AN ATTACKING REPERTOIRE FOR WHITE WITH 1.d4

AMBITIOUS IDEAS AND POWERFUL WEAPONS

NEW IN CHESS
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Foreword

Dear chess player,

The main purpose of this creative book is to help you understand (and play) the main opening systems that arise after White’s first move 1.d4. The pawn structures on both sides of the board are already determined by this first move, and these structures are what you will need to focus on first and foremost. Every specific chapter in this book will then serve as an augmentation of this basic knowledge.

An Attacking Repertoire for White with 1.d4 presents a selection of opening variations. These opening choices I have made are an important factor in my personal approach to chess.

The repertoire presented here focuses on active play supported by a powerful pawn centre.

The Four Pawns Attack against the King’s Indian Defence and the moves 4.a3 and 4.f3 against the Nimzo-Indian Defence are choices in my repertoire that already featured in my earlier book Revolutionize Your Chess (New In Chess, 2009). After these 10 years this repertoire still stands firm, though of course all the lines have been carefully checked and updated for this project.

Mikhail Botvinnik at the Hoogovens tournament, 1969.

In the chapters on the Nimzo-Indian and the Exchange Variation of the Queen’s Gambit (Nos. 7 and 11), I hope I have managed to deepen and further develop the concepts that were established earlier by the sixth World Champion, Mikhail Botvinnik (1911-1995). In those chapters you will also learn a lot about the fabulous ‘Sämisch structures’ (with f2-f3).
In the rest of the chapters, I have combined the knowledge I have gained through many years of experience with several modern ideas and analysis with computer engines.

This book presents 10 fundamental openings plus 4 original defensive systems for Black (Chapters 3 and 12-14), which complement those basic openings but are included mainly for their surprise value (note: for anti-Dutch lines for White, see my book *The Diamond Dutch*, New In Chess 2014).

**Strategies for the white player in 1.d4 openings**

- You will have to sacrifice material more often than accept sacrifices by your opponent. However, there are some exceptions, such as in the Albin Counter-Gambit (Chapter 14), where Black simply insists too much!
- If Black chooses an opening with a fixed pawn centre (1.d4 d5), then it is important for White to pay special attention to the placement of his pieces.
- Conversely, if Black’s play is aimed at controlling the centre with his pieces (1.d4 ♘f6), the assimilation of the pawn configuration has a key importance, since the set-up of the pieces will follow naturally from this step.
- Of course, in our repertoire, the attack is not a universal panacea against all of Black’s opening choices. In some cases, the clearest path to success will be a transposition to a favourable endgame.

Do not forget that you are also an active participant in the creative process and the development of the opening systems proposed in this book!

I would like to wish you great success in your future chess battles!

*Grandmaster Viktor Moskalenko*

*Dubai/Barcelona, May 2019*
Six Symbols

TRICK: hidden tactics and some tricky ideas, e.g. traps you can set and pitfalls you have to avoid.

PUZZLE: possible transpositions, move order subtleties, curiosities and rare lines.

WEAPON: the best lines to choose; strong or surprising options for both attack and defence, which deserve attention.

PLAN: the main ideas for one of the sides in the next phase of the game.

STATISTICS: winning percentage for a line or for either side/player.

KEEP IN MIND: here, fundamental ideas for either side are given.
A bit of history

Without a doubt, the King’s Indian is one of the most popular defences. It has been used for a long time by players of all levels. By the way, in Russia it is called ‘Staroindiskaya Zaschita’, the ‘Old Indian Defence’, as opposed to the New (= Queen’s) Indian. It is an excellent option for Black, and a very powerful and practical weapon. It offers its followers strategically easy plans and almost always leads to complex play.

It is not necessary to mention all the elite players who have this defence in their repertoire. Suffice it to say that one of them was the great Garry Kasparov, who was the greatest expert and a champion of the KID for many years.

As for white players who begin their game with 1.d4, they must come very well prepared for this defence and its theoretical concepts and practical ideas.

Personally, throughout my career so far, I have tried out nearly all the possible variations against the KID, but I have never liked repeating the long fashionable lines, some of which require theoretical analysis up to move 20 or 30.

In the 1990s I decided to enlarge my repertoire against this defence with something original that would correspond to my personal playing style. After some successful attempts I discovered that the Four Pawns Attack was exactly what I was looking for: underdeveloped theory and active play for White, thanks to the advanced central pawns.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f4
Who could ask for more?

In this first chapter, I would like to share with the reader a few secrets that have been discovered during a long period, and to present some lines that are highly unusual to the present day. With these lines I myself have harvested some very important points against players of different levels for a number of years.

The strategic ideas of the Four Pawns Attack versus the King’s Indian are quite aggressive and lead to complex middlegames. The arising positions contain numerous options for both colours. I have written Surveys on this variation in Yearbooks 82, 83, 85 and 88, and Yearbook 87 features an article on a similar approach to the Benoni (see Chapter 3).

Statistics Moskalenko

Total 72 games = 76,4%. Performance = 2654.
1-0 = 55 games; draw = 15; 0-1 = only 2!

Resources for White

• White has a very strong centre and he must use this to dominate the play. There are good possibilities of a strong attack on the kingside. Normally in the Four Pawns, the middlegame starts quite soon, and Black will counterattack in the centre and on the queenside. White must try to maintain his strong centre;
• After correct play in the opening, followed by a complex middlegame, normally White reaches a favourable ending, due to the fact that he has more space and better development, and also due to the dynamic characteristics of the pawn structure.

A different pawn wedge (Games 1-6)

After 5...0-0 6.♘f3 c5 7.d5 e6 we arrive at one of the main positions of the 4P. Now, surprisingly, White plays 8.dxe6!
A quite paradoxical move for theoretically inclined players!
• By exchanging the d5-pawn and opening the d-file, White obtains a dynamic central pawn structure e4/f4 with good options of pushing e4-e5 or f4-f5 later on. In addition, Black’s d6-pawn is now much weaker.
• The character of the game becomes more dynamic. Both sides immediately start to fight for the initiative, and the games in this line are very exciting.

Resources for Black
Black must try to reduce White’s domination. The games of the great player Garry Kasparov may help black players to solve their doubts regarding the direction their analyses should take.

Facing the Four Pawns, Kasparov has chosen three different lines:

Developing the bishop: 8...♗xe6
In his 1976 game against Murey, Kasparov played 8...♗xe6 (Games 1, 2). Black develops the passive bishop while keeping the e-file open for his rook. White’s best reply is 9.♗d3, intending to push his pawns and start an attack. Now Black must quickly look for effective counterplay, as one of the downsides of 8...♗xe6 is that the attacking advance f4-f5 can be played with tempo.

A) Kasparov played 9...a6 instead of the more common 9...♘c6 or 9...♗g4, to prepare the ...b7-b5 advance (Game 1);

B) Various examples given in the notes to Game 2 illustrate that Black is not in time with 9...♗g4, with the idea ...♗b8-c6-d4. So for White, careful preparation of the attack with 10.0-0 is healthier in my opinion. After 10...♘c6 11.h3! ♗xf3 12.♗xf3 ♘d4 13.♗f2, the critical position arises.
White has good attacking potential.

**The flexible move 8...fxe6**

Six years later, Kasparov tried 8...fxe6!? This is probably the best response, and now the natural 9.\(d3\) \(c6\) 10.0-0.

This is the main position of the Pawn Wedge line. Here there are a great number of possibilities. Let’s examine them.

Game 3: some early deviations, and the ‘theoretical’ move 10...\(h8\)?!

⚠️ **KEEP IN MIND**

The manoeuvre 11.\(g5\)? is nearly always favourable for White! This move is very annoying for Black. White starts activity in the centre and on the kingside.

*(see diagram next page)*
Game 4: the main possibilities against Black’s slow plans with 10...a6, 10...e5, 10...d7 and 10...h5. Games 5 and 6: Black’s most dynamic, and most popular, move is 10...d4?, played in Christiansen-Kasparov, Moscow 1982. Now 11.g5 e5! is very complicated, but also interesting is the solid option 11.xd4 cxd4 12.b5!.

In both games, Kasparov achieved a good result basically because of his combativeness, since he had to go through some difficult moments.

**Warcraft against the Four Pawns Attack (Game 7)**

7...b5

In this aggressive line, similar to (but not exactly the same as!) the Benko/ Volga Gambit (1.d4 f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5), both armies must use their pawns. Black’s usual moves are: ...b7-b5/...a7-a6/...e7-e6/...d6-d5 and White’s: cxb5/bxa6/a2-a4/dxe6/e4-e5/f4-f5.

8.cxb5 Accepting the pawn is the most principled move, although the dynamic 8.e5 is also possible.

After 8...a6, the main continuation 9.a4! is the richest in possibilities for both sides. The aim is to place an obstacle on b5 in such a way as to reduce Black’s activity on the queenside. Now it is not easy to find a good continuation for Black. We shall examine the three main possibilities: 9...a5, 9...xb5 and the ‘Benoni line’ 9...e6.

⚠️ **KEEP IN MIND**
Evidently, Black’s fast counterattacks on the queenside are delayed and his activity there is already sufficiently limited now.

**Waterloo (Games 8 and 9)**

*Never interrupt your enemy while he is making a mistake* – Napoleon Bonaparte.

6...\(\texttt{\#a6!}\) was chosen even by Garry Kasparov in his last game against the Four Pawns Attack. Please note that this was the third time that Kasparov changed variations against the Four Pawns.

This seems a very strange manoeuvre, but it is in fact the start of a solid and effective plan. Black’s initial objective consists in the preparation of the blocking advance \(...\texttt{e7-e5}\). This is combined with the jump of the knight from \(\texttt{a6} \text{ to } \texttt{c5}\), attacking pawn \(\texttt{e4}\). Since the light-squared bishop’s diagonal is open, it can ‘shoot’ to \(\texttt{g4}\).

As we will see in Game 7, the positions that arise are very flexible. They allow both players to plan their strategies and choose between different pawn structures in the opening. Nevertheless, great care is needed, since the real battle will begin soon.

**Various plans**

After 6...\(\texttt{\#a6}\), White can choose between three main possibilities:

1) **The frontal attack**

White can avoid Black’s threat of \(...\texttt{e7-e5}\) by deciding on the typical sharp frontal attack \(7.\texttt{e5}\).
In some modern books this is presented as the main line for White. But even though it hampers Black, the advance may be too hasty in general terms.

2) Classical development
In my opinion, it is more natural for White to first finish his kingside development with 7.\texttt{b}e2, also analysed by Vaisser in Yearbook 78, but with different ideas. It allows Black to pursue his main idea 7...e5!.

This is a tactically important position with many possibilities for both sides.

3) A better square
After the analysis of the first two options, I am beginning to feel that the f1-bishop is better off on square d3: 7.\texttt{b}d3!, intending 7...e5 8.fxe5 dxe5 9.d5, when 9...\texttt{c}c5 is less effective, since the e4-pawn is well defended.

The Battle of Waterloo
Both modern and earlier theory offer as Black’s best solution to this problem the ‘pseudo-counterplan’ 7...\texttt{g}4 8.\texttt{e}e3! \texttt{d}d7 9.0-0 e5!? 10.fxe5 \texttt{c}5!.

16
A colourful position! Now the fight can begin. In a way it is very similar to the battles from the times of the Roman Empire to the age of Napoleon Bonaparte. The pawn legion attacks, and behind it are the minor and the major pieces.

But now a remarkable move: 11.\(\text{b}2!\). The books have hidden this strong move from the readers. One victim of these books was the black player in Game 8 of this chapter. After that game, Lopez Martinez claimed that 11.\(\text{b}2!\) ‘did not exist’ as it wasn’t in ECO or any other book.

⚠️ KEEP IN MIND
Some of the exciting games in this chapter are excellent illustrations of the spirit of the Four Pawns Attack, according to the motto: *If you don’t beat me, I will destroy you!*

In this variation it is the white pawns that are the main actors.
Four Pawns Attack – Games

The bishop capture 8...♗xe6

If you don’t beat me...

At the start of our games collection, we analyse an historic battle that demonstrates the attacking potential of the Four Pawns. A young Garry Kasparov defends with the black pieces.

Game 1
Jacob Murey
Garry Kasparov
Moscow 1976 (7)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 0-0 6.♘f3 c5 7.d5 e6 8.dxe6!? ♗xe6
This recapture develops the passive bishop, and keeps the e-file half-open for activity.
The other option is 8...fxe6, which we shall analyse in Games 3-5.

9.♗d3!
The bishop goes to the important d3-h7 diagonal, where it will help both the e4 and f4-pawns and the pieces in the upcoming attack. This is one of the critical moments of this variation. Black must quickly look for some sort of effective counterplay, otherwise he will be in danger.

9...a6
Preparing the advance ...b7-b5!? but losing time for development.
The pin 9...♗g4, avoiding f4-f5, will be analysed in the next game.

10.f5!
A typical Four Pawns Attack.
Of course White could continue his development with 10.0-0!? first.

10...♘d7 11.0-0 ♗c6
In this game the young Kasparov played very slowly.

WEAPON: 11...♗c6 seems more elastic: 12.♗g5!? h6 13.♗f4 ♔e7 14.♗c2 ♕e5 15.♗xe5 dxe5 16.♗e3
gxf5 17.exf5 c6 18.e2

12.e1!?  
The queen heads for the kingside.

12...bd7 13.h4! e5  
Black tries to put up a block in the centre, but this is not enough.

14.xe5 dxe5 15.d5

We can now see the fruits of both sides’ opening play. Black’s position is very uncomfortable and he lacks counterplay, whereas White is prepared for the attack. Threats like 16.g5 are very serious.

15.xd5  
15.xd5 16.xd8 xd8 17.exd5±.

16.exd5 h5  
16...e4 17.e2!†.

17.g5!  
Without much effort White has achieved a nearly decisive advantage, and the final attack merely requires precision.

17.f6  
17.f6? 18.fxg6!.

18.fxg6! fxg6 19.xf6! xf6 20.g4!  
The climax of the game. A few more moves and it seems White will be able to celebrate the victory.

20.h6  
The only defence.
EXERCISE: What is the winning move for White?

21. ♗xg6?!
A pity. Probably IM Murey made a mistake in his calculations, or it was simply a conceptual error. He chooses to continue the attack but then makes several tactical mistakes, allowing the talented Kasparov to come back into the game.

The simplest and strongest was 21. ♗xf6! ♕xf6 22. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 23. ♖xg6 ♖xg4 (23...b5 24. ♗f5 bxc4 25. ♕d1+–) 24. ♕e1 with a practically winning ending for White.

21...hxg5 22. ♕xh5 ♕e7 23. ♗f5 ♗g7 24. ♕f1?!
24. ♕h3!?  
24...e4

Now Black has serious counterplay.

Interesting was 24...♖h6!? 25. ♗e6+ ♔h8 26. ♕f7 e4! 27. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 with a quite complicated ending.

25. ♕h3 ♕e8 26. ♕e3 b6 27. ♕d1 ♕d6 28. ♕d2 ♕e7 29. ♕g2 ♖h8
Kasparov puts his pieces on the dark squares to defend against White’s light-squared bishop.

29...♖f8!?.

30. ♕e2
After you have lost the initiative it’s very difficult to find a good plan.
After a prolonged defence, Black slowly but surely starts harassing the white king.

31. ♕f1 ♖e8 32. ♗d2 ♗e5 33. ♘xg5

33.d6!? All seems well, but...

33... ♗h3! 34.d6?

His last chance was 34. ♗g6!? e3 35. ♘e2, keeping the balance.

34...e3! 35. ♘e2 ♖xd6 36. ♘e1 ♖d8 37. ♗c2

EXERCISE: Find the win for Black.

37... ♗g3+!

Kasparov never gives you a second chance.

38. ♕f1 ♖f8+ 39. ♘f3 ♗f3+ 0-1

This exciting game is an excellent illustration of the spirit of the Four Pawns Attack: *If you don’t kill me, I will destroy you!*

**Attacking with soldiers**

The following game is a good example of how White’s attack on the kingside can be developed.

**Game 2**

Viktor Moskalenko

Lluis Maria Perpinya Rofes

Barcelona rapid 2002 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 c5 6.d5 0-0 7.♗d3 e6 8.dxe6 ♘xe6 9.♗f3 ♘c6 9... ♗g4!? to avoid the option of f4-f5.

10.0-0

In my opinion, this is the correct move. The main alternative is 10.f5!? with complex play.

10... ♗g4 11.h3! ♘xf3 12.♗xf3
This is the critical position of the variation. White’s basic plan is to prepare the advance f4-f5! and develop the initiative further with the moves ♗e3-f2-h4 and ♘d5 with strong pressure on f6.

12...a6
Garry’s old idea, preparing ...b7-b5.

**WEAPON:** Most popular is 12...♘d4 13.♕f2 ♖e8 14.♗e3 (less strong is 14.f5 because of 14...♘d7? with counterplay) 14...a6 15.♖ae1! and White’s position is very solid:

A) Black can complicate matters with 15...b5!? 16.cxb5 ♘xb5 (16...axb5 17.♖xd4!) 17.f5! ♘xc3 18.bxc3 ♘xe4? 19.♗xe4 ♖xe4 20.fxg6 fxg6 21.♗f7+ ♕h8 22.♖h6+–. In general we see that White is better prepared for the complications;

B) Or 15...♖b8 16.f5 ♘d7 17.♖h1 ♕e5 18.♖d1 b5 19.cxb5 axb5 20.f6 ♖f8 21.♖xd4 cxd4 22.♘xd4 b4 23.♗d5+– Moskalenko-Andriasyan, playchess.com 2005;

C) 15...♘d7 (a waiting strategy) 16.♖h1! (the king leaves the g1-d4 diagonal, nipping Black’s counterplay in the bud) 16...♖h8 17.♖d1! (the e4-pawn is well protected, so the rook goes to the d-file) 17...♗b8 (too slow) 18.e5!? (a typical break. Also possible is 18.f5!? 18...f5?! (the main idea was 18...dxe5 19.f5 ♘d7 20.♗b1!? with good attacking chances) 19.exf6 ♖xf6 20.f5! –. White has completed his plan and he has a huge advantage, Moskalenko-Munoz Pantoja, Badalona 2001.

13.♗e3 ♕e7
Other possibilities give White good prospects:

A) 13...♗d7 14.♗ad1 ♖b8 15.♖h1 ♘h4 16.♗b1!– Moskalenko-Barlov, Maspalomas 2002;

B) 13...♗b8 14.♗ad1 ♘a5 15.♗f2!– Moskalenko-Komljenovic, Burjasot rapid 2001;

14.♖ae1!
White’s development is completed and he is ready for the final assault.

14...♖ae8 15.♔h1!
The last preventive measure that avoids Black’s counterplay on the d4-g1 diagonal.

15...♘d4 16.♕f2 ♕d7 17.f5!
The attack begins.

17...c6 18.♕h4!
From here the queen operates more effectively.

18...b5
It’s too late for serious counterplay.

19.♗g5!
White’s domination is obvious. The initiative progresses automatically.

19...d5!?+-.

19...♗d7
If 19...b4, 20.♗xf6 ♖xf6 21.♕xf6 bxc3 22.bxc3, winning the knight.

20.f6!
This advance of White’s fourth pawn locks Black’s King’s Indian bishop in a neat prison.

20...♖h8 21.cxb5 axb5 22.♕d5! ♖e5 23.♗b1 ♖e6

EXERCISE: How to continue the attack with white?
24. ♗h6!
Looking for an immediate mate.
24. ♗e7+ ♗xe7 25.fxe7
24... ♘fe8 25. ♘f4!
Threatening 26. ♘h4.
25... ♗g4!?
The last stand is always made with tactics. On 25... ♗d7, 26. ♘h4 ♗f8 27. ♗e7+ wins.
26. ♗xe7+
26... ♗f5
26... ♗xd5 27. ♘h4+–.
27.exf5 ♗xe1+ 28. ♘f2 ♘xd5 29.fxe6 ♗xe1+ 30. ♘f2 ♘xb1∞.

This game was quite clear-cut!

The flexible recapture 8...fxe6

The anti-theory-model
It must be understood that in the Four Pawns, White has a very strong centre and he must use this factor to dominate. In addition to this, there are good possibilities of a strong attack on the kingside.

Game 3
Viktor Moskalenko

Manuel Apicella

Paris 1992 (9)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 0-0 6.♗f3
WEAPON: 6.♗d3 c5 7.d5 e6 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.♗e2!?.
This is an alternative to ♘f3. 9...♘c6 (9...e5?! 10.f5 gxf5 11.exf5 d5? 12.cxd5 e4 13.♗c2+– Peev-Bologan, Ulcinj 1997) 10.0-0 a6 (10...♗d4 11.h3∞) 11.h3!? ♘d4 12.♗e3 e5 13.f5! gxf5 14.exf5 b5 15.♗g5 ♗b7 16.b3+– Moutousis-Markidis, Greece tt 2010. White controls the key central squares e4-d5.

6...c5 7.d5 e6 8.dxe6 fxe6? This continuation is more flexible than 8...♗xe6.

9.♗d3! As in the previous line, this is the most active placement for the bishop.

9...♗c6 This seems natural, but there are several alternatives:

9...e5, trying to activate his game by attacking f4: 10.0-0 exf4 11.♗xf4 ♘c6 (11...♗xe4? is bad: 12.♗xe4 ♘xf4 13.♗d5+ ♔h8 14.♗g5!+) 12.♗e2!+, attacking the weak d6-pawn, Moskalenko-Nataf, Villa Salou 2003.

WEAPON: Or 9...♗h5, with the same idea to take on f4: 10.g3 ♘c6 (10...e5? 11.f5!) 11.0-0 b6 12.♗e3 ♗b7 13.♗g5!.

Black doesn’t have enough resources for active play: 13...♗xc3?! (≥ 13...♔e7 14.♗g4!? ♘d4 15.♗b5+) 14.bxc3 ♘g7 15.♗g4→ h6 16.♗f3 ♘e8 17.♗h4 h5 18.♗g5! ♘e7 19.♗h6+– Moskalenko-Vidarte
Morales, Castellar 1999.

10.0-0
This is the main position of the Pawn Wedge Variation, because of the sheer number of possibilities here.

10...♔h8
Although this is recommended by theory, in my opinion it is a waste of time.
We shall examine the other alternatives in Game 4, and the most popular answer 10...♘d4!? in Games 5 and 6.

11.♘g5!
This manoeuvre is White’s main resource in the 8...fxe6 line.

11...♕e7
Black doesn’t have any good alternatives.

TRICK: After the weak 11...♘d4? Black loses quickly: 12.e5!→ dxe5 (12...♗e8 13.♕g4+– with the idea ♫xh7! or ♗xg6!) 13.fxe5 ♦d7 14.♖xf8+! (14.♗f7+?! ♩xf7 15.♖xf7 ♘xe5 with counterplay) 14...♕xf8.

EXERCISE: Find the breakthrough.
15. ♘xh7! (a typical sacrifice in this set-up) 15... ♘f3+ (if 15... ♘xh7, 16. ♘h5+ ♗g8 17. ♘xg6+–) 16. ♘xh7 ♘xh7 17. ♘f4 ♘g6 18. ♘g4 ♘g8 19. ♘e4 ♘b6 20. ♘h3 ♘g7 21. ♘d6 ♘b8 22. ♘f5+– Moskalenko-Arribas Robaina, Badalona 1999;

**WEAPON:** 11...e5 12.f5! with tactical play after 12...gxh5 (12... ♘e7 13. ♘f3!? with the idea ♘h3, Moskalenko-Gonzalez Rodriguez, Barbera 2002) 13.exf5 e4 14. ♘cxe4 ♘xe4 15. ♗xe4 ♘d4+ 16. ♘h1 ♘f6.

![Analysis Diagram](image)

**EXERCISE:** Find the breakthrough.

17. ♘xh7! → ♘xh7 18. ♘h5+ ♗g7 19. ♘g5 1-0, Moskalenko-Gutieres Clares, Badalona 1999;

**PLAN:** On 11...h6?! the knight returns: 12. ♘f3 with the idea ♘h4 and e4-e5!.

12. ♘e3

**PLAN:** 12. ♘e1!? and ♘h4.

12... ♘d7 13. ♘f3!?

Planning ♘h3 or ♗g3.

13...h6

After this move the g6-pawn is very weak.

14. ♘h3 ♘h7?! 15. ♘g3 ♘g8 16. ♘e5!

White starts his attack, although he could still improve his position.

Maybe it was better to first finish development with 16. ♘ad1!?.

16...dxe5 17. ♘xe5? Too hasty. Stronger was 17. ♘ad1!? ♘e8 18. ♘e4! and White has the initiative.

17...e4?

My opponent cracks under the pressure. His last chance was 17... ♘f6!? 18. ♘g3 (18. ♘e4 ♘e8 19. ♘g3 ♘d8!≈) 18...e4! with some counterplay.

18. ♘xe4

Now Black’s position is hard to defend.

18... ♘xc3

18... ♘f6 19. ♘f3+–.

19. bxc3 ♘f6 20. ♘f3 ♘a5

20... ♘d4 21. ♘f2!. 

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27
EXERCISE: Find the winning attacking move.

21. ♘g5!
The knight returns to g5, which is decisive. The threat is 22.♕h3.
21...hxg5 22.fxg5 ♘h7 23.♕g7 24.g6 ♖ag8 25.♖f7! ♖xf7
25...d6 26.♖xh7+! ♖xh7 27.♖xh7 mate.
26.gxf7 ♖g7 27.♖f1 ♖f8 28.♖xh7 ♖xh7 29.♗e5+ 1-0

Slower alternatives

Game 4
Viktor Moskalenko
José Antonio Lacasa Diaz
Barcelona 2000 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 g6 5.e4 ♗g7 6.f4 0-0 7.♗f3 e6 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.♗d3 ♘c6 10.0-0
After these natural moves we reach the main position. My opponents have tried many different moves here.

10...a6

**WEAPON:** 10...e5?! is an early attempt to grab the initiative, but it fails: 11.f5! ♘d4 12.♗g5! gxf5 13.exf5 ♘xf5 14.♗c2 (14.♗d5+-) 14...d4 15.♖xd4 cxd4 16.♖h7+ ♔h8 17.♗d5+– CapNemo-Watu, playchess.com 2006;

**WEAPON:** 10...♗e7
11. ♖g5!? (11.e5 is a possibility to launch a direct attack (Moskalenko-G.Hernandez, San Clemente 2000): 11...dxe5∞; 11...d2!? a6 12.♖b1 ♖b8 (Turov-Seel, playchess.com 2006) 13.e5!? 11...d7 (11...d4 12.♗e1 ♖d7∞ Moskalenko-Boscolo, Forni di Sopra 2013) 12.♖d2 a6 13.♗f3 ♖h5 14.♖g4 ♖h6 15.h4 ♖f6 16.♖g3 ♖g7 17.♖ae1 ♖d4 18.e5!↑ Moskalenko-De la Paz Perdomo, Montcada 2005;

WEAPON: 10...♗d7 11.♖g5!?


EXERCISE: Find the breakthrough.

15. ♖xh7! ♖xh7 16.♖h5+ ♖g8 17.♖xg6+ ♖g7 18.♖g5 ♖c7 19.♖h7+ 1-0, CapNemo-Cameron Crowe, playchess.com 2006.

If 11...h6 12.♗f3 ♖e8 13.♖h1 ♖e7 14.♖e1 ♖h5 15.g3 b6 16.♖e3 ♖b4 17.♖b1 ♖c6 18.a3 ♖a6 19.♖g1! ♖c7 20.♖h4!↑ (eyeing the g6-pawn) 20...♖e8 21.e5! --. His superior pawn structure guarantees White a clear advantage, Moskalenko-Alcazar Jimenez, La Roda 2004.

Or 10...♖h5 11.g3 (11.f5!? exf5 12.exf5 gxh5 13.♖g5↑) 11...♖d4 12.♖g5!? ♖f6 (12...e5 13.f5!).
EXERCISE: Find the breakthrough.

13. ♘xh7! ♔xh7 14.e5! Moskalenko-Fernandez Muixi, Torredembarra 2010. But now White again has the promising knight sortie:

11. ♘g5!?

Glenn Flear suggests the modest approach 11. ♗d2 with chances for both sides.

11... ♘d4

TRICK: Dubious is 11...b5?! 12.cxb5 ♘d4 13.e5! ♘e8.

EXERCISE: Find the refutation.

14. ♘xh7! ♔xh7 15.♕h5+ ♔g8 16.♕xg6+– Moskalenko-Sarto, Villa Salou 2004;

WEAPON: 11...e5 12.f5!
12...h6!? 13.♘h3 (13.♗f3?!N) 13...gx<tab>f5 14.ex<tab>f5 h5?! (14...♘d4!?) 15.♗e4 (15.♗f2!) 15...d5 16.cxd5 ♕xd5 17.♘hf2↑.

With pressure in Moskalenko-Matamoros Franco, Motril 2005. Now 17...c4!? 18.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 19.e4 ♕xd1 20.♗xd1 ♕a7 is mentioned by GM Flear as the best option for Black. However, after for example 21.a4!? White keeps the initiative.

12.♗e3

A lazy move.

WEAPON: Worthy of consideration is 12.e5!, fighting for the initiative: 12...dxe5 (12...♗e8? 13.♗x<tab>h7! ♕xh7 14.♗h5++) 13.fxe5 ♕d7 14.♗xf8+ ♕xf8? (14...♕xf8 15.♗f1!).

12...h6!
EXERCISE: Find the refutation.

15. ♖xh7! ♖xh7 16. ♖h5+ ♗g8 17. ♖xg6 ♖e7 18. ♖h7+ ♗f8 19. ♖h6! 1-0 CapNemo-Topchess2, playchess.com 2006.

12...e5!?N
12...h6?! 13.e5! dxe5 14.fxe5 ♖d7 (Ordaz Valdes-Castrillon Gomez, Cali 2009) 15. ♖xg6!±

13.f5 gxf5
13...h6!?⇆.

14.exf5 b5 15. ♖ge4!+
Occupying the e4-square.

15...♖b7
A) If 15...bxc4, 16.♗xc4+ ♔h8 17.♗g5! ♖xf5 18.♖xf5! ♖xf5 19.♖d5± with a Nimzowitschian blockade on the light squares – domination;
B) 15...♖xe4 16.♖xe4 ♖xf5 17.♖xa8 ♖xa8 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♖xb5!+–.

16.b3 b4 17.♖xf6+ ♕xf6 18.♖e4! ♖xe4
18...bxc3 19.♖xb7 ♖b8 20.♖e4±.

19.♖xe4
With a dangerous initiative.
19... xf5 20. xf5 xf5 21. g5! c8 22. d5+
22. xd6!?.
22... h8 23. f1 a7 24. xd6 xd6 25. xd6 d7
In case of 25... e4 follows 26. f6+–.
26. e6 d8 27. xc8!? xc8

After an interesting fight the ending is nice for White. However, this still has to be demonstrated.

**EXERCISE:** How to proceed?

28. d1+–
The d-file is important to keep the overall advantage and to avoid dynamic counterplay for Black.
28... e4?
The King’s Indian bishop on g7 needs some air to breathe.
29. e3!
Preventing 29... d4 and preparing an attack against the black structure (the c5-pawn).
29... g8 30. f2
There is no hurry. A better option for impatient players would have been 30. d5!?. Black’s position is hopeless either way.
30...a5!? 31.♖d5 a4!? Passive defence doesn’t offer much: 31...♗f8 32.♗f4+– and 33.♔e3.
32.♘xc5 ♔f8+
If 32...♖a8, 33.bxa4!? ♖xa4 34.♖c8+ ♔f7 35.♖c7+ ♖g6 36.♖a7+–.
33.♖g3! axb3 34.axb3 ♔f1 35.♗b5 ♖c3 36.c5!+–
The c-pawn is unstoppable.
36...♖e1 37.♖b1 38.c6 ♖b2+ 39.♔f1 1-0

Following in Kasparov’s footsteps: 10...♘d4!
In the last two Pawn Wedge games the main line is investigated. This may be helpful for either side to make up their minds.

Game 5
Viktor Moskalenko
Pedro Toledano Luna

The c-pawn is unstoppable.
36...♖e1 37.♖b1 38.c6 ♖b2+ 39.♔f1 1-0

Black’s most popular move, thanks to the famous old battle Christiansen-Kasparov. Black hopes to obtain a strong outpost on d4. This position holds many possibilities for both players.

11.♘xd4!?
A solid option that ensures a technical game.
Let’s also consider some other interesting plans for White:

**WEAPON:** More complicated is 11.♗g5!? We already know that this is the most active move and that it forces Black to take action. But this time White has some interesting alternatives (as also in the main game).
11...e5! (this is a difficult position to understand, so we must continue playing!) 12.f5!? h6! (attacking White’s best piece):

A) The sacrifice 13.fxg6 doesn’t promise much because of 13...hxg5 14.♖xg5 ♖g4! (14...♖e6!?) 15.♔xf6 ♖d7! and there isn’t enough compensation for the piece, Toporov-Chehlov, St Petersburg 1998;
B) 13...♗f3!? leads to a balanced position: 13...gxf5 14.exf5 ♖xf5 15.♖xf5 ♖xf5 16.♖xe5= Molina Camacho-Catarineu Rabell, ICCF email 2012;
C) 13...♗h3 gxf5 14.exf5 b5!? This Benko/Volga break is the key idea for Black. The complications that
now start are related to strategic concepts. Brave players can accept the pawn with 15.♘xb5! (15.♗e3?! looks like a bad response. White should react with something more effective: 15...bxc4! 16.♗xc4+ ♔h8!). Now the position was good for Black in Christiansen-Kasparov, Moscow 1982. Despite its age, this game is very important for an understanding of the line. However, in his next game against the Four Pawns Garry would turn to 6...♘a6 – see Lautier-Kasparov in the notes to Game 8) 15...♕xb5 16.cxb5 d5!.

[Diagram]

Black’s three centre pawns are a dangerous force that compensates for the sacrificed material. However, things are still unclear after 17.a4! (idea ♖a3-g3!) with a complex game: 17...c4 (if 17...e4, 18.♗e2!? d4 19.♗c4+ ♔h7 (19...♔h8 20.g4!? 20...d2?! a6 21.♖c1) 18.♖b1 ♖b6+ (18...d4? 19.♖a2= Carnstam-Werner ICCF corr 1985) 19.♖h1 a6 20.♖a3! ♖b7 21.♖g3! → and suddenly White has a completely winning position! Cervantes Landeiro-Bykovtsev, St Louis 2017.

Also interesting is 11.♔h1!? with the idea to advance e4-e5!?, but also anticipating bad reactions from Black.

11...cxd4 12.♗b5!

This leads to the key position of my anti-♘d4 line.

If 12.♗e2?!, 12...e5=.

[Diagram]

12...e5!
The most principled defence.

**WEAPON:** With 12...♕e8 Black can attempt to defend everything, but his pieces are passive: 13.♘d2 (13.b4!? 13...a6 14.♕a3 ♣f6!? 15.♘c2 ♘d7 16.b4 a5 17.a3. In the following game it looked as if AlphaZero was playing White. Anyway, I enjoyed it a lot: 17...♕c7 18.♗c1?! e5 19.h3 axb4 20.axb4 b6 21.fxe5! dxe5 22.♗xf8+ ♤xf8 23.♗f3! ♘g7 24.♖g3! (♘xd4) 24...♗b8 25.♖e1! ♖b7 26.♗f3 ♘a3 27.♗g5!+–

![Analysis Diagram](image1)

27...♗a6 28.♖f1 ♖e8 29.♗c1 b3 30.b5 ♗c8 31.c5! ♗xd3 32.♖xd3 ♗xc5 33.♗a3 h6 34.♗a2+ ♕h8 35.♗f7+ ♕h7 36.♗a8 1-0 Mozelius-Campbell, ICCF email 2016;

**WEAPON:** Another possibility is 12...a6

![Analysis Diagram](image2)

13.♖xd4! (13.♗xd6 ♖xd6 14.e5 ♖c7= is OK for Black) 13...♗b6 14.♗e3 ♘g4 (if 14...d5, 15.cxd5 ♖xd4 16.♗xd4 ♖xd4+ 17.♗h1 exd5 18.♗c2 favours White slightly) 15.♗xg4 ♖xd4 16.♗f2 ♖xb2 17.♖ad1!+ and White’s development lead gave him a strong initiative: 17...♖xf2+ (17...♗g7 18.h4!?±; 17...♗h8 (Flear-Guilleux, Dieppe 2009) 18.e5!+-) 18.♖xf2 ♖d4 19.e5 dxe5 20.♗xg6 ♖xf2+ 21.♗xf2 ♖xf4+ 22.♖xf4 exf4 23.♘d8+ ♕g7 24.♗e4+-.
13. ♖b3
White starts action on the queenside. But the strategic risk is that the white knight may be permanently bogged down on this flank. A quite forced line is 13.fxe5!?, see Game 6 below.

13... ♗e6!
Again the best move for Black.

14. ♖b4 ♖e8
Another key moment.

15. ♖d2

**WEAPON:** More dynamic could be 15.f5!?, for instance: 15...gx f5 (15...♗f7!?∞) 16.exf5 ♖f7 (16... ♖c8 17. ♖e1!??) 17.f6!.

![analysis diagram]

Suddenly gaining the initiative: 17...a5 (17... ♖xf6 18. ♗xd6↑; 17... ♖xf6 18. ♖h6 ♖g7 19. ♖xg7 ♗xg7 20.c5↑) 18. ♖h7+!? (18. ♖e1!?; the queen sac 18.fgx7 is interesting; 18...axb4 19.gxf8 ♖+ ♖xf8 20. ♖h6+ ♗g8 21. ♗xf7! ♖xf7 22. ♖f1+ and here 22... ♖e6 23. ♖f5+ seems to be a draw) 18... ♖xh7 19.fgx7↑.

15...a6 16. ♖a3
The game is very complex. The main question is: who can bring his knight back into the game first?

16...b6
16...♖b8 17.fxe5 dxe5 18.c5 b5! ∞ Moskalenko-Perpinya Rofes, Catalonia tt 2003.

17.♖f3!? White’s wants to improve the set-up of his pieces. 17.fxe5=.

17...♖a7!? 18.♖af1 ♖af7 19.♖a4 ♗c8
An automatic retreat. 19...exf4!?.

20.♘c2  ♗b7 21.♗b4  ♗c7 22.♗d1
22.fxe5!?.

22...♖e6 23.fxe5  ♖xf3 24.♖xf3 dxe5 25.♗d5
Finally this knight is active.

25...♗xd5 26.cxd5  ♗c5 27.♗c2! b5 28.g3!? Quite useful in this structure as a prophylactic move.

28...♗b7 29.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 30.♖g4↑
Now White dominates the game.

30...♖b6 31.♔g2! a5

TRICK: 31...d3? 32.♖xd3 ♖d4 33.♖e6+ ♖g7 34.♖c3 ♖xd3 35.♖xe5+ ♕h6 36.♖h3+ ♖g5 37.♖h4#.

32.♖d7  ♖d8
32...♗c5 33.♖c6#.

33.♖d3 b4
EXERCISE: Find the breakthrough.

34.d6!+–
Combining various tactical motifs.

34...♕xd6 35.♗c4+ ♔h8 36.♕xd6
Black resigned in view of 36...♗xd6 37.♗g5 ♘b7 38.♗f6 mate.

My advice is to study more deeply the most active move 11.♗g5!? and Kasparov’s play in reply to it. 11.♗h1 can be held in reserve as an additional weapon.

More weapons after 10...♗d4!?

Game 6
Glenn Flear

Andrey Zhigalko

Lille 2012 (7)

IM David Vigorito (chesspublishing): ‘I must say that I am always pleased when I see an author continue to play the openings that he has written about. It may leave one vulnerable to preparation, but the author’s experience may also shine through ... Here our own GM Flear plays the Four Pawns Attack line with 8.dxe6 which he wrote about in the excellent Dangerous Weapons: The King’s Indian. This line is often underestimated due to the influential game Christiansen-Kasparov, Moscow 1982, but as often happens there is more to the story than just one game...’

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 c5
This move order sidesteps another of Flear’s ‘Dangerous Weapons’: 5...0-0 6.♗f3 c5 7.dxc5, as Flear himself indicated.

6.d5 0-0 7.♗f3 e6 8.dxe6
IM Vigorito: ‘The move recommended by Flear is also a big favourite of the creative GM Viktor Moskalenko, who has also written quite a bit about it in his interesting book Revolutionize Your Chess. White probably does not get any advantage, but he may well get a position with which he is more familiar with than his opponent.’
The traditional move is 8.e2.

8...fxe6 9.♗d3 ♘c6 10.0-0 ♗d4 11.♗xd4
IM Vigorito: ‘Both Flear and Moskalenko prefer this positional move.’ For 11.♗g5 and 11.♗h1, see the previous game.

11...cxd4 12.♗b5 e5
For 12...a6 and 12...♗e8, see the previous game.

English GM Glenn Flear: master of the Four Pawns Attack.

13.fxe5!?  
This move has clear advantages: the white knight remains in the game, the ensuing positions are easier to understand and play, and there are many hidden tactical resources, especially for White. The nature of the play is quite forced and requires precise decisions, particularly from Black. For 13.♕b3, see the previous game.

13...dxe5 14.c5!?  
Using the c-pawn as an attacking piece, and creating a next outpost for the knight on d6.

14...♗e6
15. $\texttt{g5}$!

Flear varies from previous games (mine and his own). Instead:

**WEAPON:**

15. $\texttt{c2}$ $\texttt{c7}$! (15... $\texttt{d7}$ 16. $\texttt{d6}$ $\texttt{b6}$ 17. $\texttt{b4}$ $\texttt{a5}$! 18. $\texttt{c4}$ $\texttt{bxc5}$ 19. $\texttt{b6}$ $\texttt{c6}$ 20. $\texttt{xc5}$!?
(20. $\texttt{x} \texttt{a8}$?) 20... $\texttt{xc5}$ 21. $\texttt{bxc5}$ $\texttt{b7}$ 22. $\texttt{d2}$ with a favourable ending, Flear-Lejarre, Saint Affrique 2010) 16. $\texttt{g5}$! $\texttt{h6}$ 17. $\texttt{xf6}$ (17. $\texttt{h4}$!?) 17... $\texttt{xf6}$ 18. $\texttt{c4}$ $\texttt{xc4}$ 19. $\texttt{xc4}+$ $\texttt{g7}$ 20. $\texttt{d6}$ (knight facing bishop; this was our old mutual recommendation) 20... $\texttt{g5}$ 21. $\texttt{g3}$! $\texttt{e3}$+ 22. $\texttt{g2}$ $\texttt{d3}$ 23. $\texttt{b4}$ $\texttt{d2}$ 24. $\texttt{e2}$ $\texttt{d4}$ (Moskalenko-Campos Moreno, Mallorca 2005).

**TRICK:**

Now 25. $\texttt{ab1}$! was the best option: 25... $\texttt{b6}$ 26. $\texttt{xd2}$ $\texttt{bxc5}$? (26... $\texttt{ab8}$= looks fine for Black – Vigorito) 27. $\texttt{bxc5}$--; White threatens to invade on $\texttt{b7}$ or $\texttt{f7}$.

15... $\texttt{b6}$

A natural move which is a novelty.

**WEAPON/TRICK:** 15... $\texttt{a6}$ 16. $\texttt{d6}$
16...\textit{c7} 17.\textit{c2!}N (an improvement on 17.b4 \textit{b6} Peng Zhaoqin-Salazar, Azov 1990) 17...\textit{b6}? (if 17...\textit{h8}\textit{d8}, 18.b4\textit{d8}, winning a tempo!) 18.\textit{c4!} \textit{xc4} (18...\textit{e7} 19.\textit{b3} \textit{xc4} 20.\textit{xc4!}+) 19.\textit{xc4}+ \textit{h8} 20.\textit{e6}+–;

\textbf{WEAPON/TRICK:} 15...\textit{d7} 16.a4!? (16.\textit{e2}!?; 16.\textit{d6}!?)

16...\textit{b6}? (16...h6 17.\textit{d2}!?) 17.\textit{c6!} is almost winning for White: 17...\textit{xc6} 18.\textit{c1} \textit{d7} 19.\textit{c7} \textit{d8} 20.\textit{c2} \textit{c8} (20...h6 21.\textit{c6}!+–; 20...\textit{d7}?! 21.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6} 22.\textit{c4}+ \textit{h8} 23.\textit{d6}+–)
21. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{xc7} \) 22. \( \text{xe6+} \) \( \text{cf7} \) 23. \( \text{c6!} \) \( \text{h8} \) 24. \( \text{xf7} \) 25. \( \text{xf7} \) 26. \( \text{xa7} \)

**WEAPON:** Finally, 15...\( \text{h6} \) 16. \( \text{d2!} \) (16. \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \))

16...\( \text{e7} \) (Dominguez-Lambrecht, email 2001) 17.\( \text{b4!} \)±

16.\( \text{b4} \)

16.\( \text{c1!?} \).

16...\( \text{bxc5} \)

Black could also wait with this and play 16...\( \text{h6} \).

17.\( \text{bxc5} \)
17...c8?
   A) 17...h6 18. xf6 xf6 19. a4+
   B) 17...a6 18. d6 c7 19. c2 d7! 20. fc1!? is probably about level after 20... h8 – Vigorito.
18. a4
White puts his money on the a-pawn.
18. c2!+
18... xc5 19. xa7 c6 20. ac1 xc1 21. xc1 h6 22. h4
22. c7!?
22... a8??
A remarkable blunder. 22...g5 23. g3 (23. e1 a8=) 23... h5=.
23. x a8 x a8 24. xf6! xf6

25. c6+–
Black is just losing a piece.
25... xa2
TRICK: If 25... f7, 26. xe6! anyway.
26. xe6 g5
Black looks for counterplay, but the white e-pawn will decide.
27. xe5 e3+ 28. f1 g7 29. d5 f2+ 30. e1 xg2 31. e5! h5 32. d7+ h6 33. e6 g5 34. d6 h4+ 35. f1 d2
36. \( \textit{\textbf{\heartsuit}} f7+ \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♕}}} g7 \) 37. \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♕}}} e5+ \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} e7 \) 38. \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♖}}} xe7+ \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♕}}} f6 \) 39. \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♖}}} c4 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} xe5 \) 40. \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♕}}} f7 \)

Black resigned.

**Summary of the Pawn Wedge Variation**

Generally, in the **8.dxe6!?** variation, Black will not be able to solve his problems without specific prior analytical work, whereas White will often be successful in his fight for the initiative.

In any case, I am convinced that by studying the necessary material seriously, you should eventually be able to grasp the main subtleties of this important variation.

**Warcraft – The pawn fight**

**Game 7**

**Viktor Moskalenko**

Frank De la Paz Perdomo

Barbera del Valles 2003 (8)

1.d4 \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♘}}} f6 \) 2.c4 g6 3.\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♘}}} c3 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} g7 \) 4.e4 d6 5.f4 0-0 6.\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♘}}} f3 \) c5 7.d5 b5

Here we have an interesting Warcraft battle.

8.cxb5

The principled option.

8...a6

Here we have an interesting Warcraft battle.

9.a4!

The first key moment arises. Now it is not easy for Black to find a good continuation.

Accepting the gambit with 9.bxa6 normally results in a standard Benko/Volga game. This option is not recommended by theory. 9...\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♕}}} a5!? \) could be the critical move: 10.\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} d2 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} xa6 \) 11.\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} xa6 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♕}}} xa6 \) 12.\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} e2 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} bd7 \) 13.\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♖}}} xa6 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♖}}} xa6 \) 14.\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♖}}} e2 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♖}}} b8 \) 15.\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} ab1 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} b6= \) Degerman-K.Berg, Gausdal 1990.

9...\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♕}}} a5 \)

With this manoeuvre Black combines the threats of 10...\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♖}}} xe4 \) and 10...\( \textit{\textbf{\text{♗}}} xb5 \). However, the solution to this problem is simple for White.

Other important attempts are:

**WEAPON:** The tensest struggle occurs in the ‘Benoni line’. With 9...e6!? Black enriches the game with the
concepts of the Modern Benoni Defence: 10.dxe6 ♗xe6 11.e5!? (White makes the first break; 11.♖a3!? Novak-Zebre, ICCF email 2001; the main move is 11.♗e2! axb5 12.♗xb5 d5 13.e5 ♗e8 14.0-0↑ 11...dxe5 12.♖xd8! ♖xd8 13.fxe5! (again, the dynamic option) 13...♕g4.

The key moment of this line. 14.♖g5!? (also, 14.♗f4 ♗d7 15.b6!?N) 14...♖e8 and then 15.♗e2 Feger-Aring, Böblingen 2001;

**WEAPON:** If first 9...♗b7 then 10.♖a3!? and now if 10...e6,

the refutation is 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.e5!? ♗d5 13.♗g5!± Ivanisevic-Djukic, Skopje 2012;

**WEAPON:** 9...axb5. The downside of this move is that the white bishop can now leave its initial square: 10.♗xb5 ♗a6 (after 10...♗a6 11.0-0 (11.e5!?) 11...♗b4 12.♗e2 White has the better chances, Segal-F.Portisch, Dortmund 1980)
10. ♗d2! ♔b4
Black continues in the aggressive Warcraft style, but the black queen may be trapped.

**TRICK:** If 10... ♜bd7 11. ♞c2!?± axb5 12. ♖xb5 ♗a6?, 13.e5!, winning a piece: 1-0 Polulikh-Sevostianov, Lviv 2014.

11. ♗c2!
The best square for the queen – here it defends everything.

11. ♗d3!?

11... ♗g4
Another active move. The alternatives hardly change the evaluation of this line:

**WEAPON:** After 11...c4 the simplest solution is 12.a5!? (12.e5!? is also good) 12...axb5 13. ♖a4!

13... ♖b3 14. ♖xb3 cxb3 15. ♖b6 ♗a7 16.e5! with an absolutely winning position, Lanchava-Van der Weide, Leeuwarden 1995;

12.e5!?
Finally I played this powerful advance.
Another strong move would be 12.g5! with the threat to catch the black queen.

12...dxe5 13.xe5 f5 14.d3 xd3 15.xd3 d4

We have arrived at the critical moment of the game. Here I found an extraordinary move that I was unable to resist:

16.e2!!
Never forget that the king is also a useful piece! Objectively, White now obtains an ending with a clear advantage.

16...d8 17.e3
17.b6!+–; 17.hc1?+–.

17.b4
The game becomes a little more complicated.

18.hd1 h5
18...fd7 19.c6!.

19.g3 xe5 20.fxe5 g4+
20...d7 21.e4!?+–

21.f2
White has stabilized his position and will soon be winning, thanks to his advantage in material and his more efficient pieces.

21.d7 22.e4! xe4 23.xe4+–

After correct play in the opening and in the complex middlegame, it is only normal that White reaches a favourable ending.

23.xe5 xc5 axb5 25.xe7 dc8 26.axb5 c2+ 27.e3 b8 28.d6!
The (extra) passed pawns decide the game.

28.f5 29.d7! xd7 30.xd7 fxe4
31.g4!
In the Four Pawns Attack the white pawns are the main protagonists.
31...♘g7 32.♗f6 ♘e6 33.♖e7 ♘c7 34.♖xc7!
Black resigned in view of 34...♖xc7 35.♗e5 ♖b7 36.♖xb8 ♖xb8 37.♖a5!, winning easily.

Summary
In my opinion, Black’s idea 7...b5, to achieve a Benko/Volga Gambit set-up with Benoni motifs, is not critical against the Four Pawns Attack, but it increases the importance of the pawns – one for all and all for one!

So we can say that the Warcraft move 7...b5 is a gambit that complicates the position, but if White can complete his development satisfactorily, he retains the better possibilities in the middlegame and in the ending.

Waterloo – Games 8 and 9
Thorough analysis of some of the interesting ideas in the 6...♗a6 system versus the Four Pawns Attack leads to the conclusion that White must choose between three complex lines:
1) 7.e5!? – a hasty, but quite dynamic and sharp line, with chances for both sides;
2) 7.♗e2!? e5! – the classic continuation, which keeps the game balanced;
3) 7.♗d3! – deploying your army in the way of the old Imperators.

Are you ready for the Waterloo Game? Good luck!
Preparing the advance ...e7-e5. Now White has three main options:

7.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}3!}}

I believe this is the most ambitious.

A) In the Four Pawns, White’s position is quite solid, but at any time he can decide on the frontal attack 7.e5!?.

Here I recommend 7...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d7}}} 8.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}2}} c5! (8...dxe5!? is also logical: Black opens up the position, exploiting his lead in development, for example: 9.dxe5 f6= Khudyakov-Golubev, Alushta 2005)
9.exd6 exd6 10.0-0 ♘f6 11.d5 ♖e8=, with a complex game;

B) After the natural developing move 7.♗e2 Black can continue with his main idea 7...e5! with possibilities for both sides, for instance: 8.fxe5 (if 8.dxe5, 8...dxe5 9.♘xe5 ♘c5 10.♗f3 ♕xd1+ 11.♔xd1 ♖d8+ 12.♗c2 ♘fxe4 13.♗xe4 ♗f5 14.♗e1 ♘xe5 15.fxe5 ♗d4= as seen in many games) 8...dxe5 9.d5. In my opinion, closing the position is in accordance with White’s set-up. But here Black’s options include 9...♘c5! with pressure on e4.

TRICK: The natural 10.♗c2? is not sufficient in view of the elegant 10...♘fxe4! which has occurred in several games: 11.♘xe4 ♗f5= 12.♗d3 ♘xe4 13.♗xe4 ♗f5 14.♗xf5 ♘xf5 15.♗e3 e4!.

10.♖g5!? (the only way to defend e4) 10...h6 11.♘xf6 ♘xf6 12.b4 ♘a6 (the critical position arises on move 13, Kasparov’s favourite number!) 13.a3 c5!=, blocking the centre and the queenside, Lautier-Kasparov, Amsterdam 1995.

PUZZLE: In his three games with this variation Kasparov chose three different plans. First, against Murey, he played the Pawn Wedge line with 8...♗xe6 (Game 1); his second try was 8...fxe6 (Game 5). What does this mean?

7...♗g4!?
My opponent starts a plan that ‘challenges’ theory. For the typical 7...e5!? push, see Game 9 below.

8.♗e3!

A very similar set-up to the battles in the old days. The pawn legion attacks and the minor and major pieces are positioned behind it.

8...♘d7

For the idea to close the centre with 8...e5 9.fxe5 dxe5 10.d5 and 10...c5!?, see Game 9, 9...c5;

PUZZLE: In an internet blitz game of mine the following happened: 8...c5?! 9.d5 e6 10.dxe6! (the same idea as in the Pawn Wedge Variation) 10...♗xe6 11.0-0 ♘g4 12.♗c1! ♘xc3?! 13.bxc3 f5 14.♕g5!↑

Moskalenko-Golubev, ECU Internet Championship 2006.

9.0-0 e5 10.fxe5 c5!?

The key move for Black’s plan. In my game against IM Mathias Röder in 1999, this was a surprise for me, but after a deep think at the board, I found an antidote:

11.♗e2!

By withdrawing the bishop White opens the d-file for the queen, starting an interesting fight in the centre in all lines.

TRICK: Theory gives 11.d5?! ♘xe5 with an excellent game for Black. If 11.exd6??, 11...cxd4 and Black wins a piece.

11...♗xf3

11...dxe5 12.d5++; 11...cxd4 12.♗xd4 ♘xe2 13.♖xe2±.

12.gxf3!

More pawns towards the centre.

In case of 12.♗xf3 (or 12.♖xf3) 12...cxd4 13.♖xd4 ♘xe5±, the centre would be blocked.

12...cxd4 13.♖xd4

WEAPON: More precise is 13.♗xd4!? , winning a tempo:
13...dxe5 13... xe5 14. d2 ♘c5 15. b5+! (14. d2!? with the same idea, Avila Gimenez-Saldano Dayer, Albacete 2005) 14... dc5 and now: 15. xd8! fxd8 16. d5 e6 17. b4! with a favourable ending, Agdestein-Gullaksen, Norway tt 2005.

13...dxe5
13... xe5?! 14. f4 c6 15. xg7 xg7 16. d2+

14. e3

After a short skirmish, White has a stable advantage: two bishops, d5 for the knight, three pawns against two on the queenside, and the black bishop on g7 is temporarily locked in. But Black always has prospects in such positions.

14... ac5

Trying to activate the knight.

14... b4 was seen in Moskalenko-Röder, Barbera 1999. Now 15. d2! is similar to the idea in the main game: 15... c6 16. ad1! etc.

15. d2+N

A) If 15. d5?! , 15... e6= and ... d4 or ... f4;

B) 15.b4 is also worse: 15... e6 16.c5 d4= Moskalenko-Del Rey, Granada rapid 2001.

15... e6 16. ad1! d4
WEAPON: In another game of mine there followed 16...♘f6 17.♗xd8! (17.c5!? 17...♖xd8 18.♕xd8+ ♘xd8?! (18...♖xd8 19.♗d1!?) 19.c5!±

17.♘b5!
Attacking the only active enemy piece.

17...♗xb5!?
Probably the best practical chance was the pawn sac 17...♗c5!? to unbalance the game: 18.♗xd4 exd4 19.♗xd4 ♘xd4+ 20.♕xd4 ♕g5+ 21.♔h1 ♘e6 (21...♖ad8 22.♕g1!) 22.♕f2 ±

18.cxb5

This was the position I had aimed for – and prepared well.

18...♔b6 19.♕xd8!
Exchanging queens is the key to White’s plan. It guarantees a favourable ending without allowing Black any counterplay.

19...♖xd8 20.a4!
Making use of the bishop pair and his superior pawn structure. White’s plan consists of pushing the pawns on the queenside as rapidly as possible, to fight for the initiative.

20...♗f8

TRICK: 20...♘xa4? 21.♖xd8 ♘xd8 22.♖a1! ♗xb2 23.♖a2! ♘d1 24.♖d2!+-, winning material.

21.a5!

With this, the game is practically decided.

21...♘a4 22.♖xd8 ♖xd8 23.♗xa7

23...♖d2 24.♗c4 ♖xb2 25.a6!

Black is hopelessly lost.

25...♗c5 26.♖a1! ♖b4 27.♗f1 ♖b2 28.♗c1 bxa6 29.♗xc5 axb5 30.♗xf8 ♖xf8 31.♗c5 ♖b4 32.♗xe5 ♖c2 33.♗b5 ♖c3 34.♕f2

And finally Black resigned.

A typical pawn push: 7...e5!?
With this advance Black offers a typical pawn sacrifice.
7...♗g4 was the previous game.

8.fxe5!?
Declining the offer.
In case of 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♘xe5, 9...♖e8 or 9...♗g4!? with compensation for the pawn.

8...dxe5 9.d5

With a quite pleasant position, as the bishop is placed very well on d3.

9...c6

**WEAPON:** 9...♗c5 10.♗c2, keeping the bishop just in case (10.0-0!? ♖xd3 11.♗xd3 ♘h5 12.c5↑
CapNemo-Tikva, playchess.com 2007): 10...a5 11.0-0 ♘d6
12. ♕e1!? Alekhine’s classic queen manoeuvre, intending ♕h4: 12...♗d7 13. ♕h4↑ Alekhine-Lasker, New York 1924;

**WEAPON**: 9...c5. With a closed centre, Black can easily prepare ...f7-f5: 10.0-0 ♘e8 (a typical knight manoeuvre in this structure, intending to move it to the ideal square d6) 11.a3 ♘d6 12.♗b5! (to trade off Black’s blocking piece)
Throughout his chess career, World Champion Alexander Alekhine tried all kinds of openings, even the Four Pawns Attack.

12...♕e7 13.h3 ♗d7 14.♗e3 b6 15.♗xd6! ♘xd6 16.♗c2! f6 (16...f5 17.♗a4!) 17.♗a4 ♗f7 18.♗xd7 ♘xd7 19.♗f2! (19.b4?) 19...♗f8?! 20.♗e2 ♘e8 21.♗af1 ♗ee7 22.♗h2! ♗g7 23.♗g4+- Moskalenko-Kalegin, Villa Salou 2009.

10.0-0 cxd5 11.♗xd5!?N
The most precise answer: the knight on c3 is not active, but the exchange of pieces with such a pawn structure generally favours White.

11...♖xd5

**WEAPON:** 11...♗c5 12.♗g5? h6 13.♗xf6 ♘xf6 14.b4 ♗e6 15.c5 ♗g7 16.♗c4 ♘d4 17.♗xd4 exd4 18.♗b3+ Moskalenko-Iglesias, Montcada 2001.

12.cxd5 ♘c5
Or, for example: 12...f5 13.♗e3! ♗b4 14.♗c4 ♗d6 15.♗c1+-.

**WEAPON:** 12...♗b6+ 13.♔h1 f5 and now:
13. e3! ♕ a5 14.a3
14... xd3 15. xd3 b6

As a result of the original opening play, an unusual position has come about. The rest of the game is a quite subtle and interesting mix of strategy and tactics.

16. b4!
16. fc1!?.
16... a6 17. d2 ♕ a4 18. fc1 ♕ c8
18... ac8 19.h4!?.
19. h6!
It turns out that Black has the weak king and the e5-pawn.

19... h8
19... xc1+ 20. xc1 xh6 21. xh6 xa3 22. xe5 xb4 23. f4 f5 24. c6 xe4 25. xe4 fxe4 26.d6+-.
20. h3?!
Prophylaxis.
20.\textit{h4!?} – attack!

20...\textit{\texttt{b3}}

\textbf{EXERCISE: How to proceed?}

21.\textit{\texttt{g5}!}↑

Playing intuitively.

21.\textit{\texttt{g5}!} was winning according to Stockfish; or 21.d6!? \textit{\texttt{d3}} 22.a4±.

21...\textit{\texttt{d3}} 22.\textit{\texttt{xld3}}

A bit of a ‘chicken’ move! But in the morning round, I felt that the endgame offered me a big advantage.

22.\textit{\texttt{e1}↑}.

22...\textit{\texttt{xd3}} 23.\textit{\texttt{f2}} f6

23...\textit{\texttt{f6}?!}.

24.\textit{\texttt{xe3}!} \textit{\texttt{c2}} 25.\textit{\texttt{d2}!}

Expelling the bishop from the diagonal c2-e4.

25...\textit{\texttt{a4}} 26.\textit{\texttt{e6}±}

Now Black has difficult problems.

26...f5 27.\textit{\texttt{c7}!} \textit{\texttt{ab8}}
28.b5!
Making the two black bishops look ridiculous.
28...♖b7
28...♗f6 29.♖c6! ♔e7 30.♖ac1+-.
29.♘a6! ♖xc1 30.♖xc1 ♖xb5 31.♖c8+ ♔f7 32.♖c7+-
Attacking with the three pieces and the d5-pawn.
32...♖d7 33.♖f8+ ♔e7 34.♖e6! ♖f6

EXERCISE: Find the last tactic.
35.♖xf6! ♖xf6 36.g5+ ♔f7 37.♘d8+ 1-0

PostScript: The Four Pawns Attack
The ‘Fearsome’ Four Pawns Attack requires an understanding of play with the central pawns as well as of attacking with pieces. The study at hand is an attempt to help, and in it, the readers will find all the material necessary to get themselves acquainted with this variation, to deepen their understanding, and to get a good grip on the important features.

I hope that in this variation, active players, who favour playing for the initiative and attacking, will discover good possibilities to successfully combat the King’s Indian Defence.
Modern Benoni Defence

The Taimanov Attack in the past and future
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♗c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.f4 ♗g7 8.♗b5+

Nautilus is the future, gentlemen! – Captain Nemo.

8.♗b5 is a powerful check! For many years, this strong resource has remained the chief weapon of numerous players against the Modern Benoni. Among other advantages, White’s idea is simply to gain one tempo.

In this chapter I would like to present some original ideas in the aggressive Taimanov or Four Pawns Attack that, in my opinion, have not yet been well-developed or sufficiently analysed by modern theory.
My opinion on 8.\texttt{b}5+ \texttt{bd}7

8...\texttt{fd}7 is Black’s main defence against 8.\texttt{b}5 in the Taimanov Variation. No good is 8...\texttt{d}7? because of 9.e5!, with a large advantage for White. The move 8...\texttt{bd}7, however, is more natural, although it gives White the possibility of a frontal attack with 9.e5! (White has to start his tactics immediately, since without this move Black can develop comfortably) 9...dxe5 10.fxe5 \texttt{h}5.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Now 11.e6! is the main and principled line: 11...\texttt{h}4+ 12.g3 \texttt{x}g3 13.hxg3 \texttt{h}x1 14.e3.
As recent games (and analyses) show, Black’s position is completely hopeless. See Game 10: Peralta-Lacasa Diaz, Catalonia tt 2014.

A bit of history
In the year 1988 (!) I received an invitation to play in an interesting closed tournament for promising young players in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. During my preparation, I realized that against 1.d4 almost all participants (including myself) had in their repertoire the Modern Benoni Defence, which was very popular at the time. This forced me to dedicate some time to the study of this creative opening and to prepare an interesting and effective idea...

Three alternatives
The position after 8...♘fd7 was the focus of my studies before I started in the tournament in Armenia. The black pieces do not look very active at the moment, because White has spent more time on his development. But the bishop does not do anything either on b5 and will soon be attacked there.

Now we have many options. How to continue?

A) There is GM Lutikov’s advance 9.a4, preventing Black’s counterplay with ...a7-a6 and a quick ...b7-b5. I did not like this very much, because the b4-square is weakened and a black knight can be comfortably placed there. 9...0-0 10.♗f3 ♘a6 11.0-0 ♗b4 12.h3 (or 12.♖e1 a6 13.♗f1 ♗e8 14.h3 f5!? 12...a6 13.♗c4 f5!N.
An important novelty in a well-known position. This is one of the main ideas solving the central problems in the Benoni. I think this move will have a bright future – A. Kapengut, 2002.

But anyway this retort has always been fashionable, thanks to the fact that it was used by Garry Kasparov in several games;

B) Worthy of attention is 9. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{f3}}} \) a6 10. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{e2}}} \) b5, with an unclear position (recently analysed in various books);

C) Taimanov’s move is 9. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{d3}}} \), for example: 9...0-0 10. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{f3}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\texttt{a6}}} \) 11.0-0 \( \text{\textit{\texttt{c7}}} \) 12. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{d2}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\texttt{f6}}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{\texttt{h3}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\texttt{e8}}} \) 14. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{f3}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\texttt{b8}}} \) 15.a4 \( \text{\textit{\texttt{a6}}} \) 16. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{c4}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\texttt{b4}}} \) 17. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{b1}}} \) a6 18.a5 \( \text{\textit{\texttt{f8}}} \) 19.f5 \( \text{\textit{\texttt{e7}}} \) 20.f\( \text{\textit{\texttt{xg6}}} \) fxg6 21.e5 dxe5 22.d6 \( \text{\textit{\texttt{xd6}}} \) 23. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{xd6}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\texttt{e4}}} \) 1-0 Taimanov-Trifunovic, Leningrad 1957.

Whatever the case may be, I can assure you that each of these plans has its advantages and weak points.

The idea behind 9. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{e2}}} \)?

After analysing the well-known practical examples (please note that in 1988 there were no personal computers yet and until 1995 I studied at the board, using books and magazines – and my own head!) I soon realized that the secret of this position is based on the fact that in general, Black’s counterplay is very dynamic, depending on what White plays next. There are enough resources for both sides.

But what I liked was the suggestion of 9. \( \text{\textit{\texttt{e2}}} \) ?.
Typical black plans

By putting his queen’s knight on a6 Black starts a common plan in the Benoni. One is to try the advance ...b7-b5: ...
\[ \text{c7}, \ldots \text{b8}, \ldots \text{a6}, \ldots \text{b7-b5}. \] If now (or also earlier) 10...f6?! White gains a clear tempo compared to the theoretical positions (see examples in Game 11 and Game 14).

One of the insoluble problems for Black in the Taimanov Variation is where to put these crazy knights (see also the comment to 15...a6 in Game 14)

The CapNemo plan

After 9.e2 0-0 10.f3 a6 11.0-0 c7 we reach another key moment.

![Chess diagram]

12.d2 used to be a popular continuation, but I believe that 12...f5 is an important resource for Black here.

12.h1!? is also played, with the idea to prepare the advance f4-f5.

But when I analysed this position more deeply, I found that White has another interesting plan: 12.d2!?. This might be called the ‘CapNemo Plan’, after several Internet wins with it by myself under that handle.

![Chess diagram]

The queen’s bishop will be manoeuvred to the h4-square, or to g3, from where it can support the typical break e4-e5.

In Game 11, Moskalenko-Minasian, my rival found it was difficult to solve all the problems that arose in the opening, and in the short middlegame struggle White dominated from the start, displaying good knowledge of the strategic plans and tactical resources.
In Game 12, Moskalenko-Makarevich, we will investigate the 12.♗d2!? plan more deeply. Here we observe other ways to go wrong for Black, due to errors at critical moments. Perhaps his best chance was ...f5!? on move 16 or 18, with a complicated game, although we should not forget that in the 1980s and ’90s all resources of these positions were not known yet. More recent games are found in Game 13, Moskalenko-Sanz Alonso.

As for 12.a4!? this move often only transposes to known positions. It is an alternative to 12.♗d2!? but the plans are very similar. It is possible that this advance is more reasonable here than on move 9, since Black now needs more time to take the knight to the b4-square: ...♗b8-a6-c7-a6-b4.

In Game 14, Moskalenko-Magerramov, we find more illustrative examples, along with other attempts and plans. After resigning this game, my opponent commented to me: ‘It seemed as if I was lost from the beginning; 8.♗b5 and what you played immediately afterwards is a deadly plan.’ I still agree with this evaluation.

⚠️ KEEP IN MIND
Due to the fact that there are quite typical moves in the opening, some games can transpose one to the other (Games 11-14).

Other plans for Black
Another plan for Black is 9/10...♕h4+. The main idea of this check is to weaken White’s kingside structure. However, Black is wasting important time. With this option we transpose to a game by a student of mine. During the same tournament in Yerevan, I taught the idea of 9.♗e2 and ♗d2 to my student, IM Stanislav Savchenko, who soon used it successfully in his games. See S.Savchenko-Pigusov (Game 15). Recent games of my own with 9...♕h4+ are Moskalenko-Fernandez Vicente (Game 16) and Moskalenko-Almeida Quintana (twice in Game 17).

In Game 18 we will examine an interesting option for Black: 9...0-0 10.♘f3 f5!?.

A blow to the white centre! This move (in similar positions) was used by World Champion Tigran Petrosian and later by his colleague Veselin Topalov. It is a push rich in resources, well-known in the Modern Benoni and in similar structures.

In this case, Black takes advantage of the position of his knight on d7 to advance the f-pawn. Strangely enough, after 11.exf5 gxf5, practice has seen only one game with this position: Ezat-Ghaem Maghami (Game 18).
Modern Benoni 8.♗b5+ – Games

My opinion on 8...♘bd7

Game 10
Alexander Fernando Peralta
José Antonio Lacasa Diaz

Catalonia tt 2014 (2)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.f4 ♗g7

WEAPON: 7...♕e7 is an attempt to discourage e4-e5: 8.♘f3 ♗g4 (8...♖xe4?? 9.♕a4+) 9.e5!? (9.♗b5+ ♘bd7 10.0-0+) 9...dxe5 10.d6 ♗e6 (10...♗xd6 11.♘xd6 ♘xd6 12.♗b5++) 11.♕a4+ ♘c6 12.♗c4 ♘d7 13.♗xe5 (13.♗g5!?++) 13...♘xe5 14.fxe5 ♕xa4 15.♘xa4 ♘d7 16.♗f4 ♘g7 17.♗b5± Utesch-Daurelle, chessfriend.com 2004.

8.♗b5+!

Throughout the entire history of this variation, this move has traditionally been considered dangerous for Black.

8...♘bd7

This move, more natural than ...♘fd7, aroused some interest – however it is insufficient to achieve equal chances. Practice from recent years suggests that this evaluation might need amendment.

9.e5 dxe5

9...♘h5 10.e6 ♕h4+ 11.♕f1 is just losing for Black.

10.fxe5 ♘h5

11.e6!

The calmer natural move 11.♘f3 leads to an equal game after 11...0-0 12.♗g5 (12.g4 ♘xe5! 13.♖xh5 ♘xf3+ 14.♖xf3 ♕h4+ 15.♗d2 c4!–+) 12...♗b6 13.♘e2 a6 (13...f6 14.exf6 ♘xf6=) 14.♘xd7 ♘xd7 15.0-0-0 f6 16.exf6 ♘xf6 17.♗d2 ♖ae8=.

11...♕h4+

WEAPON: 11...♖xe6 12.dxe6 0-0 13.exd7 (13.♗f3!? ♖xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♘d6 15.♘xd8 ♖xd8 16.e7+–)
13...♕h4+ 14.g3 ♘xc3+ 15.bxc3 ♧e4+ 16.♗e2 ♧xh1 17.♕e3−–.

12.g3!
After 12.♗d2?! fxe6 13.dxe6 0-0 14.exd7 ♘xd7 15.♘f2+ (15...♘xc3+?) 16.♗g2 ♗d8 Black has enough compensation.

12...♗xg3 13.hxg3
13.f3?! ♘xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♧e4+ 15.♗e2 ♗h1 16.exf7+ ♗e7 17.d6+ ♗f6 18.c4 (Kruppa-Berelovich, Donetsk 1998) 18...♗g7!=.

13...♕xh1 14.♗e3!

The key position.

14...♗xc3+
Only this idea is worthy of attention.

**WEAPON:** 14...0-0 15.exd7 ♘xd7 16.♘xd7 ♗ae8 17.♘xe8 ♗xe8 18.♗e2 ♘d4 (18...♗h6 19.♖f1 ♗xe3 20.♗g2+−) 19.0-0-0! ♘xe3 20.♘d2 ♗h5 21.♗e2 ♗g5 22.♖b1 ♗f6 23.d6 c4 24.♗d5 1-0 Draba-Zorzopulos, IECG email 2000;

**WEAPON:** 14...a6 15.exd7+ ♘xd7 16.♘xd7+ ♗xd7 17.♗a4+ ♘d8 (17...♗b5 18.♗xb5+−) 18.0-0-0 ♗e8 19.♗g5+! f6 20.♗f4 (20.♗f4?!) 20...♗e7 21.♖e1+ 1-0 Sadewasser-Wesseln, Germany tt 2000/01;

**WEAPON:** 14...♗g2 15.exd7+ ♘xd7 16.♘xd7+ ♗xd7
17.♕g4+!? (17.♕a4+ is quite similar) 17...f5 18.♕a4+ ♔c8 (18...d8 19.0-0-0 ♖xc3 20.bxc3 ♕xg3 21.♗d2+-) 19.0-0-0 ♖xc3 20.bxc3 ♕xg3 21.♖xc5 ♕xc3+ 22.♗b1 ♕xc5 23.♗c1+– Molo-Ramirez, ICCF email 2005.

15.bxc3

15...a6

**WEAPON:** 15...♕e4 leads to a favourable endgame for White: 16.♕d3!?. This move allows White to keep more pieces and pawns on the board (16.♕f3 ♕xf3 17.♕xf3 fxe6 18.dxe6 a6 19.exd7+ ♖xd7 20.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 21.0-0-0+ is still playable for Black). 16...♖xd3 17.exd7+ ♔xd7 18.♕xd3 b6 19.♗g5!? (19.♗h6!?) 19...0-0 20.♗f6! ♕e8+ 21.♕f2 ♖b5 22.♕f3 ♕ab8 23.♕e5 ♖h3 24.♖c6 ♖b6 25.♖e2 h5 26.♕f3 ♖a6 27.a3 ♕d7 28.♖e5+– Sage-Simeonov, ICCF email 2011.

16.exd7+ ♖xd7 17.♗f1!

It’s less convincing to play the endgame after 17.♖xd7+ ♖xd7 18.♕g4+ (18.♗b3 b5 19.0-0-0 ♕he8 20.♖xc5 ♕g2=) 18...f5 19.♕f3 ♕xf3 20.♕xf3 ♕he8 21.♕f2 ♕e4 22.♕g3!? ♕c4 23.♕xh7 ♕h8 24.♕f6+ ♕d6 25.♕e1 ♕f8 26.♕g5 ♕xf6 27.♕xf6 ♖xd5 and there is still a lot of technical work ahead, Pantazi-Trofimov, ICCF email 2013.
17...♗e4

**WEAPON:** 17...0-0 18.♗f2 ♗e4 19.♗xc5 ♕xc5 20.d4 ♗c2+ 21.♕e2 ♗b5 22.♖c1 ♕xa2 23.♖e7 ♗c4 24.♖e3 ♗c7 25.♖d6+– Zylla-Cilloniz Razzeto, ICCF email 2013.

18.♖f3


18...♕xf3?
18...♕e7 19.♖f2 ♗f5.

19.♘xf3+- 0-0
19...♗b6 20.♘e5+--; 19...♘c8 20.♖f2 ♗f6 21.♗d2+–.

20.♗xc5 ♗fe8+ 21.♔f2 ♗f5 22.d4 ♗b5 23.♖d1
Black resigned.

After 8...♗d7 Black has a difficult position, but it requires precision from White to capitalize on it.

**The customary Benoni plan – 9.♗e2 0-0 10.♗f3 ♗a6**

**Game 11**

Viktor Moskalenko

Artashes Minasian

Yerevan 1988

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♗c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 ♗g7 8.♗b5+! ♕d7
This is Black’s main defence against the Taimanov Attack.

**WEAPON:** No good is 8...♗d7?!

An analysis diagram

because of 9.e5! with a clear advantage for White: 9...♗h5 10.♗f3 0-0 11.♗xd7 ♕xd7 12.0-0 ♗a6 13.♗e4!? dxe5 14.fxe5 ♕e8 15.♗e1+ Marques-Del Bosco, Sao Paulo 1997.

9.♗e2?!
For other possibilities see the introduction.

9...0-0
At the moment this is the most natural, but there is a possibility to give check, 9...♕h4+, that we will see later (Games 15-17).
10. \( \text{f3} \)

GM Artashes Minasian. All his life he has been one of the greatest devotees of the Modern Benoni on the black side.

