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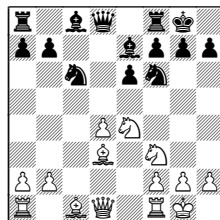
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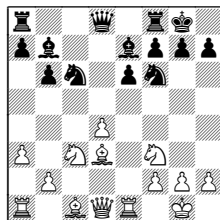
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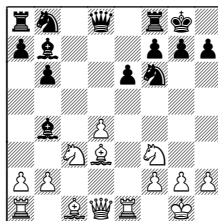
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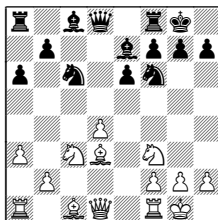
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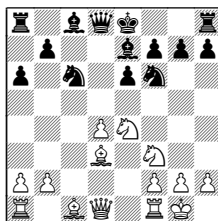
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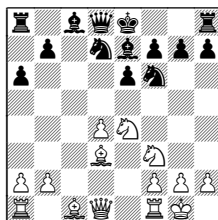
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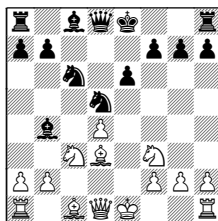
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PREFACE

The move 1...e6, in response to the initial advance of White's pawn to e4, was tried as early as the 17th century. However, it enjoyed its first wave of popularity during the middle of the 19th century. After the French players scored remarkable victories with this opening in the telegraph match between London and Paris in 1834, it was named the French Defence. Later, the famous Russian master Karl Jaenisch published the first serious analyses of this opening in 1842. At the beginning of the 20th century the French Defence became the favourite weapon of numerous great masters. We should mention here the outstanding contribution of the Hungarian maestro Maroczy, who replied to 1.e4 almost exclusively with the French and wrote a monograph on it. Many new ideas and analyses appeared, thanks to great players of the past, such as Chigorin, Alapin, Steinitz, Rubinstein, Nimzowitsch and many others. Based on their analytical work and practical experience, an extensive theory of this opening was created. Most of the strongest chess players in the world have played this opening and this is not at all surprising. It is based on a very solid positional foundation. Black is fighting against White's powerful e4-pawn in the centre and this is in harmony with all the classical principles of playing the opening.

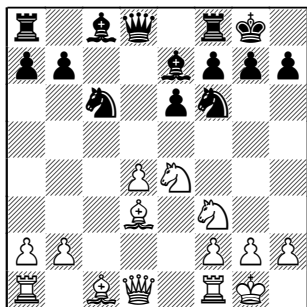
Nowadays the French Defence is one of the most popular opening schemes in response to 1.e4, so every player who begins his games by advancing his king's pawn two squares will regularly need to play against it. I should like to suggest **a new concept** of combating it. White plays 3.♘d2 (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2) and then **he deploys his pieces according to the scheme ♖gf3, ♙d3, c3, 0–0, against almost anything that Black may play** (with only minimal exceptions), and this will usually lead to exchanges in the centre and the appearance of an isolated queen's pawn for White. Accordingly, after one rarely played move – 3...h6, as well as against four very popular variations: 3...a6, 3...♙e7, 3...c5 and 3...♗f6, White plays in the same fashion and aims for the same type of position with an isolated pawn in the centre. The scheme of development we have chosen enables us to reduce the study of this tremendously popular opening to a minimal number of pawn-structures in the middle game. White thus avoids the necessity to study some fundamental but complicated variations of

the French Defence such as, for example, 3...♘f6 4.e5, or 3...c5 4.exd5 exd5, as well as many others, all of which demand extensive theoretical knowledge and vast practical experience.

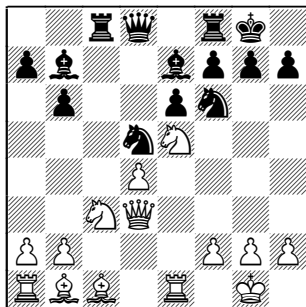
I should like to emphasize that the essence of my new concept is not so much how to play positions with an isolated queen's pawn, but how best to attain them. The most important idea is that White should be striving to reach and play positions of this type.

This book is not an opening monograph in the standard sense of the word. In fact, the majority of the variations analyzed in it deal with one specific pawn-structure, so we have devoted the third part of the book entirely to positions with an isolated queen's pawn, arising from different lines of the French Defence. It is a well known fact that an IQP can arise from various other opening systems. Thus the positions we analyze are quite similar to lines from the Nimzo-Indian Defence, the Panov attack in the Caro-Kann Defence, as well as to some of the variations of the Queen's Gambit Accepted and the Alapin variation against the Sicilian Defence.

