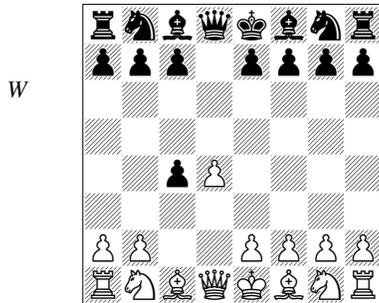


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2 Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 (D)



In common with our choice against 1 e4, we make an exchange of pawns that avoids both a blocked centre and a symmetrical pawn-structure. Our next move will be the liberating thrust ...e5 unless White prevents it!

The most common move is now 3 $\text{e}3$, when we shall transpose to a Slav line with 3...c6 (see Chapter 3). That leaves two main lines and an array of minor options:

A: 3 e3 33
B: 3 e4 35

Just one of the 'other moves' is testing, and that is only because it normally transposes to Line A:

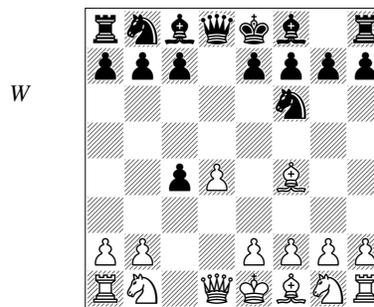
a) 3 $\text{a}3$? not only fails to prevent 3...e5!, but makes it a good deal stronger.

b) 3 g3?! e5 is likewise good for Black.

c) 3 $\text{a}4$ + is a move you normally see cited as a reason why the Queen's Gambit is not a 'real' gambit, even though after 3...c6 White can't regain the pawn immediately. Still, the position after 4 $\text{f}3$ is not so simple for Black to handle, and I shall recommend a reply that is more in keeping with our ...e5 theme: 3...d7 4 $\text{f}3$ (4 $\text{xc}4$ e5 and 4 e4 c6 5 $\text{xc}4$ e5 are unpromising for White) 4...c6 5 $\text{xc}4$ (there's little choice as Black was threatening ...b5) 5...e6 6 dxe5 $\text{e}5$ 7 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{a}5$ + 8 $\text{c}3$ $\text{xe}5$ and Black has easy development and no real

problems in this little-explored position; e.g., 9 $\text{f}4$ $\text{a}5$ (intending ...e6) 10 $\text{b}3$ $\text{f}6$ (Rook-Janisch, corr. 2017) or 9 g3 $\text{e}6$ 10 $\text{a}4$ $\text{c}5$ 11 $\text{g}2$ (Gustafsson-Semrl, Bled 1999) 11... $\text{f}6$ with very healthy development.

d) 3 $\text{f}4$?! has several good answers, including 3... $\text{f}6$ (D).



Then:

d1) 4 $\text{f}3$ b5 (don't be put off by those examples in beginner's books that show a greedy approach in the QGA failing; it is strong here!) and then:

d11) 5 $\text{c}3$ c6 6 a4 b4 7 $\text{b}1$ $\text{a}6$! and with ...e6 and ...c5 coming fast, and ...d5 and ...c3 ideas in the mix too, Black's counterplay comes before White is serious about regaining the pawn on c4.

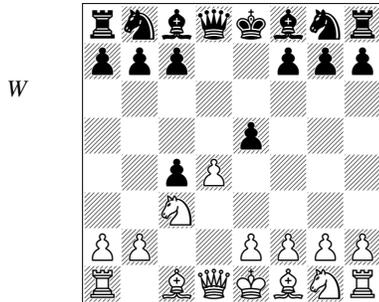
d12) 5 a4 c6 comes to the same thing after 6 $\text{c}3$, while 6 axb5 cxb5 7 $\text{c}3$ looks like a clever move-order until you see 7...d5!, holding on to the booty. Let's also note that 6 e3 e6, with ...b4(+) ideas, keeps the queenside pawns united.

d2) 4 $\text{c}3$ c6 5 a4 (5 e4?! b5) 5...d5 is good for Black; note that 6 $\text{d}2$?! e5! is back to our central theme: 7 dxe5 $\text{b}4$ 8 $\text{f}3$ $\text{a}6$ intending ...c5 and ...f5.

d3) 4 e3 b5 5 a4 (5 b3?? e5!; 5 $\text{f}3$ e6 with ...b4+ and ...c6 both on tap to keep the queenside pawns intact) 5...c6 6 $\text{c}3$ (6 axb5?! cxb5 7 $\text{f}3$ {7 b3?? e5!, Mancini-N.Pert, French

Team Ch 2004} 7...♞d5 with a solid extra pawn) 6...♞b6! denies White full compensation for the pawn.

e) 3 ♞c3 is a popular move, but after 3...e5 (D) it normally merges with the 3 e3 line. (3...a6 is a good alternative, but we shall stay with our thematic central thrust.)



