A Practical Black Repertoire with d5, c6

The Slav and Other Defences

ALEXEI KORNEV
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A PRACTICAL BLACK REPERTOIRE with d5, c6
Volume 1

Alexei Kornev

The Slav and Other Defences

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PREFACE
About an year ago I wrote the two-volume work “A Practical Black Repertoire with \( \text{Nf6, g6, d6} \)” in which the readers had the option to build their opening repertoire on the base of the King’s Indian Defence and the Pirc Defence. All these openings are very good when you have to play for a win irrelevant of the colour of your pieces. Still, sometimes, depending on the situation in the tournament, you have to play some not so aggressive, but more reliable systems. Therefore, I decided to write another two-volume work in which as main openings for Black, I analysed the Slav, the Semi-Slav and the Caro-Kann Defences. All these openings are very solid. This does not necessarily mean that the maximum that Black dreams about is a draw. The moment that White plays imprecisely, Black can try to seize the initiative.

So, now I am happy to present to my readers the two-volume work “A Practical Black Repertoire with d5, c6”. In the first volume, we will concentrate mostly on the Slav and the Semi-Slav Defences (Chapters 1-22).

In fact, nowadays the Slav Defence (1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6) is one of the most popular closed opening in the contemporary tournament practice. In it, contrary to the Queen’s Gambit Declined (2...e6), Black fortifies his centre, but does not restrict his bishop on c8. Later, it can be developed to f5, or g4.

Besides all that, in the first part of the book, we will analyse all the opening set-ups for White in which he refrains from the pawn-advance c2-c4, after d4-d5 (Chapters 23-26). Among these lines, we have to
pay special attention to the London System (1.d4 d5 2.♘f4, or 1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 ♘f6 3.♗f4), which has become tremendously popular lately. It is also worth mentioning that the combination of the Slav Defence and the Caro-Kann Defence enables Black to facilitate his defence in the opening and to avoid numerous unpleasant schemes for him.

For example, after 1.c4, he can simply play 1...c6, without being afraid of 2.e4.

In the above mentioned London System, after the moves 1.d4 d5 2.♗f4 c5 3.e3, Black has the resource 3...cxd4 4.exd4, after which there arises by transposition a variation from the Caro-Kann Defence which is practically harmless for Black.

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Alexei Kornev,
city of Vyazniki, July 2017

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New in chess Yearbook
Bestlogic Database
Chessbase online database
ChessOK Correspondence Database
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GameKnot Database
ICCF Database
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Mega Database
Part 1

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

In the first part of our book we will analyse White’s not so popular alternatives on move three, when he refrains from 3.Nf3, or when he plays 3.Nc3, he does not develop his king’s knight on his moves four and five.

The exchange variation has turned into the main danger for Black (Chapters 3, 4). Numerous fans of the Slav Defence do not spend too much time in studying it. Meanwhile, in the last several years there has been amassed plenty of theory in it and there arise rather complicated variations, so without precise knowledge in the opening Black may come quickly into a bad position.

Chapter 1

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

We will analyse as a main opening weapon for Black the Slav Defence against White’s first moves d4 and c4. This opening has become very popular in the contemporary tournament practice. It is encountered in regular open tournaments, as well as in the super-tournaments and even in the matches for the World Championship. This is quite deservedly so, because the Slav Defence has a deep positional basis. Indeed, with his first move (d7-d5) Black begins a fight for the centre and with his second move (c7-c6) he continues with his central strategy, fortifying his central pawn. Still, contrary to the Queen’s
Gambit (e7-e6), Black does not close the h3-c8 diagonal and his bishop can be developed later to an active position on f5 or g4. In addition, the move c7-c6 creates prerequisites for him to begin active actions on the queenside (dxc4, b7-b5). In some variations Black can even try successfully to hold on to his c4-pawn. This opening has been named the Slav Defence, because many Polish, Russian, Czech and Yugoslavian chess masters have contributed greatly to the development of its theory.

3.e3
White protects immediately his c4-pawn, but now his bishop on c1 is deprived of the possibility to be developed to f4 or g5.

About 3.\(\text{Qc2}\) dxc4 4.\(\text{Qxc4}\) \(\text{Nf6}\) – see 3.\(\text{Qb3}\).

3.\(\text{Qb3}\) dxc4 4.\(\text{Qxc4}\) \(\text{Nf6}\), or 5.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{f5}\) 6.\(\text{c3}\) e6 – see Chapter 7, variation B.

3.\(\text{Nd2}\) \(\text{f6}\) 4.\(\text{Ngf3}\) \(\text{Bf5}\), or 4.e3 \(\text{f5}\) 5.\(\text{Qg3}\) \(\text{Nc3}\) 6.\(\text{Qc3}\) – see Chapter 5.

It is not good for White to play 3.\(\text{Bg5}\), because after 3...h6 4.\(\text{h4}\), Black can simply capture the pawn 4...dxc4 and White fails to obtain sufficient compensation for it. 5.a4 (5.e4 b5 6.a4, Chepukaitis – Sebag, playchess.com 2003, 6...\(\text{Qf6}!\?\) 5...\(\text{Qb6}\). Black removes with tempo his queen away from the h4-d8 diagonal and prepares e7-e5 and \(\text{Bb4}\), in order to exploit the absence of White’s dark-squared bishop from the queenside. 6.\(\text{Qd2}\) e5! 7.dxe5 \(\text{b4}\) 8.\(\text{c3}\), Chepukaitis – Karjakin, Dubai 2002, 8...g5!? 9.\(\text{Qg3}\) \(\text{a6}\) 10.e3 \(\text{e6}\). Black has given back advantageously the extra pawn, but has seized firmly the initiative.

3.g3. As a rule, this move leads by transposition to lines from the other Chapters. 3...\(\text{Qf6}\).

About 4.\(\text{c3}\) dxc4 5.\(\text{f3}\) e6, or 5.\(\text{Qg2}\) e6 6.\(\text{Qf3}\) \(\text{bd7}\) – see Chapter 11.

4.cxd5 cxd5 – see Chapter 3, 4.g3 \(\text{f6}\).

4.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{g4}\) – see Chapter 6, 3.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{f6}\) 4.g3 \(\text{g4}\).

4.\(\text{Qg2}\) \(\text{g4}\) 5.\(\text{c3}\) (5.h3 \(\text{h5}\) 6.\(\text{b3}\), Berkes – K.Szabo, Paks 2002. Here, the simplest for Black would be to choose 6...\(\text{b6}\)!=, in an attempt to trade the queens and to obtain a quite acceptable position; 5.\(\text{f3}\) – see 3.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{f6}\) 4.g3 \(\text{g4}\) 5.\(\text{g2}\) 5...e6 6.\(\text{f3}\). After this move there arise very original positions (6.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{bd7}\) – see Chapter 6, variation B). 6...\(\text{h5}\) 7.\(\text{h3}\), Tischbierek – Hug, Zuerich 199. After \(\text{f4}\), White plans to exchange his knight for the enemy bishop and to obtain the two-bishop advantage, but leaves his c4-pawn without protection and Black can exploit this immediately. 7...dxc4!? 8.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{g6}\) 9.h4 \(\text{d6}\) 10.e4 \(\text{xf4}\) 11.\(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{h5}!\) There has arisen a position with dynamic balance. Black has an extra pawn at the moment, but White has occupied the centre with his pawns and has restricted
considerably the mobility of the enemy bishop on g6.

3. \( \texttt{Bf4} \) dxc4! This is the only correct move for Black; otherwise, White will play e2-e3 and Black will have great difficulties to organise counterplay on the queenside.

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4.e4 b5 5.\( \texttt{c3} \) f6 6.f3?! White protects reliably his pawn on e4, but deprives his own knight of the f3-square. (6.\( \texttt{f3} \) e6 – see Chapter 10, 5.\( \texttt{f4} \) dxc4 6.e4 b5) 6.e6 7.a4, Gonzalez Diaz – Bravo Barranco, Barbera del Valles 1997, 7...\( \texttt{b6} \)?! White has no compensation for the pawn.

4.e3. This move looks more reliable than 4.e4, but is also insufficient for equality. 4...b5 5.a4 \( \texttt{f6} \) 6.\( \texttt{c3} \) (Unfortunately for White it would not work for him to play here 6.axb5 cxb5 7.b3?, in view of 7...e5! 8.\( \texttt{xe5} \) \( \texttt{b4} \)+ 9.\( \texttt{e2} \), Mancini – Pert, France 2004, 9...\( \texttt{d5} \)–+) 6.\( \texttt{b6} \). This is Black’s simplest move. He should better refrain from b5-b4, because this would weaken his c4-pawn. 7.\( \texttt{f3} \) e6 8.\( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{b4} \) 9.0-0 0-0 10.\( \texttt{c2} \) \( \texttt{b7} \) 11.\( \texttt{f1} \) \( \texttt{bd7} \). Black has managed to complete his development and to deploy harmoniously his pieces. 12.\( \texttt{e5} \) (12.\( \texttt{g5} \), Sulskis – Antal, Plovdiv 2012, 12...a6!?+) 12...\( \texttt{xe5} \) 13.\( \texttt{xe5} \) \( \texttt{d7} \)?

3...\( \texttt{f6} \)

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4.\( \texttt{d3} \)

White wishes to impede the development of Black’s bishop on c8. Still, he presents his opponent with the possibility to accomplish an advantageous break in the centre with the help of a tactical operation.

About 4.\( \texttt{c3} \) e6 – see Chapter 2, variation B.

4.\( \texttt{f3} \) \( \texttt{g4} \) – see Chapters 8-9.

4.\( \texttt{d2} \) \( \texttt{f5} \) 5.\( \texttt{gf3} \) e6 – see Chapter 5, variation A.
The move 4.\texttt{c2} cannot create problems for Black. 4...\texttt{g4} 5.\texttt{c3} (5.\texttt{d3} \texttt{e6} 6.\texttt{c3} \texttt{dxc4} – see 5.\texttt{c3}; 5.\texttt{f3} \texttt{xf3} – see Chapter 8, 5.\texttt{c2} \texttt{xf3}) 5...\texttt{e6} 6.\texttt{d3} \texttt{dxc4} 7.\texttt{xc4}, Gnidenko – Domnin, St Petersburg 2005, 7...\texttt{c5}!? 8.\texttt{ge2} \texttt{cxd4} 9.\texttt{dxe5} \texttt{a6} 10.h3 \texttt{h5} 11.0-0 \texttt{bd7} 12.\texttt{e2} \texttt{g6} 13.\texttt{d3} \texttt{xd3} 14.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{xc8}=

4...\texttt{e5}!

This is the point.

5.\texttt{c3}

White should better refrain from opening the game in the centre.

Following 5.cxd5?! \texttt{e4} and then cxd5, Black obtains the c6-square for his knight, Potapov – Komliakov, Salekhard 2007.

5.\texttt{b3} \texttt{e4} Hoelzl – Madl, Austria 2001.

After 5.\texttt{e2}, Black’s simplest move would be 5...\texttt{d6}, for example 6.dxe5 \texttt{exe5}. Here, it is essential that White has played too early the move \texttt{c2} and cannot attack the enemy bishop with the move \texttt{f3}.

7.cxd5 \texttt{xd5} Pawlowski – Strumberg, ICCF 2014.

Following 5.dxe5 \texttt{dxe4}, it is only White who may have problems.

It is obviously bad for White to play here 6.exf6?! \texttt{cxd3} 7.fxg7 \texttt{xg7} 8.\texttt{f3} \texttt{a6} 9.0-0, Zhao – Girya, Khanty-Mansiysk 2014, 9...\texttt{g8}!? Black begins an attack against the enemy king. 10.\texttt{bd2} \texttt{e6}, followed by \texttt{d7}, 0-0-0. White can hardly parry his opponent’s threats on the g-file, because the powerful black pawn on the d-file squeezes his forces.

The endgame is preferable for Black after 6.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xd1}+ 7.\texttt{xd1} \texttt{g4}. This is the point. White cannot
5...e4
Black acquires additional space with tempo.

6.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\textit{c2}}} \textsf{\textit{d6}}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
\end{center}

7.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\textit{g2}}}
7.cxd5. This move seems imprecise, because after 7...cxd5, Black will be able to develop his knight on c6. 8.f3 0-0 9.fxe4 \textsf{\textit{xe4}} 10.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{\textit{f3}}} (10.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\textit{xe4}}} dxe4 11.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{\textit{xe4}}} \textsf{\textit{b4+}} 12.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\textit{d2}}} \textsf{\textit{e8\equiv}}) 10...\textsf{\textit{xc3}} 11.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\textit{bxc3}}}, Chernin – Kramnik, Moscow 1996. Here, Black can maintain a slight but stable edge with the line: 11...\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{\textit{c6?!}}} 12.0-0 \textsf{\textit{f5\equiv}}, preventing e3-e4. Later, he can continue with \textcolor{blue}{\textsf{\textit{a5}}}, and in the middle game White is unlikely to have compensation for his weak pawns on c3 and e3.

7.f3. The pawn on e4 restricts considerably White’s pieces, so his desire to exchange it as quickly as possible is easily understandable. 7...\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{\textit{e6}}} This is Black’s most precise move. Now, if White captures on c4, without the preliminary exchange on d5, Black will manage to regain the pawn on c4.
8.fxe4 \(\triangle x e 4\) 9.\(\triangle x e 4\) (Naturally, White cannot play here 9.\(\triangle x e 4\) dxe4 10.\(\triangle x e 4\), due to 10...\(\mathbb{N}h 4–+)\)
9...dxe4 10.\(\triangle x e 4\) \(\triangle x c 4\) 11.\(\mathbb{N}c 2\) \(\mathbb{d} 5\) 12.\(\triangle x d 6+\) \(\mathbb{N}x d 6\), followed by \(\mathbb{d} 7-f 6, 0-0, \mathbb{a}e 8\) with powerful initiative on the light squares.

8.cxd5 cxd5 9.fxe4 \(\triangle x e 4\) 10.\(\triangle x e 4\) dxe4 11.\(\triangle x e 4\). White has managed to win a pawn, but Black has seized firmly the initiative. 11...\(\mathbb{N}h 4+\) 12.\(\mathbb{f} 2\) \(\mathbb{g} 5\) 13.\(\mathbb{g} 3\) \(\mathbb{b} 4+\). He exploits the fact that his opponent cannot interpose against the check with his bishop because of the loss of his e3-pawn, so White loses his castling rights. 14.\(\mathbb{f} 1\) 0-0 15.\(\mathbb{e} 2\) \(f 5\) 16.\(\mathbb{g} 2\) \(d 8\) 17.\(\mathbb{f} 4\) \(f 7\) 18.\(\mathbb{f} 1\) \(d 6\) Firsching – Rada, ICCF 2011.

7...0-0

8.\(\mathbb{d} 2\)

The move 8.0-0? allows Black to sacrifice his bishop in a typical fashion 8...\(\mathbb{X} x h 2+\) 9.\(\mathbb{X} x h 2\) \(\mathbb{g} 4+\) 10.\(\mathbb{g} 3\) \(h 5\) 11.\(\mathbb{h} 1\) \(\mathbb{g} 5\) 12.\(f 4\) \(g 6\) 13.\(f 5\) \(g 5\) 14.\(f 1\) \(h 4+\) 15.\(x h 4\) \(h 6+\) 16.\(f 2\) \(x h 4–+

Th move 8.h3 seems a bit slow. 8...\(\mathbb{a} 6\). Black prepares the transfer of his knight to the c7-square, from where it will protect the important d5-square and can go eventually to g5 in order to join into the attack against White’s monarch. 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.a3 \(\mathbb{c} 7\) Portisch – Beliavsky, Hungary 2003.

8...\(\mathbb{a} 6\) 9.a3 \(\mathbb{c} 7\) 10.c5 \(e 7\) 11.0-0 b6
Black prepares the development of his bishop to the f1-a6 diagonal.

12.b4 a6 13.f3 exf3 14.gxf3 \(d7\)\(\) Marquardt – Puzanov, ICCF 2015. White has managed to exchange the enemy e4-pawn, but Black’s bishop on a6 exerts powerful pressure against his position.
Chapter 2

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6

We are going to analyse White’s main lines in the following chapters of our book, while now we will deal with A) 4.Bg5 and B) 4.e3, when after 4...e6, he refrains from the most natural move 5.Nf3.

About 4.g3 dxc4 5.Nf3 e6, or 5.g2 e6 6.Nf3 Bd7 – see Chapter 11.

A) 4.g3

This is a very risky move for White, since Black can simply capture the c4-pawn and White will need plenty of efforts in order to regain it.

4...dxc4


5.e4 b5, or 5.e3 b5 6.a4 Bd6 – see Chapter 1, 3.Nf4.

5.a4 a5 6.Nf3 (6.d2 e5 – see 4.g5) 6...bd7 7.d2 e5 8.e3 exd4 9.exd4 b4 10.xc4 0-0 11.0-0 b6 12.Nb3, Scheffknecht – S.Nikolic, Tuebingen 2001, 12...f5!?

B) 4.e3

4...dxc4
5.a4
This move is prophylactic against b7-b5.
5.\( \text{xf6} \) exf6 6.e3 (6.a4 \( \text{wa5} \) – see 5.a4) 6...b5 7.a4 b4 8.\( \text{b1} \) \( \text{a6} \) – see 5.e3.
5.\( \text{f3} \) b5 6.e3 e6 – see Chapter 19.
5.e4 b5 6.e5 7.a4 \( \text{xc3} \) 10.bxc3 cxb5\( \mp \); 5.e3 b5 6.a4. White must try to undermine the enemy b5-pawn as quickly as possible in order to force the pawn-advance b5-b4 and thus to weaken the protection of the pawn on c4. 6...b4 7.\( \text{b1} \) (7.\( \text{a2} \)!! \( \text{e4} \) 8.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{a5} \) 9.\( \text{f3} \), Penson – Van Houtte, Gent 1989, 9...b3+?! 10.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{a6} \) 11.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 12.\( \text{d2} \) e6 13.bxc3 \( \text{d7} \)\( \mp \) 7...\( \text{a6} \) 8.\( \text{xf6} \) exf6 9.\( \text{c1} \) (9.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{e7} \)=) 9...c3 10.bxc3 \( \text{xf1} \) 11.\( \text{xf1} \) c5 12.\( \text{f3} \), Tartakower – Bogoljubow, Karlsbad 1929, 12...\( \text{d7} \)!!? 13.g3 \( \text{c8} \)=

5...\( \text{a5} \)
Black creates the threat \( \text{e4} \), but White should better ignore it.

6.\( \text{f3} \)
6.\( \text{xf6} \)!! This move not only presents Black with the two-bishop advantage, but also enhances the development of his kingside. 6...\( \text{xf6} \) 7.e3 \( \text{b4} \) 8.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{e6} \) 9.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 10.e2 0-0 11.0-0 \( \text{b6} \) 12.e4, Rosa Valenzuela – Salazar Jacob, Vina del Mar 1997, 12...\( \text{ad8} \)!!\( \mp \)

Following 6.\( \text{d2} \)!! e5!, Black obtains a better position. 7.dxe5 (7.\( \text{e4} \)? Vladimirov – Sasikiran, Kolkata 2000, 7...\( \text{d5} \)!!? 8.\( \text{xf6} \)+ \( \text{xf6} \)\( \mp \); 7.\( \text{f3} \)? exd4 8.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 9.e3 \( \text{e5} \)\( \mp \) Snehal – Perez Garcia, Barbera
del Valles 2016) 7...\(\text{ex}e5\) 8.\(\text{fx}f3\) \(\text{ec}5\)\(\text{t}\) Black has an extra pawn. White is incapable of exploiting his lead in development, because after the natural move 9.e4?! , he will suddenly have problems with the protection of the f2-square: 9...\(\text{g}g4\) 10.\(\text{ec}2\), Ornstein – Kirov, Eksjo 1980, 10...\(\text{a}a6!\)\(\text{t}\), followed by \(\text{b}b4\) and the threats \(\text{d}d3(\text{c}2)\) will be very unpleasant for White.

6...\(\text{e}e4\) 7.\(\text{d}d2\) \(\text{xd}2\)

Black has succeeded in obtaining the two-bishop advantage, but lags in development.

8.\(\text{xd}2\) e5 9.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{b}4\)

10.\(\text{xe}5\)

10.e4?! \(\text{ex}d4\) 11.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{e}6\) 12.0-0-0 \(\text{d}7\) 13.\(\text{d}d6+\) \(\text{xd}6\) 14.\(\text{xd}6\) a5\(\text{t}\) Mende – Borst, ECG 2003. The vulnerability of the b4-square provides Black with a stable edge both in the endgame as well as in the middle game.

It is also possible for White to play here 10.e3 \(\text{e}6\) 11.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{xb}2\) 12.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{b}4\) 13.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xd}2+\) 14.\(\text{xd}2\), Giannetto – Hessenius, ICCF 2009, 14...c5?!\(\text{t}\), with approximately equal chances in the endgame.

10...\(\text{xb}2\) 11.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{b}4\) 12.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xd}2+\) 13.\(\text{xd}2\) 0-0

14.e3

14.e4 \(\text{d}7\) 15.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{xe}5\) 16.\(\text{xb}4\), draw, Sorensen – Leiner, ICCF 2011. Indeed, after 16...\(\text{d}8\) 17.d5 (17.e3?! \(\text{g}4+\) 18.\(\text{f}3\) a5\(\text{t}\)) 17...a5 18.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{cxd}5\) 19.\(\text{xd}5\) \(\text{e}6\) 20.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{d}7\) 21.\(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{c}6\)=, Black restores the material balance, but there would be just a few material left on the board.

14...\(\text{d}7\)
Black should better either exchange the powerful enemy knight, or just oust it immediately away from that square.

15.\texttt{\textit{d}3}

It seems less reliable for White to opt here for 15.\texttt{\textit{b}1} c5 16.\texttt{\textit{c}xd7} \texttt{\textit{xd}7}. Black has completed his development and his bishop-pair may turn into an important trump for him in the future. 17.d5 a6 18.a5 \texttt{\textit{e}8} 19.\texttt{\textit{e}4} \texttt{\textit{ad}8} 20.\texttt{\textit{he}1} \texttt{\textit{xa}5} 21.\texttt{\textit{xb}7} \texttt{\textit{c}6} 22.\texttt{\textit{a}7} \texttt{\textit{xd}5} 23.\texttt{\textit{xd}5} \texttt{\textit{e}5d}+ 24.\texttt{\textit{c}2} \texttt{\textit{f}5} 25.\texttt{\textit{e}2} \texttt{\textit{h}5} 26.h3 \texttt{\textit{h}6} Varonen – Laukola, ICCF 2014.

15...\texttt{\textit{a}5} 16.\texttt{\textit{e}c}2 \texttt{\textit{f}6}\texttt{=} Hopman – Giri, Hilversum 2009. Black has two powerful bishops, but White’s central pawns should not be underestimated at all.

B) 4.e3 e6

5.\texttt{\textit{c}2}

About 5.\texttt{\textit{f}3} a6 – see Chapters 13-18.

5.a3 a6 6.\texttt{\textit{f}3} \texttt{\textit{bd}7} – see Chapter 13.

5.f4. This move has been played numerous times by A.Rubinstein. It is not however among the best achievements of this great theoretician... 5...c5!? Black wishes to develop his knight on c6 in order to exert pressure against the d4-square. The loss of a tempo is not so important here, because the move f2-f4 may turn out to be not so useful for White later due to the weakening of the e4-square. 6.\texttt{\textit{f}3} \texttt{\textit{c}6} 7.\texttt{\textit{e}2} (7.a3 a6 8.\texttt{\textit{e}5} \texttt{\textit{e}7} 9.\texttt{\textit{xd}5}, Seirawan – Chernin, Wijk aan Zee 1986, 9...\texttt{\textit{exd}5}!?) 7...\texttt{\textit{e}7} 8.0-0 \texttt{\textit{b}3} (9.\texttt{\textit{e}5} \texttt{\textit{xd}4} 10.\texttt{\textit{xd}4} \texttt{\textit{xe}4} 11.\texttt{\textit{xc}6} \texttt{\textit{bc}6} 12.\texttt{\textit{xc}4}, Lilov – Drozdovskij, playchess.com 2006, 12...\texttt{\textit{b}7}!?) 13.\texttt{\textit{e}3} \texttt{\textit{d}8}\texttt{=} White’s d4-pawn would need permanent protection.) 9...\texttt{\textit{xd}4} 10.\texttt{\textit{xd}4} \texttt{\textit{xe}4} 11.\texttt{\textit{b}xc}4, Villeneuve – Feller, Cannes 2007, 11...\texttt{\textit{b}6}!? 12.\texttt{\textit{b}2} \texttt{\textit{b}7}\texttt{=} \texttt{b}, followed by \texttt{\textit{a}5}, \texttt{\textit{c}8}, exerting
pressure against the enemy hanging pawns.

5.\( \text{d2} \) a6 6.\( \text{c5} \) (6.\( \text{c2} \) c5 – see Chapter 13, 6.\( \text{d2} \)) 6...e5. Black exploits the fact that White has not developed his knight on f3 yet and accomplishes this advance without the preliminary move \( \text{bd7}. \) 7.dxe5 (7.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{e4}\) Mirzoev – Handke, Barcelona 2011) 7...\( \text{fd7} \) 8.f4 \( \text{xc5} \) 9.b4 \( \text{e6} \) 10.\( \text{b1} \) a5= Jussupow – Movsesian, Germany 1999.

5.cxd5 exd5. There has arisen the Carlsbad pawn-structure, which often happens in the exchange variation of the Queens Gambit, but here, White’s bishop on c1 has remained restricted inside his own camp and is deprived of the possibility to go to f4 or g5. 6.\( \text{d3} \) (6.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{d6} \) 7.\( \text{d3} \) 0-0 8.\( \text{ge2} \) \( \text{e8} \) – see 6.\( \text{d3} \)) 6...\( \text{d6} \) 7.\( \text{ge2} \) 0-0 8.h3 \( \text{e8} \) 9.0-0 \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{e8} \) 9.\( \text{d2} \) (9.0-0 \( \text{bd7} \) – see 8.0-0) 9...b6!?³, preparing c6-c5 and \( \text{c6}, \) Stanojevic – Shabtai, Budapest 1994.

8.0-0 \( \text{e8} \) 9.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 10.f3, Novoa – Saint Amour, IECG 2001, 11...b6!?³ 5.\( \text{d3} \) a6 6.\( \text{b3} \) (6.a4 c5 7.\( \text{f3} \) dxc4 8.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{c6} \) – see Chapter 14, 7.a4 c5 8.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{c6} \); 6.c5 \( \text{bd7} \) 7.\( \text{f3} \) e5 – see Chapter 16, 7.\( \text{d3} \) e5; 6.\( \text{f3} \) dxc4 – see Chapter 15) 6...c5 7.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 8.0-0 (8.cxd5 exd5 9.0-0 \( \text{cxd4} \) 10.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 11...\( \text{xd4} \). White has some lead in development, but this is irrelevant, since Black does not have any pawn-weaknesses in his position and he only needs several moves in order to evacuate his king away from the centre. 11...\( \text{b4} \) 12.\( \text{a4} \) 0-0 13.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{g4} \) 14.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d7}\)= Saric – Jakovljevic, Zadar 2012) 8...\( \text{dxc4} \). Black exploits the misplacement of the enemy bishop on d3 and wishes simply to capture the pawn on d4. 9.bxc4 \( \text{xd4} \) 10.\( \text{xd4} \) (10.\( \text{e4}\)?! dxe3. White does not have full compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 11.\( \text{xe3} \) \( \text{b4} \) 12.\( \text{d4} \), Levin – Vysochin, St Petersburg 2009, 12...\( \text{e7}\)??) 10...\( \text{xd4} \) 11.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 12.\( \text{b2} \), Ivanisevic – Acs, Hungary 2014 12...\( \text{d7}\)?? Here, White has some compensation for the pawn, but not more than that.

5.b3. Now, after an exchange on c4, White will be able to recapture with his pawn. 5...\( \text{b4} \). Black exploits immediately the basic defect of White’s previous move – the weakening of the e1-a5 diagonal. 6.\( \text{b2} \) (6.\( \text{d2} \). White’s bishop is not so actively placed here as on the b2-square. 6...0-0 7.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{b6}\)?? This is the simplest for Black. He plans to advance c6-c5. 8.\( \text{d3} \) dxc4 9.bxc4 c5 10.0-0 \( \text{c6} \) 11.e4 \( \text{xd2} \) 12.\( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{exd4} \) 13.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{b7}\)발 Rost – Tseng, ICCF 2015. White’s hanging pawns have become an excellent target for an attack by Black’s pieces.) 6...\( \text{e4} \)
Now, White has a choice how to protect his knight on c3.

Following 7.\(\text{Nge2}\), Black has an interesting pawn-sacrifice: 7...\(\text{dxc4}\)!? 8.\(\text{bxc4}\) \(\text{e5}\)!

9.\(\text{f3}\) (9.\(\text{dxe5}\) 0-0=) 9...\(\text{xc3+}\) 10.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 11.\(\text{xc3}\) 0-0 12.\(\text{d5}\), Cabello Rodriguez – Van Bommel, LSS 2008, 12...\(\text{a6}\)!?. White has much more space, but his dark squares have been seriously weakened.

7.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{e5}\). Black prepares the development of his bishop on the f5-square in an attempt to exploit the misplacement of the enemy queen on c2.

It is not good for White to play here 8.\(\text{d3}\), because of 8...\(\text{exd4}\) 9.\(\text{exd4}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 10.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{dxc4}\)! 11.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{xd4}\) 12.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{xc3+}\) 13.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{xc3+}\) 14.\(\text{xc3}\) 0-0= and he has no compensation for the pawn at all, Daenen – Booth, ICCF 2012.

Following 8.\(\text{cxd5}\), I.Sokolov – Palac, Neum 2005, 8...\(\text{cx}\), Black has no problems whatsoever. 9.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{exd4}\) 10.\(\text{exd4}\) \(\text{f5}\) 11.\(\text{ge2}\) 0-0 12.0-0 \(\text{e8}\) 13.\(\text{a3}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 14.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{c6}\) 15.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 16.\(\text{fe1}\) \(\text{xd3}\) 17.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{d7}\)= Later, White needs to play accurately, because in numerous variations Black’s knight may turn out to be more powerful than White’s “bad” bishop on b2.

8.0-0-0 \(\text{f5}\) 9.\(\text{d3}\). He wishes to neutralise the pressure of Black’s bishop on f5, but his bishop on d3 will come under an attack with tempo. 9...\(\text{xc3}\) 10.\(\text{xc3}\), Anuszkiewicz – Splosnov, Suwalki 2000, 10...\(\text{e4}\)!? 11.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 12.\(\text{xc3}\) 0-0=

8.a3 \(\text{xc3+}\) 9.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 10.\(\text{xc3}\). Two couples of minor pieces have gone off the board and it looks like the game is nearing quickly a drawish outcome. Still, just after a few moves the situation is sharpened. 10...\(\text{dxc4}\) 11.\(\text{dx}\) 12.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{b2}\). Black wishes to deflect the enemy queen away from the e1-a5 diagonal. 13.\(\text{xb2}\) (13.\(\text{b1}\) \(\text{g5}\) 14.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{d7}\) 15.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{g2}\) 16.\(\text{g1}\) \(\text{h2}\) 17.\(\text{g7}\) \(\text{h1+}\) 18.\(\text{g1}\) \(\text{f8}\)= Diaz – Osorio, ICCF 2016. There has arisen a position with dynamic balance. Black has
temporarily two extra pawns, but they are both weak, while his king has remained stranded at the centre of the board.) 13...a5+ 14.e2 d7 15.f4 b6 16.b3 b5+ 17.f2 e6 18.b1 f5 19.c2 xb2 20.xb2 xc2 21.xc2 0-0 22.f3 d3= Rost – Pecka, ICCF 2015. Black’s prospects are not worse in this endgame thanks to the active position of his rook.

5...a6

6.d2
About 6.a3 d7 7.f3 d6 – see Chapter 13, variation C.
6.f3 c5, or 6.b3 c5 7.f3 c6, or 7.dxc5 xc5 8.f3 dxc4 – see Chapter 18.
6.c5 d7 7.b4 (7.f3 b6 – see Chapter 16, 7.c2) 7...e5 8.f3 e4 9.d2 g6 10.e2 g7 11.b2 0-0
6...c5
After the opening of the c-file, the placement of White’s queen on c2 may turn out to be bad, since Black can win a tempo by attacking it with his rook.

7.dxc5 xc5 8.cxd5 exd5

9.e1
The move 9.b5 leads to great complications. 9...d7 10.b4 b6 11.d6+ e7 12.f5+ f8 13.c3 g6 14.d4 e4!? 15.e6+ xe6 16.xh8 e7∞ Timman – Morozevich, Wijk aan Zee 2002. White has won the exchange, but lags horribly in development. His pawn on b4 is hanging while Black is threatening to advance e6-e5, cutting off the possible retreats of the enemy bishop on h8.

9.e6 10.xd5. White wins a pawn but is considerably behind in development. 10...xd5 11.xc5 xd2+ 12.xd2 e4+ 13.d1 xc5 14.xc5 d7 15.a5 e8 16.c1 e8+ 17.b1 c5 18.f3 0-0
19.\(\text{\&e}2\) \(\text{\&fd}8\) Bareev – Gong, Beersheba 2005. It is an endgame indeed, but White’s lag in development hurts him seriously. In addition, his rook on a5 is misplaced.
This is the basic position of the exchange variation of the Slav Defence. It was considered for a long time to be a prerequisite of a quick draw. White used to choose it when he did not mind a drawish outcome, or when he played against an opponent who was stronger than him. Still, there were new possibilities found for White some years ago and despite the fact that they did not promise him an advantage, Black needed to play very precisely in numerous variations. In the line A) 4.\textit{f}4 we will deal with variations in which White postpones the development of his knight on b1 to the c3-square, while in variation B) 4.\textit{c}3 we will pay attention to the lines in which he is not in a hurry to develop his knight to f3. The next chapter will be devoted to the variations in which he develops his king’s knight immediately to f3 (4.\textit{f}3).

About 4.g3 \textit{f}6 5.\textit{g}2 (5.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}6 – see Chapter 4; 5.\textit{c}3 \textit{c}6 – see variation B) 5...\textit{c}6 6.\textit{c}3 (6.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}5 – see Chapter 4) 6...\textit{f}5 – see variation B.

The move 4.\textit{g}5 does not create any serious problems for Black. 4...h6 5.\textit{h}4 \textit{c}6 6.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}5 7.e3, Puuska – Mintenko, Krakow 2012, 7...\textit{b}6!? He is preparing e6, \textit{d}6, \textit{ge}7. If White captures the pawn on d5 – 8.\textit{d}xd5, then it all ends in an immediate draw by a perpetual check – 8...\textit{xb}2 9.\textit{c}7+ \textit{d}8 10.\textit{x}a8 \textit{c}2 11.\textit{c}1 \textit{c}3+ 12.\textit{e}2 \textit{d}3+ 13.\textit{e}1 \textit{c}3=

A) 4.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}6 5.e3  
5.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}6 – see Chapter 4.  
5.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}6 – see variation B.

5...\textit{f}5!?  
This is the simplest move for Black.

He also obtains a very good position after 5...\textit{f}6, but then after 6.\textit{d}3, White can prevent the development of Black’s bishop on c8 to the f5-square.
6. \textbf{\texttt{b}3} \\
6. \texttt{\texttt{c}3} g6 – see 4. \texttt{\texttt{c}3}.

6...\texttt{d}7 7. \texttt{\texttt{c}3} e6 8. \texttt{\texttt{f}3} \\
Following 8.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{c}8 9.\texttt{f}3 f6 10.\texttt{h}3 \texttt{a}5 11.\texttt{b}5 \texttt{xb}5 12.\texttt{xb}5+ \texttt{f}7=, there arises an approximately equal endgame on the board, Johnston – Kracht, ICCF 2016.

8...f6! \\
White’s plans include \texttt{b}5, \texttt{e}5, so Black should better take an immediate control over the e5-square. Besides that, he can manage after g7-g5, h7-h5, or h7-h5, to begin an immediate chase after the enemy bishop on f4 and this would force White to weaken his kingside in numerous variations.

9. \texttt{b}5 \\
9.\texttt{e}2 g5 10.\texttt{g}3, Nguyen Tran Quang – Switzer, Vung Tau 1999, 10...h5!∞

The move 9.a3, Lenderman – Wesley So, Las Vegas 2014, seems a bit slow 9...g5!? 10.\texttt{g}3 h5 11.\texttt{h}3 \texttt{f}7 12.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{g}6 13.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{h}6 14.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{f}5∞

Following 9.\texttt{c}1, Galje – Kuipers, Haarlem 2006, Black should better begin with the move 9...h5!?∞, because the straightforward line: 9...g5 10.\texttt{g}3 h5 11.h4 g4 12.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{g}6 13.\texttt{b}5±, would enable White to seize the initiative, Melkumyan – Lampert, Bad Wiessee 2014.

9...h5!? 10.\texttt{h}4
The inclusion of the moves h7-h5 and h2-h4 is in favour of Black, because a weak g4-square has appeared in White’s camp. The g5-square in Black’s position is reliably covered by his pawn on f6, while his weakness on g6 can be defended by his bishop on f5, his knight on e7 and his king on f7.

10... \( \text{Rc8} \) 11.0-0 \( a6 \) 12.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{a5} \)

Black has got rid of the pin and transfers his knight to the c4-square with tempo.

13.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{c4} \) 14.\( \text{d2} \)

White cannot put up with the enemy knight on c4 for long, so he sacrifices temporarily a pawn. Now, the position is quickly simplified. 14...\( \text{xb2} \) 15.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{d3} \) 16.\( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 17.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{c2} \) 18.\( \text{b6} \) \( \text{xb3} \) 19.\( \text{xd7} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 20.\( \text{xb3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 21.\( \text{fc1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 22.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{c6} \) 23.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{a3} \) 24.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 25.\( \text{dxe6+} \) \( \text{xe6} \)= Rau – Ilonen, ICCF 2016. This endgame seems approximately equal. In addition, if White plays imprecisely later, Black can even play for a win, utilising his pawn-majority on the queenside.

B) 4.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{f6} \)

There is no need to analyse here the move 4...\( \text{c6} \), because White can easily reach a position with a black knight on f6 changing a bit the order of the moves – 3.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 4.\( \text{xd5 cxd5} \).
5. \( \text{g4} \)
White develops his knight to an active position.

About 5. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{c6} \), or 5.e3 \( \text{c6} \) 6.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g4} \), or 5.g3 \( \text{c6} \) 6.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{f5} \), or 6.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{f5} \) 7.\( \text{f3} \) e6 – see Chapter 4.

It does not look good for White to play here 5.f3. He prepares e2-e4 indeed, but deprives his knight of the f3-square. 5...\( \text{b6} \) 6.e4 dxe4 7.fxe4 e5. Black begins a fight for the dark squares. 8.\( \text{b5} \) + \( \text{c6} \) 9.d5 \( \text{b4} \) 10.\( \text{d3} \) a6 11.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{a5} \) 12.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{d4} \) ñ Ruiz-Jarabo – Botev, ICCF 2015.

5.\( \text{g5} \). White’s bishop is not so well placed on this square as on \( \text{f4} \). 5...\( \text{e4} \) 6.\( \text{xe4} \) (6.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c6} \) 7.\( \text{f3} \) f6 – see Chapter 4) 6...dxe4 7.a3 (The drawback of the placement of the bishop on \( \text{g5} \) is emphasized by the fact that White cannot play 7.e3?, because of 7...\( \text{a5} \) –+ and Black wins a piece.) 7...\( \text{b6} \) 8.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{f5} \) 9.\( \text{a4} \)–! (It is more reliable for White to choose here 9.e3 \( \text{c6} \) 10.\( \text{c4} \) h6 11.\( \text{h4} \) e5 12.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{d6} \)= and at least he would not end up in an inferior position.) 9...\( \text{d7} \) 10.\( \text{c2} \) h6 11.\( \text{d2} \) e5. Black seizes the initiative with an energetic play. 12.dxe5 \( \text{e7} \) 13.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 14.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{h7} \) 15.\( \text{h3} \) g5!?, emphasizing the misplacement of White’s knight at the edge of the board, Ermakov – Kozlov, ICCF 2014.

5...\( \text{c6} \) 6.e3
About 6.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{f5} \), or 6.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{f5} \) 7.\( \text{f3} \) e6 – see Chapter 4.

6.\( \text{f5} \)

7.\( \text{b3} \)
This move has become popular just recently. White exerts pressure against the b7-pawn and forces the move \( \text{a5} \) and then the return of Black’s bishop to \( \text{d7} \). Still, he loses plenty of time on maneuvers with his queen and Black obtains a good position.
7.\f3 e6 – see Chapter 4.

7.\e2 e6 8.g4. White begins active actions on the kingside, but weakens the position of his own king. (8.\f3 \d6 – see Chapter 4; 8.\b3 \b4 9.\f3 0-0 – see Chapter 4, variation C) 8...\g6 9.h4 (9.f3 \e7∞ Nalbandian – Marcelin, Paris 1994) 9...h5 10.g5 \e4=, followed by \e7, 0-0, Del Rey – Garcia Ruido, Villagarcia de Arosa 1995. Black’s king will be much safer than its counterpart in this middle game.

7.f3. White is trying to provoke complications. Before even completing the development of his pieces, he plans to begin a pawn-offensive on the kingside (g2-g4, h2-h4). The shelter of his own king is weakened in the process, however... 7...e6 8.g4 \g6 9.h4 (8.\f3 \b4!?=) 9...h5 10.g5 \d7 11.\h2, Miladinovic – Ronchetti, Frascati 2005 (11.\h3, Vaisser – Fressinet, Chartres 2005, 11...\b6!?=) 11...\b6!? Black must organise active actions on the queenside in order to impede his opponent’s play on the other side of the board. 12.\d2 \c8 13.\f2 \b4 14.\ge2 0-0= The move 7.\c1 does not promise much to White. 7...\c8 8.\b3 (8.\f3 e6 – see Chapter 4) 8...\a5 9.\b5+(9.\a4+ \d7 10.\d1 e6 11.\d3, Drozdova – Girya, Khanty-Mansiysk 2014, 11...\c4=) 9...\d7 10.\a4 a6. This is the simplest move for Black. He forces immediately the trade of his “bad” bishop. 11.\xd7 \d7 12.\ge2 \b5 13.\d1 e6 14.0-0 \e7 15.\d3 0-0=, followed by \c4 and doubling of his major pieces on the c-file, Muzychuk – Girya, Khanty-Mansiysk 2014.

The move 7.\d3 is absolutely harmless for Black. 7...\xd3 8.\xd3 e6 9.\ge2. This development of the knight is not good for White (9.\f3 \e7 – see Chapter 4, variation A). 9...\e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.\h3 (11.\a1 \c8 12.\h3 – see 11.h3) 11...\c8 12.\a1 \d7 13.\fd1 b6. It is useful for Black to deprive his opponent of the active possibility \a4-c5. 14.\h2 (14.g5 \xf6 15.\xf6 \xf6 16.a3 \a5= Arnold – Le, Belfort 2005) 14...\d8 15.\b1 \b7 16.\f4 h6 17.\d3 \a5= Eperjesi – Le, Budapest 2005.

7.\b5 e6 8.\a4. White increases his pressure on the a4-e8 diagonal, but this activity is premature and Black seizes the initiative thanks to a nice tactical trick. (It would be better for White to have played here 8.\f3 \d7, or 8.\c1 \e7 9.\f3 \d7 – see Chapter 4, variation D.) 8...\b6 9.\f3 \e7 10.\e5 0-0 11.\xc6 \fc8!

This is the point! It turns out Black is not forced to capture the bishop.

12.e4 dxe4 13.\b5 a6 14.\c4 \xb2 Illingworth – Bjelobrk, Nadi 2013.

12.\xb7 \xb7 13.0-0 \xb2 14.\c6 \f8 Nebolsina – Zhukova, Dagomys 2008. Black’s two powerful
bishops provide him with a stable advantage.

12...bxc6 13.0-0 axb5 14.axb5 cxb5 15...e5 c2. He has powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawn. 16...b1, Vera Gonzalez Quevedo – Hector, Istanbul 2000, 16...h6!? Black can improve patiently his position, since White has no active counterplay. 17...c3 e4 18.f3 d6. Black prepares the transfer of his knight to the c4-square. 19.a4 f6 20.g4 c4 21.f2 a5. Now, his knight will go to b3. 22.d1 g5 23.g3 b3 24.ab1 g6

12.0-0 bxc6 13...c1, Morozevich – Grischuk, Moscow 2007 (13...b3 c5†). Here, Black can simply capture the pawn: 13...xb2!? 14.xc6 a3 15.a6 d3†! The position is simplified now and Black maintains a stable advantage. 16.xd3 xc6 17.ab1 xc1+ 18.xc1 xc1 19.h3 h6†. White’s queen can hardly defend successfully against Black’s two rooks.

7...a5

8...a4+
8...b5+...d7

9.a4 e6 – see variation B1.
9.c2 e6 10...d3 c8 – see variation B2.
9.d1 e6 10...d3 c4 – see 8...a4+...d7 9.d1 e6 10...d3 c4.
9.xd7+ xd7 10.b5 c4 11.f3 e6 12.e5 xe5 13.xe5 (following 13.dxe5 h5†, it would be only White who might have problems, Seirawan – Khalifman, Moscow 1990) 13...e7 14.xf6 xf6 15.d2 c8 16.xd7+ xd7=, the draw is imminent, Margvelashvili – Dreev, Philadelphia 2015.

8...d7
We will analyse now B1) $9.\text{b}5$ and B2) $9.\text{c}2$.

$9.\text{d}1 \text{e}6 10.\text{f}3 (10.\text{d}3 \text{c}4 11.\text{e}2 \text{xc}8 12.\text{f}3 \text{b}4$ – see 10.\text{f}3) $10...\text{e}8 11.\text{xd}3 \text{c}4$. Black’s active knight guarantees a good play for him in all the variations.

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{12.}\text{xc}4, \text{Bai – Van Foreest, Basel 2017, 12...dxc4!}\n\end{array} \]

$12.\text{b}1 \text{b}5 13.0-0 \text{e}7 14.\text{e}5 0-0 15.\text{xd}7 \text{xd}7 16.\text{g}5 \text{a}6= \text{S.Belov – Zhak, ICCF 2013.}$

$12.\text{e}2 \text{b}4 13.\text{c}1 \text{e}4$. Black’s piece-activity is sufficient for him to maintain the balance. $14.\text{xe}4 \text{dxe}4 15.\text{g}5 \text{e}5!$ He sacrifices a pawn and seizes the initiative. $16.\text{dxe}5 \text{g}4! 17.\text{f}3 \text{xf}3 18.\text{xf}3 0-0 19.0-0 \text{a}5 20.\text{a}3$. Black’s pieces are so active that White should better give back the extra pawn. $20...\text{xf}3 21.\text{gxf}3 \text{xc}3 22.\text{xc}3 \text{xe}5=$ Ellis – Hartl, ICCF 2016.

B1) $9.\text{b}5$

This move seems less logical than $9.\text{c}2$. Indeed, at first White forces the enemy bishop to retreat to d7, where it is not so active than on f5, but now he exchanges it deliberately.

$9...\text{e}6$
10.\(\text{\textordfiddle{f}}3\)

About 10.\(\text{\textsc{c}}1\) a6 11.\(\text{\textsc{xd}}7+\) \(\text{\textordfiddle{xd}}7\) 12.\(\text{\textordfiddle{f}}3\) \(\text{\textordfiddle{c}}6\) – see 10.\(\text{\textordfiddle{f}}3\).

10.\(\text{\textsc{xd}}7+\) \(\text{\textordfiddle{xd}}7\) 11.e4 (11.\(\text{\textordfiddle{f}}3\) a6 – see 10.\(\text{\textordfiddle{f}}3\)). This pawn-break in the centre is not dangerous for Black, since he can simply reply with 11...\(\text{\textordfiddle{c}}6\) and White cannot win the d5-pawn. 12.\(\text{\textsc{exd}}5\) \(\text{\textordfiddle{b}}6\) 13.\(\text{\textsc{wb}}3\) \(\text{\textsc{exd}}5\) 14.\(\text{\textsc{ge}}2\) \(\text{\textsc{e}}7\) 15.0-0 0-0= Grishchenko – T.Petrosian, Yerevan 2014.

After the active move 10.\(\text{\textsc{g}}5\), Black can centralise effortlessly his knight 10...\(\text{\textordfiddle{c}}6\).

11.\(\text{\textsc{xf}}6\). This deliberate exchange of the bishop for the knight is very bad for White. 11...\(\text{\textsc{xf}}6\) 12.\(\text{\textordfiddle{f}}3\) \(\text{\textsc{d}}6\) 13.0-0 0-0= Kiselev – V.Ivanov, Moscow 1995. Black’s two-bishop advantage may prove to be an important trump for him in the future.

White would not obtain much with 11.\(\text{\textsc{d}}1\), Agdestein – Raznikov, Warsaw 2014, in view of 11...\(\text{\textsc{b}}4?!\)

12.\(\text{\textsc{c}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{a}}5\). Black’s threat \(\text{\textsc{xb}}5\) forces White to trade his bishop. 13.\(\text{\textsc{xc}}6\) \(\text{\textsc{xc}}6\) 14.\(\text{\textsc{xf}}6\) \(\text{\textsc{gx}}6\) 15.a3 \(\text{\textsc{d}}6\)∞

11.\(\text{\textordfiddle{f}}3\) a6 12.\(\text{\textsc{xc}}6\) (12.\(\text{\textsc{e}}2\) h6 13.\(\text{\textsc{xf}}6\) \(\text{\textsc{xf}}6=\) Novkovic – Skoberne, Austria 2012) 12...\(\text{\textsc{xc}}6\) 13.\(\text{\textsc{wb}}3\) \(\text{\textsc{d}}6\) 14.0-0 \(\text{\textsc{c}}7\) 15.\(\text{\textsc{xf}}6\) \(\text{\textsc{gx}}6\)∞ Zilberberg – Sasikiran, ICCF 2014. Black’s two powerful bishops compensate the minimal weakening of his kingside pawn-structure. In addition, he can exploit in the middle game the semi-open g-file in order to organise an attack against White’s monarch.

10...a6 11.\(\text{\textsc{xd}}7+\) \(\text{\textordfiddle{xd}}7\) 12.0-0

12.\(\text{\textsc{c}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{c}}6\) 13.h3 (13.\(\text{\textsc{b}}3\) \(\text{\textsc{b}}6\) 14.\(\text{\textsc{xb}}6\) \(\text{\textsc{xb}}6=\) Filguth – Gomez Baillo, Corrientes 1985) 13...\(\text{\textsc{e}}7\) 14.0-0 0-0 15.\(\text{\textsc{e}}1\) b5 16.\(\text{\textsc{d}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{c}}8\) 17.\(\text{\textsc{d}}3\) \(\text{\textsc{a}}5\) 18.a4 \(\text{\textsc{b}}6\) 19.\(\text{\textsc{xb}}5\) \(\text{\textsc{axb}}5\) 20.\(\text{\textsc{a}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{a}}5\) 21.\(\text{\textsc{e}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{c}}4=\) Magallanes – Pappier, ICCF 2008.
12...b5
Black ousts the enemy queen from its active position.

13.\textit{Qd1 e7}

14.\textit{Rc1}
14.a4 b4 15.\textit{Qe2} 0-0 16.b3 \textit{Rb6} 17.\textit{Rc1} \textit{Rfe8}= Shishkin – Sieciechowicz, Poznan 2009.

14...\textit{Qe8} 15.a4
White wishes to exploit the pawn-advance b7-b5 as a target to organise counterplay on the queenside. Still, Black’s position remains solid enough.
15.\textit{Qe2} 0-0 16.\textit{Rc2} \textit{Qc6} 17.h3 \textit{Qb6} 18.b3 \textit{Qd7}= Garcia Martinez – Dominguez Perez, Las Tunas 2001.

15...\textit{b4} 16.\textit{Qe2} 0-0 17.\textit{Rd3} \textit{Rb6} 18.b3 \textit{Qb7} 19.h3 19.\textit{Qd2}, Dunn – Taylor, Reading 2017, 19...h6!?=

19...\textit{Rxc1} 20.\textit{Rxc1} \textit{Rc8} 21.\textit{Rxc8+} \textit{Qxc8}= Andeer – Dolgov, ICCF 2012.

B2) 9.\textit{Qc2}
This is the main line for White which leads to a very sharp play.

9...\textit{e6}

Now, Black’s bishop on d7, closed inside his own camp, may turn out to be “bad”. On the other hand, he can use it to organise active counterplay on the queenside with the help of the pawn-advance b7-b5, or to exchange it after a7-a6, \textit{Qd7-b5}.

We will analyse now: B2a) 10.\textit{f3} and B2b) 10.\textit{d3}.

10.h3 \textit{Qc8} 11.\textit{Qd3} \textit{Qb4} – see 10.\textit{Qd3}.
B2a) 10... Nh5!? 
Black begins an immediate chase after the enemy bishop.

11. g5
11.e5 f6 12. g3 c8 13. d3 b4 14.0-0 (14. xh7. It is rather risky for White to lose time to capture the enemy pawn. 14... c4 15. g6+ f8 16. xh5 b2 17.0-0 xc3 Barbot – Basso, Zillertal 2015.) 14... xg3. This is an important moment. Black usually captures on g3 only after White has castled kingside, so that his rook cannot join in the actions on the h-file. 15. hxg3 f5. Black weakens the e5-square, but prevents the pawn-break in the centre e3-e4.

11... f6

12. h4
Besides this move White has some other sharp alternatives at his disposal.
12.h4 d6 13.g4 fxg5 14.hxg5 g3! This is Black’s most precise move. He loses his knight anyway, so he gives it up at the dearest possible price. 15.fxg3 xg3+ 16.d2 e7 17.h3 c7!? This move may seem rather risky, because the bishop is not protected on this square, but after 18. xd5 exd5 19. xc7, Black can make a draw almost by force. 19... c6 20. d3 b4+ 21.d1 f8 22.f5 xf5 23.gxf5 xf5 24. xg7 b5 25. xh7 d3+

12.g4. This move was recommended by A.Dreev in his book “f4 in the Queen’s Gambit and the Exchange Slav”. Still, White does not achieve much with it. 12... fxg5 13. gxh5 d6 14.g1 f6 15.e2
16...\textit{\textbf{c}g5}. He has won a pawn, but at a very dear price. His doubled extra pawn on the h-file is practically useless, while Black’s pieces are very active. 16...h6 17.e3 0-0 18.f4 e8 19.d2 h8 20.g4 c7 White can hardly find a safe haven for his king. It is misplaced at the middle of the board, while if he castles queenside, Black can begin immediately active actions there with b7-b5.

12...g5

He continues the chase after the enemy bishop.

13.g4

The move 13.g3 leads to a very complicated game. 13...c8 14.e2 g4 15.h4 f5 16.e5 g8 17.g3 f6 18.h3 h5 19.g2 e4 20.f1 b4 Perez Fernandez – Dutra, ICCF 2015.

13...gxh4 14.gxh5

14...\textit{\textbf{c}7}!?

Black’s king is not reliably placed at the middle of the board and he should better prepare immediately castling queenside.

This move was recommended by A. Dreev in his book published in June 2016.

Black did not react so well in a game played three months later: 14...b4, Aronian – Giri, Moscow 2016, 15.g1!± It is obvious that even grandmasters with a rating over 2700 should read books...

15.d3 h3 16.xh7 0-0-0 17.g6 b8 18.e2 c6 19.0-0-0 b4, followed by xc3, a5 (e7). Black has very good counterplay for his minimal material deficit.

B2b) 10.d3 c8

11.f3

White would not achieve much with the line: 11.h3 b4 (11...b4!? 12.ge2 b5∞) 12.a3 xc3+
13. bxc3 c4 14. e2 0-0 15. 0-0 b5∞ Boruchovsky – Dreev, Baku 2013.

11. ge2. White’s knight is not better placed here than on the f3-square. 11...b5 12.a3 c4 13. 0-0 (It would be rather slow for White to opt here for 13.h3 a5= Fang – Yu, China 2014.) 13...a5∞ Fuentes Parra – Di Giannantonio, Santa Cruz 2015.

11...b4 12. 0-0

12. e5, Kashlinskaya – V.Sveshnikov, Moscow 2007, 12...h5!?=

12...0-0

13. f1

After 13. g5 h6 14. h4, Williams – Cox, England 2015, Black should better get rid immediately of the unpleasant pin of his knight: 14...g5!? 15. g3 h5∞

13. ac1 c4 14. e2 h5 15. g5 f6 16. h4 e8! It would be useful for him to protect his knight on h5.

17. e5 (17.a3 xc3 18. xc3 g5 19. g3 xg3 20. hgx3 d6= Rogemont – Ruiz-Vidal, ICCF 2010)

17...xe5 18. dxe5 xc3 19. xc3 g5 20. g4 xc3 21. bxc3 h8 22. g3 f5 23. b4 c6 24. e2 xg3 25. hxg3 g7 26. d1 c7 27. c4 g4= Schon – Elent, ICCF 2015. This is Black’s most precise move. Now, White cannot play f2-f4, protecting his e5-pawn. The vulnerability of Black’s king is not important here, because there is just a few material left on the board. In addition, he has a better pawn-structure.

13. a6 14. g5 (14. f1 xc3 – see 13. f1) 14...h6 15. h4 (15. xd7 xd7 16. xf6 gxf6=). Here, Black can play 15...g5, without worrying about the safety of his king, because White can hardly transfer effectively his pieces to the kingside. 16. g3 b5 17. xb5 axb5 18. e2 xc3 19. bxc3 c4 20. f3 h5∞ with a complicated double-edged position.

13...a6!? This is the simplest road to equality for Black. He plans to continue with b5, exchanging his “bad” bishop. 14. e5 xc3 15. bxc3 b5 16. xb5 axb5 17. g5 c7 18. xf6 gxf6 19. d3 c4= Weber – Zhak, ICCF 2015. Black’s kingside pawn-structure has been weakened, but White’s pawns on c3 and a2 are also weak.
In this chapter we will continue the analysis of the exchange variation of the Slav Defence, but now we will deal only with variations in which White develops immediately his knight on f3.

4...\textit{Nf6} 
This same position can also arise after the move-order 3.\textit{Nf3} \textit{Nf6} 4.cxd5 cxd5.

5.\textit{c3} 
5.e3 \textit{c6} 6.\textit{c3} \textit{g4}, or 5.\textit{g5} \textit{e4} 6.\textit{f4} \textit{c6} 7.\textit{c3} \textit{f6} – see 5.\textit{c3}.

5.\textit{g3} \textit{c6} 6.\textit{g2} (6.\textit{c3} \textit{f5} – see 5.\textit{c3}) 6...\textit{f5} 7.\textit{b3} (7.\textit{c3} \textit{e6}, or 7.0-0 \textit{e6} 8.\textit{c3} \textit{e7} – see 5.\textit{c3}) 7.\textit{xb6} 8.\textit{xb6} axb6 9.\textit{c3} \textit{e6} 10.0-0 \textit{b4} 11.\textit{d2} \textit{e4}= Hormiga Amador – Balcerak, Las Palmas 2005.

5.\textit{f4} \textit{c6} 6.e3. White can postpone the development of his knight on c3, but this cannot bring him anything positive (6.\textit{c3} \textit{f5} – see 5.\textit{c3}). Following 6...\textit{b6}, he will already have problems with the protection of his b2-pawn.

7.\textit{c3}?! This pawn-sacrifice is not good. 7...\textit{xb2} 8.\textit{c1} (8.\textit{b5}! \textit{e5}! 9.a3 \textit{b4}!+ Lyrberg – Nevanlinna, Jyvaskyla 1994) 8.\textit{f5} 9.\textit{b5} \textit{e6} 10.0-0 \textit{a3} 11.\textit{a4} 0-0= Jovicic – Pavlovic, Belgrade 2006.

7.\textit{c1} \textit{h5}?! Black attacks immediately his opponent’s powerful bishop. 8.\textit{g3} \textit{g4} 9.\textit{c3} \textit{e6} 10.\textit{d2} \textit{c7} 11.\textit{d3} \textit{xf3} 12.gxf3 0-0 13.\textit{a4} \textit{d8}=
7.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Qb3}}. Now, there arises a transfer into an endgame at once. 7...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{Qxb3}} 8.\textcolor{red}{\textit{axb3}} \textcolor{green}{\textit{d7}} 9.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{c3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{e6}} 10.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h3}}. White should better save his powerful bishop from an exchange. (10.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e2}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{h5=}}; 10.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e5}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{h5=}} Gheorghiu – Bronstein, Moscow 1971) 10.\textcolor{red}{\textit{b4}} 11.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{d2}} (11.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{d3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{a5}} 12.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{d2}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{c8}} 13.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e1}} 0-0= Kunzel – Price, ICCF 2014) 11...0-0 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{f8=}} Stefanova – I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 2002. White’s weak isolated pawns on the b-file provide Black with at least equal prospects.

5...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{c6}}

6.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f4}}

This is White’s most logical and consequent move. Before playing e2-e3, he develops his bishop to an active position.

6.\textcolor{red}{\textit{b3}}. This queen-sortie seems a bit premature. 6...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e6}} 7.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f4}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{e4}} 8.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{g5!}} After this energetic move Black obtains the two-bishop advantage and a better position. 9.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{xe4}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xf4}} 10.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{ed2}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{d6}} 11.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{d3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{fxe3}} 12.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{f3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{f5=}}, fixing the weak enemy pawn on e3, McClain – Bucsa, ICCF 2015.

6.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{c5}}. White plans after \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xc6}} to create a weakness for Black on c6. Still, this plan takes too much time. 6...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e6}}

7.g3 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xe5}} 8.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{dxe5}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{d7}} 9.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f4}}, Adorjan – Huebner, Frankfurt 1998, 9...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{g5?!}} Black prepares the development of his bishop on g7 with tempo. 10.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{g7=}}

Following 7.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f4}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{b6}} 8.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{xc6}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{bxc6}} 9.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{b1}}, Black can advance immediately c6-c5, getting rid of his weak pawn: 9...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{c5}} 10.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{xc5}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xc5}} 11.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e3}} 0-0= Lagno – Gaponenko, Moscow 2010.

7.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xe5}} 8.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{dxe5}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{d7}} 9.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{f4}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{e7}} 10.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{d3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{c5}} 11.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{c2}} a5 12.0-0 0-0 13.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{f3}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{g6=}} After this precise move (Black has defended against the threats \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xh7}}, \textcolor{blue}{\textit{h3}}, \textcolor{blue}{\textit{h5}.}), Black’s chances are not inferior thanks to his better pawn-structure, Lanin – Roubaud, ICCF 2010.
7. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{d7} \) 8. \( \text{xd7} \). Here, White obtains the two-bishop advantage, but loses too much time on manoeuvres with his pieces. 8... \( \text{xd7} \) 9.e3 \( \text{d6} \)= Popov – Hopman, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

7. \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 8.g3 \( \text{d6} \) 9. \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 10. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{e4} \) 11.dxc5 \( \text{xc5} \). Black has got rid of his weak pawn. 12. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 13.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 14.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{d7} \) 15.\( \text{c5} \), Coret Frasquet – Asensio Soto, Mislata 1997, 15...\( \text{e8} \)!? 16. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{h6} \). He is preparing \( \text{g4} \). 17. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{b5} \). Black’s light-squared bishop is better placed than its counterpart on the a6-f1 diagonal, since White’s bishop is restricted by the pawn on d5.

6.g3. White prepares the fianchetto of his light-squared bishop. Still, it would not be placed so well on the long diagonal, as on the f1-a6 diagonal, because the d5-pawn would restrict considerably its sphere of actions. 6...\( \text{f5} \) 7.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 8. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 9. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{b4} \)炎 Ohnesorg – Klundt, Frankfurt 2009.

After 8.\( \text{h4} \), Black should play 8...\( \text{g4} \), after which the chase after the enemy bishop would lead to a weakening of White's kingside. 9.h3 \( \text{h5} \) 10.g4 \( \text{g6} \) 11.\( \text{xg6} \) \( \text{hxg6} \) 12.0-0, Kotov – Tokarev, Kazan 2007, 12...\( \text{d6} \)!=

8.0-0 \( \text{e7} \) 9.\( \text{f4} \) (9.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{g4} \) 10.h3 \( \text{h5} \) 11.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 12.\( \text{xg6} \) \( \text{hxg6} \) 13.e3 \( \text{c8} \) 14.f4 \( \text{a5} \) 15.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{c4} \) 16.b3 \( \text{d6} \)元 Braga – Hamdouchi, Malaga 2000. The weakness of the e4-square may hurt White in the future.) 9...0-0 10.h3 (10.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{h6} \)=; 10.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{g4} \) 11.h3 \( \text{h5} \) 12.g4 \( \text{g6} \) 13.\( \text{xg6} \) \( \text{hxg6} \) 14.e3 \( \text{c8} \)= Gutierrez – Krylov, Moscow 1994) 10...\( \text{e4} \) (10...\( \text{b6} \)!?) 11.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{c8} \) 12.g4 \( \text{g6} \) 13.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 14.\( \text{e5} \). The exchanges of pieces do not facilitate White’s defence, because Black will soon seize the initiative on the queenside. 14...\( \text{xe5} \) 15.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe2} \) 16.\( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{a5} \) 17.\( \text{b3} \) b5!炎 This is a typical resource for similar positions. Black is preparing \( \text{c4} \). 18.\( \text{xc8} \) \( \text{xc8} \) 19.a3 \( \text{c4} \) 20.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{b6} \) 21.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{c6} \)元 The c-file is completely in Black’s hands. 22.e3 a5 23.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{c1} \) 24.f3 \( \text{f6} \) 25.\( \text{f2} \) \( \text{c4} \) 26.\( \text{d3} \) a4炎, fixing the pawn on b2. 27.e4 \( \text{xd3} \) 28.\( \text{xd3} \) b4 29.axb4 \( \text{xb4} \) 30.\( \text{exd5} \) exd5 31.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{c2} \) 0-1 Tarnowski – Botvinnik, Leipzig 1960.

6.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{e4} \)
It is not good for White to play here 7.\(B_h4?!\) in view of 7...\(a5!\). After the removal of White’s dark-squared bishop from the queenside the vulnerability of the e1-a5 diagonal hurts him severely. 8.\(Bb3\) e5 9.e3 (9.\(Bxd5\) \(b4\) 10.\(Bxa5\) \(xa5\) 11.0-0-0 \(xc3\) 12.\(bxc3\) \(xc3\)) 9...\(b4\) Fink – Schwicker, Germany 1995.

Following 7.\(f4\), Black can play 7...f6?, preparing not only e7-e5, but much rather g7-g5. 8.a3 (8.e3?? 9.\(g3\) h5 10.h3 \(xg3\) 11.\(fxg3\) \(c7\) Puzanov – Nemec, LSS 2012. He has the two-bishop advantage, while White’s kingside pawn-structure has been compromised.) 8...e6 9.\(Bf3\) \(a5\) 10.\(d2\) \(xd2\) 11.\(xd2\) b5 12.\(c1\) b4= Kirkov – Davidov, ICCF 2016.

6.e3. This move is somewhat passive. White complies deliberately with the fact that his bishop on c1 will remain restricted inside his own camp. 6...\(g4\)

7.\(b5\) \(c8\) 8.\(h3\) \(xf3\) 9.\(xf3\) a6= Rodriguez – Zirians, IECC 2000.

After 7.\(h3\) \(xf3\) 8.\(xf3\) a6 9.\(d3\), Black can try 9...e5, obtaining following 10.dxe5 \(xe5\), a very good version of a standard position with an isolated queen’s pawn. 11.\(e2\) \(b4\) 12.\(d2\) 0-0= Pepe – Cucchi, ICCF 1998.

In the variation 7.\(b3\) \(b8\) 8.\(e5\) \(d7\), there arise simplifications after 9.\(xd5\) \(a5\) + 10.\(c3\) \(xe5\) 11.dxe5 \(xe5\) 12.\(d2\) e6= Dragun – Czarnota, Poland 2013.

7.\(e2\) c6 8.0-0 (8.\(b3\). White does not achieve much by attacking the b7-pawn, since Black can easily protect it. 8...\(b6\) 9.0-0 \(d6\) 10.\(h3\) \(h5\) 11.\(d2\) 0-0= Rother – Stoeger, Germany 1997.) 8...\(d6\) 9.\(h3\) \(h5\) 10.a3 0-0 11.\(b4\) \(c8\) 12.\(b2\) \(b8\) 13.\(d2\) \(g6\)= Fajiry – Karjakin, Mainz 2010.

6...\(f5\)
7.e3
7...e6 8.e3 \(\square\)xe5 – see variation B.

7...\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{a}5\) 8.\(\text{a}4+\) \(\text{d}7\) 9.\(\text{d}1\) e6 10.e3 \(\text{c}8\), or 9.\(\text{c}2\) e6 10.e3 \(\text{h}5\) – see Chapter 3, variation B.

After 7...\(\text{c}1\) e6 8.\(\text{b}3\) (8.e3 \(\text{c}8\) – see 7.e3), Black does not need to lose time to protect his b7-pawn.

8...\(\text{d}6\) 9.\(\text{b}7\) (White should better refrain here from accepting the gift: 9.\(\text{x}d6\) \(\text{x}d6=\) 9...0-0! 10.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{xf}4\) 11.e3 \(\text{d}6\) 12.a3 (12.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{b}8\) 13.\(\text{a}6\), Barcenilla – Dao, Tagaytay City 2013, 13...\(\text{e}4!!\)

14.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{b}4+\) 15.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{g}4\) Black maintains powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawn.) 12...\(\text{b}8\) 13.\(\text{d}1\) (13.b4?! \(\text{a}5\) Voiska – Ortega, Campobasso 2006) 13...\(\text{b}6\) 14.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{b}8\)\(\text{b}\). White is faced with a difficult defence, because he lags in development, while Black’s pieces are very active.

7...\(\text{e}6\)

We will analyse now: A) 8.\(\text{d}3\), B) 8.\(\text{e}5\), C) 8.\(\text{b}3\) and D) 8.\(\text{b}5\).

8.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}7\) 9.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{c}8\) – see variation D2.

8.a3. This is not White’s most active move, because a2-a3 may turn out to be a loss of a tempo in some variations. 8...\(\text{d}6\) 9.\(\text{d}6\) \(\text{d}6\) 10.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{d}3\) 11.\(\text{d}3\) 0-0 12.0-0 \(\text{fc}8\) 13.\(\text{ac}1\) (Following 13.b4 a5 14.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}7\) 15.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{e}7\) 16.\(\text{fc}1\), Aleksandrov – Maletin, Bhubaneswar 2010, 16...\(\text{c}7??\), Black seizes the initiative.) 13...\(\text{a}5\) 14.\(\text{d}2\) (14.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{d}8\) 15.\(\text{fc}1\), Maiorov – Stambulian, Anapa 2012, 15...\(\text{b}3??\) 14...\(\text{e}4\) 15.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{xc}4\) 16.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{ac}8=\) Vasiukov – Furman, Tbilisi 1973.

8...\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{c}8\) 9.\(\text{b}3\) (9.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{e}5\) 10.\(\text{e}5\) a6= Chirila – Ostrovskiy, Montreal 2013; 9.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{d}3\) 10.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 11.0-0 0-0 12.\(\text{b}6\) 13.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{e}4=\) Kazmierczuk – Malyshev, ICCF 2014) 9...\(\text{b}4\) 10.\(\text{b}5\) (10.\(\text{e}2\) 0-0 11.0-0, Zhang – Volokitin, Kallithea 2008, 11...\(\text{h}5??\) 10...\(\text{xc}3+\)
11.bxc3. White must comply with the weakening of his pawn-structure (After 11.\texttt{Bxc3 a6 12.\texttt{Be2 \texttt{Be4}} Black can begin an advantageous chase after the enemy bishop on f4 with the moves g7-g5, h7-h5, Delchev – Andersen, Spain 2014.) 11...0-0 12.\texttt{Bxc6} (12.0-0 \texttt{Be4} Tregubov – Sebag, Montpellier 2015) 12...\texttt{Bxc6} 13.\texttt{Bxb7 Bc8} 14.\texttt{Bxc8 Bxc8} 15.\texttt{Bxe5 Bxc3} 16.\texttt{Bxc3 Bxc3} Carlsen – Anand, Dubai 2014. Black has restored the material balance and his prospects seem preferable thanks to his active rook.

White cannot achieve much with the rather careful line: 8.\texttt{Be2} \texttt{Bd6} 9.\texttt{Bxd6} (9.\texttt{Be5}, V.Georgiev – Dominguez Perez, Merida 2002, 9...\texttt{Bb6}!?) 9...\texttt{Bxd6} 10.0-0 0-0 11.\texttt{Be1} (11.\texttt{Bh4 Be4} 12.f3 \texttt{Bg6} 13.\texttt{Bxg6 hgx6} 14.\texttt{Bd2 Bc8=} Khusnutdinov – Sajedi, Rasht 1998) 11...h6 12.a3 \texttt{Bc8} 13.b4, Mihalichenko – Kovalev, Mukachevo 2013, 13...a5!?

A) 8.\texttt{d3}
White usually chooses this move when he would not mind a draw.

8...\texttt{Bxd3} 9.\texttt{Bxd3}

9...\texttt{Be7}!?
Black equalises with 9...\texttt{Bd6}, but the move 9...\texttt{Be7} leaves him with more possibilities against opponents who are playing straightforwardly for a draw.

10.0-0

10.h3 0-0 11.0-0 \texttt{Bc8} – see 10.0-0.

10.\texttt{Bb5}. Black parries easily the threat of capturing on b7. 10...\texttt{Bd7} 11.0-0 0-0 12.\texttt{Bxe5} (12.\texttt{Bc1} a6= Azmaiparashvili – Topalov, Benidorm 2003) 12...\texttt{Bxe5} 13.\texttt{Bxe5 Bxb5} 14.\texttt{Bxb5} a6 15.\texttt{Bxf6 gxf6} 16.\texttt{Bc3 Bc8=} Sumets – Starostits, Calvi 2009. The position has been simplified considerably.

10...0-0
11.h3
This is a useful move. It is a leeway for the king, as well as a square for the retreat of the bishop if Black plays \( \text{Qh5} \).

11.\( \text{Qb5} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) – see 10.\( \text{Qb5} \).

After 11.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{Ec8} \) 12.\( \text{fc1} \), Ghaem Maghami – Bu Xiangzhi, Macau 2007, Black can reply 12...\( \text{Qe8} \)?, preparing the transfer of his knight to c4 via the d6-square. 13.\( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 14.a3 \( \text{Qd6} \= 

Following 11.a3, Black can try to seize the initiative with the line: 11...\( \text{h5} \) 12.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 13.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{Qxe3} \) 14.\( \text{hxg3} \) (14.\( \text{fxg3} \)?! Vasile – Ferreira, ICCF 2003, 14...\( \text{f5} \)?) 14...\( \text{f5} \= 

The position is simplified considerably after 11.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 12.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 13.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 14.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{Ec8} \= 

followed by \( \text{Ec4} \), \( \text{b4} \), ousting White’s queen from its active position, Breier – Andersen, Germany 2016.

11.\( \text{fc1} \) \( \text{h5} \)? 12.\( \text{e5} \) (12.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{Ec8} \) 13.a3 \( \text{a6} \) = Doye – Rhodes, ICCF 2011) 12...\( \text{f6} \) 13.\( \text{g3} \), Meduna – Gdanski, Novy Smokovec 1992, 13...\( \text{d7} \)?=

After 11.\( \text{ac1} \), it seems very good for Black to continue with 11...\( \text{b6} \)?. He wishes to place his king’s rook on the c-file and not his queen’s rook. 12.\( \text{a4} \) (12.\( \text{b5} \), Khenkin – Ivanchuk, Antalya 2013, 12...\( \text{xb5} \)! 13.\( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{c4} \); 12.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{fc8} \) 13.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{h6} \) 14.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 15.a3 \( \text{a5} \) 16.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{fd6} \= 

Veremechik – Tiulin, USSR 1988) 12...\( \text{b4} \) 13.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{e4} \) 14.a3 \( \text{b5} \= 

Dragun – Artemiev, Moscow 2014.

11...\( \text{Ec8} \) 12.\( \text{fc1} \)

Following 12.\( \text{ac1} \), Black, just like in the main variation, prepares the transfer of his knight to c4.

12...\( \text{d7} \)!! 13.a3 (13.\( \text{fd1} \)?! \( \text{b6} \) 14.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 15.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{c4} \) Segal – Gomez Baillo, Mar del Plata 1989. Black’s prospects are already preferable thanks to the powerful placement of his knight on c4.) 13...\( \text{b6} \) 14.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{c4} \) 15.\( \text{fc1} \) \( \text{a6} \= 


12...\( \text{d7} \)
He is trying to seize the initiative. Now, White must play precisely in order not to end up in an inferior position.

13. **d2**
White is covering in advance the c4-square against the penetration of the enemy knight.

13.a3 **b6** 14.b3 a6 15. **b1** (15. **g3** **e8**=) 15...**d6**= Piesina – Dorfman, Vilnius 1978.

13...**b6** 14.a3 **a5**
Black is threatening again to follow with **c4**.

15.b3
This is White’s most reliable move.


15...a6 16. **b1** **d7**= Andonov – Tukmakov, Sochi 1987. Later Black can even try to maintain an edge, because White’s a3-pawn is under an attack by Black’s bishop and it impedes White’s major pieces to fight effectively for the c-file. The pawn-advance b3-b4 would lead to the weakening of the c-file, while the move a3-a4 would weaken the b4-square.

B) 8. **e5**
White wishes to trade the knights. It is understandable that he cannot fight for an advantage in the opening in this way.

8...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{N}}e5} \) 9.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{N}}e5} \)

After 9.dxe5 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{N}}}d7 \), White forces his opponent to lose a tempo for the retreat of his knight indeed, but he ends up with doubled pawns on the e-file. 10.e4. He is trying to get rid of his doubled pawns, but he will have difficulties to regain the sacrificed pawns. 10...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{dxe4}}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{B}}}b5 \), Mozny – Cerny, Tatranske Zruby 2006, 11...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{c5}}?} \) 12.0-0 \( a6 \). Black wishes to eliminate the pin of his knight and to castle. 13.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{a4}}} \) \( b5 \) 14.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{c2}}} \) \( e3 \). Black will lose his e4-pawn anyway, so he gives it up deliberately in order to double again his opponent’s pawns. White must play very accurately in the middle game, because his pawn-structure has been compromised.

9.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{d7}}} \)

10.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{g3}}} \)

It is bad for White to play here 10.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{b5}}} \), because after 10...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{a6}}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} + \text{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} \), Black obtains two powerful bishops. 12.0-0 \( f6 \) 13.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{g3}}} \) \( e8 \) 14.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{c1}}} \) \( e7 \) 15.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{b3}}} \) (15.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{a4}}} \) \( c4 \) 16.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{b3}}} \) 0-0 17.\( a3 \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{fc8}}} \) Anastasian – Ivanchuk, Yerevan 1989) 15...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{b5}}} \) 16.\( f3 \) 0-0 17.\( a3 \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{fc4}}} \), followed by \( \text{\textit{\textbf{fc8}}} \). Black maintains a considerable advantage, Shimanov – Svidler, Olginka 2011.

10.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{b3}}} \). White is trying to sharpen the game, but this attempt backfires. 10...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{xe5}}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{dxe5}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{e7}}} \)! Black is afraid neither of the loss of his b7-pawn, nor of the check on b5. 12.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{b5}}} + \) (It would be too risky for White to play here 12.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{xb7}}} \)?! 0-0 13.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{b5}}} \) \( a6 \) 14.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{e2}}} \) \( b8 \) 15.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{xa6}}} \), Lumley – Harding, England 1986. He has two extra pawns at the moment, but after 15...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{d4}}} \) his position is beginning to crumble. 16.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{xd4}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{xd4}}} \) 17.0-0 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{xb2}}} \) 18.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{a4}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{xe2}}} \) 19.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{xe2}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{xa4}}} + \) ) 12...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{f8}}} \). Black would not mind the loss of his castling rights, because later, he can castle artificially after \( g7 \)-\( g5 \), \( g7 \), or with \( h7 \)-\( h5 \), \( g8 \)-\( h7 \). 13.0-0
13. \( B_e2 \) \( Qc7 \) 14. \( f4 \), De Mauro – Harding, ICCF 1997, 14...\( g5!?! \) 13...\( \text{b8} \). Black wishes to force the move \( f2-f4 \), which would weaken the g1-a7 diagonal. (Following 13...\( g5 \), White still maintains the balance with the line: 14. \( \text{Rd1! wb6} \) 15. \( \text{d3 xb3} \) 16. \( \text{axb3 xd3} \) 17. \( \text{xd3=} \) 14. \( \text{e2} \), Berthelot – Froilan Sulit, ICCF 2016 (14.\( f4 a6 \) 15. \( \text{e2 w}a7! \) 16. \( \text{d1 c5} \) Westerman – De Groot, Netherlands 1990) 14...\( h5!?! \). Black has two powerful bishops, while White has problems with the protection of his e5-pawn, since the pawn-advance \( f2-f4 \) would weaken the g1-a7 diagonal.

10. \( \text{d3} \). White continues to simplify the position. 10...\( \text{xd3} \) 11. \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 12. \( \text{dxe5} \) 13. \( \text{b5+ wb7} \) 14. \( \text{c1 e8} \) 15. \( \text{xd7+ xd7} \) 16. \( \text{e2 c4=} \) Andersson – Beliavsky, Brussels 1988. White must play precisely, because in actions on both sides of the board Black’s bishop may turn out to be more powerful than White’s knight.

10...\( a6 \)

11. \( \text{e2} \)
After 11.\( \text{b3 wb6} \) 12.\( \text{e2} \), Ricardi – Chernin, Buenos Aires 1992, Black can simply exploit the defects of his opponent’s queenside pawn-structure 12...\( \text{xb3}?! \) 13.\( \text{xb3 b4=} \)

White cannot harm his opponent with 11.\( \text{d3 xd3} \) 12.\( \text{xd3 c7} \) 13.0-0 0-0

14. \( \text{ac1 c8} \) 15. \( \text{e2} \) (15. \( \text{e2 a5} \) 16. \( \text{a3 b5} \). With this move Black prepares an outpost for his rook on the c4-square. 17. \( \text{h3 c4=} \) Benidze – Ni Hua, Shenzhen 2011.) 15...\( \text{a5} \) 16.\( \text{fc1 c6} \) 17.\( \text{f3} \). White intends to play e3-e4, as well as to transfer his bishop to e1 (17. \( \text{f1 fc8=} \) Seel – Vovk, Berlin 2015).

17...\( \text{fc8} \) 18. \( \text{e1} \) (White should better refrain from the pawn-advance 18.\( e4 \), Leitao – Dominguez Perez, Havana 2003, 18...\( \text{b4=}?! \) 18...\( \text{d6} \) 19.\( e4 \), Remlinger – Akopian, Orange 2011, 19...\( \text{c7}?! \) 20.\( e5 b4=} \)

White has occupied space, but his bishop is restricted by the pawns on d4 and e5, has no mobility and
may turn out to be “bad”.

14.\( \text{Rfc1} \text{ a5} \text{ 15. Rc2} \text{ Rfc8} \). Both sides plan to double their rooks on the c-file. 16.\( \text{Rac1} \text{ c6} \text{ 17. Nd1} \text{ Rac8} \text{ 18. Rxc6} \text{ Rxc6} \text{ 19. Rxc6} \text{ bxc6} \). Black is not afraid of the appearance of a weak pawn on c6, because White will be incapable of preventing the pawn-advance c6-c5. 20.\( \text{Oc3} \text{ c5} = \) Kir.Georgiev – Bruzon Batista, Moscow 2001.

11...\( \text{Be7} \) 12.0-0 0-0

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram.jpg}} \]

13.\( \text{Ec1} \)

13.\( \text{d3} \). White’s straightforward desire to exchange pieces may lead him to an inferior position.

13...\( \text{Exd3} \text{ 14. Exd3} \text{ a5} \text{ 15. a3} \text{ Efc8} \text{ 16. b4} \text{ d8} \text{ 17. Oa4} \text{ Ec4} = \) Matamoros Franco – Svetushkin, Istanbul 2000.

13.\( \text{b3} \text{ b6} \) 14.\( \text{xb6} \) (14.\( \text{Rfc1} \text{ Rac8} = \) Andersson – Babula, Germany 2002) 14...\( \text{xb6} \text{ 15. Oc7} \text{ d7} \text{ 16. Efc1} \), Epishin – Chernin, Reggio Emilia 1994 (16.\( \text{g4} \text{ g6} = \)) 16...\( \text{Rfc8} = \)

13...\( \text{Ec8} \) 14.\( \text{a3} \)

After White’s alternatives he may even fail to equalise. For example: 14.\( \text{b3} \text{ b6} \) 15.\( \text{f3} \), M.Makarov – Aleshin, Pardubice 2005, 15...\( \text{xb3}?! \) 16.\( \text{xb3} \text{ b6} = \) 15.\( \text{h3} \), or 15...\( \text{xb3} \text{ 16. axb3} \text{ Ec6} = \) Bacrot – Fressinet, Ajaccio 2007. In both variations Black’s superior pawn-structure provides him with a slight but stable advantage.

14.\( \text{d3} \text{ Exd3} \text{ 15. Exd3} \text{ a5} \text{ 16. Ec2} \) (White ends up with a weak isolated pawn after 16.\( \text{e4} \text{ dxe4} \text{ 17. Exe4} \text{ b4} = \) Verduga Zavala – Vilela de Acuna, Camaguey 1987.) 16...\( \text{Ec6} \text{ 17. Efc1} \text{ Efc8} \text{ 18. f3} \text{ b4} = \) Vallejo Pons – Andreikin, Tallinn 2016. Black’s pressure on the c-file provides him with a stable advantage.

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram.jpg}} \]

14...\( \text{b5} \). Now, White cannot play \( \text{Oa4}, \text{ b2-b4}, \text{ Oc5} \). 15.\( \text{Oa2} \), Carlsen – Aronian, Moscow 2009,
15...b6!∞, followed by \( \text{c4} \).

C) 8.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{b4} \)

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

9.\( \text{b5} \)

This is White’s most active move.

It is obviously more modest for him to choose the development of his bishop to e2: 9.\( \text{e2} \) 0-0 10.0-0 \( \text{e7} \) 11.\( \text{fc1} \), Wang Yue – Ding Liren, Huaiian 2016, 11...\( \text{h5} \)!∞

9.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{xc3} \+ \) 10.bxc3 (White would not achieve much if he opts for the other capture 10.\( \text{xc3} \), because later Black will win a tempo by attacking the enemy queen either with his knight on c4, or with his rook on c8. 10...\( \text{xe5} \) 11.\( \text{xe5} \) 0-0 12.\( \text{b4} \) \( \text{c8} \) 13.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{c2} \) 14.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{c4} \) 15.\( \text{a3} \), Martinovic – Erdos, Sibenik 2011, 15...a6!?) 10...\( \text{xe5} \) 11.\( \text{xe5} \) 0-0

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

Following 12.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{c8} \)=, White leads considerably in development and therefore cannot capture the pawn 13.\( \text{xa7} \)!, since after 13...\( \text{e4} \) 14.a4, Milchev – Lindgren, Vaxjo 2015, 14...\( \text{h4} \)!!? 15.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{h6} \)

he must consider \( \text{xc3} \), or \( \text{xc3} \), as well the trapping of his bishop with f7-f6, g7-g5, while after \( \text{e5-c7} \), Black has the resource \( \text{f8-f7} \).

