

Simon Williams

the
killer Dutch

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About the Author

Simon Williams is a Grandmaster, a presenter and a popular writer whose previous books have received great praise. He is much admired for his dynamic and spontaneous attacking style.

Also by the author:

The New Sicilian Dragon

How to Win at Chess – Quickly!

Attacking Chess: The French

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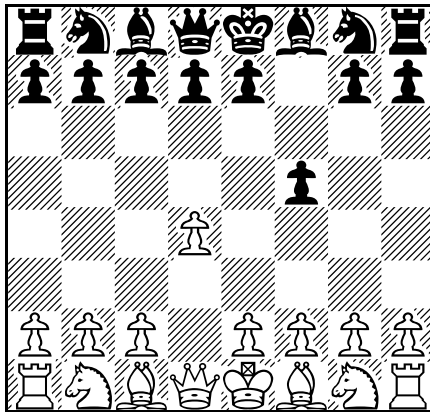
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Introduction

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Throughout this book, I have ‘borrowed’ quotes from people greater than myself. This is because I have neither the literary skill nor ability to come up with such great sayings. In this day and age of Google, such prized quotes are readily accessible. I have, therefore, concentrated my time and effort on the chess material shown in this book.

Introductory Words



The Classical Dutch has possessed my chess soul for over twenty years now. Throughout this period of my life, and despite all the ups and downs, it is still my best chess friend. Indeed, I have had some of my greatest results playing the Classical Dutch.

At the tender age of nine, I was introduced to the opening by my dad, so you can blame him for everything that follows! Since then, it has become my routine answer to 1 d4, 1 c4 and 1 ♘f3.

The Classical Dutch is an opening that will favour the brave, i.e. players who want an interesting fight from the start of the game. It is an original opening that offers many exciting options. Just in the making of this book, I have come across new ideas that have never been played before.

I would describe the Classical Dutch as an aggressive and tactical opening, but it also has some complex positional aspects. The middlegame often involves a tactical battle but just as often, players who enter these types of positions can also find themselves “grinding away” with their positional advantage.

It is true that the general reputation of the Dutch Defence is quite poor. Top players tend to refer to the opening as one might to a dangerous-looking biker, one that you might encounter in a late night bar: wary, slightly scared, but also with a hidden sense of fascination and respect.

One of my favourite quotes on the Dutch was made by top Grandmaster Artur Yusupov. “The problem with the Dutch is that Black very often in the middlegame finds that his best available move is f5-f7.” That quote may well be true in some cases, but ‘Freddy the f-pawn’ can also be a very dangerous attacking unit!

The Classical Dutch is an opening that suits me perfectly. One of the advantages I have over my opponents is that I have a very good understanding of what both sides should be doing, thanks to my vast experience in this opening. In fact, when I play some of the world’s best players, my understanding of the opening is sometimes greater even than theirs. This is due to the fact that the Classical Dutch is a rather rare opening and many players will not know how to respond to it. For example, take a look at my games against Sokolov, Gelfand and Shirov. In all cases, I obtained a good position from the opening. With this in mind, I believe that the Classical Dutch is a reputable opening which can be successfully used against the best of players.

During my chess adventures, I have dabbled with the Kings Indian Defence, English Defence, Black Knights’ Tango, the Slav and even 1...♘c6, but none of these openings has ever appealed to me, or scored as well for me, as the Classical Dutch.

Indeed, some people have even had the cheek to ask me, “Simon, I bought your 2002 book on the Dutch (*Play the Classical Dutch*) and now you have given up playing it. Why? What is wrong with the opening?”

With regard to the above, my thoughts are better explained by the fantasy author Terry Pratchett:

“Why do you go away? So that you can come back. So that you can see the place you came from with new eyes and extra colours. And the people there see you differently, too. Coming back to where you started is not the same as never leaving.”

(Terry Pratchett: *A Hat Full of Sky*)

This book is aimed at players of all strengths and its real purpose is to arm those players with a dangerous weapon that can be used against either 1 d4, 1 c4 or 1 ♘f3. I also hope that this book will be of use to players who play 1 d4 as well. Even if they don’t enter into a Classical Dutch, they will inevitably improve by getting to grips with the types of positions featured in this book.

Each chapter of the book starts with some important games that demonstrate the main themes and ideas of the chapter. Afterwards, the theory is introduced and analysed in great detail, with all relevant variations discussed. At the end of some of the main chapters, typical middlegame and endgame positions are shown and an explanation as to the plans of each player is also given, so that the player is fully prepared.

