

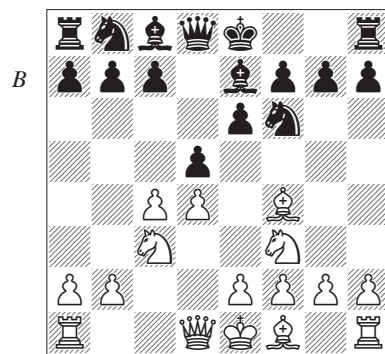
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## 2 QGD: Main Line with 5 ♖f4

We'll dive straight into an investigation of the line that lies at the very heart of our repertoire.

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♗c3 ♙e7 5 ♙f4 (D)



5...0-0

Or:

a) 5...♗bd7? is a move you're only likely to see at lower club level, as it allows 6 ♗b5 ♙b4+ 7 ♗d2, and now:

a1) 7...e5 8 dxe5 ♗e4 (8...♗h5 9 e3 ♗xf4 10 exf4 is miserable for Black) 9 e6!? ♙xd2+ 10 ♙xd2 fxe6 11 cxd5 and Black remains a pawn down since 11...exd5? loses to 12 ♙f4.

a2) 7...♗e4 8 ♗xc7+ ♖xc7 9 ♙xc7 ♙xd2+ 10 ♖xd2 ♗xd2 11 ♗xd2 gives White an extra pawn.

a3) 7...♙a5 8 ♖a4! ♙xd2+ 9 ♗xd2 and, no matter how Black continues,

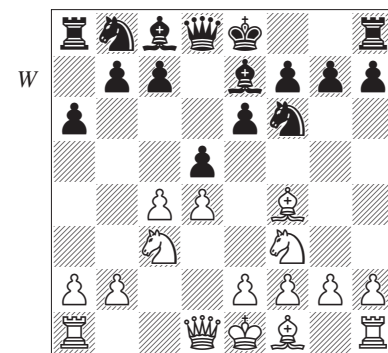
White wins a pawn for inadequate compensation.

b) 5...♗h5?! and then:

b1) 6 ♙d2 0-0 (6...♗f6 7 ♖c2 0-0 8 e4 has scored well for White, though 8...c5 keeps the game competitive) 7 e3 ♗f6 8 ♖c1 is a stodgy set-up, but White's extra tempo has some value.

b2) 6 ♙e5 ♗c6 (6...f6 7 ♙g3 is pleasant for White, as Black lacks a natural way to unravel his kingside) 7 e3 should favour White; e.g., 7...dxc4 8 ♙xc4 0-0 9 ♖c2 ♗f6 10 ♖d1 ♗b4 11 ♖b1 b6 12 ♗g5 g6 13 h4 with an attack, Shulman-La Rota, US tt (Internet) 2011.

c) 5...a6 (D) and here:



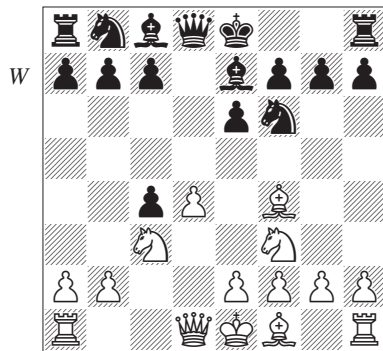
c1) 6 e3 dxc4 7 ♙xc4 (7 a4!?) 7...b5 8 ♙d3 ♙b7 doesn't seem to offer White a great deal. Black's delay in

castling enables him to prepare a quick ...c5: 9 ♖c1 (9 ♗c2 ♗bd7, Šolak-Miladinović, Serbian Ch, Vršac 2007, 10 a4 b4 11 ♗e4 c5 12 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 13 dxc5 ♜c8 14 c6 ♜xc6 is very close to equal) 9...♗bd7 10 a4 b4 11 ♗b1 c5 12 0-0-0 13 ♗bd2 ♜c8 14 ♗e2 cxd4 15 exd4 with maybe a tiny edge for White, Schlechter-Von Popiel, Vienna 1899/00.

c2) 6 c5 0-0 7 e3 transposes to 5...0-0 6 e3 a6 7 c5.

d) 5...c5 6 dxc5 ♗a6 (other moves will transpose back to 5...0-0 6 e3 c5 lines) 7 cxd5 (White can also change direction completely by 7 g3) 7...♗xd5 8 ♗xd5 exd5 9 e3 (9 e4!?) 9...♗xc5 10 ♕b5+ (10 ♕e5 0-0 11 ♕e2 is a position we see in the line 5...0-0 6 e3 ♗bd7 7 ♕e2 c5; White's edge may be small, but he has scored very well in practice) 10...♕d7 11 ♕xd7+ ♗xd7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♗e2 ♜fd8 14 ♜fd1 ♜ac8 15 ♕e5 ♗e4 16 ♜ac1 ♗a4 was claimed by Dautov to give Black enough counterplay, but it's hard to believe White doesn't still have the standard edge.