12.f3 \( \text{d7} \) 13.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{c8} \)= Ellinger – Hacker, ICCF 2015.

12.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{c8} \) 13.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 14.\( \text{x6} \) \( \text{x6} \) 15.0-0 \( \text{e7} \). White must get rid of his backward pawn on c3 as quickly as possible; otherwise, he might end up in an inferior position. 16.c4 dxc4 17.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{e4} \)= Bar – Homont, ICCF 2016.

12.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{c8} \). Black is eyeing the enemy weakness on c3. 13.0-0 \( \text{e4} \) 14.\( \text{xb7} \) (If White begins defending with 14.\( \text{fc1} \), things are not going to end up well for him. 14...\( \text{h4} \) 15.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 16.c4 \( \text{d2} \) 17.\( \text{a4} \), Polak – Ragger, Austria 2013, 17...dxc4!? 18.\( \text{xc4} \) h5) 14...f6
15...g3 (15...f4 g5 16.g3, Richter – Hermann, Germany 2015, 16...b6!? The transfer into an endgame is Black’s simplest road to equality. 17.xb6 axb6 18.fc1 xc3 19.xc3 xc3. His knight on c3 is very powerful. This compensates White’s two-bishop advantage. 20.f1 c8=) 15...f7 16.a6 xc3 17.fc1 xe2+ 18.xe2. This position with bishops of opposite colours and major pieces seems rather drawish. 18...b7 19.a6 xc1+ 20.xc1 b6 21.c8+ f7 22.xb7+ xb7 23.c7+ xc7 24.xc7 d3= Akobian – Bu Xiangzhi, Istanbul 2012.

9...0-0

We will analyse now: C1) 10.xc6 and C2) 10.0-0.

C1) 10.xc6 xc3+ 11.xc3
11.bxc3?! bxc6 12.0-0 e4 13.h3, Pakleza – Erdos, Sitges 2008. White defends against g5, h5. 13...h5!? 14.b2 c5= Black has managed to advance his weak pawn, while White must work hard in order to protect his weakness on c3.

11...c8 12.e5 bxc6!?
This is an interesting possibility after which Black preserves chances of seizing the initiative if White reacts inaccurately.

Black can equalise easily with the line: 12...g4 13.xg4 xg4 14.b4 xc6 15.xb7 c8 16.xc8 fxc8 17.0-0 a5 18.f3 f5= Kramnik – Anand, Bonn 2008. White has no chances of realising his extra pawn in this position with rooks and bishops of opposite colours.
13. \( \text{a3} \)

After 13.\( \text{c1} \) e5, White must play precisely in order to avoid ending up worse. 14.\( \text{dxc5} \) \( \text{e4} \) 15.\( \text{a3} \) f6. Black wishes to restrict his opponent’s minor pieces. 16.\( \text{f3} \) e5 17.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{e7=} \) Here, White should better give up his c5-pawn, since his attempt to protect it with 18.b4?! and 18...a5! 19.\( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{a8} \) 20.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{fb8} \) 21.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xb4=} \), would lead to a difficult position for him. The straightforward move 22.c6? even loses for White 22...\( \text{c3!} \) 23.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{a2} \) 24.\( \text{xc3} \), Andersson – Blomqvist, Borlange 2014, 24...d4+.

13...\( \text{h5} \)

Now, White’s bishop on f4 cannot avoid being exchanged.

14.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 15.exf4 f6 16.\( \text{xc6} \)

White has won a pawn, but his knight has been unpleasantly pinned.

16...\( \text{d7} \) 17.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{fe8} \)

18.0-0

The move 18.\( \text{d2} \) has its drawbacks too. There are still too many pieces on the board and White’s king may come under an attack in the centre. 18...\( \text{h8} \). Black defends against the threat \( \text{e7} \). 19.b4 a6 20.\( \text{he1} \) h6 21.a4 \( \text{b1=} \) White is preparing the transfer of his bishop to the c4-square. 22.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{a2} \) 23.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{c4} \) 24.f3 \( \text{xb5} \) 25.\( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{c7} \) 26.\( \text{f2} \) \( \text{xb5} \) 27.\( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{ec8=} \) Soltau – Bokar, ICCF 2013. White cannot save his knight, so the position is balanced.

18...\( \text{e5} \). Black plays in the centre in an attempt to deflect White’s pieces from the defence of his knight on c6. 19.\( \text{b4} \). White wishes to protect his knight with his pawn on b5 as quickly as possible in order to free his queen from its protection. In the meantime, Black manages to advance further his pawn.

19...\( \text{exd4} \) 20.\( \text{b5} \) d3 21.\( \text{ed1} \) (It is just bad for White to play here 21.\( \text{d4} \), because of 21...\( \text{e2} \) 22.\( \text{c5} \)
Rce8 23.\textsuperscript{2}xd5 \textsuperscript{2}e6 24.h3 d2=\textsuperscript{2} 24.\textsuperscript{2}d6 \textsuperscript{2}xa2 25.\textsuperscript{2}d8 \textsuperscript{2}g6 26.\textsuperscript{2}b4 \textsuperscript{2}a5 27.\textsuperscript{2}xe8+ \textsuperscript{2}xe8 28.\textsuperscript{2}xd3 \textsuperscript{2}xb5 29.\textsuperscript{2}c5 a5\textsuperscript{2} Ponomarev – Leupold, ICCF 2008. The tactical complications have ended. The outside passed a-pawn and the dominance of his bishop over the enemy knight in actions on both sides of the board provide Black with a great advantage.) 21...a6 22.a4 h5

C2) 10.0-0

White hopes that the extra tempo (\textsuperscript{2}b3) in this symmetrical position would enable him to fight for the opening advantage. Still, Black’s position remains quite solid.

10...\textsuperscript{2}xc3 11.\textsuperscript{2}xc3

There arise great simplifications after 11.\textsuperscript{2}xc6 \textsuperscript{2}xb2 12.\textsuperscript{2}xb7 (12.\textsuperscript{2}xb2 bxc6 13.\textsuperscript{2}e5 \textsuperscript{2}b6 14.\textsuperscript{2}xb6 axb6 15.\textsuperscript{2}xc6 \textsuperscript{2}d3 16.\textsuperscript{2}fc1 \textsuperscript{2}a4 17.\textsuperscript{2}d6 \textsuperscript{2}fa8 18.a3 \textsuperscript{2}e8= Graf – Miles, Chania 1997) 12...\textsuperscript{2}xa1 13.\textsuperscript{2}xa1 (13.\textsuperscript{2}xa8 \textsuperscript{2}xa8 14.\textsuperscript{2}xa1 \textsuperscript{2}e4=) 13...\textsuperscript{2}e4 14.\textsuperscript{2}c1 \textsuperscript{2}b6 15.\textsuperscript{2}xa8 \textsuperscript{2}xa8 16.h3 f6 17.g4 \textsuperscript{2}g6 18.\textsuperscript{2}c7 \textsuperscript{2}xb3 19.axb3 a5 20.\textsuperscript{2}g2 \textsuperscript{2}e8 21.g5 a4 22.bxa4 \textsuperscript{2}xa4= Voetter – Leupold, ICCF 2008.

11...\textsuperscript{2}e4

Black attacks his opponent’s queen and wins a tempo for the pawn-advance g7-g5.

12.\textsuperscript{2}a3 g5!? 13.\textsuperscript{2}g3 f6

It is useful for him to take the e5-square under control, so that White’s knight cannot go there later.

14.\textsuperscript{2}fc1

About 14.\textsuperscript{2}xc6 bxc6 15.\textsuperscript{2}ac1 \textsuperscript{2}b6 – see 14.\textsuperscript{2}ac1.

14.\textsuperscript{2}ac1 \textsuperscript{2}b6 15.\textsuperscript{2}xc6 bxc6 16.\textsuperscript{2}fd1 a5 17.\textsuperscript{2}d2 \textsuperscript{2}xg3 18.hxg3 a4 19.\textsuperscript{2}b1 \textsuperscript{2}fb8. Black squeezes his opponent’s pieces with the protection of the b2-pawn. 20.\textsuperscript{2}e7 \textsuperscript{2}d8 21.\textsuperscript{2}xd8+ \textsuperscript{2}xd8 22.\textsuperscript{2}xc6 \textsuperscript{2}ab8= White is incapable of holding on to his material advantage.
14...c8 15.xc6 bxc6

16.xa7
He wins a pawn, but presents the initiative to Black.

It is obviously bad for White to play here 16.e1?! , because after 16...h5 17.f3 d xg3 18.hxg3 c7 19.f2 h4 20.g4 g6+, the material on the board is equal indeed, but his king is seriously endangered, Bakre – Thakur, San Sebastian 2012.

There arises a complicated position following 16.d1 f7 17.d2 d xg3 18.hxg3 h5 Sykora – Hybl, ICCF 2010. Black has weak pawns on a7 and c6, but if he manages to open the h-file after h7, h5-h4, his attack against the enemy king may become very powerful.

16...h5 17.h4 g4 18.h2
Or 18.e1 d xg3 19.fxg3 d d6 20.e3! White defends precisely. (After 20.h2?! a8 21.c5 xg5 22.xc5 b8 23.xc6, Taboas Rodriguez – Ramirez Garcia, Tres Cantos 2010, 23.e4?, it is essential for Black not to allow a2–a4, while the b2-pawn is not running away. Meanwhile, White's knight is misplaced on e1 and is severely restricted by the pawn on e4 and the bishop on f5. White has two extra pawns indeed, but Black has a great advantage.) 20.e4 21.h2 a8 22.b7 b8 23.xc6 xxc6 24.xc6. Now, contrary to the previous variation, Black’s bishop is on e4 and does not protect the pawn on e6. This circumstance enables White to equalise. 24.xb2 25.a4 f7 26.a5 e7=

18.xg3 19.fxg3 d6

20.a6?!
Now again, White must defend very accurately.

The natural move 20.f1? loses. 20.a8 21.c5 xc5 22.xc5 b8 23.e4 (23.xc6 xb2+, followed
by \( b6 \) and White cannot hold on to the g2-square, Rusev – Ni Hua, Villarrobledo 2009) \( 23...dxe4 \nline 24.d2 f5 25.b3 b4 26.c6 xd4=+ \) Lechtynsky – Haba, Czech Republic 2005.

\( 20...\text{Qxg3} \, 21.f1 \text{hxg4} \, 22.c6 \text{g5} \, 23.a4 \text{g5} \) There arises a very sharp play in this middle game. White will advance his queenside pawns, while Black will push forward his g and h-pawns with the idea to attack the enemy king.

D) \( 8.b5 \, d7 \)
Black parries the threat \( d5 \).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Diagram Image}
\end{array}
\]

We will analyse now: D1) 9.0-0 and D2) 9.a4.

9.c1 e7 10.0-0 (10.b3 a6 – see 9.b3). 10...c8 – see variation D1.

9.e5 cxe5 10.xe5 a6 11.xd7+ xd7 – see variation B.

White can create a weakness on c6 – 9.xc6 bxc6, but this is not much of an achievement, since he cannot prevent later Black’s pawn-advance c6-c5. 10.e5 (10.0-0 e7 – see 9.0-0) 10...xe5 11.xe5 f6 12.g3 c5= Weiss – Orsolic, Germany 2009.

9.b3 e7 10.c1 (It is better for White to play here 10.0-0 g5 – see variation D1.) 10...a6 11.xc6 bxc6 12.e5?! Espig – Bareev, Novi Sad 1990, 12.b8!? 13.a4 xe5 14.xe5 b6= Black has the two-bishop advantage and his rook on b6 protects the pawns on c6 and a6 attacking at the same time the enemy pawn on b2.

D1) \( 9.0-0 \)
White is not in a hurry to increase the pressure against the enemy knight on c6 with the move \( wxa4 \) and simply removes his king away from the centre. Strangely enough, after castling in numerous variations his king may come under attack after \( e7, \, g7-g5, \, h7-h5. \) White must be constantly on the alert about this possibility.

9...e7
10.\textit{c}c1
10.\textit{e}5 \textit{c}xe5 11.\textit{x}xe5 0-0 12.\textit{g}3 \textit{c}c8 13.\textit{d}3. White’s plan is not impressive at all. Now, just like in variation A, he exchanges the light-squared bishops, but loses a tempo for the move 8.\textit{b}5. 13...\textit{xd}3 14.\textit{xd}3 \textit{b}b6 15.\textit{ab}1, Andersson – Hansen, Thessaloniki 1988, 15...\textit{c}4??, followed by \textit{fc}8.
10.\textit{e}2 0-0 11.\textit{fc}1 \textit{c}8 12.\textit{e}1, Jobava – Rapport, Austria 2012, 12...\textit{f}6!?
10.\textit{d}3 \textit{xd}3 11.\textit{xd}3 0-0 12.\textit{fc}1 \textit{c}8 13.\textit{b}5 \textit{b}b6= Urkedal – Rapport, Athens 2012.
10.\textit{h}3 \textit{c}8 11.\textit{e}1 a6= Andersson – Dominguez Perez, Havana 2003.
The line: 10.\textit{xc}6 \textit{bxc}6 does not promise much to White. Black’s bishops are very powerful. He is also threatening \textit{g}7-\textit{g}5, \textit{h}7-\textit{h}5, so White cannot concentrate on his attack against the \textit{c}6-pawn.

11.\textit{a}4, Henley – Torre, Indonesia 1983, 11...\textit{h}5!?
11.\textit{c}1 \textit{c}8 12.\textit{a}4 \textit{g}5! Black begins an attack with this move. 13.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}5. He is threatening to trap the enemy bishop and forces White to play 14.\textit{h}3. After 14...\textit{g}4 15.\textit{hxg}4 \textit{hxg}4, Black opens the h-file.
16.\textit{e}5 \textit{xe}5 17.\textit{xe}5 \textit{f}6 18.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}7–\textit{+} His attack is impossible to parry now. 19.\textit{e}1 \textit{h}5 20.\textit{d}2 \textit{e}4 21.\textit{f}1 \textit{f}3! 0–1 Seirawan – Beliavsky, Brussels 1988.
11.\textit{e}5. This is a reliable move for White and he is at least not worse after it. 11...\textit{xe}5 12.\textit{xe}5 0-0 13.\textit{a}4 (13.\textit{c}1 \textit{a}5 14.\textit{b}3 \textit{fc}8 15.\textit{a}4, Barbero – Meduna, Biel 1986, 15...\textit{b}5!?) 13...\textit{a}5 14.\textit{b}3 (14.\textit{fc}1 \textit{fc}8 15.a3 \textit{b}5 16.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}6 17.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}5= Guerra Costa – Schinis, Ciro 1998) 14...\textit{b}5 15.\textit{fc}1 \textit{fc}8 16.\textit{d}1 \textit{f}6 17.\textit{g}3 \textit{c}5. Black gets rid of his backward pawn and equalises completely. 18.dxc5 \textit{xc}5 19.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 20.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 21.\textit{c}1 \textit{b}5= Barlov – Mednis, Graz 1987.
After 10.\textit{a}4 \textit{b}6, White’s queenside initiative reaches its dead end.
11.\textit{B}f1 a6 12.\textit{B}xc6 bxc6= Anderton – Akstinat, Germany 2011.

White cannot break in the centre with 11.e4, because after 11...dxe4 12.d5 \textit{Q}c5 13.dxc6 0-0! 14.\textit{Q}d1 exf3\texttt{F}, Black manages to complete his development, Cosma – Gilbert, Bucharest 1993.

11.\textit{Q}b3 a6 12.\textit{B}xc6 bxc6 13.\textit{N}e5 (13.\textit{B}f1 \textit{Q}xb3 14.axb3 f6= Hansen – Salov, Wijk aan Zee 1991) 13...\textit{B}xb3 14.axb3, Illescas Cordoba – Teske, Germany 1997, 14...g5!? 15.\textit{Q}g3 \textit{Q}xe5 16.\textit{Q}xe5 f6 17.\textit{B}g3 h5†. Both sides have pawn-weaknesses, but Black’s prospects seem slightly preferable thanks to his bishop-pair.

10.\textit{Q}b3 g5!? This plan is very unpleasant for White.

11.\textit{B}g3. This natural move is not precise. 11...h5 12.h3 g4 13.hxg4 hxg4 14.\textit{Q}d2 \textit{Q}f8! Black is preparing \textit{Q}g7, in order to connect his major pieces. It would be difficult for White to parry his enemy threats on the h-file. 15.\textit{B}c1 \textit{Q}g7 16.\textit{Q}e2 \textit{Q}c8 17.\textit{B}xc6 bxc6 18.\textit{Q}b7 \textit{Q}h7 19.\textit{Q}f4, Rakhmanov – Jakovenko, Plovdiv 2012 (19.\textit{Q}xc6? \textit{B}xc6 20.\textit{Q}xc6 \textit{Q}h8++) 19...\textit{Q}d3!? 20.\textit{Q}g3 c5 21.\textit{Q}c3 c4\texttt{F}.

White must continue here with 11.\textit{Q}e5!? and only after 11...0-0 (11...f6 12.\textit{Q}g3 h5 13.h4!) to retreat 12.\textit{Q}g3. After Black has castled, White does not need to be afraid of the opening of files on the kingside.

12...a6 13.\textit{Q}xc6 (13.\textit{Q}e2 \textit{W}b6 14.\textit{W}xb6 \textit{Q}xb6\texttt{F} Jordan – Canizares Cuadra, IECG 2006) 13...bxc6

10...\textit{E}c8
11.\(\text{a4}\)

11.h3 a6 12.\(\text{e2}\) 0-0= Sasikiran – Fedorov, playchess.com 2006.

11.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{dxe5}\) 12.\(\text{xe5}\) 0-0 13.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{a5=}\) Bleul – Mueller, Germany 1992.

After 11.\(\text{b3}\), Black can also advance his kingside pawns. 11...\(\text{g5}\) 12.\(\text{e5}\), Zeller – Rausis, Germany 1999, 12...0-0!? 13.\(\text{g3}\) \text{h5}↑

11...\(\text{g5}\) 12.\(\text{g3}\)

12.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{g8}\) Nisman – Lalic, Belgrade 1989.

12...\(\text{h5}\) 13.\(\text{c5}\)

With his active actions on the queenside Black wishes to deflect his opponent of his attack on the kingside.

It would be worse for White to play here 13.h3 \(\text{g4}\) 14.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{dxe5}\) 15.\(\text{xe5}\) \text{f6=} Kropff – Cubas, Asuncion 2006.

13...\(\text{xc5}\) 14.\(\text{xc5}\) \text{h4} 15.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{xd6}\) 16.\(\text{xd6}\) \(\text{xd6}\) 17.\(\text{g5}\), I.Sokolov – Danin, Koge 2013, 17...\(\text{b4}!\) 18.\(\text{xc6}+\) \(\text{xc6}\) 19.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{g8}\) 20.\(\text{h5}\) \(\text{g6}\) 21.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{f5=}\) Now, White has nothing better than to repeat the position.

D2) 9.\(\text{a4}\)

White begins immediate active actions on the queenside.

9...\(\text{c8}\)

Black is not afraid of the possible loss of his a7-pawn.

10.0-0
White should better refrain from obtaining material gains at the moment, because after 10.\texttt{Bxc6 Bxc6} 11.\texttt{Bxa7 Bxd3!}, Black seizes firmly the initiative. 12.\texttt{Ba4}. White wishes to return his queen into his own camp as quickly as possible (12.\texttt{Qxb7 Bb6\#} 13.\texttt{Bc7?! Bxb2} 14.\texttt{Qxd8+ Bxd8} 15.\texttt{a3 Bc2\#} Petrovic – Zivkovic, Belgrade 2007). 12...\texttt{e7} 13.\texttt{d1 a6}. Black has two powerful bishops for the sacrificed pawn and what is most important his bishop on a6 impedes White’s castling kingside. 14.\texttt{a3}, Simanowski – Stewart, ICCF 2007 (White must, irrelevant of the time lost, transfer his knight to e2 and castle kingside. 14.\texttt{g1!? a5} 15.\texttt{ge2 xe2} 16.\texttt{xe2 b4} 17.\texttt{e1 0-0\#} 14...\texttt{a5!?\#} Black has very powerful initiative for his minimal material deficit.

\textbf{10...a6} 11.\texttt{Bxc6 Bxc6} 12.\texttt{Bc1 e7}

\textbf{13.e2}

White used to follow the plan with the move 13.\texttt{d1} at the end of the 80ies of the past century, but its popularity diminished quickly. 13...\texttt{b5} 14.\texttt{Bb3 c8} 15.\texttt{e4}. White sacrifices a pawn and brings his bishop to control the c1-square. Still, his dominance over the c-file does not compensate fully his material deficit. (15.\texttt{Bxc6 Bxc6} 16.\texttt{Bc3 Bxc3} 17.\texttt{Bxc3 f6\#} Hernando Garcia – Lopez Gracia, Aragon 2014) 15...\texttt{xe4} 16.\texttt{Bxc6 Bxc6} 17.\texttt{Bc1 a8} 18.\texttt{a4 Bf3}. It is useful for Black to compromise his opponent’s pawn-structure. 19.\texttt{gx f3}, Shabalov – Khalifman, Tashkent 1987, 19...\texttt{g5!?} 20.\texttt{Bc7 Bb7} 21.\texttt{g3 Bd8\#}

\textbf{13...Bb6} 14.\texttt{Bc6 bxc6}

White has managed to weaken Black’s pawn-structure, but his two powerful bishops provide him with counterplay sufficient to maintain the balance.

\textbf{15.Bc1}

15...\textit{\textbf{d}3} 16.\textit{\textbf{d}1}

16.\textit{\textbf{x}c6}. The exchange of the pawns on b2 and c6 does not promise much to White. 16...\textit{\textbf{x}b2} 17.\textit{\textbf{c}8+ \textbf{d}8} 18.\textit{\textbf{c}1} \textit{\textbf{b}5} 19.\textit{\textbf{b}3} \textit{\textbf{x}b3} 20.\textit{\textbf{a}xb3} 0-0 21.\textit{\textbf{d}6} \textit{\textbf{e}7}. Black has succeeded in getting rid of the pin of his bishop and after the exchanges, there arises an equal endgame with minor pieces on the board. 22.\textit{\textbf{x}f8+ \textbf{xf8}} 23.\textit{\textbf{x}e7+ \textbf{xe7}} 24.\textit{\textbf{f}d2} \textit{\textbf{d}6}= Plaskett – Jussupov, Graz 1981. Black’s king is more active. White must play precisely in order to maintain the equality.

16...\textit{\textbf{g}6}

\begin{center}
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\end{center}

17.\textit{\textbf{c}3}

The position is repeated after 17.\textit{\textbf{a}4} \textit{\textbf{d}3}= 17.\textit{\textbf{e}5} \textit{\textbf{xe}5} 18.\textit{\textbf{xe}5} 0-0. Black has the two-bishop advantage and can always get rid of his weak pawn by advancing c6-c5. 19.\textit{\textbf{d}2}, Pakhomov – Tuma, Pardubice 2006, 19...\textit{\textbf{c}8} 20.\textit{\textbf{c}3} \textit{\textbf{b}4} 21.\textit{\textbf{e}2} \textit{\textbf{a}5} 22.\textit{\textbf{d}1} \textit{\textbf{f}6} 23.\textit{\textbf{f}4} c5= 

17...0-0 18.\textit{\textbf{b}3} \textit{\textbf{c}8} 19.\textit{\textbf{x}b}6 \textit{\textbf{xb}6} 20.\textit{\textbf{e}5} c5 21.\textit{\textbf{x}g}6 \textit{\textbf{hx}g}6 22.\textit{\textbf{d}c}5 \textit{\textbf{e}c}5= Dzenis – Garnier, ICCF 2014.
Part 2

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6

In the second part of our book we will analyse lines in which after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6, White refrains from the most popular move 4.♗c3. The fifth chapter of the book will be devoted to the move 4.♗bd2, while in Chapters 6-7 we will deal with 4.g3 and 4.♕c2, while in the two final chapters of the second part (8 and 9), we will analyse 4.e3. It is also worth mentioning that the rather popular move 4.♗b3, after 4...dxc4 5.♕xc4, transposes to positions from chapter seven.

Chapter 5

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6

4.♗bd2

Indeed, White’s knight is not so active here than on the c3-square, but one of the pluses of this move is that now, he does not need to worry about the protection of his pawn on c4.

About 4.a4 dxc4 5.♗xc4 ♘f5, or 4.♗b3 dxc4 5.♗xc4 ♘f5 – see Chapter 7.

It is obviously bad for White to choose here 4.♗g5, because Black can simply capture the pawn 4...dxc4 and White’s compensation for it is insufficient. 5.♗c2 (5.♗bd2 b5 6.a4, Kiriakov – S.Volkov, playchess.com 2004, 6...h6!? 7.♗xf6 exf6=) 5...b5 6.e4 h6 7.♗e3 (7.♗xf6?! exf6 8.♗bd2 ♘b4=}
Cherniaev – Hochstrasser, Saas Almagell 2005. Black has an extra pawn and the two-bishop advantage.) 7...e6\textsuperscript{+} Bratanov – Yordanov, Plovdiv 2012.

4...\textit{f5}

White does not exert sufficient pressure against the d5-pawn, so before playing e7-e6, Black can exploit this developing his light-squared bishop outside of his pawn-chain without being afraid of the queen-sortie \textit{b3}.

Now, White must make a choice on which diagonal to develop his light-squared bishop: \textbf{A}) 5.e3, or \textbf{B}) 5.g3.

5...\textit{b3}. This move is not dangerous for Black with a white knight on d2. 5...\textit{b6}

6...e6 7.c5 \textit{c7} 8.b4 a5= McMurray/Allies – Capablanca, New York 1936.

The exchange of the queens is not promising for White, because after 6...\textit{xb6 axb6}, Black’s rook will operate on the semi-open a-file. 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.e3 \textit{c6} 9...\textit{b5 e6} 10...\textit{e5 \textit{c8=} Melkumjanz – Jugelt, Essen 2000.

6...h4 \textit{xb3}. This is an interesting idea. 7.axb3 \textit{c2}. It is amazing, but Black’s bishop is perfectly placed inside his opponent’s camp. It attacks the b3-pawn and White’s pieces can hardly counter it. 8.e3, Rogozenko – Pacher, Czech Republic 2013, 8...\textit{a6!?∞} Black is preparing the transfer of his knight to the b4-square. White should better not accept the pawn-sacrifice, since following 9.cxd5 cxd5 10...\textit{xa6 bxa6} 11...\textit{xa6 \textit{d3} 12...\textit{a1 e6} 13...h3 \textit{b4} 14...\textit{e5 \textit{b5=}, Black’s bishops would become very active, while White’s doubled extra pawn would be immaterial.

There arises a complicated positional battle after 5...\textit{h4 \textit{e6}. In general, it is not good to place bishops
in front of the central pawns, since this may lead to the delay of the development of the pieces. Still, this is an exceptional case, because Black can easily develop his bishop on f8 to g7. 6.e3 (It seems less consistent for White to play here 6.Qb3 b6 7.e3 Qxb3 8.axb3 a6 9.Be2 g6 10.0-0 Qg7. Black develops his pieces in the spirit of the Gruenfeld Defence. 11.b1 0-0 12.c3 c5= Rivas Maceda – Walter, ICCF 2015. White must lose time here in order to centralise his knight.) 6...g5!? This interesting move leads to positions which are not so well analysed. Black exploits the misplacement of the enemy knight on h4 and advances with tempo his kingside pawns. 7.hf3 g4 8.e5 h5!? Now, if White castles kingside, his king may come under a pawn-offensive. After 9.b3, Black must try to exchange his opponent’s centralised knight as quickly as possible.

9...bd7 10.c2 xe5 11.dxe5 d7 12.b2 g7 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.f4. This move weakens White’s pawn-structure, but he has no other way of protecting his e5-pawn. It is good for Black to have a pawn on g4, since it deprives White’s knight of the f3-square. 14...gxf3 15.xf3 a5+ 16.d2 xd2+ 17.xd2 c5= White must play accurately in this endgame; otherwise, the vulnerability of his pawn-structure might hurt him.

9.cxd5 xd5 10.d3 h6 11.c5 bd7 12.xe6 xe6

White has obtained the two-bishop advantage, but has lost too much time on the manoeuvre of his knight and lags considerably in development. 13.b3 d5!? Black sacrifices a pawn and avoids the trade of the queens. 14.b7 b8 15.a6 b4 16.a4 g6 17.d1. White defends against c2, but now, his king remains stranded at the centre of the board for a long time. 17...e5 18.a3 d5 19.dxe5 xe5 followed by 0-0, Enricci – Glatthaar, ICCF 2015. Black has more than sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit. His pieces are very active, while White will need a lot of time to
develop his pieces and to evacuate his king away from the centre.

A) 5.e3 e6

6.e2

6.a3. The immediate occupation of space on the queenside would not bring anything to White. 6...\textit{bd7 7.b4 e7 8.b2 0-0 9.e2}, Lehr – Boettcher, Bad Segeberg 1995, 9...a5!? 10.c5 b6=

6.b3 b6 7.c5 (Or 7.e2 xB3 8.xB3, Keese – Pedrosa, ICCF 2009, 8...a5!?, preparing a5-a4 and preventing White’s knight-sortie a5.) 7...c7 8.e3 bd7 9.b4 e7 10.b2 0-0 11.e2, Piazzi – Grau, Buenos Aires 1935. Here, Black can prepare his standard pawn-break in the centre e6-e5, or can apply some prophylactic on the queenside: 11...a5!?=, after which White will hardly manage to advance b4-b5, because then, his pawn on c5 would not be sufficiently protected.

After 6.h4, Black should better play 6...e4.

7.b3 b6 8.e2 (8.c5 c7 9.f3 g6∞ M.Gurevich – Hauchard, Gibraltar 2009) 8...h6. Black prepares the retreat of his bishop to h7. 9.xe4 dxe4∞. This is the essence of the idea behind Black’s move six. Now, his pawn on e4 will deprive White’s knight on h4 of the f3-square, Carlsen – Fressinet, Dubai 2014.

7.e2 bd7 8.0-0 d6 9.c5. White occupies space on the queenside, but now, Black can begin active actions on the kingside (g7-g5), without worrying about his position in the centre. (9.hf3. White admits that the manoeuvre h4 was a failure. 9...g6 10.b3, Zubov – Ravi, Mumbai 2015, 10...e4!?=; 9.g3, Giri – Fressinet, Beijing 2012, 9...h5!!!) 9...c7 10.b4 g5 11.f3 gxh4 12.fxe4 xe4 13.xe4 dxe4 14.c2 f6 15.b2 g8= Ilyushchenko – Yamaliev, ICCF 2015. Black has an extra pawn and good attacking prospects on the g-file, but his pawn-structure has been compromised. White has a bishop-pair,
6...h6!?  
This is the simplest for Black. Now, he should not be afraid of Qh4.

7.0-0  
White would not achieve much if he postpones castling. 7.b3 Qbd7 8.b2 Qd6 9.e5 (9.0-0 0-0 – see 7.0-0) 9...Qe4 10.Qxe4 Qxe4= Kholmov – Shcherbakov, Perm 1997.

7...Qbd7 8.b3  
White prepares the development of his bishop to b2.

8...Qd6 9.b2 0-0

10.Qe5  
10.a3 a5 11.Qe5 Qe7= Zallio – Macedo, Natal 2013.

10...Qc7 11.f4  
White fortifies reliably his knight on e5, but weakens the e4-square.

White would not obtain much after his alternatives. For example: 11.a3 Qfd8= Mastrovasilis – Darmarakis, Kallithea 2008, or 11.Qd3 Qfd8= Sabaev – Skatchkov, Bor 2000, or 11.Qc1 Qe4. Black wishes to trade the knights. The simplification is his most direct road to equality. 12.Qxe4 Qxe4 13.Qxd7 Qxd7 14.a3, Granda Zuniga – De la Riva, Linares 2008, 14...Qxa3?! 15.Qxa3 a5=  

11...Qe4 12.Qxd7 Qxd7 13.Qxe4 Qxe4 14.Qc5 Qc7= Yeremenko – Lucchini, ICCF 1999. White has slightly more space, but the vulnerability of the e4-square does not enable him to fight for the advantage.
B) 5.g3 e6

We will analyse similar positions in the next chapter, but there, Black’s bishop would be on the g4-square.

6.g2

It seems premature for White to choose 6.h4, since following 6...dxc4 7.xf5 exf5 8.xc4, Black has the move 8...d5 with a double attack against the enemy rook and knight. White does not lose material, because he can defend with 9.b3, Martinovsky – Feldman, New York 1992, attacking the pawn on b7 at the same time, but after 9...a6!? 10.g1 b4+ 11.d2 b5 12.xb4 bxc4 13.e3+ e4 14.d2 0-0†, the tactical complications end in Black’s favour, since he leads in development and his knight is very powerful at the centre of the board. White’s king is unsafe both in the centre and on the queenside as well.

6...h6

This is a practical decision. Black takes care immediately against the move h4.

7.0-0

About 7.a3 a5 8.0-0 bd7, or 7.b3 e7 8.b2 bd7 9.0-0 – see 7.0-0.

7.e5 bd7 8.xd7 xd7= Krasenkov – Cramling, Stockholm 2014.

7...bd7
8.b3
White prepares the fianchetto of his second bishop.

8.a3 a5 9.b3 Òe7 10.Òb2 0-0 – see 8.b3.

Following 8.Òe1 Òe7 9.Òb3 (9.b3 0-0 – see 8.b3) 9...Òb6 10.c5 Òc7 11.Òe3, Black can prevent his opponent’s pawn-advance b2-b4 with the move 11...a5 Matnadze – Korneev, Linares 2013.

8...Òe7
This placement of the bishop has the advantage, in comparison to 8...Òd6, that after Òb2 and Òe5, Black can capture White’s knight (Òxe5), without being afraid of the pawn-fork dxe5.

9.Òb2
9.Òe1 0-0 10.Òb2 a5 – see 9.Òb2.

9...0-0

10.Òe5
This is a logical continuation of White’s opening strategy. After the development of the bishop to b2, he deploys his knight at the middle of the board.

About 10.Òc1 a5 11.a3 Òh7, or 10.Òe1 a5 11.a3 Òe4 – see 10.a3.

10.Òc1 Òc8 11.Òc3 a5= Borroni – Balabaev, ICCF 2002.

10.h3. This is not the most useful move for White. 10...a5 11.a3 Òc7 12.Òc1 Òe4 13.e3 Òxd2 14.Òxd2 Òf6= Alfaro de Hombre – Tassone, ICCF 2015.

10.e3. He is preparing Òe2. 10...a5. This typical advance of the rook pawn in similar positions provides Black with a good game. 11.Òe2 a4 12.Òc3, Arkell – Berry, London 2012 (12.Òfc1, Hort – Illescas
Cordoba, Tilburg 1992, 12...\(\text{Qc7}!\)\(\text{∞}\); 12.\(\text{Nxe5} \text{b4}\)\(\text{∞}\) Bashkirov – Khusainov, Kazan 2008) 12...\(\text{Qb6}\)!\(\text{=}\), increasing the pressure against the pawn on b3. Black does not need to be in a hurry to exchange on b3, since he can open the a-file later at the most appropriate moment for him.

10.a3 a5

11.\(\text{Nxe5} \text{Nxe5}\) – see 10.\(\text{Nxe5}\).

11.\(\text{Nxe1}\). This transfer of the knight to the d3-square seems too slow. 11...\(\text{Qb6}\) 12.\(\text{Nxe4}\)

11.\(\text{Re1} \text{h7}\) 12.\(\text{Nxe1}\), Kirana – Haslinger, Leiden 2011, 12...\(\text{Qe4}\)!\(\text{∞}\)

11.\(\text{Re1} \text{e4}\) 12.\(\text{Nxe4}\) (12.\text{e3} \text{b5}\) 13.\text{cxd5} \text{cxd5}\) 14.\(\text{Nxe4} \text{xe4}\) 15.\text{f1} \text{b6}\(\text{=}\), followed by the doubling of the rooks on the c-file, Sulskis – Hasangatin, Koszalin 1996. In the middle game, the bishop on b2 may turn out to be “bad”, since it is severely restricted by his own pawns on d4, e3 and a3.) 12...\(\text{xe4}\) 13.\(\text{Nxe4}\) 13.\(\text{h7}\) =; 13.\(\text{f1} \text{h7}\) =) 13...\(\text{xg2}\) 14.\(\text{xe2}\) \text{b5}\) 15.\text{e4}. After this pawn-break in the centre, White suddenly ends up in an inferior position. 15...\(\text{dxe4}\) 16.\(\text{Nxe4}\), Cedriano – Bracali, Bratto 2005, 16...\(\text{b6}\)!\(\text{?}\). Black exerts pressure against the c4-pawn and is also threatening a5-a4, so he forces the move 17.\text{c5} \(\text{d5}\). The powerful placement of the knight at the middle of the board and White’s “bad” bishop on b2 make Black’s prospects preferable.

10...a5
This pawn-advance is very useful. Black wishes to continue with a5-a4, seizing the initiative on the queenside.

11.a3
White plans to counter a5-a4 with b3-b4.

11.Rxd7 Qxd7 12.f3. White is preparing e2-e4, but after 12...Rfd8 13.e4, Lewtak – Carlsson, Prague 2016, 13...dxe4!? 14.fxe4 Qg4 15.Qe2, Black has the powerful resource 15...a3!?, for example: 16.c3 e5 17.d5 (17.dxe5?! Qd3 18.Qxd3 Qxd3 19.exf6 Qxc3³ His bishops are very powerful in this endgame. White’s minor pieces are restricted at the moment by his own pawn on e4.) 17...Re8³. Black has provoked the pawn-advance d4-d5 and has managed to weaken the dark squares in his opponent’s camp.

11.a4. White solves radically the problem with the pawn-advance a5–a4, but weakens the b4-square in the process. 11...Qc7 12.Rxd7 Qxd7 13.Re1 Qb4= Romm – Dolgov, ICCF 2013.

11...Qxe5 12.dxe5 Qd7

13.e4
White gets rid of his doubled pawn.

After 13.Qc1 Qb6³, Black is eyeing the weak b3-pawn, Efimov – Kadimova, Formia 1995.

Following 13.Qc1, Roos – Istratecu, Vaujany 2011, Black can simply retreat his bishop 13...Qg6!?³, so that later White cannot advance with tempo e2-e4.

13.cxd5 exd5 14.e4 dxe4 15.Qxe4 Qc5³ Nilssen – Bang, Koge 1997. Black’s pieces are more active, while White’s fianchettoed bishops are severely restricted by his own pawn on e5 and the enemy pawn on c6.

13...dxe4 14.Qxe4 Qc5
Here, you can see the advantage for Black of the inclusion of the moves a7-a5 and a2-a3. White has a weak pawn on b3. 15.\(\text{Qe2}\). He sacrifices a pawn with the idea to follow with 16.\(\text{Rd1}\) and 17.\(\text{Nd6}\). Still, even the powerful placement of his knight on d6 cannot compensate fully his material deficit. 15...\(\text{Nxb3}\) 16.\(\text{Rd1}\) 17.\(\text{Nd6}\) 18.\(\text{Qe4}\) 19.\(\text{Qxe4}\) a4 20.\(\text{Rd3}\) 21.\(\text{Qc7}\). Zarnescu – Solovyev, ICCF 2015.
This move is becoming very popular lately. White avoids the theoretical disputes in the main variations of the Slav Defence and wishes to focus on the middle game for the basic fight. He develops his pieces in the spirit of the Catalan Opening.

4...\texttt{g4}!?

Black should better refrain from capturing the pawn on c4, because he can hardly hold on to it later.

His opening strategy is very simple – to develop his pieces and to preserve his pawn on d5 in order to restrict considerably the enemy bishop on g2.

We will analyse now A) 5.\texttt{e5} and B) 5.\texttt{g2}.

A) 5.\texttt{e5} \texttt{f5}

This is Black’s most precise move. He must increase his control over the e4-square.

After the routine move 5...\texttt{h5}, White can seize the initiative with the line: 6.cxd5!? cxd5 7.\texttt{c3} e6 8.\texttt{a4+} \texttt{bd7} 9.e4 Ris – Andersen, Germany 2015.

B) 5.\texttt{g2}

6.\texttt{b3} \texttt{b6} 7.cxd5 \texttt{xd5} 8.\texttt{g2} \texttt{xb3} 9.axb3. Black has not only doubled his opponent’s pawns on the b-file, but has also obtained the excellent b4-square for his minor pieces. 9...\texttt{b4} 10.\texttt{a3} f6 11.\texttt{ec4} \texttt{a6} 12.0-0 0-0-0 Pashikian – Hovhannisyan, Yerevan 2016.

White would not obtain much with the move 6.\texttt{c3}, because after 6...e6 7.\texttt{b3} (7.\texttt{g2} \texttt{bd7} – see
6...\texttt{g2}) 7...\texttt{b6} 8.c5 \texttt{xb3} 9.axb3 \texttt{bd7} 10.\texttt{xd7} \texttt{xd7}, Black succeeds in advancing e6-e5 before White pushes b3-b4-b5. 11.b4 e5 12.dxe5 \texttt{xe5=} Wirig – Favarel, Pau 2012. Now, it would be difficult for White to advance b4-b5, because his pawn on c5 would be hanging after that.

There arises a very sharp position after 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.\texttt{c3} \texttt{c6} 8.f3, preparing g3-g4. (It seems less consistent for White to opt here for 8.\texttt{g2} e6 9.0-0 \texttt{e7} 10.\texttt{f4} 0-0 11.\texttt{xc6} bxc6. He has created a weak pawn on c6 for his opponent, but this does not provide him with an edge. In the middle game his bishop with be restricted considerably by the enemy pawn on d5 and he can hardly prevent Black’s pawn-advance c6-c5. 12.\texttt{c1} \texttt{c8} 13.\texttt{a4} \texttt{d7} 14.\texttt{e3}, Ledger – Medvegy, Catalan Bay 2003, 14...\texttt{a5}!? 15.\texttt{d2} \texttt{b5∞}) 8...\texttt{c8} 9.g4 (White can push this pawn a move later: 9.\texttt{g2} \texttt{b6} 10.g4 \texttt{d7} 11.e3 e6∞ Rodshtein – Rublevsky, Sochi 2016.) 9...\texttt{d7} 10.\texttt{f4} (It would not be logical for White to continue here with 10.\texttt{xd7} \texttt{xd7} Hracek – Banusz, Jerusalem 2015, because he trades his powerful knight for the “bad” enemy bishop. Now, White cannot play 11.\texttt{xd5}?, because after 11...\texttt{e6}, the weakening of the e1-h4 diagonal becomes horrible for him. 12.\texttt{c3} \texttt{h4+} 13.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xd4+} White cannot survive for long with his king stranded in the centre of the board.) 10...\texttt{e6} 11.e3 \texttt{xe5} 12.\texttt{xe5}, Markoja – Vogel, Celje 2016, 12...\texttt{b4}?!=, followed by \texttt{a5}. Black’s task here is to play actively on the queenside and thus to squeeze his opponent’s pieces, preventing them from organising an attack on the opposite side of the board.

\textbf{6...e6}
8.\text{b3}  \text{b6}  9.\text{xd7}  \text{xd7}  10.0-0  (10.c5  \text{xb3}  11.axb3  e5\text{=} Bozic – Markovic, Valjevo 2016)  10...\text{xb3}.
Black creates a weak pawn on b3 in his opponent’s camp.  11.axb3  \text{c2}  12.cxd5  exd5  13.e4  dxe4  14.\text{xe4}  \text{xe4}  15.\text{xe4},  Rrhioua – Maleki, Bois Colombes 2005,  15...\text{b6}\text{!?}\text{=}  White has managed to maintain the material balance, but his pawn-structure has been seriously compromised.

It seems premature for him to opt for 8.\text{xd7}.  As a rule, White exchanges there only after the inclusion of the moves \text{d1-b3} – \text{d8-b6}, in order to deprive his opponent of the possibility to capture with his queen.  Here, after 8...\text{xd7}  9.\text{b3}  \text{d8},  Black is threatening to win a pawn with dxc4 and \text{xd4}.  10.cxd5,  Schulze – Wiedenkeller, Badenweiler 1988,  10...exd5  11.\text{f4}  \text{e7}  12.0-0 0-0=

7...\text{bd7}
Black takes an immediate control over the powerful enemy knight on e5.

8.\text{c3}
\text{Or} 8.b3  \text{xe5}  9.dxe5,  Eade – Nakamura, Hawaii 1994,  9...\text{e4}!\text{?}\text{∞}

8.\text{b3}.  This queen-sortie will not bring anything to White.  8...\text{b6}  9.\text{xd7}  (9.\text{c3}?!  Atalik – Nechaeva, Izmir 2016,  9...\text{xe5}?!  10.dxe5  \text{d7}\text{=}  Black’s pawn-structure is more elastic.)  9...\text{xd7}  10.\text{d2}  (10.\text{c3}  \text{e7}  –  see 7.\text{c3})  10...\text{xb3}  11.\text{xb3},  Siebrecht – Roeder, Bad Woerishofen 1997,  11...0-0-0?!\text{∞}  Black protects reliably his b7-pawn against the threat \text{a5} and obtains a very good position.

8.\text{xd7}  \text{xd7}  9.\text{d2}.  White is preparing the transfer of his knight to f3 and protects at the same time his c4-pawn.  (9.\text{c3}  \text{e7}  10.\text{b3}  0-0  11.\text{f4}  \text{ac8=}  Lomer – Homuth, Gluecksburg 1988)  9...\text{d6}

10.\text{b3}  0-0  11.\text{f3}  (It seems premature for White to play here 11.c5  \text{e7}  12.\text{f3},  Gutman – Siebrecht, Werther 2006, because Black can play 12...\text{b6}\text{!?}\text{∞},  undermining the pawn on c5, while White’s queen on
b3 makes the move b2-b4 impossible.) 11...h6= Tapprov – Derbenev, Kostroma 2011.

10.\(\text{Nf3}\) 0-0 11.b3 h6. There has arisen a position in which neither side can begin any active actions.

12.\(\text{Bb2}\) \(\text{Bf8}\) 13.\(\text{Bc1}\) \(\text{e7}\) 14.\(\text{Be5}\) \(\text{d7}\). Black ousts the enemy knight away from the centre of the board.

15.\(\text{Cc3}\) \(\text{a3}\) 16.\(\text{xa3}\) \(\text{xa3}\)= Novak – Andersson, ICCF 2015. Black’s queen will exert powerful pressure from here against the enemy a2-pawn.

8...\(\text{e7}\)

9.\(\text{b3}\)

9.\(\text{f4}\) 0-0

10.h3. White is preparing g3-g4. 10...h6. Black saves his bishop from an exchange. 11.g4 \(\text{h7}\)$ Haves – Forchert, Germany 2009. White’s king is a bit weakened and this may hurt him in this middle game, since pawns cannot go back, as it is well known...

10.\(\text{b3}\). This queen-sortie is typical for similar positions, but it is not appropriate here. 10...\(\text{xe5}\)

11.\(\text{xe5}\) (11.\(\text{dxe5}\) \(\text{d7}\)$ Kuznetsov – Nemchenko, ICCF 2011 and White cannot play 12.\(\text{xb7}\)? \(\text{c5}\)

13.\(\text{b4}\) a5 14.\(\text{a3}\) a4=+) 11...\(\text{b6}\) 12.\(\text{xb6}\) axb6 13.\(\text{cxd5}\) exd5= Nasybullin – Spitz, ICCF 2007. This endgame seems to be in favour of Black, because he has a clear cut plan for the improvement of his position on the queenside: b6-b5, \(\text{d7-b6-c4}\).

There arises a complicated double-edged position after 10.\(\text{cxd5}\) exd5 11.h3 h6 12.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{h7}\) 13.\(\text{a3}\) \(\text{e8}\)

14.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{b6}\) 15.\(\text{b4}\) a5= Aleshnia – Bubir, ICCF 2009.

9...\(\text{b6}\) 10.\(\text{xd7}\)
White wishes to deflect the enemy knight from the control over the centre and to advance e2-e4.

10...\(\text{Nxd7}\) 11.e4 \(\text{dxe4}\) 12.\(\text{Nxe4}\)

12...\(\text{Nf6}\) 13.\(\text{c5}\)

It is possible that here White should try to advance d4-d5. He will not be worse after that to say the least.

13.\(\text{c3} 0-0 14.d5 \text{xb3} 15.axb3 \text{cxd5} 16.cxd5 \text{xd5} 17.\text{xd5 exd5} 18.\text{xd5 e6} 19.\text{exe6 fxe6=}\)

Gutman – Fiebig, Dortmund 2008. Both sides have pawn-weaknesses in their camps and they balance each other somehow. There is just a few material left on the board as well...

This position was reached in the game Gutman – Porper, Korbach 2007. Black had an interesting plan here: 13...\(0-0-0!?\) He protects the b7-pawn and attacks the d4-square at the same time. 14.\(\text{c3 Exd4!}\)

Black sacrifices the exchange and seizes the initiative. 15.\(\text{xd4} \text{xc5} 16.\text{c3} \text{g4}\) He has a pawn for the exchange and what is most important his pieces exert powerful pressure against the f2-square.

B) 5.\(\text{g2} \text{e6}\)
6.0-0
6...e5 f5 – see variation A.

6...bd2 bd7 7.h3 (7.0-0 e7 – see 6.0-0) 7...f5 8.h4 e4 9.xe4 dxe4∞ Wang Hao – Ni Hua, China 2016. White has a bishop-pair, but his knight is horribly misplaced at the edge of the board.

After 6.c3 bd7 7.h3 (7.0-0 dxc4 – see 0-0; 7.b3 b6 – see 6.b3), Black does not need to waste time for the retreat of his bishop: 7...xf3!? 8.xf3 dxc4∞ Trumic – Rogic, Neum 2008.

6...b3 b6

About 7.0-0 bd7 – see variation B1.

7.c3 bd7 8.c5 (8.0-0 e7 – see variation B1) 8...a6 – sec7.c5.

7.c5 a6 8.h3 (8.c3 bd7 9.0-0 e7 – see 6.0-0) 8...xf3 9.exf3, Ovsianikov – Tropin, Saratov 2007, 9...b6!∞

6...bd7
White has two basic plans in this position: B1) 7.\( \text{b3} \) and B2) 7.\( \text{b3} \).

7.\( \text{c2} \). Now, just like after 7.\( \text{b3} \), White protects his pawn, but does not force Black to lose a tempo for the protection of his b7-pawn. 7...\( \text{e7} \) 8.\( \text{f4} \) 0-0 9.\( \text{d1} \), Kurajica – Schneider, Rethymno 2003 (9.\( \text{c1} \), Ljubojevic – L’Ami, Amsterdam 2008, 9...\( \text{c8} \)!?) 9...\( \text{h6} \)!?

After 7.h3, Black can transfer his bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal in order to increase his control over the e4-square. 7...\( \text{f5} \) 8.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{h6} \) 9.\( \text{b3} \) (The position is simplified after 9.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 10.e4 dxe4 11.\( \text{dxe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 12.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f6} \)= Theodorou – Moshkov, Heraklion 2016.) 9...\( \text{b6} \) 10.c5 \( \text{a6} \) 11.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{b6} \)= Shimanov – Motylev, Moscow 2015.

It is not good for White to play here 7.\( \text{c3} \), because then Black can simply grab a pawn and it would be very difficult for White to regain it. 7...dxc4!? 8.h3 (8.e4 8.\( \text{xf3} \); 8.a4. He prevents b7-b5, but weakens seriously the b4-square. 8...\( \text{a5} \) 9.\( \text{e4} \), Matnadze – Dzagnidze, Istanbul 2012, 9...e5!??) 8...\( \text{xf3} \) 9.\( \text{xf3} \), Derjabin – Itkis, Alushta 2004, 9...\( \text{b4} \)!?

The exchange of pawns 7.cxd5 exd5 only presents to Black the semi-open e-file.

8.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 9.\( \text{e3} \)+ \( \text{e7} \). The transfer of the queen to the e3-square seems rather awkward. 10.\( \text{c3} \) (It is preferable for White to choose here 10.b3, although even then after 10...\( \text{e4} \) 11.\( \text{bd2} \), Gutman – Neuer, Senden 2014, 11...\( \text{x} \text{d2} \)!? 12.\( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{e6} \) 13.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d8} \) 14.\( \text{e5} \) 0-0=, Black has no problems whatsoever.) 10...\( \text{h6} \) 11.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{e6} \) 12.\( \text{d3} \) 0-0 13.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{fe8} \). Black prepares a square for the retreat of his bishop. 14.\( \text{f5} \) \( \text{f8} \)= Zelovic – Ingersol, ICCF 2011. His pieces have been more harmoniously deployed.

8.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 9.h3 (9.\( \text{e1} \) 0-0 10.\( \text{f3} \), Leblanc – Sullivan, Langley 2006, 10...\( \text{h5} \)!?) 9...\( \text{xf3} \). Black
presents his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but White can hardly exploit this effectively, because the position remains rather closed. 10.\texttt{Bxf3} 0-0 11.\texttt{Bg2} (11.\texttt{Bg2} \texttt{e7} 12.\texttt{Bae8} = Zhidkov – Butnorius, Daugavpils 1978; 11.\texttt{Be1} \texttt{e8} 12.\texttt{wd3} \texttt{h6} 13.\texttt{Bg2} \texttt{b4} = Fritz – Green, Germany 2013) 11...\texttt{e8} 12.e3 (12.\texttt{wd3} \texttt{e7} = Stefanova – Krush, Huaian 2016) 12...\texttt{b6} 13.b3 \texttt{e7} 14.\texttt{de2}, Kasimdzhanov – Prie, France 2010, 14...\texttt{a5}?!∞, preparing \texttt{a5-a4}.

7.\texttt{bd2} \texttt{e7}

8.b3 0-0 – see variation B2.

8.\texttt{b3} \texttt{b6} 9.cxd5 \texttt{exd5} 10.\texttt{we3} \texttt{e6} 11.h3, Kasparov – Comp Fritz 5.32, Hannover 1999, 11...\texttt{h6}?!?

8.\texttt{e1}. White intends to continue with e2-e4. Still, this pawn-advance leads only to the simplification of the position. 8...0-0 9.e4 \texttt{dxe4} 10.\texttt{exe4} \texttt{exe4} 11.\texttt{exe4}. White has a bit freer game, but Black’s position remains quite solid. In addition, he can create counterplay by exerting pressure against the d4-pawn, or can simplify the position, preparing the pawn-advance \texttt{c6-c5}. 11...\texttt{f6} 12.\texttt{e1} (12.\texttt{e2} \texttt{h6} =) 12...\texttt{b6}. The queen frees a square for the rook. 13.\texttt{e3} \texttt{ad8} 14.\texttt{e2}, Shyam – Swapnil, Chennai 2013, 14...\texttt{f5}?! 15.\texttt{e2} \texttt{c5}=

8.\texttt{c2} 0-0 9.e4 (After 9.\texttt{c3}, Bu Xiangzhi – Lu Shanglei, Shenzhen 2016, the simplest move for Black would be 9...\texttt{h5}?!?, removing in advance the bishop against the possible attack \texttt{e5}.)

9...\texttt{a5}?! Black does not need to be in a hurry to exchange on e4, because White’s knight on d2 impedes the development of his queenside. 10.\texttt{e5}, S.Braun – Lobron, Gran Canaria 1996. Here, Black can sacrifice advantageously a pawn: 10...\texttt{exe5}?! 11.\texttt{dxe5} \texttt{d7} 12.cxd5 \texttt{cxd5} 13.\texttt{exd5} \texttt{exd5} 14.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{exe5} 15.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{a7} 16.\texttt{g2} \texttt{e7} 17.\texttt{e4} \texttt{f6} 18.\texttt{e3} \texttt{d3}∞ He has sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit. Black’s pieces are very active, while White’s queenside has not been developed yet.
Black would not mind the trade of the queens, because he would obtain a very good endgame. He is also ready to counter White’s pawn-advance c4-c5, after which he would prepare the undermining moves e6-e5, or b7-b6.

8.\(\text{c}3\)

8.c5 \(\text{a}6\). This is a very good square for the queen, because White fails to transfer his bishop to f1. 9.h3 (9.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{e}7\) – see 8.\(\text{c}3\)). After 9.\(\text{f}4\), Black can undermine immediately the enemy pawn on c5. 9...b6 10.cxb6 axb6 11.\(\text{c}3\), Teterev – S.Zhigalko, Minsk 2014, 11...b5!? =) 9...\(\text{f}5\) 10.\(\text{f}4\) b6 11.cxb6 axb6 12.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{c}8\) 13.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{h}6\). Black not only prepares a square for the retreat of his bishop, but also intends to continue with g7-g5, in order to prepare with tempo the development of his dark-squared bishop to the g7-square. 14.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{g}5\)?! 15.\(\text{d}7\) \(\text{d}7\) 16.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{f}6\) 17.\(\text{f}3\). White wishes to advance e2-e4 as quickly as possible, but the pawn-advance f2-f3 compromises the position of his king. In addition, his pawn-centre does not seem to be so reliable. 17...\(\text{g}6\) 18.e4 \(\text{g}7\) = Trubetskoil – Ponomarjov, ICCF 2014.

8...\(\text{e}7\)

9.\(\text{f}4\)

White completes the development of his pieces without determining yet the pawn-structure in the centre. Besides that, he has also tried in practice:

9.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{h}5\) 10.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{h}6\) 11.\(\text{ac}1\) 0-0 = Ribli – Larsen, Tilburg 1980.

After 9.h3, Black can transfer his bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal in order to increase his control over the important e4-square. 9...\(\text{f}5\) 10.c5 (If White continues to chase the enemy bishop with the move 10.g4, his pawn-structure might be seriously weakened. 10...\(\text{g}6\) 11.\(\text{e}5\)?! \(\text{xe}5\) 12.dxe5 \(\text{d}7\) 13.cxd5 \(\text{xb}3\))
14.axb3 exd5 $\text{³}$ Andreikin – Morozevich, Astana 2012.) 10...$\text{\textw X}$b3. This is the simplest for Black. He does not lose time for the retreat of his queen, but enters an approximately equal endgame. 11.axb3 $\text{\textw P}$e4 12.b4 a6 13.$\text{\textw F}$e1 0-0. Black has prevented reliably White’s pawn-advance b4–b5. He will be incapable of breaking Black’s defence in the centre and on the kingside. 14.g4 $\text{\textw K}$g6 15.$\text{\textw F}$f4 h6 16.e3 f5= Olofsson – Rajmaekers, ICCF 2014.

9.$\text{\textw E}$e1. White frees in advance the f1-square for his bishop, which might be very useful after c4-c5 and $\text{\textw B}$b6-a6. 9...0-0

![Chess diagram](image1)

About 10.$\text{\textw F}$f4 $\text{\textw X}$f3 – see 9.$\text{\textw F}$f4.

It does not seem logical for White to choose here 10.$\text{\textw X}$xb6 axb6 11.cxd5 exd5 $\text{³}$ Speelman – Short, Torquay 1998. It is not easy to understand why he has played $\text{\textw E}$e1 at the first place. Black has a clear cut plan for the improvement of his position on the queenside: b6-b5, $\Box$b6.

10.e4 dxe4 11.$\text{\textw P}$xe4 $\text{\textw X}$xe4 12.$\text{\textw F}$xe4 $\text{\textw K}$f5 13.$\text{\textw P}$e3, Marangunic – Mikac, Austria 1994, 13...$\text{\textw F}$d8!?=

10.c5 $\text{\textw X}$xb3. Now, the retreat of the queen to the a6-square seems less reliable, because White can attack it with $\text{\textw P}$f1 and e2-e4. In addition, the transfer into an endgame provides Black with an excellent game, because he can undermine his opponent’s pawns on the queenside with b7-b6 and a7-a5. 11.axb3 b6!? 12.b4 $\text{\textw X}$f3 13.$\text{\textw X}$f3 a5 14.b5. White cannot even equalise with this pawn-sacrifice. 14...cxb5 15.exb6. His b-pawn is too far away from the rest of his forces and will soon perish. 15...b4 16.$\text{\textw A}$a4 $\text{\textw D}$d8 17.b7 $\text{\textw F}$b8 18.$\text{\textw C}$c5 $\text{\textw X}$c5 19.dxc5 $\text{\textw X}$xb7 20.$\text{\textw F}$f4 $\text{\textw A}$7= Slyusar – Onoprichuk, ICCF 2016. White has the two-bishop advantage and a passed c-pawn, but this does not compensate fully his material deficit.

White has also tried in practice here the immediate line: 9.c5 $\text{\textw A}$6!?
The undermining of the c5-pawn, cramping Black’s position, is his simplest road to equality. 10...f4 b6. The undermining of the c5-pawn, cramping Black’s position, is his simplest road to equality.

11.cxb6 axb6 12.h3 (12.e4 0-0!?= Teterev – S.Zhigalko, Minsk 2014; 12.\textit{\textbf{e}}f1 0-0 13.e4 \textit{\textbf{e}}f8= Persson – Rublevsky, Novi Sad 2016) 12...\textit{\textbf{h}}5 13.g4 \textit{\textbf{g}}6 14.\textit{\textbf{h}}4, Rakhmanov – Debashis, Doha 2014, 14...b5?!∞, followed by the transfer of the knight to the c4-square (\textit{\textbf{b}}6, \textit{\textbf{c}}4).

\textbf{10...e1}, preparing e2-e4. 10...b6 11.cxb6 axb6.

12.e4 0-0!? Black should not be in a hurry to capture on e4, because he should not be afraid of the pawn-advance e4-e5. 13.exd5 (13.f4 dxe4 14.xe4 d5= Teterev – Kochetkova, Minsk 2015; 13.h3 xf3 14.xf3 dxe4 15.xe4 d5 – see 12.h3) 13...\textit{\textbf{d}}5 14.f1 \textit{\textbf{a}}7 15.xd5 exd5 16.b5. White’s bishop will be very active on this square, but this is still insufficient for him to maintain an edge. (16.g2 \textit{\textbf{f}}c8= Theodorou – Miton, Achaea 2016) 16...\textit{\textbf{f}}6!?=, eyeing the enemy weakness on d4.

\textbf{9...0-0}

\textbf{10.c5}

It is not good for White to play here 10.e1?!, because his f2-pawn is not sufficiently protected and this enables Black to obtain an advantage in a tactical fashion. 10...xf3 11.xf3 xd4 12.xb7 (12.cxd5. If
White’s rook had been on f1, his position would have been in order. Now, after 12...\(\text{\texttt{c}5}\) Zlotnikov – Becerra Rivero, Philadelphia 2008, he cannot play 13.\(\text{\texttt{a}3}\)?, because Black can counter that with 13...\(\text{\texttt{d}3}\)! 14.\(\text{\texttt{x}e}7\) \(\text{\texttt{x}f2}\)+ 15.\(\text{\texttt{h}1}\) \(\text{\texttt{xe}1}–+) 12...\(\text{\texttt{xc}4}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{ac}1}\) \(\text{\texttt{b}4}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{xc}6}\) \(\text{\texttt{xb}2}\), with a solid extra pawn for Black, Skatchkov – Al Sayed, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.

10.h3 \(\text{\texttt{f}5}\)! 11.c5 \(\text{\texttt{xb}3}\) 12.axb3 \(\text{\texttt{h}6}\)= Morovic Fernandez – Solomon, Istanbul 2012.

Following 10.\(\text{\texttt{d}2}\), Cvitan – Jakovljevic, Pula 2003, Black can simply capture a pawn 10...\(\text{\texttt{xd}4}\)!? 11.h3 \(\text{\texttt{h}5}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{e}3}\) \(\text{\texttt{e}5}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{xb}7}\) \(\text{\texttt{d}6}\)= The exchange of a central pawn for a flank pawn may turn out to be in favour of Black in this middle game.

After 10.\(\text{\texttt{fd}1}\) \(\text{\texttt{f}5}\) 11.c5 \(\text{\texttt{xb}3}\) 12.axb3, Black must continue with the solid move 12...\(\text{\texttt{h}6}\)= Condie – Orr, London 1986, because if he tries to capture the enemy pawn on b3, he may face serious problems: 12...\(\text{\texttt{c}2}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{dc}1}\) \(\text{\texttt{xb}3}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{d}2}\) \(\text{\texttt{c}4}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{xc}4}\) \(\text{\texttt{dx}c}4\), Kamsky – Kramnik, Nice 2009, 16.\(\text{\texttt{d}1})!?±

10...\(\text{\texttt{a}6}\) 11.\(\text{\texttt{h}3}\)

11.\(\text{\texttt{fc}2}\). This move enables Black to increase his control over the e4-square with tempo. 11...\(\text{\texttt{f}5}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{d}2}\) \(\text{\texttt{b}6}\)= Kovalev – A.Zhigalko, Minsk 2012.

White would not achieve much if he enters an endgame: 11.\(\text{\texttt{a}4}\) \(\text{\texttt{xa}4}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{xa}4}\), Stupak – Maiorov, Minsk 2009, 12...\(\text{\texttt{h}6}\)!?

11.\(\text{\texttt{fc}1}\) \(\text{\texttt{b}6}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{cxb}6}\) \(\text{\texttt{axb}6}\)= Yegiazarian – Lputian, Yerevan 1994.

11...\(\text{\texttt{h}5}\)

12.\(\text{\texttt{fc}1}\)

There arises a complicated positional battle after 12.g4 \(\text{\texttt{g}6}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{h}4}\) \(\text{\texttt{b}6}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{xg}6}\) hxg6 15.\(\text{\texttt{xb}6}\) \(\text{\texttt{axb}6}\). White has obtained the two-bishop advantage indeed, but Black’s pawn-structure is more elastic. 16.a4 \(\text{\texttt{fd}8}\) 17.\(\text{\texttt{fd}1}\) \(\text{\texttt{a}7}\) 18.e4. White’s desire to open the position is understandable, but he weakens his d4-pawn and presents Black’s knight with the wonderful d5-square. 18...\(\text{\texttt{dxe}4}\) 19.\(\text{\texttt{xe}4}\) \(\text{\texttt{d}5}\) 20.\(\text{\texttt{g}3}\) g5. Black prevents his opponent’s pawn-advance h3-h4. Later, he plans the transfer of his knight \(\text{\texttt{f}8}-\text{\texttt{g}6}\), in order to exploit the vulnerability of the f4-square. 21.\(\text{\texttt{c}2}\) \(\text{\texttt{ac}8}\) 22.\(\text{\texttt{d}2}\) \(\text{\texttt{a}5}\) 23.\(\text{\texttt{d}6}\) \(\text{\texttt{xd}2}\) 24.\(\text{\texttt{xd}2}\) \(\text{\texttt{xd}6}\) 25.\(\text{\texttt{xd}6}\) \(\text{\texttt{f}8}\)! 26.\(\text{\texttt{g}3}\) \(\text{\texttt{g}6}\)∞

12.\(\text{\texttt{b}6}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{g}4}\) \(\text{\texttt{g}6}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{d}6}\), Burmakin – Rublevsky, Tomsk 2001, 14...\(\text{\texttt{xd}6}\)!? 15.\(\text{\texttt{xd}6}\) \(\text{\texttt{fd}8}\)∞ White’s d6-pawn is too far away from the rest of his forces and would be a cause of worries for him in the future.

B2) 7.\(\text{\texttt{b}3}\)
White prepares the fianchetto of his second bishop. Still, later he will have problems activating his bishops, because one of them will be restricted by the enemy pawn on d5, while his other bishop’s mobility will be diminished by his own pawn on d4.

7...\(\text{Be7}\) 8.\(\text{Bb2}\)
About 8.\(\text{Bd2}\) 0-0 9.\(\text{b2}\) a5, or 8.\(\text{c3}\) 0-0 9.\(\text{b2}\) h6 – see 8.\(\text{b2}\).

8.\(\text{a3}\) 0-0 9.\(\text{Wc1}\) \(\text{Be8}\) 10.\(\text{Wb2}\) h6= Koneru – Cao, Budapest 2001. Black’s position is very solid.

8...0-0 9.\(\text{bd2}\)
After 9.\(\text{c3}\), Black can simply follow with 9...\(\text{h6!?}\), not only preparing a leeway for his king in advance, but also ensuring a square for his bishop to retreat against a chase after it. 10.\(\text{Be1}\). White can hardly find an active plan for actions, because after his standard plan for similar positions, connected with the preparation of the pawn-advance e2-e4, there would only arise simplifications. (10.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{f5}\) 11.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{Wb6}\) 12.e4 \(\text{dxe4}\) 13.\(\text{Wxe4}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 14.\(\text{Wxe4}\) \(\text{Ffd8}\) 15.\(\text{Wxe4}\) a5. Black wishes to play a4, in order to exert pressure against the b3-square. 16.\(\text{Wc3}\) a4= Antonenko – Versili, ICCF 2012.) 10...\(\text{f5}\) 11.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{h7}\) 12.e4 (12.a3 a5= Ribi – Nogueiras Santiago, Clermont Ferrand 1989) 12...\(\text{dxe4}\) 13.\(\text{dxe4}\) \(\text{dxe4}\) 14.\(\text{Wxe4}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 15.\(\text{Wxe4}\) \(\text{f6}\)= Vukic – Saric, Sarajevo 2007.

9...\(\text{a5}\)
Black plans to advance a5-a4.

10.a3
Now, the positional threat a5-a4 is not dangerous for White, since he can counter it simply with b3-b4. The move 10.a3 however, weakens a bit the b3-square.

With the move 10.a4, Badea – Iordachescu, Bucharest 1998, White solves radically the problem with
Black’s threat a5-a4, but weakens the b4-square in the process. 10...h6!?

10...Ne5 Nxe5 11.dxe5 Nd7 12.h3. White wishes to oust the enemy bishop away from the d1-h5 diagonal and to advance e2-e4, but this seemingly logical plan suddenly leads to difficulties for him. 12...h5 13.g4 g6 14.e4 dxe4 15.Nxe4. White is perfectly prepared to penetrate with his knight to the d6-square, but after 15...c5 it turns out that Black will penetrate with his knight to the d3-square. From there it can go eventually to the weakened f4-square and will be very effective. 16.Nd6, Andersson – Smyslov, Hastings 1972 (There arises a difficult endgame for White after 16.Qxd8 Nfxd8 17.a3 gxe4 18.gxe4, Lago – Geller, Palma de Mallorca 1989, 18...a4!?++) 16...f6!? Black undermines the pawn-base of the knight on d6. 17.a3 d3 18.Nxb7 d7 19.Nxe7 Nxe7 20.Nd6 fxe5 White’s opening strategy has failed completely. He must remove his knight from d6 and the vulnerability of his king will be the decisive factor in this middle game. Black’s attack will develop effortlessly: cxd8, f4, h4 and eventually d3. White cannot defend the h3-square.


10...h6

It is now difficult for both sides to develop any active actions, so they should be happy with the possibility to play moves which improve a bit their positions.

11.Qe1

About 11.Qc1 f5 12.Qe1 b8 – see 11.Qe1.

11.Qc3 f5 12.c5, Ruck – Portisch, Hungary 2005, 12...b6!∞

11.Qh4 Nh5= Bu Xiangzhi – Matlakov, Helsingor 2014.

11...f5

This move impedes White’s pawn-advance e2-e4. You can see now the idea behind Black’s previous move. After h4 he can simply retreat his bishop to h7.

12.Qe5

The position is quickly simplified after this move.
White has another plan, connected with the preparation of the transfer of his queen to e2, but it does not promise much to him either: 12.e3 \textit{Qb6}, Black is eyeing the weak enemy pawn on b3. 13.\textit{Qe2 Re8 14.Rc1 Se4=} Jianu – Bonte, Arad 2015, or 12.Rc1 \textit{b8 13.e3 d8 14.Qe2 b5}. Black begins active actions on the queenside. 15.Qe5 \textit{Qxe5 16.dxe5 Se4 17.Qxe4 Qxe4=} 

12...\textit{Qxe5 13.dxe5 Se4 14.Qxe4 dxe4 15.e3}, Vijayalakshmi – Zubarev, Borup 2012 (15.Bd4, Wilder – Novikov, Mendoza 1985, 15...b5!? 16.cxb5 cxb5 17.e3 \textit{Qd5=} Black’s centralised queen is very powerful and his prospects are not worse thanks to that.) 15...\textit{Qxd1!? 16.Qxd1 Qd8=}, followed by the further exchange of the major pieces on the d-file. The draw seems imminent.
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 f6 4.e2

White protects his c4-pawn with the queen and plans to follow with f4 and then e2-e3.

4...dxc4

This is Black’s simplest decision. He provokes the enemy queen to occupy an unstable position.

No doubt, White’s most natural move here is B) 5.Qxc4. There are some players however who would like to sacrifice a pawn here – A) 5.e4.

Besides the move 5.e4, White has sacrificed a pawn in some other ways too. As a rule, they are worse than 5.e4.

For example:

A) 5.d5. This pawn-sacrifice seems rather artificial. 5...b5 6.b3 cxb3 7.axb3, Davies – Khenkin, Porto San Giorgio 1998, 7...a5?! His piece-control over the c5-square does not compensate fully the sacrificed pawn.

5.\texttt{g}5 b5 6.e4 h6 7.e3 (7.\texttt{xf6}?! exf6++) Cherniaev – Hochstrasser, Saas Almagell 2005. White not only presents his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but also opens the diagonal for the enemy bishop on f8.) 7...e6 8.d2, Bratanov – Yordanov, Plovdiv 2012, 8...b7?! White’s compensation for the pawn is insufficient.

5.e3 b5 6.b3 (6.a4 a6 7.d2, Andres Gonzalez – Vishnu, San Sebastian 2012, 7...a5?!∞) 6...cxb3 7.axb3. White has no direct threats and Black has an extra pawn. Still, the position remains approximately equal, because it would be necessary for Black to advance c6-c5 in order to obtain any real chances of an advantage. It would be however very difficult for him to accomplish that. 7...e6 8.d2 d7 9.0-0 d2 10.e5 a6 11.d3. White increases his control over the c5-square. 11...c7 12.d2 d6∞

A) 5.e4 b5
6.\textit{b3}
Black’s pawn on c4 cramps considerably White’s actions on the queenside, so he should better exchange it.

6.\textit{g5} \textit{h6} – see 5.\textit{g5}.

6.\textit{a4}. Black should not be afraid of the attack against the b5-square. 6...\textit{e6} 7.\textit{e2} (7.\textit{bd2}?! Yegiazarian – Asrian, Yerevan 2008, 7...\textit{a6}!?\textsuperscript{+} 7...\textit{b7} 8.0-0, Canelli – Bianco, Asti 1995, 8...\textit{e7}!?\textsuperscript{+} 6.\textit{e2}?! This move has not been analysed extensively, but it is not bad at all. 6...\textit{e6} 7.0-0 \textit{b7} 8.\textit{b3} \textit{cxb3} 9.\textit{axb3} \textit{bd7} 10.\textit{d1} (10.\textit{c3} \textit{a6} 11.\textit{d1} \textit{e7} – see 10.\textit{d1}). White has a pawn-centre and a freer game for the sacrificed material. 10...\textit{a6} 11.\textit{c3} \textit{e7} 12.\textit{d3} \textit{h6} 13.\textit{d2} 0-0 14.\textit{e5} \textit{d5} 15.\textit{xd5} \textit{cxd5} 16.\textit{a5} \textit{b8} 17.\textit{dc1} \textit{c8} 18.\textit{e7} \textit{a7} 19.\textit{d2}. White’s pieces are very active, while Black’s bishop on b7 is severely restricted. In fact, he should better try to exchange it even at the price of a pawn. 19...\textit{c6}! 20.\textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} 21.\textit{axa6}, draw, Yurov – Zhak, ICCF 2015. Indeed, after 21...\textit{xc6} 22.\textit{xc6} \textit{a3}+, the position becomes completely equal.

6...\textit{cxb3} 7.\textit{axb3} \textit{e6} 8.\textit{d2}
About 8.\textit{d3} \textit{b7} 9.\textit{d2} a5, or 9.0-0 \textit{e7} 10.\textit{d2} a5 – see 8.\textit{d2}.

8...\textit{a5}
Black does not allow his queenside pawns to be blocked after \textit{a5}, followed by b3-b4.

9.\textit{d3} \textit{b7} 10.0-0 \textit{e7}

11.\textit{c1}
This is White’s most precise move.
After his alternatives he may even fail to equalise. For example it is bad for him to play 11.\textit{c}3, because after 11...\textit{a}6 12.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}4, in addition to his extra pawn, Black obtains also the two-bishop advantage. 13.\textit{x}b4 \textit{x}b4 14.\textit{f}4 h6 15.h4, Gausel – Astrup, Norway 2011, 15...0-0!?

11.\textit{e}1 h6!? 12.\textit{c}1, Stocek – Zakhartsov, Pardubice 2004. White is preparing to sacrifice his bishop on h6. Black does not need to castle immediately and can play 12...\textit{b}4, restricting considerably the enemy knight on b1.

It is also bad for White to choose here 11.\textit{c}3. He prepares in this fashion the development of his knight to d2, but weakens his control over the c5-square and thus facilitates Black’s thematic pawn-advance c6-c5. 11...h6. He cannot continue the game without this move; otherwise, after e4-e5 and \textit{x}h7, White will regain his pawn. 12.\textit{bd}2 \textit{bd}7 13.\textit{a}2 0-0 14.\textit{fa}1 b4 15.\textit{b}2 c5! 16.\textit{c}4 a4. Black gives back his extra pawn and seizes completely the initiative. 17.\textit{xa}4 \textit{xa}4 18.\textit{xa}4 \textit{xd}4 19.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}5 Nakamura – C.Hansen, Malmo/Copenhagen 2005. Black’s pieces are obviously much better coordinated.

11.\textit{d}1 \textit{b}6= Semcesen – Hector, Uppsala 2016.

11...\textit{b}4 12.\textit{f}4

There arises a much calmer position after the line: 12.\textit{e}3 \textit{bd}7 13.\textit{h}3 c5. Black has succeeded in advancing c6-c5 indeed, but after 14.\textit{bd}2 \textit{ec}8 15.\textit{wa}2, he will be forced to part with his a5-pawn. 15...0-0 16.\textit{xa}5 \textit{xa}5 17.\textit{xa}5 \textit{xd}4 18.\textit{xc}8 \textit{xc}8 19.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}5 20.\textit{a}7 \textit{xd}3 21.\textit{xb}7 \textit{f}8= Neto – Stalmach, ICCF 2014. The position has been considerably simplified and there has arisen an approximately equal endgame on the board.

12...\textit{bd}7 13.\textit{bd}2 c5 14.\textit{c}4 0-0 15.\textit{d}6

White’s piece-activity compensates the sacrificed pawn, but not more than that.

15...a4 16.\textit{xa}4 \textit{xa}4 17.\textit{xa}4 \textit{xd}4 18.\textit{b}1 \textit{c}5 19.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 20.\textit{xb}4 \textit{e}8 21.\textit{fl} \textit{fxe}4 22.\textit{a}5 \textit{d}5 23.\textit{xd}4 \textit{f}6 24.\textit{c}2 h6∞ Refalo – Kozlowski, ICCF 2016. Black’s centralised pieces compensate the presence of an outside passed pawn for his opponent.

B) 5.\textit{xc}4
5...\textbf{f5}

This is a reliable move for Black. He develops his bishop to an active position and it will control the important central e4-square from there.

Black’s other popular theoretical move 5...\textbf{g4} leads to more complicated positions. For example: 6.\textbf{c3} \textbf{bd7} 7.e4 \textbf{xf3} 8.gxf3 e5 9.dxe5 \textbf{xe5} 10.e2 \textbf{c5} 11.\textbf{d2} \textbf{h5} 12.f4. Now, Black is forced to sacrifice his queen. 12...\textbf{xd2}+!? 13.\textbf{xd2} \textbf{xf4} 14.\textbf{d1} 0-0-0+ 15.\textbf{d5} \textbf{xd5} He has sufficient compensation for the sacrificed queen, but this way of playing might not be to everybody’s liking.

After 5...\textbf{f5}, White has a choice between numerous possibilities and they often lead to transposition of moves. In order to systematise all this in B1) 6.\textbf{g3}, we will analyse the variations in which White is not in a hurry to develop his queen’s knight to the c3-square. The other variations with be dealt with in the part B2.

6.\textbf{bd2} e6 7.\textbf{g3} (7.e3 h6 – see 6.e3) 7...\textbf{bd7} 8.\textbf{g2} \textbf{e7} – see 6.g3.

6.\textbf{g5}. This move seems a bit premature, because after 6...\textbf{b6}, White has problems with the protection of his b2-pawn. 7.b3, Plaskett – Cooper, Port Erin 2000 (7.\textbf{b3}, Doettling – Kindermann, Germany 2003, 7...\textbf{a6}!? 8.\textbf{xb6} axb6=) 7...\textbf{bd7}!? Black wishes to advance e7-e5 as quickly as possible. 8.\textbf{bd2} e5! 9.dxe5 \textbf{e6} 10.\textbf{c1} \textbf{g4} 11.e3 \textbf{gxe5} 12.\textbf{xe5} \textbf{xe5}= Black has restored the material balance and his position seems preferable thanks to his more actively deployed pieces.

After 6.\textbf{f4}, just like following 6.\textbf{g5}, Black can attack bravely his opponent’s b2-pawn. 6...\textbf{b6} 7.\textbf{c1} e6 8.\textbf{bd2}, Schulte – Jacoby, Hamburg 1986, 8...\textbf{bd7}?!?. This is Black’s simplest road to equality. He simply completes his development and accomplishes the freeing pawn-break c6-c5. 9.a3 \textbf{e7} 10.e3 0-0 11.\textbf{c4} \textbf{d8} 12.\textbf{e2} c5=

6.e3. This is a solid move for White. He does not plan to fianchetto his light-squared bishop. 6...\textbf{e6}. 
7... Nd7!? 8. Nxf5 exf5


7. Bd2 h6. This is the simplest. Black saves his bishop in advance from the possible chase after it with the move Nh4. 8. Be2 Bd7 9.0-0 e7 10. Bb3 (The move 10.a4 leads to the weakening of the b4-square. 10...a5 11. Bd1 0-0= Epishin – Hilverda, Werther 2013.) 10... b6 11. Bd1. White avoids the exchange of the queens, but this is still insufficient for him to maintain an advantage. (There arises an equal endgame after 11. Bc4 Bxb3 12.axb3 0-0 13. Bd2 c5= Epishin – Gonzalez Perez, Oeiras 2015.) 11...0-0 12. b3 aac8=, followed by c6-c5, either immediately, or after the preliminary move ffd8, Voloshin – Sodoma, Mlada Boleslav 2007.

Following 7. d3 xd3 8. Bxd3, Black can play 8... c5, preparing the development of his knight to c6. It will be much more active on this square than on d7. 9.0-0 (9. c3 c6= Epishin – Krivoborodov, Schwabische Gmuend 2013) 9... c6 10. c3 e7= Oinonen – Pettersson, ICCF 2012.

B1) 6. g3

White plans at first to complete the development of his pieces on the kingside and to castle there.

6... e6 7. g2

7. c3 Bd7 – see 6. c3.

7... Bd7 8.0-0

8. c3 e7 – see variation B2.

8. Bd2 e7 9.0-0 0-0 – see 8.0-0.

8.e3 e7 9. c3 (9.0-0 0-0 – see variation B1a) 9...0-0 – see variation B2.

8... e7
9.e3
White prepares the retreat of his queen to e2 where it would be much safer and would support the pawn-advance e3-e4.

About 9.c3 0-0, or 9.a4 0-0 10.c3 a5 – see variation B2.

9.d2. White is preparing b2-b4, but this plan seems to be rather slow. Black manages to occupy the central d5 and e4-squares and to seize the initiative. 9...0-0 10.b4 (10.d1 h6 – see 9.d1) 10...e4 11.e1, Cramling – Liu, China 2008, 11..b6!? 12.b3 d5=

9.g5. This plan is also not so good for White, since after h7-h6 he will have to exchange on f6, after which Black will have the two-bishop advantage. 9...0-0 10.e3 (10.c3 h6 – see variation B2; 10.bd2 h6 11.xf6 xf6 12.b3, Sjodahl – Hultin, Sweden 2009, 12..c5!?↑) 10...h6 11.xf6 xf6∞, followed by e6-e5, or c8, c6-c5, Schussler – Dominguez Perez, Havana 1999. White will hardly manage to prevent the opening of the position and so Black’s two-bishop advantage will enable him to seize the initiative.

9.bd2 0-0 10.b3 (10.e3 c8 – see 9.e3) 10...b6 and here 11.e3 a5 12.a4, Urban – Dziuba, Katowice 2010, 12..fd7!?=, or 11.a4 a5 12.d1 fd7 13.e4 g6= Eljanov – Motylev, Shamkir 2014. In both variations Black’s position remains very solid, while the vulnerability of the b4-square in White’s camp may hurt him later.

9.b3. He wishes to force the move b6, with the idea to play later d2-c4, attacking the enemy queen. 9..b6 10.bd2 xb3!? This is Black’s simplest decision. (Following, 10..0-0 11.c4 a6 12.f4=, there arises again an approximately equal position, but the penetration of White’s minor pieces to the d6-square would be very unpleasant for Black, so he must defend very precisely. After the trade of the queens, the endgame will be approximately equal.)
11...axb3. White opens a file for his rook, but later the weakness of his doubled b-pawns may hurt him.

11...c2. This is an energetic move. Black exerts pressure against the pawn on b3 and wishes to impede
the harmonious development of his opponent’s pieces. 12.e1 d1!? 13.f3. This move not only
protects the pawn, but also prepares g2. 13...0-0 14.g2 (14.c4? xb3 15.d2 d1 16.b3 b4
17.d3 xd2 18.xd2 c2 White’s compensation for the sacrificed pawn is insufficient.) 14...c2
15.e3 g6= V.Georgiev – Gasthofer, Germany 2008.

11.xb3. Capturing with the knight seems to be more reliable, but cannot provide White with an
advantage either. 11.e4 12.d1 h6 13.e1 xg2 14.xg2 0-0-0. This is Black’s most precise
reaction. He not only connects his rooks, but also parries the possible threat a5. 15.d2 d6 16.f3

9.d1 0-0


10.e3 c7 – see 9.e3.

It seems premature for White to play 10.h4. He begins a chase after the enemy bishop, but the absence
of a control over the e4-square makes this plan ineffective. 10.e4 11.xe4 xe4= Ljubojevic –

Following 10.f4, Black can win a tempo for the preparation of the move c6-c5, by attacking the pawn
on b2. 10...b6 11.c1 c5= Vladimirov – Magem Badals, Istanbul 2000.

10.d2 h6. Black prepares a square for the retreat of his bishop. 11.c1 (11.e1 b6=) 11...b6
12.e1, Epishin – Dreev, St Petersbourg 2009 (After 12.c3 ac8 13.a4, the b4-square is weakened
13...a5 Epishin – Skembris, Neustadt an der Weinstrasse 2009.) 12...ac8!? 13.a4 \(c7=\) Black’s position is solid. He can organise counterplay, connected with the preparation of the pawn-advance c6-c5 either immediately, or after the preliminary move \(fd8\) and White should not underestimate that.

9...0-0

10.\(\text{c}d1\)

10.\(\text{c}c3\) b5 – see variation B2a.

10.b3 a5= Wojtkiewicz – Minasian, Yerevan 1996.

