Attacking the Spanish

By

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Key to symbols used

±    White is slightly better
⁺    Black is slightly better
±    White is better
⁻    Black is better
→    White has a decisive advantage
←    Black has a decisive advantage
=    equality
↑↓   with compensation
↔    with counterplay
8    unclear

?    a weak move
??   a blunder
!    a good move
!!   an excellent move
!?   a move worth considering
?!   a move of doubtful value
#    mate
(n)  nth match game
→    with an attack
↑    with an initiative
N    new move
Introduction

Hello and thank you for reading this book.

I have been playing the black side of the Spanish, or Ruy Lopez, for a large part of my chess career. When the opportunity arose for me to write a book on the subject, I jumped at the chance to study these fascinating positions in greater depth and share my ideas.

For a long time my primary weapon against the Spanish has been the Marshall gambit, which is certainly the most well known of the ‘aggressive’ responses to White’s opening. At the same time, I was quite happy when the publisher proposed that I cover not one, but three different systems for Black. This will enable the reader to develop a more varied repertoire over time. Even if you decide not to play a particular system in your own games, I hope that you be able to obtain some useful ideas that can somehow enrich your chess knowledge.

By coincidence, all three of the subject variations are gambits. Each has their own unique characteristics, advantages and drawbacks, but all are fully playable and have been tested at high levels of competition. Although the book is written primarily from Black’s point of view, I am confident that the contents will also be of considerable value to those who play the white side.

The first three chapters are devoted to the Schliemann gambit. To be honest, I never paid too much attention to the black side of this line until Radjabov started to play it consistently against world-class opposition. I find this variation to be extremely rich with ideas, and it is still far from clear whether White can achieve a meaningful advantage.

In chapters 4 and 5 we turn our attention to the very trendy Gajewski variation, which came into fashion a couple of years ago. I studied and experimented with the Gajewski a few times since it burst onto the theoretical scene. This variation has lost a certain amount of its surprise value since catching the eye of theoreticians, but it still provides a lot of scope for new ideas. So far White has not been able to refute the cheeky 10...d5, and I expect this line to remain topical for the foreseeable future.

The final four chapters will address the infamous Marshall gambit, including the various ‘anti-Marshall’ systems with which White can avoid the most critical variations. The Marshall has enjoyed a healthy reputation for many years now, and the most recent top-flight games have done little to change this assessment. I have been playing the Marshall myself for many years, and have no hesitation in recommending it as an exciting yet reliable weapon.
Instead of offering a narrow repertoire comprising a single recommendation against each of
the opponent's options, I decided it would be more useful to cover a few different approaches,
especially in the most critical variations. The reasons for this are many. In the case of the Gajewski,
the theory is still developing quite rapidly, so I felt it especially important to provide an up-to-
date picture including the latest games from different variations, along with a lot of my own
analysis. In several of the Marshall lines, there can be more than one equally valid approach to the
position. Thus I hope to provide the reader with the best opportunity to find an approach that
suits his own style, as well as to achieve a better overall understanding of the positions.

This is my first effort as an author, and I have enjoyed working on the project. I would like to
thank Andrew Greet and Jacob Aagaard for their help and support. Finally, I would like to thank
you, the reader, for purchasing this book, and wish you great success in your games.

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Chapter 1

Schliemann: 4.d3

1.e4 e5 2.d3 c6 3.b5 f5 4.d3

Strategic Themes
Theoretical highlights
Theory
A) 6.Wd3
B) 6.c3
C) 6.g5
D) 6.0–0! c5
D1) 7.c3
D2) 7.xc6
D3) 7.Wd3

page 8
page 9
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page 15
page 15
page 18
page 24
1. e4 e5 2. d3 d6 3. b5 f5 4. d3

This has always been quite a common response to the Schliemann, although for a long time it was considered harmless. I suspect that its popularity has partially been due to it being the default choice of a player who has been surprised and/or intimidated by Black's bold response to the Ruy Lopez.

One of the main selling points of 4.d3 is that White gets to maintain a pawn on the e4-square. Thus he will be in no danger of being overrun in the centre, unlike the 4. ttk3 variation, in which this has been known to happen if White misplays the position.

Since the turn of the millennium, the reputation of 4.d3 has been enhanced by the discovery of some new ideas, which have led to a re-evaluation of certain critical variations. Over the past few years it has been tested in several games at the highest level.

One of the ideas behind White's 4th is that he is now ready to capture the pawn on f5 without having to worry about ...e4. For this reason I recommend that Black continues:

4...fxe4

Black can certainly consider 4...d6 5.exf5 but overall I consider the text to be the soundest continuation.

5. dxe4 d6

This natural move requires no explanation. The present position provides our starting position for the present chapter. We will now explore a few of the typical ideas available to both sides, as well as taking a brief snapshot of some of the most important theoretical variations.

Strategic Themes

White's activity in the centre and queenside

White often tries to install a knight on d5, perhaps in conjunction with a bishop on g5 to pin the knight on f6. He may also try to prove that Black's dark-squared bishop developed on c5 too early by advancing his pawns on the queenside.

In order to save his bishop, Black will have to accept a structural weakening by moving his a-pawn.

Black's kingside attack

The open f-file makes kingside play an attractive proposition for Black, especially in conjunction with the dark-squared bishop on the a7-g1 diagonal. He may also look to transfer his king's knight to the f4-square.
From here, he would look to post his queen on g5 or h4, followed by doubling rooks on the f-file.

**Theoretical Highlights**

**Sacrificing the e5-pawn**

White may be allowed to exchange bishop for knight on c6 in order to capture the pawn on e5.

We will see that such a sacrifice is par for the course in the Schliemann. Black has generally scored quite well from here, although he should definitely come to the board well prepared. This position is analysed in line D2) on page 18.

**Sharp tactics**

White has just played 9.b4??, instigating heavy complications. Both players must demonstrate strong calculating abilities as well as a good deal of theoretical knowledge. I found an important improvement for Black, but was unable to claim it as my own novelty. It seems that the Indian GM Ganguly independently found the same idea, and used it last year to secure a comfortable draw against Hossain. Full details can be found in line D311) on page 24.

**The main line**

This has been the most popular variation at elite Grandmaster level. White has just
initiated a forced sequence of exchanges with 10.\( \text{c}3\text{d}5 \). Play continues:

10.\( \text{c}xd5 \) 11.\( \text{e}xd5 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 12.\( \text{c}xd7+t \) \( \text{xd}7 \)

At this point White can choose between capturing a pawn with 13.\( \text{c}xe5 \) and exchanging knights with 13.\( \text{c}xd4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \).

The former leads to great complications in which Black seems to be holding his own. This can be seen in the notes to Mamedyarov – Radjabov in line D3 121), page 27. The latter variation is currently considered critical, and is covered in D3 122) on page 31. White eschews the chance of immediate material gain and aims for a slight but stable advantage in a simplified position. The black position is solid enough, although he still has some minor long-term problems.

**Theory**

1.\( e4 \) \( e5 \) 2.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 3.\( \text{b}5 \) \( f5 \) 4.\( d3 \) \( fxe4 \) 5.\( dxe4 \) \( \text{f}6 \)

From our starting position we will consider four main moves. **A)** 6.\( \text{d}3 \) can transpose to the main lines, but the independent idea of 7.\( \text{c}4 \)?! is probably poor. **B)** 6.\( \text{c}3 \) looks natural, but is in fact harmless. **C)** 6.\( \text{g}5 \)? is not the most obvious choice, but was recently tested by Vassily Ivanchuk and thus deserves to be taken seriously. Last but not least, the most popular and challenging move is **D)** 6.0–0!.

Occasionally White tries to be a bit too clever by accelerating the thematic queen transfer, as seen in variation D3), with:

**A)** 6.\( \text{d}3 \)

6.\( \text{c}2 \) can also be played with the same intention.

6...\( \text{c}5 \) 7.\( \text{c}4 \)?!

This only leads to problems for White, so he should prefer 7.0–0 reaching line D3).

7...\( \text{e}7 \)! 8.0–0

Worse is 8.\( \text{c}3 \)? \( \text{d}4 \)! (This move is even stronger than 8...a6 9.\( x \text{c}6 \) \( \text{bxc}6 \) 10.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 11.\( x \text{f}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \))

Suddenly the bishop on b5 is in trouble. Play may continue 9.\( \text{a}4 \) (White loses a pawn after 9.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{exd}4 \) 9...\( \text{c}6 \) 10.\(\text{d}3 \) \( \text{b}5 \) 11.\( \text{b}3 \) \( a5 \) and the threat of ...\( \text{a}5-a4 \) means that White will be forced into the horrible 12.\( \text{a}3 \).

8...\( \text{a}6 \)?

Also playable is 8...\( \text{d}4 \) 9.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) when Black had no problems in Fox – Freiberger, Werther 2007.
White has no choice but to exchange with:

9.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbf{xc6}}}}

At this point Black can choose between

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{\texttt{dxc6 10.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{c3}}}}}}}}} with active piece play,
  \item \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{bxc6 10.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{g5}}}}}}}}} with a strong centre.
\end{itemize}

In both cases the two bishops provide him with excellent chances.

B) 6.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{c3}}}

This is not the most accurate continuation for reasons that will soon become apparent.

6...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{b4!}}}

Black immediately capitalizes on his opponent's small mistake. He now threatens to cripple the enemy pawn structure.

7.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{d3}}; 8.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xc3?!}}}}

This is the principled continuation, but ultimately it appears to be flawed. Relatively best would have been 8.bxc3 0–0 9.0–0 d6, although Black is at least equal here as well.

8...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xe4}}}; 9.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{e3}}}

No better is 9.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{d3}}}; 10.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xe5}}}; 10...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{d6}}}

9...d5 10.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xe5}}}; 0–0!

Black refuses to waste time defending c6, and instead launches a potent counterattack.

11.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xc6}}}; bxc6 12.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{d3}}}

White decides to jettison a pawn and hopes to salvage the opposite bishop position a pawn down. It would certainly take a brave soul to grab the pawn with 12.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xc6}}}; a6!. Black has a dangerous initiative, as demonstrated by the following variations:

a) 13.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xa8}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xf2}}}; 14.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{b7}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xb7}}}; 15.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xa7}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{f8!}}}

16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{e3}}} (16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xb7}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{d2!}}}; wins after 17.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{a7}}}; d4, or 17.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xa8}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xa8}}}; 18.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xd2}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{a4!}}}) 16...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{b4+}}};

17.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{d1}}} (17.c3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xb2}}}; 18.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xf2}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xa1+}}}; 19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xe2}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{d2+}}}; 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{f3}}}; d4!+–) 17...d4; 18.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xd4}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{d2+}}};

19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xd2}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xd2}}}; 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xd2}}}; \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xb2}}} White is losing, as his pieces will not be able to get coordinated.
b) 13.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d4}}}! is probably the best chance, although the second player remains on top after 13...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf2}}}} 14.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe3}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf1}}}} 15.0-0-0 \textit{g8} when White does not have enough compensation for the exchange.

12...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf2}}}} 13.0-0 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd3}}}} 14.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf8}}}}\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{+}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf8}}}}
15.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{cxd3}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a6}}}}

Black enjoys a lead in development in addition to the extra pawn, and in the game Rausis – Nataf, Montpellier 2008, White was unable to recover. Play continued:

16.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d2}}}}

16.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e6}}}}\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{+}}}} looks like a better chance to save the game, e.g. 16...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h8}}}} 17.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc6}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd3}}}} 18.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f4}}}}, or 16...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf7}}}} 17.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf7}}}}\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{+}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf7}}}} 18.d4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e8}}}} 19.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d2}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e2}}}} 20.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f1}}}}\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{+}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g6}}}} 21.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f2}}}} when White should hold.

16...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f5}}}} 17.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e1}}}}\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{+}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd3}}}} 18.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e6}}}}\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{+}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe6}}}} 19.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe6}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf8}}}} 20.g3 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf1}}}}\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{+}}}} 21.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g2}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b1}}}}
22.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c3}}}} \textit{\texttt{c5}} 23.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e1}}}} \textit{\texttt{d4}}
0–1

C) 6.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g5}}}}?!

Under normal circumstances I would not have viewed this move as one that warranted special consideration. However, that all changed when Ivanchuk used it against Radjabov at Linares earlier this year. It looks like White's main idea is to establish a knight on d5 as soon as possible. We have already seen that the immediate 6.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c3}}}} is harmless, so instead he waits for Black to commit his dark-squared bishop to a different square before developing the knight.

The following analysis will be based upon the game Ivanchuk – Radjabov, Linares 2009.

6...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c5}}}}

This was the Azeri GM's choice, but it may not necessarily be best.

6...d6 7.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c3}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e7}}}} (or the immediate 6...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e7}}}}) is playable but passive.

The move I like the most is 6...\textit{\texttt{b4}}\textit{\texttt{+}}! 7.c3 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c5}}}}

8.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d3}}}}

After 8.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf6}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf6}}}} 9.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}}}} \textit{\texttt{d6}}! Black is temporarily disorganized, but will soon force the enemy pieces back.

In case of 8.0–0 Black can consider 8...h6!? (Also fine is 8...d6 9.b4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b6}}}} 10.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c4}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e7}}}} 11.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{bd2}}}} a5 12.a3 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e6}}}} 13.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b3}}}} a4 14.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a2}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d8}}}} White can no longer do anything to prevent Black from castling.) 9.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf6}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf6}}}}
10.\text{d}d5 \text{ \textit{d}} \text{d}6! Black will soon organize his position, for example: 11.\textit{b}d2 a6 12.\textit{d}d3 \textit{e}e7 with decent chances.

8...\text{d}d6 9.a4 a6 10.\textit{c}c4 \textit{w}e7

10...h6! looks more accurate to me, e.g. 11.\textit{x}xf6 \textit{x}xf6, or 11.\textit{h}h4 g5 12.\textit{g}g3 \textit{h}h5, with an excellent position in both cases.

11.\textit{b}bd2

11.b4 \textit{b}b6 12.\textit{b}bd2 a5 is fine for Black.

11...\textit{d}d8 12.0-0 \textit{e}e6

8.\textit{x}xf6

8.\textit{d}d5?! allows the typical trick: 8...\textit{x}xf2\textdagger 9.\textit{xf}f2 \textit{xe}4\textdagger 10.\textit{g}g1 \textit{e}xg5 11.\textit{x}g5 \textit{w}xg5. White is two pawns behind, although he may be able to salvage half a point with 12.h4! (But not 12.\textit{xc}7\textdagger! \textit{d}7 13.\textit{xa}8?? \textit{e}3\textdagger 14.\textit{f}f1 \textit{xf}8\textdagger\textdash) 12...\textit{h}h6 (12...\textit{d}d8?! 13.\textit{h}h5\textdagger g6 14.\textit{h}h6 is risky for Black) 13.\textit{xc}7\textdagger \textit{d}8 14.\textit{xa}8 \textit{e}3\textdagger 15.\textit{h}h2 \textit{f}4\textdagger 16.\textit{g}g1 \textit{e}3\textdagger with a perpetual.

8...\textit{x}xf6 9.\textit{d}d5 \textit{w}d8 10.b4?!

White takes the opportunity to harass the enemy bishop.

10...a6 11.0-0

There was an important alternative in 11.a4. If nothing else, this would certainly be consistent with White's last. Black is practically forced to respond with 11...a6:

7.\textit{c}c3 \textit{d}6

Now White must decide whether it is worth exchanging his well-placed knight in order to damage the enemy pawn structure.

a) 12.\textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 13.\textit{c}c4 \textit{g}g4

In Garbett – Klinger, Novi Sad 1990, Black played 13...\textit{xb}4 with complications. The text is safer.

14.h3 \textit{h}5 15.c3

The impulsive 15.g4?! \textit{g}6 certainly does not help White.

15...\textit{w}f6 16.\textit{e}2 0-0
The position is balanced, and can be compared with that reached in the main game. Black’s pieces are active enough to compensate his slight queenside weaknesses.

b) 12.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{a7} \)

Another move order is 12...\( \text{g4} \) 13.\( h3 \) (13.\( c3 \) \( \text{d8} \) is similar) 13...\( \text{h5} \) 14.\( c3 \) \( \text{f8} \) 15.\( e2 \) \( \text{a7} \) 16.0–0 \( \text{e7} \).

13.0–0

After 13.\( h3 \) it looks interesting for Black to try 13...\( \text{e6} \)?, intending to meet 14.\( \text{xc7} \)\( \text{xc7} \) 15.\( \text{xe6} \) with 15...\( \text{d4} \) 16.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{c3} \)\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{xd4} \).

13...\( \text{g4} \) 14.\( \text{c3} \)

White can insert the moves 14.\( h3 \) \( \text{h5} \) before playing 15.\( c3 \), although this does not alter the fundamental character of the position.

14...\( \text{f8} \)?

In Bannik – Romanovsky, Kharkov 1956 Black faltered with 14...\( \text{d7} \)?!. This could have led to an unpleasant position after 15.\( h3 \! \! \! \text{!} \) (in the game the weak 15.\( b5 \)? spoiled White’s advantage) 15...\( \text{h5} \) 16.\( \text{d3} \) It is hard to suggest a good move for Black here.

15.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{e7} \)

White’s active bishop has been driven back, and his knight is about to be exchanged. The black position is extremely solid, and the king position does not appear to harm his chances.

11...\( \text{g4} \)
D) 6.0–0!

White exploits the fact that the greedy 6...\texttt{Qxe4}? allows 7.\texttt{Wxe2}! (this is even stronger than 7.\texttt{He1}) 7...\texttt{Qf6} 8.\texttt{Qxc6 dxc6} 9.\texttt{Qxe5} \texttt{Qe7} (9...\texttt{Qe7}? 10.\texttt{Qxd1}) 10.\texttt{Qe1} when Black faces severe difficulties.

6...\texttt{c5}

This is Black’s most active and principled continuation, although the more conservative 6...d6 is also playable.

White must now choose between simple development with \texttt{D1) 7.Dc3}, grabbing a pawn with \texttt{D2) 7.Qxc6}, and the more subtle queen manoeuvre \texttt{D3) 7.Wd3} (or 7.\texttt{Qe2}) intending \texttt{Wc4}.

\texttt{D1) 7.Qc3 d6}

White has tried several different moves here, but the only ones that deserve our specific attention are \texttt{D11) 8.Qg5} and \texttt{D12) 8.Qe3}.

\texttt{D11) 8.Qg5 0–0 9.Qd5}  
9.\texttt{Qc4\#} \texttt{Qh8} 10.\texttt{Qd5} transposes.

\texttt{9...Qh8 10.Qc4}  
10.\texttt{Qh4 Qe6} 11.\texttt{Qc4} gives Black no problems after 11...\texttt{Qxd5} (11...\texttt{Qe7} is also fine) 12.\texttt{Qxd5 Qe7}, Markovic – Matulovic, Cacak (rapid) 1998.

10.c3 should be met by 10...\texttt{Qe7} 11.\texttt{Qxf6 gxf6} 12.\texttt{Qh6 Qg8}

Black has at least equal chances thanks to his central majority and open g-file. Galicki – Goessling, Dortmund 2004, continued 13.\texttt{Qc4 Qg4} with a good position. It would also have been interesting to consider 13...d5?! 14.\texttt{exd5 Qf5} with promising compensation.

10...\texttt{Qg4}  
10...\texttt{Qe6} seems riskier in view of 11.\texttt{Qxf6 gxf6} 12.\texttt{Qxe6 fxg5} 13.c3. Black has some weaknesses on the light squares.

\texttt{11.Qxf6}  
11.c3 is well met by 11...\texttt{Qxf6}! 12.\texttt{Qxf6} (or 12.\texttt{Qxf6 Qd7}) 12...\texttt{Qxd5}! 13.\texttt{Qxd8 Qf3} 14.\texttt{gxh3 Qd6} 15.\texttt{b3 Qd8} 16.\texttt{b4 Qe6} 17.\texttt{bxc5 Qxc5}.

10...\texttt{Qg4}  
10...\texttt{Qe6} seems riskier in view of 11.\texttt{Qxf6 gxf6} 12.\texttt{Qxe6 fxg5} 13.c3. Black has some weaknesses on the light squares.

\texttt{11.Qxf6}  
11.c3 is well met by 11...\texttt{Qxf6}! 12.\texttt{Qxf6} (or 12.\texttt{Qxf6 Qd7}) 12...\texttt{Qxd5}! 13.\texttt{Qxd8 Qf3} 14.\texttt{gxh3 Qd6} 15.\texttt{b3 Qd8} 16.\texttt{b4 Qe6} 17.\texttt{bxc5 Qxc5}.

With a superb position for the exchange.
Black has an excellent position in return for a very small material investment. He enjoys a preponderance of pawns in the centre, as well as a strong pair of bishops and an open g-file. Meanwhile it is not at all easy for White to find a useful role for his rooks. Finally, his split queenside pawns are likely to become weak in the endgame.

**D12) 8...\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{h}6\)**

8...\(\text{x}e3\) 9.\(\text{x}e3\) \(0-0\) is also playable, but it is safer for Black to avoid opening the f-file. An exchange on b6 would be more desirable.

9.\(\text{d}5\)

9...\(\text{h}5\) 0–0 10.\(\text{d}5\) reaches the main line. It would be too risky for Black to try 9...\(\text{h}6\)!! 10.\(\text{x}f6\) \( \text{xf6} \) 11.\(\text{d}5\) \( \text{f}7\) 12.\(\text{a}4\) 0–0 13.\(\text{a}5\) \( \text{c}5\) 14.\(\text{a}6\)+, as occurred in Benassi – Pitt, e-mail 1996.

In Amann – Karpatchev, Oberwart 1997, White played to win a pawn with 9.\(\text{d}3\) 0–0 10.\(\text{x}b6\) \( \text{axb6} \) 11.\(\text{x}c6\) (a more accurate move order would have been 11.\(\text{e}4\)+ \( \text{h}8\) 12.\(\text{x}c6\) \( \text{bxc6} \) 13.\(\text{x}c6\)) 11...\(\text{bxc6}\) 12.\(\text{c}4\)+ \( \text{h}8\) (thanks to White’s inaccurate move order Black could have played 12...\(\text{d}5\)!) 13.\(\text{x}c6\) \( \text{d}7\) (13...\(\text{e}5\)!!) 14.\(\text{c}4\) \( \text{h}5\) Black obtained good compensation.
This is a very interesting moment. White steers the position into something almost identical to variation D11), except for the position of the black bishop which is now on b6 instead of c5. There are three reasons why this ‘tempo loss’ may be of benefit to him:

1) White now has the option of \( \text{cxb6} \). This could be especially important should Black wish to play \( ... \text{a6} \), which could now involve a structural concession after \( \text{cxb6} \ \text{cxb6} \). (At the same time, the Ivanchuk – Radjabov game from line C) has already shown us that this need not be disastrous for Black.)

2) White may threaten to trap the bishop with \( \text{a4-a5} \), perhaps hoping to provoke a structural concession as described above. (This plan would not work against a bishop on c5, as Black could simply prepare a retreat with \( ... \text{a6} \) or \( ... \text{a5} \).)

3) In certain positions Black may wish to evict the knight from d5 with \( ... \text{c6} \). With the bishop on b6 this may be less desirable due to the possibility of \( \text{cxb6} \) as well as the potential weakness of the d6-pawn.

The other principled continuation is:

\[
10. \text{\textit{\texttt{g5}}!} 11. \text{\textit{\texttt{h8}}} 12. \text{\textit{\texttt{c4}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{g4}}} 12. \text{\textit{\texttt{d2}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{d7}}}
\]

I prefer this to \( 12. \text{\textit{\texttt{xd5}}} 13. \text{\textit{\texttt{xd5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{h5}}} \) (13...\textit{xe3}?? 14.\textit{g8}+ \textit{xg8} 15.\textit{f7}#)

\[14. \text{\textit{\texttt{e6}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{f7}}} 15. \text{\textit{\texttt{ed8}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xd5}}} 16. \text{\textit{\texttt{exd5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xd8}}} \]

when White should be slightly better.

\[13. \text{\textit{\texttt{xb6}}} \]

\[13. \text{\textit{\texttt{f3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{h5}}} \]

led to a balanced position in Busemann – Neumark, Germany 1988.

It is a similar story after \( 13. \text{\textit{\texttt{xb6}}} \ \text{\textit{\texttt{axb6}}} 14. \text{\textit{\texttt{f3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{h5}}} \)

\[13. \text{\textit{\texttt{axb6}}} 14. \text{\textit{\texttt{f4}}} \]

White must maintain his momentum.

\[14. \text{\textit{\texttt{exf4}}} 15. \text{\textit{\texttt{xf4}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{e5}}} 16. \text{\textit{\texttt{b3}}} \]

We have been following the game Martorelli – Fregonese, Verona 2004. At this point the most accurate continuation would have been:

\[16. \text{\textit{\texttt{h5}}}! \]

The chances are balanced, as illustrated by the following sample variation.

\[17. \text{\textit{\texttt{ff1}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{h6}}} 18. \text{\textit{\texttt{h3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{hxg5}}} \]

Also leading to a draw is \( 18. \text{\textit{\texttt{g3}}}?! 19. \text{\textit{\texttt{e1}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{hxg5}}} 20. \text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xd8}}} 21. \text{\textit{\texttt{xd8}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{axd8}}} 22. \text{\textit{\texttt{hxg4}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xd4}}} 23. \text{\textit{\texttt{xc7}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xf1}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{t}}} 24. \text{\textit{\texttt{xf1}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{e2}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{t}}} \]

\[19. \text{\textit{\texttt{hxg4}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{g3}}} 20. \text{\textit{\texttt{hxg5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{e2}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{t}}} \]

The game will end in perpetual check.
White plays to harass the bishop on b6. This is one of the ways in which he can attempt to justify the loss of tempo associated with the \( e3-g5 \) manoeuvre.

Another approach is:

11.\( \text{exf6} \) \( \text{gxf6} \) 12.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{d4} \)

12...\( \text{g8} \) is also okay. An example is 13.c3 \( \text{g4} \) 14.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{f8} \) 15.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{g5} \) 16.\( \text{xb6} \) axb6 17.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{h5} \) 18.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{h6} \) 19.\( \text{h1} \) exf4 20.\( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{e5} \) with equality, Sznapik – Inkiov, Stara Zagora 1990.

The untested 12...\( \text{e7} \)!, challenging the knight on d5, also deserves serious consideration.

13.\( \text{d3} \)

13.\( \text{c4} \) c6 14.\( \text{e3} \) \( f5 \) is comfortable for Black, whose central majority may start to come into its own.

13...c6 14.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{g8} \) 15.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{f5} \) 16.\( \text{wh5} \)??

After the superior 16.\( \text{dxf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 17.\( \text{exf5} \) \( \text{g5} \) 18.\( \text{f3} \) d5 Black has a good position, but White should not be in any real danger.

We have been following the game Tarumyan – Teemae, Russia 1991. Unfortunately Black now missed 16...\( \text{wh4} \)! when White can resign.

11...\( \text{d7} \)

11...\( \text{g4} \) does not enable Black to solve his problems after 12.\( \text{e2} \). The game Khalifman – Inkiov, Moscow 1989, continued 12...\( \text{xf3} \)

However, 11...\( \text{c5} \)?? is definitely worth considering. For example, 12.c3 can be met by 12...\( a5 \) when I see no problems for Black.

12.\( \text{a5} \)

The game Stjazhkina – Semenova, St Petersburg 2000, resulted in a draw after 12.\( \text{exf6} \) \( \text{gxf6} \) 13.\( \text{wh6} \) \( \text{g8} \) 14.\( \text{a5} \) \( \text{c5} \) 15.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{g6} \) (15...\( \text{d5} \)?? is interesting, e.g. 16.\( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{f5} \), or 16.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 17.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 18.\( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{g4} \), with reasonable compensation in both cases) 16.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xe3} \) 17.\( \text{exe3} \) \( \text{f8} \) 18.\( \text{f2} \) \( \text{h6} \) 19.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 20.\( \text{af1} \) \( \frac{1}{2} \)–\( \frac{1}{2} \).

12...\( \text{d5} \) 13.\( \text{c5} \)

We have been following the game Logothetis – Souleidis, Aghia Pelagia 2004. The chances are roughly balanced, and the game eventually resulted in a draw.

D2) 7.\( \text{xc6} \)

In this variation White cedes the bishop pair in order to win a pawn.

7...\( \text{bxc6} \) 8.\( \text{xe5} \) 0–0
For the pawn Black enjoys a lead in development, a pair of bishops and active prospects for his pieces. The combined influence of these three factors should amount to fair compensation. We examine two natural moves: D21) 9.\(\text{c}3\) and the more popular D22) 9.\(\text{g}5\).

9.\(\text{d}3\) has been played several times, but after the simple 9...\(\text{a}e4\) 10.\(\text{d}c5\) (10.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{a}d2\) 11.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{b}d6\) also gives Black an easy game) 10...\(\text{c}x\text{c}5\) 11.\(\text{e}e3\) \(\text{a}e6\) Black is absolutely fine, one attractive plan being ...\(\text{d}6\) and ...\(\text{c}5\) to restrict the enemy bishop.

D21) 9.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{d}6!\)

This secondary offer is an important finesse. Now White must make a difficult decision.

10.\(\text{d}3\)

White can also consider the greedier option of:

10.\(\text{c}x\text{c}6\)

This is playable, although Black’s initiative is quite potent after:

10...\(\text{a}e8\)

White’s most natural response is:

11.\(\text{d}d4\)

11.\(\text{a}a5\), Schumann – Kase, corr. 1982, should be met by 11...\(\text{g}4!\) with good attacking chances.

After 11.\(\text{d}5\), Tesinszky – Schenkerik, Hungary 2000, Black should continue 11...\(\text{x}d5\) 12.\(\text{d}x\text{d}5\) \(\text{a}6\).

11.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{a}6\) 12.\(\text{b}x\text{c}5\) \(\text{a}6\) 13.\(\text{e}e1\) \(\text{x}c5\) with decent compensation.

11...\(\text{x}e4\) 12.\(\text{e}3\)

12.\(\text{x}e4\) \(\text{x}e4\) 13.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{e}8\) 14.\(\text{f}3\) was played in Mekhitarian – Nezad, Barcelona 2008, and here I suggest 14...\(\text{d}5\).

12...\(\text{c}x\text{c}3\) 13.\(\text{x}c3\) \(\text{g}6?N\)

13...\(\text{b}7\) 14.\(\text{e}e1?\) \(\text{g}6\) turned out well for Black in Gheng – Held, Schwaebisch Gmuend 1999, but White could have improved with 14.\(\text{g}4\).

White has retained his extra pawn, but he will have a hard time obtaining any meaningful winning chances in view of his damaged structure and the opponent’s powerful bishops.

14.\(\text{c}6\)

14.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{x}d3\) 15.\(\text{x}d3\) should not be too dangerous. One option is 15...\(\text{d}7\) when Black’s bishop pair provides ongoing compensation. He can also consider swapping down to an opposite bishop endgame with 15...\(\text{x}d4\) 16.\(\text{x}d4\) (16.\(\text{x}d4\) \(\text{e}e6\)) 16...\(\text{f}5\) when a draw is the most likely outcome.

14...\(\text{e}8\) 15.\(\text{c}x\text{c}5\)

15.\(\text{d}5?\) \(\text{e}6\) 16.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{f}5!\) enables Black to equalise after 17.\(\text{e}7?\) \(\text{h}8\) 18.\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{x}e3\) 19.\(\text{x}e3\) \(\text{x}c2\), or 17.\(\text{x}e8\) \(\text{f}xe8\) 18.\(\text{x}c5\) \(\text{d}x\text{c}5\).
15...\texttt{ex}c6 16.\texttt{d}d4 \texttt{dx}f5 17.\texttt{d}d2 h6

We have reached a position in which the weakness of the c2-pawn makes it hard for White to claim any real advantage.

10...\texttt{d}d4 11.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{b}b6

At this point White must decide how best to deploy his pieces.

12.\texttt{g}g5

After 12.\texttt{g}g3 I propose 12...\texttt{a}a6?!N. Black's handling of the position resembles that seen in the Carlsen – Radjabov game, referred to in the note to Black's 14th. Possible continuations include 13.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{e}e8 14.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{g}g6 15.\texttt{h}h1 \texttt{ae}8, and 13.\texttt{g}g5 h6 14.\texttt{f}f4 (14.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{d}d7) 14...\texttt{d}d7 15.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{ae}8 16.\texttt{ae}1 c5, with promising compensation in both cases.

12...\texttt{e}e8 13.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{xf}6 14.\texttt{g}g3 \texttt{f}f7?!

This move was introduced by Magnus Carlsen. With this modest approach Black demonstrates great confidence in the inherent soundness of his position. He is content to develop his pieces and improve his position patiently, rather than try to 'prove' compensation by regaining the pawn or attempting a direct attack.

Curiously enough, Carlsen had already gained some experience of this position from the opposite side of the board. Carlsen – Radjabov, Monte Carlo 2007, continued: 14...\texttt{a}a6 15.\texttt{h}h1 \texttt{xd}3 16.cxd3 \texttt{xf}2 17.\texttt{xf}2 \texttt{xf}2 18.\texttt{f}f5

At this point the most straightforward response would have been 18...g6 19.\texttt{h}h6† (19.\texttt{b}b3† d5=) 19...\texttt{g}7 20.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{d}d4 21.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{e}e6 22.\texttt{f}f7† \texttt{h}h8 when White has no trace of an advantage.

Radjabov instead chose 18...\texttt{b}b6 19.\texttt{g}g4 (19.\texttt{b}b3† \texttt{h}h8 20.\texttt{c}c3 \texttt{d}d7 21.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{f}f8=) 19...\texttt{f}f8 20.\texttt{f}f1 g6 when Black was okay and went on to hold the draw.

The fact that the young Norwegian prodigy subsequently took up the opposite side of this variation can certainly be seen as an encouraging sign for Black! We now follow the game Anand – Carlsen, Bilbao 2008.
Chapter 1 - Schliemann: 4.d3

15.b3 \( \triangleleft e6 \) 16.\( \triangleleft d2 \) \( \triangleleft f8 \) 17.\( \triangleleft a e1 \) \( \triangleleft h6 \)

18.\( \triangleleft c3 \)

White must be careful – a casual move such as 18.c4?! would allow 18...\( \triangleleft f6 \) with dangerous attacking possibilities based on ...\( \triangleleft h4 \).

18...\( \triangleleft f6 \)? 19.\( \triangleleft e2 \)!!

Anand was obviously not satisfied with a repetition of moves, but the text could have led to problems for him.

The more critical 19.\( \triangleleft x c6 \) should probably be met by 19...h5?! (but not 19...\( \triangleleft x f2 \)? 20.\( \triangleleft x f2 \) \( \triangleleft x f2 \) 21.\( \triangleleft f5 \) \( \triangleleft x f1 \)† 22.\( \triangleleft x f1 \)†) with the possible continuation 20.\( \triangleleft f5 \) \( \triangleleft d7 \) 21.\( \triangleleft c3 \) \( \triangleleft x f5 \) 22.\( \triangleleft x f5 \) \( \triangleleft x f5 \) Black has reasonable compensation based on the active pieces and pressure against f2.

19...\( \triangleleft g4 \)! 20.\( \triangleleft d2 \)!

It would have been better to admit the mistake with: 20.\( \triangleleft e e1 \) \( \triangleleft x f2 \) (20...h5??!) 21.\( \triangleleft x f2 \) \( \triangleleft x f2 \)† 22.\( \triangleleft h1 \) \( \triangleleft x e1 \) 23.\( \triangleleft x e1 \) \( \triangleleft e7 \) =

20...\( \triangleleft e3 \)!

Winning an exchange.

21.h3 \( \triangleleft x d2 \) 22.\( \triangleleft x d2 \) \( \triangleleft c8 \)

The remainder of the game is not so important for our study of the opening. White is slightly behind on material, but his position is very solid and Anand went on to hold the draw.

D22) 9.\( \triangleleft g5 \)

This is White's most common continuation, although the position retains certain similarities with the previous variation.

9...\( \triangleleft e8 \)!

With this excellent multi-purpose move Black unpins the knight while targeting e4 and facilitating a transfer of the queen to g6 or h5.

10.\( \triangleleft x f6 \)

White is forced to 'sacrifice' his second bishop in order not to forfeit his material advantage. For instance, 10.\( \triangleleft d3 \)?? \( \triangleleft x e4 \) 11.\( \triangleleft e1 \)?? \( \triangleleft x f2 \) 12.\( \triangleleft x e8 \) \( \triangleleft x d1 \)† 13.\( \triangleleft x c5 \) \( \triangleleft x e8 \) is winning for Black.

10...\( \triangleleft x f6 \) 11.\( \triangleleft d3 \) \( \triangleleft d4 \)??

This is an important finesse. Black provokes the advance of the enemy c-pawn in order to destabilise the position of the knight on d3.

12.c3

Less challenging is 12.\( \triangleleft d2 \) \( \triangleleft a6 \) 13.\( \triangleleft b1 \) (13.c4, Cigan – Srebrnic, Slovenia 1995, should have been met by 13...\( c5 \)) 13...d6 when the
two bishops provide ongoing compensation. The encounter Anand – Radjabov, Morelia/Linares 2008, proceeded with: 14.c4 c5 15.b4 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}f7}} \)

With this instructive move Black shows that he has no fear of the doubled pawns that would result from an exchange on c5.

The game continued 16.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{h1}}}}} \) (16.bxc5 dxc5 would leave Black extremely active while the knights lack stability) 16.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e8}}} \) 17.f4 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{x4}}} \) 18.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xc4}}} \) 19.bxc5 dxc5 20.e5 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{b6}}} \) 21.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{c1}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{d5}}} \) 22.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{f3}}} \) c6 ½–½.

\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{b6}}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{d2}}} \) d5!

Compared with the previous variation, D21), the present position requires a more confrontational approach.

Radjabov has tried the more patient 13...d6, but after 14.c4 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{g6}}} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{h1}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{g4}}}}} \) 16.f3 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e6}}} \) 17.f4 he was struggling for compensation and went on to lose in Macieja – Radjabov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

Black is also not helped by 13...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a6}}} \) 14.c4, as the critical 14...d5 15.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a4}}} \) dxe4? 16.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xa6}}} \) exd3 17.c5 saw him lose a piece in Yasakov – Roldan, e-mail 2000.

14.exd5

14.e5 is unpromising for White. His kingside pawns are easily blockaded while the enemy bishops enjoy tremendous potential.

The game Hernandez – Gomez, Holguin 2001, continued 14...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{f8}}} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e2}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{f5}}} \) with good compensation, although the more flexible 15...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{g6}}} \) would have been even stronger as White must now worry about bishop excursions on g4 and h3, not to mention \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{ae8}}} \) or a doubling of rooks on the f-file.

14.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e2}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a6}}} \) was also comfortable for Black in Grott – Leisebein, e-mail 2000.

14...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{h3}}}! \)

This new move could certainly come as an unpleasant surprise to an unsuspecting opponent! According to my analysis the position is objectively equal, although from a psychological perspective it is safe to say that most of us would prefer to play Black.

The alternative 14...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{cxd5}}} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e1}}} \) gives White some chances for an advantage, although the position remains quite complicated, Marez – Raleus, e-mail 2002.

15.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e1}}} \)

This is probably White's best, as both the knight and the g-pawn were vulnerable.

The tactical justification for Black's last can be seen after 15.gxh3 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{g6}}} \) 16.\( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{h1}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xd3}}} \).
White would be ill advised to venture 15.\texttt{dxc6? \texttt{g6}} 16.\texttt{\texttt{c2 \texttt{g6}} 17.\texttt{\texttt{xc2 \texttt{g6}} 18.\texttt{\texttt{e1 \texttt{xcxd5}}, intending ... \texttt{e8}. Black has excellent compensation and is probably a little better due to his exceptional piece activity.}

15...\texttt{g6} 16.\texttt{h1}

16.\texttt{c2 \texttt{xc2} transposes to the final line of the previous note.}

16...\texttt{af8!}

White's pieces remain tangled in spite of his three (!) pawn advantage. A plausible continuation would be: 21.\texttt{ef3 \texttt{fd6}} 22.\texttt{d4?? (otherwise White would have to worry about ... \texttt{g4} or ... \texttt{c2}) 22...\texttt{xd4}} 23.\texttt{\texttt{c4 \texttt{c5}} 24.\texttt{\texttt{xd6 \texttt{xd6}}. Black stands better in spite of his nominal material disadvantage. His bishops are tremendously powerful and the c6-pawn is likely to fall in the near future. Meanwhile White is a long way from creating a passed pawn or achieving any significant activity for his rooks.}

18...\texttt{h5}

Also interesting is 18...\texttt{d8?? 19.d6 \texttt{h5} with compensation.}

19.f4

Capturing a pawn with 19.\texttt{dxc6} allows Black a minimum of a draw with 19...\texttt{\texttt{h2+t} 20.\texttt{xh2 \texttt{h6+} 21.\texttt{g3 \texttt{g6+}, as 22.\texttt{f4?? \texttt{d3+} 23.\texttt{e5 \texttt{f5} mate, would be inadvisable to say the least.}}}

19...\texttt{g4} 20.\texttt{f3 \texttt{xf4} 21.\texttt{xb6 axb6}

Black retains sufficient compensation, e.g. 22.\texttt{dxc6 \texttt{c5} when the c6-pawn will fall. Meanwhile Black can compromise the enemy king's protection by exchanging on f3 at any moment of his choosing.
D3) 7.\textit{\textit{d}3}

This is widely accepted as the main line. White's main idea is to place his queen on c4. From here it prevents Black from castling, while also menacing his minor pieces on c5 and c6. Before going any further we should note that 7...\textit{0-0??} is a blunder in view of the fork on c4.

7.\textit{\textit{e}2} is an equally popular move order, which usually results in a transposition after 7...\textit{d}6 8.\textit{\textit{c}4}. However, with the queen on e2 Black may be able to obtain a slightly improved version of the 7...\textit{\textit{d}4?!} variation examined later.

In a slight break from the usual format, I will now provide coverage of two different alternatives. \textbf{D31) 7...\textit{d}6 8.\textit{\textit{e}4}!}

As mentioned previously, this was the idea behind White's 7th. With this concrete approach he prevents castling while also threatening \textit{\textit{\textit{c}xe5}}, hence Black's next.

8...\textit{\textit{\textit{e}7}}

8...\textit{\textit{\textit{d}7}} is generally considered inferior in view of 9.\textit{\textit{\textit{c}c3} \textit{\textit{b}6} 10.\textit{\textit{g}5 \textit{\textit{e}7} 11.\textit{\textit{d}d5 \textit{\textit{c}c5} 12.\textit{\textit{c}x\textit{d}5} with a strong initiative.}

At this point White can choose between the extremely direct \textbf{D311) 9.\textit{\textit{b}4}?!} and the more popular developing move \textbf{D312) 9.\textit{\textit{c}c3}}.

\textbf{D311) 9.\textit{\textit{b}4}?! \textit{\textit{e}6}!}

Without this intermediate move Black would suffer a fatal loss of material.

10.\textit{\textit{x}c6\textit{\textit{\textit{c}c6} 11.\textit{\textit{w}a6 \textit{\textit{b}6}}}

Obviously Black must avoid 11...\textit{\textit{x}b4? 12.\textit{\textit{w}b7}, which occurred in Fercec – Zelic, Rabac 2003.

12.\textit{\textit{a}4}

This is the point of White's play – he hopes to embarrass the enemy bishop on b6.

12...\textit{0-0!}

This excellent move was introduced by Ganguly in 2008. Previous games had seen 12...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{c}xe4} 13.a5 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}f2\textit{\textit{\textit{xf2} 14.\textit{\textit{xf2} \textit{\textit{c}x\textit{c6}\textit{\textit{f7} 16.\textit{\textit{c}xf2}}}}}}}}}} when White has some chances to be better.
13.a5
This must be critical, and it should come as no surprise that the alternatives promise White nothing:

The timid 13...bd2 allows Black to choose between 13...d4, 13...c8 and 13...d5+, with a good position in each case.

13.g5 is also not dangerous in view of 13...f7 14.bd2 c8 (This is the most straightforward move although 14...h5!? is also interesting, e.g. 15.a5 d4 16.xd4 exd4 17.xc6 [17.a3?!] 17...h6 18.h4 ab8.) 15.d3 a5 Black’s two bishops and central majority make his position easier to play.

13...d4 14.c3 g4!

Without this move Black would simply be losing a piece for very little. Now he obtains quite a potent attack.

15.cxd4 14.c3 g4!

White’s situation looks dire, but he can in fact force a perpetual with:

25.e8† d7
25...xe8?? 26.g8† wins, while Black also has nothing to gain from 25...xe8 26.g5 g6 27.e3.

26.d8† e7

An important alternative is:

15.g5 e8!
15...f7 16.cxd4 c4 17.xc6 xf1 18.bd2 is good for White.
Now the queen threatens to join in the fun from h5 or g6.

16.cxd4

Worse is: 16.h4?! e4 17.cxd4 (17.gxf3? is refuted by 17...dxe4! e.g. 18.xh2 e5 19.g3 e4 20.d2 g3 with mate to follow) 17...g4 16.e2 is well met by 16...h5.

16...xf3

Black has a dangerous attack although my analysis indicates that White can hold the balance if he defends precisely. The main line runs:

17.gxf3

17.h3 dxf2 18.exf2 dxf2 19.xf2 g6++

17...xh2 18.d2

18.a3 h5 19.xc6 e4 20.d2 xh1 21.xf1 xg5 still leaves White under some pressure.

18...h5 19.f4

White can hardly benefit from 19.xc6 e4, although he can probably still draw.

19...e4?!

Of course Black can take a draw with 19...g4! 20.xh2 h3+, but he may as well continue the attack while keeping the perpetual in reserve.

20.dxe5

White is not helped by 20.xc1? exf4.

20...dxe5!

Playing for a win. Once again 20...g4+ is a draw.

21.xc1 exf4 22.xc6 g4+ 23.xh2 f3

24.xe6+ xe6 25.g1

We are left with a position featuring an unusual material balance that is hard to assess.

15...d3!

From here the most likely verdict seems to be equality. Indeed, the game Hussain – Ganguly, Nagpur 2008, soon resulted in a perpetual after:

16.gxf3

Had White been determined to maintain the fight he might have considered 16.h3? Play then continues: 16...xh2! 17.hxg4 (White loses after 17.xf2? xh2 18.xf2 g4+ 19.g1 xe4) 17...xf1+ 18.xf1 exd4.
The resulting position is rather unclear. White’s extra piece is approximately balanced by his missing pawns, lack of development and ragged structure.

16...\(\text{Wh}4\) 17.h3!

The immediate 17.fxg4?? would of course see White get mated after 17...\(\text{Wh}xg4\)† 18.\(\text{Kh}1\) \(\text{Wh}f3\)† 19.\(\text{Gf}1\) \(\text{Wh}3\).

17...\(\text{Wh}xh3\) 18.fxg4 \(\text{Wh}xg4\)† 19.\(\text{Kh}2\) \(\text{Wh}h3\)†

19...\(\text{Kh}8\) 20.\(\text{Gf}3\) forces Black to take the draw with 20...\(\text{Gf}3\) anyway.

20.\(\text{Gf}1\) \(\text{Wh}g4\)†

\(1/2-1/2\)

Based on the evidence of this game, it seems that after 9.b4?! the theoretical ball is presently in White’s court.

D312) 9.\(\text{Cd}3\)

This is White’s most popular continuation, and probably his best try for a theoretical plus. The knight is headed for d5 at the earliest opportunity.

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

Black unpins his knight in preparation for the following sequence.

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

If White tries to prepare this with 10.\(\text{Gg}5\)?! there follows 10...a6! 11.\(\text{Cc}6\) (of course there is no time for 11.\(\text{Cd}5\)?? as 11...axb5 hits the queen) 11...bxc6 with an excellent position.

10...\(\text{Gxd}5\) 11.exd5 \(\text{Cd}4\)

Black has no real choice, as the alternatives would leave the knight severely misplaced.

12.\(\text{Gxd}7\)

White can change the move order with 12.\(\text{Gxd}4\) \(\text{Gxd}4\) 13.\(\text{Gd}7\)† \(\text{Gxd}7\) leading to line D3122).

12...\(\text{Gxd}7\)

White must now decide whether to grab a pawn with D3121) 13.\(\text{Cxe}5\) or exchange knights with D3122) 13.\(\text{Gxd}4\).

D3121) 13.\(\text{Cxe}5\)

With this move White wins a pawn but loses some time.

13.\(\text{Gf}5\) 14.\(\text{Gd}3\) 0–0–0

Black can regain his pawn with 14...b5?! 15.\(\text{Ge}1\)† \(\text{Gf}7\) 16.\(\text{Cc}3\) \(\text{Gxd}5\), but after 17.\(\text{Ce}3\) his position is quite unpleasant. The text is much more in the spirit of the Schliemann.
**15.a4**

15.\(\texttt{\#h1 b5?! 16.\texttt{\#c3 \#xd5} \text{was equal in Melia - Shukurova, Kusadasi 2006. Black’s active pieces compensate the slight weakening of his king’s shelter.}}\)

15.\(\texttt{\#xc5} \texttt{dxc5} 16.\texttt{\#xc5} \texttt{\#xd5} \text{should not be at all dangerous for Black, as long as he makes the right choice:}\)

In Kozhuharov – Inkiov, Fouesnant 2007, he was successful with 16...\(\texttt{\#e8}\)? 17.\texttt{\#xa7} \texttt{\#e8}?! 18.\texttt{\#e3?? \#e2+} 19.\texttt{\#h1 \#a5!} 0–1, but White could easily have improved with 18.\texttt{\#a8+ \#d7} 19.\texttt{\#xb7} with a winning position.

Therefore Black should prefer 16...\(\texttt{\#xc2:}\)

White has no chance of an advantage, for example:

17.\texttt{\#b1 \#xd5} leaves Black more actively placed.

17.\texttt{\#xa7} \texttt{\#xa1} 18.\texttt{\#a8+ \#d7} 19.\texttt{\#xb7} \texttt{\#c2} does not give White any real compensation for the rook, as only his queen is attacking.

17.\texttt{\#f4?! \#xf4} 18.\texttt{\#xc2 \#xd5} is equal.

**15...\texttt{\#e8 16.\texttt{\#h1!}}**

It is important to position the king away from the checking range of the knight.

16.\texttt{\#xc5? dxc5} 17.\texttt{\#xc5 \#xd5} 18.\texttt{\#xa7} (18.\texttt{\#c4} was mandatory, although even here 18...\texttt{\#xc2} regains the pawn while keeping a much more active position) 18...\texttt{\#e2+} 19.\texttt{\#h1 \#a5!} trapped the queen in Meshcheriakova – Agrest, Stockholm 2008.

**16...\texttt{g5!}**

The slow 16...\texttt{a6} can be met by 17.\texttt{\#f4} 18.\texttt{\#a7} 19.\texttt{\#e2} 19.\texttt{\#f4\#}. The text is designed to prevent this possibility.

We now follow the model game Mamedyarov – Radjabov, Baku 2008.

**17.\texttt{\#e3}**

White gets into trouble after:

17.\texttt{\#c3? \#c2} 18.\texttt{\#b1 \#e4} 19.\texttt{\#b3 \#e1!}
Black must utilise all eight ranks if he is to maximise his initiative!
20.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)d1
20.\(\text{\textit{c}}\)xe1? \(\text{\textit{x}}\)xf2! wins.
20.\(\text{\textit{c}}\)xc5? \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xc5 21.f3 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e2 is not much better for White.
20.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)g1
White loses after 21.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)xg2 \(\text{\textit{h}}\)h4!, or 21.b4 \(\text{\textit{h}}\)h4!.
21.\(\text{\textit{e}}\)e1!
21...\(\text{\textit{h}}\)h4 22.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)g5 (22.hg5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xd5) 22...\(\text{\textit{f}}\)f7 gives Black a smaller advantage.

The knight’s return to this unusual destination makes a nice impression.
22.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)xe1
22.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)g5 \(\text{\textit{f}}\)f3 23.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)xd8 \(\text{\textit{g}}\)g1+.

After 22.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)g5 \(\text{\textit{h}}\)h3 23.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)xe1 \(\text{\textit{x}}\)xf2 24.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)g2 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e1+ 25.\(\text{\textit{c}}\)xe1 \(\text{\textit{x}}\)xe1 26.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)xe1 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e8 27.\(\text{\textit{g}}\)g1

\(\text{\textit{f}}\)f5 28.\(\text{\textit{e}}\)a1 \(\text{\textit{f}}\)xd5† 29.\(\text{\textit{g}}\)g2 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e2 White is unlikely to survive.
22...\(\text{\textit{x}}\)xf2 23.\(\text{\textit{c}}\)f3 \(\text{\textit{f}}\)f8 24.\(\text{\textit{x}}\)xf5† \(\text{\textit{f}}\)xf5 25.\(\text{\textit{f}}\)f1
25.\(\text{\textit{g}}\)g2 \(\text{\textit{h}}\)xg1 26.\(\text{\textit{c}}\)xg1 \(\text{\textit{x}}\)xd5 27.\(\text{\textit{e}}\)e3 \(\text{\textit{f}}\)xa4 is winning for Black.
25...\(\text{\textit{c}}\)xe1 26.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)xe1 \(\text{\textit{x}}\)xe1+

Black has excellent winning chances in the ending.

We must also examine the consequences of the critical 17.b4 when I recommend 17...\(\text{\textit{e}}\)e4!.
(At first I liked the look of 17...\(\text{\textit{d}}\)f3!? but the problem turned out to be 18.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)xc5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xc5 19.\(\text{\textit{e}}\)a3! when White should maintain some advantage.)

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[ultra thick] (1,7) -- (1,8) (2,7) -- (2,8) (3,7) -- (3,8) (4,7) -- (4,8) (5,7) -- (5,8) (6,7) -- (6,8) (7,7) -- (7,8) (8,7) -- (8,8);
\node at (0.5,0.5) {a}; \node at (1.5,0.5) {b}; \node at (2.5,0.5) {c}; \node at (3.5,0.5) {d}; \node at (4.5,0.5) {e}; \node at (5.5,0.5) {f}; \node at (6.5,0.5) {g}; \node at (7.5,0.5) {h};
\node at (0.5,7.5) {1}; \node at (1.5,7.5) {2}; \node at (2.5,7.5) {3}; \node at (3.5,7.5) {4}; \node at (4.5,7.5) {5}; \node at (5.5,7.5) {6}; \node at (6.5,7.5) {7}; \node at (7.5,7.5) {8};
\node at (1,8) {.}; \node at (2,8) {.}; \node at (3,8) {.}; \node at (4,8) {.}; \node at (5,8) {.}; \node at (6,8) {.}; \node at (7,8) {.};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

The tactics work out well for Black, although of course the position is very complicated. The following variations illustrate his possibilities quite nicely.

a) 18.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)b2! \(\text{\textit{c}}\)c6+

b) 18.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)e1 \(\text{\textit{h}}\)h4 19.\(\text{\textit{b}}\)xc5 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)f3 20.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)xh4 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xh4+

c) 18.\(\text{\textit{c}}\)c3 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e2 19.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)g7 (19.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)d2 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)d4 20.\(\text{\textit{e}}\)a3 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xd5 21.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)xg5 \(\text{\textit{f}}\)f7+) 19...\(\text{\textit{d}}\)d4 20.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)xg5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xg5 21.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)xg5 \(\text{\textit{g}}\)g8+

d) 18.\(\text{\textit{f}}\)f3 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)xf3 19.\(\text{\textit{e}}\)b3
Alternatives are no better:
19.\(\text{\textit{a}}\)a2 \(\text{\textit{x}}\)e2 20.\(\text{\textit{x}}\)xf3 \(\text{\textit{g}}\)g4+
19.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)xf3 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)xf3 20.\(\text{\textit{g}}\)xf3 \(\text{\textit{x}}\)xc4 21.\(\text{\textit{b}}\)xc5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)xc5+
19...\texttt{\textasciitilde}e2 20.\texttt{\textasciitilde}f4
20.\texttt{\textasciitilde}c5 \texttt{\textasciitilde}d4 21.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g1 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xb3 22.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xf5 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xa1
23.\texttt{\textasciitilde}e6 \texttt{\textasciitilde}e8 24.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xg5 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xc2→
20.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xf3 loses beautifully after 20...\texttt{\textasciitilde}g4
21.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g3:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[step=0.5cm,gray,very thin] (0,0) grid (4,4);
\draw (0.5,0.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (1.5,1.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (2.5,2.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (3.5,3.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (0.5,4.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (1.5,3.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (2.5,2.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (3.5,1.5) circle (0.2cm);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20...\texttt{\textasciitilde}e1!! 22.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xe1 \texttt{\textasciitilde}e2 23.\texttt{\textasciitilde}h4 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xe1†
24.\texttt{\textasciitilde}h2 \texttt{\textasciitilde}g1† 25.\texttt{\textasciitilde}h3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}h1† 26.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g4 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xh4†
27.\texttt{\textasciitilde}f3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}f8† with mate in a maximum of four more moves.
20...\texttt{\textasciitilde}d4 21.\texttt{\textasciitilde}h3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xf4 22.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xf5† \texttt{\textasciitilde}xf5
23.bxc5 dxc5
Black stands clearly better.

e) 18.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xc5! seems to be the only way for White to maintain the balance. My analysis continues: 18...dxc5 19.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xc5 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xd5 20.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xa7
\texttt{\textasciitilde}xc2 21.\texttt{\textasciitilde}b1! \texttt{\textasciitilde}e1 22.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xe1 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xe1 23.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xg5!

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[step=0.5cm,gray,very thin] (0,0) grid (4,4);
\draw (0.5,0.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (1.5,1.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (2.5,2.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (3.5,3.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (0.5,4.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (1.5,3.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (2.5,2.5) circle (0.2cm);
\draw (3.5,1.5) circle (0.2cm);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

28.bxc5† \texttt{\textasciitilde}xc5 29.\texttt{\textasciitilde}d8† \texttt{\textasciitilde}a6 30.\texttt{\textasciitilde}a8† \texttt{\textasciitilde}b6
31.\texttt{\textasciitilde}d8†=

17...\texttt{\textasciitilde}f3!

The other option was 17...\texttt{\textasciitilde}e4 18.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xc5
dxc5 19.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xc5 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xd5 when Black has some activity to show for the pawn. Play might continue 20.\texttt{\textasciitilde}c3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}e2 21.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g7 \texttt{\textasciitilde}f4 22.\texttt{\textasciitilde}f1
\texttt{\textasciitilde}xd1† 23.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xd1 b6 with some, though perhaps not quite enough, compensation.

Radjabov's choice is more incisive. Black threatens to transfer a rook to the h-file.

18.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xc5

Of course 18.gxf3?? loses to 18...\texttt{\textasciitilde}xf3† 19.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g1 \texttt{\textasciitilde}e4.

18...dxc5 19.\texttt{\textasciitilde}f1

19.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xc5 \texttt{\textasciitilde}d6 20.\texttt{\textasciitilde}b5 should also lead to a draw after: 20...\texttt{\textasciitilde}e4! 21.gxf3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xf3† 22.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g1
\texttt{\textasciitilde}e4 (or immediately 22.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g4† 23.\texttt{\textasciitilde}h1 \texttt{\textasciitilde}f3†)
23.\texttt{\textasciitilde}f1 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xe3 24.fxe3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xe3† 25.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g2

19...\texttt{\textasciitilde}e4 20.\texttt{\textasciitilde}f1

White must take care to avoid 20.\texttt{\textasciitilde}xc5? \texttt{\textasciitilde}h4
21.gxf3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}xf3† 22.\texttt{\textasciitilde}g1 \texttt{\textasciitilde}d6 with a winning attack.

20...\texttt{\textasciitilde}d4 21.\texttt{\textasciitilde}d3 \texttt{\textasciitilde}e5
Black's active, centralised pieces make a nice impression.

22.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xg5}}}

22.c4?! was possible although 22...e8 would leave Black with enough for the missing pawn.

22...e8 23.d2 h4 24.h3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd5}}} 25.c4 c6

Black's activity provides full compensation for his small material investment, and I think that Mamedyarov was quite justified in repeating the position.

26.g3

The evaluation would be the same after 26.a3 g8 27.f1 f5 28.f3 d4 29.c3 f5=

26..f5 27.d3 d4 28.g3 f5 29.d3 d4 30.g3 f5

½–½

This was an excellent game. In fact, I would find it difficult to fault a single move by either player.

We may conclude that Black is presently holding his own after 13.xe5, although he should definitely make sure he comes to the board well prepared.

D3122) 13.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd4}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd4}}} 14.a4!

Tournament practice and analysis have demonstrated this to be White's most promising move. The text gains space on the queenside while also threatening to trap the enemy bishop.

14...a6

Black prepares a retreat square on a7.

15.e3

Black was intending ...0–0 with pressure against f2. White should therefore exchange off his opponent's strong bishop while conveniently opening the f-file and preventing short castling.

15.xe3

Obviously it would be far too risky for Black to venture 15...xb2? 16.ab1 b5 (after 16...d4 17 xd4 exd4 18.xb7 White will emerge with an extra pawn) 17.a2!? d4 18.xd4 exd4 19.axb5±.

16.fxe3 0–0–0

We have reached a position with equal material, no minor pieces and symmetrical pawns. Black is close to equality, but White does control slightly more space as well as the only open file.
Curiously enough, two of my Quality Chess associates have made their own significant contributions to the theory of this line. In his 2003 book: *Starting Out: The Ruy Lopez*, John Shaw recommended 14.a4! and concluded that White stood better in the diagram position, in view of his attacking prospects against the enemy king. This plan was tested in the game Cornejo – Fernandez, corr. 2003, which continued 17.b4 $\text{Nh}8$ 18.b5 a5 19.b6 $\text{Nxf}1$+ 20.$\text{Nxf}1$ $\text{Nxb}8$ 21.$\text{bxc}7$+ $\text{Nxc}7$. Black was fine and a draw was agreed after a few more moves. We must therefore conclude that the attempt to bulldoze through the enemy defences brings White no advantage.

My editor Andrew Greet arrived at this conclusion in 2006 in *Play The Ruy Lopez*. Instead of aiming for a direct attack, Greet advised White to secure control over the f-file and play for an endgame advantage.

He recommended:

17.$\text{Nf}3$

Since that time, this move has been tested at a high level, although the last word now appears to be that the rook will be slightly better placed on f2. The advantage of the more advanced square is that the rook might be able to utilise the third rank, perhaps switching to g3 or h3 to harass the enemy pawns. On the other hand, there are certain times when the white queen might wish to use the f3-square.

After 17.$\text{Nf}3$ play usually proceeds with:

17...$\text{Nf}8$ 18.$\text{Nxf}1$ $\text{Nxf}3$

18...$\text{Wf}7$ 19.$\text{We}4$ g6 gives White an extra tempo compared to Carlsen – Radjabov.

19.$\text{Nxf}3$ $\text{Nxb}8$

Some possible continuations include:

a) White can secure control over the f-file with 20.b3 $\text{We}7$ 21.$\text{Wf}1$ (21.$\text{We}4$ g6 leaves White unable to prevent ...$\text{Nf}8$ – a good example of why White may prefer to keep f3 free for the queen!) when Black has two ideas. He might try the active 21...e4!? or the more patient 21...h5, waiting for White to reveal his intentions. In both cases Black has better chances for equality than in the main line.

b) 20.$\text{We}4$ should be met by 20...g6 intending...$\text{We}7$ and...$\text{Nf}8$. (20...g5?! does not work here in view of 21.b3 g4 [or 21...h5 22.$\text{Nf}6$] 22.$\text{Wf}5$±) White may still be able to obtain a slight edge with 21.$\text{Nf}2$ intending $\text{Wf}3$ retaining control over the f-file, although if this is the best he can do then it would seem to suggest that his 17th was slightly inaccurate.
c) The game Naiditsch – Degraeve, Evry 2008, continued 20.\(\textit{Wh}4\) when 20...\(\textit{g}5\)!\(N\) was worth considering. (The game continuation of 20...\(\textit{g}6\) 21.\(\textit{b}3\) \(\textit{e}8\) 22.\(\textit{e}4\) \(\textit{a}5\) 23.\(\textit{h}3\) gave White the usual slight advantage, although Black was able to hold the draw.) Play might continue 21.\(\textit{We}4\) \(\textit{g}4\) followed by \(...\textit{h}5\) with counterplay.

17.\(\textit{df}8\) 18.\(\textit{af}1\) \(\textit{We}7\)

After: 18...\(\textit{xf}2\) 19.\(\textit{x}f2\) \(\textit{b}8\) 20.\(\textit{b}3\) \(\textit{e}7\) 21.\(\textit{e}4\) \(\textit{g}6\) 22.\(\textit{f}3\)! Here we see the usefulness of keeping the \(f3\)-square available. 22...\(\textit{c}8\) 23.\(\textit{c}4\) \(\textit{c}6\) 24.\(\textit{dx}c6\) \(\textit{xc}6\) 25.\(\textit{e}4\) \(\textit{g}5\) 26.\(\textit{h}3\) White had a solid advantage in Topalov – Radjabov, Morelia/Linares 2008, although Radjabov’s superb defence enabled him to cling on for half a point.

19.\(\textit{f}4\)

This was Carlsen’s choice, and is probably the most accurate move. Instead Naiditsch – Gozzoli, Noyon 2008, continued with the less convincing 19.\(\textit{g}4\)!\(\textit{b}8\) 20.\(\textit{h}5\) \(\textit{g}6\) 21.\(\textit{h}6\) \(\textit{xf}2\) 22.\(\textit{xf}2\), at which point I propose 22...\(\textit{d}7\)!\(N\).

The queen is eyeing both sides of the board. Play may continue 23.\(\textit{h}4\) (23.\(\textit{b}3\)! \(\textit{g}4\) is awkward) 23...\(\textit{g}5\)! 24.\(\textit{e}4\) (24.\(\textit{x}g5\) \(\textit{xa}4\) 25.\(\textit{g}7\) \(\textit{c}8\) 26.\(\textit{xh}7\) \(\textit{a}1\)! 27.\(\textit{f}1\) \(\textit{xb}2\) can hardly cause Black any problems) 24...\(\textit{g}4\) 25.\(\textit{b}3\) \(\textit{g}7\). Black should be okay here, although as usual he stands marginally worse.
This rare move has not been analysed too extensively, which makes it seem like a breath of fresh air in the modern era. I believe that this will make it an appealing choice for many readers, especially in view of the small yet persistent disadvantage suffered by Black in the main line above.

8.\(\Box xd4\)

Let us briefly note that 8.\(\Box c3 \Box xf3\) 9.\(\Box xf3\) 0–0 is harmless for Black.

More critical is:

8.\(\Box xe5\)

This might offer White chances for a slight plus, although pawn-grabbing may not be to everyone’s taste. Play continues:

8...\(\Box e7\) 9.\(\Box f3 \Box xf3\) 10.\(\Box xe5\) 10...\(\Box xe5\) 11.\(\Box c3\) d6 12.\(\Box c4\) d6 13.\(\Box d3\) d6 14.\(\Box d3\) d6 15.\(\Box c3\) 0–0 16.\(\Box xe4\) dxe4 17.\(\Box xc5\) \(\Box xc5\) 18.\(\Box xe4\) \(\Box xe4\) 19.\(\Box xe4\) \(\Box xe4\) 20.\(\Box d2\) 21.\(\Box c3\) d5 22.\(\Box c3\) d5 23.\(\Box xe4\) \(\Box xe4\) 24.\(\Box g5\) \(\Box g5\) 25.\(\Box d2\) 26.\(\Box d3\)

White has chances to consolidate his extra pawn, although Black is very active.

8...\(\Box xd4\)

The exchange of knights should, in principle, be helpful to Black. He no longer needs to worry about \(\Box xc6\) ideas, although the drawback is that he has lost some time. We will now follow the game Svidler – Radjabov, Baku 2008.

9.\(\Box d2\)

This looks best.

9.c3 \(\Box b6\) 10.\(\Box c4\) d6 11.\(\Box d2\) \(\Box e7\) is comfortable for Black.

9.\(\Box c3\) is also not too dangerous, although Black must proceed carefully. 9...c6 looks natural, but does not quite equalise after 10.\(\Box c4\) d6 (10...b5 11.\(\Box b3\) a5 12.a3 \(\Box a6\) 13.\(\Box xe2\)) 11.\(\Box e2\) \(\Box b6\) 11...\(\Box e7\) 12.\(\Box e4\) 13.\(\Box e6\) \(\Box xe6\) 14.\(\Box d3\) d5 15.\(\Box c3\) 0–0 16.\(\Box xe4\) dxe4 17.\(\Box xc5\) \(\Box xc5\) 18.\(\Box xe4\) \(\Box xe4\) 19.\(\Box xe4\) \(\Box xe4\) 20.\(\Box g5\) \(\Box g5\) 21.\(\Box d2\) 22.\(\Box d3\)

For this reason, he should prefer 9...0–0! 10.\(\Box e3\) \(\Box xe3\) 11.\(\Box xe3\) \(\Box xe3\) 12.\(\Box c4\) \(\Box h8\) = 11...d6 12.\(\Box c4\) \(\Box h8\) 13.\(\Box d5\) \(\Box d7\) with equality.

9...\(\Box a6\) 10.\(\Box c4\) \(\Box e7\) 11.\(\Box f3\) \(\Box a7\)
12.\textit{\textbf{h4}}?! \\
This is a slight inaccuracy. 12.\textit{\textbf{g5}} d6 13.\textit{\textbf{h4}} would have been the correct way to reach the game position.

The creative 12.\textit{\textbf{d2}} d6 13.\textit{\textbf{a5}}?! can be met by 13...\textit{\textbf{f8}}?!. Now Black's king will be forced to remain in the centre for a while, but all of his pieces can find good squares.

12...d6 \\
Black could have fought for the advantage with 12...b5! 13.\textit{\textbf{b3}} \textit{\textbf{b7}}, when White is unable to protect e4. The best he can do is 14.\textit{\textbf{f5}} \textit{\textbf{xe4}} 15.\textit{\textbf{h3}} \textit{\textbf{xf5}} 16.\textit{\textbf{xf5}}.

In this very complicated position White has some compensation for the pawn, but perhaps not quite enough. One sensible continuation is 16...c6, reinforcing the centre, when Black's chances look preferable. 16...0–0–0 and 16...d5 also deserve consideration.

13.\textit{\textbf{g5}} \textit{\textbf{e6}} 14.\textit{\textbf{f5}} \textit{\textbf{xf5}} 15.\textit{\textbf{exf5}} 0–0–0 \\
Black should be alright here. White's light-squared bishop is very powerful, but its opposite number on a7 is no slouch either!

16.\textit{\textbf{e6}}\textbf{t} \textit{\textbf{b8}} 17.\textit{\textbf{c4}} \textit{\textbf{h6}} \\
17...g6?! could have been considered.

18.\textit{\textbf{e3}} \textit{\textbf{xe3}} 19.\textit{\textbf{fxe3}} \\
White has exchanged his opponent's strong bishop, but no longer enjoys the benefits of a pair of bishops. His remaining bishop is no more useful than the black knight, and so the position is equal. The game continued:

19...\textit{\textbf{h7}}! 20.\textit{\textbf{ad1}} \textit{\textbf{g5}} 21.\textit{\textbf{d5}} c6 22.\textit{\textbf{e4}} \textit{\textbf{bd7}} 23.\textit{\textbf{g3}} \textit{\textbf{xe4}} 24.\textit{\textbf{exe4}} \textit{\textbf{hhd8}} 25.\textit{\textbf{f3}} d5 26.\textit{\textbf{cxd5}} \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 27.\textit{\textbf{cxd5}} cxd5 28.\textit{\textbf{f6}} \\
White has nothing better than the text, with which he exchanges down to a drawn ending.

28...\textit{\textbf{gxf6}} 29.\textit{\textbf{xf6}} \textit{\textbf{xf6}} 30.\textit{\textbf{xf6}} d4 31.\textit{\textbf{exd4}} \textit{\textbf{exd4}} 32.\textit{\textbf{f1}} d3 33.\textit{\textbf{c1}} \textit{\textbf{e8}}\textbf{t} 34.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{e2}}\textbf{t} 35.\textit{\textbf{cxh3}} \textit{\textbf{hxb6}} 36.\textit{\textbf{c3}} h5 37.\textit{\textbf{xe6}} h4 38.\textit{\textbf{gxh4}} \textit{\textbf{f3}}\textbf{t} 39.\textit{\textbf{h2}} \textit{\textbf{f2}}\textbf{t} 40.\textit{\textbf{c3}} \textit{\textbf{h3}}\textbf{t} 41.\textit{\textbf{c2}} \textit{\textbf{h2}}\textbf{t} ½–½ \\
Overall it seems that 7...\textit{\textbf{d4}}?! gives Black decent chances to equalise. The critical continuation may well be 8.\textit{\textbf{xe5}}, although White will need to demonstrate a great deal of accuracy to obtain anything meaningful. Psychological factors may also come into consideration. If White wanted to give up the bishop pair in order to win a pawn, then he could have opted for variation D2) with 7.\textit{\textbf{xc6}} dxc6 8.\textit{\textbf{xe5}} on the previous move. It would seem reasonable to assume that players who choose to forgo this opportunity are probably not looking to accept
a gambit pawn in the early stages of the game. However, the notes to Svidler – Radjabov seem to indicate that Black should generally be fine if White refuses to take the e5-pawn. I believe that 7...d4!? merits further practical testing, and it will be interesting to see whether White will be able to find a convincing reply. In the end, my advice would be to study both this and the more traditional 7...d6 before making your own choice.

Conclusion

Despite its outwardly timid appearance, 4.d3 deserves to be treated with respect. Anyone doubting this need only remind themselves of some of the players to have utilised it over the past few years: Anand, Topalov, Carlsen, Ivanchuk, Svidler, Leko etc. Despite the best efforts of these elite Grandmasters, Teimour Radjabov has almost single-handedly shown that the Schliemann has every right to exist at even the highest levels. And we are not just talking about an occasional surprise weapon that can be played once before being then quickly discarded. The young Azeri GM has continued to obtain good results, even when opponents know what is coming well in advance. And this is what defines a truly respectable opening system.
Chapter 2

Schliemann: 4. \( \text{c3} \)

1.\( e4 \) e5 2.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 3.\( \text{b5} \) \( f5 \) 4.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{fxe4} \) 5.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xf6} \)

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Introduction

4.c3 is arguably White’s most principled reaction to the Schliemann, developing another piece while defending the e-pawn. It has been established as the main line for many decades now, although its popularity has waned slightly over the past few years as new resources have been discovered for Black (as well as the realisation that 4.d3! may not be as harmless as previously thought – see Chapter 1 for full coverage of that move).

One of the main points behind 4.c3 is to facilitate the capture exf5 without allowing a favourable advance of the enemy e-pawn (as occurs after 4.exf5?! e4). This can be illustrated by a very brief investigation into a few of Black’s main responses.

a) 4...f6 is a natural move, although White should be able to maintain some advantage after 5.exf5 as 5...e4 can now be met by 6.h4!. The knight is not at all badly placed, and Black will find it difficult to regain his sacrificed pawn. Another option is 5.d4!?, although here 6.xe5 leaves Black struggling to demonstrate full compensation.

b) 4.d4!? is another interesting move which can also be met by 5.exf5. Play usually continues 5...c6 (5...f6 6.xe5 reaches the above note) when 6.a4 gives good chances for an advantage, while 6.dxe5!? is also quite dangerous.

In view of the above, it makes sense for Black to capture on e4 himself.

4...fxe4

This has become firmly established as Black’s main response.

5.xe4

This move requires no explanation. Black no longer has to worry about exf5 ideas, and he also benefits by exchanging one of the opponent’s prized central pawns for his own f-pawn, thus securing a valuable central majority as well as an open file that can be used for attacking purposes after short castling. On the negative side, the white knight is actively placed in the centre of the board, while Black has still only managed to develop a solitary piece.

At this point Black must choose between two principled alternatives. The aggressive 5...d5! used to be considered the main line, and has certainly not been refuted. Unfortunately most of the critical variations have been analysed quite extensively, and it seems that White can always maintain an edge if he knows what he is doing. For this reason I have decided to recommend the alternative:

5.f6

This move appears to have superseded 5...d5 as the experts’ choice. Most notably, it has been used on a regular basis by Radjabov, which is about as high a recommendation as one could ask for. Black develops another piece and challenges the opponent’s centralised knight. He also retains the option of occupying the centre with ...d5, depending on how White responds.
General Themes

White's speedy development
One of the main points behind White's 4th move is to develop quickly and exert pressure against the opponent's pawn centre and/or king position. The following diagram shows the type of scenario that Black should avoid.

![Diagram of chess board showing White's development advantage.]

Black lags in development and his king is vulnerable.

The e5-pawn
Over the course of the present chapter we will encounter several lines in which Black 'sacrifices' (or White 'wins', depending on your perspective!) the e5-pawn.

![Diagram of chess board showing the e5-pawn's role in the game.]

Here we see that Black's pawn structure has been compromised on both sides of the board. The biggest danger is the kingside, where the f6-pawn severely restricts the bishop on g7. If White can install a knight on f5 then he will enjoy positional domination in addition to excellent attacking chances. Black might prevent this with a timely ...f5, although this might restrict his other bishop, as well as weakening the dark squares. White might exploit the latter with the manoeuvre \( \text{f}4-e5 \).

We have seen that there are numerous pitfalls that Black must avoid. Indeed, I would say that the main virtue of the 4.\( \text{c}3 \) variation is that White's rapid development enables him to keep a variety of options open. He might equally aim for an early confrontation or a
long-term strategical approach, depending on how the opponent plays.

Fortunately it is not all doom and gloom for Black! His position contains plenty of resources and if White plays inaccurately he can easily get into trouble. We will now turn our attention to some of the more positive aspects of the black side of the Schliemann.

Central Control

One drawback of White’s 4th move is the loss of a pawn presence in the centre of the board. In an ideal world Black might end up with a powerful pawn centre resembling the following:

![Diagram](image)

Possible attacking ideas include ...\texttt{g4} to target f2, or ...\texttt{g4} to develop with gain of tempo. White must also be wary of ...\texttt{h6} followed by ...\texttt{e6} when his queen would be embarrassed.

