



## COLUMNISTS

## The Openings Explained

Abby Marshall



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## The Openings Explained

### The Scotch Four Knights [C47]

The opening for this month's column is the Scotch Four Knights. It is a very solid and reliable choice for club players and can be used for one's entire chess career, unlike some openings such as the King's Gambit (smile). I remember facing it a lot as a younger player. For my reference this month, I used the excellent [Starting Out: The Scotch Game](#) by John Emms. I recommend all of his books, because they cover the important variations and are packed with useful tips.

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3**

This is the Scotch Four Knights. White defends the pawn in the most natural way. Black has a few possibilities here.

**5...Bb4**



[FEN "r1bqk2r/pppp1ppp/2n2n2/8/1b1NP3/2N5/PPP2PPP/R1BQKB1R w KQkq - 0 6"]

This is the main line move. It is the most challenging because it attacks the center right away and prepares to castle.

5...Bc5 is a reasonable option; however, ...Qf6 is no longer available. 6.Be3 This develops a piece and keeps the tension in the center. (6.Nxc6 is the other common choice and it leads to sharp positions.) 6...Bb6 (6...0-0 7.Nxc6 is a common error!; 6...d6 is a level up from the 6...0-0 disaster, but it is not much better. 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.Bxc5 dxc5 I have actually seen a game where the tripled isolated pawns were good, but this was only a single game. All other times, the pawns are extremely weak. If they protect important squares, then maybe it is okay, but what an ugly picture.; 6...Bb4 At first this looks silly because Black has already moved this bishop, so White is a tempo up in the 5...Bb4 lines. However, the inclusion of Be3 may not benefit White much. 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.Qd4 White is ahead in development so might castle queenside here.) 7.Qd2!?

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[FEN "r1bqk2r/pppp1ppp/1bn2n2/8/3NP3/2N1B3/PPQ1PPP/R3KB1R b KQkq - 0 7"]

White employs an aggressive setup. 7...0-0 8.0-0-0 Re8 Black pressures e4. 9.f3 d5!? Black has to strike fast because White's attack is fast. The way to respond to an attack on the flanks is to attack in the center. (9...d6?! is just too passive. White is attacking quickly. 10.g4 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Be6 12.Rg1 Bxd4 13.Qxd4 Black exchanges some pieces to relieve the pressure and to get Black's own pawns rolling on the queenside. 13...c5 14.Qd2 Qa5 15.a3 a6 16.g5 Nd7 17.f4 b5 18.f5 Black is really hurting here.) 10.Bb5 White develops and responds with White's own threat. 10...Bd7 (10...dxe4 11.Nxc6 Qxd2+ 12.Bxd2 a6 13.Ba4 Bd7 14.Nb4 Bxa4 15.Nxa4 a5 16.Nxb6 cxb6 17.a3 axb4 18.Bxb4



[FEN "r3r1k1/lp3ppp/lp3n2/8/1B2p3/P4P2/1PP3PP/2KR3R b - - 0 18"]

At the end of this mostly forced variation White's bishop is better than the knight, and the doubled b-pawns are weak.) 11.exd5 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Bxb5 13.Nxb5 Qxd5 14.Bxb6 Qxb5 15.Be3 As in the previous variation, the bishop is an advantage over the knight.

5...d6 is too passive and White gets an easy edge. 6.Bc4 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.h3 Nxd4 (8...Nxe4 The fork trick is not so good here. 9.Nxe4 d5 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.Bd3 dxe4 12.Bxe4 Black has poor pawns.) 9.Qxd4 Be6 10.Be3 (10.Bxe6?! fxe6 Exchanging bishops gives Black another pawn in the center and opens the f-file for Black.) 10...Qd7 11.Rad1 Bxc4 12.Qxc4 Qc6 13.Qd3 Rae8 14.Bd4 Bd8 15.Rfe1 Now Black begins some suspect play. 15...Nd7?! (15...Re6 Looks better and keeps all the pieces active.) 16.Nd5 f5? It is very common to see players lash out when they are in a worse position. This is almost always bad and ruins the chance of putting up a tough defense. 17.Qb3



[FEN "3brk1/pppn2pp/2qp4/3N1p2/3BP3/"]

17...Kh8 18.exf5 Rxe1+ 19.Rxe1 White is ahead a clear pawn. Black cannot take back. 19...Rxf5 20.Re8+ Rf8 21.Qg3 Bf6 22.Bxf6 gxf6 23.Nxf6 Rxe8 24. Nxe8.