I would recommend that you first read the book from start to finish and then you are free to concentrate on any particular chapter after that.

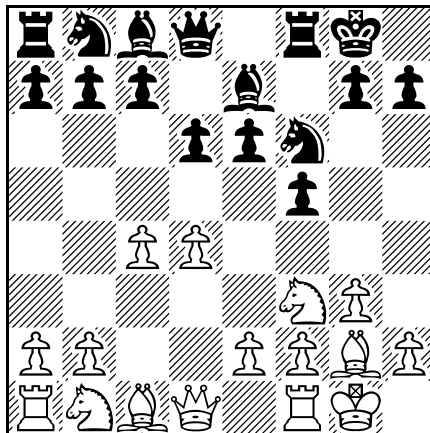
To start with, let us take a look at how I used the Classical Dutch to destroy a top Grandmaster in twenty moves.

Game 1
R. Wojtaszek-S. Williams
French League 2011

This game was played in the first round of the 2011 French Team Championships. I was rather angry before the start of the game and to be honest, the result of the match was pretty irrelevant to me. I expect, for that reason, I was able to play in the way that I did, i.e. with reckless abandon!

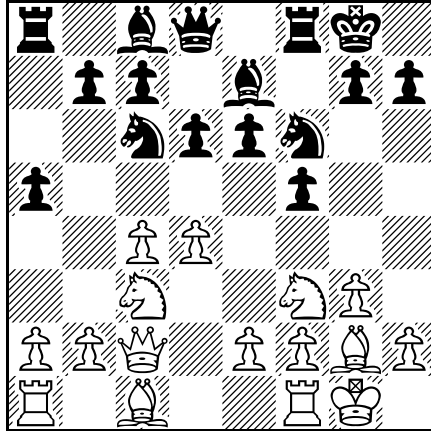
My opponent was rated 2721 at the time and the second of the World Champion, Vishy Anand. Obviously they had not studied the Classical Dutch together...

1 d4 e6 2 ♘f3 f5 3 g3 ♗f6 4 ♙g2 ♘e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 d6



This is considered to be the main line of the Classical Dutch and it is certainly a position that you need to be familiar with.

7 ♚c2 a5 8 ♘c3 ♗c6

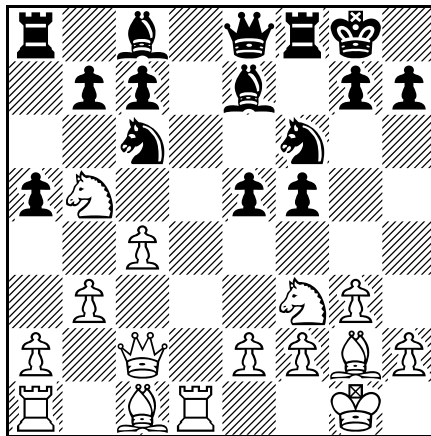


This is a very comfortable position for Black. As we will see later on, if Black can achieve the ...e5 break, he should generally be feeling confident.

9 b3 e5 10 dx e5 11 ♖d1 ♜e8

Another typical manoeuvre. The queen swings over to h5, increasing the pressure against White's kingside.

12 ♘b5

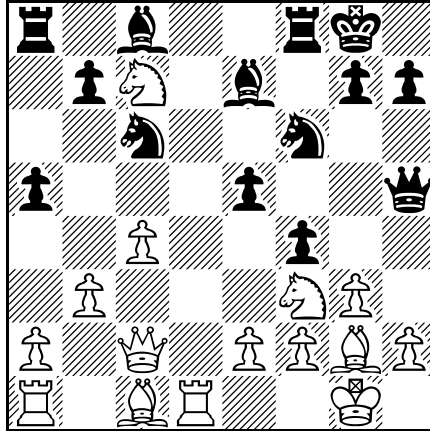


This looks like an annoying move to deal with. The knight reaches a dangerous outpost on b5 pressurising Black's queenside, but why care about the queenside when checkmate is the end of the game!

12... ♜h5!?!?

An outrageous move! The safe option would have been ...♙d8 with a perfectly fine position, but why be safe when you can live a little...