e) 5...dxc4 (D) and now:



e1) 6 e3 ♗d5 7 ♕xc4 ♗xf4 8 exf4 is possible, testing a structure that we shall see several times in the ♕f4 line.

e2) 6 ♗a4+ is of course also viable, and should be compared with our lines against the QGA:

e21) 6...♗c6 and now 7 e4 ♕b4 8 ♕g5 represents an odd transposition to a sharp line of the Ragozin, where 8...♕d7 is considered rather satisfactory for Black, but after 7 ♗xc4 White has an edge as Black has problems generating counterplay.

e22) 6...c6 7 ♗xc4 ♗a5 was Colin Crouch's suggestion; then 8 e3 0-0 9 ♗b3 c5 leaves Black close to equality.

e3) 6 e4 and then:

e31) 6...a6 7 ♕xc4 b5 8 ♕b3 ♕b7 (8...b4 9 e5 ♗h5 10 ♗e2 and White's development advantage outweighs any positional gains that Black can claim) 9 d5 and now:

e311) 9...b4 10 dxe6 bxc3?! (after 10...fxe6, White plays 11 ♗e2 and ♗ed4) 11 exf7+ ♗f8 12 ♗d4 ♕c8 13 bxc3 c5 14 e5 ♗d5 (14...cxd4 15 exf6 ♕xf6 16 0-0 and ♜e1) 15 ♗c6 ♗xc6 16 ♕xd5 ♕b7 17 0-0 is very unpleasant for Black.

e312) 9...exd5 10 e5! ♗e4 11 ♗xd5 is at least somewhat better for White.

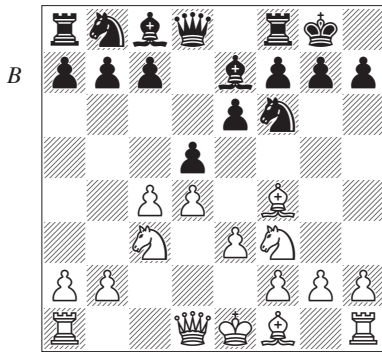
e32) 6...b5 7 ♗xb5 and here:

e321) 7...0-0 8 ♕xc4 ♗xe4 9 0-0 ♗d6 and now both 10 ♕d3 and 10 ♜c1 give White an edge at least.

e322) 7...♕b4+ 8 ♗c3 ♕xc3+ (not 8...♗xe4?? 9 ♗a4+; 8...0-0 9 ♕xc4 ♗xe4 10 ♜c1 ±) 9 bxc3 ♗xe4 10 ♗a4+ ♗d7 11 ♗c2 ♗d5 (11...♗d6 12 ♗e5) 12 ♗e5 ♕a6 13 ♕e2 intending ♕f3 with a distinct plus.

e33) 6...♗b4!? 7 ♖c2 (7 ♗g5 transposes to the main line of the Vienna, a sharp and highly theoretical line that we are avoiding in this repertoire; though if you do know something about the Vienna, then this might be a highly effective transposition, given that Black's move-order implies the Vienna isn't his first choice of defence against the Queen's Gambit; 7 ♗xc4 ♗xe4 8 ♖c2 is a gambit approach that may appeal to some players – White's development and mobility provide very reasonable compensation) 7...b5 8 e5 (8 a4 ♗b7 9 axb5 ♗xe4 10 ♖a4 is interesting, but Black is holding his own) 8...♗d5 9 ♗g5 ♖d7 10 a4!? (10 ♗e2 ♗b7 11 0-0 0-0 is rather unclear) leads to sharp and interesting play; e.g., 10...♗b7 (10...bxa4 11 ♗xc4 a3!?) 11 axb5 ♖xb5 (11...♗xc3 12 bxc3 ♗xf3 13 cxb4 ♖xd4 14 ♖c1) 12 ♗e2 with enough compensation.

6 e3 (D)



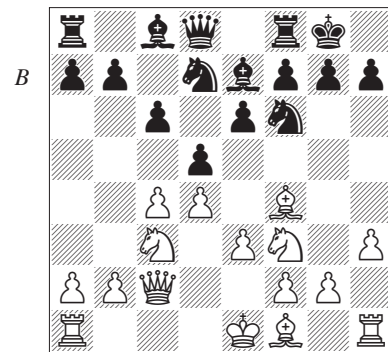
Now:

- A: 6...♗bd7 23
- B: 6...c5 25

Alternatively:

a) 6...♗h5 7 ♗e5! f6 8 ♗g3 ♗xg3 9 hxg3 leaves Black with significant problems on the kingside; even White's doubled g-pawns can prove useful as battering-rams.

b) 6...c6 is an unambitious move; indeed, it is hard to describe what positive ideas might lie behind ...c6, other than as a waiting move that reinforces the d5-pawn without creating weaknesses. Most natural replies should give White a rather pleasant game. 7 ♖c2 seems reasonable: it is the most popular, it has an excellent score in practice, and it has been Kramnik's preferred choice. 7...♗bd7 8 h3 (D).



