

# Queen's Gambit Declined

The **Queen's Gambit Declined** (or **QGD**) is a chess opening in which Black declines a pawn offered by White in the Queen's Gambit

- d4 d5
- c4 e6

This is known as the *Orthodox Line* of the Queen's Gambit Declined.<sup>[1]</sup> When the "Queen's Gambit Declined" is mentioned, it is usually assumed to be referring to the Orthodox Line; see Other lines" below.

The Orthodox Line can be reached by a number of different move orders, such as 1.d4 e6 2.c4 d5; 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5; 1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4; 1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.d4; and so on.

## Queen's Gambit Declined

<b>Moves</b>	1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6
<b>ECO</b>	D30–D69
<b>Parent</b>	Queen's Gambit

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## General concepts

Playing 2...e6 releases Black's dark-squared bishop, while obstructing his light-squared bishop. By declining White's temporary pawn sacrifice, Black erects a solid position; the pawns on d5 and e6 give Black a foothold in the center. The Queen's Gambit Declined has the reputation of being one of Black's most reliable defenses to 1.d4. In this situation, White will try to exploit the passivity of Black' light-squared bishop, and Black will try to release it, trade it, or prove that, while passive, the bishop has a useful defensive role.

An eventual ...dxc4 by Black will surrender the center to White, and Black will usually not do this unless he can extract a concession, usually in the form of gaining a tempo, by capturing on c4 only after White has played Bd3 first. In the Orthodox Line, the fight for the tempo revolves around White's efforts to play all other useful developing moves prior to playing Bd3.

## Other lines

In its broadest sense, the Queen's Gambit Declined is any variation of the Queen's Gambit in which Black does not play ...dxc4. Variations other than the Orthodox Line have their own names and are usually treated separately.<sup>[2]</sup>

- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 –Slav Defense
- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nc6 –Chigorin Defense
- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 –Albin Countergambit
- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 Bf5 –Baltic Defense
- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nf6 –Marshall Defense (unsound and no longer used by knowledgeable players)
- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c5 –Symmetrical Defense (or **Austrian Defense**)
- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 and eventual ...c6 –Semi-Slav Defense

Of the 34 games played in the 1927 World Championship between Alexander Alekhine and José Raúl Capablanca, all except the first and third began with the Queen's Gambit Declined.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Black avoids 3...Nf6

After 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 (other third moves are also possible: 3.cxd5 may be played to lead to the Exchange line, 3.Nf3 keeps options open, and 3.g3 will transpose to the Catalan), Black's main move is 3...Nf6, though he has other options as well:

- **3...c6** now the Semi-Slav Defense may be reached via 4.Nf3 Nf6, though 4.e4 dxe4 5.Nxe4 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 (6.Nc3 c5 gives little) 6...Qxd4 7.Bxb4 Qxe4+ 8.Be2 leads to a sharp struggle, and 4.Nf3 dxc4 is the Noteboom Variation, also sometimes known as the Abrahams Variation, after the English master Gerald Abrahams
- If Black is willing to accept an isolated d-pawn he can play **3...c5**. This leads to a variation of the QGD called the Tarrasch Defense
- **3...Be7**, the Alatortsev Variation.<sup>[4]</sup> At top level, this has recently been played much more often than Nf6. Sometimes, this transposes to positions arising from 3...Nf6, and has the advantage, from Black's standpoint, of avoiding the insidious pressure of the main lines in the Exchange Variation arising after 3...Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 with an annoying pin. In many cases, the game will simply transpose into the main lines after 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Bg5, or White can now play **4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf4 c6 6.e3** when 6...Bf5 7.g4 became a topical line after its adoption by Mikhail Botvinnik in his 1963 title match with Tigran Petrosian. 6. Qc2 is also popular. These exchange lines are more popular than transposing at top level. Also, Be7 is generally agreed to be more accurate than Nf6.
- **3...Bb4?** confusing a Nimzo-Indian with a Queen's Gambit (also known as the Berg defense), and at this point an inaccuracy. White has at least two good continuations: 4.Qa4+ Nc6 5.Nf3 where Black is forced to block the c-pawn with the knight, and 4.a3 Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 and White has the bishop pair almost for free (on the average worth half a pawn), since cxd5 is unstoppable and there will be no doubled pawns as a counterbalance.<sup>[5]</sup>
- **3...a6**, the Janowski Variation, is rare and rather passive.

