

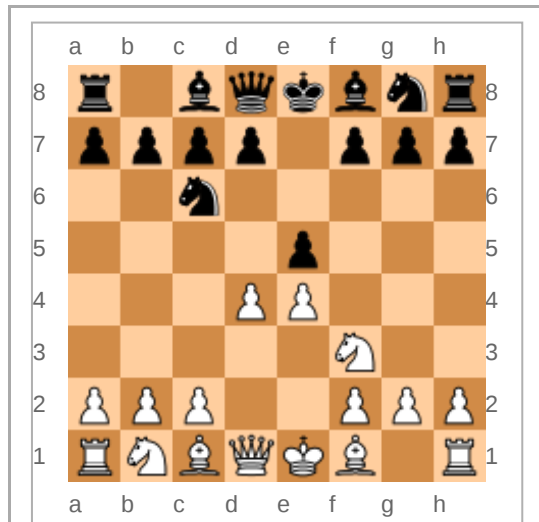
Scotch Game

The **Scotch Game**, or **Scotch Opening** is a chess opening that begins with the moves:

- e4 e5
- Nf3 Nc6
- d4

Ercole del Rio, in his 1750 treatise *Sopra il giuoco degli Scacchi, Osservazioni pratiche d'anonimo Autore Modenese* ("On the game of Chess, practical Observations by an anonymous Modenese Author"), was the first author to mention what is now called the Scotch Game.^[1] The opening received its name from a correspondence match in 1824 between Edinburgh and London. Popular in the 19th century, by 1900 the Scotch had lost favour among top players because it was thought to release the central tension too early and allow Black to equalise without difficulty. More recently, grandmasters Garry Kasparov and Jan Timman helped to re-popularize the Scotch when they used it as a surprise weapon to avoid the well-analysed Ruy Lopez.

Scotch Game



Moves 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4

ECO C44–C45

Origin 1750

Named after Scotland

Parent Open Game

Synonym(s) Scotch Opening

Contents

- Analysis**
- Main variations**
 - Main line: 4.Nxd4
 - Classical Variation: 4...Bc5
 - Schmidt Variation: 4...Nf6
 - Steinitz Variation: 4...Qh4!?
 - Scotch Gambit: 4.Bc4
 - Göring Gambit: 4.c3
 - 4...d5
 - Other ways of declining
 - One-pawn gambit: 4...dxc3 5.Nxc3
 - Double-pawn gambit: 4...dxc3 5.Bc4
- See also**
- References**
- Further reading**
- External links**

Analysis

White aims to dominate the centre by exchanging his d-pawn for Black's e-pawn. Black usually plays 3...exd4, as he has no good way to maintain his pawn on e5 (this same position can be reached by transposition from the Centre Game 1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.Nf3 Nc6). After 3...d6, White is better after 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 6.Bc4, or he may simply play 4.Bb5, when 4...exd4 5.Nxd4 Bd7 transposes to the Steinitz Defense in the Ruy Lopez.

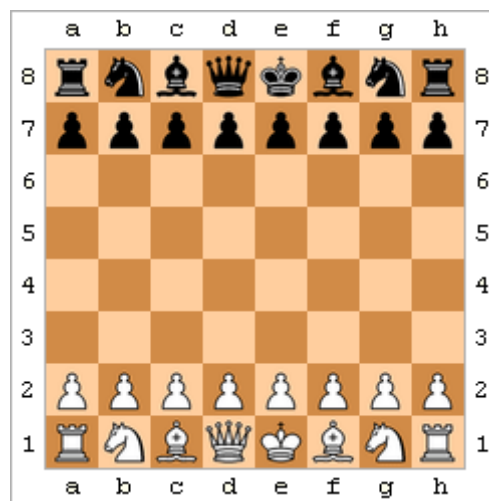
3...Nxd4 is possible, though rarely played today by strong players. It was popular in the 19th century, and receives five columns of analysis in Freeborough and Ranken's opening manual *Chess Openings Ancient and Modern* (3rd ed. 1896 p. 53). It is often described today as a strategic error, since after 4.Nxd4 exd4 5.Qxd4 (5.Bc4 is the **Napoleon Gambit**) White's queen stands on a central square, and is *not* developed too early since it cannot be chased away very effectively (5...c5? is a seriously weakening move that blocks Black's king's bishop). Nonetheless, the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings* (ECO) concludes that Black equalises with 5...Ne7 6.Bc4 Nc6 7.Qd5 Qf6 8.0-0 Ne5 9.Be2 c6 10.Qb3 Ng6 11.f4 Bc5+ 12.Kh1 d6 (I. Sokolov).^[2] Similarly, Harald Keilhack concludes in *Knight on the Left: 1.Nc3* (p. 21) that although ...Nxd4 is a "non-line" these days, if Black continues perfectly it is not clear that White gets even a small advantage. Keilhack analyses 5.Qxd4 d6 6.Nc3 Nf6 7.Bc4 Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Bg5 c6 10.a4 Qa5 11.Bh4 and now after 11...Qe5 or 11...Be6, "White has at most this indescribable nothingness which is the advantage of the first move." (*Id.* p. 25) The ECO also concludes that Black equalises after the alternative 4.Nxe5 Ne6 5.Bc4 Nf6 6.Nc3 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Be3 d6 8.Nd3 Nxe4 10.Nxe4 d5 (Parma).^[3]

