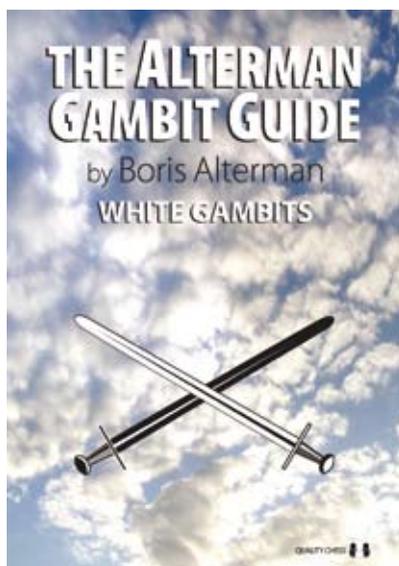


The Alterman Gambit Guide

White Gambits

By

Boris Alterman



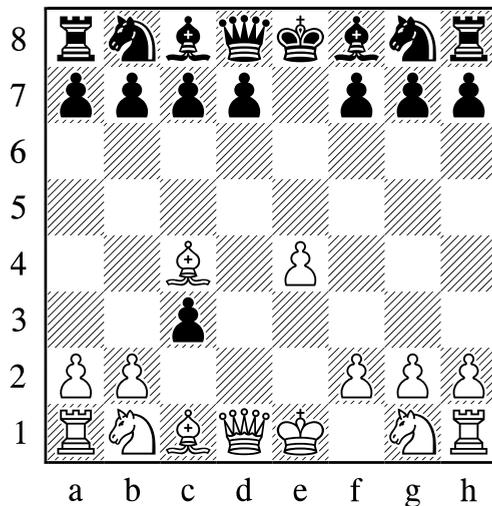
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Chapter 1

The Danish Gambit



1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 dxc3 4.♔c4

Introduction

I recall that when I was a child everyone was talking about the strength of the Danish Gambit. Some even claimed that it was winning! It was very popular, and highly aggressive. Black was getting blown away by the ferocious attacks on an open board, sometimes not even escaping the opening alive! And so, I would like to introduce you to the popular and famous Danish Gambit!

1.e4

Remember that the fight is directed at controlling the center (d4, e4, d5 and e5) in the opening. You also have to bring out all your pieces as quickly as possible, naturally to where they control the greatest number of central squares. A good way to achieve these aims is to march the e-pawn two squares forward to occupy the center, when it also opens the diagonals for his queen and f1-bishop.

White's next move, if he is allowed, will be 2.d4, when he not only controls the center, but also prevents Black from moving his pieces there. Preventing your opponent from using the center, while your own pieces have full access to these central squares, is an ideal to aim for, since the quickest route from one sector of the board to another is through the center.

1...e5

Black does likewise, and tries to make d2-d4 more difficult for White, since after 2.d4 exd4 3.♖xd4 ♟c6 Black would benefit from the early development of White's queen as it will have to move again.

After 1.e4 e5, we often get very sharp and open positions, and the Danish Gambit is no exception.

2.d4

White launches another pawn into the center, challenging Black's e5-pawn. Has White not read our comment after 1...e5? Let's see:

2...exd4 3.c3

Surprise! White has something else in mind.

3...dxc3

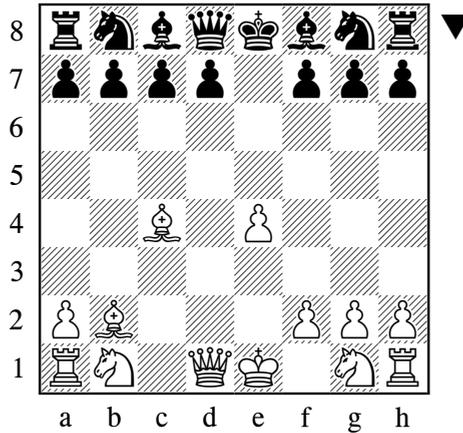
If Black does not take the pawn on offer then White would capture on d4 with his pawn, and get a two-abreast pawn center.

