Attacking The English/Reti
A Black Repertoire with 1...e5/1...d5

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Chess Informant
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The Week In Chess (www.theweekinchess.com)
10 Days (www.Chessmix.com)
Chess Publishing (www.chesspublishing.com)
Chess Today (www.chesstoday.net)
This book aims to offer an active Black repertoire against The English Opening 1.c4, the Reti 1.♘f3, and their siblings that arise after 1.g3. More importantly, we try to offer not only variations, but also a philosophy of how to treat such openings.

A century ago they called them simply “irregular”. Since then, nobody has revoked the importance of the centre, but nowadays we are so swept off by the torrents of variations the engines provide that we tend to forget conventional wisdom.

Our reasoning is simple: if White gave us a chance, we should seize central space; if he played passively, we should advance. Our goal is to reach an ideal pawn centre:

1.c4 e5 2.♘g2 d5 3.d3 ♘f6 4.♗f3 ♘d6 5.0-0 0-0;

We apply the same approach to the Reti:

1.♗f3 d5 2.c4 d4! and if 3.b4 f6! 4.e3 e5

You may find old books or annotated games that criticize Black’s set-up on the first diagram. All the better for you – this book will arm you with an innovative approach and thorough original analysis.
which often refutes widely accepted assessments. Many of our main lines are nearly unexplored and they are blank spots in theory.

Chapter 1 offers a repertoire based on 1.c4 e5 2.g3?! d6 3.g2 c6!.

Chapter 2 presents an independent alternative repertoire based on 1.c4 e5 2.g3?! c6!?.

We explain the pros and cons of the two move orders in the corresponding “Main Ideas” chapters. Both are of equal worth and claim the initiative since the first moves. We have not tried to find equalizers. On the contrary, we believe that Black has all the reasons to fight for an initiative so we chose enterprising lines, often connected with pawn sacrifices. We discovered amazing variety of positions where Black can give up one of his central pawns to get a strong attack in return.

Chapters 6 and 7 deal with a more restrictive approach from White: 1.c4 e5 2.d3! d6 3.d3! d6 4.g3. This is played “by the ABC-book” and we have little ground for an early activity here. Still, we chose the most active options after the move 4...b4. We do not cover lines with 4...d5 at all.

Especially interesting is the line 5.g2 0-0 6.0-0 e4 7.g5 xc3 8.bxc3 e8 9.f3.

This position has been in the limelight ever since the K-K match in 1987 and it seems that it is hyper topical again. We analyse both 9...e3!? and 9...exf3 in order to give you alternatives.

I have always been eager to find an exploitative strategy against passive opening play. I have started with the set-up d5-e6. My idea was to advance slowly, gradually rolling the pawns into the enemy territory. The following game illustrates the zest of this strategy:

Sveshnikov-Semkov
Albena, 1987

1.g3 d5 2.d3 e6 3.g2 d6 4.0-0 e7 5.c4 c6 6.b3 e5 7.b2 f6

8.d3 c6 9.d4 e4 10.d1 f5 11.f3
Introduction

This book presents a refined and more aggressive version of the above strategy. We emphasized on piece play, regarding the pawn centre as a mean and not as a goal. We can always sacrifice it in order to get to the enemy king.

Finally, I should mention the line 1.e4 d5 2.g3 c6 3.c4 g4 – Chapter 12.

It falls out of our general line of preparing ...e5, but it is the best way of meeting White's move order according to Delchev.

The book is written in first person, but it is a collaborative work. Every line has been checked and discussed by both authors

Semko Semkov
June 2016
Chapter 1. 1.c4 e5 2.g3 \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 3.\( \text{\textit{g2}} \) c6

Main Ideas

This is the most important chapter of our book. It presents a sharp attacking repertoire against White's popular approach in the English Opening lately:

1.c4 e5 2.g3

By delaying \( \text{\textit{c3}} \), White leaves himself more options against the Reversed Sicilian set-up when Black plays an early ...d7-d5. For instance, after 2...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 3.\( \text{\textit{g2}} \) d5 4.\( \text{\textit{cxd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) 5.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{c6}} \) 6.0-0 \( \text{\textit{b6}} \) 7.d3 \( \text{\textit{e7}} \), 8.\( \text{\textit{bd2}} \) is preferred over 8.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \).

Another point against 2.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) is the line 2...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 3.\( \text{\textit{g2}} \) c6 4.d4 exd4 5.\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) d5 6.\( \text{\textit{g2}} \) \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) when 7.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) would face 7...dxc4. Stayed the knight on b1, White would have had a4, \( \text{\textit{bd2}} \) while from c3 it cannot re-capture the sacrificed pawn.

These two examples reveal the reason behind 2.g3. However, flexibility always comes at a cost. In our case, White does not actively attack the centre.

I adhere to the classical school of chess. I believe in quick development and central strategy. A sequence of moves like 1.c4 e5! 2.\( \text{\textit{g3}} \)! defies my understanding of the game. When I see the diagram position, I think we should immediately switch to “punishing mode” and try to take over the initiative! The most consistent retort, in my opinion, is to occupy the centre by ...c6 and ...d5. The big question is should we insert 2...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 3.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) and only then 3...c6, or answer 2...c6. Both move orders are possible and have their own specifics. I discuss them in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 which propose two alternative, albeit similar, repertoires against White’s fianchetto. Chapter 3 covers 2.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 3.\( \text{\textit{g2}} \) c6.

2...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 3.\( \text{\textit{g2}} \) c6!
Chapter 1

White has three major plans from here:

**1. White attacks the d5-pawn.**

The tactical background of our setup was shown in the game Petersons-Tal, Riga 1958: 4.\( \text{c3} \) d5 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{c6}! \)

Now 7.\( \text{cxd5} \) \( \text{d4} \) 8.\( \text{xf6}+ \) \( \text{xf6} \) (or 8...\( \text{gxf6} \)), guarantees Black a lasting initiative for the pawn.

He puts a rook on c8 and the threat of ...\( \text{c2+} \) forces the enemy to lose his castling rights.

Throughout this chapter, we'll often see Black sacrificing a pawn for the initiative. That is not a speculative approach to the game aimed at fishing in muddy waters. It stems from purely positional factors. White has neglected basic laws of chess and we got the chance of taking the centre.

He might win a pawn in some lines, but that would give us a lead in development. Thus we would transfer our static edge (pawn centre) into a dynamic advantage – active pieces.

Mastrovasilis played it in 2013 and then it has occurred in practical chess only 4 more times. Black has scored a total of 4.5/5!

The critical line is 9.\( \text{b5} \) when we shed in a pawn – 9...0-0? 10.\( \text{xd5} \) h6 11.\( \text{xf6}+ \) \( \text{xf6} \) 12.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 13.e3 a6!

Now 14.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{b4}+, \) 14.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{b4}+ \) and 14.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 15.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{b4}+ \)

leave White’s king in the centre, so 14.\( \text{a5} \) looks best – 14...\( \text{g4} \) 15.h3 \( \text{e6} \) 16.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 17.a3 \( \text{f5} \) 18.0-0 \( \text{c4} \) 19.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{f7} \) 20.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{ad8}! \)

The core of my repertoire is the line 4.d4 e4! 5.\( \text{c3} \) d5 6.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{d6}! \)

This position is nearly unexplored.

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Black controls the centre. **Game 3** Hessenius–Grebenshchikov, ICCF 2014, shows his main plan – ...g5, ...h6-h5-h4, but he should proceed carefully to forestall counterplay with d4-d5 or f2-f3.

2. White attacks the e4-pawn.

4.d4 e4! 5.\(\text{c3}\) d5 6.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{bd7}\)
7.\(\text{cxd5}\) cxd5 8.f3

We’ll meet this break-through in a various settings – without \(\text{g5}\), without \(\text{g2}\) (in the chapters to follow), with \(\text{h3}\), with c4-c6 pawn still on the board. The general rule is not to take on f3! There are exceptions where ...exf3 equalizes, but commonly we should either hold the e4-pawn, or sacrifice it. For that aim, we should prepare to kill the main e4-attacker with 8...\(\text{b4}\), e.g. 9.\(\text{h3}\) 0-0 10.\(\text{fxe4}\) dxe4 11.0-0 \(\text{xc3}\) 12.\(\text{bxc3}\) h6 13.\(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 14.c4

White is unable to preserve his beautiful pawn centre after 14...\(\text{e6}\). After moving one of the pawns, his dark squares will become sensitive. If White attacked our e4-pawn before castling, we could leave it and take over the initiative:

11.\(\text{gf2}\) h6 12.\(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 13.\(\text{fxe4}\) \(\text{dxe4}\) 14.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{e8}\) 15.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{h3}\)

You can get this position via various move orders. It is promising for Black.

If White does not attack d5 early, his only plausible plan remains f3-f3. We’ll meet it with ...\(\text{b4}\), but then we have a choice:

1. To transpose to the above-mentioned examples by allowing \(\text{g5}\).

2. To prevent the pin with ...h6:

6.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{b4}\)!? 7.\(\text{cxd5}\) cxd5 8.f3 h6 9.0-0 0-0 10.\(\text{fxe4}\)
10...\textbf{\textit{xc3}} 11.bxc3 \textbf{\textit{xh3!}} 12.\textbf{\textit{xh3 xe4}}. I analyse this position in Chapter 2, \textbf{\textit{Game 5}} Nailer-Delchev, Ordu 2016.

3. White does not play d4.

4.\textbf{\textit{f3 e4}} 5.\textbf{\textit{d4 b6!}}

This rare move is the best way of obtaining active play. I do not like the common 5...d5 in view of 6.d3!. The queen move pushes back White’s only active piece. Our idea is to grab as much space as possible and use it to attack the enemy. We often sacrifice a pawn to activate our forces more quickly:

6.\textbf{\textit{b3 a5}} 7.a4 (7.d3 a4 8.\textbf{\textit{e3 d8!}}) 7...\textbf{\textit{b4}} 8.\textbf{\textit{c3?!}}

At\textbf{\textit{tack}}\textbf{\textit{ing guide}}

In the main line when White takes the d5-pawn, we aim for this attacking scheme:

26.g4 f4!! (26...\textbf{\textit{b3}} 27.\textbf{\textit{e2 c4=}}) 27.\textbf{\textit{xe4 b8}} 28.\textbf{\textit{xg5 c7}} 29.e4 f3+.

If White does not take on d5, but decides to complete development first, we could offer b7 instead:

12...\textbf{\textit{e6!}} 13.\textbf{\textit{xb7 h5!}}

Our dominance in the centre justifies such sharp onslaughts. White’s queen is far from the kingside and he lacks any counterplay.

We often do not defend our central pawns, but sacrifice them for activity. The following diagram is after the moves 4.e4 d5! 5.exd5 cxd5 6.cxd5 \textbf{\textit{xd5}} 7.\textbf{\textit{f3 c6}} 8.0-0 \textbf{\textit{c5}} 9.\textbf{\textit{e1}}
9...0-0-0! 10.\text{\texttt{Qxe5}} \text{\texttt{Qdb4}}↑.

As a rule, if White takes the e4-pawn before having castled, we can keep his king in the centre with ...\text{\texttt{Qh3}}. Then his defence is not trivial:

12...\text{\texttt{Qd7}}!. Then we simply put our rooks on the central files.

We could even castle long in some positions with an open centre:
4.\text{\texttt{Qf3}} e4 5.\text{\texttt{Qd4}} \text{\texttt{Wb6}} 6.\text{\texttt{Qc2}} d5 7.\text{\texttt{Qc3}} dxc4 8.0-0 \text{\texttt{Qe6}} 9.\text{\texttt{Qxe4}} \text{\texttt{Qxe4}} 10.\text{\texttt{Qxe4}} \text{\texttt{Qd7}}

11.\text{\texttt{Qg2}} (11.\text{\texttt{Qe3}} h5) 11...0-0-0 12.b3 h5.

Or 4.\text{\texttt{Qf3}} e4 5.\text{\texttt{Qd4}} \text{\texttt{Wb6}} 6.e3 d5 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.0-0 \text{\texttt{Qg4}} 9.f3 exf3 10.\text{\texttt{Qxf3}} \text{\texttt{Qh3}} 11.\text{\texttt{Qg2}} \text{\texttt{Qxg2}} 12.\text{\texttt{Qxg2}} \text{\texttt{Qc6}} 13.\text{\texttt{Qc3}}

13...0-0-0!?  

**Theoretical status**

The set-up with ...c6 is not in the limelight of modern theory. Your opponents will often think that you chose a second-rate line and they will tend to underestimate Black's threats.

Mihail Marin recommends in *The English Opening Volume 1* 4.d4 e4 5.\text{\texttt{Qc3}} d5 6.\text{\texttt{Qg5}} \text{\texttt{Qbd7}} 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.\text{\texttt{Wb3}}, and ommits 8...\text{\texttt{Ad6}}! altogether.

John Watson in *Mastering the Chess Openings Volume 3* does not even mention 1.c4 e5 2.g3 \text{\texttt{Qf6}} 3.\text{\texttt{Qg2}} c6 4.d4 e4 (there is only a note on 4...\text{\texttt{Ab4+}}).

I found a fleeting remark about the sequence 1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6 3.d4
Chapter 1

e4 4.\( \text{c}3 \). He points out that 4...d5 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.\( \text{w} \text{b}3 \text{ } \text{c}6! \) is good for Black and concludes: "So perhaps 4 ...d5 is a satisfactory move after all." That's all.

I could not find anything in The English Opening by Zenon Franco.

Conclusion

In my own tournament and blitz practice I observe that White does not know what to do against the ...c6 set-up. My opponents confidently play 4.d4 e4 5.\( \text{c}3 \) d5 and then start improvising. It is really rare to take over the psychological initiative so early in the opening with Black! My analyses will probably boost the popularity of this line so we could expect many important games in near future. To ensure the longevity of my idea, I propose a twin backup repertoire in Chapter 2, based on the slightly altered move order 1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6. It is up to you to decide which one you like more.
Chapter 1. 1.c4 e5 2.g3 f6 3.g2 c6

Step by Step

1.c4 e5 2.g3 f6 3.g2

The rare move order 3.c3 transposes to Chapter 3 after 3...c6.

3...c6!

A. 4.c3; B. 4.f3; C. 4.d4

Exotic alternatives are:

4.a4 is a clumsy attempt to prevent ...d5 which does not actually stop it as 4...d5 5.cxd5 b5 6.b3 xd5 7.c3 e6 is equal. A more ambitious approach is to prepare quick castling with 4...e7! when 5.f3 e4 6.d4 0-0 7.0-0 d5 is rather pleasant for Black. Playing in gambit style is also possible: 4...c5 5.b4 (5.c3 0-0 6.b4 e7 7.wb3?! could be punished by 7...a5 8.b5 a4 9.xa4 d5 10.cxd5 cxd5) 5...e7

6.b2 d5 7.cxd5 xd5 8.xe5 0-0 9.a3 d7 10.b2 a5.

4.d3 d5 5.cxd5

5.d2 c5! was in Black's favour in Bilek-Portisch, Teeside 1972. The game went on 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.b3 b6 (7...d6!) 8.f3 c6 9.0-0 0-0 10.g5 h6 11.xf6 xf6

5.f3 dxc4 (or 5...d6) 6.0-0 (6.c3 w7 c7 7.dxc4 e6=) 6...d6 7.dxc4 0-0 8.c3 h6=.

5...cxd5

4.e4 does not prevent 4...d5!
4...c5 5.c3 d6 keeps more tension, but it offers White a free hand on the kingside – 6.ge2 (The passive 6.h3 passes the initiative to Black after 6...b5) 6...0-0 7.0-0 g4 8.h3, intending h2, f4.

5.exd5 cxd5 6.cxd5 exd5 and the game is level – 7.d3 c6 8.0-0 c5 9.axe5 (9.e1 0-0! 10.xe5 db4) 9...xe5 10.d4 g4 11.a4+ d7=.

The gambit 6...g4!? keeps the fight on. For instance:

7.a4+ bd7 8.c3 d6 9.ge2 0-0 10.d4 a6 11.h3 h5∞.

7.b3 bd7 8.f3 e4 9.0-0 d6 10.g5 c5 11.wc2 e8 12.c3 0-0 White should lose a tempo on 9.g2 (9.d2 a6 10.e1 0-0 does not change things much.) 9...0-0 10.f3 c6 11.0-0 e6 12.d2 f6 13.wa4 wb6 14.fb1, Georgievski-Sofrevski, Skopje 1976, when 14...a5+ starts an offensive on the queenside where Black is clearly stronger.

6...c6 7.dxe5 d4 8.xf6+

8.wc4 xd5 9.xd5 b5 gives Black a strong attack. The main line of my analysis runs 10.xf7+ e7 11.wd5 c2+ 12.d1 xa1 13.xa8 w7c 14.e4 xf7 15.wb1 b7 16.wf3 e7 17.xa1 xe4 18.d3 db8 19.g5+ xg5 20.xg5 xh1 21.xd8 xd8+

8...wxf6


A. 4.b3 d5 5.cxd5
5.d4 e4 transposes to line C.

5...cxd5 6.b3

6.d3 is a passive move. According to our general strategy, we should gain even more space with 6...d4 7.e4 xe4 (7...d5 8.b3=) 8.xe4 e7.

Practice has proved that Black’s initiative more than compensates for the missing pawn. Computer analysis suggests that play is roughly balanced, but over the board Black’s task is easier since he owns the initiative. In many lines White must find series of only moves just to stay in the game.

I must add that 8...gxf6!? 9.wd1 wc7 10.f1 e6 (or 10...c2 11.b1 g6)
is also good and Black’s play is quite similar to 8...\textit{xf6}. 

\textbf{A1}. 9.d1 \textit{xf5} 10.d3 \textit{c8} 11.\textit{f1} \textit{c5}

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

12.e3

It is dubious to grab another pawn: 
12.\textit{xb7} \textit{c7} 13.\textit{g2} 0-0 14.h4 \textit{h6} 15.d2 \textit{g4} 16.\textit{f3} \textit{xf3} 17.\textit{xf3} e4 18.dxe4 \textit{xf3} 19.exf3 \textit{d8} 20.\textit{e2} \textit{xb2} 21.\textit{f4} \textit{xa1}+ 22.\textit{g2} \textit{c3} 23.\textit{xc7} \textit{d2}.

12.\textit{f3} 0-0 13.\textit{e3} \textit{xf3} occurred in 
Hausner-Baumbach, Leipzig 1978, when 14.\textit{xf3}? \textit{xe3} 15.fxe3 should be punished by 15...\textit{d8!}. 14.\textit{xc5} \textit{xc5} 15.\textit{xf3} is more accurate, but Black retains a dominating position with 15...\textit{h3}+ (15...\textit{d8} 16.\textit{c1} \textit{b5} 17.\textit{a4} \textit{xb2} 18.\textit{g2} \textit{e6} 19.h4 \textit{xa2} 20.\textit{b4} \textit{d7} 21.\textit{c5}+) 16.\textit{g1} \textit{b6} 17.\textit{g2} \textit{e6} 18.b3 \textit{xc8} 19.h4 \textit{c2} 20.\textit{f3} f5+.

12...\textit{a6}! 13.exd4 \textit{xd3}+ 14.\textit{e2} (or 14.\textit{e1} exd4 15.\textit{e2} 0-0--)

\textbf{A2}. 9.d3 \textit{e7}

9...\textit{xf5} is more popular. Its only drawback is that after 10.\textit{e4} \textit{xe4} 11.\textit{xe4} \textit{c8} 12.\textit{f1} \textit{e6} 13.\textit{f3} \textit{xf3} 14.exf3 \textit{c5} 15.g2= White’s king finds a safe haven too easily.

Perhaps the most challenging option is 9...\textit{d7}!??, if you do not mind positions with 2-3 pawns down for a great compensation. Then: 
10.e3 \textit{c6} 11.f3 \textit{b5} 12.\textit{e4} \textit{c6} is clearly sad for White so he should take the second pawn:
10.\textit{xb7} \textit{b8} 11.\textit{f3} \textit{xb7} 12.\textit{xd4}
12...b4!

Following the same ultra-aggressive tactic. 12...d6 13.c3 b6 14.exd3 is “only” equal.

White can castle, but it is unclear how he could complete development after 14.0-0 h3 15.f3 c4 16.e3 c5 17.b3 d4 18.c3 w6b6 19.b1 0-0.

14...c4 15.d1 e4 16.fxe4 cxe4 17.f1 c5 18.b4 e7

Black needs two tempi to castle. Then his attack on the enemy king could quickly become irresistible. White may grab a third pawn, but that would not help his defence. For instance:

a) 19.c3 g6 20.d3 e6 21.d4 h6 22.c7 d6→;

b) 19.a4 0-0 20.b5 h7 21.b2 g5 22.h4 h6→.

10.e3 c6 11.e4

11.e2 b4 12.b1 a6 13.e4 f5 leaves White with horrible holes on the light squares – 14.a3 fxe4 15.axb4 c4 16.b3 f7 17.exf7 0-0.

The pawn structure is the same as in the Mora gambit and Black’s ide-

as are similar. He has full compensation thanks to his better development and potential pressure along the c- and d-files. Possible continuations are:

a) 11...e6 12.e2 e8d 13.wb5 d7;

b) 11...b4 12.wb5+ d7 13.wb7 d5 14.a3 c2 15.xc2 c6 16.wc7 (16.wa7 xh1 17.a4+ d8) 16...xh1 17.a4+ d8 with irrational play.

c) 11...g6!? 12.e2 (12.a3 0-0 13.b4 e8d 14.wb1 d6 15.e2 b3 16.f4 f6 17.e2 e6) 12...0-0 13.0-0 b4 14.wb1 a6 15.c3 h3 16.d1 f5 17.f3 f4.

B. 4.f3 e4 5.d4

5...b6!

5...d5 is ten times more frequent, but I do not like 6.d3!

6.cxd5 wxd5 7.c2 h5 is comfortable for Black: 8.h3 (8.c3 h3; 8.h4 f5 9.c3 a6 10.a3 c5 11.e3 e6) 8...w6g 9.c3 d6 (The email game Utesch-Schuster, ICCF 2007, went through sharp complica-
1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♜f6 3.♗g2 c6

tions after 9...
11.h5 ♞xh5 12.♗xe4 ♟e7 13.d3
0-0 14.♗f3 ♞f6 15.♖e3 ♝xe4
16.♗xe4 f5 17.♗f3 ♞f6 18.♖b3+
♗f7 19.♖d2 ♜c5 20.♖c2 ♜e6
21.♖h5 g6 22.♖c3 ♜d4 23.♗a4
♖c5 24.♗c2 ♜xc2+ 25.♖xc2
♖d6 26.♗f3 f4 27.gxf4 ♖xf4
28.♖d2 ♞e5 29.♖c3 ♖d6 30.♗a4
♗e6 31.♖h4 ♖d5 32.♖xd5 cxd5
33.e3 d4 34.♖xd4 ♔b4 35.0-0
♖af8 36.♗ae1 ♕xc3 37.bxc3 ♕a3
38.♖e4 ♖xc3 39.♖d5 ♖xd3
40.♖e7 ♖f5 41.♗xf5 gxf5=) 10.d3
(or 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♗c2 ♔e8 12.b3
♕a6) 10...exd3 11.♖xd3 ♖xd3
12.exd3=, Miraglia-Dias, ICCF
email 2002.

6...exd3
6...dxc4 7.dxe4 ♕c5 8.e3 ♚bd7
(8...0-0 9.0-0 ♕e8 10.♗c3) 9.f4
0-0 10.0-0 ♚b6 11.h3! – White’s
kingside pawn horde looks dan-
gerous.
6...♕c5 7.♗b3 ♕b4+ 8.♖d2
♕xd2+ 9.♖xd2

9...dxc4 10.dxc4 ♖e7(10...♖xd2+ 11.♔1xd2 e3 12.fxe3 ♚bd7
13.h3*) 11.♕c3 0-0 occurred in
Giri-Balogh, Germany 2015.
White chose to prevent ...e3 by
12.♖e3 ♕e8 and the queenless
middlegame was roughly equal
More challenging is 12.♖d1, in-
tending 12...♕a6 13.♖d6.
6...♗b4+ 7.♗c3 ♖e7 8.0-0
dxc4 was already really grim
for Black in Gajewski-Erdos,
Dresden 2016 – 9.♗xe4 ♖xe4
10.dxe4 ♕c5 11.♕e3 0-0 12.♖c2
♖xd4 13.♖xd4 c5 14.♗e3 ♕e6
when 15.f4! f6 16.e5 fxe5 17.♖e4
♕c6 18.f5 ♘f7 19.h4 would have
promised a strong attack, e.g.
19...♖d4 20.♖g5 ♕c7 21.e3 ♕c6
22.♖ad1 h6 23.f6 hxg5 24.♖f5+.
7.cxd5! and Black’s pawn centre
is busted.

The queen sortie aims to reject the
d4-knight to a passive position.

6.♗c2

6.e3 d5
6...♕c5 7.♗b3 ♕e7 pushes back
the centralised knight, but at the
cost of a passive bishop. It would
stand better on d6. Still, 8.♗c3
d5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.0-0 0-0 11.d3
was not too impressive, Thiede-
7.cxd5 cxd5

8.0-0
8.f3 \( \triangle c6 \) 9.\( \triangle x c6 \) exf3 10.\( \triangle xf3 \) bxc6 11.0-0, Skembris-Baklan, Neustadt an der Weinstrasse 2015. Black has an attack after 11...\( \triangle a6 \) 12.\( \triangle f2 \) \( \triangle d6 \) or 11...h5 12.b3 \( \triangle a6 \) 13.\( \triangle e1 \) h4.

8...\( \triangle g4 \)! Weakens White’s king.

8...\( \triangle c6 \) 9.\( \triangle c3 \)? (9.d3 \( \triangle g4 \)=) is not really dangerous, but it gives White an initiative. The point is that 9...\( \triangle g4 \) fails to 10.\( \triangle xd5 \), and 9...\( \triangle xd4 \) 10.exd4 \( \triangle xd4 \) 11.d3 \( \triangle xd3 \) 12.\( \triangle b3 \) requires precision from Black: 12...\( \triangle c5 \)! 13.\( \triangle d1 \) \( \triangle a6 \) 14.\( \triangle f1 \) \( \triangle b6 \) (14...\( \triangle a5 \)=) 15.\( \triangle b5+ \) \( \triangle f8 \) 16.\( \triangle a4 \) \( \triangle c7 \) 17.\( \triangle g5 \) \( \triangle e6 \) 18.\( \triangle a c 1 \) b6 19.\( \triangle c3 \) a6 20.\( \triangle e2 \) \( \triangle e7 \)=.

9.f3 (9.\( \triangle b3 \) \( \triangle xb3 \)) 9...exf3

10.\( \triangle xf3 \)

10.\( \triangle xf3 \) \( \triangle c6 \) 11.d4 \( \triangle e7 \) 12.\( \triangle c3 \) 0-0 13.\( \triangle c2 \) g6 14.\( \triangle e5 \) \( \triangle e6 \)=.

10...\( \triangle h3 \) 11.\( \triangle g2 \) \( \triangle x g2 \) 12.\( \triangle x g2 \) \( \triangle c6 \) 13.\( \triangle c3 \)

It looks that Black’s king is in danger since if it castled short, \( \triangle xf6 \) or \( \triangle f5 \) would be serious threats. However, Black can hide his king on the opposite flank or even take on d4:

a) 13...0-0-0!? 14.\( \triangle b3 \) \( \triangle xb3 \) 15.axb3 \( \triangle c5 \) (or 15...\( \triangle b8 \)=) 16.\( \triangle xc6 \) bxc6 17.d4 \( \triangle b6 \)=.

b) 13...\( \triangle xd4 \) 14.exd4 \( \triangle e7 \) 15.\( \triangle e1 \) \( \triangle d8 \) 16.d3 \( \triangle d7 \) 17.\( \triangle b3 \) \( \triangle d8 \)=.

6.\( \triangle b3 \) a5 disturbs White’s development. 7.a4

The point is that 7.d4 a4 8.c5 could be met by 8...\( \triangle a7 \) 9.\( \triangle d3 \) d5 10.cxd6 \( \triangle xd4 \)=.

7.d3 a4 8.\( \triangle d2 \) (8.\( \triangle e3 \)? curiously loses to 8...c5 9.\( \triangle d2 \) \( \triangle xb2 \) and the lonely queen suddenly inflicts serious damage upon White’s queenside.) 8...d5
8.0-0
8.\(\text{c}3\) 0-0 9.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}4\) 10.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}5\) 11.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{xd}5\) \(\text{h}3\) spells a quick rout.

8...0-0 9.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{e}8\) 10.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{exd}3\) 11.\(\text{\textit{w}}\text{xd}3\) \(\text{f}8\). The full control of the queenside dark squares makes Black's game somewhat preferable.

6...\(\text{d}5\) 7.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{xd}5\)

7.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{exd}3\) 8.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}4\) provokes ugly moves from White.

7.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{xd}4\) \(\text{dxc}4\) 8.0-0 \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{6}\) 9.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}4\) 10.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}7\) is interesting. (The quiet 10...\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{7}\) is also playable.)

Now 11.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{4}\) \(\text{cxd}3\) 12.\(\text{\textit{w}}\text{xd}3\) \(\text{f}6\) 13.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}3\) \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{5}\) 14.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{4}\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{e}4\) 15.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xc}5\) \(\text{d}8\) 16.\(\text{\textit{w}}\text{d}4\) \(\text{\textit{w}}\text{xd}4\) 17.\(\text{\textit{w}}\text{x}d4\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{2}\) is equal.

11.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}2\) begs for 11...0-0-0 12.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{h}5\) 13.\(\text{bxc}4\) \(\text{h}4\) with active play.

11.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}3\) \(\text{h}5\)! 12.\(\text{\textit{w}}\text{c}2\) \(\text{\textit{w}}\text{c}5\) 13.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{cxb}3\) 14.\(\text{axb}3\) \(\text{h}4\) was pleasant for Black and he went on to win in Gabuzyan-Istratescu, Legnica 2013.

7...\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{xd}5\) 8.0-0 (8.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{6}\) transposes) 8...\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{6}\) 9.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{3}\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{7}\)

9...\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{6}\) 10.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{3}\) \(\text{d}8\) 11.\(\text{b}4\)! assures White of some pressure after 11...
Marin considers also 4...exd4 which looks somewhat ridiculous after ...c6. I have much more ambitious plans for the opening!

5.\( \text{\textbf{d}c3} \)

White can play 5.d5 himself. Then the question is whether to trade on d5 immediately.

5...cxd5 6.cxd5 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{b}}4+} \) 7.d2 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{e}}7} \) 8.xb4! (8.a3 \( \text{\textbf{d}2+} \) 9.xd2 0-0 10.d6 \( \text{\textbf{e}5} \) 11.c4 \( \text{\textbf{b}5} \) 12.c1 b6 looks attractive for Black.) 8...xb4+ 9.xd2 xd5 10.a3 xd2+ 11.xd2 f5 12.c4 0-0 13.d1 f6 14.d6 c6 15.f3 gives White compensation. Black still has enough counterplay with 15...b5 16.fxe4 fxe4 17.xe4 g4 18.f3 e3 19.d3 c4.

5...\( \text{\textbf{b}}4+ \) 6.d2 \( \text{\textbf{e}}7 \) may be more accurate.

Now 7.xb4 \( \text{\textbf{b}}4+ \) 8.d2 \( \text{\textbf{c}4} \) does not work so White plays:

7.\( \text{\textbf{c}3} \) 0-0

It makes sense to define the centre with 7...cxd5!? 8.xd5 \( \text{\textbf{d}2} \) 9.cxd5 0-0.

8.a3 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{xc}}3} \) 9.xc3 cxd5 10.cxd5 d6 11.h3 f5=.

5.g5 d5 6.xf6 xf6 7.cxd5

Or 7.e3 \( \text{\textbf{b}}4+ \).

7.a3 allows, besides the symmetrical 7...e6 8.c3 d7 7...dxc4!? with double-edged play. For instance: 8.c3 e3 9.fxe3 g6 10.f3 h6∞ or 8.xe4 d7 9.g2 \( \text{\textbf{b}6} \), followed up by ...g6∞.

7.xb4+! 8.c3 cxd5 9.e3 xc3+ 10.bxc3 c6 11.b3 (11.c1 b5) 11...d7 was fine for Black in Subal-Llorente Zaro, La Roda 2009.

5...d5 6.g5

6.cxd5 cxd5 defines the centre a bit early.

In some variations Black gets the c6-square for his knight as in the line 7.b3 h6 8.f4 c6. Or 7.f3 b4 8.h3 exf3 9.exf3 0-0 10.0-0 h6 followed by ...c6.

7.g5 \( \text{\textbf{bd}7} \) should transpose to the main line.

6.h3 h6!? leaves White with the only possible plan of undermining the centre with 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.f3 (or 8.0-0 c6 9.f3 exf3).

If White has traded his dark-squared
1. c4 e5 2. g3 d6 3. g2 c6

bishop on f6, we could let him take on e4, but here best is to aim for the symmetrical pawn structure – 8...

exf3 9.exf3 d6! 10.0-0 0-0 11.f4
c6 when 12.h5 xh5 10.g3
gxg3 14.hxg3 cd7 15.e3 f5 is at least equal as White’s bishop pair is passive.

It is more challenging to save ...h6:

6...b4! 7.cxd5

If White delays this exchange with 7.0-0 0-0 8.g5, he should also reckon with 8...xc3 9.bxc3
dxc4 0-0 (although 9...cd7! is fine for Black).

7...cxd5 8.0-0 0-0 9.wb3 (9.f3 h6 is covered in Chapter 2, Game 5 Nailer-Delchev, Ordu 2016) 9...
dxc3 10.bxc3

10.wc8!?

T.L.Petrosian-Hovhannisyan, Dubai 2012, saw 10...h6!? 11.f3
exf3 12.exf3 cd6 when 13.g4
da5 14.wc2 wc8! 15.g5?! hxg5
16.xg5 cd7 gave Black the better pawn structure.

11.g5 (11.f3 e3!) 11...cd7 12.f3
h6!

The above-mentioned game Nailer-Delchev shows that we could combine both ...b4 and ...h6 – 6.cxd5
cxd5 7.h3 h6 8.0-0 cd7 9.f3 0-0 – see Chapter 2, line B3.

6...cd7

The game Svane-Jakovenko, Cale
ta 2015, saw the plan with ...ae7:
6.cxd5 cd5 7.g5 ae7 8.e3 cd6
9.ge2 cd7 10.xe7 xe7 11.0-0 which looks passive, but resilient.

6...b4 is a simple and good alternative. After 7.cxd5 cd5

It is not practical to elaborate on the intermezzo 7.xc3+ since White could sidestep this move order by 6.cxd5 cd5 7.g5.

White has three main continuations:

a) 8.cc1 cd7!

Marin considers only 8...0-0
9.h3 cd7 10.0-0, when 10...
xc3 11.xc3 h6 12.f4! allows White to preserve his bishop, and 10...cd6 11.cc4 xc3
dxc3 h6 13.xf6 xf6 14.f3, exploiting the clumsy placement of the f6-queen. It is essential to define the fate of White’s g5-bishop before castling.

9.h3 h6!
Now 10...\text{xf6} only helps Black to develop - 10...\text{xc3}+ 11.\text{xc3}
\text{xf6} 12.0-0 0-0 13.\text{b3} \text{f5}
14.\text{fc1} \text{d7}!. The main motif in this position is the lack of prospects before the f3-knight.
15.\text{f4} g5 16.\text{e7} \text{ac8}! 17.\text{xb7}
gxf4++, Migot-Demuth, Belfort 2012.

10.\text{d2}
10.\text{f4} takes this square from the f3-knight. 10...0-0 11.0-0
[11.\text{b3} \text{xc3}+ 12.\text{xc3} (12.\text{xc3} \text{b6} =) 12...\text{b8}=] 11...\text{b6}
12.\text{b3} (12.\text{e5} \text{g4}) 12...\text{xc3}
13.\text{xc3} \text{f5}.

10...\text{xc3} 11.\text{xc3}
11.\text{xc3} would weaken e3 (after f3-f3) and it also blocks the c-file - 11...0-0 12.0-0 \text{e8} 13.f3 a5
14.\text{f2} \text{b6} 15.fxe4 dxe4, when White could maintain the balance with 16.d5.

11...0-0 12.0-0
I have been following the game Eljanov-Edouard, Istanbul 2012.
Edouard suggests here the manoeuvre 12...\text{d7-b8-c6}=, but the move he actually played is more challenging.
12...\text{b6} 13.\text{c2}

Edouard gives 13.\text{b3} \text{xd4}
14.\text{b4} \text{xd1} 15.\text{xd1} \text{d8} 16.\text{f4}
b6 17.\text{xd5} \text{xd5} 18.\text{xd5} \text{b7}
19.\text{d1} \text{f8}=

13...\text{e8}! =
This move prepares ...\text{f8} thus solving the problem with the development of the c8-bishop.
The stem game saw 13...\text{xd4}!
14.\text{d1} \text{e5} when 15.\text{e3}! \text{d8}
16.\text{f4} \text{e7} 17.\text{c7} \text{e8} 18.\text{f4}
\text{b6} 19.\text{xb6} axb6 20.\text{xd5}
\text{xd5} 21.\text{xd5} \text{e6} 22.\text{d1} \text{f5}
would have been slightly better for White.

b) 8.f3 should be ignored by Black - 8...\text{bd7} 9.fxe4 dxe4 10.\text{h3} h6
11.\text{xf6} \text{xc3}+ 12.bxc3 \text{xf6} leads to a typical position with mutual chances. It is considered in line C1.

c) 8.\text{b3} is best met by 8...\text{xc3}+ 9.\text{xc3}
9.bxc3 \text{bd7} 10.\text{h3} h6 is pleasant for Black (10...0-0 11.\text{f4} h6
12.h4!? \text{e8} is also possible).
9...0-0 10.\text{h3} \text{bd7} (10...\text{f5}
11.\text{xf6} \text{xf6} 12.\text{f4} \text{e8} deserves attention) 11.0-0 h6 12.\text{f4} \text{e8}
13.\text{ac1} was tested in two games.
Simplest is 13...\(\text{b}8\), but sending the knight to the kingside after 13...
\(\text{e}7\) (or 13...\(\text{f}8\)) 14.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{f}8\), intending 15.fxe4 \(\text{x}h3\) 16.\(\text{x}h3\) \(\text{x}e4\), is also fine.

7.cxd5

After 7.\(\text{h}3\), 7...h6 8.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.0-0 \(\text{d}6\) equalizes as 11.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 12.\(\text{xb}7\) 0-0 would be dubious for White. However, Black may also consider 7...dxc4!? with asymmetrical double-edged position, for instance: 8.\(\text{xe}4\) h6 9.\(\text{xf}6+\) \(\text{x}f6\) 10.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{b}4+\) 11.\(\text{d}2\) a5 12.a3 \(\text{xd}2+\) 13.\(\text{xd}2\) 0-0. White's centre is not mobile since his pieces are passive.

??xd5

C1. 8.\(\text{f}3\); C2. 8.e3, C3. 8.\(\text{wb}3\)

I mentioned 8.\(\text{h}3\) h6 9.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 10.0-0 \(\text{d}6\) above.

8.\(\text{wa}4\) aims to drag Black's queen to b6, which is the natural place for the d7-knight. After 8...\(\text{wb}6\) 9.\(\text{d}2\) (9.0-0-0 is clearly dubious – 9...\(\text{b}4\) 10.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{e}7\) 11.\(\text{b}1\) 0-0) 9...\(\text{e}7\), White fails to win the d5-pawn:

10.g4 h6 11.h4 \(\text{wc}6\);
10.\(\text{f}3\) e3 (the thematic sacrifice 10...0-0 is also okay) 11.\(\text{xe}3\) \(\text{xb}2\);
10.\(\text{h}3\) 0-0 11.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{wd}6\) 12.\(\text{wb}3\) \(\text{b}6\) 13.a4 a5 – White's activity is tamed and it is Black's turn to reject the enemy pieces with ...g5.

C1. 8.\(\text{f}3\)

This breakthrough does not fit well with \(\text{g}5\). Black's most consistent retort would be:
8...\(\text{b}6\), pinpointing the weaknesses on b2 and d4. However, it only weakens d5. Play is balanced after 9.fxe4 \(\text{xe}4\) 10.\(\text{h}3\) h6 11.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{b}4\) 12.\(\text{d}3\), for example: 12...f5 13.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{xc}3+\) 14.bxc3 \(\text{c}6\) 15.c4! dxc4 16.\(\text{xe}4\).
Mastrovasilis chose against Donchenko, Legnica 2013, to define the fate of the g5-bishop with:

8...h6 and got the slightly better game after 9.\texttt{xf4？! b4 10.b3 e7 11.d2 when best was 11...a5 12.a3 \texttt{xc3 13.xc3 0-0. In this sharp position tempi are more important than the bishop pair so White should better play 9.xf6 xf6 10.fxe4 dxe4 11.f2 e7 12.0-0 0-0 when}

White would have been better stayed his knight on e3 instead of h3. From there it would protect c4 and cover g4. In the diagram position, White is unable to preserve his beautiful pawn centre after:

14...e6

White should decide what concession to make as 15.c1 c8 gives only a short respite:

15.d5 b6+ takes over the initiative after either 16.h1 g4 17.f2 ac8 18.b1 c5, or 16.f2 f5.

15.c5 offers the d5-square and defines a target which could be immediately attacked with 15...b6.

To sum up, White’s kingside and especially the e3-square are chronically weak.

b) 11...h6! 12.xf6 xf6 13.f2 (13.c1 d4 14.d2 f5) 13...xc3 14.bxc3 d5 15.c1 f5.

11...h6 12.xf6 xf6 13.fxe4 xe4 14.xe4 e8 15.d3 h3

White must find a series of strong moves to stay in the game. He cannot castle in view of 16.0-0-0? c8 17.b1 xc3 18.bxc3 a5.

Perhaps best defence is 16.a3 a5
1.c4 e5 2.g3 f6 3.g2 c6

17.b4 b6 18.ed1 a5 19.b5 e7 20.h7+ h8 21.d5 e6 22.xb6 xb6 23.e4, but Black still retains a pull after 23...e7 24.f3 f6.

C2. 8.e3 h6

Markowski-B. Socko, Warsaw 2014, saw 8...d6 9.ge2 0-0 10.b3 h6 11.xf6 xf6 12.0-0=. The point is that after 11.f4 Black could easily defend d5 with 11...b6. Therefore, critical should be 9.a4 when the only reasonable answer 9...b6 takes away b6 from the d7-knight. Then 10.ge2 0-0 11.e1 h6 12.f4! gives White some initiative, for instance: 12...d8 13.0-0 xf4 14.xf4 f8 15.f3. Black’s problems ensued from the bishop staying on d6. 8...d6 is good to 8.b3, but slightly inferior to 8.e3.

Since White’s eight move is not threatening anything yet, let’s define the plans of the enemy dark-squared bishop. The game Adams-Bogner, Germany 2013, went:

9.f4

At some point White will have to part with his bishop via f4-e5-f6, but he hopes that ...g5 could be a weakness. 9.xf6 xf6 10.ge2 obviously has no venom as Black can choose between 10...g4, 10...d6 and the passive, but solid 10...d7 heading for c6.

I like Black’s position. 13.b3 xe5 14.dxe5 xc3 15.xf6 xf6 16.xd5 e8 is fine for him. Even better is 13.xf6 xf6. Adams tried to keep the bishop, but:

13.c7

was dubious in view of 13...b6 14.a4 b7 15.ac1 fc8. Instead Bogner opted for 13...b8 14.xb8 (14.e5!) 14...xb8 15.a3 d6 16.b3 g4 17.h1?! when simplest would have been 17...e6.

C3. 8.b3 d6!
This move holds the position. It improves on 8...h6?! 9.\textsecondfrenchf4 g5 10.\textsecondfrench\textseconde5 \textsecondf5g7 when White has several good options. For instance: 11.h4 6xe5 12.hxg5 hxg5 13.xhx8+ xhx8 14.dxe5 \textsecondf5g4 15.xxd5 xbd6 16.xb5+ xxb5 17.xb5 \textsecondf5xe5 18.xxe4 \textsecondd7 19.xc3 \textsecondf6 20.xd3 g4 21.e3±.

Let's consider now: \text{C31}. 9.xb5; \text{C32}. 9.f3; \text{C33}. 9.e3.

Practice has also seen: 9.\textsecondf3h3 h6 10.\textsecondf4, Lederer-Mikhail­evski, Beersheba 2014 (10.\textsecondxf6 \textsecondxf6 11.0-0 \textsecondf5e6! 12.xxb7 0-0†), 10...\textsecondxf4 11.\textsecondxf4 \textsecondb6 12.a4 a5=.

\text{C31}. 9.xb5 0-0!?

9...\textsecondb6 was introduced in the correspondence game Flatz-Tyuenko, ICCF 2012, which showed that Black easily defends the end-game after 10.\textsecondxf6 gxf6 11.\textsecondh3 xxb5 12.\textsecondxb5 \textsecondf7 13.\textseconde6 \textsecondxd6 \textsecondxd6. The game went on 14.\textsecondf4 \textsecondb6 15.\textsecondc1 \textsecondf5 16.\textsecondb3 a5 17.\textsecondf4 (17.\textsecondf3 f5) 17...\textsecondac8 18.\textsecondd2 \textsecondd7 19.e3 \textsecondb8 draw. I propose a more enterprising gambit approach which sets practical problems to White.

10.\textsecondd5 h6

If Black changes the move order with 10...a6 11.\textseconda4 h6 12.\textsecondxf6 \textsecondxf6 13.\textsecondxf6+ 14.\textsecondxf6, d4 is protected and White can eat a second pawn - 14.\textsecondxe4 \textseconde7 15.\textsecondd5 \textsecondf5 16.\textsecondb3 \textsecondd8 17.\textsecondf1 \textsecondac8 18.\textsecondxb7 \textsecondc7 19.\textsecondb3 \textsecondec2 20.\textsecondf3 \textsecondf7 21.b4±.

11.\textsecondxf6+ 12.\textsecondxf6 13.e3 a6

The \textsecondb5 controls the fifth rank and two important squares on the queenside - b4 and c4.

14.\textseconda5

If White allows a check from b4, he will be unable to connect his rooks anymore:
14.\textsecondd5 \textsecondb4+ 15.\textsecondf1 \textseconde8 16.\textseconde2 \textsecondd2 17.\textsecondb3 \textseconde6 18.d5 when Black can force a draw with 18...\textsecondxd5 19.\textsecondxd5 \textsecondxe3 20.f4 exf3 21.\textsecondxf3 \textsecondf3 22.\textsecondxb7 \textsecondd7 23.\textsecondc6 \textseconde6 24.\textsecondd8+ 25.\textsecondf2 26.f4 or keep the tension with 18...\textsecondd7!? 19.\textsecondg1 \textsecondac8.

14.\textseconde2 \textsecondb4+ 15.\textsecondf1 \textseconde7 16.\textsecondd1 f5 17.\textseconde2 \textseconde6 18.\textsecondg1 \textsecondd6 19.a3 \textsecondac8 20.\textsecondf1 \textsecondf7. This position resembles the main line. Black can attack on both flanks - with ...g5 or ...b5.

Black also has clear counterplay after 14.\textsecondb3 \textseconde6 15.\textsecondd1 \textsecondb4+ 16.\textsecondf1 \textsecondc4+ 17.\textseconde2 \textsecondd3 18.a3 \textsecondac8 19.\textsecondg1 \textsecondc2 20.\textsecondf4 \textsecondd6 21.\textsecondxf6 exd3 22.\textsecondf3 \textsecondf5.
14...g4 15.h3

The e4-pawn is immune due to the double hit 15...xe4?? e7.
15...e2 loses the right to castle owing to 15...f3.
15...d2 is solid, but rather passive. Black can follow up with natural moves like 15...ac8 16.e2 xe2 17.xe2 b4+ 18.xf1 ef6 19.a3 d6 20.h4 f5 21.h3 ef7 22.g2 fc7 23.ad1 g6 24.d2 g7 25.f1 g5= keeping pressure.

15...e6 16.e2

16...xe4 may lead to a draw after 16...ef7 17.a3 c4 18.f3 xg3 19.xc3 h4 20.xc4 with repetition of moves - 20...xe3+ 21.ee2 xd4 22.ad1 wb6 23.f1 x8 24.cc2 c8 25.d2 cd8 26.cc2.

16...ef7 17.a3 f5

A critical position for the gambit 9...0-0. My analysis convinced me that it is balanced, but Black retains the initiative in all the lines. His main task is to deprive the enemy of counterplay based on d4-d5 or f2-f4. Then he can launch a march of the h-pawn up to h4, preparing it with ...g7-g5 first. Let’s go further:

18.0-0

18.xc1 b5 19.0-0 xc4 20.d2 is similar.

Although Black can already start his kingside offensive with 20...g5, I would recommend to improve our heavy pieces first. White does not have any threats so there is no need to rush. Why give him chances to alter the course of the game with 21...xc4 bxc4 22.xc4.

18...b5 19.h4 g5 is also premature in view of 22.b3! xb3 23.xg5 xg5 24.cc6+ xd8 25.cf4. It is better to play first:

20...ef7

Alternatively:

21.xe1 unpins the knight and threatens to meet 21...g5 by 22.d5! ad8 23.cd4 so we should anticipate this idea with 21...ad8 22.xc3 xb3.

21.xd1 ad8! 22.xf1 g5 23.xe1 g6 24.xh1 dh8.

21.gh2 g5 22.xg1 is a passive waiting stand. We can display
activity with 22...\texttt{\textit{h}}8 23.\texttt{\textit{c}}3 \texttt{\textit{a}}ae8 24.\texttt{\textit{d}}1

24...h5 25.\texttt{\textit{h}}1 h4 26.g4 f4!! (26...\texttt{\textit{b}}3 27.\texttt{\textit{e}}2 \texttt{\textit{c}}4=) 27.\texttt{\textit{d}}xe4 \texttt{\textit{b}}8 28.\texttt{\textit{x}}g5 \texttt{\textit{c}}7 29.e4 f3+. It may be even stronger for Black to improve the placement of his king before pushing ...h4. For example, ...\texttt{\textit{h}}8-h7-h6 looks promising.

21...g5 22.\texttt{\textit{f}}c1 \texttt{\textit{a}}ad8 (22...\texttt{\textit{a}}ae8 is also possible, of course). Now everything is ready for ...h5, and ...f4 can also become an option after ...\texttt{\textit{h}}8, ...\texttt{\textit{g}}6. White’s only counterplay is 23.\texttt{\textit{x}}c4 bxc4 24.\texttt{\textit{c}}3 with mutual chances, for instance: 24...\texttt{\textit{b}}8 25.g4 fxg4 26.hxg4 \texttt{\textit{x}}d4! 27.exd4 \texttt{\textit{f}}4 28.\texttt{\textit{c}}2 \texttt{\textit{xc}}1 29.\texttt{\textit{xc}}1 \texttt{\textit{x}}f2+ 30.\texttt{\textit{h}}1 e3=.

18...\texttt{\textit{a}}c4 19.\texttt{\textit{d}}2 \texttt{\textit{f}}7 20.\texttt{\textit{f}}c1

Compared to 18.\texttt{\textit{f}}c1, White’s knight is unpinned. That enables ideas with d4-d5 so we should address this threat with:

20...\texttt{\textit{a}}d8!=

Black’s main plan is 20...g5 intending ...h5. It is effective against passive play as convincingly shown by Game 3 Hessenius-Grebenshchikov, ICCF 2014. However, it is still premature since White could counter-attack with:

21.d5! \texttt{\textit{d}}3 22.\texttt{\textit{d}}4 f4 23.\texttt{\textit{e}}6 when White’s knight proves to be very powerful:

23...\texttt{\textit{x}}g3 24.\texttt{\textit{x}}g3 \texttt{\textit{f}}c8 25.\texttt{\textit{f}}1 \texttt{\textit{f}}5 26.\texttt{\textit{f}}2 \texttt{\textit{e}}5 27.\texttt{\textit{h}}1=.

After the text, White should be accurate in order to keep the balance. He can only wait. On the other hand, it is not easy to break through his ditches:

a) 21.\texttt{\textit{f}}4 \texttt{\textit{h}}7 22.\texttt{\textit{e}}2 g5 23.\texttt{\textit{c}}3 \texttt{\textit{b}}3 24.\texttt{\textit{c}}3 \texttt{\textit{h}}8 25.\texttt{\textit{e}}c1 \texttt{\textit{d}}5

b) 21.\texttt{\textit{c}}3 \texttt{\textit{b}}3 22.\texttt{\textit{e}}2 (22.\texttt{\textit{e}}1 g5 23.\texttt{\textit{e}}2 \texttt{\textit{c}}4 24.\texttt{\textit{c}}3 \texttt{\textit{b}}3) 22...g5 23.\texttt{\textit{c}}3 \texttt{\textit{h}}8 24.\texttt{\textit{e}}c1 \texttt{\textit{d}}5 25.\texttt{\textit{c}}c2.

c) 21.\texttt{\textit{h}}1 g5 22.\texttt{\textit{g}}1 b5 23.\texttt{\textit{c}}3 \texttt{\textit{b}}3 24.\texttt{\textit{e}}1 \texttt{\textit{h}}8 25.\texttt{\textit{c}}1 \texttt{\textit{d}}e8.
d) 21...c2 g5 22...ac1 b3 23...c3 d5 24...f1!

Preparing to meet 24...h5 by 25.f4!.
24.b4 h5 25...h1 h4 26...g1 hxg3 27.fxg3 c4 would give Black a tangible initiative.
24...b5 25...c2

After 25.f4 exf3 26...xf3 cxf3 27...xf3 we have the strong resource 27...Wh5! 28...g2 b4 (to drag the rook to a vulnerable square) 29...c6 g4 30.hxg4 fxg4 31...xf8+...xf8 32...g1 with a drawish position although the fight might heat up after 32...d5 (32...e1=) 33...xd6!? (33...d3=) 33...xd6 34...d3 bxa3 35.bxa3 ...f3∞.
25...c4 26...e1 (26.f4 gxf4) 26...h5 intending ...h4 at an opportunity.

C32. 9.f3 h6 10...d2

White can also take on e4 after 10...xf6 xf6 11.fxe4 dxe4 12...xe4...e4 13...xe4, but Black's compensation is more than enough. He castles and follows up with ...e6, ...b6. If White prevents it with 14...d5, then the queen finds another nice place — 14...a5! (14...a5+ 15.f2 ...d7 16.a4 was unclear in L.Mkrtchian-Zawadzka, Wroclaw 2014.) 15.e4 a4 16...d3 ...f5! intending ...a5+.

10...0-0 11.fxe4 dxe4 12...xe4...e4 13...xe4...e6 14...g2...e6

White is doomed to a passive defence, see game 1 Lechtynsky-Mastrovillas, Germany 2013.

C33. 9.e3 h6 10...xf6

10.f4 xf4 11...xf4 b6 left White with a chronically weak kingside in Ledger-Shaw, Hinckley Island 2015.

10...xf6 11...ge2 0-0?!

It is not absolutely necessary to defend the b7-pawn although 11...b8 12.0-0...e6 is possible. Then 13.f3 0-0 14.fxe4 dxe4
is balanced – see game 2 Gagare-Dragun, Pune 2014.

12.0-0 d6! 13.dxb7 h5!

Black has more than adequate compensation for the pawn. His dominance in the centre is a sound ground for a kingside attack. Black’s idea is simple – to trade h-pawns and bring a heavy piece in the vicinity of the enemy king. He can combine this with a chase of the queen.

14.h4

Perhaps White should seek a way to equalize. For instance:

14.\textit{f}c1 h4 15.d6 \textit{b}8 16.c2 \textit{c}8 17.xa7 \textit{b}7 is a draw.

14.f4 \textit{xf}4 15.gxf4 \textit{b}8 16.xa7 \textit{c}8 is at least a draw – 17.a5 \textit{h}3.

14...a5 15.ab1 \textit{b}8 16.c6 \textit{g}4

Perhaps a computer could save White’s game, but in practice his task would be difficult. The engines recommend here the strange waiting move 17.a6 (17.xd5 \textit{xg}3; 17.a4 g5!), but then Black could activate his last passive piece with 17...\textit{e}8!. It can go to c7 via e7, or to the kingside via e6.

18.c6 \textit{b}6 19.a4 g5 20.hxg5 h4 21.gxh4? is lethal due to 21.h2+ 22.h1 \textit{g}7!.

18.f1 is more logical, but 18...\textit{f}6 would force 19.f1.

However, Black can continue the attack with:

18...c8 19.c6 \textit{b}7 20.b5 \textit{e}6.

Black’s main threat is seen from the line 21.d5 \textit{a}6! 22.xa6 \textit{g}3, and 21.f4 \textit{xf}4 22.exf4 is not helpful either – 22...e3 23.f3 \textit{f}2 24.f1 \textit{a}6.
Chapter 1. 1.c4 e5 2.g3 d6 3.g2 c6

Annotated Games

1. Lechtynsky – Mastrovasilis
Germany 2013

1.c4 e5 2.g3 d6 3.g2 c6 4.d4 e4 5.c3 d5 6.g5 b7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.b3 d6 9.f3 h6 10.d2

10...0-0!

Black will obtain an excellent compensation for the pawn. Perhaps White should restrain his appetite and complete development with 11.b3 b6 12.0-0#. However, first players often think that Black’s setup is dubious and greedily eat poisoned pawns, assuming that his material advantage is a natural result of their opening “advantage”. Thus wrong assessments lead to wrong decisions.

11.fxe4 dxe4 12.dxe4?! dxe4 13.dxe4 f6 14.g2 e6 15.d3

You might ask where is Black’s compensation here? The answer is simple – White’s kingside is weakened and he is lagging behind in development. Black simply puts his bishop on d5 and his rooks on open files and starts looking around for the harvest. For example: 15.a4 e8 16.d3 d5 17.e3 g4.

White logically decides to keep his queen closer to his central pawns, but on d3 it will be a prey for the light-squared bishop.

15...b6?!

Black trades his strong initiative for a mere pawn.

15...c8! was much more unpleasant: 16.b3 e8 17.d3 d5

Now 18.0-0 loses by force after 18...e4 19.b5 a6 20.a5 c7 21.b4 a5 22.b5 (22.a4 c6)
22...\texttt{xf3}. More stubborn is 18.e3 \texttt{e4} 19.\texttt{we2} \texttt{c2+}. The a2-pawn will soon fall.
After 15...\texttt{c8} White could also grab a second pawn: 16.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{b8} 17.\texttt{g2} \texttt{d7} (threatening ...\texttt{f5}) 18.b3 \texttt{f5} 19.\texttt{c4} \texttt{fc8}

![Diagram](image1)

Black’s rooks are so strong that he could even trade queens after 20.\texttt{a4} \texttt{xa4} (20...\texttt{e7}!++) 21.bxa4 \texttt{b2} 22.\texttt{f3} \texttt{g4+}. His pressure will cost White more than two pawns.

16.\texttt{f3} \texttt{xb2} 17.0-0 \texttt{fc8} 18.\texttt{fb1} \texttt{c2} 19.\texttt{e1} \texttt{xd3}=  

![Diagram](image2)

20.\texttt{xd3}

20.exd3 was easier to hold. The pawns may be doubled, but they keep the black pieces at bay. The position after 20.exd3 \texttt{ab8} 21.\texttt{xb7}

\texttt{fc7} 22.\texttt{f3} \texttt{xb1} 23.\texttt{xb1} \texttt{xa2} 24.\texttt{a1} \texttt{d5} 25.\texttt{a5} is a draw.

