

The Scandinavian Defense  
(Marshall Gambit)  
Part 2

Our examination of the Marshall Gambit will begin with play surrounding White's attempt to hold onto his extra pawn (after 1. e4, d5 2. e x d, Nf6 3. c4, ...). After 3. ... c6, Black has no option of turning back; White "permanently" gains the extra pawn with 4. d x c, N x c. Black, however, has now developed two pieces to none for White but more importantly, the combination of White's capture of the c-pawn (opening the d-file for Black's queen), and the recapture by the queen's knight prevent White from playing d4, freeing and consolidating his position. Just how much of a problem that can be will now be shown through two of my tournament games:

Game 1	Game 2
May 3, 2003	April 8, 2006
S. Smith	S. Smith
1. e4 d5	1. e4 d5
2. e x d Nf6	2. e x d Nf6
3. c4 c6	3. c4 c6
4. d x c N x c	4. d x c N x c
5. Nf3 e5	5. Nf3 e5
6. Nc3 Bc5	6. d3 Bf5
7. h3 0-0	7. Be2 Qd7
8. Qe2 Re8	8. Nh4 Bb4 ck
9. Ne4 Nd4	9. Nc3 Rd8
10. N x N ck g x N	10. N x B Q x N
11. Qd1 Bf5	11. 0-0 0-0
12. d3 e4	12. a3 Bc5
13. N x N Q x N	13. Be3 e4
14. Be3 Bb4 ck	14. b4 Bd4
15. Ke2 e x d ck	15. g4 Qg6
16. Kf3 Qe4 ck	16. Rc1 B x B
17. Kg3 Bd6 ck	17. f x B e x d
18. Bf4 Q x B mate	18. Bf3 N x g
	19. B x N h5
	20. Rf4 Ne5
	21. h3 f5
	22. Nd5 Rf7
	23. R x f h x B
	24. Qf1 g x h ck
	25. Kh1 R x N
	26. R x R Qe4 ck
	27. Kh2 Ng4 ck
	28. Kg3 Q x e ck
	29. Rf3 Qe5 ck

30. Rf4 Ne3
31. Qf3 d2
32. Rd1 N x R
33. d x R Nc3
34. K x h d1 (Q)
35. resigns

A check of the Chessmaster 9000 database for the key position after the first 4 moves comes up with 19 matches (18 from the Marshall Gambit and 1 from the Caro Kann Defense). Of those 19 games, Black won 11 and drew 1. Obviously, those are not encouraging statistics for White! The following two games come from the CM 9000 database, as do all of the other games not played by me.

If you thought that Game 1 was a quick "knockout", check out this game between A. Versvik (White) and Vo Hong Phuong at the 1999 World Junior Championship for girls in Erevan, Armenia. This game illustrates some salient points about play in the key position from Games 1 & 2.

### Game 3

1. e4 d5
2. e x d Nf6
3. c4 c6
4. d x c N x c
5. Nc3 e5
6. d3 Bf5
7. a3 Bc5
8. Nf3 Ng4
9. Be3 B x e3
10. f x e3 N x e3
11. Qa4 0-0
12. c5 B x d3
13. B x d3 Q x d3
14. Rc1 N x g2 ck
15. resigns

A few similarities between Game 1 and Game 3 are that in neither game did White neglect to make what are normally considered good, solid opening moves (i.e. Nf3, Nc3), nor did White make any glaringly terrible moves. In both games, White did fail to castle. And in both games, White took unnecessary prophylactic measures on the 7th move ( 7. h3 in Game 1 and 7. a3 in Game 3). I say unnecessary because if Black is following normal procedure in this variation, his bishops are going to c5 and f5 and not b4 and g4. With the weight of the world bearing down on his d-pawn, White can't waste time preventing something that probably isn't going to happen, anyway. On the other hand, my opponent in Game 2 got his king's bishop developed and castled quickly, while also managing to eliminate (10. N x B) one of the tormentors of his backward d-pawn. It took 34 moves, a knight sac, and one of my most inspired efforts to come away with

the win.

Here is another Marshall Gambit blowout, this time of master E. Pilapil by Georges Haas at the 1984 Olympiad in Thessaloniki, Greece. White does manage to get castled, but makes not one but both of the dubious prophylactic moves mentioned. The result is not pretty, unless you happen to be Black!

#### Game 4

1. e4 d5
2. e x d Nf6
3. c4 c6
4. d x c6 N x c6
5. Nc3 e5
6. a3 Bc5
7. h3 Bf5
8. d3 e4
9. g4 e x d3
10. Be3 B x e3
11. f x e3 Bg6
12. Qd2 Ne5
13. b3 0-0
14. Bg2 Re8
15. 0-0-0 Qb6
16. Nb5 R(a)c8
17. Qc3 Q x b5
18. resigns

In view of White's 6th and 7th moves, as Black, I might have castled before launching my attack with ...e4. Having a rook ready to swing over onto the open e-file probably would have been worth the delay. It's hard to second-guess an 18-move win against someone with an ELO rating of 2205, though, right?!

