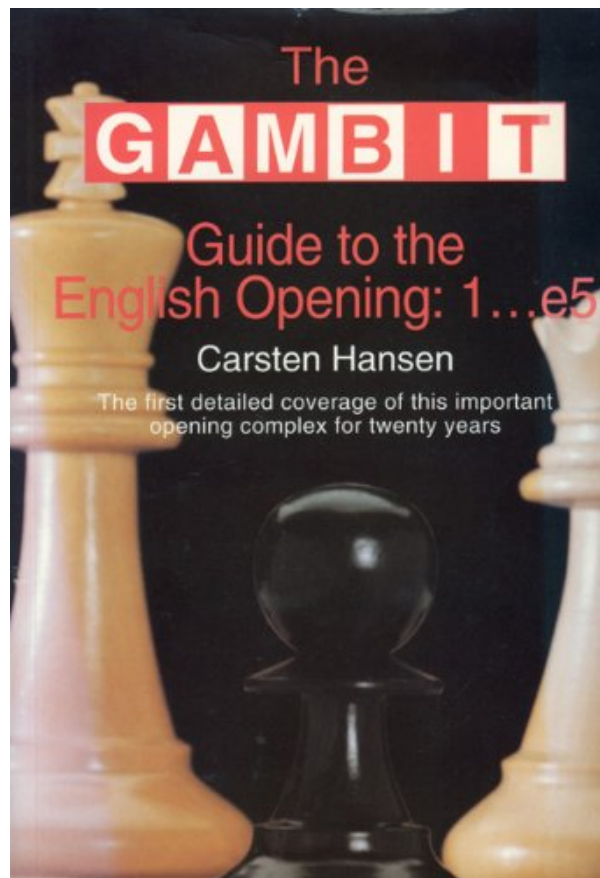
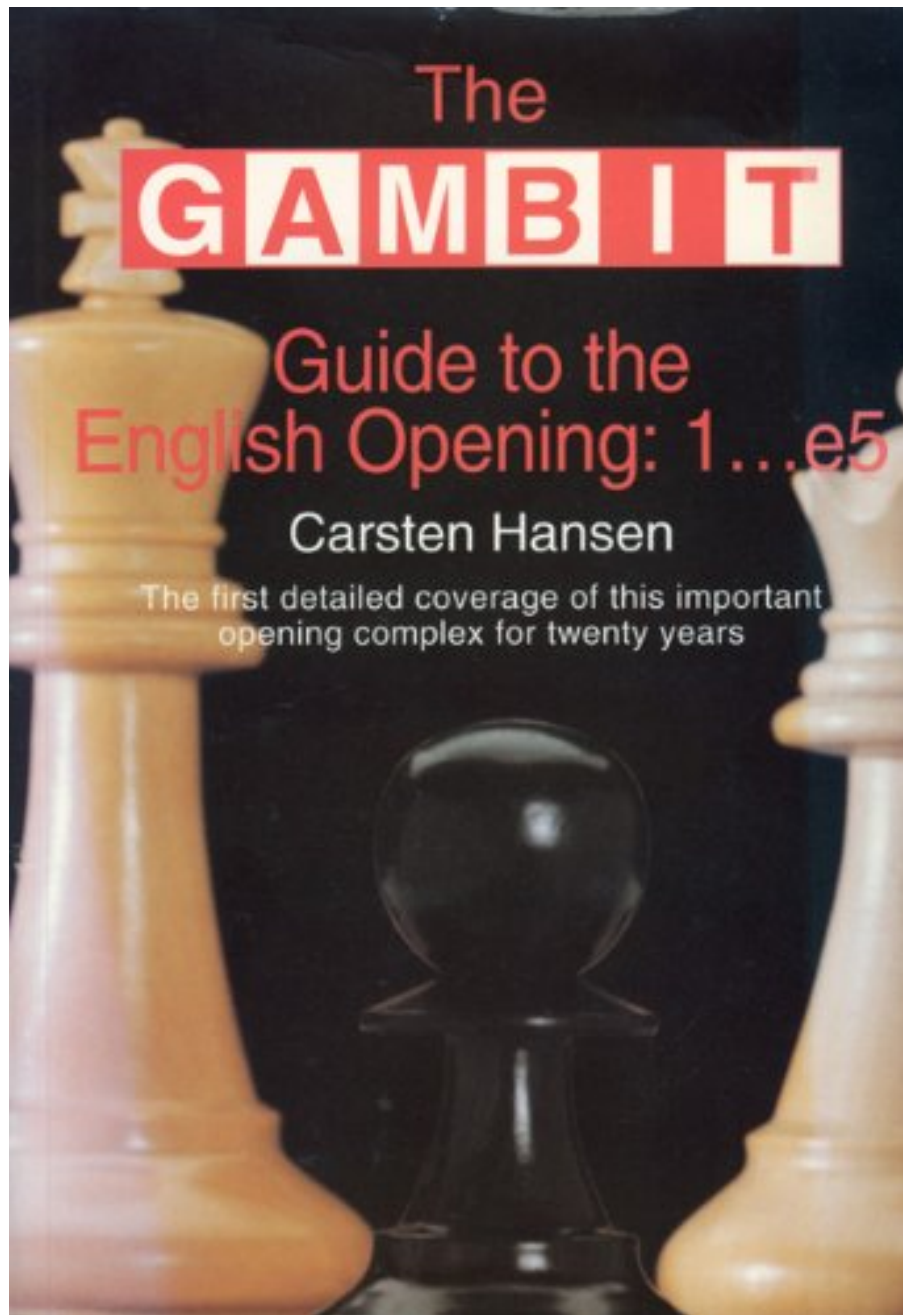