13 ♘xc7 f4

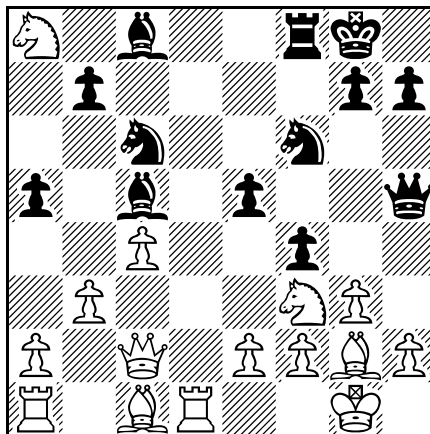


After this game, a well-known GM came up to me and his comment went something along the lines of, “Simon, how can you show such a complete disregard for classical chess principles and go on to beat such a strong player?” To which I responded, “Surely, the main principle of chess is checkmate?”

The plan is clear: I simply want to put all my pieces onto the most aggressive squares possible, namely those that all point towards White’s king, then the rest should play itself!

If I lose, life goes on, but at least I have had some entertainment along the way!

14 ♖xa8 ♘c5



Another black piece finds a good square and now f2 is under pressure. I am only a rook and one pawn down which is nothing really. Morphy used to give those types of odds all the time!

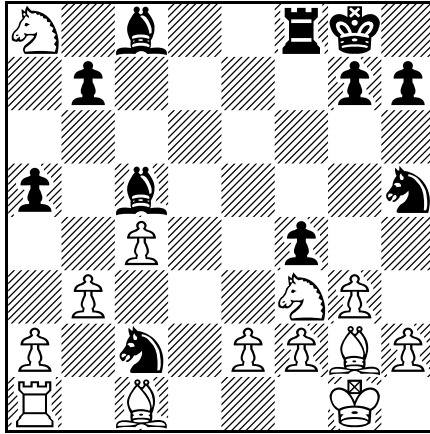
15 ♖d5?

My opponent cracks immediately but facing such an attack from such an unpredictable

The Killer Dutch

player must have been quite disconcerting. 15 gxf4 was later found to be a better move, but it is very easy to go wrong in such a complicated position.

15...♖b4 16 ♖xe5 ♗xc2 17 ♖xh5 ♗xh5



White is already busted.

18 ♖b1 fxg3 19 hxg3 ♗xg3 20 ♖b2 ♗f5 0-1

“Fortes fortuna adiuvat”

A fun game for me to play but not so for my opponent, who appeared to be left reeling in a state of shock. I noticed that Wojtaszek’s Elo rating has taken a bit of plunge since this game. I guess that is the effect that the Dutch and I have on people...

A lot of comments were made about this game and my “crazy” idea of simply sacrificing the queenside pieces in order to enhance my attack on the kingside. Furthermore, a number of people have stated that 12...♗h5 was a great novelty, but the truth of the matter is that I had already used this idea a number of years ago. It was first played in the world under-20 championships in Yerevan after, dare I say, a rather late night with my friend Torbjorn Hansen. I doubt that I would have ever considered this concept if I had had a clear head at the time. Let us take a quick look at the game in question.

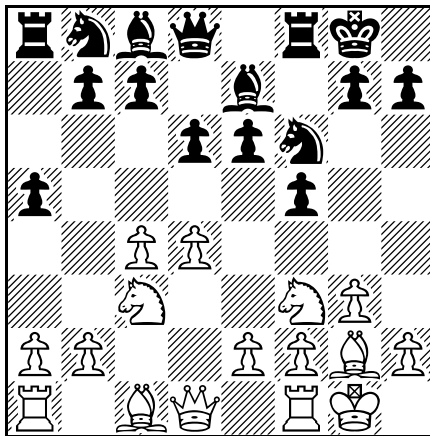
Game 2 S. Williams-Yuan Zhong Zhao World Under-20 Championship 1999

1 f4 d5 2 ♗f3 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♗e2 c5 5 0-0 ♗c6 6 d3 ♗f6 7 a4 0-0 8 ♖h1

Chapter One

Ye Olde Faithful: 7...a5

1 d4 f5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♙g2 ♙e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 d6 7 ♘c3 a5



Originally known as the Simagin Variation, I have named this chapter ‘Ye Olde Faithful’ because it has been my favourite variation in the Dutch for the last twenty years. (This has now changed and I will come onto this point later on in the chapter!)

I am one of the only players in the world who has played this move at top level for a long period of time. For this reason alone, I should have a good understanding of it. I was attracted to 7...a5 as it offered Black good chances to play for a win. Indeed, the positions that it leads to are often complex and exciting.

7...a5 is a very useful waiting move as it takes control of the b4-square. This square can often be used as a good outpost for Black’s knight or even bishop.

One of the most enjoyable encounters that I have had in this line was against Joseph Gallagher. I was due to play Joe at the Isle of Man tournament. Joe was riding high as he

had just won the British Championship, so he was obviously on good form.

