

## Petroff Defense or Russian Defense Indefensible

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The Petroff Defense or Russian Defense arises from the moves 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 d6 4 Nf3 Nxe4. It is the subject of this computer analysis with Deep Fritz 8 software to level 20 and dual-processor hardware with d240 Opteron and 2 GB RAM.

The best line for white continues as 5 Qe2 Qe7. The white move was invented in 1850 in New Orleans by Paul Morphy, the chess prodigy at the age of 13. At that time his move was considered a refutation of the defense. This paper concurs.

Some writers as Raetsky Chetrevik 2005 state that black can equalize. Their text lines are 6 d3 Nf6 7 Bg5 Be6 (0.28) from Em. Lasker-Marshall, St Petersburg, 1912, 1-0 and 6.d3 Nf6 7 Bg5 Qxe2+ (0.27) from Aronian-Akopian, Ohrid, 2001, ½-½. The numbers in parens are those assigned by the software where the higher positive number favors white, the lower negative number favors black, and the number zero shows both sides are equal. After 7 Bg5, the best move for black is 7 ... Bg4 (0.24) which comes closer to equalizing.

However, neither of the text lines is the strongest for white according to computer analysis. The best line continues 6 Nc3 Nxc3 7 dxc3 Nc6 (0.29). In fact, the advantage of 0.29 for white can be preserved. If black fails on one single move in the sequence below, then the white advantage increases dramatically. The format is that of ECO with transpositions in brackets.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
e4	Nf3	Nxe5	Nf3	Qe2	Nc3	dx3	Be3	Nd4	cx4	0-0-0	Qd2
e5	Nf6	d6	Nxe4	Qe7	Nxc3	Nc6	Qe6	Nxd4	d5	Bd6	0-0
											[ -
											Qd7
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Bd3	Bf4	Rde1	h3	Bxd6	Re5	Re3	Rhe1	Rxe8	Qe2/3	Qe7	Qe3
Qd7	Qc6	Bd7	b5	Qxd6	f6	Rae8	b4	Bxe8	Bf7	Qf4+	Qd6 ½
[Bf4	Bd3					[ -	Rhe1				
0-0	Qc6]					b4	Rae8]				

### References

Raetsky A Chetrevik M, 2005. petroff defense. London: Everyman Chess Series.