This is the critical position of this variation.

10... \( \text{a6} \)

This knight manoeuvre introduces a customary Benoni plan. One possibility is to try and carry through the ...b7-b5 advance with ...\( \text{c7} \), ...\( \text{b8} \), ...a7-a6, and ...b7-b5.

**WEAPON:** If now or at a later stage 10...\( \text{f6} !? \), White can gain a clear tempo in comparison with the theoretical positions: 11.0-0 \( \text{g4} \) (11...\( \text{e8} \) 12.e5!; 11...\( \text{bd7} \) 12.\( \text{e1} !? \)) 12.e5!? (12.h3!? \( \text{xf3} \) 13.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 12...\( \text{xf3} \) (12...dxe5 13.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{fd7} \) 14.\( \text{g5} ! \)) 13.\( \text{xf3} \) dxe5 14.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{fd7} \) 15.e6 \( \text{e5} \) 16.\( \text{g4} ! \)\( \pm \)


More examples:
10...a6 11.a4 ♘f6 (11...♕e7 12.0-0! ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♕xe4 14.c4+– Kasparov-COMP Super Constellation, Hamburg 1985) 12.0-0 ♖e8

WEAPON: 10...♗xc3+?! 11.bxc3 ♘f6 12.e5! dxe5 13.fxe5 ♘xd5 14.♗g5 ♕d7 15.♕d2 ♘c6 16.♖d1+– Moskalenko-Munoz Pantoja, Sant Marti 2011;

WEAPON: 10...♖e8 11.0-0 ♘f8?! 12.e5 (12.♗d2! ?; 12.f5! ?) 12...♗d7 13.♗g5 dxe5 14.f5↑ Moskalenko-Perenyi, Budapest 1988.

11.0-0 ♘c7

12.♗d2!?

Another key moment. Here White has the interesting plan to bring the bishop to the h4- or g3-square. From there the bishop can support the typical e4-e5 break – see also Games 12 and 13.

PUZZLE: For transpositions: 12.a4!?, see Games 13 and 14.

Earlier, the popular continuation was 12.♗d2 but I believe that here 12...f5!? is an important resource for Black.

Another interesting option, 12.♗h1!!, has been played, with the idea to prepare the advance f4-f5. But it is easier for Black to find a defence with such direct play. For instance: 12...♗b8 13.a4 a6 14.f5 b5 15.♗g5 ♗e8 16.e5 ♗xe5 17.f6 ♗h8∞ Ivanisevic-Donchenko, Biel 2015.

12...♖e8

For 12...♗b8 see Game 12 below.

In this variation it is always necessary to study the possibility of 12...f5.

13.♖c2

13.a4 transposes to Game 14.

WEAPON: 13.♗e1!? is still not much explored: 13...♗xc3 (13...b5 14.e5 ♘b6 15.♘xb5= Reichert-Viard, ICCF email 2011) 14.bxc3 ♔xe4 15.f5 ♗e5∞ 16.♗xe5 ♘xe5 17.fxg6 hxg6 18.♗f3∞.

13...♗f6


14.♖ad1?

Mobilizing the major pieces for the battle.

14...a6

Too slow.

14...♖e7 15.♖d3!; 14.b5 15.e5!?

15.e5!?

This advance is one of the most important means for White to attack the black structure. 15.♗c1!? also deserves to be considered.

15...♗fxd5

15...♗f5 16.♗d3 (16.♗b3!?+) 16...♗xd3 17.♖xd3 dxe5 18.fxe5+=.

16.♗xd5 ♖xd5 17.♗c4! dxe5?

17...♗e7=.

TRICK: 17...♗e6? 18.f5! gxf5 (18...♗xf5 19.♗b3+–) 19.♕g5+–.

18.♗c1!

18...♗e1!?.

18...♗e6 19.♖xd5 ♘xd5 20.♕xc5+—
The rest is merely a matter of technique.

20...\textit{c}8 21.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 22.\textit{xd}5 \textit{e}4 23.\textit{d}4

23.\textit{e}5!?.

23...\textit{e}3 24.\textit{e}1 \textit{c}4 25.\textit{b}3 \textit{c}2 26.\textit{xe}3 \textit{xb}2 27.\textit{d}2 \textit{a}5 28.\textit{xb}2 \textit{xb}2 29.\textit{d}2 \textit{xe}1+ 30.\textit{xe}1 \textit{a}4 31.\textit{a}5 \textit{b}5

32.\textit{c}6 \textit{g}7 33.\textit{f}1 \textit{f}6 34.\textit{a}7 \textit{f}5 35.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}5 36.\textit{xb}5 \textit{h}4 37.\textit{g}2 \textit{hxg}3 38.\textit{hxg}3 \textit{g}5 39.\textit{fxg}5 \textit{fg}5 40.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}5 41.\textit{c}3 \textit{a}1 42.\textit{a}3 \textit{e}6 43.\textit{b}4 \textit{d}5 44.\textit{c}3+ 1-0

Game 12
Viktor Moskalenko

V.K. Makarevich
Yerevan 1988

1.d4 \textit{f}6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.\textit{c}3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 \textit{g}7 7.f4 \textit{g}7 8.\textit{b}5+! \textit{fd}7 9.\textit{e}2!? 0-0 10.\textit{f}3 \textit{a}6 11.0-0 \textit{c}7 12.\textit{d}2!? \textit{b}8

With this move, Black is trying to save a tempo for executing his main plan with ...b7-b5.

12...\textit{e}8 is Game 11 above.

13.a4

13...\textit{a}6
14.a5!?  
This well-known blockade is very useful, since it reduces Black’s possibilities of counterplay with the advance ...b7-b5.

WEAPON: I have also played the direct 14.♗e1!??. See Game 13 (next).

14...b5

WEAPON: In the case of 14...♖e8 we have: 15.♕c2 (alternatively, 15.♗e1!? b5 16.♗xb5 axb5 17.♘h4! Moskalenko-Iturrizaga Bonelli, Mollet rapid 2010) 16.axb6 (16.e5?!?) 16...♖xb6 17.♗c2 (17.e5!?) 17...♗b4 (17...♗b8 18.♖h4!↑ Moskalenko-C.Kovacevic, Tortosa rapid 2006) 18.♖h4 ♘f6 19.♕g3 (19.♕g5?!?) 19...♗b6 20.♖e5 ♖e7 21.♘ad1 ♘f5 22.♖c1 ♘a8 23.♗h4 ♘d7 24.exd6 ♘xd6 25.♗xg3 26.hxg3 ♘xe2 27.♖xe2 ♘b5 28.♖c3 ♘c6 29.♘h6 ♘g4 30.♖xd5 ♘xd5 31.♘xd5! Moskalenko-A.Ivanov, Vladivostok 1997) 15...♕e7 (15...b5 16.axb6 ♘xb6 17.♗e1!; 15...♘f6 16.♗a1!? b5 17.axb6 ♘xb6 18.♖c4! ♘g4 19.e5↑ Sigrist-Dos Santos, Americana 1999)

15.axb6 ♘xb6

WEAPON: During this event in Yerevan, I taught the idea of 9.♗e2 followed by ♘d2 to my student, IM Stanislav Savchenko, who soon started applying it successfully in his games: 15...♖xb6
16. ♜c2 and now:

TRICK: 16... ♞b5? 17. ♞xb5 axb5 18. ♞a5!.


16. ♖e1!? Played with the idea of 17. ♖h4!.
16. ♜c2!? is an alternative.

16... ♔d7?! Confusion at the key moment. It was necessary to look for counterplay immediately:

A) If 16... ♕b7, 17.f5 (17. ♖f2!?) 17...gx5f 18. ♖h4↑;
B) 16...f5 17.e5! ♖b7 18. ♖h4 ♕d7 19. ♕c1!? ♖h8 20. ♖d1±;
C) Interesting was 16... ♞b5!? with a complicated game.

17. ♖h4! ♕e8 18. ♕c2
18. ♖d2!? was even more precise.

18... ♕b5 A traditional method that does not work well in this situation.

A) 18... ♖b4 19. ♕ae1!;
B) 18...f5 19.exf5! gx5f 20. ♕ae1↑.

19. ♖xb5 axb5
20.e5!?  
The typical e4-e5 break is White’s primary goal in the middlegame. His initiative in the centre is more important than activity on the flanks.
20...dxe5  
20...♘b6
21.♖fe1
21...♕d8?  
The decisive error.
22.f6 22...♕f7
22.fxe5 24.♗exg5! fxg5 25.♗xg5 ♦xg5 26.♗xe5 ♦xe5 27.♖a7 ♖f5 28.♖xg7+!  
Black resigned.

Game 13  
Viktor Moskalenko

Francisco Sanz Alonso
1.d4  ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.f4  ♗g7 8.♗b5+  ♘fd7 9.♗e2 0-0 10.♘f3  ♗a6 11.0-0  ♘c7

In order to complete our study of this typical position, we will look at other attempts.

12.a4!?

PUZZLE: This prophylactic move normally transposes to the lines 12.♗d2 ♖e8 or 12...♖b8 as in Games 11 and 12 above. However, there is also an extra idea – see the strong weapon on move 13.

12...a6

For 12...♖e8 see Game 14 below.

12...♗a6 13.f5!?

WEAPON: 13.f5!? is another attacking resource which seems to work perfectly here:

13...♘e5 14.♗e1!? (the transfer of the queen to the kingside) 14...♖b8 15.♕g3! ♗xf3+ 16.♕xf3 ♘e5 17.♖f4+- Anagnostopoulos-Lazaridis, Anogia 2018.

13...♖b8 14.♗e1!?

14.a5!? is Game 12 above.

14...♗b5
15. ♗h4
Following my predetermined plan.

WEAPON: However, in this position White should start with 15.e5! dxe5 and now 16.♗h4 (16.d6!? is similar) 16...♗f6 (16...♕e8 17.d6 ♗e6 18.axb5 axb5 19.fxe5 ♗xe5 20.♗d5↑) 17.♗xf6 ♗xf6 18.d6 ♗e6 19.♗d5 ♗g7 20.axb5! axb5 21.♗a7! ♗h8 22.♗e5 ♗xe5 23.fxe5+– A.Aleksandrov-Hedman, Stockholm 1995.

15...♗f6 16.♗xf6 ♗xf6
16...♗xf6 17.♗d2 b4 18.♗d1++

17.axb5!?
In the previous century I played 17.e5 b4!≈ 18.exf6 bxc3 19.bxc3 ♘xf6 20.♗d2∞ ♕b3 21.♗c4! ♘b8 22.h3 ♗f5 23.g4 ♘d7 24.g5 ♗fe8 25.♗ae1 ♘xe1 26.♗xe1 ♗e8 27.♗e4 ♗h4 28.♗f2! ♘xh3 29.♗f6+ ♗g7 30.♗f1 ♘xc3 31.♗xe8+ ♘xe8 32.g5 ♘xa4 33.♗e4 ♘d7 34.♗e7 ♘a4 35.f5 ♗f8 36.f6 h6? 37.♗e4 (37.gxh6!) 37...♗d7 38.♗h4 h5 39.♗e1 ♘xe1 40.♗xe1 ♘a4 41.♗xa6 ♘b3 42.♗e7 ♘xd5 43.♗b5+– Moskalenko-Totsky, Moscow 1992.

17...♗xb5
17.axb5 18.e5!?.

18.♗xb5
WEAPON: I missed the correct attack: 18.e5! ♘xc3 19.bxc3 dxe5 20.fxe5 ♘xd5 21.♕c1! ♘e7 22.♕g5†.
18...AXB5 19.♕e1?!
19.e5!?.
19...♗e8
19...b4!?
20.e5 b4 21.♕a4 dxe5 22.fxe5 ♘xd5 23.♕c5 ♗g4 24.h3 ♘b5 25.♕c1 ♘b6?
25...♗xf3 26.♕xf3 ♘c3! (26...♗b6? 27.♕f1!) 27.♕d3 ♘d5=.
26.♕xd5 ♘xf3

27.♕d6!
27.gxf3 ♘d8 28.♕c4 ♘c8 29.e6 ♘bxc5 30.exf7+ ♘g7=.
27...♗a8
27...♕c6 28.e6+--; 27...♕xd6 28.exd6±.
28.♕xb6 ♘xb6 29.♕d7 ♘c6 30.♕xc6 ♘xc6 31.♕f6+ ♗f8 32.♕xe8 ♘xe8 33.♕d1 1-0
The value of this game (and the next one): we have discovered some additional advantages of the flexible move 12.a4!? – for example 13.f5!?

Game 14
Viktor Moskalenko

Elmar Magerramov

Rostov-on-Don 1993

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♕c3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 ♗g7 7.♕b5+ ♘f8 9.♕e2 0-0 10.♕f3 a6 11.0-0 ♘c7 12.a4!?
This is an alternative to 12.♕d2!?, but the plans connected with it are very similar. Possibly this advance is more reasonable now than on move 9, since it takes Black more time to take his knight to the b4-square: ...♗b8-a6-c7-a6-b4.
12...♗e8
Azeri GM Elmar Magerramov: ‘It seemed as if I was lost from the beginning...’ In his youth, Magerramov helped Garry Kasparov to understand the complexities of the Modern Benoni System as Black.

12...a6 was seen in Game 13.
Remember: 12...♘a6?! 13.f5!.

13.♕c2

**WEAPON:** It is also possible to return to the idea of 13.♗d2?! Then in case of 13...♗xc3?! 14.♗xc3 ♖xe4 (14...♘f6? 15.♘g5!) 15.♘g5 ♖e8 16.♗d3 – White has good possibilities of a kingside attack.

13...♗f6
Remember: thus White wins a tempo: ♖b5+♘d7, ♖e2-♗f6.

**WEAPON:** 13...a6
14. ♖d2!? ♘b8 15. ♗e1! b5 16.e5! dxe5 17. ♘h4†.

14. ♖d2  ♖g4 15. ♗ae1  ♘a6

One of the paramount problems for Black in the Taimanov Variation is where to put his ‘crazy’ knights!

WEAPON: 15...a6 16.h3 (16.a5!?++) 16... ♖xf3 17. ♖xf3 b5 18.e5†;

WEAPON: I believe 15... ♘d7 is somewhat passive. It allows White to obtain the initiative: 16. ♖g5 (16.f5!?; 16.♖h1!!) 16...xe2 17. ♖xe2 c4 18. ♖e3 a6 19. ♖d2 (19.e5! dxe5 20.f5+++) 19...b5 20.e5! dxe5 21.f5 ♚f6 22.d6 b4 23. ♖ce4 ♖d5 24.fxe6 hxg6 25. ♖xf7! ♖d7 26. ♖g5+- Moskalenko-Alonso Rossell, Banyoles 2006;

WEAPON: Five years later the evaluation remains unchanged: 15... ♖b8 16.h3 ♖xf3 17. ♖xf3 ♖d7 18.g4 ♖a6 19. ♖b5 ♖b4 20. ♖b3 ♖b6 21. ♖g2 ♖c6 22.a5 ♖xa5 23. ♖a4 a6 24. ♖d6 ♖xd6 25.e5+- Avila Gimenez-Alonso Rosell, Barcelona 2011.

16. ♗c4

WEAPON: 16.e5!?.

16... ♖b4 17. ♖b3

All ready to fire away with e4-e5!.

17... ♖xf3 18. ♖xf3 ♖g4 19.g3!±
This strong preventive move avoids all counterplay along the dark squares. White is much better.

**WEAPON:** 19.e5!? dxe5 20.d6±.

19...f5
Finally Black starts to look for new resources! But it’s already too late.

20.h3 fxe4 21.♗xe4 ♘h6 22.g4! ♘f7 23.♗g2 ♘d4 24.c3!+-

![Chessboard Diagram](image)

24...♘h4 25.♗xd4! ♘xe1 26.♗f6+ ♘h8 27.♗c3
A spectacular position.

27...♗e2+ 28.♗xe2 ♘xe2+ 29.♕f2 ♘e7
For example: 29...♕e3 30.g5! ♘d3 31.♗d2 ♘f5 32.c4+–.

30.♗c4 1-0
There is no defence against 31.♗e2.

A check on h4 – 9.♗e2 ♘h4+ 10.g3 ♘e7/♕d8

Game 15
Stanislav Savchenko

Evgeny Pugusov

Norresundby 1992 (4)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♗c3 exd5 5.cxd5 ♘f6 6.e4 ♗g7 7.f4 ♗g7 8.♗b5+ ♘d7 9.e2 a6
For 9...♕h4+ see Games 16 and 17.

10.a4 ♘h4+
The main idea of this check is to weaken the white pawn structure on the kingside. However, the black queen wastes important tempi.

11.g3 ♘d8

**PUZZLE:** 11...♗e7 transposes to the next games.

12.♗f3 0-0 13.0-0 ♘e8 14.♗g2?!-

The main move.

14.♗e1!? is an alternative.

14...♗f8
Looking for a way to finish development.

**WEAPON:** 14...♗xc3 15.bxc3
15... \textit{f}6 (15... \textit{xe}4 16. \textit{d}3 \textit{e}8 17. \textit{f}5 \rightarrow) 16. \textit{e}5 (16. \textit{c}4!) 16...dxe5 17. \textit{fxe}5 \textit{xd}5 18. \textit{g}5↑. 14...b6?! is too slow: 15. \textit{c}4 b7 16. \textit{e}1± Hillarp Persson-E.Berg, Oslo 2015.

15. \textit{e}5!?

The most aggressive reaction. White immediately begins a dangerous attack in the centre.

\textbf{WEAPON:} 15.h3!? \textit{bd}7 16. \textit{e}1± is a solid set-up for White.

15... \textit{g}4?! 

Actually it is not easy to find a good defence here.

It was possible to follow up with the cold-blooded 15... \textit{bd}7!? 16. \textit{e}4!↑.

16. \textit{g}5!

Now the initiative is in White’s hands.

16. \textit{xe}2 17. \textit{xe}2 \textit{f}6

17...dxe5 18. \textit{f}5!++; 17...f5 18.e6!?±

18. \textit{ge}4 dxe5 19. \textit{f}5!

A typical blockade. Black no longer has any active counterplay.

19...gx\textit{f}5 20. \textit{xf}5 \textit{g}6 21. \textit{e}3 \textit{b}6 22. \textit{af}1+-
31.♘c7 ♖xc7 32.dxc7 1-0

Game 16
Viktor Moskalenko

Carmelo Fernandez Vicente

Sitges 2006 (2)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.♗g4 ♗b4+ ♕d7 9.♗e2 ♘h4+ 10.g3 ♕e7

For 10...♕d8 see Game 17 below.

11.♘f3 0-0

**WEAPON:** As we already saw in many similar lines, the e4-pawn is poisoned: 11...♗xc3+? 12.bxc3 ♕xe4 13.0-0 0-0 14.c4 ♘b6 15.♗d3 →

15...♕e8 (15...♕e7 16.f5!+–) 16.f5+– Rupp-Ederer, Germany tt 2013/14.

12.0-0
12...♘b6

A few other typical lines:

A) 12...a6 13.♖e1 ♘b6 14.f5!±;
B) 12...♖e8 13.♘e1 ♘a6 14.♗f1 ♘b6 15.h3± Utasi-H.Porsch, Kecskemet 1989;
C) 12...a6 does not change much: 13.a4 ♖e8 14.♖e1± A.Aleksandrov-Minasian, Yerevan 1988.

13.e5

WEAPON: 13.f5!? gxf5 14.♗h4†.

13...♗g4

13...dxe5 14.fxe5 ♖g4 15.♗f4†.

14.♗g5!

This is often an interesting manoeuvre after ...♗g4.

14...♖xe2 15.♖xe2 dxe5 16.f5!

With a positional threat: 17.♗ge4.

16...♗d7

16...e4 17.♗xe4±.

17.♗ge4!+-

Black’s position is completely blocked – without any counterplay.

17...f6 18.♗e3 ♘c8 19.♗g4! gxf5 20.♗xf5 ♘f7 21.♗b5? 21.♖ad1 ♘d6 22.♗xd6 ♖xd6 23.♗e4+-.

21...b6 22.d6 ♖f8 23.♗c7 ♗b8 24.♗ad1 ♘h6 25.♗xh6 ♖xh6 26.♗e8 ♖f8 27.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 28.♗xf6+ ♘h8 29.♗xe5 ♖g7 30.d7 1-0

Game 17

Viktor Moskalenko

Omar Almeida Quintana

2569

2500

Sabadell 2008 (8)

WEAPON: A game played one year earlier saw 12...♗b6

![chessboard](attachment:image.png)

analysis diagram
13.e5 (13.f5!? gxf5 14.♘h4! 13...g4 14.♗g5! xe2 15.♗xe2 dxe5 16.fxe5 (16.f5!? ♘xd5 17.♘xd5 ♘xd5 18.fxe6 ♕h6 19.♗d1 ♘c6 20.fxe6) 16...♘xd5 17.e6! ♘c6 (17...f5 18.e7! ♘xe7 19.c4+ ♕h8 20.♗e6) 18.exf7+ ♕h8 19.♗g2 (better was 19.♗e6!++) 19...哕x3 20.bxc3 ♘d7 21...f4? (21...e3) 21...xh2 22.♖ad1 ♕d4+ ½-½ Moskalenko-Almeida Quintana, Barcelona 2007.

13...♖g2!?  
WEAPON: Interesting is 13.f5!? or first 13.a3!? ♘a6 14.f5!.

13...a6  
WEAPON: 13...♗b6 14.f5!;
WEAPON: 13...♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘f6 15.c4!

15...♖xe4 16...b2 ♘d7 17...c2 ♘f6 18.a4!+, preventing ...b7-b5.

14.f5!  
The Moska attack begins.

14...♗e5

14...gxf5 15...h4 fxe4 16.♗f5 →.

15.♗g5! f6 16.♗xe5
16. ♗f4!?

16...fxg5 17. ♔g4+ gxf5
17...h5 18.f6!; 17...♗f8 18.fxg6±

18.exf5 h5

Black’s position is already hopeless.

For example: 18...♖f8 19.f6! ♗xg4 (19...xf6 20.♗xf6+ ♔xf6 21.♖d2+) 20.♗xg4 ♖xf6 21.♖e4 ♖e7
22.♖e6+ ♔h8 23.♖h5+–.

19.f6! ♖xe2+ 20.♕xe2 ♗xg4 21.♗g4+–

21...♖d7

21...♖xf6 22.♖g6+ ♔g7 23.♖e4+–

22.fxg7

22.♖g1!? ♔h3 23.f7+ ♔h8 24.♖g6+–

22...♖h3+ 23.♖g1 ♖xf1 24.♖xf1 ♖c7 25.♖g6 ♖xg7 26.♖xd6 ♖b6 27.♖f6 ♖h7 28.♖e5 ♖g8
28...♖f8 29.♖f5+ ♔g8 30.♖e4+–

29.♖f5+ ♔h8 30.♖f7 ♕d4+ 31.♖f1 ♖g7 32.♖f8+ 1-0

Summarizing ...♕h4+ (Games 15-17)
It seems that the check on h4 hardly hampers White’s plans with the e4-e5 (or f4-f5) break. On the contrary: Black does not get the time to create acceptable counterplay.

A blow to the white centre – 9.♗e2 0-0 10.♗f3 f5

Game 18
Mohamed Mahmoud Ezat

Ehsan Ghaem Maghami

Abu Dhabi 2003 (6)
A sharp break, using the fact that the position of the black knight on d7 gives him the chance to play ...f7-f5. But White can now exploit the weakness of the e6-square.

11.exf5
Also worth studying is 11.0-0!?.

**WEAPON:** Or directly 11.♘g5!? ♘b6 (11...♘f6? is possible in the main game, but not here: 12.e5!) 12.exf5 gxf5 13.a4! (threatening a4-a5 and additionally giving White the option of playing the thematic rook lift ♖a3-g3) 13...a5 14.0-0 h6 (14...♘a6 15.♗xe6 ♖xe6 16.dxe6 ♘c6 17.♗b5 d5 18.g4 ♖f6 19.♕h1 with advantage to White.

11...gxf5
11...♖xf5? 12.0-0 ♘b6 13.♘g5!?± Avila Gimenez-Perez Conde, ICCF email 2006.

12.0-0 ♘f6
A) 12...a6 13.♗d2!;
B) 12...♗b6?! 13.a4 ♖a6 14.♘g5±

13.♘g5
This jump is more promising on move 11. Now, with the black knight on f6, the white army is not yet well prepared for immediate combat.
Iranian GM Ehsan Ghaem Maghami was the first (and, so far, last) player who employed the dynamic move 10...f5!?

**WEAPON:** It was far better to prepare the offensive carefully with 13.\(\text{c2}\)? or 13.\(\text{d2}\)?.

13...\(\text{a6}\)

14.\(\text{f3}\)!
Another mistake. The bishop is not effectively placed on f3.
Better was 14.\(\text{e6}\)!? \(\text{xe6}\) 15.\(\text{dxe6}\) \(\text{e7}\) 16.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{c7}\) 17.\(\text{f3}\).∞

14...\(\text{c7}\) 15.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{e8}\) 16.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{h6}\) 17.\(\text{e6}\)
17.\(\text{h3}\)? \(\text{g4}\).↑

17...\(\text{xe6}\) 18.\(\text{dxe6}\) \(\text{xe6}\) 19.\(\text{xb7}\) \(\text{b8}\) 20.\(\text{c6}\) \(\text{e7}\) 21.\(\text{f3}\)
21...c7
21...g4 22. xg4 fxg4 23. d2∞.
22. b1
22. d2!?.
22...h8 23. f2 d5 24. xd5?!
White is confused. Better 24. a4!?.
24...d8 25. xe6 d1 26. bxd1 xf4↑

In the end, Black won this game after his opponent blundered a couple more times.
27. xc5 e8 28. d6? h4
28...g5—.
29. g3 g5 30. d5 e4 31. f4 h4 32. g3 h5—+ 33. d7 d8?
33...f3! 34. xe8 f2!—+
34. e7??
34...c3—.
34...f3
34...f7—+
35. xf5?? xd7 0-1
General conclusions
Without a doubt, the existence of the Taimanov Attack with 8...b5! is one of the reasons why the Modern Benoni has fallen out of favour in recent years. The ensuing positions force Black to defend from the start and do not offer him too many possibilities to play actively.

The particularity of 9.\textit{b}e2!? is that it is an attempt to restrict Black’s counterplay even more, preparing attacks in the centre and on the kingside, beginning with typical breaks like e4-e5! or f4-f5. Actually, after I have studied so many quite easy victories by White, it seems to me that Black’s customary plans do not work very well. Black must look for different, more creative ways, for example by a more thorough study of the ...f7-f5 advance, attacking the centre.

To conclude, the advance 10...f5 is at the moment the freshest and most creative possibility. Black continues in the true spirit of the Modern Benoni Defence, fighting for the initiative from the very first moves. Still, White has several options to choose from and his position is quite solid.
CHAPTER 3

Snake Benoni

Two antidotes
1.\(d4\) \(\text{♘}f6\) 2.\(c4\) c5 3.\(d5\) e6 4.\(\text{♘}c3\) exd5 5.\(\text{cxd5} \text{♗}d6\)

The ‘Snake Bishop’ system with 5...\(\text{♗}d6\) was applied in practice in the 1970’s by a talented Ukrainian player, IM Vladimir Peresipkin (1953-1994), especially in his blitz games, and at the tournament level in Beliavsky-Peresipkin, Kiev 1978.

A bit of history
The Snake Benoni refers to a variation of the Modern Benoni where the bishop is developed to d6 rather than g7.
The opening was given its curious name because of the sinuous movement of the bishop – Black follows up with ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{c}}7} and then ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{a}}5}.

Despite the fact that the first tests of this complex variation were not very successful for Black, strong grandmasters like Julian Hodgson, Normunds Miezis and Vugar Gashimov (1986-2014) were regular exponents of 5...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{d}}6}, giving way to completely original play with the dark-squared bishop.

The Snake is also popular among club players, as the resulting dynamic positions often lead to unpredictable play.

From time to time, this system was played in my own games, with both colours. But I have always thought that The Snake is a very risky and dubious variation. The bishop is placed in front of the d-pawn in order to move it to a5: ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{c}}7-\textbf{\textcolor{black}{a}}5}. In the Nimzo-Indian, for example, this bishop placement is achieved more easily and much more quickly by playing 3...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{b}}4}! directly (though the positions are, of course, different).

\textbf{Snake – basic ideas}

- After ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{c}}7} and ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{a}}5}, to seek counterplay directly on the queenside with ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{b}}6};
- Going for the classical Benoni set-up with ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{e}}8}, ...a7-a6, ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{b}}8} and ...b7-b5;
- The queenside fianchetto ...b7-b6/...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{b}}7}, if the black pawn on d7 is blocked by d5-d6;
- Sometimes Black returns his Benoni bishop to its initial square, as for example in Game 20:

\includegraphics{snake_diagram.png}

10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{f}}8}.

\textbf{Two antidotes for White}

White can wage the anti-Snake battle in two different ways:

- Game 19 – The sharp advance: \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{e}}4}!? , planning an attack by pawns with f2-f4/e4-e5;
- Game 20 – The attacking pin: \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{g}}5}!? . Here, the strategic advance d5-d6!? is the most popular way of meeting the Snake Benoni at present, fighting for the initiative in the centre and on the kingside and putting up a total blockade shutting out many of Black’s pieces. If he could play ...d7-d6! himself, Black would achieve a normal Benoni structure. The rest of White’s plan is quite automatic: e2-e3, \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{c}}4}, 0-0 and then e3-e4 (or first \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{black}{e}}1}).

These two set-ups are the most challenging for Black.
Snake Benoni – Games

Game 19
Peter Daus

Uwe Mauermann

Germany tt email 2011

2113
2182

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5 ♘d6 6.e4!? This advance is a direct attempt at refutation: preparing f2-f4/e4-e5.

6...0-0
The main move. Possible deviations easily lead to White’s advantage:

6...♗c7? 7.d6 ♗a5 8.e5+–.

WEAPON: 6...♗e5?! 7.♗f3!? (7.♗d3) 7...♘xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♖xe4 9.♗d3↑ ♖f6 10.d6 0-0 11.0-0 h6? 12.♗f4 (12.♖xh6+–) 12...♗c6 13.♖d2+– Hodysh-Schwab, Vienna 2003;

WEAPON: 6...♕e7 7.♗d3 (also 7.f3!? a6 (7...0-0 8.♗b5! 8.♕a4!±) 7...♗c7 8.♗f3 d6 9.h3!? 0-0 10.0-0 a6 11.a4 ♖bd7 12.♖f4 b6 13.♗e1± Leisebein-Kirwald, Remote email 2013.

7.f4
The threat of e4-e5 forces Black to sacrifice the knight.

7...♖xe4 8.♖xe4 ♖e8 9.♗e2!
The first key moment.

9...c7

If 9...f5?!?, 10.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xd6\( \textit{\text{\&}} \).

**WEAPON:** 9...\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f8 10.g4 d6 11.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) h3 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xg4 12.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xg4 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xe4+ 13.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) e2 (13.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f2?!) 13...\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) d7 (P.Nielsen-Karjakin, Beijing rapid 2011) 14.0-0;

**WEAPON:** 9...\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) a6!? seems to be the most promising: 10.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) d2 (10.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f3 c4!??; 10.g4 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) b4! 11.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f2 b5\( \textit{\text{\&}} \)) 10...c4?!N (10...f5 11.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xd6\( \textit{\text{\&}} \); 10...f8 11.0-0-0 f5 12.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f6+ gxf6 13.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) h5\( \textit{\text{\&}} \))

11.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xd6 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xe2+ 12.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xe2 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f6 13.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xc4 b5 14.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) e3 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xb2 15.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) c1 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) b4 16.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f3 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xa2 17.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) c7!? (17.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) c5∞) 17...b4 (17...\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f6 18.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f2?!?) 18.0-0 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f6 19.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) h1! \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) d6!? 20.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) c2 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) a6! and now, for example, 21.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xa6 (21.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f5 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f6 22.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xa6 b3\( \textit{\text{\&}} \)?) 21...\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xa6 22.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) a1 b3 23.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) b2 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) b8∞ is still unclear.

10.g4

**WEAPON:** 10.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) d1!? d6 (10...f5 11.d6!) 11.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f3 h5 12.h3 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) e7 13.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) c3 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) e1+ 14.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) c2 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f5+ 15.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) d3 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xd3+ 16.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xd3 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) a6 17.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f3\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) Saidashev-Hempel, ICCF email 2007.

10...\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) c6!?

**WEAPON:** 10...d6 11.f5 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xf5 12.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) g5 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) a5+ 13.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) d1 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) d7 14.gxf5 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) a4+ 15.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) c2 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) d4+ 16.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) d3 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xe4 17.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xe4 \( \textit{\text{\&}} \) xe4 18.\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) f3\( \textit{\text{\&}} \) Jenneborg-Van Seben, IECG email 2002.
11. dxc6 d5 12. g2

\[ \text{Diagram 1} \]

12...bxc6
12...dxe4 13. g5 bxc6 14. e3= Stern-Bussard, Bad Wiessee 2016.
13. h3?!N
An important improvement.
13. e3 a5+ 14. f2 (14. f1 dxe4 15. h3 b6 16. g2 a6 17. f2 ad8 18. c1 d3 Stöckert-Vozda, ICCF email 2009) 14... h4+ 15. g3 d4 16. f3 f6 17. h5 d6 18. e5 dxe3+ 19. xe3 xg4 Skowronek-Mauermann, Germany email 2014.
13...h5 14. 0-0!

\[ \text{Diagram 2} \]

In the further struggle White has better chances.
14... xg4 15. c2
15. f2!? xh3 16. xh3 xe4 17. g2=.
15...dxe4
\[ \text{TRICK:} \] 15... xh3?? 16. g5!+–.
16. e3 d3 17. c1 f3 18. f2 d8 19. c2 e6 20. h3!
With the profound idea of giving back the piece, but winning the initiative; 20. h1!?.
20... g6 21. g5! xg2 22. xg2! f6
22...d3 23...fe1+, threatening 24.f5 or 24...ad1.
23...xe4 e8 24...c4+ h8 25...ae1 fxg5 26.f5±

26...f6

TRICK: 26...e5 27...f4! gxf4+ 28.fxg6±.

27...xg5 f7 28...c2 xa2 29...xf6 gxf6 30...d2 g8+
30...g8+ 31...f2!+–.

31...h1

31...e5

The immediate endgame is also winning due to the same manoeuvre as in the game: 31...d5+ 32...xd5 cxd5 33...f3!+– and 34...h3!.

32...f3! d8 33...h6+ h7 34...xh7+ xh7 35...h3+– g8 36...xh5 f7 37...h7+ g8 38...xa7 d2 39...g1+ h8 40...ga1! 1-0

This was a perfect correspondence game. White showed deep analysis after 9...c7. However, the simple developing move 9...a6!? still gives Black hope for the future.

Game 20
Boris Gelfand
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5  ♘d6 6.♗g5!?

The modern treatment.

⚠️ KEEP IN MIND 6.♘f3 is a slower option, where Black has more chances of counterplay: 6...c7!? (6...0-0?! 7.♗g5!)
7.d6 ♖a5 8.♗g5!?

Grandmaster Vugar Gashimov (1986-2014) was a great specialist in the Modern Benoni. I believe he had prepared the Snake System as a surprise for blitz or rapid games.

Chessboard image:

TRICK: 8...h6?! is not useful: 9.♗h4 ♖b6 (9...c6 10.e3 ♖b6 11.♗b1! ♕e4 12.♘d2! ♖xd6??
13.♗d5+–) 10.♗b1! ♕e4 and now the black knight is not attacking the bishop on g5 (see line 8...♖b6!}

100
below): 11.♘d3 ♘xd6 12.♘d2

8...♗b6! (the main resource for Black which is not working after 6.♗g5!) 9.♖xf6 (9.b1 ♘e4! 10.♘d3 f5 11.♘d2 ♘xd6 12.♖xe4 ♘xd3 13.exd3 ♘xe4 14.dxe4 ♘d2+ 15.♘xd2= Hnydiuk-Stupak, Krakow 2013) 9...♗xb2! with an unbalanced position: 10.♗xg7 (a logical move; 10.♘c1 gxf6 11.♘d2 ♘xd2+ 12.♘xd2 ♘c6=; 10.♘c1 ♘xc1+ 11.♖xc1 gxf6 12.♗d2 ♘c6=) 10...♗xc3+! 11.♗xc3 ♘xc3+ 12.♗d2 b6! (12...♗d4?! 13.e3 ♘xd6 14.♗c2 ♘c6 15.♖d1) 13.♖c1 ♘f6!N (13...♗g7?! 14.h4! ♘b7 15.♖h3↑ Lalic-Hodgson, Sochi 1987; 13...♗d4?! 14.e3 ♘xd6 15.♗f3 ♘c6 16.♗e4=).

14.♗e4 (14.e3 ♘b7) 14...♗e5 15.♗d5 (15.♗g3 ♘c6=) 15...♗xd5 16.♗f6+ ♘f8 17.♖xd5 ♘c6 and the endgame is equal. So, 6.♗f3 should be considered an inaccurate move order for White.

6...h6

**WEAPON:** 6...♗c7 7.d6! ♘a5 8.♗c2!? (8.e4!?) 8...h6 9.♖h4 ♘c6 10.e3 0-0 (Narciso Dublan-Akshat, Barbera del Valles 2014) 11.♗f5!?N ♘xc3+ (11...♗b6 12.♗b1=) 12.bxc3 ♘e8 13.♖xf6 ♘xf6 14.♖xf6 gxf6 15.♗e2 b6 16.♗g3 ♘b7 17.♗e2 ♘a5 18.0-0-0=;

**WEAPON:** 6...0-0?! 7.♗f3 ♘e8 8.e3

analysis diagram
8... h6 9. d6 transposes to the main game; 8... c7 9.d6 a5 10. c4 e6 10. c4 xd6 11. b3 e8 12. xf6! b6?! (12...gxf6 13.0-0; 12... xf6 13. d5) 13. c2 gxf6 14. d5--

7. d4 0-0

For 7... c7 see the line on move 6.

8. f3

8... e8

WEAPON: Again, 8... c7 is too late: 9.d6! a5 10.e3 b6 (10...e8 11. d3 see below, line B) 11. b1 e4 12. d3!+-- V.Belov-Sergienko, St Petersburg 2006.

9.e3 a6

A) 9... g5? 10. g3 xg3 11.hxg3 g7 12.d6!+-- Vaganian-Hodgson, Sochi 1986;

B) 9... c7 10.d6! a5 11. d3 b6 12.0-0 xc3 13.bxc3 b7 14.e4+-- Narayanan-Li Di, Al-Ain 2015.

10.a4 f8

11.d6!? 

The most popular way of meeting the Snake Benoni at present.

WEAPON: 11. d2!? leads to a typical Benoni position, where Black has lost a lot of time on his king’s bishop manoeuvres: 11...d6 12. e2 bd7 13.0-0 b8 14. c2 e7
15. ♕e1 (15. ♖g3!?) 15...g6 16.h3 ♗g7 17. ♖ad1 b6 18. ♖g3!? (18.e4 g5 19. ♖g3 L.Portisch-Minko, St Petersburg 2012) 18...e5 19.f4 ♖d7 20.e4±.

11...♖e6
Otherwise 11...♘c6? 12.♗c4!±

12.♗c4 ♖xd6 13.♗b3 ♖e8
If 13...♖e6 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.0-0±, Black hasn’t got enough compensation.

14.♗g3
A natural human decision – to pick up material.

WEAPON: However, the computer helps us discover hidden resources: 14.♗xf6!? ♖xf6 15.♗d5 ♖c6 16.h4!! (this wonderful reply puts the black army in a kind of zugzwang) 16...a5? (this allows White to execute his main idea; 16...g6 17.0-0±; 16...♗d8 17.a5±; 16...b6 17.♗g5!) 17.♗g5!+– hxg5 18.hxg5 ♖e6 19.♗d3 g6 20.♗f6+ 1-0 Sanchez Rodenas-E.Rasmussen, ICCF email 2007.

14...c6 15.♗xd6 ♖xd6 16.♗d5 ♖xd5 17.♗xd5 ♖b4 18.0-0 ♖f8 19.e4 ♖d6
So far, there are only two games with this line. White may be slightly better, but as is typical in the Benoni, there is convincing compensation for the exchange.
20.h3
Not necessary; 20.♖fe1!? ♖b8 21.a5 ♖xd5 22.exd5 ♕d8 23.♘b6± Hainke-Minko, Livigno 2012.
20...♖b8 21.a5 b5 22.axb6 ♖xb6
After many tactics and blunders, White now wins this rapid game.
23.♕c3
23...c4=.
23...g6
23...♖xd5!? 24.exd5 ♖xb7⇆.
24.♖fe1 g7 25.♖d7 26.exd5 ♖ab1 ♗h7 28.♗f4? a5?
28...♗b7⇆.
29.♗h4 ♖b4 30.♗g5+ ♗g8 31.♗e4 ♗h8 32.♗g3 ♖b6 33.♗d2 ♖a6 34.b3 ♗h7 35.♗bd1 ♗f5 36.♗e4 ♗e5 37.♗e3 ♗b4
38.♗xc5 ♗f4 39.♗xf6 dxc5 40.d6 ♖xb3 41.♗e7 ♘c4 42.d7 ♖xh3 43.gxh3 ♗g5+ 44.♗f1 ♗f5 45.♗e3 ♗xe3 46.♗xe3
♗d5+ 47.♗h2 ♖xd7 48.♗xc5 ♗f5 49.♖xd5 ♗f4+ 50.♗g1 ♖a4 51.♖d4 ♗c1+ 52.♖d1 ♗c3 53.♖d3 ♖b4 54.♖a1 ♗f4
55.♖a3 ♗g5+ 56.♖g3 ♗f4 57.♖g4 ♗f3 58.♖g3 ♗f4 59.♖a3 ♗h5 60.♖f3 ♗c4 61.♖e3 ♗g8 62.♖e8+ ♖g7 63.♖e5+ ♖g8
64.♖c3 ♖a6 65.♖e8+ ♖g7 66.♖c8 1-0

Summary
In general, I am more impressed by the flexible ideas of the model Game No. 20, starting with 6.♗g5. Here White has more positional opportunities:
11.d6 and later 14.♗xf6!? ♖xf6 15.♗d5 ♖c6 16.h4!! looks like a brilliant line;
Or even the standard plan with 11.♗d2.
However, the direct attack 6.e4 (Game 19) forces Black to make tough decisions, playing a complicated position with different material.
My advice: always choose the line that accords best with your style!

Conclusion
In the Snake Benoni, it is obvious that White’s initiative in the centre and on the kingside is stronger than Black’s defensive and counter-attacking resources. In many games, the decisive moment came after the ‘snake manoeuvre’ ...♗d6-c7-a5, culminating in ...♗x♘c3. Also, by starting on its long journey, the bishop leaves the kingside undefended. However, to take advantage of this, White must play very accurately and also take risks.

According to the statistics with 5...♗d6, Black wins many games by gaining the initiative – in the spirit of the Snake!
Indo-Benoni

Various set-ups vs Czech Benoni / Semi-Benoni / Schmid Benoni

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5

The Indo-Benoni systems work well for players who prefer a closed game. The arising positions are quite complex. I have often faced such defences in my tournament practice, and I believe White can get a strategic advantage using the set-ups given below.

Directions

In this chapter there is no definite opening classification. I just picked up the most successful plans in the Indo-Benoni structures – that is, with the pawns on c4/d5/e4 (or c2/d5/e4) vs ...c5/d6/e5 (or ...c5/d6/e7).
Czech Benoni
Games 21-25: Here we will study the two main alternatives (the placement of the white bishop): g2-g3/ ♗g2 or ♗d3.
Game 21 – An unusual set-up: g2-g3/\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}2 and \textit{\textcolor{red}{h}}3!? vs ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}7 or ...g7-g6/...\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}7.
The curious knight move to h3 could even become a main weapon against the Czech Benoni. In fact, I accidentally discovered this idea when I watched some blitz games by fans in an open tournament! After that, I began to successfully apply this scheme in my own games.

Game 22 – Standard plan: g2-g3/\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}2 and \textit{\textcolor{red}{ge}}2 vs ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}7.
Game 23 – Fianchetto: g2-g3/\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}2 vs ...h7-h5.

\begin{itemize}
  \item Remember that, after the fianchetto \textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}2-g3/\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}2, the main idea is to prepare f2-f4 (Games 21-23);
  \item The popular alternative for White is 6.\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}3. But this move makes the game more flexible (and therefore more complicated, and more tense) on both sides. On d3 the bishop helps against Black’s advances ...b7-b5 and ...f7-f5. Here White should mainly control Black’s counterplay, slowly preparing a2-a3 and b2-b4 or h2-h3 and g2-g4 (Game 25). And White should keep f2-f4 as a weapon against ...f7-f5 (see in Game 24).
\end{itemize}

Game 24 – \textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}3 vs ...g7-g6/...\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}7;
Game 25 – \textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}3 vs ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}7.

Another category of typical pawn structures in the Indo-Benoni is more dynamic (mainly because of the white pawn on c2):

\textbf{Semi-Benoni}
Game 26 – Pawns c2/d5/e4 vs ...c5/d6/e5.

\textbf{Schmid Benoni}
Game 27 – Pawns c2/d5/e4 vs ...c5/d6/e7.
Indo-Benoni – Games

Czech Benoni

g2-g3/♗g2 and ♘h3 vs ...♗e7 or ...♗g7

Game 21
Viktor Moskalenko

Swayangsu Satyapragyan

Sitges 2009 (7)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.♘c3 d6 5.e4 ♘bd7
A flexible move, waiting to see how White continues. ❄️

**WEAPON:** Black can also develop his knight via a6: 5...♗e7 6.g3 ♘a6 7.♗g2 ♘c7

![](analysis_diagram.png)

8.a4! (prevents counterplay with ...b7-b5; 8.♗e2 h5!?; 8.♘h3 b5!?; 8.f4 exf4 9.gxf4 0-0 10.♗f3 b5! Moskalenko-Damaso, Andorra 2006) 8...0-0 (8...♗a6 9.♗e2!? 9.♗ge2!? (see also Game 22; 9.♗h3!?N is the key idea) 9...b6 10.0-0 a6 11.♖d3!? ♖b8 12.♗d2 and White is ready for f2-f4, Drasko-Kaspi, Vrnjacka Banja 1991; ❄️

**WEAPON:** 5...g6 (see also the comment to move 6)
6.g3!?
For the alternative plan 6.♗d3 see Games 24 and 25.

6...♗e7

**WEAPON:** Black’s main alternative is 6...g6 which is more in the KID style: 7.♗g2 ♗g7 8.♗h3!? (White’s main manoeuvre for this model game) 8...0-0 9.0-0 a6 (9...♗e8 10.♗g5!? f6 11.♘d2 ♜f5 12.exf5 ♗xf5 13.g5 ♘c7 14.g6†) 10.a4! b6 (10...♗e8 11.♘a5!? 11.♗d3!? ♗e8 12.g5!? (12.♘d2 is similar) 12...f6 13.♗d2 ♖b8 14.f4! ♖xf4 15.♖xf4 ♖f5 16.♗xf5 ♘xf5 17.♕a1=)

7.♗g2 a6

**WEAPON:** If 7...h5 (more on this advance in Game 23), best is 8.♗f3!?, to block the h-pawn: 8...♗f8 9.♗h4!?
An unusual but very interesting scheme. On h3, the white knight has more prospects: if ...f7-f5 it can jump to g5. Also, it doesn’t interfere with the advance of the white f- and g-pawns. There are only a few games in the database with 9.♘h3.

9...♘e8

**WEAPON:** A classical example is Ljubojevic-Speelman, Roquebrune rapid 1992: 9...♖b8 10.0-0 ♔e8 11.f4 (11.a5!? 11...c7 12.a5! b5 (12...exf4 13.gxf4 ♔f6 14.♗d3! g6 15.e5?! 13.axb6 ♔xb6 14.b3 (14.♗d3?!).

![analysis diagram]

Black has no active counterplay: 14...♗xh3 (14...exf4 15.gxf4 ♔f6? 16.e5! dxe5 17.♗e4+–) 15.♗xh3 ♔f6 16.♗d2 (16.♗d3!?) 16...♗d7 17.♗xd7 (17.♗g4!? 17...♗xd7 18.f5! ♔b7 19.h4 ♔fb8 20.♗a3 ♔e7 21.♗g2 ♔e8 22.♗e2 ♔d8 23.♗h3 ♔e7 24.♗a5 ♔d7 25.g4=+. The whole black army is suffering from zugzwang.

10.0-0

10...g6

**WEAPON:** 10...b6

11.♗e2 ♔a7 12.♖h1 ♔h8 13.♗a3 ♔c7 14.f4 exf4 15.gxf4 ♔f6 16.e5 dxe5 17.f5 ♔e8 18.♗e4 ♔g8

11.♗h6 ♘g7 12.f4
White does not need to hurry.

**WEAPON:** Even stronger was the preparatory move 12.♕d2!? , avoiding the complications that occurred in the game: 12...f5 (12...♘f6 13.f3±) 13.f4!? ♘f6 14.♕g5 ♘b6 15.b3 exf4 16.gxf4 fxe4 17.♕cxe4! ♘xa1 18.♖xa1+-.

12...exf4
12...f5? 13.♕g5±.

13.gxf4 ♘f6

14.♕g5!? ♘e8 15.♕d2 ♘d4+ 16.♕h1 ♘f6 17.♕xg7
During the game, I thought this exchange was necessary. But White also has the advantage after 17.♕e2!? ♘gh5 18.♕xd4 cxd4 19.♕xd4 ♘g4 20.♕xf7! ♘xf7 21.♕g5 ♘c7 22.♖a3±.

17...♕xg7 18.♕e2 h6 19.♕xd4 hxg5

One of the critical moments in the game. The position is so complex that errors in calculation were inevitable. Time trouble was also approaching.

20.e5?!  
20.fxg5! ♘h7 (20...♗xe4 21.♕e6+ ♘xe6 22.♕f4±) 21.♕c2 ♘xg5 22.♕f4+. 

111
20...♘g4
20...♘h5!? 21.♗e2∞.

21.h3!?

21...dxe5 22.♗f3 gxf4 23.hxg4 ♔xg4
White has won a piece for three pawns, but now the position is highly unclear.

24.♖ae1!? ♔f6 25.♕c3 ♔d6
25...g5!?.

26.♗g1
26.♗d2!?.

26...♗f5 27.♗h4 ♔d7 28.e4 f5 29.♗f3
29...fxe4 30.♗xe4 ♔f5?! 31.♖xf5 ♔f6 32.♖h4 ♔h8 33.♖h8 ♔xh8 34.♖xe5 ♔xe5 35.♗e5 ♔h4 36.b3 a5 37.♗f3 ♔e4
38.♖d3 b6 39.♖f2 ♔d4 40.♕e5 ♔d2+ 41.♕e3 ♔b2 42.♖f4

The decisive moment.

42...♔f6?
42...♖e2=.

43.♗g4+ ♔e7 44.♖e3+ ♔d6 45.♖h6! ♔c2 46.♖f7+ ♔d7 47.d6! 1-0

All the plans with ♔h3, carried out until up to move 12, deserve practical testing.

g2-g3/♗g2 and ♔ge2 vs ...♗e7

Game 22
Viktor Moskalenko

Eduard Lopez Agustench

Badalona 2002 (7)
7...♘e8
7...bd7 (and 7...a6) 8.♘h3!? a6 9.a4 transposes to Game 21.

8.♘g2!?
A natural placement of the knight.

**WEAPON:** The alternative 8.♘h3!? is similar to the set-up shown in Game 21:

8...♗xh3 (8...g6 9.♗h6 ♘g7 10.♗d2!) 9.♗xh3 ♘g5 10.♗xg5 ♘xg5 11.b3 ♘e7 12.0-0 ♘c7 13.f4

8...♘d7
If 8...♗g5, 9.f4 exf4 10.gxf4 ♘h4+ 11.♗g3

**WEAPON:** Alternatively, 8...a6 9.0-0 ♘d7 10.f4 ♘f6 11.♗e3 ♘ec7 (11...♗ac7 12.a4) 12.a4 ♘b4 13.♗d2 b6 14.f5!? a6
15.b3!? (preparing to block the queenside; 15.♘a2!? is also interesting: 15...♘xa2 16.♖xa2 ♘b8 (16...b5 17.b4!?) 17.b45 15...b5 16.a5 ♘e8 17.h4 ♘e7 18.♗f1 ♗f6 19.♗f3 h6 20.♖f2 ♘h7 21.♗g2 ♘b8 22.♖h1 ♘b7 23.♗g1 ♘f6 24.♗e2 ♙e7 25.♗f3 bxc4 26.bxc4 h5 27.♗g5 g6 28.g4+– Browne-Miles, USA 1989.

WEAPON: As recommended in Game 21, White can prepare f2-f4 slowly and leisurely: 11.♕d3?.

11...♖a7 12.♔h1 ♗f6 13.f4 (13.♗d1?!?) 13...exf4 14.gxf4 g6 15.♗d2 and White’s position is very solid, Basso-A.Smirnov, Riga 2013.

11...♗b8

11...exf4 is similar: 12.gxf4 g6 (12...♗f6 13.♗d3) 13.♗d3!?.

12.♗e3

White can also continue with the above weapon: 12.♗d3!?.

12...♗c7 13.♗d3! ♔f6
14. ♖h1!?
A useful prophylaxis.
In my opinion, 14.f5, which was played in several games, is premature: 14...♗g5 15.♗f2 h5!?.
14...♖e8 15.♘h3!?
Provoking the subsequent erroneous combination...; 15.b3!?
15...exf4 16.gxf4 ♖xc3?!
Better was 16...g6 17.b3!? ♖g7 18.♗d2=.
17.♗xc3 ♕e5? 18.fxe5 ♖xh3

EXERCISE: How should White continue?

19.exd6!?
A human decision.
The computer gives: 19.♖g1+– with a deadly threat: 20.♗h6!.
19...♖xf1 20.♖xf1 ♖xd6 21.♗f4
The dark-squared bishop dominates the game.
21...♖d7
21...♗e5 22.♗d1!? ♕be8 23.♗f2+–.
22.♗g3 ♖bc8 23.e5
23. ♖h6!? f6 24. ♖g1 g6 25. d6+–.
23...♔h8 24. ♖e4
24. ♖f3!? f5 25. ♖e1+–.
24...♖f8
24...♕xd5 25. ♖g1 g6.
25. ♖d6 ♖cd8 26. ♖g5!+–

26...♖a8
26...f6 27. exf6 h6 (27...♕xd6 28. fxg7+ ♕xg7 29. ♖f6++–) 28. fxg7+ ♕xg7 29. ♖xd8 ♖xf1+ 30. ♔g2+–.
27. ♖e7! 1-0
Wherever you place your knight (♖h3/♘ge2), the main thing is to deprive Black of counterplay in the opening, and then calmly push f2-f4.

g2-g3/♗g2 vs ...h7-h5
How to distinguish between a real attack and a false one? By making use of his own experience and analyses (for example, using the system of ‘Five Touchstones’ offered by your author in previous books), any player can improve his level of understanding in many positions until he understands them intuitively, especially the key moments in a game.

Game 23
Viktor Moskalenko

Artur Kogan

Barbera del Valles 2000 (7)

1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. ♖c3 d6 5. g3

**WEAPON:** 5.e4 h5?! (5...g6 6. ♖d3!? – Game 24) 6. ♖e2!? (of course, other moves are possible) 6...♖bd7 7. ♖f3 ♖e7 8.0-0
5...h5?! 
An attack? Should I be worried? Calm down: this is a premature advance. I guess that my opponent’s intention is to attack on the kingside. But he lacks any positional advantage to succeed. For 5...g6 see the Weapon in Game 21.

6.h3!?
A typical blocking move, after which the h-pawn cannot proceed any further.

6...g6
If 6...h4?! 7.g4

7.♗g2 ♘h6?! 
Another strange idea.

In this type of position it is very important to play solidly:
8.♗xh6 ♘xh6 9.♕d2 ♕h8 10.f4!
Following the classical rules: against any flank action it is recommended to counterattack in the centre, opening up
the position. This becomes especially effective if the enemy has not yet castled.

10...♕e7 11.fxe5!
The alternative was 11.♘f3 e4!? 12.♗g5 ♕f5 but the game has a closed character.

11...♕xe5 12.♗f4!
Despite the exchange of queens, White has good prospects to develop his central initiative.

12...♗d7 13.♗f3 ♕xf4
If 13...♕e7?, 14.♗b5!.

14.gxf4
Strategically White’s position is already winning. It is hard to find a defence against the planned e4-e5. And this is definitely a real attack!

14...♗b6 15.b3 h4!?
Looking for a square for his knight (h5).

16.0-0 ♖d7
There is no time to complete development: 16...♗h5 17.e4! ♕xf4 18.♗b5 ♕e7 19.e5+-.

17.e4!
The attack begins.

17...

EXERCISE: How to continue with white?

18.e5!
The pawn on f4 does not matter, the prevalent factor here is time.

18...♕xf4 19.♗e4!+-
More white pieces approach the centre.

19...♗c8 20.exd6 ♕e2+ 21.♖h2 ♕g3 22.♖f6+ ♕d8 23.♖xd7!
The simplest.

23.♗e5!?.

23...♗xf1+ 24.♖xf1
The battle is over. The black pieces have not really participated in this game.

24...b6
Too quiet a move for such a desperate situation.

24...♖xd7 25.♗e5+++; 24...♖xd6 25.♗xc5+-.

25.♗e5 ♖xd6 26.♖g5 ♕h5 27.♗xf7+ ♕d7 28.♖f3! ♕xf7 29.♖g4+ ♕e8 30.♖xf7 ♕h7 31.♖e5 ♕d8 32.♖xg6 1-0
Finally, my opponent resigned; mate is inevitable.
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.♘c3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.♗d3!?

**PLAN:** This is the main alternative to g2-g3/♗g2. Instead of preparing f2-f4, White concentrates on controlling Black’s advances ...b7-b5 and ...f7-f5.

6...♗g7

**WEAPON:** However, the break f2-f4 is needed sometimes (see also further on in this game), for example:
6...h5 7.f4!?N exf4 8.♗xf4 ♘g4 9.♗f3 ♘h6? (9...♗d7 10.♕a4!?) 10.♗xh6 ♘xh6 11.♗d2 (11.e5!?) 11...♗h8 12.h3 (12.♗f4!?) 12...♗e5 13.♘xe5 ♘h4+ 14.♗e2! dxe5 15.♖f1+– Moskalenko-Gonzalez Rodriguez, Badalona 2002.

7.♗ge2 ♘a6

**WEAPON:** 7...0-0 8.h3 ♘e8 (8...♘a6 – see the main game) 9.0-0 f5 10.f4! (I think this should be the correct answer to ...f7-f5; the engine prefers 10.exf5!? gxf5 11.f3 but it isn’t clear how White can make progress): 10...♘d7 (10...♗e7 11.♘c2 ♘a6 12.a3 exf4 13.exf4 ♘xf4 14.♗xf4 ♘xf4 15.♗xf4 ♘e5 16.♗e1± Zakharov-Kremenietsky, Briansk 1975) 11.exf5! gxf5 12.fxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗f4 (13.♗g3!? ♘xd3 (13...♖h4 14.♗xf5±) 14.♗xd3 ♘e5 15.♗f4±) 13...♗e7 14.♗c2 ♘xd3 15.♘xd3± Moskalenko-Gonzalez Rodriguez, Badalona rapid 2011.
Colombian IM Jorge Gonzalez Rodriguez. During my years in Barcelona (since 1999) we played the Czech Benoni many times (it being Jorge’s main opening as Black), with different results, producing several beautiful games on both sides.

8.h3 d7 9.e3
The engine suggests 9.g5!? h6 10.e3.

9...0-0 10.d2
10.a3!?.

**WEAPON:** It is also typical to play 10.g4!? e8 11.g3 b8

12.h4 (12.f1!? 12...ac7? (12...ec7!?) 13.e2 a6 14.a4 c8 15.f3 b5 16.axb5 axb5 17.cxb5 b7 18.a5 f5 19.gxf5 gxf5 20.xf5 xf5 21.exf5 f6 22.h5 1-0 Trapl-Sörensen, ICCF corr 1992.

10...e8 11.0-0!?
PLAN: White is flexible; he can play on both flanks (but he should play f2-f4 only after Black pushes ...f7-f5).

11...♘ec7

WEAPON: If Black plays immediately 11...f5, this can lead to a similar combination as in the game: 12.f4! g5 (12...♕e7 13.♖ae1±) 13.fxe5 f4 14.e6!+–.

12.a3 f5

This typical advance is suspicious here, since Black has moved his knights to the queenside.

WEAPON: Logical was 12...♖b8!? intending ...b7-b5, for example: 13.♗b4!? (13.b4!? 13...b5 14.b4! bxc4 15.♗xc4 cxb4 16.axb4 ♕xb4 17.♕a2!±)

13.f4! g5

A strategic push to complicate the play, which should be punished tactically. 13...♕e7 14.♕ae1±.

14.fxe5! f4 15.exd6!

Black’s idea was 15...♗f2? ♕xe5±.

15...♗e8

15...fxe3 16.♕xe3!?+–.

16.♗xf4!

Destroying the black wedge.
16...gxf4 17. exf4 d4+ 18. h1 xf4! 19. xf4 f6 20. xf6! xf6 21. e5!+-

After an exchange of blows, Black’s strategy has suffered a complete breakdown.

21... xe5 22. ae1 xc3 23. bxc3 e8 24. b1! h5 25. xb7! g3+ 26. f1 xd7 e3 28. h7+ f8 29. g6 b8 30. f7+ g8 31. xa7 1-0

In this game White was successful, but generally Black has many different plans against 6. b3.

6. b3 vs ...e7

**Game 25**

**Viktor Moskalenko**

**Mihail Marin**

2534

2537

Spain tt 2005 (3)

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**PUZZLE:** The well-known author, Romanian GM Mihail Marin, gave this game as a model in his book about the Spanish (1.e4 e5) Opening!! However, one position in the middlegame with the closed centre (black pawns ...c5/d6/e5) does have some similarities with the Czech Benoni (especially in the lines with ...d3/...f3).

1. d4  ♘f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e5 4. c3 d6 5. e4  ♘f6 6. d3

**PLAN:** Although this is the most popular move vs ...e7, I am sure the fianchetto set-up g2-g3/...g2 (Games 21-23) is more practical here. f2-f4 becomes a powerful plan. Due to many alternatives and transpositions the text move is also more difficult to study. The author’s plan here is to just give a general picture of ...d3 vs ...e7.

6... bd7!?

6... a6 is clearly worse, since with the white bishop on d3 it is more difficult to prepare ...b7-b5.

7. h3

**PUZZLE:** After 7. ge2 both sides have many options: 7...g6!? 8.0-0 (8.a3 h5 9.b4 h4 10.h3 ♘h5=Dreev-Marin, playchess.com blitz 2006; 8.h3 h5 9. ♘e3 h4 10. ♗d2 a6 11.a4 b6∞ l’Ami-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2011) 8... h5 9. ♗e3 0-0 10. ♗d2 ♘g7 11. ♘h6 ♗f6 12.h3 ♘h8?!∞ Giri-Aronian, chess.com blitz 2018.
7...a6 8.♘f3!? 0-0

It still doesn’t look like the Spanish Opening – Black at least needs to put his pawn on b5.

9.♗e3
This position is flexible.

WEAPON: 9.a4!? ♘h5 10.♗e2 g6 11.♗h6 ♘g7 12.g4 (12.♗b1!? – Stockfish) 12...f6 13.♕d2 ♘h8∞

9...♘h5 10.♕e2
Quite similar is 10.♗d2 g6 11.♗e2 (11.g4?! ♘f4!→) 11...♖b8 12.g4 ♘g7∞ Nybäck-Ionescu, Germany Bundesliga 2007/08.

10...g6 11.g4
11.♕h6!?.

11...♗g7 12.♗g3

I controlled ...f7-f5 rather than ...b7-b5. Perhaps this is strategically correct, but the position is still complicated.
White does not have a specific plan yet; 12.a4!?; 12.♕h6!?.

12...b5!?
Now it is almost a Ruy Lopez!

13.b3!? ♖b8 14.♔f1!? ♕e8 15.♖g2 ♗h8!?

Black follows a well-known plan: ...♗h8, ...♘d7-f6-g8, preparing ...f7-f5. The computer gives White an advantage, but the position resembles a compressed spring. It was not easy to make decisions and find the useful moves.

16.♖e2 ♗d8
16...♗f6!?.

17.♗d2!? I decided to move the bishop to c3 and try to advance f2-f4.

If 17.cxb5, 17...axb5 18.♕xb5 f5 19.♖h6 ♗f7=.

17...♖f6 18.♗c3 ♖g8 19.♖c2

This looks like a natural move, preventing ...f7-f5, but for some reason it does not work.

WEAPON: A more solid move was 19.♖e1!? with the idea 19...f5? (≥ 19...♗d7!?) 20.exf5 gxf5
21.♕xe5!+–.

19...f5! The critical moment of this game. Finally Black has achieved both advances. The game becomes very dynamic.

20.exf5 gxf5 21.gxf5

21...♖ae1 e4 22.♘d2 ♕f6∞.

21...♖h6 22.♕e1!

Preparing a crushing sacrifice on e5.

22...♗b7?!

Very strange, though many natural moves in this game turned out to be weak! In this case Black has no time for this move, it is refuted by a standard combination.

The engine suggestion is 22...♕f7!? 23.♖xe5!? dxe5 24.♕e5 ♕c7 25.♘g4 ♗b6∞.

23.♖xe5! dxe5

24.♗xe5?

I was already in time trouble.

Correct was 24.♖xe5! ♕f7 25.♘d2↑ and the white pieces dominate.

24...♕f7

Now Black is better, but it’s still not easy for either player.

25.f4 ♖h4?!

25...♖f6!?

26.♗e3 bxc4 27.bxc4 ♖f6 28.♗f1 ♗xf5 29.♗xf5 ♖xf5 30.♗xf5 ♖xe5 31.fxe5 ♖xf5
32. ♖xf5??
A ridiculous blunder, due to fatigue (it was my second game of the day).
After the obvious 32.♕xf5 ♕xf5 33.♖xf5 34.e6 it would have been a draw: 34...♗g7+ 35.♕h2 ♕f2+ 36.♕h1 ♔g8 37.d6 ♕d2 38.d7 ♕b8 39.♖e1 ♕g7 40.e7 ♕xd7 41.e8♕ ♖xe8 42.♖xe8 ♕d4 43.♖a8=.

32...♖g6+! 33.♖g3 ♖xf5 34.♖xf5 ♖f5+–
Now, with the white rook on g3 (instead of e3), Black is winning.

35.e6
35.♖e3 ♕g7+ 36.♕h2 ♕g8–+

35...♖b2+ 36.♔g1 ♖e5 37.♔f1 ♖e2 38.♖d3 ♕g7 39.d6 ♕h2 40.♖g1 ♕h2b2+ 41.♖f1
White resigned.

After 5...♗e7 6.♖d3 very complex strategic positions arise (but this is what Black is striving for in this opening!). The main thing is that White has no clear plan in the middlegame.

**Summary of the Czech Benoni (Games 21-25)**
It seems to me that it is easier for White to play with the fianchetto set-up g2-g3/♗g2 (following up with f2-f4). The alternative 6.♖d3 should be played only in case of ...g7-g6/...♗g7.

**Semi-Benoni**

**Game 26**
Viktor Moskalenko

2532

Miguel Munoz Pantoja

2494

Catalonia tt 2012 (9)

1.d4

**PLAN:** In the Semi-Benoni Defence the central pawn complex is different: c2/d5/e4 vs ...c5/d6/e5. Here, White can use the c4-square for his minor pieces. Against the advance ...b7-b5, the most effective reply is a4-a5!? The emerging positions are generally more dynamic than in the Czech Benoni.

1...c5 2.d5 ♕f6

**WEAPON:** Some examples without an immediate ...♕f6:

2...e5
3.♘c3 (or 3.e4 d6 4.f4! exf4 5.♘xf4 ♕f6 6.♘c1!! ♕g6? 7.♘c3 ♕f6 8.♘f3+– Rozanov-S.Volkov, Moscow 2014) 3...d6 4.e4 ♗e7 (planning 5.♗g5!? 5.f4!?! (a positional alternative is 5.a4!? ♗g5 6.♗xg5 ♕xg5 7.♗f3 ♘e7 8.♘d2! ♘f6 9.♗c4 0-0 10.♗d3 ♖bd7 11.0-0 ♘e8 12.♘d2 Beliavsky-Bogut, Croatia tt 2018) 5...exf4 6.♗xf4 a6 7.♗f3 ♗g4 8.e5 dxe5 (8...♗h4+ 9.g3 dxe5 10.♗e3!) 9.♗xe5 ♘f6 (9...♗h4+!? 10.g3 ♘f6 11.♗f4 ♗e7 12.h3!?) 10.♗e2 ♗e7 11.♗d6 ♘xe2+ 12.♘xe2 Moskalenko-Paquico Rodriguez, Barcelona 2001.

3.♘c3 d6 4.e4 e5

PLAN: In these positions, there is no longer a need for the slow fianchetto g2-g3/♗g2 (as we saw above against the Czech Benoni), or the development of the bishop to d3.

5.♗e2!?
Preventing the strategic exchange ...♗g4♗f3.
5.♗f3 ♗g4!?
5...♗e7 6.♗f3 0-0
6...♗g4 7.♘d2!?
7.0-0 ♘e8 8.♘d2!!
PLAN: White’s main idea in this position is to prepare ♘c4 and f2-f4.

8...♘d7

WEAPON: 8...f5 is premature: 9.exf5 ♗xf5 10.♘c4 ♘a6 (10...d7 11.♗d3) 11.f4! exf4 (11...♗b4

9.a4 a6

WEAPON/TRICK: 9...g6 10.♗c4 ♘b6 (10...f5?! 11.♗h6 ♘g7 12.♗b5 ♘b6 13.♗xd6! ♘xd6 14.a5??) 11.♗e3 f5 12.a5 ♘d7 13.exf5 gxf5 14.f4! exf4 (14...e4? 15.g4!!) 15.♗c4 ♘g5 16.♗xf4 ♘xf4 17.♗xf4 ♘e5 18.♗d2 ♘ Lopez Martinez-Munoz Pantoja, Mollet del Valles 2016.

10.a5!?

The typical anti-Benoni block.

WEAPON: 10.♗c4!? ♘b6 11.♗e3 g6 12.a5 ♘d7 13.♗c4 ♘g5 (13...b5 14.axb6 ♘xb6 15.♗h6 ♘g7 16.♗a5??) 14.♗d3 ♘xc1 (14...f5 15.♗xg5 ♘xg5 16.exf5 gxf5 17.f4!!) 15.♗c1 f5 (To Nhat Minh-Rzayev, Budapest 2011) 16.f4!+

10...b5

PLAN: If 10...♗b8, 11.♗c4 b5 12.axb6 ♘xb6 13.♗a5+ ♘
11.axb6 ♘xb6 12.♗b3!
With the above-mentioned strong idea in such positions: 13. ♘a5!

12...f5

Trying to complicate the game; 12...♘c7 13. ♘a5

13.exf5

I decided to win the pawn on a6, but this loses part of the initiative.

.weapon: 13. ♘a5!? was a more active alternative, keeping the pressure: 13...f4 14. ♘c6 ♕c7 15. ♗g4

13...♗xf5 14. ♖xa6

14. ♘a5!?

14...♖xa6 15. ♖xa6 ♕a8 16. ♗b5

Perhaps it was stronger to place the bishop on f3: 16. ♗e2!? ♘c7 17. ♗f3 with the threat 18. ♘xc5!

16...♘c7 17. ♗c6 ♗a6?

Allowing a tactical blow. The most tenacious defence was 17...♕c8?.

18. ♘xc5!++ ♕c4

.trick: 18...dxc5 19.d6 ♖d8 20.♗d5+!

19. ♗a4 ♖xa4 20.♖xa4 ♗h4 21.g3 ♘h3 22.f3 h5 23.♗e4 ♘g6 24.♗e2 ♗c8 25.c4 ♘a6 26.♖c6 ♗e6 27.dxe6 ♖xc6 28.♗d3 h4 29.♗d5 ♗b6+ 30.♖g2 ♘h5

The rest of the game was a bit random due to my time trouble, but in general the assessment did not change.
31.gxh4
31...g5!+-.
31...b3 32.g3 g6 33.d3 34.xe7 xc4 35.d1
35...c6+--.
35...xf1+ 36.xf1 e8 37.g5
37.xd6+-.
37...xe6 38.c1 e8 39.c3 e6 40.h5 d5 41.b4 e4 42.fxe4 dxe4 43.e3 c8 44.d2 b3 45.f2 f3+ 46.g1 c3
47.xe4 g4+ 48.g3 xb4 49.d5+ h7 50.f5+ h8 51.h6! c7 52.hxg7+ xg7
And Black resigned.

Schmid Benoni

Game 27
Viktor Moskalenko
2530

Antonio Gual Pascual
2421

Barcelona 2005 (4)

1.d4 c5 2.d5 d6 3.e4 f6 4.c3 g6 5.f3
Natural piece development.

WEAPON: More ambitious is 5.f4!? g7 6.b5+! Now Black has to find the best answer: 6...fd7.
Otherwise White gets the advantage with the advance e4-e5 (6...d7 7.e5!, by analogy with the Taimanov Variation in Chapter 2: 7...g8 8.f3 h6 9.e2!??.) 7.a4!? a6 8.f3 b4?! (8...c7 9.e2!?)
9.e2! 0-0 (9...a6 10.xd7+ xd7 11.c3+) 10.c3 a6 11.g3 c7 12.d3 f6 13.h3! e6 14.dxe6 fxe6 (14...xe6 15.0-0 d5 16.e5 d7 17.f5+--) 15.0-0 d5? (15...b6 16.f5!?) 16.e5 d7 17.h4+--

5...g7 6.e2 0-0 7.0-0
This is the main position of the Schmid Benoni, although it may arise from many different openings.

7...♘a6

This well-known manoeuvre (…♘a6-c7) supports the typical Benoni advance …b7-b5.

**WEAPON:** The main alternative is 7...♗g4 8.a4!? ♖xf3 9.♖xf3 a6 10.♗f4 (10.a5!??) 10...♗bd7 11.♕d2 ♗a5 12.♖e1 ± ♘e8 13.♗g5!? ♖f6 14.♖g4 ♖e5 15.♖e2 ♗b4 16.♗xf6 exf6 (16...♗xf6 17.f4↑)


8.h3!?  

A prophylactic move, preparing ♖f4 and preventing Black’s counterplay with …♗g4 or …♘g4.

**WEAPON:** White can play first 8.♖e1!? ♘c7 9.a4 b6 (9...a6 10.h3 ♖b8 11.a5!?++) 10.h3 ♖b7 11.♗f4! ♖d7 12.c4± (keep this set-up in mind; it is the best for White) 12...♖ad8 (12...a6 13.♖d3!? ♖h5 14.♖h2 f5 15.e5± Moskalenko-Karatekin, Chalkida 1998) 13.♖b5!? a6 14.♖xc7 ♖xc7 15.♖d3 ♖c8 16.♖ad1±.
The rest of the game is quite instructive, and also entertaining: 16...\&d7 17.\&d2!? \&fe8 18.\&c3 \&xc3 19.bxc3 \&f6 20.\&b1 \&g7 21.e2 \&c7 22.\&d2!? \&a8 23.f4! \&f8 24.e5!

24...fxe5 25.fxe5 \&d7 26.f3 dxe5 27.\&g5! \&d6 28.\&e4 \&c7 29.\&g5 \&d6 30.\&e4 \&c7 31.\&g4! \&f6 32.\&e6 \&f8 33.\&g5 b5 34.\&xe5! \&xe5 35.\&xe5 \&h6 36.\&e6 \&g8 37.axb5 axb5 38.\&xb5 \&a6 39.\&xc5 \&d7 40.\&e4! g5 41.\&xa6 \&xa6 42.\&c6!+– (Moskalenko-Cifuentes Parada, Wijk aan Zee 1992) and Black resigned soon after.

8...\&c7 9.\&e1 \&e8
Preparing another Benoni break: ...e7-e6.
If immediately 9...e6, 10.dxe6! \&xe6 11.\&f4!.
10.\&f4!
The most useful diagonal for this bishop is h2-b8: here it prevents Black’s counterplay in the centre and supports the e4-e5 push.
10...a6 11.a4
A typical blocking move in these lines: the b-pawn cannot advance to b5 for now.

11...b6 12.♗c4

White’s other bishop controls the a2-g8 diagonal and also supports the advance of the e-pawn.

12...♗b7 13.♕d3!

On d3, the queen keeps the ...b6-b5 push in check, and prepares ♕ad1.

13...♖a7?!

Black’s pieces suffer from a lack of breathing space, and he doesn’t have an effective plan.

14.♖ad1!

Meanwhile, White has successfully completed his opening plan: all his pieces are ready for the e4-e5 break.

14...♖h5 15.♖h2 ♖xc3?!

In order to prevent e4-e5, Black exchanges his best piece.

16.♕xc3 b5 17.♗a2! f6 18.♗e3 ♖a8 19.c4?!

White needs to strengthen the d5-point.

19...♗c8 20.e5!

A strong thematic break in the centre, which opens the position for the two white bishops and decides the game.

20...fxe5

20...bxa4 21.e6±

21.♗xe5!

This knight sacrifice is logical. The bishop pair is a significant advantage in an open position, controlling the board.

21...dxe5 22.cxb5 axb5 23.d6+! c4

If 23...♕e6, 24.d7!.

24.dxc7 ♖xc7 25.b3?!

The bishop on a2 returns to life.

25...e6

It is difficult to find a recipe for Black: 25...♗f4 26.♗xe5+−.

26.♗xe5 ♖a7 27.♗d4 ♖f7 28.bxc4 ♖xa4 29.b3 ♖c4 30.♗xc4 bxc4 31.♗e5 ♖g7 32.♗c3!
And Black finally resigned, since he can no longer breathe.