# THE GAMBIT GUIDE TO THE ENGLISH OPENING: 1...E5 BY CARSTEN HANSEN



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## **About the Author**

Carsten Hansen is a young FIDE Master from Denmark. He has a wealth of experience at the international level, and a reputation as an original thinker and thorough researcher.

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The 1...e5 systems of the English Opening lead to positions rich in tactical and strategic subtleties, making them suitable for players of all standards and temperaments. These lines have not been properly covered in chess literature for twenty years, and this thoroughly researched book fills a gaping void. The main systems covered include the Reversed Dragon, where the position is balanced on a tactical knife-edge; the tense Closed lines, where Black adopts a King's Indian set-up; the fashionable lines with a very early ...Bb4; and the main lines of the English Four Knights, as used in many top-level games. The unique GAMBIT System makes it easy to use the book to the maximum practical advantage. "Quick Summaries" introduce the main themes of each system, where appropriate suggesting a coherent repertoire of reliable lines. Then comes detailed, unbiased coverage of all the critical lines, for reference and detailed study. Whether you're looking for a quick !! introduction to an opening system for surprise use, a refresher course in a favorite opening, or to research an opening deeply, the GAMBIT Guide is the ideal choice.

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## About the Author

Carsten Hansen is a young FIDE Master from Denmark. He has a wealth of experience at the international level, and a reputation as an original thinker and thorough researcher.

## Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Convinced that e5 is the way to play the English as Black

By Andrew

I don't play the English as White and I don't face it as Black that often so I don't know it well. I also don't play the Sicilian as Black and when I face it as White I play the Smith-Morra Gambit, so playing 1...e5 puts me into positions I am unfamiliar with. Against the English Opening I actually play 1...Nf6 hoping that White will play 2. d4 and then I can set up for my favourite Benko Gambit with 2...c5 3. d5 b5. However White rarely plays 2.d4, I guess it is not in the spirit of the English Opening. After 1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3, FM Hansen has convinced me to play 2...e5 which seems to be the English Opening Main Line, it is the move order played most often by GMs according to the 365Chess.com GM database.

I have become particularly fond of playing c6 followed by d5 when White fianchettoes the light squared Bishop, especially in the Keres Variation which can lead to Black offering a fun pawn sacrifice for the threat of forking White's King and Rook which eventually forces White to lose the right to castle: 1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e5 3.g3 c6 4. Bg2 d5!? 5. cxd5 cxd5 6.Qb3 (determined to win back the pawn) 6...Nc6! (there is no way for Black to defend the d pawn) 7.Nxd5 Nd4 (attacking the Queen and Nc2 looks like it's coming, forking White's King and Rook) 8. NxNf6+ QxNf6 9. Qd3 Bf5 10.Be4 BxBe4 11.QxBe4 Rc8 (Nc2 cannot be stopped and White loses the right to castle, either playing 12.Kf1 or 12.Rb1 Nc2+ 13.Kf1).

This book has proved a bit difficult to follow for me since many of the lines after 1...e5 are similar because White usually plays g3 at some stage. Perhaps this is not Hansen's fault but simply the complex nature of the English. Nevertheless it is very difficult as Black to choose variations in response to White that are most suited to one's style. One reviewer pointed out that the index makes it easy to follow but I assume he plays the English as White and knows the opening more than I do. The index is of course helpful for post game analysis or correspondence games but I don't think it helps for studying the theory. It seems like one needs to wade through the book.

Despite this difficulty, the variations covered and the comprehensive analysis of the illustrative games have proved very useful for me in getting wins against the English Opening where I have been able to out theory my opponent in their favourite opening, much to their dismay. Since buying this book I have faced the English Opening twice in correspondence, once in a 90/30 tournament and once in a blitz tournament. I have won every game!

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

A very useful chess book on 1...e5 in the English Opening

By Jill Malter

I think a chess player ought to know at least a little about how to play the most typical first moves for White. That means having some sort of repertoire with 1 e4. And 1 d4. And 1 Nf3. And, yes, 1 c4.

That's where this book comes in. Black may answer 1 c4 with 1...e5 (you'll need to find out what to do about other replies in other books, of course). Now you play 2 Nc3 (if you want to do something else, maybe this isn't the right book for you: it spends 230 pages on 2 Nc3 and 17 pages on everything else combined). And Hansen shows you what you can do in response to all the popular Black systems at that point. Namely:

2...f5

2...d6

2...Bb4

2...Nf6 3 Nf3 (my choice as White). Black can try 3...e4 or 3...d6.

