



# The Two Knights Defense

BY JOHN HARTMANN

**O**NE OF THE ideas behind the CLK Openings Project is to give our readers some knowledge of openings that will help them grow in chess strength, and we think improving tactical abilities is important in this process.

With the Evans Gambit, you learned how to gambit a pawn for an attack. The Two Knights is another sharp, aggressive opening, and sometimes you'll sacrifice a knight to get an attack on the king. One thing to keep an eye on is when it's wise to sacrifice on f7, and when it's not. One hint — if your c4-bishop is already under attack, or if Black can safely block the check, it's probably not time to sacrifice.

You'll also work on another key skill — how to patiently defend a position where you have material and your opponent has some initiative.

Everyone wishes they could attack all the time, but unfortunately, that's not possible. In the “main line” of the Two Knights you'll be up a pawn but have to carefully untangle your pieces and make the material count.

Ok, enough talk. Let's look at some moves.

## THE TWO KNIGHTS

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Ng5 d5**

Black's best move, blocking the bishop's attack on the f7-square and opening the door for Black's pieces to get out.

Here there is just one key alternative for Black, but it's not very good. The Wilkes-Barre or Traxler variation begins with 4. ... Bc5. White should avoid all the complications after 5. Nxf7 by playing 5. Bxf7+! Ke7 6. Bb3 and White is simply better, solidifying the e4-pawn with d2-d3 if needed, and castling.

Note that after 4. ... Nxe4? 5. Bxf7+ Ke7 the king is in the center, so we open it with 6. d4!, which also defends the g5-knight. If 6. ... exd4 7. Bd5 and White should win. And after 4. ... Qe7? White also gets a great game with 5. Bxf7+ Kd8 6. Bb3.

## 5. exd5

This is the key position for our repertoire. Black has two major options and two minor ones.

## THE FRIED LIVER

### 5. ... Nxd5

The Fried Liver is played ALL

THE TIME in scholastic games, and surprisingly often at the club level. If you are playing the Two Knights, you MUST know this line. It's also very instructive for learning attacking chess — giving up material for quick development and a king stuck in the center is a recipe for quick wins!

### 6. Nxf7! Kxf7 7. Qf3+

This move is why the knight sacrifice works. The double attack on the king and pinned knight gives White compensation for the piece.

### 7. ... Ke6



Here 7. ... Ke8? loses almost on the spot to 8. Bxd5.

### 8. Nc3!

Piling on the pinned piece.

### 8. ... Ncb4

This is already almost forced.

Now 8. ... Nce7 further ties Black's pieces up. It should be met with 9. d4! opening lines to the king.

If 8. ... Nd4?! 9. Bxd5+ Kd6 10. Qd1! defends the c2-pawn without blocking the d-pawn from advancing. Another idea is 10. Qf7, threatening Nc3-e4 mate, but gives Black chances if she knows what she's doing. See the Lichess study for details!

### 9. d4!



Time to open lines! We can't be afraid to give up more material when the king is in the center of the board.

Note that in this position 9. 0-0!? is perhaps even stronger. We transpose to the 9. d4 lines after 9. ... c6 10. d4, and it avoids the forced draw seen below after 9. d4 Nxc2+ 10. Kd1 Nxd4.

### 9. ... Nxc2+

Black decides to grab more material, but there are other options.

After (a) 9. ... c6 10. 0-0 Qf6 (10. ... Nxc2? is met by 11. dxe5 Nxa1? 12. Rd1! pressuring the pinned d5-knight when White is completely winning) 11. Qe2! Bd6? 12. f4!.

White wins back the material

after (b) 9. ... exd4? 10. Nxd5 Nxd5 11. Qe4+ with a great attack.

Black loses after (c) 9. ... Qf6? 10. Bxd5+.

### 10. Kd1 Nxa1??

Too greedy! White's pieces swarm the king.

Correct is 10. ... Nxd4! 11. Bxd5+ Kd6 12. Qf7 (the complicated 12. Qg3 does not allow the forced draw) and now if Black knows this line, they can force a draw with 12. ... Qe7 13. Ne4+ Kd7 14. Nc5+ Kd6 15. Ne4+.

If 10. ... Ncb4?! White plays 11. Nxd5 Nxd5 12. Re1 and Black is in trouble.

### 11. Bxd5+ Kd7 12. Qf5+

Checkmate is unstoppable, and soon.

## THE MAIN LINE

### 5. ... Na5

At higher levels this is the move you will most often see — some 56% of the time in games by club-strength players on Lichess.

### 6. Bb5+

Note that the knight sacrifice doesn't work here because the bishop can be taken. After 6. Nxf7? Kxf7 7. d6+ Nxc4 Black is winning.

### 6. ... c6

I have always liked Alekhine's 6. ... Bd7, but after 7. Qe2! Bd6 (not 7. ... Nxd5? 8. Qxe5+; if 7. ... Be7 8. Nf3! e4 9. Ne5) 8. 0-0 it's just a game.

### 7. dxc6 bxc6 8. Qf3!?

(see diagram top of next column)

This is our repertoire choice. It is very tactical in nature, using the pin on the c6-pawn, and entering positions where material is often unbalanced. It's also less common



than other White options like 8. Be2 and 8. Bd3, so your opponent may not have seen it before.

One key idea here is that we have to know when we can, and when we can't, grab the second pawn on c6. In most cases we will retreat the b5-bishop to the d3-square, where it does well on the b1-h7 diagonal, but it — along with a retreating Ng5-e4 after Black's ... h7-h6 — can be a target for Black's central pawns after ... f7-f5 and ... e5-e4.

White has to figure out how to develop the rest of their pieces, and the c1-bishop is a particular problem, sometimes coming to b2 after b2-b3. For their part, Black has to continue to make active moves and cause White problems, or else their initiative wears out and White's extra material begins to matter.

Black has many moves to choose from. Let's look at six of them, in order of frequency played on Lichess.