Theoretical highlights

Here are a few of the most noteworthy theoretical variations contained within the present chapter. Our first example shows how even a seemingly placid variation can contain hidden dangers.

1.\texttt{e4} e5 2.\texttt{df3} \texttt{ac6} 3.\texttt{b5} f5 4.\texttt{c3} fxe4 5.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{df6} 6.d3 d5 7.\texttt{xf6+} \texttt{xf6} 8.\texttt{g5} \texttt{wfs}
White's 6th move may appear excessively timid, and has generally not been considered at all threatening for Black. However, in the diagram position I found a strong novelty for White: 9.c4!, after which Black's position can become dangerous if he does not react precisely. Full details can be found in line A) on page 43.

Here is a more popular variation, which Black should definitely study:

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 f5 4.c3 fxe4
5.dxe4 d6 6.e2 d5 7.f6 gxf6 8.d4 g7 9.dxe5 0–0

This is considered to be one of the critical lines. It is dangerous for White to try to keep the extra pawn so he invariably plays e5–e6, either with or without a preliminary exchange on c6. Line B4) on page 50 shows why Black has nothing to fear from either approach.

The following variation is also seen quite frequently.

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 f5 4.c3 fxe4
5.dxe4 d6 6.f6 gxf6 7.e2 e7
8.exd6 cxd6 9.e5 f5 10.0–0 0–0 11.d4
White has an extra pawn and keeps some advantage, but I do not believe it to be anything serious. As you will see in the notes to Kramnik – Radjabov, my recommendation involves simplifying into an endgame a pawn down which I expect Black to hold quite easily.

Theory

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 f5 4. c3 fxe4 5. Qxe4

It should come as no surprise that White gains nothing from:
5. a6 bxc6!
Instead 5 ... dxc6 6. Qx e4 Qf6 would transpose to the note to Black's 5th in line C of Chapter 3. Usually in the Schliemann Black would prefer to recapture with the d-pawn, but in the present position the text is stronger.

6. Qxe4 d5 7. Qg3 e4
Black must of course avoid 7 ... d6? 8. Qxe5 Qxe5 9. f5+
8. Qe5 Qf6?!N
With this untested move Black gives up a pawn in order to fight for the initiative.

9. d4
Or 9.0–0 Qd6 10. Qxc6 Qd7 11. Qd4 0–0 with the bishop pair and a lead in space and development to compensate the pawn.

9 ... d6 10. Qxc6 Qd7 11. Qe5 Qe6

Black has a promising position. Indeed, if we look a little deeper we can see how easy it is for White to fall into difficulties:

12. c4?
This may be his best chance.
After 12.0–0 Qxe5 13. dxe5 Qxe5 14. Qe3 0–0= Black stands better thanks to his powerful central pawn majority.
12. Qf4 Qa6 13. c4 (13. Qe2 0–0=) 13 ... 0–0 14. Qc4 15. Qxc4 Qxc4 16. Qe3 Qb8 also leaves Black with an obvious advantage.

12 ... 0–0

12 ... Qxe5?! leaves Black with some structural defects after: 13. dxe5 Qxe5 14. cxd5 0–0 15.0–0 Qd8 16. Qb3 Qxd5 17. Qd2+

13. cxd5 Qxd5 14. Qb3 Qxb3 15. axb3 Qe6
With two powerful bishops and a lead in development, Black maintains excellent compensation notwithstanding the queen exchange.

5 ... Qf6
5 ... d5 is the other principled continuation, but the present work will focus exclusively on the text. Black is not in a hurry to occupy the centre and will instead be happy to continue his kingside development while also challenging the strong enemy knight.

We will consider the quiet response A) 6. d3 before moving on to the much more common
B) 6...e2 and C) 6...xf6

The position after 6...xc6 dxc6 is analysed in line C) of Chapter 3 (note to Black’s 5th move on page 77).

A) 6.d3

This timid move should not be too dangerous, although we will see on move 9 that the white position still contains some interesting resources.

6...d5!

There is no reason for Black to refrain from this natural move.

7...xf6

White is simply worse after the passive 7...g3 xd6 8.0–0 0–0=, for example 9.c3 (after 9.e1 d4?! 10.exd4 exd4 11.h3 c6 12.a4 c7= Black eventually prevailed in Schmaus – Maier, Munich 1993) 9...e7 10.a4 c6, as in Kochyev – Kuzmin, St Petersburg 1992.

7...xf6

8.d4 e4 9.e5 b4 10.c3 0–0 11.0–0 d6= was Todorovic – Dinic, Sokobanja 1989.

8.0–0 g4 9.e1 (9.c4 was tried in Nakamura – Chernoff, Dos Hermanas 2003, when Black could have obtained the advantage with the natural 9...xf3 10.xf3 xf3 11.gxf3 0–0–0=) 9...d6 10.h3?! (10.a4 would have left Black with only a slight edge) 10...xf3= Black went on to win in Vamos – Jakubowski, Szombathely 1993.

8...xf5 9.c4

This untested idea was mentioned in the introduction. I believe this to be only move that can cause Black any significant problems. A few examples:

9.d2 d6= was Bernal Caamano – Arbakov, Linares 1995.

9.0–0 d6 10.c4 looks fairly sensible, e.g. 10...0–0 11.exd5 d4 12.d4 exd4 with equality in Toledano Linares – Ferron Garcia, Vilanova 1993.

After 9.e2 d6 White can try many moves, none of which enables him to equalise, e.g. 10.h4 (Neither 10.0–0 0–0=, Diez–Schlesinger, Bad Homburg 2005, nor 10.0–0 0–0 11.e3 e6=, Huellen – Rieke, Enger Spenge 1998, offer any improvement.) 10...0–0 (10...h5= is also very strong) 11.xc6 bxc6 12.0–0= h5 13.g3 g4 Black was already winning in Yap Choow Tun – Handoko, Kuala Lumpur 2001.

9...f7!
This surprising move is the one which best meets the demands of the position! Black's number one priority is to facilitate a knight jump to d4.

In case of 9...\texttt{b4}\textsuperscript{t} 10.\texttt{d2} 0–0 11.\texttt{x}x\texttt{c6} \texttt{xd2}\textsuperscript{t} 12.\texttt{W}xd2 \texttt{bxc6} 13.0–0 dxc4 14.dxc4 \texttt{e}4 15.\texttt{d}d4 \texttt{gg}6 Black's structural weaknesses render his position strategically quite dangerous.

10.cxd5

The surprising 10.g4!? should be met by 10...\texttt{b4}\textsuperscript{t} (10...\texttt{W}xg4?? loses to 11.\texttt{x}x\texttt{c6}) 11.\texttt{f}f1 (11.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{xd2}\textsuperscript{t} 12.\texttt{xd}d2 enables Black to pick up a pawn on either d3 or g4.) 11...\texttt{W}xg4 12.\texttt{x}x\texttt{c6} \texttt{h}h3\textsuperscript{t} 13.\texttt{g}g1 (13.\texttt{e}e2? \texttt{bxc6} 14.\texttt{xe}e5\textsuperscript{t} \texttt{g}g8\textsuperscript{t}) when Black can either take a perpetual with 13...\texttt{W}g4\textsuperscript{t} or continue the fight with 13...\texttt{bxc6}.

10...\texttt{d}d4 11.\texttt{c}c4

11.\texttt{xd}xd4 \texttt{exd}4 leads to an equal position after 12.\texttt{W}d2 \texttt{d}d6 13.0–0 a6 14.\texttt{c}c4 b5 15.\texttt{b}b3 \texttt{b}b7=.

11...\texttt{d}d6 12.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{xf}f3\textsuperscript{t}

12...\texttt{b}b5?! 13.\texttt{g}g5\textsuperscript{t} \texttt{g}g6 14.\texttt{b}b3 is dangerous for Black, e.g. 14...\texttt{a}a5 15.h4 when the white pieces coordinate very well.

13.\texttt{xf}f3 \texttt{xf}f3 14.gxf3

In this position Black clearly has long-term compensation for the pawn. White suffers from some structural defects, although his weaknesses are not so easy to attack. Overall I consider the chances to be roughly equal after the simple 14...\texttt{d}d7 or 14...\texttt{b}b5.

On the other hand the tempting 14...\texttt{b}b5? is interesting but probably not best in my opinion. Play continues 15.\texttt{xb}b5 \texttt{b}b8 16.\texttt{c}c4 \texttt{xb}b2 17.0–0 when White has some advantage, e.g. 17...\texttt{h}h3 18.\texttt{fb}1 \texttt{xb}1\textsuperscript{t} 19.\texttt{xb}1 \texttt{a}a5 20.d4 followed by a bishop transfer to e4.

B) 6.\texttt{we}2

This is a more challenging continuation than 6.d3. The queen sets up an x-ray attack against
the enemy monarch while also menacing the e-pawn.

6...d5!

Once again Black should not shy away from the most aggressive and principled continuation. At this point we will begin by considering the unusual B1) 7...\textit{\textsc{dxe}}5, which should not cause Black too many problems. Next will come the two knight moves B2) \textit{\textsc{d}eg5} and B3) \textit{\textsc{d}g3}. Both ensure him of an extra pawn, but the good news is that Black’s rapid development and active pieces should provide excellent compensation. Finally we will address the main line of B4) 7...\textit{\textsc{xf}}6\dagger.

B1) 7...\textit{\textsc{dxe}}5 \textit{\textsc{dxe}}4

This resembles the line 5...d5 (instead of our preferred 5...\textit{f6}) 6...\textit{\textsc{xe}}5 \textit{\textsc{dxe}}4, although the extra moves \textit{\textsc{c}2} and ...\textit{\textsc{f}6} will create some unique opportunities for both sides.

8...\textit{\textsc{c}4}?

This looks like the most principled way for White to utilise the position of his queen.

Instead the unimaginative 8...\textit{\textsc{xc}}6 \textit{\textsc{bcx}}6 9...\textit{\textsc{xc}}6\dagger \textit{\textsc{d}7} 10...\textit{\textsc{xa}}8 \textit{\textsc{xa}}8 leads to a position in which Black can claim at least equal chances despite his nominal material deficit, for example 11...\textit{\textsc{c}7} (11...\textit{\textsc{c}6}? could be considered, after which 12...f3 is the critical test) 12...\textit{\textsc{xe}}4 \textit{\textsc{xe}}4 13...\textit{\textsc{xe}}4 \textit{\textsc{xe}}4 14...\textit{\textsc{e}3} \textit{\textsc{b}4}\dagger (14...\textit{\textsc{a}6} 15...\textit{\textsc{e}6} may have been better, keeping an unbalanced position in which I slightly prefer Black’s chances) 15.c3 \textit{\textsc{xc}}3= led to an equalization of the material in Rutherford – Cook, Sydney 1992.

After the text there follows a forced sequence.

8...\textit{\textsc{d}5} 9...\textit{\textsc{xd}}5 \textit{\textsc{xd}}5 10...\textit{\textsc{xc}}6 \textit{\textsc{d}7} 11...\textit{\textsc{d}4} c6 12...\textit{\textsc{c}4} \textit{\textsc{c}5}
Black enjoys full compensation here. His pieces are very actively placed, and it is not easy for White to develop his queenside pieces.

13...b6 14.d4 exd3 15.cxd3

We have been following the game Raty – Reich, corr. 1983, in which Black failed to equalise after 15...0–0 16.0–0 ñae8 17.ñd2 ñh8 18.d4±, and subsequently blundered with 18...ñf6? 19.ñb4 1–0.

Instead I propose 15...ñf5N 16.0–0 0–0–0; with reasonable chances. Black is very active and White’s d-pawn is weak. The primary threat is ...ñb4.

B2) 7.ñeg5 ñd6

Black should have no qualms about offering the e-pawn.

8.ñxe5

8.ñxc6† ñxc6 9.ñxe5 0–0 also gives Black plenty of play. Westerinen – Pokern, Germany 1982, continued 10.d4 c5! 11.c3 cxd4 12.cxd4, and now 12...c5! would have been consistent and strong. We will encounter this method of undermining the white centre more than once over the coming pages.

8...0–0!

Offering a second pawn. Black is building a useful lead in development, and is well placed to take advantage of the open f-file.

9.ñxc6

9.ñxc6 can be met by 9...bxc6 as in the note to White’s 8th, as well as 9...ñxe5!? 10.ñxe5 bxc6†, which may be even better.

9...bxc6 10.ñxc6 ñb8 11.d3

The alternatives are no more appealing.

After 11.c4 ñb6 12.ña4 ñb4† Black regains a pawn without dampening his initiative.

11.d4 ñb6 12.ña4 was played in Malmstroem – Kudryavtsev, e-mail 2001. At this point the strongest continuation would have been 12...h6 13.ñf3 ña6 with a very powerful attack.

11...ñb6 12.ña4 ñc5

12...ñg4? was another interesting possibility. The position after the text can be found in the introduction, in which it was remarked that White was in some danger. In case the reader was sceptical of this assessment, the evidence can be found in the remainder of our analysis.

13.0–0

After 13.c3 ñg4 Black’s attack is extremely strong, as demonstrated by the game Morais
– Beaumont, e-mail 2000, which continued:
14.f3 \text{xf2}† (perhaps even stronger may have been 14...h6! 15.fxg4 hxg5 intending \dots \text{e6})
15.\text{d}d1 \text{h}h4 16.\text{h}h3 \text{e}e6 17.\text{c}c2 \text{e}e7 18.\text{b}b3 \text{e}e2 19.g3 \text{h}h8 20.\text{b}b8 \text{x}xh2 21.\text{x}xh2 \text{h}xh2
22.gxh4 \text{xf3} 23.\text{f}f4 \text{g}g4 24.\text{x}xa7 \text{e}e1†
It is not often that one can achieve such an attack after just 14 moves with the black pieces! In the only practical encounter White failed to find the correct response.

15.\text{xf2}?!  
The only satisfactory continuation was 15.\text{xf2}† \text{xf2} 16.dxc5 \text{b}b4 17.\text{b}b3 \text{e}e4 18.\text{xe}e4 \text{xe}e4 19.\text{f}f4 when White has enough for the queen.

15...\text{d}d4! 0–1. An elegant finish to a fine attacking game.

13...\text{g}g4 14.d4  
In the game Stock – O'Hara, e-mail 1998, White was swiftly demolished after: 14.\text{f}f3? \text{e}e6! 15.\text{e}e3 (this is hopeless, although 15.\text{wd}1 can also be refuted by 15...\text{xf2}†
16.\text{xf2} \text{xf2}† 17.\text{h}h4† 18.\text{g}g1 \text{xf3}!)
15...\text{xe}e3 16.\text{exe}3 \text{exe}3 0–1

14...\text{xf2}!  
In Grazinys – Raleus, e-mail 1999, Black had restored the material balance while retaining a very strong attack.

B3) 7.\text{g}g3  
This move carries similar intentions to the previous variation, namely to capture the e5-pawn. The difference is that White hopes his knight will be more secure and less tactically vulnerable on g3.

7...\text{d}d6  
Black's response is identical.

8.\text{exe}5  
8...\text{exe}6† bxc6 9.\text{exe}5 0–0 reaches the main line.

8...0–0!
Once again Black should not hesitate to offer a second pawn. Now White must decide which minor piece to exchange for the knight on c6.

9.\( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)c6

Probably best, although relinquishing the bishop pair is never a decision to be taken lightly.

The drawbacks of 9.\( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)c6 bxc6 are twofold: White loses a valuable blockader of the open e-file, and his bishop is forced to spend a tempo. The loss of time is important, notwithstanding the fact that a second enemy pawn is about to fall. Play continues 10.\( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)c6 \( \texttt{\texttt{b}} \)8 11.0–0 \( \texttt{\texttt{b}} \)6 12.\( \texttt{\texttt{a}} \)4 \( \texttt{\texttt{g}} \)4

The following variations illustrate Black's chances:

a) After 13.d3? \( \texttt{\texttt{d}} \)c5 White was already busted in Gomez Trigo – Antunes, Seville 1993.

b) No better was 13.h3? \( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)g3 14.fxg3 (14.hxg4 \( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e6!–+) 14...\( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e6 when White was losing his queen for insufficient compensation in Jackson – Lyell, West Bromwich 2003.

c) White can probably maintain equality with: 13.\( \texttt{\texttt{b}} \)3 \( \texttt{\texttt{c}} \)c5 14.d4! \( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)d4 15.\( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e3 \( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)xe3 16.fxe3 \( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e8 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{f}} \)f3 \( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)xe3† 18.\( \texttt{\texttt{h}} \)h1 \( \texttt{\texttt{h}} \)h8 19.\( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)d5 \( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)d5

At this point the game Riepe – Leisebein, e-mail 2002, was agreed drawn, presumably in view of 20.\( \texttt{\texttt{d}} \)xd5 \( \texttt{\texttt{b}} \)2 21.\( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e1 \( \texttt{\texttt{g}} \)6, when White has nothing better than 22.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}} \)c6 \( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e6 23.\( \texttt{\texttt{d}} \)5 \( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e8 repeating.

d) 13.d4 should be met by 13...\( \texttt{\texttt{d}} \)h4!? if Black is playing for a win. A logical continuation is 14.h3 \( \texttt{\texttt{a}} \)a6 15.\( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e6† \( \texttt{\texttt{h}} \)h8 16.\( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)g4 \( \texttt{\texttt{g}} \)xg3 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)h4 \( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)h4 18.f3 \( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)f1 19.\( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)f1 \( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e6 20.\( \texttt{\texttt{d}} \)2 c6.

The position is quite balanced. White has two pawns for the exchange, but he is not completely safe as Black can try to invade on e2.

Alternatively, should he wish it, Black can more or less force a draw with: 13...\( \texttt{\texttt{d}} \)xh2 14.\( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)xh2 \( \texttt{\texttt{h}} \)h4† 15.\( \texttt{\texttt{g}} \)g1 \( \texttt{\texttt{x}} \)g3 (15...\( \texttt{\texttt{a}} \)a6?! 16.\( \texttt{\texttt{c}} \)c4 \( \texttt{\texttt{c}} \)c4 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{e}} \)e1 is less convincing)
Play continues 16.fxg3 \text{\textit{xf1}} 17.Wxf1 (risky is 17.\text{\textit{xf1}}?! \text{\textit{h1f}} 18.\text{\textit{f2}} \text{\textit{f6f}} 19.\text{\textit{f4}} \text{\textit{xal})}
17...\text{\textit{xd4f}} 18.Wgf2 \text{\textit{d1f}} with a perpetual.

9...bxc6

10.0–0
10.\text{\textit{xc6?? d7}} leaves White facing embarrassment along the e-file.

10.d4 c5 11.0–0 is another try, after which I like Postny’s suggestion of 11...cxd4. Surprisingly, this move has never been played. Play continues 12.\text{\textit{c6 d7}} 13.\text{\textit{xd4 e8}} with sufficient compensation according to the Israeli Grandmaster.

10...\text{\textit{e8}} 11.d4 c5!
This undermining move is key, as Black needs to open lines for his bishops.

12.Wf3
White does not appear to have a satisfactory way to stabilise his centre.

12.Wb5, Roiz Baztan – Menendez Rey, Gijon 2003, can be met by 12...cxd4 13.\text{\textit{c6 d7f}} with advantage to Black.

12.c3 cxd4 13.cxd4 c5!? continued Black’s undermining policy in Beveridge – Curnow, Cheltenham 2004. The doubled c-pawns certainly proved useful in this instance.

12.g5?! is an interesting suggestion of Postny. I think that Black should play 12...h6 (12...cxd4 13.f4 \text{\textit{b8}} 14.\text{\textit{h5}} is dangerous) 13.xf6 \text{\textit{xf6}} (Postny analyses only a long and complicated variation starting with 13...gx6 but in my opinion it’s not necessary to weaken the kingside) 14.c3 cxd4 15.cxd4 c5.

Black’s bishop pair and active pieces ensure him of a full share of the chances.

We now return to the main line (after 12.Wf3).

10...\text{\textit{e8}} 11.d4 c5!
This undermining move is key, as Black needs to open lines for his bishops.
The game resulted in a draw after: 14.c4 c6 (14...\textit{Q}xe5 15.\textit{W}xd5 \textit{Q}xd5 16.cxd5 \textit{Q}d3?! is okay for Black) 15.\textit{Q}f4 (15.cxd5 \textit{Q}xe5 [15...cxd5 16.\textit{R}d1\textit{Q}f4 16.\textit{W}c3 \textit{W}xd5 17.\textit{R}e3\textpm]) 15...\textit{R}f8 16.e6 \textit{Q}xe6 17.h3 \textit{Q}f6 18.\textit{Q}ae1 \textit{W}d7 19.\textit{W}c3 \textit{Q}ae8 20.\textit{W}xc5 dxc4 21.\textit{Q}e5\textpm \frac{1}{2}\textdash\frac{1}{2}

Instead White could have secured a slight advantage with 14.\textit{W}a3! \textit{W}h4 15.h3 \textit{Q}xe5 16.\textit{W}xc5.

In view of the above, 12...\textit{cxd4} looks more promising, when play may continue: 13.\textit{Q}c6 \textit{W}d7 14.\textit{Q}xd4 \textit{Q}b8 15.\textit{Q}d5 \textit{Q}e5

B4) 7.\textit{Q}xf6\textdagger

This is White’s most promising move, eschewing the gain of a pawn but avoiding the loss of time.

7...\textit{gx}f6

Naturally, Black recaptures with the pawn in order to avoid the loss of the e-pawn. From a purely strategic point of view Black’s extra central pawn is a big plus. The downside is that, in the short term at least, his king will be slightly exposed.

8.d4

White had better stake a claim in the centre rather than being tempted by the lure of a check on h5, as shown by the following variations.

8.\textit{Q}h4 can be met by 8...\textit{W}c7 9.0\textdash0 \textit{Q}d7\textdagger when White had given up the centre for nothing in Lanin – Smirnov, St Petersburg 2007.

No better is 9.\textit{Q}xc6\textdagger bxc6 10.0\textdash0 e8\textdagger when Black’s pawn centre makes a powerful impression, especially when backed up by a pair of bishops.

8.\textit{Q}d4?! may appear attractive, but after the calm response 8...\textit{Q}d7 9.\textit{W}h5\textdagger \textit{Q}e7 Black’s magnificent centre gives him the advantage once again.

Postny concludes that Black has good compensation, and I agree. Black controls the centre, his bishops have great potential and his remaining pieces are all very active.
8...\texttt{g7}

Black should have no qualms about sacrificing a pawn, especially considering that 8...e4?! 9.\texttt{h4} would leave him under some pressure. Compared with the previous note the d4-pawn secures White some additional space, while Black's own centre can be undermined by a timely f2-f3.

9.dxe5

From time to time White tries 9.c4?! but this is unlikely to bring him anything good after 9...\texttt{g4}!, maintaining the option of castling on either side. White has tried three moves here:

a) 10.dxe5 0-0 11.e6?! (White should be able to equalise with 11.cxd5 \texttt{d4} 12.\texttt{d3} \texttt{xf3} 13.\texttt{xd4} fxe5 14.\texttt{d3} \texttt{xd5} 15.\texttt{c4} c6 16.0-0 \texttt{f7} =) 11...\texttt{e5} 12.\texttt{d7} dxc4

The position appears messy, but is favourable to Black who enjoys a useful lead in development. For example:

a1) After 13.e7 \texttt{d3}† 14.\texttt{f1} \texttt{xd7} 15.exf8=\texttt{xf8} Black went on to win quickly in Acosta Ruiz – Rybak, e-mail 1999.

a2) 13.h3 may be a better try, but after 13...\texttt{xh3} 14.gxf3 \texttt{e7} 15.\texttt{e3} \texttt{xd7} 16.exd7 \texttt{xd7} 17.\texttt{xc4}† \texttt{f7} 18.\texttt{xf7}† \texttt{xf7} Black's superior structure give him the advantage in the endgame.

b) 10.h3 \texttt{xh3} 11.\texttt{xf3} 0-0 12.cxd5? (after 12.\texttt{xc6} bxc6 only Black is playing for the advantage, but this was the lesser evil) 12...\texttt{d4} 13.\texttt{d3}

The players agreed a draw here in De Vreugt – Hendriks, Wijk aan Zee 1997, but I am sure Black would have continued had he spotted 13...c6! 14.\texttt{c4} (14.\texttt{xc6}? \texttt{a5}† picks up the bishop) 14...\texttt{cxd5} 15.\texttt{b3} \texttt{f5} when his extra pawn and powerful centre should add up to a decisive advantage.

c) 10.cxd5 has been seen at a high level, but after 10...\texttt{xd5} 11.dxe5 0-0 0-0 12.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{xc6}

it was clear that Black had won the opening battle in Morozevich – Aronian, Monte Carlo 2006.

9...0-0
This position was featured in the introduction. It should be noted that Black gains nothing with 9...fxe5?! 10.dxe5. At this point White usually chooses between B41) 10.xc6 and B42) 10.e6.

The attempt to hang on to the extra pawn with 10.exf6 xf6 leaves Black with plenty of compensation, e.g. 11.c3 g4 12.xc6 wc6 13.e5.

In this position Black enjoys the luxury of more than one route to an advantage.

In Westerinen – Binham, Helsinki 1986, he opted for 13..xe2 14.xc6 w8 15.e3 bxc6 16.xe2 c5 17.d3 d4 18.cxd4 cxd4 19.d2 xf2 and retained an edge, although White eventually held on for a draw.

An interesting deviation to the above game would have been: 15..h5?! 16.b4 (16.a5 c5 17.0-0 d4 18.cxd4 cxd4 19.d2 g2 20.ad1 xc8++) 16.d4 17.cxd4 xd4 (or 17.c5 18.dxc5 xb2 19.0-0 xa1 20.xa1+ when White will offer a tough resistance in the endgame) 18.0-0xb2+

Although both of the aforementioned options are quite agreeable, Black can also consider the more straightforward 13..wc3?! 14.xc3 xe2 15.xe2 xe5++.

B41) 10.xc6 bxc6 11.e6
White opts for a strategic handling of the position. Instead of opening for the game for the enemy bishops, he returns the extra pawn in the hope of exploiting his opponent’s structural weaknesses on both sides of the board. One could certainly make the argument that the f6-pawn is more of a liability than an asset for Black, so this approach is eminently sensible.

11..e8
The rook no longer has a future on the f-file, but it will be happy enough opposite the white queen.

Queenside castling is riskier, as Black’s heavy pieces enjoy much easier access to the b-file.
than the g-file. Nevertheless a few games have proceeded with:

12.\textit{\texttt{\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}}e3 \textit{\texttt{x}}e6 13.0–0–0

13.0–0 \textit{\texttt{g}}4 sets up an unpleasant pin, so the safest continuation is probably 13.\textit{\texttt{d}}d2!? \textit{\texttt{d}}d6 14.0–0 with equality.
The alternative 13.\textit{\texttt{d}}d4 \textit{\texttt{d}}d7 14.0–0–0 looks unpromising after 14...\textit{\texttt{b}}8 15.\textit{\texttt{b}}b3 \textit{\texttt{a}}5 16.\textit{\texttt{d}}d2, Anka – Micic, Balatonbereny 1993, when Black could have secured a big advantage with 16...\textit{\texttt{a}}4 17.\textit{\texttt{c}}c5 \textit{\texttt{a}}3.

13...\textit{\texttt{d}}d6

Black's central control combined with the two bishops and open b-file more than make up for his structural deficiencies.

14.\textit{\texttt{a}}a6

White is not helped by 14.\textit{\texttt{d}}d2 \textit{\texttt{c}}5 15.\textit{\texttt{h}}h6 d4 16.\textit{\texttt{x}}xg7 \textit{\texttt{x}}xg7\texttt{\texttt{+}}, Luther – Caruso, Verona 2005, with good attacking chances.
It was a similar story after 14.\textit{\texttt{d}}d4 \textit{\texttt{c}}5 15.\textit{\texttt{x}}xe6 \textit{\texttt{x}}xe6\texttt{\texttt{+}} in Hanisch – Karpatchev, Neuhausen 2004.

The diagram position was reached in McShane – Nordfjord, Copenhagen 2003. At this point Black should change plans, forgoing the attack in favour of 14...\textit{\texttt{c}}5! 15.\textit{\texttt{x}}x6 \textit{\texttt{c}}xd6 when the modification of the pawn structure helps him considerably. The doubled pawns are not at all weak, and the d6-c5-d5 trio will ensure his domination over the central squares.

12...\textit{\texttt{e}}xe6 13.\textit{\texttt{e}}e3

After 13.\textit{\texttt{d}}d3 it looks quite interesting for Black to try 13...\textit{\texttt{a}}5!? (the more popular option of 13...\textit{\texttt{c}}5 is also fine).

Possible continuations include:

a) 14.\textit{\texttt{d}}d4 \textit{\texttt{e}}e4 15.\textit{\texttt{d}}d1 (or 15.\textit{\texttt{f}}3 \textit{\texttt{a}}a6 16.\textit{\texttt{c}}c3 \textit{\texttt{x}}xd4 17.\textit{\texttt{x}}xd4 \textit{\texttt{x}}xf1 18.\textit{\texttt{x}}xf1=) 15...\textit{\texttt{f}}5 16.\textit{\texttt{c}}c3 \textit{\texttt{e}}8 17.\textit{\texttt{d}}d2 \textit{\texttt{g}}6 was equal in Severiukhina–Grebenshikov, Dubna 2007.

b) 14.\textit{\texttt{e}}e1 is playable although 14...\textit{\texttt{e}}xe1\texttt{\texttt{+}} 15.\textit{\texttt{x}}xe1 left the knight in a passive position in Lenz – Chulis, Austria 1996.

c) In Fisher – Koons, e-mail 2000, White soon lost after 14.\textit{\texttt{d}}d1 \textit{\texttt{a}}a6 15.\textit{\texttt{f}}f5 \textit{\texttt{e}}8 16.\textit{\texttt{f}}f4? \textit{\texttt{c}}c2
17.\textit{\texttt{e}}e1? \textit{\texttt{e}}e4 0–1. A perfect result for Black, although White could easily have improved by means of 16.\textit{\texttt{d}}d2 with equality.

It is for this reason that I propose the more ambitious 15...\textit{\texttt{e}}e4?!N. This is a multipurpose move, whose numerous merits are revealed in the following sample variations:

c1) The first point worth mentioning is that 16.\textit{\texttt{d}}d2?? can be refuted instantly by 16...\textit{\texttt{c}}8!, trapping the queen. Please note, however, that the same idea cannot be used against other moves, as White could simply capture the rook on e4 thanks to the pin along the d-file.
c2) 16...\textit{e}3 should be met by 16...\textit{c}8!, threatening to trap the queen with ...\textit{c}8. Following 17...\textit{d}2 \textit{b}4 18...\textit{e}5 Black is starting to take control over the centre. After 19...\textit{d}7 \textit{d}6 White must either retreat or allow a useful improvement in the enemy pawn structure.

c3) 16...\textit{d}4 may be White's best. Here I would suggest 16...\textit{c}8!? 17...\textit{c}8+t \textit{c}8 when the powerful bishops make up for Black's damaged structure.

13...

Postny correctly recommended this move as the best.

Less good is 13...\textit{e}8 14...\textit{d}3 \textit{g}4 15...\textit{c}5 when Black's position is somewhat unpleasant, albeit defensible. (Instead after 15...\textit{h}4?! \textit{c}5! Black obtained counterplay and triumphed in Shirov – Radjabov, Odessa 2007.)

14...\textit{d}2 \textit{d}4 15...\textit{h}6

It looks natural for White to exchange one half of his opponent's bishop pair, although there is nothing wrong with 15...\textit{f}4 \textit{b}7 16...\textit{e}1 \textit{b}6 17...\textit{f}3 18...\textit{f}3= (Postny).

15...\textit{b}7 16...\textit{e}1 \textit{d}7 17...\textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6

18...\textit{g}7 \textit{xf}3 19...\textit{xf}3 \textit{g}7

We have been following the game Klundt – Bock, Forchheim 2002. The chances can be evaluated as approximately level, as the mutual pawn weaknesses are of roughly equal significance.

B42) 10...\textit{e}6

With this move White aims for a roughly similar type of position, but without ceding the bishop pair. Strategically speaking, he hopes to show that Black's split kingside pawns will be a liability. In an ideal world, he dreams of securing the f5-square as a base of operations from which to launch a devastating attack. I hope to show you how to
prevent such a nightmare from ever becoming a reality in your games.

10...\(\triangle e5\)

Black begins by posting his knight on an active, central location. At the same time he prepares to capture the doomed e6-pawn as well as to bolster his centre with \(...c6\). Please also note the misplacement of the bishop on b5.

11.0–0

There does not seem to be anything better than this natural move.

11.\(\triangle f4\)

With this move White tries to misplace the enemy queen.

11...\(\triangle d6\)

Black must avoid 11...\(c6\)? 12.\(\triangle xe5\) \(fxe5\) 13.\(\triangle xe5\) when he will not have time to capture on b5 due to the impending e6-e7 fork.

12.0–0 \(\triangle xe6\)

Compared with the main line, Black has been obliged to capture the e-pawn with his queen rather than bishop, but this does not appear to harm his chances.

13.\(\triangle fe1\)

Nothing is really changed by 13.\(\triangle ae1\) \(c6\)
14.\(\triangle d3\) \(\triangle xd3\) 15.\(\triangle xd3\), Hellers – Antunes, Novi Sad 1990, when I suggest 15...\(\triangle g4\), just as in the analogous position after 13.\(\triangle fe1\). The position of the second white rook does not alter the evaluation.

13.\(\triangle d4\) also achieves very little for White after 13...\(\triangle f7\) or 13...\(\triangle b6\)?.

13...\(c6\) 14.\(\triangle d3\) \(\triangle xd3\) 15.\(\triangle xd3\) \(\triangle g4\) 16.\(\triangle d2\) \(\triangle d7\) 17.\(\triangle e7\) \(\triangle f7\) 18.\(\triangle ae1\) \(\triangle f8\) 19.\(\triangle xf7\) \(\triangle xf7\)

The position is equal, although I would say it is White who may have to be slightly more careful. The bishop pair combined with the extra central pawn gives Black some chances to play for the advantage, and in Ovetchkin – Zvjaginsev, Krasnoyarsk 2007, he eventually managed to win.

Occasionally White castles long, such as after:

11.\(\triangle e3\) \(c6\) 12.\(\triangle d3\) \(\triangle xe6\) 13.0–0–0?!

13.\(\triangle d4\) can be met by 13...\(\triangle g4\) 14.\(f3\) \(\triangle d7\) 15.\(\triangle b3\) \(b6\)? (15...\(\triangle e8\) was a sensible alternative). Black was fine and eventually won in Tseshkovsky – Yilmaz, Kusadasi 1990.

Compared with variation B41) above, queenside castling is less risky here as the b-file is closed.

13...\(\triangle g4\) 14.\(h3\) \(\triangle xd3\) 15.\(\triangle xd3\) \(\triangle h5=\)

Now in Hracek – Werle, Germany 2008, White faltered with:

16.\(g4?!\) \(\triangle g6\) 17.\(\triangle d2??\)
After 17.\textit{W}b3 \textit{Q}e4 18.\textit{Q}d4 \textit{W}a5 19.\textit{Q}he1 \textit{Q}xf3 20.\textit{W}xf3 \textit{W}xa2 21.\textit{W}f5 White should be able to hold the position.

17...\textit{Q}e4\textit{=}+

White had some problems although he eventually salvaged half a point.

11...\textit{Q}xe6 12.\textit{Q}d4

The game Mills – Botsari, Manila 1992, continued 12.h3 c5? 13.c3? (13.\textit{Q}f4 \textit{W}d6 14.\textit{Q}xe1±) 13...\textit{W}b6 with equality. Instead I propose the improvement 12...\textit{Q}f7?!N, intending ...\textit{Q}h5 with a good position.

12...\textit{Q}g4

Black should take the opportunity to provoke the f-pawn into moving.

13.f3

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

13...\textit{Q}c8!\textit{=}

I like this move, although I suppose that there is nothing particularly wrong with 13...\textit{Q}d7 14.\textit{Q}xd7 \textit{W}xd7 15.\textit{Q}f4 \textit{Q}c6 with balanced chances. The point of the text is that the white bishop is misplaced on b5, and will soon be forced back by ...c6 in any case. Meanwhile Black’s extra central pawn gives him a solid space advantage, so it almost seems too generous to offer a straightforward exchange of bishops.

14.\textit{Q}f4 c6! 15.\textit{Q}xe5

15.\textit{Q}a4 is well met by 15...\textit{W}b6! 16.c3 \textit{Q}g4 when Black has everything in order.

15...\textit{Q}xe5!

Of course Black had no intention of taking on b5 immediately. Now two enemy pieces are under fire, while the g7-bishop is suddenly looking a lot happier!

16.\textit{Q}xf8\textit{=} \textit{W}xf8 17.\textit{Q}d3 e4!

Black must of course avoid 17...exd4?? 18.\textit{W}h5 with a decisive attack.

18.\textit{Q}xe4

18.\textit{Q}e3 exd3 19.\textit{W}xd3 \textit{W}f6 (19...\textit{Q}d7 20.\textit{Q}f1 \textit{W}e7 is another way) 20.\textit{Q}f1 \textit{Q}g6 left White struggling to equalise in Cisler – Rybak, Czech Republic 1998.

18...\textit{Q}xd4\textit{=} 19.\textit{Q}e3

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

19...\textit{Q}xe3\textit{=}

This leads to a forced draw, so let us see if there is anything better.

There is nothing to be gained from 19...\textit{W}c5 20.\textit{Q}xh7\textit{=} \textit{Q}h8 21.\textit{Q}xd4\textit{=} \textit{W}xd4\textit{=} 22.\textit{Q}h1 \textit{Q}xh7 23.\textit{Q}f1 \textit{Q}g4 24.\textit{W}e7\textit{=} when White can force a draw at any moment of his choosing.
The only genuine winning attempt seems to be 19...\textit{i}xb2?!. Play then continues 20.c3 (20.\textit{f}f1?! \textit{e}7! [20...\textit{g}7 21.\textit{h}5 \textit{e}6 22.\textit{d}3 \textit{d}7 leaves the onus on White to prove compensation]) 20...\textit{xc}3 (20...\textit{hal} 21...\textit{hx}7t \textit{g}7 22.\textit{h}5t=) 21.\textit{hx}7t \textit{hx}7 22.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}8 23.\textit{c}2t \textit{g}6 24.\textit{xc}3 \textit{h}3 25.\textit{f}2 \textit{e}8

Now White chooses between the natural C1) 7.0–0 and the immediate attack on the e-pawn with C2) 7.\textit{e}2.

C1) 7.0–0 \textit{d}4!?

With this ambitious move Black compromises his pawn structure in order to gain space. The similarity to the Bird defence against the Ruy Lopez (3...\textit{d}4) is almost too obvious to warrant mentioning, although I would tend to regard the present variation as offering better equalising chances.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
\textbf{8.\textit{xd}4} \\
8.\textit{e}1 \textit{e}7 9.\textit{xd}4 exd4 transposes to the main line.
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

8...\textit{xd}4

Upon first impressions, it looks as though the opening has gone badly for Black. His pawn structure has been damaged (if we removed all other pieces except the kings then White would easily be winning), he lags in development and his uncastled king stands on an open file.

Fortunately the position also contains a few redeeming features. Most obviously, the pawn on d4 severely cramps the White position, and makes it hard for him to find a useful role for his bishops. After the subsequent ...c6 and ...d5 Black will be able to develop his own bishops on good, active squares.
Ultimately we can summarise the situation by saying that Black is investing in quality of development at the expense of both time and pawn structure.

9...\textit{e}1+ \textit{e}7 10...\textit{e}2

It looks obvious to keep the enemy king pinned down in the centre. Nevertheless, White occasionally prefers:

10...\textit{h}5+ \textit{g}6 11...\textit{h}6

11...\textit{e}5 \textit{xe}5 12...\textit{xe}5 \textit{c}6 is equal, but easier to play for Black.

11...\textit{c}6 12...\textit{f}1

Black should be alright here, although care is required. I suggest:

12...\textit{f}7!

This is an important finesse. Instead after 12...\textit{d}5 13.d3 \textit{f}7 White can make a powerful exchange sacrifice with 14...\textit{xe}7+! \textit{xe}7 15...\textit{d}2 \textit{e}6 16...\textit{e}1.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board1.png}
\caption{Black's position is quite precarious. In Kupreichik – Jonkman, Groningen 1995, he slowly lost his pawns after 16...\textit{ae}8 17...\textit{f}4 \textit{h}4 18...\textit{h}4 \textit{e}7 19...\textit{g}5 \textit{d}6 20...\textit{xd}4 \textit{f}5 21...\textit{f}4 \textit{d}7 22...\textit{e}5 \textit{hf}8 23...\textit{xa}7.}
\end{figure}

13.d3

Compared with the previous note, the point behind delaying the advance of the d-pawn is seen after 13...\textit{xe}7+ \textit{xe}7 14.d3 when 14...\textit{d}6! allows Black to cover his dark squares more easily.

13...\textit{f}8 14...\textit{f}4 \textit{xf}4 15...\textit{xf}4 \textit{c}5

Black should have no real problems in the ending.

10...\textit{c}6 11...\textit{d}3

The light-squared bishop has found a decent home. Unfortunately for the first player, the future of its brother on \textit{c}1 – not to mention the rook on \textit{a}1 – is an altogether different proposition.

11...\textit{d}5

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board2.png}
\caption{In Zelic – Lalic, Rijeka 2009, White instead tried:
12.f4 \textit{d}8

12...\textit{f}7?! 13.c4 dxc3 14.dxc3 \textit{d}6 also looks fine for the second player.}
\end{figure}

12.b3

In Zelic – Lalic, Rijeka 2009, White instead tried:

12.f4 \textit{d}8

12...\textit{f}7?! 13.c4 dxc3 14.dxc3 \textit{d}6 also looks fine for the second player.

13.c4

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board3.png}
\caption{Black's position is quite precarious. In Kupreichik – Jonkman, Groningen 1995, he slowly lost his pawns after 16...\textit{ae}8 17...\textit{f}4 \textit{h}4 18...\textit{h}4 \textit{e}7 19...\textit{g}5 \textit{d}6 20...\textit{xd}4 \textit{f}5 21...\textit{f}4 \textit{d}7 22...\textit{e}5 \textit{hf}8 23...\textit{xa}7.}
\end{figure}
13.b3 also fails to create any problems after 13...d7 14.b2 c5 15.f2 f8 16.g3 a5. Black easily manages to develop his pieces.

13...dxc4 14.bxc4 d6 15.d3 c7 16.d2 d7 17.f2 e8 18.e4 c5 19.e1 h8

White went on to win the game, but at this stage the position is balanced.

It is also worth mentioning that 12.c4 can be met convincingly by 12...0-0!

White is able to leave his bishop en prise thanks to some specific tactical resources. Players who do not wish to give their opponent the option of forcing the draw (as in the note to White's 15th in the main line below) may wish to investigate 12...d8! intending to complete development by ...d6, ...c7 etc.

On the other hand, 12...f7?! 13.b2 d6 is well met by 14.c4!.

13.xe7

If White does not take up the challenge then Black will obtain an easy game, as can be seen after 13.b2 c5 intending ...d7 and ...

13...xf2† 14.h1 h3!

Black tosses another log onto the fire.

15.g1

A draw could be agreed after 15.gxh3 f3†.

15...e8

16.xf8†

16.a3?? xe7 17.xe7 was played in Virovansky – Skrivanek, St Petersburg 1998, at which point Black missed 17...f7! 18.g5 h6 19.f1 xg2† winning.

16...xf8 17.f1 xg2† 18.xg2 d6
Black's slight material deficit is balanced by the exposed position of the enemy king. Provided he does not allow White to coordinate his army in a harmonious way, he should be able to maintain the balance. Before moving on I will briefly mention that 18...\textit{c}e7?! looks like a playable alternative.

19.\textit{b}b2 \textit{c}5 20.\textit{f}f2 \textit{f}b8!

It makes a lot of sense to exchange a pair of rooks before White can double on the f-file. 20...\textit{b}5 21.\textit{d}xb5 \textit{g}6\textit{t} 22.\textit{h}h1 \textit{e}4\textit{t} 23.\textit{g}2 is unclear according to Tseitlin, but it looks to me as though White is almost winning.

21.\textit{a}f1 \textit{x}f2\textit{t} 22.\textit{x}f2

Thanks to the rook exchange White's attacking potential has been reduced, while his own king will have a harder time escaping checks.

22...\textit{b}5!

Black makes use of a tactical opportunity to gain additional space on the queenside. It is important that White is not given time to coordinate his pieces effectively.

23.\textit{b}4

White is obviously not helped by 23.\textit{d}xb5? \textit{g}6\textit{t} followed by 24...\textit{xc}2.

23...\textit{c}4 24.\textit{f}f5 \textit{g}6 25.\textit{g}4 \textit{e}5

25...\textit{h}5 26.\textit{f}f3 \textit{e}5 was a more forcing route to the same position.

26.\textit{f}f3 \textit{h}5 27.\textit{e}2 \textit{g}5\textit{t} 28.\textit{h}1 \textit{f}5

Black creates a threat on every turn.

29.\textit{g}2

![Chess Diagram]

29...\textit{g}5\textit{t}

Black cannot continue the game with Tseitlin's suggestion of 29...\textit{g}5 on account of 30.\textit{e}8\textit{t} \textit{h}7 31.\textit{x}d4 \textit{g}4 32.\textit{d}1=.

30.\textit{f}1 \textit{f}5=  

Now the 'correct' conclusion of the game would be 31.\textit{g}2 \textit{g}5\textit{t} followed by a swift handshake. Instead, in Kalegin – Tseitlin, USSR 1986, White blundered with 31.\textit{f}2?? \textit{xc}2 and went on to lose.

C2) 7.\textit{e}2!

I believe this to be the most critical test of 5...\textit{f}6. White simply intends to capture on c6 followed by e5.

7...\textit{e}7

The gambit approach is firmly established as Black's best. It is pointless to defend with 7...d6? as 8.d4 leaves Black struggling.
8. \( \texttt{\text{N}}x\texttt{c6} \)

8.0–0 allows Black to choose between transposing to variation C1) with 8...\( \texttt{\text{D}}d4 \)? 9.\( \texttt{\text{N}}\texttt{x}d4 \) exd4 10.\( \texttt{\text{B}}e1 \) c6, or to the main line below with 8...0–0 9.\( \texttt{\text{N}}x\texttt{c6} \) dxc6.

8...dxc6

8...bxc6?? is an interesting alternative that deserves attention. White can capture the e5-pawn in one of two ways:

a) 9.\( \texttt{\text{N}}\texttt{x}e5 \) has been the most popular move historically, although it has been eschewed by the world’s top players over the past couple of years. I do not know if there is a specific reason for this, so will merely present what I believe to be one of Black’s better responses.

9...\( \texttt{\text{B}}f7 \) 10.\( \texttt{\text{N}}\texttt{xc7} \)

Capturing the second pawn is the most principled response.

10...0–0 11.d3 \( \texttt{\text{B}}b4 \)†!

This looks better than 11...\( \texttt{\text{f}}f6 \), 11...\( \texttt{d}d8 \) and 11...\( \texttt{B}e6 \)†, none of which seem to be sufficient for equality.

12.c3

Perhaps White could consider 12.\( \texttt{\text{f}}f1 \), although in that case it will clearly take him a long time to catch up on development. If Black is not happy with this position then he should be playing a different opening.

12...\( \texttt{\text{g}}g6 \)!

This is the clever point behind Black’s previous move. At this point the game Volaks – Auzins, corr. 1994, continued:

13.\( \texttt{\text{g}}\texttt{g}3 \)

Perhaps White can improve with 13.cxb4, although 13...\( \texttt{\text{w}}xg2 \) 14.\( \texttt{\text{g}}g1 \) \( \texttt{\text{w}}xf3 \) 15.\( \texttt{\text{e}}e3 \) \( \texttt{\text{e}}e8 \) looks like decent value for a pawn.

13...\( \texttt{\text{w}}x\texttt{d}3 \) 14.\( \texttt{\text{e}}e5 \) \( \texttt{\text{e}}e4 \)† 15.\( \texttt{\text{d}}d1 \)

Although White went on to win, Black could have obtained a fine position with:

15...d6!N 16.\( \texttt{\text{e}}e1 \) \( \texttt{\text{d}}d5 \)† 17.\( \texttt{\text{d}}d2 \) \( \texttt{a}a5 \)

White’s extra pawn looks less important than his awful king position.

b) 9.\( \texttt{\text{N}}\texttt{xe5} \) has been much more popular over the past couple of years.

Play proceeds with:

9...0–0 10.0–0 \( \texttt{\text{w}}e6 \) 11.\( \texttt{\text{e}}e1 \)

White prepares for a queen exchange.

11...\( \texttt{\text{c}}c5 \)

In Karjakin – Zvjaginsev, Dagomys 2008, Black was unsuccessful after 11...\( \texttt{\text{h}}h4 \)

12.\( \texttt{\text{f}}f3 \) \( \texttt{\text{w}}\texttt{xe2} \) 13.\( \texttt{\text{f}}f6 \) \( \texttt{\text{f}}f6 \) 14.d3 \( \texttt{d}d6 \) 15.\( \texttt{\text{e}}e3 \)

\( \texttt{c}c5 \) 16.\( \texttt{\text{b}}b1 \) a5 17.a4 \( \texttt{\text{d}}d7 \) 18.b3 \( \texttt{\text{e}}ab8 \) 19.\( \texttt{\text{d}}d2 \)

\( \texttt{\text{w}}e8 \) 20.\( \texttt{\text{w}}xe8 \)† \( \texttt{\text{f}}xe8 \) 21.\( \texttt{\text{f}}f1 \) d5 22.\( \texttt{\text{b}}b2 \)

\( \texttt{\text{w}}xb2 \) 23.\( \texttt{\text{w}}xb2 \). White went on to convert his extra pawn smoothly.

12.\( \texttt{\text{f}}f3 \) \( \texttt{\text{w}}\texttt{xe2} \) 13.\( \texttt{\text{w}}\texttt{xe2} \) \( \texttt{d}d6 \)

This is an important position. The question is whether Black’s two bishops and better mobility can provide enough for a pawn.
White has two choices:

a) Leko – Radjabov, Monte Carlo 2007 proceeded with 14.d3?! \( \text{g4} \). White has no chance of an advantage, and an equal ending was soon reached after: 15.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{b}4 \) 16.a3 \( \text{a}5 \) 17.b4 \( \text{b}6 \) 18.\( \text{xb}6 \) axb6 19.\( \text{e}7 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 20.gxf3 \( \text{xf}7 \) 21.\( \text{xf}7 \) \( \text{xf}7 \)

b) If White wants to play ambitiously then he should prefer 14.d4 \( \text{b}6 \), and now:

b1) 15.\( \text{e}7 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 16.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 17.gxf3 \( \text{xf}3 \) 18.c4 \( \text{f}8 \) 19.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) was okay for Black in Kharlov – Vuilleumier, Dresden 2007.

b2) 15.c3 \( \text{g}4 \) 16.\( \text{e}3 \) c5 was played in Chan Wei Xuan – Lyell, Beijing 2008. Here White could have played 17.\( \text{dxc}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 18.\( \text{d}4 \)±.

b3) 15.a4?! looks promising. Solomon – Lyell, Queenstown 2009, continued 15...\( \text{g}4 \) 16.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 17.gxf3 \( \text{a}5 \) 18.\( \text{a}3 \)±. White went on to convert his advantage.

8...\( \text{bxc}6 \)±? is certainly playable. However, at the present time it appears that Black still has some problems to solve in line b) above.

10.0-0!

This is White’s most accurate move order, keeping the d-pawn’s options open until the opponent’s intentions have been revealed. 10.d3 0-0 11.0-0 reaches the note to White’s 11th below.

Instead 10.d4 gives Black an additional opportunity in:

10...0-0-0? 10...0-0 11.0-0 reaches the main line.

11.\( \text{e}3 \) c5

Also possible is 11...\( \text{d}6 \) 12.f4 \( \text{xe}5 \) 13.dxe5 (13.fxe5 \( \text{g}6 \)\( \text{f}6 \)) 13...\( \text{g}6 \) 14.\( \text{c}1 \) h5 15.0-0 with good chances of equality, as in the game Wessels – Freiberger, Germany 2005. Compared with the main line, the black monarch has to feel safer on the queenside.

12.0-0-0 cxd4 13.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{g}5 \)† 14.\( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{xg}2 \) 15.\( \text{hg}1 \) \( \text{d}5 \)

Black was okay in Solodovnichenko – Ponkratov Naberezhnye, Chelyny 2008.

10...0-0

The tactical justification for White’s last is revealed after 10...\( \text{xc}2 \)? 11.d3 0-0-0 12.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 13.\( \text{g}4 \)† \( \text{b}8 \) 14.\( \text{g}5 \), winning material for insufficient compensation.

11.d4

11.d3 is slightly less accurate in view of 11...\( \text{a}e8 \).
With the following possibilities:

12. \( \text{d}c4 \) b5?! 13. \( \text{d}e3 \) \( \text{d}d6 \) is unconvincing for White.

12. \( \text{f}f4 \) (Nijboer – Degraeve, France 2007) 12. \( \text{c}c5 \)N leads after 13. \( \text{a}ae1 \) \( \text{d}d4 \) 14. \( \text{c}c3 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 15. \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 16. \( \text{d}d1 \) \( \text{h}3 \) 17. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{g}4 \) to a position in which White can probably maintain equality but nothing more.

After 12. \( \text{f}f4 \) \( \text{d}d6 \) White has to waste time with 13. \( \text{d}d4 \), admitting that his 11th was a mistake, although unfortunately the present position is not one in which a single tempo is likely to alter the evaluation in a pivotal way.

11... \( \text{d}d6 \)

Black clears the e-file while giving himself the option of swapping down to an opposite coloured bishop position at a moment’s notice.

12. \( \text{c}c3 \)

An important alternative is:

12. \( \text{f}f4 \)

Black should respond with:

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

12. ... \( \text{c}5 \) is conveniently met by 13. \( \text{e}e3 \).

13. \( \text{d}xe5 \) \( \text{g}6 \)

I must emphasise that if Black is going to exchange on e5, then it is crucial that he chooses the right moment to do so. This will usually mean waiting for white pawns to appear on both d4 and f4. This will ensure that, regardless of which way White recaptures, his pawns will be securely blockaded on dark squares where they will restrict his own bishop.

If White is given time to develop his bishop on f4 (and subsequently g3), exchanging on e5 will become a lot less palatable as the white bishop would replace its colleague on a superb square.

Finally, in the event that White recaptures on e5 with the d-pawn, he will obtain a kingside pawn majority of four versus two. In this case it is essential that Black be in a suitable position to prevent his opponent from mobilising the kingside pawns. We will now witness a demonstration of how he can frustrate his opponent’s ambitions.

14. \( \text{f}f2 \) \( \text{ad}8 \) 15. \( \text{e}e3 \) \( \text{d}d5 \)

From this position Black has good chances to establish a successful light square blockade. Here we can see another reason why the second player should wait for a white pawn to appear on f4 before exchanging on e5. If the pawn were one square further back then it would be easy for him to prepare the g4 advance, crushing Black’s dreams of a light square blockade. By contrast, in the diagram position Black will, as a rule, almost always answer h3 with ...h5. An example is Oral – Jonkman, Pardubice 1996. That game continued:
16.\text{c1} \text{e8d8} 17.\text{e2f1} h5 18.\text{e2f2} a6 19.\text{h3} \text{e8f8} 20.\text{d2h2} \text{e8h7} 21.\text{e2f1} \text{e8d8} 22.\text{a2xd5} \text{e2xd5} 

![Diagram]

The precise moves here are not too important. What matters is that Black constantly maintains the all-important blockade.

23.\text{e1}!? \text{e8g6!}

Black avoids 23...\text{hx2}?! 24.e6 when his defence would be more difficult. Instead Jonkman sticks to the plan, and is never in any real danger. For the sake of completeness I will leave you with the remainder of the game, which provides an excellent demonstration of how to hold such a position with the black pieces.

24.\text{c1} \text{e6} 25.\text{d2d4} \text{e8d8} 26.a3 \text{e8f8} 27.\text{h4} \text{e8f5} 28.\text{e2f1} \text{d8d5} 29.\text{g2} \text{e8f7} 30.\text{d8f8} \text{h7h7} 31.\text{h4} \text{e8g8} 32.b4 b6 33.\text{g3} \text{d3\textdagger} 34.\text{h2} \text{e8f5} 35.\text{g3} \text{e8e7} 36.\text{e3} \text{e8e6} 37.\text{e2} \text{g6} 38.\text{c2} \text{e4} 39.\text{d2} \text{e6} 40.e6 \text{e8xe6} 41.\text{e5} \text{e8g6} 42.\text{d2} \text{d5} 43.\text{c2} \text{e4} 44.\text{d2} \text{g5} 45.\text{d5} b5 46.\text{e6} \text{xe7} \text{e8e6} 47.\text{e5} \text{e8g6} 48.\text{e7} \text{e8e6} 49.\text{d2} \text{g8} 50.\text{e2} \text{xe2} 51.\text{xe2} \text{e8e4} 52.\text{xe4} \text{xe4} 53.g4 \text{h8xh4} 54.h8xh4 \text{g6} 55.\text{g3} \text{e8f7} 56.\text{h4} \text{e8f6} 57.\text{e5\textdagger} \text{e8e6} 58.\text{g5} \text{e2c2} 59.\text{d4} \text{d3} 60.\text{e7} \text{e2c2} 61.\text{h4} \text{d3} 62.\text{b8} \text{c2} 63.\text{g5} \text{b1} 64.\text{h6} \text{e8f7} 65.\text{h7} \text{e2c2} 66.\text{c7} \text{b1} 67.\text{h6} \text{e8c2} 68.f5 \text{gxf5} 69.g5 \text{f4} 70.\text{xf4} \text{g6} 71.\text{e3} \text{c2} 72.\text{a2d4} \text{e6} 73.\text{h8} \text{e2c7} 74.\text{h5} \text{e8g6\textdagger} 75.\text{g4} \text{e6} 1/2-1/2.

Let us now return to the main line. One advantage of 12.c3 is that White's bishop enjoys greater freedom.

12...\text{e6}!?

It is important for Black to prevent the manoeuvre \text{f4-g3}. If White were allowed to accomplish this then he could continue to consolidate his extra pawn while Black would be starved of any meaningful counterplay. Meanwhile the exchange of bishop for knight on e5 would be undesirable for reasons described previously. There follows a summary of the alternatives. I do not consider any of them to represent an improvement for Black over the main line. However, I do believe that by playing through these lines you will improve your understanding of what both sides are trying to achieve.

a) 12...\text{c5}

This is well met by:

13.\text{f4}

13.\text{f4} \text{cxd4} 14.\text{cxd4} \text{e6} is not convincing for White, and 13.\text{e1} \text{e6} 14.\text{f4} \text{e8g8} gives a balanced position.

13...\text{eae8} 14.\text{e1} \text{cxd4} 15.\text{cxd4}

Despite the isolated d-pawn and Black's pair of bishops, the second player does not have enough compensation. A couple of games have continued:

15...\text{e6} 16.\text{g3} \text{c6} 

Curiously the Greek GM Vasilios Kotronias has encountered this position twice. In Steffansson – Kotronias, Gausdal 1990, White obtained a clear plus after 17.\text{d2} \text{e8d8} 18.\text{c3}
\textit{c7} 19.a4 \textit{\&\textit{b}6} 20.\textit{\textit{f}3!} \textit{\textit{g}4} 21.\textit{h}4. Kotronias obviously learned his lesson, because two years later he switched to the opposite side!

The game Kotronias – Vouldis, Greece 1992, saw him temporarily return the pawn but retain the advantage after 17.\textit{\textit{c}2} \textit{\textit{b}4} 18.\textit{\textit{e}3} \textit{\textit{d}8} 19.\textit{\textit{d}3} \textit{\textit{x}d}4 20.\textit{\textit{e}5} \textit{\textit{h}4} 21.\textit{\textit{a}4} a5 22.a3 b5 23.\textit{\textit{c}2±.}

b) After 12...\textit{\textit{a}e}8 13.\textit{\textit{f}4} there appears to be nothing better than 13...c5 reaching the above note.

c) The immediate 12...\textit{\textit{x}e}5?! looks premature in view of 13.\textit{\textit{x}e}5!.

This looks best, although White can also maintain an edge with 13.dxe5, e.g. 13...\textit{\textit{g}6} 14.\textit{\textit{d}1} (14.\textit{\textit{e}1} is well met by 14...\textit{\textit{a}d}8; White should not allow Black to dominate the d-file) 14...\textit{\textit{g}4} 15.\textit{\textit{c}4†} \textit{\textit{h}8} 16.\textit{\textit{d}4} (16.\textit{\textit{e}1} \textit{\textit{f}3} is obviously satisfactory for Black) 16...\textit{\textit{f}3} 17.\textit{\textit{f}1} \textit{\textit{f}5}

18.\textit{\textit{h}1!} (without this Black obtains a comfortable position, e.g. 18.\textit{\textit{e}3} \textit{\textit{x}e}5 and 18.\textit{\textit{f}4} \textit{\textit{a}f}8 19.\textit{\textit{x}f}5 \textit{\textit{x}f}5) 18...c5 19.\textit{\textit{h}4!} (19.\textit{\textit{f}4} \textit{\textit{c}6} 20.\textit{\textit{x}f}5 \textit{\textit{x}f}5) 19...\textit{\textit{c}6} 20.\textit{\textit{f}4} \textit{\textit{d}8} 21.\textit{\textit{g}3} \textit{\textit{d}2} 22.b4 \textit{\textit{x}b}4 23.\textit{\textit{x}b}4 \textit{\textit{f}7}
White keeps a slight advantage, although Black should be able to hold.

After 13.\textit{\textit{x}e}5! Black may try:

c1) 13...\textit{\textit{f}7} 14.\textit{\textit{g}3} \textit{\textit{a}e}8 15.\textit{\textit{f}4} \textit{\textit{e}6} (15...\textit{\textit{e}2} 16.b3 does not change the assessment of the position) 16.\textit{\textit{e}5} \textit{\textit{g}6} 17.\textit{\textit{e}3} with good winning chances, as in the game Galkin – Bezgodov, Russia 1998, although Black was eventually able to salvage half a point.

c2) 13...\textit{\textit{x}e}5 14.dxe5 \textit{\textit{a}d}8 15.\textit{\textit{e}1} \textit{\textit{f}7} 16.\textit{\textit{f}3±}

Black has serious problems. He is practically two pawns down, and his only chance to save the game is associated with the presence of opposite-coloured bishops. It is crucial that the f-pawn has not yet advanced to f4, as now White will have no problem mobilising his kingside pawns with g4 (which can be supported with h3, should Black attempt to prevent it with...h5).

c3) 13...\textit{\textit{a}e}8 14.\textit{\textit{x}f}6 (14.\textit{\textit{g}3} \textit{\textit{e}2} is less good. Note that White would be ill-advised to continue: 15.\textit{\textit{x}c}7? \textit{\textit{d}3} 16.\textit{\textit{f}3} \textit{\textit{x}g}2† 17.\textit{\textit{x}g}2 \textit{\textit{x}f}1† 18.\textit{\textit{g}1} \textit{\textit{x}f}2†) 14...\textit{\textit{x}f}6 15.\textit{\textit{e}3} \textit{\textit{f}7±} Black faces an unenviable defensive task, although I believe that it should be possible for him to hold the draw.

13.\textit{\textit{f}4}
13.\textit{\textit{d}2} c5 14.\textit{\textit{f}4} cxd4 15.cxd4 \textit{\textit{f}5}?! offers Black decent play on the light squares.
So far we have been following the game Kramnik – Radjabov, Monte Carlo 2007, which continued:

13...\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{ae8}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{e3}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{f5}\) 15.\(\texttt{b3}\)

Black has failed to equalise from the opening. His position remains quite solid, but it is not easy to suggest a useful plan for him.

15...\(\texttt{a5}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{ae1}\) \(\texttt{a4}\) 17.\(\texttt{c4}\) \(\texttt{axb3}\) 18.\(\texttt{axb3}\) \(\texttt{h5}\) 19.\(\texttt{h3}\)

This may have been the right time to improve the bishop’s position with 19.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{d2}\)\!, e.g. 19...\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{c2}\) (19...\(\texttt{h4}\) 20.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{c3}\)\(\texttt{\textdagger}\) 20.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{e3}\) \(\texttt{h4}\) 21.\(\texttt{h3}\)! when the \(\texttt{h4}\)-pawn becomes a target. 19...\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{h7}\) 20.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{g4}\)\?

20.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{d2}\) was still possible, as suggested by Postny.

20...\(\texttt{hxg4}\) 21.\(\texttt{hxg4}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xe5}\) 22.\(\texttt{dxe5}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{g6}\)

23.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{f2}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xg4}\)\(\texttt{\textdagger}\) 24.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xg4}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xg4}\)

Black had equalised the material, and the game was eventually drawn after 68 moves.

In view of the improvements available to White on moves 19 and 20, I think that the correct path for Black would have been:

13...\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xe5}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xe5}\)

14.\(\texttt{dxe5}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{g6}\) 15.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{e3}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{ad8}\) should be compared with the note to White’s 12th. Once again Black has good chances of achieving a successful blockade. The inclusion of the move \(\texttt{c2}\)-\(\texttt{c3}\) is less than helpful for White, as the \(\texttt{d3}\)-square may require protection.

14...\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xf1}\)\(\texttt{\textdagger}\) 15.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xf1}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xf1}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{xf1}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{f8}\)\(\texttt{\textdagger}\) 17.\(\texttt{\textit{\textdollar}}\texttt{g1}\)
We have been following the analysis of Postny who concludes by stating: “Black’s chances for a draw are higher than White’s chances to win”. I would tend to go even further and say that White’s winning chances are very low indeed, and Black should have little trouble securing the half point.

Conclusion

Virtually all of the variations considered within the present chapter have featured plenty of rich and dynamically unbalanced positions. By following the recommended repertoire you will, at the very least, be forcing your opponents to confront unusual problems that they would not typically expect to encounter in the Ruy Lopez.

In variations B4) and C1) the material balance remained equal, but Black was still able to play ambitiously by seizing additional space in return for a slight compromising of his pawn structure.

In variations B2), B3), and C2) we saw how Black could fight for the initiative by sacrificing his e5-pawn (and perhaps, in the first two cases, an additional queenside pawn to boot). Our analysis showed that, especially in lines B2) and B3), White’s position could quickly become quite precarious.

The critical test of our repertoire came in variation C2) after 7.\textit{We2! We7} 8.\textit{\textbackslash_\textbackslash_xc6 dc6} 9.\textit{\textbackslash_\textbackslash_xe5}. Black must certainly demonstrate some precise knowledge here, but I believe his position to be quite defensible. It is important for the second player to understand when to swap down to an opposite coloured bishop position, and I hope that after absorbing the contents of the present chapter the reader will feel equipped to make that decision. When carried out correctly, this should lead to a position that the second player ought to be able to draw without too many problems.
Chapter 3

Schliemann: Minor Lines

1.e4 e5 2.d3 c6 3.b5 f5

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Introduction

The present chapter is concerned with White’s alternatives to the two main lines of 4.\texttt{d}c3 and 4.d3. These range from the meek (4.exf5?!), to the aggressive (4.d4), to the strategic (4.\texttt{x}xc6), to the highly unorthodox (4.\texttt{W}e2?!). None of the options presented here should worry Black unduly, although each has the potential to cause problems against an unprepared opponent.

Strategic Themes

Over the course of this chapter we will be investigating four very different variations, each with their own unique characteristics. For this reason it makes little sense to attempt to offer generic advice. However, I believe that the reader will be able to learn everything he needs to know about each line from the theoretical section.

Theoretical Highlights

There follows a brief preview of some of the most interesting theoretical variations that we will encounter over the course of the present chapter.

Tactics in the centre

1.e4 e5 2.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{c}c6 3.b5 f5 4.\texttt{x}xc6 dxc6

The above diagram shows a critical position from variation C), coverage of which begins on page 77. Fortunately I found a strong novelty on move 11, which ensures Black of at least equal chances.

A dangerous piece sacrifice

1.e4 e5 2.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{c}c6 3.b5 f5 4.d4 fxe4 5.\texttt{x}xe5 \texttt{x}xe5 6.dxe5 c6 7.\texttt{c}c3!? cxb5 8.\texttt{x}xe4

Usually in the Schliemann it is Black who attempts to seize the initiative through material sacrifices. In the present position White is trying to turn the tables! Fortunately White should be able to emerge with the advantage.
if he responds correctly. Most of the correct defensive methods have been known for some time, although I was still able to find a number of minor improvements in order to maximise Black’s chances.

Bishop pair versus pawn structure
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♛c6 3.♗b5 f5 4.d4 ♞xe4
5.♗x6 ♝x6 6.♗xe5

In this variation Black’s bishop pair should provide plenty of compensation for his slightly compromised pawn structure. In most games he has developed the king’s bishop on e7 in order to take the sting out of the ♘g5 pin. Instead in line D1) I suggest the more active, yet seldom played, development of the bishop on d6, which seems to offer Black good chances.

Generally speaking, the variations presented in this chapter are theoretically fine for Black. At the same time it is important to know how best to handle them. After familiarising yourself with the contents of the following pages, you will have every reason to feel confident should you encounter any of these lines over the board.

Theory

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♛c6 3.♗b5 f5

We now consider the following four moves:
A) 4.exf5?!, B) 4.♕e2?!, C) 4.♗xc6, and D) 4.d4.

The exceedingly rare 4.0–0?! fxе4 5.♗xc6 dxc6 6.♗xe5 can be strongly met by 6...♖d4!. Rafid Kifl – Bruchmann, Cologne 1993, continued 7.♕h5† (Black is also better after 7.♗g4 h5 8.♗e3 ♕e6 intending ...0–0–0) 7...g6 8.♗xg6?! hxg6 9.♕xg6† (the queen on d4 defends h8) 9...♖d8 when White had very little to show for the piece.

A) 4.exf5?!

This feeble move gives Black good chances to seize the initiative. The missing f-pawn can usually be regained in due course.

4...e4 5.♗xc6

White is more or less forced to make this exchange in order to avoid what would be a humiliating knight retreat. 5.♕e2 merely leads to a transposition after 5...♖e7 6.♗xc6 dxc6.

5...dxc6 6.♕e2

No better is 6.♗e5 ♛xf5†.

6...♖e7 7.♖d4 ♔h6!
It is not often that the knight visits this square in the Schliemann. In the present position the text is the perfect way to regain the pawn.

8.0-0
8...dxc3 9.xf5 d5 10.a4 8e6 11.0-0 8xb3 12.cxb3 0-0-0 was uninspiring for White in Vetter – Leisebein, e-mail 2001.

8...h5 is also unpromising after 8...f7 (there is nothing wrong with 8...f7 although Black’s initiative has the potential to become more potent with the queens on the board) 9.dxc3 (9.g4 g6 did not help White in Chermer – Jasinski, e-mail 2000) 9...e5 10.c2c5 11.d3b3 8b6 when the white position is a sorry sight.

8.dxc5 9.d3b3

It is difficult to say whether White should prefer the text over 9.dxc5 8xf5 10.d3c3 0-0-0 when Black also enjoys an excellent position, e.g. 11.e1 8f7!? (11...e8 is fine, but the text may be even better) intending to meet 12.dxe4 8xe4 13.dxe4 with 13...c5 when the f2-pawn will fall.

9...a5! 10.a4 8e6 11.dxe4

11.d3c3 transposes to 8.d3c3 (note to White’s 8th above) after 11...dxb3 12.cxb3 0-0-0.

11...g6!?N

11...h6 also gave Black a comfortable game in Rosek – Leisebein, e-mail 2000. The point of the text is that, by supporting the knight on f5, Black turns the idea of 8...dxb3 into quite a serious positional threat. I would rate Black’s position as preferable, and offer the following plausible continuation.

12.d4

12...d4 13.xd4 g7 14.e3 0-0

Black could even consider queenside castling, but the text is more straightforward.

15.c3 e8

Black has excellent compensation for the pawn, with a lead in development and superbly placed pieces.

B) 4.d2

What’s this – the Worrall Attack versus the Schliemann? It appears terribly unnatural for White to allow his queen to be drawn into the centre, and it is hardly surprising that the text has seldom been played. At the same time, this move does have one clear purpose: White is simply and unashamedly playing to win the e5-pawn. It is not easy for Black to prevent this plan, and quite frankly he should not even try, as the typical gambit approach seems to work well enough.

4...fxe4

4...f6!? is not such a good idea as after 5.exf5 e4?! White can simply play 6.d3 with advantage.

5.xe4

Black has no problems after:
5.xc6 dxc6 6.xe4 a6 7.xe5 d6 8.e2 0-0
One does not have to be Mikhail Tal to see that Black has excellent compensation for a pawn here. Play may continue:

9.\(d4\) \(\text{\textit{e}}8\) 10.0–0

10.\(\text{\textit{c}}3??\) is refuted by 10...\(c5!\).

10...\(c5!\)

10...\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) 11.\(dxe5\) \(\text{\textit{d}}4\) is also possible, e.g. 12.\(\text{\textit{e}}1\) \(\text{\textit{g}}4\) regaining the pawn. The text is more ambitious.

11.\(\text{\textit{e}}3\) \(\text{\textit{cx}}d4\) 12.\(\text{\textit{xd}}4\) \(c5!\)

12...\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) 13.\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) \(\text{\textit{g}}4\) 14.\(f4\) \(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) 15.\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) \(\text{\textit{d}}4\)\(\text{\textit{f}}2\) \(\text{\textit{xf}}2\) is close to equal, with a slightly edge to Black on account of his superior minor piece.

13.\(\text{\textit{c}}3\) \(b5!\)

Black has a strong initiative for the pawn.

6...\(\text{\textit{d}}6!\) is also possible. This move would definitely turn out well should White elect to capture on \(c6\) and \(e5\), as the bishop would be much more active on \(d6\) than \(e7\) in the resulting position. Indeed, 7.\(\text{\textit{d}}c6\) \(\text{\textit{d}}c6\) 8.\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) 0–0 would transpose directly to the note to White's 5th above. However, if White refrains from this show of gluttony then it will not be easy to develop the \(c8\)-bishop.

After the text White must decide whether or not to exchange on \(c6\) before taking the e-pawn.

7.\(\text{\textit{d}}c6\)

With this move White cedes the bishop pair while also helping to develop the \(c8\)-bishop.

7.\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) was also less than an ideal solution. Following 7...\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) 8.\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) 0–0 White’s queen becomes a target while his kingside is bereft of defenders. The game Bruzon Bautista – Gomez, Matanzas 1997, continued with:

9.0–0 \(d5\) 10.\(d4\) \(\text{\textit{g}}4\) 11.\(\text{\textit{e}}1\) \(\text{\textit{d}}6\) 12.\(h3\)

(12.\(f4\) \(c6\) 13.\(\text{\textit{d}}3\) \(\text{\textit{f}}6\) followed by ...\(\text{\textit{f}}5\) gives Black more than enough compensation)

12...\(\text{\textit{h}}2!\) Black was winning the exchange, which he subsequently converted to a full point.

7...\(\text{\textit{d}}c6\) 8.\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) 0–0 9.0–0 \(\text{\textit{f}}5\)
This position has seldom been reached, although there is an obvious resemblance to variation C2) of Chapter 2 (page 60).

In principle, the presence of an additional pair of knights should favour Black, whose forces may benefit from a 'non-linear' fighting unit whereas White's second knight may struggle to find a useful role. This does not mean that Black stands better. However, compared with the aforementioned line, he should enjoy a higher probability of creating practical problems for his opponent.

We will now analyse two alternatives: B1) 10.d3 and B2) 10.\( \texttt{\textit{f}} \text{e} \text{1} \).

It should also be pointed out that after 10.\( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{c} \text{3} \)? Black can get away with 10...\( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{c} \text{2} \). For example:

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

11.d3 does not trap the bishop because of 11...\( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{d} \text{6} \).

11.d4 \( \texttt{\textit{f}} \text{5} \) is simply better for Black thanks to his bishop pair and the opponent's weak d-pawn.

Relatively best is 11.\( \texttt{\textit{e}} \text{1} \) \( \texttt{\textit{f}} \text{5} \) 12.\( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{c} \text{6} \) bxc6 13.\( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{e} \text{7} \) \( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{e} \text{7} \) 14.\( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{e} \text{7} \) \( \texttt{\textit{f}} \text{e} \text{8} \) 15.\( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{e} \text{8} \)† (15.\( \texttt{\textit{e}} \text{3} \) would be met by 15...\( \texttt{\textit{g}} \text{4} \)) 15...\( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{e} \text{8} \) 16.f3 \( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{5} \):

11.\( \texttt{\textit{e}} \text{3} \)

11.\( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{2} \) brings White no advantage after 11...\( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{6} \) (also possible is 11...\( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{5} \) 12.c4 \( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{6} \) 12.f4 (12.d4 is well met by 12...c5!) 12...\( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{e} \text{5} \) 13.fxe5 \( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{4} \)† 14.\( \texttt{\textit{f}} \text{2} \) \( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{f} \text{2} \)† 15.\( \texttt{\textit{x}} \text{f} \text{2} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e}} \text{5} \) 16.\( \texttt{\textit{f}} \text{3} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e}} \text{e} \text{8} \) with an equal position.

11...\( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{6} \)

11...\( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{5} \) was a good alternative, after which a plausible continuation is 12.\( \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{2} \) \( \texttt{\textit{f}} \text{6} \) 13.f4
\( \text{\#xe5\ fxe5\ \#xe5\ c4\ \#xe3\ \#xe5\ \#xf1\ \#xf1\ \#d4\ f2\ \#f8\ c3\ \#d6 \text{with equality.} \)

12.\( \text{\#c4?} \)

Better would have been 12.\( \text{f4\ \#d5\ d4 (or \#f2\ \#f6\ c3\ \#xe3\ \#xe5\ \#xe5\ =)} \) 13...c5 14.\( \text{\#d2\ \#xe3\ 15.\#xe3\ cxd4\ 16.\#b3t\ \#e6\ 17.\#d3 \text{with roughly equal chances.}} \)

This is a logical developing move, and perhaps a more theoretically challenging option than the previous line. The drawback is that the \( f2 \)-pawn could become vulnerable.