2...Nf6 3 g3

2...Nc6 3 Nf3. Black can try 3...d6 or 3...Bb4 or 3...f5 or 3...g6?! Or 3...Nf6.

After 1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Nf3 Nf6, White has a bunch of choices: 4 a3, 4 d3, 4 d4, 4 e4, 4 e3, and the most popular, namely 4 g3. My recommendation, for what it is worth, is 4 d3. Hansen spends three pages on this move, while the rest combined get 73 pages.

Of course, there is another potential use for this book. You can prepare to use 1...e5 as your defence to 1 c4. I'm happy that Hansen spends over 18 pages on 2...Bb4. That's an atypical system that I'd recommend looking at, just to see if you like it.

Why would anyone want to play 1...e5 with Black against 1 c4? I'll tell you why I do it. Many years ago, I

had to play a tournament game against someone who liked to play the English. I told a friend, a novice at chess (USCF rating 1017) that I'd probably be facing 1 c4. He asked if I wanted to try a practice game. I secretly doubted that playing Black against a 1017 player would help me much, but I consented. Our practice game, however, was a shock that I still remember vividly:

1 c4 c5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 g3 e6 4 Nf3 (4 Bg2?! is not good) b6 5 Bg2 Bb7 6 d4 cxd4 7 Qxd4 Be7 8 0-0 d6 9 Rd1 0-0 10 b3 Nbd7 11 Bb2 a6 12 Qe3 Qc7 13 Nd4 Bxg2 (so far, everything has gone well, of course, I'm still in "book") 14 Kxg2 Rab8 (this was the book move, but obviously it is not very good) 15 Nf5 Nc5? (Black is still alive after 15...Rfe8 but not after this) 16 Nd5! Nxd5 (now White has a forced mate) 17 Qh6 gxh6 18 Nxb6 mate

In the tournament game, I decided to avoid 1...c5. I'm sure you can understand why. In fact, I tried the unsound Bellon Gambit, mainly because I'd come up with what I thought was a new move for Black:

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nf3 e4 4 Ng5 b5 5 d3 bxc4 6 dxe4 Nc6 (this was my "new" move, and I was proud of it, since, as this book explains, an immediate 6...h6 loses to 7 Nxf7) 7 e3 h6 (this move has to be played now!) 8 Nf3 Bb4 9 Qc2 Qe7 10 Nd2 Ne5 11 Be2 Ba6 12 0-0 c6 13 a3 Ba5 14 Nf3 Nxf3 15 Bxf3 Qe5 16 Qa4 0-0 17 Nd5 c3 18 Nxf6 gxf6 19 Rd1 Rfb8 20 b4 c2 21 Rd4 (a forced move that I had overlooked) c5 22 bxc5 Rb1 23 Qxa5 Rab8 24 Qd2 Rxa1 25 Qxc2 Qxd4 26 exd4 Rbb1 27 White Resigns

Since then, I've used 1...e5 to answer 1 c4. I even tried the Bellon Gambit once again, in a friendly game. The first seven moves were identical to the above game, but now my opponent tried 8 Nxf7. Obviously, if this move actually works, the Bellon Gambit is not merely unsound but unplayable. The game continued 8...Kxf7 9 Bxc4 d5 10 Bb5 Ne5 11 f4 (Hansen's recommendation for White at this point) Bg4 12 Qb3 Ned7 13 exd5 Bc5 14 e4 Re8 15 e5 a6 16 Bc6 Nxe5! 17 fxe5 Rxe5+ 18 Kd2 Be3+ 19 Kd3 Bf5+ 20 Kc4 Rb8 21 Qa3 Nxd5 22 Nxd5 Qh4+ 23 Kc3 Qd4 mate

This book gives the Bellon Gambit a little over two pages. Hansen quotes Bagirov, who gives the 8 Nxf7 line as well as 8 Nf3 Bb4 9 Bd2 0-0 10 Bxc4 Bxc3 11 Bxc3 Nxe4. In this final line, Bagirov and Hansen say that White can get an excellent game with 12 Rc1 and an even better game with 12 Qd3. However, I think Black still has some practical chances even in these two lines.

One complaint that I have about my particular copy of this book is that pages 129 through 160 are upside down! I wonder if there is a quality control problem here.

Nevertheless, I think the book itself is a great text and reference and I recommend it.

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

good choice for english' lovers

By Garik Tal

The "english opening" is one of the most complex chess playing systems. In this book Hansen deals with the variations called "reversed sicilian". Hansen analyzes main lines and side lines through 10 chapters. An useful index of variations at the end of the book allows to easily skip through many transpositional lines. The games analyzed are numerous as in every "Gambit guide" book. Hansen's analysis includes many correspondence games, too. I think this book is the perfect choice for everybody interested with the "english opening".

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## About the Author

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