**Summary of the Schmid Benoni**

Once the white pieces are placed correctly ( $\text{♙} h3/ \text{♖} e1/ \text{♗} f4/ \text{♗} c4$ etc.), he will enjoy easy play, and in some cases also the benefits of the bishop pair.
Benko/Volga Gambit

My old weapon reloaded
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♕c2

There are many new ideas and books about opening weapons. Here is one more story.

A gambit does not need to be accepted to be refuted – GM Rainer Knaak (co-author of 1000 Opening Traps).
History
In the famous Benko Gambit, Black sacrifices a pawn to activate his game along the a- and b-files (dynamics vs material).

Theory conclusion on 4. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \)
In *ChessBase Magazine 114*, Rainer Knaak offered an aggressive anti-Benko weapon, starting with 4. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{b7}}! \) and now 5. \( \text{\textit{c2}}! ?. \) In the main game of his survey, Moskalenko-Soloviev, Cullera 2001, the key position arises after Black’s most dynamic response 5... \( \text{\textit{a6}}! . \)

![Chessboard diagram](image)

After deep study, Knaak comes to the following conclusion: ‘I am not quite sure whether White can achieve an opening advantage with 5. \( \text{\textit{c2}}. \) After 5...\( \text{\textit{bxc4}} \) things seem to be relatively simple, but 5... \( \text{\textit{a6}} \) is more of a challenge; then it is not clear whether the more positional 6.\( \text{\textit{a3}} \) or 6. \( \text{\textit{c3}}, \) which can sometimes lead to hair-raising complications, should be preferred.’

The Anti-Gambit reloaded
Personally I agree with Knaak’s opinion, and in the early 2000s I was not very happy with the line 4. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \). But it’s just that the anti-gambit idea agrees with my mindset! So, finally, in 2002 I found a great solution: the early queen move 4. \( \text{\textit{c2}}! \) might in fact be more effective, since it gains an extra tempo compared to 4. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{b7}}. \) Among other advantages, White threatens to play e2-e4 immediately, and controlling the centre is easier for him.

Let’s look at the differences and the possibilities.

Knight versus queen
As in Knaak’s old line with 4. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{b7}} \) included, the most dynamic option for Black is the counter-attacking move 4... \( \text{\textit{a6}}! ?. \)
With this knight jump, Black tries to exploit the position of the white queen at once, looking for immediate complications. But if you compare this position with the previous diagram, Black has fewer resources here, since the c8-bishop is not yet developed!

**A surprising reply**

So White has enough time to vary with the ambitious move 5.\(\text{c3}\)!. ‘The idea is brilliant: the text-move exploits the fact that Black can only place one piece on b4 – either the pawn or the knight. But this is far from meaning that White has achieved the advantage’ – Knaak.

The problem in Knaak’s old variation was that after 4.\(\text{f3}\)?! \(\text{b7}\) 5.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{a6}\) 6.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{b4}\) 7.\(\text{d1}\) bxc4, Black attacks the d5-pawn. On the other hand, in the modern set-up, after 5...\(\text{b4}\) 6.\(\text{d1}\) bxc4 White has time for 7.a3!. Also, if Black immediately takes, 5...bxc4 6.e4 \(\text{b4}\), then 7.\(\text{a4}\)! looks strong.

See for all these tries the notes to Moskalenko-Vernay (Game 28).

**Prophylaxis**

A more positional move is 5.a3?!, to prevent Black’s ...\(\text{b4}\) jump. See Mamedyarov-Tregubov (Game 29).

Summarizing the most direct sub-variation (4.\(\text{c2}\) vs 4...\(\text{a6}\)), it seems that White can achieve an advantage or an initiative in all lines, mainly because the moves 4.\(\text{f3}\)! \(\text{b7}\)! have not been included.
Alternatives and deviations

Black can react with non-critical lines which, however, are in typical Benko/Volga or Benoni fashion.

Anti-Blumenfeld (vs 4/5...e6)

After 4.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\textcolor{black}{2}}, against Blumenfeld Gambit motifs with ...\textit{e7-e6}, White always has the strong ‘anti-Blum’ advance \textit{e2-e4}. GM Stohl recommended this as a main line for Black in ChessBase Magazine 130: ‘His best chance is in my opinion 4...bxc4 5.e4 e6!?, which leads to balanced positions.’

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
\end{center}

Stohl is possibly right about ‘Black’s best chance’, but I didn’t find any clear way to equality and I even found some improvements for White... his advantage basically consists of a better pawn structure and the passivity of Black’s pieces, which is hard to remedy.

- See the beautiful attacking games further on:
  - 6.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\textcolor{black}{3}}: Mamedyarov-Galstian (Game 30);
  - 6.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\textcolor{black}{c}4}: Sedlak-Vuckovic (Game 31).

White’s 6th move determines the subsequent fight.

Anti-block (versus ...\textit{b5-b4})

Another advantage of 4.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\textcolor{black}{2}} instead of 4.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}\textcolor{black}{3}?! is the possibility to apply the scheme of a real Four Pawns Attack against the queenside blockade ...\textit{b5-b4}. See the position after 6.f4! in Moskalenko-Demuth (Game 32).
Gambit Declined
After Black’s response 4...\textit{bxc}4 we enter typical declined lines: similar to the well-known anti-gambit line 4...\textit{xb}5 \textit{a}6 5.\textit{b}6!? but in some lines with an extra half-tempo!

An important position for all the declined lines. Usually, White prefers to play 9.h3 first here, instead of the natural 9.\textit{c}3! I think that inserting the prophylactic h2-h3 is reasonable only after Black has played ...\textit{bd}7, when it serves to prevent the well-known Benko/Volga manoeuvre ...\textit{g}4-\textit{ge}5.

In any case, Black has two main options:
1) Planning central action with 9...\textit{bd}7: Kempinski-Staniszewski (Game 33);
2) Looking for simplifications and traditional queenside counterplay with 9...\textit{a}6: Meduna-Damjanovic (Game 34) and Ilincic-Vajda (Game 35).

Gambit Accepted
White will at least have the more comfortable game after the natural moves 4...\textit{d}6 5.\textit{e}4; if Black now continues his development with 5...\textit{g}6?! then 6.\textit{xb}5!.
Now, accepting the gambit is a better option for White, since he plays with an extra tempo compared to the usual Benko/Volga lines where White tries to advance the e-pawn at an early stage. See Moskalenko-Gomez Jurado (Game 36).
Benko/Volga Gambit – Games

A surprising move – 4...♘a6

Game 28 – 5. ♘c3
Viktor Moskalenko

Clovis Vernay

Illes Medes 2007 (5)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5
The famous Benko/Volga Gambit.

4.♕c2!?
Preparing the immediate 5.e4.

A) 4.♘f3 might be inferior: 4...♗b7 (4...b4!? 5.♕c2 ♘a6!? (5...bxc4!? 6.e4 e6 7.♗xc4 is another critical line) 6.♘c3 ♘b4 7.♕d1 bxc4 8.e4 e6!±.

![analysis diagram]

The typical centre break, which is here reinforced by the black knight’s placement on b4, Moskalenko-Soloviov, Cullera 2001;

B) The line 4.cxb5 a6 5.b6!? is a well-known way of declining the Benko/Volga.

4...♘a6!?
The most dynamic option, looking for a fast struggle.
Black hasn’t got time to prepare the attack with 4...♗b7 because of 5.e4!.

WEAPON: If 4...bxc4, 5.e4 ♘a6!? (5...d6 – Games 33-35 and 5...e6 – Games 30-31)
6. ♞xc4 (6.a3!? transposes to Game 29) 6... ♞b4 7. ♞e2 ♞a5 8. ♞f1!? (8. ♞c3 ♞a6?!?) 8... ♞a6 (8...e6 9. ♞f4!?) 9.b3 ♞xc4 10.bxc4 d6 11. ♞b2 g6 12.a3 ♞a6 13. ♞c3 ♞d8 14.f4!±;

**TRICK:** 4...g6 5.e4 bxc4 6. ♞xc4 ♞g7 7. ♞c3 0-0 8. ♞f3 a6?! too late (8...d6) 9.e5! ♞g4? 10. ♞xa6 ♞xa6 11. ♞a4+- Moskalenko-Malakhatko, Yalta 1996.

5. ♞c3!?

Now Black can choose between three replies. For 5.a3!? see Game 29.

**5...bxc4**

**WEAPON:** Against 5...b4 White has a tricky option: 6. ♞e4!? ♞xe4 7. ♞xe4 d6 (7...g6 8. ♞e5!??) 8.b3?! Nichols-Lind, IECC email 2001;

**PUZZLE:** Interesting is 5... ♞b4 6. ♞d1 bxc4 with the idea to sacrifice the knight after 7.a3 (7.e4 ♞a5!?) Ale.David-Carow, Iasi 2014) 7... ♞b7?!∞, which has never been played yet.

6.e4!?

**WEAPON:** 6.a3!? is still possible, thanks to one tempo: 6... ♞a5!? (6...e6 7.e4 transposes to Game 29) 7. ♞d2 ♞b8
8.♘f3!? e6 (8...♗b6 9.e4! ♘b3 (9...♗xb2? 10.♗d1!±) 10.♗xb3 (10.♗c1?) 10...♗xb3 11.e5!? 9.e4 ♘b4 10.♗b1 ♘d3+ 11.♗xd3 cxd3 12.e5 ♗g4 13.h3 ♗h6 14.b4! ♗b6 15.0-0±

6...e6?!
The knight on a6 will be out of play.

**WEAPON:** The critical line would be 6...♘b4!? 7.♕a4!

7.♗xc4↑
White has achieved an important tempo gain as he hasn’t played 5.a3.

7...♕a5?
Too late.

A) The anti-Blumenfeld method would be 7... cô7 8.dxe6!? fxe6 9.f4↑;
B) Anyway, White is better after 7...exd5 8.exd5 cô7 9.e2+!? e7 10.e4 (10.e3!? 10...d6 11.0-0-0
8.f3 b4 9.e2 a6 10-0+
Black’s counterattack has failed: his pieces are undeveloped and badly placed.
10.e7 11.d6!? d8 12.e5
d5 12...c7+ 13.d2!
The b4-knight should finally be removed.
a3!?
13...b6 14.b5! xb5 15xb5 a6

EXERCISE: Your move?

16.c3

TRICK: 16.c7+! c7 17.a3! b5 18.axb5 axb5 19.axb4+–.
16...c2 17.ad1
17.ab1 d4 18.xd4 cxd4 19.b4 a3 20.b3+–.
17...b4 18.e4
18.c1+–.
18...b5 19.xb5 axb5 20.c1 d4 21.xc5 xf3+ 22.gxf3 f6 23.xb5 xa2 24.a5 a4 25.xd8
Black resigned.

It seems that with 5.c3, White can achieve a small advantage or initiative in many lines. Even against 5...bxc4, it
is not too late for 6.a3!? (instead of 6.e4).

Game 29 – 5.a3
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

Pavel Tregubov

Ajaccio rapid 2008 (3)

1.d4 f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.c2 a6 5.a3!?
In order to prevent 5...♘b4.

5...bxc4

**WEAPON:** 5...♕a5+ 6.♗d2

![Diagram 1](image1.png)

6...b4 (6...♘b4? 7.♕c1! bxc4 8.♘c3!) 7.e4 d6 8.f4! (8.♗f3 g6 9.e5?) 8...g6 9.♗f3 ♗g7 10.♗d3 0-0 11.0-0 ♘b8 12.e5↑ Lafuente-Marra, Botucatu 2003;

**WEAPON:** 5...e6

![Diagram 2](image2.png)

6.dxe6 (6.e4 exd5 7.exd5 ♗d6!? 8.♘c3 ♘c7= Aloma Vidal-Alsina Leal, Barcelona 2015) 6...fxe6 7.cxb5 ♙a5+ 8.♗d2 ♘xb5 9.e4 (9.♘c3?) 9...♗b6 (Sumets-Michalczak, Guben 2012) 10.♘c3!??

6.e4
6...e6

**TRICK:** 6...a5+?! 7. d2! b4? (7...b6 8.xc4+?) 8.xc4! a6 9.xb4+– Zentai-Csati, Budapest 2013;

**WEAPON:** 6...g6 7.xc4 c7 8.f3 g7 9.0-0 d6 10.c3 0-0 11.g5 (11.h3?) 11.b8 12.e5!? fe8 13.fe1± Pankratov-A.de Groot, ICCF email 1997.

7.c3

**WEAPON:** Quite similar is 7.xc4 exd5 8.exd5 d6 9.f3 0-0 10.0-0 h6 11.c3 c7 12.e1 e8 13.d2 f8

**analysis diagram**

14.d6!? e6 (14...xd6? 15.xh6!) 15.b5 b7 (15...a6 16.xe6!) 16.e5 b6 17.f5 a6 18.c7! xd6 19.xe8 xe8 20.c3 e7 21.xd7! xd7 22.xe6! fxe6 23.g6 1-0 Nestorovic-Vuckovic, Yugoslavia tt 1999;

**WEAPON:** The Anti-Blum capture 7.dxe6 is also an interesting option: 7...fxe6
8.e5!? ♘d5 9.♗xc4 ♘a5+ 10.♗c3 ♘ab4 11.a xb4! ♘xa1 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.♗xd5 ♘b8 14.♗e2↑.

7...♘c7

**WEAPON:** 7...exd5 8.exd5 ♘d6 9.♗xc4 0-0


8.♗xc4 exd5 9.exd5 d6 10.♗ge2!?

As we will also see in the next game, Mamedyarov-Galstian, this Mamedyarov manoeuvre, with the idea ♘g3-f5/e4, might be a more flexible option.

**WEAPON:** There is a game with 10.♗f3!?:

---

*Analysis Diagram*
10...\textit{b} e7 10...\textit{g}6 11.b4!?.

11.b4!? 0-0 12.0-0

12...\textit{d}7?!  
\textbf{WEAPON:} An earlier game went 12...\textit{b} b8 13.bxc5 dxc5 14.\textit{g}3!? (14.\textit{d} d1 \textit{d} d6 15.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}6= Malakhatko-S.Kasparov, Pavlograd 2000) 14...\textit{d} d6 15.e1 (15.\textit{g}5!?) 15...\textit{h}6 16.\textit{d} d2=.

13.bxc5! dxc5
13...\textit{c} c5 14.\textit{d} d4↑.

14.\textit{f} f4↑ 
White is clearly better.
14...\textit{b} b6 15.\textit{a} a2 \textit{e} e8 16.\textit{f} e1
16.a4!?.
16...\textit{d} d6 17.\textit{g} g3 \textit{b} b7 18.a4! \textit{a} a6 19.\textit{d} d1 \textit{e} e8 20.\textit{c} e4 \textit{xe} e4 21.\textit{c} xe4 c4 22.d6
22.\textit{b} b1!?.
22...f8 23...b1!+-

23...f5
23...g6 24...g5+-.

24...c5 +xe1+ 25...xe1 +xd6 26...xf5 +xc5 27...xh7+ +f8 28...h8+ +f7 29...h5+ +f8 30...xc5+ +g8 31...h5 +f6 32...e8+

Black resigned.

So, as we already observed, White also maintains pressure after 5.a3!?.

Blumenfeld motifs – 4/5...e6

Game 30
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Benjamin Galstian
Peniscola Ech U18 2002 (1)

1.d4 c5 2.d5 +f6 3.c4 b5 4...c2 bxc4

WEAPON: Against Blumenfeld Gambit motifs with 4...e6!? White has the Anti-Blum move 5.e4 exd5 (5...bxc4 – main game) 6.cxd5 (6.exd5 is possible, but the game continuation is more critical; 6.e5 bxc4 7.exf6 xf6∞ is the kind of game Black hopes for, Ilincic-Werner, Budapest 2006)
A) 6...a6 7.e2 e7 8.d2 is simply better for White;
B) 6.e7 7.xb5 xe4+ 8.xe4 9.e2 d6 10.bc3 (10.a3??) 10...xc3 11.xc3 0-0 12.e3 ± e8 13.0-0 a6 14.he1 Haznedaroğlu-Abdullayev, Cesme 2017;
C) 6...c4!? 7.c3! (7.a4?! a6!±):

TRICK: The careless 7...a5? 8.d2 c5 9.e5! g4 10.f5! xf2 11.e4!± is something that belongs to another chess era.
7...b4! 8.a4!?N (8.e2 0-0 9.f3 (Nisipeanu-Tate, Gibraltar 2011) 9...e7!∞).

Perhaps the most precise move. 8...0-0 (8.e7 9.axb5 xe4+ 10.xe4+ xe4 11.xc4! xc3 12.d2 ±) 9.axb5 e8 10.g5!? (10.xc4 xe4+ 11.e2±) 10...b7 11.e2 d6 12.f3 bd7 13.d2! with advantage to White.

5.e4
5...e6
Again, dynamic defence: trying to play a la the Benoni.

WEAPON: 5...a6 6.xc4 (6.f3!? g6 7.bd2 c3 8.bxc3 xf1 9.xf1 g7 10.b1 0-0 11.g3 d6 12.g2 a5 13.c4 Leitao-Leon Hoyos, Quito 2012) 6...xc4 7.xc4 d6 8.c3 bd7 9.f4 g6 10.f3 g7? (Schreiber-Nemeth, Hungary tt 1998/99; ≥ 10...b6) 11.e5!

6.c3!?
This interesting move order is more tricky (see the Weapon on move 6).
Normal is 6.xc4 exd5 7.exd5 – Game 31.

6...b7?!
Confusion: this is not the 4.f3 line.

WEAPON/TRICK: If 6...exd5, 7.e5!? (7.exd5 – Game 31). This way White avoids the main continuation. However, the game would be more complicated: 7.g4 (7.b7!? 8.exf6 xf6 9.h3!∞ Matlakov-Kanmazalp, Batumi 2018) 8.xd5 b7? (8...xe5 9.e4!?) 9.xc4+– Mamedyarov-Bareev, Moscow blitz 2009.


7.xc4 exd5 8.exd5 d6
The anti-gambit expert GM Mamedyarov: against Blumenfeld motifs he always played the flexible move 6..c3!?

9.♘ge2!

This manoeuvre reveals one more difference between 4.♘f3 and 4.♕c2. White is going to play ♘e2-g3-f5/e4.

**WEAPON:** Of course, the natural 9.♘f3 should also be good: 9...♗e7 10.0-0!? (10.♕b3!? ♘c8 (Kempinski-Wong Zi Jing, Istanbul 2000) 11.♗b5!) 10...♗bd7 11.a4!

```

Now Black is confronted with an unpleasant choice between 11...♘b6 or 11...0-0:

A) 11...0-0 12.a5! a6 13.♗e1 ♖e8 14.h3! ♗c7 15.♗d3 ♕f8 16.♖xe8 ♖xe8 17.♗e4↑ Najer-Quan Zhe, Mashantucket 2005;

B) 11...♘b6 12.♗b5+ ♔f8 13.♗c6! ♗xc6 14.dxc6 ♗c8 (14...♗c8 15.♗d1 ♗xc6 16.♗e5! ♖c7 17.♗b5↑) 15.b4! (15.♗h4!? ♗xc6 16.♗f5↑) 15...♗xc6 (15...cxb4 16.♗b5↑) 16.b5 (16.bxc5?)
```
9...♗e7
9...g6 10.0-0 ♖g7 11.♗b3!? ♖b6 12.♗f4+.

10.♗g3 0-0 11.0-0

11...♖g6
A logical move, defending against ♕f5. 11...♗bd7?! 12.♕f5! ♖b6 (12...♕e5 13.♖e1! is similar) 13.♕e1 ♖xc4 14.♕xe7+ ♔h8 15.♕g5! ♕e5 16.♕xf6 (16.f4!) 16...gxf6 17.♕f5 ♕g8 18.♕e3 Moskalenko-Gershon, Mallorca 2010.

12.♗g5
Just very natural development.

WEAPON: An interesting alternative is 12.b3!?, preparing an attack along the a1-h8 diagonal: 12...♗bd7 13.♗b2 ♖b6 14.♖ad1 ♖e8 15.♕e4 ♖xc4 16.♕xc4! (16.bxc4!? ♕f5 17.♕c3 -- ) 16...♖e1! ♕h7 18.♕e2+.

12...♗bd7
Now Mamedyarov executes his attack in an extremely attractive way.

13.♖e1! ♖e8 14.f4! ♙h6

EXERCISE: Your move?
15.f5!
The black king will be ‘killed’ soon.
15...♔g7
15...hxg5 16.fxg6 ♖f8 17.gxf7+ ♔xf7 18.♖h5+-
16.fxg6 hxg6 17.♗f4 ♖g4 18.h3 ♖ge5 19.♖xe5+ ♖xe5 20.♖xe5! dxe5

**EXERCISE:** Your move?

21.♘h5+!
Correct.
21...gxh5 22.♖f7+ 1-0
If 22...♔xf7 23.♕h7+ ♔f8 24.d6, mating.

**Game 31**
Nikola Sedlak

Bojan Vuckovic

Serbia tt (6) 2007 (6)

1.d4 ♔f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♗c2 bxc4 5.e4 e6 6.♖xc4
Let’s analyse some main variations more deeply.
For 6.♗c3 see the previous game.
6...exd5 7.exd5 d6
7...♖d6?! is an idea from the Snake Benoni (Chapter 3) but I feel this is always an unnatural square for the bishop:
8.♗f3 0-0 9.0-0 Kempinski-Shevelev, St Vincent 2000. Ignoring development will cost Black dearly (Stohl).
8.♗c3 ♖e7
According to GM Stohl in CBM 130, this is the best defensive set-up for Black... but I disagree.
8...g6? 9.♗f3 ♖g7 10.♗e2+ Aleman Alamo-Boutahar Belgasi, San Agustin 2012.
9.♗e2+?
This is a nice idea, similar to the previous game.

**WEAPON:** However, after 9.♗f3 White is also slightly better: 9...0-0 10.0-0 ♖bd7. Now it’s best to play the prophylactic move 11.h3!, preventing both ...♖g4 and ...♖g4: 11...♖b6 12.b3 ♖xc4 (12...♖b7 13.♖d3?) 13.bxc4
13... $\text{b}8$ 14. $\text{f}4$ (14. $\text{d}2$!? Sergeev-Sammalvuo, Jyväskylä 1991) 14... $\text{a}6$ (14... $\text{b}4$ 15. $\text{d}2$ $\text{a}6$ (15...$\text{g}6$ (Kempinski-Urban, Hamburg 1999)) 16. $\text{ae}1$ $\text{f}5$ 17. $\text{d}1$ $\text{a}6$. 16. $\text{a}3$ $\text{b}6$. 17. $\text{fe}1$ I.Sokolov-Swapnil, Stockholm 2016/17) 15. $\text{d}2$ $\text{h}5$. 16. $\text{h}2$ $\text{g}5$. 17. $\text{ce}4$ $\text{f}4$. 18. $\text{ab}1$ $\text{xb}1$. 19. $\text{xb}1$! Kempinski-Miton, Poland tt 2000. Black has two ‘bad bishops’!

9...0-0 10.0-0 $\text{bd}7$. 11. $\text{g}3$ $\text{b}6$. 12. $\text{b}3$

12... $\text{b}8$

**WEAPON:** 12... $\text{e}8$. 13. $\text{e}1$. $\text{f}8$. 14. $\text{f}4$. $\text{xe}1$. 15. $\text{xe}1$. $\text{b}8$. 16. $\text{h}3$. $\text{xc}4$. 17. $\text{bc}4$. $\text{d}7$! 18. $\text{ce}4$. $\text{xe}4$. 19. $\text{xe}4$. $\text{a}6$. (19... $\text{b}6$ 20. $\text{a}4$) 20. $\text{xc}5$–! Mamedyarov-Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, Khanty-Mansiysk rapid 2013;

**WEAPON:** 12... $\text{g}4$?! 13. $\text{d}3$ $\text{g}6$. 14. $\text{h}3$. $\text{e}5$. (Erdös-Bologan, Gibraltar 2011) 15. $\text{h}6$! $\text{e}8$. 16. $\text{b}5$. $\text{d}7$. 17. $\text{f}4$.

13. $\text{e}1$

This move unexpectedly leads to a sharp game.

**WEAPON:** A more solid plan is 13. $\text{d}2$!? White is going to transfer all his pieces to the kingside: 13... $\text{e}8$. 14. $\text{ae}1$! $\text{xc}4$. 15. $\text{bc}4$. $\text{d}7$. 16. $\text{d}1$! $\text{a}6$. 17. $\text{h}3$. $\text{f}8$. 18. $\text{e}3$! $\text{g}6$. 19. $\text{c}3$. (19. $\text{f}4$?) 19... $\text{g}7$. 20. $\text{c}1$! $\text{a}4$? 21. $\text{a}1$–! S.Gross-J.Nun, Trnava 1980.
13...♘xc4 14.bxc4 ♘g4!?
From here on the game becomes quite dynamic, but the final result is in White’s favour.

15.♗f4 ♘f6 16.h3! ♘xf2 17.♕xf2 ♘d4+ 18.♗e3 ♘f6+
18...e5 19.♗e2
19.♕g1 ♘c3 20.♗e4 ♘xa1
20...♕g6 21.♕xc3 ♘f2+
21.♕xf6+ ♘xf6 22.♗b1
After the simplifications, White has a clear advantage.
22...♗f4!? ♖b6 23.♖b1
22...♗xb1+ 23.♖xb1 ♘e5 24.♗c1+ ♗f5 25.♘f4! f6 26.♗xe5 fxe5 27.♕a3 e4? 28.♖xa7 ♘e8 29.♖f2 e3+ 30.♗e1 e2
31.♗a4 ♘e7 32.♗b3 ♘e4 33.♗b8+ ♘f7 34.♖d6+-
And White soon won.

Summary Games 30 and 31:
The move order 6.♘c3!? is obviously more tricky than the main move 6.♕xc4. But in both cases, Black’s life is not sweet.

The block – 4/5...b4

Game 32
Viktor Moskalenko

Adrien Demuth

Catalonia tt 2017 (7)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♗c2 b4

WEAPON: A wrong set-up is 4...♕a5+ 5.♘d2 b4. According to Play the Benko Gambit by IM Nicolai V. Pedersen, this set-up (...♕a5/♗b4) is the best reply against 4.♘c2, ‘as it forces White to place his pieces in a slightly awkward way’. However, here White can also use a scheme of the real Four Pawns Attack. Let’s see: 6.e4 d6 7.♗d3 g6 8.f4! ♖bd7 9.♗f3 ♖g7 10.0-0 0-0 11.h3! ♖c7 (defending against e4-e5)
12.♗e3!N (White calmly prepares a massive attack through the centre: ♖d2, ♖e1 and e4-e5)
12...a5 (following Pedersen’s advice; 12...e6 13.\(\text{\textit{d}d2}?!\)) 13.\(\text{\textit{d}d2}\) \(\text{\textit{b}b7}\) (13...a4 14.\(\text{\textit{a}e1!}\) Ramon Solans-Palau Cabases, Almenar 2010) 14.\(\text{\textit{a}e1!}\) a4 15.e5!+(the attack begins) 15...dxe5 16.fxe5 \(\text{\textit{h}h5}\) 17.e6! (17.g4!?) 17...fxe6 18.\(\text{\textit{x}g6}!+–\) Moskalenko-R.Gonzalez, Mollet del Valles 2011.

5.e4
5.a3!?.
5...d6

6.f4!?
Applying the true Four Pawns Attack against the Benko/Volga!

\textbf{WEAPON:} Including 6.a3!? is also interesting: 6...bxa3?! (6...a5 7.f4 Vidarte Morales-Adel Lahchaichi, Catalonia tt 2011) 7.\(\text{\textit{x}a3}\) (7.bxa3\(\text{\x2011}\)) 7...g6 8.\(\text{\textit{c}c3}\) Mamedyarov-Caruana, Moscow blitz 2010;

\textbf{WEAPON:} 6.h3!? g6 7.\(\text{\textit{g}g5}!\) \(\text{\textit{g}g7}\) 8.\(\text{\textit{d}d2}\) a5 9.\(\text{\textit{d}d3}\) h6 10.\(\text{\textit{b}b3}\)
10...g5 (10...a4 11. d1!? 11. e2!? (11.e5!?) 11... bd7 12. g3 e5 13. e2 e6 (13...a4 14.0-0) 14.0-0 g6 (14...0-0 15.f4!) 15.dxe6 fxe6 (15... xe6 16. f5±)

16.e5! (16.h5!? I.Sokolov-Hamitevici, France tt 2015) 16... xe5 17. d1 0-0 18. de4±.

6...g6

WEAPON: 6...c7 7. f3 g6 8. d3 g4 9. bd2
9...♕xf3? (9...♘h5 (Moskalenko-Galiana Salom, Mallorca 2010) 10.h3!? ♕c8 11.e5!) 10.♗xf3 ♘bd7 11.♕a4! (threatening e4-e5-e6): 11...e5 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.♗g5!+– Moskalenko-Mela, Ampolla rapid 2006.

7.♗d3 ♘g7 8.♗f3 0-0

**WEAPON:** 8...♗g4?! is quite similar to the above examples: 9.♗d2 0-0 10.0-0 (10.h3!? 10...a5 11.h3 ♘xf3 12.♕xf3±

12...♖fd7 13.♗d2 (13.e5!? dxe5 14.f5±) 13...a4 14.♗e1± Mamedyarov-Caruana, Moscow blitz 2013.

9.0-0
9... ♖bd7!?

An important moment. My opponent had obviously prepared this.

PLAN: 9... ♖e8?! 10. ♖e3!? ♖d7 11. ♖bd2 a5 12. ♖ae1=±

10. ♕e2!?

Intending to push 11.e5 (following my own recommendation in Yearbook 92). Other lines to investigate:

**WEAPON:** 10. ♖bd2!? ♖b6 (10...a5!?) 11.a4!+– Plischki-Zagt, Dos Hermanas Internet blitz 2004;

**WEAPON:** 10. h3!? ♖e8?! (10...e6!? 11. ♖e1!? 11. ♖e3 e5 12.f5!? (12.fxe5!?; 12.dxe6!?) 12... ♖df6 13. ♖bd2 ♖d7 14.g4=± Illingworth-Kalisch, Sydney 2008.

10...e6!?

Probably the best reaction, starting a fight in the centre.

11.dxe6 fxe6
12. ∞g5!?! 
A practical decision – just don’t force things!
I spent a lot of time on the principled option 12.e5, but did not feel that it would give an advantage or even a sufficient initiative: 12...dxe5 13.fxe5 ∞g4 14.∞g5 ♗c7 15.∞bd2 ♗dxe5 (15...♗b7?! 16.∞e7!) 16.∞xe5 ♗xf1+ 17.∞xf1 ♗xe5= etc. My assumptions seem to have been correct, since the engine also evaluates the position as equal.

12...∞b6 
12...∞e7?!.

13. ∞d2 ∞h5

The position is very similar to the ones in Chapter 1, but the problem is that the white knight does not have the c3-square.

14. ∞b3 
Preparing a typical trick a la the Four Pawns Attack.
Objectively better was 14.∞h3!?∞.

14...e5!
From this moment on, incredibly complicated and dynamic play begins, with a ‘high voltage’ right until the last move.

TRICK: I was hoping that Black would play ‘logically’: 14...a5? 15.e5!
15...a4 16.♘xc5! dxc5 17.♗xh7! ♕f5 18.♖g5↑.

15.f5 ♘f4!

15...a5 16.♗h3.

16.♗xf4 exf4 17.♗h3 g5 18.a3 ♘a4?! This looks natural, but it’s a mistake.

Better was 18...a5∞ or 18...bxa3∞.

19.axb4! ♘xb2 20.♖a2 ♕f6!?

21.♗b1 ♘xd3 22.♗xd3 ♕f7 23.b5! ♘b7 24.♗f2!±

White has seized the initiative, but this is far from the end of the story.

24...♗e7

24...h5 25.♗a5!.

25.♗d1! ♕ae8 26.♗xd6

26.♖xa7!? ♕xe4 27.♗xe4 ♕xe4 28.♖a8!±.

26...♕xe4? 27.♗xf6 ♘xf6 28.♗xe4?

Time trouble. 28.♖g4! ♕f7 (28...♗c3 29.♖xc5+-) 29.♖a6+-.

28...♕xe4 29.♖d6 ♗c3 30.♗e6!
Here I already thought about how not to lose, and decided to simplify the position a little.

30... \( \text{b8xe6} \) 31.\( \text{fxe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 32.\( \text{f2} \)

32.\( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{e1+} \) 33.\( \text{f2} \) \( \text{b1} \) 34.\( \text{a5} = \).

32... \( \text{e3} \) 33.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{d3} \) 34.\( \text{e8+} \) \( \text{f7} \) 35.\( \text{e2?!} \) \( \text{d7} \) 36.\( \text{c8} \) \( \text{e7+} \) 37.\( \text{d1} \)

37.\( \text{f1!} \) was safer.

37... \( \text{e1+} \) 38.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{b4} \) 39.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{e2+} \) 40.\( \text{d3!} \) \( \text{xg2} \) 41.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{g4} \) 42.\( \text{c5}! \)

The struggle has flared up again; this time the passed pawns decide.

42... \( \text{xb2?} \)

42... \( \text{g1=}. \)

43.\( \text{b6! axb6} \) 44.\( \text{cxb6} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 45.\( \text{b7} \) \( \text{b2} \) 46.\( \text{b8\#} \) \( \text{xb8} \) 47.\( \text{xb8} \) \( \text{h5} \)

After a tough fight, White has obtained a winning endgame. But unfortunately, with a 30 seconds’ increment, I did not manage to convert my material advantage. Still, the position is quite curious.

48.\( \text{h8} \)

The easiest way was 48.\( \text{b5!} \) \( \text{g6} \) 49.\( \text{b6+} \) \( \text{f5} \) 50.\( \text{b7} \) \( \text{e6} \) 51.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{h4} \) 52.\( \text{h5} \) \( \text{h3} \) 53.\( \text{f2+}. \)

48... \( \text{g6} \) 49.\( \text{g8+} \) \( \text{f7} \) 50.\( \text{h8} \) \( \text{g6} \) 51.\( \text{a8} \) \( \text{h4} \) 52.\( \text{a6+} \) \( \text{f5} \) 53.\( \text{a5+} \) \( \text{g6} \) 54.\( \text{f2} \) \( \text{g3} \) 55.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{f3} \) 56.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{f2} \) 57.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{f7} \)

58.\( \text{f1} \)

58.\( \text{h5!} \) \( \text{f6} \) 59.\( \text{f4+-} \).

58... \( \text{f6} \) 59.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 60.\( \text{b5+-} \)

In the sequel, White did not find a clear plan, so Black miraculously escaped: \( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \)

After this game I changed my opinion about the blocking concept 4...\( \text{b4} \). It’s more complicated than I expected. However, White keeps more interesting options: just check all the Weapons given throughout the game!

**Gambit Declined – 4...\( \text{bxc4} \)**

**Game 33 – ...\( \text{bd7} \)**

Robert Kempinski

Piotr Staniszewski

Polanica Zdroj ch-POL (7) 1999

1.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 2.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 3.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{b5} \) 4.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{bxc4} \) 5.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 6.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 7.\( \text{f3} \)

\( \text{TRICK:} \) 7.b3? \( \text{xe4!} \) I.Sokolov-Ivanchuk, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010.
7...Ng7 8.0-0 0-0 9.h3
A playable though not forced order of moves.

WEAPON: More natural seems to be the developing move 9.Nc3!? and if 9...Nbd7 (9...b6 could be met by 10.Nb5!?, see Game 34 below), 10.h3! – only now.

9...Nbd7

WEAPON: More natural seems to be the developing move 9.Nc3!? and if 9...Nbd7 (9...b6 could be met by 10.Nb5!?, see Game 34 below), 10.h3! – only now.


10.Nc3

10...Nb6

WEAPON: 10...Nc8 11.Ne1!? Nf5 (11...Nc6 12.Nf1=) 12.b3!?

11.Ne2

WEAPON: An interesting move order is 11.Nb5!? and if 11...d7, now 12.Ne2! as the black bishop on d7 is misplaced.
11...♘e8
Black prepares the standard breakthrough ...f7-f5.

**WEAPON:** Benoni-style would be 11...e6 12.dxe6 ♘xe6 (12...fxe6 13.♗g5±) 13.♗e3!?N (13.♗g5?!). The idea is that White has time to play 14.♖ad1!. 13...♗e7 (13...d5? 14.♗xc5) 14.♗d1! ♘fd8 (14...♗ac8 15.♗fe1!?++) 15.♗fe1 ♘c4 (15...fxe6 16.♗g5 ♕f6 17.♗xe5 ♖c8 18.♗g5!?++) 16.♗xc4!? ♘xc4 17.♗f4± ♘h5 18.♗h2 ♕f6? 19.♖xd6! 1-0 Moskalenko-Artigas Isart, Catalonia tt 2002.

12.♗f4 ♘c7 13.♖fd1
I don’t understand why the ♕♖ was chosen to move to d1 over the ♕♘.

**WEAPON:** More natural was 13.♖ad1!?

[Analysis Diagram]

13...f5 (13...♗b7 14.♗b5!?) 14.e5 ♗b7 (14...h6 15.h4 ♗b7 16.♗h2!?++) 15.exd6 exd6 16.♗b5! ♘xb5 17.♗xb5± Sage-Weiler, ICCF email 2001.

13...f5?
A typical Benko/Volga counterattack.

14.e5! h6 15.h4

**WEAPON/TRICK:** It was possible to include first 15.a4!? g5? (15...a5 16.h4++) 16.a5+-.

15...♗b7 16.exd6
16.♗d2!?± was a better idea.

16...exd6 17.♗b5!? ♗e8
17...♘xb5 18.♗xb5 ♘c8 19.♗ac1±.

18.a4!
A typical anti-Benko/Volga attack.

18...♗h7 19.♗b3 ♗b8 20.♗xa7
20...♘xd5!?  
An interesting combination, trying to activate the pieces.  
20...f6 21.b5†.  
21.♗xd5 ♘xd5 22.♗xd5 ♙e7?  
A tactical blunder.  
After the correct 22...♖xb2 23.e1 ♙f6= the position would remain sharp.  
23.c6 ♙xe2 24.♖xb8 ♙xb2 25.e1! ♙xb8 26.h5†=  
The black fortress is falling apart on all sides.  
26...gxh5  
If 26...g5, 27.xg5! with a winning attack: 27...hxg5 28.xg5+ ♙h8 29.f7+ ♙h7 30.xf5+ ♙g8 31.e7+=.  
27.a5! ♙c8  
27...♗b5 28.e7+=; 27...♗a7 28.c6+=.  
28.e7! c4 29.d4 c3 30.b7 ♙xb7 31.xb7 ♙g6 32.e6 ♙f7 33.a6 c2 34.xf7 ♙xf7 35.a7 ♙e5 36.c1 1-0  

Game 34 – ...♗a6  
Eduard Meduna  
2480  

Mato Damjanovic  
2405  

Stary Smokovec 1982 (10)  

1.d4 ♙f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.c2 bxc4 5.e4 d6 6.xc4 g6 7.f3 ♙g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗c3!
An important position in the Gambit Declined.

9... ♗a6!?

Black looks for simplification and for his traditional queenside counterplay. Remember: 9... ♖bd7 10.h3! (Game 33).

10. ♗b5!

A very strong piece-blocking move.

**WEAPON:** An alternative is 10. ♗xa6 ♖xa6 11. ♗f4!? 

11. ♗xb5

The two-bishops concept versus the Benoni. Here Black’s problem is his lack of active counterplay.

11... ♖b6

Or 11... ♗fd7 12. ♗b1!? (12. ♗f4!?) 12...a6 13. ♗e2± Barria Zuniga-Beltran de Heredia Eguiaz, Mostoles 2008.
A nice game by GM Meduna, who is an expert on the Anti-Benko/Volga Gambit.

12. ♗e2

12... ♘bd7

13. ♗d2


13... ♘e8

13...e6 14.dxe6 fxe6 15.e5!.

14. ♗ab1 a5 15.a4

15. ♗c3!?; 15. ♗a4!?.
15...♘c7 16.b3 e6 17.♗c4 exd5 18.exd5 ♘f6 19.♗d3 ♘e8 20.♖e1 h6 21.h3 ♘b7 22.♗xe8+ ♘xe8 23.♖xa5

White has a winning pawn structure. The game is practically over.

23...♗xd5 24.♗d2
24.♖e1±
24...♗d8 25.♗d1
25.♕h4!?
25...♗b4? 26.♗xb4 ♘xb4 27.♕e5! ♘f8 28.♗g6 1-0

Game 35 – ...a6
Zlatko Ilincic
Levente Vajda

Budapest 2005 (7) 2540

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♕c2 bxc4 5.e4 g6 6.♗xc4 d6 7.♕f3 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.h3

This prophylactic approach is the most popular. After the most natural alternative 9.♘c3! we are back in the previous game.

9...a6

10.♗bd2

WEAPON: 10...♗a3?! is a creative alternative: 10...♖d7 (another typical Benko/Volga manoeuvre;
10...♗xc4 11.♗xc4 ♘bd7 12.♘d2!? ♘b6 13.♘a5 (13.b3!?) 13...♗d7 14.♗f1±) 11.♗b5!? (same idea as in Game 34; 11...♗b1 ♘b6 12.♗e2?!?) 11...♗b6 12.♗e2 ♗d7 13.a4 ♘e5 14.♗xe5 ♘xe5 15.♖h6 ♖e8 16.♖fd1 ♗d7 17.♖ab1 ♖ab8 18.b3± Efremov-Berendsen, ICCF email 2009.

10...♖d7 11.♗b1 ♘b6 12.b3! ♘c8
12...♗xc4 13.bxc4 ♘a5 14.♗b3 (14.♗b2±) 14...a4 (Mamedyarov-Ivanchuk, Beijing blitz 2012) 15.♗d3!±
13.♗xb2 ♘xb2 14.♖xb2 ♗d7 15.♗e1
White is ready for 16.e5!.

15...f6 16.♘h4!? Preparing 17.f4.

16...♖b8 17.f4 ♘xc4 18.bxc4 ♖xb2 19.♖xb2 ♕b6 20.♕e8 21.♖e3! ♖c8 22.e5 ♕c7 22...fxe5 23.fxe5 ♕f7 24.♘f3 ♕g7 25.e6= ♖b7 26.♕a3 ♖a8 27.♖h2 ♖f6 28.♖e4 ♖b2 29.♗b3 ♖f6 30.a4!+– ♖a6 31.a5 ♖a4 32.♖c2 ♖f8 33.h4 ♖f4+ 34.g3 ♖f6 35.♕c1 1–0

Gambit Accepted – 6.cxb5

Game 36

Viktor Moskalenko

Alberto Gomez Jurado

Sitges 2005 (9)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♘c2 d6 5.e4 From here on White threatens to accept the Benko/Volga pawn.

5...g6 6.cxb5!
White has at least the more comfortable game.

6...a6

The Gambit Accepted can also arise from some unusual transpositions: 6...g7 7.c3 b7?! 8.f3 0-0 9.c4! a6 10.0-0 axb5 11.xb5 bd7 12.e1? g4?! 13.d2 de5 14.xe5 xe5 15.c3 (15.e2?!±) 15...d7 16.b3 g5 17.a4± Moskalenko-Kalegin, Balatonbereny 1994.

7.c3 g7 8.f3 0-0 9.a4!?

The most useful move here.

9...e6

Another mix of the Benko/Volga, Benoni and Blumenfeld. It’s not easy for Black to find active counterplay.

WEAPON: A Blumenfeld Gambit Accepted is 9...b7?! 10.e2 (10.c4 bd7) 10...axb5 11.xb5 e6 (11...a6 12.0-0 c7 13.c4± Wornath-Dillmann, Germany 2001) 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.g5! c6 14.d1 ± Moskalenko-R.Gonzalez, Sabadell 2005;

WEAPON: 9...axb5 10.xb5 and the bishop comes to b5 without loss of time: 10.a6 (10...a6 11.h3?! b4 12.e2±) 11.0-0 xb5 12.xb5 a6 13.d2!± CapNemo-Kmpk, playchess.com 2006;

WEAPON: 9...e8?! is too slow: 10.e2 axb5 11.xb5 c7 12.0-0 d7 13.d2 ba6 14.c3 xb5 15.axb5 c7 16.xg7 xg7 17.b4!± Moskalenko-Z.Varga, Budapest 1994;

WEAPON: Also 9...fd7?! 10.e2 axb5 11.xb5 a6 12.d2 b4 13.xb4 cxb4 14.fd4±
10.\texttt{dxe6 }\texttt{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}} }\texttt{xe6}

\textbf{WEAPON:} 10...\texttt{fxe6}?! 

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\texttt{analysis diagram}

11.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{g5}?! (11.e5?! Moskalenko-Hernando Rodrigo, Sitges 2002) 11...\texttt{h6}? (11...\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{a5} 12.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{d3} \texttt{axb5} 13.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{xb5} 12.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{xf6} \texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{xf6} 13.e5?! (13.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{d1}?!?) 13...\texttt{dxe5} 14.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{d3} \texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{b7} 15.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{e4} \texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{xe4} 16.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{xe4}+\texttt{–} Kortchnoi-M.Domingo, Berlin simul 2001.

11.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{e2}

11.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{e3}?!N.

11...\texttt{axb5} 12.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{xb5}! \texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{a6} 13.0-0

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Black’s counterattack is delayed, whereas White’s position is pretty solid now. There is no real compensation for the pawn.

13...\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{b4} 14.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{e2} \texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{e8}?! 

\textbf{WEAPON:} 14...\texttt{d5} 15.exd5 (15.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{g5}?! Thej Kumar-Philippe, Wasselonne 2014) 15...\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{fxd5} 16.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{xd5} (16.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{d2}?!?) 16...\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{xd5} 17.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{e3}+\texttt{–} Anikaev-Folc, Vladivostok 1990.

15.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{f4} \texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{e7} 16.\texttt{\textbullet}\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}}\texttt{fd1}+\texttt{–}
The passed (extra) a-pawn decides the game.
16...♖d8 17.♖c4
17.a5!?; 17.♖d2!?
17...♗c7 18.a5 ♘xc4 19.♘xc4 ♖e6 20.♗g3 ♘e6 21.a6 ♖ed4 22.♘xd4 ♘xd4 23.♕a4 ♘b4 24.a7 ♘a8 25.♗b5 ♘e5 26.♗xd6!++

And White won: ... 1-0 (50)

Conclusion
• 4.♕c2 is a rare but highly aggressive way of declining the Benko/Volga Gambit. White strives for a (more) positional struggle with central control;
• A gambit does not need to be accepted to be refuted... and in practice my anti-gambit play has brought me more success than other methods – at least in the Benko/Volga;
• I have definitely ‘reloaded’ 4.♘f3 into the queen move 4.♕c2!, but this is far from claiming that White achieves any sort of easy advantage here;
• This line serves as a continuation of my aggressive repertoire in the Four Pawns Attack versus the King’s Indian Defence and the Benoni – see Chapters 1-4.
A fascinating struggle

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♗d2!

A bit of history

The Grünfeld Defence is known as one of the most active against the move 1.d4 and has remained a favourite of top players in the world at all times.

What do we see in the Grünfeld? Just a dynamic defence, in which all the pieces play freely, where Black apparently yields the centre – the opponent is allowed to advance his pawns, and then Black can attack them from a distance.

In all variations Black has adequate counterplay, and many of them require an exhaustive study of lines that must be carefully memorized.

However, even in such a heavily analysed opening as the Grünfeld, there is a way to deviate from the main theoretical discussion, since this is a very flexible opening with practically unlimited possibilities for improvising.

This chapter shows an interesting strategic system to fight the Grünfeld, which I personally have carried out on dozens of occasions, with excellent results. The explanations are clear and concrete and they take us to positions where the struggle is really fascinating.

Ernst Grünfeld (1893-1962) invented his defence a long time ago (in 1921). In contrast, the variation under discussion, 5.♗d2, appeared for the first time in 1971 and you can find over 3700 games (according to the MegaBase) where it appears. But, despite its relative youth, the idea is gaining more and more popularity. It has already for a long time been present in the repertoire of many great players: Kortchnoi (1931-2016), Ivanchuk, Kramnik and Anand, among other GMs.

The idea of 5.♗d2!?
• Instead of pushing the pawn right away, White leisurely prepares e2-e4: in case of 5...♗g7 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.♗xc3, the main move ...c7-c5 leads to a strategic advantage after d4-d5 and the exchange of the dark-squared bishops;
• The advanced central pawn on d5 or e5 hinders Black’s development and restricts the black minor pieces;
• White has the advanced d- and e-pawns and therefore he must try to dominate the centre. He also has to face the move ...c7-c5. Apart from this, there are possibilities of an attack on the kingside with h2-h4-h5.

Directions
From the above diagram position Black has two possibilities: 5...♗g7, without fearing the advance 6.e4, or 5...♘b6 to avoid it.
Games 37-44: Black continues with 5...g7 (diagram left) and after 6.e4 he must choose again between two options:
6...xc3 is very typical for the Grünfeld: 7.xc3 0-0 and now: 8.c4 (Game 37), 8.f3 (Game 38) or the most complex 8.d2 (Game 39);
6...b6 is the most popular in practice. After the natural 7.e3 0-0 there are several different plans: the most aggressive one with 8.f4 (Game 40); the two solid moves are 8.e2 (Game 41) and 8.b5 (Game 42); or the most creative idea 8.h3!?, preparing 9.f3 (Games 43 and 44).
Games 45-48: Black continues with 5...b6 (diagram above right).
The idea of this answer is to avoid White’s move e2-e4, attacking the pawn on d4. The game acquires a positional character.
White’s ideas:
– 6.f4/g5 or first 6.f3 (also 7.c1!?): Games 45 and 46;
– 6.e3 and 7.f3 (or vice versa): Game 47;
– 6.e3 and 7.f4!?, the modern approach: Game 48.

Typical endgames (Games 38, 39, 44, 45 and 46)
In fact, the endgames are not ‘typical’ in this line. In the main Grünfeld with 5.e4, Black has two pawns against one on the queenside. In contrast, the endings of the variation 5.d2 are characterized by the presence of many pieces and this fact complicates the situation to the maximum.
If in the opening and middlegame there is no time to activate the major pieces, in the endgames the rooks finally come into play.
**Grunfeld Defence – Games**

**Games 37-39: 5...g7 6.e4 ♖xc3 7.♖xc3**

**Ideas with ♖c4 and h2-h4**

The following game (and the lines in the notes) shows us perfectly the main ideas of the variation 5.♖d2.

**Game 37**

Viktor Moskalenko

2518

Alfonso Jerez Perez

2343

Barcelona 2000 (9)

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.♖d2!? ♖g7

If now 5...c5, 6.dxc5! tests the entire variation and demonstrates the deficiency of ...c7-c5: 6...♖g7 7.♖b3?!

![analysis diagram](image)

7...♖f6 (7...♖xc3 8.♖xc3 e5 9.♖f3 ♖e7 10.e4 0-0 11.♖c4=) 8.♖f3 (8.e4!? 8...0-0 9.♖a3!? and it is not easy for Black to recover the pawn or to find any kind of compensation.

The main alternative is 5...♖b6 – see Games 45-48.

6.e4 ♖xc3 7.♖xc3 c5

**WEAPON:** In case of 7...0-0, interesting is 8.♖c4!? which coincides with the idea of the main game (or continue to develop: 8.♖f3!? – Game 38; 8.♖d2 would be Anand-Hammer, Game 39): 8...♖f6 (8...c5, see main game) 9.a4!? ♖d7 10.♖f3 c5 11.d5 ♖xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♖a5 (12...♖b6 13.♖d2!?) 13.♖c2 (sacrificing a pawn for the initiative; or 13.♖d2!? with good prospects) 13...b5 14.♖e2 ♖b6 15.0-0 ♖xa4 16.♖fc1 ♖xc7 17.c4 ♖d7 18.e5 ♖fd8 19.♖e4! ♖e8 20.♖h4
and White has a winning attack: 20...♕g7 21.♖a3! (a thematic rook lift) 21...h6 (21...b4 22.♘g5 h5
23.♖e3+-) 22.♖e3 b6 23.♘d2 bxc4 24.d6! ♘b7 (24...exd6 25.♖h3 dxe5 26.♘e4+-) 25.♘h3 h5
26.♘hx5 ♘d7 27.♗f3 ♘h8 28.♘xe7 ♘d5 29.♗xd5 1-0 Moskalenko-Danelia, Barcelona 2007;

WEAPON: 7...♘c6 allows 8.♗b5 (White could also consider 8.♘f3 ♗g4 9.d5 ♘xf3 10.♘xf3 ♘d4
11.♕d1= Epishin-Stajner, Nova Gorica 2002)

8...0-0 9.♖e2 ♘d6 (Wojtaszek-Grischuk, Russia tt 2015) 10.0-0!? (10.♗d2!?) 10...♖d8 11.♗b3! e5 12.d5

8.d5!
In the main line Grünfeld it is difficult to make this move so early because the c3-square would be occupied by an
unprotected pawn.

8...♗xc3+
8...0-0!? is considered a more accurate order, which transposes to analysis in the notes to Games 37-39.

9.bxc3 0-0
One of the key positions in the variation with 5.\textit{b}d2. After removing the dark-squared bishops from the board, White is strategically better, although he has to solve some problems in the centre and with his development.

10.\textit{b}c4!?

Avoiding the simplification with 10...\textit{b}g4. Other moves:

A) 10.\textit{f}3 – Game 38;
B) The most popular move 10.\textit{d}2 – see Game 39;

\textbf{WEAPON:} 10.h4!? could be one of the methods to punish Black’s early exchange 8...\textit{b}xc3: 10...e6 11.d6! \textit{f}6 12.\textit{d}2 \textit{d}7 (12...\textit{c}6 13.h5!\textit{b} Shirov-Maletin, Russia tt 2014) 13.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}6 14.h5!? \textit{d}7 15.hxg6 fxg6 16.\textit{g}5! h5 17.\textit{c}4 \textit{e}8 18.0-0! \textit{b}6 19.\textit{e}2 e5 20.a4!↑.

10...\textit{d}7!?\textbf{\textit{WEAPON:}} 10...\textit{a}5 11.\textit{e}2 b5 12.\textit{b}3 c4 13.\textit{c}2 e6

14.h4! (14.\textit{d}2!?) 14...b6 15.\textit{d}2 with a clear initiative for White, Moskalenko-Rocabert, Castellar 1999;

\textbf{WEAPON:} One of the critical lines is 10...\textit{d}6!!? 11.\textit{f}3 (11.e2 \textit{e}5\textit{⇌} Zhou Weiqi-Sutovsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009; 11.\textit{d}2 f5\textit{⇌}) 11...\textit{g}4 12.e5!? c7 13.0-0 xf3 14.xf3 xe5 15.ab1 \textit{d}7 16.fe1 \textit{d}6 17.xb7 fb8 18.xb8+ xb8 19.b3\textit{⇌} Stieger-Thierry, ICCF email 2015.
11. ♘f3 ♘b6 12. ♕d3!?  
Following the same strategy: if now 12...g4?!, then 13. ♘d2!.

WEAPON: An alternative would be 12.♗b3?!, allowing 12...g4 (12...f5?!) 13.h3 ♘xf3 14.♗xf3 ♘d6 15.0-0 c4 16.♗c2 e6 17.a4! exd5 18.♗d1 a5 19.♗b1† Laznicka-Elsness, Istanbul 2012.

12...♕c7


13.a4!?  
In this kind of position White always has several options:

WEAPON: 13.0-0!? (White is very solid) 13...♗d7 14.♗e1 ♘xc4 15.♖xc4 b5 16.♗d3 ♘f4 17.g3 ♘c7 18.c4 hxg4 19.♘xc4 ♘ab8 20.♗c3 ♘fc8 21.♗ac1 ♘b7 22.h4!? ♘d6 23.♗e5† ♘b5? 24.♘g4 ♘e6 25.♗e5+– Slapikas-Boreika, ICCF email 2005.

13...♗d7

13...♗g4 14.♗e2=.  
14.♗b5! c4 15.♗d4!  
The white queen comfortably occupies a central square, controlling the entire board.

15...♖xb5 16.♖xb5 ♘fd8

In order to attack the centre.

16...♘d7 would be too slow: 17.h4 ♖xb5 18.0-0!?. A pawn less has nothing to do with White’s initiative and control of the centre.

17.h4!  
In this game I preferred to play in a more complicated fashion. After this move White has to attack the king, while Black the centre. Who will arrive first?

Obviously, 17.♗d1!? would be the more solid and flexible alternative.

17...e6 18.h5
18...exd5 19.hxg6?!
The result was a miscalculation in a forced line.
The correct attacking set-up was 19.e5!  e8 (19...e7 20.f1!) 20.f1! and White is winning.

19.fxg6 20.g5?!
Following the wrong line; 20.e5±.

20...e8??
A calculation error. The position is still complicated and in practice, when defending, it is easier to make mistakes than to find good moves.
The game could have continued differently: 20...dxe4 21.e6 (21.f6!∞) 21...e7! (21...xd4? 22.xc7) 22.xd8 xd8 and suddenly, Black has sufficient compensation for the exchange.

21.xh7! 1-0
After a long think, in this extraordinary and dramatic position my opponent resigned due to the following variation:
21...xe4+ 22.xe4 dxe4 23.f6+ f8 24.h8+ e7 25.h7+ d8 26.d1+ c8 27.h8+ and checkmate in two moves.

The developing move f3

Game 38
Viktor Moskalenko

Marco Massironi

Padova.2013 (3)

1.d4 f6 2.c4 g6 3.c3 d5 4.cxd5 f5 5.d2 g7 6.e4 xc3 7.xc3 0-0

WEAPON: This time, my preparation, the developing move f3?!, was based on the model game
Nakamura-Karjakin, Moscow 2013: 7.c5 8.d5 xc3+ (8...0-0!? – see main game) 9.bxc3 0-0 10.f3? (instead of 10.c4; or 10.h4!? – Game 37; or the most popular 10.d2 – Game 39)
10...e6 (10...♗g4 may be the same, but with this order White has more options, for example 11.♕d2!?)
11.♗e2 (11.♕c4 b5!?) 11...exd5 12.exd5 ♗g4 (12...♕d6 would be similar) 13.0-0 ♗d7 14.h3!? ♗xf3
15.♕xf3+

I realized that this position is very convenient to play with white. Nakamura brilliantly showed how:
15...♘e5 16.♗e2 ♕d6 17.♗b1 b6 18.♕e1! ♕fd8 (18...♕ad8 19.♗b5; 18...a6 19.a4+) 19.♗a6! ♕ab8
20.c4! (slamming the door! Black is almost devoid of counterplay) 20...♖d7 21.♗b5 ♕f6 22.♗e2 ♕b7
23.♖b3! ♕h5 24.♗e3 and White has a strategically winning position.

8.♗f3!?
Following in Nakamura’s footsteps, allowing ...♗g4 for the sake of rapid development and the strengthening of the central d-pawn.

8...♗g4
8...c5 9.d5 is a transposition.
For example, 8...b6?! is too passive: 9.h4!? (9.♗c4!?) 9...♗g4 (9...♗b7 10.♗c2!) 10.♗d2 h5 11.♗g5+

9.♗e2 c5
It is not easy for Black to do without this counter-thrust.
A) 9...c6 10.d5 ♘xf3 11.xf3 ♘xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♘e5 13.e2
B) 9...d7 10.0-0 c6 11.c1 ♘b6 12.a4 Moskalenko-Lima, Caldas de Reis 1992.

10.d5 ♘xc3+

**WEAPON:** Another critical line continues with 10...e6!? 11.0-0 exd5 12.exd5 ♘d6!?. Black does not play ...

...♘xc3, to keep more pressure in the game.

---

Nakamura-Karjakin, Moscow 2013.

**analysis diagram**

13.h3 (13.b3 ♘d7 is similar) 13...♗xf3 14.xf3 ♘d7 15.b3 b6 16.♗e1 ♘e8 17.♗xe8+ (17.g3!? or 17.a4!? look more promising to me) 17...♖xe8 18.♗b5 (18.♖a4!??) 18...♗xc3 19.bxc3 ♗g7 20.♖d1 ♗e7 and Black managed to achieve a draw on move 41 in Genchev-Cuccumini, ICCF email 2013, thanks to his control on the e-file (but mainly because it was computer analysis!);

**WEAPON:** Or, for example, 10...♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♘d6
12.0-0 (12.♗b3!??) 12...♘d7 13.♗e1 (13.a4!?±) 13...♗ad8 14.g3 e5? (Genov-Kislik, Budapest 2010) 15.♗b3!?±
11.bxc3 ♘xf3 12.♖xf3
White has even won a tempo without spending time on h2-h3.
12...♗d6
Black’s standard plan in such positions.

WEAPON: 12...♗d7 13.0-0 b5 14.♗e1!? ♗c7 15.♗e2 a6 16.e5±
13.♗b1
13.a4!?± 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.c4±.

I believe that White has a certain advantage in this position.

13...♗b6 14.0-0 ♘d7 15.♗e1

WEAPON: 15.c4!? ♗fd8 16.g3!? e5 17.♗g2 ♗f6 18.f4± Akesson-Tikkanen, Sweden tt 2011/12.
15...♗ad8

WEAPON: After 15...♗f6,
16. ♗e2?! was a miscalculation in my previous game, but any of three queen moves (16. ♙d2!?±, 16. ♙c1!?±, 16. ♙c2!?±) leads to a comfortable position for White. 16... ♙xc3! 17. ♗b5 ♖ad8 18. ♙a4 ±f6 19. ♙xa7 ♙a8 20. ♙xe7 ♙xa2→ Moskalenko-Rodshtein, Hoogeveen 2013.

16. ♗e2
16. ♙a4!?± 16. ♙c2!?±.
16...e6 17. ♗b5!

Viva Nakamura! After this move, I already had no doubt about the result of this game.

17...exd5 18. exd5 ♪e8
18... ♕f6 19.c4±.
19.c4!± ♤xe1+ 20. ♤xe1 ♤e5 21. ♤e2 g5
A forced block, otherwise White will play f2-f4.

22. ♤e1
It was even stronger to put the rook before the queen: 22. ♤b3!?±.

22... ♤g6 23.g3 ♤g7 24.a4 h6 25.a5?!
The right idea, but too hasty. White had to prepare this advance more carefully. For example, 25. ♤g2!?, playing for zugzwang: 25... ♤f6 26. ♤e3 ♤d6 and now 27.a5!±.
25...bxa5 26.♕b2+♔h7?
Almost the only mistake by Black in this game, not counting the whole defensive plan; 26...♕f6.
27.♕c3+—

Now White’s pieces dominate the board.
27...a6 28.♕a4
28...♖b8 29.♖c2! ♖b6 30.♖e8 ♕f6 31.♖xf6 ♖xf6 32.♗c8 ♔g7 33.♖xg6 ♖xg6 34.♖xc5 1-0
As we have seen, the simple move 8.♘f3!?, allowing 8...♗g4, also deserves attention. Black’s only plan, where his position is not clearly worse, is not to exchange the bishop on c3 (see 10.e6!?) thereby maintaining a viable defence on the queenside and in the centre.

The most popular move – ♕d2
The one who fights with monsters must be careful not to be a monster. If you stare into an abyss, the abyss will look inside you – Nietzsche.
Once the great Vasily Ivanchuk frankly admitted to me: ‘When I play against Anand, Kasparov, Topalov, Kramnik or Aronian, I feel that I face monsters! However, playing against Magnus Carlsen, I don’t feel anything special...’ So, now we will play the anti-Grünfeld Variation 5.♗d2!? on the side of one of those chess ‘monsters’:

Viswanathan Anand!

Game 39
Viswanathan Anand

Jon Ludvig Hammer

Stavanger 2013 (8)
The most principled continuation according to modern theory. Probably because there is more flexibility and therefore more opportunities, but not only for White. I believe in practice the two moves ♗c4 and ♘f3 (which sometimes transpose) are not worse.

8...c5

In this game, due to the large variety of ideas, the verbal comments will mostly be replaced by useful analysis of lines with assessments.

_WEAPON: 8...♘c6!? is a way of deviating from the main theoretical discussion:

A) 9.d5. Without kingside development, this radical advance is not likely to yield too much: 9...♗e5
10.f4 (10.♗e2 c6 11.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 12.♖xf3 ♘xc3 13.♗xc3 cxd5 14.exd5 e6= Ulybin-Petr, Teplice 2014) 10...♖g4 11.e5 e6 12.0-0-0 exd5 13.h3 ♘h6 14.g4 ♘e6 15.♗g2 ♕e7 16.f5!?∞ Cuccumini-Gagliardi,
ICCF email 2016;

B) If 9.♘e2, Black can simplify with 9...e5!? 10.d5 ♘d4 11.♘xd4 exd4 12.♗e2 ♘e8 (or 12...♕h4!? 13.f3 ♘xd5= Vallejo Pons-Aronian, Novi Sad 2016;

C) 9.♘f3 is a natural defence of the pawn which allows Black to develop freely: 9...♗g4!? 10.d5 (10.0-0-0? ♘xf3 11.gxf3 e5↑) 10...♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♘g7!? (a concrete idea, which worked reasonably well. An alternative line is 11.gxf3 ♘e5 12.♗e2 (12.0-0-0 c6 13.♗d4 ♘d6 14.♗b1 ♘f6 led to a draw in Rost-Rawlings, ICCF email 2016) 12...c6 13.f4 ♘d7 14.♗xf3 ♘xf3 15.♖c1 ♘xg7 16.♖c6 bxc6 17.♕c1 ♘f6 18.♕xg7 19.♖d2 = Moiseenko-Nepomniachtchi, Yaroslavl rapid 2014) 11...♗xg7 12.gxf3. White sets up some pressure on the centre: 12...♗e5 13.0-0-0 (also 13.♗e2?! e6 (13...c6 14.♗b1!) 14.♗d7 15.0-0-0= Bulski-Y.Vovk, Slovakia tt 2016/17) 13...c6 (or, 13...â6d6 14.♗e2 (14.♗g2!?; 14.♗b1!? Rocco Ruiz-Roques, ICCF email 2016) 14...c6 15.♗f4= 14...♗c3! (weakening Black’s kingside) 14...f6 15.♗h3= (15.f4?) 15...cxd5 (15...â6d6 16.♗b1!?; 15...♗b6!?) 16.♗d5 a5 17.f4= Tomashevsky-Volokitin, Doha 2014) 16.exd5↑

16...♗f7 (16...b5 17.f4 (17.♗b1!? 17...♗c4 18.♗e5 a5 19.♗b1= Le Quang Liem-Odeev, Ashkhabad 2017) 17...c4 18.♗e1 ♘he1 19.♖c2= Le Quang Liem-Odeev, Ashkhabad 2017) 17...d6 18.♗d4 ♘ad8 (18...♗fd8? 19.♗e1 ♘f8 20.♖e6+= Nyzhnyk-Hilby, Philadelphia 2017) 19.♖e6 ♘b6
20. ♗d2 (20. ♗xb6!? axb6 21. ♗b1±) 20... ♗d6 (20... ♗d6 21. ♘e1++] 21. ♗b1! (21. ♘e1 ♗d8= Anand-Carlsen, Sochi 2014) 21... ♘d8 22. ♗g4± White keeps a playing advantage as he has more active pieces and a safer king.

9.d5

WEAPON: Black can postpone ... ♗xc3 with 9...e6!?: 10. ♗c4 (also interesting is 10. ♗xg7!? ♗xg7 11. ♗c4 ♗d7 12. ♗e2 ♗f6 (12... ♗e5 13. ♗b3∞) 13. ♗c3 exd5 14. ♗xd5 ♗e6 (14... exd5 15. ♗xd5 ♗e6 16. ♗c3+ f6 17.0-0-0↑ Mamedyarov-Sutovsky, Baku rapid 2010) 15.0-0-0 ♗xd5 16.exd5 ♗d6 17.f3 ♗ad8 18.g4!↑ Gleizerov-Gähwiler, Winterthur 2012) 10...exd5 (for 10... ♗xc3 see the main game, move 11. ♗c4) 11. ♗xd5 ♗d7 12. ♗xg7 (12. ♗e2!!?) 12... ♗xg7

A) 13.h4!? h5 14. ♗h3 ♗f6 (14... ♗b6 15. ♗f4↑ Anton Guijarro-Svane, Gibraltar 2015; 14... ♗xh4 seems to be risky: 15.0-0-0 ♗f6 16.f4 ♗b6 17.f5↑) 15.0-0 ♗xh4 16. ♗g5 ♗f6 17. ♗ac1! ♗xd5 18. ♗xd5↑;

B) 13. ♗c3+ ♗f6 14. ♗e2 ♗b8!? Le Quang Liem-Robson, St Louis 2016;

C) 13.0-0-0!? ♗f6 14. ♗e2 ♗xd5 (14... ♗e7 15.f3!? 15.exd5.
White seems to have more chances in this position. 15...\textit{d}7 (15...\textit{e}8 16.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}6 17.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}5 18.\textit{g}4 \textit{d}7 19.\textit{hf}1 \textit{Evans-Halliwell, ICCF email 2017}) 16.\textit{h}4!? \textit{h}5 17.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}6 18.\textit{g}3 (18.\textit{c}3!?) 18...\textit{f}5 19.\textit{g}5! \textit{xg}5+ 20.\textit{hxg}5 \textit{e}8 21.\textit{xf}5+ \textit{gx}f5 22.\textit{xh}5= \textit{Hammer-Kramer, Helsingor 2016.}

10.bxc3

Other options in this important position:

\textbf{WEAPON: 10...\textit{d}6!?}

11.f4 (11.h4 \textit{f}5= \textit{Evanchuk-Dominguez Perez, Beijing rapid 2014}) 11...\textit{e}6!? (11...\textit{d}7?! 12.\textit{f}3 \textit{e}5 13.dxe6! \textit{xe}6 14.\textit{d}3= \textit{Ragger-I.Popov, Tromsø 2013}) 12.\textit{c}4 (12.\textit{c}4 \textit{e}5=) 12...\textit{b}5!? 13.\textit{xb}5 \textit{exd}5 14.\textit{c}4 (14.\textit{exd}5 \textit{d}7 15.\textit{xd}7 \textit{xd}7 16.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}5 17.\textit{f}2 \textit{ad}8= \textit{Gelfand-Dominguez Perez, Wijk aan Zee 2014}) 14...\textit{b}7 15.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}8.
Here White could try 16.e5!? (16.♗xd5= Tomashevsky-Nepomniachtchi, Satka 2018) 16...♕c7 17.♗e2!? ♖c6 18.0-0 and the struggle still rages on;

**WEAPON:** 10...♖d7 is less popular: 11.♘f3 (11.♖d1!? 11...♕c7 12.♗d3 ♖f6 13.h3!± Mamedyarov-Vachier-Lagrave, Germany Bundesliga 2009/10)

12.e5!? ♖e4 13.♗e3 ♖xd5 14.♖d1 ♖c6 15.♗d3 f5 16.exf6 ♖xf6 17.0-0 and White has the initiative for a pawn.

**WEAPON:** 11.♗c4!? Compared to Game 37 (♗c4), here ♖d2 allows Black a tempo for counterplay in the centre. However, White still has an interesting idea found by GM Aleksandrov: 11...exd5!? (11...b5 is not enough: 12.♗xb5 exd5 13.exd5 ♖d7 14.♗e2 ♖b7 15.♖xd7 ♖xd7 16.c4 ♖g4 17.0-0 ♖xc4 18.♗c3 ♖ad8 19.♖a1 ♖fe8 20.h3± Lenic-Volokitin, Warsaw 2013) 12.♗d5 ♖d7!? (this seems to be the strongest continuation; 12...♖f6 13.♗e2!?±)
A) After 13.♘f3 ♘f6 14.0-0 Black can get an equal position in two ways:
   A1) 14...♖e8 15.♖fe1 ♖g4!? 16.♘g5 ♖e6 17.c4 ♖xd5 18.exd5 b5!= Kasimdzhanov-Radjabov, Tbilisi 2015;
   A2) Or 14...♗g4 15.♗g5 ♔d7! 16.h3 ♔e6 17.c4 ♖xd5 18.exd5 b5!= Vinchev-Sethuraman, ICCF email 2015.
   B) 13.♘e2!? ♘f6 (13...♘b6!? Kolasa-Levchenkov, Riga 2018) 14.c4 ♖xd5 (14...♖e6 15.f3!) 15.cxd5 ♖e8 16.f3 ♕f5 17.0-0 ♖xe4 18.fxe4 ♔xe4 and now 19.d6! (instead of 19.♘c3? ♖d4 with an edge for Black, A.Aleksandrov-Vidit, Doha blitz 2016)

19...♖e6 20.♖e1!= White has a dangerous initiative for a pawn less.

11...♗d7

**WEAPON: 11...♗d7**
12. ♘f3 ♗c6 13. h4!? ♗xe4? (13... ♘d7 14. h5!? 14. ♘g5 →

12. h4 ♗e6 13. ♘h3

This was a novelty by Anand.

**WEAPON:** However, 13. h5!? was still an interesting option: 13... g5 14. ♘f3

14... f6 15. ♗b5 (15. ♗e2!? with the idea 16. ♘h2!? 15... ♘f7 16. ♘d1 ♘c6 17. ♗e3 h6 18. 0-0 ♘d7 19. ♘xc5 ♘b6 20. ♘xb6 axb6 21. ♘d2± Matsenko-Kopylov, Ekaterinburg 2018.
13...♕xh4
Black accepts the pawn sacrifice, which leads to great complications.

WEAPON: If 13...f6!? 14.g3!? ♘c6 (14...♘d7 15.f4!) 15.f4!. White prepares an attack with h4-h5.
14.0-0-0 ♘xe4
14...h5 15.♗b5!?.

TRICK: 14...♘d7? 15.♗b5!+–.

15.♗d3?!
WEAPON: Better was 15.♘g5!?, for example:

15...♕f4 16.♘xf4 exf4 17.♗xe6!? fxe6 18.♗c4!.

15...a4 16.♗g5 ♘xa2 17.♗e3!? ♘a3+ 18.♗d2 ♘b2+ 19.♔c2! ♘f5 20.♖c1?
White takes a risk, which pays off.

20.♖xh7 led to a perpetual after 20...♘xc2! 21.♕h6! ♘xd1+ 22.♗xd1 ♘b1+ etc.

20...♘d8??
A natural but losing move.
20...♘c6! was correct: 21.♘xh7 ♖fd8!±.

21.♘xf7!+-
White is playing in vintage style! 21...♕xf7 22.♕xe5 ♖xd6+
If 22...♔g8, 23.♕d5+ ♔g7 24.♕xh7+! and checkmate in four moves.
23.♕xd6 ♘c6 24.♕xh7+ ♔g8 25.♕d7!!

This is probably what Black overlooked.
25...♖e8 26.♕f6! ♖xd7 27.♕xg6+ ♔f8 28.♕f6+ ♔g8 29.♗h1 ♗e2+ 30.♕xe2 ♗d4+
30...♕xc2+ 31.♖e3+-.
31.cxd4 ♖xc2+ 32.♖e3 ♖c3+ 33.♕f4 ♖xd4+ 34.♕xd4 cxd4
Black has avoided mate but the arising endgame is hopeless for him.

35. ♔ e4 a5 36. xd4 a4 37. b5 38. b4 ♔ f7 39. h7+ ♔ e6 40. g4 ♔ e8 41. ♔ f6 42. h6+ ♔ g7 43. g5 ♔ g6 44. h3 ♔ f5 45. ♔ e3 1-0

**Summing up 6... ♖ xc3**

Compared to 8. c4 (Game 37) and 8. f3 (Game 38), the idea 8. d2 (Game 39) is more flexible and requires more precise analysis, or calculation during the game, for both sides. However, the two first mentioned moves are still interesting. White can combine all three weapons for different games.

**Games 40-44: 6... ♖ b6 7. ♔ e3 0-0 (8.f4, 8. e2, 8. b5 and 8.h3!?)**

**The most aggressive set-up – 8.f4**

**Game 40**

Viktor Moskalenko

2525

Nenad Ristic

2415

Metz 1990

Here is a pretty good demonstration of how White has developed his initiative.

1. d4 ♖ f6 2. c4 g6 3. c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♖ xd5 5. d2 ♖ g7 6. e4 ♖ b6

Instead of 6... ♖ xc3 (Games 37-39).

Here Black attacks d4 and is going to push ...c7-c5, ...e7-e5 or ...f7-f5.
7. \textit{e3} 0-0

\textbf{WEAPON:} 7...\textit{c6} would be a bit hasty: 8.d5 (I like 8.\textit{b5}!? 0-0 9.\textit{ge2!} \textit{a5} 10.b3!? \textit{a6} 11.\textit{d3} \textit{c6} 12.\textit{c2}±) 8...\textit{e5} 9.f4!?

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{analysis diagram}

9...\textit{g4} 10.\textit{b5}!? \textit{d7} 11.\textit{d4} \textit{xd4} 12.\textit{xd4} 0-0 13.\textit{xd7} \textit{xd7} 14.\textit{h3} \textit{f6} 15.\textit{ge2} \textit{c6} 16.a4 \textit{ad8} 17.\textit{d1} \textit{cxd5} 18.a5 \textit{c8} 19.e5 \textit{h5} 20.g4 \textit{g7} 21.\textit{xd5}± Laznicka-Molner, Arlington 2014. White’s set-up is more active.

8.f4

\textbf{PUZZLE:} By this move, White first strengthens the centre. The structure is a bit like in the Four Pawns Attack, but here the game is more open (because two pawns are exchanged: c- and d-).

8.\textit{e2} – Game 41; 8.\textit{b5} – Game 42; 8.h3!? – Games 43 and 44.

8...\textit{c6}
9.d5!?  

**WEAPON:** 9. ♘f3 allows the typical pin 9...♗g4 (9...f5? 10. ♕b3+ ♕h8 11.e5±) but still, there is an interesting idea: 10.d5 ♘a5! 11.h3!? (11.♗d4 ♗xf3 12.gxf3 e6=) 11...♗c4 (11...♗xf3 12.♕xf3) 12.hxg4!? ♘xe3 13.♕d3∞ ♘xg4 14.e5! Fagerbekk-Booth, ICCF email 2014.

