

opening repertoire

# the Queen's Gambit

## Damian Lemos

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# About the Author

**Damian Lemos** is a **g**randmaster from Argentina. He is a former Pan-American junior champion and was only 15 years old when he qualified for the international master title. He went on to become a grandmaster at 18. An active tournament player, he also trains students at [ichess.net](https://ichess.net).

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# Preface

Creating a repertoire for the white pieces is no easy task. Nowadays the large amount of theory out there makes it even harder. After finishing my first work, *Opening Repertoire: The Fianchetto System*, John Emms at Everyman Chess suggested the Queen's Gambit as a subject for another book. I decided to take on the challenge and the result is in your hands now.

Why the Queen's Gambit? It is definitely the most aggressive approach for White after 1 d4 d5 and 2 c4 is also the best move if we want to fight for an advantage. My goal was to create a repertoire that allows us to reach the middlegame with a solid foundation while not depending too much on 'exact theory'. Instead, the focus is on strategic plans and positional understanding.

Throughout this project good use was made of *Mega Database 2018* (ChessBase), *Stockfish 10* and the ChessBase Online Database. I must also acknowledge and thank John Emms and Byron Jacobs for giving me the chance to write my first two books, as well as my family and all my chess friends for their endless support.

Damian Lemos,  
Santa Cruz de la Palma,  
July 2019

## Chapter Four

# The Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4

```

W                W
[rhb1kgn4]
[0p0W0p0p]
[WDWDWDWD]
[DWDWDWDW]
[WDp)WDWD]
[DWDWDWDW]
[P)WDP)P)]
[$NGQIBHR]
W-----W

```

Against the Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) we are going to take an aggressive approach with 3 e4!. Personally, I think 3 e4 is more challenging than the main line 3 f3 followed by e3 and fxc4, when Black usually plays a quick ...c5 and ...cxd4, giving White an isolated queen's pawn. By contrast, after 3 e4 we have already built up a pawn centre and we usually emerge with more space, especially in the case of 3...f6 and 3...f6 4 e5.

Our centre and extra space is also of paramount importance in the following endgame: 3...c5 4 f3 cxd4 5 fxd4!?, as covered in Game 35, while our development advantage is quickly felt after 3...e5 4 f3 exd4 5 fxc4, which we'll explore in some detail towards the end of this chapter.

Game 33  
**R.Ponomarev-I.Sokolov**  
 Zafra 2007

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4

W W  
 [rhb1kgn4]  
 [0p0W0p0p]  
 [WDWDWDWD]  
 [DWDWDWDW]  
 [WDp)PDWD]  
 [DWDWDWDW]  
 [P)WDW)P)]  
 [\$NGQIBHR]  
 W-----W

I think this is the most aggressive approach against the QGA. As we will see in this chapter, it is often employed by strong grandmasters.

**3...b5!?**

The text move is unsurprisingly risky for Black, since he does not develop and White can open the queenside by simple means.

**4 a4 c6 5 axb5**

White can also consider 5 b3, although Black then frees his position with 5...e5 6 axb5 b4+!? 7 d2 d4 8 b4 d4 9 b4 d4, reaching a murky position.

**5...cxb5 6 d3!**

White has to aim for rapid development. It is not necessary to focus on regaining the pawn immediately. Besides, after 6 b3 e5 Black manages to trade pieces off, with good chances to equalize.

**6...d7**

The ultra-aggressive 6..a6 is the main line and the subject of our next game, Wagner-Smeets. The text is probably the only other playable move, since 6...b4 just loses a pawn after 7 a4+ d7 8 b4 when c4 is falling next, while 6...b6?! cannot be recommended either, since Black has violated too many opening rules and after 7 b3 White has a clear advantage.

**7 f3 e6 8 e2**

8 e5 is also very promising. After 8...f6 9 e2 c6 10 0-0 b4 (or 10...e5 11 dxe5 g8 12 e3 and all Black's pieces are still on the back rank) 11 d7 d7 12 b5 (12

## Opening Repertoire: The Queen's Gambit

e5!?) 12...fxe4 13 fxc4 d6 (otherwise White advances with d4-d5, while 13...f6 runs into 14 f4!) 14 fxd6+ fxd6 15 d5 White opens up the position as his bishop-pair becomes powerful.