I had Black against him and I thought that it would be an ideal time to try out my favourite line i.e. 7...a5, the line we are about to look at. I had only one concern: I was worried about one move and coincidentally, Joe played that move immediately! 8 ♖e1.

After this move, I had a long think and came up with a very good plan. A plan that, until recently, still looked good.

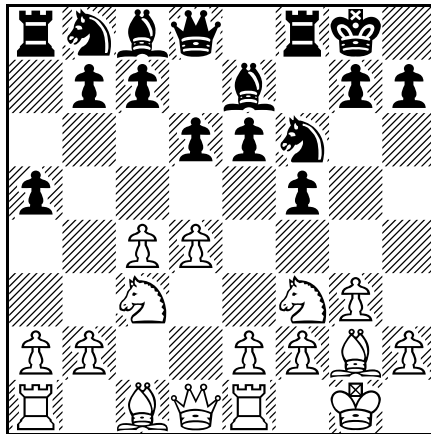
However, there does seem to be a major drawback with this whole variation. GM Stephen Gordon highlighted the problem in his game against a very unsuspecting Marcus Harvey at the 2012 British Championship.

The idea was first shown to me by Stephen over two years ago. I have decided to keep it hidden until now. This idea does seem to leave the whole 7...a5 variation in doubt... We will take a look at this idea after the first two introductory games.

Let's have the good news before the bad!

Game 11
J.Gallagher-S.Williams
Port Erin 2001

1 d4 f5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♙g2 e6 4 ♘f3 ♚e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 d6 7 ♘c3 a5 8 ♖e1



This used to be the old main line and 8 ♖e1 was the move I feared!

Black certainly needs to know what he is doing against this move. White is planning to play e4 when he will gain a positional advantage. Black should aim to stop this at all costs.

BRAINSTORMING POINT!

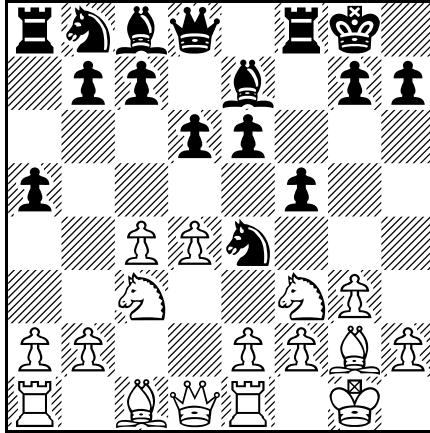
At the start of this book, I pointed out some basic strategic points that Black needs to

know. One of these springs to mind now.

If White can achieve the e4 advance without Black playing ...e5 and Black has to exchange with ...fxe4, White will generally obtain an advantage.

Black has to stop White from playing e4 here. There is only one way of doing this.

8...♘e4



This move is pretty much forced.

BRAINSTORMING POINT!

Black must stop White from playing e4!

9 ♙c2 ♘xc3!

This is an important improvement on the old main line (see later).

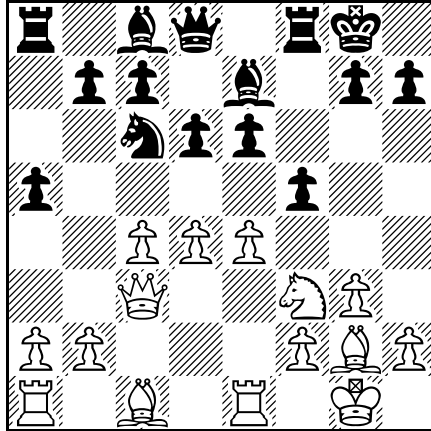
10 ♙xc3

This is the natural response to 9...♘xc3! as it keeps White's pawns intact but I don't believe that it is the best move. We will take a look at 10 bxc3! in the Theory section of this book, as this move is a better attempt at gaining an opening advantage for White.

10...♘c6!

I now had a long think as I had to try and do something about White's plan of playing e4. The real point of ...♘c6 becomes clear after White's next move.

11 e4

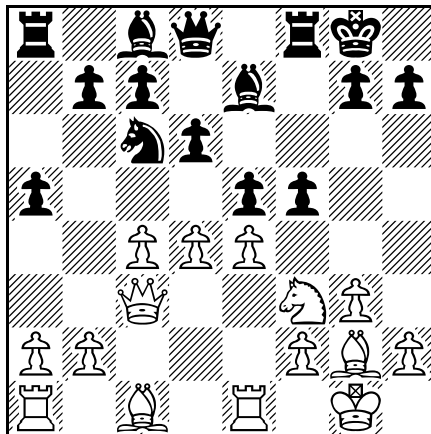


BRAINSTORMING POINT!