9...♘a5!?  

**WEAPON:** The retreat 9...♗b8 also has many followers. But it allows White to gain space: 10.a4!. In order to attack the knight on b6.

10...c6 (10...e5 11.a5!) 11.a5 ♘6d7 12.e5 cxd5 13.♕xd5 ♘c6 14.♕f3 Moskalenko-Tseshkovsky, Balassagyarmat 1990.

10.♗d4  
To exchange the Grünfeld bishop is one of the key ideas after 6..♗b6 and 8.f4 (as also in Games 37-39).

10.e5? f6!↑.

10...e5!  

11.fxe5!  
11.fxe5 c6!?±.
11...\texttt{\textbackslash b}xe5 12.fxe5 \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash b}h4+ 13.g3 \texttt{\textbackslash e}7 14.\texttt{\textbackslash d}4!?

14.\texttt{\textbackslash f}3 \texttt{\textbackslash g}4+.

The critical position of this line. Black has two main options:

14...c5

\textbf{WEAPON:} More popular is 14...\texttt{\textbackslash r}d8!? 15.b4 \texttt{\textbackslash n}ac4! (15...\texttt{\textbackslash c}6?! 16.\texttt{\textbackslash g}5 17.\texttt{\textbackslash f}3 \texttt{\textbackslash h}5 18.\texttt{\textbackslash g}2!\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d}).

14...c5

\textbf{WEAPON:} More popular is 14...\texttt{\textbackslash r}d8!? 15.b4 \texttt{\textbackslash n}ac4! (15...\texttt{\textbackslash c}6?! 16.\texttt{\textbackslash g}5 17.\texttt{\textbackslash f}3 \texttt{\textbackslash h}5 18.\texttt{\textbackslash g}2!\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d}).

This is probably equal, but there are some tricks (and new ideas): 16.\texttt{\textbackslash d}xc4 (after 16.\texttt{\textbackslash f}3 \texttt{\textbackslash g}4! 17.\texttt{\textbackslash d}xc4 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xf3 18.0-0 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xb4 19.e6!? (19.\texttt{\textbackslash d}xf3 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xc4=) looks very active but leads only to a forced draw: 19...\texttt{\textbackslash f}xe6 20.\texttt{\textbackslash d}xf3 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xc4 21.\texttt{\textbackslash f}6 exd5! 22.\texttt{\textbackslash e}6+ \texttt{\textbackslash h}8 \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash f}e6 ½-½ F.Gheorghiu-Granda Zuniga, New York 1987) 16...\texttt{\textbackslash d}xb4.
This is another forced line: 17.♘f3 (a new idea is the prophylactic 17.h3!?, 17...♕xc4 18.♖d1, keeping a game on the board) 17...♕xc4 (17...c5!? 18.♗e3 c6 (18...♕e8!?) 19.e6 (even more tricky is 19.♕c1!? ♗g4 20.♗d2 ♗b4 21.0-0 cxd5? (21...♕e7!?)) 22.exd5 ♗xd5 23.♗xd5 ♗xd5 24.♗e4! ♗d4 25.♗f6+ ♗g7 26.♗xd5= Mamedyarov-Shirov, Baku rapid 2009) 19...fxe6 (19...cxd5 20.♗e5!?) 20.♗e5 (the black king seems to be in great danger without any piece to defend it, but fortunately White has not yet finished developing) 20...♗b4 (20...♕a6!?) 21.0-0 ♗c4! (21...cxd5? 22.♕f7+–) 22.♕g5!? ♗b6+ 23.♕h1 ♗xe5 24.♗xe5 exd5! 25.♗ab1 ♗a6 26.♖e7 ♗h3! (the only and nice move that saves Black) 27.♖f7+ (27.♗f7 ♗d7=) 27...♗h8 28.♖f6+ ♗g8 29.♗f7+ ♗h8 30.♖f6+ ♗g8 ½-½ Kaidanov-Peng Xiaomin, Seattle 2001. A great game, but it seems that White’s attack was not enough to checkmate the black king. So, White can try the novelty 17.h3!?, avoiding forcing play.

15.♕f2!? With the purpose of preparing an attack on the dark squares.

**WEAPON:** Another possibility is to play 15.d6!?

15...cxd4 16.dxe7 with a complicated ending: 16...♗e8 17.♗d5 ♗xd5 18.exd5

**TRICK:** 18...♗xe7? 19.b4! ♗f5 (19...♗xe5+ 20.♗d2+) 20.♗f3! ♗e4 21.♗f2 ♗c8 22.d6!+. The d6-pawn
is going to be very strong, Sakalauskas-Avronk, Bled 2002; 18...f5! 19.d6!? (if 19...f2, 19...xe7!++; and 20...c8!).

An interesting position for analysing. 19...e4 20.b5! c6 and now 21.f3 (or even 21.xc6!? bxc6 22.f3 xf3 23.f1!++;) 21...xf3 22.0-0 g4 23.f4 d7 Gleizerov-Yandemirov, Cappelle-la-Grande 2004. The computer gives equality, but White can still try a few practical options.

15...ac4

16.xc4
Taking up the development of his pieces.
16.0-0 e4 17.e2∞ Dziuba-Ksieski, Lublin 2009.
16...xc4 17.f3 g4 18.d6? 18.0-0 is too slow: 18.xf3 19.xf3 xe5! blocks the position, Ingbrandt-Hellers, Sweden tt 1992/93.
18.e6 19.d5!
The last practical attempt to fight for the initiative, although Black has enough defensive resources.
19.xf3 20.xf3 xe5
20...xe5!? 21.c3 xd6 22.0-0-0∞.
21.0-0 ♦xd6?
White was better prepared for this game.
21...♔h8!∞; 21...f5 22.exf5.

Chess TRICK: 21...♖ad8?! 22.♘f6+ ♔g7 23.♘ad1 ♖xd6 24.♘d7!±.
22.♘f6+ ♔g7 23.♘ad1!±
Now White keeps a dangerous initiative.
23...♖ad8
23...♗b5 24.♗d7!±.
24.♗d5! ♔e6
Or, for example, 24...♕xb2 25.♖f2 ♔a1+ 26.♖g2 h6 27.♖f4++. 25.♗c3!++
The black king has got into trouble.
25...♔h6 26.♖f4 ♗g5 27.♗g4+ ♔h5 28.♖g7! 1-0
After 8.f4, Black can equalize the game, but he needs to keep all those precise moves in his head (or to find them over the board).

Games 41 and 42: two solid moves – 8.♗e2 and 8.♗b5

Game 41 – 8.♗e2
Yuri Razuvaev
Mikhail Steinberg
Vilnius 1971

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.♗d2

PUZZLE: Curiously, in the real game there occurred a rare transposition: 5.e4 ♗b6 6.h3 ♗g7 7.♗f3 0-0 8.♗e2 ♗c6 9.e5 ♗e6 10.0-0 ♖d7 11.♗e3 – see the same position after the move 12.0-0.
5...♗g7 6.e4 ♗b6 7.♗e3 0-0 8.♗e2? 1-0
White prepares 9.♗f3, which was a favourite weapon of Viktor Kortchnoi in this line.
GM Yuri Razuvaev (1945–2012) found the right plan: 13.♕c1!? – although his game came from a mysterious transposition.

8...♘c6

**WEAPON:** Black can try 8...e5 9.d5 (two quieter moves hardly allow White to get a serious advantage:
9.dxe5 ♘xd1+ (9...♗xe5 10.♕c2!!) 10.♖xd1 ♗xe5 11.♗f3 ♘f3 exd4! 10.♗xd4 ♘8d7 (10...e7!? 11.♗c2!? ♘e5 12.0-0-0!) 9...c6 10.♗b3!? (White is going to take control of the centre; 10.h4!!) 10...cxd5 11.exd5 e4!? (taking advantage of White’s poor development; 11...♗a6 12.h4!!).

**TRICK:** White has 12.h4!!N (instead of the solid 12.♖d1 ♘a6 ⇆ Kortchnoi-Svidler, Dos Hermanas 1999) 12...♗xc3+? (12...♗e5 13.h5!) 12...♗a6 13.♗h3!!) 13.bxc3 ♘xd5? 14.♗xb6!, winning a piece;

**WEAPON:** After 8...f5?! White has two strong ideas:

A) 9.exf5?! ♘xf5 10.♗b3+ ♘h8 11.g4! ♘d7 12.h4! ♘c6 13.♖h3 Van Hoolandt-Conquest, Novi Sad 2009;
B) 9.♗b3+!? ♘h8 10.♖f3 ♘f4 11.♖d2 ♘c6 12.d5 ♘e5 13.♖xe5 ♘xe5 14.♗b5+ and 15.♘c3.

9.♗f3


9...♗g4!

The main defence.

After 9...e5?! 10.d5 ♘e7 the position is strategically winning for White: 11.♘c5!? (11.a4?!) 11...♗g4 12.♗b3±
10.e5!?

An alternative idea to defend d4.

**WEAPON:** The old advance 10.d5 is still playable: 10...xf3

A) After 11.gxf3 White has many weaknesses: 11...a5! One of the rare occasions when a knight is better placed at the edge of the board than in the centre! (11...e5?! allows 12.b3!): 12.d4 d6! 13.xg7 xg7 Kortchnoi-Kasparov, Wijk aan Zee 2000. This game produced a strong blow to 11.gxf3;

B) 11.xf3!? is not ambitious but does contain some poison: 11.e5 12.e2 ec4!

10...d7!?

After 10...b4 11.0-0 d5 12.h3 White scored 5½ out of 7 games.

11.h3 e6

**WEAPON:** 11.xf3 12.xf3 d8 13.e2
13... c4 (13... b4 14.0-0 d5 15. b3 c6 (M.Brown-Yip, Philadelphia 2017) and now 16. d2!±) 14.0-0 (14. c1!? 14... b4 15. b3 (15. g5!) 15... xe3 16. fxe3± Solomon-Migliorini, Bergamo 2014.

12.0-0!? There are only three games with this position.

**WEAPON:** 12. e4!? ad8 13. c5 c8 14. xe6 xe6 (Shirov-A.Spielmann, St Petersburg 2012) 15. c2!?

12... fd8?! A) Better is 12... ad8 13. c1!? as in the main game; B) 12... f5?! (Schellig-Korte, Germany tt 2008/09) 13. d2!?±.

13. c1!? Preparing d1 and h6. White’s set-up is stronger.

13... c4 13... f6 14. d1!?

14. xc4 xc4 15. d1 ac8 15... xe3 16. fxe3±

16. h6!±
16... h8? 17.b3
17... a4!?.
17... b6 18.e4 e8 19.c5 b8 20.c2
20.h4!?.
20... e6 21.ac1
21.e4+–.
21... d5 22.g5 ce7 23.a3 g7 24.b4 dc8 25.d2 b6 26.h2 d7 27.e4 d5 28.g4+–
A great strategic lesson by a GM of the Russian school.
28... a8 29.e2 f8 30.f3 h6 31.d2 h7 32.h4 ab8 33.g3 e7 34.gf6+ xf6 35.exf6 f5 36.f4 d8 37.e5
f8 38.h5 gxh5 39.xh5 d7 40.g4 d5 41.xf7+ 1-0
The natural move 8.e2 can be useful for the next 10 years, without the evaluation changing: because of its solidity, White is slightly better.

Game 42 – 8.b5
Viktor Moskalenko

Petri Kekki

Villa Salou 2006 (3)
The classical masters of the past would have hardly considered placing the bishop here. Fashion comes and goes: this somewhat artificial-looking move appeared in practice only in 2001 and since then it became amazingly popular. White’s idea is to prevent Black from placing the knight on c6. 8...a6 weakens the knight on b6 a bit.

8...c6

**WEAPON:** Here is a possible variation where White is using the drawbacks of the advance: 8...a6 9.e2

A) If 9...f5, White can continue with two ideas we have also seen in Game 41 above (see the line 8...f5): 10.exf5!? (or 10.b3!? h8 11.f3! etc.) 10...xf5 11.b3+ h8 12.g4! d7 13.h4! c6 14.h3! g2 15.h2 d5 16.xd5 xd5 17.f3! and 18...h5!

B) 9.c6 10.d5 e5 11.d4 c5 12.xc5 ec4
13. ♗b3! and with the pawn on a7 Black would take on b2 followed by ... ♖a4. Here this is not possible; after 13... ♖xb2? 14. ♗xb6 ♕xc3+ 15. ♕f1! Black would be in trouble.

**WEAPON:** After the immediate 8... ♖c6 there is the flexible 9. ♗ge2!, not allowing ... ♗g4: 9... d6 (9... a5 10.b3) 10.0-0! ♖d8 (10... a6 11. ♗xc6=) 11.e5 ♕d7 12.f4!?±


This position is familiar to us, also with the bishop on e2 (Game 41): 10... fxe4 (10... f4 11. ♗d2=) 11. ♗g5 c6 (Vorontsov-Puranik, Philadelphia 2018) 12. ♗c4! with initiative;

**WEAPON:** Finally, a logical idea is 8... ♗e6!? – so played the great Magnus.
9. ♘f3!? (Black is OK after 9. ♘ge2 c6! 10. ♘d3 ♘c4 11. ♘xc4 ♘xc4 Wang Yue-Carlsen, Medias 2010, but maybe it is time for 9.h4!? c6 10. ♘e2 ♘c4 11. ♘xc4 ♘xc4 12.h5∞ N.Anand-Rohan, Abu Dhabi 2015) 9... ♘g4?! Black even loses a tempo to play this (9... ♘c4 10. ♘xc4 ♘xc4 11. ♗a4! allows White to castle queenside: 11... ♗a6 12.h4↑; 9... ♘c4 10. ♘xc4 ♘xc4 11. ♗b3 ♗xe3 12.fxe3= Najer-Kudrin, Philadelphia 2007). 10.e5!?

The position is close to equal. 10... ♘d5!? (10...c6 11. ♗e2 ♘d5 12. ♘xd5 cxd5 13.0-0 ♘c6 14. ♗e1!? (14.h3!?)) 14... ♘xe2 15. ♘xe2 ♘d5 16. ♘h3 ♘e6 12.0-0 c6 13. ♘d3 ♗c5 14. ♗e4 cxd4 15. ♘xd4 ♘c6= David Bordier-Bobel, ICCF email 2017.

9. ♗e2!
9...e6
Intending to use the c4-square for one of the black pieces.

WEAPON: 9...e5 10.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 11.♖xd1 ♖xe5 12.♘f3 (12.h4!?N) 12...♗xc3+ 13.bxc3

10.♘f3
10.h4!? is the same idea as 13.h4!? in the Weapon with 8...f5.

10...♗c4
WEAPON: 10...c4 11.♖c1! b5 12.h3!?= Marklund-Eksmyr, Sweden tt 2011/12.

11.0-0
11.h4!? is still interesting.

11...♗d7
A critical situation. My plan was to take solid control through the centre.

12.b3
12.a4!?; 12.♗c2!?

12...♗xe2 13.♗xe2 e5 14.♖ad1 exd4
Otherwise 14...♕e7 15.d5=.

15.♗xd4?! ♕e7
15...♗xd4 16.♖xd4!? (16.♖xd4=) 16...♕e7 17.♖d1=
16. ♘xg7 ♕xg7

17.e5

**WEAPON:** 17. ♘d4!? ♖e8 18.f4! ♘f6 19.e5 (19.♗f2!?) 19...fd5 (Pustovoitova-Przezdziecka, Yerevan 2015) 20.♗xd5 ♘xd5 21.♖e1!! and f4-f5.

17...♖ae8 18.♖fe1

18...♗b4?
This queen outing allows White to finish the game effectively.
18...♗c5 19.♗e3!? (19.h4!?).

19.♗b2!
With an eye to the king on g7.

19...f6
19...f5 20.♖d4 ♖e7 21.b4±.

20.♖d4!±
Black’s most important pieces (queen and king) get into trouble.

20...♛a5
20...♛e7 21.exf6+ ♞xf6 22.♗e4+-; 20...c5 21.b4!+-.

21.b4! ♛a6 22.exf6+ ♞xf6 23.♖xe8 ♞xe8
23...♕xe8 24.♖e4+-.

24.♗e4 ♕g8 25.♘c5 ♖b5 26.a4! 1-0
The ambitious move 8...♗b5 is another cartridge in your Weapons box, so keep it in stock!

Games 43 and 44: a creative idea – 8.h3!?

Game 43 – 8/9...f5
Viktor Moskalenko

2591

Daniel Pulvett

2303

Badalona 2011 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♗d2 ♗g7 6.e4 ♘b6 7.♗e3 0-0 8.h3!? 
This preventive move has its pros and cons. Instead of developing the bishop (see Games 41 and 42), White leisurely prepares 9.♗f3. However, the assessment of this option depends on the strength of Black’s two dynamic resources: 8...f5 or 8...e5.
8...c6
Preparing one of the mentioned advances (sometimes this simply transposes). In this game we will consider all the possibilities of the counter-break 8/9...f5.
For the alternative 8...e5!?, see Game 44 below.

**WEAPON:** 8...f5!? 9.exf5!? (9.♘f3!? f4 (9...c6 10.exf5, see main game) 10.c1 c6 11.e5!? (the idea is to box in the bishop on g7) 11...e6 12.b3!∞) 9...xf5 10.f3 d6!? (10...c6 11.b3+, see main game) 11.d3± Leite-Ainutdinov, ICCF email 2015.

9.♘f3 f5
For 9...e5 see Game 44 below.

10.exf5! ♖xf5
The main move. But luckily, I had already played this position once. With home analysis, I had discovered a precise move order that leads to a clear advantage for White. And it worked perfectly in this game.

**WEAPON:** 10...gxf5 may be the best chance for Black:

11.♗b3+!? e6 (11...♔h8?! 12.d5! ♕e5 13.♕xe5 ♙xe5 14.f4 ♕f6 15.0-0-0 ♘e8 16.g4± Zsinka-Karacsony, Hungary tt 2010/11) 12.♖d1 f4 13.♗c1 ♔h8 14.♗b5!? ♘xd4 (14...♗d7 15.0-0 a6 16.♗e2 ♘e7 17.♗f1± V.Aleksandrov-De Waard, ICCF email 2013)
15. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{xd4 \textdaggerdbl xd4} \) 16. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{e2 e5} \) 17. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{xd4 exd4} \) 18.0-0 c6 19. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{d3 \textdaggerdbl} \). White has initiative for a pawn, Belanoff-Doren, ICCF email 2012.

11. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{b3+! \textdaggerdbl h8} \)

11...e6?! 12.g4! \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{c2} \) 13. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{xc2 \texttt{xf3}} \) 14. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{e4 (14.0-0-0!?)} \) 14... \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{f7} \) 15.0-0-0 \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{d6} \) 16.h4 \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{Sanchez Carol-Schuller, ICCF email 2010.} \)

12.d5! \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{e5} \) 13. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{xe5!} \)

This was a nasty surprise for my opponent. Previously I had won a game after 13. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{d4 \textdaggerdbl d6?} \) (later I found 13...a5!? with the idea 14. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{d1 a4} \) 15. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{b4 \textdaggerdbl d6=} \) and so I decided to change my 13th move for the next game) 14. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{d1! \textdaggerdbl f6} \) 15. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{e2 \texttt{ad8} 16.0-0 \texttt{h4} 17. \texttt{xf5 \textdaggerdbl xf5} 18.f4+} \) Moskalenko-Jerez Perez, Sabadell 2010.

13... \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{xe5} \) 14. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{d1!} \)

White’s position has a big potential advantage: very soon the f- and g-pawns will rush into the attack.

14.g4!?.

14... \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{d6} \)

14...e6 15.g4!.

15.g4! \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{d7} \) 16. \( \texttt{\textdaggerdbl} \texttt{g2 \textdaggerdbl f6} \)
16...a5 17.0-0! a4 18.♗c2 ♘c4 19.♗h6+–.
17.0-0
The rest is almost automatic.

17...g5
Trying to prevent f2-f4.

Some other examples:
A) 17...e6 18.f4 ♖xc3 19.bxc3 ♘g8 20.♗d4+–;
B) 17...♗f4 18.♘d4 ♘e5 19.♗e4 ♘g7 20.♗xe5 ♘xe5 21.♗c5+– Akesson-Carlhammar, Sweden tt 2008/09.

18.♗e4 ♗g7
Or 18...♗g6 19.♕xg5!? ♙a4 20.♗b4+–.

19.♕xg5! ♙a4 20.♗d3 ♘xd1 21.♗xd1+–
The black fortress is hopelessly destroyed.

21...♖xb2 22.♗e6 ♕f7 23.♗c2 ♕f6 24.g5! ♕e5 25.f4 ♕d6 26.♗e4 ♕g8
26...c5 27.♗c1+–.

27.g6 hxg6 28.♘xg6 ♕f6 29.♗d4 ♕h4 30.♗g2 ♕h6 31.♖e8+!
Black resigned.

This game helped to show the potency of the move 8.h3, especially against such a sharp resource as ...f7-f5.
However, in the next game we will have even sharper battles, connected with advancing the black e-pawn.

Game 44 – 8/9...e5
Markus Ragger

Alexander Grischuk

Warsaw Ech tt 2013 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♗d2

PUZZLE: In this game Black initially decided to play the variation with the early move
5...♗b6
instead of 5...♗g7 6.e4 ♘b6.
However:

6.e4!?
An ingenious gambit, as a way to force Black to come back to the variation 6...♗b6. If this works, you can even ignore the last games of the chapter (5...♗b6).
For the main answers 6.♗f4, 6.♗g5, 6.♗f3 and 6.e3 see Games 45-48 below.
Grischuk refuses to take the pawn on d4. This is a good sign.

**WEAPON:** After 6...\(\text{cxd4}\) 7.\(\text{c2!}\)? White gains long-term compensation, but perhaps not enough for a clear advantage: 7...\(\text{xd8}\) (7...\(\text{c6}\)?! 8.\(\text{e3 d8}\) 9.\(\text{d1 d7}\) 10.\(\text{f3 g7}\) 11.\(\text{e2 0-0}\) 12.h4\(\text{Mamedyarov-Safarli, Nakhchivan 2016}\)) 8.d1 c6 9.b5 d7 10.f4 (10.f3?!?) 10...g7 11.xc6 bxc6 12.f3\(\text{Kuzubov-Vocaturo, Benasque 2016}\).

7.\(\text{e3 0-0}\) 8.h3 e5?  
Comparing this with 8...f5 (Game 43), here Black tries to get quick counterplay by opening the centre, which leads to simplifications, and even the exchange of queens. In case of 9.d5, he immediately attacks the centre.

**WEAPON:** To insert 8...\(\text{c6?!}\) would be a mistake: 9.f3 e5?! 10.d5! (winning an important tempo on the knight) 10...\(\text{e7}\) (10...\(\text{b8}\) 11.a4!) 11.a4! \(\text{d7}\) (after 11...a5 12.b3! Black cannot play ...c7-c6) 12.b3 (12.\(\text{d3?!}\) 12...\(\text{bc8}\) (12...a5? 13.d6!) 13.\(\text{xb7}\) (taking the pawn is not the only way: 13.e2!? \(\text{d6}\) 14.0-0\(\text{e7}\) 15.e2!\(\text{d3}\)! 16.d6\(\text{d6}\) 17.\(\text{g5}\) fxe4 18.b5 \(\text{ef5}\) 19.e6 \(\text{xe6}\) 18.dxe6 \(\text{e7}\) 19.0-0 \(\text{d4}\) 20.\(\text{d5}\))

9.d5?!  
White refuses the simplifications, going for a tough fight in the middlegame. The pawn structure has changed from the Grünfeld towards the King’s Indian Defence. Instead, White has two calmer, less risky options:
A) 9.\textit{f3} exd4 10.\textit{xd4} \textit{c6}?! (10...\textit{xd4}!? 11.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 12.\textit{xd4} = \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} Bronznik-Sulypa, Elancourt 2004) 11.\textit{xd7} \textit{xg7} 12.\textit{xd1} \textit{xg7} 13.\textit{b5} \textit{d8} 14.0-0 \textit{c6} 15.\textit{e2} \textit{e6} = Ulybin-Cori Tello, Montcada 2013;

B) 9.dxe5!? is a bit more challenging: 9...\textit{bxe5} (9...\textit{xd1}+ 10.\textit{xd1} \textit{xe5} 11.\textit{ge2}?! \textit{c6} 12.f4 Xu Yinglun-Wei Yi, Shenzhen rapid 2016) 10.\textit{f3} (10.\textit{c2}!?, keeping the queens: 10...\textit{c6} 11.\textit{f3} \textit{g7} 12.\textit{d1} \textit{e7} 13.\textit{e2} \textit{e6} 14.0-0= Abasov-Puranik, Pune 2014) 10...\textit{g7} (10...\textit{xd1}+!? 11.\textit{xd1} \textit{xc3}+ 12.bxc3 \textit{e6} Wanger-Darazs, Budapest 2012)

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

11.\textit{c1}?! \textit{e7} 12.\textit{e2} \textit{e8} 13.0-0= With the queens on the board White still has good chances for an attack,

GM Markus Ragger: a good game – but an unlucky day.

9...c6!

Any delay is extremely dangerous for Black. For example: 9...f5? 10.♘f3 (10.a4!?; 10.♗b3!? 10...c6 (10...♗d7? 11.♗g5+– Lodici-Vesce, Trieste 2014) 11.a4 fxe4 12.♗g5†.

10.♗b3!? cxd5 11.exd5

This can be considered the critical position of this line. Surprisingly, it is not often reached in actual practice. However, with a deeper look, there are plenty of hidden resources for White.

11...e4

A typical resource in this line.

**WEAPON:** 11...♘a6!? is the main (and flexible) answer: 12.♖d1 (here, for example, I found 12.♗f3!?N e4 13.♗g5!? ♕e8 (13...♗xc3+ 14.bxc3 h6 (14...♗xd5? 15.♗d1†) 15.♗xe4 ♕e8 16.f3 16...f5? 17.♗b5+–) 14.d6 ♕e6 15.♗xe6 ♕xe6 16.♗b5 ♕f8 17.0-0-0! ♕xd6 18.♗b1 ♕e8) 12...e4!? (12...♗d7!? 13.♗f3 (13.♗b5 ♕c8∞) 13...e4 14.♗g5!?N) 13.♗ge2!? ♕d7 14.♗f4! ♕e8

15.♗e2 (15.♗b5!?; 15.d6!? ♕e5 16.♗xa6 bx a6 17.0-0∞) 15...♗c8 16.♗a3 ♕c4? (16...♗a4?∞) 17.♗xc4 ♕xc4 18.0-0 ♕c8 19.d6 ♕e5 20.♗d5+– Hambleton-Kleinman, Ottawa 2013;
**WEAPON:** 11...♘d8? is a bit slow. 12.b5!? (12.f3 e4→) 12...f6 (12...f5 13.f3±) 13.d1!? 13.c5 e4∞ Hannesson-Peetoom, ICCF email 2014) 13.e4 14.ge2 a6 15.a4 ♘xa4 16.xa4 b5 17.c5±.

12.♖d1

**WEAPON/PUZZLE:** 12.ge2!? a6 13.d1 e8 14.f4! transposes to 11...a6.

12...♘d8

12...a6, 13.ge2! again – 11...a6.

13.ge2 e5 14.d4

**WEAPON:** As in the above lines the f4-square is probably better for the knight: 14.f4!? f5 15.e2 c8 16.0-0 ec4 17.xc4 xc4 18.d6

14...♖e8?

This seemingly natural move in fact loses an important tempo. Black does not sense the dynamics and immediately falls into a bad position. However, in such a complex situation, mistakes will inevitably follow on both sides. 14...h4!? 15.e2∞.
15. \( b5 \) \( d3+ \)

\[ \text{TRICK:} \]

15... \( d7? \) 16. \( e6! \) clearly favours White.

16. \( xd3 \)

Better was 16. \( xd3! \) exd3 17. \( xe8 \) xe8 18.0-0 \( d7 \) 19. \( d1 \) with a clear advantage.

16...exd3

16... \( xd4!? \) 17. \( xd4 \) exd3+ 18. \( f1 \) e7=\( \triangleright \).

17. \( xd3 \) \( h4 \) 18.0-0+–

18... \( xh3!? \)

The only practical chance to continue the struggle.

19. \( gh3 \) \( xe3?! \)

19... \( xh3 \) 20. \( d1 \) c4 21. \( f4+–. \)

20. \( f3! \) \( xf3 \) 21. \( xf3 \) \( c4 \) 22. \( xb7 \) f8 23. \( d1 \) h5 24. \( d6 \) d2 25. \( g2 \)

25. \( xd2!? \) g5+ 26. \( f1 \) xd2 27.d7+–.

25... \( xf3 \) 26. \( xf3 \) g5+ 27. \( g4 \) c5 28.d7 \( d8 \)

Here the story could have ended. It’s time for Black to surrender. But the opponents, in a fierce turmoil, first played it out to an equal position, and then GM Ragger had a complete hallucination and made a big blunder in one move... enjoy!
29. ♗e4 ♗f8 30. ♖d5 ♗c6 31. ♗b4+ ♗g8 32. ♗b5 ♗e6 33. ♗d3 ♗f8 34. ♗d6 ♗e5 35. ♗e4 ♘xb2 36. ♗c5 ♘e5 37. ♗d5 ♗c7 38. ♗f3 ♗b6 39. ♗e4 ♗h6 40. ♗c3 ♗e6 41. ♗c5+ ♗g7 42. ♗d4+ ♗f8 43. ♗f6 ♗b6 44. ♗h4 ♗g7 45. ♗d6? ♗f5 46. ♗e8+ ♗f8 47. ♗xh6+ ♗e7 48. ♗f6?? ♗d7 49. ♗e8+ ♗f7 50. ♗d7 ♗xe8 1-0

Regarding the option 8.h3!? e5!?: if you are not afraid of a heartattack, then play 9.d5 !
Otherwise, look for a slight advantage after 9.dxe5!?, but still try to keep the queens on the board for a possible attack...

Good luck!

Games 45-48: 5... ♗b6 (white ideas: ♗f4, ♗g5, ♗f3/e2-e3 and e2-e3/fl2-f4)

Game 45 – 6/7. ♗f4 (also 6. ♗f3 and 7. ♗c1)

Viktor Moskalenko 2543

Sebastien Midoux 2343

Medes 2006 (2)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♗c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5. ♗f3 d6 6. ♗f3!

A flexible move, defending d4.

6.e4 – Game 44; 6. ♗g5 – Game 46; 6.e3 – Games 47 and 48.

 WEAPON: The direct 6. ♗f4

6... ♗g7 and 7.e3 (7. ♗f3!? is the main game) eventually leads to an equal position, but Black needs to play accurately: 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♗xd1+ 10. ♗xd1 ♗d7 (10... ♗a4?? 11. ♗b5+) 11. ♗b5 a6!? (11... ♗c6!? 12. ♗f3 a6 (12... ♗xc5 13. ♖e5 ♗d7 14. ♗d5! Arutinian-Kanarek, Rijeka 2010) 13. ♗xc6 bxc6 14. ♗c7 0-0 15. ♗d4 ♗xc5 16. ♗xc6 ♗e8 17. ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 18. ♗d6 ♗b7 19. ♗xc5± Bajarani-Gupta, Nakhchivan 2015) 12. a4 ♗c6 (12...f6? 13.e4!? ♗c6 14. ♗e3±) 13. ♗c7 0-0 14. ♗b6 ♗ce5 (14... ♗xb6?! 15.cxb6 ♗a5 16. ♗f3 ♗c4=) 15. ♗d4 (15. ♗f3 ♗xb6 16.cxb6 ♗c4= A.Muzychuk-Bok, Wijk aan Zee 2010) 15... ♗xb6 16.cxb6 ♗e6 17. ♗f3 ♗xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♗xa2 19. ♗d7 ♗fc8= Sachdev-L.Schut, Wijk aan Zee 2012.

6... ♗g7
7. ♖f4!?  
**WEAPON:** White can also consider 7. ♕c1!? 0-0 (7... ♖c6 8. ♖h6!) 8. ♖h6 ♖g4 9. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 10.e3 (10. ♖f4 ♖xf3 11. ♖xf3 (11.gxf3 ♖d6= Khenkin-Leko, Dortmund 2013) 11... ♖xd4 (11... ♖c6?! 12.e3= I.Sokolov-Khusnutdinov, Jakarta 2013) 12.♖xb7 ♖8d7∞) 10... ♖d7 11.♖e2 ♖c5 12.dxc5 ♖xc5 13.0-0 ♖c8 14.♖d1= Hambleton-Balaji, England 4NCL 2013/14.

7...c5  
This is a slightly premature advance – now the ending is favourable for White.  
**WEAPON:** The main move is 7...0-0!?: 8.e3 and now:

A) 8... ♖g4 9.♖e2 ♖8d7 10.0-0 ♖c6 11.♖g3= Babula-Bernasek, Ostrava 2010;  
B) 8...♖c6 9.♖c1 (9.♖b5?!) 9...♖e6 10.♖e2 ♖d5 11.♖g3 ♖xc3 12.bxc3= Derichs-Vidonyak, Germany tt 2001/02;  
C) Maybe 8...♖e6!? 9.♖e2 ♖c5 10.dxc5 ♖6d7 11.♖d4 ♖xc5= A.Onischuk-Swiercz, St Louis 2018;  
D) Again, the advance 8...c5 is hasty: 9.dxc5
TRICK: 9...\textit{\textbf{xc}3+?!} leads to confusion for Black: 10.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{xd}1+} 11.\textit{\textbf{a}4??} (11...\textit{\textbf{d}6}7\textit{\textbf{d}6} 12.\textit{\textbf{h}6} ± 12.\textit{\textbf{h}6}+− Moskalenko-Vidarte Morales, Tenerife rapid 2004.

9...\textit{\textbf{d}6}7 10.\textit{\textbf{d}5}!? \textit{\textbf{xb}2} (10...e5 11.\textit{\textbf{g}3} \textit{\textbf{c}6} 12.\textit{\textbf{h}4}!\textit{\textbf{d}6}7; 11...0-0 12.\textit{\textbf{b}1} \textit{\textbf{g}7} 13.\textit{\textbf{b}5}↑ Dreev-Lalic, Croatia tt 2008.)

8.dxc5 \textit{\textbf{xc}3+} 9.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{xd}1+} 10.\textit{\textbf{d}1}

10...\textit{\textbf{a}4??} 11.\textit{\textbf{g}3}!\textit{\textbf{xc}5} (11...f6 12.\textit{\textbf{g}2} \textit{\textbf{xc}3} 13.\textit{\textbf{d}2} \textit{\textbf{c}6} 14.0-0 \textit{\textbf{e}4} 15.\textit{\textbf{c}2}± 11...0-0 12.\textit{\textbf{g}2} \textit{\textbf{xc}3} 13.\textit{\textbf{d}2}± Bachmann-Antoli Royo, Benasque 2014) 12.\textit{\textbf{d}4} f6 13.\textit{\textbf{e}3} b6 14.\textit{\textbf{b}5} \textit{\textbf{ba}6} 15.\textit{\textbf{a}5}\textit{\textbf{c}5} \textit{\textbf{b}7} 16.f3 bxc5 17.e4±

\textit{\textbf{e}3}?!±

Obviously, White’s position is more promising in this ending.

11...b6

11...\textit{\textbf{a}6}?! 12.c6! bxc6 13.\textit{\textbf{d}4}! (13.\textit{\textbf{g}3}?!).

12.cxb6

12.h4!?.

12.axb6 13.\textit{\textbf{d}2} \textit{\textbf{a}6} 14.\textit{\textbf{h}6}
14. g3! a6 15. g2 xa2 16. xa2 a6 17. d2

14...f6 15. g3
15. g4?.
15... b7
15... c4 16. g2±
16. g2 a6 17.0-0±

White will have an extra pawn until the end of the game.

17... ac5 18. e3
18. fd1!?; 18. b1.
26... e6 27. b1 hd8 28. c1 d4 29. xd4 xd4 30. d3 a6 31. b3! a7 32. b4+ c5 33. d5 xc4

34. b5+
34. xf6!?+–.
34... c6 35. xf6 f7 36. 5b4
36. d5?.
36... xb4 37. xb4 b5 38. g4 e7 39. b3 c5 40. f3 b4 41. f8 d5 42. b8 b7? 43. d8+ e6
44. \( \text{Re}8+ \text{Ka}f5?? \) 45. \( \text{Rx}e5+ \) 1-0

It’s checkmate on the next move.

Game 46 – 6/7. \( \text{Bg}5 \)Game 10
Anish Giri
Abhijeet Gupta

Wijk aan Zee 2009 (10)

1.d4 \( \text{Nf}6 \) 2.c4 \( \text{g}6 \) 3.\( \text{Nb}3 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 4.\( \text{cxd}5 \) \( \text{Nxd}5 \) 5.\( \text{Bd}2 \) \( \text{Nc}6 \) 6.\( \text{Bf}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 7.\( \text{Bg}5! \)

7.\( \text{c}1 \) is not necessary. White cannot prevent Black’s \( \ldots\text{c}7-\text{c}5 \) anyway: 7...\( \text{0-0} \) 8.\( \text{Bg}5 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 9.\( \text{Bf}4 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 10.\( \text{Bf}3 \) \( \text{g}5! \)

7...\( \text{0-0} \) 8.e3

---

A) 11.d5 \( \text{Bxc}3! \) 12.\( \text{Bx}c3 \) (12.Bxc3?! \( \text{Bxd}5 \) 12...\( \text{Bxd}5 \) 13.\( \text{Bxc}5 \) \( \text{Bf}6= \);

B) 11.\( \text{Bb}5? \) \( \text{cx}d4 \) 12.\( \text{fx}d4 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 13.\( \text{Bc}7 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 14.\( \text{Bxb}6 \) \( \text{axb}5\pm \) Priehoda-Sutovsky, Kaskady 2002;

C) 11.\( \text{dx}c5 \) \( \text{Bxc}3+ \) 12.\( \text{Bxc}3 \) \( \text{Bx}d1+ \) 13.\( \text{Bxd}1 \) \( \text{Bxa}4 \) 14.\( \text{Bc}1 \) \( \text{d}8+ \) 15.\( \text{Ke}1 \) \( \text{Bc}6? \) (15...\( \text{Bxb}2\pm \)) 16.\( \text{Bc}6\pm \) Ulybin-Ris, Hoogeveen 2010.

7...\( \text{0-0} \) 8.e3
8...h6
Black prepares 9...c5.

WEAPON: Immediately 8...c5!? is also possible and can transpose: 9.dxc5 ♘d6 10.♗e2 (the most solid. It may be interesting to try 10.♖c1!? ♘c6 11.♗d4!? (11.♗b5!? h6 12.♗h4 transposes to the main game) 11...h6 12.♗h4 g5 13.♗g3 ♘xc5 14.h4!? 10...c6 11.d4! h6 12.h4 g5 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♗g3 ♘xc5 15.♗c2! I. Sokolov-Leko, Dortmund 1999. White is a little better because of the pawns’ weaknesses;

WEAPON: 8...♗e6 9.♗e2 ♘8d7 10.e4!?N;

WEAPON: 8...♘c6?! 9.♗b5 (9.♗e2!?) 9...a5 10.0-0 ♗e6 11.♗e4= Dreev-Kristjansson, Gothenburg 2005.

9.♗h4

PUZZLE: 9.♗f4!? transposes to the previous game, but with the black pawn on h6.

9...c5 10.dxc5 ♘6d7 11.♖c1

WEAPON: 11.♗b5!?

11...g5 12.g3 ♘a5 13.♗d4! (13.0-0 Pytel-Bapst, Rennes 2011) 13...xcd5 14.0-0±.

11...c6 12.♗b5? 
For 12.♗d4!? see 11.♗d4 in the Weapon above starting with 8...c5!?.

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12...♘xc5 13.0-0 g5 14.g3
With a slight advantage for White.

14...♗f5?!
Oddly enough, this is possibly a decisive mistake.

**WEAPON:** 14...e6 15.♗xc6 (15.♕e2!?; 15.h4!?) 15...bxc6 16.♘d4=Dreev-Sutovsky, Russia tt 2005;

**WEAPON:** 14...d7 15.h4!? (15.♘d5 ♘e4 16.♗c7=Gleizerov-Voitsekhovsky, Barlinek 2002) 15...g4
(15...a6 16.♗xc6 ♘xc6 17.♗d4=) 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♗e5=;

**WEAPON:** 14...♗b6!? may be the best option for Black: 15.♕e2 (15.a4!?) 15...♕xc3?! (15...♗d8!?)

15.♗d5= ♘xd5 16.♗xd5

Young talent Anish Giri: a nice technical win with the precise move 7.♗g5!?.
With a clear initiative in the endgame.

16...♘d3?
Black collapses immediately.

But 16...e6 is also hopeless: 17.♗xc6 (17.♖xc5=$) 17...exd5 18.♗xd5 ♘d3 (18...♗e4 19.♗e5 Timoscenko-Rogulj, Jesolo 1999) 19.c7 ♖ad8 20.♗xb7+– Ionov-Colovic, Paide 1999.

17.♗xc6 ♘xc1 18.♖xc1

White has a decisive advantage, and Black resigned on move 36.

In conclusion – Games 45 and 46 (6/7.♗f4 or 7.♗g5)
I can say that Black’s main opening resource ...c7-c5 doesn’t exactly equalize, but as always it gives Black an active game, especially for the bishop on g7 and the other light pieces. On the other hand, White temporarily has an extra pawn and several options to maintain pressure in the position, and so has to be somewhat better.
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♗d2 ♘b6 6.e3!?  
Much more often White continues 6.♗g5 or 6.♘f3. Or 6.♗f3 ♘g7 7.e3 would be the same.

6...♗g7 7.♘f3  
This modest-looking set-up is mainly directed against ...c7-c5. Black is almost forced to play ...e7-e5.  
7.f4 – Game 48.

7...0-0  
For example: 7...c5?! 8.dxc5 ♘d7 9.♘a4!  
**WEAPON:** 7...♗d7 8.a4!? (8.e4!?) 8...a5 (Peptan-Deac, Medias rapid 2016) 9.e4!?. This is the point! ...c7-c5 will now weaken the b5-square.

8.♗e2!?  
I found many games with 8.♖c1 but the benefits of this move aren’t clear: 8...♘c6! (8...♗d7?! 9.a4! a5 10.e4! Topalov-Cheparinov, Sofia 2008) 9.♗b5 e5!? is definitely more active: 10.♗xc6 exd4=Gleizerov-P.Nielsen, Køge 2013.

8...♗c6!?  
With the idea 9...e5.

A) 8...c5? is still not working: 9.dxc5 ♘6d7 10.♗a4++;  
B) 8...♗d7 is too slow: 9.a4!? a5 10.e4 c5 11.d5 f5 12.exf5 ♖xf5 13.0-0++.  

9.0-0 e5 10.♗xe5 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♖xe5 12.♗c2!? ♕f5?  
An impulsive move, which helps White to win an important tempo and thereby develop an attack.

**WEAPON:** 12...c6!? (probably the most flexible set-up for Black) 13.♗d1 ♘e7 14.e4 ♘e6 15.♗e3 ♖d8 (with a roughly equal position in Tunik-Timofeev, Taganrog 2016) 16.f4!??;  

**WEAPON:** 12...♗e7?! 13.e4 ♘e6 (13...♗e8 14.f4!?) 14.f4 ♗g7 (Naumkin-Pribyl, Germany Bundesliga B 1999/2000) 15.f5!±.

13.e4 ♕e6 14.♗ad1  
14.f4!? ♖d4+ 15.♗h1 f5 16.♗ad1 ♘e7 17.♗b5 ♘c5 18.♗c3?!±.
14...c6 15.f4 g7?
15...d4+ 16.h1 e7 17.f5†.

16.f5!±
In a devastating style, similar to the Four Pawns Attack (Chapter 1).
16...c4 17.f4 c8 18.d6 e8 19.f6! h6 20.e5 xe2 21.xe2 e6 22.e4 22.b3!?
22...d7 23.e7 xe7 24.fxe7
Black resigned.

Game 48 – 6.e3 and 7.f4
Rustam Kasimdzhanov
Peter Svidler
2705
2739
Tbilisi 2015 (5)

1.d4 f6 2.c4 g6 3.c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.d2 b6 6.e3 g7 7.f4

An interesting recent approach to fight the Grünfeld. White prevents ...e7-e5 at all costs, but he is of course still vulnerable to ...c7-c5.
7...0-0
7...c5!? 8.dxc5 GNUC6d7 9.GNUCe4!? – 8...c5.

8.GNUCf3 GNUCg4

**WEAPON:** 8...c5!? 9.dxc5 GNUC6d7. If Black recaptures the sacrificed pawn without making concessions he should be doing more than fine, so for the moment White is trying to keep his extra pawn: 10.GNUCe4!? (this can lead to double-edged play. 10.GNUCa4!? is also interesting: 10...e5 (10...b6!? 11.GNUCc3!?) 11.GNUCc4 exf4 12.0-0! GNUCe7 13.exf4 GNUCxc5 14.GNUCb4 b6 (Gleizerov-Uzunoglu, Serik 2017) 15.GNUCe1! GNUCc7 16.GNUCe5↑) 10...GNUCxb2 11.GNUCb1 GNUCg7 12.GNUCc4 (12.GNUCc2 GNUCc7↑ Kurbonboeva-Khusenkhojaev, Tashkent 2018)

![analysis diagram]

12...GNUCc7 (12...GNUCa6!? may be safer: 13.GNUCxa6 bxa6 14.GNUCc1 GNUCb8!? 15.0-0 GNUCd5 16.GNUCf2 GNUCc6 (16...GNUCb7 17.GNUCc2!? GNUCc8 18.GNUCe4 GNUCc6 19.GNUCfd1± Grandelius-Tari, Oslo 2015) 17.GNUCa4 GNUCb8 18.GNUCfd1 GNUCb2 19.GNUCe4 GNUCe6= Scott-Leon Cazares, London 2018) 13.GNUCfg5!? (13.GNUCb3 GNUCa6! (13...GNUCe6!? 14.0-0↑ Gunina-Lagno, Warsaw 2013) 14.GNUCxf7+ GNUCxf7! where either 15.GNUCfg5 or 15.GNUCeg5 are answered by 15...GNUCe6!)

![analysis diagram]

13.GNUCf6 (13...GNUCa6 14.GNUCxf7!?)) 14.GNUCb3! with plenty of tactics;

**WEAPON:** 8...GNUCd7 9.e4 GNUCb8!? 10.GNUCe3 GNUCg4 11.GNUCe2 GNUCc6 12.d5 GNUCxf3 (12...GNUCa5 13.GNUCe5!??) 13.gGNUCxf3
\[ a5 \ 14. b4 d6 (14...c5?! 15. \text{h}xg7 \text{h}8xg7 16. \text{h}5 \text{h}5 17. \text{b}d3\pm) 15. \text{b}4 \text{c}4 16. \text{d}xc4 \text{d}xc4 17. \text{d}b3 \text{d}6 18. \text{e}2\pm. \]

\[ 9. \text{h}3 \text{xf}3 10. \text{xf}3 \]

It is very well possible that this position is already won for White.

\[ 10...\text{d}8d7 \]

**WEAPON:** \[ 10...c6? 11. \text{h}4! (when your opponent waives counterplay in the centre, it is time for a flank attack!) 11...\text{d}8d7 12. \text{h}5+- Svidler-Gelfand, London 2013. \]

\[ 11.0-0-0?! \]

An interesting decision.

**WEAPON:** \[ 11. \text{h}4! \rightarrow allows White to play a quick \text{h}4-\text{h}5 to attack the kingside. \]

\[ 11...\text{e}6 12. \text{b}1 \]

Too slow. 12.\text{g}1!? \text{e}7 13.\text{h}4!.

\[ 12...\text{c}5 13. \text{dxc5} \text{xc5} 14. \text{e}4 \text{e}7 15. \text{e}2 \text{ad}8 16. \text{he}1?! \]

16.\text{h}4!.

\[ 16...\text{d}4 17. \text{e}5 \text{f}6! 18. \text{b}5 \text{d}5 19. \text{b}4 \]

19.\text{a}3!?.

\[ 19...\text{fxe}5 20. \text{a}3! \]

White has multiple threats, especially on the a3-f8 diagonal.

\[ 20...\text{bd}7? \]

20...\text{a}5\Box.

21.\text{g}4?!.

21.\text{c}3!.

21...\text{xf}4

21...\text{xd}1+ 22. \text{xd}1 \text{h}5!\infty.

22. \text{xd}5 \text{exd}5 23. \text{c}3
23...♖f7??
This, though, is a serious mistake.
23...c4 24.♗xd5 ♕d6!.
24.♗xd5 ♕d6 25.♗d1+— b6 26.♕xa7
Now Black is severely tied down and he cannot hold all of his pieces together.
26...e4 27.♖xd7 e3
Desperation.
27...♖xd7 28.♗xc5 bxc5 29.♖xd7 ♖xd7 30.♕f6++–.
28.♕xe3! ♕e5
28...♖xd7 29.♖xd6 ♕xa7 30.♕c4 was also hopeless.
29.♕a8+ 1-0
Another example of a new tendency in super-GM preparation, which worked brilliantly: finding new ways at an early stage of the opening and working them out. The element of surprise will play the most important role. The set-up 6.e3 and 7.f4 prevents ...e7-e5 but slightly compromises White's centre. However, the usual way for Black to exploit that fact (...c7-c5) is not very comfortable here.
Conclusion Chapter 6

- For now, with the creative and flexible move 5.\textit{b}d2!? White has achieved the best results and a lot of great victories. Against the Grünfeld, I would like to play in similar strategic style against Black’s ...c7-c5;
- In this variation we have quite original plans with complex middlegames. The arising positions offer abundant tactical options for both colours. One of the advantages is that because of its solidity it is always possible to find something new within the old lines;
- In many of the games analysed in this chapter, new ideas are suggested that had never been played;
- Another interesting detail is that against 5.\textit{b}d2, strong players have not agreed on a specific line that is rated as good for Black, or simply as the best. For example, Kasparov played the natural 5...\textit{g}g7 and Svidler decided on 5...\textit{b}b6.

The theory is still virgin in this variation, there are many secrets yet to be revealed.
Nimzo-Indian: Sämisch and Kmoch Variations

Part I. A repertoire for White
This chapter is dedicated to various structures and set-ups in the Sämisch and Kmoch Variations of the Nimzo-Indian, which usually arises after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♗b4.

4.a3 (the Sämisch Variation) and 4.f3 (the Kmoch Variation) are the two most aggressive moves against the Nimzo-Indian:
The creators of the system, German GM Friedrich Sämisch (1896-1975, left) and Austrian-American IM Hans Kmoch (1894-1973), played an exceptional game with 4.a3 in Brno 1928, ending in a draw.

Interestingly enough, Kmoch never played 4.f3, but always 4.a3. There are two possible explanations for the fact that 4.f3 was named after him:

1) Johann Joseph Kmoch (generally known as Hans Kmoch) wrote the supplement to Bilguer’s *Handbuch* in 1930;
2) Kmoch lived in the Netherlands in the 1930’s and worked closely together with Euwe in those days. Euwe coined many of the names of opening variations in his famous opening book series. Perhaps it was the Dutch World Champion who named the variation after Kmoch.

The idea of 4.a3, to invite the trade of the black bishop for the knight on c3, appeared in tournaments during the 1920’s. After that, German GM Friedrich Sämisch developed the theory of the system and started playing the variation regularly.

According to the database, 4.f3 (preparing the aggressive advance e2-e4), was played for the first time by the famous crack attacker, GM Bogoljubow, in 1931.

4.f3 and 4.a3 are my personal favourite weapons against the Nimzo-Indian and I have used them for many years. They offer a complex strategic fight where understanding is more important than pure theoretical knowledge.

In 1984, during my preparation for the Soviet championships, I bought a repertoire book on the Nimzo-Indian Defence by the popular grandmaster Mark Taimanov. What I was interested in was the Sämisch System with 4.a3. But in the explanatory texts I found a surprising option which started with the move 4.f3!? – only without analysis. So I decided to investigate this line and my early results were more than satisfactory: 2 points out of 3 in my first Soviet championship (semi-final) and many victories in tournaments in the late 1980’s. Later I shared my analysis of this new variation with a strong player who was a team-mate of mine, Vladimir Malaniuk, and he duly became another expert on 4.f3.

In 1987, I won a spectacular game against Yury Yakovich with this move (see the notes to Game 63, in Part 2). Today Yakovich is a recognized grandmaster and, curiously, the author of a well-known book called Play the 4.f3 Nimzo-Indian, Gambit 2004. Using 4.f3, I even beat young Alexander Morozevich in 17 moves in our match in 1994 – see Game 49.

These days, the theory of the Kmoch is rapidly progressing. Players of all levels can still find new resources here; strategic plans and also many attacking themes.

Megabase statistics

Here are some interesting statistics for the various replies to the Nimzo-Indian.

The greatest popularity is shared by two moves:
– 4.e3 = 50.147 games = 52.6% for White; and
– 4.♕c2 = 45.684 games = 51.9%.

Less frequently used moves are (percentages are scores for White):
– The universal 4.♗f3 = 11.095 = 51.7%;
– The quite new and ‘green hybrid’ move 4.f3! = 8.854 = 53.7%;
– The ‘pseudo-aggressive’ 4.♗g5 = 6.907 = 45.6%;
– Sämisch’s and Botvinnik’s favourite move 4.a3 = 6.970 = 46.4% (the latter does not look so strange nowadays);
– 4.g3!? = 2.4506 = 53.6%, looks like a potentially fashionable Catalan-style move.

Generally speaking, we can observe that against 3...♗b4, most players in the 1500-2500 regions have followed the attacking ideas of Sämisch (e2-e3/a2-a3/f2-f3) until the present day. In contrast, in the repertoire of a great number of professional chess players with ratings between 2500-2800, the solid move 4.♕c2 (which is more similar to the Queen’s Gambit) has always been predominant. Of course, after that the ambitious Sämisch move a2-a3 can be used at any moment in the game, when the exchange ♗x♗ does not spoil the pawn structure.

When studying theory and building up a repertoire, you can always choose between two things: adopting fashionable variations, as in this case 4.♕c2!, or searching your own paths in less usual lines (in our case, the variations 4.a3 and 4.f3). It is also possible to combine the two. I personally think that it is quite boring to reproduce over the board up to 20-30 well-known moves and play variations which have been deeply analysed by others, even if these are high-level players.
My own statistics in the Nimzo-Indian

4.f3 = 177 games = 72.4%. Performance = 2604 (1-0 = 97, draw = 63, 0-1 = 17);
4.a3 = 30 games = 80%. Performance = 2568 (1-0 = 21, draw = 6, 0-1 = 3);
4.e3 = 37 games = 67.6%. Performance = 2545 (1-0 = 19, draw = 12, 0-1 = 6);

Note: sometimes the three moves coincided by transposition.

The Sämisch System

White’s main idea in the lines that start with 3.♘c3 lies in the preparation of the advance e2-e4, in order to dominate in the centre. Compared to the lines with 4.e3, where White closes in his own bishop on c1 and opts for a slow but solid game, and 4.♕c2, where Black slows down his development in order to set up a good pawn structure, lines with 4.a3 and 4.f3 are more dynamic: tactics prevail. White tries to obtain an immediate advantage with his central pawns.

Black’s objectives after 3...♗b4 are: to control the centre with minor pieces (for example, by playing ...b7-b6 and ...♗b7), to complete his development by castling and to start looking for typical blocking advances like ...c7-c5, ...d7-d6/...e6-e5, or to play similarly to the Queen’s Gambit with ...d7-d5.

Very often, the two lines transpose, and therefore it makes sense to study them together, not only the exact moves but also the general ideas:
• Playing 4.f3, with the idea of 5.e4, White starts a fight for the centre that often leads to a sharp battle. The downside of this variation is that the pawn on f3 deprives the white knight of its natural square and it also weakens the dark squares;
• After 4.a3, in comparison to other variations where the bishop on b4 retreats, here Black is forced to take the knight, consolidating White’s centre. White gets the immediate advantage of the bishop pair and attacking chances on the kingside. In the sharpest lines, the pawn on c4 is sacrificed to gain the initiative.

The disadvantages of this line are also obvious: White loses a tempo with 4.a3 and his pawns on c3 and c4 can become weak.

Main set-ups and alternatives

White’s main ideas after a2-a3 and f2-f3 are to prevent any counterplay for Black, to dominate the centre by preparing the e2-e4 advance, and to combine the initiative in the centre with a kingside attack.

Sharp lines – Kmoch Variation

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3 c5!? 5.d5!

Here Black has two aggressive ideas at his disposal for a direct counterattack:
• In Game 49 we analyse the advance 5...b5 and several more positional replies such as 5...d6 and 5...0-0;
• The attack with 5...♘h5, threatening 6...♕h4+ and preparing ...f7-f5 (Game 50). Some similar ideas arise without the moves 4...c5 5.d5, for example: 4...0-0 5.a3! ♘xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘h5!? (Game 51);
• The classical blockade of the centre with 5...♗xc3+ and ...e6-e5 can be found in Game 61 in Part II, ‘A Trojan Horse in the Nimzo War’.

**Sharp lines – Sämisch Variation**

4.a3 ♘xc3+ 5.bxc3 b6!?

This is probably a major weapon against 4.a3. Black prepares an immediate attacking plan against the pawn on c4: ...

4.f3 0-0!?

Quite a topical continuation. Black waits one more move before launching his plan.
• White can now choose between the immediate advance 5.e4, or else the more flexible move 5.a3! (Game 51). Many similar ideas appear by transposition; for instance, after 4.a3 ♘xc3+ 5.bxc3 0-0 and now either 6.f3 or 6.e3 b6 7.♗d3 etcetera;
• In Game 53, we study the attacking possibilities against a defensive manoeuvre implemented by Capablanca: 6...♗e8!?.

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This is an important line that is often reached by transposition. The knight retreat can also be played one move later, after the inclusion of the moves 6...b6 7.e4. This game also presents several interesting deviations against ...b7-b6 and ...♘e8.

Black can postpone Capablanca’s move even further and play it after 4.a3 ♗xc3+ 5.bxc3 c5 6.e3 ♘c6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.♘e2 b6 9.e4 and now 9...♘e8.

This prophylactic concept was introduced by Capablanca in 1929 in the game Johner-Capablanca, Carlsbad 1929. The move is played in order to avoid the pin with ♗g5 and to block the kingside attack f2-f4 with ...f7-f5.

Inside of Games 52 and 53, we discover the tricky positional idea of a ‘captive knight’, where White tries to pin down the Capablanca knight in similar situations.

**Classical plans – Kmoch and Sämisch**

4.f3 d5 (for 4...♗c6, see Game 60) 5.a3! ♘xc3+ (the bishop can also be withdrawn: for 5...♗e7!? see Game 59) 6.bxc3 c5! (or else the reply 6...c6!?, as in Game 58) 7.cxd5, and now:
• 7... \textit{N}xd5 – Black fights with his pieces against the white centre. See Games 54, 55, and there are also two games in Part II on the ‘Trojan Horse’;
• 7...exd5 defines the classical line against the Sämisch. Black tries to block the centre with his d5-pawn and to manoeuvre with his knights. World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik won many games against such set-ups. We will see some easy victories in Games 56 and 57.

\textbf{Middlegame}

Game 54 contains some revolutionary ideas:

In their Candidates’ match in 1990, Timman managed to take Karpov by surprise with the knight sac 16. \textit{N}d4!!. We will take a deeper look at this new motif in Part II, ‘The Trojan Horse in the Nimzo War’, Games 61-64.
Another good example of successful play in the opening and the middlegame can be seen in this second diagram: I spotted the superstar move 18.\textit{f2!!} and thus succeeded in developing my army effectively.

\textbf{KEEP IN MIND}

- The flexible knight manoeuvre $\textit{g1-h3}$ is typical and very useful in many lines with the Sämisch set-up;
- In both variations (4.f3 and 4.a3) there is great scope for creativity and new ideas.
Nimzo-Indian: Kmoch/Sämisch – Games

Kmoch Variation

Game 49
Viktor Moskalenko

Alexander Morozevich

Moscow match 1994 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♖b4 4.f3!?

Ready for e2-e4! This is my favourite move and I have used it for years.
4...c5
A typical counterattack in the Nimzo-Indian: Black fights back immediately to either block or destroy the white centre.
4...♘c6 – Moskalenko-Mateo, Game 60.

5.d5
Advancing the d-pawn is the usual response. The move 5.a3 leads back to Sämisch paths.

5...b5?*
A dynamic blow, a la the Blumenfeld Gambit.
A sharp alternative is 5...♘h5!?, starting action on the kingside and threatening 6...♕h4+. See Game 50.

WEAPON: 5...d6 is the most strategic option: 6.e4 exd5 (after this exchange White has a better pawn structure; for the blockading idea 6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 e5, see the Trojan Horse Part) 7.cxd5±.
Now it is important to finish development as soon as possible: 7...0-0 8.\( \text{d3} \) (8.\( \text{ge2!?} \)) 8...b5!? 9.\( \text{ge2!?} \) (9.\( \text{xb5!?} \)) 9...c4 10.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{b6} \) 11.a4! (a very effective break) 11...\( \text{bd7} \) (11...bxa4 12.\( \text{f1!?} \)) 12.axb5 \( \text{e5} \) 13.\( \text{d4!} \) with a great advantage, Moskalenko-Kortchnoi, Banyoles rapid 2006. Kortchnoi told me that he had felt like resigning here, but was ashamed of losing so easily – by the way, the game ended in a draw;

**WEAPON:** The natural 5...0-0 is quite similar to the previous line: 6.e4 d6 7.\( \text{ge2!?} \) (after 7.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xc3+!?} \)) 8.bxc3 \( \text{b5!?} \) (7...\( \text{e8} \) 8.\( \text{g3!?} \) and then \( \text{e2!} \)) 8.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{xc3+} \) (8...\( \text{exd5} \)) 9.bxc3 \( \text{a5} \) 10.dxe6!\( \text{=} \) Moskalenko-Short, Banyoles rapid 2007.

**6.e4!**

White creates a central pawn chain.

If he accepts the pawn with 6.dxe6?! fxe6 7.cxb5 a6! Black gets more than satisfactory counterplay.

**6...0-0!?**

Since Black is better developed, it is important for White to keep the position closed.

**WEAPON:** I have faced 6...\( \text{bxc4} \) 7.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{xd5} \) (or 7...\( \text{d6} \) 8.\( \text{ge2 e5} \)) 9.0-0 0-0 10.\( \text{g3!?} \) \( \text{a6} \) 11.\( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{xa6} \) 12.\( \text{f4!} \) Moskalenko-Klimm, Barcelona 2001) 8.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 9.\( \text{xd5} \) more often. This is a key
position in this line. Black has a bad pawn structure and therefore he must look for active counterplay:
9...♘c6 (9...0-0?! 10.♗e2 ♘b6 11.0-0!± Moskalenko-Gomez Jurado, Montcada 2004) 10.♗e2 ♘a6 11.♗f2! 0-0 12.♖d1

![analysis diagram]

12...♗b6 (12...♗b8 13.♗f4!? ♕b7 14.♖b1 ♘xc3 15.♗xc3!± with a better structure in Moskalenko-Vainerman, Chernigov 1985) 13.♗e3! d6 14.♗b3!?(14.♖b1±) 14...♕a5 15.♖c2 ♘c4 16.♖d5 ♘xe3 17.♖xe3! ♖d8 18.♖g3± and the white knights control the board, Moskalenko-Ulybin, Pinsk 1986;

**WEAPON:** Recently, an interesting strategic pawn sac was found after 6...d6: 7.♗e2!? (7.♗d3 is usual) 7...♗xc4 (for 7...0-0 see the above line/Weapon 5...0-0) 8.♗f4

![analysis diagram]

8...♖xc3+ (8...e5 9.♗f2 ♖d7 10.♗g3± Adhiban-Laxman, Bhubaneswar 2018) 9.bxc3 e5 10.♘e2 ♘h5 11.h4 ♘d7 12.g4 ♖f6 13.gxh5!? (13.♗f2 ♘f4 14.♖xf4 exf4∞ Kravtsiv-Moiseenko, Kiev 2018) 13...♖xf3 14.♖h2!. White should be better here.

7.♗h3!?
The g1-knight can be very flexible in the Nimzo-Indian.

**WEAPON:** The modern alternative is the ambitious advance 7.e5!?.

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7...exd5 leads to some fabulous puzzle lines (the modest retreat 7...♘e8!? gives more chances to keep the balance: 8.f4 exd5 9.cxd5 d6 10.♗f3 ♘c7?! (10...c4!? seems to be the best defence: 11.a4 ♘d7 12.♖e2 ♘b6 13.axb5 dxe5 14.fx e5 ♘c7=) 11.a4 ♘b7 12.♗d3! g6 (12...h6 13.0-0= Mamedyarov-Hou Yifan, Sharjah 2017) 13.0-0 c4 14.♗e4 ♘d7 15.f5= Shpakovsky-Kovalev, ICCF email 2014): 8.exf6 d4 9.a3 ♘a5 10.b4 dxc3 11.bxa5

11...♖e8+ (11...♕xf6 12.♗d5!? ♖xe8+! 13.♗f2!? (13.♗e2 b4!? is unclear) 13...c2 14.♘a2 ♗b7 15.♗d2!? (15.♗g5!?) 15...bxc4 16.♗xc2 d5 17.♗b2 ♖d8 18.♗e2 ♘c6 19.♗g3 ♖b8 20.h4!+) 12.♗f2 ♖xf6 13.♗a2! bxc4 (13...b4? 14.♗e2!± Mekhitarian-l’Ami, Tromsø 2014) 14.♗e2 ♖e6 15.f4! ♗b7 16.♗xe6!? ♖xe6 (16...fxe6 17.♗xc4 d5 18.♗b3! ♖c6 19.♗b5 c4 20.♖b4 ♕d4+ 21.♗e1! ♕e4+ 22.♗e2±)
analysis diagram

17. ♘f3 ♘c6 (17...h6 18.♗e2!? (18.f5!?)) 18.e4 ♘e1 d5 20.♗xc3 18.g5! ♘f5 19.♕e5 ♘e5 20.♗b3 ♘xc4 21.♗xb7.

7...bxc4 8.♗xc4 ♗xc3+ 9.♗xc3 ♘a5 10.♗c2!

10...d6
Now Black threatens 11...exd5 and then 12...♗xh3.
The interesting alternative was 10...exd5 11.♕xd5! ♘xd5 12.exd5, but I think that White has the better chances here.
If 10...♗a6, 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.♕g5!.
11.dxe6!
Taking advantage of his turn to move.
11...♗xe6 12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.0-0
After completing his development, White keeps his advantage with his superior pieces and better pawn structure.
13...♗c6 14.f4 e5 15.♗g5 ♘e8? 16.♗b3+ ♗h8??
A tactical lapse that allows a quick win. Very rare for Morozevich!
16...♗f7 was the only defence, when White plays 17.♘d5!? with a clear advantage.
17.♗b7 1-0
I won this friendly and very interesting match by a small margin (4½-3½), but had the pleasure of discovering the great potential of the fabulous ‘Moro’.

**Game 50**  
**Shakhriyar Mamedyarov**  
**Ruslan Ponomariov**  
Moscow blitz 2008 (15)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♖b4 4.f3 c5 5.d5 ♘h5

Black is starting a flank attack by preparing ...f7-f5 and threatening ...♕h4+.

6.♘h3!?  
The genuine response in Sämisch style.

**WEAPON:** The most positional option is 6.g3!? ♖xc3+ (6...d6 7.♘h3 0-0 8.♗g2 exd5 9.cxd5 ♘d7 10.0-0 ♘hf6 11.♗f2 ♘e8 12.e4 Moskalenko-Tarasov, ICCF email 2010) 7.bxc3 f5 8.e4! f4 (8...♕f6 9.f4!++) Moskalenko-Holzhäuer, St Martin 1991) 9.dxe6! ♖f6 10.♗e2! fxg3 (10...dxe6 11.♗d6??) 11.♗g2!+- Moskalenko-I.Novikov, Lviv 1988.

6...f5  
A Stonewall motif.

**WEAPON:** A purely strategic struggle ensues after the alternative 6...d6:
7. ♖f2 (7.g4!? 7...0-0 8.e4 (8.g4!? 8...exd5 9.cxd5 f5 10.exf5 ♖xf5 11.♗d3 ♗e5+ 12.♗e4!, almost winning by superior piece placement, Moskalenko-Baches Garcia, Benasque 2007;

**WEAPON:** Black can take some risks and capture a few pawns with 6...♕h4+!? 7.♖f2 ♕xc4 and now 8.e4 with very attractive play for White in all lines (8.♗d2!? Arencibia-Yudasin, Novi Sad 1990): 8...♖xc3+ (8...♕d4 9.♗c2 exd5 10.g4 ♕f6 11.♗f4 c4 12.♖d1 ♗c5 13.g5 Ingersol-Cimins, ICCF email 2009) 9.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 10.♗d2

10...♗d4 (10...♖a3 11.g4 ♕f6 12.g5++; 10...♖f6 11.g4!? ♕f4 12.g5! ♘xg5 13.♗c1 e5 14.♖xc5 ♗a6 15.♖xa6 bxa6 16.♖c1+) 11.♖c1! exd5 12.♖c3 ♗a4 13.♖g5!↑ Moskalenko-Barsov, Sitges 2007.

7.e4!
Tactically very strong. Black doesn’t have enough resources for his counterattack.

7...fxe4

7...0-0 8.♗e2?N.

8.fxe4 ♘h4+ 9.♖f2 0-0 10.♗e3!
White gets winning chances, since it is easier for him to complete his development and fight for the initiative. The most serious problem for Black is how to activate his queenside pieces.

10...exd5
This invites a brutal pounding by an aggressive player like Mamedyarov.
10...♗f6 11.♘d3!+–; 10...d6 11.e5!+–.
11.♕xd5+ ♔h8 12.g3 ♗f6 13.e5! ♗e7 14.♗e2
14.♗f4!?+–.
14...♗f6 15.exf6 ♕xe3 16.fxg7+
16.0-0!.
16...♗xg7 17.0-0 ♗c6
If 17...♗xc3, 18.bxc3 ♗xe2 19.♗g5+ ♔h8 20.♗e4 with mate in a few moves.
18.♖ae1 ♕e5 19.♖d2 ♖d6 20.a3!
The final stage of a blitz game is always dramatic.
20... ♖xc3 21.bxc3 ♔h8 22.♗f3 ♕g7 23.♗xc6 ♖xc6 24.♗xd6 ♕f5 25.♗xc5 ♕xc5 26.♗e3 ♗g7 27.♗e7 ♗b2 28.♖xa7
♖xa7 29.♖xf8# 1-0

Game 51
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

Pavel Eljanov

Moscow blitz 2008 (2)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♗b4 4.f3 0-0
A topical reply; Black waits one more move before showing his plans.

Weapon: Similarly as in the game: 4...♗h5 5.♗h3!? f5 6.e4! 0-0 7.e5!? f4 8.d3 Moskalenko-Nikoladze, Banyoles 2007.
5.a3!
Leading the game back to the Sämisch System. This option is the most popular these days.

**WEAPON:** The main alternative 5.e4!? is currently in crisis due to 5...d5!. But there’s a fresh idea here: 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.cxd5 exd5 8.f4!? (8.a3 is worse in view of 8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 f6!↩. After this breakthrough, Black almost balances the game, Moskalenko-Gonzalez Garcia, Mataro 2004) 8...c5! 9.a3! ♗a5 10.♗e3!.

A new move by the 4.f3 expert: if White just defends his centre and finishes his development he will be better (10.♗f3? cxd4↑). 10...cxd4 11.♗xd4 ♘c6 12.♗f3 ♘xd4 (12...f6?! 13.e6!) 13.♗xd4! (but not: 13.♗xd4?? ♘xe5!—+ Yakovich-Lysyj, Moscow 2009). This could become the key position of a new line.

13...♗b6 14.♗xd5 ♘c5 15.b4 ♘e6 16.♖d1= Hawkins-Conquest, Canterbury 2010.

5...♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘h5
Another flank attack. We saw a similar idea in the previous game.

The classical possibility after Capablanca’s manoeuvre 6...♗e8!? is 7.e4 b6, which we will check in Game 53 (and also in games with the ‘captive knight’ theme).

7.♖h3!
A development a la Sämisch.

7...f5 8.♗g5!?
This activation of the bishop may be an improvement on Mamedyarov’s 8.♗f2, which he played against Fedorchuk (see below).

WEAPON: However, 8.♗f2!? d6 (8...b6 9.e4! fxe4 10.fxe4± So-Naroditsky, St Louis 2015; 8...c6 9.e4 d6 10.♗d3 fxe4 11.♕xe4↑ Mamedyarov-Fedorchuk, Villarrobledo rapid 2008) 9.e4! ♗e8 10.♗d3 e5 11.0-0 f4 12.c5± Jones-Trent, Torquay 2009.

8...♕e8 9.e3 d6 10.♗d3 e5 11.0-0 ♗c6 12.♕h4 ♗d7 13.♕h1 ♗h8 14.f4!?

The position is rich with attacking possibilities. Just what Mamedyarov likes!

14...b6 15.d5 ♗a5 16.fxe5 dxe5 17.♕g5 h6 18.♕e6! ♗xe6 19.dxe6 e4??

19...g5 was the only defence, and then 20.e7↑.

20.♕xe4! fxe4 21.♕xf8+ ♗xf8 22.♕xh5 ♗xc4 23.e7 ♗g8 24.♕f1 ♗d6 25.♕g3 ♗e8 26.♕f8+ Black resigned.

Sämisch Variation

Featuring the idea of ‘a captive knight’

Game 52

Viktor Moskalenko

Emanuel Berg

Villa Salou 2009 (8)

The following lines are very important for learning the Sämisch System. Even after many years of analysis, I keep finding new attacking resources.

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♗f6 3.♗c3 ♗b4 4.a3

This move forces Black to exchange 4...♗xc3 and to enter the Sämisch. Nowadays, this option is seldom used in the modern practice of super-tournaments, since White cannot easily create real threats on the kingside to compensate for the weaknesses of his doubled pawns on c3 and c4. However, White gains the bishop pair and a very strong centre.

4...♗xc3+ 5.bxc3 c5!?

The genuine Nimzo-Indian break – see Game 56 and the second part.

5...b6 – Game 53; 5...♗c6 – Game 60.

6.e3

WEAPON: A pawn sacrifice and a captive knight: 6.f3!? (a typical transposition of the ‘Sämisch’ to the
‘Kmoch’) 6...c6 (or 6...0-0 7.e4 e8 8.d3 b6 9.f4!? transposing to the lines below) 7.e4. Now Black should be careful and not mix the plans.

A) 7...0-0 8.e5!? (8.d3 Carlsen-Ivanchuk, Cap d’Agde rapid 2008; 8.d5 a5 9.g5!? Ding Liren-Wang Yue, Shenzhen rapid 2011) 8...e8 9.f4. Captive knight-1. Here is a tricky positional sacrifice of the c4-pawn: 9...b6 (9...cxd4 10.cxd4 b6 11.f3 a6 12.d3 f5 13.d5 a5 14.d6! Bronstein-Simagin, Moscow 1961) 10.f3 a6 11.d3 f5 (11...cxd4 12.xh7+!) 12.d5 a5 13.d6! xc4 14.xc4 xc4 15.e2 a5 16.h4!?± and White dominates the board;

B) 7...d6

8.e2!? (with the idea g5, and if ...a5, White has e2-c1-b3!? 8...b6 (8...a5 9.f4!?; 8...e5 9.d5!) 9.g5 h6 10.h4 a5 11.c1 a6 (11...g5 12.f2++) Ipatov-Bloomer, Middleton 2018) 12.b3! xc4 (12...xc4? 13.d2+) 13.xa5 xf1 14.dxc5 bxa5 (14...a6?! 15.c6! Merry-Jedynak, Douglas 2014) 15.xf1 dxc5 16.xd8+ xd8 17.b1 0-0 18.e2 with a promising ending;
C) 7...d5

8.cxd5 exd5 9.e5 \( \text{\textit{??}} \) 10.e2!\(N\) f6 11.g3 fxe5 12.dxe5 xe5? 13.b5+ c6 (13.d7? 14.0-0!)
14.0-0↑ ge7? 15.g5+−;

D) 7...b6 8.d3!? a6 (8...cxd4 9.cxd4 xd4 10.b2 c6 11.e5 g8 12.e2 ge7 13.0-0 0-0
14.g3 a6 15.f4 a5 16.c1 c8 17.e2 c7 18.xh7+ xh7 19.h5+ g8 20.e4+−)
9.h3!?.
Captive knight-2: 9...0-0 (9...♘a5 10.e5 ♘g8 11.♘g5!; 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♘xd4 11.e5 ♘g8 12.b2 ♘c6 13.0-0 ♘ge7 14.f4 h6 15.♘f2!) 10.e5 ♘e8 11.0-0 ♘a5 (11...d5 12.♗g5!↑ f6? 13.♘f4!) 12.f4!?N (12.♕e2 is Volkov’s move) 12...f5 (12...♗xc4? 13.♗xh7+!) 13.d5 ♘xc4 (13...d6? 14.♘g5! ♘c7 15.dxe6 ± Blübaum-Fedorovsky, Germany Bundesliga 2016/17) 14.♗xc4 ♘xc4 15.d6!.

If you look at this new position a little, you quickly realize that White has various plans to improve. At the same time, Black has almost no counterplay. For instance, 15...♕c8 16.♗h5!? and now:

D1) 16...♖a6 17.♖a2! with the idea †a2-f2-f3!;
D2) 16...h6 17.♖a2!? (17.♖f3!?) 17...♘c6 18.♗af2 ♖e4 19.♘f3†;
D3) 16...b5 17.♘g5!? h6 18.♗f3 ♖b7 19.♘h4! a5 20.♗g6 ♖f7 21.♖h4! ♖a6 22.♗e2† and 23.h5!.

Summary the ‘captive knight’ theme: the c4-pawn sacrifice after f3-f4/e4-e5/d4-d5-d6 can be a surprising weapon in the Sämisch system. It is a creative idea and it is still not fully developed. White obtains more than sufficient compensation for the pawn, with a long-term initiative and without much risk.

