



Lars Schandorff

*Playing 1.d4*

# The Queen's Gambit



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# Playing 1.d4 The Queen's Gambit

## Lars Schandorff

**Playing 1.d4 – The Queen's Gambit** is part of an ambitious two-volume repertoire for White with 1.d4. The core of the repertoire from the first edition, published in 2009, is retained, but a multitude of details have been updated and improved within the lines. This is both the same repertoire but at the same time so much more, as when a boy grows up and becomes a man – many features are unchanged, but his strength and knowledge are expanded immensely.



The repertoire is completed by **Playing 1.d4 – The Indian Defences**.

**Lars Schandorff** is a Danish Grandmaster who is best known for his deep opening preparation.

### Reaction to the first edition:

"Lars, I want to play your book" — GM Boris Avrukh

"Very well-written and an excellent choice for ambitious players" — Carsten Hansen

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# Playing 1.d4



# The Queen's Gambit

*– a grandmaster guide*

By

# Lars Schandorff



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## Playing 1.d4 — The Queen's Gambit

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# Preface

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This is the first of a two-volume complete repertoire for White with 1.d4. In this book I offer an ambitious repertoire against 1...d5 with 2.c4. In the second volume, *Playing 1.d4 – The Indian Defences*, I complete the repertoire.

In addition to being part of a new repertoire, this is also the second edition of my 2009 book *Playing the Queen's Gambit*. It is natural for the reader to wonder – what has changed? The short answer is that the core of the repertoire remains the same, but a multitude of details have been updated and improved within the lines.

As I explained in the first edition, the repertoire is based entirely on big mainlines, which guarantees its reliability and strength. Firstly, you cannot expect to get anything against well-respected openings like the Queen's Gambit Declined and the Slav by trying a little sideline or just by playing safe. The main lines, on the other hand, have not become main lines by chance. They have slowly but surely evolved and proved their strength over the years, so by choosing main lines you gain reliable weapons.

Secondly, the main lines are sharp and put the maximum pressure on the opponent, both theoretically and in practice. This corresponds perfectly with the philosophy behind this work, which is that White should strive for the initiative and show that moving first matters. Developing the pieces fluidly to active squares and trying to take the centre with pawns to seize space – these are key elements in the various White set-ups presented here.

Playing White is like serving in tennis – with a good serve you either win directly or, if the opponent manages to return the ball, at least you get the chance to take the initiative and dictate the rest of the duel. In this book I offer you an excellent first serve. But every tennis player knows that it is important to have a decent second serve as well. This may also be true in chess, especially in this computer age, so having a safe alternative is a good idea. Thus, throughout the book I offer hints of where you could devote some of your further investigations.

In the first edition I chose well-respected mainlines so it is pleasing but not so surprising that they have generally stood the test of time. It was also inevitable that a few years of practice and analysis would reveal parts that required strengthening. Thus every chapter has been updated, but some needed more work than others.

To be more specific, the greatest changes have been made in the sharpest lines, particularly the Semi-Slav and the Noteboom variations.

The Semi-Slav remains one of the greatest challenges a 1.d4-player must face. Accordingly I have not only updated my previous answer to it but also offered as an alternative a new sharp but slightly less theoretical answer. This new line has the bonus that it can be played against both the Botvinnik and Moscow variations.

My original recommendation against the Noteboom was one of the most 'controversial' parts of my repertoire. Sadly, the doubters may have been right! I have updated my old line, but this 'Triangle' line remains troublesome. So I also offer a completely new antidote to the Noteboom.

If you studied my first edition then much will feel familiar – the text I wrote about the lines' positional features is still valid. The devil is always in the details and that is where I concentrated my attention. I am confident this updated and improved repertoire will be an effective weapon now and for years to come. I hope it brings you many aces!

Lars Schandorff  
Denmark, June 2012

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## Key to symbols used

±	White is slightly better	?	a weak move
∓	Black is slightly better	??	a blunder
±	White is better	!	a good move
∓	Black is better	!!	an excellent move
+–	White has a decisive advantage	!?	a move worth considering
–+	Black has a decisive advantage	?!	a move of doubtful value
=	equality	#	mate
∞	with compensation	(n)	n <sup>th</sup> match game
↗	with counterplay	→	with an attack
∞	unclear	↑	with an initiative
		N	new move

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*New in Chess: Yearbooks and Magazine*  
*Sahovski Informator: Chess Informant and Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings*

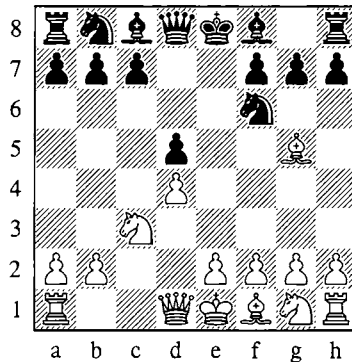
# Introduction to the Repertoire

I have explained the principles of the repertoire – aggressive reliable mainlines that seize space – but after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 how does that translate into moves? Against some openings the choice seems obvious, in others there are several possible lines that could fit the bill. Where there was a real choice I have used my judgment to select the most principled continuation – no compromises!

