

Opening Repertoire Queen's Gambit Accepted

Nicolas Yáp



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About the Author

Nicolás Yap started playing in tournaments aged nine, and won the Northern California K-8 Championship in 2003, the Northern California K-12 Championship in 2009 and was a part of the USA delegation at the 2005 World Youth Championship in Belfort, France. Having recently completed his academic studies he is now restarting his chess career, as well as planning to fulfill his two life dreams of becoming a grandmaster and entering medical school to become a doctor. This is his first book.

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Introduction

The Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) is one of Black's most solid, reliable and active defences against 1 d4. It has remained popular throughout chess history, and its popularity spiked in 2021 due to new discoveries. Its reputation as the most direct way of dealing with 2 c4 by simply accepting the gambit, plus its prowess for allowing Black free development, has never waned.

I have played many defences against 1 d4 throughout my career, at some point shifting from one to the other with no direction, just trying to look for a reasonable long-term weapon. I played the Classical Slav as my first defence to 1 d4 in my youth, followed by the King's Indian as a teenager. Towards the end of my teenage years, I shifted from the KID to the Nimzo-Indian/QGD complex and had issues with the Catalan. Thereafter came a hiatus due to university studies. During my 20s I adopted the Grünfeld, which is still one of my main weapons, but the practical problem with the Grünfeld, just like the KID, is that it is a more "low-occurrence" defence. In other words, it takes several moves to actually get to the Grünfeld. After 1 d4 ♟f6 White has a billion and one different ways to deviate. Should I get to 1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6, there is the very popular 3 h4 nowadays, as well as the extremely sharp 3 f3 Anti-Grünfeld. A similar comparison could be made for the KID. The QGA, however, arises after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4. True, White can deviate on move two, but in my experience the deviations at White's disposal after 1 d4 d5 are significantly less annoying than after 1 d4 ♟f6. For example, the Trompowsky with 1 d4 ♟f6 2 ♟g5 is way more dangerous than 1 d4 d5 2 ♟g5. The only deviation on the second move that I would consider slightly annoying after 1 d4 d5 is the London, and perhaps the Torre and Colle, since my preferred systems involving ...d7-d6 and ...e7-e6 are now not possible.

The QGA is no longer the opening that it was in bygone eras, considered a boring, yet very solid defence against 1 d4 when you just wanted a draw. Since mid-2021, it has undergone what I would call a renaissance. Fresh ideas have completely rejuvenated the QGA, as well as overturned various lines that were once considered dubious. The main example that stands out is undoubtedly the variation 3 e4 b5.

One characteristic of this book is that the lines that I recommend are not well-trodden paths, but rather a journey through an unknown jungle or wooded area where you have to carve out your own path.

For various factors that are outside of my control, for the past few years I have been unable to play in over-the-board tournaments. What I did during that time was to follow

Opening Repertoire: Queen's Gambit Accepted

theoretical battlegrounds with the aim of creating a solid, reliable, yet fighting repertoire for Black against 1 d4. The result is this book. Although I had made it as my own home preparation files geared to my own goals – norm tournaments, playing in high-quality closed and open events throughout Europe, etc – this repertoire can be used by anyone, from the club player up to world champion – whoever they or the next one may be.

Truth be told, this is not a repertoire for lazy players; it is an ambitious, maximalist repertoire for Black that takes serious study and dedication to employ properly with accuracy and thus success – but the outcome shall be repaid in dividends in terms of results, such as getting your third (and last) IM or GM norm, just winning the club championship, or even winning the men's or women's Candidates cycle.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that had started in 2020, many recent games are rapid and blitz games. There was no other recourse, as over-the-board play was rightly curtailed due to the gravity of the pandemic. While this is not ideal, these games, some of which are presented here, have still contributed significantly to recent theory.

I have consulted as many sources as possible – printed material in the form of books, as well as electronic material in the form of DVDs, Chessable courses, and old-style courses with mp4 and pgn files – as I see it as important that this book addresses analyses and recommendations of other publications as a prerequisite to providing the reader with updated and correct information. Every single line has been checked by engines, most notably by various versions of *Stockfish* and *Leela Chess Zero (Lc0)* – something that would be sheer madness to eschew in any opening book in the era of supercomputers.

I wish you the best of luck in your new QGA adventures.

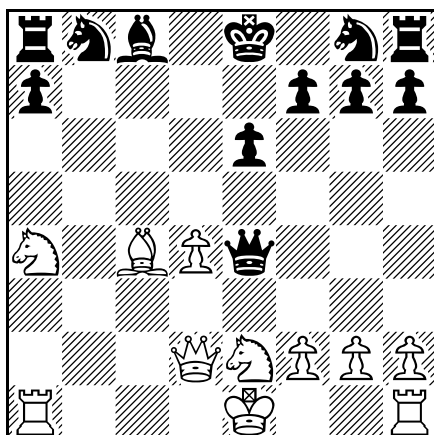
Nicolás Yap
San Francisco, California
July 2023

Game 5
W. So-L. Domínguez Perez
 FIDE Grand Prix, Berlin 2022

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 b5 4. a4 c6 5 axb5 cxb5 6 ♖c3 ♜b6 7 b3 e6 8 bxc4 ♙b4 9 ♙d2 bxc4 10 ♘f3

White delays recapturing on c4 for the moment. Otherwise 10 ♙xc4 ♘e7 11 ♘f3 (rather than 11 ♘ge2 as in the previous three games) reaches the same position. The knight on f3 also defends the d-pawn, while there are more possibilities to create an attack, for example with ♘e5 or ♘g5.

