

An Introduction to the Danish Gambit Accepted  
Richard Westbrook, 2006

The Danish Gambit is a variation of the Center Game and begins with the moves **1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3**. The Danish is closely related to the Scotch and Goring Gambits, depending on the timing of the development of White's kingside pieces. (It was popular with masters of attack including Alekhine, Marshall, Blackburne, and Mieses, but when Black's defenses improved it lost favor.) Today it is rarely played at the higher levels.

White sacrifices one or two pawns for the sake of rapid development and attack. Black can accept one or both pawns safely, or simply decline the gambit altogether with 1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3, by playing 3...d6!?, or 3...d5, but best is probably the awkward looking 3...Qe7!

If Black enters the Danish Gambit Accepted with **3...dxc3**, White offers a second pawn with **4.Bc4** which can be safely declined by transposing into the Scotch Gambit. Accepting the pawn allows White's two bishops to rake the Black kingside after **4...cxb2 5.Bxb2**. White will often follow up with Qb3 if possible, applying pressure on Black's b7 and f7 squares which can make it difficult for Black to develop his bishops.

Carl Schlechter found the most reliable defense for Black. It is a typical method which combines returning one of the pawns and freeing the position with **5...d5**. In this case, Black also gains time to complete development. After **6.Bxd5 Nf6 7.Bxf7+ Kxf7 8.Qxd8 Bb4+ 9.Qd2 Bxd2+ 10.Nxd2**, Black regains the queen.

Most theorists evaluate this position as equal, but some believe that the queenside majority gives Black the advantage in the endgame. If White plays 6.exd5 instead, his light-square bishop is blocked and Black can complete development with relative ease.

The popularity of the Danish fell after Schlechter's defense was introduced because the resulting positions are not what White generally desires from a gambit opening. Nevertheless, it is worth learning as a way to improve your tactical skills and to be aware of what not to do defensively.

**1.e4 e5**  
**2.d4 exd4**  
**3.c3 dxc3**

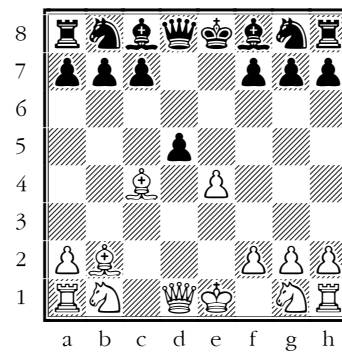
Or, 3... Qe7!  
4.Qxd4 Nc6  
5.Qe3 Nf6  
6.Bd3 Ne5  
7.Bc2 d5 =/+.

Or, 3... d5!?  
4.Qxd4 Qe7 =.

**4.Bc4 ...**

Alekhine recommended a "half-Danish" 4.Nxc3 which may transpose into the Scotch Gambit.

**4... cxb2**  
**5.Bxb2 ...**



The main line is **5...d5**  
**6.Bxd5 Nf6**

Sometimes seen is 6... Bb4+!? Now,  
7.Nd2! ...

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is stronger than the usually recommended  
7.Nc3 since White threatens Qa4+ and Bxg7.

7... Ne7

The “natural”

7... Nf6?

8.Qa4+ c6

9.Bxf7+ Kxf7

10.Qxb4 gives White a good position.

8.Bxf7+ Kxf7

9.Qb3+ ...

In this position, Black has to find

9... Nd5! just to stay in the game.

10.0-0-0 ...

(10.exd5? Re8+ is good for Black!)

with equal chances.

7.Bxf7+ Kxf7

8.Qxd8 Bb4+

9.Qd2 Bxd2+

10.Nxd2 with an equal game.

Black can, and often does, make all sorts of mistakes. For example, 1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 dxc3 4.Bc4 cxb2 5.Bxb2 Nf6!?. This normal looking move is the first in a series of mistakes.

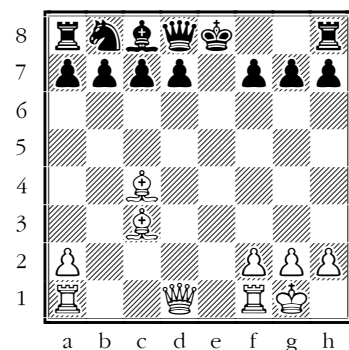
6.Nc3 Bb4

7.Nge2 Nxe4

8.0-0 Nxc3!?