10.\(\text{bd}2\) \(c8\) 11.\(\text{h}4\). White begins a chase after the enemy bishop. He weakens however the shelter of his king in the process. 11...\(g4\) 12.\(h3\) \(h5\) 13.\(g4\) Milchev – Manea, Condom 2013 (The move 13.\(\text{b}3\) looks less consequent here. 13...\(e2\). Black transfers his bishop to the queenside and does not allow his opponent to obtain the two-bishop advantage. 14.\(e1\) \(a6\)\(\ddagger\) and later c6-c5, Fedoseev – Bajarani, Kocaeli 2011.) 13...\(d5\)\(\ddagger\) 14.gxh5 \(xh4\)

10.\(w\)\(e2\) \(c7\). Black’s pieces are harmoniously deployed. He is perfectly prepared to undermine the enemy d4-pawn with the moves e6-e5, or c6-c5. 11.\(c3\) (11.\(d1\) e5 – see 10.\(d1\); 11.\(h3\) c5= Chuchelov – Sandipan, Germany 2010; 11.\(bd2\) h6= Bu Xiangzhi – Eljanov, Tsaghkadzor 2015) 11...e5

12.\(d1\) e4 – see 10.\(d1\).

12.dxe5 \(\text{xe}5\) 13.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{xe}5\) – see 12.\(\text{xe}5\).

12.\(\text{xe}5\). White clarifies immediately the situation in the centre. His later plan is connected with the pawn-advances e3-e4, f2-f4. Still, Black’s pieces are active and this enables him to maintain the balance. 12...\(\text{xe}5\) 13.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{xe}5\) 14.\(e4\) \(e6\) 15.h3. Before advancing f2-f4, it would be useful for White to take
the g4-square under control, as well as the g1-a7 diagonal. (15.\(\text{Rd1} \ \text{Rad8}=\) Papaioannou – Esen, Aix les Bains 2011; 15.\(f4 \ \text{bxc5}+ 16.\text{e3} \ \text{b4} 17.\text{a3} \ \text{xb3}=\) Sargissian – Salgado Lopez, Villafranca 2010) 15...\(\text{Rad8} 16.\text{c3} \ \text{a5} 17.\text{f4} \ \text{c5}.\) Black must try to exchange pieces, in order to neutralise White’s piece-activity. 18.\(\text{Rd1} \ (18.\text{Bf2}, \text{Ju Wenjun – Girya, Teheran 2017, 18...\text{Nd7}?!=} 18...\text{d7}.\) Black’s knight is severely restricted by the pawns on h3 and e4 and should leave the kingside in order to find a better sphere of actions. 19.e5 \(\text{b6} 20.\text{xf2} \ \text{xf2}+ 21.\text{xf2} \ \text{c5} 22.\text{h2} \ \text{e8} 23.\text{d6} \ \text{xd6} 24.\text{exd6}.\) White’s passed d6-pawn may turn out to be a liability later. 24...\(\text{Nd7}.\) There is no pawn on the e4-square anymore, so Black’s knight can come back. 25.\(\text{Be6}.\) From this square Black’s knight can go to d5, cutting the enemy major pieces from the protection of the pawn on d6 and can also take part in an attack after \(\text{Rd8}, \text{e8}.\) 26.g4 \(\text{d5} 27.f5 \text{d5} 28.g5 \text{e8} 29.\text{xd5} \ \text{cxd5} 30.\text{xd5} \ \text{xd6} 31.b3 \text{g6} 32.\text{fxg6} \text{hgx6}.\) Cruzado Duecas – Roubaud, ICCF 2014. The position has been considerably simplified. There is just a few material left on the board. Black’s knight protects reliably the pawns on f7 and d7, moreover that the position of White’s king seems seriously weakened.

12.h3 \(\text{e8}.\) Black does not determine yet the position in the centre. Later, depending on White’s actions, he can exchange on d4, or can occupy additional space with the move e5-e4. 13.e4. White prevents e5-e4. (13.\(\text{d1} \text{e4}!?? 14.\text{d2} \text{f8} \text{Robert, ICCF 2012}) 13...\text{exd4} 14.\text{Nxd4} \ \text{b4}.\) He has the two-bishop advantage, but Black’s counterplay against the pawns on b3 and e5 is sufficient for equality. 25.e6 \(\text{xe6} 26.\text{a7} \text{g5} 27.\text{xe3} \ \text{xb3} 28.\text{xb7} \ \text{c5} 29.\text{xb6} \ \text{xc4}.\) Black has managed to capture all his opponent’s pawns on the queenside. 30.\(\text{d4} \text{f5} 31.\text{xe5} \text{xe5} 32.\text{xc6} \text{e1}+ 33.\text{h2} \text{e6}=\) Stephan – Persson, ICCF 2012.

10...\(\text{c7}\) This is a very flexible move. Black is waiting for the moves \(\text{c3}\) and \(\text{e2},\) in order to prevent the pawn-advance e3-e4 with the move \(\text{e4}.\)
11.\textit{\textipa{c3}}
11.h3 $\textit{\textipa{ad8}}$ = Pogonina – Goryachkina, Nizhnij Novgorod 2013.

Following 11.\textit{\textipa{e2}} e5, White must consider the possibility e5-e4. This would be particularly effective with a rook on d1, because after the removal of the knight from the f3-square and Black’s move $\textit{\textipa{g4}}$, White will have to weaken the position of his king with the move f2-f3 in order not to lose the exchange. 12.\textit{\textipa{c3}} (12.h3. White defends against $\textit{\textipa{g4}}$, but his play seems to be too slow. 12...e4 13.\textit{\textipa{fd2}} $\textit{\textipa{fe8}}$
14.\textit{\textipa{c3}} $\textit{\textipa{f8}}$ 15.b3?! $\textit{\textipa{b6}}$ 16.\textit{\textipa{c4}} $\textit{\textipa{bd5}}$ 17.\textit{\textipa{b2}} b5 18.\textit{\textipa{xd5}} $\textit{\textipa{xd5}}$ 19.\textit{\textipa{d2}} $\textit{\textipa{d7}}$ = Taras – Robert, ICCF 2012.) 12...e4 13.\textit{\textipa{h4}} $\textit{\textipa{g4}}$ 14.f3 $\textit{\textipa{xf3}}$ 15.\textit{\textipa{xf3}} $\textit{\textipa{xf3}}$ 16.\textit{\textipa{xf3}} c5 17.\textit{\textipa{f5}}. White’s knight will be very powerful on this square, but he cannot support its activity with anything, since his queenside pieces are not developed yet. 17...$\textit{\textipa{fe8}}$ 18.\textit{\textipa{g4}} exd4 19.exd4 $\textit{\textipa{c6}}$. The trade of the queens is Black’s simplest way of neutralising White’s imitative. 20.\textit{\textipa{xc6}} bxc6 21.\textit{\textipa{g5}} $\textit{\textipa{d5}}$ 22.\textit{\textipa{xd5}} exd5 = Matlakov – Jakovenko, Olginka 2011.

11...$\textit{\textipa{ad8}}$

12.\textit{\textipa{e2}}
Black can counter 12.h3 with 12...\textit{\textipa{e4}}, without waiting for the move $\textit{\textipa{e2}}$. 13.\textit{\textipa{d2}} $\textit{\textipa{xc3}}$ 14.bxc3 $\textit{\textipa{c2}}$
15.\textit{\textipa{e1}} $\textit{\textipa{b6}}$. He prepares the transfer of his knight to a4 in order to attack the enemy weakness on c3.
16.\textit{\textipa{e2}} $\textit{\textipa{a4}}$ 17.\textit{\textipa{c4}} $\textit{\textipa{g6}}$ 18.\textit{\textipa{d2}} f6 19.e4 b5 20.\textit{\textipa{e3}} e5 = Jenkinson – Jones, ICCF 2016.

12...\textit{\textipa{e4}} 13.\textit{\textipa{c1}}
This is White’s most principled move. He wishes to force the exchange on c3 in order to fortify his centre.

White’s plan, connected with the advance of the a-pawn, leads to quick simplifications. 13.a4 $\textit{\textipa{g6}}$ 14.a5
15...\( \text{Bxc3} \) 16.\( \text{bxc3} \) e5

Black not only attacks the enemy centre, but also prepares the e6-square for his bishop.

15.e4 \( \text{Be6} \)

This bishop will be much more active on the a2-g8 diagonal than on the g6-square.

16.\( \text{Nf3} \) f6 17.\( \text{Nh4} \)

17.\( \text{Be3} \), Miron – S. Volkov, Plovdiv 2012, 17...\( \text{b6} \)!±

17.\( \text{wC2 b6} \) 18.\( \text{f1 f7} \) 19.\( \text{h4 ef8} \). Black prepares a square for the retreat of his bishop on e7.

20.\( \text{f5 ef8} \)= Mikheev – Poli, ICCF 2012.

17...\( \text{b6} \)

Black prepares the transfer of his knight to c4, from where White will hardly manage to out it easily.

18.\( \text{a4 ef8} \) 19.\( \text{a5 c4} \) 20.\( \text{d5 exd5} \) 21.\( \text{exd5 f7} \) 22.\( \text{f5 ef8} \). Black’s pieces are much more harmoniously deployed.

23.\( \text{a4 b5} \) 24.\( \text{axb6} \). After this move the position is simplified, but White has nothing better anyway. Black’s knight on c4 is so powerful that White may even end up in an inferior position.

24...\( \text{xb6} \) 25.\( \text{a5 xc3} \) 26.\( \text{xa7 wc4} \) 27.\( \text{xc4 xc4} \)= Andersen – Weber, ICCF 2013. Black is completely safe in this endgame. On the contrary, White must play precisely. He must watch carefully about the possibility that Black may encircle and capture the isolated d5-pawn.

B2) 6.\( \text{c3} \)

This is a logical move, but is a bit too straightforward. White increases immediately his control over the central e4-square, but later his knight may come under attack after b7-b5-b4.

6...\( \text{e6} \)
White prepares the fianchetto of his light-squared bishop.

He wishes to play g2-g4. After this however, his kingside would be slightly weakened. 7...\textit{bd7} 8.g4 \textit{g6} 9.\textit{g2} \textit{c7}\textit{=} Korchnoi – Raznikov, Caleta 2012.

Following 7.\textit{wb3} \textit{wb6}, White must consider Black’s threats \textit{xb3} and \textit{c2}. If White exchanges the queens 8.\textit{xb6} axb6, then he will not have the possibility 9.\textit{h4}, because of 9...\textit{c2}\textit{=} and after 10.\textit{d2} \textit{b3}\textit{=} Walseth – Pavlidis, Porto Carras 2008. Black exploits the pin of the a2-pawn, saves his bishop and obtains an advantage.

7.\textit{g5} \textit{b6} 8.0-0-0. White’s plan, connected with castling queenside, seems rather risky, because his king will be unsafe on the queenside. 8...\textit{bd7} 9.\textit{h4} \textit{b4} 10.\textit{xf5} \textit{ef5} 11.\textit{f3} 0-0\textit{=} M.Horvath – Videki, Balatonbereny 1993.

7...\textit{bd7} 8.\textit{g2} \textit{c7}

White’s delay with castling cannot be good for him at all.

9.e3 0-0 10.\textit{h4} (10.0-0 \textit{b5} – see variation B2a) 10...\textit{b6} 11.\textit{fl}. White’s play seems a bit awkward. 11...\textit{g4} 12.h3 \textit{h5} 13.\textit{g4} \textit{fd5} 14.\textit{xh5} (14.\textit{f3} \textit{g6} 15.\textit{e5}, Andersen – Gysi, Argentina 2001, 15...\textit{xc3}?! 16.bxc3 \textit{c2}. Black has managed to avoid the trade of his light-squared bishop. Now, his plan includes its transfer to the b5-square from where it would exert powerful pressure against White’s position. 17.\textit{e2} \textit{a4} 18.0-0 \textit{b5} 19.\textit{d3} \textit{c7}\textit{=} Bareev – Anand, Tilburg 1991. White has succeeded in obtaining the two-bishop advantage, but at a very dear price. His kingside has been weakened and his king is still stranded in the centre.
8. \( b3 \) \( b6 \) 10. \( d2 \). White is preparing \( c4 \), but weakens his control over the central e5-square and Black exploits this immediately. 10...e5 11.d5 (11.dxe5 \( xe5 \) 12.\( a4 \) \( b4 \)= Korchnoi – Sandipan, Caleta 2011) 11...\( cxd5 \). The simplifications are unavoidable. 12.\( xd5 \) \( xd5 \) 13.\( xd5 \) \( xb3 \) 14.\( xb3 \) \( b4 \)+ 15.\( d2 \) \( xd2 \)+ 16.\( xd2 \) \( e7 \) 17.\( xb7 \) \( ab8 \) 18.\( f3 \) \( xb2 \)= Mirzoev – Firat, Cappelle-la-Grande 2012.

9...0-0

Now, White has two main lines: B2a) 10.e3 and B2b) 10.\( e1 \).

It would be a blunder for him to choose the routine move 10.\( d1 \), since following 10...\( c2 \)+, Black’s threat to trap the enemy queen \( b6 \) would force White to part with an exchange.

White cannot harm his opponent with 10.\( e3 \), T.Petrosian – Bagirov, Moscow 1983, 10...\( h6 \)=

10.h3 \( h6 \) 11.\( e4 \)= Jankovic – Antal, Hungary 2016.

10.a3. White is preparing a square for the retreat of his queen, but the move a3 seems rather slow. 10...\( e4 \) 11.\( d1 \) \( b6 \) 12.\( a2 \) \( d5 \)= Itkis – Matulovic, Cetinje 1993. Black’s knights have joined very effectively in the fight for the central squares.

It seems premature for White to opt here for 10.\( h4 \)!, because Black can simply capture the central pawn. 10...\( b6 \) 11.\( b3 \) \( xd4 \) 12.\( xf5 \) \( exf5 \) 13.\( f4 \), Rogers – Bacrot, Batumi 2001, 13...\( fe8 \)=. White’s two-bishop advantage does not compensate fully his material deficit.

After 10.\( f4 \) \( g6 \) 11.\( fe1 \), Black obtains a very good game with the plan, connected with a pawn-offensive on the queenside. 11...\( c8 \) 12.\( b3 \) \( b5 \)=, followed by a7-a5-a4, Hauchard – Brunner, Evry 2008.

10.a4. White solves radically the problem with Black’s pawn-advance b7-b5, but weakens the b4-square in the process. 10...\( e5 \) 11.\( e3 \) \( b6 \) 12.\( h4 \) (12.\( e2 \) \( a6 \)= Kharlov – Ki.Georgiev, Istanbul 2003) 12...\( c2 \)= Now, White should better refrain from the pawn-advance 13.e4=, because after 13...\( b3 \) 14.\( d3 \) \( fd8 \), Black’s threat \( e5 \) would be very unpleasant, Jeremic – Blagojevic, Budva 2003.

After 10.\( g5 \) \( h6 \) 11.\( xf6 \) \( xf6 \), Black has the two-bishop advantage and a solid position. 12.\( fd1 \) (12.\( h3 \), Ibarra Jerez – Salgado Lopez, Madrid 2015, 12...\( g6 \)=; 12.\( e3 \) \( b6 \)= Dragomarezkij – Gagarin, Moscow 1998; 12.\( e4 \) \( g6 \) 13.\( ad1 \) \( a5 \)= Knol – Sivic, ICCF 2009) 12...\( c2 \)=. Before playing \( b6 \), Black deprives his opponent of the b3-square. 13.\( d2 \) (13.\( dc1 \) \( b6 \) 14.\( c5 \) \( f5 \)= Romanishin – Kalinitschew, Germany 1992.) 13...\( b6 \) 14.\( c5 \) \( g6 \)= Brunner – Hochstrasser, Switzerland 2005.

10.\( b3 \) \( b6 \)
There arises an approximately equal endgame after 11.\textit{f4} \textit{xb3} 12.\textit{axb3} \textit{d5}= Sahu – Rajesh, Bhubaneswar 2016.

The move 11.\textit{e1} is not timely here for White, since following 11...\textit{xb3} 12.\textit{axb3}, Black can begin an attack against the pawn on b3. 12...\textit{c2} 13.\textit{g5} \textit{h6} 14.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6} 15.\textit{ec1} \textit{h7}† Bates – Lalic, Hastings 2016. Black’s threats against the pawn on b3 have forced White to exchange his powerful bishop for the enemy knight on f6. His compensation for the vulnerability of his doubled b-pawns and his opponent’s two-bishop advantage is insufficient.

After 11.\textit{xb6} \textit{axb6} 12.\textit{d4}, Black can avoid the exchange of his powerful bishop for the enemy knight with 12...\textit{c2}! 13.\textit{d2} \textit{h6}†. There might follow 14.\textit{ac1} \textit{h7}. It is much easier to play this position with Black, since he has a clear cut plan: \textit{b6-b5}, \textit{b6-c4}. 15.\textit{fe1} \textit{b5} 16.a3 \textit{b6} 17.e4 \textit{c4†} Ovetchkin – Skorchenko, Novokuznetsk 2008.

11.\textit{d2}. White is preparing \textit{c4}, but weakens his control over the central d4 and e5-squares. 11...\textit{e5}. This timely counter strike in the centre is Black’s simplest way of equalising. 12.d5 (12.e4, Dzagnidze – Zhu, Doha 2011, 12...\textit{g6}?!∞) 12...\textit{xd5} 13.\textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 14.\textit{xd5} \textit{a6}. He exchanges his b7-pawn for the enemy e2-pawn. 15.\textit{xb7} \textit{xe2} 16.b3 \textit{c5}. Black’s pieces are very active, so White is forced to trade the light-squared bishops. 17.\textit{f3} \textit{d3} 18.e4 \textit{xe4} 19.\textit{xe4} \textit{c3} 20.\textit{bb1} \textit{d4=}+, followed by \textit{c5}, Opitz – Lundberg, ICCF 2010. White’s pawn-majority on the queenside is not important at all.

\textbf{B2a} 10.e3

White prepares \textit{e2}, but Black can obtain a very good position in a tactical fashion.

10...\textit{b5}!?

This is the point. It turns out that Black is not afraid of the capturing on c6 and so he seizes the initiative
on the queenside. Now, White must play very precisely; otherwise, he might end up in an inferior position.

11. \( \text{Q}e2 \)

It seems less adequate for White to choose the other retreat of his queen 11. \( \text{Q}b3 \) b4 12. \( \text{Q}a4 \) \( \text{Q}e4 \) 13. \( \text{Q}d2 \), Portisch – Galliamova, Marbella 1999, 13...\( \text{a5}!\).  

11. \( \text{Q}xc6 \) b4 12. \( \text{Q}b1 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 13. \( \text{Q}e1 \) \( \text{a5} \) 14. \( \text{Q}fd2 \) \( \text{ac8} \) 15. \( \text{Q}f3 \) \( \text{b3}!\). Balog – To Nhat Minh, Balatonlelle 2009. Black’s pieces are very active. He has more than sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit.

11...\( \text{b4} \)

12. \( \text{Q}a4 \)

12. \( \text{Q}b1 \). This move is too passive 12...\( \text{c}5 \) 13. \( \text{Q}d2 \) \( \text{c}8 \)

14.\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{b}3!\)? 15.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 16.\( \text{Q}xb3 \) \( \text{x}e4 \) 17.\( \text{d}xc5 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 18.\( \text{c}6 \) \( \text{xb}3 \) 19.\( \text{cxd}7 \) \( \text{Q}xd7 \), followed by \( \text{c}2 \), Deforel – Bartsch, ICCF 2015. White can hardly complete the development of his queenside without material losses.

Following 14.\( \text{b}3 \), there appears a weak c3-square in White’s camp and Black’s knight is immediately headed there. 14...\( \text{d}5 \) 15.\( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{c}3 \) 16.\( \text{x}c3 \) \( \text{bxc3} \) 17.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 18.\( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 19.\( \text{bxc}4 \), Bancevich – Jones, LSS 2007, 19...\( \text{a}5!\) Black’s bishops are very powerful and his pawn on c3 can hardly be captured easily by White.

14.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 15.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 16.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{ex}d5 \) 17.\( \text{ex}d5 \) \( \text{c}2 \) 18.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 19.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 20.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 21.\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \). Black trades the strong enemy knight. 22.\( \text{x}c8 \) \( \text{x}e8 \) 23.\( \text{x}b6 \) \( \text{axb6} \) 24.\( \text{axb}4 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 25.\( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 26.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{xd}5 \), Deforel – Yakovlev, ICCF 2015. Black has managed to restore the material balance. His pieces are
tremendously active and his bishop on c5 is particularly powerful, exerting rather unpleasant pressure against the f2-square, as well as his centralised knight. White must work very hard to neutralise the pressure.

12...\textit{Q}a5
Black improves the placement of his queen with tempo.

13.b3 \textit{Q}b5

14.\textit{R}e1
14.\textit{Q}d1 \textit{R}ac8 15.\textit{B}b2 \textit{R}fd8 16.\textit{R}c1, D.Gurevich – Bruzon Batista, Buenos Aires 2003, 16...\textit{g}g6!?=

14...\textit{R}ac8 15.\textit{B}b2
15.a3, Istratescu – Itkis, Bucharest 2000, 15...a5=

15...\textit{Q}d3

Black plans to continue with \textit{Q}a6 and \textit{B}b5 in order to emphasize the misplacement of the enemy knight on a4.

16.\textit{R}d1 \textit{R}fd8 17.\textit{B}c1 \textit{Q}a6 18.\textit{R}d2 \textit{B}b5 19.\textit{B}f1 \textit{B}xf1 20.\textit{B}xf1
This position was reached in the game Deepan Chakkravarthy – Alarcon Casellas, Barcelona 2012. White managed to neutralise the threat $\text{Rx}a4$, but he had no advantage. 20...$\text{Nd}5$!? This is Black’s simplest road to equality. 21.$\text{Wg}4\text{ g}6$. Before advancing c6–c5, Black must take care about his opponent’s threats against the g7-square. 22.$\text{Ec}2\text{ c}5\text{ Ec}1\text{ cxd}4$. There begin forced actions which lead to almost complete simplifications. 24.$\text{Exc}8\text{ Exc}8\text{ 25.Exc}8+\text{ Exc}8\text{ 26.Exd}4\text{ Ef}6\text{ 27.Exa}7\text{ Ec}2\text{ 28.Exd}7\text{ Exb}2\text{ 29.Exb}2\text{ Exd}2\text{ 30.Ee}8+\text{ Eg}7\text{ 31.Ee}4\text{ Exa}2$. The draw has become imminent, for example: 32.$\text{Ed}6\text{ Ea}7\text{ 33.Ed}8\text{ Exe}3$!? Black sacrifices a piece and forces a perpetual check. 34.$\text{fxe}3\text{ Exe}3+\text{ 35.Eg}2\text{ Ee}2=$

B2b) 10.$\text{Ee}1$

This is an energetic move. White is threatening e2-e4 and wishes at first to force the move $\text{Ed}4$ and to follow this with $\text{Ed}h4$. Still, the complications beginning after this are not dangerous for Black if he plays correctly.

10...$\text{Ed}4$

11.$\text{Eb}3$

White must play this preparatory move, because after the immediate try 11.$\text{Ed}h4$?!, Black can exploit the exposed placement of the enemy queen with 11...$\text{Ed}6\text{ 12.Eb}3\text{ Exh}4\text{ 13.gxh}4\text{ Exh}4\text{f}$. Caceres Vasquez – Marin Munoz, Santiago de Chile 2009. White has the two-bishop advantage indeed, but this does not compensate fully the sacrificed pawn.

It is bad for White to play here 11.$\text{Ec}3$, since then it becomes unclear why he had played $\text{Ee}1$ at the first place. 11...$\text{Ec}5$?! Black undermines his opponent’s centre and this is his simplest way of equalising.

12.$\text{Ed}2\text{ Exc}3\text{ 13.bxc}3\text{ cxd}4\text{ 14.exd}4\text{ Ec}8\text{ 15.Eb}3\text{ Ef}6\text{ 16.Bb}2\text{ Ec}7\text{ 17.c}4\text{ b}6\text{ 18.Eac}1\text{ Ef}d8=$ Rost – Romanov, ICCF 2013. Black’s pieces exert powerful pressure against his opponent’s hanging pawns.
There arises a calm position after 11.\text{\texttt{B}}f4 \text{\texttt{N}}xc3 12.bxc3 \text{\texttt{B}}e4. This is a standard resource in similar positions. Black prevents mechanically the enemy pawn-advance e2-e4. After the removal of the knight from f3, Black would like to trade the light-squared bishops.

It seems rather slow for White to opt here for 13.\text{\texttt{B}}f1. Before playing \text{\texttt{N}}d2, he avoids the exchange of his bishop. Still, this plan takes too much time. 13...c5 14.\text{\texttt{N}}d2 \text{\texttt{b}}b6 15.\text{\texttt{B}}b3 \text{\texttt{d}}d5 16.\text{\texttt{B}}d1, Portisch – Lengyel, Budapest 1965, 16...cxd4!? 17.cxd4 \text{\texttt{B}}b4= Black’s minor pieces have become very active. 13.\text{\texttt{B}}b3 c5. He has a very comfortable position.

The position is simplified after 14.\text{\texttt{Q}}b3 14.\text{\texttt{N}}e5 \text{\texttt{B}}xg2 15.\text{\texttt{Q}}xe5 16.\text{\texttt{Q}}xe5 17.\text{\texttt{B}}d7 17.c4 b5= Brunello – Kobalia, Plovdiv 2012, or 14.\text{\texttt{N}}d2 \text{\texttt{B}}xg2 15.\text{\texttt{Q}}xg2, Horvath – Savchenko, Pula 1994, 15...\text{\texttt{Q}}b6!?=

14.\text{\texttt{R}}ad1, Barber – Kleiser, ICCF 2009, 14...cxd4!? 15.cxd4 \text{\texttt{B}}b6=

14.\text{\texttt{R}}ed1 \text{\texttt{Q}}c8. Black prepares the transfer of his queen to the long diagonal. 15.\text{\texttt{Q}}e1 (There arises a more complicated battle after 15.\text{\texttt{R}}ac1 c4= Efimov – Knezevic, Prague 1985. Naturally, it is not good for Black to open the c-file with a white rook on c1.) 15...\text{\texttt{Q}}xg2 16.\text{\texttt{Q}}xg2 \text{\texttt{B}}d8 17.e4 b6 18.\text{\texttt{B}}b5 \text{\texttt{Q}}f6 19.f3. White has managed to obtain a pawn-centre. Still, he had to weaken his king in order to do that. In addition, his knight on g2 seems a bit misplaced. 19...\text{\texttt{B}}b7. Black’s plans include the advance of his queenside pawns a7-a6, b6-b5, but he must protect at first his pawn on b6. 20.a4 a6 21.\text{\texttt{B}}b2 b5 22.\text{\texttt{Q}}e3 \text{\texttt{Q}}c6 23.axb5 axb5= Tucci – Borroni, ICCF 2012.

11...\text{\texttt{B}}b6
12.\textit{\texttt{h4}}

White weakens his pawn-structure, but wishes to obtain the two-bishop advantage and what is even more important – to bring his bishop on g2 into the fight for the e4-square.

The transfer into an endgame 12.\textit{\texttt{Wxb6 axb6}} does not promise White more than equality. 13.\textit{\texttt{Be4}} (It would be worse for him to choose here 13.\textit{\texttt{h4}}, because after 13...\textit{\texttt{b4}} 14.\textit{\texttt{Be4}}, Moehring – Golz, Zinnowitz 1964, Black can create at first a weakness for his opponent on c3 14...\textit{\texttt{xc3}}?! 15.\textit{\texttt{Bxc3}} \textit{\texttt{Be4}} and then fix it with the moves b6-b5 and \textit{\texttt{Be6}}. 16.\textit{\texttt{f3}} \textit{\texttt{d5}} 17.\textit{\texttt{a3}} \textit{\texttt{f6}} 18.\textit{\texttt{e4}} \textit{\texttt{c4}} 19.\textit{\texttt{g2}} \textit{\texttt{b5}} 20.\textit{\texttt{e3}} \textit{\texttt{Bb6}}. White’s chase after the enemy bishop with his pawns and a knight has failed completely. His weak pawns on c3 and a3 provide Black with a stable advantage.) 13...\textit{\texttt{Bxe4}} 14.\textit{\texttt{Bd3}} \textit{\texttt{Bxe4}} 15.\textit{\texttt{Be4}} \textit{\texttt{Bc2}}

13...\textit{\texttt{g4}}

This is a logical continuation of White’s plan.

The exchange of the queens 13.\textit{\texttt{Wxb6 axb6}} is in favour of Black, because his rook on a8 is activated. 14.\textit{\texttt{Be4}} (14.\textit{\texttt{gxh4}} \textit{\texttt{Bxc3}} 15.\textit{\texttt{Bxc3}} \textit{\texttt{b5}} 16.\textit{\texttt{e4}}, Shinkevich – Odnorozhenko, Perm 2009, 16...\textit{\texttt{Bg6}}! Black has a superior pawn-structure, so he can try to play for a win without any risk at all.) 14...\textit{\texttt{Qxb3}} 15.\textit{\texttt{Bf4}}, Serov – Butuc, St Petersburg 2007, 15...\textit{\texttt{xe4}}?! 16.\textit{\texttt{xe4}} \textit{\texttt{b5}}=, followed by \textit{\texttt{Bb6-c4}}.

13.\textit{\texttt{Be4}} \textit{\texttt{e7}} 14.\textit{\texttt{f4}} (It is worse for White to try here 14.\textit{\texttt{c3}}?!, since following 14...\textit{\texttt{Wxb3}} 15.\textit{\texttt{axb3}} \textit{\texttt{c2}}=, he will fail to save his b3-pawn, Roy – Yagupov, Olomouc 2016.) 14...\textit{\texttt{xe4}} 15.\textit{\texttt{xe4}}, Leutwyler – Kharitonov, Paleochora 2011, 15...\textit{\texttt{Wxb3}}?! 16.\textit{\texttt{axb3}} \textit{\texttt{f6}} 17.\textit{\texttt{Bf3}} \textit{\texttt{b4}} 18.\textit{\texttt{ed1}} \textit{\texttt{d5}}= White has the
two-bishop advantage, but his queenside pawn-structure has been compromised.

13...\(\text{N}f6\)
Black is reluctant to give up the e4-square without a fight.

14.f3
White wins the fight for the e4-square, but this is still insufficient for him to maintain an advantage.

He can also play f2-f3 after the preliminary exchange of the queens. 14.\(\text{Q}xb6\) axb6 15.f3 (15.\(\text{Q}xe4\) \(\text{xe}4\) – see 14.\(\text{Q}e4\)). Still, after 15...\(\text{Nxc3}\) 16.bxc3 \(\text{c}2\) 17.\(\text{b}2\), Tiggelman – Roorda, Vlissingen 2012, 17...\(\text{a}5!\)??, followed by \(\text{fa}8\), Black’s prospects are not worse.

White would not achieve much with 14.\(\text{Q}xe4\) \(\text{xe}4\) 15.\(\text{Q}xb6\) axb6 16.f3, because Black’s bishop can easily avoid the pawn-chase after it. 16...\(\text{d}5\) 17.a3 \(\text{c}4\) 18.e4 (The trade of the b-pawns is evidently in favour of Black: 18.b3 \(\text{xb}3\) 19.\(\text{xb}1\) \(\text{c}4\) 20.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{a}7\)\(\text{f}\) Landa – Gasanov, Dagomys 2010. He has got rid of his doubled pawns, while White must worry about his weakness on a3.) 18...\(\text{h}5\)

19.\(\text{h}3\) b5 20.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{f}6\), draw, Eger – Bleker, ICCF 2012. Indeed, after 21.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{h}5\)=, White has nothing better than to repeat the moves.

19.b3. Now, just like on the previous move, the exchange of the b-pawns is not dangerous for Black.
19...\(\text{xb}3\) 20.\(\text{xb}1\) \(\text{c}4\) 21.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{fb}8\) 22.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{f}6\)= Dimitrov – Robert, ICCF 2011. His superior pawn-structure compensates White’s two-bishop advantage.

19.f4 f5. Black must try to keep the centre closed, because of White’s bishop-pair. 20.e5 g6 21.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{fd}8\) 22.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{g}7\) 23.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{d}5\) 24.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{f}7\)= Fortune – Krzyzanowski, ICCF 2011. Black’s bishop is very powerful at the centre of the board. White can break neither on the kingside, nor on the queenside.
14...\square xc3 15.bxc3 e5!?

This is not the most popular move for Black, but is possibly his simplest way of equalising. He frees the e6-square for his bishop.

16.\textbf{Qxb6}

White would not achieve much with 16.e4 \textit{\textbf{b6}}. Here, Black’s bishop would be much more active than on the g6-square.

17.\textbf{Qxb2} 18.\textbf{Rfd8} 19.\textbf{Qxb2} 20.\textbf{Nc5}=

Rodolfo Masera – Burg, ICCF 2015. There has arisen a position with dynamic balance. Black has a superior pawn-structure, while White has a bishop-pair.

16...\textbf{axb6} 17.dxe5 \square d7 18.f4

He protects reliably his pawn.

Following 18.e4 \textit{\textbf{e6}}, White’s pawns on e5 and a2 are hanging. Therefore, Black restores the material balance. 19.f4, Wojtaszek – Zherebukh, Warsaw 2009, 19...\textbf{xa2}!=

18...\textbf{c5}

White has an extra pawn, but Black’s pieces are very active, while White’s pawns on a2, c3 and h4 are weak.

19.e4
After 19.\text{c3 }\text{a3} 20.\text{d4}, Vorobiov – Poetsch, Pardubice 2014, 20...\text{fa8=}, White cannot avoid the loss of his a2-pawn.

19...\text{e6} 20.\text{e3 }\text{xa2=} The material balance has been restored. Naturally, White has the two-bishop advantage, but his pawn-structure is inferior, so he cannot play for a win.
Chapter 8

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3

This move may seem rather modest, but it gains popularity in the last several years. White wishes to avoid the long forced lines, typical for the Botvinnik variation, or the Meran system and wishes to focus on the fight in the middle game. He would not mind his opponent to develop his bishop on g4, or f5. His later plans include the development of the queen to b3 in order to attack the b7-pawn, or the chase after the enemy bishop with Nh4, or h3, g4, Ne5, with the idea to obtain the two-bishop advantage.

4...Bg4

Black exploits the possibility to develop his bishop to an active position before playing e7-e6.

Now, White has a choice between numerous possibilities. In this chapter we will analyse only these in which he refrains in his first moves from the pawn-advance h2-h3. The possible attacks against the enemy bishop will be dealt with in the next chapter.

We will analyse now A) 5.Nbd2, B) 5.cxd5, C) 5.Qb3 and D) 5.c3.

5.Qc2. White removes his queen from the pin, but allows his pawns to be doubled. 5...fxe3 6.gxf3 e6 7.Nc3 Nbd7= Just – Minte, Binz 2012.


5.d3 e6 6Nb3 (6.Nc3 Nbd7 – see 5.Nc3; 6.Nbd2 Nbd7, or 6.0-0 Nbd7 7.Nbd2 Nbd6 – see 5.Nbd2) 6...dxc4!? This is Black’s most precise road to equality. 7.Nxc4 (The chase after the enemy rook on a8 leads to a loss for White: 7.Nxb7? cxd3 8.Nxa8 Nxf3 9.gxf3 Nc7+, with the threat Nd7-b6.) 7...Nf3
Black is not in a hurry to play \( \text{N} \text{bd7} \), preserving the possibility to develop his knight to c6 after c6-c5. 10.\text{N}d2 0-0 11.h4 a6= Rakhmanov – Grachev, Moscow 2011.

5.\text{N}f3. This is not White’s most active move. 5...e6 6.0-0 (Following 6.b3, Black can prevent the development of the enemy bishop on b2 with 6...\text{b}4+!? 7.\text{N}d2 \text{d}6 8.\text{N}c3 \text{N}bd7= Kock – Zichichi, Saint Vincent 2002; 6.\text{N}bd2 \text{N}bd7 – see 5.\text{N}bd2; 6.\text{N}c3 \text{N}bd7 – see 5.\text{N}c3) 6...\text{N}bd7 7.b3 (7.\text{N}bd2 \text{d}6 – see 5.\text{N}bd2; 7.\text{N}c3 \text{d}6 – see 5.\text{N}c3) 7...\text{d}6 8.\text{b}2 (8.\text{N}bd2 0-0 – see 5.\text{N}bd2) 8...0-0 9.\text{N}e5 (9.h3, Stein – Vaganian, Leningrad 1971, 9...\text{f}5!?=; 9.\text{N}bd2 a5 – see 5.\text{N}bd2; 9.\text{N}c3 \text{f}e7 – see 5.\text{N}c3) 9...\text{xe}2 10.\text{e}xe2 \text{c}7 11.f4. White preserves his knight at the centre of the board, but weakens the e4-square. (11.\text{N}xd7 \text{xd}7= Maze – Balcerak, Germany 2011) 11...\text{e}4 12.\text{d}2 \text{xd}2 13.\text{e}2d2 \text{f}6 14.\text{e}2 \text{e}4 15.\text{N}d3, Durst – Ennepen, Germany 1997, 15...a5!?= Black’s prospects are not worse, because White’s bishop is severely restricted by his own pawn on d4.

A) 5.\text{N}bd2

This is not White’s most principled move. He does not attack the b7-pawn and does not oust the enemy bishop from the g4-square. Therefore, Black completes effortlessly his development and obtains a wonderful position.

5...e6

6.\text{N}d3

About 6.h3 \text{h}5, or 6.\text{N}bd7 7.h3 \text{c}7 7.h3 \text{h}5 – see Chapter 9, variation A.

After 6.b3 \text{N}bd7 7.\text{N}b2, Black can deploy immediately his knight at the centre of the board, exploiting the delay of White’s move \( \text{N}d3 \). (7.\text{N}c2 \text{a}5 – see 6.\text{N}c2; 7.\text{d}3 \text{d}6 – see 6.\text{d}3; 7.\text{e}2 \text{b}4 – see 6.\text{e}2) 7...\text{e}4 8.\text{e}2 \text{b}4 9.0-0, Budnikov – Tregubov, St Petersburg 1993. 9...0-0!? 10.\text{xe}4. White can hardly continue the game without the exchange of the centralised enemy knight, but now, after 10...\text{dx}e4 he will have to lose a tempo for the retreat of his knight. 11.\text{e}1 \text{xe}2 12.\text{xe}2 f5=

Following 6.\text{N}c2 \text{N}bd7 7.b3 (7.\text{d}3 \text{d}6 – see 6.\text{d}3), Black has a very active plan: 7...\text{a}5!? 8.\text{d}3 \text{xf}3 9.gxf3 \text{c}5. White has a pair of bishops, but his pawn-structure has been compromised. 10.b4!? This pawn-sacrifice is interesting, but still insufficient for White to maintain an advantage. 10...\text{xb}4 11.\text{b}1 \text{a}5 12.\text{xb}7 \text{xd}4 13.\text{xd}4 \text{dx}c4 14.\text{xc}4. He has managed to activate his pieces, but his pawn-structure has been weakened even more. 14...\text{e}7 15.\text{b}5 \text{d}8 16.\text{e}4 0-0=

6.\text{N}c2. White’s bishop is not so active on this square as on d3. 6...\text{N}bd7 7.0-0 (7.h3 \text{h}5 – see Chapter 9, variation A; 7.b3 \text{b}4 8.a3 \text{c}3 9.\text{a}2 \text{e}4 10.0-0, Tregubov – Sebag, France 2010, 10...0-0!?=) 7...\text{d}6
8.h3 \( \text{h5} \) – see Chapter 9, variation A.

8.c5. White occupies space on the queenside, but reduces the tension in the centre and sets Black’s hands free to prepare the pawn-break e6-e5. 8...\( \text{c7} \) 9.b4 0-0 10.b5 e5\( \text{∞} \) Kishkin – Mannanov, ICCF 2015.

8.b3 0-0 9.b2 a5. Black is ready to seize the initiative on the queenside at an opportune moment with the move a5-a4.

10.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{x} \text{e2} \) 11.\( \text{xe2} \) a4= Paranichev – Shabanov, Krasnodar 1983.

The position is simplified considerably after 10.a3 \( \text{e4} \) 11.\( \text{xe4} \) dxe4 12.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xe2} \) 13.\( \text{xe2} \) f5= Rice – Houska, Sutton 1999. Black’s bishop seems more active than its white counterpart.

10.h3 \( \text{f5} \) 11.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{e4} \) 12.\( \text{xf5} \) exf5 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{e7} \text{∞} \) Karpov – Carlsen, Moscow 2008. White has obtained the two-bishop advantage indeed, but his bishop on b2 is very passive.

6...\( \text{bd7} \)
7.0-0
About 7.h3 \( \text{h}5 \) – see Chapter 9, variation A.

7.\( \text{b}3 \text{ d}xc4! \) 8.\( \text{x}c4 \), Lammi – Eklof, Helsinki 1993, 8...\( \text{c}7!? \)

7.\( \text{c}2 \text{ d}6 \) 8.\( \text{b}2 \) (8.0-0 0-0 – see 7.0-0; 8.\( \text{c}2 \) 0-0 – see 7.\( \text{c}2 \)) 8...0-0 9.\( \text{c}2 \) (9.0-0 \( e5 \) – see 7.0-0)

9...\( \text{xf}3 \) – see 7.\( \text{c}2 \).

7.\( \text{c}2 \text{ d}6 \) 8.\( \text{b}3 \) (After 8.\( \text{c}5 \text{ c}7 \) 9.\( \text{b}4 \) 0-0 10.\( \text{b}2 \), Dumpor – Cabarkapa, Subotica 2010, there arises a very complicated position. In the middle game White will prepare active actions on the queenside with a2-a4 and b4-b5, while Black will try to accomplish the freeing pawn-break in the centre \( e6-e5 \).

10...\( \text{e}7!? \) 11.0-0 \( \text{xf}3 \). This is the simplest decision. Before playing \( e6-e5 \), Black exchanges his bishop, since it may become “bad” later. 12.\( \text{xf}3 \) \( e5 \) 13.dxe5 \( \text{xe}5 \) 14.\( \text{xe}5 \text{ xe}5 \) \( e5= \) White cannot avoid the trade of his dark-squared bishop, so he loses his two-bishop advantage.) 8...0-0 9.\( \text{b}2 \text{ xf}3 !? \) Without this move, after White plays \( \text{c}e5 \), this bishop may turn out to be out of the actions. 10.\( \text{xf}3 \text{ a}5+ \).

Black exploits the fact that White has not castled yet and succeeds in exchanging the dark-squared bishops. 11.\( \text{c}3 \) (11.\( \text{d}2 \text{ a}3 \) 12.\( \text{c}3 \text{ b}4= \) 11...\( \text{b}4= \) Pheby – Benejam, ICCF 2005. After the exchange, the chances would be approximately balanced, since neither side has any pawn-weaknesses.

7...\( \text{d}6 \)

8.b3

8.h3 \( \text{h}5 \) see Chapter 9, variation A.

Following 8.\( \text{c}2 \) 0-0 9.\( \text{b}3 \), Black manages to advance \( e6-e5 \) before White has played \( \text{b}2 \). 9...\( e5 \)

10.dxe5 \( \text{xe}5 \) 11.\( \text{xe}5 \text{ xe}5 \) 12.\( \text{b}1 \), Matjushin – Rudak, Alushta 2005, 12...\( \text{e}7!?= \)

8.\( \text{b}3 \). This queen-sortie seems premature, because Black can simply protect his b7-pawn with his rook.
8...b8 9.cxd5 9.h3 h5 10.e1 0-0 11.e4 dxe4 12.xe4 xe4 13.xe4 f6= Reinstadler – Kleiser, ICCF 2012) 9...cxd5 10.a4. White is threatening e5, but Black can simply sacrifice his a7-pawn. 10...0-0!? 11.xa7 b5 Pecot – Polaczek, Email 1999. White has lost too much time winning a pawn. Black has seized completely the initiative. In addition, White will have problems to bring back his queen on a7 into his own camp.

8...0-0 9.b2 e5 10.cxd5, Dahl Pedersen – Christiansen, Denmark 2002,

10...b5?! Black forces the enemy queen to occupy an unfavourable position. 11.xf3. White must capture with his queen, because taking with the pawn would weaken the shelter of his king, while capturing with the knight would lose a piece after e5–e4. 11...dxe5 12.dxe5 xe5 13.xe5 xe5. White fails to block his opponent’s isolated pawn. 14.e2 d4=

B) 5.cxd5

This move seems anti-positional, because after the exchange of the pawns, Black’s knight obtains access to the c6-square. It has however a tactical justification.

5...xf3
Black is forced to exchange his bishop.

Following 5...cxd5 6.c3 e6 7.a4+ bd7 8.e5 a6 9.xg4, White will obtain the two-bishop advantage anyway. This does not mean however that his position is better. 9...xg4 10.f3 gf6 11.b3 b5 12.d3 d6 13.0-0∞ Vorobiov – Shirov, Czech Republic 2016.

6.xf3
6.gxf3. Capturing with the pawn seems less reliable for White. 6...cxd5 7.b3 (7.c3 c6 8.b3 d7 – see 7.b3) 7.d7 8.c3 (8.d2 c6 9.c3 e6 – see 8.c3) 8...c6 9.d2 (White would not achieve
much with the move 9...\textit{b}5. The knight on f2 has been exchanged, so White cannot increase the pressure against the c6-square. 9...\textit{e}6 10.\textit{c}1 (10.\textit{c}a4 \textit{d}6 11.\textit{c}c1 0-0, or 11.\textit{b}5 0-0 12.\textit{c}c1 \textit{ac}8 – see 10.\textit{c}c1) 10...\textit{d}6

White’s two-bishop advantage is practically irrelevant here, since his kingside pawn-structure has been weakened and his king has remained for too long stranded at the centre of the board. If Black manages later to advance e6-e5, he will seize firmly the initiative. 11.\textit{a}4. The transfer of White’s knight to c5 would take too much time. (He should possibly choose here 11.\textit{b}5, although even then after 11...0-0 12.\textit{e}2 \textit{fe}8 13.\textit{a}4 \textit{ac}8 14.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 15.\textit{b}4, Eingorn – Dolmatov, Tashkent 1980, 15...e5!?, the vulnerability of White’s king compensates with an interest the defects of Black’s queenside pawn-structure.) 11...0-0 12.\textit{b}5 (12.\textit{c}5 \textit{xc}5 13.\textit{xc}5 e5\# Nikolic – Sokolov, Reykjavik 2003) 12...\textit{ac}8 13.\textit{e}2 \textit{e}7 14.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 15.\textit{c}2, Nogueiras Santiago – Ehvest, New Delhi/Teheran 2000, 15...\textit{h}5!? 16.\textit{d}3 e5 17.dxe5 \textit{xe}5\#, creating the threat \textit{f}4.

6...\textit{xd}5

7.\textit{c}3
7.\textit{b}5+ \textit{c}6 8.\textit{c}3 e6 – see 7.\textit{c}3.

7.\textit{d}3 \textit{c}6 8.0-0 (8.\textit{c}3 e6 – see 7.\textit{c}3) 8...\textit{e}6 9.a3. White does not lose a tempo for the move \textit{c}3. This attempt is interesting, but still insufficient to obtain an advantage. (9.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}7 – see 7.\textit{c}3) 9...\textit{d}6 10.b4 e5 11.dxe5 \textit{xe}5 12.\textit{a}2 0-0 13.\textit{h}3 \textit{e}8 14.\textit{d}2 \textit{d}4. This pawn-advance is Black’s simplest way of equalising 15.\textit{e}4 \textit{f}4\textasciitilde, followed by \textit{e}5, Bogdanovich – Wirthensohn, Liechtenstein 1994.

7...\textit{c}6
Black has nothing to complain about, despite White’s two-bishop advantage. He has neither bad pieces,
nor pawn-weaknesses.

\[\text{Diagram 1}\]

8.d3
8.g4 e6 9.g5 (9.d3 a6 – see 8.d3) 9...d7 10.h4 c8 11.d2 a6= Bauer – Dautov, France 2003.

It seems less convincing for White to play here 8.b5. In fact, he cannot increase his pressure against the c6-square. The exchange bxc6 would only lose for him the two-bishop advantage. 8...e6 9.0-0 c8 10.d2 d6 11.fc1 (11.e4 dxe4 12.xe4 oxe4 13.xe4 0-0= Knotek – Roubalik, Stare Mesto 2010. The vulnerability of the isolated d4-pawn precludes White from exploiting the power of his bishops.) 11...0-0 12.d3 c8= Burmakin – Krivoshey, Oberwart 2001.

8.d2. This is a flexible move. White conceals for the moment his further plans. 8.e6.

\[\text{Diagram 2}\]

9.d3 c7 – see 8.d3.
9.g4 c8 10.g5 d7 11.h4 a6 – see 8.g4.
9.g3. White impedes his opponent’s castling kingside. Still, Black can simply reply with 9...g6 10.d3 c7 11.0-0 0-0 12.ac1 c8= Polak – Videki, Paks 2004.

9.c1 c7 10.g4. White begins active actions on the kingside, but can hardly create any meaningful threats against the enemy king. It is well known that pawns cannot come back, so the weakening of his kingside may hurt him later. (10.d3 0-0 11.0-0 c8 – see 8.d3) 10..c8 11.g2 d7 12.e2, L.Hansen – Heller, Germany 2002, 12.a5!? Black prepares the transfer of his knight to the c4-square and this promises him an excellent position. 13.0-0 c4=

8.e6
9.0-0

About 9.\textit{\textbf{c}}e2 \textit{\textbf{c}}c7 10.0-0 0-0, or 9.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 \textit{\textbf{e}}e7 10.0-0 0-0, or 10.\textit{\textbf{c}}c1 0-0 11.0-0 – see 9.0-0.

The move 9.g4 leads to a double-edged fight. 9...a6 10.g5 \textit{\textbf{d}}d7 11.\textit{\textbf{g}}g2 \textit{\textbf{b}}b6 Miron – Dobre, Targu Mures 2014.

9.\textit{\textbf{g}}3, Burmakin – Fominyh, Ekaterinburg 2002, 9...\textit{\textbf{d}}d6!? Black would not mind the exchange of the g-pawns. 10.\textit{\textbf{x}}g7 \textit{\textbf{x}}g8 11.\textit{\textbf{h}}h6 \textit{\textbf{x}}g2 12.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 \textit{\textbf{b}}b4 13.\textit{\textbf{b}}b5+ \textit{\textbf{e}}e7 14.\textit{\textbf{h}}h3 \textit{\textbf{g}}g8 15.a3 \textit{\textbf{c}}c2+ 16.\textit{\textbf{f}}f1 \textit{\textbf{x}}xa1 17.\textit{\textbf{x}}g2 \textit{\textbf{x}}g2+ 18.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 \textit{\textbf{g}}g8+ 19.\textit{\textbf{f}}f3 \textit{\textbf{b}}b3= The tactical complications are over and there has arisen an approximately equal endgame on the board.

9...\textit{\textbf{e}}e7

This move looks more precise than the development of the bishop to d6. In this variation White can simply remove his queen from f3 and play later f2-f4, preventing Black’s pawn-break e6-e5.

The development of Black’s bishop on e7 has the advantage that after 0-0, he can transfer his knight to the queenside at an opportune moment: \textit{\textbf{f}}f6-e8-d6-c4.

10.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2

White connects his rooks.

About 10.\textit{\textbf{e}}e2 0-0 11.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 \textit{\textbf{c}}c8 or 10.\textit{\textbf{h}}h3 0-0 11.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 g6 – see 10.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2.

Following 10.\textit{\textbf{d}}d1 0-0 11.\textit{\textbf{f}}f1, the simplest for Black would be to prepare the transfer of his knight to the c4-square from where it would exert rather unpleasant pressure against the b2-square. (11.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 \textit{\textbf{c}}c8 – see 10.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2) 11...\textit{\textbf{c}}c8 12.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 \textit{\textbf{a}}a5 13.\textit{\textbf{e}}e1 \textit{\textbf{c}}c4 14.\textit{\textbf{e}}e2, Jussupow – Rogozenco, Germany 2011 (14.\textit{\textbf{a}}b1 \textit{\textbf{d}}d7 15.\textit{\textbf{e}}e2 \textit{\textbf{c}}c7=, followed by the doubling of the rooks on the c-file, Vorobiov – Nikcevic, Cappelle-
la-Grande 2012) 14...\text{c6}!?! Black will play later \text{\texttt{\textit{c7, c8,}} tripling his major pieces on the only open file. White’s bishops are very passive at the moment and it is rather difficult to see how they can be activated later.

10...0-0

11.\texttt{a1c}  
11.\texttt{fd1 c8 12.a1e}, Polugaevsky – Hort, Petropolis 1973 (12.\texttt{ac1 d7} – see 11.\texttt{ac1}) 12...a6?!=

11.\texttt{g3}. White is preparing the advance of his f-pawn. 11...\texttt{c8 12.f4}, Koneru – Karavade, Calicut 2003. Here, Black can simply play 12...\texttt{e8}! with the idea to transfer the knight to d6, without being afraid of the move 13.f5, since he can counter that with the line: 13...e5! 14.dxe5 \texttt{h4} 15.\texttt{f4 g5}, with a permanent chase after the enemy queen. 16.\texttt{g3 h4}=

11.\texttt{e2 c8 12.f4} (12.\texttt{ac1 a6} – see 11.\texttt{ac1}; 12.\texttt{fc1 a6=} Medvegy - Hajnal, Hungary 2016) 12...g6. Black impedes his enemy pawn-advance f4-f5. 13.\texttt{ac1 d7} 14.\texttt{e1 f5}. Now, White will hardly manage to open the position. 15.\texttt{g4 f6} 16.\texttt{xf5 gxf5} 17.h1 h8 18.\texttt{g1 g8=} Tkachiev – Fressinet, Ajaccio 2007.

11.\texttt{h3}. With this move, just like after 11.\texttt{g3}, or 11.\texttt{e2}, White prepares f2-f4, but now he creates a threat against the h7-square. 11...g6 12.f4 (12.\texttt{ac1 c8} – see 11.\texttt{ac1}) 12...\texttt{c8 13.g4, Berkes – Salgado Lopez, Paks 2011} (White’s attempt to bring his rook into the attack with 13.\texttt{f3}, Dragun – Miton, Wroclaw 2014, would not achieve anything for him: 13...\texttt{b4}! 14.\texttt{b1 b6} 15.\texttt{a4 c6} 16.\texttt{c3 e4=} 13...\texttt{b4}?! Black must try to organise active counterplay; otherwise, he may end up in a bad position. 14.\texttt{e2 e8 15.f5 d6} 16.\texttt{xe6 fxe6} 17.\texttt{xf8+ xf8} 18.\texttt{f1 g7=} Black’s bishop on g7 cements reliably his position on the kingside.

11...\texttt{c8 12.h3}  
The alternatives for White do not provide him with any advantage. For example: 12.\texttt{e2 a6} 13.\texttt{a4}, Ghaem Maghami – Gatterer, Oberwart 2007, 13...\texttt{e4}?! =, or 12.\texttt{fd1 d7} 13.\texttt{e2 c7} 14.a3 \texttt{f8=} Curtis – Smallbone, Sunningdale 2008.

12...\texttt{g6 13.f4}  
13.\texttt{fd1}, Danner – Meduna, Passau 2000, 13...a6?!=
13...a5 14.c2 c4 15.e1 h5. Black has deployed almost all his pawns according to the rules – on squares opposite of the colour of his bishop. 16.f3, Jussupow – Fridman, Arnhem 2006, preparing h2-h3 and g2-g4. Still, Black can take care about this threat by transferring prudently his rook to the h-file. 16...g7! 17.h3 h8=
C) 5.b3
White attacks immediately the enemy b7-pawn.

5...b6

6.e5
About 6.c3 e6, or 6.d3 bd7 7.c3 e6 8.d2 e7 – see 5.c3.
6.c5 c7 7.e5 f5, or 6.xb6 axb6 7.e5 f5, or 6.cxd5 xb3 7.axb3 xd5 8.e5 f5 – see 6.e5.
6.bd2. White’s knight will be less active here than on the c3-square. 6.xb3! 7.xb3 e6 8.d2, Fassmann – Lichtblau, Magdeburg 2015, 8...bd7!?

6.f5 7.cxd5
White complies with having doubled pawns on the b-file.
About 7.c3 e6, or 7.c5 c7 8.c3 e6, or 7.e2 e6 8.c3 bd7, or 7.d3 xd3 8.c3 e6 9.c3 bd7 – see 5.c3.
7.xb6. White avoids the weakening of his pawn-structure, but activates his opponent’s rook. 7...axb6 8.cxd5 xd5. This move seems more reliable for Black, than capturing with the pawn, since it would lead for him to the appearance of two doubled pawns on the b-file. 9.d3 xd3 10.d3 e6. Black has a solid position. 11.d2 (11.e2 a6 12.d2 ab4 – see 11.d2) 11.a6. Black prepares the penetration of his knight to the b4-square, which would lead to further simplifications. 12.e2 ab4
7...\texttt{Nxb3} 8.axb3 \texttt{Nxd5}

White will hardly manage to advance his centre in this endgame (f2-f3, e3-e4). In addition, he must consider his enemy’s possibility \texttt{Nc2-f4}.

\textbf{9.a3}

White parries immediately the threat \texttt{Nc2-f4}. Still, the edge of the board is not the best place for his knight.

\textbf{9.c4 e6=}

\textbf{9.e2 \texttt{Nxd7} 10.\texttt{Nxd7} \texttt{Nxd7}=} Giri – Smeets, Amstelveen 2015.

\textbf{9.c3}. This move seems premature, because after \textbf{9...\texttt{Nc2}}, White cannot protect the c2-square with the move \texttt{Nc3}. \textbf{10.e4}. He removes his rook away from the fork. Its placement on the a4-square seems rather awkward, though... 10...\texttt{e6} 11.e4 \texttt{g6} 12.e3 \texttt{d7} 13.\texttt{xd7} \texttt{xd7} 14.d2 \texttt{e7=} Shalimov – Borisiuk, Kiev 2009.

\textbf{9.d2}. This move has the same defect as \textbf{9.c3}. \textbf{9.d4} 10.\texttt{d7} \texttt{e6} 11.e4 \texttt{g6} 12.d1 \texttt{d7=} Skomorokhin – Ponkratov, Izhevsk 2013.

\textbf{9.d3}. This is a reliable move with which White would not mind simplifications. He will not be worse by playing in this way, but cannot fight for the advantage either. 9.\texttt{xd3} 10.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{e6} 11.d2 \texttt{a6} 12.e2 \texttt{ab4} 13.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{xb4} 14.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{xb4=} Narciso Dublan – C.Balogh, Barcelona 2013.

\textbf{9.f6}

Black ousts immediately his opponent’s knight away from the centre.

\textbf{10.d3}

White would not obtain much with \textbf{10.ec4} b5 11.d5 e5= Vaganian – Jussupow, Germany 2007, or \textbf{10.d3} e6 11.xf5 exf5 12.d3 \texttt{a6=} Bars – Walther, Germany 2013. In most of the cases the activity of Black’s pieces compensates the slight defects of his pawn-structure, moreover that White should not forget about the weakness of his doubled b-pawns.

\textbf{10.d7} 11.f3
11...\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xd3 12.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xd3 e5 13.dxe5 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xe5

Black presents his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but has advanced e7–e5 quite comfortably. His knights are very active at the centre of the board.

14.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e4 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}c5 15.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e2 0-0-0 16.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d2 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}b8= I.Sokolov – Dreev, Shanghai 2001.

D) 5.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}c3

This is the natural development of White’s knight.

5...e6

6.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}b3

As a rule, after his alternatives there arise positions from the next chapter by transposition of moves.

6.cxd5 exd5 7.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e2 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}bd7 8.0-0 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d6 9.h3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h5 10.b3 0-0 11.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}b2 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e8 12.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}c1 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e7 13.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e1 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}g6= Capitelli – Ernst, Dublin 2012.

6.h3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h5, or 6.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e2 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}bd7 7.h3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h5, or 7.0-0 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d6 8.b3 0-0 9.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}b2 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e7 10.h3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h5 – see Chapter 9, variation D.

6.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d2 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}bd7 7.cxd5 (7.h3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h5 8.cxd5 exd5 – see 7.cxd5) 7...exd5 8.h3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h5 9.g4 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}g6 10.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h4 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}b4 11.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xg6 hxg6 – see Chapter 9, variation D2.

6.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}bd7 7.0-0 (7.h3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h5 – see Chapter 9, variation D; 7.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d2 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d6 8.h3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h5 9.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}b3 dxc4 10.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xc4 b5 11.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e2 0-0= Adly – Smeets, Hoogeveen 2008) 7...\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d6 8.e4. This pawn-break in the centre seems rather premature. (It would be better 8.h3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}h5 – see Chapter 9, variation D; 8.cxd5 exd5 9.e4 dxe4 10.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xe4 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xe4 11.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xe4 0-0 12.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e2, Tarrasch – Chigorin, Ostend 1907, 12...h6!=) 8...dxe4 9.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xe4 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xe4 10.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}xe4 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}f6 11.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}c2 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}c7. He is preparing \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d6. 12.\text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}e3 \text{\texttt{\textdquotesingle\textdquotesingle}}d6. Black is threatening the h2-square and thus provokes a weakening of the light squares in the enemy camp. 13.g3, Chiang – Goryachkina,
Caldas Novas 2011, 13...0-0-0!?

6...b6 7.e5
About 7.c5 e7 8.e5 f5 – see 7.e5.

7.h3 h5, or 7.h4 h5 8.h3 e7 – see Chapter 9, variation D1.


7...f5

8.c5
White occupies space on the queenside. Now however, Black has a clear cut plan for his further actions – he must prepare e6-e5, or the undermining of the c5-pawn with the move b7-b6.

8.d1. This retreat of White’s queen to its initial position cannot be good for him. 8.bd7 9.xd7 xd7 10.xd3 xd3 11.xd3 a6! Black increases his pressure against the c4-pawn. 12.b3 b6. White cannot hold on to the pawn and after 13.e2 dxc4, his compensation for the material loss would be insufficient, Villamayor – Sorokin, Kolkata 2001.

About 8.d2 bd7 9.xd7 xd7 10.e2 e7 – see 8.e2.

8.e2 bd7 9.xd7 xd7 10.xd2 e7 11.0-0 (11.c1 0-0 12.0-0 fe8 – see 11.0-0) 11...0-0 12.ac1 fe8= Milov – Predojevic, Philadelphia 2007. There has arisen an approximately equal position in which neither side can organise active actions.

8.d3. The exchange of the bishops cannot create any problems for Black. 8.xd3 9.xd3 bd7 10.cxd5, Ye – Antonio, Beijing 1992 (10.0-0 a6!?∞) 10...xb3!? 11.axb3 xdx5∞ White must play very carefully in this endgame, because the vulnerability of his doubled d-pawns may hurt him in the future.

8...c7 9.e2
After 9.f3, Black’s simplest reaction would be 9...h6=, avoiding in advance White’s pawn-attacks against his bishop (g2-g4, h2-h4), Chiburdanidze – Paecht, Ekaterinburg 2007.

9.f4?! White fortifies the strategically important e5-square, but Black can inflict a strike on the other side of the board: 9...b6!?? Yordanova – Nikolova, Kozloduy 2014.
This prophylactic is necessary. Black prevents immediately his opponent’s idea, connected with the pawn-advance g2-g4. In addition, the move will be very useful for the organisation of his counterplay on the kingside with h5-h4.

10.0-0
10.\textit{d2} \textit{bd7} 11.f4 h4∞ Mahling – Efendiyev, ICCF 2011.

10...\textit{bd7} 11.\textit{xd7} \textit{xd7} 12.\textit{a4} \textit{e7} 13.b4 h4 14.\textit{d1} b6
This is the simplest for Black. Now, White will hardly manage to create active counterplay on the queenside, because the move b4-b5 would be impossible.

15.a4
This advance of the rook pawn seems a bit slow, but White has nothing better anyway.

15...0-0 16.a5 bxc5 17.bxc5 e5∞ Ilyushchenko – Tleptsok, ICCF 2013. There has arisen a very complicated position with mutual chances. Black has created promising counterplay in the centre and on the kingside, while it would be very difficult for White to exploit the weakness of the c6-pawn.
Chapter 9

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.ªf3 ½f6 4.e3 ½g4 5.h3 ½h5

White’s most natural move in this position is D) 6.ªc3, but before that we will analyse A) 6.ªbd2, B) 6.g4 and C) 6.cxd5.

About 6.ªd3 e6 7.0-0 (7.ªc3 ½bd7 – see 6.ªc3; 7.ªbd2 ½bd7 – see 6.ªbd2) 7...½bd7 8.ªc3 ½d6 – see 6.ªc3 (8.ªbd2 ½d6 – see 6.ªbd2).

6.ªb3. As a rule, this leads to transposition of moves. 6...ªb6

About 7.ªc3 e6, or 7.ªh4 e6 8.g4 ½g6 9.ªxg6 hxg6, or 7.ªe5 e6 8.ªc3 ½e7, or 8.g4 ½g6 9.ªxg6 hxg6 10.ªg2 ½e7 11.ªc3 g5 – see variation D1.

7.cxd5 ½xb3 8.axb3, Belous – Raznikov, Kenner 2016, 8...½xd5!?=

Following 7.g4 ½g6 8.g5, Kempinski – Krejci, Czech Republic 2015, Black can simply enter an approximately equal endgame 8...½xb3!? 9.axb3 ½e4=

A) 6.ªbd2
This is a passive move after which White has no chances of obtaining an advantage in the opening. His knight is not so active on this square as on c3.

6...e6
Black’s plan is quite simple: ½bd7, ¼d6, 0-0. In general, if in the variation with 4.e3 White refrains at the beginning from an attack against the enemy b7-pawn (ªb3), or from a chase after the bishop on h5, Black obtains effortlessly a very comfortable game.
7.\textit{d3} \\
7.b3 c7 8.g4 \textit{g6} 9.e5 bd7 10.xg6 hxg6 11.g5, Bologan – Vitiugov, Dubai 2014 (11.g2 0-0-0∞ Michalik – Navara, Czech Republic 2017) 11...dxc4!? 12.xc4 d5=
7.g4 \textit{g6} 8.e5 bd7 – see 6.g4.
7.e2. White would not obtain much with this development of the bishop. 7...bd7

8.b3 d6 9.b2 0-0 10.0-0 e7 – see 8.0-0.


8.0-0 d6 9.b3 0-0 10.b2 e7. Black’s queen is very well placed here, supporting at an opportune moment the pawn-break e6-e5. 11.e5 xe2 12.e2 fd8 13.c5. White occupies space on the queenside. (13.fd1, Goh – Torre, Hangzhou 1981, 13...a5!?) 13...c7 14.b4 xe5 15.dxe5 d7 16.f3, Eldridge – Ponomarjov, ICCF 2012, 16...a5= White has occupied slightly more space, but his central pawns have been deployed on squares with the same colour as his bishop and the vulnerability of the light squares in his camp may hurt him in the future.

7...bd7
White should better postpone the move b2-b3 until his opponent plays d6, because after the immediate move 8.b3, Black has the resource 8...b4= and White cannot play 9.b2??, because of 9...c4. Following 8.Qc2, Black has a very interesting idea – 8...dxc4?!. He exchanges his central pawn and will try later to advance his queenside pawns. 9.Wxc4 e5 10.0-0 a6. White’s defence is not easy at all, because he must lose time for the retreat of his queen. 11.dxc5 (11.Qe5 b5 12.Wc2 c6 13.Qxd7 Wxd7 Xu Jun – Zhang Pengxiang, Yongchuan 2003) 11...Qxc5 12.Bb1 c6 13.b3 cxd8= Seketrykov – Romm, ICCF 2009.

8...d6

White’s plan, connected with the pawn-advance e3-e4, would lead to simplifications. 9.e4 dxe4 10.Qxe4 Qxe4 11.Qxe4 0-0 12.Qe1 Qf6 – see 9.Qe1. Or 9.Qe1 0-0 10.e4 dxe4 11.Qxe4 Qxe4 12.Qxe4 Qf6 13.Qc2 c5. The undermining of the pawn on d4 is Black’s simplest road to equality. 14.g4 Qg6 15.Qxg6 hxg6 16.dxc5 Qxc5 17.Qxd8 Qxd8 18.Qg5. White will hardly manage to advance his queenside pawns in this endgame, because Black can play 18...a5 19.Qg2 a4 20.Qe1 Qf8= Fremegaard – Stojanovic, ICCF 2016. He should not forget to centralise his king in the endgame.

9.b3

White’s plan, connected with the pawn-advance e3-e4, would lead to simplifications. 9.e4 dxe4 10.Qxe4 Qxe4 11.Qxe4 0-0 12.Qe1 Qf6 – see 9.Qe1.

Or 9.Qe1 0-0 10.e4 dxe4 11.Qxe4 Qxe4 12.Qxe4 Qf6 13.Qc2 c5. The undermining of the pawn on d4 is Black’s simplest road to equality. 14.g4 Qg6 15.Qxg6 hxg6 16.dxc5 Qxc5 17.Qxd8 Qxd8 18.Qg5. White will hardly manage to advance his queenside pawns in this endgame, because Black can play 18...a5 19.Qg2 a4 20.Qe1 Qf8= Fremegaard – Stojanovic, ICCF 2016. He should not forget to centralise his king in the endgame.

9...0-0 10.Qd2

After 10.Qc2, Black can exploit the delay of the development of White’s bishop on c1 and advance 10...e5 immediately, for example: 11.dxe5 Qxe5 12.Qxe5 Qxe5 13.Qb1, Puranen – Lako, Finland 1993, 13...Qe7?! 14.b4 Qad8=
10...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{c}e8}}
Black is preparing e6-e5.

11.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}c2} e5 12.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{c}xd5}}
12.dxe5 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}xe5} 13.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}xe5} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}xe5} 14.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}e1} g6 15.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{R}}e1} hxg6= Dizdarevic – Movsesian, Sarajevo 2004.

12...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}xf3}
This is Black’s most precise move. He exploits the fact that White cannot capture with his knight due to the loss of a piece, while capturing with the pawn would weaken the position of White’s king. So, Black thus forces the intermediate exchange on e5 after which the position is quickly simplified. 13.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{d}xe5}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}xe5} 14.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}xf3} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}xb2} 15.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}xb2} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}xd5} 16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{R}}d1} (16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}ad1} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}e7} 17.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}c4} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}xf6} 18.a3 a5= Stushkin – Selin, ICCF 2015) 16...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}f6} 17.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}c2} g6 18.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}c4} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}b6} 19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}ac1} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}ad8} 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}e2} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}e7}= Ponomarenko – Naumenko, ICCF 2013.

B) 6.g4 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{g}6}}

7.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}e5}
This is an interesting plan which is used in the last several years by numerous grandmasters. White begins a chase after the enemy bishop on h5 before he has developed his knight on c3. Later, he plans to develop this knight on d2, where it would defend his c4-pawn, contrary to its placement on c3. So, White will be able to develop his bishop on g2 without being afraid of the safety of his c4-pawn.

7.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{c}xd5}} cxd5 – see variation C.

7.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}c3} e6 – see variation D2.

7.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}h4} e6 8.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}xg6} hxg6 – see 7.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Q}}e5}. 
7...e6

8.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}2}}
8.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}3 \textit{bd}7} – see variation D2.}
8.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}2 \textit{bd}7} 9.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}g}6 \textit{hx}g6 – see 8.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}g}6.}}
8.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}g}6 \textit{hx}g6 9.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}2} (9.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}2 \textit{bd}7} – see 8.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}2}; 9.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}3 \textit{bd}7} – see variation D2}) 9...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{bd}7}}

10.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}2 \textit{g}5 – see 8.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}2}}.}}
10.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}3 \textit{dxc}4 – see variation D2.}}

It would be imprecise here for White to play 10.0-0, Grischuk – Mamedyarov, Sochi 2014, because Black can exploit the defencelessness of the e4-square and play 10...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}4!\textcolor{red}{\textit{?}}}}, followed by f7-f5. Then, in the middle game, the weakening of the shelter of White’s king, because of the moves h3 and g4, may hurt him.

10.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}3}, Lysyj – Korchmar, Moscow 2015. This is another interesting idea for White. He protects his e4-pawn with his queen and not with his knight. 10...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}6!?! 11.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}3 \textit{dxc}4}. Without this exchange, Black cannot advance e6-e5. 12.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}4 e}5 13.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{b}3 \textit{exd}4 14.\textit{exd}4. The position is opened, but White’s pawn-weaknesses prevent him from exploiting the power of his bishops. 14.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{b}6 15.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}5 \textit{c}7 16.0-0 0-0 17.a}4 \textit{ab}8=, followed by \textit{f}4 either immediately, or after the preliminary move \textit{h}2.}}}}}}}

8.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{bd}7 9.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}g}6}}
After 9.h4, Black cannot advance his rook pawn, since this would weaken horribly his kingside after the exchange on g6. He can play however: 9...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{dxc}4 10.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}g}6 \textit{hx}g6 11.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}5 \textit{d}5 12.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}4 \textit{b}4+. This is an important check. Black wishes to deprive his opponent of his two-bishop advantage. 13.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}2 \textit{e}7 14.a}3}}}}}}}}}
\textit{\textbf{xd2+ 15.\textit{xd2} \textit{7b6 16.\textit{e5} \textit{d7=}}}} Anton Guijarro – Dvirnyy, Reykjavik 2015. He has obtained a very solid position and White will hardly manage to break it.

\textbf{9...hxg6 10.\textit{g2}}

About 10.g5 \textit{e4 11.\textit{xe4 dxe4}} – see variation D2.

\textbf{10...g5}

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This is an important move. Black not only fixes the enemy pawn on h3, but also frees the g6-square for his knight.

\textbf{11.0-0}

11.\textit{b1}. White is preparing b2-b4, but Black has very good chances of organising counterplay on the kingside. 11...\textit{d6 12.b4 a6 13.a4}, Vitiugov – Geske, Bilbao 2014, 13...\textit{f8??}, followed by \textit{g6, h4}.

11.e4. This pawn-break in the centre seems premature, since following 11...\textit{dxe4 12.\textit{xe4 xe4}} 13.\textit{xe4 a5+ 14.\textit{d2 b4}}, White cannot save his dark-squared bishop from an exchange. After he loses his two-bishop advantage, he would have no compensation for the vulnerability of his h3-pawn. In addition, after Black doubles his rooks on the d-file, White’s d4-pawn would need permanent protection. 15.a3 \textit{xd2+ 16.\textit{xd2 xd2+ 17.xd2 0-0-0??}} Shengelia – Kojima, Tromsoe 2014.

\textbf{11...\textit{d6 12.e1 f8??}}

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Black transfers his knight to the g6-square.

\textbf{13.\textit{b3}}

There arises a complicated positional battle after the line: 13.\textit{cxd5 cxd5 14.c4 g6 15.b3 b8 16.xd6+ xd6=} Javakhishvili – Muzychuk, Batumi 2016. White can hardly advance his e-pawn, since this would weaken the f4-square and Black’s knight would occupy it immediately.
13...b6!?
It seems less precise for Black to choose here 13...b8 14.e4 dxe4 15.\(\text{c5}\) xe4 16.\(\text{xe4}\) Topalov – Caruana, Saint Louis 2016. White’s bishops are very powerful.

14.\(\text{c2}\)
With a black queen on b6 White cannot follow the plan, we have mentioned in our previous comments, connected with the move 14.e4, because at the end of this variation, after \(\text{xb3}\), he will simply lose his h3-pawn.

14...e7
Black defends against c4-c5.

15.\(\text{f3}\) e4 16.\(\text{d1}\) g6

It is rather difficult for White to obtain here even a minimal advantage. In addition, even a single mistake may lead to an inferior position for him, because his kingside has been seriously compromised. 17.\(\text{e5}\) e5 18.\(\text{dxe5}\) c5 19.b3 dxc4. Black is opening the d-file. 20.\(\text{xc4}\) d7 21.\(\text{b2}\) c7. He protects his knight and squeezes his opponent’s pieces with the protection of the e5-pawn at the same time. Black is perfectly prepared to castle kingside, since his king would not be so safe on the queenside. 22.\(\text{c3}\) a5 23.a3 0-0 24.\(\text{e4}\) fd8 25.\(\text{ac1}\) c5 26.e2 \(\text{d5}\). He begins a fight for the d-file. 27.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{ad8=}\) Fraczek – Pereverzev, ICCF 2014.

C) 6.cxd5 cxd5!?  
Now, contrary to the variation 5.cxd5 from the previous chapter, Black does not need to play 6...\(\text{xf3}\) 7.\(\text{xf3}\) cxd5=, although even then his position would look quite reliable.

7.\(\text{c3}\)
Following 7.\(Qa4+\) \(\text{N}b7\) 8.\(d5\), it becomes obvious that the inclusion of the moves \(h3\) and \(b5\) is in favour of Black, because White cannot obtain the two-bishop advantage with the move \(\text{ex}g4\). 8...a6! This is necessary prophylactic against the move \(\text{bx}g4\). 9.\(c3\) b5 10.\(Qb3\) \(\text{exe}5\)? After this interesting pawn-sacrifice Black obtains a lead in development. 11.dxe5 \(\text{d}7\) 12.\(\text{xd}5\) \(e6\) 13.\(\text{d}4\) \(c5\). He develops his bishop with tempo. 14.\(f4\) \(e8\) 15.\(g4\) \(g5\) 16.\(g3\) \(g6\) 17.\(g2\) \(d3\). Black prevents his opponent’s castling kingside. 18.e4 \(b6\) Pawlowski – Klochan, ICCF 2016.

### 7...e6

8.\(d4\)

White cannot achieve much with 8.\(a4+\) \(\text{bd}7\) 9.\(d5\), because Black can simply reply with 9...\(d6\) and after 10.\(b5\)?! a6, obtaining the two-bishop advantage. 11.\(\text{xd}7+\) \(\text{xd}7\) 12.\(\text{xd}7+\) \(\text{xd}7\) 13.\(\text{xd}7\) \(\text{xd}7+\) Koneru – Muzychuk, Monaco 2015.

8.\(b3\). Black parries easily the attack against his b7-pawn. 8...\(c7\) 9.\(e5\) \(c6\) (It seems less reliable for him to opt here for 9...\(\text{fd}7\) 10.\(\text{xd}7+\) \(\text{xd}7\), Yang – Dreev, Las Vegas 2015, 11.e4↑ and White opens advantageously the game in the centre.) 10.\(d2\) \(e7\) 11.\(e1\) 0-0 12.g4 \(g6\) 13.\(xg6\) (There arises a much more complicated game after the move 13.f4. White fortifies his knight on e5, but weakens the e4-square. 13...\(\text{ac}8\)↑ Altrichter – Terekhov, ICCF 2010.) 13...\(xg6\)↓ Pert – Anand, London 2014. White has the two-bishop advantage indeed, but Black has good counterplay on the c-file. Later, he will manage to exploit the misplacement of the enemy queen on b3 winning a tempo (\(a5\)) for the transfer of his knight to the c4-square.

8...\(g6\) 9.\(e5\)

9.\(b3\) \(c7\) 10.\(e5\) \(c6\)= Pert – Anand, London 2014.

9...\(\text{fd}7\)

Black should better exchange immediately the powerful enemy knight.

10.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{xc}6\) 11.\(g2\)

After 11.\(b3\), Khismatullin – Ponkratov, Dagomys 2008, it seems good for Black to continue with 11...\(b6\)!?=, while the pawn-sacrifice 11.e4 \(dxe4\) 12.d5, Makarov – Kotanjian, Samara 2002, leads only to equality after 12...\(c5\)!?=

11...\(c6\)
12.e4
White has the two-bishop advantage and he must strive to open the game. After that he would remain with an isolated pawn in d4, though...

Following 12.0-0 f5, White cannot advance e3-e4. 13...e2, Tregubov – Anand, Bastia 2014, preparing the transfer of the knight to the f4-square. 13...fxg4!? This is Black’s simplest road to equality. 14.f4 gxh3 15.g4 f6 16.xh3 d6 17.xe6+ xe6 18.xe6. Naturally, White cannot capture with his knight due to the loss of a piece. Now however, Black manages to compromise his opponent’s pawn-structure and equalises completely. 18...xf4 19.exf4 xf6 20.e1 d8=

12...dxe4 13.xe4
After 13.xe4, Black’s main task is to fight against the pawn-break d4-d5. 13...b6 14.e3 b4 15.e1 d7 16.g2 e8 17.0-0 xxc3 18.xc3 d5 19.e1 f6 20.d3 f7 21.d2 c7 He has a slight edge thanks to his control over the d5-square.

13...b6!?
This is Black’s most reliable move.

Following 13...b4+ 14.c3 b6 15.0-0 0-0 16.d5 exd5 17.xd5 c5 18.c3=. The position is opened and White preserves good winning chances thanks to his bishop-pair, Carlsen – Nakamura, London 2015.

14.0-0 d6 15.e3 e8 16.c5. White’s knight on c5 is very powerful, but he has no concrete threats. 16...e7 17.c1 0-0 18.a3. He is preparing b2-b4. 18...fd8 19.b4 xc5. Black exchanges the powerful enemy knight. 20.bxc5 d5 21.d2 b6 22.b2 d7 23.fe1 b8=. The position seems approximately equal and after 24.e2 in the game Perez Lopez – Gonzalez Sanchez, ICCF 2016,
Black began to simplify. 24...bxc5 25.dxc5 Nxe3 26.Rxe3 Bxc8 27.Qe1 Qd3 28.Qxd3 Qxd3 29.Qxd1 Qxd1+ 30.Qxd1 Qf8 31.Qd6 Qa5 32.Qa6 Qxc5 33.Qxa7 Qb3 34.a4 g5 35.Qf1 Ec1, draw. White’s outside passed pawn can be stopped easily with the move Ea1, while the pawn on e6 prevents reliably Black of any problems connected with the attack against the f7-square.

D) 6.Qc3 e6

We will analyse as main lines for White here D1) 7.Qb3 and D2) 7.g4.

7.cxd5 cxd5 – see variation C.

White would not achieve much with 7.Qd3 Qbd7 8.0-0 (8.Qb3 Qb8!=) 8...Qd6. We have already analysed a similar position earlier (Chapter 8, variation D), but without the inclusion of the moves h3 – Qh5. This circumstance cannot change the evaluation of the position as approximately equal. 9.b3 (9.e4 dxe4 10.Qxe4 Qxe4 11.Qxe4 0-0 – see variation A) 9...0-0 10.Qb2 Qe8= Zilberman – Huzman, Tel Aviv 1994.

7.Qe2 Qbd7 8.0-0 (8.Qb3 Qb8=) 8...Qd6 9.b3 0-0. Black has completed effortlessly his development and castled. 10.Qb2 Qe7

He connects his rooks and prepares the pawn-advance e6-e5 at an opportune moment.

After 11.Qe1, Black does not need to be in a hurry to play e6-e5 and can follow instead with 11...Qad8= Ftacnik – Barbero, Debrecen 1989.

11.Qd2 Qg6. It would be sufficient for Black to exchange here on e2 in order to equalise, but he can also try to obtain an advantage. 12.c5. This occupation of space on the queenside seems to be premature for White. 12...Qc7 13.f4. He defends against e6-e5, but weakens the e4-square. 13...b6 14.b4, Frare – Dianda, Sao Paulo 2002, 14...Qab8!?? Later, Black can exchange on c5 at the right moment and begin
active actions on the queenside.

There arises a calmer position after 11.Rc1 Rac8 12.Qd2 g6= Alekseev – Lintchevski, St Petersburg 2016.

11.Qe5 xe2 12.Qxe2 Rac8 13.Qc1. White has a slightly freer game, but his bishop on b2 is more passive than its counterpart. 13...c7. Black is preparing xe5. 14.Qf4 Rfd8 15.Qe4 d4 16.Rd1 g5 17.Qd3 h5=

D1) 7.b3 b6

8.Qh4

White has removed his queen from the pin and begins a chase after the enemy light-squared bishop. His purpose is to obtain the two-bishop advantage.

About 8.g4 g6, or 8.xb6 axb6 9.g4 g6 – see variation D2.

As a rule 8.e5 leads to transposition of moves. 8...e7 9.g4 g6 10.Qxg6 (10.d1, Lupulescu – Ragger, Istanbul 2012, 10...b4!?∞) 10...hxg6 – see 8.Qh4.

8...e7

Black should not be in a hurry to play Qbd7, because in some variations his knight on b8 can go to a6 and from there either to c7, or to b4.

9.g4

After 9.d2 Qd7, in order to obtain the two-bishop advantage White must comply with the weakening of his pawn-structure. 10.g4 Qxh4 11.gxh5, Perez Ponsa – Peralta, Argentina 2013, 11...f6!?=

9...g6 10.Qxg6 hxg6
11. \( Bg2 \)
White defends against \( Ng4 \).

He could have protected his pawn with the move 11. \( Rg1 \), but this seems less active than \( Bg2 \), since it does not contribute to the development of his pieces. 11... \( g5 \)

12. \( Bd2 \) \( Nd7 \) 13.0-0-0, Topalov – Steingrimsson, Warsaw 2013, 13... \( dxc4!? \) 14. \( Qxc4 \) \( Nd5 \) 15. \( Kb1 \) \( dxc3+ \) 16. \( xc3 \) \( f6= \) White has the two-bishop advantage, but his pawn on b3 is backward and his king is protected on the kingside by only two pawns, so this might hurt him in the middle game.

After 11.g5 \( Ne4 \) 12. \( Nxe4 \) \( dxe4 \), White will have problems with the protection of his g5-pawn. 13. \( wc2 \) (13. \( g2 \), Ki.Georgiev – Michalik, Dubai 2014, 13... \( Rh4!? \) 13... \( h4 \) 14. \( c5 \) \( Rg8 \) Vareille – Boudre, France 2009.

11... \( g5 \)
Black fixes the enemy weakness on h3 and prepares the manoeuvre \( b8-d7-f8-g6 \).

12. \( Bd2 \)
White prepares castling queenside.

About 12.e4 \( dx4 \) 13. \( wb6 \) \( axb6 \) 14. \( dx4 \) \( dxe4 \) 15. \( xe4 \) \( a6 \) – see 12. \( wb6 \).

There arises an approximately equal endgame after 12. \( wb6 \) \( axb6 \) 13.e4 \( dx4 \) 14. \( dx4 \) \( dxe4 \) 15. \( xe4 \). White has the two-bishop advantage, but Black’s position looks very solid. He must be only on the alert about the possible pawn-break in the centre d4-d5. 15... \( a6 \). This is the simplest for him – to transfer the knight to the c7-square. 16. \( e3 \) \( c7= \) B.Socko – Michalik, Germany 2014.