Another option is 10 ♘a4, which Gledura covers in his Chessable course. The idea is to chase Black's queen and gain a lead in development. Note that after 10... ♜b7 11 ♙xc4 ♜xe4+ 12. ♘e2 ♙xd2+ 13 ♜xd2, taking on g2 would be reckless and greedy.



In a practical game, I imagine that Black would get destroyed most of the time, since it is hard to handle positions where the queen grabs pawns and the rest of the army stays at home. Instead, Black should mobilize their pieces to avoid suffering at the hands of White's initiative:

a) 13... ♘f6 14 ♘ac3 ♜b7 (there is no way to stop Black from castling now) 15 0-0 0-0 16 d5 a5 and Gledura stops here, saying that the position is around equal. My analyses with *Stockfish 15* confirm this view, and I add the following for reference to see how Black should develop: 17 h3 ♜b4 18 ♙a2 ♜d8 and the black pieces are ready to enter the game, such as with ... ♙a6 and/or ... ♘c6.

b) 13... ♘e7 is also possible, controlling both c6 and d5. For example: 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♙d3 ♜c6 16 ♜fc1 ♜d6 17 ♙e4 ♘bc6 (plugging the a8-h1 diagonal to avoid problems with the a8-rook) 18 ♜f4 (trying to divert Black from the defence of the c6-knight) 18... ♜xf4 19 ♘xf4 ♙d7 20 ♘c5 ♙e8 and after bringing the a8-rook to either c8 or d8, Black neutralizes

White's initiative.

10...♞e7

The reason I prefer to delay the development of this knight is to see how White reacts. Sometimes the knight is better on e7 in order to avoid losing a tempo after e4-e5.

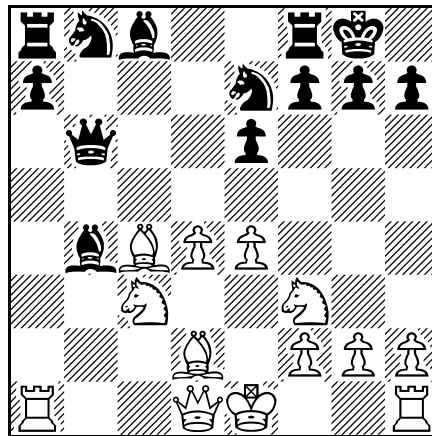
Note that trying to defend the c4-pawn with 10...♙a6?? would be a huge mistake, since 11 ♖a4+! ♕f8 (blocking with the b8-knight drops the a6-bishop) 12 ♜b1 ♙xc3 13 ♜xb6 ♙xd2+ 14 ♞xd2 axb6 15 ♙xc4 is winning for White.

11 ♙xc4

Both sides are ready to get their king out of the centre, which shall inevitably be where the main battle takes place.

11...0-0

Black should not delay in favour of 11...♙b7?, which is in fact a huge blunder. The black pieces on the b-file are horribly lined up for White to harass: 12 ♞a4! ♙xd2+ 13 ♖xd2 ♜c7 14 ♜c1 0-0 15 ♞c5 ♙c6 was V.Raahul-D.Divya, Guwahati 2022, and now 16 ♞g5! leaves Black dead lost. There are simply too many threats, especially on e6.



12 0-0

12 ♞b5 is ambitious, trying to cause real chaos in Black's queenside. However, as in all the lines here, Black equalizes, as we shall see: 12...♞bc6 (the c8-bishop is itching to get to a6 to create problems for White's awkwardly-placed b5-knight and c4-bishop) 13 0-0 ♙a6 (White has to do something urgently about the b5-knight) 14 ♞d6 ♙xc4 15 ♞xc4 ♖b5 16 ♙xb4 ♞xb4 (the game is in a delicate balance of one or two tempi; accurate moves are required by both sides to maintain equality) 17 ♖a4 (a little tactical sequence that liquidates the game) 17...♖xc4 18 ♜fc1 (Black can no longer hang on to the loose b4-knight, and must therefore return the piece) 18...♖d3 19 ♖xb4 ♜fe8 20 ♖b1 ♖xb1 21 ♜xb1 ♜eb8 slightly resembles a Semi-Tarrasch endgame, with even chances.

12...a5

A multi-purpose move, which has the double aim of trading bishops with ...♙a6, as well

as protecting the b4-bishop.