20...\texttt{c2} 21.\texttt{f4} \texttt{d8}!?

A good try. It does not change the evaluation, but faces the opponent with practical problems. 21...\texttt{xf4} 22.\texttt{xf4} \texttt{xa2} 23.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{g5} 24.\texttt{d3} \texttt{exe2} 25.\texttt{b2} \texttt{xb2} 26.\texttt{xb2} \texttt{d5} 27.\texttt{c4}! eliminates all the pawns.

22.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{a5} 23.\texttt{a7} \texttt{g5} 24.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{xd6} 25.\texttt{c5} \texttt{c4}

26.\texttt{xa5}

The endgame is drawn, but White still has to find a couple of precise moves. 26.\texttt{b3} was safe enough.

26...\texttt{xd4} 27.a4? (27.\texttt{a4}!=) 27... \texttt{exe2} 28.\texttt{f1} \texttt{ed2} 29.\texttt{c1} \texttt{d1} 0-1

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2. Gagare – Dragun  
Wch U20 Pune 14.10.2014

1.c4 e5 2.g3 \texttt{f6} 3.\texttt{g2} c6 4.d4 \texttt{e4} 5.\texttt{c3} d5 6.\texttt{g5} \texttt{bd7} 7.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{cxd5} 8.\texttt{vb3} \texttt{d6} 9.e3 \texttt{h6} 10.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 11.\texttt{ge2}
11...\( \text{b8} \)

11...0-0!? 12.0-0 \( \text{a6} \)! 13.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{h5}! \) is a sharper approach.

12.0-0 \( \text{a6} \) 13.\( \text{f3} \)

This is undoubtedly the most principled way. 13.\( \text{b5} \) is just a blunt struggle for the draw, although Black retains some active options after 13...a6 14.\( \text{xd6+} \) \( \text{xd6} \) 15.\( \text{fc1} \) 0-0 16.a3 \( \text{g4} \) 17.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{g5} \).

13...0-0 14.\( \text{fxe4} \) \text{dxe4} 15.\( \text{c2} \)

The e4-pawn looks very weak, but it is still alive and it considerably hampers White’s play. It turns out that \( \text{c2} \) is the only good retreat of the queen since 15.\( \text{d1} \) allows a crucial tempo for 15...\( \text{g4} \) 16.\( \text{d2} \) f5 17.\( \text{h3} \) h5 when Black consolidates his space advantage. 15.d5 is also dubious because it offers a nice square to the d6-bishop – 15...\( \text{g4} \) 16.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 17.\( \text{f2} \) \( \text{e5} \).

15.\( \text{c8} \) 16.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e7} \)

A critical moment of the game. First of all, White should discard:

17.\( \text{xe4?} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 18.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{h3} \) 19.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{g2} \) 20.\( \text{xg2} \) \( \text{e4+} \) 21.\( \text{g1} \) \( \text{c2} \).

It is more difficult to assess 17.\( \text{xe4} \). In practice, White probably does not even consider such a move seriously because the bishop pair after 17...\( \text{xe4} \) 18.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{b4} \) will be a generator of constant threats throughout the game. Objectively, however, the position is rather unclear. Another attractive option for Black is 17...\( \text{b5!?} \) 18.\( \text{g2} \) b4 19.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{d5} \)

Black has full compensation for the pawn, but it would be difficult to break through the enemy centre.

We see that both captures on e4 offer Black a lasting initiative. On the other hand, any delay would give him time to bolster it up. I think that the best practical approach would be to immediately sacrifice the ex-
change – 17.\text{x}xf6 \text{xf}6 18.\text{c}xe4 \text{we}7 19.\text{d}x\text{d}6 \text{xd}6 20.\text{a}xb7 \text{b}8 21.\text{g}2.

From a formal standpoint, this is not even a sacrifice since White gets two pawns. The resulting position is balanced. More importantly, it is easy to play with White who could just stay, hiding behind his pawn shield.

Gagare obviously missed the importance of the moment and made a trivial move which turns the tables in Black’s favour.

17.\text{a}c1?! \text{c}4 18.a3

It is already late for an exchange sac – 18.\text{f}5 \text{fd}8 19.\text{c}f1 \text{b}4 20.\text{x}xf6 \text{gx}f6 21.\text{f}2 \text{xa}2\text{+}.

18...\text{b}5 19.\text{h}3

A purely defensive move, taking g4 under control. 19.\text{f}5 \text{g}6 20.\text{f}2 \text{g}4 21.\text{f}1 \text{f}5 would be clearly better for Black.

19...\text{c}7 20.\text{f}2 \text{a}5! 21.a4 \text{b}4 22.\text{b}5 \text{xb}5 23.axb5 \text{b}8 24.\text{xc}7 \text{xc}7 25.\text{f}5 \text{a}4–+

White has kept the material balance, but his pieces are totally un-coordinated and he is unable to stop the distant passer on the queenside:

26.\text{c}1 \text{b}3 27.\text{e}2 \text{c}2 28.\text{xc}2 \text{bxc}2 29.\text{c}1 \text{a}3 30.\text{b}3 \text{a}2 31.\text{xa}2 \text{a}8 32.\text{c}1 \text{a}1 33.\text{f}1 \text{a}3 34.\text{e}2 \text{xf}1+ 35.\text{xf}1 \text{d}5 36.\text{b}6 \text{xb}6 37.\text{f}5 \text{d}5 38.\text{xe}4 \text{xe}3+ 39.\text{f}2 \text{c}1=\text{w} 40.\text{xc}1 \text{xc}1 41.\text{b}4 \text{f}8 42.\text{b}5 \text{c}4 43.\text{e}2 \text{e}7 44.\text{d}3 \text{b}6 45.\text{c}6 \text{f}5 46.\text{h}3 \text{d}6 47.\text{g}4 \text{f}4 48.\text{e}4 \text{g}5 49.\text{f}5 \text{e}3 50.\text{f}3 \text{c}4 51.\text{b}6 \text{d}2 52.\text{b}7 \text{c}7 53.\text{d}5 \text{xd}4 0-1

3. Hessenius – Grebenshchikov
Rochade-25/TT ICCF 2014

1.c4 e5 2.g3 \text{f}6 3.\text{g}2 c6 4.d4 e4 5.\text{c}3 d5 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.\text{g}5 \text{bd}7 8.\text{b}3 \text{d}6 9.\text{b}5
9...0-0! 10.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{hx}d5 \texttt{\textbf{h}6}} 11.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{hx}f6+ \texttt{\textbf{hx}f6}} 12.\textit{xf6 \texttt{hxf6}} 13.e3 a6 14.\texttt{w}a5 g4 15.h3 \texttt{e}e6 16.\texttt{d}e2 \texttt{e}e7 17.a3 f5 18.\texttt{w}d2 \texttt{c}c4 19.0-0 \texttt{w}f7 20.\texttt{f}c1

24.f1

24...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{hx}h8!}}

In some lines the king would be safer on h6, but Black must be constantly on guard for f3 or f4. For instance, after 24...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{hx}h7}} 25.f4 exf3 26.\texttt{hx}f3 \texttt{hx}f3 27.\texttt{w}xf3 h4 28.\texttt{w}d3, the king is obviously on the wrong square.

Besides, White should have played 25.f3 in all events, because it is his only defence against the imminent attack. Perhaps White got scared by variations like 24...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{hx}h8}} 25.f3! exf3 26.\texttt{hx}f3 h4 27.\texttt{w}xd5 \texttt{hx}d5

28.\texttt{gx}h4?! f4! 29.exf4 gxf4 with a strong attack, but the tactical trick: 28.\texttt{d}d1! \texttt{hx}g3?! 29.\texttt{hx}g3!= saves the day. Instead, 28...f4! keeps the fire on.
Chapter 1

25.\textit{\text{h1}}?! h4 26.\textit{\text{f1}} \textit{\text{g8}} 27.\textit{\text{g1}} \textit{\text{c4}} 28.\textit{\text{c2}}

![Diagram](image1.png)

28...\textit{\text{xe2}}

Removing the last defender of g3. The opposite-coloured bishops attack is now decisive.

29.\textit{\text{xe2}} g4 30.\textit{\text{f1}} \textit{\text{h7}} 31.\textit{\text{c2}} \textit{\text{gxh3}} 32.\textit{\text{c4}} \textit{\text{e5}} 33.\textit{\text{b3}} \textit{\text{h5}} 34.\textit{\text{d1}} \textit{\text{g6}} 35.\textit{\text{c1}} \textit{\text{g7}} 36.\textit{\text{e2}} \textit{\text{hxg3}} 37.\textit{\text{fxg3}} \textit{\text{xe3}} 38.\textit{\text{d5}} \textit{\text{g4}} 39.\textit{\text{cf1}} \textit{\text{h8}} 40.\textit{\text{c2}} \textit{\text{d6}} 41.\textit{\text{g4}} \textit{\text{fxg4}}

The ending is won since White is unable to prevent the invasion of Black's rook on the second rank:

![Diagram](image2.png)

42.\textit{\text{xe4}} \textit{\text{xe4+}} 43.\textit{\text{xe4}} g3 44.\textit{\text{e1}} \textit{\text{f8}} 0-1

4. Troyke – Delchev
Wunsiedel 06.05.2016

1.g3 e5 2.c4 \textit{\text{f6}} 3.\textit{\text{g2}} c6 4.d4 e4 5.\textit{\text{c3}} d5 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.\textit{\text{g5}} \textit{\text{bd7}} 8.f3 \textit{\text{b4}} 9.\textit{\text{c1}}

![Diagram](image3.png)

An ambitious idea. White would like to recapture on c3 by rook, but it costs a tempo. Alternatives are 9.fxe4 and 9.\textit{\text{f3}}.

9...0-0 10.\textit{\text{f4}}

If White delays this exchange too much, we could take by piece on e4 – 10.\textit{\text{h3}} h6 11.\textit{\text{xf6}} \textit{\text{xf6}} 12.0-0 \textit{\text{e8}} 13.\textit{\text{xe4}} \textit{\text{xc3}} 14.\textit{\text{xc3}} \textit{\text{xh3}} 15.\textit{\text{xh3}} \textit{\text{xe4}}.

10...\textit{\text{dxe4}} 11.e3

I expected 11.\textit{\text{xe4}} h6 12.\textit{\text{xf6}} \textit{\text{xf6}} 13.\textit{\text{g2}} \textit{\text{e8}}

![Diagram](image4.png)
and suddenly White faces difficult problems.

11...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash w}} \texttt{a} \texttt{5} 12.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{f} \texttt{6} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{c} \texttt{3}+

This intermediate move spoils White’s plans to connect the knights. I did not like 12...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{f} \texttt{6} 13.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash g} \texttt{e} \texttt{2} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{a} \texttt{2} 14.0-0 with compensation, but Black is not obliged to take the pawn. Instead, the new 13...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash g} \texttt{4}! assures him of a clear edge.

13.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{c} \texttt{3}

13.bxc3 \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{f} \texttt{6} 14.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{2} is grim for White. I could either eat the a2-pawn or achieve the thematic ...\texttt{f} \texttt{5} after 14...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{6} 15.0-0 \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash g} \texttt{4} 16.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d} \texttt{2} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash f} \texttt{5}.

13...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{f} \texttt{6} 14.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d} \texttt{2}

Or 14.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{2} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash g} \texttt{4} 15.0-0 \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{a} \texttt{2}. After 14.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d} \texttt{2} I decided that my play should be rewarded and snapped the pawn.

14...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{a} \texttt{2} 15.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{2} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d} \texttt{5}?

It all had been fine, but this move is a terrible blunder. 15...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash g} \texttt{4} 16.0-0 \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{e} \texttt{2} 17.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{e} \texttt{2} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{6} was a healthy pawn up and better pieces – 18.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash c} \texttt{7} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash a} \texttt{b} \texttt{8} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash f} \texttt{c} \texttt{1} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d} \texttt{5}.

16.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash a} \texttt{3} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash c} \texttt{4}

At the last moment I saw that there is 16...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash b} \texttt{1}+ would lose to 17.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash f} \texttt{2}. (I only considered 17.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash c} \texttt{1} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash b} \texttt{6}). Now the game starts again and White’s bad bishop suddenly breaks loose.

17.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{e} \texttt{4} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{8} (17...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash f} \texttt{6}! 18.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash g} \texttt{4}) 18.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d} \texttt{3} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash c} \texttt{6} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{4} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash f} \texttt{6} 20.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash c} \texttt{3} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash b} \texttt{6}!

I was afraid to enter the endgame after 20...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{e} \texttt{4} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{d} \texttt{2} 22.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{c} \texttt{8} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{c} \texttt{8} 23.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{d} \texttt{2} in view of the enemy passed pawn.

21.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{5} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d} \texttt{5} 22.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash c} \texttt{5} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{6}

22...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash b} \texttt{4} 23.0-0 \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{d} \texttt{3} 24.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{d} \texttt{3} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{6} is roughly equal.

23.0-0 \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash a} \texttt{d} \texttt{8} 24.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash f} \texttt{c} \texttt{1} \texttt{a} \texttt{6}

24...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash b} \texttt{4} equalized, but I wanted to keep the queens in order to exploit the weakened white king.

25.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash e} \texttt{4} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d} \texttt{7} 26.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{d} \texttt{5} \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash x} \texttt{d} \texttt{5} 27.\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash f} \texttt{4}

27...\texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash d} \texttt{d} \texttt{8}?

Following the same course of keep-
ing more pieces on the board, but I lack space so I had to seek exchanges. Correct was 27...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{dxc5}} 28.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{dxc5}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d8}} (28...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b3}} 29.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c3}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{h6}}). After my mistake my opponent could have impose a total domination in the centre with 28.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{f5}} 29.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c3}}. Fortunately, he preferred the “solid”:

28.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f2}}?! \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b3}} 29.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c1c3}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{a5}} (29...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b4}}!) 30.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e3}}?

White misses the trick 30.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}}! \textcolor{red}{\texttt{exd5}}? 31.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c8}}!. I would have to answer 30...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a4}} 31.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d4}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{h6}} 32.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d6}}±.

30...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a4}} 31.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h4}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{f6}}

At last I got serious counterplay!
32.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d3}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{e6}} (32...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a2}}!\texttt{+}) 33.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c7}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{g4}}
33...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f5}} 34.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xb7}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}} 35.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a7}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{h3}} gave more chances.
34.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xb7}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}} (34...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd4}=}) 35.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f2}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{f5}} 36.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a7}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d7}} 37.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd7}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd7}}
38.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f4}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe5}} 39.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{dxe5}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{f8}}

40.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e3}}?

White finally breaks down and lets my queen in.
40...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a8}} 41.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e6}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}} 42.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f1}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d1}}+ 0-1 (43.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e1}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{g2}}+)
Chapter 2. 1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6

Main Ideas

This chapter presents an alternative repertoire with 1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6. It is completely independent of Chapter 1 and formally, you could skip it (and vice versa!). However, you would improve your understanding if you studied both. It is instructive to observe the impact of the different move order on the plans in positions with an identical pawn structure. To facilitate comparisons, I will consider the same three major plans I focused on in Chapter 1:

1. White attacks the d5-pawn.

3.d4 e4 4.âc3 d5 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.âb3. The same method of Chapter 1 is effective here: 6...âc6! 7.âxd5 âxd5 8.âxd5 âxd4 and Black achieves comfortable equality.

The big difference is when White continue development with 5.âg2. Now we could use the fact that our knight is not on f6 and it cannot be pinned by âg5. A logical answer is:

5...âb4!?

6.cxd5 cxd5 7.âh3 h6 and White should switch to the plan with the break-through f2-f3.

7...âf6 is also possible – 8.0-0 0-0 9.âg5 âxc3 10.bxc3 âbd7 11.f3 h6
12.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 13.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 14.\textit{wd}3 \textit{xd}h3 with the better pawn structure, Alvarado Diaz-Ramiro Ovejero, Vecindario 2013.

**Pros and cons:** We can prevent the pin \textit{g}5 with \ldots h6, but that involves \ldots \textit{b}4, beginning the battle for e4. Play is more positional than in Chapter 1 and Black does not need to sacrifice a pawn. The choice is a matter of taste.

**2. White attacks the e4-pawn.**

3.d4 e4 4.\textit{c}3 d5 5.\textit{h}3 h6 (5... \textit{f}6!? is also possible) 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.\textit{g}2 \textit{f}6 8.0-0 \textit{b}4! 9.f3 0-0! is a critical position which could arise via several move orders. I analyse it in Game 5 Nailer-Delchev, Ordu 2016.

![Diagram](image)

The point is to take on e4 by piece: 10.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xc}3 11.bxc3 \textit{hx}h3! 12.\textit{xh}3 \textit{xe}4\infty. Next, we connect the knights with \ldots \textit{b}8-d7-f6 and impose a light-square blockade on the centre.

**Pros and cons:** The play is identical with Chapter 1.

3. **White does not play d4.**

3.\textit{f}3 e4 4.\textit{d}4 \textit{wb}6!

It may seem that 4...d5 is stronger than in Chapter 1. Indeed, after 5.d3, we could already take 5...\textit{ex}d3 (with \textit{g}2 \textit{f}6 inserted, White had the unpleasant \textit{intermezzo} 7.cxd5!). Still, 6.\textit{xd}3 \textit{xc}4 7.\textit{xc}4 is pleasant for White due to his pawn majority in the centre. So we adopt the same tactic of repelling the d4-knight from its active stand. Only 5.\textit{b}3 is of independent significance when 5...a5 is not effective in view of 6.d3 a4 7.\textit{d}3 \textit{d}xd3 8.\textit{g}2 with an initiative.

5...\textit{f}6

6.d3 (6.\textit{g}2 a5 – see Chapter 1, line B, and 6.\textit{c}3 a5 – Chapter 3, line A1.) 6...\textit{g}4! 7.e3

7.d4 d5 8.\textit{xd}5 \textit{cxd}5 9.\textit{c}3 leads to a familiar pawn structure:
Since White will attack e4, we forestall it with 9...\textit{b}4 10.\textit{g}2 0-0 11.0-0 \textit{xc}3 12.\textit{xc}3 \textit{d}7\text{\textsubscript{\infty}}.

\textit{7...d}5 8.\textit{c}xd5 (8.\textit{g}2 \textit{e}5) 8...\textit{c}xd5 9.\textit{c}3 \textit{b}4!? 10.\textit{g}2 0-0!

\textbf{Pros and cons:} The play may take original turn after 5.\textit{b}3 \textit{f}6 6.d3 \textit{g}4!, but it depends only on White since he could also transpose to Chapter 1 with 6.\textit{g}2. On the other hand, Black also has the additional option 4...\textit{d}5 5.d3 exd3 which is not too ambitious, but offers easy development.

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

\textbf{Conclusion}

2...\textit{c}6 is worth considering, especially if you want to avoid the pin from g5. The trade-off is that without a dark-squared bishop (which should go to b4), Black has more modest attacking resources.
Chapter 2. 1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6

Step by Step

1. c4 e5 2. g3 c6

A. 3. d3 f3; B. 3. d4

3. d3 c5 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. d4 e4 6. f3 b4+ 7. d2 xd2+ 8. xd2 exf3 (8... f5!? and 8... d6 are more tangled) 9. exf3 e7 10. d2 0-0 11. bc3 bc6 12. 0-0 e6 13. ad1 f5 14. g4 h4 15. f4 e8 16. ah1 g6 17. ace2 draw, Vaulin-Delchev, Zadar 1998.

A. 3. d3 f3 e4 4. d4 e6!?

We should not try to transpose to Chapter 1 or 3 with 4... d6, hoping to see 5. g2 or 5. c3, since White has a better move order: 5. d3 when 5... exd3 6. xd3 d5 7. g2 dxc4 8. xc4 is pleasant for White due to his pawn majority in the centre - 8... bd7 9. 0-0 b6 10. w3 c5 11. d1 0-0 12. c3 h6 13. e4.

4... d5 is a popular move, but it offers White some initiative. For instance: 5. d3 poses a problem - 5... f6 6. g2 throws us out of the repertoire from Chapter 1. Besides, I do not like this position anyway. Remains:

5. c5 6. b3

6. dxe4 dxe4 7. e3 f6 8. c3 e7 (8... 0-0 9. xc6) 9. h3 0-0 is roughly equal - 10. wc2 ed8 11. ed1 a6 12. g2 e5 13. b3 xd1+ 14. xd1 xe3 15. xe3 ed7 16. 0-0 c5 17. d2 c6=.

6... b4+ 7. d2 xd2+ 8. xd2 exd3 9. xd3 dxc4 10. xc4 f6 11. g2 0-0 12. 0-0
I prefer to avoid such positions with a mobile pawn centre for the enemy.

Note that lately Black is also experiencing problems after 4...d5 5.cxd5  we5 6.e3

6.e3  h6 7.g2  we5 8.f4  exf3 (8...e7?? 9.c3  g6 10.c2  g7 11.xe4  xe4 12.xe4  xe4 13.xe4 0-0 14.xf2  e8) 9.xf3  h5 10.d4  b4+ 11.a6=.

6...h6 7.c3! (7.g2 is mentioned on page 18.) 7...h5

Perhaps 7...e5! 8.g2  e7 will replace 7...h5 in future.

8.e3

8.h3 prevents ...h3, but weakens g3. After 8...g6 9.g2  d6 10.e3 0-0 11.c2  e8, the threat ...xg3 will be a constant concern for White.

8...c5 9.c2

I analyse this position in detail in the annotations to Game 5 Anand-Adams, Shamkir 2015. In my opinion, best practical chances offers the pawn sacrifice 9...0-0!?.

5.b3

5.e3  f6 6.g2  d5 7.cxd5  cxd5 8.d3 (8.0-0 g4 – see Chapter 1, line B) 8...c6 9.dxe4  dxe4 10.c3  b4 is covered in Chapter 3, line A2.

5.c2  d5 should also transpose to the corresponding chapters.

5...f6

The method from Chapter 1, 5...a5, is not effective here in view of 6.d3  a4 7.d2  exd3 8.g2 with an initiative.

6.d3

Practice has only seen 6.g2 a5 – see Chapter 1, line B, and 6.c3 a5 – see Chapter 3, line A1. The text, however, is the sternest test of Black’s plan. It demands from Black ingenious play:
Chapter 2

6...\( \text{Ng4}! \)

Or 6...exd3 7...xd3 d5 8...g2.

7.e3

7.d4 d5 8.cxd5 cxd5 9...c3 transposes to a position which has occurred in a few games via a different move order.

I analysed this pawn structure in the previous chapter. White's most dangerous plan is based on f3 when we commonly trade our dark-squared bishop for the c3-knight and hold e4. The placement of the king's knight on b3 does not change the evaluation:

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

a) 9...b4 10...g2 0-0 11.0-0 ...xc3 12.bxc3 ...d7

The idea of this move is to meet 13.f3 ...gf6 14...g5 by 14...h6. Alternatively, 14.fxe4 ...xe4 15.c4 dxc4 is balanced. More aspiring is to keep the blockade on e4 with 15...e8?! 16.cxd5 ...g6 17...d3 ...d6.

If White postpones the break in the centre, we can transfer the knight to e6:

13.a4 ...c6 14.a5 ...e8 15...f4 h6 16...c2 ...f8=.

b) 9...e6?! may be objectively a decent option, but I would not recommend to enter OTB the position after 10.f3 ...f6 11.fxe4 ...xe4 12...g2 ...b4 13.0-0 (13...d2 ...xd2 14...xd2 ...d7 15.0-0 0-0 16...g5 ...xc3 17.bxc3 ...ac8 18...ac1 ...f5) 13...xc3 14.bxc3 ...xc3 15...b1 ...d7 16...a3 ...a6 17.e4! 17...c5 ...a4 (threatening ...xc5) 18...d6 ...a6 is a draw.

17.dxe4 18.d5 ...xa3 19.dxe6 fxe6

Black is holding here, but only if he calculates like a computer.

7...d5 8...xd5 (8...g2 ...e5) 8...cxd5 9...c3

9...g2 offers Black more chances to develop the initiative – 9...c6 10...c3

10.dxe4 dxe4 11...xe4 ...f6 12...g2 ...g4 13.f3 ...e6 14.0-0∞ is a worse version of the main line.

10...e6 11.0-0 f5 12.dxe4 dxe4 13...d5 ...d8 14...f4 ...c4 15...xe4 fxe4 16...xg4 ...xf1 17...xf1 ...d7 18...e6 ...d8 19...bd4 ...xe6 20...xe6 ...c8 whereas White can force a draw with 21...xe4 ...d1+ 22...g2 ...xc1 23...xc1 ...xc1 24...xg7+ ...f7 25...e6 ...e7 26...f5+ ...e8 27...g7+ ...d8 28...e6+ ...e8.

46
The email game Portyeh-Cárdenas Huaman, ICCF 2011, saw 9...\textbf{b}4!? 

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
1.c4 & e5 & 2.g3 & c6 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{itemize}
\item 9...\textbf{b}4!?
\end{itemize}

The correspondence game Putt-Lovelock, New Zealand 2003, saw 10.\textbf{d}2 \textbf{f}6 11.f4 exf3 12.\textbf{x}d5 \textbf{x}d2+ 13.\textbf{x}d2 f2+ (13...\textbf{d}6!? 14.e4 \textbf{e}6=) 14.e2 \textbf{d}6 15.\textbf{c}3

15.e4 gives Black time to castle – 15...0-0 16.h3 \textbf{e}5 17.d4 \textbf{g}6 18.\textbf{x}f2 f5\dag.

10.\textbf{g}2

The correspondence game Putt-Lovelock, New Zealand 2003, saw 10.\textbf{d}2 \textbf{f}6 11.f4 exf3 12.\textbf{x}d5 \textbf{x}d2+ 13.\textbf{x}d2 f2+ (13...\textbf{d}6!? 14.e4 \textbf{e}6=) 14.e2 \textbf{d}6 15.\textbf{c}3

15.e4 gives Black time to castle – 15...0-0 16.h3 \textbf{e}5 17.d4 \textbf{g}6 18.\textbf{x}f2 f5\dag.

\begin{itemize}
\item 10.\textbf{g}2
\end{itemize}

The correspondence game Putt-Lovelock, New Zealand 2003, saw 10.\textbf{d}2 \textbf{f}6 11.f4 exf3 12.\textbf{x}d5 \textbf{x}d2+ 13.\textbf{x}d2 f2+ (13...\textbf{d}6!? 14.e4 \textbf{e}6=) 14.e2 \textbf{d}6 15.\textbf{c}3

15.e4 gives Black time to castle – 15...0-0 16.h3 \textbf{e}5 17.d4 \textbf{g}6 18.\textbf{x}f2 f5\dag.

10...0-0

Only 10...\textbf{f}6 11.0-0 0-0 has been tried so far in two old correspondence games. White has the more active pieces after 12.dxe4 \textbf{xc}3 13.bxc3 dxe4 14.\textbf{c}2 \textbf{e}8 15.\textbf{c}4.

\begin{itemize}
\item 11.dxe4
\end{itemize}

After 11.0-0, the original queen lift \textbf{d}8-b6-h6 allows us to put pressure on the enemy king – 11...\textbf{h}6 12.h3 \textbf{f}6 13.dxe4 \textbf{xc}3 14.bxc3 dxe4 15.h4\dag. 

Now instead of 15...0-0? 16.\textbf{c}7, Black seizes the initiative with: 

15...\textbf{a}6! 16.\textbf{x}g7 \textbf{xd}5 17.\textbf{x}h8+ \textbf{e}7 18.e4 \textbf{h}5 19.\textbf{g}7 \textbf{f}6+ 20.\textbf{xf}2 \textbf{g}4 21.e5 \textbf{e}8 22.\textbf{h}8 \textbf{d}8 

and White must find only moves.

10...0-0

Only 10...\textbf{f}6 11.0-0 0-0 has been tried so far in two old correspondence games. White has the more active pieces after 12.dxe4 \textbf{xc}3 13.bxc3 dxe4 14.\textbf{c}2 \textbf{e}8 15.\textbf{c}4.

11.dxe4

After 11.0-0, the original queen lift \textbf{d}8-b6-h6 allows us to put pressure on the enemy king – 11...\textbf{h}6 12.h3 \textbf{f}6 13.dxe4 \textbf{xc}3 14.bxc3 dxe4 15.h4\dag.
11.\(d2\) \(\text{d}8\) 12.\(dxe4\) \(dxe4\) 13.\(\text{g}xe4\) \(\text{g}6\) 14.\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{g}4\) 15.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{a}6\) is similar to the main line.

Black has full compensation for the pawn. An illustrative line is:

16.\(h3\) \(\text{e}6\) 17.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{c}6\)! 18.\(\text{a}x\text{b}4\) \(\text{a}x\text{b}4\)
19.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{d}3\) 20.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{d}4\) 21.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{c}2+\) 22.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{b}3\) 23.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{d}4\)∞.

It is undoubtedly easier to play this position wit Black.

11...\(dxe4\) 12.\(\text{g}xe4\) \(\text{g}6\) 13.\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{g}4\)

Black’s active pieces fully compensate the missing pawn. The point of his counterplay are the weak light squares \(d3\) and \(c4\), and split queenside pawns (after ...\(\text{a}c3\)). The further play is not forced so I will try to illustrate several key points.

I have analysed two possible approaches from here:

A1. 14.\(f3\) \(\text{e}6\) 15.0-0 \(\text{c}6\)

Decent alternatives are:
15...\(\text{c}4\) 16.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{c}6\) 17.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}8\)
18.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{b}5\) 19.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{a}6\) 20.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{e}7\)
21.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{xf}1\) 22.\(\text{xf}1\) \(\text{d}3\) 23.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{fd}8\)
24.\(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{xd}3\)∞.

15...\(\text{d}8\) 16.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{c}6\) 17.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{a}6\)
18.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{bxa}6\)∞.

16.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{b}5\) 17.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{d}4\)
18.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{ad}8\) 19.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 20.\(\text{e}1\)
\(\text{d}5\) 21.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{b}6\)

Black is threatening 22...\(\text{f}4\) and 22...\(\text{f}6\). 22.\(\text{xd}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) is not too helpful. Perhaps White should seek a draw with 22.\(\text{a}4\), but Black could deviate from repetition by 22...\(\text{c}6\).

A2. 14.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{a}6\) 15.\(\text{d}2\)

15.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 16.\(\text{d}4\) (16.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{c}6\) is similar to A1.) 16...\(\text{c}4\) 17.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{c}8\)
18.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{xf}1\) 19.\(\text{xf}1\) \(\text{d}6\) 20.\(\text{d}1\)
\(\text{d}5\) 21.\(\text{de}2\) \(\text{xc}3\) 22.\(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{c}5\)
Black has a long-term compensation due to his better pawn structure. He does not need to rush since the weak a- and c-pawns will not run away. White can push e4, a4, $\text{Ab}1$, but that's all. For his part, Black can double his rooks on the d-file or place them on d8 and c8:

a) 23.$\text{Fb}1$ $\text{De}5$ 24.$\text{Dd}4$ h6

Alternatively:
24...$\text{Dd}8$ 25.$\text{We}2$ $\text{Cc}4$ 26.$\text{Dg}2$ $\text{Ac}8$=.
24...$\text{Cc}4$ 25.e4 $\text{Dd}8$ 26.$\text{Dg}2$ $\text{Dd}7$.
25.$\text{We}2$ $\text{Cc}4$ 26.e4 $\text{Cc}7$=.

b) 23.a4 $\text{De}5$ 24.$\text{Dg}2$ $\text{Dd}8$ 25.e4 $\text{Exd}1$ 26.$\text{Wxd}1$ $\text{Dd}3$ (26...$\text{Wc}4$=)
27.$\text{Dxa}3$ $\text{Axa}3$ 28.$\text{Dxa}3$ $\text{Dd}8$ 29.$\text{Dd}4$ $\text{De}5$=.
15...$\text{Db}d7$ 16.a3 $\text{Axc}3$ 17.$\text{Axc}3$ $\text{Ac}8$ 18.$\text{Dd}4$ $\text{Cc}5$ 19.$\text{h}3$ $\text{Ah}5$
20.$\text{Ef}1$ $\text{Dd}6$ 21.$\text{Cc}4$ $\text{Gg}6$ 22.$\text{We}2$
$\text{Dfe}4$ 23.$\text{Ab}4$ $\text{Efe}8$=

White is unable to keep the extra pawn – 24.g4 $\text{Dx}f2$ or 24.0-0 $\text{Dx}g3$.

B. 3.d4 e4 4.$\text{Cc}3$

After 4.d5, we should not linger too much with ...$\text{cxd}5$ since we can miss the moment as in the game Hellbing-Dutra Neto, IECG email 2004: 4...$\text{b}4+$ 5.$\text{Dd}2$ $\text{We}7$ 6.$\text{Cc}3$
$\text{Df}6$ 7.$\text{Dh}3$ 0-0 8.$\text{Dg}2$ $\text{d}6$?! (correct was 8...$\text{cxd}5$! 9.cxd5 $\text{d}6$ 10.$\text{Dxe}4$
$\text{Dx}f6+ 11.$\text{Dxf6}$ $\text{Dxb}2$ 12.$\text{Dxb}2$ $\text{Dxb}2+ 15.$\text{Dxd}2$ $\text{Dd}6$ 16.e4 $\text{Cc}5$ 17.$\text{Dhe}1$ $\text{Dfe}8$
draw, Lukesova-Vegjeleki, ICCF email 2010) 9.$\text{Dxe}4$ $\text{Dx}f6$ 10.$\text{Dxf6}$
$\text{Dxb}2$ 12.$\text{Cc}1$ $\text{cxd}5$
13.$\text{Cc}2$! (this intermezzo punishes Black's tactic) 13...$\text{Dxd}2+ 14.$\text{Dx}d2$=.
Perhaps the most challenging is:

4...$\text{cxd}5$ 5.$\text{cxd}5$ $\text{Df}6$ 6.$\text{Dg}2$
6.$\text{Cc}3$ $\text{b}4$ 7.$\text{Dd}2$ $\text{We}7$ 8.a3 $\text{Dx}d2+$ 9.$\text{Dxd}2$ 0-0
4...d5

**B1.** 5.cxd5; **B2.** 5.g2; **B3.** 5.h3, but have in mind that these lines often interweave.

**B1.** 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.b3

In all other lines the exchange on d5 might prove premature as it offers Black the extra option of ...c6. However, I'm not sure Black should go for it as the knight move delays the development of the kingside: For instance:

6.h3 c6?!

Line B3 deals with 6...h6!? and 6...b4?!

7.g2 b4

7...h6 8.0-0 df6 9.f3 exf3 10.exf3 e7 11.e3 0-0 12.f4, Czebe-Farago, Hungary 2006,

**may be playable, but Black lacks an active plan. He should transfer his bishop to b6 via e7-d6-c7, e.g. 12...f5 13.e1 d6!.

8.0-0 ge7 9.f4 0-0 10.f3 f5

11.wb3 xc3 12.wc3 w6 13.wc5


6...c6! 7.xd5 xd5 8.xd5 xd4 9.c7+

9.g5 c2+ 10.d2 xa1 11.c7+ d7 12.xxa8 h6 13.f4 b4+

14.e1 f6 15.g2 e7 16.c7 d7 17.b1

Now 17.c8 keeps the material balance due to the idea ...d6, e.g.

18.h3 g5 19.e5 g4 t.

17...c2 is also interesting — 18.xc2 c8 19.b1 a5 20.e5 xc7 21.xf6+ xf6 22.xe4 b6

23.xb7 c4. Black is two pawns behind, but his raging bishops will easily regain them.

9...d8 10.xa8 c2+ 11.d1 xa1

The stem game De Bari-Penafiel Lopez, ICCF 2009, continued
12.\textit{xf}4 \textit{xe}6 13.\textit{b}3 \textit{\textbf{d}xb}3 14.axb3 \textit{\textbf{d}xb}3+ 15.\textit{\textbf{c}c}1 \textit{\textbf{a}a}3+ 16.\textit{\textbf{b}b}1 \textit{\textbf{e}e}7 17.e3 \textit{g}5 18.\textit{\textbf{x}g}5 \textit{\textbf{d}d}7 19.\textit{\textbf{h}h}3+ \textit{\textbf{e}e}6 20.\textit{\textbf{x}e}6+ \textit{\textbf{x}e}6 21.\textit{\textbf{x}e}7 \textit{\textbf{x}e}7 22.\textit{\textbf{e}e}2 \textit{\textbf{e}e}8 and White was happy to draw this endgame.

**B2. 5.\textit{g}g2 \textit{\textbf{b}b}4?!**

5...\textit{\textbf{x}f}6 transposes to Chapter 1. The text is the only reasonable way to rip dividends from 2...c6.

6.f3

6.\textit{\textbf{d}d}2 \textit{\textbf{x}xc}3 7.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{d}f}6! 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.\textit{\textbf{h}h}3 0-0

10.f3

Black can now reach a better version of line B3 after 10...h6 since White has spent a tempo on the useless \textit{\textbf{d}d}2. The game A.Larsen-Konstantinov, ICCF 2013, went further 11.0-0 \textit{\textbf{e}e}8 12.\textit{\textbf{c}c}1 \textit{\textbf{b}b}d7 13.\textit{\textbf{x}h}6?! gxh6 14.\textit{\textbf{x}h}6 \textit{\textbf{f}f}8 15.\textit{\textbf{g}g}5+ (15.fxe4 \textit{\textbf{x}xe}4) 15...\textit{\textbf{g}g}6 16.\textit{\textbf{f}f}4 exf3 17.\textit{\textbf{x}g}6 \textit{\textbf{h}h}7. Besides, he could discard ...h6 at all and aspire to the advantage with:

10...\textit{\textbf{e}e}8 11.0-0 e3?! 12.\textit{\textbf{e}e}1 \textit{\textbf{c}c}6 (or 12...h5?!). The e3-pawn splits the board, hindering White's communication.

6.cxd5 cxd5 branches to:

a) 7.\textit{\textbf{h}h}3 \textit{\textbf{f}f}6 (7...h6 is line B3) 8.0-0 0-0 9.\textit{\textbf{g}g}5 \textit{\textbf{xc}c}3 10.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{b}b}d7 11.f3 h6

12.\textit{\textbf{x}f}6

12.\textit{\textbf{f}f}4 \textit{\textbf{b}b}6 13.\textit{\textbf{f}f}2 \textit{\textbf{f}f}5 14.\textit{\textbf{b}b}3 \textit{\textbf{e}e}8 secures Black's control of the light squares. Then 15.a4 \textit{\textbf{c}c}4 16.\textit{\textbf{x}xb}7 puts him in total command after 16...\textit{\textbf{e}e}7 17.\textit{\textbf{b}b}4 a5 18.\textit{\textbf{b}b}5 exf3 19.exf3 \textit{\textbf{c}c}8. 12...\textit{\textbf{x}f}6 13.\textit{\textbf{x}xe}4 \textit{\textbf{x}xe}4 14.\textit{\textbf{d}d}3 \textit{\textbf{x}h}3 with the better pawn structure, Alvarado Diaz-Ramiro Ovejerero, Vecindario 2013.

b) 7.f3 \textit{\textbf{f}f}6 8.\textit{\textbf{g}g}5 0-0 9.fxe4 dxe4 10.e3
Chapter 2

Black has enough compensation following 10.\textit{\texttt{xe4 \texttt{e8}}}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{ch2_image1}
\end{center}

11.\textit{\texttt{g2 \texttt{a5}}} 12.\textit{\texttt{f3 \texttt{xc3+}}} 13.\textit{\texttt{bxc3 \texttt{xc3+}}} 14.\textit{\texttt{d2 \texttt{d3}}} 15.\textit{\texttt{f4 \texttt{c3+}}} 16.\textit{\texttt{d2 \texttt{d3}}} 17.\textit{\texttt{f4 \texttt{c3+}}} 18.\textit{\texttt{d2 \texttt{draw, Kerr-Schramm, ICCF 2010.}}}

10...h6 11.\textit{\texttt{xf6 \texttt{xf6}}} 12.\textit{\texttt{ge2 \texttt{g4∞}}, B.Damljanovic-Komarov, Le Port Marly 2009.}

\textbf{6...\textit{\texttt{f6}}} 7.\textit{\texttt{g5}}

Perhaps it was time to include 7.cxd5 cxd5 because after the text, Black could exchange on f3 and grab the c4-pawn with unclear consequences.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{ch2_image2}
\end{center}

7...\textit{\texttt{0-0?!}}

7...\textit{\texttt{bd7}} transposes to Chapter 1 /

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{ch2_image3}
\end{center}

\textbf{line C1, but this move is unnecessary here.}

\textbf{8.fxe4 dxe4 9.\textit{\texttt{h3}}}

9.\textit{\texttt{xe4 \texttt{e8}}} 10.\textit{\texttt{g2 \texttt{bd7}}} 11.\textit{\texttt{f3 \texttt{h6}}} leads to an interesting position with mutual chances. For example:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{ch2_image4}
\end{center}

12.\textit{\texttt{ac1 \texttt{e4}}} 13.\textit{\texttt{wb3 \texttt{a5}}} 14.\textit{\texttt{d2 \texttt{xd2}}} 15.\textit{\texttt{xd2 \texttt{f6}}} – the pressure along the e-file promises Black a lasting initiative.

9.\textit{\texttt{wb3}} a5 10.a3 \textit{\texttt{e7}} 11.\textit{\texttt{d1 \texttt{g4}}} 12.\textit{\texttt{xe7 \texttt{xe7}}} 13.\textit{\texttt{xe4 \texttt{a4}}} 14.\textit{\texttt{c3 \texttt{f5}}} is double-edged.

\textbf{9...\textit{\texttt{bd7}}}

9...h6 10.\textit{\texttt{xf6 \texttt{xf6}}} 11.\textit{\texttt{f2 \texttt{d8}}} 12.e3 \textit{\texttt{wg5}} 13.\textit{\texttt{c1 \texttt{f5}}} also deserves attention.

\textbf{10.\textit{0-0 \texttt{xc3}}} 11.\textit{\texttt{bxc3 \texttt{h6}}} 12.\textit{\texttt{xf6}}

White’s bishop does not have good prospects after 12.\textit{\texttt{ac1 \texttt{b6}}}.

\textbf{12...\textit{\texttt{xf6}}} 13.\textit{\texttt{f2 \texttt{e8∞}}}

Black has a target on c4. He could attack it with ...\textit{\texttt{we6}}, ...\textit{\texttt{b6}}, ...\textit{\texttt{a6}}.

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This move secures the d5-pawn, but it slows down development. More challenging is:

5...d5!? 6.exd5 cxd5 7.Qg5 b4

8.Qxf6

Alternatively:

8.Qc1 Qbd7 9.d3 h6 10.Qxf6 Qxc3+ 11.Qxc3 Qxf6 12.Qf4 0-0=;

8...Qxf6 9.Qf4 Qd6

Black has saved the d5-pawn and should gradually level the game:

10.Qb3 Qe6 11.Qc1 0-0 12.e3 Qc6 13.a3 Qxc3+ 14.Qxc3 Qfc8 15.Qe2 (15.Qxe6 Qxe6) 15...Qa5 16.Qb4


5...Qb4!? 6.Qg2 Qf6 transposes to Chapter 1, Line C, but White has also:

6.Qa4

6.Qb3 a5 is similar, only the b-pawn is not hanging. Black was fine after 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.a3 (8.Qg5!? f6) 8...Qxc3+ 9.Qxc3 a4 10.Qb5+ Qc6, Klekowski-Navarra, Hockenheim 2015. The d5-pawn could be defended by ...a5.

6...a5 7.cxd5 b5 8.Qb3 cxd5,

when 9.d3 could be met by the sharp 9...Qf6 10.Qxb5+ Qd7 11.Qxd7+ Qxd7 with compensation for the pawn – White cannot castle safely due to the weak h3-square.

6.cxd5 cxd5 7.Qg2


7...Qf6 8.0-0 Qb4! 9.f3
metrical pawn structure after 9... exf3 10.exf3 which might be boring to defend. Besides, the computer claims that 9...exf3 is a tactical mistake in view of 10.\text{Exf3!} 0-0? 11.\text{Exf6!} or 10...\text{xc3} 11.\text{xe3+!} \text{e6} 12.\text{xc3} 0-0 13.\text{f4} when 13...\text{f5} 14.\text{e5} and 13...\text{d7} 14.\text{xe6} are slightly better for White.

After the text Black holds the critical square e4 and has full-fledged play. See Game 6 Nailer-Delchev, Ordu 2016.
Chapter 2. 1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6

Annotated Games

5. Anand (2791) – Adams (2745)
Shamkir 24.04.2015

1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6 3.df3 e4 4.d4
d5 5.cxd5 exd5 6.c2 df6 7.cc3
dh5 (7...we5!) 8.de3 wc5 9.cc2

This move saves the e4-pawn, but
Black remains without an active
plan. Instead I recommend:
9...0-0!? 10.ccxe4 ccxe4 11.ccxe4
d6 12.cg2 da6 13.cf3 wh3

Let’s ponder over this position. White
cannot castle short since 14.cc2 wh5
15.0-0 would drop the e2-pawn.

Trading queens by 14.wh4?! is
always dubious since White’s
queenside will be left to the mercy
of Black’s overwhelming forces. That reduces his options down
to long castling, but then the extra
pawn will be of no significance since
the kings will be on stake:
14.b3 cc8 (threatening ...xb3)
15.cc4 ccad8 16.cb2 f6 17.cc3
17.0-0-0 defines White’s castling
position too early – 17...cc6
18.cc1 cc5

More provocative is 18...cc5 19.cc2
dc8 when 20.0-0-0 cb4 21.ccxb4
ccxb4 22.d4 a5 23.cb1 cc8 24.cc3
c5 keeps the battle on.

10.fx e3

In a later game Kovalenko chose
10.dxe3 whereas Black failed to find
an adequate set-up:
Perhaps it is better to keep the queen in the centre, e.g. 10...\texttt{We5} 11.b3 0-0 12.\texttt{gb2} \texttt{gf5} 13.\texttt{gg2} \texttt{a6} 14.\texttt{Ed1} \texttt{b4} 15.\texttt{Cc1} \texttt{We7} 16.0-0 \texttt{Efd8}

As long as the g2-bishop is out of play, Black is safe.

11.\texttt{gg2} \texttt{gg6}? (11...\texttt{a6} 12.h3 0-0 13.a3 \texttt{Cc7} 14.b3 \texttt{Cd5} 15.\texttt{bb2} \texttt{g6} 16.0-0 \texttt{Efe8}) 12.b3 (12.\texttt{wb3} b6 13.\texttt{a3}\#) 12...\texttt{bd7} 13.\texttt{a3} c5 14.\texttt{Efd1}\#, Kovalenko-Petursson, Berlin 2015.

10...\texttt{we5} 11.\texttt{gg2} \texttt{gf5} 12.0-0 0-0 13.b3

In Littke-Kolek, ICCF 2011, White shifted the focus to the queenside with 13.b4!? \texttt{bd7} 14.\texttt{b2} \texttt{we6} 15.b5 15.\texttt{Exf5} \texttt{xf5} 16.\texttt{xe4} is also possible, but the pawn on b4 could give Black a lever for counterplay.

15.\texttt{Eac8} 16.\texttt{b3} \texttt{Efd8} 17.\texttt{Aac1} \texttt{Cc5} 18.\texttt{wxee6} \texttt{xe6} 19.\texttt{Cc2} \texttt{Ed7} 20.\texttt{bxec6} \texttt{xc6} 21.\texttt{Cb1} \texttt{Aa4} 22.\texttt{Aec1} \texttt{Efd7} 23.\texttt{Ead4} b6 24.\texttt{Cc3} \texttt{Cc6} 25.\texttt{Ec2} with tangible pressure.

13...\texttt{bd7} 14.\texttt{bb2} \texttt{We6}

15.\texttt{Exf5}! \texttt{xf5} 16.\texttt{Exe4}

Anand demonstrates one of White’s main ideas in this line of the English – a kingside attack exploiting the open f-file. The computers “believe” that the game is roughly even, but this impression is rather deceiving. In fact, we have a typical example of modern top-level approach to the opening. White does not risk anything as he does not have any weaknesses while Black must defend accurately. Even strongest players like Adams often fail to hold on in such fluid positions without clear reference points. Black’s difficulties ensue from the lack of concrete variations. For instance, he must now decide where to put the queen. The natural 16...\texttt{we6} 17.\texttt{Exf6+} \texttt{xf6} 18.\texttt{Ef1} \texttt{Ed5} (preventing \texttt{Ef4}) 19.\texttt{Ee4} \texttt{Wh6} 20.\texttt{wc4} a5 21.a3 \texttt{Eae8} 22.\texttt{dd3} \texttt{Exe6} does not solve his problems as White preserves many attacking resources, like 23.\texttt{Ef5}\# threatening h4, \texttt{gg5} or \texttt{Eg4}, \texttt{Sh5}. Adams takes the brave decision to allow doubled pawns.

16...\texttt{g6} 17.\texttt{Ef1} \texttt{Efe8} 18.\texttt{Exf6} \texttt{Exf6} 19.\texttt{Exf6+} \texttt{gf6} 20.e4 \texttt{aad8}
21.\textit{Ef}4  \textit{Wh}5  22.\textit{d}3  \textit{We}5  23.\textit{h}3  \textit{g}7  24.\textit{g}2

24...h5

This move looks like a blunder, but things are not that simple. Apparently, Adams thought that passive waiting would not be safe. After the obvious 24...\textit{wd}4 25.\textit{Eg}4+  \textit{Sh}8  26.\textit{Ec}1  \textit{Eg}8  27.\textit{Eh}4, Black begins to experience difficulties in finding good moves. For instance, 27...a5 28.\textit{Ef}5  \textit{Eg}7  29.\textit{wd}2  a4 simply loses a pawn to 30.bxa4  \textit{xa}4 31.\textit{wb}2  \textit{wd}4 32.\textit{xb}7.

Let's analyse another stand: 27...c5 28.\textit{Ef}5  \textit{Eg}7. Now 29.\textit{Ef}3  b6 30.\textit{Eh}6 does not win in view of 30...\textit{wa}1 31.\textit{sg}2  \textit{wb}2, but White has a cunning idea – to put his queen behind the rook, e.g. 29.\textit{Eh}5!  b6 30.\textit{Ef}1  \textit{Ee}8 31.\textit{Eh}4  \textit{wa}1+ 32.\textit{Ef}2  \textit{Ee}4+ 33.\textit{Ef}3  \textit{wa}1 34.\textit{Eh}4.

There is no perpetual check so 34...\textit{Sg}8 is the only move. In this line White wins the h-pawn without having to trade any piece. The bottom line is that Black's defence is not trivial at all. Adams' decision might be the right approach, but he shaped it wrongly.

25.\textit{Ef}5  \textit{wd}4  26.\textit{Exh}5  \textit{We}3

26...\textit{Ee}5 deserved attention, and only after 27.\textit{Ef}5, 27...\textit{We}3. The point is that the f-file is plugged by the f5-bishop and 28.\textit{Eh}4  \textit{Eh}8 29.\textit{Ef}4?? would lose to 29...\textit{Sc}5 30.\textit{Sb}2  \textit{Ec}1. Thus Black would have traded rooks with excellent chances to draw. It seems that Adams wanted to preserve more tension and was actually playing for a win!

27.\textit{Eh}4  \textit{Ee}5  28.\textit{Ef}4  \textit{Ec}5  29.\textit{wb}2  \textit{Ed}6 30.\textit{Ef}1

30...a5

The game is balanced, e.g. 30...\textit{wd}4 31.\textit{wb}1  \textit{wc}3 32.\textit{sg}4.

31.\textit{Ef}5 b5 32.\textit{h}4  \textit{Ed}8?

This is Black's only mistake in the game. Perhaps he was planning
...\text{d8-a8} followed up by ...a4, but this idea misses a tactical hit. 32...b4 was more precise. It would have fixed a possible target for Black's rooks on a2.

33.a3 b4 34.axb4 axb4

10.fxe4 was more principled. Then 10...\text{x}c3 11.bxc3 \text{x}h3! (11...dxe4?! released the central blockade in Wiedenkeller-Carlsson, Sweden 2014 – 12.c4 b6 13.d5±) 12.\text{xf}h3 \text{dxe}4 13.\text{xd}d3 is the critical test of this line.

35.\text{xe}6!

White succeeds in transferring his passive bishop to c4 and the game is suddenly over.

35...\text{c}3 36.\text{c}4 \text{a}8 37.\text{f}5 \text{a}7 38.\text{f}3 \text{c}5 39.\text{d}2 \text{d}6 40.\text{e}3 \text{a}5 41.\text{f}2 \text{c}2 42.g4 \text{d}7 43.\text{g}3 \text{c}5 44.g5 \text{fxg}5 45.\text{xf}7+ \text{xf}7 46.\text{xf}7 \text{xf}7 47.\text{f}3+ \text{g}7 48.h5 \text{a}5 49.\text{f}2 \text{b}2 50.h6+ \text{g}6 51.h7 1-0

This position is difficult to play with both sides as White has the bishop pair advantage, but his pawn structure is compromised. Black can develop his knight on c6, followed up by ...b6, but I prefer to treat the position à la Nimzowitsch, e.g. 13...\text{d}7 14.c4 \text{e}8 15.b1 dxc4 16.\text{xc}4 \text{d}f6± with a blockade of the enemy pawn centre.

10...\text{xf}3 11.\text{xf}3?!

11.exf3 was roughly equal – 11...\text{c}6 12.\text{d}3 \text{a}5 13.\text{e}3 \text{e}8 14.\text{f}2 \text{f}5.

11...\text{c}6 12.e3?
A horrible positional mistake which leaves the cl-bishop completely useless. 12.\&f4, having in mind g3-g4-g5, was a must.

12...\&f5 13.\&d3 \&xc3 14.bxc3 \&e4

A triumph of my light-squared strategy.

15.\&c5 \&xf3 16.\&xf3 b6 17.\&d3 \&a5 18.\&e5 \&c8 19.\&a3 \&e8 20.\&b4 \&c4 21.\&xc4 \&xc4 22.\&ae1 \&d7 23.\&f5 \&e6 24.\&g4 \&e4 0-1

The material is still even, but the computer evaluates the final position at -3.60 due to the threat 25...a5!
Chapter 3. 1.c4 e5 2.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{c3} \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{6} \) 3.g3 c6

Main Ideas

1.c4 e5 2.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{c3} \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{6} \) 3.g3 c6

The move \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{c3} \) has a stronger influence on the centre than \( \text{\textit{g}} \text{2} \), but it throws White off his repertoire with 2.g3. As I explained in Chapter 1, in many lines the knight is not well placed on c3. The stats show that in the following sequence of moves: 1.c4 e5 2.g3 \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{f6} \), 3.\( \text{\textit{c}} \text{3} \) is ten times (!) less frequent than 3.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{2} \). I will not elaborate further on the best way of exploiting White's knight early sortie since that is often a matter of taste or fashion. Instead let's see how it compares to the previous two chapters if we insist on 3...c6.

1. White attacks the d5-pawn.

This approach directly transposes to Chapter 1, line C, after 4.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{2} \) d5 5.d4 e4 and to Chapter 1, line A, after 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{3} \) \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{6} \).

2. White attacks the e4-pawn.

4.d4 e4 5.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{5} \) cuts our choice down to 5...\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{4} \) in view of 5...d5? 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{f6} \). After 6.\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{3} \) \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{6} \) 7.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{2} \) h6 8.\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{f6} \) \( \text{\textit{x}} \text{f6} \) 9.e3 \( \text{\textit{x}} \text{c3} + \) 10.\( \text{\textit{xc}} \text{3} \) d5 11.cxd5 cxd5, Black does not have serious problems, but he lacks any target. I propose to adopt the more enterprising scheme with an isolated pawn: 4...\( \text{\textit{exd4}} \) 5.\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) d5.
I recommend to take on d4 only in this particular case when White has already committed his knight to c3. This detail forces him to exchange on d5 (unless he wants to sac the c4-pawn) which gives us a nice tempo after ...c6. This tempo considerably alters White’s common plans against an IQP. The immediate results of it are:

1. White cannot comfortably develop his c1-bishop to g5 due to the hit on b2: 6...g5 e7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8...g2 (8...f3 c6 9.a4 b6!? 8...c6 9.a4 b6!)

Or 6...g2 e6 7.cxd5 cxd5 8...g5 c6 9.a4 b6! with complications which may lead to a draw.

2. If we do not fear the pin from g5, we can find an active stand for our bishop on c5: 6...g2 e6 7.cxd5 cxd5 8...f3 c6 9.a4 c5

10.0-0 0-0

3. The bishop on c5 deprives White of e3, d4, so he must look for nontrivial ways of completing his development. Whatever he does, we must aim for activity, even at the price of a pawn, e.g. 11.b5 (11.g5 h6) 11...b6! 12.xb6 axb6 13...g5

3. White does not play d4.

4. f3 e4 5.d4 b6!

As you see, our retort is the same. Most of the lines may transpose to Chapter 1, line B2. In the rest of them, the placement of the knight on c3 is more likely in our favour because we can get in ...d4 with a tem-
1.c4 e5 2.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{c6} \)

po: 6.\( \text{b3} \) a5! 7.d3 a4 8.\( \text{d2} \) exd3 9.\( \text{g2} \) d5!

Note also the plan 6.e3 d5 7.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{d7} \) 8.a3

10.0-0 (10.exd3 \( \text{g4} \); 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.0-0 \( \text{g4} \) 10...d4 11.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 12.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 13.\( \text{xd3} \) f5!? 14.\( \text{g5} \) 0-0 with mutual chances.

Do not allow the idea b2-b4+c4-c5. We can forestall it with 8...c5! 9.\( \text{d2} \) dxc4 10.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 11.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{e6} \) 12.\( \text{xe6} \) + fxe6=.
Chapter 3. 1.c4 e5 2.\( \text{\texttt{\#c3 \texttt{\#f6}} \) 3.g3 c6

Step by Step

1.c4 e5 2.\( \text{\texttt{\#c3 \texttt{\#f6}} \) 3.g3 c6

A. 4.\( \text{\texttt{\#f3}} \); B. 4.d4

4.\( \text{\texttt{\#g2}} \) d5 5.d4 (5.cxd5 cxd5 6.\( \text{\texttt{\#b3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\#c6}} \) is covered in Chapter 1, line A) 5...e4 transpose to Chapter 1, line C.

A. 4.\( \text{\texttt{\#f3}} \) e4 5.\( \text{\texttt{\#d4}} \)

5.\( \text{\texttt{\#g5}} \) presents a tempo for the useful prophylactic move ...h6 - 5...d5 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.d3 h6 8.\( \text{\texttt{\#h3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\#b4}} \) 9.\( \text{\texttt{\#d2}} \) exd3\( ^{\*} \).

5...\( \text{\texttt{\#b6}} \)!

This is my standard recommendation against \( \text{\texttt{\#d4}} \). It is always good to repel the active knight from the centre. Most of the lines may transpose to Chapter 1, line B2.

5...d5 6.cxd5 \( \text{\texttt{\#c5}} \) looks also logical, but then 7.\( \text{\texttt{\#b3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\#b6}} \) 8.\( \text{\texttt{\#g2}} \) cxd5 9.d3 e3 10.\( \text{\texttt{\#xe3}} \) is sharp, but favourable to White. If we leave the d4-knight in piece for a while, we’ll not be able to shift it later at all, e.g. 6...cxd5 7.d3 \( \text{\texttt{\#c5}} \) 8.dxe4 dxe4 9.\( \text{\texttt{\#e3}} \).