12.c5. White occupies space on the queenside. Now, the position becomes closed and he will hardly manage to prove the power of his bishops. 12... \( wb3 \) 13. \( axb3 \) \( a6!? \) This is why Black was not in a hurry to play \( d7 \). 14. \( d2 \) (The move 14.f4 cannot even equalise for White. 14... \( gxf4 \) 15. \( exf4 \), Miroshnichenko – Predojevic, Kragujevac 2009, 15... \( b4!? \) 16. \( d2 \) \( d7 \) Black’s knight on b4 causes disharmony in White’s position.) 14... \( c7 \). Black plans to play a7-a6 and 0-0-0, after which White will be incapable of breaking on the queenside. 15.f4 (15. \( b4 \) \( d7 \) 16.e4. Without this move Black will advance e6-e5. 16... \( dx4 \) 17. \( dx4 \) \( f6 \) 18. \( c3 \) a6 19.0-0-0 0-0-0 20.f4 \( xf4 \) 21. \( xf4 \) e5 22. \( xe5 \) \( xe5= \), followed by \( e6 \). White’s bishops cannot be activated at all.) 15... \( xf4 \) 16. \( exf4 \), Wang – Aronian, Linares 2009, 16... \( e4!? \) This temporary pawn-sacrifice is Black’s simplest way of equalising. 17. \( dx4 \) \( dx4 \) 18. \( f6 \) He simply increases the pressure against the enemy d4-pawn and White’s defensive moves are exhausted quickly. 19. \( e3 \) \( b5 \) 20.0-0-0 0-0-0=
12.0-0 .bd7 13.e1 (The exchange 13..xb6 only helps Black to activate his rook on a8. 13...xb6 14.cxd5 xd5= Wang – Inarkiev, Elista 2008; 13.e1, Dreev – Inarkiev, Sochi 2012, 13..xb3 14.axb3 a6=} 13..xb3 14.axb3 a6

Black deploys his pawns according to the rules – on squares opposite of the colour of his bishop. The only exception is the move g6-g5, but that was necessary for him to ensure the g6-square for his knight.

After 15.cxd5, Galliamova – Girya, Sochi 2016, Black can simply capture with his knight and to follow this with b4. 15...xd5!?

After 15..d2 0-0-0 16.f3, Black can begin the standard transfer for similar positions of his knight to the g6-square. 16..f8 17.e2 g6 Batsiashvili – Girya, Germany 2016.

15.f3 d8 16.d2 f8 17.f2 (17.e2 g6 18.f2 h4= Galliamova – Girya, Novosibirsk 2016) 17..g6 18.a4 d7. Black prevents his opponent’s knight to go to b6, or c5. 19.cxd5 exd5 20.b4. White is preparing c5. 20..b8. Black has in mind in advance to counter the penetration of the enemy knight. 21.c5 b6. Naturally, he refrains from xc5, since this would improve White’s queenside pawn-structure. 22.f1 d6= Joppich – Szczepanski, ICCF 2016. White can hardly find a way of improving his position, because after the pawn-advance e3–e4, Black’s pieces will gain access to the f4-square.

12..bd7

13.0-0-0

After 13..c2, Kuraszkiewicz – Boehnisch, Germany 2012, Black can simply capture the pawn and White will have to waste too much time in order to regain it. 13..xc4!?

Following 13.0-0, Wang Hao – Movsesian, Huai’an 2016, Black can accomplish his standard manoeuvre
13...\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} f8! =

After 13.\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} c1 \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} xb3 14.axb3, Kobo – Tate, Caleta 2017, 14...a6!? =, Black’s position remains very solid.

If 13.\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} a4, Black has the powerful resource 13...c7, threatening to win a pawn with the move \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} b6. 14.cxd5 exd5 15.c2 0-0-0 16.c1 \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} b6. Black defends against \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} xd5. 17.f5+ f7 18.xd7+ xd7. There has arisen a transfer into an approximately equal endgame. 19.b3. White prevents the manoeuvre of the enemy knight to the c4-square. 19...\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} e8. Black intends to deploy his knight on e6, so that his pressure against the d4-square would impede White’s break in the centre after f2-f3 and e3-e4. 20.0-0 \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} c8 21.e2 \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} c7 = Novak – Szczepanski, ICCF 2016.

13...\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} xb3 14.axb3 0-0-0

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15.\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} c2

White will hardly manage to prove the power of his bishops in this endgame.

After the immediate opening of the centre with 15.e4, the position will be simplified even more. 15...\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} e4 16.\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} e4 dxe4 17.\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} e4 f6 = Kogler – Emelyanov, ICCF 2014.

After his alternatives Black also obtains a good game by transferring his knight to the g6-square: 15.\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} f1, Bachmann – Negi, Graz 2014, 15...\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} f8! =, or 15.e5 \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} f8 16.b4 a6 17.f3 g6 = Movsesian – Najer, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013, or 15.f3 \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} f8 16.f1 g6 = Sargissian – Jakovenko, Yerevan 2014.

15...\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} f8 16.f3

There arises a sharper position after 16.\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} a1 \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} b8 17.e4 \textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} xe4 18.\textcolor{red}{\textepslongdashbox{1cm}} xe4 dxe4 19.a5, but even then, Black holds his defence successfully. 19...f6 20.c3 g6 21.xe4 f4 = Jorgensen – Andersen, ICCF 2009. His pressure against the h3-pawn provides him with counterplay sufficient to maintain the equality.
16...\textit{g}6 17.\textit{e}1 \textit{h}4 18.\textit{x}h4 \textit{x}h4= Dreev – Najer, Moscow 2013. Black has forced the exchange of the enemy bishop for his knight and has a quite acceptable position.

D2) 7.g4
This is White’s most principled move.

7...\textit{g}6

8.\textit{e}5
White wishes to realise the main idea of the variation with 4.e3 – the exchange of the knight on f3 for the enemy light-squared bishop.

8.cxd5 cxd5 – see variation C.

8.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}6 9.\textit{x}b6 (9.\textit{e}5 \textit{bd}7 10.\textit{x}g6 \textit{hxg6} – see 8.\textit{e}5) 9...\textit{axb6}. The transfer into an endgame leads to a complicated fight. 10.\textit{e}5 \textit{bd}7 11.\textit{x}g6 \textit{hxg6} 12.cxd5 exd5 13.g5 \textit{g}8\div, followed by b6-b5, \textit{b}6, or \textit{e}7-f5, Milos – Vitiugov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

8.\textit{h}4. This chase after the enemy bishop seems less precise for White here, because after 8...\textit{e}4, the placement of his knight at the edge of the board does not beautify his position. 9.f3 \textit{fd}7 10.\textit{g}2. This is his most reasonable decision. (After 10.fxe4 \textit{x}h4+ 11.\textit{d}2, there are still too many pieces left on the board and White’s king might be endangered in the middle game. 11...dxc4 12.\textit{xc}4, Lysyj – Najer, Zvenigorod 2008, 12...\textit{d}8!?\div) 10...\textit{g}6. Black has managed to save his light-squared bishop from an exchange. 11.\textit{b}3 \textit{a}6
12.cxd5 (After 12.a3 Qb6=, the juxtaposition of the queens will be in favour of Black, because after the removal of White’s pawn from the a2-square, his queen will remain defenceless.) 12...exd5 13.f4 f5 14.d2 e7. Black is threatening to deprive his opponent of his castling rights after h4. 15.g5. After this move, the position is closed. 15...0-0 16.h4 h5 17.e2 xe2 18.xe2. White has more space, but his bishop may turn out to be “bad”. 18...b6 19.xb6 xb6 20.g3 g6. Almost all Black’s pawns are deployed according to the rules, i.e. on squares opposite of the colour of his bishop, which cannot be said about their white counterparts. 21.f3 e8 22.b3 c5= Vecek – Valli, ICCF 2015. Black should not be afraid of the capturing on c5 and the appearance of an isolated pawn in his position, because in that case White’s pawn on e3 will also become a target for an attack.

8...bd7

9.xg6
Capturing with the queen 9.b3? will be a mistake, because after 9...xe5 10.dxe5 d7, Black can sacrifice advantageously his pawns on b7 and c6, obtaining very powerful initiative for them. 11.xb7 (11.cxd5, D.Gurevich – Dautov, Moscow 2001, 11...exd5!?++) 11...b8 12.xe6 b4 13.d2 0-0 14.0-0 e5 15.a4, Stefansson – Dreev, Berlin 2015, 15...b6!?–+. Black’s attack is impossible to parry..

Or 9.cxd5 xe5 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.dxe5, B.Socko – Dreev, Warsaw 2013, 11...d7!?∞ White can hardly hold on to his extra pawn, because he lags horribly in development.

After 9.h4, Black must play very precisely. 9...dxc4!
This is his only move! The pawn-advance h7-h6, after the exchange \( \texttt{Nxg6} \), would lead to a horrible weakening of his kingside pawn-structure. Therefore, he must save his bishop on g6 in a tactical fashion.

Following 10.h5 \( \texttt{Oxe5} \) 11.hxg6 \( \texttt{Oxg6} \) 12.\( \texttt{Bxc4} \) \( \texttt{Bb4} \), White does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn, Pira – Postny, Le Port Marly 2009.

10.\( \texttt{Oxc4} \). Now, White’s knight is not threatening to capture on g6, so Black can play simply 10...h6, for example: 11.\( \texttt{g2} \), Fominyh – Abdulla, Dhaka 2002, 11...\( \texttt{Ec8} \)!

10.\( \texttt{Oxg6} \) hxg6

11.g5 \( \texttt{Od5} \) 12.\( \texttt{xc4} \) \( \texttt{b6} \) 13.\( \texttt{e2} \) (13.\( \texttt{f1} \) \( \texttt{b4} \) 14.\( \texttt{d2} \) \( \texttt{e7} \)= Schenk – Bieluszewski, Koge 2010)

13...\( \texttt{b4} \) 14.\( \texttt{d2} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 15.a3 \( \texttt{xc3} \) 16.\( \texttt{xc3} \). White has the two bishop advantage, but he can hardly find a safe haven for his king. 16...\( \texttt{a5} \) 17.f4 0-0-0 18.\( \texttt{c2} \) \( \texttt{b8} \) 19.\( \texttt{b1} \) \( \texttt{c8} \) 20.\( \texttt{f3} \) \( \texttt{a8} \) 21.\( \texttt{f2} \) \( \texttt{d6} \infty \), followed by \( \texttt{f5} \) with powerful pressure against the pawn on h4, Fischer – Saidashev, ICCF 2014.

11.\( \texttt{xc4} \) \( \texttt{d5} \) 12.h5 (12.g5 \( \texttt{b6} \) – see 11.g5) 12...\( \texttt{gxh5} \) 13.\( \texttt{gxh5} \) \( \texttt{f6} \)= Benson – Maatman, Groningen 2014. White has a bishop-pair, but his kingside pawn-structure has been compromised.

9...\( \texttt{hxg6} \)
There has arisen a position whose evaluation is critical for the fate of the variation 4.e3 \(g4\). White has the two-bishop advantage, but Black’s position is rather difficult to break.

10.\(b2\)

10.\(d3\) \(b4\) 11.\(d2\) \(dxc4\) – see 10.\(d2\).

After 10.\(f3\), Black can play in the spirit of the Nimzo-Indian: 10...\(b4\) 11.\(d3\), Golod – Petrosyan, Yerevan 2014 (11.\(d2\) \(xc3\) – see 10.\(d2\)) 11...c5!?∞

There arises a very complicated position after 10.\(b3\) \(xg4\) 11.\(g2\) \(h6\) and here, it would be bad for White to choose 12.e4?! in view of 12...\(dxe4\) 13.\(xb7\), Hebden – Jaunooby, Wakefield 2016, 13...\(f5\)!?

10.\(g2\). This pawn-sacrifice seems rather dubious. 10...\(dxc4\) 11.\(e2\) \(b6\) 12.0-0 \(c7\) 13.e4 \(e5\) Hebden – Melkumyan, London 2012.

10.\(cxd5\). White clarifies the pawn-structure in the centre with this move. 10...\(exd5\)

11.a3 \(d6=\) Arutinian – Hovhannisyan, Gyumri 2009.

11.\(d2\) \(b4\) or 11.\(d3\) \(b4\) 12.\(d2\) \(e7\) – see 10.\(d2\).

11.g5 \(h7\) 12.f4 \(d6\) 13.\(d3\) \(e7\). Black wishes to evacuate his king to the queenside, since if he castles kingside, White will develop a crushing attack with the move h4-h5. 14.\(f3\) 0-0-0 15.\(d2\) \(b8\) 16.0-0-0 \(hf8\) 17.h4, Batsiashvili – Asan, Kocaeli 2014, 17...\(b6\)!?

10.a3. White prevents \(b4\), but the move a2-a3 may turn out to be not so useful for him. 10...\(g5\)
11...g2, Kozul – Haba, Austria 2014, 11...dxc4?!±
11...cxd5, Kozul – Ribli, Slovenia 2013, 11...exd5?!=

After 11.c5, Black can accomplish the standard plan for similar positions with the transfer of his knight to the g6-square. 11...e7 12.b4, Spoelman – Giri, Amstelveen 2015, 12...f8?!∞

11...f3 d6 12.d2 e7 – see 11.d2.

11.d2 d6 12.f3 e7 13.0-0-0 0-0-0. Black’s king will be much safer on the queenside than on the kingside. 14.b1 (14.d3 b8 15.b1, Levin – Zhurikhin, St Petersburg 2013, 15...c7?!=) 14...b8 15.c1 (15.d3 c7 – see 14.d3; 15.g2 c7= Cheparinov – Potkin, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013; 15.e4. This pawn-advance in the centre leads to the simplification of the position. 15...dxe4 16.xe4 xe4 17.xe4, Inarkiev – Mamedyarov, Sochi 2014, 17...e5?!=) 15..c7 16.c2, Ivanchuk – Potkin, Havana 2012, 16...f8!?!=, followed by g6.

After 10.g5, Black can deploy his knight at the centre of the board without being afraid of the doubling of his pawns. 10...e4 11.xe4 dxe4

There arises an approximately equal endgame after 12.g4 a5+ 13.e2 e7 14.g2 xg5 15.xg5 xg5= Lysyj – Potkin, Taganrog 2011. White has the two-bishop advantage, but his kingside pawn-structure has been compromised.

12.h4 b4+. Black exploits White’s lag in development and deprives him of his two-bishop advantage. 
13.\(\text{\textit{d2 \textit{a5}}}\) 14.\(\text{a3 \textit{d2+}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{d2+}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{d2 f5}}\)

17.g2, Blomqvist – Smith, Uppsala 2016, 17...0-0-0= 
17.gxf6 gxf6 18.e2 e7 19.\(\text{ag1 ag8} \text{20.b4 f5} \text{21.a4 e5} \text{22.c5 exd4} \text{23.exd4 f6=} \text{, taking the d5-square under a reliable control, Efremov – Emelyanov, ICCF 2015}. \text{Black is not worse at all thanks to his superior pawn-structure.}\)

17.c5. White prepares the development of his bishop to the c4-square. 17.e5 18.c4 e7 19.b4 d8= Ljubicic – Cornejo, ICCF 2015. It is inconceivable how White can break his opponent’s position.

10...b4
Black develops his bishop to an active position.

11.cxd5
White clarifies the pawn-structure in the centre.

11.c1, Bareev – Najer, Philadelphia 2009, 11.g5!?=

Following 11.f3, Black can simplify considerably the position with 11...xc3 12.xc3 e4 13.e1 xc3 14.xc3 b6= Walther – Hinz, Germany 2013.

11.f3. White takes the important e4-square under control, but weakens the e1-h4 diagonal. 11...dxc4 12.xc4 d5 13.b3 a5= Ivanchuk – Topalov, Tromsoe 2014.

It seems too straightforward for White to choose here 11.d3, because he loses a tempo after 11...dxc4.
12. \texttt{Bxc4 Bxc3} 13. \texttt{Bxc3 Qe4} 14. \texttt{Qc2 Qxc3} 15. \texttt{Qxc3 b6} 16. \texttt{f1 d5} 17. \texttt{g1}, Miton – Prie, Elgoibar 2007, 17...g5!!

There arises a very complicated position after 11. \texttt{Qb3}. White wishes to trade his g4-pawn for the enemy b7-pawn after which his kingside and Black’s queenside will be considerably weakened. 11... \texttt{Bxc3} 12. \texttt{Bxc3 Nxc4} 13. \texttt{Qg2} (It would be premature for White to opt here for 13. \texttt{Qxb7}!?, because after 13... \texttt{Rb8} 14. \texttt{Bxc6 Qf6} White’s threat to capture on f2 would force White to part with an exchange. 15. \texttt{hxg4} \texttt{Fxh1} \texttt{µ} Stefansson – Solak, Baku 2016.) 13... \texttt{h6} 14. \texttt{Qxb7 Qf5} 15. \texttt{c5}. White fixes the enemy weakness on c6. (15. \texttt{Qxc6 e8} 16. \texttt{a4 Exc4} 17. \texttt{Qxa7 0-0} 18. \texttt{Qf1 Qe7} 19. \texttt{a5 Qf6} 20. \texttt{d3 Qb8} 21. \texttt{a4 Qh4} \texttt{µ} Zalcik – Hauser, ICCF 2012. The activity of Black’s pieces compensates with an interest his minimal material deficit.) 15... \texttt{Qc8} 16.0-0-0, Levin – Yevseev, St Petersburg 2012, 16... \texttt{Qf6}!? 17. \texttt{Qxa7 Qh4} \texttt{µ}

11...\texttt{exd5}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
12. \texttt{Qb3}  \\
12. \texttt{g2 e7} 13. \texttt{c2} (It seems premature for White to play here 13.0-0, Kozul – Perisic, Bizovac 2005, 13... \texttt{xc3}?! 14. \texttt{Qxc3 e4} \texttt{µ}; 13.a3 \texttt{xc3} 14. \texttt{Qxc3 e4} 15. \texttt{c2} \texttt{xc3} = Bareev – Nepomniachtchi, Moscow 2010.) 13... \texttt{b6} 14.b3 \texttt{a5} \texttt{µ} Werner – Mannanov, ICCF 2013.  \\
12. \texttt{d3 e7} 13. \texttt{e2} (13. \texttt{b3 0-0-0} – see 12. \texttt{b3}). Here, Black can simplify advantageously the position with the line: 13... \texttt{e4} 14. \texttt{xe4 dxex4} = Svetushkin – Prie, Gap 2008.  \\
12...\texttt{e7} 13. \texttt{f3}  \\
13.d3 0-0-0 14.0-0-0 \texttt{xc3} (or 14... \texttt{b8} = Kovalyov – Adams, Tromsoe 2014) 15. \texttt{xc3 h7}. Black is preparing the doubling of his rooks on the h-file in order to organise an attack against the pawn on h3. 16. \texttt{b4 e6} 17.g5 \texttt{e4} 18. \texttt{xe4}. His pieces are very active and White is forced to part with his two-bishop advantage. 18... \texttt{xe4} 19. \texttt{d6 b6} 20.h4 \texttt{b7} 21. \texttt{g3 f8} = Bars – Stromberg, ICCF 2014.
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
13...0-0  
Now, contrary to the variations, we have already analysed, Black can castle kingside, since White fails to organise an attack against the enemy king.  
14.h4 c5  
Black follows the classical principles. He inflicts a counter strike in the centre against his opponent’s flank attack.  
15.\f2 \f8 16.h5 g5  
Black prevents the opening of files on the kingside.  
17.\e1 \e6 18.d3 \b6  
He is preparing the transfer of his knight to the c4-square.  
19.c2 c4 20.xc4  
Black’s knight is very active and White is forced to exchange it.  
20...dxc4 21.a3 xc3 22.xc3 \ad8  
Black’s pieces have been very harmoniously deployed, while the position of White’s king is not reliable at all. Therefore, he has no chances of maintaining an advantage in the middle game, but the transfer into an endgame cannot provide him with much either.  
23.f5 xf5 24.gxf5 \d5= Neto – Vassia, ICCF 2015.
Part 3

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6

In this part of the book we will analyse all the possibilities for White after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6, besides 5.e3 (Part 4) and 5.Bg5 (part 5). The tenth chapter of the book will be devoted to White’s early queen-sortie (5.Qb3). In Chapter 11 we will deal with the interesting hybrid between the Semi-Slav Defence and the Catalan Opening – 5.g3, while in Chapter 12 we will analyse 5.cxd5 exd5, after which there arises by transposition a line from the exchange variation of the Queen’s Gambit, but not in the best version for White.

Chapter 10

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6

5.Qb3
White protects his c4-pawn, but his queen enters the actions too early. Later, Black will manage to win a tempo for the development of his queenside by playing b7-b5 after the preliminary exchange on c4.


White has tried in more than a hundred games the move 5.a3?! but after dxc4±, he has no compensation for the pawn at all.
White obtains a difficult position after 5.Bf4 dxc4 6.e3 (6.e4?! b5 7.Qc2 b7 – see 5.Qc2) 6...b5 7.a4 b4 Golombek – Wade, Nottingham 1946.

It seems rather dubious for White to opt here for 5.Qc2, since following 5...dxc4, he will have problems to prove that his pawn-centre and lead in development are sufficient to compensate the sacrificed pawn. 6.e4 (White should possibly prefer here the more modest move 6.a4, preventing b7-b5. 6...c5 7.e3 Qc6. Black exploits the drawbacks of the move 5.Qc2. White will have difficulties to protect his pawn on d4. 8.exd4 cxd4 9.exd4 Qxd4 10.Qxd4 Qd5+ 11.Qd2 Qe5 13.0-0 c5∞ Ooms – Vul, Cappelle-la-Grande 1995. If Black succeeds in completing his development, White will not have compensation for his material deficit.) 6...b5

7.g5 h6 – see Chapter 20.
7.f4 b7 8.e2 Qd7 9.0-0 Qe7 10.e4 0-0 11.Qf1, Fornal – Bashkov, Katowice 1993, 11...h6
7.g3 Qb7 8.g2 Qd7 9.0-0 Qe7 10.h3 a6 Spassky – Bagirov, Leningrad 1960.

After 7.a4, White cannot obtain compensation for the pawn. 7...a6 8.axb5 (8.e2 b7 9.g5 h6! Lukasova – Kuhl, ICCF 2014) 8.cxb5 9.e5 Qd5 10.Qxb5 axb5! Black sacrifices the exchange and seizes completely the initiative. 11.Qxa8 Qb7 12.Qa7 Qb4 13.Qd1 Qe4 Gelfand – Bacrot, Albert 2002.
7.e2 Qb7 8.0-0 Qe7 9.e5. White’s pawn frees a square for the knight, but now Black’s knight also gains access to a very good square at the centre of the board. (9.g5 h6 10.h4 Qd7 11.b3, Rausis – Goloshchapov, Cairo 2000, 11...g5!? 12.g3 b4 13.Qd4 c3∞) 9.Qd5 10.Qe4

10.h6. This is important prophylactic; otherwise, White will play Qg5 and will penetrate to the d6-square after the trade of the dark-squared bishops. 11.b3 cxb3 12.axb3 Qa6. Black prepares the
transfer of his knight to b4. 13.\texttt{b}b2 \texttt{ab}4 14.\texttt{d}d2 0-0 15.\texttt{fc}1 a5 16.\texttt{c}c5 \texttt{c}7 17.\texttt{d}d1 \texttt{fd}8+ Babychuk – Tkachenko, ICCF 2016. He has managed to complete the development of his pieces. White is dominant over the c5-square, but this does not compensate fully his sacrificed pawn.

5...dxc4 6.\texttt{xc}4 b5

Now, White must make up his mind where to retreat with his queen: A) 7.\texttt{b}3, or B) 7.\texttt{d}3.

A) 7.\texttt{b}3
White’s queen is not so active here as on the d3-square, since it does not control the important central e4-square and does not protect the d4-pawn.

7...\texttt{bd}7
This is a very elastic move for Black. Later, depending on circumstances, he can advance c6-c5 after b5-b4, c6-c5, as well as following a7-a6, c6-c5.

8.\texttt{g}5
The pawn-sacrifice 8.e4 seems too risky for White. 8...b4 9.\texttt{a}a4 \texttt{xe}4 10.\texttt{d}d3 \texttt{ef}6 11.\texttt{g}5, Vaganian – Chekhov, Vilnius 1980, 11...\texttt{d}6!?+, followed by 0-0. Black’s queenside is a bit weak, but this does not compensate fully White’s material deficit.

8.g3. White’s plan to fianchetto his light-squared bishop takes too much time. 8...b4 9.\texttt{a}a4 c5 10.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{b}7 11.\texttt{xc}5 (11.0-0 \texttt{d}5 12.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{c}8 13.dxc5 \texttt{xc}5= Mihajlovskij – Matlakov, St Petersburg 2008) 11...\texttt{xc}5 12.dxc5 \texttt{xc}5. He must play very precisely in order to neutralise the activity of Black’s pieces. 13.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{xe}3 14.\texttt{xe}3, Marsalek – Dufek, Czech Republic 1995, 14...\texttt{b}6!? 15.\texttt{f}4 0-0 16.0-0 h6 17.\texttt{fc}1 \texttt{ac}8=

8...a6
Black is perfectly prepared for the pawn-advance c6-c5.

**9.e4**

9.e3. This move is too passive. 9...c5 10...e2 b7 11.0-0, Piasetski – Grandelius, Gibraltar 2016, 11...d6!? 12.fd1 c4 13.c2 h6 14.h4 c7

9.d1 c7 10.g3 c5 11.xf6 xf6 12.g2 b7 13.0-0, Timoscenko – Rogozenco, Berlin 1994, 13...c8!?

The move 9.a4 leads to a complicated position. 9...a5 10.xf6, Bachmann – Santiago, Neuquen 2015, 10...xf6 Black’s two-bishop advantage may be a serious trump for him in the future.

9...c5 10.d5 c4 11.e2, Korchnoi – Novikov, Pamplona 1990, 11...e7!? Black has succeeded in occupying space on the queenside. He is not afraid of the exchange on c6, because he would easily protect this pawn.

**B) 7.d3**

White’s queen is more actively placed here than on the b3-square.

7...b7

8.e4

This is his most active move. He occupies immediately the centre with his pawns.

The move 8.a3 looks too passive. 8...a6. Black is quite ready to advance c6-c5. 9.e4 (9.e3 c5 10.dxc5 xc5 11.xd8+ xd8 12.d2 e7= Karpov – Kasparov, Las Palmas 1996) 9...c5 10.e5. This move seems too ambitious, because now Black can occupy with tempo additional space on the queenside.

(White had better think already about equality: 10.dxc5 xd3 11.xd3 xc5= Stojanovic – Dgebuadze, Basel 2010.) 10...c4 11.c2 d5 12.e2 e7 13.0-0 0-0 Dimov – Petkov, ICCF 2009. The dominance over the d5-square provides Black with better prospects.

White cannot achieve much with 8.g3, because Black can counter that with the energetic response 8...c5!= and it would be bad for White to play 9.xb5+?!, because of 9...e6 10.c4 cxd4 11.b1, Tunik – Lintchevski, Kazan 2014, 11...bd7!?. Black exploits the defencelessness of the enemy bishop on c1 and completes quickly the development of his queenside pieces. 12.xc6? c8=+

8.g5. This pin is harmless for Black. 8...bd7

9.g3. This move does not combine well with 8.g5. Here, after h7-h6, White’s bishop cannot retreat to the h4-square. 9...a6 10.a4 (10.Ed1, Bartel – Werle, Novi Sad 2009, 10...c5!? 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.g2 b6 13.0-0 0-0= Black’s pieces are more actively deployed.) 10.e3 h6 12.gxf6 gxf6 13.Ed1 b6 14.a4 c4 15.b2 b4= Norowitz – Naroditsky, Reykjavik 2015. Black has two powerful bishops.

9.a3 h6 10.f4, Portisch – Nogueiras Santiago, Brussels 1988, 10...a6!? 11.e3 e7 12.e2 c5 13.e3 0-0=

9.e3 a6. If Black manages to advance c6-c5, he will not be worse at all.

10.e2 (10.a4 e7 11.e2 0-0 12.0-0 h6 13.xf6 xf6= Matsenko – Potkin, St Petersburg 2014. White has succeeded in impeding the pawn-advance c6-c5, but Black has the two-bishop advantage and a solid position.) 10...c5 11.0-0 e7 12.Ed1 (12.dxc5 xc5 13.Ed8+ Ed8 14.Ec1 0-0 15.d4 Ec8= Andersson – Beliavsky, Parnu 1997) 12...0-0 13.dxc5 xc5 14.ed4 xd4 15.Ed4, Karpov – Timman, Netherlands 1993. The queens have been exchanged early in the game, but Black can still seize the initiative: 15.h6!? 16.h4 Ed8= White must play very accurately; otherwise, Black’s edge will increase.

8...b4
Black outstout immediately the enemy knight to the edge of the board.

9.a4 bd7
10.e5
The move 10.e2 leads to a complicated fight. 10...Qa5 11.b3 c5 12.e5 Qd5 13.0-0 Qe7 14.Qd2 0-0 15.Qc1 cxd4 16.Qxd4 Qc8 17.a3 Qxc1+ 18.Qxc1 Qd8= Knoll – Mignon, ICCF 2011. Black can hope to equalise thanks to his powerful knight at the centre of the board.
10.e3. White wishes to impede Black’s freeing pawn-break c6-c5. 10...Qe7 11.Qd2 0-0

Following 12.Qb3, Black can continue with 12...a5, preparing the transfer of his bishop to the b5-square. 13.f3 Qa6 14.Qc2 Qb5 15.Qbc5 Qxc5 16.Qxc5 Qd7 17.Qxd7 Qxd7= Dreev – Van Wely, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005. The position has been simplified after the exchange of the knights. The slight weakness of the c6-pawn is compensated by Black’s lead in development.
12.f3. White protects reliably his e4-pawn. 12...Qa5 13.Qc2 Qac8 14.Qc5. Without this move Black will advance c6-c5. Now however, after 14...Qxc5 15.dxc5 Qd7, White’s pawn on c5 would need protection. 16.Qb3 Qa4 17.0-0-0 Qfd8 18.Qb1 Qa6 19.Qd4 Qxf1 20.Qxf1 Qb5 21.Qfd1. White’s pieces are more actively deployed, but his initiative gradually reaches its dead end. 21...Qf8. Black continues to simplify the position. 22.Qxd8 Qxd8 23.Qxd8 Qxd8 24.Qc1 Qe7 25.Qd3 Qb7 26.f4 a5 27.Qc4 e5 28.Qf5 Qd7. Black’s position is impossible to break. 29.Qd3 Qa8 30.Qc2 h6 31.g3 Qg5 32.Qf2 Qa7 33.h3 Qe7 34.b3 Qa8 35.Qb2 Qf8 36.Qa4 Qb7 37.Qd3 Qa8, draw, Vinchev – Busenberg, ICCF 2015.
After 10.Qg5, it seems good for Black to play 10...Qa5, running away with his queen from the pin with tempo. 11.b3 c5
There arises a very complicated position after 12.d5 exd5 13.exd5 \( \text{\#d6} \)∞ Bu Xiangzhi – Gasanov, Moscow 2010.

12.\( \text{\#xf6} \). White weakens his opponent’s pawn-structure on the kingside, but presents Black with the two-bishop advantage. 12...gxf6 13.e2 (13.dxc5?! \( \text{\#c6} \)† Dzagnidze – Cramling, Monaco 2015; 13.d5?! \( \text{\#g8} \) 14.\( \text{\#e3} \) 0-0-0 15.0-0-0 \( \text{\#b6} \) 16.\( \text{\#xb6} + \text{axb6} \)† Kirienko – Bogatov, ICCF 2011. White’s king is not so safe as its counterpart.) 13...exd4 14.0-0 (14.\( \text{\#xd4} \) \( \text{\#e7} \)† Black’s two-bishop advantage provides him with a stable advantage in this open position.) 14...\( \text{\#c5} \) 15.\( \text{\#b5} \). White must continue to simplify the position; otherwise, he might even fail to equalise. 15...\( \text{\#xb5} \) 16.\( \text{\#xb5} + \text{\#d8} \) 17.\( \text{\#xd4} \) \( \text{\#xa4} \) 18.\( \text{\#xa4} \) a6 19.\( \text{\#c6} \). White deprives his opponent of his bishop-pair and the position becomes balanced. 19...\( \text{\#xc6} \) 20.\( \text{\#xc6} + \text{\#d7} \)∞ Bennett – Rivas Maceda, ICCF 2015.

10...\( \text{\#d5} \)

11.\( \text{\#d2} \)

11.e2 \( \text{\#a5} \) 12.b3 \( \text{\#b6} \) 13.\( \text{\#xb6} \), Blagojevic – Marjanovic, Kragujevac 2013, 13...\( \text{axb6} \)!† White is unlikely to manage to equalise due to the vulnerability of his backward a2-pawn.

It would be too active for him to choose 11.\( \text{\#g5} \), because the passive placement of his other knight at the edge of the board would preclude him from seizing the initiative. 11...\( \text{\#e7} \) 12.e4 (12.\( \text{\#g3} \)† \( \text{\#a5} \) 13.b3 \( \text{\#c5} \)† Gonzalez Zamora – Quesada Perez, Merida 2015) 12.\( \text{\#a5} \) 13.b3 \( \text{\#b6} \)† Stupak – Duda, Lublin 2013. The edge of the board is not the best place for a knight indeed, but the knight on a4 prevents Black’s pawn-break c6-c5. Therefore, his desire to exchange it is easily understandable.

11.d2. White is preparing the transfer of his knight on b3 to the e4-square. 11...\( \text{\#e7} \) 12.b3 \( \text{\#b6} \) 13.\( \text{\#xb6} \) \( \text{\#xb6} \) 14.\( \text{\#g3} \). White cannot prevent Black’s pawn-advance c6-c5, but can deprive his opponent
of his castling rights with active actions on the kingside. 14...\textit{f}8 15.\textit{c}3 \textit{c}7 16.\textit{c}4 c5= Stephan – Noble, ICCF 2013.

11...\textit{b}5b6!? 12.\textit{c}2

12.\textit{x}b6, Tregubov – Yakovich, Paris 2005, 12...axb6!=

12...\textit{x}xa4 13.\textit{xa}4 a5

Black’s plan is quite simple: \textit{e}7, 0-0, c6-c5 and White can hardly manage to counter it effectively.

14.\textit{c}1

After White’s alternatives, Black seizes the initiative. For example: 14.\textit{e}2 \textit{e}7 15.\textit{c}1 0-0 16.0-0 c5= Banschchikov – Sutkalenko, ICCF 2013, or 14.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}7 15.\textit{x}e7 \textit{xe}7 16.\textit{d}3 c5= Williams – Wells, Edinburgh 2003.

14...\textit{e}7\textit{∞} Black’s prospects are not worse at all. Later, in the game Tregubov – Yakovich, Kazan 2005, White played carelessly 15.\textit{d}3? and after 15...\textit{c}5 16.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5=+, he suffered material losses.
This is something like a hybrid between the Semi-Slav Defence and the Catalan Opening. White wishes to develop his king’s bishop to the g2-square ignoring the fate of his pawn on c4.

5...dxc4!
This is Black’s most principled move. He captures his opponent’s defenceless pawn. Later however, he must play very precisely, since he lags in development and his light-squared bishop is severely restricted by his own pawns.

6.g2
6.g5 b5 – see Chapter 19.

6.a4. With this move White impedes b7-b5 indeed, but weakens the b4-square. In addition, the move a2-a4 does not contribute to the development of his pieces. 6...c5! Black inflicts an energetic strike against the enemy centre and is trying to seize the initiative.

7.g5, Akobian – Shen, Gibraltar 2008, 7...c6!?
7.e3. White’s bishop is unstable on this square. 7...g4 Khader – Mohammad, Dubai 2011.

7.dxc5. After this straightforward transfer into an endgame White cannot even equalise. 7...xd1+ 8.xd1 a6. This is Black’s most precise move. He wishes to capture on c5 with his knight and not with his bishop. 9.g2 xc5 Stupak – Reshetnikov, Moscow 2011. White’s queenside has been weakened by the pawn-advance a2-a4 and regaining the pawn on c4 would take too much time for him.
7.\textgreek{b}2 \textgreek{c}6 8.\textgreek{d}xc5 (8.e3 \textgreek{c}xd4 9.\textgreek{d}xd4, Tukmakov – Drozdovskij, Odessa 2006, 9...\textgreek{a}5†) 8...\textgreek{w}xd1+ 9.\textgreek{b}xd1, Lalith – Kohlweyer, Gibraltar 2016, 9...\textgreek{a}5?! In both these variations Black’s knight will be perfectly placed at the edge of the board, because from the a5-square it not only protects reliably the pawn on c4, but can also go to the b3-square.

After 6.\textgreek{e}5, Black’s simplest response would be 6...
\textgreek{b}d7!? giving back the extra pawn, but planning to develop his bishop on c8. 7.\textgreek{xe}4 \textgreek{b}5

8.\textgreek{c}3 \textgreek{c}7 9.\textgreek{g}2 \textgreek{w}b6 10.0-0 \textgreek{b}7 11.b3 0-0. Black has completed his development and has no problems at all. 12.\textgreek{b}2 \textgreek{fd}8 13.\textgreek{d}d3 (13.\textgreek{c}2 \textgreek{ac}8 14.\textgreek{ac}1 \textgreek{d}5= Petkov – Andersen, Can Picafort 2013) 13...a5 14.\textgreek{fd}1 \textgreek{ac}8 15.\textgreek{ac}1 \textgreek{h}6= Tsygankov – Serazeev, ICCF 2014.

8.\textgreek{d}2. White plans to follow with \textgreek{de}4, but his king’s knight has made too many moves at the beginning of this game. 8...\textgreek{b}7 9.\textgreek{g}2 \textgreek{w}b6 10.\textgreek{de}4 (The position is simplified after 10.0-0 c5 11.\textgreek{d}xc5 \textgreek{xe}5 12.\textgreek{xb}7 \textgreek{xb}7 13.\textgreek{b}3 \textgreek{d}8 14.\textgreek{c}2 \textgreek{c}8 15.\textgreek{xc}5 \textgreek{xc}5=, followed by 0-0, Romanishin – Ki. Georgiev, Belgrade 2000.) 10...\textgreek{e}7 11.0-0 0-0 12.\textgreek{g}5 (After 12.\textgreek{e}3, Black can play 12...\textgreek{d}5=, attacking the enemy bishop, Troff – Le, Saint Louis 2015.) 12...\textgreek{fd}8. Black’s pieces have been harmoniously deployed and White will be incapable of preventing the pawn-advance c6-c5. 13.e3. He is trying to fortify his position in the centre. 13...c5 14.\textgreek{xf}6 \textgreek{xf}6 15.\textgreek{d}xc5. Now, White must simplify the position; otherwise, he may end up in an inferior position. 15...\textgreek{xd}1 16.\textgreek{xf}6+ \textgreek{xf}6 17.\textgreek{xb}6 \textgreek{x}f1+ 18.\textgreek{xf}1 \textgreek{g}2+ 19.\textgreek{x}g2 \textgreek{xb}6 20.\textgreek{xb}5, Hernandez – Rabler, ICCF 2015, 20...\textgreek{xb}2=

6...\textgreek{bd}7!?
Black impedes his opponent’s knight-sortie in the centre (\textgreek{e}5).

Here, White can play either A) 7.a4, preventing b7-b5, or B) 7.0-0.
About 7.\texttt{g5} b5 8.\texttt{e5} (8.0-0 \texttt{b6} – see 7.0-0) 8...\texttt{xe5} 9.\texttt{xf6} gxf6 10.dxe5 \texttt{xb7=} Tregubov – Sakaev, St Petersburg 1993.

Following 7.e4 b5 8.e5 (8.0-0 \texttt{b7} - see variation B) 8...\texttt{d5}, White would not achieve much with the knight-sortie 9.\texttt{g5} \texttt{e7} 10.\texttt{h5} g6 11.\texttt{h6} \texttt{f8} 12.\texttt{h3}, Olszewski – Dreev, Warsaw 2009. Here, Black could have played 12...\texttt{h6}!\textsuperscript{∞}, without being afraid of the piece-sacrifice 13.\texttt{xe6}?! , because he would have the powerful tactical counter strike 13...\texttt{xe5}!\textsuperscript{†}

A) 7.a4

This is a reliable move for White. He is reluctant to play with material sacrifices and deprives the enemy c4-pawn of the possible support of his b-pawn. Later, he hopes to restore the material balance, but the drawback of the move 7.a4 (the vulnerability of the b4-square) would not allow him to fight for the advantage.

7...\texttt{b4}
Black occupies immediately the weak square.

8.0-0
8.\texttt{e2} 0-0 9.0-0 – see 8.0-0.

8...0-0 9.\texttt{e2}
It seems less precise for White to play 9.\texttt{d2}, because this move weakens his control over the centre. Black can exploit this immediately: 9...\texttt{e5}! 10.\texttt{xc4} exd4 11.\texttt{xd4}. After the disappearance of White’s d4-pawn off the board, Black’s knight gains access to the wonderful c5-square from where it can go to b3. 11...\texttt{c5}\textsuperscript{†} Loginov – Beshukov, St Petersbug 1997.

9...\texttt{a5}
Black increases his control over the b4-square.
10.\textit{\textbf{Nd1}}

The move 10.\textit{\textbf{Ne5}}, Dziuba – Olafsson, Reykjavik 2015, leads to the appearance of doubled e-pawns in White’s camp. 10...\textit{\textbf{Nx}e5}?! 11.\textit{\textbf{dxe5}} \textit{\textbf{Nd5}}

10.\textit{\textbf{Da2}} \textit{\textbf{Dd6}}. Black is reluctant to trade his powerful bishop for the enemy knight placed at the edge of the board. 11.\textit{\textbf{Dxc4 e5}} 12.\textit{\textbf{Cc2}}; Gleizerov – Thomassen, San Sebastian 2010. This is White’s most precise move. (Following 12.\textit{\textbf{Cc3 exd4}} 13.\textit{\textbf{Dxd4}}, his queen will be misplaced at the centre of the board, since it can be attacked by the enemy pieces. 13...\textit{\textbf{Cc5}} Miton – Dreev, Moscow 2002) 12...\textit{\textbf{exd4}}?! 13.\textit{\textbf{Dxd4 De8}} There can be expected a complicated battle with mutual chances in this middle game.

10...\textit{\textbf{Qe7}}

Black removes his queen from the X-ray juxtaposition with the enemy rook.

11.\textit{\textbf{Da2}}

It seems bad for White to play here 11.\textit{\textbf{Dg5}}, because after 11...\textit{\textbf{h6}} 12.\textit{\textbf{Dxf6}} \textit{\textbf{Dxf6}}, Black obtains the two-bishop advantage. 13.\textit{\textbf{Dc4 Df5}} 14.\textit{\textbf{Da1}}, Zhou Weiqi – Wen Yang, Xinghua 2016, 14...\textit{\textbf{e5}}?!?

11.\textit{\textbf{De5}}. White is not afraid of the appearance of doubled d-pawns in his position. He is fighting for the d6-square. 11...\textit{\textbf{Dxe5}} 12.\textit{\textbf{Dxe5 Dd7}} 13.\textit{\textbf{Df4}}? Black is forced to weaken his pawn-structure; otherwise,
White will play \( \text{d}4 \), followed by \( \text{d}6 \), or \( \text{g}5 \), seizing completely the initiative. 14.exf6 \( \text{xf}6 \) 15.e4 e5 16.d3 \( \text{e}6 \). Black has solved the problem with his bishop on c8 and preserved his extra pawn, but White still has the initiative. 17.g5 \( \text{d}5 \) 18.xd5. This exchange-sacrifice is interesting, but still insufficient for White to maintain an advantage. 18...cxd5 19.xd5+ \( \text{h}8 \) 20.xc4. White has a pawn for the exchange and his pieces are active. 20...\( \text{Ac}8 \). Black pins the enemy bishop. 21.xd1 \( \text{h}6 \). He ousts White’s knight, but weakens the g6-square. 22.f3 e4 23.h4 \( \text{h}7 \) 24.d4 \( \text{g}4 \). Black begins counterplay against the f2-square. 25.h3 \( \text{xf}2 \). Now, there arises an equal endgame by force. 26.xf2 \( \text{xf}2 \) 27.xf2 \( \text{c}5+ \) 28.xf1 \( \text{xc}4 \) 29.xc4 \( \text{xc}4= \) Pheby – Burger, ICCF 2015.

11...\( \text{d}6 \) 12.xc4 e5

Black’s plans include the exchange of the e-pawn for the enemy d-pawn after which his knight will gain access to the c5-square.

13.c2 \( \text{exd}4 \) 14.xd4 \( \text{c}5 \)

15.e3
15.b4 axb4 16.xb4. White has activated his knight, but now, his a4-pawn has become isolated and this might hurt him later. 16...\( \text{ce}4 \) 17.d3 \( \text{d}8 \) 18.b2 \( \text{c}7 \) 19.a3 \( \text{e}8 \) 20.e3 \( \text{h}5 \), followed by \( \text{h}5-h4 \), Borstnik – Serban, ICCF 2015. White must watch carefully for Black’s kingside initiative not to become threatening.

Following 15.c3 \( \text{e}8 \) 16.f3, Black should play 16...\( \text{d}5 \), without waiting for the move e2-e4, since after that his knight on f6 would be restricted by the enemy pawns on f3 and e4. 17.xd5 \( \text{exd}5 \). White cannot exploit the weakness of the d5-pawn, because his kingside has been weakened by the move f2-f3. 18.b5 \( \text{a}6 \). Black sends his knight to the b4-square. 19.xd6 \( \text{xd6} \) 20.e4 \( \text{b}6+ \) 21.xf2 \( \text{xf}2+ \) 22.xf2 dxe4 23.e3 exf3 24.xf3 \( \text{b}4= \) Dimitrov – Hitzegrad, ICCF 2014. White’s two-bishop
advantage compensates the sacrificed pawn, but not more than that.

15.b3. White prepares the fianchetto of his queen’s bishop. 15...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}8\) 16.\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b}2\) (He should better not enter the complications arising after 16.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{c}6\) bxc6 17.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{c}6\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}7\) 18.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{d}8\) \(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h}3\) and White loses after 19.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{d}6??\) \(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}4\). Black’s knight is very powerful at the middle of the board. From there it can go to g5 creating threats against the enemy king. 17.e3 \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c}5\) 18.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}1\) \(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}5\) 19.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}1\) \(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b}6\) 20.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{f}5\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{f}5\) 21.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{f}5\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}4\) 22.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{d}4\) 23.exd4 \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{a}3\) 24.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}4\) \(\text{\textit{xa}}\text{a}2=\) Schneider – Amann, ICCF 2015. The position has been considerably simplified. Later, it would be White who must play accurately in order not to remain without compensation for his weak pawns on d4 and b3.

15...\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}4\)
Black ousts the enemy bishop from its active position.

16.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}2\)
16.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{c}6\) bxc6 17.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{d}6\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}3\) 18.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c}5\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{g}2\) 19.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{g}2\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}2=\)

16...\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}8\) 17.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}1\) \(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h}5\)

The majority of White’s pieces are on the queenside, so Black’s plan, connected with the pawn-advance h5-h4, would be rather unpleasant for his opponent. 18.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c}3\) \(\text{\textit{f}}\text{f}6\) 19.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}4\) \(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h}4\) 20.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{f}3\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{g}3\) 21.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{g}3\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}7\) 22.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{f}2\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}8\) 23.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}2\) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{a}6\) Sommerbauer – Panitevsky, ICCF 2016. Black’s play is much simple in this middle game, because White’s position has been weakened on both sides of the board.

B) 7.0-0
White complies with playing without a pawn.

7...\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b}5\)

8.e4
He wishes to play e4–e5, ousting the enemy knight from the f6-square and to follow this with \( \Box g5 \).

8.b3?! b4 9.\( \Box a4 \) c3 10.a3 a5\( ^{\text{+=}} \) – Hofer – Nowakowski, ICCF 2010. White’s knight has been ousted to the edge of the board and Black has obtained a protected passed pawn.

White only loses time for the move 8.a4?! , because after 8...b4 , his knight will be forced to retreat to the edge of the board. 9.\( \Box b1 \).

Black has a very active position and an extra pawn. His further plan is quite simple – to advance c6–c5 and after the exchange on d4 to liquidate his doubled c-pawns. 9...\( \Box a6 \) 10.\( \Box g5 \) \( \Box e8 \) 11.\( \Box bd2 \) (11.\( \Box c2 \) c5\( ^{\text{+=}} \) 11...c5 12.\( \Box c1 \) exd4 13.\( \Box xd4 \) \( \Box b6 \) 14.\( \Box b5 \) \( \Box xb5 \) 15.\( \Box xb5 \) \( \Box xb5 \) 16.\( \Box xf6 \) gxf6\( ^{\text{+=}} \) Tregubov – Grischuk, Mainz 2010. Black lags in development indeed, but still has two extra pawns.

8.\( \Box d2 \) \( \Box b6 \) 9.a4 \( \Box b7 \)\( ^{\text{+=}} \) Vakhidov – Khoroshev, Tashkent 2016.

Following 8.\( \Box e5 \), there arises a transfer to a very complicated endgame. 8...\( \Box xe5 \) 9.dxe5 \( \Box xd1 \) 10.\( \Box xd1 \) \( \Box d5 \) 11.a4 b4 12.\( \Box e4 \) a5 13.\( \Box e3 \) , Zhao Xue – Brunello, Wijk aan Zee 2014, 13...\( \Box a6 \)\( ^{\text{+=}} \)

8.\( \Box e4 \) \( \Box b7 \) 9.\( \Box d1 \) (9.\( \Box g5 \) \( \Box b6 \)\( ^{\text{+=}} \) Lenderman – Stopa, Mesa 2010; 9.e4 \( \Box e7 \) – see 8.e4) 9...\( \Box e7 \) 10.\( \Box e5 \) \( \Box d5 \) . Black wishes to diminish the pressure of the enemy bishop on g2 on the long diagonal. 11.\( \Box xd7 \) \( \Box xd7 \) 12.\( \Box e4 \) . White impedes the enemy pawn-advance c6–c5. 12...\( \Box b4 \) 13.\( \Box d2 \) \( \Box d8 \)\( ^{\text{+=}} \) Ladva – Fridman, Tallinn 2016.

8.\( \Box g5 \) \( \Box b6 \) 9.b3 \( \Box b4 \) 10.\( \Box xf6 \) \( \Box xf6 \) 11.\( \Box c1 \) \( \Box d5 \) 12.\( \Box xd5 \) exd5 . There has arisen an interesting position.

Black has an extra pawn and the two-bishop advantage. Still, after 13.bxc4 dxc4 14.\( \Box e5 \) 0-0 15.a4 , White’s pieces are very active. He is threatening axb5, after which Black’s queenside pawn-structure will be compromised. Therefore, he must play 15...\( \Box b7 \)!\( ^{?\infty} \) , sacrificing the exchange. 16.\( \Box d7 \) \( \Box a6 \) 17.\( \Box xf8 \) \( \Box xf8 \)\( ^{\text{+=}} \) Mende – Babushkin, ICCF 2014. Black’s passed pawns, supported by his bishop-pair, can create great problems for White.

8.\( \Box g5 \) . White is threatening to capture on c6 and b5, but Black can parry easily both these threat.

8...\( \Box b6 \)

There arises a complicated position after 9.a4 b4 10.a5 \( \Box a6 \) 11.\( \Box ce4 \) , Gupta – Robson, Wijk aan Zee 2010, 11...\( \Box e7 \)!\( ^{?\infty} \)

9.e4 h6 10.\( \Box xe6 \) . This piece-sacrifice is rather dubious (after 10.e5 \( \Box xg5 \) 11.exf6 gxf6 12.\( \Box e3 \) \( \Box b7 \)\( ^{?\infty} \) , White does not have sufficient compensation for the two missing pawns, Harikrishna – Amanov, Philadelphia 2011) 10...fxe6 11.e5 \( \Box d5 \) 12.\( \Box g4 \) , Dubov – Ter Sahakyan, Moscow 2015, 12...\( \Box b8 \)!\( ^{?\infty} \) White’s compensation for the sacrificed piece is not good enough.
It is possible he must choose 9.b3 h6 10.g4xe4 cxb3 11.xf6+ (11.xb3, Shinkevich – Kozionov, Togliatti 2011, 11...d5?!=) 11...xf6 12.xb3 b7 13.a4 a6= Taylor – Visigalli, ICCF 2016. White leads in development and exerts pressure on the queenside and this compensates his minimal material deficit, but not more than that.

8...b7

9.e5
White must play energetically not to end up in an inferior position.

It is bad for him to play here 9.g5?!, because after 9...h6 10.xf6 xf6, Black exchanges his opponent’s powerful bishop. 11.c2 e7++; Baburin – Bhat, San Francisco 1997.

It would be too slow for White to opt here for 9.c2 e7 10.d1 0-0++; He does not have full compensation for the pawn.

9.d5 10.g5 h6 11.xe6
The idea of this piece-sacrifice was behind White’s previous play.

He cannot even equalise if he retreats his knight: 11.g4xe4 e7 12.h5, Vinchev – Goncharenko, ICCF 2014, 12...f8!??++; or 11.h5 g6 12.h3 e7 13.g4 e7++; Alvarez Pedraza – Ibarra Jerez, La Roda 2016.

11...fxe6 12.h5+ e7

13.e4
White obtains a bad position after 13.g5+?! hxg5 14.xh8 g7b6. Black’s two minor pieces are stronger than his opponent’s rook in this middle game. 15.e4 d7 16.g8 (16.h5 c7 17.xg5 d7 18.h3 e8. He has fortified reliably the e6-square. Black only needs to advance c6-c5, in order to
activate his bishop on b7. 19.a3 c5† Petukhov – Odrov, ICCF 2015.) 16...e8 17.h7 d8 18.xg5 e7 19.ae1 b8† Shinkevich – Korobov, St Petersburg 2010. Black has managed to evacuate his king to the queenside where it will be quite safe.

13...e8 14.g5+ hxg5 15.xh8
White has obtained a rook for two minor pieces under much better circumstances than in our previous notes.

15...d8
It is necessary for Black to evacuate his king away from the danger zone as quickly as possible.

16.xg5
16...g8?! g6† Lalith – Ding Liren, Hyderabad 2015.

16...c8?! 17.a4
17.h3?! c7. Black parries easily the threat against his e6-pawn. 18.fe1 b8 19.e4 b6† Ciciotti – Romanov, ICCF 2012.

There arises a complicated situation following 17.fe1 c7 18.e4 c5 19.h4 xe4 20.xe4 b8 21.ad1 cxd4 22.xd4 c5∞ Lukasova – Fonteneau, ICCF 2016. The position is beginning to open and White’s rook can fight successfully against Black’s minor pieces.

17...c5
Black activates his bishop on b7.

18.h3
White attacks the e6-pawn and wishes thus to oust Black’s knight from the centre of the board.

18.Rfd1 bxa4 19.Rxa4 N5b6 20.Ra5 Qxg2 21.Nxg2 cxd4 22.exd4 Bb7. Now, Black must play very precisely, since the position has been opened and his king might be endangered. 23.Qe4 g6 24.Qh4 c8 25.Nd6+ Nxd6 26.exd6 e5. Black has managed to coordinate his pieces. White is forced to trade the queens in order to prevent his opponent from seizing the initiative to the end of the game. 27.Qe4+ Qxe4 28.Qxe4 Qf8 29.f4 exf4 30.Qxf4 Qxf4 31.gxf4 Qc6 32.Nxa7 Qxd6= Rubinas – Mendl, ICCF 2014. In order to make a draw in this endgame, White must exchange his rook and three pawns for the enemy two pawns and then Black would be left with two useless knights.

18.dxc5 Nxc5 19.axb5 Nxb6 20.Nf3 c7 21.Qh3 Nxb5 22.Qd4 Qd7 23.Rfd1 a5 24.Nxb7 Qxb7. Black has managed to consolidate his position and White must play energetically; otherwise, Black’s two minor pieces might prove to be stronger than White’s rook and pawns. 25.b3 c3 26.Rac1 Nc5 27.Qg2 Bb6. Black removes his king away from the pin. 28.Qe2 Nb3 29.Qb1 a4. His passed a-pawn seems very powerful, but his king is vulnerable and he cannot maintain an advantage. 30.Nxc3 Qc8 31.Qxd5+ exd5 32.Qf3 c6 33.Qe2 Qa8. Black defends against the penetration of the enemy queen to the a6-square. 34.e6 Qd8 35.Qd3 Qc5 36.Qd1 d4∞ Campbell – Sherwood, ICCF 2014.

18...c7 19.d5

White continues to increase his pressure.

19...Qxd5 20.Qxd5 exd5 21.e6

21...Qe7!
The activity of his pieces becomes greater with every move, so Black is trying to simplify the position sacrificing a piece.
22.\textit{exd7+}  \textit{\textit{\textbf{Qxd7}}}

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23.\textit{\textbf{Qh5}}

White’s attempt to play for a win seems to be too risky for him, because Black has too many pawns on the queenside.

White should have possibly agreed to a draw by repetition of moves. 23.\textit{\textbf{Qh8+ \textit{\textbf{Qd8=}}}}

23...\textit{\textbf{bxa4}}  24.\textit{\textbf{Rfe1}}

After 24.\textit{\textbf{Rfd1}}, there might follow a variation ending up with a perpetual check: 24...\textit{\textbf{Qf5}}  25.\textit{\textbf{h4 \textit{\textbf{b8}}} 26.\textit{\textbf{d2 \textit{\textbf{f6}}} 27.\textit{\textbf{f7 \textit{\textbf{d7}}} 28.\textit{\textbf{f8+ \textit{\textbf{b7}}} 29.\textit{\textbf{xc5 \textit{\textbf{xe5}}} 30.\textit{\textbf{hxg5 \textit{\textbf{h8}}} 31.\textit{\textbf{d4 \textit{\textbf{h3}}} 32.\textit{\textbf{h4 \textit{\textbf{xh4}}} 33.\textit{\textbf{b4+ \textit{\textbf{c8}}} 34.\textit{\textbf{gxh4 \textit{\textbf{g4+}}} 35.\textit{\textbf{fl \textit{\textbf{h3+}}} 36.\textit{\textbf{e2 \textit{\textbf{d3=}}}}}}}}}}}}}

24...\textit{\textbf{f6\infty}}

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Black’s bishop on f6 exerts powerful pressure against White’s queenside.

25.\textit{\textbf{e2 \textit{\textbf{b8}}} 26.\textit{\textbf{h7}}}

White decides to sacrifice his b2-pawn, but now, Black has too many passed pawns on the queenside.

26...\textit{\textbf{xb2}}  27.\textit{\textbf{f8 \textit{\textbf{g6?!}}}}

He sacrifices a pawn and provokes White’s queen to occupy a square on the sixth rank in order to attack it later with his rook with tempo.

28.\textit{\textbf{xe6 \textit{\textbf{b6}}} 29.\textit{\textbf{h5 \textit{\textbf{d6}}} 30.\textit{\textbf{ae1 \textit{\textbf{c3}}} 31.\textit{\textbf{e6}}}}}}
31...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}e1}}}!! This is the point! Now, Black can sacrifice his queen. 32.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}x6}} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d6}}. Here, White’s queen will hardly manage to stop the enemy passed pawns, despite the fact that after 33.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}5}}, he can capture the enemy bishop on e1 thanks to the double attack. 33...\texttt{\texttt{b}6} 34.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}e1}} \texttt{\texttt{a}3} 35.\texttt{\texttt{a}1} \texttt{c3}± 36.\texttt{\texttt{d}7}. White sacrifices a piece and forces the enemy king to an unfavourable position. This does not help him, though... 36...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}x}d7} 37.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}a}a3} \texttt{d4} 38.\texttt{\texttt{x}c}c5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}e}6}. Black has finally managed to coordinate his pieces and White’s lone queen is helpless against the enemy rook, knight and passed pawns. 39.\texttt{\texttt{f}f5} \texttt{\texttt{c}c6} 40.\texttt{\texttt{h}7}+ \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}d}6} 41.\texttt{\texttt{e}2} \texttt{a5} 42.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{\texttt{c}7}. Black cannot play immediately d4–d3, because White will capture the pawn with a check. 43.\texttt{\texttt{h}7}+ \texttt{\texttt{b}6} 44.\texttt{\texttt{b}1}+ \texttt{\texttt{a}7} 45.\texttt{\texttt{e}4} \texttt{\texttt{c}7} 46.\texttt{\texttt{c}2} \texttt{d3}. Black sacrifices a pawn, but advances his passed c-pawn another square forward. The outcome of the game has become quite evident. 47.\texttt{\texttt{x}d3} \texttt{c2} 48.\texttt{\texttt{e}3}+ \texttt{\texttt{e}5} 49.\texttt{\texttt{c}1} \texttt{\texttt{c}3} 50.\texttt{\texttt{g}2} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}c}5}± Visloguzov – Buhme, ICCF 2015.
This quiet move is usually chosen by White when he wishes to avoid the long theoretical variations arising after 5.e3, or 5.g5. Still, he cannot fight for the opening advantage when he plays in this fashion.

5...exd5

Black opens the diagonal for his light-squared bishop.

There has arisen on the board the exchange variation of the Queen’s Gambit, but in a favourable version for Black, because White has developed too early his knight on f3. Later, he cannot accomplish the standard set-up of his pieces in similar positions – g5, e3, d3, because Black manages to develop his bishop on f5.

We will analyse now: A) 6.g5 and B) 6.c2.

6.h3. This can be hardly White’s most useful move. 6...d6. Black develops his bishop to an active position and prevents f4. 7.c2 0-0 8.g5 h6 9.h4 g5. This move emphasizes the defects of White’s move six. 10.g3 xg3 11.fxg3 h5† Ivanisevic – Kramnik, Tromsoe 2014. White’s pawn-structure has been seriously compromised.

6.g3. The development of this bishop to the g2-square is too slow. 6.d6 7.g2 0-0 8.0-0 e8. Black has already a slightly freer game. 9.c2 (9.e1 f5 10.d3, Luzuriaga – Urrutia, Buenos Aires 1998, 10..b6!?†) 9..bd7 10.e1 (10.h4 b6 11.f5 b4† Kuznetsova – Katzkoiva, Zvenigorod 2005. The transfer of the knight to the f5-square has not improved White’s position, because Black has managed to avoid the exchange of his bishop.) 10..h6 11.h4 b6 12.b3 a5† Huzita – Saitou, ICCF 2011.

6.e3. Before the development of White’s bishop to f4, or g5, this move seems bad for him. 6.d6 7.d3 0-0 8.0-0 e8 9.h3. He prevents the development of the enemy bishop to g4. (9.c2 g4†) 9..e4 10.c2 f5† Krawiec – Gaponenko, Fond du Lac 1990. Black’s pieces have been more actively deployed.

6.f4. This bishop is not better placed here than on g5. 6..f5. Black has managed to develop his bishop to an active position and this means that he has solved the problems in the opening. 7.e3 (7.b3 b6=) 7..bd7 8.d3 xd3 9.xd3 e7
10.h3. White saves his bishop from an exchange after \( \text{h}5 \). (Following 10.0-0, Black can sharpen the game with 10...\( \text{h}5 \)!? 11.\( \text{xe}5 \) 0-0 12.h3 \( \text{xe}5 \) 13.\( \text{dxe}5 \), Volkov – Kotanjian, Dubai 2011 and here he had to attack immediately the cramping enemy pawn on e5 with the move 13...\( \text{f}6 \)?) 10...0-0 11.0-0 \( \text{e}8 \) 12.\( \text{ab}1 \) (12.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{b}6 \)= Fressinet – Fridman, Trzecianka 2015) 12...\( \text{a}5 \). Black thwarts his opponent’s pawn-minority attack (b2-b4-b5).

13.\( \text{c}2 \). White prevents a5-a4. 13...\( \text{b}6 \) 14.\( \text{b}3 \), Fressinet – Gustafsson, Oberhof 2011, 14...\( \text{b}4 \)?)

The move 13.a3 allows 13...a4. Black is deploying his pawns according to the rules – on squares opposite of the colour of his bishop. 14.\( \text{c}2 \) (14.\( \text{h}2 \), Pert – Hawkins, London 2015, 14...\( \text{b}5 \)!, followed by \( \text{b}6 \), \( \text{c}4 \)) 14...\( \text{a}5 \) 15.\( \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 16.\( \text{e}5 \), Larsen – Spassky, Montreal 1979, 16...\( \text{a}6 \)!= White can hardly find an active plan for his further actions.

13.\( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 14.\( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 15.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 16.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \)= Black’s prospects are not worse and after White’s careless reaction 17.\( \text{f}4 \)! \( \text{h}4 \) 18.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{ae}8 \), Black seizes the initiative. His attack develops effortlessly. 19.\( \text{b}6 \)! \( \text{g}6 \) 20.\( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 21.\( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 22.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{b}5 \) 23.\( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{xf}4 \) 24.\( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) – Knaak – Geller, Novi Sad 1979.

A) 6.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{h}6 \)!

The inclusion of this move is very useful for Black.
7.\texttt{\texttt{h4}}
It is not good for White to play here 7.\texttt{\texttt{xf6 \texttt{xf6}}. Black has a bishop-pair and a solid position.

White must play very accurately not to end up in an inferior position.

8.\texttt{\texttt{c1}}. Black can parry easily the threat \texttt{\texttt{xd5. 8...\texttt{d7 9.e2}, Shrentzel – Greenfeld, Tel Aviv 1988, 9...\texttt{b6!}}?}

8.\texttt{\texttt{b3}}. This is hardly White’s most useful move. \texttt{8...\texttt{d6 9.e3 \texttt{d7 10.d3 \texttt{e7 11.0-0-0 \texttt{f6}}} Lilienthal – Botvinnik, Moscow 1945. He has no compensation for Black’s bishop-pair, moreover that his king is not so reliably placed on the queenside.}

8.\texttt{\texttt{e3 \texttt{d6 9.d3 0-0 10.0-0 \texttt{g4 11.h3 \texttt{xf3 12.xf3 \texttt{d7 13.xf6 \texttt{xf6= Shengelia – Ragger, Vienna 2010.}}}}}

7...\texttt{f5}
8.e3
8...b3. The attack against the b7-pawn leads to difficulties for White. 8...g5. Before playing Qb6, Black must oust his opponent’s bishop in order to avoid the compromising of his kingside pawn-structure.
9.g3 (It is bad for White to play here 9.Qxb7?, because after 9...gxh4 10.Qxa8 Qb6, his queen will have great problems to get away from the a8-square. 11.0-0-0 Qd6 12.Qa4 Qc7 13.Qc5 Qxc5 14.Qxc5 0-0 15.Qd4 Qd7 16.e3 Qc8. Black is perfectly prepared to trap the enemy queen, 0–1 Spasov – Dimitrov, ICCF 2013. 17.Qe2 Qa6 18.Qxe8+ Qxe8–+ You can see now why Black has played Qc8 – his knight on a6 is protected. White does not obtain sufficient material for his queen.) 9...Qb6.

![Diagram](image-url)

White has numerous alternatives here, but neither of them equalises.
10.Qxb6?! The opening of the a-file is in favour of Black. 10.axb6 11.e3 b5+, followed by Qbd7-b6-c4, Banovic – Cabarkapa, Novi Sad 2015.

10.h4 Qxb3 11.axb3 g4++ Lysyj – Lintchevski, Novokuznetsk 2008. The pawns on b2 and b3 are weak in White’s position.

10.Qd2. He avoids the doubling of his pawns on the b-file. 10...Qbd7 11.f3 (11.e3 Qh5 – see 10.e3) 11...Qg7 12.h4 0-0 13.Qxg5 Qxg5 14.Qf2 Qxe8 15.0-0-0 Qg6++ Tosi – Krakovsky, ICCF 2011. Black’s pieces are more harmoniously deployed and White will hardly manage to advance e2-e4.

10.e3 Qbd7. Black takes the e5-square under control. He plans to continue with Qh5. (11.Qd2 Qh5, or 11.e2 Qh5 12.Qd2 Qxg3 – see 8.e3, 9.Qb3) 11.e2 Qh5 12.e5 Qg7 13.Qg3 Qxb3 14.axb3, Janachkov – Rusev, Plovdiv 2007, 14...e7!?++ Black has a superior pawn-structure.

8...Qbd7

![Diagram](image-url)

9.Qd3
9...\texttt{B}xd3 10.\texttt{Q}xd3 \texttt{B}d6
Black’s bishop is more actively placed here than on e7.

11.0-0
11.0-0-0. White’s king will not be so reliably deployed on the queenside. 11...0-0 12.g4 \texttt{b}b4 13.\texttt{Q}e2 \texttt{e}7 14.\texttt{g}g3 \texttt{e}4 15.h4 c5. This is a double-edged position. 16.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{x}g3 17.\texttt{x}g3 \texttt{c}c8 18.\texttt{b}b1 c4 19.\texttt{c}c2 \texttt{b}b4 20.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{c}c6 21.g5 \texttt{a}a5→ followed by \texttt{a}a6, Rogos – Kloster, ICCF 2015. Black’s rook is doing a lot of work. It attacks the enemy king and protects the own monarch.

11.a3 a5 12.\texttt{e}e2 0-0 13.0-0 \texttt{e}8= Landa – Bareev, Vienna 1996.

11...0-0

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board-1100.png}
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12.e4
White wishes to activate his pieces, but ends up with an isolated pawn in his camp.

12.\texttt{f}e1 \texttt{e}8 13.e4 dxe4 14.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{e}7 – see 12.e4.

White’s decision not to play e3-e4 leads to an approximately equal manoeuvring game. 12.\texttt{ab}1 \texttt{e}8 13.\texttt{b}4 a6 14.a4, Ueti – Caldeira, Sao Bernardo do Campo 2014, 14...b5= This is a typical resource for Black in positions with the Carlsbad pawn-structure. He solves radically the problem with White’s pawn-break b4-b5 and wishes eventually to transfer his knight to the c4-square (\texttt{b}6-c4). From there it will cover reliably his c6-pawn against the attack of White’s major pieces on the c-file.

12...dxe4 13.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{e}7 14.\texttt{f}e1
14.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{e}8 15.\texttt{f}e1 \texttt{b}6 – see 14.\texttt{f}e1.

14...\texttt{e}8
15.\text{\texttt{g3}}

15.\text{\texttt{c3}} \texttt{\texttt{b6}} 16.\texttt{\texttt{ad1}} \texttt{\texttt{d6}} 17.\texttt{\texttt{c2}} \texttt{\texttt{a5}=} Nowak – Kolanek, ICCF 2011.

15.\texttt{xf6}. The vulnerability of the isolated d4-pawn becomes more and more obvious with every exchange of pieces. 15...\texttt{xf6} 16.\texttt{xf6+} \texttt{xf6} 17.\texttt{xe8+} \texttt{xe8} 18.\texttt{b3} \texttt{d7}+ Arkell – Gordon, Torquay 2013.

15...\texttt{g6}
Naturally, Black should not allow the enemy knight to occupy the f5-square.

But not 15...\texttt{g5}?, because of 16.\texttt{f5} \texttt{gxh4}? 17.\texttt{xf6}+--

16.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 17.\texttt{e5} \texttt{g7} 18.\texttt{b3}

It may look like White has triumphed with the double attack against the f7 and b7-squares, but Black has calculated precisely everything.

18...\texttt{d5} 19.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{d6} 20.\texttt{ac1} \texttt{ac8} 21.\texttt{b3}
White would not achieve much with 21.\texttt{xa7} c5 22.\texttt{a6} \texttt{a8} 23.\texttt{c4} \texttt{xd4} 24.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} 25.\texttt{c4} \texttt{xe1+} 26.\texttt{xe1} \texttt{xg3} 27.\texttt{hxg3} \texttt{xa2}. There is just a few material left on the board. 28.\texttt{d1} \texttt{a4} 29.\texttt{b3} \texttt{b4} 30.\texttt{x4}. White has an extra pawn, but will be incapable of holding on to it. 30...\texttt{b6} 31.\texttt{g4} \texttt{xb3} 32.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{xb6}=

21...\texttt{xb3} 22.\texttt{axb3} c5 23.\texttt{f3} \texttt{xe1+} 24.\texttt{exe1} \texttt{xd4} 25.\texttt{xd4}
White’s doubled extra pawn is practically useless. In addition, Black’s bishop will be stronger than any of White’s knights in a fight on both sides of the board.

25...\texttt{d8} 26.\texttt{d1} \texttt{c7=} Black prepares the transfer of his bishop to the a7-g1 diagonal.
B) 6.\(c2\)
White impedes the development of the enemy bishop to the f5-square.

6...g6
Black resumes his positional threat.

7.g5
White would not achieve anything with 7.\(f4\) \(f5\) 8.\(b3\) (8.\(c1\) \(bd7\) 9.\(h3\), Radjabov – Al Sayed, Doha 2016, 9...\(e4!\)?=) 8...\(b6\) 9.\(d2\), Kharitonov – Tukmakov, Riga 1988, 9...\(h5!?\) 10.\(e3\) \(d7\).

It is obviously bad for White to opt here for 7.e3, because his dark-squared bishop would remain restricted in his own camp. 7...\(f5\) 8.\(d3\) \(xd3\) 9.\(xd3\) \(d6\) 10.0-0 0-0 11.e4. Now, White’s bishop will have the possibility to go to g5, or h6, but he ends up with an isolated pawn. 11...\(xe4\) 12.\(xe4\) \(xe4\) 13.\(xe4\) \(e8\) 14.\(d3\) \(d7\) 15.\(g5\) \(a5\) 16.a3 \(d5\) Bohm – Chekhov, Polanica Zdroj 1981. Black’s pieces are very active and the vulnerability of the isolated d4-pawn may hurt White in the future.

7...\(e7\)
Black has also tried in practice to fianchetto his bishop: 7...\(g7\) 8.e3 \(f5\) 9.\(d3\) \(xd3\) 10.\(xd3\) 0-0 11.0-0 \(bd7\) 12.\(b4\) \(e8\) 13.\(fc1\) \(e8\) Bayer – Knaak, Germany 1991.

Here, White can choose the calm move B1) 8.e3 and the more active B2) 8.e4.

8.\(h6\) \(f5\) 9.\(c1\) \(bd7\) 10.\(h3\) \(b6\) 11.e3, Studnicka – Konopka, Decin 2009, 11...\(e4!?\) 12.\(e2\) \(f8\) 13.\(f4\) \(d6\)

He would not achieve much with the move 8.\(h3\), with the idea to follow with g2-g4, because Black can simply remove his bishop from f5 to e6. 8...\(f5\) 9.\(b3\) \(b6\) 10.g4 \(xb3\) 11.axb3 \(e6\) 12.\(h6\) \(a6\)= Van
der Wiel – Jadoul, Brussels 1986. It is White who must play carefully in this endgame, because he has isolated pawns on the b-file.

8...\textit{xf6}. White exchanges his bishop with the idea to provoke Black’s bishop to occupy the f6-square from where it cannot impede the pawn-advance b2-b4. 8...\textit{xf6}

The move 9.e4 is not in the spirit of the position, because Black has the two-bishop advantage and the opening of the position would be in his favour. 9...0-0! 10.exd5 cxd5 11.e2 c6 12.d2 f5 Khegay – Shomoev, Nizhny Tagil 2014.

9.e3 f5 10.d3 xd3 11.xd3 d7 12.0-0 (12.b4 a6 13.0-0 0-0, or 13.a4 0-0 14.0-0 b6 – see 12.0-0) 12..0-0 13.b4 a6 14.a4 b6. Black’s knight can go to c4 from this square. 15.ab1 (After the straightforward move 15.b5, Black can create an outside passed pawn on the a-file with the line: 15.cxb5! 16.axb5 a5 Nei – Van Scheltinga, Beverwijk 1966.) 15..e7. Black’s bishop on f6 was restricted by the pawn on d4, so he transferred it to a more active position – the d6-square. 16.d2 e8 17.fc1 d6= Javakhishvili – Korneev, Linares 2005.

B1) 8.e3
If White manages to develop his bishop on d3 he would have the edge, but it is Black’s move now...

8...f5

9.d3
Black’s bishop is very active on f5, so White should better exchange it.

Or 9.c1, Radjabov – Wang Yue, Beijing 2013, 9..bd7!=

Following 9.b3 b6 10.d2 bd7 11.e2 h6 12.f4, Black can enter a favourable endgame.
12...\textit{\ttfamily{wb}}\textit{xb3} 13.\textit{axb3} \textit{g5} 14.\textit{\ttfamily{dg}}\textit{3} 0-0 15.0-0 \textit{\ttfamily{dg}}\textit{7} 16.\textit{\ttfamily{fc}}\textit{1} \textit{a6†} Graf – Landa, Cappelle-la-Grande 1995. His superior pawn-structure provides him with a slight but stable edge.

\textbf{9...\textit{\ttfamily{xd3}}} 10.\textit{\ttfamily{xd3}} \textit{\ttfamily{bd7}??}

This is Black’s most precise move. Now, after an exchange on \textit{f6}, he will be able to capture with his knight and his bishop will not lose the control over the \textit{b4}-square.

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White has a choice now. He can play \textbf{B1a} 11.\textit{\ttfamily{h6}}, impeding his opponent’s castling kingside, or castle immediately \textbf{B1b} 11.0-0.

About 11.\textit{\ttfamily{xf6 \ttfamily{xf6}}} 12.0-0 0-0, or 11.\textit{\ttfamily{h3 0-0}} 12.0-0 \textit{\ttfamily{e8}}, or 12.\textit{\ttfamily{f4 e8}} 13.0-0 \textit{\ttfamily{b6} – see variation B1b.}

11.\textit{\ttfamily{b1}}. White would not achieve much if he delays his castling. 11...a5 12.\textit{\ttfamily{h6}} (12.0-0 0-0 – see 11.0-0) 12.\textit{\ttfamily{f8}} 13.\textit{\ttfamily{xh8 \ttfamily{xf8}}}. Black is not afraid of the loss of his castling rights. 14.0-0 \textit{\ttfamily{g7}} 15.\textit{\ttfamily{c2}}, Andersson – Farago, Dortmund 1978. Here, it seems very good for him to transfer his knight to the \textit{d6}-square: 15...\textit{\ttfamily{e8}!!} 16.\textit{\ttfamily{fe1 \ttfamily{d6=}}}

The move 11.\textit{\ttfamily{h4}} seems a bit too active. 11...0-0

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Following 12.0-0-0 \textit{\ttfamily{e8}} 13.\textit{\ttfamily{xf6 \ttfamily{xf6}}} 14.\textit{\ttfamily{h5 \ttfamily{h5} \ttfamily{h5}}} White does not obtain sufficient compensation for the pawn. 15.\textit{\ttfamily{h3 \ttfamily{f6}}} 16.\textit{\ttfamily{dh1}}, Williams – Stankevicius, ICCF 2003, 16...\textit{\ttfamily{f8}!!} Black prepares the transfer of his bishop to \textit{g7} where it would protect reliably his king. 17.\textit{\ttfamily{e5 \ttfamily{g7}} 18.\textit{\ttfamily{g4 \ttfamily{xe5}}}! It is now time for Black to sacrifice! 19.dxe5 \textit{\ttfamily{xe5}}. He sacrifices the exchange and seizes the initiative. 20.\textit{\ttfamily{xe5 \ttfamily{xe5}}} 21.\textit{\ttfamily{xe5 \ttfamily{xe5}}} 22.\textit{\ttfamily{f4 \ttfamily{c4}}}†

12.\textit{\ttfamily{e5 \ttfamily{xe5}}}. Black wishes to reduce his opponent’s attacking potential by exchanging pieces. 13.dxe5,
Oral – Konopka, Czech Republic 2005, 13...g4!? Black forces the enemy queen to protect the pawn on e5. 14.Qd4 h5 15.Qf4 f6 16.e6 Qc8 17.f3 e5 18.Qxe5 fxe5 19.Qxe5 Qf5 20.Qd4 Qxe6 He has succeeded in trading his f-pawn for White’s e-pawn. Later, in a fight on both sides of the board, Black’s long-range bishop will be obviously stronger than White’s knight.

**B1a)** 11.h6 Qg4

Black wishes to oust the enemy bishop and to castle.

12.f4

With the move 12.g7, White can deprive his opponent of his castling rights, but later Black may castle queenside, while White will miss badly his powerful dark-squared bishop. 12...Qg8 13.e5 Qxe5 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.dxe5 Qc7 16.Qd4, Arkell – Dempsey, Hastings 1995, 16...0-0-0!? Black would not mind the exchange of his rook pawn for White’s central pawn. 17.Qxa7 Qxe5 18.0-0 d4 19.Qxd4 Qxd4 20.Qa8+ Qc7 21.Qa5+ Qb8 22.Qd1 Qb4 23.Qe5+ Qd6 24.Qf6 Qf4 25.Qxf4 Qxf4 Black’s bishop will be more powerful than the enemy knight in this endgame.

12...0-0

![Chess Diagram](image)

13.h3

Or 13.0-0 Qe8 14.a3 (14.h3 Qg6, or 14.eab1 a5 15.a3 Qg6 16.h3 a4 – see 13.h3) 14...a5 15.Qc2 Qb6 16.b3 Qd6 17.Qxd6 Qxd6 18.h3 Qf6 19.Qe5 Qc8 20.Qb2 Qd7 21.Qd3, Seirawan – Khalifman, Bali 2000, 21...Qf6!=, followed by Qd6.

13...Qg6 14.0-0


White’s king will not be so reliably placed on the queenside. 14.0-0-0?! b5 15.Qe5 Qxe5 16.Qxe5 Qd7= Braun – Halkias, Peristeri 2010.

14...Qe8
15.\textit{\textbf{e5}}

15.\textit{\textbf{c2 a5 16.a3 b6=}} Seirawan – Norowitz, Vancouver 2012.

15.\textit{\textbf{fc1 b6 16.e2 d6 17.xd6 xd6 18.e5 e7 19.d3 e4 20.e5, Gareev – Bruzon Batista, Las Vegas 2014, 20...xd6!?=}}

15.\textit{\textbf{h2, Nepomniashchy – Yakovich, St Petersburg 1994, 15...b6!?=}}

15.\textit{\textbf{ab1 a5}}

16.\textit{\textbf{e2 f8 17.a3 d6=}} Polugaevsky – Tal, Leningrad 1962.

16.a3 a4= Houska – Koneru, Antakya 2010;


16.\textit{\textbf{c2 b6 17.e5 (17.d2 h5 18.h2 d6 19.xd6 xd6= Ivkov – Hemasian, Siegen 1970)}}

17...\textit{\textbf{h5 18.h2 d6 19.e1, Volkov – Pashikian, Abu Dhabi 2014. Here, Black had to remove immediately his knight from the edge of the board, obtaining a quite acceptable position 19...g7!?=}}

15...\textit{\textbf{b6}}
Black’s plan is very simple in similar positions. He must place immediately one of his knights on b6 and to transfer his other knight to d6, via e8, or e4. After that White can hardly find any active plan, because the pawn-minority attack (b2-b4) would weaken horribly the c4-square.

16.\(B\)g5  N\(e4\) 17.\(B\)xe7  Qxe7  18.\(W\)c2  \(\text{Nd}\!\!d6\)!  19.\(A\)a4  \(\text{Bc}\!\!c4\)  20.\(B\)xc4  Qxc4  21.\(Q\)c5  Qd6\(\text{f}2\)

This position was reached in the famous game Bobotsov – T.Petrosian, Lugano 1968. White has no active plan at all. Black can improve patiently his position on the kingside preparing an attack against the enemy king there. 22.\(A\)ac1  Wg5  23.\(A\)d1  h5  24.\(A\)h1  Ke7  25.\(A\)d3  Qe4  26.\(A\)c5  Qd6  27.\(A\)d3  Wh5  28.\(A\)e5  f6  29.\(A\)f3  Kg7. Black is perfectly ready to begin a pawn-offensive with g6-g5-g4. 30.\(A\)h2  Qe8  31.\(A\)g1  Qe4  32.\(A\)f3  Wa6. Naturally, he should be reluctant to exchange the queens. 33.\(A\)fd1  g5\(\text{f}2\)  Black sacrifices a pawn and begins a decisive attack. 34.\(A\)hx5  f5  35.Ae1  g4  36.hxg4  fxg4  37.f3?  This was not White’s best defence, but his position was already tremendously difficult anyway. 37...\(A\)xf3  38.\(A\)xf3  Kh7  39.\(A\)e5  We8  40.\(A\)f4  \(\text{Bf}\!\!8\)  41.\(A\)e5  \(\text{Bf}\!\!5\)  0–1

B\(1\)b)  11.0-0  0-0
12.\textit{ab1}

White is preparing the pawn-minority attack.

He can prepare the pawn-advance b2-b4 also with the move 12.a3, but even then after 12...\textit{e8}?!?, Black equalises easily. 13.b4 a6 14.\textit{c2} \textit{b6} 15.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6}= Polugaevsky – Karpov, Mar del Plata 1982.

12.\textit{h6} \textit{e8} 13.\textit{h3} a5= Gheorghiu – Ivkov, Petropolis 1973.

12.\textit{fe1}. The central strategy would not promise much to White here. 12...\textit{e4} 13.\textit{f4}, Iniyan – Golikov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2016 and here, Black could have tried to seize the initiative with the line: 13...\textit{g5}?! 14.\textit{g3} f5=

12.\textit{ad1} \textit{e8} 13.\textit{fe1} \textit{e4} 14.\textit{xe7} \textit{xe7} 15.\textit{d2} f5 16.\textit{f3}, Gonda – Erdos, Hungary 2008, 16...\textit{g5}?!= White’s e3-pawn is weak and the pawn-advance e3-e4 would lead to further exchanges.

12.\textit{c2} \textit{e8} 13.\textit{ab1} \textit{e4}. Black would not mind further simplifications (13...a5 – see 12.\textit{ab1}).

14.\textit{xe4} (White should possibly choose here the modest line: 14.\textit{xe7} \textit{xe7}= Kuzmin – Vladimirov, Dubai 2002.) 14...\textit{dxe4} 15.\textit{xe7} \textit{xe7} 16.\textit{d2} c5?! 17.\textit{bc1}. After an exchange on c5, Black’s knight will occupy quickly the d3-square. 17...\textit{cxd4} 18.\textit{exd4} \textit{f6} 19.\textit{fe1} \textit{ad8}\textsuperscript{7} Gyimesi – Khalifman, Ulcinj 1998. Black has a superior pawn-structure and more harmoniously deployed pieces.

12.\textit{xf6}. This exchange is reasonable only when Black is forced to capture on f6 with his bishop, so that White can play b2-b4 immediately. 12...\textit{xf6} 13.\textit{ab1} a5 14.\textit{fe1} \textit{e8}= Kurajica – Ribli, Surakarta 1982.

12.\textit{h3}. White is preparing a square for his bishop. 12...\textit{e8} 13.\textit{f4}. There has arisen a position like in variation \textbf{B1a}, but without a tempo for White. This circumstance does not influence the evaluation of the position as approximately equal. 13...\textit{b6} 14.\textit{ae1} (14.\textit{ab1}, Harikrishna – Barsov, Hastings 2003, 14...\textit{c4}?!=) 14...\textit{c4}. Black prepares the transfer of his bishop to the d6-square. 15.b3 \textit{d6} 16.\textit{e5} a5= Ciucurel – Begliy, ICCF 2014.

12.\textit{d2}. White takes the e4 and c4-squares under control. 12...\textit{e8} 13.\textit{ae1} (13.\textit{ab1} a5 – see 12.\textit{ab1}; 13.\textit{fe1} \textit{e4} 14.\textit{xe7} \textit{xe7} 15.\textit{f3} \textit{d2} 16.\textit{xd2}, Bu Xiangzhi – Bhat, Seattle 2001, 16...f5=, preventing e3-e4.) 13...\textit{f8}. Black prepares the transfer of his knight to e6. 14.\textit{ae2} \textit{e6} 15.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6}. His minor pieces exert powerful pressure against White’s d4-pawn and thus deprive him of an active play connected with the pawn-advance e3-e4. 16.b4. This move looks rather inconsistent. White had at first centralised his rook on a1 and then began active actions on the queenside. 16...a5 17.bxa5 \textit{xa5} 18.\textit{b3} \textit{a3}\textsuperscript{7} Hulak – Beliavsky, Murska Sobota 2007. White’s weak a2-pawn needs permanent
Black impedes the pawn-advance b2-b4.

