

# Contents

Symbols	5	
Bibliography	5	
Dedication	5	
Introduction	6	
Overview	8	
<b>1</b>	<b>Beating the Grünfeld Defence</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1	Starting Out	10
1.2	Typical Endgames	11
1.3	Early Deviations	16
1.4	The 5...♘e4 Continuation	28
1.5	Black's 12th-Move Deviations	38
1.6	The 12...e5 Central Break	47
1.7	Illustrative Games	51
<b>2</b>	<b>Beating the Benko/Volga Gambit</b>	<b>56</b>
2.1	Starting Out	56
2.2	Typical Endgames	56
2.3	The 4...b4 Variation	58
2.4	The 4...♙b7 Variation	61
2.5	The 4...bxc4 Variation	65
2.6	The 4...g6 Variation	70
2.7	The Blumenfeld Gambit	73
2.8	Illustrative Games	82
<b>3</b>	<b>Beating the Modern Defence</b>	<b>86</b>
3.1	Starting Out	86
3.2	Typical Endgames	86
3.3	Black's 3rd-Move Deviations	88
3.4	The 3...d6 Variation	93
3.5	Illustrative Games	102
<b>4</b>	<b>Beating the Modern Benoni</b>	<b>105</b>
4.1	Starting Out	105
4.2	Typical Endgames	105

4.3	Black Avoids ...exd5	107
4.4	The Snake Benoni	109
4.5	The 8...♗g4 Variation	113
4.6	The Main Line without 9...b5	115
4.7	The Main Line with 9...b5	128
4.8	Illustrative Games	136
<b>5</b>	<b>Beating the King's Indian Defence</b>	<b>139</b>
5.1	Starting Out	139
5.2	Typical Endgames	139
5.3	The Early ...♞bd7 Variation	142
5.4	Black's 5th-Move Deviations	146
5.5	The 5...♗g4 Variation	152
5.6	The Exchange Variation	156
5.7	7 d5: Introduction and 7...♞h5	165
5.8	7 d5 ♞e8	167
5.9	7 d5 ♞a6	169
5.10	The Main Line 7 d5 a5 with ...♞c5	176
5.11	Illustrative Games	185
	Index of Variations	189

## 2 Beating the Benko/Volga Gambit

### 2.1 Starting Out

The Benko/Volga Gambit (1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5) is a dangerous weapon in Black's hands, especially when the player with White does not know how to handle it. If White accepts the pawn sacrifice he will have to combat Black's harmonious development and natural queen-side play.

The founding father of the Benko Gambit is the 78-year-old Hungarian/American GM Pal Benko (twice a World Championship Candidate). In Russia it is called the Volga Gambit, probably on Cold War grounds! It is interesting to note how GM Pal Benko recollects the early history of his gambit: "When I lived in America, I worked out a new opening. In the beginning, I used to call it the Benoni Counter-gambit. In the 1950s, some players – especially the Swedish elite: Ståhlberg, Stoltz and Lundin – played ...b5 only after Black had castled, and White closed the centre with d5 as a reaction to their pawn move ...c5. As I pushed the b-pawn already on move 3 in an attempt to undermine the centre, a new system appeared in tournament practice. When my book *The Benko Gambit* was published in 1973, I toured the United States in order to popularize it. In my simuls, I let all my opponents have White if they were willing to play against the Benko Gambit. I beat all of them. If I remember correctly, I lost only two games with this opening, but in those I had to play against my own weapon as White..."

I strongly believe that White should not be in a hurry to 'win' the offered pawn immediately! Thus, my suggestion is to aim for a slow fight with 4 ♘f3. In most cases White achieves a healthy spatial advantage and good piece-play. Of course things are not that easy, but, at least, if White knows what to do he has no cause for worry! Here is the debut game of this opening:

R. Grau – Guerra Boneo  
*Buenos Aires 1924*

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f3 c5 3 d5 b5 4 c4 bxc4 5 ♖c3 d6  
6 e4 g6 7 ♙xc4 ♗fd7 8 ♙f4 ♙g7 9 ♖d2 0-0 10  
0-0 ♗b6 11 ♙e2 ♗d8 12 ♙h6 a5 13 ♙xg7  
♙xg7 14 ♗fe1 ♖c7 15 ♗ac1 ♖b8 16 ♗d1 ♗d8  
17 ♖c3+ f6 18 ♗e3 ♗f8 19 ♙d1 ♗d7 20 ♗g5  
♗b7 21 f4 a4 22 ♗f3 ♗bd7 23 ♗c4 ♗b6 24  
♗xb6 ♗xb6 25 e5 ♗a7 26 exf6+ exf6 27 ♙xa4  
♗b4 28 ♙b3 ♗xf4 29 ♗e8 ♖b7 30 ♗ce1 ♗b4  
31 ♗xf8 1-0

### 2.2 Typical Endgames

In this section I shall present two interesting and characteristic endgames of the 4 ♘f3 variation against the Benko/Volga Gambit.