Here (a) 8. ... Bb7 is played about a third of the time, and threatens to take the b5-bishop, but it takes away support of the ... f7-f5 push. White should play the thematic 9. Bb3, which does very well in the statistics. Now Black often tries 9. ... h6 (if 9. ... c5? 10. Bb5+! and Black is scrambling) 10. Ne4 Nxe4 11. Bxe4 and White is better.

One of Black's best options is (b) 8. ... Be7. As usual, we should play

**9. Bd3!** (9. Bxc6+?! is too greedy, and after 9. ... Nxc6 10. Qxc6+ Bd7 11. Qf3 0-0 White has to be very careful) 9. ... 0-0 10. Nc3 h6 (10. ... Bg4?! puts the queen on a better square after 11. Qg3) 11. Nge4 Nd5 12. Ng3! and we see one of the ideas of 9. Bd3 — trading a minor piece on f5.

The simple **(c) 8. ... Bd7** isn't very good, and we should play **9. Bd3**.

Another good move for Black is **(d) 8. ... Rb8**, breaking the pin. White has to move the bishop. After **9. Bd3!?** (9. Bxc6+? is a mistake due to 9. ... Nxc6 10. Qxc6+ Nd7!) White disrupts the easy development of their pieces, but gains some attacking chances on Black's kingside along with access to the f5-square.



Three moves are important.

(d1) After 9. ... h6 10. Ne4 Nd5 (10. ... Nxe4 11. Bxe4 and Black has to worry about the c6-pawn) 11. b3! (or 11. 0-0 Be7, when ... f7-f5 is a threat) immediately is interesting, playing to develop the bishop on b2. If 11. ... Nf4 12. Bb2 Nxd3+ 13. cxd3 and the doubled pawns are no problem for White, who has effectively caught up in development.

(d2) If 9. ... Be7 10. Nc3 (10. b3 0-0 11. Bb2 is a possibility here) 10. ... 0-0 11. Bf5! (or 11. 0-0) trading pieces in a cramped position.

(d3) With 9. ... Bd6 the threat is ... Bc8-g4 followed by ... e5-e4. Now 10. Bf5! is again a possibility,

avoiding the ... Bc8-g4 issues, and White could also try 10. h3!.

The move **(e) 8. ... h6** loses a tempo, because White is happy to move that knight anyway! Still, Black has a powerful idea we need to be aware of. After **9. Ne4**

(e1) 9. ... Nxe4 10. Qxe4 White threatens the c6-pawn, but here it's a bit poisoned. After 10. ... Be7 White should castle.

(e2) 9. ... Nd5 is a common move, blocking the diagonal. White might try 10. Ba4!? or 10. Bd3.

(e3) Top-level GM theory recommends 9. ... cxb5, but this is hard for Black to play at amateur levels.



After 10. Nxf6+ gxf6 11. Qxa8 Qd7! 12. Qf3! Bb7! 13. Qxf6 Rg8 14. Qxe5+ Be7 Black has amazing compensation for the material, but at worst White can force a draw with 15. Qb8+ Bd8 16. Qe5+ Be7.

It looks like **(f) 8. ... cxb5!?** is a mistake, but Black gets good compensation for the Exchange. After **9. Qxa8**

(f1) White is happy after 9. ... Bc5? 10. Ne4! Nxe4 11. Qxe4 0-0 12. 0-0.

(f2) Black has compensation after 9. ... Be7 10. 0-0 0-0 11. d4!, but opening lines to develop helps White use the extra material.

(f3) Black's best move is 9. ... Qc7! and after 10. Qf3 Nc6! (10. ... Qxc2? 11. Qc3 is great for White.; 10. ... Bb7? 11. Qe2) White should play 11. c3 stopping ... Nc6-d4.

**THE MINOR VARIATIONS**

The **Ulvestad variation** begins with **5. ... b5**, and is seen in about 6% of games on Lichess.



It can be a great surprise weapon for Black, as White often plays the mistake 6. Bxb5?, giving Black an easy game after 6. ... Qxd5.

Instead White should play 6. Bf1 retreating the bishop and forcing Black to deal with the attack on the c6-knight. Black can try (a) 6. ... Qxd5?! 7. Nc3, which is now good for White. (b) After 6. ... Nxd5?! 7. Bxb5! is strong now that the queen can't get to d5; if 7. ... Bd7? 8. Nxf7! is great for White. (c) Finally, 6. ... Nd4 is a transposition to 5. ... Nd4, but we will treat it here. White gets a good game after 7. c3 Nxd5 8. cxd4 Qxg5 9. Bxb5+ Bd7? (9. ... Kd8 10. 0-0) 10. Bxd7+ Kxd7 11. 0-0.

Finally, **5. ... Nd4** is the **Fritz variation**. After 6. c3 b5 (6. ... h6?! allows a Fried Liver style attack with 7. Nxf7 Kxf7 8. cxd4, while White is better after 6. ... Nf5 7. Qe2!) 7. Bf1 is a transposition to 5. ... b5.

For more on the Two Knights, including videos about the key variations, "Tactics Tuesday" worksheets, and Lichess studies with replayable analysis, visit the CLK Opening Project website: [new.uschess.org/clk-opening-project](http://new.uschess.org/clk-opening-project)

# TEST YOUR ACTICS

# 1.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 2.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 3.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 4.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 5.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 6.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 7.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 8.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 9.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 10.

WHITE TO PLAY



**TO TAKE, OR NOT TO TAKE? THAT IS THE QUESTION.**

Once you have seen the Fried Liver Attack, it's tempting to try to use the Ng5xf7 idea in many different types of positions. But you have to be careful and look at the details of your specific position — sometimes it allows the knight sacrifice, and sometimes, it doesn't.

Here are 10 positions from the Two Knights Defense where Ng5xf7 is possible. Can you determine which ones are wise captures, and which ones are mistakes?