6...♘c6 7.♗d3 b6
7...0-0 8.♗e2 b6 9.e4 ♘e8.
This classical manoeuvre was introduced by Capablanca in 1929:

- To avoid a possible pin with ♗g5;
- To block the push f2-f4 with ...f7-f5!
- Planning to attack the c4-pawn with ...♘e8-d6.

10.0-0 ♗a6 11.f4 f5 12.e5 (this was my old idea. The main move is 12.♘g3 cxd4 (12...g6∞) 13.cxd4 fxе4 14.♗xe4 ♘xd4 15.a4!? ♗c7? 16.♗a3± Knight-Andersen, IECG email 2006) 12...a5 (a new plan is 12...d6!?, and now 13.d5?! does not work because of tactical tricks: 13...exd5! 14.cxd5 ♗xd5 15.♖xd5 dxe5! and Black has defended everything, Carlsen-Aronian, Elista blitz 2007) 13.d5!?. If Black accepts the pawn sacrifice with 13...♗xc4 (better 13...d6!∞), this allows White to imprison Black’s king’s knight: 14.♗xc4 ♘xc4 15.d6!♕. Now the king’s knight has only three available squares: e8, g7 and h5 (see Games 8.17-8.20 in my book Revolutionize Your Chess).

Let’s come back to the main game!

8.e4!
With typical Sämisch play.
8...cxd4
8...d6 9.♗e2!? keeping the tension in the centre.
9. cxd4 e5
   TRICK: 9... ♢xd4? loses to 10.e5 ♢g8 11. ♤g4+-.

10. ♤e2!? d6 11.f3
Delays castling.

   WEAPON: 11.0-0! 0-0 12. ♤b2 ♢e8 13.f3 exd4 14. ♤xd4 ♢e5 15. ♤e2 ♤e6 16. ♢c1± Revelle-Bouma,
   IECC email 1997.

11...0-0 12. ♤g5!? h6 13. ♤h4 ♤a6 14.0-0;
Black already has problems.

14...g5
A forced defensive advance.
14...exd4? 15.f4!+–;

   TRICK: 14... ♢c8?

15.f4!+-, for example: 15...exf4 16. ♢xf4 g5 17. ♤h5 (17. ♤d5+-) 17... ♢xh5 (17... ♢e8 18. ♤e1+-) 18. ♢xh5 gxh4
   19. ♤xh6+-.

15. ♤f2±
White has advantage and different options to develop the initiative.

15... ♤h5 16. ♤a4 ♤a5 17. ♤e1
17. ♤fd1!?.
17... ♤c8 18. ♤xa5 bx a5 19. ♤fd1 ♤f4 20. ♤xf4 gx f4 21. ♤f1 ♤e8 22. ♤xe8
22... ♤xe8
22... ♤fxe8
The critical moment.
23. ♕ ac1?
Too slow. This move spoiled the technical part of the game, since I overestimated my advantage.
The winning line was 23.dxe5! ♖ xe5 (23...dxe5 24.♕ ac1++) 24.♕ xd6 ♖ xc4 25.♕ xh6+–.
23...♖ c6!
Now Black has good saving chances.
24.dxe5 ♖ xe5 25.♕ d5 ♖ f8 26.♕ xe5 dxe5 27.c5 ♖ xf1 28.♖ xf1 ♔ e7 29.g3 fxg3 30.hxg3 ♕ c8 31.♕ g2!? ♖ d7 32.♕ d1+ ♕ c6
33.♕ d5 ♖ e8 34.a4
34.♕ d6+ ♖ x c5 35.♕ d5+ ♕ b6 is equal.
34...f5 35.g4 fxg4 36.fxg4 ♖ b8 37.♕ xe5 ♖ b4 38.♕ f3 ♖ xa4 39.♕ h5 ♖ a1 40.♕ x h6+ ♖ xc5 41.g5 ♖ d4 42.♕ a6 a4 43.g6 a3
44.♕ f2 ♖ a2+ 45.♕ f3 ♖ a1 46.♕ xa7
46.♕ f4!? a2!.
46...♖ e5 47.♕ a6 ♖ g1 48.♕ xa3 ♖ x g6 49.♕ a5+ ♖ e 6 50.♕ a6+ ♖ f 7 ½-½

Game 53
Viktor Moskalenko

Manuel Larios Crespo

La Roda 2004 (6)

1.d4 ♗ f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘ c3 ♘ b4 4.a3
We can also reach our study position by Kmoch’s order 4.f3 0-0 5.a3 ♘ xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘ e8 (this may be too soon here. It allows a nice flank advance) 7.a4!? (7.e4 b6 leads to the main game. Now there is no time to block this pawn) 7...d6 8.e4 b6 9.a5! ♘ a6 10.♕ d3 ♘ c6 11.axb6 axb6 12.♕ h3 ♘ a5 13.0-0!
and White keeps the initiative: 13...c5 (13...xc4? 14. xa5) 14.d5 e5 15.f4! e7 16.g5 exf4 17.xf4 f6 18.e2 h6 19.f3 fe8 20. ae1 d7 21.e5! dxe5 22.xe5 xe5 23.xe5 g5 24.f3 a7 25.c7! 1-0 Mamedyarov-Alekseev, Moscow blitz 2008.

4...xc3+ 5.bxc3 b6!? This might be Black’s best weapon against 4.a3. It prepares a direct attack against the weak pawn on c4: ...a6/...b8-c6-a5.

5...c5 was seen in the previous game. 6.f3 d5 – Games 54-57, 63 and 64.

6.f3!? Again, a flexible transposition of the Sämisch to the Kmoch.

**WEAPON:** An interesting try would be the pinning 6.g5!?: 6...h6 7.h4

7...c6 (for example, 7...a6 8.e3!? c6 9.f3 a5 10.d2! 0-0? 11.e4 Moskalenko-Rojas, Sant Marti 2010; 7...g5 8.g3 e4 9.e3 b7∞) 8.f3!. This is the key move that supports the defence of the pawn on c4; and after 8...a6 White continues 9.d2 (9.e4!?), to prepare e2-e4: 9...0-0 (9...a5? 10.e4! Moskalenko-Kastaner Harster, Sitges 2005) 10.e3 d6? 11.f3! and White wins, Moskalenko-Mascaro March, Cala Millor 2010.
6...0-0
Black goes back to the popular defensive idea with ...♘e8.

**WEAPON:** 6...♗a6!? 7.e4 ♘c6.

This is another key position in the Sämisch.

A) Now, the pin 8.♗g5 may not be that dangerous since the white knight is still on g1, for example:
8...h6 9.♗h4 ♘c8 (9...g5 10.♗f2 ♘e7 11.h4! 0-0 0 12.d5!↑ Carlsen-Leko, Monaco blindfold 2007)
10.e5!? (10.♗d3 ♘a5 11.♗e2 ♘b7∞ Berczes-Jaracz, Zalakaros 2006) 10...♘h5?! (10...♘g5 11.♗f2 ♘e7 11.♗h3 ♘a5 12.f4 g6 Rapport-Pataki, Szombathely 2008. Here after 13.g4!↑ White seizes the initiative;

B) 8.e5!? ♘g8 9.♘h3!? (we already know this universal manoeuvre) 9...♗a5 10.♕a4 (in later Sämisch games I attempted to keep the queen in the centre. However, I think that this position deserves more credit)
10...♕h4+ (10...♗e7 11.♗g5?!; 10...f6 11.♗d3↑ Moskalenko-Kveinys, Riga 1984) 11.♗f2! (an improvement by Hungarian GM Laszlo Gonda in 2009. After the weak 11.g3?!, Black gets a dynamic advantage: 11...♖h5 12.♗f2 f6! 13.♗f4 ♘f7↑ Moskalenko-Neveryov, Kharkov 1984) 11...f6. A typically French defensive move. But if you look at the position with a microscope, you might conclude that the Nimzo pin is rather similar to the Winawer pin!
12. \( \text{d3!} \) with the idea 12...fxe5 13.0-0↑.

7.e4!

**WEAPON:** Again, it is not clear, but the interesting pin 7.\( \text{g5!?} \) would be met with 7...h6 8.\( \text{h4} \) d5 9.cxd5 (9.e4!? leads to surprising tactics) 9...exd5 10.e3 \( \text{e8} \) 11.\( \text{f2!} \). Usually in the Nimzo, the bishop remains on c1. This looks more like an interesting Queen’s Gambit (only 4 games, but 3-1 in White’s favour).

7...\( \text{e8} \)

Again, the famous classical manoeuvre.
If 7...\( \text{a6} \) 8.\( \text{g5!?} \).

8.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{c6} \)

The critical position. Black continues ...\( \text{a6} \) and ...\( \text{a5} \), attacking the c4-pawn. In the meantime White must complete his development and advance his e- and f-pawns, preparing a massive attack in the centre and on the kingside.

9.\( \text{h3!} \)

A flexible manoeuvre.

**WEAPON:** The classical position arises after the advance 9.f4!? the ‘Four Pawns Attack’. Let’s look at some
interesting resources: 9...♗a6 10.♗f3 (10.a4!?) 10...♗a5 11.♘e2 c5 (11...♗d6? 12.e5 ♘xc4 13.♗xh7+!) 12.e5!.

WEAPON: 10.e5!? is one more interesting option in Sämisch battles: 10...♗a5 11.♗g5!? (11.♕e2 is usual) 11...f5 12.f4! (with the deadly threat 13.♕h5 and 14.h4!) 12...h6 (12...g6 13.h4! –) 13.♗h5!! –.

A spectacular attacking resource! 13...hxg5 (after this White wins; 13...♗e7 14.h4!) 14.fxg5 g6 15.♗xg6+ ♗g7 16.♖e1 ♗e7 17.g6 ♗e8 18.♗h5+– (or 18.0-0 ♗g7 (Berkes-Lysyj, Martuni 2009) 19.♗h5+–) 18...♗xc4 (18...d6 19.♗h6+–) 19.♗xc4 ♗xc4 20.0-0 ♗g7 21.♗f3 etc. with a winning
attack.

10...a5 11.e2 c5
We are getting close to the critical point of the opening.

12.e3!? 
This is a solid move; it defends the pawn on d4 and also avoids the simplification with ...b3 and ...xc1. White could play more actively with 12.d5 f6 13.dxe6!? dxe6 14.e5!, similar to the main game but without the moves 12.e3 c8:

![Analysis Diagram](attachment:image.jpg)

14...f5 15.g5! d7 16.g4! c7 (16...h6 17.h4!) 17.ad1 f7 18.f2! with a potentially fantastic kingside attack: 18...h8 (18...h6 19.h4+–) 19.f4! and White is winning, Moskalenko-Trent, Benasque 2007;

**WEAPON/TRICK:** Or 12.e5!?, as was played in the rapid game Moskalenko-Pogorelov, Sant Adria 2005, with a booby-trap: 12...cxd4? (12...h6 13.f4!? f5 14.d5! – the captive knight; 12...f6 13.f4!? with creative play for both sides, Moskalenko-Vehi Bach, Navalmoral 2005).

![Analysis Diagram](attachment:image.jpg)

**EXERCISE:** How can White start an attack?
13. ♗xh7+! (a famous thematic combination) 13... ♕xh7 (13... ♕h8 14. ♗g5+–) 14. ♗g5+ ♕g8 (14... ♕g6 15. ♘e4+ ♕f5 16. ♘h4+–) 15. ♘e4 f5 16. ♘h4+–. On 16... ♕f7, 17. ♕h7+ ♕f8 18. ♕h5! wins.

12... ♕c8 13.d5!
Closing the centre is a logical concept here. Now the black queenside pieces are temporary out of play.

13...f6
If 13...e5, 14.f4!.
Capturing on c4 is dubious, as after 13... ♘d6 14.e5 ♘dxc4 15. ♗g5! White has a dangerous initiative on the kingside.

14.dxe6 dxe6 15.e5!
White’s initiative may outweigh the weakness of his pawn on c4.

15...f5 16.g4!?
Looking for new attacking resources.

16...g6?
This defence of the f5-point weakens the dark squares too much and allows a straightforward attack.
The best move was 16... ♘c7!?, similar to Moskalenko-Trent, seen in this game, in the line 12.d5.

17.gxf5
17. ♗g5!+– was even stronger.

17...gxg5? 
This loses immediately.
17... ♘xf5 18. ♘xf5 exf5 19. ♘g5+–.

18. ♕h1 ♕h4 19. ♘g1+ ♕h8 20. ♕g2 ♘xc4
EXERCISE: Find the winning move.

21.♗g5! ♘h5 22.♗f6+ 1-0
Followed by mate with 23.♕g7 or 23.♕g8.

Conclusion
Both of these typically tense Sämisch games (52 and 53) offered a great number of opportunities for White to attack.

Classical plans
Piece play: 7...♘xd5, 8...♕a5

Game 54
Viktor Moskalenko

Logman Guliev

Montcada 2007 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3 d5 5.a3 ♘xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5!
The main resource in the Nimzo-Indian, also against Sämisch set-ups.

7.cxd5! ♘xd5!?  
Black fights against the white centre with his pieces. For the classical alternative 7...exd5, see Games 56 and 57.

8.dxc5  
8.♗d2 is an interesting, little-studied move:

\[
\text{analysis diagram}
\]

A) 8...♕a5?! 9.e4 ♘xc3 (9...♗xc3? 10.♗e2+-) 10.♗b1! ♘xd2+ 11.♖xd2 ♘e7 12.dxc5 ♘d7 13.♗b5+ Papaioannou-Ashwin, Kavala 2012;

B) 8...♖c6 9.e4 ♗b6 (9...♗f6 10.♗d5+) 10.a4!? cxd4 (10...♘a5 11.dxc5!) 11.a5!∞;

C) 8...0-0 9.e4 ♗e7 (9...♗b6 10.a4!? Botvinnik-Smyslov, Soviet Union 1966) 10.♗b5!?∞ Khismatullin-Sharafiev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010;

D) 8...♗f5 9.e3 0-0 10.♗h3 ♗c6 11.♖b1 cxd4 12.cxd4 b6 13.♗b5 ♖b7 14.0-0∞ Neverov-Eggleston, Hastings 2008/09.

8...♕a5  
Attacking the pawns on c3 and c5 immediately. Another popular defence is 8...f5!?, see Game 55.

\[\textbf{WEAPON:} 8...♗d7 9.e4 ♗e7 10.♗e3 ♗a5 11.♗b3 ♗c7 12.♗b5! 0-0 13.♗xd7! ♗xd7 14.♗e2 ♗c6 (14...e5 15.c4+ Moskalenko-Campos Moreno, Mallorca 2005) 15.c4 ♗a5 16.♗c3 e5 17.♖d1 ♘e6 18.♗d5+ Mamedyarov-Korobov, Huai’an rapid 2017.\]
9.e4! ♞e7!?
The most flexible knight retreat. The reply 9...♞c7 can be found in the next part, on the Trojan Horse.
9...♞xc3? is refuted by 10.♕d2, threatening 11.♗b2 or 11.♕e2, with a clear advantage.

**WEAPON:** But 9...♞f6!? is an important alternative: 10.♗e3

and now:

A) On 10...fd7, White obtained the advantage after 11.♖b1!? (11.a4!? ♞c6? 12.♗b5! 0-0 13.♗e2 Moskalenko-Vilar Lopez, Barcelona 1999) 11...0-0 12.♗f2! ♞a6?! 13.♕xa6 (13.♖d6!) 13...♕xa6 14.♗d6 ♞xa3 15.♗e2± in Gyimesi-Werle, Antwerp 2008;

B) 10...0-0 11.♗b3 (11.♗f2!? is Sergey Volkov’s move, see also line A) 11...fd7 (my main idea is seen in the line 11...GENCY a6 12.♗xa6! ♝xa6 13.♗e2 Moskalenko-Shneider, Lviv 1985) 12.♗b5!? (this is the modern idea against 8...♗c5; defending the c5-pawn. I used to go for 12.a4 ♝c7 13.♗a3 b6!? Moskalenko-Vaisser, Las Palmas 1992) 12...c7 13.♗b4!?
13...\textit{c6}! (a nice trick occurred after 13...\textit{e5} 14.\textit{d1 \textit{d7} 15.\textit{e2 \textit{xb5} 16.\textit{xb5 \textit{bd7} 17.0-0 \textit{fc8} 18.\textit{h1! a6 19.\textit{b4 \textit{xc5}? 20.\textit{xc5+-- Moskalenko-Lapshun, Barcelona 2006. If 20...\textit{xc5 21.\textit{d8+}) 14.\textit{a4 \textit{ce5}?! 15.\textit{d4 a6 16.\textit{e2?! (16.\textit{xd7 \textit{d8= Moskalenko-Gonzalez Vidal, Montcada 2008) 16...\textit{c6 17.\textit{d2∞ Moskalenko-Galojan, Al-Ain 2014.}}}}}}}

10.\textit{e3!}

Defending the pawn on c5.

10...0-0

10...\textit{xc3+ 11.\textit{f2 0-0 12.\textit{e2±.}}}}

11.\textit{b3}

11...\textit{c7}?! The favourite manoeuvre of former World Champion Anatoly Karpov, preparing to play ...\textit{d7 at ease. A worse line is 11...\textit{a6?! 12.\textit{d1 (12.\textit{xa6!?\textit{a2) 12...\textit{xc5? 13.\textit{b4= whereas 11...\textit{d7 12.\textit{b5! would be similar to the main game, and also to Game 63 in the next part.}}}}}}}

12.\textit{b5!}

The idea presented by the legendary GM Jan Timman against Anatoly Karpov in 1990. This way, White tries to defend his pawn on c5.
Black has more chances to balance the game with the more natural 12.♗e2 ♘d7 13.♗f4 ♘xc5 14.♕c4 b6.

12...♘e6 13.♗e2

**WEAPON:** 13.♖d1!? ♘a5, and now the white queen has more than one interesting square to retreat to. The actual game saw 14.♗b4!? e5 15.♗e2 ♗e6... stop!

In my opinion, this is a very important position. Black threatens 16...♗b3 and 16...♗c6, and 16.c4?! is met by 16...a6! as in Timman-Karpov, Kuala Lumpur 1990. But the pretty knight sacrifice 16.♗d4!! is a fresh resource in this line that we will study more deeply in Part II: ‘A Trojan Horse in the Nimzo War’. After 16...exd4 17.cxd4 the domination by the white centre pawns is obvious.

13...♗a5

With the idea of developing the other knight and the bishop.

**WEAPON:** Black could insert 13...e5 first, but here interesting is 14.♗b2!? with the same Trojan Horse idea: 14...♗e6 (14...♘a5 15.♗g3++) 15.♗d4!.

14.♗b4 ♘d7

**WEAPON:** Again, 14...e5 15.0-0 ♗e6 16.♗d4↑ Anand-Wang Hao, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

15.♗d1 ♘xb5 16.♗xb5 ♘d8
EXERCISE: White already has the advantage, but here I found a spectacular idea. What was it?

17. ♞f4! ♖xd1+ 18. ♕f2!!

This amazing intermediate move is based on a tactical resource culminating in mate along the eighth rank, and that made my opponent feel nervous!

18... ♕e7

Looks like the only move. If 18... ♕d7, 19. ♖xd1; or 18... ♖xh1?? 19. ♙e8#.

19. ♖xd1

White has an extra pawn, the initiative and a big positional advantage in all respects (1-0, 57).

See the next part for more games with the variation 7... ♖xd5.

Combining piece play with pawn play: 8...f5

Game 55
Viktor Moskalenko

Vadim Karpman

Nikolaev ch-UKR 1987 (14)
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♖b4 4.f3 d5 5.a3 ♖xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 ♖xd5 8.dxc5 f5!? The second plan for Black in this well-known position, and it is quite a bit sharper than 8...♕a5.

9.e4
The most forcing option.

A) The preliminary move 9.♘c2 leads to a similar line. It should be noted that Vladimir Kramnik used the advance 8...f5 against Anand in the World Championship match, achieving complicated play after 9...♗d7!? (9...f4 10.♘xf4! ♖xf4 11.♘e4+ ♖c6 12.♘xf4∞) 10.e4 fxe4 11.fxe4 ♗f5 12.c6!? (12.♘f3 ♖c5 13.e5 ♖e4∞) 12...bxc6 13.♘f3. The black structure is broken up. White was somewhat better until the end of the game, Anand-Kramnik, Bonn 2008;

B) The Sämisch move 9.♘h3!? is the most flexible in almost every case: 9...0-0!? (it is a bit too late to play 9...♕a5 10.♘f4 (10.e4!? 10...♖xc5 11.♖xd5 (11.♖d4!? 11...♖xd5 12.♖xd5 exd5 13.♖f4± Moskalenko-Tatai, San Sebastian de La Gomera 2007) 10.c4 (in this line there are always two options. White can also play with the Sämisch knight: 10.♘f4!? ♖c6 11.♖xd5 exd5 12.♘f4∞ Naroditsky-Ly, chess.com rapid 2019) 10...♖h4+ 11.♘f2 ♔xf4 12...♖xc4? is a mistake: 12.e4 ♖c3+ 13.♗d2 ♖e5 14.♗d3=} 12.g5 ♖h5 13.cxd5. We have reached a quite balanced position. However, both players will still get the chance to demonstrate their technical skills: 13...♖e3 (13...f4 (Moskalenko-Delchev, Spain tt 2005) 14.e4!?; 13...exd5 14.♖xd5 ♖h8 15.♗d2 ♖e7 16.♖d6 ♖e8 17.e4± Moskalenko-Campos Moreno, Estartit 2006) 14.♗c1 ♖xc1+ 15.♖xc1 exd5 16.e3!?
In my opinion, this endgame is easier to play for White. First of all he should block the pawns on d5 and f5:

16...d7 17. d3!? c6 18. f2 d7 19. f4 a8 20. h4!. Now Black gets no counterplay and White converted his advantage little by little without hurrying but also without hesitation in Moskalenko-Roktim, Montcada 2006;

C) After the alternative 9.c4!? we can reach certain endgames that are interesting for White. This advance, instead of e2-e4, is another important resource that can also be used one tempo later, in combination with 9. h3.

C1) 9...f6!? 10. g5 (a repetition of the tactic in line B) 10...xg5 11.cxd5 exd5 12. h3 f6 (12...e3 13. d2 d4 14. d1 Eljanov-Mchedlishvili, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010) 13. f4 c3+ 14. f2 x5+ 15.e3 and White dominated in the endgame after getting the d5-pawn back, Moskalenko-Naumkin, Moscow 1991;

C2) 9...h4+ 10.g3 x4 11.e4 c3+ 12. d2 e5 13. g2 fxe4 14.fxe4

14...c3 (14...0-0 15. e2 f6? (Mamedyarov-Wang Hao, Huai’an blitz 2017) 16. f4!±) 15. c1 xe4 16. f4 d4 17. e3 d3 18. e2 0-0 19. f4! with a slight initiative for White after 19...c3+ 20. xc3 xc3± Moskalenko-Karpman, Simferopol 1990.

9...fxe4 10. c2
The key moment.

10...0-0

**WEAPON:** The main alternative (apart from Kramnik’s 10...♘d7) would be 10...e3!? 11.♗d3 ♘d7 12.♘e2 ♘xc5 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.c4! ♖a4 15.♖g6+ ♕f8 16.♗b1 hxg6 17.cxd5↑ Laukola-Ylipartanen, ICCF email 2016.

11.fxe4 ♘f4

**WEAPON:** A favourable endgame for White would ensue after 11...♕h4+ 12.g3 ♕f6 13.♗g2 ♘xc3+ 14.♖xc3 ♘xc3 15.♖f4! ♗d7 16.♖d6 ♖c8 17.♗e2 ♙a4 18.e5! ♖c6 19.♖h3!± Mkenas-Dubinin, ICCF corr 1966.

12.♗f3 ♖c7 13.♗e3 ♘d7 14.♗c4 ♘xc5 15.0-0 ♘d7

We are in a key middlegame position for this line. White must exploit his bishop pair to start an attack.

16.e5

16...♗d4!?

16...♗g6

If 16...♗a4, 17.♖b1 keeps the pressure.

17.♗d4! ♖f4 18.h4

On the attack!

However, better was 18.g3! ♕ff8 19.♖g5↑.

18...♖g4 19.♖g5! ♖xh4 20.♗f5! ♕h8 21.♗f7

The decisive moment of the game.

21...♖g4?

A tactical mistake that allows a beautiful finish. 21...♖d8 was better, with complications.
EXERCISE: Find the winning combination for White.

22. ♘xe6! ♙xg2+ 23. ♔h1!!
A resource my opponent did not expect.
If 23. ♔xg2, 23... ♗c6+ 24. ♔g1 ♔xe6, and Black is still alive.
23... ♔xe6 24. ♘xe6 ♙d8 25. ♘xd7 ♗g5 26. ♘xb7
Attacking both black rooks geometrically along the a8-g2 diagonal. Black resigned.

Blocked centre: 7...exd5

Game 56
Viktor Moskalenko

Felix Barrios

Barcelona 2002 (4)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.a3 ♘xc3+ 5.bxc3 c5!
This continuation is very popular, as it fixes White’s doubled pawns on c3/c4. However, Black has several alternatives: 5...b6!? see Game 53, or the natural 5...0-0, see Game 57.

6.e3
The common move in the Sämisch, preparing ♘d3 and e3-e4. The ‘Kmoch option’ 6.f3!? is a good alternative.

6...0-0 7.♘d3 d5 8.cxd5 exd5
Another important position for the Sämisch. Capturing with the pawn leads to a positional game with the centre temporarily blocked (see also Game 57).

9. \( \textit{\text{♘}} \text{e2} \) \( \textit{\text{b6}} \)

Similar examples that show the best set-ups for White are:

**WEAPON:** 9... \( \textit{\text{♘}} \text{c6} \) 10.0-0 \( \textit{\text{b6}} \) 11.\( \textit{\text{f3}} \) \( \textit{\text{♖}} \text{e8} \)

And now:

A) 12. \( \textit{\text{♘}} \text{g3} \) (preparing e3-e4) 12... \( \textit{\text{♘}} \text{e7} \) 13. \( \textit{\text{♗}} \text{a2!} \) (the usual manoeuvre in this structure) 13... \( \textit{\text{♖}} \text{e6} \) 14. \( \textit{\text{♖}} \text{af2!} \) \( \textit{\text{♗}} \text{d7} \) 15.\( \textit{\text{e4}} \) dxe4 16.\( \textit{\text{♗xe4}} \) cxd4 (16... \( \textit{\text{♘}} \text{g4} \) 17.\( \textit{\text{d5}} \) \( \textit{\text{♗xf2}} \) 18.\( \textit{\text{dxe6!}} \) • 17. \( \textit{\text{♗xf6!}} \) \( \textit{\text{♖xf6}} \) 18. \( \textit{\text{♗h5}} \), winning after 18... \( \textit{\text{♗g4}} \) 19. \( \textit{\text{♗xf6}} + \) \( \textit{\text{♗h8}} \) 20. \( \textit{\text{♗e1!?}} \) \( \textit{\text{♗e6}} \) 21.cxd4 \( \textit{\text{♗d6}} \) 22. \( \textit{\text{♗b2}} \) \( \textit{\text{♗b3}} \) 23. \( \textit{\text{♗d2}} \) 1-0
Moskalenko-Flores Campos, Sitges 2002;

B) The alternative plan is 12.\( \textit{\text{g4?!}} \) \( \textit{\text{♗b7}} \) (or 12... \( \textit{\text{♗d7}} \) 13. \( \textit{\text{♗g3}} \) h6 14. \( \textit{\text{♗c7}} \) 15. \( \textit{\text{♗d5}} \) \( \textit{\text{♗a5}} \) 16.\( \textit{\text{h4!}} \) •
Moskalenko-G.Rodriguez, Badalona 2000) 13. \( \textit{\text{♗g3}} \) \( \textit{\text{♗c7}} \) (or 13... \( \textit{\text{♗c8}} \) 14. \( \textit{\text{♗a2}} \) \( \textit{\text{♗a5}} \) 15.\( \textit{\text{g5}} \) \( \textit{\text{♗d7}} \) 16.\( \textit{\text{♗e4!}} \) •
Moskalenko-Trujillo Villega, Sitges 2011) 14. \( \textit{\text{♗a2}} \) \( \textit{\text{ad8}} \) 15.\( \textit{\text{g5}} \) \( \textit{\text{d7}} \) 16.\( \textit{\text{♗f4!}} \) •

10.\( \textit{\text{f3}} \)

The same position can come about via the variation with 4.\( \textit{\text{f3}} \).

10... \( \textit{\text{♗e8}} \)
PLAN: Or else 10...a6 11.0-0 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3

12...♘c6 (12...♖e8 13.g4!? (13.♕g3!? is the main game) 13...c6 14.a6 ♗d7 15.g3 h6 16.g2 ♖ac8 17.h4 etc.) 13.e4 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♗e8 15.a4! and White controls the whole board, Moskalenko-Petkov, La Pobla de Lillet 2005.

11.0-0 ♗a6 12.♕g3!? 

The immediate exchange allows the black knight to follow another path: 12.xa6 xa6 13.g3 ♗d7 (13...c7!? ∞) 14.d3 a4 15.e4! cxd4 16.cxd4 dxex4 17.fxe4 ♗ad8 18.xf6! ♖xd4 (18...gxex4 19.b2 →) 19.e2 gxf6 20.g4+ ♖h8 21.b2→ ♗c5? 22.f5+− Moskalenko-Bebchuk, Belgrade 1988.

12...xd3 13.xd3 ♗c6

14.b2!

This seems to be the easiest and most natural way to prepare e3-e4.
The alternative is the well-known 14.a2, but here this is too slow.

14...♗c8

Let's see two other critical defences:

**WEAPON:** 14.c4!? 15.e2 h5 (15...b5 16.e4!)
16. ♕f2! (a new, strong move) 16...♕d7 (16...h4?! 17. ♕f5!± Liu Zhaoqi-Li Ruofan, Hanoi 2018) 17. ♕ae1 h4 (17...♕e7 18.e4 h4 19.♕h1! ♕g6 (19...h3 20.♕g3!) 20.e5± Shankland-Sanikidze, Baku 2016) 18.♕h1 h3 19.♕g3! ♕ad8 20.e4! ♕e7 21.♗c1!± Shpakovsky-Ilyasov, ICCF email 2015;

**WEAPON:** 14...h5


15.♕ae1 ♕e6 16.e4!
This advance successfully completes White’s opening strategy in almost all cases. We have reached the desired position, where White is threatening to attack with the e- and f-pawns.

16...cxd4
Black opens up the position, looking for some counterplay.
Otherwise, the following could happen: 16...♘a5 17.e5 ♘d7 18.f4 c4 19.♗c1 cxd4 20.cxd4 ♖c6 21.f5 with an unstoppable attack.

17.cxd4 dxe4 18.fxe4 ♘e5 19.♕d1!
Black cannot save this position.

19...♘c4 20.♗a1 b5 21.d5!
This move marks the beginning of a decisive attack with the central pawns and all the pieces.

21...♖a6 22.♗f5 ♘e8 23.e5! ♘c5 24.e6 ♖f6 25.♗g4 ♖g6 26.♗d4 ♘c7 27.♗h6+ ♖g7 28.♗g4 1-0
A model game for the study of the desired positions for the white pieces in Sämisch set-ups. There are two different plans:
1) Preparing e3-e4, playing in the centre; or
2) Playing the alternative advance g2-g4, combining control in the centre with a possible kingside attack.
See also the next game.

Game 57
Viktor Moskalenko

Cristhian Cruz Sanchez

Montcada 2006 (3)

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♖b4 4.a3

WEAPON: We will first study another defensive idea in the classic set-up for Black: 4.f3 d5 5.a3 ♖xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.e3.
I advise you to look at the next most recent game, from the last tournament of Vladimir Kramnik’s professional chess career: 8...c4 (to block the d3-square and to prepare ...♗b8-c6-a5-b3; 8...♗c7?! is an interesting tactical resource) 9.♖e2 ♖c6 10.g4 ♖a5 11.♖g2 ♖b3 12.♗b1 0-0 13.0-0 b5 (13...h6 14.♖g3?!?) 14.e4! dxe4 15.♖xe4↑.

The punishment begins (the threats are 16.♗g5 or 16.d5): 15...♗xc1 16.♗xc1 ♖xg4 17.♗f4 ♖b8 18.h3 ♖d7 19.e5 ♖e8 20.♖e3 ♖b6 21.d5 ♖c7 22.d6 ♖e6 23.♖d5 ♖a6 24.♗f5! ♖h4 25.♗f1 ♖xa3 26.♖e7+ ♖h8 27.♖xf7 ♖xf7 28.♖xf7 ♖h5 29.♖f4! 1-0 Vidit-Kramnik, Leiden (Tata Steel) 2019;


9.♖e2!? is the most flexible move in this situation:

TRICK: White should be better after 9...h5 (a creative defence, blocking the advance g2-g4) 10.♗f4!?± (I played 10.c4!? in Moskalenko-Suba, Alicante 2000) 10...♖f5? 11.c4! cxd4 12.♖xd4 ♖c6 13.♖xd5! ♖xd5 14.♖xg7 0-0-0 15.cxd5± Grover-Buckley, London 2011.

9...0-0 10.g4! ♖e8 11.♖g2 (11.♖f2!?)

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11...\texttt{c6} (11...\texttt{b6} 12.\texttt{0-0} \texttt{c6} 13.\texttt{g5}?! \texttt{d7} 14.\texttt{f4}! \texttt{b7} 15.\texttt{f5}! → Moskalenko-Suba, Benidorm 2008) 12.\texttt{0-0} \texttt{h6} 13.\texttt{f4} \texttt{a5} 14.\texttt{h4}! \texttt{c4} 15.\texttt{d3} \texttt{cxd4} 16.\texttt{cxd4} \texttt{e6} 17.\texttt{g5}!↑ Moskalenko-Rojas, Montcada 2008.

4...\texttt{xc3+} 5.bxc3 0-0 6.\texttt{f3} \texttt{d5} 7.cxd5

There are many typical traps in this opening.

\textbf{TRICK}: 7...\texttt{xd5}?! is suspicious here after 8.e4!, with the idea of trapping the knight after 8...\texttt{xc3} 9.\texttt{b3} \texttt{xd4} (9...\texttt{xe4} 10.\texttt{fxe4} \texttt{xd4} 11.\texttt{b1}!\texttt{c4}) 10.\texttt{b2} \texttt{e3+} 11.\texttt{e2}! (here is the trick) 11...\texttt{d5} 12.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{xe3} 13.\texttt{f2} and the knight will not get away, Moskalenko-F.Levin, Soviet Union tt 1989.

8.e3 \texttt{f5}!?

Black proposes an exchange of bishops that would be favourable for him without losing tempi, as would be the case with \texttt{...b7-b6/...a6}.

8...\texttt{c5} is similar to Game 56 above.

9.\texttt{e2}!

This is the most flexible development, preparing \texttt{g3} or even \texttt{g2-g4}.

9...\texttt{c5}!

The blockading move 9...\texttt{h5}?! is dubious after kingside castling, for example: 10.\texttt{g3} \texttt{g6} 11.\texttt{d3} \texttt{h4}?! 12.\texttt{f5}
e8 13.g4! with good chances of an attack for free: 13...d6 14.0-0 e8 15.a2! xf5 16.gxf5 d7 17.g2+—Moskalenko-Joa.Fluvia Poyatos, Banyoles 2005.

Vidit-Kramnik during Tata Steel, the round in Leiden, 2019.

10.g4!

A common advance in this structure which also helps White complete his development with g2 followed by castling.
10...e6

A) The knight sacrifice 10...xg4?! looks interesting, but does not work: 11.fxg4 h4+ 12.g3 (12.d2?) 12.e4 13.g1 xh2 14.xe4 xg1 15.xc5; 

B) The retreat 10...g6 leaves the initiative to White after 11.h4! h6 12.f4, Moskalenko-Lakos, Barbera del
Valles 2002.

11. \( \text{g3} \)

11. \( \text{f4!?} \) is always an interesting alternative after g2-g4.

This is a typical position for these structures, but White is already much better thanks to his strong and dynamic pawn mass. There are several moves and plans here.

11... \( \text{c7} \) 12. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{c6} \) 13. \( \text{d3!} \)

The bishop is more effective on this square.

13... \( \text{e8} \) 14.0-0 \( \text{ad8} \) 15.\text{g5}!±

A massive attack begins on the kingside. In this situation there might not be a satisfactory defence any more.

15... \( \text{d7} \) 16.\text{f4} \( \text{f8} \)

16...\text{g6} 17.\text{f5}+–.

17.\text{f5} \( \text{c8} \)

18. \( \text{h5!} \)

These are automatic moves. 18.\text{h5}!?.

18... \( \text{d7} \) 19. \( \text{g4!} \) \( \text{d6} \) 20. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{c4} \) 21. \( \text{c2} \)

Here Black decided to avoid further torment and resigned. A possible finish was 21... \( \text{a5} \) 22. \( \text{f6}+ \) (22. \( \text{xg7!?} \) is also good) 22...\text{xf6} 23.gxf6+–.
In my opinion, the Magistral Casino de Barcelona II was an organizational success. The games were very combative thanks to the rule that prohibited the agreement of draws before move 40.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3 d5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 c6!?

This variation is not as common as 6...c5, but it is quite fashionable nowadays, its main idea being ...0-0, ...b7-b6, ...♗a6 and after cxd5, ...cxd5! with a favourable pawn structure. Grandmasters like Rozentalis and Tiviakov are defenders of this line on the Black side.

7.e3!?

Following the Sämisch theme: preparing the kingside development with ♗d3, ♗e2, 0-0 and then e3-e4!

A) Another interesting possibility is the gambit 7.♕c2 with the idea of advancing e2-e4: 7...dxc4! 8.e4 b5 9.a4, with good compensation for the pawn, as in Moskalenko-Vehi Bach, Paretana 1999;

B) The pinning move 7.♗g5 is very optimistic (but a good weapon for rapid chess). Generally, in this variation the queen’s bishop remains on c1 until the middlegame: 7...0-0 (7...h6 Mamedyarov-Tiviakov, Ajaccio rapid 2008; 7...dxc4!? 8.e4 b5∞ Lund-Vitiugov, Bornholm 2008) 8.e3 ♗bd7 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♗d3 ♖e8 11.♖d2 h6 12.♗h4∞ Mamedyarov-Karjakin, Kolkata rapid 2018;

**WEAPON:** However, GM Volkov offers the pawn on e4 for consumption with the immediate 7.e4!?.
7...dxe4 8.fxe4 ♘xe4 (or 8...e5 9.♗f3 ♘a5 10.♗d3!? exd4 11.♗d2 dxc3 12.♖xc3 S.Volkov-Hou Yifan, Moscow 2008) 9.♖g4 (similar to the aggressive Winawer lines in the French) 9...♗f6 10.♕xg7 ♖g8 11.♖h6 c5 12.♗f3 ♘c6 13.♕g5 ♘g6 14.♖h4↑ cxd4? 15.♗d3!+–. White has some initiative and some extra material, S.Volkov-Moiseenko, Internet 2004.

7...0-0

8.♗d3 b6
I have also faced 8...♗bd7 9.♗e2 e5 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.0-0 e4!? 12.fxe4 dxe4 13.♖c2 ♘b6 14.♕g3 ♗e8.

EXERCISE: How does White break open Black’s king position?

15.♖xf6!? Here this thematic exchange sacrifice is useful to unlock the centre and free the minor pieces: 15...♘xf6 16.♗xe4. For me, this position is easier to play with the white pieces; I won after 32 moves in Moskalenko-Edzgveradze, Alushta 1998.

9.♗e2 ♘a6 10.cxd5

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Forced.

10...cxd5

If 10...♗xd3 11.♗xd3 cxd5 12.c4! White is more comfortable, slowly preparing his standard advance e3-e4, Moskalenko-Vehi Bach, Montcada 2005 and Moskalenko-Tiviakov, Banyoles 2006 & Benidorm 2009.

11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.♕d3

This was the reason for the exchange of the bishop, since thanks to the black knight being on a6 White gains a tempo for carrying through e3-e4 or c3-c4!

12...♕c8

Here we have a typical structure that arises from the Sämisch Variation, and also the Botvinnik set-up for White. Black has defended against c3-c4, but we have another important pawn!

13.e4!

This is a critical position for this line. White must conquer space, and fast, by moving his pawns.

After 13.0-0 ♗b8?!, now 14.e4 would be met by 14...♕a6!=.

13...♗b7

**WEAPON:** 13...♗c7 14.♗g5 ♘d7 15.♗g3!? (a new idea; if 15.0-0, 15...♕a6! almost equalizes, Moskalenko-Beltran Rueda, Sitges 2002) 15...b5 (Black changes plans. My main trick was to take advantage of the extra tempo after 15...♕a6 16.♗xa6 ♘xa6 17.exd5 exd5 18.♗f5!± and White has a long-term initiative) 16.0-0 ♗b6 17.e5! (preparing a standard attack with f4-f5) 17...f6 18.exf6 gxf6
19. h6 f7 20.f4! f5 21. h5 with a winning initiative for White, Moskalenko-Giffard, Banyoles 2007; 13...e5?! was a surprising idea. Now, 14. g5! is a strong intermediate move: 14... d7 15.exd5 exd4 16.cxd4 e8 17.0-0 c7 18. c3 b7 19. c4 Moskalenko-A.Kovacevic, Villa Salou 2000.

14.e5 d7 15.a4!
This prevents ...b6-b5 and opens the a3-f8 diagonal for the bishop.

15... ab8
This imprisoning of the rook on a8 looks terrible, but Black prepares the manoeuvre ...a6.

15... ac8 16. a3

16. a3 c8 17.f4!
The white army closes in, preparing the final attack.

17... a6 18. b5? I had faith in my position. However, the most logical option would have been to avoid the queen exchange with 18. f3!, playing for a kingside attack.

18... c4
18... xb5 19.axb5

19. d6 c8 20.f5!
One step beyond.

20... xc3
Quite an optimistic move. My opponent does not sense the danger.
The correct reaction was to develop with 20... c6!? 21.fxe6 fxe6 22.0-0 b4?!, with some chances to complicate the game. White could reply 23.a5+–.

21.0-0!
General chess rules recommend castling queenside before move 21, but I was short on time!

Of course, not 21. xc3? xc3+ 22. e2 c6+.

21... c4 22.fxe6 fxe6 23. ac1!
Now Black is caught in zugzwang, he has only few moves at his disposal.

23... a6 24. b3 b5!? 25. xc4!
Preparing a nice surprise gift.

25... bxc4
25...dxc4 would not change the situation: 26. h3 e8 27. f4 c6 28. xe6+–.

26. h3
Black is lost. He has no time to make up for all his disadvantages.

26... e8 27. f4 c6 28. xe6 c8
EXERCISE: Find the winning move.

29. ♖f8!!
The knight is sacrificed on the best-defended square on the board! This was a decisive resource that I had spotted when I played 25. ♖xc4. After this strong blow, Black resigned in view of 29... ♖xf8 30. ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 31. ♕e6+, winning.

Game 59 – 5... ♗e7!? Game 11
Viktor Moskalenko
Joan Fluvia Poyatos
Mataro 2004 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3 d5 5.a3 ♗e7!?
Withdrawing the bishop yields a solid game, similar to the Queen’s Gambit. But here White has some extra tempi.

WEAPON: Similar is 5... ♘d6
6.e4! dxe4 (6...c5 – see note to move 6) 7.fxe4 e5 8.d5 c6 (8...0-0 9.♘f3 ♗g4 10.h3 ♘h5 11.♗e3?!N)

6.e4!
Fighting for the centre.
6...dxe4

WEAPON: An interesting idea against 6...c5 is 7.dxc5!? ♗xc5 8.b4

analysis diagram

8...♗xg1 (8...d6 9.cxd5 ♗e5 10.♗xe2! exd5 11.f4 (11.♗f4!?) 11...♗xc3+ 12.♗xc3 ♗g4 13.♗d3± Moskalenko-Atalik, Budapest 1991) 9.♗xg1 d4 (9...a5 10.♗f4!N) 10.e5! and White gets the advantage: 10...dxc3 11.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 12.exf6 gxf6 13.♗e3±, Moskalenko-Rashkovsky, Balassagyarmat 1990.

Slightly passive is 6...0-0 7.e5!, gaining space: 7...♗d7 (7...e8 8.f4±, Moskalenko-Rosich, Mataro 1999) 8.cxd5 ♗b6 9.♖d3!?± Timofeev-Iordachescu, Moscow 2008.

7.fxe4 e5 8.d5

8...♗c5!?
The most active defence. White will be better if the game develops slowly: 8...0-0 9.♖d3 a5 10.♗f3 ♗g4
(10....bd7 11.0-0 e8 12.d1 d6 13.b1 c5 14.b5 Moskalenko-Kholmov, Belgorod 1990) 11.0-0 bd7 12.h3 h5 13.b1 e8 14.e3 c6 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.b4! axb4 17.axb4 c5 18.b5, see the curious finale in *Training with Moska* (Chapter 1), Moskalenko-I.Novikov, Odessa 1989.

9. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \)

This is the best way to develop the kingside. White is now ready to kick the bishop with b2-b4.

9... \( \text{\textit{g4}} \)

Another dynamic move, but Black will need more material for a serious counterattack.

**WEAPON:** More popular is the blockading idea 9... \( g4 \)!? 10.h3 xf3 (if 10...h5, 11.d3!? (or 11.d3!? bd7 and now: 12.g4 g6 13.c2! 11...0-0 12.g4 Oreopoulos-Mukherjee, ICCF email 2014) 11.xf3 bd7. The critical moment. Usually White plays 12.d3 here, but instead, he can save this tempo for a flank attack. For instance 12.g5!? At first White provokes ...h7-h6, and then g2-g4/h3-h4 will be more effective (but also interesting is immediately 12.d2!? 0-0 13.0-0 c6 14.g4! etc.)! 12...h6 (12...d4?! 13.e2 xb2? 14.a2! d4 15.xd4 exd4 16.e5! Ganguly-Filippov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009) 13.d2! 0-0 14.d3 (14.g4!? 14...c6 15.g4 d4 16.h4↑ and White already threatens with 17.g5!.

10. \( \text{\textit{a4}} \)!

White prefers a positional approach in the opening, and tactics later.

**WEAPON:** Sharper is 10.b4
10...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{d}7}}

\textbf{WEAPON:} The check 10...\texttt{\textbf{f}2+} is tactically interesting: 11.\texttt{\textbf{e}2}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{diagram1}
\end{center}

11...\texttt{\textbf{b}5} (if 11...\texttt{\textbf{h}4}, 12.\texttt{\textbf{g}3} \texttt{\textbf{e}7} 13.\texttt{\textbf{h}3} \texttt{\textbf{f}6} 14.\texttt{\textbf{c}3} 0-0 15.\texttt{\textbf{f}2} and White is more comfortable here, Malaniuk-Douven, Almaty 1989) 12.\texttt{\textbf{cxb}5}? \texttt{\textbf{d}7} 13.\texttt{\textbf{g}5}! \texttt{f6} (13...\texttt{\textbf{xb}5+} 14.\texttt{\textbf{d}2\textbf{d}5} 14.\texttt{\textbf{h}3} \texttt{\textbf{xb}5+} 15.\texttt{\textbf{d}2} \texttt{\textbf{d}7} 16.\texttt{hxg}4 \texttt{fxg}5 17.\texttt{b3+} Simeone-Ermolaev, ICCF email 2006; It’s dubious to take the exchange: 10...\texttt{\textbf{f}2}? 11.\texttt{\textbf{c}2} \texttt{\textbf{xh}1} 12.\texttt{\textbf{xc}5+}–.

11.\texttt{\textbf{xc}5} \texttt{\textbf{xc}5} 12.\texttt{\textbf{c}2} \texttt{\textbf{a}5} 13.\texttt{\textbf{h}3} \texttt{\textbf{f}6} 14.\texttt{\textbf{d}3} \texttt{\textbf{d}6} 15.\texttt{\textbf{e}3} 0-0 16.0-0

16.0-0-0!?

16...\texttt{\textbf{a}4} 17.\texttt{\textbf{f}2?} \texttt{\textbf{fd}7} 18.\texttt{\textbf{af}1}\texttt{\textbf{d}5}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{diagram2}
\end{center}

With a stable edge for White, even though the black structure is quite solid, too. The game ended in a draw on move 62, when I was still better but had little time left.
In this game we see an interesting pawn fight in the opening, which results in a dangerous initiative for White. This was followed by an attack in which the rest of the white army also took part.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♖b4

My opponent was unknown to me, but he was one of the leaders in the tournament.

4.f3!

For these reasons I decided to enter well-known lines.

4...♘c6!?

This is one of the most creative replies here. The general idea is to fight against White’s central pawns with minor pieces.

5.e4!

**WEAPON:** The exchange of the black bishop can also be invited immediately with 5.a3!? a la the Sämisch: 5...♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 d6 7.e4
analysis diagram

7...e5!? (7...h6 – scared of ♗g5 – 8.♗d3 e5 9.♗e2 ♘h5 10.♗e3!? ♘h4+ 11.g3 ♘f3 12.♗f2 0-0 13.♗g1! ♘d7 14.g4± Moskalenko-Rogovski, Alushta 1999) 8.♗e3 (also 8.♗e2!?)

TRICK: 8...b6 9.♗d3 ♖a6?? 10.♕a4 ♖b7 11.d5+–, Sämisch-Capablanca, Karlsbad 1929;
8...0-0 9.♗d3 b6 10.♗e2 ♖a6 11.♗g3 ♖a5 12.♖e2 ♖e8 13.0-0 ♖a4 14.f4+– Moskalenko-Douven, Metz 1990.

5...e5
Another interesting possibility to attack the centre is 5...d5!?, a blow that follows Queen’s Gambit patterns: 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e5 ♖g8. The critical position in this line. White usually plays 8.a3!?, but with time I found a new way to develop the pieces (see line A), keeping the pawn on f3:

A) Playing blitz on the Internet (handle: CapNemo), I have tried 8.♗b5!? ♖ge7 9.♖e2 a6 (9...0-0 10.♖g5!) 10.♖a4 ♖f5 11.0-0 ♖d7 12.a3 ♖a5 13.b4 ♖b6 14.♖h1+ CapNemo-Ovet, playchess.com 2006;
B) 8.a3!? ♖a5 9.♖b5! (this is my idea, defending the d4-pawn against ...♖h4+) 9...♖ge7 10.♖e2 0-0 11.♖g5! ♖d7? (this modest defence curiously loses the d5-pawn. If 11...♖b6, 12.♖a4!?) 12.b4! ♖b6 13.♖xd5 and White kept his advantage till the end, Moskalenko-Gonzalez Garcia, Ampolla rapid 2005.

6.a3
Transposing to the Sämisch.

WEAPON: A dynamic option was played in an old game of mine: 6.d5!? ♖d4 7.a3! ♖e7 8.♖d3 ♖h5 9.♖ce2!? c5 10.♖xd4 cxd4 11.g3! g6 12.♖e2 d6 13.h4! f5 14.exf5 ♖xf5 15.♖h6 ♖f8 16.♖g5 ♖e7 17.g4!
17... exd3 18. exd3 g7 19. g3! xg5 20. hxg5 dxe4 21. e4↑ d5 22. e2↑ h5 23. c5↑ – Moskalenko-Conquest, Paris 1992.

6... exd4
A novelty. The only move used so far was 6... xc3+, see 5.a3.

7. axb4 dxc3

Now, in case of the natural 8.bxc3, the position would be balanced, with equal chances.

8. b5!
The first of a few surprises. The most important thing now is not to let the opponent breathe and to gain the initiative.

8... e5 9. f4!
The pawns chase the knights.

9... g6 10. e5
I do not remember having ever played nine out of ten moves in the opening with pawns!

10... e4
Here my opponent offered a draw.

11. f3
This is only the second move in the game where White played with a piece.

11...♕e7
If 11...cxb2, 12.♗xb2 ♕e7 13.♘a3 d6 14.♗d3, with initiative for White.

12.bxc3 d6 13.♗d3 ♘c5 14.0-0

Opening summary: White has completed his development and keeps a nice advantage. ‘Why?’, the surprised reader might ask. The answer is easy, though. White has advantages in development; space, pawn structure and the two bishops, but the main point is that the black king is in great danger and cannot escape.

For his part, Black has nothing to offer against these arguments. My opponent’s position will collapse soon.

14...dxe5

A) 14...♘xd3! makes things more complicated for White, and now 16.fxg6 hxg6 17.♗xe4 with the threat 18.a3, and all variations favour White.

B) If 15...e4, 16.fxg6 hxg6 17.♗xe4 ♘xe4 18.♗a3+={.

15.♗a3!

A position worth looking at. The black queen is a kind of Amazon that must control and protect her crazy horses. But she can’t!
16...♘xf3+
16...♕xf5 17.♗xf5 ♘xf5 18.♗e1! ♕d8 19.♖c2 e4 20.♗d2+-.
17.♗xf3
The white position is already winning, but this still has to be proved.
17...♗d6
17...e4 18.♖xe4 ♕xe4 19.♖ae1+-.
18.♕e3 ♕xd3
18...b6 19.♖e4 ♕b8 20.♘fd1 ♕e7 21.♘c6+ ♕f8 22.♖d5+-.
19.♖xe5+! ♕e6 20.♗xe6 ♖xe6 21.♖d1!
Black resigned as he cannot stop the many mate threats: 21...♕xc4 (21...♕g6 22.♕c5!) 22.♖xg7+-.

Summary
In the overwhelming majority of key positions in these lines, it is still possible to find new and promising paths, even though opening theory considers that they lead to balanced positions. Therefore, if you like the kind of positions in this study of the systems with 4.a3 and 4.f3 – get smart and get ready to fight!

The most important point in this chapter is that while studying this variation, you will also be led along a number of side-paths and you will enjoy learning about GM Sämisch’s aggressive ideas against the Nimzo-Indian Defence.

In the next part of this chapter, we will continue this study, investigating a number of interesting options in the main directions of the Sämisch and Kmoch Variations.
Nimzo-Indian: The Trojan Horse

Part II. A Trojan Horse in the Nimzo War
Possibly the most difficult thing in chess is to make a positional sacrifice. Firstly, because such a sacrifice cannot be calculated, and secondly because our mind tends to work differently.

The beautiful resource ♖ d4!, or ‘The Trojan Horse’
In this second part of this chapter, I would like to present to the reader an extraordinary idea in the Sämisch System, which can arise after both 4.f3 and 4.a3: a knight sacrifice on the central square d4 – the best protected square on the board!

In the Nimzo-Indian Defence, the ♖ d4 sacrifice can be made in two types of positions:

Closed structure

How to continue the struggle when the entire position is blocked? Constructing stairs to climb a wall can be a waste of time. Perhaps we can break the wall with a piece sacrifice – but how?
In the first two model games we will find a possible answer, following the idea of the Trojan Horse in Homerus’ Iliad.

Semi-open structure
There is also a super-modern version of the sacrifice ♘d4! if White plays it in a semi-open centre. This is a lesser-known manoeuvre in this type of position. I learned that this sacrifice can also be made in semi-open structures when I saw an astonishing game by Shakhriyar Mamedyarov – and in my favourite Nimzo-Indian line as well.

15. ♘d4! – an excellent positional sacrifice! See Game 63, Mamedyarov-Huzman.
A year after seeing Mamedyarov’s manoeuvre, I took advantage of this knowledge in a position with the same structure (diagram on the right):
My surprising $20. \texttt{Nd4!}$ was the key to my plan, initiated on move 15. White’s dark-square attack is started with the sacrifice of his knight! See Moskalenko-Cuadras Avellana (Game 64) and the other examples on the theme of the Trojan Horse.
In this beautiful game we find what is likely the original idea of the ♘d4 sally in closed positions.

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♗b4 4. f3 c5 5. d5 ♗xc3+ 6. bxc3 e5

An equivalent option is 6...d6 7. e4 and now 7...e5. But if Black does not close the centre, playing 7...♕e7 (Mamedyarov-Karpov, Moscow blitz 2008), the best move order for White is 8. ♘e2!? 0-0 9. ♘g3 ♘bd7 10. ♗e2± followed by castling kingside.

7. e4 d6 8. ♗d3 ♘bd7 9. ♘e2 ♘f8

We find ourselves in a typical blocked Nimzo-Indian structure.

10. h4!?

A standard flank attack, with the idea of meeting 10...♘g6 with 11.h5!.

**WEAPON:** 10. ♗c2 ♘d7 11. ♗e3 ♘c7 12. ♗b1 ♘g6 13.0-0 h6 14. ♘d2 ♘e7 15.a4 a5 16. ♘d4!! (White could continue calmly with, 16. ♘g3!? but with the centre closed Black has plenty of chances to defend).
Here is the ‘Trojan Horse’. Take my knight and watch what happens! 16...exd4 (or 16...cxd4 17.cxd4 exd4 18...xd4 d7 19.f4 f6 20.b5 with a winning attack) opens up the centre, giving way to the ‘legion’ of white pawns, e.g. 17.cxd4 b6 18.e5! (crushing the enemy centre) 18...xe5 (if 18...dxe5, 19.dxc5 bxc5 20.b5 with a strong attack) 19.dxe5 and the white initiative is decisive, J.Rodriguez-S.Mellano, Argentina 1989.

10...d7
The second example was my first experience with d4!: 10...h5 11.g5! h8 12.d2 a5 13.d7 14.a4 0-0 15.e3 h8 16.h1 g8 17.g3 b8 18.c5 a3 c8 19.b5 c7 20.a5 a8 21.d4!.

21...e7. Black does not risk opening up his fortress, but rather allows the Trojan Horse to improve its position (accepting the sacrifice is always dangerous, e.g. 21...exd4 22.cxd4 cxd4 23.d4 -- threatening 24.b6): 22.f5 xf5 23.exf5, Moskalenko-Kusch, Marganets 1999.

11.h5 h6 12.e3ting 25.d8...
26. ♘d4! →
Another beautiful example of the Trojan Horse manoeuvre.

26...exd4
26...cxd4 was even worse.
27.cxd4 ♖h7 28.♖b6!? ♘h5 29.g4 cxd4? 30.♗xd4 ♘f4 31.a6!+–
The decisive breakthrough in this Trojan war-game, breaking open the enemy king’s fortress.
31...♗e8 32.axb7+ ♘xb7 33.♖xb7 ... 1-0 (40)

Game 62
Viktor Moskalenko 2518

Jorge Gonzalez Rodriguez 2312

Montcada 2000 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3 c5 5.d5 d6 6.e4 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 e5 8.♗d3 ♕a5
With the centre closed, Black attacks the white queenside weaknesses, but this is too optimistic.

_WEAPON: The more solid option was 8...♕e7 9.♗e2 ♗bd7 10.g4!? h5 11.g5 ♗h7 12.h4 g6 13.♗e3 ♘d8 14.♗d2!?.
In blocked positions, kings can move about freely. 14...\textcolor{red}{\text{♔}}c7 15.\textcolor{red}{\text{♕}}g1 b6 16.\textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}g3 \textcolor{red}{\text{♗}}b7 17.a4 a5 18.\textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}ab1 \textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}h8 19.\textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}h1 \textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}a6 20.f4 exf4 21.\textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}xf4 f6 (there is no time for 21...\textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}e8 22.\textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}d4!!) 22.gxf6 \textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}xf6.

**EXERCISE:** How can White win?

23.\textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}d4! cxd4 24.cxd4 \textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}b7 25.\textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}xd6!. Sacrificing another piece (a Trojan Bishop!) to dominate the board with the four pawns: 25...\textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}xd6 26.e5!. One for all and all for one! White won easily in Eslon-Pogorelov, San Sebastian 2000.

**WEAPON:** A typical example of closed combat was 10...\textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}f8 11.f4!? \textcolor{red}{\text{♗}}g6 12.f5 \textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}e7 13.\textcolor{red}{\text{♕}}e1 \textcolor{red}{\text{♗}}d7 14.\textcolor{red}{\text{♗}}g3 \textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}f8 15.\textcolor{red}{\text{♗}}g5 \textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}eg8 16.a4 \textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}b8 17.\textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}h4 h6 18.\textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}e2 \textcolor{red}{\text{♗}}e8 19.g4!

19...f6 20.\textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}f2 \textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}d8 21.a5 \textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}e7 22.\textcolor{red}{\text{♘}}g1! \textcolor{red}{\text{♗}}f7 23.\textcolor{red}{\text{♗}}f3 \textcolor{red}{\text{♖}}e7 24.g5+- Moskalenko-Kazantsev, Moscow 1996.
11.a4 d7 12.d2!?
Preparing 13.d4! Finally I had learned the idea of this fabulous manoeuvre.

12...a6

**TRICK:** Now 12...a6 would lose a piece after 13.a5 xc4 14.g3 b5 15.e2 a3 16.c4! xc4 17.fc1+– etc.

13.d4!

![Chess board diagram]

Take my horse, please!

13...c8

The only defence.
If 13...xa4, 14.f5! 0-0 15.f4+–.
Black cannot capture 13...cxd4?? as after 14.cxd4 the queen is lost.

14.f4
Sharpening up the position.
Safer was 14.b3 c7 15.f4!, with a winning initiative.

14...e7??
Total confusion caused by the powerful Trojan Horse.
14...cxd4!? was the main response: 15.cxd4 b6! 16.c5 b2!, with an extremely complicated position.

15.fxe5 dxe5 16.b3 c7 17.e3 g4
17...b6 18.a5!.

18.e1 b6 19.a5!+–
Demolishing Black’s structure.

19...c8 20.g3!
With new threats.
20...h5 21.h3 0-0 22.g5 g6 23.xf6 gxf6 24.hxg4 1-0

**Semi-open structure**

**Game 63**
**Shakhriyar Mamedyarov** 2646

**Alexander Huzman** 2577

**Warsaw Ech 2005 (3)**
Here is Mamedyarov’s ‘hypermodern’ version of the move ♘d4!.

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.a3 ♘xc3+ 5.bxc3 c5 6.f3!?  
Typical Sämisch/Kmoch transpositions. 6.e3 was seen in Games 52 and 56 of Part I.

6...d5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.dxc5 ♜a5 9.e4 ♘c7  
This allows White to execute a favourable exchange of queens. The more usual alternatives 9...♘e7 and 9...♘f6 we have already studied in Part I.

But not 9...♘xc3?, which is met by 10.♗d2+.

![Chess Board](image)

10.♗d4  
Recently, 10.♗e3!? 0-0 11.♗f2 ♘ba6?! (11...c6) 12.♗d6!± Mamedyarov-Vidit, Kolkata rapid 2018.

10...f6 11.♕b4!  
At the beginning of my chess career I played more sharply: 11.♗e3!? ♘c6 12.♗c4 e5 13.♗b3 ♘e6 14.♗xb7!? (14.♗c4=) 14...0-0? (14...d7??) 15.♗xc6 ♘fd8 (if 15...♗xc3+, 16.♗f2 ♘xa1 17.♗xc7+ 16.♗f2!? (to sacrifice the queen and improve my pawn structure; 16.♗b1!?) 16...♗d7 17.♗b7 ♘ab8 18.♗c4+ ♘h8 19.♗b4! (a curious alternative to the Trojan Horse) 19...♗xb4 20.cxb4 with a very comfortable game for White: 20...♗a4 21.♗e2 ♘b5 22.♗xb5 ♘xb5 23.♗hc1 a5 24.c6 ♘c8 25.bxa5 ♘d4 26.♗xd4 exd4 27.♗d2 h5 28.♗ab1 ♘xa3 29.c7 ♘d6 30.♗b6 ♘xb2 31.f4! 1-0 Moskalenko-Yakovovich, Tallinn 1987.

11...♗c6 12.♗xa5 ♘xa5
13. \( \text{b1} \)!

Earlier I had tried 13. \( \text{e3 e5!} \) 14. \( \text{h3 e6} \) 15. \( \text{f2 0-0-0} \) 16. \( \text{d3 b3} \) 17. \( \text{b1 b5} \) 18.\( \text{c4 d4!} \) with equal chances, Moskalenko-Ivanchuk, Madrid rapid 2000.

13... \( \text{d7} \)

**WEAPON:** Against 13...\( \text{e5} \) interesting is 14.\( \text{f4!?} \) (14.\( \text{e2} \) is similar to the game) 14...\( \text{exf4} \) 15.\( \text{xf4 e6} \) 16.\( \text{d6 d7} \) and now 17.\( \text{e5!} \)

\[\text{analysis diagram}\]

17... \( \text{c8} \) (17...\( \text{fxe5?!} \) 18.\( \text{f3} \)) 18.\( \text{xf6 gxf6} \) 19.\( \text{e2!?} \) J.Anderson-Bennett, ICCF email 2011.

14. \( \text{e2!?} \)

A novelty. The knight wants to jump to d4. 14.\( \text{d2 e5} \) 15.\( \text{c4 c6} \) 16.\( \text{e3 a5} \) \( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \) Fessler-Lemutov, ICCF email 2012.

14... \( \text{e5} \)

Black does not seem to believe it.

14... \( \text{a6} \) 15.\( \text{e3} \) Ulybin-Hulak, Croatia tt 2000.

15. \( \text{d4!} \)
An excellent positional sacrifice!

After 15. ♖g3 g6 16.f4 ♖e6 the position is equal, V.Milov-Akobian, Morelia 2007.

15...0-0-0!?  
GM Huzman does not take any risks, knowing the idea of his opponent, and prefers to play the endgame with a pawn down.

In the variation 15...exd4 16.cxd4 0-0-0 (16...0-0? 17. ♗d2+– Khenkin-Rodriguez Cespedes, Sauzal Tenerife rapid 2007) 17.d5 ♖a4 Black can try to return the piece on d5, but White remains better: 18.♖b4! ♕c2 19.♖d2 ♖b3 20.♖e3=.  

16.♗xb5! ♖xb5  
Or, for instance, 16...♖xb5 17.♖xb5 ♖xb5 18.♖xb5 ♕c6 19.♕e2 and White has a slight advantage and is also a pawn up, Gyimesi-Drasko, Bosnia and Herzegovina tt 2007.

17.♖xb5 ♕c7 18.♕e2 ♖e6 19.♕e3 ♖c4+ 20.♕xc4 ♖xc4 21.♖b4 ♖xe3 22.♕xe3 ♖d7 23.♖b1 ♕c6 24.♖b2 ♖hd8 25.♕e2! 非
25...♗xc5?! 26.♖xb7 ♔c4 27.♔f2? ♔xc3 28.♔g3?!
28...♖b1! with the idea of 29.♖c1+ and 30.♖cc7!.

28...g6 29.a4 f5 30.exf5 gxf5 31.a5 a6 32.♖xd7 ♖xd7 33.♖b6 ♖g7+?
The decisive error.
The correct way was 33...e4!? 34.♖f4 ♖d3 with active counterplay, allowing Black to escape.

34.♔f2 ♖g6 35.h4!
This decides the game.

35...♖d2 36.h5 ♖g5 37.h6! e4
Too late.

38.♖d6+ ♔c3 39.♖xa6 ♖d4 40.♖d6+ ♔e5 41.♖d7
After reaching the time control, Black resigned.

**Game 64**
Viktor Moskalenko
Jordi Cuadras Avellana
Banyoles 2006 (4)

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♖b4 4.f3! d5 5.a3 ♖xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.dxc5 ♖a5 9.e4 ♖e7 10.♖e3 0-0 11.♖b3 ♖d7

**WEAPON:** Karpov preferred the direct queen retreat 11...♖c7, see Game 54, Part I. Curiously, this could be the stem game for the ♖d4 idea in semi-open positions, but unfortunately it was missed by White: 12.♖b5 ♖ec6 13.♖d1!? (after 21 years: 13.♖e2 ♖a5 14.♖b4 e5 15.0-0 ♖e6 16.♖d4! Anand-Wang Hao, Wijk aan Zee 2011) 13...♖a5 14.♖b4 e5 15.♖e2 ♖e6 16.♖d4! (16.c4?! a6! as in Timman-Karpov, Kuala Lumpur 1990).
This time it is useful to improve the central pawn structure and activate White’s pieces: 16...exd4 17.cxd4↑.

12.♗b5!? 

White fights to retain his material plus, maintaining his pawn on c5.

12...♗c7 13.♕xd7!
For 13.♗b4 ♘c6! see the notes to Game 54 in Part I (9...♘f6).

13...♕xd7 14.♗e2 e5!? 
Black is preparing a common plan, developing his counterplay on the light squares and planning ...♗e6 and ...♘c6-a5-c4.

15.♖b1!
The critical moment. To fight for the advantage I need to find a plan, a strategy, an effective trick.

15...♖ab8 16.0-0 ♘c6 

**WEAPON:** Or 16...♗e6 17.♗a4 ♘c6 18.♖d1 ♖d8 19.♗d4!
19...exd4 20.cxd4 with a central initiative for White.

17.♖fd1 ♘a5N

WEAPON: Later I played 17...♗e6 18.♕a4! ♖fd8 19.♘d4!.

This manoeuvre always seems to work: 19...exd4 20.cxd4 with a clear initiative: 20...♕a5 21.d5 ♖d7 22.♗b4+, Moskalenko-Sanchez Botella, Benidorm rapid 2006.

18.♗b4 ♕e6 19.♗f2! ♕c4
At this point my opponent seemed to have accomplished all his plans. But he was not so happy after my next move.  
20. ♘d4!  
The key to the plan initiated on move 15. White wants to attack on the dark squares in return for giving up his knight!  
20...exd4 21.cxd4  
The failure of Black’s strategy is evident. Soon he will lose a lot of material.  
21...a5  
21...b5 22.♗g3+–.  
22.♕c3 b5 23.cxb6  
Recovering material.  
23.♗g3+– was also interesting.  
23...♕c8  
If 23...♖xb6, 24.♖xb6 ♕xb6 25.d5, winning.  
24.d5+– ♔d8 25.dxe6 ♕xd1+ 26.♕xe6 ♖xe6 27.♗b1 h6 28.b7 ♕a6 29.h3 f6 30.♗d3 1-0  

**Summary of the Trojan Horse concept**  
White’s beautiful move ♘d4!, which is so similar to the idea of the Trojan Horse, can be an important resource in many variations of the Nimzo-Indian Defence. In closed positions it serves to attack the blocked centre and to help opening up the enemy stronghold, whereas in semi-open positions it serves to improve White’s own pawn structure and to activate the white pieces.
CHAPTER 8

Slav Defence, Exchange Variation

The exciting modern interpretation
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5 cxd5

If anyone ever writes a book on the Exchange French (The Exciting Exchange?), it would have to be VM and he would make it seem like fun! – Glenn Flear (Yearbook 98).

A bit of history
The Slav Exchange Variation was always considered to be a drawish opening, but the modern interpretation has shaken this assessment. It is not by chance that many grandmasters, including Vladimir Kramnik until recently, play this with white to win. Black needs to play very precisely to solve his opening problems.

Since I started to work as a coach and to write books, I began to use this option due to lack of time to study theory. The Exchange Variation was an ideal fit for my *Attacking Repertoire for White*, and I am satisfied with the results so far.

Directions
• It makes more sense to start the game with 4.♘c3 (or 4.♗f4!?!), since the squares c3 for the queen’s knight and f4 for the bishop are mandatory, but the king’s knight can sometimes be brought to e2;
• However, there are many interesting alternatives (and transpositions) with the early move ♘f3 (Games 68 and 69).

Game 65: 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♗f4 ♘c6 6.e3 e6 leads Black to a passive defence, since his light-squared bishop has no prospects after this move.
In response, White needs to put pressure on the c-file in combination with piece play in the centre, using the dark squares (this tip is useful in other games as well).

The first game in this chapter also provides an informative look at important options on the 4th and 5th moves: 4.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{c6} \), 4.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e5} \), 4.\( \text{f4!?} \) \( \text{b6} \) and 4.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 5.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{b6} \).

In the remaining games, Black is trying to bring his c8-bishop into the battle: either on g4, or on f5.

Game 66: 6/7...\( \text{g4} \);
Game 67: 6...\( \text{f5} \);
Games 68 and 69: Combining various set-ups vs ...\( \text{f5} \).
Slav Exchange – Games

A passive defence: 6...e6

Game 65
Viktor Moskalenko
Jaime Cuartas

Catalonia tt rapid 2012 (9)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5

PUZZLE: White can start with 3.♘c3!? ♘f6 and now 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.♗f4!, avoiding some intermediate options.

3...cxd5

WEAPON: Both theory and players are more prone to 4.♗f4!?. Black can try 4...♗b6, a typical counterattack against an early sortie of the c1-bishop and a favourite of GM Dreev (4...♘c6 5.e3! leads to the main variation): 5.♘c3 e6 6.♗d2 (6.♗b1!?; 6.♘c1!? is in gambit style: 6...♘c6 7.e3 ♘xb2 8.♗d3∞ Chetverik-Günthner, Bad Ems 2006) 6...♗f6 7.e3 ♘c6 8.♗d3 ♘d7 9.♗f3 (9.h3!? prevents ...♘h5) 9...♗e7 10.h3! 0-0 11.0-0 Moskalenko-Dreev, Benidorm rapid 2007. White’s set-up is more active.

WEAPON: 4...♘c6!? 5.e4!? (if 5.♗f4 e5!? or 5.♗f3 ♘f6 6.♗f4, trying to get into the main line, but 6...♘h5!? is Black’s recent hit: 7.♗e5!? (after 7.♖d2= Carlsen even lost to Nepomniachtchi in London 2017) 7...f6 8.♗g3∞)

4...♘c3

4...♗f6

In this line with 4.♘c3, Black has two tactical options to unbalance the game:
5...dxe4. GM Sakaev, in his book *Slav Defence* (2012), gives this as equalizing, but I found refutations on moves 9 and 12 (if 5...e6, 6.e5!? leads to the Advance French: 6...♘e7 7.♘f3 ♘f5 8.a3; in fact, 5...♗f6!? is probably the best defence: 6.e5 ♘e4 7.♘xe4?! ♗f5 8.♘g3 ♘xg3 9.hxg3 e6 10.♗e3 ♘b6 11.♕d2= Bocharov-S.Ivanov, St Petersburg 2004): 6.d5 ♘e5 7.♕a4+! ♗d7 8.♕xe4 ♘g6

9.♗c4! (Sakaev gives only 9.♗f3) 9...♗f6 10.♗e2 a6 11.♗f3 b5 12.♗d3!N. White has a significant advantage; **WEAPON**: 4...e5 comes with a surprise effect, but nothing more: 5.dxe5 d4 6.♗e4 ♘a5+ 7.♗d2! ♗c6 8.♗gf3
A) 8...\textit{f}5?! 9.g3 \textit{b}4? (9...\textit{d}8 10.\textit{g}2\textbf{+} 10.\textit{xd}4 \textit{g}6 11.e3+–;
B) 8...\textit{g}4 9.g3 \textit{xf}3 10.\textit{exf}3 \textit{xe}5+ 11.\textit{e}2\textbf{+} \textit{xe}2+ 12.\textit{xe}2 0-0-0 13.\textit{c}4 with a clearly better ending in D.Fridman-Hector, Germany Bundesliga 2009/10;
C) 8...\textit{h}6 9.g3 \textit{g}4 10.\textit{g}2 \textit{e}3 11.fxe3 dxe3 12.0-0 exd2 13.\textit{xd}2 \textit{b}6+ 14.\textit{h}1 \textit{e}7 15.\textit{g}5 0-0 16.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 17.\textit{d}4\textbf{+}. White is a pawn up and has more active pieces, Yevseev-Sergienko, Russia tt 2004.

5.\textit{f}4!
For ‘Trompowsky’ fun: 5.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}4!?

5...\textit{c}6

**WEAPON:** If now Dreev’s 5...\textit{b}6, White can safely sacrifice a pawn – compensation is guaranteed in all natural continuations: 6.\textit{c}1 (or 6.e3!? \textit{xb}2 7.\textit{b}5+ \textit{d}7 (7...\textit{c}6 8.\textit{ge}2\textbf{+} 8.\textit{xd}7+ \textit{bxd}7 9.\textit{ge}2 \textit{a}3 10.\textit{b}1 \textit{b}6 11.0-0 \textit{a}6 12.f3!)) 6...\textit{d}7 (well-known is 6...\textit{c}6 7.e3 \textit{xb}2 8.\textit{d}3 \textit{g}4 9.\textit{ge}2 \textit{xe}2 10.\textit{xe}2 \textit{e}5? 11.dxe5 \textit{b}4 12.0-0 Guklo-Dvoretsky, Vilnius 1978) 7.e3 \textit{xb}2 8.\textit{d}3 \textit{e}6 9.\textit{ge}2 \textit{a}3? 10.0-0 a6

11.e4!. White has a strong initiative (11.\textit{e}5 is more complicated, but it used to be popular due to a beautiful

**WEAPON:** If Black is going for ...e7-e6, it’s better to play it now: 5...e6 6.e3 ♗e7!? 7.♗d3 0-0 8.h3 a6!? (preparing ...b7-b5 and ...♗b7) 9.♗f3 b5!? 10.0-0 ♗b7.

This set-up is known from the Chebanenko Variation (...c7-c6/...a7-a6). Perhaps White has some advantage, but the position is closed and it is difficult to find a plan. 11.♖c1 (11.a4!? b4 12.♗b1 ♗c6 13.♗d2++) 11...♗d7 12.♗e5 ♗c8 13.♗b1 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♗d7 15.♗h2 ♗b6 ½-½ Gual Pascual-Moskalenko, Catalonia tt 2006.

6.e3

We reach the main position of the Slav Exchange Variation. The course of the game depends on Black’s next move. 6...e6

This is considered to be a passive set-up, but due to the symmetry it is not easy to attack. The overall white plan is described in the introduction. And now you will see how this happens in real life.

6...a6 7.♗c1 ♖f5 (7...♗g4 – Game 66) 8.♗f3 – Game 68; 6...♗g4 – line in Game 66; 6...♖f5 – Game 67.
WEAPON: For example, 7...a6 8.♗d3!? (or 8.♘xd6 ♘xd6 9.f4!?) 8...♗xf4 9.exf4 ♙b6 10.a3 with a definite positional advantage.