10...\( \text{\#c5!} \)

Guarding against the threat of \( \text{\#xc6} \) while immediately highlighting the drawback of White's previous move.

10...\( \text{\#e8?} \) 11.\( \text{\#c3=} \) would be less accurate. White's \( f \)-pawn is a genuine target, so on this occasion it is the queen's rook that should head for \( e8. \)

11.\( \text{\#c3} \)

This enables White to defend \( f2 \) with \( \text{\#d1} \) and perhaps \( \text{\#e3} \) to block the a7-g1 diagonal, as well as the e-file.

11...\( \text{\#d6\ 12.\#c4t} \)

Another possibility is:

12.\( \text{\#c4\ \#d7\ d3\ \#ae8\ 14.\#e3\ \#g4 \)}

14...b5! can also be considered, although I prefer the text.

15.\( \text{\#d2} \)

A quiet move such as 15.a3 can be met by 15...\( \text{\#g6?} \), increasing the pressure against \( f2. \)

After 15.h3 \( \text{\#xe3\ 16.\#xe3 (16.fxe3?\ b5) \text{16...\#e6 Black's bishop pair and piece}} \)
activity are more significant than a pawn.
15...\textit{dxe3} 16.\textit{dxe3} \textit{g6}

Black's pieces are developed very actively and harmoniously.

12...\textit{h8}

13.\textit{d1}

The greedy 13.\textit{f7}\#? \textit{xf7} 14.\textit{xf7} is easily punished by 14...\textit{f8} 15.\textit{c4} \textit{g4} with a crushing attack.

13...\textit{b5}!

Forcing White to execute his ‘threat’.

14.\textit{f7}\#?

14.\textit{b3}?! \textit{e4} is certainly not an improvement for White.

14...\textit{xf7} 15.\textit{xf7} \textit{xc2}!

Black takes the time to capture an important pawn. 15...\textit{f8} is met by 16.\textit{b3} when Black certainly has compensation, but no knockout blow that I can see.

16.d4

White needs to catch up on development. The d-pawn was isolated and would probably have to be sacrificed anyway at some point.

16...\textit{xd4} 17.\textit{e6}

17.\textit{e7} is well met by 17...\textit{g8}! 18.\textit{d7} \textit{b4} 19.\textit{e3} \textit{e1}\# 20.\textit{f1} \textit{g6} 21.\textit{f3} \textit{d3} 22.\textit{d2} \textit{xa1} 23.\textit{xd3} \textit{x2} 24.\textit{xc7} \textit{d4} 25.\textit{xc6} \textit{f8} when Black's position is slightly preferable.

After the text, Black must decide where to place his queen.

17...\textit{d5}

This is the option that sets White the most difficult problems. In addition to the simple idea of capturing the knight on d1, Black also threatens to win material with ...\textit{g6}, as the reply \textit{e7} can be met by ...\textit{e8}.

17...\textit{b4} is also playable, when the main line of my analysis runs as follows: 18.\textit{g5} \textit{g6} 19.\textit{xc7} \textit{e4} 20.h4 \textit{xf2} 21.\textit{xf2} \textit{xf2}\# 22.\textit{h2} \textit{g4} 23.\textit{xc6} \textit{f8}
White’s extra material is balanced by his unsafe king, e.g. 24.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{xh4} \) 25.\( \text{xh4} \) \( \text{wxh4}\) with perpetual check.

The text leads to greater complications, although the final outcome should remain the same after correct play by both sides.

18.\( \text{h6!} \)
White must combine attack and defence. There is no other satisfactory way of dealing with the aforementioned pair of threats.

18...\( \text{g8!} \) 19.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{xe3} \) 20.\( \text{xe3!} \)
White can get away with this move thanks to a tactical nuance. The alternative 20.fx e3 \( \text{h5}\) only helps Black.

20...\( \text{g6} \) 21.\( \text{c7} \) \( \text{e8} \)
It looks as though White must either lose his queen or give up the rook on \( e6 \). Unfortunately he can save himself with the following mini-combination.

22.\( \text{xf6!} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 23.\( \text{f8}\) with \( \text{g8} \) 24.\( \text{xg8}\) with \( \text{e8} \)
25.\( \text{xa7} \)
After numerous sacrifices and counter-sacrifices, the game has petered out to an equal ending.

25...\( \text{e2} \)

The reduced material and opposite-coloured bishops make the draw a virtual certainty. In the event that White positions his b-pawn on \( b3 \) and targets the vulnerable \( c7 \)-pawn with his bishop, Black can always obtain counterplay by advancing the other \( c \)-pawn.

C) 4.\( \text{xc6} \)
This move should not be too dangerous, but it deserves to be treated with respect and has been used by some strong players. Capturing on \( c6 \) without provocation is undoubtedly a concession of sorts. In return, White hopes to gain some stability in the centre, specifically for a knight on \( e4 \), which will no longer be prone to harassment from the enemy \( d \)-pawn.

4...\( \text{dxc6} \)
As usual Black should recapture with the \( d \)-pawn in order to facilitate the development of the light squared bishop.

5.\( \text{c3} \)
Feeble is 5.\( \text{xe5!} \) \( \text{d4} \) 6.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xe4}\) 7.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 8.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xe2}\) 9.\( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{d6} \) when the bishop pair gives Black the better chances.

5...\( \text{f6} \)
Black can also consider:
5...\( \text{fxe4} \) 6.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f6} \)
This should enable him to equalise with
careful play, although compared with the main line the reduced central tension will make the white position easier to handle. I will offer some brief coverage here, as the position could also be reached via the move order 4.\( \text{dxc3} \) fxe4 5.\( \text{dxe4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 6.\( \text{dxc6} \) dxc6, as mentioned in the note to White's 6th in Chapter 2 on page 43.

Play continues with:

7.\( \text{dxe2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 8.\( \text{h3} \)

8.\( \text{d3} \) should be met by 8...\( \text{b4} \)\(^\dagger\) 9.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xf3} \) when Black had a comfortable position in Bojkovic – Micic, Moscow 1994.

8...\( \text{xf3} \)

This is the safest move. Instead 8...\( \text{h5} \) is riskier in view of 9.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d5} \) (Compared with the previous note 9...\( \text{b4} \)\(^\dagger\) works less well here, as after 10.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 11.\( \text{g3} \) Black must acquiesce to an unfavourable exchange on f3 if he is to avoid losing a pawn) 10.\( \text{g4} \)\(^\dagger\)\( \text{f7} \).

Now in Milos – Van Riemisdijk, Sao Paulo 1993, White obtained a clear advantage with 11.\( \text{c4} \)! (In the high level encounter Vallejo Pons – Aronian, Monte Carlo 2007, he instead played 11.\( \text{c3} \) and went on to lose.) 11...\( \text{b4} \)\(^\dagger\) 12.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xd2} \)\(^\dagger\) 13.\( \text{exd2} \) \( \text{e6} \) 14.\( \text{xe5} \).

9.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 10.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 11.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{c5} \)

This position has been reached in several games, the earliest being Bellin – Wessels, Guernsey 1990. As long as he plays carefully Black should have little difficulty holding the draw. A glance at the database reveals a positive score for White, but I think this has more to do with a higher average rating than the superiority of his position.

We may conclude by saying that 5...f\( \text{xe4} \) gives Black good chances to equalise, although I would definitely regard 5...\( \text{d6} \) as the more principled move which sets the opponent more difficult problems.

6.\( \text{e2} \)

White is unlikely to benefit from 6.\( \text{xe5} \) f\( \text{xe5} \) as the opening of the position will tend to favour the black bishops. Play may continue 7.\( \text{d4} \) (7.\( \text{xe4} \) turns out badly for White after 7...\( \text{xe4} \) 7...\( \text{e7} \)\(^!!\)) 8.\( \text{h5} \)\(^\dagger\) 9.\( \text{xg6} \) h\( \text{xg6} \) 10.\( \text{h8} \)\(^\dagger\) 7...\( \text{exd3} \) 8.0–0 \( \text{d6} \) 9.\( \text{e1} \) 0–0 10.\( \text{xd3} \). White can perhaps claim equality here, but certainly nothing more.

6...\( \text{d6} \)

6...f\( \text{xe4} \) 7.\( \text{xe4} \) reaches the note to Black's 5th.

7.\( \text{d4} \)?
as well as the position of the enemy king on the e-file. At the same time, one should always be wary of opening too many lines when the opponent enjoys the advantage of the bishop pair.

In any event, the quieter alternatives promise White very little. 7.d3 0-0 leads to a balanced position, while 7.exf5 0-0 8.d3 \_xf5 already looks somewhat more comfortable for Black. His active piece play should easily offset the minor weakness of the e5-pawn.

After the text, it is clear that concrete tactical motifs will take precedence over longer term strategic considerations. Fortunately the black position is quite robust, and we will see that with the help of some accurate moves he can obtain a fine position.

7...exd4!
Black must meet the challenge head on! Anything else would lead to an inferior position.

8.e5
This is the consistent follow-up.

8.exf5† \_e7 9.\_e4, as in the game Lauer – Saathoff, Bavaria 2006, is refuted by the simple 9...0-0†.

8.\_xd4
This was played in Sedina – Scetinin, Biel 1997. Black's best would have been:

8...\_xe4! 9.f3
Less critical are 9.\_xe4 \_xe4 10.\_xe4† \_e7†, and 9.0-0 0-0 10.\_xe4 fxe4 11.\_xe4†. In both of these cases Black's bishop pair gives him the advantage, irrespective of whether or not the queens remain on the board.

9.\_h4† 10.\_f1 0-0! 11.fxe4 fxe4† 12.g1 \_g4 13.\_c4† \_h8 14.\_e3 \_ae8

Black enjoys an enduring initiative in return for the piece. The rook on h1 will not be entering the game any time soon, and 15.\_f1?
  is refuted instantly by 15...b5!

8...dxc3 9.exf6†
Weaker is 9.exd6† \_e4 10.dxc7 \_xc7, when Black will simply develop and enjoy a better structure after white recaptures the pawn on c3.

9...\_f8 10.fxg7†
After 10.0-0?! \_xf6† Black's position is perfectly safe, while he enjoys the bishop pair and a material advantage.

10...\_xg7 11.0-0 f4!N
This important improvement secures Black a good game. Just look at what a difference this small move makes for the respective bishops on c1 and c8!

Instead the game Kozhuharov - Toth, Bar 2006, saw 11...\texttt{\texttt{f6}} 12.\texttt{g5} \texttt{g6} 13.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e8} 14.\texttt{xc3}† with advantage to White.

12.bxc3 \texttt{xe8} 13.\texttt{d3}

This looks like White's best chance to maintain equality. The alternative is 13.\texttt{d1} \texttt{f6} 14.\texttt{b1} \texttt{g8} when Black stands better. His pieces are more active, and the light-squared bishop in particular has fantastic potential. True, his king may be slightly exposed but the open g-file may also become useful for attacking purposes.

13...\texttt{f6} 14.c4!

Only this move will do for White! The slower 14.\texttt{b1} is inadequate after 14...\texttt{f5} (14...\texttt{g6}!? also looks strong) 15.\texttt{d2} \texttt{e4}:

Black's pieces are much better coordinated. It is too risky for White to try 16.\texttt{xb7}?! \texttt{xf3} 17.\texttt{gx3} \texttt{g8} 18.\texttt{h1} \texttt{f7}, as Black's kingside attack is extremely dangerous.

14...\texttt{xal}

This seems to be the safest move, although it only leads to an equal endgame after accurate play from both sides. If Black is intent on playing for a win he may wish to consider a different approach.

14...\texttt{f5} might also be playable, but after 15.\texttt{b3} the impending \texttt{b2} will gain time for White, and a subsequent \texttt{ae1} will see his piece coordination improving.

14...\texttt{h6}?! would be my own choice if I was playing for a full point. Play may continue 15.\texttt{b1} \texttt{b6} 16.\texttt{b2} \texttt{g6}, with a highly unclear position. Neither king is particularly safe; Black's is far from ideally placed, while his opposite number must worry about the open g-file as well as the long diagonal after a subsequent ...\texttt{c5} and ...\texttt{b7}. Finally, it should be pointed out that endgames should tend to favour Black in view of White's appalling queenside structure.

15.\texttt{b3}

The following sequence now appears forced:

15...\texttt{f6} 16.\texttt{b2} \texttt{e5} 17.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 18.\texttt{c3}

White will regain the rook to reach a level endgame.

18...\texttt{g6}

18...\texttt{f7} 19.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 20.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{f3}=
The chances are balanced, and the opposite-coloured bishops will only increase the likelihood of a draw.

D) 4.d4

This is a very aggressive move. It is interesting to compare the Vienna game after the opening moves 1.e4 e5 2.d4 f6 3.f4, when Black’s best response is widely recognised as 3...d5. A naive observer might be tempted to remark that in the present variation White is playing the same position with colours reversed, except that he must surely be helped by the inclusion of the extra move 4.b5. Unfortunately for the first player, we will see that this ‘free’ move can be a mixed blessing.

4...fxe4

We now consider the somewhat prosaic

D1) 5.xc6 along with the more principled

D2) 5.xe5.

D1) 5.xc6

White plays it safe. He does not wish to commit himself to a material sacrifice as in line D2) below, but he can hardly hope to fight for the advantage by ceding the bishop pair voluntarily.

5...dxc6

This is the soundest move. However, if Black wishes to put the opponent under immediate pressure then 5...bxc6 6.xe5 h4!? could be considered.

The idea is quite enterprising, although it may not quite stand up to the highest scrutiny. Possible continuations include:

a) 7.c3 b4 8.e2 f6 9.0-0 xc3 10.bxc3 0-0 is comfortable for Black.

b) 7.e2!

This is the critical test.

7...d5

7...f6 8.c3 d5 9.h3!± is an important idea, threatening to trap the queen with g3. Following 7...d6 8.xc6 e7 9.xe7 xe7 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4+ h8 12.c3 Black does not have enough compensation for the missing pawn.

8.c4?

8.xc6 is playable, when Black should continue 8...f6 with reasonable compensation.

8...a6

After 8...d6 White can win material with 9.cxd6 f6 (Black is not helped by 9...cxd5? 10.b5+ 10.dxc6±, intending to meet 10...a5 11.c3 a6 with 12.e3 followed by g3 or g5.

9.c2 b4+ 10.d2 xd2+ 11.d2
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Black stands worse, e.g. 11...e3 12.d5 f3
xf2† 13.xf2 exf2† 14.xf2=, or 11...e7
12.0–0 0–0 13.a4 f4 14.xa6 xd2
15.xc6 xc6 16.xc6. White has won a
pawn, although Black may have chances to
hold the major piece endgame.

6.xxe5 xf6

6...h4!? can be considered, although once
again Black will have to proceed with caution
as a subsequent ...f6 could be met by h3
threatening g3. The text is more reliable.

7.g5!?

This looks like the only way for White to put
the opponent under any pressure.

The obvious move is 7.0–0, after which 7...d6
8.f4 0–0 9.g3 e7! gives Black an excellent
game.

8.e3 0–0

9.0–0

The principled 9.e2 should be met by
9...e8! 10.xf6? (10.xe4 xe4 11.xe4
f5 gives Black typical compensation for
the Schliemann) 10...gx6 11.xc4 b4 with
roughly equal chances.

White must of course avoid 9.xe4?? xe5
when he loses a piece.
Chapter 3 - Schliemann: Minor Lines

9...\textit{xf6} 10.\textit{e2} \textit{e8} 11.\textit{xf6} gx\textit{f6} 12.\textit{c4} \textit{g6}

The position is roughly equal, although if I had to choose a side I would tend to favour Black’s bishops over White’s slightly sounder pawn structure.

\textbf{D2)} 5.\textit{xe5} dxe5

5...\textit{xf6} would be the standard response in the Vienna (i.e. in the same position with colours reversed and the bishop on \textit{f1} instead of \textit{b5}), but the text enables Black to call into question the position of the bishop.

6.dxe5 c6!

This is the key move. The point is that bishop retreats can be met by ...\textit{a5\#} winning the e-pawn. We now analyse \textbf{D21)} 7.\textit{e2} and the piece sacrifice \textbf{D22)} 7.\textit{c3}. The latter is undoubtedly the more principled response.

7.\textit{c4}? has been played but after 7...\textit{a5\#} 8.\textit{c3} \textit{xe5} White simply has an inferior version of line \textbf{D21)}, as a subsequent ...d5 will gain time by hitting the bishop.

\textbf{D21)} 7.\textit{e2}

If White intends to gambit the e-pawn, then this is the only sensible option.

7...\textit{a5\#} 8.\textit{c3}

White can also play:

8.\textit{d2}

This enables him to force the enemy king to move.

8...\textit{xe5} 9.\textit{c3}

9.\textit{h5\#} will usually transpose after 9...\textit{d8} 10.\textit{c3} (10.0–0 \textit{f6} 11.\textit{e2} d5 is excellent for Black) 10...\textit{g5} 11.0–0 \textit{f6} 12.\textit{e2} d5.

9...\textit{g5} 10.\textit{h5\#} \textit{d8} 11.0–0 \textit{f6}

Can White profit from the position of the king on d8? In my opinion Black has every reason to feel confident, as his central pawns will form a powerful barrier against the enemy pieces.

12.\textit{e2}
The game Cunha Pereira – Machado, Sao Paulo 1983, instead saw: 12.f4 c5† 13.h4 f5 14.g4 (14.e2 is well met by 14...d5†) 14...e6 15.f5 e7 16.g5 hxg5 17.f6 e6 18.xh5 g6 19.e2 (19.xh6 e3 wins)

Now instead of the game continuation of 19...e3, Black could have obtained a large advantage with 19...d5!.

12...d5

White has tried a few different moves here, without coming close to demonstrating adequate compensation.

13.f4

13.d2 f5 14.e3 (14.c4? d4++) 14...d6 15.c4 c7 16.c3 dxc4† was Pedersen – Grynfeld, Helsinki 1952.

The feeble 13.h1 is hopeless after 13...d6 14.d2 c7, as first shown in Hoenliger – Steiner, Vienna 1951.

13...exf3 14.xf3 d6

Black stands clearly better. His extra pawn is an important asset, and his king will be perfectly safe on c7.

8...xe5 9.e3

After 9.0–0 d6 10.g3 d5 11.f4 e7† Black will develop easily.

9...f6

10.d2

White maintains the option of long castling. This move was tested in Kuzmin – Stjazhkina, St Petersburg 2000.

In Buenjer – Leisebein, e-mail 2001, White failed to demonstrate compensation after: 10.d4 g5 11.0–0 (not surprisingly, a queen exchange is of no help to White: 11.d2 xd2† 12.xd2 d5 13.f3 exf3 14.xf3 d6 15.ae1† f7 16.hf1 e8†) 11...d5 12.c1 xc1 13.axc1 d6 14.f3 exf3 15.e3 0–0 Black was simply a pawn up for nothing.

10.c5!N

I believe this to be the most accurate move.

11.0–0–0

No better is 11.0–0 xe3 12.xe3 d5, or 12.fxe 0–0 followed by ...d5, with a clear advantage to Black in both cases.
11...0-0 12.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xc5} 4xc5 13.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}d6}
This attempt to obstruct Black’s queenside development is easily rebuffed.

13...\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xd6} 14.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xd6} 4e8 15.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}d2} d5\textsuperscript{+}
There is no reason why Black should not go on to convert his extra pawn.

\textbf{D22) 7.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}e3}}
This is the only critical move. The previous variation saw White gambit a pawn for meagre compensation, so he may as well up the stakes in order to make a real fight of the game.

7...cxb5 8.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xe4}
\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw [ultra thick] (1,1) rectangle (2,2);
\draw [ultra thick] (3,3) rectangle (4,4);
\draw [ultra thick] (5,5) rectangle (6,6);
\draw [ultra thick] (7,7) rectangle (8,8);
\draw [thick] (0.5,0.5) -- (7.5,7.5);
\draw [thick] (0.5,7.5) -- (7.5,0.5);
\node at (1,1) {a}; \node at (1,2) {b}; \node at (1,3) {c}; \node at (1,4) {d}; \node at (1,5) {e}; \node at (1,6) {f}; \node at (1,7) {g}; \node at (1,8) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}
White has only a single pawn for the piece, but his initiative should not be underestimated. His immediate plan is simply to castle and centralise his pieces. Meanwhile it is far from easy to suggest a convenient way for Black to develop his pieces. That is, until you notice the following move.

8...d5!
If it were not for this pawn sacrifice then Black would be in considerable danger.

9.exd6
White has no real choice but to accept the offer.

9...\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}f6}
Suddenly things are looking a lot rosier for Black. His knight has entered the game, while the c8-bishop is free to do the same. On the other hand his king is still some way from castling, and the pawn on d6 has the potential to become a nuisance.

At this point White must decide how to meet the attack on his knight. Exchanging on f6 would be pointless, as Black would simply recapture with the queen and then gobble the d6-pawn.

Instead White normally chooses between \textbf{D221) 10.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}d4}} and \textbf{D222) 10.\textit{\textipa{\textg5}}.}

\textbf{Occasionally White tries the cheeky move:}
10.0-0?! 
In this case Black should not be afraid to accept the gift.
10...\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xe4} 11.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}h5}\textsuperscript{+}
No better is: 11.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}e1} 4f5 12.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}d5} 4d7 13.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xe4}\textsuperscript{+} 4xe4 14.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xe4}\textsuperscript{+} 4f7--
11...g6 12.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}e5}\textsuperscript{+}
After 12.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xb5}\textsuperscript{+} 4f7 13.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}d5}\textsuperscript{+} 4g7 14.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xe4} 4xd6 Black should convert his extra material without too much trouble.
12...4f7 13.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xh8} 4f6
\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw [ultra thick] (1,1) rectangle (2,2);
\draw [ultra thick] (3,3) rectangle (4,4);
\draw [ultra thick] (5,5) rectangle (6,6);
\draw [ultra thick] (7,7) rectangle (8,8);
\draw [thick] (0.5,0.5) -- (7.5,7.5);
\draw [thick] (0.5,7.5) -- (7.5,0.5);
\node at (1,1) {a}; \node at (1,2) {b}; \node at (1,3) {c}; \node at (1,4) {d}; \node at (1,5) {e}; \node at (1,6) {f}; \node at (1,7) {g}; \node at (1,8) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}
White has regained a portion of the sacrificed material, but his initiative has evaporated and he will soon have to defend an inferior ending. Possible continuations include: 14.\textit{\textipa{\textg5}} 4f5 15.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}ad1} 4g7 16.\textit{\textipa{\textdollar}xd8} 4xd8\textsuperscript{+},
Frolov – Kuzmin, Cappelle la Grande 1994, and 14...h6 e6 15...xf8 xf8 16...xf8+ xf8+, Martjukhin – Efendiyev, e-mail 1999.

D221) 10...d4 d7!

This is not the most obvious move, but it has been recognised as Black’s strongest since well before the days of Fritz and Rybka.

It is worth mentioning that the less sophisticated 10...xe4 is also far from bad, and after 11...e4+ f7 12...d4 e8 13...e5 c6 Black is doing fine. This could be a useful secondary option in case you are ever surprised over the board and find yourself struggling to recall the details of the main line.

11...xf6+

This is not the only move to have been tested.

11...f4? xe4 12...xe4+ e6 forces the queens off, after which Black should have no difficulty converting his material advantage.

A much more respectable alternative is:

11.0–0

Black can maintain his advantage, but will need to play accuracy. There follows:

11...xe4 12...e1

The alternative 12...xe4† e6 13...d3 xd6 14...d1 (14...f4 xf4 15...e1 e5 16...xb5† d7+) is well met by 14...e7 15...g5 (15...xb5† f7+) 15...xg5 16...e1 0–0 17...xe6 xe6. The white queen is outgunned by the opposing bishop pair and rook. Also playable is 14...f8!?.

White has some compensation here, but it is very hard for him to create concrete threats.

12...xd6 13...xe4†

After 13...xe4† f7 14...f4† g8 White cannot force a draw with 15...xf8† xf8 16...d5† because of 16...e6! 17...xe6† f7†.

13...f7 14...f3†

14...e8† g8† is safe for Black.

14...f6†

This is a significant improvement. The previously played 14...g6 is much less clear after 15...e8†.
It seems that the most White can hope for here is to regain one or two more pawns. The trouble is that, even if he restores theoretical material equality of three pawns for a piece, Black’s bishop pair will always be too strong.

15.\(\text{h5}\) \(\text{g6}\)
15...\(\text{g6}\) 16.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{e6}\) 17.\(\text{xb5}\) is less clear.

16.\(\text{d5}\)
16.\(\text{xb5}\) \(\text{c6}\)+
16...\(\text{e6}\) 17.\(\text{xb7}\) \(\text{e7}\)

Black is ready to complete development and should be the strong favourite to win the game.

11...\(\text{xf6}\) 12.\(\text{f4}\)
White must support the pawn on \(d6\). He can hardly consider 12.0–0? \(\text{xd6}\)+ or 12.\(\text{xf6}\)?! \(\text{e6}\)+ 13.\(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{xe6}\)+.

12...\(\text{e6}\)+!

This disruptive check ensures that White’s king will have its own problems.

13.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{f7}\) 14.\(\text{he1}\)

14...\(\text{c4}\) 15.\(\text{xc4}\)+ \(\text{bxc4}\)+

This is a very useful move. Black not only escapes the pin while forcing one of the enemy pieces to retreat, but also prepares to activate the queen along the fifth rank. We will see several instances over the coming pages where Her Majesty plays a key role in the defence.

With apologies for the clumsy labelling, we now reach a final division between D2221) 11.\(\text{d2}\) and D2222) 11.\(\text{c3}\).
D2221) 11.\texttt{d}2 b4 12.\texttt{d}xf6†

The alternatives are no better.

12.0–0  \texttt{d}xe4 13.\texttt{e}e1  \texttt{w}e5 14.f3  \texttt{f}f5 15.d7†
\texttt{d}8 is winning for Black.

12.\texttt{w}e2  \texttt{w}e5 13.\texttt{d}xf6† gxf6 was seen in Barry – Marshall, Cambridge Springs 1904. Again, White has no compensation whatsoever.

12.\texttt{w}f3

This can be met convincingly by:
12...\texttt{w}f5!

Already we see an important example of the queen's mobility.

13.\texttt{d}xf6†

13.0–0–0 proved hopeless after 13...\texttt{d}xe4 14.\texttt{e}e1  \texttt{w}f5 15.\texttt{e}e4  \texttt{xd}6, Terwey – Kunisch, Ruhrgebiet 2003.

12...gxf6 13.\texttt{f}4  \texttt{g}4! 15.\texttt{e}3†  \texttt{e}6†

Black should convert his advantage without difficulty.

12...\texttt{g}xf6 13.\texttt{f}4

White has also experimented with the idea of sacrificing the d-pawn:

13.0–0  \texttt{d}xd6 14.\texttt{h}6

The point of White's play is that the opening of an additional central file may make it harder for the black king to find shelter. I suggest the following new move:

14...\texttt{c}7!N

Preventing a check on c4.

17.\texttt{ad}1

17.\texttt{e}3  \texttt{d}6 18.\texttt{c}4†  \texttt{e}6 19.\texttt{h}4  \texttt{ag}8–+

17...\texttt{e}6!

This is the most accurate move. White has practically nothing to show for the sacrificed piece.
Black should be better, provided he avoids any careless mistakes.

14. **d4**

14. **e2** **f7** 15.0–0 **xa2** 16. **e1** **c4** is winning for Black.

14.0–0 can be met by 14... **f7**!.

The king is quite safe here. Note the role of the queen on a5, preventing any checks on h5.

A logical continuation would be 15. **e1** **d5** 16. **e2** **g8** 17. **g3** **g4** 18. **ad1** **c6** 19. **f3** **f5**. Black maintains his advantage and will gradually continue bringing his pieces into the game, starting with the queen's rook at the earliest opportunity.

We have been following the game Jonasson – Van Beers, Eupen 1994. At this point I would suggest:

15... **c8**

I see very little compensation for White here.

**D2222) 11. c3**

This looks like White's best chance to obtain an acceptable position.

11... **b4**

Once again Black continues to harass the enemy pieces, while at the same time activating
his queen. The text uncovers an attack against
the bishop on g5, so White's next is forced.

12.\text{nxf6} \text{gxf6} 13.\text{d5} b3†!
I cannot overemphasise the importance of
this move! The alternative is much less
convincing:
13...\text{e6} 14.\text{h5\d8} 15.0-0-0
White's initiative is starting to become
dangerous. \text{h}e1 is threatened, and Black is
practically forced to play:
15...b3!
Instead 15...\text{xa2?} 15...\text{xe1} 16.\text{xh6}
should win for White.

Now 16.axb3 might result in a repetition
after 16...\text{a1}\d8 17.\text{d2} \text{a5}\d8 18.\text{c1} etc.
White can also try 16.cxb3?! \text{c8}\d8 (after
16...\text{c5}\d8 17.\text{b1} \text{xd6} 18.\text{f3} Black is
in some danger) 17.\text{b1} \text{xd6} 18.\text{f3} \text{f8}
19.b4 \text{b5} 20.\text{e1} with reasonable practical
compensation.

14.c3 \text{e6}
Compared with the previous note, the
inclusion of the moves ...b3 and c3 makes a
significant difference.

15.\text{c7}\d8
Thanks to Black's accurate 13th move, it
would now be hopeless for White to continue
15.\text{h5}\d8? \text{d8} 16.0-0-0? \text{xa2} 17.\text{c2} a1=\text{a8}
18.\text{xa1} \text{xd5} winning easily.

15...\text{d7} 16.0-0
16.\text{xe6?} \text{e5}\d8 wins for Black.

In Kotov – Stjazhkina, St Petersburg 2000,
White tried 16.\text{xa8} \text{xd6} 17.axb3, at which
point 17...\text{e5}\d8 would have left Black with an
obvious advantage.

16...\text{xd6} 17.\text{xe6}
17.\text{xa8} was seen in Parkanyi – Semenova,
Tapolca 1997, and now the cool 17...\text{xa2}!
would have been excellent for Black.

17...\text{e5}

Now both kings are out in the open.

18.\text{e1}!
This looks like White's best chance, although
it would require strong nerves to allow the
queen to capture on h2 with check.

Instead the timid 18.g3 failed to put Black
under any pressure in Wolny – Mallee, corr.
1986, which continued 18...\text{xe6} 19.\text{e1} \text{f7}
20.axb3, and now 20...\text{c7} would have been
clearly better for Black.

18...\text{xh2}\text{†} 19.\text{xf1} \text{h1}\text{†} 20.\text{e2}

20...\text{xg2}
20...\text{h5}\text{†}! is also at least equal for Black.
We have been following the game Pavlovic – Garbarino, Internet 2002. Black’s accurate play has left him with slightly better chances. His king is safer, while White must always worry about reaching an ending in which his knight will struggle against the enemy h-pawn.

Conclusion

In the present chapter we have considered four very different answers to the Schliemann variation. Line A) with 4.exf5?! (page 71) is hardly worth mentioning as a serious option for White. Variation B) with 4.\textit{We}2!? is actually rather interesting, despite breaking one of the fundamental principles of opening play by exposing the queen to an early attack. It is hard to see this variation becoming fashionable for White, but in any case it seems that Black can sacrifice the e5-pawn for enough compensation.

The positional option of 4.\textit{B}xc6 dxc6 5.\textit{B}c3 should also not worry Black. The most important thing for him to remember after 5...\textit{f}f6 6.\textit{We}2 is that he should maintain the tension with 6...\textit{d}d6, not fearing the complications that might arise after 7.d4?! exd4! Following the more or less forced sequence of 8.e5 dxc3 9.exf6+ \textit{f}f8 10.fxg7+ \textit{x}g7 11.0–0, my new suggestion of 11...\textit{f}4! should ensure an excellent game for Black.

Finally, the active D) 4.d4 (page 81) is a move for which Schliemann players should definitely be prepared. After the normal 4...\textit{f}xe4, D1) 5.\textit{B}xc6 (page 81) is not too threatening, and I rather like the idea of developing the bishop actively on d6. D2) 5.\textit{B}xe5 (page 83) is a different matter entirely – White elects to fight for the initiative, but more or less commits himself to a piece sacrifice (the feeble D21) 7.\textit{f}e2, as analysed on page 83, is clearly insufficient). Fortunately the correct
defensive methods have been tried and tested, and my analysis has reinforced the widely held view that Black can obtain an advantage with accurate play.
Chapter 4

Gajewski: 11.d3 and 11.exd5

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0–0 ♘e7
6.♘e1 b5 7.♗b3 0–0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 ♘a5 10.♗c2 d5!!?

Introduction
Kuznetsov – Gajewski
Wang Hao – Gawain Jones
Theory
A) 11.d3
B) 11.exd5 e4
B1) 12.♘g5?!
B2) 12.♗xe4
1. e4 e5 2. d3 c6 3. b5 a6 4. a4 5f6 5.0-0 e7 6. e1 b5 7. b3 0-0 8. c3 d6 9. h3 10. c2 d5?

**Introduction**

This aggressive move is named after the young Polish GM Grzegorz Gajewski, who began playing it in 2007. Black's 10th was not completely new, but it had never been taken remotely seriously at a high level.

It soon transpired that Gajewski's approach enables Black to fight for the initiative and create a variety of problems for his opponent at an early stage. Not surprisingly, this variation immediately attracted many adherents and quickly became a subject of intense theoretical debate. Two years later we are in a better position to draw conclusions, although the theory is still developing. This makes it an ideal weapon for players who like to analyse at home.

**Strategic Themes**

We will now look at a few of the general ideas for both sides.

**White’s extra pawn**

By taking on d5 White intends to win Black's e-pawn and play his own pawn to d4, consolidating the material advantage.

**Black’s kingside attack**

Black will sometimes advance his e-pawn with ...e4. He would love to bring his f-pawn into a supporting role, as seen in the diagram below.

A dream position for him might look something like the above. White has retained his light-squared bishop and can develop his queenside pieces smoothly. Meanwhile Black has no counterplay in sight.

**Two important games**

Before we look at any theoretical lines, it is worth familiarising ourselves with the following two games. Between them they illustrate many
important attacking ideas, as well as helping to explain how the present variation became so popular in a short time.

We will begin with the game in which Gajewski unveiled his new weapon.

Kuznetsov – Gajewski

Pardubice 2007

1. e4 e5 2. d3 c6 3. b5 a6 4. a4 d6 5.0-0 Ae7 6. d3 d6 7. b3 0-0 8. c3 f6 9. h3 a5 10. c2 d5! 11. exd5

Confronted by an unexpected move, White reacts in the most natural way. The other main line is 11.d4, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

11...e4

12. g5?!

White plays to preserve his bishop pair, but we will see in variation B1) that this approach is flawed.

12...xd5 13. xe4 f5!

Gajewski uses the f-pawn as a battering ram to break open the enemy kingside.

14. g3 f4 15. e4 f3 16. d4 fxg2 17. g3 d6

In line B1) we will see that 17...g6! is even stronger.

18. e4 b7?!

Strictly speaking this is not quite sound, although the idea is a very attractive one. 18...c6 and 18...e6 were objectively better.

19. f5 xf5 20. xf5 e8 21. e6

After 21. g4 h6 22. e6 h8 23. f3 c4 Black's compensation is obvious.

21...xf5 22. x6 d6

Black has just two pieces for the queen, but he is well ahead on development and the g2-pawn is a real threat. The idea is wonderfully imaginative, even if it is objectively not quite sound.

23. a4

23. e2 looks like the best way to begin the consolidation process. After the game continuation Black is able to whip up some dangerous counterplay.

23...g3! 24. f3

After 24. f3 xg3 25. xg3 fxg3 26. xg3 the sting in the tail can be found in 26... b3!
24...\(\text{Qf4}\)
Black achieves little with: 24...\(\text{Qc4}\) 25.\(\text{Qe2}\) \(\text{Qe3}\) 26.\(\text{Qxe3}\) \(\text{Qxf3}\) 27.\(\text{Qc1}\)±

25.\(\text{axb5}\) \(\text{Qxc1}\) 26.\(\text{Qxa5}\)?
White could have retained the advantage with 26.\(\text{Qxc1}\):
26...\(\text{Qxf3}\) 27.\(\text{bxa6}\) \(\text{Qa8}\) 28.\(\text{Qg5}\)! \(\text{Qf1}\)† (28...\(\text{Qc4}\) 29.\(\text{Qxg2}\) \(\text{Qf4}\) 30.\(\text{Qxf3}\)=+) 29.\(\text{Qxg2}\) \(\text{Qe3}\)† 30.\(\text{Qh2}\) \(\text{Qh1}\)† 31.\(\text{Qg3}\) \(\text{Qg1}\)† 32.\(\text{Qf4}\) \(\text{Qxg5}\) 33.\(\text{Qxg5}\) is winning for \(\text{W}\).

26...\(\text{Qf4}\)! 27.\(\text{Qe1}\)?
White cracks under pressure. 27.\(\text{Qd2}\) was the last chance.

27...\(\text{Qxb3}\)
Now there is no defence.

28.\(\text{bxa6}\) \(\text{Qh3}\)† 29.\(\text{Qh2}\) \(\text{Qf4}\)† 30.\(\text{Qxh3}\)

Now Black finishes the game in style:
30...\(\text{g1=Q}\)† 31.\(\text{Qxg1}\) \(\text{Qxa5}\)
0–1

White resigned, as he will be forced to give up his queen to avoid mate. Gajewski’s novel treatment of the opening would probably have attracted attention irrespective of the outcome of the game. However, the fact that he won so spectacularly must have made his new system all the more seductive to Grandmasters and amateurs alike.

In our next game, which took place a couple of months after the above, we see the young English GM Gawain Jones using 10...\(\text{d5}\)! to surprise the formidable Chinese GM Wang Hao.

Wang Hao – Gawain Jones

Liverpool (UK – China) 2007

1.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{e5}\) 2.\(\text{Qf3}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) 3.\(\text{Qb5}\) \(\text{a6}\) 4.\(\text{Qa4}\) \(\text{Qf6}\)
5.0–0 \(\text{Qe7}\) 6.\(\text{Qe1}\) \(\text{b5}\) 7.\(\text{Qb3}\) \(\text{d6}\) 8.\(\text{c3}\) 0–0 9.\(\text{h3}\)
\(\text{Qa5}\) 10.\(\text{Qc2}\) \(\text{d5}\) 11.\(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{e4}\) 12.\(\text{Qg5}\) \(\text{Qxd5}\)
13.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{f5}\) 14.\(\text{Qg3}\) \(\text{f4}\) 15.\(\text{Qe4}\) \(\text{f3}\) 16.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{fxg2}\)
17.\(\text{Qg3}\) \(\text{Qd6}\)

18.\(\text{Qd3}\)
Up to this point we had been following the previous game, in which 18.\(\text{d3}\) was played.

18...\(\text{g6}\) 19.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 20.\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{f4}\)

20...\(\text{xf5}\) was a good alternative, e.g. 21.\(\text{bd2}\) \(\text{h5}\) with good attacking chances.

21.\(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{xf4}\) 22.\(\text{bd2}\) \(\text{f7}\) 23.\(\text{a4}\)

Another possibility was 23.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{h4}\) 24.\(\text{xg2}\) \(\text{h7}\) 25.\(\text{e2}\), although Black would obviously retain fine compensation here as well.

23...\(\text{h4}\) 24.\(\text{axb5}\) \(\text{b7}\)! 25.\(\text{xa5}\)?

Too greedy! Necessary was 25.\(\text{e2}\) axb5 26.\(\text{xb5}\) with good chances to defend. A possible continuation is 26...\(\text{xf5}\) 27.\(\text{xb7}\)? (27.\(\text{d3}\) ) 27...\(\text{xb7}\) 28.\(\text{xa8}\)\(\text{f5}\) 29.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{b7}\) 30.\(\text{xg2}\) when White may be slightly for choice, although the position remains very unclear.

25...\(\text{xe4}\)?

Black could have crowned his energetic play with:

25...\(\text{xe4}\)! 26.\(\text{xe4}\)

26.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{g4}\)!! is a brilliant point.

26...\(\text{xe4}\) 27.\(\text{e2}\)

27.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{xe1}\)\(\text{f}\) 28.\(\text{xe1}\) \(\text{e8}\) 29.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{f3}\)

is winning.

27...\(\text{xe2}\) 28.\(\text{xe2}\) \(\text{e8}\) 29.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xe2}\) 30.\(\text{xf7}\)\(\text{f}\)

\(\text{xf7}\) 31.\(\text{bxa6}\) \(\text{xf2}\)\(\text{f}\) 32.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{xd4}\)\(\text{f}\)

With a winning ending.

26.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 27.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xc2}\) 28.\(\text{xa6}\) \(\text{e4}\)

29.\(\text{a7}\) \(\text{h8}\) 30.\(\text{f4}\)

The position is approximately equal, and was eventually drawn. For the record, the remaining moves were:

30...\(\text{d5}\) 31.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{f5}\) 32.\(\text{a1}\) \(\text{g5}\) 33.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 34.\(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 35.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{f3}\) 36.\(\text{g2}\)

\(\text{g2}\) 37.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{a8}\) 38.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{h6}\) 39.\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{f7}\)

40.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{d4}\) 41.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{f4}\) 42.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{e3}\) 43.\(\text{a6}\) \(\text{x8}\)

44.\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{h5}\) 45.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{d8}\) 46.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{cxd6}\) 47.\(\text{cxd6}\)

\(\text{e8}\) 48.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{a7}\) \(\text{a7}\) \(\text{g8}\) \(\text{g8}\) \(\text{g8}\)

51.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{b5}\) 52.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{c6}\) 53.\(\text{g6}\) \(\text{e8}\)

54.\(\text{f7}\) \(\text{e8}\) 55.\(\text{e7}\) \(\text{e7}\) 56.\(\text{e6}\) \(\text{e6}\)

57.\(\text{h5}\) \(\text{h4}\) \(\text{h8}\) 58.\(\text{g6}\) \(\text{g6}\) \(\text{h1}\) 59.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{e3}\) 60.\(\text{h8}\)

61.\(\text{h6}\) \(\text{h3}\) 62.\(\text{h8}\) \(\text{xd6}\) 63.\(\text{h4}\)

\(\text{e7}\) 64.\(\text{a8}\) \(\text{g1}\) 65.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{g5}\) 66.\(\text{a7}\)

\(\text{f8}\) 67.\(\text{a6}\) \(\text{e6}\) 68.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{e5}\) 69.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{e2}\)

70.\(\text{a7}\) \(\text{f6}\) 71.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{e5}\) 72.\(\text{h6}\) \(\text{h5}\) 73.\(\text{g4}\)

\(\text{h1}\) 74.\(\text{a6}\)\(\text{f}\) 75.\(\text{f7}\) \(\text{f7}\) 76.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{f6}\)

77.\(\text{a3}\) \(\text{g6}\) 78.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{h7}\) 79.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{g1}\)

80.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{g6}\) 81.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{g5}\) 82.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{h6}\)

83.\(\text{h2}\)\(\text{f}\) 84.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{f6}\) 85.\(\text{a2}\) \(\text{f7}\)

86.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{e6}\)\(\text{f}\) 87.\(\text{a5}\) \(\text{f6}\) 88.\(\text{a2}\) \(\text{e5}\)

89.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 90.\(\text{a6}\) \(\text{e5}\) 91.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{e8}\)

92.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{e1}\) 93.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{e5}\) 94.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{d1}\)

95.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{d4}\) 96.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{h4}\) 97.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{h8}\)

98.\(\text{b1}\) \(\text{d8}\)\(\text{f}\) 99.\(\text{fc}\) \(\text{e2}\) 100.\(\text{f1}\)

101.\(\text{b1}\) \(\text{d6}\) 102.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{c7}\) 103.\(\text{g6}\) \(\text{d6}\)

104.\(\text{g8}\) \(\text{d7}\)

\(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\)

Regardless of the final result, Gajewski’s system once again proved its worth in securing a winning position against a high calibre opponent.

**Theoretical Highlights**

Before moving on to the main theoretical section, we will briefly note some of the key variations.
**White refuses the bait**

Accepting a gambit pawn is not to everyone's taste, so the following is seen from time to time.

1. e4 e5 2. d3 c6 3. b5 a6 4. a4 f6 5.0-0 e7 6. e1 b5 7. b3 0-0 8. c3 d6 9. h3 a5 10. c2 d5 11. d3

This is a reasonable choice for players who yearn for a solid game with little theory. However, I hardly need state that it is not a serious try for a theoretical advantage.

**Having his cake and eating it**

We have already encountered the following approach in the two illustrative games:

1. e4 e5 2. d3 c6 3. b5 a6 4. a4 f6 5.0-0 e7 6. e1 b5 7. b3 0-0 8. c3 d6 9. h3 a5 10. c2 d5 11. exd5 e4 12. x e4 x e4 13. x e4 b7 14. d4 e8

White has tried a few different moves here. He has scored quite well with:

15. x e1 x d5 16. f4

However, in line B22) I found a new move which I believe to be the answer to Black's problems. The other main line is:

15. f4

This is perhaps the most theoretically challenging move. Virtually every game has continued with:

15... c4 16. b3 b6 17. c4

Based on the evidence presented in B2312), it does not appear that Black can equalise here.
However, in variation B232) I reveal a simple novelty on move 15 which offers reasonable compensation.

At the present time, I believe that Black is holding his own in all of the variations contained within the present chapter. This may explain why the active 11.d4?! has become an increasingly popular way for White to meet the Gajewski. This move will be discussed in its own dedicated chapter.

**Theory**

1.e4 e5 2.f3 c6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 d6 5.0-0 e7 6.e1 b5 7.b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 a5 10.c2 d5!

This will be our starting position for the present chapter.

We will now consider the solid A) 11.d3, followed by the more principled B) 11.exd5.

The only other sensible moves are:

11.d4?! will be examined in Chapter 5.

11...dxe5 is met by 11...dxe4, when two moves have been tried:

- a) 12.b4 should be met by the zwischenzug 12...d6 13.d4 exd3 14.xd3 (14.xd3 d4 is also fine for Black) 14...dxe5 15.dxe5 d4 16.e1 xd5. Black is doing well and eventually won in Leon Hoyos - Miton, Lubbock 2007.

- b) 12.d4 is also harmless after 12...exd3 13.xd3 xd3 14.dxe3 xe8, when Black has completely equalised and can perhaps claim a small advantage. S.Pedersen – Schandorff, Denmark 2007, was soon agreed a draw: 15.a4 b7 16.axb5 axb5 17.g5 d6 18.xe8† xex8 19.d2 c6 ½–½.

A) 11.d3

This is a safe choice for White. The ensuing queenless position should be approximately equal, but at the same time there is plenty of scope for either player to outplay the opponent. In the following section we will see some examples of how Black should handle the position.

11...dxe4 12.dxe4 xd1 13.xd1 b7

Black can also consider delaying the development of this bishop with 13.d6 14.bd2 b7?! (14.e6 and 14.d7 are more natural, but the text is also interesting):

Najar – Safin, Moscow 2008, continued 15.b3 c8 (Black continues to play flexibly) 16.e3 h6 17.bd2 d7 18.f1 c6 19.d2 c5 with chances for both sides. Black went on to lose this game, but his play up to this point was fine.
14.\texttt{Bbd2 Ffd8}

There is no reason to avoid this very natural move.

In Shirov – Leko, Moscow (blitz) 2007, Black preferred 14...\texttt{d6} 15.a4 (after 15.b4 \texttt{Cc6} 16.a4 \texttt{Cc7} Black's pieces are well coordinated) 15...\texttt{Cc6}?! (15...\texttt{c5} was correct, with equality) 16.b3! \texttt{Cc7} 17.\texttt{Ce1} \texttt{Ab8} (17...\texttt{Ab8} seems preferable) 18.axb5 axb5 19.\texttt{Ce3±} and White eventually won. Of course, with more time available Leko would surely have played more accurately.

15.\texttt{Ae1}

15.\texttt{Bxe5 Aexe4} brings White nothing.

More logical is 15.b4 \texttt{Cc6} 16.a4. In this case 16...g6?! looks like a sensible choice. Both sides should aim to improve their positions slowly but surely. Overall I would evaluate the chances as approximately equal.

15...\texttt{Ad6}!

This is where the bishop needs to be. In Lupulescu – Baratosi, Bucharest 2008, Black failed to equalise after:

15...\texttt{d7} 16.b4 \texttt{Cc6} 17.a4 h6?!

It was not too late for 17...\texttt{d6}!, transposing to the main game.

Even 17...g6?! would have been a more useful waiting move than the text.

18.\texttt{Af1 bxa4}

18...\texttt{Bb6} 19.a5 \texttt{Cc4} 20.\texttt{De3 Dxe3} 21.\texttt{Dxe3} looks pleasant for White.

19.\texttt{Bxa4 Bb8}

This is very passive. A better try would have been 19...a5?! 20.\texttt{Cxc6 Bxc6} 21.bxa5 \texttt{Dd6} when the strong light-squared bishop provides some compensation for the pawn.

20.\texttt{Dg3}

White had a very pleasant position and went on to convert his advantage.

16.b4 \texttt{Cc6} 17.a4 \texttt{Dd7}

17...\texttt{Dc7} 18.\texttt{Bb3} allows White a useful grip over the queenside.

18.axb5 axb5 19.\texttt{Bxa8 Bxa8} 20.\texttt{Cd3 Aa6}!

This looks clumsy, but Black will soon be able to harmonise his pieces. As soon as he plays ...\texttt{c6} White's temporary advantage will disappear.

21.\texttt{Bb1 Dd8} 22.Da3 Bb8 23.De3 Bf8

24.Da1 c6 25.De2 Bb7 26.Dd1 De7

Black has fully equalised, and the game Konguvel – Srinam, Mangalore 2008, was eventually drawn.
B) 11.exd5
This is where the real fun begins!
11...e4

One of the advantages of the Gajewski over the Marshall is that Black can advance this pawn without being troubled by a hanging knight on c6. We now consider B1) 12.Qg5?! and B2) 12.Qxe4.

12.Qe5?! is unpromising in view of 12...Qxd5 13.d4 exd3 14.Qxd3 Qb7 when Black's position is already preferable. Haznedaroglu – Brunello, Crete 2007, continued: 15.Qxd5 Qxd5 16.Qd2 Qfe8 17.Qd3

Instead, the superior 17...Qd6 would have kept an advantage. For instance, after 18.Qd2 f6 19.Qd3 Qc4 20.Qad1 c5 21.Qc1 Qad8 22.Qxe8† Qxe8 23.Qf1 g5! White is still some way short of equality.

12.Qg5?!
This was played in several games shortly after the Gajewski came into fashion. It is now considered to be too risky, as Black soon develops a formidable attack.

B1) 12.Qg5?!
12...Qxd5 13.Qxe4
Instead 13.Qxh7?! Qxh7 14.Qxe4† Qg8 15.Qxd5 might look like a clever combination, but White can easily find himself in trouble after: 15...Qxd5 16.Qxe7 Qxh3

17.Qf3 (17.gxh3? Qg5† picks up the rook) 17...Qxf3 18.Qxf3 Qae8 19.Qxe8 (no better is 19.Qxc7 Qe1† 20.Qh2 Qxc1 21.Qxh3 Qc4) 19...Qxe8 20.Qa3 Qe1† 21.Qh2 Qf5 White must struggle to equalize in this difficult endgame.

B2) 12.Qxe4
This pawn can force its way to f3 with gain of tempo. We have already encountered this important motif in the two introductory games.

13.f5!
At this point the game continued: 17...b4?! 18.cxb4 Qxb4 19.Qd2 Qxd2 20.Qxd2 Qf4 21.Qef3 White was okay and eventually drew.
One way or another, White’s kingside is going to be damaged. His best reaction is to develop his queenside pieces as quickly as possible.

16.d4 fxg2 17.\(\text{fxg2}\)

From this square the knight helps to shield the king, while also unblocking the sights of the rook on e1 and bishop on c2. It is doubtful that White has anything better:

17.\(\text{fxg2}\) \(\text{gxf5}\) gives Black a healthy initiative.

In Guliyev – Fressinet, Ajaccio 2007, White lost quickly after 17.\(\text{h5}\) \(\text{g6}\) 18.\(\text{h6}\) \(\text{f5}\) 19.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{f8}\) 20.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{f7}\) 21.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{f4}\) when the game was as good as over.

Although Black’s play made for a positive impression, he could have played even more strongly with 20...\(\text{c4}\)! 21.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{f7}\), when White’s kingside is under heavy pressure.

17.a4 looks like a luxury that White can ill afford. In Brinck-Claussen – O. Larsen, Denmark 2007, Black won in fine style after 17...\(\text{xh3}\) 18.\(\text{axb5}\) \(\text{h4}\)! 19.\(\text{xa5}\) \(\text{xf2}\), Black plays the correct combination incorrectly. It was best to take with the bishop first, to make the h4-square available for the queen.

17...g6!

Here White could have defended better, by playing 20.\(\text{bd2}\) or 20.\(\text{d3}\). Black still has the initiative, but the exact evaluation is not too important to us. If he had played 19...\(\text{xf2}\) he would have won as in the game, which concluded swiftly with 20.\(\text{xf2}\)? \(\text{xf2}\) 21.\(\text{xf2}\) \(\text{h4}\) 22.\(\text{g1}\) \(\text{f8}\) 0–1.

With this excellent move Black gains control over two key squares: f5 and h5. The former is important because White can use it to exchange pieces in some variations. The latter might have been utilised by the white queen. Finally, the knight on g3 and bishop on c2 are both restricted. I probably was the first to play this move, albeit only in an unpublished rapid game, in 2007.
17...\textit{Nd6} is a reasonable move, and was used in both of the introductory games at the start of the chapter. This move would have been good enough to recommend, were it not for the even stronger main line.

18.\textit{Re4}

White has to transfer some pieces to cover his kingside. We now follow the game Dabo Peranic – Stevic, Bizovac 2008.

18...\textit{axh3} 19.\textit{Rh6}

19.\textit{xd5\#} \textit{xd5} 20.\textit{xe7} is refuted brilliantly by 20...\textit{xf2}!:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\filldraw[black] (0,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {a};\filldraw[black] (1,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {b};\filldraw[black] (2,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {c};\filldraw[black] (3,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {d};\filldraw[black] (4,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {e};\filldraw[black] (5,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {f};\filldraw[black] (6,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {g};\filldraw[black] (7,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {h};\filldraw[black] (0,1) circle (0.05) node[left] {1};\filldraw[black] (0,2) circle (0.05) node[left] {2};\filldraw[black] (0,3) circle (0.05) node[left] {3};\filldraw[black] (0,4) circle (0.05) node[left] {4};\filldraw[black] (0,5) circle (0.05) node[left] {5};\filldraw[black] (0,6) circle (0.05) node[left] {6};\filldraw[black] (0,7) circle (0.05) node[left] {7};\filldraw[black] (0,8) circle (0.05) node[left] {8};\filldraw[black] (1,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {a};\filldraw[black] (2,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {b};\filldraw[black] (3,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {c};\filldraw[black] (4,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {d};\filldraw[black] (5,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {e};\filldraw[black] (6,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {f};\filldraw[black] (7,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {g};\filldraw[black] (8,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {h};\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21.\textit{xf2} \textit{xf8\#} 22.\textit{g1} \textit{f6\#} 23.\textit{xf1} \textit{xf1\#} 24.\textit{xf1} \textit{xf1\#} 25.\textit{xf1} \textit{h1\#} and wins.

19...\textit{Re7} 20.\textit{Re3}

After 20.\textit{Rh2} Black can calmly play 20...\textit{g1\#} 21.\textit{xg1} \textit{c6\#} with ideas of ...\textit{d6} and ...\textit{h4}.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\filldraw[black] (0,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {a};\filldraw[black] (1,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {b};\filldraw[black] (2,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {c};\filldraw[black] (3,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {d};\filldraw[black] (4,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {e};\filldraw[black] (5,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {f};\filldraw[black] (6,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {g};\filldraw[black] (7,0) circle (0.05) node[below] {h};\filldraw[black] (0,1) circle (0.05) node[left] {1};\filldraw[black] (0,2) circle (0.05) node[left] {2};\filldraw[black] (0,3) circle (0.05) node[left] {3};\filldraw[black] (0,4) circle (0.05) node[left] {4};\filldraw[black] (0,5) circle (0.05) node[left] {5};\filldraw[black] (0,6) circle (0.05) node[left] {6};\filldraw[black] (0,7) circle (0.05) node[left] {7};\filldraw[black] (0,8) circle (0.05) node[left] {8};\filldraw[black] (1,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {a};\filldraw[black] (2,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {b};\filldraw[black] (3,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {c};\filldraw[black] (4,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {d};\filldraw[black] (5,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {e};\filldraw[black] (6,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {f};\filldraw[black] (7,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {g};\filldraw[black] (8,8) circle (0.05) node[right] {h};\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

A beautiful move! It is not often that one sees a bishop ‘trapped’ in such an ingenious way.

26.\textit{Re5}

26.\textit{de4} runs in to 26...\textit{xg5}!.

26...\textit{xe5} 27.\textit{xe5} \textit{xg5} 28.\textit{xd5} \textit{ad8} 29.\textit{xa5}

29.\textit{de4} \textit{xg3\#} will leave Black a whole rook up.

29...\textit{xd2} 30.\textit{xf1} \textit{h5} 0–1
This was not a perfect game, but it highlighted once again the kinds of tactical pitfalls into which White may so easily fall. Ultimately it seems that 12.\( \square \text{g}5?! \) is too risky to be an effective practical choice.

B2) 12.\( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{e}4 \) \( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{e}4 \) 13.\( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{e}4 \)

If White wishes to accept the gambit pawn, then this is the sensible way to do it. The position will resemble a Marshall gambit after Black captures on d5. Both players can claim certain advantages compared to that opening. White has been forced to part with his light squared bishop in return for an enemy knight. However, the remaining black knight is somewhat misplaced on the edge of the board. White is less likely to succumb to a direct attack as he still possesses a knight on f3 to protect the kingside. On the other hand, Black is not so reliant on a mating attack, as his bishop pair will often provide a degree of positional compensation.

13...\( \text{\texttt{b}} \text{7} \)

This is the best place for the bishop.

14.d4 \( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{8} \)

This is the best and most popular move. Black keeps his options open and waits for White to reveal his intentions.

Instead 14...\( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{d}5?! \) would be premature after 15.\( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{1} \):

a) In Onischuk – Drozdovskij, Kharkov 2007, Black was successful with 15...\( \text{\texttt{d}} \text{6} \) 16.b3 \( \text{\texttt{c}} \text{6} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{3}?! \) f5 with good counterplay, which eventually proved to be too much for White to handle. However, 17.\( \text{\texttt{a}} \text{3} \) is an obvious improvement, after which White stands better.

b) Zherebukh – Swiercz, Kirishi 2008, instead saw 15...\( \text{\texttt{d}} \text{6} \) 16.\( \text{\texttt{b}} \text{d}2 \) \( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{8} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{e} \text{8} \) \( \text{\texttt{i}} \text{xe} \text{8} \) 18.\( \text{\texttt{f}} \text{1} \) when White was starting to get coordinated. Following 18...\( \text{\texttt{c}} \text{4} \) 19.b3 \( \text{\texttt{b}} \text{6} \) 20.\( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{3} \) he enjoyed a stable advantage.

Another idea is 14...\( \text{\texttt{f}} \text{6} \), preparing to recapture on d5 with the queen. The drawback is that he commits the dark-squared bishop to what may turn out to be an unfavourable square. Play continues 15.\( \text{\texttt{f}} \text{4} \) and now:

a) 15...\( \text{\texttt{c}} \text{4} \) is well met by 16.b3 \( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{d}5 \) (16...\( \text{\texttt{b}} \text{6} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{5} \)±) 17.\( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{1} \) \( \text{\texttt{f}} \text{5} \) (17...\( \text{\texttt{d}} \text{6} \) is safer but the position is already unpleasant. Both 18.\( \text{\texttt{b}} \text{d}2 \) and 18.\( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{5} \) give White a stable advantage.) 18.\( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{c}7 \) \( \text{\texttt{b}} \text{2} \) 19.\( \text{\texttt{d}} \text{2} \+ \) In Prasad – Ivanov, Selestat 2008, it turned out that Black’s active play had brought him nothing but problems. After the further 19...\( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{f}3 \) 20.\( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{xb}2 \) \( \text{\texttt{g}} \text{6} \) 21.\( \text{\texttt{g}} \text{3} \) \( \text{\texttt{b}} \text{7} \) 22.\( \text{\texttt{d}} \text{2} \) White had consolidated and went on to win.

b) The game Degraeve – Karpatchev, Saint-Chely d’Aubrac 2008, resulted in a quick draw after 15...\( \text{\texttt{x}} \text{d}5 \) 16.\( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{1} \) \( \text{\texttt{c}} \text{4} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{c}} \text{2} \) (17.\( \text{\texttt{b}} \text{3} \) transposes to Prasad – Ivanov above) 17...c5 \( \frac{1}{2} \)–\( \frac{1}{2} \). However, if White had been feeling more ambitious he could have obtained a pleasant advantage with: 18.b3 \( \text{\texttt{d}} \text{6} \) 19.\( \text{\texttt{e}} \text{5} \) cxd4 20.cxd4±

We may conclude that Black does best to follow the path of the main line.
After 14...\textit{a}e8 we reach an important position in which White has tried three main moves: B21) 15.\textit{ab}d2, B22) 15.\textit{ae}1, and B23) 15.\textit{af}4.

B21) 15.\textit{ab}d2

This is not the most theoretically challenging move. The bishop on c1 is now blocked, so White will have to move the knight for a second time to make room for it. In the meantime Black will be able to complete development and open the centre with ...c5.

15...\textit{axd}5 16.\textit{ae}1

16.\textit{ae}2 \textit{d}7 17.\textit{ae}3 (17.\textit{ae}5?! \textit{e}6 18.\textit{ae}3 \textit{g}5 19.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}6) should be met by 17...c5 (Kosten) with good play for Black.

In Tuncer – Kosten, Cappelle la Grande 2008, White preferred 16.\textit{ae}5 \textit{d}7 17.a4.

16...\textit{ad}8

Black has a couple of reasonable alternatives in 16...\textit{d}6?! and 16...\textit{c}5? 17.dxc5 \textit{xc}5 18.\textit{de}4 \textit{b}6\textit{w}.

17.\textit{af}1 c5 18.\textit{ae}3

The game continued 18...\textit{h}5. The game Hoffmann – Nyback, Germany 2008, showed another promising path for Black in 18...\textit{we}6?! 19.\textit{d}2 \textit{e}4 20.b3 \textit{c}6 21.d5 \textit{xd}5 22.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 Black has a very slight edge, although the game was eventually drawn.

18...\textit{h}5

19.d5 \textit{c}4?! 19...\textit{xd}5 would have been equal. The text is more ambitious, although is probably does not change the final evaluation.

20.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}4 21.\textit{e}5 \textit{g}6 22.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}8 23.\textit{xc}4 \textit{f}6

We have been following Kryvoruchko – Nyback, Plovdiv 2008. The position is rather unclear, with mutual chances. White has retained his extra pawn, but Black enjoys a pair of bishops and a healthily centralised army. The game was eventually drawn.

B22) 15.\textit{ae}1

The rook will soon be chased away regardless,
so White reasons that by moving it immediately he will keep all of his options open regarding the placement of the other pieces. The drawback is that he loses some flexibility with the rook which might, in certain positions, be better off moving to e2 or e5.

15...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}xd5 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}4}
16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}d2 transposes to line B21) above.

\textbf{16.c5?}

After a detailed examination of the alternatives, I came to the conclusion that this was Black's most promising move.

In Zhigalko – Teterov, Minsk 2009, Black failed to equalise with 16...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}c4?! 17.b3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d6 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c2! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c8 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}e5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c6 20.a4 (promising alternatives include 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}b2, or 20.d5!? \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d7 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}e1=) 20...f6 21.axb5 axb5 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c5=.

White was clearly better although the game was eventually drawn.

\textbf{16...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}5!!N}

This is more interesting. For a while I believed that this move would ensure Black of an excellent game. Unfortunately I then discovered that White can obtain a slightly better ending with precise play.

17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}xc7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c4 18.b3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}b2 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}e2!!

Hopeless is 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}xf3 20.gxf3? (20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}b2

\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}4 is examined after 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c2!) 20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}g5
21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}xe8\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}xe8 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xb2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}e1+ 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}g2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c1 (23...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}f4 also wins) 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d2:

Now the most efficient route to victory is 24...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}h1! 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}xh1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}xb2.

\textbf{19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}xf3}

The alternatives are no better:

19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}f8?! 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xb2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}xf3 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}xe8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}xe8
22.gxf3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}g1+ 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}g2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d3 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}xa1
25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xa1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xd2 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c4±

19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d3 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}b1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}a3 (after 20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c8
21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xd3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}c4 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}e3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}xf7 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}bd2
Black does not have enough for two pawns)
21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xd3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xd3 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}xe3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}xb2 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}a1
24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c4 White's connected passed pawns are very dangerous, e.g.: 24...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c8 25.c5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}f5
26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}f6 27.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}}b2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}xa8 28.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d6±

20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xf3

After 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xb2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}h4 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}a3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}c6 Black has excellent prospects, despite being two pawns down. The bishop pair is very strong, White's kingside is under pressure and the knight on a3 is a mere spectator.

20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}xf3 21.gxf3
21...Ec8
White has quite good chances to convert his extra pawn; the centralised king is a big help to him.
22.Eg3

22...b4!
22...f5 23.Ee2 Od1 24.a4=
23.c4
After 23.cxb4 Exb4 24.Exe8+ Exe8 it is hard for White to develop.
23...Ee6 24.Ed2
24.Ed5? Od3
24.Exe8+ Exe8 25.Ed5 Od3 is also fine for Black.
24...Exd4 25.Eab1 Od3 26.Exe8+ Exe8 27.Ef1 f5!
Threatening to trap the bishop.
28.f4
Black probably has enough positional compensation to draw this position, but he can hardly hope for anything more.

17.dxc5
This was White’s choice in the only practical encounter I was able to find. It certainly seems like a natural choice, as after 17.Ed2 cxd4 the pressure on the long diagonal would force White to compromise his structure by capturing with the c-pawn.

17...Exc5 18.Ed2 Ec4!!
In Mekhitarian – Perdomo, Sao Paulo 2008, the continuation was 18...Ee6 19.Ee3 Ed5 20.Ed4 Ed5 21.Ed1 Ed4:

22.Ee3?! Ef5? (the simple 22...Ec7 leaves Black with no problems) 23.Exf4 Exf4 24.Ed7± (24.Ed4±). Black eventually managed to draw although the results of his opening were unimpressive.


Black's powerful light-squared bishop will provide ongoing compensation for the pawn. We will see that similar positions can arise in certain variations of the Marshall Gambit. It is not easy for White to make his extra pawn count, even if he manages to exchange queens.

**B23) 15...\textit{f}4**

This is the main line. White develops the bishop on its most natural square. He intends to follow with $\texttt{bd}2$, completing development with good chances to consolidate his extra pawn. We will now analyse two moves. **B231) 15...\textit{c}4** has been the most common choice, although I am not convinced that it can suffice for full equality. However, my new suggestion of **B232) 15...\textit{xd}5?!** may be more promising.

Before moving on, let us briefly note that 15...\textit{xd}5 does not equalise after 16.\textit{e}5 $\textit{d}7$ 17.\textit{bd}2. Yagupov – Zubarev, Tula 2008, continued: 17...\textit{f}6 (After 17...\textit{d}6 18.\textit{xe}8+ \textit{xe}8 19.\textit{xd}6 \textit{cxd}6 20.\texttt{f}1?! Black's strong bishop gives him some compensation, but he has no real targets to attack and White has reasonable chances to convert his extra pawn.) 18.\textit{e}1 \textit{d}5 (Also insufficient is 18...\textit{c}4 19.\textit{xc}4 bxc4 20.\textit{d}2 intending b3) 19.b3 \textit{ac}8 20.\textit{c}2 \textit{b}7 21.c4 \textit{f}7 22.\textit{e}2±

**B231) 15...\textit{c}4**

This is a very logical move. The first point is that Black forces his opponent to spend time dealing with the threat against the b2-pawn. At the same time he improves the misplaced knight, which can proceed to a better central location via either ...\texttt{d}6, or ...\texttt{b}6\textit{xd}5.

**16.b3**

In Adams – Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007, White obtained a slight edge with 16.\textit{e}2 \textit{xd}5 17.\textit{e}5 \textit{g}5 18.\textit{g}3 \textit{xe}5 19.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 20.\textit{xe}5. Black still had some problems to solve, although Carlsen duly held on for a draw after a long battle.

The improvement 16...\textit{xd}5 has been suggested by Kosten who goes on to analyse:

a) 17.\textit{bd}2 \textit{xb}2 18.\textit{c}2 \textit{a}3=

b) 17.b3 \textit{f}5 with two choices for White:

b1) 18.\textit{xc}7?! \textit{xf}3 19.\texttt{xf}3 \textit{d}6 20.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xd}6 is good for Black, as pointed out by Kosten. White's two pawn advantage is outweighed by his shattered kingside.

b2) 18.\textit{bd}2 looks better, when there follows 18...\textit{xd}2 19.\textit{wd}2 \textit{xf}3 20.\texttt{xf}3 \textit{wh}3 21.\texttt{ae}1 \textit{d}7.
edge thanks to his control over the e-file, but overall I agree with Kosten’s assessment that Black should not be in any real danger.

16...\texttt{b6}

White now faces a choice of his own. \textbf{B2311) 17.a3} should not be too dangerous for Black, although the second player must still react with some precision. The strongest move is \textbf{B2312) 17.e4}. Less challenging is 17.d3 \texttt{xd5} when White has tried two moves:

a) 18.e5 f6 19.h2 c5 was fine for Black in Nyysti – Nyback, Mantta 2008.

b) The game Ivkina – Ikonomopoulou, Plovdiv 2008, instead saw 18.a3 \texttt{c8} 19.b4?! \texttt{b6} (19...f5 20.e1 \texttt{f4} 21.h2 \texttt{d6} 22.d2 is promising for White) 20.e2 c5 21.bxc5 \texttt{xc5}. Black obtained good compensation, although he eventually lost in the game. However, White’s play can easily be improved. 19.d2 is simple and good, as can be seen after 19...c5 20.dxc5 \texttt{xc5} 21.e8† \texttt{xe8} 22.e1 \texttt{c6} 23.e4. In this position White’s well placed knights give him excellent chances.

Therefore Black should probably have preferred one of the alternatives on the previous move:

b1) 18...f5? 19.e1 \texttt{f4} has been suggested by Kosten. Following 20.h2 c5 the poorly placed bishop on h2 ensures Black of a reasonable game.

b2) 18...c5 is another logical move. Play may continue 19.d2 \texttt{xd4} 20.d4 \texttt{c5} 21.e4 \texttt{b6} 22.b4 \texttt{f8} with fair compensation.

\textbf{B2311) 17.a3}

This is my recommendation. Black has a second satisfactory continuation in:

17...\texttt{xd5}! 18.e1 c5

Black does not obtain equality with: 18...d6 19.e8† \texttt{xe8} 20.d6 cxd6 21.d2 \texttt{c6} 22.e2 \texttt{xe8} 23.e1 \texttt{xe1}† 24.e1= 19.d2 \texttt{xd4} 20.d4

20.cxd4 \texttt{c8} also looks fine for Black.

20...\texttt{c8}

Black has decent compensation. Possible continuations include 21.f5 \texttt{f8} 22.e8 \texttt{xe8} 23.e1 \texttt{d7}, and 21.e4 \texttt{f8} 22.d3 \texttt{xe4} 23.e4 \texttt{xe4} 24.e4 \texttt{xe4} \texttt{d5}, regaining the pawn to reach an equal position.

18.e1

Black should not be worried by 18.d3 f5 19.e2 f4 20.h2 c5 21.d2 \texttt{xd4} 22.cxd4 (Kosten) 22...\texttt{c8} with sufficient compensation
based on the bishop pair and well centralised pieces, not to mention the poorly placed bishop on h2.

18...c5 19.a4 cxd4 20.axb5 axb5
Also possible was 20...dxc3 21.bxa6 axa6 22.axa6 c2 (22...axa6?! 23.dxc3 dxc3 24.xd8 xd8 25.dxe7 gives White good winning chances) 23.xc2 axa6 24.d2:

According to Kosten Black does not have quite enough compensation for the pawn here. My own view is that he should not face too many difficulties after 24...b4 25.c3 (25.c7 xxc7 26.dxc7 c2 27.e5 f6 28.e6 d3 is very close to equal) 25.d3 26.e4 c5 27.e3 d6, when the bishop pair provides ongoing compensation.

21.bxa8 bxa8 22.cxd4 c5!
Kosten enthusiastically awards this move not one but two exclamation marks. The idea is certainly interesting, although there was a fully satisfactory alternative in 22...b4:

With the following possibilities:

a) After 23.c4 c3 24.dxc3 bxc3 the c3-pawn is very powerful. It is White who is more likely to fall into danger here.

b) 23.xb2 c5 (also playable is 23...f6 24.dxe8+ xxe8 25.b3 a8 24.d5 exe1+ 25.xe1 looks a little better for White, so Black should probably prefer 25...d6! with decent compensation.

c) 23.d5 bxc3 leads to no more than equality for White, e.g. 24.dxc3 dxc3 25.dg4 (25.d7 d5 26.xe7 dxe7 27.e7 xxe7 28.xe7 xg2+ should lead to a draw after 29.xc7 xh3 30.d8+xh8 31.xd8) 25.d6 26.h6 c8 27.xf7 g8 28.h6+ with a perpetual.

d) 23.xd3 f6 24.dxe8+ xxe8 should be fine for Black. It is important that 25.c4 can be met by: 25...c3!
The knight vacates the long diagonal while also preparing a possible ...\textit{e}4. Another important point is that the checking square on e8 is now protected, thus freeing the black queen from defensive duties.

\textbf{25.\textit{c}7}

25.b4 \textit{xg}2 26.bxc5 (the computer suggests 26.\textit{h}2 \textit{f}8 27.\textit{d}2, although White's exposed king is likely to cause him problems for a long time to come) 26.\textit{xh}3 27.f3 \textit{xf}3 28.\textit{f}2 \textit{d}1+ 29.\textit{e}1 \textit{f}3 This is a draw, as pointed out by Kosten.

However, it seems that Black can do even better with 28.\textit{d}3!

Black regains the piece to obtain a clear advantage, as 29.\textit{a}3 can be met by 29.\textit{e}4.

\textbf{25...\textit{a}1}

25...\textit{d}8 looks slightly less accurate in view of 26.b4 \textit{b}6 27.\textit{b}5 \textit{d}5 28.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}4 (Kosten) 29.c4 \textit{g}3 30.cxd5 \textit{xf}1 31.\textit{xf}1 \textit{xd}5\textdagger, although Black should probably be able to hold the draw.

\textbf{26.b4 \textit{b}6 27.\textit{d}1}

Kosten has suggested 27.\textit{b}5 \textit{a}8 28.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}4 29.\textit{h}2 as a possible improvement for White. I would tend to agree, although I still think that Black has enough compensation. His bishops are superbly placed and his overall piece coordination is excellent.

\textbf{27...h6}

27...h5!? is more ambitious.

\textbf{28.\textit{h}2 \textit{e}4 29.\textit{d}8\textdagger \textit{h}7 30.\textit{d}2 \textit{xc}3 31.\textit{d}6}

At this point the game Durarbeyli – Kosten, Cappelle la Grande 2008, was agreed drawn. Overall we have seen that 17.\textit{g}3 presents Black with multiple routes to an acceptable position.

\textbf{B2312) 17.c4!}

This looks like White's best chance for a plus.
Attacking the Spanish

11...bxc4 18.bxc4 Qxc4 19.Qc3

This is a more difficult line for Black to meet. Compared with the previous variation, White is playing much more dynamically. We will see that he has a lot of tactical resources at his disposal.

19...Qb6

In Kaplan – Ragger, Yerevan 2007, Black was able to equalise with 19...Qd6 20.Qe1?! Qb5! (after this move Black is fine) 21.Qe1 Qc6 22.Qa4 Qd6 (an even faster route to equality would have been: 22...Qxc3 23.Qxc3 Qd6 24.Qxe8+ Qxe8 25.Qxe8+ Qxe8 26.Qxd6 Qxd6=) 23.Qxe8+ Qxe8 24.Qe1 Qd7 25.Qe5 Qxe5 26.Qxe5 Qd8. White was unable to keep his extra pawn, and an equal endgame ensued after 27.Qb3 Qxd5 28.Qxd5 Qxd5 29.Qxd5 Qxd5 The game was subsequently drawn.

However, White could have secured a plus with 20.Qxd6!N. Play continues 20...Qxd6 (20...Qxd6 21.Qxe8+ Qxe8 22.Qb3 Qb8 23.Qe1±) 21.Qb3 Qc8±. From a purely materialistic point of view, White's extra pawn is not too important. However, from a positional perspective the doubled d-pawns are extremely useful in restricting the freedom of the enemy bishops. We may therefore conclude that Black has failed to equalise from the opening.

20.Qb3 Qb8

It is important to defend the bishop. 20...Qxd5 runs into 21.Qxc7! (21.Qxb7 Qxc3 should enable Black to equalise) 21...Qxc7 22.Qxd5 Qxd5 23.Qxd5 with a solid extra pawn.

21.Qe5!