**ANSWERS ON PAGE 23.**

### MIND YOUR K'S AND Q'S

This month, we look at the **Two Knights Defense** with **1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Ng5!?**. One testing line continues **4. ... d5 5. exd5 Na5!**

### 6. Bb5+ c6 7. dxc6 bxc6 8. Qf3!?!?

These lines are very sharp, and the best way to get familiar with them is practicing tactical positions.

This week's exercises feature three variations on this week's example, followed by three games where White neglected development to devastating effect on the back rank.

In the **example**, Black should not fear the queen, and can play **9. ... cxb5! 10. Qxa8 Nc6! 11. Nc3 Bc5!** As

a **bonus**, can you see why **11. ... Be7** is not as good?



#### # 1. BLACK TO PLAY

#### # 2. WHITE TO PLAY

#### # 3. WHITE TO PLAY

#### # 4. BLACK TO PLAY

#### # 5. BLACK TO PLAY

#### # 6. BLACK TO PLAY

### SOLUTIONS

**1) 11. ... Nc6! 12. Nc3 Bb4!** Black can now castle and play ... Bc8-b7 without worry of Nc3xb5. **2) 11. Nxb5** With the queen on d6, the c8-bishop will hang before Black has time to play ... Na5-c6. Worse is **11. Qxa8!?** 0-0 **12. Qf3 Bb7**, as Black still has a serious attack. **11. ... Qb6 12. Nxd6+ Qxd6 13. Qxa8** when the queen will safely escape. **3) 13. Nge4!!** Is this hard? Very! But it's instructive. Note how, now, White's

queen gets out: **13. ... Nxe4** Or **13. ... 0-0 14. Nxf6+ gxf6 15. Nd5** and Black's queen has no way to save the knight (since ... Qc7-d7 allows Nc4xf6+). **14. Nd5 Qd7 15. Nb6!** The queen escapes. **4) 20. ... Nf4! 21. g3** Both captures fail: **21. Qxf4 Qd1+ 22. Re1 Qxe1** mate; **21. Rxf4 Qd1+ 22. Qe1 Qxe1** mate. **21. ... Bd6! White resigned**, as any queen move gives up control of the e-file, allowing ... Qg4-d1 with mate to follow. (Wayte - Williams, England, 1835) **5) 18. ...**

**Bb4+! 19. Kf1** More pressing is **19. Kd1 Re8 20. Qg4 Bxd3**, when Black is winning, too. **19. ... Re8!** An X-Ray of the queen and mate on e1. (Krejci - Kravtsiv, Katowice, 2010) **6) 19. ... Bxd3+** On the spot, **White resigned**, due to **20. cxd3 Qxd3+ 21. Qe2 Qxe2+ 22. Kg1 Qe1** mate. (Lubbe - Geske, Playchess.com, 2011) **Bonus** **11. ... Be7?** **12. Nxb5! Qd7 13. Nxa7! Nxa7 14. d3** when White's queen can come to f3, or, if Black's knight returns to c6, to a4! (analysis)

### FRIED LIVER: PINS + CHASES

In the Fried Liver, White is down a piece, but Black's king is pinned. This week's puzzles feature three "king hunts" (1-3) and three puzzles

making use of these pins (4-6).

This week's **example** is a typical "king hunt" position you'll see in the main line of the Fried Liver. Black's last move was 10. ... Kd6, trying to get out of the pin coming on the e-file. Now, White plays **11. Bg5!**, when the "logic" of White's play is becoming clear: if Black breaks your pin, then find a new one. **11. ... h6 12. Bh4 g5 13. Bg3** Another pin! **13. ... Bg7 14. dxe5+ Ke6 15. Ne4 Nf5 16. Rad1** As a **bonus**, what

would you do if Black captured your e-pawn with **16. ... Bxe5?**



# 1.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 2.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 3.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 4.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 5.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 6.

WHITE TO PLAY



### SOLUTIONS

**1) 25. Qb3+ Ka7** Or 25. ... Kc7  
**26. Qxb7** mate. **26. Qxb7** mate.  
 (Zhigalko – Agdestein, Doha (Blitz), 2023) *Note: other exercises are all analysis positions from this game.*  
**2) 17. Bxe5+** We always want to find opportunities to draw the king further into the center! **17. ... Kxe5**  
**18. Rfe1+ Kd6** **19. Qg3** would be mate. Instead, **19. Ne4+** is the first check you might see, but it allows the king to retreat to safety, e.g.:

**19. ... Kc7** **20. Qg3+ Nf4!** With no pin, this is a new resource for Black.  
**3) 14. Na4+ Kb4** Or 14. ... Kxc4  
**15. Qb3** mate. **15. Qa3+ Ka5** **16. Bd2+ Nc3** Or 16. ... Nb4 **17. Qxb4** mate.  
**17. b4** And that's mate! **4) 16. Re1+ Kf7** **17. Qf3+! Ke8** Alternatively, **17. ... Kg8** **18. Bxe7 Bxe7** **19. Bxd5+** is nice. **18. Bb5+!** Winning the queen!  
**5) 18. Qh3+ Kc7** It is counterintuitive to let the king here, but there's no way back to the "foxhole" after ...  
**19. Bf4+ Kb6** **20. Re6+ Nc6** **21. Bxc6**

**bxc6** **22. Qb3+ Ka6** **23. Qa4+** Mate is only a matter of time. **6) 13. dxe5+ Kd7** The alternatives hang the bishop: **13. ... Kc7** **14. Bxe6**; **13. ... Kc5** **14. Bxe6**. **14. bxc3!** This is a very clever move. After **14. ... Bxc4** **15. Rad1+ Bd5** We see the power of the c3-pawn. **16. c4!** If White had played **14. Qxc3**, there would be no c3-c4 move here. **Bonus)** After this move, it's hard to go wrong for White here. I like **17. Bxe5 Kxe5** **18. Rfe1** using all of our pieces!

### COVERING ALL THE BASES

The downside to playing aggressive openings is our pieces are not always safe. We have to keep an eye out for our own hanging pieces.