9.Nxc3 Bxc3

10.Bxc3 +- ...



10... Qg5 to guard g7.

Black could try 10...d5

11.Re1+ Be6

12.Bxd5 c6

13.Bxe6 Qxd1

14.Raxd1 fxe6

15.Rxe6+ Kf7

16.Rde1 Rd8

17.Re7+ Kf8

18.Bxg7+ Kg8

19.Bc3 ...

White threatens to double rooks on the seventh beginning with 20.Rg7+ or win another pawn with 20.Rxb7. There is even the threat of 20.Re8+ Rxe8 21.Rxe8+ Kf7 22.Rh8 gaining a pawn or the knight after Be5.

But not 10... 0-0??

11.Qg4 g6

12.Qd4 Qf6

13.Qxf6 with mate next move.

11.Re1+! ...

White's position is so strong that even a move such as 11.h4 can be played!! It probably transposes into the following.

11... Kd8

12.h4!! ...

Weaker is 12.f4!?. Qc5+

13.Bd4 Qf8! (13...Qxc4? 14.Bxg7 +-)

14.Qh5 d6

15.Bxf7 Bd7

16.Qg5+ Kc8

17.Bxg7 Qxf7

18.Bxh8 White is winning, but could have had a much easier time of it.

12... Qg6

Not 12... Qxh4?

13.Bxg7 d6

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If 13... *Re8*  
14.*Qh5 Qe7*

White wins the queen for a rook and then pins Black's rook.

15.*Rxe7 Rxe7*  
16.*Bf6.*

The threats of *Qxf7* and *Re1* are crushing.

14.*Bxh8 Qxc4!?*  
15.*Bf6+ Kd7*  
16.*Rc1 +-.*

**13.Qe2! Nc6**  
**14.Bd5 f6**  
**15.h5! Qe8**  
**16.h6!! Qxe2**

If 16...*Ne5* 17.*hgx7 d6* 18.*Bf7!! +-.*

**17.Rxe2 Ne7**

If 17... *Ne5*  
18.*hgx7 Re8*  
19.*Bxe5 fxe5*  
20.*Rxe5! Rxe5*  
21.*g8Q+ Re8*  
22.*Qg5+ Re7*  
23.*Re1* White wins easily.

**18.hgx7 Rg8**

If 18... *Re8?*  
19.*Bxf6 c6*  
20.*Rxe7 Rxe7*  
21.*g8Q+ Kc7*  
22.*Qg3+ d6*  
23.*Bxe7 +-.*

**19.Bxg8 Nxb8**  
**20.Rae1! ...**

White regains the knight or checkmates.

Sample Games

Even the great Emanuel Lasker lost badly!

**Bird, Henry - Lasker, Emanuel**

England, 1892

**1.e4 e5**  
**2.d4 exd4**  
**3.c3 dxc3**  
**4.Bc4 cxb2**  
**5.Bxb2 Qg5**  
**6.Nf3 Qxg2??** [Correct is ...*Qc5*.]  
**7.Rg1 +- Bb4+ !?**

Better is 7... *Qh3*  
8.*Bxf7+!! Ke7* (8...*Kd8* 9.*Rxg7!*)

9.*Nc3 Kd8*  
10.*Rg3! Qh6*  
11.*Ng5! ...*

Threatens 12.*Bxg8* followed by 13.*Nf7+!*

11... *Nf6*

12.*Bc4* and White wins decisive material by forking on *f7*.

**8.Ke2! Qh3**  
**9.Bxf7+ Kd8**  
**10.Bxg7 Ne7** [...*d6*]  
**11.Ng5 Qh4**  
**12.Ne6# 1-0.**

So, too, falls Frank Marshall!