**8...f6 9 0-0 e7**

W                      W  
[rhW1kDW4]  
[0WDbgp0p]  
[WDWDphWD]  
[DpDWDWDW]  
[WDp)PDWD]  
[DWHWDNDW]  
[W)WDB)P)]  
[\$WGQDRIW]  
W-----W

Black has to castle as soon as possible, otherwise his king is going to be trapped in the centre.

9...b4 can be met in two promising ways:

a) 10 a4 fxe4 11 fxc4 d6 (or 11...d6 12 d5 0-0 13 e2 f6 14 dxe6 fxe6 15 fxe6 fxe6 16 fxe6+ e8 17 e3 when White has a clear advantage) 12 d3 followed by c5 with a great initiative for White.

b) 10 e5 d5 (after 10...bxc3 11 exf6 cxb2 12 fxb2 gxf6 13 d5 White's advantage is clear) 11 e4 with strong play for White.

### **10 d5 exd5**

After 10...b4 White has the zwischenzug 11 d6. Then after 11...f8 (or 11...bxc3 12 dxe7 e7 13 bxc3 fxe4 14 e4 and a3 is coming next) 12 e5! bxc3 13 exf6 f6 14 bxc3 e6 15 a4 e5 16 a3! White's development causes Black serious headaches.

### **11 exd5**

Unfortunately for White the natural 11 e5 is not effective after 11...e4. White only obtains a tiny plus after 12 e5 (or 12 fxd5 f6 13 fxe7 e7 14 d4) 12...fxc3 13 bxc3 f6.

### **11...e6**

Others:

a) If 11...f5 12 g5 0-0 13 e4 e7 14 fxc5 e5 15 f6 gxf6 16 e2 and White can consider playing the manoeuvre a3-g3 at some point.

b) 11...d6 looks like a better try, but after 12 g5 h6 13 f4 0-0 14 e4 White will weaken Black's kingside.

### **12 f4 f5**

```

W           W
[rhWDkDW4]
[0WDbDp0p]
[W1WDWhWD]
[DpgPDWDW]
[WDpDWGWD]
[DWHWDNDW]
[W)WDB)P)]
[$WDQDRIW]
W-----W

```

Black is about to castle and it appears that his position is safe. However...

### 13 Íxc4!

...is an imaginative try which sets Black great defensive problems. White develops a strong attack and traps Black's king in the centre. Another approach is 13 b3 b4 14 ìa4 Íxa4 15 bxa4 when 15...c3 is met by 16 ìb5+.

### 13...bxc4

After 13...0-0 14 Íd3 White's passed pawn on d5 allied to the fact that Black cannot develop his queenside gives the first player a clear advantage.

### 14 Ëe2+ Êf8 15 ìe5 Íf5

This is a mistake (15...h6 is better), but it is not easy to deal with White's attack over the board.

### 16 ìa4 Ëb5 17 ìxc5

Even after trading queens White maintains the initiative, as shown by 17 Ëxc4 Ëxc4 18 ìxc4 Íd3 19 Ífc1.

### 17...Ëxc5 18 ìxc4 Ëd4

Not 18...Ëxd5? 19 Ífd1 Ëe6 20 Íd8+ ìe8 21 Íd6+ and mate is coming soon.

### 19 ìe5

Even stronger is 19 Íd6+ Êg8 20 Ífd1 Ëe4 21 Ëxe4 ìxe4 22 ìb6 when White has a clear advantage.

### 19...Íd3

Or if 19...Ëd3 20 Íd6+ Êg8 21 Ëxd3 Íxd3 22 ìb6 Íxf1 23 Ëxf1.

### 20 Ëd2



W W  
 [rhWDWiW4]  
 [0WDWDp0p]  
 [WDWDWhWD]  
 [DWDPGWDW]  
 [WDN1WDWD]  
 [DWDbDWDW]  
 [W)W!W)P)]  
 [\$WDWDRIW]  
 W-----W

### 20...Ėxd5

If 20...Ėxc4 then 21 ĩfc1 Ėg4 22 h3! Ėd7 23 Ėxd3, and if 23...ĭxd5 24 ĩd6+! winning.