In some of these exercises, White is ready to attack. In others, the “obvious” move is refuted.

In our **example**, White must not get greedy by capturing the d5-knight, as White’s own knight hangs on g5. Instead, White rids the possibility of a fork with ... c7-c6 by playing **9. Bxd7+!**. Note that 9. Nxd5 does not win a piece after either 9. ... Qxg5 or 9. ... Bxb5 10. Qxb5+ c6. Now **9. ... Qxd7 10. Nxd5** wins a piece as the queen does not hit the

hanging g5-knight. As a **bonus**, can you refute **9. ... Kxd7?**



**# 1. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 2. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 3. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 4. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 5. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 6. WHITE TO PLAY**

### SOLUTIONS

**1) 8. Bf3! Qxg5** Black wins the piece, but with **9. Bxc6+** White gets it right back... **9. ... Bd7 10. Bxa8** With interest! (Oleg946 – Vahe\_Dan, lichess.org, 2023) **2) 10. Qxb7!** We’ve seen capturing the “poison pawn” on b7 get White into trouble before, but not here. **10. ... Ne7** is best. **11. Qb5+ Qd7 12. Qxe5** White’s up three pawns and about to castle. (bluft85 – mohammad-a-sh, lichess.org, 2023) **3) 11. Nxf7!** We should

always be alert for thematic tactics. **11. ... Kxf7 12. Qf3+ Ke6 13. Re1+ Ne5 14. Bf4!** Return of the pins! **14. ... Bf6 15. c3** White is winning. (NicholasElliott – Enjoy\_Chess\_88, lichess.org, 2023) **4) 14. ... Bc8!** Black uses the open file to win the bishop. (boppintothebeat – Blindbandit99, lichess.org, 2023) **5) 16. ... Qe6!** Black had to stop both the threats of Qg4-d7 and Bc1-g5. Instead, after 16. ... Bc6?? Black stopped mate, but not the

pin. After 17. Bg5, Black resigned. (ohmydomdom – Ahmadraihan15, lichess.org, 2023) **6) 12. Ndf3!** White reveals the threat on the e3-knight while also defending the hanging g5-knight! **12. ... Bf4** and after **13. Bxe3 Nxe3 14. Qd3 Bxg5 15. Nxc5 Qxg5 16. Rxe3+** White is winning. (emiliooo – Sunilkapoor, lichess.org, 2023) **Bonus) 10. Qg4+ Kc6** (or **10. ... Ke8 11. Nxd5** winning) **11. Qa4+** with mate to follow. (A0square – ashu\_1992, lichess.org, 2023)

To the reader:

This a hard copy of the games that were analyzed as part of the CLK Openings Project installment on the Two Knights Defense.

They are available for replay in our lichess study:

<https://lichess.org/study/O4qdtahm>

These are parts four and five of the study.

C57

CLK Model Games: 1. e4 e5: Ch. 4: Fried  
[<https://lichess.org/@/ChessLifeOnline>]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5  
In contrast to the Evans, most of our model games here will focus on the actual Fried liver with 4...d5 5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nxf7 as you will see this position so much in your games.

☐ Zhukov,Vladimir  
☑ Sviridov,Vladislav

RUS-Cup sf 05 (7)  
[Lang,JJ]

C57  
2270

0

24.05.2005

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5  
5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nxf7 Kxf7 7.Qf3+ Ke6 8.Nc3  
Ncb4 9.0-0 Be7!?

A reasonable idea. Rather than over-protect the pinned knight, Black prioritizes speedy development to contest White's queen. The problem with this move, as we've already seen in the previous games, is that White's queen will also be a nuisance on other squares such as e4 and h5. 10.a3

This is why Black usually plays 9. ... c6, otherwise it sure looks like the knight will be underprotected after White "removes the defender" with this move. 10...Rf8 But Black tries to remove an attacker. 11.Qh5

[ 11.Qe4!? tries to keep the 'squeeze' on the d5-knight, but Rf4 would play into Black's hands. 12.Qe2 Rxc4 13.Qxc4 Nxc2 14.Nxd5 although White is still better. ]

11...Rf5 12.Qxh7 Rf4 13.Qg6+

[ 13.d4! is a more thematic move, bringing more pieces into the game. Rxd4 14.Bb3 c6 15.axb4 when the d5-knight is still under siege, and f2-f4 threatens to open up even more lines of attack. ]

13...Bf6 14.Bb3 Ke7 15.axb4 Nxb4 16.Qf7+  
If they give us the f7-square... 16...Kd6 17.d4  
Finally! 17...Rxd4

[ 17...exd4 18.Bxf4+- ]

18.Nb5+ Kc6 19.Nxd4+ exd4 20.Qc4+ Kb6

[ 20...Kd6 21.Qxb4+ ]

[ 20...Kd7 21.Qe6# ]

21.Qxb4+ Kc6 22.Ba4+ 1-0 White wins.

1-0



Zhigalko,Sergei  
Agdestein,Simen

Wch Blitz Doha (17)  
[Lang,JJ]

C57

2671  
2602

30.12.2016

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5  
5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nxf7 Kxf7 7.Qf3+ Ke6 8.Nc3  
Nce7

Less popular than bringing the c-knight to b4, as now Black will struggle to finish developing. But, on the other hand, White does not have the a2-a3 resource to remove the defender. 9.0-0 c6 10.d4 Kd6 Black breaks the pin happily. White must act fast. 11.Bg5! Hopefully, the "logic" of White's play is becoming clear: if Black breaks your pin, it's time to find a new pin. 11...Be6

[ 11...h6 12.Bh4 g5 13.Bg3 Another pin!  
Bg7 14.dxe5+ Ke6 15.Ne4 Nf5 16.Rad1+- ]

12.Rfe1! exd4 13.Ne4+

[ 13.Qg3+! Kd7 14.Rxe6! Kxe6 15.Nxd5!  
cxd5 16.Re1+ Kf7 17.Qf3+! Ke8 ( 17...Kg8  
18.Bxe7 Bxe7 19.Bxd5+ is nice. ) 18.Bb5+! ]

13...Kc7 14.Qg3+ Kb6 15.Qb3+ Kc7

16.Qg3+ Kb6 17.Nd6 Qd7 18.a4 a5

19.Qe5? Ng6! Black has broken out of every pin, and now White is in danger of simply being down material. 20.Qxd4+ c5 21.Qd3 Qxd6

22.Rad1 h6?