A1. 6.\( \text{\texttt{\#b3}} \); A2. 6.e3

6.\( \text{\texttt{\#c2}} \) d5 7.cxd5 (7.\( \text{\texttt{\#g2}} \) dxc4) 7...cxd5 8.\( \text{\texttt{\#g2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\#e7}} \) 9.d3 \( \text{\texttt{\#c6}} \) 10.0-0 0-0 is covered in Chapter 1, line B2.

A1. 6.\( \text{\texttt{\#b3}} \) a5! 7.d3

We can meet 7.a4 by 7...\( \text{\texttt{\#a6}} \) or 7...\( \text{\texttt{\#b4}} \) as in Chapter 1. Enterprising alternatives are 7...d5 8.cxd5 \( \text{\texttt{\#xd5}} \) 9.\( \text{\texttt{\#xe4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\#e6}} \) and 8...\( \text{\texttt{\#g4?!}} \) 9.e3 \( \text{\texttt{\#e5}} \).

7...a4 8.\( \text{\texttt{\#d2}} \) exd3 9.\( \text{\texttt{\#g2}} \)
Or 9.exd3 \( \texttt{\&}c5 \textup{\texttt{\&}} \).

9...d5 10.0-0

10.exd3 \( \texttt{\&}g4\) 11.\( \texttt{\&} \texttt{c}2 \) could be countered by 11...\( \texttt{\&} a6?! \) 12.a3 dxc4 13.\( \texttt{\&} xa4 \) \( \texttt{\&} a5\) 14.dxc4 \( \texttt{\&} f5\) 15.\( \texttt{\&} c3 \) \( \texttt{\&} xc3 \) 16.\( \texttt{\&} xc3 \) \( \texttt{\&} d3 \) with compensation, for instance: 17.\( \texttt{\&} f1 \) \( \texttt{\&} b4\) 18.\( \texttt{\&} xd3 \) \( \texttt{\&} xd3 + 19.\( \texttt{\&} e2 \) 0-0-0=.

10...d4 11.\( \texttt{\&} c4 \) \( \texttt{\&} xe4\) 12.\( \texttt{\&} xe4 \) \( \texttt{\&} e7\) 13.\( \texttt{\&} xd3\)

13...\( f5?!\)

As usual, the space advantage assures Black of good chances, but he must stay active. Instead in Yudin-Jumabayev, Tomsk 2013, was 13...c5?! 14.e3 \( \texttt{\&} c6\) 15.exd4 cxd4 when 16.\( \texttt{\&} f4\) 0-0 17.\( \texttt{\&} fc1\), intending c5, would have forced 17...\( \texttt{\&} a5\) with a tenable, but passive position. The text might look as a weakness, but it drives back the e4-knight before it had the chance to go to d6.

14.\( \texttt{\&} g5\) 0-0 15.\( \texttt{\&} f3 \) \( \texttt{\&} f6\) 16.\( \texttt{\&} c2\) (defending b2) 16...\( \texttt{\&} a6!\)

Again, it is better to sac a pawn, than to play 16...c5?! 17.\( \texttt{\&} e1 \) and the knight is heading for d5 via f4.

17.\( \texttt{\&} xa4\)

17.\( \texttt{\&} f4 \) \( \texttt{\&} b4\) 18.\( \texttt{\&} d2\) c5 is already fine so White has to accept the gift.

17...\( \texttt{\&} e8\) 18.\( \texttt{\&} b3 \) \( \texttt{\&}xb3\) 19.axb3 \( \texttt{\&} d7\)

Black has full compensation for the pawn. For instance:

- 20.\( \texttt{\&} e1 \) \( \texttt{\&} c5\) 21.\( \texttt{\&} xa8 \) \( \texttt{\&} xa8\) 22.b4 \( \texttt{\&} b3\) 23.\( \texttt{\&} d2 \) \( \texttt{\&} xc1\) 24.\( \texttt{\&} xc1 \) \( \texttt{\&} a2\) 25.\( \texttt{\&} b1 \) \( \texttt{\&} e6\);
- 20.\( \texttt{\&} d1 \) \( \texttt{\&} c5\) 21.\( \texttt{\&} xa8 \) \( \texttt{\&} xa8\) 22.\( \texttt{\&} d4 \) \( \texttt{\&} xd4\) 23.\( \texttt{\&} xd4 \) \( \texttt{\&} a1\);
- 20.\( \texttt{\&} g5 \) \( \texttt{\&} xg5\) 21.\( \texttt{\&} xg5 \) \( \texttt{\&} xe2\).

A2. 6.e3 d5 7.cxd5

7.\( \texttt{\&} b3 \) dxc4 8.\( \texttt{\&} xc4 \) \( \texttt{\&} xb3\) 9.\( \texttt{\&} xb3 \) \( \texttt{\&} a6\) 10.f3 exf3 11.\( \texttt{\&} xf3 \) \( \texttt{\&} b4\) 12.a3 \( \texttt{\&} xc3\) 13.bxc3 \( \texttt{\&} c5\) 14.\( \texttt{\&} c2 \) \( \texttt{\&} e6\) 15.\( \texttt{\&} b1\) 0-0-0 was in Black's favour, Granda Zuniga-Jumabayev, Pavlodar 2015.

7.\( \texttt{\&} c2 \) \( \texttt{\&} d7\) 8.a3 would have been promising for White if he secured the d4-knight with b2-b4+c4-c5.
However, 8...c5! throws a spanner into the works - 9.\(\text{d}e2\) dxc4 10.\(\text{d}xe4\) \(\text{d}xe4\) 11.\(\text{f}xe4+\) \(\text{f}e6=\). Black is safe without queens. An illustrative line runs 12.\(\text{f}xe6+\) fxe6 13.\(\text{f}f4\) g5 14.\(\text{h}h3\) g4!? (14...h6=) 15.\(\text{f}f4\) \(\text{c}6\) 16.\(\text{g}1\) \(\text{d}7\) 17.\(\text{c}x\text{c}4\) \(\text{e}5\) 18.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{f}7\) 19.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{f}3+\) with a pretty position.

7...\(\text{cxd}5\) 8.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 9.\(\text{d}xe4\) dxe4

Fans of isolated pawns could consider 9...\(\text{e}4\) 10.\(\text{f}3\) f6 11.0-0 \(\text{e}7\) 12.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}8\), but I would take White after 13.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{b}xc6\) 14.b3.

10.\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{b}4\)

11.0-0 \(\text{xc}3\) 12.\(\text{bxc}3\) 0-0 13.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{c}5\)

Black’s pieces are well placed. He is not afraid of 14.\(\text{c}xe4\) \(\text{d}xe4\) 15.\(\text{c}e4\). That capture would be dubious since the opposite coloured bishops are clearly in his favour after 15...\(\text{h}3\) 16.\(\text{f}d1\) \(\text{f}e8\) 17.\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 18.\(\text{cxd}4\) \(\text{f}5\).

Instead, White can open his bishop with 14.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{e}5\) 15.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{xc}4=\).

B. 4.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{exd}4\)

4...\(\text{e}4\) is more consistent with our opening strategy, but the specific move order (\(\text{c}3\) instead of \(\text{g}2\)) throws us out of Black’s most active schemes. After 5.\(\text{g}5\), we cannot follow up with:

5...d5? 6.\(\text{cxd}5\) \(\text{cxd}5\) due to 7.\(\text{xf}6\). That is not a tragedy since we can resort to the development with:

5...\(\text{b}4\). Play may continue 6.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{d}6\) 7.\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{h}6\) 8.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 9.e3 \(\text{xc}3+\) 10.\(\text{xc}3\) d5 11.\(\text{cxd}5\) \(\text{cxd}5\)

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Black should not have problems to hold this position, but the lack of the dark-squared bishops deprives him of active plans:

12.\(\text{e}2\)

12.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{b}6\) (12...\(\text{d}6\)) 13.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{axb}6\) is a draw endgame, e.g. 14.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{b}4\) 15.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{d}3\) 16.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 17.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xb}2\) 18.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{d}xe4\) 19.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{a}3\) 20.\(\text{hc}1\) \(\text{c}4+\) 21.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{d}6\) 22.d5 \(\text{d}7\) 23.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{xc}3\) 24.\(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{b}5+\) 25.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{xc}3\) 26.\(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 27.\(\text{b}1=\) \(\text{c}8+\) 28.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{a}8\) 29.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{a}4+\) 30.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{xa}2\) 31.\(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{d}6\) 32.\(\text{h}4\) \f5 33.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{a}3++\).

12...\(\text{g}4\) 13.\(\text{f}4\)

66
White should not forget that Black can castle long - 13...b3 0-0-0.

13...d6 14.h3 a5 15.a3 (15.Wa5 b4) 15...g5 16.de2 0-0 17.b3 c7 18.c3 fc8 19.f1 a5 20.e2 b5

White cannot break through Black's defence line - 21.h4 g7 22.f1 d7 23.hxg5 hxg5 24.g2 h8 25.Exh8 Exh8 26.h1 Exh1 27.xh1=.

It is a matter of taste, but I prefer active and more complex play. By taking on d4, we accept an isolated central pawn which, however, will be quite mobile as White cannot comfortably blockade it.

5.xd4 d5

6.g5 could be met by 6.e7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.g2 c6 9.Wa4 0-0, but the temporary weakness of b2 hints at more challenging ideas as 9...b6! 10.Wb5 0-0. The same attack is possible after 8.f3 (instead of 8.g2) - 8...c6 9.Wa4 g6!? 10.Wb5 0-0 11.g2 d4=.

6.e6 7.cxd5

If the knight were still on b1, White might have hoped for some edge with quick kingside development and castling. The point is that when Black takes on c4, White can regain the sacrificed pawn by 7.bd2. In the diagram position, that course is impossible and 7.f3 dxc4 8.Wxd8+ xd8 leaves White struggling to equalize. For instance, 9.g5 bd7 (9...d6?) 10.xe6 xe6 11.h3? e7 was outright bad for him in the blitz game Ovetchkin-Volkov, playchess.com 2006. Thus White is forced to let our knight to c6 with a tempo.

7.cxd5 8.f3

8.g5 is a principled move. After 8...c6 9.Wa4, Black must immediately hit b2 with 9...b6!

We should not allow White to torture us in a typical IQP position following 9.e7 10.e3. Practice has seen 9.b4, but 10.e3 h6 11.xf6 xf6 12.ge2 0-0 13.0-0 xc3 14.xc3 is obviously pleasant for White.

10.xf6 gxf6. Perhaps White should force a draw here with:
move, and it is well scoring at that. Its idea is to kill the dark-squared bishop after 11...\texttt{b}6 12.\texttt{a}4. Of course, we should keep it:
11...\texttt{b}6! 12.\texttt{xb}6
12.\texttt{d}3 gives us a tempo – 12...
\texttt{b}4 13.\texttt{d}1 (or 13.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{e}4
14.\texttt{x}e4 \texttt{xe}4 15.\texttt{g}5 f5=) 13...
\texttt{e}4 14.e3 \texttt{ac}8?! (conceding to
trade the bishop in return for full
control of the c-file) 15.\texttt{a}4 \texttt{a}6
16.\texttt{x}c5 \texttt{x}c5 17.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{fc}8.
12.e3 \texttt{e}4 is also satisfactory.
12...\texttt{xb}6 13.\texttt{g}5

With an isolated pawn, we should
aim to place our pieces on their
most active places so I did not consi-
der 9...\texttt{e}7 at all. 9...\texttt{b}4 deserves
attention, but 10.\texttt{e}5 underlines its
shaky state.

10.0-0 0-0

11.\texttt{g}5

11.\texttt{b}5 is the second most popular
move, and it is well scoring at that.
Its idea is to kill the dark-squared
bishop after 11...\texttt{b}6 12.\texttt{a}4. Of
course, we should keep it:
11...\texttt{b}6! 12.\texttt{xb}6
12.\texttt{d}3 gives us a tempo – 12...
\texttt{b}4 13.\texttt{d}1 (or 13.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{e}4
14.\texttt{x}e4 \texttt{xe}4 15.\texttt{g}5 f5=) 13...
\texttt{e}4 14.e3 \texttt{ac}8?! (conceding to
trade the bishop in return for full
control of the c-file) 15.\texttt{a}4 \texttt{a}6
16.\texttt{x}c5 \texttt{x}c5 17.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{fc}8.
12.e3 \texttt{e}4 is also satisfactory.
12...\texttt{xb}6 13.\texttt{g}5

Now it is turn to preserve the light-
squared bishop: 13...\texttt{g}4 14.h3 \texttt{h}5
15.g4 \texttt{g}6 16.\texttt{x}d5 \texttt{x}d5 17.\texttt{x}d5.
White has won a pawn, but all his
pieces are uncoordinated – 17...
\texttt{fe}8 18.e3 \texttt{h}6 19.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{ed}8 20.\texttt{b}3
\texttt{e}4↑.

11.\texttt{g}5 could be put to the test with
11...\texttt{h}6
I do not see any compelling rea-
son to precipitate the exchange
so 11...\texttt{c}8!? should be at least as
good as 11...\texttt{h}6.
12.\texttt{x}e6 \texttt{xe}6 13.e4
White was too passive after
13.a3 \texttt{xc}8 (13...\texttt{e}5!? 14.e3
\texttt{e}7 15.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{e}5 16.\texttt{ad}1?! \texttt{f}7
13...\texttt{g4} 14.exd5 \texttt{xf2} 15.xf2 \texttt{xf2} with a perpetual.

\textbf{11...h6 12.xf6 \texttt{xf6}}

This position resembles the Tarrasch, but Black is a tempo up since White's queen landed on a4 via the triangle d1-d4-a4. Besides, this square, as a rule, belongs to the c3-knight to chase the active c5-bishop. In the Tarrasch White occasionally employs the plan with \texttt{g5}, but connects it with the idea of forcing ...d5-d4 which plugs the black dark-squared bishop. In the diagram position Black is not obliged to comply. As a result, he preserves active pieces and excellent chances. See \textbf{Game 7 Neiksans-Kovalenko, Riga 2014}.
Chapter 3. 1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♠f6 3.g3 ♠c6

Annotated Games

7. Neiksans – Kovalenko
Riga 2014

1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♠f6 3.♗g2 ♠c6 4.d4 exd4 5.♗xd4 ♠d5 6.cxd5 ♠xd5 7.♕f3 ♤c6 8.a4 ♤c5 9.0-0 0-0
10.♗g5 ♤h6 11.♗xf6 ♤xf6 12.♗c3 ♤e6

13.♗fd1

The blockading plan 13.♗e1 ♤ad8 14.♗c1 ♤fe8 15.♗d3 is not effective since we are not obliged to push ...d4 – 15...♗b6 16.♗f4 ♤e5.

13.♗ad1 looks strange as the queen’s rook would be more useful on c1. Black can follow the same plan as in the game – 13...♗fd8 and if 14.♗b5 ♤e7 15.♗a4 ♤d6 16.♗d4 ♤xd4 17.♗xd4 ♤e6 18.♗b6 ♤e5 19.♗d3 ♤ac8 20.♗fd1, Dvirnyy-Van den Heever, Tromso 2014, 20...♗c4 21.♗e3 ♤xg3 leads to a drawish endgame. Therefore, we could first retreat the bishop – 20...♗f6!, followed up by ...♗c4.

13...♗fd8 14.♗ac1

14.e3 does not really blockade the isolated pawn as we could always exchange it with ...d4. More interesting is:
14...♗b6 15.♗d2 ♤ac8 16.♗ad1 d4 17.♗xd4 ♤xd4 18.exd4 ♤c4 19.♗c2 ♤xd4 20.♗xb7

Black enjoys very active pieces – 20...♕g4 21.♗e1 ♤g6 22.♗b3 ♤e6†.

14...♗ac8 15.♗b5 ♤e5! 16.♗xb7

It suddenly transpires that 16.♗xe5
\( \texttt{xf2} + \) and 16.\( \texttt{c4} \texttt{d7} \) 17.\( \texttt{b3} \texttt{xa4} \)

18.\( \texttt{xa4} \texttt{c4} \) lose a pawn so White decides to grab one himself. However, Black's initiative now becomes overwhelming.

16...\( \texttt{g4} \) 17.\( \texttt{f1} \)

A natural human move which guarantees Black a strong initiative. Only a computer could calculate that 17...\( \texttt{b6} \)! threatening ...\( \texttt{d4} \), is even more awkward for White.

18.\( \texttt{xf2} \texttt{d4} \) 19.\( \texttt{f1} \texttt{xc3} \) 20.\( \texttt{exc3} \texttt{xxc3} \) 21.\( \texttt{bxc3} \texttt{xc3} \) 22.\( \texttt{xa7} \texttt{e3} \) 23.\( \texttt{b1} \texttt{xf5} \) 24.\( \texttt{e1} \texttt{g4} \) 25.\( \texttt{e7} \texttt{d5} \) 26.\( \texttt{f2} \)

26...\( \texttt{e6}? \)

A critical moment. The winning shaping of this idea was 26...\( \texttt{d1} \) !
27.\( \texttt{f1} \texttt{h7}!! \) and only after 28.\( \texttt{h3} \) (28.\( \texttt{xf7} \) loses to 28...\( \texttt{xc5} \)), 28...
\( \texttt{e3} \) 29.\( \texttt{f2} \texttt{e6} \) ! 30.\( \texttt{wa7} \texttt{xc5} \) (the fight is for the g1-a7 diagonal) 31.\( \texttt{wa4} \texttt{c2} \) 32.\( \texttt{ed1} \texttt{e3} \) + and White is tide up and down.

17...\( \texttt{xf2} + \)

A further attack on e2 (after some preparation), will decide the game. The text is mistake because White could trade his bishop by 27.\( \texttt{h3} \)=.

27.\( \texttt{wa7}?! \texttt{c5} \) 28.\( \texttt{b8} \texttt{c8} \)

29.\( \texttt{a7} \texttt{ec2} \) 30.\( \texttt{d1} \texttt{c4} \) 31.\( \texttt{e7} \texttt{a5} \) 32.\( \texttt{h3} \texttt{b6} \) 33.\( \texttt{e3} \texttt{e6} \) 34.\( \texttt{xe6} \texttt{xe3} \) + 35.\( \texttt{g2} \texttt{e2} \) +
36.\( \texttt{h3} \texttt{e6} \) 37.\( \texttt{xe6} \texttt{fxe6} \)
38.\( \texttt{c1} \texttt{f8} = \) 39.\( \texttt{xc2} \texttt{xf3} \) 40.\( \texttt{a4} \texttt{ea3} \) 41.\( \texttt{c8} \texttt{f7} \) 42.\( \texttt{ea8} \texttt{ea2} \)
43.\( \texttt{a5} \texttt{h5} \) 44.\( \texttt{a6} \texttt{e5} \) 45.\( \texttt{g4} \texttt{ea3} \) +
46.\( \texttt{h4} \texttt{hxg4} \) 47.\( \texttt{yg4} \texttt{g6} \)
48.\( \texttt{a7} \texttt{e4} \) 49.\( \texttt{f4} \texttt{e3} \) 50.\( \texttt{f3} \texttt{h7} \)
51.\( \texttt{e2} \texttt{g5} \) 52.\( \texttt{h3} \texttt{g7} \) 53.\( \texttt{f3} \texttt{h7} \) 54.\( \texttt{e2} \texttt{g7} \) 55.\( \texttt{f3} \texttt{h7} \)
56.\( \texttt{e2} \)

Draw.
In this chapter we begin to investigate White’s most challenging system: 1.c4 e5 2.\textit{\texttl{c3}} \textit{\texttl{f6}} 3.\textit{\texttl{f3}} \textit{\texttl{c6}}

White’s quick development is much more restrictive than the slow g3. It does not leave us time to build a pawn centre with ...\textit{\texttl{c6}}. Of course, we could play ...d5 without other preparation, but the Reversed Sicilian is not a subject of this book. Fortunately, we have other ways to fight for the centre, based on ...\textit{\texttl{b4}}. In chapter 4 I analyse four rare White options while the main line 4.g3 is considered in Chapters 6 and 7.

4.d4 exd4 5.\textit{\texttl{xd4}} \textit{\texttl{b4}} 6.\textit{\texttl{g5}} h6 7.\textit{\texttl{h4}} \textit{\texttl{xc3}}+ 8.bxc3 0-0 is easy to play and does not require any special knowledge.

We meet 4.d3 with 4...\textit{\texttl{b4}}, too. 5.\textit{\texttl{d2}} 0-0 6.g3 a5

Our next moves should be prophylactic – we hinder White’s advance on the queenside and keep our bishop.

7.\textit{\texttl{g2}} d6 8.0-0 h6 9.a3 \textit{\texttl{c5}}

Let’s take stock. White’s play until this moment was mostly preventive. He avoided sharp lines, did not give us a chance to double his pawns, and kept control of the centre. Black, for his part, developed comfortably, but he lacks an active plan. He should manoeuvre carefully to neutralise White’s advance on the queenside. It would be useful to trade a pair of knights – with \textit{\texttl{d5}} \textit{\texttl{xd5}} or with ...\textit{\texttl{c6}}-\textit{\texttl{d4xf3}}. Galanov-Eckhardt, corr. 2011, went 10.e3 \textit{\texttl{f5}} 11.\textit{\texttl{c2}} \textit{\texttl{e8}} 12.\textit{\texttl{h4}} \textit{\texttl{h7}}
13.b3! \( \text{Nd7} \) 14.\( \text{Bc1} \) \( \text{Ne8} \) 15.\( \text{Bd1} \) \( \text{Nc6} \) 16.\( \text{Bb1} \) \( \text{Ne7} \).

4.e4 does not fit in with \( \text{xf3} \) when White cannot develop his king's knight on e2. I suggest 4...\( \text{Bb4} \) intending to take on c3 after 5.\( \text{d3} \) d6 6.\( \text{a3} \) \( \text{Bxc3} \) 7.bxc3 \( \text{h6} \) 8.\( \text{g3} \) 0-0 9.\( \text{g2} \)

It turns out that Black can fianchetto the bishop with 7...g6!? 8.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{g7} \) 9.\( \text{g5} \) d6! since 10.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{d8} \) is okay.

5.\( \text{xf3} \) 0-0-0 9.\( \text{g5} \) h6 10.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 11.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{d8} \) – see Game 8 Edouard-Karpov, Cap d’Agde 2015.

In the light of the above examples, 4.\( \text{a3} \)! looks more than logical and I used this move myself. However, we have a trump up our sleeve:

4...e4!? 5.\( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 6.\( \text{d3} \) exd3 7.\( \text{xd3} \)

The thematic way of obtaining counterplay in this structure is 9...a6!? followed up by ...b5.

6.\( \text{e2} \) does not seem any better – Black was fine after 6...\( \text{g4} \) 7.0-0

White is unable to capitalise on the pin.
Chapter 4. 1.c4 e5 2.\(d\)c3 \(d\)f6 3.\(d\)f3 \(d\)c6

Step by Step

1.c4 e5 2.\(d\)c3 \(d\)f6

2...\(d\)b4 3.\(d\)d5 is another popular option.
The King's Indian structure 2...d6 3.d4 exd4 4.\(d\)xd4 \(d\)c6 5.\(d\)d2 g6 does not appeal to me. White has a space advantage after 6.g3 \(d\)g7 7.\(d\)g2 \(d\)f6 8.b3 0-0 9.\(d\)b2 a5 10.\(d\)f3 \(d\)e8 11.0-0 \(d\)f5 12.\(d\)h4 \(d\)d7 13.\(d\)ad1 \(d\)c8 14.\(d\)f1 \(d\)e5 15.\(d\)f3 \(d\)xf3+ 16.\(d\)xf3 \(d\)c6 17.\(d\)d5 \(d\)xd5 18.cxd5.

3.\(d\)f3 \(d\)c6

A. 4.d4; B. 4.a3; C. 4.d3; D. 4.e4.

4.e3 is the subject of our next chapter while 4.g3 is considered in Chapters 6 and 7.

A. 4.d4 exd4 5.\(d\)xd4 \(d\)b4

Black's task is easy. He will damage the enemy pawn structure with ...\(d\)xc3 and will aim to trade some minor pieces.

6.\(d\)g5 h6 7.\(d\)h4 \(d\)xc3+ 8.bxc3 0-0

It is also possible to play 8...\(d\)e5 immediately - 9.f4 \(d\)g6 10.\(d\)xf6 \(d\)xf6 11.g3 \(d\)f8 12.\(d\)g2 \(d\)e6 13.\(d\)d2 0-0 14.\(d\)b1 \(d\)c5 15.\(d\)b3 d6. Still, it looks more clever to wait for e3 before shifting the knight to e5.

9.e3

After 9.f3 \(d\)e8 White cannot play e4
anyway due to the hit on e4 – 10.e4 dx e4 or 10...f2 d6 11.e4 dx e4.

9...dx e5 10...dx e2 xg6 11.xxf6 xxf6 12.0-0 d6 13.b1 dx e5

Black’s knight returns to the queenside via d7-c5 to underline the biggest flaw of doubled pawns - the weakness of the square before them. White is already on the defensive.

B. 4.a3

I used to play this move ten years ago in order to prevent 4...db4. Black has a wide choice.

4...d5 leads to the Sicilian Reversed.

4...g6 5.g3 xg7 6.xg2 0-0 7.0-0 d6 8.d3 is a closed system where the opponents attack on the opposite flanks. White’s typical play may be illustrated with the following line: 8...dx d4 9.xd2 c6 10.b4 x e6 11.xb2 x d7 12.e3 xf5 13.xd4 x e4 14.xe4 x e7 15.a4 x b6 16.b5 f5 17.xd2 x ac8 18.b1 d5 19.bxc6 bxc6 20.a5+. The presence of the a-pawns gives White a target. That explains the popularity of 8...a5?!

with mutual chances after 9.xb1 x d4 or 9...x e8 10.xg5 h6 11.xxf6 xxf6 12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 x g7 14.b5 x e7 15.wc2 c6.

My only objection against this setup is that the English adepts usually have plenty of experience with this plan. We can surprise them with the poorly explored:

4...e4!? 5.xg5 x e7 6.d3 exd3

My game Delchev-Papa, Zuerich 2002, went on 7.e4 h6 8.xf3 d5 9.exd5 x e4 10.xe3 x c3 11.bxc3 x e5 12.xd3 x d3+ 13.xd3 x d8 14.0-0

Here my opponent chose a passive stand with 14...x e7 15.c4 c5? (15...0-0 16.xf1 x e8 is roughly equal) 16.xf1 0-0 17.xd2 with a clear edge. More natural is:

14.xd6 15.c4 b6 16.xf1 0-0 17.xd4 x e8=. The a3-pawn might hang in some lines.

In my next game I tried to improve with:

7.xd3

The idea is to meet 7...x e5 by 8.xc2 d6 9.e4 h6 10.xf3 x xf3+ 11.gxf3±.
White’s powerful centre assures him of the edge.

7...\textit{g}6 8.\textit{d}f3 \textit{g}7 9.\textit{g}5 d6!

9...\textit{d}e5 10.\textit{x}e5 \textit{wx}e5 11.f4 gave me an initiative against Peranic in 2003.

10.\textit{d}d5 \textit{d}8

It transpires that White cannot convert the pin of the f6-knight into even the slightest advantage! For instance:

11.\textit{w}e3+ (11.\textit{w}c3 \textit{e}5) 11...\textit{e}6 12.g3 0-0 13.\textit{d}d1 \textit{e}8 (13...h6 is also possible) 14.\textit{f}4 \textit{h}5 15.\textit{xd}8 \textit{xf}4 16.\textit{xc}7 \textit{xd}5 17.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{g}4! 18.\textit{g}2 \textit{xf}3 19.\textit{xf}3 \textit{dd}4 with a level endgame. Black can either regain the pawn, or enter a curious rook endgame after 20.0-0 \textit{e}5 (20...\textit{b}5 21.\textit{a}5 b6=) 21.\textit{a}5 b6 22.\textit{b}4 \textit{xf}3+ 23.\textit{e}f3 a5 24.\textit{c}3 \textit{xc}3 25.\textit{bxc}3 \textit{ec}8=.

C. 4.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}4

4...d5 is also possible – 5.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{c}xd5 6.g3 \textit{b}4 6...\textit{e}7 is the standard approach.

7.\textit{d}2 \textit{e}6 8.\textit{g}2 f6 9.0-0 0-0

10.a3 10.\textit{e}4 \textit{xd}2 11.\textit{wx}d2 b6 12.\textit{ac}1 \textit{d}7=.

10...\textit{xc}3 11.bxc3 \textit{c}5=.

5.\textit{d}2 0-0

White’s set-up is innocuous, but not without venom. He avoids doubled pawns while making normal developing moves. That discourages aggressive plans with long castling as in the line 4.e3 \textit{b}4 5.\textit{c}2 \textit{xc}3 6.\textit{wx}c3 \textit{e}7 7.a3 d5 8.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{c}xd5 9.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}6 10.d3, where Black’s huge lead in development enables 10...\textit{f}5 11.\textit{e}2 0-0-0.

6.g3

6.e3 is less challenging and it gives Black a wide choice. The most na-
Chapter 4

The natural answer is 6...d5 7.cxd5 ąxd5 8.ęe2

8.ćc2 ąxc3 9.ćxc3 ąd6 (or 9... će7) is balanced.

8...ćxc3

8...ęe6 9.0-0 ęe7!? 10.a3 a5 is a curious way to get the Scheveningen with two tempi down! Nevertheless, this is the most challenging line and the top players gladly take it in order to ensure more action. Black's stand in the centre is so solid that he can afford the frivolity of playing like that. I assume that Sicilian adepts will know what to do in this structure (of course, they should forget about the sharpest options), and the others will opt for simpler approaches which involve piece exchanges.

9.ćxc3 ćxc3 10.bxc3

6...a5!?

6...ćxc3 7.ćxc3 e4 8.ęh4 d6 is consistent, but the threat ...g5 can be ignored – 9.ęg2! when 9...g5 fails to 10.ćc1. Black can revive the threat with 9...će7 to force play – 10.ćxf6 ćxf6 11.ćxe4 ćxb2 12.0-0 ćd4 13.će1 with a tangled position. Still, White's position is more flexible due to the pawn majority in the centre.

6...će8 7.ęg2 ćxc3 8.ćxc3 d5 9.cxd5 ćxd5 is a viable alternative:

a) 10.0-0

Ghaem Maghami-Ramesh, Dubai 2006;
10...će7 11.d4 ćd7 12.0-0 ćad8
13.ćc2 ćfe8 14.ćab1 b6 15.ćb5 e4
16.ćd2 ća5 17.ćxd7 ćxd7 18.ća4
ćd6=, Timofeev-Najer, Dagomys 2010;
10...ćf6 11.0-0 ćg6 12.će1 ćh3
13.g3 ćad8 14.d4 b6 15.ćb1 e4
16.ćd2 ća5∞.

Black's next moves are easy – he puts his rooks on the central files and protects the b-pawn with ...b6. The only question is where to put the queen – ...će7 is safe as Black's pieces stay compact, but ...ćf6-g6 is more active. Possible continuations are:

10...ćf5 11.d4 će7 12.0-0 ćad8
13.ćb3 e4 14.ćd2 ćd6 15.g3 draw,
in the centre with ...d6, ...f6, ...

ds6. 11.bxc3 b8 12.c2

In the event of 12.d2, simplest looks 12...a5 (12...d7!? ) aiming for a Maroczy structure with ...
c5 – 13.c2 c5 14.b3 xxb3 15.axb3 a5 16.b4 axb4 17.cxb4
cxb4=.
12...e6 13.d2 w7 14.b3 b6

b) 10.d2 d4 11.0-0 c6=.

6...d4!? 7.g2 xf3+ 8.xf3 is =/+.
My recommendation keeps more tension in the centre. More importantly, White’s plan is not so clear as in the open Sicilian structures. The pawn move preserves the bishop in the event of 7.a3 c5 8.a4.

7.g2 d6 8.0-0 h6

9.a3

9.d5 c5 (9...xd5 10.cxd5 e7 11.xb4 axb4, intending ...c6, is balanced.) 10.c3 d4 11.e3 xf3 was equal in Kryvoruchko-Sargissian, Spain team ch. 2015.
After 13.b3!, Black does not have a clear plan since 13...g5?! 14.\textit{\text{\text{\text{f3 e4}}}} 15.dxe4 \textit{\text{\text{\text{e4}}}} 16.\textit{\text{\text{d1 f5}}} 17.\textit{\text{\text{g2 e4}}} would neutralise his temporary activity. Instead he should embark on manoeuvring.

Galanov-Eckhardt, corr. 2011 went 13...\textit{\text{\text{d7}}} 14.\textit{\text{c1}}

14.\textit{\text{f1 d1}} \textit{\text{g4}} revives the break ...e4, for instance, 15.\textit{\text{c1 e4}}. White could repel the queen with 15.h3 \textit{\text{d7}}, but the h3-pawn would be a good target. Black can then transfer his c6-knight to g5 via d8-e6 – 16.\textit{\text{c1}} (preparing \textit{\text{e1}}) 16...\textit{\text{d8}} 17.\textit{\text{b1 e6}} 18.b4 (18.\textit{\text{xb7?! \textit{\text{e8}}}} 19.\textit{\text{g2 g5}} 20.g4 \textit{\text{xe4}}!) 18...\textit{\text{b6}} 19.\textit{\text{e4 fxe4}} 20.dxe4 \textit{\text{e7}} 21.\textit{\text{f5 d8}} with complex play.

14...\textit{\text{ab8}} 15.\textit{\text{d1 b6}} 16.\textit{\text{b1 e7}} 17.\textit{\text{f3 f5}} 18.\textit{\text{e4 e6}} 19.b4, when 19...\textit{\text{axb4}} 20.\textit{\text{axb4 xe4}} would have been roughly equal.

D. 4.e4 \textit{\text{b4}}

This is a solid approach which allows both sides to demonstrate their positional understanding. On the opposite, 4...\textit{\text{c5}}!? 5.\textit{\text{xe5}}!

5.d3 d6

11.0–0

More prudent is:

11.\textit{\text{e3}} 0-0 12.0-0 \textit{\text{d7}} 13.exd6 \textit{\text{c6}}= or:

11.\textit{\text{g3 f5}} 12.\textit{\text{f4}} 0-0=.

11...\textit{\text{xe5}} 12.\textit{\text{a3 \textit{\text{f6}}}} 13.\textit{\text{e3 c6}} 14.\textit{\text{f3 b6}} and White is yet to prove enough compensation for the pawn.

6.\textit{\text{e2}}

I suggest to meet 6.a3 by 6...\textit{\text{xc3+}} for consistency sake – we could get

\textit{\text{xе5 e4 d4}} 6.\textit{\text{e4 b4}} 7.\textit{\text{xe5 \textit{\text{xe4}}}} 8.\textit{\text{f3}} 9.\textit{\text{xc3}} 9.\textit{\text{bxc3 \textit{\text{a5}}}} 10.\textit{\text{e2}}
the same structure after 4.e3 \texttt{b}4 5.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{xc}3 6.bxc3, see Chapter 5 line B.

Carlsen chose against Ghaem in Berlin 2015, 6...\texttt{c}5 7.b4 \texttt{b}6 8.\texttt{a}4 \texttt{g}4 9.\texttt{xb}6 \texttt{axb}6 10.\texttt{b}2 (10.\texttt{e}2 0-0 11.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{e}7 12.0-0 \texttt{g}6=) 10...\texttt{xf}3 11.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{d}7 aiming for ...\texttt{d}7-f8-e6. Critical for his idea would be 12.\texttt{g}3! \texttt{f}6 13.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{f}8 14.f4! \texttt{e}6 15.f5 with a space advantage.

7.bxc3 \texttt{h}6

I'm not too sure that we need this prophylaxis. The plan with 7...\texttt{a}6 is also effective without it. 8.g3 0-0 9.\texttt{g}2 a6!? (this is always good against the setup with \texttt{g}2)

10.\texttt{b}1

Libiszewski-Postny, Bastia 2013 saw here 10...\texttt{b}5 when White backed off with 11.\texttt{d}2. The idea of Black's sacrifice was to play ...\texttt{d}7, ...\texttt{c}8, ...\texttt{a}6, ...\texttt{f}b8 with an initiative on the queenside. I do not see anything wrong with the more restrained:

10...\texttt{b}8 11.0-0 \texttt{b}5=.

6.g3 is strategically similar to the main line as both allow the exchange ...\texttt{c}8-g4xf3 – 6...\texttt{g}4 7.\texttt{h}3 \texttt{xf}3 8.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{d}4 9.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{c}6 10.\texttt{g}2. Black has two possible plans now – either to stay passive on the queenside with 10...a5 11.0-0 \texttt{c}5, or to prepare ...\texttt{b}5 with 10...a6 11.0-0 \texttt{c}5 12.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{b}5.

In his rapid match against Karpov in Cap d'Agde 2015, Edouard firstly tried 6.\texttt{h}3 a6 7.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{c}5 8.0-0 0-0 9.\texttt{e}3, but 9...\texttt{d}4 turned out to be balanced:

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

10.a3 \texttt{h}6 11.b4 \texttt{xf}3+ 12.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{xe}3 13.\texttt{xe}3 \texttt{e}6 14.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{b}6 15.a4 \texttt{c}5=.

In the next match game, Edouard opted for 6.\texttt{e}2.

6...\texttt{g}4 7.0-0 \texttt{xf}3 8.\texttt{xf}3 0-0 9.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{h}6 10.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{xf}6 11.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{d}8

White's bishop does not have any prospects. See Game 8 Edouard-Karpov, Cap d'Agde 2015.
Chapter 4. 1.c4 e5 2.\textit{c3} f6 3.f3 c6

Annotated Games

8. Edouard – Karpov
Cap d’Agde 2015

1.c4 f6 2.c3 e5 3.f3 c6 4.e4 b4 5.d3 d6 6.e2 g4 7.0-0 axf3 8.xf3 0-0 9.g5 h6 10.xf6

10.h4 c5 11.d5 g5 is hardly any better.

10...\textit{xf6} 11.d5 \textit{d8}

We see the biggest flaw of the scheme with e4 – the d4-square and the dark squares in general are weak. If we compare the two bishops, White has played against the textbook. The central pawns on light squares are a long-term factor in Black’s favour. Accordingly, his game is already more pleasant. I would think of changing the pawn structure in the centre with 12.d4 exd4 13.a3 c5 14.b4 b6 15.h5

The threat f4 would offer White counterplay, but it is Black to move and he retains an advantage by returning the pawn with 15..e5! 16.xb6 axb6 17.xd4 f6 18.fd1 a4. The pressure along the a-file binds the white pieces. Besides the a3-pawn, c4 is also weak, e.g. 19.e2 fa8 20.c3 g6 21.b3 xf4 22.g4 e6 23.e3 c5.

Alternatively, 12.a3 c5 13.b4 b6 14.a4 a5 15.xb6 cxb6 also leaves Black with a superior knight vs. a bad bishop.

12.b3 a5 13.a3 d4 14.d1 c5 15.g4 a4

I’m not sure about this move. It is strategically “correct”, but the a4-pawn will be weak. That will face Black with technical problems. 15...c6 16.c3 g6 was less committal.
16.\h1 c6 17.\c3 \wa5

18.f4?

It is understandable that White wants to show some activity, but this move only weakens the kingside dark squares. Besides, it is a tactical mistake which both opponents fail to spot in a rapid game – 18...\b3! 19.\b1 \xa3! wins a pawn since 20.\xa4? loses to 20...\d2.

18...exf4? 19.\xf4 \b3 20.\b1 \d4 21.\f5 \e5?

21...d5 22.cxd5 \xc3 23.bxc3 \xc3 24.\e1 \xe1+ 25.\xe1 \d4 simplifies to a better endgame, but Karpov prefers to improve his pieces before forcing the play.

22.\e2 \b6 23.\c3 g6 24.\f1 h5! 25.\xh5?

Edouard obviously hated his position if he went for this desperate attempt to complicate things. The calm retreat 25.\h3 would have passed the ball into Black's court. Although he is clearly better, he lacks a clear plan how to improve further.

25...\gxh5 26.\xh5 \a5 27.c5

27...\xc5?

White's bold play is suddenly rewarded. Black would keep an extra piece with 27...\g7! 28.\xa4 \d8!.

28.\f5 \d4 29.\bf1 \g7 30.\xa5 \xa5 31.\xa5 \xd3 32.\d1?

The last mistake. 32.\f5 b5 was only slightly better for Black.

32...\c2 33.\f1 \xb2 34.e5 \xe5 35.\e4 \e2 36.\e1 \c4 37.\d2 \e6 38.\g5 \h6 39.h3 \f6 40.\e4 \xd2 41.\xd2 \c3 42.\e2 \xd2 43.\xd2 d5 44.\g1 \e8 45.\f2 \e4 0-1
Chapter 5. 1.c4 e5 2.d3 f6 3.f3 c6 4.e3

Main Ideas

1.c4 e5 2.d3 f6 3.f3 c6 4.e3 b4

The knight on f3 naturally attracts the e5-pawn to go to e4. For instance, 5.d5 stumbles into 5...e4. White commonly answers 5.c2, reviving the threat d5. I suggest to remove it altogether with 5...xc3.

A. 6.xc3 preserves the pawn formation flexible, but will cost a tempo after ...d5. 6...e7. If White now wants to play a true Sicilian Reversed, he must spend another tempo on 7.a3 since 7..e2 d5 8.exd5 cxd5 9.b3 b6 10.d3 allows the promising combination 10...e6 11.c2 b4 12.b1 f5 13.a3 cxd3+! 14.xd3 cxd3 15.xd3 e4. 7...d5 8.exd5 cxd5 9.b3 (9.c2 e4) 9...b6 10.d3.

Here the common equalizer is the plan with short castling, but I think that White has spent too many tempi on ambling around with the queen and we should make him pay. So: 10..f5!? 11.e2 0-0-0!

I'm sure your opponents will not like this. White has to spend yet another tempo to free the lane for the b-pawn while Black's play is easy and effective. He hits the d3-pawn with ...Ed6, Ed8 to force the ugly e1, and then changes the direction of his main strike towards the kingside with ...g5, ...h6.

If White plays d4 early, the centre is eliminated and Black's game is easy due to his better development. Here are several ways that lead to the same pawn structure:

7.d4 exd4 8.xd4 fxd4 9.xd4 0-0 (9...c5=) 10.e2 d8=.

7.a3 d5 8.d4 exd4 9.xd4 cxd4 10.xd4 0-0 11.d2

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Black often includes ...c5, but I prefer to gain the tempo by taking with a rook on d5 – 11.cxd5 $\Box$d8 12.$\Box$h4 $\Box$xd5=.

**B. 6.bxc3**

This recapture makes sense only in conjunction with e4, but that means White will present us with a clear tempo.

**6.bxc3 0-0 7.e4 d6**

White puts his hope in f2-f4, but we can easily hinder this idea. For instance:

**8.$\Box$e2 $\Box$h5 9.d4 $\Box$f6**

10.d5 (10.g3 exd4) 10...$\Box$a5 11.g3 b6 planning ...$\Box$a5-b7-c5 or ...c7-c6.

**8.g3 $\Box$h8 9.d3 $\Box$g8** – see game 11 Suba-Delchev, Albacete 2004. Another thematic plan against the fianchetto is 8...$\Box$d7 9.$\Box$g2 $\Box$c5 10.$\Box$h4 a6 11.0-0 b5 $\neq$. 

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Chapter 5. 1.c4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.d3 d6 4.e3

Step by Step

1.c4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.d3 d6 4.e3

White displays an intention to contest actively the centre with d4. We should refrain from 4...d5 5.cxd5 exd5 as 6.b5 7.bxc3 6.d4 exd4 9.cxd4 0-0 10.0-0 is obviously pleasant for the first player.

4...e7 5.d4 exd4 is a decent option, but I will focus on the more challenging continuation:

4...b4 5.c2

5.d5 allows 5...e4 6.dxb4 6.g1 practically reverses the roles and Black is already ahead in development – 6...0-0 7.a3 d6 (aiming to lead the other...)

I will consider now:
A. 6.xc3 which we'll attack by castling long, and:
B. 6.bxc3 which leads to a closed manoeuvring game.
A. 6.\textit{\texttt{xc3 \texttt{e7}}}

10...\textit{\texttt{f5}}?!  
Almost everybody opts for short castling with 10...0-0 11.\textit{\texttt{e2 a5}} 12.\textit{\texttt{d2 a4}} 13.\textit{\texttt{c2 e6}} 14.\textit{\texttt{c1}}. Black stands perfectly well here, but he does not have a clear plan. Of course, he controls the centre, but he should basically wait and try to keep the grip. It is difficult to find the best moves in such circumstances. On the opposite, White’s setup is flexible and his play on the queenside and in the centre is not too committal. I recommend to set concrete problems to the opponent by castling long and hitting his weak point at d3. Note that the Najdorf-style attack 10...\textit{\texttt{g4 e2}} 0-0-0 12.\textit{\texttt{c2 f5}} seems rather impotent and the counter-attack with 13.b4 has more chances to succeed. Finally, 10...\textit{\texttt{g5}}?! has not been tested, but it makes sense exactly in this moment — when we have not committed our king to the queenside yet. The position after 11.\textit{\texttt{c2 g4}} 12.\textit{\texttt{d2 f5}} 13.b4 a6 is difficult to evaluate.

A1. 7.a3; A2. 7.\textit{\texttt{e2}}

7.d4 exd4 8.\textit{\texttt{xh4}} 8.d4 exd4 9.\textit{\texttt{xd4}} defines the centre too early – see\textit{\texttt{Game 9 Mastrovasilis-Hracek, Istanbul 2003.}}

A1. 7.a3 d5 8.\textit{\texttt{xd5}}

8.d4 exd4 9.\textit{\texttt{xh4}} 8.d4 0-0 is completely balanced. See\textit{\texttt{Game 10 Onischuk-Shirov, New Delhi/Teheran 2000.}}

\textit{\texttt{8...xd5 9.b3}}

9.\textit{\texttt{c2}} lets in 9...\textit{\texttt{e4}} when 10.\textit{\texttt{b5?}} loses to 10...\textit{\texttt{exf3.}}

\textit{\texttt{9...b6 10.d3}}

We can still castle short or even leave the king in the centre — 14.\textit{\texttt{e2 f4}}
15...\textit{b}b3 \textit{e}f8. This plan is very sharp and double-edged though. I do not see any reason to prefer it over the text or the more tested 10...0-0.

11.\textit{e}2 0-0-0 12.0-0 \textit{b}b8!?

12...g5 looks out of step as it is commonly effective in conjunction with ...f7-f5, where Black’s bishop is currently residing. White would lead the race after 13.\textit{d}d2 g4 14.\textit{c}c2 h5 15.b4→.

12...\textit{d}d6!? is perhaps the most straightforward continuation. It prepares ...\textit{e}hd8 or ...\textit{g}g6. White must quickly display activity with 13.a4

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
Xu,Jun-Atalik, Moscow 2001, saw 13.\textit{d}d2 \textit{e}hd8 14.\textit{b}b4 \textit{d}xb4 15.\textit{c}cxb4 when 15...\textit{d}d5 (15...\textit{d}b8=) 16.\textit{c}c5 \textit{f}b6 takes over the initiative.
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

13...a5

13...\textit{e}hd8 14.a5 \textit{d}d7 15.a6 b6 16.\textit{c}c3 \textit{d}c5 is a more complex alternative. Then 17.b4 \textit{d}xd3 18.b5 e4 19.\textit{d}xd3 \textit{xd}3 20.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 leads to perpetual check. Of course, Black can switch plans with 16...\textit{g}g6 17.\textit{e}e1 \textit{f}h4, with mutual chances.

14.e4 \textit{g}g4 15.\textit{e}e3 \textit{xf}3 16.\textit{xf}3 \textit{d}d4 17.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 18.\textit{b}b5 \textit{d}b8 19.\textit{xa}5 \textit{hd}8 20.\textit{fc}1 (20.\textit{e}e2 \textit{b}b4 21.\textit{fc}1 \textit{dd}4) 20...\textit{f}6= is comfortable for Black.

12...e4!? is the other logical follow-up to 10...\textit{f}f5. It aims to open the centre and capitalise on Black’s better development. The point is that after 13.dxe4 \textit{xe}4,

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
White cannot play 14.\textit{d}d2 since it would be hanging.
14.\textit{c}c3 \textit{d}d5 15.\textit{c}c4 \textit{d}b6 was drawn in the blitz game Mamedyarov-Rublevsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Perhaps he should try: 14.\textit{d}d2 \textit{f}5 (Atalik suggests 14...\textit{d}d5 15.\textit{c}c3 \textit{e}5, but I would not play an endgame here.) After 15.a4? Black can exploit the fact that \textit{e}e2 is unprotected with 15...\textit{d}d4!. It seems that best would be the humble return 15.\textit{f}f3! when 15...\textit{e}e4 would repeat. I have also checked the more ambitious 15...g5, but 16.\textit{e}e1 g4 17.\textit{d}d4 reminds that White has a bishop pair and he would gladly sac a pawn to activate it.

At that point I thought 14.\textit{g}e1 in the diagram position might be a decent idea – protecting \textit{e}e2 and preparing \textit{f}f3-d4. We should continue our plan of playing with pieces rather than with pawns – 14.\textit{g}g6 15.\textit{d}d4 \textit{f}h4 or 15.\textit{d}d2 \textit{d}d5 16.\textit{c}c3 \textit{f}5 17.b3 \textit{g}g6.

The above analysis suggests that d2 is an important retreat square for the f3-knight. It transpires that stayed White’s bishop on d2, ...g5 would have been awkward since \textit{c}c3 would drop the d3-pawn. Thus
the f3-knight would have to go to the passive square e1. Therefore, a useful waiting move like 12...@b8!? is a clever way of fighting for an advantage.

13.@d2

In the normal Najdorf, Black often uses the a-pawn for ramming the enemy castling position. The only drawback of this plan is that the pawn structure after 13.a4!? a5 (13...@d7 14.@$c3 f6??) is not flexible and that limits the options of both sides. Most endgames will be better for Black so White should quickly complete development with 14.e4 $g4 15.@$e3 whereas the forced line 15...@$xf3 16.@$xf3 $d4 17.@$c3 $xf3+ 18.@gxf3 $d6 is balanced. White will evacuate his king via f1.


13...g5

Black exploits the fact that 14.@$c3 would drop the d3-pawn.

14.e4

A critical line is 14.@$fc1 g4 15.@$e1 h5 16.a4 $e6 17.@$d1 $d5 18.a5 a6

Commonly, the exchange sacrifice should provide a lasting initiative, but the very clumsy placement of the e1-knight reduces White’s attacking potential – 19.@$xc6 (19.b4 $a7) 19...bxcc6 20.d4 exd4 21.exd4 $b4 and he is still to prove that he has adequate compensation.

Another attempt to generate counterplay is 14.d4 exd4 15.$b5 $e4 16.@$xd4 $xd4 17.exd4 a6 18.$b4 $f6 19.$e2 $he8f.

14...$e6 15.@$c3 $f6 16.$e3 g4 17.@$h4 $d4 18.@$xd4 $xd4

White is in a positional bind, but the following break gives him some counterplay:

19.f4! gxf3 20.$xf3 $d6=
1. c4 e5 2. ∆c3 ∆c6 3. ∆f3 ∆c6 4. e3

**A2. 7. ∆e2 d5**

8. d4

8. cxd5 ∆xd5 9. ∆b3 ∆b6 10. d3 might look as an improved version of line 1. However, the absence of a3 enables the tactics:

10... ∆e6 11. ∆c2 ∆b4 12. ∆b1 ∆f5 13. a3 ∆xd3+! 14. ∆xd3 ∆xd3 15. ∆xd3 e4 16. ∆b5+ c6 17. ∆e5 exf3 18. ∆xg7 0-0-0 (18... ∆hf8!? 19. gxf3 ∆c4∞) 19. ∆g4+ ∆d7 20. ∆xf3 ∆e6 with full compensation for the pawn.

Moreover, the plan with 10... ∆f5 11.0-0 0-0-0 is still possible even though White has not spent a tempo on a3. For instance:

12. a4 ∆d7 13. ∆c3 ∆c5 14. ∆e1 a5; 12. ∆d2 g5 13. ∆fc1 g4 14. ∆e1 ∆e6 15. ∆d1 f5

Perhaps White should opt for the exchange sacrifice with 16. a4 ∆f7 17. ∆xc6 bxc6 18. a5∞.

8... exd4 9. ∆xd4 ∆xd4 10. ∆xd4 0-0

10... c5 was automatically played in all the games, but I prefer to activate a rook rather than a pawn. To be fair, the pawn attack is also sufficient for equality – 11. ∆h4 ∆e6 12.0-0 dxc4 13. ∆xc4 ∆xc4 14. ∆xc4 0-0-0 15. ∆d1 ∆ad8=.

11. cxd5 ∆d8 12. ∆h4

After 12.0-0, we could also recapture 12... ∆xd5 13. b3 c5=.

12... ∆xd5 13.0-0

We can use the tempo we saved on ... c5 to trade bishops:

13... ∆f5 14. f3 ∆d3

The activity of Black's heavy pieces balances the strong enemy bishop. We can even safely allow doubled pawns on the f-file.
B. 6.bxc3 0-0 7.e4

White does not gain anything from delaying this move. After 7...e2 d6 8.0-0 e4 9.Qe1 Qf5, his dark-squared bishop is a poor sight.

7...d6

8.Qe2

The older line 8.g3 offers Black an additional plan, based on the break ...b7-b5. Of course, it should be combined with ...f5. It seems that Black is fine regardless of the retreat square the f6-knight chooses: 8...Qd7 9.Qg2 Qc5 10.Qh4 a6 11.0-0 b5 ³, Khairullin-Svidler, Chita 2015; 8...a6!? 9.a4 Qa5 10.d3 Qd7; Other possible moves are 8...Qh5 and 8...Qe8.
I chose against the most prominent adept of this line, Suba, 8...Qh8 9.d3 Qg8 – see game 11 Suba-Delchev, Albacete 2004. Even the noncommittal development 8...h6 9.Qg2 Qe6 10.d3 Qd7 is a fair option.

8...Qh5

This is more forcing than 8...Qe7 which aims for a dark-squared strategy on the kingside:

a) 9.0-0 Qg6 10.d3 Qe8 11.Qe1 h6 12.Qd2 Qh7 13.Qf1 Qf4

14.Qg3

Or 14.Qxf4 exf4 15.d4 Qg5 16.Qd2 Qg6 17.Qd3 Qh3 18.Qf1 b6 19.c5 dxc5 20.dxc5 Qg5. 14...Qg5 15.f3, Suba-Rodriguez Guerrero, Salobrena 2009, when the logical continuation of Black’s play would have been 15...h5 16.Qf1 h4 17.Qe2 Qxe2+ 18.Qxe2 Qf6.

b) 9.d4 Qg6 10.0-0 Qe7 11.Qd3 Qe8 White’s setup with d4 is more active than in the previous example and it would be a mistake to follow in the same fashion. For instance, Bocharov-Matlashkov, Tyumen 2012 saw 11...h6 12.Qe1 Qh7 when 13.c5 would be strong as 13...dxc5 14.Qxe5 favours White. It is better to deprive the enemy of this resource. 12.Qe1 h6 13.Qd2 c5.

9.d4 Qf6

Again the most straightforward move – we attack d4.
9...exd4 allows 10.Qxd4
1. c4 e5 2. ∆c3 ∆c6 3. ∆f3 ∆c6 4. e3

Or 10. cxd4 ∆f6 11. 0-0 ∆f4 12. ∆xf4 ∆xf4 13. ∆ae1 ∆g4 14. ∆b2 =.
10... ∆f6 11. 0-0∞ Diamant-Molner, Phoenix 2015.

10. d5

10. g3 exd4 11. ∆xd4 ∆xd4 12. cxd4 ∆xd4 13. ∆b2 ∆c5 14. 0-0 ∆f6
15. ∆xf6 gxf6 16. f3d1 e8 17. f3d5 c6

Computer analysis proves that White has nothing more than a draw after 18. f3d2 (18. f4 b6+) 18... e5.

10... ∆a5 11. g3 b6

This move does not intend ... ∆a6, it only clamps on c5 and prepares ...

... ∆a5-b7-c5 or ... c7-c6 – for instance:
The radical solution 12. c5 dxc5 13. c4 does not really change Black’s plan – 13... ∆g4!.
The only challenging continuation is:

12. ∆g5 ∆g6 (12... g6!?∞) 13. h4

13... f5 14. exf5 ∆xf5 15. f3d1 d6 16. h5 e8

White’s initiative has come to an end while the defects of his pawn structure remain. An interesting fight is ahead.
Chapter 5. 1.c4 e5 2.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) f6 3.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) c6 4.e3

Annotated Games

9. Mastrovasilis – Hracek, EU-ch Istanbul 01.06.2003

1.c4 \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 2.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) e5 3.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) c6 4.e3 \( \text{\textit{b4}} \) 5.\( \text{\textit{c2}} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 6.\( \text{\textit{xc3}} \) \( \text{e7} \) 7.d4

7...exd4

Kiril Georgiev successfully defends 7...d6 which keeps more tension – 8.d5 \( \text{\textit{b8}} \) 9.d2 \( \text{f5} \). It is unclear how White could extract value from his spatial advantage.

8.\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 9.\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) c5

Black could play ...c5 later or even omit it. Bandza-Z.Polgar, Wiesbaden 1994, saw 9...0-0 10.\( \text{\textit{e2}} \) \( \text{d8} \) 11.0-0 c5 12.\( \text{\textit{h4}} \) d5 13.cxd5 \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) 14.\( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{e4}} \) \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) 16.\( \text{\textit{e3}} \) b6

17.\( \text{\textit{a6}} \) \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) 18.f3 \( \text{\textit{c8}} \) 19.\( \text{\textit{c4}} \) \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) 20.\( \text{\textit{a6}} \) \( \text{\textit{c8}} \) 21.\( \text{\textit{c4}} \) \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) draw.

10.\( \text{\textit{wh4}} \)

White aims for an endgame. 10.\( \text{\textit{xd3}} \) keeps the queen – 10...0-0 11.\( \text{\textit{e2}} \) d5 12.0-0 \( \text{\textit{d8}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{c2}} \) \( \text{\textit{e5}} \) =, Strikovic-Viterbo Ferreira, Vila Nova de Gaia 2010.

10...\( \text{\textit{d5}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{cxd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) + \( \text{\textit{xe7}} \)
Black has active pieces and a pawn majority 3:2 on the queenside. That should allow him to neutralise the bishop pair. He should aim to trade one of them, for instance, 13.a3 \( \text{a6} \) 14.e4 \( \text{e6} \).

13.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e6} \) 14.0-0-0

Naturally, White wants to have his king closer to the enemy’s potential passers, but he underestimates Black’s threats. A curious alternative was 14.\( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{ac8} \) 15.e4 \( \text{b4} \) 16.a3 \( \text{aa2} \) followed up by ...c5-c4-c3=.

14...\( \text{ac8} \) 15.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{b4} \) 16.\( \text{xb4} ? \)

16.a3 \( \text{c6} \) 17.e3 \( \text{f6} \) was about equal. Black’s plan is to push ...b7-b5-b4.

16...\( \text{xb4} + \) 17.\( \text{b1} \) b3! 18.\( \text{xb3} \) \( \text{xb3} \) 19.\( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{hd8} \) 20.\( \text{xc8} \) \( \text{xc8} \)

21.\( \text{d3} ?! \)

White has a small problem – he cannot trade rooks with 21.\( \text{c1??} \) due to 21...\( \text{a2} + \). Perhaps he should have addressed it urgently with 21.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{d5} \) 22.f3 a5 23.\( \text{e1} \) intending \( \text{e2} \). \( \text{d3} \) is a step in the wrong direction.