### 21 ĩfd1?

White spoils his fine effort with a blunder. 21 ĩxf6! was winning, as shown by 21...gxf6 (21...ĭxc4 22 Ėb4+ Ėg8 23 ĩfd1 is crushing) 22 ĩe3 Ėe4 23 ĩfd1 ĩb5 24 Ėd6+ Ėe7 25 Ėd8+ Ėxd8 26 ĭxd8+ Ėg7 27 ĩf5+ Ėg6 28 ĭxh8 Ėxf5 29 ĩd1.

### 21...Ėxc4

Not 21...ĭxc4? 22 Ėb4+.

### 22 ĩac1 Ėa6?

It is never easy to find the best defence when you are facing a relentless attack. Black could have exploited White's lapse on move 21 with 22...Ėe6! 23 ĩxf6 (or 23 Ėb4+ Ėg8 24 Ėb7 h5 25 ĩxf6 ĩe4 and Black wins) 23...ĭc6 and Black survives with an extra piece.

### 23 ĩxf6

23 ĩd6+!? Ėxd6 24 ĩc8+ Ėe7 25 ĭxh8 looks better for White.

### 23...ĭd7

Side-stepping 23...gxf6 24 Ėh6+ Ėe7 25 Ėe3+ Ėe6 26 Ėxd3 with a raging attack.

### 24 ĩc3 ĩb5 25 Ėg5 ĩf6

Black cannot play 25...f6 in view of 26 Ėd5 followed by ĩb4+.

### 26 Ėc5+ Ėg8 27 ĩxf6 h6 28 ĩc3

Now material is equal, but the game will be decided by White's superior development and activity.

### 28...ĩe8 29 ĩd6 Ėb7 30 Ėf5

```

W          W
[WDWDrDk4]
[0qDWDp0W]
[WDW$WDW0]
[DbDWDQDW]
[WDWDWDWD]
[DWGWDWDW]
[W)WDW)P)]
[DW$WDWIW]
W-----W

```

White plans  $\text{Eg4}$ .

**30... $\text{Ee7}$ ?**

This makes things easier for White. 30...a6 31  $\text{Eg4}$   $\text{h7}$  offered better resistance.

**31  $\text{Exb5! 1-0}$**

Black's rook is hanging.

Game 34  
**D.Wagner-J.Smeets**  
 German League 2018

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 b5 4 a4 c6 5 axb5 cxb5 6  $\text{lc3}$  a6**

A critical and fairly topical choice.

**7  $\text{ixb5 axb5}$  8  $\text{ixa8 ib7}$  9  $\text{ia1}$**

```

W          W
[WhWIkgn4]
[DbDW0p0p]
[WDWDWDWD]
[DpDWDWDW]
[WDp)PDWD]
[DWDWDWDW]
[W)WDW)P)]
[$WGQIBHR]
W-----W

```

9  $\text{f3}$  is another key move to consider. I prefer the text because it keeps things simple for White.

### 9...e6!

Development is much more relevant than material.

After 9... $\text{f3}$  10  $\text{b3}$  (10  $\text{f3}$  followed by  $\text{f2}$  looks extremely safe for White) 10... $\text{c6}$  11  $\text{f3}$  White's position is clearly better according to the engines, although accuracy is required. After all, having the king in the centre is always a risky enterprise: 11... $\text{e5}$  12  $\text{fxe4}$  (12  $\text{bxc4!}$  is the right way to go for White, but I suggest playing out all the possibilities with the help of an engine in order to fully understand these sharp lines) 12... $\text{Eh4+}$  (Black misses a great opportunity to mix things up with 12... $\text{b4+}$  13  $\text{d2 c3}$  14  $\text{xb5 cxd2+}$  15  $\text{Ee2 Eb6}$ , with an unclear position) 13  $\text{g3 Exe4+}$  14  $\text{Ef2 lxd4}$  15  $\text{lg2 Ef5+}$  16  $\text{lf3 lc5}$  17  $\text{b4}$  (Black's attack is over and so is the game) 17... $\text{lf6}$  18  $\text{bxc5 le4+}$  19  $\text{Eg1 0-0}$  20  $\text{le3 lc3}$  21  $\text{ld4 exd4}$  22  $\text{Ed2 dxe3}$  23  $\text{Eex3 h5}$  24  $\text{h3 1-0}$ , R.Leitao-E.Matsuura, Tres Barras 2015.