## Black plays 3...Nf6

Lines beginning with the moves 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 are covered by ECO codes D35–D69. These are old lines that can transpose into many other queen pawn openings. White has several ways of dealing with Black's setup:

### QGD Main Variations: 4.Bg5 Be7 5.Nf3

- **Tartakower Defense** or **Tartakower–Makogonov–Bondarevsky System (TMB system)** 5...h6 6.Bh4 0-0 7.e3 b6 is one of the most solid continuations for Black.
- **Anti-Tartakower–Makogonov–Bondarevsky (Anti-TMB)** 5...h6 6.Bxf6 Bxf6 this line was extensively tested in the Kasparov–Karpov matches in 1980s. To this day Black has no problems in this line despite being tested at the highest levels. Most recently Boris Gelfand defended the Black side of this variation in the 2011 candidates matches which eventually he went on to win. For example, in the third round of the final candidate match, he forced White to accept a draw in 14 moves with a very strong novelty Grischuk vs Gelfand, Elista 2011
- **Lasker Defense** 5...0-0 6.e3 h6 7.Bh4 Ne4 8.Bxe7 Qxe7 is also a solid line, often leading to the exchange of two sets of minor pieces. It was this line that Miswanathan Anand chose in the final game of the World Chess Championship 2010 in order to defeat Veselin Topalov and retain the world championship.
- **Orthodox Defense** 5...0-0 6.e3 Nbd7 7.Rc1 c6 and now White has two main moves: 8.Bd3 and 8.Qc2. After 8.Bd3 dxc4 9.Bxc4 Black has surrendered the center and stands somewhat cramped, but has succeeded in making White lose a tempo by playing Bd3 before Bxc4. White will try to use his advantage in space to attack, whereas Black will try to keep White at bay while striking back at the center. Capablanca's main idea here was the freeing maneuver 9...Nd5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.0-0 Nxc3 12.Rxc3 e5 13.dxe5 Nxe5 14.Nxe5 Qxe5 15.f4 Qe7, which has led to a number of exchanges in the center though Black must exercise care even in the wake of this simplification. This line was once so frequently played that it has a separate code (D69) in ECO, though the lack of active counter play for Black has made the main line of the Orthodox a backwater in modern practice.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Cambridge Springs Defense: 4.Bg5 Nbd7

The **Cambridge Springs Defense** was introduced more than a century ago, and is still played. **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7** (setting up the Elephant Trap) **5.e3 c6 6.Nf3 Qa5**, now Black intends ...Bb4 and possibly ...Ne4, with pressure along the a5–e1 diagonal. This Black defense is popular among amateurs because there are several traps White can fall into, for example **7.Nd2** (one of the main lines, countering Black's pressure along the diagonal) **7...Bb4 8.Qc2 0-0** and here **9.Bd3??** loses since **9...dxc4!** (threatening ...Qxg5) **10.Bxf6 cxd3!** (a zwischenzug) **11.Qxd3 Nxf6** wins a piece for Black.

## Exchange Variation: 4.cxd5 exd5

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 c6 6.Qc2** and White has a pawn majority in the center, Black has a pawn majority on the queenside. This pawn structure gives White the opportunity to either advance his pawns in the center by means of Nge2, f2–f3, followed by e2–e4, or play for a minority attack by means of the plan Rb1, followed by b2–b4–b5, then bxc6 in order to create a weak pawn at c6. While Black can play ...cxb5, or recapture on c6 with a piece, each of these possibilities are even less desirable than the backward pawn in the open file. For Black, exchanging at d5 has released his light-squared bishop and opened the e-file, giving him the use of e4 as a springboard for central and kingside play. While chances are balanced, Black is usually more or less forced to use his superior activity to launch a piece attack on White's king, as the long-term chances in the QGD Exchange structure favour White. The following games are model games for White:

- Central Pawn Advance: Carlsen vs Jakovenko, Nanjing 2009
- Minority attack: Evans vs Opsahl, Dubrovnik 1950

## Ragozin Variation: 4.Nf3 Bb4

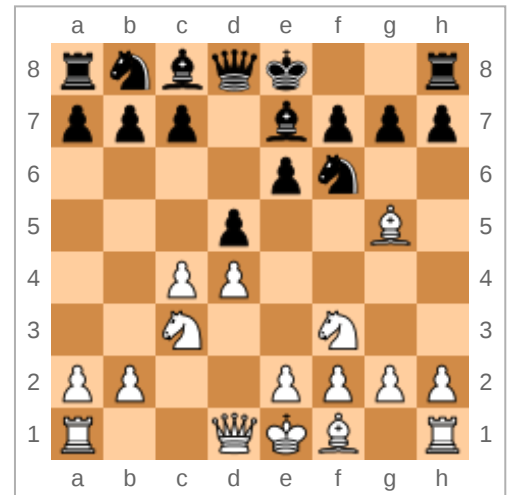
The Ragozin Variation (*ECO* code D37–D39) occurs after **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 Bb4**. An important line in this variation is the Vienna variation where the game continues: **5.Bg5 dxc4 6.e4**. White's pawns or pieces occupy the central squares in exchange for long-term pawn structure weaknesses. An instance of Vienna variation played at the highest level was Fine vs Euwe, AVRO 1938.

## See also

- Queen's Gambit
- Queen's Gambit Accepted

## References

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Main Line of the QGD: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.Nf3

## Further reading

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  - [Komarov, Dmitry; Djuric, Stefan; Pantaleoni, Claudio \(2009\). \*Chess Opening Essentials, Vol. 2: 1.d4 d5 / 1d4 various / Queen's Gambits\* New In Chess. ISBN 978-9-056-91269-7.](#)
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