8.♖c1 ♙d7?!
Black does not find a clear defensive plan and quickly falls into an unpleasant position.
For 8...♗d6 see above line, move 7.

9.h3?!
Preventing any possible counter-play with ...♗h5.

9...♗b5 10.♗f3 ♖e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗e5!

Pressure on the c-file and an attack on the dark squares.

12...♗a5
12...♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♗e8 14.e4=.

13.b3 ♗a3 14.♖c2 ♖e7?
Total confusion – the punishment will be harsh.

15.♗g5!+–
Another dark square for the attack.

15...♗h6 16.♗xf6 ♕xf6 17.♖g4+ ♔h8
EXERCISE: Find the breakthrough.

18. ♘xd5! exd5 19. ♘xd7 ♘g8 20. ♘f5 ♘g6 21. ♘b6 ♘ag8 22. ♘xd5 ♘b7 23. ♘c7

A slight distraction. 23. ♘e4 was easier. Now Black tries his last chance:

23... ♘d6! 24. ♘xd7 ♘g8 25. ♘f5 ♘g6 26. ♘b6 ♘ag8 27. ♘xd5 ♘b7 28. ♘xb7

TRICK: 24. ♘xb7?? ♘xg2+ 25. ♘h1 ♘h2#.

24... fxg6 25. ♘xb7 ♘xb7 26. ♘xf6 1-0

6/7... ♘g4

Game 66
Viktor Moskalenko

2523

Hipolito Asis Gargatagli

2482

Barcelona 2012 (3)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5 cxd5 4. ♘c3 ♘f6 5. ♘f4 ♘c6 6.e3

Again, the main position. Black must make a choice.

6... a6!? A prophylactic move and the most popular in practice.

6... ♘f5 – Game 67.

WEAPON: If immediately 6... ♘g4, then White has two pleasant options: 7. ♘b3!? transposes to Game 67; and if 7.f3!?

TRICK: 7... ♘h5?! is a bad retreat: 8.h4!? ♘g6 9. ♘b3 ♘d7 10. ♘xe5+. Black cannot play 10...e6? because 11. ♘xf6 gxf6 12.h5 etc. wins the bishop.

7... ♘d7 8. ♘d3 e6 9.g4! (this resource also features in the main game) 9... ♘e7 10.h4!? ♘c8 11. ♘ge2 ♘a5 12. ♘f2 ♘c4 13. ♘b1±. It is not easy for Black to make decisions in this position: 13...b5 (13...0-0 14. ♘g3!? 14.b3!? (14. ♘g3!?) 14... ♘a3 15. ♘c1 ♘a5 16. ♘b1 0-0 17. ♘xc8 ♘xc8 18. ♘xa3 ♘xa3 19. ♘b1±. White dominates, thanks to his precise set-up, Boruchovsky-Dvirnyy, Barcelona 2015.

7. ♘c1!? The key move, which starts White’s overall plan: putting pressure on the c-file while awaiting a reply.

7. ♘d3 is a weaker option: 7... ♘g4! 8.f3 and now the black bishop can go to h5 and g6 (8. ♘ge2 is the same) 8... ♘h5! 9. ♘ge2 e6 10.0-0 ♘g6=.

WEAPON: 7. ♘f2, preventing ♘g4. Oddly enough, even here White’s performance is quite high: 7... ♘f5
(after 7...e6?! White quickly develops an initiative: 8.♘f3 ♖e7 9.♗e5 (9.h3!? 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗d3 ♗c8 12.♘f3!? ♗e8 13.♖h3→ Rakhmanov-McShane, Riyadh blitz 2017) 8.♗f3 e6 9.♗b3 and now:

**TRICK:** 9...♖a5? loses: 10.♗a4+ ♗d7 11.♗e5 b5 12.♗xb5!.

9...♗d6 10.♗xd6 ♕xd6 11.♕xb7!? 0-0 12.♗b3.

White has retained an extra pawn, but he still needs to complete his development: 12...♖b8 (12...♖c8!? is unclear) 13.♕a3 ♖b4 14.0-0 ♗c7 (14...♖b6 15.♗e1± P.Nikolic-J.Van Foreest, Netherlands tt 2015/16) 15.♗e1± Barsov-Munkhgal, Guangzhou 2010.

7...♗g4
The alternative 7...♗f5 8.♗f3 transposes to Game 68.

8.♗f3!
Moving the position from the Slav to the Sämisch.

⚠️ **KEEP IN MIND:** It is important that the white bishop is not on d3, so Black cannot exchange it via ...♗g4-h5-g6.

8.♗b3?! ♗a5! 9.♗a4+ b5!.

8...♖d7

**WEAPON:** 8...♗h5 9.g4!? (White can vary: 9.♖e2 e6 10.♗g5 ♖e7 11.♗f4 ♖g6 12.♖e2 ♖d7 13.♖xe7 ♖xe7 14.h4+ Rakhmanov-Al Sayed, Khanty-Mansiysk blitz 2013)
9...\textit{\texttt{g6}} 10.h4! h6 (10...h5?! 11.g5 \textit{\texttt{d7}} 12.\textit{\texttt{xd5}}!) 11.\textit{\texttt{ge2}}!? e6 12.\textit{\texttt{f2}} \textit{\texttt{e7}} 13.\textit{\texttt{g3}} 0-0 14.\textit{\texttt{f4}}. White’s pieces and pawns are ready to attack, Chirila-Shetty, Rockville 2013.

9.\textit{\texttt{d3}} e6 9...\textit{\texttt{h5}}?! 10.\textit{\texttt{g5}}!.

10.g4!
Only this option is fundamental to the fight. White seizes space on the kingside, at the same time preserving the f4-bishop from being attacked by the knight on h5.

10...\textit{\texttt{c8}}

\textbf{WEAPON:} Here are a few examples of the right set-up: 10...h6 11.h4! \textit{\texttt{e7}} 12.\textit{\texttt{ge2}} \textit{\texttt{c8}} 13.\textit{\texttt{f2}}!.
In such a position it is very dangerous for Black to castle – so Black is in a kind of \textit{\texttt{zugzwang}}, while White can play on either flank: 13...\textit{\texttt{h7}} (13...\textit{\texttt{a5}} 14.\textit{\texttt{g3}}\textsuperscript{+} Shatko-Alonso Rosell, Spain tt 2011) 14.\textit{\texttt{g3}} \textit{\texttt{f8}} (14...\textit{\texttt{a5}} 15.\textit{\texttt{f4+}}– Moskalenko-Hilwani, Al-Ain rapid 2014) 15.\textit{\texttt{f4+}}– Le Quang Liem-Harikrishna, Beijing blitz 2008.

11.\textit{\texttt{ge2}} \textit{\texttt{a5}}

11...\textit{\texttt{e7}} 12.h4!? etc. Le Quang Liem-Mamedyarov, Beijing blitz 2013.
**KEEP IN MIND:** The king’s move is included in White’s plan, but it is more accurate to play h2-h4 or ♘g3 first.

**WEAPON/TRICK:** For instance, 12.h4!? ♗c4 13.♗c2!? b5 14.b3!?! (14.♖b1= Khairullin-Kapnisis, Budva 2009) 14...b4? 15.♗xd5!+-;

**WEAPON:** Or 12.♗g3!?

We have reached a typical position in this line. I hope you already like White’s exciting opportunities.

13...♗c4

**WEAPON:** 13...b5 14.♗g3 ♗c4 15.♗e2 (15.♗c2!?+) 15...♗c6 16.g5 ♗d7 17.b3 ♗d6 (Stefanova-M.Muzychuk, Hancheng blitz 2016) 18.a4!?±.
14. c2
14. c2! b5 15. b3.

14... b5

15. b1

**WEAPON/TRICK**: Stronger was 15. g3! e5. After 15... x b2? 16. x b2 x c3 17. g5 White is winning.

15... c6 16. b3 d6

**TRICK**: 16. x g4+? 17. f x g4 x h4+ 18. f h3 (18. g1?!) 18... g5 19. x h4+–.

17. g3 0–0 18. d2 d7 19. b1+–

Threatening 20. x h7+ or 20. h c1.

19... f5 20. x f5 x f5 21. x f5

More precise was 21. h c1! b6 and then 22. x f5 e f5 23. h5+–.

21... e f5 22. h c1

22. e2!

22... x h4+ 23. e2 g5?

23... b6 24. h1+–

24. x c6 x c6 25. x c6 x f4 26. e f4 h4 27. x f5 h2+ 28. e3 e8+ 29. e6+ h8 30. f5 1–0

**Conclusion for 6/7... g4**: no words – see the game content and train with this set-up!
6. \texttt{\textcopyright{f5}}

Game 67  
Anton Korobov  
Maxim Rodshtein  
Czechia tt 2018/19 (3)

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5 cxd5 4.\texttt{\textcopyright{f4}!!?} 5.e3 6.\texttt{\textcopyright{c3} \texttt{\textcopyright{f5}}}

6...a6 7.\texttt{\textcopyright{c1} – Games 66 and 68.}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

7.\texttt{\textcopyright{b3}!!?}

A modernized idea (which is similarly applied in openings like the Caro-Kann Defence and the London System). So far, Black has not shown the right reaction. For a common understanding it is useful to explore other continuations, as they have different nuances:

For 7.\texttt{\textcopyright{f3}} see Rakhmanov-Shirov, Game 69.

\textbf{WEAPON:} Also in fashion is 7.\texttt{\textcopyright{c1}!!?}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}
7...\(\text{e}6\) (7...\(\text{b}6\)?! 8.\(\text{b}5\)! \(\text{e}6\) 9.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{b}4\) 10.0-0 \(\text{xc}3\) 11.\(\text{xc}6+\) bxc6 12.bxc3 (12.\(\text{xc}3\)?) 12...0-0 13.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{a}6\) 14.g4! \(\text{g}6\) 15.h4\(\equiv\) Eljanov-Mamedov, Tromsø 2014) 8.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{b}4\) (8...\(\text{b}6\) 9.\(\text{xb}6\) axb6 10.a3?!\(\equiv\)) 9.a3?! \(\text{xc}3+\) 10.\(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 11.\(\text{b}5\) 0-0 12.\(\text{xc}6\) bxc6 13.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{fc}8\) 14.\(\text{xc}8+\) \(\text{xc}8\) 15.\(\text{e}2\?\) (keeping an extra pawn) 15...\(\text{c}2\)? 16.f3!\(\equiv\) Orosz-Kozak, Kecskemet 2016.

7...\(\text{a}5\)

8.\(\text{a}4+\)

**PUZZLE:** A possible transposition is 8.\(\text{b}5+!?\) \(\text{d}7\) 9.\(\text{c}2!?\) \(\text{c}8\) 10.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 11.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}7\) and we have the same position as in the main game after 11...\(\text{c}8\).

8...\(\text{d}7\) 9.\(\text{c}2\)

In such a ‘ridiculous’ way, after three moves with the queen (7.\(\text{b}3\), 8.\(\text{a}4+\) and 9.\(\text{c}2\)), White has driven the black bishop from f5. And probably he has achieved some advantage by this ‘magic’ trick.

9...\(\text{e}6\) 10.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 11.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{c}8\) 12.0-0 \(\text{c}6\) 13.\(\text{e}2\)

**WEAPON:** Alternatively, 13.a3?! seems to be a strong continuation as White’s queen can still be useful on c2.

13...\(\text{h}5\) 14.\(\text{e}5\) f6?! (14...\(\text{xe}5\)?! 15.\(\text{xe}5\) (15.dxe5?!?) 15...\(\text{f}6\) 16.f4↑) 15.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{xe}3\) 16.fxg3! f5

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17. g4 g6 18. gxf5 gxf5 (Haba-Miton, Germany Bundesliga 2015/16) 19. ♕h1†. Black cannot castle due to the threat of g2-g4.

13... ♖h5 14. ♖e5
The critical position.

14...0-0?! After this inaccuracy White keeps an advantage. After the ‘invisible’ move 14... f6! 15. ♖g3 ♖xg3 16. hxg3 (16. fxg3 0-0=) 16... f5! it is difficult to break through Black’s defences.

15. h3! f5
15... ♕xe5 16. ♕xe5!?+-

16. ♖h2 ♖f6 17. ♖ac1 ♖e4 18. a3 ♖e8 19. ♖d2 ♖d6 20. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 21. ♖c2 ♖d7 22. ♖fc1 ♕a5 23. ♔b5 ♖xc2 24. ♖xc2 ♖xb5 25. ♖xb5 a6

26. ♕xe4 dxe4?! In the Stonewall Dutch, Black usually takes 26...fxe4?: 27. b4! axb5 28. bxa5 b4 29. axb4 ♖xb4 30. ♖c5†.
27. ♖c4 ♖g6 28. ♖a2 ♖g7 29. ♖c5 ♖c6 30. ♖c2 ♖e8 31. ♖b4 ♖e7 32. ♖b3 e5 33. d5
33. ♕c4!?.
33... ♖d8?
Ukrainian GM Anton Korobov: another exciting game in the Exchange Slav.

33...♘a7!? was more resistant.

34.♖c8+ ♘f7 35.♗c5 ♘d7 36.♗a4 ♘d8 37.♗c7 b5 38.♗b3 1-0

A tense game, in which White converted a minimal advantage.

**Conclusion 6...♗f5**: pay attention to all the ‘weapons’ during this game, including the alternative, 13.a3!?

Combining various set-ups vs ...♗f5

**Game 68**
Andrey Sumets

**Viktor Moskalenko**

Villa Salou 2010 (5)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5 cxd5 4.♗f4 a6

This preventive move is the second most popular. The delay of ...♗f5 gives White two interesting possibilities. For the main option 6...♗f5!? – Rakhmanov-Shirov, Game 69; 6...♘h5!? – 4...♘c3 in Game 65.

**TRICK**: 6...♗g4?! 7.♘e5 ♘b6? (7...d7 8.e3 e6 9.♗d3+) is funny: this is the most popular move in this position (67 games) – and it loses! 8.♗xg4 ♘xg4 9.e4 e5 10.♗e5!? ♗b4 11.xc6+ ♘xc6 12.0-0! ♘xc3 13.♗g4+– A.Guseinov-Sideif Sade, Baku 1986.

7.♗c1? 7.e3?! ♘g4=.

**WEAPON**: After the active jump 7.♗e5!? White is slightly better in most of the lines: 7...e6 8.e3 (8.♗xc6!? bxc6 9.e3 ♘d6 10.♗xd6 ♘xd6 11.♗e2 ♘b8) 12.♗a4!? (not allowing ...c6-c5) 12...♗b4+ 13.♗f1 ♘d6 (Zherebukh-Jumabayev, St Louis 2018) 14.f4!) 8...♗xe5 (delaying the exchange doesn’t change anything: 8...♗e7 9.♗d3 ♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘d7 11.0-0 ♘b5 12.♗e2 ♘b7 13.♗d4+) Jobava-Dziuba, Warsaw rapid 2011) 9.♗xe5 ♘d6 (9...b5 10.♗d3 ♘d7 11.♗g3 ♘b7 12.0-0 ♘e7 13.a4! Jakubowski-Antoniewski,
Czechia tt 2017/18)


7... $f5$!

**WEAPON:** 7... $h5$

8.$d2$ $f6$ 9.a3!? $e4$ 10.$xe4$! $dxe5$ 12.$dxe5$ $d7$ 13.$g3$ $c6$ 14.$g2$ $d5$ 15.0-0!?. White is better here, thanks to his development advantage, Meier-S.Volkov, Spain tt 2018;

**WEAPON:** 7... $e4$ is interesting: 8.e3 $xc3$ 9.$bxc3$ $f5$ 10.$d3$ $xd3$ 11.$xd3$ e6 12.0-0 $a5$ 13.$d2$ $b5$ 14.a4!
analysis diagram


8.e3

**PUZZLE:** 8.♗e5 ♗xe5! 9.dxe5 d4 10.e4! with many options, Bolz-Calio, ICCF email 2016.

8...♖c8

**WEAPON:** 8...♗b6?! is too risky for Black: 9.♗e2!? ♗xb2 10.0-0 e6 11.♗a4 ♘b4 12.♗h4 ♗e4 13.f3 ♗g6 14.♗xg6 hxg6 15.♕b1 ♘a3 16.♖xb7 ♘a5 17.♘c7 ♗d6 (17...g5? 18.♘c3+– Meier-M.Gurevich, France tt 2008) 18.♘c3± Just-Rund, Germany email 2013;

**WEAPON:** 8...♗e4 9.♗xe4!? ♗xe4 10.♗e5 ♗xe5 11.♗xe5 f6 (11...e6 12.f3+) 12.♗c7+ ♗d7 13.♗b3 ♗f5 14.f3 ♗f5 15.g4± M.Richter-A.Braun, Budapest 2003.

Or 8...e6 9.♗b3!?

**TRICK:** 9...♘a5? 10.♗a4+ b5 11.♗xb5!.

If 9...♗d7, 10.♗e2 ♗e7 11.♗a4! ♘a5 12.♗d1 ♗c8 13.♗c5±.

9...♗a7!? is a quite ridiculous defence of the b7-pawn: 10.♗e2 ♗e7 11.0-0 (first 11.h3?!, preventing ...♗h5) 11...0-0 12.♗a4 ♗d7 13.h3 ♗a5 (13...♗a5 14.a3±) 14.♗c3 ♗c4 (14...b5 15.♗c5± Buss-Kappeler, Switzerland tt
2013) 15.b3↑ and White is better, Xiong-Jumabayev, St Louis 2018.

9.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbullet}}} e5!}?

\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{\textbullet}}} WEAPON}}: 9.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbullet}}} e2} is quite balanced, but tricky: 9...e6 10.0-0. GM Wesley So even managed to lure the World Champion into this position! 10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} d7} (10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} d6} 11.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xd6} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xd6} 12.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} a4\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} d7} 11.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} a4} 12.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} e7} 12.h3 0-0 13.a3 14.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} a5} 15.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} c5} 16.b4 (15.b3!? 15...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xc5} 16.dxc5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xa3} 17.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} d4} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} e4} 18.f3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} g6} 19.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} b3} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} c4} 20.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xc4} dxc4 21.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xc4} and White won on move 44, So-Carlsen, Stavanger 2018.

9...e6

\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{\textbullet}}} WEAPON/\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbullet}}} TRICK}}: The most amazing combination occurred after 9...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xe5} 10.dxe5 (10.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xe5=} 10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} e4} 11.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} d3} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xc3} 12.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xf5!} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xd1} 13.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xc8}.

\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} TRICK}: 13...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xb2?} 14.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xd8+} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xd8} 15.e6!± and the bishop on f8 is blocked, S.Volkov-Kharitonov, Voronezh 2012.

13...e6! is the only move, but the tactics continue: 14.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xe6!?} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xf2} 15.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xf7+!} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xf7} 16.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} xd8} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{green}{\text{\textbullet}}} xh1} 17.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textbullet}}} f1.
The climax of this forced variation: 17...♖g8? (17...h6=) 18.h4! (18.♕g1?! Shomoev-Khegay, Novokuznetsk 2013) 18...h6 19.h5 g5 20.♕h2 g4 21.f4 g3 22.♕xh6+--;

**WEAPON:** 9...♕b6 is obviously risky, as White is already well developed: 10.♗d3 ♕xd3 11.♕d3!? (11.♘xd3) 11...♕xb2 12.0-0 ♤b4 (12...e6 13.♘a4=Gual Pascual-Cabrera Trujillo, Spain tt 2012) 13.♗e2 ♙xe2 14.♕xe2 ♘c6 15.♗c2 ♘d7 16.♗b1 ♤dxe5 17.dxe5↑ Sedlak-Wallner, Aschach 2011. The ending is hopeless for Black.

10.♕b3
The main continuation.

10...♕xe5

**TRICK:** 10...♗a5? 11.♗a4+ b5 12.♗xb5++–.

11.♗xe5

**TRICK:** 11.dxe5? ♘e4! ♕b4 (12.♕xb7?? ♘c5+–.

11...♕d7

**TRICK:** 11...b5? 12.a4 b4 13.♗xa6+–.

12...e7
This is considered the main defensive plan, and it was a part of my preparation. However, after the game, when analysing the final position, we discovered a hidden resource for White.

**WEAPON:** Then I began to analyse 12...♘e4!?, but it turned out that there is no equality, though White has to play very subtly: 13.f3 ♘d6!? (13...xc3 14.xc3 ♘xc3 15...xc3 f6 16.g3) 14.f2 ♘c4 15.f4 ♘e7 16.h4!↑.

![analysis diagram](image)

Threatens g2-g4 or e3-e4.

**TRICK:** 16...a5 17.a4 ♘xh4+ 18.g3 ♘d8 19...xd7+ ♘xd7 20.g4 ♘g6 21.a4;

**TRICK:** 16...h5 17.e4! dxe4 (17...a5 18.a4+) 18.xc4 ♘xd4+ (18...exf3 19.hd1) 19.e3 ♘xc4 20.b5!+–.

If 16...h6 17.e4! ♘h7 (17...dxe4 18.xc4+) 18.exd5 b5 19.xc4! (19.a4+ Fontaine-Sebag, France tt 2010) 19...xc4 20.d6 and White has a clear advantage!

13.0-0 0-0 14.a4 ♘xc1
Insufficient is 14...c6

![analysis diagram](image)
Ukrainian GM Andrey Sumets. In our game, White had the better ending but offered a draw.

15. \( \text{b6} \) (15.f3?! \( \text{b5} \) 16. \( \text{c5} \+)

15...\( \text{e8} \) 16.f3! \( \text{d8} \) 17. \( \text{c8} \) \( \text{d7} \) 18. \( \text{a7} \) \( \text{b6} \) 19. \( \text{c3} \) with a clear advantage for White, who controls the c-file.

15. \( \text{xc1} \) \( \text{c8} \) 16. \( \text{xc8}+! \)

16. \( \text{c5}?! \) \( \text{e4}! \).

16...\( \text{xc8} \) 17. \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{xc5} \)

17...\( \text{b5} \) 18. \( \text{xf6}! \)

18.\( \text{dxc5} \)

I prepared this sequel for the game, and considered it safe. But it is possible that Black’s position is already difficult, since the other options are no better:
A) 18...álezd7?! 19.landers c6 20.landers c3工业化 Predojevic-Movsesian, Sarajevo 2009;
B) 18...állez e4?! 19.g4! (19.f3?!) 19...állez g6 20.f3?! ález xc5 21.landers c3工业化;
C) 18...landers c6?! 19.landers xf6 gxf6 20.landers b6! ález d7 21.b4 d4 22.c6 bxc6 23.landers xd4工业化．

19.landers xb7 ález c1工业化 20.landers f1 h6 21.landers xa6 ález e4

In this position, I thought that Black had sufficient counterplay. My opponent had a similar opinion – complete equality. But we were both wrong.

22.landers e2

WEAPON: 22.h3?! ález d2 (22...f6 23.landers c3工业化) 23.landers e2工业化;

WEAPON: 22.landers c3工业化! ález h7 (22...állez xc3 23.landers c8工业化; 22...állez c5?! 23.landers e2 ález d3 24.landers e1工业化 23.landers d3工业化?!N (23.landers b5?! ález xc3 24.bxc3 ález b1工业化= Kazhgaleyev-Laznicka, Philadelphia 2010) 23...állez g3 24.landers b5 ález e4 25.landers b4 ález b1 26.landers e1 ález xa2 27.f3 with good winning chances.

22...f6?!

A) 22...állez c5?! 23.landers c3 ález d3 24.landers e1 ález c2 25.h3工业化


23.landers c3 ález xc3 24.bxc3

Here White offered a draw, which I gladly accepted. In the analysis room we found 24...állez xc3 (or 24...állez b1 25.c4! ález a3 26.c5! ález xc5 27.a4工业化) 25.a4 ález a1 26.landers b5 ález b1 27.h3 ález a2 28.landers h2工业化 and the draw is still far away.
This game contains material for weeks of analysis, but you should not rush when considering the details.

This exciting Exchange Slav chapter finishes with another puzzle endgame. It was the last round of the Spanish Team Championship, and I watched this game right from the next board.

Game 69
Alexander Rakhmanov

Alexei Shirov

Spain tt 2018 (7)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗f4 ♗f5!?

By far the most played continuation.
For 6...a6 see Game 68.

7.e3

**WEAPON/PUZZLE:** It is not too late for the ‘modern interpretation’: 7.♕b3!? ♘a5 8.♕a4+ ♗d7 9.♕c2 e6 10.e3 ♗e7 11.♗d3 transposes to Game 67.

7...e6!? 

**WEAPON:** After 7...♖c8, there is a forced line: 8.♕e5 (8.♕b3!??) 8...a6 9.g4! ♘xe5 10.gxf5 ♘c4 11.♕a4+ ♗c6 12.♕xc4 dxc4 13.d5 b5 14.♕c2↑. At first glance, White has a big advantage, Makowski-Franco Cazon, IECC email 2004.

8.♕b3

This move is ranked third in popularity, but there are more than a thousand games played. White has achieved excellent results in modern games at a high level.
For 8.♗b5 see the notes in Game 67.

**PUZZLE:** The most played move is 8.♗d3 but this is to make a draw. 95% end peacefully with an average of 14 moves: 8...♗xd3 9.♕xd3 ♗d6 10.♕xd6 ♘xd6 etc.
Russian GM Alexander Rakhmanov (my teammate in Barcelona) is wellversed in the Exchange Slav: he has achieved many brilliant victories over top players, like in this game.

8.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}e5\) is more of a pseudo-active move here: 8...\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xe5!\) (8...\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}d7\) may be not a bad idea, but White achieved a great number of victories in this line: 9.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xe6\) bxc6 10.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}e2\) \(e7\) 11.0-0 0-0 12.\(\text{\vphantom{d}h}c1\) c5 13.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc5\) (13.\(\text{\vphantom{d}h}b5!?\)) 13...\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc5\) 14.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}b5\)↑ Eingorn-Oll, Lviv 1990) 9.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xe5\) \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}d7\) 10.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}g3\) (10.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}b3\) \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xe5\) 11.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xe5\) \(e7\) 12.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}b5\)\(f8=\)) 10...a6 11.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}d3\) \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xd3\) 12.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xd3\) \(e7\) 13.0-0 0-0=.

8...\(\text{\vphantom{d}b}b4\)

\(\text{\vphantom{d}b4}\) is playable for Black but preferable in correspondence games: 9.\(\text{\vphantom{d}b}xb6\) axb6 10.\(\text{\vphantom{d}b}h4!\)? (10.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}c1\) \(b4\) 11.a3 \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc3+\) 12.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc3\) \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}c8=\) Bajarani-Jakovenko, Skopje 2015) 10...\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}e4\) 11.f3 \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}b4\) 12.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}d1!?\) \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc3\) 13.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc3\) \(a3!\) and White could not find a real advantage, although he was close. Draw on move 27 in Soltau-Olofsson, ICCF email 2009.

9.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}e5!\)

Most common is 9.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}b5\) 0-0 10.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xe6\) \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc3+\) 11.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc3\) \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}c8\) 12.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}e5\) \(g4\) 13.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xg4\) \(xg4\) 14.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}b4\) \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc6\) 15.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xb7\) \(c8\) 16.\(\text{\vphantom{d}d}xc8\) \(\text{\vphantom{d}d}fxc8=\) Kramnik-Anand, Bonn 2008.
9...♕b6!?  
Interestingly, this queen move has been used only in the 21st century.

**WEAPON:** Previously, the exchange 9...♗xc3+ was considered the path to equality, but there are some new trends here: 10.bxc3! ♕xe5 11.♗xe5 0-0 12.♖c1!

12...♘e4 13.h4!. Who said that this is a drawing variation!? 13...f6 14.♖h2 ♕c8 (14...♕d7?! (Zherebukh-Robson, St Louis 2018) 15.♕a3!↑) 15.f3. White keeps some initiative, but in the game Shuvalova-Goryachkina, Satka 2018, there unexpectedly followed 15...♕xc3? 16.♖xc3+--;  

**WEAPON:** 9...0-0?! 10.♕xc6 ♕xc3+ 11.♖xc3 bxc6.
White has a pair of strong bishops, while Black’s c-pawn is weak. 12.\(\text{bxa3}\)!? (the idea will be seen on the next move) 12...\(\text{b6}\) 13.\(\text{a6!}\)\(+. \)White avoids \(\text{c8}\) and blocks the a7-pawn, Salgado Lopez-Najer, Rijeka 2010.

\begin{array}{l}
10.\(\text{xc6}\) bxc6 11.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{e4}\) \\
The main move, but again, in recent games, White had a big plus.
\end{array}

11...\(\text{d7!}\) D.Fischer-Llorach Gracia, ICCF email 2015.

12.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 13.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{e7}\)

\begin{array}{l}
\underline{\text{PUZZLE: Total symmetry! Shirov will try to complicate a bit. But Alexander is a real expert in such technical games.}}
\end{array}

14.\(\text{c4!}\)
A bit of dynamics.

14.\(\text{0-0?!}\) 0-0 15.\(\text{c4}\) c5=.

14...\(\text{xb3}\)
If 14...\(\text{c5?!}\), 15.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xb3}\) 16.\(\text{axb3}\) exd5 17.\(\text{b5+}\) \(\text{d7}\) 18.\(\text{a6!}\)\(+.

15.\(\text{axb3}\) \(\text{b4+}\) 16.\(\text{f2}\) a5

Up to this position, both players have followed the main line.
17. ‖ hc1!?
A slightly different move order. But the alternative seems to be a kind of transposition.

WEAPON: By the way, after 17.g4!? White won all 4 games during 2015-17, so where is the puzzle?
17... ‖ g6 18. ‖ hc1!? ‖ d2 19. ‖ d1 ‖ b4 20. ‖ a2 (20.cxd5!?) 20... ‖ d7 21.h4↑ with annoying pressure in
the ending, Gajewski-Fressinet, France tt 2017.

17... ‖ d7 18.g4 ‖ g6 19.cxd5

WEAPON: A possible alternative: 19. ‖ a2!? h5 20.g5 f6 21. ‖ f1 ‖ hc8 22.h4↑ and White won on move 78
(!) in Baranowski-Waltmans, ICCF email 2015.

19...exd5 20.e4 dxe4 21.d5!?

21...cxd5 N
Actually, this move equalizes the game. However, the position remains complex, and there are still chances for both
sides.

A) 21... ‖ c5? 22. ‖ b5+ Li Chao-Giri, Palma de Mallorca 2017;
B) 21... ‖ hc8? 22. ‖ xc6 ‖ xc6 23. ‖ b5+– Pavlovic-Nguyen Huynh Minh Huy, Budapest 2016.

22. ‖ b5+ ‖ e7 23. ‖ c7+ ‖ f8 24. ‖ c6 ‖ d8 25. ‖ d1 ‖ c5+ 26. ‖ g3 e3 27. ‖ b5 ‖ b4
27... ‖ e7!? 28. ‖ a7 h5=.

28. ‖ dc1 h5?! 29. ‖ c8! ‖ e7 30. ‖ xd8+ ‖ xd8 31. ‖ c8 ‖ e7 32. ‖ g5+ f6 33. ‖ xe3 hxg4 34.fxg4
34... e4?! An ambitious move which will cost Black the game.
34... g8!–.
35. h4 d4 36. c4+ b7 37. c3 d5 38. h5 f7 39. d3 f8 40. h7 e6?
40... e7
41. h4!+–

41... e7 42. g6+ g8 43. e3 f5+ 44. g5 d8 45. a1 d6 46. xf5 xf5 47. xe7 d7 48. e5 g6 49. h6 d1 50. x a5 g1 51. a4 b1 52. a7
White won the ending in filigree style.

Conclusion: various set-ups vs ... f5
Despite thousands of games, even the top players keep getting into difficult situations by playing the different options for Black.

Exchange Slav Summary
It seems incredible, but in a short period of time, the Exchange Variation has turned from a ‘draw opening’ into a formidable weapon against the Slav Defence.

One of the secrets – and the most important resource – in symmetrical structures is that one tempo can turn out to be decisive.

On the other hand, the defender does not have time for active counter-play. In Games 65 and 68, we see the premature queen sortie ... b6, trying to complicate and create mutual chances, which mostly failed.

A bit of advice for black players: try to change the opening when playing against GM Rakhmanov!
I would say that the real power lies in the unformed ideas – the author.

A bit of history
The QGA is an excellent opening if a black player wants to learn less and practice more. The overwhelming majority of games is decided deep in the middlegame or in the endgame. The complexity of the theory is not even close to mammoth openings as the KID or the Grünfeld where one needs several volumes – and the corresponding memory.

At the same time, the modern QGA is a positionally sound and reliable opening, played by World Champions Kasparov, Karpov, Anand, and Topalov, as Semko Semkov writes in the Foreword of Understanding the Queen’s Gambit Accepted (co-author: Alexander Delchev).

However, in nature, everything is balanced, and so it is on the chessboard. Behind the seeming simplicity of this system, there are also certain drawbacks. At least White immediately has some advantage in the centre, and his queen’s bishop comes out (♗xc4) without losing time.

This chapter offers five interesting alternatives for White on the 7th move, processed in my workshop, from the 1980’s up to now.

Creating White’s repertoire
For example, 3.e4 is the most challenging system against the QGA, but it is not to everyone’s taste. From the beginning the play is too forced and too straight for them, and the creative process is largely replaced by clear analytical knowledge.

Instead, White has a choice of various ultra-flexible lines, where he can make use of ‘natural chess resources’, such as classical middlegame ideas, reinforced by ‘tactical gunpowder’:
• The typical attacking set-ups with the isolated d4-pawn (IP);
• Sometimes these set-ups transform into a structure with hanging c- and d-pawns (HP);
• Symmetrical structures where White is a tempo ahead, which usually allows him to develop the initiative in all
three parts of the board (the centre and both flanks);
• Finally, I will present some miscellaneous positions, ideas and set-ups.

Directions
3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5♗xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6

This is the basic position of the classical Queen’s Gambit Accepted. Black prepares the set-up ...b7-b5/...♗b7/...♘bd7, with a comfortable and flexible game.

So I provide the following alternative repertoire for White:

1. Isolated pawns and hanging pawns (IP and HP)
Game 70 – 7♗d3, a bit similar concept to the classical set-up (Caro-Kann: Panov Attack). However, the main idea is to meet 7...b5 with 8.a4!, with a comfortable attack on the black structure.

This game also contains several important plans and ideas for both sides along the way.

2. Attacking from symmetry
Game 71 – 3.e3 ♘f6 4♗xc4 a6 5♖e2!? – an early queen move with the idea 5...e6 6♘f3 c5 7.dxc5!? ♖xc5 8.0-0, and then the central pawn advance e3-e4-e5.

The way this plan is implemented further depends on Black’s 8th move.
3. The queenside fianchetto
Game 72 – 7.b3!? – another symmetrical and pretty poisonous scheme.

White is going to retake on d4 with the knight. The fianchetto is useful not only as it develops the bishop on b2, but also because the b3-pawn blocks the advance of Black’s queenside pawns.

4. Miscellaneous weapons
Game 73 – 7.a4!? preventing the advance ...b7-b5. In this game we also encounter a new structure: the one after 9.d5!.

If Black’s pawn remains on c5, White has the opportunity to attack.

5. Isolated pawn
Games 74 and 75 – Here we will focus on the popular move 7.♘b3!? This leads to positions with a white IP almost by force: 7...♗c6 8.♗c3 cxd4 9.exd4 ♗e7.
If we compare this position to the classical set-up (Caro-Kann: Panov Attack), Black has saved ‘two’ tempi: his a-pawn is on a6 (preparing the advance ...b7-b5) and his knight is on f6 instead of d5. Meanwhile, the white bishop is on b3, which favours the central advance of the IP. These differences determine the entire strategy in this line.

**IP – French Exchange**

Game 76 – If White plays 3.e3 (for example, preparing an early ♕e2, Game 71), Black has the option to play 3...e5!?.

In this case, the game transposes to an Exchange French, but in a favourable version for White (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.c4 dxc4?! 5.♗xc4).

The plans and concepts that apply in the ‘IP’ games (74 and 75) are quite similar to the ones in Game 76.

⚠️ **KEEP IN MIND**
- The queen’s knight must wait on b1 until it is determined which square is better for its development: ♗c3 or ♗d2;
- Due to high flexibility of the QGA, many other lines, ideas, deviations and transpositions are given in the notes to Games 70-76.

**Miscellaneous IP set-ups**
• It is important for the isolani side to fight for the initiative (using a temporary advantage in development), provided that he can play actively. White has to create pressure, build up an attack on the kingside, and avoid simplifications;
• In many cases, advancing and/or sacrificing the Isolated Queen’s Pawn can be an important attacking resource (see Games 70, 74 and 75);
• If the king’s bishop has been developed to c4 (in openings like the Queen’s Gambit Accepted or the Nimzo-Indian), the player with the IP can put pressure on the blockading point d5 and prepare an attack with the advance d4-d5. This way, White will get the initiative in most of the cases thanks to his development advantage (Games 70 and 73-75);
• During the opening, it is also possible to go back to the classic set-up, playing, for instance, ♖c4-♖d3 (Game 70), or placing the key pieces on the b1-h7 diagonal, playing ♗d3/♗b3-♗c2, etc.;
• In the set-up with ♖c4, White’s best option is to develop the other bishop with ♖g5!? , increasing his tactical chances after d4-d5 (Game 75);
• The f3-knight is usually moved to e5, which offers White many tactical possibilities.
Queen's Gambit Accepted – Games

1. IP/Hanging pawns on the c- and d-files: 7.♗d3

Game 70
Viktor Moskalenko

Tibor Karolyi

Lviv 1988 (5)

We start with some interesting ideas and transpositions.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3 ♘f6

WEAPON: Defending the gambit pawn seems passive: 3...a6 4.e3 b5?!

analysis diagram


WEAPON: There is a nice hidden combination in a gambit sub-line: 3...c5 4.e3!? cxd4 (4...e6 is the main game) 5.♗xc4!? ♘c7 6.♗b3!? (6.♗b3± is normal) 6...dxe3 7.♗xe3 e6 8.♗c3 ♘f6 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♗b5!? ♗a5 11.♗d4!? ♘d7 (11...♗xd4 12.♗xd4鸥) 12.♗f4 ♘c8 13.♗c1 a6 14.♗d6+ ♘xd6 15.♗xd6 ♘e4
EXERCISE: Find the best move.

16. ♖a3!N (16. ♖xc6?! (Giri-Salgado Lopez, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010) 16... ♖xc6! 17. ♖a3 ♖d2! and Black is OK) 16... ♖xc6! 17. ♖xe6! ♖xe6 (better is 17...fxe6 18. ♖h5+ g6 19. ♖g4 ♖g5 20. ♖xe4 ♖d5 21. ♖xd5 exd5 22. ♖f3+) 18. ♖xe6 fxe6 19. ♖h5+ g6 20. ♖h4! ♖f7 21. ♖c1 ♖g5 22. ♖d7+! ♖e8 23. ♖xe4! ♖xd7 24. ♖d1+ ♖c7 25. ♖d6+ ♖b6 26. ♖f4! and 27. ♖e3+ etc., +–.

4.e3 e6

WEAPON: 4...♗g4 is an idea recommended in some modern QGA books: 5.♗xc4 e6 6.♗b3!? (6.h3 is usual)

5.♗xc4 c5

WEAPON: The early ...b7-b5 is premature: 5...a6 6.0-0 (6.♗e2!? – Game 71) 6...b5?! 7.♖d3 c5 8.a4! (using his lead in development):
8...b4 (8...bxa4 9.♗e5!?N) 9.♗bd2 ♗b7 (9...cxd4 10.exd4 ♗bd7 11.c4 Moskalenko-Avila Gimenez, Badalona 1999) 10.e2 cxd4 11.exd4 (the IP set-up) 11...♗c6 12.♗e4 ♗e7 13.♖d1 0-0 14.♕g5 ♗d5 15.♗c5↑ with a huge advantage for White, Lputian-Greenfeld, Yerevan 1997.

6.0-0 a6

A key position of the classical Queen’s Gambit Accepted.

7.♗d3!?  
To meet 7...b5 with 8.a4!. 7.b3!? – Game 72; 7.a4 – Game 73; 7.♗b3 – Games 74, 75, and 71 (in comment).

**WEAPON:** Miscellaneous ideas: 7.♕e2!? (in Game 71, this move is made earlier, with the idea dxc5) 7...b5 8.♗d3!
analysis diagram

It is important that the queen’s knight is still on b1: 8...♗d7 (sacrificing the IP: 8...cxd4 9.♖d1 ♖e7 10.a4 bxa4 11.♖xa4 dxe3 12.♕xe3 ♖bd7 13.♘c3! 0-0 14.♗g5 ♖b7 (Mamedyarov-Navara, Hersonissos 2017) 15.♗e5! → 9.a4! c4 (9...b4 10.♗d2!) 10.♖c2 ♖b7 11.e4! ♖e7 12.♗c3!? b4 13.e5! bxc3 (13...♗d5 14.♗e4 a5 15.♖e1+) 14.exf6 ♖xf6 15.bxc3 ♖xf3 16.♕xf3 with some initiative for White in Giri-Eljanov, Hersonissos 2017.

7...cxd4
If Black delays ...cxd4, this can lead to a symmetrical set-up:

WEAPON: If 7...♗c6, White does best to play 8.♗c3!? ♖e7 (8...♕c7 9.a3!?) 9.dxc5 ♖xc5 10.a3 0-0 11.b4↓;

WEAPON: Most flexible may be 7...♗bd7!?: 8.♖e1!? (8.♖e2!? – 7.♖e2) 8...b5 (if 8...♖e7, 9.e4! cxd4 10.e5 ♖d5 11.♗xd4 ♖b6 12.♗f3 ♖c5 13.♖c4± Ioseliani-Hort, Amsterdam 2001) 9.e4 cxd4 10.e5 ♖d5 11.a4! bxa4 12.♖xa4 ♖b4 (12...♗c5 13.♖d4↑ Avrukh-Laznicka, Beer-Sheva rapid 2013) 13.♗d2 ♖xd2 14.♖xd2 ♗c5 15.♖xd4 ♖xd3 16.♖xd3 0-0 17.♗e4 ♖b8 18.♖d2!N ♖b6.
EXERCISE: Find the right attacking move.

With 19.♘f6+! White obtains the advantage.

8.exd4 ♘c6

WEAPON: 8...♗e7.


9.♘c3 ♘e7 10.♗g5!?

Preparing 11.♗c1. So Black will reply with the logical 10...♗b4.

WEAPON: In case of 10.a3
10...0-0, Black saves several tempi compared to the Panov Attack. Anyway: 11.\textit{\textsc{c}}2 b6?! 12.\textit{\textsc{g}}5 \textit{\textsc{b}}7 13.\textit{\textsc{d}}3 g6 14.\textit{\textsc{ad}}1 \textit{\textsc{c}}8 15.\textit{\textsc{b}}3 b5 16.\textit{\textsc{a}}2 \textit{\textsc{a}}5 17.\textit{\textsc{e}}5 \textit{\textsc{d}}7 18.\textit{\textsc{xe}}7 \textit{\textsc{xe}}7 19.\textit{\textsc{x}}d7 \textit{\textsc{x}}d7 20.d5! exd5 21.\textit{\textsc{x}}d5↑. I recommend the reader to check the annotations to the game I.Sokolov-P.Nikolic, Elenite 1993, in Sokolov’s book \textit{Winning Chess Middlegames}.

\textbf{10...\textit{\textsc{b}}4}

\textbf{WEAPON:} 10...0-0 allows 11.\textit{\textsc{c}}1! \textit{\textsc{b}}4 (too late; 11...\textit{\textsc{a}}5 12.\textit{\textsc{e}}4!? \textit{\textsc{xe}}4 13.\textit{\textsc{x}}e4↑ (Atalik-Müller, Budapest 1991) with the idea 13...\textit{\textsc{x}}g5 14.\textit{\textsc{c}}5!)

12.\textit{\textsc{b}}1! b5 13.a3 \textit{\textsc{bd}}5 14.\textit{\textsc{xd}}5 \textit{\textsc{xd}}5 15.\textit{\textsc{d}}3 g6 16.\textit{\textsc{h}}6 \textit{\textsc{e}}8 17.\textit{\textsc{e}}5 \textit{\textsc{b}}7 18.\textit{\textsc{f}}3 \textit{\textsc{f}}6 19.\textit{\textsc{e}}4 \textit{\textsc{e}}7 20.\textit{\textsc{x}}d5!? \textit{\textsc{x}}d5 21.\textit{\textsc{f}}4 \textit{\textsc{h}}8 22.\textit{\textsc{g}}4! f6 23.\textit{\textsc{c}}7 e5 24.\textit{\textsc{c}}1 \textit{\textsc{e}}6 25.\textsc{h}3 exd4.
EXERCISE: Find the winning tactical motif.

26. ♖f8! ♖e8 27. ♕c5 1-0 Giri-Laznicka, France tt 2010.

11. ♖e1
The key move (analysed back in the 1980’s! by Ukrainian GM Viacheslav Eingorn). The bishop remains on d3 without wasting a tempo.

WEAPON: The modernized version is 11. ♖xf6!? which is similar to the main game: 11... ♖xf6 12. ♖e4 0-0 13. ♖b3!? ♖c6 14. ♖xc6 bxc6 15. ♖fd1 g6 16. ♖ac1 ♖d7 17. ♖e4= Epishin-Giffard, Le Touquet 2006.

11...0-0

TRICK: If Black accepts the trade with 11... ♖xd3, White keeps a slight initiative after 12. ♖xd3 0-0 13. ♖ad1

12.♗xf6!? A typical exchange that enables White to win several attacking tempi.

The important thing is to realize the predominance of White’s pieces in the centre and, especially, on the kingside. Black’s ♗c8 and ♖a8 are temporarily out of play.

12...♗xf6 13.♗e4 ♕d6
13...g6 14.♗h6; 13...c6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♗e4+
14.♗e5 ♘d5 15.♗c3 ♘xc3 16.bxc3

This is a very common HP structure.

White’s main plan is to attack on the kingside. Black will try to put pressure on the c-pawn and to exchange as many pieces as possible.

16...♖b8 17.♗ad1! b5 18.♗d3!

A well-known technique – the rook lift.

18...♗h6 19.♗h5! ♖b7 20.♗g4! → ♖g5

There is no time for intermediate moves like 20...♗xe4: 21.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 22.♖xe4+–.
EXERCISE: Find the winning move.

22.h4!
And my opponent just resigned.

TRICK: 22...♗e7 23.♘xh6+! gxh6 24.♕xh6, netting the black king.

2. Attacking from symmetry

Game 71 – 5.♕e2
Viktor Moskalenko

Dao Thien Hai

2535

2495

Budapest 1994 (6)

In this game White made use of the advance of his e-pawn in a symmetrical structure.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3!? 
Preparing an early ♕e2.

3...♘f6 
Black plays the Classical System.

PUZZLE: An alternative idea is 3...e5, transposing to the Exchange French, see Game 76.

4.♗xc4 a6

WEAPON: Here are some other examples with the same attacking idea: 4...e6 5.♖f3 a6 6.0-0 c5 7.a4 (the main move in Game 73; or 7.♗b3 (the main move in Games 74 and 75) 7...♗c6 8.♗e2 ♕e7 (8...cxd4 9.♗d1!) 9.dxc5 ♕xc5 10.e4 ♗c7 11.e5! ♕g4 12.f4± and White had reached the desired position in Moskalenko-Cocchi, Forni di Sopra 2013) 7...♗c6 8.♗e2 ♕e7 (or 8...cxd4 9.♗d1!) 9.dxc5 ♕xc5 10.e4 ♗c7 11.e5! ♕g4 12.f4.
GM Dao Thien Hai, today working as the National Team Coach of Vietnam.

White threatens 13.h3. So, 12...f6 13..bd2! 0-0 14.ac1! gxe5 15.xe5 fxe5 16.g3+, with domination, Avchinikov-Deforel, ICCF email 2015.

5.e2!?
This is another plan that deserves attention, preparing the advance e3-e4-e5.
5...e6 6.♘f3 c5

**WEAPON:** 6...b5, as we saw in Game 70, is a hasty advance:
7.♗d3 ♗b7 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.a4! b4 10.e4!

10...♗e7 (10...c5 11.d5!↑ Moskalenko-Ponomariov, Sevastopol 1997) 11.♗d2 ♗c5 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♗b3! cxd4 14.♖xd4 0-0 15.♖e1↑ and White controls the board, Bleker-Anokhin, ICCF email 2014.

7...♗xc5? ♗xc5 8.0-0
The critical moment in this symmetrical set-up (5.♕e2). The further course of the game depends on Black’s next move.

8...♕c7

WEAPON: 8...♘bd7 9.e4 b5 10.♗d3! ♖b7 11.♗d2! 0-0 (11...e5 12.♘h4?!↑) 12.a4!? bxa4 13.e5↑
L.Popov-Drozd, Bucharest 1962;

WEAPON: 8...♘c6


If instead 8...b5 9.♗d3 ♖c6 10.♗bd2!? ♖b7 11.e4 ♖d4 (11...♖d5 12.♗c2); 11...♖d7 12.♗b3) 12.♖xd4 ♖xd4 13.♗f3 (13.a4?) 13...♖b6 14.a4! White is better.

Finally, 8...0-0 9.e4!? b5 10.♗b3!? ♖c6 11.e5!

11...♗d7 (11...♖d5 12.♖c2!?) 12.♖c2! g6 13.♖h6 ♖e8 14.♖e4 ♖b7 15.♖bd2 ♖e7 16.♖ac1 ♖c5 17.♖d1 with a comfortable positional advantage in Zubov-Tomczak, Krakow 2018.

9.e4 ♖c6

WEAPON: 9...♖g4!?
Here is the trickiest line in this variation: 10.e5! ∆xf2! 11.♘c3!! (11.♖xf2? ♞xf2+ 12.♘xf2 b5!). A series of paradoxical moves! 11...♗e4+ 12.♔h1 ♞xc3 (there is no draw after 12...♘f2+ 13.♖xf2 ♖xf2 14.♕xf2 ♖xc4 15.♕g3!); 13.bxc3.

White has a dangerous initiative for the sacrificed pawn: 13...h6 (13...0-0? 14.♗d3 –; 13...♗c6? 14.♗g5! ♂) 14.♗d4 (14.♗d2!? ♜e4) 14...♗c6 15.♖g4↑ Jankovic-Borisek, Brno 2006.
10.e5!  g4
10... d5 11. d1 0-0 12. d3?†.

TRICK: 10... d7 11. f4  d4? 12. xd4  xd4 13. d1!  xb2 14. xb2  xc4 15. d4--; the score is 7:0 for White!

11. f4†
From here on it’s a one-sided game. Black’s position is almost hopeless.
11... f6
11... 0-0 12.h3--; 11... d4 12. xd4  xd4 13. xg4†--.
12. bd2!  g5 13. xe5 fxe5
13... xe5 14. ac1!†.
14. g3

By sacrificing a pawn White obtains a long-term initiative.
14... 0-0 15. ac1!  e7

WEAPON: Here is the stem game from which I learned about White’s set-up: 15... e7 16. f3!? (16. e4† Kempinski-Meins, Groningen 1998) 16... d4 17. xd4 exd4 18. e4 (18. d3!?†) 18... d7 19. xb7† Gleizerov-S.Savchenko, Alushta 1993.
16. f3  f6 17. fd1  h8 18. d3  f7
19.h4
There are many interesting solutions; e.g. 19.♗b1!?.
19...♗d7 20.♘g5 ♗xg5 21.hxg5 ♖ad8 22.♗c4
22.♗b1+-?
22...♔g8 23.g6 hxg6 24.♖g4 ♖d4 25.♕xe5 ♗f5 26.♗xf5 exf5 27.♗d4 g5?
27...f4!?
28.f4 ♖fe8 29.c7 gxf4 30.♖xf4 ♗h5 31.♖xd7 ♖xd7 32.♖e2 ♗d5+ ♔h7 34.♕f3 ♗e8 35.♕h3+ ♗g8 36.♗b3+ ♔h7 37.♗h3+ ♗g8 38.♗b3+ ♗h7 39.♖d3 ♗e4 40.♖h3+ ♗g6 41.♖g3+ ♔h7 42.♖c3 ♗e1+ 43.♖h2 1-0

3. The queenside fianchetto

Game 72 – 7.b3
Humpy Koneru 2545
Anatoly Karpov 2668
Cap d'Agde rapid 2006 (3)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.e3 e6 5.♗xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.b3!? 
When I began looking at games with this move I was amazed at how easily White gets promising positions.

7...\textit{c6}  

\textbf{WEAPON:} For example, 7...\textit{b6} 8.\textit{a3}!? (8.dxc5 is an option for technical players: 8...\textit{xd1} 9.\textit{xd1} etc. Carlsen-Mamedyarov, Wijk aan Zee 2019) 8...\textit{bd7} 9.d5!.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

And suddenly, Black got into trouble: 9...\textit{exd5} 10.\textit{bxd5} \textit{xd5} 11.\textit{xd5} \textit{a7} 12.\textit{b2} \textit{f6} 13.\textit{xd8+ xd8} 14.\textit{d1+} with an attacking (multi-piece) endgame, Adhiban-Yakubboev, Makati 2018.

8.\textit{b2 cxd4} 9.\textit{xd4 d7} 10.\textit{d2 xd4}

In any case, this is the main line, since Black could have exchanged the knights on d4 before.

\textbf{PUZZLE:} 10...\textit{e7} 11.\textit{f3} (this is rather an additional possibility, but 11.\textit{e2}!? 0-0 12.\textit{c1 xd4} etc. transposes to the main game) 11...0-0 12.\textit{c1 c8} 13.\textit{e2 b4} 14.a3 \textit{b5} 15.axb4 \textit{bxc4} 16.\textit{xc4 xb4=}


11.\textit{xd4}

This is perhaps the first critical position.
11...♗e7

**WEAPON:** 11...c6 12.e2 (12.e2!? 12...b4 (12...e7 is the main game) 13.c4 0-0 14.f3 d5? 15.xd5! xd5 16.g4 g6 17.b6=Dreev-Rakhmanov, Havana 2018;

**WEAPON:** After 11..c8!? I did not find any interesting games by White, so I give my options: 12.e2 (maybe 12.e2!?) 12.c5!? 13.c4 (or 13.b2!?) 13...0-0. The position looks more or less balanced, but White can still try – for instance: 14.f3!? with the idea 14.xd4 15.xd4 c6 16.xd8! fxd8 17.b6! c7 18.fc1= with some pressure in the endgame.

12.e2

In most of the games White at first brings his bishop to e2 and the knight to c4.

12.c6

**WEAPON:** 12...0-0
13. ♗f3 (13. ♘c4!? 13...b5 (Yilmaz-Lintchevski, St Petersburg blitz 2018) 14. ♘c4!±

13. ♘c4 0-0 14. ♖c1!?

If 14. ♙c2, 14...♗c8 15. ♖b2 ♗c5! equalizes, Dreev-Abreu Delgado, Merida 2015.

13...♗b5

Incredibly, but this is practically a decisive mistake. White completely seizes the initiative.

WEAPON: 14...♗d7 15.♗d2 ♘d5 16.f3 ♘xc4 17.♖xc4 ♘a3 (Bokar-Straka, ICCF email 2016) 18.♖cd1!? ±

WEAPON: Again, the rook move 14...♖c8!? may be the best chance for Black: 15.♗f3 (White can also try 15.♗e5!? or 15.♗d2!?) 15...♗xf3 (15...b5 16.♗e2 ♘c5 (Malaniuk-Yakovich, Moscow 1991) 17.♗b2!? 16.♗xf3 ♗d5?. This helps White to obtain the much better endgame (16...b5!? is probably balanced): 17.♗b6! ♖xf3 18.gxf3 ♘xc1 19.♖xc1± Lysyj-Timofeev, Russia tt blitz 2015.

14...♗d5?

Incredibly, but this is practically a decisive mistake. White completely seizes the initiative.

15.♗d2!±
15... b4
Black is trying to defend actively and bring the queen to g5, but in fact, the position is already difficult.

**WEAPON:** 15... c8 16. e5 (16. fd1!??) 16... a3 17. c4 b4 18. d1 b5 19. xc8 xc8 20. c4 xc4 21.bxc4 c6.

EXERCISE: Find tactics.

22. xg7+– Hellsten-Borge, Copenhagen 1996.

16. b2! g5
If 16...f6, 17. fd1 ±.

17. f3
White already has good alternatives: 17.g3!?; 17.h4!?.

17... e7 18. e5
18.h4±.
18...d5
18...xf3 19.xf3↑.
Almost 10 years later a game Vitiugov-Balogh, Tsaghkadzor 2015, saw 18...fc8 19.h4 (19.c4!+–) 19...h6 20.xc6 xc6 21.xc6 bxc6 22.c4+–.
19.fd1
e4!+–.

19...fc8 20.xc8+ xc8 21.e4 c6 22.e3 f6 23.d4 a5 24.d6 1-0
I love this game, but I tried to analyse it as objectively as possible.

4. Miscellaneous weapons

Game 73 – 7.a4
Viktor Moskalenko

Julian Estrada Nieto

Paris 1992 (1)

The Paris Open was a most memorable tournament for me. I gained my last grandmaster norm there, winning the
tournament with a score of 8 points out of 9.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3

WEAPON: Some typical ideas with an IP (including a2-a4): 3.♘f3 a6 4.e3 e6 5.♗xc4 c5 6.a4!? ♘f6 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♗e2 cxd4 9.♗d1 ♘e7 10.exd4 ♘d5 11.♗c3 0-0 (see introduction: ‘Miscellaneous IP set-ups’)


3...♘f6 4.♗xc4 e6 5.♗c3

For this line there is no difference. But, again, 5.♘f3 is more flexible.

5...a6 6.a4!?

The key move of this game: not allowing Black to advance ...b7-b5.

6...c5 7.♗f3 ♘c6 8.0-0 ♘c7

Black does not want to get into typical isolated pawn positions after 8...cxd4 9.exd4 (see above examples). This is a matter of taste and individual chess skills.

8...♗e7 9.♗e2!?, see the above IP Weapon.

9.d5!

Development must be optimized, and this pawn must be advanced at once (the signal for dynamic play).

9...♗e2 10.♗d6 leads to balanced play.

9...exd5 10.♗xd5 ♘xd5 11.♗xd5
Centralizing the queen at this stage creates a good basis for tactical operations.

11...\texttt{d6}

The most common response.

\textbf{WEAPON:} The best defence is possibly 11...\texttt{a5}: 12.\texttt{a2} \texttt{e6} 13.\texttt{e4} \texttt{c6} 14.\texttt{xc6+} (14.\texttt{e5\infty})
14...\texttt{xc6} 15.\texttt{xe6} fxe6 16.\texttt{g5} e5 17.\texttt{d2} \texttt{e7} 18.\texttt{e4±} (Hodgson-Bus, Cappelle-la-Grande 1992), keeping the strategic pressure and the initiative.

12.\texttt{d2}!?

Development.

\textbf{WEAPON:} However, 12.\texttt{g5}! was a more dynamic possibility: 12...0-0 (12...\texttt{xh2+} 13.\texttt{h1} \texttt{e5} 14.\texttt{e2+}–; 12...\texttt{e5} 13.\texttt{a2} \texttt{h6} 14.\texttt{e4} \texttt{f8} 15.f4±) 13.\texttt{e4} \texttt{g6} 14.\texttt{h4} \texttt{h5} 15.f4!, with a dangerous attack.

12...\texttt{e5} 13.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5}

Here I found the way to lead the game into a favourable ending (using my chess skill: endgame technique).

14.\texttt{a5}!

14...\texttt{xh2+}!

Intermediate moves can occur during tactics! If 14...\texttt{e7}, 15.\texttt{d8}! – another tricky bishop move.

15.\texttt{h1} \texttt{e6}!
And now it is White’s turn.

16. ♗xc7 ♘xd5 17. ♘xd5 ♗xc7 18. ♗xb7

This was my desired position when I started the action with 14. ♘a5.

18... ♖a7

Black opts for passive defence. My opponent probably thought that the position was drawish due to the opposite-coloured bishops.

However, after 18... ♖b8

19. ♗xa6 ♖xb2 20.a5! (20. ♖fc1!?) 20... ♔e7 21. ♗c4

White keeps exerting pressure thanks to his passed pawn on the a-file and his more active bishop.

19. ♗d5 ♔e7 20. ♖ac1 ♖b8 21.b3 ♗b6

The only move to defend the oddly placed pawn on c5.

22.g4!

A strategic push, gaining some space on the kingside.

22... ♖d8 23. ♗c4 a5

To free his rook on a7.

24. ♔g2 ♖ad7 25. ♖h1!
After he has achieved a significant difference in strength between the bishops, the plan is clear for White: he is going to activate his rooks by starting operations on the h-file.

25...h6 26.f4!
Another good move. The pawns gain space and are used as attacking pieces.

26...c7 27.f3 d2 28.h5 d6 29.g5!
Securing an entrance into the black fortress.

29...hxg5 30.xg5 g6 31.h1!
Preparing the guns to open fire!

31...f8 32.h7 e8 33.e4
Preparing the breakthrough f4-f5, this is a more than satisfying attacking continuation.

33.g1!? looks like zugzwang.

33...d1 34.f5! gxh5
Or 34.e7 35.f6! xf6 36.xc5 d8 37.e5+ capturing almost all the enemy pawns.

35.xf5 c1 36.xf7+ d8 37.d5 c7 38.e6+ c6 39.d7+ 1-0
White captured the ‘opposite-coloured’ bishop and won the battle of Paris. In addition to the opening, a good example, illustrating many endgame themes.

5. Isolated pawn: 7. b3

Game 74 – 10. e1
Bu Xiangzhi

Hrvoje Stevic

Bled ol 2002 (13)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.f3 f6 4.e3 e6 5.xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.b3!

This manoeuvre is very fashionable these days thanks to Kramnik’s victory over Anand (see next game). In his match games against Kasparov, Kramnik preferred the modest but venomous continuation 7.dxc5.

7...c6
Preparing to fight against the IP.
More in the spirit of the QGA would have been 7...b5 8.a4!? b7 (8...b4 9.e4!?) 9.axb5 axb5 10.xa8 x8. White must be slightly better here due to better development, but it is far from easy to increase his advantage.

weapon: A very unusual effort was made after a pawn sac: 7...bd7 8.e4!? xe4 (8...cxd4?! 9.e5!)
9.♕e2!? (9.♖e1=?) 9...d6 10.dxc5!N (instead of the main 10.d5 e5=).

White has strong pressure in the centre. 10...♘xc5 11.♖d1 (11.♘c2!? b5 12.♗c3 ♔b7 13.♖d1=) 11...♗xb3 12.axb3 b5 13.♘c3 ♔b7 14.♗f4! ♔c8 15.♝d5!+. The black king remains in the centre, and it is not easy to complete development;

**WEAPON:** 7...♗e7!?. Black tries not to define the centre. 8.♕e2!? White insists on the IP. With dxc5 he can play the symmetrical position (Game 71). 8...cxd4 9.exd4 ♔c6 10.♖d1 0-0 11.♘c3 ♔a5!? 12.♗c2 b5 13.♗g5!? ♔b7 14.♗xf6!? (14.d5 exd5∞) 14...♗xf6 15.♗e4!? (15.♗e4∞ Moskalenko-Mirzoev, Elgoibar 2012) 15...♗xe4 16.♗xe4 ♔e7 17.♗e5 ♔d5 18.♗c3 ♔d6 19.♖d3= Tomashevsky-Hossain, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007. White keeps a little pressure.

8.♘c3 cxd4 9.exd4 ♔e7

The key position of this line.

**WEAPON:** Here we have a good example with an isolated pawn position: 9...♗a5 10.♗g5!? (10.♗c2!? is usual) 10...♗e7 11.♗c2 b5 12.♕e2 ♔b7 13.♖d1 0-0 14.♖f1!? b4 (14...♗c8? 15.d5!).

**EXERCISE:** How to continue?
15. ♘xf6!? (a typical exchange, preparing ♘e4) 15... ♘xf6 16. ♘e4 ♘d5 (16... ♘xe4 17. ♘xe4 ♘a7 18.d5!) 17. ♘e5 ♘e7 18. ♘c5↑

**TRICK:** 18... ♘d6? 19. ♘cd7 ♘fd8 20. ♘xh7+! --.
18... ♘xc5 19.dxc5 ♘c7 20. ♘e4!± (exchanging Black’s best piece) Moskalenko-Munoz Pantoja, Catalonia tt 2011.

10. ♘e1
A classical move. For the more ambitious 10. ♘g5!?, see the next game.

10...0-0 11.a3!? Preventing ... ♘b4 and creating *luft* for the bishop: ... ♘a5 would now be met by ♘a2.
The natural alternative would be to develop the queen’s bishop with 11. ♘f4 or 11. ♘g5.

11...b5 12.d5!
As we observed in the introduction, in otherwise balanced positions, White always gets a slight initiative with this advance. White has no time to start on other plans.

12...exd5 13. ♘xd5 ♘xd5

![Chess Diagram](image)

14. ♘xd5!
The desired position for White in this variation. Here, the most important factor for both players is good technique.

**TRICK:** After 14. ♘xd5,
14... ♘a5 allows tactics: 15. ♘xa8!? ♘xb3 16. ♘g5! ♘xg5 17. ♘ad1 ♘d2! (the best defence; 17... ♘f6?
18. ♘d5= Moskalenko-Gonzalez Rodriguez, Barcelona 2001) 18. ♘e4 ♘a5 19. ♘xd2 ♘xd2 20. ♘c6 ♘g4!
21. ♘e8 ♘xd1 22. ♘a8 ♘f3+ 23. gxf3 ♘e1+ 24. ♘xe1 ♘xa8 25. ♘xd1=. Black can also restore the balance with 14... ♘b7! 15. ♘h5 ♘d3! 16. ♘a2 ♘g6= and from here White cannot win.

14... ♘b7 15. ♘e5
Two white pieces have improved, making the game more dynamic.

15... ♘a5
15... ♘xe5 16. ♘xb7=.
16. ♘xb7 ♘xd1
The saving intermediate move.

**TRICK:** 16... ♘xb7?? 17. ♘c6+–.
17. ♘xd1 ♘xb7 18. ♘e3
Generally speaking, this ending is balanced. However, White is the only side that can win. The rest of the game is a display of precision and great technique by Bu Xiangzhi.

18...\texttt{\textdagger}a5 19.\texttt{\textdagger}ac1 \texttt{\textdagger}f6?!
This lapse allows many tactical simplifications in White’s favour.
19...\texttt{\textdagger}fc8!? 20.\texttt{\textdagger}xc8+ \texttt{\textdagger}xc8 21.\texttt{\textdagger}d7 \texttt{\textdagger}d8=.

20.\texttt{\textdagger}d7! \texttt{\textdagger}xb2 21.\texttt{\textdagger}c2 \texttt{\textdagger}xa3 22.\texttt{\textdagger}a2 \texttt{\textdagger}c4 23.\texttt{\textdagger}xa3! \texttt{\textdagger}xa3 24.\texttt{\textdagger}xf8 \texttt{\textdagger}xf8 25.\texttt{\textdagger}c5 \texttt{\textdagger}c4 26.\texttt{\textdagger}xf8 \texttt{\textdagger}xf8 27.\texttt{\textdagger}f1 \texttt{\textdagger}e7 28.\texttt{\textdagger}e2 \texttt{\textdagger}e6 29.\texttt{\textdagger}d8!†

The potential of the white rook is stronger here than that of the knight plus Black’s a- and b-pawns.

29...a5 30.\texttt{\textdagger}d3 \texttt{\textdagger}e5+ 31.\texttt{\textdagger}c3 \texttt{\textdagger}c6 32.\texttt{\textdagger}e8+ \texttt{\textdagger}d5 33.\texttt{\textdagger}g8 g6 34.\texttt{\textdagger}g7 a4 35.\texttt{\textdagger}xf7 b4+ 36.\texttt{\textdagger}b2 \texttt{\textdagger}e5 37.\texttt{\textdagger}a7 \texttt{\textdagger}c4+ 38.\texttt{\textdagger}a1 a3 39.\texttt{\textdagger}a2 \texttt{\textdagger}c5 40.\texttt{\textdagger}h7 \texttt{\textdagger}b5 41.\texttt{\textdagger}h4 \texttt{\textdagger}a4 42.\texttt{\textdagger}a7+ \texttt{\textdagger}a5 43.\texttt{\textdagger}xa5+!

The final simplification.

43...\texttt{\textdagger}xa5

44.\texttt{\textdagger}b3! 1-0
A super-Bu!

But not 44.g4??, losing the pawn race: 44...\texttt{\textdagger}a4 45.h5 b3+ 46.\texttt{\textdagger}b1 gxh5! 47.gxh5 \texttt{\textdagger}b4 48.h6 \texttt{\textdagger}c3 49.h7 a2+ 50.\texttt{\textdagger}a1 b2+ 51.\texttt{\textdagger}xa2 \texttt{\textdagger}c2 52.h8\texttt{\textdagger}b1\texttt{\textdagger}+ 53.\texttt{\textdagger}a3 \texttt{\textdagger}b3#.

Now for the more aggressive and dynamic plans related to 10.\texttt{\textdagger}g5!? All the games presented here are rich with tactical themes: time plays an important role in the QGA.
1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 e6 3.c4 dxc4 4.e3 c5 5.♗xc4 ♘f6 6.0-0 a6 7.♗b3 cxd4 8.exd4 ♘c6 9.♘c3 ♗e7 10.♗g5!

White does not spend tempi on a classical set-up, but develops his pieces in the most active way.

10...0-0 11.♕d2

The start of an interesting queen switch for the attack: ♕d2-f4-h4.

**WEAPON:** However, 11.♖c1!? would also have been a useful move, which works well against a possible ...b7-b5: 11...♗d5 12.♗e3!? (this is a perfect temporary square for the queen’s bishop, defending the IP and enabling other pieces to improve) 12...♘xc3 (12...♗xe3 13.fxe3 ♗c3 will improve all of White’s pieces with an active d-/e-pawn formation) 13.♗xc3! ♖b4 14.♖e5 ♘d5 15.♖c1 ♖d7 16.♗g4!↑ with another desirable position in a Queen’s Gambit Accepted IP structure. White’s attacking chances are great:

16...♖b5 17.♗h6! (an annoying intermediate move) 17...♗f6 18.♗e1 ♗e7 19.♗d2! (a nice bishop step, threatening 20.♗b4) 19...♖d6 (Black delays counterplay, and punishment soon follows; simplifications do not help either; if 19...♗xe5, 20.♗xe5 ♕c8 21.♖xc8 ♖xc8 and here 22.♖c3! with the initiative).
EXERCISE: The placement of White’s pieces is extraordinarily good. Everything is ready to switch on the tactics: but how?

20. ♕xf7!  ♘xf7? (20... ♘xd4 was the best defence, though White is still clearly better after 21.♘xd4 ♘xd4 22.♗xe6) 21. ♛xe6 ♘d7 22. ♕xf6! (a funny and decisive queen sacrifice) 22...♛xg4 23. ♗xe7 ♘xe7 24. ♞xe7 ♚c8 25. ♞xc8+ ♗xc8 26.d5 1-0 Mamedyarov-Kharlov, Russia tt 2006.

11...♘a5
Defending well against d4-d5, but the knight is wrongly placed on a5. Alternatives, including some tricky transpositions, are:

A) 11...♘d5, with the idea of maximum simplifications: 12. ♗xd5! exd5 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.♗f1 – the
symmetrical structure;

B) 11...h6

12.♗f4! ♔e8 13.♖ad1 ♔f8 14.♗e5 ♔e7 15.♖d3! ♔ed5 16.♖xd5!? (or 16.♗c1 b5 17.♖g3↑ Kramnik-Anand, Mainz rapid 2001) 16...♖xd5 17.♖c2 ♔f5 18.♖g3 ♔xf4 19.♖xf4 ♔d6 20.♖e1 with a solid edge, Barsov-Lesiege, Montreal 2002;

PUZZLE: 11...b5 12.♖ad1 ♔b7?! (better is 12...♗a5, transposing to the main game after 13.♗c2; 12...b4?! 13.♖xf6!) 13.d5! exd5 14.♖xd5 ♔xd5 15.♘xd5↑ ♔g5 16.♖xe5 ♔f6 17.♗e4 ♔e7 18.♖d6± Avrukh-Kofidis, Athens 2003.

12.♗c2

We have returned to the classical (Panov Attack) set-up.

12...b5

Black wants to play comfortably with ...♗b7, ...♘c4 etc., but he spends two important tempi.

TRICK: 12...♗c4?! 13.♖e2 b5? 14.♖xf6 ♔xf6 15.♖e4+–.

13.♖ad1

An improvement by Kramnik.

The direct manoeuvre 13.♖f4!? often leads to transpositions, similar to the main game:

TRICK: 13...♗b7!? 14.♖h4 g6 15.d5 b4? (15...♖xd5) 16.d6+– Bacrot-Edouard, Le Port Marly rapid 2012;

13...♗a7 is a fabulous defensive idea: 14.♖ad1! ♔b7 (this is a strategic mistake after playing ...♔a7; 14...♖c7 15.♖h4!; 14...♖h5!? 15.♖g4!?) 15.d5! and White’s dynamic pieces dominate: 15...♖xd5 (15...♖xd5 16.♖xh7+!–; 15...exd5 16.♖h4+–) 16.♖xd5 exd5 (16...♖xd5 17.♖xd5!+–) 17.♖h4–, Kramnik-Anand, Dortmund 2001.
13...\textbf{c4}

An improvement by Anand.

Here are some more recent attempts:

\textbf{TRICK:} 13...b7!? 14.f4 (14.d5 exd5 15.e1 f5 16.f4 c7 17.h5 18.h4 g5 19.xg5 h6= Mamedyarov-Karjakin, Wijk aan Zee 2016) 14...b4? (14...g6?!∞) 15.h4! h6. A small puzzle:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{EXERCISE: How to continue?}

16.xh6! bxc3 17.xg7 xg7 18.g5+ h8 19.h6+ g8 20.g5+– Ryan-Randazzo, Barcelona 2008;


14.f4

The key moment in this line.

14.a7

Anand’s patent: he tries to use the a7-rook as a defensive resource. Unfortunately, there are some tactical problems.

\textbf{TRICK:} There is no time for 14..xb2 15.xf6! xf6 16.e4!, threatening to give mate with 16.xh7 and to take the rook on a8;
TRICK: 14...♗b7 seems more natural, but the question is: mate or no mate? 15.♕h4! g6? (≥ 15...h6 16.♕xh6! gxh6 17.♖xh6 --) 16.d5! ♖xd5 (16...exd5 17.♘e1+) 17.♗e4! (finishing off) 17...♗g7 18.♕h6+ ♔g8 19.♖xf6 ♖xf6 20.♗e5 1-0 Zenyuk-B.Muhren, Heraklio 2004.

15.♗e5
15.♕h4!?
15...♗c7 16.♖xc4 ♖xc4
16...♖xc4 17.♗h4↑.

EXERCISE: Find the best plan for White.

17.♕xf6!
Exchanging the blockading piece. A chunk of Nimzowitsch!
17.d5 was worse here, because it allows too many simplifications: 17...♖xd5! 18.♗xe7 ♖xe7 19.♖xc4 ♔b7 20.♖xd5 exd5 21.♗d4＋.
17...♕xf6 18.d5↑
IP-Kramnik is already in action. The black pieces are not well placed to deal with this thematic advance.

18...♗e5
18...♖xc3 19.d6↑; 18...exd5 19.♖xd5?! ↑.
19.♕f3!
Winning the opposition and even bringing about a kind of zugzwang.

19...♔b7
Vishy’s resource comes too late.
If 19...♖e7, 20.d6! ♖xd6 21.♖d5 ♔e7 22.♖xe5 ♖d7 23.♖d5±.
20.♕e4! g6 21.♖xc4
Note this queen triangulation: ♕f3-e4-c4.

21...♖xb2 22.♖b3!
Now Vishy’s rook is useless, and it is threatened with 23.♕a4.
22...♖g5 23.d6!
Thus, the pawns win this war.

23...♖e6 24.♕a4
24...♖xb3 25.axb3
The IP is now extremely strong.

25...b6 26.g4!
The queen has a remarkable level of influence in this game.

26.f4
No time for 26...xb3 27.xg5+–.

27.d5! d8

TRICK: 27...xd6 28.xf4 b4 29.d5+– and White will regain the queen with a winning fork check on f6.

28.xf4 exf4 29.d7!
One more step.

29.xb3 30.xf4
IP-Kramnik ties Black down completely.

30.b8 31.fe1
Further development.

31.b6 32.h4!

This advance, making use of an attack, results in a decisive advantage.
32...h5
Stopping the pawn from advancing to h6, but allowing a rook sacrifice on g6, which is a typical attacking motif in a fianchetto structure.

33. ♖d6! ♖c5 34. ♖f6 ♖f5
We can see a mating construction in the line 34...c7 35. e3 ♖bd8 and now, for instance, 36. ♖d4, threatening 37. ♖xg6+. White should win easily.

35. ♖xf5 gxf5
Black’s kingside (isolated) soldiers will not survive.

36. ♖xa6 ♖fd8 37. ♖d6 1-0
This was a typically tense top-class rapid game. Vishy’s plan with ... a5/b7-b5/... ♖a7, playing with his pieces on the a-, b- and c-files only, was somewhat dubious. Vladimir Kramnik was a player who often exchanged queens in order to win games – and matches. But in this game the queen was clearly his favourite piece.

IP – French Exchange: 3.e3 e5

Game 76
Kiril Georgiev

Mihajlo Stojanovic

Montenegro tt 2011 (3)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 e5 4.♗xc4 exd4

WEAPON: White is better after 4... ♖c6 (refusing to exchange on d4) 5.♗f3 e4

![Analysis Diagram]

and now: 6.♗b3!? (or 6.♗d2!? ♖g5 7.♗xe4!? ♖xg2 8.♗g3 ♖f6 (8...♗h3 9.♗f3!) 9.♗f3! ♖d5 10.♗c3 ♖b4 11.♗d2 ♖d8 12.a3!? ♖e7 13.♗c2± Dragun-Chigaev, Krakow 2016) 6...♖h6 7.♗fd2 ♖g5 8.♗f1!? f5 9.♗c3 a6 10.a3!? ♖f7 11.h4! ♖d8 12.g4! (12.f3!? 12...♗d6 13.♗g2 ♖e7 14.gxf5 ♖xf5 Valenzuela Gomez-Salinas Herrera, Antofagasta 2017. Here White had 15.♗dxe4!, winning a centre pawn.