This looks like the most accurate move:

a) 21.Qae1?! Qxd5 can only be better for Black.

b) After 21.Qg5 Qxd5 22.Qxd5 Qxd5 23.Qxc7 Qxc7 24.Qxd5 Qf8! White is unable to consolidate his extra pawn, e.g. 25.a4 (...Qb5 was a serious threat) 25...Qb8 26.Qe5 Qxe5 27.Qxe5 Qf6 (27...Qxg5 28.Qxg5 Qxd4=) 28.Qa5 Qxd4 29.Qb3 Qd6. The position is equal, with perhaps a miniscule edge to Black in view of his better minor piece.

c) 21.Qe2 Qxd5 22.Qxd5 Qxd5 23.Qxc7 gives Black a choice:

cl) After 23...Qxb3 24.Qa8 Qb7 25.Qxe7 Qxe7 26.Qxe7 Qxe7 White must be a little better although the most likely result should be a draw.

c2) It also looks interesting to try 23...Qd7?! 24.Qe5 (24.Qxb8 Qxb8 25.Qxb8 Qxf3 26.Qxf3 h5 is balanced) 24...Qe6 25.Qxb8 (25.Qc2 Qbc8 26.Qe1 Qb4 27.Qf3 Qxe1 28.Qxe6 Qxe6 29.Qxe1 Qd7 30.Qd3 Qxc7 should be alright for Black) 25...Qxb8 26.Qxb8.
Chapter 4 - Gajewski: 11.d3 and 11.exd5

The position is approximately equal. White has a slight material advantage, but Black’s queen and bishop pair work together very well. However, it is worth mentioning that he must avoid: 26...f6? 27...a6±

21...a8

The alternative is 21...d7:

When White can choose between:

22.e2 b6 23.e1 (after 23.b1 xdx5 24.xd5 xd5 25.xb8 xb8 26.xb8 xb8 27.xc7 b1 28.h2 f6 Black should be okay, as his pieces are extremely active) 23...xd5 24.xd5 xc7 25.xb3 26.xd8 xd8 27.axb3 f6 Black should be able to draw this position.

22.ee1

This looks like the best try for an advantage. Play continues:

22.e6 b3 23.eb1

23.e5 xd5 24.eb1 b4=

23...a8

23...xd5 24.xc7 xc7 25.xd5 xd5 26.xd5 leaves Black struggling.

24.a4 d7 25.e4 xb1 26.eb1 b6 27.axa6 xd5 28.xd5 xd5

If Black defends well than he may be able to hold the draw. At the same time, this is not the type of position that one generally wishes to obtain from the opening.

22.dg5

This energetic move targets the weak f7-pawn.

22...f8

22...d7 does not equalise after 23.c2:

a) 23.f6 24.e1! (weaker is 24.e3 h6 25.xf3 xdx5= or 24.e4 xe4 25.xe4 xg5 26.xg5 xe5 27.xe5 xdx5=) 24.h6 25.ge4 xdx5 26.xd5 27.c5 28.e2±

b) 23.g6 24.e2 b6

After 24.f6 25.e1 b4 26.e8 27.ge4 xdx5 28.c5 xc3 29.xc3 b6 Black is surviving, although he is still under pressure after 30.e3?!

25.e1 d7
26...\texttt{Ge}4!

After 26.\texttt{Gf}3 \texttt{f}6 Black's kingside has been compromised slightly, but he will soon regain his pawn and his bishop pair should ensure a reasonable game. Play may continue:

27.\texttt{Gb}3 \texttt{Gg}7 28.\texttt{Gd}2 \texttt{Gxd}5 29.\texttt{Gxd}5 \texttt{Gxb}3

30.\texttt{Gxe}7\texttt{f} 31.\texttt{Gxe}7\texttt{f} \texttt{Gxe}7 32.\texttt{Gxe}7 \texttt{Gb}4 Black should be fine in this ending.

26...\texttt{Gb}c8

26...\texttt{Gxd}5 27.\texttt{Gxd}5 \texttt{Gxd}5 28.\texttt{Wxc}7 \texttt{Gbc}8

29.\texttt{Gxe}5\texttt{f}+

27.\texttt{Gd}3 \texttt{Gxd}5 28.\texttt{Gxd}5 \texttt{Gxd}5 29.\texttt{Wxa}6

Black is struggling. Not only is he a pawn down, but the dark squares around his king are also weak.

23.\texttt{Wc}2 \texttt{g}6 24.\texttt{Gg}e4

24.\texttt{Gb}1? \texttt{Gd}7 25.\texttt{Gee}1 \texttt{Gxd}5 leads nowhere for White, who might already stand slightly worse.

24...\texttt{Gd}4

No better is: 24...\texttt{Gxd}5 25.\texttt{Gxd}5 \texttt{Gxd}5 26.\texttt{Gh}6 \texttt{f}6 (26...\texttt{Ge}8 27.\texttt{Gel}+) 27.\texttt{Wxf}8 \texttt{fxe}5

28.\texttt{Gxe}7 \texttt{Gxe}7 29.\texttt{Gc}3\texttt{f}+

25.\texttt{Gxe}7\texttt{f} \texttt{Gxe}7

We have reached a critical position.

26.\texttt{Wc}2!?

This was White's choice in Carlsson – Stevic, Dresden 2008. The move is not at all bad, but I do not believe it to be the strongest. We will return to this position in due course, after first reviewing the course of the game.

26...\texttt{f}5

This is the only satisfactory response to the twin threats of \texttt{Wxc}4 and \texttt{Gg}5.

27.\texttt{Wxc}4 \texttt{fxe}4 28.\texttt{d}6\texttt{f} \texttt{Wf}7 29.\texttt{Wxf}7\texttt{f} \texttt{Wxf}7

30.\texttt{Gdc}7 \texttt{Gc}8 31.\texttt{Gg}3

31.\texttt{Gg}2 may have been more precise, although White has probably lost the greater portion of his advantage already.

31...\texttt{Gf}xe7 32.\texttt{Gxc}7 \texttt{Gxc}7

\begin{tikzpicture}[scale=0.5]
\draw[help lines] (-4,-4) grid (4,4);
\node at (0,0) {1};
\node at (1,0) {2};
\node at (2,0) {3};
\node at (3,0) {4};
\node at (4,0) {5};
\node at (5,0) {6};
\node at (6,0) {7};
\node at (7,0) {8};
\node at (0,1) {a};
\node at (0,2) {b};
\node at (0,3) {c};
\node at (0,4) {d};
\node at (0,5) {e};
\node at (0,6) {f};
\node at (0,7) {g};
\node at (0,8) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}

Black has reasonable chances to draw, although his task is not easy.

33.\texttt{Ge}1 \texttt{Gd}5 34.\texttt{Gg}e2 \texttt{Gxc}1\texttt{f} 35.\texttt{Gxc}1 \texttt{Gf}7

36.\texttt{Gf}1 \texttt{Gc}4\texttt{f} 37.\texttt{Gc}1 \texttt{Ge}6 38.\texttt{Gd}2 \texttt{Gd}5

39.\texttt{Gg}3 \texttt{g}5

39...\texttt{a}5 40.\texttt{Gb}3 \texttt{a}4 41.\texttt{Gc}5 \texttt{a}3 42.\texttt{Gxe}4 \texttt{Gf}1

43.\texttt{Gd}2 \texttt{Gxg}2 44.\texttt{h}4\texttt{f} is difficult for Black.

40.\texttt{Gg}3

The last winning chance was: 40.\texttt{Gb}3 \texttt{Gf}1

41.\texttt{Gg}3 \texttt{Gxh}3 42.\texttt{Gc}5 \texttt{Gf}5 43.\texttt{Gc}a4 \texttt{Gc}4 44.\texttt{Gb}6\texttt{f} 45.\texttt{Gd}5 \texttt{h}5 46.\texttt{Gc}3\texttt{f} 47.\texttt{Gxe}4 \texttt{h}4
48.\textit{\text{e}}xg5 h3 49.\textit{\text{e}}xh3 \textit{\text{h}}xh3 50.\textit{\text{e}}e4 It is still far from trivial for Black to hold this ending.

40...a5
Now the draw is simple.

41.h4 gxh4 42.gxh4 a4 43.h5 a3 44.h6 \textit{\text{b}}b5 45.\textit{\text{b}}b3 \textit{\text{c}}c4 46.\textit{\text{c}}c1
1/2-1/2

Returning to move 26, I believe that White has a strong improvement available:

26.\textit{\text{g}}5?!N

![Diagram](image1)

26...f6
This looks more or less forced. In case of 26...\textit{\text{a}}a3 White can choose between 27.\textit{\text{f}}f6\texttt{\textit{\text{g}}}7 28.\textit{\text{d}}d7\texttt{\textit{\text{f}}}f6 29.\textit{\text{c}}c4 with a very strong initiative.

27.\textit{\text{f}}xf6\texttt{\textit{\text{g}}}8
27...\textit{\text{xf}}6 28.\textit{\text{e}}e4 is virtually winning for White, e.g. 28...\textit{\text{xf}}2 29.\textit{\text{xf}}2 \textit{\text{a}}a3 30.\textit{\text{d}}d3 \textit{\text{b}}b4 31.\textit{\text{c}}c1 \textit{\text{b}}b5 32.\textit{\text{e}}e3 when the black kingside is just too weak.

28.\textit{\text{c}}e4 \textit{\text{d}}d6 29.\textit{\text{e}}1 h6
29...\textit{\text{xe}}4 30.\textit{\text{xe}}4 \textit{\text{g}}7 31.\textit{\text{g}}4 is winning for White.

![Diagram](image2)

30.\textit{\text{f}}xh6 \textit{\text{xf}}6 31.\textit{\text{f}}xf6 \textit{\text{xf}}6 32.\textit{\text{f}}xc7 \textit{\text{e}}e8 33.\textit{\text{g}}7\texttt{\textit{\text{g}}}7 34.\textit{\text{xd}}6

White has four pawns for a bishop, as well as a strong attack against the enemy king. His advantage ought to be enough to decide the game.

![Diagram](image3)

B232) 15...\textit{\text{d}}x\textit{\text{d}}5?!N

16.\textit{\text{e}}1 \textit{\text{d}}6
According to the database this position has been reached just once, via a different move order.
17.\textbf{\textit{x}}d6
17.\textit{\textit{xe}}8+ \textit{\textit{we}}8 18.\textbf{\textit{x}}d6 \textit{\textit{cxd}}6 19.\textbf{\textit{bd}}2
is similar to the main line. Once again my suggestion is 19...\textbf{\textit{c}}4?! with reasonable compensation.

17...\textit{\textit{cxd}}6
Also possible is 17...\textit{\textit{xe}}1+ 18.\textbf{\textit{xe}}1
(18.\textit{\textit{we}}1 \textit{\textit{cxd}}6 19.\textbf{\textit{bd}}2 is similar to the main
line) 18...\textit{\textit{xd}}6 19.\textbf{\textit{d}}2 \textit{\textit{e}}8:

Black has sufficient compensation. The game Rusjan – Marin, Ljubljana 2007, continued 20.\textbf{\textit{d}}3 \textbf{\textit{xe}}2 21.\textit{\textit{g}}4?! \textit{\textit{b}}7 when
Black stood better. Instead after the superior 21.\textit{\textit{xe}}2 \textit{\textit{g}}6+ 22.\textit{\textit{g}}4 \textit{\textit{xd}}3 23.\textit{\textit{e}}1 \textit{\textit{f}}8! the
chances are approximately equal.

18.\textbf{\textit{bd}}2 \textbf{\textit{c}}4?!
Conclusion
The Gajewski variation has only been topical for a couple of years at the time of writing. Although the theory is still developing, we have reached the stage where we can begin to draw at least some tentative conclusions about certain variations.

If White decides to play solidly with A) 11.d3 (page 99), then he can hardly hope for an opening advantage. At the same time, the move should not be ignored completely. From a psychological perspective, it is not always easy to switch from offering a sharp gambit to manoeuvring without queens. I hope that the guidance offered in section A) will help the reader to react appropriately should he encounter this variation.

Aside from the central counter-strike 11.d4, which will be covered in the following chapter, the critical test of Black’s idea has to be the acceptance of the gambit pawn with B) 11.exd5 (page 101). Following the standard response of 11...e4, it seems too risky for White to try B1) 12.Qg5?! (page 101), so he should instead prefer B2) 12.Qxe4 Qxe4 13.Qxe4 (page 104). Then after the logical 13...b7 14.d4 Qe8 we analysed three main continuations for White. Generally speaking, it seems to me that Black has enough compensation in most lines, although further practical testing is clearly needed before any firm conclusions can be drawn. For instance, after B23) 15.Qf4 (page 108), the response of 15...Qxd5??N (line B232, page 115), which may well be Black’s most promising continuation, has not even been played yet!

Overall I consider the Gajewski to be a good practical weapon against the Spanish, although the downside to its newfound respectability is the diminishing of its surprise value. As I have already mentioned, the theory is still developing in many lines, so I would regard it as an especially attractive option for creative players who like to search for their own original ideas.

But let us take a look at the move that has quickly developed to be the main option:
Chapter 5

Gajewski: 11.d4

1.e4 e5 2.\( \mathcal{f}f3 \) \( \mathcal{c}6 \) 3.\( \mathcal{b}b5 \) a6 4.\( \mathcal{a}a4 \) \( \mathcal{f}f6 \) 5.0–0 \( \mathcal{e}e7 \)
6.\( \mathcal{a}a1 \) b5 7.\( \mathcal{b}b3 \) 0–0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 \( \mathcal{a}a5 \) 10.\( \mathcal{c}c2 \) d5? 11.d4

Introduction
Theoretical Highlights
Theory
A) 11...dxe4 12.\( \mathcal{c}xe5 \) c5
A1) 13.\( \mathcal{d}xc5 \)
A2) 13.\( \mathcal{d}d2 \)
A3) 13.\( \mathcal{g}g5 \)
A4) 13.\( \mathcal{e}e3 \)
B) 11...\( \mathcal{d}xe4 \)
B1) 12.dxe5
B2) 12.\( \mathcal{d}xe5 \)

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page 139
1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 f6
5.0-0 c7 6.e1 b5 7.b3 0-0 8.h3 d6 9.c3
a5 10.c2 d5 11.d4

This has become the most popular reaction to the Gajewski amongst top players. White eschews the gain of a pawn and instead fights for the initiative.

**Introduction**

Despite White's refusal to accept the pawn sacrifice, the text should not be viewed as in any way less principled than 11.exd5. White's 11th move signifies a willingness to fight for the central squares, in accordance with classical chess principles. Both players have developed the same number of pieces, although advocates of the white side may point to the less than ideal placement of the knight on a5.

Obviously the situation in the centre of the board will need to be clarified over the next few moves. Black will almost always capture the e4-pawn on the next turn, with either the knight or the d-pawn. In both cases, White will respond by capturing the e5-pawn with his knight. The evaluation of the resultant positions will then hinge on a variety of tactical and strategic motifs. Both of Black's options will be explored in detail in the theoretical section.

### Strategic themes

There are a number of recurring themes in the 11.d4 variation.

#### Attacking the e4-pawn

In the 11...dxe4 variation, it is quite common for White to mount an assault against the pawn on e4.

White can increase the pressure with b1 and g4 to exchange the defensive knight on f6. Alternatively, he might develop his dark squared bishop on a square like g5. Then the bishop can remove the defensive knight, while the rook on e1 would assist in attacking the e-pawn.

Black has very little chance of defending the pawn by conventional means, so he will usually need to rely on tactical counterplay. You can find plenty of examples throughout our coverage of line A), beginning on page 124.

#### White's positional trumps

The following type of position can occur in the 11...xe4 variation. Black's pieces are quite active, but he may experience problems if he allows White to carry out the plan described below.
White can arrange his knights in an ideal way with \( \text{d}3 \) and \( \text{f}5 \). In doing so he eyes a second potential outpost square on \( c5 \). More importantly, he frees his \( f \)-pawn which will be able to evict Black’s best placed piece. Finally, he will often insert the move \( a2-a4 \) at a suitable moment. This helps to soften up the enemy queenside, while also activating what would otherwise be a passive rook on \( a1 \).

**Black’s kingside attack**

In some positions White may be tempted to compromise his position in order to gain material. In the following case, Black is unable to regain the \( c5 \)-pawn due to the possibility of \( b2-b4 \), forking queen and knight. However, he can instead obtain fantastic compensation as indicated below:

Black begins by moving his bishop out of harm’s way. He will follow up with a rapid advance of the \( f \)-pawn, conveniently gaining time by targeting the enemy knight. In variation A3), note to White’s 14th move on page 129, you can find an example in which a top class player was crushed by this attacking plan.

**Voluntary acceptance of doubling pawns**

The following situation might arise in variation B). It is quite possible that White will try to exchange his own ‘bad’ bishop for his opponent’s ‘good’ one, in order to increase his positional advantage. Whenever this happens, Black should always keep in mind the possibility of recapturing with the \( c \)-pawn.

The structural transformation helps Black in a big way, primarily by guarding the weak squares on \( c5 \) and \( e5 \). The open \( c \)-file is an additional benefit. The doubled pawns are not really weak, as White has no way of attacking them.

**Playing on the light squares**

Sometimes White will exchange the knight on \( e4 \) and install his own knight on \( c5 \). In response, Black can consider exchanging this piece for his dark-squared bishop. The resulting position may look something like this:
This type of position can occur with or without queens. Generally speaking, Black's control over the light squares combined with his better pawn structure should provide sufficient compensation for the loss of the bishop pair. In order for this idea to work properly, it is crucial that White must already have moved his a-pawn. If this pawn were back on a2 then White could simply play b3 to bolster his light squares, after which the knight on a5 would look very silly indeed. This idea can be found in line B221 on page 145, as well as the note to White's 19th in line B222 on page 149.

Theoretical Highlights

A starting point

Virtually all games involving 11...dxe4 reach the following position.


Black can now launch a sacrificial attack with:

An interesting piece sacrifice

In the following line I found a novelty on move 14, followed by a promising sacrifice.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 c6 3.b5 a6 4.b4 d6 5.0-0 e7 6.Bb5 b5 7.b3 0-0 8.h3 d6 9.c3 a5 10.c2 d5 11.d4 dxe4 12.Nxe5 c5 13.dxc5 Bc7 14.g4 Bg4! 15.hxg4
15...\text{c}5! 16.b4 \text{xf}2 \uparrow 17.\text{xf}2 \text{wh}2

According to my analysis this should be enough for at least a draw. Full details can be found in line A1), beginning on page 124.

The acid test?

According to the latest games and analysis, the following looks like the most critical test of the 11...\text{dxe}4 variation.

1.e4 e5 2.\text{d}f3 \text{c}6 3.\text{b}5 a6 4.\text{a}4 \text{f}6
5.0-0 \text{e}7 6.\text{e}1 b5 7.\text{b}3 0-0 8.h3 \text{d}6
9.c3 \text{a}5 10.\text{c}2 d5 11.d4 \text{dxe}4 12.\text{xe}5 \text{c}5
13.\text{e}3 \text{b}7 14.\text{d}2 \text{c}7 15.\text{wb}1!

White targets the e4-pawn directly. In line A42), beginning on page 136, you can see how Black has attempted to combat his opponent's plan. So far he has not been able to demonstrate a convincing route to equality.

The ultimate main line?

Due to the current status of the previous variation, Black's primary equalising attempt is currently connected with 11...\text{dxe}4 rather than 11...\text{dxe}4. At the time of writing the following appears to be the most critical test.

1.e4 e5 2.\text{d}f3 \text{c}6 3.\text{b}5 a6 4.\text{a}4 \text{f}6
5.0-0 \text{e}7 6.\text{e}1 b5 7.\text{b}3 0-0 8.c3 \text{d}6 9.h3
\text{a}5 10.\text{c}2 d5 11.d4 \text{dxe}4 12.\text{xe}5 \text{f}6

This is line B222), coverage of which begins on page 145. My own choice with Black was 15...\text{b}7 (line B2221), page 146). Although I suffered an unpleasant reversal against Zoltan Almasi, it is clear that there is a lot more for both sides to discover in this variation. Alternatively, in line B2222) on page 149, I provide coverage of the as yet untested 15...c6?!N. According to my analysis Black should be alright here, although we will need to wait for some practical tests before drawing any firm conclusions.

Theory

1.e4 e5 2.\text{d}f3 \text{c}6 3.\text{b}5 a6 4.\text{a}4 \text{f}6
5.0-0 \text{e}7 6.\text{e}1 b5 7.\text{b}3 0-0 8.c3 \text{d}6 9.c3
\text{a}5 10.\text{c}2 d5 11.d4

The present chapter will be organised slightly differently from most others. The Gajewski has only been around for the past couple of years, and fresh ideas are still being tested on a regular basis. Instead of recommending a specific repertoire, I will instead conduct a slightly wider theoretical survey, while at the same time providing some specific recommendations. The intention is to offer the best possible coverage of the entire 11.d4 variation, according to the information available at the present time.
The chapter will be divided between the two primary options: A) 11...dxe4 and B) 11...\( \text{\#$erd}\).

Instead 11...exd4 is unlikely to equalise after 12.e5, e.g. 12.\( \text{\#$erd} \) 13.cxd4 c5 14.\( \text{\#$erd} \) 2 with a nice position for White.

A) 11...dxe4 12.\( \text{\#$erd} \) e5 c5

This is the universal choice. Black needs to challenge the enemy centre while also dealing with the threat of b4. At this point White faces an important choice between four alternatives: A1) 12.dxc5, A2) 12.\( \text{\#$erd} \) 2, A3) 12.\( \text{\#$erd} \) g5 and A4) 12.\( \text{\#$erd} \) e3.

A1) 13.dxc5

This simplistic move releases the central tension. Logic tells us that this should not worry Black, although I needed to find a new move in order to demonstrate it.

13...\( \text{\#$erd} \) c7

13...\( \text{\#$erd} \) c5 is also a playable option, although the text would be my own choice.

14.\( \text{\#$erd} \) g4!

This is the most challenging move. White intends to win the e4-pawn, and it is up to Black to demonstrate compensation.

14...\( \text{\#$erd} \) g4? N

This is a new idea. Black gives up the bishop pair in order to accelerate his development. A previous game had seen:

14...\( \text{\#$erd} \) g4 15.hxg4 f5

15...\( \text{\#$erd} \) b7 is not very logical. After 16.\( \text{\#$erd} \) e4 \( \text{\#$erd} \) d8 17.\( \text{\#$erd} \) f3 \( \text{\#$erd} \) e4 18.\( \text{\#$erd} \) White has improved his coordination while taking a second pawn.

16.\( \text{\#$erd} \) d5+ \( \text{\#$erd} \) h8 17.\( \text{\#$erd} \) x a8 \( \text{\#$erd} \) c5

Inferior is 17...\( \text{\#$erd} \) b7? 18.\( \text{\#$erd} \) f8+ \( \text{\#$erd} \) f8 19.gxf5. White has a lot of material for the queen, while Black has no real attack.

This position was reached in Apicella – Hamdouchi, Clichy 2008, which soon resulted in a draw after:

18.\( \text{\#$erd} \) d5? \( \text{\#$erd} \) b7 19.\( \text{\#$erd} \) e6

19.\( \text{\#$erd} \) d1?! \( \text{\#$erd} \) f2+ 20.\( \text{\#$erd} \) f2 \( \text{\#$erd} \) h2 is only dangerous for White.

19...\( \text{\#$erd} \) c8 20.\( \text{\#$erd} \) d5 \( \text{\#$erd} \) b7 21.\( \text{\#$erd} \) e6 \( \text{\#$erd} \) c8 22.\( \text{\#$erd} \) d5 \( \text{\#$erd} \) d5 ½–½.

However, White could have refuted his opponent’s play with:

18.b4! \( \text{\#$erd} \) f2+ 18...\( \text{\#$erd} \) b7 19.\( \text{\#$erd} \) f8+ \( \text{\#$erd} \) f8 20.bxa5 is winning for White.

19.\( \text{\#$erd} \) f2

With an extra rook and bishop, White has an overwhelming material advantage and should win easily provided he avoids being mated.
Chapter 5 - Gajewski: 11.d4

19...\textit{h}2

19...fxg4\textsuperscript{+}? 20.\textit{g}1 defends easily.

20.\textit{d}2

Black's attack should not be sufficient:

a) 20...\textit{h}4\textsuperscript{+}? is feeble: 21.\textit{e}2 \textit{w}xg4\textsuperscript{+} 22.\textit{f}1 White escapes the checks and claims the full point easily.

b) After 20...fxg4\textsuperscript{+} 21.\textit{e}2 \textit{w}xg2\textsuperscript{+} 22.\textit{d}1 \textit{c}4 23.\textit{w}xe4 White also wins.

c) 20...\textit{c}4!

This looks like the best chance, although White should still win after:

21.\textit{d}5! \textit{e}3\textsuperscript{+} 22.\textit{e}2 \textit{e}6

22...exd2 23.\textit{x}d2 only helps White.

23.\textit{f}1! \textit{h}4 24.\textit{d}4 \textit{f}4

24...\textit{f}2\textsuperscript{+} is also insufficient after 25.\textit{d}1 (25.\textit{d}3?? \textit{xe}1) 25...\textit{f}4 26.\textit{f}5! \textit{xf}5

27.\textit{xf}5 \textit{e}8 28.\textit{d}2!.

25.\textit{xe}3! \textit{xe}3 26.\textit{f}5! \textit{f}2\textsuperscript{+} 27.\textit{d}1 \textit{xf}5

28.\textit{xf}5 \textit{e}8 29.\textit{d}7! \textit{xf}8 30.\textit{d}3 \textit{w}xg2 31.\textit{e}2

The king will escape to c2. It would be difficult for most players to find so many accurate defensive moves over the board, so adventurous souls might still consider rolling the dice with this sacrificial approach. Unfortunately, it simply does not cut the mustard as a main recommendation.

15.\textit{hx}g4 \textit{xc}5!

In this position the sacrifice appears to be playable.

16.b4

Without this move Black would obtain an easy game, e.g. 16.\textit{xe}4 \textit{ae}8 17.\textit{f}3 (or 17.\textit{w}f3 \textit{c}4! with a great position) 17...\textit{xe}1\textsuperscript{+} 18.\textit{xe}1 \textit{e}8 19.\textit{f}1 \textit{c}4! White has great difficulty developing, e.g. 20.\textit{d}2? \textit{e}3! 21.\textit{xe}3 \textit{xe}3\textsuperscript{+} 22.\textit{h}1 \textit{g}3 and wins.

16...\textit{xf}2\textsuperscript{+} 17.\textit{xf}2 \textit{h}2

Also deserving attention is 17...\textit{c}4?! 18.\textit{w}g5 \textit{ad}8 19.\textit{w}e2 \textit{e}5 20.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6\textsuperscript{+} 21.\textit{g}1 \textit{w}b6\textsuperscript{+} 22.\textit{w}f2 e3 23.\textit{w}f4 \textit{fe}8. Black certainly has some compensation here, although overall I consider this approach to be slightly riskier than the main line.

18.\textit{xe}4?!

This is more ambitious than 18.\textit{xe}4 \textit{h}4\textsuperscript{+} 19.\textit{g}1 \textit{x}g4 20.\textit{d}2 (White is not helped by 20.\textit{e}3? \textit{c}4 21.\textit{c}5 \textit{fe}8). At this point Black can force a draw immediately with 20...\textit{f}2\textsuperscript{+} 21.\textit{h}1 \textit{h}4\textsuperscript{+} he wishes it. Alternatively he can continue the fight with 20...\textit{ad}8\textsuperscript{!}, although this brings no advantage against accurate play:
21.bxa5 \texttt{d}d6!? (21...\texttt{f}f2\texttt{f} once again draws) 22.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{h}h2\texttt{t} 23.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{f}f6 24.\texttt{f}f5 \texttt{h}h5 25.\texttt{g}g1 (White can also consider playing on with 25.\texttt{x}g4?! \texttt{x}g4 26.\texttt{x}f6 \texttt{g}xf6 27.\texttt{h}h6 with a highly unclear position.) At this point Black really has no choice but to repeat the position with: 25...\texttt{h}h2\texttt{t} 26.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{h}h5

18...\texttt{d}xe4\texttt{t} 19.\texttt{x}xe4 \texttt{h}h4\texttt{t}

20.\texttt{g}g1

The alternative is: 20.g3 \texttt{h}h2\texttt{t} 21.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{ad}8 22.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{h}h3\texttt{t} 23.\texttt{g}g2 \texttt{xf}x3 24.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{x}xf3\texttt{t} 25.\texttt{xf}x3 \texttt{c}c4 Black should be alright in this ending. His pieces are more active and he has good chances to advance his kingside pawns. The white king is also less than comfortable.

20...\texttt{ad}8 21.\texttt{e}e2 \texttt{fe}8 22.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{e}e4 23.\texttt{c}c4 \texttt{xe}4 24.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{xf}6

Black's initiative fully compensates his small material deficit.

A2) 13.\texttt{d}d2

This leads by force to a position where Black needs to defend carefully for a long time in order to achieve a draw.

13...\texttt{c}xd4 14.\texttt{d}xe4 \texttt{d}xc3 15.\texttt{f}f3! \texttt{b}b7

15...\texttt{xb}2 would be too greedy. After 16.\texttt{xb}2 \texttt{b}b7 17.\texttt{ad}1 White is tremendously active.

16.b4!

Without this move White would struggle to justify his play.

16...\texttt{xe}4

An equally valid move order is 16...\texttt{xe}4 17.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xe}4 18.\texttt{xe}4. However, Black must avoid 16...\texttt{xb}4? 17.\texttt{g}5.

17.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xe}4

17...\texttt{xb}4? is refuted by 18.\texttt{g}5!, e.g. 18...\texttt{e}7 19.\texttt{ad}1 \texttt{c}8 20.\texttt{xf}6! \texttt{xf}6 21.\texttt{d}7! winning.

18.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{f}5

Otherwise Black loses a piece.
19. \( \text{b1!} \)

This is White’s only try for an advantage. In Hillarp Persson – S.B. Hansen, Denmark 2007, he got nowhere with 19.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c4} \) 20.\( \text{xc4} \) bxc4 21.\( \text{xc4} \)\( \text{h8} \) 22.\( \text{e3} \)\( \text{h2} \). 

19...\( \text{c2!} \)

Forced, as knight moves would allow a fork on c6.

20.\( \text{b2} \)

White has no choice, as the queen must defend the b-pawn.

20...\( \text{c4} \) 21.\( \text{xc4} \) bxc4 22.\( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{e8} \) 23.\( \text{d2} \)

White stands slightly better. Black has three vulnerable pawns on a6, c4 and f5, although the c-pawn could also prove to be an asset in some endings. The advance of the f-pawn has also weakened his kingside. Whether or not these factors amount to a significant advantage for White is open to debate.

23...\( \text{f6} \) 24.\( \text{d1!} \)

24.\( \text{ac1} \) is less precise. The game Caruana – Aveskulov, Plovdiv 2008, soon resulted in a draw after 24...\( \text{d3} \) 25.\( \text{xd3} \) cxd3 26.\( \text{xc8} \) \( \text{xc8} \) 27.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{c2} \) 28.\( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{xa2} \) 29.\( g3 \)\( \text{h2} \).

24...\( \text{d3} \)

It is hard to determine Black’s most accurate move here.

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

This is a legitimate alternative to the main line.

25.\( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 26.\( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{fd8} \) 27.\( \text{xd8} \)\( \text{xd8} \) 28.\( \text{e6} \)

28...\( \text{d3} \)

28...\( \text{d1} \)\( + \) 29.\( \text{h2} \) \( \text{d3} \) 30.\( \text{e5} \)! \( \text{e4} \) 31.\( \text{d6} \)! \( \text{b7} \) 32.\( a3 \) \( \text{b8} \) (32...\( c3 \) might lead to a similar ending after 33.\( \text{e7} \) \( \text{b8} \) 34.\( \text{xb8} \) \( \text{xb8} \) 35.\( \text{c7} \) a5 36.\( \text{xc3} \) axb4 37.\( \text{b3} \) 33.\( \text{xb8} \) \( \text{xb8} \) 34.\( \text{c6} \) a5 35.\( \text{bxa5} \) (35.\( \text{xc4} \) axb4 36.axb4 is also unpleasant) 35...\( \text{b3} \) 36.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{xa3} \) 37.\( \text{c5} \) Black faces a long and difficult defence.

29.\( \text{e1} \)!
This is a very precise move. Instead 29.\texttt{We5} \texttt{Wb1\#} 30.\texttt{Wxb4} 31.\texttt{Wxa7} 32.\texttt{Wxb8} 33.\texttt{Wxb8} 34.\texttt{Wxb8} should be a draw.

\texttt{29...Wf8}

After 29...\texttt{h5} 30.\texttt{Wxa6} \texttt{We4} 31.\texttt{Wc4} \texttt{Wd3} 32.\texttt{Wxd3} \texttt{cxd3} 33.\texttt{Wxd6} \texttt{Wc1\#} 34.\texttt{Wf2} \texttt{Wb1} 35.\texttt{Wd4} White has good winning chances.

\texttt{30.\texttt{Wf5\#}}

White maintains slight pressure, but I doubt that it is enough to win.

\texttt{33...Wg8} 34.\texttt{Wc6} \texttt{Wb8\#} 35.\texttt{g3} \texttt{Wc6} 36.\texttt{Wxc6} \texttt{Wg8} 37.\texttt{Wxa6} \texttt{h6} 38.\texttt{Wc6} \texttt{c3} 39.\texttt{Wxc3} \texttt{Wxa2}

Black should hold this endgame without any real problems.

\texttt{25.\texttt{Wxd3} cxd3 26.\texttt{We6} Wf7 27.\texttt{Wxa6} Wg8}

\texttt{28.\texttt{Wxa8}}

Active defence is the key. I believe that the position is closer to draw than to a white win. For instance:

\texttt{34.\texttt{Wf2} f4 36.gxf4\# 37.\texttt{Wf5} Wb8 38.\texttt{Wxf4}\# 39.\texttt{Wg5} \texttt{Wb5} 40.\texttt{Wf2} \texttt{Wb8} 41.\texttt{Wg5} \texttt{Wg8\#} 42.\texttt{Wf3}}

Black draws easily.

A3) 13.\texttt{Wg5} \texttt{Wb7}
Here White faces an important choice between A31) 14.\textit{\texttt{d2}} and A32) 14.a4.

After the feeble 14.dxc5?! \textit{\texttt{c7}}! Black's position might already be preferable. The game Volokitin – Wojtaszek, Crete 2007, soon turned into a disaster for White after:

14...\textit{\texttt{f6}}?! \textit{\texttt{ad8}}! 15.\textit{\texttt{e2}}

15.\textit{\texttt{d7}} \textit{\texttt{xd7}} 16.\textit{\texttt{d4}} \textit{\texttt{xc5}} 17.\textit{\texttt{x e4}} \textit{\texttt{xe4}}

18.\textit{\texttt{xc4}} \textit{\texttt{xc4}}

19.\textit{\texttt{xc4}} \textit{\texttt{xc4}}

20.\textit{\texttt{f6}}! 21.\textit{\texttt{f3}} e3! 22.fxe3

The last chance may have been 22.\textit{\texttt{cx e3}} although 22...\textit{\texttt{xf3}} 23.\textit{\texttt{xf1}} still leaves White in trouble after 23...\textit{\texttt{c6}}, or even 23...\textit{\texttt{c4}}?!

24.\textit{\texttt{xc4}} \textit{\texttt{bxc4}} 25.\textit{\texttt{xc4}}+ \textit{\texttt{h8}}.

22...\textit{\texttt{xf3}}

White's kingside is in ruins, and he soon lost after:

23.e4 \textit{\texttt{d f8}} 24.\textit{\texttt{g2}} \textit{\texttt{h4}} 25.\textit{\texttt{bd2}} \textit{\texttt{xc3}}

26.\textit{\texttt{ec1}} \textit{\texttt{c8}}! 27.\textit{\texttt{xe5}} \textit{\texttt{xc5}}+ 28.\textit{\texttt{h1}} \textit{\texttt{f2}}

29.\textit{\texttt{b3}}+ \textit{\texttt{h8}}

30.\textit{\texttt{xc3}} \textit{\texttt{xc3}} 31.\textit{\texttt{xf2}} \textit{\texttt{xf2}}

32.\textit{\texttt{xd1}} \textit{\texttt{gh3}}

A31) 14.\textit{\texttt{d2}} cxd4 15.cxd4 \textit{\texttt{e8}}

Black gains nothing from 15...\textit{\texttt{xd4}}?!

16.\textit{\texttt{xe4}}.

Also unsatisfactory is 15...\textit{\texttt{c8}} 16.\textit{\texttt{xf6}} \textit{\texttt{xf6}}

17.\textit{\texttt{xe4}} \textit{\texttt{xe4}} 18.\textit{\texttt{xe4}} \textit{\texttt{c4}} 19.b3 (19.\textit{\texttt{f5}} \textit{\texttt{c7}})

19...\textit{\texttt{xe5}} 20.\textit{\texttt{b3+}}

21.\textit{\texttt{xc1}} \textit{\texttt{xe5}} 22.\textit{\texttt{f7}}+ \textit{\texttt{xf7}}

White has good winning chances, although in Pierrot – Liascovich, Buenos Aires 2008, Black eventually salvaged a draw.

16.\textit{\texttt{b3}}

In Charbonneau – Benjamin, Internet 2007, Black equalised easily after 16.\textit{\texttt{xf6}} \textit{\texttt{xf6}}

17.\textit{\texttt{xe4}} \textit{\texttt{xe5}} 18.\textit{\texttt{xe5}} \textit{\texttt{e5}}

So far we have been following the game.
Dominguez – Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007. At this point the young Norwegian prodigy erred with:

16...\(\text{b3}!\) 17.\(\text{xb3} \text{xd5}\)
17...\(\text{d5}\) 18.\(\text{xc1} \text{h6}\) 19.\(\text{h4}\) also leaves Black under pressure.

18.\(\text{xe7} \text{xe7}\) 19.\(\text{xc1} \text{f4}\)
After 19...\(\text{d6}\) correct is 20.\(\text{c2}\) (Marin).

Black also fails to solve his problems with 19...a5 20.a3 a4 21.\(\text{xa2}\).

20.\(\text{g4} \text{g6}\)
20...\(\text{d3}\) can be met by 21.\(\text{f5}\), at which point Black should play 21...\(\text{xe5}\) 22.\(\text{xe5}\) transposing to the game. He only risks falling into even greater difficulties with: 21...g6 22.\(\text{f6} \text{xe5}\) (other moves lead to a fatal loss of material) 23.\(\text{dxe5} \text{d7}\) 24.\(\text{c5}\) 25.e6 \(\text{xe6}\) 26.\(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{h8}\) 27.\(\text{c7}\).

21.\(\text{f5} \text{xe5}\) 22.\(\text{dxe5}\)±
White’s pieces are much more active, although the game was eventually drawn.

Fortunately Black has a significant improvement available.

16...\(\text{b4}!\)N
This was suggested by Marin in his annotations to the aforementioned game. It appears to be Black’s only route to equality.

17.\(\text{xc4}\)
Harmless is 17.\(\text{xf6} \text{xf6}\) 18.\(\text{c5} \text{xe5}\) 19.\(\text{dxe5} \text{xd1}\) 20.\(\text{axd1} \text{xb2}\) 21.\(\text{xb7}\) (21.\(\text{b1}\) does not win a piece in view of 21...\(\text{ac8}\)) 21...\(\text{xd1}\) 22.\(\text{xd1} \text{exe5}\) when Black is certainly not worse.

17...\(\text{bxc4}\) 18.\(\text{c5} \text{c6}\)
18...\(\text{d5}\)? 19.\(\text{a4}\)! would be very annoying.

White plays to soften up the enemy queenside. He does not mind postponing the development of the knight on b1, as this piece may be able to find a better home on c3.

14...\(\text{xd4}\)
In Luther – G. Jones, Maastricht 2008, Black tried a different approach:
14...\(\text{e8}!\)
This is riskier than the main line, but may nonetheless be playable.

15.axb5
After 15.dxc5 \( \text{wc7} \) 16.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 17.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g5} \) Black has reasonable compensation, e.g. 18.axb5 axb5 19.\( \text{wd6} \) \( \text{wd8} \) 20.\( \text{a3} \) \( \text{a6} \) 21.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{d8} \) 22.\( \text{b1} \) f5 23.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{h4} \) 24.b4 f4 25.\( \text{g4} \) h5 26.\( \text{e5} \) e3 with a strong initiative for the pawn.

15...axb5 16.\( \text{d2} \)
16.dxc5 \( \text{wc7} \) 17.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 18.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g5} \) reaches the above note.

15...cxd4 17.cxd4 \( \text{wd4} \) 18.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xd1} \)
19.\( \text{exd1} \)

19...\( \text{ac8} \)
19...\( \text{xe4} \) 20.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 21.\( \text{xe7} \) f6 is equal.

20.\( \text{xf6} \)!
The superior 20.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{c6} \) would have led to a balanced position.

20...gxf6 21.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g7} \) 22.\( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{xc2} \)!
Black's bishop pair and activity were more significant than the pawn weaknesses on the kingside.

15.cxd4
We are following the game Kamsky – Miton, Dagomys 2008, which continued:

15...b4 16.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e8} \) 17.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 18.\( \text{xe4} \)
18.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 19.dxe5 \( \text{exe5} \) is equal.

19...\( \text{ac8} \)
19...\( \text{xe4} \) 20.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 21.\( \text{xe7} \) f6 is equal.

20.\( \text{xf6} \)!
The superior 20.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{c6} \) would have led to a balanced position.

20...gxf6 21.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g7} \) 22.\( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{xc2} \)!
Black's bishop pair and activity were more significant than the pawn weaknesses on the kingside.

15.cxd4
We are following the game Kamsky – Miton, Dagomys 2008, which continued:

15...b4 16.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e8} \) 17.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 18.\( \text{xe4} \)
18.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 19.dxe5 \( \text{exe5} \) is equal.

At this point, instead of the game's 18...\( \text{xe4} \)?
19.\( \text{xe4} \)\( \pm \), Black could have equalised with 18...\( \text{xd4} \) 19.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \).

However, White also missed an earlier opportunity to improve with:
17.\( \text{d3} \)\!N

Instead of targeting the e4-pawn, White plays to activate his pieces. Play may continue:
17...\( \text{d5} \)
17...\( \text{xb3} \) 18.\( \text{xb3} \) \( \text{d5} \) (18...\( \text{d5} \) 19.\( \text{c1} \))
19.\( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 20.\( \text{c1} \) leaves Black under pressure.
18.\( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{xa5} \) 19.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 20.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 21.dxe5 \( \text{xe4} \) 22.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 23.\( \text{f4} \)\( \pm \)
Black's position is deceptively difficult, and he faces a long fight for a draw. His best course of action may be to activate his pieces at the cost of a pawn with:
Black has reasonable chances to hold the draw, although the ending will not be much fun for him.

In view of the above, I would like to recommend an improvement on move 15. Curiously enough, the same idea was also suggested in line A31) above. Not surprisingly it involves improving the position of the a5-knight.

15...\(\text{\textit{c4}}\)N!

This is a useful improvement of Black’s worst placed minor piece.

16.\(\text{\textit{xc4}}\)

16.b3 \(\text{\textit{d6}}\) gives Black no problems.

16...\(\text{\textit{bxc4}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\)

This is clearly the best square for the knight.

Instead, should play continue with 17.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\)! \(\text{\textit{c8}}\), Black would be fine.

17.\(\text{\textit{e8}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\) h6 19.\(\text{\textit{fxf6}}\) \(\text{\textit{xf6}}\) 20.\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\)

20.\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) leads to equality after 20...\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 21.\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 22.\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) 23.\(\text{\textit{xf6}}\)† \(\text{\textit{xf6}}\).

20...\(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) 21.\(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) 22.\(\text{\textit{d6}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe1}}\)†

White has won a pawn, but the bishop pair will be very powerful in this open position featuring pawns on both sides. I consider the most likely result to be a draw after 24...\(\text{\textit{e8}}\) or 24...\(\text{\textit{c8}}?!\).

A4) 13.\(\text{\textit{e3}}\)

This has emerged as White’s main try for an advantage.

13...\(\text{\textit{b7}}\) 14.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\) \(\text{\textit{c7}}\)

This seems to be best.

In Kotronias – Mastrovasilis, Igoumenitsa 2007, Black’s position quickly went downhill.
after 14...\textit{d}5?! 15.\textit{D}g4! \textit{cx}d4 (or 15...\textit{D}xg4 16.hxg4 \textit{f}5 17.gxf5 \textit{w}xf5 18.\textit{f}3\textbf{+}, intending to meet 18...\textit{h}4 with 19.\textit{D}xe4! \textit{xe}1 20.\textit{D}g5\textbf{+}) 16.\textit{D}xd4\textbf{+} \textit{e}3? 17.\textit{D}xe3 and White won easily.

A more interesting alternative is:

14...\textit{g}8

This was played in Macak – M.Ivanov, Prague 2008. This would be a decent move were it not for the strong reply:

15.\textit{D}b1!\textbf{N}

Unfortunately this accurate move spoils Black's idea.

15...\textit{cx}d4 16.\textit{D}xd4 \textit{c}5 17.\textit{D}xe4 \textit{xd}4 18.\textit{D}xd4 \textit{xe}4

18...\textit{D}xc2 19.\textit{D}xe2 \textit{xe}4 20.\textit{D}xe4 \textit{xe}4 21.\textit{D}xe4 leaves White a safe pawn up.

19.\textit{D}xe4 \textit{D}xd4

Or 19...\textit{D}xe4 20.\textit{D}xe4\textbf{+}

20.\textit{b}4! \textit{D}c6 21.\textit{D}c6\textbf{+}

White wins the exchange as 21...\textit{D}d6 can be met by 22.\textit{D}e7\textbf{+} anyway.

We have reached a final branching point for the 11...\textit{dx}e4 variation. One critical idea is \textbf{A41}) 15.\textit{D}f4, losing a tempo with the bishop in order to embarrass the enemy queen. This can lead to great complications, with some chances of a white advantage if he plays very precisely. However, I believe that the greatest threat to Black's survival comes from \textbf{A42}) 15.\textit{D}b1!.

A couple of other moves have also been tried.

15.\textit{c}1 \textit{D}ad8 16.a3 is hardly the most critical approach, although White is still not worse. Spraggett – Zubarev, Cappelle la Grande 2008, continued 16...\textit{c}6 17.\textit{D}xc6 \textit{D}xc6 18.\textit{D}e2 \textit{D}fe8 with a balanced position.

In Arakhamia – Wells, Liverpool 2008, White obtained an edge with: 15.a4 \textit{D}fd8 16.axb5 \textit{ab}5 17.\textit{D}g4 \textit{D}xg4 (17...\textit{D}e8 18.\textit{D}xe4 \textit{f}5 [18...\textit{D}xd4 19.\textit{D}xd4 \textit{f}5 20.\textit{D}xa5! \textit{xa}5 21.\textit{b}3\textbf{+} \textit{D}h8 22.\textit{D}h6\textbf{+}] 19.\textit{D}xc5 \textit{xc}5 20.\textit{D}xf5\textbf{±} White has three pawns and an attack) 18.hxg4 \textit{D}xd4 19.\textit{D}xd4 \textit{D}c6 20.\textit{D}xa8 \textit{xa}8 21.\textit{D}xe4 \textit{D}xd4 22.\textit{D}xd4\textbf{±}

However, I think that Black could have improved with 15...\textit{b}4!\textbf{N} leading to the following possibilities:

a) 16.\textit{cx}b4 \textit{cx}d4 17.\textit{D}xd4 \textit{D}xb4 looks at least equal for Black.

b) 16.\textit{D}c1 \textit{bxc}3 17.\textit{bxc}3 \textit{D}ad8 reaches a tense position with chances for both sides.

c) 16.\textit{D}e2 \textit{D}d5!

White has two ways to capture the e-pawn:

c1) 17.\textit{D}xe4 \textit{f}5 18.\textit{cx}b4 \textit{D}xb4 19.\textit{D}xc5 \textit{xc}5 20.\textit{D}ac1 \textit{D}d6 21.\textit{D}xf5 \textit{D}b3
The complications turn out in Black’s favour.

c2) 17...\texttt{ex}e4 bxc3 18.bxc3 \texttt{dx}c3 19.\texttt{hx}h7+ 19.\texttt{d}d3? \texttt{ex}e4 20.\texttt{xe}xe4 c4 21.\texttt{c}c2 f6 22.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{ac}8 is clearly better for Black.

19...\texttt{hx}h7 20.\texttt{d}d3+ f5 21.\texttt{xc}x c3 f4

White’s situation appears difficult, but he can secure half a point with a tactical sequence.

22.\texttt{c}c2? \texttt{x}xh7 20.\texttt{d}d3t 21.\texttt{xc}x c3 f4

There is nothing better.

25.\texttt{c}c4t!

25.\texttt{xb}3t?? c4 wins.

25...\texttt{h}h7 26.\texttt{d}d3t

26.\texttt{c}c2t?? \texttt{x}e4! 27.\texttt{xe}xe4 \texttt{xa}1 hits the queen.

26...\texttt{g}g8 27.\texttt{c}c4t

The game ends with a repetition of moves.

A41) 15.\texttt{f}f4 cxd4 16.\texttt{xe}4

This is the most ambitious move.

16.\texttt{g}g6 is unpromising after 16...d6
17.\texttt{xd}x d6 \texttt{d}xd6 18.\texttt{xf}x f8 d3 19.\texttt{hx}h7 \texttt{hx}h7, when Black’s powerful pawns make up for his small material deficit.

16.cxd4 \texttt{d}d5 17.\texttt{exe}e4 \texttt{d}d6 18.\texttt{g}g3 \texttt{ac}8 19.\texttt{c}c1 \texttt{b}b4

17.\texttt{g}g3

17.\texttt{h}h5!? demands an accurate response:
17...f5! 18.\texttt{g}x g5 \texttt{x}xg5 19.\texttt{x}xg5 dxc3 20.bxc3 g6!? Black’s slightly airy kingside is compensated by his opponent’s weaknesses on the opposite flank.

17...f5!

Once again Black should not shy away from complications.

18.\texttt{g}x g6 \texttt{c}c6 19.\texttt{xf}x f8 \texttt{xf}x f8 20.\texttt{xd}x d4

After 20.cxd4 fxe4 21.\texttt{xe}x e4 \texttt{b}b4 (21...\texttt{c}c4?? 22.\texttt{h}h5++) 22.\texttt{e}e2 g6 the position is balanced.
20...c4
After 20...fxe4 21.xe4 g6 22.ad1 Black faces a difficult defence.

We have reached a critical position. The game Z. Almasi – Stevic, Plovdiv 2008, continued:

21.a4? d6
White was losing material for insufficient compensation, and was unable to salvage the game.

Instead, the critical continuation would have been:

21.b3!
The position is extremely complicated but it seems that White can retain an advantage.

21...a3 22.d1! fxe4 23.xe4
Positions featuring rook versus two minor pieces can be hard to evaluate. This one would be fine for Black, were it not for the fact that his pieces are rather unstable and badly coordinated. The immediate threat is d3 which might be followed by ad1.

23...c5
Another possibility is 23...f6 24.f3 xc3 25.ac1 b4 26.ed1 xf3 27.xf3, leading to an unusual material balance of two rooks and a pawn versus three minor pieces. White seems to be better, e.g. 27...b5 (27...f6? 28.e4! is almost winning for White) 28.ed3.

24.f3 xf3
White was threatening to exchange on d5 followed by e5 winning material.

24...c8? is no good in view of ad1.

25.xf3
25.gxf3 xc3 26.xc6 xc6 (Kosten) reaches a very unclear ending.

25...c2 26.c4 bxc4 27.bxc4 db4 28.xc6 xc6 29.ex5 xf2 30.xf2 xa1 31.c5? d3 32.f5

In this position White's rook and pawn should be more effective than the opponent's two minor pieces. The passed c-pawn is a threat, and the knight on a1 is misplaced. A possible continuation is:

32.h6 33.b8 34.c8 b7 35.e7 xc5 36.xc5 ec2 37.f2
Black faces a difficult defence.

It appears that White may be able to obtain an advantage with 15.f4, although he will need to find a lot of accurate moves to do so.
A42) 15.\textit{b}1!

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\node[draw,shape=rectangle,minimum width=1.5cm,minimum height=1cm,fill=white] (a) at (0,0) {a};
\t\node[draw,shape=rectangle,minimum width=1.5cm,minimum height=1cm,fill=white] (b) at (1,0) {b};
\t\node[draw,shape=rectangle,minimum width=1.5cm,minimum height=1cm,fill=white] (c) at (2,0) {c};
\t\node[draw,shape=rectangle,minimum width=1.5cm,minimum height=1cm,fill=white] (d) at (3,0) {d};
\t\node[draw,shape=rectangle,minimum width=1.5cm,minimum height=1cm,fill=white] (e) at (4,0) {e};
\t\node[draw,shape=rectangle,minimum width=1.5cm,minimum height=1cm,fill=white] (f) at (5,0) {f};
\t\node[draw,shape=rectangle,minimum width=1.5cm,minimum height=1cm,fill=white] (g) at (6,0) {g};
\t\node[draw,shape=rectangle,minimum width=1.5cm,minimum height=1cm,fill=white] (h) at (7,0) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

This has become White's principal weapon in the 11...dxe4 variation. The e4-pawn is now under heavy fire, and Black will have to stir up some complications.

15...\textit{cx}d4 16.\textit{xx}d4

16.cxd4?! makes no sense here. Kreisl – Freitag, St Veit 2008, continued 16...\textit{ac}8 (16...\textit{b}4?! is also possible) 17.\textit{c}c1 (17.\textit{xx}e4 \textit{xx}e4 18.\textit{xx}e4 \textit{f}6 19.\textit{f}3 \textit{xx}c4 gives Black more than enough for a pawn) 17...\textit{xx}d6 with a good position for Black.

16...\textit{xx}d6

Otherwise Black will simply lose the e4-pawn for no compensation.

17.\textit{g}4 \textit{xx}g4 18.\textit{hx}g4 \textit{hh}2+ 19.\textit{hh}1 \textit{f}5

This does not appear to equalise, although it is doubtful that Black has anything better.

19...\textit{ff}4?? 20.\textit{ff}1 was a disaster for Black in Baramidze – Djuraev, Gaziantep 2008.

19...\textit{ff}4 20.\textit{xx}e4 \textit{ee}8 21.g5

This has been played in a couple of games, although 21.\textit{dd}1?? also deserves attention.

Black has tried a few different approaches here. The position is rather complicated, but ultimately it seems that White can always maintain an edge.

a) 21...\textit{cc}6 gives White a choice:

a1) In Kotronias – Esterema Panos, Liverpool 2008, Black obtained a good position after 22.\textit{ee}3 \textit{xx}e3 23.\textit{xx}e3 \textit{ee}5 24.\textit{dd}1 (24.\textit{ee}1 \textit{gg}4 25.\textit{ff}6+ \textit{ff}6 26.\textit{xx}f6 \textit{cc}6 27.\textit{ff}3 \textit{xx}e3 28.\textit{xx}e3 \textit{xx}f6 29.\textit{dd}1 \textit{gg}6 is close to equal for Black – Korneev) 24...\textit{cc}4 25.\textit{ee}2+ \textit{xx}b2 26.\textit{xx}e1 \textit{ee}6+. Therefore White should investigate one of the alternatives:

a2) 22.\textit{ff}6?? is a promising idea of Kosten, who offers the following sample variation: 22...\textit{ee}5 23.\textit{dd}1 \textit{hh}6 24.\textit{hh}5 \textit{ee}6 25.gxh6 gxh6 26.\textit{ff}5 \textit{xx}h6 27.\textit{gg}3, with a very dangerous attack.

a3) 22.\textit{cc}5 also looks strong. Korneev analyses 22...\textit{ee}5 23.\textit{dd}1 \textit{ad}8 24.\textit{hh}5 \textit{xx}e4 25.\textit{xx}e4 \textit{xx}c5 26.\textit{xx}f4 \textit{gg}6 27.\textit{ff}3 \textit{dd}2 28.b4 \textit{bb}6 29.\textit{bb}3 \textit{ee}7 when Black does not have enough for the pawn.

b) Korneev – De Jong, Porto Mannu Palau 2008, continued: 21...\textit{ee}6 22.\textit{cc}5 (22.\textit{ff}6†?? gxh6 23.\textit{xx}h7† also looks dangerous) 22...\textit{ee}1† 23.\textit{xx}e1
bl) 23...d5 24.e2 is clearly better for White according to Korneev.

b2) 23...c6 24.e2! is another strong suggestion from the Russian Grandmaster. The idea is that 24...xg5 can be refuted by 25.e6! e7 (25...fxe6 26.exf6+ h8 27...g5--) 26.h5 h6 27.xg7++; (Korneev).

b3) In the game Black avoided these tactical problems with 23...xg5, but after 24.xb7 b7 he had lost the bishop pair. Following 25.e4 g6 26.e1 White had an indisputable advantage, and went on to win convincingly.

20.gxf5

So far we have been following the game Kononenko – Gajewski, Pardubice 2008, which continued:

21.f1

The following sequence now looks more or less forced:

21...xf5 22.xe4 h5+ 23.g1 h2+ 24.xh2 xh2+ 25.f1 f4 26.xb7xb7 27.d3

White kept an extra pawn as well as the superior minor piece, but her king was still not completely happy.

27...d6 28.f3?

Better was 28.e3 h1+ 29.e2 g4+ 30.d2 d8 31.d5+ f7 32.xd4 h6 33.f3 fxf3 34.gxf3, when White retains an edge.

28...h1+ 29.e2 e8+ 30.e3 c4+ 31.d2 xe1 32.e1

Black enjoyed excellent compensation.

Despite the improvement noted at move 28, White could have obtained an even better position with:

21.xe4! xf5 22.d1 a8 23.g4 c4 24.g3 g5

It is hard to suggest any improvements for Black.

25.e6+ h8

Perhaps a better try, relatively speaking, would be 25...f7 26.xf7+ xf7+. The trouble is that even if Black regains his pawn by taking on g3, he will still stand clearly worse thanks to the opponent's strong bishops.

26.h3 h5 27.e4

We have been following the analysis of
Korneev. Both sides have positioned their pieces on active squares, but White stands clearly better. Aside from his extra pawn, he also dominates the centre thanks to his securely anchored pieces.

Overall, it seems to me that 15.\textit{b}1 is quite a solid bet for a white advantage. The position can become quite complicated, but after correct play from both sides I do not see how Black can equalise. For this reason, at the present time I consider the following variation to be Black’s main hope against 11.d4.

B) 11.\textit{d}xe4

Occasionally White plays B1) 12.dxe5 here, but the better and more popular move is B2) 12.\textit{d}xe5.

B1) 12.dxe5

This should not worry Black at all. The position resembles the Open variation (5...\textit{d}xe4 6.d4 b5 7.\textit{d}b3 d5 8.dxe5 \textit{e}6) except for the placement of a few pieces. The differences seem to favour Black, who can obtain an equal position without difficulty.

12...f5

This is not the only reasonable move. Lukasevicius – Egan, corr. 2008, continued

12...\textit{c}5 13.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}4 14.b3 \textit{d}6 15.b4 \textit{e}7 16.\textit{d}d4 \textit{d}7 17.\textit{f}4 c5 18.bxc5 \textit{xc}5 19.\textit{x}xe4 dxe4 20.\textit{x}xe4 \textit{c}8 21.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}5 22.\textit{e}1 \textit{e}6 when Black had more than enough compensation for the missing pawn.

13.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 14.\textit{bd}2

14.\textit{f}4 \textit{b}7 15.\textit{h}2?! (15.\textit{bd}2 \textit{xc}3 16.bxc3 \textit{xf}4 17.\textit{xe}4 dxe4 18.\textit{d}2=) 15...\textit{c}4! 16.b3 \textit{cd}6 gave Black a solid advantage in Salgado Lopez – Chirila, Szeged 2008.

14...\textit{xd}2 15.\textit{xd}2 \textit{c}4 16.\textit{d}3 g6 17.\textit{d}1

17...c6

There is nothing wrong with this, although 17...\textit{b}7?! was also fine. It is worth adding that the attempt to invade on e6 with 18.\textit{d}4 would be strongly countered by 18...\textit{e}8!+

18.b3 \textit{d}6

18.\textit{xc}3 would be risky in view of 19.\textit{g}5 \textit{b}2 20.\textit{c}1 when the knight may have trouble escaping from b2, although the position remains complicated.

19.\textit{d}4 \textit{b}6 20.\textit{h}6 \textit{f}7

We have been following the game Kotronias – Lie, Malmo 2008. Black has an extra
central pawn, he has developed his pieces harmoniously, and can look to the future with confidence.

B2) 12.\(\text{dxe}5\)

This looks more logical than 12.dxe5. By maintaining a pawn on d4 he keeps the c5-square as a potential outpost. The knight is well placed on e5, while the rook on e1 also enjoys greater freedom.

At this point Black has tried B21) 12...\(\text{d6}\) and B22) 12...\(\text{f6}\), the latter of which seems to be more promising.

B21) 12...\(\text{d6}\) 13.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{f5}\)

In an ideal world Black would prefer not to play this committal move at such an early stage. Unfortunately, in the present position it is the only really consistent choice.

Now White usually chooses between the commencement of a queenside offensive with B211) 14.a4 and reinforcing his grip over e5 with B212) 14.\(\text{df3}\).

B211) 14.a4

We are following the game T. Hansen – Lie, Tonsberg 2008, which continued:

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

This gives White more than one route to an advantage. Instead Black could have obtained a satisfactory position with 14...\(\text{h4}\)! We will return to this move after we finish analysing the game continuation.

15.\(\text{b3}\)

This is a good move, although there was a second promising line in 15.f3 \(\text{f6}\) 16.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xb3}\) 17.\(\text{xb3}\)±.

15...\(\text{c4}\)

In this position White could have obtained a distinct advantage with:

16.\(\text{f3}\)!\(\text{N}\)

Instead the game continued:
16.\(\text{xc4}\) dxc4 17.\(\text{a5}\)
17.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{fxe}4\) 18.\(\text{d2}\) allows 18...\(\text{xf2}\)!, which should lead to a draw after 19.\(\text{xf2}\) \(\text{h4}\) 20.\(\text{g1}\) \(\text{h3}\) 21.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{g3}\) 22.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{h2}\) 23.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{f8}\) 24.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 25.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{g3}\) 26.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{d3}\) 27.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{g3}\) etc.
17...\(\text{h4}\) 18.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{e6}\) 19.\(\text{b7}\)

Now:
14\...h4!N 15.e2

This is clearly the most natural way to defend the pawn.

15.b4

Throughout the above variation we saw numerous different ways in which White could have secured an advantage. Fortunately, I found an important improvement which was mentioned at move 14. This should enable Black to achieve a satisfactory game, as shown in the following analysis.

14\...h4!N 15.e2

This is clearly the most natural way to defend the pawn.

15.b4

16.b3

16.d3 e6 17.d4 b8 is comfortable for Black. White has an outpost on e5, but Black's knight on e4 is also excellent. The second player also enjoys good prospects on both flanks. His queenside pieces are already well placed, and he may be able to consider a timely \...g5 to gain space and perhaps even start an attack.

16.d2

Also strong is 20.d4 b8 21.e3 c5 22.xc5 xc5 23.xc5 d4. Here White has a pleasant choice between 24.c4+ h8 25.e1 with a nice middlegame position, and 24.e6 b6 25.xb6 xb6 26.c7 with a lasting advantage in the endgame.

20.c5 21.exf6 gxf6 22.b3\hc6 23.xf6 24.b3

20.f3 e5 21.dxe5 d4!?

This is the most dynamic move, although that does not necessarily make it the best. 20...cxb4 21.e3 c7 is a calmer alternative, leaving White just marginally better.

21.cxd4!

White must react precisely. He would be ill-advised to accept the sacrifice with 21.cxb4?! d3!.

Here we have:

After 22.xd3?? xd3 White cannot recapture as the rook on e1 hangs
22.f2 xb4 is better for Black.
22.e3 xb4 (also playable is 22...dxc2?? 23.bxc5 a8 23.d2 xb2 24.c1 e4! leaves White in difficulties.
22.d2 dxc2 23.bxc5 a8 Black has more than enough play for a pawn.

21.f4 22.e3 xe5
Black has gone from offering a pawn sacrifice to accepting one. White certainly has compensation, although it is hard to say whether it is enough for an advantage. A possible continuation might be:

23.\textcolor{green}{\textit{f2}} 24.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{g5}} 25.\textcolor{red}{\textit{ad1}} 26.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e7}} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xb4}}

White has regained his pawn, but Black has reasonable prospects on the queenside.

B212) 14.\textcolor{green}{\textit{d3}}

This is probably White's best. The only drawback is that he will not be able to challenge the strong enemy knight with f2-f3 for a few more moves. We will now follow the game Hou Yifan – D. Howell, Gaziantep 2008.

14...\textcolor{red}{\textit{c4}} 15.a4!

This is an important move for White. The difference between this position and the previous variation is that Black does not have the ...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{Nh4}} idea at his disposal.

15...\textcolor{red}{\textit{b7}} 16.\textcolor{green}{\textit{xb5}} 17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xa8}} 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xa8}}

The other possibility is:

17...\textcolor{red}{\textit{xa8}}

This is playable enough, although White can still obtain an advantage with precise play.

18.\textcolor{green}{\textit{d3!}} 19.\textcolor{green}{\textit{fe5}}

It is worth remembering this method of arranging the knights. Usually it is seen in the Stonewall Dutch. Instead 19.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d2}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{cxd2}} 20.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{xd2}} b4 gives Black a reasonable position.

19...\textcolor{red}{\textit{xe5}}

More passive is 19...g6 20.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{f4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{e8}} 21.\textcolor{green}{\textit{c1!?}} with a slight edge. The queen move defends b2 while also eyeing Black's weak squares on the kingside.

20.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xe5}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{b6}}

21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{e2}}

After 21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h2?}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf2}} 22.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xf2}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf2}} 23.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f1}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{b6}} 24.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xf5}} g6 White has no advantage.

21...\textcolor{red}{\textit{e8}} 22.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c3}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe3}} 23.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xe3}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xe3}} 24.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xe3}}

Black faces a difficult defence in this endgame. His light-squared bishop is passive and the white knight may jump to c5 later.
Instead 18...\textit{d}d3!?N deserved serious attention. The idea is to continue with \textit{f}e5 followed by a timely \textit{f}3.

18...c5!?  
Black takes the opportunity to free his position.

19.\textit{d}d3  
A good move, threatening to take on c5 and exchange one of Black's better minor pieces.

19...\textit{cxd}4 20.\textit{xd}4 \textit{b}8  
White retains a very slight advantage thanks to her strong knight on d4. On the other hand Black remains quite active, and went on to hold a draw without any real problems.

We may conclude that 12...\textit{d}6 is a viable option. At the same time, it seems that both of the main lines examined offer White some chances of an advantage. Black may also need to worry about the promising but as yet untested idea of 14.\textit{f}3!?.

\textbf{B22) 12... \textit{f}6}

\textit{13.\textit{d}d3}  
13.\textit{f}3 is less logical. The f3-square should be kept free for the queen's knight, or perhaps for a pawn to drive away the intruder on e4. Now Black has two playable options:

\begin{enumerate}[a)]  
\item The untested 13...\textit{f}5!? warrants consideration. Compared with line B21) above, it is likely that White will have to lose a tempo with \textit{d}f3-\textit{e}5 at some point. Following 14.\textit{bd}2 Black can choose between 14...\textit{c}6, 14...\textit{b}7 and 14...\textit{e}6, with good chances in each case.
\item 13...\textit{c}4 has been played in two games:
\begin{enumerate}[b1)]  
\item In Pavasovic – Stevic, Sibenik 2008, White decided to snatch a pawn with 14.\textit{axe}4 dxe4 15.\textit{xe}4. There followed 15...\textit{b}7 16.\textit{e}1 \textit{ae}8:
\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board}
\end{figure}

Black had achieved what looks like a very comfortable version of line B2) in Chapter 4. The game proceeded with 17.\textit{bd}2 \textit{b}6 18.b3 \textit{wd}7 19.\textit{c}4!? (White returns the pawn in order to simplify to an equal position) 19...\textit{xf}3 20.\textit{xf}3 bxc4 21.bxc4 \textit{xc}4 22.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}5 23.\textit{f}4 \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}.
\item 14.\textit{bd}2 \textit{cxd}2 15.\textit{xd}2 \textit{b}7 16.\textit{f}4 \textit{d}6 17.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xd}6 18.\textit{d}2 \textit{ae}8 19.\textit{b}3
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}
White obtained a minimal edge in Smirin – Greenfeld, Beer Sheva 2007. He will gain a nice outpost on c5, but Black has enough prospects for counterplay on the opposite flank.

13...\textit{d}6 14.\textit{d}d2

This is White's most natural and strongest move. However, it is worth paying attention to the following two alternatives, as they illustrate some important motifs that can also arise in the main variation.

14.\textit{f}4 should not cause Black any problems after 14...\textit{c}c4. The game So – D. Howell, Wijk aan Zee 2009, continued: 15.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}6 16.\textit{c}c1 \textit{e}e8 17.\textit{x}xd6 \textit{c}xd6!

This excellent move secures Black a good game. The doubled pawns are not at all weak, as White has no realistic way of attacking them. On the contrary, the structural change helps Black considerably by covering the weak square on c5 as well as opening the c-file. The game was soon agreed drawn after 18.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}5 19.a4 \textit{b}xa4 ½–½.

In Bosiocic – Stevic, Rijeka 2009, White gained no advantage with: 14.\textit{h}5 \textit{e}e6!

The bishop transfer to f7 enables Black to cover all of his weaknesses, while conveniently gaining time. This game also resulted in an early draw after 15.\textit{f}4 (15.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}7 16.\textit{h}4 \textit{x}xd2 17.\textit{x}xd2 \textit{g}6 18.\textit{b}3 \textit{d}7 gives Black no problems) 15...\textit{f}7 16.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}c4 17.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}6 18.\textit{x}xd6 \textit{xd}6 19.\textit{f}4 ½–½.

Let us return to the main line after 14.\textit{d}d2:

14...\textit{e}e8

This is almost certainly Black's best option.
14...\( \text{b7} \) does not equalise after 15.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{c4} \)
(15...\( \text{xb3} \) 16.axb3 is also undesirable for
Black) 16.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g3} \) 17.\( \text{bc5} \). The outpost on
c5 guarantees White a stable advantage, e.g.
17...\( \text{c8} \) 18.a4 or 18.\( \text{b4} \)!!.

14...\( \text{f5} \)
This is positionally risky.

15.\( \text{f3} \)
The two white knights work in perfect
harmony. Play might continue:
15...\( \text{c4} \) 16.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{h4} \) 17.\( \text{f3} \)

17...\( \text{c5} \)!!
After 17...\( \text{g5} \) 18.\( \text{e2} \)!! is a very annoying
move. White’s kingside is protected and
he may even plan \( \text{e1} \), completely killing
Black’s hopes of kingside counterplay.

18.a4!
Refusing to be drawn into complications.
18...\( \text{xd4} \) 19.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 20.\( \text{f2} \)±

White has a very pleasant position.

14...\( \text{f5} \)
This is also unsatisfactory in view of:

15.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 16.\( \text{f3} \) (16.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 17.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 18.\( \text{wh5} \) c6=) 16...\( \text{g6} \) 17.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{xc2} \)
18.\( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{e8} \) is equal.

15...\( \text{xc5} \) 16.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{e8} \) 17.\( \text{f1} \)!
Black’s pieces will be pushed back, and the
pair of bishops will soon come into their
own.

17...\( \text{d7} \) 18.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{g6} \)
No better is: 18...\( \text{e6} \) 19.b4 \( \text{c4} \) 20.\( \text{xd5} \)
\( \text{xc5} \) 21.\( \text{xf6} \)† \( \text{gxf6} \) 22.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{f5} \) 23.\( \text{b3} \)±
19.\( \text{xd5} \)† \( \text{xd5} \) 20.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 21.\( \text{xe8} \)†
\( \text{xe8} \) 22.\( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{e1} \)† 23.\( \text{h2} \) \( \text{hx6} \) 24.b4 \( \text{ab3} \)
25.\( \text{axb3} \) \( \text{xb3} \) 26.\( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{xc1} \) 27.\( \text{c6} \)±

White wins a pawn, giving him good
winning chances.

Returning to the main line of 14...\( \text{e8} \), we
will now examine B221) 15.\( \text{xe4} \) followed
by the main line of B222) 15.\( \text{h5} \).

Another sensible-looking alternative is:
15.\( \text{f1} \) c6?!

This is often a useful prophylactic move to
stabilise the centre and queenside, as well as
making way for the queen’s rook to swing to
the centre from a7.

16.\( \text{f4} \)
16.\( \text{f3} \) brings White no advantage after:
16...\( \text{g3} \) 17.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{xf1} \) 18.\( \text{xe8} \)† (18.\( \text{xf1} \)
\( \text{xf4} \) 19.\( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{c4} \) looks fine for Black)
18...\( \text{xe8} \) 19.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{c3} \) 20.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{f5} \) 21.\( \text{e1} \)
\( \text{ac4} \) 22.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{f7} \)=

16.\( \text{xf4} \) 17.\( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{a7} \)
After 17...\( \text{d6} \) 18.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{f5} \) 19.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{c4} \)
20.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 21.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{d7} \) Black’s passive
bishop renders his position slightly worse,
albeit still defensible.

18.a4 \( \text{ae7} \)
Black has decent chances.
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B221) 15.\(\text{dxe4} \text{dxe4} 16.\text{c5} \text{f5}\)

17.a4
This looks like a principled attempt to fight for the initiative. It is difficult to suggest another way to put Black under any pressure.

17...\(\text{\texttt{xc5}}!\)
Black should not be afraid to relinquish the bishop pair here.

18.\(\text{dx}c5 \text{Wxd1} 19.\text{\texttt{xd1}} \text{e6}\)
Black's control over the light squares compensates for the loss of the dark-squared bishop.

20.f3
White tries to open the position.

20...\(\text{\texttt{b}3}\!\!)
This pawn sacrifice virtually forces the draw.

21.\(\text{\texttt{xb}3} \text{\texttt{xb}3} 22.\text{a}x\text{b}5 \text{a}x\text{b}5 23.\text{\texttt{xa}8} \text{e}a8\)
24.\(\text{\texttt{f}x\text{e}4} \text{\texttt{f}x\text{e}4} 25.\text{\texttt{f}e}4\)
26.\(\text{f4} \text{c}6 26.\text{\texttt{e}x}e4 \text{\texttt{a}4} 27.\text{\texttt{xa}4} \text{\texttt{xa}4}\) is a trivial draw.

25...\(\text{\texttt{a}1} 26.\text{\texttt{e}1} \text{\texttt{d}5} 27.\text{\texttt{f}2} \text{\texttt{f}7} 28.\text{\texttt{g}3} \text{c}6\)
It is highly unlikely that White will achieve anything in this ending.

B222) 15.\(\text{\texttt{h}5}\!\!\)

This is the most challenging option at White's disposal. Black's usual response has been B2221) 15...\(\text{\texttt{b}7}\), but I do not believe this to be sufficient for equality. However, I do think that the untested B2222) 15...\(\text{c6}\!)\text{N should provide a satisfactory game. Before addressing these options, it is worth mentioning that the following two alternatives can be dismissed relatively easily.}

15...\(\text{\texttt{e}6}\!)\ just loses a pawn after 16.\(\text{\texttt{d}xe}4 \text{dxe}4 17.\text{\texttt{e}x}e4 \text{\texttt{f}7} 18.\text{\texttt{b}3} \text{\texttt{e}4} 19.\text{\texttt{xe}4}\), when Black has no real compensation.

15...\(\text{f}5\)
This is usually unpromising when White is in a position to place his knights on d3 and f3, and the present position is no exception.

16.\(\text{\texttt{f}3}\)
White gets nowhere with 16.\(\text{\texttt{d}xe}4 \text{dxe}4\), e.g. 17.\(\text{\texttt{e}5} \text{\texttt{xe}5} 18.\text{\texttt{d}xe}5 \text{\texttt{c}4} 19.\text{\texttt{a}4} \text{\texttt{e}6} 20.\text{\texttt{f}3} \text{\texttt{g}6} 21.\text{\texttt{g}5} \text{\texttt{ex}f}3 22.\text{\texttt{b}3} \text{\texttt{b}6}\). White is in danger of suffering in a 'bad bishop' endgame. Black should maintain the blockade of the e5-pawn while gradually improving his pieces.

16...\(\text{g}6\)
16...\(\text{\texttt{c}4}\!\!\) 17.\(\text{\texttt{g}5}\!\!\!\) ±
17.\(\text{\texttt{h}6}\!\!\) ±
Black has a difficult position and must try to neutralize his opponent’s initiative. If he attempts to play too actively then his problems can quickly escalate, for example:

17...\(\text{d}c4\) 18.\(\text{e}g5\) \(\text{f}6\)? 19.\(\text{xe}8\#\) \(\text{xe}8\) 20.b3 \(\text{f}8\) 21.\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{e}2\)?

21...\(\text{d}6\) looks like the lesser evil, although after 22.\(\text{f}3\) White’s grip over the e5- and c5-squares ensures him of a stable advantage.

22.bxc4 \(\text{xc}2\)

Now White can break through in stunning fashion.

23.\(\text{f}7\)!! \(\text{g}7\)

23...\(\text{e}4\) 24.\(\text{d}8\)! \(\text{xf}7\) 25.\(\text{e}5\) gives White a decisive attack.

After 23...\(\text{d}7\) 24.\(\text{h}6\)\# \(\text{g}7\) 25.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{xd}3\) 26.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{f}6\) the move 27.\(\text{e}8\)!! wins beautifully.

24.\(\text{h}6\)\# \(\text{h}8\) 25.\(\text{e}5\)

Threatening mate.

25...\(\text{e}6\) 26.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}5\) 27.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{xc}3\) 28.\(\text{x}g6\)\# \(\text{x}e6\) 29.\(\text{xe}6\)±

Black is unlikely to survive for long.

B2221) 15...\(\text{b}7\)

I tested this move myself in the game Z. Almasi – Brunello, Dresden 2008, which we will now follow.

16.\(\text{f}1\)

White may have been able to improve with:

16.\(\text{x}e4\)?? \(\text{N}dxe4\) 17.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 18.\(\text{xc}5\)

Black can react in a variety of ways, although it is not clear whether he can equalize.

a) 18...\(\text{c}4\) is well met by 19.b3 \(\text{b}6\) 20.a4! \(\text{bxa}4\) 21.\(\text{bxa}4\) when Black’s position is quite unpleasant. He cannot seek relief through a queen exchange with 21...\(\text{d}6\)? in view of 22.\(\text{xd}6\) cxd6 23.\(\text{b}1\) winning a piece.

b) The attempt to blockade the light squares with 18...\(\text{d}5\) 19.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{c}6\) also fails to solve Black’s problems after 20.b3 \(\text{b}7\) 21.\(\text{a}3\)±. White’s bishop pair is a real asset. Furthermore, Black’s bishop is not very stable on d5, with c3-c4 ideas being a constant worry.

c) I think that the strongest response is 18...\(\text{d}6\)!