Now:

e1) It is instructive just how bad 4 d5? is. This move wastes time and gives Black too many useful squares. 4...♞f6 5 ♟g5 (5 e4 b5! is simply good for Black) 5...a6 6 a4 (Vizantiadis-Spassky, Siegen Olympiad 1970) 6...h6 7 ♟xf6 ♞xf6 gives Black the bishop-pair and good development for free.

e2) 4 ♞f3 exd4 5 ♞xd4 (5 ♞xd4 a6!? covers b5 in preparation for playing ...c5) 5...♞xd4 6 ♞xd4 ♞f6 (6...a6 is also a good move) 7 ♟f4 (7 e4?! transposes to note 'b' to White's 5th move in Line B; 7 ♟g5 ♟b4 is fully OK for Black) 7...♟b4 8 ♟xc7 (8 ♞b5 ♞a6) 8...0-0 9 a3 ♞c6!? 10 ♞xc6 (10 ♞b5 ♟a5 leaves Black well placed on the queenside) 10...♟xc3+ 11 bxc3 bxc6 and the black pieces quickly reach good squares.

e3) 4 e3 will normally transpose to 3 e3 lines. 4...exd4 5 exd4 ♞f6 6 ♟xc4 ♟d6 7 ♞e2+ (the main independent idea; 7 ♞f3 0-0 8 0-0 transposes to Line A, while neither 7 ♞ge2 nor 7 ♟g5 0-0 8 ♞f3 brings White any particular benefit) 7...♞e7 and then:

e31) 8 ♟g5 0-0 9 ♞xe7 (9 0-0 h6) 9...♟xe7 10 0-0 h6 11 ♟f4 ♟f5 and the c7-pawn is tactically defended.

e32) 8 ♞xe7+ ♟xe7 9 ♞f3 (Sedlak-Indjić, Serbian Ch, Novi Sad 2018) 9...♞e8 10 0-0 ♞c6 (intending ...♟g4; 10...♟f8 11 ♞g5 ♞e7 is quieter and also OK) 11 ♞g5 (or 11 ♞e1+ ♟f8 12

♞xe8+ ♞xe8) 11...♞xd4 and both sides must be careful: 12 ♟xf7 (12 ♞xf7 ♟b4!) 12...♞d8 13 ♟c4 ♞c2 14 ♞b1 (14 ♞f7 ♟xh2+!? 15 ♟xh2 ♞d4) 14...♟f5 15 ♞f7 ♞d7 with a rough balance.

A)

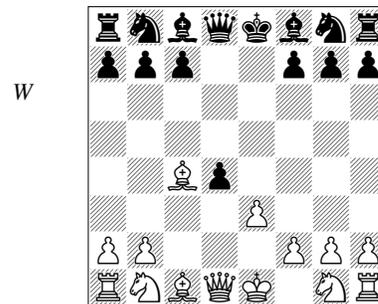
3 e3 e5

3...♟e6 is an attempt to transpose to our repertoire line 3 ♞f3 c6 4 e3 ♟e6 (see Line E of Chapter 3), but offers White some dangerous additional possibilities.

4 ♟xc4

4 ♞c3 transposes to note 'e3' to White's 3rd move above.

4...exd4 (D)



5 exd4

We now have a position that can also arise from an Exchange French. This simple recapture is the overwhelming choice, but Black should at least be aware that f7 is exposed and that White can target it in various crude ways:

a) 5 ♞h5? ♟b4+ 6 ♟d2 ♟xd2+ 7 ♞xd2 ♞e7.

b) 5 ♞b3 ♞e7 6 a3 (6 ♞f3?! ♞b4+) 6...♞c6 and with ...♞f6 and ...♟d7 in the pipeline, White will soon have to deal with ...♞a5 ideas.

c) 5 ♞f3!? ♟b4+! 6 ♟d2 ♟xd2+ 7 ♞xd2 affords Black several viable options, including 7...♞c6 8 0-0 (8 exd4 ♟g4 puts pressure on d4, Čertić-Paunović, Belgrade 1989) 8...♞f6 9 ♟b5 (9 exd4 0-0 is safe for Black, Gorovets-Bregadze, Burlingame 2015) 9...dxe3 10 ♞xe3+ ♞e7 11 ♞xe7+ ♟xe7 12 ♟xc6 bxc6 13 ♞e1+ ♟e6, when White gets enough compensation, but that is all.

5...♟d6 6 ♞f3

6 ♖c3 ♗f6 transposes to note 'e3' to White's 3rd move at the start of the chapter, while 6 ♗b3 ♖e7+ (a position dating back to 1855!) offers White nothing.