Let's go back to one of the general rules. You should know it by now:

If White can achieve the e4 advance without Black playing ...e5 and Black has to exchange with ...fxe4, White will generally obtain an advantage.

11...e5!



Yes, this is the correct response! We can now see why the pawn on a5 is good. It secures the b4-square for a black piece. This dynamic move holds the position together. Only the central counter-strike will stop White from gaining an advantage.

12 exf5

We will come back to White's two other possibilities in the theory section.

12...♙xf5 13 ♙e3?

This is too passive. White should have tried 13 dxe5 which is looked at below.

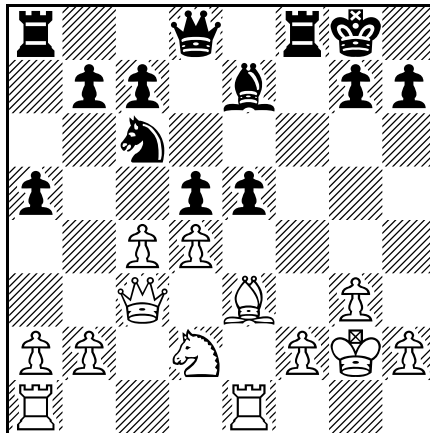
13...♙e4

An exchange of light-squared bishops can only help Black. White will then have some weakened squares around his kingside (h3, g2, f3) and will have lost his best minor piece, the light-squared bishop. Furthermore, White's light-squared bishop often puts pressure on Black's queenside.

14 ♘d2?!

14 ♙d2 was better.

14...♙xg2 15 ♖xg2 d5!



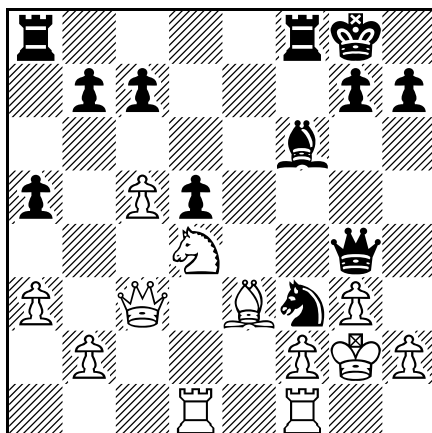
It is time to pause and reflect on the position that has arisen from the opening. White's pieces are all looking rather passive, whilst Black's position is starting to come alive. With the last move 15...d5! Black starts to attack White's centre, which could crumble at any moment.

16 a3 ♙f6 17 ♘f3 exd4 18 ♘xd4 ♙d7 19 ♖ad1 ♘e5 20 c5 ♘f3!

A tricky move for White to deal with.

21 ♖f1 ♙g4?!

This was tempting but not the best move. I should have played 21...♖a6! with the idea of getting Black's last piece over to the kingside. This is another reason why 7...a5!? was a good move! Black is planning ...♙xd4 and ...♖h6, for example, 22 h3 ♙xd4 23 ♙xd4 ♖h6 and Black is winning.



22 ♔d3 ♕xd4 23 ♕xd4 ♖h4+ 24 ♔h1 ♗f3 25 ♔g2 c6 26 h3 ♕e6 27 ♕e3 g5 28 ♕d4?!

White should have played 28 ♕f4! when he is over the worst, although Black may still be slightly better, for example, 28...♗h4+ 29 gxh4 gxf4.

28...♖ae8

White has a few problems now as he has no way of improving his position.

29 b4 axb4 30 axb4 ♕d7 31 ♕a1 ♕e6 32 ♖c1 d4 33 ♖fd1 ♖f7 34 ♕c4 ♕e4 35 ♔f1 ♗d2+ 0-1

Game 12
S.Iskusnyh-S.Williams
Cappelle La Grande 2005

Let's take a look at another game that I have played in this variation. This time, we will concentrate on 8 b3, which is one of White's most popular moves.

1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5 3 g3 ♗f6 4 ♕g2 ♕e7 5 ♗f3 0-0 6 0-0 d6 7 ♗c3 a5!?

This game was played at the Cappelle la Grande tournament in France. My opponent was a Russian GM. I have to admit that I was very annoyed with myself after the game, because I felt that I had achieved a good position from the opening. I then went on to throw it away. Never a pleasant feeling in chess!

8 b3

White will often choose this positional move which I now consider to be the main line. The plan is to simply play ♕b2 gaining extra control over e5.