13 d5

The most critical option; White decides to push at once in order to get a passed d-pawn after an exchange on d5. However, there are numerous other possibilities:

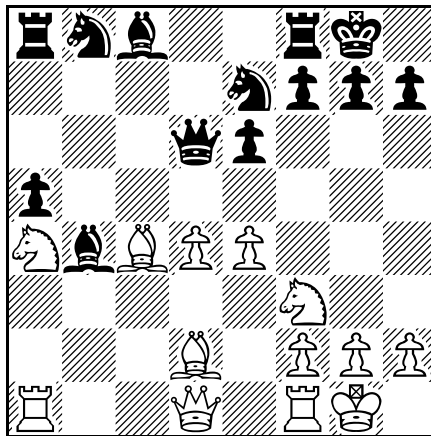
a) 13 ♖e2 ♗a6 14 ♘a4 ♗d6 transposes to the 13 ♘a4 line below.

b) 13 ♖e1 ♗a6 sees Black manage to exchange the bad bishop before White has time to push their central pawns.

c) 13 ♖c2 is a nonchalant-looking move that nonetheless does improve White's position, albeit slightly, in that the white rooks are now connected and can shuttle along the first rank. For example: 13...♗a6 (trading light-squared bishops is, as we know, one of Black's strategic goals and prevents White from creating a dangerous attack utilizing this bishop later on) 14 ♘a4 ♗d6 (keeping the d4-pawn in the crosshairs; the b8-knight will soon come to c6, followed by the f8-rook to the central files) 15 ♗xb4 axb4 16 ♘c5 (White keeps pressurizing the a6-bishop; due to the tactical details of the position, this threat is easily parried) 16...♗xc4 (the fact that the f1-rook is en prise, as well as the a8-rook, enables Black to maintain material equality; had this not been the case, Black would be under pressure) 17 ♖xc4 ♘bc6 and the game is dynamically balanced. White has a full centre with pawns on d4 and e4, but Black has a passed b-pawn. Neither side has any real weaknesses.

d) 13 ♖e1 ♘d7 14 d5 ♘c5!? (Kotronias & Ivanov analyse 14...exd5, but I prefer activating Black's pieces first) 15 ♘a4 (piece exchanges generally favour Black, unless White can successfully pressurize or outright win the passed a-pawn) 15...♘xa4 16 ♖xa4 ♗xd2 17 ♘xd2 h6 (for now the a-pawn is blockaded, but not in a stable manner – heavy pieces, especially the queen, are not good blockaders) 18 ♘f3 ♗d8 19 ♖ab1 ♖c7 20 ♖bc1 ♖b6 21 ♘e5 ♗a6 and Black obtains sufficient counterplay.

e) 13 ♘a4 is a significant alternative, kicking Black's queen out of b6, with ideas of jumping to c5 in the future. After 13...♗d6 (the best square; on c6 the queen would block the b8-knight from entering the game with ...♘bc6),



White has numerous possible continuations:

e1) 14 ♖xb4 lets Black equalize easily, who can now can freely develop the queenside pieces: 14...axb4 15 ♙b3 ♜d7 16 ♚e1 ♙b7 and Black follows the same simple plan: pressurize White's centre.

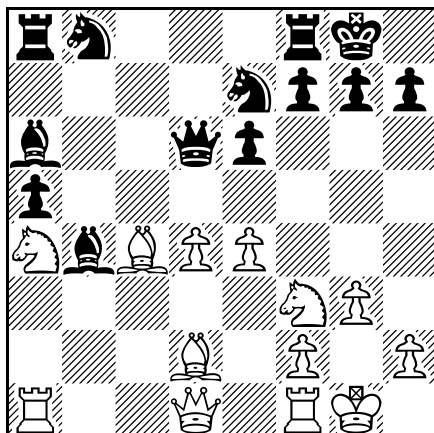
e2) 14 ♚e2 connects the rooks but allows Black to trade light-squared bishops immediately: 14...♙a6 15 ♙xa6 ♚xa6 16 ♚xa6 ♚xa6 17 ♙xb4 axb4 18 ♜c5 ♚xa1 19 ♚xa1 ♚c8 with an equal endgame very similar to the one in the main line.

e3) 14 ♜b2 is theoretically unchallenging; the knight tries to reroute itself via d3 or c4 back into the centre. Black should capitalize on this slow move by again trading light-squared bishops: 14...♙a6 15 ♚e1 (White begins preparations for a break in the centre, their main source of trying to obtain an initiative) 15...♜bc6 (Black attacks the d4-pawn without hesitation; always remember that in this variation the initiative often matters more than purely static, positional factors, so it is important to play actively and energetically) 16 d5 (undoubtedly the most critical response, but it is easily parried – Black simply eliminates the centre) 16...exd5 17 exd5 ♜xd5 18 ♙xb4 ♜cxb4 19 ♚xa5 ♚b6 20 ♚xd5 ♜xd5 21 ♜xd5 ♚xb2 22 ♙xa8 ♚xa8 and the board has been massively liquidated, such that a draw should come very soon.

e4) 14 ♚e1 (protecting the e4-pawn in advance, while stepping off the a6-f1 diagonal) 14...♜d7 (the immediate 14...♙a6?!, trying to trade light-squared bishops, would be met by 15 ♙xb4! ♚xb4 16 ♙b3, followed by ♜c5 or ♚b1 with the initiative; but ...♙a6 will come soon) 15 h3 h6 16 ♜b2 ♙a6 and the position is more or less equal. White has a full centre, but Black has active pieces and is ready to fix the pawn structure with ...e6-e5.

e5) 14 ♜c5 sacrifices a pawn to obtain the bishop pair. White gets compensation but, as usual, for no more than equality: 14...♙xc5 15 dxc5 ♚xc5 16 ♚c1 (White threatens a discovery with ♙xe6; I suggest simply ignoring it in order to speed up development) 16...♜bc6!? 17 ♙xe6 ♚d6 18 ♙a2 ♙e6 and material equality is restored, but Black's pieces spring to life very rapidly. Do not hang on to material for the sake of it. Being material up lets you give it back at an opportune moment to distract your opponent's forces.

e6) 14 g3 is a cryptic-looking move that at first makes little sense. White plans either to place the bishop on f4 or just create luft for the king to avoid later back-rank tricks. In response Black adopts the theme we see over and over: to exchange the bad bishop for White's good bishop with 14...♙a6, followed by attacking d4 and forcing concessions, such as the premature advance of the d-pawn:



e6) 15 ♟xa6 ♞xa6 16 ♟xb4 axb4 17 ♞c5 (mass exchanges now ensue) 17...♞xa1 18 ♞xa1 ♞bc6 19 ♞c1 f5 creates holes in White's central structure, guaranteeing Black counterplay on the kingside.