5...Nxe4!? This may shock White, but it is not very good. Of course, Black regains the piece, but at the cost of a good position. 6.Nxe4 Qe7



[FEN "r1b1kb1r/ppppqppp/2n5/8/3NN3/8/PPP2PPP/R1BQKB1R w KQkq - 0 7"]

The peculiar pressure of the knight attacking d4 and the queen attacking the e4-knight allow Black to regain the piece. 7.f3 d5 8.Bb5 Bd7 9.Bxc6 White gets rid of Black's most active piece. 9...bxc6 (9...Bxc6 is inferior because Black is giving up a bishop for a knight, and the ensuing open d-file means Black can't castle queenside. 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.0-0 dxe4 12.fxe4) 10.0-0 dxe4 11.Re1 0-0-0 (11...f5 is weakening and asks for trouble. 12.fxe4 fxe4 13.c3 c5? 14.Qh5+ Qf7 15.Rxe4+ Be7 16.Rxe7+! Kxe7 17.Bg5+ Ke8 18.Re1+ Be6 19.Rxe6+ Kf8 20.Re7 Qxh5 21.Ne6+ Kg8 22.Rxg7# The position before 16. Rxe7! would make a good tactics problem.) 12.Rxe4 Qf6 13.Qe2 c5 14.Nb3 Qb6 (14...Bc6 15.Rf4 Qg6 16.Rg4 Qd6 17.Bf4 Qd7 18.Qa6+ Kb8 19.Na5 Ba8 20.Be3 g6 21.Rb4+ cxb4 22.Bxa7# This is not a forced line of course, but it gives a good idea of the dangers that Black faces.) 15.Be3 Bd6 16.Qf2 Piling up on the c5-pawn. 16...f5 17.Rh4 Be7 18.Rc4 Qb5 19.Bxc5 Qxc4 20. Bxe7 Rde8 21.Qxa7 White is ahead two pawns and the black king is exposed.

5...Be7? is much too passive. 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.e5 Ng8 8.Qf3 This position is terrible for Black.

5...d5? I've seen this move played a few times at scholastic tournaments. It is simply bad. 6.Bb5 Bd7 7.exd5 White just wins a pawn.

5...Nxd4 is not good. White's queen becomes developed and White has tons of space. 6.Qxd4 c5? I've actually seen young players play this sequence: drawing the queen out with ...Nxd4 and then attacking it with ...c5. All this does is create holes in the position. Attacking the queen is exciting because sometimes the opponent won't notice, but it is not recommended. 7.Qe3.

### 6.Nxc6 bxc6

6...dxc6 prevents the a7-pawn from becoming isolated, but Black gets an uncomfortable position. 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.Bd2 Even though the queens are off the board, the black king is vulnerable in the center and White has easier development. 8...Bxc3 9.Bxc3 Nxe4 10.Bxg7 Rg8 11.Bd4 White is much better with the two bishops in a wide open game.

### 7.Bd3 d5

7...d6 This may be more adventurous than the main line 7...d5, but White scores better. 8.Bg5 (8.0-0 Ng4! Black doesn't want to get into a Bg5 pin. 9. Be2 Qh4 10.h3 Ne5 11.f4 Ng6 Equal play.) 8...h6 9.Bh4 Be6 10.f4 White wants to prevent Black from breaking the pin with ...g5. Playing ...g5 on the previous move would have been unwise because White had not yet committed the king to the kingside. I like White here because White has more space and greater central control.(10.0-0? White plays into Black's hands. 10...g5! 11.

Bg3 h5 12.f4 White tries to chip away at the pawns and open the center, but Black is quite solid. 12...h4 13.Be1 gxf4 14.Rxf4 Nd7



[FEN "r2qk2r/p1pn1p2/2ppb3/8/1b2PR1p/2NB4/PPP3PP/R2QB1K1 w kq - 0 15"]

Black has dark squares around White's king and also the g-file to conduct an attack.).

7...0-0 is another option. It usually transposes to the main line if Black follows up with 8...d5, so in this variation we will examine what happens when Black doesn't seek a stake in the center. 8.0-0 Re8 9.Bg5 h6 10.Bh4 Rb8 (10...d6 11.f4 Bb7 12.Ne2!