According to Chess Openings: Theory and Practice (p. 256), Dr. Lasker's answer to the Marshall Gambit is 1. e4 d5, 2. e x d Nf6, 3. c4 c6, 4. d x c N x c, 5. d3 e5, 6. Nc3 Bf5, 7. Nf3 Qd7, 8. Be2 Rd8, 9. 0-0 B x d, 10. B x B Q x B, 11. Qa4, with the obvious threats to bring the king's rook over to the d-file or capture the e-pawn, which is only protected by the pinned queen's knight. However, Mieses (one of the few old masters who regularly used this defense) recommends 6. ...Bc5 in place of ...Bf5, continuing 7. Be3 B x B, 8. f x B Qb6, 9. Qd2 Be6, 10. e4 Ng4! threatening ...Ne3 and ...f5. 10. ...Rd8 is answered by 11. Nd5!, a devastating counter-punch. However, Black's attack is still far from finished after 11. ...N x N, 12. e x N B x d, 13. c x B R x d, 14. 0-0-0 Nb4, even being down a bishop.

Speaking of the old masters (and lest we leave the impression that the Marshall Gambit is an automatic win for Black), let's check out the following blast from the past featuring the redoubtable Joseph Blackburne. This is one case of "The Black Death" being 'plagued' by a weak 7th move and then misfiring in the ensuing combinative duel.

## Game 5

Nuerenberg 1896

M. Porges J.H. Blackburne

1. e4 d5
2. e x d5 Nf6
3. c4 c6
4. d x c N x c6
5. Nf3 e5
6. d3 Bf5
7. Nh4 Be6
8. Be2 Bc5
9. 0-0 Qe7
10. a3 Rd8
11. b3 0-0
12. Bb2 e4
13. Qc2 Nd4
14. B x d4 B x d4
15. Ra2 g5
16. d x e4 g x h4
17. Kh1 Kh8
18. Nc3 Rg8
19. Nd5 N x d5
20. e x d5 Qg5
21. Qe4 R x d5
22. c x d5 B x d5
23. Q x d4 ck f6
24. Bg4 Bc6
25. f3 resigns

In My System, Aron Nimzovich uses the analogy of a farmer who loses a young pig he has fed grain to as the chess piece which has had several tempi invested in its movements and is then exchanged for a piece which has not moved as much. In other words, all of those moves which could have been used for something else worthwhile are now lost. Is that not the case of White's king knight using 3 moves to capture the queen's bishop, which has only moved once? Instead of moving the bishop to e6 where it interferes with Black's attack, isn't 6. ...Qd7 called for? If the knight captures, the queen takes its place on the recapture and the rook can now cover the open d-file, keeping up the pressure.

We've seen the move Nh4 by White before, in Game 2, in response to ...Bf5. 6. ...Bf5 is certainly a tempting move to make, since it really puts the pressure on White's backward d-pawn. However, the previous analysis by Mieses, as well as my own personal experience, seems to indicate that 6. ...Bc5 is stronger. Once again touching on Nimzovich's theories, 6. ...Bc5 restrains the weak d-pawn before 'executing' it; you could throw in the 'over-protection' of the important d4 square as well. There is also the fact that 6. ...Bc5 quickly paves the way for Black's king-side castling, an important consideration as you are about to see. ...Bf5 as a later move is probably a better idea.

The following game of mine illustrates the difficulties Black can face when playing 6. ...Bf5 against an aggressive opponent. It is my belief that had White played 16. Nf5 (ck) before castling (forcing 16. ...Kf8 and imprisoning Black's kingside pieces) that he would have had a most curious, positionally won, game. In retrospect, I feel that my play against his counterattack (moves 7-15) was far from perfect because I was too preoccupied with quickly regaining my pawn. The game is long but I think the endgame is interesting , with a surprise or two!

## Game 6

Nov. 9, 2002

S. Smith

1. e4 d5	33. Ne4 Kb4
2. e x d Nf6	34. Nd6 K x a
3. c4 c6	35. Kf3 a6
4. d x c N x c	36. b6 Ka5
5. Nc3 e5	37. N x b ck K x b
6. d3 Bf5	38. Nd6 a5
7. a3 Qd7	39. Nc4 ck Kb5
8. Bg5 Rd8	40. Nd6 ck Kb4
9. B x N g x B	41. Ke4 a4
10. Nd5 Bg7	42. Kd3 Kb3
11. Nf3 Ne7	43. Nb7 a3
12. N x N K x N	44. Nc5 ck Kb4
13. Nh4 B x d	45. Na6 ck Ka5
14. B x B Q x B	46. Nc5 a2
15. Q x Q R x Q	47. Kc2 a1(N) ck
16. 0-0 R(h)d8	48. Kb2 Kb4
17. Nf5 ck Kf8	49. Nd3 ck Kc4
18. Ne3 Rd2	50. Nf2 Nb3
19. R(a)d1 R x R	51. Kc2 Nd4 ck
20. R x R R x R ck	52. Kd1 Nf5
21. N x R Ke7	53. Ke2 Kd4