5.exd4
In the Exchange French, Black does not take on c4 at once, waiting until White moves his king’s bishop. Therefore, White has gained a tempo here. This fact should have an effect in White’s favour in almost all variations.

5...d6
For example, if 5...♗b4+, 6.♗c3 ♖f6 7.♗f3 0-0 8.0-0 ♖c6 (8...♖g4 9.h3!?) 9.h3 h6 10.♖e1† and the black

6. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 7.0-0

It was better to play the middlegame. After 7. \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) + \( \text{\textit{e7}} \) 8. \( \text{\textit{x e7}} \) + \( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) 9.0-0 0-0 10. \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) a6!? 11. \( \text{\textit{e1}} \) \( \text{\textit{d6}} \) 12. \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) the endgame is balanced.

7...0-0 8. \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{c6}} \) 9.h3

\[ \text{\textit{analysis diagram}} \]

9...h6

\textbf{WEAPON:} 9... \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) 10. \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) ! h6 11. \( \text{\textit{h4}} \) g5 12. \( \text{\textit{g3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) 12. \( \text{\textit{x g5}} \) hxg5 13. \( \text{\textit{x g5}} \) \( \text{\textit{e8}} \) Artemiev-Motylev, Chita 2015) 12... \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) (12... \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) 11.d5 (11. \( \text{\textit{e5}} \)!??) 11... \( \text{\textit{e7}} \) 12. \( \text{\textit{d4}} \) \( \text{\textit{h7}} \) (12... \( \text{\textit{g6}} \) 13. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) ?) 13. \( \text{\textit{d5}} \) a6 (13... \( \text{\textit{c5}} \) 14. \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) ?) 14. \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \) 15. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{+}} \) Ki.Georgiev-Kogan, Barcelona 2008) 11. \( \text{\textit{xe8}} \) + \( \text{\textit{xe8}} \) and now
12.♕c2!?N. Only one game has been played with this move. 12...a6? (12...♘b4!? 13.♕b3?) allows the winning 13.♗xh6! Dreev-A.Haast, Wijk aan Zee 2016.

10...♕a5

TRICK: For example: 10...♖e8? 11.♗xh6;

WEAPON: 10...♘b4 11.♕b1.

The well-known Bulgarian GM Kiril Georgiev has shown us how it is possible to dominate with white in the QGA Exchange.

The critical position. 11...c6 provokes a sharp tactical fight (while 11...♗e6 leads to passive a position for Black: 12.♕xe6 fxe6 13.♗d2 (13.♗e5!?N) 13...♗e8 14.♖e1 ♘f7 15.♗e4 ♘xe4 (15...♗d5 16.♗c5± Glek-Kotenko, Saratov 2006) 16.♗xe4 ♘ae8 17.♗xb4 ♘xb4 18.♘e3 c6 19.d5!± Tkachiev-Vlassow, Moscow rapid 2013): 12.♗xh6!? gxh6 13.♖g6+ ♘h8 14.♖h6+ ♘h7 15.♘e4! ♘e7 16.♗e5 (16.g4!?N)
16...♕xd4  (16...♗f5 17.♗f4∞ Sarakenidis-Pajak, ICCF email 2014) 17.♖xf7+ ♕xf7 18.♖xf7 ♕xe4
19.♕ae1 ♕h4 20.♕xh4 ♘xh4 21.♕e4 ♘f6 22.♕xb4. In this multi-piece ending White has good winning
chances: 22...♕g7 23.♕h5 a5 24.♗e4 ♗f5 25.♗e3 ♕h6 26.♗e2 ♘d4 27.♕e7 b6 28.g4 ♖c5 29.♖e5
♗g6 30.h4 ♗f7 31.g5+ 1-0 Pierzak-Broniek, ICCF email 2011.

11.♗d3 ♗e6
Black has improved his bishop, but the queen’s knight will be passive.
12.♖e1 ♗c6 13.a3 a6 14.♗e3

‖ WEAPON:‖ 14.♗d2?! with the idea 14...♖e8 15.♕xe6!? (an interesting exchange sac; 15.♗d1+) 15...fxe6
16.♖e1 ♗d7 (Wendt-Rabiega, Berlin 2007) 17.♖g6!??

14...♖e7  15.♖ad1

Now White’s position is quite solid and comfortable for the attack, while Black does not have a clear plan.

15...♖ad5
15...c6 16.♗a4?.
16.♖c1
16.d2!?
16...♗f4 17.♗a4
17.♗e5?.
17...♗xc1 18.♖xc1 ♗b6?!
18...b6 19.♖c3±
19.♗c5 ♖d5 20.♖e5
20.♖h4?.
20...♖c8 21.♗b1! ♖b6 22.♖d3 ♗e7 23.♖f4 ♖d6 24.♖c2+–
There is nothing more to discuss – checkmate is just a matter of time.
24...♖e8 25.♖e3 a5 26.♖e1 a4 27.♗g4 ♕xf4 28.♖xf6+ ♕xf6 29.♖h7+ ♕h8 30.♖g8+! ♕xg8 31.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 32.♖e8 # 1-0

Summary Queen’s Gambit Accepted
We have five possible approaches here: 7.♗d3 and the plan e2-e3/♕e2 with 7.dxc5, 7.b3, 7.a4 and 7.♗b3.

In modern chess, there is no need to prove which of the moves/lines is more popular, or which is best. It should always be the one that you like, and/or the one which brings a positive result. So just test them, one by one, and use it on your next opponent – good luck!
CHAPTER 10

Queen’s Gambit Declined: Semi-Slav without ...\(\text{\textit{f6}}\)

A positional Anti-Triangle set-up
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\) c6 4.e4

![Chess Diagram]

Legendary GM Boris Gulko beat several World Champions in the Triangle System with positional pressure.

One important method of preparing an attack is to first deprive the opponent from his original plans and, accordingly, from creating counterplay. Not every player feels comfortable when he is in such a restrained situation. The defending side often loses control, committing mistakes or inaccuracies in his plans, which can quickly change
the game in your favour. See, for example, games of the World Champions Anatoly Karpov, Magnus Carlsen, or even the legendary GM Boris Gulko (who achieved a remarkable positive result against Garry Kasparov, using positional pressure).

This chapter is devoted to one of these opening systems, where White plays in the indicated style.

A bit of history

The Triangle set-up may lead to a whole range of different and complex positions. The Semi-Slav Defence (1.d4 d5 followed by e7-e6 and c7-c6) is one of the most popular opening set-ups for Black. Black can follow two entirely different concepts.

One includes an early ...♘g8-f6 and leads to a number of popular and deeply analysed systems: the Meran, the Botvinnik, the Moscow, the Westphalian, etc. In this book we discuss this approach in Chapter 11: ‘Queen’s Gambit – the Exchange Variation’.

The other set-up, in which Black refrains from ...♘g8-f6 at an early stage, is presented in this chapter. Black keeps a choice between two double-edged interesting systems: the Noteboom variation (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗f3 dxc4) and the Stonewall (...f7-f5) if White plays an early e2-e3.

Directions

Of course Black’s decision to refrain from an early ...♘g8-f6 gives White other options (the most important being the Slav Gambit: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e4!?), which help the white player to avoid the mentioned Noteboom and Stonewall.

However, there is also a solid set-up within the gambit: 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♖b4+ and now 6.♘c3!? (instead of the popular pawn sac: 6.♗d2 ♖xd4 etc.).

Game 77: This is a particularly good choice for creative positional players (without long and forced computer lines). By the way, GM Boris Gulko is one of the long-time followers of this Anti-Triangle System (and I adopted this scheme after studying his old games).

White’s play is quite simple and leads to interesting positions. Any player can quickly broaden his strategic and tactical understanding, and play this variation without much risk.

Deviation – 4...♗b4!?
Game 78: With this classical pin Black is trying to fix the centre, which is rather surprising in this case. The puzzling diagram position is a bit similar to the Nimzo-Indian Defence, or even the French Winawer (with the white pawn on c2 and a black pawn on c7).

The most interesting continuations for White:
• 5.cxd5 exd5 6.e5 (main game);
• The puzzle line 5.♕g4/a2-a3;
• The most popular move 5.e5;
• The flexible alternative 5.♗d3!? (see the Weapon).
Anti-Triangle set-up – Games

A positional move: 4.e4 dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 6.♘c3!?

Game 77
Erwin l'Ami

Dusko Pavasovic

Hersonissos Ech-tt 2017 (9)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e4!?
The most active move here, White attacks the centre straight away. Instead, 4.♘f3 dxc4 – Noteboom Variation; 4.e3 f5 – Dutch, Stonewall; 4.cxd5 exd5 – Queen’s Gambit, the Exchange Variation, Chapter 11.

4...dxe4
For the pin 4...♗b4!? see Game 78.

5.♘xe4 ♗b4+
A dynamic check. Without this Black will have a passive position.
For example: 5...♘f6?! 6♗d2+ ♗xf6 7.♗f3 ♘b4+ 8.♕d2 ♘xd2+ 9.♕xd2±

6.♘c3!?
This positional move is the main idea of this chapter. White refuses the sharp Slav Gambit: 6.d2!? ♘xd4 7.♗xb4 ♘xe4+ etc.
6...c5!?
If first 6...♗f6, 7.a3 ♖xc3+ 8.bxc3 – see 7...♖xc3.

7.a3!?
A Nimzo/Sämisch touch.

**WEAPON:** Playable is 7.♗f3

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7...♗a5

**WEAPON:** After the exchange (...,♖xc3), White has a choice between gambit options and a better ending:

7...♖xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♖f6 9.♗f3 ♖a5 10.d2 ♖e4 11.d3 ♖xd2 12.♖xd2
12...0-0 (12...cxd4 13.cxd4 ♘c6 14.♕c1!?N ♘xd2+ 15.♔xd2??) 13.♕b1!?N (13.h4!?) 13...c6 14.♖b5 ♙xa3 15.0-0 cxd4 16.cxd4 (16.♖h5!?) 16...♖d8 17.♖e1++

8.♗e3
13...c7 (13...0-0!? 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♗xd8 ♖xd8 16.e2 ♒g5 17.♗f3!? ♔a6 18.b3 ♖xe3+ 19.♗c2 ♖b7 20.♗he1 ♖½-½ Grego-Morcin, LSS email 2013) 14.♗xc6 (14.♗b5??) 14...bxc6 15.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 16.♗e2 (16.g3!?) 16...♖e7 17.♗f3 ♖d7 18.♗e4 ♖b6 19.c5 f5!= Carlsen-Anand, Chennai Wch match 2013;

**WEAPON:** Very interesting is the immediate 8.♗ge2?!, to gain the bishop pair: 8...♗xc3+ (8...♘f6?!) 9.dxc5!; 8...cxd4 9.♖xd4??, see Gulko-Khenkin above) 9.♕xc3! cxd4 10.b5 a6 (10...♖c6 11.c5↑ and ♖d6+) 11.♖xd4 e5 12.♗b3? ♖xd1+ 13.♗xd1 ♕d7 14.♗e1 ♔a4 15.♗c5 ♕c6 16.♗e3 ♖f6 17.f3 and White won this favourable ending step by step, Shimanov-Sevian, St Louis 2015.

8...♗f6

An automatic move.

**WEAPON:** 8...♖e7? with the flexible idea ...♗f5: 9.♗ge2!?
9.♘g2!?
A strategic move.

TRICK: 9.♖c1 contains some hidden tricks:

Dutch GM Erwin l’Ami followed the old Soviet School and Gulko.

9...♗xc3+ (9...cxd4!? 10.♕xd4 ♗xd4 11.♖xd4 ♛c6 12.♕xf6 gxf6= Lenderman-Gaponenko, Doha 2014)
10.♖xc3 ♞e4 11.♕g4 ♞xc3 12.♖xg7 ♕f8 (12...♕d7? (Langheinrich-Rehberg, Apolda 2017)
13.dxc5!+–) 13.bxc3 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♕a5+ 15.♖d2 ♕xa3 16.♗e2! with dangerous compensation for the
exchange (♗d2 vs ♕f8).

9...cxd4

WEAPON/TRICK: If 9...♗g4?!
10.dxc5!  †xe3 11.fxe3! (a creative option; after 11.♘xd8+ ♗xd8 12.fxe3 Black has some compensation, Veselov-Chernyak, St Petersburg 2017) 11...♕g5 12.b4 ♗c7 (12...♗d8 13.♘f4!? 13.h4! (13.♗b5!? ♗e5 14.h4!))

13...♗xe3 14.♖h3! ♗e5 15.♗b5 and White is clearly better!
10. ♕xd4!?  
Again, the solid option.

**WEAPON/TRICK:** 10. ♕xd4 ♘e4?! (quite a natural move, but tactically erroneous. Better is 10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 0-0 12.♘e2 where each side has its pros and cons, Voskanyan-Moisan Plante, Montreal 2003) 11.b4! ♘xc3 12.♗c2 e5 13.♗f3 ♗c7 14.♗xe3 0-0 15.♗d1 ♗f6 (Gorovets-Baryshpolets, Sturbridge 2018) 16.♗d3!?↑.

10...♗xd4  
The main answer.  
Dangerous is 10...0-0?! 11.♕h4! (11.0-0-0!?)

11...♗b7 (11...♗c6 12.♗d1↑) 12.0-0-0 ♗e7 13.g4! ♗e5 14.♗e4 ♗d8 15.♗g2 ♗d5 16.♗xe7 ♗xe7 17.b4+-  
Aupi Royo-Teichmann, ICCF email 2014.

11.♗xd4!?  
The critical moment. Now White complicates the game, giving Black a choice between the move played and 11...♘xc3!?.

11.♗xd4 is a less ambitious option: 11...♗c6 12.♗xf6 (12.b4 (D.Fridman-Godart, Gibraltar 2017) 12...♗d8!?→) 12...gxf6, which is more or less balanced but still playable.
11...♘g4?!
Black again falls for the provocation (as also noted in the introduction and in many notes to this game).

**TRICK:** For example: 11...♘e4?! 12.b4! ♘xc3 13.bxa5 a6 14.♗d3 ♘a4 15.♖b1 ♘c5 16.♖c2

**WEAPON:** Black’s logical alternative is 11...♗xc3+!? 12.bxc3 0-0 13.♗e2

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analysis diagram
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13...e5 14.♗b5+ ♘c6 15.0-0!? ♔d8 16.♗f1 (16.♖ad1?!) 16...a6 17.♗c7↑ Möller-Schulz, Germany email 2013.

12.♗d2!N ♔b6 13.♗b5!

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The key move, giving White a tactical advantage.

13...0-0

**TRICKS:** 13...♖xf2 14.♗a4+-; 13...♖xf2+ 14.♔e2 ♔b6 15.c5 ♔d8 16.♖d6+ ♔d7 17.♖xf7 ♔f8 18.♖xd8.

14.♗e2! ♔f6
Black’s counterplay has been a total failure. No piece can take on f2!

15.c5
15.♗a4?.
White wins a large number of tempi, and then of course the game.
EXERCISE: Find a breakthrough.

41. ♘ xf7!
In the main game, following the strategy of increasing positional pressure, White already achieved a winning position on move 14.

Conclusion
After 6. ♘ c3!? c5, a complicated game starts immediately from the 7th move, and each move is quite a responsibility, especially for Black. Both sides have alternatives – nevertheless, White has good chances for an initiative, or a small positional plus, in almost every line.

The pin: 4.e4 ♗ b4

Game 78
Viktor Moskalenko

Roy Saptarshi

Barcelona 2012 (8)

Even today, the Anti-Triangle System resembles an uninhabited jungle. I did not manage to find a single perfect or really beautiful game in this line. Therefore I selected a game of my own, which is ideally suited for the analysis of the most important options inside this wild theoretical jumble...

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗ c3 c6 4.e4 ♗ b4? 
4...dxe4 is the previous game.
A funny pin. Black is also trying to play creatively (or maybe he was scared to take on e4 for some reason).

5.cxd5?!

I think this exchange is better played immediately (to ‘soften up’ the ‘Noteboom Wall’). Alternatives:

**PUZZLE:** Just a few brave souls tried to attack right away with 5.♕g4 (5.a3 is similar), but Black has enough counterplay to equalize:

5...♖f6 6.♗xg7 ♖g8 7.♗h6 dxe4!? (7...c5!?N; 7...♗g6?! 8.♗e3 ♖xe4 9.a3!) 8.♗e2 (8.a3 leads to the same line) 8...c5 9.a3 ♖xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♖c6 and now, after 11.dxc5

the key point is that with the white pawn on c2 we have exactly the same – favourable – position as in the Winawer French (4.a3). But here the c4-pawn limits White’s possibilities and leads to equal play:

11...♖g6 12.♗e3 d7!? 13.♗g3 ♖e5 14.♗xe4 ♖xe4 15.♖xe4 ♕f6 16.f4 ♖d7 17.c4 ♖c6 18.xf6 ♖xf6 19.♖g1 0-0-0= Heinke-Andersen, Germany email 2014.

I understand that 5.e5 is the most popular because White does not want to open a path for the black bishop on c8, as in the case of 5.cxd5 (main game). But this is a rather dogmatic view, since Black has some new options (including for his c8-bishop): 5...c5 (5...♖e7 6.a3!? is similar) 6.a3 ♖xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♖e7 8.♗f3 ♖bc6 (8...cxd4!?; Black should take on d4 sooner or later) 9.♗d3 (9.cxd5 ♖a5++; 9.cxd5 ♖xd5??) 9...b6?! (better is 9...cxd4!? 10.cxd4 ♖b6 11.cxd5 ♖xd5=) 10.cxd5 ♖xd5 occurred in Korobov-Ivanchuk, Huai’an blitz 2017. Here White could have an advantage after the correct 11.c4! ♖d7 12.cxd5!=.
WEAPON: 5. d3!? This idea, to keep more tension in the centre, deserves more attention than the first two: 5...dxe4 6.dxe5 dxe4 7. xe4 xd1+ 8. exd1 e6 9. c2 6. xe4 f6 7. c2 c5 (note: it looks like White has an extra tempo in comparison to the previous game, where after 6...c5 the white bishop was on f1 and the black knight was still on g8) 8.a3 a5 (8... xc3+ 9. bxc3 c7 10. e2 0-0 11. f3 b6 (Qendro-Costantini, Bratto 2003) 12. e5!±) 9. f3 cxd4 10. xd4? a6 (10... xc3+ 11. bxc3 0-0 12.0-0 c7 13. d3!? 11.0-0 0-0

analysis diagram


5...exd5
PUZZLE: 5...cxd5 6.e5!? trans-poses to a favourable position of the Advance French.
6.e5 c5!? WEAPON: The main move is 6... e7 but it usually transposes: 7. d3!? (7.a3! 5. xc3+ 8. bxc3 0-0 9. d3 f5 (Narciso Dublan-Moskalenko, Santa Coloma rapid 2005) 10. f3!? 5...c5 8.a3 xc3+ (8... a5 9. f3!? 9. bxc3 5. b6 10. e2 0-0 11.0-0 cxd4 (11... g4 12. g5) 12. cxd4 f5 13. g5!? (13.a4!? 13... d7 14. g3! xd3 15. xd3± g4? 16.f4± Le Quang Liem-Yudin, St Petersburg blitz 2018.

7.a3
7... ♗xc3+

**WEAPON**: If 7... ♗a5, White has 8.b4!? N cxb4 (8...cxd4 9.♘b5 ♗c7 10.f4!?) 9.♗b5! b3+ 10.♗d2 ♗c6 11.♗f3 ♗ge7 12.♗d6+ ♗f8 13.♗b1 (13.♗b5!?) 13...♗f5 14.♗xf5 ♗xf5 15.♗xb3† with the initiative.

8.bxc3 ♗c4N

A new blockading move, but White is comfortable here.

**WEAPON**: 8... ♗c6 is similar to the Weapon 6... ♗e7: 9.♗f3 ♗ge7

![analysis diagram](image)

10.♗d3!? (this move is more in the spirit of the position; 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 cxd4 (11...♗g4 12.♗b1!? Khalifman-Galkin, Hoogeveen 2000) 12.cxd4 ♗h6 (So-Nakamura, Wijk aan Zee 2014) 13.♗b1!? 10...♗g4 (10...♗f5? (Gupta-Joshi, New Delhi 2007) 11.♗xf5 ♗xf5 12.dxc5!?) 11.0-0! with the idea 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♗xd4 14.♗e3† and White has a powerful position for a pawn.

9.♗e2!? ♗c6

The critical position. White has several favourable plans. However, during the game I was confused at precisely the key moments.

![analysis diagram](image)

10.g3

**WEAPON**: 10.a4!? ♗a5 11.♗a3†.
10... ♝a5 11. ♖g2 ♝b3 12. ♖b1
Preparing the ♖xb3 sac.

**WEAPON**: The simplest way was 12. ♖a2!? ♗f5 13.a4! ♖xc1 14.♖xc1 ♗e7 15.♗f4 ♗d7 16.0-0 0-0 17.♖a3 with a great positional advantage for White.

12... ♗f5 13.♖xb3!? ♗xb3 14.♗xb3 ♗e7 15.♖g5?!
Allowing counterplay.
15.♗f4!? kept the initiative.
15... ♖b6! 16.♗xb6 axb6 17.♗f4 ♗e6
Due to the complexity of the position, my opponent’s play was not perfect either.
17...♖xa3!?

18.♕d2 ♖xa3 19.♖b1 ♖a2+ 20.♔e1 ♖c8? 21.♖xd5
White is better again. But the game ended in a draw (in mutual time trouble, on move 51).

**Conclusion on the 4... ♗b4 pin**

In my opinion, the most promising chances for White appear after 5.cxd5!? exd5 6.e5, or after the flexible move 5.♗d3!?. Both of these alternatives give rise to a lot of cool ideas and varied weapons.
CHAPTER 11

Queen’s Gambit Declined: Exchange Variation

Part I. In the footsteps of Botvinnik

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5

Mikhail Botvinnik, the patriarch of pragmatic play and a great chess architect, once said that ‘Chess is the art of analysis’. Unfortunately, modern chess has become the art of computer – not human – analysis.

A bit of history
The sixth World Champion, Mikhail Botvinnik (1911-1995), created and improved many important systems. The main characteristics of these systems lie in their pawn structures: original, very dynamic, aggressive and full of venom. All these are ingredients for an interesting middlegame.

One of the typical ideas of Botvinnik is the plan with a2-a3 and f2-f3 in the Sämisch Variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence, which was the subject of Chapter 7. White’s general aim is to put up a sharp fight for the centre with a very strong and dynamic central pawn structure.

In the Exchange Variation of the Queen’s Gambit Declined, only two plans were known at the time: the minority attack with b2-b4-b5 (Games 81, 83-85 and 87), and queenside castling with opposite-side attacks (Games 83, 84 and 87 – see Part II). But thanks to his deep knowledge, Botvinnik found a new strategic idea of ♘ge2, f2-f3 and e3-e4, starting a central attack with pawns (Games 78-82 – Part I).

This approach resulted in two remarkable victories, against Keres (1952, left diagram): and Larsen (1965):
White’s main ideas after f2-f3 are:
• To avoid any counterplay for Black (especially ...♘e4);
• To dominate the centre, preparing e3-e4 or f3-f4-f5 advances;
• To combine the initiative in the centre with a kingside attack.

**Directions**

At first we observe the development of the Botvinnik/Sämisch set-up with ♘ge2 and f2-f3: 5...c6 6.♕c2 ♗e7 7.e3 ♘bd7 8.d3 0-0 9.♘ge2 ♕e8 10.0-0 ♕f8 11.f3, see above, right diagram;

Game 79 – 11...♗e6 12.♖e1!? An extraordinary game by Botvinnik’s favourite pupil (Garry Kasparov);
Game 80 – 12.♗d1!? and 12.♗h4!? are interesting alternative plans to 12.♖e1;
Game 81 – 10/11...♗h5. Black tries to simplify the position, but White is already prepared for the e3-e4 push!
Game 82 – 11...c5. Black immediately shows activity in the centre (...cxd4), or on the queenside (...c5-c4), but gives himself a weak pawn on d5.

⚠️ **KEEP IN MIND**
You never lose when you’re playing on Botvinnik’s side!
Part I: QGD Exchange – Games

The plan ♘ge2 and f2-f3

Game 78
Mikhail Botvinnik
Paul Keres
Moscow ch-URS 1952

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5

5...♗e7
Alternatively, 5...6.e3 ♘e7 7.♗c2. This is actually regarded as the best move order (if 7.♗d3, then 7...♘e4!? 8.♗f4 f5, blocking the centre in Dutch Stonewall fashion; but, of course, the position remains playable for both sides). 7...0-0 8.♗d3 ♘bd7 9.♘ge2 h6. This looks like a logical response: gaining a tempo by defending h7 and attacking the white bishop. But strategically it weakens the kingside. The main defence is 9...♖e8!?; see Games 79-82: 10.♗h4 ♖e8 11.f3!? (if 11.0-0, 11...♗e4!?).
Thirteen years went by and then Botvinnik came up with another example that became famous:
11...c5 12.0-0 (12.♖d1!? 12...a6!? 13.♖ad1 b5! (logically, Black is seeking counterplay on the queenside) 14.♗f2 (Botvinnik usually liked a slow game, nearly always aiming for closed or semi-open positions. It was a good moment to play for an advantage with 14.dxc5!? 113...c4 15.♗f5∞ Botvinnik-Larsen, Noordwijk 1965.

6.e3 0-0 7.♗d3 ♘bd7 8.♖c2

In our modern times, more accurate opening moves are considered to be 8.♘ge2 or 8.♘f3.

8...♖e8 9.♘ge2 ♕f8

Why does grandmaster Paul Keres avoid playing the natural pawn move 9...c6 first? The answer is to be found in the positioning of the white king, which at the moment is still in the centre. If White castles queenside, Black will save time by playing ...c7-c5 directly! This is a typical example of prophylaxis in the opening: monitoring potential rival plans so as to implement a more precise order in your own moves.
A game Keres-Botvinnik in the 1950s – with reversed colours!

WEAPON: Alternatively, the sharper set-up with 10.h3 c6 and 11.0-0-0 is also popular.

For example: 11...a5 12.♖b1 b5 13.♘g3 (13.g4!? 13...a4 14.♘e2!?) ♗a6 15.f3! h6 16.♗xf6 ♖xf6 17.e4↑

Dreev-Jussupow, Switzerland tt 2011.

10...c6

The main position of the Exchange Variation with ♘ge2 (Games 78-82).

11.♖ab1

In this game Botvinnik starts with a minority attack, preparing the advance b2-b4-b5, but then his opponent forces him to seek a new path.

WEAPON: 11.f3!? is the modern idea, see Games 79-82.

11...♗d6

PLAN: With this move Keres aims for an aggressive counterplan: ...♗g6, ...h7-h6 and after ♖xf6 – ...♗xf6, when the black pieces suddenly become active for an attack on the kingside. Black is also threatening the
standard combination $12...\text{hxh}2+$ and $13...\text{gxg}4+$. However, Botvinnik comes up with an elegant way to refute this strategy.

11...a5 12.a3 is usual.

**EXERCISE:** What is White’s next move?

$12.\text{h}1!$

Prophylaxis!

12.f3!?.

$12...\text{g}6$

**TRICK:** $12...\text{xh}2?? 13.\text{xg}6$, winning a piece.

**EXERCISE:** Black has prepared $13...\text{h}6$. How should White continue?

$13.f3!!$

Thanks to this game (and thanks to his fundamental knowledge), Botvinnik found a new strategic idea in the Exchange Variation of the QGD – starting a central attack with pawns.

$13...\text{e}7$

Keres, surprised, has to change plans, and adopts a passive defence.
In case of 13...h6 14.\(\text{\&}x\text{xf6} \text{\&}xf6\) 15.e4! White attacks first: with the terrible threat e4-e5.

**EXERCISE:** How should White continue?

14.\(\text{\&}be1\)
Another prophylactic move, improving the position of the rook.
It was still too early for the advance 14.e4 dxe4 15.fxe4 \(\text{\&}g4\), but interesting was 14.\(\text{\&}bd1\)!? with the idea 14...h6 15.\(\text{\&}xf6 \text{\&}xf6\) 16.e4↑.

14...\(\text{\&}d7\)
Black attempts to simplify.
He could have complicated matters with 14...h6!?

15.\(\text{\&}xe7 \text{\&}xe7\) 16.\(\text{\&}g3\)
16.e4!? was playable, but White prefers making prophylactic moves, preparing this advance in comfort.

16...\(\text{\&}f6\) 17.\(\text{\&}f2\) \(\text{\&}e6\) 18.\(\text{\&}f5\)
Another advance, 18.f4?!, was also interesting.

18...\(\text{\&}xf5\) 19.\(\text{\&}xf5\) \(\text{\&}b6\) 20.e4↑

White concludes his strategic plan: advancing pawns to gain space.

20...dxe4
If, for example, 20...♖ae8, 21.e5 ♘d7 22.f4+ would be wonderful!

21.fxe4 ♖d8 22.e5!
A radical way to activate his pieces and move the knight to d6 (♘c3-e4-d6).

22...♘d5
22...♖e8 23.♖d1+–.

23.♘e4!
Jumping to the desired square.

23...♗f8 24.♗d6! ♕c7

**EXERCISE:** How should White continue?

25.♗e4!
White is going to exchange Black’s only good piece, the d5-knight, and prepares to attack with ♘f5.

25...♗e6 26.♗h4!
The threat to h7 forces Black to weaken his kingside structure.

26.g6
26...h6 27.♗f5 ––.

27.♗xd5 cxd5 28.♗c1!
It is nice to occupy the open c-file, while preventing the possible defensive sacrifice ...♖xd6.

28...♗d7 29.♗c3 ♕f8
EXERCISE: How can White continue the attack?

30. ♘f5!

The culmination of a chess game always requires tactics! Actually, this strong manoeuvre is also prophylactic, preventing the liberating advance ...f7-f5.

30... ♖e8

The f5-knight is untouchable: 30...gxf5 31. ♖g3+ ♘g7 32. ♕f6 and mate on the next.

31. ♘h6+ ♕f8 32. ♕f6 ♘g7 33. ♗c3 ♘c8 34. ♗xf7 ♖e6 35. ♕g5 ♘f5 36. ♘h6 ♖g7 37. ♗g4 1-0

An excellent game by Botvinnik, and a good practical demonstration of the effectiveness of ‘prophylactic thinking’, and of the power of the plan with f2-f3/e3-e4 in the opening. Black’s strategy was convincingly refuted, as White smoothly developed his initiative. Botvinnik was invincible in such positions.

Game 79 – 11...♗e6 12. ♖e1

Garry Kasparov

Ulf Andersson

Belfort 1988 (10)

In this game Kasparov brilliantly made use of Botvinnik’s strategic idea.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 c6 6.♗c2 ♘e7 7.e3 ♖bd7 8.♗d3 0-0

The modern defence is 8...♘h5!?, see Game 87, Part II.

9.♗e2 ♖e8!?

The main move: planning a flexible defence with ...♗f8/...♗e6 etc.

9...h6 was Botvinnik-Larsen, see the previous game.

10.0-0

10.0-0-0 b5!? 11.♗b1 a5=¿.

10...♗f8 11.f3!?
11...e6

Black’s strategy is to wait, improve the position of his pieces, and prepare for action. This is currently the most popular line.

Simplification: 11...♘h5, see Game 81.

_WEAPON/TRICK:_ A tricky idea is 11...♕b6.

Black’s defence is based on two tactical concepts, so White must be careful and make a precise move: 12.♖ad1! (for example: 12.♗h4? ♘g4! or 12.e4?! dxe4 13.fxe4 ♘e6= and the black queen on b6 becomes useful) 12...h6 13.♗h4! (if 13...♘e6, 14.f2!?± is an 8-0 score for White!) and now 13...♘g4? does not work!: 14.♗xe7 ♘xe3 15.c5! and White wins material, since the ♗d3 is defended by the ♖d1: 15...♘xc2 16.♗xb6 ♘b4 17.c5+-;

Another very strong GM, Ulf Andersson, also fell victim to one of Botvinnik’s opening systems.

_WEAPON:_ For example, in Moskalenko-Eberlein, Metz 1990, Black also tried to simplify with 11...♘6d7,
the main defensive idea in Games 78 and 79: 12.\textbullet xe7 \textbullet xe7 13.e4! \textbullet b6 14.e5! (see analysis diagram next page) followed by f3-f4!

The desired position for White in this variation (the centre pawn formation is similar to the Sämisc/Botvinnik in the Nimzo Indian;

\textbf{WEAPON:} A logical, and the second popular move is 11...\textbullet g6!? in the style of Paul Keres against Botvinnik, preparing 12...h6:

\textbf{PLAN:} If now 12...\textbullet 6d7, 13.\textbullet xe7 \textbullet xe7 14.\textbullet g3 (14.\textbullet f4!?%) 14...\textbullet ad8 15.\textbullet f2\textbullet Moskalenko-Glud, Spain tt 2011.
13. ♗h1!?
The same prophylaxis a la Botvinnik (Game 78).

13... ♘d7
Again, Black is trying to simplify.

14. ♖xe7 ♖xe7

PLAN: 14... ♖xe7

15. ♗f4!? ♘d6 16. ♗f2 f6. Here, apart from the standard move e3-e4, White can plan to advance f3-f4/h2-h4/g2-g4, for instance: 17. ♖xe6 ♘xe6 18. f4!?± etc. Carlsen-Ivanchuk, Leon rapid 2009.

15. ♗f4!? c7 16. ♗f2!
White’s queen is placed well on f2, since it defends the d4-pawn and strengthens the attack along the f-file. Everything is ready for e3-e4!

16... ♗f6 17. e4!
In the spirit of his teacher, Kasparov also implements the classic central ‘Sämisch/Botvinnik’ attack.

17... dxe4 18. fxe4 ♖cd7
18... ♗g4 19. ♗g1 ♘f6.

19. d5!
Winning material.


19... cxd5 20. ♗b5! ♖c7 21. exd5 ♖d7
21... ♗xd5? 22. ♗d1+-.

22. ♗e2±
The tactical operations have ended up in White’s favour. The double threat is d5-d6 or ♗xa7.

22... ♕c8 23. ♕xa7

23... b6 24. ♕a6 ♗e4 25. d6 ♘xd6 26. ♕d5 ♗e5 27. ♕xb6+-

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An extraordinary game: it seems that after starting the plan with f2-f3 White’s central initiative was always stronger than Black’s modest counterplay.

**Game 80 – 12. ♖d1/12. h4**

Sanan Sjugirov
2673

Artur Jussupow
2581

Doha 2014 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.d3 0-0 8.♗e2 ♖e8 9.0-0 c6 10.♗c2 ♘f8 11.c3 e6 12.♖d1?

This move is very similar to 12.♖ae1 (Game 79), but this way the rook is a better defender of the pawn on d4.

**WEAPON/PLAN:** Isolated pawn: 12.♗h4!? is an additional strategic idea generated by GM Malaniuk (1957-2017) to not force the game – avoiding the exchange of the dark-squared bishop – and to be prepared against ...c6-c5. For instance: 12...♘c8 (if now 12...♗d7/...♗g6/...♗h5, then 13.♗f2!?) 13.♖d1!? a6 (13...♗a5?! 14.♗f2!? Malaniuk-Graf, Tashkent 1987) 14.♗f2!? c5 15.dxc5± ♘xc5 Malaniuk-Shabanov, Smolensk 2000.
GM Sanan Sjugirov, a member of a new generation of ‘computer players’.

\[
\text{analysis diagram}
\]

‘This is one quite common transformation of the pawn structure in this line. If Black does not have immediate problems with the d5-pawn, he might get reasonable play. Of course, for a usual position with the isolated d-pawn Black’s knight on f8 is somewhat misplaced, but White’s pieces are also not placed typically’, wrote GM A.Baburin in ChessToday.

More examples on Black’s ...c7-c5 break are given in this game and in Game 82.

12...\text{\textit{c8}}

For 12...\text{\textit{g6}}, see the line in Game 79 above.
The critical position.

13.e4!? Of course, White can choose a wait-and-see strategy, and not rush into this advance: 13.h3, 13.a3 or 13.h4!? etc. This is especially good against an opponent’s computer preparation.

13...dxe4 14.fxe4  

**WEAPON:** Counterattacking with 14...c5?! is wrong here:

15.♗xf6! ♗xf6 16.e5 ♘g4 17.d5! ♘g4 (17...d7 18.e6!) 18.f5! ♘xf5 19.xf5 Moskalenko-Saada, France tt 2002/03.

15.♗f4!

After 15.♕xe7 ♗xe7 (15...♕c7!?) 16.♕d2 c5 17.d5 ♘d7 18.h3 ♘e5 White’s centre is blocked.

15...♘g6

The super-experienced GM Jussupow repeats his (almost) twenty-year-old game, but his young star opponent hits him with a prepared surprise...

**PLAN:** The art of computer analysis: 15...♗g5!? Considering the course of the main game, this is probably the best defence for Black. 16.c1 ♘xf4 17.xf4 ♘g6 18.g3 ♗h4! 19.xh4 ♗xh4 20.d5 ♘d7 21.dxc6 ♘xc6 22.f4 h5 23.c4 ♗e7 24.h3 ♗e3 25.xh4 ♘xc4 26.b3 ½-½ Magat-Ginderskov, ICCF
email 2016.

16.e5! g5

If 16...xf4?! 17.xh7+ h8 18.xf4 e3 19.d3 xd1 20.xe6 fxe6 21.xd1↑.

17.xg6 hxg6 18.d2 xf4 19.xf4 c4 20.fe1 c5

And now:

21.d5!

An important improvement, which had already been played in two correspondence games (see below). After 21.e4 cxd4 22.d6 d3= Black was OK in Timman-Jussupow, Riga 1995.

21...xe5

TRICK: 21...xe5 loses after a beautiful variation: 22.d6! d7 23.b3! g5 24.h5! g4 25.d7!+-.

22.b3 a6

If 22...g5, 23.h3 (computer art: 23.h3!? and White won on move 56, Ellis-Maurer, ICCF email 2008) 23.xe1+ 24.xe1 f6 25.bxc4 gxf4 26.xf4±.

23.d6

White is winning, but incredibly precise tactics are required here.

23...g5

TRICK: The most tenacious defence, 23...c4, is also refuted by the engine:
24. h3! ♗b6+ 25. ♗h1 ♗f2+ 26. ♗h2 ♗xd1 27. ♗d7 ♗d8 28. ♘xe5 ♘xc3 29. ♗e8+ ♗h7 30. ♗e1! g5 31. ♗e7 1-0 Sirota-Sander, IECG email 2002.

24. ♗e4 ♖h6 25. ♗h3 ♗f6 26. ♗xf6+! ♖xf6 27. ♗f2! ♗g5 28. ♗xe5 ♖xe5 29. ♗d5 ♗g7 30. ♗d7 ♗d8 31. ♗c7! ♗e7 32. ♗e8+ ♗h7 33. ♗a4!

Preventing 33... ♗b5. White continues to play with the power of the machine.

33... e4 34. ♗d6! e3 35. ♗f6+ ♗g7 36. ♗h4 ♗e5?

36... ♖xd6 37. ♗e8++.–.

37. ♗e8+ ♖f8 38. ♗xd8 ♗a1+ 39. ♗d1! ♖xd1+ 40. ♗h2 ♗d4 41. ♗f6+ ♗g7 42. ♗g8+ ♗h6 43. ♗g4+ ♗h5 44. ♗d8++–

A spectacular demonstration of resourceful play by two different analytical methods – of course, the computer method won...

Game 81 – 10/11... ♗h5
Vasily Ivanchuk

Artur Jussupow

Brussels ct 1991 (3)

The initial idea of the plan with ... ♗h5 is to exchange the bishops and simplify the position, attacking White’s centre pawns.

1. c4 e6 2. ♗c3 d5 3. d4 ♗f6 4. cxd5 exd5 5. ♗g5 ♗e7

PLAN: Another important anti-Botvinnik method is to play ... ♗h5 before castling: 5... c6 6. e3 ♗e7 7. ♗c2 ♗bd7 8. ♗d3 and now 8... ♗h5?!, keeping the possibility of ...0-0-0 – see Game 87.

6. e3 0-0 7. ♗d3 ♗bd7

WEAPON: Recently, Kramnik also tried 7... c6 8. ♗c2 h6 9. ♗h4 ♗e8 10. ♗ge2 ♗h5?!

11. ♗xe7 ♗xe7 12. h3 (preparing queenside castling. However, the minority attack seems more promising here: 12.0-0!? ♗d7 13. ♗ab1!? ♗h4 14. b4 ♗df6 15. b5!± Norri-Khamrakulov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010)

12... a5?! 13. a3 (13. g4 ♗f6∞ Novotny-Konopka, Zdar nad Sazavou 2007) 13... ♗d7 14. ♗a4 ♗h4 15. g3 ♗d8 16. g4 ♗hf6 17. ♗g3 ♗f8 18. 0-0-0 with a complicated, unpredictable game ahead, Caruana-Kramnik, Douglas 2017.
Despite his convincing victory in this game, Ivanchuk lost the dramatic match in Brussels 1991 on tiebreak: 4½-5½.

8. \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{e8} \) 9.0-0 \( \text{f8} \) 10.\( \text{c2} \) c6 11.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h5} \)

Nowadays, this move is played at an earlier stage (as in the above lines), before White builds the e3/f3 pawn formation.

12.\( \text{xe7} \)

Now it depends on Black’s response, but White has the better chances anyway.

12...\( \text{xe7} \)

**WEAPON:** 12...\( \text{xe7} \) allows White to play slowly: 13.\( \text{d2} \)\( !? \) \( \text{e6} \) (if 13...\( \text{f6} \), 14.e4\( !? \)); or 13...\( \text{f5} \) 14.\( \text{ae1} \)!? (14.e4\( !? \)) 14...\( \text{d6} \) 15.e4\( !+- \) Moskalenko-Ramon, Catalonia tt 2000) 14.\( \text{ad1} \)

14...g6 (14...\( \text{f6} \) 15.\( \text{h1} \) b5 16.e4\( \text{f6} \) Zhou Jianchou-Barbosa, Olongapo City 2010) 15.\( \text{h1} \) (15.b4\( !? \))
15...ещ d7. Another possible plan in these structures is 16.f4!? (or even 16.g4!?) 16...ещ eg7 (Timman-Short, Amsterdam 1992) and now 17.g4т.

13.e4!
This is a typical position for these structures, but White is already much better thanks to his strong and dynamic centre pawns.

13...dxe4

WEAPON: Also playable is 13...ещ e6, when the critical line is 14.e5!?. White gains space and prepares the attack with f3-f4-f5: 14...g6

15...f5 (15...ещ g7 16.ещ d1!? f6 17.ещ e3т) 16.ещ a4 ы g7 17.b4т Martinovic-Schwarhofer, Austria Bundesliga 2016/17.

14.fxe4 ы g4
If 14...ещ g5?, 15.e5! т ы c3-e4-d6.
Or 14...ещ e6 15.ещ f2!? (15.ещ ad1!? 15...c5 (15...ещ f6 16.h3) 16.щ b5 ы ec8 17.d5т Eliet-Dambacher, Belgium tt 2006/07.

15.e5т
Preparing Botvinnik’s jump ♘c3-e4-d6. At the same time, the black knight on h5 is now insecure.

15...♖ad8
15...f6 16.h3!+–; 15...c5 16.♗ae1?!±

16.♗e4 ♗g6

Another interesting game went 16...♗e6 17.♗d6 ♗xd6 (17...♗xe2 18.♗xh7++–) 18.exd6 ♗xd6 19.♗xh7+ ♗f8 20.♗g6! 1-0 A.Aleksandrov-Jasnikowski, Warsaw rapid 2005.

17.♖ad1
Defending d4.

17...♗f8
Defending f7.

18.h3 ♗xe2 19.♗xe2 ♗hf4 20.♕c4 ♖h8 21.♗f3
21...♗b3!±

I remember that at this moment the combatants were both already in time trouble...

22.exf6 ♖xf6 23.♖g3 ♖b5
23...f5!?.

24.♗f1 ♗c5 25.♗f2
25...♖c7? 26.♗c1 ♗c4 27.b3 ♗fe8 28.♗xc4 ♖xc4 29.♗xc4 ♖b8 30.♖h4 ♖d5 31.♖h5 ♗e4 32.g3 ♖xh4 33.gxh4 ♖g8+ 34.♖h1 ♗gg4 35.♖c5 ♗xh4+ 36.♖h3 ♗xh3+ 37.♖xh3 ♗b1+ 38.♖g1 ♗xg1+
38...♖e1 39.♗c8+.

39.♖xg1 ♖b6 40.d5 ♖h4
EXERCISE: Find the winning move.

41.d6! 1-0

Black's counterplay with ...c6-c5

In this game, we will look at typical ideas related to the breakthrough of the black c-pawn with ...c6-c5.

Game 82
Viktor Moskalenko
Danko Gazarek
Novi Sad 1988 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.e3 0-0 7.♗d3 c6 8.♕c2 ♘bd7

TRICK: Isolated pawn: 8...h6 9.♗h4 ♖e8 10.♘ge2 ♖bd7 11.f3 c5?! 12.0-0 cxd4 13.♘xd4±

13...♗c5? (Moskalenko-Munoz Pantoja, Barcelona 2005) 14.♘xd5!+–.

9.♘ge2 ♖e8 10.0-0 ♗f8 11.f3 c5

With this break Black tries to generate counterplay in the centre, or on the queenside, but at the same time he leaves
his d5-pawn very weak.

**WEAPON PLAN:** Or first 11...h6 12.♗h4

![Analysis Diagram]

12...c5 (if 12...♘e6 13.♖ad1 g5?! (a pseudo-aggressive counter) 14.♗g3 ♗g7 15.e4↑ Moskalenko-Mingo Fernandez, Barbera 2001) 13.♖ad1 c4 (13...cxd4 14.♗xd4+ ♗b4 14...♗f5 ♗f5 e6 15.♗xe6! fxe6 16.e4↑.)

Another favourable structure, White is further ahead with his central pawns: 16...♗6h7 17.♗xe7 ♗xe7 18.e5! a6 19.f4± followed by f4-f5 etc., Moskalenko-Fokin, Soviet Union 1985.

12.♖ad1!?

12...c4
Black is playing in Bent Larsen style (see Game 78).

**WEAPON/TRICK:** Isolated pawn: 12...cxd4?! 13.♗xd4 a6 (13...h6 14.♗h4+!) 14.♗f5 ♗xf5 15.♗xf5 g6 16.♗h3 ♗b6 17.♗xf6! ♗xe3+ 18.♔h1 ♗xf6 19.♗d5+ Sadler-Vaganian, Oviedo rapid 1992.

13.♗f5 ♗e6
13...♗xf5 14.♗xf5± Moskalenko-Campos Moreno, Mallorca 2005.

14.♗f4↑
A nice position to play – remember this set-up.
14...a6 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.h3 b5 17.e4! b4 18.♘e2
18...♘a4!?

PLAN: 18...a5 19.e5! ♘6d7 20.♕xe7 ♘xe7 21.f4!±
19.♕xe7
19...c1!?.

19...♗xe7 20.g4! ♗g5

PLAN: 20...♕h4 21.♗g2 ♘f6 22.e5 ♘6d7 23.h3+– and f3-f4.
21.♗d2!

Not allowing Black to blockade the position with 21...♗f4.
21...♗xd2 22.♖xd2 ♘f6 23.e5! ♘6d7 24.f4+-

Again, the desired position. The same rules work in the endgame: White is better advanced in the centre, while Black’s queenside counterplay lags far behind... 1-0, 37
Queen’s Gambit Declined: Exchange Variation

Part II. Carlsbad battles

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5

Forget about the Botvinnik/Sämisch for a while – ♘f3 is also good, and a classic move!

Flexibility = victory

Over the next five games, we continue to learn the main ideas and the attacking possibilities in typical Carlsbad structures (in the Exchange Variation of the QGD).

Games 83 and 84 – 8-10.♘f3
White is combining the two classic plans: ‘queenside castling’ and ‘the minority attack’ (after 0-0).

Game 85 – 10.0-0

Piece play in the centre: a mix of ideas for both sides (for example, Black’s manoeuvre ...♝e4);

Game 86 – 6...♝f5 7.♗f3
leads to a typical Carlsbad endgame, where Black has doubled f-pawns (see the heavyweight encounter Carlsen-Kramnik);

Game 87 – 8...\texttt{h5}!?

Black’s popular anti-Carlsbad defensive plan. White shows some interesting antidotes, transpositions and attacking set-ups.

\textbf{KEEP IN MIND}

• White must be flexible and choose queenside castling, mainly relying on the tempi he has for the attack (and keeping an eye on Black’s counterplay);
• The solid alternative is 0-0, combining the ‘minority attack’ (with a-b pawns) with play in the centre.
Part II: QGD Exchange – Games

Queenside castling

Game 83 – 6. ♕c2 ♘a6
Viktor Moskalenko

Alexander Graf

Pinsk ch-URS 1986

Black seeks counterplay with ... ♘a6, followed by ... ♘b4/... f5/... ♕a5. After the prophylactic a2-a3, the knight jumps to e6 via c7.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 c6 6.♕c2? 

PLAN: 6.e3 ♖e7 (6... ♗f5 7.♕f3, see Game 86) 7.♕c2 ♘a6?.

EXERCISE: Black places his knight on a6, instead of developing towards the centre by 7... ♘bd7. How should we react: calmly or aggressively?

8.♗xa6!. The right solution, doubling the black pawns (8.♗f3 ♘b4! 9.♗d1 ♐f5 10.♗c1 ♘a5 with active counterplay): 8...bxa6 9.♗f3 0-0 10.0-0 h6 11.♗xf6! (11.♗h4!? is also possible) 11...♗xf6 12.♗a4!
A typical manoeuvre, blocking the c6-pawn and keeping the position static. 12...d6 13. fc1 d7 14. c5 g4 (an attempt to complicate. After 14...c8 White can double his rooks on the c-file, increasing his advantage) 15. xa6 xf3 16.gxf3 ac8 17. c5 e7 18. f5!. White has won a pawn and continues to have a significant positional advantage. Moskalenko-Rodriguez Vargas, Barcelona 2006.

EXERCISE: We are in a Carlsbad position again. Black’s last move was strange. How should we react?

7.a3!?

TRICK: Black’s tactical point appears after 7.e3 b4!? 8.d2 f5! (improving the c8-bishop) 9. c1 a5 10.a3 a6 and Black basically solved his opening problems, Kasparov-Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

7...c7 8.e3 e7 9.d3 g6
10. f3!?
This move is more logical here than the flexible 10. ge2, since no black piece is controlling the e5-square.

10...0-0
The critical moment for White: how to choose which side to castle?
Also, for example:

**WEAPON/PLAN:** Minority attack: 10... e6 11. h4 0-0 12.0-0!?

The best solution for this situation, since the white pieces control the centre, and the b-pawn is ready to rush forward! 12... g7 (12...a5 13. ab1 g7 14. b4 f5 15. xf6 xf6 16. b5 xd3 17. xd3 e6 18. a4† Moskalenko-Borges Mateos, Holguin 1989) 13. b4 a6 14. a4 f5 15. c5 a7 16. a4 xd3 17. xd3 f5 18. xf6 xf6 19. b5† Carlsen-Bruzon Batista, Berlin rapid 2015.

11. h4!
A flank attack – already a challenge! Black is not yet ready to respond with a classical breakthrough in the centre.

11...♖e8
For instance: 11...c5? 12.dxc5+– or 11...♘e6 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.h5→.

12.0-0-0!
Now the choice is clear.

12...a5
Intending an ‘opposite-side’ attack, but unfortunately for Black’s army the train has already left...

13.♗e5!?  
An alternative given by the engine: 13.♗xf6!? ♗xf6 14.h5→.

13...♘g4 14.♗f4
h4-h5 is coming.

14...♗e6
14...♗d6 15.h5!.

15.h5! ♗xf4 16.exf4 ♗d6 17.hxg6 hxg6

EXERCISE: How to make use of White’s active pieces?

18.♖h8+!
The magic square is h8. This thematic sacrifice shows the perfect co-ordination of two white pieces (this time: ♖h1
+ ♖e5).
18...♖xh8 19.♘xf7+
Winning the queen, and soon after, the battle: ... 1-0 (36)

Game 84 – ♖f3/♗f4
Viktor Moskalenko

Michael Hammes

St Ingbert 1995 (4)

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♖f6 3.♗c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 ♖e7 6.e3 ♖bd7 7.♗d3 0-0

WEAPON/PLAN: Another popular plan for Black is 7...c6 8.♕c2 ♖f8!? (before kingside castling) 9.♘f3 ♖e6 10.♗h4 g6. And now, a moment of flexibility: 11.h3!, a useful waiting move.

Further play depends on Black’s next move: 11...♖h5 (if 11...♖g7, 12.g4!?; or 11...0-0 12.0-0!? going for a minority attack) 12.♗xe7 ♖xe7 13.0-0-0!↑.
The desired position for a queenside castling set-up. White is again better prepared for the attack! 13...0-0 (13...d7 14.b1!?) 14.g4! f6 (14.hg7 15.h4!) 15.b1 g7 16.e5 d7 17.f4 f6 18.xg6! fxe5 19.xh7+ h8 20.dxe5+ xxe5 21.fx e5 xe5 22.d3 e6 23.d2 g8 24.e2!? f2.

EXERCISE: Find the tactic.


8.f3!?
The good old classical set-up.

8.ge2 – Games 78-82.

8...c6 9.c2 e8

The key position of the Carlsbad structure with f3. Black usually tries the thematic central move ...e4, or plays the other knight with ...f8. Take your time.

10.h3!?
My old favourite waiting idea.

PLAN: 10.0-0-0 is possible, but a bit hasty in my opinion: 10...f8 11.e5 d7 12.h4!?∞ Mamedyarov-
WEAPON/PLAN: Queenside castling: 10.♗f4?!. This flexible sequel is gaining more and more popularity, since the knight on f6 now has no moves: 10...♘f8 11.h3 ♘g6 12.♗h2 ♘d6 13.♗xd6 ♘xd6 14.0-0-0!.

White is better: 14...♗e6 (14...b5 15.♔b1!?; 14...♕e7 15.g4!? 15.♗b1 ♖ac8 16.g4↑, see also the main game;
WEAPON: Mix of plans (also in the next game): 10.0-0!?

10...h6 (10...♗f8 11.h3!? ♘e4 12.♗f4!? 11.♗f4 ♘f8 (11...♗h5? 12.♗xd5!) 12.h3 a6 13.♗b1!? (preparing the minority attack) 13...♗e6 14.♗h2 ♘d6 (14...c5 15.dxc5 ♘xc5 16.♖fd1++) 15.♖d6 ♘xd6 16.b4! ♘d7 17.♗e1!? b6 18.e4↑.
Flexibility is the way to win! 18...b7 19.e5! Kuzubov-Rapport, Spain tt 2016.

10...f8
If 10...e4, 11.f4!?.

11.0-0-0!?
For 11.0-0! – see the ‘minority attack’, here and in Part I.

PLAN: 11.g4! a5 12.0-0-0! a4 13.b1 a5 14.a3! e6 15.xf6!? xf6 16.g5 e7 17.e5↑ Yu Yangyi-Wang Yue, China tt 2016.

11...e6 12.g4 d6d7

PLAN: If 12...a5, 13.xf6!? (13.hg1!?N) 13...xf6 14.b1↑ with a +5 score.

13.xe7 xe7 14. dg1

Too straightforward, but threatening: h3-h4/g4-g5 etc.

PLAN: Similar, but more flexible, is 14.hg1!?, keeping the other rook for central action: 14...a6 (preparing c6-c5; 14...b5 15.b1!) 15.h4↑
15...c5 16.gc5!? (16.h1?) 16...f6 (16...cxd4 17.exd4!) 17.dxc5 xc5 18.b1 c8 19.xe6! fxe6 20.d2 d7 21.f4 b5 22.h5! with a clear initiative for White, Moskalenko-Flear, Las Palmas 1992.

14...ac8 15.h4 a6 16.b1
A bit of prophylaxis. But 16.gc5!? was more dynamic.

16.c5 17.gc5!

17...f6 18.xe6!
This strange-looking exchange is, in fact, the key to White’s advantage.

18.fxe6 19.dxc5
19.f4!?.
19.xc5 20.g5 d6 21.f4 b5 22.d2
22.g2!?.
22.b6 23.h5! c4 24.xc4! bxc4 25.h6 g6 26.e4!
The game is over. Black can soon put the pieces back in the box.

26...d8 27.exd5 exd5 28.e1 f7 29.e5 e6

Now comes a fun combination:

30.f5! gx5 31.g6! xg6

TRICK: 31...hxg6 32.h7+ g7 33.xe6! xe6 34.d4+ f6 35.xc5+–.

32.xe6! xe6 33.g5+ f7 34.xd8 1-0

Kingside castling: mix of ideas

Game 85
Viktor Moskalenko

H. Gerhardt
Schwäbisch Gmünd 1990

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.c3 f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.g5 c6 6.c2

WEAPON: One more example of the minority attack with b2-b4-b5: 6.e3 e7 7.c2 0-0 8.d3 bd7 9.ge2 e8 10.0-0 h6!?.
This line also complements the system with \( \text{Ge2/f2-f3} \) (Games 78-82). 11.\( \text{f4} \) (if now 11.\( \text{h4} \), Black has 11...\( \text{e4?!} \)) 11...\( \text{f8} \) (11...\( \text{h5} \) fails tactically: 12.\( \text{xd5} \) cxd5? 13.\( \text{c7} \), winning the queen on d8) 12.h3 \( \text{d6} \) 13.\( \text{ab1} \) \( \text{e6} \) 14.\( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xd6} \) 15.b4! a6 16.\( \text{fc1} \) \( \text{h5} \) 17.\( \text{a4}! \) \( \text{g5} \) 18.\( \text{b6} \) \( \text{b8} \) 19.\( \text{xc8} \) \( \text{bxc8} \) 20.a4↑ Moskalenko-Panelo, Castellar 2003.

6...\( \text{bd7} \)

\textbf{WEAPON}: Black’s ...\( \text{e4} \) counter: 6...\( \text{h6} \) 7.\( \text{h4} \) (of course, now this retreat is correct) 7...\( \text{e7} \) 8.e3 0-0 9.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{e8} \) 10.\( \text{ge2} \) \( \text{e4}! \). This blockading knight manoeuvre is one of the main Black’s resources in the Carlsbad structure (it was also possible in Games 78-82). 11.\( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 12.\( \text{xe4}! \) dxe4 13.\( \text{f5} \) 14.0-0 \( \text{a6} \) 15.a3 \( \text{c7} \) (15...c5? 16.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 17.f3↑ Moskalenko-Gomez Esteban, Las Palmas 1992) 16.f3 \( \text{exf3} \) 17.\( \text{xf3} \)\text{ M.Carlsen-H.Carlsen, Tromso 2007.}

7.e3 \( \text{a5} \) 8.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d6} \)

Black’s set-up is clearly aimed against White’s queenside castling.

9.\( \text{f3}! \)

White is flexible.

9...0-0 10.0-0 \( \text{h6} \) 11.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{b5} \)

This is a pseudo-attack. Black only weakens the pawn formation b7/c6/d5. Now there is no sense in playing for a
minority attack; White should play in the centre.

12. ♘e2!? ♗b7 13. ♘g3!? 
Strategically interesting is 13. ♘g3!?: the exchange of bishops will weaken Black’s dark squares.

13... ♖fe8 14. ♘f5 ♗f8 15. ♘g3!? ♘e4 16. ♘xe4! dxex4 17. ♘e5 ♘xe5

TRICK: 17... ♕d8 18. ♘xe4 f6? 19. ♘xh6+!. 

18. dxe5 ♖ad8

The key moment in this middlegame.

19. ♘xe4!? 
White should win after the obvious 19. ♘d6!+–, but I was attracted by the positions of my pieces on the kingside, and decided to attack. This is what happened:

19... ♖d2 
19...g6!?.

20. ♘g4! ♘c8

EXERCISE: Check your calculation skills.

21. ♘xh6+
There is no other way. But have you calculated all the lines correctly until the end?
21...♔h7 22.♕e4+!
22.♕f3?! ♔xh6 23.♕xc6+ also wins.
22...♔xh6 23.♕f4+ g5 24.♕xg5+! ♔xg5 25.♕h7!
Now the black king cannot escape the mating net.
25...♗xe5 26.f4+ ♔f6 27.fxe5+ ♔xe5 28.♕h8+ 1-0

Endgame: 6...♗f5 7♕f3

Game 86
Magnus Carlsen
Vladimir Kramnik
Stavanger 2016 (7)

In this game we will take a little breath and play a peaceful Carlsbad endgame.
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♔f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 c6 6.e3 ♔f5 7.♗f3 a6 8.♕xf6 ♔xf6
8...gx6?!
9.♕xf6 gx6

Kramnik had obviously grown older, since he entered such a line against the World Champion with the black pieces. Anyway, the Carlsbad has nothing to do with the ‘Berlin Wall’!
Carlsen and Kramnik during the post-game press conference.

Black’s position is considered passive in this endgame, but sometimes he manages to create counterplay on the queenside. This is what Kramnik and some other opponents (see below) tried to do, but they all failed...

### PLAN:

My own experience in this ending: 10.h4 ♘d7 11.h5 ♗f5 12.♕f3 a5 (12...b6 13.♕h4 13.♕h4 ♘e6 14.♕d3 a4 15.a3 b5 16.f3!? (playing in the Sämisch style) 16...b6 17.♗f2 h6 18.g4!? ♘d6 (18...c4 19.♗ab1♕c4 19.♕f5 ♕xf5 20.♕xf5 ♘c4 21.♕b1 (21.e4!?)) 21...♕d8 22.♕d3 ♘d2 23.♕d1 ♘b3 24.♕ab1 ♗c7 25.♕c2 ♘hd8 26.♕xb3! axb3 27.♕d3+—, winning the pawn on b3, Moskalenko-Genovese, Barcelona 2006.

10...♕d7 11.♕h4 ♗e7 12.♕e2!?
Planning e2-g3-f5.

12...b6

PLAN: Kramnik himself subsequently won a brilliant game, following in Carlsen’s footsteps: 12...f5 13.g3 hxh4 14.gxh4 f6 15.g1 e7 16.h3 e8 17.f4 d6 18.d2 e7 19.a4!? (a kind of minority attack, but in this case enabling a rook lift: a1-a3-b3) 19..a5 20.a3! he8 21.b3 c7 22.c1! d6 23.g2+ h5?


13.g3!? b4+ 14.d1 a4 15.gf5!

15...d7

TRICK: 15..xb2+? 16.c2 c4 17.xc4 dxc4 18.hb1+-.

16.b1 e6 17.d3 hc8 18.e2 f8 19.g4!

Black decided not to wait for the torture and accelerated the outcome of the drama:
19..c5?!

This move actually creates even more weaknesses in Black’s camp.
20.♘g2! cxd4 21.exd4 ♗d6 22.h4!+– ... 1-0 (50)

Here Kramnik could have surrendered with a clear conscience, but apparently the ’40 (or 30) moves rule’ had a strong effect on him... or maybe he just derived some kind of masochistic pleasure from it – who knows. Anyway, at the post-game conference he smiled happily (see photo).

Black’s anti-Carlsbad plan: 8...♘h5!?  

Game 87  
Evgeny Tomashevsky  
Tigran Gharamian  
Germany Bundesliga 2016/17 (14)  

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.d4 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 c6 6.e3 ♗e7 7.♗d3  

**WEAPON/PLAN:** An alternative option, with the white knight on f3: 7.♕c2 ♘bd7 8.♗f3 ♘h5!? 9.♕xe7 ♘xe7 10.0-0-0! ♘b6!?.
The main position of this line.

11. ♜e5!? ♝f6 12. ♛d3 ♝g4 13. ♝f3! ♝e6 14. ♞b1 0-0 15. ♝c1 ♞b8 16. ♞he1 ♝f6 17. ♝d2!? ♝c8 18. ♝b3 ♝fd7 19.f3 g6 20. ♝f2 with a slight edge for White, Dreev-Vitiugov, Doha rapid 2016.

7... ♝bd7 8. ♝c2

**WEAPON/PUZZLE:** White can try to avoid an early ... ♝h5 by transposing to some of the Carlsbad set-ups from this chapter. For example: 8.h3!? 

---

8... ♝f8 (if 8...0-0, 9. ♝c2!? (9. ♝f4!? 9... ♝e8 10. ♝f3!? leads to Game 84) 9. ♝f3 ♝e6 10. ♝h4 g6 11. ♝b1 (or 11. ♝c2!!, see Moskalenko-Gomez in Game 84) 11...a5 12.0-0 ♝g7 13.a3 ♝f5 14.b4 axb4 -- Evgeny Tomashevsky.
15.axb4 0-0 16.b5= with a typical minority attack, Wojtaszek-D.Fridman, Tallinn rapid 2016.

8...♘h5!?

Anti-Sämisch/Carlsbad: apart from simplifying, this also gives Black the option to castle queenside. Black becomes flexible too!

9.♗xe7 ♘xe7 10.0-0-0!

Without wasting time on small details.

WEAPON/PLAN: With the Botvinnik move 10.♗ge2!? White also keeps the choice of castling: 10...g6!? (for instance: 10...♗b6 11.0-0!? and the knight on b6 is not so good in this line)

WEAPON/PLAN: Or, for example, 12...♗e6 13.♗f3!? 0-0-0 14.♗a4!? ♘xa4 15.♖xa4 ♗b8 16.♖c1!. 
Here White has a good chance to develop his attack: 16...\textsf{\texttt{f}6} (if 16...\textsf{\texttt{g}7} 17.\textsf{\texttt{c}3}! \textsf{\texttt{f}5} 18.\textsf{\texttt{e}5}! \textsf{\texttt{c}8} and now 19.\textsf{\texttt{b}3}!↑) 17.\textsf{\texttt{c}3} \textsf{\texttt{e}4} 18.\textsf{\texttt{a}3}! \textsf{\texttt{x}f2} 19.\textsf{\texttt{x}a7}+ \textsf{\texttt{c}7} 20.\textsf{\texttt{b}3} \textsf{\texttt{b}8} 21.\textsf{\texttt{a}6} \textsf{\texttt{f}5}+ 22.\textsf{\texttt{a}1} \textsf{\texttt{x}h1} 23.\textsf{\texttt{b}7} \textsf{\texttt{d}6} 24.e4! with strong threats to the black king.

13.g4!

13...\textsf{\texttt{d}7}

\textsf{\texttt{TRICK:}} 13...\textsf{\texttt{h}5}? 14.\textsf{\texttt{f}3}! \textsf{\texttt{e}6} 15.\textsf{\texttt{e}5} 0-0-0 16.f4↑.

14.\textsf{\texttt{f}3}!

Here’s the secret: unlike on e2, the white knight has more attacking squares to go to from f3.

14...0-0-0

And now:

15.a4!?

Again, White chooses the most direct option.

\textsf{\texttt{WEAPON/PLAN:}} 15.\textsf{\texttt{c}1}!? \textsf{\texttt{b}8} 16.a4
16...♗b4 (otherwise 16...♘c8?! 17.a5! ♘d6 18.a6=S Sadler-Baramidze, Tromsø 2014) 17.♗e5 (17.b3!? may be even stronger) 17...♖hf8 18.♗e2!? ♘e6 19.♘d3↑ Zoll-Krebs, ICCF email 2016.

15...♗b4 16.♕e5?
Looks natural, but analysis shows that 16.b3!? has its advantages too.

16...♗e6

![Analysis Diagram](image)

Obviously, White has some initiative, as he is further advanced on all parts of the board. But the question is how much more effective the attack is than Black’s defensive resources, since potentially the white pawns could turn into weaknesses. In this game, thanks to his decisive play, White managed to solve this problem.

16...♖e6

**WEAPON/PLAN:** 16...♖hf8!? 17.h4!? (a new move; 17.♗e2!? is similar to the main game) 17...♖e6 18.♗e2 ♖b8 19.♘d3 ♖e7 20.a5 ♘c4 21.♖a4 (21.a6!??) 21...f5 22.g5 (22.b3!? may be a better move) 22...f4!? 23.♗xf4 ♖xf5+ 24.♖a2 b5! 25.axb6 axb6 26.♕xc4 dxc4 27.♖xc4 ♗d7! Zoll-Krebs, ICCF email 2015.

17.♗e2!
Preparing to attack the black queen with ♘d3.

17...♗b8 18.♘d3 ♗d6 19.a5! ♘d7
If 19...♗c4, 20.♗a4 ♗c7 21.a6 b6 22.♗c1=.
20.a6
20.♘a4!?.
20...b6

As a result of active play, White has achieved a clear advantage. The choice of how to continue the attack depends on the individual style of the player.

21.e4
An intuitive sacrifice on d4, trying to fight for the initiative immediately. Or 21.♖c1!; 21.♕a4!?.

21...♖c8?
21...dxe4 22.♘xe4↑.

22.e5
22.♗f3!?.

22...♗e7 23.f4 f5 24.♖c1 c5 25.♗a4 cxd4 26.♗xd4 ♘c5 27.♗xc5 bxc5 28.♖a4 ♘c7 29.♗f3 ♖hd8 30.♖hd1+–
The position of the black king is too open.

Black lasted 10 more moves: ... 1-0 (40).
A highly combative attacking Carlsbad game by Russian GM Evgeny Tomashevsky.

Summary of Parts I and II
Currently, the QGD Exchange Variation is very popular and it is used by players of all levels. Many black specialists of the Queen’s Gambit prefer to play with less risk, opting for 3...¥e7 in order to avoid the dangerous plans given in the first 10 games of this chapter – see Part III.
Queen’s Gambit Declined: Exchange Variation

Part III. Sämisch forever!
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♧e7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4

If you still misunderstand something, pretend that you already understand this...
And your vital Qi energy will flow towards understanding...
(ancient Chinese proverb)

A bit of history
Of course, even Botvinnik had failures, which is normal in a creative process – also in the case of classical chess.
However, the era of Botvinnik has passed, and today we are more dependent on computers – one of the ‘advantages’ is that a player of any level can easily discover the ‘lies and blunders’ of the classics.
We will try to combine both approaches, and make them sound.
In Botvinnik-Petrosian, Moscow Wch match 1963, after 5...c6 6.e3 ♤f5
7.g4!? – three games were played in this position, with a score: +1, -1 and one draw.

55 years later, this move is still the most dangerous for Black. And today’s grandmasters even continue to generate new ideas (although this time with the help of computers). See Game 88.

**Directions**

In fact, after 3...♗e7, White has more specific and diverse plans: the same Carlsbad structure, but the play is often quite unlike that in Part I.

A lot also depends on Black’s fifth move:

A) 5...c6 6.e3 ♗f5

Game 88 – 7.g4. In this position, Vladimir Kramnik quite recently presented a totally new, challenging plan;

Game 89 – 7.♘ge2. This game mainly features ‘Sämisch-plans’ with f2-f3!

But it is also interesting to play first 6.♕c2!?, posing a question to Black: what to do if not 6...♗f5 ?!

B) 5...♗f6 6.e3 ♗f5

Game 90 – 7.♘ge2. In this line, Black usually hits the centre with the break ...c7-c5!;

Game 91 – 7.♘f3 with the idea of playing a Carlsbad, no matter if the black bishop is already developed on f5;

Game 92 – 7.♕b3, attacking the weakness on b7. See the exciting novelty played by my student, a young WGM.

Botvinnik-Petrosian, World Championship match 1963.
Part III: QGD Exchange – Games

A) 5...c6 6.e3 ♖f5

Game 88 – 7.g4
Vladimir Kramnik

Wesley So

Berlin ct 2018 (12)

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 ♖e7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4 c6
5...♘f6 – Games 90-92.
6.e3
6.♖c2!?, see the note to Game 89.
6...♗f5
Historically (the classics) and theoretically (dogmatics), this set-up has been quite popular for Black, because it gives the illusion of liberation from the problem of a bad bishop c8.
7.g4!?
Botvinnik (1963).
7.♘ge2 – Game 89.

7...♖e6!?
Petrosian’s retreat is also considered the strongest so far.

TRICK: The point: if 7...♗g6?! 8.h4! ♖xh4 (8...h5 9.g5!) 9.♗b3! and Black has problems defending b7:
9...b6 10.♖b4! ♖xb4 11.♘xd5+–.

8.♗b3!?N
A fascinating novelty by Kramnik in 2018!

PLAN: Let’s have a look at the development of the line:

A) 8.h3 is so reliable that Botvinnik played it only against Petrosian, but objectively there is no special need for this move: 8...♗f6 (8...h5 9.gxh5!) 9.♗f3 (9.♗d3 c5?! 10.♗f3= Botvinnik-Petrosian, Moscow
m/14 1963) 9....bd7 10...d3 b6 11...c2 Botvinnik-Petrosian, Moscow m/18 1963;
B) Quite similar is 8...d3!? d7 9.h3

analysis diagram

9...h5 (9...g5 10...h2 h5 11.f3!? 10.gxh5 g6 11.h6 g6 12...c2 h5 13...h2!? xh6 14.0-0-0 with interesting play, Dunlop-Malchev, ICCF email 2016.

WEAPON: The next step of ‘the patriarch’ was more aggressive: 8.h4!?

analysis diagram

8...xh4 (8...h5!? 9.g5 (9...b3!? 9...d6 10...ge2 Botvinnik-Balashov, Moscow 1970) 9...b3 g5! 10...e5 (10...h2!?) 10...f6 11...h2 (11...xb7? fxe5 12...xa8 exd4 13.exd4 c7) 11...xg4! (11...b6 12...c2) 12...xb7 e7!=.
13. ♕xa8 (13. ♕xe7+ ♕xe7∞ Giri-So, chess.com blitz 2017) leads to a draw: 13... ♔xe3+ 14. ♔e2 ♔xf2+ 15. ♔f1 ♔h4 16. ♔xb8+ ♔f7 17. ♔d1 ♔xe2+ 18. ♔xe2 ♔f3+ 19. ♔g1 ♔xe2 20. ♔g3 ♔g4, Vaisser-Geller, Sochi 1982.

8... ♕b6

A logical reaction.

PUZZLE: Later that year Black tried 8...b5 in two games (Mchedlishvili-Baryshpolets, Turkey tt 2018 and Sargissian-Meier, Batumi 2018). Because of the complexity of the position Sargissian opted for 9.h3 ♕d7 10. ♔f3∞.

9.f3!?

The main point of Kramnik’s plan. The Sämisch move is more effective here than h2-h3.

9...g5!

A dynamic approach, as is typical of Wesley’s style.

PLAN: White has the advantage after 9...d7 10.h4! ♕gf6 (10... xb3 11.axb3 h5 12.g5 ♕b4 13. ♔f2
10. \( b5 \)!

First provoking \( ...f7-f6\).

10. \( g3?! \) h5 11.gxh5 \( \text{g}3 \) 12.axb3 \( \text{d}7 \)\( \text{+} \) Usmanov-Duzhakov, St Petersburg 2018.

10...f6 11. \( g3 \) \( \text{xb}3 \) 12.axb3 h5! 13.gxh5 \( \text{xh}5 \) 14. \( d3 \)!

Another key point of 10. \( b5 \): now White is threatening 15. \( g6 \).

14...\( f7 \)

\textbf{PLAN}: In a recent Chinese game, 14...f5!? was played. Now White had to continue in the spirit of Kramnik’s idea, for example: 15.h4!? (instead of the weak 15. \( g5 \) in Li Chao-Zhang Ziji, China tt 2018) 15...\( f7 \) 16. \( h3 \), transposing to the main game.

15.h4! f5 16. \( h3 \)! f4

16...gxh4 17. \( f4 \)!

17.exf4 \( \text{xh}3 \)

If 17...gxh4, 18. \( g5 \)!

18.fxg5 \( \text{d}7 \) 19.\( f2 \)

As a result of the fantastic opening plan starting with 8. \( b3 \)? and 9.f3!, Kramnik has achieved a practically winning position.
19...♘a6 20.♗xa6
Perhaps not very profitable – White exchanges the bishop that controlled the kingside and helped the white passed pawns for an inactive knight. However, White still has a big advantage. 20.♖ae1!?.
20...bxax6 21.♖e2! ♗d8 22.♖e7 23.♗f4 ♘h7 24.h5 ♘g8

25.♖ag1
25.♖xa6!±?
25...♗f5 26.h6 ♘e8 27.g6 ♘xh6 28.♖xh6 ♘h6 29.♖h1 ♘g5 30.♖e6 ♘xg6 31.♖xg6 ♘f7 32.♖e6?!
32.f4!? still kept winning chances.
32...♘xe5 33.dxe5 ♘e8 34.♖f4 ♘c2 35.♖g1+ ♘f7 36.e6+ ♘f6 37.♖h5+ ♘e5 38.f4+ ♘d6 39.♖g7 ♘f8 40.♖e3 ♘d4+ 41.♖f3 ♘e7 42.h4 ♘f6 ½-½
An unsatisfying result for Kramnik, but unfortunately in recent years ‘Big Vlad’ didn’t have the same grip that he had in his best days! Only this fact allowed Wesley So to escape from a ‘deserved’ defeat.

Sämisch style: 7. \( \text{\textit{ge2}} \)

**Game 89**

Viktor Moskalenko

2500

Nikoloz Managadze

2435

Chalkida 1998 (9)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{e7}} \) 4.cxd5 exd5 5.\( \text{\textit{f4}} \) c6

5...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) – Games 90-92.