This enjoys the same three positive features as White's previous move. Note that we have a classic 'battle for the tempo' that is seen in other lines of the QGD. In this position, White is well-placed for this battle. The move h3 is useful not only as it gives the bishop a square, but also in preparation for g4; note that leaving the rook

on a1 for now means that White retains 0-0-0 options.

b1) 8...a6 9 ♖d1 b6 (9...b5 10 c5 b4 11 ♘b1 ±) 10 ♙d3 ♙b7 11 0-0 c5 12 cxd5 exd5 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 e4 (the classic thrust to break up hanging pawns) 14...d4 15 ♘a4 gave White a workable plus in Zhigalko-Grachev, Nakhchivan 2012.

b2) 8...♙e8 9 a3 (the unpretentious 9 ♙d3 dxc4 10 ♙xc4 favours White too) 9...♘f8 10 ♙d3 (at some point in the ‘battle for a tempo’, one side has to call it a day and get on with the game, generally once they feel the opponent has made moves that are not terribly useful, or that they have neutralized his main ideas that might follow an exchange on c4; 10 ♖d1 ♘g6 11 ♙h2 ♙d6 12 ♘e5 is another way to play it) and now:

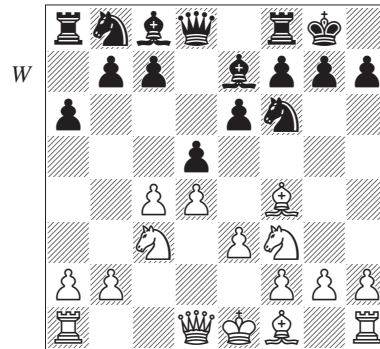
b21) 10...♘g6 11 ♙h2 ♙d6 12 ♙xd6 ♗xd6 13 0-0 dxc4 14 ♙xc4 e5 15 ♘g5 ♖f8 16 ♖ad1 ♗e7 17 ♙a2 ♙d7 (Husari – Vachier-Lagrave, Paris 2003) 18 dxe5 ♘xe5 (18...♗xe5 19 ♘ce4!?) 19 f4 ♘g6 20 e4 ±.

b22) 10...dxc4 11 ♙xc4 ♘d5 12 ♙h2 ♘xc3 13 ♗xc3 ♙d6 14 ♙xd6 ♗xd6 15 ♖c1 with a clear, though not overwhelming, advantage for White, Piket-Toth, Bundesliga 1997/8.

c) 6...a6 (*D*) and then:

c1) 7 c5 seeks an improved form of the wildly popular 6...♘bd7 7 c5 line, as Black’s move ...a6 is not so useful in this structure:

c11) 7...b6 8 cxb6 (8 b4 a5 9 a3 is possible too, of course) 8...cxb6 looks like an Exchange Slav, but significantly improved from White’s viewpoint.



c12) 7...♘h5 8 ♙d3! ♘xf4 9 exf4 and as is so often the case, White’s pawn on f4 does good work stifling Black’s pawn-breaks, while White’s remaining pieces work harmoniously with his pawn-structure; e.g., 9...♘c6 10 a3 ♙f6 (10...f5 11 h4 ♙f6 12 ♘e2 ♙d7 13 ♖c1 ♗e7 14 h5 with a nice bind, Kasparov-Speelman, Moscow Intel rapid 1995) 11 ♘e2 g6 12 0-0 ♙g7 13 b4 f6 14 ♗b3 e5 (A.David-Dervishi, Fermo 2010) 15 dxe5 fxe5 16 ♙e4 exf4 17 ♙xd5+ ♖h8 18 ♖ad1 with a pleasant advantage for White.

c13) 7...♘c6 (arguing that Black, and not White, gains from the fact that Black has played ...a6 instead of ...♘bd7) 8 h3 (8 a3 is more ambitious, planning b4 in answer to ...b6) 8...b6 9 cxb6 cxb6 10 ♙d3 with an edge for White in an Exchange Slav lookalike.

c2) 7 ♗c2 and now:

c21) 7...dxc4 8 ♙xc4 b5 9 ♙d3 ♙b7 10 0-0 ♘bd7 11 ♖fd1 and in comparison with the line we saw after 5...a6, Black’s ...c5 advance is less effective: 11...♖c8 (11...c5 12 dxc5