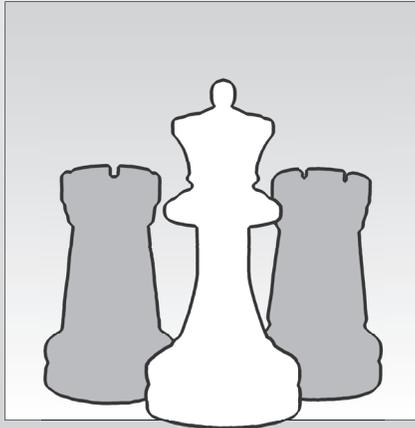




**Chess
University - 8**

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**Complete Guide
to the Queen's
Pawn Opening**

Volume 1



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PREFACE

In order not to play the Queen's Gambit, you can think of a thousand reasons. And excuses.

But in order to play the Queen's Pawn Opening, there can be only one reason.

You have to love this opening.

You cannot say to yourself five minutes before a game: I will play 1.d4, but 2.c4 – not on your life. Or even worse: you arrive for a game with the firm intention of playing 2.c4, you make the first move, but at the very last moment you change your mind: you look into your opponent's eyes, and become terrified – oh my God, he's so strong, he knows everything, he's an expert on the Queen's Gambit, I must urgently deviate somewhere. And without any preparation, without analysis or deep knowledge, bang! – 2.♘c3 or 2.♗f3 (or 2.♙g5, or something else). Anything but 2.c4.

This is a direct and sure way to lose. And not only to lose, but lose crushingly. How many such examples are to be found in this book – and how many others did not find their way into it.

You cannot regard the Queen's Pawn Opening as a one-off measure. Like a cheap umbrella, that you open once, wait till the thunderstorm is over, then stick in a corner and forget about.

No, no, you need to know and love this opening. And realise that it has its theory, a theory that has gone far beyond antiquated impressions. And that if you study this theory beforehand and reinforce it with your own analyses, then you can go boldly into battle, and the opening will serve you faithfully. But if you don't know, study and analyse it, but play by guesswork, after learning only the most general concepts that may be a hundred years old, this will be very foolish.

Take, for example, the Levitsky Variation: 1.d4 d5 2.♙g5 (**Chapter Two**). For many years everything in this variation was simple and understandable. Black brought out his knight to f6. White captured it

with his bishop (which was why, in fact, he placed it on g5), and Black recaptured with the e7-pawn. Then White arranged his pieces according to the following pattern: bishop on d3, queen on f3, knights on d2 and e2, pawn on c3. Kingside castling and then a rapid storming of the king: h2-h4, g2-g4 and so on.

Here you can indeed manage without any fundamental knowledge. You arrange the pieces as you have been taught, and then off you go.

But this was all in the past. All this long ago became outdated and moss-covered. All this is no longer applicable.

Firstly, Black has learned how to combat this set-up. It has transpired that, if Black plays competently, his pawns reach the white king more quickly. In addition, avoidance variations have been found in which a race is not necessary. Why, for example, should Black be in a hurry to castle kingside?

Secondly, out of nowhere the variation with the capture on f6 with the g7-pawn appeared. Here there are quite different ideas – they must be known, but how, if you don't work on the variation beforehand?

Thirdly (and most importantly), completely new variations have appeared. They have appeared, developed and produced extensive shoots. It can no longer be said that 2...♘f6 is the main move. 2...c5!? is played. 2...f6!? is played – a strange idea! – 2...c6!? and 2...h6 3.♙h4 c6!? are played, after which without preparation beforehand it is altogether difficult for White to make even one move! If you play 4.♘f3, you have to be ready to sacrifice your central pawn: 4...♗b6 5.♙c1 g5 6.♙g3 g4 7.♘e5 ♗xd4 (the Hodgson Gambit). If you play 4.e3, you have to be ready for the ambitious Gelfand variation: 4...♗b6 5.b3 e5!? or 5.♙c1 e5!? Everywhere the variations are forceful, concrete, 'modern', so to speak – i.e. 'move by move'. How can you play them without preparation? You can, of course, if you are not bothered about the result.

Much of what is given in the book is given for the first time – in the Russian language, at any event. This is the first time there has been a detailed, painstakingly written analysis of the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit (**Chapter Four**). Once again it may seem that the gambit is an unpretentious one which can be played 'at sight': 1.d4 d5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4!? de 4.f3!?, and then know where to develop the pieces, after which they can be launched into all sorts of combinations.

Nothing of the sort! If you throw your pieces about unthinkingly, you will be easily beaten. But if you make a proper study of the variations suggested and add your own to them, it can be a very formidable weapon.

In a match for the world championship it may not be employed, but in a club tournament or a keen friendly game – it is just the job. A very formidable weapon, with its traps, characteristics, branches and paths – and, of course, with its absolutely original theory, unlike anything else.

For the first time in the Russian language a detailed account of the modern state of affairs in the Veresov Opening is given (**Chapter Five**). Again it can be confidently stated that the ancient impressions of this opening are out of date. How was it regarded earlier? You played 1.d4 d5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♙g5, and then, according to circumstances, you either captured on f6, or advanced e2-e4. There were no variations with an especially accurate move order, so that little thought was needed. You played it, and looked to see how it turned out.

Everything is different from how it was in the past. Again a new theory has developed – forceful, modern, ‘move by move’. Take, for example, just one variation: 1.d4 d5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♙g5 ♙f5 4.f3 ♖bd7 5.♘xd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 h6 7.♙h4 ♖e3 – it is inconceivable to hope to figure it out without preparation. Traps and pitfalls on every move – even on every half-move. And yet the modern theory of this variation extends to move 20 and is proceeding even further!

In **Chapter Three** the variation 1.d4 d5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♙f4 g6 4.♘f3 ♙g7 is studied. In the Queen’s Pawn Opening it is not a frequent guest, although a welcome one. More often it arises as a kind of ‘anti-Grünfeld’ (1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♙f4 ♙g7 4.♘c3!?, and if Black is afraid of e2-e4, he replies 4...d5); thus it turns out that, by studying it, you obtain two variations instead of one. You can employ it in reply to 1...d5, as well as in reply to 1...♘f6. And it is an intricate variation, in which for an unprepared opponent it will be rather difficult to find his way.

Chapter One covers all kinds of rarities and, above all, ‘oldies’, such as 2.e3, 2.c3... It is probably not worth playing these, but to see how they have been played is very interesting. The modern-day elite, migrating from Wijk aan Zee to Linares, and from there on to Dortmund, increasingly play the Chelyabinsk Variation or the Petroff Defence – and for both sides. So that, when you read the first chapter, you will see that essentially nothing has changed. A hundred years ago it was just the same, except that the top grandmasters of those times, travelling from Vienna to Prague, crossed swords in the 1.d4 d5 2.e3 ♘f6 3.♙d3 variation. And also for both sides!

The book is equipped with a detailed **Index of Variations**, and at the end some **Illustrative Games** are given. Repetition is the mother of

learning, and these games serve precisely this aim. They are analysed in such detail, with references to the appropriate pages in the theoretical section, that by playing them through you will as though look at the entire book anew.

Good luck! And don't forget about **Volume Two**. There we will be talking about 1.d4 d5 2.♘f3.

And you will also get more than you bargained for.