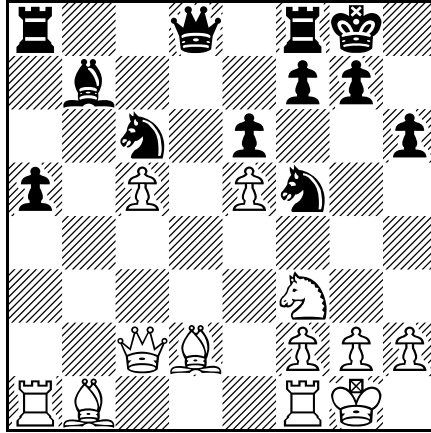
e6) 15 ♟f4 (Black should not fear this attack) 15...♞c6 (the light-squared bishops will be traded eventually) 16 ♟d3 ♞g6 17 ♞c1 ♞e8 (this looks passive, but the queen eyes the knight on a4 and keeps open possibilities of breaking with ...e6-e5) 18 ♟xa6 ♞xa6 19 ♟d2 ♞d7 20 ♞c4 ♞a8 and the other rook will soon enter the game with ...♞c8.

e6) 15 ♟xb4 axb4 16 ♞c5 (White forces mass exchanges, since the pressure on the a-file is now at maximum levels) 16...♟xc4 17 ♞xa8 ♟xf1 18 ♟xf1 (or 18 ♞xf1 h6 19 ♞c4 ♞bc6 20 ♞a6 ♞c8 21 ♞b3 ♞d7 with equality) 18...♞ec6 (Black is threatening to capture on d4, taking advantage of the loose c5-knight, so White has to retreat) 19 ♞b3 (this helps to stabilize the d4-pawn in advance should Black increase the pressure even more; for example, 19 ♞d3 ♞d8 20 ♞a1 f5! forces White to define the central structure, and if the e4-pawn moves, the d5-square will be available for Black's pieces) 19...♞d7 (offering an exchange of rooks; remember that Black's passed b-pawn becomes more dangerous with every piece trade) 20 ♞a6 ♞c8 and the game is equal, although by no means a draw. Black just needs to unpin the queen. In certain instances where d4-d5 is unfavourable for White, the ...e6-e5 break becomes a possibility.

e7) 14 e5 is very direct. White plans to initiate a kingside attack with this pawn push. The e4-square is now open for White's pieces, as well as the b1-h7 diagonal. The game N.Theodorou-A.Hong, Las Vegas 2021, continued 14...♞c7 15 ♞c1 ♞bc6?!, when 16 ♟a2! would have left White with a small advantage. The a2-bishop can re-route to b1, enabling White to create a queen and bishop battery attacking h7.

I think 14...♞d8 is better, keeping the d4-pawn under pressure and letting the queenside pieces develop with ease. After 15 ♞c5 (threatening to take on b4, as the pin would win a piece) 15...♟xc5 16 dxc5 White now has the bishop pair in a relatively open board, but that is not the end of the story. Light square weaknesses abound in the centre, and

Black has excellent outposts on d5 and f5 for the knights. For example: 16...♖bc6 17 ♔c2 (these quiet moves can be deadly – pay attention to where White’s pieces are going and what the threats are; in this case ♖g5 is in the air, and I recommend that Black stops that threat once and for all) 17...h6 18 ♗a2 (avoiding the trade of light-squared bishops, as ...♗a6 was coming) 18...♗b7 19 ♗b1 (with quite an obvious threat of mate) 19...♖f5



Exercise: The white queen and bishop battery looks terrifying. What if White just kicks the f5-knight with g2-g4 - ?

Answer: 20 g4?? is horrible. It might appear to be winning at first glance but White is dead lost after 20...♖b4!, as both the queen and the f3-knight are under attack, while 21 ♗xb4 ♗xf3 22 gxf5 ♔g5 is actually mate.

If White instead protects the f3-knight with 20 ♖a3, hoping perhaps to target Black’s king with a rook switch to the kingside, then 20...♖b4 solves all problems. The white queen is attacked, and Black has ideas of ...♗xf3, followed by ...♖d4, creating chaos in White’s camp.

13...♗a6

Yet again, we see the aim of ...♗a6 – trading the light-squared bishops, taking away a large part of White’s attacking possibilities. There are now two main choices at White’s disposal: jump to a4 to harass Black’s queen, or trade on a6 and try to weaken Black’s b4-pawn.