After the usual 3...exd4, White can respond with the main line 4.Nxd4 or can play a gambit by offering Black one or two pawns in exchange for rapid development

Main variations

After 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4, the most important continuations are:

- 4.Nxd4 (Main line)
 - 4...Bc5 (Classical Variation)
 - 4...Nf6 (Schmidt Variation)
 - 4...Qh4!? (Steinitz Variation)
 - 4...Qf6
 - 4...Nxd4?!
 - 4...Bb4+?!
- 4.Bc4 (Scotch Gambit)
- 4.c3 (Göring Gambit)
- 4.Bb5

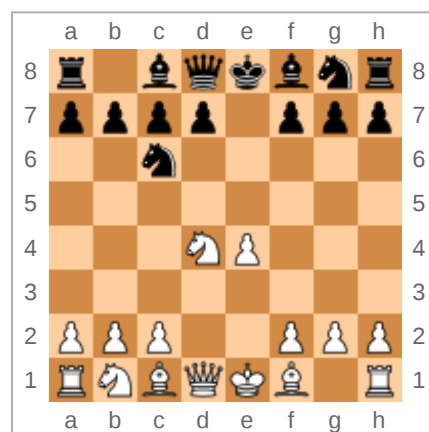


Main line: 4.Nxd4

In the main line after 4.Nxd4, Black has two major options. Either 4...Bc5 or 4...Nf6 offers Black good chances for an equal game.

Classical Variation: 4...Bc5

After 4...Bc5 White has 5.Nxc6, 5.Be3, or 5.Nb3. After 5.Nxc6, play almost always continues 5...Qf6 (Black does not lose a piece on c6 because he is threatening mate with 6...Qxf2) 6.Qd2 dxc6 7.Nc3. On 5.Be3 play almost always continues 5...Qf6 6.c3 Nge7 7.Bc4 (as proposed by IM Gary Lane in *Winning with the Scotch*; several seventh move alternatives for White are possible here, 7.g3 for example) 7...0-0 (7...Ne5 is more often played here. Play usually continues 8.Be2 Qg6 [8...d5 is also possible] 9.0-0. Here, Black has the option of taking the unprotected pawn on e4, but it is considered "poisoned"^[4]) 8.0-0 Bb6 where the position is roughly equal. On 5.Nb3 play almost always continues 5...Bb6 6.a4 a6 7.Nc3. Another plan for White is to play 6.Nc3, followed by (in some order) Qe2, Be3, h4 and 0-0-0.



Main line (4.Nxd4)

Schmidt Variation: 4...Nf6

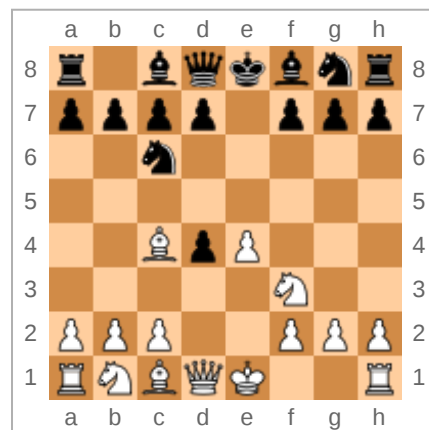
After 4...Nf6 White has 5.Nxc6 (the **Mieses Variation**) or 5.Nc3 (the **Scotch Four Knights Game**). After 5.Nc3 almost always played is 5...Bb4 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.Bd3 d5 8.exd5 cxd5 9.0-0 0-0 10.Bg5 c6. After 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5 Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 is also very common. Where these main lines end, the first real opening decisions are made, which are too specific for this survey

Steinitz Variation: 4...Qh4!?