21...\( \text{a5} \) 22.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{h6} \) 23.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{a4} \)

White does not realise that he cannot survive with his king caged in. The rest is pathetic.

24...\( \text{g5} \) 25.\( \text{hxg5} \) \( \text{hxg5} \) 26.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{c5} \)

10. Onischuk – Shirov
New Delhi/Teheran 2000

1.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{e5} \) 2.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 3.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c6} \)

4.e3 \( \text{b4} \) 5.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 6.\( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 7.a3 \( \text{d5} \) 8.d4 \( \text{exd4} \) 9.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 10.\( \text{xd4} \) 0-0

11.\( \text{c5} \)

Black has discarded 10...\( \text{c5} \) in favour of the plan with ...\( \text{d8} \). White accepts the challenge and seizes space on the queenside. This game shows a convincing plan for Black – he arranges an exchange of the bishops via a6.

A more cunning version of this idea is 11.\( \text{d2} \) intending 11...\( \text{d8} \) 12.\( \text{b4} \)
...\texttt{e8} 13.\texttt{c5}, but Black could switch to 11...\texttt{c5} 12.\texttt{\textit{wh4}} dxc4 13.\texttt{\textit{xc4}} \texttt{\textit{e6}}=.
11.b4?! is worse, on account of 11...
dxc4 12.\texttt{\textit{xc4}} \texttt{\textit{d8}} 13.\texttt{\textit{f4}} a5.

11...b6 12.b4 bxc5 13.bxc5 \texttt{\textit{e6}}
14.\texttt{\textit{d3}} \texttt{\textit{a6}} 15.\texttt{\textit{c2}}

15.0-0 is positionally harmless since White would not be able to generate any threat in near future.

\begin{center}
\textbf{18.g4}
\end{center}

18.a4!? bans 18...\texttt{\textit{xb5}} and 18...\texttt{\textit{b5}}, but Black gets through the e-file:
18...\texttt{\textit{e6}}! 19.g4 \texttt{\textit{be8}} 20.g5 \texttt{\textit{e4}}!
21.\texttt{\textit{xe4}} \texttt{\textit{xe4}} 22.\texttt{\textit{d2}} g4

15...\texttt{\textit{c6}}

Black had to decide what pawn set-up to oppose against the enemy bishop pair. One possible stand was 15...\texttt{\textit{d7}} 16.\texttt{\textit{b2}} f6, then ...\texttt{\textit{c6}}.
A more active version of it is 15...\texttt{\textit{g4}}
16.\texttt{\textit{f3}} \texttt{\textit{e5}} 17.\texttt{\textit{b2}} f6 18.\texttt{\textit{f2}}, Belozerov-Korchnoi, Smolensk 2000,
18...\texttt{\textit{c4}}, aiming for ...\texttt{\textit{e7}}, ...\texttt{\textit{c6}}.
A completely different plot offers 15...\texttt{\textit{ae8}}!? 16.\texttt{\textit{f3}}\texttt{c6} 17.\texttt{\textit{f2}} \texttt{\textit{d7}}
18.\texttt{\textit{e1}} (18.\texttt{\textit{b2}} \texttt{\textit{wh6}}) 18...f5.
Shirov's novelty defines the queen's placement a little too early.

16.\texttt{\textit{b2}} \texttt{\textit{ab8}} 17.\texttt{\textit{c3}} \texttt{\textit{fe8}}

A critical position. Both sides have completed the "compulsory program" and it is time for heavy calculation.

White's defence is not easy - 23.\texttt{\textit{g1}}
would face 23...\texttt{\textit{xh2}}, but he can make a draw with accurate moves
- 23.\texttt{\textit{d4}} \texttt{\textit{e5}} 24.\texttt{\textit{xe5}} \texttt{\textit{xe5}} 25.\texttt{\textit{b1}}
h6 26.\texttt{\textit{g1}} d4 27.\texttt{\textit{xd4}} \texttt{\textit{xc5}} 28.gxh6
\texttt{\textit{xc1}}=+. The text is also very sharp.

18...\texttt{\textit{b5}} 19.g5 \texttt{\textit{xc5}} 20.\texttt{\textit{a4}}!
\texttt{\textit{b6}} 21.\texttt{\textit{xe8}}?!

21.gxf6? loses to 21...\texttt{\textit{e4}}.
The best continuation was 21.\texttt{\textit{b4}}!
when Black risks to enter a slightly worse endgame. He should carry on the attack with 21...\texttt{\textit{xc3}}! 22.\texttt{\textit{xc3}}
c5!!
After 23.gxf6 d4 24.\texttt{d2} dxe3 25.fxe3 \texttt{xf6} it all ends with a draw in view of the double attack on a1 and h4. The whole variation is long and complex, starting with 26.\texttt{xe8} \texttt{xa1} 27.\texttt{d1} \texttt{c3}+ 28.\texttt{f2} \texttt{b2}+ 29.\texttt{g1} \texttt{e5}!=

After the text Black’s attack is more difficult to tame.

21...\texttt{xe8}

22.f3

22.\texttt{d2}!? was tried in a correspondence game and White failed to make a draw after 22...\texttt{c6} 23.\texttt{ac1} \texttt{c4} 24.\texttt{xa7} \texttt{g6}, Bolda-Rattinger, corr. 2005. My computer claims that best is 25.\texttt{d4} \texttt{b4} 26.\texttt{c2}=

22...\texttt{c6} 23.\texttt{d2} \texttt{b5} 24.\texttt{f2} \texttt{e2}+?

24...\texttt{c2}! 25.\texttt{he1} c5 26.\texttt{xd5} c4!
27.\texttt{xb5} \texttt{xd2}+ 28.\texttt{e2} \texttt{xe2}+ 29.\texttt{xe2} \texttt{xb5} 30.a4 \texttt{d7} 31.\texttt{c1} \texttt{xa4} 32.\texttt{e1} should be a draw.

After mutual mistakes, the game was eventually drawn:

25.\texttt{g3} \texttt{c2}? 26.\texttt{e5}? (26.\texttt{a4}+-)
26...\texttt{d6} 27.\texttt{ab1} \texttt{b5} 28.\texttt{xb5} \texttt{xb5} 29.\texttt{c3}

29...\texttt{d4} (29...\texttt{f8}=; 29...\texttt{xc3} 30.\texttt{xc3} d4=) 30.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{f5}+
31.\texttt{f4} \texttt{d4} 32.\texttt{exd4} \texttt{xe5}+ 33.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{f8} 34.\texttt{b1} \texttt{e7} 35.\texttt{b7} \texttt{d7} 36.\texttt{xa7} \texttt{exh2} 37.\texttt{a8} h6 38.\texttt{g8} \texttt{hxg5} 39.\texttt{e7} \texttt{e7} 40.\texttt{g8} \texttt{e2}+ 41.\texttt{d5} \texttt{e3} 42.\texttt{a4} \texttt{xf3} 43.\texttt{c6} \texttt{c3}+ 44.\texttt{b5} \texttt{b3}+ 45.\texttt{c4} \texttt{a3} 46.\texttt{b4} \texttt{d3} 47.\texttt{a5} \texttt{exd4}+ 48.\texttt{c5} \texttt{a4} 49.\texttt{b5} \texttt{a1} 50.\texttt{a6} \texttt{f6} 51.\texttt{d8} \texttt{b1}+ 52.\texttt{c5} \texttt{a1} 53.\texttt{b5} \texttt{b1}+ 54.\texttt{c5} \texttt{e5}

Draw.

11. Suba — Delchev
Albacete 05.09.2004

1.\texttt{c4} \texttt{f6} 2.\texttt{c3} e5 3.\texttt{f3} \texttt{c6} 4.e3 \texttt{b4} 5.\texttt{wc2} \texttt{xc3} 6.\texttt{bxc3} d6 7.e4 0-0 8.\texttt{g3} \texttt{h8} 9.d3 \texttt{g8}
Another way to enable ...f7-f5 was ...d7. My manoeuvre ...f6-g8-e7 is a bit slow, but the position is closed and White cannot do much with the tempi.

10.h4 d7 11.g2 f5 12.exf5 dxf5 13.d3

13.dxf5 xf5 14.b1 b8 15.0-0 d7 is easy to play.

13...d7 14.0-0 h6 15.d2

White can create serious threats only on the kingside. Perhaps he could try 15.h3 intending h2-g4.

15...e7 16.h3 c8 17.h2

17...d8?!

I have obtained a normal, safe position out of the opening. Now I could have waited with ...b8, ...b6, ...e8, probably ...g6, but I decided to improve the placement of my c6-knight. It stays well on c6, but it executes only defensive functions there. It seemed to me that from e6 I could send it to the kingside. Also my bishop could use the freed c6-square. However, my last move unnecessarily provokes 18.d4! when 18...g6 is impossible. 18...f7 would be too passive – White follows up 19.e4, then f2-f4. Therefore, I should return to c6 – 18...dc6 19.b3 a5 20.a4 e8 hoping to grab the a4-pawn later on. Fortunately, my opponent was too engulfed in his own knight manoeuvre and missed his chance to seize the initiative.

18.e4 e6 19.d1 f5 20.a4 c6 21.a5 d7 22.e2 e8 23.a3 b6 24.axb6 axb6 25.b2 c5 26.a7 xe4 27.xe4 e7

The transformation of the pawn structure was definitely in my favour – the c4-pawn is a juicy target. I could attack it with a knight on a5, but I should trade first a pair of rooks on the a-file. Perhaps that explains Suba’s next move –
it prevents ...\text{\texttt{a}}8, but at the high price of creating more doubled pawns! Of course I had to trade queens and play a better endgame although my decision does not spoil my position either. It just leaves White more chances for obtaining some counterplay.

28.\texttt{g}4 \texttt{d}8 29.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{b}8 30.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{g}8 31.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{d}8?

This is panic. I suddenly change my mind and offer to trade queens in a worse setting than 3 moves ago. The cold-blooded attack on the e4-pawn 31...\texttt{f}6! would have assured me of an edge. The trick is that 32.g4 is effectively parried by 32...\texttt{d}8! 33.g5? \texttt{h}7. The rest is not too interesting:

32.\texttt{x}d8 \texttt{x}d8 33.\texttt{a}7 \texttt{c}8

38...\texttt{f}6?! (38...\texttt{c}5!) 39.\texttt{x}e5 \texttt{d}xe5 40.\texttt{c}5 \texttt{d}7 41.\texttt{a}6 \texttt{b}5 42.\texttt{a}2 \texttt{d}3 43.\texttt{x}b6 \texttt{xb}6 44.\texttt{x}b6 \texttt{xc}3 45.\texttt{c}7 \texttt{e}8 46.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{a}3 47.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{xe}4 48.\texttt{a}5 \texttt{ag}2 49.\texttt{x}g2 \texttt{e}4 50.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{d}8 51.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{gxf}6 52.\texttt{g}4 \texttt{d}2+ 53.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{d}3+ 54.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{xh}3 55.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{g}7 56.\texttt{a}8 \texttt{b}3 57.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{f}7 58.\texttt{h}8 \texttt{g}7 59.\texttt{a}8 \texttt{b}5 60.\texttt{c}8 \texttt{g}5 61.\texttt{a}8 Draw.
Main Ideas

1. c4 e6 2. d3 e5 3. d3 c6 4. g3 b4 5. d5

White escapes the exchange on c3, but the knight jump has two drawbacks:

1. As a rule, exchanges help the defender, and this is no exception. Although we do not take on d5 at once, the trade is constantly in the air. Moreover, after 5... c5 6. h2 0-0 7. 0-0 d6

8. d3, we could eliminate both knights with 8... xd5 9. xd5 d4 10. xd4 xd4=. That's why first players prefer 8. e3 a6! 9. b3 a7 10. b2 xd5 11. xd5 e7 12. h4 f5=. You can learn more about this line from the annotations to Game 12 Agdestein-To-palov, Stavanger 2014.

2. White removes the control of e4 and we could take our chance with 5... e4!? 6. h4 0-0 7. g2 d6!? 8.0-0 g5!? 9. d4 h6!

When I started my work on this book, the line with 8...g5 was totally neglected by practical players and it was harshly criticized by Marin and Watson in their works on the English Opening. My analyses suggested that in fact it was promising for Black and I hoped to arm you with a powerful surprise weapon. The Candidates tournament in Mos-
cow, however, saw both Aronian and Anand opting for 5...e4. Their games did not change my evaluation, but they pushed the variation under the limelight. The diagram position is too sharp for generalisations and it demands concrete play. Still, there is something I would like to stress – Black should not hold for the material advantage. On the opposite – he must be ready to return it for an initiative. For instance: 10.xxb4 xxb4 11.f3 gxh4! 12.xh6 hxg3 13.hxg3 h5

14.xf8 gxf3! 10.g2 is more solid – See the free-style Game 13 Sonoflucx,Rybka 2.x-Intuitivestra, playchess.com 2007.

Note also Nakamura’s move order 8.a3 when simplest is 8...a5 (8... Anand’s 8...c5 is a decent alternative, but after 9.0-0 Black should look for improvements. I suggest 9...g4?!?) 9.b4 (9.0-0 g5 10.b4 b6; 9.e3 g5 10.b4 e5!) 9...b6 10.b2

10...d4 11.xd4 xd4 12.e3 f5=.
Chapter 6. 3.\( \text{\textit{f}} \) 3 \( \text{\textit{d}} \) 6 4.\( \text{\textit{g}} \) 3 \( \text{\textit{b}} \) 4 5.\( \text{\textit{d}} \) 5

Step by Step

1.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 4 \( \text{\textit{f}} \) 6 2.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 3 e 5 3.\( \text{\textit{f}} \) 3 \( \text{\textit{c}} \) 6 4.\( \text{\textit{g}} \) 3 \( \text{\textit{b}} \) 4

5.\( \text{\textit{d}} \) 5 (5.\( \text{\textit{g}} \) 2 is covered in the next chapter) 5...e 4!?

This rare move is risky, but it is much more enterprising than the established equalizer 5...\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 5 6.\( \text{\textit{g}} \) 2 0-0 7.0-0 d 6

The first question which comes to mind is why Black led out his bishop to b 4 in the first place. Wasn’t it easier to play at once 4...\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 5. One reason is that 4...\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 5 5.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 5 e 4 is somewhat better for White. Another argument is that after 4...\( \text{\textit{b}} \) 4 5.\( \text{\textit{d}} \) 5 \( \text{\textit{c}} \) 5, Black obtains counterplay by trading on d 5 and then undermining the d 5-pawn with ...c 7-c 6.

8.\( \text{\textit{e}} \) 3

Or 8.d 3 \( \text{\textit{c}} \) 5 d 5 9.e 4 \( \text{\textit{d}} \) 4 10.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 4 \( \text{\textit{c}} \) 4=.

8...a 6! 9.b 3 \( \text{\textit{c}} \) 7 10.b 2 \( \text{\textit{c}} \) 5 d 5 \( \text{\textit{e}} \) 7 12.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 4 f 5=. I analyse this line in detail in the annotations to Game 12 Agdestein-Topalov, Stavanger 2014. It could serve as a backup of our main repertoire.

6.\( \text{\textit{h}} \) 4

6.\( \text{\textit{g}} \) 1 is undoubtedly a strange way of fighting for an opening advantage: 6...0-0 7.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 2 d 6!?. White has lost two tempi so we can sacrifice the e 4-pawn without much hesitation: 8.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 6+ \( \text{\textit{c}} \) 6 9.e 4 \( \text{\textit{c}} \) 8

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Chapter 6

White is unable to finish his development without big concessions.

6.\(\text{\textipa{\text{\textipa{dx}}x}b4}\) offers White the bishop pair advantage, but it cannot even balance Black’s central domination – 6...\(\text{dx}x\)b4 7.\(\text{d}d4\) 0-0 8.\(\text{g}g2\) (8.a3 \(\text{c}c6\) 9.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{dx}x\)c6) 8...d5 9.\(\text{c}c2\) (9.cxd5 \(\text{xd}5\)?) 9...\(\text{xc}2\)+ 10.\(\text{xc}2\) \(\text{dx}c4\) 11.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{e}e6\) 12.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{e}e8\) 13.b3 \(\text{g}4\) 14.\(\text{b}2\), Smyslov-Benko, Wijk aan Zee 1972, 14...\(\text{f}3\)†. White needs its d5-knight for an indirect attack on the e4-pawn – by trading its only defender.

6...0-0 7.\(\text{g}2\) d6!?

The hunting season on the \(\text{h}4\) is open! The threat ...g5 is now looming. Black’s last move has a poor reputation, but nonetheless it is the most testing continuation.

8.0-0

8.\(\text{\textipa{\text{\textipa{dx}}x}b4}\) \(\text{\textipa{\textipa{dx}}x}b4\) 9.a3 \(\text{c}6\) 10.d3

10...d5

10...\(\text{e}e8\) is considered equal after 11.0-0 \(\text{h}6\).

11.0-0 exd3!? 12.\(\text{xd}3\)

This pawn sacrifice was seen in Topalov-Aronian, Moscow 2016, but something went wrong very quickly – 12...\(\text{e}5\) 13.\(\text{d}4\)?

13.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{xc}4\) 14.e4 \(\text{c}6\) 15.b3 \(\text{e}5\) is about equal. Topalov takes e5 under control, but his move is probably wrong in view of:

13...\(\text{xc}4\) 14.e4 \(\text{e}6\) 15.b3

15...\(\text{c}5\)!? The game actually went 15...\(\text{a}5\) 16.\(\text{a}4\) when 16...\(\text{c}5\)! would have
been in Black’s favour - 17.b4 cxb4 18...\textgreek{g}5 dxe4 19...\textgreek{xf}6 gxf6 20...\textgreek{xe}4 \textgreek{b}3 21...\textgreek{ad}1 \textgreek{b}6.
16...\textgreek{xc}5 (16...\textgreek{d}1 \textgreek{e}5 17.f4 \textgreek{g}4 18...\textgreek{d}2 \textgreek{c}6\uparrow, heading for d4) 16...\textgreek{a}5\uparrow.

8...\textgreek{xf}6+ \textgreek{xf}6 9...\textgreek{xe}4 \textgreek{e}8 offers Black excellent compensation as the bishop lacks a good retreat square (10...\textgreek{f}3 \textgreek{h}3). So White has to part with it - 10...\textgreek{xc}6 bxc6 11.0-0 \textgreek{g}4 12...\textgreek{f}3 \textgreek{e}6 13.d3 \textgreek{c}5+ 14...\textgreek{h}1 d5 15...\textgreek{xd}5 \textgreek{xd}5\textgreek{=}.

The insertion of 8.a3 \textgreek{c}5

8...\textgreek{a}5 is simpler - 9.b4 (9.0-0 \textgreek{g}5 10.b4 \textgreek{b}6; 9.e3 \textgreek{g}5 10.b4 \textgreek{e}5!) 9...\textgreek{b}6 10...\textgreek{b}2 \textgreek{d}4 11...\textgreek{xd}4 \textgreek{xd}4 12.e3 \textgreek{f}5 is roughly equal.

White will open the f-file, but without minor pieces his attacking chances are minimal.

9.0-0 helped Nakamura to beat Anand in Moscow 2016.

The game went 9...\textgreek{e}8 10.e3 g5?! 11.b4 \textgreek{b}6? (Nakamura suggested after the game 11...\textgreek{xh}4 12...\textgreek{b}2 \textgreek{xd}5 13...\textgreek{xd}5 \textgreek{e}5 14...\textgreek{xc}5 \textgreek{g}4 15...\textgreek{b}3 \textgreek{f}3+ 16...\textgreek{xf}3 \textgreek{xf}3 17.h3\textgreek{=} 12...\textgreek{b}2 \textgreek{xd}5 13...\textgreek{cxd}5 \textgreek{d}4 (13...\textgreek{e}5 14.f4) 14.d3 g\textgreek{xh}4 15.dxe4 \textgreek{e}6 16.dxe6 \textgreek{xe}6 17.e5\textgreek{=}.

I propose to improve with:

9...\textgreek{g}4! hitting immediately e2.

The idea behind this move is seen in the line:

a) 10.b4 \textgreek{xd}5 11...\textgreek{xd}5 (11...\textgreek{xc}5 \textgreek{f}4) 11...\textgreek{d}4 12...\textgreek{e}1 \textgreek{xe}2+ 13...\textgreek{xe}2 \textgreek{xf}2+.

b) 10.h3 \textgreek{e}6 11.d3 \textgreek{xd}5 12...\textgreek{xd}5 \textgreek{xd}5 13...\textgreek{xe}4 \textgreek{e}6 14.b4 \textgreek{b}6 15...\textgreek{f}5 f6\textgreek{=}.

c) 10...\textgreek{e}3 \textgreek{xe}3 11...\textgreek{xe}3 \textgreek{e}7 12.b3 \textgreek{e}6=.

d) 10...\textgreek{xf}6+ \textgreek{xf}6 11...\textgreek{xe}4 (11...\textgreek{h}1 \textgreek{e}8) 11...\textgreek{f}8 12.d3 \textgreek{d}4 13...\textgreek{f}3 c6! 14...\textgreek{e}3 \textgreek{xf}3+ 15...\textgreek{xf}3 \textgreek{h}3 16...\textgreek{e}1 \textgreek{xe}3 17...\textgreek{xe}3=.

17...d5! 18...\textgreek{xd}5 \textgreek{xd}5 19...\textgreek{xd}5 \textgreek{exe}3 20...\textgreek{xe}3 \textgreek{g}5. This double attack on
d5 and e3 allows Black to take over the initiative and assures him of full compensation for the pawn.

8...g5!? 

Forcing the play. 8...\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}e8} is much more common, but the pawn structure arising after 9.d3 is pleasant for White. Still, Black gets enough counterplay.

9.f3 \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}xe8} 10.cxd5 11.dxc5 \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}e5} was seen in Nepomniachtchi-Efimenko, Ningbo 2011. Black’s dark-squared bishop will remain out of play on the queenside so he must alter the pawn structure by ...c7-c5!. That would enable a back door via d8. For instance 12.e3 (Marin’s recommendation) 12...\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}a5} 13.\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}c2} c5 14.\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}xe5} (14.dxc6 \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}xc6}) 14...\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}xe5} 15.d3 \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}g4} 16.e4 \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}d7=}

9.exd3 10.\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}xd3} \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}xd5} 11.cxd5 \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}e5} 12.\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}c2} \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}c5} 13.b3 a5! (intending ...a4) 14.a3 \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}d7}.

10.\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}h1}

Marin proposes 10.\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}xb4} \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}xb4} 11.f3, but correspondence chess has seen White struggling to equalize:

11...gxh4! 12.\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}xh6} hxg3

12...e3?! 13.g4 c5 14.\text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}g5} \text{\underline{\text{\text{-}}}e7} also deserves attention, but the text is preferable because it counts on attack rather than on material advantage.
3.\(\text{d}f3\) \(\text{c}6\) 4.\(g3\) \(\text{b}4\) 5.\(\text{d}d5\)

13.\(\text{hxg3}\) \(\text{h}5\)

![Chess Diagram](image)

14.fxe4
14.\(\text{xf8}\) \(\text{xg3}\)! gives Black a strong attack.

14...\(\text{hxg3}\) 15.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{xe4}\)
Black owns the initiative, but probably White can maintain the balance with accurate defence after 16.\(\text{wc1}\) (16.\(\text{xf8}\) \(\text{xf8}\)) 16...f5=+. White went on to draw eventually in Bubnov-Schunck, corr. 2011.

The game McNab-Haik, Metz 1988, saw 10.\(\text{wa4}\) a5
10...\(\text{xd4?!}\) 11.\(\text{xb4}\) \(\text{xe2}\+)
12.\(\text{h1}\) c6

![Chess Diagram](image)

sets more problems as the obvious 13.\(\text{xf6?!}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 14.\(\text{e3}\) gxf4 15.\(\text{ad1}\) stumbles into 15...\(\text{g4}\) with many threats.
It is better to retreat – 13.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{xc1}\) 14.\(\text{axc1}\) gxf4 15.gxf4

with sharp play. For instance, 15...\(\text{g4}\) is not decisive due to 16.\(\text{xe4}\) d5 17.\(\text{d2}\) and White is holding.

11.\(\text{e3}\) gxf4 12.a3 with unclear position.

10.\(\text{e3}\) gxf4 11.a3 \(\text{a5}\) 12.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{b6}\)
13.c5 d5 is another principled line.

14.gxf4
The attack on h6 is easily parried: 14.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{e7}\) or 14.cxb6 axb6 15.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{h7}\) 16.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{g8}\).

14...\(\text{h8}\) 15.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{g8}\) 16.\(\text{f3}\) exf3 17.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{e6}\). A sharp position with mutual chances has arisen. The activity of Black’s pieces compensate the enemy bishop pair. We can even sacrifice the exchange, using the fact that White’s kingside is still undeveloped:

18.\(\text{f5}\)

18.\(\text{b2}\) concludes the development. We can meet it by 18...
\(\text{h5}\) 19.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{e7}\) 20.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{g6}\) 21.\(\text{g1}\) \(\text{d7}\=\).

18...\(\text{e4}\) 19.\(\text{e6}\) \(\text{xg2}\) 20.\(\text{xg2}\) \(\text{xh4}\). The h6-knight has no retreat, but we cannot win it. Thus we have some sort of a fragile balance.
I have also analysed the somewhat slow:

![Chess Diagram](image)

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10.h3 \( \text{cxd5} \) (10...\g xh4 and 10...\a 5 are perfectly possible, too) 11.cxd5 \b 8 12.\a 4 \e 6 13.a3 \d 7 14.\b 3 \a 5 15.\xb 7 \c 8=.

Finally, 10.a3 \a 5 11.e 3 \g xh4 transposes to the main line.

10...\a 5

10...\x d 5 11.cxd5 \e 7 12.\x e 4 \g xh4 13.\a 4 \pm.

11.\g 2

This position is strategically unbalanced and it needs testing.

Both 11...\x d 5 12.cxd5 \e 7 13.e 3 \h 8 \pm and 11...\h 3 12.e 3 \x f 1 13.e 8 \x f 1 are unclear. See the free-style Game 13 Sonoflunk,Rybka 2.x-Intuitivestra, playchess.com 2007.
Chapter 6. 3.\( \text{\textit{f}} \) 3 4.\( \text{\textit{f}} \) 5 6.\( \text{\textit{d}} \) 5

Annotated Games

12. Agdestein – Topalov
Stavanger 2014

1.c4 e5 2.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 3 3.\( \text{\textit{f}} \) 3 4.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 4 5.\( \text{\textit{d}} \) 5 6.\( \text{\textit{g}} \) 2 0-0 7.0-0 d6

8.e3

White prevents the unloading operation 8.d3 \( \text{\textit{d}} \) xd5 9.cxd5 \( \text{\textit{d}} \) d4 10.\( \text{\textit{d}} \) xd4 \( \text{\textit{d}} \) xd4 11.e3 \( \text{\textit{b}} \) 6 with easy equality. Black only should refrain from undermining the centre with ...c6. Such an idea would have had some sense if Black had knights and the d5-pawn was restricting them. With only long-range pieces left on board, ...c6 is anti-positional because:
1. It does not solve any strategic problems;
2. It only prolongs the diagonal to the g2-bishop;

3. In principle, one should not display unnecessary activity on the wing where the opponent is stronger. Thus, after:
12.a4 a5! 13.\( \text{\textit{d}} \) d2,

instead of preparing ...c6, we should turn our attention to the kingside where ...f5 is a natural idea. We can push it immediately:
13...f5 14.\( \text{\textit{h}} \) 1, but here we need to turn again to 14...\( \text{\textit{d}} \) d7, since 14...g5 is a bit premature due to 15.\( \text{\textit{h}} \) 5, e.g. 15...\( \text{\textit{d}} \) 7 16.f4 exf4 17.gxf4 g4 18.h3. This line suggests that perhaps it would be better to wait for White to shift his queen from the d1-h5 diagonal:
13...\( \text{\textit{d}} \) d7 14.\( \text{\textit{c}} \) 2 f5! 15.\( \text{\textit{h}} \) 1 when we have two possible set-ups.

a) Simplest is to open the e-file and trade all the rooks with a probable draw: 15...\( \text{\textit{f}} \) 7 16.f4 exf4 17.exf4
Note that Anand’s rook lift …\texttt{f8-f6-h6} is clumsy since White can easily prevent …\texttt{h5} with f4, \texttt{h3}.

b) The same idea could be modified by gaining space first with 15...g5 16.f4 exf4 17.exf4 (17.gxf4 g4 18.e4 \texttt{e8} 19.e5 h5∞) 17...\texttt{g4} 18.\texttt{c3} \texttt{e8} 19.b3 \texttt{h5} 20.\texttt{h4} (20.\texttt{b2} \texttt{e7} 21.\texttt{c3} \texttt{h7} 22.\texttt{ae1} \texttt{f7} 23.\texttt{d2} \texttt{c6}∞ 24.\texttt{a3} \texttt{h4}) 20...\texttt{e3} 21.\texttt{h2} \texttt{f8} 22.\texttt{b2} \texttt{ae8} 23.\texttt{c3} \texttt{h7}∞.

The first plan is certainly safer and is effective against all White’s move orders, for instance, 14.\texttt{c1} (instead of 14.\texttt{c2}) 14...\texttt{e8} 15.b3 (15.\texttt{c4} c5=) 15...\texttt{f5} 16.\texttt{h1} \texttt{f7}.

On a final note, I should add that if White begins with 12.b4 (instead of 12.a4), it is best to counter it with 12...\texttt{a5}!

12...\texttt{d7} 13.a4 \texttt{a5} 14.b5 \texttt{f5} 15.\texttt{d2} \texttt{f6} is possible, of course, if a player like Anand chose it, but the b5-pawn clamps on c6 and reduces Black’s counter-attacking options.

13.bxa5 (13.b5 \texttt{a4}!) 13...\texttt{xa5}

14.\texttt{d2} \texttt{f5} 15.\texttt{xa5} \texttt{xa5} 16.f4 \texttt{e7} 17.\texttt{e1} \texttt{b6}, Rogozenco-Balogh, Germany 2009.

14...\texttt{e7} 15.e4. Here the game Marin-Komarov, Cairo 2001, finished in a draw, but Black obviously has a slight edge owing to his better pawn structure.

8...\texttt{a6} 9.\texttt{b3}

White’s most unpleasant plan is based on the attack with \texttt{h4}, \texttt{f4}, aiming to open the f-file. Therefore, 9.\texttt{h4} should be his most principled continuation. However, the sharp attack 9...\texttt{xd5} 10.cxd5 \texttt{e7} 11.f4 (11.b3 \texttt{c6} 12.dxc6 \texttt{xc6} 13.\texttt{b2} \texttt{d5} 14.\texttt{c1} \texttt{e7}=, Tari-Matlakov, Yerevan 2014.) 11...\texttt{xf4} 12.b4 \texttt{b6} 13.\texttt{xf4}!??, Romanov-Fressinet, Hamburg 2014, could be tamed by 13...\texttt{f5} or even 13...\texttt{e8}, intending to meet \texttt{h5} by ...\texttt{f5}.

9.\texttt{d4} \texttt{a7} should not be a problem:

10.\texttt{dxe5}

10.\texttt{c3} \texttt{h6} 11.\texttt{h3} (11.d5 \texttt{e7}) 11...\texttt{f5} 12.a3 (12.dxe5 \texttt{dxe5}) 12...\texttt{e4} 13.\texttt{e2} \texttt{exd4} 14.\texttt{exd4} (14.exd4 \texttt{d5} 15.cxd5 \texttt{e7} 16.\texttt{c3} \texttt{xd5} 17.\texttt{b3} \texttt{xc3} 18.bxc3 \texttt{c5})
14...\(\text{\texttt{h}}\text{\texttt{xd4}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{xd4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{h}}\text{\texttt{7}}\) leads to normal play in the centre.
10.b3 \(\text{\texttt{exd4}}\) 11.\(\text{\texttt{xd4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xd4}}\)
12.\(\text{\texttt{exd4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xd5}}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{cxd5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{d7}}\)
14.\(\text{\texttt{e3}}\) a5= is rather dull.
10...\(\text{\texttt{xe5}}!\) 11.b3 \(\text{\texttt{g4}}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{f4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{e4}}\)
was equal in Kuzubov-Gupta, Iasi 2015.

Finally, the plan of a queenside pawn storm 9.d3 \(\text{\texttt{a7}}\) 10.\(\text{\texttt{d2}}\) has no bite.
10.\(\text{\texttt{xf6}}\) + \(\text{\texttt{xf6}}\) 11.\(\text{\texttt{d2}}\) invites Black's queen to the kingside –
11...\(\text{\texttt{g6}}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{c3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{h5}}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{h4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{g4}}\)
14.\(\text{\texttt{f3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{f5}}\)=, Grischuk-Adams, Warsaw 2013.
10.\(\text{\texttt{xd5}}\) 11.\(\text{\texttt{cxd5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{e7}}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{b3}}\) c6
13.\(\text{\texttt{dxc6}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xc6}}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{c3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{b8}}\) 15.d4

Now 15...\(\text{\texttt{exd4}}\) is enough for equality, but in Tomashevsky-
Svidler, Moscow 2007, Black
opted for:
15...\(\text{\texttt{e4}}\)!? 16.\(\text{\texttt{d2}}\) d5 17.f3, when 17...
\(\text{\texttt{e6}}\)! 18.\(\text{\texttt{d1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{f5}}\) would have accomplished Black's main strategic goal
in our anti-English repertoire – to occupy the centre and hold it.

9...\(\text{\texttt{a7}}\) 10.\(\text{\texttt{b2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xd5}}\) 11.\(\text{\texttt{cxd5}}\)
\(\text{\texttt{e7}}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{h4}}\)

White hopes to open up the f-file
with \(\text{\texttt{f4}}\). 12.\(\text{\texttt{d4}}\) is harmless owing to
12...\(\text{\texttt{e4}}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{g5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{f5}}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{wh5}}\) h6 15.\(\text{\texttt{e6}}\)
\(\text{\texttt{xe6}}\) 16.\(\text{\texttt{dxe6}}\) c6.

12...\(\text{\texttt{f5}}\)!

12...c6? 13.\(\text{\texttt{dxc6}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xc6}}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{f4}}\) led to Black's rout in Swiercz-Balogh, Budapest 2014.

13.\(\text{\texttt{f4}}\)

In Marin's opinion, critical here is
13.\(\text{\texttt{c1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{b6}}\) (to free the queen) 14.\(\text{\texttt{f4}}\)
\(\text{\texttt{e4}}\) 15.g4, but he only considers:
15...\(\text{\texttt{xd5}}\)! 16.\(\text{\texttt{xf5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xf5}}\) 17.\(\text{\texttt{gx5}}\)
\(\text{\texttt{e7}}\) 18.\(\text{\texttt{c4}}\). We have the much
better option of:
15...\(\text{\texttt{fxg4}}\)! 16.\(\text{\texttt{xe4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{e8}}\) with active
play. For example:
Chapter 6

18.\textit{c6}

The most principled retort was 18...\texttt{\textit{d5}}. Then White has nothing better, but push 19.f6 when both captures are possible:

19...\texttt{\textit{xf6}} 20.\texttt{\textit{xf6}} \texttt{\textit{xf6}}; 19...\texttt{\textit{xf6}} 20.\texttt{\textit{xe4}} \texttt{\textit{xe3}} 21.\texttt{\textit{g1+ \textit{h8}} 22.\texttt{\textit{h5 d5\textsuperscript{\textbullet}}.}}

19.\texttt{\textit{dxe4}}

Agdestein fails to assess realistically the position. He overestimates the significance of the open g-file.

19...\texttt{\textit{xe4}} 20.\texttt{\textit{c2}} \texttt{\textit{ae8}} 21.\texttt{\textit{g1 \textit{f6 22.eae1}}}.

\texttt{\textbullet} The stranded e3-pawn is a cause of constant concern for White. Black can choose a solid set-up as ...\texttt{\textit{a7}}, ...\texttt{\textit{h8}}, \texttt{\textit{f8}} or the more active:

22...\texttt{\textit{f7}} 23.e4?

White counted on 23...\texttt{\textit{xg1}} 24.\texttt{\textit{xe4}} which would have given him decent compensation, but he misses Topalov's counter-blow. The calm 23.\texttt{\textit{d2}} kept things under control:
23...\textit{\texttt{wh}}5 24.\textit{\texttt{xf}}1 or 23...d5 24.\textit{\texttt{xf}}3 when Black cannot double rooks on the e-file in view of \textit{\texttt{a}}3.

23...d5!\textsuperscript{?} 24.\textit{\texttt{x}}f6 \textit{\texttt{xl}}g1 25.\textit{\texttt{xe}}5 \textit{\texttt{a}}7 26.\textit{\texttt{exd}}5 \textit{\texttt{cx}}d5 27.\textit{\texttt{dd}}3 \textit{\texttt{ed}}8 28.\textit{\texttt{ec}}1 \textit{\texttt{bd}}7 29.\textit{\texttt{h}}3 \textit{\texttt{e}}7 30.\textit{\texttt{g}}3 \textit{\texttt{h}}8 31.\textit{\texttt{e}}c2 \textit{\texttt{b}}8 32.\textit{\texttt{g}}4 \textit{\texttt{d}}4 33.\textit{\texttt{g}}1 d3 34.\textit{\texttt{ed}}2 \textit{\texttt{wd}}5 35.\textit{\texttt{exd}}3 \textit{\texttt{a}}7+ 36.\textit{\texttt{f}}f1 \textit{\texttt{wh}}1+ 37.\textit{\texttt{e}}e2 \textit{\texttt{we}}4+ 38.\textit{\texttt{d}}1 \textit{\texttt{b}}b8 39.\textit{\texttt{gf}}3 \textit{\texttt{xf}}3+ 40.\textit{\texttt{xf}}3 \textit{\texttt{x}}e5 41.fxe5 \textit{\texttt{xe}}5 42.\textit{\texttt{xb}}7 \textit{\texttt{exf}}5 43.a4 a5 44.b3 \textit{\texttt{f}}2 45.\textit{\texttt{a}}6 g5 0-1

13.Sonoflucker,Rybka-Intuitivestra
PAL/CSS Freestyle 2007

1.c4 e5 2.\textit{\texttt{dc}}3 \textit{\texttt{dc}}6 3.\textit{\texttt{df}}3 \textit{\texttt{df}}6 4.g3 \textit{\texttt{db}}4 5.\textit{\texttt{dd}}5 e4 6.\textit{\texttt{hh}}4 0-0 7.\textit{\texttt{g}}2 d6 8.0-0 g5 9.d4 h6 10.\textit{\texttt{h}}1 \textit{\texttt{a}}a5 11.\textit{\texttt{ag}}2 \textit{\texttt{ah}}3

White's kingside is a funny sight. Especially the \texttt{h1}-bishop is rather awkward. Lines like 12.b4 \textit{\texttt{xb}}4 13.\textit{\texttt{xb}}4 \textit{\texttt{xb}}4 14.\textit{\texttt{b}}1 c5 15.a3 \textit{\texttt{ac}}3 16.dxc5 dxc5 17.\textit{\texttt{xb}}7 \textit{\texttt{wd}}1 18.\textit{\texttt{xd}}1 \textit{\texttt{ab}}8 underline that. Every exchange increases the weight of the remaining black pieces. White's only counterplay could be based on the temporary weakness of e4. If the bishop could take it, the whole course of events would abruptly change since Black will have to worry about his king. Therefore, the following sacrifice is timely and good.

12.\textit{\texttt{ge}}3! \textit{\texttt{xf}}1 13.\textit{\texttt{xf}}1 \textit{\texttt{h}}8?!

This move is too hesitant. The e4-pawn could not be defended with 13...\textit{\texttt{e}}8 due to 14.\textit{\texttt{f}}5 \textit{\texttt{h}}7 15.h4 so Black should have thought how to limit the scope of White's would-be-a-beast light-squared bishop. I prefer 13...\textit{\texttt{xd}}5! 14.\textit{\texttt{cx}}d5 \textit{\texttt{e}}7 15.\textit{\texttt{xe}}4 f5 16.\textit{\texttt{g}}2.

The potential strength of the \texttt{g2}-bishop discourages immediate active actions with ...f5-f4, but in future the f-pawn could turn into an important resource.

I think that White has just enough for the exchange to balance the game, e.g. 16...\textit{\texttt{g}}6 17.\textit{\texttt{c}}4 \textit{\texttt{b}}6 18.e3 \textit{\texttt{ff}}6 19.a4 f4 20.\textit{\texttt{g}}1.

It looks safer to gain some space on the queenside with 16...b5!? 17.\textit{\texttt{c}}2 \textit{\texttt{gg}}7 18.\textit{\texttt{g}}1 \textit{\texttt{g}}6 19.a4 bxa4 20.\textit{\texttt{xa}}4 \textit{\texttt{b}}6 21.e3 \textit{\texttt{d}}7=.
14.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b1}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b6}} 15.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b4}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xd4}} 16.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xe3}} 17.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}bxc6}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xc1}} 18.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}cxb7}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b8}} 19.\textbf{\texttt{xcl}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xd5}} 20.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}cxd5}}

According to the engines, the positions on the last two diagrams have the same evaluation, but from a practical point of view, White has made a big progress. The b7-pawn secures him at least a draw while any mistake will cost Black dearly. Without the a-pawns, Black would not have risked anything, of course. The rest of the game shows that even computer’s help is often not enough to save such “equal” (?) positions.

20.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e7}} 21.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c4}} f5 22.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e3}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e5}} 23.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g2}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f7}} 24.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g1}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e7}} 25.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}h3}} h5 26.a4 f4 27.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c8}} h4 28.g4 \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g7}} 29.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f5}} a5 30.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b3}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f7}} 31.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e6+}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g6}} 32.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f5+}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g7}} 33.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c4}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f7}} 34.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b3}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g8}} 35.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e6+}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f8}} 36.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f5}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f6}} 37.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c2}} h3 38.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c8}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e5}} 39.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b3}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f7}} 40.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c4}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g7}} 41.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f5}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e7}} 42.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c8}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g8}} 43.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b3}} fxe3 44.fxe3 \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e8}} 45.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f5}}

45...\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e7}}?

Black should always threaten to take the bishop. 45...\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f8}}! 46.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c4}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xf5}} 47.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}gxf5}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xf5}} 48.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e2}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f3}} 49.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xf3}} exf3 50.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f2}} g4 51.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g3}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g7}} 52.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xg4}} f2! is a draw.

46.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c4}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g7}} 47.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}d4}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xd4}} 48.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}exd4}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e7}} 49.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f2}} 1-0

I'm not sure what has actually happened, but this position is probably still a draw after 49...e3+! 50.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e2}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g7}} 51.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e6}} (51.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b3}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f6}} 52.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c8}}; 51.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}c8}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e8}} 52.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}e6}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}g6}} 53.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xe3}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f8}}) 51...\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}f6}} 52.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b5}} (52.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xe3??}} c5; 52.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}b3}} \textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xe6}}) 52...\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xe6}} 53.\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbullet}xe6}} d5!.
Chapter 7. 3.\text{\textcopyright}f3 \text{\textcopyright}c6 4.g3 \text{\textcopyright}b4 5.\text{\textcopyright}g2

Main Ideas

1.c4 e5 2.\text{\textcopyright}c3 \text{\textcopyright}f6 3.\text{\textcopyright}f3 \text{\textcopyright}c6 4.g3 \text{\textcopyright}b4 5.\text{\textcopyright}g2 0-0 6.0-0

6...\text{\textcopyright}e4!?
I do not say 6...d6 or 6...\text{\textcopyright}e8 are bad, but I will always choose the aggressive approach unless it’s proven wrong. And practice shows 53 percent in Black’s favour!
7.\text{\textcopyright}g5
7.\text{\textcopyright}e1 \text{\textcopyright}xc3 8.dxc3 h6 9.\text{\textcopyright}c2 d6 10.\text{\textcopyright}e3 \text{\textcopyright}e8 may be of equal worth.

However, the strategical plot in this position is much simpler than after 7.\text{\textcopyright}g5. White’s only serious plan is connected with f3 and we must learn how to meet it. I suggest 11.\text{\textcopyright}c2 \text{\textcopyright}e5!? – see Game 14 Kelly-Gormally, Birmingham 2002. It is enough to trade any pair of minor piece to achieve comfortable play.
7...\text{\textcopyright}xc3 8.bxc3 \text{\textcopyright}e8 9.f3 \text{\textcopyright}e3!?

The other reasonable option is 9...\text{\textcopyright}xf3 10.\text{\textcopyright}xf3 when most solid looks 10...\text{\textcopyright}e7 (10...d5 seems to hold, too, but I suspect that we could expect surprises from White here), although this idea is based on the positional pawn sac 11.e3 \text{\textcopyright}e5 12.\text{\textcopyright}d4 d6! 13.d3 c5 14.\text{\textcopyright}f5 \text{\textcopyright}xf5 15.\text{\textcopyright}xf5 d5! 16.cxd5 c4\infty. It is a fair alternative to 9...\text{\textcopyright}e3.
10.d3 (10.dxe3 \text{\textcopyright}e7! 11.\text{\textcopyright}h3 \text{\textcopyright}c5=) 10...d5
Since the source game Kasparov-Karpov, Seville 1987, 11.b3 was White’s main retort. The bulletin of the world title match awards it an exclamation mark and puts an evaluation “!”. Indeed, I also prefer White after 11...a5 12.a3 c6. However, I suggest the more active set-up:
12...b6! Instead of b7-c6, we’ll build the pawn chain b6-c5. That will leave c6 free for our knight. Have in mind that 12...b6 is nearly unexplored. Play may continue:
13.cxd5 dxe5 14.f4 1b7

Black’s game is very easy. He will trade bishops with ...e7 and will block the long diagonal with ...c5, ...c6-d4. White’s threats on the f-file only look dangerous, but he cannot do much without his queen which is stranded on the other flank. My main line runs:
15.c4 e7 16.xb7 xeb7 17.f5 c5! 18.f6 e6 19.b2 h6 20.e4 g6 21.e1 d4∞.

Perhaps Svidler also was not satisfied with White’s game since at the Candidates tournament 2016 he came up with the novelty:
11.a4?!, but after 11...h6 12.cxd5 dxe5 13.e4 f5 14.c5 f4 he failed to revive his king’s bishop.

The g2-bishop is a poor sight, but the position remains extremely tangled – Game 15 Svidler-Karjakin, Moscow 2016.

The same idea works in the event of 11.cxd5 dxe5 12.e4 f5! 13.c4 d7 followed up by ...f4.

Conclusion:
The ball is in White’s court in the 9...e3 line. 9...exf3 also seems in good shape.
1.c4 e5 2.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{c}}}}\)c3 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{f}}}}\)6 3.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)f3 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{c}}}}\)6 4.g3 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{b}}}}\)4 5.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{g}}}}\)2 0-0 6.0-0

6.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)d5 e4 7.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{h}}}}\)h4 d6 transposes to the previous chapter.

6...e4!?

This advance perfectly fits in with our aggressive approach to the opening as it promises active piece play in a strategically unbalanced position.

Alternatives are rather passive:

a) 6...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e8 7.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)d5 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{x}}}}\)xd5 8.cxd5 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)d4 9.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)xd4 exd4. If Carlsen was willing to defend this, it should not be dangerous, but it looks deadly dull to me.

b) 6...d6 gives White some spatial advantage due to the plan \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)3-\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)4. The best shaping of this idea is, however, the slower 7.d3 h6 8.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{a}}}}\)a4! (8.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)d5 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{c}}}}\)c5 9.e3 a6!) 8...a5 9.b3

White defends \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{c}}}}\)4 and enables the tactical shot 9...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{c}}}}\)c5 10.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{x}}}}\)xe5! \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{x}}}}\)xe5 11.d4 with the easier game. 9...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{f}}}}\)f5 is dubious in view of 10.d4! (threatening a3).

9...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e7 could prove a waste of time as in Aronian-Topalov, Moscow 2016: 10.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{b}}}}\)b2 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{c}}}}\)c5 11.e3 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{a}}}}\)a7 12.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e3 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e8 13.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{h}}}}\)h4. The ex-world champion did not find anything better than 13...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)d8 14.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)d2 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e7 15.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)ad1 c6 16.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e2 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{f}}}}\)f5 17.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{f}}}}\)xf5 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{f}}}}\)xf5 18.d4 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{c}}}}\)c8 19.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{c}}}}\)c3 exd4 20.exd4 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e4 21.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d}}}}\)xe4 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{x}}}}\)xe4 22.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{x}}}}\)xe4 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{x}}}}\)xe4 23.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e1 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)xe1+ 24.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{x}}}}\)xe1 \(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{f}}}}\)f5 25.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e7+.

In general, the queen stands better on d7 in this line.

9...\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e}}}}\)e8 10.\(\text{\textit{\textbf{\textsf{b}}}}\)b2
Chapter 7

Reviving the threat of 10...\texttt{c5} 11.\texttt{dxe5} \texttt{dxe5} 12.d4 \texttt{xc4} 13.bxc4 \texttt{a7} 14.e3\#. Svidler-Nakamura, Candidates, Moscow 2016, saw 10...\texttt{e3} \texttt{e7}?? when White missed 12.d4!, trapping the b4-bishop. Correspondence chess has seen:

10...\texttt{g4} 11.h3 \texttt{f5} 12.e3 \texttt{d7} 13.\texttt{h2} \texttt{ab8} and Black is holding thanks to the possibility of ...\texttt{b5}. Still, the whole Black's set-up is hanging on a hair.

7.\texttt{g5}

7.\texttt{d1} \texttt{xc3} 8.dxc3 (8.bxc3 \texttt{e8} 9.f3 \texttt{exf3} 10.\texttt{xf3} d5 transposes to line B.) 8...h6 9.\texttt{c2} d6 10.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e8}

7...\texttt{xc3} 8.bxc3

8.dxc3 \texttt{e8} 9.\texttt{h3} d6 10.\texttt{f4} (10.\texttt{g5} \texttt{hxh3}?? 11.\texttt{xh3} h6=, Muthahaiah-Costachi, Porto Carras 2015) 10...\texttt{e5} 11.b3 \texttt{f5} 12.\texttt{d5} h6 is similar to the previous comment – 13.\texttt{e3} \texttt{d7} 14.h3 \texttt{g6} 15.\texttt{h2} \texttt{e5} 16.f4 \texttt{xf3} 17.\texttt{xf3}, J.Gabriel-Gymesi, Deizisau 2009. The open e-file is a decent insurance against White’s kingside attack.

8...\texttt{e8} 9.f3

9.d3 is senseless. After 9...\texttt{exd3} 10.exd3 d6 11.\texttt{b1} h6 12.\texttt{e4} \texttt{xe4} 13.\texttt{exe4} \texttt{h3} 14.\texttt{e1} \texttt{e5} it turns out that 15.\texttt{xb7} is not a threat in view of 15...\texttt{g4} 16.f3 \texttt{xf3}+.

We have now two good options: A. 9...e3??; B. 9...\texttt{exf3}.

The latter is more dynamic and complex, but it is up to you to decide whether that is a plus. The arising positions with a fluid centre are rather chaotic and demand perfect calculation.

9...e3 is easier to play and Black is commonly the active side.
A. 9...e3!?

This push became popular after Karpov's win over Kasparov in the 1987 world title match. Karpov writes that it was invented by his second I. Zaitsev for the match in Bagio against Korchnoi, but later he discovered an older correspondence game Berndt-Zaets, 1979. The idea behind this sacrifice is that Black easily restores the material balance in the event of 10.dxe3 \textit{We7!} 11.\textit{h3 c5} 12.\textit{f4 xc4} 13.e4 d6 14.\textit{wd3}.

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

In 2001 Kasparov drew as White with Sadvakasov in the endgame after 14...\textit{de5} 15.\textit{xc4}. A year later Khalifman-Grischuk made only the moves 14...\textit{xe6} 15.\textit{e3} before signing a peace treaty. Curiously, modern engines evaluate both moves as 0.00 which is highly unusual for a position without forced variations.

10.d3

White keeps his pawns connected. The obvious threat is \textit{de4}, \textit{xe3} so Black must quickly find targets in order to distract the enemy from the overextended pawn.

10...d5 11.\textit{wb3}

11.cxd5 \textit{xd5} 12.\textit{wb3} 12.\textit{de4} f5 13.c4 \textit{de7}, intending to meet any knight retreat by 14...f4, promises Black an initiative. 12...\textit{wxb5} 13.f4 \textit{wh5} 14.\textit{xd5 dg4} 15.\textit{f3 xf3} 16.\textit{xf3 b6} 17.\textit{xe3 xe7} gives Black nice compensation.

Svidler's novelty 11.\textit{wa4}! does not change significantly Black's play - 11...h6 12.cxd5 \textit{xd5} 13.\textit{de4} f5 14.\textit{c5} f4 - see \textit{Game 15} Svidler-Karjakin, Moscow 2016.

11...\textit{e5} 12.\textit{wa3}

12.\textit{wa4} does not protect c3. That encourages 12...c6 (although 12...b6 is also possible) 13.cxd5 \textit{xd5} with a double attack. Then 14.c4 \textit{c3} 15.\textit{wc2 xe2+} is equal, as well as 14.\textit{b2} b5.

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

12...b6!

This rare set-up is more active than the well tested 12...c6 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.f4 \textit{c6} 14...\textit{g4} 15.\textit{f3} \textit{c6} allows
White to launch a pawn storm on the kingside after 16.h3 \( \text{d}7 \) (16...\( \text{xf}3 \) 17.\( \text{xf}3 \)) 17.\( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 18.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 19.\( \text{g}4 \).

15.\( \text{b}1 \)!!! \( \text{c}7 \)
15...\( \text{g}4 \)?? 16.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 17.\( \text{xf}7 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 18.\( \text{e}1 \)+–; 15...\( \text{b}6 \)?? 16.\( \text{b}2 \)! \( \text{g}4 \) 17.\( \text{c}4 \).

This is a critical position for the Karpov/Zaitsev/Zaets variation.

16.\( \text{f}3 \)±

The stem game Kasparov-Karpov, Seville 1987, saw 16.\( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 17.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{dxc}4 \) 18.\( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 19.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{g}7 \) with active play. Perhaps White’s best continuation is 20.\( \text{c}3 \) (20.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 21.\( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}1 \) 22.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{e}5 \)!) 20...\( \text{d}8 \)! 21.\( \text{xb}7 \) (21.\( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{d}4 \)=) 21...\( \text{d}4 \) 22.\( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 23.\( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 24.\( \text{h}3 \) with unclear complications.

White could try to improve over Kasparov’s 17.\( \text{c}4 \) with 17.\( \text{f}3 \), but then 17...\( \text{d}7 \)! restricts the enemy on the kingside (White’s game is easier after 17...\( \text{ad}8 \) 18.\( \text{h}3 \)! \( \text{c}8 \) 19.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 20.\( \text{cxd}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 21.\( \text{bc}1 \).) 18.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{dxc}4 \) 19.\( \text{dxc}4 \) \( \text{ad}8 \) 20.\( \text{a}1 \) (20.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 21.\( \text{fxe}5 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 22.\( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}1 \) 23.\( \text{xf}1 \) \text{e}2 is dynamically balanced.) 20...\( \text{h}6 \) (Preparing to meet 21.\( \text{b}3 \) by 21...\( \text{e}6 \).) 21.\( \text{fe}1 \) \( \text{e}6 \)! Black has a comfortable equality. For example: 22.\( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 23.\( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 24.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 25.\( \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{xd}7 \) or 22.\( \text{ec}1 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 24.\( \text{xc}7 \) \( \text{xe}7 \).

16.\( \text{f}3 \) anticipates the manoeuvre ...\( \text{g}4 \) (with tempo!), ...\( \text{d}7 \) and leaves Black in a somewhat cramped position. White may then proceed with \( \text{h}3 \), \( \text{g}4 \), or with the more solid \( \text{b}2 \), \( \text{c}4 \) (he can also prepare it with \( \text{f}1 \)).

13.\( \text{cxd}5 \) \( \text{xd}5 \) 14.\( \text{f}4 \)

If White lingers with this move, he might never achieve it, for instance, 14.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 15.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 16.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{f}4 \)!.

14.\( \text{b}7 \)

15.\( \text{b}2 \) should transpose after 15...\( \text{c}5 \) (15...\( \text{e}7 \) 16.\( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{g}2 \) 17.\( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 18.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 19.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 20.\( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{h}8 \) is also possible.) 16.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \). This move order offers Black additional possibilities, but I think that \( \text{e}7 \) is the best retreat anyway. For instance, White’s attack is more
dangerous after 16...\(\text{Db}4\) 17.\(\text{Cc}3\) \(f6\)
18.\(\text{BxB7 BxB7}\) 19.\(\text{Bf3 Cc6}\) 20.\(\text{Bh1}\).
16...\(\text{Cc7}\) is also dubious in view of 17.\(\text{Bf3 De6}\) (or the knight will be clogged with \(f4-f5\)) 18.\(\text{Bab1 f6}\)
19.\(f5\) when 19...\(\text{Bd4}\) 20.\(\text{Bxd4 cxd4}\)
21.\(\text{Bb2 Cc6}\) 22.\(\text{Bh4! Ce5}\) 23.\(\text{Bf4}\)
surrounds the \(d4\)-pawn.

15...\(\text{Be7}\) 16.\(\text{BxB7 BxB7}\) 17.\(f5\)
17.\(\text{Bb2 c5}\) 18.\(f5\) \(\text{Cc6}\) 19.\(f6\) transposes to the main line.

It might seem that White has a terrible attack, but once again we witness that good control of the centre is a fair insurance against flank assaults.

17...\(c5!\)

17...\(f6\) 18.\(\text{Be4 Bd7}\) 19.\(\text{Bb2 Bxf5}\)
20.\(\text{Bxf6 Bf8}\) 21.\(\text{Bb2 c5}\) is “only” balanced.

18.\(f6\) \(\text{Cc6}\) 19.\(\text{Bb2 h6}\) (19...\(g6\))
20.\(\text{Be4 g6}\) 21.\(\text{Bae1 Bd4}\)

White should be very careful. For instance, 22.\(\text{Wa4 Bd6}\) 23.\(\text{Bc3 Cd5}\) obviously favours Black. On the other hand, 22.\(\text{Wa6 Bd6}\) 23.\(\text{Cc3}\) does not guarantee him a repetition of moves with 23...\(\text{Bc2}\) 24.\(\text{Cc1 Bd4}\). Instead, Black plays on with 23...
\(\text{Bd7!}\) 24.\(\text{Wa4 b5}\) 25.\(\text{Bxb5 Be5}\).

B. 9...\(\text{xf3}\) 10.\(\text{xf3}\)

In my opinion, Black has two decent options here:

B1. 10...\(d5\); B2. 10...\(\text{Be7}\)

The latter is more cunning and easy to play. It is based on a positional pawn sacrifice which gives Black significant strategic advantage.

B1. 10...\(d5\) 11.\(d4\)

11.cxd5 \(\text{Bxd5!}\) helps Black activate his queen. The point is that 12.\(\text{Bd4 Bh5}\) 13.\(\text{Bxc6}\) (13.e3?! \(\text{Bg4}\) 14.\(\text{Bf3 Ce5}\)
15.\(\text{Bxg4 Bxg4}\) 16.\(\text{Be2 Bbd8}\)
17.\(\text{Bg2 De4}\) 18.\(\text{Bb1 c5}\) 13...\(\text{Bxc6}\)
14.e3 \(\text{Bg4}\) 15.\(\text{Bxh4 Bxe4}\) gives Black a significant positional advantage which amply compensates a small material deficit.

15...\(\text{Bxe6}\) has similar ideas –
16.\(\text{Bxc6}\) (16.\(\text{Bb1?!}\) \(\text{Be2}\) 17.\(\text{Be1}\)
The game Girth-Scwenk, corr 2010, went on 18...f4 Wh5 19...a3 Ebd8 20...d4 when 20...Exd4 21.cxd4 Wxa5! 22...c1 Exe3 forces a perpetual, but Black could certainly play on with 22...h5 23.a4 Ebd8.

White has tried to improve on 12...d4 with 12...b2?! , but 12...g4! 13.d3 Wa5 14...f2 Ead8 is clearly in Black's favour.

Another attempt was 12.d3 Wc5+ 13...h1 Gg4 14.We1 Wh5! ? 15.Wf4 (15.e4 f5) 15...ce5 16...xe5, Van Wely-Ruck Los Angeles 2011, when 16...Exe5! would have left Black with a more mobile rook which could attack both h2- and a2-pawns.

11...h6

I do not like 11...dxc4?! 12...g5?? (12...c2 h6 transposes) 12...h6 13...xf6 Wxf6 14.e4 (14...e5 Wd6 15...xc4 Wg6 16.e4) 14...d6 (14...ag4 15...a4 We7 16...xc4 Wd7) 15...d2 Ad7 16...xc4, Tomashevsky-Gajewski, Berlin 2015.

The common 11...e4 is another way to prevent the pin from g5, but the knight is somewhat hanging on that square. For instance, 12...c2 dxc4 13...e5 Exe5 14...xe4 looks unpleasant: 14...g4 (14...g6 15...d5 We7 16.e4 c6 17...xc4±) 15...f3, but 15...f5 16...d5+ Wxd5= saves the day.

The text keeps more tension.

12.cxd5

Alternatively:

12...c2 dxc4 13...f4

13...b1 We7 14...b2 Wc4 15...xe4 (15...a4 Wc6) 15...xe4 16...e5 Exe5 17...xe4 d7 leads to massive elimination of forces after 18...xb7 Exb7 19...xb7 Exe2 20...xc7 E6f 21...xc4 Exa2 22...b4! =.

13...e4 14...ad1

After 14...e5 Exe5 15...xe5, simplest is 15...c5 (aimed against 16...e4) 16...b1 ag4=.

14...e7

14...f5 15...e5 Eg3 (15...d6?!...
16.e4 \textit{g}h7 17.\textit{g}e2 \textit{g}e7 18.\textit{g}xh6 was unpleasant, to say it mildly, in Caruana-Anand, Moscow 2016. In the postmortem Caruana also proposed 18.h4! 16.e4 xf1 17.exf5 \textit{g}h2 18.\textit{g}xh2 \textit{g}xe5 19.\textit{g}xe5 \textit{g}g5 should be tenable. Black could always sac the exchange and play with 3-4 pawns for a piece. For instance: 20.\textit{f}f1 \textit{c}6 21.f6 \textit{d}xe5 22.dxe5 \textit{d}e8 \pm. However, at the press conference in Moscow Caruana called the position “resignable”.

15.\textit{d}e5 \textit{d}xe5 16.\textit{d}xe5 \textit{d}d6 17.\textit{e}de1 (17.\textit{f}f2 is the same – 17...\textit{f}6 18.\textit{d}d5+ \textit{h}8 19.\textit{x}f6 \textit{g}x6 20.\textit{g}g6=) 17...\textit{f}6 18.\textit{d}d5+ \textit{h}8 19.\textit{x}f6=.

12.\textit{d}e5 \textit{d}xe5 13.dxe5 \textit{d}xe5 is at least equal after (14.\textit{f}f4?! \textit{e}e8 15.cxd5 \textit{xf}5=) 14.cxd5 \textit{g}g4.

12...\textit{d}xd5!

13.e3

This was played by Aronian against Adams in 2015. I have also analysed:

13.\textit{h}h4 \textit{h}h5 14.\textit{b}b3

Or 14.\textit{b}b1 \textit{g}g4 15.\textit{f}f3 \textit{xf}3

Now 20.\textit{x}b7 \textit{e}7 21.\textit{a}a5 \textit{d}d5 would be totally even so in the correspondence game Zlotkowski-Nowak, 2013, White tried 20.\textit{f}f2!? \textit{a}a5 21.\textit{e}e4 and got an overwhelming position after 21...\textit{h}h8? 22.g4 c6 23.\textit{x}f6 \textit{e}e6 24.\textit{g}g5. Black should have defended the f6-pawn with 21...\textit{e}e6 22.d5 \textit{e}a6 when White has just about sufficient compensation for the exchange.

13.\textit{f}f4 \textit{a}a5

16.\textit{x}f3 \textit{d}d5 17.\textit{f}f5 \textit{e}e4 18.\textit{d}d3 \textit{d}d6=.

14...\textit{a}a5 15.\textit{b}b4 \textit{e}e4 16.\textit{a}a4 \textit{g}g4 17.\textit{c}c2 \textit{f}5 18.\textit{b}b1 \textit{c}6 is unclear, Musitani-Dorer, corr. 2010.

13.e4 \textit{d}xe4 (13...\textit{c}c4!?=) 14.\textit{e}e5 \textit{h}h7 15.\textit{x}c6 \textit{b}xc6 16.\textit{x}f6 16.\textit{x}c6 is dubious owing to 16...\textit{g}g4 17.\textit{a}a4 \textit{h}h3.

16...\textit{d}d6 17.\textit{d}d5 \textit{h}h7 18.\textit{x}c6 \textit{b}xc6 19.\textit{c}c5 \textit{c}c4
13...\textit{Wh}5 stumbles into 14.\textit{Bb}1 \textit{dd}5 15.\textit{Bb}5 \textit{ce}7 16.\textit{e}4 \textit{c}6 17.\textit{Bb}2+. 14.\textit{Bb}3 \textit{exe}2 15.\textit{Bfe}1 \textit{fg}2+! 16.\textit{Bxg}2 \textit{Wh}5 is excellent for Black.

13...\textit{Ad}5 14.\textit{Ad}2

Black was threatening ...\textit{Ae}4. Another attempt to put the centre in motion is 14.\textit{Bwe}2 \textit{Ae}4 15.\textit{c}4 \textit{Wh}5 16.\textit{Bb}2 \textit{Ad}8 with full mobilisation.

14...\textit{Bd}7 15.\textit{Ab}3 \textit{Ae}4 16.\textit{c}4 \textit{b}6 17.\textit{Bf}4 \textit{Bd}8

In the stem game Aronian failed to equalize completely with White after 18.\textit{Bf}1 \textit{Ag}6 19.\textit{Ba}3 \textit{Aa}5!? 20.\textit{Bb}4 \textit{Bxb}3 21.axb3 \textit{c}5=.

\textbf{B2. 10...\textit{We}7 11.e3}

11.d4!? is an interesting alternative. It looks strategically wrong as it offers Black a seemingly full control over e4. However, White puts his hopes on 11...\textit{h}6 12.\textit{e}4! \textit{exe}4 (12...\textit{Bxe}4 13.\textit{Ae}5 \textit{Wh}7 14.\textit{Bxf}6 triggers a strong attack.) 13.\textit{Be}1

12.\textit{Bd}4

It is natural for White to avoid exchanges, moreover that the \textit{f}5 would be a nice place for the knight. 12.\textit{Bxe}5 \textit{Bxe}5 13.\textit{Bb}1 \textit{Bb}8 occurred
in Aronian-Anand, Stavanger 2015. After 14.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 15.d3 d6 16.e4 \( \text{g4} \) 17.\( \text{xf3} \) (17.\( \text{c2} \) a6 18.\( \text{b1} \) \( \text{e6} \)) 17...\( \text{h3} \) 18.\( \text{g2} \), a draw was signed.

In Biedermann-Kurgansky, email 2012, White came up with 14.c5, intending to meet 14...\( \text{xc5} \) by a second sac, 15.c4 and the a1-h8 diagonal suddenly opens up. Black preferred development over material and the game was drawn after 14...b6 15.c4 \( \text{e6} \) 16.d3 \( \text{b7} \) 17.e4 d6 18.cxd6 \( \text{xd6} \) 19.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 20.g5=.

12.\( \text{h4} \)? d6 13.d3 is best met by 13.\( \text{g6} \)!

14.\( \text{f5} \)

In Karjakin-Eljanov, Baku 2015, White played 14.\( \text{dxg6} \) = and offered a draw.

14...\( \text{e5} \) 15.d4 (15.e4 \( \text{xc3} \) 16.\( \text{b1} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 17.exf5 \( \text{e5} \) 18.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{a5} \)) 15...\( \text{e6} \) 16.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 17.e4 \( \text{xf5} \) 18.exf5 \( \text{e2} \) 19.\( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{xe2} \) 20.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{c2} \) leads to a balanced endgame.

12...\( \text{d6} \)!

This move, in conjunction with the pawn sacrifice on move 15, effectively patches the 10...\( \text{e7} \)-line. The source game Kasparov-Karpov, Seville 1987, saw 12...\( \text{d3} \)? 13.\( \text{e2} \) (13.\( \text{f5} \)?) 13...\( \text{xc1} \) 14.\( \text{xc1} \) d6 15.\( \text{f4} \) c6 16.\( \text{c1} \) with an initiative.

12...\( \text{xc4} \)! 13.\( \text{f5} \) \( \text{e5} \) 14.e4 d5 15.d4= is also dangerous.

13.\( \text{d3} \) c5 14.\( \text{f5} \)

After 14.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 15.\( \text{d2} \) the thematic break from the main line:
15...d5 16.\( \text{cxd5} \) c4 is bad because White's bishop enters play from a3 - 17.\( \text{a3} \) \( \text{d8} \) 18.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 19.\( \text{d4} \). I propose to modify this idea with:
15...b5?!
14...\texttt{xf5} 15.\texttt{xf5} d5!

The point of the 10...\texttt{e7}-line. Without it, White would enjoy a bishop pair and the better centre.

16.\texttt{cxd5} c4

17.d4

17.dxc4 \texttt{xc4} 18.\texttt{d4} \texttt{xe3} 19.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{xe3}+ 20.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{xe3} restores the material balance and the chances are even after 21.c4 b6 22.a4 \texttt{Ec8}.

17...\texttt{d3} 18.\texttt{d2}

The stem game which introduced 15...d5, Khismatullin-Tomashevsky, Chita 2015, saw 18.\texttt{xf6}? \texttt{xf6}. Instead of panicking, White should have calmly defend, but he can hardly expect an edge with his central pawns blocking his bishop. A possible continuation is 18...\texttt{e4} 19.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xe4} 20.\texttt{f3} \texttt{xf3} 21.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{ad8} 22.\texttt{af1} (22.\texttt{b1} b6 23.\texttt{b5} \texttt{d6} 24.a4 a6 25.\texttt{b1} \texttt{xd5}=) 22... \texttt{xd5} 23.\texttt{xf7} \texttt{b5}.
Chapter 7. 3.\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$f3$ $c6$ 4.g3 $b4$ 5.$g2$

Annotated Games

14. Kelly – Gormally
Birmingham 20.01.2002

1.\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}c4 $\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$f6 2.$c3$ e5 3.$g3$ $b4$
4.$f3$ e4 5.$d4$ $c6$ 6.$c2$ $xc3$
7.$xc3$ d6 8.$g2$ h6 9.$e3$ 0-0 10.0-0 $e8$

11.$\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$c2

White’s bishops lack prospects. His only viable plan is to push f4, but 11.f4 $\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$xf3 12.$\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$xf3 has not caught in practice since Black could take the best stand against this pawn structure – 12...$d7$ 13.$h3$ $e7$ 14.$\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$c2
(14.f4? $\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$f5) 14...d5 (or 14...$c8$
15.$h2$ d5). This break in the centre is Black’s main method of defence against a pawn storm on the kingside.

15.$\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$xd5 $\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$xd5 16.$\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$f2 $c8$ 17.$h2$ b6 18.$c4$ $xe3$ 19.$xe3$ c5=, Lautier-Karpov, Biel 1990.

More often White tries to disrupt the coordination of the black pieces before pushing f4.
A possible stand is 11.b3, but it allows the regroupment 11...$e5$ 12.f4 $\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$xf3 13.$\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$xf3 $d7$ 14.$h3$ $c6$. As a rule, Black needs to trade one minor piece to be perfectly happy with his position. That’s why plans with $d5$ do not bother him at all. For example, 12.$d5$ (instead of 12.f4)
12...$f5$ 13.$h3$ a5 14.$e3$ a4 with counterplay on the queenside, e.g.
15.$d2$ $xd5$ 16.$\textit{\textfloatsep5pt\textparindent0pt}$xd5 $d7$ 17.$h2$
$c6$ 18.$xc6$ $bc6$ 19.$c4$ $ab8$.

The queen move is meant to hinder ...
$e5$, but – surprise!
A similar idea is 11...\textit{d}7 12.b3 \textit{e}7!?.

Note that the most popular continuation, 11...a5, loses a tempo since White is not obliged to answer 12.a4, but can develop a piece. After 12.d2 \textit{e}7 13.f4 Black's pieces do not succeed to take the best stand with ...\textit{d}7, ...\textit{c}8.

\textbf{12.\textit{xe4}}

Let's investigate the alternatives:

12.b3 \textit{eg4} achieves the goal of trading a piece.

12.h3 \textit{e}6

The thematic 12...\textit{d}7 is good, but why not use the hit on c4 to win a tempo!

Even 12...\textit{g}6 13.f4 \textit{exf3} 14.exf3 \textit{d}7 15.f4 \textit{e}7 16.g4 \textit{c}6 17.g5 hgx5 18.fxg5 \textit{d}7 is equal.

13.b3 \textit{d}7 14.\textit{h}2 \textit{f}5!

Exploiting the tactical trick 15.\textit{xf5} \textit{x}f5 16.f4? \textit{eg4}+! 17.\textit{h}1 \textit{h}5 with attack. If White did not take on f5, we retreat the bishop to h7 and f4 would not have a bite anymore owing to the hole on d3.

Thus 12.\textit{xe4} is the most principled move, but White has not won a single game after it in correspondence chess!

\textbf{12...\textit{xe4}}

This leaves more tension than 12...\textit{xe4} 13.\textit{xe4}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure}
\caption{Diagram for 12...\textit{xe4} 13.\textit{xe4}}
\end{figure}

If Black traded his last knight here, he should be able to hold the draw in view of the opposite-coloured bishops, for instance:

13.\textit{g}4 14.\textit{d}3 \textit{xe3} 15.\textit{xe3} \textit{h}3 (15...\textit{e}7 16.\textit{fe1} b6 17.\textit{xd}2 \textit{b}7 18.f3 \textit{e}6 19.e4 \textit{h}3, Berkes-Gyimesi, Hungary 2003) 16.\textit{fe1} \textit{d}7 17.\textit{xd}2 \textit{e}6 18.e4 \textit{xe8} 19.f3 f5, Polugaevsky-Uhlmann, Solingen 1974. Perhaps even better is to insert 13...a5 14.a4 first.

13.\textit{g}2 \textit{xe3} 14.\textit{xe3} \textit{e}7 15.c4 \textit{e}4
16.\(\text{d}3\)

Polugaevsky-Panno, Mar del Plata 1971, saw 16.b3 \(\text{d}7\) 17.\(\text{d}4\) f5 18.\(\text{a}e1\) \(\text{f}8\) 19.\(f\text{f}3\) \(\text{\text{g}}6\) 20.\(e\text{e}3\). Black’s best stand is more restrained: 16...\(\text{f}5!\) 17.\(\text{b}2\) a5 18.\(\text{d}4\) f6

19.\(\text{a}d1\) b6 20.\(f\text{f}3\) \(\text{\text{g}}5\) 21.\(e\text{e}4\) \(\text{h}3\)=.

16...\(b\text{b}6\) 17.\(b\text{b}3\) \(\text{\text{b}7}\) 18.\(\text{\text{f}e1}\) \(\text{\text{ad}8}\) 19.\(\text{\text{a}d1}\) c5 20.\(\text{c}2\) d5=

Opening the d-file allows Black to eliminate the rooks and reach a draw position. One mistake on move 29 complicated White’s task, but it all ended up peacefully at the end.

21.\(\text{cxd}5\) \(\text{\text{xd}5}\) 22.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{\text{b}7}\) 23.\(f\text{f}3\) \(\text{\text{g}5}\) 24.\(e\text{e}4\) \(\text{\text{f}6}\) 25.\(\text{\text{f}2}\) \(\text{\text{xd}1}\) 26.\(\text{\text{xd}1}\) \(\text{\text{d}8}\) 27.\(\text{\text{xd}8+}\) \(\text{\text{xd}8}\) 28.\(\text{\text{e}2}\) \(\text{\text{d}4+}\)

29.\(\text{\text{f}l}\)? \(\text{\text{a}6!}\) 30.\(\text{\text{xa}6}\) \(\text{\text{d}1+}\) 31.\(\text{\text{f}2}\) \(\text{\text{c}2+}\) 32.\(\text{\text{f}1}\) \(\text{\text{xc}1+}\) 33.\(\text{\text{f}2}\) \(\text{\text{e}6}\) 34.\(\text{\text{xa}7}\) \(\text{\text{d}2+}\) 35.\(\text{\text{f}1}\) \(\text{\text{d}4}\) 36.\(\text{\text{a}8+}\) \(\text{\text{h}7}\) 37.\(e\text{e}5\) \(\text{\text{e}2+}\) 38.\(\text{\text{g}1}\) \(\text{\text{e}3+}\) 39.\(\text{\text{f}1}\) \(\text{\text{xe}5}\) 40.\(\text{\text{e}4+}\) \(\text{\text{xe}4}\) 41.\(\text{\text{f}e4}\) \(\text{\text{g}6}\) 42.\(\text{\text{f}2}\) \(\text{\text{f}6}\) 43.\(\text{\text{e}3}\) \(\text{\text{e}5}\) 44.\(\text{\text{d}3}\) \(\text{\text{b}5}\) 45.\(\text{\text{f}3}\) \(\text{\text{d}6}\) 46.\(\text{\text{g}2}\) \(\text{g5}\) 47.\(\text{\text{f}3}\) \(\text{f6}\) 48.\(\text{\text{e}3}\) \(\text{b5}\) 49.\(\text{\text{d}3}\) \(\text{b4}\) 50.\(\text{\text{e}3}\) \(\text{g4}\) 51.\(\text{\text{g}2}\) \(\text{\text{b}5}\) 52.\(\text{\text{d}3}\) \(\text{\text{d}6}\) 53.\(\text{\text{e}3}\) \(\text{h5}\) 54.\(\text{\text{d}3}\) \(\text{f5}\) 55.\(\text{\text{e}f5}\) \(\text{\text{xf5}}\) 56.\(\text{c}6\) \(\text{\text{g}5}\) 57.\(\text{\text{e}3}\) \(\text{\text{f}5}\) 58.\(\text{\text{d}3}\) \(\text{\text{g}5}\) Draw.

15. Svidler – Karjakin
Candidates, Moscow 20.03.2016

1.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{\text{f}6}\) 2.\(\text{\text{c}3}\) e5 3.\(\text{\text{f}3}\) \(\text{\text{c}6}\) 4.\(g\text{g}3\) \(\text{\text{b}4}\) 5.\(\text{\text{g}2}\) 0-0 6.0-0 e4 7.\(\text{\text{g}5}\) \(\text{\text{xc}3}\) 8.\(\text{\text{bxc}3}\) \(\text{\text{e}8}\) 9.\(\text{\text{f}3}\) e3
10.\(\text{d}3\) d5 11.\(\text{\text{a}4}\)

Svidler’s novelty hinders the plan with ...\(\text{\text{a}5}\) and ...\(b6\), but the queen does not have any impact on the centre. Karjakin takes the chance to hem in the g2-bishop.

11...\(h\text{h}6\) 12.\(\text{cxd}5\) \(\text{\text{xd}5}\) 13.\(\text{\text{e}4}\) f5 14.\(\text{\text{c}5}\) f4 15.\(\text{\text{b}2}\) \(\text{\text{b}8}\)

Defending the b7-pawn in order to free the c8-bishop. If Black wanted
to push ...b5, he could have done it without any preparation since 15...
b5 16.\textbf{\textit{x}}b5? 3b8 would be in his favour. However, this move would be double-edged as it creates weaknesses on the queenside.
Karjakin provokes c4 which weakens the square d4. It is indicative that the engines prefer for White more restrained play on the queenside:

a) 16.\textbf{\textit{ab}}1 \textbf{\textit{e}}7 17.\textbf{\textit{d}}e4 (17.\textbf{\textit{c}}4 \textbf{\textit{f}}6 18.\textbf{\textit{a}}6 \textbf{\textit{a}}8 19.\textbf{\textit{b}}b5 \textbf{\textit{d}}8 20.\textbf{\textit{c}}5 \textbf{\textit{x}}c5 21.\textbf{\textit{x}}c5 b6 22.\textbf{\textit{b}}3 a5=) or:

b) 16.\textbf{\textit{e}}4 b5 17.\textbf{\textit{c}}2 \textbf{\textit{e}}6

The best place for the queen is f7 from where it is eyeing both c4 and g6. Now the most principled continuation is:

b1) 18.\textbf{\textit{c}}4 \textbf{\textit{d}}b4 19.\textbf{\textit{c}}c1 bxc4 20.\textbf{\textit{d}}xc4 \textbf{\textit{f}}5! 21.\textbf{\textit{d}}d4 \textbf{\textit{x}}g3 22.\textbf{\textit{x}}g3 \textbf{\textit{b}}c6 23.\textbf{\textit{x}}e3 \textbf{\textit{f}}5 with chaotic play where Black's pieces are very active.

More prophylactic approaches are:

b2) 18.\textbf{\textit{ab}}1 \textbf{\textit{e}}6 19.\textbf{\textit{a}}4 a6 20.\textbf{\textit{xb}}5 \textbf{\textit{xb}}5 21.\textbf{\textit{c}}1 \textbf{\textit{f}}7 22.\textbf{\textit{c}}5 \textbf{\textit{f}}5∞.

b3) 18.\textbf{\textit{c}}c1 \textbf{\textit{f}}7 19.\textbf{\textit{a}}4 \textbf{\textit{x}}g3 20.\textbf{\textit{x}}g3 \textbf{\textit{a}}5∞.

Black should play complexly, combining threats on both flanks.

\textbf{16.\textbf{\textit{c}}4?! \textbf{\textit{de}}7! (eyeing f5) 17.\textbf{\textit{g}}4?}

No matter the threats, one should never make such moves.

\textbf{17...b6 18.\textbf{\textit{d}}e4 \textbf{\textit{e}}6}

The opening is over and we can take stock now. White has made a novelty, then played all the obvious moves, and ended down clearly worse! To be sure, the engines evaluate this position as nearly even, but I guess that nobody would like to contemplate such a hopeless bishop on g2. It would be interesting to know what went wrong with his home preparation. After all, Svidler is one of world's leading experts on the English Opening. He was obviously frustrated with his achievements as his next attempt to resurrect the poor bishop is almost losing. White adds to the bad bishop another positional drawback – an even worse king.

\textbf{19.\textbf{\textit{g}}5? \textbf{\textit{h}}5?!}

Karjakin does not want to part with the sight of the sealed bishop, but the position was ripe for decisive action. 19...\textbf{\textit{hxg}}5! 20.\textbf{\textit{x}}g5 \textbf{\textit{f}}5 was much stronger. 20.\textbf{\textit{b}}5 \textbf{\textit{f}}5
21.\( \text{d}x\text{g}5 \) does not help either owing to 21...\( \text{d}d4 \) 22.\( \text{d}x\text{d}4 \) \( \text{w}x\text{d}4 \) 23.\( \text{h}h3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 24.\( \text{w}a4 \) \( \text{h}x\text{h}3 \) 25.\( \text{h}x\text{h}3 \) \( \text{w}f6 \).

20.\( \text{f}d1 \) \( \text{d}4 \)?!

20...\( \text{d}7 \)! 21.\( \text{w}a3 \) \( \text{f}5+ \) was a good introduction to \( ...\) \( \text{d}4 \). Now White is still kicking.

21.\( \text{h}x\text{d}4 \) \( \text{w}x\text{d}4 \) 22.\( \text{w}a7 \) \( \text{d}7 \)

23.\( \text{w}a3 \)

23...\( \text{h}4 \) (23...\( \text{c}6 \)) 24.\( \text{w}c3 \) \( \text{f}5 \)

25.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{h}x\text{h}3 \)?

Black is getting impatient. 25...\( \text{c}6+ \), taking the centre under control, was a must. The text allows White to activate the queen and drops all the advantage. The subsequent play was sprinkled with mistakes which eventually led to a curious endgame:

26.\( \text{w}e5 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 27.\( \text{d}d5+ \) \( \text{e}6 \)

28.\( \text{w}x\text{d}7 \) \( \text{w}x\text{d}7 \) 29.\( \text{h}h2= \) \( \text{a}8 \)

30.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{h}x\text{h}3 \) 31.\( \text{h}x\text{h}3 \) \( \text{a}3 \)

32.\( \text{d}c1 \) \( \text{e}a8 \) 33.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 34.\( \text{d}4 \)

35.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 36.\( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 37.\( \text{d}6 \)

38.\( \text{b}6 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 39.\( \text{d}x\text{d}6 \)

40.\( \text{b}5 \)? (40.\( \text{g}6 \))* 40...

41.\( \text{c}6 \) 41.\( \text{g}6+ \) \( \text{x}x\text{g}6 \) 42.\( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{h}7 \)

43.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{a}7 \) 44.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 45.\( \text{h}5 \)

46.\( \text{g}x\text{h}4 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 47.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{f}8 \)

48.\( \text{g}h4 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 49.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{f}8 \)

50.\( \text{f}x\text{f}4 \)?

50.\( \text{e}5! \) \( \text{x}a2 \) 51.\( \text{e}7 \) \( g6 \) 52.\( \text{f}x\text{f}4 \) was still winning.

50...\( \text{e}a2 \) 51.\( \text{e}h4 \) \( g6 \) 52.\( \text{e}5 \)

Draw.
I conclude my survey on the English Opening with rare second moves. Their only merit is that they might throw us out of our repertoire. We need a concrete approach towards any one of them.

1.c4 e5 2.d3 is aimed against 2...c6 in view of 3.Qf3. One possible exploitative strategy is 2...f5 which is normally bad due to d2-d4. I analyse this plan in Game 16 Schwaninger – Balinov, Oberwart 2000.

We could reach more familiar positions with 2...Qb4+!? 3.Qd2 (or 3.Qd2 c5 and we meet a3 by ...Qa5) 3...Qxd2+ 4.Qxd2

Here simplest is to trade a pair of knights with 4...Qf6 5.Qf3 Qc6 6.Qc3 0-0 7.g3 d6 8.Qg2 Qd4 9.0-0 Qxf3+ 10.Qxf3 c6=.

2.a3 is a typical Sicilian move so we should not discard it altogether. Just as 2.g3, it has no direct influence on the centre so we can safely employ our plan of claiming the centre with 2...c6. However, we should meet d4 by exd4, e.g. 3.Qc3 d5 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.d4 exd4 or:

3.d4 exd4 4.Qxd4 d5

If White does not exchange now on d5, we take on c4:
5.Qf3 dxc4 6.Qxh8+ Qxh8 7.Qf4 Qd7 8.Qc3 Qg6 9.Qd1 Qe8 or 5.Qc3 dxc4.

5.cxd5 is the only principled line, but it offers us an initiative. I suggest to prevent any blockading ideas with the manoeuvre ...Qf8-e7-
f6. It hinders White's harmonious development: 5...cxd5 6.\( \text{\textbf{d}}f3 \) \( \text{\textbf{d}}c6 \) 7.\( \text{\textbf{g}}d3 \) \( \text{\textbf{g}}4 \) 8.\( \text{\textbf{g}}3 \) \( \text{\textbf{e}}7 \) 9.\( \text{\textbf{g}}2 \) \( \text{\textbf{f}}6 \) 10.0-0 \( \text{\textbf{g}}e7 \)

The isolated d-pawn is always ready to move forth, gaining even more space.

\[ \text{\textbf{d}}f3 \text{ e}4 \text{ \textbf{d}}d4 \text{ \textbf{f}}6 \]

looks already pleasant for Black. Good old chess laws hint that White is playing with fire and should be punished by an energetic attack.

\[ \text{\textbf{d}}3 \text{ \textbf{c}}6 \text{ 5.\( \text{\textbf{c}}x\text{c}6 \) dxc6 is quite clear so we should consider mostly 4.\( \text{\textbf{c}}3 \), keeping the pawn on d2.} \]

\[ \text{4...\textbf{c}5 5.\( \text{\textbf{b}}3 \) \( \text{\textbf{b}}4 \) 6.\( \text{\textbf{c}}2 \) 0-0!} \]

The point! White wins a pawn, but falls behind in development. We can play for suffocation with simple centralising moves: 7.\( \text{\textbf{x}}e4 \) \( \text{\textbf{x}}e4 \) 8.\( \text{\textbf{w}}e4 \) \( \text{\textbf{e}}8 \) 9.\( \text{\textbf{w}}c2 \) \( d5 \) 10.a3 \( \text{\textbf{f}}8 \) 11.\( \text{\textbf{e}}3 \) \( \text{\textbf{c}}6 \) 12.\( \text{\textbf{e}}2 \) dxc4 13.\( \text{\textbf{x}}c4 \) a5!.

You do not need glasses to notice that White's kingside lacks any defenders...
Step by Step

1. c4 e5
A. 2.d3; B. 2.a3; C. 2.\textit{d}f3

A. 2.d3

This ridiculous move aims to discourage plans with \textit{d}c3 \textit{b}4. It would not have posed any problems to us had we the Sicilian Reversed with ...\textit{d}5 in our arsenal. The funny thing is that we still have:

2...\textit{b}4+!? with a rather easy game.

Note that if we delayed the check for one move later – 2...\textit{d}f6, intending 3.\textit{d}f3 \textit{b}4+, White might definitely throw us out of our repertoire with 3.a3!? – why not!

In the annotations to Game 16 Schwaninger – Balinov, Oberwart 2000, I consider in detail an alternative plan which is based on 2...f5!? This is an attempt to exploit White's second move since normally 2...f5 is dubious in view of d2-d4! An argument in its favour is that it is applicable after both 2.d3 and 2.a3. On the other hand, it allows White to follow typical for the English Opening schemes. That leaves him inside his comfort zone.

3.\textit{d}d2

I propose to meet 3.\textit{d}d2 by 3...c5!? 3...a5 is another positionally well grounded option – 4.\textit{g}f3 \textit{c}6 5.e3 \textit{f}6 6.\textit{e}2 0-0 7.0-0 \textit{e}8 8.a3 \textit{f}8 9.b3 \textit{d}6 10.\textit{e}2 \textit{g}4 11.\textit{e}1 \textit{d}7 12.\textit{b}2 h6 13.h3 \textit{h}5, Csom-Taimanov, Saint Vincent 2001.

4.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}6 5.g3 \textit{g}7 6.a3 \textit{a}5! We keep the bishop in order to hamper White's queenside play. 7.\textit{g}2 0-0 8.0-0 \textit{d}6

We are ready to attack 9.e3 with 9...f5 so perhaps White should immediately change the course of events with:
9.b4!? cxb4 10.b3 b6 11.axb4
\[ \text{Diagram 1} \]
\( \text{AXB4} \)
12.a3 bc6 13.d4 e4 (13... g4 14.dxe5=) 14.g5 f5 15.d5 e5
16.c5 dxc5 17.xc5 xd5!? 18.a4 d8 with roughly equal chances, but all the fight is still ahead.

3...xd2+ 4.xd2

We have from here several ways to complete development. Simplest is:

4...f6

Another plan consists of ...d6, ...f5, ...f6, but probably the best way to play for a win is:
4.b6!? 5.f3 d6 6.g3 b7 7.g2
\[ \text{Diagram 2} \]
\( \text{DF6} \)
8.0-0 0-0 9.c3 bd7.

This line is inspired by the Bogo-Indian Defence. Black's position is very solid and flexible. See Game 17 Lein-Korchnoi, Johannesburg 1979.

5.f3 c6 6.c3 0-0 7.g3 d6
8.g2

8...d4 9.0-0 xf3+ 10.xf3 c6

B. 2.a3

This modest pawn move does eliminate ...b4, but it neglects the centre. That should encourage us to claim it with:

2...c6!? 3.d4

3.c3 d5 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.d4 should be met by 5...exd4!.

3.f3 e4 4.d4 d5 5.cxd5 xf6 is a reversed Alapin where Black's active pieces ensure him a pleasant albeit equal game.


3...exd4

3...e4 4.\(\text{c3}\) d5 is more in the spirit of this book, but it leads to an overly static position where White's game is too easy: 5.\(\text{gf4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 6.\(\text{e3}\)

6.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{gf6}\) 7.\(\text{cx}d5\) \(\text{cx}d5\) 8.\(\text{e3}\) 0-0 9.\(\text{ge2}\) \(\text{bd7}\) 10.\(\text{bb3}\) \(\text{xe5}\)

11.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{gf4}\) 12.\(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 13.\(\text{dxe5}\) \(\text{dxe5}\)

White could win a pawn with 14.\(\text{gf3}\), but Black's initiative and bishop pair amply compensate for it after 14...\(\text{xe6}\)! More prudent is 14.\(\text{dc3}\) \(\text{d5}\) 15.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{e5}\) =.

6.\(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{cx}d5\) 7.\(\text{xf6}\)?! \(\text{xf6}\) 8.\(\text{xa4}\) \(\text{d7}\) 9.\(\text{xa7}\)? drops the queen after 9...\(\text{f6}\).

6...\(\text{d6}\) 7.\(\text{cx}d5\) \(\text{cx}d5\) 8.\(\text{ge2}\) 0-0 9.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{d6}\) 10.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 11.\(\text{e2}\)

We cannot stand the e5-bishop for long so 11...\(\text{d6}\) 12.\(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{xe6}\) looks consistent. We have enough counterplay after 13.\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{ac8}\), but our chances to break through the enemy's ditches appear to be minimal.

4.\(\text{xf6}\) d5

We can play first 4...\(\text{gf6}\), followed up by 5...d5. I'm planning to recapture on d5 with pawn anyway and I'm not afraid of 5.e4 d5=. Still, we could develop the knight to e7 instead of f6 in some lines so it looks clever to push ...d5 immediately.

5.\(\text{ec3}\)

5.\(\text{c3}\) dxc4 6.\(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 7.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{d7}\) 8.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{gf6}\) transposes to the main line.

Of course, Black can also keep the tension with 5...\(\text{gf6}\).

5.cxd5 is risky as Black will get an initiative in various ways. I like the following original set-up: 5...cx\(\text{d5}\) 6.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{c6}\) 7.\(\text{ed3}\) \(\text{g4}\) 8.g3 (8.\(\text{ec3}\)

\(\text{d4}\) ) 8...\(\text{e7}\) 9.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{f6}\) 10.0-0 \(\text{ge7}\)

It is difficult for White to complete development as 11.\(\text{d5}\) could
face 11...\eb5 12.\ebb5 d4. Perhaps he should seek simplification with 11.\ebg5 \exf3 12.\exf6 \exg2 13.\exe7 \exe4 14.\exe4 dxe4 15.\edx8 \ edx8=.

5...dxc4

It is worth considering more complex lines as 5...\eb6 6.\eb5

If White fianchettoed his king's bishop, he would be unable to prevent ...d4.
6...\eb7 cxd5 cxd5! 8.e3 \ec6 9.\wd3 h6 10.\eh4 0-0 11.\eb2

It seems that White will obtain a standard IQP position, but 11...d4!? throws him out of his comfort zone. Following 12.\edx4 \edx4 13.\edx4 \edx5, White should play accurately in order to maintain the balance:

a) 14.\eb3 \wb6 15.\wb5 \xbxb5 16.\xbxb5 \eb5 17.\ec3 \fd8 18.0-0 \ac8 19.\ec1 \eb6=.

b) 14.\eb7 \wb7 15.\ec3 \xbxc3 16.\bxc3 \ec8 17.\wb3 \eb8 18.\wb8 \xe7 19.\wd3 \b8= 20.0-0 \xe2 21.\fxfg4 \b8e3.

We are not worse here, at least. For instance: 10.\ed4 \eb6 11.\eb4 \edx7 12.\eb5 \ec5 13.\edx6+ \edx6 14.\edx6 \ec4 15.\edx6 \edx6 16.\edx2 b5 17.\eb2 \eb6 18.f4 \d8 – our extra pawn is still alive.

C. 2.\eb3 e4 3.\edx4 \eb6

3...\ec6 is the common move here, but Black's pawn formation after 4.\edx6 dxc6 is too static and it would be difficult to devise a clear plan. Perhaps long castling is best, in order to mount a kingside attack, but 5.\edx3 \eb6 6.e3 \eb5 7.\wb3 b6 8.\wc2 \wd7 9.b3 \eb7 10.h3 h5 11.\edx2 0-0-0 12.a3 is double-edged.

Now both 12...\eb7 13.b4, Rakhmanov-Seirawan, Berlin 2015, and 12...c5 13.b4 \edx8, seem unclear.
The text is more in the spirit of the book.

4. ëc3

After 4.d3 we can already play 4... ëc6. The point is that we no longer fear the set-up with e3, b3, ëb2 and a possible f3 later where White needs his d-pawn on d2 to protect e3. For instance: 5.ëxc6 dxc6 6.ëc3 ëc5 7.e3 exd3 gives Black free piece play.

4...ëc5 5. ëb3 ëb4 6. ëc2

We meet 6.d4 (and 6.d3) by 6...exd3 7.ëxd3 ëc6.

6.g3 ëxc3 (or 6...0-0 7.ëg2 ëxc3) 7.bxc3 0-0 brings about a familiar pawn structure where the knight on b3 is a little strange and aloof from the kingside. Play may continue


6...0-0!

Guliyev obtained a good game with 6...ëe7, but it would be more natural to defend the e4-pawn with a rook. If White does not accept the gift, he risks to become worse without any material consolation, e.g. 7.g3 a5!? (7...ëe8=) 8.a3 ëxc3.

7.ëxe4 ëxe4 8.ëxe4 ëe8

My claim may sound exaggerated, but I believe that Black's game is clearly better! White is severely lagging behind in development and it would be difficult for him to castle. An illustrative line is:

Chapter 8. Rare Second Moves

Annotated Games

16. Schwaninger – Balinov
Oberwart 2000

1.c4 e5 2.g3 f5 3.Bg2 f6 4.d3 e7 5.Be3 0-0 6.Bf3

White’s move order is unimportant provided that he fianchettoes his bishop and develops the king’s knight on f3. The only independent set-up is 6.e3 d6 7.Bge2 c6 (7... Da6!? limits White’s options)

8.0-0

8.b4 discloses White’s plans too early and suggests a counter in the centre with 8...De6 9.b5 d5 10.bxc6 Dxc6. It is not clear at all that the advance of the b-pawn is White’s best idea. Central play with b3, f4 may be a more clever approach.

8...Da6

White’s set-up is a little passive, but it protects well his castling position. Thus the manoeuvre 8...De8 already encourages 9.b4! Dh5 10.f4. The text slows down White’s offensive.

9.f4


9...De8 10.Db1 Dh7!

The point! Black targets the c4-pawn and prepares ...e4, e.g. 11.b4 e4, or 11.a3 Dc7 12.b4 e4. It transpires that White should protect c4:

11.b3 Dd7 12.Dd2 De8 13.Bb2

13...Dd8

Black is fully mobilised and well coordinated.

6...d6 7.0-0
7...c6

I have played in one game 7...a6, having in mind to meet 8.b5 by 8...c6 9.b4 c7 10.b5 d7, but this setup is a bit too passive.

Later I was attracted by the straightforward idea 7...e8!? 8.b4


8...h5

Black’s idea is to sac a pawn for a great initiative after 9.d2 (9.c2 f4) 9...f4 10.gxf4 h3

11.xh3 (11.h1 xg2+ 12.xg2 bd7 13.h1 g4) 11...xh3 12.g5 h4 13.h1 g4 14.f3 h3.

Critical, however, is 9.e3! which prevents ...f4 and prepares a trade of queens with d2. My analysis shows that Black can hold the endgame after 9...e6 10.d2 xd1 11.exd1 c6 12.b5 c8 13.a3 bd7 14.bc6 bc6 15.ab1 f7, planning ...d5.

Still, it is not worth to test White on the move 9.e3!. The text does not waste time on dubious queen manoeuvres, but prepares ...h8, e6.

The best move order, however, is 7...a5!? in order to exchange the a-pawns, and more importantly, to provoke ab1.

8.xb1

Of course, 8.b4 is better. In fact, White might need the rook exactly on a1. For instance, 8...h8 (intending ...e6), is best met by:

9.a4 e6 10.a3. In practice, White chooses instead exclusively:

9.xb1


9...a6 10.a4 e6 11.b5 axb5 12.axb5

Black has achieved comfortable development and after 12...c7 13.bc6 bc6 14.b3 the game
Spraggett-Dolmatov, Hastings 1989, has finished in a draw.

8...a5!? 9.a3 ♘h8 10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 ♘a6 12.b5 ♘c5 13.♗e3 ♘e6 14.bxc6 bxc6

15.♗b3

The email game Kuttruf-Zeh, 2004, saw 15.♗b6 ♙d7 16.♕c2 ♗b7 17.♗b2?! c5 and Black's game is even more pleasant. An obvious improvement is 17.c5 ♘d5=.

Black could also meet 15.♗b6 by 15...♗e8!? 16.c5 f4, for example – 17.cxd6 ♘xd6 18.♕d2 ♘e7 19.e3 ♘a3 20.♗c1 fxg3 21.hxg3 ♘a6 with active piece play.

Now 22.d4 would be risky in view of 22...e4 23.♗e5 ♘g5 24.♕a1 ♘xa1 25.♕xa1 ♘c8†.

15...♗g4

The thematic idea 15...f4 was also possible, but perhaps Balinov wanted to keep the centre more fluid.

16.♗b6?! ♘e8

Black smells the blood and stakes on a kingside attack. 16...♕xe3 17.♕xd8 ♘xd8 ensured him a clear edge though.

17.♗a1 ♘xa1 18.♗xa1

18...f4?

Black has a big Elo advantage and rushes to finish off the opponent with a direct attack. Correct was 18...♗d8! 19.♗b4 ♘xe3 with the bishop pair advantage and a target on e3.

19.♖d2? (19.♗a3! d5 20.♕a3) 19...fxg3 20.hxg3 ♘d5 21.e3? (21.♗e1) 21...♗e5 22.♕a5 ♗h5++
Black has achieved the ultimate attacking set-up. The rest is irrelevant to the opening:

23.cxd5 \textit{Exf3?} 24.\textit{De4 cxd5} 25.\textit{Exf3 dxe4} 26.\textit{Exg4 Wxg4} 27.\textit{Ec1? h6} 28.\textit{Exc5 \textit{Exc5}} 29.\textit{Exc5 \textit{Ed1+} 30.\textit{Gg2? Wf3+}} 31.\textit{Gh2 Wxh2+} 32.\textit{Gg1} \textit{Gh3} 0-1

17. Lein – Korchnoi
Johannesburg 1979

1.c4 \textit{df6} 2.cf3 \textit{b6} 3.g3 \textit{ib7} 4.\textit{Gg2 e5} 5.d3 \textit{ib4+} 6.d2 \textit{xd2+} 7.\textit{xd2} 0-0 8.0-0

8...d6

Korchnoi had played earlier 8...\textit{Ee8} 9.\textit{Cc3 c6} 10.a\textit{ac1 d5} 11.cxd5 \textit{cx5} 12.d4 e4 13.\textit{De5 \textit{bd7}} 14.\textit{Xd7 \textit{Wxd7=}}, Hort-Korchnoi, Moscow 1971, but White could improve with 10.d4! e4 11.\textit{Gh4 d5} 12.Gf5. It is more logical to leave the pawns on dark squares.

9.\textit{Cc3 bd7} 10.e4

White chooses a plan with f4, but it turns problematic. As usual, central play is better: 10.d4 \textit{Ee8} 11.\textit{Gc2} where Black is solid, but cramped.

10...\textit{Cc5} 11.\textit{Gh4 W6} 12.\textit{Gf2}

So far 12.f4 drops a pawn after 12...\textit{Exf4} 13.\textit{Gxf4 \textit{Gxe4}}

12...\textit{Gh5} 13.\textit{Gf5} \textit{g6} 14.\textit{Gf3}

14...\textit{Wg5}

14...f5 equalized because 15.\textit{Exf5} \textit{Gxg2} 16.\textit{Gxg2 \textit{Exf5}} 17.g4? would lose to 17...\textit{Gh4} 18.\textit{Gxf5 \textit{Wg5}}.

15.\textit{Gad1 f5} 16.\textit{Exf5 Gxg2} 17.\textit{Gxg2}

White's knights are slightly better coordinated than Black's after 17.\textit{Gxg2! Gxf5} 18.\textit{Gh1 Gg8} 19.f4 \textit{Exf4} 20.\textit{Gxf4 \textit{Wxe7}}.

17...\textit{Exf5} 18.\textit{Gf1}?! An incredible move from a decent grandmaster as Anatoly Lein. I fail to understand its motives. 18.f4= eliminated the tension.

18...\textit{Wg4} 19.\textit{Gh4 g5} 20.\textit{Gg2 \textit{Ef6}} 21.\textit{Gg1 \textit{Hg7}} 22.\textit{Gf3 \textit{Wh5}}
23.\texttt{\textasciitilde}e2 \texttt{\textasciitilde}g6 24.\texttt{\textasciitilde}d5 \texttt{\textasciitilde}f7 25.\texttt{\textasciitilde}e4 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xe4+ 26.dxe4 \texttt{\textasciitilde}af8 27.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g2 \texttt{\textasciitilde}d4

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28.\texttt{\textasciitilde}d2

White stubbornly refrains from 28.f4 which should be enough to hold after 28...\texttt{\textasciitilde}gxf4 29.\texttt{\textasciitilde}gx\texttt{\textasciitilde}f4 c6 30.fxe5 dxe5. Perhaps Lein shared the opinion of GM Spiridonov who liked to say that f4 was ALWAYS bad?!

28...\texttt{\textasciitilde}ge6 29.h3 h5 30.\texttt{\textasciitilde}e1 g4 31.h4 a6 32.\texttt{\textasciitilde}e3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}c5 33.\texttt{\textasciitilde}d5 c6 34.\texttt{\textasciitilde}c3

34...b5

This game is a good example of what to do against passive waiting game – Korchnoi implacably advances, seizing more and more space all over the board.

35.cxb5 axb5 36.b4 \texttt{\textasciitilde}ce6 37.\texttt{\textasciitilde}e3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}a8 38.\texttt{\textasciitilde}ge2 c5 39.bxc5 dxc5 40.\texttt{\textasciitilde}d5 c4 0-1

I suppose that the game was adjourned and the knight analysis convinced Lein that his position was hopeless.
Chapter 9. 1.\textit{\textbf{d}}f3 d5 2.\textit{\textbf{c}}4 d4 3.\textit{\textbf{b}}4

Main Ideas

1.\textit{\textbf{d}}f3 d5 2.\textit{\textbf{c}}4 d4 3.\textit{\textbf{b}}4 f6!

White players had great expectations about this system five years ago. It seemed that the sharp attack: 4.e3 e5 5.c5 was an effective way to exploit the light-squares weaknesses in Black's camp. After 5...a5 White followed up with 6.\textit{\textbf{b}}5+? c6 7.\textit{\textbf{c}}4 axb4 and his design was based on the hit 8.\textit{\textbf{d}}xe5?.

However, Reinhold Thiele noticed that 8...\textit{\textbf{x}}xe5! 9.\textit{\textbf{h}}5+ g6 10.\textit{\textbf{x}}e5+ is winning for Black as the queen remains entrapped on h8. The same theme occurs in various lines of the 3.b4 system and it is worth remembering it.

In 2013 Bukavshin introduced the new idea 6.\textit{\textbf{a}}4+, aiming to un-coordinate Black's pieces. Critical then is 6...\textit{\textbf{d}}7 7.\textit{\textbf{b}}5 \textit{\textbf{x}}c5 8.\textit{\textbf{c}}4 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 9.\textit{\textbf{e}}xd4 exd4

Black should forget about short castling, but it turns out that his king can find a safe haven on the opposite wing. An important nuance is that White cannot regain the pawn with 10.\textit{\textbf{b}}2 \textit{\textbf{g}}4 11.\textit{\textbf{x}}d4 because after 11...\textit{\textbf{d}}7! all his minor pieces are hanging and 12.\textit{\textbf{e}}6 \textit{\textbf{x}}e6 13.\textit{\textbf{x}}e6 stumbles into 13...\textit{\textbf{xf}}2+!.

That leaves White with 10.\textit{\textbf{a}}3 \textit{\textbf{a}}6!? 11.0-0 \textit{\textbf{b}}4 12.d3 when
Black has a pleasant choice between 12...c6 13.\textit{\text{f}}b2 b6= and 12...\textit{\text{f}}5 13.\textit{\text{b}}3 \textit{\text{d}}6= enabling ...0-0-0. See \textbf{Game 20} Fraczek-Van Assche, corr. 2013.

Another modern direction of White's investigations is the Benko or Benoni Reversed pawn structure. For instance: 4.d3 e5 5.a3

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\end{center}

White tries to keep his queenside pawns fluid and to keep all his options open. Of course, we'll not oblige. We can attack his shaky queenside formation with either 5...a5 or 5...c5. But not both! In a position of this type:

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Black lacks comfortable places for his pieces and his stand is passive - he will have to defend against King's Indian style attacks without counterplay on the queenside.

The 5...c5 approach is universal as it works against different set-ups. Its strong point is that it is centre-oriented and preserves Black's spatial advantage. For instance, 6.bxc5 \textit{\text{c}}x5 7.g3 \textit{\text{e}}7 8.g2 0-0 9.0-0.

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\end{center}

Black will aim to keep the status quo in the centre while White will attempt flank stabs as f2-f4. See \textbf{Game 19} Iturrizaga-Ly Mo, Caleta 2016.

Sometimes White offers a pure Benko gambit with 6.g3 cxb4 7.g2 \textit{\text{c}}c6 8.0-0 a5, but his compensation is at most sufficient for a draw as the game Korchnoi-Seirawan, London 1984, suggests.

In the above diagram we see that White's pawn on a3 hampers the move \textit{\text{c}}1-a3 which is essential in the fight for the c5-square. That led the first players to the idea of refraining from a2-a3 and the move 4.\textit{\text{a}}3 e5 5.\textit{\text{c}}2 is their latest hope of reviving the 3.b4 system. Although 5...c5 is still possible, I propose to enhance this plan by inserting 5...\textit{\text{a}}6!? first.
The trick is that 6...b1 c5!? 7.bxc5 bxc5 8.d3 d7! threatens the nasty pin ...d4 and it is unclear how White should neutralise it. With a hindsight, White may choose 7.b5, but then 7...c7 8.d3 d6 9.g3 b6 10.g2 b7 11.0-0 a6 opens up the a-file and that is a good base for counterplay. Of course, there is seemingly nothing to attack on the queenside, but if we considered the breakthrough ...e5-e4, we would notice that the c4-pawn is a potential target.

In conclusion, the 3.b4 line is still not living up to White's expectations. The ultra-sharp variations with c4-c5 are balanced, at best, while calmer development offers Black a structural advantage after ...c5 (or ...a5).
Chapter 9. 1.\( \text{d}f3 \) d5 2.\( c\)4 d4 3.b4

**Step by Step**

1.\( \text{d}f3 \) d5 2.\( c\)4 d4 3.b4 f6!

This aggressive approach best fits in the spirit of our book. We take advantage of any move that does not attack the centre to grab more space.

A. 4.d3; B. 4.e3; C. 4.\( \text{d}a3 \)

Rare alternatives are:

4.\( \text{d}a4+ \text{d}7 \) 5.\( \text{d}b3 \) e5 6.e3 c5 7.bxc5 \( \text{d}xc5 \) 8.exd4 exd4↑.

4.\( \text{b}2 \) e5 5.e3 (5.a3 c5) 5...dxe3 6.fxe3 \( \text{d}xb4 \). White does not have full compensation for the pawn:

7.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 8.0-0 0-0 9.\( \text{d}b3 \) c6; 7.a3 \( \text{e}7 \) 8.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 9.d3 g6 10.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 11.0-0 \( \text{d}7 \); 7.c5 (Vaganian) 7...\( \text{xc}5 \) 8.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 9.0-0 \( \text{bc}6 \) when 10.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 11.\( \text{xe}5 \) is countered by 11...\( \text{xe}3+! \).

A. 4.d3 e5 5.a3 c5

If you are a Pirc fan, you may consider 5...a5!? 6.b5 \( \text{d}7 \)!. Then 7.e3 would be well met by 7...dxe3 8.fxe3 e4 9.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \) when 10.g3 \( \text{e}7 \) is considered in **Game 18** Van der Werf-Burg, Wijk aan Zee 2013.

6.bxc5

6.g3 cxb4 7.\( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 8.0-0 a5 is a good version of the Benko Reversed. Korchnoi-Seirawan, London 1984, went 9.e3 \( \text{g}4 \) 10.h3 \( \text{xf}3 \) 11.\( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 12.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{ge}7 \) 13.e4, when instead of the hasty 13...\( \text{xd}5 \) 14.\( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{e}7 \), which was roughly equal, Black could have posed more problems with 13...\( \text{d}7 \)↑! 14.\( \text{h}5+ \) \( \text{d}8?!!↑ \). Please forgive me for this line, I'm perfectly aware that only a silicon creature would take it.
6...\text{\textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xc5 7.g3 \textit{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e7 8.\textit{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}g2} 0-0
9.0-0=

See Game 19 Iturrizaga-Ly Mo, Caleta 2016.

B. 4.e3 e5 5.c5

White cannot play 5.exd4? since he is worse after 5...e4! – 6.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e2

Or 6.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}h4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xd4 7.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}c3 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xb4
8.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}h5+ \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}f8 9.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}b2 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}h6+, Gudmundsson-Kaila, Munich 1936.

6...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e7 7.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}g1 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}c6 8.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e3 when strongest is 8...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}h6!, heading for f5.

5.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xe5? fxe5 6.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}h5+ is all wrong since even 6...g6?! (6...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e7! 7.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xe5+ \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}f7 8.c5 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e6 is close to winning)

7.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xe5+ \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}f7 8.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xh8 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}f6 is rather unclear. Black threatens to win the enemy queen with ...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}d7, ...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}g7.

We typically meet 5.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}b3 by 5...c5

6.bxc5 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}c6

Correspondence players prefer 6...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xc5!? when 7.exd4 exd4 8.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}a3 b6 keeps Black's centre together.

7.exd4 exd4

8.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}a3

8.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}d3 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xc5 9.0-0 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}ge7 10.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}a3 b6=, Tomashevsky-Sakaev, Selpukhov 2007.

8...f5! 9.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e2 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}f6 10.0-0 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e7 11.d3 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}d7 12.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}bd2 0-0 with a balanced game.

5.a3 c5 6.exd4 exd4 is a better version of the previous line from Black's standpoint as the a3-square is occupied.

5.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}b2 transposes to 4.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}b2 – we can eat the pawn.

5...a5 6.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}a4+?

6.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}b5+? c6 7.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}c4 axb4 8.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xe5? loses to 8...fxe5! 9.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}h5+ g6 10.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xe5+ \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e7 11.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xh8 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}f6

Panjwani-So, Edmonton 2014, went further 12.d3 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e6 13.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}d2 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}bd7
14.a3 dxe3 15.fxe3 b3 16.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xe4
17.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xe6 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}h4+ 18.g3 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xg3 19.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}g1 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e4+ 20.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}d1 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}dxc5 21.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e5 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}f2+ 22.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}e2 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}fxd3 23.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}d4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}f2+ 0-1.

6.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}c4 axb4 7.exd4

It is not a good idea to delay this exchange too much as later Black might recapture on d4 by piece – 7.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}b3 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}h6 8.0-0 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xc5
9.exd4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xd4! 10.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xd4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}}xd4
11...b2 b6=, Chouari-Pupke, corr. 2004.
7...exd4 8.0-0 0xc5
As Russians say, we take everything and easily win. Our king will be safe on f8. The game Gareev-Ramirez, Saint Louis 2014, continued 9...h4
g6 10.d3 f6 11.d2 c6 12.e4 e7 13.f4 a5 14.xg8,

\[\text{Diagram 1}\]

when instead of 14...xg8 15.f5=, Black had 14...f5!!

6...d7
6...c6 steers the game into a complex ending – 7.b5 b4 8.a3 d5
9.exd4 exd4 10.xd4 e7+ 11.e2 xc5 12.0-0 xd4 13.xd4 c5

\[\text{Diagram 2}\]

14.b3
White’s only trump is his lead in development so he should not give us a respite with 14.b2
g7 (another good option is 14...f4 15.c4 xd4 16.xd4 e6) 15.c4 d7 16.e1 b6
17.b3 0-0-0= as in Demuth-So, Montpellier 2015.
14..d6. White has a slight initiative, but Black should be able to neutralise it. Mareco-Ni Hua, Baku 2015, saw further 15.f3 g7
16.e1 f4 17.d4 d3 18.d1 xc1 19.xc1 when 19...f7! would have been unclear. In the game Black wrongly opted for a long castle –
19...e6 20.c5 xc5 21.xc5 0-0-0 22.b6 c6 23.c3 xd4 24.e1=.

7.b5 xc5 8.c4
8.a3?! xa3 9.xa3 e7 10.exd4 is bad in view of 10.e4.

8...e7 9.exd4 exd4

\[\text{Diagram 3}\]

10.a3
Ramirez-Edouard, Arlington 2015, featured 10.b2 g4 11.xd4 when 11...d7! 12.e6 xe6 13.xe6 xf2+! was strong, as Edouard points out. Black is on top after
14.xf2 c5 15.g4 xd3+ 16.g1 xb2 17.xg7?! d4+ 18.f1 f8=.
1. d3 d5 2. c4 d4 3. b4

The careless 10.0-0 allows the redeployment 10...g4 11. a3 d7 pawn.

10...a6!? 11.0-0 b4 12. d3 f5

12...c6 13. bd2 b6=, Bukavshin-Shukh, Saratov 2013.

13. wb3

In Demuth-Duda, Ruzomberok 2014, White decided to provoke ...b6 with 13. ac1, but that only bolsters Black’s queenside. He was better after 14. wb3 wd6 15. bd2 0-0-0 16. h4 g6 17. e1 ed5 pawn.

13...e1 x d3 14. x d3 x d3 15. xc5 xc5 16. c4 wd6 17. bd2 leads to an equal endgame after 17...0-0-0 18. ac1 b6 19. e4 xe4 20. xe4 d5 21. xd4 wc5=. Instead, 17... ed8 18. ac1 b6 19. e4 wd5 and 17...d3 18. ac1 b6 are similar.

13...d6

Black is ready to castle long. Subjectively the position is equal, but Black’s game is easier. After all, he is still a pawn up. See Game 20 Fraczek-Van Assche, corr. 2013.

C. 4. a3 e5 5. c2 a6!? 6. wb1

White’s play might be characterised as hypermodern, but it looks to me simply bad. I propose to take over the initiative with concrete play.

The other possible approach is 6. a3 c5 7. g3 e6 7...e4 8. g1 g7 9. g2 f5 10. h3 a4 11. d3 is tangled.

8. d3 (8. b5 c7 9. d3 wd7 10. g2 h3 3) 8...wd7 9. b1 e7!? More solid set-up is 9...d6 10. d2 e7 11. e4 b8 12. b5 c7 13. g2 0-0 14.0-0 b6.

10. g2 h3 11.0-0 h5 (11...xg2!? 12. xg2 h5)

Black has good attacking prospects: 12. e3 xg2 14. xg2 h4;
12.e4 \( \text{dxg2} \) 13.\( \text{dxg2} \) h4; 12.\( \text{dxh3} \) \( \text{gxh3} \) 13.\( \text{dxe1} \) h4 14.\( \text{wa4+} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 15.\( \text{dxh4?!} \) g5 16.\( \text{dhf3} \) \( \text{g8} \) followed by ...\( \text{g6} \).
12.\( \text{dxe1} \) \( \text{dxg2} \) 13.\( \text{dxg2} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{c7} \) 14.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{g6} \)

15.f4
The engine suggests 15.\( \text{de4} \) \( \text{cxb4} \) 16.\( \text{axb4} \) h4 17.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{e1} \) which is not very consistent, does it?
15...h4 16.f5 \( \text{hxg3!} \) 17.\( \text{hxg3} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{e7} \) 18.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{exh4!} \) 19.\( \text{gxh4} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 20.\( \text{de4} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{e3} \) 21.\( \text{dxe3} \) \( \text{wg4+} \)=.

Note that 6.b5?! \( \text{dc5} \) 7.d3 is dubious in view of 7...a6.

6...c5?! 7.bxc5
7.b5 solidifies our centre – 7...\( \text{dc7} \) 8.d3 \( \text{d} \)\( \text{d6} \) 9.g3 b6 10.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{b7} \) 11.0-0 a6 12.a4 \( \text{axb5} \) 13.\( \text{axb5} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{e7} \) 14.e4

Here 14...g5 is a bit premature owing to 15.\( \text{h4} \).
14...\( \text{dxe3} \) 15.\( \text{fxe3} \) 0-0 16.e4 \( \text{de6} \) 17.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{d4} \) is "only" equal. It is more interesting to castle:
14...0-0 15.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{h4} \)
15.dxe1 would be too passive – 15...\( \text{d} \)\( \text{e6} \) whereas 16.f4?! drops a pawn to 16...\( \text{exf4} \) 17.\( \text{gx} \)\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c7} \).
After the text, we can take over the initiative with:
15...g5?! 16.d5 \( \text{dx} \)\( \text{f5} \) 17.\( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{dxg2} \) 18.\( \text{dxg2} \) e4?! 19.\( \text{dxe4} \) \( \text{h} \)\( \text{h8} \) 20.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{e8} \)=. The c4-pawn is weak and we could attack it with ...\( \text{d} \)\( \text{e5} \), ...\( \text{d} \)\( \text{d6} \).
For instance: 21.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{a} \)\( \text{a2} \) 22.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{wa8} \) 23.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{g1} \) \( \text{g8} \), intending ...\( \text{g4} \).

7.d3 is not entirely correct – 7...\( \text{dx} \)\( \text{b4} \) 8.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{xb4} \) cxb4 9.e3 \( \text{d} \)\( \text{e7} \) 10.exd4 exd4 11.g3 \( \text{d} \)\( \text{c6} \) 12.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{b2} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{e7} \) 13.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{g2} \) 0-0=.

7...\( \text{d} \)\( \text{xc5} \) 8.d3 \( \text{d} \)\( \text{d7} \)!

The threat ...\( \text{a} \)\( \text{a4} \) is rather awkward for White and 9.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{xb7} \)? loses material. Remains: 9.e3 \( \text{a} \)\( \text{a4} \) 10.\( \text{we2} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{c7} \) (10...\( \text{d} \)\( \text{xe3} \) 11.\( \text{fxe3} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{e7} \)=) 11.exd4 \( \text{d} \)\( \text{b6} \) (11...exd4?! 12.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{c6} \) 13.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{b2} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{b6} \) 14.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{a} \)\( \text{a5} \)+ 15.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xf3} \)=) 12.a3 exd4 13.\( \text{d} \)\( \text{b4} \) \( \text{d} \)\( \text{c5} \) with active pieces.
Chapter 9. 1.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}f3} d5 2.c4 d4 3.b4

Annotated Games

18. Van der Werf – Burg
Wijk aan Zee 14.01.2013

1.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}f3} d5 2.c4 d4 3.b4 f6 4.d3 e5
5.a3 a5 6.b5

6...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}e7

Black’s first task in the diagram position was to decide:
1. How to meet e2-e3.
2. Then he should choose the best set-up of his \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}f8 and \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}g8.
3. Finally, he should weigh the pros and cons of an early ...a5-a4.

The best solution is 6...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}d7 as pointed out in the “Step by Step” chapter. It prepares to counter 7.e3 by 7...
dxe3 8.fxe3 e4 9.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}d4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}c5!. At the same time it does not block the way to the dark-squared bishop. Thus, if
White decides to play 7.a4 himself, 7...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}b4+! would be unpleasant –
8.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}d2 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}e7 9.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}xb4 axb4 10.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}b3 c5.

Black’s 6th move does not address any of the above-mentioned strategic problems. It allows 7.e3! dxe3
8.fxe3 when 8...e4 would be already bad in view of 9.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}d4! with domination in the centre.

7.g3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}d7 8.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}g2 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}c5

Black plays by general considerations, without bothering himself with “details”. I would prefer 8...a4 in order to squelch the enemy’s thematic queenside play. That is not so significant from computer’s standpoint, but it would drastically complicate White’s task OTB because he remains without a clear plan. For instance, undermining the centre with 9.e3 also does not work due to 9...
dxe3 10.fxe3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}c5 or 10.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}xe3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}f5
11.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}c3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}c5.

Here is a similar game: 4.d3 e5 5.a3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}e7 6.g3 a5 7.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}b2 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}g6 8.b5 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}d7
9.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}g2 a4 10.0-0 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{n}}}c5
11.\(\text{b}d2\) \(\text{e}7\) 12.\(\text{c}e1\) \(\text{f}5\) 13.\(\text{c}c2\) 0-0
14.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{e}6\) (14...\(\text{f}4!?)\) 15.\(\text{c}c2\) \(\text{d}7\)
(15...\(\text{f}4!?)\) 16.\(\text{a}d1\) \(\text{d}8\) 17.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{h}8\)
18.\(\text{f}e1\) \(\text{f}4\) 19.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{b}3\)=, Iturrizaga-
Wang Hao, Dubai 2014.

9.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{g}6\)

The engines prefer 9...\(\text{f}5\), but humans understand that Black’s
only active plan in this structure is
...\(\text{f}6-\text{f}5-\text{f}4\) so the knight should not
be hampering it.

10.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 11.\(\text{f}d2\) \(\text{c}8\)

The battle is for \(c5\) so the queen
should have stayed in touch with
the dark squares. 11...\(\text{b}8\) was more
accurate.

12.\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{d}6\) 13.\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{f}8\) 14.\(\text{b}3\)
\(\text{xb}3\) 15.\(\text{xb}3\) \(\text{d}7\)

Chances are roughly even and any
small nuance could tip slightly the
balance in either side. Now 16.\(\text{h}6!\)
would have given White a hidden
 trump in a future endgame.

16.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{c}5\) 17.\(\text{c}2\) 0-0 18.\(\text{b}3\)
\(\text{xb}3\) 19.\(\text{xb}3\) \(\text{f}5\)

The ABC book recommends to fix
the enemy pawns on light squares
and 19...\(\text{h}6\) was a step in the right
direction. Instead, Black puts his
own one on a “wrong” place, beg-
ging to be stopped with 20.\(\text{f}4!\).

20.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{xa}3\) 21.\(\text{xa}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 22.\(\text{a}1\)
\(\text{f}4\)

Black is more active here, but
23.\(\text{gxf}4\) \(\text{xf}4\) 24.\(\text{h}6\) \(\text{g}6\) 25.\(\text{d}2\)=
would hold. Instead White errs and
lands in a critical position.

23.\(\text{d}2?\) \(\text{fxg}3\) 24.\(\text{fxg}3\) \(\text{f}2\)
25.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{g}4\) 26.\(\text{h}1\) \(\text{h}2\) 27.\(\text{c}5\)
\(\text{h}8\) 28.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{f}5\) 29.\(\text{d}5\)
\(\text{g}5+\) 30.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{c}6\) 31.\(\text{bxc}6\) \(\text{bxc}6\)
32.\(\text{e}7?\) \(\text{h}6\) 33.\(\text{a}1\) \(\text{e}4\) 34.\(\text{xg}4\)
\(\text{exd}3+\) 35.\(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{e}3+\) 36.\(\text{c}2\)
d\(\text{d}3+\) 37.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{exe}2\) 38.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{d}4+\)
39.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{xg}4\) 40.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{e}8\) 41.\(\text{c}7\)
\(\text{d}1\) 42.\(\text{f}7\) \(\text{h}7\) 0-1

19. Iturrizaga – Ly Mo
Caleta 01.02.2016

1.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}5\) 2.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{d}4\) 3.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 4.\(\text{d}3\)
e\(5.\text{a}3\) \(\text{c}5\) 6.\(\text{bxc}5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 7.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{e}7\)
8.\(\text{g}2\) 0-0 9.0-0
The queen’s knight should control the key square c5 from a6 or d7. But the other knight could take another route – to g6, leaving c6 for the bishop, e.g. 9...\(\text{d}7\) 10.\(\text{bd}2\) \(\text{a}6\) 11.\(\text{c}2\) (11.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{c}6\)) 11...\(\text{c}6\) 12.\(\text{b}3\) b6

13.\(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 14.a4 e4↑.

10.\(\text{bd}2\) \(\text{e}7\) 11.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{a}6\) 12.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{e}6\) 13.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{b}8\) 14.f4 \(\text{d}7\) 15.\(\text{e}4\)

15...\(\text{h}6\)

White has made all his active moves, but he cannot progress any further. The d4-pawn cuts his forces on two and hampers his manoeuvring. Conversely, Black possesses a clear plan for offence. He can push forth his kingside pawns.

16.\(\text{d}2\) f5 17.\(\text{f}2\) e4?!

This is a typical strategic mistake. The pawn trade is almost always in White’s favour since it frees his pieces. Normal would have been 17...\(\text{exf}4\) 18.\(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{e}8\). Then Black will aim for ...\(\text{g}5\), ...\(\text{f}4\).

18.dxe4 \(\text{fxe}4\) 19.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{xc}4\) 20.\(\text{b}4\)

A solid human approach. The greedy computer suggests 20.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{c}5\) 21.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{xc}6\) 22.\(\text{xd}4\).

20...\(\text{c}5\) 21.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xb}4?!\)

This idea is probably based on miscalculation. Black’s knight is heading for c3, but instead it will be forced to land the passive place b6.

22.axb4 \(\text{a}4\) 23.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 24.\(\text{c}2\)

24.b5! would repel the knight – 24...\(\text{b}6\) 25.\(\text{b}4\) with the more active pieces. Instead, White suddenly shifts the battle to the kingside.

24...\(\text{b}5\) 25.\(\text{g}6\) \(\text{h}8\) 26.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{g}8\) 27.\(\text{bc}1\) \(\text{c}3\) 28.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 29.\(\text{fe}1\) \(\text{b}6\) 30.\(\text{xf}6?!\)
Simplifying Black’s task. The opposite-coloured bishops justify the quick draw that followed.

30...\texttt{bxf6} 31.\texttt{h5} \texttt{e4} 32.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xe4} 33.\texttt{e5} Draw.

20. Fraczek – Van Assche
corr FICGS 2013

1.\texttt{f3} d5 2.\texttt{c4} d4 3.\texttt{b4} f6 4.e3 e5 5.c5 a5 6.\texttt{a4}+ \texttt{d7} 7.b5 \texttt{xc5} 8.\texttt{c4} \texttt{e7} 9.exd4 exd4 10.\texttt{a3} \texttt{a6} 11.0-0 \texttt{b4} 12.d3 \texttt{f5} 13.\texttt{b3} \texttt{d6} 14.\texttt{bd2}

14...0-0-0

14...a4 temporary uncoordinates White’s heavy pieces, but it is more committal since the \texttt{b4}-knight loses pawn support. That binds the \texttt{d6}-queen with its defence. Still, the game remains balanced: 15.\texttt{b1} 0-0-0 16.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g6} 17.\texttt{xg6} hxg6 18.h3 f5 19.\texttt{f3} \texttt{bd5}

Black had no time for 19...\texttt{h5} (covering \texttt{g5} and threatening \texttt{g5}), due to 20.\texttt{e1} \texttt{ed5} 21.\texttt{e5} (threatening 22.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{xb4} 23.\texttt{e6}) 21...\texttt{c3} 22.\texttt{xb4}! \texttt{xb4} 23.\texttt{wb2} and White preserves some initiative due to the hanging state of the \texttt{c5}. This line suggests that it would be preferable to get rid of the problem bishop.

20.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 21.\texttt{g5} \texttt{c3} 22.\texttt{e1}

22...\texttt{ed5}!?

The exchange sacrifice is not obligatory. For instance, Black could save it with 22...\texttt{ede8}, but then White could repeat moves with 23.\texttt{f7} (23.\texttt{e6}+!?!) 23...\texttt{d8} 24.\texttt{c4}.

23.\texttt{e6} \texttt{d6} 24.\texttt{xd8} \texttt{xd8} Black has full compensation thanks to the weakness of the \texttt{b5}-pawn. He would have practical chances OTB, but computers easily defend such positions: 25.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} 26.\texttt{d2} \texttt{f4} 27.\texttt{fe1} g5 28.b6 cxb6 29.\texttt{b2} \texttt{d6} 30.\texttt{ac1} \texttt{e8} 31.\texttt{exe8+} \texttt{exe8} 32.\texttt{xc3} dxc3 33.\texttt{xc3} draw, Kögl-Rüttenacht, ICCF 2012.

15.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g6} 16.\texttt{xg6} hxg6 17.h3 \texttt{ed5}

17...f5 weakens both e5 and g5 and that gives White sufficient compensation for the pawn after 18.\texttt{fe1} \texttt{ed5} 19.\texttt{f3}. Black finds an indirect defence of the piece:
18.\( \text{\textit{e}}4 \) \( \text{\textit{e}}5 \)

It turns out that 19.\( \text{\textit{x}}c5 \) stumbles into 19...\( \text{\textit{x}}h3!! \) 20.\( gxh3 \) \( \text{\textit{g}}5+ \) 21.\( \text{\textit{h}}2 \) \( \text{\textit{h}}8-+ \).

19.\( \text{\textit{a}}e1 \)

It seems that White is in a predicament, but he finds enough counter-play thanks to the open c-file:

27.\( \text{\textit{b}}6 \) cxb6 28.\( \text{\textit{d}}2 \) d3 29.\( \text{\textit{b}}1 \) c6 30.\( \text{\textit{e}}3 \) \( \text{\textit{h}}d4 \) 31.\( \text{\textit{c}}1 \) \( \text{\textit{c}}4 \)
32.\( \text{\textit{x}}c4 \) \( \text{\textit{x}}c4 \) 33.\( \text{\textit{e}}1 \) \( \text{\textit{c}}6 \)
34.\( \text{\textit{e}}4 \) \( \text{\textit{d}}4 \) 35.\( \text{\textit{c}}1 \) \( \text{\textit{c}}4 \) 36.\( \text{\textit{c}}3 \)
37.\( \text{\textit{a}}3 \) 37.\( \text{\textit{d}}1 \) \( \text{\textit{x}}c3 \) 38.\( \text{\textit{x}}c3 \) \( \text{\textit{x}}c3 \)
39.\( \text{\textit{x}}d3 \) \( \text{\textit{b}}2 \) 40.\( \text{\textit{d}}1 \) \( \text{\textit{b}}5 \) 41.\( \text{\textit{d}}8+ \) Draw.
Chapter 10. 1. ¿f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.e3

Main Ideas

1. ¿f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.e3

This chapter deals with some very sharp variations which need memorization. White is ready to contest the centre with pawn sacrifices in the Blumenfeld/Benko style. For instance, 3...c5 4.b4 (4.exd4 is the Benoni Reversed. It is covered in the next chapter.) 4... ¿f6!? 5. ¿b2 cxb4 6.a3 may be not entirely correct, but it is not easy to refute, especially in rapid games.

My repertoire choice is quick development with:

3... ¿c6

In the last years Black has found new ideas which cast doubt on White's opening approach.

First of all, 4.exd4 ¿xd4 5. ¿xd4 ¿xd4 6. ¿c3 c6 7.d3 ¿h6! turns out to be even slightly more pleasant for Black.

In my 2012 book, *The Modern Réti*, I suggested that White could obtain a slight pull after 8. ¿e2 (8. ¿e3 ¿d8 9.d4 ¿f5) 8... ¿f5 9.0-0 e5 10.g4 ¿h4 11. ¿e3 ¿d6 12. ¿e4 ¿c7 13.f4. However, the latest innovation: 9... ¿d8!?, which clears d4 for the knight, leaves White without a clear plan. His only sensible attempt to get something out of the opening could be an attack on the e-file, but:

10. ¿e1 g6! 11. ¿g4 ¿g7 12. ¿xf5 ¿xf5 13. ¿g5 ¿e6!? 14. ¿d2 h6 15. ¿f4 g5 16. ¿e3 ¿c7 17. ¿e2 0-0-0
leads to interesting double-edged play.

The tricky 4.b4?! has also received serious blows. The lazy solution is to answer 4...\(\text{b4}?!\) 5.exd4 e5

You can play normal chess here without having to discover only moves. For instance: 6.dxe5 \(\text{f5}\) 7.\(\text{a3}\) \(\text{d3}\) or 6.\(\text{a3}\) e4 7.\(\text{xb4}\) \(\text{exf3}\) 8.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{xd4}\)=.

A sterner test of White’s idea is to grab the pawn:
4...dxe3 5.\(\text{xe3}\) \(\text{xb4}\) 6.d4 e5! 7.\(\text{a3}\) \(\text{c6}\)!

The point! Instead of 7...e4?! , Black opts for a position with an open e-file. Now 8.d5?! e4 9.\(\text{fd2}\) \(\text{e5}\) promises Black a strong attack, so White should play:
8.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{exd4}\) 9.\(\text{exd4}\) \(\text{f6}\) 10.\(\text{e2}\)

A critical position. Black will bolster his kingside with the manoeuvre ...\(\text{c8-f5-g6}\) and he’ll wait to see whether White’s centre will offer sufficient compensation. But do not overestimate your chances! Most probably the position is balanced. See Game 22 Hacker-Kribben, BdF-Schachserver 2013.

You should also be ready to face the symmetrical pawn structure that arises after:
4.d3 e5 5.\(\text{exd4}\) \(\text{exd4}\)

White will prepare b4 and I think that we must counter it with ...b5!. An illustrative line is 6.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{f6}\) 7.0-0 \(\text{c5}!\) 8.\(\text{a3}\) 0-0 9.\(\text{c2}\) a5 10.b3 \(\text{b8}\)! 11.a3 b5!

We preserve our space advantage.
Chapter 10. 1.\( \text{d}f3 \) d5 2.c4 d4 3.e3

**Step by Step**

1.\( \text{d}f3 \) d5 2.c4 d4 3.e3 \( \text{c}c6! \)

This is a solid equalizer. 3...c5 also has enough fans who love gambit pawns after 4.b4 (Of course, the Benoni Reversed with 4.exd4 is a decent alternative. I consider it in the next chapter). Perhaps the most tricky move order is 4...\( \text{f}6! \) 5.\( \text{b}2 \) dxe3 6.fxe3 cxb4. This approach is principled, but it demands very precise play.

8.\( \text{w}a4+ \) (8.a3!??) 8...\( \text{b}d7! \)
8...\( \text{c}c6 \) 9.d5 \( \text{w}a5 \) 10.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{b}8 \)
11.\( \text{b}d2 \) \( \text{b}d7 \), followed up by ...\( \text{h}6 \), is unclear.
9.\( \text{w}xb4 \) \( \text{h}6 \)! 10.\( \text{b}3 \) 0-0 11.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{a}5+ \)
12.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 13.\( \text{d}2 \) e5!
14.\( \text{x}e5 \) \( \text{h}4+ \) 15.g3 \( \text{h}3 \) 16.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{g}2+ \).

b) 7.a3! e6 8.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 9.0-0 a5
10.d4 is perhaps White’s best move order towards this position:

To start, White should avoid here:

a) 7.d4?! in view of 7...\( \text{g}6! \)
7...e5 8.\( \text{x}e5 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 9.\( \text{e}2 \) 0-0
10.a3 \( \text{c}6 \) 11.0-0 \( \text{e}7 \) is nice for Black so White should continue in gambit style with 8.\( \text{bd}2 \) exd4
9.exd4 \( \text{d}6 \) 10.c5!? \( \text{c}7 \) 11.\( \text{b}5+ \)
\( \text{c}6 \) 12.\( \text{e}2+ \) \( \text{e}7 \) 13.\( \text{x}e7+ \)
\( \text{x}e7 \) 14.0-0 with enough compensation for the pawn.

It was tested in several correspondence games which commonly featured 10...\( \text{b}6 \) and White enjoyed an initiative after 11.d5?! exd5 12.\( \text{x}f6 \) \( \text{xf6 \) 13.\( \text{bd}2 \).

Critical is 10...\( \text{e}7! \) 11.\( \text{bd}2 \) 0-0. White is yet to prove his compensation. Dammer-Buettner, corr. 2014, saw 12.\( \text{e}5?! \) \( \text{x}e5 \) 13.dxe5 \( \text{d}7 \)
14.axb4 \( \text{xb}4 \) 15.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{c}5+ \).

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12.axb4 ¤xb4 also looks fine for Black. So the ball is in White’s court in this line.

A. 4.exd4; B. 4.b4?!

4.d3 aims to throw us out of repertoire if we answered 4...e5 5.exd4 ¤xd4 6.¤xd4 ¤xd4. Not that it is such a big achievement, but I consider ...¤h6 instead of ...e5. We can follow in Anand’s footsteps: 5...exd4. Of course it is natural to preserve more pieces on the board since we have a space advantage.

The plot in this position turns around the d4-pawn. White will aim to encircle it and we cannot oblige to play by general considerations. Before all, we should decide how to meet the following White’s plan:

6.¤e2


6...¤f6 7.0-0 ¤e7 8.¤a3 0-0 9.¤c2 a5 10.b3 h6 (10...¤b8 11.¤b2 ¤c5 12.a3 b5) 11.a3

11.¤d2 does not hit d4 so we could continue 11...¤f5 12.a3 ¤h7 13.b4 ¤f6.

11...¤e8 12.¤b1

The best solution here is to stop the march of the b-pawn with:

12...¤b8 13.b4 (13.¤b2 ¤c5 14.b4=) 13...axb4 14.axb4 b5=.

We see that White can always drag our bishop to c5 by playing ¤b2, and equalize with b4. That brings us back to move 7. Why not try:

7...¤c5!? Then 8.¤a3 0-0 9.¤c2 a5 10.b3 ¤b8! 11.a3 b5

keeps the tension in our favour since we have preserved our superior centre. Remember this thematic way of neutralising the plan with b4!

White could try to exploit the absence of our bishop from e7 with:

8.a3 a5 9.¤g5, but 9...h6 10.¤xf6 (10.¤h4 0-0 11.¤bd2 ¤e7) 10...¤xf6 11.¤bd2 0-0 12.¤e4 ¤e7 still keeps
things in control. Black is ready to take over the initiative after 13.\(d2\) \(d6\) 14.\(d1\) a4 15.\(h3\) f5.

A. 4.\(exd4\) \(dxe4\) 5.\(dxe4\) \(dxe4\) 6.\(c3\)

White does not gain anything by delaying this natural move – 6.\(d3\) \(h6\) 7.\(e2\) \(f5\) 8.\(d2\) \(g6\) 9.\(f3\) \(d6\).

6...c6 7.d3

7.\(e2\) \(h6\) 8.d3 transposes.

7...\(h6\)!

Black generously offers White to play 8.\(e3\) \(d8\) 9.d4 since his game is very easy after 9...\(f5\). Although he cannot realistically claim an advantage, practical experience sees him scoring more than 70% from here:

10.\(d2\) \(g6\) 11.d5

11.0-0-0 \(g7\) 12.\(e2\) 0-0 13.\(h4\) is not dangerous because White's attack does not have serious chances to succeed without a dark-squared bishop:

8.\(e2\)

8.\(xh6\) \(gxh6\) 9.\(e2\) \(f5\) hardly needs more attention – Black's pieces dominate the board.

The “improved” version of the above line is 8.\(e3\) \(d8\) 9.\(xh6\) (9.\(e2\) \(f5\) 10.0-0 has no venom due to 10...\(g6\)) 9...\(gxh6\) 10.d4 \(g7\) 11.d5 hardly even equalizes after 11...\(d6\)! (threatening 12.\(d3\) \(xc3+\) 13.\(xc3\) \(e5+\)) 12.\(c1\) \(g6\) 13.\(f3\) \(g5\), Zvjaginsev-Granda Zuniaga, Pamplona 1996.

8.h3 \(f5\) 9.\(g4\) aims to prevent
Chapter 10

Black’s knight from reaching d4, but 9...\texttt{\textbackslash e5}+! (9...\texttt{\textbackslash h4} 10.\texttt{\textbackslash e3} \texttt{\textbackslash f6} 11.f4 \texttt{\textbackslash e5} 12.f5) throws a spanner in the works.

10.\texttt{\textbackslash e4}

The more natural move 10.\texttt{\textbackslash e2} does not even equalize after 10...\texttt{\textbackslash wxe2}+! 11.\texttt{\textbackslash xxe2} (11.\texttt{\textbackslash xxe2} \texttt{\textbackslash h4} 12.\texttt{\textbackslash g3} \texttt{\textbackslash f3}+ 13.\texttt{\textbackslash d1} \texttt{\textbackslash g6}) 11...\texttt{\textbackslash d4}\textsuperscript{†}.

10...\texttt{\textbackslash d4} 11.f4 \texttt{\textbackslash w}a5+(11...\texttt{\textbackslash w}c7 12.\texttt{\textbackslash e3} \texttt{e5}) 12.\texttt{\textbackslash d2} \texttt{\textbackslash w}d8 13.\texttt{\textbackslash g2} \texttt{\textbackslash g6} 14.\texttt{\textbackslash c3}, Naiditsch-Bauer, Mulhouse 2011, brought about a position where White is overextended. That could be exploited with 14...\texttt{\textbackslash h5}\textsuperscript{†}.

8...\texttt{\textbackslash f5} 9.0-0

9.g4 \texttt{\textbackslash h4} 10.\texttt{\textbackslash g1} \texttt{\textbackslash d6} 11.\texttt{\textbackslash g3} is clearly dubious in view of 11...\texttt{\textbackslash e5}!

11...\texttt{\textbackslash h5} 12.\texttt{\textbackslash e4} \texttt{\textbackslash b4}+ 13.\texttt{\textbackslash d2} \texttt{\textbackslash x}b2 14.\texttt{\textbackslash c3} \texttt{\textbackslash b6} 15.\texttt{\textbackslash g}xh5 was unclear in Getz-Hammer, Sandefjord 2012.

12.\texttt{\textbackslash e3} f5 13.\texttt{\textbackslash x}f5 \texttt{\textbackslash x}f5\textsuperscript{†}.

9...\texttt{\textbackslash d8}

The latest innovation in this line, aimed at anticipating g4.

The older move was 9...\texttt{\textbackslash e5}? 10.g4 \texttt{\textbackslash h4} 11.\texttt{\textbackslash e3} \texttt{\textbackslash d6} 12.\texttt{\textbackslash e4}, Illescas-

Salov, Hermanas 1995, when 12...\texttt{\textbackslash c7}! 13.f4 \texttt{\textbackslash e7} 14.f5 \texttt{\textbackslash h5} 15.h3 \texttt{\textbackslash h}xg4 16.hxg4 \texttt{\textbackslash c5} is balanced.

The h4-knight is easily defended with 17.\texttt{\textbackslash e1} (or 17.\texttt{\textbackslash f2} \texttt{\textbackslash d}d7 18.\texttt{\textbackslash e1}) 17...\texttt{\textbackslash d}d7 18.f2 \texttt{\textbackslash g}5 while 18...\texttt{\textbackslash c}6 19.f6 \texttt{\textbackslash x}e4 20.\texttt{\textbackslash x}g7 \texttt{\textbackslash x}g8 21.dxe4 \texttt{\textbackslash x}g6 is equal.

10.\texttt{\textbackslash e1}

10.\texttt{\textbackslash g}4 g6 11.\texttt{\textbackslash x}f5 \texttt{\textbackslash x}f5 12.d4 \texttt{\textbackslash g}7 13.\texttt{\textbackslash e}3 0-0= was the stem Game 21 Gorovets-Bosiocic, Greensboro 2014.

10...\texttt{\textbackslash g}6!

Gonzalez Vidal-Naroditsky, Tsaghkador 2015, saw 10...\texttt{\textbackslash d}4 11.\texttt{\textbackslash f}4! g6 12.\texttt{\textbackslash e}5 f6 13.\texttt{\textbackslash x}d4 \texttt{\textbackslash x}d4 14.\texttt{\textbackslash f}3 with an initiative.
1. d3 d5 2. c4 d4 3. e3

11. g4

Concrete approach. White targets the e7-pawn.

11... g7 12. xf5 xf5 13. g5 e6? 

13... f6 14. e3 xd3 15. wb3 wd7 16. ad1 wc7 17. c5 e5 is probably a draw. White cannot regain the pawn, but he owns the only open file. An illustrative line is 18. h3 h5 19. e4 xe4 20. xe4 f8 21. xf8 xf8 22. e3 h7 23. c2 f5 24. ed3 g7 25. wd2 f4=.

14. wd2 h6 15. f4 g5 16. e3 wc7 17. we2 0-0-0

21. axb6 can be calculated up to a perpetual check. More dangerous, however, is 19. d4 when 19... xd4? fails to 20. xd5.


B. 4.b4?! dxe3

4... xb4!? is an interesting and simpler alternative. Its idea is to meet 5. exd4 by 5... e5. For instance: 6. a3

Or 6. dxe5 xa3 7. da3 da3 8. wb3 c5=.

6... e4 7. axb4 exf3 8. xf3 xd4 9. a4 f6

Black's pressure down the d-file and the active bishop on the main diagonal promise him good counterplay. It is difficult for White to organise an attack. For instance:

18. a4 b8!

Eliminating both tactical threats xa7 and d4 which were possible after 18... f5: 19. xa7 b6 20. a5 xa7
Chapter 10

6.d4

6...a4+ c6 7.d4 has no bite: 7...
d7 8.b3 e5

9.d5

If White tries to play by analogy with the main line 9.e2, the d4-pawn falls after 9...exd4 10.exd4 xd4. And in the event of 10.0-0, Black could return the pawn with a positional advantage – 10...d3! 11.cxd3 f6 12.c3 d6 13.b2 0-0+.

9...b4 10.c3

10.a3 a6 11.xe5 was horrible for White after 11...c5 12.c2 a4 13.f2 f6 14.c3 d6 15.d3, Kozul-A.Petrosian, Slovenia 1994, 15...g4!显露．

10.d2 is hardly an improvement – 10...a6 11.xe5 c5 12.b2 f6 13.e2 d6 14.xd7 xd7 15.c3 0-0 16.0-0 fe8.

10...f6!

Pakhomov-Ovetchkin, St Petersburg 2012, saw 10...f6? which was bad in view of 11.c5! (dragging a piece on c5) 11...xc5 12.a3, winning the unfortunate knight.

11.e2 d6 12.0-0 0-0 13.c5 xc5 14.a3

14...e4显露．

6...e5

The simplest choice from a practical standpoint. It ensures us easy development and a good control of the centre. 6...c5 and 6...e6 are also possible.

7.a3

7.xe5!? wh4 8.d2 f6 9.c3 may look absurd, but in fact Black’s task is not so easy due to White’s powerful pawn centre. I even suspect that it is objectively White’s best option and his only way to keep the balance although Black retains some initiative with best play:

9...g4!
9...\texttt{a}d6 10.a3 \texttt{a}xe5 (10...\texttt{c}c6!?)
11.axb4 \texttt{f}5 12.\texttt{d}d3 \texttt{xd}3
13.\texttt{xd}3 was unclear in Arribas Lopez-Hernando Rodrigo, Sants Open 2013 and after 13...\texttt{g}g4?
14.\texttt{c}c2! White got an edge.
White may try 10.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{h}5 11.c5
\texttt{xc}5 12.a3! \texttt{c}c6 13.dxc5 \texttt{xc}5
14.\texttt{wb}3 with very sharp play
where better calculation should decide the game.

9...\texttt{f}5 10.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{e}4 11.\texttt{exe}4
\texttt{exe}4+ 12.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{c}c3+ 13.\texttt{d}d2
\texttt{e}e4+ 14.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{c}c3+ led to a repetition of moves in Czarnota-Socko, Katowice 2010.

10.\texttt{f}f3!?
10.a3 \texttt{xe}5 11.axb4 could face
11...\texttt{xb}4!! 12.dxe5 \texttt{f}5 13.\texttt{wa}4+
c6 14.\texttt{xb}4 0-0-0+ 15.\texttt{d}d6 \texttt{he}8
16.g3 \texttt{xd}6+ 17.\texttt{e}e1 \texttt{h}6 18.exd6
a6. White's king will never find a safe haven so his defence should be unpleasant in a practical game.

10...\texttt{wh}6 11.\texttt{xe}1 c5!
11...\texttt{e}e6 12.\texttt{eb}1 \texttt{xe}3 13.\texttt{wa}4+
\texttt{d}7 14.\texttt{b}b5 \texttt{ec}2+ 15.\texttt{f}f2 \texttt{g}6
16.c5 \texttt{a}6 is another crazy position where White has at least two decent moves:

13.a3
Black manages to blockade the enemy pawns after 13.e4 \texttt{g}6
14.\texttt{xd}6+ \texttt{xd}6 15.a3 \texttt{c}c6 16.d5
\texttt{ce}5 17.h3 \texttt{xf}3+ 18.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{e}5
19.\texttt{g}3 0-0.
13...\texttt{a}a6 14.\texttt{xd}6+ \texttt{xd}6 15.\texttt{d}d3
0-0 16.\texttt{ea}2 \texttt{x}d4 17.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{f}6 18.\texttt{f}f2
\texttt{g}4 19.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{ae}8 20.\texttt{e}1
This position is dynamically balanced, but Black can pose practical
problems to White with 20...b5↑ – he does not risk much with the d5-square in his possession.

The bottom line of my analysis is that 7.£xe5!? should not be underestimated and it leads to great complications where the cost of mistakes looks higher for White.

7...£c6!

The first game in this variation, Takacs-Rubinstein, Merano 1924, saw 7...e4?! 8.£fd2 £d3+ 9.£xd3=. White should be more aggressive: 8.£e5! £c6 9.£a4! with a pull. For instance: 9...£d6 10.£xc6 £h4+ 11.g3 £xg3+ 12.hxg3 £xh1 13.£f5! £f6 14.£e5+ £c6 15.£xc6 £d7 16.£e5+ £e6 17.£d6, with a strong attack.

9.£d4 £e5 10.£c3 £f6 11.£c2 £c5 11...£d6 12.£e2 0–0 13.0–0 £e8 is also in Black’s favour as 14.£db5 £g4 15.£xd6 £xd6 will practically cost White the c4-pawn while 14.£b1 a6 will deprive him of any sensible ideas.

12.£xc6 £xc6 13.£xc6 bxc6 14.£e2 occurred in Neubert-Dmitriev, ICCF World Cup, 1990 when taking the pawn with 14...£c5 would have given Black a clear edge.

Simpler is 9...£xd4 10.£xd4 £f5 11.£e2 £f6 when White should not have enough compensation:

12.£b2 £b6 13.0–0 £c5 14.£c3 0–0 15.£d2 £d7=.

9...£e5 10.£xe4 £h4+ 11.£f2

B1. 8.d5?!; B2. 8.£c3

8.£e2 exd4! (It is safer to open up the e-file. That also weakens White’s g1–a7 diagonal.) 9.exd4 £f6 10.£c3 transposes to line B2.

B1. 8.d5?! e4 9.£fd2

11...£f6
11...\(g4\) 12.g3 \(\text{xf}2\) 13.\(dxf\) \(dxf\) 14.\(dxf\) \(dxf\) 15.\(dxf\) \(dxf\) + 16.\(dxf\), Mueller-Fier, Caleta 2014, 16...\(c5\) offers Black a better queenless middlegame.

12.\(c2\)

12.\(d4\) \(\text{fg}4\) 13.\(a2\) \(d6\) 14.g3 \(h6\).

12...\(d4\) 13.g3 \(\text{xf}2\) 14.\(c4\) \(d1\) 15.\(d1\) \(c5\)

White’s pieces are too passive.

B2. 8.\(c3\) \(f6\)

Perhaps 8...exd4 9.exd4 \(f6\) is just as good since the only line of independent significance, 10.\(d5\) \(a5\) 11.d3, is better for Black. It was proved by two 2013 email games of Mujunen which featured 11...\(c5\) 12.\(e2\) + \(e7\) 13.\(xe7\) + \(xe7\).

9.\(e2\)?

9.d5 \(a5\)

9...e4 10.\(g5\) \(e5\) is not too clear after 11.\(e2\)!

10.\(x5\) \(d6\) 11.\(f3\) 0-0 12.\(d3\) \(g4\) 13.0-0

Black obtains an initiative thanks to the timely undermining of the enemy centre: 13...c6 14.\(b1\) b5!, Nguyen-Steinke, corr. 2014.

9...exd4! 10.exd4 \(e7\) 11.0-0

11.\(f4\) 0-0 12.\(d5\) \(a5\) 13.\(b5\) is effectively parried with 13...\(e8\) (or even 13...\(d6\) 14.d2 b6 15.\(xd6\) cxd6 16.\(g5\) \(h6\) 17.\(h4\) \(e7\) 18.0-0 \(g5\) 19.\(f2\) \(g4\)) 14.0-0 c6.

11...0-0

Both sides have completed development, but we still have an extra pawn. I should note, however, that White’s fluid centre keeps us at bay so all the fight is ahead. Our task would be easier if we provoked d5 since we’d have clear counterplay with ...\(a5\), ...c6. After the more cunning 12.\(h1\), we could lead our bishop to f5 or g4, having in mind ...\(h5\)-g6. I would gladly take Black here. See Game 22 Hacker-Kribben, BDF-Schachserver 2013.
Chapter 10. 1.\( \text{d}f3 \) d5 2.c4 d4 3.e3

Annotated Games

21. Gorovets – Bosiocic
Greensboro 31.08.2014

1.\( \text{d}f3 \) d5 2.c4 d4 3.e3 \( \text{c}c6 \) 4.exd4 \( \text{c}xd4 \) 5.\( \text{c}xd4 \) \( \text{vxd4} \) 6.\( \text{c}c3 \) c6 7.d3 \( \text{h}6 \) 8.\( \text{e}e2 \) \( \text{f}f5 \) 9.0-0 \( \text{v}d8 \) 10.\( \text{g}g4 \) g6 11.\( \text{xf}5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 12.d4 \( \text{g}g7 \) 13.\( \text{e}e3 \) 0-0 14.\( \text{d}d2 \)

We see a typical Caro-Kann/Scandinavian pawn structure. It is generally harmless for Black, but it is useful to know what exactly he should do in it. If he waits passively, White could trade bishops and organise a kingside attack. The best approach is to harass the c4-pawn, trying to provoke b3. 14...\( \text{e}e6 \) is therefore principled, but 15.\( \text{e}e2 \) \( \text{a}a5 \) 16.\( \text{e}ad1 \) \( \text{a}a6 \) 17.b3 \( \text{e}ad8 \) allows 18.\( \text{e}e4 \) and 17...\( \text{a}5 \) is met by 18.\( \text{d}d5 \). Thus it is best to put a rook on \( d8 \) before moving the f5-bishop.

14...\( \text{b}b6 \) 15.\( \text{a}a4 \)

It was better to play a waiting game with 15.\( \text{e}ad1 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 16.\( \text{e}e2 \) \( \text{e}d8 \) 17.\( \text{e}d2 \) \( \text{e}e6 \) 18.b3 \( \text{c}c8 \). White's knight is better off on \( c3 \) than on \( c5 \).

15...\( \text{a}6 \) 16.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{fd}8 \)

The correct rooks set-up is 16...\( \text{e}ad8 \). The other one will go to \( e8 \) in order to prepare ...e5. Opening the centre would be in favour of Black's bishop pair.

17.\( \text{c}c5 \) \( \text{b}b6 \) 18.\( \text{e}ad1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 19.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 20.\( \text{e}4 \)

It is now clear that 16...\( \text{fd}8 \) was wrong. It would be senseless to try to justify it with 20...a5 since after 21.a4 the pawn on \( b6 \) would be a potential target. On the other hand,
White is threatening g4 which would not have been a problem stayed the right rook on d8 – Black could simply retreat to c8. I would think of repairing the damage with 20...Ee8, but then White would obtain an initiative with 21.Fh6.

20...Ed7 21.Ff2 Ead8 22.g4 Exe4 23.Fxe4 e6 24.Ed2?! The pawn structure has changed in White’s favour who is now controlling the game. He should have tried to maintain the grip with 24.Fg5 Ef8 25.Fh1 when 25...b5 would allow 26.c5 e5 26.d5. After the text Black opens lines on the queenside and should be confident for his future.

24...b5! 25.Ffd1 bxc4 26.bxc4 Fa5 27.Fe2 Fc3 28.Ed3 Fa5 29.Fe2 Ef8 30.Ed3 Fa4 31.Ed2 Eb8 32.h3 Eb4 33.Ec2 36.Ec1 Edb7 with an initiative. After the text the game is totally even, but the draw has come after mutual mistakes:

34.Ff2 Eb2 35.Edd2 Exc2 36.Exc2 Eb1+ 37.Fg2 Fb4 38.c5 Fg7 39.Fc4 Fb8 40.d5 Ff4? (40...cxd5 41.exd5 exd5 42.Fxd5 Fh1!! =) 41.Fg3? (41. Ed3±) 41...Fg1+ 42.Fxg1 Fxg3+ 43.Ff1 Fxb3+ 44.Fe1? (44. Ff2=) 44...Fg3+ 45.Fd1 Fxg4+ 46.Fe2 Fg1+ 47.Fe1 Fd4+ 48.Fd2 Fg1+ (It is not easy to evaluate correctly 48...Fxe4! 49.d6 Ff3+ 50.Fe2 Fh1+ 51.Fe1 Fd5+ 52.Fd2 Fd4 53.Fg2 Fh5+ 54.Fd2 Fxc5±) 49.Fe1 Fd4+ 50.Fd2 Fg1+ Draw.


The table have turned and Black now misses the chance to deal a blow in the centre – 33...c5! 34.d5 exd5 when 35.exd5? would fail to 35...Ee7. Remains 35.Exd5 Eb1+

33...Edb7?! The table have turned and Black now misses the chance to deal a blow in the centre – 33...c5! 34.d5 exd5 when 35.exd5? would fail to 35...Ee7. Remains 35.Exd5 Eb1+

12...Fg4 Black’s pieces are well placed and
out of reach of the enemy forces. The c6-knight can always retreat to a5 after d4-d5, then ...c6 will generate counterplay. Remains to accommodate the light-squared bishop. I prefer to put it on g6. The shortest route to this place is:

12...\text{f}5 intending 13.\text{h}4 \text{g}6 with a stable albeit small edge.

If White keeps the tension with 13.\text{f}4 \text{g}6 14.\text{a}2 (14.\text{b}5 runs into 14...a6 15.\text{x}c7 \text{c}8 16.d5 \text{h}5), we could spend a tempo on prophylaxis – 14...a6, planning to seek exchanges with ...\text{c}e4.

13.\text{e}3 \text{e}8

Jakel-G.Flear, Antwerp 1993, saw 13...\text{d}7 14.\text{a}4 \text{f}e8 15.\text{g}1 \text{ad}8 16.\text{ad}1, when 16...b6 17.c5 \text{a}5 would have been a good defensive stand on the queenside.

14.\text{g}1 \text{ad}6

Black is not afraid of the pin \text{g}5 anymore so he decides to activate the bishop. He could also commit himself with a long-term strategic choice as 14...b6. However, Kribben prefers to delay this move for a while. The game has reached the manoeuvring stage where tempi are not so important. Still, I would leave the bishop on e7 in order to defend f6 and keep an eye on d4.

15.\text{b}1 \text{b}8 16.\text{c}2

White creates threats on the diagonal b1-h7, e.g. \text{d}3, \text{g}5. If Black now tries to cover it with 16...\text{h}5 17.\text{d}3 \text{g}6 18.\text{e}4 b6 19.\text{x}g6 hxg6 20.\text{d}5 \text{a}5, White has 21.\text{f}3 and the idea \text{c}2-f2-h4 hints that it is not very good to have doubled pawns on g6 while White's knight is still alive.

Perhaps Black should have braced himself for 16...h6, but he stubbornly avoids any pawn moves. It is difficult to win a game without making any committal move.

16...\text{e}7 17.\text{d}3 \text{g}6 18.\text{e}4 \text{xe}4 19.\text{xe}4 b6 20.\text{d}5

20.c5 \text{f}4 21.\text{bd}1 was more straightforward. Chances would be roughly even already. The text move is a small inaccuracy due to 20...\text{e}6 21.\text{c}6 \text{d}7 22.\text{d}5 \text{f}4!, but Black comes up with an amazingly passive answer:

20...\text{f}8 21.a4
It is obvious that Black cannot win without neutralising the enemy centre. Thus 21...c5 appears logical, but it would be a tactical mistake in view of 22.dxc5 \( \text{dx}c5 \) 23.\( \text{dx}c5 \) bxc5 24.\( \text{xb}8 \) \( \text{xb}8 \) 25.\( \text{g}5 \).

It transpires that White’s bishop should be repelled first. Again, the most straightforward attempt 21... \( \text{d}4 \) 22.\( \text{e}4 \) f5 is not convincing due to 23.\( \text{c}6 \).

Thus we can conclude that we should play something like 21... \( \text{d}7 \), preparing ...\( \text{f}4 \) or ...c7-c6-c5. Instead Black plays yet another meaningless move.

21...\( \text{f}4 \) 22.a5! \( \text{d}7 \) 23.\( \text{xb}6 \) \( \text{xb}6 \) 24.\( \text{bd}1 \) e8 25.\( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{h}8 \) 26.\( \text{de}1 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 27.\( \text{f}3 \) c6 28.\( \text{e}4 \) b5 29.\( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{xb}5 \) 30.d5 b4 31.\( \text{d}4 \)

Black’s pieces are scattered around the board and that makes it impossible to convert the extra pawn.

31...\( \text{g}5 \) 32.\( \text{c}5 \) b3 33.\( \text{xc}6 \) hxg6

34.\( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 35.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{b}2 \) 36.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 37.\( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 38.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 39.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}4 \) 40.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{ec}8 \) 41.\( \text{b}6 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 42.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 43.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{ec}5 \) 44.\( \text{c}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 45.\( \text{xc}6 \) g5 46.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) Draw.
Chapter 11. 1.\textit{f3} d5 2.c4 d4 3.g3

Main Ideas

1.\textit{f3} d5 2.c4 d4 3.g3

This move should ring a bell in our mind – White is provocatively neglecting the centre! According to my understanding, at this point we should switch our thinking process from playing for equalization to exploiting the opponent’s passivity. The immediate consequence of his approach is that we get a really wide choice. Indeed, any development aimed at bolstering the d4-pawn would be appropriate – 3...c5, 3...\textit{c6}, 3...g6, even 3...f6. It is difficult to single out one of these moves and claim it is best. You should take the decision according to your personal taste and style. I consider several decent set-ups, but my own preference is 3...\textit{c6} – probably because I like to play against the Pirc as White. It involves more calculation and piece clashes. Pure d4-players may like to control the centre with pawns so I analyse 3...c5, too. It leads to the Benoni Reversed after 4.e3 \textit{c6} 5.exd4 cxd4 6.\textit{g2} e5 7.d3 \textit{d6} 8.0-0 \textit{f6} when White can exploit his extra tempo with 9.\textit{g5} (in the normal Benoni he has already h3!) 9...h6 10.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6} 11.\textit{bd2}

11...\textit{c7}!\infty. We stay passively on the queenside and focus our attention on the centre.

Let us now deal with 3...\textit{c6} 4.\textit{g2} e5 5.d3

5.0-0 e4! 6.\textit{e1} h5! takes over the initiative on move 6! See Game 25 Malakhov-Tomashevsky, Jurmala 2015.

5...\textit{b4}!? This check is an elegant solution of the problem what to do with this
bishop. A well tested alternative is 5...\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{f}6 \) 6.0-0 a5 (preventing 5...\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{e}7 \) 6.b4!) 7.\( \text{\textit{a}} \text{a}3 \) which I discuss in Game 24 Azaladze-Gagunashvili, Tbilisi 2009 or 7.e3 \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{c}5?! \), see Game 23 Hamitevici-Edouard, Montpellier 2015.

The point is that 6.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{bd}2?! \) a5 de­prives White of his two main plans – \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{a}3\text{-c}2 \) or \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{c}1\text{-g}5\text{xf}6 \). Remains: 6.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{d}2 \) a5 7.0-0 \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{f}6 \)

We should consider from here White’s two main plans:

a) Flank stabs: 8.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{a}3 \) 0-0 9.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{c}2 \) \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{xd}2 \) 10.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{xd}2 \)

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

10...\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{e}8 \) 11.a3 (11.f4? \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{b}4?! \)) 11...\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{d}6 \). White’s pieces are passive.

12.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{b}1 \) does not make sense since 12...a4 13.b3 would only make a weakness on a3.

On the other hand, 12.b3 \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{f}5 \) 13.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{b}1 \) is too slow. Black could push 13...e4, or aim for an attack with 13...h5

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

14.b4 axb4 15.axb4 h4 16.b5 \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{d}8 \). White has nothing to attack on the queenside while his king lacks ade­quate defence.

b) Play in the centre: 8.e3 0-0 9.exd4

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

9...\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{xd}4?! \) (9...exd4=) 10.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{xd}4 \) (10.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{e}8 \) 11.f4 \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{g}4?! \)) 10...\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{xd}4 \) 11.\( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{c}3 \) \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{d}6 \) 12.a3 \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{g}4?! \)

Black has a tiny plus due to the stranded pawn on d3. See Game 26 Zmokly-Ness, ICCF 2011.
Step by Step

1. $\text{d}f3$ $d5$ 2. $c4$ $d4$ 3. $g3$

A. $3...c5$; B. $3...\text{c}6!$

3...$g6$ offers White more chances to develop an initiative.

A. $3...c5$ 4. $e3$ $\text{c}6$ 5. exd4 cxd4 6. $g2$ e5 7. $d3$

7...$d6!$

Overprotecting the important pawn at $e5$. The other standard way of fighting the Benoni is $7...\text{d}6$ 8.0-0 $d7$, but White's extra tempo allows him to take over the initiative thanks to the straightforward plan of pushing $b4$: 9. $a3!$ $e7$ 10. $c2$ 0-0 11. $b1$ $a5$ 12. $b3$ $b8$ 13. $e1$ $e8$ 14. a3 $c7$ 15. b4 $xb4$ 16. axb4 when the only way to stop $b4-b5$ is:

16...$b5$, but White preserves some pull.

Putting a knight on $c5$ does not change the pattern – 9. $e1$ $e7$ 10. $a3!$ 0-0 11. $c2$ $a5$ 12. $b3$ $c7$ 13. $b1$ $c5$ 14. $a3$ $f5$ 15. $xc5$ $xc5$ 16. a3 $fe8$ 17. b4 $xb4$ 18. axb4 $f8$ 19. b5 $a5$, Kronic-Cruz Lopez, Lyon, 1990, 20. $b4\pm$.

8.0-0 $d6$ 9. $g5$

In the normal Benoni White prevents this move with $h3$. Indeed, it is positionally right to trade the bishop since White has less space. Furthermore, Black's knight is an
important attacking piece which controls e4 and could be unpleasant if it dig itself on c5. That said, it does not automatically means that White becomes better with ²c1-g5xf6. More likely, chances are objectively even. My big correspondence database shows 48% only and that is normal as Black retains the better centre. But undoubtedly, his game is practically more difficult since he lacks an active plan. All he should do is wait, hiding behind his central pawns.

Alternatively:

9.a3 could be met by 9...h6, but let us allow ²g5 and consider 9...a5 10.²g5 h6 11.²xf6 ²xf6 12.²bd2 when again 12...²c7 should be a solid retort. I must admit that I'm partial in my assessment since I love bishops in open positions...

9.²e1 0-0 10.²a3 ²e8 11.²c2?! a5 12.b3 h6 13.²b1 – this plan is already dubious because Black’s pieces are actively placed in the centre and 13...²f5 14.a3 ²f8 sets up the thematic breakthrough 15.b4?! e4!.

9...h6 10.²xf6 ²xf6 11.²bd2

11...²c7!

The best set-up. The bishop retreats in advance from Ðe4 or c4-c5. The famous game Zvjaginsev–Bareev, Sochi 2005, saw instead 11...²e7?! 12.a3 ²f5 13.²e2 0-0 14.b4 ²f8 15.²h4 ²e6 16.²e4 g5? 17.²h5!± with a decisive attack.

12.²a4

The simplest way to push b4. Two correspondence games went 12.a3 a5 13.²a4 ²d7 14.²f1 0-0 15.²ac1 ²f8 16.²e4 ²e7 17.c5 ²ab8 18.²fd2 ²b4 19.²b3=. The weak c5-pawn offers Black sufficient counterplay.

12...0-0 13.b4 ²f5 14.²b3

White has fulfilled stage one of his plan, but it seems that he lacks any stage 2. A further advance of his queenside pawns will produce weaknesses. Black has two possible stands: the more active one is to leave the rook on a8 and push ...a5. Or he plays ...²ac8 (or ...²ab8) followed up by ...b6:

a) 14...²ac8 15.²ac1 b6 16.a3 a5 17.b5 ²d8
18.\( \text{Qh4} \text{ h7} \) 19.e5 \( \text{Qe6} \) 20.cxb6 \( \text{Qxb6} = \) 21.\( \text{Qxc8} \text{ Qxc8} \) 22.\( \text{Qe4} \text{ Qc5} \) (d3 is a target), Kriksciunis-Hayakawa, ICCF 2014.

b) 14.\( \text{Rxe7} \text{ a7} \) 15.a3 \text{ a5} 16.b5 \( \text{Qd8} \) 17.\( \text{Qc2} \text{ g6} \) 18.\( \text{Qe1} \text{ a3} \) 19.\( \text{Qxe5} \) \text{ a4} =.

B. 3...\( \text{Qc6}! \) 4.\( \text{Qg2} \text{ e5} \)

5.d3

The provocative 5.0-0 avoids our main line, but at a high price.

a) Black could answer 5...\( \text{Qf6} \), entering our solid backup line. Only 6.b4 has an independent significance, but then 6...\( \text{e4} \) 7.\( \text{Qg5} \text{ Qxb4} \) 8.\( \text{Qxe4} \text{ Qxe4} \) 9.\( \text{Qxe4} \) 0-0 is in Black’s favour owing to his active pieces.

White has also tried 6.e3 when Black has won all 5 games in my database after 6...\( \text{e7} \), but I believe 6...\( \text{c5} \) is more testing – 7.exd4 \( \text{Qxd4!} \) 8.\( \text{Qxe5} \) 0-0 or 7.b4 \( \text{Qxb4} \) 8.\( \text{Qxe5} \) 0-0∞.

The real fun is when Black picks up the gauntlet and burns his bridges:

7.\( \text{Qxe4} \) when both 7...\( \text{h3}!? \) and 7...\( \text{h4} \) promise Black an attack and adequate compensation for the pawn. See Game 25 Malakhov-Tomashevsky, Jurmala 2015.

5...\( \text{Qb4} +!? \)

This check considerably restricts White’s choice of plans. At the same time it leads to complex positions where the better player could prove his superiority.

5...\( \text{Qf6} \) is a solid equalizer – 6.0-0, when Black has two decent plans:

a) 6...\( \text{a5}! \) 7.\( \text{e3} \)

The devoted Reti fans prefer 7.\( \text{Qa3} \), aiming for a pure flank strategy. Indeed, White’s next moves are easy, but in the long run he risks to get gradually suffocated. See Game 24 Azaladze-Gagunashvili, Tbilisi 2009 for details.

7.\( \text{Qg5} \) is rarely played. After 7...\( \text{e7} \) 8.\( \text{Qbd2} \) (8.\( \text{Qa3} 0-0 9.\text{Qc2} \text{ Qd7} \) 10.\( \text{Qxe7} \text{ Qxe7} \) 11.\( \text{Qb1} \text{ Qc5} \) 12.\( \text{Wd2} \text{ Qg4} \) 13.b3 \( \text{Qad8} \) 14.\( \text{Qh1} \text{ f5} \) 15.\( \text{Qg1} \text{ e4} +\), Sahu-Thipsay,
New Delhi 1987) 8...0-0 9.\text{\textit{De}}1 (9.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6} 10.\textit{De}1 \textit{g4=}, Shariyazdanov-Vaulin, Krasnayaarsk 1998) 9...\textit{d}7 10.\textit{exe7} \textit{xe7} 11.\textit{c}2,

Black has retained the better centre, Rakhmanov-Korneev, Sochi 2014. His most consistent plan is to prepare ...\textit{f5}, ...\textit{e5-e4}, for instance, 11...\textit{c}5 12.\textit{b}1 \textit{f5}.

7...\textit{c}5!? The current status of 7...\textit{dxe3} 8.\textit{exe3} \textit{e7} is dead equal – 9.h3 0-0 10.\textit{dc}3 \textit{f5} 11.d4 exd4 12.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 13.\textit{ddd4} c6, Gabuzyan-Tomashevsky, Yerevan 2014.

8.exd4. This is the modern trend. Practical experience has seen White scoring less than 50%. See Game 23 Hamitevici-Edouard, Montpellier 2015. Besides, 8...\textit{xd4} is also fine.

b) 6...\textit{d}6. The only drawback of this move is that it could lead to a drawish symmetrical pawn structure after 7.e3 0-0! 8.exd4 \textit{xd4} (or 8...\textit{exd4}) 9.\textit{xd4} exd4 10.\textit{g5} h6 11.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6} 12.\textit{d}2 c6 13.\textit{e}1 \textit{f5} 14.\textit{e}4 \textit{d}8 15.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}8 16.\textit{xd6} \textit{xd6} draw, Zhou Weiqi-Ma Qun, China 2015.

The other plan, 7.\textit{a}3, gives more chances for a full-fledged fight – 7...0-0 8.\textit{c}2 (8.\textit{b}5 is senseless due to the simple retreat 8...\textit{e}7, e.g. 9.e3 a6 10.\textit{a}3 \textit{dxe3} 11.\textit{xe3} \textit{g}4 12.\textit{c}2 \textit{f}5)

8...\textit{e}8 9.\textit{b}1 a5 10.\textit{b}3 (10.\textit{a}3 a4) 10...\textit{b}4 11.\textit{a}3 \textit{xc}2 12.\textit{xc}2 with a pleasant choice between 12...\textit{e}7, ...\textit{c}5 or ...\textit{c}6.