#### Endgame 1

Dobosz – Trauth  
*Zurich 1997*

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f3 c5 3 d5 b5 4 c4 bxc4 5 ♖c3 g6  
6 e4 d6 7 ♗d2 ♙g7 8 ♗xc4 0-0 9 ♙e2 ♙a6 10  
♗e3 ♖a5

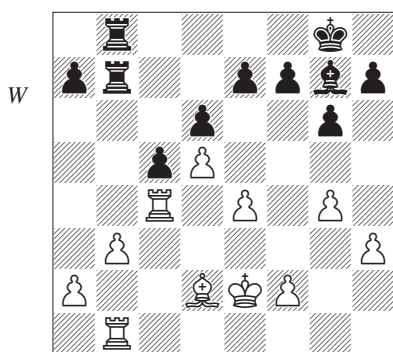
For more information on the opening play, see Section 2.6, Line B.

11 ♙d2 ♙xe2 12 ♖xe2 ♖a6 13 ♖xa6 ♗xa6  
14 ♙e2 ♗ab8 15 ♗ab1 ♗d7 16 g4 ♗c7 17  
♗hc1 ♗b5?!

Black should not exchange knights. Better is 17...♗b7 ±.

18 ♗xb5 ♗xb5 19 b3 ♗fb8 20 ♗c4 ♗e5 21  
h3 ♗xc4 22 ♗xc4 ♗5b7 (D)

This is the kind of endgame that White dreams of. Better pawn-structure (because the a7-pawn is weak and most of the black pawns can be targeted by the white bishop), better bishop, more space and, most important: lack of an active plan for Black. Considering the above we can evaluate the position as advantageous for White. Of course there is still work



to be done to convert this advantage into victory.

**23 ♖a4 ♗d4**

Seeking counterplay with 23...e6 is not that easy as the black d6-pawn becomes weak, but Black should try this sooner or later.

**24 ♗h6!? f6 25 h4! ♕f7**

25...♖e8 26 ♗e3!? ♗xe3 27 ♕xe3 e6 28 dxe6 ♖xe6 29 ♕f4 is also clearly better for White.

**26 ♖c1**

26 ♖a6 c4!

**26...♖b4!?**

Maybe it was time for 26...e6.

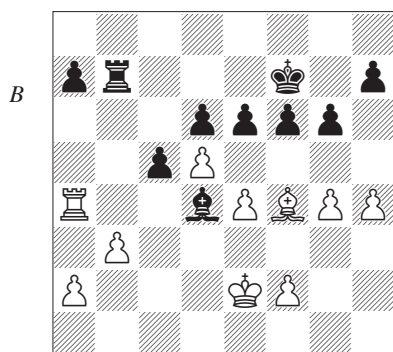
**27 ♖c4**

White correctly avoids 27 ♖xa7 c4 28 ♖d7! ♕e8 29 ♖c7 cxb3 30 axb3 ♖xb3, which would surrender part of his advantage.

**27...♖xc4 28 ♖xc4 e6**

If Black stays passive then White will make considerable progress with f3, ♗d2, ♕d3-c4, ♖a4 and b4-b5.

**29 ♖a4 ♖b7 30 ♗f4 (D)**



**30...e5?!**

An absolutely mistaken idea. Black had to try 30...exd5 31 exd5 ♗e5 32 ♗e3 f5 33 f4 ♗g7

34 g5 where, although White stands better, there still lies a fight ahead. Now the d4-bishop is a 'tall pawn'.

**31 ♗h6 g5?**

This loses quickly, but the passive 31...♕e7 32 f3 ♕f7 33 ♖a6 ♕e7 34 ♕d3 ♗b2 35 ♗d2 ♗d4 36 ♕c4 ♕d7 37 b4 was hopeless anyway.

**32 hxg5 ♕g6 33 ♖a6! ♖d7 34 ♗f8**

Winning the house!