14 ♖a4

The alternative plan is 14 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 15 ♖b1 (pinning the b4-bishop, at least trying to cause some coordination problems in Black’s camp) 15...exd5 16 ♖xd5 (this leads to mass exchanges; whereas after 16 exd5 the passed pawn needs extra protection; Black’s plan is to tie White’s forces to this pawn, diverting them from commencing operations on other parts of the board: 16...♔d8 17 ♔e2 h6 is a good start, preventing rubbish beginning with ♖g5 which can cause more damage than appears at first sight) 16...♖xd5 17 exd5 ♖d7

Opening Repertoire: Queen's Gambit Accepted

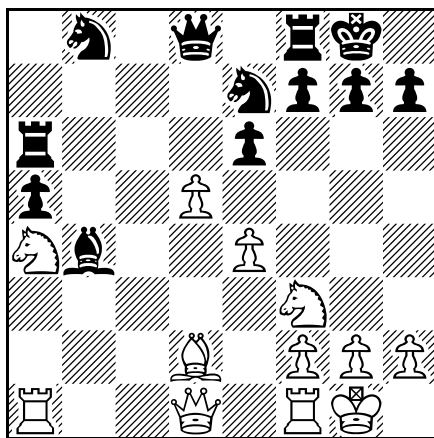
(Black's knight arrives in time to blockade the d-pawn) 18 ♟xb4 axb4 19 ♞d4 ♞f6 20 ♞c6 (both passed pawns are under heavy pressure; Black can liquidate the position relatively easily by taking on d5, causing even more exchanges) 20...♞xd5 21 ♚xd5 ♚xc6 22 ♚xc6 ♚xc6 23 ♚xb4 ♚a6 and after a forced series of moves, the endgame is totally equal. Not even Magnus Carlsen could win this position with White.

14...♚d8

Question: Obviously Black has to move the queen, but why specifically to d8?

Answer: It is important to pay attention to subtle details. If the queen went to c7, say, White could trade on a6, trade on b4, and then play d5-d6, forking the queen and e7-knight.

15 ♟xa6 ♚xa6



I recommend taking with the rook in this particular instance, to monitor the d6-square in case White tries to advance their d-pawn.

16 dxe6 ♚xe6 17 ♟xb4 axb4 18 ♚xd8 ♚xd8 19 ♞c5 ♚c6 20 ♚fc1

20 ♚fd1 ♚xd1+ 21 ♚xd1 g6 22 ♚d8+ ♞g7 23 ♚xb8 ♚xc5 is another way of getting to an equal endgame. Note that the b4-pawn is taboo, in view of the back-rank mate.

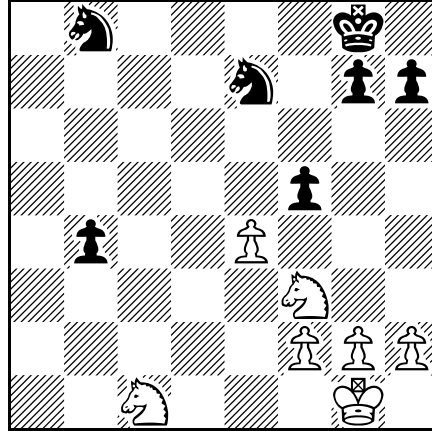
20...♚dc8

White is forced to retreat the c5-knight no matter what, resulting in a completely liquidated, equal endgame.

21 ♞b3

Mass trades ensue on the open c-file.

21...♚xc1+ 22 ♚xc1 ♚xc1+ 23 ♞xc1 f5



Question: This looks like a random shot in the dark. What is the point of ...f7-f5 here?

Answer: This pawn lever is good technique. It allows Black to liquidate White's majority on the kingside and get the king to the centre more quickly via f7.

24 exf5 ♖xf5 25 ♔f1 ♘c6 26 ♔e2 ♔f7 27 ♔d3 ♘d6 28 ♘e2 ♔f6 29 ♘ed4 ♘xd4 30 ♘xd4 ♘f5 31 ♘f3 ♘d6 32 ♘d4 ♘f5 33 ♘f3 ♘d6 34 ♘d4 ½-½

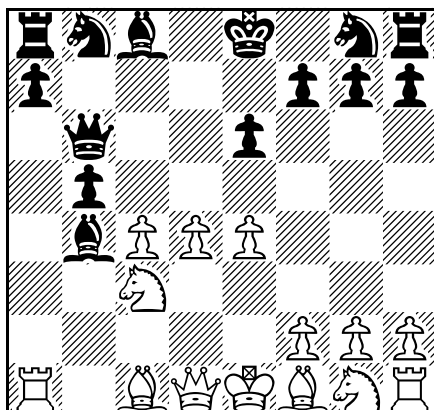
The outside passed b-pawn is not enough for any advantage.

Game 6

D.Navara-J.Xiong

Tal Memorial (blitz), Riga 2021

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 b5 4 a4 c6 5 axb5 cxb5 6 ♘c3 ♔b6 7 b3 e6 8 bxc4 ♙b4



9 ♖b3

White attacks and X-rays three of Black's pieces on the b-file, while keeping options with the c1-bishop.

