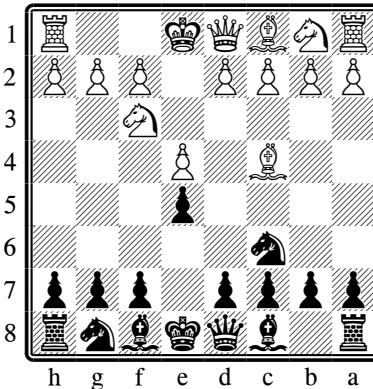


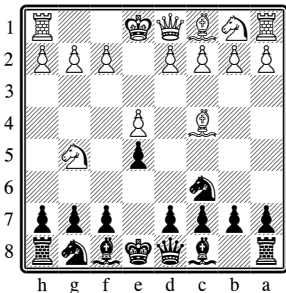
CHESS OPENING THEORY

Defending Against Italians



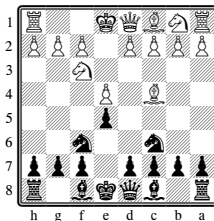
Any time you are playing the black side of an open game and White's bishop comes to c4 before you have castled, WATCH OUT! This is a dangerous situation and you cannot just make natural-looking moves or you will be *greced*. Simply put, you have to know what the right moves are here.

From the position above, where it is Black's move, imagine that White's knight were already at g5. What are your options for stopping the attack at f7 without dropping material?



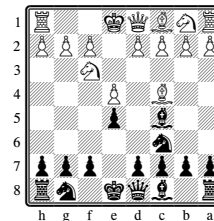
You would have two options:
Qxg5 or Nh6

Now consider the **Two Knights Defense**, where Black plays the natural-looking Nf6.



Notice that this move removes both options Qxg5 and Nh6. If White were to play Ng5 now, Black's only option would be d5 (now possible because the knight supports it). Ultimately, Black should be OK but you need to know the right moves!

This is why I am recommending the **Giucio Piano** instead, bringing the bishop out before the knight.



Notice now that White cannot play Ng5 immediately because you still have Qxg5. With the bishop developed, you are ready to play Nf6 because Ng5 can be met simply by castling, and the rook would then protect f7.

A common position (the **Möller Attack**) arrives after the natural moves **4 c3 Nf6 5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 Bb4+ 7 Nc3 Nxe4 8 O-O**



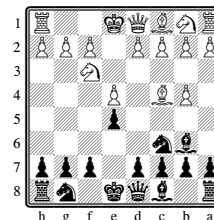
White is giving up material for the attack here, trying to catch Black before he castles.

Black plays **8 ... Bxc3** and now:
9 bxc3 d5! 10 Ba3 (otherwise Black can castle) **dxc4 11 Re1 Be6 12 Rxe4 Qd5! 13 Qe2 O-O-O =+**

or

9 d5 Bf6 10 Re1 (10 dxc6 bxc6 is much better for Black) **Ne7 11 Rxe4 d6** and Black can castle, e.g., **12 Bg5 Bxg5 13 Nxg5 O-O =+**

Let us decline the dangerous **Evans Gambit 4 b4 Bb6**



5 a4 a6 6 Nc3 Nf6 7 Nd5 Nxd5 8 exd5 Nd4 9 a5 Ba7 10 d6! Nf5! 11 Bb2 Nxd6 12 Bb3 e4 13 Ne5 O-O 14 O-O Ne8 and White can try **15 Nxf7 Rxf7 16 Bxf7+ Kxf7 17 Qh5+ Kg8 18 Qd5+ Kh8 19 Qxe4 d5 = or 19 Qf7 Nf6 20 Bxf6 gxf6! 21 Ra3 Bd4 22 Rh3 Qg8=**