

Bill Harvey

The Gambit Files

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Tactical Themes to Sharpen Your Play



BOSTON

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Introduction

Long before I learned how to read chess notation, I remember marveling over the final position in the famous “Shower of Gold” game, Levitsky-Marshall, Breslau 1912. Notation can make a game permanent, but it is the winning combination that captures a young explorer’s attention. In any opening, characteristic strategies yield typical tactics. A good grounding in the combinations that we are likely to face in the opening we wish to master gives us a clearer understanding and appreciation of that opening.

Gambits are a remedy for chessplayers who have become complacent. As King Solomon would say, “Don’t set your heart on your wealth, but never say, ‘I have enough.’” Studying gambits makes us better people: There’s greed and fear, along with braggadocio and uncertainty – and to some extent, there’s an equal measure of each. This is exactly what gets in the way of formalized gambit study. Memorizing lines often leads to cold, unemotional middlegames. This is not really what the student seeks.

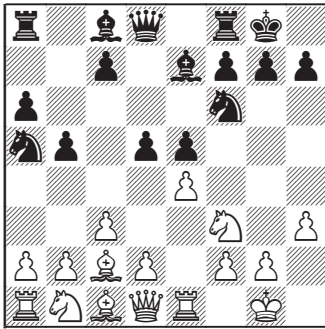
For this book I have reviewed thousands of chess games for interesting combinations, relying on the engines *Rybka 3* and *Fritz 6* to verify that the combinations here are sound and unique. These positions should give the reader a good idea of the kind of power that must be harnessed, or faced, in a gambit. Following the review of the themes and strategies for each gambit, I have provided a collection of puzzles taken from miniatures to help to improve the reader’s understanding of the variation. The solutions are given at the end of the book, with their starting diagrams for convenience.

*Bill Harvey
Alexandria, Virginia
May 2010*

Chapter 10

Ruy López – Gajewski Gambit (C96)

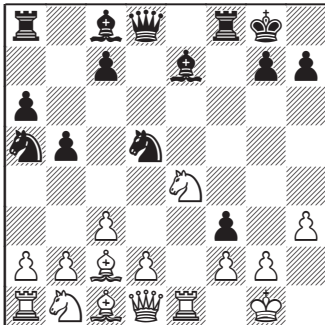
This gambit was first played in a 2007 encounter between Viktor Kuznetsov and Polish grandmaster Grzegorz Gajewski: 1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♝c6 3. ♙b5 a6 4. ♙a4 ♜f6 5. O-O ♙e7 6. ♞e1 b5 7. ♙b3 d6 8. c3 O-O 9. h3 ♜a5 10. ♙c2 d5:



Since then, the line has been played by dozens of GMs – Lékó, Carlsen, Fressinet, Wojtaszek, and Benjamin, among others. White has replied in a variety of ways; the Gajewski's debut featured the most dynamic variation:

A.

11. exd5 e4 12. ♘g5 ♜xd5 13. ♜xe4 f5 14. ♜g3 f4 15. ♜e4 f3:

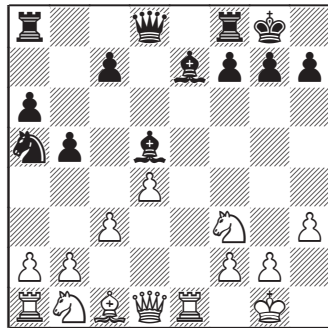


Black has created avenues of attack for most of his army and his f-pawn has made a dash for his opponent's kingside, where it will pry it open. White has but one active piece, which restricts the scope of two semi-mobilized pieces.

Rather than dance with his knight, White can opt for a quieter variation.

B.

12. ♙xe4 ♜xe4 13. ♞xe4 ♙b7 14. d4 ♙xd5 15. ♞e1:

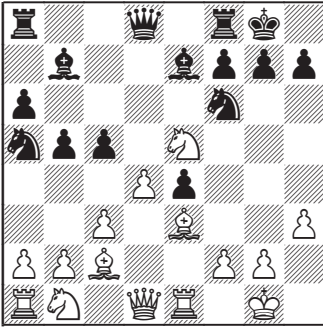


White is better developed than in the previous line, and now Black's knight looks awkwardly placed. White is up a pawn, but he has no ready targets.

The following two variations are fairly common, but they are not gambits and might be considered drawish since queens and rooks are traded early on. Still, they can be highly charged in their own right.

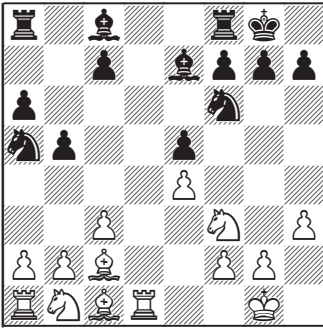
C.