[ 22...Be7 Black had to finish development quickly, and is better here. 23.Bxe7 Ngxe7-+ ]

23.Rxe6 Qxe6 24.Bxd5 Qd6??

[ 24...Qd7 returns material, but after  
25.Qxg6+ Ka7 26.Bf3 Qe8 27.Qxe8 Rxe8  
Black is still alive. ]

25.Qb3+ Black is swiftly punished for his greed.

25...Ka7 26.Qxb7# 1-0 White wins.

1-0



Liang,Awonder  
Ponkratov,Pavel

PNWCC-ch Online blitz (5)  
[Lang,JJ]

C57

2592  
2631

02.08.2020

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5  
5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nxf7 Kxf7 7.Qf3+ Ke6 8.Nc3  
Ncb4 9.0-0 c6

Black defends naturally, and White continues with "Plan A" and opening up

the center. **10.d4 Nxc2??** It is worth knowing that White does not have to fear further loss of material.

[ 10...Qf6 is most testing. King retreats to either d7 or e7 are also playable. ]

**11.dxe5 Nxa1 12.Rd1!** Remember: we must use all of our pieces to justify our sacs. **12...b5**

[ 12...Nc2 13.Nxd5 cxd5 14.Rxd5 leads to mate, also illustrating the need to activate the remaining rook. ]

**13.Nxd5 bxc4 14.Nf4+ Ke7 15.Rxd8**

[ 15.Ng6+ hxg6 16.Bg5+ is also deadly. ]

**15...Kxd8 16.Qxc6 Rb8 17.Nd5** Black has seen enough. White's pieces have coordinated into a mating net before Black could finish developing the extra forces.

**1-0**

 **Tanenbaum,Zachary Chen**

**C57**

**2135**

 **Nesterov,Arseniy**

**2514**

Speed Chess Super Swiss (7)

16.10.2021

[Lang,JJ]

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nxf7 Kxf7 7.Qf3+ Ke6 8.Nc3 Ncb4 9.0-0 c6 10.d4 Qf6** Finally, we come to the most testing move. **11.Qe2** White switches the pressure from the pin on the d5-knight to the pin on the e5-pawn. **11...Kd7 12.a3?**

[ 12.dxe5 Qf5 ( 12...Nxc3?? 13.Qd2+ is an important intermezzo.; 12...Qe6? 13.a3! ) 13.a3 is a totally different story: Nxc3 14.bxc3 Nd5 15.Bd3 With tempo, and a sustained attack. ]

**12...Nxc3 13.bxc3 Nd5 14.dxe5 Qg6?!**

[ 14...Qe6! After already removing the knight from c3, Black's queen is much safer pinned to the knight on d5 than in our note to 12.dxe5 Qe6?, as White cannot add meaningful pressure to the piece. ]

**15.Rd1?** White gets confused about where the attack is currently pointed. Taking twice on d5 is not a meaningful threat.

[ 15.Bd3 Qf7 16.f4 is how to continue. ]

**15...Kc7 16.Bd3** White admits that 15. Rd1 was not aligned with the attack.

[ 16.Bxd5 cxd5 17.Rxd5 Qa6 With the king safely on c7, Black remains up material and calmly offers a game-deciding trade. ]

**16...Qg4 17.f3 Bc5+ 18.Kh1 Qh4** This is a good position to keep in mind as to what White does \*not\* want out of the opening. There is no clear attacking focus, while Black's king is safely tucked away. **19.c4 Nc3 20.Qe1 Bf2!** Ouch! **21.Qxc3 Bg3! 22.Kg1**

[ 22.h3 Bxh3! ]

**22...Qxh2+ 23.Kf1 Qh1+ 24.Ke2 Qxg2+ 25.Ke3 Qf2+ 26.Ke4 Bf5+ 27.Kxf5 Qxf3+ 28.Kg5 h6+ 29.Kg6 Qg4+ 30.Kf7 Rhf8+ 31.Ke7 Rae8#** 0-1 Black wins.

**0-1**

 **Tomcik,Milan**

**C57**

**2032**

 **Ulehla,Jakub**

**1505**

Senica op 6th (1)

27.08.2014

[Lang,JJ]

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nxf7 Kxf7 7.Qf3+ Ke6 8.Nc3 Ncb4 9.0-0 c6 10.d4 Nxc2?? 11.dxe5 Nd4!?** Rather than go "greed mode," Black tries to reroute the knight to the center. But remember, this is still "too little, too late."

**12.Qe4**

[ 12.Qg4+ is also good, picking up the knight on d4. Kf7 ( 12...Kxe5? Attempting to defend the d4-knight is hopeless. 13.Re1+ and the knight is still a goner. ) 13.Qxd4 Be6 14.Rd1 with a comfortable lead in development. ]

**12...Bc5 13.Be3!** This is a nice motif to remember in these lines. The bishop cannot be captured on e3, due to the pin from its partner in crime. But even if the bishop were traded off, f2xe3 would simply control the f-file and further enmesh Black's king in the web. **13...Bb4**

**14.Qxd4 Bxc3 15.bxc3 Kf7 16.f4**

Black's idea was to remove the c3-knight as to make sure White could not "break through" on the a2-g8 diagonal after playing a well-timed Nc3xd5. No matter, for this plan took so much time that White is able to continue to mobilize forces. This move also prepares Ra1-d1, anticipating Black's defensive and pin-breaking ... Bc8-e6, which will now be swatted away with f4-f5. **16...Rf8 17.Rad1 Qh4**

[ 17...Be6 18.f5 is why White "prepared" Ra1-d1 with 16. f4. ]

**18.f5 Qh5**

[ 18...Qxd4 19.Bxd4 White is "down a pawn," but it's worth sitting with this position until you understand why the bishop pair and space advantage all but guarantee White a win. ]

**19.Bxd5+ cxd5 20.Qxd5+ Ke7 21.Bc5+**

1-0 White wins.