White has two remaining ways to defend the c3-knight:

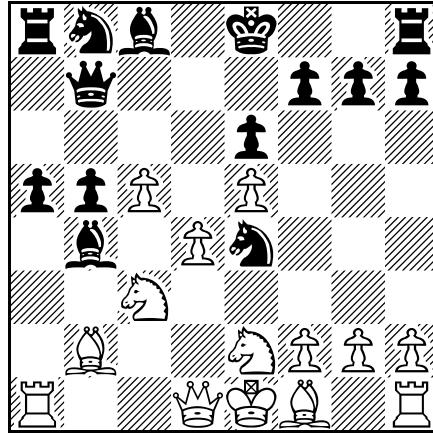
a) 9 ♖c2?! (putting the queen here leaves the d4-pawn en prise) 9...♗c6 (the d-pawn is now bound to fall, no matter what happens) 10 ♕e3 ♗xd4 11 ♖b2 a5 12 ♗ge2 e5 13 0-0-0 ♗e7 14 c5 ♕xc5 (the simplest solution; 14...♖b7 15 ♗xd4 cxd4 16 ♕xb5+ leads to more of a mess that, honestly, White does not deserve) 15 ♗xd4 (commencing a forced sequence) 15...♕xd4 16 ♖xb5+ ♖c6 17 ♕xd4 exd4 18 ♖xc6+ ♗xc6 19 ♕b5 ♕d7 and Black has a slight advantage. White could restore material equality by taking on c6 and d4, but this leaves Black with a bishop in an open position, plus an outside passed a-pawn.

b) 9 ♕b2 is the final possibility.

Question: This move looks curious, even nonsensical. Why would White fianchetto the bishop here?

Answer: The idea is deeper than it first appears. Although the a1-h8 diagonal is closed at the moment, the bishop could become potentially dangerous if it opens. It also protects White's central pawns.

Black should fight fire with fire: 9...♗f6 (instead of fiddling with pawns on the queen-side, Black attacks the e4-pawn immediately) 10 e5 (the start of great complications) 10...♗e4 (forcing White to answer the new threat to the c3-knight) 11 c5 (a highly double-edged strategy; White creates all sorts of holes in the centre, especially on the light squares, with the aim of gaining space to launch an initiative) 11...♖b7 12 ♗ge2 (lending support to the c3-knight; however, as one can see, this hinders White's development as the f1-bishop is now blocked in) 12...a5 (simply 12...0-0, evacuating the king from the centre, is also good: if 13 f3 ♗xc3 14 ♕xc3 ♗c6 15 ♕xb4 ♗xb4 16 ♖d2 a5, White has no initiative and Black is ready to take advantage of those juicy light squares)



Question: I see this ...a7-a5 advance yet again. What purpose does it serve in such a messy position?

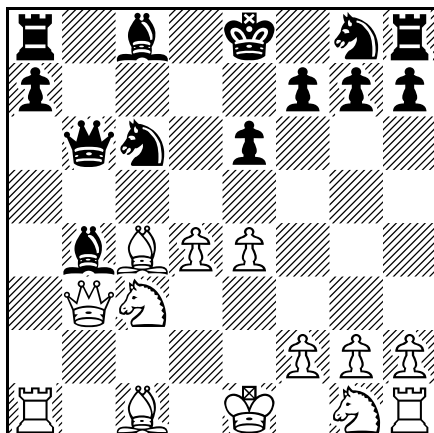
Answer: Passed pawns must be pushed! But more specifically, the a5-pawn reinforces the b4-bishop in case White attacks it, as well as supporting the ...b5-b4 advance.

One point is seen after 13 f3 (forcing Black to show their cards) 13...♘xc3 14 ♙xc3 ♘c6 15 ♙xb4 axb4!? – doubling the b-pawns on purpose looks odd, but the idea is still to have passed queenside pawns, with an open a-file for the king's rook after trades there. For example: 16 ♘g3 (the front b-pawn also prevents the white knight from going to c3) 16...♖a1 17 ♗xa1 ♕a6 18 ♗xa6 ♙xa6 19 ♖f2 ♘xd4 20 ♙d3 ♖e7 21 ♖a1 ♖a8 22 ♙e4 ♖a7 23 c6 ♘b3 24 ♖b1 ♘c5 25 ♖xb4 ♖c7 and Black will regain the pawn on c6, while keeping an outside passed b-pawn.

9...bxc4 10 ♙xc4

Obviously 10 ♗xc4? would be ridiculous, as after 10...♙a6 White is already in deep trouble.

10...♘c6



Exercise: We arrive at a critical juncture. Black not only threatens the d4-pawn, but also ...♞a5, forking queen and bishop. How can White parry both of these threats?

Answer: White is required to give up rook for knight on a5. It is impossible to hang on to the exchange without suffering consequences.

11 ♞ge2

Defending the d4-pawn and preparing to castle. The g1-knight inevitably must go to either e2 or f3. Both have their pros and cons, as we shall soon see.

The alternative 11 ♞f3 ♞a5 12 ♜xa5 (absolutely forced in order to avoid a catastrophe) 12...♙xa5 13 ♙b5+ ♚f8 14 ♙a3+ ♞e7 certainly looks scary, but in fact Black is slightly better, since White has insufficient compensation for the exchange: 15 0-0 ♙xc3 16 ♙c5 (driving the black queen to an inferior square; after 16 ♙xe7+? ♚xe7 White has nothing) 16...♜b7 17 ♙xe7+ ♜xe7 (now if 17...♚xe7 then 18 ♞e5! a5 19 ♞c6+ ♚f8 20 ♜xc3 offers White more chances. since 20...♜xb5?? loses outright to 21 ♜a3+ etc) 18 ♜xc3 ♙b7 (Black has lost castling rights but has no other weaknesses) 19 d5 ♜c8 20 ♜d3 exd5 21 exd5 ♜d6 22 ♜d1 ♚g8 23 h4 h5 24 ♞g5 ♜h6, when Black finally covers all the weak spots and is still an exchange up. White will have to fight hard for a draw.