Steinitz's 4...Qh4!? almost wins a pawn by force, but White gets a lead in development and attacking chances as compensation. As of 2005, White's most successful line has been 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Be2 Qxe4 7.Nb5 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 Kd8 9.0-0, when Black's awkwardly placed king has generally proven more significant than his extra pawn.

Scotch Gambit: 4.Bc4

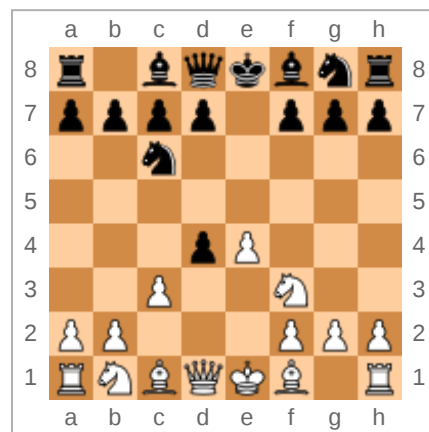
Instead of 4.Nxd4, White has two ways to offer a gambit. The **Scotch Gambit** (which is the line recommended by GM Lev Alburt in his book *Chess Openings for White, Explained*) starts with 4.Bc4. Black can transpose into the Two Knights Defense with 4...Nf6 or he can continue the Scotch with 4...Bc5 5.c3 and now 5...Nf6 will transpose into a safe variation of the Giuoco Piano. Black can instead accept the gambit with 5...dxc3 but this is riskier because White will gain a lead in development. A possible continuation is 6.Nxc3 (the main alternative, favoured by Grandmaster Sveshnikov, is 6.Bxf7+ Kxf7 7.Qd5+ followed by 8.Qxc5) 6...d6 7.Bg5 (7.Qb3 is dubious as 7...Qd7 8.Nd5 Nge7 9.Qc3 0-0 10.0-0 Nxd5! 11.exd5 Ne5 12.Nxe5 dxe5 13.Qxe5 Bd6 is good for Black, but 7.0-0 may also be good) 7...Nge7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Nd5.



Scotch Gambit (4.Bc4)

Göring Gambit: 4.c3

The **Göring Gambit** is a relative of the Danish Gambit that starts with 4.c3. White sacrifices one or two pawns in return for a lead in development, and typically follows up by putting pressure on f7 with Bc4, Qb3 and sometimes Ng5, while Nc3-d5 is another common motif. The *Oxford Companion to Chess* notes that the gambit was first played at high levels by Howard Staunton in the 1840s, and the earliest game with it was probably played in 1843.^[5] The first game with the gambit accepted may be Meek vs Morphy, New York 1857.^[6] Carl Theodor Göring introduced it into master play in 1872, but while Göring's name is most often associated with the one-pawn gambit (5.Nxc3) Göring invariably used the double-pawn gambit with 5.Bc4. The gambit has been played by Ljubomir Ljubojević, David Bronstein, Frank Marshall, and Jonathan Penrose. In casual games Alexander Alekhine often transposed to it via the move order 1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 dxc3 4.Nxc3, when ...Nc6 for Black and Nf3 for White often followed. In general, the opening is unpopular at master level but is more popular at club level. It is recommended to study the Göring Gambit in connection with the Danish.



Göring Gambit (4.c3)

4...d5

Black can equalise by transposing to the Danish declined with 4...d5, when the critical line runs 5.exd5 Qxd5 6.cxd4 Bg4 7.Be2 Bb4 8.Nc3 Bxf3 9.Bxf3 Qc4 (or 6...Bb4+ 7.Nc3 Bg4 8.Be2 Bxf3 9.Bxf3 Qc4, leading to the same position), often referred to as the Capablanca Variation in view of the strength of Black's concept in the game Marshall-Capablanca, Lake Hopatcong 1926.^[7] This line (which can also arise from the Chigorin Defense to the Queen's Gambit),^[8] forcing White to either exchange queens or forgo the right to castle with the risky 10.Be3, deters many players from employing this gambit. Equal endgames result after either 10.Qb3 Qxb3 11.axb3 Nge7 or 10.Bxc6+ bxc6 11.Qe2+ Qxe2+ 12.Kxe2 Ne7. If Black avoids steering for Capablanca's ending, e.g. with

6...Nf6 or 7...0-0-0 in the above lines, then White obtains good piece play in return for the isolated d-pawn. White can deviate with 6...Bg4 7.Nc3, with the idea of meeting 7...Bb4 with 8.a3 (or 6...Bb4+ 7.Nc3 Bg4 8.a3)^[9] or the rare 5.Bd3,^[10] neither of which promise an advantage but which avoid those endings.