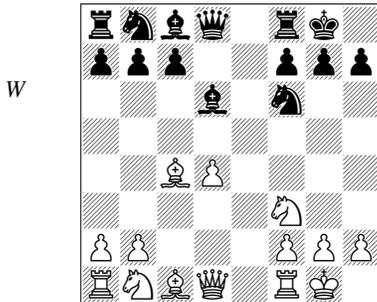
6...♗f6

Black just develops actively and trusts in the solidity of his position to combat any early aggression from White.

7 0-0

7 ♖e2+ is intended as an annoying prod, but 7...♗e7 8 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 causes Black little inconvenience apart from the sterility of the resulting positions. 9 0-0 (9 ♗f4 ♗d6 10 ♗xd6 cxd6 11 ♗c3 0-0 intending ...♗g4 and ...♗c6) 9...0-0 10 ♖e1 (or 10 ♗c3 a6 11 ♖e1, as in Aronian-Nakamura, Dubai rapid 2014, when 11...♗d6 transposes) 10...♗d6 11 ♗c3 a6 12 ♗g5 ♗bd7 (Li Chao-Alekseenko, Qinhuangdao tt 2018) and it is not clear how White can make real progress.

7...0-0 (D)



8 ♗c3

This is a particularly important position as it can also arise from a 3 ♗c3 move-order.

Other moves:

a) 8 h3 ♗c6 9 ♗c3 transposes to the main line.

b) 8 ♖e1 ♗c6 (8...♗g4?! 9 h3) 9 h3 (9 ♗c3 ♗g4 gives Black useful pressure on the d4-pawn, as does 9 ♗g5 ♗g4) 9...h6 (for both sides it is worth spending a move at this point to prevent an annoying pin; ...h6 also makes a possible home on h7 for the bishop) 10 ♗c3 transposes to the main line.

c) 8 ♗g5!? (perhaps the most important option unique to the 3 e3 line) 8...♗c6 9 h3 (9 ♗c3 transposes to the note to White's 9th move) invites 9...h6 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♗g3, when Black is

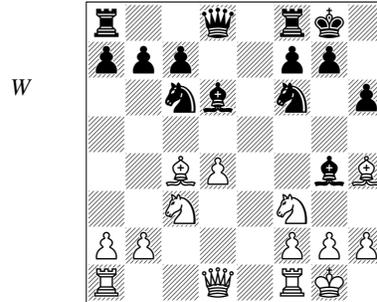
fully OK if he plays precisely: 11...g4 (11...♗e4 12 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 is possible too) 12 hxg4 ♗xg3 13 fxg3 ♗xg4 14 ♗c3 ♗g7! 15 d5 (Moiseenko-J.Christiansen, European Clubs Cup, Novi Sad 2016) 15...♗xf3! 16 ♖xf3 ♗e5 17 ♖f4 ♖d6!; e.g., 18 ♗b5 ♖b6+ 19 ♗h1 ♗g6! 20 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 21 ♗xc7 ♖ac8 22 d6 ♗e5 23 ♗b3 ♗e4 24 ♖fe1 ♗g4 and with his knights going like clockwork, Black has weathered the storm in a teacup.

8...♗c6

A position also known from the Petroff Defence – opening theory can be a tangled web!

9 h3

Or 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗h4 ♗g4 (D), and then:



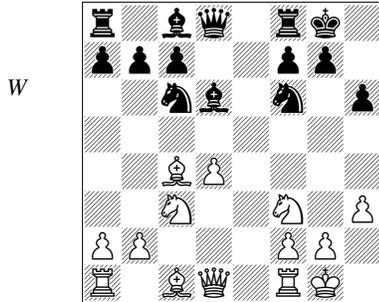
a) 11 ♖d3 ♗xf3 12 gxf3?! (12 ♖xf3 g5 13 ♗g3 ♗xg3 is not essentially different from the line after 11 h3: 14 hxg3 ♖xd4, Bukavshin-Shimanov, Kirishi 2010) 12...♗h8 (intending ...g5; not 12...g5? 13 ♖g6+) 13 ♖ad1 ♖d7 works out well for Black.

b) 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 ♖xf3 g5 (after 12...♗xd4, 13 ♖d3!? is more dangerous than taking back the pawn on b7) 13 ♗g3 ♗xg3 followed by ...♖xd4 works out OK for Black: 14 ♖xg3 (or 14 fxg3 ♖xd4+ 15 ♗h1 ♖xc4 16 ♖xf6 ♖e6 17 ♖f3 f5, Elsness-Agdestein, Norwegian Ch, Moss 2006) 14...♖xd4 15 ♗b5 ♖b6 (15...♖d6 is OK too) 16 h4 g4 (16...♗h5 17 ♖g4 ♗f6 18 ♖g3 ♗h5 repeats) with a roughly balanced fight ahead; e.g., 17 ♗e2 ♗d4 18 ♗xg4 ♗h8.

c) 11 ♖e1 and here Black has a number of viable options, including the untried and rare 11...♗e7!? with the point 12 d5 (12 ♗e2 ♖e8!) 12...♗xd5; e.g., 13 ♗xd5 (13 ♗xd5 ♗xh4 14 ♖e4 ♗h5 and the best White can do is regain his pawn in a line like 15 ♖e2 ♗h8 16 ♖d1 ♗xf3 17 ♖xf3 ♗f6 18 ♗e3 ♗d4 19 ♖h5 ♖e8)

13...♙xh4 14 ♖e4 ♙xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♙e7 16 ♖d1 ♙d6 and Black holds his game together.