Initially I thought that White could obtain a safe edge with:

19.\(\text{xd}6\)

Obviously this is not forced, and White may be better off investigating alternatives. However, Black will certainly benefit from the removal of the annoying queen.

19...\(\text{xd}6\)

This small change in the pawn structure should improve Black’s chances considerably. The d-pawn can help to support the centre while the open c-file is a potential source of activity.

20.a4
20.\textit{f4} \textit{d5} looks playable enough for Black. My first reaction was that White should automatically be better after the text move. However, a closer examination revealed that Black is not without chances after:

20...\textit{d5}!

The attempt to activate the bishop with 20...\textit{d5}?! runs into 21.\textit{f4}.

Instead it is more important to stabilize the centre. Now Black’s queenside prospects should compensate the opponent’s bishop pair.

21.\textit{d1}

This piece was doing nothing on c2, so it makes sense for it to relocate.

21...b4?!

Black could of course consider a more patient approach with 21...\textit{f7}. In this case White’s bishop pair should be enough for a slight plus, although Black should not be in any great danger.

22.cxb4

Otherwise White will be left with a queenside weakness.

22...\textit{c6} 23.\textit{d2} \textit{xd4}

In my opinion this position is dynamically balanced. White’s bishop pair is a definite asset, but the same can now be said of Black’s powerful central pawns.

16...\textit{d7}

Two other moves also deserve our attention.

a) 16...\textit{c4} 17.\textit{f3} \textit{g3}

17...\textit{g6} does not equalise after 18.\textit{w4} \textit{g5} 19.\textit{exe8t} \textit{exe8} 20.\textit{xg5} \textit{fxg5} 21.\textit{xg5} \textit{xe2} 22.\textit{exc1} \textit{efe8}. At first glance this appears quite tempting for Black, but it seems that White can maintain the advantage with either 23.\textit{wh4}, intending \textit{f2}, or 23.\textit{b1}, threatening \textit{f1}. In both cases Black has no real compensation for the pawn.

18.\textit{exe3} \textit{exe3}

This enables White to whip up a dangerous attack.

19.\textit{e5}!!

When the queen comes to h5 Black should always be on the lookout for this move.

19...\textit{fxe5} 20.\textit{wh7t} \textit{f8} 21.\textit{wh8t} \textit{f7}

22.\textit{wh5t} \textit{f8} 23.\textit{g5}

White can force a draw with 23.\textit{wh8t}, but he should be playing for more.

23.\textit{d6} 24.\textit{g6} \textit{e6} 25.\textit{b3} \textit{d6}

25...\textit{b6} 26.\textit{e3} intending \textit{f4} gives White a huge attack.

26.\textit{e3} \textit{g8}

26...\textit{f5} 27.\textit{xf5} \textit{xf5} 28.\textit{f7t} wins the queen. And 26...\textit{f7} is also unsatisfactory in view of 27.\textit{f4} \textit{g5} 28.\textit{exe5!!}.

27.\textit{g4} \textit{e6}

After 27...\textit{e6}, the simple 28.\textit{c2} leaves Black without a satisfactory response.

28.\textit{exe8} \textit{exe8} 29.\textit{fxg4} \textit{xf4} 30.\textit{f1} \textit{g8}

31.\textit{xf4} \textit{fxf4} 32.\textit{e7} \textit{exe8} 33.\textit{exe4}

White should win this ending.
b) Fortunately Black has a stronger alternative:
16...g6!N 17.h4
17.h6 c4 18.f3 g3 is equal.
17...f5 18.xd8 axd8

In this position Black's active pieces should make up for the slightly weak squares on e5 and c5.

If this evaluation stands up to scrutiny (and I see no reason why it should not) then White should focus all his efforts on the earlier suggestion, 16.xe4?!, if he intends to fight for an opening advantage.

17.f4

White could have obtained a strong attack using the same idea as in variation a) in the note to Black's 16th move:
17.f3! g3 18.xe8+ xe8 19.xg3 xg3 20.xe5!

The only differences are that the black queen is on d7 rather than d8, while the rooks on e1 and a8 have been removed from the board. Unfortunately these factors do very little to ease Black's defence:
20...g6?!
The best chance. Instead 20...fxe5 21.xh7+ g8 leads to defeat after some precise moves: 22.xf5! exd4! 23.xg5! (23.xd7?? e1#) 23...f7 24.c6 g6 25.xh8 g8 26.xg8+ xg8 27.xe8. Compared with the comparable variation noted above, please note the enormous significance of the undefended rook on e8 and the absence of the rook on e1.
21.xg6! xe5!
The only chance, but it is still not good enough.
22.dxe5 hxg6 23.xg6+ g7 24.e8+ f8 25.e6+ f7 26.g4+ g7 27.exf6 xg4 28.hxg4±

White is the strong favourite to win this ending.

17.c4

18.xd6 xd6
18...cxd6?! was a worthy alternative, just as in the So – D. Howell game from page 143. Black should still be a little worse in the present position, but would retain reasonable
defensive chances after something like 19.f3 g6 20.wg4 wxg4 21.hxg4 dg5±.

19.c5 c6 20.b3 a3 21.axe4 dxe4 22.ac1 g6 23.yh6

23...a5?! 23...f5! would have prevented the manoeuvre that shortly follows. In this complex position both players need to play accurately. Black should play ...e7 and ...f8, supporting his kingside pawns. The position is marginally better for White, mainly due to the offside knight on a3. A plausible continuation might be 24.yg5 (24.yg3 e3! solves all of Black's problems) 24.ye7 25.yg3 f8 26.h4 a5 27.h5 f6 28.yxf6 xf6. Black should be alright here. In case of 29.c4 he can play a strong regrouping move: 29...e8!, with equal chances.

24.yg3! f5 25.ye2!

Having successfully completed this manoeuvre, White can be very happy about his position. Unfortunately I failed to defend optimally and my position soon deteriorated.

25.ad8 26.df4 yd5 27.ye3 yf8 28.yxf8† yfx8 29.c4 d7 30.d5 e7?!

30...yg8 looks like the lesser evil, although Black is in trouble regardless.

White has won a pawn, and his pieces are much more active than their black counterparts. Almasi finished the game smoothly.

36.yb2 37.c5† yd5 38.yc7† yxe4 39.yxe8 yb8 40.c6 yb5 41.c7 ye8 42.a4 1–0

Despite this reversal, there is clearly much more to discover in this line. I hope that the suggestions and accompanying analysis will provide a useful starting point for future practical tests.

B2222) 15...c6!?N
This is a new idea which, in my opinion, may well be the best move. Compared with the previous variation, Black's b5- and d5-pawns are now a lot more stable, and the lightsquared bishop may fine a useful role on the c8-h3 diagonal. Finally, the text also allows a useful transfer of the queen's rook via a7.

16.\(\text{Qxe4}\)

The idea of the rook transfer is well illustrated by the following variation: 16.\(\text{Qf4}\) f5 17.\(\text{Qxe4}\) fxe4 18.f3 \(\text{Qa7!}\) 19.fxe4 g6 20.\(\text{Qf3}\) dx e4 21.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qf7}\)

16...\(\text{Qxe4?!}\)

16...dx e4 17.\(\text{Qc5}\) g6 (17...f5 18.\(\text{Qg5}\) also looks pleasant for White) 18.\(\text{Qh4}\) is slightly awkward, as Black will have to weaken his kingside.

17.\(\text{Qxe4}\) dx e4 18.\(\text{Qc5}\) f5 19.f3

After 19.a4?! \(\text{Qxc5}\) 20.dxc5 \(\text{Qe6}\) 21.axb5 axb5 the position is about equal. White has a powerful dark-squared bishop, but Black has one more pawn on the kingside and the knight on a5 will come into play soon.

19...g6 20.\(\text{Qg5}\)

White gains nothing from avoiding the queen exchange. For instance, after 20.\(\text{Wh6}\) exf3 21.gxf3 \(\text{Qc4}\) Black stands well.

20...\(\text{Qxg5}\)

Less promising is 20...\(\text{Qc7}\) 21.\(\text{Qg3}\) exf3 22.\(\text{Qxf3}\) \(\text{Qxc5}\) 23.dxc5 \(\text{Qe6}\):

White's position is preferable thanks to the strong dark-squared bishop. The main difference between this position and the note to White's 19th is that White has not weakened his queenside with a4, so there is no weak square on b3. Black may be able to defend any immediate threats, but White should be able to increase the pressure gradually.

21.\(\text{Qxg5}\) exf3 22.gxf3
White's kingside pawns have been compromised, but on the other hand he still has an extra central pawn.

22...\textdt{c}4

Black should begin by improving this piece. If he tries a move like 22...\textdt{f}7 then 23.a4! might prove slightly awkward, e.g. 23...\textdt{c}4 24.axb5 cxb5 when White's central domination increases.

23.b3 \textdt{b}6

The alternative is no better:

23...\textdt{e}5

This only loses time.

24.\textdt{f}2 \textdt{d}7

It looks logical for Black to attempt to exchange or improve this knight. Unfortunately White can maintain his advantage with the resolute response:

25.b4! \textdt{b}6

Black has no time for 25...a5? in view of 26.\textdt{b}3\textg7 27.\textdt{e}6\textg7.

26.\textdt{b}3\textg7

26...\textdt{d}5 27.a4 maintains the pressure.

27.\textdt{e}1

White enjoys an ongoing initiative.

24.c4

This looks like the critical move. White prevents the knight from coming to d5 (and subsequently f4).

24...\textdt{g}7

The king should vacate the diagonal.

24...\textdt{d}7 25.\textdt{d}3 maintains a slight edge for White.

The immediate pawn exchange 24...bxc4 25.bxc4 only improves the scope of the white bishop, e.g. 25...\textdt{g}7 26.\textdt{b}3!? (26.\textdt{d}3 reaches the main line) 26...a5 27.\textdt{a}4 \textdt{a}4 28.\textdt{x}a4 c\text{\textsubscript{5}} 29.d5 when Black faces a difficult defence.

25.\textdt{d}3

25.\text{\textsubscript{d}}8 causes Black no problems: 25...\text{\textsubscript{b}}8 26.\text{\textsubscript{d}}3 bxc4 27.bxc4 \text{\textsubscript{d}}xc5 28.dxc5 \text{\textsubscript{d}}7 29.\text{\textsubscript{c}}7 (29.\text{\textsubscript{e}}1 \text{\textsubscript{d}}xc5\text{\textsubscript{\textsuperscript{\texttt{f}}}}) 29...\text{\textsubscript{b}}2 30.\text{\textsubscript{d}}6 \text{\textsubscript{g}}7 31.\text{\textsubscript{e}}1 \text{\textsubscript{x}}a2 32.\text{\textsubscript{e}}7\text{\textsuperscript{\texttt{f}}} \text{\textsubscript{f}}\text{\textsuperscript{\texttt{f}}} with equality. White has active pieces, but Black has an extra passed a-pawn and his king protected by a solid structure. I can see nothing better for White than taking a draw with 33.\text{\textsubscript{e}}8 \text{\textsubscript{b}}7 34.\text{\textsubscript{e}}7 forcing 34...\text{\textsubscript{c}}8.

25...bxc4 26.bxc4 \text{\textsubscript{f}}7 27.\text{\textsubscript{d}}7?

27.\text{\textsubscript{b}}1 \text{\textsubscript{d}}c5 28.dxc5 \text{\textsubscript{d}}7 29.\text{\textsubscript{c}}3 \text{\textsubscript{e}}5 is equal.

27...\text{\textsubscript{a}}xb7 28.\text{\textsubscript{b}}1 \text{\textsubscript{a}}7 29.\text{\textsubscript{a}}b6 \text{\textsubscript{c}}7 30.\text{\textsubscript{b}}2 \text{\textsubscript{c}}8
Black will follow with ...\textit{b}7, after which he should be able to hold the double bishop ending without too many problems.

**Conclusion**

We have reached the end of what has been a fascinating journey into the still relatively unknown Gajewski variation. In the present chapter we have seen that the plan with 11.d4 must be respected as a serious try for a white advantage. Throughout the chapter I have combined a thorough survey of the latest games with my own original analysis, to provide a clear theoretical picture.

At the present moment I do not see a way for Black to equalise with 11...dxe4. According to my analysis White has more than one route to an advantage, but the most straightforward seems to be 12.\textit{xe}5 c5 13.\textit{e}3 \textit{b}7 14.\textit{d}2 \textit{c}7 15.\textit{b}1!, which was discussed in line A42) on page 136. Unless Black can find a major improvement here, I would recommend that he avoids this path.

At the present time, Black's best hope of equalising seems to be 11...\textit{xe}4, followed by 12.\textit{xe}5 \textit{f}6 13.\textit{d}3 \textit{d}6. This has been less popular than 11...dxe4, probably because most Gajewski players have tended to prefer an unbalancing approach over a position with symmetrical pawns. Logic tells us that White's position ought to be slightly preferable, thanks primarily to the potential outpost square on c5. At the same time Black has an active position with plenty of resources. At the time of writing there have still been very few games played, and I was able to find a variety of new and interesting possibilities for both sides. The Gajewski remains a fertile area for fresh ideas, so I would encourage the reader to examine the latest games and look for improvements of his own. Happy hunting!
Chapter 6

Anti-Marshall

1. e4 e5 2. ∆f3 ∆c6 3. ∆b5 a6 4. ∆a4 ∆f6
5. 0-0 ∆e7 6. ∆e1 b5 7. ∆b3 0-0

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1.e4 e5 2.\( \text{\&} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}6 \) 3.\( \text{\&} \text{b}5 \) a6 4.\( \text{\&} \text{a}4 \) \( \text{\&} \text{f}6 \) 5.0-0 \( \text{\&} \text{e}7 \) 6.\( \text{\&} \text{e}1 \) b5 7.\( \text{\&} \text{b}3 \) 0-0

**Introduction**

With his last move Black prepares to meet 8.e3 with 8...d5, the notorious Marshall Attack, which will be covered in Chapters 7-9. Before moving on to this subject we must first address the numerous ways in which White may sidestep this formidable weapon.

The present chapter is an extremely important one. The Marshall Attack has enjoyed a fearsome reputation for several decades, and there are a great many Ruy Lopez players who prefer to avoid it entirely. Even the best prepared player in chess history, Garry Kasparov, would invariably opt for one of the anti-Marshall systems found in the present chapter.

**Strategic themes**

Just as in Chapter 3, we are going to be dealing with quite a varied selection of different lines. Each has its own individual characteristics, so I will once again refer the reader to the theoretical section for an in-depth discussion of each variation.

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**Theoretical Highlights**

**White strikes back in the centre**

1.e4 e5 2.\( \text{\&} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{c}6 \) 3.\( \text{\&} \text{b}5 \) a6 4.\( \text{\&} \text{a}4 \) \( \text{\&} \text{f}6 \) 5.0-0 \( \text{\&} \text{e}7 \) 6.\( \text{\&} \text{e}1 \) b5 7.\( \text{\&} \text{b}3 \) 0-0 8.c3 d5

9.d4

White retaliates with his own central strike. The idea is somewhat reminiscent of the previous chapter, but less effective for White.

9...exd4 10.e5 \( \text{\&} \text{e}4 \) 11.cxd4 \( \text{\&} \text{f}5 \)

The bishop is ideally placed on the h7-b1 diagonal. Play may continue 12.\( \text{\&} \text{c}3 \) \( \text{\&} \text{xc}3 \) 13.bxc3 \( \text{\&} \text{d}7 \) when Black is doing fine, as seen in variation A) on page 157.
The same idea, a move earlier

If 9.d4 is playable for White, then he might very well consider the same idea on the previous move.

1.e4 e5 2.\textit{d}f3 c6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 \textit{f}6 5.0-0 e7 6.e1 b5 7.b3 0-0 8.d4

I analysed two responses to this move:

a) 8...\textit{d}6 is the most solid option. After 9.c3 \textit{g}4 we reach a position that has been played thousands of times. The latest games indicate that Black is still doing fine here, as seen in line B1) starting on page 159.

b) 8...\textit{xd}4?? is a more combative move which aims to unbalance the game. White can react in a few different ways.

b1) After 9.\textit{xf}7\textit{xf}7 10.\textit{xe}5 \textit{f}8 11.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}5 12.\textit{e}4 \textit{xc}7 Black has plenty of activity for the pawn, as seen in line B21) on page 165.

b2) White usually exchanges knights with 9.\textit{xd}4 \textit{exd}4, followed either by recapturing the pawn (line B221, page 166) or aiming for a lead in development by means of a gambit (line B222, page 169).

In the former case, the following position might be reached:

Here White’s most natural and strongest continuation has not been tested. 16.\textit{c}3!N (page 168) is a good move, but Black can still obtain full chances if he plays energetically.

The pawn sacrifice with 10.\textit{c}3 leads to interesting positions, but if both sides play accurately then the usual result will be a draw. White seems to have enough activity to regain his pawn, but not enough to claim an advantage. The following position was reached in Dominguez – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2009, as given in the note to White’s 13th move in line B222), page 169.

Black could have gained the advantage with 16...\textit{a}8!N 17.\textit{a}7 \textit{c}5 when the bishop is trapped on a7.
The traditional anti-Marshall

1. e4 e5 2. d3 d6 3. b5 a6 4. a4 d6
5. 0-0 c7 6. e1 b5 7. e3 0-0

For the last few decades of the 20th century, White’s most principled way of avoiding the gambit was considered to be:

8. a4
To this day, this move remains a popular choice at all levels. In line C) I recommend the response:

8... b4.

Compared with the main lines of the closed Ruy Lopez, the inclusion of these two pawn moves introduces certain nuances. One particularly striking example was the game Kulaots – Bartel, Gjovik 2009:

\[ \text{Diagram 1} \]

White’s premature central advance has allowed Black to gain a lot of space on the queenside. Moreover, White’s queenside pieces are completely shut in. Details can be found in the note to Black’s 11 th in line C2), page 174.

The fashionable anti-Marshall

1. e4 e5 2. d3 d6 3. b5 a6 4. a4 d6
5. 0-0 c7 6. e1 b5 7. e3 0-0

During the past decade the following system became extremely popular:

8. h3? b7 9. d3
White is hoping to discourage the gambit approach with ...d5. By comparison with the standard Marshall with 8. c3 d5, he hopes that the moves h3 and d3 will prove more useful in the event that Black gives up a pawn. For a long time, Black responded with 9...d6, at which point White would respond with 10. a3. With this approach White avoided the potential weakening of his queenside as seen in the previous example. The resultant semi-closed positions were tested in many games at the highest level. Although Black probably has enough defensive resources, I prefer to recommend a more active approach:

9... d5!

\[ \text{Diagram 2} \]

Despite the earlier comments, it turns out that the text is playable nonetheless.

10. exd5 cxd5
Full analysis of this variation can be found in line D), beginning on page 176. Black’s main idea is revealed after:

11. c5 d4!
Unlike the main line of the Marshall, Black
is in no position to play for a direct attack. Instead he prepares to eliminate one of the opponent's strong bishops, after which he should have enough positional compensation to ensure a satisfactory game.

Overall, it seems to me that Black is holding his own in all of the above lines. We will now conduct a more detailed examination.

**Theory**

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 d6
5.0-0 e7 6.e1 b5 7.b3 0-0

We examine four options: A) 8.c3 d5 9.d4, B) 8.d4, C) 8.a4, and D) 8.h3.

**A) 8.c3 d5 9.d4**

This is nowhere near as effective as the comparable anti-Gajewski variation: 7...d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 d5 10.c2 d5 11.d4, which we encountered in the previous chapter. In the present position Black has avoided moving his knight on c6 away from the centre. He can also make use of the fact that his opponent's bishop is on b3 rather than c2.

9...exd4!

9...dxe4 10.xe5 also leaves Black some way short of equality.

**10.e5**

Nothing else can threaten Black, e.g. 10.exd5 xdx5 (10...a5!? also looks playable) 11.xd4 xdx4 12.cxd4 (12.xd4?! b7=+) 12...e6 13.c3 e8 with equality.

**10...dxe4 11.cxd4 c5**

12.c3


In Sulskis – Brunello, Arvier 2007, I fell into difficulties after 12.h3 d7 13.bd2 b4 14.f1 c5 15.a3 c6 16.e3:
16...\texttt{e}6? 17.\texttt{c}xd5 \texttt{xd}5 18.dxc5 \texttt{ead}8 19.\texttt{wx}d5 \texttt{xd}5 20.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{ad}5 21.\texttt{xe}4+ Black had no real compensation for the pawn.

However, Black could have obtained the better chances with 16...c4! 17.\texttt{xf}5 (17.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{g}6\#) 17...\texttt{xf}5 18.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{ad}8!. This excellent prophylactic move pre-empt s any exchange of the knight on e4. Now Black has good chances to seize the initiative with ...f6. Instead, the immediate 18...f6 could have been met forcefully by 19.g4! (rather than 19.\texttt{xe}3 \texttt{ad}8\#).

12...\texttt{xc}3 13.\texttt{xc}3 \texttt{wd}7 14.\texttt{c}2

After 14.\texttt{gf}5 \texttt{a}3?! 15.\texttt{w}e2 (15.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{e}7=) 15...h6 16.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{d}5 17.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{c}4 18.\texttt{ad}1 \texttt{c}7 19.h3 a5 Black had good counterplay and eventually triumphed in Bacrot – Anand, Bastia 2004.

14...h6 15.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{a}5

The knight heads for the outpost on c4 while also making way for the c-pawn to advance. We will follow the game: Nijboer – Jakovenko, Sabadell 2008.

Now the game comes down to a battle between pawn majorities. Black must be careful not to allow the white pawns to advance too far, as this could easily lead to a crushing attack. It turns out that Jakovenko has evaluated the position correctly, as demonstrated by the next few moves.

22.g4 \texttt{wd}7 23.f4 f5!

It is imperative that Black prevents the f4-f5 advance. The text allows him to neutralise White’s pawn majority.

24.\texttt{xf}6 \texttt{xf}6

White’s pawn advances have done little except weaken his kingside pawns. Black has the initiative, as well as the sounder structure and superior bishop.

We may conclude that 9.d4 is of no danger to practitioners of the Marshall Attack. Let us now see whether White can do better by employing a similar idea a move earlier.

B) 8.d4

Now we consider two moves: B1) 8...d6 and B2) 8...\texttt{xd}4?. The former is perhaps more reliable, while the second is intended to unbalance the game.
B1) 8...d6

This is Black's most solid answer. Now he threatens ...\textgreek{x}d4, winning a pawn without allowing the troublesome e4-e5 advance. (White would be unable to regain the d4-pawn because of ...c5 and ...c4, trapping the bishop on b3). For this reason White's next move is almost universally played.

9.c3

Alternatives are not at all challenging:

9.d5?! is undesirable for White, as after 9...\textgreek{a}5 his valuable light-squared bishop will be exchanged for a mere knight.

9.dxe5 relinquishes White's space advantage in the centre, leading to equality after 9...dxe5, or 9...\textgreek{xe}5!?

9...\textgreek{g}4

The present variation is a major branch of the Ruy Lopez, and has been tested in thousands of games. To analyse it in full detail would take a great deal of space, which would hardly be appropriate for what is essentially a mere sideline in the context of the present book. Instead I will focus on the most popular and critical lines. Before moving on, it is worth noting that this section may also be of use to Gajewski players, who might encounter this variation via the move order 7...d6 (instead of 7...0-0) 8.c3 0-0 9.d4 (9.h3 \textgreek{a}5 10.\textgreek{c}2 d5 reaches the Gajewski) 9...\textgreek{g}4.

At this point the pressure against f3 and d4 generally encourages White to react in one of two ways: B11) 10.d5 and B12) 10.\textgreek{e}3. A number of sidelines have also been tested, but we will focus on the main lines for reasons explained earlier.

B11) 10.d5 \textgreek{a}5 11.\textgreek{c}2 c6

12.h3 \textgreek{c}8

It is worth knowing that 12...\textgreek{d}7? should be avoided due to 13.\textgreek{x}e5! dxe5 14.d6 when White's bishop pair will give him the advantage.

13.\textgreek{xc}6 \textgreek{c}7

13...\textgreek{xc}6 is less accurate. Black should arrange to recapture with the queen in order to improve his control over the d5-square.

14.\textgreek{bd}2

This is White's most common and almost certainly best move.

14.\textgreek{g}5 \textgreek{c}4 15.b3 \textgreek{b}6 is comfortable for Black. It is useful to remember this method of improving the wayward knight, especially when it can be achieved with gain of tempo.

14.a4 looks slightly premature. Black can react in a few different ways, including 14...\textgreek{x}c6 15.\textgreek{bd}2 \textgreek{e}6 with equal chances. However, I think that the option most in the spirit of the present book is 14...b4?!, temporarily giving up a pawn in order to fight for the initiative. Malaniuk – Smyslov, USSR 1988, continued 15.cxb4 \textgreek{x}c6 16.\textgreek{d}2 \textgreek{b}7 with good play for Black.

14...\textgreek{x}c6 15.\textgreek{f}1
15.a4 should be met by 15...\(\text{e}6\), e.g. 16.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}7\) 17.\(\text{f}1\) \text{h}6 18.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}6\) with decent chances.

15...\(\text{e}6\) 16.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{f}8\)

White has no advantage. Here we will explore a few of the more instructive examples from recent years.

17.\(\text{h}4\)

With this interesting move White hopes to provoke a kingside weakness. Here are a few other possibilities:

17.a4 \(\text{f}8\) 18.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{b}4\)!

20.\(\text{cxb}4\) \(\text{xc}2\) 21.\(\text{bxa}5\) \(\text{xd}1\)† 22.\(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{b}3\) Black's bishop pair gives him the advantage, Balogh – Wang Hao, Taiyuan 2007.

17.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}7\) 18.a4 \(\text{d}8\)! (18...\text{h}6 followed by ...\text{e}6 would have been simplest) 19.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{c}4\) 20.\(\text{d}3\):

20...\(\text{e}7\) (once again 20...\text{h}6 looks natural, although Black may have been unsure about the complications ensuing after 21.b3!!) 21.b3 \(\text{a}5\) 22.\(\text{h}5!\) \(\text{xe}5\) 23.\(\text{w}xh5\) \(\text{d}5\) 24.\(\text{w}xg5\) \text{h}6 25.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{e}6\) 26.\(\text{d}5\) Black's creative opening play only brought him problems in Kamsky – Jakovenko, Sochi 2008, although he eventually managed to draw.

17...\(\text{d}5\)!

I like this dynamic approach very much, although the more mundane 17...\text{g}6 also looks perfectly playable.

18.\(\text{exd}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 19.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{c}4\) 20.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{c}5\)
Black's beautiful pieces provide full compensation for the pawn. We have been following the game Kamsky – Grischuk, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005, which was eventually drawn.

B12) 10.\(\text{e3}\)

This time White supports his centre and maintains the tension. If he is allowed to complete development with \(\text{bd2}\) then he will stand very well, so Black needs to take action. Before we move on, please note that capturing the e4-pawn here would allow a fork on d5. Some players have nonetheless experimented with 10...\(\text{xe4?!}\), the idea being 11.d5 \(\text{d7!}\) 12.xe4 d5 with compensation. I would encourage interested readers to conduct their own investigation into this line, although ultimately I suspect that White can maintain an advantage. For this reason we will instead focus on a tried and tested continuation.

10...\(\text{exd4}\)

Usually it would be a mistake to concede the centre voluntarily, but Black has a specific follow-up in mind.

11.\(\text{cxd4}\) d5

Black must stake a claim for the central squares. The other main line is 11...\(\text{a5}\) 12.\(\text{c2}\) c5 (or 12...\(\text{c4}\) 13.\(\text{c1}\) c5, but my own subjective preference is for the text).

12.e5

Black has nothing to fear from 12.exd5 \(\text{xd5}\) 13.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{xe3}\) 14.\(\text{xe3}\). The game Liwak – B. Socko, Lubniewice 2003, continued 14...\(\text{a5}\) 15.\(\text{c2}\) g6 16.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{c4}\) 18.\(\text{xe2}\) c5 19.\(\text{d5}\) cxd4 20.exd4 \(\text{g5}\). Black was doing well and went on to win.

12...\(\text{e4}\)

13.\(\text{c3}\)

13.h3 \(\text{h5}\) is likely to transpose to the main line.

13.\(\text{bd2}\) is not too threatening after 13...\(\text{xd2}\) 14.\(\text{xd2}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 15.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{b4}\) 16.\(\text{wc2}\) \(\text{a5}\) (16...\(\text{xe1}\) 17.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{a5}\) 18.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xb8}\) 19.\(\text{e4}\) gave White reasonable compensation in Pulkkinen – Lindstedt, Helsinki 1990) 17.\(\text{ec1}\) \(\text{c4}\) with equality in T. Horvath – Zupe, Austria 1995.

13...\(\text{xc3}\) 14.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{a5}\) 15.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{c4}\)

The knight settles on its optimal square. Black can now start thinking about ...a5 and ...b4 to open a queenside file and begin undermining his opponent's strong centre.
16.h3
It is clear that White's chances lie on the kingside. His next job will be to develop an initiative on that flank, and the text seems like a sensible starting point. The following alternative does not appear too threatening:

16.d3 g6 17.h6 e8 18.c2
White must waste time in order to avoid an unfavourable exchange of bishops.
18...a5 19.h3 e6
Black should certainly not exchange this piece for an ineffective knight.
20.d3 c6 21.h2
White needs to find a useful role for the knight, but in the meantime Black can fight back on the queenside.
21.b4! 22.cxb4 axb4 23.g4 f5 transposes to the game.

16.h5 17.g4
17.f4 a5 18.g4 g6 19.f5 b4 transposes to the game.

17.g6 18.f5

Although White possesses a somewhat unpleasant bind over the kingside, Black's defensive resources should not be underestimated. One important idea, which is easy to overlook, is that he may be able to consider exchanging the bishop on f5 at a suitable time. Though it may appear almost suicidal to permit the opening of the g-file, we will see that there are certain times when the idea can work well. Of key importance is the idea of meeting gxf5 with the blockading move ...f6!. This prevents the f5-f6 advance while fixing the f5-pawn as a potential target. If Black is able to combine these moves with ...e8-h5, then he might even be able to take over the initiative on that side of the board.

18...a5!
Black must strive for queenside counterplay before he gets steamrollered on the opposite flank.

19.f4
It is hard to determine White's most precise method of handling the position. In any case, I think that the following examples will illustrate Black's chances quite well. I suggest that the reader pays particular attention to the timing of the bishop exchange on f5 in lines b) and c).

a) 19.h1
This is a reasonable move. It is clear that White is anticipating an exchange on f5, and hopes to utilise the g-file for his rooks. Therefore, in this particular case Black should try to avoid the bishop exchange for as long as possible. In Jakovenko – Shomoev, Internet 2004, he obtained an excellent position after:
19.b4 20.d3 bxc3 21.g1 b8
21.b4 keeps the pawn but Black's position looks dangerous after 22.h4.
However, the defensive move 21.f6!? looks reasonable, e.g. 22.xg6 hxg6 with an unclear but roughly balanced position.
22.\texttt{Ag}2 \texttt{h}8 23.\texttt{Ag}1

White is really banking on the subsequent opening of the g-file. Fortunately for us, this dream does not have to become a reality.

24.\texttt{Fe}8 24.\texttt{Fxc}3
24.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{f}6!
24...\texttt{f}6 25.\texttt{Axg}6 \texttt{Xg}6$

White's strategy has failed, and his rooks are starting to look ridiculous on the g-file.

b) In Sznapik - Sydor, Poznan 1984, White began with a different king move.

19.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{b}4 20.\texttt{cxb}4 \texttt{axb}4 21.\texttt{xf}4 \texttt{a}3 22.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{xf}5!

Excellent timing. Black has seen that he can force the enemy queen to an awkward position.

23.\texttt{gxf}5 \texttt{d}7 24.\texttt{b}1

After 24.\texttt{c}2? \texttt{E}c3 25.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{a}3 Black picks up the f5-pawn.

24...\texttt{fa}8

The white pawns on e5 and f5 may look impressive, but he is unable to mount an attack as his pieces are completely lacking in harmony. The a-pawn is a serious weakness, and ...\texttt{b}3 is already a serious threat.

c) In Svidler - Delchev, Plovdiv 2003, the Russian Super-Grandmaster based his play around the e- rather than g-file.

19.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{b}4 20.\texttt{e}2:

We reach an interesting branching point:

c1) The game continued 20...\texttt{a}6 21.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{b}6 22.\texttt{cxb}4 \texttt{axb}4 23.\texttt{ae}1. The position is extremely complex. Black should probably be alright, although Svidler eventually won in thematic fashion with a timely advance of the e-pawn.

21.\texttt{f}5! \texttt{xf}5

The latter of the above points even holds true after 23.\texttt{ae}1 \texttt{e}8! \texttt{xf}6 \texttt{xf}6. White has no useful discovered attacks. The queen will come to h5, with good chances for Black.

22) If White wishes to prevent the queen transfer, he should try 23.\texttt{f}4. Now it would be inadvisable for the queen to come to e8, as the opening of the e-file will be too dangerous. However, Black can change plans with 23...\texttt{bxc}3. White can hardly recapture this pawn, as his f5-pawn would be lost after ...\texttt{fxe}5. He may instead try 24.\texttt{e}6. This prevents ...\texttt{fxe}5, but the downside is that White relinquishes the ability to open the e-file. Thus
Black can return to his original plan with 24...\textit{e}8. (24...\textit{b}4!? was possible, but the text is simple and strong) 25.\textit{xc}3 \textit{h}5 I prefer Black's position, as the f5- and e6-pawns could easily become weak.

19...\textit{b}4

We now follow the game Ronchetti – Brunello, Fiuggi 2007.

20.h4 \textit{xf}5

As we have already seen, it can be difficult to decide on the correct timing of this move. In general, unless there is a pressing reason I would say that Black should avoid revealing his intentions for as long as possible. For this reason, today I would prefer the more flexible 20...\textit{bxc}3.

21.gxf5 \textit{lc}8

This looks like the most consistent follow-up, although 21...\textit{bxc}3 was also possible.

22.\textit{d}3

22...\textit{f}6!

Black fortifies the kingside in the usual way. The computer wants to play 22...\textit{bxc}3. However, after the natural 23.\textit{h}2 the open g-file will always ensure some practical compensation for White.

23.\textit{xf}6

Evidently White was not happy with the position after 23.e6 \textit{e}8, when the queen comes to the ideal h5-square.

23...\textit{xf}6

Black's position seems to be slightly favourable, thanks primarily to his sounder pawn structure. At the same time, the position is rather complicated and White is also not without his chances.

24.e6 bxc3 25.eae1 \textit{d}7 26.\textit{xc}3 \textit{f}7

The queen will be ideally placed on h5, as is so often the case in this variation. Nevertheless, 26...\textit{ab}8 also deserved serious consideration.

27.\textit{d}3 \textit{ad}8

27...\textit{ab}8! looks best, e.g. 28.e6 (perhaps White should play cautiously with 28.\textit{ae}2) 28...\textit{h}5 29.\textit{xc}7 \textit{bc}8 30.\textit{c}5 \textit{b}2!

White is unable to maintain the defence of both f3 and f5.

28.\textit{g}2 \textit{h}5?!

This pawn sacrifice was a bit too optimistic.

29.\textit{xc}7 \textit{g}4\textsuperscript{+} 30.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}8 31.\textit{e}1\textsubscript{e}2

By now the tide has turned in White's favour, so I was happy to accept a draw. It seems to me that Black has no real problems in the 8...d6
variation. At the same time, the reader may also wish to investigate a less common continuation offering good chances to unbalance the game. It is to this possibility that we will now turn our attention.

B2) 8...\texttt{\texttt{x}}d4?

This leads to more unusual and dynamic positions than 8...d6. It is a good option for players who are happy to take some risks in order to play for a win with the black pieces. We examine: B21) 9.\texttt{\texttt{x}}f7\texttt{\texttt{f}} and B22) 9.\texttt{\texttt{x}}d4.

B21) 9.\texttt{\texttt{x}}f7\texttt{\texttt{f}} 10.\texttt{\texttt{x}}e5 \texttt{\texttt{f}}

If Black retreats the knight from d4 then \texttt{\texttt{x}}f7 followed by e5 will be problematic for him.

11.\texttt{\texttt{x}}d4

White has emerged with an extra pawn, but Black's bishop pair and open f-file should provide full compensation.

11...c5 12.\texttt{\texttt{d}}1 \texttt{\texttt{b}}7

This would be my own preference, although 12...\texttt{\texttt{c}}7 is also playable. Now White can try two moves:

a) In Timofeev – Nyback, Plovdiv 2008, the continuation was 13.\texttt{\texttt{f}}3 \texttt{\texttt{b}}7 14.\texttt{\texttt{g}}5 d5!

b) In Ivanchuk – Leko, Morelia/Linares 2008, White preferred 13.\texttt{\texttt{g}}4 and achieved a slight edge after: 13...\texttt{\texttt{x}}g4 14.\texttt{\texttt{xe}}4 d5 15.\texttt{\texttt{h}}5 dxe4 16.\texttt{\texttt{d}}5\texttt{\texttt{f}} 17.\texttt{\texttt{h}}8 17.\texttt{\texttt{a}}8 18.\texttt{\texttt{a}}7 \texttt{\texttt{a}}8.

19.\texttt{\texttt{f}}4! \texttt{\texttt{c}}6 20.\texttt{\texttt{xa}}8\texttt{\texttt{f}} 21.\texttt{\texttt{e}}3

The position is close to equal, although White retains a small advantage and in the present game Ivanchuk eventually managed to grind out a win.

13.\texttt{\texttt{c}}3 \texttt{\texttt{c}}7 14.\texttt{\texttt{g}}4

a) In Timofeev – Nyback, Plovdiv 2008, the continuation was 13.\texttt{\texttt{f}}3 \texttt{\texttt{b}}7 14.\texttt{\texttt{g}}5 d5!
Also playable is: 14...\(\text{a}8\) 15...\(\text{xf}6\)† (15...\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{x}g4\) 16...\(\text{x}g4\) \(\text{d}6\) might transpose to the main line after 17...\(\text{g}3\)) 15...\(\text{xf}6\) 16...\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{e}5\) 17...\(\text{xf}6\)† \(\text{xf}6\) 18...\(\text{xd}7\) \(\text{c}6\) 19...\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 20...\(\text{f}4\)

Black had regained his pawn while keeping his positional trump.

**B22** 9...\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{exd}4\)

10...\(\text{xe}4\) 21...\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{xe}4\) 22...\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{g}4\) 23...\(\text{c}4\) White’s extra pawn does not count for much, and the most likely result is a draw.

15...\(\text{x}g4\) \(\text{d}6\)

Black’s lead in development and powerful pair of bishops ensure full compensation for the pawn. We will follow the game Sivanandan – Negi, Chennai 2008.

16...\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{a}e8\)

Also possible was 16...\(\text{e}5\).

17...\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{e}5\) 18...\(\text{ad}1\) \(\text{d}6\) 19...\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{f}7\) 20...\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{xb}2\)†

Black must of course avoid the so-called “Noah’s Ark Trap”: 10...\(\text{xd}4\)? \(\text{c}5\) followed by ...\(\text{c}4\), trapping the bishop.

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

Now White can regain his pawn with **B221** 11...\(\text{xd}4\), or adopt a gambit approach with **B222** 11...\(\text{c}3\).

**B221** 11...\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{c}5\)?

This has not been the most popular choice, but I believe it to be a fully viable option. More common is:

11...\(\text{b}7\) 12...\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{xc}4\) 13...\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{d}5\) 14...\(\text{exd}6\) \(\text{xd}6\) 15...\(\text{g}4\)
White’s sounder pawn structure gives him some chances for an edge.

15...\textit{b}5

Heading for d4. Nijboer – Sokolov, Netherlands 1996, instead saw: 15...\textit{f}6 16.\textit{c}3 \textit{b}8 17.\textit{f}4±

16.\textit{c}3!

White relinquishes his structural advantage, instead pinning his hopes on the greater activity of his pieces.

16...\textit{x}c3

16...\textit{f}6 17.\textit{e}4 \textit{x}e4 18.\textit{x}e4 \textit{d}4 19.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}5 20.\textit{e}3 \textit{x}e3 21.\textit{x}e3 \textit{e}7 22.\textit{a}c1±, Balogh – Jenni, Dresden 2007.

16...\textit{d}4 also fails to equalize after 17.\textit{h}6 (17.\textit{x}e7? \textit{xe}7 threatens mate on e1) 17...\textit{f}6 18.\textit{ad}1.

17.bxc3 \textit{d}6

The position looks close to equal, but in Ivanchuk – Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2008, the brilliant Ukrainian was able to turn his slight initiative into something more tangible.

18.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}6 19.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xd}6 20.\textit{ad}1 \textit{ad}8 21.\textit{b}4 \textit{a}8 22.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}6 23.\textit{b}6 \textit{g}5 24.\textit{g}3 \textit{b}5 25.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6 26.\textit{xd}6

White had won a pawn.

12.\textit{e}4

The alternative 12...\textit{b}8 is also fully playable. Kholmov – Smyslov, Sochi 1974, continued: 13.\textit{c}4 \textit{b}7 14.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}4 (also very interesting is the pawn sacrifice 14...\textit{xc}4 15.\textit{xc}4 \textit{d}5!? 16.\textit{xa}6 \textit{xa}6 17.\textit{xa}6 \textit{d}7 with decent compensation) 15.\textit{d}2 \textit{c}7 16.\textit{e}4 (16.\textit{c}2 \textit{f}5 17.exf6 \textit{xf}6 18.\textit{b}3 \textit{d}6 is equal) 16...\textit{e}6 17.\textit{d}3 \textit{f}5!. Black obtained interesting counterplay.

13.\textit{c}4 \textit{xc}4

13...\textit{b}8 is possible, although if Black wanted to place the rook here then it would have made more sense to do so on the previous move.

14.\textit{c}2

After 14.\textit{xc}4 \textit{d}5 15.exd6 \textit{xd}6 Black’s fluid development makes up for the slight weakness of his structure.

14...\textit{g}6

Black has enough activity to offset his slightly loose pawn structure. Statistically White’s results have been extremely poor from this position, although objectively I would tend to evaluate the chances as approximately equal.

15.\textit{xc}4

Two other moves have been tried.
Attacking the Spanish

15. c3 d5

This is the simplest response, although 15... b8 is also playable. Van der Wiel – Ki.Georgiev, Wijk aan Zee 1988, continued 16. a4!? at which point Black could have obtained an edge with 16... d5!N 17. exd6 hxd6 18. h6 f5 19. c6! (19. xc4?? b4 20. e2 h4++;) 19... xb2±.

16. exd6 hxd6

White has no advantage, and the game Sikora – Maskova, Naleczow 1987, was agreed drawn after:

17. xc4 e6 18. a4 d7 19. c4 e6 20. a4 \(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}\).

b) 15. h6 e8 16. c3 b8 17. xc4 b4

This is an important method of activating the rook. We will follow the game: Brooks – Kaidanov, New York 1990.

18. d3 h4? Black is playing quite creatively, although 18... b7 19. ad1 d4 20. g3 e6 was also fine.

19. e3 d5 20. exd6 xd6 21. h3 xh3! 22. gxh3 xh3 23. xf1 h2 24. c4

Black now faces a choice:

a) 19... f5 does not enable him to equalise after 20. xd6 xd6 (20... xxe4 21. xf8 e4 22. xxe4 e4 23. xxe4±) 21. xd6 xc2 22. b3 e8 23. c4 e6 24. b2±. Black faces a difficult defence due to his inferior structure and weak dark squares on the kingside.

b) 19... c7 20. f4 e6! (20... xb2 21. xd8 e8 22. xc7 e7 23. d6 xd6 [23... xc2 24. xf6 e7 25. xe7 e7 26. xxe7 xf6 27. ee1±] 24. a4! e7 25. xd7 xd7±) 21. e5 d4∞ (21... xd3 22. xd3±) The position is dynamically balanced, although plenty of complexity remains.
17.\texttt{g}f1 d5 18.exd6 \texttt{xd6}

Black's active pieces compensate for his split queenside pawns.

19.\texttt{e}e4 \texttt{e}e6 20.a3 \texttt{b}b6

From this slightly unusual square the rook is ready to enter the action via d6.

21.\texttt{x}d6 \texttt{xd6} 22.\texttt{h}h6 \texttt{e}e8 23.\texttt{c}c4 \texttt{d}d4 24.\texttt{c}c3 \texttt{b}b7

It seems to me that Black's active pieces should be enough to compensate White's pair of bishops.

\textbf{B222) 11.c3}

White fights for the initiative with the aid of a pawn sacrifice.

11...\texttt{d}xc3

11...d3 is sometimes played, but does not quite equalise after 12.\texttt{x}d3 \texttt{b}b7 13.\texttt{d}d2 d6 14.e6 fxe6 15.\texttt{xe}e6. This position looks somewhat risky for Black, although the game Dominguez – Aronian, Beersheba 2005, was soon agreed drawn after 15...\texttt{h}h8 16.\texttt{c}c2 g6 17.\texttt{b}b3 ½–½.

12.\texttt{xc}c3 d6

Black should not delay in challenging the enemy centre.

13.\texttt{f}f3

13.\texttt{d}d5 \texttt{e}e6 14.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{c}c8 transposes to the main line.

There is an important alternative in: 13.\texttt{d}d5 \texttt{b}b8 14.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{e}e6 15.\texttt{a}a7 \texttt{xd}d6 16.\texttt{x}xb8

With a choice for Black:

\textbf{a)}\text{ The high level game Dominguez – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2009, continued 16...\texttt{b}b7 17.\texttt{a}a7 \texttt{a}a8 (17...c5? may have been better) 18.exd6 \texttt{xd}d6 19.\texttt{d}d4 \texttt{b}4? (19...c5 20.\texttt{e}e5 \texttt{xe}e5 21.\texttt{xe}e5 \texttt{xg}2 would have left White with only a slight advantage) 20.\texttt{a}a4 \texttt{xg}2 21.\texttt{xe}e8 \texttt{xe}e8 22.\texttt{xg}2 when Black did not have sufficient compensation.}
b) Stronger would have been:
16...a8!N 17.a7 c5
The bishop on a7 is in danger of being trapped. Play might continue:
18.e2
18.d5 \(\text{axd5} \ 19.xd5 \text{c7} \ 20.a4 \text{b4} \ 21.exd6 \text{c5} \ 22.xc5 \text{xc5} \ 23.ad1 \text{c2}^+
18..d7 19.exd6 \text{d6} 20.ad1 b4!
20..xa7? 21..xe8 lets White off the hook.
20..g6 is not clear after 21..b6.
21..xc5
After 21..e4 \text{xe4} 22.xe4 \text{xa7} 23.xe8 \text{xe8} 24.xe4 \text{f8} 25..d8 g6 26..xf8+ \text{g}7 Black has excellent winning chances.
21..bxc3 22..xd6 \text{d6} 23.bxc3 23..d3?! \text{c6} does not help White.
23..c6^+
Black escapes the pin, and his two pieces should prove more effective than the opponent’s rook and pawn. White will have to struggle to hold this position.

13..e6 14..d5
14..f4 is another logical move, when Black faces a choice:

a) Jakovenko – Karjakin, Foros 2007, continued:
14..xb3 15.axb3 \text{dxe5} 16..xe5 \text{d6} 17..xb5 \text{xe5} 18..xe5 \text{d6} 19..d4
White had regained his pawn while keeping a slight initiative. The game proceeded with:
19..b5
Now White could have obtained the advantage with Marin’s suggestion of:
20..xb5!
The game itself was soon agreed drawn after 20..c6 \text{d4} 21..xd4 \text{xd4}.
20..xb5 21..d1
From here, Marin offers the following sample continuation:
21..b8 22..h4?! \text{a2} 23..h6 24..e2^+
White’s advantage is defined by his active pieces and safer king.

b) In view of the above, I think that Black should prefer:
14..dxe5 15..xe5 \text{d6} 16..d1
Marin proposed 16..xe6 fxe6 17..c6 as an improvement. He may be correct, although Black can still obtain full equality with
17..b8! 18..xd6 \text{xd6} 19..xe6 \text{xc6} 20..xc6 \text{d8}!.
16..xb3 17.axb3 \text{d6} 18..xd6 \text{cx}d6 19..c6 \text{e}8
The position is equal, Polzin – Stern, Germany 2006.

14..c8 15..f4 \text{dxe5}
White also gains no advantage with:
16.\texttt{c}xe5 \texttt{d}d6

The game Henrichs – Gustafsson, Bad Koenigshofen 2007, continued:
17.\texttt{ad}1
17.\texttt{c}c3 might lead to a draw after 17...\texttt{x}xd5
(17...\texttt{g}g5?! is a winning attempt) 18.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{b}4 19.\texttt{xe}8 \texttt{xe}8 20.\texttt{x}xg7 \texttt{x}xg5 21.\texttt{g}5† with a perpetual.
17...\texttt{xe}5 18.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{xd}5
18...\texttt{d}d6 also deserves consideration.
19.\texttt{ex}d5 \texttt{d}d6
Black has no problems. The most that White can reasonably hope for here is to regain his pawn.

16\texttt{xe}7

We have been following the game Adams – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2008, which was soon agreed drawn after:
17.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{d}d6 18.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{fxe}6 19.\texttt{wc}6 \texttt{we}8
20.\texttt{ac}1 \texttt{c}c4 21.\texttt{we}4 \texttt{f}f7
\frac{1}{2}\text{–}\frac{1}{2}

White has enough play for a pawn and is not in any danger, but at the same time he can scarcely hope for any advantage.

As far as I can see, 8...\texttt{xd}4 looks like a fully playable alternative to the more solid 8...\texttt{d}d6. We will now turn our attention to a very important anti-Marshall variation.

C) 8.a4

8...\texttt{b}7 is a respectable alternative, but I choose to focus on the text. We now consider C1) 9.d4 and C2) 9.d3.

The following rarely played alternative should not be too threatening:

9.c3 \texttt{d}d6
In this position it would be a mistake for Black to play 9...\texttt{d}5?!, as compared to the usual Marshall lines White has the extra defensive option of \texttt{c}c4-f1.
10.d3
10.d4 bxc3 11.dxe5 (11.bxc3 \texttt{g}g4 can only lead White to troubles, as the queenside is too open) 11...\texttt{xe}5 is fine for Black.
In Karjakin – Svidler, Dresden 2008, White preferred the unusual 10.a5 \texttt{b}8 11.\texttt{c}4. In this position Svidler came up with a very interesting pawn sacrifice: 11...\texttt{e}6?! 12.\texttt{xa}6 \texttt{a}8 13.\texttt{b}5 \texttt{xa}5 14.cxb4 \texttt{b}3 15.\texttt{xa}8 \texttt{xa}8, with excellent compensation.
10...\texttt{b}8 11.\texttt{bd}2 \texttt{a}5 12.\texttt{a}2 \texttt{c}5
We have transposed to line C2), page 172.

C1) 9.d4 \texttt{d}6 10.dxe5

10.c3 reaches the above note.
10...\textit{\textbf{dxe5}}

10...dxe5 is possible, but it looks quite logical to exchange the passive knight.

11.\textit{\textbf{dxe5}}

In Anand – Naiditsch, Dortmund 2004, White obtained no advantage with 11.\textit{\textbf{bd2}} \textit{\textbf{xf3}} 12.\textit{\textbf{xf3}} \textit{\textbf{b7}} 13.\textit{\textbf{e5}} \textit{\textbf{d7}} 14.\textit{\textbf{e6}} fxe6 15.\textit{\textbf{xe6}}+ \textit{\textbf{h8}} 16.\textit{\textbf{d6}} c6 17.\textit{\textbf{a2}} c5 (17...d5 also fine for Black). The game soon ended in a draw after 18.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{xd5}} 19.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} \textit{\textbf{b6}} 20.\textit{\textbf{e6}} \textit{\textbf{f6}} 21.a5 \textit{\textbf{d7}} 22.\textit{\textbf{d5}} \textit{\textbf{e5}} 23.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{g4}} 24.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{e5}} 25.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{g4}} 1/2–1/2.

11...\textit{\textbf{dxe5}}

\textbf{Diagram 11}

12.\textit{\textbf{f3}}

White has also failed to demonstrate an advantage with other moves.

In Jansa – Smagin, Copenhagen 1992, he achieved nothing with 12.\textit{\textbf{g5}} \textit{\textbf{c5}} 13.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{g4}}! 14.\textit{\textbf{xf6}} \textit{\textbf{xf6}} 15.\textit{\textbf{xf6}} gxf6. The doubled f-pawns were not really weak, and Black’s powerful bishop pair gave him the advantage.

After 12.\textit{\textbf{e6}} \textit{\textbf{b7}} 13.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{h5}} 14.\textit{\textbf{g3}} \textit{\textbf{h8}} 15.\textit{\textbf{e3}} f5?! 16.\textit{\textbf{xf5}} \textit{\textbf{xf5}} 17.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{d6}} 18.\textit{\textbf{c4}}! White stood better and eventually prevailed in Nisipeanu – Sokolov, Kemer 2007. However, Marin has pointed out that Black should have preferred the preparatory 15...\textit{\textbf{c8}}!, intending ...f5. In this case his position would have been absolutely fine.

12...\textit{\textbf{e6}} 13.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{c5}} 14.\textit{\textbf{h3}} \textit{\textbf{d7}} 15.\textit{\textbf{e2}} \textit{\textbf{e7}} 16.\textit{\textbf{e4}} \textit{\textbf{a5}}

We have been following the encounter Dominguez – Navara, Turin 2006. Black eventually lost this game, but at this stage I see no reason to evaluate his chances as worse.

\textit{\textbf{C2}) 9.\textbf{d3}}

The problem with the previous line, from White’s point of view, is that the early exchanges removed a lot of tension from the position. The text, on the other hand, leads to much more subtle manoeuvring, with more chances for both players to outplay the opponent.

9...\textit{\textbf{d6}}

\textbf{Diagram 12}

10.\textit{\textbf{bd2}}

There has a major alternative in:

10.\textit{\textbf{a5}}

With this move White fixes the pawn on a6 as a potential target. On the negative side, he spends a tempo and presents Black with a square on b5, which might later be occupied by a rook.

10...\textit{\textbf{e6}} 11.\textit{\textbf{bd2}} \textit{\textbf{b8}}
From here both sides will patiently try to improve their positions. Although the chances are approximately balanced, it is possible for either side to outplay the opponent if they understand the position better. We will now look at a few examples.

In the present position White can occupy the c4-square with either minor piece:

a) 12.\(\text{c4}\) \(h6\)
Black should safeguard the position of the bishop on e6.

13.\(h3\)
After 13.\(c3\) bxc3 14.\(bxc3\) \(\text{wc8}\) 15.\(a3\) \(\text{zd8}\) 16.\(a4\) \(\text{xc4}\) 17.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{b5}\) 18.\(\text{xb5}\) \(\text{xb5}\) Black has no problems, Sebag – Karjakin, Mainz 2007.

13...\(\text{wc8}\) 14.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{zd8}\) 15.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{f8}\)

Black has organised his position solidly, and the chances are balanced. Let us follow the high level game Adams – Anand, San Luis 2005.

16.\(\text{fd2}\) \(\text{e7}\) 17.\(d4\) \(\text{g6}\) 18.\(d5\) \(\text{xd7}\) 19.\(a4\) \(\text{b5}\)!
Black is happy to exchange bishops, but it will be on his own terms.

20.b3 \(\text{e7}\) 21.\(\text{ec1}\) c6 22.\(\text{xb5}\) \(\text{xb5}\) 23.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{b7}\) 24.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xc6}\) 25.\(\text{c4}\) ½–½

Evidently the players were content to share the point, although the game was far from dead. If anything, I would slightly prefer Black’s chances after:

25...\(\text{b7}\)!
The idea is to play ...\(d5\), with chances to take over the initiative in the centre.

b) 12.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{c8}\) 13.\(\text{f1}\)
Black has nothing to fear from the slower

13.b3 \(\text{d7}\) 14.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{f6}\) 15.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xc4}\) 16.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{c5}\) 17.\(\text{b2}\) \(\text{e6}\) with equal play, Jakovenko – Zhang Zhong, Taiyuan 2006.

13...\(\text{h6}\)
13...\(\text{xc4}\) 14.\(\text{dxc4}\) would give White a nice grip on the centre.

14.\(\text{e3}\)
14.\(h3\) \(\text{e8}\) 15.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{f8}\) 16.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{xc4}\) 17.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 18.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{b5}\) was equal in Leko – Grischuk, Dubai 2002.

14...\(\text{e8}\) 15.\(\text{d5}\)

15...\(\text{d8}\)!
It would be too early to exchange on \(d5\) immediately, as the knight on \(c6\) would have no good squares. We have been following the game Leko – Svidler, Moscow 2002, which continued:

16.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{xd5}\)
This is the correct timing, as the e7-square is available.

17.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 18.\(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{e7}\) 19.\(d4\)
After a period of accurate manoeuvring by both players, there follows a sequence of exchanges resulting in a completely equal position.

19.\(\text{xd5}\) 20.\(\text{dxe5}\) \(\text{dxe5}\) 21.\(\text{exe5}\) \(\text{f6}\) 22.\(\text{c6}\)
\[ \text{a8} 23. \text{\textit{D}}x\text{b4} \]

\[ 23. \text{\textit{f}}3 \text{\textit{d}}7 24. \text{\textit{D}}x\text{b4} \text{\textit{D}}x\text{b4} 25. \text{\textit{D}}x\text{b4} \text{\textit{D}}x\text{b2} \]

is also equal.

\[ 23... \text{\textit{D}}x\text{b4} 24. \text{\textit{D}}x\text{b4} \text{\textit{D}}x\text{b2} 25. \text{\textit{b}}1 \text{\textit{b}}2-\text{\textit{b}}1 \]

Both of the above games are fairly typical for this line. The positions can sometimes be deceptively difficult, and demand a high level of understanding from both players. However, if Black plays accurately then his chances are by no means worse.

10... \text{\textit{D}}a5

10... \text{\textit{D}}e6 is a valid alternative. The last trend for White has been 11. \text{\textit{D}}xe6 fxe6 12. \text{\textit{D}}f1!!, bringing the knight to g3 before advancing in the centre. The position is playable for Black, but I consider it to be strategically slightly riskier than the main line.

11. \text{\textit{D}}a2 \text{\textit{D}}e6

Compared with the previous note, I believe that the extra move ... \text{\textit{D}}c6-a5 improves Black's chances by facilitating the space-gaining ...c5 advance. Black can also consider the immediate:

11...c5

In this case White should prefer a patient build up. The following examples illustrate the risks associated with a premature central expansion.

a) 12.c3 \text{\textit{b}}8 13.d4 \text{\textit{g}}4!

This is a clever move. The pin on the knight actually has a serious impact on the opposite side of the board!

14.h3

No better is: 14.dxe5 dxe5 15.h3 \text{\textit{D}}xf3

16.\text{\textit{D}}xf3 \text{\textit{b}}3 (16...\text{\textit{c}}7 17.\text{\textit{c}}4 \text{\textit{b}}6=)

17.\text{\textit{b}}1 \text{\textit{c}}4

14...\text{\textit{D}}xf3 15.\text{\textit{D}}xf3 \text{\textit{b}}3!

This is the idea: White's queenside pieces will be trapped!

16.\text{\textit{b}}1 \text{\textit{c}}7

White's queenside pieces are in serious danger of being imprisoned.

17.d5

It looks logical for White to rescue his bishop with 17.\text{\textit{D}}d3. However, in Corby - Mitchell, England 1998, Black secured an excellent game with 17...exd4! 18.cxd4 \text{\textit{c}}4 19.\text{\textit{f}}1 d5! 20.exd5 \text{\textit{D}}xd5.

17.\text{\textit{D}}e2?! \text{\textit{c}}4 18.\text{\textit{D}}e3 seems to be the best choice for White. The position is rather double edged. On the one hand, if Black can maintain his blockade of the e4-pawn while somehow managing to exchange all of the kingside pieces, then he will be winning automatically. Unfortunately this is easier said than done. White has quite a strong position on the kingside, and it will hard for Black to achieve his ambitions without opening the position. Overall I would evaluate the position as unclear, with perhaps a very slight preference to Black.

17...\text{\textit{c}}4

Compared with the above note, the closing of the centre is a big help to Black who no longer has to worry about maintaining the tension. Having said that, it is still not easy for Black to achieve his goal of exchanging the kingside pieces. In the end, White managed to escape with a draw in Kulaots - Bartel, Gjovik 2009.
b) A more prudent option is:

12.\(\mathcal{D}c4\) \(\mathcal{D}c6\)

From here the game Morozevich – Leko, Monte Carlo 2006, continued:

13.c3

This is not a bad move, although I would prefer a more patient build-up with 13.h3 or a developing move with the dark-squared bishop.

13...\(\mathcal{Z}b8\)

Black has good prospects on the queenside.

14.h3 \(h6\) 15.d4 cxd4 16.exd4 \(\mathcal{D}xd4\) 17.\(\mathcal{D}xd4\) exd4 18.\(\mathcal{D}f4\) \(\mathcal{E}c6\)

19.\(\mathcal{A}c1?!\)

White could have maintained the balance with: 19.e5 \(\mathcal{D}d5\) (19...dxe5 20.\(\mathcal{D}xe5!\) is slightly awkward) 20.\(\mathcal{A}xg5\) dxe5 21.\(\mathcal{D}xe5\) \(\mathbb{C}c8\) 22.\(\mathbb{W}xd4\).

19...\(\mathcal{D}d7\) 20.\(\mathcal{A}b1\) \(g5!\) 21.\(\mathcal{A}xg5\) \(\mathbb{W}xg5\) 22.\(\mathcal{A}d3\) \(\mathcal{D}e5\)

Black was clearly better and went on to win.

12.\(\mathcal{A}xe6\) \(fxe6\)

The knight on a5 discourages the usual c3, d4 plan, as the knight would eye the potential holes on b3 and c4.

13.d4

If Black were allowed to play ...c5 then he would be very comfortable.

13...exd4 14.\(\mathcal{A}xd4\) \(\mathbb{W}d7\) 15.\(\mathcal{D}f1\) \(c5\)

15...\(\mathcal{C}c6\) is also perfectly fine. Karjakin – Alekseev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007, was soon agreed drawn after 16.\(\mathcal{A}b3\) \(\mathbb{W}e8\) 17.\(\mathcal{A}g3\) \(h5\) 18.\(h3\) \(\mathbb{W}g6\) 19.\(\mathbb{W}e2\) \(h4\) 20.\(\mathcal{A}f1\) \(\mathcal{D}h5\) 1/2–1/2.

16.\(\mathcal{A}f3\) \(\mathcal{C}c6\) 17.\(\mathcal{A}g3\) \(\mathcal{G}g4\) 18.\(\mathcal{E}5\)

So far we have been following the game Svidler – Navara, Crete 2007. Black opted for 18...\(\mathcal{A}ad8\), but failed to equalise after 19.exd6 \(\mathcal{D}x\mathcal{D}6\) 20.\(\mathcal{G}g5\). Black’s position is still defensible but clearly unpleasant. White eventually won.

Far stronger would have been the natural central strike:

18...d5!

One can only assume that Black was afraid of:

19.h3

However, it seems that he has two satisfactory responses here.

By far the simplest reaction would be 19...\(\mathcal{A}xf3\) 20.\(\mathcal{X}xf3\) \(\mathcal{G}x\mathcal{E}5\) 21.\(\mathcal{E}e2\) \(\mathcal{D}d6\) with good compensation for a very small material investment.

It also looks interesting to consider: 19...\(\mathcal{D}xf2?!\) 20.\(\mathcal{X}xf2\) \(h4!\) 21.\(\mathcal{E}e4\)! \(\mathbb{W}e7\) 22.\(\mathcal{X}f4\) \(g5!\)
there is nothing to stop you from transposing with 8...d6 9.c3 etc.

9.d3
9.c3 can be met by 9...d5! 10.exd5 ¤xd5.

a) 11.¤xe5? is almost suicidal, as after 11...¤xe5 12.¤xe5 we reach a normal Marshall except that Black has been gifted the free developing move ...b7, while White has wasted time on the weakening h2-h3. Black is almost winning after 12...¤f4!

b) 23.¤xh4 looks better, when there follows 23...gxh4 24.¤f1 ¤xe5 25.¤h2 ¤xf3 26.¤xf3 ¤f5 Black is doing well.

D) 8.h3

This is the anti-Marshall of the new millennium! The text became fashionable during the past decade, and remains a common occurrence at high level tournaments.

8...b7
This is the typical move for Marshall players. Black retains the option of ...d5. Of course, if your repertoire also includes the Gajewski then

For instance, 13.d4 (after 13.f3 ¤d6 the black queen will shortly join in the fun) 13...¤xg2 14.¤g4 ¤h4 15.¤d2 ¤h8!, Laouini – Henni, Cairo 1998. White faces the extremely unpleasant threat of ...f5.

b) 11.d3 is not so bad, but can hardly threaten Black after 11...¤d6 12.¤bd2 ¤ad8 13.¤e4 ¤g6, Fischer – Szabo, Portoroz 1958.

c) 11.d4 is well met by 11...exd4 12.cxd4 ¤a5??
Black takes the opportunity to eliminate the 'Spanish bishop' from the board. Daulyte – Azarov, Warsaw 2005, continued 13...c2 b4 14.e4 (If White is going to exchange this bishop, he would sooner do it for a bishop than a knight) 14...xe4 15.xe4 f6 16.c3 d5 17.e5 c5!, when Black was even beginning to take over the initiative.

9...d5!?

This was an important discovery. For several years it was presumed that White was doing enough to prevent this sacrifice, but it now appears fully playable. The alternative was 9...d6. This leads to positions similar to those considered in variation C) above, with some subtle differences. Black's position is perfectly playable, but our main line is much more in the spirit of the Marshall.

10.exd5 exd5

White has three principal options: D1) 11.a4, D2) 11.c3, as well as, of course, D3) 11.xe5.

11.bd2 should be met by 11...f6:

a) In Lanka – Gustafsson, Graz 2008, White failed to put his opponent under any pressure with 12.c3 h8 13.f1 d7 14.a3 e8 15.d4 exd4 16.cxd4 d8 ½–½.

b) 12.c4! was a creative idea, although White also failed to obtain an advantage after 12...bxc4 13.xc4 c5 (13...b4?! 14.e3 a5 15.d4 exd4 16.xd4 xbd3 17.xb3 xxd4 18.xb7 xe3 19.xe3 d7. White's bishop is not really any stronger than Black's well centralised knight on d5, Adams – Bacrot, Baku 2008.

D1) 11.a4

This should not be too dangerous, although if White is not feeling ambitious then he can more or less force a draw.

11...d4! 12.xd4

White can hardly take on e5, as after ...xb3 the extra pawn would not make up for the loss of the bishop pair and ruination of his queenside structure. We now follow the game Karjakin – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2009.

12...exd4 13.axb5 axb5 14.bxa8 bxa8 15.a3 b4

The last few moves require little explanation. Both sides are playing consistently, putting their pieces on the best available squares.

16.d2
17.\textit{d}e5 \textit{d}d6 leaves White nothing better than retreating, as 17.\textit{x}d5? \textit{x}d5 18.\textit{x}d5 \textit{x}a3 works out badly for him.

16.\textit{a}b2 17.\textit{a}x\textit{d}2 \textit{a}f6 18.\textit{x}d5 $\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$

The players saw no reason to continue the fight. Note that after 18.\textit{x}xb5 \textit{f}4 19.f3 \textit{x}f3 20.gxf3 \textit{h}h4 White has no more than a draw. After the move played, the game might have continued: 18...\textit{a}xd5 19.\textit{x}xb5 \textit{x}g2 20.\textit{x}g2 \textit{c}6† 21.\textit{g}3 \textit{w}xb5 22.\textit{e}7=

White’s exposed king should not change the evaluation, as the material is so limited.

D2) 11.\textit{c}3 \textit{w}d7?

11...\textit{w}d6 is also possible, but I prefer to continue with the gambit theme.

12.\textit{d}xe5

12.d4 exd4 13.cxd4 \textit{b}4 (13...\textit{e}e8 is also logical) 14.\textit{d}d2 \textit{a}d8 15.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}6 leads to a complex fight where Black’s chances are at least not worse, Sokolov – Sargissian, Plovdiv 2008.

12...\textit{d}xe5 13.\textit{x}e5 \textit{a}d8 14.\textit{g}4 \textit{f}5 15.\textit{g}3

Less testing is 15.\textit{h}5 \textit{f}6 16.\textit{e}1 \textit{h}8=, Zagrebeleny – Giorgadze, Yerevan 1996 (16...\textit{f}e8 is also good). White’s queen is achieving very little on \textit{h}5.

We now follow the game Topalov – Leko, Morelia/Linares 2008.

15...\textit{f}6 16.\textit{e}1 \textit{h}8

16...\textit{h}e8 17.\textit{d}d2 \textit{e}e1† 18.\textit{e}e1 \textit{e}e5 19.f4 \textit{d}d6 20.\textit{d}d2 \textit{h}h8 21.\textit{x}d5 \textit{x}d5 22.\textit{f}3 \textit{e}e8 gives Black compensation according to Postny. The evaluation is probably correct, although I do not believe this line to be an improvement over Leko’s move.

17.\textit{d}d2 \textit{b}4!

An excellent move, which reminds us that Black should always look for opportunities to play across the whole board and not just on the kingside.

18.\textit{f}3!

It is pointless for White to try to keep his extra material. Instead he must continue to improve his pieces.

18...\textit{b}xc3 19.\textit{d}4 \textit{f}4 20.\textit{g}4 \textit{g}4 21.\textit{hx}g4

We have reached a critical position. In the game Black could find nothing better than the slow 21...\textit{g}5?! and after 22.\textit{e}5 \textit{g}7 23.\textit{b}xc3 \textit{d}xc3 24.\textit{b}2 \textit{d}d5 25.\textit{a}c1= White had achieved a high level of piece coordination and went on to win. Instead, it would have been much more logical and principled to play:
21...c5!
This was recommended by Marin.

22.bxc3 bxc3 23.dxc5
White does not appear to have anything better:

a) Marin gives the line: 23.a3 axf3 24.gxf3 xd4+

b) 23.e5 f3 24.exf3 axf3 25.gxf3 db5 is equal.

23...e2†
23...f3! is also quite playable.

24.xe2 a1

Black's kingside weaknesses cannot be exploited, and the bishop pair remains a potent force.

D3) 11. xe5 d4!
After the moves 11...xe5 12.xe5 Black's compensation is questionable.

12.c3
Two other moves deserve our attention:

12.d2 e8 13.c3 Ivanchuk – Svidler, Foros 2008, resulted in a draw after 13.d3 xb3 14.axb3 f6 15.g4 d7 16.d2 c5 17.e2 h5 18.gh2 d6 19.f1 ½–½. White's position is too passive for him to claim an advantage, but at the same time it is quite solid.
13...xb3 14.db3 c5
As usual, Black's pair of bishops and generally active pieces ensure good compensation.

Hou Yifan – Kosteniuk, Nalchik 2008, continued:
15.h5 g6 16.f3 f6 17.xg6 hxg6 18.c4 d7 19.cxd5 xd5 20.g3 g5
15.\( \text{to} \) 16.\( \text{to} \) 17.\( \text{to} \) enables Black to liquidate to a drawn ending with 16...\( \text{to} \) 17.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 18.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 19.\( \text{xe}8 \) 20.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 21.\( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 22.\( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 23.\( \text{xe}7 \) \( \text{xe}7 \) 24.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 25.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 26.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) ½–½, Jakovenko – Grischuk Elista 2008.

After 16.\( \text{xe}1 \) the simple 16...\( \text{f6} \) is good enough.

16.\( \text{f6} \) 17.\( \text{g5} \)

Now White's position becomes risky. Safer would have been 17.\( \text{d4} \), when Postny analyses 17...\( \text{d7} \) 18.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d8} \) 19.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c6} \) 20.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 21.\( \text{xd}6 \) \( \text{xd}6 \) ½, Jakovenko – Grischuk Elista 2008.

At this point White was content to return the pawn to reach a drawn ending with:

17.\( \text{d5} \)

He could, of course, have played more ambitiously with 17.\( \text{f3} \), but after 17...\( \text{d7} \) intending ...\( \text{d}8 \) Black's activity should be sufficient.

b) 14.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{f6} \) 15.\( \text{g4} \)

15.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 16.\( \text{xf3} \) is unpleasant for White, although he might be able to defend, Schachinger – Freitag, Leoben 2008.

15.\( \text{f5} \) 16.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 17.\( \text{d4} \)

Too passive is 17.\( \text{a}2 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 18.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{c6} \) with good play for Black, Timofeev – Sokolov, Sarajevo 2007.

17...\( \text{h}4 \) 18.\( \text{e}2 \)
18...f4?!
Simpler would have been 18...\(\text{We}4\) 19.\(\text{Qf}4\) \(\text{Wxc}2\) with equality.
19.f3 \(\text{Qd}5\) 20.\(\text{Qc}3\) \(\text{Qe}3\) 21.\(\text{Qxe}3\) \(\text{fxe}3\) 22.\(\text{Qxe}3\) \(\text{Qad}8\)
Black has compensation even for two pawns, Ki. Georgiev – Ivanisevic, Valjevo 2007.

c) In Gormally – Beliavsky, Liverpool 2008, White was successful with: 14.\(\text{Qf}4\) \(\text{Wd}4\) 15.\(\text{Qg}3\) \(\text{Qd}6\) 16.\(\text{Qe}2\) \(\text{Qc}5\) 17.c3 \(\text{Qxe}5\) 18.\(\text{Qxe}5\) \(\text{Qxe}5\) 19.\(\text{Qxb}4\) \(\text{Qad}8\) 20.\(\text{Qd}2\) \(\text{Qd}7\), 21.\(\text{Bac}1\)± The English Grandmaster went on to convert his advantage.

Instead there were two decent alternatives on move 19:

c1) 19...\(\text{Wxb}2\) was suggested by Postny, who analysed as far as 20.d4 \(\text{Qfe}8\) 21.\(\text{Bb}1\) \(\text{Wc}3\) 22.\(\text{Qd}2\) a5 23.\(\text{bxa}5\) \(\text{Qxa}5\). This looks like an improvement over the game, although if we continue a little deeper it seems that White has some chances to be better after 24.\(\text{Qxa}5\) \(\text{Qxa}5\) 25.\(\text{Qc}3\) \(\text{Qc}6\) 26.\(\text{Qd}5\)!

c2) In view of the above, I believe that the simplest solution would have been 19...\(\text{Qg}5\!\text{N}\) 20.\(\text{Qg}3\) \(\text{Qd}5\) 21.f3 \(\text{Qd}4\) 22.\(\text{Sh}1\) \(\text{Qxb}4\) when Black is absolutely fine.

14...\(\text{Wd}5\)
The game Timofeev – Jakovenko, Moscow 2008, continued with the less precise 14...f5?!
15.\(\text{Qd}2\) \(\text{Qf}6\) 16.\(\text{Qd}3\) when the outpost on e5 gave White good chances of an advantage. After 16...\(\text{Qe}8\) 17.\(\text{Qd}2\) c5 18.\(\text{Qxe}5\) a critical position was reached:

White can recapture in three different ways:

a) In the game White squandered any real chances of playing for a full point with 19.\(\text{Qxe}5\)? \(\text{Qxd}4\) 20.\(\text{Qxb}4\) \(\text{Qxd}1\) 21.\(\text{Qxd}1\) \(\text{cxb}4\) 22.\(\text{Qd}3\) \(\text{Qxe}1\) 23.\(\text{Qxe}1\) \(\text{Qc}8\) 24.\(\text{Qe}2\) \(\text{Qc}4\) 25.\(\text{Qxb}4\) a5 26.\(\text{Qd}3\) \(\text{Qxd}3\) 27.\(\text{Qxd}3\) \(\text{Qc}1\) 28.\(\text{Qh}2\) \(\text{Qd}1\). Black easily defended this endgame. However, both of the following alternatives would have left Black struggling.

b) After 19.\(\text{Qxe}5\) \(\text{Qxf}3\) 20.\(\text{Qxf}3\) \(\text{Qh}4\) (20...\(\text{Qe}6\) 21.\(\text{Qxb}4\) \(\text{Qc}6\) 22.\(\text{Qd}5\) will leave Black facing a difficult, though perhaps still tenable endgame) 21.\(\text{Qxb}4\) \(\text{cxb}4\) 22.\(\text{Qd}5\) \(\text{Qh}8\) 23.e6 the e-pawn is a very serious threat.

c) Also promising would have been 19.\(\text{Qxe}5\) \(\text{Qxf}3\) 20.\(\text{Qxf}3\). The doubled pawns, while far from perfect, are not a serious liability. Meanwhile the onus will be on Black to demonstrate compensation for his lost pawn. Perhaps he can draw the ending after 20...\(\text{Qxd}4\) 21.\(\text{Qxe}8\) 22.\(\text{Qd}3\) \(\text{Qd}8\) 24.\(\text{bxc}5\) \(\text{Qxd}2\) 25.\(\text{Qxd}2\) \(\text{Qxd}2\) 26.\(\text{Qxa}6\) \(\text{Qxb}2\) although White should definitely play on for a while.
Returning to the main line, we will now follow the game Piscopo – Brunello, Cortina 2007.

15...c5

I rather like this patient approach. Black has positional compensation and does not need to be in a hurry to prove anything. Nevertheless there was a valid alternative in 15...f5, after which Postny analyses 16.\textit{f}eg5 \textit{d}d6 17.\textit{d}d2 \textit{f}fe8 18.\textit{x}xb4 \textit{x}xb4 19.c3 \textit{d}d6.

16.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}d8

16...\textit{ae}8 17.\textit{d}2 f5 is a good alternative.

17.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}8 18.\textit{ad}1 \textit{f}5\textit{f}:

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

Black has typical compensation for this line. He has two strong bishops, active pieces and no real weaknesses. Even if White manages to exchange queens, it would be tough for him to make anything of his extra pawn.