Other ways of declining

Black can also decline with 4...Nf6, transposing to a line of the Ponziani Opening. The continuation 5.e5 Ne4 was endorsed by *Dangerous Weapons, 1.e4 e5* (Everyman Chess, 2008) but Tim Harding considers 5...Nd5 a better try for equality,^[11] when White can continue 6.Bb5 a6 7.Ba4 Nb6 8.Bb3, 6.Qb3, 6.Bc4 or 6.cxd4. Another possibility is 4...Nge7 intending 5...d5, when the critical continuation is 5.Bc4 d5 6.exd5 Nxd5 7.0-0. According to IM John Watson Black may be able to equalise with 7...Be7.^[12] However, declining with 4...d3 allows White some advantage after 5.Bxd3 d6 6.Bf4 Be7 7.h3 Nf6 8.Nbd2 Bd7 9.Qc2 according to *Batsford Chess Openings 2*

One-pawn gambit: 4...dxc3 5.Nxc3

If Black accepts the gambit with 4...dxc3, White can commit to sacrificing only one pawn with 5.Nxc3. Black's most critical response is generally considered to be 5...Bb4,^[13] when White does not get enough compensation after 6.Bc4 d6 7.0-0 Bxc3 8.bxc3 Nf6!, when 9.Ba3 Bg4 is insufficient and 9.e5 Nxe5 10.Nxe5 dxe5 11.Qb3 (11.Qxd8+ Kxd8 12.Bxf7 Ke7 is also good for Black) 11...Qe7 12.Ba3 c5 does not give enough compensation for two pawns. White can deviate with 7.Qb3, when the old main line runs 7...Qe7 8.0-0 Bxc3, and here 9.Qxc3 gives White good compensation. Thus both John Watson and USCF master Mark Morss recommend 7...Bxc3+, in order to meet 8.Qxc3 with 8...Qf6! when White loses too much time with the queen. Thus White often continues 8.bxc3 when 8...Qe7 9.0-0 Nf6 can be met by 10.e5 (transposing back to lines arising from 7.0-0 Bxc3 8.bxc3 Nf6 9.e5, though these are insufficient for White) or the relatively unexplored 10.Bg5. Other deviations for White include 7.Ng5 and 6.Bg5.^[14]

Black's main alternative is 5...d6 which usually leads to complications and approximately equal chances after 6.Bc4 Nf6 7.Qb3 Qd7 8.Ng5 Ne5 9.Bb5 c6 10.f4, or 7.Ng5 Ne5 8.Bb3 h6 9.f4. 5...Bc5 is also playable, transposing to the Scotch Gambit after 6.Bc4 but cutting out the Bxf7+ possibility. 5...Nf6 6.Bc4 can transpose back to 5...d6 lines after 6...d6, or Black can attempt to transpose to 5...Bb4 lines with 6...Bb4 but this allows 7.e5 d5 8.exf6 dxc4 9.Qxd8+ Nxd8 10.fxd7 Rg8 11.Bh6.

Double-pawn gambit: 4...dxc3 5.Bc4

Alternatively White can transpose into the Danish by offering a second pawn with 5.Bc4 cxb2 6.Bxb2, an approach which John Emms considers far more dangerous for Black. If Black does not accept the second pawn with 5...cxb2, then White can avoid Black's most critical response to 5.Nxc3 (5...Bb4 6.Bc4 d6). For instance, after 5...d6, White's best is 6.Nxc3, transposing back to the 5.Nxc3 d6 line. 5...Nf6 6.Nxc3 transposes to the 5.Nxc3 Nf6 line, 5...Bb4 is well met by 6.0-0 or 6.bxc3 (transposing to the Scotch Gambit), 5...Bc5 also transposes to the Scotch Gambit while 5...Be7?! (which is well met by 6.Qd5) transposes to the Hungarian Defense

Thus Black's most critical response is to take the second pawn with 5...cxb2 6.Bxb2. Unlike in the Danish proper, having committed the queen's knight to c6 Black cannot safely meet 6.Bxb2 with 6...d5.^[15] Instead, play often continues 6...d6 7.0-0 Be6 8.Bxe6 fxe6 9.Qb3 Qd7 or 7.Qb3 Qd7 8.Bc3 Nh6. 6...Bb4+ is the main alternative for Black, whereupon an approach with queenside castling is considered dangerous for Black, e.g. 7.Nc3 Nf6 8.Qc2 d6 9.0-0-0.