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|--------------------|----------------|
| 22. g4 Ke6         | 54. Kf3 Nd6    |
| 23. f3 Bh6         | 55. Ng4 Bc1    |
| 24. Kf2 f5         | 56. Ke2 e4     |
| 25. a4 f x g       | 57. h4 Nf5     |
| 26. f x g f5       | 58. Nf6 h6     |
| 27. g x f ck K x f | 59. h5 e3      |
| 28. b4 Bf4         | 60. Kf3 Kd3    |
| 29. h3 Ke4         | 61. Ng4 Nd4 ck |
| 30. b5 Kd4         | 62. Kg2 e2     |
| 31. c5 K x c       | 63. Kf2 Bd2    |
| 32. Nc3 Kc4        | 64. Ne5 ck Ke4 |
|                    | 65. resigns    |

White's castling on the 16th move is not to be faulted too harshly, because for several good reasons it was the obvious move to make. I'm not sure if chess purists would call 16. Nf5 ck! a zwischenzug (in-between move) or not; all I know is that while my opponent was pondering his 16th move, all I was thinking was "Please castle, please castle, please castle,..."! By the way, those who may criticize my opponent for not resigning sooner should note that I had the wrong color bishop to force through my h-pawn to queen (if knights were exchanged and my e-pawn was lost) and also that he might have been able to sac his knight for a pawn, leaving the difficult K+B+N vs. K ending for me to execute, assuming he could somehow pick off my other pawn. And as I wrote elsewhere on this website, my chess computer program was not impressed with my 47. ... a1(N) ck !!

We'll close this part of our analysis of the Marshall Gambit with a game between a couple of formidable Brits; IGM Murray Chandler (ELO 2585) and IM Michael Adams (ELO 2505).

### Game 7

M. Chandler M. Adams

Hastings, 1989

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|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. e4 d5          | 29. Na6 ck Kb6 |
| 2. e x d Nf6      | 30. Nb4 Re4    |
| 3. c4 c6          | 31. Rg1 a5     |
| 4. d x c N x c    | 32. Nd5 ck Kc5 |
| 5. Nf3 e5         | 33. Rd1 N x c  |
| 6. d3 e4          | 34. Nf6 Rf4    |
| 7. d x e Q x Q ck | 35. Nd7 ck Kc6 |
| 8. K x Q N x e    | 36. a4 g5      |
| 9. Be3 Bf5        | 37. Nb8 ck Kc7 |
| 10. Nh4 0-0-0 ck  | 38. Nd7 Nd6    |
| 11. Kc1 Be6       | 39. Ne5 Rf5    |
| 12. Nc3 N x N     | 40. Ng4 h5     |
| 13. b x N b6      | 41. Ne3 Rf3    |
| 14. Nf3 Bc5       | 42. Nd5 ck Kc6 |
| 15. B x B b x B   | 43. g4 g x h   |
| 16. Rb1 R(h)e8    | 44. Ne7 ck Kd7 |

17. Be2 Bh3	45. Nc8 K x N
18. g x B R x B	46. R x N h3
19. Rb2 R x R	47. Rd4 h2
20. K x R Rd3	48. Rh4 Rf2
21. Ng5 Rd2 ck	49. R x h(5) f5
22. Ka3 R x f	50. Kc4 Rd2
23. Rd1 h6	51. Kc5 f4
24. Ne4 R x h	52. Kc6 Kd8
25. Rg1 Re2	53. c4 f3
26. N x c g6	54. c5 Rg2
27. Rg3 Ne5	55. Kb6 Rb2 ck
28. Kb3 Kc7	56. Kc6 f2
	57. resigns

Black's 6th move comes as a surprise, unleashing some nasty tactical threats. It shows that going 'off the beaten path' can often be rewarding, if you have the guts for it!

Players can sometimes avoid a certain variation of their favorite defense if they don't like it; not so in this case. If White decides to play 3. c4, Black's options are limited. (We'll examine another daring venture, the Icelandic-Palme Gambit in a future installment of this series.) If you're terrified of being a pawn down in the opening, then it's best if you avoid the Marshall Gambit entirely. This isn't the kind of defense to play if you are overly cautious. However, because it is relatively easy for Black to regain the pawn, it is a good first step toward doing the kind of thing that masters and grandmasters do all the time; sacrificing a pawn for a lead in development or positional advantage.

This isn't the best way to handle the Marshall Gambit for White, yet a large percentage of my opponents have used it, so you must be prepared for it, as Black. It must be pointed out that White also has the option of transposing to the Panov Attack of the Caro Kann by playing 4. d4 instead of 4. d x c, an attractive strategy for some players which Black must be prepared to face. I hope that highlighting this particular variation will arouse players' interest in the Marshall Gambit as an aggressive defense for Black and something to be aware of if you play 1. e4. Finally, I plan on doing two or three more parts on some of the lesser-used variations of this defense, another on the main line (3. d4, N x d 4. c4), and finally, as a way to wrap things up (and silence any critics who think I'm doing this series just as a way to showcase my tournament victories!), some of my losses with this defense, including a few which are just plain 'butt-ugly'!