6.\textit{d}2

6.\textit{bd}2?! is a typical positional mistake. The knight at d2 blocks the way of the c1-bishop and cannot support the break b2-b4 with the manoeuvre \textit{b}1-a3-c2. My game Nenkov-Delchev, Sunny Beach 2014, went further 6...a5 7.0-0 \textit{f}6 8.\textit{a}3 or 8.\textit{e}1 0-0 9.\textit{c}2 \textit{c}5 10.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}7 11.\textit{a}3 \textit{f}5.

8...\textit{c}5 9.\textit{b}3 0-0?
10.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 11.\( \text{dxe}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 12.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 13.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 14.\( \text{d}2 \) (14.\( \text{wc}2 \) \( \text{wb}8 \) 15.\( \text{d}2 \) b5!) 14...a4 and White’s queenside crumbled down.

6.\( \text{fd}2 \) a5 7.\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 8.\( \text{c}2 \) could be safely met by 8...\( \text{d}6 \). In practice Black has played 8...0-0 and 8...\( \text{f}5 \), but I see no reason to offer the enemy the bishop pair. 8...\( \text{c}5 \)! is more principled, but you should be ready to part with the a5-pawn after 9.0-0 0-0 10.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 11.\( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 12.\( \text{d}2 \), although Black’s compensation is more than enough.

6...a5 7.0-0 \( \text{f}6 \)

The blitz game Anand-Kramnik, Zürich 2016, saw 7...\( \text{ge}7 \) 8.\( \text{xb}4 \) 8.e3 \( \text{f}5 \) (8...dxe3!? 9.\( \text{he}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \)) 9.exd4 \( \text{fxd}4 \) 10.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 11.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{f}6 \).

8...axb4 9.\( \text{bd}2 \) 0-0

8.e3

White should not delay for long the break in the centre, but he could try a hook from the flank: 8.\( \text{a}3 \) 0-0 9.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{xd}2 \) 10.\( \text{xd}2 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 11.f4 \( \text{xf}4 \) 12.\( \text{xf}4 \)\( \text{e}8 \). The possibility of f2-f4 should not be underestimated and perhaps Black should anticipate it with 10...\( \text{e}8 \) (intending 11.f4? \( \text{b}4 \)!, eliminating the defence of the e3-square, Likavsky-Voloshin, Ceske Budejovice 1998.) 11.a3 \( \text{d}6 \) – White has weakened his queenside so the line 12.f4 \( \text{g}4 \) 13.f5 \( \text{h}6 \) 14.h3 \( \text{e}3 \) 15.\( \text{xe}3 \) dxe3 16.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 17.g4 \( \text{d}7 \) 18.\( \text{h}2 \) a4 is obviously pleasant for Black.

8.\( \text{xb}4 \) axb4 9.\( \text{bd}2 \) 0-0 10.\( \text{e}1 \) hardly deserves any attention since it does not even win a pawn after 10...\( \text{f}5 \) 11.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 12.\( \text{xc}6 \)?! \( \text{bxc}6 \) 13.\( \text{xb}4 \) \( \text{f}b8 \).

8.\( \text{g}5 \) 0-0 9.\( \text{a}3 \) h6 10.\( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 11.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 12.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 13.\( \text{b}1 \) h5! 14.a3 a4 is obviously in Black’s favour owing to the imminent attack on the kingside.

8...0-0 9.exd4

10.a3

10.\( \text{wb}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 11.a3 bxa3 12.\( \text{xa}3 \) \( \text{xa}3 \) 13.\( \text{xa}3 \) \( \text{a}8 \)=, Cvitan-Barle, Rijeka 2010.

10...bxa3 11.\( \text{wb}3 \) when 11...\( \text{e}6 \) 12.\( \text{xa}3 \) transposes to the above game.

The text is more ambitious.
Chapter 11

9...exd4!?

Of course, 9...exd4= is also possible. Its only drawback is that the pawn structure is too symmetrical. Here are some examples:

a) 10.a3 d7 (or 10...f5 11.f4 h5)

11.f4 c5 12.b5 d6=.

b) 10.g5 h6 11.xf6 xf6 12.a3 c5 13.bd2 f5 14.e1 e5+.

10.exd4

The tactical justification of Black’s idea is the line 10.ex5 e8 11.f4

Or 11.e1 w6d6 12.f4 g4 13.xg4 xe1+ 14.xe1 xg4 15.xg4 xe1=.

11...g4! (to be fair, the blunt 11...d7 achieves the same effect) regaining the pawn since 12.d5 h6! leaves White with a horrible hole on e3, e.g. 13.c3 c5 14.h1 c6 15.g2 f6 16.f3 df5+; and 12.xg4? fails to 12..e2+ 13.h1 xg4.

10.wxd4 11.c3 w6d6 12.a3

12.xg4!?

Black has a slight initiative, see Game 26 Zmokly-Ness, ICCF 2011.
Chapter 11. 1.\( \text{d}f3 \text{d}5 \text{2.c}4 \text{d}4 \text{3.g}3 \)

Annotated Games

23. Hamitevici – Edouard
Montpellier 31.05.2015

1.\( \text{d}f3 \text{d}5 \text{2.c}4 \text{d}4 \text{3.g}3 \text{c}6 \text{4.g}2 \text{e}5 \text{5.d}3 \text{f}6 \text{6.0-0} \text{a}5 \text{7.e}3 \text{c}5 \text{8.exd}4 \)

\[ \text{8...\text{exd}4!} ? \]

The rare \( \text{8...\text{exd}4} \) is very good, too – 9.\( \text{\text{d}xe}5 \)

Of course, 9.\( \text{\text{d}xe}4 \) cannot be of any theoretical interest. The full control of d4 suggests that Black’s game is better: 9...\( \text{\text{d}xe}4 \) 10.\( \text{\text{d}c}3 \text{0-0} \) 11.\( \text{\text{b}f}3 \text{h}6 \) 12.h3 c6 13.\( \text{\text{d}e}2 \text{a}7 \) 14.\( \text{\text{b}3} \text{e}8 \) 15.\( \text{\text{b}2} \text{h}7 \) 16.\( \text{\text{a}d}1 \text{g}5 \) 17.\( \text{\text{w}h}5 \text{e}5 \) 18.d4 e5 19.e2 \( \text{g}6 \) 20.\( \text{\text{h}4} \text{exd}4 \) 21.\( \text{\text{d}xd}4 \text{d}3 \text{0-1, Karakocu-Ivanisevic, Skopje 2015.} \\text{9...0-0} \) 10.\( \text{\text{f}3} \text{g}4 \)

a) 11.\( \text{\text{b}d}2 \text{w}8 \) 12.\( \text{\text{b}3} \) (12.h3 \( \text{\text{e}2}+ \) 13.\( \text{\text{h}1} \text{\text{w}xd}3! \) 12...\( \text{\text{e}2}+ \) 13.\( \text{\text{h}1} \text{a}7 \) 14.a4 \( \text{\text{d}7} \). White’s defence is difficult. For instance, the relatively best 15.\( \text{\text{e}3} \) loses pawns after 15...\( \text{\text{xf}3} \) 16.\( \text{\text{xf}3} \text{\text{d}xg}3+! \) 17.hxg3 w3+ 18.g1 \( \text{\text{xe}3} \) 19.g2 \( \text{\text{w}xg}3 \).

b) 11.\( \text{\text{e}3}! \text{\text{d}xg}3+! \) 12.\( \text{\text{xf}3} \text{\text{xf}3} \) 13.\( \text{\text{w}xg}3 \text{\text{xd}3} \) 14.\( \text{\text{d}1} \text{w}e4 \) 15.\( \text{\text{xe}4} \text{\text{d}xe}4 \) is totally equal.

9.\( \text{\text{d}xd}4 \)

9.\( \text{\text{d}c}3 \text{0-0} \) does not change the character of play.

9...\( \text{\text{d}xd}4 \) 10.\( \text{\text{e}1} \)

10.f4 0-0 11.\( \text{\text{f}5} \text{d}4 \) 12.\( \text{\text{c}3} \text{\text{d}xe}5 \) 13.\( \text{\text{f}4} \text{e}6 \) 14.\( \text{\text{e}4} \text{\text{d}xd}3 \) left White pawnless in an online game.
10.h3 0-0 11...c3 e8 12...h2 h6 occurred in Bu Xiangzhi-Ganguly, Doha 2014.

White opted for the sharp 13.f4 exf4 14...xf4 a6 15...d2 when instead of 15...g5? 16...e3 xe3 17...xe3 c2 18...f2 axa1 19.d4+, Black could have played 15...h5! 16...e3?! g6 with an initiative, or even the simple 15...ae6=.

10...0-0 11...c3

11...e5? loses to 11...g4 12.f3 (12...d2 f3) 12...xf3+ 13...xf3 d4+ 14...e3 a8, M.Gomes-Adhiban, Pune 2014.

11...e8 12.h3

12...e4 is positionally bad since White needs his knight to contest the d4-square. Zimina-Mirzoeva, Plovdiv 2014, went on 12...e4 13...xe4 c6†. It is much more logical to take g4 under control.

12...c6

I have mentioned above the rook lift ...a6. It is also possible here although the rook looks a bit awk-

ward on a6: 12...a6 13...e3 d5 14...a4 h6 15...ad1 d7 16...a3 c8 17...h2=, Alf-Lange, corr. 2010.

13.f4

White possesses a bishop pair and aims to open play. On the other hand, this pawn push weakens the king. Edouard suggests 13.g4 d7 14...e2 xe2+ 15...xe2 d8∞.

A correspondence game saw a completely different plan which could be born only in a computer’s brain: 13.b3 f5 14...b2 d6 15...e2 – killing Black’s strongest piece. The game R. Angelov-V.Popov, 2013, went further 15...h6 16...d2 a4 17...xd4 exd4 18...e8...xe8 19.bxa4...xa4 and was eventually drawn. Perhaps 14...c7 instead of 14...d6 is slightly more accurate. By defending e5, Black preserves his knight from exchange – 15...e2 e6.

13...exf4 14...xe8+...xe8?!

The d4-square is a matter of paramount importance so the manœuvre 14...xe8-c7-e6 was called for. Then Black would have had an excellent game.
15.\textit{xf4} \textit{xf5} 16.\textit{g4} \textit{g6} 17.\textit{d2} \textit{d8}?! 

A mundane move obviously made by general considerations. Stronger was 17...\textit{h5}! 18.\textit{g5} \textit{h7} killing three birds with one shot – Black makes a \textit{luft}, gains the f5-square for his knight, and transfers the f6-knight via the route h7-f8-e6. As a “bonus”, the g5-pawn could hang.

18.\textit{c7} \textit{d7}

19.\textit{xa5}?

Apparently White missed the pin along the a-file. Indeed, moves like 19...\textit{wa8}!, with the idea of 20.\textit{b4} \textit{b3}, are difficult to spot. Correct was 19.\textit{b6}! with unclear play. Edouard suggests 19...\textit{xd3} 20.\textit{xd3} \textit{b3} 21.\textit{b1} \textit{xa1}. In principle White’s pieces should be stronger, but his naked king offers Black counter-chances.

19...\textit{a8}!! 20.\textit{a4} \textit{e2}+! 21.\textit{xe2} \textit{xa5} 22.\textit{b3} \textit{xd3}+ 23.\textit{d1} \textit{xd1}+ 24.\textit{xd1} \textit{h5}

Edouard converts his advantage with energy and confidence.

25.\textit{gxh5} \textit{hxh5} 26.\textit{c5} \textit{f4} 27.\textit{a3} \textit{h5} 28.\textit{f3} \textit{h3}+ 29.\textit{h2} \textit{xf3} 30.\textit{xf3} \textit{g5} 31.\textit{f4} \textit{d2}+ 32.\textit{xd2} \textit{f3}+ 33.\textit{g3} \textit{xd2} 34.\textit{b4} \textit{c4} 35.\textit{f4} \textit{xa3} 36.\textit{c3} \textit{f8} 37.\textit{e4} \textit{c4} 38.\textit{c3} \textit{e7} 39.b5 \textit{e6} 40.\textit{e4} f5+ 41.\textit{d4} \textit{d6} 0-1

24. Azaladze – Gagunashvili

Tbilisi 2009

1.\textit{f3} \textit{d5} 2.\textit{c4} \textit{d4} 3.\textit{g3} \textit{c6} 4.\textit{g2} \textit{e5} 5.d3 \textit{f6} 6.0-0 a5 7.\textit{a3} \textit{c5}

Black’s only active plan in this structure is connected with ...\textit{e5-e4} so the d4-pawn should be well protected end the e-file should remain open for a rook on e8. Another consideration is that \textit{c5} discourages possible breaks in the centre. That said, 7...\textit{e7} also has enough adherents, but it is more prophylactic than aggressive.

8.\textit{c2}

8.\textit{g5} 0-0 9.\textit{d2} is well met by 9...\textit{e7}! 10.\textit{c2} \textit{h6}. Without a dark-squared bishop, White’s counterplay in the centre would
be impotent. Note that 10...\(\texttt{\textacutedd7}\) 11.\(\texttt{\textacutedxe7}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedxe7}\) could be attacked with 12.e3 or even 12.f4, as in Rivas-Romero, Alicante 1989.

Similarly, 8.\(\texttt{\textacutedb5}\) 0-0 9.\(\texttt{\textacutedg5}\) is parried by 9...\(\texttt{\textacutede7}\) 10.e3 h6.

8...0-0 9.a3

Another critical line is 9.\(\texttt{\textacutedg5}\) h6 10.\(\texttt{\textacutedxf6}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedxf6}\) 11.\(\texttt{\textacutedd2}\)

The game Adamski-Rausis, Lyngby 1989, saw 11.b3 \(\texttt{\textacutede7}\) 12.a3 \(\texttt{\textacutede6}\) 13.\(\texttt{\textacutedd2}\) f5 and Black controls the board. White's attempt to push b4 was instructively parried by the curious rook lift 14.\(\texttt{\textacutedwc1}\) \(\texttt{\textacuteda6}\) 15.\(\texttt{\textacutedb1}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedb6}\). Here Adamski tried 16.f4 exf4 17.gxf4 \(\texttt{\textacutedf7}\) 18.b4 axb4 19.\(\texttt{\textacutedb3}\), but 19...bxa3 20.\(\texttt{\textacutedxc5}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedxb1}\) 21.\(\texttt{\textacutedxb1}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedxc5}\) 22.\(\texttt{\textacutedxb7}\) \(\texttt{\textacuteda5}\) leaves Black with a sound extra pawn.

11...\(\texttt{\textacutede7}\)

12.a3 (12.\(\texttt{\textacutede4}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedb6}\); 12.\(\texttt{\textacutedb3}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedb6}\)) 12...a4 (or 12...\(\texttt{\textacutedg4}\) 13.h3 \(\texttt{\textacutede6}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textacutedb1}\) a4) 13.b4 (exploiting the hanging \(\texttt{\textacuteda8}\)) 13...axb3 14.\(\texttt{\textacutedxb3}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedd6}\). It seems that White has achieved his goal, but Black is still better thanks to his bishop pair. The break 15.e3 does not help — 15...dxe3 16.fxe3 \(\texttt{\textacuteda5}\) 17.\(\texttt{\textacutedd2}\) f5 18.d4 c6 19.\(\texttt{\textacutedh5}\) \(\texttt{\textacutede6}\), Henderson-Krutous, ICCF 2015. The c4 and a3-pawns are hanging.

9.\(\texttt{\textacutedd2}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedf5}\) leaves White without sensible moves – he cannot play \(\texttt{\textacutede4}\), 10.f4 is also dubious due to 10...\(\texttt{\textacutede4}\). 10.b3 \(\texttt{\textacutedd6}\) would prevent \(\texttt{\textacuteda3}\). Remains 10.a3 when 10...\(\texttt{\textacutedh6}\) would be a good prophylactic move, aimed against the idea of \(\texttt{\textacutedg5}\), as in the line 10...\(\texttt{\textacutedd7}\) 11.\(\texttt{\textacutedb1}\) a4 12.b4 axb3 13.\(\texttt{\textacutedxb3}\) \(\texttt{\textacutede7}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textacutedg5}\).

9...\(\texttt{\textacutede8}\)

Another interesting set-up is 9...\(\texttt{\textacutede7}\) 10.\(\texttt{\textacutedb1}\) a4 11.\(\texttt{\textacutedd2}\) \(\texttt{\textacuteda5}\) 12.b4 axb3 13.\(\texttt{\textacutedxb3}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedxb3}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textacutedxb3}\) c6, but the text is more consistent. Black prepares...e4.

10.\(\texttt{\textacutedg5}\)

10.\(\texttt{\textacutedb1}\) a4 11.\(\texttt{\textacutedd2}\) stumbles into 11...e4 12.dxe4 \(\texttt{\textacutedxe4}\) 13.\(\texttt{\textacutedb4}\) b6.

Similar is 10.b3 e4, e.g. 11.\(\texttt{\textacutedg5}\) (11.\(\texttt{\textacutedd2}\) exd3 12.exd3 \(\texttt{\textacutedg4}\) 13.\(\texttt{\textacutedf3}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedd7}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textacutedb2}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedf5}\)) 11...exd3 12.exd3 \(\texttt{\textacutedg4}\).

10.e3 dxe3 11.\(\texttt{\textacutedxe3}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedf8}\) 12.d4 also does not solve White's problems due to 12...\(\texttt{\textacutede4}\)! 13.\(\texttt{\textacutedd2}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedg4}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textacutedf3}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedh5}\)!

10...\(\texttt{\textacutedh6}\) 11.\(\texttt{\textacutedxf6}\) \(\texttt{\textacutedxf6}\) 12.\(\texttt{\textacutedd2}\) \(\texttt{\textacutede7}\)

It is natural to avoid exchanges having more space, but 12...a4 13.\(\texttt{\textacutede4}\)
\[ \text{\textcopyright 1988 \textcopyright 2018} \]

14. \( \text{\&}x\text{c}5 \) \( \text{\&}x\text{c}5 \) is also pleasant for Black. The game Larsen--Short, Hastings 1988, was eventually drawn after 15. \( \text{\&}d2 \) \( \text{\&}f5 \) (Perhaps 15... \( \text{\&}a5 \) 16. \( \text{\&}b4 \) \( \text{\&}b3 \) poses more problems to White.) 16. \( \text{\&}ab1 \) \( \text{\&}a5 \) 17. \( \text{\&}b4 \) \( \text{\&}d8 \) 18. \( \text{\&}bd1 \) c6 19.e4 \( \text{dxe}3 \) 20. \( \text{f}xe3 \) \( \text{\&}g4 \) 21. \( \text{\&}f3 \) \( \text{\&}h3 \) 22. \( \text{\&}g2 \) \( \text{\&}g4 \) 23. \( \text{\&}f3 \) \( \text{\&}h3 \) 24. \( \text{\&}g2 \), draw.

13.b3

This breakthrough crowns Black's strategy. All the diagonals to his bishop pair are ripped open.

13... \( \text{\&}g4 \)!

13...f5 also looks pretty, but it is better to activate first the bishop.

14. \( \text{\&}e1 \)

14. \( \text{\&}e4 \) \( \text{\&}b6 \) 15. \( \text{\&}ab1 \) is too slow – 15...f5 16. \( \text{\&}d2 \) e4! 17. \( \text{dxe}4 \) d3. The \( \text{\&}g4 \) is decisive in this line!

14...f5 15.h3?!

Black is obviously better, but White should not facilitate his task by weakening his kingside. A waiting game would have been more stubborn for White.

15... \( \text{\&}b5 \) 16. \( \text{\&}b1 \) \( \text{\&}g5 \)!

Black is all set for 16...e4 17. \( \text{dxe}4 \) \( \text{\&}g5 \), but the threat is stronger than its execution!

17. \( \text{\&}c1 \) e4!

Black has played perfectly so far, but this awful move ruins all his efforts. The simple 21...d3 22. \( \text{\&}xc5 \) \( \text{dxc}2 \) 23. \( \text{\&}xc2 \) \( \text{\&}d4 \) 24. \( \text{\&}b2 \) \( \text{\&}f3+ \) wins easily.

22.c5

The tables have turned and Black is now worse. After mutual mistakes, the game was drawn:

22... \( \text{\&}e8 \) 23. \( \text{\&}xb4 \) \( \text{f}xe4 \) 24. \( \text{\&}xc\text{d}4? \) (24.b5±) 24... \( \text{\&}xd4 \) 25.b5 \( \text{\&}xb5 \) 26. \( \text{\&}xd4 \) \( \text{\&}xd4 \) 27. \( \text{\&}e3? \) \( \text{\&}f3+ \) 28. \( \text{\&}xf3 \) \( \text{\&}xf3 \) (28... \( \text{\&}xf3\)?) 29. \( \text{\&}b3+ \) \( \text{\&}c4? \) 30. \( \text{\&}xb7 \) \( \text{\&}d8 \) 31. \( \text{\&}xa7 \) \( \text{\&}h3 \) 32. \( \text{\&}xf3 \) \( \text{\&}d5 \) 33. \( \text{\&}e8+ \) \( \text{\&}xe8 \) 34. \( \text{\&}xd5+\)±
7. **hxg6**

7.d3 only accelerates Black's attack owing to 7...e3! 8.fxe3 h4 9.gxf3 hxg3 10.hxg3 f6 11.exd4 exd4 12.c3, Jessel-O'Donnell, Dublin 2015, 12...f5! 13.g5 e7 14.e1 c6.

7... **h4**

This obvious move is far from being trivial. Black should seriously consider 7...hxg3!?, aiming to limit White's choice. The point is that 8.e4? (or 8.g2?!) 8...d7 is very promising for Black who achieves an ideal attacking position with a long castle. Therefore, White must answer:

8.b3 c8

25. Malakhov-Tomashevsky 
**Jurmala 08.03.2015**

1.d3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.g3 c6 4.g2 e5 5.0-0 e4 6.e1 h5!

![Chessboard diagram]

Black obtains a nearly free, self-conducting attack.

9.h5

Hawkins-Pert, London 2015, saw 9.b5 when 9...f5! was too timid although Black went on to win after 10.g2 d7 11.xb7 b8 12.a6 f5 13.f3 d3!.

He had more natural developing moves like 9...d6 or even 9...f6.

9... **h4** 10.d3,

transposing to the comments to White’s move 9.

**8.d3**

8.e3? ²f6 9.²g2 dxe3 10.²e2 (10. fxe3 hxg3 11.hxg3 ²d6) 10...²d4 11.²xe3+ ²e7 12.²c3 occurred in V.Popov-Navara, Minsk 2015, when 12...²g4! was winning.

8.²g2 ²f6 9.²f3 hxg3 10.fxg3 ²h3 11.d3?! (11.²xh3 ²xh3 12.d3 was the lesser evil) 11...²d7 12.²f2 ²g4 13.²xh3 ²xh3 14.²g2 0-0-0 was seen in Harika-Zimina, Rome 2015.

This position illustrates Black’s main goal after 6...h5!. White is probably lost here. Harika played 15.²a3 when the strongest plan was 15...f6 followed up by ...g5. The decisive blow should be dealt on h2, e.g. 16.²a4 g5 17.b4 ²xb4 18.²b1 ²c5 19.²c2 ²dh8 20.²a3 ²xa3 21.²xa3 ²xh2! 22.²xh2 ²wh7 23.²b5 ²xg3!—+

**8...²h3**

8...²f6! is another critical line.

a) 9.²g5 hxg3 10.fxg3 ²e5 11.²d2 (11.²g2 ²e7) 11...²eg4 12.²ef3

b) 9.²g2 hxg3 10.fxg3 ²h3 (10...²g4 is also worth considering) 11.²f2 (11.²xh3 ²xh3 12.²f3 and 11.²g5 ²d7 12.²xf6 were more resilient, but Black is better in either case.) 11...²g4 12.²f4 (avoiding the pattern of Harika-Zimina after 12.²g2) 12...²xg2 13.²xg4 ²h3 14.²e4+ ²e7 15.²d2 ²d7 16.b4 f5 was yet another opening rout, Podzielny-Meister, playchess.com 2007.

Attack is the best defence and White should probably not lose any tempo, but take immediately on c6:
c) 9...\text{c}6+! bxc6 10...\text{d}3 aiming for \text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{d}1-d2-e4. Then 10...hxg3 11.fxg3\text{g}4 is unclear:}}}}}}}}}}

White has 12.e4 dxe3 13...xe3 \text{\text{\text{\text{\text{e}7}}}} 14.e1 ...xe3 15...xe3 0-0 where the bishop pair serves as a good compensation for the pawn.

9...\text{g}2

9...\text{g}2 hxg3 10.fxg3 \text{d}7 11.d2 0-0-0 is excellent for Black, but:

9.../xb3, aiming to hamper the castle, deserves attention: 9...c8 (9...hxg3? 10...xb7) 10...g2

10...\text{g}2 is dangerous for White since his pieces remain passive – 10...f6 11...f3 \text{g}4 12.d2 \text{e}7. 10...xg2 11.xg2 hxg3 12.fxg3. Now 12...h3 13...b7 \text{h}2+ 14...f2 \text{d}7 15...f4 \text{c}8 16.d2 \text{f}6 17.h1 \text{g}4= forces a draw, but of course Black should keep the tension with 12...d7! 13.d2 0-0-0.

9...\text{d}7

It was better to exchange first on g3, avoiding the exchange sacrifice \text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{d}xh4 – 9...hxg3! 10.fxg3 \text{d}7 with}}}}}}}}}})

a strong attack. The same reasoning applies to Tomashevsky’s next moves, too.

10...\text{f}4?

10...g5 \text{e}7 is also dubious. 10...xh4! was the only defence. I would not even consider taking the exchange. Black retains the initiative with 10...\text{f}6! 11...f3 \text{g}4, for instance: 12.e4 \text{e}7! (there is no reason to repeat moves with 12...\text{f}6) 13...b3 \text{d}8 14...f5 \text{c}6 15...f3 \text{h}xh2.

10...f4? hxg3 11.fxg3 \text{f}6 12...f3 \text{g}4?.

10...\text{f}6 11...f3 \text{d}6 (11...hxg3 12.fxg3 \text{g}4?) 12...c1 0-0-0 13...a3 hxg3 14.fxg3

Black has obtained a very strong position and now 14...\text{xf}4! 15.xf4 \text{e}8 16...f2 \text{e}5 was clearly better for him. His next two moves wipe out his advantage.

14...\text{g}4?! 15...xd6 cxd6 (15...xg2! 16.xg2 cxd6)
16. hxg4

White should be able to hold after 16. hxf4, e.g. 16... Qe5 17. b5 a6 18. dxe4 dxh5 19. hxg4 dxe4
20. gxf7 gxf7 21. gxf7 hxg2 22. xe7 xe7 23. fxe4 e1+ 24. xe4 xxa1 25. a3 xa2 26. b3 xa3 27. xe7 d5=.

16... hxg4 17. f2?!

17. f2 was essential - 17... e5
(17... exd2 18. xe2 xxe4 19. b5=) 18. g4+ e8 19. g4 f5 20. exd4 g2 21. g4! gxf4 22. g4 with good chances for a draw.

17... g5 18. c5 (or 18. b4 g8 19. e2
e5 20. g1 f5) 18... e8 19. e5
dxc5 20. e5 c5 b8 21. e1 e5
22. c4

Black dominates in the centre and he only needs to open another file against the enemy king to finish the game.

22... f5!++ 23. e3 g2 24. e3
dxe3 25. g4 fxg4 26. a3
d4 27. c4 f3+ 28. e1 e1
dxe5 g2 30. g2 ed5
31. g4 ed3 32. f3 ed2 33. h4

gxh4 34. g4 e2 35. e2 xb2
36. h5 b4 0-1

26. Zmokly – Ness
ICCF 2011

1. d3 d5 2. c4 d4 3. g3
4. e3 a6 5. d3 d5 6. d2 a5
7. c6 8. e3 0-0 9. edx4
edx4 10. edx4

12. g4

Black could include first 12... c5
13. d2 edx3 14. e5 and only now
14... g4. Then 15. f3 f5 16. xc7 a4 offers good compensation, but 15. f3 looks totally equal.
The text keeps the pawn structure unbalanced.

13. f3

The bishop does not stand well on f3. Perhaps 13. d2 xc3 14. xc3 c6
15. e3 was more solid.

13... xc3 14. xc3 h3

14... f5 15. e4 is about even.

15. e1 c6

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Chapter 11

The opening stage is over. The opposition of the pawns e5:d3 defines a slight space advantage for Black. Naturally, White seeks to trade them.

16.\textbf{\textit{b3}} \textbf{\textit{xd3}} 17.\textbf{\textit{e3}} \textbf{\textit{d7}} 18.\textbf{\textit{xe5}} \textbf{\textit{fe8}} 19.\textbf{\textit{exe8+}} \textbf{\textit{exe8}} 20.\textbf{\textit{e2}} \textbf{\textit{h5}} 21.\textbf{\textit{c2}} \textbf{\textit{f5}} 22.\textbf{\textit{d1}} \textbf{\textit{e7}}

Black grasps the chance to complicate things with a pan sacrifice. OTB, that could offer him practical chances, but in an email game, White easily holds the balance.

23.\textbf{\textit{xb5}} \textbf{\textit{d8}} 24.\textbf{\textit{e2}} \textbf{\textit{xe2}} 25.\textbf{\textit{exe2}} \textbf{\textit{d2}} 26.\textbf{\textit{a2}} \textbf{\textit{c2}} 27.\textbf{\textit{f3}} \textbf{\textit{e6}} 28.\textbf{\textit{d3}} \textbf{\textit{c1+}} 29.\textbf{\textit{f2}} \textbf{\textit{d7}} 30.\textbf{\textit{e2}}

30...\textbf{\textit{hl}} 31.\textbf{\textit{b3}} \textbf{\textit{c5}} 32.\textbf{\textit{g2}} \textbf{\textit{e1}} 33.\textbf{\textit{f4}} \textbf{\textit{xb3}} 34.\textbf{\textit{xe6}} \textbf{\textit{fxe6}} 35.\textbf{\textit{e2}} \textbf{\textit{a1}} 36.\textbf{\textit{exe6}} \textbf{\textit{f7}} 37.\textbf{\textit{e3}} \textbf{\textit{xa3}} 38.\textbf{\textit{g4}} \textbf{\textit{a2+}} 39.\textbf{\textit{g3}} \textbf{\textit{c5}}

Draw.
Chapter 12. 1.dı3 d5 2.g3

Main Ideas

1.dı3 d5 2.g3 c6

With this move we prepare to lead out our bishop to g4. That would solve Black's main problem against White's fianchetto – the poor fate of the light-squared bishop which often remains caged on c8.

3.c4

The only way to exploit the imminent 3...dıg4 is to attack the light squares on the queenside which would be left somewhat weakened by the absence of the bishop.

I consider KI set-ups in the next chapter.

3...dıg4

4.dıb3 is well met by 4...dıxf3 while 4.dıe5 dıf5! 5.dıb3 misses the mark in view of 5...dıd7!

4...dıe6

White has now three main approaches.

1. One of them is to drag Black's queen to b6 and harass it later with dıe3 or c4-c5:

5.dıb3 dıb6

The most critical test of 3.c4 is 3...dxc4 4.dıg2 dıd7, but it is not in the spirit of our book. I analyse here only plans where we hold the centre.

4.dıg2

a) 6.d3 dıd7 7.dıe3 is easily parried by 7...dıc5, but if you read carefully the "Step by Step" chapter, you could also force play with 7...dxc4!?

b) 6.dıc2 dıd7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.0-0 dıe7 9.dıa4 dıxf3 10.dıxf3 dıc6=.

c) 6.dıc3 dıd7 7.d4 dıgf6 8.c5 dıa6! 9.0-0 dıe7 10.dıe1 b6. Remember the retreat ...dıa6 after c4-c5. It is effective in many lines. There is an exception though:
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Black does not play ...\(\texttt{a6}\)

Here 11...\(\texttt{a6}\) is inaccurate (11...\(\texttt{xb3!}\) 12.\(\texttt{axb3a6=}\)) because White's rook is already on e1. That does not leave Black time for ...b6 after 11.e4 dxe4 12.\(\texttt{xe4}\) \(\texttt{xe4}\) 13.\(\texttt{xe4}\) (threatening 14.\(\texttt{f1}\)).

2. Sometimes White plays c4, d4, b3: 5.0-0 \(\texttt{f6}\) 6.d4 \(\texttt{bd7}\) 7.\(\texttt{bd2}\) \(\texttt{e7}\)! 8.b3 0-0 9.\(\texttt{b2}\) a5 10.a3 h6

Whenever White's knight jumps on e5, we take it, and if he attempted e4, we answer ...\(\texttt{f5}\), aiming to trade on e4 more pieces. That would secure our king against a kingside attack.

3. White's most principled approach is 5.cxd5.
Then the simplest answer is 5...\(\texttt{xf3}\) 6.\(\texttt{xf3}\) cxd5 7.0-0 \(\texttt{c6}\) 8.d3 \(\texttt{f6}\) 9.\(\texttt{c3}\) \(\texttt{e7}\)

See Game 29 Mola-Delchev, 2015.

More double-edged is 5...\(\texttt{exd5}\). It offers White a pawn majority in the centre and the dynamic factors often play a decisive role. If Black stays passively, he risks to fall under attack - White will simply roll forth all his kingside pawns. I suggest the active set-up with ...\(\texttt{d6}\):

6.0-0 \(\texttt{f6}\) 7.d3 \(\texttt{bd7}\) 8.\(\texttt{c3}\) \(\texttt{d6}\) 9.h3 \(\texttt{h5}\) 10.e4 0-0

a) Now 11.\(\texttt{c2}\) \(\texttt{e8}\) 12.\(\texttt{h4}\) (For 12.\(\texttt{e3}\) \(\texttt{c5}\)! see Game 28 Markowski-Pedersen, Istanbul 2003.) is the sterner test of our plan. We oppose a dark-squared strategy - 12...\(\texttt{c5}\)!, heading for e6-d4. Our idea is to lure the pawns into our camp where we could attack them easier. A typical position with an overextended White's centre is:
17.\textit{\texttt{f3}} \textit{\texttt{e3}} stumbles into $17\ldots \text{c5}$ and $17.\textit{\texttt{d1}}$ could be met by either $17\ldots \text{c5}$, or $17\ldots \text{f6}$.

b) It would be a moral victory for Black if White exchanged on $d5$ – $11.\text{exd5} \text{cxd5} 12.\textit{\texttt{g4}} \textit{\texttt{g6}} 13.\textit{\texttt{h4}} \textit{\texttt{c5}} 14.\textit{\texttt{xg6}} \text{hxg6} 15.\textit{\texttt{d4}} \textit{\texttt{e6}} 16.\textit{\texttt{e3}}$

Stayed the g-pawn on g3, White might have hoped for some advantage in view of his pressure on d5. But the weakened h2-b8 diagonal gives us excellent counterplay: $16\ldots \textit{\texttt{c7}}! 17.\textit{\texttt{b3}} \textit{\texttt{d6}}$.

To sum up, taking on $d5$ by e-pawn leads to rich sharp play.
Chapter 12. 1.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) d5 2.g3

Step by Step

1.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) d5 2.g3 c6 3.c4 \( \text{\textit{g4}} \)

4.\( \text{\textit{g2}} \)

4.\( \text{\textit{b3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf3}} \)

Morozevich’s 4...\( \text{\textit{b6}} \) is less clear – 5.\( \text{\textit{e5}} \) \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) 6.d3 f6 (White had the slightly more active pieces after 6...g6 7.\( \text{\textit{e3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xb3}} \) 8.axb3 \( \text{\textit{g7}} \) 9.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xb2}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{xa7}} \) \( \text{\textit{xa7}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) in Aronian-Motylev, Sochi 2015.) 7.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f7}} \) 8.\( \text{\textit{h3}} \) (8.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{a6}} \) ) 8...e5

12.d3 \( \text{\textit{d8}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{b2}} \) d4 14.\( \text{\textit{e4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{dxe4}} \) e5 16.a3 \( \text{\textit{c5}} \) 17.\( \text{\textit{b4}} \) \( \text{\textit{a6}} \) 18.b5 cxb5 19.cxb5 \( \text{\textit{c8}} \) 20.\( \text{\textit{xd1}} \) \( \text{\textit{c5}} \) 21.a4 \( \text{\textit{d7}} \), Rapport-Balogh, Zombathely 2011.

b) 6.\( \text{\textit{b3}} \)! \( \text{\textit{b6}} \)! [Black has tried
only 6...\( \text{a6} \), heading for c5, but the knight is misplaced there – 7.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{dxc2} \) \( \text{f6} \) (8...d4 \( \text{9.b4\( ^{\pm} \)} \) 9.0-0 \( \text{e7} \) 10.d4 \( \text{cd7} \) 11.d2 0-0 12.b3 with a slight advantage due to the bishop pair although 12...c5 promises Black counterplay.] 7.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 8.cxd5 \( \text{dxc3} \) 9.axb3 cxd5 10.\( \text{b5\( ^{?} \)} \) \( \text{d7} \) 11.\( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{xa7} \) 12.\( \text{xa7} \) when White’s small material advantage will be short-lived – 12... \( \text{c5} \) 13.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{c8} \) 14.f3 \( \text{c6} \), followed up by ...\( \text{a5xb3} \).

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

It is safer to trade queens.

5... \( \text{d7} \) 6.d4 offers White some initiative although the full control of the blockading d5-square neutralises all concrete threats. For instance: 6...\( \text{dxc4} \) 7.\( \text{xc4} \) e6 8.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 9.0-0 \( \text{d7} \) 10.\( \text{e1} \) 0-0, Maletin-Pushin, Tula 2009.

6.\( \text{xb6} \) axb6 7.cxd5 \( \text{cxd5} \) 8.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e6=} \).

4.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{f5=} \) 5.\( \text{g2} \)

5.\( \text{b3} \) is already a strike at thin air due to 5...\( \text{d7=} \) 6.d4 \( \text{exe5} \) 7.dxe5 \( \text{c7} \) 8.cxd5 \( \text{e4} \) 9.\( \text{d3} \) 10.\( \text{g3} \)g6? 11.e6 \( \text{d6=} \).

5.cxd5?! \( \text{xd5} \) is a double hit to h1 and a2. White is happy to find 6.\( \text{xb3} \) (6.d4 \( \text{xb1} \) 7.\( \text{xb1} \) \( \text{xb1} \) 8.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 9.\( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{e4} \) 10.\( \text{a1} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 11.\( \text{h8} \) \( \text{d5} \) 12.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{b8} \) 13.\( \text{a6} \) \( \text{f6=} \) 6.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d1} \) 7.\( \text{xb1} \) \( \text{xa2} \) 8.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{a6=} \) when simplest would be 6... \( \text{d7=} \). 6...\( \text{xb3} \) 7.axb3 \( \text{d6=} \) is also roughly equal after 8.d4 (8.d3 \( \text{b7} \) 9.\( \text{c4} \) e5 10.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{e6} \)

11.0-0 \( \text{e7} \) 12.\( \text{bd2} \) 0-0 13.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c5} \) 14.\( \text{d8} \) \( \text{d7} \) 15.\( \text{d5} \) 9.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 10.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{a6} \) 11.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{db4=} \).

5... \( \text{e6}! \)

6.0-0

6.cxd5 \( \text{exd5} \) 7.0-0 \( \text{d7} \) 8.d4 \( \text{d6} \) (or 8...\( \text{gf6} \) 9.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 10.\( \text{h3} \) h6 11.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 12.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{d8} \) 13.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 14.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{d8} \) 15.\( \text{b3} \) draw, Pigusov-Dreev, Pavlodar 1987) 9.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{exe5} \) 10.\( \text{exe5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 11.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 12.e4 \( \text{xe4=} \), Kengis-Yakovich, Pinsk 1986.

6...\( \text{f6} \) 7.d4 \( \text{bd7} \) 8.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e7=} \), see Game 27 Kazmierczuk-Carolei, ICCF 2013

4... \( \text{e6} \)

Main continuations now are:
A. 5.\( \text{b3} \); B. 5.0-0; C. 5.cxd5
A. 5.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 6.d3

6.\( \text{c2} \) brings White good results. His idea is to win a tempo later with \( \text{e3} \) or to exploit the weakening of the back rank. For instance: 6...\( \text{d6} \) 7.cxd5 which forces 7...exd5, although this set-up is not dangerous for Black as we'll see in line C.

An independent line arises after 6...\( \text{d7} \), having in mind 7.cxd5 cxd5. The game T.L.Petrosian-Aghasaryan, Yerevan 2013, continued 8.0-0 \( \text{e7} \) 9.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{xf3} \) (9...\( \text{h5} \)?) 10.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{c7} \) 11.d4 \( \text{xe2} \) 10.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 11.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e7} \).

6.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 7.e3 \( \text{dxc4} \)? Black has two solid alternatives:

7...\( \text{c5} \) 8.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 9.\( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 10.\( \text{bd2} \) a5 11.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{c7} \) 12.0-0 0-0; 7...\( \text{xb3} \) 8.\( \text{xb3} \) a6 9.\( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{gf6} \) 10.0-0 \( \text{e7} \).

White has undisputable compensation due to his lead in development and open files on the queenside. The best defence is to take the centre under control with:

10...f6

In Romanishin-Delchev, Forni di Sopra 2014, I chose 10...\( \text{xf3} \) 11.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{a5} \)

Safer is 11...\( \text{xc4} \) 12.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 13.0-0 (13.\( \text{xa7} \) b5 14.\( \text{b6} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 15.\( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{a3} \) 16.0-0 \( \text{e7} \)=) 13...b6 14.\( \text{ab1} \) \( \text{gf6} \) 15.\( \text{fc1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 16.a4 0-0 17.a5 \( \text{d5} \) 18.\( \text{axb6} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 19.\( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 20.\( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 21.\( \text{xb6} \) c5=.

12.\( \text{ab1} \) \( \text{b8} \) 13.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{c7} \) 14.\( \text{a4} \)

14.\( \text{h5} \)?? \( \text{d6} \) 15.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 16.\( \text{xd5} \) exd5 17.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{gf6} \) (17...\( \text{h6} \) 18.\( \text{e4} \)) 18.\( \text{xf7} \+ \( \text{e7} \).

14...\( \text{gf6} \) 15.\( \text{xa7} \) when 15...\( \text{d5} \)?? is unclear.

One year later, Romanishin repeated the variation, but his opponent
Marzano was apparently well prepared and opted for 10...f6. The same idea works also after 10...\texttt{Wxc4 11.\texttt{Qxc4 f6}}! (but not 11...\texttt{Qg6 12.\texttt{Qb1 with nasty pressure}).

\textbf{11.\texttt{Qb1}}

11.0-0 \texttt{Wxc4 12.\texttt{Qxc4 Qh6}}!? (12...e5 13.\texttt{Be3 Qb6 14.\texttt{Qa5 0-0-0 15.\texttt{Qfb1 Qc7 16.d2 Qe7 17.\texttt{Qd4 Qed5 18.Qxb6 Qxb6 19.Qb2}} is roughly equal as white will regain the pawn. The knight move aims to repel the d4-bishop from the g1-a7 diagonal.) 13.\texttt{Qab1 Qf5 14.\texttt{Qc3 Qb8 15.h3 Qxf3 16.Qxf3 Qd6 and Black retains the extra pawn although White has probably sufficient compensation.}

\textbf{11...Wxc4 12.\texttt{Qxc4 e5}}

\textbf{13.\texttt{Be3}} (13.\texttt{Qc3 b5}) \textbf{13...b6}

13...b5 14.\texttt{Qxe5 fxe5 15.\texttt{Qxc6 leads to a very sharp and unclear endgame after both 15...Qc8 16.Qxb5 Qc5 17.Qxe5 Qxe3 and 15...bxc4 16.Qxa8 cxd3 17.exd3.}

14.\texttt{Qfd2 Qc8}

\textbf{B. 5.0-0 Qf6 6.d4}

I analyse 6.b3 Qbd7 7.Qb2 Qd6 8.d3 0-0 9.Qbd2 Qe8 in the annotations to \textit{Game 30} Janaszak-Dziuba, Warsaw 2011. The same plan is also discussed in the Chapter 14, line B, but Black has an extra tempo there since he pushes ...e5 in one step – on the first move!

\textbf{6...Qbd7}

\textbf{7.Qc3}

7.Qbd2 Qe7! I prefer this square for the bishop in order to enable a possible exchange on e5 if White’s knight landed there. 8.b3 0-0 9.Qb2 a5

This is the thematic plan against White’s set-up, but 9...h6 also deserves attention, securing the g4-bishop: 10.Qe1 (10.Qe5 Qxe5 11.dxe5 Qd7 12.h3 Qh5 13.g4
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...g6 14.e4 \(\text{\&}c5\) 10...\(\text{\&}f5\) followed up by ...a5.

10.a3

10.\(\text{\&}e5\) \(\text{\&}xe5\) 11.dxe5 \(\text{\&}d7\) is generally fine for Black – 12.h3 \(\text{\&}h5\) 13.g4 \(\text{\&}g6\) 14.e4 dxe4 15.\(\text{\&}xe4\) \(\text{\&}c5\) 16.\(\text{\&}d6\) \(\text{\&}d3\) 17.\(\text{\&}a3\) \(f6!!\) (17...\(\text{\&}xe5\) 18.c5) 18.\(\text{\&}d2\) \(\text{\&}b8\) 19.c5 fxe5\(\mp\).

10...h6

10...b5 11.c5 \(\text{\&}b8\) 12.b4 is difficult to win with either side.

11.\(\text{\&}e1\) \(\text{\&}f5\) 12.\(\text{\&}e5\) \(\text{\&}xe5\)! 13.dxe5 \(\text{\&}d7\) 14.cxd5

14.e4 is dubious with a closed c-file – 14...dxe4 15.\(\text{\&}xe4\) \(\text{\&}c5\) 16.\(\text{\&}d6\) \(\text{\&}xd6\).

14...cxd5 15.e4

White needs to open the centre as otherwise Black has a clear plan on the queenside – 15.\(\text{\&}d4\) \(\text{\&}c5\) 16.\(\text{\&}c1\) \(\text{\&}c8\) 17.\(\text{\&}b2\) \(\text{\&}d7\) 18.\(\text{\&}ec1\) b5 19.\(\text{\&}e3\) \(\text{\&}fd8\) 20.\(\text{\&}f3\) a4 21.\(\text{\&}d4\) \(\text{\&}xb3\) 22.\(\text{\&}xb3\) axb3 23.\(\text{\&}xb3\) \(\text{\&}c4\), Malaniuk-Dreev, Tilburg 1993.

15...dxe4

16.\(\text{\&}xe4\) (16.\(\text{\&}xe4\) \(\text{\&}c5\) 17.\(\text{\&}xd8=\)) Here Bagirov-Rabiega, Berlin 1995, signed a draw. Both 16...\(\text{\&}xe4\) 17.\(\text{\&}xe4\) \(\text{\&}e8\) and 16...\(\text{\&}c5\) 17.\(\text{\&}xf5\) are equal.

7.b3 \(\text{\&}e7\) 8.\(\text{\&}b2\) 0-0 9.\(\text{\&}bd2\) should transpose to 7.\(\text{\&}bd2\) unless Black chooses 8...\(\text{\&}e4!!\) 9.\(\text{\&}bd2\) \(\text{\&}xd2\) 10.\(\text{\&}xd2\) 0-0.

7...dxe4!?

7...\(\text{\&}e7\) is certainly possible. White usually continues 8.\(\text{\&}b3\)

8.cxd5 exd5 9.h3 is best met by 9...\(\text{\&}f5\) (9...\(\text{\&}h5\) allows 10.\(\text{\&}e5\) \(\text{\&}xe5\) 11.dxe5 \(\text{\&}d7\) 12.g4 \(\text{\&}g6\) 13.f4) 10.\(\text{\&}h4\) \(\text{\&}g6=\).

8...\(\text{\&}b6\)

In this popular position top players prefer lately 9.\(\text{\&}e1\)

9.c5 is typically met by 9...\(\text{\&}a6\) and then ...b6. The rook move is aimed against it.

9...0-0 10.c5 \(\text{\&}xb3\)

10...\(\text{\&}a6\) is less attractive here as 11.e4 dxe4 12.\(\text{\&}xe4\) \(\text{\&}xc4\) 13.\(\text{\&}xe4\) practically forces 13...\(\text{\&}xf3\) in view of the threat 14.\(\text{\&}f1\).

You could retain more tension with 10...\(\text{\&}c7\) 11.\(\text{\&}f4\) \(\text{\&}c8\), but it is not advisable to give more space to a good player as you will have to struggle for the rest of the game, e.g. 12...h6 (12...b6 13.\(\text{\&}d6\) \(\text{\&}d8\) 14.\(\text{\&}xe7\) \(\text{\&}xe7\) 15.cx\(\text{\&}b6\) axb6 16.e4) 13.e4 dxe4 14.\(\text{\&}xe4\) \(\text{\&}xe4\) 15.\(\text{\&}xe4\) \(\text{\&}f6\) 16.\(\text{\&}ee1\) \(\text{\&}d5\) 17.\(\text{\&}d2\) \(\text{\&}xf3\) 18.\(\text{\&}xf3\) \(\text{\&}d8\) 19.h4 with an

11.axb3 a6 12.b4 \(\text{B}e8\)

The blunt 12...\(\text{B}xf3\) (anticipating the typical manoeuvre \(\text{B}f3-d2-b3-a5\)) 13.exf3 \(\text{B}\text{fd}8\) proved quite effective for a draw in Bu-Malakhov, China 2015: 14.f6 g6 15.\(\text{B}e3\) \(\text{B}e8\) 16.\(\text{B}\text{f}1\) \(\text{B}c7\) 17.\(\text{B}b1\) \(\text{B}f6\) 18.\(\text{B}d2\) \(\text{B}g4\) 19.\(\text{B}f3\) h5 20.h3 \(\text{B}h6\) 21.\(\text{B}e5\) \(\text{B}g7\) 22.\(\text{B}d3\) \(\text{B}f5\) 23.\(\text{B}f3\) \(\text{B}h8\) 24.\(\text{B}g2\) \(\text{B}f6\) 25.\(\text{B}a3\) \(\text{B}a8\) 26.\(\text{B}h1\) \(\text{B}e7\) 27.\(\text{B}aa1\) \(\text{B}cg8\) 28.g4 draw.

13.\(\text{B}f4\)

13.\(\text{B}d2\) e5 assures Black of counterplay.

13...h6=.

8.e4

It is clear that White's hopes are based on the strong centre, but in practice he often inserts a4 a5 first:

8.a4 a5 9.e4 \(\text{B}b4\)

9...\(\text{B}b6\), threatening ...e5, is also in Black's favour.

10.\(\text{B}e2\) e5 11.d5 cxd5

11...\(\text{B}c8\) keeps the extra pawn -- 12.\(\text{B}d1\) cxd5 13.exd5 0-0\(\text{=}\), Matnadze-Dzagnidze, Istanbul 2012, but it is even better to have even pawns and a clear positional advantage.

12.exd5 0-0 13.\(\text{B}x\text{c}4\) \(\text{B}c8\)

8...e5

8...b5 9.h3 (9.e5? \(\text{B}d5\) 10.\(\text{B}e4\) \(\text{B}e7\))

9...\(\text{B}xf3\) 10.\(\text{B}xf3\) \(\text{B}e7\) 11.e5?! \(\text{B}d5\)

12.\(\text{B}g4\) \(\text{B}f8\) defends everything and Black can hope to advance his pawn majority on the queenside. However, in this line White has lasting pressure by just staying solidly in the centre, e.g. 11.\(\text{B}d1\) 0-0 12.\(\text{B}f4\), which compensates for the missing pawn. It is better to contest the centre at once.

9.\(\text{B}e3\) (9.dxe5?! \(\text{B}xf3\) 10.\(\text{B}xf3\) \(\text{B}xe5\))

9...\(\text{B}xe4\) 10.\(\text{B}xd4\) \(\text{B}c5\)

(threatening 11...\(\text{B}e6\))

11.e5 \(\text{B}d5\)

12.\(\text{B}e2\)

Black has at least two ways of reaching comfortable equality:

a) 12...\(\text{B}b6\) 13.\(\text{B}ad1\) \(\text{B}d3\) 14.\(\text{B}e4\) \(\text{B}d7\) 15.\(\text{B}xb6\) axb6 16.\(\text{B}xc4\) \(\text{B}xb2\) 17.\(\text{B}xd7\) \(\text{B}xc4\) 18.\(\text{B}xb7\);

b) 12...\(\text{B}f5\)? 13.\(\text{B}xd5\) cxd5 14.\(\text{B}fd1\) \(\text{B}e7\) 15.b3 \(\text{B}d3\) 16.e6 0-0 17.\(\text{B}xf7+\) \(\text{B}h8\).

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C. 5.cxd5 exd5

It is always risky to unbalance the game with Black, but this is the best way to play for a win. In my practice I prefer the solid 5...\uftile{x}f3 6.\uftile{x}xf3 cxd5 7.0-0 \uftile{d}c6 8.d3 \uftile{f}6 9.\uftile{c}c3 \uftile{e}7

White's bishop pair does not have great prospects due to the symmetrical pawn structure. I consider in detail this backup line in the annotations to Game 29 Mola-Delchev, 2015.

6.0-0

6.\uftile{b}3 \uftile{b}6 7.\uftile{c}2 is an attempt to win a tempo with \uftile{e}3 since White was going to play \uftile{c}2 anyway. However, the black queen may retreat to a6 where it would be quite active:

7...\uftile{d}7 8.0-0 \uftile{g}6 9.d3 (9.\uftile{c}3 \uftile{d}6) 9...\uftile{c}5!

An important move, aimed at driving the enemy queen back to d1.

9...\uftile{d}6 10.e4 0-0 is also possible – 11.\uftile{c}3 \uftile{e}8 (11...\uftile{e}5 12.\uftile{x}xe5 \uftile{x}xe5 13.\uftile{e}3! d4 14.\uftile{a}4 \uftile{b}5 15.\uftile{c}1 offers White a mobile pawn pair e4-f4.) 12.\uftile{e}3

12...\uftile{a}6! (12...\uftile{a}5 13.\uftile{d}4! dxe4 14.dxe4 defines the centre in White's favour) 13.\uftile{d}4 \uftile{e}5 14.h3 \uftile{d}7= (or 13...c5 14.\uftile{d}b5 d4 15.\uftile{x}d6 \uftile{x}d6 16.\uftile{f}4 \uftile{a}6 \eft). 10.\uftile{d}1 \uftile{d}6 11.\uftile{c}3 0-0 12.\uftile{e}3 12.e4 is not a good idea because of 12...dxe4 13.dxe4 \uftile{e}5.

After 12.h3 \uftile{h}5 13.e4 dxe4 14.dxe4 \uftile{e}5 15.g4 \uftile{g}6 16.\uftile{x}e5 \uftile{x}e5 17.\uftile{e}3 \uftile{e}7 18.f3 Black could trade a piece with 18...h5 19.g5 \uftile{x}c3 20.bxc3 \uftile{d}5=.

12...\uftile{a}5

13.h3

The game T.L.Petrosian-Hovhannisyan, Lake Sevan Martuni 2015, saw the wrong plan 13.a3?! \uftile{e}8 14.b4 \uftile{d}8 15.\uftile{d}4 \uftile{f}8 16.\uftile{a}4 \uftile{e}6 17.\uftile{c}3 when 17...b5 18.\uftile{b}2 \uftile{c}8 19.\uftile{b}3 c5 20.bxc5 \uftile{x}c5 favours Black.

13.\uftile{h}5 14.\uftile{d}4 \uftile{g}6 15.f4 \uftile{e}8
16...f3. Now a good redeployment is 16...h5! 17.Wd2 c7 18.eac1 b8=.  

6...d6 7.d3 bd7 8.c3 d6  
8...e7 and 8...c5 are well tested alternatives.  

9.h3  
I do not believe that White could aspire to the advantage without this move so he better play it right away. 9.e4 does not gain anything since 9...0-0 10.h3 h5 will simply transpose. Besides, 9...dxe4 10.dxe4 e5 evens the game outright.  

9.c2 0-0 10.e4 e8 11.h3 h5 is another important branch of the main line.  

9...h5  
9...xf3 10.xf3 d4  
10...0-0 11.e4 dxe4 12.dxe4 gives White a fluid centre and the bishop pair.  
11.e4 leads to a very static position where Black lacks any active plan while White could try to mount a minority attack with b4. I would avoid it for practical reasons.  

10.e4  
The only sensible plan. 10.d4 0-0 11.f5 c7 12.e3 e8 13.d2 f8 14.b4 e6 15.d4 b6 was pleasant for Black in Vaganian-Murey, Marseille 1987.  

10...0-0 11.exd5  
Practice has also seen here 11.c2 although this position arises more often following the move order with 9.c2. We answer 11...e8 12.h4  
For 12.e3 c5! see Game 28 Markowski-Pedersen, Istanbul 2003.  
12...c5!  

The knight is heading for e6-d4. We try to keep as much tension as possible in the centre and play on the dark squares. Any White’s pawn advance will be double-edged as his pieces are still undeveloped and not ready to back it. This line now branches to:  
a) 13.g5? e6 14.xf6 xf6 15.exd5 d4 16.d2 g5+.
Chapter 12

b) 13.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{e}}e3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}6 14.exd5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}xd5 15.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{d}}xd5 cxd5 16.d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e7 17.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}f5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}2 18.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}fe1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}c4 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}f3 g6=.

c) 13.f4 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{e}}e6! 14.e5 (14.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}f5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}c5+ 15.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{h}}h2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}g6=) 14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}c5+ 15.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{h}}h2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}d7 and White's offence has come to a halt while Black could think of ...g5 or ...f6.

d) 13.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}f5 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}f8 14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e3 14.g4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}g6 15.e5 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}fd7 16.d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e6

We see a typical overextended White's centre. 17.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{e}}e3 stumbles into 17...c5 and 17.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{d}}d1 could be met by either 17...c5, or 17...f6. 14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}g6 15.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xc5 (15.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{a}}ad1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{x}}xf5) 15...\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xc5 16.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{d}}xd5 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xf2+ 17.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xf2 cxd5=, Leopolis-Pelger, gameknot.com 2007.

11...cxd5 12.g4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}g6 13.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{h}}h4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}c5 14.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xg6

The immediate 14.d4 could face 14...\textit{\textcolor{blue}{c}}ce4 15.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xd5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{x}}xd5 16.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xg6 fxg6 17.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xe4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}f4 with compensation, e.g. 18.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}f3 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{h}}h8 19.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xb7 (19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e1 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{h}}h8) 19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{b}}b8 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}c6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e6 (20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{a}}c7?) 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}d5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{x}}xd4=.

14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{h}}xg6 15.d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e6 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e3

16...\textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}c7!

Underlining the weakness of the h2-b8 diagonal. 16...\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}f4 cost Black a pawn after 17.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{b}}b3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{b}}b8 18.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{a}}ad1 b5 19.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xf4 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xf4 20.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}fe1 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{b}}b6 21.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xd5 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xd5 22.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xd5=, Radjabov-Ivan­chuk, Ningbo 2011, with an eventu­al draw.

17.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{b}}b3 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{d}}d6 18.f4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{b}}b6 19.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{a}}ad1 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{e}}e8 20.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{h}}h1

Or 20.g5 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{h}}h5 21.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xd5 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{g}}g3 22.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}f3 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}f5 23.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xb6 axb6 and Black easily regains the pawn.

20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e7 21.f5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}c7 22.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{g}}g1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}f4=.

