

# Mini-Lessons from Short Games of the 21st Century

by IM Nikolay Minev

## #1: Exciting Short Stories From The Olympiads

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**C70 Z. Al-Zendani – Z. Dollah**

Istanbul (ol) 2000

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**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 g6**

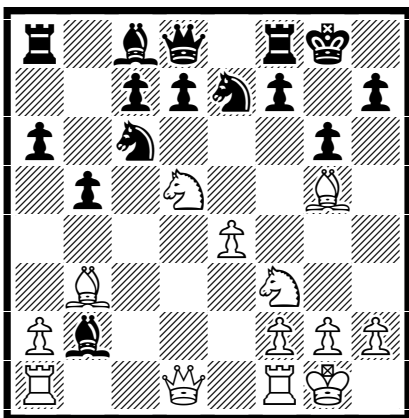
This is a rarely used continuation, with not much theory behind it.

**5.d4 b5 6.Bb3 exd4 7.O-O!?**

This, together with next move, is a novelty. It is a gambit typical for today's chess: initiative first and foremost! However, I suppose that in case of 7.Nxd4 the reply will be 7...Na5!?, which is also an interesting novelty!

**7...Bg7 8.c3 dxc3 9.Nxc3 Nge7 10.Nd5! O-O 11.Bg5 Bxb2**

Maybe 11...Kh8 offers more resistance.



**12.Rc1!!**

What a surprise! Now White wins by force.

**12...Ba3**

After 12...Bxc1 13.Qxc1 Black has no defense against the threat Bf6 and Qh6.

**13.Rxc6! dxc6 14.Nf6+ Kh8 15.Qa1 Ng8 16.Nxg8+ Kxg8 17.Bh6! 1-0**

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**C00 O. Ganbold – B. Villamayor**

Istanbul (ol) 2000

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**1.e4 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 cxb4**

The theory considers that accepting the gambit is OK for Black, even though for a pawn he will be under considerable pressure. The alternative 4...c4!? is the preferred continuation for many players.

**5.a3 Nc6**

Usual is 5...bxa3.

**6.axb4 Bxb4 7.c3 Be7 8.d4 f6!?**

Black introduces new and interesting plan for immediate counter-attack against White's center which, in my opinion, deserves to be tested further.

**9.Bd3 Qc7 10.Bf4 f5 11.g4**

11.Na3!?

**11...fxg4 12.Ng5 Bxg5 13.Bxg5 Qf7**

Perhaps here or next move Black should play a6.

**14.Qxg4 Nge7 15.Rg1 Nf5 16.Na3!**

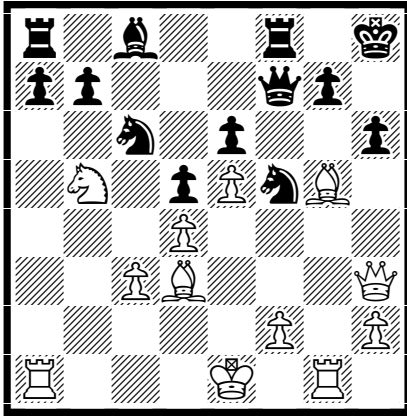
This Knight is going to d6! The position is tense and unclear.

**16...O-O**

Now 16...a6 does not prevent 17.Nb5!

**17.Nb5 Kh8 18.Qh3 h6?**

This loses. Instead, after 18...a6 19.Nd6 Qc7 the situation is still unclear.



**19.Bf6!! 1-0**

What a knock-out!

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**E38 M. Carlsen – N. Ibraev**  
Calvia (ol) 2004

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**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 c5 5.dxc5 Bxc5**

Also popular are the continuations 5...Na6 and 5...O-O.

**6.Nf3 Qb6!? 7.e3 Qc7 8.b3 b6 9.Bb2 Bb7**

The theory suggests 9...a6! as necessary. As we shall see immediately, this is with good reason.

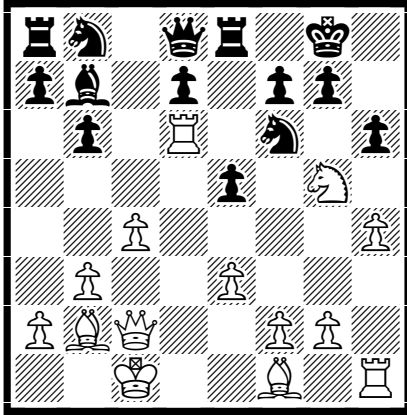
**10.Nb5! Qd8 11.O-O-O! O-O 12.Ng5! Re8**

In case of 12...g6 13.h4 White's attack is irresistible.

**13.h4!**

But not 13.Bxf6? Qxf6 14.Qxh7+ Kf8 and it is White who is in big trouble.