**1-0**

☐ **Vucinic,Gojko**  
 ● **Jovanovic,Miroslav T**

SRB-ch sf Belgrade (1)

[Lang,JJ]

**C57**

**2291**

**1903**

21.03.2016

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5  
 5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nxf7 Kxf7 7.Qf3+ Ke6 8.Nc3  
 Ncb4 9.0-0 c6 10.d4 Qf6 11.Qe2 Kd7  
 12.dxe5 Qg6 13.Rd1?**

[ 13.a3 Nxc3 14.bxc3 Nd5 15.Bd3 Qe8  
 16.f4 ]

**13...Ke8?!**

[ 13...Kc7! ]

**14.Nxd5?!**

[ 14.e6 is an incredibly ambitious computer suggestion, with (some) lasting compensation in the form of an initiative that won't go away easily. Bxe6 15.a3 Nxc3 16.bxc3 Nd5 17.Rb1 Nxc3 18.Qe1! Nxd1 19.Bxe6 Be7 20.Rxb7 ]

**14...cxd5 15.Bb3 Bh3 16.Qb5+ Nc6?**

Black misses a much better defensive resource.

[ 16...Kf7 17.Bxd5+ Nxd5 18.Qxd5+ Be6  
 19.Qxb7+ Be7! ]

**17.Bxd5 Rd8 18.Bf4 a6 19.Qb3 Be7**

**20.Qxh3!** and now White is simply winning.

**20...Rf8 21.Bg3 Rd7 22.Qxd7+ Kxd7**

**23.Be4+ Ke6 24.Bxg6 hxc6 25.Rd2 Nb4**

**26.c4 Rc8 27.a3 Nc6 28.b4 b6 29.f3 Nd8**

**30.Bf2 b5 31.c5 Nc6 32.f4 g5 33.fxc6**

**Bxg5 34.Rd6+ Kf5 35.e6 Be7 36.Re1 a5**

**37.Rd5+ Kg6 38.Rd7 axb4 39.axb4 Re8**

**40.Rb1 Kf6 41.Rb7** 1-0 White wins.

**1-0**

☐ **Emojong,Elijah**

● **Mpalanyi,Isaac**

UGA-chT Kampala (3.2)

[Lang,JJ]

**C57**

**2267**

**0**

08.06.2018

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 Bc5**

The dreaded Traxler. As mentioned, we prefer taking with the bishop to the heavy theoretical battles following 5. Nxf7. **5.Bxf7+ Kf8 6.Bb3 d6 7.0-0**

[ 7.Nf7 Qe7

**A) 8.Nxh8?** Bg4! 9.f3 Nxe4! is the kind of chaos White is trying to avoid. 10.Kf1 ( 10.fxc6?? Qh4+-+ ) 10...Nf2 11.Qe2 Nxh1 12.Qc4 favors Black, but everything else was losing for White.;

**B) 8.d3** Rg8 9.Ng5 is interesting. ]

**7...Bg4 8.Qe1?** White should not give up

control of the light squares so easily. **8...d5??** Opening up the center? With the king on f8? Not a wise choice!

[ 8...Qd7! and Black is pushing. ]

**9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Qe4 Qxg5**

[ 10...Nf6 11.Qc4 Qe7 12.d3 favors White, given the initiative. I like the idea of Bc1-e3 as well, attempting to open the f-file after either f2xe3 or trading bishops and pushing f2-f4. ]

**11.Qxd5 Qe7 12.Nc3 Rd8 13.Qe4 Rd4**

**14.Qe1??**

[ 14.Qe3 Black does not have any good discoveries. ]

**14...Ke8**

[ 14...Bf3!! This is exactly how Black must play given the weak light squares around White's king. 15.gxf3 Rh4 and weak dark squares too! ]

**15.d3 Rf8 16.Be3 Rd7 17.Nd5 Qd6 18.f4 Kd8**

[ 18...Nd4 maybe this was the best try.

19.Bxd4 Bxd4+ 20.Kh1 Bxb2 21.fxe5

White is still pushing. ]

**19.Qh4+ Ne7 20.fxe5 Bxe3+ 21.Nxe3 Rxf1+**

**22.Rxf1 Qg6 23.Rf8+ Qe8 24.Rxe8+ Kxe8**

**25.Qxg4 g6 26.d4 c6 27.c4 b6 28.d5 cxd5**

**29.cxd5 Kf8 30.Qxd7** 1-0 White wins.

**1-0**

CLK Model Games: 1. e4 e5: Ch. 5: Two Kn  
[<https://lichess.org/@/ChessLifeOnline>]

### 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5

This chapter considers some of the alternatives to the "main line" including the Traxler and the trendy 5. ... b5. **4...d5**

[ 4...Bc5 ]

### 5.exd5 Na5

[ 5...b5 ]

 **Bogoljubow, Efim**  
 **Euwe, Max**

Match Euwe-Bogoljubow +5-2=3 (3) 23.07.1941  
[Lang, JJ]

### 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5

**5.exd5 Na5** Here is one game in the "theoretical" line with 5. ... Na5 that shows a number of instructive themes. **6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Qf3** One of the earliest proponents of this sharp line was Efim Bogoljubow, who was a multiple time challenger for the title of world champion. **8...cxb5 9.Qxa8 Bc5?** This natural move actually makes very little sense. Black prepares to castle, but White is arguing that their advantage is from their material not their initiative. Black attacks the f2-square, but once White castles, the king is safe. So, by giving White's queen time to retreat, Black has lost their counterplay. **10.0-0**

[ 10.Ne4! I like this thematic move, we are trying to get our queen out of the corner with tempo. Be7 ( 10...Bb6 11.Qxc8!