[FEN "r2qr1k1/pbp2pp1/2pp1n1p/8/1b2PP1B/3B4/PPP1N1PP/R2Q1RK1 b - - 0 12"]

This is a common maneuver in the Scotch. The knight moves over to the kingside for an attack, and Black's bishop is looking silly.) 11.f4!? Since Black hasn't challenged the center, White threatens to advance in the center and gain more space. 11...d6 12.Kh1 White prepares e5. 12...Bb7 13.e5! dxe5 14.fxe5 Bxc3 15.exf6 Bxf6 16.Bxf6 gxf6 17.Qh5 Black's pawns are shattered and Black's king is extremely weak.

### 8.exd5

8.e5 I was always afraid of this move as Black, even though it might not be that dangerous. 8...Ng4 9.0-0 0-0 (9...Nxe5? 10.Re1 Qe7 11.f4) 10.Bf4 f6! Black immediately attacks the white pawn to relocate the knight on g4. 11.exf6 Qxf6 12.Bg3 (12.Bxc7 Bc5 13.Bg3 Nxf2 14.Bxf2 Bxf2+ 15.Kh1 Qh4) 12...Bc5 13.Qd2 Rb8 14.Rab1 Bd6 Black chips away at the main defender of the White kingside. 15.Be2 Ne5 16.Nd1 d4 17.Kh1 c5 Black has a fantastic game.

### 8...cxd5

This recapture makes the most sense. Black undoubles the c-pawns and gains a solid pawn in the center. 8...Qe7+!? 9.Qe2 cxd5 10.Qxe7+ Kxe7 11.Bd2 c6 12.0-0-0 Rd8 13.Na4!



[FEN "r1br4/p3kppp/2p2n2/3p4/Nb6/3B4/PPPB1PPP/2KR3R b - - 0 13"]

White tries to seize control of the dark squares. 13...Bd6 14.Be3.

## 9.0-0

9.Qe2+ is an interesting choice. I remember facing it in scholastic events and it can be a surprise because castling looks so automatic. 9...Be7 10.Bg5 0-0 11.0-0 c6 12.Rhe1 Bb4 Both sides look aggressive and it is attractive to young scholastic players. White has nice bishops while Black has the open b-file making it a good game.

## 9...0-0 10.Bg5

White puts immediate pressure on the Black center.

## 10...c6

One ridiculous game I played long ago went 10...Bb7 11.Bxf6 Qxf6 12.Qh5 g6 13.Nxd5 Qxb2 (13...Qd8).

10...Be6 Black protects the d-pawn in a different way. This develops a piece and prepares to save a tempo with an immediate ...c5, but leaves the b5-square open for occupation. 11.Nb5 c5 (11...Be7 After the knight moves, Black's dark-squared bishop looks a little silly, and ...c5 right away cuts off the bishop. 12.Nd4 Qd6 13.Re1 c5 14.Nf5 Bxf5 15.Bxf5 The two bishops have a slight pull on the Black position.) 12.a3 Ba5 13.b4 cxb4 14.Qe1 Qe7?! (14... bxa3 15.Bxf6 gxf6 16.Qe3; 14...h6 This is the best. 15.axb4 Bb6 16.Bh4 Re8 Black has lost the mobile pawns in the center, but has an okay position.) 15. Nd4 Rac8 16.Nf5 Qd7 (16...Qd8 White is still better of course, but this would prevent the ensuing tactic and king hunt.) 17.Nxg7! Kxg7 18.Bxf6+ Kxf6 19. f4



[FEN "2r2r2/p2q1p1p/4bk2/b2p4/1p3P2/P2B4/2P3PP/R3QRK1 b - f3 0 19"]

19...Kg7 (19...Bf5 Stopping the advance of the f-pawn is no use. 20.Qe5+ Kg6 21.g4) 20.f5 f6 (20...Kh8 21.Qh4 Rg8 22.Qxh7+ Kxh7 23.fxe6+ Kg7 24. exd7 Rc7 25.Bf5) 21.fxe6 Qe7 22.Qh4 Kg8 23.Rf5 Rc7 24.Rh5 f5 25.Qg3+ Kh8 26.Bxf5 Qf6 27.Rd1 Rg7 28.Qh3 Qe7 29.Rxd5 White is clearly crushing Black.

10...h6? fails tactically, but positionally it is also a poor move. Black weakens the kingside and at some point will have to play ...g6 to combat the strength of



the light-squared bishop. 11.Bxf6 Qxf6 12.Nxd5 Qxb2 13.Rb1.