### 10 $\text{le2}$

As pointed out before, development is much more important than material. As such, 10  $\text{f3}$  is very risky because Black has lots of possibilities involving moves like ... $\text{f5}$ , ... $\text{c6}$  and ... $\text{b4+}$ , and even 10... $\text{f5}$  11  $\text{exf5 lc6!}$ ? seems extremely difficult for White to face in practice.

### 10...f5

Now after 10... $\text{f6}$  11  $\text{f3}$  Black no longer has the possibility of playing ... $\text{f5}$ .

### 11 $\text{lc3 lb4}$

With 11... $\text{c6}$  12  $\text{le2!}$   $\text{b4}$  13  $\text{lb1 lxcg2}$  14  $\text{lg1 ld5}$  15  $\text{ld2}$  I don't mind losing pawns so long as White maintains the initiative. The following game is a model example of that strategy: 15... $\text{c3}$  16  $\text{bxc3 bxc3}$  17  $\text{lb1}$  (White obtains a winning advantage after 17  $\text{lb5+!}$   $\text{lc6}$  18  $\text{lxc6+ lxc6}$  19  $\text{le4 lge7}$  20  $\text{la6}$  with  $\text{lc5}$  and  $\text{Ea4}$  to follow) 17... $\text{lb4}$  18  $\text{Ea4+ lc6}$  19  $\text{lb5 Ed6}$  20  $\text{Ea8+ Ee7}$  21  $\text{lg5+ lf6}$  22  $\text{Exh8 la2}$  23  $\text{Exg7 c2+}$  24  $\text{ld2 lxd2+}$  25  $\text{ld2 lxd4}$  26  $\text{Eg3 Ec5}$  27  $\text{ld3 lb3}$  28  $\text{lc1 lxc1}$  29  $\text{lxc1 Ec3+}$  30  $\text{Ee2 ld5}$  31  $\text{Eh4+ f6}$  32  $\text{lg7+ Ed6}$  33  $\text{Ea4 Ee5+}$  34  $\text{Ef1 1-0}$ , M.Rodshtein-K.Alekseenko, Russian Team Championship 2017. CCSC{qu33n5-64mb17\_1f-u\_w4n7\_2-f16h7-4-4n\_4dv4n7463}

### 12 $\text{le2!}$

```

W          W
[W h W 1 k D n 4]
[D W D W D p 0 p]
[W D W D p D W D]
[D p D W D W D W]
[W g p ) b D W D]
[D W H W D W D W]
[W ) W D B ) P )]
[$ W G Q I W D R]
W-----W

```

Several games have been lost by White defending his pawns and not developing his minor pieces here.

### 12...Ėd5

Alternatively, 12...ĭxg2 13 ĭg1 ĩe4 14 ĩd2 with a clear edge for White (after 14 ĭxg7 ĭg6 White's rook is trapped, but even in this variation White has much the better chances following 15 d5 Ėf8 16 ĭxg6 hxg6 17 dxe6).

### 13 f3 ĭg6 14 0-0 Ėb7 15 ĩe4

Very logical from a human point of view. However White had an amazing option available in 15 ĭxb5 Ėxb5 16 Ėb3!!.

```

W          W
[W h W D k D n 4]
[D W D W D p 0 p]
[W D W D p D b D]
[D q D W D W D W]
[W g p ) W D W D]
[D Q D W D P D W]
[W ) W D B D P )]
[$ W G W D R I W]
W-----W

```

White is going to play ĭxc4, ĩa4 and ĩd2. He is doing extremely well, as shown by the lines 16...ĩe7 17 ĭxc4 Ėb6 18 ĩd2 Ėxd4+ 19 ĩe3 Ėe5 20 Ėxb4 Ėxe3+ 21 Ėh1 ĩbc6 22 ĩa8+, 16...cxb3 17 ĭxb5+ Ėe7 18 ĩa7+ Ėf6 19 ĩf4 and 16...Ėb6 17 ĭxc4 ĩe7 18 ĩd2 ĩbc6 19 ĩa8+.