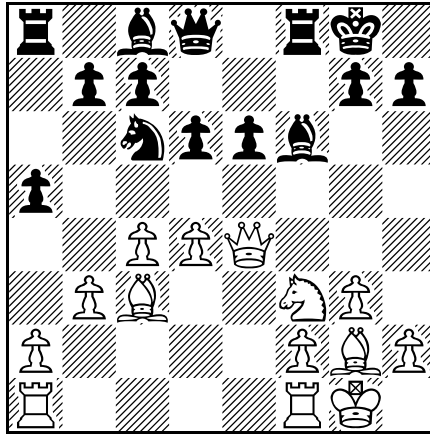
8...♗e4

This is a common plan in this type of structure. As Black's position is more cramped, exchanges tend to help him. It is also now possible for Black to move his bishop to f6.

9 ♕b2 ♗xc3!?

I believe that this is Black's best chance. The general plan is to meet e4 with ...f4 when

Black often has chances to attack on the kingside. I used to play 9...♙f6 on a regular basis but I had some difficulty finding a good response to 10 ♖c2 ♗xc3 11 ♙xc3, for example 11...♘c6 12 e4! fxe4 13 ♗xe4.



BRAINSTORMING POINT!

This type of structure is worth avoiding at all costs!

After 13...♗e8 14 ♖fe1 White had a dream position and went on to win in R.Ruck-S.Williams, European under-20 Championship 1997.

10 ♙xc3 ♗e8

The black queen wriggles its way around to h5. White has a number of options here.

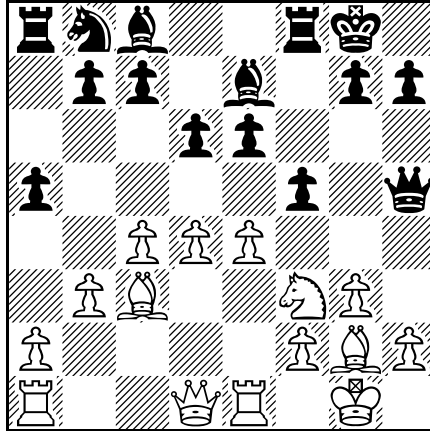
11 ♖e1

A very logical move. The rook is well placed behind the e-pawn. One logical plan is e4-e5.

11...♗h5!

An active square for the queen. I once tried 11...c6?! in this position, but I soon got myself into trouble: 12 e4 f4 13 d5! cxd5 14 e5! (a brilliant idea; White has sacrificed a pawn in order to stop Black from meeting e5 with the standard ...d5 and Black is now forced to open the e-file) 14...dxe5 15 cxd5 fxg3 16 hxg3 ♗f7 17 ♗d2 and White was clearly better and duly won in J.Benjamin-S.Williams, Bunnratty Masters 2007.

12 e4



BRAINSTORMING POINT!

Capturing on e4 would give White the type of position that he wants. We have to avoid this at all costs and play a different plan. What should that plan be?

12...f4!

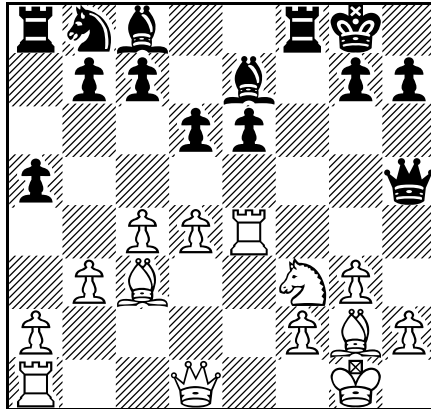
That's right!

BRAINSTORMING POINT!

From a positional point of view, Black is forced to meet 12 e4 with 12...f4. If the e-file is ever opened, Black will be positionally lost. Black must always aim to keep a White pawn on the e-file.

The move ...f4 gives Black good attacking chances on the kingside. As you will see, the f-pawn will eventually become a thorn in White's side.

12...fxe4? 13 ♖xe4

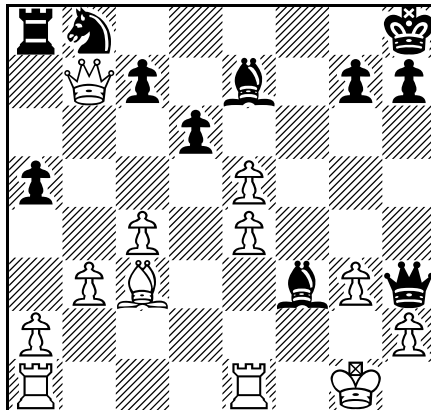


Black must avoid this type of structure! White will always have pressure against Black's pawn on e6. Black is also left with a cramped and passive position. This was not the reason behind choosing to play the Dutch!