11...♞a5

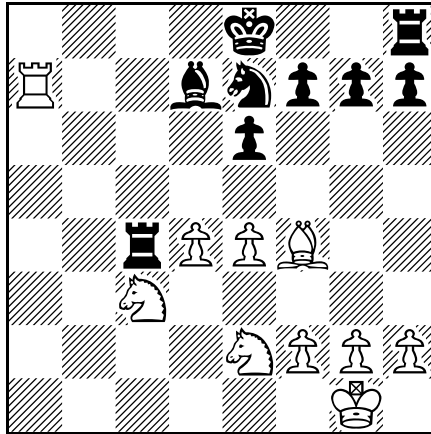
With so many pieces under pressure, White has a serious decision to make.

12 ♜a2?!

White chooses to maintain material equality and give up the bishop pair, but in this case White is simply worse.

The only challenge to Black's idea is 12 ♜xa5 ♜xa5 13 0-0, when Black has problems to solve despite being an exchange up. White will try to force the enemy king to linger in the centre as long as possible, while Black will try to castle after developing the knight: 14 ♙f4

♘e7 15 ♖a2 ♙a3 (keeping control of the a3-f8 diagonal, thus preventing the especially annoying ♙d6; I prefer this to 15...♙d2, which leads to too much of a mess, even if 16 ♙d6 ♘c8 17 ♙c5 ♘b6 may still offer Black a slight edge) 16 ♖a1 (lining up a pin on the a-file) 16...♖c8 (Black places the c4-bishop in the crosshairs to threaten it later, abandoning the a3-bishop if necessary) 17 ♘ac3 ♚b4 (White has to acquiesce to exchanges, whether they like or not) 18 ♚xa3 ♚xa3 19 ♖xa3 ♖xc4 20 ♖xa7.



After the complications, White has regained a pawn for the exchange, but this is simply not enough. Gledura also gives this line in his Chessable course on the QGA, which coincides with my own analyses. Gledura opts for 20...♖b4 here, but I prefer 20...♘c8, attacking the a7-rook and plugging the eighth rank to avoid any rubbish there. After 21 ♖b7 ♙a4 (an odd-looking move that paralyzes White's centre and knight pair) 22 f3 0-0 Black has finally castled, and the extra exchange should tell eventually.

12...♘xc4

You should almost always trade knight for bishop when given the chance. White may have to acquiesce to such an exchange to secure the king and complete development.

13 ♚xc4 a5

Threatening to skewer White with ...♙a6.

14 ♙a3?

14 0-0 was undoubtedly the more prudent option, but even getting the king out of the centre doesn't help White stave off having a disadvantage: 14...♙a6 (if this bishop doesn't go to b7, the a6-square is often a good home and can cause White logistical problems along the f1-a6 diagonal) 15 ♚a2 ♘e7 16 ♖d1 0-0 17 ♙e3 ♚c6 18 d5 ♚c4 and Black is slightly better.

14...♙a6

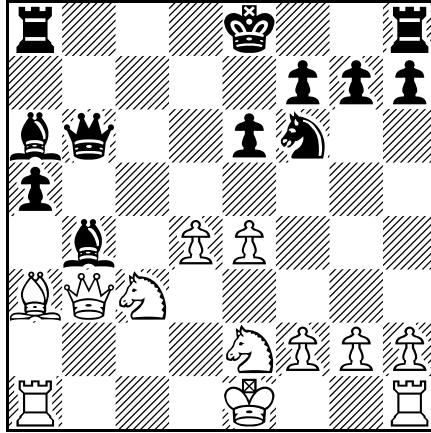
Black already has a significant advantage due to the two bishops, which skewer many of White's pieces.

15 ♚b3 ♙xc3+??

Opening Repertoire: Queen's Gambit Accepted

This move is truly inexplicable. The dark-squared bishop is one of Black's most important pieces. You should only exchange this bishop for a white knight if there is a concrete reason to do so, which is not the case at all here.

Simply developing with 15...♘f6! would have left Black with a huge advantage in view of the bishop pair, superior development and more active pieces:



a) 16 0-0 (White manages to castle, but the same problems remain: that of the opposing bishop pair and White's tied-up knights) 16...0-0 17 f3 (this protects the e4-pawn but weakens the g1-a7 diagonal) 17...♗f8 18 ♖fd1 ♕c7 19 ♗dc1 ♕d8 and it may not look like much, but the fact that White can move neither knight without suffering serious consequences paralyses their game tremendously.