### 15...Ėb6

After 15...ĭf6!? White is probably still better, although the position is far from clear.

**16 b3 ĭxe4 17 fxe4 ĭc3 18 ĩa8 ĭf6 19 ĭe3 0-0 20 bxc4 bxc4**

W W  
[RhWDW4kD]  
[DWDWDp0p]  
[W1WDphWD]  
[DWDWDWDW]  
[WDp)PDWD]  
[DWgWGWDW]  
[WDWDBDP)]  
[DWDQDRIW]  
W-----W

### 21 Ėb1

21 ĩa4 would have been even faster, but White got there in the end.

**21...ĭb2 22 Ėh1 Ėb7 23 ĩa2 c3 24 ĭd3 e5 25 dxe5 ĭfd7 26 e6 fxe6 27 ĭxf8+ ĭxf8 28 ĩa7 Ėc6 29 Ėf1 ĭbd7 30 ĭb5 Ėd6 31 ĭxd7 ĭxd7 32 ĩa8+ ĭf8 33 e5 Ėe7 34 ĩa7 Ėe8 35 ĭd4 h6 36 h3 ĭg6 37 Ėf3 Ėh7 38 Ėf6 Ėg8 39 h4 ĭc1 40 ĭxc3 ĭe3 41 ĭd7 ĭf4 42 ĩa5 ĭc1 43 Ėe7 Ėg6 44 Ėc5 Ėa8 45 Ėc2+ Ėh5 46 Ėd1+ Ėxh4 47 ĭxg7 1-0**

Game 35  
**Y.Vovk-N.Nikcevic**  
Cappelle-la-Grande 2013

### 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 a6

This is a fairly solid try for Black, who hopes to hit back against White's centre just as he does in the 3 ĭf3 ĭf6 4 e3 e6 5 ĭxc4 a6 variation.

### 4 ĭxc4 c5

Playing a quick ...b5 is premature, as the following spectacular variations demonstrate: 4...b5 5 ĭb3 ĭb7 6 ĭf3 e6 (6...ĭxe4 7 ĭxf7+ Ėxf7 8 ĭg5+ leaves Black's position full of weaknesses) 7 0-0! (when you have a huge advantage in development, material is not that relevant) 7...ĭxe4 8 ĭc3 (speeding up White's development and now d4-d5 is imminent) 8...ĭb7 9 d5 b4 (after 9...exd5 10 ĭxd5 White already has a winning advantage) 10 ĩa4+ c6.

```

W          W
[rhW1kgn4]
[DbDWDp0p]
[pDpDpDWD]
[DWDPDWDW]
[B0WDWDWD]
[DWHWDNDW]
[P)WDW)P)]
[$WGQDRIW]
W-----W

```

Here White can crash through with 11 ðe5! Èc7 12 ðxf7 Êxf7 (or 12...Èxf7 13 dxe6 Èf5 14 ðd5 when White has a clear advantage) 13 dxe6+ Êe7 14 Èh5 g6 15 Íg5+ Êe8 16 ðd5 giving him a decisive attack.

#### 5 ðf3 cxd4 6 ðxd4

An ambitious move from White, but trading queens should also offer a small advantage. We will look at such an approach in our next game.

#### 6...e6?!

As pointed out by Grandmaster Sumets, this natural move (blocking the diagonal of the c4-bishop) is dubious.

Black should play 6...e5 7 Èb3 (White doesn't get much after 7 Èa4+ Èd7) 7...Èc7 8 ðc3! (as usual, development is what really matters; Black gets a good position after both 8 ðf3 b5 or 8 ðe2 ðc6). Let us take a look at Black's possibilities here:

```

W          W
[rhbDkgn4]
[Dp1WDp0p]
[pDWDWDWD]
[DWDW0WDW]
[WDBHPDWD]
[DQHWDWDW]
[P)WDW)P)]
[$WGWIWDR]
W-----W

```

a) After 8...b5 the long variation 9 ðdxb5 axb5 10 ðxb5 Èb7 11 ðd5 ðc6 12 Èc4 Ía6

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13 0-0 ðf6 14 ðe3 ðxd5 15 exd5 ðb4 16 a3 ðxd5 17 Ëxd5 Ëxd5 18 ðc7+ Êd8 19 ðxd5 is good for White.

b) 8...ðf6 is the most solid try for Black, but after 9 ðf3 ðd6 10 ðg5! (there is no rush to castle) 10...b5 (Black cannot connect his knights by means of 10...ðbd7 because f7 is hanging) 11 ðd5 ðxd5 12 ðxd5 Ëb7 13 Ëd3 I prefer White's chances.