13.a3
13...Rc1 14.f3 (14...b5 – see 13.a3) 14...Nd8∞ Jakab – Todorovic, Budapest 2003.
13.h3 Re8 14.f4 (14...b5 – see 13.a3) 14...Nd8 15.c2 b6∞ Burmakin – Dreev, St Petersburg 1999.
13...d2 Re8 14.d3 (14.a3 Ne4 – see 13.a3; 14.c2 b6 – see 13.c2) 14...d6. Black is preparing b8 and h5. 15.Nf1 b8 16.f3 h5∞ His prospects are not worse and White’s too active move 17.g4?! led only to the weakening of his kingside. 17...g7= Tangborn – Bhat, ICC 2007.
13.c2 Re8

About 14.a3 Ne4, or 14...xf6 xf6 15.a3 d6 – see 13.a3.

The line: 14.h3 Ne4 15.f4 d6 16.xe4 leads to complications which turn out to be in favour of Black. 16...dx4 17.xd6 exf3 18.gxf3 e5 19.xf4 g5. He regains his pawn. 20.g3 xf3 21.xf3 22.Nf6 e2 e5∞ Meenakshi – Makka, Athens 2006. White’s king does not seem to be so safe in this middle game. In addition, the attacking potential of Black’s tandem queen + knight is well known...

14.f1 b6 15.e5 fd7. Simplifying of the position is Black’s simplest road to equality. 16.xe7 xe7 17.d3 (Following 17.xd7 xd7 18.a4, Black can refrain from exchanging the last couple of minor pieces and transfer his knight to the d6-square. 18...c4 19.b5 e7 20.b3 d6 21.c5 h5∞

\textbf{13...\textit{Ne8}}

14.\textit{Wc2}

14.\textit{Wfc1 Qe4} 15.\textit{Bf4 d6} 16.\textit{Bxd6 Qxd6} = Tomaszewski – Flear, Buende 1985.

14...\textit{Wxf6} 15.\textit{Bxf6} 16.\textit{Wc2 d6} (16.\textit{b4}, Chuprov – Shomoev, Khanty-Mansiyk 2010, 16...\textit{b5}!?)

16.\textit{Be2 We7} = Vescovi – Mekhitarian, Americana 2010) 16...\textit{We7} = Jakovenko – Gelfand, Odessa 2009.

Black has no problems at all, which is by the way typical for the Carlsbad pawn-structure when he has managed to exchange his passive light-squared bishop.

\textbf{14...Be4} 15.\textit{Bxe7}

About 15.\textit{Bxe4 dxe4} 16.\textit{Bxe7} \textit{We7} – see 15...\textit{We7}.

\textbf{15...Wxe7}

16.\textit{b4}

There arises a complicated manoeuvring battle after 16.\textit{Wfc1 Qd6} 17.\textit{Be2}. White prepares the transfer of his knight to the d3-square. 17...\textit{Wg7} 18.\textit{Wf4 Wf8} 19.\textit{Bd3 Qe6} = Ivanchuk – Giri, Leon 2013.

16.\textit{Bxe4 dxe4} 17.\textit{Bd2} c5!? After this move, White must comply with the weakening of his pawn-structure in order to prevent the appearance of Black’s knight to the d3-outpost. 18.\textit{Bbc1} (18.\textit{Wfc1}, Vera Gonzalez Quevedo – Morovic Fernandez, Havana 1999, 18...\textit{b5}!? 19.\textit{Bbc1 Wac8} =) 18...\textit{cxd4} 19.\textit{exd4}, Nikolic – Lagunina, Lugano 1989, 19...\textit{Wf6}! = Now White must play very precisely not to end up in an inferior position. The vulnerability of his isolated d4-pawn may hurt him in the future.

16...\textit{Be6}
This is the ideal square for Black’s knight in this variation.

17.bxa5
17...bxa5 18.axb4, Stamenkovic – Korneev, Forni di Sopra 2011, 18...b5?!?

17.b5 c4 18.bxc6 bxc6. White has succeeded in creating a weakness on c6 for his opponent, but thanks to the powerful placement of his knight on d6, Black manages to get rid of it by advancing c6-c5. 19.a1 db6 20.a4 xa4 21.xa4 ac8 22.fc1 c5= Gardarsson – Ruimy, ICCF 2008.

17...xa5 18.a4 a6 19.e1
White prepares the transfer of his knight to d3. Black does not need to waste time and can send his own knight to the c4-square.


19...b6 20.d3 bc4 21.b4, Inkiov – Abramovic, Bor 1983, 21...g7!?∞ The powerful placement of Black’s knight on c4 provides him with at least equal prospects.

B2) 8.e4
White wishes to exploit his lead in development, but his pawn-break in the centre would lead to the appearance of an isolated pawn in his position.

8...dxe4 9...xf6
Or 9...xe4 10...xe4 11...h6, Toth – Nagy, Budapest 2004, 11...d7!?

9...xf6 10...xe4+
It would not be so energetic for White to play here 10...xe4 11...f5 Baron Rodriguez – Rodriguez Guerrero, Mataro 2004.

10...e7

11...c4
White’s pieces have been deployed very actively, but his queen is pinned. After its exchange, if Black manages to complete the development of his pieces, he will succeed in exploiting the vulnerability of the d4-pawn.
About 11...xe7+ 12...xe7 12...c4 11...f5 – see 11...c4.

11...f5
Black develops his bishop with tempo.

12...xe7+
12...e3 13...d7 13.0-0 0-0 Orzech – Parramon Guillaumet, Balaguer 2009.

12...xe7
13.0-0-0
Besides this move, White has tried in practice:

13.h3 h5. Black should better not allow g2-g4. 14.0-0 d8. He has taken measures against the possible check on e1. 15.fe1+ f8 16.ad1 (After 16.e4, Black can simply exchange the enemy knight. 16...xe4 17.xe4 d7 18.f4 g7 Johansen – Sandler, Melbourne 1998. White must play accurately in this endgame.) 16..d7 17.e4 xe4. This move is necessary; otherwise, Black cannot neutralise his opponent’s initiative. 18.xe4 b6 19.b3 d5. This black knight, placed in the centre, will impede the enemy bishop on b3 to exert pressure against the f7-square. 20.e5 g7 21.g3, Grigore – Dumitrache, Bucharest 1992, 21...a5!∞

13.0-0. Now, just like after 0-0-0, White plans to give a check from the e1-square. Still, his queen’s rook will occupy a less active position. 13..d8 14.fe1+ f8 15.e4, Beim – Portisch, Frankfurt 1998 (15.h3 h5, or 15.ad1 d7 16.h3 h5 – see 13.h3) 15...xd4!? Black exploits the insufficient protection of the pawn on d4 and can simply capture it. Naturally, White still maintains the initiative, but his compensation for the sacrificed pawn is insufficient. 16.fg5 f6 17.f7 d7 18.ed6 a6 19.ad1 xb2. White’s pieces seem very active, but Black has already two extra pawns. White’s attempt to restore the material balance would lead to numerous exchanges. 20.xf5 xd1 21.xd1 xf5 22.d8 c5 23.e6+ xe6 24.xe6 b5 25.xf5 c5 26.xh7 d4 27.f1 a5∞ Now, thanks to the powerful position of his bishop and the far-advanced queenside pawns, Black’s prospects seem preferable.

13..d7 14.h3
It is obviously worse for White to play here 14.d5?! Sanikidze – M.Gurevich, Metz 2012, since following 14..hc8!? 15.d6+ f8+, Black manages to avoid the dis-coordination of his rooks and White’s pawn, having penetrated to the d6-square, is much rather a liability than a real danger.

14..b6
While Black’s rook remains on h8, it is important for White to give a check on the e-file, so that Black’s king, after its retreat to the f8-square, would impede the coordination of his major pieces.

15.\texttt{\textbf{Rd}e1+} The check with this rook looks less precise. (16.\texttt{\textbf{R}h}g1 \texttt{h4} Sulava – Brkic, Marija Bistrica 2011; it is better for White to play here 16.\texttt{\textbf{R}de}1+ \texttt{\textbf{f}f}8 – see 15.\texttt{\textbf{R}de}1.) 16...\texttt{\textbf{f}f}8. With a rook on d1 White cannot play \texttt{\textbf{N}e}5, because of the enemy bishop-check on g5. 17.\texttt{\textbf{B}c}2. White deprives his opponent of the two-bishop advantage, but with the exchange of every piece the vulnerability of his isolated d4 pawn becomes more and more obvious. 17...\texttt{\textbf{B}xc}2 18.\texttt{\textbf{K}xc}2 \texttt{\textbf{K}g}7 19.\texttt{\textbf{N}e}4 \texttt{\textbf{N}d}5 \texttt{Capuano – Zawadka, ICCF 2014.}

15...\texttt{\textbf{f}f}8 16.\texttt{\textbf{B}b}3 \texttt{h}5 17.\texttt{\textbf{D}e}5 \texttt{\textbf{g}g}5+ 18.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}1 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}8 19.\texttt{\textbf{A}xf}7 \texttt{\textbf{xd}d}4+. Here, Black could have even tried to obtain an advantage if his rook on h8 had not been so horribly misplaced. 20.\texttt{\textbf{e}e}2 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}3+ 21.\texttt{\textbf{f}f}3 \texttt{\textbf{f}f}4+ 22.\texttt{\textbf{e}e}3 \texttt{\textbf{xf}f}7+ 23.\texttt{\textbf{x}d}3 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}7+ 24.\texttt{\textbf{e}e}2 \texttt{\textbf{g}g}7= Deforel – Bericat, ICCF 2016. The tactical complications are over and the position is just dead simple and equal.
Part 4

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 e6 5.e3

The fourth part of our book will be devoted to the analysis of one of the two main lines for White on move five – 5.e3. As an opening weapon for Black we will not choose the Meran variation (5...\texttt{bd}d7), but 5...\texttt{a}6!?

The point is that after 5...\texttt{bd}7, there has been played an enormous amount of games and there has been amassed so much theory both in the Meran variation (6.\texttt{d}d3), as well as in the Anti-Meran set-ups (6.\texttt{w}c2), so that not every reader will manage to find his way in these intricacies.

The move 5...\texttt{a}6 has not been so well studied, but has been tested by such strong players as V.Anand, L.Aronian, M.Carlsen, P.Elianov, G.Kasparov, A.Morozevich, A.Tomashevsky, V.Topalov...

In Chapter 13 we will analyse the moves 6.h3, 6.d\texttt{d}2 and 6.a3 as well as some other possibilities for White. The Chapters 14-15 will be devoted to the moves with White’s bishop: 6.\texttt{e}c2 (Chapter 14) and 6.d\texttt{d}3 (Chapter 15). The occupation of space (6.c5) will be dealt with in Chapter 16. Finally, in Chapters 17-18, we will analyse White’s popular moves 6.b3 and 6.\texttt{c}2.

Chapter 13

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 e6 5.e3 a6
Black prepares dxc4, followed by b7-b5 and contrary to the Meran variation, does not determine yet the placement of his knight on b8. It can often go to a more active position (the c6-square), even after a loss of a tempo, following c6-c5.

In this chapter we will analyse White’s relatively seldom played moves: A) 6.h3, B) 6.\textit{d}d2 and C) 6.a3.

6.\textit{b}b3. This move does not seem logical. Why should White protect once again his c4-pawn, if it is defended by his bishop on f1? 6...dxc4 7.\textit{xc}4 b5 8.\textit{e}2 c5 9.dxc5 \textit{xc}5 10.0-0 0-0= Dimakiling – Alavkin, Moscow 2011.

6.\textit{e}5 c5 7.cxd5 (7.a4 \textit{d}6 – see 6.a4) 7...exd5 8.\textit{e}2 (8.\textit{d}3 \textit{d}6 9.0-0 0-0 10.h3, Gagunashvili – Kobalia, Istanbul 2003, 10...b5!?= Black begins immediate active actions on the queenside.) 8...\textit{d}6 9.0-0 0-0

10.b3, Moiseenko – Bojkov, Plovdiv 2008, 10...\textit{e}8!?=

10.f4. The basic defect of the plan with \textit{e}5 and f2-f4 is that White weakens the e4-square. 10...\textit{c}6 11.h1 cxd4 12.exd4 \textit{b}6= Moiseenko – Svane, Helsingor 2014.

10.\textit{f}3 \textit{e}6. Black parries easily the threats against his d5-pawn. 11.b3 cxd4 12.exd4 \textit{c}7. White’s knight is very active at the centre of the board and Black must exert pressure against it. 13.b2 \textit{bd}7?!=

6.a4. White impedes his opponent’s counterplay, connected with b7-b5, but weakens the b4-square.

6...c5. Black prepares \textit{c}6. The loss of a tempo is not so important here, because White’s “extra” move a2-a4 does not seem so useful either. 7.cxd5 (7.e2 dxc4, or 7.d3 dxc4 8.xc4 \textit{c}6 – see Chapter 14; 7.e5, Lugovoi – Grigoriants, Krasnoyarsk 2003, 7...\textit{d}6!? 8.cxd5 exd5 9.g3 \textit{e}6=) 7...exd5
8.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{c}6\) 9.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 10.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{bxc}6\) 11.0-0 0-0= Purnama – Nguyen, Jakarta 2015. Black’s pawns look a bit weak, but the position is approximately equal, because his pieces are very active and White’s queenside has been weakened by the pawn-advance a2-a4.

8.\(\text{xe}2\) \(\text{c}6\) 9.0-0 \(\text{d}6\) 10.\(\text{dx}c5\) (10.b3 \(\text{cx}d4\) 11.\(\text{fx}d4\) \(\text{wc}7\) 12.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 13.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{xa}3\) 14.\(\text{xa}3\) 0-0= Grivas – Giorgadze, Ankara 1995. Here, just like in our previous notes, White’s queenside has been compromised after a2-a4.) 10...\(\text{xc}5\) 11.\(\text{d}4\) (11.b3 0-0 12.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{xa}3\) 13.\(\text{xa}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 14.\(\text{a}1\) \(\text{e}7\)= Neverov – Gormally, Cappelle-la-Grande 2002) 11...0-0 12.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{bxc}6\) 13.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{d}6\)\] Siebrecht – Drozdovskij, Dresden 2007. You can see once again the negative consequences of the move a2-a4. White does not have the standard manoeuvre for similar positions \(\text{a}4\)-c5, because of that.

**A) 6.h3**

White is waiting. He wishes to capture with his bishop without the loss of a tempo after Black takes on c4. Still, the move h2-h3 does not seem to be so useful.

6...\(\text{bd}7\)!?

This is an interesting decision. Black transfers into Meran set-ups in which his move a7-a6 will be more useful than his opponent’s move h2-h3.

7.\(\text{c}2\)

White plays in the spirit of the Anti-Meran.

The move 7.\(\text{a}4\) weakens the b4-square and Black can exploit this immediately. 7...\(\text{b}4\) 8.\(\text{d}2\) 0-0 9.\(\text{e}2\), Ehlvest – Malakhov, Jurmala 2015, 9...a5!?

7.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{b}4\) 8.\(\text{d}2\) 0-0 9.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{d}6\). We will analyse similar positions in Chapter 17, but there White does not lose time for the unnecessary move h2-h3. 10.0-0 e5 11.\(\text{dx}e5\) \(\text{xe}5\) 12.\(\text{cx}d5\) \(\text{cx}d5\)= Giffard –
Kurmann, France 2007.

White’s attempt to occupy space on the queenside with 7.c5 frees Black’s hands for counterplay in the centre. 7...g6 8.d3 g7 9.0-0 0-0 10.b4 e8 11.b2 e5 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.dxe5 xe5. He does not need to be afraid of White’s possible knight-sorties. 14.a4 e8 15.d4 e4 16.xe4 xe4 = Stocek – Cerveny, Pardubice 2007.

7.a3. White makes too many moves with his rook-pawns. 7...d6. Now, he has no more waiting moves and must clarify the position. 8.c5. This is an important decision. White occupies space on the queenside, but with his bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal Black will accomplish easily the thematic pawn-advance e6-e5. (White would not achieve much with 8.d3 dxc4 9.xc4 c5 10.dxc5 xc5 11.0-0 b5. Black prepares the development of his bishop on b7 with tempo. He has no problems whatsoever. 12.e2 b7 13.b4 c7 14.b2 0-0= Stocek – Laznicka, Czechia 2012.) 8...c7 9.b4 e5 Naumkin – Kobalia, Moscow 2008.

7...d6

8.g4
White is fighting for the initiative on the kingside.
8.c5 c7 9.d3, Kozul – Glavas, Bihac 1999, 9...e5=

8.b3. This fianchetto of White’s bishop seems to be too slow. 8...e5 9.b2 e4. Black occupies space. 10.d2 0-0 11.g4 h6 12.e2 e8 13.0-0-0 b5 14.c5. Now, Black cannot open the b-file, but on the other hand, he does not need to worry about the protection of the d5-square. (Following 14.dg1, Black must take care about the possibility g4-g5. 14...h7 15.b1 bxc4. He opens the b-file for his rook. 16.bxc4 b8 17.a1 b4 18.cxd5 xc3 19.xc3 cxd5 20.a3 b6 21.b1 d7= Petersons – Schoch, ICCF 2015. Black’s king is safer than its counterpart.) 14.c7 15.dg1 h7 16.h4 df8. He is preparing f7-f5. 17.d1 f5 18.g5. White sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. 18...hxg5 19.xg5 xg5 20.f4 gh7= Grabliauskas – Pezzica, ICCF 2014. White has managed to open the h and g-files, but Black has an extra pawn. In addition, he has more space too.

8...h6
Black prevents g4-g5.
If White wishes to occupy space on the queenside, he should better do this before Black has played b7-b5.


9.Rg1 Be7. Black’s plans include the exchange on c4, followed by b7-b5, c6-c5, b7. He does not need to be in a hurry to castle kingside, because after g4-g5, his king may come under an attack. 10.Bd2 (10.h4 dxc4 11.Bxc4 b5 12.e2 c5 13.g5 hxg5 14.hxg5 Bxd5= Valli – Cecchelli, ICCF 2009) 10...dxc4 11.Bxc4 (11.e4 Black parries easily his opponent’s threat to win a piece. 11...e5 12.Bxc4 b5 13.e2 c5 14.dxe5 Bxe5 15.0-0-0, Berczes – Baramidze, Budapest 2010, 15...b4!?∞) 11...b6 12.e2 c5 13.h4 (13.dxc5 Bxc5= Sakhabeev – Alderisio, ICCF 2012) 13...b4. Black ousts the enemy knight to the edge of the board. 14.Ba4, Rodshtein – Drozdovskij, Cappelle-la-Grande 2007, 14...cxd4!?∞

9...Be7!?

The bishop usually retreats to c7, or b8 in similar positions. Still, Black’s further plans include not e6-e5, but b7-b6. In these lines, the bishop will be better placed on the a3-f8 diagonal, controlling the important c5 and b4-squares.

10.Bd2

Or 10.Rg1 b6 11.cxb6, Ding – Vitiugov, Sochi 2009 and here, Black does not need to lose time to capture the pawn, but can play immediately 11...c5!?∞

10...b6 11.cxb6. Adhiban – Ragger, Moscow 2012, 11...AXB6!? 12.g5 (Following 12.a4 c7 13.c1 Bb7=, Black can defend easily his weakness on c6, while White can hardly find a safe haven for his
king.) 12...\(\text{\textipa{c}e4}\). Black sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. 13.\(\text{\textipa{c}e4}\) dxe4 14.\(\text{\textipa{b}e4}\) b7 15.\(\text{\textipa{g}g2}\) (15.gxh6?! c5 16.hxg7 \(\text{\textipa{g}g8}\)) 15...c5 16.\(\text{\textipa{g}4}\) hgx5=, restoring the material balance.

B) 6.\(\text{\textipa{d}d2}\)
White wishes to develop quickly his queenside pieces, but with a bishop on d2, his queen would not control the important d4-square.

6...c5

[Diagram]

Black is not bothered by the loss of the tempo and is preparing \(\text{\textipa{c}c6}\). His plan is to create pressure against the enemy centre as quickly as possible.

7.exd5
7.\(\text{\textipa{c}c1}\) \(\text{\textipa{c}c6}\) 8.cxd5 exd5 – see 7.exd5.
7.\(\text{\textipa{w}c2}\) \(\text{\textipa{c}c6}\) 8.dxc5 \(\text{\textipa{x}c5}\) 9.\(\text{\textipa{d}d1}\) \(\text{\textipa{e}7}\) 10.a3 0-0= Nakamura – Fernandez, Orlando 2011.

7...exd5

[Diagram]

8.\(\text{\textipa{e}2}\)
White’s bishop will be less active on this square than on d3, but on the other hand Black would not be able to win a tempo with the move c5-c4.

8.dxc5. White prefers to play against an isolated pawn. 8...\(\text{\textipa{x}c5}\) 9.\(\text{\textipa{w}a4}\). He wishes to exploit Black’s delay with castling. (After White’s calmer line: 9.\(\text{\textipa{c}c1}\) \(\text{\textipa{c}c6}\) 10.\(\text{\textipa{a}a4}\) \(\text{\textipa{d}d6}\) 11.\(\text{\textipa{c}c3}\) 0-0 12.\(\text{\textipa{e}e2}\) \(\text{\textipa{e}4}\)=, Black’s centralised knight is obviously more powerful than White’s knight on a4, Nikolic – Giri, Hilversum 2009. 9.g3 \(\text{\textipa{c}c6}\) – see 8.g3.) 9...\(\text{\textipa{c}c6}\) 10.\(\text{\textipa{b}b5}\) \(\text{\textipa{d}d7}\) 11.\(\text{\textipa{x}c6}\) \(\text{\textipa{x}c6}\) 12.\(\text{\textipa{f}f4}\) 0-0 13.0-0, Vovk – Rutkowski, Mrzejno 2011, 13...\(\text{\textipa{e}4}\)!? 14.\(\text{\textipa{f}fd1}\) f5\(\text{\textipa{x}}\) Black’s bishop-pair and his powerful knight in the centre compensate the weakness of his d5-pawn.
8.g3. White prepares the fianchetto of his bishop. 8...\(\text{\texttt{c}}\text{6} 9.\text{\texttt{x}}\text{c}5 (9.\text{\texttt{g}}\text{2} \text{\texttt{g}}4 10.0-0 \text{\texttt{c}}\text{xd}4 11.\text{\texttt{e}}\text{xd}4 \text{\texttt{e}}\text{7} = \text{Hebden – Haslinger, Great Yarmouth 2007}) 9...\text{\texttt{xc}}5 10.\text{\texttt{g}}\text{2} 0-0 11.0-0 \text{\texttt{g}}4.\) There has arisen a typical position with an isolated queen’s pawn in which Black’s active pieces compensate the slight weakness of his d5-pawn. 12.h3, S.Atalik – M.Gurevich, Istanbul 2003, 12...\text{\texttt{f}}5!? 13.\text{\texttt{e}}\text{2} \text{\texttt{e}}\text{4} 14.\text{\texttt{c}}\text{c}1 \text{\texttt{d}}7 15.g4 \text{\texttt{e}}6\text{=} 16.\text{\texttt{d}}\text{3} \text{\texttt{c}}\text{6}\text{9.\texttt{e}}\text{5} (After the rather slow move 9.h3, Gajewski – Barnaure, Jerusalem 2015, Black can try to occupy additional space on the queenside, instead of exerting pressure against the d4-pawn: 9...c4!? 10.\text{\texttt{c}}\text{2} b5\text{=} 9...\text{\texttt{c}}\text{xd}4 10.\text{\texttt{xc}}\text{6} \text{\texttt{bxc}}6 11.\text{\texttt{e}}\text{xd}4 \text{\texttt{d}}\text{6} 12.0-0 0-0 13.\text{\texttt{g}}\text{5}, Markus – M. Gurevich, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005, 13...\text{\texttt{b}}\text{8}!? 14.\text{\texttt{a}}\text{4} h6 15.\text{\texttt{h}}\text{4} \text{\texttt{f}}\text{4}.\He is preventing the move \texttt{\texttt{c}}\text{1}. 16.a3 a5 17.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{d}6 18.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{g}4 19.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{h}5\text{=} We have already seen in this variation that Black’s active pieces compensate the vulnerability of his c6-pawn.

8.\text{\texttt{c}}\text{1} \text{\texttt{c}}\text{6}
9.0-0
9...e5 cxd4 10.exd4 d6 11...xc6 bxc6 12...g5 b8 13.d2 h6 14...h4 0-0 15.e1 e8= Bareev – Malakhov, Sochi 2006.

9...e6
Black is not in a hurry to develop his bishop to d6 in order not to lose a tempo after White captures dxc5.

10.e1
10...e5 cxd4 11.exd4 d6 12...xc6 bxc6 13.g5 b8. Black removes his queen from the pin. 13...h3 e4 15.xe4 dxe4 16.a4 d5. His bishop cements perfectly his position on this square. 17.e4 0-0=

10...e8

White has no more waiting moves, so he must exchange on c5. 11.dxc5 xc5 12.a4 a7 13.b3 b7. Black complies with the penetration of the enemy knight to the b6-square, but that is practically useless for White. 14.b6 b8 15.g5 0-0∞ Bischoff – M.Gurevich, Germany 2002. Black has completed the development of his pieces. It is inconceivable how White can develop his initiative later. The exchange on e6, after fxe6, would lead to the opening of the f-file and the fortification of the pawn on d5.

C) 6.a3 bd7
This transfer to the Meran set-ups seems logical, because the move a6 seems more useful than White’s move a3.
7.\textit{d}3
7.c5 g6 – see Chapter 16.
7.\textit{e}2 dxc4 8.\textit{x}xc4 – see 7.\textit{d}3.
7.h3 \textit{d}6 – see 6.h3.
7.b3 \textit{d}6 8.\textit{b}2 0-0 9.\textit{e}2 b6!? With this move Black not only prepares the development of his bishop on b7, but also c6-c5. 10.0-0 \textit{b}7 11.\textit{c}2 c5 12.dxc5 bxc5= Bilobrk – Kovacevic, Sibenik 2009.

The move 7.cxd5 is not good for White, because after 7...\textit{exd}5, Black’s rook will have the semi-open e-file in the middle game and his bishop will gain access to the h3-c8 diagonal.

8.\textit{d}3 \textit{d}6 9.0-0 0-0=

7.\textit{e}2 \textit{d}6 8.e4. This move leads to simplifications. (8.b4 e5 – see 7.b4) 8...dxe4 9.\textit{x}xe4 \textit{xe}4 10.\textit{xe}4 c5 11.\textit{g}5, Grigoryan – Wells, Aix les Bains 2011 (The position might seem absolutely equal, but White must play carefully, because after 11.\textit{d}3 cxd4 12.b4 \textit{f}6 13.\textit{xd}4, Black can exploit his opponent’s delay of castling and accomplish a dangerous break in the centre with 13...e5!, seizing completely the initiative. 14.\textit{e}3 e4\textsuperscript{+} Kotsur – Kvon, Al Ain 2012.) 11...\textit{a}5+!? 12.\textit{d}2 \textit{c}7=

7.b4. White occupies space on the queenside, but after 7...\textit{d}6, Black’s counterplay, connected with e6-e5, would be sufficient for him at least to maintain the equality. 8.\textit{b}2 (8.\textit{d}3 e5=; after 8.\textit{e}2 e5 9.\textit{b}2, Malaniuk – Lau, Montecatini Terme 1994, Black can occupy space advantageously with 9...e4!? 10.\textit{d}2 0-0\textsuperscript{=} 8...0-0

9.h3 \textit{e}7!=

9.\textit{b}3. White exerts pressure against the d5-square with the idea to prevent the enemy pawn-break
e6-e5. Still, Black can undermine White’s centre with his other pawn after the preliminary move b7-b6. 9...\(\text{Qe7}\), Volkov – Svetushkin, Moscow 2008, 10...b6!? 11.\(\text{Bxe2}\) dxc4 12.\(\text{Bxc4}\) e5=

9.c5. White occupies even more space on the queenside, but reduces his pressure against the pawn on d5. Now, the pawn-break e6-e5 will be even more effective for Black. 9...\(\text{Bc7}\) 10.\(\text{Nc4}\) \(\text{Qe7}\) 11.\(\text{Be2}\) dxc4 12.\(\text{Bxc4}\) c5=

9.\(\text{Qc2}\) \(\text{Qe7}\) 10.\(\text{Bb3}\) (10.\(\text{Bd3}\) dxc4 11.\(\text{Bxc4}\) e5 – see 10.\(\text{Bb2}\); 10.\(\text{Rd1}\) dxc4 11.\(\text{Bxc4}\). After the removal of the rook from a1, the move b4-b5 becomes impossible. Black can exploit immediately this circumstance with the move 11...a5= Krasenkow – Kobalia, Port Erin 2006.) 10...dxc4 11.\(\text{Bxc4}\) e5 12.\(\text{Bb3}\) (12.\(\text{Be2}\) f5= Bauer – Gelfand, Biel 2005) 12...a5 13.b5, K.Georgiev – Dorfman, Moscow 1990, 13...\(\text{exd4}\) = 14.\(\text{Bxd4}\) \(\text{f5}\) Black’s pieces have been much more harmoniously deployed.

7...dxc4 8.\(\text{Bxc4}\) b5

Now, White must make up his mind where to retreat his bishop to.

[Diagram]

9.\(\text{Bc2}\)

9.\(\text{Bb2}\) e5 10.0-0 \(\text{Bb7}\)

[Diagram]

White would not achieve much with the move 11.e4, because of Black’s simple response 11...\(\text{exd4}\). He does not need to calculate the variations, connected with the capturing on e4. 12.\(\text{Bxd4}\) \(\text{c5}\) 13.\(\text{Be3}\) 0-0 14.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{e5}\)= Hoi – Petursson, Reykjavik 1981.

11.\(\text{Be1}\). White is preparing e3-e4, but reduces the protection of his pawn on f2. 11...\(\text{d6}\) 12.e4 (12.d5 \(\text{exd5}\) 13.e4 \(\text{d4}\) 14.e5 \(\text{dxe5}\) 15.\(\text{Bxe5}\) 0-0) Kruck – Beyer, Germany 2001. Black has more than sufficient
compensation for the sacrificed piece.) 12...cxd4 13.\textit{\texttt{W}}xd4 \textit{\texttt{B}}c5 14.\textit{\texttt{W}}d1 \textit{\texttt{g}}4. He attacks the f2-pawn and wins an important tempo, managing to transfer his knight to the e5-square. 15.\textit{\texttt{R}}f1 \textit{\texttt{d}}e5 16.\textit{\texttt{B}}xe5 \textit{\texttt{B}}xe5= Santos Etxepare – Llorach Garcia, ICCF 2012.

11.\textit{\texttt{W}}e2 \textit{\texttt{d}}6. Black's bishop will be very active on the h2-b8 diagonal. Later, he can follow with \textit{\texttt{W}}c7, or \textit{\texttt{W}}b8, increasing the pressure against the h2-square. 12.\textit{\texttt{R}}d1 (12.e4 cxd4 13.\textit{\texttt{B}}xd4 \textit{\texttt{B}}c8!=; 12.dxc5 \textit{\texttt{N}}xc5 13.b4 \textit{\texttt{N}}cd7 14.\textit{\texttt{B}}b2 0-0 15.\textit{\texttt{R}}fd1 \textit{\texttt{W}}e7= Khalilbeili – Ustinov, Batumi 1961. White’s knight is better placed on d2 than on c3 in similar positions.) 12...\textit{\texttt{W}}c7 13.dxc5 (After 13.d5, Black has the powerful resource 13...e4!?, restricting the enemy bishop on a2, Bauer – Lautier, Enghien les Bains 2001.

Following 13.h3 0-0=, White should better refrain from 14.e4?! cxd4 15.\textit{\texttt{B}}xd4 \textit{\texttt{c}}5, with rather unpleasant pressure against the pawn on e4, Kozul – Varga, Medulin 1997.) 13...\textit{\texttt{N}}xc5 14.b4 \textit{\texttt{N}}cd7 15.\textit{\texttt{B}}b2 \textit{\texttt{B}}c8 16.\textit{\texttt{B}}ac1 \textit{\texttt{W}}b8 17.h3. Now, White must play very precisely not to end up in an inferior position. (For example: he cannot equalise with 17.e4, because of 17...0-0 18.g3, Piskov – Rublevsky, Helsinki 1992, 18...\textit{\texttt{R}}fd8!?\texttt{^5}, followed by \textit{\texttt{B}}b6-c4.) 17...0-0 18.\textit{\texttt{B}}b1 \textit{\texttt{R}}fd8= Velilla Velasco – Van der Hoeven, ICCF 2010.

9.\textit{\texttt{B}}d3 c5 10.0-0 \textit{\texttt{B}}b7. Black deploys his pieces analogously to the line with 9.\textit{\texttt{B}}a2, which we have just analysed. 11.\textit{\texttt{W}}e2 (11.\textit{\texttt{B}}c2 \textit{\texttt{W}}c7=; the move 11.dxc5 only enhances the development of Black’s pieces. 11...\textit{\texttt{N}}xc5 12.\textit{\texttt{B}}c2 \textit{\texttt{W}}c7!?) Black avoids the trade of the queens and shows his aggressive intentions. He will not be happy anymore with just equalising. 13.\textit{\texttt{W}}e2 \textit{\texttt{d}}6 14.e4 0-0 15.\textit{\texttt{R}}e1 \textit{\texttt{d}}c7 16.h3 \textit{\texttt{d}}5\texttt{^7} Moutousis – Halkias, Aspropyrgos 2003.) 11...\textit{\texttt{B}}d6

12.\textit{\texttt{R}}d1 0-0 13.dxc5 \textit{\texttt{B}}xc5 14.e4 (14.\textit{\texttt{B}}c2 \textit{\texttt{W}}c7 15.e4 \textit{\texttt{B}}cd7 – see 14.e4) 14...\textit{\texttt{W}}c7 15.\textit{\texttt{B}}c2 \textit{\texttt{d}}c7!? Black parries the threat e4-e5 and frees the c5-square for his bishop in the process. 16.\textit{\texttt{W}}d2 \textit{\texttt{c}}5\texttt{^5} Boreika – Gudkov, ICCF 2012.

12.\textit{\texttt{B}}c2 \textit{\texttt{W}}c7 13.\textit{\texttt{R}}d1 (It is possible that White should better think about equalising here and try to simplify the position, exchanging pieces. 13.dxc5 \textit{\texttt{B}}xc5 – see 11.dxc5) 13...0-0 14.h3, Korchnoi – Acs, Paks 2007, 14...cxd4!? 15.exd4 \textit{\texttt{R}}fe8\texttt{^7} The vulnerability of White’s isolated pawn may hurt him in this middle game.

9...c5 10.dxc5
10.0-0 \textit{\texttt{B}}b7 11.dxc5 \textit{\texttt{B}}xc5 – see 10.dxc5.

10...\textit{\texttt{B}}xc5 11.0-0
11.b4 \textit{\texttt{B}}e7 12.0-0 \textit{\texttt{B}}b7, or 12.\textit{\texttt{B}}b2 \textit{\texttt{B}}b7 13.0-0 0-0 – see 11.0-0.

11...\textit{\texttt{B}}b7 12.b4 \textit{\texttt{B}}e7
13.\textit{\textbf{b3}}
After White’s alternatives, Black has no problems at all.
13.\textit{d2} 0-0 14.\textit{a4}. After this move, the queenside pawns are exchanged and there arises complete equality. 14...\textit{xb4} 15.\textit{axb5} axb5 16.\textit{xa8} \textit{xa8} 17.\textit{xb5} \textit{xd2} 18.\textit{xd2} \textit{e5}=. Vidit – Lu Shanglei, Pune 2014.
13.\textit{d4} 0-0 14.\textit{b2} \textit{e8} – see 13.\textit{b2}.
13.\textit{b2} 0-0

14.\textit{b3} \textit{d6} – see 13.\textit{b3}.
14.\textit{d4} \textit{c8} 15.\textit{b3} \textit{d5} 16.\textit{xd5} \textit{xd5}=. Andersson – Sosonko, Wijk aan Zee 1988.
14.\textit{d4}, Capablanca – Euwe, Amsterdam 1931, 14...\textit{c8}!?
14.\textit{e1} \textit{e8} 15.\textit{b3}, Glienke – Blauert, Germany 1997, 15...\textit{d6}!?

13...0-0 14.\textit{d1}
14.\textit{b2} \textit{d6}!? Black is preparing \textit{e7}. 15.\textit{fd1} \textit{e7} 16.\textit{ac1} \textit{ac8} 17.\textit{b1} \textit{d5} 18.\textit{d3} \textit{b8}=. Alexandrova – Delchev, Cappelle-la-Grande 2005.
Before White has played $\text{Ra}c1$, Black must succeed in playing $\text{Ra}c8$, in order to remove his queen away from the c-file, to a safer place.

15. $\text{R}b2$ $\text{R}ac8$ 16. $\text{R}ac1$ $\text{Q}b8$

17. $\text{h}3$
17.a4 $\text{bxa}4$ 18. $\text{Qxa}4$ $\text{b}b6$ 19. $\text{b}b3$ $\text{g}g4$† Karpov – Illescas Cordoba, Wijk aan Zee 1993.

17...$\text{b}b6$ 18. $\text{a}1$ $\text{Fd}8$

It is only Black who can play for a win in this position, because he can seize the initiative at an opportune moment with the move $\text{c}c4$. 19. $\text{Exd}8+$ $\text{Exd}8$ 20. $\text{b}b1$ $\text{h}6$ 21. $\text{E}d1$ $\text{E}c8=$ Karpov – Kasimdzhanov, San Sebastian 2009.
Chapter 14

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\!f3 \!f6 4.c3 e6 5.e3 a6 6.e2 dxc4

7.a4!?
This is an interesting possibility after which there arises by transposition a line from the Queen’s Gambit Accepted, but not in the best possible version for White, since he has played too early \!c3.
7.xc4 b5 – see Chapter 15.
7.0-0?! b5?
7...c5 8.xc4
8.0-0 \!c6 9.xc4 \!e7 – see 8.xc4.
8...\!c6
This position arises much more often after the move-order: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.\!f3 \!f6 4.e3 e6 5.xc4 c5 6.e2 a6 7.a4.
9.0-0
Following 9.d5 exd5 10.xd5 \!e6 11.xf6+ xf6 12.xe6 xe6, only White may have problems, because Black can easily advance his pawn-majority on the queenside. 13.0-0 \!e7 14.\!d2 0-0 15.e2 b5?! Aliekhin – Lebedev, Moscow 2011.
9...\!e7!?

Black should not exchange on d4 in order not to allow his opponent to develop his bishop on f4, or g5. Here, you can see the consequences of White’s loss of a tempo for the move \!c3. His d4-pawn is not
sufficiently protected, so he is incapable of accomplishing the standard set-up for similar positions \( \text{e}2, \text{d}1. \)

Now, we will analyse in details: A) 10.dxc5 and B) 10.\( \text{e}2. \)

10.h3. This move does not seem so active. 10...0-0 11.dxc5 \( \text{xc}5 \) 12.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 13.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 14.e4 \( \text{d}4 \)
15.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{exd}4 \) 16.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{xd}5= \) Costa – Boikov, IECG 2001.

10.\( \text{d}3 \) 0-0 11.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{c}7. \) Black continues to refrain from exchanging on d4. 12.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 13.h3 \( \text{h}6 \) 14.d5. White’s waiting moves have ended and he is forced to clarify his further plans. This pawn-break in the centre however, leads only to the simplification of the position. 14...\( \text{exd}5 \) 15.\( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{b}4. \) Black’s knight will be well-placed and stable on this square. 16.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{xd}1+ \) 17.\( \text{xd}1, \) Can – Sakaev, St Petersbur 2015, 17...\( \text{d}7?!= \)

10.d5. Black is well prepared to counter this pawn-break. 10...\( \text{exd}5. \) Now, his bishop on c8 will be developed to an active position, which cannot be said about its white counterpart on c1. 11.\( \text{d}5 \) 0-0 12.\( \text{xe}7+ \) (12.h3 \( \text{xd}5 \) 13.\( \text{xd}5 \), Uhlmann – Gustafsson, Dresden 2003, 13...\( \text{d}6?!= \), preparing \( \text{e}6) \)
12...\( \text{xe}7 \) 13.h3 \( \text{e}4 \) 14.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d}8= \) Milanovic – Erdos, Nova Gorica 2008. White has the two-bishop advantage indeed, but Black’s pieces are very active. In addition, White needs to complete the development of his queenside.

10.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{cxd}4 \) 11.\( \text{xc}6 \) bxc6 12.d4. The pawns on d4 and c6 are about equally weak. 12...a5. Black emphasizes the vulnerability of the b4-square and prepares the exchange of his “bad” bishop (\( \text{a}6). \)
13.\( \text{f}3 \) 0-0? 14.\( \text{d}1 \) (Following 14.\( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{b}8= \), due to the threat \( \text{b}7, \) White fails to protect his d4-pawn, Polajzer – Zheliandinov, Ptuj 1993; 14.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 15.\( \text{ac}1 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 16.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}6= \) Piket – Nikolic, Wijk aan Zee 1993.) 14...\( \text{d}5 \) 15.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 16.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 17.\( \text{g}3 \). White wishes to begin an attack with the move \( \text{h}6, \) but 17...\( \text{b}8 \) parries this threat. 18.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{d}8= \) Pinter – Hoelzl, Austria 1998.

10.b3 0-0. Black is not in a hurry to exchange on d4, before White has played \( \text{b}2, \) in order to obtain a position with an isolated pawn in which White’s bishop will be restricted by his own pawn on d4.

11.\( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{cxd}4 \) 12.d4. It is only Black who can fight for an advantage in this position (Therefore, White should possibly consider here 12.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{d}7= \) Deich – Nasybullin, Khabarovsk 1990). 12...\( \text{b}4. \) Black increases his control over the strategically important d5-square. 13.\( \text{e}5 \) (13.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{b}6=; \) 13.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 14.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{b}7 – \) see 13.\( \text{e}5) \) 13...\( \text{b}6 \) 14.\( \text{f}3 \). White prepares the transfer of his queen to the g3-square with tempo. (14.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 15.\( \text{ac}1 \) \( \text{fd}5= \) Kempinski – Van Wely, Gothenburg 2005) 14...\( \text{b}8 \) 15.\( \text{g}3 \) (The character of the position remains more or less the same after 15.\( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 16.\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{bd}5 \) 17.\( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{xd}5 \) 18.f4, Lima – Quinn, Yerevan 1996, 18...\( \text{g}6?!= \)) 15...\( \text{b}7 \) 16.\( \text{ac}1 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 17.\( \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 18.\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{bd}5 \)
**Bxd6 Qxd6** Molzahn – Grabner, ICCF 2013. White has got rid of his passive bishop on b2, but the vulnerability of his isolated d4-pawn provides Black with a slight but stable advantage.


**A) 10.dxc5**

After this move, there arises an endgame in which White can hardly exploit his slight lead in development due to the vulnerability of the b4-square.

10...Qxd1 11.Qxd1 Bxc5

**12.Qd2**

Besides this, White has numerous alternatives, but neither of them provides him with any chance of obtaining an advantage.


12.Qd2. White prepares the transfer of his knight to the e4-square. 12.Qe7. It is well known that the king is better placed at the centre of the board and not at the edge in an endgame. In addition, here it covers the d6-square against the penetration of the enemy knight. 13.Qe4 Qxe4 14.Qxe4 Qb4 15.Qd2 Qd7

16.Qf1, Thomas – Rubinstein, Scarborough 1930, 16...Qhd8!?, followed by Qac8.

16.Qc3 Qxc3 17.Qxc3, Uhlmann – Wells, Austria 2002, 17...Qb4!?=
16.\textit{Be2}, Can – Gordievsky, Sitges 2015, 16...\textit{Bxd2} 17.\textit{Bxd2} \textit{\textbullet}b4=

16.\textit{Bxb4+}  \textit{\textbullet}xb4 17.\textit{Cc5}. White must play energetically; otherwise, Black may obtain an edge.

(17.\textit{Cd6}?! This strike is useless 17...\textit{Cc6} 18.e4?! Shinkevich – Vorobiov, St Petersburg 2011. Here, Black can obtain an advantage exploiting the drawbacks of the placement of White’s seemingly active knight on d6: 18...\textit{Cxd8}?! 19.e5 \textit{f6} 20.f4 \textit{g5}=. 17...\textit{Cc6} 18.\textit{Cd3}. White trades the active enemy knight and maintains the balance. 18...\textit{Cxd3} 19.\textit{Bxd3} \textit{\textbullet}hd8= Lilienthal – Bronstein, Moscow 1962.

12.b3 0-0 13.\textit{Bb2} \textit{b6} 14.\textit{Cg5}. The transfer of the knight to the e4-square leads to further simplifications.

14.\textit{Ce7} 15.\textit{Cge4} \textit{\textbullet}a5 16.\textit{Cxa3} \textit{\textbullet}xe4 17.\textit{Cxe4} \textit{\textbullet}xa3 18.\textit{Cxa3} \textit{\textbullet}b7 19.\textit{Cd6} \textit{\textbullet}fd8 20.\textit{Aa1} \textit{Cc6} 21.f3 \textit{\textbullet}f8 22.e4 \textit{\textbullet}e7= Farago – Trent, Porto San Giorgio 2004.

12.h3. White defends against the knight-sortie  \textit{\textbullet}g4 and prepares the advance of his e-pawn. 12...\textit{b6} 13.e4 (13.\textit{Cd4} \textit{\textbullet}b4 14.\textit{Cg5} \textit{\textbullet}e7 15.\textit{e4} \textit{\textbullet}b7 16.f3 \textit{\textbullet}d7 17.\textit{\textbullet}f4 \textit{\textbullet}c8= Kose – Acs, Yerevan 2000) 13...\textit{a5}

14.\textit{a2} \textit{\textbullet}b7 15.e5 (15.\textit{Cg1}?! This removal of the rook from the open file seems bad for White. 15...0-0\textsuperscript{=} Bourgoin – Luers, IECC 2001.) 15...\textit{\textbullet}d7 16.\textit{\textbullet}g5 \textit{\textbullet}xe5 Littlewood – Wells, West Bromwich 2002. White has compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but not more than that.

14.\textit{Cd3}. This move allows the penetration of Black’s knight to the b3-square after which he obtains the two-bishop advantage. 14...\textit{\textbullet}b3 15.\textit{\textbullet}c1 \textit{\textbullet}xc1 16.\textit{\textbullet}xc1 \textit{\textbullet}b7 (16...\textit{\textbullet}d7?! 17.e5\textsuperscript{=} Bareev – Kasparov, Novgorod 1997) 17.e5 \textit{\textbullet}d5 18.\textit{\textbullet}xd5 \textit{\textbullet}xd5 19.\textit{\textbullet}g5 \textit{\textbullet}e7 20.\textit{\textbullet}e4 0-0. Black has completed the development of his pieces and his bishops may become very powerful in the endgame. Therefore, White’s most reasonable decision is to force a draw by a repetition of moves. 21.\textit{\textbullet}c7 \textit{\textbullet}d8 22.\textit{\textbullet}c1 \textit{\textbullet}g7= Shinkevich – Filipenko, Kazan 2012.

12...\textit{b6}
Black only needs to solve the problem with his bishop on c8 in order to equalise completely. With his last move he prepares its development on b7.
13.\texttt{d}3
13.\texttt{a}2, Postny – Baron, Beersheba 2014. White prepares the pawn-advance b2-b4. Meanwhile, it is not dangerous for Black. 13...e7!? 14.b4 b7=

13.g5 e5 14.e2 (14.b3 b7= Meins – Svane, Bad Zwischenahn 2013) 14...b7 15.a2 h6 16.c3 ed7 17.f3 xf3 18.xf3 0-0 19.ac1 fc8= Lahaye – Okkes, Hilversum 2008.

13.ac1 b7 14.a2 (14.d3 d8 15.e1 e7= Hera – Macieja, Kallithea 2008) 14...0-0 15.e1 a5. Now, White is deprived of the possibility b2-b4, while the weakening of the b5-square is immaterial in this position. 16.c3 fd8= Karpov – Hjartarson, Seattle 1989.

13...b7 14.e4 e7 15.xf6+
Following 15.c3 0-0 16.xf6+ xf6 17.e4 fd8 18.xf6 gxf6, White will be incapable of exploiting the slight vulnerability of Black’s kingside pawn-structure, since there is just a few material left on the board. 19.d2 f5 20.f3 a5. Black exchanges the active enemy bishop. 21.xb7 xb7 22.c4 b5= Kulaots – Sulskis, Borup 2009.

15.xf6

16.ac1
16.e4 fc8 17.ac1 0-0 18.b4 fd8 19.b5. There arise further exchanges after this move. 19...xb5 20.axb5 a5 21.xb7 (Following 21.xa5 xd1+ 22.xd1 xe4 23.xb6, Black regains the pawn after 23...b8 24.d6 e7 25.d7 f8=) 21...xb7 22.xc8 xc8 23.e4 e7= Cantelli – Korchut, ICCF 2007.

16...0-0 17.e4 fc8 18.b3, Ivanchuk – Naiditsch, Dortmund 2008, 18...ab8!?= White’s pieces are slightly more active, but Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his camp.
B) 10.\(\text{e2}\)

White’s attempt to play \(\text{e2}\) and \(\text{d1}\) leads to considerable simplifications.

10...\(\text{cxd4}\)

The pawn-sacrifice 11.\(\text{exd4?!}\) seems rather dubious, because after 11...\(\text{Nxd4}\) 12.\(\text{Nxd4}\) \(\text{Qxd4}\) 13.\(\text{d1}\) \(\text{g4}\), White does not obtain full compensation for it. 14.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{h5}\) Van Foreest – Loiseau, Lille 2015.

11...\(\text{e5!}\) 12.\(\text{exd4}\) \(\text{exd4}\) 13.\(\text{Nxd4}\)

White restores the material balance with this temporary piece-sacrifice.

13.\(\text{e5?!}\) 0-0 14.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{d7}\) 15.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 16.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{f6}\) Jianu – V.Popov, Dresden 2007.

13...\(\text{Nxd4}\)

14.\(\text{e5}\)

14.\(\text{e3}\) 0-0 15.\(\text{xd4}\) (After 15.\(\text{xd4}\), there arises a transposition to the main variation, but with an extra tempo for Black. This would not influence the evaluation of the position as approximately equal.

15...\(\text{xd4}\) 16.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{c5}\) 17.\(\text{d1}\) \(\text{g4}\) 18.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{ac8}\) Kahlert – Korpa, Germany 2015.) 15...\(\text{c7}\). Black is threatening \(\text{c5}\).
16.\textit{t}f3 e5 17.\textit{t}f4 xf4 18.\textit{t}xf4 – see 16.\textit{t}f4.

16.e2, Sasikiran – Wells, Hastings 2002, 16...\textit{c}5!?

16.\textit{t}f4 xf4 17.\textit{t}xf4 e6!? This is the simplest for Black. He exchanges the active enemy bishop and the arising weakness on e6 after that will be protected easily. 18.\textit{x}xe6 fxe6 19.d6 (19.\textit{d}ad1 \textit{c}5 20.\textit{d}d2 \textit{ac}8 21.e5 \textit{b}4= Alves – Frey Beckman, ICCF 2002) 19...\textit{f}d8 20.\textit{ad}1 \textit{f}7 21.\textit{f}1, Miladinovic – Guliyev, Frascati 2005, 21...\textit{x}d6 22.\textit{c}d6 \textit{d}d5 23.\textit{x}d8 \textit{x}d8=

14...\textit{d}6
There arises an approximately equal endgame after this move.

15.\textit{t}xd4
15.\textit{t}xd6 \textit{xd}6 16.\textit{t}xd4 \textit{e}5

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17.\textit{h}h4 0-0 18.\textit{t}f4 \textit{xc}3 19.bxc3 \textit{f}5. White has the two-bishop advantage, but his queenside pawn-
structure has been weakened. 20.f3 (20.\textit{\texttt{Be5}}, Psakhis – Tal, Tel Aviv 1990, 20...\textit{\texttt{Rac8}}?! =) 20...\textit{\texttt{Rac8}}
21.\textit{\texttt{Be5}} \textit{\texttt{Rfe8}} 22.\textit{\texttt{Bxf6}} \textit{\texttt{gxf6}} = Ftacnik – Z.Polgar, New York 1987. Both sides have pawn-weaknesses and they balance each other.

17.\textit{\texttt{Rd1}} 0-0

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18.\textit{\texttt{Be1}} \textit{\texttt{Rc8}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Bd2}} \textit{\texttt{g7}} = Cvitan – Horvath, Pula 1997.
18.h3, Tregubov – Agrest, Ohrid 2001, 18...\textit{\texttt{Bf5}}!? 19.\textit{\texttt{Be3}} \textit{\texttt{Rac8}} =

The move 18.\textit{\texttt{Nd5}} leads to the simplification of the position. 18...\textit{\texttt{Be6}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Bxf6+}} \textit{\texttt{Bxf6}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Bxe6}} \textit{\texttt{fxe6}}.
The bishop on f6 exerts powerful pressure against White’s queenside. 21.\textit{\texttt{Be3}} \textit{\texttt{Bxb2}} 22.\textit{\texttt{Rab1}} \textit{\texttt{Rd8}}
23.\textit{\texttt{Rf1}} \textit{\texttt{Bd4}} = Speelman – Movsesian, Caleta 2010.

18.\textit{\texttt{Be3}} \textit{\texttt{Bf5}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Bd4}} \textit{\texttt{Rfe8}}. Black has completed the development of his pieces and has equalised completely. 20.\textit{\texttt{Bxe5}} \textit{\texttt{Rxe5}} 21.f3 \textit{\texttt{Be6}} = Mueller – Bindrich, Germany 2010.

15...\textit{\texttt{Wxd4}} 16.\textit{\texttt{Bxd4}} \textit{\texttt{Be5}}
Black wins a tempo by attacking the enemy rook.

17.\textit{\texttt{Rd1}}
17.\textit{\texttt{Rf4}} 0-0 18.\textit{\texttt{g5}} (18.h3 \textit{\texttt{h6}} = Hebden – Harikrishna, Hastings 2002) 18...\textit{\texttt{g4}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Be4}}, Neverov – Meister, Togliatti 1985, 19...\textit{\texttt{Bb6}}?! =
17.\textit{\texttt{Rd3}}. White prepares the transfer of his rook to the f3-square. 17...\textit{\texttt{f5}} 18.\textit{\texttt{Rf3}} \textit{\texttt{Bxe6}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Bxe6}} (19.\textit{\texttt{Be3}} \textit{\texttt{Rc8}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Bxe6}} \textit{\texttt{fxe6}} = Le Quang Liem – So Wesley, Saint Louis 2012) 19...\textit{\texttt{fxe6}} 20.\textit{\texttt{g5}} 0-0 21.\textit{\texttt{Rd1}} \textit{\texttt{Rd8}}
22.\textit{\texttt{Bxd8}} \textit{\texttt{Rxd8}} 23.\textit{\texttt{Bf1}} \textit{\texttt{Bf7}} = Koneru – Ju Wenjun, Chengdu 2016. Black gradually neutralises his opponent’s initiative by exchanging pieces.

17...0-0
18.\textbf{f4}

18.h3 \textit{e}6 19.\textit{x}e6 \textit{fxe6} 20.\textit{xf1} \textbf{(20.\textit{e}3 \textit{x}e3 21.\textit{fxe3} \textit{ad8} 22.a5 \textit{f7}= Todorovic – Macieja, Budva 2009) 20...\textit{d}5 21.f3 \textit{xc3} 22.bxc3 \textit{ac8} 23.\textit{b1} b6= Eljanov – Caruana, Douglas 201.}

18.\textit{e}1 \textit{f5} 19.\textit{g}5 \textit{ac8}. Black is not afraid of the exchange on f6, since he would obtain the two-bishop advantage after that. 20.\textit{e}2. White wishes to play a4-a5 and \textit{f3}, squeezing the enemy pieces with the protection of the pawn on b7. Still, Black can prevent the fixing of his queenside. 20...a5 21.\textit{f3} b6 22.h3 \textit{fe8} 23.\textit{xe8+} \textit{xe8} 24.\textit{d1} h6 25.\textit{xf6} gxf6 26.\textit{f1} \textit{g7}= Epishin – Khenkin, Bolzano 2000.

18.\textit{g}5 \textit{g4} 19.\textit{d}3 \textbf{(19.\textit{d}2 \textit{ad8} 20.\textit{d}5, Hertneck – Aronian, Bad Wiessee 2002, 20...b6!?=) 19...\textit{f}5 20.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}6 21.\textit{xf6} (21.h4, Gabuzyan – Chibukhchian, Jermuk 2013, 21...\textit{g}4!?=) 21...\textit{xf6}}

22.h4. White plans to chase the enemy bishop on g6. 22...\textit{d}4 23.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}5 24.g4 h5 25.g5 \textit{ad8} 26.\textit{xd8} \textit{xd8} 27.\textit{d}5, Khenkin – Aronian, Germany 2004, 27...\textit{g7}!? 28.gxf6+ \textit{h6} White has played too actively for a win and has serious problems now. His extra doubled pawn is useless, while Black’s two powerful bishops control almost the entire board in this open position.

22.\textit{d}5 \textit{fd8} 23.\textit{xb7} \textit{ab8} 24.\textit{xa6} \textit{xb2} 25.h4 \textit{dd2} Tisdall – Elsness, Norway 2016.

22.\textit{xf6} \textit{ad8} 23.\textit{e}1, Keymer – Wichmann, Schwaebisch Gmuend 2017, 23...\textit{g7}!? 24.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}2 In the last two variations Black’s pieces have become very active, compensating the minimal material deficit.

18...\textbf{g4}

He develops his bishop with tempo.

19.\textit{e}1 \textit{ac8} 20.\textit{d}5 \textit{fd8} 21.\textit{xf6+} gxf6 22.b3
White has managed to realise the maximum in this position. He has weakened his opponent’s pawn-structure without presenting him with the two-bishop advantage. Still, this is insufficient for an advantage, because Black’s pieces are very active and his pawn-weaknesses are easily defensible.

22...\textit{g7} 23.h3 \textit{f5} 24.ad1 \textit{b4} 25.xd8 \textit{xd8} 26.e1 \textit{a3}= 27.e1 \textit{b4} 28.e1 \textit{a3} 29.e1, draw, Ivanchuk – Wang Hao, Beijing 2013.
Black plays in the spirit of the Meran variation, but his knight is still on b8. Later, he can develop it not only on d7, but also on c6, after the preliminary move c6-c5.

Now, White’s most popular retreat of the bishop in this position is – C) 8.\textit{d}3. Before that however, we will analyse the less popular alternatives A) 8.\textit{e}2 and B) 8.\textit{b}3.

A) 8.\textit{e}2 c5
Black attacks immediately the enemy centre.

\textbf{9.0-0}
White would not obtain much with the straightforward line: 9.e4 cxd4 10.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 11.\textit{xd}4, Werle – I.Sokolov, London 2007, 11...e5!?=, while following 9.dxc5 \textit{xd}1+ 10.\textit{xd}1 \textit{xc}5 11.a3 \textit{b}7 12.b4 \textit{d}6 13.\textit{b}2 \textit{bd}7= Rakhmanov – Shimanov, Minsk 2014, there arises an approximately similar endgame as in the main variation.

\textbf{9...\textit{b}7}

\textbf{10.dxc5}
After this move, the endgame is with about equal prospects.

About 10.a3 \textit{bd}7 11.dxc5 \textit{xc}5 – see Chapter 13, variation C.

10.\textit{e}5. White is preparing \textit{f}3, but this plan seems to be too slow. Later, Black can not only equalise, but can think about something more in this position. 10...\textit{d}6 11.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}7 12.a4 cxd4 13.exd4 b4
14.\texttt{\texttt{x}b7} \texttt{\texttt{x}b7} 15.\texttt{\texttt{e}2} 0-0\footnote{Uhlmann – Jonkman, Dresden 1993. After the exchange of the light-squared bishops, White can hardly develop any initiative, while the vulnerability of his isolated pawn will hurt him.}

10.b3 \texttt{\texttt{c}6} 11.dxc5 \texttt{\texttt{x}c5} 12.\texttt{\texttt{b}2} 0-0 13.\texttt{\texttt{e}c1} \texttt{\texttt{e}7} 14.\texttt{\texttt{c}2} \texttt{\texttt{ac}8}= Cvek – Haba, Czech Republic 2012.

10...\texttt{\texttt{x}d1} 11.\texttt{\texttt{r}d1} \texttt{\texttt{x}c5}

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\textbf{12.\texttt{\texttt{d}2}}

The transfer of the knight to the b3-square seems rather time-consuming, but after his alternatives White has no hopes of obtaining an advantage in the opening.

12.\texttt{\texttt{d}4} \texttt{\texttt{bd}7} 13.\texttt{\texttt{b}3} \texttt{\texttt{b}4} – see 12.\texttt{\texttt{d}2}.

12.b3 \texttt{\texttt{bd}7} 13.\texttt{\texttt{b}2} 0-0 14.\texttt{\texttt{ac}1} \texttt{\texttt{ac}8} 15.\texttt{\texttt{f}1} h6= Salov – Karpov, Moscow 1992.

12.\texttt{\texttt{e}5} \texttt{\texttt{bd}7} 13.\texttt{\texttt{x}d}7 (13.\texttt{\texttt{d}3} \texttt{\texttt{d}6} 14.f3, Hedman – Lind, Hallstahammar 2001, 14...b4!? Black occupies space on the queenside. 15.\texttt{\texttt{b}1} a5=) 13...\texttt{\texttt{x}d}7 14.\texttt{\texttt{d}2} \texttt{\texttt{e}7}= Smederevac – Gaprindashvili, Hoogovens 1966.

12.\texttt{\texttt{d}2} \texttt{\texttt{bd}7} 13.\texttt{\texttt{b}4}. Before playing a2-a4, White wishes to fix the enemy pawn on b5. Still, this plan only leads to the exchange of the queenside pawns. (13.\texttt{\texttt{e}1} 0-0=) 13...\texttt{\texttt{e}7} 14.a4, Adly – M.Gurevich, Port Erin 2007, 14...\texttt{\texttt{x}b}4!? 15.axb5 axb5 16.\texttt{\texttt{xa}8}+ \texttt{\texttt{xa}8} 17.\texttt{\texttt{x}b}5 \texttt{\texttt{xd}2} 18.\texttt{\texttt{xd}2} \texttt{\texttt{e}7}= 12.a3. White is preparing b2-b4, after which the pawn-structure would become quite symmetrical.

12...\texttt{\texttt{bd}7} 13.\texttt{\texttt{b}4} \texttt{\texttt{e}7} 14.\texttt{\texttt{b}2} 0-0 15.\texttt{\texttt{ac}1} (15.\texttt{\texttt{d}2} \texttt{\texttt{fd}8}=) 15...\texttt{\texttt{ac}8} 16.\texttt{\texttt{f}1} \texttt{\texttt{fd}8} 17.h3 \texttt{\texttt{f}8}= Pomar Salamanca – Spassky, Gothenburg 1971.

12...\texttt{\texttt{bd}7} 13.\texttt{\texttt{b}3} \texttt{\texttt{b}4}

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14.\textbf{d2}

Following 14.a4 \textit{bxa4} 15.\textit{\underline{axa4}} a5, White will hardly manage to increase his pressure against the enemy a5-pawn and he has no other objects to attack. 16.\textbf{d2} 0-0 17.\textit{\underline{aa1}}, Vidit – Sengupta, Dharamshala 2014, 17...\textit{\underline{f8}}!?

14...0-0 15.a4

15.f3, Vitiugov – Vidit, Tsaghkadzor 2015, 15...\textit{\underline{fc8}}!?

15.a3 \textit{\underline{c5}} 16.\textit{\underline{c1}} \textit{x}c3 17.\textit{x}c3 \textit{\underline{fc8}}. White has the two-bishop advantage, but Black’s pieces are very active. 18.\textbf{d4} \textit{\underline{d5}} 19.f3 \textit{\underline{c4}}. He wishes to deprive White of his only advantage. 20.\textit{\underline{f2}} \textit{x}e2 21.\textit{\underline{xe2}} \textit{\underline{d5}} 22.\textit{\underline{ed2}} f6 23.\textit{x}c5 \textit{\underline{xc5}} 24.\textit{\underline{d3}} \textit{\underline{c7}}= Kramnik – Tomashevsky, Moscow 2012.

15...\textit{bxa4} 16.\textit{\underline{xa4}} a5 17.\textit{\underline{xb4}} axb4 18.\textit{\underline{ac5}}

White’s pieces are a bit more active, but he has no concrete threats in sight. Black should gradually equalise completely with an accurate play. 18...\textit{\underline{d5}} 19.f3. White restricts the enemy minor pieces and prepares the move \textit{\underline{f2}}. 19...\textit{\underline{xa1}} 20.\textit{\underline{xa1}} \textit{\underline{fc8}} 21.\textit{\underline{ec1}} \textit{\underline{xb3}} 22.\textit{\underline{xb3}} \textit{\underline{xc1}}+. The draw outcome becomes more and more probable with every exchange. 23.\textit{\underline{xc1}} \textit{\underline{c5}} 24.\textit{\underline{f2}} \textit{\underline{d5}} 25.\textit{\underline{e4}} \textit{\underline{b6}} 26.\textit{\underline{c3}} \textit{\underline{e5}}. Black fixes the enemy pawn on the same colour of the square as his bishop. 27.\textit{\underline{b3}} \textit{\underline{f8}}= Topalov – Wang Hao, Stavanger 2013.

\textbf{B) 8.\textbf{b3}}

8...\textit{c5} 9.0-0

It would be premature for White to play here 9.a4, because after 9...\textit{b4}, his knight would need to retreat to a passive position. 10.\textit{\underline{c2}} \textit{\underline{b7}} 11.0-0 \textit{\underline{bd7}} 12.\textit{\underline{f4}}, Epishin – Meister, Togliatti 1985. This transfer of the knight has taken too many tempi for White... 12...\textit{\underline{c8}}!?
9...\textit{b}7

\begin{center}
\textbf{Diagram}
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\textit{b}7
\end{center}

10.\textit{W}e2
He is preparing \textit{d}d1.

After 10.\textit{W}e1, Black can play 10...\textit{c}e6, increasing his pressure against the d4-square and impeding White’s pawn-advance e3-e4. 11.\textit{d}5 \textit{xd}5 12.e4. This is an interesting pawn-sacrifice, but insufficient for White to maintain an advantage. 12...\textit{d}xe4 13.\textit{g}5 \textit{xd}1 14.\textit{axd}1 \textit{d}d4. Black exchanges pieces and neutralises his opponent’s initiative. 15.\textit{d}xd4 \textit{cxd}4 16.\textit{x}f6 \textit{gxf}6 17.\textit{xd}4, Graf – Sargissian, Batumi 2002, 17...\textit{c}5!?=

After 10.dxc5 \textit{xd}1 11.\textit{xd}1, Mirzoev – Yanev, Spain 2013, Black should better not capture on c5 with his bishop. It seems much better for him to choose instead 11...\textit{bd}7!?=, followed by \textit{xc}5.

10.e4. White exploits his lead in development and begins immediate active actions in the centre.

10...\textit{cxd}4. This is Black’s most reasonable reaction. He does not need to enter the complications after the capturing on e4. 11.\textit{d}d4 \textit{c}6

\begin{center}
\textbf{Diagram}
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\begin{center}
\textit{d}4 \textit{c}6
\end{center}

12.\textit{e}3 \textit{xd}4 13.\textit{xd}4 \textit{e}7 14.f3 (14.e5 \textit{d}d5= Cornette – David, Cap d’Agde 2010) 14...0-0 15.a4, Wojtaszek – Kulaots, Warsaw 2013, 15...b4!? 16.\textit{e}2 \textit{d}7 Black’s knight is very passive on the f6-square, because it is severely restricted by the enemy pawns on e4 and f3. Therefore, he should better transfer it to a more active position.

The move 12.\textit{xc}6 would lead to simplifications. 12...\textit{xd}1 13.\textit{xd}1 \textit{xc}6 14.f3 \textit{c}5+. Black develops his bishop with tempo. 15.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}7. He connects his rooks. 16.\textit{g}5 (After 16.e5 \textit{d}7 17.\textit{g}5+, Korobov – Lesiege, Baku 2016, Black can simply retreat his king: 17...\textit{e}8!?, for example: 18.\textit{ac}1 \textit{h}6 19.\textit{d}2 \textit{c}8 20.f4 \textit{e}7=) 16...\textit{h}6. Black should better get rid immediately of the rather unpleasant pin.
17.\textit{\textbf{h4}} g5 18.\textit{\textbf{xf2}} \textit{\textbf{xf2}} 19.\textit{\textbf{xf2}} \textit{\textbf{hc8}} 20.\textit{\textbf{ac1}} \textit{\textbf{d7}}= Ponomariov – Anand, Moscow 2009.

\textbf{10...c6 11.\textit{\textbf{ab1}}}

11.d5 \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 12.\textit{\textbf{da1}} \textit{\textbf{e7}} 13.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{exd5}} 14.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{b6}} – see 11.\textit{\textbf{d1}}.

11.dxc5 \textit{\textbf{xc5}} 12.e4 (After 12.\textit{\textbf{d1}} the fifth World Champion has shown how to play with Black:

12...\textit{\textbf{c7}} 13.\textit{\textbf{d2}} 0-0 14.\textit{\textbf{ac1}} \textit{\textbf{e5}} 15.\textit{\textbf{xe5}} \textit{\textbf{xe5}}\textit{=} Winter – Euwe, London 1946. His pieces have been much more actively deployed.) 12...\textit{\textbf{d4}} 13.\textit{\textbf{xd4}} \textit{\textbf{xd4}} 14.e5 \textit{\textbf{d5}} 15.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 16.\textit{\textbf{d1}} \textit{\textbf{xb3}} 17.axb3 \textit{\textbf{b6}} 18.\textit{\textbf{d2}} 0-0 19.\textit{\textbf{a5}} \textit{\textbf{a7}}= Kramnik – Ponomariov, Dortmund 2012. The position has been simplified considerably. Black has completed his development and has no problems at all.

\textbf{11...\textit{\textbf{e7}}}

He does not exchange on d4 in order not to help in the activation of White’s bishop on c1.

\textbf{12.d5}  

After 12.dxc5 \textit{\textbf{c7}}, Black regains his pawn and obtains an excellent position. 13.e4 \textit{\textbf{xc5}} 14.h3 \textit{\textbf{e5}} 15.\textit{\textbf{g5}}, Litmanowicz – Buljovic, Warsaw 1959 (15.\textit{\textbf{xe5}} \textit{\textbf{xe5}}=) 15...0-0!??

\textbf{12...\textit{\textbf{exd5}} 13.\textit{\textbf{xd5}}}  

13.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{c7}} 14.\textit{\textbf{e4}} \textit{\textbf{d8}}= Landau – Rubinstein, Netherlands 1930.

\textbf{13...\textit{\textbf{xd5}} 14.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{b6}}}  

Black removes his queen away from the dangerous juxtaposition with the enemy rook. It would be sufficient for White to castle in order to complete his development. After that, the activity of his pieces would compensate Black’s pawn-majority on the queenside.

\textbf{15.e4}
The development of the bishop to the a1–h8 diagonal does not promise anything to White either.

15. B\textsubscript{d2} 0-0 16. c\textsubscript{3} \textsubscript{ad8} 17. b\textsubscript{3} \textsubscript{fe8} 18. e\textsubscript{ac1} h\textsubscript{6} =  
Bubir – Semrl, ICCF 2014.

15. b\textsubscript{3} 0-0 16. b\textsubscript{2} c\textsubscript{4} 17. a\textsubscript{4} b\textsubscript{7} \textsubscript{xb7} 18. e\textsubscript{4} \textsubscript{fe8} 19. c\textsubscript{3} f\textsubscript{8} 20. e\textsubscript{5} d\textsubscript{5} 21. e\textsubscript{4} \textsubscript{ad8} =  
Deforel – Sadler, ICCF 2015.

15...0-0 16. e\textsubscript{3} b\textsubscript{4}

Black exchanges the powerful enemy bishop.

17. x\textsubscript{b7} \textsubscript{xb7} 18. a\textsubscript{3} c\textsubscript{6} 19. d\textsubscript{5} c\textsubscript{4} 20. a\textsubscript{4} \textsubscript{d1} \textsubscript{ad8} 21. h\textsubscript{4} f\textsubscript{8} =  

C) 8. d\textsubscript{3} c\textsubscript{5}

Here, White can either begin immediate active actions on the queenside by attacking the enemy b5-pawn –

C1) 9. a\textsubscript{4}, or at first castle –

C2) 9. 0-0, concealing for the moment his further plans.

9. a\textsubscript{3} b\textsubscript{d7} – see Chapter 13, variation C.

9. e\textsubscript{2} b\textsubscript{d7} 10. a\textsubscript{4} (10. 0-0 b\textsubscript{7} – see variation C2b) 10... b\textsubscript{4} 11. e\textsubscript{4} b\textsubscript{7} – see variation C1.

9. e\textsubscript{4}. This seems to be better when the moves a2-a4 and b5-b4 are included, because then White can exploit the weakening of the c4-square in the middle game. 9... b\textsubscript{d7} 10. 0-0 b\textsubscript{7}.

11. x\textsubscript{f6}+ x\textsubscript{f6} 12. d\textsubscript{xc5} x\textsubscript{xc5} 13. e\textsubscript{2} 0-0 14. d\textsubscript{1} e\textsubscript{7} = 

After 11. x\textsubscript{c5}, Black can reply with 11... x\textsubscript{c5}!? 12. d\textsubscript{xc5} x\textsubscript{c5}. He has presented his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but his pieces are very actively placed. 13. e\textsubscript{2} 0-0 14. b\textsubscript{3}. White prepares the development of his bishop to an active position, but weakens the c3-square. Later, Black will play d\textsubscript{5}, e\textsubscript{4}, b4 and will accomplish penetration to the c3-square. 14... c\textsubscript{8} 15. b\textsubscript{2} e\textsubscript{4} 16. x\textsubscript{d8} f\textsubscript{xd8}
Black has gradually managed to realise his plan. His prospects are not worse in this endgame.

9.dxc5 ♗xc5

10.0-0 ♗b7 or 10.♗e2 ♗bd7 11.0-0 ♗b7 – see variation C2a.

The move 10.a4 only leads to simplifications, because after 10...b4 11.♗e4 ♖xe4 12.♖xe4, Black can exchange not only the knights, but the queens as well. 12...♘xd1+ 13.♗xd1 ♖a7 14.b3 ♖b7= Soysal – Kanmazalp, Kocaeli 2015.

C1) 9.a4 b4 10.♗e4 ♗bd7

He is fortifying his c5-pawn.

11.0-0

About 11.♗e2 ♗b7 12.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 13.0-0 cxd4, or 13.dxc5 ♖xc5 14.0-0 0-0, or 14.e4 0-0 15.0-0 ♗d6 – see variation C1a.

11.a5 ♗b7 12.♗ed2 ♖e7 or 11.♗ed2 ♗b7 12.a5 ♗e7 – see 11.♗ed2.

After 11.dxc5, Black can seize the initiative by sacrificing a pawn. 11...♗b7!? 12.♗d6+ ♖xd6 13.cxd6 ♖c5 14.♖c2, Gavrilo – Bezgodov, Moscow 1995, 14...a5?!†, followed by ♖a6, regaining the pawn and preserving all the advantages of his position.

11.♗ed2 ♗b7 12.0-0 ♗e7, or 12.a5 ♗e7 13.0-0 0-0, or 12.♗c4 ♖e7 13.0-0 0-0, or 12.♗e2 ♖e7 13.0-0 0-0, or 13.a5 0-0 14.0-0 ♖c7 – see 11.0-0.

11.b3 cxd4 12.exd4. White has an isolated pawn, but not in the most favourable version. 12...♗b7 13.♗e2 ♖e7 14.0-0 ♖xe4. As it is well known, the exchanges are in favour of the side, which plays
against the isolated pawn. It is becoming weaker, when the position nears an endgame. 15.\texttt{d}xe4 \texttt{d}xe4 16.\texttt{h}xe4 0-0 17.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{f}f6 18.\texttt{d}d3 \texttt{d}d5= M.Gurevich – Krivoshey, Bastia 2005.

11.\texttt{d}xf6+ \texttt{d}xf6

12.0-0 \texttt{b}7 – see 11.0-0.

12.b3 cxd4 13.\texttt{x}d4 \texttt{b}7 14.0-0 \texttt{d}5. Black’s queen frees the square for his rook with tempo. 15.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{d}8= Vidal Zamora – Aroshidze, Sitges 2016. His pieces have been obviously more actively deployed. 12.dxc5 \texttt{xc}5 13.b3 (13.0-0 \texttt{b}7, or 13.\texttt{e}2 0-0 14.0-0 \texttt{b}7, or 13.e4 \texttt{b}7 14.\texttt{e}2 0-0 15.0-0 \texttt{d}6 – see 11.0-0) 13...\texttt{b}7 14.\texttt{b}2, M.Gurevich – Pavasovic, Plovdiv 2008. Here, Black could have exploited immediately the weakness of the c3-square: 14...\texttt{d}5!? 15.0-0 \texttt{c}3 16.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{d}6 17.\texttt{x}c3 bxc3 18.\texttt{x}c3 \texttt{x}f3 19.gxf3 \texttt{h}2+. He sacrifices a piece and forces a draw by a perpetual check. 20.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{h}4+ 21.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{g}5=

11...\texttt{b}7

Now, we will analyse in details: C1a) 12.\texttt{x}f6 and C1b) 12.\texttt{ed}2.

Alexander Alekhine showed how to play with Black after 12.\texttt{x}c5?!: 12...\texttt{xc}5! 13.dxc5 \texttt{xc}5 14.\texttt{c}4 0-0 15.\texttt{e}2 a5= Reinfeld – Alekhine, Pasadena 1932.

12.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{c}8. This move emphasizes the unfavourable placement of White’s queen on c2. 13.\texttt{x}f6+ \texttt{xf}6 14.\texttt{c}2. The threat of capturing on f3, or d4 forces White to lose another tempo for a move with his queen. Still, fortunately for him, the position is within equality. 14...\texttt{xf}3 15.\texttt{gxf}3 (15.\texttt{xf}3?! \texttt{xf}3 16.\texttt{gxf}3 \texttt{e}4 17.\texttt{e}2 a5= Dothan – Napalkov, ICCF 2008. In this endgame, Black’s prospects seem preferable thanks to his far-advanced queenside pawns.) 15.\texttt{d}6 16.\texttt{a}6 \texttt{h}2+ 17.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{g}5=

12.\(\text{Ng3}\). White’s knight is not so well placed here, as on d2, because in some variations Black can develop powerful initiative on the kingside by advancing h7-h5-h4. 12...\(\text{d}\)6 13.\(\text{Qe2}\) (After the patient line: 13.b3 \(\text{cxd4}\) 14.\(\text{N}\)xd4 \(\text{c}\)5 15.\(\text{c}\)4, Black can begin immediate active actions on the kingside: 15...h5! The threat of the advance of Black’s h-pawn forces White to weaken seriously his pawn-structure. 16.h3 \(\text{xg3}\) 17.\(\text{fxg3}\) \(\text{d}\)5 \(\text{Kameneckas – Rezzuti}, \text{ICCF 2008.})\) 13...0-0 14.\(\text{d1}\), Kummer – Koutsin, Oberwart 1998, 14...\(\text{c7}\)?∞

C1a) 12.\(\text{xf6+}\)
White is reluctant to waste a tempo for the retreat of his knight.

12...\(\text{xf6}\)

13.\(\text{dxc5}\)
13.b3 \(\text{cxd4}\) 14.\(\text{xd4}\) (14.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{d}\)5 15.\(\text{f3}\), Sobek – Jirovsky, Prague 2015, 15...\(\text{c5}\)??) 14...\(\text{e7}\) 15.\(\text{e4}\) 0-0∞ Akobian – Shulman, Stillwater 2007. White has no compensation for the vulnerability of his isolated pawn.

After 13.a5, Black can retreat his knight 13...\(\text{d7}\)?, so that after an exchange on c5 to play \(\text{xc5}\).

14.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{e7}\) 15.\(\text{d2}\) 0-0= Probst – Thier, Germany 2008.

13.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{cxd4}\)

14.\(\text{exd4}\). This straightforward transfer into a position with an isolated pawn cannot be approved, because after 14...\(\text{e7}\) 15.\(\text{e3}\) 0-0 16.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{d}\)5, Black’s pieces become very active. White has no compensation for his weak d4-pawn. 17.\(\text{f3}\) a5 18.\(\text{fc1}\) \(\text{fc8}\) 19.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{d}\)6 20.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{d5}\)∞ Semenov – Lovakovic, ICCF 2011.
14. \texttt{Nxd4 Bxd6}. Black’s bishops exert powerful pressure against White’s castling position. 15. \texttt{f3} (15. \texttt{b3}. This move leads to the weakening of the c3-square. 15... \texttt{d5} 16. \texttt{b2} \texttt{c3} 17. \texttt{xc3} \texttt{bxc3=} Opryatkin – Matei, ICCF 2007. Black’s bishop-pair provides him with a stable advantage.) 15... \texttt{e4=} Ftacnik – Kramnik, Dortmund 1992. White is forced to begin defending.

14. \texttt{d1 d6} 15. \texttt{exd4 0-0} 16. \texttt{g5}, Farid – Malakhatko, Biel 2013, 16... \texttt{h6} 17. \texttt{h4} a5!?=

14. \texttt{e4}. This interesting pawn-sacrifice is still insufficient for White to maintain an advantage. 14... \texttt{e7} 15. \texttt{f4} 0-0 16. \texttt{f1} \texttt{c} 17. \texttt{e5} \texttt{xc1}+ 18. \texttt{xc1} \texttt{xf3}. Black wishes to neutralise his opponent’s initiative by exchanging pieces. 19. \texttt{xf3} \texttt{d5} 20. \texttt{d2} a5 21. \texttt{g4} \texttt{b8} 22. \texttt{xd4} \texttt{d8} 23. \texttt{e4} \texttt{g6=} Krasenkow – Dreev, Esbjerg 2003. White has managed to restore the material balance, but Black’s prospects are not worse thanks to his powerful centralised knight on d5.

13... \texttt{xc5} 14. \texttt{e2} 0-0

15. \texttt{e4}

There arises an approximately equal position after 15. \texttt{d1} \texttt{e7} 16. \texttt{a5} (16. \texttt{e4} \texttt{e5=} 16... \texttt{fd8} 17. \texttt{d2} \texttt{e5} 18. \texttt{e4} \texttt{h6=} Gagunashvili – Kazhgaleyev, Bastia 2006.

15... \texttt{d6}!?

This is not Black’s most popular move, but it is very good. He exploits the circumstance that White cannot play \texttt{e4-e5} and establishes control over the h2-b8 diagonal. Later, Black’s plans include \texttt{b8} and \texttt{d8}.

16. \texttt{d1}

16. \texttt{e5=} \texttt{xf3} 17. \texttt{gxh3} (17. \texttt{xf3} \texttt{xe5=} 17... \texttt{xe5}+)

16. \texttt{e1} \texttt{d7=} 

16... \texttt{b8}
17.\underline{d}2
White would not achieve much by attacking the enemy knight on f6. 17.\underline{g}5 \underline{d}7 18.\underline{ac}1 \underline{c}8 19.\underline{e}3 h6. Black only needs to bring his rook on a8 in order to equalise completely. 20.\underline{xc}8+ \underline{x}c8 21.\underline{b}1 \underline{c}7 22.\underline{h}3 \underline{e}8 23.\underline{d}2 \underline{d}8 24.\underline{b}3 \underline{f}6=

17...h6 18.\underline{ac}1 a5 19.\underline{e}2 \underline{d}8 20.\underline{h}3 \underline{f}4 21.\underline{xf}4 \underline{xf}4= Bokar – Zhak, ICCF 2013.

C1b) 12.\underline{ed}2 \underline{e}7

13.\underline{e}2
This is the best square for White’s queen. It squeezes the enemy rook to protect the pawn on a6.

13.\underline{c}4 0-0 14.\underline{e}1, Golod – Ribli, Germany 2007 (14.a5 \underline{c}7 – see 13.a5; 14.\underline{e}2 \underline{c}7 – see 13.\underline{e}2) 14...\underline{c}8 15.\underline{fe}5 \underline{e}7!\_∞

13.a5 0-0 14.\underline{c}4 (14.\underline{e}2 \underline{c}7 – see 13.\underline{e}2) 14...\underline{c}7 15.\underline{h}3 (15.\underline{e}2 \underline{g}4 – see 13.\underline{e}2; following 15.\underline{fe}5 \underline{ad}8 16.\underline{e}2 cxd4 17.exd4 \underline{xe}5 18.dxe5, Black obtains a very good position by transferring his knight to the c5-square. 18...\underline{d}7 19.\underline{f}4 \underline{c}5\_∞ Bennborn – Gysi, ICCF 2007.) 15...\underline{fd}8 16.\underline{e}2 \underline{e}4. Black begins active actions in the centre and on the kingside. 17.\underline{d}2 \underline{e}6. White is practically helpless against Black’s pressure on the h1-a8 diagonal. 18.\underline{fd}1 \underline{g}5\_ Troia – Domancich, ICCF 2012.

13.\underline{e}1 0-0 14.\underline{e}4. This is a double-edged pawn-sacrifice with which White risks more than Black. (14.\underline{c}4 \underline{c}8 – see 13.\underline{c}4) 14...cxd4 15.e5 \underline{g}4?! 16.\underline{e}4. White wishes to trade the powerful enemy bishop. (After 16.\underline{h}3, he cannot oust Black’s knight. 16...\underline{c}5 17.\underline{e}4 \underline{e}3! 18.fxe3 \underline{xe}4 19.exd4, Korchnoi – Ponomariov, Karlovy Vary 2007, 19...\underline{g}5?!\_ White’s weak d4-pawn will cause plenty of problems for him.) 16...d3!
With this powerful move, Black opens the a7-g1 diagonal for his queen.

White ends up in an inferior position after 17...\textit{Q}xb7 18.\textit{Q}b6\textasciitilde, while capturing the rook 18.\textit{Q}xa8? just leads to a smothered checkmate, or the loss of the queen 18...\textit{N}xf2\textasciitilde. While capturing the rook 18...\textit{Q}b6\textasciitilde, Black has managed to solve the problem with his knight on g4. 20.\textit{R}xe6 (White’s attempt to eliminate the powerful enemy passed d3-pawn would not solve his problems either. 20.\textit{R}d4 \textit{Q}c7\textasciitilde. 21.\textit{R}xd3 \textit{N}c5. White’s unfortunate rook comes constantly under an attack by Black’s pieces. 22.\textit{R}d4 e5 23.\textit{R}xb4 e4 24.\textit{N}e1 e3 25.fxe3 \textit{N}d5\textasciitilde) 20...\textit{Q}c5\textasciitilde

13...0-0

14.\textit{R}d1

14.\textit{Q}c4 \textit{Q}c7 15.\textit{R}d2 (15.\textit{R}d1 \textit{Q}fd8 – see 14.\textit{R}d1; 15.\textit{Q}e5, Vescovi – Leitao, Rio de Janeiro 2007 15...a5!?\textasciitilde) 15...\textit{Q}g4. Black is threatening to capture on f3 and this forces White to weaken the long light-squared diagonal. 16.g3 f5\textasciitilde Koskela – Pfiffner, ICCF 2009.