4.♗c4

White sacrifices another pawn (!), and develops his bishop to its most aggressive outpost, where it exerts pressure on the center. The bishop also targets Black's weakest spot before castling – f7 – as it is protected only by the king, and sacrifices at precisely this spot would draw the king out and expose it to attack.

This energetic opening system is called the Danish Gambit.

4...cxb2 5.♗xb2



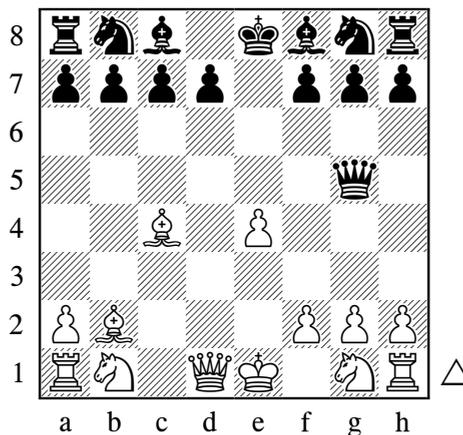
This is the so-called “Accelerated variation of the Danish Gambit”. Being 2 pawns ahead, Black hopes to realize his material advantage in the endgame.

White, however, has serious positional dividends such as:

- ❖ A huge advantage in development and greater mobility of his pieces.
- ❖ Significant control over the most important central squares (d4, d5, e4, e5).
- ❖ His bishops are nicely placed to put pressure on the center and the kingside.
- ❖ Open lines and diagonals which are avenues along which White could develop very unpleasant threats.

Illustrative Games

Black has a wide selection of options, which we will now examine. But let’s start with an exercise that arrives after Black’s fifth move:



White to play! - How should he exploit the early development of Black's queen?

In the following games, we will learn how we should think during the game. More importantly, we will see in full force the power of having a lead in development.

The first two games are instructive in the clash between the *police* and the *thief* – the side who follows the rules of development, against the materialist who violates the principles of opening play.

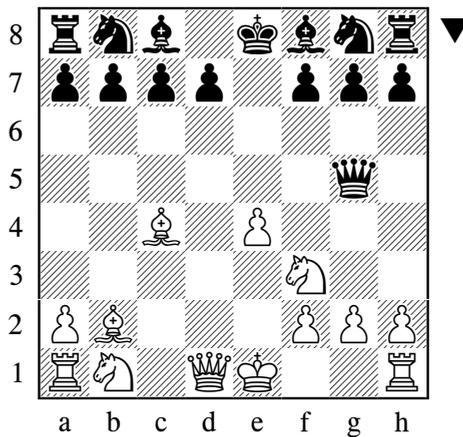
Game 1

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 dxc3 4.♘c4 cxb2 5.♙xb2 ♚g5?

An obvious and greedy attempt, aiming to exploit the weakness on g2 created by the development of the bishop to c4. But this move has major drawbacks.

Remember the important opening principle: don't develop your queen too early. This "rule" may be broken only when you can achieve a good target for the queen. Now, is the g2-pawn such a great target? No!

6.♞f3!



White develops his knight with tempo by attacking Black's exposed queen, and also controls the central squares d4 and e5. Remember the main opening principle: develop all your pieces rapidly.

If White instead defended with 6.g3?, he would allow Black to follow a well-known principle for the side with a material advantage: exchange pieces (not pawns) and enter an endgame where you can make your material advantage count. An advantage of "7 pieces against 6" is significant, but the advantage of "2 pieces against 1" is much proportionally greater.

So, after 6...♙b4† 7.♞d2 ♚xd2†! (forcing the exchange of queens) 8.♚xd2 ♙xd2† 9.♙xd2 ♞f6 White's attacking chances have disappeared together with the queens, while Black remains 2 pawns up.