\textbf{Conclusion}

We have examined four different variations in which White can sidestep the main lines of the Marshall Attack. Anti-Marshall systems will always remain popular, especially amongst amateur players who may view them as a more convenient solution than accepting the gambit pawn.

Out of the four variations that we examined, variation A), with 8.c3 d5 9.d4, should be the easiest for Black to meet. Line B), 8.d4, is somewhat more challenging, and I hope that my decision to cover two separate responses will prove helpful to the reader. Variations C) and D) are arguably the two most important anti-Marshall variations that Black needs to know. The former tends to lead to a subtle manœuvring game after 8.a4 b4. Generally speaking, the high-level games seem to indicate that accurate play from both sides will lead to a balanced game. Line D) with 8.h3 has only become popular relatively recently, and the theory is still developing. The gambit approach with 8...\textit{b}7 9.d3 d5?! seems to be holding up at present, although I am sure that this line will continue to be debated and tested at GM level for some time. Generally speaking, I would always recommend that the reader keeps an eye on the theoretical developments, as well as conducting his own original analysis at home.
Chapter 7

Marshall: 12.d4

1.e4 e5 2.dı3 d6 3.dıb5 a6 4.dıa4 dıf6 5.0–0 dıe7 6.dıe1 b5 7.dıb3 0–0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 dıxd5 10.dıxe5 dıxe5 11.dıxe5 c6 12.d4 dıd6 13.dıe1 dıh4 14.g3 dıh3

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In the present chapter we will begin to investigate the acceptance of the gambit pawn, as occurs after:

10.dxe5 dxe5 11.xe5

Introduction

The Marshall has always been a controversial and divisive gambit – it seems that some Ruy Lopez players love to try and refute it, while others are so terrified that they avoid it at all costs! There is an old adage which states that “in order to refute a gambit, you must accept it”. So far the Marshall has stood the test of time, and continues to be used at the highest levels of chess. In the present and remaining two chapters I will endeavour to provide an up to date summary of the most important variations, as well as some challenging sidelines. We will begin by discussing the next couple of moves, which lead us to the starting point for the present chapter.

11...c6

This is firmly established as the most promising move. Black spends a tempo to stabilise the knight in the centre, while preparing to attack the enemy rook on the next move.

12.d4

This is the most natural move. It remains a popular choice at all levels, although in recent years 12.d3 seems to have become the main line amongst the world’s elite. I think that it makes sense for us to begin by analysing the most natural move. By doing so, we will be able to appreciate certain nuances of the position which have influenced the subsequent developments in the theory. The presently fashionable 12.d3 will form the subject of Chapter 8, and White’s other 12th moves will be analysed in Chapter 9, along with a few of the sidelines that can occur after 12.d4.

12...d6

The present position will serve as the starting point for the theoretical section of this chapter.

Strategic Themes

White consolidates his position

If Black were to follow his pawn sacrifice with bog-standard developing moves, we might reach a position resembling the following:
Black has obtained no compensation whatsoever for the sacrificed pawn. Needless to say, he can do much better than this!

**Black's kingside attack**

Black should look to involve his queen in the attack at an early stage. After provoking the weakening pawn move, g2-g3, he will often use his f-pawn to increase the pressure. The following would be a dream position for him.

White will look to open the a-file to activate his rook and soften up the enemy queenside. And we have already seen that Black's f-pawn plays an important part in his plans. As a general rule, if White cannot prevent the pawn from advancing to f4 then he will be in big trouble. Therefore he will either have to block the position by playing f4 himself, or find some other way to defend (e.g. force a queen exchange).

**Exchanging the attacking pieces**

White will sometimes try to exchange, or at least drive away, some of the opponent's attacking pieces.
Having given up a pawn, Black must be sure to play energetically, otherwise his initiative may be extinguished by the exchange of his active pieces.

**Playing on both flanks**

When the Marshall first became popular, Black players usually had one thing on their minds: to smash through the enemy defences and checkmate the white king. Nowadays a lot of defensive methods have been worked out and, of course, checked with computers. Thus it has become a lot more difficult for Black to succeed with a crude attack against a well-prepared opponent. For this reason the modern interpretation of the Marshall involves playing across the whole board. The following position is a good example:

White is looking very solid on the kingside, but his pieces are not so well equipped to fight for the centre. Therefore Black should change plans with 22...c5!, which gives him good chances. This variation is analysed fully in line A211) on page 199.

**Theoretical Highlights**

**The main line**

From the starting position mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the most popular variation has been the following:

11...c6 12.d4 6d6 13.e1 6h4 14.g3 6h3

This has been the main line for a long time and it still enjoys great popularity at all levels. White has tried several different ideas here, but the most important move is:

15.e3

This is the subject of line A), beginning on page 188. There are a number of sidelines, which will be considered in Chapter 9. Black should also be ready for the interesting alternative: 15.e4?, intending to drive the queen away with 6h4.

**The 6e4 line**

We will end the chapter by examining the
following important sideline (after the usual 11...c6 12.d4 \(\texttt{d}d6\) 13.\(\texttt{e}\)e1 \(\texttt{w}h4\) 14.g3 \(\texttt{w}h3\)):

15.\(\texttt{e}\)e4?!?

This is an important alternative, which demands accurate handling by Black. We will see in line B) (page 207) that correct play should enable him to reach a fully satisfactory position.

Theory

1.e4 e5 2.\(\texttt{d}\)f3 \(\texttt{c}\)c6 3.\(\texttt{b}\)b5 a6 4.\(\texttt{a}\)a4 \(\texttt{d}\)f6 5.0-0 \(\texttt{e}\)e7 6.\(\texttt{e}\)e1 b5 7.\(\texttt{b}\)b3 0-0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 \(\texttt{x}\)xd5 10.\(\texttt{x}\)xe5 \(\texttt{xe}\)5 11.\(\texttt{x}\)xe5 c6 12.d4 \(\texttt{d}\)d6

13.\(\texttt{e}\)e1

This is by far the most popular move, although 13.\(\texttt{e}\)e2 has also been used by some strong players. This alternative will be analysed in Chapter 9. Let me reiterate that the present chapter will focus on White's most natural response to the gambit. By learning to appreciate the nuances of these positions, the reader will be in a better position to understand the pros and cons of the various alternatives and sidelines.

13...\(\texttt{w}\)h4 14.g3

It is well known that White should avoid: 14.h3? \(\texttt{x}\)xh3 15.gxh3

Also unsatisfactory is: 15.\(\texttt{x}\)xd5 \(\texttt{h}2\)!

16.\(\texttt{e}\)e5!N

This looks like the only chance, although it is still not enough to make the line a viable proposition for White.

Several games have ended with 16.\(\texttt{x}\)xd5?? \(\texttt{h}2\) followed by mate in three.

After 16.f4, Nuschke – Quiring, Sackville 2001, the most efficient route to victory would have been 16...\(\texttt{g}\)g3!, when either king move can be met by 17...\(\texttt{d}\)xf4 with a decisive attack.

16...\(\texttt{e}\)xe5

16...\(\texttt{a}\)ae8 17.\(\texttt{h}\)h5 enables White to defend.

17.\(\texttt{x}\)xe5 \(\texttt{e}\)ae8

17...\(\texttt{f}\)f5!?
Attacking the Spanish

18...\texttt{wh3}

In this position White has two main options:
A) \texttt{15.e3} and B) \texttt{15.e4}. The former is the most natural and by far the most popular move, but the latter is also quite challenging and demands attention.

A) \texttt{15.e3 g4 16.d3}

The queen must stay within touching distance on f1, in order to parry the potential mating threats after ...\texttt{f3}. Obviously 16.f3?? \texttt{xg3} is no good for White.

16.\texttt{ae8} 17.\texttt{d2}

White needs to complete development. Now we reach a very important moment. We will consider A1) \texttt{17.wh5?!} as well as the main line: A2) \texttt{17.e6}. The two moves can often lead to the same position after White's typical response: 18.a4. The main purpose of line A1) is to avoid line A21) below (18.\texttt{gf1}). I do not believe that this move brings White any advantage, but Black must nevertheless be prepared for it. On the other hand, line A1) also offers White some additional options, primarily 17...\texttt{wh5} 18.\texttt{c2}. Overall I would rate the two move orders as being of approximately equal strength, so I advise the reader to study both options and decide which he prefers.

Before moving on I will briefly mention the other main option:

17...\texttt{f5}

Historically this has been Black's main alternative to 17...\texttt{e6}. While the position remains complicated, if White defends correctly then it is doubtful that Black can break through using brute force alone. For this reason, most Marshall experts now prefer a more refined strategy. Instead of staking everything on a kingside breakthrough, the modern interpretation involves a more fluid approach in which Black combines his attacking potential with his positional trumps, including his control over the e-file and the weakness of White's light squares on the kingside. So while the immediate advance of the f-pawn may not necessarily be bad, I would prefer to keep more options open at this stage of the game.

A1) \texttt{17.wh5?! 18.c2}

The usual response is 18.a4, when 18...\texttt{e6} reaches line A22). As mentioned previously, the text is an attempt to take advantage of Black's slightly unusual move order.

Other possibilities include:

a) 18.\texttt{df1 e6} 19.\texttt{d1}

19.a4 will reach line A22) after a subsequent exchange on b5.

19...\texttt{f5} 20.\texttt{xg4 xg4} 21.\texttt{d2 g6}

Black has good compensation, and eventually his threats became too strong in Ivanchuk–Adams, Terrassa 1991. It is worth playing through the remainder of this game, as Black's play was extremely instructive. I especially like the way that Adams was able
to switch between attacking weaknesses on both sides of the board.  
22...g2 f4 23.f3 Wh5 24.g4 Wh4 25.e2?!  

This looks like a mistake, although Black had nice compensation in any case.  
25...Exg4†! 26.fxg4 f3† 27.eh1 fxe2 28.Wxe2 Sh8 29.g1 h6 30.Wg2 f4 31.e1 Wg5 32.h3 Wg6!  
A very nice 'creeping' move, typical of the British number one.  
33.d1 b8 34.d2 Wb1 35.f2 Sg8  

White is horribly restricted, and Ivanchuk is unable to withstand the pressure.  
36.b3 f4 37.e2 dxc3 38.e6 Wxa2 39.exd6 Wxb3 40.xa6 e2† 41.eh1 b8 42.e1 Wd1 0–1  

b) One of the clever ideas behind Black's move order is to meet 18.Wf1 with the careful 18...Se7!:  

Compared with line A21) the rook is less exposed than on e6. Here we have:  

b1) The clever point behind of Black's last move is revealed after:  
19.f3? dxe3 20.Wf2  
Compared with the analogous position with the rook on e6 instead of e7, here Black can simply play:  
20...Re8!  
The rook's position on e7 instead of e6 means that it is not under fire from the bishop on b3.  
21.fxg4 Exg4 22.Wxe7 Wxe7  
Only Black can be better here, for instance:  
23.Wg2  
After 23.d1 c5! Black has the initiative.  
23...Wxh2†  
23...g6?! also looks promising.  
Black retains some winning chances, although White can probably hold.  

b2) Bacrot – Inarkiev, Elista 2008, continued 19.e5 20.f3 Sf5 21.b3 Wfe8 22.f2 Sx2 23.We7 Wxe7 24.We1 Se6 25.Wxe6 Wxe6 26.Wxe1 Wxe1† 27.Wxe1 f5. Black had no real problems, as his light-squared bishop was extremely strong. There is a simple plan of ...d3-c1xd2 leading to a drawn opposite bishop ending.
b3) 19.a4 \textit{\&}fe8 20.\textit{\&}xd5 \textit{\&}xd5 21.axb5 axb5

Peter Leko has achieved two comfortable draws from this position against world-class opposition.

b31) In Anand – Leko, Dortmund 2007, White decided to exchange the rooks with:
22.\textit{\&}f4 \textit{\&}xe1

But not 22...\textit{\&}xf4? 23.\textit{\&}xe7. This type of possibility is the only real drawback of having the rook on e7 instead of e6.
23.\textit{\&}xe1 \textit{\&}xe1 24.\textit{\&}xe1 \textit{\&}f8

Black's strong pair of bishops mean that he is is no real danger, even after a subsequent queen exchange.
25.\textit{\&}e4 f6 26.\textit{\&}xd5\textit{\&}xd5 27.\textit{\&}c7 \textit{\&}f7 28.\textit{\&}b6 \textit{\&}d6 29.\textit{\&}c5 $^{1/2} - 1/2$

Anand obviously felt that it would be a waste of time even to try to win this position.

b32) In Inarkiev – Leko, Elista 2008, White instead elected to exchange queens with:
22.\textit{\&}g2 \textit{\&}xg2\textit{\&} 23.\textit{\&}xg2 f6

Black's pieces are all very active, so he sets about improving his king and pawns.
24.b3
24.\textit{\&}a6 gets nowhere after 24...\textit{\&}c8\textit{\&}.
24...h5 25.c4 \textit{\&}b4 26.\textit{\&}a2 \textit{\&}f5 27.\textit{\&}c1 g5 28.h3 \textit{\&}f7 29.\textit{\&}f1 \textit{\&}ed7 30.\textit{\&}h2 \textit{\&}d3 31.\textit{\&}a6 \textit{\&}xe6 32.\textit{\&}a8 \textit{\&}e8 33.\textit{\&}a6 \textit{\&}e6 34.\textit{\&}a8 \textit{\&}e8 $^{1/2} - 1/2$

Once again, Black had no problems whatsoever in holding the draw.

b) The simplest move is probably 20...\textit{\&}e2, when White loses the exchange for insufficient compensation.

\textbf{19...\textit{\&}h3}

This looks more challenging than 19...\textit{\&}xf3 20.\textit{\&}xh3 \textit{\&}xf3 21.\textit{\&}d2 \textit{\&}xd3 22.\textit{\&}xd3$^{\text{\pm}}$. White's light-squared bishop became very powerful in Ponomariov – Leko, Moscow 2008.
20.\texttt{Af2} \texttt{Af4}!

This move highlights a real drawback of White's 18th move – the lack of a pin on the black knight. The next couple of moves are forced.

21.\texttt{gx f4} \texttt{Ax f4} 22.\texttt{Ag3} \texttt{Ag5} 23.\texttt{Ab3}†

In an earlier game from the same event, Efimenko – Sargissian, Dresden 2008, White played:

23.\texttt{Af1} h5 24.\texttt{Af2} \\
24.\texttt{Ab3}† makes little sense, as h7 is available for Black's king now.

White should also not be attracted to:

24.\texttt{Ah1} h4 25.\texttt{Ae2} hxg3 26.hxg3 (26.\texttt{Axg3} \texttt{Axg3} 27.\texttt{Ag1} \texttt{Axe2} 28.\texttt{Axe2} f4†) 26...\texttt{xf1} \\
27.\texttt{Ab3}† \texttt{Ah7} 28.\texttt{Ah2}† \texttt{Ag6}†

24...h4 25.\texttt{Axe8} \texttt{Axe8} 26.\texttt{Ae1} hxg3† 27.hxg3

Now Black erred with:

27...\texttt{Ad8}?! \\
Correct would have been 27...\texttt{Axe1} 28.\texttt{Axe1} \texttt{Axg3}† 29.\texttt{Axg3} \texttt{Axg3}† with an easy draw.

28.\texttt{Ae2}!!

White could have obtained a serious advantage with 28.\texttt{Ae2}!, although it is easy to miss such a move over the board.

28...\texttt{xf1}†

Black is okay again.

29.\texttt{xf1} \texttt{e8} 30.\texttt{Ae1} \texttt{Axg3} 31.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{e1}†!

Forcing the draw.

32.\texttt{xe1} \texttt{x f3}† 33.\texttt{e2} \texttt{f1}† 34.\texttt{e1} \texttt{f3}† \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}

23...\texttt{h8} 24.\texttt{Af1} \texttt{h5}!

Preparing to regain the piece while also creating an escape square for the king.

25.\texttt{Axe8}

25.\texttt{Ah1} should lead to a draw after

25...h4 26.\texttt{Ae2} \texttt{xf1} 27.\texttt{Axe8} \texttt{xd3} 28.\texttt{xf8}† \texttt{h7} 29.\texttt{g8}† \texttt{h6} (29...\texttt{g6} 30.\texttt{f7}† \texttt{f6}?! 31.\texttt{e1}++; 30.\texttt{f7} \texttt{h7} (30...\texttt{g6}?? 31.\texttt{hxh4}++)

25...\texttt{xe8} 26.\texttt{f7} \texttt{e7} 27.\texttt{hxh5} \texttt{xf1}

28.\texttt{xf1}

28.\texttt{xf1} is also level: 28...\texttt{Axg3} 29.\texttt{hxg3} \texttt{yg5} 30.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{h4}! The only move, but good enough. 31.\texttt{hg8}† \texttt{h7} 32.\texttt{g6}† (32.\texttt{f5}† \texttt{h8}=) 32...\texttt{gxg6} 33.\texttt{g4}† (33.\texttt{xc6}?? \texttt{h7}=) 33...\texttt{xf4} 34.\texttt{fxg4} \texttt{yg5}=

28...\texttt{e3}† 29.\texttt{h1} \texttt{eh5}

The dust has settled. White has retained his extra pawn, but Black's active pieces and safer king ensure adequate compensation.

30.\texttt{yg2}

Mikhelevski analyses the line: 30.\texttt{e5} \texttt{e6} 31.\texttt{f4} 32.\texttt{e2} \texttt{g6} 33.\texttt{g2} \texttt{h3} 34.\texttt{e2} \texttt{e5} 35.\texttt{d1} \texttt{g2} 36.\texttt{g2} \texttt{g8} Black has full compensation thanks to his active pieces, especially the beautifully placed queen.
Black retained full compensation in Ni Hua – Sargissian, Dresden 2008. In addition to the move played in the game, another good option was 31...c5.

It seems that 17...\(\texttt{h}5!?\) is a perfectly valid move order. Based on the evidence presented above, it seems unlikely that White has anything better than 18.a4, transposing to line A22) on page 198 after 17...\(\texttt{e}6\).

**A2) 17...\(\texttt{e}6\)**

This is still the main line. Black gives himself the options of doubling on the e-file or swinging the rook to an attacking position on the third rank. We will now consider White’s two main moves: A21) 18.\(\texttt{f}1\) and A22) 18.a4. Instead 15.\(\texttt{x}d5\) cxd5 reaches line A14) of Chapter 9, page 264.

**A21) 18.\(\texttt{f}1\) \(\texttt{h}5\) 19.\(\texttt{f}3\)**!

This is the clever point behind White’s last move. He offers a temporary piece sacrifice, and hopes to obtain a positional advantage after regaining the material. In this important position we will investigate three alternatives: A211) 19.\(\texttt{f}5\), A212) 19...\(\texttt{f}6\) and A213) 19...\(\texttt{x}e3\). In my opinion the last option seems to be best. The alternatives are unpromising:

19...\(\texttt{h}3\)? 20.\(\texttt{f}2\) \(\texttt{f}5\) 21.f4 leaves Black with no real compensation, as the knight is coming to e5.

19...\(\texttt{x}e3\) also fails to equalise after 20.f\(x\)g4 \(\texttt{x}g4\) 21.\(\texttt{e}3\) \(\texttt{e}3\) 22.\(\texttt{f}2\) \(\texttt{d}5\) 23.\(\texttt{e}1\). White has a slight but stable edge thanks to his active pieces and extra central pawn.

**A211) 19...\(\texttt{f}5\) 20.\(\texttt{e}4\)**

20.\(\texttt{f}2\) \(\texttt{g}6\) looks risky for White.

20.\(\texttt{f}2\) should be met by 20...\(\texttt{g}6!\) (20...\(\texttt{e}8\) 21.\(\texttt{x}d5\) cxd5 22.\(\texttt{b}3\)) 21.\(\texttt{e}4\) (21.a4 \(\texttt{e}8\) 22.\(\texttt{xb}5\) axb5=) 21...\(\texttt{xe}4\) 22.\(\texttt{f}e\) 23.\(\texttt{d}1\) \(\texttt{h}3\) 24.\(\texttt{f}3\) \(\texttt{xe}4\) 25.\(\texttt{xe}3\) \(\texttt{xe}3\) 26.\(\texttt{xe}3\) \(\texttt{d}7\) with equality.

**20...\(\texttt{xe}4\) 21.\(\texttt{f}e\) \(\texttt{xe}4\)**
Material is level. The question is whether White will be able to make his bishop pair and extra central pawn count for something. The difficulty is that Black's pieces are rather active. Still, if White can coordinate his pieces then he may be able to torture his opponent for a long time in the ending. At the present time, the set-up employed for White by GM Etienne Bacrot seems to be the last word in this line.

22...d4

Another reasonable continuation is 22...f2?! fe8 23.exe4 exe4 24.f1 g6 25.fxe4 exe4 26.f1 fxe1+ 27.fxe1. White must be slightly better in this ending, although Black has good chances to hold.

22...g6 23.c2 f5

23...xg3? does not work in view of: 24.xe4 fxe4 25.xg3 fxe3 26.f2 fe8 27.ev2 ev6 28.ev1 eg6 29.ev6!+-

24.d2!

This was a very important discovery by Bacrot. Instead, if White takes the exchange then Black seems to have enough compensation:

24.ev6 fxe4 25.ev3

25.gg2 ef3 26.f2 h5 gives Black enough compensation.

25...ef3

Worse is: 25...h6 26.ev1 ef3 27.ev1 eg7 (27...e3 28.ev1 exf1 29.exf1±) 28.ev2± 26.ev5!

The only chance for an advantage, although Black can still maintain the balance with precise play.

25...h6!

26...xg5? 27.ev6+ regains the piece, after which White should win without too many problems.

26...xg3 is also not quite sufficient after:

27.xg3 xg5 28.ev6+ ef8 29.ev4 xg3+ 30.hg1 g6 31.ev1 ed7 32.ev1 ef3 33.ev5+ ev5 34.ev5±

27.ev8+

After 27.ev4 ef8 White's pieces are very badly placed, while his material advantage is not felt.

27...h7??

27...ef8 also leads to a satisfactory position, e.g., 28.ev4 ef3 29.ev8 (29.ev1 ef7 30.ev6 ef5=) 29...ef2 30.ev1 exa1 31.ev6 exf3 32.ev8+ ef7 33.ev8 b1± 34.ev2 eb2† 35.ev3 xa2 36.ev4† eg8 37.ev6 ef7† with equality.

28.ev6 ev5 29.ev7

29...d2?! e3 30.ev3 ef3 31.ev3 exf3† 32.ev1 ef4+ 29...eh3 30.ev6

After 30.ev6 eg3! (30...ef2 31.ev2 ev8† 32.ev1 e3 33.ev3 exf3† 34.ev1 eb2=) 31.ev1 exf3 the threat of ...ef2 forces White to find: 32.g4 evg4† 33.ev1.
At this point Black has nothing better than 33...\texttt{f3}t with a perpetual.

30...\texttt{f2}! 31.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{xh2}t 32.\texttt{xf1} e3 33.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{xe3}t 34.\texttt{e1} \texttt{c2t}

The game will end in perpetual check - unless, of course, White prefers to be mated after:

35.\texttt{d1} \texttt{e3}t 36.\texttt{c1}??

36.\texttt{e1}= 36...\texttt{c2#}!

We now follow the game Bacrot - Jakovenko, Kallithea 2008.

24...\texttt{g4} 25.\texttt{e2}!

An excellent move, preparing to swing the rook to g2 in the event of a sacrifice on g3. At the same time White makes room for the other rook to come to e1. Black is unable to break through on the kingside, so White has time to catch up on development, after which the bishop pair will really come into its own.

25...\texttt{f6}

25...\texttt{h5} 26.\texttt{d1}! is awkward.

The aggressive 25...\texttt{h5} is too slow, e.g. 26.\texttt{ae1} h4? 27.\texttt{e6} \texttt{h5} (27...\texttt{f6} 28.\texttt{xf6} followed by \texttt{xf5}) 28.\texttt{xd6} hgx3 29.\texttt{h3} \texttt{h4} 30.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{hxh3} 31.\texttt{g2} \texttt{f6} 32.\texttt{f4} winning.

Black's best chance was probably 25...\texttt{f7} 26.\texttt{f2} g6 27.\texttt{e1}, although even here White has a stable advantage thanks to the bishop pair as well as the slightly vulnerable position of the rook on g4.

26.\texttt{ae1} \texttt{f7}?

Losing, although Black's position was already difficult. For instance, after the superior 26...h6 there follows: 27.\texttt{f2} \texttt{e7} 28.\texttt{d1} \texttt{e4} 29.\texttt{xe4} fxe4 30.\texttt{xf6} gxf6 31.\texttt{h3} \texttt{h7} 32.\texttt{d7} f5 33.\texttt{b3} h5 34.\texttt{f2}+ 27.\texttt{e8} \texttt{f8} 28.\texttt{ed8}

There is no good defence against \texttt{ee8}.

28...\texttt{e4} 29.\texttt{xe4} fxe4 30.\texttt{g2} e3 31.\texttt{exe3} \texttt{e7} 32.\texttt{xd5} cxd5 33.\texttt{xd5}t

White was winning easily and soon converted his advantage in Bacrot – Jakovenko, Kallithea 2008.

A212) 19...\texttt{f6}

This is a tricky move, but ultimately it seems that White can maintain an advantage with precise play.

20.\texttt{g2}

This looks more challenging than either of the two alternatives:
Chapter 7 - Marshall: 12.d4

a) 20.\textit{\textbf{e}2} leads nowhere for White after 20...\textit{\textbf{xf}3} 21.\textit{\textbf{xf}3} \textit{\textbf{xf}3} 22.\textit{\textbf{xd}5} (22.\textit{\textbf{f}2?} \textit{\textbf{f}4\textit{\textbf{f}4}}) 22...\textit{\textbf{xd}5}. Black has nothing to worry about, and his position may already be slightly preferable, Anand – Ivanchuk, Bilbao 2008.

b) 20.\textit{\textbf{d}1} \textit{\textbf{e}8} 21.\textit{\textbf{f}4}

In case of 21.\textit{\textbf{f}2} Black should play 21...\textit{\textbf{g}6} (21...\textit{\textbf{f}5} 22.\textit{\textbf{e}4} \textit{\textbf{xe}4} 23.\textit{\textbf{xe}4} \textit{\textbf{h}3} 24.\textit{\textbf{f}3} \textit{\textbf{exe}4} 25.\textit{\textbf{xe}4} \textit{\textbf{xf}2} 26.\textit{\textbf{xf}2} \textit{\textbf{h}5\textit{\textbf{h}5}}) 22.\textit{\textbf{b}3} \textit{\textbf{d}7} (22...\textit{\textbf{f}5} 23.\textit{\textbf{xd}5} \textit{\textbf{cxd}5} 24.\textit{\textbf{f}4\textit{\textbf{f}4}}; 22...\textit{\textbf{h}5} 23.\textit{\textbf{g}5!} \textit{\textbf{fe}6} 24.\textit{\textbf{e}4\textit{\textbf{e}4}}) 23.\textit{\textbf{a}4} \textit{\textbf{h}5}, with decent compensation.

21...\textit{\textbf{xe}1} 22.\textit{\textbf{w}xe1} \textit{\textbf{e}6} 23.\textit{\textbf{e}e}5 \textit{\textbf{h}3} 23...\textit{\textbf{xe}5?!} 24.\textit{\textbf{dxe}5} \textit{\textbf{f}5} 25.\textit{\textbf{f}4\textit{\textbf{f}4}} White has managed to consolidate his position and is a clear pawn up, Becker – Henao, e-mail 1995.

24.\textit{\textbf{f}2}

24.\textit{\textbf{f}4} \textit{\textbf{g}6} 25.\textit{\textbf{f}2} \textit{\textbf{f}8\textit{\textbf{f}8}}

24...\textit{\textbf{e}5} 25.\textit{\textbf{f}4} \textit{\textbf{xd}4} 26.\textit{\textbf{xf}5} \textit{\textbf{xf}5} 26.\textit{\textbf{xf}5} \textit{\textbf{g}5\textit{\textbf{g}5}}

21.\textit{\textbf{e}2} \textit{\textbf{f}5}

21.\textit{\textbf{e}2} \textit{\textbf{f}5}

Plenty of pieces remain on the board, and in a practical game Black will keep some tactical chances. However, the bottom line is that White will be better if he continues to play accurately.

22.\textit{\textbf{a}4!}

A typical move, activating the rook while softening up the enemy queenside.

22...\textit{\textbf{d}3}

Perhaps Black should have been considered: 22...\textit{\textbf{xd}5} 23.\textit{\textbf{axb}5} \textit{\textbf{xb}5} Two possible continuations include:

a) 24.\textit{\textbf{e}4}

This leads to a forcing sequence:

24...\textit{\textbf{exe}4} 25.\textit{\textbf{fxe}4} \textit{\textbf{g}3} 26.\textit{\textbf{hxg}3} \textit{\textbf{b}h} 27.\textit{\textbf{cxd}5} \textit{\textbf{b}h} 28.\textit{\textbf{cxd}5} \textit{\textbf{f}f} 29.\textit{\textbf{f}f1}

29...\textit{\textbf{b}4!}

This disruptive move prevents White from consolidating smoothly. Instead 29...\textit{\textbf{xb}3\textit{\textbf{b}3} 30.\textit{\textbf{f}2} \textit{\textbf{cxd}5} 31.\textit{\textbf{e}e} 32.\textit{\textbf{g}1\textit{\textbf{g}1}} intending \textit{\textbf{d}1\textit{\textbf{f}3}} gives White good chances to convert his material advantage.

b) 24.\textit{\textbf{f}4!}

This may enable White to obtain an edge through simpler means. The idea is to return the pawn in order to make way for the manoeuvre \textit{\textbf{f}3\textit{\textbf{e}5}}. Play continues:

24...\textit{\textbf{h}3} 25.\textit{\textbf{f}3} \textit{\textbf{xf}4}

And not: 25...\textit{\textbf{xf}4?} 26.\textit{\textbf{xf}4} \textit{\textbf{xf}4} 27.\textit{\textbf{e}5\textit{\textbf{e}5}}

White's better structure gives him the advantage, although Black has decent chances to hold.
We now follow the game Naiditsch – Sargissian, Kallithea 2008.

23.axb5 axb5 24.\textit{g}2 \textit{b}8 25.\textit{g}4! \textit{g}6 
26.\textit{d}5 \textit{c}5 27.\textit{b}3

By now it is clear that Black’s strategy has failed.

27...\textit{h}5 28.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}6 29.\textit{c}5 \textit{e}7 30.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}2 
31.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}4 32.\textit{xf}4 \textit{xe}1\texttt{#} 33.\textit{xe}1 \textit{f}6 
34.\textit{d}7

Also tempting was 34.\textit{e}7?! \textit{fxg}5 35.\textit{e}5. White will pick up the d5-pawn, with excellent winning chances.

34...\textit{e}8 35.\textit{xe}8\texttt{#} \textit{xe}8 36.\textit{b}8 \textit{xb}8 
37.\textit{xb}8

The German Grandmaster went on to convert his advantage convincingly:

37...\textit{fxg}5 38.\textit{a}6 \textit{b}3 39.\textit{c}7 \textit{c}4 40.\textit{e}6 
The knight’s dance forces a fatal weakening of the enemy pawns.

40...\textit{g}4 41.\textit{fxg}4 \textit{hxg}4 42.\textit{f}2 \textit{f}7 43.\textit{c}5 
\textit{b}4 44.\textit{xb}4 \textit{f}6 45.\textit{a}4 \textit{e}6 46.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}3 
47.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}5 48.\textit{f}4 \textit{g}6 49.\textit{b}5 \textit{d}6 50.\textit{b}6 
1–0

A213) 19...\textit{xe}3
As mentioned previously, I believe this to be the most promising route to an equal game.

20.\textit{f}2

Black now has two minor pieces plus the rook on e6 en prise, so he can hardly hope to maintain his material advantage.

20...\textit{d}5 21.\textit{fxg}4 \textit{gxg}4 22.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}6 
I think that this is Black’s most promising move.

In Kramnik – Aronian, Yerevan 2007, Black fell into trouble after:
22...\textit{g}5?! 23.\textit{exe}6 \textit{exe}6 24.\textit{e}4! \textit{g}6 25.\textit{e}2 
\textit{f}4?!

The lesser evil would have been 25...\textit{f}4, although even here after 26.\textit{h}1 \textit{e}3
27.\textit{\textbf{exd5}} exd5 28.\textit{\textbf{c5 \textit{\textbf{e8}}} 29.\textit{\textbf{e1+}}} Black’s troubles are far from over.

26.\textit{\textbf{c2 \textit{\textbf{h3+}}}?!}

26...\textit{\textbf{e7}} also leaves Black clearly worse after 27.\textit{\textbf{e1}} or 27.\textit{\textbf{f2+}}.\textit{\textbf{?!}}.

27.\textit{\textbf{g2+}}

Black has two pieces hanging.

Black can also exchange queens with:

22...\textit{\textbf{xf3}} 23.\textit{\textbf{xf3}}

This endgame is deceptively dangerous for Black. White has the better bishop and an extra central pawn. The placement of the b5-pawn also presents the first player with an obvious target with which to prise open the queenside. Play may continue:

23...\textit{\textbf{fe8}}

Perhaps it is worth considering 23...\textit{\textbf{h6}} 24.\textit{\textbf{exf6 \textit{\textbf{xf6}}} 25.\textit{\textbf{d2+}}} The position is somewhat unpleasant for Black, but he has chances to hold, Naiditsch – Ivanisevic, Subotica 2008.

24.\textit{\textbf{exf6 \textit{\textbf{xf6}}} 25.\textit{\textbf{a4! b4}}} 26.axb5 axb5 27.\textit{\textbf{a8+}}\textit{\textbf{ h7}} 28.\textit{\textbf{c8+}} (Marin).

25...\textit{\textbf{e2?}} 26.axb5 axb5 27.\textit{\textbf{a8+}}\textit{\textbf{ f8}} 28.\textit{\textbf{e5+-}} (Marin).

25.\textit{\textbf{c4}}

26.cxb4 \textit{\textbf{f6}} 27.\textit{\textbf{e5}}\textit{\textbf{ xb4}} is okay for Black.

26...\textit{\textbf{e3}}

26...\textit{\textbf{f6}} 27.c5 \textit{\textbf{e3}} 28.cxd5 \textit{\textbf{xb3}} 29.\textit{\textbf{e5+}}

27.\textit{\textbf{cxd5 \textit{\textbf{xb3}}} 27...\textit{\textbf{f3}} 28.\textit{\textbf{c4 \textit{\textbf{xd5}}} 29.\textit{\textbf{g2 \textit{\textbf{e3}}} 30.\textit{\textbf{xa6+}} (Marin) gives White decent winning chances, as the a-pawn is a real threat.}

28.\textit{\textbf{d2 \textit{\textbf{d3}}} Black does not solve his problems with 28...\textit{\textbf{xb2}} 29.\textit{\textbf{c4 \textit{\textbf{c2}}} 30.\textit{\textbf{xd6 b3}}} 31.\textit{\textbf{e1!}} Thanks to the mate threat, White wins a crucial tempo which enables him to position his rook behind the enemy pawn while also driving the enemy king further away. Following the likely continuation of 31...\textit{\textbf{h5}} 32.\textit{\textbf{e8+ h7}} 33.\textit{\textbf{b8 b2}} 34.\textit{\textbf{xb2 \textit{\textbf{xb2}}} 35.dxc6 \textit{\textbf{c2}}} 36.d5 \textit{\textbf{g6}} 37..\textit{\textbf{f1}}, White is winning.

29.\textit{\textbf{c4+}}

We have been following the analysis of Marin. White has excellent winning chances.

23.\textit{\textbf{xe6 \textit{\textbf{xe6}}} 24.\textit{\textbf{e4 \textit{\textbf{e8}}} 25.\textit{\textbf{e1}}}}

25.\textit{\textbf{xe6 \textit{\textbf{xe6}}} is identical to the previous note (22...\textit{\textbf{xf3}} 23.\textit{\textbf{xf3 \textit{\textbf{e8}}} 24.\textit{\textbf{xe6 \textit{\textbf{xe6}}} except that the white knight is positioned on the less active d2-square. This certainly helps Black, e.g. 26.a4 is well met by 26...b4! (26...\textit{\textbf{e2}} 27.axb5) 27.c4 \textit{\textbf{e2!}} 28.cxd5 \textit{\textbf{xd2}} 29.dxc6 \textit{\textbf{xb2}} 30.\textit{\textbf{d5 \textit{\textbf{f8}}} with equality.}

25...\textit{\textbf{f8}}
I believe this to be the most precise move, although Black also has good drawing chances after 25...\(\text{fxe}4\) 26.\(\text{Qxe}4\) \(\text{f}8\) as suggested by Mihail Marin.

26.\(\text{Qxe}6\) \(\text{fxe}6\) 27.\(\text{Qxe}6\) \(\text{fxe}6\)

Black is marginally worse, but he should be able to hold this ending without much difficulty.

To summarise, 18.\(\text{Qf}1\) is certainly an important option which deserves serious attention. We saw in line A1) that Black can avoid it with 17...\(\text{Qh}5\)! if he so desires. Therefore my advice to Black players would be to compare lines A1) and A21) and choose whichever one you prefer.

A22) 18.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{Qh}5\)

Black anticipates the white queen’s arrival on \(\text{f}1\), which will no longer come with gain of tempo. A secondary point is that an exchange on \(\text{d}5\) will no longer force a compromising of Black’s queenside pawns.

19.\(\text{AXB}5\) \(\text{AXB}5\)

Now White normally chooses between A221) 20.\(\text{Qf}1\) and A222) 20.\(\text{Qf}1\). Both moves are quite sensible, and can be met in different ways. We will explore all of the major possibilities for both sides, after first dealing with a few rare alternatives:

a) In Catapano – Warrick, corr. 1998, White made the mistake of trying to utilise the newly opened a-file too early with 20.\(\text{Ba}6\)? Here the strongest reaction would have been: 20...\(\text{Qf}4\)! with a dangerous attack. 21.\(\text{gx}f4\) can be met by 21...\(\text{Qg}6\)!, when White must give up his queen.

b) 20.\(\text{Qd}1\)? was played in Hellers – I. Sokolov, Haninge 1989, as well as quite a few other games. Amazingly, so far no-one seems to have noticed that Black can win by force after 20...\(\text{Qxe}3\)!N 21.\(\text{fxe}3\) (21.\(\text{Qxe}3\) \(\text{Qxd}1\) wins a piece for nothing) 21...\(\text{Qx}g3\)! 22.\(\text{hx}g3\) \(\text{Qh}6\) with a mating attack.

c) 20.\(\text{Qd}5\) \(\text{Qxd}5\) is not a serious option for White, who has needlessly ceded the bishop pair without good reason. Parma – Geller, Sukhumi 1966, concluded 20.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{bxc}4\) 21.\(\text{Qxc}4\) \(\text{Qb}4\) 22.\(\text{Qxe}1\) \(\text{Qe}2\) 23.\(\text{Qd}1\) \(\text{Qxd}3\) 24.\(\text{Qxh}5\) \(\text{Qxc}4\) 25.\(\text{Qxc}4\) \(\text{Qxe}3\) 26.\(\text{fxe}3\) \(\text{Qd}2\) \(\frac{1}{2}\). 

d) 20.\(\text{Qe}4\)

This is quite a reasonable move and has been tested at elite level.

20...\(\text{Qf}5\) 21.\(\text{Qd}2\) \(\text{Qxe}4\)!

Naturally Black captures in this way so as to catch the enemy rook in an awkward pin.

22.\(\text{Qxe}4\) \(\text{Qf}6\)

Also possible is 22...\(\text{Qg}6\), when Di Berardino – Vescovi, Sao Paulo 2006, concluded 23.\(\text{Qae}1\) \(\text{Qf}6\) 24.\(\text{Qf}3\) \(\text{Qxg}3\) 25.\(\text{hxg}3\) \(\text{Qxg}3\)† 26.\(\text{Qh}1\) \(\text{Qh}3\)† 27.\(\text{Qg}1\) \(\text{Qg}3\)† 28.\(\text{Qh}1\) \(\frac{1}{2}\). 

23.\(\text{Qf}3\) \(\text{Qg}6\) 24.\(\text{Qf}1\)

24.\(\text{Qc}2\) or 24.\(\text{Qae}1\) both allow Black to force a draw immediately with 24...\(\text{Qxg}3\) etc.

24...\(\text{Qxe}4\) 25.\(\text{fxe}4\) \(\text{Qxe}4\) 26.\(\text{Qf}4\)
White's extra central pawn gives him a symbolic advantage, but no real chances to play for a win. Svidler – Kamsky, Groningen 1995, was soon agreed drawn after:

26...\(\text{d}3\) 27.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{xf}4\) 28.\(\text{xf}4\) h6 29.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{e}8\) 30.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{xe}1\)? 31.\(\text{xe}1\) \(\text{d}4\) 32.\(\text{f}2\) \(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\).

A221) 20.\(\text{f}1\)

This looks slightly less purposeful without a black queen on h3, but nonetheless it is quite playable and has been used repeatedly at high levels. We will analyse both of Black's principal responses: A2211) 20...\(\text{h}3\) and A2212) 20...\(\text{fe}8\). Both are sound, although if one wishes to play ambitiously then it should be noted that the former invites White to repeat moves immediately should he wish it.

A2211) 20...\(\text{h}3\) 21.\(\text{d}1\)

21.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{g}4\) gives White nothing better than 22.\(\text{f}1\) repeating.

21...\(\text{f}5\) 22.\(\text{e}2\) c5!

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

Alternatives give White no chance of an advantage.

Sax – I. Sokolov, Haninge 1989, soon resulted in a draw after 23.\(\text{f}1\) cxd4 24.cxd4 (24.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{xc}3\) 25.bxc3 \(\text{d}5\)) 24.\(\text{b}4\) 25.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{c}6\) (stronger would have been 25...\(\text{e}8\)) 26.d3 \(\text{b}4\) 27.d5 \(\text{e}6\) 28.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xd}5\) 29.\(\text{xb}4\) \(\text{xb}4\) 30.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}7\) 31.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{g}4\) 32.\(\text{xd}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 33.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{xf}3\) \(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\).

Mauro – Coscia, corr. 1996, proceeded with 23.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{f}4\)! Now this idea works much better. 24.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{g}2\) 25.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{d}5\) 26.gxf4 \(\text{g}6\) 27.\(\text{xg}6\) \(\text{fxg}6\) 28.\(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 29.dxc5. At this point Black should have played: 29...\(\text{h}1\) 30.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{xb}3\) 31.\(\text{h}1\) \(\text{d}5\) 32.\(\text{g}1\) \(\text{f}3\), with more or less a guaranteed draw. Instead he quickly self-destructed with 29...\(\text{h}3\)? 30.\(\text{f}3\)±
200 Attacking the Spanish

g5? 31. d4 Exf4 32. e5+ wc4 33. c2 wb3 34. e7 df8 35. b7 1–0.

23...f4!
Black takes the opportunity to transfer the bishop to a more purposeful diagonal, from which it can menace the weakness on e3.

24. d2
24. c2 g4 25. d3 g6 leads to a forcing sequence: 26. e5 xe5 27. dxe5 df3 28. e4 xe4 29. xe4 xe3 30. xe3 xe5. The position is equal, and Svidler – Kramnik, Monte Carlo 2007, was soon agreed drawn after 31. c6 xe3 32. fxe3 ed8 33. xb5 ed2 34. b4 cxb4 35. cxb4 eg2+ 36. h1 ed2 37. ef1 \(1/2–1/2\).

24...xe3 25. fxe3 h6

It is not easy for White to defend the e3-pawn.

26. f2
26. e5 leads to equality after 26...f6 27. c2 (27. d7?? xe3† wins) 27...h5 28. d3 (28. d7? fe8†) 28...fe8 29. f4 xf4 30. exf4 c2 31. c2 c2 32. d1 ed2 33. xh5 g6. Black guards against mate, and will regain his pawn to reach a completely level endgame.

26...fe8 27. c2

The alternative is 27. e5 xf2† 28. xf2 f6 with a choice for White:

a) Leko – Kramnik, Monte Carlo (blind) 2007, continued: 29. g4?! xe5! 30. xh3 xe3† and Black went on to convert his advantage.

b) Stronger would have been:
29. g4
I think that Black can maintain the balance, although he must be precise.

29...g5!
29...xg4?! makes Black’s task unnecessarily complicated, although he can probably still hang on with accurate play. 30. xg4 f5 31. h5?! g6 32. f3 f8 (Black’s task is not made any easier after 32...xe3† 33. g2 f8 [no better is 33...g7 34. d5 ed6 35. a7† h6 36. b7†, or 33...ed6 34. ecx5 ed2† 35. h1†] 34. d5 ed6 35. a7 h5; White is clearly better, but Black may be able to hold with precise defence.) 33. d5 (33. d5 xe3=) 33...xe3† 34. f3 ed6 35. xe3 ed5. Black ought to hold this endgame, although White can certainly continue ‘playing for two results’ for a while longer.

30. dx5 ed4
30...h5 31. b3 xg4 may be playable, but is hardly necessary.

31. f3
31...f5!
31...\textit{\texttt{exg4}} 32.\textit{\texttt{exg4}} \textit{\texttt{xg4}} would be less accurate, as the f-file remains closed which means that White's king will be safer.
32.\textit{\texttt{exe4}} \textit{\texttt{fxe4}}
Black will capture the knight on g4, thus obtaining two bishops for a rook. However, White has some extra pawns on the queenside.
I think that the correct result should be a draw, although the position is rather unbalanced and I suppose that the stronger player might try to win with either colour.

27...\texttt{wh5} 28.\texttt{de5}
Also possible is 28.e4 \texttt{xf6} 29.\texttt{d1}:

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\caption{Diagram 1}
\end{figure}

a) In Wang Hao – Grischuk, Dagomys 2008, Black fell into trouble after 29...g6? 30.e5 \texttt{f5} 31.\texttt{e2} \texttt{cxd4} (31...\texttt{g4} 32.\texttt{xb5}+) 32.\texttt{cxd4} \texttt{g8} 33.\texttt{d4} \texttt{g4} 34.\texttt{d4} \texttt{g4} 35.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g5} 36.\texttt{h4} \texttt{xg4} 37.\texttt{f3} 1–0.

b) As our repertoire should not lose by force, I want to recommend an improvement.
29...\texttt{g4} 30.\texttt{h1} g6!
30...\texttt{h3} does not equalise after 31.e5! \texttt{xf1} 32.\texttt{xf6} (32.\texttt{xf1} \texttt{e6} 33.\texttt{xb5} \texttt{cxd4} 34.\texttt{cxd4}) 32...\texttt{h1} 33.\texttt{h4} \texttt{d3} 34.\texttt{f3} \texttt{d7} 35.\texttt{g2} (35.\texttt{g2} \texttt{e6=} 35...\texttt{cxd4} 36.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 37.\texttt{cxd4+}
31.e5 \texttt{f5}
Black has fair counterplay. Play might continue:

32.h4? \texttt{cxd4} 33.\texttt{cxd4} \texttt{f8}
The game will more than likely be drawn, as it will be very difficult for White to unpin the knight in a favourable way.

28...\texttt{f6} 29.\texttt{d1} \texttt{g5} 30.\texttt{d3} \texttt{xe3} 31.\texttt{b3}+ \texttt{c4} 32.\texttt{f4} \texttt{xe1}+ 33.\texttt{xe1} \texttt{d7}

Material is equal. Black has a pair of bishops, although the one on h6 is not well placed at present. White can probably claim a faint edge, although if Black can relocate this problem piece to a better square then he may have chances to take over the initiative himself.

34.\texttt{c2}
34.\texttt{xe8}+ \texttt{d8} 35.\texttt{e1} \texttt{f7} 36.\texttt{f7} g6! completely solves Black's problems, as the bishop will come to a better square with gain of tempo.

34...\texttt{f5} 35.\texttt{xe8}+ \texttt{d8} 36.\texttt{f3}
White should try to create some problems before Black can coordinate his pieces.

36...\texttt{g6} 37.\texttt{d5}+ \texttt{f7} 38.\texttt{d5}
Winning a pawn, but allowing Black to create counterplay.

38...\texttt{e7} 39.\texttt{b8}+ \texttt{g7}
40.\textit{We5}\dagger

White has nothing better than exchanging queens, but now he will be left with a weak e-pawn. For instance, after 40.\textit{Whf2} \textit{Wxf4!} 41.\textit{Wxf4} (41.\textit{gxf4?!} \textit{Wxf4}\dagger can only be dangerous for White) 41...\textit{Wb7}! White has no advantage.

40...\textit{Wxe5} 41.\textit{dxe5} \textit{Wf8} 42.\textit{b1} \textit{e7} 43.\textit{a2} \textit{g7} 44.\textit{e6} \textit{xe6} 45.\textit{xe6} \textit{xe6} 46.\textit{xc4}\dagger \textit{e7}

Unfortunately for White this endgame is rather easily drawn, Relic – Equidistance, Internet 2006.

\textbf{A2212) 20...\textit{We8}}

21.\textit{Axd5}

Usually White feels obliged to make this exchange in order to relieve the pressure against e3. Of course, the downside is that his light squares will become more sensitive.

21.\textit{Wg2?!} has seldom been played, but looks like a reasonable alternative. Kobe – Roskar, Slovenia 1992, continued 21...\textit{Qxe3} 22.\textit{Qxe3} \textit{Qxe3} 23.\textit{fxe3} \textit{Qxe3} 24.\textit{Wxc6} \textit{e2} 25.\textit{h4} \textit{f8} 26.\textit{Wf1} \textit{e6}? 27.\textit{Qxe6} \textit{Qxe6} 28.\textit{Wf3} \textit{Wg6} 29.\textit{h5} \textit{Wf6} 30.\textit{Wxf6} \textit{gxf6} 31.\textit{h2} and White went on to win the ending with ease.

Instead Black should have preferred 26...\textit{Qxd2} 27.\textit{Qxf7}\dagger \textit{Wxf7} 28.\textit{Wf7} \textit{xf7} 29.\textit{Wd5}\dagger \textit{e6} 30.\textit{Wxb5} with rather a double-edged ending. White has a slight material advantage but his pawns are not far advanced, so I suspect that Black should at least be able to draw without too many problems.

Alternatively, he could even consider the much earlier deviation: 21...\textit{h6}?!N This safeguards against any back rank mates, thus turning ...\textit{Qxe3} into quite a serious threat as Black will no longer have to worry about his king after the enemy queen arrives on c6. In this case Black also seems to be fine.

21...\textit{Wxd5} 22.\textit{h3}

White can also play:

22.\textit{Wg2} \textit{f5}

Black might consider avoiding the queen exchange with 22...\textit{Wh5}?! 23.\textit{f3} \textit{h3} 24.\textit{Wf2} \textit{f5}.

23.\textit{Qc1}

23.\textit{h3} \textit{Wxg2}\dagger 24.\textit{Qxg2} \textit{h5} transposes to the main line.

23...\textit{Wg6}

23...\textit{Wxg2}\dagger 24.\textit{Qxg2} \textit{f4} 25.\textit{Wxf4} \textit{xf4} 26.\textit{gxf4} \textit{e2} should also be alright for Black.

24.\textit{Qxd5}\dagger \textit{cxh5} 25.\textit{Wh1} b4
Black’s powerful light-squared bishop remains an important asset in the endgame. 25...h5! also looks playable.

22...\textcolor{red}{\textsf{g5}} 23.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{g2}} \textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}2}+!

In Gurevich – Benjamin, New York 1992, Black allowed his structure to become damaged after 23...f5 24.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xd}5} cxd5. This looks slightly riskier, although even here he may still be able to hold the balance. In the game he was able to survive after 25.\textsf{xf}1 f4 26.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{d}2} \textcolor{red}{\textsf{exe}1} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{exe}1} \textcolor{blue}{\textsf{exe}1} 28.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{exe}1} \textsf{e}2, when White had no chance to make his extra pawn count.

However, if White had played 25.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{a}5}! then things would not have been quite so easy, e.g. 25...\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xg}3} 26.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}3} \textcolor{blue}{\textsf{exe}3} 27.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{exe}3} \textcolor{blue}{\textsf{exe}3} 28.\textsf{f}1 \textsf{e}2:

29.g4! (29.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{xb}5}? \textsf{f3}) 29...\textsf{e}8 (29...\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}4}? 30.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{g}3}) 30.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{g}3} \textcolor{blue}{\textsf{xb}2} 31.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}5} \textsf{g}6 32.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{e}7}+ \textsf{f7} 33.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xd}5} \textsf{e}4 34.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{f}4} White retains an extra pawn, although his king is cut off so I suspect that Black can hold this position as well.

24.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xg}2} f5!

By playing actively, Black easily solves his problems. We will follow the model game: J. Polgar – Adams, San Luis 2005.

25.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{d}3}

25.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{a}6} f4 26.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}4} \textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}4} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}4} \textsf{exe}1 28.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{exc}6} \textsf{d}1 29.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{e}5} \textsf{e}2 Black should be fine, as long as he is not careless enough to allow the enemy pawns to advance too easily. For instance, if 30.d5 then 30...\textsf{f8} 31.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{e}3} \textsf{e}8 32.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{f}3} (32.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{f}4} repeats) 32...\textsf{d}8 with a safe position.

25...\textsf{f}4 26.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{d}2}

26.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}4} \textsf{xf}4 is equal.

26...\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}3} 27.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{exe}6} \textcolor{blue}{\textsf{exe}6} 28.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{a}8}+ \textsf{f}8

29.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{e}5}

After 29.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xg}3}? \textsf{g}6+ 30.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{g}5} \textsf{h}6 31.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{h}4} \textsf{d}1 32.\textcolor{red}{\textsf{h}7} \textcolor{red}{\textsf{xh}7} 33.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{xf}8} \textsf{g}2 White’s king would be in serious danger.

29...\textcolor{red}{\textsf{xf}2} 30.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{xf}2} \textsf{e}8 31.\textcolor{blue}{\textsf{a}6} \textsf{d}6

Adams decides to secure the draw by swapping down to an opposite bishop ending with equal material. If Black wished to prolong
the game he could have tried 31...c5!? although the position is still just equal.

32.\texttt{xf4} \texttt{xe5} 33.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{e6} 34.\texttt{b4} \texttt{f7} 35.\texttt{xa7+} \texttt{e7} 36.\texttt{exe7+} \texttt{exe7} 37.\texttt{gxg7} 1/2–1/2

A222) 20.\texttt{df1}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}
\node at (0,0) {\texttt{a}}; \node at (1,0) {\texttt{b}}; \node at (2,0) {\texttt{c}}; \node at (3,0) {\texttt{d}}; \node at (4,0) {\texttt{e}}; \node at (5,0) {\texttt{f}}; \node at (6,0) {\texttt{g}}; \node at (7,0) {\texttt{h}};
\node at (0,1) {1}; \node at (1,1) {2}; \node at (2,1) {3}; \node at (3,1) {4}; \node at (4,1) {5}; \node at (5,1) {6}; \node at (6,1) {7}; \node at (7,1) {8};
\draw (0,0) rectangle (7,1);
\end{scope}
\node at (2,0.5) {8}; \node at (2,1.5) {7}; \node at (2,2.5) {6}; \node at (2,3.5) {5}; \node at (2,4.5) {4}; \node at (2,5.5) {3}; \node at (2,6.5) {2}; \node at (2,7.5) {1};
\draw (2,0) rectangle (2,1);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

This has been a higher scorer for White than 20.\texttt{df1}, but Black should still be fine.

Once again there are two decent moves to consider: A2221) 20...\texttt{fe8} and A2222) 20...\texttt{f5}.

A2221) 20...\texttt{fe8} 21.\texttt{d1} \texttt{xd1} 22.\texttt{xfd1} \texttt{f5} 23.\texttt{d2}

White continues his policy of simplification. The alternative of 23.\texttt{a6}, A. Sokolov – Hellers, Reykjavik 1990, should probably be met by 23.\texttt{f8N}, with the possible continuation 24.\texttt{d2} \texttt{exe1} 25.\texttt{exe1}. At this point Black can choose between the straightforward 25...\texttt{g6} and the more subtle 25...\texttt{h6}?, intending 26.\texttt{exc6} \texttt{e4} 27.\texttt{d2} \texttt{e3} with approximate equality.

23...\texttt{exe1} 24.\texttt{exe1} \texttt{h5}!

This creates a square for the king while also threatening an awkward advance to \texttt{h4} and perhaps \texttt{h3}.

\texttt{25.h4}

This may not be completely forced, but it is certainly understandable that most White players have preferred to halt the advance of the enemy pawn.

\texttt{25...c5}!

Once again we see Black turn his attention towards the centre.

In Gashimov – Shirov, Poikovsky 2008, he failed to equalise with 25...\texttt{g6} 26.\texttt{b3} \texttt{b4}!? (26...\texttt{f6} is better, but I would still prefer the main line continuation) 27.\texttt{c4} \texttt{c3} 28.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{bxc3}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}
\node at (0,0) {\texttt{a}}; \node at (1,0) {\texttt{b}}; \node at (2,0) {\texttt{c}}; \node at (3,0) {\texttt{d}}; \node at (4,0) {\texttt{e}}; \node at (5,0) {\texttt{f}}; \node at (6,0) {\texttt{g}}; \node at (7,0) {\texttt{h}};
\node at (0,1) {1}; \node at (1,1) {2}; \node at (2,1) {3}; \node at (3,1) {4}; \node at (4,1) {5}; \node at (5,1) {6}; \node at (6,1) {7}; \node at (7,1) {8};
\draw (0,0) rectangle (7,1);
\end{scope}
\node at (2,0.5) {8}; \node at (2,1.5) {7}; \node at (2,2.5) {6}; \node at (2,3.5) {5}; \node at (2,4.5) {4}; \node at (2,5.5) {3}; \node at (2,6.5) {2}; \node at (2,7.5) {1};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

29.\texttt{c5}! (playing against the bishop, although 29.\texttt{xc1} also looks good) 29...\texttt{c2} 30.\texttt{wd2} \texttt{c7} 31.\texttt{xc1} \texttt{f3} 32.\texttt{xc2} and White eventually converted his advantage.

\texttt{26.b3}

In Elburg – Simmelink, Netherlands 1999, Black became very active after 26.\texttt{g2} \texttt{xd4} 27.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{c5} 28.\texttt{wd1} \texttt{e5}.

The alternative 26.\texttt{a6} \texttt{f8} is also satisfactory for the second player.

\texttt{26...xd4}

I will keep this as the main line as it has been used in two games. However, there is a tempting alternative in 26...\texttt{b4}?:

\texttt{26...cxd4}

\texttt{27.\texttt{xd4} c5}

\texttt{28.\texttt{wd1} e5}
White has a choice:

a) $27.c4?! \text{c}3 \text{28.}\text{x}c3 \text{bxc3 29.d5} \text{c2 30.}\text{d}2 \text{f}7!$ Black combines play on both flanks. In view of the threatened rook invasion on e2, White has only one choice: $31.\text{h}2 \text{f}b3 32.e1 \text{xc4}$, when Black stands better.

b) $27.cxb4$ looks better, when $27...\text{cxb4}$ is satisfactory for Black, whose active pieces make up for the missing pawn.

27. $\text{xd}4$

We have reached an important position, in which I believe Black can improve on earlier games.

27... $\text{e}6?!$N

Hitherto Black has preferred the more obvious $27...\text{e}4! 28.\text{d}3$ when Black’s pieces are slightly unstable. Play continues $28...\text{c}5$ and now:

a) In Chandler – Nunn, Hastings 1987, White attempted to take immediate advantage of the pinned rook with $29.\text{a}8f 2\text{h}7 30.\text{e}8$. However, it seems that he overlooked the tactical resource: $30...\text{x}c3!$ when the position was just equal.

b) In R. Ward – Garcia Rojas, e-mail 2000, he improved with $29.\text{g}2!$, after which I do not see any route to a satisfactory position for Black. The game continued $29...\text{e}5 30.\text{a}8f 2\text{h}7 31.\text{x}f5 32.\text{f}4 \text{f}6 33.\text{c}8 \text{d}6 34.\text{f}2+$ and White eventually won.

The point of my improvement is to improve the rook while safeguarding the bishop on d6. In general I think that Black should have enough activity to compensate the missing pawn. A possible continuation is:

28. $\text{c}4$

Obviously White is not obliged to rush with this, but it is perhaps his most forcing continuation so we should consider it.

28... $\text{bxc4} 29.\text{bxc4} \text{f}6$
The game is likely to end in a draw. Black’s pieces are still very active. It will be difficult for White to make his pawn advantage count for anything, especially considering the reduced material.

A2222) 20...\textit{f5}

21.\textit{d2}

The alternative is:
21.\textit{d1}
21...\textit{e2} \textit{g4} 22.\textit{d2} is the same.
21...\textit{g4} 22.\textit{d3} \textit{f5} repeats.
22...\textit{h3} 23.\textit{d1}

Black was threatening ...\textit{f3}, and 23.\textit{f4} would be very weakening.
23...\textit{xd1} 24.\textit{axd1}

No-one seems to have tried 24.\textit{xd1}, when 24...\textit{f5} looks like a good reply.
24...\textit{f5}! 25.\textit{f4}

25...\textit{g5}

This leads to a draw, which is fine from a theoretical perspective. Black can also maintain the tension with 25...\textit{fe8}!, when I think he has enough for a pawn.

26.\textit{fxg5}
26.\textit{g2} \textit{g2} \textit{+} 27.\textit{h2} \textit{g8} 28.\textit{d2} \textit{xe1}
29.\textit{xe1} \textit{xe1} 30.\textit{xe1} \textit{gxf4} was equal in Karpov - Short, Tilburg 1991.
26...\textit{f4} 27.\textit{xf4} \textit{xf4} 28.\textit{xf4} \textit{xf4} 29.\textit{g3}
29.\textit{xe6}?? \textit{xe6} leaves White defenceless.
After the text, the game Ljubojevic – Nikolic, Belgrad 1991, was soon agreed drawn after:
29...\textit{g4} 30.\textit{xe6} \textit{h3} 31.\textit{g2} \textit{f4} 32.\textit{g1}
\textit{h3} 33.\textit{g2} 1\textfrac{1}{2} - 1\textfrac{1}{2}

21...\textit{fe8} 22.\textit{c2}

White achieved nothing in Ivanchuk – I. Sokolov, Biel 1989, after 22.\textit{xd5} \textit{cxd5}
23.\textit{f4} \textit{xe1} 24.\textit{xe1} \textit{xe1} 25.\textit{xe1} \textit{e4}
26.\textit{d2} \textit{xf4} 27.\textit{xe4} \textit{dxe4} 28.\textit{gxf4} \textit{g4} 29.\textit{f1} 1\textfrac{1}{2} - 1\textfrac{1}{2}

22.\textit{d1} \textit{g6} 23.\textit{f3} keeps some more tension in the position, although 23...\textit{h5}, Fleetwood – Olofsson, corr. 1999, maintains Black’s compensation. The game was eventually drawn.

22...\textit{h3}

Threatening ...\textit{f3} mating.

23.\textit{d1} \textit{g4} 24.\textit{d3} \textit{h3}
Once again Black threatens to construct a mating net. We will follow the game: Svidler – Jakovenko, Foros 2008.

25.\textit{d}2

Another possibility is 25.\textit{d}1 26.\textit{f}5 26.\textit{w}d2 h6?!. Black does not need to rush to prove anything, so he takes time out to safeguard his king’s position. White is defending his kingside, but it is not easy for him to utilise his extra pawn.

27...\textit{e}2 26.\textit{xe}2 27.\textit{e}1

After 27.\textit{f}5 Black can repeat the position with 27...\textit{g}4 28.\textit{d}3 \textit{e}2.

27...\textit{x}d3 28.\textit{xe}8\textdagger{} \textit{f}8 29.\textit{x}d3 \textit{d}7

30.\textit{e}1 \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}

At the time of writing the above game seems to be the last word in the 20...\textit{f}5 variation.

I have no doubt that the 15.\textit{e}3 variation will continue to be debated at a high level for many years. At this stage it seems to me that Black is holding his own in all the major lines we have covered, although I have no doubt that proponents of the white side will continue to unearth new ways to fight for an advantage. I hope that my decision to cover two responses to both 20.\textit{f}1 and 20.\textit{f}1 will find favour with the reader. Should a problem arise in one of these variations, you will have a dependable backup on which you can rely.

Having devoted a considerable amount of space to the traditional 15.\textit{e}3 variation, we will now consider quite a respectable sideline.

B) 15.\textit{e}4

This important variation has been tested in approximately a third of the number of games as 15.\textit{e}3. White intends to drive the enemy queen away with \textit{h}4.

15...\textit{g}5

This is the most common response. Black utilises a tactical feature (16.\textit{x}g5?? \textit{f}5 wins material) to cover the \textit{h}4-square. The drawback is the permanent compromising of his kingside. On the other hand, he may be able to exploit the exposed position of the white rook in order to gain time for the forthcoming attack. We now consider five moves: B1) 16.\textit{d}2?!, B2) 16.\textit{f}3, B3) 16.\textit{e}2, B4) 16.\textit{e}1, and B5) 16.\textit{f}1. The first is weak, but the other four are all playable with line B5) being perhaps the most challenging.
B1) 16.\(\text{Q}d2?!\)
This turns out to be too serious a mistake.

16...f5
White faces a potent attack.

17.\(\text{Q}e3\)
The rook can also move to a different square:

In Al Sayed – Kaplan, Bad Wiessee 2006, White lost in just three more moves: 17.\(\text{Q}e1\) f4 18.\(\text{Q}e2\) \(\text{Q}g4\) (already White is without a satisfactory defence) 19.\(\text{Q}d3\) (White also loses after: 19.\(\text{Q}f1\) \(\text{Q}h5\) 20.\(\text{Q}d3\) [or 20.\(\text{Q}g2\) f3 21.\(\text{Q}f1\) \(\text{Q}h3\) 22.\(\text{Q}d3\) \(\text{Q}xg3\) –+] 20...\(\text{Q}xg3\) 21.\(\text{Q}xg3\) \(\text{Q}f2\) 22.\(\text{Q}f1\) \(\text{Q}af8\) –+) 19...\(\text{Q}xg3\) 20.\(\text{Q}xg3\) \(\text{Q}f2\) 0–1

Carlsson – Deltin, Sweden 2000, continued 17.\(\text{Q}e2\) f4 18.\(\text{Q}f1\) \(\text{Q}h5\) when White was under pressure. He then blundered with 19.\(\text{Q}e4??\) \(\text{Q}h3\) and was forced to give up his queen in view of the ...\(\text{Q}f3\) mating net.

Perhaps it was already time to sacrifice the exchange with: 17.\(\text{Q}e5?!\) \(\text{Q}xe5\) 18.dxe5 when White can perhaps claim some compensation, and should at least avoid being mated.

17...\(\text{Q}h8!\)
There is no need to rush with 17...f4?! 18.gxf4 \(\text{Q}h6\), Giaccio – Vescovi, Sao Paulo 2006, 19.\(\text{Q}e4!\) \(\text{Q}xf4\) 20.\(\text{Q}g3!\) \(\text{Q}xg3\) 21.hxg3 when White may even be better.

18.\(\text{Q}xd5\)
Perhaps White could consider moving his rook along the third rank, although this appears rather artificial and Black would retain excellent compensation regardless.

18...\(\text{Q}xd5\) 19.\(\text{Q}f1\) \(\text{Q}h6\)

20.\(\text{Q}e2?!\)
It was necessary to play 20.\(\text{Q}e1\) although Black still has an advantage after the simple 20...\(\text{Q}d7\).

20...f4
From here the game: Stone – Knol, e-mail 2001, ended beautifully after some fine attacking play from Black.

21.\(\text{Q}e1\) \(\text{Q}g4\) 22.f3 \(\text{Q}xg3\) 23.\(\text{Q}xg4\) \(\text{Q}h3\) 24.b4 \(\text{Q}ae8!\)

0–1
The finish might have been 25.\(\text{Q}b2\) \(\text{Q}xe2\) 26.\(\text{Q}xe2\) \(\text{Q}f2\) 27.\(\text{Q}e8\) \(\text{Q}g7\) 28.\(\text{Q}d7\) \(\text{Q}f7\) when the checks run out.
B2) 16...<br>
White prepares to drop his queen back to g2. The move is not a bad one, but nor is it a serious try for an advantage.

16...<br>
Black has achieved a comfortable position.

17...<br>
Sacrificing the exchange. A few other moves have been tried.

17...<br>This is far too slow. After the automatic 17...<br>Black's initiative is already nearing decisive proportions. White has to develop his pieces.

Lima - Grischuk, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007, continued:

17...<br>Not 17...<br>White is clearly better.

18...<br>White is not helped by 20.fxe3?!<br>Here the most important factor is the weakness of White's kingside. Black's light-squared bishop is the best-performing piece on the board. It protects his weaknesses and may become useful also in the attack, e.g.<br>21.a4 bxa4 22.xa4 <br>Indirectly defending the bishop, as White can hardly allow the black queen to penetrate to d1 and c1.

21...<br>Harmless is 21.<br>Material is approximately equal, but Black's pieces are more actively placed. I think it is White who should be fighting for a draw.

21...<br>Now a couple of moves deserve attention:

a) Timman - Ivanchuk, Linares 1991, was soon agreed drawn after:<br>22.<br>23. <br>24.xb5 <br>25.axb5 <br>26...<br>27.<br>28...<br>29...<br>30...<br>31...<br>Finally, another reasonable option is:

17...<br>18...<br>19...<br>20...<br>21...<br>22...<br>23...<br>24...<br>25...<br>26...<br>27...<br>
The position is extremely double-edged, and the players were evidently not in a mood to take risks. Personally I would tend to favour Black as the side with the initiative. A plausible continuation might be:

25.\texttt{d2}

After 25.\texttt{d5+} \texttt{g7} 26.\texttt{xe4?} \texttt{d8} the opening of the e-file is too dangerous for White.

25...\texttt{e3} 26.\texttt{exe3} \texttt{fxe3} 27.\texttt{exe3} \texttt{f3} 28.\texttt{d5+} \texttt{xd5} 29.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{g4}

White has five pawns for a rook, but they are not far advanced. Furthermore, White will have to worry about the safety of his king in the event of a rook invasion on e2.

b) A critical alternative was:

22.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{e3} 23.\texttt{e4!}

This looks best, although my analysis indicates that Black can stay on top if he demonstrates study-like precision. Instead, after the feeble 23.\texttt{fxe3} \texttt{exe3} 24.\texttt{f1} \texttt{e1=} White’s pieces are unable to develop, and he is helpless against the development of Black’s remaining rook.

23...\texttt{d1+}

23...\texttt{f2+} only leads to a draw after: 24.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{exe1} 25.\texttt{g2} \texttt{e2} 26.\texttt{f6} \texttt{f1+} 27.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e2=} 28.\texttt{g2}=

24.\texttt{g2} \texttt{e2}

24...\texttt{exe4}?! 25.\texttt{f6} \texttt{g4} 26.\texttt{fxe3} is not at all dangerous for White.

A fascinating position has arisen. Black can always force a draw without difficulty, but I think he can achieve more if he can combine the most accurate moves with some strong nerves!

26.\texttt{f4}

Hopeless is 26.\texttt{xe8?} \texttt{f1+} (26...\texttt{e1=} 27.\texttt{g1=} 27.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e1=} 28.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e1=} \texttt{f1+} when Black wins, e.g. 28.\texttt{g4} \texttt{e2+} 29.\texttt{f5} \texttt{d3+} 30.\texttt{xg5} \texttt{g8+} and White can resign.

26.\texttt{d2} is a better attempt, but still not quite sufficient after 26...\texttt{xa1} 27.\texttt{xe8} \texttt{f1+} 28.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e1=} 29.\texttt{xe1} \texttt{h1+} 30.\texttt{g4} \texttt{h5+} etc.

26...\texttt{xa1} 27.\texttt{e5} \texttt{f1+} 28.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e1=} \texttt{f1+}!

This underpromotion is an important theme in several of the above variations.

29.\texttt{g4}
It seems incredible that this can work, yet nonetheless it seems to.

30. \( \text{\=xh5} \)†
30. \( \text{\=xh5} \) \( \text{\=wh3} \)† 31. \( \text{\=xg5} \) \( \text{\=f3} \)† 32. \( \text{\=xf4} \) \( \text{\=xe5} \) 33. \( \text{dx}e5 \) \( \text{\=wh2} \) is winning for Black.
30. ... \( \text{\=h7} \) 31. \( \text{\=f6} \)
After 31. \( \text{\=f6} \)† \( \text{\=g6} \) White is amazingly helpless, e.g. 32. \( \text{\=h4} \) (or 32. \( \text{\=xe8} \)† \( \text{f6} \) threatening ... \( \text{\=e2} \)† mating) 32. ... \( \text{\=e2} \)† 33. \( \text{\=h3} \) \( \text{\=e6} \) 34. \( \text{\=h5} \)† \( \text{\=xh5} \)†! 35. \( \text{\=xh5} \) \( \text{\=xd6} \) 36. \( \text{\=xd6} \) \( \text{\=d8} \). Black will emerge with an extra rook after winning back one of White’s minor pieces.
31. ... \( \text{\=e2} \)† 32. \( \text{\=f3} \)
32. \( \text{\=f5} \) \( \text{\=xe5} \)† wins easily.
32. ... \( \text{\=xf3} \)† 33. \( \text{\=xf3} \) \( \text{\=xf3} \) 34. \( \text{\=xf3} \) \( \text{f6} \)
Black should win the ending without too many problems.

17. ... \( \text{\=xe4} \) 18. \( \text{\=xe4} \) \( \text{\=we6} \) 19. \( \text{\=xg5} \)

White has two pawns for the exchange, plus a pair of powerful bishops. If he is allowed to coordinate his pieces then he will stand clearly better, so Black must react energetically.

19. ... \( \text{\=f}5 \) 20. \( \text{\=d3} \)
In Topalov – Adams, Sarajevo 2000, White got nowhere with 20. \( \text{\=xd5} \) \( \text{\=cx}d5 \) 21. \( \text{\=d2} \) \( \text{f}4 \) 22. \( \text{\=xf4} \) \( \text{\=xf4} \) 23. \( \text{\=xf4} \) \( \text{\=a}7 \). White had temporarily gained three pawns for the exchange, but while the quantity was fine, the quality was poor. Play continued 24. \( \text{\=h1} \) \( \text{\=ce7} \) 25. \( \text{\=gl} \)† \( \text{\=h8} \) 26. \( \text{\=f1} \) \( \text{\=e4} \) 27. \( \text{\=g2} \) \( \text{\=xf3} \)† 28. \( \text{\=xf3} \) \( \text{\=e}1 \) 29. \( \text{\=h1} \) \( \text{\=e}4 \), after which it did not take Black long to wrap up the full point.

20. ... \( \text{\=f4} \)
We will now follow the game: Hallengren – Lakatos, e-mail 2001.

21. \( \text{\=e}4 \) \( \text{\=d7} \)!
Black’s queen should avoid being exchanged, as her opposite number will soon come under fire after ... \( \text{\=a}8 \).

22. \( \text{\=d}2 \) \( \text{\=ae8} \) 23. \( \text{\=h}1 \)
White has no choice but to make this awkward retreat. 23. \( \text{\=g}2 \? \text{f}3 \) 24. \( \text{\=f1} \) would be even worse after: 24. ... \( \text{\=g}4 \) 25. \( \text{\=h}4 \) \( \text{\=f}4 \)→

23. ... \( \text{\=g7} \) 24. \( \text{\=e}4 \) \( \text{\=c}7 \) 25. \( \text{\=h}4 \) \( \text{\=f}3 \)

Now the queen on \( h1 \) is hopelessly misplaced. White faces severe difficulties, and soon succumbed after:

26. \( \text{\=f1} \) \( \text{\=b}4 \)!
Opening a second front is the easiest way to take advantage of White’s wayward pieces on the h-file.
27.\textit{xd}1 bxc3 28.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3 29.bxc3 \textit{a}5 0–1

White's position is hopeless, e.g. 30.\textit{c}1 \textit{xc}3! (there are other ways to win, but the text is simplest) 31.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xd}4 32.\textit{c}4+ \textit{h}8 33.\textit{c}1 \textit{e}2! (33...\textit{d}2 is also good enough).

B3) 16.\textit{e}2 f5

There is no reason for Black to refrain from this natural attacking move.

17...\textit{x}d5

White has also tried moving the rook without the preliminary exchange:

In Smirin – Grischuk, Panormo 2001, he was quickly crushed after 17.\textit{xe}6?? \textit{xe}6 18.\textit{xe}6+ \textit{h}8 19.\textit{xd}6 (19.\textit{x}g5 \textit{ae}8–+) 19...\textit{ae}8 20.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}4 21.\textit{xd}5 \textit{cxd}5 22.f3:

22...\textit{g}4! 0–1

17.\textit{e}5 \textit{xe}5 18.\textit{xe}5 \textit{h}5 19.\textit{xd}5+ \textit{cxd}5 20.\textit{xd}5+ \textit{h}8 gave Black good chances in Lindberg – Nyback, Stockholm 2005. For instance, 21.\textit{xa}8?? \textit{d}1† 22.\textit{g}2 \textit{f}4! wins for Black, and 21.\textit{d}2 \textit{a}7 also gives the second player an active position.

17...\textit{cxd}5 18.\textit{e}6 \textit{f}4!

As the saying goes: sometimes the best form of defence is to attack. Black must certainly avoid: 18...\textit{xe}6?? 19.\textit{xe}6+ \textit{h}8 20.\textit{x}g5 when White is simply winning. After the main move, the game is headed for a forced draw. We will follow the game Ponomariov – Anand Linares 2002 (as well as several others).

19.\textit{xd}6 \textit{g}4 20.\textit{f}1 \textit{xf}1† 21.\textit{x}f1 \textit{ae}8 22.\textit{d}2 \textit{h}3† 23.\textit{g}1 \textit{fxg}3 24.\textit{hxg}3 \textit{e}2

White can only defend his kingside at the cost of a perpetual check.

25.\textit{e}3
25.\(f_4\)? allows 25...\(g2\)\(t\) 26.\(h1\) \(e8\) intending ...\(e2\) with a mating net.

