

The Reversed Modern Opening

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Introduction

The two main variations of the opening are classified as A00 and A07. The variation in A00 is 1.d3 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 Nf6. The variation in A07 is 1.d3 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nbd7 4.Bg2 e5. The difference is the placement of black's queenside knight from b8 to c6 or d7 as determined by the respective move orders. If both sides play perfectly, the variation in A00 ends in a white mate after 103 moves, and the variation in A07 ends in a white mate after 68 moves. One expects the A07 variation to end more quickly because of weaker moves by black. What follows is that in reply to 1.d3, black's goal may be simply to play for a draw.

There is a large literature about black playing 1...d6 to *any* opening move of white [Yrölä, Jussi 2001, James 2005]. According to computer analysis, in reply to 1.d3 the move 1...d6 is not the strongest move. However, the advantage of playing 1...d6 as black *or* 1.d3 as white is that one effectively must know only one opening with its variations, tactics, and patterns. It is that goal which this paper addresses.

History of the Opening

The opening move 1.d3 is attributed to Jacques Mieses (1865-1954), a German emigrant who became England's first grandmaster at the age of 80. The opening is probably misnamed because in his published games, not one begins as 1.d3, 2.Nf3, 3.g3, 4.Bg2 with Mieses playing white *or* black. In fact, the website in German that is devoted to his memory by family contains *no* games beginning with 1.d3. Therefore this opening is re-named the Reversed Modern because it is in effect a Modern, Pirc, or Robatsch position that is played by white with the extra move.

Computer analysis

The lines of the 1.d3 opening were generated by Deep Fritz 8 with a 1GB hash table on a dual Opteron 240 with 2 GB ECC RAM and Windows XP Professional x64 Edition (64-bit). On Windows XP Pro x64, Deep Fritz in the late middle and end games consistently runs about 50% faster at node speed 2700 kN/S than Deep Fritz on Windows XP 32-bit at 1800 kN/S. Therefore a dual Opteron 252 should perform about 220% faster at 3600 to 5400 kN/S. However, that performance is at a CPU cost which is about seven times greater than that for a dual 240. The level of play below is estimated to be above 3500 because of the amount of time used to explore all major variations which was about 3200 hours (= 1.5 computers x 24 hours x 90 days).

The A00 Variation

[A00] 1.d3 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 [*transposes as 1.d3 Nc6 2.Nf3 e5*] 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 Nf6 5.0-0 Bd6 6.Nc3 d4 7.Nb1 0-0 8.Nbd2 Re8 9.c3 Bf8 10.Re1 Be6 11.Qc2 Bd5 12.a3 Qd7 13.c4 Be6 14.Ng5 Bf5 [*transposes as 12.c4 Be6 13.a3 Bf5 14.Ng5 Qd7*] 15.b4 h6 16.Nge4 Nxe4 17.Nxe4 Bh3 18.Bh1 Nd8 19.Rb1 c6 20.Nd2 Ne6 21.c5 Ng5 22.Nc4 Bf5 [*transposes as 21.c5 Bf5 22.Nc4 Ng5*] 23.Bxg5 hxg5 24.a4 Rad8 25.Na5 Rc8 26.Nc4 g4 27.a5 Qd8 28.Be4 Qg5 29.Rf1 Be6 30.a6 bxa6 31.Ra1 Rb8 32.Rfb1 Bd5 33.Rxa6 Bxe4 34.dxe4 Re6 35.Na5 Rc8 36.Rxa7 Qh5 37.Nc4 Rh6 38.h4 gxh3 39.Kh2 Rb8 40.Nb6 Rd8 41.Qd3 Rf6 42.Rf1 Qg4 43.Nc4 Qh5 44.f3 Rb8 45.Nb6 Rd8 46.Rd7 Re8 47.e3 dxe3 48.Qxe3 Rfe6 49.Ra1 Rf6 50.Ra3 Rg6 51.Rd1 Rge6 52.Nc4 Rb8 53.Qc3 Qg5 54.Ra6 Rg6 55.Qxe5 Rxb4 56.Ra8 Rxc4 57.Rxf8+ Kh7 58.Qxg5 Rxg5 59.Kxh3 f6 60.Rd7 Rg6 61.Rdd8 Rh6+ 62.Kg4 Rxc5 63.Rc8 Rg6+ 64.Kf4 Rh6 65.Rc7 Rc4 66.Rd8 f5 67.Rdd7 Rg6 68.Kxf5 Rxg3 69.f4 Rg6 70.e5 Rg1 71.Rd2 Rh1 72.Rg2 Rh5+ 73.Rg5 Rxg5+ 74.Kxg5 Rc1 75.e6 Rg1+ 76.Kf5 Ra1 77.Rc8 Ra5+ 78.Ke4 Ra1 79.Ke5 Re1+ 80.Kd6 Kg6 81.e7 Kf5 82.e8Q Rxe8 83.Rxe8 Kxf4 84.Rf8+ Kg4 85.Kxc6 Kg5 86.Rf1(#17); Kd5(#17) 1-0 with mate in 103 moves.