Remember: opening with an attacking gambit system and then playing cowardly moves is a sure recipe for disaster.

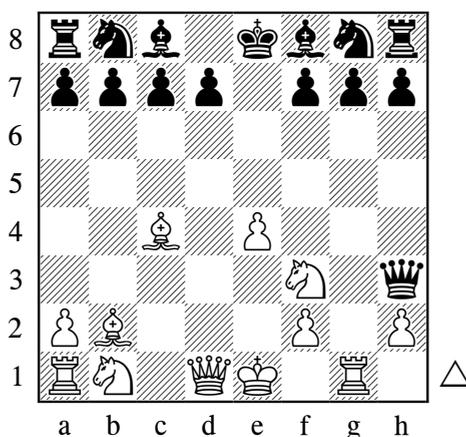
6...♙xg2

Capturing on g2 leads to a very instructive position. Currently, Black is 3(!) pawns up. Nevertheless, after:

7.♖g1

There are not many squares available to the black queen. Incidentally, may I also point out that White is developing his rook with tempo – to an open file.

7...♙h3



White to play! - How should White utilize his lead in development?

In my experience, many inexperienced chess players get too concerned about such positions with White. Yes, Black is 3 pawns up, but take a look at his minor pieces – they are all sleeping! Out of 7 moves, Black has played 4 with his pawn, and 3 with the queen. White, on the other hand, has concentrated on developing his pieces, and undoubtedly has a clear lead in development. This should be converted into something more, but therein lies the difficulty.

Many of you might simply play 8.♙xg7 ♙xg7 9.♖xg7 ♘h6! (covering f7), later asking, “Where did I go wrong? Where did I spoil my huge initiative, and why did it bring me only a pawn?”

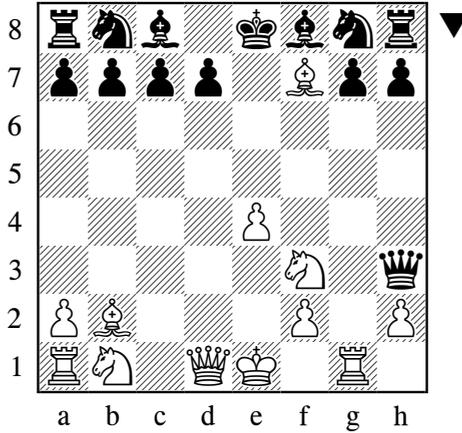
The solution is simple. Before calculating, ask yourself: what/where is my target? Usually, correctly identifying your aim leads you halfway on the road to success.

In this position, we see that:

- ❖ the g7-pawn is threatened
- ❖ the queen is badly placed on h3
- ❖ the f7-pawn is weak

These clues lead us to 8. ♖g5, with a double attack on the f7-pawn and the black queen. Alas, after 8... ♙xh2 Black counterattacks by attacking the g1-rook. But White has an improvement on this idea.

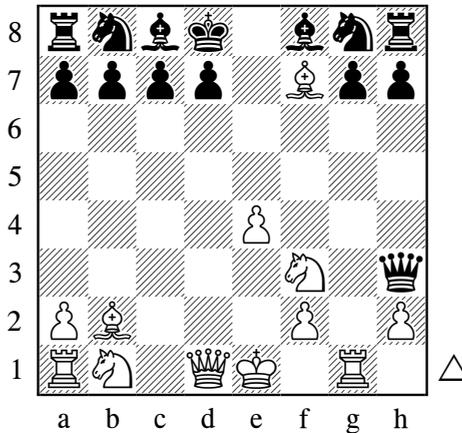
8. ♕xf7†!



White captures the f7-pawn with check, forcing Black to move his king.

After 8... ♙xf7 9. ♖g5† – fork! – White wins the queen.

8... ♕d8



White to play! - How should he continue?

White's attack now converges on Black's other weakness – g7. Exploiting the fact that Black's rook is stuck on h8, White performs a nice tactical blow: