ATTACKING the CARO-KANN

ALEXEY DREEV
Contents

Preface

Part 1
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5
1) various; 4...e6 5.a3 c7;
   5...dxc5;
   5...c6
2) 4...c6 5.d3 g4 6.c3 e6 7.b4;
   7.e3 xf3 8.xf3 cxe5;
   8...c7

Part 2
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5
3) 4.c4 e6; 4.h4 h5; 4.bd2 e6
4) 4.d3 various; 4...e6 5.e2 various; 5...e7 6.0-0 c8;
   6...g6
5) 4.d3 e6 5.e2 c7 6.0-0 c5 7.a3;
   7.c4 xdc4; 7...bc6 8.a3;
   8.xc5
6) 4.d3 e6 5.e2 d7 6.0-0 various; 6...g6;
   6...e7 7.bd2 w/o h6
7) 4.d3 e6 5.e2 d7 6.0-0 e7 7.bd2 h6 8.b3 g6; 8...g5
   8...h7

Part 3
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.d3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3
8) 6...e7 7.xc5
9) 6...b6 7.c3 c4; 7...xb2;
   7...c6
10) 6...d7 7.0-0 c8; 7...a6
   7...e7
11) 6...xd4 7.xd4 e7 8.e4
12) 6...xd4 7.xd4 e7 8.0-0
13) 6...xd4 7.xd4 e7 8.d2 bc6 9.xd3 a6; 9...g4;
   9...e4

Complete Games
Games 1-4
Games 5-9
Games 10-14
Index of Variations

Swipe left for next chapter
PREFACE

The advanced variation of the Caro-Kann Defence (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5) attracted for the first time the attention of the chess theoreticians during the World Championship match between Mikhail Tal and Mikhail Botvinnik back in the year 1961.

White seems to lose a tempo for the move 3.e5, but closes the centre in this way, providing himself with a considerable space advantage and impeding the harmonious development of Black’s kingside. The pawn-structure, which we analyse in this book, resembles a bit the closed variation of the French Defence (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5), but with the difference that Black, contrary to what happens in the French Defence, can develop his “bad” light-squared “French” bishop to the f5-square.

Black often tries the immediate undermining move 3...c5, but still we have to assume that his main line is connected with 3...f5. The forthcoming fight is centred more or less around space and although he has no obvious weaknesses, Black’s position is a bit cramped. Therefore, in the majority of the variations, the evaluation of the position depends on the consequences of the undermining move c6-c5, creating more space for Black’s pieces. Still, he has some other schemes in which he is trying to complete his development without playing immediately this undermining move. White often tries to seize the initiative on the kingside by advancing his pawns there in front of his own king. As a rule, he usually begins this by playing with tempo the move g2-g4.

The advanced variation of the Caro-Kann Defence is a very good alternative to the classical variation 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3...d2 (or 3...c3) dxe4 4...xe4 f5 (4...d7). The theory after 3.e5 has developed extensively nowadays too; nevertheless, the positions of the advanced variation are considerably less studied than those in the classical lines, in which there is much less practical fight and much more a comparison of thorough theoretical erudition.

Naturally, I do not intend to assert that the move 3.e5 is better than the classical schemes for White. Still, my long-term experience in playing the Caro-Kann Defence with Black has shown to me that his problems in this variation are not
easy to solve at all. I hope this book will be very useful for the adherents to the Caro-Kann Defence, since it would help them to understand better the difficulties they would have to cope with.

The variation, we analyse in this book, often leads to non-standard situations on the board, so I would recommend it to players who are inclined to enter complicated and unusual positions and who hope to seize the initiative and to maintain it skilfully.

I believe this book will turn out to be a wonderful guide for my readers in the advanced variation of the Caro-Kann Defence...

*Alexey Dreev*
Chapter 1

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5

3...c5

Black does not have any good alternatives besides 3...c5 and 3...Bf5. We will be soon convinced of this.

3...h5? 4.Bd3!? and his bishop cannot go to the f5-square, while the h5-pawn does not beautify his position at all (4.Ne2!? h4 5.h3±).

It would be senseless for Black to try 3...e6?! because for example after 4.Qf3!? c5 5.c3±, there would arise a very fashionable variation of the French Defence (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3), but without a tempo for him.

3...f6?! 4.Nf3 fxe5 5.Nxe5 g6 (5...Nd7 6.Qh5+ g6 7.Qxg6 Qxf6 8.Qh4 Qg8 9.Qxf8 Qxf8 10.f3±) 6.c4 Qg7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.Qb5±

3...a6?! It is obvious that Black’s knight on a6 is misplaced. 4.Qd3?! (4.Nf3 Qf5 5.Nc3 e6 6.0-0±) 4...b4 5.Nc3 a5 6.a3 e6 7.c3 Qa6 8.Qc2±

It is also bad for him to opt for 3...Qb6?!, since White can counter this with the calm line: 4.Qe2!? Qf5 5.Nf3 e6 6.0-0±, with the idea 6...c5?! 7.c4+–, or with the more aggressive approach 4.c4!? dxc4 (4...Qf5 5.Nc3 e6 6.Qf3 Qb4 7.Qe2 Qe7 8.0-0 dxc4 9.Qxc4 Qd5 10.Qh4±; 6.c5?! Qc7 7.g4 Qg6 8.Qge2±) 5.Qxc4 Qf5 6.e6! Qxe6 7.Qxe6 fxe6 8.Qf3 Qd7 9.0-0 g6 (9...e5 10.dxe5 e6 11.Qg5 c5 12.Qg4 Qxe5, Vasiukov – Johannessen, Dresden 2002, 13.Qh3+–) 10.Qe1± 3...g6?! 4.c4. This is White’s most energetic alternative. 4...h6 5.Qc3 Qg7 6.Qf4! (It would not be so convincing for him to choose 6.h4 f6 7.h5 g5 8.exf6 exf6 9.Qd3 Qe6± Kamsky – Panico, Albany 2014.) 6...xc4 (Following 6...0-0 7.Qd2 Qf5 8.Qg4±, Black would have problems with his knight on h6.) 7.Qxc4 Qf5 (It would be more or less the same after 7...0-0 8.Qd2 Qf5 9.Qf3±) 8.Qf3 0-0 9.Qd2 h5. Black is preventing g2-g4. 10.h3±. His position is very difficult in view of the unstable placement of his knight on f5, as well as due to White’s lead in development and extra space.

4.dxe5

This is White’s most principled response. It would be very difficult for Black to regain his pawn without certain positional concessions. Still, White has often tried in practice some other moves too. We will have a look at some of them, so that the readers would not have the feeling that we have ignored them.

Black can counter the somewhat surprising counterstrike in the centre 4.c4 in a different fashion, but we will pay attention to some of the most forced lines. 4...cxd4 5.Qf3 (5.Qxd4 e6= White’s queen would be attacked with tempo after the move b8-c6.) 5...g4!? 6.cxd5 (6.Qa4+ d7 7.Qb3 dxc4 8.Qxc4 e6 9.Qxd4 Qc6 10.Qxc6 Qxc6=; 6...d7!?) 6...Qxd5 7.Qc3 Qxf3 8.Qxd5 Qxd1 9.Qc7+ Qd7 10.Qxa8 Qc2 11.Qd2 Qc6 12.Qc1 d3 13.h4 e6 14.Qh3 Qg7 15.Qxd3 Qxd3 16.Qxd3+ Qd5 17.b4 b5 18.a4 bxa4 19.b5 Qxe5 20.Qc7+. 
This position was reached in several games. The most likely outcome of the fight would be a draw.


Black would be very close to a draw following 20...e8! 21.exd5 (21.c8+ d7 22.c7+ c8 23.c8+ d7, draw, Najer – Khairullin, Moscow 2010) 21.exd5 22.xa7 c5 23.c7 (23.b6?! a3=) 23.d8 24.a5 (24.xc5?? d3) 24.c4 25.xc5+ xa5 26.exd5+ e7 27.b6 a3 28.d3 b8 29.xa3 xb6 30.xa5, but he would still need to play accurately.

After the more modest, but still often played move 4.c3, the simplest reaction for Black would be 4...c6 5.f3 cxd4! (5...g4 6.xc5! – see Chapter 2) 6.exd4 g4 and he will have an excellent version of the French Defence, due to the absence of problems with the development of his light-squared bishop.
Following 4.dxc5, Black has two main lines: **4...e6** and **4...\(\text{Nc6}\)** (Chapter 2) and both of them lead to entirely different types of positions. Still, his plans in both cases are quite obvious. He must try either to regain the sacrificed pawn, or to obtain for it some compensation.

**4...e6**

Black’s desire to regain immediately his pawn is easily understandable, however his light-squared bishop is becoming weaker in the process.

About **4...\(\text{c6}\)** **5.\(\text{f3}\)** – see Chapter 2.

4...\(\text{a5+?!}\) **5.\(\text{c3}\)** \(\text{e6}\) **6.\(\text{e3!}\)** \(\text{c6}\) (6...\(\text{xc5}\) 7.b5+ d7 8.xc5 xb5 9.g4 g6 10.b4 a6 11.xd5!+– Draganic – Avdic, Sarajevo 2012) 7.a3 \(\text{xe5}\). It often happens in similar pawn-structures that after Black regains his e5-pawn and his opponent’s c5-pawn remains on the board, he would still have some difficulties. The reason for this is that White’s outpost on the c5-square is well fortified and squeezes Black’s position. In addition, White exerts powerful piece-pressure in the centre. Therefore, his advantage is even more evident due to the fact that Black has lost plenty of time for moves with his queen 8.f4!? \(\text{c6}\) 9.b4 d8 10.f3±
5.a3!?

This move is seemingly modest, but is quite logical. After Black regains his pawn with the move $\text{Bxc5}$, White plans with the help of $b2-b4$ to develop comfortably his queenside pieces. Later, due to his superior development and extra space he can develop his initiative on the kingside and under favourable circumstances even in the centre with the help of $c2-c4$. Black would have serious problems because of this.

Evgenij Sveshnikov, who is famous for his excellent intuition in the opening stage, was one of the first players in the world who played this variation. Nowadays, this line is included in the opening armour of great attacking players like Ian Nepomniachtchi and Alexander Morozevich. It seems to me that the move is a very good alternative to the much more often played 5.$\text{Be3}$, which for example after the popular lately response 5...$\text{Nh6}$, would lead to very complicated positions, which are rather unclear in comparison to the variations, focused on positional concepts, which we will be analysing.

We can also begin with 5.$\text{Nf3}$ $\text{Bxc5}$ 6.a3. The following variation is very popular 6.$\text{Bd3}$ $\text{c6}$ 7.0-0, but after the correct response by Black 7...$\text{f6}$! (Strangely enough, the move 7...$\text{Nge7}$ is much more often played here...), he acquires much more space, so his position is not so cramped, which is very typical for this variation.

There may arise a very justifiable question. Why Black is not trying to advance $f7-f6$?! The answer is very simple. In the variation, which we are analysing, with the move 5.a3, White’s dark-squared bishop is fianchettoed on the b2-square, with the help of the move b2-b4, supporting favourably his fight for the e5-square.
Following 5.a3, it would be interesting for Black to try the relatively rarely played move A) 5...\textit{c}7. In fact, he has two main responses. He may either regain immediately the c5-pawn B) 5...\textit{x}c5, or play at first C) 5...\textit{c}6 6.\textit{f}3.

Black cannot solve his problems with the prophylactic move 5...\textit{a}5, aimed at preventing b2-b4.

About 6.\textit{f}3 – see Rodshtein - Arkell, Hastings 2015 (\textit{game 1}).

In the game Shabalov – Ostrovskiy, Arlington 2010, White was successful following 6.\textit{g}4!? h5 7.\textit{f}4 \textit{x}c5 8.\textit{d}3 \textit{c}6 9.\textit{f}3 f6 10.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}8 11.\textit{x}f6 \textit{xf}6 12.\textit{h}4 \textit{ge}7 13.0-0 e5 14.\textit{c}3 \textit{g}4 15.\textit{h}3 g5 16.\textit{g}6+ \textit{x}g6 17.\textit{xd}5± 6.\textit{e}3!? \textit{h}6 (6...\textit{c}7 7.\textit{c}3! \textit{d}7 8.\textit{b}5 \textit{xb}5 9.\textit{xb}5+ \textit{d}7 10.\textit{b}4± Hody – De Billoez, Roux 2009) 7.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}5, Kryvoruchko – Battaglini, Cappelle la Grande 2010, 8.\textit{g}5!? \textit{c}7 (8...\textit{e}7 9.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 10.\textit{d}3±) 9.\textit{g}4! \textit{e}7 10.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}7 11.\textit{d}4 \textit{bc}6 12.\textit{e}3 \textit{a}7 13.\textit{d}3±

5...\textit{d}7. It is a bit too early for Black to determine the placement of his knight on b8. 6.\textit{f}3 (6.\textit{b}4!? \textit{xe}5 7.\textit{b}2†)
6...dxc5 (6...e7 7.c4! dxc4 (7...exf5 8.e3±) 8.xc4 g6 (8...xc5 9.xd8+ xd8 10.b3±) 9.b4 gxe5 10.xe5 exf5 11.xd8+ xd8 12.e2±) 7.d3 (7.c4!? e7 8.b3) 7...e7 8.b4 b6 9.b2±. White’s game is very comfortable.

A) 5...e7 6.f3 xc5

Black is not in a hurry to clarify the deployment of his knight on b8.
6.d7 7.b4 e5 8.f4 xf3 9.xf3±

7.b4

7...e7!

It may seem at first sight this idea is not so good for Black, but the point is that he has already played c6, instead of e7. The essential difference however, is that in our variation Black relies on advancing a7-a5 in order to create havoc in White’s plans. When Black’s knight is on c6, his advance a7-a5 would not be so good, because White can attack the enemy knight with tempo with the move b4-b5.

The retreat 7...b6?! would enable White to realise the advantages of his position with the help of the move 8.c4! and it would turn out that Black would not be well prepared for the opening of the position. 8.a6 (8...dxc4 9.bd2±) 9.b2 (following 9.cxd5 exd5 10.b2 e7 11.d3 c6 12.0-0 g4 13.bd2±, Black succeeds in completing his development, Shaposhnikov – Prasad, Hoogeveen 2002) 9.e7 10.bd2 0-0 11.c1± with the idea 11...bc6 12.b5!

8.b2 a5
9.b5

This is White’s simplest move. After it, there arises a standard position in which his prospects are preferable thanks to his space advantage and the dominance over the d4-outpost.

9...Nd7 10.Bd3 Nc5

10...Nh6 11.0-0 b6 12.Nbd2 Nc5 13.a4 b7 14.Nb3N 14...0-0 15.Nxc5 Nxc5 16.e1

11.a4 Nh6 (11...Nxd3+ 12.cxd3) 12.0-0 b6 13.Nbd2 Bb7 14.Nb3 White’s space advantage and his reliable position in the centre provide him with better chances. He should not be afraid of the capturing 14...Nxd3, since Black’s bishop-pair is not dangerous in a situation like this.
Now, White has two possibilities to fight for an advantage in the opening: B2) 6...\(\mathcal{N}\)f3!, in which he practically transposes to variation C, or he can enter entirely different lines, contrary to those after \(\mathcal{Q}\)d1-g4, following the preliminary move B1) 6.b4!? 

The essential approach for White in a position like this is that he is ready to advance b4, but at an opportune moment, for example if Black plays \(\mathcal{N}\)b8-c6. White is doing this in order to de-evaluate Black’s reaction a7-a5, which with an enemy knight on c6, White can counter with b4-b5, winning an important tempo. Still, his reluctance to play \(\mathcal{Q}\)d1-g4 is a little bit questionable, so I am sharing with the readers of this book my own impressions.

It would not be so good for White to play here 6...\(\mathcal{Q}\)g4, in view of 6...\(\mathcal{Q}\)e7! This spectacular pawn-sacrifice makes White’s queen-sortie completely senseless. (Following 6...g6 7...\(\mathcal{Q}\)d3 \(\mathcal{Q}\)c6 8...\(\mathcal{Q}\)f3 \(\mathcal{Q}\)c7 9...\(\mathcal{Q}\)g3\(\mathcal{Q}\), the dark squares on Black’s kingside are seriously weakened; 9...\(\mathcal{Q}\)f4?! Ivanchuk – Akopian, Warsaw 2003, 9...f6\(\mathcal{Q}\)) 7...\(\mathcal{Q}\)xg7 (After 7.b4, Black is not forced to retreat with his bishop. Instead, it would be interesting for him to try 7...h5! 8...\(\mathcal{Q}\)xg7 \(\mathcal{Q}\)g8 9...\(\mathcal{Q}\)h7 \(\mathcal{Q}\)d4 10.a2 \(\mathcal{Q}\)xe5\(\mathcal{Q}\)).
Here, Black can force a draw with the line: 7...Ng6 8.Nf3 (8.c3?! Akopian – Zhigalko, Moscow 2012, 8...d7!?)
8...f8 9.Qf6 e7=, or he can sacrifice a second pawn with 7...g8?!?, with the idea 8.Qxh7 b6=, or 8...b6=, obtaining a lively piece-play.

B1) 6.b4?!

Now, Black is forced to clarify the position of his dark-squared bishop.

6...b6

After the retreat 6...e7, White can change his plan: 7.c4!? a5 8.b5 (It would not be so clear after 8.cxd5 exd5 9.b5 f6= and Black would solve the problems with his development.) 8...d7 9.b2↑
Black plays only very seldom the move 6...\( \text{f}8 \)?, which after for example 7.\( \text{f}3 \) a5 8.b5\( \text{∞} \), may lead to very complicated positions, which would be rather difficult to evaluate, in which White has serious trumps. It would be only after thorough practical tests that the correct evaluation of this variation win 6...\( \text{f}8 \) would be made.

7.\( \text{g}4 \)

Now, in comparison to 6.\( \text{g}4 \), White’s last move is played under much more favourable circumstances. This is because Black’s dark-squared bishop has already abandoned the important a3-f8-diagonal and has deprived his own queen of the b6-square. It might have gone there, at an opportune moment, as we had already seen in the variations after 6.\( \text{g}4 \).

![Chess Diagram]

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

Here, this gambit pawn-sacrifice is much less effective than following 6.\( \text{g}4 \). It is essential that Black’s dark-squared bishop is not on the a3-f8-diagonal, but he had no choice anyway.

7...g6 8.\( \text{f}3 \) a5 9.b5 f6. It would be interesting for White to opt here for 10.\( \text{d}3 \) fex5 11.\( \text{x}g6?! \) hxg6 12.\( \text{g}6 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 13.a4\( \text{!} \) and he would have dangerous initiative.

The move 7...\( \text{f}8 \), is not so justified in this situation, because White plans to develop his initiative on the kingside and Black’s king would be a juicy target there. Besides that, it would be inconceivable how he would develop his rook on h8 after this. 8.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) (8...\( \text{d}7 \) 9.\( \text{d}3 \) a5 10.\( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 11.0-0\( \text{±} \) Kapnisis – Logothetis, Ikaros 2000) 9.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 10.\( \text{b}2 \) (White can also prevent h7-h5 with the move 10.\( \text{h}5?! \), for example: 10...\( \text{f}5 \) 11.\( \text{b}2 \) g6 12.\( \text{g}4 \) h5 13.\( \text{f}4 \); 10...\( \text{g}6 \) 11.0-0 \( \text{d}4 \) 12.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 13.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 14.a4 a5 15.\( \text{x}g6?! \) fxg6 16.\( \text{g}4 \) 10...\( \text{g}6 \) 11.0-0 (It would be premature for White to advance his h-pawn here 11.h4, due to 11...\( \text{c}7 \) and Black would begin attacking the enemy e5-pawn. 12.\( \text{g}3 \) d4\( \text{!} \); 12.\( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{f}4 \) 13.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 11...\( \text{c}7 \) 12.\( \text{c}3 \)!! (12.\( \text{bd}2 \) 12...\( \text{f}5 \) 13.\( \text{e}2 \) (It is somewhat premature for White to choose here 13.\( \text{ad}1 \) h5 14.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 15.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{ge}7 \) 16.\( \text{a}4 \), Antipov – Filipets, Moscow 2013, because after Black’s spectacular reply 16...\( \text{c}3 \)! White can hardly achieve anything meaningful.). 13...h5 14.\( \text{h}3 \) with the idea \( \text{a}1 \)-d1) Black would be doomed to only defending, moreover that he would have problems with the development of his rook on h8. White intends to open the centre with the breakthrough c2-c4.
We will analyse now White’s principled possibility B1a) 8.\textit{Qxg7} as well as the more pragmatic move B1b) 8.\textit{Nf3}!?

B1a) 8.\textit{Qxg7}

This is no doubt a principled move, but is hardly obligatory. We have to pay attention to it, though... It is possible that many players would be interested in it, but we do not plan to analyse it extensively. The final evaluation of this variation can be made only after thorough practical tests, since it had been played only very seldom. I believe the evaluation – “unclear” would be the appropriate one in this case.

8...\textit{Rg8}

Now, it would be senseless for Black to opt for 8...\textit{Ng6}?! because his dark-squared bishop had abandoned the a3-f8-diagonal and following 9.\textit{Nf3}±, in comparison to the variation with 6.\textit{Qg4}, White’s queen on g7 would be deployed much more comfortably.

9.\textit{Qxh7}
9...\textit{c7}

Black’s most powerful piece joins in the actions, trying to pinpoint the most vulnerable spot in his enemy position.

9...\textit{d4} 10.\textit{a2} (The inclusion of the moves 10.\textit{c3 \textit{c7} would be in favour of Black.) 10...\textit{xe5} 11.\textit{f3 \textit{f6}

The move 12.\textit{c4 leads to very unclear positions (It is aimed at preventing Black’s pawn-advance 12...\textit{e5}, since White can counter this with the spectacular response 13.\textit{c3!}, with the idea 13...\textit{f5? 14.\textit{xd5! \textit{h7 15.\textit{xf6+ \textit{f8 16.\textit{h6+ \textit{g7 17.\textit{xh7+ \textit{g8 18.\textit{f6+ \textit{h8 19.\textit{d2 \textit{c8 20.\textit{c7+ \textit{g7 21.\textit{h5+ \textit{h6? 22.\textit{d6+ \textit{g6 23.\textit{g3+–) 12...\textit{bc6 13.\textit{e2!?!}

12.\textit{ab2!} \textit{d7 (12...\textit{xb2 13.\textit{xb2 \textit{bc6, Kosteniuk – Khotenashvili, Beijing 2012, 14.c4!±; after 13.\textit{c7, T.Kosintseva – Bystryakova, Sochi 2006, White has the possibility to undermine the enemy d5-pawn with 14.c4!\textit{dxc4
15.\( \text{c3} \)\( ^\pm \) 13.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{g7}! \) 14.\( \text{h8}^+ \) \( \text{g8} \) 15.\( \text{g3} \)\( ^\pm \) – the arising positions are tremendously complicated and need further practical tests.

10.\( \text{f3} \)

It would not be easy for White to consolidate his material advantage in the variation 10.\( \text{b2} \) \( \text{bc6} \) 11.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{xg1} \) 12.\( \text{xg1} \) \( \text{b6} \)\( ^\pm \)

The positions after 10.\( \text{f4} \) are rather difficult to evaluate. White has two extra pawns indeed, but his king is vulnerable and he lags in development, so the position is very unclear. 10...\( \text{a5} \) 11.\( \text{bc6} \) 11.\( \text{f3} \) (11.\( \text{a2} \) \( \text{d4} \) 12.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{g6}^\infty \)) 11...\( \text{d4} \) 12.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 13.\( \text{a2} \) \( \text{d7} \)\( ^\infty \) (It would be worse for Black to opt here for 13...\( \text{a5} \) 14.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{c5} \) 15.\( \text{d3} \)\( ^\pm \), or 15.\( \text{d1} \)\( ^\pm \) with the idea a4.).

10...\( \text{bc6} \)

11.\( \text{b2} \) \( \text{d4}! \) (Black’s alternatives would not promise him any compensation, for example: 11...\( \text{a5} \) 12.\( \text{d3} \)! \( \text{axb4} \) 13.0-0\( ^\pm \); or 12...\( \text{xg2} \) 13.\( \text{c3} \)! \( \text{xb4} \) 14.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{d8} \) 15.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{xf2} \) 16.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{xf1}^+ \) 17.\( \text{xf1}^\pm \)) 12.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xf3}^+ \) 13.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 14.\( \text{d2} \) 0-0-0 15.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{h8} \) 16.\( \text{g7} \) (16.\( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{c6}^\infty \)) 16...\( \text{h8} \) 17.\( \text{h7} \) (17.\( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{c6}^\infty \)) 17...\( \text{h8} = \)

11.\( \text{bd2} \)? with the idea 11...\( \text{xc5} \) (After 11...\( \text{d4} \), White can choose 12.\( \text{c4} \)?; following 11...\( \text{a5} \) 12.\( \text{b2} \)?, or 11...\( \text{d4} \) 12.\( \text{b1} \)? and Black will still have to prove whether his compensation is sufficient.) 12.\( \text{b2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 13.\( \text{b5}^+ \) \( \text{d7} \) 14.\( \text{xd7}^+ \) \( \text{xd7} \) 15.\( \text{f1} \)\( ^\pm \) with the idea 16.\( \text{h3} \).

The positions arising after 8.\( \text{xg7} \)? need further practical tests.

B1b) 8.\( \text{f3} \)?
White can be completely happy with the fact that his queen is very actively deployed and should avoid entering the complications that Black is trying to provoke, enticing his opponent to capture the g7-pawn.

8...\textit{g6}

8...\textit{f8} 9.\textit{d3}±

9.\textit{d3} \textit{c6} 10.\textit{b2} \textit{d7}

10...0-0. Black should better avoid delaying his castling, since he can hardly counter effectively the advance of his opponent's h-pawn. 11.0-0 (White should not be in a hurry to advance 11.h4?, due to 11...\textit{f5}! 12.exf6 e5\textsuperscript{+–}.)

11...\textit{c7} (11...\textit{f5} 12.exf6 e5 13.\textit{h5} \textit{xf6} 14.\textit{c3}!\textsuperscript{+–}) 12.\textit{e1} \textit{d7} (12...\textit{f6} 13.\textit{xg6} h\textit{xg6} 14.exf6 \textit{gxf6} 15.\textit{c6}+ \textit{g7} 16.\textit{xg7}+ \textit{xg7} 17.c4 dxc4 18.\textit{bd2}±) 13.h4\textsuperscript{+–}

11.0-0 \textit{cc7} 12.\textit{c3}! \textit{a6} 13.\textit{ad1}

13.h4?! \textit{h5} 14.\textit{g5}±
13...\texttt{c8}

This move is seemingly consistent, but Black has hardly any better alternative anyway.

He cannot solve his problems with 13...\texttt{b8} 14.\texttt{fe1} (The situation would not be so clear after 14.\texttt{e2} \texttt{c7} 15.\texttt{g3} 0-0\texttt{∞}, or 15.\texttt{g3} \texttt{xe5} 16.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xf3} + 17.\texttt{gxf3} \texttt{g8} 18.\texttt{f6} \texttt{g6} 19.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{g6} 20.\texttt{h8}+ \texttt{e7} 21.\texttt{xh7} \texttt{g8} 22.\texttt{h4}+ f6\texttt{∞} Almasi – Grishchenko, Yerevan 2014.) 14...\texttt{c7} 15.\texttt{b1±}

14.\texttt{fe1} \texttt{c7} 15.\texttt{h4}↑ Black is doomed to only defending. 15...\texttt{c8} 16.\texttt{e2} h5 17.\texttt{g5} \texttt{b5} 18.\texttt{xb5}+ axb5 19.\texttt{d4}! \texttt{c6} 20.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{xb6} 21.\texttt{ed4±} Nepomniachtchi – Grishchenko, Loo 2014.

\textbf{B2) 6.\texttt{f3}!}

White would not mind transposing to variation \textbf{C}.
6...b6

The prophylactic move 6...a5 is aimed at preventing b2-b4, but is weakening the b5-square and its effect can be seen in the principled variation 7.d3 c6 (7...b6 8.c3 e7 9.h4 a6 10.b5↑ Cornette – Astengo, Geneve 2008) 8.0-0 f6 9.b5! d7 10.c4 fxe5 11.cxd5 exd5 12.c3±

6...e7 7.d3 g6 8.0-0 0-0 (8...c7 9.e1 0-0 10.h4 c6 11.b4 b6 12.b2±; 11...e7 12.b2±) 9.g5! e7 10.h5 xg5 11.xg5 c7 12.c3!?↑ with the idea 12...xe5 13.e1 d6 14.e3 (Black was threatening 15.h3.) 14...e5 15.f4!±

7.d2 a5

7...d7 8.d3 b5 9.b4 c7 10.0-0± Black cannot solve his problems by trading the bishops, because it is not an easy task for him to complete his development, for example: 10...h6 11.c3 xd3 12.xd3±
8.\texttt{\textbf{N}c3}

It is also possible for White to choose here the more consequent line: 8.\texttt{\textbf{B}d3} \texttt{\textbf{N}e7} 9.0-0 \texttt{\textbf{B}d3} 9...0-0?! 10.\texttt{\textbf{N}c3} \texttt{\textbf{B}d7} 11.\texttt{\textbf{N}g5!±} and White’s queen is transferred to the kingside with a great effect.) 10.\texttt{\textbf{N}c3} \texttt{\textbf{N}d4} (10...a4?! 11.\texttt{\textbf{Q}f4}± Kryvoruchko – Kovchan, Alushta 2011) 11.\texttt{\textbf{N}xd4} \texttt{\textbf{B}xd4} 12.\texttt{\textbf{Q}a4} \texttt{\textbf{W}c6} 13.\texttt{\textbf{W}f4} \texttt{\textbf{a}a7} 14.\texttt{\textbf{N}c3} 0-0 15.\texttt{\textbf{W}g3}↑

8...\texttt{\textbf{B}d7} 9.\texttt{\textbf{B}d3} \texttt{\textbf{N}e7} 10.0-0 \texttt{\textbf{h}6}

It is rather risky for Black to play here 10...0-0, in view of 11.\texttt{\textbf{W}g5}↑ (with the idea 12.\texttt{\textbf{B}xh7!}) 11...\texttt{\textbf{G}g6} 12.\texttt{\textbf{h}4}↑ and White’s initiative becomes very dangerous.
Motwani – Arkell, Lichfield 2000. White has a space advantage and a superior development, so his kingside initiative is very threatening. Black has problems with his castling on either sides of the board, therefore, he will be doomed to a passive defence.
C) 5...\(\texttt{\textipa{d}c6}\)

Black is trying to provoke the enemy knight to occupy the f3-square, in order to prevent the queen-sortie \(\texttt{\textipa{d}d1-g4}\).

6.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}f3}\)

It would be premature for White to choose 6.b4?, due to 6...a5!\

6...\(\texttt{\textipa{b}xc5}\) 7.b4 \(\texttt{\textipa{b}b6}\)

The drawbacks of the retreat 7...\(\texttt{\textipa{b}e7}\) are quite evident. Black’s bishop thwarts the harmonious development of his kingside 8.b5!. White reduces the tension, concerning the e5-pawn, and this is more important that the slight weakening of the c4-square. (Following the natural move 8.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}d3}\), Black can free his position with the pawn-break 8...f6! 9.\(\texttt{\textipa{b}b2}\) \(\texttt{\textipa{h}6}\) 8...\(\texttt{\textipa{a}5}\) 9.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}d3}\) \(\texttt{\textipa{d}7}\) 10.0-0 \(\texttt{\textipa{c}4}\). He fails to withstand the pressure, but remaining passive was not easy to put up with either... (10...\(\texttt{\textipa{e}c7}\) 11.\(\texttt{\textipa{e}c2}\) \(\texttt{\textipa{e}c8}\) 12.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}e1}\) \(\texttt{\textipa{c}5}\) 13.\(\texttt{\textipa{c}3}\) \(\texttt{\textipa{e}7}\). He has almost completed his development and it might seem that he has some reasons to be optimistic, however, White suddenly attacks the enemy dark-squared bishop – 14.\(\texttt{\textipa{a}4}\)±) 11.\(\texttt{\textipa{x}c4}\) dxc4 12.\(\texttt{\textipa{c}3}\)± Black’s problems with the development are quite obvious. 12...a6 13.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}d4}\) (13.bxa6!? \(\texttt{\textipa{x}a6}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}d4}\)±) 13...\(\texttt{\textipa{h}6}\) 14.\(\texttt{xh6}\) gxh6 15.\(\texttt{\textipa{h}5}\) 0-0 16.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}ad1}\) \(\texttt{\textipa{e}c7}\) 17.\(\texttt{\textipa{fe}1}\) \(\texttt{\textipa{h}8}\) 18.\(\texttt{\textipa{e}4}\) \(\texttt{\textipa{e}8}\) 19.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}6}\)–


8.\(\texttt{\textipa{b}b2}\)

White can also begin with 8.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}d3}\) and the difference is that following 8...f6, he is deprived of the possibility to react with the move \(\texttt{\textipa{f}1-b5}\).

Here, the move 8.b5 is not so strong, in view of 8...\(\texttt{\textipa{c}e7}\)! 9.\(\texttt{\textipa{d}d3}\) \(\texttt{\textipa{g}6}\) 10.0-0 (10.h4?! \(\texttt{\textipa{h}6}\)±) 10...\(\texttt{\textipa{e}8}\)∞
Black has a choice here. He can try to undermine the enemy e5-pawn with the move **C1) 8...f6**, or make an attempt to complete his development as quickly as possible – **C2) 8...Ng7**.

**C1) 8...f6 9.Nbd2**

This is a simple and promising move.

White can hardly achieve anything meaningful with 9.c4 fxe5 (9...Ng5?! 10.Nxe5 fxe5 11.Qh5+ Kf8 12.Qxe5 Nd6 13.Nxe5) 10.Qxe5 (Or 10.cxd5? exd5 11.Qxe5 fxe5 Shomoev – Kornev, St Petersburg 2006 and he has not obtained an edge after 10.c5 Be7 11.b5 Nbd7 12.Nbd2!?) 10...fxe5 11.Qh5±

It is also interesting for White to opt here for 9.b5!?, but after Black’s surprising response 9...Ng7! (This is not a blunder of a pawn at all!) I have failed to find any advantage for White. The position however, is so complicated that only the tournament practice may clarify how easy it is to be played by both sides (9...d7 10.Nbd2? Bxf2+? 11.Qxf2 Nf6+ 12.Qd4 Nxd4 13.Qc4!+–; 10...fxe5 11.Qxe6 Nxe6 12.Qxe5 f6 13.c4 0-0 14.0-0±) 10.exf6 (10.0-0, Mullon – Nikolaidis, Caleta 2011, 10...fxe5! 11.Qxe5 0-0=) 10...gxf6 11.c4 (It would not work for White to play here 11.Qxf6, due to 11...0-0! 12.Nh4 e5=) 11...e5 12.Nbd2 0-0 13.0-0∞
9...fxe5 (9...\texttt{N}ge7?! 10.exf6 gxf6 11.b5\pm Vehi Bach – Valsecchi, Barcelona 2013) 10.\texttt{Nx}e5 \texttt{N}f6 11.\texttt{B}d3 0-0 12.0-0 a5 13.b5 \texttt{Q}xe5 14.\texttt{Q}xe5 \texttt{Q}e7 15.c4 \texttt{Q}c5 (15...\texttt{B}d7 16.a4 \texttt{B}e8 17.\texttt{c}c1\pm) 16.a4 b6 17.\texttt{Q}b3\pm – White’s pieces have occupied the most favourable positions, while Black’s pawn-centre is much rather a liability. He will be faced with a very unpleasant passive defence.

C2) 8...\texttt{N}ge7 9.\texttt{B}d3 \texttt{Q}g6

Black increases his pressure against the enemy e5-pawn and prepares the manoeuvre \texttt{Q}g6-f4 under more favourable circumstances.

10.0-0

This position is like a tabia of the variation with 5.a3. I believe it is very promising for White. Black has completed his
development indeed, but his pieces are somewhat cramped and are not well prepared for active actions. White completes his development and can begin active actions on the queenside, or with the help of advancing h-pawn (g2-g3 and h2-h4) on the kingside, depending on circumstances.

Now, Black has a choice. He can begin a chase after the enemy light-squared bishop with C2a) 10...\(\text{Nf4}\), or try to complete rapidly his development C2b) 10...\(0-0\).

C2a) 10...\(\text{Nf4}\)

This is the right time for this knight-sortie. We will see that making it later would be senseless.

11.c4!

The modest approach here – 11.\(\text{Re1}\) \(\text{Nxd3}\) 12.\(\text{Qxd3}\) (12.cxd3!? is also possible, but is not as energetic as 11.c4.

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11...\(0-0\)

Black should better refrain from the undermining move 11...\(\text{f6}\)?! 12.\(\text{exf6}\) \(\text{gxf6}\) 13.\(\text{\text{c3}}\) \(\text{dxc4}\) 14.\(\text{\text{xc4 xdx1}}\) 15.\(\text{axd1 e5}\) 16.\(\text{e4 e7}\) 17.\(\text{b5 a5}\) 18.\(\text{a2±}\). S.Zhigalko – Lomako, Minsk 2011.

Besides its all other pluses and minuses, the move 11...\(\text{dxc4}\)?! enables White to preserve his valuable light-squared bishop 12.\(\text{\text{xc4 xdx1}}\) 13.\(\text{\text{xd1}}\). The trade of the queens only creates new problems for Black, instead of facilitating his defence. This is due to his considerable lag in development 13...\(\text{\text{g6}}\). Now, White maintains effortlessly an advantage after 14.\(\text{b5?! a5}\) 15.\(\text{bd2 0-0}\) 16.\(\text{f1 d7}\) 17.\(\text{e4±}\) A.Fedorov – Lomako, Minsk 2011, as well as following 14.\(\text{bd2?! c7}\), Quesada Perez – Shmeliov, Greensboro 2013, 15.\(\text{ac1! 0-0}\) 16.\(\text{e2 xe5}\) 17.\(\text{xe5 xxe5}\) 18.\(\text{g3±}\)

It seems rather slow for Black to opt for 11...\(\text{a6}\) 12.\(\text{c3}\) (Or 12.\(\text{c2?!±}\) with the idea to counter 12...\(\text{dxc4}\) with 13.\(\text{\text{bd2}}\).) 12...\(\text{c7}\) 13.\(\text{e2!}\) White is transferring another battle unit to the kingside. 13...\(\text{dxc4}\) (13...\(\text{\text{xd3}}\) 14.\(\text{\text{xd3 xdx7}}\) 15.\(\text{\text{f4!!}}\); 14...\(\text{dxc4}\) 15.\(\text{\text{xc4 0-0}}\) 16.\(\text{\text{fd1 e7}}\) 17.\(\text{g3,})\) 14.\(\text{xf4 cxd3}\) 15.\(\text{\text{b3±}}\) – Here, besides a lead in development and a space advantage, White has excellent attacking prospects against the enemy king, Frolyanov – Grishenko, Samara 2012.

11...\(\text{\text{xd3?!}}\) This hasty move is justified by the circumstance that Black’s position is cramped, so he is trying to facilitate his defence by exchanges. 12.\(\text{\text{xd3 dxc4}}\) 13.\(\text{\text{xc4 0-0}}\) 14.\(\text{c3 d4}\). This is a continuation of Black’s planned
strategy. The exchanges enable him to free his position a bit, but his lag in development is still a very important factor. (He should better refrain from the transfer of his knight to the d5-square, with the line: 14...\texttt{Q}e7 15.\texttt{Q}ad1 \texttt{Q}d5, because of 16.\texttt{Q}g4, for example: 16...f5. This move is almost forced; otherwise, after \texttt{Q}c3-e4 Black’s king will remain bare and helpless against White’s powerful piece-formation on the kingside. 17.exf6 \texttt{Q}xf6 18.\texttt{Q}h4 \texttt{Q}d5 19.\texttt{Q}e4\texttt{±} Istratescu – Grachev, Basel 2013; 18.\texttt{Q}g5?!\texttt{±} 15.\texttt{B}xd4 \texttt{B}xd4 16.\texttt{Q}e2! It is quite natural for the dominant side to avoid exchanges having a superior development! 16...\texttt{Q}h4 (16...\texttt{Q}d7?? 17.\texttt{Q}ad1\texttt{+}–) 17.\texttt{Q}ad1 \texttt{B}d8 (17...f5 18.exf6 \texttt{Q}xf6, Roos – Schubert, Germany 2009, 19.\texttt{Q}a4! \texttt{Q}f8 20.\texttt{Q}xb6 axb6 21.\texttt{Q}d4 \texttt{Q}e7 22.\texttt{Q}d1\texttt{+}–) 18.\texttt{Q}a4! White is so keen on creating weaknesses in the enemy position that he ignores any exchanges. (His edge may prove to be insufficient following 18.\texttt{Q}xd8+, I.Smirnov – Sharapov, Evpatoria 2008, 18...\texttt{Q}xd8 19.\texttt{Q}d1\texttt{±} 18...\texttt{Q}d7 19.\texttt{Q}xb6 axb6 20.\texttt{Q}d4 \texttt{Q}e7 21.b5!\texttt{±} – This is a very important resource, fixing Black’s weak b6-pawn, as well as his bishop.

White managed to preserve the advantages of his position after 11...\texttt{Q}c7 12.\texttt{Q}d2 \texttt{B}xd3 13.\texttt{Q}xd3 0-0 14.\texttt{Q}e1 \texttt{Q}e7 15.\texttt{B}c3\texttt{±} Ly – Cheng, Melbourne 2014.

12.\texttt{Q}c3

White completes his development.

He could have also attacked the enemy knight with 12.\texttt{Q}d2!? \texttt{Q}xd3 (12...\texttt{Q}g6 13.c5 \texttt{Q}c7 14.\texttt{Q}e3\texttt{±} 13.\texttt{Q}xd3. Now, in comparison to the variation with 11...\texttt{Q}d3, Black has an extra tempo indeed and this is in his favour. Still, he will have to work hard to reach equality. 13...\texttt{Q}xc4 14.\texttt{Q}xc4 \texttt{Q}d7 (14...a6?! 15.\texttt{Q}c3 \texttt{Q}d4 16.\texttt{Q}xd4 \texttt{Q}xd4 17.\texttt{Q}e2!\texttt{±} A.Fedorov – Dudukin, Vladimir 2009) 15.\texttt{Q}c3 \texttt{Q}e7 16.\texttt{Q}fd1 \texttt{Q}c8 17.\texttt{Q}e2\texttt{±}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
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12...\texttt{Q}e7 13.c5 (13.\texttt{Q}d2?! \texttt{Q}xd3 14.\texttt{Q}xd3 \texttt{Q}xc4 15.\texttt{Q}xc4\texttt{±} P. Smirnov – Kharitonov, Moscow 2007) 13...\texttt{Q}c7 14.\texttt{Q}b5 \texttt{b}6 15.\texttt{Q}xc7 \texttt{Q}xc7 16.\texttt{Q}e1\texttt{±} – White’s positional advantage is doubtless.

C2b) 10...0-0
It is best for White to begin with this very move, since it is a part of his set-up anyway. Black’s possible knight-sortie \( \text{Ng6-f4} \), which would have been possible after 11.\( \text{Nbd2} \), can be countered with the retreat \( \text{Bd3-f1} \). It is also interesting for White to opt here for 11.\( \text{g3} \), but Black can also try to counter this with the pawn-brake 11...\( \text{f6} \) and then, after the opening of the position, the placement of White’s pawn on \( \text{g3} \) and the absence of his rook on \( \text{e1} \) would provide Black with additional possibilities on the kingside. There arises a situation in which, no matter how Black reacts, White would maintain an advantage, thanks to his extra space. Black can hardly create any meaningful counterplay.

11...\( \text{a5} \)

It seems rather slow for him to choose here 11...\( \text{a6} \) 12.\( \text{bd2} \text{d7} \) 13.\( \text{c4} \text{e7} \) 14.\( \text{b3} \pm \) Muniz – Larrea, Montevideo 2011.

Black would not achieve much with the undermining move 11...\( \text{f6} \) 12.\( \text{exf6} \text{gxh6} \), because after 13.\( \text{c4} \pm \), his powerful pawn centre vanishes into thin air, while White’s pieces remain perfectly placed. 13...\( \text{f4} \) (13...\( \text{dxc4} \) 14.\( \text{xc4} \text{xd1} \) 15.\( \text{xd1} \text{f7} \) 16.\( \text{e3} \text{e7} \) 17.\( \text{b5} \text{a5} \) 18.\( \text{a2} \text{d8} \) 19.\( \text{e4} \) 20.\( \text{a4} \text{e6} \) 21.\( \text{a3} \pm \) 22.\( \text{f1} \) Gabriel – Lauber, Bad Woerishofen 1997) 14.\( \text{f1} \text{dxc4} \) 15.\( \text{xc4} \text{f6} \) 15.\( \text{xd8}?! \) E.Hansen – Houska, Gibraltar 2015; 15...\( \text{d8} \); 15.\( \text{bd2}?! \) \( \text{d3} \) 16.\( \text{xd3} \text{cxd3} \) 17.\( \text{c4} \text{c7} \) 18.\( \text{e3} \pm \) 15...\( \text{xd1} \) 16.\( \text{xd1} \text{g7} \) 17.\( \text{c1} \) 18.\( \text{c3} \pm \)

Black would not facilitate his defence with: 11...\( \text{d7} \) 12.\( \text{bd2} \text{ce7} \) (12...\( \text{e8} \) 13.\( \text{g3} \text{a6} \) 14.\( \text{h4} \text{f6} \) 15.\( \text{exf6} \text{gxh6} \) 16.\( \text{c4} \pm \) Pikula – Jovic, Vrnjacka Banja 2014; 12...\( \text{f4} \) 13.\( \text{f1} \text{e7} \) 14.\( \text{g3} \) 15.\( \text{c4} \text{dxc4} \) 16.\( \text{xc4} \text{c6} \) 17.\( \text{d3} \pm \); 15.\( \text{d3} \text{a4} \) 16.\( \text{h4} \pm \) Swiercz – I.Khenkin, Warsaw 2013) 13.\( \text{c4} \) (13.\( \text{g3} \pm \) 13...\( \text{dxc4} \) 14.\( \text{xc4} \text{b5} \) 15.\( \text{d6} \pm \) (White would not achieve much by capturing the enemy bishop 15.\( \text{xb6} \text{xb6} \) 16.\( \text{xd}4 \) 17.\( \text{c2} \text{fd8} \) 18.\( \text{a4} \) 19.\( \text{d2} \text{b6} \)– Arakhamia Grant – Nikolaidis, Caleta 2010.).

12.\( \text{b5} \)
12...\texttt{\textasciitilde}ce7

Black should better avoid 12...\texttt{\textasciitilde}b8 13.c4!? (13.\texttt{\textasciitilde}bd2!? \texttt{\textasciitilde}d7 14.a4±), because after 13...dxc4 14.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xg6 fxg6 15.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xd8 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xd8 16.\texttt{\textasciitilde}bd2±, as well as following 13...\texttt{\textasciitilde}d7, Fercec – Bodiroga, Senj 2008, 14.cxd5 exd5 15.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xg6 hxg6 16.\texttt{\textasciitilde}c3±, White would maintain extra space and a superior development.

13.a4

It is also possible for him to play at first 13.g3!? a4 14.c4±

13...\texttt{\textasciitilde}e5
After this move, Black comes under positional pressing and his pieces remain cramped. He does not have any attractive alternatives either. For example after 13...f6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.c4!, Black will have to cope with new problems, for example: 15...e5 16.cxd5 2xe5 17.Nc4 Nc6 18.Nc3 Ng7 (18...fxe5+ 19.Nxf5 Nxe5 20.Nxe5 c6) 19.Nxe5 Nf5 20.Nxf5 Nxf5+ (20...fxe5 21.Qg4+ Ne6 22.Qxe5+--) 21.Nxf5 Nxe5+ 22.Ng1 Nxc4 23.Nxd5


White has a superior development and a space advantage. The game Nepomniachtchi – Andreikin, Nizhny Novgorod 2013 followed with: 16.b6 17.Ne1 Na4 18.Nc3 Ne5 19.Bc1 Bb7 20.Bd4 Bae8 21.Nc2 Qf4 22.Nf1 Qf5 23.Nf3 Nc8 24.g3 Nc6 25.h4 Nf5 26.h5 Ng3 27.Nge7 Nh5 28.Bb3 Qxg3 29.Nc5 Nxe5 30.Nd3 bxc5 31.Nh5+--. This is an excellent example of realising White’s space advantage, which is so typical for the variation we have just completed the analysis of.
Chapter 2

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 Nc6 5.Nf3

5...Bg4

This is a natural and logical move. Black’s plan is to regain the c5-pawn, as comfortably as possible, and to free his light-squared bishop. Still, it would be hardly possible for him to kill two birds with one stone, since White succeeds in preparing counter-arguments.

About 5...e6 6.a3 – see Chapter 1.

6.c3!

This is a multi-purpose move. White is ready to protect his c5-pawn with b2-b4, as well as to provide for his queen the possibility for active actions on the queenside, which might be very important for him in numerous lines.

White has often tried in practice 6.b5, however this move is losing its popularity recently. One of the reasons is that after 6...e6 7.e3 a5 8.c3 ge7 9.a3 0-0-0! 10.xc6 xc6 11.b4 xf3 12.gxf3 c7, the position is completely unclear and all the three results become possible. 13.f4 (The other indirect defence of the e5-pawn is 13.d4, with the idea 13...xe5 14.b5 xb8 15.xa7+, in which Black has hardly sufficient compensation for the sacrificed material, but after the prophylactic move 13...a6, White would have great problems to find a way to obtain an easy advantage: 14.f6 – 14...g5!∞ – 15.exf6 gxf6 16.xf6 g7 17.xg7 xg7 18.d3∞. This complicated position was reached in the game Fedorov – Mateuta, Brasov 2011, in which the opponents decided not to take any more chances and agreed to a draw.) 13...a6. This move is with the idea to prevent c3-b5. 14.g3 g5!? 15.h4 (It would be bad for White to try 15.0-0!?, in view of 15...h5, because after that Black would develop powerful initiative on the kingside and White’s king would just be an attractive target. 16.hxg4 h2+ 17.g7#. Black’s pieces have been deployed much more actively and White’s queenside attack has no good prospects following 16.b5? h4 17.bxc6 xc6, Edouard – D.Fridman, Plovdiv 2012.). Now, Black can even ignore White’s actions and turn his attention to some more important issues – like
the enemy e5-pawn with the move 15...\textit{g}7!??, obtaining after 16.hxg5 \textit{x}e5 17.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}6 18.gxf6 h5=, a very good position as compensation for the sacrificed material, or try another interesting reaction 15...gxh4 16.\textit{h}xh4 h5, with the idea \textit{f}8-e7 and h5-h4. (Black should better not lose time to regain quickly the sacrificed pawn 16...\textit{e}5=, following 17.\textit{e}2 \textit{g}7 18.0-0 h5 19.\textit{a}4=, or 18.\textit{h}5 \textit{f}5 19.\textit{a}4 \textit{f}4 20.\textit{h}xh4 \textit{d}3+ 21.\textit{h}xh3 \textit{f}xf4 22.\textit{h}b1= Kravtsiv – Braun, Shenzhen 2011. White manages to consolidate his position and to begin active operations.) 17.\textit{a}4 \textit{e}7 18.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}4

6...\textit{e}6

The e5-pawn is seemingly very attractive, but after capturing it 6...\textit{e}5=, following 7.\textit{e}5 \textit{d}1 8.\textit{b}5 it turns out to be poisoned.

With the move 6...\textit{xf}3?! Black regains immediately his pawn, however White succeeds in developing initiative 7.\textit{xf}3 \textit{e}5 8.\textit{b}5+ \textit{c}6 9.0-0 \textit{e}6 10.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}7 (10...\textit{f}6 11.\textit{c}4 \textit{a}6 12.\textit{a}4 \textit{c}8 13.\textit{d}1 – see variation B1) 11.\textit{c}4 \textit{f}6 12.\textit{c}3= Black has tried in practice the move 6...\textit{a}6, not without success though... (for example: Ponomariov – Grischuk, Beijing 2013), but a move like this might be successful only in a single game with the idea to surprise the opponent, because after 7.\textit{b}3! \textit{c}7 8.\textit{xd}5 \textit{e}6 9.\textit{e}4\textit{±}, it would be hardly possible for Black to prove sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

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

Now, White can try to obtain an opening advantage with the move B) 7.\textit{e}3, but he has also another possibility, which has become very popular lately among the strong players – A) 7.\textit{b}4!??, after which however, it seems to me that the position is rather unclear.

A) 7.\textit{b}4!?
Black is trying to restore the material balance as quickly as possible.

It would be weaker for him to opt for 7...c7?! 8.bd2 xe5 9.b5+ c6 10.a4+ and he would have problems with his development.

Black would be very close to equality following 7...a6!? 8.bd2 xe5 (About 8...ge7 9.a4 – see 7...ge7 8.bd2 a6 9.a4.) 9.e2 (9.h3 xf3 10.f3 xf3 11 xf3 g6= Fedorchuk – Lupulescu, Legnica 2013.) 9 xf3 (9...c6 10.0-0 f6 11.b2?! c7 12.h3 h5 13.a3 0-0 14.c4±) 10 xf3 f6!? (10...f5? Kosintseva – Stefanova, Moscow 2010, 11.d4 g6 12.a4+; 11...e7 12.a4+ d7 13.b5+-) 11.0-0 c7 12.h3 h5 13.e5!? xe2 14.xe2 0-0 15.c4† with the idea 15...a5?! 16.c6!±

It would be a bit too slow for Black to try 7...ge7 8.bd2.
The e5-pawn is still untouchable, just like before 8...\( \square \times e5 \)?, due to 9.\( \mathbb{W} \)a4+ \( \square \dagger d7 \) (9...\( \square \times c6 \) 10.\( \mathbb{B} \)xf3 11.bxc6+–) 10.\( \mathbb{Q} \)e5+-, followed by \( \mathbb{Q} \)f1-b5.

The prophylactic move 8...a6 is aimed at preventing \( \mathbb{B} \)f1-b5 and eventually b4-b5, and it enables White to solve his problems with his development and to preserve his extra pawn. 9.\( \mathbb{W} \)a4 \( \mathbb{B} \)xf3 10.\( \mathbb{Q} \)xf3 g6 11.\( \mathbb{Q} \)d3 \( \mathbb{Q} \)g7 12.\( \mathbb{B} \)f4 0-0-0 f6 14.\( \mathbb{W} \)xf6 \( \mathbb{B} \)xf6 15.\( \mathbb{R} \)h6 \( \mathbb{R} \)e8 16.\( \mathbb{W} \)b3+- Grischuk – Shimanov, Moscow 2013.

Black cannot solve his problems with the line: 8...g6 9.h3 \( \mathbb{B} \)xf3 10.\( \mathbb{Q} \)xf3 \( \mathbb{Q} \)g7 11.\( \mathbb{Q} \)f4 0-0 12.\( \mathbb{Q} \)e2! This is the most precise move. (12.\( \mathbb{B} \)b5 f6 13.\( \mathbb{W} \)xf6 \( \mathbb{B} \)xf6 14.\( \mathbb{Q} \)xc6 \( \mathbb{Q} \)xc6 T.Kosintseva – Ushenina, Dagomys 2009; 12.\( \mathbb{Q} \)d3 f6 13.\( \mathbb{W} \)xf6 \( \mathbb{B} \)xf6) 12...\( \mathbb{W} \)c7 13.0-0 \( \mathbb{Q} \)xe5 14.\( \mathbb{R} \)h1 \( \mathbb{Q} \)7c6 15.\( \mathbb{B} \)b1 a6 16.\( \mathbb{A} \)a4±

8...\( \mathbb{W} \)c7, Ponomariov – Khenkin, Dagomys 2010, 9.\( \mathbb{B} \)b5!?± (The position would not be so clear after 9.h3 \( \mathbb{Q} \)h5 10.\( \mathbb{W} \)e2 g5!?).
8...a5 9.\( \mathbb{A} \)b5
Black has serious problems with the development of his kingside. He should try to exchange his light-squared bishop for the enemy knight on f3, or comply with a weakening of his position. He is going to have great difficulties in both variations.

9...Qc7 10.h3 Bh5 (Black should better avoid trading his bishop – 10...Bxf3 11.Bxf3 g6 12.a3 Bg7 13.Bf4 0-0 14.0-0 Bxe5 15.Bh1 Bc6 16.e1 f6 17.d4 Bf7 18.Qe2±) 11.0-0± 0-0-0?! 12.Qe2!? Bg6 13.b5 Bxe5 14.Ba4 Bxf3+ 15.Qxf3 Qf5 16.c6+– Li Shilong – Alavi Moghaddam, Cebu 2007.

There is an interesting possibility for Black too – 9...g5!?, but it would be hardly sufficient for him to equalise. He wishes to develop his dark-squared bishop to the g7-square and to preserve his other bishop. This is going to happen after 10.h3 Bxf3, with the idea 11.g4Bg6 12.Bb3 axb4 13.cxb4 h6 14.h4 Bg7 15.hxg5 h5 16.fd4 hxg4 17.Bxg8+ Bxg8 18.Bxg4 Bxg5∞ and his pieces would become very active. Still, following 10.0-0 Bg7 11.h3 Bh5 12.Ke1 Qc7 13.Bb3 axb4 14.cxb4 h6 15.Bd4 0-0 16.Ke2 Bxe5 17.Bxe5 Bxe5 18.Qb2, or 16.Bc6!? Bxc6 17.Bxc6 Bxc6 18.Bb2±, Black would still have problems to worry about.

9...g6. After this move he would have to part with his light-squared bishop, which would be a serious positional concession. White would maintain a space advantage and the power of his bishops would be considerable. 10.h3 Bxf3 11.Bxf3 Bg7 12.a3!N (White should better not be in a hurry to play 12.0-0?!), since following 12...0-0 13.We1 Qc7 14.f4 axb4 15.exb4 a3!∞, with the idea Bxf3! gxf3 Bxd4, Black would obtain an excellent game for the sacrificed pawn, Areshchenko – Bernadskiy, St Petersbourg 2013.) 12...0-0 13.f4 Bc7 14.0-0 Bxe5 15.Bh1!± White wishes to increase the effect of the pin on e5, with the moves Bf1-e1 and Bd1-e2. It would be rather difficult for Black to get rid of the pin without material losses, for example: 15...Bc6 16.Ke1 f6 17.Bd4 Bf7 18.Bc2 Bxc8 19.Ba4±

8.Bxf3 Bxe5 9.Bb5+ Bc6
10.0-0

White cannot create any serious problems for his opponent with the line: 10.\textit{\textit{b}2 \textit{e}7 11.c4 \textit{f}6 12.c3 0-0=}, while after the rather risky attempt 13.0-0-0?! d4! 14.xc6 bxc6 15.xc6, Nepomniachtchi – Andreikin, Moscow 2012, 15...a5\textpm, it would be White who would have problems.

10...\textit{e}7

Black can also try to speed up his development with the variation 10...\textit{f}6 11.\textit{f}4 \textit{e}7 12.d2 0-0, but following 13.\textit{fe1 d}7 14.b3 \textit{f}6 15.d6 \textit{e}8 16.ad1 \textit{c}8 17.a3 a6 18.xc6 bxc6 19.c4\textpm, he would still have problems, Almasi – Khenkin, Istanbul 2012. We are going to see later that he should better transfer to the f6-square his dark-squared bishop, since it would be much better deployed there than on the e7-square.

11.\textit{f}4

This is the basic difference between this variation and the line with 7.\textit{e}3 – White’s bishop is best placed on f4.
11...a5!N

This is a very important novelty for Black! It is his most precise decision, which reduces considerably White’s possibilities.

11...f6 12.d2 – see 10...f6.

Following 11...f6, White has the resource 12.a3 and here 12...a5 (12...ge7 13.ad1, threatening c4. 13...c8 Kurnosov – Goganov, Legnica 2013, 14.a4!? a6 15.d6 0-0 16.c2) would not be so effective in view of 13.xc6+ bxc6 14.b5 and White maintains an advantage in development and can utilise the power of his c5-pawn, as well as to undermine the enemy centre, under opportune circumstances, with the move c3-c4. 14.e7 15.bxc6 xc6 16.d6 (16.c4 0-0 17.fd1) 16...e7 17.b5 (17.c4!?) 17...0-0 18.ab1 and in all those lines Black would have difficulties, because of his opponent’s actively placed pieces.
White’s advantage is much rather symbolic in this position. He can hardly create any serious problems for his opponent with for example: 12.\text{N}\text{d}2 \text{axb4} 13.\text{cxb4} \text{Bf6} 14.\text{Rd1} \text{Qc8} 15.\text{Qb3} \text{Nge7} 16.\text{Qf3} 0-0 17.\text{Rfe1} \text{Qf5} 18.\text{a4} \text{Qd4} 19.\text{Qxd4} \text{Qxd4} 20.\text{Qd3} \text{Qxb5} 21.\text{Qxb5} \text{Qc3} 22.\text{Qd2} \text{Qxd2} 23.\text{Qxd2} \text{Qc6}=
B) 7.e3

7...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}}}}}f3!?

Black is trying to solve his problems, concerning material.

7...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}}}}}xe5?? 8.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}a4+–

After 7...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}}}}}ge7, White would have a very effective counter argument – 8.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}bd2!, in order, after the exchange on f3, to recapture with his knight (His alternatives are not so promising, since following 8.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{B}}}}}}b5, it would be very interesting for Black to counter with 8...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}a5! 9.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}a4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}xa4 10.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}xf3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}xf3 11.gxf3, Dussart – Favarel, France 2007, 11...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}f5 12.b4 a5 13.a3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}e7!?; or 13...axb4 14.axb4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}e7 15.f4 g5\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}}; it would be very imprecise for White to opt here for 8.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}a4? \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}xf3 9.gxf3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}f5 10.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}b5 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}c7 11.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}d4, Czarnota – Olender, Bartkowa 2002, 11...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{Q}}}}}}e7\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}})

8...$\text{N}xe5?? 9.$\text{Wa4}+–

8...$\text{g6} 9.$\text{Wa4} $\text{xf3} 10.$\text{xf3} $\text{c7} 11.$\text{d3}!?! (11.$\text{b5} $\text{xe7} 12.0-0 0-0 13.$\text{xc6} $\text{bxc6} 14.$\text{d4} a5 15.$\text{fb1} $\text{fb8} 16.$\text{c2}± Volokitin – Berczes, Germany 2010) 11...$\text{e7} 12.0-0 0-0 (12...$\text{gxe5}? 13.$\text{xe5} $\text{xe5} 14.$\text{f4} $\text{f6} 15.$\text{a6}!+–) 13.$\text{g6} $\text{hxg6} 14.$\text{f4}±

After 8...a6, White has a very attractive queen-sortie – 9.$\text{Wa4} and Black would hardly have any compensation after 9...$\text{xf3} 10.$\text{xf3}±, as well as following 9...$\text{h5} 10.$\text{h4}!±

8...$\text{c7} 9.$\text{Wa4} $\text{xf3} 10.$\text{xf3} $\text{f5} 12.$\text{d3}± Van Kampen – Willemze, Haarlem 2010.

In the variation 8...$\text{f5} 9.$\text{d4} $\text{e7} (9...$\text{g5}?! 10.$\text{h3} $\text{xf3} 11.$\text{xf3} $\text{g7} 12.$\text{b5} $\text{c8} 13.$\text{d2} $\text{h6} 14.0-0 0-0 15.$\text{fe1}±, White ends up with a solid extra pawn, Pudas – Maki Uuro, Naantali 2011.) 10.$\text{b5}?? Black’s compensation for the pawn is insufficient.

8...$\text{g6}!? 9.$\text{b3}??N White attacks the b7-pawn and avoids at the same time the pin of the enemy bishop on g4 against his queen. (In the game Svidler – Andreikin, Tromso 2013, White reacted much more prudently – 9.$\text{f4}, although that move was hardly necessary and after 9...$\text{f5} 10.$\text{b4} $\text{xg5} 11.$\text{d5} $\text{xg5} 12.$\text{d4} $\text{xh4} 13.$\text{d3} $\text{d4} 15.$\text{g3} $\text{g6} 16.$\text{f4} $\text{xb4} 17.$\text{xb4} $\text{d7} 18.$\text{b5} $\text{c5} 19.$\text{xc5} 0-0 20.$\text{xc6}=$, the opponents agreed to a draw; 14...$\text{xb4}!?? with the idea 15.$\text{xf5}?! $\text{bxc3}! 16.$\text{b1} $\text{xc5}!?, or 15.$\text{xb4} $\text{f4}=$) 9...$\text{c7} 10.$\text{d4} (with the idea $\text{b5}) 10...$\text{f5} 11.$\text{xf5} $\text{xf5} (11...$\text{gxf5} 12.$\text{b5} $\text{xe5}?! 13.$\text{xc6}+$ $\text{xc6} 14.$\text{b7}+–; 12...$\text{e7} 13.$\text{a4} 0-0 14.$\text{xc6} $\text{bxc6} 15.$\text{d4}± and Black failed to obtain any compensation) 12.$\text{e2} (White cannot fortify the e5-square with the move 12.$\text{f4}!, because of the undermining move 12...$\text{g5}! and Black’s pieces liven up – 13.$\text{f5} $\text{h6}=$) 12...$\text{g5} (Black obtains a good position neither with 12...$\text{h5} 13.$\text{f4} $\text{g5} 14.$\text{f5}±, nor following 12...$\text{xe5} 13.$\text{a4} $\text{e7} 14.$\text{g4} $\text{d3} 15.$\text{f4} $\text{c4} 16.$\text{xc4} $\text{dxc4} 17.$\text{xd3} $\text{cxd3} 18.0-0-0–) 13.$\text{f3} $\text{e7} 14.$\text{h4} $\text{xf4} (14...$\text{g4} 15.$\text{d4}+–) 15.$\text{xf4}± Now, White’s rook on h1 joins into the actions. If Black tries to restore immediately the material balance with the line: 15...$\text{xf4} 16.$\text{xf4} $\text{xe5}, then after 17.$\text{xc6}±, he would be faced with new serious problems, since after 17...$\text{d6}, White would have the counter argument 18.$\text{f4} $\text{a5} (18...$\text{e5} 19.$\text{h5} $\text{d7} 20.$\text{g5}±) 19.$\text{xa5} $\text{xa5} 20.0-0-0± and he would maintain a considerable advantage thanks to his bishop-pair and more actively placed pieces.

7...$\text{a6}?? Black is preparing 8...$\text{xe5}. This is a very solid move, but a bit too slow. He regains his pawn and obtains a very solid position, but White has a bishop-pair and can hope to exploit effectively this advantage later. 8.$\text{bd2} (8.$\text{d4}?! $\text{xf3} 9.$\text{xf3} $\text{b6}±) 8...$\text{xe5}. 

7...$\text{xe5}?? 8.$\text{xc6}+–
Now, Black should not be afraid of the move 9.Qa4+, because of the possibility 9...Qd7 and his a6-pawn prevents the appearance of the enemy bishop on the b5-square.

It also deserves attention for White to force immediate clarification of the situation after 9.h3!? Qxf3+ (Black fails to preserve his light-squared bishop with the move 9...Qh5, in view of 10.g4 Qxf3+ 11.Qxf3 Qg6 12.Qe5± and White has created the rather unpleasant threat Qa4 in the process.) 10.Qxf3 Qxf3 11.Qxf3 Qc7 (11...Qc8 12.b4 Qf6 13.exf6 Qxf6 14.d3 g6 15.0-0-0! Qg7 16.Qb2±) 12.b4 Qd6 13.Qc1 Qe5 14.d3 Qe7 15.0-0 0-0 16.Qe1 Qc6 17.Qb1± White’s two bishops provide him with a slight, but stable advantage.

9.Qe2!? He gets rid of the pin with this developing move.
This voluntary exchange of the light-squared bishop fails to equalise as well: 9...Nx f3 10.Qxf3 c6 11.0-0 f6 12.b4 (The standard undermining move 12.c4 would not promise White anything special due to 12...e7 13.Qc1 0-0 14.cxd5 Qxd5 15.Qd2 Qf6= Ferencz – Zelcic, Banja Luka 2009.) 12...e7 13.Qb3 0-0 14.Qad1 Qc7 15.Qc4±

9...Qxf3+ 10.Qxf3 (White would not achieve much with 10.gxf3?! f5 11.$$a4+$$d7, Charochkina – Belenkaya, Pushchino 2013, 12.$$xd7+$$xd7 13.0-0-0 $$c7∞ and all his efforts turn out to be in vain and anti-positional due to the weakening of his kingside.) 10...Qf6 11.h3. This logical move forces Black to make up his mind about the placement of his bishop on g4. 11...f5 (11...Qxf3 12.Bxf3±) 12.e5 $$xd7 13.$$a4 $$c2 (13...f6 14.$$f3↑ 14.xc2 (White should better avoid a line with numerous exchanges: 14.$$xd7+$$xd7 15.$$xd7 $$xd7 16.c4 dxc4 17.xc4= and Black’s defence has been facilitated considerably, Korneev – Goganov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.) 14...xe5 15.0-0± White’s advantage is based on his superior development and the presence of his bishop-pair. 15...c7 16.f4 $$d7 (16...c6 17.f5↑ and Black cannot play 17...e5? due to 18.$$ad1±, followed by $$f3, and he loses his d5-pawn.) 17.b4 0-0 18.c4 $$f6 19.$$f3±

8.Qxf3

Here, Black can regain his pawn immediately with B1) 8...Qxe5, or try to complete his development as quickly as possible B2) 8...$$ge7.

B1) 8...Qxe5 9.$$b5+

White should try here to advance c3-c4 in order to get rid of his doubled pawns and to activate his minor pieces. He should not be so much in a hurry to do this immediately, though...

9...Qc6

White develops very powerful initiative following 9...Qd7?! 10.c4±

It would be rather strange for Black to retreat here 9...e7? 10.$$g3±, since his king would be obviously misplaced in the centre of the board.
10.0-0!

This is a natural and powerful move. It is quite reasonable for White to remove his king away from the centre, before advancing c2-c4 and to prepare his rook on h1 for active operations in the centre. It might be useful on the d1-square at an opportune moment.

It would be slightly weaker for White to play immediately 10.c4, since in that variation Black can reduce his opponent’s pressure by exchanging queens 10...\textit{Q}f6 11.\textit{Q}d2 \textit{Q}e7 12.0-0 \textit{Q}xf3 13.\textit{Q}xf3±. White has two bishops indeed, but Black’s defence has been facilitated considerably and White’s edge may turn out to be just symbolic. Black can try the following attractive lines in his attempt to equalise: 13...\textit{R}c8!? (13...f6!??, preparing in the process a nice leeway for his king on f7; 13...dxc4!? 14.\textit{Q}e5, Dvoirys – Abeln, Cappelle la Grande 2007, 14...\textit{R}c8 15.\textit{Q}xe6 \textit{Q}xe6 16.\textit{R}f1 \textit{Q}e7 17.\textit{Q}xc4 0-0. White’s prospects of achieving anything real have been reduced considerably.) 14.\textit{R}ac1 dxc4 15.\textit{Q}xc4 \textit{Q}f6. It would be rather difficult for him to preserve his bishop-pair without positional concessions for example: 16.\textit{B}d2 \textit{Q}xc5 17.\textit{Q}xe6 \textit{Q}xe6 18.\textit{Q}xc2 fxe6 19.\textit{Q}g5 0-0 20.\textit{Q}xe6 \textit{Q}e8 21.\textit{R}f1 \textit{Q}xe6=, or 16.\textit{R}b5 \textit{Q}xc3 17.\textit{R}f1 \textit{Q}e7 and the position has been simplified.

10...\textit{Q}f6

10...a6 11.\textit{a}a4 \textit{h}a5 (11...\textit{Q}f6 12.\textit{R}d1 – see 10...\textit{Q}f6 11.\textit{R}d1 a6 12.\textit{a}a4; 11...\textit{Q}h4?! 12.\textit{R}d1! Black’s queen is absolutely useless on the kingside. 12...\textit{Q}ge7?! 13.\textit{Q}d2 0-0-0 14.\textit{Q}f3 \textit{Q}h5 15.b4+– Khairullin – Krenz, Germany 2010. He had better retreat his queen immediately – 12...\textit{Q}d8, but then it would be completely unclear why he had tried that sortie in the first place. 13.c4 \textit{Q}f6 14.\textit{Q}b3?) 12.\textit{Q}c2 \textit{f}6 13.\textit{Q}d2 \textit{Q}e7 14.\textit{Q}g3 0-0 15.\textit{Q}b3 (15.b4±) 15...\textit{Q}d8 16.\textit{Q}h6 \textit{Q}e8 17.\textit{Q}ad1± Wang Zili – Magem Badals, Yerevan 1996.

Black lags in development and it would be hardly reasonable for him to lose tempi for the transfer for his knight – 10...\textit{Q}ge7 11.\textit{R}d1! a6 (11...\textit{Q}f5? 12.c4±) 12.\textit{Q}a4 \textit{Q}g6 (12...\textit{Q}f5 13.c4 \textit{Q}xe3 14.\textit{Q}xe3±; 13...\textit{Q}a5? 14.cxd5 \textit{Q}xa4 15.\textit{Q}c3± T.Kosintseva – Girya, Geneva 2013) 13.\textit{Q}d2!? (It seems attractive for White to try here the risky line: 13.c4!? \textit{Q}ge5 14.\textit{Q}h5 \textit{Q}xc4 15.\textit{Q}d4↑) 13...\textit{Q}e7 14.\textit{Q}c4 \textit{Q}c7 15.\textit{Q}b6 \textit{Q}e8 16.c4±
Now, White can exert immediate pressure against the enemy d5-pawn with the move B1a) 11.c4, or can chose the preparatory move B1b) 11.Rd1.

B1a) 11.c4!?

This is a very precise decision which requires serious attention by Black.

11...a6

11...e7 12.c3 0-0 (12...a6? 13.a4 0-0 14.cxd5 exd5 15.f2+ – Procacci – Luo, Montreal 2013) 13.fd1 a5 14.a3 (14.cxd5 cxd5 15.cxd5 exd5 16.d3 – see 11.ad1) 14...dxc4 15.xc4 e5 16.e2 xc4 17.xc4 fc8 18.b4 c7 19.ac1± Erenburg – Schroer, ICC 2011.

Following 11...e8 12.d1 a5 (12...a6 13.a4 – see 11...a6) 13.c3 dxc4 14.g3±, it would be a serious problem for Black to develop his kingside.

12.a4
12...\(\text{c}8\)

His desire is easily understandable. He wishes to reduce the enemy pressure against the d5-square with the move d5xc4 and his last move is aimed at just that. Its drawback however, is the fact that the development of Black’s kingside is slowed down and White will make use of that in the future.

12...\(\text{Q}a5\)? 13.\(\text{d}c3\) \(\text{B}xc5\) (13...\(\text{e}7\) 14.a3+–) 14.cxd5 exd5 15.\(\text{B}xd5\) \(\text{d}xd5\) 16.\(\text{Q}xd5\) 1-0 Pfau – Schroeder, Germany 2004.

It would be worse for Black to protect his knight with the queen 12...\(\text{Q}c7?!\), because of 13.\(\text{B}f4\) (13.\(\text{d}c3?!\) dxc4 14.\(\text{R}fd1\) \(\text{e}7\) 15.\(\text{B}f4\) \(\text{c}8\) 16.\(\text{d}d6±\)) 13...\(\text{d}d7\) 14.\(\text{d}c3\) \(\text{B}xc5\) 15.cxd5 exd5 16.\(\text{Q}e1±\) and his king remains stranded in the centre, since he cannot follow with 16...\(\text{B}e7?\) (16...\(\text{f}8\) 17.\(\text{R}ad1±\) 17.\(\text{g}5+–\)

Black’s attempt to speed up his development fails here just like before. 12...\(\text{e}7\) 13.\(\text{d}c3\) 0-0 14.cxd5 \(\text{B}xd5\) 15.\(\text{R}ad1!\) \(\text{Q}a5\) 16.\(\text{B}x\text{d5}\) exd5 17.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{d}4\) 18.\(\text{B}d4\) \(\text{e}4\) 19.\(\text{Q}x\text{d4}\) \(\text{B}xc5\) 20.\(\text{R}d7±\). He cannot save his pawn with 20...\(\text{b}5?!\) (20...\(\text{f}b8\) 21.\(\text{b}f4!±\)) 21.\(\text{B}x\text{f7+}\) \(\text{h}8\) 22.\(\text{e}4±\) and now it has become evident why on move 15, White placed on d1 his rook from a1. His other rook on f1 has turned out to be very useful for the protection of the f2-pawn.

13.\(\text{R}d1!\)

White prevents Black’s plan, connected with the pawn-advance d5xc4.

13.\(\text{b}4?!\) \(\text{e}7\) 14.\(\text{d}c3\) 0-0 15.cxd5 \(\text{B}xd5\) 16.\(\text{R}ad1\) \(\text{c}xb4\) 17.a3 \(\text{f}6\) 18.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 19.\(\text{b}3!\) \(\text{e}5\) 20.\(\text{R}xd5\) exd5 21.\(\text{R}xd5\) \(\text{Q}e7\) 22.\(\text{R}d1\) \(\text{Q}d8\) 23.\(\text{d}6±\)

13...\(\text{Q}a5\) 14.\(\text{d}c3\) \(\text{d}xc4\)
15.\textit{g}3

Black has realised his idea, but his kingside has been ignored. White exploits this by threatening the g7-pawn and prevents the development of the enemy bishop on f8.

His alternative here is the move 15.\textit{f}4!? , with the idea to regain immediately the c4-pawn and to begin an offensive on the queenside by advancing his pawns there. He has very good reasons to follow that plan, because of his pawn-majority, superior development and space advantage.

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

\textbf{15.\textit{g}3}

It would be a suicide for Black to try to win material here with 15...\textit{b}4?, because of 16.a3 \textit{a}5 (16...\textit{xb}2? 17.\textit{ab}1! \textit{xa}3 18.\textit{xc}6+ bxc6 19.\textit{b}8+-; 17...\textit{xc}3 18.\textit{xb}7+-, followed by \textit{a}xe6) 17.\textit{xc}4 \textit{e}7 18.\textit{b}4 \textit{c}7 19.\textit{f}4 e5 20.\textit{g}5+- White has weakened the d5-square and is ready to deploy his knight there. 20...0-0 21.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 22.\textit{d}5 \textit{d}8 23.\textit{e}4, with the idea \textit{d}5-b6+-
15...\texttt{Be7} 16.\texttt{Bxc4} 0-0 17.\texttt{Bxc6}! White should be on the alert (following 17.a3?! \texttt{Qe5} 18.\texttt{Qf4}, Akopian – Bernadskiy, St.Petersburg 2013, 18...\texttt{Qc7}! 19.b4 \texttt{Qh5} 20.\texttt{Qe4} f5 21.\texttt{Qc2} \texttt{Qg4}!\textsuperscript{+}, it would be White who should worry about maintaining equality) 17...\texttt{Rxc6} 18.b4 \texttt{Qc7} 19.a4\textsuperscript{=} (with the idea b4-b5) – Black is helpless against his opponent’s pawn-offensive on the queenside.

15...\texttt{Qc7}

His desire is to trade the queens, or to deflect the protector of the c5-pawn (the bishop on e3), but this does not facilitate his defence at all.

15...\texttt{Be7}?! Now, Black is in a serious trouble. 16.\texttt{Bxc6} White frees his knight on c3 from the protection of his bishop and compromises his opponent’s queenside pawn-structure. (He can also capture the enemy g7-pawn 16.\texttt{Qxg7}!\textsuperscript{=} \texttt{Rg8} 17.\texttt{Qh6} \texttt{Qg6} 18.\texttt{Qf4}\textsuperscript{†} with the idea \texttt{a4-c2}.) 16...\texttt{bxc6} 17.\texttt{Qd4} 0-0 18.\texttt{Qe4} \texttt{Qe8} (White destroys the enemy kingside too after 18...\texttt{Qh5} 19.\texttt{Qf3} \texttt{Qf6} 20.\texttt{Qc3} \texttt{Qb5} 21.\texttt{Qg3} \texttt{Qe8}?! 22.\texttt{Qd7} \texttt{Qxc5} 23.a4 \texttt{Qb6} 24.a5 \texttt{Qb5} 25.\texttt{Qe5}±; 21...\texttt{Qh5} 22.\texttt{Qe5} \texttt{Qf6} 23.\texttt{Qg5} h6 24.\texttt{Qg3} \texttt{Qh5} 25.\texttt{Qg4} g6 26.\texttt{Qd7}+; 25...\texttt{f5} 26.\texttt{Qxh5} \texttt{fxe4} 27.\texttt{Qg4} \texttt{Qf7} 28.\texttt{Qxg7} \texttt{Qxc5} 29.\texttt{Qd4}+ \texttt{Qg5} 30.\texttt{Qxe6} \texttt{Qf5} 31.\texttt{Qxc4}±) 19.\texttt{Qd6} \texttt{Qxd6} 20.\texttt{cxd6} \texttt{Qd8} 21.\texttt{Qc3} \texttt{Qf5} 22.d7 (22.\texttt{Qh4}?!±, White eyes the enemy queenside pawns, which are in ruins.) 22...\texttt{Qf6} 23.\texttt{Qac1}± and Black's queenside pawns are in a pathetic state and his position is rather difficult to defend, moreover that White’s d7-pawn is like a wedge in the enemy position.

Black’s attempt to oust the enemy queen from the g3-square with the line: 15...h5 16.\texttt{Qd4} h4, would not be successful due to 17.\texttt{Qf4} \texttt{Qe7}, Gopal – Mammadov, Al-Ain 2013, 18.\texttt{Bxc6}! White is preparing the knight-sortie \texttt{Qc3-e4}. 18...\texttt{Bxc6} (18...\texttt{Qxc6} 19.\texttt{Qb8}±) 19.\texttt{Qxf6} \texttt{Qxf6} (The other possible recapturing 19...\texttt{gxf6} would weaken Black’s position even more: 20.\texttt{Qe4} \texttt{Qd8} 21.b4\textsuperscript{†}) 20.\texttt{Qe4} \texttt{Qe7} 21.h3?! White fixes his opponents far-advanced pawn on h4, which would need permanent protection and would be a serious liability (He obtains a very promising position too after 21.b4 \texttt{Qxb3} 22.axb3 \texttt{Qb5} 23.b4\textsuperscript{†}) 21...0-0 22.\texttt{Qd7}\textsuperscript{†}

16.\texttt{Qf4}

The position would not be so clear; nevertheless, the move 16.\texttt{Qd6}?!± deserves some practical tests, with the idea \texttt{Qad1}.

16...\texttt{Qa5}
17.b4!?

White’s kingside is idle and his king is in the centre, but he should try to bring as quickly as possible all his pieces into the actions. This is what his last move is aimed at, trying to activate his rook on a1 without losing any additional tempi. Naturally, he should not comply with the repetition of moves after 17...e3 c7.

17...cxb3

17...xb4?? 18.ab1+-

18.axb3 xc5
19.b4

White is trying to entice the enemy queen to the b4-square, if it captures the pawn there, and will attack it with tempo with the move $a1-b1$.

19.$ac1?!$ $f5$ Zhigalko – Svetlov, St Petersburg 2013.

19...$f5$ 20.b5↑

White’s initiative is becoming very threatening and Black will have a hard time neutralising it.

20...$h5$ 21.bxc6 $b5$ 22.$f3$ $e7$ 23.$c2$ $x2$ 24.$e5$ $f6$ 25.$a2$! (25.$xa6$? $b4$) 25...$b3$ 26.$c7$±, followed by $xa6$.

B1b) 11.$d1$?!

11...$a5$

Black’s queen is running away from the pin and seemingly with tempo.

His alternatives would not facilitate his defence either, for example: 11...$e7$ 12.$c4$, or 11...$a6$ 12.$a4$ $c8$ 13.$c4$ $a5$ 14.$c3$ $xc4$ 15.$g3$?±

12.c4!

This is an excellent resource! White protects his bishop, undermines the enemy d5-pawn and is ready to exploit the pin on c6 at an opportune moment.

12...$e7$

Black has nothing else to do! He is on the alert about his opponents actions and is trying to complete rapidly his development.

12...$xc4$?? 13.$xc6$–
Black can hardly be happy with the result of the line: 12...a6 13.\(\text{xc6+ bxc6 14.d2 e7 15.cxd5 xd5 (15...cxd5 16.c4+) 16.c4 b4}\) (following 16...b5, White can exploit the weaknesses of the enemy position in the variation 17.g4 0-0 18.d4 g6 19.d6+) 17.e5±

13.e3!?

This is a logical move, but is not White’s only possibility. He protects additionally his bishop on b5 and increases the pressure against the d5-square at the same time.

His alternative is – 13.a3!? He wishes to exploit the misplacement of Black’s queen on the a5-square and with this preparatory move he is trying to increase his queenside advantage with the move b2-b4. 13...0-0 14.b4 c7. Black’s queen is forced to go back. (Black loses after 14...xb4?, due to the practically forced line: 15.axb4 a1 16.d4 a2 17.c3 c2 18.cxd5 exd5 19.d3 b3 20.b1 a3 21.xf6 xf6 22.xd5+–; the other possible retreat of his queen – 17...b3 can be countered by White in a very spectacular fashion 18.xd5+–) 15.f4 c8 16.c3 a6 17.a4 dxc4 18.e2±

13...0-0 14.cxd5 xd5 15.d5 xd5 16.d3±
White has preserved his two bishops and has opened up the position in order to increase their power. He can also exploit at an opportune moment the vulnerability of Black’s isolated pawn on d5. Now, he has chances of developing kingside initiative. For example, it would not work for Black to opt for 16...\textit{f}6?? in view of \textit{Q}f5+–

His attempt to win a pawn with 16...\textit{xc}5?! and 17.\textit{xc}h7+ \textit{x}h7 18.\textit{xd}5± would lead to his immediate demise.

If Black tries to win a pawn after 16...\textit{d}4 17.\textit{f}4 \textit{xc}5 (17...\textit{xc}5 18.a3±), then White can begin a chase after the enemy queen with 18.\textit{dc}1!? (Black would have too many problems to worry about even after the more natural move 18.\textit{ac}1!?\textit{a}5, with the idea 18...\textit{a}5 19.a3\textit{a}5) 18...\textit{b}4. Black’s queen protects his bishop on e7 from the square (The other possible retreat is even worse: 18...\textit{b}6?! 19.\textit{e}4 g6 20.\textit{xc}6±; 19...\textit{f}5 20.\textit{e}6+ \textit{f}7 21.\textit{c}4 \textit{a}8 22.\textit{xf}5±) 19.a3 \textit{xb}2 20.\textit{ab}1 \textit{xa}3 21.\textit{b}3 \textit{xb}3 22.\textit{h}7+ \textit{x}h7 23.\textit{xb}3 \textit{d}8 24.\textit{e}5± with the idea 24...\textit{g}8 (24...\textit{e}6 25.\textit{f}4±) 25.\textit{f}4±
B2) 8...\(\text{Q}e_7\)

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{9.} \text{b}5
\end{array}\]

It is also interesting for White to try here 9.\(\text{d}2\)!, with the idea to prepare castling queenside, after which his lead in development would become an even more important factor. 9...a6 10.0-0-0 \(\text{Q}\)xe5 11.\(\text{Q}\)g3 \(\text{d}7\) 12.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{g}6\) 13.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{c}8\) 14.f4 \(\text{h}4\) 15.\(\text{h}4\). This is a very useful inclusion of this move, since it enables White to preserve the elasticity of his pawn-structure (It would not be so effective for him to choose immediately 15.f5 \(\text{Q}\)xg3 16 hxg3 \(\text{g}5\) 17.fxe6 \(\text{d}3+\) 18.\(\text{b}3\) fxe6= Sutovsky – Khenkin, Plovdiv 2012.) 15...\(\text{Q}\)xh4 16.g3

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{16...} \text{g}6.
\end{array}\]

This is Black’s only move. (It would hardly be advisable for him to opt for 16...\(\text{g}2\)?? 17.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{c}5\))
18.\textit{\textbf{B}}f1+-, and Black’s knight would be likely to be lost.). 17.f5 \textit{\textbf{N}}ge5 18.\textit{\textbf{R}}e1 \textit{\textbf{N}}xd3+ (18...\textit{\textbf{B}}xc5 19.\textit{\textbf{N}}xc5 \textit{\textbf{N}}xc5 20.\textit{\textbf{R}}e2 White’s bishop-pair and his more actively deployed pieces compensate with an interest his minimal material deficit. 20...\textit{\textbf{Q}}ed7 21.fxe6 fxe6 22.\textit{\textbf{B}}xc5 \textit{\textbf{N}}xc5 23.\textit{\textbf{R}}xd5± – White’s bishop is obviously more powerful than the enemy knight in this endgame, moreover that Black has a chronic weakness on the e6-square.) 19.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xd3 \textit{\textbf{N}}f6 20.\textit{\textbf{B}}d4 \textit{\textbf{K}}d7 21.\textit{\textbf{B}}xf6 gxf6 22.\textit{\textbf{N}}d4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e8 (After 22...e5? 23.\textit{\textbf{B}}b3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c6 24.\textit{\textbf{R}}ed1 \textit{\textbf{R}}d8 25.\textit{\textbf{Q}}a5±, Black loses his d5-pawn.) 23.b4 White’s knight has occupied the ideal d4-square and as we have been convinced in our notes to the previous move, Black would manage to oust it from there only at the price of considerable material losses. It would be rather difficult to find an appropriate plan for his further actions. White’s game is much simpler in similar situations. He maintains the tension in the centre and increases his pressure on the queenside.

9...a6

Black is trying to clarify the future of his opponents light-squared bishop, but all his efforts would be in vain as we will be convinced very soon. It would be difficult however to suggest to him anything more reasonable.

After, for example: 9...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c7 10.\textit{\textbf{B}}d4 (10.0-0!? , with the idea 10...\textit{\textbf{W}}xe5 11.\textit{\textbf{B}}d2 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g6 12.\textit{\textbf{B}}d4 \textit{\textbf{W}}c7 13.\textit{\textbf{R}}e1±, White’s lead in development may turn out to be decisive.) 10...\textit{\textbf{Q}}f5 (10...\textit{\textbf{Q}}g5 11.0-0 \textit{\textbf{B}}g7 12.\textit{\textbf{R}}e1 h5 13.\textit{\textbf{B}}a3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c4 14.\textit{\textbf{W}}e2 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f5 15.\textit{\textbf{Q}}c2± Yu Yangyi – Labib, Antalya 2013) 11.\textit{\textbf{B}}d2± and Black has failed to obtain sufficient compensation for the pawn.

10.\textit{\textbf{B}}a4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}a5

This seemingly active queen-sortie leads to an attack not so much against the enemy bishop on a4, but against his pawn on e5.

Black could have attacked White’s pawn on e5 in a more straightforward manner with the move 10...\textit{\textbf{W}}c7, but in the meantime, while Black is regaining his pawn, White will complete rapidly his development. 11.\textit{\textbf{B}}d2± (White should better not insist on preserving his extra pawn with 11.\textit{\textbf{B}}d4, although even then after 11...\textit{\textbf{Q}}f5, Lopez Martinez – Valiente Roy, Salou 2008, 12.\textit{\textbf{B}}d2 \textit{\textbf{B}}e7 13.b4 0-0 14.\textit{\textbf{B}}xc6 \textit{\textbf{W}}xc6 15.\textit{\textbf{B}}b3±, his position would be obviously preferable.) 11...\textit{\textbf{W}}xe5 12.0-0 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g6 13.\textit{\textbf{B}}c4 \textit{\textbf{W}}c7 14.\textit{\textbf{B}}b6 \textit{\textbf{R}}d8 15.\textit{\textbf{R}}ad1 \textit{\textbf{B}}e7 16.c4± White’s initiative turns out to be much more important than the extra pawn.

10...\textit{\textbf{Q}}f5 11.0-0 \textit{\textbf{B}}e7 12.\textit{\textbf{B}}d2 0-0 13.\textit{\textbf{B}}xc6 bxc6 14.b4± – Black’s compensation for the pawn is evidently insufficient.
This is the critical position of this line. We will analyse now: B2a) 11.\textit{d}1 and B2b) 11.\textit{c}2!

\textbf{B2a) 11.\textit{d}1!?}

I am not going to ignore this move, although at least for the moment, it does not seem as promising as 11.\textit{c}2.

11...\textit{f}5 12.\textit{b}4

White would hardly manage to preserve his extra pawn after 12.\textit{d}4 \textit{fxd}4 13.\textit{b}4 \textit{f}3+ 14.\textit{xf}3 \textit{c}7 15.\textit{f}4 \textit{g}5

12...\textit{xe}3

Black cannot delay this capturing, which weakens the enemy pawn-structure, because after 12...\textit{c}7 13.\textit{d}4, he should better forget about this.
13.\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)xc6!

This is an important inclusion of the move, forcing Black to recapture on c6 with his pawn.

It would not be the same after 13.fxe3 \(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)c7 14.\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)d4 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)7 15.\(\text{\textbf{d}}\)2 a5 N. White has not fortified his queenside pawns yet, so Black should try to undermine them as quickly as possible (It would not be so energetic for him to choose here 15...0-0 16.\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)xc6 \(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)xe6 17.0-0 a5, Svidler – Andreikin, Tromso 2013, 18.a3!? with the idea to counter 18...axb4, with 19.axb4!). 16.\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)xc6+ \(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)xc6 17.0-0 axb4! (17...0-0?! 18.a3!\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)) 18.axb4 0-0 19.\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)d3 (19.a3 \(\text{\textbf{f}}\)6) 19...b6!? Here, the difference with the line with 13.\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)xc6!, becomes evident, since this undermining move would be impossible. 20.cxb6 \(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)xb6 21.a3 \(\text{\textbf{f}}\). After this undermining move Black succeeds in activating his dark-squared bishop. (The following seemingly active line is weaker: 21...\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)g5 22.\(\text{\textbf{R}}\)xe6 \(\text{\textbf{R}}\)c8 23.\(\text{\textbf{f}}\)3 \(\text{\textbf{h}}\)6 24.\(\text{\textbf{h}}\)1\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\) with the idea \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)4, or 23...g7 24.\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)c1\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\) Black’s compensation is insufficient.) 22.\(\text{\textbf{f}}\)3 (22.\(\text{\textbf{R}}\)xe6 \(\text{\textbf{R}}\)xe6 23.\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)ab1 \(\text{\textbf{R}}\)c8) 22...\(\text{\textbf{R}}\)xe6 23.\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)xe6 \(\text{\textbf{R}}\)xf1+ 24.\(\text{\textbf{R}}\)xf1 \(\text{\textbf{B}}\)d6\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\) White’s e3-pawn is weak, while Black’s pieces are more active, so he does not risk anything.

13...\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)xc6 14.\(\text{\textbf{f}}\)xe3 \(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)c7 15.\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)d4\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\) White holds on to his extra pawn, but its realisation would not be easy at all. 15...\(\text{\textbf{g}}\)5!? Black opens a second front on the kingside and his king would feel comfortable even in the centre at the moment.

16.\(\text{\textbf{d}}\)2 \(\text{\textbf{g}}\)7 17.\(\text{\textbf{f}}\)3 \(\text{\textbf{h}}\)5 18.\(\text{\textbf{h}}\)3 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)7 19.0-0 (Here, it deserves a practical test for White to try the move 19.\(\text{\textbf{f}}\)2!\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\), after which there arise positions which are very difficult to play for both sides, for example: 19...\(\text{\textbf{a}}\)5?! 20.\(\text{\textbf{a}}\)3!? \(\text{\textbf{f}}\)6!? 21.\(\text{\textbf{e}}\)4?!\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)) 19...\(\text{\textbf{g}}\)4 20.\(\text{\textbf{h}}\)xg4 \(\text{\textbf{h}}\)xg4 21.\(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xg4 (21.\(\text{\textbf{g}}\)5?! \(\text{\textbf{B}}\)af8\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)) 21...\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)xe5 22.\(\text{\textbf{d}}\)xe5 \(\text{\textbf{Q}}\)xe5 23.\(\text{\textbf{f}}\)4 \(\text{\textbf{R}}\)xf4 24.\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)xf4 \(\text{\textbf{B}}\)ag8\(\text{\textbf{Q}}\) – In fact, White has an extra pawn indeed, but he is not very likely to realise it easily.

B2b) 11.\(\text{\textbf{B}}\)c2!
In the game Zhigalko – Khenkin, Baku 2012, following 11...\(\text{Nxe5}\), the opponents agreed to a draw, although White could have tried to obtain an advantage with the move 12.b4!, for example:, 12...\(\text{Nxe5}\) 13...\(\text{Qd1}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 14.0-0 \(\text{Qc4}\) (Black fails to complete effortlessly his development after 14...\(\text{Q7c6}\) 15.\(\text{N\text{d2}}\) \(\text{Be7}\) 16.f4↑, with the idea f4-f5.) 15.\(\text{N\text{d2}}\) (It would not work for Black to play here the seemingly attractive line: 15...e5 16.\(\text{R\text{e1!}}\) f6 17.f4 and he cannot capture the enemy bishop 17...exd4, due to 18.\(\text{B\text{a4+}}\), after which he would be forced to part with his queen.) 16.\(\text{N\text{d2}}\) – Black has serious problems with the development of his kingside.

12...\(\text{Qg3}\)

White has given back his extra pawn, as we have already predicted, but has obtained instead a slightly better development and a powerful bishop-pair.

12...\(\text{Qc4}\)

This is the most principled response for Black.

Following 12...\(\text{Q5c6}\), White can exploit the misplacement of the enemy queen and can win a tempo and seize the initiative with 13.\(\text{Qd2}\) g6 14.\(\text{Qb3}\) \(\text{Qd8}\) 15.h4! h5 16.0-0-0 \(\text{g7}\) 17.\(\text{R\text{e1}}\) 0-0 18.f3↑ and now, if White manages to advance g2-g4, then Black’s position would be a sorry sight.

13.b4
13...\textit{\textcomments}d8

It seems more principled for Black to choose here 13...\textit{\textcomments}xe3. He accomplishes a seemingly favourable exchange of his queen for a rook and two bishops and tries to destroy the enemy pawn-structure in the process. He solves his problems with the development indeed, however his knight on a1 is doomed to perish. 14.bxa5! White accepts the challenge! (The situation would not be so clear after 14.fxe3 \textit{\textcomments}b5=) 14...\textit{\textcomments}xc2+ 15.\textit{\textcomments}d2 \textit{\textcomments}xa1 16.\textit{\textcomments}c7! Black lags so much in development that he fails to protect his queenside pawns. 16...\textit{\textcomments}c8 17.\textit{\textcomments}xb7 \textit{\textcomments}xc5 (17...g6 18.\textit{\textcomments}a3\pm) 18.\textit{\textcomments}a3 \textit{\textcomments}c6 19.\textit{\textcomments}xa1\pm

The evaluation of the entire line with the 11.\textit{\textcomments}c2 depends on this position. It may seem that Black has chances of obtaining a favourite result, however he has certain problems in all the lines. 19...\textit{\textcomments}d6 (Following 19...\textit{\textcomments}e7?! 20.\textit{\textcomments}b1! 0-0 21.\textit{\textcomments}b6, he would lose his a6-pawn. 21...\textit{\textcomments}g5+ 22.\textit{\textcomments}d1 \textit{\textcomments}e5 23.\textit{\textcomments}xa6 \textit{\textcomments}ce8. This is a forced move, since White was
threatening $\text{Ra6-a8}$, after which the advance of the a-pawn would have been decisive. 24.$\text{Rb3}$± 20.$\text{Rb1}$ 0-0 21.$\text{Rx}a6$ (After 21.$\text{Rb6}$ $\text{xf4+}$ 22.$\text{d}d1$, in comparison to the variation with 19...$\text{e7}$, Black has the possible retreat 22...$\text{b8}$! and White’s task would not be easy at all, for example: 23.$g3$ $\text{c7}$± 21...$\text{f4+}$ 22.$\text{e1}$ $\text{xc3}$ 23.$\text{b5}$ $\text{c2}$ 24.$g3$ $\text{g5}$ 25.$f4$ $\text{d8}$ 26.$\text{d1}$ $\text{e5}$ 27.$\text{e1}$ $\text{xc1+}$ 28.$\text{xc1}$ $\text{xa5}$ 29.$\text{c2}$± White wishes to advance his a-pawn and in order to do that he would have to prevent the enemy knight on a5 from accomplishing the manoeuvre $\text{b5-d4-c6}$, although even then the realisation of his advantage would not be an easy task.

Following, 13...$\text{b5}$, White’s dark-squared bishop manages to avoid the chase by the enemy knight on c4 – 14.$\text{d4}$!±, with the idea 14...a5 15.a4

14.0-0

We are going to see in our notes to Black’s next move that White should not be afraid of the capturing $\text{bxc4xe3}$, since his dark-squared bishop may become useful even on the g5-square, while it cannot reach the d4-square at once.
Meanwhile, even after 14.$\text{d4}$ a5 15.0-0±, Black will still have problems to worry about.

14...$\text{c6}$

Following 14...$\text{xe3}$ 15.$\text{fxe3}$ $\text{c6}$ 16.e4±, Black’s lag in development is more than obvious, Zhigalko – Laznicka, Rodos 2013.

15.$\text{g5}$!± with the idea $\text{b1-d2}$.
It is rather difficult for Black to complete his kingside development. 15...f6 (15...\texttt{Q}d7 16.\texttt{\textsubscript{N}}d2 \texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xd2 17.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xd2 g6 18.h4!?\upuparrows) 16.\texttt{\textsubscript{B}}c1\pm followed by \texttt{\textsubscript{B}}b1-d2. Meanwhile, White has created the threat \texttt{\textsubscript{B}}c2xh7 in the process. Black has no chances of creating counterplay. 16...a5 17.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}d2!? axb4 18.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xc4 dxc4 19.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}d1!? (19.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xh7!?\updownarrows) 19...\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}e8 (19...\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}e7 20.cxb4 \texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xb4 21.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xh7 \texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xh7 22.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}g6\pm) 20.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xh7 \texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xh7 21.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}g6+ \texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}e7 22.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}xh7 bxc3 23.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}e4 \texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}e5 24.\texttt{\textsubscript{Q}}d4\pm (followed by f2-f4) Black has no compensation for the exchange.
In this chapter we will analyse the moves: A) 4.c4, B) 4.h4 and C) 4.bd2, which are relatively popular, but I believe not so promising to White in comparison to 4.f3.

A) 4.c4

This is not a very attractive move. Its main plus is that White can play like this without burdening his memory so much, since there is not much theory in this line anyway. The most probable developments after it are like this: Black exchanges on c4 and establishes a piece on the d5-square. Still, he cannot place both knights there, though... White relies on exploiting his slight space-advantage and Black’s somewhat cramped position. There arises a similar pawn-structure in some other openings as well, for example in the Queen’s Gambit Accepted – 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 f6 4.e5 d5 5.xc4...

Among the very strong players, Evgenij Alexeev plays like this, but most often he does that in games with a shorter time control, or in blitz. In fact, he is striving for not so much an advantage in the opening, but for well familiar middle game pawn-structures, which is very practical in rapid chess.

4.e6 5.de3
5...\(\text{Ne7}\)!

It is also a possible for Black to play here simply 5...dxc4, although in the main line he changes the pawn-structure only after the inclusion of the moves 5...\(\text{Ne7}\) 6.a3, which, of course, seems much more logical. 6...\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{d7}\) 7.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{b6}\) 8.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{e7}\) 9.0-0 \(\text{xd3}\) 10.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{f5}\) 11.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{e7}\) 12.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{d5}\) (12...0-0?! Alekseev – Burmakin, St.Petersburg 2014, 13.\(\text{e4}\)! \(\text{h4}\) 14.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{h4}\) 15.f4 \(\text{f5}\) 16.exf6 \(\text{xf6}\) 17.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{f7}\) 18.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{d5}\) 19.a3?! \(\text{w7}\) 20.\(\text{e5}\)=) 13.\(\text{e4}\) h5= 6.a3

White would not create problems for his opponent with the line: 6.\(\text{e3}\) dxc4 (6...\(\text{d7}\)=? 7.e5?! \(\text{f6}\) 8.\(\text{xf6}\) gxf6\(\text{∞}\)) 7.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{d5}\)!=? (7...\(\text{d7}\) 8.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{b6}\) 9.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{bd5}\) 10.0-0 \(\text{xd3}\) 11.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{f5}\) 12.\(\text{ad1}\) \(\text{e7}\) 13.\(\text{c1}\) h5 14.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{b6}\) 15.a3, Alekseev – Dreev, St Petersburg 2014, 15...0-0-0! 16.b4 \(\text{b8}\)=) 8.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{e7}\) 9.0-0 0-0 10.\(\text{d3}\). White should try to seize the e4-outpost and this justifies the trade of the bishops. 10...\(\text{xd3}\) (10...\(\text{a6}\)!? 11.\(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{exf5}\) 12.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{g6}\)\(=\); 11.a3 \(\text{xd3}\) 12.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{xe3}\)! 13.\(\text{f3}\) c5 14.d5 \(\text{exd5}\) 15.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{c7}\) 16.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{e6}\)\(∞\)) 11.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 12.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{xe3}\) 13.\(\text{f3}\) c5 14.\(\text{ac1}\) cxd4 15.exd4 \(\text{b6}\) 16.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{e8}\)= Alekseev – Simonian, St.Petersburg 2014.

Black should not be afraid of 6.\(\text{ge2}\) \(\text{d7}\) 7.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{g6}\) 8.a3 dxc4 9.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{b6}\) 10.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{f5}\)!? (He must play very accurately here and be on the alert – 10...\(\text{d7}\) 11.0-0 \(\text{d8}\) 12.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{ed5}\), Ahmadinia – Dreev, Jakarta 2011, 13.\(\text{h5}\)=) 11.\(\text{e3}\) (11.\(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{xf5}\)=) 11...\(\text{xe3}\) 12.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{e7}\) 13.0-0 0-0 14.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{d5}\)=

6...\(\text{d7}\)?

It also seems quite acceptable for Black to try 6...dxc4?! 7.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{d7}\) 8.\(\text{xe2}\) \(\text{b6}\) 9.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 10.0-0 \(\text{g6}\) 11.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{f5}\) 12.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{e7}\)! (12...\(\text{d8}\) 13.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 14.\(\text{ad1}\) \(\text{d5}\) 15.\(\text{fxd5}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 16.\(\text{c1}\) h5 17.\(\text{e2}\) h4 18.g4 \(\text{hxg3}\) 19.\(\text{fxg3}\)\(↑\) A.Fedorov – Zhigalko, Minsk 2011) 13.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{d5}\) 14.\(\text{fxd5}\) \(\text{exd5}\)\(∞\)
7.c5

Naturally, White should not be afraid now that his opponent might undermine his pawn-mass on the queenside, because he has fortified it in advance with the move 6.a3, but Black can try to brake from the other side...

He has nothing to fear in the variation 7.Qf3Bg4 (7...dxc4!? 8.Qxc4Qd5 9.Qxd5 cxd5 10.Qd3 Qd3 11.Qxd3 Qe7=) 8.Qe3 Qf5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.h3 Qh5 11.Qd3 Qh4!? (11...Qg6 12.Qf4 a6 13.h4 Qe7 14.h5 Qxd3 15.Qxd3± Zhigalko – Rodshtein, Jerusalem 2015) 12.g4 Qxf3 13.Qxf3 Qg6=

7...b6

It would be weaker for Black to opt here for 7...Qg6 8.h4 f6 9.h5 Qf7 10.f4 b6 11.b4 a5 12.Qe3 axb4 13.axb4 Qxa1 14.Qxa1 bxc5 15.bxc5 g5 16.hxg6 Qxg6 17.Qf3 Qg7 18.Qe2 0-0 19.Qa7 Qf5 20.Qf2± Najer – Michalik, Czech Republic 2012, or 7...Qc7 8.Qd2 b6 9.b4 a5 10.Qe2 f6 11.f4± axb4?! 12.axb4 Qxa1 13.Qxa1 bxc5 14.bxc5 h5 15.Qf3 Qg6 16.0-0 Qe7 17.Qe1 Qf7 18.Qd1 h4 19.Qc2± Fedoseev – Palachev, Samara 2013.

8.b4 a5

8...f6!? with the idea 9.exf6 gxf6 10.Qf3 bxc5 11.bxc5 e5∞

9.Qe3 f6
10.exf6

10.f4?! g6!? (10...fxe5 11.fxe5 axb4 12.axb4 xa1 13.xa1 bxc5 14.bxc5 xxe5 15.dxe5 d4 16.b5 d5! 17.xd4 h4+ 18.d1 e4∞; 18.g3 e4+ 19.f2 xh1 20.f3∞), with the idea 11.e2 h6!

10...gxf6 11.e2 g7 12.f3 0-0 13.0-0 axb4 14.axb4 bxc5 15.bxc5 g6

15...xa1 16.xa1 e5 17.a4 c8 18.a1 e6∞

16.a2 a5 17.d2 a3 18.h3 fb8∞ Najer – Popov, St Petersburg 2011.

We can make the assumption that the move 4.c4 is only of purely practical interest.

B) 4.h4

This move is not particularly dangerous for Black either. White determines his kingside pawn-structure a little bit too early.
4...h5!

This is a simple and reliable response after which Black’s prospects are not worse at all. After it he ensures a stable placement of his light-squared bishop on the f5-square. Now, White cannot oust it from f5 with the move g2-g4, or exchange it with his knight with the help of the manoeuvre \( \text{Ng1-f3-h4} \). The trade of the light-squared bishop after \( \text{Bf1-d3} \) would not be troublesome for Black, because his king’s knight will gain access to the wonderful f5-outpost. White has some space advantage in a similar pawn-structure, but this is practically irrelevant, because as we are going to see later, it would be very difficult for him to prevent Black’s standard pawn-break in similar positions with the undermining move c6-c5.

5.c4
This is White’s most popular move. His alternatives are only seldom played and are not dangerous for Black at all.

5.\( \text{\textit{Ne2}} \) e6 6.\( \text{\textit{Nf3}} \) c5=

5.c3 e6 6.\( \text{\textit{Ne2}} \) c5=

5.\( \text{\textit{Ng5}} \) b6 6.\( \text{\textit{Nxd3}} \) c6 7.e4 c6. It would be too risky for Black to accept the pawn-sacrifice 7...\( \text{\textit{Nxa1}} \) (He should better choose here 7...\( \text{\textit{e6}} \)= – see 5.\( \text{\textit{d3}} \).) 8.e6! f6 (8...\( \text{\textit{xc6}} \) b5 10.\( \text{\textit{dx6}} \) \( \text{\textit{fxe6}} \)) 9.\( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) Qb6! 10.\( \text{\textit{Qxf6}} \) Qxb2 11.\( \text{\textit{Qd2}} \) xe4 12.\( \text{\textit{Nd5}} \) c5 13.\( \text{\textit{Qe3}} \) Qc4 14.\( \text{\textit{Qxd6}} \) axb5 15.\( \text{\textit{Qxe4}} \) fxe4 16.\( \text{\textit{Qxe4}} \) b5 17.\( \text{\textit{Qe2}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qb3}} \) f6 18.\( \text{\textit{Nf3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qd4}} \) 19.e5=

5.\( \text{\textit{Bd3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Nxd3}} \) 6.\( \text{\textit{Nxd3}} \) e6=

The exchange of the light-squared bishops is not favourable for White, because his opponent’s king’s knight will be deployed reliably on the wonderful f5-square. It would be also difficult for him to prevent Black’s thematic pawn-break c6-c5. 7.\( \text{\textit{g5}} \) (Following 7.\( \text{\textit{Bf3}} \) c5!? 8.e3 \( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \), or 7.\( \text{\textit{d3}} \) c5!? 8.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) c6=, he has no problems, because the arising positions resemble the closed variation of the French Defence in a very good version for Black, since the trade of the light-squared bishops is very advantageous for him in similar pawn-structures.) 7...\( \text{\textit{Qb6}} \) (About 7...\( \text{\textit{e7}} \) – see Potapov – Alekseev, Moscow 2015, \textbf{game 2}) 8.\( \text{\textit{d2}} \) (8.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) c5!? 9.\( \text{\textit{xc6}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc6}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{xc6}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{a4}} \) \( \text{\textit{a5}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Nc6}} \) \( \text{\textit{Nc6}} \) = N.To – Jo.Horvath, Budapest 2010) 8...c5= 9.e4 b5 10.\( \text{\textit{b1}} \) xd4 and Black’s prospects are not inferior at all, Nepomniachtchi – Motylev, Yaroslavl 2014 (\textbf{game 3}).

5.\( \text{\textit{Ne2}} \) e6 6.\( \text{\textit{Ng3}} \) (6.\( \text{\textit{f4}} \) c5=) 6...\( \text{\textit{g6}} \) ! (6...\( \text{\textit{g6}} \) ? 7.\( \text{\textit{xf5}} \) xf5 8.e4= Tal – Botvinnik, Moscow 1961)
7.\( B_d3 \) \( \text{xd3} \) 8.\( B\text{x}d3 \) c5 9.\( c\text{c}3 \) \( N\text{c}6 \)

Following 7.\( N_d2 \) c5, or 7.\( N\text{c}3 \) c5, Black’s chances are not worse and the arising positions of the closed variation of the
French Defence in a very good version for him, because his light-squared bishop is not on the c8-square, like in the
French Defence, but is placed on a more active position – to g6.

After 7.\( B_e2 \), the simplest reaction for Black would be to advance the thematic move 7...c5!? , for example: 8.c3 (8.dxe5 \( B\text{x}c5 \) 9.\( d\text{c}3 \) \( B\text{c}6\##\) Timman – Vukich, Banja Luka 1974; 8.\( B\text{x}h5 \) \( B\text{x}h5 \) 9.\( B\text{x}h5 \) g6 10.\( f\text{f}3 \) \( B\text{x}h4\##\) Hecht – Hort, Kecskemet 1964) 8...\( c\text{c}6 \) 9.\( B\text{x}h5 \) cxd4 10.cxd4, Ricardi – Bologan, Buenos Aires 2000, 10...\( B\text{x}h5 \) 11.\( B\text{x}h5 \) g6 12.\( f\text{f}3 \) \( B\text{x}h4\##\)

5...\( e\text{e}6 \)
6. $\text{Nc3}$

It is not preferable for White to opt here for 6. $\text{Bg5}$ $\text{Qb6}$ 7. $\text{dxc4}$ (8. $\text{Bxc4}\?\text{xb1}$ 9. $\text{Rxb1}\text{b4–+}$) 8...$\text{a6!}\?\text{∞}$ and there arise favourable complications for Black. 9. $\text{Nh3}$ $\text{d7}$ 10. $\text{e2}$ $\text{e7}$ 11. $\text{d3}$ $\text{d3}$ (11...$\text{d8!}\?\text{∞}$, with the idea 12. $\text{we3}\text{f6}↑$; 12. $\text{Bxc4}\text{b5}$ 13. $\text{d3}\text{xd3}$ 14. $\text{xd3}\text{xe5=}\text{Kurnosov – Galkin, Kazan 2005}$.

White should better refrain from 6. $\text{Nf3}$, because after for example: 6...$\text{Nc6}$ 7. $\text{c3}$ $\text{d7}$ 8. $\text{Bg5}$ $\text{f6!}↑$ Black’s chances would not be worse in the arising complications.

6...$\text{Nc7}$

This is his simplest way to obtain a reliable and approximately equal position.

7. $\text{Bg5}$

This move seems to be the most active for White, but he does not achieve much with it.

7.$\text{f3}$ $\text{d7}$ 8. $\text{g5}$ (8. $\text{cxd5}\text{cxd5=}\text{f6!}\?\text{∞}$ 9. $\text{f4}\text{g6}↑$)

He sometimes chooses 7. $\text{ge2}$, but then, after 7...$\text{dxc4!}?$, there arises a very complicated position in which Black’s prospects are not inferior. 8. $\text{g3}\text{b5!}\?\text{∞}$ (He can also choose the calmer line: 8...$\text{g6}$ 9. $\text{g5}\text{b6=}\text{Adams – Karpov, Tilburg 1996}$; 9. $\text{xc4}\text{f5!?}$ 10. $\text{g5}\text{e7}$ 11. $\text{xf5}\text{xf5}$ 12. $\text{d2}\text{d7}$ 13. $\text{d1}\text{xe5}$ 14. $\text{xg5}\text{e7}$ 15. $\text{a3}\text{0–0–0=}\text{Chernobay – Gunina, Moscow 2014}$.) 9.$\text{a4}\text{b4}$ 10. $\text{c4}\text{e4}$ 11. $\text{xe4}\text{f5}$ 12. $\text{e3}\text{d5}$ 13. $\text{g3}\text{g5}$ 14. $\text{fxg3}\text{d7=}\text{Amonatov – Fedoseev, Kocaeli 2014}$.

7. $\text{b6!}$

It is worse for Black to play here 7...$\text{d7}$, in view of 8.$\text{cxd5!}\text{exd5}$ (8...$\text{cxd5?}$ 9. $\text{b5=}–$) 9. $\text{ge2=}\text{Vasiukov – Boehnisch, Dresden 2001}$.

8. $\text{d2}$

Following, 8.$\text{b3}\text{d7=}$, Black does not have serious problems, due to the threat $\text{f7–f6}$. 

[Diagram of chessboard with moves and possible continuations indicated]
8...\(\text{d}7\)

This is his simplest reaction.

Or 8...\(\text{dx}c4!?\) 9.\(\text{xc}4 \text{d}7\) 10.\(\text{ge}2\) (10.\(\text{f}3\) \(f6\), or 10...\(\text{d}5\)) 10...0-0-0\(\text{f}\) E.Hansen – Laznichka, Dubai 2014.

9.\(\text{f}3\)

After 9.\(\text{ge}2\), it would be good for Black to continue with 9...\(\text{dx}c4!?\) 10.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{g}6\) 11.\(\text{xc}4\) 0-0-0 S.Novikov – Ushenina, St Petersburg 2006.

9...\(\text{f}6\)!?

He can also try here 9...\(\text{dx}c4!?\) 10.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{d}5\) 11.0-0 \(f6\) 12.\(\text{ex}f6\) \(\text{gxf6}\) 10...\(\text{g}6\) 11.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{ex}d5\) cxd5 14.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}7!\)= Dave – Burmakin, Sitges 2014.

10.\(\text{ex}f6\)

10.\(\text{e}3\) 0-0-0!?\(\text{f}\)

10...\(\text{gx}f6\)=

In this complicated position Black has no serious problems. In the game Gelashvili – Asrian, Batumi 2002, there followed 11.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{g}8\) (11...0-0-0!?\(\text{f}\)) 12.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{a}5\) (12...0-0-0!?\(\text{f}\)) 13.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{b}6\) 14.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{dx}b6\) (14...\(\text{ax}b6\)!?) 15.\(\text{e}4\)?! (It is better for White to play here 15.\(\text{c}1\)) 15...\(\text{x}d2\) 16.\(\text{ex}d2\) \(\text{a}5\)? (16...\(\text{a}4\)!?)

C) 4.\(\text{bd}2\) \(\text{e}6\) 5.\(\text{b}3\)

White’s idea in this variation is to prevent the enemy pawn-advance \(c6\)-\(c5\) and thus to avoid the transposition to the line:

4.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 5.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{c}5\).
5...c5!

Following 5...e7, or 5...d7, the game transposes, but with somewhat reduced possibilities for White (due to the early transfer of his knight to the b3-square.), to a variation, which we have already analysed in details – 4...f3 e6 5...e2 (but without c6-e5).

This way of playing for White is no doubt of a great practical interest for him, but Black’s immediate move 5...c5, forces White, as it seems to me, to reconsider the purposefulness of this treatment of the entire variation with 3.e5. Black solves his opening problems, after an accurate play, but the position remains sufficiently appealing for the White players, therefore, this variation will always attract new adherents.

6.dxc5 ²xe5
7. $\text{Nx}c5$

He has often tried in practice, and not without success, the move 7.$\text{b}5$?!?, but after 7... $\text{c}6$ 8.$\text{a}4$?! (8.$\text{e}2$, Rublevsky – Lintchevski, Olginka 2011, 8...$\text{b}6$ 9.$\text{bd}4$ $\text{ge}7$ 10.$\text{g}5$ $\text{c}7$ 11.$\text{xe}7$ $\text{xe}7$ 12.$\text{xf}5+$ $\text{xf}5$=)

8... $\text{b}6$!, Black should ignore the enemy bishop and transpose to pawn-structures similar to the main line (It would be worse for him to choose 8...$\text{f}8$ 9.$\text{a}5$! $\text{a}6$ 10.$\text{a}4$ $\text{c}7$ 11.$\text{e}2$ $\text{xe}5$ 12.$\text{bd}4$ $\text{c}8$?! 13.0-0 $\text{c}5$ 14.$\text{e}3$ $\text{d}6$ 15.$\text{b}4$ $\text{xd}4$ 16.$\text{xd}4$ $\text{ge}7$ 17.$\text{xf}5$ $\text{xf}5$ 18.$\text{c}5$ $\text{c}7$ 19.$\text{c}4$ $\text{xc}4$ 20.$\text{g}4$± Perunovic – Dreev, Erevan 2014; 12... $\text{ge}7$ 13.0-0 $\text{d}6$ 14.$\text{e}1$ $\text{e}5$ 15.$\text{xf}5$ $\text{xf}5$ 16.$\text{f}4$†) 9.$\text{xc}5$ $\text{xc}5$ 10.$\text{c}3$ $\text{b}6$ 11.$\text{e}3$ (11.$\text{f}3$ $\text{g}4$ 12.$\text{d}4$ $\text{xf}3$ 13.$\text{xb}6$ $\text{axb}6$ 14.$\text{gxf}3$ $\text{d}8$ 15.$\text{g}1$ $\text{g}6$ 16.$\text{g}5+$ $\text{c}7$ 17.0-0-0 $\text{b}6$ 18.$\text{e}3$=, draw, Solak – Zontakh, Palic 2014) 11...$\text{c}7$ 12.$\text{e}2$ $\text{ge}7$ 13.$\text{f}4$ $\text{a}6$= and Black has no problems at all (13...0-0 14.0-0 $\text{a}5$∞ Antipov – I.Kovalenko, Riga 2014).
Here, thanks to the pawn-break 5...c5, the pawn-structure has been changed in favour of Black and he has no problems with his development and space. He has paid for that by presenting his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but this is not such great positional concession after all...

I have played this position with Black many times against very strong players and have not had any serious problems in the opening at all.

9.\text{\textit{b}e}3

Following 9.\textit{a}4+, Black can solve his difficulties with 9...\textit{d}7! (9...\textit{c}6?! 10.\textit{e}3±) 10.\textit{b}5 \textit{c}7 (10...\textit{c}8!?∞) 11.\textit{e}2 (11.\textit{f}3, Vachier Lagrave – Mchedlishvili, Germany 2010, 11...\textit{a}6 12.0-0 \textit{c}8=) 11...\textit{a}6, Naroditsky – N.Adams, Orlando 2011, 12.0-0 \textit{c}8=.

White can try here 9.\textit{f}3, a natural developing move, but it would not be so effective, since he must worry about the protection of his e5-pawn.
It would be premature for Black to opt here for 9...\( \texttt{c} \texttt{e}\texttt{c} \texttt{7} \), due to 10.\( \texttt{a} \texttt{a} \texttt{4} \) (10.\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{b} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) – see. 9...\( \texttt{d} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \); 10.\( \texttt{c} \texttt{e} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{7} \) =)
10...\( \texttt{b} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) (10...\( \texttt{e} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) 11.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{7} \) 12.\( \texttt{b} \texttt{b} \texttt{5} \) \( \texttt{a} \texttt{6} \) 13.\( \texttt{b} \texttt{b} \texttt{6} \) \( \texttt{g} \texttt{4} \) 14.\( \texttt{c} \texttt{c} \texttt{5} \) \( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{7} \) 15.\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{x} \texttt{e} \texttt{5} \) 16.\( \texttt{h} \texttt{h} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{h} \texttt{h} \texttt{5} \) 17.\( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{e} \texttt{6} \) 18.\( \texttt{g} \texttt{g} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{g} \texttt{6} \) 19.\( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{5} \) =; 10...\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{7} \) 11.\( \texttt{b} \texttt{b} \texttt{5} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{8} \) 12.\( \texttt{g} \texttt{g} \texttt{5} \) \( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{5} \) \( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{5} \) 11.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{a} \texttt{5} \) 12.\( \texttt{x} \texttt{a} \texttt{x} \texttt{a} \texttt{5} \) 13.\( \texttt{b} \texttt{b} \texttt{5} \) \( \texttt{a} \texttt{6} \) 14.\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{4} \) = and White will maintain long-lasting initiative thanks to his bishop-pair, Rublevsky – Dreev, Sochi 2004.

9...\( \texttt{c} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \)!? 10.\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{4} \) (10.\( \texttt{a} \texttt{a} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{b} \texttt{b} \texttt{6} \) =; Black should not be afraid of 10.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{a} \texttt{5} \) 11.\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{g} \texttt{e} \texttt{7} \) 12.\( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{x} \texttt{d} \texttt{4} \) 13.\( \texttt{x} \texttt{d} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) =; or 12...\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{4} \) =? Dembo – Ruck, Budva 2009.) 10...\( \texttt{g} \texttt{g} \texttt{7} \) 11.\( \texttt{b} \texttt{b} \texttt{5} \) \( \texttt{x} \texttt{e} \texttt{5} \) 12.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \). This is Black’s only move.
13.\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{a} \texttt{7} \) \( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{7} \) 14.\( \texttt{b} \texttt{b} \texttt{5} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) ! (14...\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{5} \) ?! Medvegy – Bernei, Hungary 2000, 15.\( \texttt{x} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) \( \texttt{b} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) 16.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{2} \) \( \texttt{e} \texttt{5} \) 17.0-0 0-0 18.\( \texttt{a} \texttt{a} \texttt{4} \) = White’s passed a4-pawn provides him with an edge.) 15.\( \texttt{x} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) \( \texttt{b} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) 16.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{2} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{4} \) ! 17.\( \texttt{x} \texttt{c} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{d} \texttt{c} \texttt{4} \) =

Black can develop his knight in another way too – 9...\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{7} \), so that he can place on the c6-square his other knight (having in mind the manoeuvre \( \texttt{g} \texttt{g} \texttt{8} \) – \( \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \)). 10.\( \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{d} \texttt{e} \texttt{7} \) 11.\( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{4} \) (11.\( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) =; 11.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{7} \) 12.\( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{e} \texttt{6} \) 13.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{2} \) 0-0 14.0-0 \( \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) =) 11...\( \texttt{g} \texttt{g} \texttt{6} \) 12.\( \texttt{h} \texttt{h} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{h} \texttt{5} \) 13.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{2} \) (13.\( \texttt{b} \texttt{b} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{a} \texttt{6} \) =) 13...\( \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) 14.\( \texttt{a} \texttt{a} \texttt{4} \) 0-0= Motylev – Bareev, Moscow 2010.

9...\( \texttt{c} \texttt{7} \) 10.\( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{4} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \) 11.\( \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{3} \) \( \texttt{c} \texttt{g} \texttt{e} \texttt{7} \) 12.\( \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{2} \) 0-0 13.0-0
Until now, the play has been of a positional type. White can hardly obtain a real advantage if Black plays accurately.

13...\textit{Be4}!? 14.\textit{Nd2}


14...\textit{g6} 15.g4

White cannot create problems for his opponent with the move 15.\textit{b3}, in view of 15...\textit{a5} !=. (It would not be so precise for Black to react with 15...\textit{Rfd8} 16.\textit{Bf3} \textit{a5} 17.\textit{We2} \textit{ec6} 18.\textit{Rfd1} \textit{c4} 19.\textit{f2=} Rublevsky – Laznicka, Valjevo 2011.) 16.\textit{xa5}, draw, Rublevsky – Dreev, Warsaw 2012.

15...f6!?

After this important undermining move, White’s pawn-avalanche on the kingside becomes harmless for Black. Or 15...\textit{Rfd8}?! 16.\textit{b3} b6 17.\textit{We1}† Iordachescu – Dreev, Mulhouse 2011.

16.\textit{exf6} \textit{xf6} 17.\textit{b3} \textit{af8} 18.\textit{We1} h6

Black can also try here the interesting alternative 18...\textit{c8}!!?, with the idea to transfer the knight to a more promising position – \textit{c8-d6}.

19.\textit{Wg3} \textit{c2} 20.\textit{We2} \textit{Wg6}∞ (with the idea \textit{e7-f5}) and Black has good prospects in the arising complications.
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.Nf3

4...e6

Black should better refrain from 4...Qb6? 5.Be2 e6 6.0-0±

4...h6?! 5.Nh4 Bd7 (5...h7 6.e6±) 6.c4 e6 7.Qf3±

4...c5? 5.dxc5 e6 6.d4 g6 7.b5 Nbd7 8.b4±

It would be more or less a suicide for Black to opt for 4...f6?, since he should not open files in the centre voluntarily, lagging horribly in development. 5.d3± xd3 6.Qxd3 e6 7.0-0 d7 8.exf6 xf6 9.b3 b8 10.c4 d6 11.cxd5 exd5 (11...exd5 12.e3+–) 12.Qe1+ e7 13.g5 f7 14.Qxe7 xe7 15.g5 f6 16.Qe6 Qf7 17.Qe3±

He has also tried in practice the move 4...g4. White can react against this rather strange attempt in a different fashion and this would be a matter of style. I would rather counter it with the “modestly” looking variation 5.Qd2 e6 6.Qh5 Qh5 7.Qe2 Qd7 8.0-0±

Black should not determine so early the placement of his knight with the move 4...d7, since he will have to play sooner or later e7-e6 anyway. First of all this move is not logical and it also enables White to try an additional possibility, which would be favourable for him – 5.Qh4!? Qe4 (5...e6 6.Qd3±) 6.e6!? (6.Qd2!? e6 7.Qxe4 dxe4 8.Qg4 a5 9.c3 c5 10.dxc5 Qxc5 11.Qxe4 Qxe5 12.Qxe5 Qe5 13.b5+ Qc6 14.Qf3±) 6...fxe6 7.Qc3 Qf6 8.f3 Qg6 9.Qxg6 hxg6 10.f4±

5.Qe2

White completes calmly his development with the idea that his far-advanced e5-pawn will impede the harmonious development of his opponent’s kingside.
White does not force the issue yet, but is ready to react against his opponent’s plans, which should be directed to the completion of his development on the kingside.

5...\(\text{Qe7}\)

With this developing move Black conceals his plans for a while.

His most popular alternatives are 5...\(\text{Qd7} 6.0-0\) – see Chapters 6-7 and 5...c5 6.\(\text{Qe3}\) – see Chapters 8-13.

5...\(\text{Qg6}\) 6.0-0 \(\text{Qh6}\) (6...\(\text{Qe7}\) 7.\(\text{Qbd2}\) – see variation B; 6...\(\text{Qd7}\) 7.\(\text{Qbd2}\) – see Chapter 6, variation A) 7.\(\text{Qbd2}\) \(\text{Qe7}\) (7...\(\text{Qf5}\) 8.\(\text{Qb3}\) – see variation B; 7...\(\text{Qd7}\) 8.\(\text{Qb3}\) – see Chapter 6, variation A) 8.\(\text{Qb3}\) 0-0 (8...\(\text{Qf5}\) 9.\(\text{Qh4}\) 10.\(\text{Qxh4}\) \(\text{Qxh4}\) 11.\(\text{Qf4}\)±) 9.\(\text{Qxh4}\)!! (9.a4!? a5 10.\(\text{Qd2}\) b6 11.\(\text{Qc1}\) \(\text{Qa6}\) 12.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{Qb4}\) 13.cx\(\text{d5}\) Ushenina – Schuurman, Dresden 2008) 9...\(\text{gxh6}\) 10.\(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Qg7}\) 11.a4! (11.\(\text{Qf6}\)?! \(\text{Qd7}\) 12.c3 c5= Erenburg – Galkin, Port Erin 2005) 11...\(\text{Qd7}\) 12.a5± White not only acquires additional space, but deprives his opponent of the important b6-square. 12...c5 13.\(\text{c4}\) dxc4 14.\(\text{Qxc4}\) cxd4 15.\(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qc7}\) 16.\(\text{Qe2}\)±

It seems rather suspicious, but not senseless for him, to try the seldom played move – 5...\(\text{b4}\) 6.\(\text{c3}\)!? (6.\(\text{Qbd2}\)!! \(\text{Qd7}\) 7.0-0 \(\text{Qa5}\) 8.\(\text{Qc4}\) \(\text{Qe7}\) 9.\(\text{Qb3}\) \(\text{Qc7}\) 10.\(\text{Qh4}\)±) 6...\(\text{Qa5}\) 7.\(\text{Qb3}\) \(\text{Qb6}\) (7...\(\text{Qb6}\) 8.\(\text{Qa3}\) (8.\(\text{Qh4}\)!?) 8...\(\text{Qc7}\) 9.\(\text{Qbd2}\) h6 10.0-0 \(\text{Qe7}\) 11.\(\text{c4}\)!? a6 12.b4 \(\text{Qb6}\) 13.c5 \(\text{Qa7}\) 14.\(\text{Qh4}\) Eljanov – Ponomarev, St Petersburg 2013) 8.a4 a5 9.\(\text{Qh4}\)±

Following 5...\(\text{b6}\)? 6.0-0 \(\text{Qd7}\) (6...c5?! 7.\(\text{c4}\)! dxc4 8.\(\text{a3}\)– Kavalek – Burnet, Gold Coast 1996) White can choose the plan with 7.b3±, after which Black’s early queen-sortie would turn out to be just a loss of time.

After 5...\(\text{e7}?!\), Black deprives his own king’s knight of the e7-square, with which he reduces considerably his possibilities and presents his opponent with a much greater choice. For example now, White has sufficient time to follow the plan with b2-b3 and c2-c4, for example: 6.0-0 (Or 6.c4?! dxc4 7.\(\text{xc4}\)± and Black’s dark-squared bishop thwarts the development of his king’s knight.) 6...\(\text{h6}\) (6...\(\text{d7}\) 7.\(\text{b3}\)!±; following 6...h5, White has enough time to play 7.b3!?±, with the idea c2-c4) 7.b3!? (In some other variations the move 7.\(\text{xh6}\)! would have led to rather unclear consequences, while now it is quite appropriate, for example: 7...\(\text{g6}\) 8.d3 \(\text{g5}\) 9.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{g5}\) 10.\(\text{xe5}\) hxe5 11.\(\text{c3}\) 0-0 12.f4±) 7...0-0 8.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{g6}\) 9.\(\text{xe6}\) gxe6 10.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 11.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{g7}\) 12.\(\text{d3}\) a6 13.\(\text{e2}\)± Grischuk – Galkin, Moscow 2011.

5...h6 6.0-0
6...c5? 7.c4 dxc4 8.a3
About 6...d7 7.bd2 e7 – see Chapter 6, 6...h6.
6...g5 7.bd2 e7 (7...d7 8.b3 – see Chapter 6, 6...h6) 8.b3 d7 9.e1 – see Chapter 7, variation B.
6...e7 7.bd2

7...d7 8.b3 – see Chapter 7.
7...g5 8.b3 d7 9.e1 – see Chapter 7, variation B.
7...g6 8.b3 f5 (8...d7 9.d2 – see Chapter 7, variation A) 9.d2 d7 10.c1 – see Chapter 7, variation A.
7...h7 8.b3 f5 (8...d7 9.d2 – see Chapter 7, variation C; 8...g6 9.d2 d7 10.c1 – see Chapter 7, variation C1) 9.d2 e7 (9...d7 10.c1 – see Chapter 7, variation C2) 10.g4! h4 11.xh4 xh4 12.f4 d7 13.f5 e7
14.a3!? (14.d3 0-0-0 15.g3 b8 16.a3= Oparin – Kovalenko, Riga 2014) 14...0-0-0 15.d3 a5 d8e8 16.c4±

6.0-0

White would not achieve much with 6.bd2, in view of 6...c5! 7.dxc5 dxc6 8.b3 g4∞ or 8.d7!?∞

It is promising for White to try here 6.c3!??, but the move, we analyse as the main line, seems to me to be stronger.

We will deal with: A) 6...c8 and B) 6...g6.

6...d7 7.bd2 – see Chapters 6-7.
6...c5 7.a3, or 7.c4 – see Chapter 5.
6...h6 7.bd2 – see. 5...h6.

It would be rather dubious for Black to try the rather extravagant move 6...g4?! 7.bd2 d5f5 8.h3 h5 9.c3!? (9.b3 xf3 10.xf3 g6 11.a4± Bologan – Jobava, Poikovsky 2010) 9.d7 10.b3 b8 11.d3±

Following 6...g6, Black’s light-squared bishop may have some problems, for example: 7.e3 (7.c4!? e7 8.c3↑, with the idea 8...0-0 9.e1! dxc4 10.g4 d3 11.xd3 cxd3 12.xd3 c5 13.d5 xe5 14.e4±) 7.d7 (7...e7?! 8.e1 f8 9.g4 g6 10.f4 f5 11.h3± De Vreugt – Guerra, Lisbon 2000) 8.h3±, with the idea 8...e7 9.g4 e4 10.fd2±

A) 6...c8

This plan is a bit slow; nevertheless, it is quite logical. Black frees the e7-square for his bishop, while his knight on c8 will be headed for the b6-square.

Still, one of the possible reactions for White is to create tension in the centre with the help of the moves b2-b3 and c2-c4, as well as the plan with the advance of his a-pawn, which would make Black’s idea very unattractive.
7.b3

Black lags in development, so he should better refrain from 7...c5?! , since he is not well prepared for the opening of the position. 8.c4 \( \text{\textbullet} \) b6 9.\( \text{\textbullet} \) g5 \( \text{\textbullet} \) d7 10.a4±

Black would come under a very unpleasant positional bind following 7...e7 8.c4 0-0 9.\( \text{\textbullet} \) c3 a5 (He would have to face even greater problems after 9...\( \text{\textbullet} \) d7 10.\( \text{\textbullet} \) d3 \( \text{\textbullet} \)xd3 11.\( \text{\textbullet} \)xd3 f5?! 12.\( \text{\textbullet} \) e2 \( \text{\textbullet} \) f7 13.h3± Oparin – Burmakin, Sochi 2012.) 10.\( \text{\textbullet} \) e3 \( \text{\textbullet} \) d7 11.\( \text{\textbullet} \) d2 \( \text{\textbullet} \) g6 12.h3± Brkic – Dizdarevic, Solin 2007.

Black’s attempt to play actively on the queenside with the move 7...b5 may turn out to be a serious loss of time for him. 8.\( \text{\textbullet} \) e1 (White should not be in a hurry to trade pieces, which would be possible after 8.\( \text{\textbullet} \) g5 \( \text{\textbullet} \) e7 9.\( \text{\textbullet} \) xe7 \( \text{\textbullet} \) xe7, because, as we know, the exchanges are in favour of the defending side, as a rule. 10.\( \text{\textbullet} \) bd2 0-0 11.c4 bxc4 12.bxc4± Romero Holmes – Lobron, Manila 1992) 8...\( \text{\textbullet} \) e7 9.g4 \( \text{\textbullet} \) g6 10.f4 f5 11.\( \text{\textbullet} \) g2 (11.exf6?! \( \text{\textbullet} \) xf6 12.g5 \( \text{\textbullet} \) e7 13.\( \text{\textbullet} \) h5 \( \text{\textbullet} \) d6 14.\( \text{\textbullet} \) xg6+ \( \text{\textbullet} \) f7 15.\( \text{\textbullet} \) e2±) 11...0-0 12.\( \text{\textbullet} \) e3±

Black has an interesting possibility, at first sight, to try to prevent his opponent from acquiring extra space with the line: 7...a5 8.c4 a4, but in general, that is rather dubious. 9.cxd5 exd5 10.bxa4! \( \text{\textbullet} \) b6 11.\( \text{\textbullet} \) c3 (11.\( \text{\textbullet} \) d3!? White ousts the enemy bishop on f5 from its active placement. 11...\( \text{\textbullet} \) xd3 12.\( \text{\textbullet} \) xd3 \( \text{\textbullet} \) e7 13.\( \text{\textbullet} \) c3 \( \text{\textbullet} \) axa4 14.\( \text{\textbullet} \) e2, transferring the knight closer to the Black’s king. 14...0-0 15.\( \text{\textbullet} \) f4±) 11...\( \text{\textbullet} \) b4, Gelashvili – Kacheishvili, Tbilisi 2000, 12.\( \text{\textbullet} \) g5±

8.c4±

White has occupied additional space and although there will be no decisive events in the nearest future, his position is obviously preferable.

8...\( \text{\textbullet} \) e7 (Black cannot solve his problems with 8...dxc4 9.bxc4 c5 10.\( \text{\textbullet} \) g5 \( \text{\textbullet} \) e7 11.\( \text{\textbullet} \) xe7 \( \text{\textbullet} \) xe7 12.d5± Q.Liu – Zhou Weiqi, Ningbo 2011.) 9.\( \text{\textbullet} \) c3 0-0 10.\( \text{\textbullet} \) d2 \( \text{\textbullet} \) a6 11.\( \text{\textbullet} \) d1 \( \text{\textbullet} \) c7 12.h3 h6 13.\( \text{\textbullet} \) d3!? White deprives his opponent of his only active piece – the light-squared bishop. (13.\( \text{\textbullet} \) b2!? with the idea \( \text{\textbullet} \) e2-d3 and \( \text{\textbullet} \) a1-c1). 13...\( \text{\textbullet} \) xd3 14.\( \text{\textbullet} \) xd3± with the idea 14...c5 15.a4±

In general, the plan with an early transfer of the knight to the c8-square should be considered as very passive for Black. White obtains effortlessly a slight, but stable advantage and he can try to realise it in different ways.
The difference between this variation and the much more often played 6...h6, followed by 7...\textit{f}5-h7, is that Black loses less time for the transfer of his knight from e7 to f5 and hopes to utilise somehow this tempo.

7.\textit{bd}2

About 7.c3 – see Brkic – Dreev, Jerusalem 2015 (game 4).

7...\textit{f}5

About 7...h6 – see 5...h6.

7...\textit{d}7 8.\textit{b}3 – see Chapter 6, variation A.

7...e5 8.dxc5 \textit{ee}6 9.\textit{b}3 \textit{d}7 10.c4 dxc4 11.\textit{xc}4

8.Qb3

About 8.g4 – see Shirov – Dreev, Loo 213 (game 5).

8...Qd7

It would be premature for Black to opt for 8...Qe7?! 9.g4 h4 10.Qh4 Qxh4 11.f4±
9.\textit{d2}

This is the most unpleasant plan for Black.

White improves the placement of his pieces in anticipation of Black’s move \textit{f8-e7} and White plans to counter that with \textit{g2-g4}. In this line, after the possible exchange on \textit{h4}, Black will manage to capture on \textit{h4} with his bishop (\textit{f5-h4} \textit{f3xh4 e7xh4}) and not with his queen, which is in fact very important for White. Naturally, Black can refrain from \textit{f8-e7}, but this move is so important for the development of his kingside that he can hardly continue the game without it.

White’s other plans are not so dangerous for Black if he reacts properly against them.

White has a move which is more or less with the same ideas, but is not so effective – 9.c3, since Black can counter that with the useful waiting move 9...\textit{a6}! – he is not in a hurry to play \textit{f8-e7} and prepares the pawn-advance \textit{c6-c5} at an opportune moment. (White’s hopes would be realised following 9...\textit{e7} 10.g4?! \textit{h4} 11.\textit{xf4} \textit{xf4} 12.f4 f5 13.exf6!? \textit{xf6} 14.d3; 13...\textit{xf6} 14.d2 h5 15.g5 \textit{f5} 16.d3 \textit{g4+} 17.\textit{h1 e4} 18.d3) 10.d4 (White’s alternatives are not dangerous for Black either: 10.d3 \textit{c5!}, or 10.g4 \textit{h4} 11.\textit{xf4} \textit{xf4} 12.f4 h5!? 13.g5 \textit{e7} 14.d3 \textit{f6∞}) 10...\textit{e7} 11.g4 \textit{h4} 12.d3 \textit{xf4} 13.d3 \textit{g3} \textit{xg3} 14.hxg3 \textit{f6}! Black undermines his opponent’s important central e5-pawn, which emphasises White’s space advantage. (It is also interesting for Black to opt here for 14.d3 \textit{e4} 15.f4 a5 16.a4 \textit{c5} 17.a5, Dominguez Perez – Dreev, Loo 2014, 17...\textit{a7∞}). 15.f4 \textit{xf6} 16.dxe5 \textit{b6∞}

Black can react in an analogous way after 9.a4 – 9...\textit{a6}! (About 9...\textit{e8} – see Grischuk – Jobava, Tbilisi 2015, game 6; It would be weaker for him to opt for 9...\textit{e7} 10.g4 \textit{h6} 11.h3 Grischuk – Dreev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013, or 10...\textit{h4} 11.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6} 12.d4 f5 13.exf6 \textit{xf6} 14.d3, with the idea 14...0-0-0 15.e4; 13...\textit{xf6} 14.g4! Gharamian – Pantsulaia, Aix-les-Bains 2011; it would not be so accurate for him to play 12...\textit{f6}, because of White’s principled reply 13.f5) 10.a5 c5 11.c3 (11.dxc5 \textit{xc5} 12.c3 \textit{d7}) 11...\textit{e8}! Black makes a useful move and does not determine yet the placement of his bishop on \textit{f8}. (White is better after the preliminary exchange 11...\textit{xe4} 12.\textit{xd4} \textit{e8} 13.\textit{d2} \textit{b8} 14.\textit{e1} 15.c6 16.\textit{xc5} 16.\textit{d3} \textit{xc5} 17.\textit{xc5} \textit{b4} 18.\textit{d4} \textit{xf7} 19.\textit{e4} \textit{f7} 20.\textit{g4}! Berkess – Norowitz, Reykjavik 2014; 18...\textit{xf7} 19.\textit{d3}!; it is also good for White to try here 18.\textit{bc5}?!), with the idea to obtain the two-bishop advantage, for example: 18...\textit{xc5} 19.\textit{xc5} \textit{xf7} 20.b4 0-0 21.e1 12.d4 \textit{cxd4} 13.\textit{b3} \textit{d4} 14.\textit{d4} \textit{e7} 15.e1 0-0 16.\textit{f1} \textit{b8} = Vachier Lagrave – Wang Hao, Beijing 2013.
Black cannot solve his problems if he tries to postpone the development of his dark-squared bishop.

After 9...a6, White can try the useful waiting move 10.\textit{Rc1} (or 10.a3!??) and Black will have to play sooner or later \textit{Bf8-e7}, after which White seizes the initiative with g2-g4, for example: 10...\textit{Be7} 11.g4 (It is also possible for him to choose immediately 11.c4!? dxc4 12.\textit{a5} \textit{wc7} 13.\textit{xc4} 0-0 14.\textit{g4} \textit{h6} 15.\textit{h3±} Najer – Lastin, Dagomys 2008.) 11...\textit{h6} (11...\textit{h4} 12.\textit{exh4} \textit{xh4} 13.\textit{f4} \textit{e4} 14.\textit{e3}, with the idea \textit{bd2±}) 12.\textit{h3} 0-0 13.\textit{c4±} (White does not need to play the move 13.\textit{e3}, because it will provide Black with additional possibilities after 13...\textit{h8}, being ready to follow with the undermining move f7-f6, Wang Hao – Asrian, Taiyuan 2007.).

Following 9...a5, White can reply with the standard move 10.a4, ending up with a slight, but stable edge after for example: 10...h6 11.\textit{e1} b6 12.\textit{c1} \textit{e7} 13.\textit{c4} 0-0 14.\textit{cx}d5 \textit{cx}d5 15.\textit{h3} \textit{b8} 16.\textit{b5} \textit{a7} 17.\textit{e2±} Volokitin – Goryachkina, Yerevan 2014.

Black fails to solve his problems with 9...h6 10.\textit{c1} \textit{e7} 11.c4 dxc4 12.\textit{a5} \textit{c8} (12...\textit{b8} 13.g4 \textit{h4} 14.\textit{xh4} \textit{xh4} 15.\textit{xc4} \textit{e7} 16.f4 \textit{b6} 17.\textit{a5} \textit{e4} 18.\textit{f3±}; 15.\textit{b4}!? \textit{e7} 16.\textit{xe7} \textit{xe7} 17.\textit{xc4} 0-0 18.\textit{f4} \textit{e4} 19.\textit{d6±}) Gabrielian – Yuffa, Samara 2014) 13.g4! This is an important inclusion of this move. (White should better avoid 13.\textit{xc4}, due to 13...\textit{b6} and Black’s knight would control the important d5-square, with the idea to occupy it later, Bologan – Riazantsev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.) 13...\textit{h4} 14.\textit{xc4} \textit{xc4} 15.\textit{xc4}. Now, the vulnerability of the d6-square hurts Black. 15...\textit{e7} 16.\textit{a5}! White prevents the important manoeuvre of Black’s knight – \textit{d7-b6-d5}. 16...0-0 (16...\textit{b6} 17.\textit{d2±}) 17.\textit{f4} \textit{e4} 18.\textit{f3±}

White can react in an analogous fashion following 9...\textit{c8} 10.\textit{c1}!? (He can also include the moves 10.\textit{a5}!? b6 11.\textit{d2±}, aiming at provoking some weaknesses on the enemy queenside.)
10...\textit{Be7} 11.\textit{Ba5}!? (11.g4!!? \textit{h4} 12.\textit{Bxh4} \textit{Bxh4} 13.\textit{f4} \textit{Be4} 14.\textit{ce3}, with the idea \textit{bd2}±; 11...\textit{h6} 12.h3 0-0 13.\textit{d3} – 13.\textit{e3}!?± – 13...\textit{h8} 14.\textit{We2} \textit{g8} 15.\textit{g2}± Rublevsky – Asrian, Dagomys 2008) 11...b6 12.\textit{d2}. White weakens the enemy queenside with this bishop-maneuver and deprives Black’s knight from the b6-square. Now, White can begin active actions on the queenside with c2-c4. 12...0-0 13.\textit{Be3}!\textit{²} 13...\textit{Kh8} 14.\textit{Qe2} \textit{Ng8} 15.\textit{Kg2}² Rublevsky – Hovhannisyan, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

The vulnerability of the light squares on Black’s queenside becomes an important factor following 10...\textit{h6} 11.\textit{Ba5}!? \textit{b6} 12.\textit{d2} \textit{Be7} 13.c4 0-0, Cerbulenco – Iovcov, Chisinau 2015, 14.g4 \textit{h4} 15.\textit{Bxh4} \textit{Bxh4} 16.\textit{cxd5} \textit{cxd5} 17.\textit{b4} \textit{Be8} 18.\textit{b5}±

10...\textit{h5} 11.h3 \textit{xf3} 12.\textit{xf3} \textit{c5} 13.c3 (It also seems good for White to try here the more energetic line: 13.c4!? \textit{dxc4} 14.\textit{fxe4} b5 15.\textit{a5} \textit{b6} 16.\textit{xc5} \textit{xc5} 17.\textit{dxc5} \textit{xd1} 18.\textit{xd1} \textit{d5} 19.\textit{xd5} \textit{exd5} 20.\textit{xd5}↑ Sjugirov – Jobava, Moscow 2012.) 13...\textit{wb6} 14.\textit{g4} (14.c4?!±) 14...\textit{c4} 15.\textit{a1} \textit{xb2} 16.\textit{xf5} \textit{exf5} 17.\textit{c2} \textit{g6} 18.\textit{f3} \textit{b6} 19.\textit{g4}± Najer – Rodshtein, Netanya 2009.

9...h5. We have already analysed a similar situation with a white rook on c1 and with a black rook on c8, in which we have recommended the manoeuvre \textit{d2-a5}, weakening Black’s kingside. Here, a similar idea is also very promising, but since the c1-square is free for the time being, White can try the transfer of the knight via the route \textit{b3-c1-d3-f4} and then to squeeze the enemy queenside with the help of the move b2-b4. Therefore, he can choose more prudent strategy – 10.c3, aimed at the fortification of his position in the centre and the improvement of the placement of his pieces. 10...\textit{Be7} 11.\textit{c1} c5 12.\textit{d3} \textit{b6} 13.\textit{wa4} \textit{c6} 14.\textit{xc6} bxc6 15.b4! (He would achieve much less with 15.\textit{f4} \textit{b8} 16.b3± Mamedov – Solak, Konya 2010.) 15...\textit{xb4} 16.\textit{cxb4}±

10.g4!
10...\&h4

Black would fail to solve his problems with 10...\&h6 11.e1 (It is also possible for White to try the prophylactic line: 11.h3!? \&g8 12.\&g2 h5 13.\&h6 \&frolyanov – Dreev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013; 12.c4!?; 12.e1!? h5 13.gxh5 \&e4, Volokitin – Mamedyarov, Dubai 2014, 14.d3\&e, exchanging Black’s most active piece – his light-squared bishop.) 11...c5

12.dxc5! (The alternatives for White would not be effective, for example: 12.\&xc5 \&xc5 13.dxc5 \&xc5 14.b5+ \&f8 15.h3 \&g8 16.d3 \&b6 17.b4+ \&e7 18.c5 \&xc5 19.\&xc5 \&g8\& Karjakin – Mamedyarov, Beijing 2013, or 12.c3 c4 13.c1 f5 14.exf6 \&xf6 15.b3 cxb3 16.\&xb3 \&f7 17.\&b7 0-0 18.\&b3 \&d6 19.\&a6, Grischuk – Mamedyarov, Beijing 2013, 19...\&b6\& 12...0-0 (If Black delays his castling, White would have even more promising possibilities, for example: 12...\&xe5 13.\&xh6 gxh6 14.f4\&+, with the idea f4-f5, or 12...\&xc5 13.b5+ \&f8 14.\&g2!?\&; 13.d7
14..h4!±) 13.f4 \( \text{Nxe} \) 14.\( \text{N} \) e3 \( \text{Nc} \) 15.\( \text{N} \) d3±, with the idea h2-h3 and \( \text{N} \) e2-f3.

11.\( \text{N} \) xh4 \( \text{N} \) xh4 12.f4

12...f5

White can counter Black’s active move 12...h5 with the effective counter-strike 13.f5! (but not 13.gxh5? \( \text{B} \) f5) 13...h7 14.\( \text{N} \) d3±

White can react in an analogous fashion after 12..h6 13.f5 \( \text{B} \) h7 14.\( \text{N} \) d3 0-0 15.\( \text{W} \) f3 (15.f6!?†) 15..e5 16.\( \text{B} \) xe5 \( \text{B} \) xc5 17.\( \text{B} \) c5 f6, Zhigalko – Jobava, Martuni 2011, 18.\( \text{B} \) f4!±, with the idea 18..\( \text{B} \) a5 19.exf6 \( \text{B} \)xf6 20.\( \text{B} \) d6+–

After 12...\( \text{B} \) e4, White can reply with the simple move 13.\( \text{B} \) f3, exchanging his opponent’s important light-squared bishop. (He can also try to oust Black’s bishop from its active position in the centre by playing 13.\( \text{N} \) e3!?, with the idea 13..f5 14.\( \text{B} \) d2±) 13...\( \text{B} \) f3 14.\( \text{B} \) xf3 \( \text{B} \) e7 (14...0-0 15.g5+- and Black’s bishop is trapped) 15.f5 0-0 16.\( \text{B} \) h1!?±, with the idea 16..f6 17.\( \text{B} \) g2?? fx e5 18.dxe5 \( \text{B} \) xe5 19.\( \text{B} \) d4±

Following 12...f6?! White is not forced to transfer to the main line with the move 13.exf6, since he has an important inclusion of the moves 13.f5! \( \text{B} \) f7
14.g5!? hxg5. This is the only move with which Black can still hold this position. (14...exf5? Rublevsky – Jobava, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005, 15.gxf6 gxf6 16.e6! hxg6 17.h5+ Ke7 18.b4+–; 14...fxe5? 15.fxe6 hxg6 16.g4! h6 17.Qxf7! Qxf7 18.Bf3+ Ke8, Groszpeter – Vajda, Zalakaros 2002, 19.h3+, or 16...Ke6 17.Qxe6 Qxe6 18.Qh5+–; 14...fxg5?! 15.Qg4 exf5 16.Qxf5±, or 15...Qe7 16.b4+–) 15.Qxe6 Qxe6 16.g5! This is White’s most precise move, activating his knight with tempo. 16...Qc7 17.Qxe6 Qxe6 18.Qg5 Qe4 19.Qg4 Qe7 20.Qf5!±
Black’s problems would be even greater after 13...\textit{\&}xf6 14.g5 \textit{\&}e7 15.\textit{\&}g4, for example: 15...\textit{\&}f8 (15...\textit{\&}f5 16.\textit{\&}e1 0-0 17.\textit{\&}xe6! \textit{\&}xe6 18.\textit{\&}xe6+ \textit{\&}h8 19.\textit{\&}g4 \textit{\&}b6 20.\textit{\&}a5! (20.\textit{\&}f1?! \textit{\&}c4 21.\textit{\&}c1, Caruana – Fernandez Romero, Caleta 2011, 21...g6\textsubscript{∞}) 20...g6 21.f5 gx\textit{\&}f5 22.\textit{\&}xf5 \textit{\&}c7 23.g6 \textit{\&}g8 24.\textit{\&}h1\textsubscript{±}) 16.\textit{\&}e2 \textit{\&}e4 (16...\textit{\&}d7, Huschenbeth – Turov, Haarlem 2011, 17.f5! exf5 18.\textit{\&}c5+–) 17.f5\textsubscript{±}

15...0-0-0!? With this move Black is trying to steer the game into troubled waters.

White obtains effortlessly a slight edge after 15...\textit{\&}b6 16.\textit{\&}d3 \textit{\&}h5 (16...\textit{\&}f5, Bartel – Solak, Kavala 2011, 17.\textit{\&}xb7 \textit{\&}xb7 18.\textit{\&}h5+ \textit{\&}f7 19.\textit{\&}h4\textsubscript{±}) 17.\textit{\&}xb7 \textit{\&}c8 18.\textit{\&}e2 \textit{\&}xe2 19.\textit{\&}xe2 \textit{\&}xb7 20.\textit{\&}h5 \textit{\&}f7 21.\textit{\&}xh4 \textit{\&}d6 22.\textit{\&}b4 (22.\textit{\&}h3!? \textit{\&}f5 23.\textit{\&}xf5 exf5 24.\textit{\&}b3\textsubscript{±} Wei Yi – Gunina, Wijk aan Zee 2015) 22...\textit{\&}e4 23.c4 a5 24.\textit{\&}a3 \textit{\&}f5 25.\textit{\&}ac1 (White should not try to open prematurely the c-file with 25.cxd5 exd5 26.\textit{\&}ac1 \textit{\&}d7\textsubscript{∞} Khalifman – Sjugirov, Legnica 2013.) 25...\textit{\&}d7 26.\textit{\&}c2\textsubscript{±}

16.c4! He should play very energetically here.

If White tries a chase after his opponent’s misplaced bishop on h4, then Black may even seize the initiative. 16.\textit{\&}xc6 bxc6 17.\textit{\&}a6+ \textit{\&}b8 18.\textit{\&}g4 \textit{\&}f6! 19.\textit{\&}xh4 \textit{\&}e4 20.\textit{\&}a5 \textit{\&}de8\textsubscript{∞}, with the idea h7-h6.

16...\textit{\&}f5 17.\textit{\&}c1 \textit{\&}b6! Black plans to sacrifice a pawn with the idea to begin active actions on the d-file.

18.e5 \textit{\&}c4
19. \( \text{Nxc4} \)

White fails to exploit the vulnerability of the d6-square after 19. \( \text{Nxc4} \) dxc4 20. \( \text{Nxc4} \) \( \text{Bh3!} \) 21. \( \text{Rf3} \) (Following 21. \( \text{Nd6+} \), Black has the resource 21... \( \text{Rxd6} \) 22. \( \text{cxd6} \) \( \text{Rd8=} \) 21... \( \text{Bg4} \)

22. \( \text{Qa4} \) (White's knight does not have any good prospects after 22. \( \text{Nxe5} \) \( \text{Qf5} \) 23. \( \text{Qa4} \) \( \text{Exd4} \) 24. \( \text{Qxa7} \) \( \text{Rxd2} \) 25. \( \text{a8}+ \) \( \text{c7} \) 26. \( \text{a5}+, \) Sjugirov – Dreev, Rodos 2013, 26... \( \text{c8=} \) ) 22... \( \text{Bxf3} \) 23. \( \text{Qxa7} \) \( \text{Qh5} \) 24. \( \text{h3!} \) \( \text{d1}+ \) 25. \( \text{Qa8+} \) \( \text{d7} \) 26. \( \text{xb7+} \) \( \text{e8} \) 27. \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{f8} \) 28. \( \text{g6} \) \( \text{f5} \) 29. \( \text{ha5} \) \( \text{h5} \) 30. \( \text{Exd8} \) \( \text{f2}! \) 31. \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{e4=} \), with a perpetual check.

19... \( \text{dxc4} \) 20. \( \text{Bxc4} \) \( \text{e4} \)

White develops very powerful initiative following 20... \( \text{h6} \) 21. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{b8} \) 22. \( \text{f3!} \), for example: 22... \( \text{d3} \) 23. \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{d5} \)
24. \textbf{B}xd5 exd5 25. \textbf{\textit{Q}}xc6 \textbf{B}xf1 26. g6! a8 27. gxf7 bxc6 28. \textbf{\textit{Q}}xf1 f8 29. e2 \textbf{xf}7 30. b3

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21. \textbf{g}4!

White will have greater problems to break his opponent’s position after 21. a4 a6 (21... b8?! 22. f5! e5 23. \textbf{\textit{Q}}c1+, with the idea 23... \textbf{R}xd4 24. \textbf{R}xd4 exd4 25. \textbf{R}f4+). 21... \textbf{d}3 22. a4 \textbf{xf}1 23. \textbf{xf}1 h5 24. f3+ – White has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange due to his excellent attacking chances against the enemy king, as well as Black’s misplaced bishop on h4.
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 e7 6.0-0 c5

It is only now that Black comes back to his initial plan, connected with the pawn-advance c6-c5, avoiding in the process the variations, which we will analyse after the move-order 5...c5 6.e3.

Here, it seems less promising for White to choose 7.e3, since this enables Black to continue with 7...e5 8.dxc5 d7 9.c4 dxc4 – see Chapter 8. White cannot obtain an advantage following 7.dxc5 e6 8.e3 d7 9.c4 dxc4.

His best reaction would be to push immediately c2-c4, trying to open files in the centre exploiting his lead in development and space advantage B) 7.c4!?, or to play at first A) 7.a3 and to advance c4 only later.

A) 7.a3

This relatively seldom played move is tried sometimes at the very top level. The peak of its popularity has long passed, but it seems to me that White’s resources have not been exhausted yet.
7...\texttt{\textbf{d}}c6

Black cannot solve his problems with 7...a6 8.dxc5 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d7 9.c4 \texttt{\textbf{c}}xc5 10.ae3 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d7 11.d4 \texttt{\textbf{g}}6 (White develops powerful initiative after 11...\texttt{\textbf{d}}xe5 12.cxd5 \texttt{\textbf{g}}gxe5 13.a4+ \texttt{\textbf{d}}d7 14.b5 \texttt{\textbf{g}}7c6 15.ad1+-, or 12.exd5 13.xe1+) 12.f4± (12.xb3!?±).

White can react in an analogous fashion following 7...b6c6 – 8.dxc5!, with the idea 8.g6 9.e3 \texttt{\textbf{e}}7 (9.gxe5? 10.xxe5 \texttt{\textbf{d}}xe5 11.g4 \texttt{\textbf{g}}6 12.f4--) 10.d4 \texttt{\textbf{g}}xe5 11.g4 (11.xf5±) 11...g6 12.f4 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d7 13.f5±

8.c4

This is a principled decision.

Black should not be afraid of 8.g5 \texttt{\textbf{e}}7 9.xe7 \texttt{\textbf{xe}}7=, since he solves easily the problems with the development of his kingside, Gashimov – Ivanchuk, Warsaw 2010.
8...cxd4

About 8...dxc4 9.dxc5 — see variation B1.

16.axb3 ëxc6 17.bxc3 ëc7 18.e3 0-0 19.b4±) 12.ëxd4 ëxd4 13.ëxd4 ëc6 14.ëd1± with the idea 14...ëb4 15.exd5 exd5 16.e6 fxe6 17.ëxe4 dxe4 18.ëc3 ëe5 19.ëb3 0-0 20.ëad1±

9...dxc4 10.dxc5 ëxc5 11.c3 (It may be even stronger for White to choose here 11.ëxc4†, with the idea 11...0-0?! 12.ëxd8 ëxd8 13.ëd2 ‡c2 14.ëc7†) 11...a6 (After the trade of the bishops 11...ëxe3 12.fxe3, the vulnerability of the dark squares in Black’s camp is just horrible.) 12.ëxc5 axb5 13.ëd6 ëd7 14.ëe1 – Now, White has an excellent possibility to exploit the misplacement of the enemy king, stranded in the centre. He can also try to undermine Black’s pawn-chain on the queenside with the help of the move a2-a4 and this provides White with more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

9.ëb5!

This is a very energetic move, emphasizing the weak points in Black’s position.

Following 9.cxd5, Black can prevent radically White’s knight-sortie with 9...ëxa3! and suddenly, it is White who should worry about equalising, for example: 10.ëxd4 (10.dxc6 ëxc6 11.ëb3 d3†, or 11.bxa3 d3†) 10...ëxd4 11.ëxd4 0-0 12.bxa3 ëc6 13.ëc5 ëxd5 14.ëxd5 exd5= Inarkiev – Riazantsev, Olginka 2011.

9...a6

Black would have difficulties after 9...ëe4 10.ëg5 ëd7 11.ëf4† Kamsky – Kacheishvili, Philadelphia 2011.

9...dxc4
10. \texttt{Bg5}! (10. \texttt{fxd4} \texttt{d3=} 10... \texttt{b6} 11. \texttt{bxd4} \texttt{g6} 12. \texttt{xc4} \texttt{c5}. This risky move may turn out to very good?! (12... \texttt{xd4} 13. \texttt{xd4} \texttt{c5} 14. \texttt{b5}+ \texttt{c6} 15. \texttt{xc6+} bxc6 16. \texttt{b3}±) 13. \texttt{xe6} fxe6 14. \texttt{xe6}, It is more than obvious that Black’s king is terribly misplaced. 14... \texttt{e7} 15. \texttt{a4} \texttt{bc6} 16. \texttt{g4} \texttt{d8}. White was threatening \texttt{d7}+. 17. \texttt{fd1} (17. \texttt{ad1} \texttt{d3} 18. \texttt{f6} \texttt{xf1} 19. \texttt{f7}+ \texttt{xf7} 20. \texttt{g7}+ \texttt{e6} 21. \texttt{g4}+ \texttt{f7} 22. \texttt{g7=} ) 17... \texttt{xf2} 18. \texttt{h1} \texttt{=} 

10. \texttt{bxd4} \texttt{xd4} (10... \texttt{d3} 11. \texttt{e3}±; 10... \texttt{e4} 11. \texttt{e3} \texttt{e7} 12. \texttt{xc4} 0-0 13. \texttt{e2} \texttt{xf3} 14. \texttt{xf3}±) 11. \texttt{xd4} \texttt{d3} (11... \texttt{e4} 12. \texttt{xe4} \texttt{c6} 13. \texttt{b5} \texttt{xd1} 14. \texttt{xd1} \texttt{e8} 15. \texttt{b3} a6 16. \texttt{d6}+ \texttt{xd6} 17. \texttt{xd6} \texttt{xe5} 18. \texttt{xe6}±) 12. \texttt{e3} \texttt{e7} 13. \texttt{xd3} \texttt{cxd3} 14. \texttt{f3}!? \texttt{d7} 15. \texttt{fd1}±

10. \texttt{g5}!

White brings with tempo his bishop into the actions, while after 10... \texttt{e7}?, he has the powerful argument 11. \texttt{d6}±

It is also good for him to play here simply 10. \texttt{bxd4}!? \texttt{e4}
Black should not be afraid of 11...f4 e7 12.cxd5 exd5= 13.d3?! g5! 14.g3 g4 15.xc6 xc6 16.e1 h5† Inarkiev – Riazantsev, Olginka 2011.

He can hold the position, but not without efforts, following 11.g5 xd4 12.xd4 c6 13.e3 g6 14.cxd5 xd5 15.f3 b5! N It is essential for Black to deprive the enemy queen of the a4-square. (It would be rather careless for Black to choose here 15...c5 16.d1 h6, Volokitin – Ponomariov, Kiev 2011, in view of 17.xe6! xe6 18.b3 e7 19.d6 d8 20.f4† f7? 21.a4! Now, Black’s idea 15...b5 becomes quite clear! 21...b5 22.xd8+ xd8 23.c6+ d7 24.d4!+; 20...f7 21.ad1 g8 22.d7 e8 23.b6±) 16.a4 e5 17.d1 h6= 18.xe6?! xe6 19.b3 e7 20.d6 d8 21.f4† f7†

White still has some chances of obtaining an edge after 11.e3!? e7 12.d2†
It would be weaker for White to choose 13.h4, due to 13...e7 14.xe7 xe7 15.d2 bc6 16.4b3 c7 17.xe4 dxe4 18.d6 b6 19.fd1 0-0 20.e5 c7 21.d6 b6 22.c5 c7 23.d6, draw, Svidler – Anand, Moscow 2011.

13...e7 14.cxd5 xd5

15.d2!

White’s prospects are not so clear after 15.c4 0-0 16.e2 d8 17.fd1 xc4 18.xc4 e8 (18...b4!?) 19.b3 d7 20.a3 f8 21.xc6 xc6 22.xd7 xd7 23.d1 c8 24.c1 d7 25.d1 c8 26.c1, draw, Gashimov – Grischuk, Porto Carras 2011.

15...b4

Now, White can counter 15...0-0 with 16.xh6!±

Black would not solve his problems with 15...xd4 16.xd4 c6 17.g4↑

16.d3 0-0 17.a3 e7 18.d1 d8 19.c2 g6 20.e2 g7 21.fd1 xd4 22.xd4 b5 23.d3± White’s space-advantage and his more actively deployed pieces provide him with a long-lasting advantage, Gashimov – Grischuk, Beijing 2011.
B) 7.c4!?  

Now, Black is faced with a difficult choice. He can either complete the development of his queenside with B2) 7...\(\Box bc6\), or can reduce in advance the tension, concerning the d5-square B1) 7...dxc4.

7...\(\Box d7\)!? 8.\(\Box g5\)± – see Chapter 6, 6...c5?! 7.c4  \(\Box e7\) 8.\(\Box g5\).

7...\(\Box xb1\)? 8.\(\Box xb1\) cxd4 9.\(\Box xd4\) dxc4 10.\(\Box a4\)!?  \(\Box bc6\) (10...\(\Box d7\) 11.\(\Box xc4\) a6 12.\(\Box xe6\)! fxe6 13.\(\Box xe6\)++) 11.\(\Box d1\) \(\Box a5\) 12.\(\Box xc4\) \(\Box xd4\) 13.\(\Box xd4\)  \(\Box d8\) 14.\(\Box b4\)!? \(\Box b6\) 15.\(\Box xb6\) \(\Box xd1\)+ 16.\(\Box xd1\) axb6 17.\(\Box a4\)+

7...\(\Box ec6\)!? 8.cxd5 exd5 9.\(\Box c3\) \(\Box e7\) 10.\(\Box e3\)+ Vehi Bach – Bello, San Sebastian 1996.

7.cxd4 8.\(\Box xd4\) \(\Box bc6\) (8...dxc4 9.\(\Box a3\) \(\Box d3\) 10.\(\Box xc4\) \(\Box xc4\) 11.\(\Box xc4\), Tate – Grigoriants, Cappelle la Grande 2012, 11...\(\Box bc6\) 12.\(\Box e3\)!?+, with the idea 12...\(\Box xe5\) 13.\(\Box b5\)+ 14.\(\Box c1\)++) 9.\(\Box xf5\) (9.\(\Box b5\)!? \(\Box xe5\) 10.\(\Box a4\) \(\Box c6\) 11.cxd5 exd5 12.\(\Box f4\)↑) 9...\(\Box xf5\) 10.cxd5 \(\Box xd5\) 11.\(\Box xd5\) exd5 12.\(\Box c3\)± Cao – Lou Yiping, Mashhad 2011.

B1) 7...dxc4
8. \( \text{Na3!} \)

White brings his knight into the actions, without closing the way for his dark-squared bishop (This would have happened after 8. \( \text{Nbd2}. \)) and eventually plans the manoeuvre \( \text{Na3-b5}. \)

White has no good prospects in the variation 8. \( \text{Nc3} \quad \text{Nbc6} \quad 9. \text{dxc5} \quad \text{Nbd5}! \quad 10. \text{Nxc3} \quad \text{Nxc5} \quad 12. \text{Nxf5} \quad \text{exf5} \quad 13. \text{Qc2} \quad (13. \text{Bxc4} \quad \text{Bxf2}\uparrow \quad \text{Shirov – Karpov, Vienna 1996}; 13. \text{f4} \quad 0-0 \quad 14. \text{xc4} \quad \text{We7} \quad 15. \text{We2} \quad \text{d8=}) \quad 13. \text{...d5} \quad 14. \text{f4} \quad 0-0! \quad (14. \text{...e6} \quad 15. \text{a4=} \quad \text{Kosteniuk – Karpov, Moscow 2009}) \quad 15. \text{xf5} \quad \text{xe5}! \quad 16. \text{h1} \quad \text{ae8} \quad 17. \text{Ad1} \quad \text{e6} \quad 18. \text{xe6} \quad \text{exe6} \quad 19. \text{d5} \quad \text{g6=} \)

8... \( \text{Nec6} \)

About 8... \( \text{bc6} \quad 9. \text{xc4} \) – see variation B2a1.

8... \( \text{cxd4}?! \quad 9. \text{xd4} \quad \text{d3} \quad 10. \text{xc4} \quad \text{xc4} \quad 11. \text{xc4} \quad \text{bc6} \quad 12. \text{b5}\pm \)
9.dxc5

This move leads to a multi-piece endgame, in which after the eventual appearance of a white powerful passed pawn on d6 and a bishop-pair, White will have a considerable advantage.

He has another promising alternative – 9.\textit{\texttt{B}}g5!?\,, connected with a pawn-sacrifice.

Black will have to face great difficulties following 9...\textit{\texttt{Q}}d7 10.dxc5 \textit{\texttt{B}}xc5 11.\textit{\texttt{N}}xc4, with the idea 11...h6 12.\textit{\texttt{B}}e3\, Kocian – Splichal, Czech Republic 2006.

It would also be very risky for him to opt for 9...f6 10.exf6 gxf6 11.\textit{\texttt{f}}f4 (11.\textit{\texttt{e}}e3 cxd4 12.\textit{\texttt{B}}xd4 \textit{\texttt{Q}}xd4 13.\textit{\texttt{B}}xd4 \textit{\texttt{x}}xa3 14.bxa3 \textit{\texttt{c}}c6\,=) 11...\textit{\texttt{Q}}xd4 12.\textit{\texttt{Q}}xc4! (12.\textit{\texttt{B}}xd4 cxd4 13.\textit{\texttt{h}}h5+ \textit{\texttt{g}}g6 14.\textit{\texttt{Q}}xc4 \textit{\texttt{c}}c6 15.\textit{\texttt{e}}e1 e5 16.\textit{\texttt{x}}xe5 fxe5 17.\textit{\texttt{Q}}xe5 \textit{\texttt{x}}xe5 18.\textit{\texttt{Q}}xe5+ \textit{\texttt{f}}f7 19.\textit{\texttt{g}}g4 \textit{\texttt{c}}c8 20.\textit{\texttt{x}}xg6+ hgx6 21.\textit{\texttt{e}}e6+ \textit{\texttt{g}}g7 22.\textit{\texttt{d}}d5 \textit{\texttt{h}}h4 23.\textit{\texttt{e}}e5+ \textit{\texttt{g}}g8 24.\textit{\texttt{e}}e6\,=) 12...\textit{\texttt{b}}bc6
13...e1\# White’s dangerous initiative more than compensates the sacrificed pawn.

9...

9...

9...


Black would have to pay a dear price for the postponement of the development of his kingside after 9...a6?! 10.xc4, for example: 10...xc5 11.e3 e7 12.d6+ Bxd6 13.exd6 Qe4 14.Qb3 Qd6 15.Nxd1 Qe4 16.c5 Qd5 17.Qxd5 exd5 18.Qxd5+– Volokitin – Epishin, Bad Wiessee 2001.

10.Qxd8+ Qxd8

10...Qxd8 11.b5 (11.xc4 dxc6 12.d6!? Qxd6 13.exd6 Qd7 14.e3±) 11.a6 12.xc4 Qc6 13.f4 0-0 14.d6 Qxd6 15.exd6±

11.xc4 Qd7

12.a3!? White is well prepared to occupy additional space on the queenside with b2-b4.

He has another promising line here: 12.Qf4 Qe7 13.Qd6±

12.Qe7 13.b4 Qd4

Black’s bishop does not have adequate squares to retreat to, because after 13...b6 14.Qxb6 Qxb6 15.b5 Qa5 16.Qg5,
White can exploit effectively his two-bishop advantage. Black should better not try to capture the enemy e5-pawn 13...d4?!, since after 14.b5 xa1 15.bxc6 b5 (15...bxc6 16.e3 c3 17.c1+−) 16.a4 bxc6 17.a3+ d8 18.d1 d3 19.xd3 cxd3 20.xd3 c7 21.xd7±, with the idea 21...xc6 22.d1±, his bishop would be lost.

14.g5+ f6 15.exf6+ gxf6 16.xd4 xd4 17.ad1 xf2+ (The endgame would be very bad for Black following 17...fxg5 18.xd4 Nunn – Epishin, Germany 2000.) 18.xf2 fxg5 19.d6± – Black will hardly manage to hold on to his extra pawn, therefore, he will have to defend long and hard an inferior endgame.

B2) 7.bc6

Now, White can choose between two lines in his attempts to fight for an advantage in the opening: B2a) 8.a3?! and B2b) 8.dxc5.
It is weaker for him to opt for 8.\textit{c}3 \textit{dxc}4 – see variation \textbf{B1}, 8.\textit{c}3 \textit{bc}6.

\textbf{B2a)} 8.\textit{\textalpha}3!?

This is a solid move and I feel we have to pay serious attention to it. Its plus is that White can react against 8...\textit{dxc}4 in a slightly different fashion as against 8.\textit{dxc}5.

We will analyse in details now the straightforward move \textbf{B2a1)} 8...\textit{dxc}4 as well as the prophylactic try \textbf{B2a2)} 8...\textit{a}6!

The exchange on \textit{d}4 would lead to grave consequences for Black after 8...\textit{x}d\textit{d}4? 9.\textit{x}d\textit{d}4 \textit{c}xd\textit{d}4 10.\textit{b}5 \textit{c}6 11.\textit{c}xd\textit{d}5 12.\textit{\textalpha}xd\textit{d}4+, since it would become obvious that the opening of the central files would be clearly in White’s favour, due to Black’s considerable lag in development.

He cannot solve his problems with 8...\textit{e}4 9.\textit{dxc}5 \textit{f}5 10.\textit{cxd}5 \textit{xd}5 11.\textit{g}5! (White achieves much less after 11.\textit{\textalpha}c2 \textit{a}5!= Bodnarek – Gunina, Nizhny Novgorod 2013.) 11...\textit{e}7 (Here, White would counter 11...\textit{a}5 with the powerful argument 12.\textit{\textalpha}! \textit{xf}3 13.\textit{x}f3 \textit{fd}4 14.\textit{xc}6+ \textit{xc}6 15.\textit{b}3+; 12...\textit{b}4 13.\textit{xf}5 \textit{g}4+ 14.\textit{h}1 \textit{xe}5 15.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6 16.\textit{xd}5! \textit{ex}d5 17.\textit{b}5+ \textit{c}6 18.\textit{xc}6+ \textit{xc}6 19.\textit{ae}1+ \textit{e}7 20.\textit{e}7+ \textit{f}8 21.\textit{f}7! \textit{g}8 22.\textit{f}4+--) 12.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 13.\textit{b}5 \textit{xf}3 14.\textit{xf}3 \textit{xe}5, Ponomariov – Ding Liren, Tromso 2014, 15.\textit{e}4 \textit{xe}5 16.\textit{e}2 0-0 17.\textit{ac}1 \textit{e}7 18.\textit{fe}1! (White should not go for 18.\textit{xf}5 \textit{ex}f5 19.\textit{fe}1 \textit{ac}8 20.\textit{f}4 \textit{xe}1 21.\textit{xe}1 \textit{a}6=) 18.\textit{fc}8 19.\textit{xc}8+ \textit{xc}8 20.\textit{xa}7 \textit{d}8 21.\textit{xf}5 \textit{ex}f5 22.\textit{f}1 \textit{ed}5 23.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}5 24.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}6 25.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 26.g3 \textit{f}8 27.\textit{e}7 \textit{c}1+ 28.\textit{f}2 \textit{c}2+ 29.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}5 30.b4! Now, White’s pawn-majority on queenside has become a very important factor.

\textbf{B2a1)} 8...\textit{dxc}4 9.\textit{\textalpha}c4 \textit{d}5
10...\(\text{Bg5}\)

It would be weaker for White to opt for 10...\(\text{Be3}\) \(\text{Nxe3!}\) 11...\(\text{Nxe3}\) (11...\(\text{fxe3}\) \(\text{Be7}\) 12...\(\text{dxc5}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 13...\(\text{d6+}\) \(\text{xd6}\) 14...\(\text{exd6}\) 0-0=) 11...\(\text{c4}\) 12...\(\text{a4}\), Green – R.Smith, Auckland 2000, 12...\(\text{wa5}\) 13...\(\text{xa5}\) \(\text{xa5}\) 14...\(\text{dxc5}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 15...\(\text{ac1}\) \(\text{xe3}\) 16...\(\text{fxe3}\) 0-0=.

10...\(\text{Qd7}\)

It would be rather difficult to suggest to Black anything better.

His king has not castled yet, so the opening of the central files is obviously unacceptable to him – 10...\(\text{f6}\)?!, for example: 11...\(\text{fxf6}\) (It is also very good for White to continue here with 11...\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{e4}\), Gross – Schandorff, Germany 2006, 12...\(\text{b3}\)?; 11...\(\text{xe3}\) 12...\(\text{fxe3}\) \(\text{f5}\); 12...\(\text{xe3}\) \(\text{e4}\) 13...\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 14...\(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{gf6}\) 15...\(\text{h4}\)=) 11...\(\text{xf6}\) 12...\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xe3}\) 13...\(\text{xe3}\) \(\text{e4}\) 14...\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{f7}\) 15...\(\text{d5}\)? \(\text{exd5}\) 16...\(\text{h4}\)=

It would be rather careless for Black to choose 10...\(\text{c7}\)?! in view of 11...\(\text{e1}\) and his queen would come under an X-ray with White’s rook. 11...\(\text{a6}\) (11...\(\text{h6}\) 12...\(\text{e3}\)=) 12...\(\text{dxc5}\)! \(\text{xc5}\) 13...\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{g6}\) 14...\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 15...\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xe3}\) 16...\(\text{xd7+}\) \(\text{xd7}\) 17...\(\text{xe3}\) \(\text{xe3}\) 18...\(\text{xc6+}\) \(\text{xc6}\) 19...\(\text{fxe3}\)

11...\(\text{e1}\)!
11...h6

11...g6 12.e3!? h6 13.h4 f4 14.b5 a6 15.xc6 xc6 16.dxc5 d3 17.e1 g5 18.g3 0-0-0 19.xf4 xf4 20.c2 e4 21.e2±

Following 11...g4, White can develop his initiative with 12.e3! (It is also possible for him to play simply 12.dxc5 xe5 13.a4†, or 13.a3?!†, with the idea b2-b4.) 12.xf3 (12.xe3 13.fxe3, with the idea 13...cxd4?! 14.xd4 xe2 15.xe2 xd4 16.exd4 e7 17.xe7 xe7 18.f2--; 17.xe7 18.b5--) 13.xf3 xd4 14.xd5 exd5 15.f4† Olivotto – Wunderlich, ICCF 2007.

12.e3
Black has fortified his position on the queenside and wishes to prevent the development of White’s initiative there. Black cannot harm his opponent with 12...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xe3 13.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xe3 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)e4 (13...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4? 14.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xd4 \(\text{\texttt{cx}}\text{\texttt{d}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{g}}\)g4 \(\text{\texttt{W}}\)d8 17.e6±) 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)b3† 12...\(\text{\texttt{c}}\)xd4 13.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\hline
a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

13...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4 14.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4 (14.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4?! \(\text{\texttt{G}}\) 15.g4 \(\text{\texttt{G}}\) 16.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d6+ \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd6 17.\(\text{\texttt{ex}}\text{\texttt{d}}\) 0-0 18.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f4±) 14...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f4 (14...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e7, Bologan – Erenburg, Istanbul 2003, 15.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e3?! \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e4 16.\(\text{\texttt{f}}\)f3 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xe3 17.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xe3 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd1 18.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)fxd1 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xf3 19.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d8 20.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)g2±) 15.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f3! \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d3 (15...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d3?! 16.\(\text{\texttt{e}}\)e1 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4 17.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e4 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d7 18.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)fxd4 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e7 19.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d6--; 18...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)c8 19.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d4 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4 20.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d6±) 16.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)b3 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xe1 17.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xc1 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e7 18.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xb7 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xb7 19.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)x7 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d8 20.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)c6+ \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f8 21.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xa7±

13...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xe3 14.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xe3 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4! (15.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4?! \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d8? 16.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)b3 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e4 17.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f4 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d5 18.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f1--; 15...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e7 16.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d5 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd5 17.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d6+ \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd6 18.\(\text{\texttt{ex}}\text{\texttt{d}}\) 0-0 19.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd5 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e6 20.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d4 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)ac8=) 15...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4 16.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xd4 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e7 (Following 16...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e4, White has numerous attractive possibilities, but the best for him seems to be 17.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)a5!?, for example: 17...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)b4 18.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)b5+ \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d8 19.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xf7 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xa5 20.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xg7! \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)c6 21.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xc6 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xc6 22.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xc6 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)b6 23.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d6+ \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e8 24.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xe6+ \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f8 25.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e7 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)c8 26.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f2++; 21...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d2 22.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)c2 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e3+ 23.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f1 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xc6 24.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)xc6±) 17.d5 (17.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e3?! \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)g6 18.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)c7 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)b8 19.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)b5+ \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f8 20.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e2 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d8 21.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)d7 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)e8 22.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)b5 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f8 23.\(\text{\texttt{g}}\)3±) 17...0-0 (17...\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)c5+ 18.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)h1 0-0 19.d6 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f6 20.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)fd1±) 18.d6 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)g5 19.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)c3 \(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)ac8 20.\(\text{\texttt{Q}}\)f3± and in view of the powerful protected passed pawn on d6 White’s prospects are clearly preferable.
13.\textit{\texttt{\textsection}a3}!

13.\textit{\texttt{\textsection}d6+?! \texttt{\textsection}xd6 14.exd6 c4 15.b3 0-0 16.bxc4 bxc4 17.\texttt{\textsection}xc4 \texttt{\textsection}xd6=}

13...\textit{\texttt{\textsection}}a6

13...\textit{\texttt{\textsection}}xe3 14.fxe3 a6 15.dxc5

14.dxc5 \texttt{\textsection}e7

14...\texttt{\textsection}e4 15.\texttt{\textsection}c2 \texttt{\textsection}xe3 16.\texttt{\textsection}xe3 \texttt{\textsection}e7 17.a4 – see 14...\texttt{\textsection}e7.

After 14...\texttt{\textsection}d8?, Black’s lag in development on the kingside may lead to his rapid demise. 15.\texttt{\textsection}xb5! \texttt{\textsection}xe3 16.fxe3 axb5 17.\texttt{\textsection}xb5 \texttt{\textsection}d3 18.\texttt{\textsection}xd3 \texttt{\textsection}xd3 19.\texttt{\textsection}a4 \texttt{\textsection}d7 20.\texttt{\textsection}fd1+-

He would hardly facilitate his defence after the exchanges, which may be possible after 14...\texttt{\textsection}xe3 15.\texttt{\textsection}xd7+ \texttt{\textsection}xd7 16.fxe3±

15.\texttt{\textsection}c2 \texttt{\textsection}xe3

15...0-0 16.\texttt{\textsection}cd4±

16.\texttt{\textsection}xe3 \texttt{\textsection}e4
17.a4!

This undermining pawn-brake is played at the right moment and is the most practical decision for White.

It would be weaker for him to continue here with 17.a3 \textit{Qc7 18.b4} (After the careless attempt 18.\textit{Qd3}?! Gopal – Laznicka, Caleta 2012, 18...\textit{0-0-0}! 19.\textit{Qc3} \textit{b8\#}, Black would seize the initiative. White would not achieve much with 18.\textit{Nd2} \textit{h7}! 19.\textit{Qf3} \textit{d8\#}) 18...0-0=

17...\textit{Qb7 18.\textit{Nd2}!}

It would be premature for White to go for exchanging pawn on the queenside with 18.axb5 \textit{axb5} 19.\textit{Qd2} (19.\textit{Qb3}, Motylev – Riazantsev, Poikovsky 2010, 19...0-0! 20.\textit{Qxb5} \textit{Qxb5} 21.\textit{Qxf3} \textit{xf3} 22.\textit{Qxe5} 23.\textit{Qf3} \textit{f3}+ 24.\textit{Qg2} \textit{d2}! 25.\textit{Qf1} \textit{b3} =) 19...\textit{g6} (19...\textit{d8} 20.\textit{Qxe4}!) 20.\textit{Qf3} (20.\textit{b3} \textit{d8} 21.\textit{Qe1} \textit{xe5} 22.\textit{Qa5} \textit{a6}!; 22.\textit{Qc3} \textit{f6} 23.c6 \textit{c7} 24.\textit{a5} \textit{xa5} 25.\textit{xa5} \textit{d3} 26.\textit{Qxe2} \textit{xe2} 27.\textit{Qd3} 28.\textit{cc2} 0-0 29.\textit{Qf2} \textit{b4} 30.\textit{Qxd8} \textit{xd8} 31.\textit{e5} \textit{c8} 32.\textit{xb5} \textit{xb5} 33.\textit{Qc6} \textit{a7} = Bologan – Antoniewski, Germany 2012) 20...\textit{d8} = 21.\textit{xc6}?! \textit{xc6} 22.\textit{f3}?! \textit{c7} 23.\textit{fd1} 0-0\# Cheparinov – Bologan, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

18...\textit{d8}

White will realise his plan easily after 18...\textit{g6} 19.\textit{b3}! \textit{d8} 20.\textit{e1} \textit{xe5} 21.\textit{a5}! \textit{+} – This is the reason why White had not exchanged the a-pawns in the first place. Now, Black does not have access to the a6-square with his queen.

19.axb5 \textit{AXB5}
20.\textit{Nxe4} 21.\textit{Rxd1} \textit{Nxe5} (21...0-0 22.\textit{Nxd6\#}) 22.\textit{c6} \textit{Qc7} 23.\textit{Nc3!} White is transferring his knight to the queenside and there it would help the advance of his passed pawn. (He should better refrain from 23.\textit{Bxb5?!} 0-0\# So – Dziuba, Reykjavik 2013.) 23...0-0 24.\textit{Nxb5} \textit{Qb6} 25.\textit{c7} \textit{Ec8} 26.\textit{Ec2\#} The passed c7-pawn provides White with long-lasting initiative.
B2a2) 8...a6!

Black prevents the penetration of the enemy knight to the b5-square.

9.dxc5

White’s alternatives do not create any real problems for Black.

He obtains effortlessly a good position following 9.\(\text{Be}3\) cxd4 10.\(\text{Bx}d4\) \(\text{c}x\)d4 11.\(\text{Bx}d4\) \(\text{c}c6\) 12.cxd5 \(\text{Bx}d5\) 13.\(\text{Bc}3\) \(\text{xa}3\) 14.bxa3 0-0= Karjakin – Ponomariov, Moscow 2008.

Black should not be afraid of 9.\(\text{Qa}4\) dxc4 10.dxc5 \(\text{Qd}5\) 11.\(\text{Bg}5\) (11.\(\text{Qx}c4\) \(\text{Ba}5=\) 11...\(\text{Qd}7\) 12.\(\text{Qxc}4\) \(\text{Ba}5!\) 13.\(\text{Qd}4\) \(\text{c}c6=\)

9...d4 10.\(\text{Ba}4\) \(\text{Bg}6\)

About 10...d3 11.\(\text{Qd}1\) \(\text{Qg}6\) 12.\(\text{Bf}3\) – see 11...d3.

11.\(\text{Bd}1\)

The complications are favourable for Black after 11.b4 \(\text{Ke}7\) 12.\(\text{Bd}1\) 0-0 13.\(\text{Bb}2\) \(\text{f}4!?\) (It is also possible for him to try here the more aggressive line: 13...d3!? 14.\(\text{Bx}d3\) \(\text{d}x\)d3 15.\(\text{Bb}3\) \(\text{f}4!??\); after 15...a5!? 16.\(\text{Bx}d3\) \(\text{b}8\), Volokitin – Ponomariov, Baile Herculane 2010, 17.\(\text{Bb}5\) axb4 18.\(\text{d}6=\) White will hardly manage to achieve anything meaningful.) 14.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{ce}4\infty\)
11...\texttt{xc}5!

It would be premature for Black to opt for 11...d3 12.\texttt{e}3! (12.b4 \texttt{e}7 13.\texttt{xd}3 \texttt{xd}3 14.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{cxe}5 15.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{xe}5 16.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{c}7 17.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{xe}5 18.\texttt{xd}3 0-0 19.\texttt{c}2 a5= Naiditsch – Leko, Dortmund 2012) 12...\texttt{d}7! (12...\texttt{e}7 13.\texttt{c}2 0-0 14.\texttt{xd}3 \texttt{xd}3 15.\texttt{ce}1 \texttt{cxe}5 16.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{xe}5 17.\texttt{xd}3 \texttt{xd}3 18.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{e}8 19.\texttt{xd}3 \texttt{b}6 20.b4 bxc5 21.\texttt{xc}5\texttt{±} Zhigalko – Bologan, Olginka 2011) 12...\texttt{a}7

Now, for example, White’s pawn is untouchable 12...\texttt{xb}4, in view of 13.g4!±, for example: 13...\texttt{c}5 14.\texttt{xb}4+; 13...\texttt{xb}4 14.\texttt{xa}3 15.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{g}4 16.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{xf}3 17.\texttt{xd}8+ \texttt{d}8 18.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{g}5 20.\texttt{d}6+- 14.\texttt{xb}5 axb5 15.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{e}4 16.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{a}5 17.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xd}1 18.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{b}6 19.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{xc}6 20.e3! \texttt{xe}5 21.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{e}7 22.\texttt{a}7 0-0 23.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6 24.a4± White’s passed a-pawn and his two-bishop advantage provide him with a considerable advantage in the endgame.

12.b4

Black has succeeded in completing the development of his kingside, but his set-up obviously lacks harmony.

12...\texttt{a}7

Now, for example, White’s pawn is untouchable 12...\texttt{xb}4, in view of 13.g4!±, for example: 13...\texttt{b}5 (13...\texttt{g}4 14.\texttt{xd}4+; 13...\texttt{xa}3 14.\texttt{xa}3 \texttt{f}4 15.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{g}4 16.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{xf}3 17.\texttt{xd}8+ \texttt{d}8 18.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{d}4 19.\texttt{g}5 20.\texttt{d}6+-) 14.cxb5 axb5 15.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{e}4 16.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{a}5 17.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xd}1 18.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{b}6 19.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{xc}6 20.e3! \texttt{xe}5 21.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{e}7 22.\texttt{a}7 0-0 23.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6 24.a4± White’s passed a-pawn and his two-bishop advantage provide him with a considerable advantage in the endgame.

13.c5 0-0 14.\texttt{c}4

It would be rather careless for him to continue here with 14.\texttt{e}3? due to 14...\texttt{e}8+
14...\textit{Be4}

After 14...d3, White can develop his initiative with the help of the move 15...\textit{g5}!, for example: 15...\textit{d5} (Black’s less energetic move 15...\textit{c7} would enable White to achieve an even greater advantage, for example: 16.\textit{xd3 xd3} 17.\textit{xd3} a5 18.a3 axb4 19.axb4 \textit{xc5} 20.\textit{xa8 xa8} 21.\textit{a8+ f8} 22.h4 h5 23.b5 \textit{b4} 24.d4 \textit{d5} 25.e3\textpm, or 17...\textit{gxe5} 18.\textit{fxe5 xe5} 19.\textit{f4 c6} 20.\textit{xc6 xc6} 21.a3\textpm) 16.e3 \textit{e4} 17.\textit{xd3 xb4} 18.\textit{xb4 xb4} 19.\textit{xf5 exf5} 20.h4\textpm h6 21.h5 hxg5 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.\textit{xe5 fe8} 24.d5 \textit{xd5} 25.\textit{xd5 ad8} 26.ad1 \textit{xd5} 27.\textit{xd5 e8} 28.\textit{d7 xe5} 29.\textit{f1 b5} 30.e6 \textit{f8} 31.c7\textpm White can regain his pawn at any moment. In fact, he will have symbolically an extra pawn, since Black has doubled pawns on the g-file. White can also delay this operation and bring his king closer to the focus of the fight. It becomes obvious that he will either win the game, or Black may save the draw, but after a laborious defence.

15.\textit{Be3}

Black’s task is easier after 15.\textit{d6 xf3} 16.\textit{xf3 gxe5} 17.e4\textpm, White has doubtlessly compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but hardly more than that. 17...\textit{h4}! (17...\textit{e7} 18.g3\textpm; 17...f5 18.xc6 xc6 19.b2 \textit{e7} 20.xd4 \textit{ad8} 21.c3 \textit{b8} 22.b5 axb5 23.xb5\textpm Nilsson – Josefsson, ICCF 2009) 18.g3 \textit{h3} 19.g2 (It is more or less the same following 19.d2 \textit{h5} 20.b2 f3\textpm.) 19...\textit{h5} 20.b2 f3\textpm 21.\textit{xf3 xf3} 22.xd4 b5 23.cxb6 \textit{xd4} 24.\textit{xd4 xb6} 25.\textit{d2 f8}=

15...d3 16.\textit{Be1}
16...\textit{Qd5}!\textit{N}

This move requires further practical tests.

Black cannot solve his problems with 16...\textit{Qgxe5} 17.\textit{Qxe5} \textit{Qxe5} 18.\textit{Qxd3}, with the idea 18...\textit{Qxd3} 19.\textit{Qxd3} \textit{Qxd3} 20.\textit{Qb3} \textit{Qf6} 21.\textit{Qxd3} \textit{Qad8} 22.\textit{Qe4} \textit{Qd5} 23.\textit{Qac1} \textit{Qfd8} 24.\textit{Qxd5} exd5 (24...\textit{Qxd5}? 25.c6+--) 25.\textit{Qd4}±

16...\textit{Qd5} 17.\textit{Qd6} \textit{Qgxe5} 18.\textit{Qxe4} \textit{Qxe4} 19.\textit{Qxd3}± White has a clear advantage thanks to his extra space and the pawn-majority on the queenside, supported by his two powerful bishops, Leko – Roiz, Ningbo 2011.

17.\textit{Qxd3} \textit{Qh4} 18.\textit{Qg3} \textit{Qg4} 19.\textit{Qf3} \textit{Qxf3} 20.\textit{Qxf3} \textit{Qxf3} 21.\textit{Qf1} \textit{Qg4} 22.\textit{Qae1} \textit{Qcxe5} (22...\textit{Qad8} 23.\textit{Qc2} \textit{Qe4} 24.\textit{Qb3} \textit{Qcxe5} 25.\textit{Qg5} \textit{Qd7} 26.\textit{Qc1}+ and White’s initiative compensates his sacrificed pawn.) 23.\textit{Qxe5} \textit{Qxe5} 24.\textit{Qf4} \textit{Qh5} 25.\textit{Qe4} \textit{Qad8} 26.\textit{Qc2} \textit{Qf5} 27.\textit{Qxb7} \textit{Qd3} 28.\textit{Qxf1} \textit{Qxf4} 29.\textit{Qxf4}+ White’s pawn-majority on the queenside, his two powerful bishops and his more actively placed pieces compensate with an interest the sacrificed exchange.

B2b) 8.dxc5
8...d4!?

Black is not in a hurry to regain his sacrificed pawn and restricts the mobility of the enemy pieces, threatening in the process to trap White’s bishop with the move d4-d3.

Black could have also chosen the standard approach 8...dxc4!? 9.\texttt{xc4} (9.\texttt{a4}?! \texttt{d5} 10.\texttt{d4} \texttt{d3} 11.\texttt{x}d3 cxd3 12.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{d7} 13.\texttt{d2} a5 14.\texttt{e4} \texttt{e7} 15.\texttt{e1} \texttt{c8} 16.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{xe6} 17.\texttt{x}c6+ \texttt{xc6}$^+$ Frolyanov – Leko, Loo 2014; 9.\texttt{a3} \texttt{d5} 10.\texttt{g5} \texttt{d7} 11.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xe5} =; 10.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xe5} 11.\texttt{g5} \texttt{c7} 12.a3, Koivisto – Maki Uuro, Salokangas 1996, 12...0-0=; 11...\texttt{d7}?!).

9...\texttt{g4} 10.\texttt{bd2} \texttt{g6} (10...\texttt{xe5}? 11.\texttt{a4}+ \texttt{c6} 12.b4+–) 11.\texttt{b3} \texttt{xf3} (11...\texttt{c7}? 12.\texttt{e4} \texttt{xf3} 13.\texttt{d6}+–) 12.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{c7} 13.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e7} (13...\texttt{gxe5}? 14.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 15.\texttt{f4} \texttt{xc5} 16.\texttt{e1} 0-0 17.\texttt{e2}+–) 14.b5 0-0 15.\texttt{xc6}$^+$

9...Qxd1 10.Rxd1

It would be rather slow for Black to choose here 10...Bg4?! in view of 11.Nc3!. White is planning to create immediate threats with the help of the move Nc3-b5. 11...d8. Black wishes to facilitate his defence by trading pieces. (White realises his plans following 11...xf3 12.gxf3, for example: 12...xe5? 13.b5+–; 12...g6 13.b5+–; 12...f5 13.b5! c8 14.b4±, with the idea 14...xb4 15.xa7 xc5 16.b5+ c6 17.b1+–) 12.Rxd8+ Rxd8 13.Qg5 Qxe5 14.f4 (White needs to be on the alert; otherwise, he may lose his advantage altogether after 14.f4? xc4 15.xf7+ c8 16.xh8 c6=, or 14...f1?! Qd5 15.Qxd5 exd5 16.f4 h6 17.Qxe5 hXg5 18.c1± Svidler – Yermolinsky, Madrid 1998.) 14...7g6 15.Qxe5 Qxe5 16.e1 h6 17.Qxe6+ Qxe6 18.Qxe6±. 

10...Qg6 11.Qe3 a6! (11...Qxe5 12.Qxe5 Qxe5 13.b5+ Qc6, Tochtermann – Davydov, Germany 1995, 14.f3!? White restricts the mobility of the enemy light-squared bishop. 14...e7 15.b3±) 12.e2 (12.Qc3!? Qgxe5 13.Qxe5 Qxe5 14.Qe2 e7 15.Qd2!?±, with the idea 15...d8 16.ad1± – White cuts off Black’s king from the queenside. The arising complicated endgame is in favour of White thanks to his pawn-majority on the queenside.) 12...Qxe5 13.Qxe5 Qa3 e7 15.f4 Qc6 16.d6 Qe4 17.Qc4 d8 18.b3 Qd5 19.Qab1±.
9. \textit{b3!}

He would not achieve much with 9.\textit{a4 g6 (9...d3?!)} 10.\textit{d1} (10.\textit{b4 a5 11.b5, Hamdouchi – Karpov, Cap d’Agde 1998, 11...\textit{cxe5}}) 10...\textit{d3} 11.\textit{c3 e7} 12.\textit{xe3 xed3} 13.\textit{b3 gxe5} 14.\textit{xex5 xe5} 15.f4 \textit{xc4} 16.\textit{xed3 a5} 17.d2 xe3 18.\textit{xb7} 0-0 19.b3 a4 20.\textit{xe7 d5=}

It is less principled for White to choose 9.\textit{d3 xed3} 10.\textit{xe3 g6} – Black regains his pawn and the prospects for both sides are approximately equal in this complicated position, Bologan – Razuvaev, Reggio Emilia 1996.

9...\textit{c7}

Black defends his pawn on b7 and his queen attacks the enemy e5-pawn in the process.

Following 9...\textit{d7}, the queen would have come under an X-ray with the enemy rook 10.\textit{d1} and would be misplaced and less active 10...\textit{g6} 11.\textit{c3}
11...f6 12.exf6 gxf6 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{d5}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{f7}} \) (13...0-0-0 14.\( \text{\textcopyright{xd4}} \) exd5 15.\( \text{\textcopyright{xc6}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xc6}} \) 16.cxd5 \( \text{\textcopyright{xc5}} \) 17.\( \text{\textcopyright{e3}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{b4}} \) 18.\( \text{\textcopyright{a7}} \)±) 14.g4 \( \text{\textcopyright{xd4}} \) 15.\( \text{\textcopyright{g5+}} \) fxg5 16.\( \text{\textcopyright{xd4}} \)± Vachier Lagrave – Ding Liren, Wijk aan Zee 2015.

White will make use of the pin on the e-file after 11...\( \text{\textcopyright{gxe5}} \) 12.\( \text{\textcopyright{xe5}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xe5}} \), Timman – Brunello, Wijk aan Zee 2014, 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{b5}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xc5}} \) 14.\( \text{\textcopyright{g3}} \) f6 15.\( \text{\textcopyright{xe3}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{c6}} \) 16.b4 \( \text{\textcopyright{xb4}} \) 17.\( \text{\textcopyright{d4}} \)±

11...\( \text{\textcopyright{c5}} \) 12.\( \text{\textcopyright{b6}} \) b6 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{a4}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{cxe5}} \) (13...\( \text{\textcopyright{b4}} \)±? 14.\( \text{\textcopyright{xd7}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xd7}} \) 15.a3 \( \text{\textcopyright{c6}} \) 16.b4 \( \text{\textcopyright{c2}} \) 17.\( \text{\textcopyright{xc5+}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{bxcc}} \) 18.\( \text{\textcopyright{d2}} \)± B.Bok – E.Ronka, Pune 2014) 14.\( \text{\textcopyright{xd7}} \)\( \oplus \) 14...\( \text{\textcopyright{xd7}} \) 15.\( \text{\textcopyright{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xd4}} \) 16.\( \text{\textcopyright{d4}} \) e5 17.\( \text{\textcopyright{xd2}} \) (17.\( \text{\textcopyright{d5}} \)??) 17...\( \text{\textcopyright{f4}} \) 18.\( \text{\textcopyright{f1}} \)± White’s two-bishop advantage provides him with better prospects in this complicated endgame, Nijboer – L’Ami, Boxtel 2011.

Black’s attempt to complete as quickly as possible the development of his kingside with the move 9...\( \text{\textcopyright{g6}} \) would lead to material losses for him. 10.\( \text{\textcopyright{xb7}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{c8}} \) (The careless move 10...\( \text{\textcopyright{rcc8}} \)?! will be countered by White with 11.\( \text{\textcopyright{d1}} \)!, with the idea \( \text{\textcopyright{d1-a4}} \)). 11...\( \text{\textcopyright{c7}} \) 12.\( \text{\textcopyright{a6}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{c8}} \), Karjakin – Grischuk, Beijing 2011, 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{xc8+}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xc8}} \) 14.\( \text{\textcopyright{b4}} \)\( \oplus \) 11.\( \text{\textcopyright{xc8+}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xc8}} \) 12.a3\( \oplus \), with the idea b2-b4. (It is also attractive for White to try here 12.\( \text{\textcopyright{d2}} \)\( \oplus \), planning \( \text{\textcopyright{d2-b3}} \). 12...\( \text{\textcopyright{xc5}} \) 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{b3}} \) 14.\( \text{\textcopyright{d1}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{b6}} \) 15.\( \text{\textcopyright{e1}} \) 0-0 16.\( \text{\textcopyright{d2}} \)± Shiriov – Yevseev, Jurmala 2013.) 12...a5 13.b4 axb4 14.axb4 \( \text{\textcopyright{xb4}} \) 15.\( \text{\textcopyright{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xc5}} \) 16.\( \text{\textcopyright{xf5}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xf5}} \) 17.\( \text{\textcopyright{a5}} \) 0-0 18.\( \text{\textcopyright{d1}} \)± Kosteniuk – Bulmaga, Astana 2013 (Or 18.g3\( \oplus \), with the idea 18...\( \text{\textcopyright{xe5}} \) 19.\( \text{\textcopyright{a3}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{bd3}} \) 20.\( \text{\textcopyright{d1}} \)±).

10.\( \text{\textcopyright{a3}} \)

It would not be so effective for White to continue here with 10.\( \text{\textcopyright{d1}} \), because Black’s queen has already abandoned the d-file. 10...\( \text{\textcopyright{d8}} \) 11.\( \text{\textcopyright{a3}} \) a6 12.\( \text{\textcopyright{e2}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xc2}} \) 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{xc2}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{g6}} \) 14.a3 \( \text{\textcopyright{xc5}} \) 15.b4 \( \text{\textcopyright{a7}} \) 16.\( \text{\textcopyright{b2}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xe5}} \) 17.\( \text{\textcopyright{xe5}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{exe5}} \) 18.\( \text{\textcopyright{f3}} \) 0-0 19.\( \text{\textcopyright{e5}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{b8}} \) 20.g3 \( \text{\textcopyright{xc7}} \) 21.\( \text{\textcopyright{xc6}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{xc6}} \) 22.\( \text{\textcopyright{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{d5}} \)± Hovhannisyan – Jakovenko, Legnica 2013.

10...a6 11.\( \text{\textcopyright{a4}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{d8}} \)

It would be too risky for Black to try here 11...0-0-0?! 12.b4 \( \text{\textcopyright{g6}} \) (12...\( \text{\textcopyright{xe5}} \)? 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{xe5}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{exe5}} \) 14.\( \text{\textcopyright{f3}} \), Shomoev – Maletin, Barnaul 2011) 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{g5}} \) f6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.\( \text{\textcopyright{xf6}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{f4}} \) 16.\( \text{\textcopyright{d1}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{g8}} \) 17.\( \text{\textcopyright{g3}} \)±

12.b4 \( \text{\textcopyright{g6}} \) 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{d1}} \)

The move 13.\( \text{\textcopyright{b2}} \)± would require extensive practical tests, for example: 13...\( \text{\textcopyright{f4}} \) (13...d3 14.\( \text{\textcopyright{d1}} \) \( \text{\textcopyright{d7}} \) 15.\( \text{\textcopyright{e1}} \)±
Volokitin – Parligras, Warszawa 2013) 14...\textit{e}1 \textit{g}4 (14...\textit{e}4!?) 15.b5 \textit{a}5 16.\textit{b}3 \textit{xc}5 17.bxc6 bxc6 18.h3 d3 19.hxg4 \textit{xe}2+ 20.\textit{f}1 h5 21.g5 h4 22.\textit{xe}2 h3 23.gxh3 \textit{dx}e2+ 24.\textit{g}2!\textit{d}1 25.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}6 26.\textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 27.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}7 28.a3 \textit{hd}8 29.\textit{fe}1\pm

13...\textit{d}7!

Black will hardly be happy with the results of the line: 13...\textit{e}7 14.b5 axb5 15.\textit{xb}5 \textit{d}7 16.\textit{d}6+ \textit{xd}6 17.\textit{cxd}6 \textit{g}xe5 18.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 19.c5± White’s powerful pawn-tandem c5 and d6 will create numerous problems for his opponent.

14.\textit{c}2!

The pin on the a4-e8 diagonal is very unpleasant for Black and White may try to gobble the enemy d4-pawn.

14...\textit{xc}2 15.\textit{xc}2 d3 16.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}7

Black’s situation would become really critical after 16...\textit{g}xe5 17.\textit{xe}5 \textit{dx}e5 (17...\textit{xe}5 18.\textit{b}7!\pm) 18.\textit{f}4 g6 19.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 20.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}7 21.\textit{c}6 bxc6 22.\textit{xc}6 \textit{d}4 23.\textit{xa}6 \textit{xf}6 24.a3±

17.\textit{b}2 0-0 18.\textit{b}1 \textit{fd}8 (He would not solve his problems with 18...a5 19.a3±, or 19.b5!? \textit{b}4 20.a3 \textit{c}2 21.\textit{c}6 bxc6 22.\textit{xc}6 \textit{dd}8 23.\textit{xc}2 \textit{dx}c2 24.\textit{bc}1\pm) 19.\textit{e}1 \textit{h}4 20.\textit{hx}4 \textit{hx}4 21.\textit{e}4 \textit{e}7 22.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}4 23.\textit{b}2± White has managed to preserve his extra pawn and Black’s compensation for it is evidently insufficient. 23...\textit{g}6 (23...a5, Andreikin – Parligras, Warszawa 2013, 24.\textit{xa}5! \textit{xa}5 25.\textit{b}xa5 \textit{xc}5 26.\textit{f}1 \textit{c}6 27.\textit{d}2\pm) 24.\textit{d}2 (24.g3?!±) 24...\textit{b}6 25.\textit{xa}6 bxc5 26.\textit{b}5 \textit{b}8 27.\textit{b}6 \textit{b}7 (27...\textit{g}5 28.\textit{b}2\pm) 28.\textit{xb}7 \textit{xb}7 29.\textit{b}2 \textit{db}8 30.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 31.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xb}6 32.\textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 33.\textit{b}3± Grischuk – Lupulescu, Warsaw 2013.
Chapter 6

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 $\mathcal{Q}f5$ 4.$\mathcal{Q}f3$ e6 5.$\mathcal{Q}e2$ $\mathcal{Q}d7$ 6.0-0

We will analyse: A) 6...$\mathcal{G}g6$ and B) 6...$\mathcal{Q}e7$.

About 6...f6 7.c4! – see Svidler – Jobava, Tbilisi 2015 (game 7).

The move order 6...a6 7.$\mathcal{Q}bd2$ does not lead to original positions.

About 7...$\mathcal{G}g6$ 8.c4 – see variation A.
7...c5 8.c4  e7 9.dxc5 – see B3c.
7...e7 8.d3  e7 9.d2 – see variation B, 7...a6 8.d3.
7...h6 8.d3  e7 9.d2 – see Chapter 7, 8...a6 9.d2.

After 6...h6, following 7.bd2, most often there arises transposition to variations from Chapter 7.

6...h6 7.bd2  e7 (7...g6 8.d3 – see variation A.) 8.b3 0-0 (8...g6 9.a4 – see variation A) 9.a4 c5 (9...g6 10.a5 – see variation A) 10.c4 (10.xc5!? xxc5 11.dxc5  bxc5, Alekseenko – Pantsulaia, Yerevan 2014, 12.c3!? c8 13.xh6 gxh6 14.d2  g7 15.d4? 10...dxc4 11.xc4  b6 12.e2 cxd4 13.fxd4  g6 14.f3=)
6...e7?! 7.c4= (7.b3?!=) 7...dxc4 8.xc4  b6 9.xb3  g6 10.c3  h6 11.xh6 gxh6 12.d2= It would be a futile loss of time for Black to play 6...b6?, because his queen is better placed on the d8-square. On this square his queen may come under attack (after c2-c4) and he has also lost his control over the h4-square. 7.b3!? (7.h4?!=; 7.c4?!  e7 8.c3=) 7...c5 8.c4?
6...e7?! Black loses his control over the h4-square and White exploits this immediately. 7.h4  e7 (7...g6 8.xg6 hxg6 9.d2  e7 10.f3=) 8.xf5 (8.g4?!  g6 9.f4  e4 10.c3=) 8...xf5 9.c3= – He has obtained the two-bishop advantage.
6...h5?! This move creates a dangerous weakening of Black’s kingside and that might be very precarious for him in the future. 7.b3=, with the idea c2-c4.
7...\(\text{h6}\) 8.e4±;
7...\(\text{e7}\) 8.e4 \(\text{g6}\) 9.a3 \(\text{e7}\) 10.c2± Now, in view of the weakening h7-h5, Black has problems with his castling kingside 10...0-0, and White will follow this with 11.e3 \(\text{e4}\) 12.d2±
7...\(\text{e7}\) 8.e4 \(\text{h6}\) (8...g5 9.c3 g4 10.e1 f6 11.d3 \(\text{xd3}\) 12.\(\text{xd3}\) f5 13.f4± Garcia Martinez – Campora, Coria del Rio 2001) 9.c3 a6, Volokitin – Gjorgjieski, Struga 2014 (9...f6? 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.h4 g6 12.\(\text{xd5}\)! exd5 13.e6 \(\text{b6}\) 14.\(\text{h5}\)+–) 10.d2!? White prevents radically the pawn-advance g7-g5. 10...0-0 11.h3±
Naturally, it would be very bad for Black to opt for 6...c5?!, since after 7.c4, he will hardly manage to control the situation in the centre.

7...\(\text{xd4}\) 8.cxd5+-
7...dxc4 8.a3 (8.d5?! \(\text{e7}\) 9.c3†) 8...\(\text{xd4}\) (8...\(\text{e7}\) 9.g5±) 9.\(\text{xc4}\) d3 10.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{xd3}\) 11.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{b6}\) 12.\(\text{xd8}\)!?
(12...b3!?±) 12...exd8 13...xb6 axb6 14...e3 c5 15...xc5 bxc5 16.b4!?±
7...e7 8...g5 (It is also possible for White to try here 8...c3, but the move 8...g5 is a bit stronger.) 8...dxc4 9...a3±
A) 6...g6 7...bd2

7...h6

Following 7...a6, besides the usual move 8...b3, White has an additional possibility 8.c4, with the idea 8...dxc4 9...xc4 and after the exchange of the pawns and 9...b6, it would be very good for White to continue with 10...g5! c7, Socko – Braun, Austria 2009, 11...fd2±, while after the rather slow move 7...a6, Black will have great problems with the development of his kingside.
7...e7 8...b3
8...\(\text{Nf5}\) 9.\(\text{Bd2}\) – see Chapter 4, variation B.
8...a6 9.\(\text{Bd2}\) – see variation B, 7...a6 8.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{g6}\) 9.\(\text{Bd2}\).

8...\(\text{Qc7}\) 9.\(\text{Bd2}\) \(\text{Nf5}\) 10.a4!? \(\text{Be7}\) 11.\(g4\)


8.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{e7}\)

About 8...\(\text{f5}\) 9.\(\text{d2}\) – see Chapter 4, variation B.
Following 8...\(\text{c8}\), the simplest reaction for White would be 9.\(\text{xh6 gxh6}\) 10.\(\text{Bh4}\) 11.\(\text{e1}\)\(\text{g7}\) (10...b5 11.\(\text{e1}\)\(\text{g7}\), with the idea \(\text{e1-d3}\)) 11.c4 dxc4 (11...0-0 12.\(\text{e1}\)\(\text{g7}\) or 12.cxd5? cxd5 13.\(\text{xh6}\) \(\text{xc8}\) 14.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{b8}\) 15.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{b6}\) 16.\(\text{e5}\)) 12.\(\text{xc4}\) 0-0 13.\(\text{e1}\)\(\text{g7}\)
9.a4!?

Naturally, White has numerous possibilities here, but it seems to me that the plan with the advance of his a-pawn is the most unpleasant for Black.

White should not be in a hurry to exchange his dark-squared bishop, despite the fact this operation compromises a bit Black’s pawn-structure. In fact, White occupies additional space on the queenside. It is essential for him to control the b6-square, moreover that White’s plans include the pawn-advance c2-c4. If Black’s knight goes to the f5-square, then White can use the standard resource g2-g4, occupying space on the kingside in the process as well.

Here, it would not be so good for White to play the standard move 9.\(B_d2\), because Black’s knight is not on the f5-square, therefore, White cannot gain space with tempo, as usual, with the move g2-g4, 9...0-0∞, as well as 9.\(B_h6\) gxh6 10.\(W_d2\) h5! Black is not in a hurry to castle kingside, keeping the possibility to castle queenside in some variations.

(10...0-0 11.c3  \(\triangle_g7\) 12.\(\triangle_c1\) c5 13.\(\triangle_d3\) cxd4 14.cxd4 \(W_c8\) 15.\(W_e1\) \(\pm\) Rublevsky – Panarin, Olginka 2011) 11.c3 (11.\(\triangle_d3\) \(\triangle_c7\)) 11...\(W_c7\) 12.\(\triangle_c1\) 0-0-0 13.\(\triangle_d3\) f6, Friedel – Chiang, Richardson 2013, 14.\(W_e3\) \(W_dg8\)∞

9...0-0

9...\(\triangle_f5\) 10.g4. This is a standard move. If, after the possible exchange of the knights on h4, Black captures with his bishop, then, as a rule, this is in White’s favour. 10...\(\triangle_h6\) (10...\(\triangle_h4\) 11.\(\triangle_xh4\) \(\triangle_xh4\) 12.f4 f5 13.exf6 \(\triangle_xf6\) 14.\(g_5\) \(\triangle_c7\) 15.\(\triangle_g4\) \(\triangle_f5\) 16.\(\triangle_e1\) \(\Rightarrow\) Shankland – Pakleza, Las Vegas 2014) 11.h3 \(\triangle_g8\). Black’s knight is doing nothing on the h6-square and he is preparing h7-h5. 12.\(\triangle_d3!\) \(W_c7\) 13.\(\triangle_e3\) (13.\(\triangle_xg6!?\) hxg6 14.\(\triangle_g2\)\(\triangle\)) 13...\(\triangle xd3\) 14.\(\triangle xd3\) h5 15.\(g_5\)\(\triangle\) Grischuk – Dreev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.

The move 9...a5, may lead in the future to the weakening of the b5-square. 10.\(\triangle d2\) 0-0 (10...\(\triangle_f5\) 11.c4!?; 11.g4 \(\triangle h4\) 12.\(\triangle xh4\) \(\triangle xh4\) 13.f4 \(\triangle e4\) 14.\(\triangle f3\)\(\triangle\)) 11.c4 \(\triangle f5\) 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.\(\triangle b5\)\(\triangle\) Solodovnichenko – Alonso Rosell, Andorra 2012.

10.a5
10...\textit{Nf5}

10...\textit{cxc8 11.\textit{Nxc8 gxh6 12.c4±}

It would be too optimistic for Black to try here 10...c5, Sengupta – Mirzoev, Seville 2011, since this can be countered by White with the standard reaction 11.c4!, for example: 11...dxc4 (11...\textit{Nf5 12.cxd5 exd5 13.dxc5 \textit{Nxc5 14.g4! \textit{Nh6 15.f4±}) 12.\textit{Bxc4 cxd4 13.\textit{Nxd4 gxh6 14.\textit{Bxd4±}}

Following 10...b5, it becomes reasonable for White to capture the enemy knight 11.\textit{Bxc4!?, since his opponents queenside is slightly weakened. (It would not be so effective for White to choose here 11.\textit{Be1, Areshchenko – Sundararajan, Chennai 2011, 11...\textit{Nf5 12.d3 \textit{Qc7∞, with the idea c6-c5 with counterplay.) 11...gxh6 12.\textit{Qd2, with the idea 12...\textit{Qg7 13.\textit{Qc1 f6 14.\textit{dxc5 \textit{Qxd5 15.\textit{xd5 fxe5 16.dxe5 \textit{b8} 17.\textit{d4±}}

After 10...a6 11.c4 dxc4 (White maintains a slight but stable positional edge following 11...\textit{f5, Vacher Lagrave – Doettling, Haguenau 2013, 12.g4 \textit{h4 13.\textit{g4 xh4 14.f4 f6 15.e3, or 14...f5 15.g5 h6 16.gxh6 gxh6 17.e3±} 12.\textit{xh4 c5 (It would be premature for Black to try 12...\textit{f5, due to 13.g4, and his knight will have to retreat from the centre. 13...\textit{h4 14.\textit{h4 \textit{Bf4 15.\textit{f4± Yang Kaiqi – Zhang Xiaopen, Beijing 2012) 13.\textit{e2 \textit{f5 14.d1 \textit{xd4 (Black should better refrain from 14...\textit{h5?, in view of 15.d5!± and he would be beyond salvation. 15...\textit{d5 16.\textit{d3 \textit{gxf3 18.\textit{xexd} 17.\textit{d3 xg7} 18.\textit{dxe5} 19.\textit{dxe5} 17.\textit{e3} (It also seems promising for White to try the exchange operation 17.\textit{dxe6 fxe6 18.\textit{xe6 e8 19.\textit{g4 \textit{c5 20.\textit{dxc5 cxe3 21.fxe3 \textit{e7 22.\textit{xexd} 23.\textit{d4±} 17...\textit{b5 18.\textit{e1± (with the idea 18...\textit{dxe5? 19.\textit{f3+–. White’s space advantage and his more actively deployed pieces provide him with superior prospects.}}

11.\textit{g4 \textit{d4}

11...\textit{h6 12.h3 c5. The opening of the position in the centre is advantageous for White in view of the misplacement of Black’s knight on h6. 13.c4± (13.\textit{xex5?! 14.\textit{dxc5 \textit{dxc5 Oleksienko – Laznicka, Legnica 2013) 13...dxc4 14.\textit{dxc4 cxd4 15.\textit{bxd4 \textit{c8 16.\textit{e2±}}

White continues with the standard operation – an exchange of pieces, followed by f2-f4.

12.\textit{d4 \textit{xh4 13.f4}
13...f6

13...e4 14.d2 f5, Belenkaya – Andreeva, St Petersburg 2013, 15.exf6 xf6 16.xe4 dxe4 17.c3±
13...h6, Das – Bullen, Glasgow 2014, 14.f5 h7 15.d3↑
13...f5 14.g5 h6 15.gxh6 gxh6 16.h1 h7 17.e3 (17.f3?! g8 18.h3 e7 19.e3 c8 20.d2 c5 21.c3 Volokitin
– Nanu, Plovdiv 2008) 17.g8 18.g1± c7?! 19.cf1 b6 20.h3+– Arakhamia-Grant – Keen, Hinckley 2014.

14.e3 14.c4!? e7 15.e3 ac8 16.e1± 14...e7 (14...fxe5 15.dxe5 e7 16.c4 – 16.d2!± – 16.e4 17.g5 f7,
Bodnaruk – Kharmunova, St Petersburg 2012, 18.h5 g6 19.g4 f8 20.c5±) 15.exf6!? xf6 16.d2. White
transfers his knight to the f3-square, after which Black’s bishop on h4 may be in trouble. 16.h6 (16.e4 17.f3.
Black was threatening g7-g5. 17.d6 g5 18.f5 19.d2 ae8 20.e5!±) 17.f3± – He cannot solve his problems,
because his pawn-structure is inferior, moreover that White’s space advantage is overwhelming, just like before,
T.Kosintseva – Chiburdanidze, Jermuk 2010.
We will deal now with: **B1) 7...\(\text{\textit{e}}6\), B2) 7...\(\text{\textit{c}}8\) and B3) 7...\(\text{\textit{c}}5\).**

7...\(\text{\textit{h}}6\) 8.\(\text{\textit{b}}3\) – see Chapter 7.

7...\(\text{\textit{g}}6\) 8.\(\text{\textit{b}}3\) – see variation A, 7...\(\text{\textit{e}}7\) 8.\(\text{\textit{b}}3\).

Following 7...\(\text{\textit{c}}7\), besides the standard response 8.\(\text{\textit{b}}3\), White has the additional possibility 8.\(\text{\textit{h}}4\)!? for example:

8.e5 9.dxe5 \(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) 10.\(\text{\textit{b}}5\) (10.c4?! \(\text{\textit{c}}2\)! 11.\(\text{\textit{xe}}2\) \(\text{\textit{xe}}2\)= Akopian – Jaracz, Aix-Les-Nains 2011) 10.\(\text{\textit{d}}8\) 11.\(\text{\textit{df3}}\) \(\text{\textit{c}}7\) 12.\(\text{\textit{b}}4\)±

Black’s attempt to free the f5-square with the help of the move 7...\(\text{\textit{g}}4\) is not to be recommended from the positional point of view. He cannot place his knight on f5 without parting with his light-squared bishop. 8.h3 (8.c3!?±)
8...\( \text{Bxf3} \) 9.\( \text{Bxf3} \)± White’s advantage is based on his two powerful bishops. 9...c5 10.c4 cxd4 11.\( \text{g5} \)!? (11.\( \text{Wxd4} \)!? \( \text{Qc6} 
12.\( \text{Wf4} \) \( \text{Qb6} 
13.\( \text{Qd1} \) \( \text{Wc7} 
14.\( \text{b4} \)±) 11...dxc4 12.\( \text{Wxd4} \) \( \text{Qc6} 
13.\( \text{Wxc4} \) \( \text{Qe7} 
14.\( \text{f4} \) 0-0 15.\( \text{Rfd1} \) \( \text{Rc7} 
16.\( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{Qb6} 
17.\( \text{e4} \)± Gashimov – Izeta Txabarri, San Sebastian 2011.

8...\( \text{h5} \) 9.c3!? , with the idea 9...c5 10.dxc5 \( \text{Qc6} 
and with the move 11.b4± White will fortify his pawn on c5 (9...\( \text{g6} 
10.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{f5} 
11.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{hxg6} 
12.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{e7} 
13.a4± A.Zhigalko – Sanikidze, Plovdiv 2010).

After 7...a6 8.\( \text{b3} \), Black will have to complete his development anyway.

About 8...\( \text{Qg6} \) 9.\( \text{d2} \) – see variation B1.

8...\( \text{g6} \) 9.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d8} \) (9...\( \text{f5} \) 10.\( \text{c1} \) – see Chapter 4, variation B) 10.\( \text{a5} \)!? \( \text{c7} 
11.c4 b6 12.\( \text{b3} \)± Van den Heever – Klaasen, Windhoek 2014; 12.cxd5?!±

8...\( \text{c7} \) 9.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{g6} \) 10.\( \text{c1} \) b5 11.\( \text{a5} \) \( \text{c7} 
12.\( \text{b4} \) \( \text{d8} 
13.\( \text{c3} \)± \( \text{b6} 
14.\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} 
15.\( \text{a5} \)± Oleksienko – Norowitz, Reykjavik Open 2013.

8...\( \text{g4} \) 9.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{x3} \) (9...\( \text{h5} \) 10.\( \text{d2} \)±) 10.\( \text{x3} \) \( \text{c8} 
11.\( \text{e2} \)!±, with the idea 11...c5 12.c4 dxc4 13.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{xc5} 
14.dxc5 \( \text{xc5} 
15.\( \text{xb7} \)±

8...\( \text{c8} \) 9.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{c7} 
Praneeth – Deac, Pune 2014, 10.c4 dxc4 11.\( \text{a5} \) \( \text{c7} 
12.\( \text{xc4} \) 0-0 13.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{d8} 
14.\( \text{a5} \)± b6 15.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{g6} 
16.b4±

B1) 7...\( \text{g6} \) 8.\( \text{b3} \)

White’s threat g2-g4 is an illusion after 8.\( \text{e1} \), because Black can counter that with 8...\( \text{f4} \) (8...\( \text{h5} \)!? 9.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xd3} 
10.\( \text{xd3} \) 0-0= Negi – Nigalidze, Baku 2012) 9.\( \text{g4} \) (9.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h5} 
10.\( \text{b3} \) g5∞) 9...\( \text{g4} \) 10.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g6} \)= Iordachescu – Shengelia, Dubai 2010.
8...\textit{Bg4} 

White maintains a stable advantage following 8...h5 9.\textit{Be3 Be7}, T.Kosintseva – Dzagnidze, Nalchik 2010, 10.\textit{fd2!?} h4 11.f4± 

8...a6 9.\textit{d2}!? c5 10.dxc5 \textit{Bxc5} (10...\textit{xc5} 11.\textit{fd4±}) 11.\textit{xc5} \textit{Bxc5} 12.\textit{b4}?! \textit{wb6} 13.c3 0-0 14.\textit{d4±} Rublevsky – Nisipeanu, Foros 2007. 

After 8...\textit{Be7}, White can choose between 9.\textit{e1}!, threatening g2-g4. 9...h5 (The move 9...\textit{gf8} looks completely senseless for Black, since he needs to castle and not to place his knight on the f8-square. 10.g4 \textit{g6} 11.f4 \textit{e4} 12.\textit{d2}±; 11...\textit{f5} 12.\textit{g2} \textit{fxg4} 13.\textit{xg4} \textit{f5} 14.\textit{d2} \textit{b6} 15.\textit{e3}±). Black’s queen now has no access to the h4-square, so White can capture bravely the pawn: 10.\textit{xh5} \textit{g5} (10...\textit{b4} 11.\textit{g4} \textit{wh4} 12.h3+–) 11.f4± Meszaros – Tatar Kis, Budapest 2013. 

After 8...\textit{f6}, White again has the reply 9.\textit{e1}!, for example: 9...\textit{fxe5}. This move is connected with a bishop-sacrifice, but it can hardly be recommended anything better to Black. (The move 9...h5 would enable White to consolidate effortlessly his advantage. 10.f4 \textit{h4} 11.\textit{g4±}, or 11.c3!? \textit{wb6} 12.\textit{c2} 0-0-0 13.\textit{e3}± Smirin – Pantsulaia, Baku 2013.) 10.g4 e4 11.gxf5 \textit{exf5} 12.f4± Black’s compensation for the sacrificed piece is evidently insufficient, Ni Hua – Gelashvili, Turin 2006. 

9.h3!? 

White is trying to clarify immediately the intentions of the enemy bishop on g4. 

White can also not provoke immediately the exchanges on f3 and can at first complete his development with 9.\textit{e3}!? \textit{e7}, Boehm – Bastian, Bublingen 2007, 10.\textit{bd2}. After White has developed his dark-squared bishop, it would not be so good for Black to transfer his knight to the g6-square, because White’s knight can go back to the d2-square and it would be much more useful there. 10...0-0 11.h3 \textit{xf3} (11...\textit{f5} 12.\textit{g4}±) 12.\textit{xf3} \textit{c5} 13.c3± 

9...\textit{xf3} 

It is clearly worse for Black to try to preserve his bishop with 9...\textit{f5}?! 10.g4 \textit{e4} 11.\textit{g5}±
10...\textit{e}7

Black’s attempt to try to change the character of the position with the move 10...f6?! would lead to great difficulties for him following 11.h5! fxe5 12.dxe5\textsuperscript{±} Svidler – Jobava, Novi Sad 2009.

11.e3 g5

Black should better avoid 11...\textit{c}8 12.e2\textsuperscript{±} Boehm – Bastian, Bublingen 2007, since he will not be able to trade the bishops, because White would counter 12...g5?! with the move 13.f4\textsuperscript{±}

12.e4\textsuperscript{±} White’s space advantage and his more actively placed pieces provide him with long-lasting positional pressure.

B2) 7...\textit{c}8

Here, White has a great choice between some very promising moves and various plans to fight for an advantage.
We will deal in details with: B2a) 8.Ne1, B2b) 8.b3!?, B2c) 8.a4!? and B2d) 8.c3!?

B2a) 8.Ne1 c5

This is a principled move and it is the only way for Black to fight for obtaining an acceptable position. His alternatives would not promise him equality for example: 8...Bg6 9.Nd3, 8...Be7 9.g4 Bg6 10.f4, 8...h6 9.c3 c5 10.Qc2!? Be7 11.Qe3 Bh7 12.f4

9.g4!?

This is a very consistent reaction. White cannot create problems for his opponent with the line: 9.c3 cxd4 10.cxd4 Qe7∞
Here, he cannot achieve much with the standard move 9.c4, in view of 9...dxc4 (Black needs to play very accurately.

After the careless move 9...Ncb6, he would be in a great trouble for example: 10.b4 cxd4 11.c5 Qc8 12.Qb3±, with the idea 12...Qxe5?! 13.Qxd4 Qe7 14.g4+-; 13...Qg6 14.Qb5+ Qd7 15.Qef3+-; 13...Qe7 14.Qb5+ Qf8 15.Qxf5±) 10.Qxc4 Qcb6∞


9...Qg6 10.f4

10...Qe7!

This is the only move for Black to obtain a good position!

White’s space advantage will be consolidated after 10...f5 11.exf6 Qxf6 12.Qdf3↑

The inclusion of the moves 10...cxd4 11.f5, would enable White to develop powerful initiative. 11...exf5 (The bishop-sacrifice would not be justified after: 11...Qxe5 12.fxg6 hxg6 13.Qdf3 Qc6, Lagno – Danielian, Warsaw 2013, 14.Qb5!±) 12.gxf5 Qg5+ 13.Qg2 Qxf5 14.Qb3 Qg6 15.Qh5 Qe6 16.Qh1 (It would be premature for White to choose 16.Qxd4?! Qc5 17.Qe3± and Black’s task would be considerably facilitated.) 16...Qg6 17.Qxd4 Qb6 18.e6 fxe6 19.Qf4 e5 20.Qxg6+ hxg6 21.Qxd5 Qxd4 22.Qc7+ Qe7 23.Qxd4 exd4 24.Qxa8+-

11.c3 cxd4

It would not be so accurate for Black to choose 11...Qb6, due to 12.Qb3 and here after 12...cxd4, White would be able to capture on d4 with his knight 13.Qxd4↑

12.cxd4 Qb6 13.Qb3
13...e4 14.d3 h5 15.gxh5 g6 16.f2 f5∞ The arising complications are advantageous for Black.

The plan with the immediate move e1, followed by g2-g4, is somewhat premature on White’s move eight, but as we are going to see in variation B2c, it would become quite possible after the inclusion of the moves 8.a4 e7.

B2b) 8.b3!?

We are already familiar with this plan, in fact, with the way of its implementation, after Black’s early manoeuvre g8-e7-c8 (see Chapter 4, variation A), but then, White’s knight had been on the b1-square, so that he could have developed it not only to the d2-square. Still, under the circumstances, the idea to occupy additional space on the queenside seems quite applicable, although it does not provide White with a clear edge.
With this move Black obtains a very solid position, despite its being somewhat passive.
Black’s alternatives do not promise him much.

The other way of development of his bishop – 8...\textit{b}4 enables White to improve his position on the queenside with tempo. 9.\textit{b}2 0-0 10.c4 \textit{a}5 12.b4 (12.h4 dxc4 13.xc4 c7 14.f3 b6 15.a4=) 12...c7 13.h4 dxc4 14.xf5 xf5 15.xc4 b6 16.a5 \textit{b}8 17.d3± Efimenko – Iordachescu, Port Erin 2007.

White can counter the active move 8...c5 with the standard reaction 9.c4 and Black will hardly manage to neutralize his opponent’s initiative due to his considerable lag in development. 9.cb6 10.a4 a5 11.cxd5!? \textit{d}5 12.c4 c7 13.d6+ xd6 14.exd6 c3. It would be essential for Black to prevent his opponent from utilising the power of his bishop-pair, after an eventual opening of the position. (White would be successful in doing that following 14...0-0 15.b2 wb6 16.dxc5 xc5 17.h4 e4 18.d4 d6 19.ac1 ac8 20.a3 cd7 21.xb6 xb6 22.d3=) 15.e1 xe2+ 16.xe2 0-0 17.a3=

8...a5 9.c4 a4 (9.e7 10.b2 0-0 11.a3 – see 8...c7) 10.d2 (10.bxa4?! Robson – Akobian, Arlington 2013, 10.cb6) 10.e7 11.c5 (There may arise a slightly different type of position after 11.e3?!↑, White is preparing the capturing b3xa4, followed by the pawn-advance a4-a5.) 11...0-0 12.b4= – his positional advantage is quite stable.

9.c4 0-0 10.e2 a5

10.g6 11.e1 a5 12.d3. White should redeploy his pieces in advance in the best possible way and only then begin to realise his space advantage by advancing his kingside pawns. (For example, it would not be good for him to play immediately 12.f4 a4 13.g4 b44, with the idea b4xd2 and g6-e4, Pridorozhi – Ovetchkin, Dagomys 2009.) 12.xd3 13.xd3 a4 14.f4=

This move is aimed at preventing a5-a4, since White can counter this with b3-b4.
It would not be so clear after 11.a4, in view of 11...cb6! 12.c5 (12.e1 dxc4 13.bxc4?! c5↑; 13.xc4 d5=) 12...c8 13.e1 b6 14.g4 g6 15.f4 f5∞
11...a4 12.cxd5 (Black will have a slightly cramped, but still defensible position after 12.b4 dxc4 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{xc4}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{db6}}} 14.\texttt{e3}\textcolor{red}{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{g6}}}}}) 12...cxd5 13.b4 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\texttt{\textbf{cb6}}} 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\texttt{e3}}} \texttt{fg6})² His position lacks space indeed, but is still solid enough.

B2c) 8.a4!?

This is a useful waiting move. White is ready to counter in advance Black’s knight-sortie to the b6-square.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\node at (0,0) [draw] (0) {$\text{a}$} ;
\t\node at (1,0) [draw] (1) {$\text{b}$} ;
\t\node at (2,0) [draw] (2) {$\text{c}$} ;
\t\node at (3,0) [draw] (3) {$\text{d}$} ;
\t\node at (4,0) [draw] (4) {$\text{e}$} ;
\t\node at (5,0) [draw] (5) {$\text{f}$} ;
\t\node at (6,0) [draw] (6) {$\text{g}$} ;
\t\node at (7,0) [draw] (7) {$\text{h}$} ;
\t\node at (0,1) [draw] (8) {$\text{h}$} ;
\t\node at (0,2) [draw] (7) {$\text{g}$} ;
\t\node at (0,3) [draw] (6) {$\text{f}$} ;
\t\node at (0,4) [draw] (5) {$\text{e}$} ;
\t\node at (0,5) [draw] (4) {$\text{d}$} ;
\t\node at (0,6) [draw] (3) {$\text{c}$} ;
\t\node at (0,7) [draw] (2) {$\text{b}$} ;
\t\node at (0,8) [draw] (1) {$\text{a}$} ;
\t\fill [draw, line width=0.05cm] (0) rectangle (8) ;
\t\fill [lightgray] (0) rectangle (8) ;
\t\node at (1,1) (A) {$\text{e}$} ;
\t\node at (2,2) (B) {$\text{f}$} ;
\t\node at (3,3) (C) {$\text{g}$} ;
\t\node at (4,4) (D) {$\text{h}$} ;
\t\node at (5,5) (E) {$\text{i}$} ;
\t\node at (6,6) (F) {$\text{j}$} ;
\t\node at (7,7) (G) {$\text{k}$} ;
\t\node at (8,8) (H) {$\text{l}$} ;
\t\draw (A) -- (B) -- (C) -- (D) -- (E) -- (F) -- (G) -- (H) ;
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

8...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{e7}}}

This move might seem like a positional concession for Black, because it enables White, on his next move, to realise the idea, which we have already analysed in variation \textbf{B2a}. Still, Black lags so much in the development of his kingside that his situation is not to be envied.

Or 8...a6 9.c3!? \texttt{\textbf{e7}}, Nevednichy – Cioara, Sarata Monteoru 2012 (9...c5 10.\texttt{b3}² 10.b4 a5 11.\texttt{b3}²

Black fails to counter his opponent’s plans with the help of the move 8...a5?!., because this weakens the b5-square and may turn out to be very costly for him after the pawn-advance c6-c5, for example: 9.c3 \texttt{\textbf{e7}} (9...c5 10.\texttt{b3}² 10.\texttt{c1} 0-0 11.g4 \texttt{\textbf{g6}} 12.f4 \texttt{\textbf{e6}} 13.f5 \texttt{\textbf{f7}} 14.\texttt{d3}²

9.\texttt{\textbf{e1}}

With the idea g2-g4.

White has at his disposal another calmer positional plan – 9.a5?! 0-0 10.c4², which is also possible, but the variation 9.\texttt{\textbf{e1}} is much more dangerous for his opponent.

9...0-0

Black must complete his development.

It would be premature for him to play the undermining move 9...f6 10.f4 (10.h5?! g6 11.e2 h5 12.f4² 10...fxe5 11.fxe5 0-0, Lindberg – Eriksson, Sweden 2014, 12.g4²), or 9...c5 10.g4 \texttt{g6} 11.f4. The e7-square has been occupied by Black’s bishop, so he does not have the resource \texttt{\textbf{c8}}-\texttt{e7}. 11...f6 (11...f5 12.c4 \texttt{\textbf{b8}} 13.\texttt{b3}² \texttt{\textbf{c6}}
14. \( \text{Nc}_2 \pm \) 12. c4 \( \pm \)

10. g4 \( \text{g}_6 \) 11. f4 \( \text{f}_5 \)

12. \( \text{Ng}_2 \)!

White is preparing the transfer of his knight to the e3-square.

12. h3. White does not need to waste a tempo for this move. 12... a5!? 13. \( \text{N}_d3 \) (13. \( \text{N}_g2 \) c5\( \pm \)) 13... c5 14. \( \text{xe}_3 \) \( \text{h}_8 \) (14... a7\( \approx \)) 15. b3 \( \text{a}_7 \) 16. \( \text{d}_3 \) c4 17. bxc4 dxc4 18. c5 \( \text{xc}_5 \) 19. dxc5 \( \text{c}_8 \approx \) Svidler – Riazantsev, Moscow 2009.

It also seems good for him to try 12. a5!? fxg4 13. \( \text{b}_xg4 \) \( \text{b}_f5 \) 14. g2\( \pm \), with the idea \( \text{g}_2\)-e3.

12... c5, Bulmaga – Mamedjarova, Tromso 2014, 13. \( \text{b}_3 \)\( \pm \) White has obtained excellent prospects for the development of his kingside initiative (It would be weaker for him to opt for 13. gxf5 \( \text{xf}_5 \) 14. \( \text{e}_3 \), in view of 14... \( \text{h}_3 \) 15. f3 cxd4 16. \( \text{x}_h3 \) dxe3 17. \( \text{b}_3 \) \( \text{xf}_4 \) 18. d4 \( \text{f}_8 \) 19. \( \text{xe}_3 \) \( \text{h}_4 \) 20. \( \text{h}_4 \) \( \text{xe}_4 \) 21. \( \text{g}_4 \) \( \text{g}_5 \) 22. \( \text{f}_2 \) \( \text{h}_4 \)\( = \)).

B2d) 8. c3?!

I believe this insidious move is the most dangerous for Black. White is preparing the plan with \( \text{f}_3\)-e1, followed by g2-g4, under the best possible circumstances. He is going to counter Black’s standard move c6-c5 with the counter-strike c3-c4 and Black will be absolutely unprepared for this.
8...\textit{c}7

8...\textit{c}5. Black is fighting against the enemy centre with this energetic move. 9.\textit{c}4. (It is possible for White to play here 9.\textit{b}3!? opening the diagonal for his bishop on \textit{c}1 and increasing the pressure against the enemy pawn on \textit{c}5. Still, the move 9.\textit{c}4 is more fashionable and principled.) 9...\textit{c}6 10.\textit{b}4↑ The arising situation is obviously in favour of White due to his superior development and extra space. Black will hardly find the way to maintain the balance, for example: 10...\textit{cxd}4 11.\textit{c}xd4 \textit{xb}4 12.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{xd}5 13.\textit{xf}5 exf5 14.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}6 15.\textit{b}3\textit{b}6, with the idea 15...0-0?! 16.\textit{d}1↑

9.\textit{e}1 0-0

9...\textit{g}6 10.\textit{d}3 \textit{c}5 11.\textit{f}4 \textit{cxd}4 12.\textit{xg}6 hxg6 13.\textit{cxd}4 \textit{b}6 (13...\textit{cb}6 14.\textit{d}3! 0-0 15.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}8 16.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}6 17.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}4 18.\textit{b}3 \textit{a}3 19.\textit{b}2 \textit{b}6 20.\textit{ac}1 \textit{a}6 21.\textit{g}4± Svidler – Houska, Gibraltar 2012) 14.\textit{f}3 a6 15.\textit{g}3?! \textit{a}7 16.\textit{h}4 \textit{c}8 17.\textit{b}1 \textit{c}6 18.\textit{g}2± Caruana – Genov, Arvier 2012.

9...\textit{c}5 10.\textit{g}4 \textit{g}6 11.\textit{f}4 \textit{cxd}4 12.\textit{cxd}4 f5 13.\textit{g}2 \textit{b}6 14.\textit{b}3 a5 15.a4± Akopian – Molner, Saint Louis 2014.
10.g4!?N

It is also possible for White to choose here 10.f4 and after 10...g6 (or 10...f6, T.Kosintseva – Gunina, Moscow 2010, 11.g4 g6 12.f5) 11.g4 (It is weaker for White to play 11.d3, Sjugirov – Rozum, St Petersburg 2008, 11...c5∞) 11...f6 12.f5 and there arises transposition to the same situation.

Still, the move 10.g4 looks more accurate, because White would not need to consider the possibility 10.f4 h6.

10...g6 11.f4 f6 12.f5 f7 13.d3 White exerts powerful pressure on the kingside and has increased his space advantage.

B3) 7...c5 8.c4!

He has created tension, concerning the d5-square, thwarting his opponent’s development.

The line 8.dxc5 c6, as well as White’s other alternatives are less promising to him.
We will analyse thoroughly B3a) 8...\(\text{ Nh6} \), B3b) 8...\(\text{ cxd4} \) and B3c) 8...\(\text{ a6} \).

White’s alternatives are considerably less convincing.

It would be too slow for him to opt for 8...\(\text{ Qc7}?! \) 9.\(\text{ dxc5 Nhxc5} \) 10.\(\text{ Nbd4}\)

After 8...\(\text{ dxc4?!} \), Black cannot occupy the d5-square with his knight without certain positional concession. 9.\(\text{ xc4 Qc7} \) Now, White can either increase methodically his pressure with 11.\(\text{ Be1} \) ± Mitkov – Fontana, Benasque 1996, or try to clarify immediately the situation in the centre: 11.\(\text{ d5 exd5} \) 12.\(\text{ Be3 Ne6} \) 13.\(\text{ xd5 Qd5} \) 14.\(\text{ Nxd5}\), with the idea 14...\(\text{ dxe5}?! \) 15.\(\text{ Be1} \) 16.\(\text{ xe5}\) ± Dijkhuis – Maas, Vlissingen 2014.) 10.\(\text{ g5 Qc7} \) (It would not be preferable for Black to opt here for 10...\(\text{ e7}?! \) 11.\(\text{ d6}\) –, or 10...\(\text{ f6} \) 11.\(\text{ exf6} \) 12.\(\text{ h4} \) \(\text{ e7} \) 13.\(\text{ g3} \), Semasev – Hocevar, Grieskirchen 1998, 13...0-0 14.\(\text{ d6±} \)) 11.\(\text{ Rc1} \) ± , with the idea 11...\(\text{ h6} \) 12.\(\text{ h4} \) b5, Sepetavc – Wallnoefer, Jenbach 2009, 13.\(\text{ d6}+\) 14.\(\text{ dxc5} \)

8...\(\text{ Nh6} \) 9.\(\text{ dxc5 Nhxc5} \) 10.\(\text{ d4 g6} \), V.Lebedev – A.Popov, ICCF 2009, 11.\(\text{ b3} \) (It also seems quite consistent for White to continue here with 11.\(\text{ f3}?! \), for example: 11...\(\text{ a6} \) 12.\(\text{ Be3} \) dxc4 13.\(\text{ xc4} \) \(\text{ Qd7} \) 14.\(\text{ c1} \) b5 15.\(\text{ b3} \) \(\text{ Qb3} \) 16.\(\text{ xh3} \) \(\text{ Qd5} \) 17.\(\text{ xe8}+ \) \(\text{ xe8} \) 18.\(\text{ axb5} \) \(\text{ xb5} \) 19.\(\text{ xe3} \) \(\text{ axb5} \) 20.\(\text{ xf6} \) a6 21.\(\text{ xe4} \) \(\text{ f6} \) 22.\(\text{ xh5} \) \(\text{ e4} \) 23.\(\text{ f2} \) \(\text{ d5} \) 24.\(\text{ e4} \) \(\text{ xe3} \) 25.\(\text{ xe3} \) ± ) 11...\(\text{ dxc4} \) 12.\(\text{ xc4} \) a6 13.\(\text{ e3} \) \(\text{ d5} \) (Black’s considerable lag in development may turn out to be a very important factor after 13...\(\text{ a4} \) 14.\(\text{ xe2} \) \(\text{ d5} \) 15.\(\text{ xd5} \) \(\text{ xd5} \) 16.\(\text{ fdl} \) \(\text{ xe5} \) 17.\(\text{ ac1}\), or 16...\(\text{ b6} \) 17.\(\text{ h4} \) h6 18.\(\text{ h5} \) \(\text{ h7} \) 19.\(\text{ ac1}\) ± ) 14.\(\text{ xd5} \) exd5 (14...\(\text{ xd5} \) 15.\(\text{ xc5} \) bxc5 17.\(\text{ a4}+ \) \(\text{ xd7} \) 18.\(\text{ xd7}+ \) \(\text{ xd7} \) 19.\(\text{ b3±} \) 15.\(\text{ c1} \) ± , with the idea 15...\(\text{ d3} \) 16.\(\text{ xc8} \) \(\text{ xc8} \) 17.\(\text{ e2} \) \(\text{ e7} \) 18.\(\text{ f4} \) \(\text{ e4} \) 19.\(\text{ d1±} \)

B3a) 8...\(\text{ Nh6} \)

This is a very straightforward move, but it creates a chronic weakness for Black – the isolated pawn on d5.

9.\(\text{ cxd5} \) exd5 10.\(\text{ dxc5} \)
10...\textit{Bxc5}

It would not be better for him to capture with his knight 10...\textit{Qxc5} 11.\textit{Nb3 Qxb3} (11...\textit{Qe6} 12.\textit{Qfd4}; 11...\textit{Qe7} 12.\textit{Qe3 Qxb3} 13.\textit{Qd7} 13.\textit{Qd1 Qe6} 14.\textit{Qg5}. This is a very energetic move. (There arise numerous exchanges following 14.\textit{Qd4 Qe5} 15.\textit{Qxc6 bxc6} 16.\textit{Qe3 Axe3} 17.\textit{Qxe3} 0-0 18.\textit{Qac1}, although even then Black’s position is not to be envied, Vachier Lagrave – Dittmar, Gibraltar 2009.) 14...\textit{Qe7} 15.\textit{Qxe6 fxe6} 16.\textit{Qh3 Qxe5}, (or 16...0-0 17.\textit{Qg4 Qd8} 18.\textit{Qe3} 17.\textit{f4 Qf7} 18.\textit{Qg4 Qd8} 19.f5 0-0 20.fxe6 \textit{Qd6} 21.\textit{Qe3 Qc6} 22.\textit{Qf3}±

11.\textit{Qb3 Qb6} 12.\textit{Qg5}

It also seems advisable for White to try here 12.a4!? , with the idea to oust Black’s bishop on b6 away from the g1-a7 diagonal, forcing it to occupy a less promising position. In addition White seizes more space on the queenside in the process. 12...\textit{a6} (12...\textit{Qdxe5} 13.\textit{Qxe5 Qxe5} 14.\textit{Qb5+ Qf8} 15.a5 \textit{Qc7} 16.\textit{Qd4}; 12...0-0 13.a5 \textit{Qc7} 14.\textit{Qfd4 \textit{Qg6} 15.f4}) 13.a5 \textit{Qa7}. Black has managed to preserve his bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal, but he still has many problems to worry about. 14.\textit{Qbd4 \textit{Qg4} 15.\textit{Qxc6 bxc6} 16.\textit{Qg5 Axe2} 17.\textit{Qxe2} 18.\textit{Qxf7 Qxf7} 19.e6+ \textit{Qg8} 20.\textit{exd7 Qxd7} 21.\textit{Qa3}± One of the pluses of the advance of White’s a-pawn is that his queen’s rook on a1 can be brought quickly into the actions on the a-file.

12...\textit{Qc7} 13.\textit{Qxd5} 0-0

13...\textit{Qdxe5} 14.\textit{Qb5} 0-0 15.\textit{Qxc6 bxc6} 16.\textit{Qxe5 Qxe5} 17.\textit{Qxe5} f6 18.\textit{Qxc6 fxg5} 19.\textit{Qe7+ Qh8} 20.\textit{Qxf5 Qxf5} 21.\textit{Qae1}±
14.\textit{N}fd4  \textit{N}xd4 15.\textit{N}xd4  \textit{B}xd4 16.\textit{W}xd4  \textit{W}xe5 17.\textit{B}e3² White’s powerful bishop-pair provides him with a slight but stable advantage in this open position.

B3b) 8...cxd4 9.\textit{N}xd4

9...\textit{B}xe5

It would be tremendously risky for Black to accept this pawn-sacrifice.

If he refrains from accepting the sacrificed pawn on e5 with the line: 9...\textit{g}6 10.\textit{B}f3 a6 11.\textit{g}5±, this would have been a lesser evil, but would not have solved all his problems.
He should better avoid giving up his light-squared bishop with the line: 9...\(\text{c6?!} \ 10.\text{xf5 exf5} \ 11.\text{cxd5} \text{cxe5}
12.\text{e4!?} \text{xc4} 13.\text{xc4} \text{d6} 14.\text{e1}^\pm \text{Ashwin – Lokander, Dubai 2014.}

10.\text{a4!}

White is trying to preserve by all means his opponent’s monarch stranded in the centre and is ready to do that even if he has to comply with considerable simplifications, including the trade of the queens.

He would achieve much less with 10.cxd5 \text{xd5} 11.\text{a4+} (Black equalises almost effortlessly after
11.\text{f3} \text{c6} 12.e3 e4 13.b5 \text{xd1} 14.\text{fe1} d5 15.g5 g6 16.\text{exd5 exd5} 17.\text{c7+ d7} 18.xa8 d4= \text{Ni Hua – Rasmussen, Beijing 2008.) 11...c6 12.xc6 (12.f3 – see Gopal – Dragun, Cappelle la Grande 2015, \text{game 8}) 12...xc6 13.f3 \text{d7} 14.e1 (14.c4? d8! 15.e3 d4= Pasiev – Tari, Moscow 2012) 14.e5 15.xd7+ xd7 16.xb7 b8=)

10...\text{d7}

Black’s king is stranded in the centre and this becomes an important factor in the line: 10...c6 11.xf5 exf5 12.f3 xc4 13.xc4 dxc4 14.g5 f6 15.e1 e7 16.xc4+, or after 10...c6 11.cxd5 exd5 (Black’s attempt to preserve his harmonious pawn-structure fails after 11...xd5 and 12.e4+–, with the idea 12 xd4 13.d1+– \text{Von Meijenfeldt – Stolwijk, Amsterdam 2014.) 12.e1+}

11.xd7+ xd7

Black would lose his castling rights too, following 11...xd7 12.b5, so he would have nothing better than 12.d8 13.d6 g6 14.xb7+ c7 15.a5 d4 16.b4+

12.cxd5 exd5

13.\text{b3}!

White should exploit immediately the misplacement of the enemy king in the centre by avoiding exchanges, since this would facilitate considerably Black’s defence.
13. \( \text{xf5? xf5=} \text{Brkic – Drozdovskij, Rijeka 2010.} \)

13...xc8

Black’s defence would not become any easier after 13...c6 14.xf5 xf5 15.f3 d4 16.e4 d6 17.d5, or 17.xc6+ xc6 18.f4+

14.f4 f6

He has no time to retreat his knight: 14.c4 15.xf5 xf5 16.fd1 e7 17.ac1+, with the idea 17.xb2 18.g4+ and Black’s king ends up horribly misplaced.

15.ac1!? xc1 16.xc1 c6 17.b5± White’s lead in development and the misplacement of the enemy monarch provide him with excellent prospects of developing powerful initiative.

B3c) 8...a6

This is Black’s most reliable and solid move in comparison to his alternatives.

9.dxc5

9.h4 e4∞

9...xc5 10.b3

This is a very principled move, which forces Black to make up his mind about the future of his knight on c5. White also frees the diagonal for his bishop on c1 and is preparing the manoeuvre b3-d4 under favourable circumstances.

10.d7

This move looks like a loss of time, but Black has nothing better anyway.

It would be anti-positional for him to continue with 10.xb3?! 11.xb3+, because this would help White to develop
with tempo his queen to a very active position, freeing in the process the d1-square for his rook.
Black should better avoid the seemingly active line: 10...e4 11.h4!? (11.bd4±) 11...g6 12.cxd5 wxd5 13.f4, with the idea h4xg6 and e2-f3.
White develops very dangerous initiative after 10...c6 11.e3 (11.cxd5 wxd5 12.wxh5 exd5 13.bd4+) 11...xb3 12.axb3↑ Adhiban – Short, Caleta 2014.

11.cxd5!?N

With this move White reduces the tension against the c4-square with the idea to complete rapidly his development and to consolidate his space advantage.

He should also try in practice the variations 11.bd4!? e4 12.e3↑, with the idea a1-c1, or 11.d2!? e4 (11...dxc4 12.a5↑) 12.a5 (It is also interesting for him to try 12.c3↑, freeing his knight on f3 from the protection of the pawn on e5.) 12...b8!? (12...dxc4?! 13.xc4 c6 14.g5 w7 15.c1 Efimenko – Pantsulaia, Plovdiv 2008) 13.e1 g6∞

11...xd5

Now, White’s most promising plan seems to be connected with the advance of his f-pawn.

12.fd4 g6

It would be too risky for Black to try to gobble the enemy e5-pawn 12...xe5, due to 13.xf5 exf5 14.d4, with the idea f1-d1, while White will counter 14...c6 with 15.e1 and his queen will be untouchable.

13.f4

White fortifies with this move his space advantage in the centre and on the kingside.

13...e5

Or 13.e7 14.f5±; 13.e4 14.h1!?±, with the idea 14.e7 15.g4 h5 16.h3 g5 17.e2+–
White exploits the lack of development on Black’s kingside and organizes powerful initiative.

14...exf5 15.Nxf5 Bxf5 16.Nxe7 Rxf1 17.Qxd1 e6 18.c3 d3 20.e6 fxe6 21.Qg4

White has two powerful bishops and Black will be faced with a long and laborious defence.
Chapter 7

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.f3 e6 5.fxe2 O d7 6.0-0 Oe7 7.bbd2 h6

8.b3

White has some other alternatives with which he can try to obtain an advantage in the opening – 8.c3?, or 8.Re1?; but we are going to analyse his strongest and most logical move – 8.b3.

We will deal in details now with: A) 8...g6, B) 8...g5 and C) 8...h7.

8...g6? 9.Re1+

The move 8...a6 does not prevent White’s plans. 9.d2 c8 (9.g4, Quesada Perez – Andreikin, Havana 2013, 10.c1?? Bc7 11.b4†) 10.c4 dxc4 11.a5 Bc7 12.bxc4 Be7 13.Re1!? (13.Re1??) 13...0-0 14.d3 Bxd3 15.cxd3 Rd8 16.Bg4±

Following 8...c8, White can react in a standard fashion – 9.d2, for example: 9.g5 (9.g4 10.c1 c5, Efimenko – Andreikin, Dagomys 2008, 11.bxc5 Oxc5 12.dxc5 Bxc5 13.g3 Bc8 14.e4 Oxe4 15.Re2??; 15.a4 Bb7 16.cxd5 Bxd5 17.Bg4±) 10.c4 dxc4 11.a5 Bc7 12.bxc4 Oxd5 13.Re1 Oe7 14.Oe3 (14.a3 O7b6 15.a5 Bxd8 16.b4 Bb8 17.h3± Ponomariov – Kamsky, Beijing 2013) 14...e4 15.Re1±

8...c8 9.a4
9...\(\text{c}6\) 10.a5 \(\text{c}4\) 11.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{b}4\) 12.\(\text{a}4!\)? \(\text{e}7\) 13.\(\text{f}5\) (13.\(\text{xc}4\) b5! 14.\(\text{xb}5\) exb5 15.\(\text{a}1\) \(\text{c}7\) Darini – Andreikin, Tromso 2013) 13...exf5 14.\(\text{d}3\) g6 15.\(\text{xc}4!\) dxc4 16.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{b}8\) 17.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{d}5\) 18.\(\text{d}3\)\(\pm\), followed by c2-c4\(\pm\).

9...\(\text{e}7\) 10.a5. Now, Black’s knight has no access to the b6-square. 10...a6 (10...0-0 11.\(\text{e}3\) a6 12.\(\text{e}1\) f6 13.\(\text{f}4\) fxe5 14.fxe5 \(\text{g}5\) 15.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xe}3\)\(\mp\) 16.\(\text{xe}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 17.\(\text{d}3\)\(\pm\) Vallejo Pons – Anand, Leon 2008) 11.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{a}7\), Rodshtein – Donchenko, Hoogeveen 2013 (11...\(\text{c}7\) 12.\(\text{f}2\)! White is preparing the advance of his kingside pawns. 12...\(\text{a}7\) 13.\(\text{f}4\) 0-0 14.\(\text{c}4!\)\(\pm\) Motylev – Rodshtein, Moscow 2008.). He has another promising plan here, connected with pushing forward his pawns on the kingside: 12.\(\text{f}2\) 0-0 13.\(\text{f}4\)\(\pm\).

9...a5 10.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{e}7\), Rajkovic – Ratkovic, Kragujevac 2015, 11.\(\text{e}1!\)\(\pm\), with the idea 11...0-0 12.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{xd}3\) 13.\(\text{xd}3\)\(\pm\) White is ready to develop powerful initiative on the kingside with \(\text{d}1\)-\(\text{g}4\), \(\text{f}2\)-\(\text{f}4\)... If Black does not clarify the position yet, by playing 8...\(\text{c}7\), then White can react in the standard way with 9.\(\text{d}2\).
9...<i>h</i>7 10.<i>c</i>1 – see variation C.

9...<i>a</i>5 10.<i>a</i>4 <i>g</i>5 11.<i>c</i>1 <i>g</i>7 12.<i>e</i>1 <i>b</i>6 13.<i>c</i>4 <i>dxc</i>4 14.<i>x</i><i>c</i>4 0-0 15.<i>h</i>4 <i>g</i>4 16.<i>h</i>2 <i>f</i>6 17.<i>f</i>3 <i>gxf</i>3 18.<i>g</i>4± Bologan – Khismatulin, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.

9...<i>c</i>8 10.<i>a</i>4!? <i>c</i>b6 11.<i>a</i>5 <i>c</i>4 12.<i>c</i>3 <i>b</i>5 13.<i>x</i><i>b</i>6 <i>cxb</i>6 14.<i>a</i>5 <i>e</i>7 15.<i>b</i>4± Motylev – Lalith, Gibraltar 2015.

9...<i>g</i>5 10.<i>c</i>1 <i>b</i>6 (10...<i>f</i>6 11.<i>exf</i>6 <i>x</i><i>f</i>6 12.<i>e</i>5+; 11...<i>g</i>6 12.<i>e</i>5 <i>x</i><i>xe</i>5 13.<i>dxe</i>5 0-0-0 14.<i>d</i>4+; 13...<i>x</i><i>e</i>5 14.<i>h</i>5+ <i>d</i>7, Soumya – Yu Ruiyuan, Hong Kong 2014, 15.<i>e</i>1 <i>d</i>6 16.<i>c</i>3 <i>e</i>ae8 17.<i>e</i>2+ (11.<i>a</i>5 0-0-0 12.<i>b</i>4 <i>g</i>6 13.<i>e</i>1 <i>f</i>4 14.<i>d</i>3± Areshchenko – Lalith, Abu Dhabi 2014) 11...<i>g</i>7 12.<i>fd</i>2 0-0 13.<i>c</i>4±

A) 8...<i>g</i>6 9.<i>d</i>2

9...<i>f</i>5

Black should try to complete the development of his kingside, therefore, he opens the way for the development of his dark-squared bishop.

9...<i>c</i>8. This move is played with the same idea, but is somewhat passive. 10.<i>a</i>5!? This is an important inclusion of this move, which restricts Black’s possibilities. (It will be premature for White to opt for 10.<i>c</i>4, because after 10...<i>dxc</i>4 11.<i>a</i>5, Svidler – Dreev, Astana 2012, Black will have the resource 11...<i>b</i>5! 12.<i>x</i><i>c</i>4 <i>e</i>7 13.<i>d</i>5 <i>exd</i>5 14.<i>fd</i>4 <i>c</i>5∞ and the arising complications will be favourable for him.) 10...<i>c</i>7 11.<i>c</i>4 <i>dxc</i>4 12.<i>x</i><i>c</i>4 <i>e</i>7 13.<i>a</i>5± Black’s position is obviously cramped.

10.<i>c</i>1

The immediate move 10.<i>c</i>4 would not be so good for White in view of 10...<i>dxc</i>4 11.<i>x</i><i>c</i>4 <i>b</i>6= and Black controls the important d5-outpost.

It is also reasonable for White to play here 10.<i>a</i>5!??, trying to provoke weaknesses on his opponent’s queenside, for example: 10...<i>b</i>6 (10...<i>c</i>8 11.<i>c</i>1 <i>c</i>7 12.<i>g</i>4 <i>h</i>4 13.<i>x</i><i>h</i>4 <i>x</i><i>h</i>4 14.<i>f</i>4 <i>b</i>6 15.<i>b</i>4± Grischuk – Kamsky, Beijing 2013) 11.<i>d</i>2 <i>e</i>7 12.<i>c</i>4 0-0 13.<i>cx</i><i>d</i>5 <i>cx</i><i>d</i>5 14.<i>ec</i>1= (It was also interesting for White to try here 14.<i>a</i>6!?, preventing the appearance of Black’s rook on the c8-square. 14...<i>h</i>5 15.<i>h</i>3 <i>h</i>4 16.<i>g</i>4 <i>x</i><i>f</i>3+ 17.<i>xf</i>3 <i>g</i>6 18.<i>e</i>2; 16...<i>g</i>6 17.<i>x</i><i>h</i>4 <i>x</i><i>h</i>4 18.<i>e</i>2↑; About 14.<i>h</i>3 – see Wei Yi – Lalith, Hyderabad 2015, game 9).
10...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{Be7}}

10...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{Bh5}} 11.h3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{Bxf3}} 12.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{Bxe7}} 13.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{g4}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{b6}} 14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xf5}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{exf5}} 15.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{f3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{g6}} 16.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{ce1}}± Paikidze – Charochkina, Moscow 2012.

11.g4

Now, after Black’s bishop has been developed to the e7-square, this move becomes very promising for White.

11.\texttt{c4!} dxc4 12.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{a5}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{b8}} 13.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{g4}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{h4}} 14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xh4}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xh4}}, Gabrielian – Yuffa, Samara 2014, 15.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xc4}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{e7}} 16.\texttt{f4} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{b6}} 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{a5}}±

11.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{a5}}!? He is trying to create weaknesses on Black’s queenside.
11...\textit{b}8?! 12.g4 \textit{h}4 13.\textit{xh}4 \textit{hxh}4 14.f4 f5?! 15.b4± Dastan – Parligras, Skopje 2013.

White will develop very powerful pressure on the kingside after 11...\textit{b}6 12.g4 \textit{h}4 13.\textit{xh}4 \textit{hxh}4 14.f4 (14.\textit{d}3?! \textit{xd}3 15.cxd3, Kravtsiv – Yuffa, Pardubice 2014, 15...h5! and White’s initiative on the kingside has reached its dead end.) 14...0-0 15.\textit{d}3 f5 16.\textit{h}1±

11...\textit{b}6 12.\textit{d}2 0-0 13.c4 dxc4 14.\textit{xc}4 \textit{h}5 15.h3 \textit{xf}3 16.\textit{xf}3 c5 17.\textit{d}3 cxd4 18.\textit{e}4 g6 19.g4! (19.\textit{fd}1 \textit{h}7 20.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}5= Grischuk – Bologan, Astana 2012) 19...\textit{h}4 20.\textit{hxh}6 \textit{xe}5 21.f4 \textit{xd}3 22.\textit{xf}8 \textit{xf}8 23.\textit{xd}3 \textit{d}5 24.\textit{f}2±

11...\textit{h}4 12.\textit{xh}4 \textit{hxh}4 13.f4 \textit{e}4, Demchenko – Yuffa, Nizhny Tagil 2014, 14.\textit{f}3 \textit{xf}3 15.\textit{xf}3± White has a very stable position in the centre and excellent prospects to develop initiative on the kingside.

**B)** 8...g5!?

Black solves his problems with the development, but weakens a bit his kingside (His king is very likely to castle there...).
9. \textit{Ne}1!? 

White regroups immediately his pieces. His knight will go to d3 and his bishop will be very active on the d1-h5 diagonal. It is even more important that he will have the possibility f2-f4, beginning active actions on the kingside.

White must consider very seriously Black’s kingside activity and try to parry it in advance. Therefore, I do not recommend here the standard move 9.\textit{Bd}2, due to 9...a5 (threatening a5-a4) 10.a4 \textit{Ag}7= and Black wins a tempo to continue his plan begun with the move g7-g5.

The variation with 9.h4!? has not had sufficient tests in the tournament practice yet. This is a very concrete move with the idea to compromise Black’s far-advanced kingside pawns. 9...\textit{Ng}6! This pawn-sacrifice enables Black to activate his pieces. (His alternatives provide White with the opportunity to obtain effortlessly a slight, but stable advantage, for example: 9...g4 10.\textit{Ce}1 h5 11.g3, with the idea 11...f6 12.exf6 \textit{Cxf}6 13.\textit{Cd}3=, or 9...gxh4 10.\textit{Cxhr}4 \textit{Ag}8 11.g3!? \textit{Ce}4 12.c3 \textit{Cf}5 13.\textit{Cg}2=; 12...c5 13.\textit{Ce}3 \textit{Cc}8 14.\textit{Ch}2?± White has parried his opponent’s kingside activity and can rely on exploiting in the future Black’s kingside pawn-weaknesses.) 10.h5 (It would be too risky for Black to accept the sacrifice: 10.hxg5?! hxg5 11.\textit{Cxhr}5 \textit{Ce}7 12.\textit{Ce}3 \textit{Cc}7=) 10...\textit{Cf}4! This is an attempt by Black to exploit White’s early castling, with the idea to open files on the kingside and to organise counterplay there. (10...\textit{Ce}7 11.\textit{Ch}2 c5 12.c3 \textit{Cc}6 13.\textit{Cc}4 \textit{Ch}7 14.\textit{f}4 gxf4, Volokitin – Rodtshein, Moscow 2010, 15.\textit{Cxf}4 \textit{Cb}6 16.\textit{Cd}2; 13.\textit{Cc}7 14.\textit{Cg}4 \textit{Ch}7 15.\textit{f}4 S.Zhigalko – Ding Liren, Kocaeli 2014.) 11.\textit{Cxf}4 gxf4 12.\textit{Cc}1, with the idea \textit{Cc}1-d3. White is ready to counter his opponent’s offensive on the kingside and brings his reserves to assist in the defence. (It would be weaker for him to choose 12.\textit{Cd}2 \textit{Ag}8 13.\textit{Ce}1. Black was threatening 13...\textit{Ch}3 and White was ready to counter it with 14.\textit{Cf}1. 13...\textit{Ce}4! 14.\textit{Cxf}4 \textit{Cxc}2 15.\textit{Cc}1 \textit{Cf}5=; 14.\textit{Cc}1 \textit{Ccx}2+ 15.\textit{Cgx}2 \textit{Cg}5+ 16.\textit{Cf}1 \textit{Cg}4 17.\textit{Cd}3 \textit{Ch}3+ 18.\textit{Cg}1 \textit{Cg}4= Black forces a draw by a perpetual check.) 12...c5 13.dxc5 (13.c3=; 13.c4 dxc4 14.\textit{Cxc}4\textit{Cc}∞) 13...\textit{Cg}8 14.\textit{Cd}3 \textit{Ce}4 15.\textit{Cd}2 \textit{Cg}2=.
Now, we will analyse in details Black’s immediate move B1) 9...c5, as well as the more prudent B2) 9...\textit{Q}c7.

9...\textit{B}g6 10.f4 (10.\textit{N}d3!?!) 10...\textit{Q}f5 11.\textit{h}5±

It would not be consistent for Black to opt for 9...\textit{B}g7, because his dark-squared bishop on g7 prevents the development of his own kingside initiative, having closed the g-file for the rook on h8. 10.f4 (White would achieve less with 10.\textit{N}d3 \textit{Q}c7!?; 10...\textit{b}6!? 11.\textit{f}4 c5 12.dxc5 \textit{b}xc5 13.\textit{b}xc5 \textit{Q}xc5 14.\textit{Q}xc5 \textit{b}b6 15.\textit{c}3 0-0!∞) 10...\textit{b}6 (Black cannot solve his problems with 10...\textit{g}xf4 11.\textit{xf}4 \textit{b}b6 12.a4 \textit{a}6 13.a5± Quesada Perez – Kaufman, Arlington 2013, or 12.\textit{h}1?! \textit{a}5?! 13.a4 \textit{h}5 14.\textit{g}5 \textit{g}6 15.\textit{xf}4 \textit{xe}7 16.\textit{d}3± Vachier Lagrave – Harikrishna, Beijing 2014; 12...c5 13.dxc5 \textit{c}7 14.\textit{d}3 \textit{g}6 15.\textit{g}3↑) 11.\textit{d}3 (It would not be so promising for White to continue here with 11.a4, Bartel – Bologan, Budva 2009, although even then, after for example: 11...c5 12.dxc5 \textit{g}7 13.\textit{d}3 \textit{xf}4 14.\textit{xf}4 \textit{g}6 15.\textit{g}3↑ Black would still have problems to worry about.) 11...\textit{xf}4 12.\textit{h}1 \textit{g}6 13.\textit{xf}4 \textit{xf}4 14.\textit{xf}4 0-0-0 15.\textit{a}4± White maintains a considerable space advantage and his pieces are much more actively placed, Kritz – Burmakin, Bad Wiessee 2005.

B1) 9...c5 10.\textit{x}c5

It is also good for White to try here 10.dxc5!?, because his pawn on c5 cramps considerably his opponents position. 10...\textit{c}6 11.\textit{d}3 \textit{xd}3 12.\textit{xd}3 \textit{dxe}5 13.\textit{xe}5 \textit{exe}5 14.f4 \textit{c}4 15.\textit{h}5 \textit{f}6 16.c3↑ (16.f\textit{x}g5?! \textit{hx}g5 17.\textit{wx}g5 \textit{x}g5 18.\textit{x}g5 \textit{g}8 19.\textit{h}6 \textit{e}3 20.\textit{f}2 \textit{g}4 21.\textit{f}3 \textit{xf}6= Olszewski – Rodshtein, Puerto Madryn 2009).

10...\textit{x}c5 11.dxc5 \textit{c}6 12.\textit{d}3
12...\textit{\textbf{Be}}4

With this move Black wishes to restrict the possibility of White’s knight on e1 and his rook on f1 to join into the actions, which would be possible after 13.\textit{\textbf{B}}xe4 dxe4, for example: 14.\textit{\textbf{Be}}3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd1 15.\textit{\textbf{R}}xd1 \textit{\textbf{b}}6

Following 12...\textit{\textbf{B}}xc5 13.\textit{\textbf{B}}xf5 exf5 14.\textit{\textbf{Nd}}3 \textit{\textbf{b}}6

White can develop his initiative in two different ways:

1) 15.\textit{\textbf{Be}}3!?! This move is played with the idea to exploit his lead in development. 15...\textit{\textbf{d}}4 (Black would suffer, because of his lag in development after 15...\textit{\textbf{B}}xe3 16.fxe3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e7 17.g4!?) 16.\textit{\textbf{Q}}d2± \textit{\textbf{Q}}d7?! (He should better play here 16...\textit{\textbf{Q}}d5 17.a4!?) 17.a4 a6 18.b4 \textit{\textbf{Nd}}8 19.\textit{\textbf{Q}}f3 \textit{\textbf{g}}4 20.\textit{\textbf{Q}}f4 \textit{\textbf{c}}8 21.\textit{\textbf{ac}}1+- Svidler – Nakamura, Amsterdam 2009.

2) 15.\textit{\textbf{Wh}}5?! White attacks the enemy kingside. 15...\textit{\textbf{Q}}e7 (15...\textit{\textbf{d}}4 16.c3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e6 17.\textit{\textbf{Q}}f3 \textit{\textbf{f}}4 18.\textit{\textbf{Q}}b4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c7 19.\textit{\textbf{Q}}d1±
13.f3!?

Black’s bishop on e4 is very unpleasant, therefore, White’s desire to oust it from there is easily understandable.

It would not be so good for him to play with the same idea the move 13.\texttt{Qe2}, due to 13...\texttt{Bxc5} 14.\texttt{Bxe4} dxe4 15.\texttt{Qxe4} \texttt{Qf7} 16.\texttt{Qxf7} \texttt{Qxf7} 17...\texttt{0-0-0} 18.\texttt{exf7} \texttt{Rf8}, Antipov – Mamedyarov, Dubai 2014, 19.\texttt{Re1}\pm

13.\texttt{Bxe3}?

Black’s bishop on e4 is very unpleasant, therefore, White’s desire to oust it from there is easily understandable.

It would not be so good for him to play with the same idea the move 13.\texttt{Qe2}, due to 13...\texttt{Bxc5} 14.\texttt{Bxe4} dxe4 15.\texttt{Qxe4} \texttt{Qf7} 16.\texttt{Qxf7} \texttt{Qxf7} 17...\texttt{0-0-0} 18.\texttt{exf7} \texttt{Rf8}, Antipov – Mamedyarov, Dubai 2014, 19.\texttt{Re1}\pm

13.\texttt{Bxe3}!

It is also promising for him to opt for 13.\texttt{Bxe3}?! with the idea to preserve in advance the important c5-pawn, which restricts Black’s possibilities. 13...\texttt{Qc7} (The immediate transfer of Black’s dark-squared bishop to the a1-h8 diagonal with the move 13...\texttt{Bg7} would not solve the problems for him, for example: 14.\texttt{f3} \texttt{Bxd3} 15.\texttt{Bxd3} \texttt{Qxe5} 16.\texttt{Qxe5} \texttt{Qxe5} 17.\texttt{f4\pm} \texttt{Bxb2}?! 18.\texttt{Bb1} \texttt{d4} 19.\texttt{c2} \texttt{c3} 20.\texttt{fxg5} \texttt{Bxd2} 21.\texttt{Bxd2} \texttt{Bxe5} 22.\texttt{Bd4}\pm Paichadze – Rodshtein, Yerevan 2014; 20.\texttt{Bxc3}?! \texttt{Bxc3} 21.\texttt{Bxc3} \texttt{Bxd1} 22.\texttt{Bxd1} \texttt{Be8} 23.\texttt{fxg5} \texttt{hxg5} 24.\texttt{Bd3}\pm) 14.\texttt{Bf2} \texttt{g4} 15.\texttt{Bxd4} \texttt{f4} 16.\texttt{Bd4} \texttt{exf4} 17.\texttt{Bxf4} \texttt{Bd7} (17...\texttt{Bxe5} 18.\texttt{Bf2}\pm) 18.\texttt{Bf2} \texttt{d5}, Zawadzka – Feuerstack, Wroclaw 2010, 19.\texttt{Bb1}\pm

13...\texttt{Bxc5}+ 14.\texttt{Kh1} \texttt{Bf5}

The trade of the bishops 14...\texttt{Bxd3} 15.\texttt{Bxd3} would enable White to bring his knight into the actions with tempo. 15...\texttt{Bb6} 16.\texttt{f4} \texttt{gxh4} 17.\texttt{xf4}\pm Hernandez Estevez – Aranaz, Linares 2013.

15.\texttt{Bxf5} \texttt{exf5} 16.\texttt{f4}

It would be rather careless for White to try the ambitious move 16.\texttt{Bd3} and despite the fact that his knight joins in the actions with tempo, he would have problems with the development of his queenside. 16...\texttt{Bb6} (16...\texttt{e7}?! 17.\texttt{f4} \texttt{g4} 18.\texttt{b4} \texttt{d4} 19.\texttt{b5} \texttt{a5} 20.\texttt{Be1} \texttt{Cc8}\in Hosseinzadeh – Ghaem Maghami, Zahedan 2012) 17.\texttt{f4} \texttt{g4} 18.\texttt{Bb2} \texttt{h5} 19.\texttt{Bb4} \texttt{h4}\in Karjakin – Nisipeanu, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

16...\texttt{g4}
17.c3!

White should not be in a hurry to develop his knight to d3, since it might be handy on the c2-square as well, while the d3-square might be very appropriate for his queen. Now, he plans a very favourable regrouping of his forces with: \( \text{N}e1-c2, \text{Q}d1-d3 \) and \( \text{B}c1-e3 \), enabling him to complete the development of his queenside.

17...d4

White can develop powerful initiative after 17...\( \text{Q}d7 \) 18.\( \text{N}c2 \) 0-0-0 19.b4 \( \text{B}b6 \) 20.a4 ±

18.\( \text{Q}d3 \) \( \text{Q}d7 \) 19.\( \text{N}c2 \) \( \text{dxc}3 \) 20.\( \text{W}xc3 \) ± (with the idea \( \text{B}c1-e3 \)) – His space advantage and more elastic pawn-structure provide him with superior chances.

B2) 9...\( \text{c7} \)

Black prepares castling queenside with this move, as well as the undermining pawn-break c6-c5, attacking the enemy e5-pawn in the process.

10.\( \text{N}d3 \)

White needs to develop his pieces and to fortify his position in the centre. He can acquire additional space only later. About 10.\( \text{h5} \) – see Nakar – Sjugirov, Jerusalem 2015 (game 10).

10.\( \text{d}2 \) c5 11.c4 \( \text{dxc}4 \) 12.\( \text{W}xc4 \) a6∞

It would be premature for White to try here 10.f4, since Black will have the pleasant choice between the immediate move 10...c5!? 11.\( \text{dxc}5 \) (11.c3 c4!? 12.\( \text{d}2 \) gxf4 13.b3∞ Ponkratov – Iordachescu, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011) 11...\( \text{e}4 \) 12.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \)??∞, as well as 10...0-0-0!?∞, with the idea 11.fxg5?! hxg5 12.g4 f6! (12...\( \text{g}6 \) 13.\( \text{W}xg5 \) c5 14.c3± Haslinger – Turov, Sevilla 2014) 13.gxf5 \( \text{xf5} \) 14.\( \text{g}4 \) fxe5 15.dxe5 \( \text{dxe}5 \) 16.\( \text{xf}5 \) exf5 17.\( \text{W}xg5 \) \( \text{d}6 \)∞

10...b6

It would be premature for Black to castle here 10...0-0-0, Matinian – Bocharov, Izhevsk 2012, in view of 11.\( \text{dc}5 \)!
12...c5 13.dxc5 and he would be too slow with the development of his kingside initiative.


11.Be3 g7 12.f4


12...c5 13.dxc5

13...gxf4


C) 8...h7

Black retreats his bishop, with the idea to develop his knight to f5, or to the g6-square. Still, such a slow development may lead to tragic consequences for him in an open position. Here, the game is still just maneuvering, so this type of play is possible. One of the basic dangers for Black may arise when he plays e7-f5 and then f8-e7, because after the series of moves – g2-g4, f5-h4, f3xh4, e7xh4 and f2-f4, his position may turn out to be clearly worse. I would also like to mention that with a black knight on f5, White should not have in mind the move g2-g4, before Black’s bishop has been developed on e7.

9.\textit{d}2!? 

White has also some other promising possibilities, for example: 9.a4!?

I plan to analyse this natural and powerful move – 9.d2!? I like it not only because White has the possibility to play at some moment b3-a5, or to provoke Black after d2-a5 to play the move b7-b6, weakening his queenside, since it deprives his knight of the b6-square, but also because before forcing the issue, White has the possibility to make another useful waiting move – c1.
We will deal now with: C1) 9...Ng6 and C2) 9...Nf5.

Black will still have problems after 9...Qc7 10.Rc1 Nc8 (10...g5, Solodovnichenko – Thejkumar, New Delhi 2009, 11.Ne1!? c5 12.c4 dxc4 13.Nxc4 Qc6 14.b5?!↑; 14...d3 cxd4 15.exh7 Qxh7 16.Nf3↑) 11.a5 b6 12.d2 b5, Dominguez Perez – Dreev, Sochi 2012, 13.a5! This important move blocks the advance of Black’s a7-pawn.

13...Qc8 14.d3 Nxd3 15.Bc4 Ne7 16.Bd2 Qc8 17.a5 Qb8 18.Ne1 0–0 19.g4↑

Black cannot achieve much with the inclusion of the moves 9...c8 10.c1, for example: 10...Ng6 11.c4 dxc4 12.Bxc4 Qe7 13.d3 Qb6 14.a5 (14.a5!? Qd7 15.b4↑ Alimov – Berezhnov, Saratov 2011) 14...Qd7 15.g3 0–0 16.h4±

White should not be afraid of 9...a5, since he can counter that with the standard move 10.a4, for example: 10...Ng6 (10...c8 11.Ne1±) 11.Ne1 b6 12.c4 (12.Nc1!? Qc7 13.c4 0–0 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.b5±) 12...dxc4 13.Nxc4 Qc7 14.Nc1 (14.Qe2 0–0 15.g3!↑ Bar – Spraggett, Caleta 2014) 14...0–0 15.Qe3± Vachier Lagrave – Magem Badals, Linares 2013.

C1) 9...Ng6 10.c1!?

This is an important preparatory move, but is not White’s only resource.

He can also play immediately 10.c4!? dxc4 11.Bxc4 Qe7 (11...c7. Now, Black will hardly manage to transfer his knight on g6 to a more favourable placement. 12.Ne1 – see 10.Ne1.) 12.b4 a5 13.d6 Qd5 14.Qc5±

White can also emphasize the rather awkward placement of the enemy knight on g6 with the line: 10.g3!? Qe7 11.h4 0–0 12.c4 f6, Milliet – Bollengier, Pau 2012, 13.Nc3±, or 12...dxc4 13.Qa5±

10...Qe7

White maintains a stable advantage following 10...b6 11.Qa5 Qd7, Andriasian – Ovetchkin, Abu Dhabi 2009, 12.h4 Qe7 13.g3±, with the idea 13...0–0 14.h5 Qh8 15.d3 Qxd3 16.cxd3 f5 17.exf6 Qxf6 18.Qe5±
11.c4

After 11...\textit{c5} \textit{b8} 12.c4, Black has at his disposal an important tactical resource – 12...\textit{f4}!, which provides him with a quite acceptable position. 13.\textit{xf4} \textit{xa5} 14.\textit{d2} \textit{b4} 15.\textit{exd5} \textit{cxd5} 16.\textit{xb4} \textit{xb4} 17.\textit{c7} \textit{xb2} 18.\textit{c1} \textit{xc1} 19.\textit{fxc1}, Khairullin – Rodshtein, Moscow 2008, 19...\textit{b6}!, with the idea \textit{a8}. He should not be afraid of the loss of his casting rights after the possible move \textit{c2-b5+}, because it is much more important for him to oust the enemy rook on \textit{c7} away from the penultimate rank. 20.\textit{b5+ f8} 21.\textit{d2 g5} 22.\textit{b3 a8!} 23.\textit{d7 b6=}

11...\textit{dx4} 12.\textit{xc4}

12.\textit{a5 f4!} 13.\textit{xc4 d3=}

12...\textit{0-0}
13.\textbf{d}3!\

White removes his bishop in advance against the possible attack \textbf{d}7-b6.

He can also try a plan, which we have recommended in our notes to White’s move ten – 13.g3!? \textbf{e}8 (13...\textbf{b}6 14.d3 \textbf{d}7 15.h4 \textbf{f}8 16.a5 \textbf{f}8 17.xh7+ xh7 18.f2 \textbf{d}5 19.e2 \textbf{d}7 20.e4 \textbf{b}5 21.xb5 cxb5 22.axb6 axb6 23.a3\pm A.Kovacevic – A.Bykhovsky, Cappelle-la-Grande 2014) 14.e1 \textbf{f}8 15.a5 \textbf{b}8, Malakhov – Jobava, Kallithea 2008, 16.d3\pm.

13...a5 (13...\textbf{b}6, Wunderlich – Napalkov, ICCF 2008, 14.g3\pm) 14.a4 \textbf{b}4 15.xb4 axb4 16.a5 \textbf{e}7 17.xh7+ xh7 18.fd2 \textbf{d}5 19.e4\pm So – Margvelashvili, Kazan 2013.

\textbf{C2)} 9...\textbf{f}5
10. \textit{c1}

The move 10.c4 is also interesting here, but leads to rather unclear consequences. 10...dxc4 11.\textit{a5} \textit{c8} (11...\textit{b8}?! 12.\textit{xc4} \textit{c5} 11...b5 12.g4 \textit{h4} 13.\textit{xc6} \textit{b6} 14.\textit{exh4} \textit{xc6} 15.a4 a6 16.\textit{f5}! \textit{c8}, with the idea 16...\textit{c8} 17.axb5 axb5 18.\textit{f3} \textit{b6} 19.\textit{a5} \textit{b8} 20.d5!! exf5 21.d6 \textit{xd6} 22.exd6 0-0 23.g5! \textit{hxg5} 24.\textit{e1} g4 25.\textit{d5}±) 12.\textit{xc4} \textit{b6}, J.Sanchez – Patuzzo, Nice 2009, 13.b3 \textit{d7} 14.\textit{a5} \textit{d5} 15.g4 b5! 16.bxc4 \textit{xc6} 17.bxc4 \textit{c4} 18.\textit{fxe6} \textit{xe6} 10.\textit{d3}?! \textit{g6} (10...h5?! 11.\textit{g5} \textit{g6} 12.\textit{h3} \textit{e7} 13.\textit{e2}± Kabanov – Shimanov, Pardubice 2006; 10...\textit{e7} 11.g4 \textit{h4} 12.\textit{exh7} \textit{xf3} 13.\textit{xf3} \textit{exh7} 14.\textit{d3}±) 11.\textit{xe2} \textit{e7} 12.g4 \textit{h4} 13.\textit{exh4} \textit{xd3} (13...\textit{axh4}?! 14.\textit{xg6} \textit{fxg6} 15.\textit{d3}±) 14.\textit{xd3} \textit{exh4} 15.f4±, with the idea f4-f5, Hladecek – Muller-Tupler, ICCF 2009.

10...\textit{e7}

Black may have greater problems if he postpones the development of his kingside after 10...\textit{b6} 11.\textit{a5} \textit{b8} 12.\textit{d3} \textit{g6} 13.\textit{e2} \textit{h4} 14.\textit{exh4} \textit{xd3} 15.\textit{xd3} \textit{xb4} 16.b3 \textit{e7} 17.\textit{f4}± Gharamian – Michiels, Belgium 2010.
11.c4!?

This move leads to positions in which Black’s camp looks solid, but is cramped, so White’s chances are noticeably better.

It is also good for him to continue here with 11.g4!? Nh4 12.Nxh4 Bxh4 13.f4 0-0 (Black’s king will remain stranded in the centre after 13...Qc7?! 14.Bb4+, while his castling kingside will be very difficult and castling queenside will be just precarious, Airapetian – Ponomarev, Serpukhov 2009; 13...c7?! 14.f5+ g5? 15.d3 c7 16.a5 b6 17.e1 0-0-0 18.g3 g8 19.f6 f8 20.c4+– Wang Hao – Darban, Vishakapatnam 2008) 14.Be3 (14.f5?! c5! 15.xc5 xc5 16.dxc5 c7) 14...f6 15.c4±

11...dxc4

Black fails to solve his problems after 11...0-0 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.a5 b8 14.a4 g6 15.h3 e8 16.b5 b6 17.b3 f8, Gargatagli – Sanchez Guirado, Barbera del Valles 2013, 18.g3± White’s space advantage and his more actively placed pieces provide him with excellent chances of developing powerful initiative.

12.a5

Naturally, this move is stronger than 12.xc4. White exploits the possibility to transfer his knight to a more active position (the c4-square), freeing in the process the b3-square for his queen, moreover that the road forward of his b-pawn has been opened.
12...c3

12...b8 13.\(\text{xc}4\), with the idea 13...\(\text{b}6\) 14.a5±

12...c8, Yemelin – Figura, Berlin 2009, 13.g4 \(\text{h}4\) 14.\(\text{hx}4\) \(\text{hx}4\) 15.\(\text{xc}4\) e7 16.a5 0-0 17.f4±

12...c7 13.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{b}6\) (13...0-0 14.\(\text{b}3\)±) 14.a5 0-0 15.\(\text{b}3\)± Ferreira – Padeiro, Torres Vedras 2011.

12...b8, Salgado Lopez – Kantarji, Jerusalem 2015, 13.g4 \(\text{h}4\) 14.\(\text{hx}4\) \(\text{hx}4\) 15.\(\text{xc}4\) e7 16.f4±

13.\(\text{xc}3\) b8 14.a4 0-0

15.a4!?
With this move White consolidates his space advantage on the queenside.

It seems also good for him to opt here for 15...a5!?↑, with the idea to clarify the situation on the queenside.

15...b6 16.a5±

Black is doomed to a passive defence. It would not work for him to try, for example the seemingly active move 16...c5?, in view of 17.dxc5 ♘xd1 18.♖fxd1 ♖xa4 19.g4+– Kotenko – Ivaschenko, Armavir 2010.
Chapter 8

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3

This is a logical developing move, creating the threat to capture on c5.

6...Be7

This is a seldom played reply for Black.

His main responses here are 6...Qb6, 6...Qd7 and 6...cxd4 and they will be analysed in Chapters 9-13.

Black should better refrain from 6...Qc6?!, since regaining his pawn after 7.dxc5±, may prove to be very problematic, because it would be a disaster for him to play 7...Qa5+ 8.c3 Qxc5? 9.b4+-

It is also bad for him to opt for 6...c4?! 7.b3 b5 (After 7...cxb3 8.axb3±, the opening of the a-file will be in favour of White, because he will castle later and will increase his pressure in the centre with the help of the pawn-advance c2-c4.) 8.a4±

7.dxc5

Capturing of this pawn is White’s most principled reaction.

He would achieve much less with 7.c4 dxc4 8.Qc3 Qc6 9.dxc5 Qd5 10.Qxd5 Qxd5 11.0-0 Qd3 12.Qc1 Qd8= Shirov – Anand, Dortmund 1996, as well as following 7.0-0 Qc6 (7...d7 8.Qd2 – see Chapter 10; 7...cxd4 8.Qxd4 – see Chapter 12) 8.dxc5 Qd7 – see 7.dxc5 Qd7 8.0-0 Qc6.
7...\( \text{\textit{d7}} \)

Black should better avoid 7...\( \text{\textit{d6}} \)!, in view of 8.c4! and he would have to lose additional time to regain his pawn.

8...\( \text{\textit{a5}} \) (After Black's alternatives, he suffers material loses without obtaining any compensation for them: 8...dxc4 9.\( \text{\textit{xd8}} + \text{\textit{xd8}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{xa3}} \) \( \text{\textit{a6}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{b5}} \), with the ideas \( \text{\textit{e2xe4}} \) and \( \text{\textit{b5-d6}} \); 9...\( \text{\textit{xd8}} \), Adams – Brunner, Germany 1994, 10.\( \text{\textit{a3}} \) \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{e1}} \) \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{xc3}} \) \( \text{\textit{e8}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{c4}} \); after 8...d4, White has the pleasant choice between 9.\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \)# and 9.\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{c6}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{xe5}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{c8}} \) 14.\( \text{\textit{a4}} \) 9.\( \text{\textit{d2}} \). He should exploit his opponent’s lag in development and not be greedy to win material. (For example, after 9.\( \text{\textit{d2}} \) \( \text{\textit{dxc4}} \), Demers – Li Zhichao, Red Deer 2003, 10.\( \text{\textit{xa5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xa5}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{a3}} \) \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{b5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe5}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{c7}} + \text{\textit{e7}} \) 14.\( \text{\textit{xa8}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe3}} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{fxe3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xa8}} \), White’s position becomes very dubious.) 9...\( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{cxd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{exd5}} \) (10...\( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 12.0-0 \( \text{\textit{e7}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{a4}} \) 0-0 14.\( \text{\textit{fd1}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{a3}} \) \( \text{\textit{e7}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{c1}} \) \( \text{\textit{b6}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{b5}} \) \( \text{\textit{a6}} \) 14.\( \text{\textit{d6}} + \text{\textit{xd6}} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{exd6}} \)
8. \textcolor{red}{\text{N}}d4!?

This is a solid move, but White has some alternatives as well.

Following 8.0-0, Black manages to cope with his difficulties in the opening, not effortlessly, though... 8...\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}c6 (Or 8...\textcolor{red}{\text{g}}g4?! 9.\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}bd2 \textcolor{red}{\text{c}}c6 10.b4!±, with the idea 10...\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}xb4 11.\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}b1 \textcolor{red}{\text{c}}c6 12.\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}xb7 \textcolor{red}{\text{w}}c8 13.\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}6 \textcolor{red}{\text{c}}b8 14.\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}4 \textcolor{red}{\text{x}}a6 15.\textcolor{red}{\text{x}}g4 \textcolor{red}{\text{x}}xc5 16.c4±) 9.c4 dxc4 10.\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}a3

After 10...c3, White has an attractive counter argument – 11.\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}b3! (it would be weaker for White to choose here 11.bxc3 \textcolor{red}{\text{x}}xc5 12.\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}c4 0-0 13.\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}d4 \textcolor{red}{\text{w}}c7!±?) with the idea to develop powerful initiative following 11...exb2 12.\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}ad1 b1=\textcolor{red}{\text{w}} 13.\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}xb1 \textcolor{red}{\text{w}}c7 14.\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}c3 a6 (14...\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}xc5 15.\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}c4±) 15.\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}4 \textcolor{red}{\text{g}}6 16.\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}xg6 hxg6 17.\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}4 \textcolor{red}{\text{x}}e5 18.g3†; even after Black’s relatively best response 11...\textcolor{red}{\text{x}}xc5, he cannot solve his problems either: 12.\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}xc5 \textcolor{red}{\text{N}}xc5 13.\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}xc3 \textcolor{red}{\text{d}}d7 14.\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}c4 0-0 15.\textcolor{red}{\text{R}}ad1 \textcolor{red}{\text{b}}e4 16.\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}d4 \textcolor{red}{\text{d}}d5 17.\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}xc6 bxc6 18.\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}4±

10...\textcolor{red}{\text{x}}xc5 11.\textcolor{red}{\text{N}}xc5 \textcolor{red}{\text{d}}xc5 12.\textcolor{red}{\text{x}}xc4 0-0 13.\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}c1! \textcolor{red}{\text{d}}d3! After this knight-sortie, Black can rely on reaching an approximately equal position (13...\textcolor{red}{\text{g}}g4 14.\textcolor{red}{\text{Ed}}1 \textcolor{red}{\text{w}}c7 15.\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}c3 \textcolor{red}{\text{d}}d7 16.h3 \textcolor{red}{\text{h}}5 17.\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}d4 \textcolor{red}{\text{xd}}4 18.\textcolor{red}{\text{xd}}4 \textcolor{red}{\text{x}}e2 19.\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}xe2± White dominates over the d6-outpost and can develop his initiative on the kingside, so he maintains a slight but stable advantage, Khalifman – Dreev, Elista 1998; 17.g4!? \textcolor{red}{\text{g}}g6 18.a3†)
16...\( \text{N} \)xe4\( \text{=} \) Wang Zili – Karpov, Beijing 1998\( \text{; 16...\text{xc}1} 17.\text{xc}1 \text{xe}4 18.\text{d}d6 \text{d}d5 19.\text{x}c6 \text{x}c6 (Black’s road to equality is much more complicated following 19...\text{b}c6!? 20.\text{b}3 a5 21.\text{c}4 \text{fb}8 22.\text{b}2 \text{b}4 23.\text{f}3 \text{f}6 24.\text{xf}6 \text{gf}6 25.\text{a}4 \text{f}7 26.\text{f}2 \text{e}7 27.\text{c}3 \text{d}6 28.\text{d}2 \text{h}5= Kryvoruchko – Miton, Lublin 2012; 24.\text{e}1?) 20.\text{d}4 \text{f}6=\)

8.c3!? This is a very interesting move. It is not so ambitious, but White manages to change the pawn-structure and can rely on maintaining long-term initiative thanks to his pawn-majority on the queenside. 8...\( \text{c}6 9.\text{b}4 (White managed to
equalise, but with great difficulties following 9.\( \text{d}4 \text{xc5} \) 10.0-0 0-0 11.\( \text{xf5} \text{exf5} \) 12.\( \text{xd7} \text{xb2} \) 15.\( \text{h}8 \text{xe3} \) 16.\( \text{e}6 \text{e5} \) 18.\( \text{h}1 \text{g}4 \) 20.\( \text{f}3 \text{e5} \) 21.\( \text{f}4= \text{Karjakin – Morozevich, Moscow 2011.} \)

9...\( \text{dxe5} \) (9...a5 10.\( \text{d}4 \text{g}6 \) 11.\( \text{f}4 \text{xb4} \) 12.\( \text{xc6} \text{bxc6} \) 13.\( \text{f}6 \text{f6} \) 14.0-0 \( \text{fxe5} \) 15.\( \text{xe5} \) 16.\( \text{b}8 \) 17.\( \text{c}3 \) 18.\( \text{b}5= \); 9...\( \text{exe5} \) 10.\( \text{d}4 \) 11.\( \text{xb1} \text{e7} \) 12.0-0 0-0 13.\( \text{f}4= \text{Qin Kanying – Xu Yuanyuan, Beijing 1997} \) 10.\( \text{d}4 \) 11.\( \text{g}6 \) (White obtains a stable advantage after 10...\( \text{d}4 \) 11.\( \text{c}6 \) 12.\( \text{a}3 \) 13.\( \text{e}7 \) 14.0-0; or 11...\( \text{c}4 \) 12.\( \text{d}2 \) 13.\( \text{a}4= \) 14.\( \text{f}3 \) 15.\( \text{e}6 \) 16.\( \text{f}3 \) 17.\( \text{b}5 \) 18.\( \text{e7} \) 19.\( \text{d}2= \text{White has long-lasting initiative thanks to his space advantage and a solid position in the centre.} \)

8...\( \text{xc5} \)

Black’s alternatives provide White with additional possibilities, connected with preserving his c5-pawn.
Black may pay a dear price for capturing the enemy central e5-pawn after 8...\(\text{c}\)xe5 9.\(\text{c}\)c3 (9.\(\text{f}\)f4!? \(\text{c}\)c6 10.\(\text{b}\)b5 \(\text{g}\)g6 11.\(\text{e}\)d6 \(\text{g}\)g5? 12.g4 \(\text{e}\)e4 13.f3−− Bologan – Asrian, Krasnodar 1997; 11...\(\text{x}\)xd6 12.\(\text{x}\)xd6+ \(\text{f}\)f8, Bologan – Alavkin, Kstovo 1997, 13.\(\text{d}\)d2?!±) 9...\(\text{g}\)g6 (9...a6 10.0-0 \(\text{c}\)c6 11.\(\text{a}\)a4!?!; 11.\(\text{f}\)f3!? \(\text{g}\)g6 12.\(\text{a}\)a4 e5, Minasian – Asrian, Yerevan 1996, 13.\(\text{a}\)xc6! bxc6 14.\(\text{b}\)b6 \(\text{a}\)a7 15.c3±) 10.h4! h5 11.\(\text{f}\)f4 \(\text{c}\)c6 12.\(\text{x}\)xe5 \(\text{x}\)xe5 13.\(\text{b}\)b5+ \(\text{d}\)d7 14.\(\text{e}\)e2 \(\text{xc}\)5 15.\(\text{e}\)xe6−− Black would not solve his problems with 8...\(\text{g}\)g6 9.0-0 (9.b4!? \(\text{x}\)xe5 10.\(\text{d}\)d2†) 9...\(\text{x}\)xe5 (9...\(\text{c}\)c5 10.\(\text{d}\)d2 a6 11.\(\text{b}\)b3±) 10.\(\text{a}\)a3 (White has excellent prospects of developing initiative following 10.f4!? \(\text{c}\)c6 11.\(\text{e}\)e3 \(\text{f}\)f5 12.\(\text{x}\)xf5 \(\text{x}\)xf5 13.\(\text{d}\)d2 h6 14.\(\text{f}\)f3 \(\text{e}\)e7 15.\(\text{d}\)d3†) 10...a6 11.c4†, with the idea 11...\(\text{c}\)c6 12.b4 e5 13.\(\text{c}\)xc6 bxc6 14.cxd5 \(\text{c}\)xd5 15.\(\text{c}\)c3 \(\text{e}\)e7 16.\(\text{c}\)c4 \(\text{c}\)c7 17.\(\text{b}\)b6+-

9.\(\text{c}\)d2 \(\text{g}\)g6 10.\(\text{e}\)e2 \(\text{d}\)d7 11.f4±

White has succeeded in fortifying reliably his position in the centre (the e5-pawn) and has taken under control the d4-square and all this provides him with a slight edge.
Chapter 9

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Bf3 e6 5.Qe2 c5 6.Qe3 Qb6

White is trying to develop his pieces as quickly as possible and to seize the initiative, while Black is attacking the b2-pawn.

The move 7.c4?! is not good for White at all. 

7...Qxb2 8.0-0 (8.Nbd2 Ne7 9.0-0 Qb6 – see 8.0-0) 8...Qe7 (8...Qxa1? 9.Bb3) 9.Bd2 Bc6 10.Qb3 dxc4 11.Qxc4 Qd8! Black protects additionally the important d5-square. 12.Qxc5 Qd5. He has occupied the key d5-outpost and completes effortlessly his development. 13.Qd3 Qa3 14.Qc1 Qe7 – Black has solved the problems with his development and has obtained better prospects, Kosteniuk – Kacheishvili, Las Vegas 2010.

Following 7.Qc3, Black can reduce the tension against the c5-square with A) 7...c4, or can continue in a principled way B) 7...Qxb2, or can try to complete rapidly the development of his queenside and to increase the pressure against the enemy d4-pawn with the move C) 7...Qe6.

It seems too slow for Black to choose 7...g4?! 8.0-0 c4 9.b3 cxb3 10.axb3 Qe7 11.a4 Qc7 12.c4± Kiik – Kallio, Helsinki 1996, as well as 7...a6 8.a4 (8.h4?!?, with the idea Qxf5) 8...Qa5+ 9.c3 c4 (9...Qxd4 10.Qxd4± Qg6 11.Qxe6+, with the idea to capture the enemy queen after Qe3-b6, Illner – Ahling, Ruhrgebiet 1999) 10.Qh4 (10.b4?! Qd8 11.0-0 h6 12.g3 Qc6 13.h4±) 10...Qe4 11.f3 Qg6 12.b4 Qc7 13.0-0± White plans to increase the tension on the kingside, preparing the standard pawn-offensive f3-f4, g2-g4 and f4-f5. Black is practically deprived of any counterplay.

After 7...d7?!, White has the resource 8.Qb5!, threatening to capture on d7 and to keep the enemy king in the centre. 8...Qd8 9.0-0 c4 (Black’s pawn-sacrifice would be hardly justified following 9...a6 10.Qxc5 Qc7 11.Qxd7+ Qxd7 12.a4± – White has a material advantage and a superior position. He has a better development and a space advantage; 10...Qxc5?? 11.Qxd7+ Qxd7 12.a4+) 10.a4 Qb4 11.Qh4 Qc7 12.Qg5 Qg6 13.a5 Qxa5 14.Qa4 Qb4 15.Qa2 a6
16. ∆xb4 ∆xb4 17.c3 ∆b6 18.f4 ∆d3 19.∆f2†, with the idea 19...h6 20.∆xe7 ∆xe7 21.f5,

A) 7...c4

Black has increased his space advantage on the queenside, but has reduced the tension against the important d4-square and this is much more important. This plan cannot be refuted immediately, but it can hardly be termed as principled. White seizes the initiative for long. In addition, Black will have some problems with the development of his kingside.

8. ∆b1!

White solves radically the problem with the protection of his b2-pawn and is ready to exploit the advantages of his position. He has extra space on the kingside, a superior development and a reliable position in the centre. Later, he can play b2-b3 under favourable circumstances and seize the initiative on the queenside and his rook will be very helpful on the b1-square.

The move 8.b3 seems too slow and Black solves effortlessly his problems in the opening. 8...∆b4 9.∆d2 ∆a5 10.∆a4 ∆c7! (Here, Black should better postpone the development of his queen’s knight – 10...∆d7 11.∆xb4 ∆xb4+ 12.∆d2 ∆xd2+ 13.∆xd2 b5 14.∆c5 ∆e7 15.∆b7± and as we will see later, his knight will be handy on the d7-square in order to protect his c5-pawn, or can occupy a more active placement on c6; 10...∆xd2+ 11.∆xd2 ∆c6 12.∆c5±; 10...∆c6 11.∆xb4 ∆xb4+ 12.c3±, with the idea 12...∆a5 13.bxc4 dxc4 14.0-0 ∆ge7 15.∆c5† and Black’s knight turns out to be misplaced on c6, since it would have been better placed on the d7-square.) 11.∆xb4 (The misplacement of the knight on a4 hurts White after 11.c3 ∆a3 12.0-0 ∆d7!!∞, with the idea b7-b5, or 12...b5!? 13.∆c5 0-0∞) 11...∆xb4+, Miciak – Marko, ICCF 2007, 12.∆d2 ∆bc6 13.c3 ∆a3=}
Black’s desire is easily understandable. He wishes to complete his development as quickly as possible. Still, his last move cannot solve all his problems.

It seems like a loss of time if he tries 8...\texttt{c6}?! 9.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g6} 10.\texttt{xg6} \texttt{hxg6} 11.\texttt{b4} 12.\texttt{d2} or 8...a6?! 9.\texttt{h4} \texttt{e7} 10.0-0 \texttt{d7} 11.\texttt{g4} \texttt{g6} 12.f4\texttt{±} Mietzner – Timme, Germany 2006.

8...h6. Black prepares the h7-square for the retreat of his light-squared bishop, saving it from being exchanged if White chooses a manoeuvre, which is a part of his plan – \texttt{f3}-h4. Still, Black is helpless against the advance of his opponent’s f-pawn... 9.0-0 \texttt{b4} (9...\texttt{c6}? 10.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{dxc4} 11.d5 \texttt{a6} 12.dxc6\texttt±} Tukhvatullin – Aplaev, Ufa 2009) 10.\texttt{h4} \texttt{h7} (10...\texttt{e7} 11.f4\texttt) 11.f4 \texttt{e7} 12.\texttt{g4} 0-0 13.f5,

8...\texttt{c6} 9.a3?! White prevents the development of his opponent’s bishop to the b4-square and impedes considerably the development of Black’s kingside. (White should not be afraid of the bishop-sortie \texttt{f8-b4} however, and should try to develop quickly his kingside initiative – 9.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g6} 10.0-0\texttt±; 9.0-0?!\texttt†, with the idea \texttt{h4}. 9...\texttt{b4}?! 10.\texttt{xc4}±).
Following 9...\(\text{Q}e7\)? 10.b3!±, Black loses his control over the d6-square and will be unprepared for the opening of the game on the queenside, for example: 10...\(\text{cxb3}\) 11.\(\text{Rxb3}\) \(\text{Qc7}\)? 12.\(\text{Nbd5}\)+

9...\(\text{Qd8}\). After this move, White’s hands are free for the development of his initiative. 10.0-0 \(a6\) 11.\(\text{e1}\) \(h6\) 12.\(g4\) \(h7\) 13.\(f4\) \(\text{Qe7}\) 14.\(\text{f2}\)+, with the idea \(f4-f5\) and his kingside initiative will become even more powerful.

Black’s attempt to prevent the move b2-b3 with the help of the line: 9...\(\text{Qa5}\) 10.0-0 \(b5\) (10...\(\text{h6}\) 11.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{cxb3}\) 12.\(\text{exb3}\) \(\text{a6}\) 13.\(\text{b1}\) \(b5\) 14.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{b6}\) 15.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{b4}\) 16.\(\text{a2}\) \(\text{b8}\) 17.\(\text{c1}\) \(\text{c8}\) 18.\(\text{a1}\)±) 11.\(\text{h4}\) \(g6\) 12.\(g3\)!± \(\text{Qe7}\) (12...\(\text{e7}\) 13.\(\text{g2}\) \(h6\) 14.\(\text{f4}\) \(h7\) 15.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{d8}\) 16.\(\text{h3}\)+) 13.\(\text{g4}\)± (with the idea \(f2-f4-f5\)), would only lead to even greater problems for him due to his lag in development.

9.0-0 \(\text{xc3}\)

Black is trying to facilitate his defence by exchanging pieces. He weakens his opponent’s queenside pawn-structure in the process, but will hardly manage to exploit this, since White’s rook on b1 joins in the actions with a great effect.

Black had no other acceptable alternatives anyway... 9...\(\text{e7}\) 10.\(\text{h4}\); 9...\(\text{c6}\) 10.\(\text{xc4}\)! \(\text{dxc4}\) 11.\(d5\)+

10.\(\text{xc3}\)
10...\textit{\textbf{Q}}a6

10...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c6 11.\textit{\textbf{Q}}h4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e7 12.\textit{\textbf{Q}}g5±

10...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c7 11.\textit{\textbf{Q}}h4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c6, Korchmar – Ledin, Naberezhnye Chelny 2010 (After 11...\textit{\textbf{Q}}g6 12.f4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e7 13.g4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e4 14.f5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}bc6 15.\textit{\textbf{Q}}d3?!†, White develops powerful initiative. 15...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xd3 16.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xd3 0-0 17.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xe4 dxe4 18.f6†; 13...\textit{\textbf{Q}}d7? 14.f5 exf5 15.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xf5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf5 16.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xf5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf5 17.\textit{\textbf{Q}}g4 g6 18.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xf5 gxf5 19.\textit{\textbf{Q}}h5+– Forgacs – Magyar, Hungary 2012) 12.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xf5 exf5 13.\textit{\textbf{Q}}c1± – His two bishops and extra space provide White with long lasting initiative.

11.\textit{\textbf{Q}}h4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e7

The arising position is obviously in favour of White. He has a considerable space advantage, a better development and a bishop-pair with excellent possibilities to develop initiative on the kingside.
12. \textit{Bg5}

It would be useful for White to improve the placement of his dark-squared bishop before the beginning of his pawn-offensive on the kingside.

It seems natural and quite logical for him to try the aggressive move 12.g4 here, since White has completed his development and can begin an attack on the kingside. 12...\textit{Bg6} 13.f4 \textit{Be4} 14.f5 \textit{Nbc6} 15.\textit{Bf3}!? (He should not be in a hurry to clarify the situation on the kingside with the move 15.f6, because after 15...\textit{gxf6} 16.\textit{Rxf6} \textit{Rg8} 17.\textit{Qf1} \textit{Nd8}?, this may turn out to be in favour of Black, Tukhvatullin – Galin, Ufa 2008; 16.b6 17.\textit{Qf1} \textit{Nd8}=. Zivkovic – Ljubinkovic, Novi Sad 2008.) 15...0-0-0 16.\textit{Bxe4} dxe4 17.\textit{Bd2} \textit{Qc6} 18.\textit{Qe1} e3 19.\textit{Qxe3} \textit{Qxa2} 20.\textit{Rc1} – The material is equal indeed, but Black still has serious problems.

12...\textit{Nbc6}

This is his only move, since he must try to complete rapidly his development.

13.\textit{Qxf5} \textit{Qxf5}

13...\textit{xf5} 14.a4 b6 15.\textit{Rc1}±
14.g4 Nf7 15.f4† (followed by f4-f5) – White has an overwhelming space advantage on the kingside.

B) 7...Qxb2

This is a consequent move, to say the least. After it, Black’s lag in development will become an even more important factor, but White must play very precisely to prove that his compensation for the sacrificed pawn is sufficient.

8.Qb5!

He begins an immediate counter offensive on the queenside. White creates the threat Qb5-c7† and prevents the retreat of the enemy queen to the b6-square.
The move $8.\text{b}1$ leads to a very complicated endgame. $8...\text{xb}1+$ ($8...\text{xc}3? 9.\text{d}2+\rightarrow$) 9.\text{xb}1 \text{c}4! 10.\text{xb}7 \text{c}6 11.\text{d}1!? (11.\text{d}2 \text{b}4 12.\text{b}1 \text{a}5\in \text{Inarkiev – Eljanov, Astrakhan 2010})$

11...\text{d}8!N This is Black’s simplest response. (Meanwhile, he would be close to equality even if he parts with his light-squared bishop after 11...\text{b}8!? 12.\text{xb}8+ \text{xb}8 13.\text{h}4 \text{g}6 14.\text{a}4, \text{Quesada Perez – Khairullin, Havana 2010}, 14...\text{h}6 15.\text{d}2 \text{c}6 16.g4 \text{d}7 17.\text{b}1 \text{b}4+ 18.\text{d}1 \text{e}7\in) 12.\text{c}7!? (12.\text{b}1 \text{h}6=) 12...\text{h}6 13.\text{c}1= – The queens have been exchanged and the position has been simplified considerably, so White’s edge has evaporated.

$8...\text{c}4$

This difficult decision is a consequence of the arising circumstances. Otherwise, Black must be constantly on the alert about White’s possibility – dxc5.
Black can hardly solve his problems with the rather optimistic line: 8...\textit{d7} 9.c4 \textit{c2} 10.\textit{xc1} \textit{xc1}+ 11.\textit{xc1} \textit{e4} 12.\textit{xc5}+– and despite the absence of the queens, Black’s king remains stranded in the centre and will become an easy prey.

8...\textit{a6}? 9.\textit{xc5}! The d6-square is so weak that Black’s position seems hopeless.

9...\textit{b4} 10.0-0 \textit{xc2} 11.\textit{d2}+–

9...\textit{xc2} 10.\textit{d6}+!? \textit{xd6} 11.\textit{d6}+–

9...\textit{h6} 10.\textit{d6}?! \textit{xd6} 11.\textit{d6}. This passed pawn plays the decisive role in this position in the majority of the variations, 11...0-0 12.\textit{b1} \textit{xa2} 13.\textit{a4}+–

9...\textit{xc2} 10.\textit{xc1} (10.\textit{d4} \textit{d4} 11.\textit{fxd4} \textit{d4} 12.\textit{d6}+ \textit{xd6} 13.\textit{d6}+–) 10...\textit{xc1}+ (10...\textit{b4}+ 11.\textit{d2} \textit{g6} 12.\textit{c6}+–) 11.\textit{xc1} \textit{a4} 12.\textit{d6}+ (12.0-0 \textit{h6} 13.\textit{c6}+– \textit{bxc6} 14.\textit{c3}) 12...\textit{xd6} 13.\textit{cxd6} \textit{d6} (13...\textit{b4} 14.\textit{ae7}+– Duppel – Heller, Germany 2002) 14.\textit{xa6} bxa6 15.\textit{d6} 0-0 16.\textit{d2} \textit{f5} 17.\textit{b1}+–

9...\textit{xc5} 10.0-0!? (White does not need to be in a hurry to win the exchange. 10.\textit{xc5} \textit{xc5} 11.\textit{b1} \textit{xc2} 12.\textit{xc2} \textit{xc2} 13.\textit{d3}+ 14.\textit{xd3} \textit{xd3} 15.\textit{d7}+ \textit{d7} 16.\textit{xa8} \textit{c4} 17.\textit{d2} \textit{d7} 18.\textit{xc4} dxc4 19.\textit{d4}+. He will still need to prove that his slight material advantage will be sufficient to win the game.) 10...\textit{f6} (10...\textit{xe3}. Black reduces his protection of the d6-square and this will decide the issue. 11.\textit{f1} \textit{xc2} 12.\textit{d6}+ \textit{f8} 13.\textit{xb7} \textit{b6} 14.\textit{xc2} \textit{xc2} 15.\textit{fxe3} \textit{c5} 16.\textit{d7} \textit{d3} 17.\textit{xd3} \textit{xd3} 18.\textit{e4}+–) 11.\textit{f1} 0-0 12.\textit{d1} \textit{xg2} 13.\textit{d2}+– Now, White has the decisive threats – \textit{f1} and \textit{xh6}. 13...\textit{a5} (13...\textit{xd4} 14.\textit{xd4} \textit{a4} 15.\textit{xb7}+, with the idea 15...\textit{g4} 16.\textit{b2}+ and the threat \textit{xf1-a1}, which is impossible for Black to parry.) 14.\textit{xh6} gxh6 15.\textit{xf5} exf5 16.\textit{d6}+–

Black can continue with his plan to capture his opponent’s queenside pawns with 8...\textit{xc2}!! 9.\textit{xc1} \textit{xc1}+ 10.\textit{xc1} \textit{g6}, but White would not need to capture the enemy rook on a8, since Black does not need it at all.
White has an additional resource – 11.dxc5! This pawn-structure is completely justified, because White’s lead in development is so great that Black’s defence will be very difficult. (11...c7+ Kd7 12.Nxa8 c4∞ 13.h4 c6 14.xg6 hgx6 15.0-0 b4 16.b1 c8 17.fc1 ge7 18.g5 f5 19.xc4 dxc4 20.xc4, S. Hansen – Berkes, Heraklio 2007, 20...a5!?) 11...d7 12.d6 c6 (12...xd6 13.exd6 c6 14.d4, with the idea 14...a6 15.f4 f6 16.b3 fxe5 17.fxe5 xe5 18.f4 xd6 19.a5 b8 20.xd1+) 13.xb7 b8 (13...f6 14.d6 ge7 15.b5†) 14.d6 ge7 15.b5† (with the idea 0-0) and Black will hardly manage to complete the development of his kingside.

9.b1!

This is an important inclusion of this move, activating the rook.

It would not be so good for White to play immediately 9.c7+, because of 9...d7 10.xa8 xc2 11.c1 a3∞ and Black would seize the initiative.
9...\texttt{\textsymbol{xa2}!}

Black should avoid the trade of the queens 9...\texttt{\textsymbol{xc2} 10.\textsymbol{xc2} \textsymbol{xc2}}, because his strongest piece is considerably more active than its white counterpart and his opponent’s task would become much easier. 11.\texttt{\textsymbol{b2} \textsymbol{a4} 12.\textsymbol{c7+ \textsymbol{d7} 13.\textsymbol{xa8 \textsymbol{c8} (After 13...\textsymbol{c6 14.a4 \textsymbol{a3 15.\textsymbol{b6+ axb6 16.\textsymbol{xb6 \textsymbol{e7 17.\textsymbol{d2\texttt{+. White manages to preserve his material advantage without any serious positional concessions.) 14.\texttt{d1 \textsymbol{c6, Qin Kanying -- Karpov, Beijing 1998 (Following 14...\texttt{a3 15.\texttt{b1 \textsymbol{c6 16.\texttt{g5 \textsymbol{h6, Huschenbeth -- Lenic, Chur 2010, 17.\texttt{d2\texttt{+, Black's compensation for the missing material is insufficient.) 15.\textsymbol{g5\texttt{!? It would not be so easy for him to oust this knight from its powerful placement. 15...\texttt{h6 16.\texttt{d2 b5 17.h4!? \texttt{xa8 18.\texttt{xb5 \texttt{c6 19.\texttt{c3\texttt{+}}}

10.\texttt{c7+ \texttt{d8 11.\texttt{xa8 \texttt{xc2}}}

It may seem that Black has solved his opening problems, but White has an important tactical resource.

12.\texttt{xb7\texttt{!}}

The more natural move 12.\texttt{a1, after 12...\texttt{b4+ 13.\texttt{d2 \texttt{xd2+ 14.\texttt{xd2 c3+ 15.\texttt{e3 \texttt{b2 16.\texttt{c1 \texttt{c6 17.\texttt{b5 \texttt{h6=, provides Black with a very good position.}}}

12...\texttt{xd1 13.\texttt{xb8+ \texttt{d7 14.\texttt{xd1 \texttt{e7 15.0-0 h6!}}}

Black prevents \texttt{f3-g5.}

He must play very carefully, because his king is in the centre: 15...\texttt{a6 16.\texttt{a4!! \texttt{xa4 17.\texttt{fb1-- and Black's king is inside a web from which it cannot escape without considerable material losses, for example: 17...\texttt{a6 18.\texttt{g5--}}}

16.\texttt{d2}

It would not work now for White to play 16.\texttt{a4? \texttt{xa4 17.\texttt{fb1 \texttt{a6 18.\texttt{b7+ \texttt{xb7 19.\texttt{xb7+ \texttt{c8 20.\texttt{xa7 \texttt{b8\texttt{+, with the idea 21.\texttt{a1 \texttt{b7\texttt{+, and his knight on a8 is doomed.}}}}


16...\texttt{\textsc{n}c6}

Following 16...g5 17.\texttt{\textsc{a}a4+} \texttt{\textsc{xa}4} 18.\texttt{\textsc{f}b1} \texttt{\textsc{a}6} 19.\texttt{\textsc{e}1}!+–, with the idea \texttt{\textsc{e}1-c2}, White wins by transferring his knight on f3 to the queenside.

17.\texttt{\textsc{b}7+} \texttt{\textsc{e}8} 18.\texttt{\textsc{c}3}

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

Now, just like before, Black has difficulties with the development of his kingside, while White can mobilise in the meantime his forces to create threats on the queenside.

18...\texttt{\textsc{e}7}

Following 18...\texttt{\textsc{d}8} 19.\texttt{\textsc{d}2!} \texttt{\textsc{e}7} 20.\texttt{\textsc{h}5} \texttt{\textsc{c}2}, Black is already beyond salvation. (20...g6 21.\texttt{\textsc{a}1} \texttt{\textsc{c}2} 22.\texttt{\textsc{a}5+} \texttt{\textsc{e}8} 23.\texttt{\textsc{d}1}+–; 22...\texttt{\textsc{x}a}5 23.\texttt{\textsc{x}a}5+–) 21.\texttt{\textsc{x}f7} \texttt{\textsc{xc}3} 22.\texttt{\textsc{f}3} \texttt{\textsc{c}8} 23.\texttt{\textsc{c}7+} \texttt{\textsc{b}8} 24.\texttt{\textsc{x}c}6 \texttt{\textsc{xa}8} 25.\texttt{\textsc{x}e}6 \texttt{\textsc{b}4} 26.\texttt{\textsc{x}e}7 \texttt{\textsc{xc}7} 27.\texttt{\textsc{x}d}5+ \texttt{\textsc{b}8} 28.\texttt{\textsc{b}1+} \texttt{\textsc{c}8} 29.\texttt{\textsc{xc}4}+– The position has been simplified considerably and Black even has some slight material advantage; nevertheless, his chances of survival are just minimal, due to the horrible misplacement of his king.

19.\texttt{\textsc{c}7+}
19...@d8


20.b2 a3 21.b5

White’s knight has run away from the a8-square and the superiority of his perfectly placed pieces becomes the decisive factor.

21.a6 22.d2± Black is helpless against the combined power of White’s pieces, for example: 22.d7 23.c4 dxc4 24.d5±
This is Black’s most promising move. He does not determine yet the pawn-structure on the queenside, completes his development and increases the pressure against the d4-square.

8.0-0

White needs to play energetically, without losing time for the protection of his b2-pawn, because after the seemingly natural move 8.\texttt{Rb1}, Black has the powerful counter argument 8...\texttt{Bxe4!} and White’s d4-square is crumbling.

His alternatives are not so principled and interesting.

8.\texttt{Nb5} c4

White can hardly be successful if he reduces immediately the tension against the c5-square with the line: 8.dxc5 \texttt{Bxc5} 9.\texttt{Bxe5} \texttt{Qxe5} 10.\texttt{Qb5} \texttt{Qf6} 11.\texttt{Qd4}, Nakamura – Mamedyarov, Shamkir 2014, 11...\texttt{Qb4}+ 12.\texttt{Qd2} (following 12.c3 \texttt{Qxb2} 13.0-0 \texttt{g6∞}, White is unlikely to prove that he has sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn) 12...\texttt{Qxd2}+ 13.\texttt{Kxd2} \texttt{Nge7}=

8.\texttt{Bb5}? c4

8.\texttt{Bb5}+ 9.c3\texttt{cxd4} (9...\texttt{c4}!? 10.0-0 b5 11.\texttt{Qc5} \texttt{Bxc5} 12.dxc5 \texttt{Bb8}?!?; About 10.b4 – see Sethuraman – Zhou Jianchao, Hyderabad 2015, \textbf{game 11}) 10.\texttt{Qxd4} \texttt{Qxd4} 11.\texttt{Qxd4} \texttt{Qe7} 12.b4 (12.\texttt{Qc5} \texttt{Qc7} 13.b4 \texttt{Qc6∞} Kosteniuk – Gunina, Moscow 2011) 12...\texttt{Qc7} 13.b5 \texttt{Qc8}=, Black prevents the pawn-advance b5-b6 and preserves the possibility to play \texttt{Qc8}-b6 at an opportune moment, Areshchenko – Molchanova, St Petersburg 2009.

After 8.\texttt{Bb5}, Black can react in several ways and equalises easily.
8...c4. Black closes the way back for his opponent’s bishop on b5 and plans active actions on the queenside. 9.Nh4. This standard chase after the bishop on f5 is fruitless, but White has hardly anything better anyway. (9.0-0 a6 10.xc6+ xc6 11.Nh4 Ne7= Naiditsch – Adla, Mulhouse 2011) 9...Bg6 10.0-0 Bb4 11.xc4 xc3 12.bxc3 dxc4 13.d5 xc7 14.dxc6 xc6= Gashimov – Vallejo Pons, Linares 2010.

8...Qxb2

Accepting the pawn-sacrifice is no doubt Black’s most principled response. 

He only loses time after 8...a6?, due to 9.Qa4†, with the idea c2-c4. White exploits Black’s considerable lag in
development and opens the central files. 9...\textit{c}7 10.dxe5 \textit{d}xe5 11.\textit{e}xe5 \textit{w}xe5, Soler – Arnandis, Spain 1998, 12.c4\textsuperscript{±}

It would be bad for Black to choose here 8...cxd4? 9.\textit{d}xd4 and White’s hands would be free for actions, while Black’s queen would come under an attack with tempo. 9...\textit{d}xd4 10.\textit{d}xd4 \textit{a}5 (10...\textit{c}7 11.\textit{b}b5\textsuperscript{±}) 11.g4 \textit{g}6 12.f4 f5 13.exf6 \textit{xf}6 14.\textit{b}b5+ \textit{d}8 15.\textit{e}e1\textsuperscript{±}, Black’s king will hardly survive for a long time stranded in the centre.

He should better avoid here 8...c4, because in the majority of the variations, due to his lag in development, White will develop effortlessly dangerous initiative on the kingside.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
\end{center}

9.\textit{b}xc4?! \textit{x}b2\textsuperscript{±}

It would be also interesting for White to opt now for 9.b3, but after 9...\textit{a}5 10.\textit{d}d2 \textit{b}4, he would not have any clear advantage. 11.\textit{e}e1 \textit{g}e7?! (11...b5 12.a3 \textit{xc}3 13.\textit{xc}3 \textit{b}6\textsuperscript{±} – He has not achieved anything meaningful, because his two-bishop advantage is neutralised by the closed pawn-centre. White has a space advantage on the kingside, but Black dominates on the queenside, Granda Zuniga – Magem Badals, Pamplona 1996.) 12.bxc4 (12.a3 \textit{xc}3 13.\textit{xc}3 \textit{c}7\textsuperscript{∞} Van der Werf – Schwalfenberg, Dieren 1991) 12...dxc4! (12...\textit{xc}3 13.\textit{xc}3 \textit{a}4 14.c5\textsuperscript{±}) 13.\textit{xc}4 0-0 14.a3 \textit{xc}3 15.\textit{xc}3 \textit{c}7 16.\textit{b}3 \textit{d}8\textsuperscript{∞}. Black has a good game for the pawn and excellent chances of equalising.

9.\textit{b}1! This is White’s simplest and most logical decision! Besides its defensive functions, this move is aimed at seizing the initiative on the queenside with the help of the move b2-b3. The arising lines are very similar to variation A.

9...\textit{Q}h6 10.\textit{Q}xc4 dxc4 11.d5 \textit{Q}a5 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.\textit{Q}e2± Al Modiahki – Dimitrov, Gibraltar 2008.

It would not work now for Black to play 9...\textit{B}b4?!, in view of 10.\textit{Q}xc4 dxc4 11.d5 \textit{Q}a6 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.a3± and his lag in development is more than obvious, Nemeth – Volosin, Hungary 2005.

White develops his kingside initiative very quickly following 9...\textit{Q}c7 10.\textit{Q}h4 \textit{Q}g6 11.f4±

Black should better refrain from 9...\textit{Q}a5 10.\textit{Q}h4 \textit{Q}g6 (10...\textit{Q}e7 11.g4 \textit{Q}g6 12.f4±) 11.a3 0-0-0 12.\textit{Q}d2 \textit{Q}e7 13.\textit{Q}xg6 hxg6 14.b4 \textit{Q}c7 15.b5 \textit{Q}b8 16.b6 axb6 17.\textit{Q}b5, Paragua – Cervinka, Paris 1998.

He would not achieve anything either with 9...\textit{Q}b4 10.\textit{Q}e1 \textit{Q}a5 (10...\textit{Q}c6 11.f4±; undermining White’s centre with 10...\textit{f}6? and 11.b3+– leads to the opening of the position, which is in favour of White, Korchmar – Kaneyama, St Petersburg 2010,) 11.\textit{Q}c1 b5 12.a4 bxa4 13.\textit{Q}a1 a3 14.\textit{Q}xa3 \textit{Q}c7 15.b3+– Neelotpal – Farazi, Vishakapatnam 2008.

9...\textit{Q}d8. This is a solid move. Black prevents White’s plan, connected with \textit{f}3-h4 and defends against \textit{Q}e2xc4. It may look like Black has an acceptable position, but as we have seen in the similar variation \textbf{A}, White can begin active actions on the queenside – 10.b3 \textit{Q}b4 11.\textit{Q}b5! cxb3 12.\textit{Q}xb3 a6 13.\textit{Q}xb4±
9.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}e1!

It would not be good for White to choose 9.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b5, because after the precise move 9...c4!, Black equalises.

It would be too risky for White to opt here for 10.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{N}}}c7+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{K}}}d7 11.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{N}}}xa8 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{B}}}xc2 and he must play very precisely in order to hold the balance... 12.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}c7+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{K}}}d7 13.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{B}}}b4 14.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{N}}}xb1 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{N}}}xb1 15.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{N}}}xb7+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}c8 16.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{R}}}x7, Ni Hua – S.Ionov, Dagomys 2010, 16...\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}a5 17.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{B}}}f8+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b7 18.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{R}}}g5 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{B}}}b4+; 16.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{B}}}c7+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b8 17.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{N}}}xe2 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}ge7 18.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}g5 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}f5 19.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xc4 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}c8 20.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xc8+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xc8 White will not save his knight on a8 and his pawn on d4 will need permanent protection, so the arising endgame is in favour of Black.) 12...\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}a3 13.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}e1 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}g6 14.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}d1 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}ge7 15.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}d3 cxd3 16.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b1 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xa2 17.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xb7+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}c8 18.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}c7+ (18.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b3? d2!–+) 18...\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b8 19.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}a4 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xa8 20.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xc6 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xc6 21.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xc6+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b8 22.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b5+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}a8 23.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}c6+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b8=  

Now, even after White’s relatively best line: 10.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b1 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xc2! 11.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xc2 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xc2 12.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}b2 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}a4 13.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}c7+ \texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}d7 14.\texttt{\texttt{\textit{Q}}}xa8 b5
15.\(f_b1\) a3 16.\(x_b5\) \(x_b5\) 17.\(x_b5\) ge7 18.\(b_7+\) c8 19.\(b_5\) d7 20.\(b_7+\) c8= Black should manage to hold the position.

9...\(cxd4\)

There is nothing better for him in sight.

It will be too risky for Black to opt for 9...0-0-0, Kamsky – Morozevich, Nice 2009, because White leads in development and Black’s king will be tremendously endangered after the opening of files on the queenside. 10.\(b_5!\) a3. Now, he must also worry about the safety of his queen. (White captures the enemy queen after 10...c4 11.a3!, with the idea \(a_1-a_2.\) 11...\(xc2\) 12.e2 12...\(b3\) 13.a6 14.d2 \(xa2\) 15.e2 axb5 16....\(x_b5\), or 12...\(d3\) 13.a4 \(g_6\) 14.c1 c6 15.d1 f5 16.d2+, threatening \(e2-g3\) and \(a4-c2.\) 11.exc6 bxc6 12.dxc5 exa\(c5\) 13.b1! d4 (13...\(xc2\) 14.hc1 d3 15.b1+) 14.b3 a6 (14...\(a5\) 15.b1! c6 16.d4+) 15.d4 d4 16.d4 d4 17.d4+ 16.d4 d4 17.c3 xxc2 17...d8 18.b1+) 18.b4 d3 19.axb3 h6 20.d1+, with the idea \(d4-d7\) and \(c3-e4.\) 20...\(b7\) 21.g4+, with the idea \(c3-e4.\)

Just like before, Black cannot play 9...c4?!. 10.b1 xc2 11.eb7
11...\textit{b}4. He should try to complete his development as quickly as possible. 12.\textit{xb}4 \textit{xb}4 13.\textit{d}1! White must play very energetically in order to maintain an advantage in the opening. 13...\textit{d}3 14.\textit{a}4+ \textit{f}8 15.\textit{a}1±, with the idea \textit{b}2, bringing his most powerful piece for the attack on the queenside. In addition, White is threatening to trap the enemy queen with the moves \textit{d}1, or \textit{e}1, Karjakin – Laznicka, Poikovsky 2011 (game 12).

His lag in development becomes an important factor after 11...\textit{b}8 12.\textit{xb}8+ \textit{xb}8 13.\textit{d}1! (White should better refrain from the attempt to trap the enemy queen with 13.\textit{a}1, with the idea \textit{e}2-d1, or \textit{f}1-c1, due to 13...\textit{b}4, with rather unclear consequences, for example: 14.\textit{b}1 \textit{xc}3 15.\textit{xb}8+ \textit{d}7 16.\textit{d}1 \textit{h}6! 17.\textit{b}7+ \textit{d}8!= S.Zhigalko – F.Berkes, Denizli 2013.) 13...\textit{b}2 14.\textit{a}4+ \textit{d}7 15.\textit{b}5 and Black’s king will be in a great trouble. 15...\textit{b}4 (15...\textit{b}4 16.\textit{c}1 \textit{xe}1? 17.\textit{d}6+-; 16...\textit{b}1 17.\textit{d}6+ \textit{xd}6 18.\textit{exd}6 \textit{gf}6 19.\textit{e}5±, with the idea 19...\textit{b}7 20.\textit{g}4!+-) 16.\textit{d}1 \textit{c}3, Klein – Michalik, Groningen 2011, 17.\textit{xa}7 \textit{e}7 18.\textit{b}3 \textit{xb}3 19.axb3+– and Black’s c-pawn falls.

10.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 11.\textit{xd}4 \textit{b}4
We will analyse now the move C1) 12.\textit{Rb1}, after which Black will have to work long and hard to equalise, although a final theoretical evaluation of it has not been made yet, and C2) 12.\textit{Ndb5}?!?, preparing at an opportune moment a knight-sortie to the d6-square.

C1) 12.\textit{Rb1}

This move leads to the trade of queens. Black may seem close to equality, but he will have to withstand for a long time White’s pressure which prevents Black from completing his development. There have been numerous practical games, lost by Black and I would not say that his task to hold the position would be easy. Meanwhile, it cannot be said that White is objectively better in this position. It looks like the most truthful evaluation would be – White maintains long lasting initiative. I have failed to find a clear advantage for him in this complicated endgame, but White can create numerous problems for his opponent.

In fact, he does not risk anything, so I will have to analyse thoroughly this variation...
12...\texttt{xc}3

12...\texttt{xc}3?! The transfer into an endgame in this situation is in favour of White, because his rook is much more active on b4 than on the b2-square. 13.\texttt{xb}4 \texttt{xe}1 14.\texttt{xe}1 b6 15.\texttt{b}5+ \texttt{f}8 16.\texttt{xf}5 \texttt{exf}5 17.\texttt{d}1 (17.\texttt{b}3 – see 12...\texttt{c}3) 17...\texttt{e}7 18.c4±. Black must activate his rook and prevent the attack against his king at the same time. He must be on the alert, since there are great dangers for him if he plays carelessly in this seemingly safe endgame. This can be best illustrated by the following possible variation: 18...\texttt{xc}4 (Black should not be afraid so much of the line: 18...a6 19.\texttt{a}4 b5 20.cx\texttt{b}5 axb5 21.\texttt{x}b5 g5 22.\texttt{b}3±, although even then, his position would be worrisome, Mekhitarian – Turov, Eforie Nord 2010.)

19.\texttt{a}4!N Black is incapable of exploiting his material advantage due to his lag in development. His pieces are helpless and White should increase his pressure in the meantime, being careful about Black’s counter chances. (He will save the
day after 19...bxa6 g5 21...b7 a2 22.c7 a5. This is Black’s only move. 23.f4 e5! 24.xc5 bxc5 25.fxg5 e7= Kryvoruchko – Yu Ruiyuan, Fujairah City 2012.) 19...g6 20.xc4 xe5 21.c7 g6 22.h3 a6 23.f4 b5 24.c2! e4 25.dd7 g7 26.ff7+ h6 27.g4 fxg4 28.hxg4 af8 29.xf2! xf7 30.xf7 g5 31.f3 d2+ 32.g3 f1+ 33.f2 d2 34.d7 c4 35.f3 a5 36.d3=

13.xb2 xe1 14.xe1 b6

15.b5!?

This is White’s most popular and natural move.

Lately however, he has tried in practice some other possibilities as well.

Black still holds following 15.xf5 exf5 16.c4, Poetsch – Lintchevski, Warsaw 2011, 16...e7 17.d2 0-0-0 18.cxd5 xd5=

White’s attempt to occupy additional space on the kingside leads to rather unclear consequences – 15.g4 g6 16.b5+ f8 17.a6 h5 18.h3 e7 19.b3 Motylev – Laznicka, Poikovsky 2013.

Black has not completed his development yet, so White can try to penetrate with his rook into the enemy camp 15.b3!?, with the idea c3-c7. 15...e7 16.c3 c8! Black should not let White’s rook to occupy the c7-square. (Following 16...0-0 17.g4 g6 18.e7 fe8 19.a6↑, or 16...g5 17.c7 g6, Sjugirov – Eljanov, St Petersburg 2013, 18.a6 f5 19.c6 0-0 20.h3g4, White succeeds in “occupying” his opponent’s queenside.) 17.xc8+ xc8 18.b5+ (Black obtains a reliable position after 18.xf5 exf5 19.d1 e7 20.d5 d8 21.c4 d7=) 18...d8 19.xf5 exf5 20.d1 e7 21.c4 g6=

15.h4!?, with the idea g2-g4, in order to attack the enemy bishop on f5. 15...h5 16.a4 e7 17.a5
17...0-0!N This is the least of evils for Black, since he needs to activate rapidly his pieces. He removes his king away from the centre and brings his rook on h8 into the actions. (He can try to preserve his pawn on h5 with 17...g6, but after 18.b5+ f8 19.a1, Black will have to pay a very dear price for that. 19...bxa5 20.xa5 g8 21.d3!? xd3 22.cxd3 g5 23.hxg5 g6 24.b7 xe5 25.f4 xd3 26.f5 Motylev – V.Belov, Dagomys 2010, or 21.ba2!? h7 22.xa7 xa7 23.xa7 f5 24.f3 b8 25.d3 g8 26.g3) 18.xh5 fc8 19.axb6 axb6 20.e2± Black is close to equality, but White still maintains some pressure.

15...f8 16.xf5 xf5 17.b3!?

White’s rook is headed for the c7-square via c3.

Black holds after 17.d1 e7 18.c4 dxc4! 19.xc4 e6! He attacks the e5-pawn and frees in the process the e7-square for his king, preparing the activation of his rook on h8. 20.e6 fxe6 21.xe6 e7 22.xf5 ad8=
Black has a choice now. He can either prevent his opponent’s plan, connected with the penetration of the rook $b3-c3-c7$, or try to complete quickly the development of his kingside.

17...Ne7

17...$c8$!? White’s threat $b3-c3-c7$ is tremendously unpleasant for Black and he prevents that by all means. 18.a3 a5 (18...$e7$?! 19.d1 Ne7 20.e4!++; 19...g6 20.xd5 h6, Divyasri – Mahalakshmi, Jalgaon 2012, 21.f4 $g7$ 22.c4+)

19.d3 Ne7 20.b3 $c6$ 21.eb1 $g6$ 22.xb6 $xb6$ 23.xb6 Ne7

White’s game is much more pleasant in this position. If Black plays very precisely he may save the draw, but in a practical game White’s advantage is considerable. 24.xf5 xe5 25.b5!? (He can also force Black to clarify immediately the placement of his knight on e5 – 25.f4!? g6, Predke – Lintchevski, Kazan 2012, 26.h3 c4 27.b7+ $f6$ 28.b5, with the idea 28..d8 29.f2 d4 30.g3 d3 31.cxd3 $xd3$ 32.f1 $c5$ 33.$xc5$ $xe3$ 34.$xc3$ $d1+$ 35.$f3$ $xc3$ 36.$c4+$, ending up in an endgame in which White’s bishop is much more mobile and is considerably stronger than the clumsy black knight.) 25..d6 (25..$f6$ 26.h3 g5 27.g3 a4 28.b6+ $g7$ 29.b4!) 26.f4! It is essential for White to oust the enemy knight from its active position on e5. (He should not be in a hurry to win a pawn. 26.xa5 g6 27.d3 $xd3$ 28.cxd3 $e5$=; 27..b8 28.$f1$ b1+ 29.$xe2$ $h1$ 30.h3 $h2$= Black succeeds in exploiting the weak points in White’s position.) 26..c6 27.b7 g6 28.d3 f5 29.a3 h5 30.$f2$ $e8$ (30..b8? 31.xb8 $xb8$ 32.$b5+$) 31.c3!?? White has placed perfectly his pieces and pawns in the arising endgame and Black will have to work long and hard for a draw.

18.e3
18...\textit{R}c8

Black should not let the enemy rook inside his camp.

18...a6?! 19.\textit{R}d7! White prevents his opponent’s rook from occupying the c8-square. 19...g6 (19...h5 20.\textit{R}c7 \textit{h}6 21.f4±) 20.\textit{R}c7 b5 (20...\textit{g}7 21.e6! \textit{f}6 22.exf7+--; 21...fxe6 22.\textit{R}xe6 \textit{f}6 23.\textit{xf}7! \textit{xf}7 24.\textit{R}cxe7! \textit{f}6 25.f4+-; 24...\textit{f}8 25.\textit{R}c7=) 21.e6! \textit{f}6. This move is forced; otherwise, White’s rook will join in the actions on the e-file with a decisive effect. Now, however, it finds another attractive square – 22.\textit{R}e3. 22...b4 (22...\textit{R}b8?! 23.\textit{R}c7 \textit{b}6 24.\textit{R}c3 \textit{h}5 25.\textit{R}c8 \textit{h}7 26.\textit{R}c7+- Gashimov – Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 2011) 23.\textit{R}b3 a5 24.a3 bxa3 25.\textit{R}xa3±

19.\textit{R}xc8+ \textit{d}xc8 20.\textit{R}d1 \textit{e}7

Black has managed to facilitate considerably his defence by trading pieces, but still needs to play very accurately.

He cannot complete his development in a natural way without positional concessions – 20...\textit{e}7?! 21.\textit{R}xd5 \textit{d}8 22.c4±
21.f4

White would not achieve much with 21.c4 \( \text{xg6} \) 22.cxd5 \( \text{xe7} \) (But not 22...\( \text{xe5??} \) 23.\( \text{e1} \) f6 24.f4+- and in view of the threat \( \text{e1-e8} \) Black will have to part with his knight.).

21...g5

It is essential for him to bring his rook on h8 into the actions as quickly as possible and he finds a way to do this on the kingside.

22.fgx5 h6 23.c4

23.gxh6 \( \text{h6} \) 24.c4 dxc4 25.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{c6} \) 26.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 27.\( \text{d7} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 28.\( \text{xa7} \) f4 29.\( \text{f2} \) \( \text{g7} = \)
23...dxc4!

After this important improvement Black somehow holds the position.

24.Rd8+


24...Bg7 25.Rd7

25.gxh6+ Rxh6 26.Bxc4 Rc6 27.b3 Kg6 28.Rd7 Ng5 29.Ra7 f4=
25...c3! 26.\text{\textit{R}}xe7 \text{\textit{R}}e8 27.\text{\textit{R}}a4 \text{\textit{B}}c2 28.\text{\textit{B}}xc2 \text{\textit{B}}xc2 29.gxh6+ \text{\textit{K}}xh6 30.\text{\textit{B}}xa7 \text{\textit{B}}g6 31.a4 \text{\textit{B}}c1+ 32.\text{\textit{B}}f2 \text{\textit{B}}e2+ 33.\text{\textit{B}}f3 \text{\textit{B}}c3+ 34.\text{\textit{B}}f4 \text{\textit{B}}c4+ 35.\text{\textit{B}}e3 \text{\textit{B}}f4+ 36.\text{\textit{B}}d3 \text{\textit{B}}xe5 37.\text{\textit{B}}b7 \text{\textit{B}}e6 38.g3 \text{\textit{B}}c6= White is still slightly better, but objectively this endgame is close to a draw.

C2) 12.\text{\textit{R}}db5!?

This is a principled move and is very popular even at a high level. It leads to complicated middle game positions in which White has the initiative and Black must be very careful on his every move.

12...\text{\textit{B}}a5!

It is essential for Black to preserve this bishop and to exert pressure against the c3-square. In addition, the bishop can be
useful to protect the dark squares on the kingside.

After 12...\textit{Bxc3}?! 13.\textit{Bxc3} a6 (13...\textit{Bh6} 14.\textit{Bb1} \textit{Bxc2} 15.\textit{Bb5}+ \textit{Bf8} 16.\textit{Be3}= Wan Yunguo – Yu Ruiyuan, Jiangmen 2014) 14.\textit{Bb1} \textit{Ba3} 15.\textit{Bxb7} \textit{Be7} 16.\textit{Bb5}+ \textit{Bf8} 17.\textit{Bd3} \textit{Cc8} 18.\textit{Be2} \textit{Bxd3} 19.cxd3, Black’s king is misplaced and he has problems with bringing into the actions of his rook on h8, Karjakin – Tukhaev, Plovdiv 2010.

\[13.\textit{Bb1} \textit{Bxc2}\]

\[14.\textit{Bb3}?!\]

The position is simplified following 14.\textit{Bd6}+ \textit{Bf8} 15.\textit{Bxb7} \textit{Bh6} 16.\textit{Bb3} d4 17.\textit{Bd1} \textit{Bxc3} (17...\textit{Bc1}?! 18.\textit{Bxf5} \textit{Bxf5} 19.\textit{Be4=} 18.\textit{Bxc2} \textit{Bxe1}=

It is also very interesting for White to try here 14.\textit{Bc1} \textit{Bb2} 15.g4?!?, like it was played recently by Caruana, but it is still unclear whether that was not just an attempt for a surprise in a single game. (15.\textit{Bc4} \textit{Bxe1} 16.\textit{Bxb2} \textit{Bb5} 17.\textit{Bd6}+ \textit{Be7} 18.\textit{Bc5} \textit{Bb6} 19.\textit{Bxf5}+ \textit{Bxf5} 20.\textit{Bxd5} \textit{Bh6} 21.\textit{Bc4} \textit{Bh8}=; 15.\textit{Bd6}+ \textit{Bf8} 16.\textit{Bxf5} \textit{Bxf5} 17.\textit{Bc4}, Kryvoruchko – Charnota, Catowice 2014, 17...\textit{Bb4}! 18.\textit{Bxb4} \textit{Bxb4} 19.\textit{Be7} b6=) 15...\textit{Bg6} 16.f4
It would be too risky for Black to opt for 16...\textit{e}4?! in view of 17.{\textit{f}}2!, for example:

17...\textit{h}6? 18.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}4 19.\textit{b}1 \textit{c}5 20.\textit{x}e4 \textit{d}xe4 21.\textit{x}a5+– Caruana – Vachier-Lagrave, Saint Louis 2014;

or 17...\textit{b}4?! 18.f5 \textit{e}xf5 19.\textit{d}6+ \textit{f}8 20.\textit{d}1! \textit{f}6 (20...\textit{b}6 21.\textit{c}xe4 \textit{d}xe4 22.\textit{d}5 \textit{h}6 23.\textit{g}5+–) 21.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 22.\textit{x}d5 \textit{xd}6 23.\textit{ex}d6 \textit{d}2 24.\textit{c}5 \textit{b}6 25.\textit{c}8+ \textit{d}8 26.\textit{e}7 27.\textit{c}5+ \textit{d}6 28.\textit{xf}5 \textit{f}6 29.\textit{e}4 \textit{e}5 30.\textit{x}b7+–;

or 17...\textit{f}8 18.\textit{d}3 (18.f5? \textit{e}xf5 19.\textit{xf}5 \textit{b}6+–) 18...\textit{b}4 19.\textit{b}1 \textit{c}5 20.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xb}5 (20...\textit{d}xe4 21.\textit{xa}5 \textit{d}3 22.\textit{d}2 \textit{e}7 23.\textit{d}6+) 21.\textit{f}1 \textit{d}7 22.\textit{d}6 \textit{b}6 23.f5,

16.\textit{e}7 17.\textit{d}6+ (following 17.f5, White must consider seriously Black's reply 17...0-0\textit{=} 17...\textit{f}8 18.f5 \textit{e}xf5 19.\textit{xf}5 \textit{d}5 20.\textit{xf}5 \textit{c}8 21.\textit{b}5 (21.\textit{d}5 \textit{xc}1 22.\textit{xa}5 \textit{c}5+ 23.\textit{xc}5+ \textit{xc}5 24.\textit{fe}3 \textit{e}8=) 21...\textit{xf}5 (21...\textit{xc}3? 22.e6+– \textit{xb}5 23.\textit{xc}3 \textit{e}8 24.e7+ \textit{g}8 25.\textit{e}5+–) 22.e6! (Black holds the position after 22.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xc}3 23.\textit{e}6 \textit{xb}5 24.\textit{xf}7+ \textit{e}8 25.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3 26.\textit{xc}3 \textit{b}6+ 27.\textit{g}2 \textit{xe}6 28.\textit{xb}7 \textit{e}4=) 22...f6 23.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xc}3 24.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3 25.e7+ \textit{f}7 26.e8=\textit{=} 27.\textit{xe}8+ \textit{f}8 28.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3 29.\textit{a}4 \textit{d}3 30.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}7= and he should not lose this endgame.

14...\textit{e}7

Black cannot activate his knight in any other way – 14...\textit{h}6?? 15.\textit{d}4 \textit{xc}3 16.\textit{xc}3 \textit{b}2 17.\textit{b}5+ \textit{f}8 18.f3!! (White is threatening to trap the enemy queen with 19.\textit{f}2 \textit{b}4 20.\textit{e}8.) 18...\textit{d}8 19.\textit{h}4 \textit{f}6 20.\textit{fc}1+–

15.\textit{d}6+

15.\textit{d}4?! \textit{xc}3 16.\textit{xc}3 \textit{e}4\textit{=} Tukhaev – Mirzoeva, Samara 2012.

15...\textit{f}8 16.\textit{xb}7 \textit{b}6
17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Nd6}}}\texttt{!}\texttt{?}\texttt{!}

No doubt, it is hardly possible to analyse this position “to the end”, since the game is tremendously complicated and completely irrational.

The situation is very difficult to evaluate following 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Nd6}}} \texttt{\textit{Ba5}} 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bf3}}!}\texttt{?} \texttt{\textit{Bd3}} 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Qc1}}} \texttt{\textit{Bxc1}} 20.\texttt{\textit{Bxc1}} \texttt{\textit{g6}} (After 20...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{g6}}}, White has an effective counter strike – 21.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxd5}}!} \texttt{\textit{Bxe5}} 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Qf4}}} \texttt{\textit{xf3}}+ 23.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{gxf3}}} \texttt{\textit{g6}} 24.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{b7}}} \texttt{\textit{b6}} 25.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{c8+}}} \texttt{\textit{xc8}} 26.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc8}}} \texttt{\textit{d4}} 27.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bb8}}} \texttt{\textit{e5}} 28.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a8}}} \texttt{\textit{xf4}} 29.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{xa7+}}} \texttt{\textit{e7}} 30.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxc8+}}} Karjakin – Fridman, Dortmund 2012, or 21...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{exd5}}} 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxd3}}} \texttt{\textit{xe5}} 23.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxd5}}} \texttt{\textit{xf3}}+ 24.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{gxf3}}} \texttt{\textit{b6}} 25.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a4}}} \texttt{\textit{g6}} 26.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a5}}} \texttt{\textit{d8}} 27.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{ec8}}} \texttt{\textit{xc8}} 28.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc8}}} Hovhannisyan – Rozum, Yerevan 2014.) 21.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bb7}}} \texttt{\textit{d3}} (21...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{b6}}}? 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a4}}} \texttt{\textit{d4}} 23.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{c5}}} \texttt{\textit{h6}} 24.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{b5}}}) 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{h4}}} (22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxd5}}} \texttt{\textit{exd5}} 23.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxd5}}} \texttt{\textit{d5}} 24.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bf7}}} \texttt{\textit{g8}} 25.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxa7}}} \texttt{\textit{b8}} 26.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxa5}}} \texttt{\textit{f4=})} 22...h5\texttt{∞}

17...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Qc1}}}

Black can also retreat his queen to another square – 17...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bd3}}}, but can hardly equalise after that. 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a4}}}! (18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a4}}}) 18...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{e4}}} (18...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a6}}} 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{ac5}}}) 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{xb6}}} \texttt{\textit{axb6}} (19...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{exe1}}}) 20.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d7+}}} \texttt{\textit{e8}} 21.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d6+}}} \texttt{\textit{xd7}} 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{b7+}}} \texttt{\textit{d8}} 23.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a4+}}}) 20.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{c3}}} \texttt{\textit{d4}} (20...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{c4}}} 21.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{e3!}} \textit{d4}} 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d2+}}}) 21.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{c7}}} \texttt{\textit{c6!}} 22.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxc6}}} \texttt{\textit{xc6}} 23.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{f4}}} \texttt{\textit{xa2}} 24.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxb6}}} \texttt{\textit{g6}} (24...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{e4}}} 25.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{f3}}} \texttt{\textit{xf3}} 26.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxf3}}} \texttt{\textit{ac2}} 27.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d6+}}}) 25.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxc6}}} \texttt{\textit{ac4}} 26.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{f3}}} \texttt{\textit{xc6}} 27.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{Bxc6}}} \texttt{\textit{ac7}} 28.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d1}}} \texttt{\textit{ac8}} 29.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{f3}}} \texttt{\textit{ac4}} 30.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{h3}}} (30.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d6}}} \texttt{\textit{b4}} 31.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{e4}}} \texttt{\textit{ab2}} 32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{f1+}}}) 30...\texttt{\textit{b4}} 31.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{h2+}}}

18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a4}}}

18...\(c7\)

The alternatives would not solve Black’s problems either. In the majority of the cases White’s lead in development is the decisive factor as well as the misplacement of Black’s king. Meanwhile, White must also play very accurately. He must act energetically; otherwise, his initiative may evaporate.

18...g5 19.\(\square\)xb6 axb6 20.\(\square\)b4↑

18...g6 19.\(\square\)xb6 (19.\(\square\)d6\(\square\)) 19...axb6 20.g4 \(e\)4 21.f3 \(b\)1 22.\(\square\)b4 \(c\)7 23.\(\square\)d6 \(x\)a2 24.\(\square\)f4 \(g\)8 25.\(\square\)c3 \(c\)4 26.\(\square\)e2 b5 27.\(\square\)xc4 bxc4 28.\(\square\)b1±, with the idea \(b1-b7\).

18...\(\square\)d4!? This move requires extensive practical tests. 19.\(\square\)d6 \(f\)4 20.\(\square\)a5!? (20.g3 \(x\)e5 21.\(\square\)b4 g6 22.\(\square\)b5\(\square\))

20...g6 21.\(\square\)b6 (21.\(\square\)c5!? ) 21...\(\square\)xb6 22.\(\square\)xb6 \(x\)e5 (22...\(g\)7? 23.\(\square\)b7 \(x\)e5 24.\(\square\)c7\(\square\)) 23.\(\square\)e1 \(f\)6 (23...\(x\)e1+ 24.\(x\)xe1 \(x\)b6 25.g4\(\square\)) 24.\(\square\)b7 (24...\(g\)7? 25.\(\square\)a3\(\square\)\(\square\)) 24...e5 25.\(\square\)xf5!? (25.\(\square\)a3?!\(\square\)) 25...gxf5 26.\(\square\)b3↑

19.\(\square\)d6 \(g\)6 20.\(\square\)b4 \(g\)8 21.\(\square\)xb6 axb6 22.\(\square\)c3 \(d\)8
23.\textit{\texttt{Q}}h7!N

With this move White ousts the enemy queen, which protects the b6-pawn.

He has also tried in practice the seemingly active line: 23.\textit{\texttt{B}}a4 h5 24.\textit{\texttt{R}}fc1 \textit{\texttt{h}}h7 25.\textit{\texttt{R}}c7 \textit{\texttt{Q}}f5 26.\textit{\texttt{R}}xf5 (26.\textit{\texttt{Q}}xf7 \textit{\texttt{B}}xf7 27.\textit{\texttt{R}}xf7 \textit{\texttt{R}}f8!) 26...\textit{\texttt{Q}}xf5 27.\textit{\texttt{R}}xf7 \textit{\texttt{E}}c8 28.\textit{\texttt{R}}xc8 \textit{\texttt{B}}xc8 29.\textit{\texttt{R}}c1+ 30.\textit{\texttt{R}}h2 \textit{\texttt{E}}c8=, but White has failed to achieve anything real in the game Caruana – Postny, Achaea 2012.

23...\textit{\texttt{Q}}f8

Black can hardly be happy with his position in the multi-piece endgame after 23...\textit{\texttt{Q}}d7 24.\textit{\texttt{W}}xb6 \textit{\texttt{Q}}e8 25.\textit{\texttt{R}}c7 \textit{\texttt{W}}xc7 26.\textit{\texttt{R}}xc7 \textit{\texttt{h}}h6 27.\textit{\texttt{P}}b3 \textit{\texttt{h}}h7 28.\textit{\texttt{R}}fc1 \textit{\texttt{Q}}b6 29.\textit{\texttt{R}}d6+.

24.\textit{\texttt{E}}c7
24...\text{f5} (Following 24...\text{c8} 25.\text{wb2} \text{h6} 26.\text{e2} \text{h7} 27.\text{c1} \text{e7} 28.\text{d6}\pm, White’s pieces are very active and compensate with an interest the sacrificed pawn.) 25.\text{xb6} \text{h6}, with the idea \text{h7}. (25...\text{xa2}? 26.\text{g4!} \text{h4} 27.\text{d6} \text{a8} 28.\text{f4}\pm) 26.\text{a4}\pm Black has solved somehow the problems with the development of his kingside, but White’s passed a4-pawn remains very dangerous.
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Nc3 c5 6.Ne3 O7d7

This is a logical move. Black develops a piece and protects his c5-pawn, while the c6-square is left for the other knight. It has a drawback, however. The development of his kingside is delayed.

White’s task is to open the game in the centre at an opportune moment and to create problems for the opponent with his development. Black will have to solve them complying with some positional concessions.

7.0-0

It would be premature for White to choose here 7.Nbd2, because he should not be in a hurry to place his knight on this square. We will see later that the knight may be more useful on c3 and even on the a3-square. 7...e7 8.dxc5 Nc6 9.b3 and Black has a choice between 9...e4!?∞, or 9...g4!? 10.Nd4! xe2 11.Nxe2, Short – Adianto, Jakarta 1996, 11...exd5∞, leading to favourable complications for him.

The immediate move 7.c4 does not create any serious problems for Black. 7...cxd4 8.Nxd4 xe1b 9.Nxb1 Ne4+ 10.Qf1. White plans to exploit the unstable placement of the enemy bishop on b4 in some variations. (10.Qd2?! Ne2+ 11.Nxd2 Nxe5?∞; 11...Nf6 12.cxd5 Qxd5 13.f4 0-0 14.0-0 b5 15.Qf3, Anand – Gulko, Riga 1995, 15...e8∞, with the idea 16.Ne5 Qxe5 17.Qxe5 Qxd5 18.Nd1 Qf8 19.Qf4 f6!–+; it would be the least of evils for White to play here 16.Bbc1 Qb8+, but he would be hardly happy with that.) 10...e7 11.Qa4 Nwa5 12.Qx5 Nxa5 13.f4 (He fails to exploit the power of his two bishops after 13.b4 Qd8 14.f4 dx4 15.Qxc4 Qb6 16.Qb5+ Qf8= Black has his pluses. He controls reliably the d5-square, which is an excellent base for his knights.) 13...b6 14.Qf2 Qc6 (After Black’s active move 14...Qc5?!, White has a powerful argument – 15.Qf3!± and his king turns out to be perfectly placed in the centre of the board, Vasiukov – Vyzmanavin, Elista 1995.) 15.Qd1 Qxd4 16.Qxd4 dx4 17.Qxc4 Qe7 18.Qxb6 Qxb6 19.Qb3 Qc8= Kernazhitsky – Meduna, Stary Smokovec 1996.
Following 7.0-0, Black has a choice. He can make an useful developing move A) 7...\textit{R}c8, or the prophylactic move B) 7...\textit{a}6, or can try to develop rapidly his kingside with C) 7...\textit{N}e7.

His alternatives promise him much less.

7...\textit{c}xd4?! This move reduces the tension from the d4-square and enables White to transfer with tempo his knight to a better central placement. 8.\textit{N}xd4 \textit{B}g6. Black must lose a tempo to retreat his bishop. (8...\textit{N}e7 9.f4±; the e5-pawn is untouchable: 8...\textit{Q}xe5?? 9.\textit{b}5+ \textit{d}7 10.\textit{N}xf5 \textit{exf}5 11.\textit{R}xd5+–) 9.c4±, with the idea 9...\textit{Q}e7 (9...dxc4 10.\textit{Q}d2±) 10.\textit{b}5 \textit{Q}xe5 11.\textit{a}4 \textit{Q}c6 12.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{exd}5 13.\textit{d}1c3 \textit{Q}e7 14.\textit{N}xd5+, White’s initiative is decisive.

7...\textit{h}5?! 8.c4 \textit{e}7 (8...\textit{c}xd4? 9.\textit{N}xd4 \textit{B}xb1 10.\textit{R}xb1 \textit{Q}xe5 11.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{exd}5 12.\textit{b}5+ \textit{d}7 13.\textit{Q}e1 \textit{Q}e7 14.\textit{f}5+– Loftsson – Valtysdóttir, Reykjavik 2008) 9.\textit{Q}g5±

7...\textit{Q}c7?! 8.\textit{c}4 \textit{d}xc4 9.\textit{a}3 \textit{c}xd4 (Black loses very quickly if he reacts too slow, for example: 9...\textit{a}6 10.\textit{Q}xc4 \textit{b}5 11.\textit{d}6+ \textit{B}xd6 12.\textit{exd}6 \textit{Q}xd6 13.\textit{a}4 \textit{c}xd4 14.\textit{Q}xd4+– Henrichs – Kamper, Recklinghausen 2011.) 10.\textit{b}5 \textit{Q}a5 11.\textit{bx}d4±

Black should better avoid 7...\textit{c}4?! since this reduces the tension against the d4-pawn and White’s task will become much easier. He will increase his space advantage by advancing his kingside pawns. 8.b3 \textit{b}5 (8...\textit{xb}3 9.\textit{axb}3 \textit{B}b4 10.\textit{c}3 \textit{a}5 11.\textit{g}5± Ricardi – Garcia Palermo, La Carlota 1995) 9.a4 \textit{a}6 10.\textit{axb}5 \textit{axb}5 11.\textit{Q}xa8 \textit{Q}xa8 12.\textit{d}c3 \textit{Q}c6 13.\textit{bxc}4 \textit{bxc}4 14.\textit{h}4 \textit{e}7 15.\textit{g}4 \textit{g}6 16.\textit{f}4±

After 7...\textit{g}6?! as well as against all the other responses for Black, connected with the delay of the development of his kingside, White can react in an analogous way – 8.c4, for example: 8...\textit{c}xd4 9.\textit{Q}xd4 \textit{d}xc4 10.\textit{Q}xe4!? You will see in the following variations that he can exploit the fact that Black’s king is stranded in the centre by sacrificing a piece on the e6-square. (White can also prepare capturing the c4-pawn with his knight – 10.\textit{d}2!? \textit{Q}c5 11.\textit{Q}xc4, transferring it to a wonderful central position from where it exerts powerful pressure against the enemy position. 11...\textit{Q}e7 12.\textit{f}3±)
10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}\textcolor{red}{8} (White can sacrifice his bishop on a6 following 10...a6 11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}3\pm, with the idea 11...\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}7 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}e6 fxe6 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}e6 \textcolor{red}{\textit{a}}5 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}6 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}8 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}1\pm; or 10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}e5?! 11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}4+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}7 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}e6+– Biti – Hajna, Postojna 2009.) 11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{a}}4 (It deserves some practical tests for him to try 11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}e6!? fxe6 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}e6\textcolor{red}{\textit{a}}, but White should better keep this strike in reserve, waiting for the best possible moment for it.) 11...a6 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}1 (12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}e6?!?) 12...b5 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}b5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}2 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}6+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}d6 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}5 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{a}}3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{gf}}6 17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{b}}8 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{b}}3 0-0 19.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}4\pm Gallagher – Kelecevic, Lenk 1995.

It looks like a loss of time for Black to opt for 7...\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}}4?!, since this may become very important for him, having in mind his undeveloped kingside. 8.c4. This key-move enables White to open the position in the centre and this emphasizes Black’s lag in development. 8...\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}d4 (8...\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}7 9.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}}3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{h}}5 10.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}3 dxc4 11.dxc5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}6 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}2 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}}e2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}xe5 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}4 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}7 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{fd}}1 \textcolor{red}{\textit{a}}5 17.a3\pm, with the idea b2-b4)

9.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xd}}4!? (9.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xd}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf}}3 10.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xf}}3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}5, Sidorenko – Kantarji, Israel 2008, 11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}3 12.fxe3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}7 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}}5 0-0 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xf}}7+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{h}}8 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}3\pm; 9.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xd}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}2 10.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}2 dxc4 11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}5 12.f4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}6 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}6 \textcolor{red}{\textit{bxc}}6 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}6 15.f5\pm)
7...\textit{$\mathbf{b6}$} 8.c4. This is White’s most precise move. (8.\textit{$\mathbf{c3}$}!? a6 9.\textit{$\mathbf{a4}$} $\mathbf{c6}$ 10.\textit{$\mathbf{xc5}$} $\mathbf{xc5}$ 11.\textit{$\mathbf{xc5}$} $\mathbf{xc5}$ 12.\textit{$\mathbf{d4}$} $\mathbf{xd4}$ 13.\textit{$\mathbf{xd4}$} $\mathbf{e7}$ 14.\textit{$\mathbf{ac1}$}+) 8...\textit{$\mathbf{xb2}$} 9.\textit{$\mathbf{bd2}$} $\mathbf{e7}$ (9...\textit{$\mathbf{c2}$} 10.\textit{$\mathbf{xc2}$} $\mathbf{xc2}$ 11.\textit{$\mathbf{xd5}$} $\mathbf{exd5}$ 12.\textit{$\mathbf{xc5}$} $\mathbf{e7}$ Paulet – Czarnota, Chisinau 2005) 10.\textit{$\mathbf{c1}$} $\mathbf{b6}$ (White obtains effortlessly a great advantage after 10...\textit{$\mathbf{c6}$} 11.\textit{$\mathbf{xc5}$} $\mathbf{exd5}$ 12.\textit{$\mathbf{xc5}$} $\mathbf{e7}$ 13.\textit{$\mathbf{b3}$} 0-0 14.\textit{$\mathbf{bd4}$}, with the idea 14...\textit{$\mathbf{e4}$} 15.\textit{$\mathbf{e6}$} 11.\textit{$\mathbf{h4}$} (11.\textit{$\mathbf{b3}$}!?) 11...\textit{$\mathbf{e8}$} 12.\textit{$\mathbf{xc5}$} $\mathbf{exd5}$ 13.\textit{$\mathbf{a4}$} 

7...\textit{$\mathbf{h6}$} 8.c4! $\mathbf{e7}$ (8...\textit{$\mathbf{xc4}$} 9.\textit{$\mathbf{a3}$}!?, with the idea 9...\textit{$\mathbf{c3}$} 10.\textit{$\mathbf{xc3}$} $\mathbf{exd4}$ 11.\textit{$\mathbf{xd4}$} $\mathbf{xa3}$ 12.\textit{$\mathbf{xf5}$} $\mathbf{exf5}$ 13.\textit{$\mathbf{a4}$}+) 9.\textit{$\mathbf{c3}$}. This is an instructive example why the early development of White’s knight to d2 is not so good. Now, the knight is much better placed on c3. 9...\textit{$\mathbf{xc4}$} (9...\textit{$\mathbf{xd4}$}? 10.\textit{$\mathbf{xd4}$} $\mathbf{xc4}$ 11.\textit{$\mathbf{cb5}$} $\mathbf{c6}$ 12.\textit{$\mathbf{xf5}$} $\mathbf{exf5}$ 13.\textit{$\mathbf{e6}$}+) 10.\textit{$\mathbf{xc4}$} a6

Now, White has a very pleasant choice. He can increase the pressure with 11.d5!??, for example: 11...\textit{$\mathbf{b6}$} 12.dxe6 $\textit{fxe6}$ (12...\textit{$\mathbf{xc4}$}? 13.\textit{$\mathbf{a4}$}) 13.\textit{$\mathbf{d2}$}!? $\mathbf{xc4}$ (13...\textit{$\mathbf{ed5}$} 14.\textit{$\mathbf{xd5}$} $\textit{xd5}$ 15.\textit{$\mathbf{h5}$}+ $\mathbf{g6}$ 16.\textit{$\mathbf{f3}$} $\mathbf{b5}$ 17.\textit{$\mathbf{e2}$} $\mathbf{h5}$ 18.\textit{$\mathbf{e4}$} 14.\textit{$\mathbf{xc4}$} $\textit{xd1}$ 15.\textit{$\mathbf{fxd1}$} $\textit{cb6}$ 16.\textit{$\mathbf{d2}$}, or after for example: 11.\textit{$\mathbf{xc5}$}! $\mathbf{c6}$ 12.\textit{$\mathbf{b4}$} $\mathbf{xc5}$ (12...\textit{$\mathbf{xb4}$}?! 13.\textit{$\mathbf{d4}$} $\mathbf{h7}$ 14.\textit{$\mathbf{xe6}$}! $\mathbf{xc5}$ 15.\textit{$\mathbf{e4}$}) 13.\textit{$\mathbf{xe5}$} $\textit{xd1}$ 14.\textit{$\mathbf{axd1}$} $\textit{exf5}$ 15.\textit{$\mathbf{e2}$} $\mathbf{e7}$ 16.\textit{$\mathbf{f4}$} $\textit{c6}$ 17.\textit{$\mathbf{f3}$}, he can enter a multi-piece endgame in which he is clearly better thanks to his extra space, more actively placed pieces and his pawn-majority on the queenside.

A) 7...\textit{$\mathbf{e8}$} 8.c4!

This is a principled key-move, which White will play practically against all possible moves by Black in the variation we are analysing in this chapter.
8...dxc4

Before the start of the development of his kingside, Black reduces the tension against the d5-square.

His alternatives are weaker: 8...cxd4? 9.\textit{N}xd4 dxc4 10.\textit{N}xf5 \textit{exf5} 11.\textit{Q}a4± and Black’s considerable lag in development enables White to organize powerful initiative, Sepp – Jarvela, Turku 1999, or 8...\textit{B}xb1? 9.\textit{R}xb1 \textit{N}e7 10.dxc5 \textit{Q}xc5 11.cxd5 \textit{Q}xd5 12.\textit{B}b5+ \textit{d}7 13.\textit{a}xa7 \textit{Q}a5 14.\textit{Q}xd7+ \textit{Q}xd7 15.\textit{B}d4 \textit{Q}xa2 16.\textit{g}5+– Klovans – Kock, Triesen 2000.

8...\textit{e}7 9.\textit{b}d2!? This knight may go to the c4-square at some moment, or may attack the c5-square after the preliminary move \textit{d}2-b3. (9.\textit{d}3 dxc4 10.\textit{b}5± – see variation A1) 9...cxd4 10.\textit{Q}xd4 \textit{Q}xe5 11.\textit{b}3 \textit{Q}c6 12.\textit{B}xb7 \textit{Q}xd4 13.\textit{B}d4 \textit{Q}c6 14.\textit{b}3!?±

Following 8...dxe4, White can develop his initiative in two different ways: A1) 9.\textit{c}3 and A2) 9.d5.
It would not work for him to play now 9...a3, since this move would enable Black to complete effortlessly the development of his kingside. 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 a3 11.xf5 exf5 12.bxa3 e7 13.f4 f4!? (13...0-0!?) 14.xf4 d5

A1) 9.cx5!?

White completes the development of his queenside and is ready to play d4-d5 at an opportune moment.

9...a6

This is an important prophylactic move for Black. There may appear that he has obtained an acceptable position, but this is an illusion, because White manages to preserve his pressure maintaining the initiative.

He is better after 9...cxd4?! 10.xd4. White’s knight on d4 exerts powerful pressure against Black’s position. 10...d3 11.xd3 cxd3 12.Qa4 f4!? (13...0-0!?) 14.xf4 d5

After 9...e7, it would be possible for White to continue with 10.b5 (10.c4?!?) and his initiative would become tremendously dangerous. 10...c6 11.c1! a6 (11...e7 12.d6+ xd6 13.exd6 cxd4 14.xd4; 11...cxd4 12.xd4 d5, Domancich – Luzuriaga, ICCF 2005, 13.xf5 exf5 14.a4 a6 15.a7+; 11...g4 12.xc4 xf3 13.xf3 cxd4 14.xd4 dxe5 15.xc6 xd1 16.xe5! d8 17.d1 f6 18.xd8+ xd8 19.e7 fxe5 20.xb7+; 14...exe5 15.xc8 xc8 16.c1! xf3+ 17.xf3+) 12.d6+ x6 13.exd6 cxd4 14.xd4 xd4 15.xd4 e5 16.d5 b5 17.a4 0-0 18.axb5 xb5 19.xb5 b8 21.a6±

10.a4

The move 10.d5 promises to White a bit less. 10...e7 (Black can advance his queenside pawn avalanche only at the price of some positional concessions – 10...b5 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.a4 b4 13.b1+, with the idea b2xc4, or e2xc4 and his queenside pawns will be blocked.) 11.dxe6 xe6 (11...exe6 12.xc4 b6 13.b3 ed5 14.xd5 xd5 15.g5 d7 16.c1 h6 17.h4 hxg5 18.xf5) 12.g5! xe5 13.xe6 xd1 (13...exe6 14.c2 b5 15.e4+; 14...f5 15.e4 e6 16.f4 xe3 17.xe3 d3 18.xe6+ e7 19.h1 c6 20.xc4 xb2 21.e4 d4 22.c2 c4 23.d5 xd5 24.xc4+) 14.xg7+ xg7 15.axd1 d5 16.e4† There has arisen a very complicated endgame in which White’s prospects are preferable.
10...c6!

with the idea b7-b5.

Following 10...e7 11.dxc5 dxc5 12.exd5 exd5 13.d4+, White’s initiative becomes very dangerous, Nemeth – Prohaszka, Budapest 2005.

11.\textit{xc}4 c6 12.d3 c4 13.d1

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

13...d5!

This is an important blocking move for Black.

13...e7 14.d4 h4 d5 15.f1 b5 16.exd5 exd5 17.xf5 xf5 18.e4 e7 19.g4 h6 20.h3 g5 (20...0-0 21.e3+) 21.xg5 xg5 22.f4, and White exerts powerful pressure on the kingside.

14.d2 b5 15.g3↑ Black has succeeded in parrying partially his opponent’s initiative, but the lack of development of his kingside still hurts him.

A2) 9.d5!?

This is a more precise move for White and its requires serious attention by Black.
9...\(\text{\texttt{\textit{\textbf{N}}}}\)e7!

He is still concentrated on solving his main problem – the development of his kingside.

The attempt to preserve the c4-pawn may end up very badly for Black following 9...\(\text{\texttt{\textit{\textbf{N}}}}\)b6?, due to 10.d6 f6 11.a4!±. White exploits the unstable placement of the enemy knight on the b6-square and increases his queenside space advantage in the process. (11.a3!? fxe5 12.xc4 xc4 13.xc4 xd6 14.g5±) 11...fxe5 12.a5 d5 13.a4+ e6 14.xe5+–

Black can hardly be happy with the line: 9...exd5?! 10.xd5, because this helps the opponent to activate his queen. 10...\(\text{\texttt{\textit{\textbf{N}}}}\)e7 (10...\(\text{\texttt{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}\)c7? 11.xc4 e6 12.d3 xc4 13.xc4+– Gimenez – Quiroga, Buenos Aires 2009) 11.xb7 (11.xc4?! a6 12.d1±) 11...\(\text{\texttt{\textit{\textbf{B}}}}\)xe6 12.a3 e6 13.c3+., with the idea 13...d3 14.xd3 cxd3 15.fd1 c4 16.ac1 f5 17.xb6 axb6 18.g4 e7 19.b5 g6 20.xd3±

10.dxe6

The following line deserves further practical tests 10.d6!? , with the idea 10...g6 11.bd2!? b5 (11...dxe5 12.xe5 xe5 13.f4 d7 14.xc4 e4 15.e5 a6 16.c1±; 11...a6 12.a4 dxe5 13.xe5 xe5 14.f4 d7 15.xc4+?) 12.a4 a6 13.axb5 axb5 14.b4+}

10...\(\text{\texttt{\textit{\textbf{B}}}}\)xe6 11.a3 f5
12. \( \text{Bxc4 Nxe3} \) 13. fxe3 \( \text{Bxc4} \) 14. \( \text{Nxc4 b5} \) 15. \( \text{a3 a6} \) 16. \( \text{d5 b7} \) 17. \( \text{e4 c7} \) 18. \( \text{b1! 0-0} \) 19. \( \text{c3} \) White has extra space and more actively placed pieces, so his prospects are preferable.

B) 7...a6!?

With this prophylactic move Black protects the important b5-square, since White’s pieces might be deployed there. Now, Black may try, at an opportune moment, to acquire additional space there with the help of the pawn-advance b7-b5.

8.c4!? This seems to be White’s most principled move.
It would be also promising for him to try the simple line: 8.\\texttt{N}bd2!? c4 9.\\texttt{N}e1 h6 10.c3 \texttt{N}e7 11.g4 \texttt{h}h7 12.\\texttt{N}g2 b5 13.f4↑ Karjakin – Wang Hao, Beijing 2011.

8...dxc4

If Black postpones this capture, then White will have the possibility to play even more aggressively – 8...\\texttt{N}e7 9.\\texttt{N}c3 cxd4 (It would be still better for Black to choose here 9...dxc4 10.\\texttt{B}xc4 – see variation \textbf{B2}.) 10.\\texttt{B}xd4 dxc4, Volokitin – Lenic, Plovdiv 2012, 11.f4! (11.\\texttt{B}xc4 – see variation \textbf{B2}) 11...\texttt{R}c8 (11...b5 12.g4! ±) 12.g4! \texttt{d}d3 13.\\texttt{B}xd3 cxd3 14.\\texttt{Q}xd3 \texttt{c}6 15.\texttt{R}ad1±

![Chess Diagram]

Now, White can fight for an opening advantage in two different ways: \textbf{B1) 9.d5} and \textbf{B2) 9.\\texttt{B}xc4}.

\textbf{B1) 9.d5!}

He increases immediately the pressure, trying to exploit the lack of development of Black’s kingside and the misplacement of his king stranded in the centre.

9...\\texttt{N}e7 10.\\texttt{B}c3

It would not work for White to play now 10.d6?!, because in comparison to the variation \textbf{A2}, Black has played the more useful move – a7-a6. 10...\\texttt{g}6† Van der Weide – Krizsany, Saarlouis 2002.
10...exd5

He is trying to facilitate his defence by exchanging pieces. Still, even after that, his considerable lag in development will hurt him.


Following 10...Qg6, White can begin an offensive on the kingside with the move 11.Qg5!? (He will have a very good position too after the more modestly looking line: 11.b3!? cxb3 12.axb3∞, with the idea 12...Qxe5?! 13.Qxe5 Qxe5 14.Qg4 Qg6 15.f4±) 11...e7 (After 11...h6, White has the same idea up his sleeve. 12.Qxf7 Qxf7 13.f4 Qg8 14.g4 Qxd3 15.Qxd3 cxd3 16.Qxd3, 12.Qxf7 Qxf7 13.f4! White advances his pawn-avalanche on the kingside in an attempt to exploit the misplacement of the enemy monarch. 13.Qf8 14.g4 Qd3 15.Qxd3 cxd3 16.Qxe6+ Qg8 17.Qxd7 Qxd7 18.Qb3+ Qh8 19.e6 Qd6 20.Qc4 b5 21.Qe4 c4 (21...Qf6 22.g5!!) 22.Qf3, with the idea Qf3-h3.

11.Qxd5
11...\(\text{\textbar}x e 5\)

The inclusion of the moves 11...b5 12.a4\(\pm\), would not change the character of the position.

12.\(\text{\textbar}x e 5\)

White should better refrain from 12.\(\text{\textbar}x e 7\) \(\text{x} f 3+\) 13.\(\text{x} f 3\) \(\text{x} e 7\) 14.\(\text{x} b 7\) \(\text{\textbar}x d 1\) 15.\(\text{\textbar}x d 1\) \(\text{\textbar}b 8\) 16.\(\text{\textbar}c 6+\) \(\text{\textbar}f 8=\)

12...\(\text{\textbar}x d 5\) 13.\(\text{\textbar}x c 4\)

White’s position would be quite acceptable too after 13.f4 \(\text{\textbar}x d 1\) 14.\(\text{\textbar}x d 1\\)\(\equiv\)

13...\(\text{\textbar}x d 1\) 14.\(\text{\textbar}x d 1\) \(\text{\textbar}c 6\) 15.\(\text{\textbar}f 3\) \(\text{\textbar}e 6\) 16.b3 \(\text{\textbar}d 8\) 17.\(\text{\textbar}x c 6+\) \(\text{\textbar}b c 6\) 18.\(\text{\textbar}a 5\pm\) Black must fight long and hard for a draw in this endgame. His two bishops are restricted in their movements by his pawn-weaknesses on the queenside and must protect them.

B2) 9.\(\text{\textbar}x c 4!?\)
9...\(\mathcal{N}\)e7

Or 9...b5?! 10.\(\mathcal{N}\)e2 c4 (10...\(\mathcal{N}\)e7 11.dxc5 \(\mathcal{N}\)c6 12.a4 b4 13.\(\mathcal{N}\)bd2 \(\mathcal{N}\)dxe5 14.\(\mathcal{N}\)xe5 \(\mathcal{N}\)xe5 15.f4 \(\mathcal{N}\)c6 16.\(\mathcal{N}\)c4+– Shevelev – Kaganskiy, Tel Aviv 2002) 11.a4±

10.\(\mathcal{N}\)c3

White must play maximally energetically in order to maintain the initiative.

10.dxc5?! \(\mathcal{N}\)c6= Zalkind – Kaganskiy, Tel Aviv 2002.

10...cxd4

White can counter his opponent’s ambitious move 10...b5?!, just like on the previous move with 11.\(\mathcal{N}\)e2! (He would achieve less with 11.\(\mathcal{N}\)d3 c4, Kamsky – Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1995, 12.\(\mathcal{N}\)xf5 \(\mathcal{N}\)xf5 13.d5± and White’s edge may prove insufficient to obtain anything meaningful.) 11...\(\mathcal{N}\)c6 (Following 11...c4, White may try to capture the enemy bishop on f5 with 12.\(\mathcal{N}\)h4±, with the idea 12...\(\mathcal{N}\)b6 13.\(\mathcal{N}\)xf5 \(\mathcal{N}\)xf5 14.\(\mathcal{N}\)f3±) 12.d5 exd5 (12...\(\mathcal{N}\)cxe5 13.\(\mathcal{N}\)xe5 \(\mathcal{N}\)xe5 14.g4 \(\mathcal{N}\)g6 15.f4+–; or 14...exd5 15.gxf5 d4 16.\(\mathcal{N}\)f4 \(\mathcal{N}\)d6 17.\(\mathcal{N}\)e4+–) 13.\(\mathcal{N}\)xd5 \(\mathcal{N}\)b6 14.\(\mathcal{N}\)xb6 \(\mathcal{N}\)xb6 15.a4±

11.\(\mathcal{N}\)xd4!

After 11.\(\mathcal{N}\)xd4 \(\mathcal{N}\)c6 12.\(\mathcal{N}\)f4 \(\mathcal{N}\)c7 13.\(\mathcal{N}\)d5 \(\mathcal{N}\)e7±, White’s initiative will gradually evaporate. 13...\(\mathcal{N}\)cxe5 14.\(\mathcal{N}\)ac1\(\mathcal{N}\)

11...\(\mathcal{N}\)xe5

Black can hardly solve the problems with his development, so he captures material in order “to suffer for something real” after all...

It would be bad for him to try to preserve his dark-squared bishop with 11...\(\mathcal{N}\)g6? 12.\(\mathcal{N}\)xe6 fxe6 13.\(\mathcal{N}\)xe6 \(\mathcal{N}\)a5 14.\(\mathcal{N}\)d6 \(\mathcal{N}\)c6 15.\(\mathcal{N}\)c7 \(\mathcal{N}\)b8 16.\(\mathcal{N}\)ad1+–
12.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{b3}}}!\texttt{N}

White activates his strongest piece, after which Black’s lag in development will become an even more important factor. White has also tried in practice 12.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a4}}} and this move enables him to fight for the advantage as well.

12...b5?? 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{N}}}cxb5 axb5 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xb5+ \textit{\texttt{\textbf{N}}}d7 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}d7+-

12...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{N}}}d7? 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{B}}}g5!, with the idea 13...b5 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xb5 axb5 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xb5+-

12...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}5c6?! 13.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{R}}}fd1 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}a5 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}b3! 0-0-0, Volokitin – Lenic, Plovdiv 2012 (Black’s attempt to facilitate his defence by trading queens 14...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}b4 can be countered by White with the spectacular move 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}db5!, emphasizing the vulnerability of the dark squares in Black’s camp. 15...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xb5 16.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xb5 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}d5. This is his only move. 17.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xb3 18.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xb3±) 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}a4! White does not lose time and begins an attack against the enemy king. 15...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}b4 16.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xf5 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xf5 17.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}xe6+ fxe6
18.\textit{Qxe6+ Qb8} 19.\textit{Rxd8+ Nxd8} 20.\textit{Qxa4} 21.\textit{Qf4+ a7} 22.\textit{e5!+–}

12...\textit{Nc6}. Black opens the diagonal for his dark-squared bishop. 13.\textit{Qxf5 b5} (13...\textit{exf5} 14.\textit{Rad1±}) 14.\textit{Qxb5 axb5} 15.\textit{Qxb5 e6} 16.\textit{d4 xB5} 17.\textit{dxe6 Qxe6} 18.\textit{Qxe6+ e7} 20.\textit{g3=} White’s passed pawns are tremendously dangerous and Black will hardly manage to hold them in a practical game...

12...\textit{Qxc4} 13.\textit{Qxe4 c8} 14.\textit{e2}

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

14...\textit{e5}

He has hardly anything better anyway...

Black’s alternatives enable White to obtain a decisive advantage, for example: 14...\textit{g6} 15.\textit{ac1 c6} 16.\textit{a4 c7} 17.\textit{xc6 bxc6} 18.\textit{f3+–}

15.\textit{Qxf5} 16.\textit{f4 e6} 17.\textit{f3 c6} 18.\textit{h5±}. White’s lead in development is overwhelming.
Here, White can follow a well trodden path with **C1) 8.c4!?**, or choose the relatively seldom played move **C2) 8.Nbd2!?**

It is also promising, but not so strong for him to opt for 8.dxc5 – see Chapter 8.

**C1) 8.c4!?**

White undermines the enemy d5-pawn, hoping to open the central files as quickly as possible and to exploit his lead in development.
8...dxc4

Black has eliminated the tension from the d5-square and has freed it for his knight.

About 8... incarcerating 9.Nbd2 – see variation A.

Black would not solve his problems by exchanging 8...xb1?! 9.xb1, because after for example: 9.cxd4 10.xd4 dxc4 11.xc4 c6, Vajda – Magyar, Budapest 2001, 12.f5 e7 13.e1 c8 14.a4+–, he would succeed in completing the development of his kingside indeed, but would suffer material losses.

It will be tremendously risky for Black to try 8...cxd4?! since this move enables White to develop powerful initiative. 9.xd4

Black can hardly be happy with 9...xb1?! 10.xb1 xe5 11.a4+– and White has decisive threats on the a4-e8 diagonal, for example: 11..d7 12.b5+–; 11...c6 12.cxd5 exd5 13.f4+– Rytshagov – Van Baarle, Dieren 1996; 11...d7 12.f3 c8 13.cxd5 cb6 14.b3 e5 15.e6+– Almasi – Berkes, Hungary 2006.

Black’s horrible lag in development would be fatal for him after the immediate capturing of the e5-pawn 9...xe5?! 10.cxd5 exd5 (10...xd5 11.c3 d7 12.b3+–) 11.e1 d7 12.c3+–, or after the preliminary move 9...dxc4?! 10.a3 and only then 10...xe5 11.xc4 xc4 12.xc4 e4 13.e5+–

9...g6. This is Black’s relatively best move.
Now, White has a choice between numerous good possibilities.

It seems very appropriate for him to try to impede the development of his opponent’s kingside with 10.\texttt{Bg5!?} \texttt{Qb8} (10...\texttt{Nxe5?!} 11.\texttt{Nc3} dxc4 12.\texttt{Nc3} dxc4 12...\texttt{Nxe5} (12...\texttt{exd5?} 13.\texttt{Qd5+–}) 11.\texttt{Nc3} dxc4 12.cxd5 \texttt{Qxe5} (12...\texttt{exd5?} 13.\texttt{Qd5}+–)) 11.\texttt{Qd5} \texttt{cxd4} 12.\texttt{fxe6} \texttt{Qxe6} (12...\texttt{fxe6?} 13.\texttt{Qd5}+–) 13.\texttt{Qd5} \texttt{Qe8} 14.\texttt{Nc3} \texttt{Qe8} 15.\texttt{Rd1} \texttt{d6} 16.\texttt{Nxe6+}

It is also possible for White to bring his knight into the actions with tempo 10.\texttt{Nc3}?! threatening \texttt{Nc3\texttt{xe5}}. 10...\texttt{Nxe5} (10...\texttt{Nxe5}?! 11.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{Qc7} 12.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{cxd4} 13.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{Qc7} 14.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 0-0 15.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 16.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 17.\texttt{Qd4}+–) 11.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 12.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{Qc7} 13.\texttt{Qd4} 14.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 15.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 16.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 17.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 18.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 19.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 20.\texttt{Qd4}+–

10.\texttt{Qd4}?! Black’s light-squared bishop is too far from his queenside and White creates threats on the \texttt{a4-e8} diagonal. 10...\texttt{dxc4} (10...\texttt{a6} 11.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{dxc4} a6 12.\texttt{Nc3} dxc4 13.\texttt{Nc3} b5 14.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{b5} 15.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{b5} 16.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 17.\texttt{Qd4} \texttt{exd5} 18.\texttt{Qd4}+–

9.\texttt{Qd4}
Now, Black can try to complete the development of his kingside with C1a) 9...\(\text{d}5\), or to include before that the move C1b) 9...c3!

He should better refrain from 9...cxd4?, in view of 10.\(\text{xc}4\), threatening \(\text{c}4\)-d6. 10...\(\text{c}6\) 11.\(\text{xd}4\). White is perfectly prepared for an offensive against the enemy king stranded in the centre. 11...\(\text{xd}4\) (11...\(\text{e}4\) 12.\(\text{b}5++\); 11...\(\text{dxe}5\) 12.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{xe}5\) 13.\(\text{b}5++\) \(\text{d}7\) 14.\(\text{xf}5++\) Hunt – Crichton, West Bromwich 2006) 12.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{e}4\) 13.\(\text{d}6\) \(\text{xd}6\) 14.\(\text{xf}5++\) Dorin – Hernandez Penna, Buenos Aires 1998.

9...\(\text{c}6\). Black’s knight is not so active here as on the d5-square. 10.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{e}4\) 11.\(\text{d}6++\) \(\text{xd}6\) 12.exd6 cxd4 13.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{e}4\) 14.\(\text{b}5\) 0-0, Feletar – Zelic, Makarska Tucepi 1995, 15.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{f}5\) (15...\(\text{d}5\) 16.\(\text{c}7++\)) 16.\(\text{c}1\) White’s powerful bishop-pair and his strong passed pawn provide him with an overwhelming advantage.

C1a) 9...\(\text{d}5\)

Black places his knight in the centre and frees the diagonal for his dark-squared bishop.
We will analyse here: C1a1) 10.\textit{Bg5}!? and C1a2) 10.\textit{Nxc4}!

C1a1) 10.\textit{Bg5}!?

White avoids the possibility of Black’s knight capturing his bishop and hopes to create weak dark squares in Black’s camp.

10...\textit{Be7}

His alternatives provide White with more possibilities, while Black will still have problems with the development of his kingside, for example: 10...\textit{Qb8} 11.\textit{Nxc4} (11.\textit{Bxc4 h6} 12.\textit{Bh4} \± Smirin – Vyzmanavin, Elenite 1994) 11...\textit{h6} 12.\textit{Bh4} \textit{b5} 13.\textit{Nxc3} \textit{b4} 14.a4±

It is still too risky for Black to play 10...\textit{f6}, because after 11.exf6 gxf6 12.\textit{d2}±, in view of the unstable placement of his king on the kingside, his castling there would be very precarious, Kersten – Klings, Bad Wildungen 1998.

11.\textit{Nxe7} \textit{Qxe7}

Black would not be any better if he captures with his knight 11...\textit{Qxe7} 12.\textit{Bxc4} 0-0 13.\textit{e1} \textit{c6} 14.\textit{dxc5} \textit{Nxc5}, Dorin – B.Larsen, Buenos Aires 1998, 15.\textit{d6} \textit{Qb6} 16.\textit{b5}±, with the idea \textit{b5xc6}.

12.\textit{Bxc4} 0-0 13.\textit{d6}
This is the consequence of the trade of the dark-squared bishops. White’s knight has penetrated to the weakened d6-outpost in Black’s camp.

13...cxd4!

This exchange in the centre emphasizes the vulnerability of White’s pawn on e5 and frees Black’s knight on d7, since it was squeezed with the protection of his c5-pawn.

The move 13...Bg4 can be countered by White with 14.dxc5!, with the idea after 14...Nxc5?, to reply with 15.Qd4+–. 14...f4 15.Qd2 Nxe2+ 16.Nxe2 Nxc5, Rytshagov – Fridman, Finland 1995, 17.h3 (17.eac1!? b6 18.fd1±) 17...fxe3 (17...h5?! 18.eac1±) 18.Nf3 f6 19.fd1 fxe5 20.Ke3 b6 21.b4± Black is doomed to a passive defence.

His attempt to preserve his bishop with the move 13...Bg6 would not have facilitated his defence either. 14.e1 (14.e4!?↑) 14...cx4d 15.Qd4 7b6 16.h4 c8 17.xg6 hxg6, Anagnostopoulos – Magem Badals, Manresa 1995, 18.e4 dxe6 19.fd1 (It is also possible for White to play here the prophylactic move 19.a3!?, preventing the penetration of the enemy pieces to this square. 19...fd8 20.f3±) 19...fd8 20.b3± The d6-square is very weak in Black’s camp, while White has the initiative and a long-lasting advantage.

Following 13...f4, White can try to preserve his bishop with 14.b5!? or to exchange it for the enemy knight on d7 at an opportune moment (White would not mind giving it up either after 14.Qd2!? xe2+ 15.Qxe2 g4 16.dxc5 xc5 17.h3±) 14...Bg4
15. $\text{Bxd7}$. This exchange is forced, since Black’s knight is exerting rather unpleasant pressure against White’s pawn on e5. (The unstable placement of the pawn on e5 would be detrimental to White’s cause after 15. $\text{Rc1? f6}$ Velcheva – Khurtsidze, Halle 1995.) 15... $\text{Qxd7}$ 16. $\text{h3 Bh5}$ 17. $\text{Qd2}$ $\text{Nxd3}$+ (17... $\text{Bxf3}$ 18. $\text{Qxf4 Bd5}$ 19. $\text{dxe5 Qc6}$ 20. $\text{b4 a5}$ 21. $\text{a3}$ $\text{Nxe5}$ 22. $\text{b5 Nf3}$ 23. $\text{Bxf3}$ $\text{Qxf3}$ 24. $\text{Bc1}$+–; 20... $\text{Nxe5}$ 21. $\text{b5 Nf3}$ 22. $\text{Nxf3}$ $\text{Qxf3}$ 23. $\text{Bc1}$+–) 18. $\text{Kh2}$ $\text{Bxf3}$ 19. $\text{gxf3}$ $\text{f6}$ 20. $\text{Nh3}$ $\text{fxe5}$ 21. $\text{dxe5}$ $\text{Bxa3}$+ 22. $\text{Bxa3}$ $\text{Qc6}$ 23. $\text{Bc2}$! $\text{Qe8}$+ 24. $\text{f3}$ $\text{Qxe5}$ 25. $\text{Oe4}$± Black does not have sufficient compensation for the sacrificed knight.

14. $\text{Qxd4}$

14. $\text{Nf5}$? $\text{exf5}$ 15. $\text{Bxd4}$ $\text{b6}$ 16. $\text{Qf4}$±

14... $\text{g6}$ 15. $\text{Nxb7}$ $\text{Qxe5}$ 16. $\text{Nxe5}$ $\text{Qxb7}$ 17. $\text{Oe4}$± White’s pieces are very active and he can try to exploit later his pawn-
majority on the queenside.

C1a2) 10.\(\text{Nxc4}!\)

White is not afraid of the trade of his dark-squared bishop and transfers his knight to a more active position.

We will analyse thoroughly now two possibilities for Black: C1a2a) 10...\(b5\) and C1a2b) 10...\(e7\).

His alternatives would enable White to obtain effortlessly a great advantage.

10...\(h6?\) 11.dxc5 \(\text{Nxc5}\) 12.\(\text{Nd4+}–\)

10...\(a6\). This move is too slow. 11.dxc5 \(\text{Nx}c5\) (11...\(\text{Nxe}3\) 12.\(\text{Nxe}3\) \(\text{Nx}c5\) 13.\(\text{Nxf5} \pm\) Keskisarja – Raud, Tallinn 2000) 12.\(\text{Bg}5\) \(\text{Qd7}\), Haslinger – Surtees, Halifax 2008, 13.\(\text{Nh}4!\), with the idea 13...\(\text{Bg}6\) 14.\(\text{Qd}4+–\)

Following 10...\(\text{Nxe}3\) 11.\(\text{Nxe}3\) \(\text{Be}4\), White can develop powerful initiative with the help of the move 12.d5!\(\pm\), for example: 12...\(\text{exd}5\) 13.\(\text{Nxd}5\) \(\text{Be}7\) 14.\(\text{Fe}1\) 0-0 15.\(\text{Bb}5\) \(\text{Ff}3\) (15...\(\text{f}5\) 16.\(\text{e}6!\) \(\text{Fxe}6\) 17.\(\text{Fxe}6\) \(\text{Fxe}6\) 18.\(\text{Nxe}7+\) \(\text{Qxe}7\) 19.\(\text{Fxd}7+–\) Shaked – Frenklakh, Honolulu 1997) 16.\(\text{Ff}3\) \(\text{Bb}6\) 17.\(\text{Fad}1\) \(\text{Fxd}5\) 18.\(\text{Be}4\)

C1a2a) 10...\(b5\) 11.\(\text{Bg}5\)

White removes his bishop with tempo, freeing the square for his knight.

11.\(\text{Fd}6+!\) \(\text{Fxd}6\) 12.\(\text{exd}6\) \(\text{c}4\) 13.a4 a6, Jorge Bort – Gonzalvez Garcia, Valencia 2006, 14.\(\text{Ff}5\)
11...\texttt{Qb8}

Black has hardly anything better here.

The other retreat of his queen is not so good 11...\texttt{Qc7?!}, since it presents White with an additional possibility – 12.\texttt{Nxd6+ (12.\texttt{Nxe7!} h6 13.\texttt{Nxf5 exf5 14.dxc5!+-; 13...hxg5 14.\texttt{Nxe3 Qxe3 15.fxe3+-, with decisive threats \texttt{Qf3xg5 andQx2xb5; 12...Qxe3 13.Qxe3 c4 14.a4\texttt{+– Rytshagov – Helvensteijn, Soest 1996}) 12...Qxd6 13.exd6. Now, in comparison to the main line with 11...\texttt{Qb8}, White attacks the enemy queen and wins important tempi for the development of his initiative. 13...\texttt{Qxd6 (13...\texttt{Qb7}! 14.dxc5 Qxc5 15.Qd4+-; 13...\texttt{Qb6} 14.dxc5 Qxc5 15.Qd4+-) 14.dxc5 \texttt{Qxc5} 15.Qd4 0-0 (15...\texttt{Qg6} 16.Qc1 \texttt{Qd6} 17.Qxb5 \texttt{Qe5} 18.Qf3! 0-0 19.Qxd5 exd5 20.Qd2\texttt{+– White has a pawn-majority on the queenside and the possibility to attack Black's isolated pawn on d5.) 16.Qxf5 exf5 17.Qc1 \texttt{Qd6} 18.Qxb5\texttt{+–. White has a powerful bishop-pair and a better pawn-structure.})

Black cannot solve his problems with 11...f6 12.exf6 gxf6 in view of 13.\texttt{Nxe7!} and it would be difficult for him to win a piece, for example: 13...fxg5 (It would be slightly better for him to choose here 13...\texttt{Qxe3 14.Qxe3 c4 15.d5\texttt{+–, but then his previous play would have lost its purposefulness and his position would remain clearly worse after that.) 14.Qxf5 exf5, Larrea – Morgado, Salta 2004, 15.Qxb5+-

12.\texttt{Qxe7 h6}

12...\texttt{g4 13.a4 b4 14.Qd2+}

13.\texttt{Qh4 Qe4}


It is now very difficult for Black to complete the development of his kingside, just like before. White is trying to compromise Black’s queenside pawns and to create targets for attack there, for example after 14...b4, White will have the resource 15.\texttt{b5±}

C1a2b) 10...\texttt{e7}

Black has finally completed the development of his kingside, but White has a space advantage and much more actively placed pieces.

11.\texttt{d6+}

He is trying to create a pawn-wedge on the d6-square, which would reduce considerably Black’s possibilities.

11...Nx xd6 12.exd6

12...0-0?!

White should not be afraid of the exchange of his dark-squared bishop 12...Nx xe3 13.fxe3, for example: 13...Nb6 14.Na4 cxd4 15.Ne5 Nxd6 16.Nxd7 Ke7 17.Rad1 Nxd7 18.Nb4+ Nf6 19.Qxb7 Nf7 20.b3± and Black’s king turns out to be horribly misplaced.

12...cxd4!? It looks like Black should better reduce the tension against the c5-square prior to his castling. 13.Qxd4!? White should preserve his bishop with the idea to exploit later his two-bishop advantage. 13...0-0 14.Qb3 Qf6 15.Qc1 b6 16.Qe5 Qd7 17.Qa3± – His pawn on d6 reduces considerably Black’s possibilities and White has long-lasting initiative thanks to his more actively deployed pieces.

13.dxc5 Qxe3 14.fxe3 Qxc5 15.Qd4!

He activates his queen with tempo.

15...Qb6

15...Qc8 16.Qc1 Qd7 (16...b6?! 17.b4 Qb7 18.a6+-) 17.Qxc8 Qxc8 18.Qh4±
16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h4}}}!

White begins a chase after his opponent’s light-squared bishop and plans to exploit later the dominance of his bishop over the enemy knight in this open position.

16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ac1}}}!? \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{e4}}} 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d7}}} \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{fd8}}} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb6}}} axb6 19.\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{e5}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f8}}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g4}}} \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{g6}}} 21.\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{d6}}} 22.\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{xg6}}} hxg6 23.\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{xg6+}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g8}}} 24.\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{e5}}} f6 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{fd1}}} \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{e4}}} 26.\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{c4±}}} Smirin – Vyzmanavin, Novosibirsk 1995.

16...\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{g6}}} 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ac1}}} \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{d7}}} 18.\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{g6}}} hxg6 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{fd1±}}, with the idea \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{f3}}} and \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{c7}}}.

C1b) 9...\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{c3}}}!

16...\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{g6}}} 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ac1}}} \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{d7}}} 18.\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{g6}}} hxg6 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{fd1±}}, with the idea \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{f3}}} and \textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{c7}}}.

C1b) 9...\textit{\textcolor{green}{\textbf{c3}}}!
It would be useful for Black to compromise his opponent’s pawn-structure before placing his knight on the d5-square.

10.\(\text{Nb5}\)

It would be interesting for White to test in practice the line: 10.bxc3!? \(\text{Nd5}\), Krajnc – Forsloef, corr. 2000, 11.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{b8}\) (11...\(\text{e7}\)?!? 12.\(\text{xe7}\) \(\text{xe7}\) 13.\(\text{b5}\) 0-0 14.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{b6}\) 15.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 16.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{b4}\) 17.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{d3}\) 18.\(\text{e1}\)!!? \(\text{g6}\) 19.\(\text{e2}\) b6 20.\(\text{xc5}\) bxc5 21.\(\text{d2}\)!!; 18.a3?! \(\text{xf1}\) 19.\(\text{axb4}\) \(\text{xc4}\) 20.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{xb4}\)!!) 12.\(\text{b3}\) h6 13.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{e7}\) 14.\(\text{ad1}\) 0-0 15.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{b6}\) 16.\(\text{e3}\) cxd4 17.\(\text{xh4}\)

10...\(\text{d5}\) 11.\(\text{xc3}\)

11...\(\text{xe3}\)

This is the most logical capturing for Black; otherwise, White’s two bishops may become very powerful after the opening of the centre.

11...\(\text{xc3}\) 12.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{e7}\)
13.dxc5?! Shirov – Eljanov, Moscow 2010, 13...0-0! 14.d4 e4 15.f3 d5 16.c4 c6= with the idea e7xc5.

13.d3 xd3 (13...g4?! 14.e4+) 14.xd3 0-0 (14...c7 15.g5± Ernst – Malmstig, Linkoping 1996) 15.d5 exd5 16.xd5 c7 17.e4!± White removes prudently his queen to an active position before Black attacks it with his pieces.

It also seems logical for White to play here 13.d5, after which he will activate his queen, while Black’s pawn on c5 restricts his own pieces. 13...exd5 14.xd5 c7 15.g5 (15.g5!? xg5 16.xg5 xe5 17.f3 0-0, Pekin – Jordaan, ICCF 2008, 18.e1 xd5 19.xd5 e6 20.xb7 ab8 21.f3) 15...e6 16.d2 xg5 17.xg5 0-0-0 (17...0-0? 18.f4+) 18.xe6 fxe6 19.ab1†, with the idea 19...xe5 20.e3 he8 21.a4†

12.fxe3
It would not work for Black to play here 12...cxd4?! because as we have already mentioned before, this move is in favour of White, since it enables him to transfer his knight to a more favourable centralised position.

13. \( \text{N} \text{xd4} \text{B} \text{g6} \)

(13...\text{c}5 14. \text{N} \text{xf5} \text{exf5} 15. \text{N} \text{b3} \text{xe3}+ 16. \text{N} \text{h1} 0-0 17. \text{N} \text{ad1} \text{e}8 18. \text{N} \text{b5} \text{c}5 19. \text{N} \text{c2} \text{xe5} 20. \text{N} \text{xf5} \text{e}6 21. \text{N} \text{e1}+–; 19...\text{N} \text{c}8 20. \text{N} \text{d5} \text{g}5 21. \text{N} \text{xf5} \text{e}6 22. \text{B} \text{f2}+– His initiative has become tremendously dangerous.) 14. \text{b}5! (14. \text{a}4 \text{a}6 15. \text{N} \text{ad1}, \text{B} \text{artel – Rodshtein, Moscow 2009}, 15...\text{c}5!∞ Black completes the development of his kingside.) 14...\text{c}7 (14...\text{a}6 15. \text{N} \text{xd7}+ \text{B} \text{xd7} 16. \text{N} \text{a}4! \text{B} \text{d}8 17. \text{B} \text{b}3+ 15. \text{h}4+–, with the idea 15...\text{xh}4 16. \text{B} \text{g}4 \text{g}5 (16...0-0 17. \text{N} \text{xd7} \text{g}5 18. \text{B} \text{g}3+–) 17. \text{B} \text{xd7}+ \text{B} \text{xd7} 18. \text{Q} \text{e}2 \text{xe}5 19. \text{f}3 \text{h}5 20. \text{B} \text{h}4 \text{B} \text{h}4 21. \text{B} \text{b}5+–)

13.d5!?

This is a principled move which enables White to activate his queen in view of the threat d5-d6.

Black should not be afraid of 13.\text{b}3, due to 13...0-0! 14.\text{xb}7 \text{b}8 15.\text{xa}7, \text{Morozevich – Kamsky, Moscow 2008}, 15...\text{a}8 16.\text{b}7 \text{b}8=)

13...\text{exd}5 14.\text{xd}5

14...0-0

If Black postpones his castling kingside with the move 14...\text{b}6, White can even prevent it later with 15.\text{b}5!? \text{e}6 (15...\text{d}8 16. \text{B} \text{b}3 \text{e}6 17. \text{d}5 \text{xd}5 18. \text{xd}5 \text{xb}5? 19. \text{d}4+–; 18...\text{e}6 19. \text{xb}7 0-0 20. \text{e}4+–) 16. \text{xd}7+ \text{xd}7 17. \text{g}5 \text{xe}6 18. \text{xe}6 \text{xe}6 (It would be too risky for Black to opt here for 18...\text{f}6, because of 19. \text{d}1+ and his king would have to remain in the centre.) 19. \text{xb}7 0-0 20. \text{e}4± Black has not obtained sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

15.\text{xb}7 \text{b}8 16.\text{xa}7
16...\textit{\text{\text{\textit{a8}}}}! (16...\textit{\text{\textit{\text{xb2}}}? 17.\textit{\text{\textit{\textit{ad1}}}±) 17.\textit{\text{\textit{b7 e8}}} 18.\textit{\text{\textit{c6 xb2}}} (18...\textit{\text{\textit{b6}}} 19.\textit{\text{\textit{a4 xb2}}} 20.\textit{\text{\textit{fd1}}}±) 19.\textit{\text{\textit{ad1 e6}}} 20.\textit{\text{\textit{f2 b6}}} 21.\textit{\text{\textit{e4 b4}}} 22.\textit{\text{\textit{c2}}}± – Black will still need to work hard to prove that his compensation for the pawn is sufficient.}

C2) 8.\textit{\text{\textit{bd2}}}!?  

This quiet developing move is in fact insidious and in connected with the sacrifice of the pawn on e5. Black can hardly find a way of completing his development without positional concessions and accepting the pawn-sacrifice may turn out to be very dangerous for him.

8...\textit{\text{\textit{cxd4}}}  

This is a principled move.
8...c4 9.h4 h6 10.xf5!? (10.f4↑) 10...xf5 11.g4↑
8...c6?! 9.c4!

9...e4 10.a3!? e7 (10...cxd4 11.xd4 dxe5, Krivic – Krajnc, ICCF 2008, 12.a4↑) 11.dxc5 xc5 12.xc5 xc5 13.b4±

9...cxd4 10.xd4 xd4 (Black’s attempt to win a pawn with 10...dxe5 11.a4 e7 12.ad1 0-0 13.xf5 exf5 14.b3 d4 15.xd4±, does not work, because White’s two bishops dominate over the board; 12.f4!?↑) 11.xd4 c5 (The reduction of the tension in the centre after 11...dxc4 12.xc4 e4 13.f3+-, is in favour of White, because of his overwhelming lead in development, Efimenko – Pribeanu, Turin 2006.) 12.b3 xd4 13.xd4 xe4 14.f3 g6 15.cxd5 exd5 16.f4 e4, Cao Sang – Z.Lan, Kuala Lumpur 2010, 17.b3!? b6 18.xb6 axb6 19.fc1± Black is doomed to a very difficult defence in this endgame.

9.xd4 xe5

Black will have to capture this pawn, since his alternatives are even less promising. 9...c6 10.xf5 exf5 11.f3 c5, Inarkiev – Khalifman, St Petersburg 2011, 12.g5!? e7 13.xe7 xe7 (13...xe7 14.c4± dxc4? 15.xc4 0-0?! 16.e6+-; 14.b6 15.cxd5 xd5 16.c1±, with the idea c1-c7) 14.b5!± a6 15.xc6 bxc6 16.d4± Black suffers material losses.
10.c4!

Opening of the central files will emphasize the importance of White’s lead in development.

It would not be so effective for him to choose 10.f4 5c6 11.g4 g6!? (11.e4?!∞), with the idea 12.f5 exf5 13.gxf5 xf5 14.xf5 d4!∞

10... 5c6

Black transfers in advance his knight to a defensive position.

About 10... 7c6 11.a4 – see 8..c6.

10... g6. Black is trying to preserve his bishop. 11.a4+ d7 (11..d7 12.f3± 12.b5 5c6 13.b3 f5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.c5 c8 16.f4±
11.cxd5!

White realises his plan maximally quickly.

It is also promising for him to try the natural move 11...Qa4!?, for example: 11...Qd7 12.b5 Qc8 13.Qxa7! White must capture this important pawn, because it may be very useful for Black in some variations. (13.Qc5?! Qg6 14.Qxf8 Qxf8 15.Qe1. White’s pieces are very active, but it is too early to say that he has achieved anything real. It would not be so practical for him to try the rather ambitious line: 13.g4 Qg6 14.c5 Qg8 15.cxd5 exd5 16.b3 a5∞ and Black’s a-pawn turns out to be very useful.) 13...Qa8 14.Qad1 Qc8 15.cxd5 exd5 16.Qf4 Qxa7 17.Qc4 Qc6 18.Qg4!+, with the idea 18...Qxg4 19.Qxd5+-

11...Qxd5

11...Qxd4 12.Qxd4 Qxd5 13.Qa4+ Qc6 14.Qc3±

12.Qb5
12...\texttt{c8}

Following 12...\texttt{\texttt{xc}e3} 13.\texttt{fxe3} \texttt{\texttt{xc}e8} 14.\texttt{\texttt{f}f3}\texttt{\pm}, Black is faced with serious problems.

13.\texttt{\texttt{c}c4} \texttt{\texttt{c}e7} 14.\texttt{\texttt{f}f3} \texttt{\texttt{g}g6} 15.\texttt{\texttt{e}e5} 0-0 16.\texttt{\texttt{xc}c6} \texttt{bxc6} 17.\texttt{\texttt{xc}c6} \texttt{\texttt{c}c7} 18.\texttt{\texttt{xa}x a7} \texttt{\texttt{a}a8} 19.\texttt{\texttt{c}c6} \texttt{\texttt{f}f6} 20.\texttt{\texttt{d}d4} \texttt{\texttt{xd}d4} 21.\texttt{\texttt{d}d4} \texttt{\texttt{e}e5} 22.\texttt{\texttt{fd}d1}\texttt{\pm} White has obtained two dangerous connected passed pawns on the queenside.
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \&f5 4.\&f3 e6 5.\&e2 c5 6.\&e3 cxd4 7.\&xd4

After his last move Black does not need to worry about the protection of his c5-pawn, but White has gained access to the important d4-square.

Black’s task is to complete his development, while White should try to prevent this by all means.

7...\&e7

Black lags in development, therefore, his idea to avoid the exchange of his light-squared bishop for White’s knight, so the move 7...\&g6?! cannot be recommended. After 8.0-0 and Black’s every possible move, White can begin active actions in the centre with c2-c4.
8...Nc7 9.c4! dxc4 (9...bc6 10.Na4±) 10.a4!? Ne6 11.d2 Ne7 12.xc4 0-0 13.fdl±

8...Nd7 9.c4! dxc4 10.bxc4 Nxe5 (10...c5 11.xe6 xd4 12.xd7+) 11.a4 d7 12.xe6 fxe6 13.xe6 f7
(13...gf6 14.c3 f7 15.xf7 xh7 16.b3 – see 13...f7) 14.xf7 xf7 15.d1 gf6, Gietka – Pijewski, Koszalin
2012, 16.b3 g6 17.c3 h6 18.d5 d6 19.d3+-

8...e6 9.c4! ge7 10.c3 xd4 11.xd4 dxc4 12.b5 c6 13.xc4 xd4 14.xd4 c5 15.a4+ e7 16.b3 b6
17.ac1 hc8 18.e2± Short – Malisauskas, Moscow 1994.

8.c4!?

This is an active and principled move. White is striving for an immediate clarification of the situation. I have failed to find a clear advantage for him at the moment. Still, having in mind the level of the players who have tried it in practice, I feel obliged to pay a serious attention to it.

In Chapters 12 and 13 we will analyse the moves 8.0-0 and 8.bd2.
8...\texttt{\textit{c}}bc6

Black’s alternatives are easily refuted by White’s active piece play.

Black has no time to retreat his bishop 8...Bg6?! 9.a4+ (9.0-0?! \texttt{\textit{b}}c6 10.a4 dxc4 11.d1 a5 12.xc4 \texttt{\textit{x}}e5 13.b3+–) 9...\texttt{\textit{c}}ec6 10.\texttt{\textit{c}}c3± Collins – Keen, Hinckley 2012.

If Black reduces immediately the tension against his d5-square with the move 8...dxc4?! his defence would not be facilitated at all. 9.d2 \texttt{\textbf{b}}c6 10.xc4 \texttt{\textbf{d}}5, Scholz – Franke, Dortmund 1999, 11.xf5 exf5 12.0-0 \texttt{\textbf{x}}e3 13.xe3 f4 14.d5±

The following exchange operation is in favour of White 8...\texttt{\textbf{a}}xb1?! 9.xb1

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board.png}
\caption{Board position after 9.xb1.}
\end{figure}

9...dxc4 10.a4+ \texttt{\textit{c}}bc6 11.0-0±
9...\(\text{Nc6}\) 10.0-0 dxc4 (10...\(\text{Nxe5}\)? 11.\(\text{Qa4+}\) \(\text{d7}\) 12.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{c8}\) 13.cxd5 \(\text{cb6}\) 14.\(\text{b3}\) e5 15.\(\text{e6}\) Almasi – Berkes, Hungary 2006; 15...\(\text{fxe6}\) 16.\(\text{dx e6}\) \(\text{f6}\) 17.\(\text{b5+}\) \(\text{e7}\) 18.\(\text{fd1}\) \(\text{c8}\) 19.\(\text{xb6}\) axb6 20.\(\text{bc1+}\)–; 11...\(\text{d7}\) 12.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{b5}\) 13.\(\text{bd1+}\)–) 11.\(\text{Bxc4}\) a6 (11...\(\text{Nxe5}\)? 12.\(\text{Qa4+}\) \(\text{d7}\) 13.\(\text{b5+}\)–) 12.\(\text{Bxc6}\) \(\text{xc6}\) 13.\(\text{fxd1}\) \(\text{xc6}\) 14.f4± White’s two-bishop advantage is in addition to his extra space, Shaked – Burmakin, Linares 1997.

9...\(\text{Nc6}\) 10.0-0!±

10...dxc4 11.\(\text{a4}\) a6 (11...\(\text{a5}\) 12.\(\text{xc4}\) ? \(\text{xc6}\) 13.\(\text{fd1}\) \(\text{e7}\) 14.\(\text{b4}\) 0-0 15.b5+-) 12.\(\text{fd1}\) (12.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{a5}\) ? 13.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 14.\(\text{c8+}\)–; 12...\(\text{d7}\) 13.\(\text{b5}\)! \(\text{e7}\) 14.\(\text{bd1}\) \(\text{c8}\) 15.\(\text{b6}\) 0-0 16.\(\text{c7}\)±) 12...\(\text{c7}\) 13.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 14.f4 0-0 15.\(\text{bc1+}\)– 10...\(\text{xd4}\) 11.\(\text{xd4}\) (11.\(\text{xd4}\)! ? \(\text{c6}\) 12.\(\text{a4}\) dxc4 13.\(\text{f3}\)±) 11...\(\text{d6}\) 12.\(\text{f4}\). White has a considerable space-advantage and manages to create great problems for the opponent thanks to that. 12...dxc4 13.\(\text{xc4}\)±, or 12...d4 13.\(\text{fd1}\) \(\text{c5}\) 14.\(\text{f3}\)±

9.\(\text{a4}\)

White must play energetically here.

9.\(\text{c3}\)?! \(\text{xd4}\) 10.\(\text{xd4}\) dxc4\(\text{f}\) with the idea \(\text{e7-c6}, \text{f8-c7}\) and 0-0. White is busy with regaining his sacrificed pawn, so in the meantime Black can solve his main problem – the development of his kingside. 11.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{c6}\) 12.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{e7}\) 13.0-0 (13.\(\text{xc6}\) c6, Brenjo – Radivojevic, Valjevo 2011, 14.\(\text{f3}\) 0-0\(\text{f}\)) 13...0-0 14.\(\text{xc6}\) bxc6 15.\(\text{c2}\) c5 16.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{b6}\)± Shirov – Anand, Linares 1998.
After 9.\texttt{a4}, Black can try to equalise with the moves: \textbf{A) 9...dxc4} and \textbf{B) 9...a6}.

After his alternatives, White can consolidate his advantage effortlessly.

It would be premature for Black to opt for 9...\texttt{a5}?! in view of 10.\texttt{xa5} \texttt{xa5} 11.exd5 \texttt{xd5} (11...exd5 12.\texttt{b5}\pm Golovachev – Pankov, Anapa 2012) 12.\texttt{b5+ d8} 13.\texttt{xf5 exf5} 14.\texttt{c3}\pm

Black’s threat against the enemy e5-pawn is just an illusion after 9...\texttt{c7}?! 10.0-0, because its capturing leads to the opening of the e-file and he will have to pay a very dear price for that 10...\texttt{xe5} 11.exd5 exd5 12.\texttt{c3 d7} 13.\texttt{f3 f6} 14.\texttt{fe1}\pm

9...\texttt{d7}?! 10.\texttt{b5}! \texttt{g6} (10...\texttt{c8} 11.\texttt{c3}\pm Van der Poel – Strating, Netherlands 2000) 11.cxd5 exd5 12.\texttt{c3 b4} 13.\texttt{d1}\pm

\textbf{A) 9...dxc4}!\

Black reduces the tension against the d5-square.

10.\texttt{a3}
10...\texttt{Qa5}+

This is his most logical move. Black is trying to exchange his opponent’s strongest piece – the queen.

His alternatives would make his problems even more difficult to solve.

It would not work for him to opt for 10...\texttt{a6}? 11.\texttt{Nxc4} \texttt{b5}, due to 12.\texttt{Nxb5}! \texttt{axb5} 13.\texttt{Qxb5} \texttt{Rb8}, Panjwani – Margvelashvili, Heraklio 2004, 14.\texttt{a6}!+–, with the idea \texttt{Nc4-d6}+.

About 10...\texttt{d5} 11.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{d7} 12.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{bxc6} 13.0-0 – see. 10...\texttt{d7}.

10...\texttt{d7} 11.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{d5}

12.\texttt{xf5}!? \texttt{b4}+ 13.\texttt{d2}! (The retreat of White’s king 13.\texttt{f1} is weaker in view of 13...\texttt{exf5}, for example: 14.\texttt{f3} \texttt{f4}!)
15.\textit{Red}1\textit{fxe}3 16.\textit{fxe}3 \textit{\textDelta}xe5 17.\textit{\textDelta}xd7+ \textit{\textDelta}xd7=, or 14.\textit{Red}1, Khalifman – Dreev, Dagomys 1998, 14...0-0 15.\textit{Bf}3 \textit{\textDelta}xe3+ 16.\textit{Nxe}3 \textit{Qe}7=) 13...\textit{\textDelta}xd2+ 14.\textit{Kxd}2 exf5 15.\textit{\textDelta}d6+ \textit{\textDelta}e7 16.\textit{\textLy}d1 \textit{\textDelta}xe5 17.\textit{\textLy}d7+ \textit{\textLy}d7 18.\textit{\textLy}xf5 \textit{\textLy}ad8 19.\textit{\textEe}1 \textit{\textEe}c7 20.\textit{\textLy}xg7 \textit{\textLy}h8 21.\textit{\textLy}ac1+ \textit{\textEe}b6 22.a4!? \textit{\textLy}xg7 23.a5+ \textit{\textFf}xa5 24.\textit{\textCc}5+ \textit{\textEe}b6 25.\textit{\textLy}xd5± and Black will be faced with a long and laborious defence of an inferior endgame.

12.\textit{\textLy}xe6!? bxc6 (12...\textit{\textLy}xe6? 13.\textit{\textLy}d6+–; 12...\textit{\textLy}b4? 13.\textit{\textLy}xb4! \textit{\textLy}xb4 14.\textit{\textLy}xb4±) 13.0-0 \textit{Bb}e7 14.\textit{Rfd}1 0-0 15.\textit{Rac}1– White has long-lasting initiative thanks to his more actively placed pieces and the possibilities to exploit the pawn weaknesses on Black’s queenside, Perpinya Rofes – Avila Jimenez, Sabadell 2011.

The position remains very complicated after 12.\textit{\textLy}ab5 \textit{\textLy}d5 13.\textit{\textLy}xf5 (13.\textit{\textLy}d2 a6! 14.\textit{\textLy}c7+ \textit{\textLy}c7 15.\textit{\textLy}xa5 \textit{\textLy}d5 16.\textit{\textLy}xf5 \textit{\textLy}e4 18.\textit{\textLy}xb4 \textit{\textLy}xb4=) 13...\textit{\textLy}xf5 (13...\textit{\textLy}b4+ 14.\textit{\textLy}d2 \textit{\textLy}xd2+ 15.\textit{\textLy}xd2 \textit{\textLy}xf5 16.\textit{\textLy}f3!, with the idea 16...c3+ 17.\textit{\textLy}c2 \textit{\textLy}xb2 18.\textit{\textLy}d6+ \textit{\textLy}e7 19.\textit{\textLy}xf5+ \textit{\textLy}f8 20.\textit{\textLy}ad1±) 14.\textit{\textLy}d2 a6!? 15.\textit{\textLy}d4 (15.\textit{\textLy}d6+ \textit{\textLy}xd6 16.\textit{\textLy}xd6 c3 17.\textit{\textLy}xc3 \textit{\textLy}e8↑) 15...\textit{\textLy}b4 16.\textit{\textLy}xf5 0-0!? (16...\textit{\textLy}xf2?! 17.\textit{\textLy}xf2 0-0∞) 17.\textit{\textLy}xb4 (17.0-0-0 \textit{\textLy}c3! 18.\textit{\textLy}g5 \textit{\textLy}xb2+ 19.\textit{\textLy}xb2 \textit{\textLy}c3 20.\textit{\textLy}d4 \textit{\textLy}a4=) 17...\textit{\textLy}xb4 18.0-0∞ Gelfand – Karpov, Sanghi Nagar 1995.

12...\textit{\textLy}xe4 13.\textit{\textLy}xe4 a6 14.\textit{\textLy}f3!?

White prevents Black’s typical manoeuvre \textit{\textLy}f5-e4.

14.\textit{\textLy}c1 \textit{\textLy}e4=

14.\textit{\textLy}xf5 \textit{\textLy}xf5 15.\textit{\textLy}b6 \textit{\textLy}e7 16.0-0 \textit{\textLy}d8= 
14...\text{\textit{g}6}!

If Black solves radically the problem with the development of his kingside, he can be optimistic about the future.

14...\text{\textit{g}6}?! 15.\text{\textit{f}c1} \text{\textit{f}f5} 16.\textit{xf5} \textit{xf5} 17.\textit{f2} \textit{e7} 18.\textit{e2}, with the idea \textit{ec1-c7}.

14...0-0-0?! 15.\text{\textit{f}c1} (15.\textit{f2}!?) 15...\textit{b8} 16.\textit{f2} \textit{g5} 17.\textit{hd1} \textit{h6} 18.\textit{xf5} \textit{xd1} 19.\textit{xd1} \textit{xf5} 20.\textit{b6} \textit{g7} 21.\textit{g4}! (21.\textit{d7} \textit{e8} 22.\textit{b3} \textit{xe5} 23.\textit{xf7} \textit{d6}= Belov – Deviatkin, Moscow 2006) 21...\textit{e7} 22.\textit{d7} \textit{e8} 23.\textit{c5} \textit{g6} 24.\textit{xf7} \textit{xe5} 25.\textit{d3} and Black’s problems seem impossible to solve.

15.\textit{xf5}

White has hardly anything better here.

Black succeeds in complicating the situation following 15.\textit{f4} \textit{e4} 16.\textit{f2} \textit{h4} 17.\textit{hg1} \textit{g5}!

15...\textit{xe5} 16.\textit{b3}
16...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}4!}

The inclusion of this move is very necessary for Black!

The hasty move 16...exf5?! would provide White with the possibility – 17.0-0-0!↑ and he would have excellent prospects due to his very active pieces, for example: 17...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}7} 18.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}6} 19.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf}5} 0-0 20.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}1} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}6} 21.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}7} b5, Svidler – Anand, Madrid 1998 22.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}5} (22.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}5}!? \textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}5} 23.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe}5} 24.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf}8} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf}8} 25.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}3}↑) 22...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}5} 23.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{dd}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{fe}8} 24.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}4} – White has excellent chances in this multi-piece endgame thanks to his two-bishop advantage and very actively deployed pieces.

17.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}2}

The other possible retreat of his king is not so good – 17.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}2} exf5 18.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{ac}1} 0-0 19.a3, Lintchevski – Tate, Plovdiv 2012 and it becomes obvious that White’s king is not so stable on the e-file. 19...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}7}!!=

17...exf5 18.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{hd}1}

18.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{ad}1} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}8} 19.a3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}7} 20.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}6} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}6} 21.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd}6} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd}6} 22.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}3} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}7} 23.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}1} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}7}= 
18...\texttt{d}8! Van Unen – Muck, ICCF 2011 (18...\texttt{e}8 19.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{f}6 20.\texttt{ad}1!?) 19.\texttt{xd}8+ \texttt{xd}8 20.\texttt{d}1+ \texttt{c}7 (White maintains a slight initiative after 20...\texttt{e}7 21.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{f}6 22.a3 \texttt{d}6 23.f4 \texttt{c}6 24.\texttt{e}1+ \texttt{d}7 25.\texttt{e}6+ \texttt{c}7 26.\texttt{e}3; 24.b6 24...\texttt{x}f4 25.\texttt{c}5+ \texttt{e}8 26.\texttt{e}6, but Black has excellent chances for a draw.) 21.h3 b5 22.f4 \texttt{xc}4 23.\texttt{xc}4 ² It looks like White has an edge, but he can hardly ever win a position like this...

B) 9...\texttt{a}6!?

Now, Black is ready to counter the standard move 10.\texttt{a}3 with the queen-sortie 10...\texttt{a}5.

10.\texttt{c}3

Black should not be afraid of 10.cxd5, due to 10...\texttt{b}5! (10...\texttt{x}d5 11.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{d}7 12.\texttt{c}3↑) 11.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6 12.\texttt{f}4 (12.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{b}4=) 12...\texttt{b}4! 13.0-0 \texttt{xd}5= 

White cannot create problems for his opponent with the line: 10.d2 d7! 11.cxd5 cxd4 (11...d5?! 12.xc6 bxc6 13.c1 b4 14.0-0 dxe3 15.xb4 axf1 16.c4 e7 17.d6+ f8 18.xc6 g8 19.xf1± Kosteniuk – Paikidze, Moscow 2010; 14...0-0 15.c4?) 12.xd4 (12.Qxd7+ Kxd7 13.bxd4 d5=) 12...d5 13.0-0 c8 14.c4 xe3 15.xe3 c5 16.g3 0-0, draw, Kosteniuk – Girya, Moscow 2011.

It seems sensible for White to try the move 10.a3, with the idea to develop his rook on the c1-square with a great effect. Still, after the standard trade of the queens with 10...d7! (White’s idea is justified following 10...e8, Cao – Chevannes, Santa Clara 2014, 11.c1! d7 12.cxd5 xdx4 13.e8+ xex8 14.xd4±) 11.xa5 xax5, the position is simplified considerably and his edge would be just symbolic. 12.0-0 (12.cxd5 d5 13.xf5 b4! 14.f1 exf5 15.c2= Vanegas – Mazara, Santiago de los Caballeros 2011; 12.c1 a6 13.cxd5 xd4 14.xd4 xd5=) 12...dxc4 13.xe4 (13.xf5 xf5 14.b6 axa3 15.bxa3 c6 16.f4 g5= Leko – Le Quang, Dortmund 2010) 13...xc4 14.xc4 e4! 15.ac1 b5 16.e2 b8 17.xc8+ xc8 18.c1 d7= Svidler – Anand, Tilburg 1998.

10...dxc4 11.0-0-0! After 11.d1, Black can force great simplification with the line: 11...d3 12.xd3 cxd3 13.exd3 wa5=, or try to seize the initiative with 13...b5!? 14.xb5 (He would have been successful after 14.b3, Svidler – Leko, Tilburg 1998, 14.c5! 15.axb5 xe5 16.d1 xe3 17.xe3 b4+ 18.c3 b7=) 14.xd3 15.c7+ d7! 16.xa8 d5! 17.xd5 (17.b6? xb6 18.xb6 b4=) 17...exd5 18.g4+ (18.b6+ c7 19.xd5+ xd5 20.0-0 e7=) 18.d8 19.b6+ e7 20.c5+ d8= Ni Hua – Wu Shaobin, Beijing 2001.

11...wa5

If Black really intends to exchange the queens, he should do that immediately.

The trade of the queens would not have worked after the preliminary inclusion of the moves 11...d3 12.xd3 cxd3 13.exd3 wa5 (13...b5? 14.xb5 xd3 15.c7+=), due to 14.b3! (The endgame, arising after 14.xa5!? xa5 15.f4=, would be very unpleasant for Black, but in comparison to the variation with 14.b3, it would be a reason for him to celebrate.)
14...b4 (14...b4 15.\textit{b}xe6! \pm; Black’s king would be in a great trouble after 14...\textit{d}xe5 15.\textit{d}d1 0-0-0 16.\textit{d}xe6! fxe6 17.\textit{b}6+--; 16...\textit{d}d3+ 17.\textit{e}xd3 \textit{d}xd3 18.\textit{c}5+-- and he would be helpless due to the lack of development of his entire kingside; 15...\textit{b}5 16.\textit{d}xe6 fxe6 17.\textit{e}xe6 \textit{d}c4 18.\textit{d}d7+ \textit{f}7 19.\textit{c}5+--; 17...\textit{c}7 18.\textit{b}6 \textit{c}6 19.\textit{e}xe5 \textit{xb}6 20.\textit{e}4+--) 15.\textit{d}2 (It would be imprecise for White to choose 15.\textit{d}d1, because he should leave the d1-square for his rook on h1. 15...\textit{d}ed5 16.\textit{b}1, Efimenko – Macieja, Plovdiv 2008, 16...\textit{xc}3+ 17.bxc3 \textit{c}6! 18.\textit{xc}6 bxc6 19.\textit{b}7 \textit{xb}5+ 20.\textit{xb}5 axb5=) 15...\textit{ed}5

16.\textit{b}1! White must remove his king from the c-file, since Black’s rook on a8 may occupy it in the future and leave the c1-square for his rook on h1. 16...\textit{e}7 (16...\textit{xc}3 17.\textit{f}xe3 \textit{f}7 18.a3 \textit{d}5 19.\textit{xb}7 \textit{xc}3+ 20.bxc3 \textit{d}5 21.\textit{xd}5 \textit{ex}d5 22.\textit{f}5+--; 16...\textit{xc}3+ 17.bxc3 \textit{c}6 18.\textit{xc}6 bxc6 19.\textit{b}7 \textit{b}5+ 20.b2 \textit{xb}7 21.\textit{xb}7+--; White’s rook on c1 may become handy following 16...\textit{c}8 17.\textit{c}1! \textit{e}7 18.a3 \textit{xc}3+ 19.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3 20.\textit{xc}3 \textit{c}6 21.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}3 22.bxc3 bxc6 23.\textit{b}2+--) 17.a3 \textit{xc}3+ 18.\textit{xc}3 \textit{c}6 19.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}3 20.bxc3 bxc6 21.\textit{hd}1 (21.\textit{a}2?!?) 21...\textit{xa}3 22.\textit{d}7± In the
arising multi-piece endgame White’s piece activity becomes very important. In addition, Black’s bishop on a3 is deprived of acceptable squares to retreat to. 22...\(\text{Rb8+}\) 22...0-0?? 23.\(\text{a2+}\)–; 22...\(\text{Be7}\) 23.\(\text{Cc7}\)± with the idea 23...\(\text{d8}\) 24.\(\text{b7}\) 0-0? 25.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{e8}\) 26.\(\text{dd7+}\)– 23.\(\text{a2}\) \(\text{e7}\) 24.\(\text{b7}\)

11...\(\text{Qc8}\)! Black is trying to provoke complications. 12.\(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 13.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{b4}\) (13...\(\text{e7}\) 14.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{h4}\) 15.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{g6}\) 16.\(\text{xc4}\)± Kosteniuk – Ramstad, Kristiansund 2010) 14.\(\text{f4}\). White consolidates his space-advantage with this move. 14...0-0 (14...\(\text{xc3}\) 15.\(\text{bxc3}\) 0-0 16.\(\text{f3}\) Predojevic – Harikrishna, Sarajevo 2009) 15.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{f7}\) 16.\(\text{g3}\)! He fortifies his pawn-chain. (16.\(\text{g4}\)? Sebag – Paikidze, Moscow 2010, 16...\(\text{xc3}\) 17.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{d5}\)–) 16...\(\text{b8}\)! 17.\(\text{d2}\)! White is preparing to prevent his opponent’s attempt to get off the positional bind. (17.\(\text{b1}\) \(\text{a5}\) 18.\(\text{xa5}\) \(\text{b5}\) 19.\(\text{a3}\) \(\text{b4}\) 20.\(\text{xb4}\) \(\text{b4}\) 21.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{f5}\) 22.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{h4}\) 23.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{c5}\) 24.\(\text{b7}\) a5∞; Black can maintain the balance, but not without great efforts, following 17.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xc6}\) 18.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 19.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{xd6}\) 20.\(\text{exd6}\) \(\text{d7}\) 21.\(\text{xc4}\) e5 22.\(\text{he1}\) \(\text{e8}\)–; 19.\(\text{b1}\) \(\text{b4}\) 20.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{xd6}\) 21.\(\text{exd6}\) c3! 22.\(\text{xc1}\) \(\text{c4}\) 23.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{d3}\) + 24.\(\text{xa1}\) \(\text{d5}\) 25.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{xd4}\) 26.\(\text{xd4}\) b5 27.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{xc4}\) 28.\(\text{xc4}\) f6=) 17...\(\text{a5}\) (17...\(\text{d5}\) 18.\(\text{xd5}\) exd5 19.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{e6}\) 20.\(\text{xb4}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 21.\(\text{fxe5}\) \(\text{xb6}\) 22.\(\text{d5}\)–) 18.\(\text{xa5}\) \(\text{b5}\) 19.\(\text{a3}\) \(\text{b4}\) 20.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{xa5}\) 21.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 22.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{c5}\) 23.\(\text{hd1}\)± Black has succeeded in simplifying considerably the position; nevertheless, his pawn-weaknesses on the queenside doom him to a difficult endgame, if that happens.

12.\(\text{xa5}\) \(\text{xa5}\) 13.\(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 14.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{c6}\)

14...\(\text{b4}\) 15.\(\text{e4}\)± 0-0?! 16.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{e7}\) 17.\(\text{f3}\)±

15.\(\text{f4}\)

White maintains the initiative and his play is much easier than Black’s task to survive in this endgame. Still, it would not be so easy for White to preserve a stable advantage if Black defends accurately. White however, can fight for a win without any risk and should do so in this endgame.

15...\(\text{c8}\) 16.\(\text{g4}\)

16.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{g5}\)! 17.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{h4}\) – see 16.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{h4}\) 17.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{g6}\).

White cannot create serious problems for his opponent with the rather slow line: 16.\(\text{b1}\) \(\text{e7}\) 17.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{xe5}\)! (17...\(\text{g5}\), Dijkhuis – Riemersma, Wijk aan Zee 2013, 18.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{gf4}\) 19.\(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 20.\(\text{d5}\)?) 18.\(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{xe6}\) 19.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{c5}\)
Black solves his problems successfully after 16.\texttt{R}d2 \texttt{h}e7 (16...g5 17.g4 \texttt{h}h4 18.\texttt{g}e4+) 17.\texttt{f}f3 (17.\texttt{xc}4? \texttt{xe}5\texttt{=}+) 17...g5! 18.g3 \texttt{xf}4 19.gxf4 \texttt{h}h4 20.\texttt{e}e4 \texttt{g}8 21.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{g}4= Leko – Anand, Miskolc 2009.

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16...\texttt{h}h4

After 16...\texttt{fe}7 17.\texttt{b}1 (17.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{g}6 18.\texttt{hf}1 h5! 19.g5 \texttt{e}7\texttt{=}+) 17...\texttt{g}6 18.\texttt{hf}1 \texttt{e}7 19.a3\texttt{=}, White succeeds in consolidating his space-advantage.

17.\texttt{hf}1?!

There are still too many pieces left on the board and this attempt to seize the initiative is no doubt very interesting.

17.\texttt{xc}4. White regains his pawn, hoping to realise his two-bishop advantage. 17...g5?! This is a timely counter-strike. (It would not work for Black to attack directly the enemy bishop on c4-square with 17...\texttt{xe}5? 18.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{xc}4 19.\texttt{d}8+ \texttt{e}7 20.\texttt{hd}1\texttt{=}; 17...\texttt{e}7?! 18.\texttt{b}3! g5?! 19.f5 \texttt{xe}5 20.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{xe}6 21.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{hf}3 22.\texttt{xe}6\pm Kosteniuk – Ushenina, Nalchik 2008.) 18.f5 (18.fgx5 \texttt{xe}5 19.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{c}5\texttt{=}+) 18...\texttt{xe}5 19.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{e}5?! Black wishes to deprive his opponent of his main trump – the two-bishop advantage. (19...\texttt{hf}3 20.\texttt{b}1\texttt{=} 20.\texttt{xc}5 (It would not work or White to win a piece with 20.\texttt{a}4?! \texttt{e}7 21.f6+ \texttt{xf}6 22.\texttt{e}4+ \texttt{g}7 23.\texttt{xc}5, Caruana – Arutenian, Rijeka 2010, due to 23...\texttt{xc}5! 24.\texttt{xc}5 \texttt{e}8\texttt{=}) 20...\texttt{xc}5 21.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{xe}6 22.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{e}7 23.\texttt{b}3 (It would be very difficult to evaluate the endgame arising after 23.\texttt{d}5?! b5 24.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{hg}6 25.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{d}8 26.\texttt{b}7 \texttt{x}d1+ 27.\texttt{xd}1 a5 28.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{c}7 29.\texttt{a}6 \texttt{h}6 30.h3 b4 31.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{d}7 32.\texttt{xa}5 \texttt{d}1+ 33.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{hf}1\texttt{=} White has a long range bishop, working effectively on both sides of the board, while Black has relatively far-advanced pawns on the kingside.) 23...\texttt{d}8 24.h3, draw, Bologan – Le Quang, Moscow 2010.

17...\texttt{e}7 18.\texttt{b}1\texttt{=}
White is not in a hurry to regain immediately his pawn, and plans to do that a bit later.

Black is faced with certain problems now, because his pieces are scattered over the board and discoordinated, so he can hardly find an appropriate plan. Therefore, despite his extra pawn, Black will have numerous problems to worry about, for example: 18...h5 19.gxh5 (19.g5!? g6 20.a3 $\text{d}8$ 21.$\text{f}2$ $\text{f}5$ 22.$\text{e}4$ b5 23.$\text{f}3$) 19...f5 20.$\text{g}4$ (20.$\text{g}1$?) 20...b4 21.$\text{a}4$,

or 18...g5, Tate – Bures, Heviz 2012, 19.f5 $\text{xe}5$ (19...0-0 20.$\text{xe}6$ $\text{xe}5$ 21.$\text{d}5$ $\text{e}8$ (21...$\text{hg}6$ 22.$\text{f}5$?) 22.$\text{d}4$ $\text{hg}6$ 23.$\text{f}5$ f6 24.$\text{b}6$?) 20.$\text{d}4$ f6 21.$\text{xe}6$ $\text{hg}6$ 22.$\text{d}5$↑
Chapter 12

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.a3 cxd4 7.exd4 e7 8.0-0

8...Nc6

8...a6. Black should better avoid to slow down his development with this move. 9.f4!? White wishes after the possible exchange on f5 to be able to retreat with his bishop to the f2-square. 9...g6 (His two bishops will play an important role after 9...Nc6 10.xf5 xf5 11.f2= White should not be in a hurry to capture the enemy light-squared bishop. 10.c3!? xd4 11.cxd4) 10.d2 Nc6 11.c4=

9.b5!?

This is a very ambitious move. White plans with the help of the undermining move c2-c4 and the possible inclusion of his queen to active actions, via the a4-square, to create serious problems for his opponent.

We will deal in details now with the moves A) 9...a6 and B) 9...g6.

9...Qc7?! You will see in the following variations that Black’s queen is misplaced on the c-file. 10.c4! dxc4 (10...a6 11.Qxc6+ bxc6 12.Qa4±) 11.Qa3 Qd3, Sevian – Dale, Wijk aan Zee 2015, 12.Qxc6 Qxf1 13.Qdb5±

Following 9...Qd7, White can complete the development of his queenside with 10.Qd2 (10.c4!? Qg6 11.Qa3±; 10...a6 11.Qxc6 bxc6 12.Qc3 – see variation A) 10...Qg6 (10...a6 11.Qxc6 bxc6 12.b4++) 11.c4 a6 12.Qxc6 Qxc6 13.Qxd5 exd5. Black will have to comply with the weakening of his pawn-structure. (13...Qxd4?! 14.Qc4!±; 13...Qxd5?! 14.Qxc6 Qxc6 15.Qd1 Qd5 16.Qc4±; 14...bxc6 15.Qc1 Qe7 16.Qc4±) 14.Qxc6 bxc6 15.Qe1 Qe7 16.Qb3 0-0 17.Qc5± White fixes the pawn-weaknesses on the enemy queenside.

Black’s logical move 9...Qc8 can be countered by White with the simple response 10.Qd2! and while Black loses time for the development of his queenside, White will exploit the lack of development of his opponent’s kingside, beginning immediate active piece-play, opening additionally files in the centre. 10...a6 (10...Qg6 11.c4 a6 12.Qa4 Qf5 13.Qxf5 Qxf5 14.Qb3 Qd7 15.Qad1 Qe7 16.Qb6 0-0 17.Qf3) 11.Qxc6+ bxc6 12.b4?! (12.Qe2!? c5 13.Qxf5 Qxf5 14.Qxa6 Qe7 15.Qb5± Volokitin – Vachier Lagrave, Warsaw 2013) 12.Qf7 (12...Qg6 13.Qxb3 Qf5 14.Qxf5 Qxf5 15.Qd2 Qe7 16.Qc5±) 13.Qe2!± (White does not need to waste time for the move 13.f4! Iordachescu – Berkes, Mamaia 2012) with the idea 13...Qxe5?! 14.Qg4 Qe4 15.f3 Qg6 16.f4±, followed by f4-f5.

A) 9...a6 10.Qxc6+

Black does not have enough time to retreat his bishop, since his e5-pawn is hanging.

10...bxc6

After the other possible capture – 10...Qxc6 and 11.Qxf5 exf5, White will have some additional possibilities, connected with exploiting his opponent’s compromised pawn-structure. 12.c3! (12.Qd4!? Qe7 13.Qc3 0-0 14.Qe2 Qc8 15.Qe3 Qd7 16.Qd3± T.Kosintseva – Khotenashvili, Geneva 2013) 12...Qe7 13.Qd2 Qxe5 (13...0-0 14.Qf3 Qd7 15.Qc4±) 14.Qd4 f6 (14...Qd6, Ni Hua – Ankit, Fujairah 2012, 15.Qe1 f6 16.Qb3± – see 14...f6) 15.Qe1 Qc6 (15...Qd6 16.Qb3 b6 17.Qe2±) 16.Qf1! f4 17.Qg4 0-0 18.Qxf4± White has excellent chances of attacking Black’s vulnerable isolated pawn on d5, Shirov – Laznicka, Novy Bor (m/6) 2012.

11.c4
White must play maximally energetically, because slowing down may lead to the loss of his initiative.

11...\(Qd7\)

Black fortifies his c6-square, preparing the establishment of his knight on the d5-square (after d5xc4).

Following 11...c5 12.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{Q}}}xf5}\) \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{Q}}}xf5}\) 13.cxd5, Black's lag in development would hurt him horribly. 13...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{Q}}}xd5}\) (13...\(exd5\) 14.\(Qf3!\pm\)) 14.\(Qa4+\) \(Qd7\) 15.\(Qe4\) \(Ec8\) 16.\(Qa3\pm\) Giri – Ipatov, Reykjavik 2013.

If he accepts the pawn-sacrifice 11...dxc4, White's queen will occupy a very active position after 12.\(Qa4\), creating threats on the a4-e8 diagonal.

Black has numerous pawn-weaknesses on the queenside, so he will hardly manage to preserve his material advantage.
Still, he has at his disposal the important strategically d5-outpost, which can be occupied by his knight. 12...\textit{\texttt{d7}}. Black needs to complete the development of his kingside as quickly as possible. Therefore, he frees his knight from the protection of the c6-pawn and intends to deploy his knight on the d5-square. (12...\textit{\texttt{d3}}?! 13.\textit{\texttt{d1}} \textit{\texttt{d7}} 14.\textit{\texttt{a3}} c5 15.\textit{\texttt{db5}} \textit{\texttt{d5}} 16.\textit{\texttt{c7}}! \textit{\texttt{xc7}} 17.\textit{\texttt{xd7}}+ \textit{\texttt{xd7}} 18.\textit{\texttt{xc4}} \textit{\texttt{d5}} 19.\textit{\texttt{xd3}} \textit{\texttt{c6}} 20.\textit{\texttt{b3}}\texttt{?}\texttt{±}; 14...\textit{\texttt{d5}} 15.\textit{\texttt{xc4}} \textit{\texttt{xc4}} 16.\textit{\texttt{xc4}} c5 17.\textit{\texttt{b3}} \textit{\texttt{xe3}} 18.\textit{\texttt{fxe3}} \textit{\texttt{b5}} 19.\textit{\texttt{ac1}} \textit{\texttt{c8}} 20.\textit{\texttt{g4}}? g6 21.\textit{\texttt{d2}}\texttt{±}; 20.\textit{\texttt{c2}} \textit{\texttt{e7}} 21.\textit{\texttt{dc1}} \textit{\texttt{xc4}} 22.\textit{\texttt{xc4}}\texttt{±} Ni Hua – Gagare, Kolkata 2012) 13.\textit{\texttt{a3}}

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13...\texttt{c3}. Black gives back the gobbled material, trying to compromise his opponent’s queenside pawn-structure. (He can hardly be happy with the endgame arising after 13...\texttt{c5} 14.\texttt{xd7}+ \texttt{xd7} 15.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xf5} 16.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{c6} 17.\texttt{ac1}?) 14.\texttt{bxc3}. This capturing is quite logical, because just like before Black’s kingside has not been developed yet. (White can make use of this circumstance by the energetic attempt 14.\texttt{ad1}!, with the idea 14...\texttt{d5} 15.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xf5} 16.\texttt{d4} \texttt{xb2} 17.\texttt{xb2} \texttt{e7} 18.\texttt{e6} \texttt{fxe6} 19.\texttt{xg7} \texttt{g8} 20.\texttt{e5}?) 14...\texttt{d5} 15.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xf5} 16.\texttt{c4} \texttt{e7} 17.\texttt{fd1} 0-0 18.\texttt{b6} \texttt{xb6} 19.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{c6} 20.\texttt{c7}\texttt{±} Khalifman – Laznicka, Plovdiv 2012.

12.\textit{\texttt{c3}} \textit{\texttt{xc4}} 13.\textit{\texttt{a4}} \textit{\texttt{d5}} 14.\textit{\texttt{xf5}} \textit{\texttt{exf5}}
15.\textbf{Rc1!}

This is an important inclusion of the rook, aiming at exploiting Black’s pawn-weaknesses on the queenside. White follows consistently his plan to mobilise his pieces as quickly as possible!

It would be less energetic for him to choose 15.\textbf{Bd4 Rd8 16.Qf3 c5!!} Gelfand – Karpov, Sanghi Nagar 1995.

15...\textbf{Qe6}

Black protects indirectly his c4-pawn and would not mind preserving his material advantage.

After 15...\textbf{Be7 16.Rxc4 0-0}, Peng Xiaomin – Liang Chong, Shenyang 1999, 17.\textbf{Re1 Re8 18.c5!? Re5 19.xc5 Rc7 20.d3}, Black’s queenside pawns would be considerably weakened.

White should hardly be afraid of the weakening of his pawn-structure after 15...\textbf{Nx3}, since following 16.Rxd7+ Rxd7 17.fxe3 Re6 18.Rxc4, his lead in development would be a much more important factor. 18...c5 19.b4!? (It is also quite acceptable for him to opt for 19.b3 Re8 20.b2 xe5 21.a4 Rc6 22.e4!±) 19...Re8 (19...cxb4? 20.Rd1 Re8 21.c6+ Re7 22.Re5+–; 21...xe5? 22.b2+–) 20.fxe1 xe5 21.xc5 xe5 22.xc5+ xxc5 23.xc5+. In the arising endgame Black will have to work long and hard for a draw, for example: 23...\textbf{e4 24.f2 Rd8 25.e2 Rd7 26.c6 a7 27.c4+ d5 28.d3±}
16. \textbf{\textit{Qc5}}!? \\

This move seems very active, but is not White’s only possibility. \\
It deserves attention for him to try to keep the enemy king stranded in the centre with the help of the line: 16. \textbf{\textit{Qc5}}!? \textbf{\textit{Qf4}} 17. \textbf{\textit{Bxf8}} \textbf{\textit{Exf8}} 18. \textbf{\textit{Qd2}}!? Black’s position cannot be termed as bad, but it is still very precarious, because White maintains long-lasting initiative. (18. \textbf{\textit{Qf3}} \textbf{\textit{Qd3}} 19. \textbf{\textit{Qb6}} \textbf{\textit{Qd8}} 20. \textbf{\textit{Qc3}} \textbf{\textit{Qxe5}} 21. \textbf{\textit{Qe3}}! \textbf{\textit{Qd3}} 22. \textbf{\textit{Qe1}} \textbf{\textit{Qxc3}} 23. \textbf{\textit{Qxc3}} \textbf{\textit{Qf6}} 24. \textbf{\textit{Qe1}} \textbf{\textit{Qf7}} 25. \textbf{\textit{f4}} \textbf{\textit{c5}}!=; 21. \textbf{\textit{Qc2}} \textbf{\textit{Qd4}} 22. \textbf{\textit{Qe3}} \textbf{\textit{Qe4}} 23. \textbf{\textit{Qxe4}} \textbf{\textit{Qxe4}} 24. \textbf{\textit{Qxe4}} \textbf{\textit{f5}}=) 18... \textbf{\textit{Qd3}} 19. \textbf{\textit{Qc3}} \textbf{\textit{Qd8}} 20. \textbf{\textit{Qb6}}\uparrow (20. \textbf{\textit{Qd1}}?!\uparrow). \\

White has good prospects too if he regains immediately his pawn with 16. \textbf{\textit{Qd4}}!? \textbf{\textit{Qe7}} 17. \textbf{\textit{Qxc4}} (Black will manage to save the day after 17. \textbf{\textit{Qc5}} \textbf{\textit{Qxc5}} 18. \textbf{\textit{Qxc5}} \textbf{\textit{c3}} 19. \textbf{\textit{Qxe3}} \textbf{\textit{Qxe3}} 20. \textbf{\textit{fxe3}} \textbf{\textit{Qd5}} 21. \textbf{\textit{Qxd5}} \textbf{\textit{Qxd5}} 22. \textbf{\textit{Qxf5}} \textbf{\textit{Qxe7}}=) 17...0-0 18. \textbf{\textit{Qd4}}\uparrow, or 16. \textbf{\textit{Qc2}}!? \textbf{\textit{Qe7}} (16... \textbf{\textit{Qxe3}} 17. \textbf{\textit{Qxe3}} \textbf{\textit{Qg6}} 18. \textbf{\textit{Qxc4}} \textbf{\textit{Qxc4}} 19. \textbf{\textit{Qxc4}} \textbf{\textit{Qg7}} 20. \textbf{\textit{Qb6}} \textbf{\textit{Qd8}} 21. \textbf{\textit{Qxe6}} 0-0 22. \textbf{\textit{Qc4}}\uparrow) 17. \textbf{\textit{Qxc4}} 0-0 18. \textbf{\textit{Qd4}}\uparrow \\

16... \textbf{\textit{Qxc5}} 17. \textbf{\textit{Qxe5}} \textbf{\textit{Qf4}}
Black transfers his knight to the d3-square in the attempt to oust the enemy dark-squared bishop from the a3-f8 diagonal. White’s task here is to exploit Black’s misplaced king, stranded in the centre of the board.

18.\textit{Qf3} \textit{\texttt{d}3} 19.\textit{\texttt{d}6} \textit{\texttt{c}8} 20.\textit{\texttt{c}3} \textit{f6}

With this move, Black emphasises the unstable placement of the enemy bishop on the d6-square.

White will manage to exploit the weaknesses in the enemy camp after 20...\textit{g6} 21.\textit{Qe3}!? (21.\textit{Qg3} \textit{\texttt{f}4} 22.\textit{\texttt{h}4} \textit{\texttt{xe}5} 23.\textit{\texttt{x}e}5 \textit{\texttt{xe}5} 24.\textit{\texttt{h}6} \textit{f5} 25.\textit{\texttt{xc}4} \textit{\texttt{f}7} 26.\textit{b3= Narayanan – Gagare, Pune 2014}) 21...\textit{\texttt{f}4} 22.\textit{\texttt{a}7} \textit{\texttt{xe}5} 23.\textit{\texttt{x}a6=}

21.\textit{exf6}!? \textit{\texttt{x}d6}

Black will not fare much better if he refuses to accept the pawn-sacrifice 21...\textit{gxf6}, in view of 22.\textit{g3}!? (or 22.\textit{a3}!!)
22...h5 23.b3 h4 24...xe4 hxg3 25...xd3 gxh2+ 26...h1

22.fxg7...g8 23...xf5...c7 24...e4+...e7 25...xc4...exg7 26.g3...b4 27...b3 a5 28...e1

White has played a2-a3 in advance and intends to capture another pawn in order to obtain adequate compensation for the missing knight. In addition, Black’s king is rather unsafe, so he will have to work long and hard for a draw.

B) 9...g6 10.e4 a6

10...dxc4?! 11...a3.

11...xc6+

About 11...a4 – see Bartel – Laznicka, Dresden 2015 (game 14).

11...xc6

Black opens the way for his dark-squared bishop in his attempt to complete the development of his queenside pieces in the fastest possible way.

Here, capturing the pawn 11...bxc6 seems to be a loss of time in comparison to variation A, in which he does not lose time for the retreat f5-g6. 12.a4 (12...c3?! d7 13...a4†; 12...dxc4 13...a4...d3 14...fd1...d7 15.b3...d5 16...ac1!...xe3 17...xe3 c5 18...db5; 16...b6 17...a5 c5 18...db5...c6 19...d6+...xd6 20...exd6...c8 21...xa6=) 12...d3. It may look like Black has saved the day, but he is faced with a nasty surprise. 13...c1! (13...d1?...xc4 14...c3...c8 15...ac1, Kotter – Schlecht, Germany 1998, 15...b5! 16...c2 c5 17...xb5 axb5 18...xb5...f5=, followed by f8-e7 and 0-0.) 13...xc4 14...d2...b5 (14...d3 15...c3...b5 16...c2= Obertin – Santos, ICCF 2006) 15...c2...c8 16.a4 c5 17...xe6...xe6 18.axb5 axb5 19...xc5...f5 20...d3= White runs away from the pin with his queen and preserves all the pluses of his position.
12. \textit{Qa4}

This logical decision is not the only one for White.


The following line can be of some practical interest: 12.cxd5!? \textit{N 12...Qd5 13.Nxc6 (13.Nc3!? Qxe5 14.xc6 bxc6 15.d4 c7 16.e1 c5 17.f3+) 13...Qxc6 (13...bxc6 14.a4+) 14.d2}

This position seems to be rather simple and Black should not have great problems. Still, things are not so straightforward as they may look like... 14...\textit{d3}! This important inclusion prevents White’s possibility to transfer his
12...\(d7\) 13.exd5 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xe5

14.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)c3!

White has nothing to brag about in the endgame arising after 14.\(\text{\texttt{B}}\)xd7+ \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)xd7 15.dxe6+ fxe6 16.\(\text{\texttt{R}}\)d1, although Black will still need to defend precisely. 16.d6 17.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)b3 (17.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)c3 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)c4=) 17...\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)d3 18.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)c3 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)hd8 19.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)a4 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)e8 20.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)a5 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)ab8 21.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)a7 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)a8 22.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)c3=

14.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xa4 15.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xa4 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)d6

Black should better avoid 15...exd5, in view of 16.f4! (16.\(\text{\texttt{F}}\)e1?! \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)d3 17.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)d2+ \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e7 18.\(\text{\texttt{B}}\)e2 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)f8+) 16...\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)c4 (16...\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)g4 17.f5 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xe3 18.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)ae1 0-0 19.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xe3 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)h5 20.h3 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)f6 21.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e6+) 17.f5 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)h5 18.\(\text{\texttt{B}}\)f2 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)b4 19.h3 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)f6 20.b3 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)d2 (20...\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e5 21.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e6+) 21.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)f1 0-0 22.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)b6+ and his two bishops are not only very weak, but they are just helpless. There is horrible disharmony in Black’s camp, while White’s pieces are very active and he is threatening to penetrate with his rook – \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)c1-e7, as well as with his knight – \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)d4-e6. Black will lose unavoidably material. 22.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)ab8 (22...\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)d6 23.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e6 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e4 24.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)c2 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)f7 25.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xa8 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xa8 26.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)ac1 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xe6 27.fxe6 \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e8 28.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e8+ \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)xe8 30.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)c8+ \(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e7 31.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)g8+) 23.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)e6 \(\text{\texttt{B}}\)e8 24.\(\text{\texttt{N}}\)g3+–
Black has some compensation for the pawn, but it is hardly sufficient. 16...0-0 17.\(\text{f}_{\text{d}1}\) \(\text{a}_{\text{e}8}\) 18.\(\text{f}_{\text{f}4}\)! (18.\(\text{f}_{\text{f}5}\)?! \(\text{x}_{\text{f}5}\) 19.\(\text{x}_{\text{d}6}\) \(\text{x}_{\text{e}6}\)= Grischuk – Sumets, Rodos 2013) 18...\(\text{f}_{\text{xe}6}\) 19.\(\text{g}_{\text{g}3}\)= Black has a weak pawn on e6 and his pieces are misplaced, so White’s position is obviously preferable.
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3 cxd4 7.cxd4 e7 8.d2

This move leads to a quiet positional play. White does not undermine the centre immediately and avoids forcing the issue, although in numerous variations, under favourable circumstances, he can attack the centre with the move c2-c4. He expects his opponent to make certain positional concessions in order to complete his development. In fact, White often obtains the two-bishop advantage. Naturally his extra space, so typical for the entire variation with 3.e5, is a long-term factor.

8...bc6

About 8...a6 9.0-0 bc6 10.f3 – see variation A.

9.f3
Black will have to retreat his bishop on f5 sooner or later in order to complete harmoniously his kingside development.

He can also retreat his bishop to a more natural position B) 9...g4, or can choose the more complicated move C) 9...e4!? Black can also delay the retreat of his bishop and play at first A) 9...a6.

9...g6 10.0-0 f5 (10...a6 11.c4! dxc4 12.xc4 c8 13.e1± Huschenbeth – Nuding, Nuremberg 2011) 11.xf5 xf5 12.d4 e4 (12...g6 13.c4± Van der Weide – Pappenheim, Bad Wiessee 2002; 12.xd4 13.xd4 a6 14.c4±) 13.xc6 bxc6, Beshukov – Gutov, Maikop 1998, 14.c4 e7 15.a4±

9...c8 10.0-0 e4 (10...g4 11.e1 – see variation B) 11.c3!? xf3 12.xf3 g6 13.c4 dxc4, Iordachescu – Vedmediuc, Romania 2014, 14.xd8+ x8 15.xc4 a6 16.ac1±, with the idea 16...gxe5 17.xe5 xe5 18.e2 e7 19.f4 d3 20.c7 b5 21.f5 e5 22.f3±

A) 9...a6

After this move, Black’s lag in development will be an even more important factor.

10.0-0
10...\text{\textit{g4}}

About 10...\textit{e4} 11.c4 – see variation C.

10...\textit{c8} 11.\textit{c1} \textit{e4} 12.c4!? (12.a3 \textit{xf3} 13.\textit{xf3}, Haslinger – Pogorelov, Balaguer 2010, 13...\textit{g6} ∞) 12...\textit{xc4} (12...\textit{xd4} 13.\textit{xd4} \textit{dxc4} 14.\textit{xc4} \textit{d5} 15.b3 \textit{wd7} 16.\textit{g4}↑) 13.\textit{xc4} \textit{d5}!? 14.\textit{xd5} (14.\textit{d3}?! Viswanadha – Hernandez Carmenates, Brownsville 2015, 14...\textit{g6} =) 14...\textit{xd5} (14...\textit{xd5} 15.\textit{xc6} bxc6 16.\textit{a4}± – White wins a pawn.) 15.\textit{a4} \textit{wd7} 16.\textit{fd1} \textit{xe5} 17.\textit{xc8+} \textit{xf3} 18.\textit{xf3} \textit{xe3} 19.\textit{xc6}+ \textit{c6} 20.\textit{d3} \textit{d5} (20...\textit{d6} 21.\textit{e1} \textit{d7} 22.\textit{xc8±}) 21.\textit{b1}! \textit{b5} 22.\textit{d4} \textit{d5} 23.\textit{b3} \textit{b5} 24.\textit{c2} \textit{c6} 25.\textit{xc6+} bxc6 26.\textit{a5}±

Following 10...\textit{d7}, White can already capture the enemy bishop. 11.\textit{xf5} \textit{xf5} 12.\textit{b6}!? (12.\textit{f4} \textit{c5} 13.\textit{e1} \textit{f7} 14.\textit{c4}± Mamedov – Margvelashvili, Konya 2010) 12...\textit{e7} 13.\textit{c4} \textit{d8} 14.\textit{xd5} \textit{wd5} (14...\textit{xb6} 15.\textit{xc6}±) 15.\textit{xd5} \textit{exd5} 16.\textit{c5} \textit{e7} 17.\textit{ac1}± – Now, besides the two-bishop advantage, White has the possibility to attack the weak enemy isolated d5-pawn.

Following 10...\textit{c7}, White can develop powerful initiative with 11.c4, for example: 11...\textit{dxc4} 12.\textit{a4} \textit{d5} (12...\textit{e8} 13.\textit{c4} \textit{a5}, Ryan – Gomez Jurado, Montcada 2014, 14.\textit{b3}!± He has excellent prospects thanks to his extra space and a superior development.) 13.\textit{xf5} \textit{xf5} 14.\textit{xc4} \textit{xe3} 15.\textit{fxe3} \textit{g6} (15...\textit{b6} 16.\textit{d4}±) 16.e4↑

11.\textit{e1}!

This is an important move and is also very typical for this variation. White is preparing c2-c4. Now, Black must make up his mind how to complete his development.

The immediate move 11.c4 would not be so good, because of 11...\textit{dxc4} 12.\textit{c1} \textit{b5}∞ and White would hardly manage to prove that his active pieces compensate his sacrificed pawn.

It would be rather slow for him to opt for 11.c3 \textit{xf3} 12.\textit{xf3} \textit{g6} 13.\textit{b3} \textit{d7} 14.\textit{fd1}, Roiz – Bareev, Cala Mayor 2008, 14...\textit{c8}!= Black has no problems, since he can counter 15.c4 with 15...\textit{a5}±

11...\textit{xf3}

11...\textit{xd4} 12.\textit{dx}4 \textit{xe2} 13.\textit{exe2} \textit{c8} 14.f4 \textit{g6} 15.\textit{fd1}!?±
12.\texttt{\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{g}6}

13.c4!? 

White would maintain a slight, but stable edge after 13.c3 \texttt{\texttt{g}7} 14.\texttt{f}4±

13...\texttt{g}7 14.\texttt{cxd}5 \texttt{xd}5

14...\texttt{x}d5 15.\texttt{c}5↑ He sacrifices a pawn in order to exploit the misplacement of Black’s king, stranded in the centre.

15...\texttt{x}e5 16.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{xe}5 17.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{xb}2 18.\texttt{x}d5 \texttt{xd}5 19.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{exd}5 20.\texttt{fe}1+ \texttt{d}8 21.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{c}3 22.\texttt{ec}1 \texttt{d}4 23.\texttt{xb}7±

15.\texttt{a}4

It is also interesting for White to continue here with 15.\texttt{c}2!↑, with the idea \texttt{f}1-d1, making use of the rather awkward placement of Black’s queen in the centre of the board, which can be best illustrated by the variation 15...\texttt{xa}2?? 16.\texttt{a}1 \texttt{d}5 17.\texttt{fd}1+–

15...\texttt{a}5

Black will need to lose time for the retreat of his queen, since his opponent was threatening \texttt{f}1-d1.

15...0-0 16.\texttt{c}5 \texttt{d}7 17.\texttt{fd}1↑
16.\textit{\textthinspace}xa5

White has also tried in practice the retreat of his queen – 16.\textit{\textthinspace}b3!?\textdagger, with the idea to attack the enemy b7-pawn. 16...0-0 17.\textit{\textthinspace}c5 \textit{\textthinspace}fe8 18.\textit{\textthinspace}d6 \textit{\textthinspace}xe5 19.\textit{\textthinspace}xe5 \textit{\textthinspace}xe5 20.\textit{\textthinspace}d4 \textit{\textthinspace}d2 21.\textit{\textthinspace}xe5 \textit{\textthinspace}xe2 22.\textit{\textthinspace}xb7 \textit{\textthinspace}d5 It looks like White has not achieved much; nevertheless, the variation deserves serious practical tests, Gashimov – Stellwagen, Novi Sad 2009.

16...\textit{\textthinspace}xa5 17.\textit{\textthinspace}d3 \textit{\textthinspace}ac6 18.\textit{\textthinspace}e4\textdagger\textdagger

B) 9...\textit{\textthinspace}g4 10.0-0

10...\textit{\textthinspace}xf3
10...a6 11.c1 – see variation A.
10...g6 11.c4! xf3 12.xf3 – see variation B1.

After 10...g6, White’s possible ideas were very well illustrated in the game Karjakin – Le Quang, Beijing 2011: 11.h3!? xf3 12.xf3. He has a bishop-pair, but Black’s position seems to be solid enough. White needs to stabilise the situation in the centre and then to develop his kingside initiative with the help of advancing his h-pawn. We will see how Sergey Karjakin realises convincingly this plan. 12...g7 13.f4 c7 14.e1 0-0 15.f1± ac8 (15...d4!? 16.a3?±; 16.xd4 ad8 17.c3 f5 18.e1±) 16.c3 a5 17.d3 c4 18.e2 a6 19.h4 h6 20.ac1 b5 21.b1 b6 22.h5 d7 23.d2 h7 24.d4 c5 25.hxg6+ xg6 26.g3 e4 27.e4 dxe4 28.xe4 fd8 29.f4–

10...xd4. Black will be in trouble after this exchange. 11.xd4. White’s knight on d4 exerts powerful pressure against Black’s position and is ready to accomplish under favourable circumstances the manoeuvre b5-d6, penetrating into the enemy camp. (After the capturing 11.Qxd4, Black’s task would become much easier. 11...xf3 12.xf3 f5, Kalod – Velicka, Zlin 1997, 13.a4+ d7 14.xd7+ xd7 15.c4 xe3 16.fx3 e5 17.exd5 xe3+ 18.h1± – White has a slight edge, but due to the presence of bishops of opposite colours on the board, the draw seems very likely in this endgame.) 11...xe2 12.xe2±

The position has been considerably simplified, but Black can hardly complete his development without certain positional concessions. 12...c6 13.c4! White must play very energetically; otherwise, his advantage may evaporate. 13...e7 (13...xe5?! 14.xd5 xd5 15.ac1 a6 16.fd1±; 15...e7 16.b5 0-0 17.c7 xd3 18.h5±; 13...xd4 14.xd4 e7 15.fd1 0-0 16.xd5 xd5 17.xa7± Debashish – Linda, Bhiwani 2010) 14.fd1 (14.xc6?! bxc6 15.g4 g6 16.h6 f8 17.f4±) 14...0-0 15.f3!? (15.exd5?! exd5?! 16.f5± Bologan – Bakker, Gibraltar 2006; 15...xd5 16.xc6 xc6 17.ac1 e4 18.b5±) 15...a5 16.exd5 exd5, Ni Hu – Yu Ruiyuan, Ningbo 2011, 17.a3 ad8 18.h3±. Black’s isolated d5-pawn is very weak in this position.

10...c8. Black should not delay the development of his kingside. 11.c1 (11.c3 g6∞) 11...xf3 (11...a6?! 12.c4 xd4 13.xd4 xf3 14.xf3 f5 15.f4 xe3 16.fx3 ecx5 17.exd5 0-0 18.h1± Baklan – Lenderman, Reykjavik 2010; 15.d3!? xe3 16.xe3±; 11...g6 12.xc6?! xc6 13.c4 xf3 14.xf3 xe5 15.xd5 xc1 16.xc1 xf3+ 17.gxf3±) 12.xf3 g6 (He fails to preserve his dark-squared bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal: 12...f5 13.f4 e7 14.d3 0-0 15.xf5 exf5 16.d3 d7 17.c3 h6 18.e1 fd8 19.b4 a6 20.a4± Motylev – Evdokimov, Dagomys 2010.)
13.c3!? After Black’s bishop has been developed to the g7-square, White changes his plan. He will have a target for the development of his kingside initiative and his space advantage will enhance that. (He would achieve much less with the seemingly active line: 13.c4 \textit{B}g7 14.cxd5 \textit{N}xd5 15.\textit{B}c5 \textit{B}f8 16.\textit{B}c5 \textit{B}f8 17.\textit{R}xc5 0-0 18.\textit{B}xc6 \textit{B}xc6 19.\textit{B}xc6 bxc6 20.\textit{B}c1 \textit{B}g7 21.\textit{B}xc6 \textit{B}b8= Black’s material deficit is just minimal, while White’s pawn on e5 may become a liability Cheparinov – Bareev, Moscow 2010.) 13...\textit{B}g7 14.\textit{B}f4 \textsuperscript{²} (followed by \textit{R}f1-e1 and the possible advance of White’s h-pawn) – His position in the centre is very reliable and he has good chances of developing initiative on the kingside, Alsina Leal – Macieja, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

11.\textit{N}xf3

Now, Black can place his e7-knight on the g6-square – \textbf{B1}) 11...\textit{g6}, attacking in the process White’s pawn on e5, or following \textbf{B2}) 11...\textit{f5}, he can try to deprive at some moment his opponent of the two-bishop advantage. Black can
also delay the clarification of the future placement of his knight on e7 and make the useful move B3) 11...\textit{c7}.

The move 11...g6 has been tested in practice at very hard level indeed, but it hardly deserves serious attention, because White can reach a favourable version of the variation 10...g6 11.h3 \textit{xf3} 12.\textit{xf3}, in which he has wasted some time for the move h2-h3. 12.\textit{e1 g7} 13.\textit{f4} 0-0 14.\textit{d3 c8} 15.c3 a6 16.\textit{e2 a5} 17.\textit{g5 c7} 18.h4 \textit{c4} 19.\textit{ad1 c6} 20.\textit{xc4} dxc4 21.\textit{e3} Wang Hao – Yu Ruiyuan, Beijing 2014; 21.h5!?±

B1) 11...\textit{g6}

Black’s knight on g6, as we will see, is isolated from the actions for long and if he captures the enemy pawn on e5, his lag in development may become just horrible.

12.c4!

White does not need to waste a tempo for the protection of his e5-pawn, because Black would lag terribly in development if he captures it.

12.\textit{b5 e7} 13.c4 0-0 14.cxd5 \textit{exd5} 15.e3, S.Zhigalko – Ipatov, Plovdiv 2012, 15...\textit{gxe5}! 16.\textit{xe5 xe5} 17.\textit{ad1 g4} 18.\textit{xd5 c7} 19.g3 \textit{xe3} 20.\textit{xe3 fd8} 21.\textit{fd1 d6}=

12...dxc4

12...\textit{e7} 13.cxd5 \textit{xd5} 14.\textit{xd5 exd5}, Dragnev – Arngrimsson, Budapest 2014, 15.\textit{ac1} 0-0 16.\textit{fd1 fd8} 17.\textit{f1}!? \textit{gxe5} (17...\textit{f8} 18.\textit{a6}?) 18.\textit{xe5 xe5} 19.\textit{c7}

White’s e5-pawn is poisoned – 12...\textit{gxe5}? 13.\textit{xe5 xe5} 14.cxd5 \textit{xd5} 15.\textit{a4+ d7} 16.\textit{b5 c6} 17.\textit{fd1 c7} 18.\textit{ac1 e8} 19.\textit{xa7}– and Black’s lag in development would lead it to his demise.

13.\textit{xc4}

White manages to create problems for his opponent too after 13.\textit{a4}!? \textit{a5} 14.\textit{xc4 e7} 15.\textit{b3 b8} 16.\textit{b5}+ Charbonneau – Bartell, ICC 2011.

13...\textit{c7}

The e5-pawn is untouchable, just like before: 13...\textit{gxe5}?! 14.\textit{xe5 xe5} (14...\textit{xd1} 15.\textit{fxd1 xe5} 16.\textit{b5+ c6} 17.\textit{ac1+}) 15.\textit{b5+ c6} 16.\textit{a4 c8} 17.\textit{fd1 c7} 18.\textit{xa7}, or 18.\textit{ac1+}

The trade of the queens would not facilitate Black’s defence either: 13...\textit{xd1} 14.\textit{fxd1 a6} (14...\textit{gxe5} 15.\textit{xe5 xe5} 16.\textit{b5+ c6} 17.\textit{ac1+}) 15.\textit{d3 0-0-0}, S.Zhigalko – Braun, Gaziantep 2008 (15...\textit{gxe5} 16.\textit{xe5 xe5} 17.\textit{e4 c6} 18.\textit{ac1 c8} 19.\textit{d3}?) 16.\textit{b6}! \textit{d5} 17.\textit{xa7}±
14.\text{Rc1}

White should not be in a hurry to pin the opponent on a4-e8 diagonal, which would be possible after the move 14.\text{b5}, since he would have to exchange after that his light-squared bishop for the enemy knight. He may create thus some pawn-weaknesses in the enemy camp indeed, but this is not a great achievement. In fact, Black will be very happy after that. 14...\text{e7} 15.\text{Cc1} (15.\text{a4} 0-0 16.\text{xc6} bxc6= Navara – Laznicka, Novy Bor 2011; 15.\text{c2} 0-0 16.\text{xc6} bxc6 17.\text{c3} \text{fd8} 18.\text{fd1} a5 19.a3 \text{xd1}+ 20.\text{xd1} \text{d8}= Motylev – Drozdovskij, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011) 15...0-0 16.\text{d4} (16.\text{xc6} bxc6 17.\text{d4} \text{fd8} 18.\text{c3} \text{ac8}= T.Kosintseva – Danielian, Jermuk 2010) 16...\text{fd8} 17.\text{a4} \text{ac8} 18.\text{c4} \text{f4} 19.\text{xc6} bxc6 20.\text{xa7} \text{xa7} 21.\text{e3} \text{d3} 22.\text{xc6} \text{xa2} 24.b3 \text{b2}=  

14...\text{e7}

14...\text{gxe5} 15.\text{xe5} \text{xe5} 16.\text{b3} \text{c7} 17.\text{f4} \text{d6} (Black will have to give back the pawn; otherwise, after 17...\text{b6} 18.\text{xe6}! \text{xe6} 19.\text{xe6}+ \text{e7} 20.\text{e2}+, he will be faced with a great problems.) 18.\text{xd6} \text{xd6} 19.\text{xb7} \text{b8} (19...0-0 20.\text{a6}+) 20.\text{a6} \text{b6} (20...0-0? 21.\text{fd1}+) 21.\text{c8}+ \text{d8} 22.\text{xe6}. It is now White who ends up with an extra pawn. 22...\text{xc8} 23.\text{xc8} 0-0 24.\text{h3} \text{d4} 25.\text{b1}±  

15.\text{b3}!

This is no doubt a useful move and is a necessary preparation for the transfer of White’s bishop to the e4-square. After the immediate move 15.\text{d3}, Black has the resource 15...\text{gxe5}=  

15...0-0 16.\text{d3} \text{b8}!?  

It would not be preferable for him to choose 16...\text{fd8} 17.\text{fd1} \text{f8} 18.g3 \text{d7} 19.\text{e4} \text{xd1}+ 20.\text{xd1} \text{c8} 21.\text{g2}+ Karjakin – W. So, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011, with the idea 21...\text{gxe5} 22.\text{g5} \text{h6} 23.\text{xe6}! \text{exe6}? 24.\text{xe6}+ \text{h8} 25.f4+– and his knight on e5 has no acceptable square to retreat to, in view of White’s threat \text{e6-g6-h7} with a checkmate!
17.g3!

It may seem strange at first sight, but if White plays immediately 17.Rfd1, then after 17...Ngxe5 18.Nxe5 Qxe5 19.e4, Black will counter with 19...Qg4= This is the reason that White should play 17.g3, in order to prevent all these possible developments.

17...Rd8

Now, after 17...Ngxe5 18.Nxe5 Qxe5 19.e4 Black does not have the move 19...Qg4, due to 20.Qxb7. Following 19...c6 20.Rfd1=, Black would still have problems to worry about.

White should counter the active move 17...a5 with 18.a4!? (Following 18.Qb5 a4 19.e4 a5∞ Black succeeds in provoking unclear complications, Volokitin – Laznicka, San Sebastian 2012.) 18...Ngxe5 19.Nxe5 Qxe5 20.e4= 18.Rfd1!?N

White would not mind to trade his e5-pawn for one of Black’s queenside pawns, hoping later to create a passed pawn there.


Black will have much greater difficulties on the queenside in the variation 20...Qc6 21.Qxd8+ Qxd8 22.Qa4! Qd6 23.b4= 21.Rxd1 Qc7
22. \textit{Qxb7} (22. \textit{Bf4}!? \textit{f6} 23. \textit{Qxb7} \textit{Qxb7} 24. \textit{Bb8}e4 g5 26. \textit{c1}±) 22... \textit{Qxb7} 23. \textit{Bxb7} \textit{Rb8} 24. \textit{g2}± – White has a powerful pair of bishops and the possibility to create an outside passed pawn, so the arising endgame is obviously in his favour. Black will be faced with a long and laborious fight for a draw.

B2) 11... \textit{f5} 12. \textit{f4}

12... \textit{c5}

This is his most natural move.

12...h6!? Black plans to play g7-g5 with the idea to organise some counterplay. This is a reasonable decision, because if he plays calmly and even passively, White’s space advantage and his two powerful bishops would provide him with
much better prospects. The unstable placement of Black’s knight on f5 however, precludes him from accomplishing his plan. 13.\textit{d}3! g5 14.\textit{xf}5 \textit{exf}5 15.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}7, Erenburg – Kacheishvili, ICC 2009, 16.\textit{d}4 \textit{xe}5 17.\textit{xf}5 \textit{d}7 18.\textit{d}3± 12...\textit{e}7. This is a quiet developing move, after which White should consider his opponent’s possibility g7-g5. 13.\textit{d}3. With this principled move White emphasizes the unstable placement of the enemy knight on the f5-square. (The calmer line: 13.c3 \textit{c}8 14.\textit{d}3 g6 15.\textit{e}2 a6 16.\textit{fd}1 \textit{b}6 17.\textit{ac}1±, would have provided him with a slight but stable edge, Parligras – Khotenashvili, Paleochora 2010; 13...g5 14.\textit{c}1!, with the idea 14...g4 15.\textit{d}4 \textit{fxd}4 16.\textit{xd}4 h5 17.\textit{e}3±)

13...\textit{h}4 (Following 13...g5 14.\textit{xf}5 \textit{exf}5 15.\textit{e}3! f4 16.\textit{d}4 \textit{g}8 17.e6 fxe6 18.\textit{e}5 \textit{xe}5 19.\textit{xe}5 g4 20.\textit{xf}4 \textit{d}6 21.\textit{d}4±, Black’s king remains stranded in the centre and this is a very important factor, Ni Hua – Vidit, Moscow 2012. After 14...\textit{xf}4 15.\textit{d}3, Black will have problems with the protection of his f4-pawn. 15...\textit{c}7 16.\textit{e}1 0-0-0 17.\textit{d}2±) 14.\textit{xf}4 \textit{hxh}4 15.\textit{g}4 \textit{g}6 (15...\textit{g}5 16.\textit{d}2 h5, Van der Weide – Schuurman, Utrecht 1999, 17.\textit{e}2! g4 18.c4±)
16...ad1?!?, with the idea to exploit the X-ray juxtaposition of the rook on the d-file with the help of the move c2-c4. 16...h5 (16...0-0 17.c4±) 17.gf3 g5 18.gf1 g4 19.f4 wc7 20.fe1± – The far-advanced black kingside pawns are much rather a liability than a beginning of kingside initiative, Granda Zuniga – Gonzalez Vidal, Havana 2003.

16.c4 dxc4 17.xc4 h5 (16...0-0 17.c4²) 17.Qf3 g5 18.Bc1 g4 19.Qf4 Qc7 20.Rfe1– The far-advanced black kingside pawns are much rather a liability than a beginning of kingside initiative, Granda Zuniga – Gonzalez Vidal, Havana 2003.

16...h5 17.Qf3 g5 18.Bc1 g4 19.Qf4 Qc7 20.Rfe1 – The far-advanced black kingside pawns are much rather a liability than a beginning of kingside initiative, Granda Zuniga – Gonzalez Vidal, Havana 2003.

16...0-0 17.Qe2± Dragomirescu – Georgescu, Brasov 2011) 19.Qad1 Qc7 (The move 19...a5? can be refuted by 20.Qe4+–, with the idea Qf4-h6. 20.Qe7 21.Qxe6+–; 20...Qe8 21.Qd2 Qd8 22.Qc1 Qe7 23.Qf4 g5 24.Qe3 Qb4 25.Qd3 g4 26.Qh6 1-0 Volokitin – Ruck, Budva 2009.) 20.Qe4± White’s extra space, his two bishops and the more actively deployed pieces provide him with noticeable initiative.

13.Qd3

13.c3?!±

13...h4

13...Qe7 14.c3 (14.Qg5!? Qg6 15.Qh5±; 14...h6 15.Qh5 g6 16.Qh3 Qf5 17.c3 Qe7 18.Qf3 h5 19.Qfe1±) 14...Qg6 15.Qg3 a6 16.Qe2 0-0 17.h4+ Bulmaga – Danielian, Rodos 2013.


14.Qg5

14.c3?! Qg6 15.Qg3± Van der Weide – Overeem, Vlissingen 2002.

14...Qg6 15.Qh5±

15.Qe3 Qd7 16.Qad1 Qad8 17.Qg5 Qe7 18.Qxe7 Qxe7 19.Qd4± Black’s pawn-weaknesses obviously hurt him.

14...Qg6 15.Qh5±


14...Qg6 15.Qh5±


14...Qg6 15.Qh5±

With this move White deprives the enemy monarch of a safe haven on the kingside. His hands are free, while Black has been deprived of any counterplay whatsoever. 15...Qe7 16.Qxg6 fxg6 17.Qg4 Qd8 18.Qxh7 Qxh7 19.Qxg6+ Qf7 20.Qxh7 Qxf4 21.Qxg7± – His compensation for the material deficit is evidently insufficient.

B3) 11.Qc7
This is a very reasonable move. Black still does not clarify the future placement of his knight on e7.

12.c4!?

12...dxc4

The placement of Black’s king will be hardly satisfactory following 12...0-0-0 13.cxd5 Qxd5, Narayanan – Fedoseev, Kirishi 2009, 14.Qb3 Qb8 15.Qac1 Qxe3 16.Qxe3= 

13.Qxc4 Qf5

About 13...Qg6 14.Qc1 – see variation B1.
14. $\text{Bf4}!$?

Bishops should be kept!

After 14. $\text{Be2}$ $\text{Qxe3}$ $\text{Nxe3}$ $\text{Qe2}!$? (15...$\text{Qe7}$ 16. $\text{d3}$ 0-0 17. $\text{e4}$ Dominguez Perez – Laznicka, Havana 2012) 16. $\text{Bxe6}$ axb6 17. $\text{a3}$ (17. $\text{Bf1}$ $\text{Qc5}$ 18. $\text{a3}$ 0-0 19. $\text{d2}$ $\text{a5}$? 20. $\text{a2}$ b5 21. b4 $\text{axb4}$ 22. $\text{bxc4}$ $\text{bxc4}$), there arises an endgame, which would be preferable for White in view of his opponent’s doubled pawns. This is true indeed, but it looks like that Black should manage to hold this position. 17...$\text{g6}$ 18. $\text{Rfc1}$ $\text{h6}$ 19. $\text{c3}$ 0-0 20. $\text{b5}$ $\text{f6}$ 21. $\text{d1}$ $\text{a5}$ 22. $\text{xh7}$ $\text{xc4}$ 23. $\text{b4}$ $\text{c6}$ 24. $\text{d7}$ $\text{c1}$ 25. $\text{xb7}$ $\text{xa3}=$ Ni Hua – Ding Liren, Danzhou 2012.

14...$\text{e7}$

Black will be faced with much more serious problems after 14...$\text{d8}$ 15. $\text{d3}!$ $\text{e7}$ 16. $\text{e2}$, with the idea 16...$\text{fd4}$ 17. $\text{xd4}$ $\text{xd4}$, Grischuk – A.Evdokimov, Apatity 2011, 18. $\text{e4}$?

15. $\text{d3}$ 0-0 16. $\text{e2}$ $\text{fd8}$
17. $\text{Rfd1!}$

The idea behind this novelty is to prevent the exchanges on the d4-square under favourable circumstances for Black.

White would achieve less with 17. $\text{Ra1}$ $\text{Nfd4}$! (17... $\text{Qa5}$ 18. $\text{a3}$ $\text{cd4}$ 19. $\text{xd4}$ $\text{xd4}$ 20. $\text{g3}$ $\text{d5}$ 21. $\text{xf5}$ $\text{exf5}$ 22. $\text{Rfd1}$ $\text{xd1}$+ 23. $\text{xd1}$ $\text{xd1}$+ 24. $\text{xd1}$ $\text{f8}$ 25. $\text{xd7}$ $\text{Shirov – Laznicka, Novy Bor 2012}$) 18. $\text{xd4}$ $\text{xd4}$ 19. $\text{e4}$ (19. $\text{e3}$ $\text{d7}$ 20. $\text{f4}$ $\text{ad8}$ 21. $\text{e4}$ $\text{a5}$!= Nakamura – Laznicka, Istanbul 2012) 19... $\text{h6}$=, with the idea $\text{ad8}$ and Black’s position would be quite acceptable.

17... $\text{Oxd4}$ 18. $\text{Oxd4}$ $\text{Oxd4}$ (It is essential that now, it would not work for Black to play 18... $\text{xd4}$?, due to 19. $\text{xh7!}$ $\text{xh7}$ 20. $\text{e2}$+) 19. $\text{e4}$± – White maintains a slight but stable edge thanks to his two powerful bishops and extra space.
C) 9...\( \texttt{\texttt{c}e4} \) 10.0-0

10...\( \texttt{\texttt{d}g6} \)

Black creates immediately a threat against the enemy e5-pawn and frees the a3-f8 diagonal for his bishop.

About 10...\( \texttt{\texttt{b}xf3} \) 11.\( \texttt{\texttt{d}xf3} \) – see 9...\( \texttt{\texttt{g}g4} \) 10.0-0 \( \texttt{\texttt{xf3}} \) 11.\( \texttt{\texttt{xf3}} \) (variation \textbf{B}).

Black should better avoid the retreat – 10...\( \texttt{\texttt{q}b8}?! \) 11.\( \texttt{\texttt{r}e1} \)

The simplifications are in favour of White after 10...\( \texttt{\texttt{c}xd4} \) 11.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}xd4} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{c}c6} \), Meszaros – Juhasz, Zalakaros 2011, 12.\( \texttt{\texttt{b}xc6!} \) \( \texttt{bxc6} \) 13.\( \texttt{c}c4 \) (13.\( \texttt{d}d3?! \)), with the idea 13...\( \texttt{a}a5 \) 14.\( \texttt{f}f3?! \) (14.a3!\texttt{\texttt{d}xc4} 15.\( \texttt{\texttt{d}d4} \) \( \texttt{d3} \) 16.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}xd3} \) \( \texttt{cxd3} \) 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{f}xd3} \) \( \texttt{e}e7 \) 18.\( \texttt{\texttt{f}d1} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{d}d8} \) 19.\( \texttt{\texttt{e}e4} \)) 14...\( \texttt{\texttt{xf3}} \) 15.\( \texttt{\texttt{xf3}} \) \( \texttt{e}e7 \) (15...\( \texttt{\texttt{c}c5} \) 16.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}xd5} \) \( \texttt{cxd5} \) 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{g}g4} \) \( \texttt{g}6 \) 18.\( \texttt{\texttt{h}6} \) \( \texttt{f}f8 \) 18.\( \texttt{\texttt{f}e4} \)) – The dark squares are horribly weak in Black’s camp.

The prophylactic move 10...\( \texttt{a6} \) would enable White to begin a decisive offensive with the help of the move 11.\( \texttt{c4} \), for example: 11...\( \texttt{dxc4} \) (11...\( \texttt{\texttt{c}g6}?! \) 12.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}xc6} \) \( \texttt{bxc6} \) 13.\( \texttt{\texttt{g}g5}! \) \( \texttt{\texttt{x}e5} \) 14.\( \texttt{\texttt{d}d4} \); 11...\( \texttt{\texttt{d}d7}?! \) 12.\( \texttt{\texttt{g}5}?! \) \( \texttt{\texttt{x}e5} \) 13.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}xe4} \) \( \texttt{dxe4} \) 14.\( \texttt{\texttt{b}b3} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{c}c7} \) 15.\( \texttt{\texttt{f}d1} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{e}7} \) 16.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}5} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{e}7} \) 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{f}f4} \); 11...\( \texttt{\texttt{c}c8} \) 12.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}c1} \) – see variation \textbf{A}, 10...\( \texttt{\texttt{c}c8} \) 11.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}c1} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{e}e4} \) 12.\( \texttt{c4} \) 12.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}c4} \)
12... \( \text{Qxd4} \) 13. \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Bd5} \) 14. \( \text{Rc1!} \) (14. \( \text{Be2!} \), with the idea 14... \( \text{c6} \) 15. \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{xc6} \) 16. \( \text{f3!} \)±) 14... \( \text{xc4} \) 15. \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 16. \( \text{g4!} \)± The development of Black’s kingside has been impeded, Mekhitarian – Deac, Golden Sands 2013.

Following 12... \( \text{g6} \), Black’s lag in development hurts him. 13. \( \text{g5!} \) \( \text{xd4} \) (13... \( \text{d5} \)? 14. \( \text{xf7!} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 15. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 16. \( \text{f3+} \) \( \text{e8} \) 17. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{gxe5} \) 18. \( \text{h5+} \) \( \text{g6} \) 19. \( \text{f3±} \), or 15... \( \text{xe6} \) 16. \( \text{g4+} \) \( \text{f7} \) 17. \( \text{f3+} \) \( \text{e6} \) 18. \( \text{ad1} \) \( \text{ce7} \) 19. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{d5} \) 20. \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{ge7} \) 21. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{c8} \) 22. \( \text{xd5+} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 23. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 15. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 16. \( \text{b6} \) 17. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{d5} \) 18. \( \text{f3±} \), with the idea 18... \( \text{c8} \) 19. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{c7} \) 20. \( \text{fc1} \) \( \text{xg5} \) 21. \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{xc7} \) 22. \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{e7} \) 23. \( \text{g3} \) 0-0 24. \( \text{xe3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 25. \( \text{xb7}+\)

12... \( \text{xf3} \). This exchange facilitates considerably Black’s defence. 13. \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xd1} \) 14. \( \text{fxd1!} \) (14. \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{g6} \), Pogonina – Soumya, Mardin 2011, 15. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{gxe5} \) 16. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{c6} \) 18. \( \text{d3} \) Black is incapable of preserving his slight material advantage due to the lack of development of his kingside.) 14... \( \text{h6} \) (14... \( \text{g6} \) 15. \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 16. \( \text{f1!} \) \( \text{gxe5} \) 17. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{e5} \) 18. \( \text{e7} \) \( \text{b5} \) 19. \( \text{g3!} \) 15. \( \text{h4!} \) (15. \( \text{d3!?} \) \( \text{g5} \) 16. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{g7} \) 17. \( \text{h3±} \) 15... \( \text{g6?!} \) (15... \( \text{f5} \) 16. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 17. \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{a7} \) 18. \( \text{d3} \) 16. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{gxe5} \) 16. \( \text{e7} \) 17. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xh4} \) 18. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{a4} \) 19. \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 20. \( \text{d6±} \) 17. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 18. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{c6} \) 19. \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{c8} \) 20. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{f5} \) 21. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 22. \( \text{dc3} \) \( \text{h6} \) 23. \( \text{xc6±} \) Robson – Hernandez Carmenates, USA 2014.

10... \( \text{d7?!} \) Black is trying to provoke complications by building up a battery consisting of a queen and a rook on the d-file. 11. \( \text{c4} \)
11...\texttt{d}d8 12.\texttt{b}b5! \texttt{f}f5 (It might be stronger for Black, despite being not so principled, to continue with 12...\texttt{g}g6
13.\texttt{c}xd5 \texttt{x}xd5 14.\texttt{x}xa7±) 13.\texttt{c}xd5 \texttt{xe}3, Volokitin – Jobava, Austria 2012, 14.\texttt{f}xe3! \texttt{xd}5 15.\texttt{g}g5 \texttt{xe}5 16.\texttt{d}d4! \texttt{c}6
(16...\texttt{f}6 17.\texttt{h}h5+ \texttt{g}g6 18.\texttt{x}h7+-) 17.\texttt{c}c3 e5 18.\texttt{ad}1 \texttt{b}b4 19.\texttt{xd}5! \texttt{xc}3 20.\texttt{xd}7 \texttt{xd}7 21.\texttt{xc}3±

It may be the least of evils for Black to choose here 11...\texttt{d}xc4 12.\texttt{x}c4 \texttt{d}d5 13.\texttt{g}g5 \texttt{g}g6 14.\texttt{x}xd5 \texttt{xd}5 15.\texttt{gf}f3! \texttt{e}e7
(15...\texttt{d}xd4 16.\texttt{b}b4 a6 17.\texttt{ea}4+ b5 18.\texttt{ea}5±) 16.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6 (16...\texttt{xc}6 17.\texttt{c}c1 \texttt{b}b5 18.\texttt{c}c7±) 17.\texttt{a}a4 0-0 18.\texttt{fd}1
\texttt{b}b5 19.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{xb}5 20.\texttt{d}d4±, but that would have not solved all his problems anyway.

Now, White has two possibilities to fight for an opening advantage: \textbf{C1) 11.\texttt{xc}6} and \textbf{C2) 11.\texttt{b}b5}.

It seems logical for him to choose here 11.\texttt{g}g5, but it looks like this is not enough for him to achieve anything meaningful. 11...\texttt{g}xe5 12.f4?! (It would be relatively better for him to opt for 12.\texttt{xe}4 dxe4 13.c3 \texttt{ad}6 – see 11.\texttt{d}d2.) 12...\texttt{c}c5!\textsuperscript{f} Van Kampen – Mazur, Athens 2012.
Following 11.\textit{\text{N}}d2, Black succeeds in equalising after an accurate series of moves. 11...\textit{\text{N}}gxe5 12.\textit{\text{N}}xe4 dxe4 13.\textit{\text{c}}3 \textit{\text{d}}6! 14.\textit{\text{a}}4 (14.\textit{\text{c}}2 \textit{\text{D}}xd4 15.cxd4 \textit{\text{d}}3!=) 14...\textit{\text{a}}5! 15.\textit{\text{b}}3, Caruana – Fridman, Dortmund 2012, 15...\textit{\text{d}}5!?

16.\textit{\text{N}}xc6 (Black would hardly lose the endgame arising after 16.\textit{\text{R}}fd1 \textit{\text{a}}xb3 17.axb3 0-0-0 18.\textit{\text{a}}4 \textit{\text{c}}7 19.\textit{\text{N}}xc6 \textit{\text{D}}xd1+ 20.\textit{\text{R}}xd1 \textit{\text{N}}dxc6 21.\textit{\text{a}}xe4 \textit{\text{f}}5 22.\textit{\text{R}}h4 \textit{\text{R}}d8 23.\textit{\text{d}}2 \textit{\text{h}}6=, with the idea \textit{\text{b}}6) 16...\textit{\text{a}}xb3 17.axb3 \textit{\text{N}}xc6 18.\textit{\text{b}}4 \textit{\text{c}}7 19.\textit{\text{b}}5 \textit{\text{e}}5 20.\textit{\text{a}}4 \textit{\text{f}}5 21.\textit{\text{f}}1 \textit{\text{d}}3∞

C1) 11.\textit{\text{N}}xc6 \textit{\text{b}}xc6

12.\textit{\text{d}}2!?

This is a very interesting move and it has not been analysed extensively yet. After that Black has a choice between defending a slightly inferior endgame and an attempt to complicate radically the situation.

The routine move 12.\textit{\text{g}}5 does not promise much to White. 12...\textit{\text{c}}7 (12...\textit{\text{x}}e5 13.\textit{\text{d}}4! Van der Weide – Marentini, Triesen 2012) 13.\textit{\text{x}}e4 \textit{\text{D}}xe4 14.\textit{\text{d}}4! \textit{\text{d}}5! 15.\textit{\text{f}}4 (15.\textit{\text{c}}3 0-0=; 15.\textit{\text{h}}5 \textit{\text{D}}xe5 16.\textit{\text{ad}}1 0-0 17.\textit{\text{c}}3 \textit{\text{b}}5 18.\textit{\text{a}}4 \textit{\text{b}}8= Caruana – Laznicka, New Delhi 2011) 15...\textit{\text{f}}3 16.\textit{\text{xf}}3 \textit{\text{D}}xd4 17.\textit{\text{D}}xd4 0-0-0 18.\textit{\text{c}}3 \textit{\text{c}}5+ 19.\textit{\text{h}}1 \textit{\text{d}}4 20.\textit{\text{a}}5 \textit{\text{b}}6 21.\textit{\text{c}}3 \textit{\text{d}}4= Kryvoruchko – Navara, Turnov 2014.

It may be interesting for him, but still insufficient for an advantage to try 12.\textit{\text{d}}4 \textit{\text{x}}e5 13.\textit{\text{f}}3 \textit{\text{g}}6 14.\textit{\text{f}}4 \textit{\text{d}}7 15.\textit{\text{f}}5 (15.\textit{\text{xc}}6 \textit{\text{b}}7= Hracek – Postny, Sibenik 2008) 15...\textit{\text{f}}5. Therefore, a very beautiful series of moves, which is practically forced. 16.\textit{\text{xf}}5 \textit{\text{xf}}5 17.\textit{\text{xc}}6 \textit{\text{c}}7 18.\textit{\text{xd}}5 \textit{\text{d}}6 19.\textit{\text{d}}1 \textit{\text{xh}}2+ 20.\textit{\text{h}}1 \textit{\text{f}}6 21.\textit{\text{c}}5 \textit{\text{e}}4 22.\textit{\text{b}}5 \textit{\text{d}}6 23.\textit{\text{xa}}7+ \textit{\text{f}}8 24.\textit{\text{xc}}7 \textit{\text{xc}}7 25.\textit{\text{d}}7 \textit{\text{d}}6 26.\textit{\text{c}}4 \textit{\text{e}}8 27.\textit{\text{b}}5 \textit{\text{f}}8 28.\textit{\text{c}}4 \textit{\text{e}}8 29.\textit{\text{b}}5 \textit{\text{f}}8, draw, Almasi – Berkes, Paks 2009.
12...\textit{\textbf{B}}xg2!

This is the only way for Black to reach a fighting position, entering bravely the complications.

12...\textit{\textbf{N}}e5 13.\textit{\textbf{N}}xe4 dxe4 14.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xd8+ \textit{\textbf{K}}xd8 (14...\textit{\textbf{R}}xd8 15.\textit{\textbf{R}}fd1\pm) 15.\textit{\textbf{R}}d1+ \textit{\textbf{c}}7 16.\textit{\textbf{f}}4 f6 17.\textit{\textbf{d}}4 e3 18.\textit{\textbf{x}}e3 \textit{\textbf{e}}5 19.\textit{\textbf{e}}4 \textit{\textbf{x}}e3 20.\textit{\textbf{f}}xe3\pm Jasny – Bures, Czech Republic 2012.

13.\textit{\textbf{gx}2} d4 14.\textit{\textbf{f}3} dxe3

There may arise a slightly inferior endgame for Black after 14...\textit{\textbf{R}}c8!? 15.\textit{\textbf{c}}4 dxe3 16.\textit{\textbf{b}}d8+ \textit{\textbf{x}}d8 17.\textit{\textbf{f}}xe3 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 18.\textit{\textbf{h}1}! (White will preserve a minimal edge following 18.\textit{\textbf{g}}4 \textit{\textbf{f}}8 19.\textit{\textbf{d}}1+ \textit{\textbf{c}}7 20.\textit{\textbf{d}2} \textit{\textbf{h}4}\pm, but Black has serious chances of equalising.) 18...\textit{\textbf{c}}7 19.\textit{\textbf{g}1} \textit{\textbf{h}f}8 20.\textit{\textbf{a}f}1\pm

15.\textit{\textbf{x}}c6\pm

The arising position is no doubt completely irrational. Still, the complications are much rather in favour of White, although both sides must play very carefully.

15...\textit{\textbf{e}7} 16.\textit{\textbf{g}4}

The endgame is approximately equal after 16.\textit{\textbf{c}4} e2! 17.\textit{\textbf{d}6}+ \textit{\textbf{x}d}6 18.\textit{\textbf{e}d}6+ \textit{\textbf{f}6} 19.\textit{\textbf{x}}a8 \textit{\textbf{exf}}1=\textit{\textbf{g}7}+ 20.\textit{\textbf{x}}f1 \textit{\textbf{x}d}6=  

It would be rather difficult to evaluate correctly the position arising after 16.\textit{\textbf{f}}xe3 \textit{\textbf{e}8} 17.\textit{\textbf{a}4} \textit{\textbf{x}}e5 (17...\textit{\textbf{x}}a5!? 18.\textit{\textbf{b}3} \textit{\textbf{d}8} 19.\textit{\textbf{e}}3 \textit{\textbf{x}}e5 20.\textit{\textbf{e}2} g6; 18...\textit{\textbf{x}}e5 19.\textit{\textbf{h}1} \textit{\textbf{d}8} 20.\textit{\textbf{e}2}\pm) 18.\textit{\textbf{e}2} g6\infty
16...f5!

16...exd2?? 17.Qb4+–; 16...Qxd2? 17.Rad1.

17.exf6+ gxf6 18.Nf3!

White can hardly be happy with the line: 18.Bxa8 exd2 19.f3 Qb6 20.b3 (20.Kh1 Qh6 21.Qa1 Qf4 22.b3 f5) 20...h6 21.Qh1 Qc5

18...e2!

This is Black’s only move! He should not allow the enemy rook to penetrate to the d1-square.

18...Rc8? 19.Rfd1+–

19.Qe1 Qe8 20.Bb5

White must play precisely as well 20.Qe4?! f5! 21.Qxf5 exf5 22.Qxf5 Qd7 23.Qxe2+ Qd8
20...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}5!}

Black will still have problems to worry about after 20...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{h}6} 21.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xe}2} \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{f}4+} 22.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{f}1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}5} (22...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc}2}? 23.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ad}1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}8} 24.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}5} 25.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}4}!+–) 23.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ad}1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}8} 24.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}1+} 25.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}g1+} 26.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}g1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}8+} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}3} 28.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}1}±

21.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xe}2} \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e}5} 22.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}4+}

There arises an approximately equal endgame following 22.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}3} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc}2} 23.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ad}1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}7} 24.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}3} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}8+} 25.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}1} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xf}3+} 26.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xf}3} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xf}3} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc}2} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xe}1}=

The consequences of the inclusion of the moves 22.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}4} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}7}∞, or 22...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}6}∞ would be rather unclear.

22...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{f}7} 23.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}3} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}6}
24.\textbf{\textit{f1}}

Black manages to draw in a problem-like fashion after 24.\textit{Rd1 \textit{g8+}}.

25.\textbf{\textit{h3}}! (25.\textit{f1? \textit{g7}}! Finally, his king has found a safe haven on the h8-square. 26.\textit{Rd4 \textit{h8}} 25...\textit{g6}! 26.\textit{Rd4 \textit{c5}} 27.\textit{c4}! \textit{xd4} 28.\textit{xe6+ \textit{g7}}
29. Nxd4! (29. Bxg8? Rxg8 30. Nxd4 Qc5 31. Ne6+ Kh8 32. Nxc5 Qf4+ 33. Qh4 Qg2=) 29... Qc5! (29... Nf4? 30. Kg4 ±) 30. Bxg8 (Black has a perpetual check following 30. Re4 Qh5+ 31. Kf3 Qe5 32. Qxe8 Qh8+ 33. Qxg8+ Qxg8 34. f3 Qg5+ 35. Kf2 Qd2+ 36. Ke3 Qg5=) 30... Qxg8 31. Nxe6+ Qh8 32. Qf3 (32. Nxc5 Qf4=)

32... Qf4! This spectacular knight-sacrifice enables Black to save the day by a perpetual check. 33. Qxf4 Qf5+ 34. Kh4 Qg5+ 35. Kh3 Qf5=

24... Qg7 25. Kg1 Qg8 26. Nxe5 fxe5 27. f3
27...\#f6+ 28.\#h1 \#xc2 29.\#e3 \#f5 30.\#e4± Black is close to equality, but he will still need to work hard.

C2) 11.\#b5!?  

11...\#xf3

Following 11...\#d7?!, White can begin a dangerous offensive with the line: 12.\#g5 \#gxe5 13.f4 \#g6 14.\#xe4 dxe4 15.f5↑ and Black will have a hard task to neutralise his opponent’s initiative. 15...exf5 16.\#xc6 bxc6 17.\#xf5± \#xd1 18.\#xd1 \#e5 19.\#f4 f6 20.\#xe4 g6 21.\#d6+ \#xd6 22.\#xd6 0-0 23.\#h6 \#f7 24.h3 \#e8?! 25.\#xc6+– Adams – Summerscale, Canterbury 2010.
Black has an interesting line here, but it is still advantageous for White: 11...\textcolor{red}{\textit{R}}c7 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}g5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xg5 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}7 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{dxe}}4 dxe4 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}5 e5 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{exf}}c6 \textcolor{red}{\textit{bxc}}6 17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}6 fxe6 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}}5+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{g}}6 19.\textcolor{red}{\textit{fxg}}6 0-0-0 20.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}7 \textcolor{red}{\textit{w}}a5 21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}}7 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}c5 22.\textcolor{red}{\textit{gxh}}8=\textcolor{red}{\textit{w}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}3+ 23.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}}1 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xh}}8 24.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}1 \textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}2 (24...\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}8 25.b4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{w}}b6, Iordachescu – Krivoborodov, Moscow 2010, 26.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}}3! \textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}4 27.c3\textcolor{red}{\textplus} 25.\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}3 26.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xd}}7 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xd}}7 27.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}3\textcolor{red}{\textplus}

Black fails to equalise if he tries to protect his c6-square with the move 11...\textcolor{red}{\textit{R}}c8, because after 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}}5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xg5 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}7 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xe4 dxe4 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xf}}3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}c7 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xf3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}c7 13.c4 (The preparatory move 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}1 would enable Black to solve his problems with 13...a6! 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xc6+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}6 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}d4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}4 16.f4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}5\textcolor{red}{\textplus} and White’s space advantage can hardly be of any use to him.) 13...dxc4 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}e1 \textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}7 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xg5 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}e5 (16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{b}}6 17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}6+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{bxc}}6 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}5 19.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}6=) 16...\textcolor{red}{\textit{ xc}}5 17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}6+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{bxc}}6 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{b}}5=

12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xf3

Black succeeds in maintaining the balance, but not effortlessly after 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xf3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}c7 13.c4 (The preparatory move 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}1 would enable Black to solve his problems with 13...a6! 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xc6+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}6 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}d4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}4 16.f4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}5\textcolor{red}{\textplus} and White’s space advantage can hardly be of any use to him.) 13...dxc4 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}e1 \textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}7 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}xg5 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}e5 (16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{b}}6 17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}6+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{bxc}}6 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe}}5 19.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}6=) 16...\textcolor{red}{\textit{ xc}}5 17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}6+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{bxc}}6 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{b}}5=

12...\textcolor{red}{\textit{Q}}d7

13.c4!

The consequences of the following variation are rather unclear. 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}}5 a6! (13...\textcolor{red}{\textit{gxe}}5, Almasi – Landa, Reggio Emilia 2010, 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{a}}e1\textcolor{red}{\textplus} 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}6 \textcolor{red}{\textit{bxc}}6 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}5 (15...\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}}5?!\textcolor{red}{\textplus}) 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}f3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}4\textcolor{red}{\textplus} Gharamian – Ragger, Germany 2011.

13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{gxe}}5 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}}5!\textcolor{red}{\textplus}

White’s long-lasting initiative is more than sufficient to compensate the sacrificed pawn for example: 14...\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}4 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}6 \textcolor{red}{\textit{bxc}}6 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{dxc}}4 17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{ad}}1 \textcolor{red}{\textit{b}}7 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{e}}5\textcolor{red}{\textplus}
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 e6 5.a3 a5

Black prevents reliably his opponent’s plan, connected with the pawn-advance b2-b4, but he must pay a dear price for that. He obviously weakens the b5-square and as a result of that will have no counterplay on the queenside.

6.Nf3 Bxc5 7.Bd3 Qc7 8.0-0 Qg6
9.\textit{Bg5}!?

The players are crossing their swords, speaking in the language of fencing. White forces his opponent to make an important choice.

It was also good for him to have tried the logical line: 9.\textit{Nc3}!? \textit{c6} 10.\textit{Qe2} \textit{d4}?! 11.\textit{Nxd4} \textit{xd4} 12.\textit{b5}±

9...\textit{Be7}

This is a very arguable decision. After the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, White takes the d4-square under a reliable control and this unties his hands to develop his kingside initiative.

It was preferable for Black to have played 9...\textit{Qc7} 10.\textit{c3} \textit{d7}.

10.\textit{Bxe7} \textit{Bxe7} 11.\textit{c3} \textit{d7} 12.\textit{d2} 0-0 13.\textit{ae1}
13...\(a6\)

13...\(c6\) 14.\(b5\) \(e5\) 15.\(a4\)!±

14.\(d4\) \(e5\) 15.\(f4\)

White could have considered here 15.\(xg6\)?! \(xg6\) 16.\(f4\)±

15...\(xd3\) 16.\(exd3\)

Or 16.\(xd3\) \(c5\) 17.\(h1\) \(ac8\) 18.\(g4\) \(fe8\)!∞, preventing \(f4-f5\).

16...\(e5\) 17.\(e3\)
17...f6?!

After this imprecise move, White obtains a target to exert pressure against.

Black should have played the more prudent move 17...\textit{Rac8}.

18.exf6 \textit{Rxf6} 19.g3!± \textit{Re8} 20.\textit{Nf3} \textit{Rc8}

White’s advantage increases after the trade of the queens, so Black had to prefer here 20...\textit{Qd6}.

21.\textit{Rf2}

It was better for White to play 21.\textit{Qxc5} \textit{Rxc5} 22.\textit{Qd4}±.

21...b6
Now, the exchange of the queens on the c5-square is not advantageous for White, because Black will capture on c5 with his pawn, but even without the trade of the queens, it is more than obvious that Black has great problems due to the vulnerability of his e6-pawn and his dark squares in the centre.

22.\text{Rfe2} h6 23.\text{Qf2} \text{Rc8} 24.\text{Qd4}

24.\text{Re2}!?

24...\text{c8} 25.\text{Qxc5} bxc5 26.\text{Na4}?

This is an annoying mistake! After 26.\text{Nd1}! \text{a6} 27.\text{f2}, White would have maintained a considerable advantage.
26...\(\text{Qxf4}\)!

After this move White must think about saving the game.

27.gxf4 \(\text{Qxf4}\) 28.\(\text{Qc5}\)!

He would have had much more chances of survival after 28.\(\text{Ne5}\) \(\text{Rx}a4\) 29.\(\text{Re}c2\).

28...\(\text{Qxf3}\) 29.\(\text{Qe}3\) \(\text{Qxf4}\) 30.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{Qf6}\)

30...e5!? 31.\(\text{Qxe}5\) \(\text{Qxh}3\).

31.\(\text{Qe}1\) \(\text{Qf}7\) 32.\(\text{Qg}2\) \(\text{Qe}7\) 33.\(\text{Qg}3\) \(\text{Qd}6\)

33...e5++

34.\(\text{Qb}3\)

34.\(\text{Qxe}6\) \(\text{Qxe}6\) 35.\(\text{Qxe}6+\) \(\text{Qxe}6\) 36.\(\text{Qxe}6+\) \(\text{Qxe}6\) 37.\(\text{Qxf}4\) a4!++

34...a4 35.\(\text{Qa}5\)

35...d4

It was better for Black to play here 35...e5++

36.\(\text{Qe}4\) \(\text{Qf}3+\) 37.\(\text{Qg}2\) \(\text{Qxd}3\) 38.\(\text{Qe}2\) \(\text{Qd}7\)

38...\(\text{Qa}6++\)

39.\(\text{Qc}4+\) \(\text{Qe}7\) 40.\(\text{Qb}6\) \(\text{Qd}6\) 41.\(\text{Qc}4+\) \(\text{Qe}7\) 42.\(\text{Qb}6\) \(\text{Qd}8??\)
It was preferable for Black to choose here 42...\(\text{g6}+\) 43.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{b5}\)–+

43.\(\text{c4}\) e5 44.\(\text{xd7}\) \(\text{xd7}\) 45.\(\text{xe5}\)

He has already lost the lion’s share of his advantage, but still, not without the help of his opponent, Black managed to win that game. Let us see how this happened.

45...\(\text{c6}\) 46.\(\text{d5}\)+ \(\text{d6}\) 47.\(\text{xd6}\)+ \(\text{xd6}\) 48.\(\text{xa4}\) \(\text{d5}\) 49.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{e3}\) 50.\(\text{b7}\) \(\text{c4}\) 51.a4 d3

52.\(\text{f2}\)?

52.\(\text{d7}\)! \(\text{b3}\) 53.a5 \(\text{c2}\) 54.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{e2}\)+ 55.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{e6}\) 56.b4 d2 57.b5=
52...d2 53...c3 54...e2 52+ 56...d1 57...g7 h5+ 58...c2 59...b5 60...e8 61...c4 h3 62...h4 63...d1 64...c2 65...d5 66...e8+ 67...f8+ 68...e2 69...e3 6...g2 70...xd2 71...h2 72...g8 73...e3 h1= 74...h1 0–1

2 Potapov – Alekseev
Moscow 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.h4 h5 5...d3 xd3 6...xd3 e6 7...g5 e7 8...f3 h6 9...c3 f5 10...e2 c5

This is a quite logical move. The tension in the centre and on the queenside deflects to a great extent White from the possibility to develop his initiative on the kingside. Meanwhile, with a black knight on b8, and not on d7, this undermining move is stronger, because Black has the possibility to develop the knight to c6. He may also have other ideas in some variations.

11...cxd4 12...xd4

White would not achieve much with 12...xd4 xd4 13...a5+ (13...c6?! 14.0-0 xg5 15...xg5 b6 16...fd1 g6 17...ac1 0-0 18...c3 e7 19...b3 c6 20.f3).

12...a5+ 13...d2

13...f1 a6=

13...a6
In fact, this move forces the exchange of the queens after which White must play accurately, since his strategy in the opening is not in harmony with this important decision. We have already mentioned about this in our notes to Black’s move ten.

14. \( \text{Qxa6} \) \( \text{Nxa6} \) 15.0-0-0

15. \( \text{Rc1} \) \( \text{Kd7} \) 16.\( g3 \) \( \text{Rhc8} \) 17.0-0 \( \text{Nb4} \)

15...\( \text{Kd7} \)

This is a standard, but somewhat routine move. It was more important for Black to transfer his knight to the c6-square and only then he could have thought about the move f7-f6, followed by \( \text{e8-f7} \). Then, his king would have been much
better placed on f7, since later, after some exchanges, it would have the chance to break further on the kingside with the help of the manoeuvre $g6-f5$.

16. $g5$ $hc8+$

16...$f6$ 17.$d2$ $b8$ 18.$f4=$

17.$b1$ $f8$ 18.$h3$

White could have played here the more concrete move – 18.$g4?!$, for example: 18...$hxg4$ 19.$h2$ $e7$ 20.$xe7$ $xe7$ 21.$xg4$. The position would be approximately equal, but White’s game would have been easier in comparison to what he chose in the game.

18...$c4$?!

18...$b4=$

19.$g3$?!

After this inappropriate exchange, Black’s previous play becomes completely justified and he seizes the initiative. Instead, White could have exploited his opponent pseudo-activity, winning an important tempo for the implementation of the plan with the pawn-advance f3-g4: 19.$d2$ $c7$ 20.$f3$ (20.$f3$!? $ac8$ 21.$f1$) 20...$e7$ 21.$g4$ $xg5$ 22.$gx5$ $f1+$

19...$xg3$ 20.$xg3$ $ac8$ 21.$e3$

White had to open the third rank for his rook with the move 21.$g1$.

21...$e8$

21...$b4$?! 22.$g5$ $e8$†

22.$h3$?!
22. \( \text{Ng1} \)

22... \( \text{b4} \) 23. \( \text{e1 a5} \) 24. \( \text{h1 a4} \)

25. \( \text{a3} \)

This move weakens the light squares, but White cannot continue the game without it, for example: 25. \( \text{d3?! a3!} \) 26. \( \text{b3 c2} \) 27. \( \text{c1 d3} \) 28. \( \text{xc2 xc2} \) 29. \( \text{xb4 b2} + 

25... \( \text{c6} \) 26. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{a5} + \) 27. \( \text{d2 c6} \) 28. \( \text{e1 e7} \) 29. \( \text{g3 d7} \)

White’s bishop is “bad” and Black can develop his initiative on the queenside, so he is better.
30. \textit{R}hd1 \textit{f}6  

He opens a second front and this should not harm his prospects, but Black could have advanced simply his \textit{b}-pawn.

31. \textit{B}f4 \textit{R}f8  

31...\textit{g}5!? 32.exf6 \textit{gxf4} 33.\textit{fxe7} \textit{fxg3} 34.\textit{fxg3} \textit{\varnothing}xe7  

32. \textit{B}e3 \textit{d}8 33.\textit{f}4 \textit{b}6 34.\textit{c}3  

\begin{center}  
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}  
\hline  
8 & & & & & & & & 8 \\
7 & & & & & & & & 7 \\
6 & & & & & & & & 6 \\
5 & & & & & & & & 5 \\
4 & & & & & & & & 4 \\
3 & & & & & & & & 3 \\
2 & & & & & & & & 2 \\
1 & & & & & & & & 1 \\
\hline  
a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h & a \\
\hline  
\textbf{\textit{a}}} & & & & & & & & \textbf{\textit{a}}} \\
\textbf{\textit{b}}} & & & & & & & & \textbf{\textit{b}}} \\
\textbf{\textit{c}}} & & & & & & & & \textbf{\textit{c}}} \\
\textbf{\textit{d}}} & & & & & & & & \textbf{\textit{d}}} \\
\textbf{\textit{e}}} & & & & & & & & \textbf{\textit{e}}} \\
\textbf{\textit{f}}} & & & & & & & & \textbf{\textit{f}}} \\
\textbf{\textit{g}}} & & & & & & & & \textbf{\textit{g}}} \\
\textbf{\textit{h}}} & & & & & & & & \textbf{\textit{h}}} \\
\hline  
\end{tabular}  
\end{center}  

34...\textit{\varnothing}e7  

Black’s king is headed on the promising route to \textit{f}5 via the \textit{g}6-square. This seems quite purposeful, but he had some other possibilities as well, for example: 34...\textit{fxe5} 35.\textit{f}xe5 \textit{\varnothing}c4 36.\textit{\varnothing}xc4 \textit{\varnothing}xc4 37.\textit{\varnothing}xc4 dxc4 38.\textit{\varnothing}c1 \textit{\varnothing}f3 39.\textit{\varnothing}f4 \textit{\varnothing}d8 40.\textit{\varnothing}xc4 \textit{\varnothing}xh4+  

35.\textit{\varnothing}c2 \textit{\varnothing}f7 36.\textit{\varnothing}g1?!  

It was better for White to play here 36.\textit{\varnothing}d3 \textit{\varnothing}g6 37.\textit{\varnothing}g1 \textit{\varnothing}f5 38.\textit{g}4+ \textit{hxg4} 39.\textit{\varnothing}f1+  

36.\textit{\varnothing}fc8 37.\textit{\varnothing}d3 \textit{\varnothing}d8 38.\textit{\varnothing}xc6  

38.\textit{\varnothing}gc1 \textit{\varnothing}g6+  

38...\textit{b}xc6  

38...\textit{\varnothing}xc6!?  

39.\textit{\varnothing}c1 \textit{\varnothing}e7 40.\textit{\varnothing}e2 \textit{\varnothing}b8 41.\textit{\varnothing}c2 \textit{\varnothing}g6 42.\textit{\varnothing}f3 \textit{\varnothing}f5
43.exf6!?

After this bad move Black’s advantage is at least doubled. In fact, White’s position becomes hopeless, because Black can remove all the pawns from the a1-h8 diagonal and attack the enemy b2-pawn. White will hardly manage to keep it, therefore he had to choose the patient move 43.\textit{Ke2} with rather unclear consequences.

43...gxf6 44.\textit{Bf2} \textit{Bd6}

Black is threatening e6-e5.

45.\textit{Nf1} \textit{Cc4} 46.\textit{De3+} \textit{Dxe3} 47.\textit{Dxe3} \textit{Rb6}

47...e5!? 48.fxe5 fxe5 49.\textit{Dxc6} e4+ 50.\textit{Dg2} \textit{Dxb2}+ 51.\textit{Dh3} \textit{Dxa3} 52.\textit{Dh6} \textit{Db3} 53.\textit{Dxh5+} \textit{Dg6} 54.\textit{Dh6+} \textit{Dg7} 55.\textit{Df4} e3 56.\textit{Dg4} \textit{Dxb2} 57.\textit{Df3} \textit{Dxd4} 58.\textit{Da6} \textit{Db2} 59.\textit{Dxe3} \textit{Dxb3}–+

48.\textit{Df2} \textit{Db8} 49.\textit{Dg2} \textit{Da7} 50.\textit{Dae2}?!?

It was better for White to play here 50.\textit{Df1}.

50...\textit{Db3} 51.\textit{Dd2} \textit{Db6}
52.\texttt{f1}

It was more resilient for White to have defended with 52.\texttt{c2}, but even then, after the possible variation 52...e5?! 53.\texttt{fxe}5 \texttt{fxe}5 54.\texttt{dxe}5 \texttt{d}4 (54...\texttt{x}f2 55.\texttt{x}f2 \texttt{xe}5 56.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xb}2+–+) 55.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xe}5, his position would have remained hopeless.

52...e5–+ 53.\texttt{dxe}5 \texttt{fxe}5 54.\texttt{xb}6 \texttt{xb}6 55.\texttt{fxe}5 \texttt{xe}5 56.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{e}4 57.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{d}4 58.\texttt{c}5 \texttt{d}3 59.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{d}4 60.\texttt{xh}5 \texttt{xb}2 61.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{e}5 62.\texttt{h}5 \texttt{c}4 63.\texttt{h}6 \texttt{h}2 64.\texttt{g}4+ \texttt{e}3 0–1

3 Nepomniachtchi – Motylev
Yaroslav 2014

1.e4 \texttt{c6} 2.d4 \texttt{d}5 3.e5 \texttt{f}5 4.h4 h5 5.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{xd}3 6.\texttt{xd}3 \texttt{e}6 7.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{b}6 8.\texttt{d}2
8...c5

This is Black’s most principled decision. He attacks immediately his opponent’s centre and forces him to take urgent counter actions.
8...a6!?

9.c4

9.c3 c6 10.d2 cxd4 11.cxd4 ge7 12.0-0 f5 13.f3 e7=

9...xb2!

Black does not take prisoners!

White would have maintained some initiative after 9.e7 10.gf3 cxd4 11.0-0 bc6 12.cxd5 xd5 13.c4 e7 14.xd4 xd4 15.xd4 e5 16.d3 0-0 17.e1 d7 18.f3.
10.\textit{b1}

It was better for him to choose here 10.\textit{d1}  \textit{c6}  11.\textit{cxd5}  \textit{exd5}  12.\textit{dxc5}  \textit{Qxe5+}  13.\textit{Nxe2}  \textit{Bxc5}  14.\textit{0-0}  \textit{Nge7}  15.\textit{Qb5}  \textit{b6}  16.\textit{Nf3}

10...\textit{Qxd4}  11.\textit{Qxd4}  \textit{cxd4}  12.\textit{Rxb7}

It was more prudent for White to continue with 12.\textit{gf3}  \textit{b6}  13.\textit{cxd5}  \textit{exd5}  14.\textit{xd4}  \textit{f6}  15.\textit{Bf4}, with some compensation for the pawn.

12...\textit{f6}  13.\textit{xf4}?!  

White had to prefer 13.\textit{gf3}!  \textit{d7}  14.\textit{xd4}  \textit{c5}  15.\textit{c7}  \textit{fxg5}  16.\textit{hxg5}  \textit{d3+}  17.\textit{e2}  \textit{xe5}  18.\textit{xe6}  \textit{e7}  19.\textit{b1}  \textit{c8=}

13...\textit{d7}  14.\textit{exf6}  \textit{gxf6}  15.\textit{cxd5}  \textit{e5}  16.\textit{h2}  \textit{e7--}
White has lost completely the battle in the opening and Black’s position is objectively winning. He failed to realise his advantage, however. Still, we should not forget this important game for the theory of this variation was played in rapid chess...

17.f4 Nc5 18.Rb5 Nxd5 19.fxe5 Nxd3+?!

Black loses the lion’s share of his advantage. He should have played instead 19...Nc3 20.Ra5 N.d3+ 21.Kf1 b4–+

20.Ke2 Nc3+

20...N3b4?! 21.de4 c3+ 22.Nxc3 dxc3 23.exf6 c2

Capturing the pawn would have still preserved some edge for Black 25...\textit{d2}a2 26.\textit{e1}d7 27.e5+ c7.

26.a4 d6 27.e5+ e8?

27...d8!∞

28.e1

28...c2?
Black would have still some chances of saving this position after 28...\(\text{Ra2}\), for example: 29.f7+ \(\text{Kd8}\) 30.\(\text{Ng6}\) \(\text{Rc3+}\) 31.\(\text{Kxd4}\) \(\text{Rc4+}\) 32.\(\text{Nd2+}\) 33.\(\text{Kxe6}\) \(\text{Kxh2}\) 34.\(\text{Kxf8}\) \(\text{Kc7}\).

29.\(\text{Bf4+}\) \(\text{Ra2}\) 30.\(\text{g6+}\) \(\text{Kd8}\) 31.\(\text{e6+}\) \(\text{Kc7}\) 32.\(\text{b1+}\) \(\text{c6}\) 37.\(\text{e7+}\) \(\text{d7}\) 38.\(\text{f5}\) 1–0

4 Brkic – Dreev
Jerusalem 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \(\text{Bf5}\) 4.\(\text{Nf3}\) e6 5.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{Nf5}\) 6.0-0 \(\text{Bg6}\) 7.c3

This is a very rarely played move by White. We recommend here – 7.\(\text{bd2}\).

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

This scheme is quite possible for Black, after White has played instead of 7.\(\text{bd2}\) the move 7.c3. Still, it was much more principled for Black to choose here 7...\(\text{f5}\). There might follow: 8.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{c7}\) 9.g4 \(\text{e7}\) 10.\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{h5}\) 11.\(\text{xg6}\) \(\text{fxg6}\) 12.\(\text{gxh5}\) \(\text{e7}\) 13.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{f6}\) 14.\(\text{exf6}\) \(\text{gxf6}\) 15.e4 \(\text{f5}\) 16.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{xd4}\) 17.\(\text{d1}\) \(\text{e5}\) Najer – Riazantsev, Loo 2013.

8.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{b5?!}\)

This move has some idea indeed, but is too ambitious. Black wishes to place his knight on \(\text{b6}\) and if White chooses the attractive move \(\text{a2-a4}\), Black wishes to obtain counter chances without allowing his opponent to fix the queenside with the help of the move \(\text{b2-b4}\).

8...\(\text{c7?!}\)

White would not have achieved much either in the line: 8...\(\text{b6?!}\) 9.\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{c5}\) 10.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{cxd4}\) 11.\(\text{xb6}\) (11.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{c7?!}\)) 11...\(\text{xb6}\) 12.\(\text{g6}\) \(\text{hxg6}\) 13.\(\text{cx}\text{d4}\) \(\text{e6}\).
9.a4

White could have put his opponent’s plan in doubt after 9.Bg5! Be7 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.a4 bxa4 12.Rxa4! (12.Qxa4 a5!=) 12...b6 13.Ra5±

9...bxa4 10.Qxa4 a5! 11.Bg5

Now, this move is not so strong any more.

15...\texttt{xa2}

White could have preserved some chances of having an edge following 15.\texttt{xd6}, but even then after 15...\texttt{xd6} 16.\texttt{exd6 f6} (16...0-0 17.\texttt{e5} \texttt{xe5} 18.\texttt{dxe5 d7} 19.f4) 17.c4 \texttt{xc4} 18.\texttt{xc4} dxc4 19.\texttt{xc4 f7} 20.\texttt{fe1} 0-0 21.\texttt{xe6 xe6} 22.\texttt{xe6 fd8} 23.\texttt{e7 f8=}, the draw would be the most likely outcome.

15...\texttt{a4}

15...\texttt{xa3}!? 16.\texttt{xa3} a4=  

\begin{center}
\textbf{16.\texttt{fa1} \texttt{xa3} 17.\texttt{xa3 e7=} }
\end{center}

\textbf{18.b3 axb3 19.xb3 \texttt{xa3} 20.\texttt{xa3 f6} 21.\texttt{e7 e8} 22.\texttt{a5 c5} 23.\texttt{xa8 xa8}}

There are no chances of any side fighting for an advantage, so White trades pieces and makes accurately a draw.

\textbf{24.e6+ e8} 25.\texttt{xc5 xc5} 26.c4 dxc4 27.\texttt{xc4 b6} 28.\texttt{b5 d3} 29.\texttt{xd3 xd3} 30.\texttt{xf6 gxf6} 31.\texttt{cd4 e7} 32.\texttt{f1 d5} 33.g3 e3 34.e1 c5 35.\texttt{ec2 d5. Draw.}
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Qf3 e6 5.Qe2 Qe7 6.0-0 Qg6 7.Qbd2 Qf5

8.g4

This is an ambitious move. We analyse mostly the calmer try – 8.Qb3.

8...Qe7

After the seemingly attractive line: 8...Qh4 9.Qxh4 Qxh4 10.f4 h5 11.g5, Black may have problems with his queen. 11...c5 12.Qf2! White frees the f1-square for his bishop. 12...Qc6 13.Qf3 Qh3 14.Qf1 Qf5 15.h3 h4 16.Qc3 0-0-0 17.c3 Qh5 18.Qe1 Qxf3 19.Qxf3 ±.

9.Qh4 c5 10.c3 Qbc6
11. \( \text{Ng6} \)

Black’s position is quite acceptable following 11. \( \text{Nxb3 cxd4!} \) (11...c4 12. \( \text{Qd2} \) h5 13. \( \text{Qxg6} \) \( \text{Qxg6} \) 14. \( \text{gxh5} \) \( \text{Qh4} \) 15. \( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{Qxh5} \) 16. \( \text{Qxh5} \) \( \text{Wh4} \) 17. \( \text{Qxf7}+ \) \( \text{Qxf7} \) 18. \( \text{Qf3} \text{±} \)) 12.cxd4 \( \text{Qc8} \) 13. \( \text{Qxg6} \) \( \text{hxg6} \) 14. \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Qb6} \) 15. \( \text{Qc1} \) \( \text{Qc8} \) 16. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) 17.a3 0-0-0! 18. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{Qc4} \) 19. \( \text{Qxc4} \) dxc4 20. \( \text{Qxe4} \) b5 21. \( \text{Qc3} \) (21. \( \text{Qc2} \) \( \text{Qd5=} \)) 21...b4 22.\( \text{Qxb4} \) \( \text{Qxb4} \) 23. \( \text{Qd3} \) \( \text{Qd5=} \)

11... \( \text{Qxg6} \) 12. \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) 13.g5

White’s intention to advance his h-pawn is more than obvious.

13... \( \text{Qb6} \) 14. \( \text{h4} \) cxd4 15.cxd4
15...f6! 16.exf6

16.h5  \( \text{\#} \)f8 17.h6  \( \text{\#} \)g8!\( \infty \)

16...gx\( f \)6 17.\( \text{\#} \)d3?!

It was preferable for White to play here 17.h5  \( \text{\#} \)f8 18.b4!? fxg5 (18...\( \text{\#} \)g8 19.b5  \( \text{\#} \)d8 20.\( \text{\#} \)h1 fxg5 21.a4  \( \text{\#} \)f7 22.a5  \( \text{\#} \)d8 23.\( \text{\#} \)h2; 18...a6 19.\( \text{\#} \)b1 fxg5 20.b5\( \uparrow \)) 19.b5 g4 20.bxc6 gxf3 21.cx\( b \)b7 \( \text{\#} \)g8+ 22.\( \text{\#} \)h1 \( \text{\#} \)xb7 23.\( \text{\#} \)xf3 \( \text{\#} \)d6 24.\( \text{\#} \)g1 \( \text{\#} \)g1+ 25.\( \text{\#} \)xg1 \( \text{\#} \)b8 26.\( \text{\#} \)e3 \( \text{\#} \)e7 27.\( \text{\#} \)b1 \( \text{\#} \)xb1 28.\( \text{\#} \)xb1 \( \text{\#} \)d7= 17...fxg5 18.\( \text{\#} \)e1

18...0-0-0?!

Black could have exploited the wonderful possibility: 18...g4 19.\( \text{\#} \)g5 e5! 20.\( \text{\#} \)e3 (20.\( \text{\#} \)xg4 \( \text{\#} \)xd4\( \rightarrow \)) 20...\( \text{\#} \)xg5 21.hxg5 0-0 22.\( \text{\#} \)xg4 e4 23.\( \text{\#} \)e2 \( \text{\#} \)ae8\( \uparrow \)

19.\( \text{\#} \)xe6  \( \text{\#} \)c7

19...\( \text{\#} \)xh4? 20.\( \text{\#} \)e5  \( \text{\#} \)c7 21.\( \text{\#} \)xc6 bxc6 22.\( \text{\#} \)d2  \( \text{\#} \)d6 23.\( \text{\#} \)e1  \( \text{\#} \)f6.

20.\( \text{\#} \)xg5
20...\textit{\underline{\text{N}}\text{xd}}4?

This blunder is rather difficult to explain. Most probably it was due to the time trouble...

After 20...\textit{\underline{\text{R}}f8} 21.\textit{\underline{\text{Q}}g4} \textit{\underline{\text{b}}8, the position would have remained quite unclear.}

21.\textit{\underline{\text{R}}xe7}

White was winning immediately following 21.\textit{\underline{\text{B}}xg6} \textit{\underline{\text{N}}xe6} 22.\textit{\underline{\text{N}}xe6} \textit{\underline{\text{Q}}d7} (22...\textit{\underline{\text{Q}}b6} 23.\textit{\underline{\text{B}}f5}+-) 23.\textit{\underline{\text{B}}f5}+-

21...\textit{\underline{\text{N}}xe7} 22.\textit{\underline{\text{Q}}g4}+ \textit{\underline{\text{R}}d7} 23.\textit{\underline{\text{Q}}xd4} \textit{\underline{\text{c}}6 24.\textit{\underline{\text{B}}f4} \textit{\underline{\text{B}}f8} 25.\textit{\underline{\text{B}}g3} \textit{h6 26.\textit{\underline{\text{B}}e2}! hgx5} 27.\textit{\underline{\text{Q}}g4} \textit{\underline{\text{f}}5} 28.\textit{\underline{\text{Q}}xg5}+- \textit{\underline{\text{R}}f8} 29.\textit{\underline{\text{B}}c1} \textit{b6}
30. **xf5**

After this imprecise move, Black obtains good chances of offering tougher resistance.

The correct line for White would have been: 30. **a3!** **f7** (30... **b7** 31. **f8**! **xg5** 32. **xg5** **xg4**+ 33. **f1+–) 31. **a6+** **b8** 32. **f4+** **a8** 33. **g3+–.

30... **xf5** 31. **f4** **b7** 32. **h5** **d4** 33. **e1**

33. **e3!?** **e6** 34. **h6** **g5** 35. **fxg5**.

33... **e6**

34. **h6**?

34. **g4** **xg5** 35. **e5** **f3+** 36. **xf3** **xe5** 37. **xe5** **g7+** 38. **f1** **xe5** 39. **h6**. This queen and pawn ending seems to be difficult for Black, but it is understandable why White wishes to avoid it. It is far from certain whether he will manage to win it easily.

34... **xg5** 35. **fxg5** **d8** 36. **e5** **c7** 37. **e3** **d8**?

It looks like Black did not believe that he could save the game. In fact, he could and should with the line: 37... **c1+** 38. **h2** **f1!= 39. **e7+** (39. **h7??** **f2–+)) 39... **a8** 40. **e8+** **b7** 41. **b8+** **a6** 42. **a3+** **b5** 43. **b3+** **a5** 44. **c3+** **a6=...
38.\text{Qg}2?! 

It was better for White to play here 38.\text{Qh}4! \text{Qc}7! 39.\text{g}6 (39.\text{h}7 \text{Qc}1+ 40.\text{Re}1 \text{Rxg}5+ 41.\text{Rxg}5 \text{Rxg}5+ 42.\text{Qf}2 \text{Rh}5 43.\text{Qe}7+ \text{c}6 44.\text{Qxa}7 \text{d}4=) 39...\text{Qc}1+ 40.\text{Re}1 \text{Rxg}5+ 41.\text{Qh}1 \text{Qd}2 42.\text{Qg}1 \text{Rxg}1+ 43.\text{Qxg}1 \text{Qd}1+ 44.\text{Qg}2 \text{Qe}2+ 45.\text{Qh}3 \text{Qe}3+ 46.\text{Qg}3 \text{Qxh}6+ 47.\text{Qg}2 \text{Qh}5 48.\text{Qd}3=) 39...

38...\text{Rxg}5? 

Still, Black makes the final mistake.

38...\text{Qc}7=! 

39.\text{Qg}3+– \text{Be}5 40.\text{Qg}7+ \text{Qc}6 41.\text{Qc}2+ \text{Qd}6 42.\text{Qg}6+ \text{Qe}6 43.\text{Qh}2+ \text{Qc}5 44.\text{Qxe}6 \text{Qg}8+ 45.\text{Qf}1 1–0

\text{6 Grischuk – Jobava} 
\text{Tbilisi 2015}

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \text{Qf}5 4.\text{Qf}3 e6 5.\text{Qe}2 \text{Qd}7 6.0-0 \text{Qg}6 7.\text{Bd}2 \text{Qh}6 8.\text{Bb}3 \text{Qf}5
9.a4

It is better for White to play here 9.d2.

9...Ec8 10.a5 h5

10...h6!?

11.h3 xf3 12.xf3 g6

Black solves the problems with his development in an original way, but loses too much time for that and White seizes the initiative obtaining a slight but stable edge.
13...e1!?  
It would be hardly better for White to continue with 13.g4 h5 14.xf5 gxf5 15.f4 e7 16.f3 f8.

13...h5 14.d3 h6 15.xh6 xh6 16.c4± dxc4  
Black should have considered giving up the c-file. 16...f8 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.cec1 b8 19.e3 g7 20.ac1 a6 21.e7 e7.

17.xc4 f8

18.ace1  
White begins to regroup his forces improving his position even more. Black seems helpless to counter this in any effective way.

18...e7 19.e3  
White’s knight is headed for the c4-square.

19.g7 20.d2 h8 21.e4 b8 22.e4 a6  
Black probably intended to transfer his knight to b5, in order to cover the d6-square and to organise some active counterplay, but all these plans are doomed to fail.

23.ace1 c8?!  
He had to prefer here 23...h4 24.d3±
24.d5!

This standard, but really effective pawn-break is winning for White.

24...cxd5 25.exd5 b5

Black cannot survive either after 25...Qe7 26.Bc6 Qd8 27.c5 Qxd8 28.Qxd8 Qf5 29.Qe4 Qd7 30.Qd2 Qf8 32.Qd8+–

26.Bc6± bxc4 27.Qxd8 Qg5
28.\textit{b7}

28.\textit{Be}d1!? \textit{Be}8 (28...\textit{B}e7 29.\textit{Be}h4 \textit{B}xh4 30.\textit{B}f1d4 \textit{B}g5 31.\textit{B}f4 \textit{B}h4 32.\textit{B}f5+–) 29.\textit{B}xf7+ \textit{B}xf7 30.\textit{B}f3+ \textit{B}f5 31.\textit{B}xe8+ \textit{B}xe8 32.\textit{B}c6+–

28...\textit{B}e7 29.\textit{B}e3

29.\textit{B}cd1?+–

29...\textit{B}xe3 30.fxe3 \textit{B}f5

30...\textit{B}d5 31.\textit{B}xc4 \textit{B}hd8 32.\textit{B}xd8 \textit{B}xd8 33.e4 \textit{B}e3 34.\textit{B}c3 \textit{B}d1+ 35.\textit{B}f2 \textit{B}d7 36.\textit{B}c6 \textit{B}d1+ 37.\textit{B}e1 \textit{B}d4 38.\textit{B}b3+–

31.\textit{B}xc4 \textit{B}xe3

32.\textit{B}c6

It would be even more convincing for White to have played here 32.\textit{B}cc7 \textit{B}hf8 33.\textit{B}f2 \textit{B}d5 34.\textit{B}c6+–

32...\textit{B}hd8 33.\textit{B}xd8 \textit{B}xd8 34.\textit{B}xa6 \textit{B}d1+

34...\textit{B}c4 35.b3 \textit{B}xe5 36.\textit{B}b6+–

35.\textit{B}f2 \textit{B}c4 36.b3 \textit{B}xe5 37.\textit{B}b6 \textit{B}a1 38.a6 \textit{B}f6 39.\textit{B}b5 \textit{B}a3 40.\textit{B}e2 1–0

7 Svidler – Jobava
Tbilisi 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \textit{B}f5 4.\textit{B}f3 e6 5.\textit{B}e2 \textit{B}d7 6.0–0
6...f6

This is a seldom played move. Black attacks immediately his opponent’s centre with the idea after the exchange on e5 to obtain the c5-square for his bishop. Later, after Ne7, he plans to castle and to exert pressure on the f-file.

All this sounds too good to be true... No doubt, White has his counter arguments.

7.c4!

This excellent move puts Black’s plan in doubt.

7...f5?! Ne7!? (7...fxe5 8.Nxe5 Nxe5 9.Nxe5 f5 10.Ne2 d6 11.f3 0-0 12.c3 Nxe5 13.Bxe5 d7=) 8.Re1?! (8.exf6 gxf6 9.c4!?) 8...Ng6 9.Bg3 fxe5 10.dxe5, Matsenko – Dobrov, Budva 2009, 10...b6 11.Nbd2 Ne7±

7...fxe5 8.dxe5 Ne5 9.d3


9...a6

9...Ne7 10.Na4±
10.cxd5

10...cxd5 11...b3 e3 12...xe3 d6 13...xd4 g6 14.f4 0-0 15...e3± (15.b3?!; 15.c5?!±)

10.cxd5 11...e3 xe3 12...xe3 e7 13...b3

13...d4 0-0 14...b3 c7, E. Hansen – Mamedyarov, Reykjavik 2015, 15.g4 c5 (15...xe5 16...d1∞) 16...a3 g6 17...xf8+=

13...b8 14...a3 xe5 15...d4 c5?!?

Black plays very precisely, but still has some serious problems. Here, it would have been correct for him to prevent the possible move g2-g4 with 15...h5, but even then after 16...a4, White would have maintained some initiative.
16.\textbf{xf5}?! 

White cannot fight for the advantage with this move.

It was correct for him to choose instead 16.g4! \textbf{g6} (16...\textbf{xd4} 17.exd4 \textbf{g6} 18.\textbf{a4}! b6 19.\textbf{ac1} \textbf{a7} 20.\textbf{b4}!)

17.\textbf{xe6} \textbf{e5} 18.\textbf{b5}!\textemdash It is possible that White had overlooked this spectacular strike.

16...\textbf{exf5} 17.\textbf{f3} \textbf{e5} 18.\textbf{c5}?! 

18.\textbf{ad1} \textbf{xe3}+ 19.\textbf{h1} 0-0 20.\textbf{fe1} \textbf{g5} 21.\textbf{xd5}= 

18...0-0-0!\textdagger 19.\textbf{fd1}
19...Kb8 20.b4?! White’s best line here was possibly: 20.Re3!?

20...Re6! 21.b5 Re8 22.Rc1?!


22...Re7 23.Ra3 axb5 24.Re2 Rxc1

24...g5?!?

25.Rc1 Re6 26.Rc5 g5 27.h3 b4 28.a3 Re6 29.Rf2 d4! 30.exd4 Rxc5 31.dxc5 Re5 0–1

8 Gopal – Dragun
Cappelle la Grande 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Re5 4.d3 e6 5.Re2 d7 6.0-0 e7 7.bd2 c5 8.e4 cxd4 9.cxd4 Rxe5
10.cxd5

We have suggested in our book as a more promising move for White to play 10.Qa4+!.

10...Qxd5 11.Qa4+ N7c6 12.N2f3

12...d3!=

This is a typical resource in similar positions. Black exchanges the light-squared bishops and reduces thus the tension.

13...xd3 xf3+!

13...xd3 14.xd1 c5 15.c2↑

14.xf3 xd3 15.e3

White has some compensation for the pawn, but he cannot even dream about having an edge.

15...e7 16.e5

16.fd1 wa6 17.xa6 bxa6 18.ac1 b4 19.c7 d5 20.b7 d6=

16...d5 17.xc6

17...bxc6

It was also possible for Black to choose here 17...xc6 18.xc6+ bxc6 19.f6 d6 20.xc6 d7=

18.ac1 wb5 19.xb5

19.c4!? 0-0 20.c2=

19...xb5 20.a7 d6

Black could have tried to hold on to the pawn, but after 20...a6 21.b7, White’s piece-activity would provide him with sufficient compensation.

21.b7!
21.\texttt{Rxa7 Rxa7 22.\texttt{Rxa7 e7 23.d4 e5 24.\texttt{Re1 f6 25.e3 a8 26.a3 e8}.}

21...0-0

21...a6 22.\texttt{Rd1}.

22.\texttt{xb5 fb8 23.xb8+ xb8}

24.\texttt{c1}

White complies with the draw, but following 24.\texttt{d1! xb2 25.g3 e7 26.d7†}, he could have still tried to make his opponent suffer, while fighting for it.

24...\texttt{f8 25.b3 a5 26.c4 e7= 27.f1 b5 28.e2}
28...g5

This activity was not necessary. The pawn on g5, after being fixed, might become a cause of worries for Black.

29.h4 h6 30.hxg5 hxg5 31.g4 Kg6 32.Kg3 Kg6 33.Kc8 Ke5+ 34.Kd3 Kd5+ 35.Ke4 Ke5+ 36.Kf3 Kf5 37.Kf3 Kg5 38.Ka8 Kb4 39.Kc8 Kc3 40.Kg8+ Kf6 41.Kc8

White could have tried some active actions after 41.Kg4!?? Kd5 42.a3, with some chances of obtaining a slight advantage.

41...Kb2?

41...Kb4=
42.\text{c2}\n\text{?}

White failed to exploit the chance of trading the rooks: 42.\text{c5}! \text{xc5} 43.\text{xc5}±. Black would have serious problems after that.

42...\text{a3} 43.\text{c4} \text{d6} 44.\text{e2} \text{g6} 45.\text{e8} \text{d5} 46.\text{d8} \text{f6}\n\text{?}\!

46...\text{f6} 47.\text{a4} \text{f7} 48.\text{d2} \text{c7} 49.\text{a8} \text{c7}= 47.\text{d7} \text{g6} 48.\text{d8}\n\text{?!}

48.a4 \text{f5} 49.\text{d2} \text{e5}+ 50.\text{f1} \text{b8} 51.\text{b7} \text{d6} 52.\text{a7}±

48...\text{f6}\n\text{?!} 49.\text{f3}\n\text{?!}

49.\text{d7}±

49...\text{e7} 50.\text{a8} \text{b5} 51.\text{a6} \text{d5} 52.\text{a4} \text{f6} 53.\text{e4} \text{e5}+ 54.\text{d3} \text{d5}+ 55.\text{e4} \text{e5}+ 56.\text{f3} \text{d5} 57.\text{e4}. \text{Draw}

\text{9 Wei Yi – Lalith}
\text{Hyderabad 2015}

1.\text{e4} \text{c6} 2.\text{d4} \text{d5} 3.\text{e5} \text{\text{f5}} 4.\text{\text{f3}} \text{e6} 5.\text{\text{e2}} \text{d7} 6.0-0 \text{h6} 7.\text{\text{bd2}} \text{e7} 8.\text{\text{b3}} \text{g6} 9.\text{\text{d2}} \text{\text{f5}}
10. \( a5 \)

This is a typical resource. White provokes his opponent to weaken his queenside and although he loses a tempo while doing this, it is not so important after all...

10...b6 11. \( b2 \) \( e7 \) 12. \( c4 \) 0-0 13. cxd5 cxd5

14. h3

This is in principle a useful move, because White opens a leeway for his king and prevents the possibility \( g6-h5 \). Still, it would have been more precise for him to have chosen 14. \( c1 \)±
14... Rc8 15.g3

This move is not obligatory, but it restricts Black’s pieces.

15... Nb8 16.Bf4?!

I do not like this move. White’s knight belongs to the f4-square and not his bishop. He could have continued here with 16.c3 c6 17.a3 (This is a prophylactic move.) 17... d7 18.c1, with the idea d3-f4.

16... d7 17.d3 a5

17... a4!? 18.e2 a6∞

18.c1 c6 19.e2

19... b7

Black could have tested his opponent’s peaceful intentions with the line: 19... b4 20.b1 c6 and if White would be reluctant to comply with this and play instead of 21.d3, the move 21.c3, then after 21...b5!!, the character of the fight could have been changed radically following 22.xb5 xe5 23.xe5 xb5∞

20.c3 f6

It was more reliable for Black to choose 20... a7∞

21.b5 fxe5
22. \( \mathcal{N} \)xe5

The most natural move is not always the best. It was correct for White to play 22. \( \mathcal{N} \)xe5!, protecting reliably his d4-pawn.

22...\( \mathcal{B} \)e8 23. \( \mathcal{N} \)xe6 \( \mathcal{B} \)xe6 24. \( \mathcal{N} \)e5

He would not achieve much with 24. \( \mathcal{B} \)xf5 \( \mathcal{B} \)xf5 (24...exf5 25. \( \mathcal{D} \)d6 \( \mathcal{B} \)xd6 26. \( \mathcal{B} \)xd6 \( \mathcal{B} \)e8 27. \( \mathcal{Q} \)f3 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f7 28. \( \mathcal{N} \)e5 \( \mathcal{B} \)b5 29. \( \mathcal{B} \)f1\( \mathcal{\pm} \) 25. \( \mathcal{Q} \)e2 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f7.

24...\( \mathcal{B} \)xb5! 25. \( \mathcal{B} \)xb5 \( \mathcal{B} \)f6 = 26. \( \mathcal{E} \)e2 \( \mathcal{E} \)e7 27. \( \mathcal{E} \)fd1 \( \mathcal{E} \)xe5 28. \( \mathcal{E} \)xe5 \( \mathcal{E} \)c2 29. \( \mathcal{E} \)ac1 \( \mathcal{E} \)xb2
29...\texttt{R}xe1!? 30.\texttt{R}xe1 \texttt{Qf6=}

30.\texttt{R}c7 \texttt{Qf6} 31.\texttt{Bd7}

31...\texttt{Qxe5}?

Black overlooked here an excellent tactical possibility and gradually made his defensive task harder and harder...

31...\texttt{Nxd4}! 32.\texttt{Qxd4} \texttt{Rb1} 33.\texttt{Qd2} (33.\texttt{g2} \texttt{f3+} 34.\texttt{h2} e5 35.\texttt{g4} \texttt{xd1} 36.\texttt{xd1} \texttt{xf2+} 37.\texttt{h1} d4=) 33...\texttt{xd1+} 34.\texttt{Qxd1} \texttt{xf2+} 35.\texttt{h1} \texttt{f6=}

32.\texttt{dxe5} \texttt{f7} 33.\texttt{c6}?!?

It was much better for White to play here 33.\texttt{d3} \texttt{xa2} 34.\texttt{f3}, with the idea 34...\texttt{e7}? 35.\texttt{b5+} \texttt{d8} 36.\texttt{fc3+}--
Black overlooks again a nice tactical possibility. Following 33...\text{e}7 34.xe6 xf2! 35.e7+ xe6 36.xf2 xe5, he could have been quite optimistic about the future.

34.e6 b8

34...xa2 35.d4+

35.d3+- f8 36.a4

36.d4!?+-

36...f5 37.xd5 d8 38.e6 e7 39.e6+ e8 40.xd8+ xd8 41.d6+ e8.

Black could have already resigned, but there still followed:

42.d7+ f8 43.b5 f5 44.xb6 d4 45.b8+ e7 46.b7+ f8 47.g2 b4 48.h4 g5 49.hxg5 hxg5 50.a7 xb5 51.axb5 xb5 52.f4 g4 53.f2 b2+ 54.e3 a4 55.e4 1–0
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ∆f5 4.∆f3 e6 5.∆e2 ∆d7 6.0-0 h6 7.∆bd2 ∆e7 8.∆b3 g5 9.∆e1 ∆c7

10.∆h5

This move is possible and seemingly active, but I do not consider it to be principled. Still, it would be interesting to see what the results would be after avoiding the main line...

10...c5 11.f4

It is more prudent for White to play here 11.c3 and there may follow 11...∆g7 12.f4 c4 13.∆d2 gxf4 14.b3 ∆a5 (14...0-0 15.∆a3 0xe5 16.dxe5 0xe5 17.∆ef3 0xc3 18.0-1) 15.bxc4 ∆xc3 16.∆b3 dxc4 17.∆f3 h5 18.∆c1 ∆c3=

11...c4 12.∆d2 ∆b6

12...gxf4?! 13.∆xf4 0g7 14.∆xf7+! ∆xf7 15.g4 0af8 (15...0ag8 16.0-h1±) 16.gxf5 0xf5 17.0-g2 0e8 18.0-f3 h5 19.0-fh4±

13.∆df3 gxf4 14.∆xf4 0g6 15.∆g3 0g7
16. $\textit{h1}$?!

It was correct for White to play the seemingly ugly move 16.$\textit{f2}$, for example: 16...0-0 (16...$\textit{xb2}$?! 17.$\textit{h4}$! $\textit{xh4}$ 18.$\textit{xh4}$ 0-0 19.$\textit{e7}$ $\textit{f8}$ 20.$\textit{d6}$±) 17.c3. He protects his b2-pawn and fortifies his centre. 17...f6 18.exf6 $\textit{xf6}$

16...0-0

Now, it would not be so comfortable for White to protect his b2-pawn.

17.$\textit{c1}$

17.$\textit{h4}$ $\textit{xh4}$ 18.$\textit{xh4}$ f6!±

17.b3 $\textit{ac8}$±
17...f6!

This is the right moment to open the game in the centre. White’s pieces are not so well prepared for this.

18.exf6 ∆xf6

This is a reliable move, but played without imagination. It was much more interesting for Black to have tried instead 18...fxe6 19.e5 dxe5 20.dxe5 f6 21.f3 e4

19.xg6 xg6
20.\textit{N}e5?

This is a grave positional blunder. White simply forgot about his knight on e1... Naturally, he had to continue with 20.\textit{N}e5 \textit{B}e4 21.\textit{N}f3, with a rather complicated position. 21...\textit{Nh5}?! 22.\textit{d}7 \textit{xc}3+ 23.\textit{hx}g3 \textit{d}6 24.\textit{xf}8 \textit{xf}8 25.\textit{d}2 \textit{xf}1+ 26.\textit{xf}1 \textit{xc}2 27.\textit{f}2 \textit{f}5∞

20...\textit{e}4—+ 21.\textit{B}xg7 \textit{B}xg7 22.c3 \textit{d}6 23.\textit{B}a2 \textit{Af}8 24.\textit{d}e3 \textit{h}5 25.\textit{c}2

25.\textit{e}5 \textit{d}8

25...\textit{d}8

26.\textit{xc}4?

This is another blunder, but White’s position was very difficult anyway...

26.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}7

26...\textit{g}6! White loses a piece, because after the retreat of his knight and 27...\textit{g}3, he will have to part with his queen. 0–1

\textbf{11 Sethuraman – Zhou Jianchao}  
\textit{Hyderabad 2015}

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \textit{f}5 4.\textit{f}3 e6 5.\textit{c}e2 \textit{c}5 6.\textit{c}e3 \textit{b}6 7.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}6
8. αa4

This may not be White’s most principled decision, but it is quite possible and leads to fresh and not so well investigated positions.

8... αa5+ 9. c3 c4

Black’s other possibility here is 9... cxd4!?

10. b4! N

This is an original idea.
10...\textit{Qd8}

This is a positional concession by Black. Now, after the queenside has been reliably blocked, White can gradually develop his initiative on the kingside.

The objective evaluation of the position probably hinges on the principled move 10...\textit{Qxb4}!? There might follow

11.cxb4 \textit{Qxb4} 12.\textit{Nc5} (12.\textit{0-0}? \textit{Qc2}+) 12...\textit{Qc2+} 13.\textit{Kf1} \textit{Qxa1} 14.\textit{Qxal} \textit{Qe7}! 15.\textit{Qh4} \textit{Qe7} 16.g4 \textit{g6∞}

11.\textit{0-0}

It was sensible for White to retreat in advance his knight to the b2-square, so that after b7-b5, he could begin, before the opponent, active operations on the a-file with 11.\textit{b2} b5 12.a4.

11...\textit{h6}

It was too early for the move 11...b5, because of 12.\textit{Nc5} a5? 13.a4!±

12.\textit{Qe1}

White had to choose now the more prudent line: 12.\textit{b2} b5 13.a4±

12...\textit{b5}!

Now, after White’s knight has occupied the e1-square, Black’s queenside counterplay is quite justified.

13.\textit{b2}

13.\textit{Qc5} a5 14.a4 \textit{Qxc5} 15.dxc5 \textit{Qb8}!

13...\textit{Qe7}

Black did not take the risk to try a very good chance and presented his opponent with the initiative. He had to play
instead 13...a5!? 14.a4 axb4!? (14...b6∞) 15.axb5 axa1 16.xa1 a5∞

14.a4 a6

15.g4

White follows a standard plan for similar pawn-structures. He advances his kingside pawns and frees in the process the g2-square for his knight. From there, it protects his own king and may join quickly in the attack against the enemy monarch.

15...h7 16.g2 h5!?
It was not necessary for White to be so principled. He could have captured the pawn instead 17.gxh5!? \( \text{Nf5} \) 18.\( \text{Bg4} \), but even after the move in the game, Black had enough problems to worry about. His position remained rather cramped.

17...\( \text{Ng6} \) 18.\( \text{Qd2}?! \)

It was better for White to play here 18.\( \text{Qe1} \) \( \text{Be7} \) 19.axb5 axb5 20.gxh5 \( \pm \) and Black could not reply with 20...\( \text{Nh4} \), because of 21.\( \text{Rxa8}+– \)

18...\( \text{Be7} \)

19.\( \text{Nd1}?! \)

White is not on the alert.

19.gxh5 \( \text{Nh4} \) 20.\( \text{Nxh4} \) \( \text{Bxh4} \) 21.\( \text{Kh1} \)

19...\( \text{hxg4} \) 20.\( \text{fxg4} \) \( \text{Nh4} \)

After the surprising move 20...\( \text{bxa4} \), Black could have seized the initiative: 21.\( \text{Rxa4} \) \( \text{a5} \) 22.\( \text{b5}?! \) \( \text{a7} \)

21.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e4}?! \)

He had to play instead 21...\( \text{bxa4} \) 22.\( \text{xa4} \) 0-0
22. Nh5!?  

White could have tested his opponent about the purposefulness of his last move with the line: 22. f2!? f3 23. xf3 gxf3 24. 4h3!, with the idea 24... xg4 25. xg4 xh3 26. f2.  

22... Rh7 23. f4  

This move is very difficult to understand... After the simple improvement of the position of his pieces 23. g3 g6 24. f2, White would have been clearly better.  

23... g6?  

It looks like Black has completely forgotten about the missed possibility on his move 21 – 23... bxa4!? 24. xa4 a5!?  

24. f2 xf4 25. xf4 g6  

Now, he has to retreat...  

26. xg6  

White consolidates the advantage he has obtained once again...  

26... fxg6 27. c2
27...\textbf{h}6?! 

Black would have preserved some practical chances following 27...\textbf{d}7 28.\textbf{x}g6 \textbf{h}6 29.\textbf{x}g7 \textbf{h}8 30.\textbf{x}h8 \textbf{ax}h8 31.h3 \textbf{g}5.

28.g5!

This is a spectacular move and naturally, it is based on the principle “This is also possible...”

28...\textbf{x}g5 29.\textbf{g}4 \textbf{e}7 30.\textbf{x}h6 \textbf{x}h6

30...gxh6 31.\textbf{a}2 \textbf{b}8 32.\textbf{g}4+–

31.\textbf{a}2 \textbf{f}5 32.\textbf{x}b5 \textbf{e}3+ 33.\textbf{h}1 \textbf{h}4

Black’s desperate attack is a bit too late and at first White reacts very precisely...
34.\text{f}3!\ g5\ 35.\text{xf}5\ \text{e}4+

35...\text{exf}5\ 36.\text{f}3+-

36.\text{f}3?! 

White was winning easily after 36.\text{f}3\ g4\ 37.\text{af}1\ \text{d}7\ 38.\text{d}1\ \text{gxf}3\ 39.\text{xf}3+-.

36...\text{xf}5

37.\text{g}2?
He was still winning after 37.\textit{\texttt{Qe2}}, with the following possible developments 37...\textit{\texttt{Qd3}} 38.\textit{\texttt{Qxd3}} cxd3 39.\textit{\texttt{bxa6}} \textit{\texttt{Qd2}} 40.\textit{\texttt{b5}} \textit{\texttt{exc3}} 41.\textit{\texttt{b6+}}=

37...\textit{\texttt{Ke7}}! 38.\textit{\texttt{Qe2}}

This is a correct decision, but it is too late for it.

White possibly intended to play the attractive move 38.\textit{\texttt{Bxd5}}, but it would have been the perfect way for him to fall into Black’s prepared net: 38...\textit{\texttt{exd5}} 39.\textit{\texttt{Qxd5}} \textit{\texttt{Rh8=}} 40.\textit{\texttt{bxa6}}?? \textit{\texttt{Rxh2--}}

38...\textit{\texttt{Bf4}}?

The Chinese player is again unlucky.

After the fantastic resource 38...\textit{\texttt{Rh8!!=}}, the position may be used as an example in a textbook about tactics. It may serve the same purpose even like this, though... 39.\textit{\texttt{Qxe3}} (39.\textit{\texttt{bxa6}} \textit{\texttt{Qf4}} 40.\textit{\texttt{a7}} \textit{\texttt{Rxh2+}} 41.\textit{\texttt{Qxh2}} \textit{\texttt{Qxf3+}} 42.\textit{\texttt{Qg2}} \textit{\texttt{Qh5=}}) 39...\textit{\texttt{Rh3}} 40.\textit{\texttt{Qf1}} (40.\textit{\texttt{bxa6}} \textit{\texttt{Qxf3}} 41.\textit{\texttt{Qe2}} \textit{\texttt{Qf2=}}) 40...\textit{\texttt{g4}} 41.\textit{\texttt{bxa6}} \textit{\texttt{Qxf3}} 42.\textit{\texttt{Qxf3}} \textit{\texttt{gxf3}} 43.\textit{\texttt{Qf2}} \textit{\texttt{b1+}} 44.\textit{\texttt{Qg1}} \textit{\texttt{e4=}}

39.\textit{\texttt{Qg4}} \textit{\texttt{Qh7}}
40.bxa6?

The readers should not be bothered by the great number of mistakes in this game. It is well known that one of the best way of learning things is to analyse the mistake of others...

40...Rxh2! 41.Kg2 Qh4 42.Qf3 Qf8 43.Qh3

43...Qf2+ 44.Kh1

43...Qxf8+ 44.Kxf8 a7 Qxg4=

43...Qf2+ 44.Kh1
44...b2?
44...g3! 45.a7 f4! 46.a8=xa8 47.xa8 e4+ 48.g1 e3=

45.d1!+– f4 46.f1?
46.b5! xb5 47.h7+–

46...a8 47.b5

47...xb5?
47...c2! 48.xc6 e4+ 49.g1 e3+ 50.h2 f4=

48.h7+– f8 49.a1 e8 50.b1

50.xg7+ f7 51.h6+–

50...h8 51.b7+ d8 52.b8+ c7 53.xh8

53.xe8 xh7+ 54.g1 b6 55.xe6+ a7 56.c6+–

53...xb8 54.xb8+ xb8 55.xe6 d2 56.xd5 xc3 57.e6 b4 58.xc4 g4 59.g2 d6 60.f2 a7 61.f1 g3+ 62.f3 b6 63.e4 e7 1–0

12 Karjakin – Laznicka
Poikovsky 2011

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3 xb6 7.c3 c6 8.0-0 xb2 9.e1
9...c4

This move is at least very risky for Black. The main theoretical discussions are centred around the move 9...cxd4.
Still, White must play super-precisely in order to put in doubt Black’s move 9. White succeeds in doing this, though...

10.\textit{Rb1} \textit{Qc2} 11.\textit{Rxb7}

11\ldots\textit{b4}?! 

It was correct for Black to choose here 11\ldots\textit{Rb8} and although his situation would remain very precarious, but it would be still defensible. There might follow 12.\textit{Rxb8}+ \textit{Qxb8} 13.\textit{d1} \textit{b2} 14.\textit{a4}+ \textit{d8} (14\ldots\textit{d7} 15.\textit{b5},) 15.\textit{g5} \textit{b7}
(15...h6 16.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{\texttt{h}5}}} x5 exd5 17.\texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}f7}} xf7 19.\texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}d5}} x8 20.\texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}c4+}} b7 21.\texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}5+}} dc6 22.e6 g6 23.xc6+ xc6 24.d7+) 16.f3

12.xb4 xb4

13.xd1!

This is a serious improvement in comparison to the previous game on this subject and it followed with 13.a1 xa2! 14.xa2 a4 15.c3 xa1 16.xa1 e7 17.c1 b8 18.d1 0-0 19.a3 b7 20.a4 a6 21.h3= Motylev – Alsina Leal, Moscow 2011.

13.d3 14.a4+ f8 15.a1 g4

White was threatening to trap the enemy queen with 16.e1.

16.b2 b8

16...a5 17.e1 g6 18.a3+–
17...f6 18.e1 g6 19.xb4+! (It was also good for White to play the more modest line: 19.f3 h5 20.a3 c6 21.xb8+ xb8 22.xb8+ e7 23.b7+ f8 24.e2+–) 19...xb4 20.xb4 h5 (20...e7 21.b7+ d8 22.b5 b1 23.d2+–) 21.b8+ e7 22.f3 f5 23.c1+–

18.c2

18...e2?

This move loses immediately. Black had to play instead 18...xc2 19.xc2 xc2 20.xb8+ e7 21.gxf3 f6 22.b7+...
19. \textit{Nxd3} \textit{Nxd3}

20.a3!

20.\textit{Rc1}?! \textit{Ne7}\infty

20...\textit{Nxb1}

20...\textit{Qc6} 21.\textit{Qxb8}+ \textit{Qxb8} 22.\textit{Rxb8}+ \textit{Ke7} 23.\textit{Qb5}\textendash

21.\textit{Qxb4} \textit{Qg6} 22.\textit{Qa3}

22.b5?! \textit{f6} 23.\textit{Qa3}+ \textit{Qf7} 24.b6?! (24.\textit{Qxa7}+?! \textit{Ke7}) 24...\textit{axb6} 25.\textit{Nb5}\textendash

22...\textit{Qb7} 23.b5+ \textit{Qe7}
24.\textbf{Bf4}

This move is sufficient for victory, but White could have continued in a more forceful way – 24.b6!? axb6 25.\textbf{Nb5} f6 26.\textbf{Bd2} e8 27.\textbf{d6} c6 28.\textbf{b4+–}

24...\textbf{h6} 25.\textbf{h4}

25.\textbf{Ba5} f5 26.\textbf{c1+–}

25...\textbf{Rh7} 26.\textbf{Ba6} f5 27.\textbf{c1} f6 28.\textbf{a3} fxe5 29.\textbf{c8+} f7 30.\textbf{xd5} 1–0

This was a very good and dynamic game illustrating perfectly White’s obvious, as well as concealed, attacking possibilities in this variation.

\textit{13 Kravtsov – Dreev}

Jerusalem 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \textbf{f5} 4.\textbf{f3} e6 5.\textbf{e2} c5 6.0-0 \textbf{c6} 7.\textbf{e3} cxd4 8.\textbf{xd4} \textbf{ge7}
9.f4?!

This is a bit too straightforward decision.

It was correct for White to choose 9...\textit{b}5, as I had recommended in the theoretical part of this book.

9...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}}d4 10.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}}d4 \textit{c}6 11.e3?! 

White remains ignorant about the possible dangers. It was correct for him to play 11.c3!=

11...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{a}}}5!
Black will develop his bishop comfortably to the c5-square, creating an uncomfortable situation for his opponent on the queenside.

I believe his last move is stronger than 11...g5, which leads to an unclear position.

12.\*h1

It was better for White to opt for 12.\*d2 \*c5 13.\*f2 \*b6 14.\*b3 \*xf2+ 15.\*xf2 0-0³

12...\*xc5 13.\*xc5 \*xc5 14.c3

14.\*d3 \*xd3 (14...\*g6!?³) 15.cxd3 \*c8 16.\*c3 0-0 17.\*d2 \*b6+ (17...\*a5!?³)

14...\*b6!

This is a very good idea. Black provokes his opponent’s queen to occupy the b3-square, so that after

15.\*b3

he can play

15...\*e3! 16.\*xb7?

This principled move is... a mistake. It was correct for White to play 16.\*b5 0-0 17.\*f3 \*c5 18.\*d2 \*ac8³

16...0-0 17.\*f3
17...\(\text{Rf}c8\)

It was also good for Black to have chosen 17...\(\text{Rd}3\) 18.\(\text{Rd}1\) \(\text{Rf}c8\)–+

18.\(\text{Na}3\) \(\text{Rab}8\) 19.\(\text{Qd}7\)

White would not be happy either after 19.\(\text{Rae}1\) \(\text{Qxf}4\) 20.\(\text{Qa}6\) \(\text{Qd}2\).

19...\(\text{Qb}6\)

His queen is already trapped.

20.\(\text{Rxd}5\) \(\text{Ec}7\)–+ 21.\(\text{Qc}4\) \(\text{Rxd}7\) 22.\(\text{Qxb}6\) \(\text{Rxb}6\) 23.\(\text{Qf}3\) \(g5\)!

The rest is very simple.

24.\(g4\) \(\text{d}3\) 25.\(\text{Qxe}1\) \(\text{gxf}4\) 26.\(\text{Qad}1\) \(\text{Qe}7\) 27.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{b}5\) 28.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{Rxd}1\) 29.\(\text{Rxd}1\) \(\text{Qc}6\) 30.\(\text{Qg}2\) \(\text{Qg}6\) 0–1

14 Bartel – Laznicka

Dresden 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \(\text{Qf}5\) 4.\(\text{Qf}3\) e6 5.\(\text{Qe}2\) c5 6.\(\text{Qe}3\) cxd4 7.\(\text{Qxd}4\) \(\text{Qe}7\) 8.0-0 \(\text{Qbc}6\) 9.\(\text{Qb}5\) \(\text{Qg}6\) 10.\(c4\) a6
11. $\blacktriangle a4!$

This is an original idea.

11...dxc4 12. $\blacktriangle a3$ $\blacktriangle d3$ 13. $\blackspade c1!$?

It may be also interesting for White to try the more prudent move 13. $\blackspade e1$, with the idea to counter Black’s natural response 13...b5? with the line: 14. $\blacktriangle x b5$ axb5 15. $\blacktriangle x b5!$ $\check w d7$ 16. b3+. Still, after 13... $\check w d7$! 14. b3 $\blacktriangle d5$, the position would have remained rather unclear.

13...$\blacktrianglexf1$

This is a principled response.

14. $\check w f1$ $\check w c8$ 15. $\check w x c4$ $\check w c7$?

15... $\check w d7$ 16. $\check w c2!$ $\check w d5$! 17. $\blacktriangle x c6$ (17. $\blacktriangle c4$ g6∞) 17... $\blacktriangle x a3$ 18. $\blacktriangle b8$ $\check w x c2$ 19. $\check w x d7+ $ $\check w e7$ 20. $\check w g5+$ f6 21. $\check w x c2$ $\check w x b8=$
16.\( \text{c2?} \)

White in his turn makes a mistake too.

After the correct reply 16.\( \text{b3} \), Black would be beyond salvation, for example: 16...g6 17.\( \text{c4} \) d5 18.\( \text{xc6} \) bxc6 19.\( \text{b6} \) xb6 20.\( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{xc6} \) 21.\( \text{xb6}+ \)--

16...\( \text{xe5?} \)

Black would have preserved some chances of survival following 16...g6 17.\( \text{c4} \) d5 18.\( \text{xc6} \) bxc6 19.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{xe3} \) 20.\( \text{b6} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 21.\( \text{xc8} \) \( \text{xc5} \)±

17.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{c7} \)

17...\( \text{b8} \) 18.\( \text{a5} \) \( \text{c7} \) 19.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 20.\( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{xc6} \) 21.\( \text{xc6}+ \) \( \text{xc6} \) 22.\( \text{xc6}+ \) \( \text{xc6} \) 23.\( \text{xc6}+ \)--
The readers may be surprised with the quantity of the mistakes in this game. In fact, this is quite normal, since the positions of this type are very difficult to play over the board and very often the best moves are tremendously hard to find. For example, here, after the not so obvious move 18...e4!, Black would be in a great trouble. 18...g5 (18...g6 19...f4; 18...d8 19...d1+–; 18...d5 19...xc6 bxc6 20...e5+–) 19...xe6 fxe6 20...f7+ d8 21...e5 d6 22...f7+ c8 23...c4 c8 24...xd6 xd6 25...f6+–

18...d8 19...e4?!

This is the same move, but not with the same effect...
19...e5??

Black returns the favour and with an interest... After the natural response 19...g6, White had already to think about equality: 20.\textit{N}xc6 \textit{N}xc6 21.\textit{N}c4 (21.\textit{B}xc6?! bxc6 22.\textit{B}xc6+ \textit{K}e7 23.\textit{B}c5+? \textit{K}f6–+) 21...\textit{d}d6 22.\textit{g}3 0-0 23.\textit{b}b6=

20.\textit{B}xc6 \textit{B}xc6 21.\textit{B}xc6 bxc6 22.\textit{B}xc6+ \textit{K}e7 23.\textit{B}c5+ \textit{f}6 24.\textit{f}3+

\textbf{Diagram}

24...\textit{B}e6

24...\textit{g}6 25.\textit{e}4+ \textit{h}6 26.\textit{e}3+ g5 27.\textit{f}6+ \textit{h}5 28.\textit{x}g5#

25.\textit{d}5+ \textit{x}d5 26.\textit{x}d5+ \textit{f}5 27.\textit{d}7

It was simpler for White to win with 27.\textit{f}3+ \textit{e}6 28.\textit{b}3+ \textit{f}5 29.\textit{h}3+ \textit{g}6 30.\textit{g}4+ \textit{f}6 31.\textit{d}5#

27...\textit{g}6

27...\textit{x}c5 28.\textit{x}f7+ \textit{e}4 29.\textit{f}6+ \textit{x}f6 30.\textit{x}c7 \textit{d}4 31.b3–

28.\textit{e}5+ \textit{f}6 29.\textit{d}7+ \textit{g}6 30.\textit{g}4 1–0
Index of Variations

Chapter 1 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5

various
3...c5 4.dc various w/o 4...c6
4.dc e6 5.a3 various
A) 5.a3 wac7
B) 5.a3 dxe5 6.wg4
B1) 6.b4!?
B2) 6.dxf3!
C) 5.a3 dc6 6.dxf3 dxc5 7.b4 dc7
C1) 7.b4 db6 8.db2 f6
C2) 8.db2 dge7

Chapter 2 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5

6.db5
6.c3! various
A) 6.c3! e6 7.db4
B) 6.c3! e6 7.dc3 various
B1) 7.dxe3 dxe3 8.wxf3 dxe5
B2) 8.wxf3 dge7

Chapter 3 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 dc5

A) 4.c4 e6
B) 4.h4 h5
C) 4.dbd2 e6

Chapter 4 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 dc5 4.dxf3

various
4...e6 5.dxe2 various
4...e6 5.dxe2 de7 6.0-0 various
A) 6.0-0 dc8
B) 6.0-0 dg6

Chapter 5 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 dc5 4.dxf3 e6 5.dxe2 de7 6.0-0 c5

A) 7.dxa3
B) 7.c4 various
B1) 7.c4 dxc4
B2a) 7.c4 \(\text{bc6}\) 8.a3?!
B2b) 8.dxc5

Chapter 6
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 d7 6.0-0
various
A) 6...g6
B) 6...e7 7.bd2 various
B1) 7.bd2 g6
B2a) 7.bd2 c8 8.e1
B2b) 8.b3
B2c) 8.a4
B2d) 8.c3
B3) 7.bd2 c5 8.c4 various
B3a) 8.c4 c6
B3b) 8.c4 cxd4
B3c) 8.c4 a6

Chapter 7
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 d7 6.0-0 e7 7.bd2 h6 8.b3
various
A) 8...g6
B) 8...g5 9.e1 various
B1) 9.e1 c5
B2) 9.e1 c7
C) 8.h7 9.d2 various
C1) 9.d2 g6
C2) 9.d2 f5

Chapter 8
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3
various
6...e7

Chapter 9
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3 b6 7.e3
various
A) 7...c4
B) 7...xb2
C) 7...\textit{c}6

\textbf{Chapter 10} 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \textit{\textit{f}f5} 4.\textit{f}f3 e6 5.\textit{e}2 c5 6.\textit{e}3 \textit{d}7 7.0-0

various
A1) 7...\textit{c}8 8.c4 dxc4 9.\textit{c}c3
A2) 9.d5
B1) 7...a6 8.c4 dxc4 9.d5
B2) 9.\textit{xc}4!?
C1) 7...\textit{e}7 8.c4!?
C2) 8.\textit{bd}2!?

\textbf{Chapter 11} 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \textit{\textit{f}f5} 4.\textit{f}f3 e6 5.\textit{e}2 c5 6.\textit{e}3 cxd4 7.\textit{xd}4

7...\textit{g}6
7...\textit{e}7 8.c4 various
8.c4 \textit{bc}6 9.\textit{a}a4 various
A) 9.\textit{a}a4 dxc4
B) 9.\textit{a}a4 a6

\textbf{Chapter 12} 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \textit{\textit{f}f5} 4.\textit{f}f3 e6 5.\textit{e}2 c5 6.\textit{e}3 cxd4 7.\textit{xd}4 \textit{e}7 8.0-0 \textit{bc}6 9.\textit{b}5

various
A) 9...a6
B) 9...\textit{g}6

\textbf{Chapter 13} 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \textit{\textit{f}f5} 4.\textit{f}f3 e6 5.\textit{e}2 c5 6.\textit{e}3 cxd4 7.\textit{xd}4 \textit{e}7 8.\textit{d}2 \textit{bc}6 9.\textit{2f}3

various
A) 9...a6
B) 9...\textit{g}4
C) 9...\textit{e}4

\textbf{COMPLETE GAMES}

1) Rodshtein – Arkell, Hastings 2015
2) Potapov – Alekseev, Moscow 2015
3) Nepomniachtchi – Motylev, Yaroslav 2014
4) Brkic – Dreev, Jerusalem 2015
5) Shirov – Dreev, Loo 2013
6) Grischuk – Jobava, Tbilisi 2015
7) Svidler – Jobava, Tbilisi 2015
8) Gopal – Dragun, Cappelle la Grande 2015
9) Wei Yi – Lalith, Hyderabad 2015
10) Nakar – Sjugirov, Jerusalem 2015
12) Karjakin – Laznicka, Poikovsky 2011
13) Kravtsiv – Dreev, Jerusalem 2015
14) Bartel – Laznicka, Dresden 2015