### 11.Qf3

There are other choices such as 11.Ne2 and 11.Na4, but here is start of the main line. White has better development and more stable pawn structure, versus Black's control of the center and open files. I always liked this position when I was a junior.

### 11...Be7

If Black wants to avoid the drawish ending that may arise in 11...Bd6 after Bxf6, then 11...Be7 is the smarter choice.

11...Bd6 It looks weird to allow White to double the pawns. However, Black's central control and the two bishops make it an equal ending. 12.h3



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/p4ppp/2pb1n2/3p2B1/8/2NB1Q1P/PPP2PP1/R4RK1 b - - 0 12"]

White doesn't want to be bothered by a future ...Bg4. Regardless of 12.h3, Bg4 couldn't have been played immediately because Bxf6 wins a piece, but White wants to safeguard against that for the future. (12.Rfe1 This variation will look at what happens if White chooses to exchange on f6, where it makes little difference whether White plays 12.h3 or 12.Rfe1. 12...Rb8 13.Na4 h6 14.Bxf6 Qxf6 (14...gxf6? Black's king is too weak for this. Why keep the queens on the board?) 15.Qxf6 gxf6 16.Rad1 Bg4 17.f3 Be6 This is considered a level ending. See the game Nunn-Sulskis 1994 below.) 12...Rb8 13.Rab1 h6 14.Bf4 (14.Bh4 This natural move leads to some complications. 14...Re8 (14...Rb4 This basically forces White to take on f6 anyway, so if White doesn't want to play that, 14.Bf4 makes sense. 15.Bxf6 Qxf6 16.Qxf6 gxf6=) 15.Rfe1 Playing other moves allow ...g5, g4. (15.b3 g5 16.Bg3 g4 17.Qd1 (17.hxg4? Bxg4 And the queen is trapped!) 17...gxh3) 15...Rxe1+ 16.Rxe1 g5 17.Bg3 Rxb2 18.Ne2 Kg7 Emms suggests this as an improvement over 18...c5. 19.Bxd6 Qxd6 20.Ng3 Qf4 Black is definitely on top.) 14...Re8 15.Ne2 c5 16.c3 Bb7 17.Bxd6 Qxd6 Emms says this is about equal, and he's right, but the position looks easier for Black. The mobile c- and d-pawns look good for Black to me. These types of positions make me think that going into the Bxf6 ending is best for White, but maybe that's just my preference.

### 12.Rae1

White plays this rook to e1 because there is no other good square for the a1-rook, the f1-rook may get in the game after a f2-f4 pawn push, and the bishop may drop back to c1 at some point and the rook won't be hemmed in.

### 12...h6

Emms cautions readers about this move because White has a chance to force an immediate draw, and Black has to play accurately if White continues to play on. 12...Rb8 may be a better choice. 13.Na4 Be6 14.Bf4 White can try to play on the dark squares.

### 13.Bf4

13.Bxh6 guarantees White at least a draw. Also, ...h6 is a common move, so

unsuspecting opponents may play it and then be totally surprised by the sacrifice. 13...gxh6 14.Qe3 This double attack is the point. 14...d4! Black counterattacks and ignores all of White's threats. 14...d4 also takes away the e3-square for a rook lift.

a) 14...Bd6? Black takes care of the threat to the bishop, but does not adequately stop White's attack. 15.Qxh6 The rook blocks off a king escape and the queen is dangerously close to the black king. 15...Bg4 Black wants to block off the g-file and develop a piece, but Black is so tied up that White finds another way in: going around the bishop on g4. 16.Re3



[FEN "r2q1rk1/p4p2/2pb1n1Q/3p4/6b1/2NBR3/PPP2PPP/5RK1 b - - 0 16"]

16...Rb8 This essentially does nothing to stop White, but Black was lost. 17. Rfe1 Rxb2 18.Re5! This is the idea. All of White's pieces except the knight are in the attack. 18...Bxe5 19.Rxe5 Ne4 This is the only square for the knight because otherwise Qh7 is mate. 20.Bxe4 f5 21.Re6 White has broken through the black position. 21...fxe4 22.Rg6+ Kf7 23.Rg7+ Ke8 24.Qg6+ Rf7 25. Qxf7#.

b) 14...Re8? Black defends the bishop in a different way, but this too is not good enough. The rook lift to e3 is too strong. 15.Qxh6 Qd6 16.Re3 Bg4 17. Rg3 Qe6 (17...Qe5 Black defends more proactively. 18.Nd1! The last piece comes to the attack and also, as the variation shows, opens the f1-rook into the attack as well. 18...Bc5 19.Ne3 Bxe3 20.fxe3



[FEN "r3r1k1/p4p2/2p2n1Q/3pq3/6b1/3BP1R1/PPP3PP/5RK1 b - - 0 20"]

Everything is falling apart. The bishop is attacked, which is defended by the knight, which is also attacked, which blocks the rook from the f7-square.) 18. h3 This begins a nice tactical sequence. 18...Bd6 19.Bh7+ Nxh7 20.Rxg4+ Qxg4 21.hxg4 White wins.