11. d4 dxe4 12. ♖xe5 c5 13. ♕e3 ♖b7:

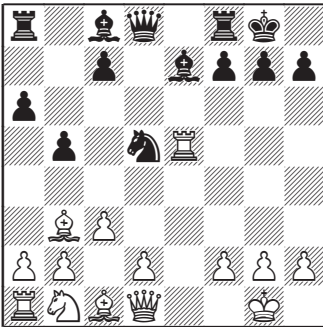


D.

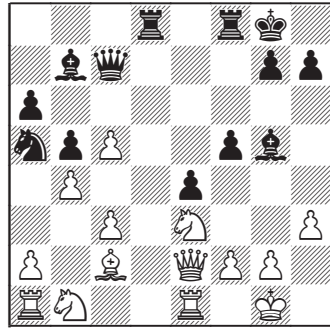
11. d3 dxe4 12. dxe4 ♖xd1 13. ♖xd1:



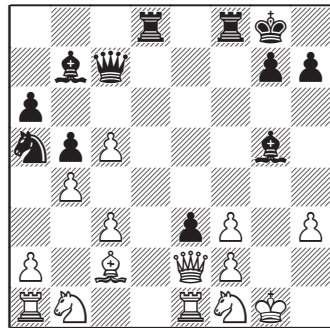
The Gajewski could be described as a delayed Marshall Attack. What are the implications? The main-line Marshall goes 8...d5 9. exd5 ♖xd5 10. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 11. ♖xe5:



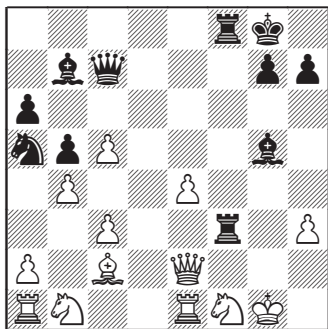
In the Gajewski, the a5-knight hinders the deployment of White's light-squared bishop to the dangerous b3-g8 diagonal, and – especially in variations B and C – opens to Black's light-squared bishop the long diagonal leading into White's castled position. Curiously, the knight is sometimes gambited itself. For example, in Volokitin – Wojtaszek, Heraklio 2007, the a5-knight was en prise to the b4-pawn for nine moves! Black's kingside attack was so strong that taking the knight was out of the question. This is the position after 19. b4:



19...f4 20. ♖f1 f3 21. gxf3 e3:

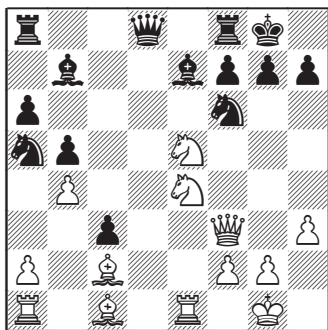


22. fxe3 (22. bxa5 exf2+ 23. ♖xf2 ♖xf3 24. ♖e2 ♖g3+ 25. ♖xg3 ♖xg3+ 26. ♖f1 ♖xh3+ 27. ♖g1 ♖h1+ 28. ♖f2 ♖g2#) 22...♖xf3 23. e4 (23. bxa5 ♖g3+ 24. ♖xg3 ♖xg3+) 23... ♖df8:



24. ♖g2 (24. bxa5 ♗h4 25. ♖c1 ♗f2+ 26. ♗xf2 ♜xf2 27. ♗bd2 ♜xd2 28. ♗b3+ ♔h8 29. ♗xd2 ♖g3+) 24...♗h4 (24... ♗f4 25. ♗bd2 ♜f2) 25. ♗bd2 ♜xc3 26. ♜ec1 ♗c8 27. bxa5 ♗xc5+ 28. ♔h1 ♜f2 29. ♗b3+ ♔h8 30. ♜xc3 ♗xc3 31. ♗xf2 ♗xf2 32. ♜d1 ♗xh3 33. ♗h2 ♖g3 0-1

This stratagem occurs in identical positions in Caruana – Aveskulov, Plovdiv 2008, and Kravtsiv – Brkić, Gaziantep 2008:

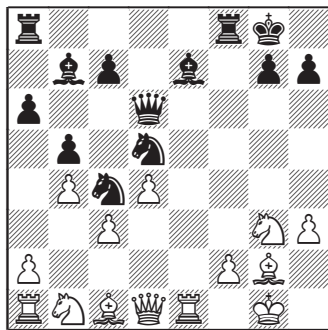


16...♗xe4 17. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 18. ♖xe4 f5 19. ♖b1 c2 20. ♖b2 ♗c4, when the knight was left hanging for four moves while taking care of other business.