White's position is dangerous in view of his naked king.
Chapter 12. 1.dı f3 d5 2.g3

Annotated Games

27. Kazmierczuk – Carolei
VWC6/pr23 ICCF 2013

1.dı f3 dı f6 2.g3 d5 3.dı g2 c6
4.0-0 dı g4 5.dı e5 dı f5 6.d4 dı bd7
7.c4 e6 8.dı c3 dı e7

This position arises more often with a knight on f3 instead of e5. The difference should be in Black's favour as he is constantly threatening to take on e5, for instance:

9.b3 0-0 10.dı b2 dı xe5 11.dxe5 dı e4
12.dı xe4 dxe4= or:
9.dı f4 0-0 10.dı b3 dı xe5 11.dxe5
(11.dı xe5 dı b6) 11...dı d7 12.dı xb7?
dı c5 13.dı b4 (13.dı xc6 dı c8 14.dı c5
dı b8 15.dı c6 dı b6) 13...dı b8 14.dı a3
dı b3.

9.dı b3 dı b6

Black does not have enough com-

pensation after 9...dı xe5 10.dxe5
dı d7 11.dı xb7 0-0 12.dı c6! dı xe5

10.dı xd7 dı xd7 11.e4 dxe4
12.dı xe4 0-0 13.dı e3 dı fd8

It is possible to trade queens immediately – 13...dı xb3 14.axb3 a6
15.dı c3 dı ac8 16.d5 cxd5 17.cxd5 e5
18.d6 dı xd6 19.dı xb7 dı b8 20.dı d5
dı c5=.

14.h3 dı xb3

14...dı f6 15.dı c5 gave White a slight pull after 15...dı xc5 16.dxc5 dı c7
17.dı d1 in Mozharov-Belov, Moscow 2014, due to the weak square
d6.
The waiting 14...dı h6 was a good alternative to the game move.

White should continue 15.dı f1!
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Or 15...\texttt{wc3} \texttt{d6} 16.d5 \texttt{c5}!; Otherwise Black takes on \texttt{b3}: 15.\texttt{ef1} \texttt{wb3} 16.axb3 \texttt{d6} 17.\texttt{Cc3} \texttt{e2}; 15.\texttt{Cc1} \texttt{xb3} 16.axb3 \texttt{a6} 17.\texttt{Cc3} \texttt{e2} 18.d5 \texttt{xb3} 19.dxc6 \texttt{bxc6} 20.\texttt{Cc6} \texttt{eac8} 21.\texttt{Cc7} \texttt{e7} 22.c5 \texttt{xc5} 23.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 24.\texttt{Exa6} \texttt{xb7}.

15...\texttt{wc3} 16.axb3 \texttt{a6} 17.\texttt{Cc3}! (intending d4-d5 or 17...\texttt{d6} 18.\texttt{Cc4}) 17...\texttt{ac8}, Romanishin-Dorfman, Tashkent 1980. It was interesting to try here 18.d5 when 18...exd5 19.cxd5 \texttt{d5} 20.\texttt{Cc5} \texttt{Exc1+} 21.\texttt{Exc1} \texttt{d8} offers White a slight initiative. The computer proposes the original 18...\texttt{Cc5}! 19.dxc6 \texttt{bxc6} with the more active pieces which compensate for the split queenside pawns.

15.axb3

15...\texttt{a5}

Sam Collins successfully defended against K. Arkell and L. Gutman the position after 15...\texttt{d6} 16.\texttt{Cc5} \texttt{xc5} 17.dxc5 \texttt{e4}.

The text fixes the b3-pawn which might prove useful at some point. However, human players mistrust such committal moves as it is difficult to judge which pawn would be weaker – b3 or a5.

16.\texttt{f1}

This has no venom. More challenging was to take c2 under control with 16.\texttt{fc1}, or to display activity with 16.g4!? \texttt{g6} 17.f4 \texttt{h6} 18.f5 \texttt{e5} 19.xf5 \texttt{h7} 20.d2 \texttt{b6} 21.\texttt{Cc3}.

16...\texttt{f6} 17.\texttt{fxf6+} \texttt{xf6} 18.\texttt{d2} \texttt{h5} 19.\texttt{h2} \texttt{e7}

20.d5

Both sides lack an active plan and a waiting game would be a logical approach. White forces the course of events, but becomes even slightly worse due to his doubled pawn.

20...\texttt{xd5} 21.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{b4} 22.\texttt{d4} \texttt{Cc} 23.\texttt{eda4}?! \texttt{xe3} 24.\texttt{fxe3} \texttt{xd5} 25.\texttt{Exa5} \texttt{Exa5} 26.\texttt{Exa5} \texttt{e6} 27.\texttt{b5} \texttt{d7} 28.\texttt{f3} \texttt{g6} 29.\texttt{g2} \texttt{f8} 30.\texttt{f2} \texttt{e7} 31.h4 \texttt{d6} 32.\texttt{e2} \texttt{e7} 33.\texttt{d2} \texttt{c6} 34.\texttt{a5} \texttt{c8} 35.\texttt{a4} \texttt{d6} 36.\texttt{a5} \texttt{e6} 37.\texttt{b5} \texttt{a6} 38.e4 \texttt{dxe4} 39.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{e1} 40.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e1+} 41.\texttt{d4} \texttt{d7} 42.\texttt{b6+} Draw.
1.\textit{g}3 \textit{d}5 2.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{f}}}3 \textit{e}6 3.\textit{g}2 \textit{g}4 4.0-0 \textit{d}7 5.d3 \textit{g}f6 6.c4 \textit{e}6 7.cxd5 \textit{exd5} 8.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}3 \textit{d}6 9.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}2 0-0 10.e4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}8 11.h3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{h}}}5 12.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}5

13.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{f}}}4

In principle, White should avoid exchanges. 13.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{x}}}c5 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{x}}}c5 14.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}d5 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{x}}}cxe4 15.dxe4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}xd5 16.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}e4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}f5= eliminates the whole centre. Another try is 13.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}d4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{g}}}6, creating a hidden pin along the diagonal, e.g. 14.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}ae1 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{x}}}xe4 15.dxe4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}d5!. Or 14.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{f}}}fd1 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{b}}}6 15.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}e5 with the more active pieces.

13...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{f}}}8

13...dxe4 14.dxe4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}3 15.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}5 16.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{g}}}2 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}3 17.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{b}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}4 18.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}ad1 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{xb}}}3 simplifies to a balanced endgame.

13...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{b}}}6!? (intending ...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}5)

14.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}ae1 occurred in the correspondence game Ptak-Merlicek, 1997, when 14...dxe4 15.dxe4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}3 16.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}5 would force the clumsy retreat 17.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}e2. Instead, Black chose the solid 14...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}5 15.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}xd5 and a draw was agreed.

14.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}a4?!

I understand White's reluctance to take on d5, but this move hands Black the initiative. Perhaps best retort was 14...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}3 15.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}4, but the retreat to e7 is also good enough.

14...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}7 15.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}5 (15...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}6!)

16.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}xd5 17.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{g}}}5

17...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}7

17...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}6!? 18.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}6 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}6 19.g4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{g}}}6 20.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}8 21.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}e5 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}8 would have given Black full compensation for the pawn. The text is passive and White could have exploited it with 18.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{b}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}6 19.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}6 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{xf}}}6 20.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}ae1 with a slight pull.

18.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}d4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{h}}}6 19.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}6 20.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{f}}}e1 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}8 21.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{xe}}}e6 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{xe}}}e6 22.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}d4 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{d}}}6 23.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{b}}}3

It was possible to eat the a7-pawn – 23.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{xa}}}7 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{b}}}6 24.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{b}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textsc{c}}}5 25.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{b}}}5 e5 26.a4 and White always has a5 to save the bishop – 26...\textit{\texttt{\textsc{e}}}7 27.\textit{\texttt{\textsc{ec}}}1
Chapter 12

\( \text{1.e8 28.a5} \text{ Bxf2+ 29.Bxf2} \text{ Bxc1} \\
30.Bxc1 \text{ bxa5 31.Bc5} \text{ Bh7 32.Bc7} \\
\text{Bxc7 33.Bb6} \text{ Bc8 34.Bxd8} \text{ Bxd8} \\
35.Bxa5 \text{ Bc8 with a probable draw. To avoid this line, Black should have defended e6 with 22...Bf7\text{∞}.} \\
23...b6 24.Bb5 Bb8 \\
\)

\( 25.Be5 \\
\text{White's bishop controls both wings so it seems that 25.f4 was better, but then g3 would become a target after ...Bh5, ...g5. Markowski adopts the Nimzowitsch's approach to blockade e6, but it is ineffective here.} \\
25...Bxe5 26.Bxe5 a6 27.Bd4 \text{ Bf7 28.Ba3} \text{ Bd7 29.e2} \text{ Bf6 30.Bf3 e5!} \\
\text{Black takes over the initiative for a small price.} \\
31.Bxa6 Bc5 32.Bb5 Bb5 33.g4 Bg6 34.Be1 (34.Bd1\text{∞}) 34...e4 \\
\text{Black forces the play prematurely. 34...Bed8 was better.} \\
35.dxe4 dxe4 36.Bd1 Bcd8 \\
37.Bxd8 Bxd8 38.b4 Bc6 \\
39.Bc4 Bd4 40.Bb3 Bh7 41.Bc3 Bh8 42.Bc2 Bd1+ 43.Be1 \\
43...Bd2? \\
\text{A decisive mistake. 43...Bf4 44.Bf1 Bd3! 45.Be5 Bxh3+ 46.Bxh3 Bxh3 47.Be3 keeps the balance.} \\
44.Bxe4 Bxe4 45.Bxe4 Bd3 \\
46.Be5 Bc1+ 47.Bg2 Bg5 \\
57.Bf4 Bf6 58.Be4 Be2 59.Bh4 Bf6 60.Bb6+ Bf7 61.Bh5 1-0 \\
\)

29. Mola – Delchev 
Lucca 13.06.2015 

\( 1.Bf3 d5 2.g3 c6 3.Ag2 Ag4 4.c4 \\
e6 5.cxd5 Bxf3 6.Axf3 cxd5\)
7.0-0

7...b3 only hinders White’s plan with a3, b4 and sooner or later he’ll have to return the queen back home — 7...d7 8.c3 c6 9.g2 d6 10.0-0 e7 11.d3 0-0 12.e2 ac8 (or 12...d4) 13.f1 fd8 14.d1 h6 15.a3 d6 16.b4 e5 17.ab1 e8 18.a4 b6 19.e3 d6 20.b3 e7 21.b2 xc1+ 22.xc1 c8=, Anastasian-Seirawan, Groningen 1997.

7...c6 8.d3 f6 9.c3 e7 10.f4

10.a4 0-0 11.f4 a6 12.f1 b5 13.d1 offers Black the initiative — 13...c8 14.e4 d4 15.b1 d7 16.d2 c5 17.e2 d7 or 17...b6 18.b4 d7 19.e1 a5. Even the positional pawn sac 17...a4 18.b3 c3!? 19.xc3 xc3 20.xc3 a3 21.e2 d4 assures Black of a comfortable game with zero risk.

10.e4 is unimpressive. In the concrete position Black can safely trade on e4, but it is generally clever to keep the centre closed when facing a bishop pair. Therefore, I recommend to meet e4 by ...d4:

10...d4 11.b1 d7 12.a3 a5 13.a4 g5 14.d2 c5 15.e2 xd2

16.xd2 wb6 17.c2 b3 and Black had a slight initiative in Pr.Nikolic-Bluebaum, Germany 2014.

White often develops his bishop on d2 — 10.g2 0-0 11.d2 e8

Or 11...b6 12.b1 a6 13.a4 a7 14.c1 c8 15.a3 b5 16.c3 d7.

12.a3

12.b3 does not really threaten anything — 12...d7! 13.f1 (13.xb7 c5 14.b5 a6) 13...a6 14.d1 g5?!

A thematic idea in this pawn structure. At some point White will try to activate his g2-bishop with e2-e4 and we’ll answer ...d4. Then, according to the ABC book, our dark-squared bishop will be constrained behind our own pawns. To be sure, White could prevent the exchange, but 15.e3 creates a weakness on d3 which might tell after 15...e7 16.e2 b6.

The game Zaragatski-Gyimesi, Germany 2011, went 15.xg5 xg5 16.d4 b6 17.e3 c7 18.a4 xa4 19.xa4 c7 20.c5 a7 21.b4 b5 22.h1 d6 23.ac1 d7 24.d3 b8
25.\texttt{Cc2 g6 26.a4 \texttt{g7 27.a5 b5}}
28.axb6 draw.

12...a6 13.b4 \texttt{d7 14.\texttt{b3 d4}}
15.\texttt{a2 f6 16.eacl e5 17.h1}
when 14...a5! 15.bxa5 \texttt{b3} is absolutely comfortable for Black. Instead, I opted for the mundane
14...\texttt{ac7 15.e3 b5 16.\texttt{xb5 \texttt{xb5}}} 17.\texttt{\texttt{b3 ac8 18.fc1 ec1+ 19.xc1}}
\texttt{xc1+ 20.xc1 a5 21.d2 axb4}
22.axb4 h5 23.f1 \texttt{d7} (23...d4=) 24.\texttt{c3 d4=}.

12.\texttt{ec1 a6 13.g2 d7 14.d2}
\texttt{b5 15.f4 d4 16.h1 c5 17.b1}
\texttt{db3 18.e1 d4 19.e4 a5}
20.\texttt{xc5 xc5 21.ec1 a4}

Fixing the pawns on dark squares.
21...\texttt{b6} 22.b4 axb4 23.\texttt{xb4} would be totally equal and Black should even think about defence since 23...
g6?! would run into 24.e4.

10...0-0 11.a3 \texttt{ec8}

I had played earlier 11...\texttt{b6} 12.b4
\texttt{d4 13.g2 fc8 14.d2}, Buchal-Delchev, Bad Wiessee 2013,

Black has a lasting advantage due to the weak kingside pawns. Perhaps I should have changed a pair of rooks
with 33...d6 34.xc7+ \texttt{xc7+} in order to free my bishop from the pin.
The c-file is unimportant.
34...\textit{d}d6!? is similar to the game – 39...\textit{x}xc7 \textit{x}xc7 40...\textit{f}f2 \textit{e}e5 41...\textit{g}g2 ...\textit{f}f7 42...\textit{c}c5 \textit{b}b3 43...\textit{e}xe5¼.

39...\textit{f}f2 \textit{d}d6 40...\textit{x}xc7 \textit{x}xc7 41...\textit{f}f1 \textit{e}e5 42...\textit{f}f2 \textit{b}4

42...\textit{f}f7 43...\textit{c}c5 \textit{b}b3 44...\textit{e}xe5 \textit{e}xe5 45...\textit{w}xd4 is a draw.

43...\textit{axb}4 \textit{w}xb4 44...\textit{c}c4 \textit{xb}2 45...\textit{xa}4 \textit{d}d6 46...\textit{a}a6 \textit{e}e6 47...\textit{c}c6 \textit{f}f6 48...\textit{g}g2 \textit{e}e5 Draw.

Our plan is to push ...\textit{e}5, so this move is not bad, but the immediate 9...\textit{e}5 was also possible. Even better is to include 9...\textit{a}5 10...\textit{a}3 \textit{e}5 in order to weaken the enemy’s queenside. The blitz game Edouard-Gunina, 2014, went 11...\textit{h}h5 12...\textit{h}h4 \textit{e}e8 13...\textit{e}e1? (this move would make sense only if the centre were closed with \textit{e}4-\textit{d}4) 13...\textit{e}e4! 14...\textit{d}xe4 \textit{d}xe4 15...\textit{f}f5 when 15...\textit{c}c7? (instead of 15...\textit{e}e5) would have preserved an important attacking piece.

Note that 10...\textit{a}3 is an almost automatic answer since otherwise Black would obtain some pull on the queenside. For instance, look at the game Sadorra-Dreev, Richardson 2010: 9...\textit{e}e8 10...\textit{w}c2 \textit{e}5 11...\textit{e}e1 \textit{a}5 12...\textit{h}h4 \textit{a}4 13...\textit{h}h3 \textit{c}c6 14...\textit{e}e4 \textit{d}xe4 15...\textit{c}cxe4 \textit{c}cxe4 16...\textit{d}xe4 \textit{a}xb3 17...\textit{a}xb3 \textit{w}b6 18...\textit{e}e2 \textit{a}a2 19...\textit{e}e1 \textit{e}e8 20...\textit{w}xa2 \textit{w}xa2 21...\textit{d}d1 \textit{c}c5 with active pieces.

The text waits for White to define his plan first. A similar approach is 9...\textit{a}5 10...\textit{a}3 \textit{h}h5 11...\textit{c}c2 \textit{e}5 12...\textit{e}4

12...\textit{d}xe4 13...\textit{d}xe4 \textit{e}e8 14...\textit{h}h4 \textit{c}c5 15...\textit{d}f3 \textit{b}b6 16...\textit{d}ad1 \textit{f}f8 17...\textit{b}b1 \textit{c}c5¼, Leko-Kasparov, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

10...\textit{h}3

If White delayed this move too much, the bishop could return to \textit{e}6! Let’s consider:
10.a3 a5 11...c2 e5 (threatening ...e5-e4-e3)

11...dxe4 12.dxe4 e5!. 

a) We commonly meet 12.e4?! by 12...dxe4 and then we try to exploit the hole on d4 – 13.dxe4

13...e4 14.dxe4 c5
15...h4 (15...f1 d6 16.h3 hxf3 17...xd7 e6) 15...b6 (15...g6!? 16.h3 h4 17...fd1 h4)
13...b6! 14.c3 (14.h3 allows 14...xf3 15...xf3 d5 16.h2 c6) 14...c5 15.h3
15.b2 xf3! 16.xf3 d4 17.b4 c5 crowns Black’s dark-squared strategy.
15...h5 16.g4 g6 17...h4 d4 18...xd4 exd4. White’s pieces are awkwardly placed. That turns the otherwise strong e4-pawn into a weakness.

b) 12.e3!? h6!. Now our bishop could retreat to e6. 13...h4 c8! 14.h3 b6 15.f4 (15...c3 b5) 15...exf4 16.exf4 c5 17.b4 d6 18.c5 b7 and White is unable to parry all Black’s threats – apart of the hit on b4, ...h5 is also awkward.

10...h5 11.c2

The insertion of 11.a3 a5 suits Black. 11.e4 is premature due to the pin –

12.e4

12.g4?! g6 13...h4 offers us space to grab – 13...d4! 14.a3 a5 15...xg6 hxg6 16...e1 e7 (16...c5 17...f3 e7 18...c1 d6 19.d2 e6) 17...c1 c5 18...f8, pinpointing the weakness on f4.

b) 12.e3!? h6! 13...h4 f8! faces White with a choice:
a) 14.g4 g6 15...xg6 weakens h4 and the whole kingside – 15...e6 16.f3 (16...f1 h4 17...h1 h5) 16...f8
16...e7 17.a3 (17.cxd5 cxd5 18...e1 e6) 17...e4 is promising, too – 18.d4 (18...e4 dxe4 19...d2 e5 20.b4 h4 21.h1 e6 22...xe5 hxe5+) 18...h4!
17.gxh5 h5+f.
b) 14.a3 a5 15.f5 c7 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.b4 (17...f1 c8) 17...c8! or 17...g6.
c) 14...f3 d7 15.e4 dxe4 16.xf3 c5 18...e1 c7 19...d1 e6=.

12...dxe4
Our general approach to this position is to take on e4, but 12...d4!? cannot be really bad. White has put his bishop on b2 and the queen on c2 so he will need 2 tempi to redeploy them for the typical KI attack. Other schemes have no venom — 13.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash h}4} a5 14.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}5} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e}8} 15.f4 g6 16.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash h}4} exf4 17.gxf4 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e}2} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}2} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash h}5} 19.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}f3} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f3} 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f3} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f4}.

13.dxe4

Trading knights underlines the weakness of d4 — 13.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}e}4 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}e}4 14.dxe4 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}7} (14...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash w}f}6 15.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e}2} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}8} 16.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}d}1 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}5} 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}2} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e}6}) 15.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash h}4} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}5} 16.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}5} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}8} 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}3} a5 18.a3 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e}6} 19.b4 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}4}.

13...a5 14.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash h}4}

14.a3 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash b}6} 15.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}3} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}5} is a familiar plan — 16.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash b}2} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}3 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}3 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}4} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash g}2} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e}d}8 19.b4 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}5} 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d}4 exd4

14...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}5} 15.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}3}

15.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash g}6}

This is a consistent move for the plan based on occupying d4. However, concrete thinking reveals that Black could penetrate even deeper in the enemy camp as d3 is also available — 15...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}3! 16.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash h}xf}3 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}7} 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}d}1 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}3} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d}3 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d}3 19.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}1} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d}8 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash g}2} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash b}6}+.

16.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}g}6 hxg6 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}d}1 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}7} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash g}2} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}8} 19.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash b}1}?! \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e}6} 20.h4?! \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}5}

20...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}4}! was more energetic. The pawn is immune owing to 21.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d}4 exd4 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d}4?! \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}g}3.

21.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d}8 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d}8 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}1} (22.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash h}3}!)

22...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash g}4} 23.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}1}

23...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}4}?

Black should have looked for a coup de grace. Any capture on f2 wins by force since after 23...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}2 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}2 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}2+ 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}2 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash b}6} 26.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}1} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e}3} the black heavy pieces dominate the board, e.g. 27.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}e}5 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}3} 28.c5 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}4}+. Another interesting way of attacking the enemy king was 23...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash g}5}! 24.hxg5 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}2 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}2 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}6} 26.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}3} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}g}5 27.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash g}2} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}2 28.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}f}2 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}3}+. After the “positional” 23...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}4} 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d}4 exd4 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}3}! Black would have stood “only” better. Instead,
Chapter 12

White lets the hit on f2 through once again and this time Black grasps his chance.

24.\textit{\textbf{xd4}} \textit{\textbf{exd4}} 25.\textit{\textbf{d1?}} \textit{\textbf{xf2}}!
26.\textit{\textbf{xf2}} d3+ 27.\textit{\textbf{f3}} f5??

27...\textit{\textbf{e5}} or 27...d2 were winning while now 28.\textit{\textbf{exf5}}! d2 29.\textit{\textbf{g4}} \textit{\textbf{xd3}}
30.\textit{\textbf{f3}}= saves the game as 30...\textit{\textbf{d7}} is not mate!

28.e5?? \textit{\textbf{xe5}} 29.\textit{\textbf{e1}} \textit{\textbf{d4}}
30.\textit{\textbf{h3}} d2 31.\textit{\textbf{xd2}} \textit{\textbf{xd2}}

32.\textit{\textbf{xd2}} \textit{\textbf{exd2}} 33.\textit{\textbf{h5}} \textit{\textbf{gxh5}}
34.\textit{\textbf{xf5}} \textit{\textbf{f7}} 35.\textit{\textbf{e8}} b6 36.\textit{\textbf{b7}} \textit{\textbf{Exa2}} 37.\textit{\textbf{xc6}} \textit{\textbf{eb2}} 38.\textit{\textbf{e4}}+ \textit{\textbf{g6}}
39.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{d2}} 40.\textit{\textbf{e8}}+ \textit{\textbf{h6}} 41.\textit{\textbf{f7}}
\textit{\textbf{e2}}+ 42.\textit{\textbf{d3}} \textit{\textbf{e5}} 43.\textit{\textbf{d5}} \textit{\textbf{g5}}
44.\textit{\textbf{e4}} \textit{\textbf{g4}} 45.\textit{\textbf{f7}} g5 46.\textit{\textbf{f3}}+ \textit{\textbf{xf3}}
47.\textit{\textbf{g3}} \textit{\textbf{e5}} 48.\textit{\textbf{c2}}
g4 49.\textit{\textbf{g7}} \textit{\textbf{h4}} 50.\textit{\textbf{g6}} \textit{\textbf{e5}}
51.\textit{\textbf{d3}} g3 52.\textit{\textbf{f1}} \textit{\textbf{f5}} 53.\textit{\textbf{h7}}+ \textit{\textbf{g5}} 54.\textit{\textbf{h3}} \textit{\textbf{f2}}+ 55.\textit{\textbf{d3}} \textit{\textbf{h2}}
56.\textit{\textbf{g7}}+ \textit{\textbf{f4}} 57.\textit{\textbf{f1}} \textit{\textbf{f2}} 58.\textit{\textbf{f7}}+ \textit{\textbf{e5}} 59.\textit{\textbf{g7}} \textit{\textbf{d6}} 60.\textit{\textbf{g5}} \textit{\textbf{e1}}
61.\textit{\textbf{e4}} \textit{\textbf{eb2}} 62.\textit{\textbf{d5}}+ \textit{\textbf{c6}} 63.\textit{\textbf{d1}}

0-1
Chapter 13. The King’s Indian Set-up

Main Ideas

1. d3 d5 2. g3 c6 3. g2 g4! 4. 0-0 e6

The King’s Indian Reversed set-up assumes that White will play d3, e4 instead of c4.
An independent line is 5.d4 f6 6. bd2 e7 7. e1 0-0 8.e4 when Black tries to provoke e4-e5 with ... g4-h5-g6 and retreats the knight to e8.

Black has a wide choice against the KI Reversed, but I discuss only set-ups with ... d6 and then ... g8-f6 or ... g8-e7. The latter may be easier to play, but White has a way to prevent it by the move order 5.b3 (or even 4.b3) 5... d7 6. b2 g6 7. d3 d6 8. bd2 0-0 9.e4

Both sides have completed development and we should now take the chance of occupying the centre with 9... e5

White’s only active plan here is to play f2-f4-f5, gaining space on the kingside. If we neutralise it in advance, White will run out of useful moves. Then we should expect to take over the initiative. First, we should concentrate our forces in the centre – ... e8, ... c7, ... ad8. Our aim is to reach a position of this type:

White’s advance has come to a halt, his pawns are hanging. See Game 31 Maiwald-Sasikiran, Dresden 2005.
The set-up with 5.d3 ᵃᵈ₆ 6.e₄ ᵇₑ₇ is based on similar ideas, but the e₇-knight can counter ᵇ₈h₄ with ...ᵈ₉g₆. Another plus for Black is the option of ...f₆, preserving the light-squared bishop. For instance:

7.하신 e₁ ᵃᵈ₇ 8.h₃ ᵇ₉h₅ 9.하신 h₄

9...dxe₄! 10.dxe₄ ʰg₆ 11.하신 xg₆ ᵇₓg₆ 12.f₄ f₆!. White has not achieved anything except of weakening his king.

White can try to exploit our set-up by changing plans: 7.하신 bd₂ ᵃᵈ₇ 8.d₄ 0-0 9.하신 c₇ 10.c₃,

This is a model example where White has kept the tension and now Black counterattacks in the centre:

14...c₅ 15.exd₅ ᵇxd₅ 16.하신 g₅ ᵇc₇ 17.하신 e₃ ᵇf₆ 18.하신 b₅ ᵇxe₃ 19.하신 xe₃ ᵇd₅ 20.하신 d₂ ᵇed₈=.

Of course, in the diagram position Black could also unload the centre with 14...dxe₄!? 15.하신 d₂ ᵇd₅ or persist with the waiting game by 14...ʰb₈!? or even 14...ᵉb₈!?.

As a whole, if White offered you a choice, ...하신 e₇ gives the g₄-bishop more freedom.
Chapter 13. The King’s Indian Set-up

Step by Step

1.\(\text{d}f3\) d5 2.g3 c6 3.\(\text{g}g2\) \(\text{g}g4\)!
4.0-0 e6

This move keeps more tension than 4...\(\text{d}d7\) 5.d3 e5 which is also possible – 6.h3 \(\text{h}5\) 7.e4 dxe4 8.dxe4 \(\text{gf}6\) 9.\(\text{We}1\) \(\text{c}5\) 10.a4 a5. Besides, White could shun this option altogether by playing 4.b3 e6 5.\(\text{b}b2\).

A. 5.d4 B. 5.b3; C. 5.d3;

A. 5.d4 \(\text{d}f6\) 6.\(\text{bd}2\) \(\text{e}7\) 7.\(\text{e}e1\)
0-0 8.e4

We should not be afraid of an attack here so we can allow e4-e5. We should even provoke it with the manoeuvre:

8...\(\text{h}5\)

I see no reason to open the centre with 8...dxe4 9.\(\text{d}xe4\) \(\text{d}xe4\) 10.\(\text{e}xe4\) \(\text{f}5\) 11.\(\text{e}e1\) \(\text{d}d7\) 12.c3 h6 13.\(\text{wb}3\) \(\text{wb}6\) with a solid, but passive position.

8...\(\text{a}6\) would be justified in the event of 9.e5?!, but 9.c3! underlines the clumsy placement of the a6-knight.

8...\(\text{bd}7\)? 9.c3 \(\text{h}5\) transposes to the main line.

9.c3 \(\text{bd}7\) 10.\(\text{h}3\)

10.e5 \(\text{e}8\) 11.\(\text{b}3\) is often seen.

White’s intention is to keep the space advantage and gradually advance on the kingside. ...c5 does not
promise serious counterplay and White might even use the d4-square for one of his knights.
It is more effective to attack the b2 and the c3-pawns. For instance: 11...\texttt{dc}7! 12.\texttt{xe}3 a5! 13.\texttt{dc}1 \texttt{db}6!
14.\texttt{d}3 (or 14.b3 \texttt{db}5 when 15.\texttt{d}2 runs into 15...\texttt{xc}3!) 14...\texttt{c}4. Only when White's pieces take passive defensive stands, could we think of ...c5 or even ...f6.

10...\texttt{g}6 11.e5

11.exd5 lacks any constructive idea. Black had comfortable equality after 11...\texttt{cx}d5 12.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{xe}5 13.dxe5 \texttt{d}7 14.\texttt{db}3 \texttt{c}5 15.\texttt{xc}5 \texttt{xc}5 16.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{c}8 17.h4 h6=, Speelman-Gausel, Slough 1997.

11...\texttt{e}8!?

11.\texttt{e}4 12.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xe}4 13.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{g}6 14.h4 h6, Anand-McShane, London 2013, is possible, but I prefer to keep the option of ...f6. The knight may be useful for this plan.

12.\texttt{f}1 c5 13.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{cx}d4 14.\texttt{cx}d4 \texttt{c}8 15.\texttt{e}3

I have been following the game Sulava-Feletar, Porec 1998. White was too busy redeploying his knights and temporarily uncoordinated them. That makes the break 15...\texttt{f}6! very strong – 16.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{xf}6 17.\texttt{eg}4 \texttt{e}4. White can preserve his centre, but 16.f4 \texttt{xe}5 17.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{b}8 leaves him with bad pieces and no trace of an attack.

B. 5.b3 \texttt{d}7 6.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{gf}6 7.d3

7.d4 \texttt{e}7! should transpose to Chapter 12 line B if White pushed c4.

7...\texttt{d}6 8.\texttt{bd}2

8.c4 0-0 was discussed in Chapter 12 – Game 30 Janaszak-Dziuba, Warsaw 2011.

8...0-0 9.e4

9...e5

Of course, it is better to occupy the centre than to seek simplification with 9...\texttt{dx}e4 10.\texttt{dx}e4 \texttt{e}5 when 11.c3! leaves Black with less space.

10.\texttt{h}3 \texttt{h}5 11.\texttt{e}1
The King's Indian Set-up

11.g4 g6 12.h4 e8 is similar to the main line.

11...e8 12.h4 c7

Black will choose the right timing for opening the d-file. White does not have any attack so he commonly ends up in a slightly worse position. See Game 31 Maiwald-Sasikiran, Dresden 2005.

C. 5.d3 d6

5...d7 is an alternative move order.

Then 6.c4 allows 6...xf3 7.xf3 (7.xf3 d6 8.c3 e7 9.e1 0-0 10.a3 f5) 7...dxc4! 8.dxc4 e5 9.d2 xf3+ with significant chances to make a draw. However, the common plan with ...f6 from the previous chapter is more interesting.

White usually answers 6...bd2 d6 7.e4 e7, transposing.

6.e4 e7 7.bd2

The insertion of 7.h3 h5 may occur now or on the next turn.

Sometimes White delays bd2, intending to roll quickly his pawns: 7.e1 d7 8.h3

8.bd2 0-0 9.b3 makes a hole on c3 which Black can exploit with concrete play - 9...b4! 10.h3 (10.b2 loses a pawn to 10...xf3 11.xf3 a5 12.d1 xa2#, Leon Hoyos-Vera Gonzalez, Yucatan 2004) 10...h5 (10...xf3 is also good) 11.e3 c3 12.b1 c5 13.h4 d4 14.e1 d6 15.f4 f6, Iljin-Goganov, Sochi 2015.

8...h5 9.h4

Now the manoeuvre 9...g6, which I recommend in the position with bd2 0-0 inserted, drops the d5-pawn, so Black should exchange on e4 first:


7.d7 8.h3

8.d4 0-0 9.e1 c7 10.c3 h5 occurred in D’Amore-Carubana, Siena 2010. With a knight on e7 instead of f6, this manoeuvre is not too effective, as Black cannot force e5 anyway. D’Amore could not find a good retort and lost the initiative after 11.b3 b8 12.a3 b5. Perhaps 10...a5, followed up by queenside play, is stronger. The game Pantsulaia-Dreev, Gjakova 2016, is a good model:

9.c3 c8 10.e1 e8 11.a4 a5 12.b3 b6 13.f1 h5 14.e3 c5.
8.b3 0-0 9...b2 a5 10.a3 b5 11.c4
11...e2 wb6 12.d4 (12.h3 h5
13.g4 g6 14.e5 c7) 12...c5
13.a4 b4=.
11...wb6 12.wc2 wab8 13.wab1 e5 offers Black the better centre.

10...w5 9.wel 0-0

10...wh4

11...hxg6 hxg6

10...wg6!

This way Black saves the bishop. 10...e5 is also possible, but why to give the opponent the bishop pair without a substantial reason?!

11.wxg6 hxg6 12.f4 wb6+
13.e1 eae8 14.wf3 f6∞

Black’s king is safe and he keeps his options in the centre open – Karja-
kin-Aronian, blitz, Stavanger 2013.
Chapter 13. The King’s Indian Set-up

Annotated Games

31. Maiwald – Sasikiran
Dresden, 28.07.2005

1.g3 d5 2.g2 d6 3.d3 c6 4.f3 
3.g4 5.0-0 d7 6.b2 e6 7.b3 
8.d2 0-0 9.e5 10.e4 
11.h3 12.h4

Black stays beautifully, but he does not have a clear plan yet. His safest strategy is to open the d-file and see what target White will offer him. Most probably, ...a5 will be a useful move, but it would be better to bring the rest of his forces to the centre first.

12...c7!

It transpires that White’s intention to push f4 should be postponed for a distant future since his centre would be hanging after 13.f5.

14.f4?! dxe4 15.dxe4 g6.
White could make a waiting move like 13.h1, but 13...ad8 will face him with the same choice again. In most practical games he cannot find anything better than 14.a3 a5 15.f5 f8 16.f4

Black has some initiative here. For instance:
16...dxe4 17.dxe4 g6
17...exf4 is probably less accurate since it offers the g3-square
– 18.gxf4 g6 19.g3 dxe4
18.xg7! xg7 19.f5.

13.a3 ad8 14.f5 f8 15.b4 a5
16.c3
Harikrishna-Smeets, Wijk aan Zee 2008 saw 16.f3 axb4 17.axb4 c5
(17...b5!? 18.bxc5 dxe4 19.dxe4 Qxc5 with harmonious pieces.

16...dxe4! 17.dxe4 Qb6

Pinpointing the weakness of White's light squares.

18.g4 Qg6 19.Re2 Qa4 20.Qc4 axb4

It is difficult to criticize this natural move, but it unnecessarily activates the rook at a1. 10...Qxf5 11.gxf5 g6! was stronger since 12.Qxa5 Qh5 would tie White up and down.

21.axb4 Qxf5 22.exf5?

This recapture allows Black to bring new resources into play. The a4-knight is a powerful beast so 22.Qxa4 b5 23.Qa5 would have been easier to hold.

22...b5 23.Qe3 e4 24.c4 Qxb2 25.Qxb2 bxc4 26.Qac1 h5 27.Qxc4

Now the weak h2-b8 diagonal is Black's main trump. The best way to build the QW battery is 27...Qf4! 28.gxh5 Qd6.

27...hxg4 28.hxg4? Qf4+ 29.Qe2 Qd6 30.Qe1 Qd5 31.Qf1 Qxb4 32.Qd1? Qc3 0-1
1.**g3** is often used against concrete opponents in order to exploit their narrow opening repertoire. For example, the King’s Indian adepts should reckon with 3.e4, reaching the Pirc. However, it does not pose any problems to us and we can choose both 1...e5 or 1...d5 to achieve the following position:

1...e5 2.g2 d5 3.d3

Chapter 11 has taught us to meet c4 by ...d4!, We can also transpose to other chapters of this book by defending the centre with ...c6. However, my main idea against the English and similar “irregular” openings is to seize as much space as possible. Therefore, we should better cross the centre and bolster the pawn at d4 rather than at d5. Thus I recommend:

1. To meet c4 by ...d4, although ...c6 is probably not worse;
2. To lead out our king’s knight to f6, although the set-up with ...e7 is also possible. A good example to follow is Game 32 Venya-Bereza, email 2013:

3...f6 4.c4 d4 5.f3 d6 6.0-0 0-0 7.e3 c5!? (7...dxe3 is “only” equal!) 8.exd4 cxd4 9.c5 c7!? 10.b4 e6 and White had to struggle all the game due to Black’s superior centre.

The other important pawn structure you should know arises when White plays e4 instead of c4. Then I suggest to bolster the centre with ...c6, complete development with ...d6, 0-0 and see the enemy’s plan. I believe that we should refrain from ...d4 and fix the centre with ...dxe4
to avoid total exchanges which could occur after White’s d3-d4. Black’s further play has some nuances depending on the placement of White’s queen’s knight:

a) 4.\( \text{d}f3 \text{d}6 \) 5.0-0 0-0 6.\( \text{b}d2 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 7.e4 c6

Our natural play should be on the queenside, aiming to seize space with moves like ...a5, ...b5. On the kingside, I prefer a passive stand without making any weaknesses with ...g6 or ...h6. A good manoeuvre is ...\( \text{b}8\text{-d}7 \text{a6}-\text{c5}-\text{e6} \). My main line runs:

8.b3 a5! 9.a3 \( \text{bd7} \) 10.\( \text{b}2 \) dxe4 11.dxe4 \( \text{c7} \) 12.\( \text{h}4 \) b5 13.\( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{f8} \)

See Game 33 Gabrielian-Riazantsev, Vladivostok 2014.

b) 6.\( \text{c}3 \) c6 7.e4 dxe4 – the knight on c3 enables the possibility of d3-d4 so we should exchange on e4 immediately. 8.dxe4 \( \text{a6} \) 9.h3 \( \text{c7} \) 10.\( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 11.\( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{c}7 \) =.

I want to stress that after 1.g3, our tactic in the opening should be not to equalize, but to take the centre and fight for the initiative. White’s extra tempo is not worth much.
Chapter 14. 1.g3

Step by Step

1.g3 e5 2.g2 d5

3.d3

3.c4 d4! (3...c6 4.d4 e4 is mentioned in Chapter 2) 4.d3 c6 transposes to Chapter 11.

3...d6 4.d3 f6 is considered below. However, we should better switch to punishing mode with 3...e4! 4.d4 c5 5.b3 c4 (5...c6=) 6.d4 c5 7.c3

7...c6 (7...f6!? 8.xc6 bxc6 9.0-0

9.b3 cxb3 10.axb3 h5! was the curious miniature Hulak-Beliavsky, Pula 2000: 11.a3 b6

12.h4 h6 13.d4 e3 14.f4 g4

15.d3 f5 16.0-0 h6 17.c4 dxc4 18.e4+ d7 19.c3 xg3

20.f2 f5 21.b1 f1 22.xf1 xd4 23.d1 e8 0-1.

9...f6 10.b3 0-0 11.bxc4 dxc4

12.a3 f5, Durarbayli-Kharlov, Kazan 2013.

3...f6

3...c6 4.f3

After 4.c4 best is 4...dxc4 (4...d4 5.f3 is Chapter 11/Line B).

4...f6 5.0-0 e7 is the Pirc Reversed. It is not the subject of this book, but it is a safe and proven way of meeting 1.g3.

3.c6 4.f3 d6 5.c4 e7 6.0-0 0-0

7.c3 d7 is another solid set-up, which I considered in the previous chapter.

4.f3

4.d2 d6 5.e4 c6 6.gf3 is covered in line B. Sometimes White tries the original set-up with 6.e2,
but it has no advantages over the standard lines. Polzin-Boensch, Berlin 1994, went 6...0-0 7.0-0 dxe4 8.dxe4 \(a\)e6 9.b3 a5 10.\(a\)c3 \(a\)a6 11.\(a\)b2 b5.

White's passive tactic allows for more active approaches and the best retort to 4.\(a\)d2 is 4...\(a\)c5! since it hinders 5.\(a\)gf3 in view of 5...e4, and 5.e4 due to 5...dxe4 6.dxe4? \(a\)g4 7.\(a\)h3 \(a\)xf2+! 8.\(a\)xf2 \(a\)e3 9.\(a\)h5 \(a\)c6!. Therefore, White has to resort to another passive move – 5.e3, giving Black a free hand in the centre. He can choose any plan at his liking.

4...\(a\)d6

4...\(a\)c6 is possible again.

5.0-0

5.c4 d4 or 5...c6 transpose to the main line.

5...0-0

I'm going to analyse from here the English approach in line A. 6.c4, and the KI plans with B. 6.\(a\)bd2 and C. 6.\(a\)c3, followed up by e2-e4.

A. 6.c4

I offer you now two good continuations to choose from:
A1. 6...d4; A2. 6...c6

A1. 6...d4 7.e3

7.\(a\)bd2 \(a\)c6 8.a3 a5 9.\(a\)b1 a4. A typical way of discouraging b2-b4. Black's pieces control more space, e.g. 10.\(a\)c2 h6±.

7.b4 only weakens the queenside. Black answers 7...\(a\)e8! and gains control of c5:

8.a3 a5 9.b5 \(a\)bd7 10.a4 \(a\)b4 11.\(a\)a3 c5, or 8.\(a\)b3 a5 9.b5 \(a\)bd7 10.\(a\)bd2 h6, followed by ...\(a\)c5.

7...c5!?

7...\(a\)c6 transposes to Chapter 11/Line B after 8.exd4 \(a\)xd4=.

Another option is 7...dxe3 8.\(a\)xe3 \(a\)c6 9.\(a\)c3 \(a\)e8. This position may be objectively balanced, but Black lacks an active plan. Conversely, White may try to display activity on the kingside – 10.h3

10.a3 \(a\)f5 11.b4 a6 12.d4 exd4
13.\( \text{cxd4} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) 14.\( \text{cxd4} \) \( c6 \) was harmless in \'Movsziszian-Kir. Georgiev, Benasque 2010. 10...\( \text{f8} \) 11.g4 h6 12.\( \text{xe}1 \), Andriasian-Ter Sahakyan, Yerevan 2015.

8...\( \text{cxd4} \) \( \text{cxd4} \)

The only way to play for a win. 8...\( \text{exd4=} \) leads to a symmetrical structure.

9.\( \text{c5} \)

9...\( \text{c7}!\)?

9...\( \text{xc5} \) 10.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 11.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{e7=} \) was eventually drawn in Grego-Calio, ICCF 2015.

The text keeps the game strategically unbalanced and full of life. White is somewhat overextended on the queenside. See Game 32 Venya-Bereza, email 2013.

A2. 6...\( \text{c6} \) 7.\( \text{cxd5} \)

White cannot rip any dividends from delaying this exchange: 7.\( \text{c3} \) will face 7...\( \text{d4} \) 8.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{e8} \).

7.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{bd7} \) should transpose to the main line, but Black could also take on \( c4 \).

7.a3 resigns the battle for the centre and gives Black time to bolster his pawn pair with 7...\( \text{h6} \) or 7...\( \text{xe8} \).

7...\( \text{cxd5} \) 8.\( \text{c3} \)

This move order is more clever than 8.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 9.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{h6} \) 10.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 11.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{d4} \) 12.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 13.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{b6} \) 14.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{e6} \) 15.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{ac8} \) when Black was at least equal in Kachishvili-Jobava, Tbilisi 2000.

8...\( \text{c6} \)

The attempt to anticipate \( \text{g5} \) by 8...\( \text{bd7} \) could be exploited with 9.e4 \( \text{d4} \) 10.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{c5} \) 11.a4.

9.\( \text{g5} \)

9...\( \text{c7}! \)?

This surprising retreat allows us to keep the centre fluid. 9...\( \text{e6} \) 10.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 11.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d4} \) 12.\( \text{ce4} \) is easier to play with White.

After the text White does not have a convincing way to force ...\( \text{d4} \) un-
less he plays e4, which would shut off his only good piece. 10.\textit{\#.b3} could be repelled by 10... \textit{\#.a5}. Another way to oppose Black’s dominance in the centre is:

10.d4 e4 11.\textit{\#.e5},

but then both:
11...\textit{\#.e6} 12.\textit{\#.xc6} bxc6 13.\textit{\#.a4} h6 14.\textit{\#.f4} \textit{\#.d7} 15.\textit{\#.c1} \textit{\#.c8} 16.\textit{\#.d2} \textit{\#.e8} 17.\textit{\#.c2} \textit{\#.f5} 18.\textit{\#.c1}, draw, Steinke-Gasanov, Lechenicher SchachServer, 2012, and:

11...\textit{\#.h6} 12.\textit{\#.xf6} \textit{\#.xf6}, Seeman-Miezis, Tallinn 2005, are fine for \textit{\#.lack}. The latter game went 13.\textit{\#.c1}?! when 13...\textit{\#.xe5}! 14.dxe5 \textit{\#.e6} would have even gained some advantage.

B. 6.\textit{\#.bd2} \textit{\#.e8} 7.e4 c6

8.b3

8.\textit{\#.e1} \textit{\#.bd7} 9.c3 a5 10.d4 exd4 11.\textit{\#.xd4} dxe4 12.\textit{\#.xe4=} annihilates the centre. Perhaps that is the reason why Karpov preferred: 9...dxe4?! 10.dxe4 \textit{\#.c7} to take over the initiative after 11.\textit{\#.c2} a5 12.\textit{\#.c4} \textit{\#.f8} 13.a4 b5 14.\textit{\#.a3} \textit{\#.a6} 15.\textit{\#.f1} \textit{\#.eb8}. Chekhov proposes as an improvement 11.b4, but then 11...\textit{\#.b6} 12.\textit{\#.c2} c5 13.b5 a6 14.bxa6 \textit{\#.xa6} favours Black. In general, his pieces are all targeted towards the queenside so the plan with c3 only plays into his hands.

By fianchettoing his bishop, White hopes to mount a kingside attack.

8...a5! 9.a3 \textit{\#.bd7} 10.\textit{\#.b2} dxe4

Logical alternatives are 10...d4 11.c3 c5 and 10...\textit{\#.c7} 11.\textit{\#.e1} dxe4.

11.dxe4 \textit{\#.c7} 12.\textit{\#.h4}

12.\textit{\#.e1} does not make sense anymore – the rook might be needed on the f-file. Black can answer 12...b5, followed up by ...a4, ...c5.

12...b5 13.\textit{\#.f5} \textit{\#.f8}

Black’s play on the queenside is easier than White’s attempts on the opposite side of the board. See Game 33 Gabrielian-Riazantsev, Vladivostok 2014.
We are faced here with a crucial choice of plans. The engines like 7...d4 8.\(\text{dxe}2\) c5, but that would mean to withstand a classical King’s Indian attack with clear two tempi down and a bishop on d6. While email games bring Black excellent results, I’m far from the thought that the KI is so bad that we should enter it at any cost. At least for practical reasons, it is safer to keep tension in the centre.

The next question we should answer is: how much tension are we ready to maintain? The knight is much more active on c3 than it was on d2 in line B. It exerts a significant impact on the centre and moves like 7...\(\text{e}8\) could be met by 8.exd5 cxd5 9.\(\text{g}5\). That hints the move 7...h6, but it has flip-sides, too. One of them is the possibility of 8.d4 exd4 9.\(\text{x}d4\) dxe4= which leaves no tension at all. Another option is 8.\(\text{h}4\) when Black should be very accurate in order to not fall under attack. A good model to follow is the game Seirawan-Dolmatov, Graz 1978: 8.\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{c}5\) 9.\(\text{e}1\) (protecting the h4-knight in the event of future f4 exf4) 9...\(\text{e}8\) 10.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{a}6\) 11.\(\text{f}5\) \(\text{c}7\) 12.g4 \(\text{e}6\) 13.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{h}7\)

Black has covered everything and now he can turn his attention to the queenside. Probably the above-mentioned “threat” to suck out any life from the position with 8.d4 tips the balance in favour of:

7...dxe4

It opens a file to ensure counterplay against a direct pawn storm on the kingside, and stabilises the pawn structure in the centre.

8.dxe4

8.\(\text{dxe}4\) \(\text{dxe}4\) 9.dxe4 simplifies the position without changing much its strategic canvas. As in the main line, Black can choose either a stand with ...g6, or with ...\(\text{b}8\)-a6-c5, ...\(\text{e}8\). Here is an example: Jones-Howell, Halifax 2010: 9...\(\text{e}7\) 10.\(\text{h}4\) g6 11.\(\text{e}7\) \(\text{a}6\) 12.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 13.\(\text{f}3\) f6 14.\(\text{fd}1\) \(\text{fd}8\) 15.c3 \(\text{c}7\).

8...\(\text{a}6\)??
Chapter 14

Black had to decide how to meet the manoeuvre $f3-h4-f5$. I suggest to simply ignore it and transfer our own knight to $e6$ via $c5$ or $c7$.

Another possible approach is to take $f5$ under control with $...g6$:

Hickl-Benham, Adelaide 1990, saw $8...\text{We}7 9.\text{h}4 \text{g}6 10.\text{g}5 \text{d}8 11.\text{e}2 \text{bd}7 12.\text{ad}1?!$ (Stronger is $12.f4! \text{g}7 13.f5 \text{c}5+ 14.\text{h}1 \text{h}6 15.fxg6 fxg6 16.\text{d}2 \text{b}6$ with complex play) $12...\text{c}5 13.\text{ad}2 \text{e}6 14.\text{e}3$, when $14...b5$ would have passed the initiative to Black.

Nakamura-Harikrishna, Wijk aan Zee 2013, shows another version of this stand: $8...\text{e}8 9.\text{We}2 \text{f}8 10.\text{h}4 \text{g}6 11.\text{g}5 \text{g}7$

12.a4 $\text{bd}7 13.\text{fd}1 \text{e}7 14.a5 $\text{c}5 15.\text{h}3 \text{e}6$.

9.$h3 (9.\text{h}4 $\text{g}4=$) 9...$\text{c}7 10.\text{h}4 \text{e}6 11.\text{f}5 \text{c}7 12.\text{e}3 \text{g}6$

In the stem game Rohde-Browne, USA 1989, White chose to return the knight disgracefully to $h4$ and became worse. He should have opted for $13.\text{xd}8 \text{xd}8 14.\text{e}7+ \text{g}7 15.\text{xc}8$ with a roughly equal position.
1.g3 e5 2.g2 d5 3.c4 d4 4.d3 \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{f6} \) 5.f3 \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d6} \) 6.0-0 0-0 7.e3 c5 8.exd4 cxd4

9.c5 \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c7} \) 10.b4 \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e6} \) 11.b5

White’s advanced pawns are not dangerous since they are not backed up by pieces. I think that quick development like 11.\( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e1} \) \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{bd7} \) 12.a3 (defending c5 against the treat of ...a5) or 11.a5 \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{bd7} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{d2} \) was more to the point.

11...\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d5} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{d2} \) \( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e8} \) 13.a5

White decides to trade light-squared bishops in order to enable \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d2-c4} \), but that leads to destruction of his queenside.

It is not easy to give a better advice though, as 13.a3 a5 14.e1 \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c3} \) also offers Black some initiative.

13...\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{g2} \) 14.\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{g2} \) \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d5+} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f3} \) \( \text{\textit{x}} \text{f3+} \) 16.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{xf3} \) \( \text{\textit{b}} \text{6} \)

17.\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b3} \)

17.cxb6 axb6 18.a4 looks attractive for White in view of the “bad” bishop on c7. In fact that bishop is quite “good” since it protects both black pawns while the d3-pawn would turn very sensitive once Black puts his knights to c5 and d5. The a4-pawn is also a potential target in view of the idea ...a7, ...\( \text{\textit{e}} \text{-a8} \).

17...\( \text{\textit{a}} \text{a6} \) 18.cxb6 \( \text{\textit{xb6}} \) 19.e1 \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{bd7} \) 20.bxa6 \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d5!} \) 21.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d2} \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \text{6} \)

The d3-pawn is a cause of constant concern and White cannot get rid of it. Still, his biggest problem is the
lack of space. If you cast a look at the next diagram, you'll notice the significance of Black's pawn centre. It helps his pieces to dominate the board.

22.\textit{E}ec1 \textit{E}xa6 23.\textit{E}c6 \textit{E}a7 24.a4 \textit{E}e7 25.\textit{E}c4 \textit{E}c7 26.\textit{E}b4 \textit{E}f7 27.\textit{E}e1 \textit{E}c6 28.\textit{E}c4 \textit{E}b8 29.\textit{E}xc6 \textit{Exb}3 30.a5 \textit{E}b8 31.\textit{E}c5 \textit{E}e6 32.\textit{E}ac1 \textit{E}d6 33.\textit{E}c8 \textit{E}d5 34.\textit{E}f1 \textit{E}a6 35.\textit{E}d8 \textit{E}c5 36.\textit{E}e2 f5 37.f3

37...\textit{E}ab7

Black's rooks threaten to invade the third or the second rank.

38.\textit{E}a8 e4 39.a6? (39.fxe4) 39...\textit{Exd}3+ 0-1

Black does not have any weaknesses on the kingside and is very stable there. On the other part of the board, he has a clear plan to open lines with 14.\textit{E}e3 a4 15.\textit{B}4 c5. White might have had the idea of opening the f-file, but now it tran-

33. Gabrielian – Riazantsev Vladivostok 2014

1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5 3.\textit{E}d2 e5 4.\textit{E}gf3 \textit{E}d6 5.g3 \textit{E}f6 6.\textit{E}g2 0-0 7.0-0 \textit{E}e8 8.\textit{B}3

In principle, this is a logical approach – White develops his bishop towards the enemy king. You should not underestimate his resources. Look at the blitz game Fedoseev-Bologan, Berlin 2015: 8...\textit{E}a6 9.\textit{B}b2 \textit{E}c7 10.h3 a5 11.a3 h6 12.\textit{E}e1 dxe4 13.dxe4 b5 14.\textit{E}f1 \textit{E}e7 15.\textit{E}e3\textit{f} g6 16.\textit{E}c1 h5 17.\textit{E}h4 \textit{E}c5 18.\textit{E}h1 \textit{E}h7 19.\textit{E}f3 \textit{E}g5?

20.\textit{E}xe5 \textit{E}xh3 21.\textit{E}d3 \textit{E}b6 22.\textit{E}f5! and the charged rifle (the b2-bishop) fired the decisive shot – 22...\textit{E}xf5 23.\textit{E}h6 f6 24.\textit{Exf}5 1-0.
spires that Black’s counterplay is faster – 14.\( \text{h}1 \text{a}4 \) 15.\( f4 \text{a}6 \)! 16.\( f3 \text{b}4 \) 17.\( \text{e}1 \text{axb}3 \) 18.\( \text{x}e5 \text{bxa}3 \). White decides to counter the enemy activity in advance.

14.\( \text{c}4 \text{b}7 \) 15.\( \text{c}2 \text{b}4 \) 16.\( \text{axb}4 \text{axb}4 \) 17.\( \text{xa}8 \text{xa}8 \) 18.\( f3 \text{g}6 \) 19.\( \text{e}3 \text{e}8 \) 20.\( \text{h}3 \)!

Intending 12\( g4 \). That would have been a decent positional idea if White had the more active pieces. In the current situation, it only wastes time and makes a new weakness.

Although Black has more space on the queenside, the position would be close to equal after 20.\( \text{e}1 \text{c}5 \) 21.\( \text{d}3 \).

20...\( \text{c}5 \) 21.\( \text{g}4 \text{xg}4 \) 22.\( \text{hxg}4 \)

Now 22...\( \text{h}6 \)! 23.\( \text{d}1 \text{c}8 \) would have found employment to the dozing \( b7 \)-bishop.

22...\( \text{g}7 \) 23.\( \text{d}2 \text{xb}3 \) (23...\( \text{xe}4 \)! 24.\( \text{x}b4 \text{d}4 \) 25.\( \text{xd}4 \text{exd}4 \)

Perhaps Black assessed this position in his favour in view of his better pieces after a possible ...\( \text{c}6-\text{c}5 \).

However, it is White to move and he can cut across his opponent’s hopes with 26.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 27.\( \text{e}1 \). The tables have turned and White has activated all his forces – for a mere pawn.

26.\( \text{c}5 \) 27.\( \text{d}8 \) 28.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 29.\( \text{e}1 \text{g}7 \) 30.\( \text{d}5 \)

30...\( \text{e}6 \)! 31.\( \text{xe}6 \)?

Trading c4 for the c6-pawn would give more chances for a draw. For instance, the rook endgame should not be a problem to hold. The bishops complicate White’s task, but after the exchange on e6, he is just lost.

31...\( \text{f}6 \) 32.\( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 33.\( \text{xc}6 \text{b}7 \) 34.\( \text{c}1 \text{b}1 \) 35.\( \text{c}8 \text{xc}1+ \) 36.\( \text{g}2 \text{xc}8 \) 37.\( \text{xc}8+ \text{f}8 \) 38.\( \text{e}6+ \text{g}7 \) 39.\( \text{d}7+ \text{g}8 \) 40.\( \text{e}6+ \text{g}7 \) 41.\( \text{d}7+ \text{f}6 \) 42.\( \text{d}4+ \text{f}7 \) 43.\( \text{d}5+ \text{e}8 \) 44.\( \text{c}6+ \text{d}8 \) 45.\( \text{d}5+ \text{c}7 \) 46.\( \text{f}7+ \text{b}6 \) 47.\( \text{xf}8 \text{xc}4 \) 48.\( \text{d}6+ \text{b}5 \) 49.\( \text{f}3 \text{c}2 \) 50.\( \text{b}8+ \text{c}4 \) 51.\( \text{c}7+ \text{b}3 \) 52.\( \text{b}6+ \text{c}3 \) 53.\( \text{a}5+ \text{a}2 \) 54.\( \text{e}3 \text{c}3 \) 55.\( \text{a}4 \text{c}1 \text{f}4 \text{g}5 \) 57.\( \text{f}3 \text{h}5 \) 58.\( \text{xb}5 \text{g}4+ \) 59.\( \text{xe}4 \text{g}2 \) 60.\( \text{b}5 \text{d}1=\text{f}+ \) 0-1

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   4.\( \text{g2} \) e6 5.\( \text{wb3} \) 198
   5.0-0 199
   5.cxd5 exd5 202 (5...\( \text{xf3} \) 208)
3.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 4.0-0 e6 5.d4 217
   5.b3 218
   5.d3 219
1.g3 e5 2.\( \text{g2} \) d5 3.d3 (3.\( \text{g3} \)?! e4 225) 3...\( \text{f6} \) 4.\( \text{f3} \) (4.\( \text{d2} \) 225) 4...
   \( \text{d6} \) 5.0-0 0-0 6.e4 d4 226
   6...c6 227
   6.\( \text{bd2} \) e8 7.e4 c6 228
   6.\( \text{c3} \) c6 7.e4 229
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