What an amazing simplification tactic! Qxc8 12.Nd6+ Kd7 13.Nxc8 Rxc8 14.c3+- )

11.Nxf6+ gxf6 12.Nc3 is great for White, as both the e4- and f3-squares are clear, so there is no danger of the queen getting trapped. ]

### 10...0-0 11.b4 Bxb4 12.Nc3 Nh5 13.Nf3 Nf4

**14.Rb1 Bxc3 15.dxc3 Nxc3??** Black goes "all in" on the attack, but it is not there. **16.Rxb5**

[ 16.Kxc3?? Bh3+ 17.Kxh3 Qxa8 was Black's idea, making use of the hanging queen still on a8. We should always be aware of these tricks, and of opponents going out of their way to "force" them. ]

**C58**

**16...Nc4 17.Rc5!** Threatening the c4-knight and mass simplifications by trading on c8.

### 17...Nd6 18.Rd1 e4 19.Bg5 Qd7 20.Qd5

Another nice simplification idea. **20...Ne3**

### 21.Ne5 Qh3 22.Bxe3 Bg4 23.Qxd6

Black resigned, as **23...Bf3 24.Qxf8+! Kxf8**

### 25.Rd8+ Ke7 26.Nc6+! Ke6

[ 26...Kf6 27.Rd6+ Qe6 28.Rxe6+- ]

### 27.Re5+ Kf6 28.Bg5+ Kg6 29.Ne7+ Kh5

### 30.Bf6+ Kg4 31.Rg5+ Kh4

[ 31...Kf4 32.Nd5# ]

### 32.Rxg7+ Kh5 33.Rg5+ Kh4

[ 33...Kh6 34.Ng8# ]

### 34.Rf5+ Kg4 35.Rg8# 1-0 White wins.

**1-0**

**C58**

 **Abdilkhair, Abilmansur** **C57**  
**2227**

 **Bacrot, Etienne** **2674**

Titled Tuesday intern op 13th Oct (5) 13.10.20

[Lang, JJ]

### 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5

**5.exd5 b5** This is a much rarer alternative than either the common 5. ... Nxd5 or the theoretical 5. ... Na5, but it is playable and has been suggested in a popular recent chessable course by IM Andras Toth. **6.Bb3**

[ 6.Bf1 is in our study, and by far the best move. ]

[ 6.Bxb5? Qxd5 7.Bf1 e4!± ]

### 6...Nd4 7.0-0 Nxb3 8.axb3 Qxd5

[ 8...Be7 Black should prioritize castling, not the pawn. ]

### 9.Nc3 Qc6 10.d4 Bb7 11.Nf3 0-0-0 12.d5

### Nxd5 13.Nxe5 Qe6 14.Nd3 a6 15.Nxd5

### Qxd5 16.Qg4+ f5 17.Qh3 Bd6 18.Bg5 Rde8

### 19.Rad1 Kb8 20.Bf4 Bxf4 21.Nxf4 Qc6

This is a nice example of what Black wants out of these ... b7-b5 lines: nice length for the light-squared bishop and a king safe on the queenside. But remember, after Bc4-f1 instead

of Bc4-b3, the game is very different. **22.c3 g5**

### 23.Nd3 g4 24.Qg3 h5 25.Nb4 Qe4 26.Rd4

### Qe5 27.Qd3 h4 28.c4 h3 29.g3 c5 30.cxb5

### Qxd4 31.Qxd4 cxd4 32.bxa6 Bf3 33.Ra1

### Ka7 34.Nc2 Re4 35.Nxd4 Rxd4 0-1 Black

wins.

**0-1**

**Bucinskas,Valdas** C57  
 **Sulskis,Sarunas** 2360  
 LTU-chT 0910 (8.31) 2591  
 [Lang,JJ] 10.04.2010

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5**  
**5.exd5 b5 6.Bf1 Nd4** Another interesting  
 move. This is a line that gets very sharp very  
 fast. **7.c3 Nxd5** Remember the discovery on  
 the g5-knight. **8.cxd4 Qxg5 9.Bxb5+ Kd8**  
**10.0-0 Bb7 11.Qf3 Rb8 12.dxe5 Nb4!?**  
 [ 12...Ne3 is also pressing. Again, Black's  
 chances rest almost entirely on the pressure  
 on the g2-square. 13.Qh3 ( 13.Qxe3??  
 Qxg2# ) 13...Qxg2+! ( 13...Bxg2?? 14.Qd7# )  
 14.Qxg2 Nxd5 15.d4 Be7 16.d5 Nh4± ]  
**13.d4 Qg6 14.d5** The right idea. White shuts  
 down the critical diagonal, using pins on Black's  
 misplaced king to justify the d-pawn's push  
 tactically. **14...Bxd5 15.Rd1 Rxb5 16.Nc3**  
**Qc6 17.Nxb5?!**

[ 17.Qf5 was more accurate than going after  
 the material. Black cannot save the Exchange  
 with Ra5 due to ( 17...h6 18.Nxb5 Qxb5  
 19.a3 Nc6 20.Qxf7 Ne7 when White  
 finishes development and has a crushing  
 initiative after 21.Bf4!+- ) 18.Bg5+  
 showing the point of White's previous move,  
 covering the c8-square and any hope of  
 Black's escape. ]

**17...Qxb5 18.Qf5 Be7 19.a3 g6 20.Qxf7?**  
**Rf8?**

[ 20...Nd3 Black's last chance was to clog the  
 d-file. ]

**21.Qxh7 Nd3 22.Be3 Nxe5 23.Qg7 Bd6**  
**24.Rac1 Nd7 25.Qd4 c6 26.Bg5+ Be7**  
**27.Bxe7+ Kxe7 28.Re1+ Kd6 29.Qe3 Qxb2**  
**30.Qg3+** And Black's exposed king finally ended  
 up deciding the game in White's favor. **30...Ne5**  
**31.Rb1 Qd4 32.Rb4 Qxf2+ 33.Qxf2 Rxf2**  
**34.Kxf2 Nd3+ 35.Kf1 c5 36.Rg4 c4 37.Re8**  
**Bf7 38.Rc8 Nc5 39.Rd4+ Ke5 40.Rdd8 Ne4**  
**41.Ke2 Nc3+ 42.Kd2 Ne4+ 43.Ke3 Nc3**  
**44.Kd2 Ne4+ 45.Kc2 a6 46.Rc6 g5 47.Rxa6**  
**Bh5 48.g3 c3** 1-0 White wins.

1-0

**Grieve,Harry** C57  
 **Tabatabaei,Mohammad Amin** 2330  
 Titled Tuesday intern op 01st Feb-A (1) 2643  
 [Lang,JJ] 1.2.22

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5**  
**5.exd5 b5 6.Bf1** The right move. **6...Nxd5**  
**7.Bxb5** This may seem like a waste of time, but  
 remember that the whole reason that 6. Bxb5  
 was wrong was because of 6. ... Qxd5, so this is  
 a totally different situation. **7...Bb7 8.0-0**

[ 8.d4! ]  
**8...Qxg5** Well, that's blitz for ya! There's a  
 piece. **9.d4 Qg6 10.c4 a6**

[ 10...Nb6! ]  
**11.cxd5 axb5 12.dxc6 Qxc6** Black returns  
 the piece, but still has the great length on the  
 a8-h1 diagonal that we are familiar with this in  
 this variation. **13.Qg4 h5 14.Qh3 exd4**  
**15.Re1+ Be7 16.Bd2 Kf8 17.Na3 Bd6**  
**18.Rac1 Qd5 19.Nc2 c5 20.Rcd1 g5 21.Ne3**  
**g4 22.Nxd5 gxh3 23.Bf4 Bxf4 24.Nxf4**  
**Bxg2 25.Nxg2 Rg8!** The push on the g-file  
 was consistent with the pressure from the light-  
 squared bishop, and now everything lines up for  
 Black. **26.b4 Rxd4 27.Kh1 Rxa2 28.bxc5**  
**Raxf2 29.Rxd4 Rxh2+ 30.Kg1 Rfg2+ 31.Kf1**  
**Rh1#** 0-1 Black wins.

0-1

**Vallejo Pons,Francisco** C57  
 **Naiditsch,Arkadij** 2660  
 EU-chT (Men) 16th (4.1) 2639  
 [Lang,JJ] 31.10.2007

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5**  
**5.exd5 b5 6.Bf1 h6?!** **7.Nxf7 Kxf7 8.dxc6**  
**Bc5 9.Be2** With the pawn on c6, Black's  
 queenside expansion is not as alarming.  
**9...Bxf2+?!** Black is not developed enough to  
 pull this off, especially with the king on f7.  
**10.Kxf2 Ne4+ 11.Kf1!** The only move! White  
 loses on the spot after anything else, but is  
 simply up a piece here.

[ 11.Ke1 Qh4+ 12.g3 Nxd3 ]  
 [ 11.Ke3 Qg5+ 12.Kd3 ( 12.Kf3 Qf4# )  
 12...Rd8+ 13.Kxe4 Qf4# ]  
 [ 11.Kg1 Qd4+ 12.Kf1 Qf2# ]

**11...Rf8 12.d3 Qd4**

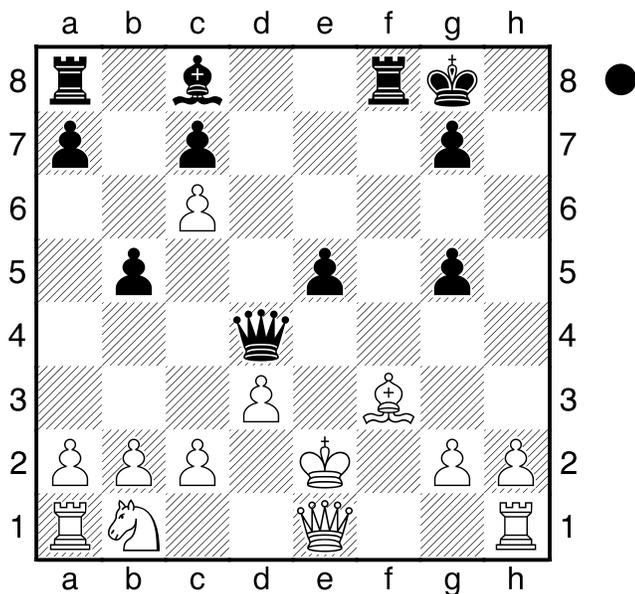
[ 12...Kg8+ 13.Bf3 g5 14.Ke1+- ]

**13.Qe1**

[ 13.dxe4?? fails due to the bishop becoming overloaded. Kg8+! 14.Bf3 Qxd1+-+ ]

**13...Kg8+ 14.Bf3 Ng5 15.Bxg5 hxg5 16.Ke2**

[ 16.c3 Qxd3+ 17.Kg1 g4 18.Bd1 is also good, but ( 18.Be4 allows Black to swindle a draw with Rf1+!! 19.Qxf1 Qe3+ 20.Qf2 Qc1+ 21.Qf1 Qe3+ )]



**16...e4 17.Bxe4 Bg4+ 18.Kd2 Rf2+ 19.Kc1**

**Raf8 20.Nc3** White has consolidated and is winning now.

**20...b4 21.Bd5+ Kh8 22.h4**

**Bh5 23.hxg5 g6 24.Bf3 bxc3 25.Qxc3 Qxc3**

**26.bxc3 Kg7 27.Rb1 Bxf3 28.gxf3 Re8**

**29.Rb7 1-0** White wins.

**1-0**