13 e5

13 ♖d2 was played against me in G.Kjartansson-S.Williams, Hastings Masters 2000, with the following possibilities:

a) I played 13...fxg3 14 fxg3 e5?! (14...a4!?), which leads to some complications, where I am sure White has an improvement on the game: 15 dxe5! ♜xf3 16 ♚d1 ♟g4 17 ♟xf3 ♟xf3 18 ♚d5+ ♟h8 19 ♚xb7 ♚h3.



Bizarrely, the game is probably a draw now! 20 ♟f2 ♚g2+ 21 ♟e3 ♟g5+ 22 ♟d3 ♟e2+ 23 ♜xe2 ♚f3+ 24 ♟c2 ♚xe2+ 25 ♟b1 ♚f1+ 26 ♟b2 ♚f2+ 27 ♟b1 ♚g1+ 28 ♟b2 ♚f2+ 29 ♟b1 ♚f1+ 30 ♟b2 ♚f2+ and we agreed a draw.

b) 13...g5! was the other critical choice and would be the move that I would play in the future. 14 h3! (White really has to prevent Black's ...g4 advance; 14 gx4!? g4!? – 14...♜xf4 is

safer for Black and looks fine – 15 ♖g5 h6 16 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 is unclear) 14...fxg3 15 fxg3 g4 16 hxg4 ♖xg4. This all looks very odd, as Black is only playing with his queen, but things are not so clear, for example, 17 ♖f2 ♗c6 18 d5 ♗b4, with a messy type of position.

13...d5!

This move follows the same principle as before. Black must avoid opening the e-file.

14 ♖d3

White has also tried the following options:

a) 14 ♗d2 An exchange of queens can only help White, so Black is advised to play 14...♖f7 15 ♖f3. Now in Play the Classical Dutch, I recommended the simple 15...c6 which is a safe way to play. Mind you, “safe” is not really a word in my vocabulary! Instead, 15...♗c6!? is an interesting sacrifice, when there could follow 16 ♔e2?! (White should really accept the sacrifice with 16 cxd5 exd5 17 ♖xd5 ♕e6 18 ♖f3 ♗ad8, when Black has compensation) 16...♗b4 17 a3 ♗c2 Black is playing very imaginatively. This is often what you need to do in the Dutch! 18 ♗a2 ♗xa3 19 ♖d3 a4 and Black was clearly better in A.Knitl-D.Pirrot, Bad Wörishofen 2008.

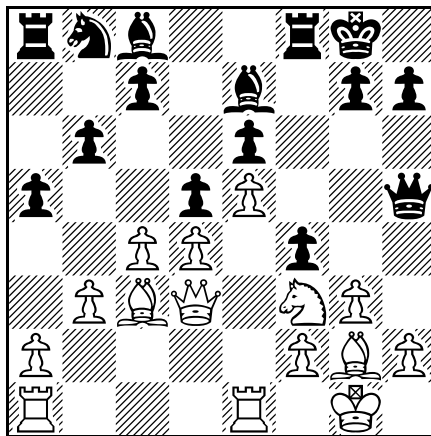
b) 14 h3 c6 (14...a4!? is often worth playing) 15 g4 and now in V.Erdos-R.Bellin, Budapest 2005, Black played 15...♖g6?!. This is the wrong square for the queen. After g4, Black should nearly always move his queen to h6, where it keeps pressure on h3 and allows Black to play ...♕d7 ...♕e8 and ...♕g6 at a later point.

c) 14 ♖e2 c6 15 ♕d2 g5 16 h3 a4 17 ♖d3 ♕d7 18 g4 ♖h6 19 bxa4 ♗xa4 20 c5 ♕e8 21 a3 ♗d7 22 ♖b3 ♗a7 23 a4 ♕g6 24 ♖f1 ♕e4 25 ♖e2 ♖g6 26 a5 ♗fa8 27 ♖d1 ♕d8 28 ♖e2? ♕c2 and White resigned in N.Clery-S,Williams, Cappelle La Grande 2005.

14...c6

This is a standard type of position. White has more space but Black’s pawn structure is very solid and he has chances to attack on the kingside. Black often plays ...♕d7, ...♕e8 and ...♕g6, an idea which can be often seen in the French Defence. Another plan is ...g5-g4.