9...h6 (D)



This is a main line played in hundreds of games, but it's not clear why White should be able to claim any advantage. Black is solid and has no weaknesses or problem pieces.

10 ♖e1

Or:

a) 10 ♗c2 (hoping to show that the c8-bishop has no good outlet) 10...♘a5 (10...a6 11 a3 ♘e7, intending ...♙f5, is another idea) 11 ♙d3 ♙e6 12 ♖e1 ♖e8 (A.Sorokin-Alekseenko, Russian Junior Ch, Kolomna 2014) and Black has no development problems.

b) 10 ♗d3 has similar ideas (to 10 ♗c2) but 10...♘a5 disrupts White's scheme: 11 ♙b5 a6 12 ♙a4 c5 13 ♙c2 c4, as first played in a de Labourdonnais-McDonnell game in 1834.

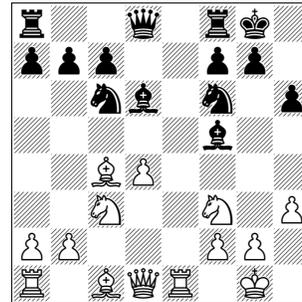
c) 10 a3 ♙f5 and now one interesting line is 11 ♘h4 (11 ♖e1 transposes to note 'b' after Black's 10th move) 11...♙h7 12 ♙e3 ♖e8 13 ♗f3 ♗d7 14 ♖ad1 ♖ad8, when the little trick 15 ♙xh6 runs into 15...♘xd4 16 ♖xd4 ♙h2+ 17 ♙xh2 ♗xd4 18 ♗g3 ♘h5, with 19 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 20 ♗xc7+ ♖d7 (20...♖e7 21 ♗a5!) 21 ♙e3! a lucky bailout.

10...♙f5 (D)

Now:

a) 11 d5 (White blunts his own bishop to gain d4 for his pieces, but doesn't achieve a great deal) 11...♘e7 12 ♙e3 (12 ♘d4 ♙g6 13 ♘db5 a6 14 ♘xd6 ♗xd6, with ...♘f5 to follow soon, is comfortable for Black, Vaganian-Souleidis, Bundesliga 2003/4) 12...a6 (threatening to win a pawn, please note) 13 ♙d4 ♘g6 (13...b5? 14 ♙xf6) 14 a4 and both 14...♘f4 and 14...♘h7 yield counterplay.

W



b) 11 a3 a6 (11...♖e8 is very solid, but less interesting) and now:

b1) 12 ♘e5 ♙xe5 13 dxe5 ♗xd1 14 ♘xd1 ♘d7 gives White nothing.

b2) The same can be said for 12 g4 ♙h7 13 ♘e5 ♙xe5 14 dxe5 ♗xd1 15 ♘xd1 ♖fe8!.

b3) 12 ♘h4 ♙h7 is completely solid.

b4) After 12 b4 ♖e8 13 ♙e3 ♗d7 (Daels-Ulybin, Charleroi 2014) Black can start thinking about playing against the IQP. Let's note the funny line 14 ♗d2 ♙xh3!? 15 ♙xh6! ♗g4 16 ♗g5 ♙xg2 17 ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 18 ♙xg7, when the ending should be drawn.

b5) 12 d5 ♘e7 13 ♙e3 (13 ♘d4 ♙h7 14 ♗f3 ♘g6 15 ♙d3 ♖e8 with good piece-play for Black) 13...♖e8 14 ♙d4 ♘g6 15 ♖xe8+ ♘xe8 and Black is no worse.

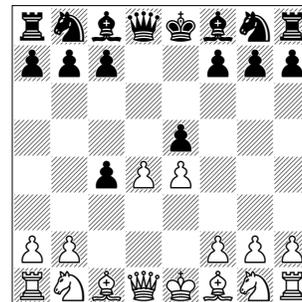
B)

3 e4

Apart from 3 ♘f3, this is by far the main and most critical move.

3...e5 (D)

W



This is the most popular of several major lines here. Black attacks the centre by the most direct means, while opening lines for his pieces.

4 ♘f3