14.e4 cxd4 15.e5. This pawn-sacrifice for initiative cannot provide White with more than equality. 15...\textit{N}d5. The basic defect of the plan, connected with the pawn-advance e3-e4-e5, is that Black’s knight gains access to a wonderful square at the centre of the board. 16.\textit{Q}b3 (16.\textit{Q}e4 g6 17.\textit{Q}b3, Ibragimov – Volzhin, Voronezh 1991, 17...\textit{Q}c7?! Black protects his bishop and is threatening the rather unpleasant knight-sortie from the d5-square. 18.\textit{Q}h6 \textit{Q}fd8\textasciitilde Black’s pieces have been deployed much more harmoniously.) 16...a5 17.\textit{Q}e4 g6 18.\textit{Q}h6 \textit{Q}e8 19.\textit{Q}b5. White wishes to exploit the vulnerability of the b5-square. 19...\textit{Q}b6 20.\textit{Q}xd4 (20.\textit{Q}xd7 \textit{Q}f6 21.\textit{Q}f4 \textit{Q}xd7\textasciitilde) 20...\textit{Q}c5. Black avoids material losses with a precise play. 21.\textit{Q}fd2 \textit{Q}c6 22.\textit{Q}xc6 \textit{Q}xc6 23.\textit{Q}fc1 \textit{Q}ec8. White cannot achieve anything out of the
pin on the c-file. 24.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 25.\textit{h}4 \textit{b}6 26.\textit{c}4. The rooks will be soon traded on the c-file after which the position will be considerably simplified. 26...\textit{c}7 27.\textit{ac}1 \textit{ac}8 28.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}7 29.\textit{xc}7 \textit{xc}7 30.\textit{xc}7 \textit{xc}7 31.\textit{c}4 \textit{d}8= Degtyaryov – Iordanyan, ICCF 2014.

14.a5. White fixes immediately the enemy pawn on a6, so that Black would not be able to play later a6-a5. 14...\textit{c}7

15.\textit{d}1 \textit{fd}8 – see 14.\textit{d}1.

15.\textit{e}1 \textit{fd}8 16.\textit{c}4 (After 16.\textit{e}4, it seems good for Black to choose 16...\textit{g}6!? 17.\textit{b}3 \textit{cxd}4 18.\textit{e}5 \textit{xf}3 19.\textit{gx}f3 \textit{d}5= Ramik – Fessler, ICCF 2011. His superior pawn-structure provides him with a stable edge.) 16...\textit{e}4. Black exchanges the powerful enemy bishop and leaves him with the passive bishop on c1. 17.\textit{b}3 (17.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4= Lenic – Berczes, Rogaska Slatina 2009) 17...\textit{ac}8 18.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 19.\textit{b}2 \textit{cxd}4 20.\textit{exd}4 \textit{c}3 21.\textit{e}3 \textit{f}6. Black’s pieces are completely dominant over the d5-square. 22.\textit{ac}1 \textit{fd}5 23.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}8 24.\textit{ce}5 \textit{b}5= Atakisi – Joppich, ICCF 2011.

The move 15.\textit{c}4 leads to interesting complications 15...\textit{g}4!? 16.\textit{e}4 (16.\textit{cd}2 \textit{gf}6=) 16...\textit{cxd}4 17.\textit{h}3, Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany 1934, 17...\textit{gf}6!? 18.\textit{e}5. White sacrifices another pawn for the initiative. 18...\textit{xf}3 19.\textit{xf}3 \textit{xe}5 20.\textit{g}3 \textit{d}6 21.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 22.\textit{h}4. Black has a huge material advantage, but his defence is not easy at all. He cannot play h7-h6, because White will immediately counter that with a bishop-sacrifice. 22...\textit{h}5!? 23.\textit{g}5 \textit{d}5 24.\textit{fc}1 \textit{d}6 25.\textit{hx}g5 \textit{g}6 26.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}3. Black is preparing \textit{b}4. 27.\textit{g}3 \textit{b}4 28.\textit{e}4 \textit{ac}8 29.\textit{xb}3. He gives back his extra material and neutralises his opponent’s initiative. White must play very precisely in order not to end up in an inferior position. 29...d3 30.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}4 31.\textit{xc}4 \textit{bg}3. Black will obtain two pawns for the piece and his passed d-pawn will become very dangerous. 32.\textit{fx}g3 \textit{gx}g3+ 33.\textit{g}2 \textit{gx}g5 34.\textit{xb}4 \textit{ac}8 35.\textit{ff}1 \textit{c}1 36.\textit{d}4 \textit{d}2 37.\textit{h}4 \textit{xa}5. Black collects already a third pawn for the piece. 38.\textit{b}4 \textit{d}1= 39.\textit{xd}1 \textit{xd}1+ 40.\textit{xd}1 \textit{xb}4=

The position is objectively drawish, but it is only Black who can play for a win.

14...\textit{c}7
15.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{c}4} \)

There arises a complicated position with mutual chances after 15.a5 \( \textcolor{red}{\text{f}d8} \) 16.h3 (16.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{c}4} \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{e}4} \) – see 15.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{c}4} \)) 16...g6 17.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{c}4} \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{e}4} \) 18.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{d}2} \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 19.\( \text{exd}4 \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{x}d}2 \) 20.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{f}xd}2 \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{f}6} \) 21.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{b}6} \) \( \text{e}7 \) 22.\( \text{eac}1 \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{f}4} \)∞

Kameneckas – Zhak, ICCF 2008. The a7-square is not the best for Black’s rook, but he has two powerful bishops, while White’s isolated d4-pawn would need permanent protection.

15...\( \textcolor{red}{\text{f}d8} \) 16.a5

White cannot delay this pawn-advance anymore, because after 16.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{d}2} \), Black will play himself 16...a5, for example: 17.\( \text{eac}1 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 18.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 19.\( \text{ec}2 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 20.e1 \( \text{cxd}4 \) 21.\( \text{exd}4 \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{f}8} \). His knight is headed for the g6-square from where it might go to f4. 22.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{cd}2} \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{g}6} \) De Oliveira – Ruemmele, ICCF 2008.

Black’s pieces have been much more actively deployed.

16...\( \textcolor{red}{\text{c}4} \) 17.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{xe}4} \)

Following 17.b3 \( \text{cxd}4 \) 18.\( \text{exd}4 \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{xd}3} \) 19.\( \text{exd}3 \), White must play very accurately; otherwise, he might end up in a worse position due to his weak d4-pawn. 19...\( \textcolor{red}{\text{b}7} \) 20.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 21.\( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 22.\( \text{xe}7 \) \( \text{xe}7 \) 23.\( \text{fe}5 \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{f}6} \) Kaupert – Molina, ICCF 2013.

17...\( \textcolor{red}{\text{xe}4} \) 18.\( \textcolor{red}{\text{d}2} \) \( \text{eac}8 \)

19.\( \text{eac}1 \)

19.e1 \( \textcolor{red}{\text{b}7} \) 20.\( \text{fe}5 \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{ef}6} \). Now, White should already think about equality. 21.\( \text{b}6 \) \( \text{xb}6 \) 22.axb6 \( \textcolor{red}{\text{xb}6} \) 23.\( \text{xa}6 \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{xa}6} \)∞ Cattani – Bergmann, ICCF 2010.

19...\( \textcolor{red}{\text{b}7} \) 20.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{g}6 \). Black wishes to exchange on d4 and to follow this with e5. Therefore, he covers immediately the f5-square against the penetration of the enemy knight. 21.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{cxd}4 \) 22.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 23.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \textcolor{red}{\text{b}5} \)∞ Petkov – Freeman, ICCF 2013.
C2) 9.0-0 ëb7

We will deal now with: C2a) 10.dxc5 and C2b) 10.ëe2.

About 10.a3 ñbd7 – see Chapter 13, variation C, 9.ëd3.

It would be too slow for White to opt here for 10.b3 cxd4!? 11.ëxd4 ëe7 12.ëb2 ñbd7 13.ëe1 ëe8 14.ëb1 0-0 15.ëe2 ëa5† Lippmann – Schulz, Kiel 2015. Black’s pieces are more active.

10.a4 b4 11.ëe2 (11.ëb1 ñbd7 12.ëbd2 ëe7, or 12.ëe2 ëe7 13.ëbd2 0-0, or 13.ëd1 ëc7 14.ëbd2 0-0 – see variation C1b) 11...ñbd7 12.b3 (12.ëg3 ëd6 13.b3 cxd4 14.ëxd4, Burmakin – Levin, Benidorm 2008, 14...h5!?=) 12...cxd4† White is already facing serious problems. 13.ëfxd4 e5. Black ousts the enemy knight from its active position. 14.ëf5 g6 15.ëfg3 h5† Jussupow – Ivanchuk, Linares 1992. The threat h5-h4 is very unpleasant for White.

C2a) 10.dxc5 ëxc5

11.a3

White is preparing b2-b4, ëb2.

After 11.a4 b4, he must worsen the placement of his knight. 12.ëe2 ëbd7† After 13.ëg3?! Black has a resource that we have already encountered in this variation – 13...h5† Hjartarson – Ehlvest, Reykjavik 1991.

11.b3 0-0 12.ëb2 ëe7!?= Kotenko – Volodarsky, Russia 1996.


11.ëe2 ëbd7
12.a3 0-0 – see 11.a3.
12.b3 0-0 13.♗b2 ♣c8 14.♖fd1 ♗b4 – see 12.♖d1.
12.♖d1 0-0 13.b3 ♣c8 14.♗b2 ♖b4 15.♕b1, Grachev – Filippov, Sochi 2004, 15...♗xf3!? This is a non-standard decision. 16.♗xf3 ♗c7. White has the two-bishop advantage, but has problems to complete the development of his queenside pieces without positional concessions. 17.a3 ♗e7 18.♗a2. He wishes to develop his rook via the c2-square. 18...♗d8 19.♗xf6 ♗xf6 20.♖c2 ♖b8 21.♗xc8 ♖xc8 22.♗e2 g6
Now, White would need to make many more accurate moves in order to equalise completely. He will hardly manage to improve the placement of his knight on b1, since it must protect the pawn on a3. In addition, the penetration of Black’s queen to the c3-square might be a serious threat.

12.e4 ♖b8. Black does not need to be in a hurry to castle; otherwise, he will have to consider the move e4-e5 and after the retreat of his knight – the standard bishop-sacrifice on h7. 13.♗g5 (13.a3 ♗d6 14.h3 0-0= Straeter – Schandorff, Germany 2007) 13...0-0

14.♖ad1, Uhlmann – Lukacs, Debrecen 1988, 14...♖c8!?\(\)
14.a3 h6 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.e5 ♖xf3. Now, White must comply with the weakening of his king’s shelter in order not to lose his e5-pawn. 17.gxf3 ♘h5\(\) Mannermaa – Olofsson, ICCF 2009.
14.♖ac1 ♗d6. Black has succeeded in establishing control over the e5-square. 15.♖fd1 h6 16.♗h4 ♗f4 17.♗c2 ♖c8\(\) Lagowski – Kempinski, Warsaw 2007. His pieces have been much more harmoniously deployed.

11...0-0 12.b4
White should better clarify immediately the position of the enemy bishop on c5, because after 12.♗e2,
Black can deploy it even more actively. 12...\texttt{B}d7 13.\texttt{b}4 (or 13.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{d}6 14.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{b}8= Johann – Nesterov, Germany 2009) 13...\texttt{d}6 14.\texttt{b}2, Najdorf – Becker, Munich 1936, 14...\texttt{c}8=

12...\texttt{e}7 13.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{bd}7

14.\texttt{e}2
14.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{c}8 15.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{xf}3 – see 14.\texttt{e}2.

The careless move 14.\texttt{b}3?! would leave the bishop on \texttt{b}2 defenceless and would enable Black to inflict a simple tactical strike and to obtain an advantage – 14...\texttt{c}5! 15.\texttt{x}h7+ \texttt{x}h7 16.bxc5, Heissenbuettel – Kahn, Schwabisch Gmuend 1993, 16...\texttt{xc}5!?=

14.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{c}8 15.\texttt{f}4, Kryakvin – P.Smirnov, Olginka 2011, 15...\texttt{c}7?!∞

14...\texttt{c}8 15.\texttt{fd}1

It would be less precise for White to play here 15.\texttt{ac}1 \texttt{xf}3!? 16.\texttt{gxf}3. Naturally, he cannot capture here with his queen because of \texttt{e}5. 16...\texttt{e}5 17.\texttt{fd}1 \texttt{xd}3 18.\texttt{x}d3 \texttt{x}d3 19.\texttt{x}d3 \texttt{c}4 20.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{xc}1+ 21.\texttt{xc}1 \texttt{d}5 22.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{c}8= Lanzani – Godena, Padova 2014. The position has been simplified and there has arisen an endgame in which Black has a stable advantage, because White’s pawns on a3 and b4 have been fixed on squares with the same colour as his bishop.

15...\texttt{c}7

Black must remove his queen away from the c and d-files in order to avoid the attack of White’s rooks.

16.\texttt{ac}1 \texttt{b}8

17.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{xc}1 18.\texttt{xc}1 \texttt{xf}3 19.\texttt{x}f3 \texttt{d}8 20.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{e}5 21.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{c}4= There has arisen a position with dynamic balance. White has the two-bishop advantage, but Black has a powerful knight on the
11...Qb6
He removes immediately his queen from the X-ray juxtaposition with White’s rook.

11...Qd2
White’s bishop will impede from this square his own rook to fight for the d-file. 11...Qd6

11.b3. The development of the bishop on b2 seems rather slow. 11...Qd6 12.b2 0-0 13.Qa1 (13.Qad1
cxd4!? 14.Qxd4 Qc8=; 13.Qfd1 Qc8 14.Qa1 cxd4 – see 13.Qa1) 13...c8 14.Qfd1 cxd4 15.Qxd4,
Picasso Gallego – Korneev, Malaga 2010, 15...Qe5!?? Black’s pieces have been more actively deployed.

11...Qb6
The straightforward attempt to advance e3-e4-e5 would lead to problems for White, due to the
weakening of the d4-square. 11.h1h7 12.h2-e4?! cxd4 13.Qxd4 Qc5 14.Qd1 b4 15.e5, Horvath – Veress,
Hungary 2010, 15...bxc3!? 16.exf6 Qxf6 17.bxc3 Qd5 18.f3 Qxd3 19.Qxd3 0-0= Black has not only the
two-bishop advantage, but also a superior pawn-structure.

About 11.dxc5 Qxc5 – see variation C2a.

11.a4 b4 12.Qb1 Qe7 13.Qbd2 0-0 – see variation C1b.
11.a3 Qd6 – see Chapter 13, variation C, 9.Qd3.

10...Qbd7
White’s queen frees a square for his rook.
12.a4
Or 12.a3 \( \mathcal{A} \)d8 13.\( \mathcal{A} \)c2 \( \mathcal{A} \)d6 14.\( \mathcal{A} \)d2 cxd4 15.exd4 0-0\( ^\text{f} \) Martins Barriga – Saglione, ICCF 2015. White has obtained a position with an isolated pawn in not the best possible version.

12.b3 cxd4!? 13.exd4, Gouy – Solakan, France 1996 (13.\( \mathcal{A} \)xd4?! e5\( ^\text{f} \)) 13...\( \mathcal{B} \)b4!? 14.\( \mathcal{B} \)b2 0-0\( ^\text{f} \) White’s dark-squared bishop is not well placed, because his own pawn on d4 restricts considerably the sphere of its actions.

12.\( \mathcal{B} \)c2 \( \mathcal{E} \)c8

The seemingly active move 13.e4 only leads to the weakening of the g1-a7 diagonal. 13...cxd4 14.\( \mathcal{A} \)xd4 \( \mathcal{A} \)c5 15.\( \mathcal{A} \)e3 0-0\( ^\text{f} \), followed by \( \mathcal{E} \)e5, \( \mathcal{G} \)g4 (or \( \mathcal{C} \)c4), Milinaroli – Rabiega, Berlin 1995.

13.a3 \( \mathcal{A} \)e7 14.dxc5 (After 14.e4, Black can transfer quickly his knight to the c4-square, from where it will exert powerful pressure against White’s queenside. 14...cxd4 15.\( \mathcal{A} \)xd4 \( \mathcal{A} \)e5 16.\( \mathcal{A} \)g5, Em.Lasker – Duras, St Petersburg 1909, 16...\( \mathcal{A} \)c4!?\( ^\text{f} \)) 14...\( \mathcal{A} \)xc5. Black is preparing the transfer of his queen to the kingside. 15.e4 \( \mathcal{A} \)h5 16.\( \mathcal{A} \)f4 0-0= Reshevsky – Najdorf, New York 1952.

12...c4!?
Black reduces his pressure against the enemy centre and relies on utilising of his pawn-majority on the queenside.

13.\( \mathcal{A} \)c2 \( \mathcal{B} \)b4 14.a5 \( \mathcal{A} \)c7 15.\( \mathcal{A} \)a4
The other retreats of White's knight lose a piece for him.

15...\( \mathcal{A} \)xa5

16.\( \mathcal{A} \)xc4
White restores the material balance, but allows the transfer of the enemy queen to the h5-square. From there, it can participate in an attack against White’s king.

There arises a complicated strategical battle after the line: 16.e4 Rc8 17.g5 b3 18.b1 b4 Istratescu – Sturua, Istanbul 2003. White has a pawn-centre, but his pieces are dis-coordinated. In addition, it should not be forgotten that Black has an extra pawn.

**16...h5 17.e2**
The move 17.c7 would lead to a perpetual check after 17...xf3 18.gxf3 xf3 19.b6 b3 20.xb3 g4=

**17.d6 18.h3**
After the careless move 18.e4?, White loses a pawn: 18...xh2 Berczes – Galyas, Budapest 2002.

**18.e4**
Black has managed to impede the enemy pawn-advance e3-e4.

**19.b3 0-0 20.d3 a5 21.b2 h6=** Black has an excellent position thanks to his powerful centralised knight.
Chapter 16

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.f3 f3 f6 4.c3 e6 5.e3 a6 6.e5

White occupies space on the queenside, but now, he must be constantly on the alert about the undermining moves b7-b6, or e6-e5.

6..\textit{N}bd7!?

This is a flexible move. Black does not clarify his plans for the time being. Later, depending on the circumstances, he may either inflict a counter strike in the centre e6-e5 (immediately, or after the preliminary moves g6, g7, 0-0), or can begin active actions on the queenside with b7-b6.

7.b4

White fortifies his c5-pawn and prepares the development of his bishop on b2.

Besides this move, he has many other possibilities:

The move 7.a3 does not look so active. 7...g6!? 8.b4 g7 9.b2 0-0 10.e2 e7 11.a4 e8!?

(11...e4?! Speelman – M.Gurevich, Port Erin 2007, 12.e5?!±, followed by f2-f3) 12.0-0 e5. This thematic pawn-advance equalises. 13.dxe5 e5=

7.a4. This does not look like the right time for White to decentralise his knight. 7...e5! 8.xe5 (8.d2 e4= Botvinnik – Rabinovich, Moscow 1937) 8...xe5 9.dxe5 e4= White has temporarily an extra pawn, but can hardly hold on to it, because after 10.b4?!, Black has the powerful resource 10...b5!

11.b6 xb6! This is the point! Black sacrifices temporarily his queen and obtains a serious advantage after that. 12.cxb6 xb4+ 13.d2 xd2+ 14.xd2 xd2 15.xd2 b8±
The move 7.\(Bd2\) does not prevent Black’s pawn-break in the centre. 7...e5 8.dxe5 (8.\(\Boxxe5\) \(\Boxxe5\) 9.dxe5 \(\Boxd7\)= White is incapable of protecting simultaneously his pawns on e5 and c5.) 8...\(\Boxe4\) 9.e6, Lymar – Ettinger, Tel Aviv 2003. White has an interesting resource here, which is still insufficient to maintain an advantage. 9...fxe6!? This is the simplest. Black is not afraid of having a weak pawn on e6. 10.\(\Boxxe4\) dxe4 11.\(\Boxd4\) \(\Boxxc5\) 12.\(\Boxb3\) \(\Boxxb3\) 13.\(\Boxxb3\) \(\Boxd6\) 14.\(\Boxd1\) \(\Boxe7\) 15.\(\Boxc4\) e5. Black opens the diagonal for his bishop. 16.\(\Boxxe4\) 0-0 17.\(\Boxf5\) 18.\(\Boxc4\)= \(\Boxe6\)=

After 7.\(Bd2\), Black can begin active actions on the queenside. 7...b6! 8.cxb6 \(\Boxd6\) 9.0-0 0-0 10.\(\Boxc2\), Javakhishvili – Krush, Istanbul 2008, 10...\(\Boxxb6\)!? The weakness on e6 is easy to defend for Black and he will exchange his “bad” bishop after a6-a5, \(\Boxa6\). 11.\(\Boxa4\) \(\Boxc7\) 12.b3 a5 13.\(\Boxb2\) \(\Boxa6\) 14.\(\Boxfc1\) \(\Boxe4\) 15.\(\Boxxa6\) \(\Boxxa6\)=

7.\(\Boxc2\). With the help of this move Boris Gelfand won his game in the World Championship match in the year 2012 against Vishy Anand. Still, later Black found quickly reliable ways of equalising. 7...b6 8.cxb6

8...\(\Boxxb6\)!? 9.\(\Boxd2\) \(\Boxd6\) 10.\(\Boxc1\) \(\Boxb7\) 11.\(\Boxd3\) a5. Black wishes to exchange the light-squared bishops at an opportune moment and White’s activity in the centre 12.e4 would lead to quick simplifications.

12...dxe4 13.\(\Boxxe4\) \(\Boxxe4\) 14.\(\Boxxe4\) c5 15.\(\Boxxb7\) \(\Boxxb7\) 16.0-0 cxd4 17.\(\Boxxd4\) 0-0 18.\(\Boxc6\) \(\Boxxc6\) 19.\(\Boxxc6\) a4 20.\(\Boxfd1\) \(\Boxf6\)=, followed by \(\Boxd5\), Ugrinovsky – Weber, ICCF 2012.

8...\(\Boxxb6\) 9.\(\Boxd2\) \(\Boxd6\) 10.\(\Boxc1\) \(\Boxb7\) 11.\(\Boxd3\) a5. Black gets rid of his weak pawn. 10.\(\Boxc1\) cxd4 11.exd4 \(\Boxd6\) 12.\(\Boxg5\) (12.\(\Boxd3\) 0-0 13.0-0 \(\Boxb7\) 14.\(\Boxa4\) \(\Boxxa4\) 15.\(\Boxxa4\) a5 16.\(\Boxc2\) \(\Boxe4\)= Gelfand – Aronian, Paris 2013) 12...0-0 13.\(\Boxd3\) h6 14.\(\Boxh4\) \(\Boxf4\)!? Black ousts the enemy rook from the c-file (In the above mentioned game Anand played against Gelfand the move 14...\(\Boxb7\).) 15.\(\Boxd1\) \(\Boxbd7\) 16.0-0 a5!? 17.\(\Boxe2\) \(\Boxb6\)= Frolyanov – Iskusnyh, Kazan 2012.

7.\(\Boxd3\) e5
About 8.dxe5 d4 9.a4 dxe5 10.dxe5 dxe5 – see 8.dxe5.

Following 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.dxe5 a5 10.dxe5 – see 8.dxe5.

Following 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.dxe5 a5 10.a4 (White’s protection with the other pawn 10.f4 does not promise him anything either: 10...dxe5 11.Bf3 b6= Bromberger – V.Georgiev, Neuhausen 2008. Black’s pieces exert rather unpleasant pressure against the e3-pawn.) 10...dxe5 11.0-0 g6!? The fianchetto of the bishop is Black’s simplest road to equality. The move 12.e4 leads to simplifications. 12...dxe4 13.dxe4 Bxd1 14.exd1 a6 15.Bf4 Bg7 16.Bb6 Bb8 17.Bxd8+ Bxd8 18.Bd1+ Be7= Pintonello – Konstantinov, LSS 2011.

7...b6

The pawn-structure resembles the famous variation of the Queen’s Gambit 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.d3 c5 4.Bf4 Bd7 5.e3 0-0 6.e4 d6 7.c5 c6 8.d3 Bb6. There however, White’s bishop is on f4 and not on c1.

With his last move, Black not only undermines the enemy c5-pawn, but also prepares the exchange of his bad bishop (a6-a5, Bb6).

8.Bb2

Following 8.Bd2 a5 9.b5, Black fortifies the c6-square with the move 9...Bb7 and after 10.cxb6, he does not need to lose time to regain his pawn, but can play more actively: 10...c5 11.dxe5 Bxe5 12.Ba4 Bf4 13.Bc1, Shirov – Fridman, Riga 2014, 13...Bc8!?∞

8...a5 9.a3 Be7
10...d3
About 10.e2 0-0 11.0-0 a6 12.xa6 xxa6 – see 10.d3.

10...0-0 11.0-0
11.c2 c7 12.0-0 a6 13.xa6 xxa6= Onischuk – Motylev, Poikovsky 2010.

11...a6
Black has realised his plan and has equalised completely.

12.xa6
If White refrains from this capture, the character of the fight remains more or less the same:
12.e1 xd3 13.xd3, Dyachkov – Rublevsky, Dagomys 2010, 13...c7=, or 12.e1, Ding – Aronian, Paris 2013, 12...c8?!=, 12.e2 xd3 13.xd3 c7 14.h3 fb8 15.fb1 b7 16.e2 h6= Matlakov – Jakovenko, Dagomys 2010.

12.xa6 13.b5
White is reluctant to comply with the rather calm developments and wishes by all means to complicate the matters.
13.e2 c8 14.ab1 axb4 15.axb4, Vachier Lagrave – Melkumyan, Biel 2012, 15...b7?!=, followed by fa8. Black has less space indeed, but his bishop is more active than its white counterpart.

13...xb5 14.c6 b8 15.e5, Korchnoi – Golod, Beersheba 2004, 15...e8!?
This is Black’s most reliable move. He is preparing f7-f6, while his knight from e8 will go later to c7, taking part in the blockade of the enemy pawn on c6. 16.\( \text{N}\)xb5 f6 17.\( \text{Q}\)g4. White continues to increase the pressure, but Black’s position remains quite solid. 17...fxe5 18.\( \text{Q}\)xe6+ \( \text{R}\)f7 19.e4!? \( \text{R}\)a8. Black frees a square for his knight. 20.\( \text{dxe5}\) (Following 20.exd5? \( \text{N}\)a6 21.dxe5 \( \text{Q}\)c5—+, White’s centre crumbles.) 20...\( \text{Q}\)a6 21.\( \text{R}\)ad1 \( \text{Q}\)ac7 22.\( \text{Q}\)xc7 \( \text{B}\)xc7 23.\( \text{Q}\)h3 d4! 24.\( \text{Q}\)xd4 \( \text{Q}\)c8 25.\( \text{Q}\)xb6 \( \text{Q}\)xh3 26.\( \text{Q}\)xh3 \( \text{Q}\)xa3 27.f4 \( \text{Q}\)e6= Black can defend successfully in this endgame and can even seize the initiative at an opportune moment.
Chapter 17

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.d3 d6 4.c3 e6 5.e3 a6 6.b3

White defends his c4-pawn. Now, he does not need to worry about the possibility dxc4, followed by b7-b5.

Still, the move 6.b3 has a drawback – the weakening of the e1-a5 diagonal and Black can exploit this immediately.

6...a6 7.d2

White’s bishop will be less active on this square than on b2, but he cannot play 7.b2?!, since he would lose a pawn after 7...a5 8.e2 e4 9.e1 xa2 10.d3 xc3+ 11.xc3 xc2 12.xc2 xc3 13.xc3, Shipov – Dreev, playchess.com 2006, 13...a5!+ This is Black’s most precise move. He impedes the pawn-advance b3-b4 and can transfer his knight to a more active position at an opportune moment: a6-b4.

7...bd7

8.d3

White develops his bishop to an active placement and prepares castling kingside.

8.e2 0-0 9.e2 (9.d3 d6 – see 8.d3) 9...d6 10.0-0 e5 – see 8.e2.

The move 8.g3 does not combine well with e2-e3. 8...e4 9.g2 e7 10.0-0 b6. Black wishes to exploit the removal of White’s bishop from the f1-a6 diagonal. 11.c1 a5=, followed by a6, Khismatullin – Reshetnikov, Taganrog 2011.
It is not good for White to play here 8.c5, because this clarifies the pawn-structure too early. Now, Black’s pawn-advance e6-e5 becomes much more effective. 8..0-0 9.\(\text{a}4\) (9.d3 e5. This temporary pawn-sacrifice is Black’s simplest road to equality. 10.\(\text{a}e5\) \(\text{x}e5\) 11.\(\text{d}xe5\) \(\text{d}7\) 12.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{a}2\) 13.\(\text{b}d2\) \(\text{a}e5=\) 9...\(\text{a}xe2+\) 10.\(\text{b}xe2\), Akesson – Cramling, Gothenburg 2005 (10.\(\text{d}xe2\) e5= Berezovsky – Krivoshey, Germany 2004) 10...e5!?

8.\(\text{e}2\). White’s bishop will be less active here than on the d3-square. 8..0-0 9.0-0 \(\text{d}6\). Black should not overlook the possibility \(\text{a}xe5\). 10.\(\text{c}2\) (10.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{e}7\) 11.\(\text{c}2\) e5 12.\(\text{c}xd5\) \(\text{c}xd5\) 13.dxe5 \(\text{a}xe5=\) Tkachiev – Godena, Cannes 1999) 10...e5

There has arisen a position with an isolated pawn. It is not easy for White to increase his control over the strategically important d4-square, because he cannot transfer his knight on c3 there. In addition, his queen might turn out to be misplaced on c2 if Black manages to develop his rook on c8.

13.\(\text{a}d1\). White’s rook is removed from the protection of his king. 13...\(\text{e}6\) 14.d4 \(\text{c}8\) 15.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{e}7\) 16.a4. He defends against the threat \(\text{a}3\), but weakens the b4-square. 16...\(\text{c}6\) 17.\(\text{f}3\), Granda Zuniga – Agrest, Turin 2006, 17...\(\text{g}4!\) White’s king is seriously endangered.

13.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{e}6=\) Kovalenko – Reshetnikov, Moscow 2013.

13.\(\text{a}d1\) \(\text{e}6\) 14.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{c}8=\) Mirzoev – Wirthensohn, Basel 2010.

8...0-0 9.0-0
After White has removed his king from e1, he is threatening to capture on d5 with his knight, so Black must take some measures against that.

It is not good for White to delay his castling. 9.\textit{Q}c2 \textit{B}d6 10.\textit{Q}e2 (10.0-0 – see 9.0-0) 10...c5!? This move looks more reliable than the advance of the other pawn. (10...e5 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.dxe5 \textit{Q}xe5 13.\textit{Q}xe5 \textit{Q}xe5 14.\textit{Q}c3 \textit{Q}xc3+ 15.\textit{Q}c3± Jussupow – Kempinski, Germany 2009. White’s bishop is more active than its counterpart. There has appeared an isolated pawn in Black’s position.) 11.0-0 b6. He is preparing to develop his bishop on b7. 12.cxd5 exd5 13.\textit{Q}g3 \textit{Q}b7 14.\textit{Q}f5 \textit{Q}c7 15.dxc5 bxc5± Huzman – Kasparov, Rethymno 2003. There has arisen a standard position with hanging pawns in which Black’s prospects are not inferior.

9...\textit{B}d6

Or 9...\textit{R}e8? 10.\textit{Q}xd5! \textit{Q}xd5 11.cxd5 \textit{Q}xd2 12.dxc6 \textit{Q}b4 13.cxd7 \textit{Q}xd7 14.\textit{Q}e5± Goryachkina – Bulmaga, Moscow 2012.

We will analyse in details now: A) 10.\textit{R}c1, B) 10.e4 and C) 10.\textit{Q}c2.

10.h3 h6 11.\textit{W}c2 (11.\textit{W}c1 \textit{Q}e8 – see variation A) 11...e5 – see variation C.

10.\textit{Q}c2 \textit{Q}e8 11.h3 e5 12.dxe5 \textit{Q}xe5 13.\textit{Q}xe5 \textit{Q}xe5 14.\textit{R}ad1, Rasmussen – Hansen, Aalborg 2006, 14...b5!? 15.cxd5 exd5+, followed by d5-d4. You can see the consequences of the misplacement of White’s queen on e2 impeding the move \textit{Q}e2.

After 10.c5 \textit{Q}c7 11.e4, Black can play 11...e5!, after which the game is sharpened. 12.dxe5, Ippolito – Erenburg, New Jersey 2008 (12.dxe5?! Le Quang Liem – Nguyen Huynh Minh, Singapore 2006, 12...\textit{Q}xe5!? Black wins by force the pawn on h2. 13.\textit{Q}xe5 dxe4 14.\textit{Q}xe4 \textit{Q}xe4 15.\textit{Q}xe4 \textit{Q}xe5 16.\textit{Q}c1 \textit{Q}xh2+ 17.\textit{Q}xh2 \textit{Q}h4+ 18.\textit{Q}g1 \textit{Q}xe4+) 12...exd4!? Black undermines the base under the enemy pawn on c5. 13.d6 \textit{Q}xc5 14.dxc7 \textit{Q}xc7. He regains his piece and ends up with an extra pawn. Still, White has two powerful bishops and this compensation is sufficient for him to maintain the balance. 15.\textit{Q}c2 dxc3 16.\textit{Q}xc3 \textit{Q}d8 17.\textit{W}c1 \textit{Q}d5 18.\textit{Q}e5 \textit{Q}e7 19.\textit{Q}e1 \textit{Q}e6∞

10.\textit{Q}e1 h6
11.\textcolor{red}{c}1 e5 – see variation A.

11.\textcolor{red}{c}2 e5 see variation C

11.h3 e5 12.cxd5 cxd5= Potkin – Jakovenko, Moscow 2012.

After 11.\textcolor{red}{c}1, Bu Xiangzhi – Rublevsky, Sochi 2016, it is good for Black to choose 11...\textcolor{red}{e}8!?=, followed by e6-e5.

11.e4 dxc4. This is a typical resource for Black in similar positions. Before playing e5-e6, he exchanges on c4. 12.bxc4 e5 13.\textcolor{red}{c}5 \textcolor{red}{c}7 14.\textcolor{red}{a}4. The edge of the board is not the best place for White’s knight. (He should have possibly chosen the more reliable move 14.\textcolor{red}{c}2, although even then after 14...exd4 15.\textcolor{red}{e}2 \textcolor{red}{g}4 16.\textcolor{red}{e}xd4 \textcolor{red}{d}e5 17.h3 \textcolor{red}{d}x\textcolor{red}{d}3 18.\textcolor{red}{x}d3 \textcolor{red}{h}e5 19.\textcolor{red}{x}e5 \textcolor{red}{x}e5=, Black would not have any problems thanks to his two powerful bishops, Bacrot – Rublevsky, Poikovsky 2011.) 14...exd4 15.h3. White takes the g4-square under control. 15...\textcolor{red}{e}8 16.\textcolor{red}{c}1 (16.\textcolor{red}{b}1, Rodshtein – Delorme, Biel 2011, 16...\textcolor{red}{h}7??) 16...\textcolor{red}{h}7 White must play very precisely in this position; otherwise, Black’s kingside counterplay might turn into a decisive attack. For example after: 17.\textcolor{red}{b}1?! \textcolor{red}{g}5 18.\textcolor{red}{x}d4, Matlakov – Iskusnyh, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011, 18...\textcolor{red}{e}5?!\textcolor{red}{f}, White would be beyond salvation, since after 19.\textcolor{red}{e}3?! Black would have the resource 19...\textcolor{red}{x}h3\textcolor{red}{+}! 20.gxh3 \textcolor{red}{x}h4 21.\textcolor{red}{c}3 \textcolor{red}{x}h3--+

A) 10.\textcolor{red}{c}1 h6

Black does not clarify his further plans yet.

11.\textcolor{red}{h}3

About 11.\textcolor{red}{c}2 \textcolor{red}{e}8 12.h3 c5 – see variation C.

11.\textcolor{red}{e}2, Aronian – Jakovenko, Moscow 2009, White increases his control over the d4-square. This may
be very useful for him if Black advances e6-e5 and there arises a position with an isolated queen’s pawn. Still, Black can undermine the enemy centre with his c-pawn as well: 11...dxc4!? 12.bxc4 c5 13.g3 b6 14.c3 cxd4 15.exd4 e4 16.e4 cxd4 17.e4 b7=

11.e1. White increases the effect of the threat e3-e4, but Black takes actions first. 11...e5 12.cxd5 cxd5 (The move 13.e4 leads to exchanges. 13...dxe4 14.xe4 cxd4 15.exd4 f6= Chadaev – Rublevsky, Taganrog 2011.) 13...xe5 14.xe5 xe5 15.e2, Sargissian – Illescas Cordoba, Istanbul 2012, 15...e4!?= Black has obtained a good position with an isolated pawn.

11...e8 12.e4
12.c2 c5 – see variation C.

White should better not postpone this move, because after 12.e1, Scekic – Erenburg, New Jersey 2008, Black can play 12...e5!? 13.dxe5 xe5 14.xe5 xe5 15.cxd5 xe5 16.xd5 xd5=

12...dxc4 13.bxc4

13...e5

Black wishes to exchange on d4 and to gain access to the e5 and c5-squares for his minor pieces.

14.c5
White is fighting for the c5-square. Still, his pawn on c5 will need protection later.

14.c7 15.e3 exd4 16.xd4 e7 17.a4 h7 18.e5
Following 18.b3, Guedon – P.Martynov, Cappelle-la-Grande 2013, it seems very good for Black to play 18...d8, in order to play later e6 with tempo. 19.b4 e6 20.c4 xb6 21.xb6 xc4 22.xc4 g5 23.xg5 hgx5 24.f3 ead8 25.b2 f6= The position has been simplified considerably.

18.hf8 19.b6 b8 20.c4 xe5
Black wins a pawn, but enables the opponent to pin him on the e-file. This pin is harmless for him, though...

21. \( \text{Bxe5} \) \( \text{Bxe5} \) 22. \( \text{Exe5} \) \( \text{Exe5} \) 23. \( \text{Bxf5} \) 24. \( \text{Bxe5} \) \( \text{Exe5} \) 25. \( \text{xf7+} \) \( \text{h8} \) 26. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{Exe1}+ \) 27. \( \text{xe1} \) \( \text{Exg3} \) 28. \( \text{fxg3} \). Black must play accurately in this endgame, because White’s pieces are much more active. 28... \( \text{h7} \). Black prepares \( \text{g8} \), in order to exchange the active enemy bishop. 29. \( \text{e7} \). This penetration of the rook is harmless for Black.

29... \( \text{g8} \) 30. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 31. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xb3} \) 32. \( \text{axb3} \) \( \text{g8} \). Centralising the king is the simplest road to equality. 33. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{f7} \) 34. \( \text{f2} \) \( \text{f6} \)= White’s pieces are more active, but Black has a better pawn-structure.

B) 10.e4

This is a straightforward move. White does not lose time to improve his position and advances immediately e3-e4. Black is perfectly prepared to counter it.

10... \( \text{dxc4} \) 11. \( \text{bxc4} \)

Capturing with the bishop cannot create problems for Black. In addition, it does not seem logical, since then the move b2-b3 becomes senseless for White. 11. \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{e5} \) 12. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{b5} \) 13. \( \text{c2} \) (13. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 14. \( \text{e2} \), Aleksandrov – Dziuba, Dresden 2007, 14... \( \text{e8} \)=) 13... \( \text{h6} \) 14. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 15. \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{b7} \) 16. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 17. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{g6} \)=, Black gets rid of the pin and is threatening later to play c6-c5, winning the pawn on e4, Wiedenkeller – Karjakin, Ohrid 2009.

11... \( \text{e5} \) 12. \( \text{c5} \)

The move 12.d5 weakens the c5-square. 12... \( \text{c5} \) 13. \( \text{g5} \) (13. \( \text{c2} \) cxd5 14. \( \text{cxd5} \) b5 15. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{g4} \)= Gasanov – Malakhatko, Moscow 2007. Black’s pieces have been harmoniously deployed, while White’s passed pawn has been reliably blocked.) 13... \( \text{h6} \) 14. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{g5} \)=? 15. \( \text{g3} \), Uhlmann – Ushenina, Marianske Lazne 2008. White’s bishop is misplaced here and he will need plenty of efforts to bring it back into the actions. 15... \( \text{cxd5} \)=? 16. \( \text{cxd5} \) \( \text{g4} \)=
12...\text{c}7

13.\text{a}4
About 13.\text{g}5 \text{exd}4 14.\text{a}4 \text{e}8, or 13.h3 \text{exd}4 14.\text{a}4 \text{e}8 – see 13.\text{a}4.
13.\text{e}3 \text{e}7= A. Moiseenko – Huzman, Montreal 2004.

13...\text{exd}4 14.\text{h}3
14.\text{g}5. This pin of the knight does not bring White anything. 14...\text{e}8 15.\text{e}1 (15.\text{c}2?! \text{f}8\text{f}, with the rather unpleasant threat \text{g}4, Dzagnidze – Stefanova, Lopota 2014.) 15...\text{b}8 16.\text{c}2 \text{h}6 17.\text{h}4 \text{f}8 18.\text{xd}4 \text{g}4\text{f} Van Wely – Rublevsky, Foros 2007.

14...\text{e}8 15.\text{e}1 \text{h}6

16.\text{b}1
16.\text{c}1 \text{f}8 17.e5 \text{d}5\text{f} Sasikiran – Kempinski, Warsaw 2008.

After 16.\text{c}1, Malakhatko – Kharlov, Zvenigorod 2008, Black has the interesting possibility 16...\text{h}7?! His knight frees the square for his queen and later it can go to e6 or g6 from the h7-square.

16...\text{f}8 17.\text{c}2
17.\text{c}1, Palliser – Malakhatko, Port Erin 2005, 17...\text{d}6?! 18.\text{xd}4 \text{e}5 19.\text{c}3 \text{xd}3 20.\text{xd}3 \text{e}6 21.\text{e}3 \text{b}8\text{f} Black’s two powerful bishops provide him with a slight but stable advantage.

17.\text{b}4, Van Wely – Bacrot, Germany 2006, Black can neutralise the threat against the d4-pawn with the move \text{e}6. 17...\text{e}6?! 18.\text{c}4 \text{b}8 19.e5 \text{d}5 20.\text{c}2 \text{d}7\text{f}

17...\text{d}67!
Now, Black’s queen may go to the kingside. 18.\textbf{bd1}, Riazantsev – Sakaev, Moscow 2008 (18.b3?! \textit{f6} 19.\textit{c4} \textit{g6} Braun – M.Gurevich, Dresden 2008) 18...\textbf{e6} 19.\textbf{e5}. White prevents \textit{f6}. 19...\textbf{b8}∞ Black’s position is a bit cramped, but he has no pawn-weaknesses. It should not be forgotten that he has an extra pawn as well.

C) 10.\textbf{e2}

This is a useful move. White connects his rooks and increases his control over the e4-square.

10...h6

11.\textbf{ad1}

He has numerous alternatives here, but neither of them provides him with an advantage.

11.c5 \textit{c7} 12.\textbf{ae1} e5 – see 11.\textbf{ae1}.

11.\textbf{ac1} \textit{e8} 12.\textit{h3}, Gajewski – Potkin, Pardubice 2005, 12...c5!? 13.cxd5 exd5 14.dxe5 \textit{xc5}=

11.\textbf{ae1} e5 12.c5 \textit{c7} 13.\textbf{xe5} \textit{xe5}?! This is Black’s simplest road to equality. 14.dxe5 \textit{xe5}. He is threatening d5-d4, as well as \textit{xd3}, depriving his opponent of his two-bishop advantage. 15.f3 (Following 15.\textbf{ac1}, Riazantsev – Tomashevsky, Dubai 2014, 15...\textit{xd3}!? 16.\textit{xd3} \textit{e4} 17.\textbf{xe4} \textit{xf5} 18.\textit{c3} \textit{xc4} 19.\textbf{b2}, Black neutralises the activity of White’s pieces on the long diagonal with the move 19...\textit{f6} and obtains a quite acceptable position 20.f3 \textit{g6} =) 15...d4 16.\textit{e4} \textit{xd3} 17.\textit{xd3} \textit{xe4} 18.fxe4 dxe3 19.\textit{xe3}. White’s pieces are better developed, but his e4-pawn is weak. 19...f6 (19...\textit{e6}?)=) 20.e5. He gets rid of the isolated pawn, but now, Black succeeds in completing his development. 20...fxe5 21.\textbf{xf8}+ \textit{xf8} 22.\textit{xe5} \textit{d7} 23.\textbf{f1} \textit{e8}= Lysyj – Rublevsky, Sochi 2015.

11.\textbf{fe1} e5 12.cxd5 exd5 13.e4 \textit{dxe4} 14.\textbf{xe4} \textit{xe4} 15.\textit{xe4} \textit{f6} 16.\textbf{h4} (After 16.dxe5, White does not obtain sufficient compensation for the exchange. 16...\textbf{xe4} 17.\textit{xe4}, Kashlinskaya – Bulmaga,
Black's two powerful bishops in this open position compensate fully his minimal material deficit.

After 11.h3, the move 11...e5 is even more effective for Black. He wishes to obtain a position with an isolated pawn, because White’s king shelter has been weakened by the pawn-advance h2-h3. 12.cxd5 (12.dxe5 @xe5 13.@xe5 $xe5 14.$ad1, Kasimdzhanov – Bacrot, Bastia 2006, 14...$d8!?) 12...$d8=

13.dxe5 @xe5 14.@xe5 $xe5 15.$ad1 (The move 15.$ac1 enables Black to play 15...$d4 16.exd4, Huzman – Najer, Moscow 2006, 16...$xd4!?= He has got rid of his only weakness and the position is equal.) 15...$d7 16.$e2 $e8 17.$b1 $e8=, preventing $c3, Kulaots – Godena, Saint Vincent 2005. The placement of White’s bishop on b2 is not so good.

If he is reluctant to play the position against the isolated pawn, White can choose 13.e4, which would lead to a calmer game. 13...dxe4 14.@xe4 @xe4 15.@xe4 exd4 16.$xd4 $f6. The central pawns have been exchanged. Neither side has pawn-weaknesses. Later, both sides will have difficulties to improve their positions and to break the balance. 17.$f3 $e5 18.$c3 $b6 19.$ad1 $d7 20.$d2 $ac8 21.$a5 $a7 22.$b4 b5 23.$e1 $e8= Tomashevsky – Jakovenko, Moscow 2010.

11.$e2. The transfer of the knight to the g3-square seems a bit slow. 11...$e7!?
12.c5 c7 13.g3 e5. Black is not afraid of the loss of a tempo after g3-f5. 14.f5 e8 15.xe5 xe5 16.dxe5 xf5. He exchanges the active enemy knight. 17.exf6 xd3 18.xd3 e5. This is the point! White must lose a tempo to defend against the checkmate and Black manages to preserve the harmony in his kingside pawn-structure. 19.g3 xf6= Prati – Cvak, ICCF 2014.

12.g3 b6 13.e4. Black is well prepared to counter this move. (13.ad1 b7 14.fe1 fd8= Volkov – Rodshtein, Dresden 2007) 13...dxe4 14.xe4 xe4 15.xe4 b7 16.fe1 fd8 17.ad1 f6 18.d3. Black cannot play yet c6-c5, because of d4-d5, but he can accomplish that pawn-advance later. (18.c3, Ftacnik – Erenburg, Germany 2006, 18...a5?!=) 18...a5= Noeth – Pavlicek, ICCF 2012.

11.e5 12.cxd5 exd5

13.e4

The transfer into a position with an isolated pawn 13.dxe5 does not promise much to White. 13...xe5 14.xe5 xe5 15.e2. His knight is headed for the blocking d4-square. Black can impede this manoeuvre, however... 15.g4 16.h3 (The move 16.f3 weakens the e3-pawn. 16...c8 17.b1 d7 18.c1 b6 19.xc8 xc8 20.gc1, Sargissian – Hansen, Turin 2006, 20...c7!? This is Black’s most precise move. He prepares d6, in order to weaken White’s king shelter even more. 21.d4 d6 22.g3 e8=) 16...c8 17.b1xe2!? (17...d7?! 18.c1 c7 19.b2 e8 20.a1 xb2 21.xb2= Nyback – Fridman, Germany 2006) 18.xe2 d6=, followed by the doubling of the rooks on the c-file, e6, fc8.

13.dxe4 14.xe4 xe4 15.xe4 exd4 16.xd4

White would not achieve much if he postpones the regaining of his pawn: 16.h7+ h8 17.f5, Aleksandrov – Fridman, Turin 2006, 17...c5?!=, or 16.c1 f6 17.b2 e8 18.f5 a5= Ftacnik – M.Gurevich, Warsaw 2005.
16...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f6}}}

White’s pieces are more active, but he cannot realise anything meaningful out of this.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
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\texttt{B} & \texttt{N} & \texttt{N} & \texttt{N} \\
\hline
\texttt{N} & \texttt{N} & \texttt{B} & \texttt{B} \\
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\texttt{R} & \texttt{R} & \texttt{B} & \texttt{B} \\
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17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f5}}}

This seemingly active knight-move leads only to further exchanges.

Following 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f3}}}?! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe}4} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe}4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}8}}=} Radjabov – Erenburg, Rishon Le Ziyyon 2006, it is only Black who can play for a win thanks to his two bishops.

17.h3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe}4} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe}4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}8}} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f3}}}, Carlsen – Erenburg, Reykjavik 2006, 19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}5}}?=}

17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f3}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}h}2+ 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}h}2} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd}4}} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}1}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}4}}. Black continues to strive for simplifications. Naturally, White will regain the sacrificed pawn, but he would have no chances of playing for a win. 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}h}6} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}5}} 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{fe}1}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}5}} 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}g}4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}4}} 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{ad}8}} 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}3}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd}1}} 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd}1}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}6}}= Navalon – Pericot, ICCF 2012.

17...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe}4} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe}4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}8}} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}3}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf}5}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf}5}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}8}} 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc}8}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{axc}8}} 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{hx}h}6} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}2+}} 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{hx}h}2} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{gx}h}6=} Maksimenko – Kempinski, Gorzow Wielkopolski 2014. In this endgame Black’s kingside pawn-structure is a bit weak, but this is not important, since there is just a few material left on the board.
White is fighting for a tempo. After dxc4, he wishes to recapture $\text{nxc4}$, therefore he is reluctant to play with his bishop. Still, the placement of his queen on c2 may turn out to be bad if the c-file is opened, moreover that his control over the d4-square has been weakened as well.

6...c5
Black wishes to exploit the defects of the move 6.$\text{Qc2}$. He would not mind losing a tempo in order to do that.

7.$\text{cxd5}$
Before developing his bishop on e2, White deprives Black of the possibility to capture on c4.

7.$\text{d2}$. This move does not contribute to the development of White’s kingside. 7...$\text{c6}$ 8.$\text{dxc5}$ $\text{xc5}$= Nakamura – Fernandez, Orlando 2011.

7.$\text{b3}$. The development of the bishop on b2 seems rather slow. Black manages to create pressure against the d4-pawn. 7...$\text{c6}$

8.$\text{cxd5}$ $\text{b4}$!?= 
8.$\text{xc5}$ $\text{xc5}$ 9.$\text{b2}$ 0-0 10.$\text{a3}$ (10.$\text{d1}$ $\text{e7}$ 11.$\text{e2}$ $\text{d8}$= Scherer – Spreemann, Email 2013) 10...$\text{d4}$= Sasikiran – Sarakauskas, Beijing 2008.

8.$\text{b2}$ $\text{cxd4}$ 9.$\text{exd4}$ $\text{xc4}$!? This is a principled move. Black wishes to capture on d4. 10.$\text{bxc4}$ (This move is forced, because after 10.$\text{xc4}$ $\text{b5}$ 11.$\text{e2}$ $\text{b7}$=, there arises an unfavourable version for White
of a position with an isolated pawn, because his bishop on b2 is very passive.) 10...\(\text{\=d}4\) 11.\(\text{\=d}4\) \(\text{\=f}4\) 12.\(\text{\=d}5\) \(\text{c}5\) 13.\(\text{\=x}f6+\) \(\text{g}xf6\) 14.\(\text{\=x}f6\), Sultana – Coimbra, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010. White has regained the sacrificed material, but after 14...\(\text{\=g}8!\) 15.\(g3\) \(d7\), Black’s prospects are not worse at all.

7.a3. White is preparing dxc5 and b2-b4, but it is Black to move now and he accomplishes a similar plan before his opponent. 7...dxc4 8.\(\text{\=x}c4\) (8.dxc5 \(\text{\=b}5\) – see 7.dxc5) 9.b5 \(\text{c}2\) 10.0-0 (After 10.d5, White would not achieve much, because following 10...\(\text{\=ex}d5\) 11.\(\text{\=x}d5\) \(\text{\=bd}7\) 12.e4, Black can play 12...c4, occupying additional space on the queenside and restricting the enemy bishop on a2, Mamedyarov – Andreikin, Baku 2014.) 10...\(\text{\=b}7\) 11.\(\text{e}2\) (11.\(\text{\=d}1\) \(\text{\=c}7!\) 12.\(\text{\=e}2\) \(\text{\=d}6\) – see 11.\(\text{\=e}2\)) 11...\(\text{\=d}6\)

Black’s bishop will be more active on this square than on e7. He should not be in a hurry to exchange on d4, because White’s bishop on c1 will be activated after exd4.

Following 12.e4 cxd4 13.\(\text{\=d}xd4\) 0-0 14.\(\text{\=d}1\), Dizdar – Lalic, Seville 2011, it seems very good for Black to play 14...\(\text{\=c}7!\), winning a tempo by attacking the pawn on h2.

12.\(\text{\=d}c5\) \(\text{\=x}c5\) 13.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{\=cd}7\) 14.\(\text{b}2\) 0-0 15.\(\text{\=fd}1\) \(\text{\=e}7=\) Inkiov – Danailov, Sofia 1985. In positions of this type White’s knight is better placed on d2 than on c3, because it does not stand in the way of the bishop on b2.

12.\(\text{\=d}1\) \(\text{\=c}7\)


Black has no problems at all after 13.h3 0-0=, while after White’s careless reaction 14.e4?! cxd4 15.\(\text{\=d}4\) \(\text{\=c}5\) Kozul – Varga, Medulin 1997, Black’s pieces will exert powerful pressure against the
enemy e4-pawn. The move f2–f3 will weaken considerably the dark squares around White’s king.

13.dxc5 Nxc5 14.b4 0-0 15.Nb2 Bc8 16.Rac1 Bb8. Black removes his queen away from the juxtaposition with the enemy rook. 17.h3 0-0 18.b1= Velilla Velasco – Van der Hoeven, ICCF 2010. His pieces have been very harmoniously deployed.

7.dxc5 Bxc5 8.a3 (8.b3 dxc4 9.bxc4 b5 10.Ne2 c6= Ghosh – Movsesian, Pardubice 2015; 8.e2 dxc4 9.0-0 0-0= Hambleton – Erenburg, USA 2017; 8.cxd5 exd5 – see 7.cxd5) 8...dxc4. White wanted to play b2–b4, therefore, Black had no time to wait for the development of the enemy bishop on f1. 9.Nxc4 b5

10.Na2. This is not going to be the best square for White’s bishop in this middle game, because it will be restricted by the pawn on e6. 10...Nbd7 11.b4 Ne7 12.Nb2 Bb7 13.0-0 (13.e4, Agrest – Godena, Batumi 1999. After this untimely activity Black obtains an edge: 13...Rc8!?) 13...Rc8= Smyslov – Pelletier, Zuerich 1998.

10.Ne2 Nd7. Black defends against Nb5. 11.0-0 Nb7 12.b4 (12.Nd2 0-0∞ Lastin – S.Atalik, Istanbul 2003) 12...Ne7 13.Nb2 0-0 14.Nfd1 (14.a4 a5= Beliavsky – Cheparinov, Amsterdam 2007). Black’s queen on d8 is misplaced under the X-ray juxtaposition with the rook on d1. Still, he can transfer it to a8 after Rc8-c7. 14...Rc8 15.Nac1 Rc7!?∞ Flohr/Reilly – Alekhine/Monosson, Nice (consultation) 1931.

10.Nd3. This is the most active retreat of the bishop, but it is still insufficient to provide White with an advantage. 10...Nbd7

11.0-0 Nb7 12.a4 (The move 12.e4 weakens the g1-a7 diagonal. 12...Bc7 13.g5, Rustemov – Vera Gonzalez Quevedo, Mondariz 2002, 13...Ng4!?) 12...0-0 13.Ne4. The exchange of the knights leads to simplifications, but White had nothing better anyway. 13...Rc8 14.Nxf6+ Nxf6= Grachev – Bareev, St Petersburg 2009.
11.b4. White prepares the development of his bishop on b2. 11...e7 12.b2 b7 13.0-0 (13...d1 c7= Kornienko – Iskusnyh, Novokuznetsk 2003) 13...c8 14.fd1 c7 15.ac1 b8. Black’s queen is going to the a8-square in order to increase the pressure on the long light-squared diagonal. 16.b1, Chernin – Malakhatko, Bastia 2005, 16...a8!?

11.e4 e7 12.xf6+ (It is less consistent for White to play here 12.d2 b7=, followed by c8, S.Atalik – Gurevich, Saint Vincent 2003.) 12.xf6 13.e4, Turov – Kobalia, playchess.com 2006. White exploits the fact that Black has failed to play b7 and wishes to cause disharmony in the deployment of his pieces. Still, Black has the powerful transfer of his rook to the c7-square. 13.a7!? 14.d2 c7 15.b1 b7 16.xb7 (The attempt to win the exchange with the move 16.a5 might create problems for White. 16...a8! 17.xc7?! xe4 18.a2 c5. Black wishes to attack the weak b3-square. 19.0-0 d5! 20.b1 b3=) 16...xb7=

7...exd5

8.e2

White wishes at first to complete the development of his kingside pieces and to castle.

About 8.e5 d6 9.e2 0-0 10.0-0 e6 – see 8.e2.

The strike in the centre 8.e4 would only lead to simplifications 8...cxd4 9.xd5 xd5 10.exd5 b4+ 11.d2 xd2+ 12.xd2 xd5 13.xd4 c6= Ivanisevic – Oms Pallisse, Andorra 2003.

8.g3. White’s light-squared bishop is better placed on the f1-a6 diagonal, because it does not control the d3-square from g2. Black can make use of this circumstance. 8...c6 9.g2 b4 10.xd2 f5 11.0-0 d3= Now, White has nothing better than to comply with the repetition of the position. 12.d1 c2 13.f1 d3 14.d1 c2= Blagojevic – Voiska, Plovdiv 2010.

8.dxc5 xc5
9.\text{\textit{e2}}  \textit{c6} 10.0-0  \textit{e6} – see 8.\textit{e2}.

Following 9.a3  \textit{c6} 10.b4  \textit{a7} 11.\textit{b2}, Radjenovic – Huebscher, Berlin 1999, Black has an interesting possibility to sacrifice a pawn for the initiative. 11...d4!? 12.exd4  \textit{g4}

9.\textit{e2}, Nikolic – Handke, Germany 2012, 9...\textit{e7}?! 10.\textit{ed4} 0-0 11.\textit{d3}  \textit{g4}= The activity of Black’s pieces compensates the vulnerability of his isolated pawn.

8...\textit{e6}!?

This is considered to be his most precise move.

After 8...\textit{c6}, White has the additional possibility 9.\textit{e5}, threatening to double the enemy pawns on the c-file.

9.0-0

9.\textit{e5}  \textit{d6} 10.0-0 0-0 11.b3 (The move 11.f4 weakens the e4-square. 11...\textit{c6} 12.\textit{xc6}  \textit{bxc6} Ushenina – Girya, Khanty-Mansiysk 2014.) 11...\textit{exd4} 12.\textit{exd4}  \textit{c7} 13.\textit{b2}  \textit{c6} 14.\textit{xc6}  \textit{xc6} Krasenkow – Ni Hua, Helsingor 2011. Black’s pieces are more actively placed.

9.\textit{xc5}  \textit{xc5} 10.\textit{d4} (10.0-0 \textit{c6} – see 9.0-0) 10...0-0 11.0-0  \textit{wd6} 12.\textit{d1} (After 12.\textit{xe6}, White obtains the two-bishop advantage, but fortifies the enemy d5-pawn and opens the f-file for Black’s rook. 12...\textit{fxe6} 13.b3  \textit{bd7} 14.\textit{b2}  \textit{ac8}= Medvegy – Banusz, Heviz 2012.) 12...\textit{c6} 13.\textit{xc6}  \textit{bxc6} 14.b3  \textit{g4} 15.\textit{g4}  \textit{g4} 16.\textit{e2}  \textit{b6}\infty, followed by \textit{ac7}, with the idea to create weaknesses in White’s king shelter, Rodshtein – Rublevsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010. Black’s piece-activity compensates with an interest the slight weakness of his pawns on c6 and d5.

9...\textit{c6}
10.\textbf{\textit{d1}}


10.a3. This move may turn out to be not so useful for White in the forthcoming battle. 10...\textit{cxd4}
11.\textit{exd4}, K. Georgiev – Svetushkin, Subotica 2008, 11...\textit{h6}!? Black prevents the development of the enemy bishop on g5. 12.\textbf{\textit{f4}} \textit{d6} 13.\textbf{\textit{xd6}} \textit{xd6} 14.\textit{h3} 0-0=

10.\textbf{\textit{e5}} \textit{c8}

11.\textit{\textbf{a4}}, Sadler – M. Gurevich, Germany 2003, 11...\textit{cxd4}!? 12.\textit{exd4} \textit{b6} 13.\textbf{\textit{xc6}} \textit{xc6}= 

After 11.\textbf{\textit{f3}} \textit{d6}, White cannot hold on to the e5-square. 12.\textbf{\textit{xc6}} \textit{xc6} 13.\textit{xc5} \textit{xc5} 14.\textbf{\textit{d1}} 0-0 
15.\textit{\textbf{d3}} \textit{g4} 16.\textit{\textbf{xg4}} \textit{\textbf{xg4}}\uparrow Black’s pieces are very active. For example, after 17.\textbf{\textit{e2}}?! \textit{g5} 18.\textit{\textbf{e1}}, Coleman – Ramirez, Freemont 2012, he has the line: 18...\textit{xe2} 19.\textit{\textbf{xe2}} \textit{e5} 20.\textit{\textbf{g3}} \textit{\textbf{e4}} 21.\textbf{\textit{d2}} \textit{\textbf{c2}}\uparrow and White is beyond salvation.

11.\textbf{\textit{d1}} \textit{\textit{cxd4}} 12.\textit{\textbf{exd4}} \textit{\textbf{d6}} 13.\textbf{\textit{xc6}} \textit{\textit{xc6}} 14.\textbf{\textit{g5}} 0-0 15.\textbf{\textit{f3}} \textit{\textbf{h6}} 16.\textit{\textbf{h4}} \textit{\textbf{xh2}}+?! This bishop-sacrifice is Black’s simplest road to the draw. 17.\textit{\textbf{xh2}} \textit{\textit{g4}}+ 18.\textit{\textbf{xg4}} \textit{\textbf{\textbf{xh4}}+} 19.\textit{\textbf{h3}} \textit{\textbf{xh3}} 20.\textit{\textbf{gxh3}} \textit{\textit{\textbf{f4}}+} 21.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{h1}}} \textit{\textbf{f3}}= Kornev – Ni Hua, Moscow 2012. White’s king cannot go to the g-file, so he is forced to comply with the perpetual check.

10.\textbf{\textit{dxc5}}. This move only enhances the development of Black’s pieces. 10...\textbf{\textit{xc5}}
11.\textit{\textnormal{Da}}4. This transfer of the knight to c5 is not dangerous for Black. 11...\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}6 12.\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}c5 \textit{\textnormal{De}}7 13.\textit{\textnormal{Dxe}}6. Black’s d5-pawn is fortified after this exchange. 13...\textit{\textnormal{Df}}xe6 14.\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}d4 \textit{\textnormal{Ec}}8= Loiseau – Salles, Saint Paul Trois Chateaux 2013.

11.b3 \textit{\textnormal{Dc}}8 12.\textit{\textnormal{Db}}2 0-0 13.\textit{\textnormal{Dac}}1 \textit{\textnormal{Da}}7 14.\textit{\textnormal{Dfd}}1 \textit{\textnormal{De}}7 15.\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}b1 \textit{\textnormal{Ffd}}8= There has arisen a typical position with an isolated pawn with approximately equal chances. Later, in the game M.Gurevich – Morozevich, Moscow 2001, White played rather carelessly 16.\textit{\textnormal{Dg}}5? and Black seized the initiative with the move 16...d4=.

11.\textit{\textnormal{Db}}5. This is a good positional move. White increases his control over the important d4-square. 11...\textit{\textnormal{Db}}6 12.\textit{\textnormal{Db}}d4 \textit{\textnormal{Dxd}}4 13.\textit{\textnormal{Dxd}}4 0-0 14.\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}3 \textit{\textnormal{Dd}}7= Lalic – Damjanovic, Lorca 2005.

11.a3. White is preparing b4 and \textit{\textnormal{Db}}2. 11...\textit{\textnormal{Dc}}8 12.b4 \textit{\textnormal{Dd}}6 13.\textit{\textnormal{Db}}2 0-0 14.\textit{\textnormal{Dac}}1 (14.\textit{\textnormal{Db}}1, Rustemov – Erenburg, Germany 2006, 14...\textit{\textnormal{Df}}8!?) 14...\textit{\textnormal{Df}}5 15.\textit{\textnormal{Dxe}}5 \textit{\textnormal{Dxe}}5= Binder – Bachner, St Poelten 2009. The pressure on the c-file is very unpleasant for White.

11.\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}1. White is threatening \textit{\textnormal{Dxd}}5. 11...\textit{\textnormal{Dc}}7

Following 12.b3, Black completes effortlessly his development and advances d5-d4. 12...0-0 13.\textit{\textnormal{Dh}}2 \textit{\textnormal{Dac}}8 14.\textit{\textnormal{Dac}}1 \textit{\textnormal{Ba}}7 15.\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}b1 \textit{\textnormal{Ffd}}8 16.h3 d4 17.\textit{\textnormal{Dxd}}4 \textit{\textnormal{Dxd}}4 18.\textit{\textnormal{Dxd}}4, Fressinet – Gagunashvili, Warsaw 2005, 18...\textit{\textnormal{Dxd}}4!?

12.a3 0-0 13.b4 \textit{\textnormal{Dd}}6 14.\textit{\textnormal{Db}}2 \textit{\textnormal{Dac}}8 15.\textit{\textnormal{Dac}}1 (15.\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}2 \textit{\textnormal{Ffd}}8= Nakamura – Shankland, Baku 2015) 15...a5 16.bxa5 (16.\textit{\textnormal{Dg}}5, Moise – Pedersen, ICCF 2009, 16...g6!?= White is incapable of exploiting the vulnerability of the a1-h8 diagonal.) 16...\textit{\textnormal{Dxa}}5 17.a4 \textit{\textnormal{Ffd}}8= 12.\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}4 \textit{\textnormal{Dxd}}4 13.\textit{\textnormal{Dxd}}4, Bischoff – Schandorff, Germany 2004, 13...\textit{\textnormal{Da}}7! 14.\textit{\textnormal{Dd}}4+. White exploits the
fact that his opponent has not castled yet and forces the transfer of Black’s bishop from e6 to c6. This is still insufficient for White to maintain an edge. 14...\texttt{d7} 15.\texttt{b3} \texttt{c6} 16.\texttt{g5} 0-0 17.\texttt{f3}. White increases his pressure against the d5-square. 17...\texttt{ad8} 18.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} 19.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} 20.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{d7}. He has an extra pawn at the moment, but is incapable of protecting the d4-pawn. 21.\texttt{g3} \texttt{g6} 22.\texttt{h3} \texttt{e8}. Black does not need to capture on d4 immediately. 23.\texttt{h4} \texttt{e6} 24.\texttt{e1} \texttt{xd4=}

\texttt{10...cxd4} \texttt{11.\texttt{xd4}}

White wishes to exploit the weakness of the isolated pawn on d5.

He would not obtain much after \texttt{11.exd4} \texttt{d6} 12.\texttt{g5}, Gordievsky – Belous, Moscow 2014, 12...\texttt{h6}!

\texttt{11...\texttt{xd4}}

\texttt{12.\texttt{xd4}}

White’s rook will come under an attack with tempo on this square.

Even after \texttt{12.exd4} \texttt{d6}, White would not achieve anything. 13.\texttt{g5} 0-0 14.\texttt{b3} \texttt{h6} 15.\texttt{xf6} (After 15.\texttt{h4}, Black should play 15...\texttt{b5}=, defending against the manoeuvre \texttt{a4-c5}, Schepetkova – Girya, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.) 15...\texttt{xf6} 16.\texttt{xb7}, Giri – Tomashevsky, Al Ain 2012. White has an extra pawn, but Black’s bishops are very powerful. 16...\texttt{fd8}?! 17.\texttt{g3} (After 17.\texttt{b3} \texttt{g6} 18.\texttt{g3} \texttt{a4} 19.\texttt{c4} \texttt{c8} 20.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{xf3} 21.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{d7} 22.\texttt{e5} \texttt{xb2} 23.\texttt{xa6}, Black’s pieces are very active. For example: 23...\texttt{e8} 24.\texttt{c5} \texttt{c6} 25.\texttt{d3} \texttt{xa2} 26.\texttt{ac1} \texttt{a4} 27.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd1} 28.\texttt{xa2} \texttt{g4} 29.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xa4} 30.\texttt{c4} \texttt{f5} 31.\texttt{h2} \texttt{b4} 32.\texttt{d1} \texttt{e4} 33.\texttt{e3} \texttt{b8} 34.\texttt{d5} \texttt{b2=} and White is incapable of realising his extra pawn.) 17...\texttt{ab8} 18.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{xb2} 19.\texttt{ab1}. He exchanges the active enemy rook. 19...\texttt{xb1} 20.\texttt{xb1} \texttt{e7} 21.\texttt{c1} \texttt{f6}. Now, White’s queen is squeezed to protect the d4-pawn. 22.\texttt{d3} \texttt{e8} 23.\texttt{c6} \texttt{f8} 24.\texttt{c3} \texttt{f5} 25.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xd3} 26.\texttt{b6} \texttt{xe2} 27.\texttt{xe2} \texttt{xe2=} Black has restored the material balance.

\texttt{12...\texttt{c5}} 13.\texttt{\texttt{d1}}

13.\texttt{d2}. White’s rook is not better placed here than on d1. 13...\texttt{e7} 14.\texttt{a4}+ \texttt{d7} 15.\texttt{d1} 0-0 16.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} 17.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{c6}. Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn. Later, in the game Yuffa – Rublevsky, Cheliabinsk 2016, White played rather carelessly 18.\texttt{h5}?! and after 18...\texttt{g6} 19.\texttt{h3} \texttt{fd8} 20.\texttt{e1} \texttt{b4} 21.\texttt{f1} \texttt{a8} 22.\texttt{a3} \texttt{d6}, ended up in a very difficult position, because his queenside pieces were not developed and his rook on h3 was misplaced.

\texttt{13...\texttt{c7}}
14.\textit{f3}
White increases the pressure against the pawn on d5.

14.b3. White prepares the fianchetto of his bishop, but with a calm play he would be incapable of preventing Black’s pawn-break d5-d4. 14...0-0 15.\textit{b}2 \textit{ac}8 16.\textit{ac}1 \textit{fd}8 17.\textit{b}1 d4 18.\textit{a}4 \textit{a}7 19.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 20.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 21.\textit{exd}4 \textit{xc}1+ 22.\textit{xc}1 \textit{xb}3. Black restores the material balance. 23.\textit{c}8+ \textit{e}8 24.axb3 \textit{xe}2 25.h3 \textit{f}8= Aleksandrov – Rublevsky, St Petersburg 2015.

14.\textit{a}4 \textit{d}6 15.\textit{b}6. This is an interesting pawn-sacrifice. It is not sufficient to provide White with an edge, however... 15...\textit{xe}2+ 16.\textit{xe}2 \textit{d}6+ 17.\textit{g}1 \textit{xb}6 18.\textit{a}4+ \textit{d}7 19.\textit{f}4 (After 19.\textit{a}3, Guseva – Schepetkova, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013, the simplest way for Black to equalise would be 19...\textit{c}8!? 20.\textit{d}2 \textit{c}8 21.\textit{f}3 \textit{xb}2 22.\textit{d}6 \textit{c}6. Now, White must comply with the repetition of the position; otherwise, his situation would be worse. 23.\textit{b}8+ \textit{c}8 24.\textit{d}6 \textit{c}6=) 19...0-0 20.\textit{b}3 \textit{ac}8 21.\textit{b}2 \textit{e}6 22.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 23.\textit{xf}6 \textit{gxf}6 24.\textit{xd}5. White has regained the sacrificed pawn, but there is just a few material left on the board. Black’s kingside pawn-structure has been compromised indeed, but he can maintain the balance with a precise play. 24...\textit{e}6 25.\textit{d}4 \textit{c}2 26.\textit{g}4 (26.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}8= Schepetkova – Girya, Moscow 2014) 26...\textit{f}5 27.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}6 28.\textit{d}5 \textit{fc}8 29.\textit{xe}6 \textit{fxe}6 30.\textit{d}7 \textit{c}7. Black exchanges the active enemy rook. 31.\textit{xc}7 \textit{xc}7= Aleksandrov – Rublevsky, Loo 2013.

14.\textit{a}4+ \textit{d}7 15.\textit{b}3. White is attacking the pawns on b7 and d5. (15.\textit{h}4?! \textit{h}6 16.\textit{g}3 \textit{d}6 17.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}6 18.\textit{f}3 0-0= Gordievsky – Rublevsky, St Petersburg 2014. Black has completed his development, while White has to worry about the weak e3-pawn in his camp.) 15...0-0

16.\textit{f}3. White can capture on d5 on his next move. 16...\textit{e}6 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 18.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 19.\textit{xd}5 \textit{ad}8. White has an extra pawn, but has difficulties to complete the development of his queenside pieces.
20.g3 \( \texttt{b6} \) 21.\( \texttt{exd8} \) \( \texttt{exd8} \) 22.\( \texttt{d2} \) (He loses after 22.\( \texttt{xb6} \), because of 22...\( \texttt{d1} + \) 23.\( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{e4} + \) 24.\( \texttt{f3} \) \( \texttt{c4} \)–+) 22...\( \texttt{exd2} \) 23.\( \texttt{xb6} \) \( \texttt{e4} \) 24.\( \texttt{c1} \) \( \texttt{h6} \) 25.\( \texttt{b3} \) \( \texttt{f5} \) 26.\( \texttt{f1} \) \( \texttt{b5} = \) Bluebaum – Heimann, Athens 2012. White has an extra pawn in the arising endgame with major pieces, but his rook is squeezed with the protection of his \( \texttt{f2} \)-pawn.

16.\( \texttt{xd5} \) \( \texttt{xd5} \) 17.\( \texttt{xd5} \), Zontakh – Korchmar, Voronezh 2014, 17...\( \texttt{a4} \)?? This is Black’s most precise move. He removes his bishop from the d-file with tempo. 18.b3 \( \texttt{ad8} \) 19.\( \texttt{h5} \) \( \texttt{xd1} + \) 20.\( \texttt{xd1} \) \( \texttt{g6} \) 21.\( \texttt{g4} \) \( \texttt{c6} \) 22.\( \texttt{b2} \) (It is bad for White to play here 22.\( \texttt{d2} \)??, because of 22...\( \texttt{h5} \) 23.\( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 24.\( \texttt{c1} \) \( \texttt{d8} \). Black’s pieces are obviously more active. 25.\( \texttt{c3} \) \( \texttt{g5} \). This move provokes a weakening in White’s position. 26.g3 \( \texttt{e8} \) 27.\( \texttt{b2} \) \( \texttt{xe3} \)!! After this simple combination, Black not only regains the material, but also remains with an extra pawn. 28.\( \texttt{f3} \) \( \texttt{xe3} + \) 29.\( \texttt{f1} \) \( \texttt{xc1} \) = 14...0-0

![Chess Diagram]

15.\( \texttt{xd5} \)
About 15.\( \texttt{xd5} \) \( \texttt{xd5} \) 16.\( \texttt{xd5} \) \( \texttt{xd5} \) 17.\( \texttt{xd5} \) \( \texttt{ac8} \) – see 15.\( \texttt{xd5} \).

White would not achieve much if he refrains from capturing the pawn. 15.b3 \( \texttt{ac8} \) 16.\( \texttt{b2} \) \( \texttt{fd8} \) 17.\( \texttt{e2} \), Iljiushenok – Lintchevski, Moscow 2016, 17...\( \texttt{b5} \)?? After this move, White’s knight cannot go to \( \texttt{a4} \) if Black plays \( \texttt{d5} \)–\( \texttt{d4} \). 18.\( \texttt{ac1} \) \( \texttt{d4} \) = 15...\( \texttt{xd5} \) 16.\( \texttt{xd5} \) \( \texttt{xd5} \) 17.\( \texttt{xd5} \) \( \texttt{ac8} \)

![Chess Diagram]

White cannot realise his extra pawn due to the lack of development of his pieces.

18.\( \texttt{d2} \)
18.\( \texttt{d1} \) \( \texttt{fd8} \) 19.g3, Yuffa – Andreikin, Sochi 2016, 19...\( \texttt{b6} \)?? 20.\( \texttt{xd8} + \) \( \texttt{xd8} \) 21.\( \texttt{c2} \) \( \texttt{c7} \) 22.\( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 23.\( \texttt{c2} \) \( \texttt{c7} \) =
18.\textit{\texttt{Qd3}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Rfd8}}} 19.\textit{\texttt{g3}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Exd5}}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Exd5}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Rd8}}} 21.\textit{\texttt{Qf3}}, Kovalenko – Shimanov, Wroclaw 2014, 21...\textit{\texttt{d6}}!? The transfer of Black’s bishop to the e5-square is his simplest road to equality. 22.\textit{\texttt{b1}} (22.\textit{\texttt{d2}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Exg3}}} 23.\textit{\texttt{hxg3}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Exd2}}}=) 22...\textit{\texttt{e5}} 23.\textit{\texttt{e4}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c5}}} 24.\textit{\texttt{g5}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c2}}}. White cannot avoid the loss of his b2-pawn. 25.\textit{\texttt{e1}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{f6}}} 26.\textit{\texttt{Qf5}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{xb2}}}=

18...\textit{\texttt{Bxe3}}
Black restores the material balance. White’s pieces are active, but he cannot obtain anything meaningful out of this.

19.\textit{\texttt{c3}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{b6}}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Qf5}}
Or 20.\textit{\texttt{b3}}, Schandorff – Erenburg, Helsingor 2013, 20...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{Fe8}}}!=

20...\textit{\texttt{Qe6}}

This is Black’s simplest reaction. He would not mind the appearance of a weak pawn on e6 in his position, because he can easily hold this endgame.

21.\textit{\texttt{Qf3}}
21.\textit{\texttt{Rad1}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Exf5}}} 22.\textit{\texttt{Exf5}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Rcd8}}}. Black only needs to centralise his king in order to equalise completely. 23.\textit{\texttt{Rfd5}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{f6}}} 24.\textit{\texttt{Qf1}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Exd5}}} 25.\textit{\texttt{Exd5}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Rd8}}} 26.\textit{\texttt{Exd8+}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Exd8}}} 27.\textit{\texttt{e2}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{f7}}}= Froewis – Svane, Ruzomberok 2014.

21...\textit{\texttt{f6}}
This move prevents White’s plan to attack the g7-square.

22.\textit{\texttt{h4}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c6}}} 23.\textit{\texttt{h5}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Rfd8}}} 24.\textit{\texttt{Exd8+}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Exd8}}} 25.\textit{\texttt{xc6}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{bxc6}}}
Black’s queenside pawn-structure is a bit weak, but this is practically irrelevant.

26.\textit{\texttt{e1}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{f7}}} 27.\textit{\texttt{g4}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d4}}}
The exchange of the bishops is Black’s simplest way of equalising.

28.\textit{\texttt{c1}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{xc3}}} 29.\textit{\texttt{xc3}} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{Ed4}}}= Gelfand – Anand, Moscow 2012.
In this part of our book we will analyse 5.\textit{Bg}5 and then 5...\textit{dxc}4, after which Black is trying to hold on to his c4-pawn, complying with the destruction of his pawn-chain on the kingside.

The variations in this scheme are usually very complicated and are full of plenty of tactical possibilities. Black’s last move is named in the theory of the openings as “The Botvinnik System”.

Mikhail Moiseevich was not the first who played this system, but this opening scheme was named after him quite deservedly, since he contributed greatly to the development of its theory. He played for the first time the move 5...\textit{dxc}4 in his game against Zhivtsov (Moscow 1943) and this system was universally acknowledged after the famous game Denker – Botvinnik (radio match USA – USSR 1945), in which Black scored a crushing victory. The idea of the Botvinnik System is that Black wishes to hold on to his c4-pawn and is ready to comply with almost complete destruction of his kingside pawn-structure. Instead he manages to create counterplay in the centre and to obtain pawn-majority on the queenside. He can use this in the endgame and his king usually finds its shelter on the queenside in the middle game. In addition, in some variations Black can use the open h and g-files on the kingside in order to organise an attack against the enemy king.

We devote to the Botvinnik System chapters 19-22. In Chapter 19 we will analyse the variations in which White refrains from the most popular move 6.e4. In Chapter 20, White plays 6.e4, but after 6...b5 7.e5 h6 8.h4 g5, he does not play 9.\textit{Dxg}5 and tries instead 9.g3, or 9.exf6. Finally, Chapters 21-22 will deal with the main lines of the Botvinnik System, arising after 9.\textit{Dxg}5.

\textbf{Chapter 19}

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}6 4.e3 e6 5.\textit{g}5 \textit{dxc}4
6.a4
This move looks too timid in comparison to 6.e4. Instead of playing actively in the centre and on the kingside, White applies prophylactic on the queenside. He can hardly fight for the opening advantage playing in this fashion.

6.e3 b5 7.Be2 (7.a4 b4 – see 6.a4) 7...b7 8.0-0 Bd7 Meduna – Ostenstad, Gausdal 1988.

6.g3. The combination of the moves g5 and g3 does not seem harmonious at all. 6...b5 7.Bg2 Bb7

It would be rather difficult for White to prove here that his lead in development and more active pieces are sufficient to compensate the sacrificed pawn.

8.0-0 e7 9.a4 (Following 9.e4 h6 10.exf6 gxf6 11.e5 e7+, Black has not only an extra pawn, but also the two-bishop advantage, Guijarro – Moreno Trujillo, Madrid 2013.) 9...a6 10.0.e5 (White ends up in a bad position after 10.e4 h6 11.exf6 gxf6 12.axb5 axb5 13.xa8 xax8 14.a1 d7 15.a7 0-0 16.e5 e7+ Andreikin – Shirow, Loo 2013.) 10...d5. Black wishes to neutralise his opponent’s pressure by exchanging pieces. 11.xe7 xe7
12.e3. The transfer of the queen to h5 seem rather slow. 12...0-0 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{h}5}} f6 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f}3}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{d}7}}\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{†}}} Kozul – Sulava, Bol 2015.

Following 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}4}}, Black can oust at first one of the enemy knights away from the centre of the board: 12...f6 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f}3}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{d}7}} 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{c}2}} 0-0 15.b3 and then the other one: 15...f5 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}d}2} c3 17.e4, A.Smirmov – Volkov, Izhevsk 2011, 17...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f}xe}4} 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xe}4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b}4}}\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{†}}}

Following 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}4}}, Black can oust at first one of the enemy knights away from the centre of the board: 12...f6 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f}3}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{d}7}} 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{c}2}} 0-0 15.b3 and then the other one: 15...f5 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}d}2} c3 17.e4, A.Smirmov – Volkov, Izhevsk 2011, 17...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f}xe}4} 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xe}4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b}4}}\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{†}}}

Black’s protected passed extra pawn provides him with a stable advantage.

12.e4. White occupies the centre with his pawns, but reduces the scope of action of his bishop on g2. 12...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xc}3}}. Black continues to play for simplifications. 13.bxc3 0-0 14.f4 f6 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{g}4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{d}7}}\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{†}}} Karthikeyan – Sardana, New Delhi 2010. White’s pawn-centre is powerful, but is insufficient to compensate fully his sacrificed pawn.

8.a4 a6 9.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}5}}. White wishes to provoke immediate tactical complications, before Black has completed his development and castled. 9...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{c}8}} 10.0-0 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{bd}7}}

Black must exchange the active enemy knight as quickly as possible.

11.f4?! Flores – Santiago, Montevideo 2015. It seems too risky for White to cut off the possible retreats of his bishop on g5. 11...b4!? 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xe}4}} 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xe}4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xe}5}} 14.dxe5 c5\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{†}}}

11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{c}2}} h6 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd}7}}, Izoria – Timofeev, Oropesa del Mar 2001, 12...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd}7}}!? 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f}4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}7}}\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{†}}}

11.e3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xe}5}} 12.dxe5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{d}5}} 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}4}} h6 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{h}5}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{c}7}}\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{∞}}}

Kamsky – Pridorozhni, Kazan 2016. Now, White must play very precisely; otherwise, he may lose his dark-squared bishop, which is deprived of squares to retreat to.

11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd}7}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd}7}} 12.e4 h6 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}3}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e}7}} 14.e5 0-0 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{g}4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{h}8}}, Romanishin – Movsesian, Solin 2006,
16. \( \text{Wh}5 \text{ c5} \) 17. \( \text{d5 b4} \) Here, White has nothing better than to force a perpetual check after 18. \( \text{gxh}6 \).

11. \( \text{xf6} \). White preserves his centralised knight from being exchanged, but presents his opponent with the two-bishop advantage. 11... \( \text{xf6} \) 12. \( \text{e3 d6} \) 13. \( \text{b3 cxb3} \) 14. \( \text{xb3 0-0} \) Ashwin – S. Atalik, Golden Sands 2012. White’s piece-pressure compensates the sacrificed pawn, but not more than that.

6... \( \text{b4} \)

Black exerts pressure on the e1-a5 diagonal with the idea to force the enemy bishop to come back to the d2-square.

7.e4

This is White’s most popular move in this position. He occupies the centre with his pawns, a move later, though...

7. \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \)

7.g3 \( \text{bd7} \) 8. \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{a5} \). Black increases his control over the weak b4-square. 9.0-0 \( \text{h6} \) 10. \( \text{d2 0-0} \) Stupak – Braun, Gaziantep 2008.

7.e3. White’s pawn is not so active here as on e4. He cannot obtain sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn with such humble moves. 7... \( \text{b5} \)

8. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 9.0-0 \( \text{b6} \) 10. \( \text{e2} \) 0-0 11.e4. White has to play e4 anyway. 11... \( \text{b7} \) 12. \( \text{e3 a6} \) 13. \( \text{e5 d5} \) 14. \( \text{g5 g6} \). He will hardly manage to exploit this slight weakening of Black’s king shelter. 15. \( \text{e4 h6} \) 16. \( \text{xf7} \). White sacrifices a piece in the hope to continue with his ebbing off initiative. 16... \( \text{xf7} \) 17. \( \text{xd5 cxd5} \) 18. \( \text{f4+ g8} \) 19. \( \text{xh6 f7} \) 20. \( \text{xg6+ g7} \) 21. \( \text{h5 h7} \) 22. \( \text{g6+ h8} \) Simeonov – Spasov, ICCF 2014. In this middle game Black’s pieces will be obviously stronger than White’s two
After 7...\textit{c2}, Black can play 7...\textit{b5}!, without being afraid of any tactical complications.