25.\(h6\) does not appear to have been tested. Play continues 25...\(fxf2\) 26.\(xh3\) \(g2\)\(t\) 27.\(h1\) \(gf2\) 28.\(a3\) \(xd2\). White can hardly hope to win this position, as his rooks are horribly passive and his extra knight is trapped on the edge of the board.

25...\(xe3\) 26.\(fxe3\) \(flt\) 27.\(h2\) \(g4\)!

Securing the draw.

28.\(xd5\)

\(1/2\) – \(1/2\)

It seems that 16.\(e2\) is only likely to represent a problem to players who are not content to achieve a draw with the black pieces.

B4) 16.\(e1\)

The point of the text is that, compared with the 16.\(e2\) variation, 16...\(f5\)? no longer works, as after 17.\(xd5\)\(t\) \(xd5\) 18.\(e6!\) \(f4\) 19.\(xd6\), the move ...\(g4\) will not attack the queen and so White is just winning.

16...\(f5\)

The experimental 16...\(f6\) 17.\(d2\) \(h5\) turned out unfavourably after 18.\(d1\) \(xd1\)\(t\) (18...\(g4\) 19.\(xg4\) \(xg4\) 20.\(f1\) \(ae8\)

21.\(g2\) is also unpleasant for Black) 19.\(xd1\) \(xe4\) 20.\(xe4\) \(e7\) 21.\(xg5\) \(xg5\) 22.\(xg5\)\(t\), Motylev – Tkachiev, Kazan 2005. White had a pleasant endgame advantage, which he went on to convert successfully.

17.\(d2\)

17.\(xd5\) \(xd5\) 18.\(e3\), Gutierrez – Moline, corr. 1999, is playable for White, but Black’s domination over the light squares will provide long-lasting compensation.

17...\(h6\)!

Black decides to strengthen his kingside before doing anything else. This approach was favoured by Etienne Bacrot, so it deserves serious attention although I must add that it is not the only playable continuation. Here are a few alternatives.

17...\(xe4?!\) 18.\(xe4\) only helps White to develop.

17...\(f6\)

This is more sensible.
18.\(f3\) \(c5\) 19.\(e3\) \(h6\)

Now a couple of moves deserve our attention:

a) 20.\(xc5\) \(xg3\) 21.\(hxg3\) \(xg3\)\(t\) 22.\(f1\)

23.\(h3\)\(t\) 23.\(e2\)

23.\(f2\) \(ad8\) looks dangerous for White.

23...\(h1!\)
White is a full bishop up, but his king is in danger and he will have a hard time completing development. It would take a great deal of space to analyse the position exhaustively, so I will instead offer the following sample variation which I believe represents a good standard of play from both sides:

24.\textit{\text{e}}5 \text{\textit{a}}e8! 25.\textit{\text{f}}xf5 \text{\textit{x}}xe3\textit{t} 26.\textit{\text{g}}xe3 \text{\textit{d}}8 27.\textit{\text{f}}e2 \text{\textit{g}}7 28.\textit{\text{e}}4 \text{\textit{e}}xe4 29.\textit{\text{f}}xf7\textit{t} \text{\textit{h}}8 30.\textit{\text{f}}xe4 \text{\textit{g}}xe4\textit{t} 31.\textit{\text{h}}e3 \text{\textit{e}}e8 32.\textit{\text{g}}f3 \text{\textit{g}}4 33.\textit{\text{g}}3 \text{\textit{h}}5 34.\textit{\text{f}}f2 \text{\textit{h}}4 35.\textit{\text{d}}d4\textit{t} \text{\textit{h}}7 36.\textit{\text{e}}e3 \text{\textit{f}}f4\textit{t} 37.\textit{\text{e}}e2 \text{\textit{f}}f3\textit{t} 38.\textit{\text{d}}d3 \text{\textit{e}}xe3\textit{t} 39... \text{\textit{f}}f5\textit{t} 39.\textit{\text{d}}d2 \text{\textit{f}}f2\textit{t} 40.\textit{\text{d}}d3 repeats the position.

39.\textit{\text{e}}xe3 \text{\textit{h}}3 40.\textit{\text{d}}d4 \text{\textit{g}}3 41.\textit{\text{d}}d5 \text{\textit{g}}4\textit{t} 42.\textit{\text{e}}e4\textit{t} \text{\textit{g}}7

Black has some advantage, although it will not be easy to promote the kingside pawns.

b) In Shchekachev – Gustafsson, Austria 2005, White preferred the safer continuation: 20.\textit{\text{f}}f2 cxd4 21.cxd4 \text{\textit{a}}d8 White still has to develop his queenside, while Black is nearing the stage where he can consider capturing the rook on e4. Therefore the game continued: 22.\textit{\text{e}}e2 \text{\textit{d}}d3 23.\textit{\text{e}}e3 \text{\textit{f}}f5 24.\textit{\text{e}}e4 White returns the pawn in order to free his position. 24... \text{\textit{e}}xe4 25.\textit{\text{f}}xe4 \text{\textit{e}}xe4 26.\textit{\text{f}}xf5 \text{\textit{g}}xf5 27.\textit{\text{d}}d2 \text{\textit{g}}7 \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2} Neither side can claim any real advantage in this ending.

After the main line of 17...h6?! , we will follow the game Anand – Bacrot, Sofia 2006.

18.\textit{\text{f}}3

This is a consistent move. Anand is confident that he will obtain fine compensation in the event that Black takes on e4.

18...\textit{\text{g}}7!

A very useful move. We will see that in certain positions Black may profit by advancing his f-pawn, so it makes a lot of sense to remove the king from the watchful eye of the bishop on b3.

19.\textit{\text{a}}4 \text{\textit{a}}xe4!

Now is the right time to take the rook.

20.\textit{\text{f}}xe4 \text{\textit{a}}e8 21.axb5 axb5

White’s idea has backfired, and he must even struggle to equalise.

22.\textit{\text{f}}f1

22.\textit{\text{f}}f2 is an alternative, when Black may try:

a) 22...\textit{\text{f}}6 might lead to a nice perpetual after 23.\textit{\text{f}}f3 \text{\textit{g}}4 24.\textit{\text{f}}f1 \text{\textit{f}}5 25.e5 \text{\textit{f}}4 26.\textit{\text{g}}2 \text{\textit{g}}xg2\textit{t} 27.\textit{\text{g}}xg2
Chapter 7 - Marshall: 12.d4

27...\textit{x}xe5! (not 27...f3? 28.\textit{e}g1) 28.dxe5 f3 29.\textit{h}1 (the point of Black's 27th move is that 29.\textit{e}g1 would now allow 29...\textit{c}5t) 29...\textit{f}2t 30.\textit{g}1 \textit{h}3t With a draw by perpetual check.

b) Though the above variation may score points for its prettiness, an objectively stronger continuation is 22...f5!. This powerful move enables Black to maintain the initiative, e.g. 23.e5 (23.exd5 f4--; 23.\textit{a}7t \textit{e}7 24.\textit{x}e7t \textit{x}xe7t) 23...\textit{c}7 24.\textit{a}6 \textit{f}4 25.\textit{xc}6 \textit{d}3 26.\textit{e}6 \textit{h}5 27.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}4 28.\textit{e}4 \textit{h}3. White's position is very difficult. A plausible continuation might be 29.\textit{d}7 \textit{d}8 30.\textit{g}6t \textit{h}8 31.\textit{x}h6t \textit{x}h6 32.\textit{xc}6t \textit{g}7 33.\textit{a}6 \textit{xd}7 34.\textit{e}4 \textit{d}5, when Black maintains a clear advantage.

22...\textit{w}g4

I believe that 22...f5!N may have been even stronger:

This makes full use of Black's strong 18th move. The following sequence looks very natural: 23.e5 \textit{f}4 24.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 25.\textit{xf}4 \textit{xf}4 26.\textit{f}2 \textit{c}7 White suffers from a slight material disadvantage. From this position he will probably have to exchange queens to defend an inferior endgame, otherwise he will face a strong attack.

23.\textit{c}2 \textit{e}7 24.\textit{d}2?

This seems too slow. 24.\textit{a}6!? would at least have distracted Black from the kingside.

24...\textit{xe}8 25.e5 \textit{f}6!

Black has better chances, although the position remains rather complicated.

26.\textit{h}3 \textit{x}h3 27.\textit{e}4 \textit{h}8 28.\textit{a}6 \textit{xe}5 29.\textit{xc}6 \textit{f}8 30.\textit{d}3 \textit{e}7 31.\textit{g}2 \textit{g}2t

It is hard to decide whether Black would have been better off keeping the queens on with 31...\textit{e}6!?.

32.\textit{xg}2

From this position the game proceeded with: 32...\textit{h}6 33.\textit{dxe}5 \textit{xe}5 34.\textit{c}5 \textit{d}6 35.\textit{e}4 \textit{fd}8 36.\textit{xb}5, when Anand was no longer in trouble, and the game was agreed drawn in a further 14 moves.

Instead Bacrot could have obtained excellent winning chances with:

32...\textit{f}2t 33.\textit{g}1 \textit{e}4! 34.\textit{xb}5 \textit{e}3!

Black will emerge with an extra piece, e.g. 35.\textit{xe}3 \textit{f}1t 36.\textit{xf}1 \textit{xe}3, or 35.\textit{xe}3 \textit{xd}2 36.\textit{xd}5 \textit{g}3.

B5) 16.\textit{f}1

This is the main line, and probably White's best try for an advantage.
16...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}}\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}h5

\textbf{17.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}}d2

This natural move is the usual choice. Sometimes White opts for a simplifying strategy with:

17.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e2 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}g6 18.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e8 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f5 19.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xa8 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xa8 20.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xd5

20.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}d2?? has been played a few times, but so far no-one has responded with the crushing 20...\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f4!N:

21.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e3 (no better is 21.gxf4 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xf4\textbullet 22.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}h1 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}h8, with unstoppable threats) 21...\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f8!

22.f3 (22.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f3 f6—+) 22...\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e8 23.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e4 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}h3\textbullet 24.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f1 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xe4 25.fxe4 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xe4 26.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f3 g4 and Black wins.

20...\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xd5 21.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}d2 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}d3 22.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e1

After 22.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e3 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}g7?? Black has full compensation and a comfortable game.

Now instead of 22...f6?? 23.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e6\textbullet \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}g7 24.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xd6++, Sanders – Bergmanis, Melbourne 1972, Black should prefer an alternative method of occupying the e-file. This can be accomplished by 22...\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}a7!, with excellent compensation.

17...\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f5

17...\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f5 is a very sharp alternative, but I prefer the text.

18.f3 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f6 19.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}g2

Three other moves have been tried here:

In Pashikian – Brunello, Yerevan 2006, I quickly went down after 19.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}c2 g4?? 20.fxg4 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xg4 21.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xg4! \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xg4 22.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e4 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e7 23.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f6\textbullet \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xf6 24.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xf6 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}d7 25.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}h6 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}g4 26.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}f1 when White was winning easily. Instead Black should prefer 19...\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}g6 20.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e2 (20.g4 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}h6!) 20...h5, with a good position.

After 19.a4 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xe4 20.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xe4 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}g6 21.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xd6 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xd6 22.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xg5 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}g6 23.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}c1 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}d3 24.axb5 axb5 25.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xa8 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}axa8 Black succeeded in holding the balance, Shirov – Aronian, Moscow 2006.

19.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}e1

This has been tested at World Championship level. Kramnik – Leko, Brissago (8) 2004, continued:

19...\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}ae8 20.\texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xe8 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}xe8 21.a4 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}g6 22.axb5 \texttt{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}d3
23.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{f2}}??}

This was a famous blunder. It emerged that Kramnik's team had superficially evaluated this position as promising for White due to an initially favourable computer evaluation. Unfortunately for the Russian, Leko was able to refute the idea over the board.

The correct continuation would have been 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{d1}} e2} 24.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{c2}} d3}, repeating the position.

23...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e2}}}!

Black's attack is decisive.

24.\texttt{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{x}}e2}

Initially the computer likes 24.bxa6 \texttt{\textbf{xf2}} 25.\texttt{\textbf{xf2}}, but soon changes its 'mind' after 25...\texttt{\textbf{h5}} and now:

a) 26.\texttt{\textbf{g2}} g4 27.f4 \texttt{\textbf{h3}} 28.\texttt{\textbf{g1}} \texttt{\textbf{xf4}}+  

b) 26.\texttt{\textbf{e3}} \texttt{\textbf{g6}}! (even better than 26...\texttt{\textbf{xa6}} 27.\texttt{\textbf{xa6}} \texttt{\textbf{xf2+}} 27.\texttt{\textbf{f1}} \texttt{\textbf{b8}} wins, e.g. 28.a7 \texttt{\textbf{xa7}} 29.\texttt{\textbf{xa7}} g4 etc.

\texttt{\textbf{c}) 26.\textbf{g1} \textbf{xg3} 27.hxg3 \textbf{h3} 28.a7 \textbf{xf3}+ 29.\texttt{\textbf{h1}} \texttt{\textbf{g7}} 30.a8=\texttt{\textbf{w}} g4:}

White's extra rook and bishop are of no use whatsoever in defending his king. It is amusing to see that, after a few moments' thought, the computer actually gives 31.\texttt{\textbf{b8}} as the best move! Needless to say, this gives little hope of saving the game. After a plausible alternative such as 31.\texttt{\textbf{a7}}, the final attack begins with 31...\texttt{\textbf{e1+}}, followed by mate in a maximum of nine moves. The main line runs: 32.\texttt{\textbf{g2}} \texttt{\textbf{xf3}}+ 33.\texttt{\textbf{xf3}} \texttt{\textbf{f1+}} 34.\texttt{\textbf{g3}} \texttt{\textbf{h5}} 35.\texttt{\textbf{h4}} \texttt{\textbf{h1}}+ 36.\texttt{\textbf{g4}} \texttt{\textbf{g2}}+ 37.\texttt{\textbf{hxh5}} \texttt{\textbf{h3}} 38.\texttt{\textbf{h4}} (or 38.\texttt{\textbf{g5}} \texttt{\textbf{g3}}+ 39.\texttt{\textbf{h5}} \texttt{\textbf{g6}}#) 38...\texttt{\textbf{g6}}+ 39.\texttt{\textbf{g5}} \texttt{\textbf{g3}#}

24...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{xe2}}} 25.bxa6 \texttt{\textbf{d3}}! 26.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{f2}}}

The result would not have been changed by 26.a7 \texttt{\textbf{e3}}+ 27.\texttt{\textbf{g2}} \texttt{\textbf{xf3}}+ 28.\texttt{\textbf{xf3}} \texttt{\textbf{e2}}+ 29.\texttt{\textbf{g1}} \texttt{\textbf{g4}} 30.a8=\texttt{\textbf{w}}+ 31.\texttt{\textbf{g7}}. Despite his huge material advantage, White is unable to protect his king.

26.\texttt{\textbf{xf3}} 27.\texttt{\textbf{xf3}} \texttt{\textbf{e4}}+ 28.\texttt{\textbf{e1}} \texttt{\textbf{xc3}} 29.bxc3 \texttt{\textbf{xc3}} 30.\texttt{\textbf{f2}} \texttt{\textbf{xa1}} 31.a7 h6 32.h4 g4 0–1

This superb attacking performance brought Leko to within a whisker of the world title.

\textbf{19...\textbf{\textcolor{red}{g6}}} 20.\texttt{\textbf{e3}} \texttt{\textbf{d5}}

Black has a decent alternative in:

20...\texttt{\textbf{ae8}}

The game Svidler – Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2007, continued:

21.\texttt{\textbf{e4}} \texttt{\textbf{xe4}} 22.g4 \texttt{\textbf{g3}} 23.hxg3

23...\texttt{\textbf{d3}}
The Armenian improves on his own play! The earlier game Anand – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2007, had continued 23...b5 24.e2
\textit{xe3} 25.\textit{xe3} h6 26.e1 \textit{c2} 27.\textit{xc2}
\textit{xc2} 28.e4 \textit{d1t} 29.g2 \textit{g7}, at which point White could have obtained a serious advantage with 30.b3!N, e.g. 30...c8
(30...\textit{xe3} 31.b4!+-) 31.e1 \textit{e8} 32.f4!
\textit{e2t} 33.\textit{xe2} \textit{xe2t} 34.f1 \textit{e6} 35.\textit{xe6} \textit{xd6}
\textit{xd6} when White should win the ending.

24.\textit{d2} \textit{xe3}

Unsatisfactory is: 24...c5 25.\textit{ae1} \textit{xe3}
26.\textit{xe3} c4 27.\textit{d1±}

25.\textit{he3} \textit{e8} 26.\textit{e1} c5 27.dxc5

Perhaps a better try would have been 27.\textit{f2?!} c4 28.d1 h5 29.gxh5 \textit{h5}
30.\textit{d2} \textit{xe1t} 31.\textit{xe1}. White has some advantage, although it will not be easy to make his extra pawn count as Black is still very active.

27...\textit{xc5} 28.\textit{d2} \textit{xe3t} 29.\textit{xe3} \textit{b6}
30.\textit{f2} \textit{d8}

White is unable to break the pin in a constructive way, and the game was soon agreed drawn after:
31.e1 \textit{e8} 32.d2 \textit{d8} 33.c2 \textit{g6} 34.e2
\textit{e8} 35.\textit{xe6} \textit{hxg6} 36.d2 \textit{d8} 37.e2 \textit{e8}
38.d2 \textit{d8} \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}.

We now follow the game Shomoev – Grischuk, Dagomys 2008.

21.\textit{e1} \textit{ae8}
a) 28.a4

This is a better attempt than the move played in the game, but it still fails to solve White’s problems.

28...Ng6 29.Nc4

If White refuses to give up this piece, then he will end up in even worse trouble:
29.axb5 Nxb3 30.Nc4 Ng2† 31.Ng1 cxb5!
32.Nc2 Nh3† 33.Nh1 Nh7
29.h4 Ng6 30.Nf1 Nh4 31.Nxf7 Nxf2
32.Nxf6 Bxf6†
29...Nh4 30.Nd2 Nh2! 31.Nxc2 Nhxc2 32.Nxb5 axb5†

b) 28.Nf1

Now Black must play very accurately to keep the advantage.

28...Nh3!

Instead 28...Ng6 can be met by 29.h4, or even 29.Nxf4! Nh4 30.Nxe1 Nh3 31.Ng3.

29.Nc2 Nh6 30.Nd2

30...Ng7

30...f5 only seems to lead to equality after:

With ...Ng2 threatened White’s situation looks dire. However, he can save himself with:
30.Nf5!! Nxg5 31.Ng1=

The exchange of rooks will result in an equal ending.

34.Nxe1? Nxe4 35.Nxe4 Ng8 wins.
34...Ng4†
34...Nh8? 35.Nxf4 Nxe4 36.Nxd6 Nxc2†
37.Nd2=*
35.Nf2 Nh7 36.Ng1

After 36.d5 cxd5! 37.Nxd5† (37.Nc5 Nh3!–+)
37...Ng7 38.Nxg7† Nxg7 Black will regain his piece, e.g. 39.Nf2 Nh3! 40.Nd1 Ng2
41.Nd3 (41.Ne1 Ng1† 42.Nd2 Nh4†)
41...Nh3 42.Nxf3 Nhf3† 43.Nc2 Nh3
44.Nxf4 Nh7 with some winning chances in the ending.

36...Nh3! 37.Nd3 Nh6 38.Nc2
38.Nf2 is similar to the previous note after:
38...Nh1† (also tempting is 38...Ng2†)
39.Nxe6 fxe6 40.Ne1 Nh4 41.Nxf4 Nh2†
42.Nf1 Nh4† 39.Nxe1 Nh1† 40.Nd2 Nh2
41.Ne1 Nh4 42.Nxf4 Nh2† 43.Nf1 Nh4
44.Nf2† 45.Ng1 Nh5 46.Ne5† f6 47.Ng3 Nh3 48.hxg3 Nh2 49.axb5 axb5†
38...f5 39.Nxf4 Nh4†

Black stands better, as 40.Nc5† runs into 40...Nh6 41.Nxh4 Nh2† winning.

c) The best move seems to be 28.Nf4! Nxe4 29.fxe4 f3
Let us now return to the game position after:

28.\textit{d1}?

Here I suggest the improvement:

28...\texttt{g6}!N

In the game Grischuk chose: 28...\texttt{h3}?! He went on to win quickly after: 29.\texttt{c2}? \texttt{e7}! This clever bishop transfer settles the game. 30.\texttt{d3} \texttt{h4} 31.\texttt{e2} \texttt{g5} 32.\texttt{e5} \texttt{xe5} 33.\texttt{exe5} \texttt{f2} 0–1

However, White could have made things a lot more difficult with 29.\texttt{c2}!N, keeping the e2-square free for the queen.

After the text move, White cannot save the game.

29.\texttt{e2}

There is nothing better, e.g. 29.\texttt{c4} \texttt{h3} 30.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{g2} 31.\texttt{g1} \texttt{xf3} 32.\texttt{f1} \texttt{d3} and Black wins.

White is also not helped by 29.\texttt{f1} \texttt{h3} 30.\texttt{xf4} \texttt{xf4} 31.\texttt{g3} \texttt{h5}! etc.

29...\texttt{e7} 30.\texttt{c4}

White loses after 30.h3 \texttt{h4} 31.\texttt{h2} \texttt{g3} 32.\texttt{g2} \texttt{h6} 33.\texttt{f1} \texttt{g5}.

30...\texttt{h4} 31.\texttt{e5} \texttt{h5} 32.\texttt{f1}

32.\texttt{xf7} is refuted by the calm 32...\texttt{g7}! 33.\texttt{f1} \texttt{g3}! 34.\texttt{g1} \texttt{xf7} winning easily.

32...\texttt{g3} 33.\texttt{g1}

33.\texttt{g2} \texttt{h3} 34.\texttt{g1} \texttt{f6} 35.\texttt{f7} \texttt{xf7} 36.\texttt{hxg3} \texttt{g3} 37.\texttt{h2} \texttt{e6} 38.\texttt{xf4} \texttt{g2} wins.

33...\texttt{f6} 34.\texttt{xc6}

Now Black can conclude the game in fine style with:

34...\texttt{g4}!!

This beautiful finish makes for a fitting end to the present chapter.

\textbf{Summary}

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the reader on making it to the end of the chapter! We have covered a great volume of material, but the good news is that the subject matter has been quite fascinating. There is still no clear-cut answer as to whether White can make his extra pawn count for a meaningful advantage against the Marshall. Even when he avoids succumbing to a direct attack, we have seen plenty of cases where Black's active piece play enabled him to claim positional compensation.
Because we have been dealing with a lot of critical variations, I once again decided to cover more than one option for Black at certain key branching points. Generally speaking, it seems to me that Black is doing alright in most lines, although this may depend to some extent on one's personal playing style and preferences.

By this stage of the chapter, it will have become obvious that the Marshall gambit has acquired a vast body of theory. Very few players, except perhaps top professionals, will have either the time or the ability to remember the full quantity of analysis contained within these pages. For most normal players, I would hardly consider it to be necessary in any case. Obviously a certain amount of concrete knowledge is essential, but we have seen that there are certain positional and tactical motifs which can crop up in several different lines. If the reader can gradually improve his theoretical knowledge as a way of complimenting his understanding of the general themes, then the present opening could become a truly potent weapon in his arsenal.
Chapter 8

Marshall: 12.d3

1.e4 e5 2.d4 c6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 f6 5.0-0 e7
6.e1 b5 7.b3 0-0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 xd5 10.xe5
ex5 11.xe5 c6 12.d3 d6 13.e1

Introduction
Theoretical Highlights
Theory
A) 14.f8
A1) 18.xd5
A2) 18.h3
A3) 18.g3
B) 14.wxh4
B1) 16.d2
B2) 16.xd5
1.e4 e5 2.d3 c6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 d6 5.0–0 c7 6.e1 b5 7.b3 0–0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.xe5 dxe5 11.xe5 c6 12.d3

**Introduction**

This move has become very fashionable, and might arguably be viewed as the main line, at least at Super-GM level. Moving the d-pawn one square may appear rather timid compared with 12.d4, but White has a specific idea in mind.

12...d6 13.e1

This position will form the starting point for the theoretical section, where we will discuss the benefits of White’s chosen system, as well as examining the principal ways in which Black may try to counter his opponent’s set-up.

**Strategic Themes**

**Material versus development**

The following theoretical position, which we will encounter in line A) on page 228, illustrates this motif quite well:

White has kept his extra pawn for the time being, but he has some problems with the development of his pieces. In the present position he can choose between grabbing a second pawn with 18..xd5 (line A1, page 228) and fortifying his kingside with 18.h3 (line A2, page 230) or the more common 18.g3 (line A3, page 231).

**Black’s play on the queenside and in the centre**

Perhaps even more than in the previous chapter, Black should not only be looking to play on the kingside. The following type of position, which can occur in line A) as referred to above, is a good example (usually the queens would be on the board somewhere, along with a pair of rooks).
Black can play ...b4!, putting pressure on the c3-pawn. If White elects to keep the position closed with c3-c4, then the knight can start manoeuvring towards the splendid outpost on d4. If he can achieve this then he should obtain plenty of compensation, as well as the ability to hold certain endgames a pawn down.

**White's extra pawn versus Black's bishop pair**

The following type of position can be reached in a few different variations, including B22) on page 240, and B231) on page 242. It can arise with or without queens, and will usually also feature at least one pair of rooks.

White certainly stands better, thanks to his solid extra pawn. However, Black's bishop pair works superbly in this position with no central pawns and play on both sides of the board. If he defends in the correct way then he should have good chances to hold the draw. However, it must be said that playing for half a point in an inferior ending is not to everyone's taste.

**Theoretical Highlights**

**A complicated double pawn sacrifice**

After the opening moves given at the start of the chapter, the following continuation leads to an absolutely fascinating position:

13...\( \text{h5} \) 14.\( \text{g}\)3 c8

The main line is 14...\( \text{h4} \), which is covered in line B), page 237.

15.\( \text{xe8} \) \( \text{xe8} \) 16.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e1} \) 17.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{g6} \)

18.g3 b4

This is the same motif that we encountered at the top of the present page.

19.c4 \( \text{f6} \)?

This position is analysed extensively in line A32). I think that White's best move is the untested 20.\( \text{xc6} \)N when I am not completely convinced about Black's compensation, although he would certainly have decent practical chances as the position is tremendously complicated.

**A topical endgame**

The following has occurred many times in Grandmaster practice:

13...\( \text{f5} \) 14.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h4} \) 15.g3 \( \text{h3} \) 16.\( \text{xd5} \) cxd5 17.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{ad8} \) 18.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{g2} \) 19.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 20.e3

(see diagram next page)
This is the most popular incarnation of the ‘extra pawn versus bishop pair’ position described above. Black certainly has compensation, although he has no real winning chances of his own unless White commits a gross error or becomes wildly over-ambitious. The real question is whether White will be able to generate realistic winning chances for himself. In line B21) on page 242 I attempt to get close to the truth of the matter.

Avoiding the ending

Instead of exchanging queens in the above variation, Black can play more ambitiously with:

18...\texttt{\texttt{W}}h5!?

From this position, the point behind White’s 12th move can be revealed after 13...\texttt{W}h4 14.g3 \texttt{W}h3 15.\texttt{E}e4!. Compared with line B) of the previous chapter, the response 15...g5?? is unplayable in view of 16.\texttt{X}xg5. The rook on e4 is defended, so there is no ...\texttt{W}f5 fork available. Of course the story does not end there, and plenty of top Grandmasters have been happy to play the black side of this position. However, my own preference is for the alternative:

13...\texttt{B}f5

This has not been played as frequently as 13...\texttt{W}h4, but has yielded a similar score and enjoys a healthy reputation.

14.\texttt{W}f3
Chapter 8 - Marshall: 12.d3

The usual move, although a couple of alternatives also deserve attention.

14.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}2\)

This enables Black to equalise comfortably.

14...\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{4}\)!

14...\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{xd}3\) is also possible, although White obtains a slight, risk-free initiative with 15.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{f}3\) (but not 15.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}4?\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{h}2\)\(\text{\textit{f}}\)! when Black wins a pawn).

15.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{xd}3\) 16.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}5\)

15.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{xd}3\) 16.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}5\)

16.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{d}7\) 17.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}6\)

17.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{e}4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}4\) 18.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{xe}4\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}8\) can only be risky for White, Ki. Georgiev - Nunn, Dubai 1986.

17...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}6\)

Black is completely fine, Gormally - Gustafsson, Gothenburg 2005 (and others).

14.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{xd}5\) \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{xd}5\)

With a choice for White:

a) After the straightforward 15.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}3\) Black has several possibilities, but my own preference is for the simple 15...\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}8\). Black keeps his options open, and enjoys full compensation.

b) 15.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}2\)

White returns the pawn in order to aim for an IQP position, however Black's bishop pair should make up for his structural defect.

15...\(\text{\textit{xd}}\text{xd}3\) 16.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{f}1\) \(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}6\)

Also playable is 16...\(\text{\textit{xf}}\text{f}1?!\) 17.\(\text{\textit{xf}}\text{f}1\) \(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h}4\)

18.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}3\) \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c}4\) 19.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}3\), Benjamin - J. Howell, Reykjavik 1990. Now after 19...\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}8\)\(\text{\textit{N}}\) Black has enough activity.

17.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}4\)

Another possibility is 17.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g}3\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}8\) 18.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}3\) \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c}7\). Black should be absolutely fine, as long as he does not allow White to exchange the dark-squared bishops.

17...\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c}8\) 18.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}3\) \(\text{\textit{b}}\text{4}\)!
to g6, increasing the pressure on the light
squares. After 17...\textit{xe}8 \textit{e}8 18...\textit{xd}5? Black can win by force: 18...\textit{g}5! 19...\textit{c}5! 20...\textit{xc}5 \textit{f}3 when the threat of ...\textit{h}3
will cost White his queen.
16...\textit{e}3 has been tried in a few games, but
should not worry Black. Although there is
nothing particularly wrong with capturing
the d3-pawn, I rather like the idea of
16...\textit{d}7?! with the threat of ...\textit{g}4.
16...\textit{d}2 has been tried in a few games, but
should not worry Black. Although there is
nothing particularly wrong with capturing
the d3-pawn, I rather like the idea of
16...\textit{d}7?! with the threat of ...\textit{g}4.

Now Black faces an important choice.
A) 14...\textit{e}8 is a decent move which may appeal
to some readers. However, the main line is
B) 14...\textit{h}4.

It should be noted that the natural-looking
14...\textit{d}7 allows White to return the pawn in
a favourable way, after 15...\textit{xd}5 \textit{cxd}5 16...\textit{f}4!
\textit{xf}4 17...\textit{xf}4 \textit{xd}3 18...\textit{d}2, when Black faces
an unpleasant defence. White will position his
knight on d4 and gradually creep forwards,
while Black suffers from a weak IQP and
traditional bad bishop.

A) 14...\textit{e}8 15...\textit{xe}8 \textit{xe}8

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\tikzset{\everypath={\begin{scope}[scale=0.5]}}
\tikzset{\everynode={\begin{scope}[scale=0.5]}}

\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\filldraw[black] (1,1) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (2,2) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (3,3) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (4,4) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (5,5) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (6,6) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (7,7) circle (0.1cm);
\filldraw[black] (8,8) circle (0.1cm);

\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (1,1) rectangle (2,2);
\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (3,3) rectangle (4,4);
\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (5,5) rectangle (6,6);
\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (7,7) rectangle (8,8);

\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (0,8) rectangle (1,9);
\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (2,0) rectangle (3,1);
\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (4,2) rectangle (5,3);
\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (6,4) rectangle (7,5);
\draw[very thick, draw=black, fill=white] (8,6) rectangle (9,7);

\node at (0.5,0.5) {a}; \node at (1.5,1.5) {b}; \node at (2.5,2.5) {c}; \node at (3.5,3.5) {d}; \node at (4.5,4.5) {e}; \node at (5.5,5.5) {f}; \node at (6.5,6.5) {g}; \node at (7.5,7.5) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

16...\textit{d}2

The knight rushes to protect the king from
the impending check on e1.

Harmless is:
16...\textit{d}7

Also possible is 16...\textit{e}6 17...\textit{a}3 \textit{e}8 18...\textit{h}3
\textit{g}6 (18...\textit{e}2 19...\textit{xf}5 \textit{xd}2 20...\textit{c}2\pm)
19...\textit{c}2 \textit{h}5 with compensation.

17...\textit{h}3 \textit{f}6

Threatening...\textit{d}3.

18...\textit{c}2 \textit{e}8 19...\textit{a}3 \textit{e}6 20...\textit{b}3 \textit{f}5 21...\textit{c}2
Here Black can either repeat moves or
maintain the tension with something like
21...\textit{h}6?! or 21...\textit{g}6?!

16...\textit{e}1\textit{t} 17...\textit{f}1 \textit{g}6

This is an important theoretical variation.
Black's queen is rather troublesome, but he is
still a pawn down and White does not really
have any other weaknesses aside from the
difficulties in developing his queenside. The
immediate threat is ...\textit{xh}2\textit{t}, so White's choice
of candidate moves is quite limited.

One option is to snatch another pawn with
A1) 18...\textit{xd}5. Otherwise he will need to make
a defensive move on the kingside, which can be
accomplished by A2) 18...\textit{h}3 (a sideline which
should not cause Black too many problems) or
A3) 18...\textit{g}3 (the main line).

A1) 18...\textit{xd}5 \textit{cxd}5 19...\textit{xd}5

At first glance this might seem like excessive
greed, but it seems that White can get away
with it. Whether or not he can obtain any
advantage is another matter entirely.

19...\textit{d}8 20...\textit{g}5!

The only good move. 20...\textit{g}5? loses after:
20...\textit{e}8 21...\textit{d}2 \textit{f}4! 22...\textit{c}2 \textit{d}8! 23...\textit{xf}4
\textit{xa}1++

20...\textit{xa}1 21...\textit{xd}8 \textit{f}8
For the moment Black is two pawns down, but his active queen and pair of bishops enable him to hold the balance.

22.h4
White combines attack and defence. There does not appear to be anything better for him.

It looks risky to try:
22.f4?!
This weakens the kingside.
22...\(\textit{xb}2\) 23.f5 \(\textit{h}5\) 24.\(\textit{e}5\)!
Only this move enables White to draw. The alternative: 24.\(\textit{d}4\)? \(\textit{e}2\) 25.\(\textit{f}2\) \(\textit{xd}3\) would leave him almost paralysed.
24.\(\textit{d}1\) 25.\(\textit{f}2\)
25.\(\textit{d}4\)? \(\textit{e}2\) 26.\(\textit{e}4\) \(\textit{d}6\) 27.\(\textit{f}2\) \(\textit{xf}1\)
28.\(\textit{xf}1\) \(\textit{xe}2\)+ 29.\(\textit{f}2\) \(\textit{g}3\)+ 30.\(\textit{g}1\) \(\textit{d}2\)!
wins for Black, as there is no good defence against ...\(\textit{e}3\)+.
25...\(\textit{c}2\)+ 26.\(\textit{g}1\) \(\textit{d}1\) 27.\(\textit{f}2\)
Now Black may as well take the repetition with:
27...\(\textit{c}2\)+
He can try playing on with 27...\(\textit{xd}3\) but gains no advantage, e.g. 28.\(\textit{e}7\) \(\textit{xe}7\) 29.\(\textit{xe}7\) \(\textit{xf}5\)+ 30.\(\textit{e}3\)=, or 28.\(\textit{f}6\) \(\textit{xd}8\) 29.\(\textit{fx}g7\) \(\textit{b}6\)+ 30.\(\textit{e}1\) \(\textit{xe}7\) 31.\(\textit{h}5\) \(\textit{b}4\)=.

22.h3

This is less dangerous for White than the previous variation, but is not a serious try for an advantage either.
22...\(\textit{xb}2\)
22...h5 would be a serious mistake. 23.\(\textit{f}4\) \(\textit{xb}2\) (23...\(\textit{b}1\)? loses after 24.\(\textit{f}5\) \(\textit{h}5\) [24...\(\textit{h}7\) 25.\(\textit{a}8\) \(\textit{xf}5\) 26.\(\textit{c}7\)+–] 25.\(\textit{g}4\)+– in this instance, the move h2-h3 is much more useful than ...h7-h6) 24.\(\textit{f}5\) \(\textit{h}7\) 25.\(\textit{a}5\)! Black is in deep trouble, e.g. 25...\(\textit{b}4\) 26.\(\textit{xb}4\) \(\textit{xb}4\) 27.\(\textit{xb}4\) \(\textit{xb}4\) 28.\(\textit{g}3\)+.

23.\(\textit{b}6\)?

White returns the pawn but improves his pieces. This looks more challenging than 23.\(\textit{a}8\) \(\textit{a}3\) 24.\(\textit{d}4\) \(\textit{h}6\), with a comfortable position for Black.
23...\(\textit{xc}3\)

Another solution is: 23...\(\textit{b}1\)! 24.\(\textit{a}8\) \(\textit{xd}3\) 25.\(\textit{c}5\) \(\textit{h}6\) 26.\(\textit{xf}8\)+ \(\textit{h}7\) 27.\(\textit{xf}7\) \(\textit{xf}1\) when Black seems to be fine.
24.\(\textit{d}4\) \(\textit{c}8\)!
After 24...\(\textit{d}3\) 25.\(\textit{c}5\) \(\textit{c}1\) 26.\(\textit{d}8\) \(\textit{h}6\) 27.\(\textit{xf}8\)+ \(\textit{h}7\) 28.\(\textit{xf}7\)+, White has a favourable version of the previous note.
25.\(\textit{c}5\) \(\textit{h}6\)
The chances are approximately balanced.

22...h6

In Dvirnyy – Brunello, Martina Franca 2008, I preferred 22...\(\textit{b}1\) 23.\(\textit{a}8\) \(\textit{xd}3\) 24.\(\textit{e}7\) \(\textit{h}6\) 25.\(\textit{xf}8\)+ \(\textit{h}7\), at which point White could have secured a plus with 26.\(\textit{xf}7\)N
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\[ \text{23.} \text{e}4 \text{ (27.} \text{h}2? \text{ f}6 \text{ 28.f}3 \text{ c}2 \text{ is problematic for White) 27...c}4 \text{ 28.h}2 \text{ b}2. \text{ Black has good drawing chances here, but I rate the main move more highly. We will follow the game Van Wieringen – Ivanovic, e-mail 2001.} \]

\[ \text{23.b}6 \]

23.h5 h7 24.b6 b1 25.a8 xd3 26.c5 h7 27.xf8 f1t 28.h2 c2=

\[ \text{23...xb2} \]

This looks clearer than 23...b1 24.a8 xd3 25.c5 h7 26.xf8 f1t 27.h2 e2 28.d4 f6 29.d6! when Black still has some defending to do.

\[ \text{24.a8} \]

24.h5 h7 25.a8 xd3 26.c5 b1 27.xf8t h7 28.xf7 f1t 29.h2 c2=

\[ \text{24...a3 25.d4 h7 26.c5 xc5 27.dxc5 xc5 28.xa6 d3} \]

\[ \text{36.g}4! \]

Without this White might be in trouble.

\[ \text{36.fxg4 37.h}5t \text{ g}8 \text{ 38.e8t f}8 \text{ 39.exf4 xf2t 40.xg2 h}3 \text{ 41.e8t } \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2} \]

A2) 18.h3

It is doubtful that he can play for an advantage with this move.

\[ \text{18.e8 19.d1} \]

There is a tricky alternative in 19...xc3?! 20.bxc3 xc3 21.b1 e1, with what appears to be a dangerous initiative. However, White can solve his problems with 22.a4! (without this he would be in serious trouble) 22...xd3 23.xd3 xd3 24.xc2 xb1 25.xb1 e1b 26.xd6 e2. This endgame should be a draw, although White has some chances to press.

\[ \text{19.h2t} \]

Black is absolutely fine, and if anything it is White who needs to be slightly careful. In the game he was able to defend for a draw.

\[ \text{29.a5 h}5 \text{ 30.e3 xh4 31.a7 f}5 \]

\[ \text{32.a3 f}6 \text{ 33.c5 h}5 \text{ 34.g3 e4 35.h2 h4} \]
Chapter 8 - Marshall: 12.d3

22.\textit{B}c1 \textit{e}e4
22...\textit{c}e2? 23.\textit{A}xe2 \textit{w}xe2 24.\textit{e}e1 wins.

23.\textit{g}g3 \textit{w}d3
White was ready to extricate himself, so the queen retreats. The difference here is that the white rook has been diverted from the a-file, which will obviously take the sting out of any a2-a4 ideas.

24.\textit{w}xd3 \textit{r}xd3
The endgame is approximately equal. White can try to make use of the bishop pair, but Black has the more active rook and a very powerful knight on d5.

A3) 18.g3

This is White's main try for an advantage. We will analyse two responses. Black can complete development with A31) 18...\textit{f}e8, or provoke an immediate weakening of the enemy queenside with A32) 18...\textit{b}4?.

A31) 18...\textit{f}e8 19.\textit{d}d1
This is White's most efficient way of expelling the intruder on e1.

19.\textit{w}e6 20.\textit{d}d2 \textit{f}f5!
Black cannot hope to break through immediately, so he should adopt a patient approach. Less promising is the pseudo-active move:
20...\textit{h}h3
This does not create any real threats.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & a & b & c & d & e & f & g \\
\hline
1 & & & & & & & \\
2 & & & & & & & \\
3 & & & & & & & \\
4 & & & & & & & \\
5 & & & & & & & \\
6 & & & & & & & \\
7 & & & & & & & \\
8 & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

21.\textit{c}c2!N
This move shows that Black's queen is not well placed on h3. All White needs to do is to play slowly in order to avoid counterplay, as Black cannot create any by himself. In Dolmatov - Kamsky, Dortmund 1993, the continuation was 21.a4 b4. This may not be so bad for White, but the position is becoming more complicated and Black eventually prevailed.

Another interesting move is 21.\textit{g}g4!? This would be the preferred choice were it not for the even stronger and simpler main line. Play continues 21...\textit{x}xg4 22.\textit{x}xg4 \textit{r}xd3 (22...\textit{f}f6 23.\textit{f}f3+) 23.\textit{d}d7 \textit{e}e2 24.\textit{r}xe6 \textit{e}e4 (after 24...\textit{f}c5 25.\textit{r}xd5 \textit{r}xf2 26.\textit{e}e3 \textit{xf}f1 27.\textit{xf}f1 \textit{xe}x3 28.\textit{f}f2 \textit{f}f5 29.\textit{g}g2 \textit{xf}f2 30.\textit{xf}f2 Black faces an uphill struggle to draw) 25.\textit{r}xd5 \textit{r}xd5 26.\textit{f}f1 \textit{f}f3 27.\textit{f}f4 \textit{e}e7 28.\textit{r}d3 \textit{e}e6 29.\textit{e}e3 \textit{xe}x3 30.\textit{r}xe3. In this typical 'Marshall endgame' Black's bishop pair gives him some chances to draw.

21...\textit{h}h5
21...\textit{h}h5 22.\textit{g}g2 \textit{f}f5 23.\textit{e}e3 \textit{xe}x3 24.\textit{f}xe3 gives White a large advantage.

22.\textit{e}e3 \textit{xe}x3 23.\textit{r}xe3 \textit{w}d7 24.a4
Black has no compensation for the missing pawn.
21.a4
21...c2!? is possible, although after 21...g4 22.e4 d7, White will have to retreat his queen to the slightly awkward h1-square if he wishes to avoid a repetition.

21...b4 22.c4 c7 23.c2 c5 24.e1 d7

A32) 18...b4!? 

19.c4
Less promising is: 19.xd5 cxd5 20.xd5 d8 21.g5 a1 22.xd8 f8
Compared with line A1) with 18.xd5, the inclusion of the extra moves g3 and ...b4 favours Black. The point is not so much that the latter is especially useful, but rather that the former seriously weakens the light squares around White's king.

23.a5
Perhaps White's best is 23.cxb4 b1 24.g2 x3 25.d2, although the opposite bishop ending arising after 25...c2 26.g5 h6 27.e3 x4 28.b3 x2 29.xc2 x2 30.xd2 offers him virtually no winning chances whatsoever.

23...b1 24.g2 x3 25.d2 c2

25.e3
25.f4!? also looks decent for White.

25.g6 26.d5 c6 27.xe8+ e8 28.d1
After 28.e3 e5 29.d1 Black may be tempted to try the disruptive 29...b3!?

28...d4 29.e3 d7
Black has some compensation, and in Sabaev – Ivanovic, e-mail 2001, he managed to hold on for a draw. The final moves were:

30.g5 f5 31.f4 f7 32.e2 d2 d2 33.e2 g6 34.d4 x4 35.dxc5 x5 36.d3 d3 37.xe3 d5 38.b3 e6 39.e3 c2 c2 40.xe4 h6 41.x2 g8 42.b3 a1 43.d2 44.d3 e1+ 44.g2 a5 45.d1 ½–½

Despite this relative success, I doubt that defending this type of inferior endgame will appeal to many players. Therefore I suggest that the reader focuses on the following more active alternative.
26. \texttt{¥a8}

This forces the draw. In Vouldis – Gustafsson, Ermi\-ion Argolidas 2005, White erred with 26. \texttt{¥g5?!} h6 27. \texttt{¥e3} \texttt{¥c5!} (presumably he overlooked this) 28. \texttt{¥e1} (also unappealing is 28. \texttt{¥xc5} \texttt{¥xd2} 29. \texttt{¥e3} \texttt{¥d1} 30. \texttt{h4} \texttt{¥f1}† 31. \texttt{¥g1} [31. \texttt{¥h2} \texttt{¥d5} wins a piece] 31...\texttt{¥b5†} 32. \texttt{¥g2} \texttt{¥f1†} 33. \texttt{¥f3} \texttt{¥c6†} 34. \texttt{¥f4} \texttt{¥c4†} 35. \texttt{¥d4} \texttt{¥e2} 36. \texttt{¥e3} \texttt{¥xb2†}) 28...\texttt{¥xb2} 29. \texttt{¥xb4} \texttt{¥xb4} 30. \texttt{¥xb4} \texttt{¥xa2†}. White’s position is difficult and he went on to lose.

26...\texttt{¥xd2} 27. \texttt{¥xb4} h5 28. \texttt{¥xf8†} \texttt{¥h7} 29. \texttt{¥xf7} \texttt{¥e2}! 30. \texttt{¥f4} \texttt{¥f1†} 31. \texttt{¥e3} \texttt{¥e2†} 32. \texttt{¥g2} \texttt{¥f1†}

The players repeated the position a few more times before agreeing a draw in Ojjeh team – Nataf team, Paris (consultation) 2003.

21. \texttt{h4!}

Only this precise move can maximise White’s chances. For example:

21. \texttt{¥e3?} \texttt{¥e8†}

21. \texttt{¥d1} \texttt{¥e6} 22. \texttt{¥d2} \texttt{¥e4} 23. \texttt{¥e3} \texttt{¥e7}

24. \texttt{¥d2} \texttt{¥xf3} 25. \texttt{¥xf3} \texttt{¥e4} is equal, as Black regains his pawn.

21. \texttt{¥a4} h6? might lead to a draw after 22. \texttt{¥xc6} \texttt{¥e6} 23. \texttt{¥e3} \texttt{¥d1} 24. \texttt{¥d2} \texttt{¥g4}

25. \texttt{¥d5} \texttt{¥xd4} 26. \texttt{¥e3} \texttt{¥f3†} 27. \texttt{¥g2} \texttt{¥h4†} 28. \texttt{¥g1} \texttt{¥f3†}, as neither side can benefit from avoiding the repetition.

21. \texttt{¥f8}

21...\texttt{¥e6} 22. \texttt{¥e3} \texttt{¥xe3} 23. \texttt{¥xe3}±

22. \texttt{h5} \texttt{¥e4} 23. \texttt{¥e3} \texttt{¥xe3} 24. \texttt{¥xe3} \texttt{¥e6}

25. \texttt{¥d2}

Also possible is 25. \texttt{¥d1} \texttt{¥f3} 26. \texttt{¥d2} \texttt{¥xh5}

27. \texttt{d5±.}

25. \texttt{¥d3} 26. \texttt{d5}
The most precise, although 26.\textit{d}d1 e2 27.e1 \textit{x}h5 28.d5 cxd5 29.exd5 c5 30.c4 also looks pleasant for White. 26...cxd5 27.cxd5 c5 28.\textit{x}c5 \textit{x}c5 29.\textit{f}3 e4 30.\textit{c}1
Black faces an unpleasant defensive task.

We now return to the main line after 19.\textit{f}6!:

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

20.\textit{xe}6!N
This may appear dangerous for White, especially if he has to find the right path under the pressure of a ticking clock and with no computer assistance. However, if he does everything right then Black may not have quite enough compensation.

The alternative is:
20.\textit{d}d1
This was played in Stellwagen – Gustafsson, Germany 2008. Unfortunately for White, this move is rather passive and can hardly be considered a serious try for an advantage.

20...\textit{e}8
There was a promising alternative in 20...\textit{d}8!?N 21.\textit{d}2 \textit{e}6 22.\textit{a}4 c5 23.\textit{c}2 \textit{g}4! intending to bring the knight to d4, with full compensation.

21.\textit{d}2 \textit{e}5 22.\textit{xe}6
22.\textit{b}1 \textit{c}5 is also quite pleasant for Black.

At this point the strongest continuation would have been:
22...\textit{xb}2N
Black stands better, e.g. 23.\textit{xe}d6?! \textit{xa}1 24.\textit{a}4 \textit{c}8\textdagger, or 23.\textit{c}1 \textit{f}8 with more than enough for a pawn.

20...\textit{d}8 21.\textit{b}6
White should take the opportunity to harass the enemy pieces.

21...\textit{d}7
21...\textit{e}7? is not good enough after:
22.\textit{e}3+

22.\textit{c}2
22.\textit{e}3 only leads to a draw after 22...\textit{e}7 23.\textit{xe}1 \textit{xe}1 24.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}7 25.\textit{b}1 \textit{e}2 26.\textit{d}1 (26.\textit{d}2? \textit{c}5\textdagger) 26...\textit{e}1. Now Black threatens both ...\textit{xd}1 and ...\textit{xf}1 trick, so White has no choice but to repeat the position with 27.\textit{c}2 \textit{e}2.

22...\textit{g}4
Black has quite a wide choice here, but I believe the text to be his most promising option.

After 22...\textit{c}7? 23.\textit{e}3 \textit{xe}3 (23...\textit{e}7? 24.\textit{d}2!+-) 24.\textit{xe}3 Black will be a pawn down for nothing (after he regains the d3-pawn).
22...h5?! is too slow, and White is clearly better after 23..b1 w2 e2 24..d2, as 24...xd3? 25..e1 wins.

22...f8 23..e3 (this looks better than 23..b1 xd3 24..d2 e4 25..xd3 xd3 26..c1? d7!-+) 23...e7 24..f1! x1 does not give Black enough compensation. Play continues 25..b1 e2 26..d2 d7 (26...c5 27..e3!) 27..d1 xd3 28..c1±, when White keeps an extra pawn.

22...f5 23..b1
The threat was ...h3.
23..e2 24..d2 h3

25..e3
There is a second strong line in 25..a4?!., combining attack and defence. Play continues 25...f3 (25...xd3 26..e1 h6 [26..xf1 27..xb4 xb4 28..xb4 d2 29..xd2 xd2 30..xf1 xb2 31..e2+-] 27..xd7 e7 28..e3+-) 26..c6 xd3 27..e1! xf1 28..xb4 xb4 29..xb4 d2 30..xd2 xd2 31..xf1 xb2 32..e2 e1+ 33..g2 e1 34..b7, when White should win the ending.
25...e7 26..xe2 xe2

Now White can return some material to reach a winning endgame.
27..c1! xf1 28..xf1 xd2 29..e1 xc2 30..xc2 c5 31.d4! xd4 32.c5

The dangerous passed pawn, combined with the swift penetration of the king to d3 and c4, should ensure White’s victory.

23..b1 w2 e2

Another possibility is:
23...c7 24..c5 xd3
24..e2 25..d2 d6 (25..e5 26..xb4+-) 26..e1 e5 27..xe2 f6 28..e3 xe3 29..xe3 xd3 30..xd3 xd3±

25..e3
White can also force the queens off with 25..d2 xf2† 26..xf2 xf2 27..e1 f5 28..xf2 xc2 29..xb4 a5 30..c5±, when Black will have to struggle in the endgame.
25..e2 26..xd3 xd3 27..e1 e5 28..d2±

White keeps an advantage, although the game remains rather complex.

24..d2 e5 25..e3
25...c5? e7 26..xb4 xd3 is very bad for White.

25..a4 xd3 26..d7 e4 27..xd6 f3† 28..g2 xd2† 29..g1 f3† 30..g2 gives Black a choice between repeating moves or playing for more with 30...h5?.

25...h5
This looks like the best chance:
25...f3 26..xf3 xf3† 27..g2 d4 28..a4 xd3 29..d1 e4† 30..h3 leaves Black with little compensation.

After 25..xd3 26..xd3 xd3 27..xd3 xd3 28..b3, the active position of the d3-knight does not provide enough compensation, as it can easily be forced back later.

The only other option is 25..xe3 26..xe3 xc4 27..xc4 xc2 28..e1±. Here too White has clearly better chances, though Black’s bishop pair gives him some chances to survive.
26.h3!

Once again White must be extremely precise if he is to maintain the advantage.

26.d4? 27.g3† 27.h1 (27.g2 loses in exactly the same way) 27...xc2 28.e8† 28f8 29.xb4 h6 is winning for Black.

26.g2?! allows Black to use the king as a target with 26...e7 27.d4 (or 27.d1 f5 28.b6 d7, when Black is doing very well) 27...f3† 28.g1 c6 (also quite attractive is 28...xg3† 29.xg3 f3† 30.g2 xd4, with excellent play for a pawn) 29.d5 f3† 30.g2 xd5 31.cxd5 e2 32.cxd2 e2. White will have a difficult time defending this endgame.

26.d1 is not such a bad move, but Black has a good answer in 26.f5 27.c2 f6!. He will follow up by playing ...c5 and taking on d3, after which his active pieces will provide good compensation for White's remaining extra pawn.

26.c5!

Black activates the bishop with a simple tactic. Alternatives are worse, e.g. 26.f3 27.c1 e6 28.h2+, or 26.xh3 27.xb4 f6 (27.h5 28.d1—) 28.xd6 exd6 29.d5 d8, when White's c-pawn becomes very powerful.

27.g4!

White is not helped by 27.f4? d4.

27...xe3 28.gxh5 x5

This looks better than 29.xe3 xc2 30.xe2 xd2 31.xb4 a5 32.d5 xc4 33.b3 (33.c1 xd5 34.xc4 f8=) 33.e5 34.c1 f6, when Black's active pieces and better kingside structure should enable him to draw.

29.xd2 30.e2 f4†

White's extra pawn gives him some winning chances.

According to my analysis it seems that White can retain an advantage in the above variation. However, it would be difficult for even the strongest Grandmasters to navigate these complications without the aid of meticulous preparation. And even if White plays all the correct moves, I would say that Black has reasonable drawing chances in the final endgame.

To conclude, I would say that 14.e8 deserves to be considered as a serious option. However, it is now time to turn our attention to the main line.
15.g3
This is the move which best fortifies the kingside, as well as gaining a useful tempo by attacking the enemy queen. In Rodriguez Cespedes – Rubio Doblas, Malaga 1991, White preferred the rare:
15.h3
It is doubtful that this can trouble Black.
15...\textit{ae}8 16.\textit{x}e8 \textit{xe}8 17.\textit{d}2
Now I suggest the improvement:
17...\textit{f}6!N
The queen will be ideally placed on g6.
18.a3
18.g4 \textit{g}6 19.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 looks better for Black, who is much better developed.
18.a4 \textit{g}6 19.\textit{axb}5 \textit{xd}3! looks dangerous for White, e.g. 20.\textit{bx}c6 \textit{f}6! (threatening \textit{e}4) 21.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}2 22.\textit{a}4 \textit{f}5 23.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}5 with a crushing attack.
18...\textit{g}6 19.\textit{c}2 \textit{h}5
Black has good compensation.

B) 14...\textit{h}4

B1) 16.\textit{d}2 \textit{ae}8
Black completes development and challenges for the open file.

B2) 17...\textit{f}5 18.\textit{ad}1 \textit{fe}8 19.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 20.\textit{xd}5 \textit{cx}d5 21.\textit{db}3 \textit{ae}6 22.\textit{ac}5 \textit{ac}7. As mentioned previously, this type of ending should be fine for Black as long as he avoids the exchange of dark-squared bishops. The game resulted in a draw after 23.\textit{d}4 \textit{ac}8 24.b4 \textit{d}7 25.\textit{c}2 \textit{xe}1\textasciitilde 26.\textit{xe}1 \textit{e}8 27.\textit{xe}8\textasciitilde \textit{xe}8 28.\textit{e}3 \textit{d}8 29.\textit{xd}5 \textit{c}6 30.\textit{e}3 \textit{f}3 31.\textit{f}5 \textit{e}4 32.\textit{e}3 \textit{f}3 33.\textit{d}4 \textit{g}5 34.\textit{f}5 \textit{g}6 35.\textit{e}3 \textfrac{1}{2}–\textfrac{1}{2}.

17.\textit{e}4
This move is playable thanks to certain tactical features of the position. Without it White would be worse, as Black's development is so good.

17...\textit{g}4 18.\textit{g}2 \textit{xxg}2\textasciitilde
After 18...f5? 19.\textit{xxh}3 \textit{xxh}3 20.\textit{d}2! the placement of Black's king is a problem.

19.\textit{xxg}2 f5

In J. Polgar – Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2008, White did not achieve anything with 16.\textit{e}3 \textit{xd}3 17.\textit{d}2 (17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{cx}d5 18.\textit{xd}5 reaches line
20.\textit{h3}  
\hspace{1em} 20.\textit{xf4} leads by force to a drawn endgame after 20...\textit{xf4} 21.\textit{gxf4} \textit{fxe4} 22.\textit{dxe4} $\textit{f3}!$ 23.\textit{xf3} \textit{Exf4} 24.\textit{g3} \textit{Exe4} 25.\textit{xe4} \textit{Exe4} 26.\textit{f3} \textit{Exe5} 27.\textit{c4} \textit{bxc4} 28.\textit{xc4} a5=, J. Polgar – Svidler, San Luis 2005.

20...\textit{h5} 21.\textit{g4}  
\hspace{1em} After 21.\textit{xf4} \textit{xf4} 22.\textit{gxf4} \textit{fxe4} 23.\textit{dxe4} \textit{f3}! the slight change in the position of White's h-pawn makes no difference to the overall evaluation.

21...\textit{fxg4}  
In Kotronias – Nyback, Turin 2006, Black erred with 21...\textit{fxe4}? 22.\textit{gxh5} \textit{exd3} 23.\textit{Exe8} \textit{Exe8} 24.\textit{c3} \textit{Exe5} 25.\textit{d4} \textit{Exe6} 26.\textit{xd5} \textit{cx6} 27.\textit{e3} \textit{Exe4} 28.\textit{d1}+. Perhaps 24...\textit{f8} would have been a slight improvement, although even here after 25.\textit{d1} \textit{f5} 26.\textit{xd3} \textit{Exh5} 27.\textit{c4} \textit{bxc4} 28.\textit{xc4}+, Black faces a difficult defence.

22.\textit{hxg4} \textit{Exg4}  
Black should be fine in this queenless position. From a strategic point of view, the only danger is that White's d- and f-pawns could enable him to dominate the central squares. Fortunately for Black, his active pieces should be enough to stop any such ideas. He has useful outpost squares on f4 and f3, as well as the safer king.

23.\textit{a4} \textit{Ab8}  
Another good move is:

\hspace{1em} 23...\textit{b4}?!  
This has the advantage of giving White more chances to go wrong. Kotronias – Asrian, Kemer 2007, was soon agreed drawn after:

24.\textit{c4}  
\hspace{1em} 24.\textit{d2} is also possible: 24...\textit{e5} (24...\textit{f3}! 25.\textit{f1} \textit{Exe5} also leads to equality after 26.\textit{d1} \textit{bxc3} 27.\textit{bxc3} – but not 27.\textit{xd6}?! \textit{Exe1}+ 28.\textit{b1} \textit{cxb2} 29.\textit{b1} \textit{Exd1} when Black wins) 25.\textit{c4} (after 25.\textit{ab1} \textit{bxc3} 26.\textit{xc3} \textit{c7} 27.\textit{c4} \textit{Exe5} White's king may start to feel uncomfortable) 25...\textit{f3}! 26.\textit{g1} (or 26.\textit{f1} \textit{bxc3} 27.\textit{bxc3} a5=) 26...\textit{c3} 27.\textit{c3} a5, with equality. 24...\textit{f4} 25.\textit{xf4} \textit{xf4} 26.\textit{c5} \textit{h8} $\frac{1}{2}$–$\frac{1}{2}$

The final position is easier to play as Black, but after 27.\textit{d6} \textit{Exe1} 28.\textit{Exe1} \textit{f3}+ 29.\textit{f1} \textit{h5} 30.\textit{d4} \textit{h4} 31.\textit{f7} \textit{h7} 32.\textit{e5} \textit{cxe5} 33.\textit{dxe5} the result will probably be a draw.

24.\textit{axb5} \textit{AXB5} 25.\textit{Ea6}  

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\hline
8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 & \\
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\end{tabular}
\end{center}

25...\textit{Ed7}  
The weakness on c6 is easily defended. Black has very little to worry about, though it will be hard for him to push for more than a draw.

26.\textit{Ed2}  
From here Black has demonstrated easy equality in two games:

S.B. Hansen – Gyimesi, Turin 2006, ended in a draw after: 26...\textit{h8} 27.\textit{c5} \textit{g4} 28.\textit{Exe8} \textit{f3}+ 29.\textit{f1} \textit{Exe8} 30.\textit{e4} \textit{f6} 31.\textit{xc6} $\frac{1}{2}$–$\frac{1}{2}$

Agopov – Gustafsson, Crete 2007, was the same story after: 26...\textit{Ee6} 27.\textit{e3} \textit{Gf6} 28.\textit{g3} \textit{Eg6} 29.\textit{e4} \textit{Gg6}+ 30.\textit{g3} \textit{Eg6} 31.\textit{e4} \textit{Gg6}+ $\frac{1}{2}$–$\frac{1}{2}$
B2) 16...\texttt{xd5}

This is a more serious try for an advantage.

16...\texttt{xd5}

Now White has tried three moves: B21) 17.\texttt{xf4}, B22) 17.\texttt{e3} and B23) 17.\texttt{xd5}, of which the last appears to be the most critical.

B21) 17.\texttt{xf4} \texttt{g4} 18.\texttt{g2} \texttt{xf4} 19.\texttt{h3}

White gains nothing by avoiding this exchange, as shown by the game Kotronias – Grischuk, Tripoli 2004, which continued:

19.gxf4 d4 20.g3?!

20...\texttt{ad8} 21.c4?! 21.f3? \texttt{xf3}+ 22.gxf3 \texttt{dx}c3 23.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{xf3} is also very difficult for White.

Perhaps relatively best would have been 21.cxd4 \texttt{xd4} (unfortunately 21...\texttt{ed6} fails after 22.\texttt{c3} \texttt{g6} 23.\texttt{d}d5) 22.\texttt{e3} \texttt{xf3}+ 23.\texttt{fxg3} \texttt{g}d8 24.\texttt{c3} \texttt{xd3} 25.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{xd3}, although even here White will have to struggle for a draw.

21...\texttt{ed6} 22.\texttt{e5}?

He had to play 22.f5 \texttt{f6} 23.\texttt{exh3} (23.\texttt{e4} \texttt{xf5} 24.\texttt{w}xh3 \texttt{hxh3} 25.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{g}6t 26.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{e}8 27.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{g}2+ 28.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{f}3+ 29.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{b}4 30.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{g}2+ 31.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{f}5+) 23...\texttt{hxh3} 24.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{xf5} 25.\texttt{cxb5} \texttt{xd}3. Black stands clearly better thanks to his superior minor piece and safer king. Still, this was the lesser evil.

22...\texttt{f5}!

Black is already winning.

23.\texttt{d}d2 23.f3 \texttt{g}6 24.\texttt{hxh3} \texttt{hxh3}+ 25.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{g}2+ 26.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{hxh2}+

23...\texttt{g}6 24.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{h}5 25.\texttt{f}3 25.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{h}3 26.\texttt{d}5+ \texttt{h}8 is winning for Black.

25...\texttt{h}3 26.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{g}2+

White is forced to give up his queen under unfavourable circumstances. The remaining moves were:

27.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{xf4} 28.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{bxc4} 29.\texttt{d}c4 \texttt{h}4 30.\texttt{ae}1 \texttt{xf4} 31.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{d}3 32.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{f}6 33.\texttt{e}8+ \texttt{h}7 34.\texttt{e}8 \texttt{e}3 35.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{h}5 36.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{e}1 37.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{g}6+ 0–1

19...\texttt{h}3 20.\texttt{gxf4} d4 21.\texttt{d}d2

This looks like the best try. 21.cxd4 is harmless, e.g. 21...\texttt{ad8} (there is also nothing wrong with 21...\texttt{ed8} 22.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{f}5 23.a4 \texttt{b}4 24.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{xd4} ½–½, Grischuk – Tkachiev, Prague 2002) 22.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{xd4} 23.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{f}5 24.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{e}8 25.\texttt{g}3 ½–½, Solodovnichenko – Miton, Germany 2007.

21...\texttt{cxd}3

This ensures that the d- and c-files will be available for the black rooks. Also playable is 21...\texttt{ad8}?! 22.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{d}6 23.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{bxc4} (after
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23...f5? 24.\(\text{h}1\) Black has lost an all-important tempo compared with the Kotronias – Grischuk game that was covered in the note to White’s 19th) 24.dxc4 (24.\(\text{d}x\text{c}4 \text{g}6\) 25.\(\text{g}5 \text{f}6\) is easier for Black) 24...\(\text{g}6\) 25.\(\text{g}5 \text{f}6\) 26.\(\text{e}1 \text{xf}4\) 27.\(f3\). The position is balanced, with chances for both sides.

22.bxc3 \(\text{g}6\) 23.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{f}5\) 24.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{g}8\)

There are different ways to arrange the pieces, but Adams’ set-up is very sound.

25.a4 \(\text{g}6\) 26.axb5 axb5 27.\(\text{h}4\)

27.\(\text{a}7\) \(\text{h}6\) 28.\(\text{b}7\) is well met by 28...\(\text{xd}3!\) 29.\(\text{xd}3 \text{xe}4\).

27...\(\text{c}6\) 28.\(\text{a}5\)

White could have obtained some winning chances with 28.\(\text{a}7!\) \(\text{h}6\) 29.\(\text{b}7 \text{xe}4\) 30.\(\text{d}x\text{e}4 \text{d}c8\) 31.\(\text{xb}5 \text{x}c3\) 32.\(\text{xc}3 \text{xc}3\) 33.\(\text{g}2\). Black should be able to hold the ending, but White can certainly press for a while.

28.\(\text{b}6\) 29.\(\text{a}7\) \(\text{h}6\) 30.\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{b}4\) 31.\(\text{xb}4 \text{xb}4\) 32.\(\text{h}5 \text{b}d4\) 33.hgx6

\(1/2-1/2\)

B22) 17.\(\text{e}3 \text{xd}3\) 18.\(\text{xd}5 \text{ad}8\)

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

Another possibility is:

19.\(\text{g}2\)

This gives Black a choice.

19...\(\text{f}5\)?

This is an independent option against White’s chosen move order. The alternative is 19...\(\text{xd}2+\) 20.\(\text{xd}2\), transposing to line B23) below (page 241).

On the other hand, 19...\(\text{h}5\)! 20.\(\text{d}2 \text{f}5\) 21.\(\text{c}6\) transposes to a line which I consider slightly unpleasant and has yielded poor practical results for Black.

20.\(\text{d}2 \text{b}4\)

Black takes the opportunity to compromise his opponent’s queenside pawns. Now the game Grischuk – Khalifman, Rethymnon 2003, was agreed drawn after:

21.\(\text{d}4\)

21.c5? \(\text{e}5\) is no good for White.

21...\(\text{bxc}3\) 22.\(\text{bxc}3 \text{h}6\) 23.\(\text{a}4 \text{fe}8\) 24.\(\text{c}6\) \(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\).

19...\(\text{c}4\)

19...\(\text{f}5\) 20.\(\text{d}2 \text{c}6\) is an alternative route to the same position.

20.\(\text{d}2 \text{c}6\)

This is quite a typical structure for this line of the Marshall. Black’s strong bishops provide ongoing compensation, and it will be difficult
for White to make anything meaningful out of his extra pawn.

21.\textit{d}d4

Both sides have more or less completed development, and will now look to improve their pieces. We will look at some high level games which demonstrate the correct plans for both sides.

21.\textit{h}b8

This was Anand’s attempt to improve on the game Bacrot – Aronian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005, which was soon agreed drawn after 22.\textit{e}e4  \textit{d}d5 23.\textit{xe}g7  \textit{xe}g7 24.\textit{f}f6\textup{t}  \textit{g}g8 25.\textit{g}g5\textup{t}  \textit{h}h8 26.\textit{f}f6\textup{t}  \textit{g}g8 ½–½. However, the text also failed to pose Black any significant problems. We will follow the few remaining moves of Anand – Aronian, Nice 2008.

22.\textit{e}e4  \textit{d}d6

It seems that Anand considered it pointless to try and convert his extra pawn in this position.

B23) 17.\textit{x}d5

This is White’s main try for a theoretical plus. White obtains, for the moment at least, a material advantage of two pawns. The advantage of doing so is that he may be have the option to return one pawn in order to tame the opponent’s initiative, but still retain chances to win the game.

22...\textit{h}5

22...\textit{f}5 looks like a good alternative.

23.\textit{f}3  \textit{g}6 24.a3  \textit{h}5 25.\textit{e}e2  \textit{d}d5 26.\textit{a}e1  \textit{fd}8

This is a perfect example of how Black should arrange his pieces. The whole army is well coordinated, and there are no real weaknesses. It is very difficult for White to make any meaningful progress.

27.\textit{e}e4  \textit{d}d6

Black does not wish to allow the knight to come to c5, but he has no problem exchanging it.

28.\textit{f}2  \textit{f}5 29.\textit{x}d6

½–½

It seems that Anand considered it pointless to try and convert his extra pawn in this position.
Here Black must make a very important choice. He can acquiesce to a queen exchange with B231) 18...\texttt{W}xg2↑, which will enable him to regain one of the lost pawns at the expense of a queen exchange. Alternatively he can keep the queens on the board with B232) 18...\texttt{W}h5, while remaining two pawns down. The choice will depend on one's personal taste as well as the specific circumstances such as the identity of one's opponent and match/tournament tactics.

B231) 18...\texttt{W}xg2↑ 19.\texttt{W}xg2 \texttt{A}xd3 20.\texttt{A}e3

This endgame has been tested many times at the highest level. The majority of games have ended in draws, although from time to time White succeeds in converting his extra pawn to victory. At 2700 level, this is probably quite satisfactory for both sides. White obtains modest winning chances at virtually zero risk, while Black knows that he will stand a good chance of drawing a high percentage of games.

Broadly speaking, there are two main plans that Black can employ. The first is to exchange a pair of pawns on the queenside with ...b4. This helps to undermine White's control over the centre (especially the d4-square), as well as increasing the range of his bishops. The second plan involves focusing on the kingside. Black will reposition his light-squared bishop on the a8-h1 diagonal and later push his h-pawn to h4, perhaps after having placed his king on f7. We will see plenty of examples of both plans over the coming pages.

At the present moment, Black normally chooses between B2311) 20...\texttt{A}fe8 and B2312) 20...\texttt{A}e4↑.

In Frolyanov – Thorfinnsson, Differdange 2008, Black tried the immediate: 20...b4 21.\texttt{A}d4 \texttt{A}c4?! This manoeuvre looks slightly dubious; it looks better to improve the kingside first. 21...\texttt{A}fe8 22.\texttt{A}d2 f6 transposes to line B2311), and would have been a wiser choice.

22.\texttt{A}d2 \texttt{A}d5↑ 23.f3 \texttt{A}c8 24.\texttt{A}e4

In Shirov – Karjakin, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007, Black adopted a ‘wait and see’ strategy,
which allowed White to improve his position. The game proceeded with:

21...f6 22.b6 b8 23.ex8+ ex8 24.b3 c4

24...c4† 25.f3 d5 26.f2 c4 27.e3 is also better for White.

25.d1 e8 26.e3 f7

Perhaps it was not too late to consider 26...b4!? as 27.d4 could be met by 27.e8.

27.a5 e6 28.a3

If we compare the above diagram with the position from eight moves ago, it becomes clear that Black’s opening strategy has failed. White has steadily improved his position, and can continue to do so as Black has very few prospects for counterplay. I would strongly advise the reader to play through the rest of this game, as Shirov’s technique is absolutely first class.

28.c8 29.f3 c7 30.d8 c8 31.b7 c7 32.d6+ xd6 33.xd6

White has no qualms about playing an ending with opposite-coloured bishops. The presence of rooks makes a big difference in reducing the drawish tendencies, especially when the rook in question is as active as the one on d6.

33.c8 34.f2 c7 35.b6 d7 36.g4 c6 37.b8 g6 38.a8 e6 39.d4 h5

This weakens some kingside squares, although if Black continued to wait then the pawn might have become a target on h7.

40.h4 e7 41.a7 d7 42.g3 e6 43.f4 e8 44.gxh5 gxh5 45.f5!

Taking the opportunity to invade, as there are no useful discovered checks.

45.d6† 46.g6 c6 47.f4 c4† 48.xh5 d5† 49.h6 f5 50.e3 f3 51.g6 e4 52.g7 h5 53.xf6 d3 54.a8† d7 55.a7† c6 56.a6† d5 57.a8 e4 58.xd8† e4 59.g5 h2 60.c5 g2† 61.f6 e4 62.d4† f3 63.a4 xxb2 64.a5 a2 65.b4 c5 66.f5 e8 67.xc4 bxc4 68.g7 e4 69.f6 g4† 70.f8 1–0

This was a perfect demonstration of White’s chances, which also illustrated the need for Black to formulate an active plan instead of merely sitting and defending.

22.b6

This is the latest try. The previously played move was:

22.d4

Stellwagen – Harikrishna, Wijk aan Zee 2008, continued:

22...bxc3 23.xc3 f6 24.ad1 xe1 25.xe1 e7 26.f3 e7 27.g4

This is not forced, but perhaps Stellwagon wished to establish a pawn here before Harikrishna played...h5 himself.

27.h5 28.h3 hxg4 29.hxg4 b5

The bishop pair compensates for the pawn deficit, and Black was able to hold the draw without too many worries.

22.xe1

I slightly prefer the text over the alternative:

22.c8 23.xe8†
White’s extra pawn gives him the edge, but Black’s bishops provide good drawing chances.

23...\textit{Exe}1 \textit{Ab}8 24...\textit{Ax}a5 \textit{bxc}3 25...\textit{xc}3

White has more or less won a tempo compared to Stellwagen – Harikrishna. In that game Black’s f-pawn was already on f6, while the placement of the rook on b8 rather than d8 changes very little. Obviously the difference can only help White’s chances, but the question is whether it can significantly boost his winning chances.

25...f6 26...\textit{e}4 \textit{if}8

26...\textit{ie}7 27...\textit{f}3 \textit{f}7 looks like a sensible alternative, when it is not easy for White to make use of his extra tempo. The game might continue 28...\textit{Ad}1 \textit{Ad}8 29...\textit{As}a5 \textit{Ad}5 30...\textit{Cc}3 \textit{Ad}7 31...\textit{Gb}6 (31...f5 looks equal) 31...f5 32...\textit{Xd}7 \textit{Xd}7. In this position I would evaluate Black’s drawing chances as being higher than White’s winning chances.

27...\textit{Ac}8

Shirov – Leko, Morelia/Linares 2008, instead saw: 27...\textit{Cc}4

The bishop has moved before being forced to do so. Leko’s idea was to provoke a weakening of White’s queenside. Here I think that White should have played:

28.a3!N

Instead the game continued 28...\textit{b}3 \textit{Gb}5 29...\textit{Aa}5 \textit{Ec}8 30...\textit{Cc}3 \textit{Cc}6, when Black had an advantage in piece coordination as well as the two bishops. The positioning of the pawn on b3 is significant because it prevents either of White’s minor pieces from enjoying any stability on the c3-square. The game was soon agreed drawn after: 31...\textit{Ed}1 \textit{Ff}7 32...\textit{Ce}2 h5 33...\textit{Cc}1 \textit{Ad}7 34...\textit{Xc}8 \textit{Xc}8 35...\textit{Cc}3 \textit{Ad}6 36...\textit{Ff}2 g5 37...\textit{Ec}3 h4 38.gxh4 \textit{Xh}2 1/2–1/2

After my suggested improvement, the game might continue:

28...\textit{Ff}7

Another possibility is 28...\textit{Ed}8 29...\textit{Cc}1 \textit{Gb}5 30...\textit{Aa}5 \textit{Ed}7 31...g4, with a slight edge to White.

29...\textit{Ed}1 \textit{Ec}6 30...g4?

I do not see a clear path to equality for Black, although of course it will take a great deal of skill for White to prove anything. Returning to the main line, we will follow the game Shirov – Aronian, Linares/Morelia 2008.

28...\textit{Ed}1 \textit{Cc}4 29...\textit{Aa}3

This is the correct pawn, for reasons described in the previous note.

29...\textit{Cc}5

Black should cover the seventh rank against a rook invasion.

30...\textit{Cc}6 31...\textit{Ed}3

White consolidates the position with a couple of simple moves.

31...\textit{Ee}8 32...\textit{Ed}4
Chapter 8 - Marshall: 12.d3

Let us recap the purpose of this move. Black intends to relocate this bishop to a more secure home on c6. He will leave the queenside the way it is, and instead focus on improving his position on the kingside with moves like ...f6, ...\( \text{h}5\)-\( \text{h}4 \).