Another option for Black is 14...b6!?.



This is an interesting idea which has yet to be played. Black wants to develop his bishop to b7, when ...dxc4 becomes a threat. This may be the best way for Black to play in this position. I would certainly give it a whirl. For example, 15 h3 ♖b7 16 g4 ♜h6 17 ♜ac1 ♘a6. Black has finished his development and he can be happy with the resulting position, which is roughly equal.

15 ♗d2 g5

15...fxg3 was possible: 16 fxg3 ♗d7, but I expect that White is a bit better here as he has more space. Black's f-pawn can often be an asset, so I preferred to avoid exchanging it.

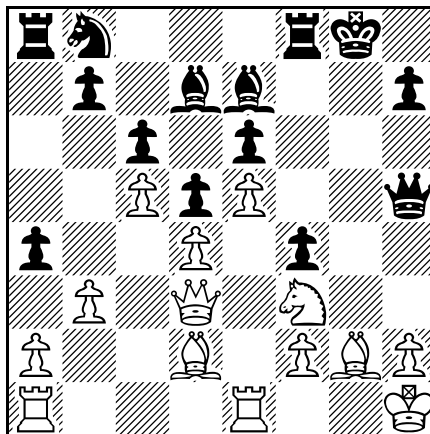
16 gxf4 gxf4

16...g4? does not quite work as after 17 ♘g5 Black cannot play 17...h6?? (17...♜f5 gives White time to play 18 h3) due to 18 ♜h7 checkmate, which would be embarrassing.

17 ♖h1

If Black has time to bring his two queenside pieces into the game, then he will be doing well. One thing in Black's favour is his queen on h5 which controls a number of squares.

17...a4 18 c5 ♗d7



The bishop manoeuvres around to g6.

19 ♘g1 ♜h4 20 b4 ♘a6

I wanted to move this knight to b5.

21 ♘e2

White has concentrated all his forces on my f-pawn, but this has taken a lot of time which has given me the opportunity to develop my pieces.

21...♗e8 22 ♜g1 ♗g6

22...♖h8! was also worth considering. The move played in the game forces White to sacrifice the exchange, but this gives White a pleasant initiative.

23 ♗f3 ♖h8?!

23...♖f7!? looks crazy but the black king is probably safer on d7, for example, 24 ♜a3 ♗e8 25 ♜xa4 ♗d3 with an unclear position.

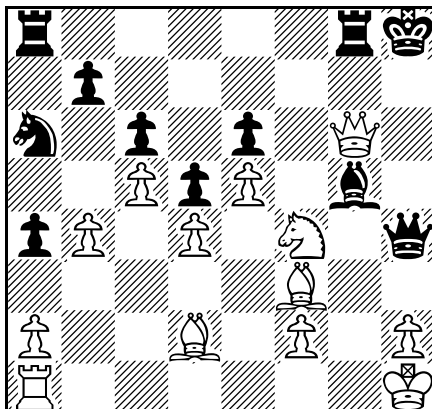
24 ♖xg6!

The only sensible plan. White's attack becomes very dangerous.

24...hxg6 25 ♖xg6 ♖g8 26 ♘xf4?!

White should have played 26 ♖xe6 when White has a big advantage.

26...♗g5!



My best chance.

27 ♖xe6 ♘c7?

I should have played 27...♖af8! 28 ♘g6+ ♖xg6 29 ♖xg6 ♗xd2, when it is unclear how White should continue his attack. Black is probably better.

28 ♘g6+ ♖xg6 29 ♖xg6 ♗xd2 30 ♖g1 ♖h6 31 ♖f7 ♖f8?

The last mistake. I should have tried 31...♗e6 which is far from clear, for example, 32 ♖g6 ♖f8 33 ♖xe6 ♖xf3+ 34 ♗g1 ♖f8.

32 ♖xc7 ♖xf3 33 e6

White is just winning now. The game finished:

33...♖f6 34 e7 ♖e3 35 ♖d8+ ♗h7 36 ♖g8+ 1-0

The Refutation of 7...a5

'Everything in life is temporary... So if things are going well, enjoy it because it won't last forever. And if things are going badly, don't worry. It can't last forever either.'

(Anon)

There is no point in "beating around the bush"! I will now come directly to the reason why I have stopped playing 7...a5. I was considering keeping this a secret, as I still want to play this move in the future, but I came to the conclusion that it is only fair to let people who have purchased GingerGM and Everyman products know the truth.

On top of this, after originally writing this book, a game was played in the 2012 British Championship which saw the idea being used in practice.