See also

- List of chess openings
- List of chess openings named after places

References

1. Harry Golombek *Chess: A History*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976, pp. 117-18.
2. Matanović 1997 (vol C), p. 254, n. 7

3. Matanović 1997 (Vol C), p. 251, n. 28
4. [Chess Openings from Swedish Chess TV program "Chess TV" - Episode 336](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQGifnXnD8&feature=relmfu)(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQGifnXnD8&feature=relmfu>)
5. [Staunton-NN, Match 1843](http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1336950)(<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1336950>) [ChessGames.com](http://www.chessgames.com) Retrieved on 2011-04-15.
6. [Meek-Morphy, New York 1857](http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1336453) (<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1336453>) [ChessGames.com](http://www.chessgames.com) Retrieved on 2011-04-15.
7. [Marshall-Capablanca, Lake Hopatcong 1926](http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1095134)(<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1095134>) [ChessGames.com](http://www.chessgames.com) Retrieved on 2010-09-09.
8. [Gambits](http://www.chesscafe.com/skittles/skittles35.htm) (<http://www.chesscafe.com/skittles/skittles35.htm>). [Chesscafe.com](http://www.chesscafe.com) Retrieved on 2010-09-10.
9. [Davies vs. Danish Dynamite](http://www.chesscafe.com/text/mueller61.pdf)(<http://www.chesscafe.com/text/mueller61.pdf>). [ChessCafe.com](http://www.chesscafe.com) Retrieved on 2010-09-10.
10. [State of Play](http://www.chesscafe.com/text/lane113.pdf) (<http://www.chesscafe.com/text/lane113.pdf>) [ChessCafe.com](http://www.chesscafe.com) Retrieved on 2010-09-10.
11. [Ponziani Opening: Other Critical Lines](http://www.chesscafe.com/text/kibitz172.pdf)(<http://www.chesscafe.com/text/kibitz172.pdf>). [ChessCafe.com](http://www.chesscafe.com) Retrieved on 2010-09-10.
12. [John Watson review of Danish Dynamite](http://www.chess.co.uk/twic/john-watson-reviews/danish-dynamite)(<http://www.chess.co.uk/twic/john-watson-reviews/danish-dynamite>) [The World In Chess](http://www.chess.co.uk). Retrieved on 2010-09-10.
13. [Mark Morss: The Importance of the Open Game; the Goering Gambit](http://www.correspondencechess.com/campbell/hard/h990201.htm)(<http://www.correspondencechess.com/campbell/hard/h990201.htm>) [The Campbell Report](http://www.correspondencechess.com). Retrieved on 2010-09-10.
14. [Steinitz for the Defense](http://www.chesscafe.com/text/mcgrew16.pdf)(<http://www.chesscafe.com/text/mcgrew16.pdf>). [ChessCafe.com](http://www.chesscafe.com) Retrieved on 2010-09-10.
15. [Danish Pastry](http://www.chesscafe.com/text/mcgrew15.pdf) (<http://www.chesscafe.com/text/mcgrew15.pdf>). [ChessCafe.com](http://www.chesscafe.com) Retrieved on 2010-09-10.

Bibliography

- Lane, Gary (1993). *Winning with the Scotch* Henry Holt & Co. ISBN 0-8050-2940-0
- Lane, Gary. (2005). *The Scotch Game Explained* Batsford, ISBN 0-7134-8940-5
- Matanović, Aleksandar, ed. (1997). *Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings C* (3rd ed.). Yugoslavia: Chess Informant ISBN 86-7297-035-7.

Further reading

- [Alburt, Lev \(2007\). *Chess Openings for White, Explained* Chess Information and Research Center ISBN 978-1889323206.](#)
- [Wells, Peter \(1998\). *The Scotch Game*. Sterling. ISBN 978-0713484663](#)
- [Gutman, Lev \(2001\). *4... Qh4 in the Scotch Game* Batsford. ISBN 0-7134-8607-4.](#)
- [Barsky, Vladimir \(2009\). *The Scotch Game for White* Chess Stars. ISBN 978-954-8782-73-9](#)
- [Botterill, G. S.; Harding, Tim \(1977\). *The Scotch*. B.T. Batsford Ltd](#)

External links

- [The Games of the Match of Chess Played Between The London and The Edinburgh Chess Clubs In 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827 and 1828](#)
 - [History of the Scotch at the Edinburgh Chess Club](#)
-

Retrieved from 'https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Scotch_Game&oldid=803127395

This page was last edited on 30 September 2017, at 16:40.

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.