**Mieses, Jacques - Marshall, Frank**

Monte Carlo (14), 1903

**1.e4 e5**  
**2.d4 exd4**  
**3.c3 dxc3**  
**4.Bc4 cxb2**  
**5.Bxb2 d6**  
**6.Ne2** [*Nf3*] **Nc6**  
**7.0-0 Be6**  
**8.Bd5 Nf6**  
**9.Qb3 Qc8**  
**10.Nf4 Nd8**  
**11.Bxf6 gxf6**  
**12.Nh5 c6**  
**13.Re1 Be7**  
**14.Qf3 Rg8**

15.Nxf6+ Bxf6  
16.Qxf6 cxd5  
17.exd5 Rg6  
18.Qh8+ Kd7  
19.Nc3! Bxd5?? [...Bf5]  
20.Qe8+ Kc7  
21.Nxd5+ Kb8  
22.Rac1 Nc6  
23.Rxc6 bxc6  
24.Rb1# 1-0.

**Szpakowski, M - Baum**

POL-ch (3), 1957

1.e4 e5  
2.d4 exd4  
3.c3 dxc3  
4.Bc4 cxb2  
5.Bxb2 d5  
6.Bxd5 Nf6  
7.Nc3 [7.Bxf7+ see text page 1.] Bb4  
8.Qa4+ Nc6??  
[8...c6 9.Bxf7+ Kxf7 10.Qxb4 +/-]  
9.Bxc6+ Bd7  
10.Bxd7+ Qxd7  
11.Qxb4 0-0-0  
12.Nf3 Qe6  
13.0-0 h6  
14.Rad1 1-0.

**Pekar, Karol - Zahorsky, Robert**

SVK-ch, 1991

1.e4 e5  
2.d4 exd4  
3.c3 dxc3  
4.Bc4 cxb2  
5.Bxb2 Nf6  
6.e5 d5  
7.exf6 dxc4  
8.fxc7?!? ...  
[8.Qe2+!? Be6 9.fxc7 Bb4+ 10.Nc3 Rg8 =/+]  
8... Bb4+  
9.Nc3 Qxd1+??  
[9...Rg8 10.Qxd8+ Kxd8 11.0-0-0+ with  
equal chances.]  
10.Kxd1! +- ...  
[10.Rxd1? Rg8 =/+]

10... Bxc3?? [...Rg8]  
11.gxh8Q+ Bxh8  
12.Bxh8 1-0.

An IM loses in the middlegame because of an error caused by the faulty location of his king.  
**Kritz, Leonid (2281) - Pilgaard, Kim (2377)**  
Budapest IM (4), 2000

1.e4 e5  
2.d4 exd4  
3.c3 dxc3  
4.Bc4 cxb2  
5.Bxb2 d5  
6.Bxd5 Nf6  
7.Bxf7+ Kxf7  
8.Qxd8 Bb4+  
9.Qd2 Bxd2+  
10.Nxd2 Re8  
11.Ngf3 c5  
[11...Nxe4? 12.Ne5+ Rxe5 13.Bxe5 +/-]  
12.Ne5+ Kg8  
13.f4 Nbd7  
14.0-0 Nxe5  
15.Bxe5 b6  
16.Rf3 Bb7  
17.Rg3 Kf7  
18.Nc4 Rad8  
19.Bxf6 gxf6  
20.e5 Re7  
21.Nd6+ Ke6  
22.Re1 fxe5? [...Bd5]  
23.Rxe5+ Kxd6  
24.Rd3+ Kc6  
25.Rxd8 1-0.

**Venios, Mihalis - Andritsopoulos, P, 2000**

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 dxc3 4.Bc4 cxb2  
5.Bxb2 d6 6.Nf3 Nf6 7.Qb3 Qe7 8.0-0 g6?  
[8...Nc6] 9.Ng5 [9.e5! dxe5 10.Nxe5 Bg7  
11.Bxf7+ Kd8 12.Re1 (12.Bc4) 12...Rf8  
13.Nc6+ Nxc6 14.Rxe7 Kxe7 15.Ba3+ Kd8  
16.Bxf8 Bxf8 +-] 9...Bg7 10.Bxf7+ Kd8  
11.Bc4 [11.e5! dxe5 12.Rd1+ Nd5 13.Qxd5+  
+-] 11...Nxe4 12.Nf7+ Ke8 13.Nxh8  
[13.Bxg7!] 13...Nc5 14.Bb5+ [14.Qa3 Bxb2  
15.Qxb2 +-] 1-0.