After 8...\textit{xf6} \textit{gxf6}, Black can play 9...\textit{xf6}!?, without being afraid of 10.\textit{e4}, because of 10...\textit{f5}! This is the point! Black sacrifices the rook on \textit{a8} in order to capture the enemy \textit{b2}-pawn with his queen. 11.\textit{xa8} \textit{c2} 12.\textit{d2} \textit{xb2} 13.\textit{xd1} \textit{xc3} 14.f3?! White opens a leeway for his king on \textit{f2}. (It seems more resilient for White to choose here 14.\textit{xb8}, but even then after 14...\textit{xd2}+ 15.\textit{xd2} \textit{b1}+ 16.\textit{d1} \textit{b4}+ 17.\textit{d2} 0-0 18.e3 \textit{c3}+, his extra rook would not save him.) 14...0-0 15.\textit{xb8}. White has already an extra rook, but his lag in development and his king, stranded in the centre, doom him to a quick demise. 15...\textit{xd4}. Black not only captures the enemy central pawn, but frees the way forward of his \textit{c}-pawn, which should settle the issue. 16.\textit{b1} \textit{a2} 17.\textit{xb5} \textit{c3} 18.\textit{e4}, Lain – Lettieri, Bratto 2005 and here, Black’s simplest winning line is: 18...\textit{c2} 19.\textit{c1} \textit{a3} 20.\textit{xc2} \textit{a1}+ 21.\textit{d2} \textit{d8} 22.\textit{d3} \textit{a6}–+ Now, White must either give up his queen, or allow a deadly discovered check.

7...\textit{a5}
8.\textit{\textsf{d2}}

White is forced to retreat with his bishop, because the following line is very bad for him: 8.e5  $\textit{\textsf{\textit{e4}}}$ 9.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{d2}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{xd2}}}$ 10.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xd2}}}$, Ernst – Potkin, Wijk aan Zee 2012, 10...b5?!?

8.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{c2}}}?$  $\textit{\textsf{\textit{xe4}}}$

8...$\textit{\textsf{c5}}$

Black undermines the enemy centre and prepares the development of his bishop to the c6-square.

9.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xc4}}}$

9.e5, Timoschenko – Berezjuk, Czech Republic 2006, 9...$\textit{\textsf{\textit{fd7}}}$?!?

9.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xc5}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{xc5}}} 10.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{e5}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{xc3}}} 11.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xc3}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{d5}}}$. White has the two-bishop advantage, but regaining the c4-pawn will take too much time for him. 12.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{d4}}} 12.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{d2}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{d7}}} 13.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{c1}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{c3}}} 14.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xc3}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{b6}}})$ 12...$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xd4}}} 13.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xd4}}}$, Rychagov – Goumas, Malevizi 2016, 13...c3?! Black will lose his c-pawn anyway, but with this move he compromises his opponent’s pawn-structure on the queenside. 14.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xc3}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{c6}}} 15.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{a5}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{xd4}}}$. Black deprives his opponent of his two-bishop advantage. 16.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xd4}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{d7}}} 17.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{d2}}}  \textit{\textsf{\textit{f6}}}$=

9...$\textit{\textsf{\textit{cxd4}}} 10.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xd4}}} 0-0

11.$\textit{\textsf{\textit{xc2}}}$

White’s pieces are very unstable on the fourth rank, so he removes immediately his knight from the centre, attacking the enemy bishop.

11. \( \text{b3} \). Now, contrary to 11. \( \text{c2} \), Black’s bishop on b4 is not threatened after this retreat of White’s knight. 11...\( \text{c7} \) 12.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{c6} \) 13.0-0 \( \text{e5} \) 14.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 15.\( \text{fe1} \). White’s pieces are seemingly more active, but Black can oust them quickly and obtain the two-bishop advantage after the exchange of his knight on e5 for the enemy bishop. 15...a6 16.\( \text{d4} \), Reyes la Rosa – Figlio, ICCF 2009, 16...\( \text{d6}! \)? 17.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 18.\( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{e8} \) 19.\( \text{f3} \) e5 20.\( \text{a5} \) \( \text{e6} \) 21.\( \text{xb7} \). White is already forced to fight for equality. 21...\( \text{b7} \) 22.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 28.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 29.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{e8} \) In the arising endgame with four rooks on the board, Black has some edge thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

After 11.\( \text{e2} \), Black should continue with 11...\( \text{c6}! \), without being afraid of the appearance of a weak pawn in his position. 12.\( \text{xc6} \) (12.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{d8} \) – see 11.\( \text{c2} \)) 12...\( \text{xc6} \) 13.0-0, Sriram – Sundararajan, Mumbai 2009, 13...\( \text{d7}! \) Black’s knight on f6 is severely restricted by White’s pawn on e4, so Black is transferring it to the b6-square. 14.f4 \( \text{b6} \) 15.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d8}!? \) 16.\( \text{fd1} \) c5 17.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{b7} \) The activity of Black’s pieces compensates the defects of his pawn-structure.

11...\( \text{c6} \) 12.\( \text{xb4} \)
About 12.0-0 \( \text{d8} \) 13.\( \text{xb4} \) (13.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{exe4} \) – see 11.\( \text{e2} \)) 13...\( \text{xb4} \) 14.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{e7} \) – see 12.\( \text{xb4} \).

Following 12.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{d8} \) 13.0-0, Black has a powerful tactical argument – 13...\( \text{exe4}! \) 14.\( \text{xb4} \) \( \text{d2} \) 15.\( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 16.\( \text{fd1} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 17.b4! (17.\( \text{xc4} \), Farago – Kozak, Budapest 2016, 17...\( \text{d7}!? \)) 17...\( \text{c7} \) 18.\( \text{xd8}+ \) \( \text{xd8} \) 19.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{d7} \) 20.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 21.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e8} \) His extra pawn compensates all White’s positional pluses.

12...\( \text{xb4} \)

He has the two-bishop advantage, but Black has a better development. In addition, White’s queenside has been weakened by the pawn-advance a2-a4.

13.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{d8} \) 14.0-0 \( \text{e7} \)
Black obtains a very good position too after 14...\( \text{d7}!? \). He is not afraid of the enemy knight-sorties and wishes to transfer his own knight to e5, or c5 as quickly as possible. 15.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 16.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{de5} \) 17.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 18.\( \text{e3} \) b6 19.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{b7} \) 20.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{ac8} \) 21.\( \text{a3} \) \( \text{xa3} \) 22.\( \text{xa3} \) \( \text{d4} \). The activity of Black’s pieces forces White to part with his two-bishop advantage. 23.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \)=
15.\textit{\textbf{e1}}

15.\textit{\textbf{e1}} b6 16.\textit{\textbf{c1}} \textit{\textbf{b7}}= Legemaat – Smith, ICCF 2013.

15.\textit{\textbf{c1}} b6 16.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{d5}}. White’s light-squared bishop cannot avoid the exchange, because of the vulnerability of the b3-square. 17.\textit{\textbf{b5}} \textit{\textbf{xc4}} 18.bxc4. Now, White must play accurately, because his queenside pawn-structure has been weakened. 18...\textit{\textbf{a6}} 19.\textit{\textbf{c3}} \textit{\textbf{b7}} 20.\textit{\textbf{e3}} \textit{\textbf{d7}} 21.\textit{\textbf{d1}} \textit{\textbf{h6}}= Holroyd – Reinhart, ICCF 2015.

Following 15.\textit{\textbf{c2}} b6 16.\textit{\textbf{fd1}} \textit{\textbf{b7}} 17.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{c5}}, Black’s queen becomes very active. 18.\textit{\textbf{h1}} \textit{\textbf{f2}} 19.\textit{\textbf{a2}} \textit{\textbf{e5}} 20.\textit{\textbf{f1}} \textit{\textbf{d3}} 21.\textit{\textbf{g5}} \textit{\textbf{c5}}. White has managed to neutralise the activity of Black’s pieces, but this leads to numerous exchanges and a very likely draw. 22.\textit{\textbf{xf6}} gxf6 23.\textit{\textbf{xd3}} \textit{\textbf{xc3}} 24.\textit{\textbf{c4}} \textit{\textbf{g7}} 25.\textit{\textbf{e2}} \textit{\textbf{e5}} 26.\textit{\textbf{g1}} f5 27.\textit{\textbf{xf5}} \textit{\textbf{xf5}} 28.\textit{\textbf{d4}} \textit{\textbf{xd4}} 29.\textit{\textbf{xd4+}} \textit{\textbf{f6}} 30.\textit{\textbf{d1}} \textit{\textbf{xd4+}} 31.\textit{\textbf{xd4}} \textit{\textbf{c6}}= Weber – Mendl, ICCF 2015.

15.\textit{\textbf{f3}}. White protects reliably his e4-pawn. 15...\textit{\textbf{d7}} 16.\textit{\textbf{e3}} \textit{\textbf{d5}} 17.\textit{\textbf{c2}} \textit{\textbf{xc4}} 18.bxc4 \textit{\textbf{d7}} 19.\textit{\textbf{b5}} (19.e5 a6 20.\textit{\textbf{ab1}} \textit{\textbf{e8}}= Benzoni – Noble, ICCF 2009) 19...\textit{\textbf{a6}}. Black ousts the enemy knight to the edge of the board. 20.\textit{\textbf{a3}} e5 21.\textit{\textbf{b6}} \textit{\textbf{de8}} 22.\textit{\textbf{fd1}} \textit{\textbf{d4}}. This pawn-sacrifice is Black’s simplest road to equality. If he plays passively, he may encounter difficulties after c4-c5, \textit{\textbf{a3}}-c4-d6. 23.\textit{\textbf{xd4}} \textit{\textbf{exd4}} 24.\textit{\textbf{xd4}} \textit{\textbf{d8}} 25.\textit{\textbf{ad1}} \textit{\textbf{e8}} 26.\textit{\textbf{xd8}} \textit{\textbf{exd8}} 27.\textit{\textbf{xd8}} \textit{\textbf{xd8}} 28.\textit{\textbf{b3}} \textit{\textbf{d4+}} 29.\textit{\textbf{f1}} \textit{\textbf{c6}}. White’s attempt to activate his knight leads to a perpetual check. 30.\textit{\textbf{c2}} \textit{\textbf{d1+}} 31.\textit{\textbf{f2}} \textit{\textbf{d2+}} 32.\textit{\textbf{g1}} \textit{\textbf{d1}}=

This position was reached in the game Nakamura – Giri, Saint Louis 2016. Here, Black had to continue with 15...\textit{\textbf{b6}}=, without being afraid of the move e4-e5. 16.\textit{\textbf{e1}} (The pawn-advance 16.e5= only helps Black to transfer his knight to c5. 16...\textit{\textbf{d7}} 17.\textit{\textbf{f4}} \textit{\textbf{c5=}}) 16...\textit{\textbf{e5}}=
This is the best for White! He occupies the centre, attacks the c4-pawn and creates the threat e4-e5 in the process.

6...b5
This is the essence of Black’s idea in the Botvinnik System. He protects the c4-pawn and plans to get rid of the pin of his knight with h7-h6, g7-g5, complying with the considerable weakening of his kingside.

7.e5
Refraining from this move would not end up well for White.

For example: 7.\textit{Be}2 h6 8.\textit{Bh}4 (8.\textit{Bxf}6 \textit{Bxf}6 9.0-0, Zherebukh – Sevian, Saint Louis 2017, 9...\textit{a}6?!?)
8...\textit{Bd}7 9.e5 \textit{Nf}5 10.\textit{Bxe}7, Pushkov – Yagupov, Orel 1999, 10...\textit{Bx}e7?!?, or 7.\textit{Qc}2 \textit{h}6 (The inclusion of this move is very useful for Black.) 8.\textit{Qc}2 \textit{bd}7 9.\textit{Be}2 \textit{b}7 10.0-0 \textit{Wb}6 11.\textit{Qad}1 \textit{b}4\textit{W} Dziuba – Dimakiling, Calvia 2006. White does not have compensation for the pawn in both lines.

7.a4. Black can easily parry the attack against his b5-pawn with the move 7...\textit{Wb}6.

8.\textit{Qc}2 \textit{bd}7 9.\textit{Be}2 a5 10.0-0 \textit{b}4 11.\textit{Qd}1 \textit{b}3 12.\textit{Wb}1 \textit{a}6\textit{W} W.Schmidt – Henley, Indonesia 1983.

8.\textit{xf}6. White weakens his opponent’s kingside pawn-structure, but presents him with the two-bishop advantage. 8...\textit{gxf}6 9.\textit{Be}2 (9.\textit{g}3. It seems too slow for White to fianchetto his bishop in this position. In addition, it weakens the f1-a6 diagonal and Black’s bishop will be placed there very soon. 9...\textit{Qd}7
10.\textit{Qg}2 \textit{b}4 11.\textit{Be}2 \textit{a}6\textit{W} Groenhout – Gray, ICCF 2016.) 9...\textit{b}7 10.0-0 \textit{a}6 11.d5 (Following 11.b3 \textit{Qa}5...
12.\texttt{c1} b4 13.\texttt{d1} c3+, Black obtains a protected passed pawn, Halkias – Bruno, Bad Wiessee 2007). White leads in development and wishes to open the position. On the other hand, Black has the two-bishop advantage and the opening of the game may turn out to be in his favour. 11...\texttt{d7}. He is not afraid of the weakening of the h5-e8 diagonal. 12.dxe6 (12.b3 cxd5 13.exd5 b4 14.a5 \texttt{d6} 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.\texttt{a4} c3+ Gyimesi – C.Horvath, Budapest 2004; 12.\texttt{d4}, Cramling – Piket, Spijkenisse 1978, 12...\texttt{e5+}) 12...fxe6 13.\texttt{d4} c5 14.\texttt{h5+}. Black is not afraid of the loss of his castling rights, because White’s pieces are incapable of organising an effective attack against Black’s king. 14...\texttt{d8} 15.\texttt{xe6+}. White’s attacking prospects are just minimal, so he cannot afford to sacrifice a piece. (15.\texttt{c2} b4 16.\texttt{e2} \texttt{c7}+ Naumkin – Korneev, Assisi 2003.

8.\texttt{e3}!? This is the only way for White to obtain a good position after 7.a4. 8...\texttt{b4}. Black wishes to oust the enemy knight, but weakens the pawn on c4. 9.a5. White frees a square for his knight. 9...\texttt{d8} 10.\texttt{a4} \texttt{a6} 11.\texttt{g5} b3 12.\texttt{c3} h6 13.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 14.\texttt{e5} c5 15.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xc4} 16.\texttt{xc4} cxd4 17.\texttt{b5} \texttt{b4+} 18.\texttt{f1} \texttt{e7} 19.\texttt{xd4} 0-0 20.\texttt{e2} \texttt{d8} 21.\texttt{xb3}. White has already an extra pawn, but has lost his castling rights. 21...\texttt{b7} 22.\texttt{g3}. He prepares an artificial castling. 22...\texttt{e7} 23.\texttt{cd2} \texttt{c6} 24.\texttt{g2} \texttt{d4} 25.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 26.\texttt{he1} a6 27.b3 \texttt{ad8} 28.\texttt{f3} \texttt{b4}. Black’s pieces exert powerful pressure and White cannot hold on to his extra material. 29.\texttt{ab1} \texttt{e8} 30.\texttt{d2} \texttt{g5} 31.\texttt{ed1} \texttt{d4} 32.\texttt{c4} \texttt{xd1} 33.\texttt{xd1} \texttt{xb3=} Dhanish – Cruzado Duenas, ICCF 2012.

\textbf{7...h6 8.\texttt{h4} g5}

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\begin{figure}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
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We will analyse the move 9.\texttt{xg5} in the following chapters, while now we will deal with \textbf{A) 9.exf6} and \textbf{B) 9.\texttt{g3}}.

\textbf{A) 9.exf6}

The exchange of White’s powerful bishop for the enemy knight is just horrible for him.

9...\texttt{gxh4} 10.\texttt{e5}

White wishes to play g3 and \texttt{g2}, in order to exert pressure against Black’s queenside. About 10.a4 a6 11.\texttt{e5} \texttt{xf6} – see 10.\texttt{e5}.

\textbf{10...\texttt{xf6}}

Black has already two extra pawns.
11.g3
Following 11...e2?!, Black can give up one of his extra pawns in order to develop quickly his queenside.
11...d7! 12.xc6 b7 13.f3 a6 14.0-0 c8 15.e5 xf3 16.xf3, Csizsar – K.Szabo, Zalakaros 2009, 16...h3!? 17.g3 e7

11.a4 a6 12.e2 (Unfortunately for White, he cannot regain his pawn by exploiting the pin on the a-file.
12.axb5 cxb5 13.xb5?? axb5! 14.xa8 b4+ 15.e2 d6 16.g4 g7+- Muradli – Sanzhaev, Moscow 2016.)
12...d7! 13.axb5 (13.xc6? b4 14.e4 f5 15.f3 d7 16.d2 c8+- Clarkson – Manarin, ICCF 2013) 13...cxb5 14.xb5. White has managed to regain one of his pawns, but after
14...b4+, Black brings his bishop into the actions with tempo. 15.c3! This is the right move! (After
15.f1 0-0 16.c7 a7, White’s knight is obviously lost inside the enemy camp. 17.xa6, Marzolo – Ribli, Germany 2011, 17...a7!–+) 15.xc3+ 16.bxc3 xexe5 17.dxe5 xe5+ Baumgartner – Kloster, ICCF 2010. Now, even if White manages to regain his c4-pawn, Black will remain with an extra pawn anyway.

11...d7

12.e2
White preserves his control over the e5-square.
12.xc6?! b7 13.g2 c8 14.d5, Mozharov – Fluvia Poyatos, Platja d’Aro 2016, 14...exd5!? 15.e2+ e6+

12.f4?! White fortifies his knight, but weakens his g3-pawn. 12...b7 13.g2, Portisch – Ribli, Warsaw 1979, 13...g8!++

12...b7 13.g2
13.\textit{N}xd7 \textit{N}xd7 14.\textit{Bg}2 \textit{c}7\textit{+} Cheng – Izzat, Adelaide 2016.

\textbf{13...Nxe5 14.dxe5 \textit{Q}g5} 

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\textbf{15.\textit{R}d1}  
After 15.a4 a6 16.\textit{f}4, White sends the enemy queen to the queenside, but it will be very well placed there, defending the bishop on b7 and exerting pressure on the g1-a7 diagonal. 16..\textit{Q}d8 17.\textit{R}d1 (17.\textit{Q}e3 \textit{b}4\textit{+}) 17...\textit{Q}b6\textit{+} Arregui – Razzeto, ICCF 2014.

15.f4 \textit{Q}d8 16.\textit{N}xb5, Braun – O’Donnell, Crawley 2016, 16...\textit{Q}b6?! This is Black’s simplest move. After 17.\textit{N}d6+ \textit{B}xd6 18.exd6 \textit{Q}b4+ 19.\textit{Q}d2 \textit{Q}xd2+ 20.\textit{R}xd2 0-0-0\textit{+}, the position is simplified and Black has excellent chances of realising his extra material in this endgame.

\textbf{15...hxg3 16.hxg3 \textit{R}d8 17.0-0.} White’s bishop exerts powerful pressure on the h1-a8 diagonal. Black has however a very strong positional exchange-sacrifice: 17...\textit{R}d5\textit{!+} 18.\textit{R}fe1 \textit{Q}e7 19.\textit{N}xd5 \textit{exd5}\textit{+} He has two pawns for the exchange and what is even more important – his c6-pawn is already on the d5-square.

\textbf{B) 9.\textit{g}3} 

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This is an interesting move. White avoids the competition with his opponent – who knows the theoretical variations better, since some of them end up deep into the endgame. He wishes to focus on the complicated middle game in which he has some compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

\textbf{9...\textit{Q}d5 10.\textit{d}2}  
White is preparing \textit{de}4.

10.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}4 11.\textit{c}1 \textit{a}5. The pressure of Black’s pieces on the e1–a5 diagonal is very powerful. 12.\textit{Q}d2 \textit{d}7 13.0-0 \textit{b}7 14.\textit{d}1. White defends against \textit{a}4, Kierzek – Meyer, Hessen 2000. Still, after
14...g4 15...h4, Black can exploit the defencelessness of the enemy queen and simply capture on a2. 15...xa2

10.h4. White attacks immediately his opponent’s weakened kingside. Still, after 10...a5 11.c1 b4, Black’s queenside counterplay seems much more dangerous. 12.hxg5 xc3 13.bxc3 xc3+ 14.d2, Dubov – Shirov, Moscow 2013, 14...a6!? 15.xh6 g8

10...b7

11.e2

11.de4 d7 12.h4 (12.e2 b6 – see 11.e2) 12...xc3 – see 11.h4.

11.a4, Lobron – Slingerland, Amsterdam 1996, 11...e7!? The move 11.h4!? leads to a very interesting game. 11...d7

12.de4 xc3 13.xc3 a5. Black is perfectly prepared to castle queenside and to follow this with c6-c5. The juxtaposition of his rook with the enemy queen will be then obviously in his favour. 14.e2, Thorhallsson – Thompson, Reykjavik 2010, 14...0-0-0!? 15.xg5 c5

12.xg5 xg5 13.de4 g6 14.h4 0-0-0 15.e2 c5. Black’s position is a bit cramped, so the exchange of pieces would be in his favour. 16.h5 (It is less precise for White to play here 16.xc5 xc5 17.xd5 xd5 18.e3 d7 19.g4 b4+ 20.f1 d3+ 21.xd3 cxd3 22.xd1 h5 23.h4 a5 24.xh5 xh5 25.xh5 f5. Black is preparing h7. 26.xd3 h7 27.a3 xxa3 28.bxa3 xh5 Konstantinov – Lykke, ICCF 2015. In the arising endgame, despite the presence of bishops of opposite colours on the board, White must still find numerous accurate moves in order to make a draw.) 16...h7 17.xc5. This is an interesting queen-sacrifice. 17...xc3 18.xd8+ xd8 19.bxc3 e7 20.0-0+ c8 21.d6+ c7 22 xd4. White has sufficient compensation for the sacrificed material. There might
follow: 22...\textit{d}8 23.\textit{b}2 \textit{c}8 24.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}8 25.\textit{f}6! This is an exchange-sacrifice, which should not be accepted by Black, because then White’s bishop on g3 will join into the attack with a decisive effect. 25...\textit{g}8 26.\textit{f}3 a5 27.\textit{x}h6. White has regained the pawn on h6, but it is inconceivable how he can improve his position later. 27...\textit{a}6 28.\textit{d}4 \textit{g}5 29.\textit{h}1 \textit{g}6 30.\textit{e}4 \textit{g}7 31.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}6= Turgut – Cruzado Duecas, ICCF 2015.

11...\textit{b}6

12.\textit{d}e4

It is worse for White to play here 12.\textit{h}4, because of 12...\textit{d}7!? Black is reluctant to lose time for the protection of his pawns on g5 and h6. 13.\textit{x}g5 0-0-0 14.\textit{x}h6 \textit{c}5. White’s centre is about to crumble. 15.\textit{x}d5 \textit{xd}5 16.\textit{h}7 \textit{xd}4. White has a far-advanced passed h-pawn indeed, but his position is difficult, because Black obviously dominates in the centre. 17.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}5 18.\textit{xd}5 \textit{exd}5 19.\textit{g}4+ (19.\textit{h}5 \textit{d}7 20.\textit{f}1 \textit{d}3= Boldysh – Secchi, ICCF 2015) 19...\textit{e}6 20.\textit{xd}4. Winning the d4-pawn is small consolation for White, because after 20...\textit{g}6 21.\textit{h}4, Black can free the seventh rank for his rook: 21...\textit{f}5 22.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}3+ 23.\textit{f}1 \textit{d}7. White is incapable of holding on to his h7-pawn. 24.\textit{f}6 \textit{xf}6 25.\textit{ex}f6 \textit{dxh}7 26.\textit{xh}7 \textit{xh}7= Coyne – Rawlings, ICCF 2015.

12...\textit{d}7

13.0-0

It seems less logical for White to opt here for 13.a4, because Black has pawn-majority on the queenside and he is supposed to play there. 13...\textit{a}5 14.0-0 (14.\textit{xb}5 \textit{xb}5 15.0-0 \textit{xc}3 16.\textit{xc}3, Swayams – Potkin, Moscow 2016, 16.\textit{b}4+) 14...\textit{b}4 15.\textit{b}1 (15.\textit{a}2. White’s knight will be misplaced on this square and he will have problems to bring it into the actions from there. 15...0-0-0 16.\textit{d}2 (16.\textit{xc}4 \textit{f}4+ Nakamura – Gustafsson, Austria 2009) 16...\textit{xd}4 17.\textit{xc}4 \textit{f}4! 18.\textit{e}1 \textit{xd}1 19.\textit{xd}1 \textit{c}5.
20.\textit{xf}4 \textit{gxf}4 21.\textit{xa}5 \textit{d}5\text{=} Johansson – Efremov, ICCF 2012) 15...\textit{a}6 (Black can obtain an edge too with the move 15...0-0?!?, but after 16.\textit{bd}2 \textit{xd}4 17.\textit{c}2 \textit{c}3 18.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}6 19.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3 20.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3 21.\textit{xc}3 \textit{b}4 22.\textit{e}3 \textit{xe}3 23.\textit{xe}3 \textit{hf}8 24.\textit{ac}1 \textit{b}8\text{=}+. White managed to draw, despite being a pawn down in the endgame, Rawlings – Boldysh, ICCF 2016.) 16.\textit{e}1 (16.\textit{d}2, Lemos – Fabian, Buenos Aires 2011, 16...c5!?\text{=}+ 16...\textit{e}7 17.\textit{d}6\text{=}+ \textit{xd}6 18.\textit{xd}6. Naturally, White’s d6-pawn is powerful, but still insufficient to compensate his material deficit. 18...0-0 19.\textit{f}3 (19.\textit{h}5 \textit{g}7 20.h4 \textit{g}8\text{=}+ Martynov – Roze, ICCF 2013) 19...\textit{g}7 20.h4 \textit{h}8 21.\textit{d}2 \textit{ag}8 22.hxg5 \textit{f}8 23.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5. White’s hopes are based on the passive position of the enemy bishop on a6. 24.gxh6 \textit{g}6 25.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}8 26.g3 \textit{f}6\text{=}+, preparing \textit{g}4, regaining the pawn on h6, Schafer – Jensen, ICCF 2015. White’s queenside pieces are still not developed.

13...c5
Black wishes to activate his bishop on b7 as quickly as possible. It was restricted until now by his own pawn on c6.

14.\textit{xd}5
The move 14.dxc5 only enhances the development of Black’s pieces. 14...\textit{xc}5 15.a4 \textit{xc}3 16.\textit{xc}3 \textit{a}6\text{=}+ Lajthajm – Aleksandrov, Budva 2003.

14...\textit{xd}5 15.\textit{c}3
White sacrifices his d4-pawn and wishes to exchange the powerful enemy bishop on d5 and to remove the blockade against his pawn on e5.

15...\textit{xd}4 16.\textit{xd}5 \textit{exd}5 17.\textit{h}5 \textit{e}7

18.a4
White opens a second front and wishes to complicate his opponent’s defence. At first, he wishes to deflect the enemy queen from the protection of his kingside.

18.e6. This pawn-sacrifice is premature at the moment: 18...\textit{xe}6 19.\textit{e}1 \textit{f}6\text{=}+. Babula – Ragger, Austria 2014.

18...0-0 19.axb5 \textit{a}5. Black defends against \textit{a}6. 20.f4 \textit{d}3\text{=}+ 21.\textit{h}1 \textit{f}5 22.e6 \textit{xe}6 23.\textit{e}1 \textit{d}6 24.\textit{fx}5 \textit{f}4 25.gxh6 \textit{f}6 26.\textit{f}2 \textit{h}7\text{=}∞ Lins – Stockert, ICCF 2016.
Chapter 21

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. f3 f6 4. c3 e6 5. g5 dxc4 6. e4 b5 7. e5 h6 8. h4 g5 9. xg5 h xg5 10. xg5 b7

![Chess board image]

11. exf6

11. f3 b7 12. exf6 b6, or 11. g3 b7 12. exf6 b6, or 12. g2 b6 13. exf6 0-0-0 – see 11. exf6.

11... b7 12. g3

With the fianchetto of his light-squared bishop White solves several problems. At first, his bishop will be very active on g2, impeding Black’s pawn-advance c6-c5. Secondly, the move g2-g3 fortifies White’s kingside and neutralises Black’s possible attacks on the g-file as well as on the h2-b8 diagonal.

12. f3. White used to play this move at the dawn of the development of the theory of the Botvinnik System. 12. b6. Black prepares castling queenside and attacks the d4-pawn. 13. e3 0-0-0 14. 0-0-0 a5 15. b1 b6 16. h4 b4 17. e4 c5= Zhivtsov – Botvinnik, Moscow 1943. The position is approximately equal indeed, but Black’s play is much simpler, because White’s king shelter is not reliable. There followed 18. f3?! c3! 19. e2 d5 20. a3. Here, the easiest win for Black would be the move – 20... b3+

12. e2. White’s bishop is not so active here as on g2. 12... b6

![Chess board image]

13. f3. This move seems stronger than 13. 0-0. White wishes to play e2 and 0-0-0, evacuating his king to the queenside. 13... 0-0-0 14. e2!? White gives back his extra pawn in the fight for the initiative. (14. 0-0 h6 – see 13. 0-0) 14... xd4 15. d1 e5 16. h4 d6 17. e4 c7 18. g3 c5 19. f4 f5 20. d6+, draw, Batrakov – Efremov, ICCF 2015, because after 20... xd6 21. xb7+ xb7 22. f3+ a6
23.\texttt{a3=} , Black’s king cannot run away from the perpetual check.

13.0-0 0-0-0 14.a4 (The move 14.h4 only weakens the shelter of White’s king. 14...\texttt{h6}† Ragozin – Botvinnik, Moscow 1941; after 14.b3, Spassky – Heyken, Germany 1987, Black can reply with the energetic strike in the centre – 14...c5!?; but White has the possibility 14.\texttt{f3} \texttt{h6} 15.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{xf6} 16.\texttt{e2} \texttt{xe3} 17.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{c7} 18.\texttt{g3} \texttt{h6}∞ Cebalo – Fercec, Rijeka 2007) 14...b4 15.\texttt{Ne4} \texttt{c5=} White’s position crumbles. 16.\texttt{b1} \texttt{e7} 17.\texttt{g3} \texttt{cxd4}–+

This position was reached in the famous game Denker – Botvinnik, radio match 1945. Black has a powerful pawn-centre and an attack. 18.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{c6} 19.\texttt{f3}. White frees the g1-a7 diagonal. 19...d3 20.\texttt{c1} \texttt{c5}+ 21.\texttt{h1} \texttt{d6} 22.\texttt{f4}. Now, Black forces a win with a beautiful rook-sacrifice. 22...\texttt{exh2}+!

12.\texttt{h4}. This move seems illogical, because White advances his rook-pawn when his king has not castled yet. Still, the move has venom... 12...\texttt{xf6}!? This is Black’s only move. (After the straightforward response 12...\texttt{b6}, White has a very interesting pawn-sacrifice: 13.\texttt{c2}!? \texttt{xd4} 14.\texttt{d1} \texttt{e5}+ 15.\texttt{e2} \texttt{c7} 16.\texttt{g3}† Walters – Rodriguez, ICCF 2016.) 13.\texttt{f3}. White increases his pressure against the enemy knight on f6. 13...\texttt{e7}

Capturing the pawn 14.\texttt{xb5} leads to the simplification of the position. 14...\texttt{b6} 15.\texttt{c7}+ \texttt{xc7} 16.\texttt{xf6} c5= Nikolic – Ivanchuk, Monte Carlo 1997.

Following 14.\texttt{e2} \texttt{d5} 15.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe7} 16.\texttt{xd5}, the simplest for Black would be to capture the enemy e-pawn, so that he can activate later his bishop via the c8-square. 16...\texttt{exd5} 17.\texttt{f4} \texttt{f8}. Black is preparing \texttt{e8}. 18.\texttt{f1} \texttt{e8} 19.\texttt{f3} \texttt{g7=} Voll – Serban, ICCF 2012. He wishes to continue either with \texttt{f6}, or with \texttt{h6}.
14.0-0-0 \(\text{c}5\) 15.\text{xe}7 \text{xe}7 16.\text{e}4 (After 16.g3, Black advances 16...\text{c}5 and equalises effortlessly. 17.dxc5 \text{xc}5 18.\text{e}2 \text{b}4 19.\text{e}4 \text{c}7 20.\text{f}6+ \text{f}8= Black’s king is placed unreliably, but its white counterpart might come under an attack after c4-c3.) 16...0-0-0

17.g3 \text{b}4 18.\text{c}5. White sacrifices his a2-pawn for the initiative. 18...\text{a}2+ 19.\text{b}1 \text{b}4. Black has an extra pawn, but his bishop on b7 is “bad”. 20.\text{g}2 \text{c}7 21.h5. The advance of White’s h-pawn seems very dangerous for Black, but he manages to cope with the brave enemy pawn. (21.g4 \text{d}5 22.\text{a}3 \text{b}8 23.h5 \text{f}4 24.\text{xd}5 \text{xd}5 25.\text{f}3 \text{a}8 26.\text{h}6 \text{c}8 27.\text{e}4 \text{e}5=, Black succeeded in activating his light-squared bishop.) 21...\text{b}8 22.h6 \text{c}8 23.\text{a}3 \text{d}5 24.\text{de}1 \text{e}7. He prepares the transfer of his knight to the f5-square in order to increase the pressure against the enemy d4-pawn. 25.\text{f}3 \text{f}5 26.h7 \text{f}6. Black is threatening to capture on h7 and after 27.\text{xc}6, there arises a transfer to an approximately equal endgame. 27...\text{xc}6 28.\text{xc}6 \text{xd}4 29.\text{g}2 \text{c}7 30.\text{h}6 \text{f}5= Taner – Noble, ICCF 2012. White’s powerful passed pawn compensates his material deficit, but not more than that.

17.h5 \text{e}5. This pawn-sacrifice is Black’s simplest way of equalising. 18.\text{f}5+ (White cannot obtain an advantage even if refrains from capturing material. 18.\text{e}2 \text{c}7 19.dxe5 \text{xe}5 20.\text{d}2 \text{c}8. Black is preparing \text{f}5. 21.\text{h}4 \text{f}5. He finally solves the problem with his “bad” bishop. 22.\text{c}3 \text{d}3 23.\text{xd}5+ \text{xd}5=) 18...\text{c}7 19.\text{xe}5+ \text{xe}5 20.\text{d}xe5 \text{de}8 21.\text{d}6 \text{xe}5 22.\text{xb}7 \text{xb}7. Black has managed to restore the material balance and his powerful knight in the centre cements his position. 23.h6 \text{c}7 24.a4 a6 25.\text{d}4 \text{f}5 26.axb5 axb5= Sanchez Ortega – Filho, ICCF 2014.

12...\text{b}6 13.\text{g}2 0-0-0
14.0-0
White plays sometimes here 14.\(^{\text{g4}}\) c5 15.\(^{\text{xb7}}\) + \(^{\text{xb7}}\) 16.\(^{\text{d1}}\) (Following 16.\(^{\text{e4}}\) + \(^{\text{c6}}\) 17.0-0-0 cxd4 18.\(^{\text{xd4}}\) \(c5\) 19.\(^{\text{ed1}}\) \(^{\text{xf2}}\) 20.\(^{\text{xb5}}\) \(^{\text{c5}}\) 21.\(^{\text{xc6}}\) + \(^{\text{xc6}}\), there arises a complicated endgame on the board. After 22.\(^{\text{xd8}}\) \(^{\text{xd8}}\) 23.\(^{\text{a3}}\) \(^{\text{d3}}\) + 24.\(^{\text{b1}}\) \(^{\text{d5}}\), the activity of Black’s pieces compensates his minimal material deficit, Trani – De Sa Nobrega, IECG 2002.) 16...\(^{\text{c6}}\) 17.0-0 cxd4 18.\(^{\text{xd4}}\) \(^{\text{b4}}\) 19.h4 \(^{\text{c5}}\). Black prepares a transfer of his knight to the outpost on d3, which is quite typical for the Botvinnik system. 20.\(^{\text{e5}}\) \(^{\text{xc3}}\) 21.bxc3 \(^{\text{d3}}\) 22.\(^{\text{e2}}\) a5= Paredes – Sadowski, ICCF 2014.

14...c5 15.d5
15.dxc5. White would not achieve much exchanging pawns in the centre. 15...\(^{\text{xc5}}\) 16.\(^{\text{e2}}\) (16.\(^{\text{xb7}}\) + \(^{\text{xb7}}\) = Nyzhnyk – Sevian, Rockville 2014) 16...\(^{\text{xg2}}\) 17.\(^{\text{xg2}}\) + h6. Black wishes to exchange the bishop and to capture the pawn on f6. 18.h4 (18.\(^{\text{hxh6}}\) \(^{\text{hxh6}}\) 19.\(^{\text{ad1}}\) \(^{\text{xd1}}\) 20.\(^{\text{xd1}}\) \(^{\text{xf6}}\) 21.b3 \(^{\text{c6}}\) + 22.f3 \(^{\text{d3}}\) 23.bxc4 bxc4 24.\(^{\text{f2}}\) \(^{\text{xf2}}\) 25.\(^{\text{xf2}}\) \(^{\text{f5}}\) 26.\(^{\text{c1}}\) \(^{\text{c5}}\) = Acevedo Villalba – Bokar, ICCF 2013. Black’s powerful passed c4-pawn compensates the unreliable shelter of his king.) 18.\(^{\text{xg5}}\) 19.hxg5, Timman – Tal, Hilversum 1988. White has protected reliably his f6-pawn, but has weakened his king, moreover that the pawn on g5 would also need protection. 19...\(^{\text{hg8}}\) 20.\(^{\text{e3}}\) (The move 20.f4?! weakens seriously White’s king 20...\(^{\text{d3}}\) =) 20...\(^{\text{d3}}\) 21.\(^{\text{f4}}\) \(^{\text{c6}}\) + 22.f3 e5 23.\(^{\text{f5}}\) + \(^{\text{d7}}\) 24.\(^{\text{xd7}}\) + \(^{\text{xd7}}\) 25.\(^{\text{ad1}}\) \(^{\text{g5}}\). After the fall of the pawn on g5, White will fail to hold on to his f6-pawn as well. 26.\(^{\text{xb5}}\) \(^{\text{e6}}\) 27.\(^{\text{xd3}}\) \(^{\text{d3}}\) =

15...b4

16.\(^{\text{b1}}\)
Black has attacked the enemy knight with his last move, but White does not plan to retreat it.

White’s main line 16.\(^{\text{a4}}\) will be analysed in the next chapter.
16.\(\text{Ne2}\) exd5 17.\(\text{Nf4}\) d4 18.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{N}\text{xd5}\) 19.\(\text{N}\text{xd5}\), \(\text{L’Ami – Seps, Budva 2003, 19...h6?}\)

16.dxe6 \(\text{N}\text{xe6}\) 17.e7 \(\text{N}\text{xf1}\) 18.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{We6}\) 19.\(\text{Nf4}\), \(\text{De Wolf – Van der Veen, Dieren 1982, 19...e4?}\)

20.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{xe7}\) 21.\(\text{fxe7}\) \(\text{dg8}\) 22.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{xe1}\). Black has a huge material advantage, but his king cannot run away from the perpetual check. 23.\(\text{c6}\) + \(\text{b8}\) 24.\(\text{d6}\) + \(\text{c8}\)=

16...\(\text{W}\text{a6}\)

Black should better not accept this gift, because after 16...\(\text{bxc3}\)? 17.\(\text{bxc3}\), the opening of the b-file would be deadly for his king 17...\(\text{a6}\) 18.\(\text{xb7}\)! \(\text{xb7}\) 19.dxe6 \(\text{b6}\) 20.e7+– Gajdos – Svizensky, Senica 2015.

17.dxe6

17.\(\text{W}\text{e2}\)?! \(\text{bxc3}\) 18.dxe6 \(\text{Wxe6}\) 19.\(\text{Wxe6}\) \(\text{fxe6}\) 20.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{W}\text{xe2}\) 21.\(\text{W}\text{xe2}\) \(\text{d6}\)+ Iriarte Gomez – Figlio, ICCF 2006. White’s two pawns do not compensate fully his missing piece.

17...\(\text{W}\text{xe2}\) 18.e7

White’s alternatives are obviously worse.

18.\(\text{W}\text{xe2}\)?! \(\text{Wxe6}\)+

18.\(\text{W}\text{e1}\)?! \(\text{bxc3}\) 19.e7 \(\text{a8}\) 20.\(\text{exd8}\)+ \(\text{W}\text{xd8}\) 21.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{d6}\) 22.\(\text{W}\text{e3}\) \(\text{c7}\)+, followed by \(\text{W}\text{c6}\) and \(\text{W}\text{e5}\), Volek – Sykora, ICCF 2009. In this middle game Black’s two minor pieces will be stronger than White’s rook and two pawns.

18...\(\text{W}\text{xf1}\)

19.\(\text{W}\text{xf1}\)

It is premature for White to choose here 19.\(\text{exd8}\)+? \(\text{W}\text{xd8}\) 20.\(\text{W}\text{xf1}\) \(\text{bxc3}\) 21.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{d6}\) 22.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{c7}\) 23.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{c6}\) 24.\(\text{xf7}\) \(\text{e4}\)+ Galanov – Tinture, ICCF 2015.
After 19.\(\text{Q}d5\), the simplest for Black would be to choose 19...\(\text{Q}xe7!\) 20.\(\text{fxe7}\) and here 20...\(\text{d}3!\) 21.\(\text{Q}e4\) (21.\(\text{exd8}\)\(=\text{Q}+\) \(\text{Exd8}\) 22.\(\text{Q}e4\) \(\text{Qxb1}\) – see 21.\(\text{Q}e4\) 21...\(\text{Qxb1}\). White’s attacking prospects seem quite real, but Black’s material advantage is too big... 22.\(\text{Q}d6+\) (22.\(\text{exd8}\)\(=\text{Q}+\) \(\text{Exd8}\) 23.\(\text{Q}d6+\) \(\text{Q}c7\) – see 22.\(\text{Q}d6\) 22...\(\text{Q}e7\)

\[\text{Diagram 1}\]

23.\(\text{Q}d8=\text{Q}+\) \(\text{Exd8}\) 24.\(\text{Q}f4\) \(\text{Q}b6\) – see 23.\(\text{Q}f4\).

White’s attempt to avoid the draw would lead to a lost position for him: 23.\(\text{Q}xf7?\) \(\text{Qe8}\) 24.\(\text{Q}f4+\) \(\text{Q}b6\) 25.\(\text{Q}xd7\) \(\text{Q}b7\) 26.\(\text{Q}e6+\) \(\text{Q}c6=\) Vovk – Kulaots, Fagernes 2015, or 23.\(\text{Q}xc4?\) \(\text{Q}f6=\) 24.\(\text{Q}f4+\) \(\text{Q}e5\) 25.\(\text{Q}xc5+\) \(\text{Q}b8\) 0–1 Mcshedlishvili – Dvimyy, Porto San Giorgio 2013.

23.\(\text{Q}f4\) \(\text{Q}b6\) 24.\(\text{Q}xc4+\) (24.\(\text{Q}d8=\text{Q}+\) \(\text{Exd8}\) 25.\(\text{Q}xc4+\) \(\text{Q}b5\) 26.\(\text{Q}d6+\) \(\text{Q}b6=\) ) 24...\(\text{Q}b5\) 25.\(\text{Q}d6+\) \(\text{Q}b6\)

\[\text{Diagram 2}\]

26.\(a4\). White continues to rekindle his ebbing off attack. (26.\(\text{Q}c4+\) \(\text{Q}b5=\); 26.\(\text{Q}d8=\text{Q}+\) \(\text{Exd8}\) 27.\(\text{Q}c4+\) \(\text{Q}b5=\) ) 26...\(\text{bxa3}\) 27.\(\text{Q}b3+\) (Following 27.\(\text{Q}c4+\) \(\text{Q}xc4\) 28.\(\text{Q}xc4\) \(\text{a}2\), Black’s far-advanced passed pawn guarantees him against any difficulties. 29.\(\text{Q}d8=\text{Q}+\) \(\text{Exd8}\) 30.\(\text{Q}b3+\) \(\text{Q}c6\) 31.\(\text{Q}f3+\) \(\text{Q}b6\) 32.\(\text{Q}a3\) \(\text{Q}e5\) 33.\(\text{Q}b3+\) \(\text{Q}a6\) 34.\(\text{Q}a4+\) \(\text{Q}b6=\) Here, White must comply with the draw, because after 35.\(\text{Q}xe5?\) \(\text{a}1=\text{Q}\) 36.\(\text{Q}xa1\) \(\text{Q}d1+\) 37.\(\text{Q}g2\) \(\text{Q}e4+\) 38.\(\text{Q}f3\) \(\text{Q}xf3+\) 39.\(\text{Q}xf3\) \(\text{Q}xa1–\) , the endgame would be hopeless for him, Mikhalevski – Karim, Gibraltar 2008.) 27...\(\text{Q}c6\) 28.\(\text{Q}xf7\) (28.\(\text{Q}f3+\) \(\text{Q}b6\) 29.\(\text{Q}b3+\) \(\text{Q}c6=\) ) 28...\(\text{Q}b8\) 29.\(\text{Q}xb8\) \(\text{Q}xb8\) 30.\(\text{Q}e6+\) \(\text{Q}b5\) 31.\(\text{Q}xd7+\) \(\text{Q}c4\) 32.\(\text{Q}e5+\) \(\text{Q}b3\)
Black has evacuated his king to a relatively safe place. 33.bxa3 ♕e2. He begins a counter attack. The idea is to give a perpetual check. 34.e8=♕ ♕xe8 35.♕xe8 ♕e4 36.♕f7+ c4 37.♕xc4+. The transfer to an endgame with four pawns against a bishop and a pawn is White’s last attempt to play for a win. It is still insufficient, though... 37...♕xc4 38.♖xc4 ♖xc4 39.f4 a5 40.g4 a4 41.f5 ♖d4 42.♕f2 ♕e5 43.♕g3 ♕c2 44.♕h4 ♕f6 45.♕g3 ♕e5 46.h3 ♕d3 47.h4. Now, Black can enter a king and pawn ending thanks to his far-advanced a-pawn. 47...♕xf5 48.gxf5 ♕xh5= 49.♕f3 ♕g6 50.♕e4 ♕h5 51.♕d4 ♕xh4 52.♕c4 ♕g5 53.♕b5 ♕f6 54.♕xa4 ♕e7 55.♕b5 ♕d7 56.♕b6 ♕c8. Black’s king has succeeded just in time, draw, Andreikin – I.Popov, Dagomys 2010.

Let us go back to 19.♕xf1.

19...♕xe7 20.fxe7 ♕d8 21.♕e4 c3+ 22.♕g1 ♕xg5 23.♕xg5 ♕g6
This is the essence of Black’s defensive idea. Now, he is threatening not only to capture on g5, but also c3-c2.
24.bxc3
After 24.c1 e2 25.e1 e8, Black manages to annihilate his opponent’s dangerous passed pawn.
26.e3 f6 27.e1 xe7 28.d2 xb2 29.xc2 e5 30.c1 b7 31.f3 f5 32.g2 b6∞
Gilimshin – Ohtake, Czech Republic 2003. There has arisen a complicated position in which Black’s
prospects are not worse thanks to the plan, connected with the advance of his queenside pawns (a7-a5,
c5-c4).

24.Qf1. White sacrifices a piece and begins an attack against the enemy king. 24...Qxg5 25.a6+
26.xa7+ Kc8 27.a6+ c7 28.bxc3 xe7 29.a7+ c8 30.a8+ b8 31.cx4 wb7. Black’s idea is
to exchange the queens after which the vulnerability of his king would be irrelevant. 32.a4 c6
33.c2 cx4 34.a3 Hh6 35.axb4 wb5 36.db2 Hf6∞

24...Qxg5 25.e2 e5 26.a6+ b8

27.b5+
White does not obtain an advantage after 27.cx4 xb4 28.a3 d6 29 xb4+ xb4 30 xb4+ c7
31.f4 f6 32.e4 xe8. Black can defend successfully this endgame. 33.e6 f5 34.f1 (34.g2 f4 35.g4
c5 36.e6 d3. It is essential for Black to preserve his f4-pawn. 37.a6 e1+ 38.f1 f3 39.h3 xe7
40.xa7+ d6 41.xe7 xe7. White has an outside passed pawn indeed, but he cannot win this
position. For example: 42.a4 d6 43.g5 xg5 44.g2 c5 45.h4 e6= Hefka – Serban, ICCF 2012; or
34.h4 f4 35.g4 c5 36.e6 d3= Milanollo – Kleiser, ICCF 2014.) 34...f4 35.g4 c5 36.e6 xe7
37.xf4 e4 38.e4 xe4= Once again, Black’s knight copes successfully with White’s three pawns.
39.h4 (Following 39.a3, Magat – Woodard, ICCF 2016, 39...d2+ 40.e2 b1=, White cannot save his
a-pawn.) 39...d6 40.f4 f6 41.g5 h5 42.f5 g3+ 43.g2 xf5 44.h5 e7=

27...c7
28.cxb4

After 28.\textcolor{blue}{Q}a5+ \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}7} 29.cxb4 (29.\textcolor{blue}{Q}d8 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}6} 30.cxb4 c4 – see 29.cxb4) 29...c4, Black’s powerful passed c-pawn provides him with good prospects. 30.\textcolor{blue}{Q}d8 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}6}.

31.\textcolor{red}{Q}f8 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{c}8} 32.\textcolor{red}{Q}xf7 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xe}7}=

31.h4 f5 32.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}1} c3 33.b5 (33.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}8} f4 34.e8=\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}e}8 35.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}7}+ \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{b}8} 36.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}c}3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{fxg}3} 37.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{fxg}3} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}5} 38.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}4} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}8}= Chubukin – Efremov, ICCF 2008) 33...c2 34.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}1} f4 35.g4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}8}. Now, White has nothing better than to comply with the repetition of the position. 36.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}7}+ \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{b}8} 37.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}8} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}7} 38.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}7}+ \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{b}8}= Bychkov – Wegman, ICCF 2007.

31.a4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}8} 32.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}7}+ \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{b}8} 33.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}1} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}e}7 34.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}c}4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}1}+ 35.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}2} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xh}2}!= Black sacrifices a rook and forces a draw. 36.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xh}2} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf}2}+ 37.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}3} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{fl}1}+ 38.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}2} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}2}+ 39.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}3}, draw, Merrell – Naumenko, ICCF 2016.

28...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe}7} 29.\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{a}5}+ \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{b}7} 30.bxc5+ \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{a}8}
31.c6
31...c3 32.xf6 xf6. The vulnerability of Black’s king is irrelevant in this endgame, while White’s kingside passed pawns are still too far from promotion. 33.g2 d7 34.c6 b6 35.e1 c8. Black prevents the penetration of the enemy rook to the e7-square. 36.b1 b6 37.b4 b8. Black should not forget to centralise his king in this endgame. 38.a4 h5 39.b5 d5 40.h4 c7 41.h5 xc6 42.h6 d6 43.h5 d8 44.f5 h8 45.xf7 xh6 46.xa7 h8 47.g4 d5 48.a5 b5 49.g3 f8=

Sienkiewicz – Compagnone, ICCF 2015. Black prevents f2-f4 and holds successfully his defence in this endgame.

31...e5 32.d5 e6 33.xe6 fxe6 34.c7 e8 35.g2 x7 36.e1 d3 37.xe6 c2 38.f6 xa2

The forced play has ended in this endgame in which it may seem that White has a clear advantage thanks to his three connected passed pawns on the kingside. The computer however, evaluates this position as completely equal...

39.h4 b7 40.h5 a5
Black wishes to deflect with his a-pawn White’s rook from the support of his passed pawns.

41.h6 c2 42.h7 c8
Black’s rook has managed to come back to his own camp in order to hold the enemy passed h-pawn just a step before its promotion.

43.g4
43.Rh6 Rh8 44.g4 Ne5 45.g3 d7 46.g5 f8= Ruiz Romero – Perez Ferris, ICCF 2010.

43...a4 44.Rd6 Ne5

45.Re6
White’s alternatives would not provide him with much, for example: 45.g5 a3 46.f4 Rh8 47.Rh6 g6 48.g3 a2 49.Rh1 b6 50.a1 xh7 51.xa2 Rh1= Mielke – Noble, ICCF 2012. Now, in order to make a draw, it would be sufficient for Black to give up a knight, or in some variations even a rook, for the enemy two pawns.

45...xg4
White’s three connected passed pawns have disappeared off the board.

46.Rg6
Now, due to the threat g8, White wins a knight. This would not change anything, though...

The move 46.f3 also leads to a draw. 46...Rh8 47.Rc7+ c6 48.fxg4 d6. White fails to capture the enemy passed pawn and to prevent his own h7-pawn at the same time. 49.a7 e5 50.g3 f6 51.f4 g6 52.a6+ xh7= Limbert – Henri, ICCF 2014.

46...e3+
47.\f3
47.fxe3 h8 48.h6 a3 49.f3 a2 50.h1 c6 51.a1 xh7= Robert – Pinho, ICCF 2014.

47...h8 48.xe3 xh7= Jacot – Mendl, ICCF 2016.

I can understand that some of my readers may be disappointed having seen such long variations, ending up with almost complete annihilation of all the pieces, but this is contemporary chess. The computer analyses can turn some opening variations into a lifeless desert...
16...\texttt{Na4}  
White’s knight runs away from the attack with tempo, but its placement at the edge of the board may turn out to be unfavourable for him.

16...\texttt{Qb5} 17.\texttt{a3}  
White wishes to open the a-file in order to bring his rook into the attack against the enemy king.

He would not achieve much with 17.\texttt{dxe6 Qxg2} 18.\texttt{xg2} (It is bad for him to opt for 18.e7?!, because of 18...\texttt{Qc6} 19.\texttt{exd8=Q + xd8} 20.\texttt{Qe1}. White has won the exchange, but the light squares around his king are hopelessly weak. 20...\texttt{h1} 21.\texttt{f3 xf3} 22.\texttt{c2}, Braeutigam – Strobel, Bayern 2002, 22...\texttt{d6}²) 18...\texttt{c6}+ 19.\texttt{f3} (19.\texttt{f3?? Xh2+}! 20.\texttt{hxh2 Qxf3} 21.\texttt{exd7+ xd7} 22.\texttt{ad1+ d6} 0–1 Aseev – Bagirov, Helsinki 1992) 19...\texttt{xe6} 20.\texttt{c2} (20.h4 \texttt{hxh6} 21.\texttt{c1 xg5} 22.\texttt{xg5}, Haba – Shabalov, Oberwart 1992, 22...\texttt{c6}?!² Now, White must fight for equality due to the misplacement of his knight at the edge of the board.) 20...\texttt{e5} 21.\texttt{ae1 b3}?! 22.axb3 \texttt{cxb3} 23.\texttt{e2 h3+} 24.\texttt{g1 d3} 25.\texttt{c3 c4}. It is essential for Black to preserve his active knight on the d3-outpost. 26.\texttt{e4 e6} 27.\texttt{h4 h6} 28.\texttt{xh6 xh6} Glembek – Weber, ICCF 2010. His powerful knight is sufficient to compensate Black’s missing pawn.

17...\texttt{b8}  
Black will increase his pressure against the d5-square.

18.\texttt{axb4} \texttt{xb4}
We will analyse now: A) 19.\textit{Be}3, B) 19.\textit{Qd}4 and C) 19.\textit{Qg}4.

19.\textit{Qe}2 \textit{Bxd}5 20.\textit{Rfc}1 (20.\textit{Bxd}5 \textit{Qxd}5 21.\textit{Be}3 \textit{Qc}6 – see 19.\textit{Be}3) 20...\textit{Qc}6 21.\textit{Qxd}5 \textit{exd}5 22.\textit{b}3. Black cannot hold on to his \textit{c}4-pawn, but White has no advantage anyway. 22...\textit{Qb}7. Black retreats immediately his king away from the dangerous file. 23.\textit{bxc}4 \textit{dxc}4 24.\textit{Be}3 \textit{Nc}6 25.\textit{Rxc}4 \textit{Nd}4 26.\textit{Bxd}4 \textit{Qxd}4 27.\textit{Qb}2 \textit{Qh}d5 28.\textit{Qa}1 \textit{Qxe}= Aguiar Garcia – Perez Fernandez, ICCF 2016. Black’s king is vulnerable, but his pawns are very dangerous.

\textbf{A) 19.\textit{Be}3 20.\textit{Qd}5 21.\textit{Qe}2 \textit{Qc}6 22.\textit{Rfc}1 \textit{Qe}5}

Naturally, Black should not allow his opponent to regain the pawn on \textit{c}4.

\textbf{23.\textit{f}4}

White ousts the enemy knight from \textit{e}5, but weakens the position of his own king.

23.\textit{Qxa}7?! Capturing of this pawn is obviously bad. 23...\textit{Qb}7 24.\textit{Qe}3 (24.\textit{Qb}6 \textit{c}3! 25.\textit{Qxb}5 \textit{Qxb}5= Loos – Paszewski, Zalakaros 2016) 24...\textit{Qd}3. White is already beyond salvation. 25.\textit{Qf}1 (After 25.\textit{f}4, Black has the powerful resource 25...\textit{Qxh}2!, deflecting the enemy king under a double attack by the knight. 26.\textit{Qxh}2 \textit{Qxe}3 27.\textit{Qd}1, Koopmans – Van der Muysenberg, Netherlands 1991, 27...\textit{Qe}1!–+) 25...\textit{Qc}6 26.\textit{Qd}6 27.\textit{Qg}2 \textit{Qa}8?! 28.\textit{Qb}6 \textit{Qxa}1 29.\textit{Qxa}1 \textit{Qxe}3 30.\textit{Qxe}3 \textit{Qxb}6–+

23.\textit{Qf}4 \textit{Qh}6 24.\textit{b}3 \textit{Qxf}4

After the intermediate move 25.\textit{bxc}4?, Black has the beautiful resource 25...\textit{Qd}1! 26.\textit{Qxd}1 \textit{Qc}6. His king has found a safe haven behind the pawn on \textit{c}4, while Black’s threats on the \textit{h}1-a8 diagonal seem very powerful. 27.\textit{Qd}3. Now, White must part with an exchange in order to defend against the threat \textit{Qf}3. 27...\textit{Qxd}3 28.\textit{Qxd}3 \textit{Qe}5 29.\textit{Qa}2 \textit{Qd}8 30.\textit{Qb}3, Kacheishvili – Yang, Saint Louis 2011, 30...\textit{Qxf}6?! 31.\textit{f}3 \textit{a}5–+ It would be sufficient to compare the power of the bishop on \textit{f}6 and the knight on \textit{a}4 in order
to evaluate this position correctly.

25.gxf4  \text{N}d3 26.\text{R}xc4+  \text{K}b8 27.\text{N}b2. White is in a hurry to activate his knight. 27...\text{xf}4 28.\text{e}3  \text{d}4. This is a beautiful rook-sacrifice. 29.\text{R}xd4  \text{e}2+ 30.\text{h}1  \text{xd}4 31.\text{R}c6+ 32.\text{g}1  \text{g}8+ 33.\text{f}1  \text{h}1+ 34.\text{e}2  \text{xa}1= Black has already an extra exchange, so White is forced to give a perpetual check. 35.\text{d}6+, draw, Balabanov – Fetisov, ICCF 2010.

23.b3 c3 24.\text{R}xc3. This was the idea behind White’s previous move. He sacrifices a knight for two pawns in order to open files for his rooks. 24...\text{bxc}3 25.\text{R}xc3+  \text{K}b8

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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board.png}
\end{center}

26.\text{xa}7+  \text{b}7 27.\text{xb}5+  \text{xb}5 28.\text{e}3  \text{d}6 29.\text{a}7+  \text{b}8= Pedersen – Schandorff, Denmark 2016. Black has managed to coordinate his pieces and White must already fight for a draw.

26.\text{c}2  \text{d}6 27.\text{xa}7+  \text{b}7 28.\text{b}4  \text{d}3. This move leads to equality. (Black could have tried here to fight for the advantage with the line: 28...\text{a}8!? 29.\text{a}5  \text{d}7 30.\text{b}6  \text{a}6 31.\text{xa}6  \text{xa}6 32.\text{c}5  \text{b}7= Rattay – Krakovsky, LSS 2010. White can hardly find a way to improve his attack against his opponent’s king, deprived of any pawn-shelter.) 29.\text{xd}3  \text{xd}3 30.\text{xd}3  \text{d}3 31.\text{d}1  \text{d}7 32.\text{d}3  \text{d}8 33.\text{h}4  \text{c}7= Giese – Herold, Germany 1996.

23...\text{d}3 24.\text{xc}4+  \text{xc}4 25.\text{e}1  \text{xc}1+ 26.\text{xc}1  \text{d}6 27.\text{c}4+  \text{b}8 28.\text{xc}1

White has a queen and a pawn for two rooks. His knight on a4 however is still misplaced, so Black manages to coordinate his rooks.

28...\text{d}6

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board.png}
\end{center}

29.\text{c}4

29.\text{g}2. This is an interesting move, but still insufficient for White to obtain an advantage. 29...\text{c}8 30.\text{h}1!?  \text{c}2+ 31.\text{f}3  \text{cd}2 32.\text{g}4  \text{e}5 33.\text{xe}5  \text{xe}5 34.\text{f}3  \text{c}7 35.\text{h}3  \text{d}8. Black’s king is trying
to run away from the queenside. His idea is to protect the important f7-pawn. 36.b3 a1 37.e3 xf6 38.a7 e8 39.b6. Finally, White’s knight is back in action. 39...h5+ 40.g4 g5+ 41.f3 f5+. White’s king must go to the centre of the board in order to avoid the perpetual check. 42.e3 c3 43.b8+ d8 44.b7 d4+ 45.e4 e5+ 46.f4 e7 47.c6+ f8 48.d5, draw, Tsygankov – Tinture, ICCF 2014. Following 48...ed7 49.xb4 d6= 50.b7 c3 51.c6 f6+ 52.e4 e6+ 53.f3 f6+ 54.g4 g6=, White must give up his h2-pawn if he wishes to avoid the perpetual check. 55.f3 f6+ 56.g2 d2+ 57.h3 h6+ 58.g4 g6+ 59.f5 xh2=

29...c8 30.e2 d8

31.a6 (31.c4 c8 32.e2 d8= Dzenis – Eshuis, ICCF 2016) 31...c8 32.g2 c2+ 33.h3 e5. Black opens files for his rooks. 34.xe5 xe5 35.b3 d4 36.f1 f2 37.a1 h5+ 38.g4 d5 39.b1 d4+ 40.h3 dd2= Black’s rooks are very well coordinated.

B) 19.d4

This is an ambitious move. White prepares a queen-sacrifice. The tournament practice shows however that he risks more than his opponent in this line.

19...c6 20.dxc6

Black should not be afraid of 20.b6+. Before sacrificing the queen, White brings his knight on the altar of the attack in order to open the a-file for his rook. 20...axb6 21.dxc6 xc6. White’s pawn on b7 will be very dangerous with the a-file opened. 22.xc6 xc6 23.g4
23...b7 (Black should not allow White’s rook to the a7-square: 23...c5 24.a7 → Carlsen – Smeets, Wijk aan Zee 2010). The tactical complications are over. Black’s prospects are not worse in the arising position thanks to his possibility to create quickly a passed pawn on the queenside. 24.b3 (24.f1? c5! The move 24.f1? only helps Black to advance his pawns. 24...b5+ Maze – Brunner, Guingamp 2010.) 24...c3 25.e2 c5 (25...h6 26.xh6 xh6, Hebden – Arun Prasad, Edinburgh 2009. Now, White must try to organise counterplay with the move 27.a4! ; otherwise, he may end up in an inferior position.) 26.f4 b5 27.a5

Black follows the advice of Steinitz who considered the king to be a powerful piece. 28.a1 a8 29.xa8 xa8 30.xa8 xa8. The arising endgame might seem dangerous for White, but he manages to draw it after an accurate play. 31.d3 e8 32.h4. White’s counterplay is connected with the advance of his h-pawn. 32...e5 33.e4 d4 34.g5 c8 35.g2 c2 36.c1 c3 37.h5 xb3 38.h6. White succeeds in deflecting the enemy queen from his passed pawns by advancing his h-pawn. 38.e6 39.h7 xf6 40.xc2 b3 41.e2 e4 42.e3 c6 43.xd4, draw, Murden – Adelseck, ICCF 2015. Later, there may follow this variation: 43...xd4 44.h5 b2 45.h8= 46.xh8 b1= 47.f6+ c5 48.e7+ c4 49.f7+ c3 50.f6+ c4= White managed to save the draw somehow, but this was not an easy task at all.

20...xd4 21.cxb7+ b8 22.e3 e5
Naturally, Black should not allow the enemy bishop to occupy the g1-a7 diagonal.

**23.b3**

White must play very precisely now, because a single mistake may lead to a hopeless position for him. For example: 23...\textit{Rfc1? Bh6–+} Ernst – Burg, Amsterdam 2014.

23...\textit{Nc3} This sacrifice of another piece seems to be too risky for White. 23...\textit{bxc3} 24.\textit{bxc3} \textit{Bc5} 25.\textit{Rfb1 \textit{Rd1}+!} This is the point! After this not so obvious rook-sacrifice, Black seizes completely the initiative. 26.\textit{Rxd1} \textit{Rxex3} 27.\textit{fxe3 wb2} 28.\textit{Ra}c1. Now, White’s rook must occupy this passive position in order to protect his c3-pawn. 28...\textit{Wb6} 29.\textit{We1} \textit{Wxf6} 30.\textit{We2} \textit{Wg6} 31.\textit{We2} f5. Black prepares the move e5-e4 in order to cut off White’s bishop from the protection of the pawn on b7. White prevents this with 32.\textit{Wd5}, but after 32...\textit{Rd8} 33.\textit{We2} a5–+, the game is practically over. 34.\textit{Wf1} a4 35.e4 a3 36.\textit{Wa2} \textit{Wh6} 37.\textit{Wa1} \textit{fxe4} 38.\textit{Wxe4} \textit{Rd3} 0–1 Claus – Rada, ICCF 2011.

23.\textit{Rfe1} \textit{Bh6}. Black wishes to trade the active enemy bishop. 24.f4. White is preventing the exchange. Still, after 24...\textit{Wxf4} 25.\textit{gxh4} \textit{Wg8}, his king becomes too vulnerable and Black’s counterplay becomes sufficient for a perpetual check. 26.\textit{Wxd4} \textit{exd4} 27.\textit{We5} \textit{Wa6} 28.\textit{Wf2} \textit{Wxf6} 29.\textit{We5}, draw, Yeremenko – Noble, ICCF 2011, 29...\textit{Wxf4}+ 30.\textit{Wg1} \textit{Wxg2}+ 31.\textit{Wxg2} \textit{Wg4}+ 32.\textit{Wf1} \textit{Wf4}=

**23...c3**

24.\textit{Wd1}

24.\textit{Wad1} \textit{Wd6} 25.\textit{Wfe1} a5 26.h4 \textit{Rd3} 27.\textit{We4} \textit{Rxd1} 28.\textit{Wxd1} \textit{Wh6} 29.\textit{We5} \textit{Wd2} 30.\textit{Wd6}+ \textit{Wa7} 31.\textit{We1} c2.

Now, White has nothing better than to give a perpetual check. 32.\textit{We5}+ \textit{Wb8} 33.\textit{Wd6}+ \textit{Wa7}= Borstnik – Efremov, ICCF 2011.

24...\textit{Wh6}
25. \( \text{Rd4} \)

The exchange-sacrifice 25. \( \text{Rxd4?!} \) leads to difficulties for White after 25...exd4 26. \( \text{Rxd4} \) c2 27. \( \text{c5 e8!} \) Black defends against \( \text{Be5} \). 28. \( \text{f1 c6} \) 29. \( \text{a6+ xb7} \) 30. \( \text{g2} \). White regains the queen, but this is still insufficient for equality. 30...c1=\( \text{+} \) 31. \( \text{xc1} \) \( \text{xc1} \) 32. \( \text{xc6+ xc6} \) 33. \( \text{xb4+ b5} \). Altanoch – Henri, ICCF 2011. Black’s rook will be obviously more mobile than White’s minor pieces in actions on both sides of the board.

25...exd4 26. \( \text{Rxd4} \) c2 27. \( \text{c4} \)


27...\( \text{xc4?!} \)

This is the simplest for Black. He gives back the queen and enters an endgame in which White needs to play very precisely.

28. \( \text{bxc4 d8} \)
29.\textit{f3}  
White loses after 29.\textit{d5}?, because of 29...b3 30.\textit{f1} c1=\textit{=b+} 31.\textit{xc1} \textit{xc1} 32.\textit{xf7} b2. Black’s pawn has advanced too far and White will have to give one of his minor pieces for it later. 33.\textit{g6} \textit{d6} 34.\textit{e4} \textit{xf6} 35.\textit{c5} \textit{d6} 36.\textit{h4} \textit{d2} 37.\textit{g2} \textit{b4}+ Serradimigni – Duliba, ICCF 2010.

29...\textit{c1=+} 30.\textit{xc1} \textit{xc1} 31.\textit{c5} \textit{d6}  
Black’s rook protects simultaneously the a6 and d7-squares.

32.\textit{d5}!  
32.\textit{g2}?! \textit{b2} 33.\textit{h4} (33.\textit{b3} \textit{xf6} 34.\textit{a5} \textit{d2} 35.\textit{h4} \textit{b2} 36.\textit{c5} \textit{c3} 37.\textit{d5} \textit{c7} 38.\textit{f1} \textit{d2} 39.\textit{g2} b3! Black sacrifices a pawn and forces White’s knight to occupy an unfavourable position. 40.\textit{xb3} \textit{d8} 41.\textit{c6} \textit{b4}. White’s knight has been severely restricted. Black’s a-pawn will settle the issue. 42.\textit{e4} a5+ Drenthen – Pannekoek, ICCF 2015.) 33...\textit{xf6} 34.\textit{h5} a5 35.\textit{h6} \textit{h8} 36.\textit{h7} f5+ 37.\textit{d5} b3! We are already familiar with this resource. Here however, it is not used with the idea to restrict the enemy knight, but to help the advance of Black’s a-pawn. 38.\textit{xb3} a4 39.\textit{c1} a3. It is well known that knights are very inadequate in the fight against the passed rook-pawns... 40.\textit{a2} \textit{b6} 41.\textit{f3} \textit{b2} 42.\textit{c5} \textit{d2}, followed by \textit{d4}, 0–1 Hiltunen – Noble, ICCF 2008.

32...a5 33.\textit{f1} \textit{b2} 34.\textit{e4} \textit{a6} 35.\textit{c5} \textit{d6}= Dorner – Feco, ICCF 2012.

C) 19.\textit{g4}
White pins the pawn on e6 and impedes capturing on d5 with the pawn.

19...\textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}x}d5 20.\textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}f}c1

Or 20.\textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}}d5?!  \textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}}d5 21.\textit{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e3 (21.\textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}}f4  \textit{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c6 22.\textit{\textit{\textbf{fc}}}1  \textit{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d4 23.\textit{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e2  \textit{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d5+ Bacrot – Fier, Le Port Marly 2012)

21...\textit{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c6 22.\textit{\textit{\textbf{fc}}}1  \textit{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e5 23.\textit{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e4  \textit{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c6 24.\textit{\textit{\textbf{g}}}g2  \textit{\textit{\textbf{h}}}h6! 25.\textit{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e1  \textit{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d3 26.\textit{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e2  \textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}}xe3 27.\textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}}xe3  \textit{\textit{\textbf{h}}}hh5 28.\textit{\textit{\textbf{g}}}g1  \textit{\textit{\textbf{h}}}he5+ Buj – Pappier, Argentina 1992. White fails to regain the pawn on c4 in both the variations.

20...\textit{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c6 21.\textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}}d5  \textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}}d5 22.\textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}4

22.\textit{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e3  \textit{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e5 – see 20.\textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}}d5.

22.\textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}}xc4?  \textit{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d1+ 23.\textit{\textit{\textbf{g}}}g2  \textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}c4 24.\textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}c4  \textit{\textit{\textbf{xa}}}a1+ Van Wely – Shabalov, New York 1993.

22...\textit{\textit{\textbf{x}}}xg5

23.\textit{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d4

White prevents  \textit{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c5. Black has temporarily an extra piece, but cannot avoid the loss of his knight on c6.

Following 23.\textit{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e4, Black succeeds in creating counterplay against the f2-square. 23...\textit{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c5 24.b3  \textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}}f5 25.\textit{\textit{\textbf{ac}}}1  \textit{\textit{\textbf{xf}}}f2+ 26.\textit{\textit{\textbf{g}}}g2  \textit{\textit{\textbf{b}}}b8 27.\textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}c6  \textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}c6+ 28.\textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}c6. After the trade of the queens the vulnerability of Black’s king would be irrelevant. 28...\textit{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d4= Harikrishna – Mulyar, Toronto 2010.

23...\textit{\textit{\textbf{b}}}b8 24.\textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}c6  \textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}c3+

This intermediate move is necessary.

24...\textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}c6? 25.\textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}}f4+–

25.\textit{\textit{\textbf{xf}}}f3  \textit{\textit{\textbf{xc}}}c6 26.\textit{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d1

Black’s king seems quite vulnerable, but there is just a few material left on the board, so White cannot bring into the attack his knight, which has remained at the edge of the board.
26.b3 \(\text{d6}\) 27.d1 \(\text{d8=}\) Robert Perez – Sevian, Saint Louis 2013.

26...\(\text{c7}\)

27.b3

White protects his knight, just in case...

The evaluation of the position remains the same after 27.\(\text{f1}\) – White removes his king away from the dangerous g1-c5 diagonal. 27...\(\text{h5}\) 28.\(\text{d8+}\) \(\text{c8}\)

Here, White has several active possibilities, but Black holds successfully the defence in all the lines.

29.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{f5+}\) 30.\(\text{e1}\). White’s king is forced to go to the e-file, because his other possibilities lose. (30.\(\text{g2}\)? \(\text{axb6}\) 31.\(\text{xb6+}\)? \(\text{b7=}\); 30.\(\text{g1??}\) \(\text{c5=}\)) 30...\(\text{e5=}\) Kozak – Mihok, Budapest 2015.

29.h4 \(\text{d5}\). It is essential for Black to exchange the enemy rook, since it might join into the attack later. 30.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 31.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{a6+}\) 32.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{xa4}\) 33.\(\text{d8+}\) \(\text{b7}\) 34.\(\text{xf8}\). There has arisen a king and queen ending in which Black exploits the misplacement of the enemy queen on the f8-square and ends the game with a perpetual check. 34...\(\text{e2+}\) 35.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{c1+}\) 36.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{f1=}\) 37.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{xf6+}\) 38.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{e6+}\) 39.\(\text{xb4}\) \(\text{b6+}\) 40.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{e6=}\) Shkuro – Ghane Gardeh, Azov 2010.

29.\(\text{d7}\). This move may seem very dangerous for Black, but he can capture cold-bloodedly the pawn on f6. 29...\(\text{f5+}\) 30.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 31.\(\text{xc8+}\) \(\text{xc8}\) 32.\(\text{xa7}\). Black’s king is cut off on the penultimate rank, but his bishop is more powerful than the enemy knight in a fight on both sides of the board. 32...\(\text{d8}\) 33.\(\text{a8+}\) \(\text{e7}\) 34.\(\text{b8}\) \(\text{h6}\) 35.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{f5}\) 36.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{d5}\) 37.\(\text{xb4}\). White has managed to win a pawn, but Black’s pieces have been activated considerably. 37...\(\text{f5}\) 38.\(\text{b7+}\) \(\text{d8}\) 39.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{d2+}\) 40.\(\text{f1}\). Now already, White’s king has become passive. 40...\(\text{e3}\) 41.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{c8}\) 42.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{d1+}\) 43.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{a7}\) 44.\(\text{c3+}\) \(\text{d7}\) 45.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{b8}\) 46.\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 47.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{e5}\) 48.\(\text{h5}\) \(\text{b1=}\) Van Seben – Starke, LSS 2012. The activity of
Black’s pieces is sufficient to maintain the equality.

29.b3 \(\text{Rd5} 30.\text{exd5} \text{exd5} 31.\text{a6+} 32.\text{g2} \text{xf6}\). In the arising endgame White’s only chance of obtaining an edge is connected with the advance of his h-pawn. 33.h4 \(\text{c7} 34.\text{h5} \text{c6}\). The trade of the queens is Black’s most accurate way of reaching the draw. 35.\(\text{xc6+ xc6}\) 36.\(\text{f3 d6}\)

\[\text{Diagram 1}\]

37.\(\text{b2 e5} 38.\text{c4+ f5} 39.\text{g4+ g5} 40.\text{e3 (40.e5 f5=) 40...g7=}\) Ham – Cruzado Duecas, ICCF 2015.

37.\(\text{f4 e6} 38.\text{g4 d6+}\). Now, irrelevant of where White will retreat with his king, he will be incapable of obtaining an advantage.

\[\text{Diagram 2}\]

39.\(\text{g5}\). His king is trying to go to the h7-square. (39.e4 \(\text{f6} 40.\text{b2 g5} 41.\text{c4 f8} 42.\text{e3 a5=}; 42.\text{e5 f6} 43.\text{d7 h6} 44.\text{f3 f5} 45.\text{gxf5 xf5=}\) Duliba – Noble, ICCF 2009) 39...\(\text{e7+} 40.\text{h6 f8+} 41.\text{h7 f5}\)

\[\text{Diagram 3}\]
This is a quite concrete decision. Black allows his opponent to obtain two connected passed pawns, but relies on his powerful f-pawn. 42.g5 (42.gxf5+, Nilsson – Efremov, ICCF 2012, 42...\( \text{xf5} \) 43.\( \text{g8 h6=} \) 42...f4 43.\( \text{g6 f3 44.h6 f2 45.g7 f1=} \) 46.\( \text{g8=+} \) 47.\( \text{xf7+} \) 48.\( \text{xf7=} \). The pawn races cannot change the evaluation of the position as approximately equal. White’s king stands in the way forward of his h-pawn and his knight cannot help the king, because it must prevent Black’s pawn-break a7-a5-a4.

27...\( \text{c8} \)
Black defends against \( \text{d8} \).

28.\( \text{c3} \)
White has some other moves with his queen as well.

28.\( \text{d2} \). After this move Black can win a tempo for the development of his bishop. This does not influence the evaluation of the position at all. 28...\( \text{h6} \) 29.\( \text{e2} \) 30.\( \text{a6+} \) 31.\( \text{xh6=} \) 32.\( \text{b5+} \). Now, White has nothing better than to give a perpetual check. 32...\( \text{a8} \) 33.\( \text{c6+} \) 34.\( \text{xf7=} \) Craig – Dijon, ICCF 2012.

28.\( \text{e4} \) 29.\( \text{d4} \) (29.\( \text{d4 c8=} \) 29.\( \text{d3 c5+} \) 30.\( \text{xc5 xc5=} \) 31.\( \text{d4 c3=} \) – see 28.\( \text{e3} \) 29.\( \text{d6} \) 30.\( \text{c4} \) (Following 30.\( \text{g2} \), Black can activate his rook. 30...\( \text{h5} \) 31.\( \text{h4 e5} \) 32.\( \text{d3 c6=} \) 33.\( \text{h3 d5=} \) Tazelaar – Schwarte, ICCF 2011; 30.\( \text{h4} \), Shimanov – I. Popov, Loo 2014, 30...a5!? He frees the a7-square for his queen. 31.\( \text{c4 a7=} \) 32.\( \text{g2 h5} \) 33.\( \text{c6 b7} \) 34.\( \text{xb7=} \) Tazelaar – Schwarte, ICCF 2011; 30.\( \text{h4} \), Shimanov – I. Popov, Loo 2014, 30...a5!? He frees the a7-square for his queen. 31.\( \text{c4 a7=} \) 32.\( \text{g2 h5} \) 33.\( \text{c6 b7} \) 34.\( \text{xb7=} \) After the trade of the queens Black has nothing to worry about.) 30...\( \text{a5} \) 31.\( \text{d3 d8} \) 32.\( \text{g2 c7} \) 33.\( \text{d4 xd4} \) 34.\( \text{xd4} \), draw, Bokar – Duecas, ICCF 2010. The position has been simplified considerably and after 34...\( \text{e5} \), White must be ready to exchange the queens in order to prevent the activation of Black’s pieces. 35.\( \text{e5 xc5} \) 36.\( \text{xc5 c7} \) 37.\( \text{a6+} \) 38.\( \text{d6} \) 38.\( \text{xb4 xf6=} \)

28.\( \text{d3} \) 29.\( \text{f5} \) 30.\( \text{b5} \). Black’s rook has come just in time to help his king. 30.\( \text{a8+} \) 31.\( \text{b8} \) 32.\( \text{a4} \). Finally, White has decided to improve the placement of his knight. (32.\( \text{d4 b8} \) 33.\( \text{d3 c1=} \) 34.\( \text{g2 c6=} \) 35.\( \text{e4 xe4=} \) Dothan – Perez Fernandez, ICCF 2016.) 32...\( \text{b8} \) 33.\( \text{c4 a5} \). Black makes use of the removal of White’s knight from the a4-square in order to create counterplay with a5-a4. 34.\( \text{g2} \) (34.\( \text{a1 d6} \) 35.\( \text{g2 g5} \) 36.\( \text{h4} \), Alexa – Davis, ICCF 2012, 36...\( \text{c5=} \) 34...a4 35.\( \text{b4 a5} \) 36.\( \text{e3} \) 37.\( \text{c3} \) Black has activated his pieces at the price of a pawn. 37.\( \text{h3 d6} \) 38.\( \text{d2 c5} \) 39.\( \text{d1 c4} \) 40.\( \text{h7 c7=} \) Bubir – Ohtake, ICCF 2007.

28...\( \text{b8} \)
White was threatening \( \text{f1} \).
29. \( \text{Wd2} \)

About 29. \( \text{Wd3} \) \( \text{Qc5}+ \) 30. \( \text{Wxc5} \) \( \text{Wxc5}+ \) 31. \( \text{Wd4} \) \( \text{Qc3} \) – see 29. \( \text{Wd2} \).

29... \( \text{Qc5}+ \) 30. \( \text{Wxc5} \) \( \text{Wxc5}+ \) 31. \( \text{Wd4} \)

Now, White must exchange the queens if he wishes to continue to fight for a win.

31. \( \text{Qg2} \) \( \text{Qc6}+ \) 32. \( \text{Qg1} \) \( \text{Qc5}= \)

31... \( \text{Qc3} \)

32. \( \text{Wxc3} \)

32. \( \text{Wf4} \), Ding Liren – Yu Yangyi, Danzhou 2016, 32...e5!? 33. \( \text{We4} \) \( \text{Ec8}= \)

32... \( \text{Bxc3} \) 33. \( \text{Ec1} \) \( \text{Ec8} \)

Black must play very accurately in this rook and pawn ending in order not to lose his c3-pawn and not to allow the promotion of the enemy h2-pawn.

34. \( \text{Ef2} \)

White is activating his king.

He cannot obtain an edge after 34. \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{b7} \) 35. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{Ec5} \) 36. \( \text{Ef2} \) (36. \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{c6}= \)) 36... \( \text{Ec6} \) 37. \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{Ec4} \) 38. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 39. \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{h4}= \) Babushkin – Butov, ICCF 2011.

34... \( \text{Ec5} \)

Black is preparing \( \text{Ec7} \), followed by \( \text{d6-e5} \).
35.g4
White’s alternatives would not change the character of the position.
35.e2 c7 36.g4 (36.d3 d6 – see 35.e3) 36...d6 37.d3 e5 – see 35.g4.
35.e3 c7 36.d3 (36.g4 d6 – see 35.g4; 36.d4 d6 37.bxc3 bxc3 38.xc3 e5 – see 36.d3.)
36...d6 37.bxc3 (37.g4 e5 – see 35.g4) 37...bxc3+ 38.bxc3 e5. Black will restore the material balance on his next move. 39.d3 (39.d2 xf6=; 39.g4 xf6 40.h4 e5 41.h5 f6 42.d4 e5 43.e5 f5 44.gxf5 exf5= Nilsson – Krzyzanowski, ICCF 2016.) 39...xf6. The king and pawn ending is a draw. 40.e4 g5 41.h3 a5 42.f3 f6 43.h4+ h5 44.f4 g6 45.g4 h6 46.g5+ fxg5, draw, Nouveau – Verhaeren, ICCF 2016, because after 47.hxg5+ g6 48.e5 xg5 49.xe6, Black’s king manages to gobble the enemy b3-pawn just in time. 49...f4 50.d5 e3 51.c4 d2 52.b5 c3 53.xa5 xb3.
35...c7 36.e3 d6

37.h4
37.d3 e5 38.g5 f5 39.h4 g4 – see 37.h4.
37...e5 38.g5 f5 39.d3 g4
40.\textbf{Exc3}

The inclusion of the move 40.b4 does not promise anything to White. 40...\textbf{Ec8} 41.\textbf{Exc3} \textbf{Ed8+} 42.\textbf{Ee4} \textbf{Exh4} 43.g6 \textbf{Eg5} 44.gxf7 \textbf{Exf6} 45.\textbf{Ec7} \textbf{Eg7}, Vecek – Taras, ICCF 2013, 46.\textbf{Ea7} \textbf{Eb8}=

40...\textbf{Ed5+} 41.\textbf{Ee3}
41.\textbf{Ee4} \textbf{Ef5} 42.\textbf{Ec7} \textbf{Exh4} 43.\textbf{Ea7} \textbf{Exg5} 44.\textbf{Ef7}, draw, Legemaat – Boskovic, ICCF 2011. Following 44...\textbf{Ef6} 45.\textbf{Ef6} \textbf{Exf6} 46.b4 \textbf{Ee7}=, Black’s king holds the enemy b4-pawn.

41...\textbf{Exh4} 42.g6

Black can simply ignore this pawn-break. 42...\textbf{Eg5} 43.gxf7 \textbf{Ed8} 44.\textbf{Ec7} \textbf{Exf6} 45.\textbf{Ea7} \textbf{Ef8} 46.\textbf{Ee4} (46.b4 \textbf{Exf7} 47.\textbf{Ea1} \textbf{Ee5=} 46...\textbf{Exf7} 47.\textbf{Ea1} \textbf{Ed7}). This is the most precise way for Black to draw. He cuts off the enemy king from the b-pawn and will place his rook on d5 on his next move. Later his king will go to the c8-square. 48.b4 \textbf{Ed5} 49.\textbf{Eb1} \textbf{Ee7} 50.b5 \textbf{Ed7} 51.b6 \textbf{Ec8=}
Part 6

1.d4 d5

In the final part of our book we will analyse the opening variations in which White plays 1.d4, but after 1...d5 refrains from advancing c2-c4 on his second and following moves. As a rule, in these variations he plays 2.Nf3, but not always. For example in Chapter 23 we will analyse the set-ups in which White plays neither c2-c4, nor Nf3.