13...e5 14.Nd6 Bxd6 15.Rxd6 h6



16.Qf5! Nc6

If 16...hxg5 17.hxg5 Ne4 (17...Be4 18.Qh3 Nh7 19.Bd3 Bxd3 20.Rxd3 and wins)  
18.Qh7+ Kf8 19.Ba3! Nc5 20.Rf6!! and wins, or 16...Qe7 17.Rxf6! Qxf6 18.Qh7+ Kf8  
19.Ba3+ d6 20.Bd3! hxg5 21.hxg5 Qd8 22.Qh8+ Ke7 23.Qxg7 Kd7 24.Bf5+ Kc7 25.Rd1  
and White should win.

17.Rxf6! 1-0

For if 17...Qxf6 18.Qh7+ Kf8 19.Ne4! Qe6 20.Ba3+ d6 21.Bxd6+ and wins.

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## C41 Friso Nijboer - Martin Poulsen

Turin (ol) 2006

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1.e4 d6 2.d4 e5 3.Nf3

Not everyone likes to exchange the Queens early (as in 3.dxe5 dxe5 4.Qxd8+) even if this should bring some advantage.

3...Qe7

This experimental variation usually arises from the following order of moves: 1.e4 e5  
2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 Qe7 and in my opinion should be included in C41 "Philidor Defense".

**4.Nc3 c6 5.Bc4 Bg4 6.Be3 Nf6 7.a3 Nxe4?!**

A strategical mistake! Almost as a rule, opening the center early favors the better developed side, in our case White. Perhaps Black should try 7...g6 or 7...Qc7.

**8.Nxe4 d5 9.dxe5 dxe4 10.Qd4!? exf3**

Maybe 10...Nd7!?

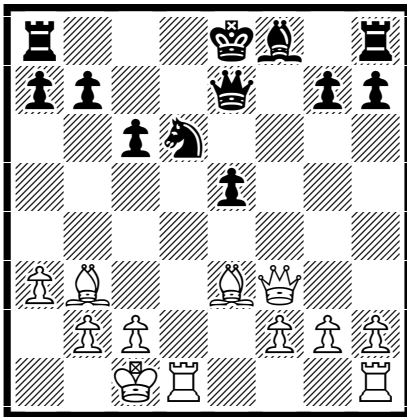
**11.Qxg4 Nd7**

Black is in trouble. For example, not much better is 11...fxg2 12.Qxg2! Qxe5 13.O-O-O Be7 14.Rhe1 O-O 15.Bh6 Qf6 16.Rxe7! (not 16.Bxg7?? Qg5+) Qxh6+ 17.Kb1 and White has strong attack.

**12.e6 fxe6 13.O-O-O Ne5 14.Qh5+ Nf7 15.Qxf3 Nd6 16.Bb3**

Black's position is already untenable. If now 16...Nf5, then 17.Rhe1, or 16...O-O-O 17.Bxa7.

**16...e5**



**17.Rxd6! e4 18.Qf5 1-0**

Because of 18...Qxd6 19.Qf7+ Kd8 20.Rd1.

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**A60 M. Mahjoob – R. Zhumabayev**  
Dresden (ol) 2008

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**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 b5 6.e4!?**

The most active and interesting continuation!

**6...Nxe4 7.Qe2 Qe7 8.Bg2 f5!?**

Deviation from the known main line 8...Nd6 9.Be3 and now 9...c4 10.Nc3 a6 11.Bc5, intending 12.a4, or 9...b4 10.Bxc5 Qxe2+ 11.Nxe2 Na6, in both cases with a complex and unclear game.

**9.d6 Qe6**

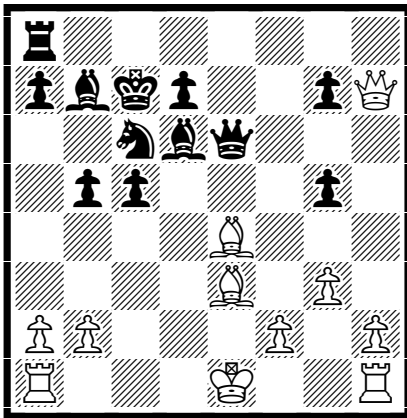
But not 9...Qxd6 10.Nc3!

**10.Nc3 Bxd6 11.Nh3!?**

Searching for new tactical opportunities. If 11.Nxb5 Ba6!

**11...h6 12.Nxe4 fxe4 13.Bxe4 Nc6 14.Qh5+ Kd8 15.Ng5 hxg5 16.Qxh8+ Kc7 17.Qh7 Bb7 18.Be3**

All this is forced and was initiated by White, but the result is not in his favor. White's King is badly exposed and will be under fierce attack.



**18...Rh8!! 19.Qxh8**

If 19.Qg6 Qxg6 20.Bxg6 Ne5! Or 19.Qf5 Qxf5 20.Bxf5 Nd4!

**19...Qxe4 20.Kd2**

There is no defense. If 20.O-O Nd4! or 20.O-O-O Nb4!

**20...Ne5 21.Rad1 Qc4! 0-1**