**34...♕xg5 35 f3 c4 36 ♗xd6 cxb3 37 axb3 h5 38 gxh5 f5 39 h6 fxe4 40 fxe4 ♖f7 41 ♗b4 ♕f4 42 ♕d3 ♗e3 43 ♖a1 1-0**

## Endgame 2

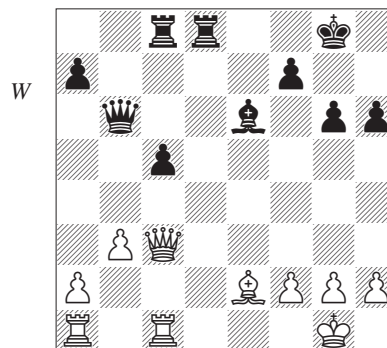
Sveshnikov – Mikhalchishin

USSR Ch, Frunze 1981

**1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♗f3 c5 3 d5 b5 4 c4 bxc4 5 ♗c3 g6 6 e4 d6 7 ♗d2 ♗g7 8 ♗xc4 0-0 9 ♗e2 ♗bd7**

For more information on this line, see Section 2.6, Line B.

**10 ♗g5 h6 11 ♗d2 ♗b6 12 0-0 e6 13 dxe6 ♗xe6 14 ♗e3 d5 15 exd5 ♗fxd5 16 ♗exd5 ♗xd5 17 ♖c1 ♗xc3 18 ♗xc3 ♗xc3 19 ♖xc3 ♖b6 20 ♖fc1 ♖fd8 21 b3 ♖ac8 (D)**



White's advantage is obvious, although not that significant. His pawn-structure is much better as the black queenside pawns are weak, but on the other hand Black's pieces are well placed and he has some small tactics at his disposal.

**22 ♖e3! h5**

Black could also play 22...♕g7 23 ♗c4 but his king on g7 might prove exposed in the future, as a check on the long diagonal would be useful for White in certain variations.

**23 ♗c4**

Nothing is gained by 23 ♖h6 ♖a5!.

**23...♖c6**

This is better than 23...♙xc4 24 ♖xc4 ♗d4 25 ♖ac1 ♗cd8 26 h3 with a comfortable advantage for White.

**24 h3**

Sooner or later White had to deal with his back-rank problems.

**24...♗d4!**

Black correctly seeks activity.

**25 ♙e2**

Unfortunately the planned 25 ♙xe6 ♗xe6 26 ♖c3 (26 ♖g5 ♗e2! 27 ♖xc5 ♗dd2 28 ♗f1 ♖xa2 => 26...♗e2 27 ♗c2 ♖xc2 28 ♖xc2 ♗d6! only leads to equality. White could continue with 25 ♙f1!? a5 26 ♗c3.

**25...♗cd6!**

Preferring activity to the passive defence of his weaknesses!

**26 ♖g5?!**

Throwing away his small advantage. With 26 ♗c3! White could retain some pressure, as the active 26...♗d2? 27 ♙d3! is not playable for Black.

**26...♗d5 27 ♖e3 ♗d4?!**

27...♖b4! is OK for Black.

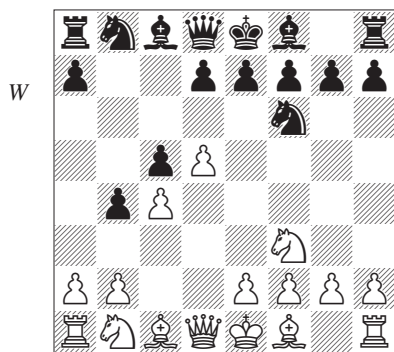
**28 ♖g5?!**

White shouldn't have accepted the draw by threefold repetition. 28 ♗c3 was called for.

**28...♗d5 29 ♖e3 ♗d4 1/2-1/2**

## 2.3 The 4...b4 Variation

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 ♗f3 b4 (D)



Black closes the queenside, planning to concentrate on the other side of the board. Also it should be mentioned that the black b4-pawn takes away the c3-square from the white knight,

at the same time gaining space on the queenside. On the other hand, White's centre is not under pressure any more.

**5 a3!**

Probably best. Other moves are harmless; e.g., 5 b3 d6 6 ♗bd2 e5! 7 e4 g6 was fine for Black in Cebalo-Barlov, Vršac 1985.