6.e3

\[ \text{WEAPON/PLAN:} \ 6.\text{\textit{c2}}!? , \text{a rather logical move, preventing } ...\text{\textit{f5}}. \]

\[ \text{analysis diagram} \]

6...g6!? (if 6...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \), then 7.e3 is a flexible Carlsbad) 7.e3 (7.h3!? , only 1 game: 7...\( \text{\textit{f5}} \) 8.\( \text{\textit{d2}} \) h5 9.e3 \( \text{\textit{d6}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{ge2}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 11.f3!!?) 7...\( \text{\textit{f5}} \) 8.\( \text{\textit{d2}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 9.f3!? h5 (9...0-0 10.\( \text{\textit{ge2}}?! \)) 10.\( \text{\textit{d3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd3}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{xd3}} \) \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{ge2}} \).
Despite the fact that the engine indicates complete equality in this position, White has an overwhelming statistical plus: 1-0 for humanity and the Sämisch!

6...♗f5 7.♘ge2!? This flexible move allows White to keep the choice between several plans. For 7.g4 see Game 88.

7...♘f6

**WEAPON/PLAN:** 7...♗d7?!. Here White has at least three options:

A) 8.♗g3!? is the most popular: 8...♗e6 (8...♗g6 9.♗e2!?) 9.♗h5!? ♗f8 10.♗g3±;

B) 8.h3!? has not been tried in many games, but it has a good performance: 8...♗gf6 9.g4 ♗xe4 (9...♗g6 10.♗g3± Ramirez Alvarez-Managadze, Wheeling 2012) 10.♗xe4 ♗xe4 11.♗g2± Bischoff-Michalczak, Senden 2003;

C) 8.h4!? (the most dynamic) 8...h5 (8...♗xh4? 9.♗b3↑ Ding Liren-Tang, chess.com rapid 2019; 8...♗gf6 9.f3!!) 9.♗g3 ♗g6 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♗xd3 g6 12.e4 dxe4 13.♗xe4↑ with an advantage for White, Vitiugov-Tan Zhongyi, Gibraltar 2019.

8.♗g3

**PLAN:** 8.h3!?, only a few games: 8...h5 9.♗g3 ♗g6 10.♗d3! ♗xd3 11.♗xd3 g6 12.f3!? ♗a6 (12...♗bd7 13.♗ge2!!?) 13.♗ge2!? ♗c7 14.♗xc7 (14.e4!!) 14...♗xc7 15.e4 ♗d7 16.0-0 ♗c5? 17.e5 ♗g8 18.♗f4
Normalmente Black is happy to remove the bishops, however...

13.f3!

Once again the wonderful and unfading Sämisch! It turns out that things are not so simple.

13...d8

Defending against the annoying e3-e4, but it is coming anyway.

**PLAN:** Similar is 13...bd7 14.ad1! c5 (14...ad8 15.e4! dxe4 16.fxe4↑ Moskalenko-Mirzoev, La Pobla de Lillet 2004) 15.fe1!? (15.f5!? 15..a6 16.dxc5 xc5 17.d4 e6 18.f5!± Moskalenko-Lopez Agustench, Badalona 2003.

14.ad1!

Suddenly, Black cannot defend against the impending attack.

14...c5?!

Black is not ready for counterplay, but otherwise: 15.e4!.

15.f5!?

15.dxc5? xc5 16.ge4+–, winning the pawn on d5.

15.f8 16.dxc5 xc5
16...a6 17.d4+–.
17.e4!
Exploiting the pin on the d5-pawn.
17...b6 18.e7+ h8 19.g5! f8 20.xd5 d8
If 20...xd5, 21.xh7#.
21.f5 d7

EXERCISE: How to continue?

22.xf6! xf5 23.xf7+ xf7 24.d8+ f8 25.xf8#

Conclusion 5...c6
As the first two games (of Part II) showed, Sämisch’ f2-f3 move is a great weapon against the early sortie of Black’s c8-bishop.

B) 5.f6 6.e3 f5

Game 90 –7.ge2
Viktor Moskalenko

Oleg Korneev

Spain tt 2012 (3)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.c3 e7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.f4
After
5...f6!? Black is also preparing 6...f5, but defending his d5-pawn with the knight.
For 5...c6 see the two previous games.
6.e3 f5
In this line White has three different directions.

7. \( \text{\textit{Ng2}} \)

This move is similar to the previous game, but here Black can use the resource ...c7-c5, without losing a tempo on ...c7-c6.

7. \( \text{\textit{Nf3}} \) – Game 91; 7. \( \text{\textit{Qb3}} \) – Game 92.

7...0-0 8. \( \text{\textit{Ng3}} \text{\textit{Be6!}}}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{WEAPON:} A very rarely played move is 8...\( \text{\textit{g6}} \).
\end{itemize}

\begin{center}
\textbf{analysis diagram}
\end{center}

9.h4!? (9.\( \text{\textit{d3}} \) is more balanced) 9...h6 10.h5 \( \text{\textit{h7}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{d3}} \) c6?! (11...\( \text{\textit{xd3}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{xd3}} \uparrow 2-0 \text{Chekhov-I.Zaitsev, Moscow 1988, and Groot-Stepan, ICCF email 2015}}) 12.\( \text{\textit{xh7+}} \text{\textit{dh7}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{f5}} \text{\textit{d7}} \) (Nepomniachtchi-Nakamura, Zurich blitz 2017) 14.\( \text{\textit{g4}} \+)

9.\( \text{\textit{d3}} \text{\textit{c5}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{dxc5}} \text{\textit{xc5}} \) 11.0-0 \( \text{\textit{c6}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{c1}} \)

12...d4

The basic position of the 7.\( \text{\textit{Ng2}} \) line. The game is quite balanced.

13.\( \text{\textit{ce4?!}} \)

Also popular is 13.\( \text{\textit{b5}} \text{\textit{b6}} \) 14.e4 (14.exd4 \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \)=) 14...\( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{f5}} \) (15.\( \text{\textit{d6?!}} \text{\textit{xh2}}\uparrow ) 15...\( \text{\textit{ge5}} \)
(15...\texttt{a}xf5=) 16.\texttt{bd}6 \texttt{g}6! 17.\texttt{xb}7 \texttt{f}6! and Black is even better, Van Wely-Zatonskih, Germany Bundesliga B 2011/12.

13...\texttt{e}7! 14.\texttt{xf}6+

14.\texttt{f}5 \texttt{xf}5 15.\texttt{xf}6+ \texttt{xf}6 16.\texttt{xf}5= Gulko-Shabalov, Seattle 2000.

14...\texttt{xf}6

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

15.e4!?

The alternative 15.\texttt{e}4 dxe3 (15...\texttt{e}8 16.\texttt{h}5!? Shirov-D.Fridman, Germany Bundesliga 2010/11) 16.\texttt{xf}6+ (16.fxe3 \texttt{x}b2\Leftrightarrow Shirov-D.Fridman, Rabat blitz 2015; 16.\texttt{xe}3= Van Wely-D.Fridman, Rabat blitz 2015) 16...\texttt{xf}6 17.fxe3 \texttt{fe}8 (17...\texttt{xb}2?! 18.\texttt{f}2↑ Medvegy-Prusikin, Austria Bundesliga B 2012/13) 18.b3 is balanced.

15...\texttt{c}8N

A) 15...\texttt{xa}2? 16.b3+;
B) 15...\texttt{e}8 16.a3 (16.\texttt{h}5!!) 16...\texttt{c}8 17.\texttt{h}5↑ Korobov-Vysochin, Kiev 2011;
C) 15...\texttt{e}5!? offers more chances to equalize: 16.\texttt{d}2?! \texttt{x}g3! 17.hxg3 \texttt{b}6!? 18.b3 \texttt{e}5 19.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{f}6 20.\texttt{d}2 a5 21.\texttt{xe}5 ½-½ Bogner-Mons, Bad Wiessee 2014.

16.a3!?
16.\texttt{h}5!?.
This position is easier to play with white because of the better pawn structure.

16...\textit{e5} 17.\textit{xc6}! \textit{xf4} 18.\textit{xc8} \textit{xc8} 19.\textit{e2} \textit{c7} 20.\textit{d2} \textit{e6} 21.\textit{c1} \textit{d6} 22.\textit{f4}! \textit{d7} 24.\textit{d5}! 24.\textit{c4}!?

24...\textit{c8} 25.\textit{xc8+} \textit{xc8} 26.\textit{xb6}! axb6

Or 26...\textit{xb6} 27.\textit{b4}?! and if 27...\textit{xb4} 28.axb4 the isolated pawn on d4 is lost.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{EXERCISE: Check your technical level: calculation skill or intuition.}

White managed to gradually outplay his opponent, but due to time constraints (trouble), I missed a beautiful study-like win.

27.\textit{f4}?! 
Not this way.

Solution: 27.\textit{b4}! \textit{c5} (27...\textit{d8} 28.f4\textit{c5}; if 27...\textit{xb4}, 28.axb4\textit{f4}+) 28.\textit{xc5}! \textit{xc5} 29.b4! and White is winning by force: 29...\textit{b6} 30.\textit{bxc5} \textit{xc5} 31.\textit{a4}! \textit{f8} 32.\textit{a5} \textit{e7} 33.\textit{c4}! \textit{d6} 34.\textit{f4}! \textit{c6} 35.\textit{f2}++.

27...\textit{c5} 28.\textit{b8} \textit{g6} 29.\textit{g2} \textit{g7} 30.\textit{h4} \textit{h5} \textit{½-½}

\textbf{Carlsbad structure: 7.\textit{f3}}

\textbf{Game 91}

Viktor Moskalenko

Stewart Haslinger

2520

2543

Hoogeveen 2013 (8)

1.d4 \textit{d5} 2.c4 \textit{e6} 3.\textit{c3} \textit{e7} 4.cxd5 exd5 5.\textit{f4} \textit{f6} 6.e3 \textit{f5} 6...0-0 7.\textit{f3}?! is similar to the main game.
PLAN: In case of 6...c6 White simply continues 7. ♖d3 and goes into a profitable classical Carlsbad:
7...♘bd7 8.h3!? (8. ♖f3?! ♘h5!) 8...0-0 9. ♖f3! ♖e8 10. ♖c2 ♖f8

11.0-0-0 (alternatively, 11.0-0!? – minority attack) with an attacking plan similar to Game 84: 11...♖e6 12.g4 ♗c8 13.♕b1 a6 14.♗g5! c5 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.dxc5 ♕xc5 17.♗b3 b5 18.e4 d4 19.♗e2 ♗h8 20.e5! ±
Moskalenko-Vidarte Morales, Barcelona 2014.

7. ♖f3!?
7...c6 8. e2!?  

**TRICK:** Or first 8.h3!? b6 (8... bd7 – move 8) 9. d3!? with the idea 9... xb2 10. xf5 xc3+ 11. f1 0-0 12. b1 a5 13. g1 with good compensation for the pawn.

8... b6  
Honestly, I did not expect this typical queen sortie. My brief preparation for this game was based on two lines:  

**PLAN:** 8... 0-0 9. h4!? e6 10. d3 e4 (10... bd7 11. f5) 11. f3;  
**PLAN:** 8... bd7!? 9.h3 0-0 10.0-0 e8 11. h4 e6 12. d3 e4 13. f3 Ratnesan-Verma, Crawley 2016.

9. c1  
A ‘chicken’ move.

**WEAPON/TRICK:** 9. h4!  
9... xb2? (9... e6 10. c2 10. xf5 xc3+ 11. f1 g6 12. xe7 xe7 13. b1 b5 14. f3! (Sämisch!) 14... c8 15.e4!+ cxe4 16. d2!, winning the black queen.

9... bd7 10.h3  
10. h4!?.

10.h6 11.0-0 0-0= 12. d2!?
After missing several opportunities in the opening, I am just intending to play some kind of Carlsbad.

12...a5 13.♗d1! ♕c8 14.c2 ♧xc2 15.♖xc2 ♔d8 16.♖ad1!? a4

My opponent in this game was clearly aggressive and took a risk, but he got lucky.

17.♘xa4 b5

18.♗c5
18...♗c3!? was the last chance to fight: 18...b4 19.♗e2

18...♗xc5 19.dxc5 ♕xa2 20.e5 ♖d7 21.♖d4 ♕f8 22.♗c1 ♕c8 23.♗c3 f5 24.♗f3 ♕2a4 25.b3 ♕a2 26.♗d1 ♕8a6 27.♖d2 ♕xd2 ½-½

My student’s novelty: 7.♗b3

Game 92
Iulija Osmak

2355

Nataliya Buksa

2385

Zhytomyr ch-UKR W 2017 (1)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♘e7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4 ♘f6 6.e3 ♘f5 7.♗b3!?
Usually, Black in the same way attacks the pawn on b2, but for White it is easier – he has one extra tempo.

7...♘c6!
Black must defend actively in this position.

8.♕xb7
A bold decision, given that we did not prepare this option before the game...! In such cases, I would advise a quieter choice:

**WEAPON:** 8.a3 ♘a5 9.♕a2 0-0 10.♘f3.

And now 10...c5?! is not good enough (10...c6!?): 11.dxc5 ♖xc5 12.♗e2 ♕e6 13.♖d1!± Khismatullin-Korneev, Russia tt 2013;

**WEAPON:** 8.g4!? is interesting for players who love an unbalanced game:
8...♘xg4 (8...♗xg4 9♗xb7 ♘b4 10.♗c1 ♘f5 11.a3!) 9♗xd5 ♘c8 (9...♖xd5 10.♖xd5 ♘b4+ 11.♗c3 0-0-0 12.♘e2) 10.g2 ♘b4 (10...♖f6 11.0-0-0?!; 10...0-0 11.♖f3?) 11.♗c1?.

8...♗b4 9.c1

9.b5+ ♔f8 usually leads to drawing lines.

9...0-0! 10.♗xc7 ♘c8 11.♖xc8 ♖xc8 12.♗f4!N

Previously the bishop retreated to g3 or e5, but now White has a new resource on move 13. 12.g3?! ♘e4 13.f3 (13.a3?! ♘xc3 14.bxc3 a5!↑) 13...♘xc3 14.bxc3 a5!↑ and Black is even better, He.Gretarsson-Wastney, Palmerston North rapid 2011.

12...♖e4 13.g4!?

Iulija: ‘White has two extra pawns, but most of her pieces are in their starting positions. I decided, by sacrificing the pawn, to disturb the coordination of my opponent’s pieces, and give her a choice: to take on g4, leading the bishop away from the strong diagonal and getting hit by a double attack with f2-f3, or a cold retreat to g6.’

WEAPON: 13.a3!?
PLAN: After 13... g6 14.a3 a5 15.axb4 axb4 16.ge2 bxc3 17.bxc3 a2,
now the white bishop has a square available: 18.♗g2! (the point of 13.g4!) 18...a3 19.♖d1± and then ♔f3 and 0-0.

14.f3
Women’s chess is always much riskier than men’s chess.
More restrained was the patient 14.a3!? ♘xc3 15.bxc3 ♘a2 16.♖a1 ♘xc3 17.♗a6! and the black rook must retreat to a more passive place.

14...♗h4+?!
Iulija: ‘The first inaccuracy.’
14...♖xc3! 15.bxc3 g5! (15...♗f5? 16.e4!). ‘An important intermediate move – now, after the white bishop retreats, it will be possible to play ...♗f5 without fear of e3-e4.’ 16.♖e5 ♖f5! 17.h4!? with mutual chances.

15.♗g3!

15...♖xg3?
Iulija: ‘It was better to keep the active knight. The bishop on g3, as will be seen from the further course of the game, will bring Black only difficulties.’
15...♖xg3+ 16.hxg3 ♝xg3 17.fxg4!? (17.♖h2 ♝f5=) 17...♖xh1 18.a3 a5! 19.♘b1 ♕c2+ 20.♔d2 ♕xc3! 21.bxc3 ♝xa3 22.♖a1 ♕g3!=.
16. hxg3 hxg3+ 17. ♔d2 ♔f5 18. a3

Iulija: ‘Now all the black pieces will be forced to leave their active positions.’
18... ♔c6 19. ♔xd5 ♔e6 20. ♔c4 ♔d6 21. ♔e2 ♔ab8 22. ♔c2!

Iulija: ‘It was not too late to lose the entire advantage with 22.b4?, which meets with an elegant combination:
22... ♔xb4! 23.axb4 ♔xc4 24. ♔xc4 ♔xd5 25. ♔c2 ♔xf3 26. ♔hc1 ♔xb4+ 27. ♔d3∞.’

Iulija: ‘A tactical chance.’
22... ♔xd4
23. ♔xd4 ♔xc4 24. ♔xc4 ♔xd5 25. ♔c2+- g6 26.b4! h5 27.e4 ♔b7 28. ♔e3

Iulija: ‘Black’s bishops are limited, and the h-pawn doesn’t move.’
28... ♔e8 29. ♔d1 g5 30. ♔f5 ♔f4+ 31. ♔f2 g4 32. ♔d7 ♔c8

Iulija: ‘A blunder in a hopeless position.’
33. ♔xc8 g3+ 34. ♔g2 ♔xc8 35. ♔e7+ ♔f8 36. ♔xc8 1-0

Summary of Chapter 11 – Queen’s Gambit Exchange
These 15 model games (Parts I-III) clearly present the modern strategies in the QGD Exchange Variation (Carlsbad Structure). But the basic ideas are still the old concepts!
CHAPTER 12

Baltic Defence

The liberated bishop

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♗f5

Specialist GM Vladimir Malaniuk (1957–2017) used this surprising counterattack frequently in the 1970’s and 1980’s, as did Rausis and Miladinovic later – with good results. Black plays for the initiative from the word go.

A bit of history
The Baltic Defence is an unusual variation of the Queen’s Gambit Declined (QGD). In most defences to the QGD, Black has difficulties developing his queen’s bishop. This opening takes a radical approach to the problem by bringing out the queen’s bishop immediately.

However, this concept has not found widespread acceptance among world-class players, and very few play the Baltic these days. Refutation attempts are given in many popular sources. Some of them call the opening the QG Refused. I haven’t seen all these articles, but I would be surprised if the evaluation of this opening has been changed.

Maybe Black will win if he is much stronger, or if White blunders, but most of the time the 3.cxd5!? lines given below will lead to one of two results: either White wins or Black holds a draw. So if you want to play the Baltic on the black side, use it as an occasional surprise weapon, but don’t rely on it as your primary defence.

**Directions**

**Game 93:** After the quite forced 3.cxd5!? ♗xb1, Black has spent two tempi to exchange his ‘liberated bishop’ for a still undeveloped knight on b1 (otherwise 3...♕xd5? 4.♘c3 with a huge advantage for White).

![Chess diagram]

Now White has a pleasant choice (depending on his style):

- 4.♕a4+!? (the main game), relying on good technique;
- Or 4.♗xb1 ♗xd5 5.♗f3!?, sacrificing the a2-pawn, but playing for the initiative.

⚠️ **KEEP IN MIND**

Here are some key positions in various lines (after 4.♕a4+), where the fianchetto with g2-g3 leads to White’s advantage:
Line 7...exd4 8.g3!

Line 8...exd4 9.g3! (♗g2/♘h3!)

Line 6...♕xd4, 9.g3!?N
Line 10.g3!?N
Baltic Defence – Games

Game 93:
Viktor Moskalenko

Michael Tscharotschkin

Badalona 1999 (8)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♖f5 3.cxd5!? ♖xb1 4.♕a4+!? This leads the game into a favourable endgame for White practically by force.

WEAPON: The continuation 4.♖xb1!? ♖xd5 5.♗f3!? is more appropriate for attacking players.

analysis diagram

5...♗c6!? (5...♗xa2 6.♗d2 with a strong initiative for a pawn: 6...♗f6 7.c2! ♖d5 (7...c6 8.e4±) 8.♖xc7 ♖a6 9.♖e5 (9.♖c2?) 9...e6 10.♖xd5 ♖xd5 (10...exd5 11.e3±) 11.e4 ♖d7 12.b4 b5 13.♗d3 ♖e7 14.♖e2 0-0-0+– Sharif-Capron, France tt 1992) 6.e3 0-0-0 (6...e5 7.dxe5 ♖b4+ 8.♗d2 ♖xa2 9.♖xb4 ♖xb4 10.♖b5+! c6 11.♖e2±) 7.b4!? e5 8.b5 ♖b4+ 9.♗d2!! ♖xd2+ 10.♖xd2 ♖ce7 11.dxe5 ♖xe5 12.♗c2± Trent-Cosentino, ICCF email 2017.

4...c6
5...\textit{dxc6!?}

\textbf{WEAPON:} 5. \textit{\textbf{♖}xb1!?} is still possible: 5...\textit{♕xd5 6.♘f3 ♘d7 7.♖d2 ♘gf6 8.e3 ♘b6 9.♗c2!? (if 9.♕a5, 9...e6 10.♗d3 ♘e4 Black is OK, Moskalenko-Malaniuk, Lviv 1988)}

\begin{center}
\textbf{analysis diagram}
\end{center}

9...\textit{♕xa2} 10.\textit{♗d3} g6 (10...\textit{e6?} 11.e4+–) 11.0-0 \textit{♗g7} 12.\textit{♕a1!?} (12.e4 Sasata-Schuster, IECC email 1996) 12...\textit{♖e6} 13.\textit{♕a3!?} (the idea: 14.\textit{♕fa1} a6 15.\textit{♗b3!}) 13...\textit{♗d6} 14.e4!\textit{♗} Gertners-Oeunmaa, ICCF email 2005.

5...\textit{♗xc6} 6.\textit{♖xb1}
6...e5

**WEAPON:** 6...♘xd4 7.♗xd4 ♘xd4 8.e3 (8.♗f3 ♘c6) 8...♗c6 9.g3! N

---

9...e6 10.♗g2 ♖c8 11.♗h3! ♖ followed by ♖e2, ♖d2 and b2-b4.

7.♗d2!

Avoiding Black’s counterplay.

7...♗xd4

**TRICK:** 7...exd4?! 8.g3 ♘d5 9.♗f3 ♖b5 10.♗d1! ♖xa2? 11.♗g2 ♖c8 12.♗c1 ♗ge7 13.0-0 ♖g6 14.♗xd4 ♘xd4 15.♗xc8+ ♖xc8 16.♗c3 ♗g7 17.♗xd4 0-0 (17...♖xd4 18.♗c6+) 18.♗c5+– Nestorovic-Pecurica, Paracin 2014.

8.♗xd4 ♘xd4

**WEAPON:** 8...exd4 9.g3! ♗c5 10.♗g2 ♗ge7 11.♗h3! (11.b4?).
Idea: h3-f4-d3. White has achieved a comfortable advantage. 11...0-0 12. f4 fe8 13.0-0 b6 14. fc1 ad8 15. f1! d6 16.b4! g5 17. d3 f6 18.b5 d8 19.a4 e6 20. xb7 1-0 Moskalenko-Sobjerg, Copenhagen 1995.

9.e3 c6 10. b5!?  WEAPON: 10.g3!?N, as given in the above line 6... xd4 and 9.g3.

10... d6
A) 10... ge7 11. f3 a6 12. a4= Schenderowitsch-Goreacinic, Kaiserslautern 2005;
B) 10... c8 11. f3 f6 12. e2= h6 13. hc1 f7 14. c4!? d6 15. d5 e7 (Dreev-Malaniuk, Tilburg 1993) 16.b4!?
11. xc6+  WEAPON: 11. f3!? ge7 12. e2 a6 13. a4 0-0
14. ♘g5!? (14. ♖d1!?; 14. g4!?) 14...b5 15. ♗b3 a5 16. a3 ♖ad8 17. ♖d1 a4 18. ♘a2= Moiseenko-Reprintsev, Ukraine tt 1999.

11...bxc6 12. ♘e2 ♘e7 13. ♘c3 f5
Or 13...d5 14. ♖e2 ♘xc3+ 15. ♗xc3= Wells-Tscharotschkin, Gibraltar 2006.

14.e4!
14. ♖e2 0-0 15. ♖d1 ♖ab8 16. e4= Hagen-Tscharotschkin, Gibraltar 2010.

14...f4
14...b4 15. ♖e2.
15. ♖e2 0-0 16. ♘a4?=}
If White continues increasing the pressure in classical style (improving his pieces), such a position will gradually shift from a stable advantage to a decisive one.

16...c5 17.♖hc1 ♘c8 18.♖c4 ♘c6 19.f3! ♖d4+ 20.♔f1 ♖f7 21..bc1 ♖c7 22.♗e1!? g5 23.♖f2 h5 24.♖c3! ♖b8 25.♗d5 ♖f7 26.b3 g4 27.♖xd4! exd4

28.♗e1
28.♖a4+-.

28...♖e8 29.♖a4 ♖e5 30.♖c1 ♖c8 31.♖ac4 ♖xf3 32.gxf3 d3 33.♖e1+- ♖g7 34.♖d2 ♖d8 34...♖g2+ 35.♖xd3+-.

35.♖xd3 ♖g2 36.♖c2 ♖xc2 37.♖xc2 ♖d6 38.♖g2+ ♖f7 39.♖g5 h4 40.♖h5 ♖g8 41.e5 ♖b8 42.♖xf4

Black resigned.
Chigorin Defence

Hunting for bigger fish!

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3

A bit of history

Russian Champion Mikhail Chigorin’s famous concepts in the opening and the middlegame basically centred on the struggle of knight versus bishop. And he always preferred the great knight.

Unfortunately, in the early 20th century, the great dogmatic teachers almost banned the exchange ♗x♘. Even nowadays there is a general hesitation to play this exchange.

However, more than a hundred years later, with the birth of another Russian star, GM Alexander Morozevich, Chigorin’s ideas made a great comeback in modern chess. After all, we are playing 21st century chess right now: remember the revolutionary book *The Chigorin Defence According to Morozevich*, New In Chess 2007.
To tell you the truth, I never used the move 3. ♘c3! in my old games against young Alexander Morozevich (for instance, during our match in Moscow 1994). In those days, I was convinced that the refutation of the Chigorin was to be found in the ‘Scandinavian’ line 3.cxd5 ♘xd5 4. ♘f3 e5! 5. ♘c3 ♘b4 and now 6.a3 or 6. ♗d2, getting the ‘advantage’ of ♗ vs ♘!

However, thanks to, among other things, my own progress in chess, I eventually found another creative way to face the Chigo, and so far I have won all my ‘post-modern’ games with the most active set-up: 3. ♘c3!.

Of course, this happened against opponents who were less strong than the young Morozevich.

**GM repertoire**

After the natural 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3. ♘c3 dxc4 4. ♘f3 ♘f6, the developing move 5. ♗g5!? is the most typical move in the Queen’s Gambit.
From now on, White also has the standard threat of $\text{g5} \times \text{f6}$, wrecking Black’s pawn structure (see the line 5...h6 6.$\text{xf6}$!, Games 96 and 97). This is a well-known scheme in the Trompowsky Attack (Chapter 14); and, of course, it is quite similar to Chigorin Defence schemes for the black side (...$\text{g4} \times \text{f3}$). I believe that strategically, this funny moment of ‘White Trompowsky’ versus ‘Black Chigorin’ is quite significant. For that reason we shall start our study without Black’s immediate ...h7-h6.

Coincidentally, the strong grandmaster Boris Avrukh, in his popular book *Grandmaster Repertoire 1.d4* (Quality Chess 2009), suggested the same line as a ‘killer repertoire’ against the Chigorin Defence. But he also writes that ‘more tests are needed in this variation’. In this chapter, I will carry out the interesting experiment of comparing our views on the same anti-Chigo line, which has also been part of my repertoire for many years.

In Game 94, Moskalenko-Perez Mitjans, the reader will find many interesting themes, but we look especially deeply into the standard defensive idea 5...a6.

Importantly, other moves, like Chigorin’s 5...$\text{g4}$ or Grünfeld’s 5...$\text{d5}$, are not really playable for Black. Even the Scandinavian motif 5...$\text{d6}$ is not helpful here. See the analysis in Game 94.

6.$\text{d5}$! is probably the best move order: 6...$\text{a7}$ (for the ambitious alternative 6...$\text{a5}$, see Game 95) 7.$\text{e4}$ $\text{b5}$!

A quite fresh idea, introduced in the game Pieterse-Boersma, Amsterdam 1986. After some bizarre manoeuvres with the Chigorin knight (...$\text{c6-a7-b5}$), Black is threatening 8...$\text{xc3}$ and then ...$\text{xe4}$ or ...b7-b5. For his part, White must try to exploit his significant advantage in space and development, and he has three main options here:

1) Central strategy with 8.$\text{c2}$: this creative option is not given in Avrukh’s book for some reason;

2) Regaining the pawn with 8.$\text{a4}$: this is a quite reasonable and practical choice by elite grandmaster Vasily Ivanchuk;

3) Finally, Avrukh’s favourite option is the gambit 8.$\text{xc4}$!?

I believe that Nos. 1 and 3 are the most dangerous weapons against 7...$\text{b5}$. But I have to agree: Avrukh’s suggestion 8.$\text{xc4}$! might be easier to play for White. ‘You don’t even need to be a grandmaster!’, as Avrukh himself claims.

**Hunting for bigger fish**

Anyway, in my own game I opted for 8.$\text{c2}$!, and after 8...$\text{xc3}$ 9.$\text{xc3}$ h6 we reach a new moment of truth, when we face a principled choice:
My New In Chess amigo Peter Boel asked me: ‘By the way, why didn’t you wreck Black’s pawn structure by taking on f6? Were you already hunting for bigger fish?’ ‘Of course’, I replied, ‘I preferred to play dynamically with 10.♗h4!, using my time advantage against my undeveloped enemy.’ After the Trompowsky/Chigorin capture ♘x♘ White would obtain a better pawn structure, but he would surely lose his dynamic advantage.

So, many times in key positions, we have to make a choice, always relying on our personal skills and taking into account the features of the position. More information about dynamic chess in the 21st century, and about my concept of the ‘Five Touchstones’ with which any position can be assessed, can be found in my book *Revolutionize Your Chess* (2009) and the more recent *Training With Moska* (2017).

The notes to the attractive Game 94 contain some summarized information and some interesting discussions, deviations for Black and White and analysis of various lines.

Game 95 (Khenkin-Ferron Garcia) features the sharp line 5...a6 6.d5 ♘a5 (Black’s alternative to 6...♘a7 from Game 94). Black defends his extra pawn on c4. This deserves independent study.

Here, depending on his style, the white player can choose between two logical ideas:

1) The pawn sac 7.e4; White fights for the initiative, using his centre pawns and his lead in development;

2) Attacking the Chigo knight with 7.♕a4+ c6 8.b4!, probably winning a piece for a few pawns. According to Avrukh, this is the critical line. In my opinion, however, both options look promising for White.
The principled choice

After the provocative move 5...h6, White has 6.♗xf6!? , wrecking Black’s pawn structure; 6...exf6 7.e3 and now:

A) 7...♘a5?! (Game 96, Gyimesi-Korpics) does not seem good for Black, because 8.♕a4!, with a standard attack on the Chigo knight, leads to a better position for White;

B) The calmer option is to develop with 7...♗d6 (Game 97, Nielsen-Rabiega), but now White will recover the c4-pawn and maintain a slight but lasting edge.

This ♗x♘ line is very recommendable for positional players: White is playing solidly, without any risk. See, for instance, the exploits of the strong grandmaster Peter Heine Nielsen given in the notes to Game 97.

Transpositions

It is much more ambitious to continue 6.♗h4!, to keep the bishop and ‘hunt for bigger fish’. This was also Avrukh’s preference in his 1.d4 book.

Once again Black must choose; but again, 6...a6 seems to be the best defence. Now there are many tricky transpositions, depending on whether White chooses 7.d5 or 7.e4.

• In my own practice I have preferred 7.d5. The important game Moskalenko-Ghannoum (Game 98) was published earlier in Yearbook 93;

• Game 99 (Lazarev-Clergy) contains some ideas similar to Game 94, but with the inclusion of the moves 5...h6
6.♘h4;
- In Games 100 and 101, White opted for Avrukh’s move 7.e4!? In Avrukh-Porat (Game 100), Black plays riskily, using Alexander Morozevich’s book move 7...b5. One of the most curious moments in this game occurred after 16.♘d4! instead of the old 16.0-0?!.

This beautiful move was already mentioned by Ftacnik in *ChessBase Magazine 44*, in his notes to the game V.Milov-Morozevich, Tilburg 1994.

**WEAPON**
What is even more interesting, in a correspondence game (2007), White found a serious improvement in this line even earlier, on the 11th move:

11.♕a4+! c6 12.b4!! For the full story, see Game 100, commented on by both Avrukh and the author.

In our last game, Teske-Bukal, Black plays 7...♗g4!? Finally, we see Chigorin’s patented move! And this could be a stronger alternative to the optimistic 7...b5.

However, it seems White maintains some pressure in almost all lines.
Against Black’s ...\texttt{a}5 move, defending the c4-pawn, it’s always advisable to check the idea of \texttt{a}4+ and b2-b4, chasing away the Chigorin knight.
Chigorin Defence – Games

The principled choice – 5. ♗g5

Game 94:
Viktor Moskalenko
Orelvis Perez Mitjans
Barbera del Valles 2009 (8)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘c3!
The most active anti-Chigo set-up!

3...dxc4
The main line against 3.♘c3. Some important deviations are:

WEAPON: 3...♘f6 4.♗f3!? (4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 e5=)

analysis diagram

4...e6 (4...dxc4 5.♗g5?! transposes to the main line of this chapter; 4...g4?! 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4!?) 5.♗g5 ♘e7 6.e3 0-0 7.♗c1 h6 8.♖h4 a6 (8...♗e4 9.♗xe7 ♕xe7 10.cxd5 ♘xc3 11.♗xc3 exd5 12.♗b3 ♗d6 13.♖d3 a5 14.0-0=) 9.a3 ♗e4 10.♗g3!?N ♙h5 (10...♗xg3 11.hxg3=) 11.♗d3 h4 12.♖e5 f6 13.♗f4 g5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♗xd5!+–;

WEAPON: 3...e5 always leads to some advantage for White, after some quite forced variations: 4.cxd5 ♘xd4 5.e3 ♗f5 6.e4?!.
This is probably the most dynamic option.

6... ♘d4 (6... ♘fe7 7. ♘f3 ♘g6 8. ♘b5+ ♘d7 9. ♘b3! b6 10.h4!? Shariyazdanov-H.Jurkovic, Oberwart 2004; 6... ♘d6 7.f4!? is a line given by Nimzowitsch!) 7.f4!? ♘d6 8. ♘f3 e5 9. ♘xe5 10. ♘f3 ♘g4 11. ♘xd4! ♘xd4 12. ♘a4+ ♘d7 and now 13. ♘b5↑ or 13. ♘c4!? – both moves are good for White.

4. ♘f3

The direct advance 4.d5!? would be an interesting story for another chapter or book!

4...♕f6

**TRICK:** 4...♗g4? is premature because of 5.d5! ♘xf3 6.exf3 ♘e5 7. ♘f4!♕d3+ (7... ♘g6 8. ♘xc4!? ♘f6 9. ♘g3 a6 10.0-0♕c8) 8. ♘xd3 cxd3 9.0-0 (9. ♘b3!?; 9. ♘b5!? 9... ♘f6 10. ♘b3+ e6N 11. ♘xb7 ♘xd5 12. ♘c6+ ♘e7 13. ♘g5+ ♘f6 (13...f6 14. ♘fe1+--) 14. ♘fe1! with the killing threat 15. ♘d5+! 1-0 Moskalenko-J.Iglesias, Castellar 2003.

5. ♘g5!?

The main idea. In many variations White is prepared to give a pawn for the initiative. Of course, 5.d5 is still possible, but it is too unclear. White gains some space and forces the knight to the edge, since now the e5-square is not available, unlike in the line 4.d5: 5... ♘a5 6. ♘a4+ c6 7.b4 b5 8. ♘xa5 ♘xa5 9.bxa5 b4 10. ♘d1 cxd5∞.
In the given position Black has clear compensation for the piece, but statistically White scores very well.

5...a6

A) For the immediate 5...h6, see Games 96-101;

B) The symmetrical response 5...♗g4?! should be met by 6.d5! ♗a5 (6...♗xf3 7.exf3 ♗a5? 8.♕a4+ c6 9.b4 cxb3 10.axb3+−) 7.♘e5!? (7.♕a4+ c6 8.b4!) 7...♗d7 8.b4 cxb3 9.axb3 e6 10.♗xa5 ♗b4 11.♘a1± Radovanovic-Spanton, Port Erin 2005;

C) 5...♗d5?! is a tactically bad idea: 6.e4! ♗xc3 7.bxc3 ♗a5 (7...f6 8.♗e3 ♗a5 9.♖e5!±) 8.♗e5! (missed in Avrukh’s book) 8...b5 (8...f6 9.♗e3!±) 9.a4 c6 10.♖f4!? g6 11.♗xc6!? ♗xc6 12.axb5 ♗b8 13.♖xc4± with a clear initiative for White;

D) After the ‘Scandinavian’ move 5...♕d6 the best reaction is 6.e4! ♗b4 (6...e5 7.d5± Delemarre-Valens, Antwerp 1996) 7.d5! ♗a5 (Colin-Karpatchev, Rennes 2010) 8.e5! and White is winning: if 8...♗e4?, 9.a3!+−.

6.d5!

Possibly the most precise move order.
The advance 6.e4 allows 6...♗g4!? (6...h6?! 7.♗e3!) 7.d5 ♗e5=.

6...♗a7

For 6...♗a5 see Game 95 below.

7.e4 ♗b5

≥ 7...b5?! 8.e5± has never been played yet, but we will see a similar idea later on, in Game 99.
The critical moment of the line with 5...
a6.

8.♕c2!?

This was my intended central strategy. Alternatives:

**WEAPON:** Ivanchuk’s idea was to recover the pawn on c4: 8...a4!? ♕d7 9.♖xc4 ♞xc3 (9...h6!? 10.♗h4 g5 11♖g3 ♖g7 12.♗d1?) 10.bxc3 h6 11.♗f4 e6 12.♖xc7 exd5 13.exd5 ♕e7+ 14.♗e2 b5 15.♗d4± Ivanchuk-Arencibia, Havana 2005;

**WEAPON:** Avrukh’s gambit option was 8.♗xc4 ♞xc3 9.bxc3 ♕xe4 10.0–0.

Avrukh: ‘This is the critical position of the 8.♗c4 line. You do not need to be a GM to understand that White has powerful compensation for a pawn, due to his big lead in development.’

A) 10...♘xg5 11.♗xg5 h6 12.♖e6! ♕d6 13.♗f3 and ‘White’s initiative looks very dangerous’ – Avrukh;

B) 10...♗g5 11.♖e1 ♖xc3 12.♕b3 cxd5 (12...♗xd5 13.♗ad1↑ Granara Barreto-Roques, LSS email 2012) 13.♗d3 h6 14.♗e3! ♕b5 15.♕ac1↑;

C) 10...♗g4 11.♗f4! (‘now White keeps his dark-squared bishop and the initiative develops itself’ – Avrukh) 11...♗d6 (11...♗d7 12.♗e1! ♗d6 13.♗e2↑ Van der Werf-Mar.Peek, Leeuwarden 2004) 12.♗b3 (12.♗e2!) 12...♗xf3 13.♕xf3 g6 14.♗e1 ♗g7 15.♗g5 f6 16.♗f4 0–0 17.♗e6 ♗d7 18.♗e1
8...\textit{\textbf{x}c3} 9.bxc3

The key position of my line.

9...h6

9...b5 10.a4 b7 (10...b8 11.d4\textit{\textbf{f}6} 11.d4 e5!? 12.dxe6 fx\textit{\textbf{e}}6 13.e2\textit{\textbf{f}6}.

10.h4!

Hunting for bigger fish; 10.f6 – Peter Boel.

10...b5

The position is a mix of Chigorin/Botvinnik/Anti-Moscow lines. So the play must be accordingly!

11.d4

11.e2!?.

11...c5

A nice break, but Black is not well enough developed.

If 11...b7!? (preparing ...e7-e5 or ...c7-c5), 12.a4?\textit{\textbf{f}6}.

12.c6 d7 13.e2 b7 14.0-0

14.e5!? c8 15.d1\textit{\textbf{f}6}.

14...xc6 15.dxc6 xc6
You may not be a grandmaster, but it is obvious that White has great compensation for only two pawns.

16.a4

This typical advance introduces a phase with many *zwischenzugs*.

**WEAPON:** But what about a third pawn sac? 16.e5! ♘d5 17.e6!!

17...♕xe6 18.♖fe1 (18.♗f3!? 0-0-0 19.♗f1 ♘g6 20.♗xg6 fxg6 21.a4↓) 18...♗g6 19.♖d2 0-0-0 20.a4 ♖b4 21.♗xc4 ♗xc3 22.♗e3 e5 23.♗xd8 ♖xd8 24.♗xe5 ♖d6 25.♕e3 and White is probably winning.

16...g5 17.e5 ♘d5 18.axb5 axb5 19.♗xa8+ ♚xa8 20.e6!
The key moment in this complex game. Black’s king will end up in the middle of the board.

20...fxe6?

Now Black loses due to the problems with his king and on his kingside.

20...gxh4, but White has fantastic attacking chances after 21.exf7+ $d7 22. $d1 $d7.

21.$g6+ $d7 22.$g3 $h5 23.$e5 $h6 24.$xg5 $h4 25.$d1!→ $h3 26.$f3! $hxg2 27.$h4 $b4 28.$xb4 $xb4 29.$g4 $e8 30.$xc4 $b3 31.$b5+ $d8

31...$f7 32.$xd5!.

32.$xd5 $exd5 33.$xd5+ $d6 34.$xd6 1-0

Game 95:
Igor Khenkin

Carlos Ferron Garcia

Alcobendas 1994 (6)

1.d4 $d5 2.c4 $c6 3.$c3 $xc4 4.$f3 $f6 5.$g5
A nice sharp stance against the Chigorin.

5...$a6 6.d5! $a5
Defending the c4-pawn. Now White has two logical continuations:

7.e4!?  
\[ \Delta \text{e4-e5. The resulting positions are sharp and unclear. In any case, White has a lot of play for the sacrificed pawn.} \]

**WEAPON:** A more technical solution would be 7.\( \text{c4} \) a4+!, attacking the Chigo knight: 7...c6 8.b4 cxb3 (if 8...b5, 9.\( \text{cxb5} \) \( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{xa5} \) 10.bxa5 \( \text{xd5} \) 11.\( \text{d2} \); if 8...\( \text{xd5} \), 9.\( \text{xd5} \) b5 10.\( \text{c7} \) \( \text{xc7} \) 11.\( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{xa5} \) 12.bxa5 e5 13.a3\( \text{h2} \) 9.axb3 e6 10.\( \text{d2} \).)

![analysis diagram]

The key move, which allows White to win a piece: 10...\( \text{b6} \) 11.\( \text{b4} \) P.Horvath-Antal, Budapest 2003.

7...\( \text{h6} \)

Only a few games have been played with this move.

8.\( \text{f4} \)

A logical retreat, but perhaps not enough for an advantage.

**WEAPON:** The critical move could be 8.\( \text{d2} \)!

![analysis diagram]

8...\( \text{e6} \) (8...c6? 9.\( \text{b4} \) cxb3 10.axb3 cxd5 11.exd5 b5 12.\( \text{b1} \) 9.\( \text{e2} \) c6 (9...\( \text{exd5} \) 10.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{c8} \); 9...b5 10.0-0 \( \text{e7} \) 11.\( \text{c2} \) 10.dxe6!? \( \text{xe6} \) 11.0-0 \( \text{e7} \) 12.\( \text{e1} \) b5 13.e5 \( \text{h7} \) 14.\( \text{d1} \).)
8...b5?!  
8...e6!∞ was probably the best move for Black.

9.e5!  
White keeps a dangerous initiative until the end of the game.

9...h5 10.e3 g6 11.e6!?  
Also interesting was 11.e2!? or 11.b4!.

11.g7  
11...fxe6 12.c2 g8 13.d1 .

12.g4! f6  
12...xc3+ 13.bxc3 f6 14.exf7+ xf7 15.e5+ g7 16.g2! and White wins.

13.exf7+ xf7 14.e5+ g8 15.g2?!  
15.xg6↑.

15...b7?  
15...xg4!.

16.xg6 xg4 17.f3 xf3 18.xf3↑  
And White won on move 53.

Wrecking the pawn structure – 5...h6 6.xf6

Game 96 – 7...a5?!:
Zoltan Gyimesi

Zsolt Korpics

Hungary tt 1998/99

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.c3 f6 4.f3 dxc4 5.g5 h6  
The main line; before playing ...a7-a6 it’s useful for Black to insert 5...h6 6.h4.

6.xf6!?  
For 6.h4 see Games 98-101.

6...exf6 7.e3 a5?! 8.a4+!  
A standard attack on the Chigo knight.

8...c6 9.b4 cxb3 10.axb3
The critical moment after 7... \( \text{h} \) a5.

10... \( \text{g} \) b6?

This move is refuted by some nice tactics.

**WEAPON:** 10...b5 was the only move, but White will be slightly better after all: 11. \( \text{h} \) xb5! \( \text{g} \) b8 (11... \( \text{d} \) d7 12. \( \text{c} \) c3 \( \text{b} \) b8 13. \( \text{a} \) a2\( \text{h} \)) 12.d2! a6 13. \( \text{a} \) a7! \( \text{c} \) c7 14. \( \text{x} \) xa5 \( \text{x} \) xa7 15. \( \text{c} \) c4 (15. \( \text{a} \) a4!? 15. \( \text{c} \) c3\( \text{h} \)) 15... \( \text{b} \) b4 16. \( \text{a} \) a2 0-0 17.0-0\( \text{h} \) Vareille-Tirard, Agneaux 2000.

11. \( \text{x} \) xa5 \( \text{x} \) xa5 12. \( \text{x} \) xa5 \( \text{b} \) b4 13. \( \text{c} \) c5

This is the key and winning manoeuvre.

13... \( \text{e} \) e6

13... \( \text{xc} \) ?! 14.dxc5 \( \text{e} \) e6 15. \( \text{d} \) d4+– Malaniuk-Myc, Kowalewo Pomorskie 2006.

14. \( \text{d} \) d2! \( \text{xc} \) 15.dxc5 \( \text{b} \)

15...b5 16. \( \text{d} \) d3 a5 17. \( \text{c} \) c2\( \text{h} \) Vareille-Loiret, France tt 2002.

16. \( \text{d} \)

16. \( \text{d} \) d3\( \text{h} \).

16... \( \text{e} \) e7 17. \( \text{c} \) c2 b5? 18. \( \text{d} \) d3 a5 19. \( \text{a} \) a1 \( \text{hd} \) 20. \( \text{e} \) e4 \( \text{a} \) a6 21.b4 a4 22. \( \text{a} \) a3 g5 23. \( \text{e} \) e2 f5 24. \( \text{d} \) d3 \( \text{f} \) f6 25.g3 \( \text{a} \) a7 26. \( \text{d} \) d4+- ... 1-0 (44)

Game 97 – 7... \( \text{d} \) d6:
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.c3 dxc4 4.f3 f6 5.g5 h6 6.xf6 exf6 7.e3 d6

PLAN: Here is a similar scheme with which GM Nielsen achieved a positional win: 7...a6 8.xc4 d6 9.a3 f5 10.c2 0-0 11.0-0 e7 12.ad1 c6 13.a2 c7 14.a4 b6 15.c1 b8 16.b4 e6?! 17.xe6 fxe6 18.c5

analysis diagram

18...bxc5 19.bxc5 xh2+ 20.xh2 e5 21.c4+ h7 22.dxe5 xe5 23.f3 e4 24.fd1 xc4 25.xc4 b3 26.a4 a8 27.d7 b1+ 28.h2 d5 29.d4 b2 30.e6 (30.xf5!? xf2 31.e4 ±) 30...g8 31.xa6 xf2 32.xc6 xe3 33.g3 a2 34.cc7 xa3 35.xg7+ xg7+ 36.xg7+ h8 37.f4 a4+ 38.xe3 e4+ 39.d3 xe6 40.f7 e5 41.c6 1-0 P.Nielsen-S.Brynell, Stockholm 2000/01.

8.xc4
The position is quite stable. Of course, White has a more pleasant game, thanks to his favourable pawn structure.

8...0-0 9.a3


9...f5

PLAN: 9...a6 10.c2 e8 11.0-0 f5 12.ad1 f6 13.d5!? d8 14.f4.

White is better here, but he should prevent Black’s counterplay on the kingside. 14...f6 15.g3 d7 16.b4 g6 17.d3!? (17.a2?! ad8 18.d2?! g5! 19.d5 g6 20.c1 f4 Agrest-S.Brynell, Skara 2002) 17...ad8 (17...g5? 18.fe5!?) 18.d5+

10.0-0 e7 11.c2 g6 12.g3 c6 13.b4 e7 14.d3 f6 15.d2!? e8 16.b5! d7 17.bxc6 bxc6 18.a4

With a solid positional edge for White: ... 1-0 (41).

Transpositions – 5...h6 6.h4 a6 7.d5

Game 98
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.d3 dxc4 4.e3 d6 5.g5 h6 6.h4 a6

**WEAPON:** 6...e6 is quite passive: 7.e3 a5 8.e5± a6 9.a4+ c6 10.xc4 xc4 11.xc4 Dreev-Morozevich, Alushta 1994;

**WEAPON:** 6...g4?! 7.d5!

7.d5

In 2004, I preferred this advance, also after the inclusion of the moves 5...h6 6.h4.

Avrukh likes 7.e4!?, see Games 100 and 101. Anyway, there are many transpositions between both lines.
7...♘a5
7...♘a7 will be dealt with in Game 99.

8.e4 c6

PUZZLE: Now 8...b5 will transpose to Game 100, Avrukh-Porat.

But 8...g5!? is interesting: 9.♗g3 ♖g7 10.♕a4+ (10.♗c2 0-0 11.0-0-0∞ Galyas-Lyell, Budapest 2008) 10...c6 11.dxc6 ♖xc6 12.♗e5 0-0! 13.♖xc6 bxc6 14.♗xc4 h5∞ and Black is OK.

9.dxc6! ♖xd1+ 10.♖xd1

10...bxc6?!
After this move White has the initiative and the better pawn structure.

WEAPON: 10...b5?! Avrukh recommends this as Black’s best defence. But I believe White has a lot of ways to obtain an advantage: 11.a4!? (11.e5 g5 12.exf6 gxh4∞ – Avrukh) 11...bxa4 (11...b4 12.♘d5 ♖xd5 13.exd5±) 12.c7 ♖d7 13.♖a1!±;

WEAPON: 10...♘xc6!? might be the best defence: 11.e5 ♖d7 12.♘d5 ♖a7! 13.♘c7+ ♖d8 14.e6 ♖xc7 15.♖g3+! ♖d8 16.exd7 ♖xd7 17.♖xc4 e6 18.0-0∞. White has some initiative for the pawn, but not more.

11.♗g3!
△ ♖c7.
11...a7 12.e5 e6 13.f4!


13...g6 14.e2
14.f2?! b7 15.a4 xe4 16.b6+
14...g7 15.0-0

15...0-0
15...b7 16.f5!
16.e1? gxf5 17.exf5 d5 18.xd5 cxd5 19.e1+
16.h7 17.a4 xe5 18.xa5
18.fxe5+
18..d6 19.c1+
And White won on move 34.

Game 99:
Vladimir Lazarev

Nicolas Clery

France tt 2009 (4)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.c3 dxc4 4.f3 f6 5.g5 h6 6.h4 a6 7.d5 a7 8.e4 b5
By transposition we have the same position as in Game 94, but with 5...h6 6.h4 included. As in Game 94, White has to check three options here:

WEAPON: 8...b5?! is dangerous: 9.e5! h5 (9...h7? 10.e6!+– CapNemo-Szakis, playchess.com 2007) 10.e6 d6 11.g3 xg3 12.hxg3 g6 13.d4 g8 14.e5 f5 15.f7 b6 16.xb6 cxb6 17.e2 g7 18.0-0-0 h5 19.he1+.
9. ♖a4

This is similar to Ivanchuk’s idea 8. ♖a4, as in the notes to Game 94 (but with the white bishop on h4 instead of f4).

Let’s check the other possibilities:

**PUZZLE:** My own option 9. ♖c2!? after 9... ♖c3 10.bxc3 transposes to Game 94;

**WEAPON:** Avrukh’s gambit 9. ♖xc4!? is also logical here: 9... ♖xc3 10.bxc3 ♖xe4.

Now, the position of the ♖h4 could help White win some tempi: 11.0-0 ♖d6 (11...g5!? 12. ♖d4∞) 12. ♖b3 g5 13. ♖g3! (13. ♖d4 ♖g8 14. ♖g3 ♖g7∞ Bukal-Mar.Peeke, Lido Estensi 2002) 13...g7 14. ♖e5 f6 15. ♖d4 0-0 16. ♖e1+. White has the initiative at the cost of one pawn.

9...c6?

This might be a tactical mistake.

9... ♖d7!? – no games; 9... ♖d7!? 10. ♖xc4 g5 (10... ♖xc3 11.bxc3 b5 12. ♖d4∞ Kovar-Vondra, Czechia tt 2010/11) 11. ♖g3 ♖g7 12.e5 (12. ♖d1!?) 12... ♖h5∞ (Campora-Martinez Martin, Madrid 2007) 13. ♖d1?.

10. ♖xc6 ♖xc3
10...bxc6 11. ♖xc4+-.
Here White has an unpleasant intermediate check.

11.\text{cxb7+! }\text{\texttt{\textcircled{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}}a4} 12.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{bxa8}}\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{e}}}}e6} 13.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{c}}}}e6+

13.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}xa4?! \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{b}}}}b4+ 14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{x}}}x}c3 15.a3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{a}}}}a5 16.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}xc4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{a}}}a4+} 17.b4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{c}}}}c7 18.0-0\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{e}}}}e6

13...d7 14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}xc4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{a}}}a5+} 15.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d2 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}b4} 16.0-0-d\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}e6?

A) 16...0-0 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{b}}}}b3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{h}}}}h5 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{x}}}}xd7 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{x}}}}xd7 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{g}}}}g3\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{e}}}};

B) 16...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}xd2+!? 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{r}}}}xd2 0-0 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}xa6 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c8 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}d4 e5 20.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{e}}}}e3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}b4 21.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{r}}}xc8+} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{x}}}xc8} 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{d}}}}d3\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{e}}}}

17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}xa6 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c5+ 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textcircled{\textbf{c}}}}c4 \texttt{\textbf{c}}c8 19.a3 1-0

Avrukh’s repertoire – 7.e4

Game 100:
Boris Avrukh

Ido Porat

Haifa ch-ISR 2008 (1)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 \texttt{\textcircled{\textbf{c}}}c6

Avrukh: ‘My opponent decided to surprise me with the Chigorin Defence, but I was well-armed, as recently I had analysed this opening quite deeply, as it appeared in my book Grandmaster Repertoire 1.d4.’

3.\texttt{\textcircled{\textbf{d}}}d3

‘This is the first time I went for this line against the Chigorin. Usually I played 3.cxd5 \texttt{\textcircled{\textbf{b}}}xd5 4.e3, but as far as I know recently Black is doing quite well in this variation.’

3...\texttt{\textcircled{\textbf{x}}}xc4 4.\texttt{\textcircled{\textbf{f}}}f3 \texttt{\textcircled{\textbf{f}}}f6 5.\texttt{\textcircled{\textbf{g}}}g5?

‘I found this move quite promising for White; needless to say, this is the move I recommend in my book as well.’

5.h6 6.\texttt{\textcircled{\textbf{h}}}h4 a6 7.e4
7...b5
Author: To me this seems very risky for Black.
More challenging would have been 7...♗g4, see Game 101, Teske-Bukal. If 7...g5, 8.♗g3 g4 (8...b5 9.d5↑) 9.d5!.
8.d5 ♘a5 9.e5 b4
The alternative is 9...g5 10.♗g3 ♘h5, but after the strong 11.e6! White has every chance to seize the initiative.
Avrukh: ‘Here I sank into deep thought, as I couldn’t remember the line I recommended in my book. But I feel quite
proud of the idea I found over the board’.
10.exf6
‘Indeed it was not so easy to remember 10.♕a4+ c6 11.exf6 bxc3 12.b4!! and in this crazy position White appeared
to be better, as shown in my book.’
10...bxc3 11.bxc3
WEAPON: Author: A possible improvement for White was found earlier in a correspondence game:
11.♕a4+!? c6 12.b4!!

12...cxb3 13.axb3 gxf6 (13...exf6 14.♗d3+; 13...g5 14.♗g3†) 14.dxc6 c2 15.c7+ ♗d7 16.♗xa5 ♗a7
17.♗c4 1-0 Papenin-Peled, ICCF email 2007.
GM Boris Avrukh (1978), the creator of a ‘killer’ repertoire against many defences, including the Chigorin.

11...exf6 12.♕a4+ c6 13.dxc6


13...♕e7+?

‘I considered this continuation as Black’s best defensive resource during the game, but it appears to be a serious mistake.’

‘The correct continuation for Black would have been 13...♗b6! 14.♘xc4 ♖xc4 15.♖xc4 ♔e6 16.♕a4 ♔c8 17.♗d4 ♔c5 and Black regains the c-pawn) 14...♗b5! 15.♖xb5 axb5 16.♗d4 ♖c5! 17.♖xb5 0-0 18.c7 ♔b7=.’

14.♗e2

14.♖d2? doesn’t work in view of 14...♕a3! with counterplay.

14...♕a3 15.♗xa3

Black gets a comfortable position after 15.♖c2 ♔f5!.

15...♖xa3 16.♗d4IN

Avrukh: ‘This strong novelty, which I found during the game, was actually recommended by Ftacnik in his comments to the following example: 16.0-0?! ♖xc6 17.♗xc4 0-0 18.♗d5 ♔d7 19.♖fd1 ♖c8± V.Milov-Morozevich, Tilburg 1994.’
16...\textit{b2}
Black has to win the exchange, as otherwise after 16...0-0 17.\textit{b1} he will suffer with equal material.

17.\textit{d2} \textit{xa1} 18.\textit{xa1} ±
Avrukh: ‘Till this moment my opponent had played very quickly and he already had a serious time advantage. As he told me after the game he was following Morozevich’s book \textit{The Chigorin Defence according to Morozevich}. For the first time in the game my opponent started to think here, but it seems to me that it’s too late already! Despite being the exchange up, Black’s position looks to me strategically losing. White has great positional compensation for the exchange: the c6-pawn is very strong and, with the support of White’s two bishops, might become a decisive factor. Also we shouldn’t forget about Black’s knight clearly misplaced on a5: eventually it gets lost.’

18...\textit{e6}
18...0-0 19.\textit{g3}+--; 18...\textit{a7} 19.\textit{g3}+--; 18...\textit{b8} 19.\textit{f3} 0-0 20.\textit{g3} \textit{b6} 21.\textit{c2}+–.
19.\textit{f3} \textit{e7}
Other options don’t help either:
19...\textit{g5} 20.\textit{g3} \textit{g4} 21.\textit{e4} \textit{f5} 22.\textit{c2}+–.

\textbf{TRICK:} A very important line runs 19...0-0 20.\textit{b1} \textit{d5} 21.c7!! and White wins, for example: 21...\textit{xc7} 22.\textit{g3}+ \textit{c8} 23.\textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 24.\textit{b8}++–.

20.\textit{g3} \textit{ac8} 21.\textit{b1}+–

White’s rook penetrates along the b-file with decisive effect.
21...hd8

‘After 21...g5 the move I like most is 22. b7+! xb7 23.cx b7 f5 24.b8!!? xb8 25.xb8 with a technically winning position for White.’

22. b6 d5

A desperate attempt, but it’s hard to propose any reliable move for Black.

23. xd5 xd5 24. f5+

The rest is very easy and doesn’t require any special comments.

24...e6 25. xg7+ e7 26. f5+ e6 27. d4+ e7 28. xg2 h3 30. xa6 b7 31. b6 a5 32. b5 1-0

Black is losing his knight.

Game 101
Henrik Teske

Vladimir Bukal Jr

La Laguna 2009 (7)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. c3 dxc4 4. f3 f6 5. g5 h6 6. h4 a6 7.e4 g4!?

A typical Chigorin move! This could be a stronger alternative compared to the previous game.

8.d5 e5 g3!? fd7! 10.e2 xf3 11.gxf3

This is a critical position for this opening line.

11...g5!

In order to block f3-f4.

11...g6?! 12.f4 d3+ 13. xd3 cxd3 14. xd3 g7 15.0-0-0 c5 16.c4 d6 17.f5!+– Ivanchuk-Chibukhchian, Yerevan rapid 2004.

12.f4!

An obvious breakthrough.

12...gx f4

WEAPON: 12... g6 13.fxg5 h x g5 14.d4 b5 a4+ – Avrukh.

13. xf4
PLAN: White is going to follow up with ♖e3 and f2-f4, or first ♕d2 and 0-0-0.

13...♗g7

WEAPON: 13...♖g8 14.♕d2 ♖g6 15.♗g3 ♖b6 16.0-0-0 Morss-Donzellotti, LSS email 2009;

WEAPON: 13...e6 14.dxe6 fxe6 15.♗h5+ ♔e7 16.♗e2 ♖g7 17.♖e3!↑ Delizia-De Waard, ICCF email 2012.

14.♖g1?! Not necessary.

WEAPON: Better is 14.♖e3!, preventing ...♘c5 and preparing f2-f4.

14...♖g6

14...♗c5!?; 14...♗f6 15.♗e3!.

15.♗e3 ♖e5? Allowing White to implement his main strategy.

16.♗d2! ♖f6 17.f4!

17...♗xc3 18.♗xc3 ♖xe4
19. ♕d4

**TRICK:** 19. ♕g7?! ♕xd5 20. ♖d1 ♕a5+ 21. ♗f1 ± 22. ♖xg6.

19... ♗f6 20.f5 ♖f8 21. ♔xc4

21.0-0-0! ♗d6 22. ♔f4+.

21... ♖d6 22.0-0-0 ♔8d7 23. ♔ge1 ♖g8?

23... ♔e5=.

24. ♔f4+–

24... ♖b6 25.d6! ♕xd6 26. ♕xd6 ♘xd6 27. ♖xd4 ♘c8 28. ♕xe7 ♗g1 29. ♖xg1 ♖xe7 30. ♔e1+ ♖f8 31. ♖b1 ♘c5 32. ♔d3 a5 33. ♕d6 h5 34.a4 ♔g7 35. ♖b5 1-0

**Conclusion**

This nice and sharp move 5. ♖g5 may be a quite complete repertoire weapon for White against the Chigorin Defence. Chigorin’s trusted motif ♖x♘ appears, but now it works for the white side. But the white player will face the principled choice between wrecking Black’s structure or going hunting for bigger fish at several key moments of this interesting line.

In order to complete the study of this variation, I used for reference Avrukh’s book *Grandmaster Repertoire 1.d4.*
Albin Counter-Gambit

The magic move 5. \( \textit{\text{bd2}} \)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.\( \textit{\text{f3}} \) \( \textit{\text{c6}} \) 5.\( \textit{\text{bd2}} \)

Our attitude towards the present will shape the circumstances of the future – the author.

A bit of history

The Albin Counter-Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5) has been played and written about since it was first popularized by Adolf Albin in the 1890’s. More recent use of the Counter-Gambit by GM’s Morozevich and Nakamura has revived interest.

I know from experience that this can be an unpleasant surprise for White if he is caught in some complex line and has forgotten how to play it in the best way.

Black sacrifices a pawn and pushes a pawn to d4. This is unpleasant for White as he has a psychological problem and feels somewhat paralyzed, unable to play his usual set-up with a knight on c3. So the white pieces start feeling a bit cramped.
The Albin Counter-Gambit is not very popular, and it is rarely played as a defence against the Queen’s Gambit at grandmaster level as it is not quite sound. But nonetheless Russian GM Alexander Morozevich (b. 1977) did play it successfully sometimes as it suits his playing style.

**TRICK**

The natural but bad move 4.e3? leads to the Lasker Trap:

4...♗b4+ 5.♗d2 dxe3 6.♗xb4?? exf2+ 7.♔e2 fxg1♘+, winning for Black.

During the early years of the gambit, white players tried a number of ideas until they hit upon the king’s bishop fianchetto with 3.dxe5 d4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.g3, which remains a popular approach. Black usually responds 5...♗g4, 5...♗e6, or (most interestingly) 5...♗f5!? – but recent attention has focused on Morozevich’s 5...♗e7!? (a move first used by Frank James Marshall and then by Ariel Mengarini).

With Black doing well after a variety of answers to 5.g3, attention has shifted to 5.♗bd2!, which has been
recommended as the easiest anti-Albin line, but few sources discuss Morozevich’ and Nakamura’s response 5...ge7 (Game 102), which may now be one of the most important theoretical lines for the evaluation of the Albin as a whole. Those that do discuss this line at all give 6.b3 f5 7.e4 dxe3 8.xd8+ xd8 (8...xd8 9.fxe3!) 9.fxe3 鞘.

With an endgame edge for White, as proven in several games. Yet no GM has tried this widely accepted ‘refutation’ against Morozevich or Nakamura! One can only guess that they assume the two are fully computer-prepped, and that the doubled e-pawns on an open file are a significant long-term weakness.

My own understanding/analysis of these lines is far from conclusive and I don’t feel confident in Black’s chances.

Directions
Readers who wish to learn more about the Albin are urged to do their own research. This chapter provides a strong repertoire for White, based on recent games and my analysis of the magic move 5.bd2 that should be helpful.

Game 102 presents 5...ge7 (also the gambit lines 5...f6 and 5...e7), which I think should be called the ‘Morozevich/Mengarini Variation’, against White’s main 5th moves: 5.bd2 (5.g3 and 5.a3). The main game is Moskalenko-Martinez Ramirez (2009).

Game 103 features the black bishop development 5...g4 (5...f5 and 5...e6), preparing ...d7/...e7 and ...0-0-0.
Game 102: Viktor Moskalenko
Erik Martinez Ramirez
Montcada 2009 (5)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2!? 
Preparing to attack the d4-pawn with 6.♘b3.
Thanks to the efforts of Morozevich and Nakamura, the immediate plans with 5.g3 ♘ge7 6.♗g2 ♘g6 or 5.a3 ♘ge7 6.b4 ♘g6 7.a5 8.b5 ♘cxe5 are considered quite playable for Black in our time.

5...♘ge7
For 5...♗g4, 5...♗f5 and 5...♗e6, see Game 103.
Here are some interesting lines against the real gambiteers’ moves:

WEAPON: 5...f6 6.exf6 ♘xf6 (6...♘xf6 7.a3 ♘f5 8.b4 d3 9.♗a2 ♘e7 10.e3 ♘f6 11.♗a4±) 7.g3!. Now the fianchetto works perfectly: 7...♗g4 8.♗g2 ♘d7 9.♗b3!? (9.h3!? 9...♗b8 9...0-0-0 10.♗e5 ♘e8 11.♗xg4+) 10.h3! ♘f5 11.g4 ♘g6 12.0-0±; 5...♗e7 6.g3!. Again, the fianchetto plan serves perfectly.
6...f6 (6...f5 7.g2 0-0-0 8.0-0+ Tschann-Thiel, Basel 2017) 7.exf6 xf6 8.g2 d3 9.e3 g4 10.h3! h5 11.0-0 0-0-0 12.b1!? e4 13.a4! c5 14.a3+– a6 15.b4! axb4 16.d4. Yalov-Leupold, ICCF email 2008.

**WEAPON:** 5...h6 (Black intends to continue with 6...g4)

6.h3!? (or 6.b3 g4 7.a3! gxe5 8.xe5 9.xd4 xd4 10.xc4 e4 12.e5 12.b5 d8 13.e3 Urban-Cosentino, ICCF email 2014) 6.f5 7.g3 (7.a3?) 7.e7 8.g2 xe5 9.0-0 c5 10.b4! cxb4 11.a3 c6 12.axb4 xb4 13.g4+– Deskin-Quirk, ICCF email 2015.

6.b3!

6.a3 g6++; 6.g3 g6++.

6...f5

This is considered to be the critical continuation (at least, according to Morozevich).

**WEAPON:** The main alternative is 6.g6 7.bxd4 gxe5 8.xe5 xe5 9.e3
7.e4!  
I think this is the best and most logical solution. You just need to understand the emerging endgame.  
7.a3 ♗e7!? 8.g3 a5⇆ leads to complications, as in the well-known game I. Sokolov-Morozevich, Wijk aan Zee 2005.  

TRICK: Not 7.g4? ♘h4 8.♗xd4 ♗xg4!  
7...dxe3 8.♕xd8+ ♘xd8  
Alternatively, 8...♘xd8?! would be too passive: 9.fxe3!.

Without queens on the board (and without the black pawn on d4), now Black’s pieces are very cramped, including his king.

A) 9...g5 10.♗bd4!? g4 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.♗g5++;  
B) 9...h6 (Narciso Dublan-Chueca Forcen, Badalona 2013) 10.♗d3++;  
C) 9...♗e7 10.♗d2 ♗d7 11.0-0-0 ♘c8 12.♗d3 ♘e8 13.♗d4+- Fier-Palozi, Curitiba 2015;  
D) 9...♗b4+ 10.♗f2 ♗e7 11.♗bd4 ♗d7 12.♗d3 (12.♗d2?) 12...♗h4. In this position, White has the
advantage after any natural move: 13.\(\text{\#}d1?\), 13.\(\text{\#}d2!?\) or 13.\(\text{\#}e4\), Jojua-Adnani, Manama 2009.

9.fxe3!

As after 8...\(\text{\#}xd8\), all Black’s pieces experience discomfort facing the white central pawns.

9...\(\text{\#}b4+\)

This check only helps White to develop. Let’s look at other continuations:

**WEAPON:** 9...\(\text{\#}e7\) 10.\(\text{\#}d2!?\) c5 (10...\(\text{\#}h4\) 11.\(\text{\#}f2!?\)) 11.\(\text{\#}d3\) \(\text{\#}c6\) 12.0-0 (12.\(\text{\#}e2!?\)) 12...\(\text{\#}e6\) 13.\(\text{\#}e4\) Rotaru-Jensen, ICCF email 2013;

**WEAPON:** Or 9...\(\text{\#}c6\) 10.\(\text{\#}d3!\)

10...\(\text{\#}e7\) (10...\(\text{\#}e7\) 11.\(\text{\#}e2!?\) \(\text{\#}h4\) 12.\(\text{\#}b4+\) 10...\(\text{\#}b4+\) 11.\(\text{\#}e2\) 0-0 12.\(\text{\#}bd4\) \(\text{\#}fxd4+\) 13.exd4 \(\text{\#}g4\) 14.\(\text{\#}e3+\) f6 15.e6!+– Tikkanen-Babikov, Stockholm 2016/17) 11.\(\text{\#}bd4\) (11.\(\text{\#}d2!?\)) 11...\(\text{\#}g4\) 12.b3!? 0-0 13.\(\text{\#}e4!\) g6 14.\(\#b2\) \(\text{\#}g7\) 15.0-0 (15.\(\text{\#}xc6!?\)) 15...\(\text{\#}he8\) 16.h3 \(\text{\#}xf3\) 17.\(\text{\#}xf3\) \(\text{\#}f5\) 18.\(\text{\#}xf5+\) gxf5 19.\(\#d4\) \(\text{\#}xe5\) 20.\(\text{\#}xf5=\) and White won on move 34, Lecha Gonzalez-Cosentino, ICCF email 2012.

10.\(\text{\#}f2=\)
STATISTICS: From 17 games (including a few correspondence ones), Black managed not to lose in only 3.

10...0-0

11.e4
A natural advance.

TRICK: 11.g4!? This option enables more tricks against some of Black’s badly-placed pieces: 11.h6 (11.e7? 12.a3 1-0 Heinke-Puleston, ICCF email 2012) 12.h3 e7? (12.e6 13.g1±) 13.g5 f5 14.e4 1-0 Ulybin-Henris, Charleroi 2014.

11.h6 12.h3 e8
If 12.c6, 13.c5!? (or 13.e3 e7 14.g4±) 13.e6 14.e3±.

13.e3
13.c5!? e6 14.e3±.

13.f8
Black is not OK.
14.c5 a6 15.♘a5+– ... 1-0 (32)
An instructive moment: after the game, the father of my young opponent asked me to comment on his son’s mistakes. My answer was simple: ‘He needs to study and play more correct openings.’

**Summarizing Black’s defences from this model game:**
After the strong move 5.♘bd2, obviously Black could not achieve a full balance in the game. Things are even worse for him in Morozevich’s line (5...♘e7 and 6...♘f5), as after 7.e4!, the arising endgame seems hopeless for Black.

**Game 103:**
Viktor Moskalenko  
Jonathan Cruz  
Barcelona 2012 (7)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2 ♗g4
A flexible bishop development, defending against ♘b3 and preparing the standard set-up with ...0-0-0. Let’s check two other bishop moves:

**WEAPON:** 5...♗f5 supports the jump ...♘b4. But the bishop is vulnerable on f5:

**TRICK:** 6.a3!?  ♕d7 7.b4±  ♕xb4? 8.axb4  ♕xb4 9.e6! and White wins;

**WEAPON:** 5... ♗e6 6.a3!?  ♕d7 7.b4!  ♕ge7 8.  ♕dxe5  ♕d5 9.  ♕c2!  ♕xd4 10.  ♕xd4  ♕xd4 11.e3± Ivanisevic-Khenkin, Serbia tt 2008) 7.b4!  ♕ge7 8.  ♕b2 (8.b5!?  ♕a5 9.  ♕a4 b6 10.  ♕b2 c5 11.bxc6  ♕exc6 12.  ♕xd4 Egli-Keres, Germany cr 1934) 8...  ♕g6 9.e3!? dxe3 10.fxe3  ♕d8 11. ♕e2  ♕e7 12. ♕e4±  ♕c8 13. ♕c2 0-0 14.0-0  ♕g4 15.c5  ♕xf3 16.gxf3  ♕cxe5 17.f4  ♕d7 18.  ♕ad1 1-0 Martinez Martin-Svensson, ICCF email 2012.

6.h3?  ♕e7!≠.

6...  ♕xf3

The main idea: 6...  ♕h5 7.g3! and now Black cannot use his standard attack against the fianchetto, with ... ♕d7/...  ♕h3 and ...h7-h5.

7. ♕xf3  ♕b4+ 8. ♕d2  ♕e7
9.g3!
Placing the bishop on g2 to exert pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal. The bishop is supporting active play on the queenside. This will increase the coordination of the g2-bishop with the other white pieces.

9...♘xe5?
Playing in the style of the Budapest Gambit, but here it’s not very good.

**WEAPON:** After the natural 9...0-0-0, White’s advantage develops quickly: 10.♗g2 ♘xe5 11.0-0

10.♘xe5

**TRICK:** 10.♗xb4?? ♘xf3#.

10...♘xd2+ 11.♗xd2 ♘xe5 12.0-0-0!
White dominates the game.

12...♖d8
12...0-0 13.e3! c5 14.♕a5
13.e3!

Using the pin.

13...♘e7 14.exd4 ♕f6 15.♗g2 c5 16.♕f4!? A technical solution, forcing a favourable endgame.

16...♗e7!?!; 16...♗c2!? cxd4 17.♕a4+ ♔d7 16...♖xf4+ 17.gxf4 cxd4

17...b6 18.dxc5 bxc5 19.♗he1 ♕xd1+ 20.♖xd1 ♗g6 21.♕c6+ ♔e7 22.♕d7+ ♔f6 23.♕xa7 ♖xf4 24.a4++

18.♗xb7 0-0 19.♗he1

White’s passed pawns on the queenside should decide the game.

19...♖d7 20.♗e4 ♕c8 21.b3 ♕f5 22.♖d3 g6 23.♗b2 ♕c6 24.♗f1 ♕f7 25.♕g2 ♔e7 26.♖d2 ♕f6 27.♖d1 ♖cd8 28.b4+— g5

29.fxg5+ ♖xg5 30.c5 ♕g6 31.♖b3 ♕f4 32.c6 ♕e7

32...♖d6 33.♖xd4+--; 32...♖c7 33.b5+—

33.♗f1 ♖d6 34.b5 d3 35.♖xd3 ♖xh3 36.♖c4 ♖f6 37.♖d7 ♕e8 38.♖d8 ♕e7 39.♖d7

Black resigned.
Index of variations

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3

3...♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 c5 6.d5 0-0 (see 5...0-0)
   5...0-0 6.♗d3 23
   6.♘f3 ♘a6!? 40, 43
   6...c5 7.d5 b5 36
   7...e6 8.dxe6

8...♗xe6 19, 21
8...fxe6!? 23, 26, 29, 32

3...d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♖d1!?
5...c5 125
5...g7 6.e4 xc3 xc3 125, 128, 131
   6...b6 137, 141, 144, 147, 149
5...b6 149, 153, 155, 158, 159

1.d4 f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5

3...e6 4.c3 exd5 5.cxd5
5...d6 6.e4 g6 7.f4 ♘e7 53
7...♗g7 8.♗b5+ ♘bd7 53
8...♘d7 55
8...♕fd7 9.♘e2
9...a6 64
9...♘h4+ 65
9...0-0 10.♗f3 ♘a6 55, 58, 60, 62
10...♗f6 55
10...a6 55
10...♗xc3+ 55
10...♗e8 55
10...f5 67
5...d6 6.e4 72
6...g5 74
6...♗f3 74

3...e5 4.♘c3 d6

5.e4 h5 85
5...♗e7 6.g3 80
6...d3 89
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2009, Revolutionize Your Chess;
2010, The Wonderful Winawer;
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2014, *The Diamond Dutch*;
2015, *The Even More Flexible French*;
2017, *Training with Moska*. 
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Be bold and put pressure on your opponent as early as possible!

Viktor Moskalenko is one of the leading chess instructors of our time. Not only has he coached Masters and Grandmasters, including Ukrainian star Vassily Ivanchuk, he has also taught hundreds of classes for amateurs and his best-selling books have inspired thousands of ambitious club players all over the world.

Moskalenko’s previous and highly popular chess opening books were mainly written for the Black pieces. Now he presents an extremely powerful set of lines for White. The guiding principle of his 1.d4 repertoire is: be bold and put pressure on your opponent as early as possible.

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Viktor Moskalenko (1960) is an International Grandmaster and a FIDE Senior Trainer. The former Ukrainian champion’s recent books include The Even More Flexible French, The Wonderful Winawer, Training with Moska and The Fabulous Budapest Gambit.

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