The opening moves 1.d3 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 transpose as 1.d3 Nc6 2.Nf3 e5.

The position through move 7 is found in “Mrkvlcka, Joseph 2395 – Vavela, Alejandro A00 1-0 IECC 1999 Team Champ email”. The Encyclopedia of Chess Openings [ECO] has no lines. The main weaker sub variations for black arise at move 43....Qe6 with five sub lines, at move 43....Qg5 with six sub lines, at move 43....Re8 with two sub lines, and at move 45....Re6 which results at move 96 with mate in 11 more moves.

The A07 Variation

[A07] 1.d3 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 [*transposes as 1.d3 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6*] 3.g3 Nbd7 4.Bg2 e5 5.0-0 Bd6 6.c4 d4 7.e3 c5 8.Nh4 0-0 9.Nf5 Nb8 10.Nxd6 Qxd6 11.exd4 cxd4 12.f4 Nc6 13.Na3 Ng4 14.h3 Ne3 15.Bxe3 dxe3 16.Qe2 Qh6 17.Kh2 Bf5 18.Qxe3 Rad8 19.Rad1 exf4 20.Qxf4 Qxf4 21.gxf4 Rfe8 22.Rf2 Re3 23.d4 Rxd4 24.Rxd4 Nxd4 25.c5 Be4 26.Nc4 Re1 27.Rd2 Ne6 28.f5 Bxf5 29.Nd6 g6 30.Nxb7 Rc1 31.b4 Nf4 32.Nd6 Be6 33.h4 Nxg2 34.Kxg2 a6 35.Ne8 Rc4 36.a3 Rg4+ 37.Kf2 Rxh4 38.Rd6 a5 39.Nc7 Rh2+ 40.Ke3 Rh3+ 41.Kd4 Bg4 42.b5 Rxa3 43.b6 Rb3 44.Nd5 Kg7 45.c6 h5 46.b7 h4 47.Rf6 g5 48.Kc5 Rb2 49.Ne3 Kxf6 50.Nxg4+ Kg7 51.c7 Rxb7 52.c8Q Rb4 53.Qf5 Rxg4 54.Qxg4 Kf6 (# 14) 1-0 with mate in 68 moves.

The opening moves 1.d3 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 transpose as 1.d3 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6.

The position through move 6.c4 is found in nine games, none of which continued as 6....d4. The ECO has no lines. The main weaker sub variations for white arise at move

35.a4 and at move 47.Rd8.

Other Black Moves after 1.d3

Other black moves to 1.d3 are 1...e6, 1...c5, and 1...d6.

[A13] 1.d3 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Bd6 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 [*transposes as 5.c4 0-0 6.0-0*] 6...Nbd7 7.Nc3 c6 8.h3 e5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.d4 e4 11.Ne1 Nb6.

[A09] 1.d3 c5 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 Nf6 [*transposes as 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Nc6*] 5.0-0 e5 6.c4 d4 7.a3 Qc7.