Black can now choose between:

**A: 5...♗a6** 59

**B: 5...a5** 59

**C: 5...g6** 60

Or:

a) 5...♖b6?! (not the best square for the black queen) 6 axb4 ♖xb4+ 7 ♗c3 ♗e4 8 ♙d2 ♗xd2 9 ♖xd2 ♙a6 (9...♖xc4? 10 e3 ♖b4 11 ♗b5! ♖xd2+ 12 ♗xd2 ♗d8 13 ♗g5 ±) 10 ♗b5 ♖xd2+ 11 ♗xd2 ♙xb5 12 cxb5 g6 13 ♗e5 ♙g7 14 ♗c4 ± Antić-Nestorović, Dimitrovgrad 2003. The c4-knight is a really strong piece and the open a-file an important asset.

b) 5...bxa3?! (relinquishing control of the c3-square so early can hardly suit Black) 6 ♖xa3 g6 7 ♗c3 ♙g7 8 e4 d6 9 ♙d3 0-0 10 h3 ♗a6 11 0-0 ♗b4 12 ♙b1 ♗e8 13 ♙f4 ± M.Kopylov-Lange, Kiel 2003. White controls more space and can apply pressure either down the a-file or in the centre with the e5 advance.

c) 5...e6 and now:

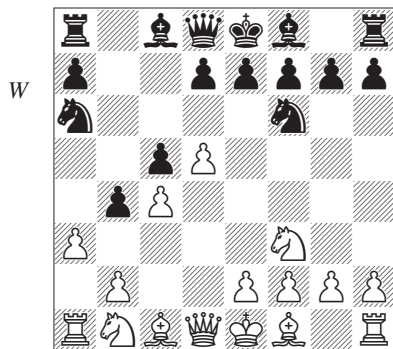
c1) 6 ♙g5 h6 7 ♙h4! (7 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 8 ♖c2 ♗a6 9 e4 ♙d6 10 ♗bd2 ♖b8 11 ♖b1 0-0 12 ♙d3 e5 13 0-0 ♙c7 14 ♗e1 d6 15 g3 bxa3 16 bxa3 ♙a5 is unclear, Chapman-Henri, corr. 1987) 7...♖b6 8 ♙xf6 gxf6 9 e4 ♗a6 10 ♗bd2 ♙g7 11 ♖b1 bxa3 12 bxa3 ♖a5 13 ♖c1 0-0 14 ♙d3 d6 15 0-0 ± Magerramov-Nikolaev, Budapest 1990.

c2) 6 ♖c2!? exd5? (6...d6 7 e4 ±) 7 cxd5 ♙b7 8 e4 ♖e7 9 ♙d3 ♙xd5 (9...♗xe4 10 0-0 with compensation) 10 0-0 b3 (10...♗xe4 11 ♗e1 f5 12 ♗bd2 ±) 11 ♖d1 ♙e6 12 e5 ♗g4 13 h3 ♗h6 14 ♗c3 ♖d8 15 ♙e4 ♗c6 16 ♗d5 ♗f5 17 ♖xb3 ± Gual Pascual-Castro Molero, Manresa 1995.

c3) 6 dxe6! (the most precise, as Black's centre is much less flexible and dangerous than in the Blumenfeld Gambit) 6...fxe6 (6...dxe6 7 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 8 ♗e5! ♗e8 9 axb4 cxb4 10 ♗d2! ♙d6 11 ♗d3 ±) 7 axb4 cxb4 8 ♙f4 ♖b6 9 ♗bd2 ♙c5 10 e3 0-0 11 ♙d3 ♙b7 12 0-0 ± Glaser-Henri, corr. 1987.

A)

5...♘a6 (D)



6 axb4

Although the text-move clarifies matters regarding the pawn-structure, White has some equally viable alternatives:

a) 6 ♖bd2 g6 7 e4 d6 8 e5 dxe5 9 ♗xe5 ♕d6 10 ♗df3 ♖g7 11 ♗d3 0-0 12 0-0 bxa3 13 ♗xa3 ♗b4 (De Boer-G.Janssen, Enschede 1998) 14 ♗e1! ±.

b) 6 g3 e6 (6...g6 7 ♖g2 d6 8 b3 {8 axb4 ± cxb4? 9 ♗xa6!} 8...♖g7 9 ♗b2 0-0 10 0-0 ♗h5 11 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 12 ♗e1 ♕b6 13 ♗d2 bxa3 14 ♗xa3 ♗b4 15 ♗e4 ♖f5 16 ♗c3 ± Davies-Votava, Rishon le Zion 1993) 7 ♖g2 ♗b7 8 ♗h4 exd5 9 cxd5 g6 10 0-0 ♖g7 11 ♗d2 0-0 (11...♗xd5 12 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 13 ♗c4 with compensation) 12 ♗c4 d6 13 ♖f4 ♗e8 14 ♗f3 bxa3 15 ♗xa3 ♗b4 16 e4 a5 17 ♗e1 ± Razuvaev-Kotronias, Sochi 1989.