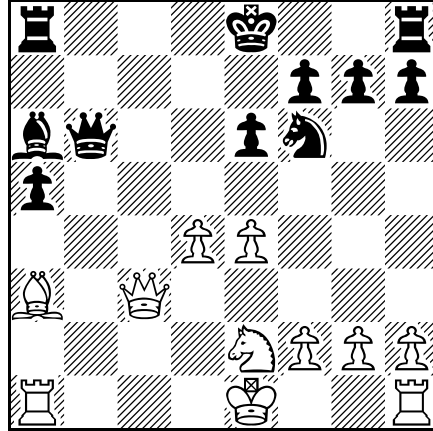
b) 16 ♗xb4 axb4 17 ♖a4 ♗b8 18 ♘a2 (piling on the b4-pawn, which is bound to fall) 18...0-0 (simply ignoring the threat; the time it White takes to capture the loose pawn allows Black to activate their pieces to the maximum) 19 ♗xb4 ♕c7 20 ♕c3 ♕a7 21 ♕a3 De7 22 ♖a4 ♕xa3 23 ♗xa3 ♗c4 and Black has sacrificed the valuable passed a-pawn, yet has the better position. This is because White's pieces are terribly coordinated, the white king is in danger, and the e4-pawn is hanging.

16 ♕xc3

Now Black suffers heavily on the dark squares, especially on the a3-f8 diagonal.

16...♘f6??

One serious mistake follows another. It would now be a miracle if Black manages to castle. The only way to get Black's king out of the centre is to plug the a3-f8 diagonal with 16...♗e7! just to make castling a legal possibility.



17 f3??

Question: This looks logical, protecting the e4-pawn. Should White then try to bring the king to f2?

Answer: This is a waste of time. White should castle and sacrifice the e2-knight to maintain the initiative. 17 O-O! ♖xe2 (or 17...♘xe4 18 ♖e3 ♗b7 19 ♖ab1) 18 ♖ab1 was called for, when Black has won a piece, but their king will be lucky to survive even five more moves.

17...♘d7 18 ♖f2?!

Here White's best was to invade via the c-file: 18 ♖c1! f6 19 ♖c7, leading to a more pleasant endgame.

18...♖c8?!

Forcing the queen to move doesn't help Black's game. It was better to take on e2 at once: 18...♖xe2 19 ♖xe2 f6 20 ♖ab1 ♖a6+ 21 ♖d3 (or 21 ♖f2 ♖f7) 21...♗xd3+ 22 ♖xd3 ♖a7 (covering the second rank) 23 ♖hc1 ♖f7 and at least Black has secured their king, even if White still holds an advantage due to the dark square weaknesses.

19 ♖d2 ♖xe2 20 ♖xe2 f5?

After 20...f6 21 ♖ab1 Black still has issues with the king, but White's queen has no entry point on g5.

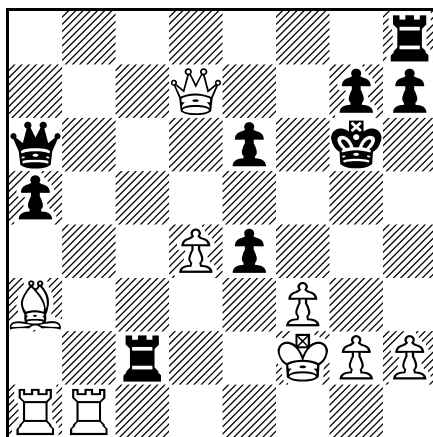
21 ♖hb1?

Black's dark square weaknesses should have led to their demise: 21 ♖g5! ♘f6 22 ♖xg7 ♖c2+ (the only way to prolong the game) 23 ♖e1 ♖c7 24 ♖xc7 (the threat of ...♖c3+ means there is no time to take either the f6-knight or h8-rook) 24...♖xc7 25 exf5 exf5 26 ♖c5 and White will soon be two pawns up with a winning position.

21...♖a6+ 22 ♖f2 fxe4?

22...♖f7 23 exf5 exf5 24 ♖f4 ♖g6 25 g4 ♖hd8 puts up more defence, as the black king will find a safer home on g8.

23 ♖g5! ♜f7 24 ♜e7+ ♜g6 25 ♜xd7 ♜c2+



26 ♜g1??

A dreadful decision, albeit a natural one in blitz chess. The white king should have gone forward: 26 ♜g3! ♜xg2+ 27 ♜f4!, when White avoids all perpetuals and wins.

26...♜xg2+! 27 ♜xg2 ♜e2+ 28 ♜g1??

And again; after 28 ♜g3 ♜xf3+ 29 ♜h4 Black has no more than a draw.

28...♜e3+??

Returning the favour. 28...exf3! would actually win for Black, as there is no good defence to the twin threats of ...♜g2 mate and ...f3-f2+ etc. But probably Black was happy just to have escaped a loss in this game.

29 ♜f1 ♜xf3+ 30 ♜e1 ♜e3+ 31 ♜d1 ♜d3+ 32 ♜e1 ½-½

Game 7

T.Laurusas-E.Blomqvist

Riga (rapid) 2022

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 b5 4 a4 c6 5 axb5 cxb5 6 ♖c3 ♜b6 7 ♖d5

One of the main lines of the entire 6 ♖c3 ♜b6 complex. Just like after 6 ♖c3 a6, White wins an exchange, but Black gets a lot of compensation in return. This line is extremely concrete, so the player who knows the ideas better will succeed.

7...♜b7

The only move. Everything else either loses or leads to a significant disadvantage for Black. From b7, the queen eyes the e4-pawn in case the d5-knight moves. Black also prepares ...e7-e6, when ...♜b4 would come next.

8 ♜f4