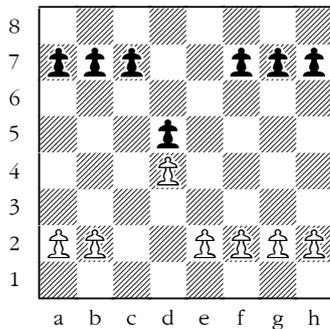


# The Exchange Variation of the (Classical) Queen's Gambit Declined [D31, 35-36]

*Compiled by Steven Craig Miller*

The major characteristic of the Exchange Variation is the exchange where White plays  $\text{cxd5}$  and Black replies  $\text{exd5}$ . This exchange can occur on the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth move (and perhaps even later). So it is hard to find just one starting point for this variation. Before we start looking at concrete variations, let's look at what they have in common, their pawn structure.



This creates an asymmetrical pawn structure where both sides can fight for an advantage. White sometimes castles kingside and attempts a queenside minority attack whereby he or she tries to trade White's a- & b-pawns for Black's a- & b-pawns so to make Black's c-pawn weak. Sometimes White castles queenside in order to conduct a kingside attack.

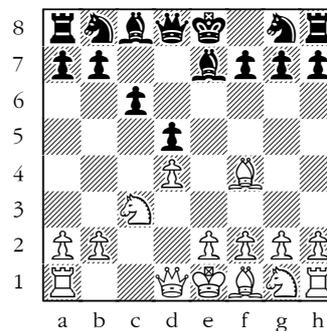
## The Alatortsev Variation

1.  $\text{d4}$   $\text{d5}$
2.  $\text{c4}$   $\text{e6}$
3.  $\text{Qc3}$   $\text{Qe7}$

This move-order, in contrast to the more traditional  $3. \dots \text{Qf6}$ , prevents  $4. \text{cxd5 exd5}$  and  $5. \text{Ag5}$ . It is possible for White to continue with  $4. \text{Qf3}$  and after  $4. \dots \text{Qf6}$   $5. \text{Ag5}$  con-

tinue on with other variations of the Queen's Gambit Declined.

4.  $\text{cxd5}$   $\text{exd5}$
5.  $\text{Qf4}$   $\text{c6}$

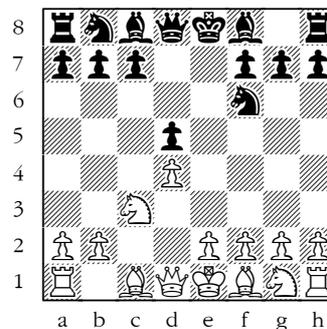


(a) Now after  $6. \text{Qc2}$ , Black can play  $6. \dots \text{g6}$   $7. \text{e3 Qf5}$  and if  $8. \text{Qd3 Qxd3}$   $9. \text{Qxd3}$ , when Black has managed to get trade of his (sometimes) troublesome bishop.

(b) After  $6. \text{e3}$ , one possibility is:  $6. \dots \text{Qf5}$   $7. \text{g4 Qe6}$   $8. \text{h3 Qf6}$   $9. \text{Qf3 0-0}$   $10. \text{Qc2 c5}$   $11. \text{0-0-0 Qc6} =$ .

## The Traditional Line

1.  $\text{d4}$   $\text{d5}$
2.  $\text{c4}$   $\text{e6}$
3.  $\text{Qc3}$   $\text{Qf6}$
4.  $\text{cxd5}$   $\text{exd5}$



White has a number of flexible plans from this position. White can play the c1-bishop to f4 or g5, can play the g1-knight to e2 or f3, and can castle kingside or queenside.

5. ♖g5 c6

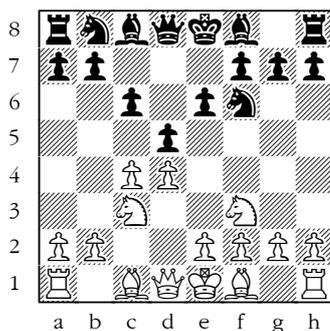
The move 5. ... ♗bd7 is a trap! After 6. ♗xd5?? Black wins a piece with 6. ... ♗xd5! 7. ♗xd8 ♗b4+ 8. ♖d2 ♗xd2+ 9. ♖xd2 ♖xd8. Of course, instead of falling into the trap, White could continue with; 6. e3 c6 7. ♖c2 ♗e7 etc. which is only a different move order.

6. ♖c2 ♗e7  
7. e3 ♗bd7  
8. ♗d3 0-0  
9. ♗ge2 ♖e8

Now White can castle either direction: 10. 0-0 or 10. 0-0-0.

### Via the Semi-Slav

1. d4 d5  
2. c4 c6  
3. ♗f3 ♗f6  
4. ♗c3 e6



This is the basic position of the Semi-Slav Defense. White can play 5. ♗g5 and enter the Botvinnik variation, 5. e3 and enter the Meran variation, or White can play 5. cxd5 and play the exchange variation.

5. cxd5 exd5

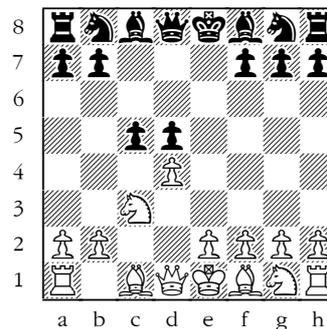
It would be a mistake for Black to play 5. ... ♗xd5, since after 6. e4, White would have a strong pawn center.

Both sides have a number of options at this point, but one interesting line is: 6. ♗g5 h6 7. ♗h4 ♗f5 8. ♖b3 g5 9. ♗g3 (9. ♖xb7?? gxh4 10. ♖xa8 ♖b6 and Black will trap White's queen with ... ♗d6, 0-0, and ♗bd7) ♖b6 10. e3 ♖xb3 11. axb3 ♗bd7 =.

### The Tarrash Defense

One way for Black to avoid the (mainlines) of the exchange variation is by playing the Tarrash.

1. d4 d5  
2. c4 e6  
3. ♗c3 c5  
4. cxd5 exd5



Now the mainline of the Tarrash continues:

5. ♗f3 ♗c6  
6. g3 ♗f6  
7. ♗g2 ♗e7  
8. 0-0 0-0

And there are a number of ways of playing this position, one example is: 9. ♗g5 cxd4 10. ♗xd4 h6 11. ♗e3 ♖e8 with mutual chances.