6...♗xb4

6...cxb4?! 7 ♗bd2 (7 ♗e3!? ♕c7 8 ♗bd2 ♗c5 and now 9 ♗d4 ± or 9 ♗d4 d6 10 e4!? ♗fxe4 11 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♗d3 with compensation) 7...♗c5 8 ♗b3 ♗fe4 9 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 10 ♗e3! e6 11 ♗d4 offers White an obvious plus and cannot be recommended.

7 ♗c3 d6 8 e4 g6

8...e5 9 dxe6 ♗xe6 ±.

9 ♗e2

9 e5!? is interesting: 9...dxe5 10 ♗xe5 ♖g7 11 ♗e3 ♖f5 12 ♗d3 ♗d7 13 ♗a4 ♗b8 (13...♕a5! 14 ♗xb4 ♕xb4+ 15 ♗d2 ♕b8! ∞) 14 ♗axc5 ♗xc5? (14...♗xb2! 15 ♗xb4 ♗xb4 16 ♕d2! ♗xa1 17 ♕xb4 0-0 18 ♗e2 ∞) 15 ♗xc5 ♗xd3+ 16 ♗xd3 ♕c7 17 ♗xa7 (17 ♕a4+ ±) 17...♕e5+ 18 ♗e2?! (18 ♗e3 is much better for White)

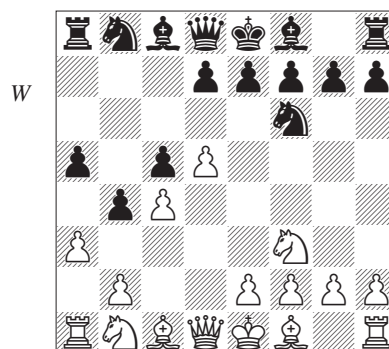
18...♗xb2 19 ♗e3 ± Vincze-Szieberth, Budapest 1997.

9...♖g7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♗f4 ♖g4 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♗d7 14 ♕d2 ♗e8 15 ♗a3

± I.Sokolov-Ki.Georgiev, Sarajevo 1998.

B)

5...a5 (D)



Black decides to relinquish control of the d4-square in order to obtain, as compensation, the c5-square for one of his knights. Another positive aspect for Black is the flexible queen-side pawn-majority (b4 + a5 against b2) that arises, which can later cause White problems. However, in the middlegame the central squares are more important.

6 ♗bd2

White refrains from the immediate capture on b4, although that option is by no means bad: 6 axb4 cxb4 7 g3 (White refrains from the e4 advance as he wants to strengthen his control of c6; after placing a knight on that square, the g2-bishop will support it) 7...g6 8 ♖g2 ♖g7 9 0-0 d6 10 ♗d4 (10 ♗e3!? 0-0 11 ♗d4 ♗a6 12 ♗bd2 ± Nass-Soyez, Reims 2004) 10...0-0 11 h3 ♗d7 12 ♗e3 ♗a6 (12...♕c8!? 13 ♗d2? {13 ♗h2 ♕xc4 14 ♗d2 and the weakness of c6 gives White compensation} 13...♗xh3 14 ♗xh3 ♕xh3 15 ♗2f3 ♗g4 16 ♖f4 ♗e5 17 e3 h6 18 ♕d3 ♖f6 19 e4 ♗xd4 20 ♕xd4 g5 21 ♗c1 f5 22 b3 ♗d7 23 ♗b2 ♗de5 → Truchot-Soyez, Clichy 2002) 13 ♗d2 ♕c7 14 ♕c2 a4 15 ♗xa4! ♗xa4 16 ♕xa4 ♗d7 17 ♗b1 ♗fc8 18 ♕c2 ♕b7 19 ♗c6 ♗e5 20 ♗b3 ♗b8 21 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 22 c5 ♕b5 23 c6 gives White more than enough compensation and a small advantage, Gulko-D.Gurevich, USA Ch (Durango) 1992.