15.Qxh6 Qd6 Black develops and protects the e5-square, so White is having trouble getting the rook into the attack, which was the crucial element in the previous lines. 16.Qg5+ Kh8



[FEN "r1b2r1k/p3bp2/2pq1n2/6Q1/3p4/2NB4/PPP2PPP/4RRK1 w - - 0 17"]

This is a critical position. White can always draw by perpetual check. I show all of White's possibilities here: consider this a lesson in calculation and attack. 17.Rxe7

a) 17.Qh6+ Kg8 18.Qg5+.

b) 17.Qh4+ fails because White cannot just attack with a queen and a bishop. 17...Kg7 18.Ne4 Nxe4 19.Qxe4 Rh8+ Remember that Black is ahead a piece. And now Black has the attack.

c) 17.Re5 White threatens mate in two with 18.Qh6 and 19.Rg5, but this idea does not work either. 17...Ng4 18.Qxe7 Qxe7 19.Rxe7 White wins the piece back, but don't forget that ...d4 was a fork. 19...dxc3+.

d) 17.f4 This tries to sneak the f1-rook into the attack, but it is too slow this time. 17...dxc3 (17...Ng8 This throws the win back to White. Black has to be accurate. 18.Rxe7 dxc3 (18...Qxe7 19.Qh5+ Kg7 20.Qh7+ Kf6 21.Qh8+ Ke6 22.Re1+) 19.Re3 White is still down a piece, but now the rook is in the attack, so White is winning.) 18.Re3 Ng8 The difference here is that the knight on c3 is now gone. Black is winning. 19.Rxe7 Nxe7! 20.Qh5+ Kg7 21.Qh7+ Kf6 There is no knight check on e4, as in the previous variation.; 17...Qxe7 This variation has White play some fancy moves, but it ends in a draw. 18.Ne4 Ng8 19.Qh5+ Kg7 20.Nf6 Nxf6! 21.Qg5+ Kh8 22.Qh6+.

**13...Bd6 14.b3 a5 15.h3**



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/5pp1/2pb1n1p/p2p4/5B2/1PNB1Q1P/P1P2PP1/4RRK1 b - - 0 15"]

This is a dynamic position.

The next game looks at the ending in the 11...Bd6 line. At the elite levels, this ending is drawn; while at the club levels, it is anyone's game. Here, White does not win and perhaps should have lost, but we can learn from White's mistakes. Also, practice playing this ending against friends. Familiarity is more important than evaluations, especially at the club level.

**Nunn, John (2625) – Sulskis, Sarunas (2455)**

Moscow ol (Men) (10), 1994

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.d4 exd4 5.Nxd4 Bb4 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.Bd3 d5 8.exd5 cxd5 9.0-0 0-0 10.Bg5 c6 11.Qf3 Bd6 12.Rfe1 Rb8 13.Na4 h6 14.**



**Bxf6 Qxf6 15.Qxf6 gxf6 16.Rad1 Bg4 17.f3 Be6**



[FEN "1r3rk1/p4p2/2pbp1p/3p4/N7/3B1P2/PPP3PP/3RR1K1 w - - 0 18"]

This is where the theory section ended. To recap, Black has doubled pawns and twice as many pawn islands as White, but Black does have the two bishops and the center pawns.

### 18.g3

18.c3 is another possibility, aimed at stopping the advance of the Black c- and d-pawns. Playing b4 becomes a possibility, but White should be cautious about this because it weakens White's own pawns. 18...Rfd8 19.b3 Kg7 20.g3 Play may progress like this. It is an even position.

### 18...Kg7

Black moves the king to make way for the rooks to have access to the g- and h-files if necessary, and puts the king closer to the action for the endgame.

### 19.b3

The knight has a square on b2 now and controls another square to stop the advance of the black pawns.

### 19...h5

Black wants to get rid of the isolated and weak h-pawn.