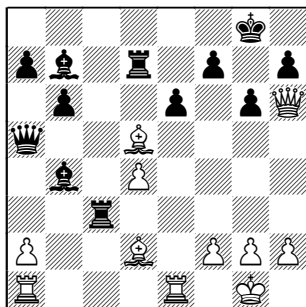
It is very difficult to say exactly who was the first player to try out the scheme of development which we suggest here. Readers will find in our book several games by the English grandmaster Jim Plaskett. Among them there are some very beautiful victories and some other games in which he did not play so well. He demonstrated numerous important ideas, most of them in the middle game, in the following encounter, which he won with White in spectacular fashion: **1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♗e7 4.♗gf3 ♘f6 5.♙d3 c5 6.c3 ♘c6 7.0-0 dxe4 8.♗xe4 cxd4 9.cxd4 0-0**



10. ♖c3!? ♜b4 11. ♙b1 b6 12. ♝e1 ♙b7 13. ♜e5 ♜bd5 14. ♚d3 ♝c8

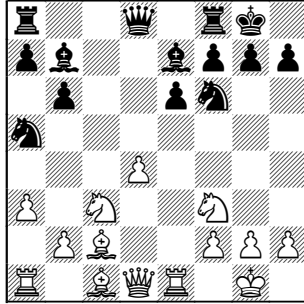


15. ♚h3! ♜xc3 16. ♙bc3 ♚d5 17. ♙d2 g6 18. ♙c2 ♚a5 19. ♚h4 ♝xc3 20. ♙b3! ♜d5 21. ♚h6 ♙b4 22. ♜d7! ♝d8 23. ♙xd5 ♝xd7

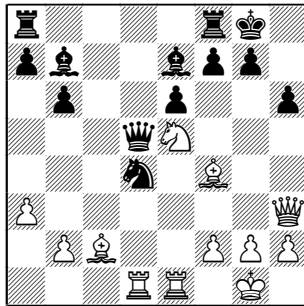


24. ♝xe6! fxe6 25. ♙xe6+ ♜h8 26. ♙xc3 ♝d8 27. ♚f4 and Black resigned, Plaskett – Short, Great Britain 2000.

In general, the side with an isolated pawn in the centre should try to develop his initiative on the kingside. I will quote here another example from grandmaster practice: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♜d2 ♜f6 4.♙d3 c5 5.c3 ♜c6 6.♜gf3 cxd4 7.cxd4 dxe4 8.♜xe4 ♙b4+ 9.♜c3 0-0 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.a3 b6 12.♝e1 ♙b7 13.♙c2 ♜a5!?



14. ♖g5! h6 15. ♖f4! ♜c4 16. ♜e5! ♜d6 17. ♗d3 ♜f5 18. ♜ad1
 ♜d5 19. ♜xd5 ♗xd5 20. ♗h3 ♜xd4



21. ♖xh6! ♜fd8 22. ♜xd4! ♗xd4 23. ♖g5 (it was even stronger for
 White to play here 23. ♗h5! ♜f8 24. ♖h7+! ♜h8 25. ♖e4!+-) 23... ♖g5
 24. ♗h7+ ♜f8 25. ♗h8+ ♜e7 26. ♗xg7 ♗xe5 27. ♗xe5± and White
 gradually realised his advantage in the game Kornev – Gleizerov, Kalu-
 ga 2003. No doubt Black’s play in these games was far from perfect,
 but my intention here is to highlight how White should play in such
 positions.

We have to pay special attention to two other popular replies for
 Black against 3. ♜d2: 3...dxe4 and 3...♜c6. The Rubinstein variation,
 which begins with 3...dxe4, is quite different from all the other lines of
 the French Defence and is like “an opening within an opening...”. We
 devote a separate study to it in **Part 1**.

The interesting move 3...♖c6 is another very specific subject within the structure of the French Defence in general, as well as in the context of this book. White must prevent Black from equalizing quickly and rather simply, so he plays in an entirely different manner and positions arise in which the character of the fight is quite different. We deal with 3...♖c6 in **Chapter 5** of our book.

Some very seldom played lines, in particular 3...♗e7, 3...g6, 3...b6, as well as a few others, are dealt with in **Chapter 4**. I will mention that, in reply to them, with only rare exceptions, White should develop his forces according to the same scheme: ♖gf3, ♗d3, c3, 0–0. I recommend this harmonious set-up as an almost universal weapon for White in the entire complex of variations.

*Denis Yevseev
Saint Petersburg, July 2011*

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