### 7 0-0 Ëc7

Black has to control the e5-square. If 7...ðf6 then 8 e5 ðd5 (or 8...ðfd7 9 ðf4 when White has much more space, as well as a good plan with the ðc3-e4-d6 manoeuvre) 9 Ëg4 with a clear advantage for White.

### 8 ðb3 ðf6 9 ðc3 ðb4

Black cannot afford to be playing this when he is so far behind in development. 9...ðe7 is better, although after 10 ðe3 0-0 11 ðc1 the positional pressure continues.

### 10 ðg5 ðbd7

10...ðxc3 11 ðxf6 ðxd4 (or 11...gxf6 12 ðc1) 12 ðxd4 gives White the bishop-pair and Black a vulnerable kingside.

### 11 ðxe6!

```
W          W
[rDbDKDW4]
[Dp1nDp0p]
[pDWDBhWD]
[DWDWDWGW]
[WgWHPDWD]
[DWHWDWDW]
[P)WDW)P)]
[$WDQDRIW]
W-----W
```

White acts quickly before Black can complete development.

### 11...fxe6

11...ðxc3 12 ðxd7+ ðxd7 13 ðxf6 does not help Black.

### 12 ðxf6?

White errs. He can obtain a winning position by means of 12 ðxe6 Ëb6 13 ðxg7+ (13 ðd5 ðxd5 14 exd5 is also very good) 13...Êf7 14 ðf5 when the position resembles a Sicilian Defence gone horribly wrong for Black.

### 12...ðc5?

Black had to play the cold-blooded 12...gxf6! 13 Ëh5+ Êe7 14 Ëh6 (if 14 ðxe6? Êxe6 15 ðd5 Ëe5 when Black survives and keeps the extra material, while both 14 ðf5+ Êd8 and 14 Ëg4 ðe5 15 Ëg7+ ðf7 lead nowhere for White) 14...Êf7 15 Ëh5+ Êe7 and there is

nothing better than repeating moves with 16 Ėh6 (not 16 Ĥad1 Ĥxc3 17 bxc3 Ĥc5 18 Ėh6 Ėf7 19 Ėh5+ Ėf8 when Black has a clear advantage) 16...Ėf7 17 Ėh5+, etc.

### 13 Ĥdb5!?

13 Ĥc2 is good enough to keep the advantage for White after 13...Ĥxc3 14 Ĥxc3 Ĥxe4 15 Ĥb4.

**13...axb5 14 Ĥxb5 Ėd7 15 Ĥd6+ Ėf8 16 Ĥe5**

W W  
[rDbDWiW4]  
[DpDqDW0p]  
[WDWHpDWD]  
[DWhWGWDW]  
[WgWDPDWD]  
[DWDWDWDW]  
[P)WDW)P)]  
[\$WDQDRIW]  
W-----W

White's forces create a pleasing effect. There is not much Black can do to get his pieces out.

### 16...Ĥa4?

The last try was 16...Ĥa6 17 Ėf3+ Ėg8 18 Ĥfd1 Ėe7 19 Ĥac1 Ĥxd6 20 Ĥxd6 Ėf7 21 Ėb3 and Black is fighting on.

**17 Ĥc1 Ĥxd6 18 Ĥxd6+ Ėg8 19 Ĥc7 Ėb5 20 Ĥe5! 1-0**

Black has no defence against both Ĥxg7+ and Ėd8+.

### Game 36

**F.Berkes-M.Perez Candelario**  
Spanish Team Championship 2014

**1 d4 d5 2 Ĥf3 c5 3 c4 dxc4 4 e4 cxd4 5 Ėxd4**