### 20.Kg2

White should not try to force the play, and hope Black's structural weaknesses outlast Black's strength: the two bishops.

### 20...h4 21.c4!?



[FEN "1r3r2/p4pk1/2pbp2/3p4/N1P4p/1P1B1PP1/P5KP/3RR3 b - c3 0 21"]

This isn't bad, but maybe it isn't necessary yet.

21.gxh4? Rh8.

21.g4 I like this move, clamping down on f5 and not allowing Black to exchange off the weak h-pawn.

#### 21...Bb4

Black gets the bishop off the d-file.

#### 22.Re2 dxc4

I don't like this because it trades off one of Black's bishops, and the two bishops are stronger than the bishop against a knight.

22...hgx3 23.hgx3 Rh8 It is still even, but this keeps the position more juicy.

#### 23.Bxc4 Bxc4

If Black doesn't trade bishops, all he has done is made White more active and the c6-pawn is now weak.

#### 24.bxc4 hxg3 25.hgx3

This position is really equal. The pawns are roughly the same, the bishop is a little better than the knight in this ending, but there's not much play.

#### 25...Rfd8 26.Rxd8

White should probably not trade a set of rooks. The rooks help defend the position, and double rook endings are very drawish. However, a rook and bishop against rook and knight is a bit different, and now Black has more chances.

#### 26...Rxd8 27.Kf2 Rd1 28.Nb2?



[FEN "8/p4pk1/2p2p2/8/1bP5/5PP1/  
PN2RK2/3r4 b - - 0 28"]

This allows the bishop to favorably relocate. 28.Rb2 Bd6 29.Ke3 f5 30.f4 This position would rest easier on my mind if I were White.

#### 28...Bc5+ 29.Kg2 Rc1

Black pretty easily infiltrates the White position, which would not have happened if another set of rooks were on the board. Black is better, but not enough to win.

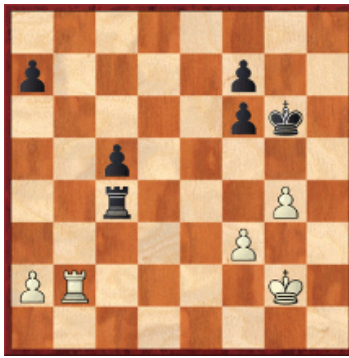
#### 30.g4 Bd4 31.Rd2 c5 32.Kg3 Kg6 33.Re2 Be5+ 34.Kg2

White can only wait.

#### 34...Bxb2?

Black wins a pawn, but in rook endings this is rarely enough to win. 34...Rc3 35.Rd2 Kg5 36.Re2 Bd4 37.Kg3 f5 may be winning for Black. The king is very active and Black has a clamp on the position.

#### 35.Rxb2 Rxc4



[FEN "8/p4p2/5pk1/2p5/2r3P1/5P2/PR4K1/8 w - - 0 36"]

The rook ending is not so interesting in terms of our opening study. White is down a pawn, but in rook endings this is not a tragedy, and White was able to draw the game. Notice how both sides kept their rooks active.

**36.Rb5 f5 37.gxf5+ Kxf5 38.Kg3 Ke5 39.Ra5 f5 40.Rxa7 Rc1 41.Re7+ Kd4 42.Kf4 Rf1 43.a4 c4 44.a5 Ra1 45.Rd7+ Kc3 46.Kxf5 Rxa5+ 47.Ke6 Kb4 48.f4 c3 49.Rd1 Ra6+ 50.Ke5 Ra2 51.Re1 Rf2 52.f5 c2 53.Rc1 Re2+ 54.Kd6 Kc3 55.f6 Rf2 56.Ke7 Kd2 ½-½**

### Lessons Learned

- This column had more variations than usual. Don't skip over something because it is long. The moves are easy to memorize and understand, so take a deep breath and learn the moves.
- Study the illustrative game to understand the ending in the 11...Bd6 line.
- This opening leads to unbalances: pawn structure vs. the two bishops; activity vs. the center. Know what the unbalances are in the position, and construct a plan to maximize your pluses.

### Practitioners

- Garry Kasparov: He revitalized the Scotch in the 1990s and made it much more popular.
- Alexander Morozevich: He is a very creative grandmaster who plays some fascinating chess, although sometimes his moves are extremely risky.
- Lev Gutman: He has made theoretical contributions to the Scotch.

### Further Reading

*Starting Out: The Scotch Game* by John Emms. Emms is a wonderful author and explains things in a lucid, easy prose.

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