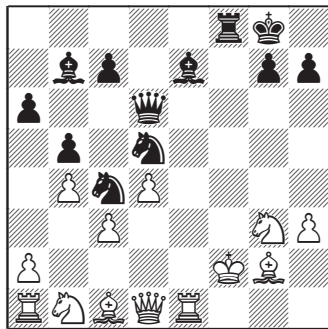
These examples with the a5-knight hanging come from Variation C above (11. d4) and are very lively. In Nyysti – Nyback, Mantta 2008, the knight remained en prise on b4 to the c3-pawn for four moves.

Let us examine other dynamic positions from this young gambit. The following position is derived from Variation A. White's lack of development is only too clear. Black leads off with a large sacrifice.

**Ljuboje Bekić – Dagur Arngrimsson
Obrenovac 2008**



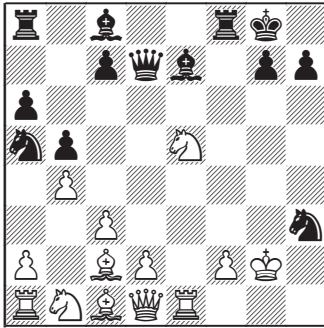
20...♜xf2 21. ♔xf2 (21. ♗e4 ♜xg2+ 22. ♔xg2 ♗de3+ 23. ♗xe3 ♗xe4+) ♜f8+:



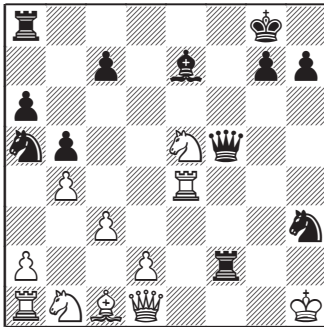
22. ♔g1 (22. ♗f5 ♜xf5+ 23. ♔g1 ♖g3 24. ♜xe7 ♗xe7 25. ♖e2 ♗xg2 26. ♖xg2 ♖e1+ 27. ♔h2 ♜f2; 22. ♗f3 ♗xc3 23. ♖d3 [23. ♗xc3 ♗h4 24. ♜e5 ♗xf3 25. ♖xf3 ♖xd4+ 26. ♜e3 ♜xf3+ 27. ♔xf3 ♗xg3] ♗h4 24. ♜g1 ♗xg3+ 25. ♜xg3 [25. ♔g2 ♗h4 26. ♗d5+] ♗e4+) 22... ♖xg3 23. ♜f1 ♗de3 24. ♜f8+ ♗xf8 25. ♖e2 ♗xg2 26. ♖f2 ♖xh3 0-1

The attack below is relatively common in the Gajewski Gambit. As noted above, it can be argued that placing the knight on a5 clears the a8-h1 diagonal and enables Black's light-squared bishop to attack at a moment's notice.

**Sara Jaćimović – Regina Pokorna
Rijeka 2009**



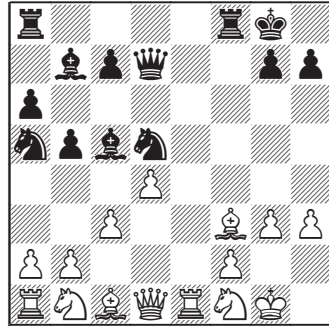
20... ♖xf2+ 21. ♔h1 ♙b7+ (21... ♙d8)
22. ♙e4 ♙xe4+ 23. ♖xe4 ♚f5:



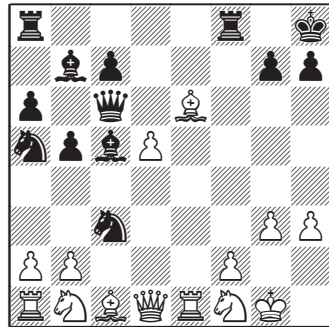
24. ♖e1 (24. ♚g4 ♖f1+ 25. ♔h2 ♖h1+
26. ♔xh1 ♜f2+) ♚f4 25. ♜f3
(25. ♜g4 ♚g3) ♙d6 0-1

There is a great number of hanging pieces in the following game, also stemming from Variation A. How is it possible for White to go nineteen moves and move hardly any pieces off the first rank?

**Leon Mazi – Manfred Freitag
Austria 2009**



19... ♜xc3 20. ♙g4 (20. bxc3 ♙xf3
threatening 21... ♚xh3) ♚c6 21. ♙e6+
(21. d5 ♙xf2+ 22. ♔h2 ♜xd1 23. dxc6
♙xe1 24. cxb7 ♜xb7) ♔h8 22. d5:



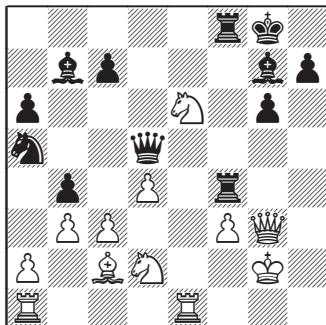
22... ♙xf2+ (22... ♚xe6 23. ♖xe6 [23.
dxe6 ♖xf2 24. ♜e3 ♖g2+ 25. ♔h1 ♙xe3
26. ♚f3 {26. ♙xe3 ♜xd1}] ♙xf2+ 24.
♔h2 ♜xd1) 23. ♔h2 ♜xd1 24. dxc6
♙xe1 25. cxb7 ♖ae8 26. ♙d7 ♖e2+ 27.
♔g1 ♙f2+ 28. ♔h1 ♙a7 29. ♙f4 ♜f2+
30. ♔g2 ♜d3+ 31. ♔f3 ♖f2+ 32. ♔e4
♜c5+ 33. ♔d4 0-1

The Gajewski has attracted the attention of some of the world's top players. It offers an abundant new source of tactics for the Ruy specialist to master. The line has performed well for Black, but White can play it profitably too.

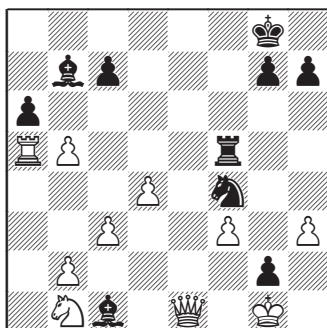
Puzzles

The process of learning of any opening can benefit from examining the typical tactics that feature in it. As with the other chapters, the following is not meant as an exhaustive compendium, but rather as an overview of the kinds of positions and the types of weaknesses to be found in this variation. Black is the one offering the gambit, however, so his/her tactics have to be the most telling. (Solutions on p. 134.)

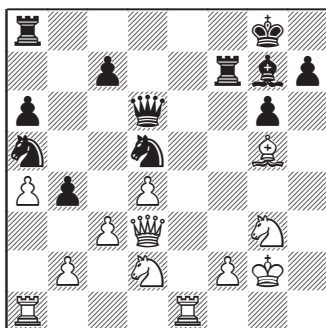
Black to move:



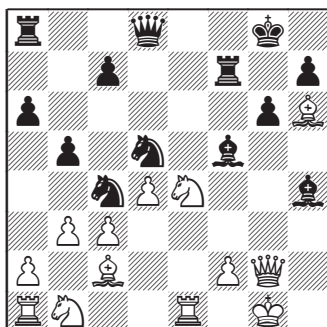
Black to move:



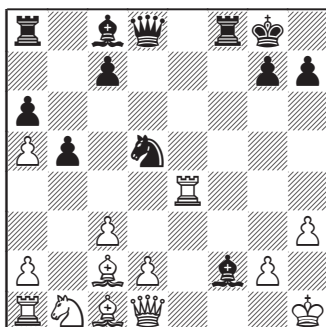
Black to move:



Black to move:

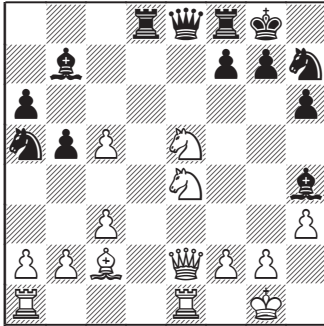


Black to move:

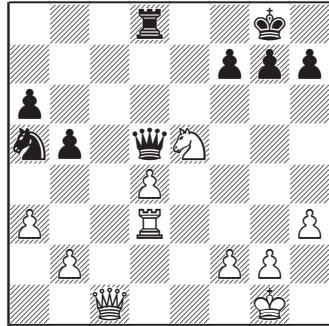


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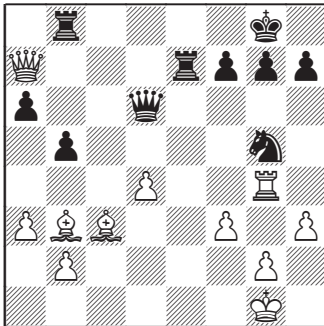
White to move:



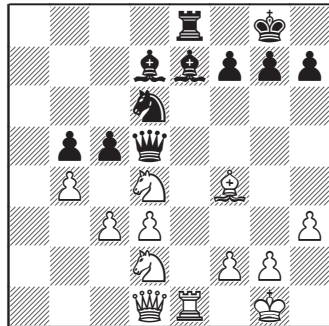
White to move:



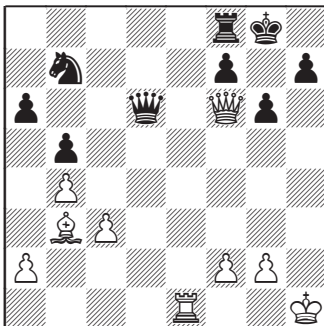
White to move:



White to move:



White to move:



White to move:

