

**Michael Adams**



## A majestic opening

John Shaw's long-awaited Magnum Opus *The King's Gambit* is an impressively objective attempt at covering one of the sharpest openings, which frequently leads to fascinating play. The risk involved with the gambit doesn't suit all players due to its complexity, and when things go wrong, it is rarely pretty.

**D. Zakarian - M. Hebden**  
4NCL Individual Rapid 2013

**1.e2-e4 e7-e5**  
**2.f2-f4 e5xf4**  
**3.Bf1-c4 d7-d5**

A brave opening choice by White, as Mark used to wheel out the opening himself in the dim and distant past. In the book, Shaw claims that Black gains the advantage here by playing 3...Nb8-c6 4.Ng1-f3 g7-g5. His analysis is impressive, but intuitively that doesn't feel right to me. It will be interesting to see how these conclusions hold up.

**4.Bc4xd5**  
4.e4xd5 is another option.

**4... Qd8-h4+**  
**5.Ke1-f1 Ng8-f6**  
**6.Ng1-f3 Qh4-h5**  
**7.Bd5-b3**

I would have preferred 7.Nb1-c3, continuing development.

**7... Nb8-c6**

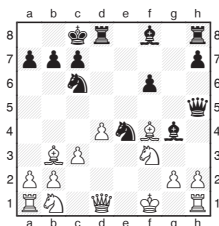
**8.d2-d4**  
The modest 8.d2-d3 was wiser. Now Black's lead in development becomes very serious.

**8... Bc8-g4**  
**9.e4-e5 Nf6-e4**  
White is also in trouble after 9...0-0-0 10.e5xf6 Nc6xd4.

**10.Bc1xf4 O-O-O**  
**11.c2-c3 f7-f6**

The accurate 11...Qh5-f5 embarrasses White's bishop 12.Bf4-g3 (or 12.Bf4-e3 Nc6xe5) 12...Bf8-c5 is deadly after 13.Kf1-g1 Nc6xd4 14.c3xd4 Bg4xf3 15.Qd1xf3 Bc5xd4+ 16.Kg1-f1 Qf5xf3+ 17.g2xf3 Ne4xg3+ 18.h2xg3 Bd4xb2 wins.

**12.e5xf6 g7xf6**



**13.Kf1-g1**  
White has survival chances after 13.Nb1-d2 challenging Black's knight.

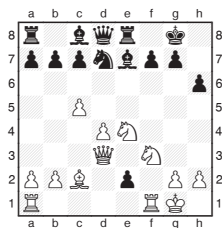
**13... Nc6-e5**  
Exploiting two different pins, now White swiftly collapses.

**14.Bf4xe5 f6xe5**  
**15.Qd1-e2**  
15.Qd1-d3 Ne4-c5 is no better.

**15... Ne4-g5**  
**16.Qe2xe5 Ng5xf3+**  
**17.g2xf3 Qh5xe5**  
**18.d4xe5 Bg4xf3**  
**19.Nb1-a3 Bf8-c5+**  
**O-1**

However, when everything works out, the results can be inspiring. This classic sacrificial masterpiece by a player who won a few memorable games in the King's Gambit gained even greater attention when the position after Black's 21st move was played by characters at the beginning of the Bond film *From Russia with Love*.

Unfortunately, in the scene, the White pawns on d4 and c5 were omitted, meaning that 22..Nf8-e6 is a much more viable defence on screen than in the game.



**B. Spassky - D. Bronstein**  
Leningrad 1960

**15.Ne4-d6**  
Much more fun than the standard 15.Rf1-f2.

**15... Nd7-f8**  
Black had to play 15...Be7xd6 16.Qd3-h7+ Kg8-f8 17.c5xd6 e2xf1Q+ 18.Ra1xf1 c7xd6 19.Qh7-h8+ Kf8-e7 20.Rf1-e1+ Nd7-e5 21.Qh8xg7 is very unclear.

**16.Nd6xf7 e2xf1Q+**  
**17.Ra1xf1 Bc8-f5**  
The most beautiful finish occurs after 17...Kg8xf7 18.Nf3-e5+ Kf7-g8 19.Qd3-h7+ Nf8xh7 20.Bc2-b3+ Kg8-h8 21.Ne5-g6 mate.

**18.Qd3xf5 Qd8-d7**  
**19.Qf5-f4**  
The light squares are too vulnerable for Black to survive long.

**19... Be7-f6**  
**20.Nf3-e5 Qd7-e7**  
**21.Bc2-b3 Bf6xe5**  
**22.Nf7xe5+ Kg8-h7**  
It looks more logical to block the check, but this still fails: 22...Nf8-e6 23.Ne5-g6 Qe7-d7 24.Qf4-e4 Ra8-d8 25.Rf1-f8+ Re8xf8 26.Bb3xe6+.

**23.Qf4-e4+**  
Black resigned, as 23...g7-g6 24.Rf1-f7+ or 23...Kh7-h8 24.Rf1xf8+ Re8xf8 25.Ne5-g6+ are decisive.