21.f3

21.\( \text{g}f1 \) has been tried a few times, but so far White has failed to show anything. Two games have continued: 21...\( \text{c}6 \) 22.\( \text{d}2 \) f6 23.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 24.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 25.\( \text{ae}1 \) \( \text{e}2 \) 26.\( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 27.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{xe}1 \) 28.\( \text{xe}1 \) g5 29.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 30.\( \text{e}3 \) h5 (Black has achieved a standard position) 31.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 32.\( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 33.\( \text{xc}5 \) a5 Black drew this position easily in both Bacrot - Aronian, Dresden 2008, and Karjakin - Kobalia, Al Ain 2008.

21...\( \text{c}6 \) 22.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 23.\( \text{d}4 \)

In Leko - Sargissian, Yerevan 2008, White decided to place the knight on d4 instead of the bishop.

Play proceeded with: 23.\( \text{b}3 \) f6 24.\( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 25.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 26.\( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{f}7 \):

This is a typical set-up for Black. White finds it hard to achieve anything on the queenside, while Black is planning ...h5-h4 and keeps a very flexible position. After the further 27.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 28.\( \text{ed}1 \) h5 Black had obtained a normal position, and went on to draw without any great problems.
23...h5

This is my preferred move order, although generally speaking these positions are more about plans than precise move orders. Black has also tried:
23...exf1 24.exf1 f6

Now in Bacrot – Sargissian, Evry 2008, White found a very nice plan.
25.df1!

The knight is headed for b4 where it will exert strong pressure against the enemy queenside. In Leko – Naiditsch, Dortmund 2008, White got nowhere with 25.df2 h5 26.de4 df8 27.e2 df7, at which point he found nothing better than the opposite bishop endgame followed by a swift handshake:
28.c5 exd5 29.exd5 e7 30.d4 a5 31.b3 \(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\).

Bacrot’s idea is much more potent, and in the game Black was unable to solve the problems with which he was confronted. The game continued:
25...h5 26.b6 e8?!

Better would have been 26...e7 27.f2 df7 when White has to look for a different plan.
27.e3 df7 28.d2 h4 29.d1 db8

If the bishop moves to a different diagonal with 29...df8, White will be able to consider 30.g4 or even 30.eh4?!

Perhaps 29...hxg3?! 30.hxg3 df8 could have been considered.

30.dc2!

Now the knight is ready to jump to b4, putting a lot of pressure on the queenside and (indirectly) the seventh rank. The game is far from over, but it has certainly become less pleasant for Black.
30...g5 31.eh4 exh4 32.dd4 e8 32...h3 33.eh4 is also unpleasant.
33.db4 da8 34.f4 a5 35.da6

White was in full control and went on to convert his advantage.
24.df2 f6 25.exf1 e8 26.df1

White tries for the same manoeuvre that we saw in Bacrot – Sargissian in the note to Black’s 23rd move above. However, we will see that Black can frustrate his opponent’s ambitions. We will follow the model game:
Leko – Aronian, Yerevan 2008. I suggest that the reader pays close attention to this and other games by Aronian in this ending, as the Armenian seems to have an extremely finely tuned understanding of the black position.

26...\textit{f}7 27.\textit{e}3 \textit{d}8

This is the correct file for the rook. One of Black's problems in the Bacrot – Sargissian game was that he was unable to challenge the white rook on the open d-file, so he should occupy it himself in good time. It does not matter so much if White controls the e-file, as the black king can easily cover the entry squares from f7.

28.a3 \textit{c}7 29.\textit{e}1 \textit{d}7 30.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}6!

The bishop keeps a watchful eye on the important b4-square. Now 31.\textit{b}4 would be as good as a draw offer in view of 31...\textit{x}b4, so Leko continues to manoeuvre.

31.\textit{e}3 \textit{f}8 32.h3 \textit{g}6 33.\textit{g}4 \textit{h}6

I would expect this to be the more appealing option for the majority of players. It is one thing to accept a slightly inferior endgame in which you can hold a draw against a 2700-rated opponent, but in a typical tournament situation most of us prefer to keep some winning chances as well.

19.\textit{e}3 \textit{h}3

Black should not be in too much of a hurry to regain material. This can be seen after 19...\textit{x}d3?! 20.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}5 21.\textit{c}6!:
Black's queenside is in trouble, and so far he has not been able to create enough play on the opposite flank. Two moves have been tried:

a) 21...e6 22.dxe6 d5 23.b6!
   23.a4 f3 24.c5 25.d4 f5 gives Black counterplay.
   23...e5 24.f5 25.dxe4 dxe4 is winning for White.
   26.d4 c5
   No better is: 26...f4 27.d4 c8 28.g5
d7 29.g4+-
   27.d4! xd4+ 28.cxd4 c2 29.ed1
   White had obtained a decisive advantage, which he soon converted in Shirov - Jakovenko, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

b) 21...h3?!
   This is a tricky move, but White can remain top. We will follow the game Stellwagen - Pashikian, Yerevan 2007.

22.a4!
White must avoid 22.dxe6? c5! (22...hxg3? followed by ...xd2 is clearly better for Black, but the text is even stronger) 23.xc5 xd2 24.c6 d5! when Black wins. Note that the tricky 25.e8? can be refuted by 25...d1+ 26.e1 f3 mating.

22...b8 23.axb5 axb5 24.a5 d7 25.c5

25...g6
25...xc5 26.xc5 f8± might be the lesser evil for Black, but if he wants this kind of endgame he should go for it earlier. Compared with line B231), the removal of the a-pawns definitely helps White as the b5-pawn will be a target.

26.g5 d3?!
   Again Black should have tried to defend the (admittedly unpleasant) endgame arising after 26...hgx5 27.xg5±.

27.d4 f6 28.d5 h8 29.b3+
   29.f1 also looks very good. In any case, White is firmly in control and over the next few moves he succeeds in coordinating his army fully.

29...xe8 30.e1 c5 31.c5 xe1+ 32.e1
d2 33.e4 h5 34.g2 d6
   Black loses after 34...xh2 35.h3! c8 36.e7 g8 37.e4!, with ideas of c5 or even xd6†.

35.h3 c8 36.e2
   Black's pieces continue to be driven back, and the game is soon over.

36.g5 37.e6 xe6 38.xe6 b8 39.h4
g6 40.d5 1-0
   A very nice performance by Stellwagen.

20.h1
White can also consider:

20.c6 e6
   Worse is 20...e8? 21.h1 (21.b7 also leads to a white advantage, e.g. 21...c7
22. \( \text{Wh}1 \) with similar play to the main line
21... \( \text{d}d7 \) 22. \( \text{d}d2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 23. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 24. \( \text{d}4 \), with a clear advantage to White.
21. \( \text{d}d2 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 22. \( \text{xa}6 \) \( \text{h}3 \) 23. \( \text{e}4 \)
23. \( \text{f}3 \)?? loses after 23... \( \text{xg}3 \) 24. \( \text{hxg}3 \) \( \text{g}3 \)† 25. \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) etc.
23... \( \text{f}5 \) 24. \( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{h}8 \)
24... \( \text{a}8 \) 25. \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{fxe}4 \) 26. \( \text{dxe}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 27. \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{xb}3 \) 28. \( \text{axb}3 \) leads to a strange position which I consider about equal in view of
28... \( \text{x}e4 \) 29. \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}3 \) 30. \( \text{xd}8 \) \( \text{xd}1 \) 31. \( \text{xd}1 \) \( \text{xd}8 \). White has four pawns for the bishop, but none of them are far advanced.
At the same time Black can hardly hope for more than a draw, so I think it is more interesting to consider the slightly riskier but more ambitious text move, which safeguards the king from any annoying checks.

25. \( \text{f}4 \)!
White must be very precise, otherwise he could easily fall into trouble as illustrated by the following lines:
25. \( \text{g}5 \)? \( \text{fxe}4 \) 26. \( \text{dxe}4 \) \( \text{xf}2 \)! 27. \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{xf}h2 \)† wins.
25. \( \text{ad}1 \)! \( \text{fxe}4 \) 26. \( \text{dxe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 27. \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{h}5 \) is also quite depressing for White.
The other possibility is 25. \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{g}3 \) 26. \( \text{fxg}3 \) \( \text{xd}5 \). In material terms White is alright, but his weak kingside could be a problem. I would rate Black's chances as superior.
25... \( \text{a}8 \)

25... \( \text{fxe}4 \)? 26. \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{xf}4 \) 27. \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{de}8 \) 28. \( \text{f}3 \) wins for White.
26. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{h}6 \)?
26... \( \text{fxe}4 \) 27. \( \text{g}5 \)! \( \text{d}7 \) 28. \( \text{dxe}4 \) looks more pleasant for White.
27. \( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{fxe}4 \) 28. \( \text{dx}e4 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 29. \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{e}7 \)
There is no real attack after: 29... \( \text{xf}4 \)? 30. \( \text{ex}d6 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 31. \( \text{ae}1 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 32. \( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{d}1 \)† 33. \( \text{f}1 \) +–
30. \( \text{f}1 \)
The position is extremely double-edged, and it is hard to say who stands better – perhaps it is dynamically equal. White has five (!) pawns for the piece, but Black's bishop on a8 is tremendously powerful and White's kingside is rather exposed.

20... \( \text{f}5 \)

The threat to push the f-pawn is extremely serious, so White invariably opts for one of the following moves: B2321) 21. \( \text{b}6 \) and B2322) 21. \( \text{f}4 \).

B2321) 21. \( \text{b}6 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
Black would be ill-advised to try 21... \( \text{f}4 \)!
22. \( \text{xd}8 \) \( \text{f}3 \) 23. \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{g}2 \) 24. \( \text{yg}2 \) \( \text{fxg}2 \) 25. \( \text{b}6 \) (but not 25. \( \text{a}5 \)?? \( \text{xf}2 \) 26. \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{hxh}2 \) 27. \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{g}3 \)† when Black wins). White has more than enough material for the queen, and Black has no targets for counterplay. Play might continue
25\ldots \textit{We will now follow the game Smeets – Bacrot, Wijk aan Zee 2008.}

\textbf{23.} \textit{d2!}

This seems to be White's best option, catching up on development and covering the crucial f3-square. Obviously Smeets would have had to calculate (or prepare for at home) the consequences of the bishop taking on g3.

\textbf{23...} \textit{exg3!}

Black should not shy away from the complications. This should lead to approximately equal chances after accurate play from both sides.

\textbf{24.} \textit{Wxd7 f4!}

Threatening mate in two. Note that \textbf{24...} \textit{exh2\#} is no good as after \textbf{25.} \textit{c1xh2+} there are no useful discovered checks.

\textbf{25.} \textit{b7}

The queen has two other squares available. There is not much to choose between them, as the resulting positions are quite similar.

One possibility is: \textbf{25.} \textit{c6 xbd2 26.} \textit{c5 xel} \textbf{27.} \textit{xe1 \textit{d8=}}

The other is: \textbf{25.} \textit{d5 xbd2 26.} \textit{d4} (or \textbf{26.} \textit{c5 xel} \textbf{27.} \textit{ele1 \textit{e8} 28.} \textit{xe8\#} \textit{xe8} \textbf{29.} \textit{c7}

22\ldots \textit{h8}

After \textbf{22.} \textit{d2 f4} White has nothing better than \textbf{23.} \textit{c6}, reaching the same position.
[White is not helped by 29.\(\&e3\) f4 30.\(\&d2\) h6] 29...\(\&g6t\) 30.\(\&h1\) h5 with equality) 26...\(\&xe1\) 27.\(\&xe1\) h6

In both cases, Black has compensation thanks to his opponent's unsafe king.

25...\(\&xd2\) 26.\(\&d4\)

26.f4?! is inadvisable due to 26...\(\&xf4\) 27.\(\&d4\) \(\&g8\). Black defends his king quite easily, but the same cannot be said for White.

26...\(\&g8\)

We have reached a critical position.

27.\(\&e7?\)

Better would have been 27.\(\&h1\) \(\&g4\) 28.\(\&xg7t!\) \(\&xg7\) 29.\(\&b8t\) \(\&g8\) 30.\(\&e5t\) with a repetition. Still, it could not have been easy to foresee Black's next move.

27...\(\&c1!!\)

This elegant move forces White to admit his mistake. Instead the feeble 27...\(\&g5t?\) 28.\(\&h1\) \(\&g2t\) 29.\(\&xg2\) \(\&xe7\) 30.\(\&d5\) would leave White with a decisive advantage.

28.\(\&e1\)

28.\(\&xc1??\) \(\&g5t\) is a forced mate.

28...\(\&f4!\)

Black is not interested in repeating moves, and utilizes the extra tempo to improve his bishop. White is certainly on the defensive, although his position should still be tenable.

29.\(\&e3\)

Returning the exchange looks sensible. White will keep an extra pawn, although his kingside troubles will not yet be over.

An inferior alternative is:

29.\(\&e7?!\) \(\&xh2t!\) 30.\(\&xh2\) \(\&g4t\) 31.\(\&g3\)

31.\(\&g2?\) \(\&h3t\) 32.\(\&g1\) \(\&f3\) and Black wins immediately.

31...\(\&f4t\) 32.\(\&xf4\) \(\&f8t\) 33.\(\&f7\)

Otherwise White gets mated quickly.

33...\(\&xf7t\) 34.\(\&xf7\) \(\&xf7t\) 35.\(\&g4\)

Black should win this ending.

However, it looks as though White can survive with the following: 29.\(\&e6!?\)

29...\(\&g4\) only leads to a repetition after 30.\(\&e7\) \(\&xh2t\) 31.\(\&f1\) \(\&h3t\) 32.\(\&e2\) \(\&g4t\) 33.\(\&f1\) etc.

Black is also unable to win with 29...\(\&xh2t\) 30.\(\&xh2\) \(\&g4t\) 31.\(\&g3\) \(\&f4t\) 32.\(\&xf4\) \(\&xe6\) 33.\(\&g1!!\). Surprisingly White seems to be quite safe as there is no forced mate, while the weakness of g7 prevents Black from including all his pieces in the attack.
30...\texttt{d}e3 30...\texttt{x}e3

Now White can maintain the balance with:
34...\texttt{e}e5!

Black does not seem to have anything better than:
34...\texttt{h}h3t 35...\texttt{e}e2 ...\texttt{g}4t 36...\texttt{f}f1

Neither side can avoid the repetition.

29...\texttt{e}e8!

This looks more challenging than 30...\texttt{g}4t
31...\texttt{h}h1 \texttt{f}f4 32...\texttt{g}g1 \texttt{c}c8 33...\texttt{x}c8 \texttt{x}c8 34...\texttt{x}f4 \texttt{b}b7t 35...\texttt{g}g2 \texttt{d}d8 36...\texttt{d}d4 \texttt{g}g8 37...\texttt{g}g1 \texttt{x}g2 38...\texttt{x}g2 \texttt{f}f7 39...\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{e}e6 40...\texttt{e}e4. White should be alright here, as he has two pawns for the exchange and it is hard for the black rook to become active.

31...\texttt{d}4?!

Under pressure, White commits an inaccuracy. Instead the later game Sutovsky – Jakovenko, Poikovsky 2008, continued 31...\texttt{c}c7 \texttt{h}h6 (31...\texttt{e}e2 32...\texttt{c}c6 forces Black to go back with 32...\texttt{g}g8) 32...\texttt{d}d4 \texttt{e}e7 33...\texttt{g}g3 \texttt{h}h7 34...\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{f}f7 35...\texttt{f}f4 \texttt{e}e7 36...\texttt{e}e5 \texttt{g}g4 37...\texttt{f}f2 \texttt{d}d1 38...\texttt{d}d4 \texttt{e}e2t 1/2–1/2. Black retained enough compensation for the pawn, but not more.
Chapter 8 - Marshall: 12.d3

21.f4

This looks like White's safest move. He stabilises the kingside and does not attempt to win any more material for the time being. To assess this variation we will examine the game Shirov – Jakovenko, Dagomys 2008.

21...Ac7

21...b8 should lead to a transposition, one way or another.

For instance, 22.d4 g5 23.d2 gxf4 24.xf4 25.gxf4 can be found in the note to White’s 22nd below.

Alternatively, 22.d2 xxd3 23.Wb7 xxd6 will be analysed in the note to White’s 23rd.

The most aggressive candidate move is:

21...g5

Unfortunately this looks a little premature.

22.d5t f7

No better is 22...f7 23.d2 c7 (or 23...xf4 24.xf4 xc7 25.f3+) 24.f3 xf3 25.xf3 gxf4 26.xf4, with a clear advantage.

23.xf7t xf7 24.fxg5

I analysed a few other moves, but the text seems to be best.

24.f4 25.xf4 xf4 26.d2 xd3 27.xf4 xf4 28.e4 g4t 29.g3 xg5 30.ad1 f3

White stands clearly better, although Black still has some chances to save the game.

22.d2

White has an interesting alternative available in:


24...xf4 25.gxf4 g4† 26.d2 xf4† 27.e2

Upon first impressions White’s king position looks hideous, but it can hide on d3 where it will not be so easy to reach. Possible continuations include:

a) 27.xd4??

This is fun, but perhaps not quite sound.

28.cxd4 xd4 29.g1t h8

29...g4† 30.e3!

30.e6
Preventing a check on e8. 
30...\(\text{xg}4\)+ 31.\(\text{ex}xg4\) \(\text{fx}xg4\) 32.\(\text{e}f1\) \(\text{e}x\text{f}1\) \(\text{e}x\text{b}2\)+ 34.\(\text{d}2\) 
White keeps some winning chances.

b) 27...\(\text{Wh}6\)!
This looks much more reliable. Now the white king can hardly settle on d3 in view of ...\(\text{f}4\) and ...\(\text{d}5\)\(\text{t}\).
28.\(\text{g}1\)\(\text{t}\) \(\text{h}8\) 29.\(\text{e}e1\) \(\text{h}5\)+ 30.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{f}4\) is hardly an improvement for White.
30...b4!
Black should be fine here, as it will be difficult for the white king to find a reliable shelter.

22...\(\text{ex}d3\) 23.\(\text{b}b3\)
White may do well to consider 23.\(\text{b}b7\)??N, e.g. 23...\(\text{d}6\) 24.\(\text{b}b3\) (but not 24.\(\text{xa}6\)?? \(\text{ex}d2\)+) 24...\(\text{e}b8\) 25.\(\text{c}e6\) \(\text{e}8\) 26.\(\text{xe}8\)+ \(\text{xe}8\) 27.\(\text{d}4\)+. White’s extra pawn gives him slightly better prospects in the endgame, although his kingside weaknesses could provide a source of counterplay for Black.

23...\(\text{g}4\)!
Threatening to trap the queen in a very humiliating way.

24.\(\text{g}2\)
24.\(\text{d}4\) leads to a draw after 24...\(\text{ex}d4\) 25.\(\text{ex}d4\) \(\text{f}3\) 26.\(\text{e}7\) \(\text{f}7\) 27.\(\text{e}8\)+ \(\text{f}8\) 28.\(\text{e}7\) etc.

The alternative was: 24.\(\text{c}6\) \(\text{f}3\) 25.\(\text{e}6\)+ \(\text{h}8\) 26.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{e}4\)
Black’s bishop is now ideally placed.
27.\(\text{e}7\) \(\text{e}8\) 28.\(\text{c}xc7\) \(\text{h}3\) 29.\(\text{e}e2\) \(\text{x}e3\) 30.\(\text{a}e1\) \(\text{xe}3\) 31.\(\text{hx}e3\) \(\text{xe}3\) 32.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{h}3\)+
Black forces a perpetual, for instance: 33.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{g}2\)+ 34.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{g}3\)+ 35.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{d}3\)+ 36.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{b}1\)+ 37.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{d}3\)+ etc.

24...\(\text{f}3\) 25.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{a}8\)!
Black retreats the bishop out of harm’s way.

26.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{d}6\) 27.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{f}7\)
Black has good compensation. Compared with variations such as B22), the weakening of White’s kingside makes a big difference.

28.\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{h}6\)!
This is rather an aggressive plan. Considering that White has just spent a tempo moving a kingside pawn, I would have been tempted to focus on the centre with either 28...\(\text{b}6\)N or 28...\(\text{d}8\)N, both moves that deserve to be tested in practice.

29.\(\text{h}2\) \(\text{g}5\)!
This is the consistent follow-up to Black’s previous move.

30.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{g}x\text{h}4\) 31.\(\text{g}x\text{h}4\) \(\text{g}6\)
There now follows a forcing sequence, leading to an endgame in which Black narrowly manages to maintain the balance.

32.\(\text{c}7\) \(\text{g}2\)+ 33.\(\text{g}x\text{g}2\)+ \(\text{g}2\) 34.\(\text{g}1\) \(\text{c}7\) 35.\(\text{g}x\text{g}2\)+ \(\text{h}8\) 36.\(\text{c}e6\) \(\text{d}6\) 37.\(\text{e}f8\) \(\text{xf}4\)+ 38.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{e}3\)+ 39.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 40.\(\text{a}1\) \(\text{xf}8\)
When I first saw this position I immediately felt that White should have some way to obtain a winning king and pawn ending. However, after closer examination I was unable to find anything. In any case, this is not an endgame book so I will leave it to the reader to investigate this matter in detail should he wish to. I will leave you with the remainder of the game, which was agreed drawn after eight more moves.

41.b3 \textit{Bc8} 42.J\textit{g8t Bxg8} 43.gxg8t \textit{cj;>xg8} 44.\textit{cj;>g3 cj;>f7} 45.\textit{cj;>f4 cj;>e6} 46.c4 \textit{bxc4} 47.bxc4 a5 48.a4 \textit{cj;>f6} 

\textit{\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}}

Black is drawing this position by one tempo.

Presumably Shirov agreed to a draw after calculating the following line: 49.c5 \textit{d6} 50.c6 \textit{d5} 51.dxf5 \textit{cx6} 52.d5 \textit{h5} 53.d6 \textit{h7} 54.\textit{h7} 55.\textit{h5} 56.\textit{h6} 57.\textit{d5} 58.\textit{d5} 59.\textit{e5} 60.\textit{e5} 61.\textit{e5} 62.\textit{d5} 63.\textit{d5} 64.\textit{b6} \textit{d8}=

\textbf{Conclusion}

It is clear that 12.d3 demands serious attention from proponents of the Marshall gambit. As I mentioned in the introduction, the seemingly more modest advance of the d-pawn can arguably be viewed as the main line amongst the world’s elite. After our recommended option of 12...\textit{e5} followed by the standard 13.\textit{d3}, I decided to provide coverage of two playable alternatives.

Variation A) with 14.\textit{e8} (page 228) looks like a sensible way for Black to increase his lead in development. Following the standard moves: 15.\textit{x e8} 16.d2 \textit{e1} 17.f1 \textit{g6}, we examined three alternatives, of which A3) 18.g3 (page 231) appears clearly strongest. My analysis indicates that White has chances to maintain an advantage, although he will have to walk an extremely narrow path in order to do so. The best practical chance for Black seems to be A32) 18...b4!? (page 232), intending to meet 19.c4 with 19...\textit{f6}??, as seen in Stellwagen – Gustafsson, Germany 2008. The critical continuation seems to be 20.\textit{xc6}, capturing a second pawn. It is hard to reach any definite evaluations in the absence of any practical tests. I have analysed the position as best I can, although I would not be surprised to learn that improvements exist for both sides. According to my own analysis Black’s compensation may not quite be enough, although in a practical game his position ought to be playable against the great majority of opponents.
The second option of B) 14...\(\texttt{h}4\) (page 237) is generally regarded as the main line. After the usual continuation of 15.g3 \(\texttt{h}3\) 16.\(\texttt{xd5}\) cxd5, there seems to be little doubt that B23) 17.\(\texttt{x}d5\) (page 241) is the critical test. Then after 17...\(\texttt{ad8}\) 18.\(\texttt{g}2\), Black must decide between the currently topical endgame variation with B231) 18...\(\texttt{x}g2\), or keeping the queens on the board with B232) 18...\(\texttt{h}5\). Once again I felt it appropriate to cover both options, although I suspect that the majority of Marshall players will prefer the latter, which keeps some winning chances alive in a complex middlegame. At the present time, the black position seems to contain sufficient resources. As with all critical and topical variations, I would advise the reader to pay attention to the latest games as well as conducting his own investigations.
Chapter 9

Marshall: Modern Ideas

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 c6 3. d4 c5 4. d5 a6 5. e2 a4 6. f6 e7 6. e1 b5 7. Bb3 0–0 8. c3 d5 9. exd5 cxd5 10. e5 d5 11. dxe5 c6

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Theoretical Highlights
Theory
A) 12. d4 d6
   A1) 13. e1
   A2) 13. e2
B) 12. xd5
C) 12. g3 d6 13. e1
   C1) 13... f5
   C2) 13... e8

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Introduction
The present chapter is devoted to a variety of sidelines available to White after he accepts the Marshall Gambit.

Strategic Themes
The story is the same as for Chapters 3 and 6; we will be dealing with a disparate collection of variations so I will refer the reader to the theoretical section for a discussion of each individual line.

However, it is worth mentioning that several of the lines in variation A) share a lot of ideas described in the introduction to Chapter 7.

Theoretical Highlights

Alternative retreat squares for the white rook
In this chapter we will see how this piece may attempt to find a better square than e1. The following is an interesting example:

12...cxd5 13.d4 d6 14.e3

This is the justification for the early exchange on d5. White hopes that the rook will be a useful defender along the third rank. The idea used to be popular, but is now out of fashion. More details can be found in line B), page 268.

Here is a second possibility:

12.d4 d6 13.e2!

Here White is hoping that the rook will
prove useful for defending along the second rank. Black can obtain a decent game, but he will need to ‘think outside the box’ as a crude kingside attack is unlikely to succeed. Full details can be found in line A2), page 266.

**White prevents ...h4**

We saw in Chapter 7 that after the standard 12.d4 d6 13.e1, Black could immediately include his most powerful piece in the attack with 13...h4 14.g3 h3. Sometimes White tries to prevent this by shuffling his move order with:

12.g3!?

This is an interesting idea, although of course the drawback is that the text does not contribute to White’s development, and might even be considered a voluntary weakening of his kingside. Nevertheless the game remains quite interesting and double-edged. Full details can be found in line C11), page 270. Black has just played 19...f5!, and went on to win with a beautiful attack.

**Naiditsch – Gustafsson, Dresden 2007**

This position can be found in line C11), page 270. Black has just played 19...f5!, and went on to win with a beautiful attack.

**Anand – Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2008**

This position arises in line C22), page 276. Here it makes little sense for Black to attack along the f-file, as his major pieces already occupy good positions elsewhere. However, Aronian showed that Black can obtain good play with the alternative pawn thrust:

18...h5!

Black went on to win a fine game.
Theory

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 d6 5.0-0 e7 6.e1 b5 7.b3 0-0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.exd5 cxd5 11.exd5 c6

We already learned in Chapter 7 (page 187) that 14.h3? ¤xh3 is unplayable for White.

14...Wh3

It is at this point that White possesses quite a wide choice of alternatives. In Chapter 7 we examined the undoubted main line of 15.£e3, along with what I believe to be the second most theoretically challenging move, 15.£e4. At the present time we will consider the alternatives: A11) 15.£f3, A12) 15.£d3, A13) 15.£e2 and A14) 15.£xd5. The following rare deviations can be dismissed easily.

A11) 15.£f3 Wh4 16.g3

A) 12.d4

We have already encountered this move in Chapter 7, in which a lot of space was devoted to the main lines of 15.£e3 and 15.£e4. When writing that chapter I did not wish to focus on the various deviations on moves 13-15, as I felt that the extra volume material would make an already large chapter into an overbearing one.

A12) 13.£e1 Wh4 14.g3

At this point we already know that the main line is A11) 13.£e1, but White sometimes tries A12) 13.£e2 as well.

A1) 13.£e1 Wh4 14.g3

15.a4?! looks premature in view of 15...£g4 16.£d3 £ae8 17.£c3 £f4! 18.£f1 Wh5 19.£d1 £h3† 20.£g2, Garcia Martinez - Plachetka, Polanica Zdroj 1975, 20...£xd1! N 21.£xd1 £f5! when White has no good defence.

15.£d2? is poor. Play continues 15...£g4:

a) In Quinn - Hussain, Istanbul 2000, White was swiftly annihilated after 16.f3 £xg3 17.hxg3 £xg3† 18.£h1 £f4 19.£e2 £ae8.

b) 16.£f3 Wh5 (16...£ae8 17.£xe8 £xe8 18.£d2 18...Wh5 19.£g2 £e6 20.£c2, Fuchs – Van de Haar, Bad Neustadt 1990, 20...£f4!N is winning for Black, but White could have
obtained a satisfactory position with the earlier improvement: 18.\(g5\) N) 17.\(xd5\) (17.\(g2\), Bodrogi – N.Toth, Nyiregyhaza 2005, should be met by 17...\(ae8\) with an excellent position) 17...\(xd5\) 18.\(g2\) \(ae8\) 19.\(xe3\) \(xe3\) 20.\(xe3\) \(f5\) White faced insurmountable problems in Blaszczak – Wozniak, Krakow 1998.

A11) 15.\(g3\)
This commits the queen to an exposed position rather early.

15...\(g4\) 16.\(g2\) \(h5\) 17.\(e3\)
17.\(d2\) \(ae8\) is difficult for White.

17...\(g3\) 18.\(f1\) \(f5!\)
18...\(ae8?!\) would be wrong, as after 19.\(d2\) \(g4\) we have actually reached note b) to White’s 18th in line A1) of Chapter 7 (15.\(e3\) \(g4\) 16.\(d3\) \(ae8\) 17.\(d2\) \(h5\) 18.\(f1\)) except that it is White to move instead of Black!

19.\(d2!\)

Without this move White would be in serious trouble.

19...\(f4\) 20.\(xf4!\) \(xf4\) 21.\(xf3\) \(xf3\) 22.\(d1\)
White regains some material to reach an interesting ‘rook vs two minor pieces’ position.

22...\(f7\) 23.\(xf3\) \(xf3\)
The position is balanced, Bromberger – Vajda, Budapest 2007

A12) 15.\(d3\)
With this move White accelerates his standard queen transfer.

15...\(g4\)
15...\(f5\) is another possibility.

16.\(f1\)
16.\(e3\) reaches the standard position dealt with in line A) of Chapter 7 (page 188).

16...\(ae8?!\)
Black plays to increase his lead in development, not fearing a queen exchange. White’s idea is to meet 16...\(h5\) with 17.\(d2\).

17.\(xe8\)
Once again White can transpose to more mainstream paths with 17.\(e3\) \(h5\) (see variation A1 of Chapter 7, page 188).

17...\(xf1\) 18.\(xf1\) \(exe8\)

Black has a big lead in development, but will have to do something with it before White can coordinate his pieces. We will follow the game Volokitin – Svidler, Foros 2008.
19.\textit{\textbf{g2}}

Black was threatening mate in two.

19...\textit{\textbf{f5}} 20.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d2} e1}} 21.\textit{\textbf{a4 b4}}

Black should keep the a-file closed to prevent the activation of the enemy rook.

22.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d3 e4}} 23.\textit{\textbf{c2}}}

After 23.\textit{\textbf{c4?! a5}} White is almost paralysed. The text leads to a forcing sequence.

23...\textit{\textbf{\textsf{d6†}}} 24.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{xel}}}!

After 24.fxe3? \textit{\textbf{\textsf{e2†}}} White loses his valuable bishop.

24...\textit{\textbf{xf4†}} 25.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{xf4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textsf{xa1}}} 26.\textit{\textbf{c4}}

White has enough compensation thanks to Black's vulnerable queenside pawns.

26...\textit{\textbf{\textsf{a2}}} 27.\textit{\textbf{c5!}}

Fixing the pawn on c6.

27...\textit{\textbf{b8}} 28.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{c1 a1}}}

Svidler decided to force a draw. There was little to be gained from 28...\textit{\textbf{\textsf{f8?!}} 29.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e4 a4}} 30.\textit{\textbf{xc6 a1}} 31.\textit{\textbf{d2}}, when it is Black who must be careful.}

29.\textit{\textbf{e3 a2}} 30.\textit{\textbf{c1 a1}} 31.\textit{\textbf{e3}}

\(1/2-1/2\)

\textbf{A13) 15.\textit{\textbf{w2}}}

This is less common than some of the other deviations, but has been tested by a few very strong players.

15...\textit{\textbf{d7}} 16.\textit{\textbf{f1 a8}}

16...\textit{\textbf{h5}} looks like a valid alternative. The position after 17.\textit{\textbf{d2 a8}} has been tested twice at GM level:

a) The game Kasimdzhanov – Bacrot, Noyon 2008, soon resulted in a forced draw after:

18.f3 \textit{\textbf{\textsf{f4†}}} 19.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{xe8 a8}} 20.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{e4} Without}} this move White would soon be crushed on the kingside. 20...\textit{\textbf{\textsf{h3†}}} 21.\textit{\textbf{g2}} (21.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{h1?}} is refuted by the beautiful 21...\textit{\textbf{\textsf{xg3!}} 22.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{xg3 \textit{\textbf{\textsf{e1!}}}}}}}) 21...\textit{\textbf{\textsf{f4†}} 22.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{g1}} \textit{\textbf{\textsf{h3†}}}} 23.\textit{\textbf{\textsf{g2}} 1/2-1/2}

b) In Volokitin – Fressinet, Crete 2007, White instead tried:

18.\textit{\textbf{e4 h3}} 19.\textit{\textbf{d1 f5}}

19...\textit{\textbf{xf1?}} turns out badly after: 20.\textit{\textbf{xe5 d3}} 21.f3 \textit{\textbf{f5 22.\textit{\textbf{xe8 a8}} 23.\textit{\textbf{f4†}}} 24.\textit{\textbf{c5†}}

20.\textit{\textbf{d3 g6}} 21.\textit{\textbf{d2 f5}}

Black has arranged his pieces harmoniously.

22.\textit{\textbf{f3}}

After 22.f3 h5 Black has compensation.

22...\textit{\textbf{f4}}

22...\textit{\textbf{e6}} 23.\textit{\textbf{g2 a8}} was another way to
maintain the balance, while 23...h5!? also deserves attention.

23...xf4 xf4 24.d2 h3† 25.g2 xe4 26.xe4 xe4† 27.xe4 xe4† 28.xh3 e8

There was no way for White to make use of his extra pawn.

17.e8 xe8 xf1† 18.xf1 e8

Black retains a significant development advantage which ensures that his compensation lasts into the ending. We will now follow the game Caruana – Sargissian, Merida 2008.

19.d2

19.g2 reaches the same position as in line A1), except that the black bishop is on d7 instead of g4. I do not see any special way for Black to benefit from this, so I suggest 19...f5 transposing.

19...b6 20.e3

The other obvious candidate is:

20.a3

This is playable, but it allows Black to damage the queenside structure at an opportune moment.

20...h3† 21.g1 e2 22.d1 xa3

Not so good is: 22...a5 23.c2 g4 24.d3 e7 25.e1 xe1† 26.xe1±

23.bxa3 g6

This looks better than 23...h5 24.c2 c4 25.e1 xe1† 26.xe1 xa3 27.e4, although even here Black's position should still be tenable.

23...f8!? looks quite alright though.

24.g5

24.h6 a5 25.c1 gives Black no problems after 25...a4 24.f4 d5 25.d2 b6.

24...a5

24...d5 is also quite playable.

25.d8 a4 26.xa4 bxa4

It is extremely doubtful that White can make his extra pawn count for anything here.

20..d5 21.xd5 cxd5 22.d2 a5 23.b3 a4 24.c5 f5

Black should be fine, as it is hard for White to make anything of his extra pawn.

25.e2

25.b3 a3! This fixes the a2-pawn as a potential weakness. 26.e1 f6 27.f3 f7 28.f2 h5 29.b7 f8 does not bring White any closer to a win.

25...f6 26.d2 g5 27.b3 a3 28.b4 f7 29.d3 g6 30.b1 h5!

Black's counterplay on the kingside is sufficient to keep White distracted. In the game Caruana seems to become overambitious.
The momentum has begun to swing in Black's favour, and he actually went on to win the game.

A14) 15.\texttt{Bxd5 cxd5} 16.\texttt{Be3}

White can also try:

16.\texttt{Wf3}

Unlike line A11) with 15.\texttt{Wf3}, the queen now threatens to capture on d5.

16...\texttt{Af5}!

16...\texttt{Ag4?!} 17.\texttt{Wxd5} is less good.

17.\texttt{Wxd5}

17.\texttt{Qd2} \texttt{Ae8} would give Black a very comfortable game.

17...\texttt{Ae8}! 18.\texttt{Qd2}

In Mueller – Kinder, Dresden 2004, White suffered a disaster after 18.\texttt{Qe3 Wg4} 19.\texttt{Wg2} \texttt{Exe3} 20.\texttt{Qxe3 Ae4} 21.\texttt{f3 Afxf3} 22.\texttt{Wf2 Ad5} 23.\texttt{Qd2 Ee8} 24.\texttt{Aa4 h5!} 25.axb5 h4 26.\texttt{Qf1 axb5} 27.\texttt{Ee1}? (a final blunder, although the position was already beyond salvation) 27...\texttt{Ee4} 0–1.

18.\texttt{Wf4} 19.\texttt{Qa3}!

Other moves lead to serious problems for White.

19.\texttt{Exe8? Exe8} 20.\texttt{f3 Wg6} is winning for Black, who threatens both ...\texttt{xb2} and ...\texttt{Axg3}.

19.\texttt{Wd6? Exe1+} 20.\texttt{Wxe1 Wd1} 21.\texttt{Wc7} (21.\texttt{Wc5 Ad7}!–) 21...\texttt{Wd6} 22.\texttt{Qa3 Wxa1} 23.\texttt{Qf1 Ah3+} 24.\texttt{Qe2 Wxb2+} 0–1, Szekely – Adorjan, Hungary 1968.

In Svensson – Illincic, Balatonbereny 1988, White suffered another painful defeat after 19.\texttt{f3? Wg6} 20.\texttt{Qa3 Axg3} 21.\texttt{hxg3 Wxg3+} 22.\texttt{Qh1 Wf3+} 23.\texttt{Qg1 Qe6} 24.\texttt{Qxe6 Wg3+} 25.\texttt{Qh1 fxe6!} 26.\texttt{Wc6 Wh4+} 27.\texttt{Qg1 Qh3} 28.\texttt{Qe1?} (better was 28.f4 although after 28...\texttt{Wg3+} 29.\texttt{Qf2} 30.\texttt{Qg1 Wxd2 White will hardly survive as his knight on a3 is completely out of play) 28...\texttt{Wg5+} 29.\texttt{Qf2 Wg2+} 30.\texttt{Qe3}

30...\texttt{Ag4!}–+

19...\texttt{Qxa3}

Black could also consider: 19...\texttt{Wg6} 20.\texttt{Qb7} \texttt{Qxa3} 21.\texttt{bxa3 Qe4++}

20.\texttt{f3 Ae6} 21.\texttt{fxg4 Qxd5} 22.\texttt{bxa3}

It is easy to predict a draw, Dias – Alves, corr. 1999.

16.\texttt{Qg4} 17.\texttt{Wd3 Aa8} 18.\texttt{Qd2 Qe6}

It is possible to reach this position by several different move orders, as White can take on d5 on any move while going through the main line with 15.\texttt{Qe3} etc.

19.\texttt{Qf1}

White does not have time for:

19.\texttt{Qd4?} bxa4 20.\texttt{Qxa4 f5} 21.\texttt{Qf1 f4} 21...\texttt{Wh5?!} is also very strong, and transposes
to the note to White’s 20th below.

22.\text{\texttt{\texttt{xhx3}}}
\begin{itemize}
\item 22.\text{\texttt{xfxf4 xfxf1}} \rightarrow 23.\text{\texttt{xfxf4 gxh4}} \text{h3+},
\end{itemize}
\begin{itemize}
\item 22.\text{\texttt{xhx3}} 23.\text{\texttt{Exa6 fxe3}} 24.\text{\texttt{fxf3 xf3}} 25.\text{\texttt{fxf3 e7}} 26.\text{\texttt{a1 g5}} 27.\text{\texttt{e1 f7}}
\end{itemize}

Theoretically White can claim material equality, but in reality Black’s bishops are far too powerful.

19...\text{\texttt{h5}}

\textbf{20.f3}

20.f4 \texttt{f6} 21.\text{\texttt{f2}} is rather anti-positional, and Black has excellent compensation after any sensible move such as 21...\texttt{g6}, 21...\texttt{f5} or even 21...\texttt{a5}?

White does not have time for 20.a4? bxa4 21.\texttt{xa4}, when 21...f5 gives Black an extremely powerful attack, as shown by the following examples:

\begin{itemize}
\item a) 22.\texttt{Exa6 f4} 23.\texttt{xf4 xe1} 24.\texttt{xe1 xf4} 25.gxf4 \texttt{e8} 26.\texttt{a1 h3} 27.f3 h6! was winning for Black in Stern – Read, corr. 1999.
\item b) 22.f4 \texttt{e8} 23.\texttt{f2 xe1} 24.\texttt{xe1 xa4} 25.\texttt{xe6+ f7} 26.\texttt{xd6 d1+} 27.\texttt{f1 h6} (27...\texttt{f3!} would have won even more quickly) 28.\texttt{d8+ h7} 29.\texttt{xd5 h3} 0–1, Kindermann – Lukacs, Budapest 1987.
\end{itemize}

\textbf{20...\texttt{h3}}

20...\texttt{f6} regains the sacrificed pawn, but consigns Black to a slightly worse endgame after 21.\texttt{e2 xf3} 22.\texttt{xf3 xf3} 23.\texttt{fxf3 xf3} 24.\texttt{g2}.

\textbf{21.\texttt{f2}}

\begin{itemize}
\item 21...\texttt{xe8}
\end{itemize}

I would be tempted to consider 21...\texttt{c8?! Nc6}, aiming at the queenside.

\textbf{22.\texttt{b3}}

22.a4?!, Fernandes – Damaso, Portugal 1997, should have been met by the standard reaction of 22...bxa4! 23.\texttt{xa4 f5} with excellent attacking chances.

\textbf{22...\texttt{g6} 23.\texttt{ad1}}

23.\texttt{c5 c6 e7} 24.\texttt{d2 h5} does not change the evaluation of the position.

\textbf{23...\texttt{h5}}

We have been following the game: Weigel – Renner, Bad Woerishofen 1993. Black retains healthy compensation for the pawn deficit.
Compared with 13...e2 this has a couple of advantages. One of White's ideas is to use the rook to defend along the second rank. A secondary point is that in certain positions the queen can move to f1 in one move rather than two. The combination of these two factors means that Black is unlikely to break through with a direct attack. Instead we will see how he can obtain a fine game by using a slightly more sophisticated approach.

13...g4

The other main move is 13...h4 14.g3 when Black can choose between 14...h3 and 14...h5. However, we will soon see that the queen can find a useful role elsewhere.

The point of the text is to provoke a slight weakening of the white kingside.

14.f3 f5 15.g3

Black has less to fear from:
15...xd5 cxd5 16...d2 d3

This is not the only playable option:
16...b4 17. xf1 bxc3 18.bxc3 c7 19.e3 f8 20.d2 g6 was unclear in Todorovic – Pavlovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1990.

16...c7?!N would be my own choice. Black remains flexible and later plans ...a5 and...b4, just as Aronian did in the main line.

17.f2

17.e3 h4 18.f4 f5 also gives Black good compensation.

17...b4?

K. Georgiev – Nikolic, Wijk aan Zee 1988, turned out badly for Black after: 17...c7 18.g3 a8 19.f1 g6 20.e3 d7 21.xd5 xg3 22.f6 f6 23.hxg3±

With the text move Black hopes to combine play on both sides of the board.

18.cxb4

After 18. xf1?! xf1 19.xf1 bxc3 20.bxc3 c7 Black regains his pawn with a positional advantage.

18...c7

18...e8 turned out well for Black in Kotronias – De Vreugt, Kavala 2002, after 19. xf1! xf1 20.xf1 b8 21.g3 xB4. However, White could have obtained an edge with 19.b3! c4 20.d2 f6 21.c3±.

18...b8?!N also looks quite playable, e.g. 19. xf1! (19.g3 xb4 20.b3 c4=) 19...xf1 20.xf1 xh2 21.b3 e8 (worse is: 21...b5† 22.e2 e8 23.e3± f4? 24.a4±) 22.xd5 xB4 23.e2 d8 24.b5 with good compensation.

19.xf1

Another possibility was 19.g3 c2 20.xf1 f8 21.b3 xB4 with mutual chances.

19...xf1 20.xf1 xh2
Black had good play for the pawn, Kotronias – I. Sokolov, Elenite 1992.

15...\( \text{c7} \)!

With this move Black hints at a possible sacrifice on g3, while also connecting the rooks and preparing to utilise the c-file in the event that White exchanges on d5.

16.\( \text{d2} \)

This was Anand's choice. Black is not threatening to take on g3 immediately, but he obviously felt it was worth taking the precaution so that he would not be troubled by it in the future. The following examples illustrate how soon the sacrifice can become a real possibility.

16.c4 bxc4 17.\( \text{xc4 eae8} \) Black's initiative is very strong.

16.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d3!} \)

This is often an irritation for White after he develops his knight on d2.

17.\( \text{f2} \)

Forced, in view of 17.\( \text{e1? xg3} \) and 17.\( \text{g2? e3} \).

17...\( \text{e3!!} \)?

Black has the option of forcing a draw with 17...\( \text{e1? xg3} \) 18.\( \text{hg3 e3} \) 19.\( \text{a1} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 20.\( \text{h1 h4} \) (but not 20...\( \text{e8?} \) 21.\( \text{g1!} \)++) 21.\( \text{g1} \) \( \text{g3} \) etc. The text is more ambitious, although White can maintain the balance. Best play continues:

18.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 19.\( \text{e4 c4} \) 20.\( \text{d1 a4} \) 21.\( \text{xe4 xxe4} \) 22.\( \text{d3 e1} \) 23.\( \text{f1 eae8} \) 24.\( \text{xe1 xxe1} \) 25.\( \text{h2 h1} \) 26.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{e1} \)

27.\( \text{h2=} \)

This time Black had better take the draw.

16.a4 \( \text{e8} \)

This is the safest move.

The more combative 16...h5?! can also be considered, when play continues 17.\( \text{a3} \)

h4 (or 17...\( \text{d7} \) 18.\( \text{g5}?! \) 18.g4 \( \text{e6} \) 19.c4 (after 19.\( \text{e1 f4} \) 20.\( \text{xd5 xd5} \) 21.\( \text{hxh4 xxc1} \) 22.\( \text{f4} \) 23.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 24.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{bxa4} \) only Black can hope to be better) 19...\( \text{xc4} \) 20.\( \text{d6 ab8} \) 21.\( \text{xd6 xd6} \) with decent compensation.

17.axb5 axb5 18.\( \text{d2} \)

In Lopez Ruiz – Rodda Romero, corr. 1996, White collapsed with 18.\( \text{c2?? xxc2} \) 19.\( \text{xc2} \) (no better is: 19.\( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{xg3} \) 20.\( \text{hxg3 xg3} \) 21.\( \text{f1 h4} \) 19...\( \text{xc3} \) 20.f4 \( \text{xf4} \) 21.\( \text{a3} \) \( \text{xh2} \) 22.\( \text{hxh2 g3} ? \) 0–1.

18...\( \text{xc3} \) 19.\( \text{hxg3 xg3} \) 20.\( \text{g2} \)

20...\( \text{e1?} \)

This looks dangerous, although ultimately it seems to lead to a draw against correct defence. Black could also consider 20...\( \text{xc3} \) 21.\( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{g2} \) 22.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{e8} \), when I would rate his chances as slightly preferable although the ending is rather double-edged.

21.\( \text{f1 h4} \) 22.\( \text{d2} \)

22.\( \text{h2 g3} \) 23.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{h4} \) is equal.

22.\( \text{xf1} \) 23.\( \text{xf1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 24.\( \text{xd5 cxd5} \)

24...\( \text{d3} \) 25.\( \text{g1 e1} \) 26.\( \text{xe1} \) 27.\( \text{h2 h4} \) is a draw.

25.\( \text{g7} \) 26.\( \text{g2} \) 27.\( \text{g6} \) 28.\( \text{g1 e1} \) 29.\( \text{xe1} \) 30.\( \text{h2 g6} \)

The position is equal.

16...\( \text{d7?} \)
Aronian simply waits. The queen is no longer required on c7 – she has already done her duty by luring the enemy king to an unfavourable square. The most obvious alternative was:

16...\(\text{Ae8}\) 17.a4 \(\text{Cc8}\)!

Preparing to take over the e-file.

18.\(\text{Cd2}\)

18.axb5 \(\text{Exe2}\)†! (this looks more accurate than 18...axb5 19.\(\text{Cd2}\) \(\text{Dd3}\) 20.\(\text{Xe8}\) \(\text{Xe8}\)

21.\(\text{Ce4}\) \(\text{Xe4}\) 22.\(\text{Xe4}\) \(\text{Xe4}\) 23.\(\text{xf3}\)†)

19.\(\text{Xe2}\) \(\text{Xe2}\) 20.\(\text{Xf1 axb5}\)\(\text{f5}\)

18...\(\text{Xd3}\) 19.\(\text{Xe8}\) \(\text{Xe8}\) 20.\(\text{Ce4}\)

20.axb5?? \(\text{Xh3}\)–+

20...\(\text{Xe4}\) 21.\(\text{Xe4}\) \(\text{Xe4}\) 22.\(\text{Cf2}\)

22.axb5?? \(\text{Xh3}\)– wins, while 22.\(\text{Xf3}\) can be met comfortably by 22...\(\text{Xe6}\).

22...\(\text{Xe8}\)

Black has enough activity to counter the enemy bishop pair.

17.\(\text{Xd5}\)

It is hard to suggest another constructive move for White. 17.\(\text{Dd2}\) is bad because of 17...\(\text{d3}\) 18.\(\text{Df1}\) \(\text{Xh3}\) with a dangerous attack.

17...\(\text{Xd5}\) 18.\(\text{Dd2}\)

18...\(\text{d3}\)

Also possible is 18...h5 19.\(\text{Df1}\) \(\text{Xe8}\) when Black has nothing to worry about.

19.\(\text{Df1}\) \(\text{g6}\)

19...\(\text{Wh3}\) 20.\(\text{Xg1}\) \(\text{Xg3}\) 21.\(\text{Xhxg3}\) \(\text{Xg3}\)†

22.\(\text{h1}\) Black needs to take the repetition, as 22...\(\text{Ae8}\)? 23.\(\text{Df1}\)! \(\text{Xf1}\) 24.\(\text{Xf1}\)– sees White defend successfully.

20.\(\text{Df1}\) a5 21.a3

\(\frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}\)

In this balanced position the players agreed to a draw. I would like to underline once again that Black did not hurry to get counterplay, but simply improved his position just as if he was not a pawn down.

B) 12.\(\text{Xd5}\)

This is an important option for us to consider. It has actually been the second most popular move after 12.\(\text{d4}\), although nowadays it is not considered as theoretically challenging as 12.\(\text{d3}\).

12...\(\text{Xd5}\) 13.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{dd6}\) 14.\(\text{Df3}\)

This is the justification for the early exchange on d5. White hopes that the rook will be a useful defender along the third rank. 14.\(\text{Df1}\) \(\text{Wh4}\) 15.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{Wh3}\) reaches line A14).

14...\(\text{Wh4}\) 15.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{f4}\)

I believe this to be the soundest move, although it does give White the option of
repeating the position. If the reader is intent on playing for a win then I would suggest that he investigates 15...g5?!.

16.\textit{Re5}

White gains nothing from 16.\textit{Rg3 \textit{Rf6}} 17.\textit{Rf3} (16.\textit{Re3 \textit{Rf4} repeats and 17.\textit{Rg5? \textit{Rf5} is unplayable for White}) 17...\textit{Rg6}, e.g. 18.\textit{Rd3 \textit{Rg8} 19.\textit{Rd2 \textit{Rg4} when Black has the initiative, Boudy – Rodriguez Cespedes, Cienfuegos 1983.

16...\textit{Rf6} 17.\textit{Re1}

17.\textit{Rf3} \textit{Rf4} repeats.

17...\textit{Rg6} 18.\textit{Rf3}

At this point Black has several routes to a satisfactory game, and the choice is a matter of personal taste.

18...\textit{Re6}

Here are some other examples:

Emms – Adams, Eastbourne 1990, was agreed drawn after: 18...\textit{Rf5} 19.\textit{Re3 b4} 20.\textit{cx \textit{b4} \textit{Rb4} 21.\textit{Rc3 \textit{Re4} 22.\textit{Rg4 \textit{Rxc3} 23.\textit{Rg6 \textit{hxg6} 24.bxc3 \textit{Rd3} 25.\textit{Re1}} \textit{Rf5} 24.f4 (24.gxf4 \textit{Rxf4} wins) 24...\textit{Rg2} 25.\textit{Rg2 \textit{Rf5} 26.\textit{Rf2 \textit{Rf3} 27.\textit{Rg2 \textit{Rf6} 28.\textit{Rg1 \textit{Rg6}} 0–1.}

Instead, White should have preferred 23.\textit{Rd4}! when the sacrifice only leads to unclear complications: 23...\textit{Rxh3}!? (a good alternative would be 23...\textit{Rg5}) 24.gxf4 \textit{Rf5} 25.\textit{Rg1} when the king has a flight square on e2.

19.\textit{Rg3} 20.\textit{Rf2 \textit{Rg6}}

Now in J. Polgar – Shirov, Cap d'Agde 2003, White found nothing better than repeating moves with:

21.\textit{Rf3}

If White avoids the repetition with 21.\textit{Rh1}?! Black plays 21...\textit{Rae8 intending ...f5 with good prospects.

21...\textit{Rc2} 22.\textit{Re2 \textit{Rg6} 23.\textit{Rf3}} \textit{\frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}}

C) 12.g3

This is quite a respectable sideline, the point of which is to prevent the black queen from coming to h4.

12...\textit{Rd6} 13.\textit{Re1}

It is hard to say for sure whether Black
should prefer C1) 13...f5, or C2) 13...e8, so we will examine both possibilities. He sometimes prefers 13...d7 when 14.d4 h3 reaches the main line. However, White also has the independent option of 14.d3 h3 15.e4 which is another matter entirely.

This is a good disruptive move. Now we need to examine two possible queen moves: C11) 17.b1 and C12) 17.c2.

C11) 17.b1 f5 18.c2!!
This allows Black to obtain a strong attack. The superior 18.wc1 is examined in line C12), while 17.d1 g4 repeats the position.

18...xc2 19.xc2 f5!

The bishop exchange has cleared the way for the f-pawn to advance. All of Black’s pieces are superbly placed, and White must demonstrate great accuracy to survive.

20.c4?
This looks like a principled reaction, but it suffers from a tactical flaw. Correct would have been:

20.d3! f4 21.g5! f6
After 21...g6 22.d2 g4 23.e4 the powerful knight holds White’s kingside together, e.g. 23...h3 24.d3 e3 25.xe3 fxe3 26.xe3 when White’s position is slightly preferable.

22.b3!
22.d2? would be a mistake. 22...g4 23.e4 (23.b3† d5 24.e4 f3 25.g5 xe1† 26.xe1 h6→) 23...fxg3 24.xf6† gxf6 25.xg3 (25.xg3 xg3 26.d1 h3
27.fxg3 \(\text{\textit{xf}}3\)\textit{g3} leads to the same position.

25...\(\text{hxg3}\) 26.\(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{g}6\) 27.\(\text{h}xg3\) (27.\(\text{e}e2\) \(\text{exe}2\) 28.\(\text{xe}2\) \(\text{xf4}\) loses for White, as does 27.\(\text{exe}8\) \(\text{exe}8\) 28.\(\text{hxg3}\) \(\text{xf}3\)) 27...\(\text{xf}3\) 28.\(\text{h}1\) (28.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{e}5\)) 28...\(\text{h}3\) 29.\(\text{g}1\) \(\text{h}8\) ! (obviously Black can repeat the position with 29...\(\text{xf}3\), but he should be playing for more) 30.\(\text{exe}8\) \(\text{exe}8\) 31.\(\text{xf}2\) \(\text{h}2\) 32.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{g}8\) 33.\(\text{e}1\) (33.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{g}2\)) 34.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{g}6\) 35.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{g}3\) 36.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{e}8\) 37.\(\text{f}1\) \(f\) 5 wins) 33...\(\text{g}2\) 34.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{e}8\) 35.\(\text{d}3\) c5!

The attack should prove decisive after 36.c4 cxd4!, or 36.b3 \(\text{e}4\) 37.\(\text{d}2\) cxd4.

22...\(\text{d}5\) 23.\(\text{c}2\)=

Black has no real choice but to agree to a repetition.

20...\(\text{bxc}4\)

Unfortunately, when I encountered this position in one of my own games I was surprised by this variation and failed to spot the brilliant sequence starting on move 23 in the main line.

Instead I played:

20...\(\text{xf}6\)? 21.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{g}4\)?

Relatively best would have been 21...\(\text{e}4\) although White retains a clear advantage after 22.\(\text{exe}4\) \(\text{exe}4\) 23.\(\text{e}3\), e.g. 23...\(\text{h}5\) 24.a4 \(\text{h}4\) 25.axb5 axb5 (25...\(\text{g}4\) 26.bxc6 \(\text{e}3\) 27.\(\text{e}2\) h\(\text{x}3\) 28.\(\text{xf}3\) allows White to hold his kingside position, while Black's

queenside has already collapsed) 26.cxb5 cxb5 27.\(\text{e}6\).

22.cxb5!

22.h3 \(\text{xf}3\) was my idea, but my opponent found a way to throw a huge spanner in the works.

22...\(\text{xf}5\) 23.\(\text{h}3!\) \(\text{f}6\)

23...\(\text{xf}3\) 24.\(\text{b}3\) shows why it was important for White to exchange pawns before playing h3.

24.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 25.\(\text{exe}8\) \(\text{exe}8\) 26.\(\text{f}3\)

White has a large advantage. The last few moves were:

26...\(\text{f}4\) 27.g4 \(\text{h}5\) 28.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{c}8\) 29.\(\text{g}5\) \(g6\) 30.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{e}6\) 31.d5

1–0 Iordachescu – Brunello, Reggio Emilia 2006/7.

21.\(\text{xc}4\)?

21.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{f}4\) 22.gxf4 \(\text{e}6\) 23.\(\text{f}1\) \(h5\) also sees White come under a strong attack, although his position may still be defensible. We will now follow Naiditsch – Gustafsson, Dresden 2007, a model game for Black. Apparently it was home preparation right to the end.

21...\(\text{f}4\)
22.\textit{d2} f3  
This threatens to construct a mating net, so White's reply is forced.

23.\textit{d3} e2!  
This was the detail that I overlooked in my game with Iordachescu.

24.\textit{xe2} h3 25.\textit{e3}  
25.\textit{xf3} \textit{xf3} 26.\textit{xd6} \textit{f6} 27.ae1 h6 leaves White with very little hope of resistance.

25...\textit{f4}!! 0–1  
The final position deserves a diagram:

White is powerless against the threat of ...\textit{h4}.

C12) 17.\textit{c2} \textit{f5} 18.\textit{c1}  
White avoids the repetition, although his queen is less than ideally placed on this square.

18...\textit{e7}  
This is a natural move, although there are a number of playable alternatives.

In Iordachescu – Vajda, Budva 2004, Black preferred:  
18...h6 19.\textit{d1}  
As far as I can see, this does not cause Black any problems. My own preference for White would be 19.\textit{f3}N, when I do not believe that Black has anything better than 19...\textit{e7} transposing to the main line below. Instead 19...\textit{e4} 20.\textit{d1} does not help him, and 19...\textit{g4} also fails to equalise after: 20.\textit{h4} g5 21.\textit{g2} \textit{f3} 22.\textit{d1} \textit{e4} 23.\textit{f3} \textit{g6} 24.\textit{d2} \textit{e6} 25.\textit{b3} \textit{e8} 26.\textit{f2}+  
19...\textit{h3} 20.\textit{d2} \textit{f5} 21.\textit{d1} \textit{e4} 22.\textit{f3} \textit{g6} 23.\textit{xd5} cxd5 24.\textit{d2} \textit{e6}  
Black was at least equal, and the game was eventually drawn.

In Leko – Anand, Cap d'Agde 2003, the Indian maestro tried a more aggressive approach with:  
18...h5?! 19.\textit{f3}  
White does not want this pawn to advance any further.

19...\textit{g4} 20.\textit{h4} \textit{e6} 21.\textit{d1} f5?!
The position was rather unclear, and Black went on to win. This approach may well appeal to some players, although personally I would tend not to hurry with so many committal moves at this stage of the game.

In Shabalov – Aronian, Mallorca 2004, Black was successful with:

18...\textit{fe}6 19.\textit{f}3
19.a4 \textit{fe}8 20.axb5 axb5
19...\textit{g}4
19...\textit{fe}8 20.\textit{wd}2 h6 is also playable.

20.\textit{g}5??
White should have preferred 20.\textit{h}4! \textit{fe}8 21.\textit{wd}2. The resulting position is identical to the main line (Anand – Svidler) except for the position of the black rook on e6 instead of e7. My own view is that this piece would be better off on e7, where it is less exposed and also does not obstruct the black queen. For this reason, I would prefer the main line continuation. However, it is still quite instructive for us to see how Aronian conducts the attack after his opponent’s inaccuracy.

20...\textit{g}6!

Black’s decision to place his rook on the third rank has been vindicated. Now White faces a powerful attack.

21.f3
White also fails to equalise with the following two alternatives:

21.a4 f5 22.axb5 axb5 23.\textit{a}6 f4 24.\textit{xd}d5 cxd5 25.\textit{xd}6 (White is forced to sacrifice the exchange for insufficient compensation) 25...\textit{wd}6 26.\textit{xf}4 \textit{xf}6 27.\textit{h}3 \textit{xe}5 28.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}6 29.\textit{hx}g4 \textit{hx}g4
21.\textit{d}2 f5 22.f3 (or 22.\textit{d}1 f4) 22...f4!
23.\textit{f}4 \textit{xd}4 24.\textit{xd}1 \textit{xd}5 leaves White under pressure on the kingside.

21...\textit{xf}3 22.\textit{c}3
22.\textit{c}2 \textit{xd}3 23.\textit{h}xg4 24.\textit{xd}3 \textit{wd}5 wins.
22...\textit{xd}3 23.\textit{h}xg3 \textit{f}4 24.\textit{e}2 \textit{g}2 25.\textit{d}3 \textit{xf}3 27.\textit{xd}5 cxd5

Black’s attack was enough to bring home the full point.

19.\textit{f}3

19.\textit{f}1 gave Black no problems in Z. Almasi – Gyimesi, Kazincbarcika 2005, after 19...\textit{fe}8 20.\textit{wd}2 \textit{h}6 (20...\textit{g}4!) 21.\textit{c}2 \textit{xf}1 (Black decides to regain his pawn to reach an equal position) 22.\textit{xf}1 \textit{d}xe3 23.\textit{xe}3 \textit{d}xe3 24.\textit{b}3 \textit{c}7 25.\textit{a}1 ½–½.

19...\textit{h}6?N

This is my suggested improvement over Anand – Svidler, Mexico City 2007, in which Black encountered problems after:

19...\textit{g}4
I do not like this move, as the bishop has few prospects on this square.
20.\textit{h}4 \textit{fe}8 21.\textit{wd}2 h6 22.\textit{d}3!

White makes good use of the diagonal.
22...\textit{g}6 23.\textit{d}1? \textit{h}3 24.\textit{f}3 g5 25.\textit{g}2 \textit{f}5 26.\textit{d}1

White continues to improve his position, while Black has not managed to produce any counterplay.
26...\textit{f}6 27.a4 \textit{xe}4 28.axb5 axb5 29.\textit{a}6+

White was firmly in control, and the game was over in another ten moves.

Before moving on, I should point out a second possible improvement in 19...\textit{fe}8?N. I think
that this should lead to a satisfactory game, e.g. 20...h4 e4 21.d2 h6, or 20.d2 e4 21.g5 g6 with nothing for Black to worry about in either case.

20.d2

I like this move slightly better than: 20.e4

This move is tricky, but it may not quite be enough to equalise.

21.e5! xex5 22.dxe5 f3 23.d3

After 23.d1 xxd1 24.xxd1 xxe5 Black is not really worse as his knight is very well placed.

23.w3 f1 w5 25.c4!

White must be careful, e.g. 25.c5? f4! turns the tables.

25.bxc4 26.xc4 xex5 27.xa6=

Black does not have quite enough for the pawn, although he still keeps some chances. After the main move, I believe that Black has enough counterplay. A sample continuation is:

21.xd5 cxd5 22.f4

It looks natural for White to try and exchange these bishops.

22.xe1+ 23.xe1 e4! 24.xd6 xf3

25.xe8+ wxe8=

White's extra pawn is virtually meaningless.

C2) 13...e8

This has been slightly less popular than 13...f5, but I do not see anything wrong with it. White can now choose between C21) 14.xe8+ and C22) 14.d4. Instead 14.d3 looks rather feeble, and 14...f5! underlines White's lag in development.

C21) 14.xe8+ wxe8 15.d4

It should be noted that 15.a4 can be met by 15...a7! anyway, as 16.axb5?? (16.d4 reaches the note to White's 16th below) 16...e7 17.g2 e1 18.f3 e6 leaves White defenceless.

15...a7!

It is not often that Black activates his rook via a7 in the Marshall, but in the present position it works well.

16.d2

It looks risky for White to try:

16.a4 e7 17.d2 h3!

A standard continuation would be 17...b6∞ or 17...f6, with compensation in both cases. After the text move Black can whip up a dangerous attack, although White has
enough resources to maintain the balance.

After the text White may try:

a) After 18.axb5? $\text{c2} 19.b4 20.cxb4 $\text{f6}$+ the light square weaknesses around the king make White’s defence extremely tough.

b) 18.axb5? $\text{e2}$!

Black has a very dangerous attack.

19.$\text{c4}$

19.$\text{f3}$ $\text{f6}$! – The knight is heading for g4.

19...$\text{c4} 20.f3$ $\text{g2}$+ 21.$\text{h}1$ $\text{e2} 22.$\text{xa6}$ $\text{xe2}$

23.$\text{xe2} 24.$\text{g1} $\text{g2}$+ 25.$\text{h}1$ $\text{d8}$! wins.

23...$\text{xe2} 24.$\text{xe2} $g5! 25.$\text{d3} $f4$

Black’s attack should decide the game.

c) 18.$\text{c2}$!

This looks like the only move.

18...$\text{f5}$!

The point of this is not so much to advance the pawn any further, but to open the path for the queen to come to g6.

19.$\text{a3}$

Everything else loses, e.g., 19.axb5 $\text{f4}$! 20.$\text{f3}$ $\text{e2} 21.$\text{xa6}$ $\text{g2}$+ 22.$\text{h}1$ $\text{e2} 23.$\text{b3}$+ $\text{h8} 24.$\text{c4} $\text{xd2}$ etc.

19...$\text{f4}$!

This is a strong attacking move, in addition to being visually shocking! The immediate threat is ...$\text{xd2}$ followed by ...$\text{e2}$.

20.$\text{b3}$

20.$\text{b1}$? runs into 20...$\text{h6}$! with the powerful threat of ...$\text{f4}$.

20...$\text{xe2} 21.$\text{xd2} $\text{f4}$ 22.$\text{f1}$

Also possible is 22.$\text{c2} 23.$\text{xe2} $\text{f4} 24.$\text{d3} $\text{xa4} 25.$\text{e3} $\text{b2} 26.$\text{xa4} $\text{e4} 27.$\text{xe4} $\text{f4}$. White is under pressure, although he should be able to survive.

22...$\text{e2}$+ 23.$\text{h}1$ $\text{xf1} 24.$\text{xf1}$

After walking a tightrope for several moves, White has reached an acceptable position.

24...$\text{h5}$

Black has enough compensation for the pawn, but not more.

16...$\text{e7}$

The rook completes its manoeuvre, and his pieces are beginning to coordinate nicely.

17.$\text{f3} $f6$

With this simple move Black reinforces his central position. His compensation is obvious and his position is very pleasant. Z. Almasi – Jakovenko, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007, continued as follows.

18.$\text{g2}$

Perhaps White could have considered 18.$\text{d2} $g4 19.$\text{c4}$, although Black looks fine after 19...$\text{xc4} 20.$\text{xc4} $\text{h5} 21.$\text{xe2} $\text{h8}$.
18...\textit{\texttt{g4}}
A more combative option was 18...\texttt{wh5} 19.h4 g5?! with reasonable attacking chances. White can sacrifice a knight to force a queen exchange with 20.dxe5?! \texttt{xd1} 21.\texttt{xd1} fxg5 22.\texttt{xg5}, although I would prefer Black’s piece over White’s three pawns here.

19.h3 \texttt{h5}
There is nothing wrong with a retreat along the c8-h3 diagonal either.

20.\texttt{d2}
20.e3 \texttt{f8} 21.\texttt{xd5} cxd5 is more solid for White, although from a practical point of view his position is still not too pleasant to play.

20...\texttt{e2}

21.g4
There was a threat of ...\texttt{xf3}†, and 21.\texttt{c2}? is refuted by 21...\texttt{g6} 22.\texttt{c1} (or 22.\texttt{d1} \texttt{e4}) 22...\texttt{e4}.

21.\texttt{xg4}! 22.hxg4 \texttt{e4} 23.\texttt{h1}!
This may be the most accurate defensive move. The other possibility of 23.\texttt{xe1} \texttt{xe2} 24.\texttt{e1} does not fully solve White’s problems after: 24...\texttt{d3} 25.\texttt{e6} \texttt{g6} 26.\texttt{g5} \texttt{f5} 27.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{g4}† 28.\texttt{f1} \texttt{xf3} 29.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{h1}† 30.\texttt{e2} \texttt{h5}† 31.\texttt{f1} a5†

23...\texttt{exd2} 24.\texttt{e1} \texttt{xd4}† 25.\texttt{f1} \texttt{xb2} 26.\texttt{xd5}† \texttt{cxd5} 27.\texttt{e5} \texttt{xe5} 28.\texttt{xd5}† \texttt{g8} 29.\texttt{dxe5}

29...\texttt{h3}†
After 29...\texttt{c4}† 30.\texttt{xc4} bxc4 31.\texttt{fxe6} \texttt{xa2} 32.fxe7 \texttt{xg7} 33.\texttt{e4} White is in no real danger, so Jakovenko decides to force a draw immediately.

30.\texttt{g1} \texttt{g4}† 31.\texttt{f1} \texttt{h3}†
\texttt{1/2–1/2}

C22) 14.d4 \texttt{xe1}† 15.\texttt{xe1} \texttt{a7}
This leads to a very similar position to the previous variation, except for the position of the two queens.

16.\texttt{e3}
White can also begin by developing the knight: 16.\texttt{d2} \texttt{c7} 17.\texttt{f1} \texttt{e8} 18.\texttt{f3} \texttt{g4} 19.\texttt{d3} \texttt{e2}
The last few moves have all flowed very naturally, but now White faces a choice.

a) 20.\( \text{g2? Wxe6+} \)

b) 20.h3!? \( \text{hxg3??} \) 21.\( \text{g5+-} \) is embarrassing, but 20...\( \text{h5} \) will reach a similar position to one of the other lines.

c) 20.d1 \( \text{e1\#} \) 21.g2 \( \text{e6} \) 22.g5! \( \text{f5}! \)

Both sides should keep this possibility in mind, as it would be easy to overlook when calculating a few moves ahead.

23.d2

23.f3 \( \text{d7} \) 24.d2 \( \text{e8\#} \) leaves White's knight misplaced.

23.f4\# 24.gxf4

24.xf4 \( \text{h3\#} \) 25.xh3 \( \text{xf4} \) 26.xf4 \( \text{c4\#} \)

24.f4\# 25.xe4 \( \text{xe4\#} \) 26.xf3 \( \text{g6\#} \)

27.xh3 \( \text{g1} \) 28.e2 \( \text{h6\#} \) 29.h5 g6 30.f5 \( \text{xh5\#} \) 31.xh5 gxh5\#.

White still has to be careful, although he should be able to draw this ending.

d) 20.a4 \( \text{e6} \) 21.axb5

21.g5 \( \text{f5!} \) (once again we see the same motif as in the previous diagram) 22.f3 \( \text{g4} \) 23.d3 \( \text{f5} \) is equal.

21...\( \text{xf5} \) 22.d1

After 22.c4 cbx5 23.xd5 \( \text{e1\#} \) 24.xe1 \( \text{xe1\#} \) 25.g2 \( \text{e4\#} \) 26.xe4 \( \text{xe4\#} \) Black has at least a draw.

22.f4

Now 23.d3 \( \text{f5} \) repeats the position. White can try to play on with:

23.xd5 cxd5

However, it is probably Black who has more chances to be better here. Play may continue:

24.bxa6 \( \text{xf3} \) 25.xf4 \( \text{xf2} \) 26.xf3

26.a7 \( \text{g2\#} \) 27.xf1 \( \text{xd1} \) 28.a8=\( \text{W} \) \( \text{h8} \)

29.xg2 \( \text{e2\#} \) forces a perpetual.

26.xf3 27.a7 h5

27.xf4 28.a8=\( \text{W} \) \( \text{h8} \) 29.xf4 \( \text{e3\#} \) is also a draw.

28.a8=\( \text{W} \) \( \text{h7} \) 29.a6 \( \text{xf4} \) 30.xf4 \( \text{g4\#} \)

31.xf2 \( \text{xf4\#} \) 32.xe1 \( \text{xe2} \)

Now Black's kingside pawns are very strong, so White is practically forced to take a draw with:

33.d3 \( \text{g6} \) 34.f3 \( \text{xb2} \) 35.a7

But not 35.xf7? \( \text{h6\#} \).

35...\( \text{c1\#} \)

The game will end in perpetual check.

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

We will now follow the instructive game: Anand – Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2008.

17.d2 \( \text{e8} \) 18.f1

After 18.xd5 cxd5 Black's compensation is not in doubt.
18...h5!

Black can be satisfied with the results of the opening. He has achieved good piece coordination while the white position remains solid but passive. With his last move Aronian gives Anand something extra to think about on the kingside.

19.a4

In his annotations Aronian mentioned the alternative: 19.Wfd l .!g4 2o.Wf d3 g6, with compensation for Black.

19...!xe6?!

19...h4 was an obvious alternative.

20.i.dl

Black presses forward with his kingside play. 20...!g4 was a safe alternative.

20...h4

Black presses forward with his kingside play. 20...!g4 was a safe alternative.

21.axb5 axb5 22.£f3 £h3

22...hxg3 23.hxg3 £h3 was also quite alright, although in general it makes sense to defer the exchange on g3 as in some situations Black might prefer to advance this pawn to h3.

23.£xd5

Generally White would prefer to avoid this exchange, but Anand was probably worried about potential sacrifices on g3 to undermine the defence of the bishop on e3 (perhaps after removing the defensive knight on f1). One cannot blame him for rejecting 23.gxh4 ?e6 24.h5 !f4, which looks rather risky for White.

23...cxd5 24.£d1 f5

Black keeps playing for an attack. A more strategically minded option was 24...hxg3 25.hxg3 b4!.

25.£g5

A possible improvement was:

25...£b3N £f7 26.£g5 ?e4

This looks dangerous for White, although he can maintain the balance with:

27.£xb5

Alternatively, there is 27.£xh4 f4 (27...£h7 is similar to the game) 28.£d1 b4!?

27...f4 28.£xh4 £h5 29.£d2

After 29.£d3 g5 30.£d2 ?e8 Black regains a piece while keeping his attack.

29...£e2 30.£d3 ?xd2 31.£a8† £f7 32.£a7† £g8

Neither side can avoid the repetition.
25...e4 26.exh4 g6

Black must of course avoid: 26...exh4??
27.gxh4 g6† 28.g3 f4 29.h5+-

27.d8 f4

White is under heavy pressure, and even Anand was unable to find a good defence.

28.d3 h5 29.d2 e2!

Now White has no defence.

30.f3

The alternatives are equally hopeless:

30.b6 xd2 31.a8† f8 32.xf8† xf8 33.d2 g8! 34.d3 e8!

30.h4 xd2 loses in exactly the same way:
31.a8† f8 32.xf8† xf8 33.d2 g8 34.d3 e8!

30.d1 f5 31.f3 g4 wins, e.g. 32.d3 xf2, 32.g2 f3 33.e1 e8, or 32.h1 xd2 33.dxd2 f3.

20...e3! 31.fxe3 xf3 32.c2 fxg3 33.hxg3

We have reached the end of our journey. I hope that you have found the present work informative and entertaining, and hope that you will feel inspired to attack the Spanish!

Conclusion

The Marshall gambit has become such a topical opening that even its 'minor variations' have been tried and tested in many games. Generally speaking, I do not see much for Black to worry about in the group of variations discussed under A1) after 12.d4 d6 13.e1 (page 260). Most of Black's best moves here are quite natural and consistent with the ideas encountered in Chapter 7. Line A2) with 13.e2 (page 266) is slightly different, in that it forces Black to think outside the box, aiming for ongoing positional compensation rather than a direct attack.

The variation with 12.xd5 cxd5 13.d4 d6 14.e3 (line B, page 268) does not really threaten Black, and is only likely to cause a problem for players who are not content with an early draw.

Line C) with 12.g3 (page 270) is perhaps the most serious of the variations covered in the present chapter. After 12...d6 13.e1, I once again decided to cover two alternatives for Black: C1) 13...f5 (page 270), and C2) 13...e8 (page 274). Both appear equally playable, although the former does permit White the opportunity to repeat moves should he wish it. In the latter variation, I was especially impressed with Aronian's play against Anand. It seemed that the relatively slow build-up combined with gradual kingside pressure with ...h5-h4 was not so easy for White to handle.
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Attacking the Spanish
Marshall, Schliemann & Gajewski

By Sabino Brunello

The Spanish opening, 1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.d4, is so respected that many Black players immediately start defending. Brunello shows that Black can engage in a tense fight for the win right from the start. The three gambits considered in this book have all been recently tested by top 10 players.

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International Master Sabino Brunello is one of the leaders of the youthful revival in Italian chess. Brunello is still a teenager, but his rating is already 2550 and increasing daily. By the time this book is printed he will probably be a grandmaster.

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