Chapter 24 will be devoted to the Torre system – 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Bg5. The London system, in which White develops his bishop on f4 will be dealt with in Chapter 25. Finally, the last chapter of the book will be devoted to the variations beginning with 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.g3. We have to mention that the connection of the openings “The Slav Defence + the Caro-Kann Defence” enables Black to avoid many problematic opening variations. For example, after 1.d4 d5 2.c3, he can play simply 2...c6, avoiding the main lines of the Veresov Attack, arising after 2...Nf6 3.Bg5. In the London system, which has become very popular lately, after 1.d4 d5 2.Bf4 c5 3.e3, Black can simply exchange on d4 – 3...cxd4 4.exd4, after which there arises on the board a harmless variation of the Caro-Kann Defence (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.Bf4).

Chapter 23

1.d4 d5
2.c3
2.Qc3 Chigorin Variation
2.e3 Stonewall Attack
2.e4 Blackmar – Diemer Gambit
2.Qg5 Bishop Attack
About 2.\( \text{\text{d}} \text{d}2 \text{\text{f}} \text{f}6 \text{3.e}4 \text{3.g} \text{f}3 \text{c}6 \) – see Chapter 24) 3...\text{c}6 – see Chapter 1.

2.f4 \( \text{\text{f}} \text{f}6 \) – see volume 2, the Bird Opening.

2.\( \text{\text{f}} \text{f}4 \text{c}5 \) – see Chapter 25, variation A.

2.g3 \( \text{\text{g}} \text{g}6 \text{3.c}4 \text{c}6 \) – see Chapter 1; 3.\( \text{\text{f}} \text{f}3 \text{c}6 \) – see Chapter 26) 3...\text{c}6 4.\( \text{\text{d}} \text{d}2 \text{4.g} \text{g}4 \) – see Chapter 26; 4.c4 \( \text{\text{g}} \text{g}4 \) – see Chapter 1) 4...\text{g}4 5.\( \text{\text{f}} \text{f}3 \text{e}6 \) – see Chapter 26.

2.a3 \( \text{\text{f}} \text{f}6 \text{3.f} \text{f}3 \text{c}6 \) – see Chapter 24.

A) 2.\text{c}3 \text{c}5

The simplest response for Black, preparing an exchange on d4 after which there arises a position from the Caro-Kann Defence, or the exchange variation of the Slav Defence.

3.\text{dxc}5

This is a principled move for White. He wins a pawn and will try to preserve it later.

About 3.\( \text{\text{f}} \text{f}4 \text{exd}4 \text{4.cxd}4 \text{c}6 \), or 3.\( \text{\text{g}} \text{g}5 \text{h}6 \text{4.\text{h}4 cxd}4 \text{5.cxd}4 \text{c}6 \) – see Chapter 3.

3.\( \text{\text{f}} \text{f}3 \text{cxd}4 \text{4.cxd}4 \text{f}6 \) – see Chapter 4.

3.e3 \text{cxd}4 \text{4.exd}4 \text{c}6 – see the Caro-Kann Defence (volume 2).

3...\text{e}6
4.b4
It is just bad for White to play here 4.e4, because after 4...\textit{xc}5, Black restores immediately the material balance. 5.exd5 exd5 6.\textit{gf}3 \textit{g}6 7.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}6 8.0-0 0-0 9.\textit{bd}2

Similar positions arise very often in the Tarrasch system in the French Defence (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.\textit{d}2). Here however, it is in a very good version for Black, because at first he has not lost a tempo for the move \textit{d}6 and secondly his king’s knight is developed to an active position to f6 and not on e7. 9...\textit{b}6 10.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}4 11.\textit{bd}4 \textit{g}4 12.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}8 13.\textit{e}1 \textit{f}6 14.\textit{f}d3 \textit{ad}8= Zindel – Lputian, Geneve 1986. Black’s pieces are very active and the vulnerability of his d5-pawn is irrelevant.

4...\textit{a}5 5.a3 \textit{b}6 6.cxb6

6...\textit{xb}6
Black is forced to sacrifice a pawn.
It would not work for him to play 6...axb4 7.cxb4 $\text{b4}+?!$, in view of 8.axb4 $\text{xa1}$ 9.$\text{b2}\pm$ Hort – Velimirovic, Novi Sad 1976 and thanks to the double attack White regains the material and preserves all the pluses of his position.

7.$\text{e3} \text{c7} 8.\text{d2} \text{f6} 9.\text{gf3} \text{d6} 10.\text{c1} 0-0\equiv$ Green – Cvetnic, ICCF 2015. Black has very good compensation for his minimal material deficit.

**B) 2.$\text{c3}$**

White is preparing e2-e4, but the placement of his knight in front of the c2-pawn may turn out to be unfavourable for him in this middle game.

2...e6!?

This is the simplest. Black is offering his opponent to transpose to the Caro-Kann Defence.

![Diagram](image)

3.$\text{g5}$

Black has not played yet $\text{f6}$, so this bishop-sortie is not so effective.

About 3.e4 $\text{dxe4}$ – see the Caro-Kann Defence (volume 2).

3.$\text{f3} \text{f5} 4.\text{f4}$ (After 4.$\text{g5}$, Black can solve the problem with the development of his bishop on f8 with $\text{b6}$, e6. 4...h6 5.$\text{h4} \text{b6} 6.\text{b1} \text{e6} 7.\text{e3} \text{e7} 8.\text{xe7} \text{xe7} 9.\text{d3} \text{d7}= Mueller – Simon, Germany 1992.) 4...e6 5.e3 $\text{d6} 6.\text{g3} \text{f6} 7.\text{d3} \text{xd3} 8.\text{xd3}$, Lindinger – Pedersen, Germany 2004, 8...0-0?!=

The move 3.$\text{f4}$ is not without venom. 3...$\text{b6}!?$(After the straightforward reaction 3...$\text{f5}$, Black must consider f2-f3, followed by g2-g4, h2-h4, or e2-e4.) 4.$\text{b1}$ (After 4.$\text{a4}$, Black’s simplest response would be 4...$\text{a5}+\pm 5.\text{c3}$, Sychev – Vitiugov, Sochi 2016, 5...$\text{b6}!?=\pm$; there arises a double-edged position after the pawn-sacrifice 4. $\text{d2} \text{xb2} 5.\text{b1} \text{a3}\infty$ Cornette – Genov, Morzine 2014.) 4...$\text{f6}$ 5.e3 $\text{f5} 6.\text{f3}$ (After 6.$\text{f3}$, Black should better defend in advance against g2-g4-g5. 6...h6 7.g4, Darini – Melkumyan, Doha 2016, 7...$\text{d7}$). Black’s bishop is more reliably placed here than on g6, or h7. 8.$\text{h4} \text{c5}\equiv$ Black follows the classical principle and counters the enemy flank attack with a counter strike in the centre. White has managed to advance his kingside pawns, but will have serious problems to find a safe haven for his king in the forthcoming middle game.) 6...e6 7.$\text{d3} \text{xd3} 8.\text{cxd3}$ White opens the c-file for his rooks, but compromises his pawn-structure. (8. $\text{xd3} \text{bd7} 9.\text{h3} \text{e7=} Hillmann – Lombardy, Nice 1974) 8...a5. Black impedes the pawn-minority attack of his opponent (b2-b4). 9.0-0 $\text{e7} 10.\text{a4} \text{b5} 11.\text{e2} \text{bd7=} Ibarra Jerez – Perez Candelario, Navalmoral 2012.

3...$\text{h6}$

This is a useful move for Black if he plans to castle kingside. He provides his king with a leeway in
This is an important move. White’s plan includes the moves \texttt{Qd2}, \texttt{0-0-0}, \texttt{f2-f3}, \texttt{e2-e4}. Now, he must either sacrifice his \texttt{b2}-pawn, or lose the possibility to castle queenside.

\textbf{5.\texttt{Rb1}}

It would be too risky for White to choose here \texttt{5.Qd2 Qxb2 6.Rb1 a3 7.e4 dxe4} Black lags in development indeed, but he has no pawn-weaknesses in his position and White can hardly find targets for attack. For example, White may have serious problems, after the straightforward move \texttt{8.d5?!}. \texttt{8...f6 9.g3 bd7 10.ge2}, Miladinovic – Starostits, Cuto 2005, \texttt{10...e5?}! \texttt{11.dxe6 b6 12.exf7+ xf7–+}

\textbf{5...f5}

Before playing \texttt{e7-e6}, Black develops his bishop to an active position.

\textbf{6.f3}

The move \texttt{6.e3} leads to a quieter game. \texttt{6...e6 7.d3 d7}. Black prepares the development of his knight to the \texttt{f6}-square. \texttt{8.ge2 gf6 9.0-0 e7 10.f3 xd3 11.exd3 0-0 12.e4 a5 13.f4}, Kavalenia – Shalimov, Dimitrov 2007, \texttt{13...d8?!}= It is not easy for White to develop his initiative on the kingside.

\textbf{6...e6 7.e4 h7 8.f2}

\textbf{8...dxe4}

Black begins an attack against the \texttt{e4}-square

\textbf{9.fxe4}

After \texttt{9.Qxe4}, the position begins to resemble the classical system of the Caro-Kann Defence. \texttt{9...d7}
10.\textit{Bd}3 \textit{gf}6 11.\textit{c3} \textit{\textit{\textit{d8}}=}

9...\textit{\textit{\textit{f6}}} 10.\textit{\textit{\textit{d3}}} \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b4}}} 11.\textit{e5}.} White must present to his opponent the \textit{d5}-square. \textit{11...\textit{\textit{x}}d3} 12.\textit{\textit{x}}d3 \textit{\textit{d5}} 13.\textit{\textit{\textit{ge}}}2 \textit{0-0=} White has more space, but Black’s pawn-structure is much more elastic.

C) 2.e3 \textit{\textit{gf6}}

![Diagram]

\textbf{3.\textit{\textit{\textit{d3}}}}

White preserves the possibility to advance f2-f4.

About 3.f4 \textit{\textit{\textit{f5}}} – see volume 2.

3.\textit{\textit{\textit{f}}3} \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{g4}}} – see Chapter 24.}

3.c4 \textit{c6} – see Chapter 1.

3.\textit{\textit{c3}}. White’s knight will be misplaced on this square impeding the pawn-advance c2-c4. 3...\textit{\textit{c5}} 4.\textit{\textit{f3}} \textit{\textit{c6}}.

![Diagram]

After 5.\textit{\textit{dxc5}} e5 6.\textit{\textit{b5}} \textit{\textit{\textit{g4}}} 7.h3 \textit{\textit{xf3}} 8.\textit{\textit{xf3}} \textit{\textit{xc5}}, Black restores the material balance. 9.0-0 0-0 10.\textit{\textit{\textit{d1}}} e4 11.\textit{\textit{\textit{e2}}}, Lugovskoy – Kupreichik, Tula 2017, 11...\textit{\textit{d7}}!? Black protects reliably his \textit{d5}-pawn.

12.\textit{\textit{c4}} \textit{d6} 13.b3 \textit{\textit{b8}} 14.g3 \textit{\textit{d7}}. He would not mind the exchange of the \textit{d5}-pawn for the enemy \textit{h3}-pawn, since the position would be considerably simplified after that. 15.\textit{\textit{\textit{xd5}}} \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{exd5}}} 16.\textit{\textit{xd5}}} \textit{\textit{\textit{xd5}}} 17.c4 \textit{c3}. This is an important intermediate move leading to the weakening of White’s queenside pawn-structure. 18.bxc3 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{xh3}}}=}}}}}}}

5.\textit{\textit{b5}}. White exerts pressure on the a4-e8 diagonal with the idea to provoke \textit{\textit{\textit{d7}}}, so that after \textit{\textit{e7-e6}}, Black’s light-squared bishop would be restricted. Still, this would not be sufficient for White to maintain an advantage in the opening. 5...\textit{\textit{e6}} 6.0-0 \textit{\textit{d7}} 7.b3 (7.a3, Kovacevic – Sermek, Makarska 1995, 7...\textit{\textit{a6=}})
7...cxd4. Black opens the c-file for his major pieces. 8.exd4 a6 9.d3 d6 10.e2. White is preparing the exchange of the dark-squared bishops. 10...0-0 11.f4 xf4 12.xf4 e7 13.d2 fe8. Black wishes to accomplish the freeing pawn-break in the centre e6–e5. 14.fe1 h6 15.c3 eac8 16.ad1 e5 17.xe5 xxe5 18.xe5 xe5 19.dxe5 xe5= Hering – Rosa Solorzano, ICCF 2016. The weaknesses of the pawns on c3 and d5 balance each other,

3...e6!?
Black places his knight in front of his c-pawn, but the threat e7-e5 compensates this defect of his position.

4.f4
It might seem that Black’s strategy is in doubt after this move.

After 4.f3 g4, White cannot prevent the pawn-advance e7-e5. 5.bd2 (5.0-0 e5 6.dxe5 xe5=) 5.e5 6.dxe5 xe5 7.e2 xf3+ 8.xf3 d6 9.0-0, Orban – Besenyi, Szekszard 1989, 9...e7!? There arise similar positions, but with colours reversed, in the Rubinstein system in the French Defence. Black has a freer game.


4...b4!?
This is the point! Black wishes either to exchange on d3, obtaining the two-bishop advantage, or to follow with f5, attacking the c2-square.

5.f3
5.e2 f5. Now, White’s knight is forced to occupy an unfavourable position at the edge of the board. 6.a3 c5 7.c3. After Black has advanced c7-c5, his knight might retreat. 7.c6 8.f3 e6 9.c2 d6 10.e5 c8 Meijers – Fedorovsky, Germany 2012.

5.xd3+ 6.cxd3 e6 7.c3 c5
8.\textit{dxc5}
8.\textit{d2 cxd4 9.\textit{xc4 c5 10.\textit{ce2 e7 11.c1 0-0}.} Black has evacuated his knight away from the centre and has a slight but stable edge thanks to his two-bishop advantage. 12.0-0 \textit{d7 13.h3 f6} Llagaria Vidal – Castro Cruz, ICCF 2014.

8...\textit{xe5 9.d4}
White increases his control over the e5-square, but weakens the light squares in his camp.

9...\textit{e7 10.e5}
The move 10.\textit{d3}, Showalter – Pillsbury, New York 1898, has the defect that after 10...0-0!, followed by b7-b6 and a7-a5, Black will win a tempo by attacking the enemy queen with the move \textit{a6}.

10...0-0 11.0-0 \textit{e4 12.xe4 dxe4 13.d2}, Marshall – Leonhardt, Vienna 1908, 13...\textit{d5}!? Black is centralising his queen. 14.b3 xxb3 15.axb3 f6 16.c4 d7 17.f1 f8 He has the two-bishop advantage, while White’s queenside pawns have been weakened.

D) 2.e4
This is the so-called Blackmar – Diemer Gambit. White sacrifices a pawn, but can hardly obtain sufficient compensation for it.

2...\textit{dxe4}
Naturally, Black can simply transfer to the Caro-Kann Defence with the move 2...c6. Still, why not capture a central pawn?
3.\textit{\textit{c}3n}

This is the improvement by Diemer, after which the gambit was named after the two of them.

At first Blackmar used to play 3.f3?!., but it became obvious quickly that after the energetic strike in the centre 3...\textit{e5}! Black would seize the initiative. 4.dxe5. This seems to be the most resilient move for White (Following 4.d5 \textit{\textit{d}f6\textit{\textit{c}3\textit{b}4\textit{g}5}, Rossi – Have, Corsica 2004, 6...\textit{h6}!?. 7.\textit{xf6 xc3+\textit{b}xc3, Black preserves the extra pawn, because capturing on e4 is impossible due to the check on h4.) 4...\textit{xd1+5.d\textit{d}d1c6}

6.fxe4!? (6.\textit{xf4 exf3!? 7.xxf3 \textit{e6 8.b5 ge7\textit{d}, followed by 0-0-0. Black has a better pawn-structure, while White will have problems with his king, despite the fact that it is an endgame. There are still too many pieces left on the board.) 6...\textit{\textit{d}xe5}

3...\textit{\textit{f}6}

Naturally, Black is reluctant to give back so easily his extra pawn and later he intends to preserve it, for example, with the help of the move \textit{\textit{f5}.}
4.f3
4.e4 d5 5.f3. The e4-pawn is doubled, but it hampers the development of the knight on g1. Therefore, White wishes to exchange it, opening in the process the f-file for his rook. (5.g5 e6 6.ge2 c6++; 5.ge2 c6 6.0-0 e6+) 5...e6

Black does not wish to exchange on f3, not to enhance the development of his opponent’s pieces.

6.g5 b4. The pin of this knight is very unpleasant for White. 7.d2 bd7 8.0-0-0, Reh – Mueller, Bad Zwesten 1999, 8...c6!?

After the advance of his g-pawn – 6.g4, White can restore the material balance, but at the price of the considerable weakening of his kingside. 6...g6 7.g5 d5 8.xe4 h6. Black exploits immediately the defect of his opponent’s position. 9.h4 hxg5 10.xg5, Portisch – Jankovics, Zalaegerszeg 1959, 10...c5!??

6.fxe4 xe4 7.f3 b4 8.0-0. White must continue with his sacrifices in order to maintain his ebbing off initiative. 8...xc3 9.bxc3 xc3 10.a3. He adds the exchange on the altar of the attack, Markwardt – Mueller, Germany 1957. Black may refrain here from capturing the rook. 10...c6!? 11.b1 xd4 12.h1 xc2 13.c5 xd1 14.fxd1 b4!? Black sacrifices two pieces for a rook here and simplifies considerably the position. 15.xb4 e3 16.c5 xd1 17.xd1 c6 18.e1 b6 19.f2 c5 20.b5+ e7++ 4.g5 c6!? This is the right move for Black! He does not need to be in a hurry to play f5, because White can counter this with xe2, followed by b5. 5.xf6. White restores the material balance, but Black’s bishops will be very powerful on this open position. (5.e2?! xd4; White cannot equalise with the gambit approach 5.f3 exf3 6.xf3 g4 7.d2 bd7 8.0-0-0 e6++) Eschert – Turowski, ICCF 2016. Black has an extra pawn and a solid position.) 5...xf6 6.e4 b6
This is his most precise move. Now, White will have problems with the protection of his pawn on b2.

7.\textit{b3}. This move weakens the e1-a5 diagonal (White would not solve his defensive problems with the line: 7.\textit{b1} e6 8.\textit{c3} a6\textsuperscript{+}, followed by 0-0-0, Lipski – Dukaczewski, Jarzombowek 2007.). 7...f5 8.\textit{c3} b4 9.\textit{ge2} a5 10.\textit{d3} 0-0 11.0-0-0, Klinger – Wetscherek, Oberwart 1991. Here, Black can obtain an advantage in numerous ways, but the simplest would be to transfer the knight to the f6-square in order to increase his control over the central squares. 11...d7?! 12.b2 f6\textsuperscript{+}

4...\textit{exf3} 5.\textit{xf3}

White sacrifices his second central pawn for the sake of maintaining his initiative.

After 5.\textit{xf3} c6, there arises a position from the Caro-Kann Defence, which will be analysed in our volume two after the move-order 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.\textit{c3} dxe4 4.f3 exf3 5.\textit{xf3} f6.

5...\textit{xd4} 6.\textit{c3} g4

Black lags in development and naturally, he would not mind a transfer into an endgame.

7.\textit{f2}

7.b5. The attempt to capture Black’s a7-pawn may end up tragically for White’s knight. 7.\textit{a6} 8.0-0-0 c6 9.\textit{xa7}, Maciulewicz – Sakai, Email 2001, 9...d7?! 10.xg4 xg4 11.b6 b4 12.a3 d5—+

7...\textit{f5}?!?

Black continues the chase after the enemy queen.

8.\textit{f3}

White allows g4.
After 8.\textit{d}2 e6 9.0-0-0 \textit{e}7 10.\textit{f}3 0-0 11.\textit{d}3 \textit{a}5 12.\textit{he}1 \textit{c}6\text{=}+, White has no compensation for the pawn at all.

8...\textit{g}4

Black trades the powerful enemy bishop. 9.\textit{d}2 \textit{xe}3 10.\textit{xe}3 e6 11.0-0-0 \textit{e}7 12.\textit{d}3 \textit{a}5 13.\textit{hf}1, Helman – Jan, ICCF 2007, 13...\textit{c}6!? Black is not in a hurry to castle kingside. After \textit{d}7, he might castle queenside at an opportune moment. 14.\textit{e}4 \textit{b}6\text{=} E) 2.\textit{g}5

White is waiting for the appearance of the enemy knight on f6 in order after \textit{xf}6 to compromise the enemy pawn-structure.

2...\textit{h}6

It is useful for Black to play this move, because he might have the possibility to play g7-g5 and \textit{g}7 in the future, or just to use the h7-square as a place for his bishop on f5 to retreat to, or as a leeway for his king.

3.\textit{h}4

3.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}5!? 4.e4 (4.e3 e6 5.\textit{d}3 x\textit{d}3 6.cxd3 \textit{d}6\text{=}+) 4...e6 5.\textit{c}3 c6 6.e3 \textit{d}6 7.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xd}6\text{=} Rafa – Balda, Poland 2007.

3...\textit{c}5

Black begins an immediate fight for the centre.
4.dxc5
White wins a pawn, but weakens the a1-h8 diagonal and Black exploits this immediately.

About 4.c3 cxd4 5.cxd4 \( \square \)c6 – see Chapter 3.

It is obviously not correct for White to sacrifice a pawn here 4.e4?! dxe4 5.d5 g5 6.\( \square \)g3 \( \square \)g7 7.\( \square \)c3, Mehmeti – Postny, Baku 2016, 7...f5!?

Following 4.\( \square \)c3, Black can continue to exert pressure against the enemy central pawn. 4...\( \square \)c6 5.\( \square \)f3
(5.e4 dxe4 6.d5 \( \square \)d4\( \uparrow \) Chepukaitis – Grachev, St Petersburg 2002; 5.e3 cxd4 6.exd4 \( \square \)f6 7.\( \square \)f3 \( \square \)g4 – see 5.\( \square \)f3) 5...\( \square \)f6 6.e3 cxd4

7.\( \square \)xf6. This move presents Black with the two-bishop advantage. 7...gx\( \text{f} \)6 8.exd4 e5 9.\( \square \)b5 e4 10.\( \square \)d2 a6 11.\( \square \)xc6+ bxc\( \text{c} \)6\( \uparrow \) Gazi – Delizia, ICCF 2012.

7.exd4 \( \square \)g4. Here, before playing e7-e6, Black develops his bishop to an active position. 8.\( \square \)e2 e6 9.\( \square \)e5 \( \square \)xe2 10.\( \square \)xe2 \( \square \)xe5 11.dxe5, Neronov – Fiodorov, Yuzhny 2008. The pin of the knight is harmless for Black, because he can play simply 11...g5!? 12.\( \square \)g3 \( \square \)d7 13.0-0 \( \square \)b6 14.\( \square \)d4 h5 15.h3 \( \square \)e7\( \uparrow \) Later, he can continue with his pawn-offensive against the enemy king. His king can always find a safe haven on the queenside.

4.e3 \( \square \)c6
5. c3 cxd4 – see 4. c3.

After 5. dxc5 c6, White can preserve his extra pawn with the line: 6. b5 a5+ 7. c3 a6 8. a4 e6 9. xf6 gxf6 10. d4 xc5 11. xf6 g8, but the two-bishop advantage, as well as the better development more than compensate Black’s minimal material deficit, Demian – Ressler, ICCF 2011.

Following 5. f3 b6 6. c3, Black obtains a good position after transferring his knight to the f5-square. 6... e6 7. e2 cxd4 8. exd4 ge7∞ Eliseev – Korbut, St Petersburg 2001. It would not be easy for White to preserve his dark-squared bishop after f5.

5. c3 b6 6. b3 c4. Black occupies space on the queenside. 7.xb6 (After 7. c2, Black can play 7... f5?! and, the defencelessness of the b2-pawn does not provide White with the possibility to capture the bishop, Kindermann – Landa, Germany 2016.) 7...xb6 8. d2 b5, followed by b5-b4. White cannot counter Black’s queenside offensive with the counterstrike in the centre 9.e4?!, because after 9...dxe4, Black’s threat to win the bishop with g7-g5, f7-f5-f4, would not allow White to regain his pawn, Polaczek – Sretenskij, Dos Hermanas 2003.

4... g5 5. g3 g7
Black develops his bishop to an active position with tempo.

6. c3 a6

7. e4
White sacrifices a pawn in an attempt to deprive his opponent of his castling rights.


After 7. a4+ d7 8. a3, White can try to preserve his material advantage, but following 8... c8 9. b4
(9.c6, Kamsky – Shirov, Moscow 2007, 9...\texttt{\texttt{9.c6!}}) 9...\texttt{\texttt{c7 10.b2, Afanasiev – Deviatkin, Moscow 2016, 10...a5!? 11.a3, Black can advance his pawns in the centre and on the kingside. 11...f5 12.e3 e5})

7...dxe4 8.xd8+ \texttt{\texttt{x}xa6 bxa6}

10.f3!
This is the only move after which White can obtain an acceptable game.

His position is inferior after 10.h4 f5 11.hxg5 hxg5 12.hxh8 \texttt{\texttt{h}xh8\texttt{\texttt{f}}} Konenkin – Landa, Minsk 2015, as well as following 10.a3 f5 11.0-0-0+ e8 12.e7, Paragua – Aradhya, chess.com 2017, 12...b7!? 10...e3 11.a3 f5 12.0-0-0+ e8 13.f4 e5!

It is essential for Black to defend his pawn on e3; otherwise, this pawn, cut off away from the rest of his forces, might perish. 14.fxe5 e7 (After the straightforward line: 14...f4 15.e1 xxe5, Tamosaitis – Kazakovskiy, Lithuania 2016, 16.e4 c7, White can exploit his superior development and begin an attack against his opponent’s far-advanced pawns. 17.h4 g4 18.e2 \texttt{h}h7\texttt{\texttt{f}} 15.e4 f4 16.e1 c6 17.f3 e6 18.d6+ e7 19.d4 xex5\texttt{\texttt{f}} Velasco – Miras Garcia, ICCF 2015. Black’s position seems preferable thanks to his two powerful bishops and his far-advanced f and e-pawns.)
Chapter 24

1. d4 d5
A) 2. Bf4
B) 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Bf4

In this chapter we will analyse the rather popular lately London system, which can be characterised by the early development of White’s bishop to the f4-square. At first we will see this development of the bishop on move two – A) 2. Bf4, and then on the third move – B) 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Bf4.

A) 2. Bf4 c5
This is Black’s most practical response. In some variations Black can exchange on d4 after which there will arise by transposition lines either from the exchange variation of the Slav Defence, or from the Caro-Kann Defence.

B) 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Bf4

3. e4
This pawn-sacrifice is double-edged.

About 3.c3 cxd4 4. cxd4 Qc6 – see Chapter 3, variation A.

3. e3 cxd4!?! 4. exd4 Qc6 – see the Caro-Kann Defence (volume 2).

3. Bxb8. This voluntary exchange of the bishop for the enemy knight is obviously bad for White.

3. Bxb8 4. c3 (4. dx5 e6 5. Qd4 c7 6. e3, Stefanova – Skripchenko, Shenyang 2000, 6... c6 7. Bb5 a5+ 8. c3 a6?! 9. a4 xc5 10. xc5 xc5 Qxc5 Black has a stable advantage thanks to his bishop-pair.)

3.\ Ng3. Now, Black can occupy the centre with his pawns. 3...cxd4 4.\ Nxb8 (It is worse for White to play here 4.\ Nxd4, because of 4...f6 5.\ e3 e5 6.\ b3 \ c6 7.e3 \ e6 8.e2 \ h6 9.\ d2 \ f5 Bozic – Zelic, Ljubljana 1999. Later Black can exchange on g3, obtaining the two-bishop advantage.) 4...\ a5+Black protects in advance his pawn on a7 with this intermediate check. 5.c3 \ xxb8 6.\ d4. Black lags in development and has no time for f6 and e5. Still, after 6...\ f6 7.\ bd2 e6 8.\ b3 (8.e3, Skatchkov – Bezgodov, St Petersburg 1998, 8...\ d7!?+ 8...\ b6 9.\ xb6 axb6∞ A.Sokolov – Westerinen, Gausdal 1996, White must play very accurately in order not to end up in an inferior position, because despite the vulnerability of his doubled pawns on the b-file, Black’s position seems preferable thanks to his two-bishop advantage.

3.\ c3 \ c6 4.\ f3 (4.e3 cxd4 5.exd4 \ f5 – see the Caro-Kann Defence, volume 2) 4...\ f6 5.e3 cxd4

About 6.exd4 \ g4 – see the Caro-Kann Defence, volume 2.

6.\ b5. White’s desire to create a double attack on the c7-square may lead to difficulties for him.

6...\ a5+ 7.d2 \ xd2+ 8.\ xd2 dxe3+ 9.\ xe3 \ d7?!+, Black removes his king in advance against the double attack, Rakic – Cvetkovic, Kladovo 1991. Later, he can defend the c7-square against the penetration of White’s knight with the moves e7-e6, \ c5-b6.

6.\ xxd4 e6 7.\ b5 \ d7 8.0-0 \ e7= Ryska – Ingersol, ICCF 2009.

3.dxc5 \ c6. Black is threatening e7-e5.

4.e4 \ f6 5.exd5 \ xd5 6.g3 \ f5. Black is preparing e7-e6. 7.c3 e6 8.\ d2 (White cannot defend his pawn with 8.b4? \ f6! 9.\ b5 \ dxb4–+) 8...\ xc5 Bu Xiangzhi – Ding Liren, Shenzhen 2016. Black’s prospects are already preferable thanks to his superior development.
4. \( \text{f3} \text{ e6} \text{ f3} \text{ e4} \text{ xc5} \text{ c3} \text{ ge7=} \) 5...\( \text{xc5} \text{ e3} \text{ f6} \text{ bd2} \text{ 0-0} \). Black has evacuated his king away from the centre. His position is already preferable. 8.\( \text{d3} \text{ e8} \text{ e5} \). White prevents e6-e5. 9...\( \text{d6} \). Black insists on the continuation of his plan. 10.\( \text{xc6} \text{ bxc6} \text{ xd6} \text{ xd6} \text{ 0-0-0} \text{ e5=} \) Rozhko – Elistratov, Moscow 2015. Black’s powerful pawn-centre provides him with an edge.

3...\( \text{dxe4} \text{ d5} \text{ f6} \text{ c3} \text{ g6!?} \)

Black plays much more often here 5...a6, defending against the knight-sortie. Still, the threat \( \text{b5} \) is not so dangerous for him.

6.\( \text{d2} \)
White not only prepares castling queenside, but also wishes to trade his opponent’s dark-squared bishop.
6.\( \text{e2?!} \text{ g7} \text{ 0-0-0} \text{ d6} \text{ e8} \text{ d5} \text{ c6} \text{ +} \), Valero – Lacrosse, Benidorm 2011, 9...\( \text{c6=} \)
Black should not be afraid of 6.\( \text{b5} \text{ a6} \text{ d6} \text{ h6} \text{ xh6} \text{ h6} \text{ Qh6} \text{ f6} \text{ c6} \text{ +} \), Toupalik – Spielmann, Prague 1912, 7...\( \text{e6=} \)

6...\( \text{g7} \text{ 0-0-0} \text{ 0-0} \text{ h6} \text{ xh6} \text{ h6} \text{ a6} \)

10.\( \text{h4} \), Winants – Okkes, Netherlands 2006 (10.\( \text{f3} \text{ exf3} \text{ gxf3} \text{ d6=} \) 10...\( \text{g4=} \) This is a very practical decision. Black ousts immediately the enemy queen further away from his king. 11.\( \text{d2} \text{ e3} \). Black cannot hold his e4-pawn anyway. 12.\( \text{fxe3} \) After the removal of the pawn from the f-file, it would not be easy to oust the knight from the g4-square. 12...\( \text{d7} \text{ h5} \text{ df6} \text{ hxg6} \text{ fxg6} \text{ e4} \text{ b5} \text{ e1} \) White is preparing e4-e5, but this threat is not so dangerous for Black. 16...\( \text{a5} \text{ e5} \text{ h5} \text{ d6} \text{ exd6} \text{ f2} \) Here, White has nothing better than after 20.\( \text{hxh5} \text{ xd1} \text{ e7} \text{ gxh5} \) to force a draw by repetition of the position: 22.\( \text{g5=} \text{ h8} \text{ e5=} \text{ g8=} \)

B) 2.\( \text{f3} \text{ f6} \text{ f4} \)
This system for White is becoming very popular lately. M. Carlsen, V.Kramnik and many other strong
grandmasters have played like this once in a while. This fact does not prove that the move 3.\( \text{B}f4 \) is particularly strong. The opening theory is developing so fast every year that it has become very difficult for White not only to obtain an advantage after the main lines arising after 3.c4, but also to enter a fighting position. So, he is looking for sidelines in which he can obtain a fighting position, even if it is about equal, if his opponent has not subjected it to a thorough computer analysis.

3...c5

Now, just like after 2.\( \text{B}f4 \), Black would not mind transposing to the exchange variation of the Slav Defence, or to a rather harmless variation of the Caro-Kann Defence.

4.dxc5
4.\( \text{c}3 \text{c}6 \) – see variation A.
4.c3 cxd4 5.cxd4 \( \text{c}6 \) – see Chapter 4.
4.e3 cxd4 5.exd4 \( \text{c}6 \) – see the Caro-Kann Defence, volume 2.

After 4.\( \text{B}xb8 \text{xb8} \), Black’s prospects seem already preferable thanks to his bishop-pair. 5.e3 e6 6.e3 (The chase after the enemy a7-pawn would end tragically for White’s queen: 6.\( \text{a}4+?! \text{d}7 7.\text{xa7?!} \text{c}8–+ 8.\text{b}6 \text{a}8 9.\text{b}3 \text{a}4 10.\text{b}6 \text{d}7 0–1 Knechtel – Letourneau, corr. 1982.) 6...b5\( \) Fritsch – Drexel, Wattens 1999.

4.c4. The combination of the moves 3.\( \text{B}f4 \) and 4.c4 is obviously bad for White. 4...cxd4 5.\( \text{c}xd4 \text{d}7 \text{b}d7 \). The threat e7-e5 is very unpleasant for him. 6.\( \text{a}4 \), Hoenig – Van den Doel, Germany 2016. It might seem that White has prevented his opponent’s threat, but Black can play 6...e5?! anyway, sacrificing a pawn for the initiative. 7.\( \text{xe5} \text{c}5 8.e3 0-0 9.\text{xf6} \text{xf6} 10.\text{c}3 \text{d}4 \). Black exchanges his powerful bishop, but opens the e-file. 11.\( \text{exd4} \text{e}8+ 12.\text{e}2 \text{g}4 \). It is useful for Black to weaken his opponent’s position. 13.f3 \text{d}7 14.\( \text{c}2 \text{xc4}+ \) Black’s advantage is doubtless here thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

4...e6
5.e3
About 5.\( \text{\textbullet} \)xc3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xc5 6.e3 0-0, or 5.c3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xc5 6.e3 0-0, or 5.\( \text{\textbullet} \)bd2 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xc5 6.e3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)c6 – see 5.e3.

5.d6 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xd6 6.cxd6 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xd6 7.c3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)c6 8.e3 e5 9.\( \text{\textbullet} \)e2 0-0\( ^{\text{\textbullet}} \) Kolbus – Yagupov, Biel 2006.

White should better not try to hold on to his extra pawn, since following 5.b4?! a5 6.c3 axb4 7.cxb4 (7.\( \text{\textbullet} \)xb8 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xb8 8.cxb4 b6 9.\( \text{\textbullet} \)a4+ \( \text{\textbullet} \)d7!\( ^{\text{\textbullet}} \) Now, Black regains his pawn anyway, because White cannot play 10.c6?, due to 10...\( \text{\textbullet} \)f6+ Schroll – Palac, Aix les Bains 2011.) 7...\( \text{\textbullet} \)c6 8.\( \text{\textbullet} \)d2 (8.\( \text{\textbullet} \)b3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)e4. Black prepares the development of his queen on f6, or g7-g5 and \( \text{\textbullet} \)g7. 9.\( \text{\textbullet} \)c3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)f6 10.\( \text{\textbullet} \)d2. White has managed to cover the a1-h8 diagonal, but there comes trouble surprisingly from another side... 10...\( \text{\textbullet} \)xb4!

11.\( \text{\textbullet} \)xb4 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xc5 12.\( \text{\textbullet} \)b2 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xf2+ 13.\( \text{\textbullet} \)d1 \( \text{\textbullet} \)c5\( ^{\text{\textbullet}} \) Williams – Perkiomaki, ICCF 2010.) 8...\( \text{\textbullet} \)e4 9.a4, Polyaninov – P.Smirnov, St Petersburg 2014, 9...\( \text{\textbullet} \)f6 10.\( \text{\textbullet} \)a3 g5! 11.\( \text{\textbullet} \)c3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xc3 12.\( \text{\textbullet} \)xc3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xb4\( ^{\text{\textbullet}} \) The pawns are equal indeed, but White’s queenside pawn-structure has been horribly weakened and his pieces are not developed.

5...\( \text{\textbullet} \)xc5

6.c4
6.e3 0-0 7.\( \text{\textbullet} \)bd2 \( \text{\textbullet} \)c6 – see 6.\( \text{\textbullet} \)bd2.

6.a3 0-0 7.c4 dxc4 – see 6.c4.

6.\( \text{\textbullet} \)c3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)c6 7.\( \text{\textbullet} \)d3 h6 8.\( \text{\textbullet} \)b5 0-0 9.0-0 \( \text{\textbullet} \)e7. Black’s prospects look preferable thanks to his pawn-dominance in the centre. 10.\( \text{\textbullet} \)bd4 \( \text{\textbullet} \)g4 11.\( \text{\textbullet} \)xc6 bxc6 12.\( \text{\textbullet} \)e5 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xe5 13.\( \text{\textbullet} \)xe5 f6 14.\( \text{\textbullet} \)c3 e5\( ^{\text{\textbullet}} \) Jefferson – Sherwood, ICCF 2015.

After 6.\( \text{\textbullet} \)d3, Black can begin a chase after the enemy bishop on f4. 6...\( \text{\textbullet} \)h5 7.\( \text{\textbullet} \)xb8 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xb8 8.\( \text{\textbullet} \)b5+ \( \text{\textbullet} \)f8!? This is an interesting decision after which Black preserves his two-bishop advantage. The loss of his
castling rights would not be so important. 9.0-0  \( \square f6 \) 10.\( \square bd2 \) g6\( \square \) Mouron – Moskvichev, ICCF 2011. 6.\( \square c2 \)  \( \square c6 \) 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 (8.\( \square bd2 \)  \( \square e7 \) – see 6.\( \square bd2 \) 8...dxc4. This is the simplest way for Black to obtain a good position. 9.\( \square xc4 \)  \( \square e7 \) 10.\( \square c3 \)  \( \square d8 \) 11.\( \square e2 \) h6 12.\( \square e5 \)  \( \square x e 5 \) 13.\( \square x e 5 \)  \( \square d7 \)\( \square \), followed by  \( \square c6 \). Wang Chen – Wang Hao, Xinghua 2015. Black solves the problem with his bishop on c8 and equalises completely.

6.\( \square bd2 \)  \( \square c6 \)

7.a3 0-0 8.b4  \( \square e7 \)= Antoniewski – Smolen, Slovakia 2016.

7.\( \square d3 \)  \( \square e7 \) 8.\( \square e5 \) (Following 8.\( \square g5 \), Black advances e6-e5 and obtains a stable advantage. 8...h6 9.\( \square h4 \), I.Sokolov – Matlakov, Dubai 2014, 9...e5\( \square \) 8...\( \square d7 \) 9.\( \square xc6 \) bxc6 10.\( \square g3 \) 0-0\( \square \) Andersson – Hector, Malmo 1995.

7.c3 0-0 8.\( \square d3 \) (8.\( \square c2 \) h6 – see 7.\( \square c2 \) 8...\( \square e8 \) – see variation A, 3.dxc5  \( \square c6 \) 4.\( \square f3 \) e6.

7.\( \square e2 \) 0-0 8.c3 (8.0-0  \( \square e7 \) 9.\( \square b3 \)  \( \square b6 \) 10.\( \square e5 \)  \( \square d8 \)\( \square \); 10.\( \square bd4 \), Kurajica – Lautier, Belgrade 1999, 10...\( \square e4 \)\( \square \) 8...h6 9.0-0  \( \square h5 \) 10.\( \square b3 \)  \( \square b6 \)\( \square \), followed by the exchange of the knight for the enemy bishop, Demircioglu – Yilmaz, Izmir 2016. Now, Black can even try to fight for the advantage thanks to his two powerful bishops.

6...0-0 7.\( \square c3 \)

There has arisen a position from the Queen’s Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\( \square c3 \)  \( \square f6 \) 4.\( \square f3 \)  \( \square e7 \) 5.\( \square f4 \) 0-0 6.e3 c5 7.dxc5  \( \square xc5 \)\( \square \), but with an extra tempo for Black, because he has saved it for the move  \( \square e7 \).

Or 7.a3 dxc4 8.\( \square xd8 \)  \( \square x d8 \) 9.\( \square xc4 \), Wen Yang – Asgarizadeh, Baku 2014, 9...b6=

7...\( \square c6 \)
8.a3
White lags in development and must play very carefully not to allow the opening of the centre after d5-d4, because Black is very well prepared for that.


8...d4
White’s king is still stranded in the centre, so Black wishes to open the position. His idea is to advance e6-e5.

9.exd4 Nxd4 10.Bxe2

10...Nxf3+ 11.Bxf3 e5!!

Black sacrifices a pawn and seizes the initiative. In addition, he will soon obtain a bishop-pair, which will be very active in this open position.


Black wishes to undermine the base under the powerful enemy knight on d5. 20.c7 Bc8 21.c5 b6 22.cxb6 d6 23.b2 axb6 24.e6 Kg3 25.hxg3. White has managed to preserve his extra pawn, but
Black’s pieces are very active and this compensates his minimal material deficit. 25...\texttt{c2}+ 26.\texttt{b3} \texttt{dc8} 27.\texttt{hd1} \texttt{e2c3}+ 28.\texttt{b2} \texttt{e2c2}+ 29.\texttt{b3} \texttt{f8c3}+ 30.\texttt{a4} g5∞ Sesko – Woznica, ICCF 2016.
Chapter 25

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6

In this chapter we will analyse all the possibilities for White besides 3.Bf4 and 3.g3.

3.Bg5
This bishop-sortie is much more justified when Black has played e6, instead of d5 (The Torre Attack), because then his knight is pinned and he cannot reply with Ne4.

About 3.c4 c6 – see Chapters 5-22.

3.Qbd2 c6 4.e3 (4.g3 Qg4 5.Qg2 e6 – see Chapter 26; 4.c4 Qf5 – see Chapter 5) 4...Qf5 5.Qe2 (5.c4 e6 – see Chapter 5, variation A) 5...h6. Black prepares in advance a square for the retreat of his bishop. 6.Qe5 Qbd7 7.f4. White fortifies his knight at the centre of the board, but weakens the e4-square. 7...e6 8.0-0 Qe7 9.g4. This is a risky decision for White, since it is well known that pawns cannot come back...

9...Qxh4! 10.g5 hxg5! Black is not afraid of the opening of the f-file, because after 11.fxg5, he has prepared the piece-sacrifice 11...Qxe5 12.gxf6, Naiditsch – Vitiugov, Jurmala 2016, 12...gxg6?! 13.dxe5 fxe5! He has obtained two pawns for the knight, a powerful pawn-centre and excellent attacking prospects against the enemy king.

3.a3. This move is often played by the French GM Eric Prie. White is ready to counter the move c7-c5 after which he will simply capture the pawn and will protect it with b2-b4. Still, after 3...c6, the move 3.a3 will hardly be so useful.

After 4.e3 Qg4 5.h3 Qxf3 6.Qxf3 Qbd7 7.c4, Black can exploit his lead in development and play 7...e5, beginning active actions at the centre of the board. 8.cxd5, Kivimaki – Olsson, Norrköping 2010,
8...exd4!? 9.dxc6 Qxc6 10.Qf5 Qxc6 11.Qb5 dxc3 12.Qxe3 Qxd5 13.Qxd5 Qxd5. White will hardly manage to make use of his two-bishop advantage in this endgame, because Black’s pieces are very active. 14.Qd2 0-0 15.0-0 Qd6 16.Qc1 Qde7 17.Qc4 f6 18.Qd1 Qe5 19.Qc3 Qd4 20.Qe6+ Qb8 21.Qab1 Qhd8 22.Qe1 Qxd1 23.Qxd1 Qd5 24.Qf1 Qf4 25.Qc4 Qd3. White is forced to trade his bishop for the enemy knight after which the position becomes completely equal. 26.Qxd3 Qxd3=

4.Bf4. Before playing e3, White develops his bishop to an active position. 4...Qf5 5.e3 e6 6.c4 (6.Qbd2 Qd6 7.Qg3 0-0 8.c4 Qc7 9.Qe2 a5 10.Qxd6 Qxd6 11.Qh4 Qg6 12.0-0 Qbd7= Fuller – Serradimigni, ICCF 2015. Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his camp, while White has no active plan in sight, since the pawn-advance c4-c5 will free Black’s hands for actions in the centre with e6-e5.) 6...Qd6 7.Qxd6 Qxd6 8.Qb3 Qc7 9.Qbd2 (9.Qd3 Qxd3 10.Qxd3 Qbd7 11.Qc3 0-0 12.0-0 Qfe8 13.cxd5 exd5. After this capture, there arises a Carlsbad pawn-structure on the board. As a rule, in it White can rely on obtaining an advantage only if Black’s passive light-squared bishop remains on the board. Here, the bishops are exchanged so Black has no problems at all. 14.Qfc1 Qd6= Prie – Bonnau, Avoine 2008.) 9...Qbd7 10.Qc1 0-0 11.Qd3 Qxd3 12.Qxd3 Qfe8 13.cxd5 exd5 14.Qf5, Prie – Kononenko, Elgoibar 2006, 14...g6!? 15.Qc2. Now, Black obtains a very good game after the standard transfer of the knight for similar positions – 15...Qb6=, followed by Qc8-d6.

3.Qc3. In the closed openings this knight is developed only very seldom in front of the pawn on c2, because later White cannot attack the enemy centre with the move c2-c4. 3...c5

About 4.e3 cxd4 5.exd4 Qg4 – see the Caro-Kann Defence (volume 2).

4.Bf4 Qc6 – see Chapter 25, variation A.

Following 4.Qg5 Qe4 5.Qf4, Black can play 5...f6, increasing his control over the central e5-square and preparing cxd4, followed by e7-e5. 6.e3. After the move Qd2 has become impossible, Black can pin the knight on c3. 6...Qa5 7.Qd2 Qxc3 8.Qxc3 Qxc3 9.Qb1 e6 10.Qb5+ Qc6= Peled – Tudor, ICCF 2015. Later, White must play very energetically in order to prove that the activity of his pieces compensates the sacrificed pawn.

4.dxc5 Qc6 5.a3. White continues with his risky flank strategy ignoring the fight for the important central squares. (It would be more reliable for him to opt here for 5.e4 d4 6.Qe2 e5 7.Qg3 Qxc5 8.Qd3 Qb4+ 9.Qd2 Qxd2+ 10.Qxd2 Qg4= Pandavos – Adler, France 1982.) 5...d4 6.Qa2 e5 7.Qb4 Qxc5 8.Qxc6 bxc6
9.e4. Now, White must admit that his previous strategy has failed and should try to play for equality; otherwise, he would end up in an inferior position. (Winning a pawn with the move 9.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}e5}}\) would be very risky after 9...0-0 10.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{N}d3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{b6}}}.

Now, while Black’s pawn is on d4, White cannot play e2-e3 and his attempt to fianchetto the bishop with the move 11.g3 would be countered by Black with 11...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{N}e5}}} 12.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{B}}}b2} \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e4}}} 13.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{B}}}g2} \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e4}}} =\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Kokorin – Stanishevski, ICCF 2015.}}}}\), 9...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{N}xe4}}} 10.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{B}}}d3} \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}d5}}} 11.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}e2}}} f5 12.0-0 \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{B}e6}}} 13.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{R}e1}}} 0-0 14.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{N}xe4}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{fxe4}}} 15.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{R}xe4}}} 16.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{R}xe4}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{d5}}} 17.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Vandermeulen – Nefedov, ICCF 2012, 17.\textbf{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{N}xe5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{d6}}} 18.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{B}e2}}} c5 19.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{g5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{xf3}}} 20.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{gx}\textit{\texttt{f3}}} =\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{White’s}}}}}}}}\)’

3.c3. White is planning to play the Slav Defence himself, but still you should try to obtain an advantage and not to equalise when you are playing with White. 3...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{f5}}}

The move 4.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{g5}}} is not dangerous for Black at all, because he can simply play 4...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{B}d7}}}, defending against \(\text{\textit{\texttt{xf6}}. 5.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{B}d2}}} h6 6.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{h4}}} e6 7.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{e3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e7}}} 8.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e2}}} c5 9.0-0 0-0. Black has already a somewhat freer game. 10.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{g3}}}}, \text{\textit{\texttt{Torre – Huebner, Brussels 1987, 10...\textbf{\textit{\texttt{b6}}}! 11.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{c1}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{h5}}} =\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{, followed by \textbf{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{xg3}}. Black has a slight but stable edge.}}}}\), 4.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{b3}}} The attack against the b7-pawn is parried easily. 4...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{c8}}} 5.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{g5}}} (5.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{f4}}} e6 – see 4.\(\text{\textit{\texttt{f4}}} 5...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{bd7}}}}\)
Black can counter 6..bd2 with the interesting possibility 6...a5!? With this advance of his rook pawn Black wishes at first to oust the enemy queen from the b3-square and then to weaken his queenside. 7.h4 a4 8.d1 e6 9.e3 c6 10.hf3 h6 11.xf6 exf6 12.d3 a3 13.b3 f5. Now, White cannot play e3-e4. 14.0-0 d6 15.c2 d6 16.c4 b4 17.e1 0-0 18.e5 e8= Winter – Babychuk, ICCF 2014. Black’s position is easier to play from the practical point of view. He has two powerful bishops and if in this middle game, or in the endgame, his knight manages to reach the c3-square, the vulnerability of White’s a2-pawn will hurt him horribly. 6.e3 e6 7.c4. White has lost a tempo, but has accomplished this standard pawn-advance for the Closed openings (7.bd2 h6 8.h4 e7 9.c1 c5= Hulak – Stevic, Pula 2001.). 7.h6 8.h4 c6 9.c3 d6 10.e2 0-0 11.0-0 e4 12.e1 b8=, Black removes his queen from the X-ray juxtaposition with the enemy rook, Markowski – Navara, Poland 2015. 

4.f4 e6

5.bd2 d6. Now, White must either exchange his bishop, or lose a tempo for its retreat. 6.g3, Zurek – Malisauskas, Pardubice 1996, 6.h6!?=

5.b3 c8 6.e3 d6 7.g3 (7.b5+ bd7 8.xd6. This move doubles Black’s pawns, but also opens the c-file for his major pieces. 8.cxd6 9.0-0 0-0= Hulak – Gulko, Moscow 1990.) 7...0-0 8.c4 xg3 9.hxg3 c6 10.c3, Rustemov – Drozdovskij, Internet 2003, 10.h6!?=

5.e3 d6. Black does not play c7-c6, because later he wishes to advance c7-c5 at once. 6.g3 (6.xd6 xg3=) 6...0-0 7.bd2 h6!? Black should not allow his opponent to trade his bishop after h4. 8.e5 c5 9.dxc5. After this exchange, it is only Black who can fight for the advantage. 9.xc5 10.d3. White should forget about his dreams of obtaining an edge and by exchanging pieces should be careful not to
become worse. 10...\$xd3 11.\$xd3 \$d6 12.\$f3 \$c6 13.\$h4 \$e7= Susedenko – Grabner, ICCF 2012.

3.e3. White usually plays this move when he wishes to develop his pieces according to the following plan: \$d3, 0-0, b3, \$b2, \$bd2. Still, this is good when the opponent is playing the Queen’s Gambit after the move 3...e7-e6. Here, the adherents to the Slav Defence can simply reply 3...\$g4

Later, depending on the circumstances, Black can play either \$bd7, advancing later c7-e5, or e7-e6 and c7-c5, obtaining an excellent position.

About 4.c4 c6 – see Chapters 8-9.

4.\$d3 \$bd7 5.h3 (5.\$bd2 e5 – see 4.\$bd2) 5...\$xf3 6.\$xf3 e5=

4.\$bd2 \$bd7 5.h3 (5.\$d3 e5 6.dxe5 \$xe5 – see Chapter 23, 2.e3 \$f6 3.\$d3 \$c6 4.\$f3 \$g4; 5.c4 e6 6.\$e2 c6 or 5.\$e2 e6 6.0-0 \$d6 7.c4 c6 – see Chapter 8, variation A) 5...\$h5 6.c4 e6 7.\$b3. This queen-sortie is usually not dangerous for Black when he can protect his b7-pawn with his rook. 7...\$b8 8.\$xd5 exd5 9.\$d3 c6 10.\$c2 \$g6. Black exchanges the powerful enemy bishop. 11.\$xg6 hxg6=


4.h3 \$xf3. He cannot save his bishop from an exchange anyway (After 4...\$h5, White has g2-g4 and \$e5.). 5.\$xf3 e6 6.c4 c5 (6...\$b4+!? 7.\$d2 \$xd2+ 8.\$xd2 0-0= Bayer – Nisipeanu, Austria 2017) 7.exd5 \$xd5 8.\$b5+ \$bd7?? This move is stronger than the development of this knight to c6, because it does not allow the doubling of his pawns. 9.\$xd5 \$xd5 10.\$c3 \$b5 11.0-0 \$c8 12.dxc5 \$xc5 13.\$d1 \$e7= White has the two-bishop advantage indeed, nevertheless the endgame seems approximately equal.

4.\$e2. Now, White does not need to be afraid of \$bd7 and e7-e5, but here his bishop would not be so active as on the d3-square. 4...e6 5.0-0 c5 6.b3 \$c6 7.\$b2 (7.\$bd2 exd4 8.exd4 \$e7 9.\$b2 0-0 – see 7.\$b2) 7...cx4
8.\textit{exd4}. Now, White’s bishop would be restricted by his own pawn on d4. (The move 8.\textit{\texttt{Bx}d4} leads to simplifications 8...\textit{\texttt{Bxe}2} 9.\textit{\texttt{Bxe}2} \textit{\texttt{Bxd}4} 10.\textit{\texttt{Bxd}4} \textit{\texttt{Be}7} 11.\textit{\texttt{Bc}2} 0-0= Arenciбia Rodriгuez – Rodriгuez Cespedes, Matanzas 1997.) 8...\textit{\texttt{Be}7} 9.\textit{\texttt{Bb}d2} 0-0 10.\textit{\texttt{Bxe}5} (10.\textit{\texttt{Bc}4} \textit{\texttt{Bc}8} 11.\textit{\texttt{Bh}3} \textit{\texttt{Bh}5} 12.\textit{\texttt{Bc}3} \textit{\texttt{Be}4\texttt{=}}, followed by f7-f5, \textit{\texttt{Bf}6}, Gelashvili – Skembris, Kavala 2004.) 10...\textit{\texttt{Bxe}2} 11.\textit{\texttt{Bxe}2} \textit{\texttt{Bc}8} 12.\textit{\texttt{Bxc}4} dxc4 13.\textit{\texttt{Bxc}6} \textit{\texttt{Bxc}6} 14.\textit{\texttt{Bxc}4}, Smyslov – Sveshnikov, Tilburg 1992. Here, Black could have played 14...\textit{\texttt{Ba}5?!}, without being afraid of the enemy pawn-break in the centre. 15.d5 exd5 16.\textit{\texttt{Bxe}7} \textit{\texttt{Bxe}2} 17.\textit{\texttt{Bxf}6} \textit{\texttt{Bxf}6} 18.\textit{\texttt{Ba}d1} \textit{\texttt{Bc}2=} Black equalises with this precise move. The point is that White cannot create a passed pawn 19.\textit{\texttt{Bxd}5?!}, because Black has the powerful argument against that – 19...\textit{\texttt{Bxf}2}!\texttt{=}.

3...\textit{\texttt{Be}4}

Now, White must choose a square for the retreat of his bishop: \textbf{A)} 4.\textit{\texttt{Bh}4} or \textbf{B)} 4.\textit{\texttt{Bf}4}.

4.h4?! c5 5.c3 \textit{\texttt{Bb}6} 6.\textit{\texttt{Bc}1} \textit{\texttt{Bc}6} 7.c3, Tiumentsev – Fominyh, Tomsk 2003, 7...e5?!\texttt{=}.

\textbf{A)} 4.\textit{\texttt{Bh}4} c5

Here, White suddenly has difficulties to hold his centre.
5.dxe5
This move is practically forced.
White’s attempt to hold the centre leads to problems for him. For example: 5.c3 cxd4 6.dxd4 (6.cxd4 
\[\text{b6} 7.\text{b3 } \text{xb3} 8.\text{axb3 e6 9.\text{fd2 } \text{b4}!\] Jaunooby – Summerscale, Sheffield 2011. Black maintains a stable advantage thanks to his superior pawn-structure.) 6...\[\text{b6}! It is bad for White to play here 7.\[\text{b3}?! because of 7...\text{h6}! His bishop on h4 is hanging and Black is threatening the rather unpleasant penetration to the c1-square. White loses material. 8.\[\text{f3 } \text{c1}+ 9.\text{d1 } \text{xb2} 10.\text{bd2 } \text{c6}–+ Kaiser – Friedrich, Germany 2008.
5.e3 \[\text{b6} 6.\text{c1}?! (Here, White should probably choose the least of evils: 6.\[\text{c3 } \text{xc3} 7.\text{xc3 } \text{b2}, M.Hansen – L.B.Hansen, Denmark 1995, 8.\[\text{d2}! \text{c6} 9.\text{b1 } \text{xb1} 10.\text{xb1 } \text{c4} White’s queenside pawn-structure has been weakened, but he still preserves chances of a successful defence.) 6...\text{cxd4 7.exd4 g5!}

This is the point! After this surprising strike with Black’s g-pawn, White’s seemingly reliable defence is broken.
Following 8.\text{xg5 } \text{xg5} 9.\text{xg5 } \text{h6} 10.f4 \text{xd4}, Black restores the material balance and preserves all the advantages of his position. 11.\[\text{e2 } \text{c6} Legall – Prats Rodriguez, Cannes 2000.
8.\text{xg5 } \text{h6} 9.\text{f4 } \text{f6} 10.\text{h3 } \text{h3} 11.\text{xh6 } \text{h6} 12.\text{xh6 } \text{c1. This penetration of Black’s bishop inside the enemy camp is another proof of his advantage. 13.a3 } \text{xb2} 14.\[\text{a2 } \text{xd4} Luther – Liepold, Grossenseebach 2012.
8.\text{g3 } \text{h6} 9.c3 \text{g4} 10.\text{fd2 } \text{f5 11.a4, Gouloutis – Iskos, Nea Moudania 2016, 11...0-0 White has a superior development, while White’s knight has come under a rather unpleasant pin.}
5...\( \Box c6 \)

6.e3
Following 6.c3 \( \Box xc5 \) 7.e3, Poscente – Oesterle, Forli 1990, it seems very good for Black to choose here 7...f6!?\( ^{\uparrow} \), preparing the occupation of the centre with e7-e5 and restricting the bishop on f4 and the knight on f3.

6...\( \Box bd2 \) \( \Box xc5 \) 7.c3 (7.e3 g6 – see 5.e3; 7.\( \Box b3 \) \( \Box xb3 \) 8.axb3, Gulko – Timoschenko, Volgodonsk 1981, 8...f6!?\( ^{\uparrow} \) 7...f6 8.b4 \( \Box e4 \) 9.\( \Box xe4 \) dxe4. After this move there arises a complicated endgame. 10.\( \Box xd8+ \) \( \Box xd8 \) 11.\( \Box d2 \), Tangborn – Kallai, Wiesbaden 1991, 11...g5!? Black frees the g7-square for his bishop with tempo. 12.\( \Box g3 \) \( \Box g7 \) 13.e3 f5\( ^{\bullet} \)

6...g6 7.\( \Box bd2 \)
About 7.\( \Box e2 \) \( \Box g7 \) 8.c3 \( \Box xc5 \) 9.\( \Box bd2 \) 0-0 – see 7.\( \Box bd2 \).

7...\( \Box xc5 \)
After White has traded a flank pawn for a central pawn, it is only he who might have problems.

8.\( \Box b3 \)
8.c3 \( \Box g7 \) 9.\( \Box b3 \) (9.\( \Box e2 \) 0-0 – see 8.\( \Box e2 \)) 9...\( \Box e4 \) – see 8.\( \Box b3 \).

8.\( \Box e2 \) \( \Box g7 \) 9.c3 0-0 10.0-0 a5 11.\( \Box d4 \), Nikolac – Pinter, Rome 1984, 11...h6!?\( ^{\infty} \)

8...\( \Box g7 \)

9.c3
9.\( \Box xc5 \). The exchange of the knights would not solve White’s problems. 9...\( \Box a5+ \) 10.c3 \( \Box xc5 \) 11.\( \Box e2 \) (11.\( \Box b3 \) 0-0 12.\( \Box d1 \) e6 13.\( \Box e2 \), Kharitonov – Yakovich, Leeuwarden 1997, 13...\( \Box a5 \)!? Black is preparing the transfer of his knight to the c4-square. 14.\( \Box b5 \). After the trade of the queens, Black will
manage to win a tempo for his pawn-offensive on the queenside. 14...\textit{xb}5 15.\textit{xb}5 \textit{a}6 16.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}5\textsuperscript{+} 11...0-0 12.0-0 \textit{g}4 13.\textit{h}3 \textit{xf}3 14.\textit{xf}3 \textit{e}6. White’s two-bishop advantage is irrelevant here. Black has a clear-cut plan for queenside actions: b7-b5, a7-a5, \textit{e}5-c4. 15.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}5 16.\textit{c}1 \textit{e}5 17.\textit{g}3 \textit{fc}8 18.\textit{e}1 \textit{c}4 19.\textit{c}2 a5\textsuperscript{+} Lambrecht – Boehnke, ICCF 2012.

9...\textit{d}e4 10.\textit{d}3
10.\textit{fd}2 \textit{d}6\textsuperscript{+} Sergeev – Borovikov, Ordzhonikidze 2001.
10.\textit{e}2 0-0 11.0-0 \textit{h}6 12.\textit{fd}2 \textit{d}6\textsuperscript{+} K.Mueller – Lukacs, Austria 2001. Black has more space, so he should better avoid the exchange of pieces.

10...0-0

11.\textit{xe}4
White doubles the enemy pawns, but presents his opponent with the two-bishop advantage.

After 11.0-0, Black obtains an excellent position by advancing his pawns in the centre and on the kingside. 11...\textit{h}6 12.\textit{e}1 g5 13.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}5 14.\textit{fd}2 \textit{x}g3 15.\textit{x}g3 \textit{e}4 16.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}5 17.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}6\textsuperscript{+} Feldis – Duchardt, ICCF 2016.

11...\textit{d}xe4 12.\textit{xd}8 \textit{xd}8 13.\textit{fd}4 \textit{f}6!?
Black’s position is very good anyway, so he does not need to sacrifice a pawn at all: 13...\textit{e}5 14.\textit{xe}7 \textit{e}8 15.\textit{a}3 \textit{d}3\textsuperscript{+} 16.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}6 Timman – Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

14.0-0-0 \textit{e}5\textsuperscript{+} Gavrijski – Brewer, ICCF 2009.

B) 4.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}5

5.e3
5.e3 \textit{cxd}4 6.\textit{cxd}4 \textit{c}6 7.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}6 – see Chapter 4, 6.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}4 7.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}6.
White only worsens his pawn-structure with the line: 5.\textit{Nd}c3 \textit{Nxc3} 6.bxc3 \textit{Nc6} 7.e3, Ntoutsoulis – Tepelenis, Porto Rio 2014, 7...\textit{Qa5}!? 8.\textit{Qd2} c4\textsuperscript{[]}.

After 5.\textit{Nbd2}, it seems very good for Black to continue with 5...\textit{cxd4}?! 6.\textit{Qxd4} \textit{Qd7} 7.\textit{Qxe4} dxe4 8.\textit{Qb3} e5\textsuperscript{[]} Kiratzopoulos – Nikolaidis, Leros 2009.

5.dxc5. White gives up the centre with this move and ends up in an inferior position. 5...\textit{Qb6} 6.\textit{Qc1} After 6.\textit{Nbd2}, White does not obtain sufficient compensation for the pawn. 6...\textit{Qxb2} 7.\textit{Nxd2} \textit{Qa5} 8.\textit{Qd2} \textit{Qxb2} 7...\textit{Qxb2} 8.\textit{Qd2} \textit{Qxb2}. Black lags in development, so he should better prevent the opening of the position. 9.\textit{Qe2} e6 10.0-0, Berend – Kappler, Dijon 1994, 10...\textit{Qc7}?!\textsuperscript{[]}

Following 6.\textit{Qc3} \textit{Qa5} 7.\textit{Qxb8} \textit{Qxc3} 8.\textit{Qd2} \textit{Qxb8}, no matter how White would recapture on c3, his queenside pawn-structure would be compromised. 9.\textit{Qxc3} (9.\textit{bxc3} c4\textsuperscript{[]}) 9...\textit{Qxc3}+ 10.\textit{bxc3} c4. Black occupies space on the queenside. 11.\textit{Qb1} e6 12.e4 b5 13.\textit{Qe2} \textit{Qb6} 14.\textit{exd5} exd5 15.0-0 \textit{Qe7} 16.\textit{Qe5} h5 17.\textit{Qf3} \textit{Qe6} 18.\textit{Qfe1} g5\textsuperscript{[]} Kmiecik – Lubas, ICCF 2010. Black has the two-bishop advantage and more space.

6.\textit{Qc6} 7.c3 \textit{f6}

He is preparing g7-g5, followed by h7-h5.
8.\textit{\texttt{\textsf{\textit{f}}d2}}

White reduces his control over the centre.

8.\textit{\texttt{\textsf{\textit{b}}d2}} g5 9.\textit{\texttt{\textsf{g}}3} (Giving up the centre with 9.dxc5 does not facilitate White’s task. 9...\textit{\texttt{\textsf{x}}c5} 10.\textit{\texttt{\textsf{g}}3} \textit{\texttt{\textsf{f}}5\textsf{+}} Jacquin – Schuster, ICCF 2009.) 9.h5. The threat h5-h4 is very unpleasant for White. 10.\textit{\texttt{\textsf{xe}}4} (After 10.dxc5 \textit{\texttt{\textsf{xc}}5} 11.\textit{\texttt{\textsf{c}}2} h4 12.\textit{\texttt{c}}7, Jacquin – Joao, ICCF 2008, 12...e5!?\textsf{+}, White’s bishop might get lost inside the enemy camp.) 10...\textit{\texttt{dxe}}4 11.dxc5 \textit{\texttt{xc}}5 12.\textit{\texttt{d}}2 h4 13.\textit{\texttt{c}}7 \textit{\texttt{f}}5 14.h3 e5. Now, White must compromise irrevocably his queenside pawn-structure in order not to lose a piece. 15.b4 \textit{\texttt{d}}7 16.b5 \textit{\texttt{xc}}7 17.bxc6 \textit{\texttt{xc}}6\textsf{+} Lagergren – Langer, ICCF 2015.

8...e5

Now, Black would not need to play g7-g5.

9.\textit{\texttt{\textsf{x}}e4}

9...\textit{\texttt{cxd}}4

He can afford this intermediate exchange, because White is incapable of removing simultaneously both his pieces away from the attack.

10.\textit{\texttt{cxd}}4 \textit{\texttt{exf}}4 11.\textit{\texttt{\textsf{ec}}3} \textit{\texttt{ce}}6 12.\textit{\texttt{a}}4 (12.\textit{\texttt{d}}2 \textit{\texttt{d}}6\textsf{+}) 12...\textit{\texttt{a}}5\textsf{+} 13.\textit{\texttt{\textsf{ac}}3} \textit{\texttt{d}}6 14.\textit{\texttt{c}}2 0-0\textsf{+} Baciak – Pecka, ICCF 2015. This is an open position and Black’s advantage is doubtless thanks to his powerful bishop-pair.
Chapter 26

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.g3

White wishes at first to fianchetto his bishop and to evacuate his king away from the centre. The defect of this plan is that White’s bishop on g2 will be severely restricted by the pawn on d5.

3...c6 4.Bg2
4.c4 Bg4 – see Chapter 6.

4...Bg4 5.0-0
5.c3 e6 6.0-0 Be7 – see 5.0-0.
5.c4 e6 – see Chapter 6, variation B.

6.h3 Bh5 6...e5 (6.0-0 e6 – see 5.0-0) 6...Bd7 7.f4 e6∞ Kargl – Kilgus, Austria 1999.
5.Bbd2 e6 6.0-0 (6.c4 Bbd7 – see Chapter 6, variation B) 6...Be7 – see 5.0-0.
5.Be5 Bf5 6.c4 e6, or 6.0-0 e6 7.c4 Bbd7 – see Chapter 6, variation A.

5...e6

6.Bbd2
White wishes to play Re1 and to follow that with e4.
6.c4 Bbd7 – see Chapter 6, variation B.
The inclusion of the moves 6.h3 \textit{h\textasciitilde}h5 does not promise much to White. 7.c4 \textit{e\textasciitilde}7. Black is not in a hurry to develop his queen’s knight, because after the exchange on d5 he will manage to develop it to a more active position – the c6-square. 8.c3 \textit{e\textasciitilde}5 d5 9.c3 0-0 10.g4 \textit{g\textasciitilde}6 – see 8.c3; 8.cxd5 \textit{xf3 9.xf3 cxd5 10.b3 \textit{c\textasciitilde}6 11.e3 0-0 12.d2 \textit{d7 13.c1 \textit{fc8= Vachier Lagrave – Dreev, Doha 2016.\) White has the two-bishop advantage indeed, but the position is rather closed, so Black’s prospects are not worse.) 8...0-0

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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

9.b3 \textit{b6 10.f4 (10.e5, Lorparizangeneh – Sargissian, Rasht 2017, 10...\textit{fd7=, Black is preparing the exchange of the powerful enemy knight.)} 10...\textit{bd7 11.c5 \textit{xb3 12.axb3, Margvelashvili – Mulyar, Rockville 2014, 12...a6?!=} White can obtain an advantage in similar endgames only if he manages to advance b3-b4-b5. Here, this pawn-break is impossible, so the prospects of both sides can be evaluated as approximately equal.

9.g4. White wishes to obtain the two-bishop advantage. Still, after 9...g6 10.e5 \textit{bd7 11.xg6 hxg6, it will not be easy to break Black’s defence, because he has no weaknesses in his camp.} 12.d3 (12.b3 \textit{b4 13.e2 \textit{e7, Vitiugov – Tomashevsky, Sochi 2016} 12...dxc4 13.xc4, Harikrishna – Adams, Shenzhen 2017. Here, Black’s simplest road to equality would be 13...\textit{b6!? 14.d3 \textit{c7 15.e4 c5. He attacks immediately the enemy pawn-centre.} 16.dxc5 \textit{xc5=}

Following 6.b3 \textit{bd7, there arises most often a transfer to a variation which we will analyse in volume two after the move-order 1.c4 c6 2.f3 d5 3.b3 \textit{f6 4.g3 \textit{g4 5.g2 e6 6.0-0 \textit{bd7.}

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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
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About 7.c4 \textit{e7 – see Chapter 6, variation B2.}

7.b2 \textit{d6 8.c4 0-0, or 8.bd2 0-0 9.c4 \textit{e7 – see volume 2.}

7.bd2 \textit{d6 8.c4 0-0 9.b2 \textit{e7, or 8.b2 0-0 9.c4 \textit{e7, or 9.e5 \textit{f5 10.c4 \textit{e7 – see volume 2.}
6.\textit{\textbf{N}}e5 \textit{\textbf{h}}5 7.c4 (7.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 \textit{\textbf{bd}}7= Vajda – Pacheco, Istanbul 2012). White has changed a bit the move-order (at first $\textit{\textbf{N}}$e5 and then c4) and has managed to avoid the variation with 6...\textit{\textbf{f}}5, which has been analysed in the part about the Slav Defence. This does not change the evaluation of the position as approximately equal. 7...\textit{\textbf{e}}7 8.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 \textit{\textbf{bd}}7

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9.h3 0-0 10.g4 \textit{\textbf{g}}6 – see 6.h3.
9.\textit{\textbf{f}}4 \textit{\textbf{xe}}5 10.dxe5 \textit{\textbf{d}}7\

9.cxd5 \textit{\textbf{xe}}5! This is a powerful intermediate move. Before capturing on d5, Black doubles the enemy pawns on the e-file. 10.dxe5 \textit{\textbf{xd}}5 11.\textit{\textbf{c}}2 0-0 12.h3 \textit{\textbf{a}}5 13.\textit{\textbf{xd}}5 cxd5. Black is already a little better thanks to his superior pawn-structure. 14.g4 \textit{\textbf{g}}6 15.\textit{\textbf{b}}3, Romanishin – Karpov, Moscow 1983, 15...\textit{\textbf{c}}7!\

After 9.\textit{\textbf{b}}3, Black can simply capture 9...\textit{\textbf{xe}}5!!, ignoring the threat against his pawn on b7. 10.dxe5 \textit{\textbf{d}}7 11.\textit{\textbf{xb}}7 0-0 12.\textit{\textbf{xc}}6, Thompson – Purtell, ICCF 2009, 12...\textit{\textbf{c}}8!? 13.\textit{\textbf{a}}4 \textit{\textbf{xc}}4 14.\textit{\textbf{xa}}7 \textit{\textbf{xe}}5 Black’s pieces are very active and White’s extra pawn is practically irrelevant.

6...\textit{\textbf{e}}7

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7.\textit{\textbf{e}}1
7.c3 \textit{\textbf{bd}}7 8.\textit{\textbf{e}}1 0-0 – see 7.\textit{\textbf{e}}1.
7.c4 \textit{\textbf{bd}}7 – see Chapter 6, variation B.

Following 7.\textit{\textbf{e}}5 \textit{\textbf{h}}5 8.h3 \textit{\textbf{bd}}7 9.g4 \textit{\textbf{g}}6, White obtains the two-bishop advantage indeed, but his kingside pawn-structure is compromised. 10.\textit{\textbf{xg}}6 \textit{\textbf{hxg}}6 11.c4 \textit{\textbf{c}}7 12.\textit{\textbf{e}}3 \textit{\textbf{e}}4 This move has become possible, because the pawn on h3 is not sufficiently protected, Tocchioni – Godena, Arvier 2008.
7.b3 \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) 8.b2 (8.c4 0-0 – see Chapter 6, variation B2) 8...0-0 9.e1 (9.c4 a5 – see Chapter 6, variation B2) 9...\( \text{\textit{h5}} \) 10.e4 dxe4 11.\( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{xe4}} \), K.Larsen – Zhao, Copenhagen 2007, 12...\( \text{\textit{c7}} \)!

7...0-0 8.e4
8.c3 \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) 9.b3 (9.e4 \( \text{\textit{h5}} \) – see 8.e4) 9...\( \text{\textit{b8}} \) 10.e4 \( \text{\textit{h5}} \) – see 8.e4.

8...\( \text{\textit{bd7}} \)

This is an important moment. Black should not exchange on e4, because this would activate the bishop on g2. After that Black would hardly manage to organise counterplay. He should better wait for e4-e5, after which he can begin active actions on the queenside (c6-c5). As a rule, the exchange on e4 in this variation is done by Black only after White plays c2-c4, because then Black can create pressure against the enemy d4-pawn on the semi-open d-file.

9.c3
This is a useful move. White also follows a waiting tactic and postpones the move e4-e5.

9.c4 \( \text{\textit{b4?!}} \) 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.e5 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{e3}} \), Lagunow – Velicka, Berlin 1999, 12...f6?! 13.\( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) dxe4 14.\( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \)

9.h3 \( \text{\textit{h5}} \) 10.e5 (10.e3 \( \text{\textit{g6}} \) – see 9.c3) 10...\( \text{\textit{e8}} \) – see 9.e5.

9.e5. This move has the drawback that White shows immediately his intentions and thus frees Black’s hands for active actions on the queenside. 9...\( \text{\textit{e8}} \) 10.h3 (10.c3 \( \text{\textit{h5}} \) – see 9.c3; 10.\( \text{\textit{b3}} \) \( \text{\textit{c7}} \) 11.h3 \( \text{\textit{h5}} \) – see 10.h3) 10...\( \text{\textit{h5}} \)

About 11.c3 \( \text{\textit{c7}} \) – see 9.c3.
After 11.b3, White’s knight may come under attack when Black advances a5-a4. 11...c7 12.e3 h6 13.c1. White is not waiting for Black’s pawn to come to a4 and transfers his knight immediately to f4. This manoeuvre takes too much time, though...13...g6 14.d3 a5 15.a4 d6 16.f4 h7 17.c3 c5∞ Rudykh – Adamko, ICCF 2009.

11.f1 c5 12.g6 13.g3 e8 14.c3, Wojtkiewicz – Waitzkin, Philadelphia 1997, 14...h6!∞, Black prepares in advance a square for his bishop to retreat to and also prevents g4-g5, followed by h4. White can hardly organise an effective attack on the kingside. On the other hand, Black’s counterplay on the opposite side of the board may turn out to be very dangerous.

9...h5
Black’s last move may be useful, because he can play later g6 and after e4-e5 centralise his knight to the e4-square, instead of retreating to the edge of the board.

10.e5
Or 10.e2, Heberla – Jarmula, Warsaw 2017, 10...a5!?∞

In similar positions, after 10.exd5, Black usually captures 10...cxd5= Mirzoev – Krivoshey, Salou 2008. Later, he organises the pawn-minority attack: b7-b5-b4.


10.h3 g6. Black exploits his opponent’s rather timid play and increases his pressure against the e4-pawn.

11.exd5 cxd5 12.e5 (12.f1 h6=) 12...xe5 13.dxe5 d7 14.b3. Without this move, Black would play c5-d3. 14...c7 15.f4 fd8 16.e3, Sajtar – Szilagyi, Warsaw 1956, 16...a5!? 17.a4 c5=
11.\textit{e5 }\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e}}}}\textit{4 }\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f}}}}\textit{xe4 }\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{g}}}}\textit{e4 }\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{h}}}}\textit{2 }\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{g}}}}\textit{6}. Black’s light-squared bishop seems more active than its white counterpart, so Black is reluctant to exchange it. 14.\textit{h4 }\textit{h6 }\textit{\textit{\textit{f}}}\textit{fl }\textit{c5}. Black prepares the opening of the c-file after which his bishop on g6 will help his pieces to penetrate to the c2-square. 16.\textit{\textit{d}}\textit{3}. White trades the powerful enemy bishop. On the other hand he has a space advantage, so the exchanges of pieces are in favour of Black. 16...\textit{\textit{xd3}} 17.\textit{\textit{\textit{xd3}} }\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{cxd4}}}} 18.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{cxd4}}}} \textit{\textit{a5}} 19.\textit{\textit{\textit{e3}} }\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f}}}}}\textit{c8} Anand – McShane, London 2013.

10.\textit{a4}. White prevents in advance Black’s pawn-minority attack. 10...\textit{\textit{g6}} 11.\textit{\textit{exd5}} (11.\textit{\textit{e5}} \textit{\textit{e}}\textit{4 }12.\textit{f1} \textit{c5} Garcia Palermo – Godena, Martina Franca 2008) 11...\textit{\textit{cxd5}} 12.\textit{a5} (Following 12.\textit{\textit{\textit{b}}}\textit{3 }\textit{\textit{\textit{c7}} }13.\textit{\textit{f1}}, Black should better continue here with 13...\textit{\textit{d6}}, preventing \textit{\textit{\textit{f4}}}. 14.\textit{h4} \textit{h6} 15.\textit{\textit{e3}} \textit{\textit{e4}} Drabke – Sax, Dresden 2002.) 12...\textit{a6} 13.\textit{\textit{e5}} \textit{\textit{xe5}} 14.\textit{\textit{dxe5}} \textit{\textit{d7}} 15.\textit{\textit{b3}} \textit{\textit{c8}}= Berkovich – Giri, Groningen 2009.

10.\textit{\textit{\textit{b}}}\textit{3}. This queen-sortie does not promise anything to White. 10...\textit{\textit{e8}}


After 11.\textit{a4 }\textit{\textit{\textit{g6}} }12.\textit{\textit{exd5}} \textit{\textit{cxd5}} 13.\textit{a5} \textit{\textit{\textit{c7}} }14.\textit{\textit{h4}}, Black can play 14...\textit{\textit{d3}}!?, preventing the exchange of his bishop for the enemy knight. 15.\textit{\textit{f1}} \textit{\textit{xf1}}. Now, he does not object to the trade of the bishops, because then White is left with a “bad” bishop. 16.\textit{\textit{\textit{xf1}} }\textit{\textit{d6}=} Hausrath – Avrukh, Biel 2008. All White’s pawns are placed “against the rules” – that is on squares with the same colour as his bishop. The position still remains approximately equal, but White must play very accurately; otherwise, he might end up in an inferior position.

11.\textit{\textit{exd5}} \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{cxd5}}}} 12.\textit{\textit{\textit{f1}}} (12.\textit{c4 }\textit{\textit{e8}}= Lenic – Pavasovic, Rijeka 2005) 12...\textit{b5}. Black’s play is much easier in similar positions. He has an easy plan – to organise the pawn-minority attack, while White can hardly find an object to attack. 13.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f4}}}} \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b6}}}} 14.a3 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e4}}} }15.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e5}}}}} }\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{xe5}}} }}}16.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{xe5}}}}} }\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d6}}}}}}}}. Now, White must either allow the move \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{c4}}}}, or present his opponent with the two-bishop advantage. 17.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}}\textit{\textit{d6}} \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}}\textit{\textit{d6}} 18.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d2}}}} \textit{\textit{a5}} Wigger – Sasikiran, Dresden 2005.

10...\textit{\textit{e8}}
11.\( \text{b3} \)
White must remove his knight from d2 in order to develop his bishop on c1. He can do that either to b3, or to f1. Both these retreats of the knight have defects. In the first case, the knight will be attacked after a7-a5-a4, while in the second case the knight on f1 will not prevent c6-c5.

About 11.h3 \( \text{c7} \) 12.\( \text{f1} \) (12.\( \text{b3 a5} \) – see 11.\( \text{b3} \)) 12...\( \text{c5} \) – see 11.\( \text{f1} \).

11.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{c7} \) 12.h3 \( \text{c5} \) 13.g4 \( \text{g6} \) 14.\( \text{g3 a6}!\) Black’s knight is misplaced on c7, so he wishes to transfer it to c6, via the b8-square, and it will be much more active there. 15.a3 \( \text{c8} \) 16.\( \text{f1 a8}\)∞ Petkov – Mascaro March, Can Picafort 2013.

11...\( \text{c7} \)

12.\( \text{e3} \)
12.h3, Palecek – Arslanov, Pardubice 2010, 12...a5!? 13.a4 \( \text{a6}\)∞

After 12.\( \text{f4} \), Black can advance his rook-pawn just like in the main line. 12...a5 13.\( \text{c1} \), Gabuzyan – K.Georgiev, Padova 2014, he removes immediately his knight against the possible attack a5-a4. (13.\( \text{d2 a4} \) 14.\( \text{c1 c5} \) Zatonskih – Mikhailovski, Schaumburg 2006) 13...b5!? Black is not in a hurry to play c6-c5 and wishes at first to advance b5-b4, attacking the c3-square. Black’s task in similar positions is to organise active actions on the queenside with the idea to deflect the enemy forces from the attack against his own king. 14.\( \text{d3 b4}\)∞

12...a5 13.\( \text{e1} \)
Or 13.a4, Rombaldoni – Sedina, Acqui Terme 2011, 13...\( \text{a6}!\)?=, followed by c6-c5.

13...a4 14.\( \text{d3} \)
14...g4!? Black has no time to play g6, h6, h7, because after f4, White will exchange his bishop. Therefore, Black is trying to play trickier...

15.h3 f5 16.f4 h6 17.f1 b6. Black prepares the transfer of his knight to c4 and it will exert from there powerful pressure against White’s queenside. 18.d3 c4. Black is not afraid of the exchange on f5, because after 19.xf5 exf5 his knight will gain access to the e6-square. 20.e2 e8 21.h4 e6 22.g2 xe3. Without this move, Black cannot play g7-g6. 23.xe3 g6 24.h5 g5 25.e2 g7 Klewe – Salzmann, ICCF 2016. White can hardly break his opponent’s defence on the kingside.
Index of Variations

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   B) 4.e3 e6

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   B) 6.g4 Qg6
   C) 6.cxd5 cxd5
   D) 6.Qc3 e6 various
      D1) 7.Qb3 Qb6
      D2) 7.g4 Qg6

Chapter 10: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6
   various
   A) 5.Qb3 dxc4 6.Qxc4 b5 7.Qb3 Qbd7
   B) 7.Qd3 Qb7

Chapter 11: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.g3 dxc4
   various
   A) 6.Qg2 Qbd7 7.a4 Qb4
   B) 7.0-0 b5

Chapter 12: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.cxd5 exd5
   various
   A) 6.Qg5 h6
   B) 6.Qc2 g6 various
      7.Qg5 Qe7 various
         B1) 8.e3 Qf5
         B2) 8.e4 dxe4

Chapter 13: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.e3 a6
A) 6.h3 Bd7
B) 6.Bd2 c5
C) 6.a3 Bd7

Chapter 14: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.e3 a6 6.Ne2 dxc4 7.a4 c5 8.bxc4 d6 9.0-0 Be7
various
A) 10.dxc5 Qxd1 11.Rxd1 Bxc5
B) 10.Qe2 cxd4

A) 8.Bc2 c5
B) 8.Bb3 c5
C) 8.Bd3 c5 various
   C1) 9.a4 b4 10.Be4 Bd7
   C2) 9.0-0 Bb7

Chapter 16: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.e3 a6 6.e5 Bd7
various
7.b4 b6

various
8.d3 0-0 9.0-0 Bd6 various
A) 10.Nc1 h6
B) 10.e4 dxc4
C) 10.Nc2 h6

various
7.cxd5 exd5

Chapter 19: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.g5 dxc4
various
6.a4 Bb4 various
7.e4 Ba5

Chapter 20: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.g5 dxc4 6.e4 b5
various
A) 7.e5 h6 8.h4 g5 9.exf6 gxf6
B) 9.g3 Bd5
various
12.g3 b6 13.Re2 0-0-0 14.Ng4 c5
14.0-0 c5 15.dxc5 dxc5
15.d5 b4 16.Bb1 a6
17.dxe6 dxe6
17.a3 b8 18.axb4 cxb4 19.Re2 xd5
A) 19.Re3 xd5
B) 19.Re4 c6
Chapter 23: 1.d4 d5
various
A) 2.c3 c5
B) 2.Nc3 c6
C) 2.e3 f6
D) 2.e4 dxe4
E) 2.g5 h6
Chapter 24: 1.d4 d5
A) 2.Bf4 c5
B) 2.Nf3 f6 3.Bf4 c5
Chapter 25: 1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 f6
various
A) 3.Ng5 e4 4.Nh4 c5
B) 4.Nf4 c5
Chapter 26: 1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 f6 3.g3 c6 4.Ng2 g4
various
5.0-0 e6 various
6.Bd2 e7