[A22] 1.d3 d6 2.Nf3 e5 3.g3 Be7 4.Bg2 Nf6 5.c4 0-0 6.0-0 c6 7.Nc3 Qc7 8.h3 Nbd7 [*transposes as 5.c4 Nbd7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nc3 c6 8.h3 Qc7*].

The remaining possible 13 moves are 1...a6, 1...h6, 1...c6, 1...g6, 1...a5, 1...Na6, 1...f6, 1...h5, 1...b6, 1...Nh6, 1...f5, 1...b5, and 1...g5 as follows.

[A04] 1.d3 a6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nd7 4.Bg2 e5 5.0-0 Ngf6 [*transposes as 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Nbd7 5.0-0 e5*].

[A07] 1.d3 h6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 e5 5.0-0 Nge7 6.c4 dxc4 7.dxc4 Qxd1 8.Rxd1 Be6.

[A07] 1.d3 c6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Nbd7 5.d4 e6 6.0-0 Bd6.

[A07] 1.d3 g6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 Nf6 [*transposes as 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Bg7*] 5.0-0 0-0 6.h3 Re8 7.d4 Nbd7 [*transposes as 6.d4 Nbd7 7.h3 Re8*] 8.Bf4 Nh5.

[A07] 1.d3 a5 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 e6 4.Bg2 Nf6 [*transposes as 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 e6*] 5.0-0 Be7.

[A04] 1.d3 Na6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 g6 5.0-0 Bg7 6.c4 0-0.

[A07] 1.d3 f6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 e5 4.Bg2 Nc6 5.c3 Bd6 6.0-0 Nge7 7.c4 Be6.

[A04 / A07] 1.d3 h5 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 e5 5.0-0 Qe7 6.c3 Bg4 7.b4 a6 8.h3 Bxf3 9.Bxf3 Nf6.

[A05 / A07] 1.d3 b6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Bb7 5.0-0 Nbd7 [*transposes as 3.g3 Nd7 4.Bg2 Bb7 5.0-0 Ngf6*] 6.c4 dxc4 7.dxc4 e5 8.Nc3 Bd6 9.Qc2 0-0.

[none] 1.d3 Nh6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nf5 4.Bg2 Nc6 5.d4 e6 [*transposes as 3.g3 Nc6 4.d4 Nf5 5.Bg2 e6*] 6.c3 Qf6 7.0-0 Be7.

[A92] 1.d3 f5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.g3 e6 4.Bg2 Be7 5.c4 0-0 6.0-0 d5 7.d4 dxc4
[transposes as 6.d4 d5 7.0-0 dxc4] 8.Qc2 c5 9.dxc5 Bxc5 10.Nbd2 Nc6
 11.Nxc4 Ne4 12.Bf4 Qf6 13.Ncd2 Nxd2.

[A05 / A07] 1.d3 b5 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 e6 5.0-0 Be7 6.c4 bxc4 7.dxc4
 c6 8.Qc2 0-0.

[none] 1.d3 g5 2. Bxg5 (white captures an unprotected piece to go up a pawn).

Conclusion

It is the plan of white to play 1.d3, 2.Nf3, 3.g3, and 4.Bg2, followed at some point with 0-0, in all variations so as to simplify and limit the amount of detailed opening knowledge. (Similarly, it is the independent plan of black to play those moves for the same reason.) The moves 1.d3 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 and 1.d3 Nc6 2.Nf3 e5 transpose into the same A00 opening. The moves 1.d3 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 and 1.d3 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 transpose into the same A07 opening. The weaker moves are as follows: 1.d3 e6 2.Nf3 d5 are in the A13 opening; 1.d3 c5 2.Nf3 d5 are in the A09 opening; and 1.d3 d6 2.Nf3 e5 are in the A22 opening. The other answers for black to 1.d3 ... result in quicker losses. It is noted that in none of the variations does white make the move of e4.

Acknowledgments

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References

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