Let's take it one opening at a time in the order I have arranged the chapters:

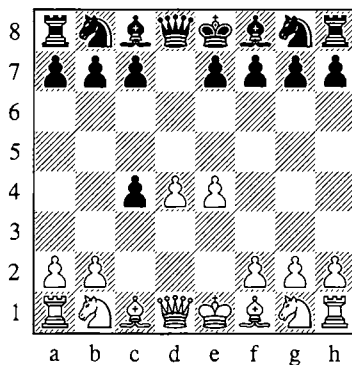
## Chapter 1: Queen's Gambit Declined

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 Against the **Queen's Gambit Declined** my choice is: 4.cxd5 exd5  
Critical, yes, but how does it take space? The answer is that in many of my lines White will later play f3 and e4. 5.♗g5 The great Botvinnik will be our guide of how to play this line.



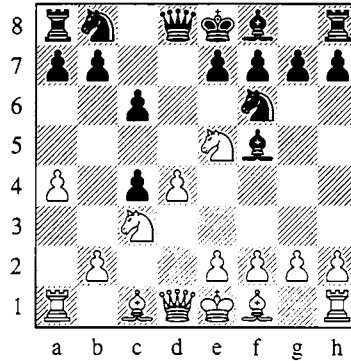
## Chapter 2: Queen's Gambit Accepted

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 The **Queen's Gambit Accepted** is a tough opening to meet, but it is obvious my space-gaining choice must be: 3.e4 Black has various ways to challenge White's central dominance, so we will leave the details till later.



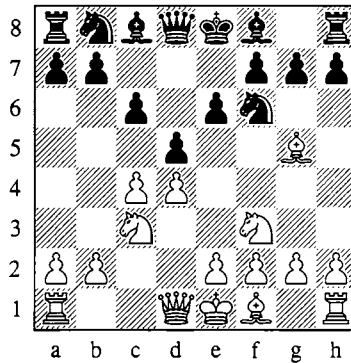
## Chapter 3: The Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♕f5 Naturally, Black also has moves such as 5...♗g4, 5...♖a6 and 5...e6, and I cover them all. But 5...♕f5 is the mainline of the **Slav**, and I answer with the mainline: 6.♗e5 As against the Queen's Gambit Declined, I will usually build my centre with f3 and e4.



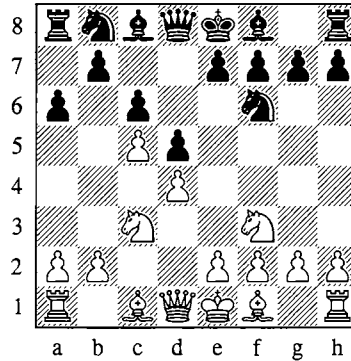
## Chapter 4: The Semi-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 The **Semi-Slav** will be met by the most aggressive reply: 5.♗g5 Naturally if Black takes on c4 then White seizes the centre with e2-e4.



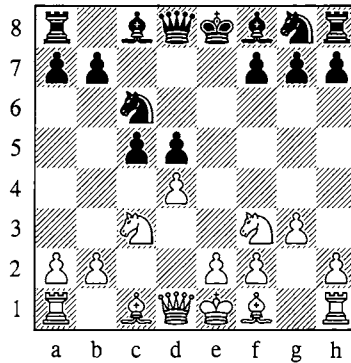
## Chapter 5: The a6-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♗c3 a6 Against the **a6-Slav** achieving e2-e4 is more difficult (though it will happen in one of my key lines!). This time I claim a space advantage by playing: 5.c5 At this point Black has a choice, so we will leave further explanation to the chapter itself.



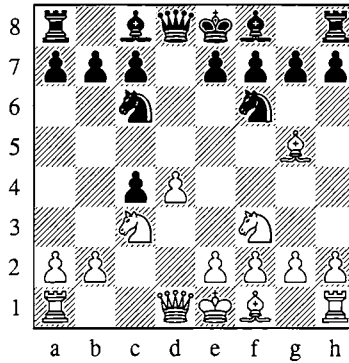
## Chapter 6: The Tarrasch

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c5 The **Tarrasch** is the joker in our pack: White will not have a space advantage but we will have easy development and the sounder pawn structure by following the main line: 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♗c6 6.g3 White's play will be more about control, whereas the rest of the repertoire is more attacking.



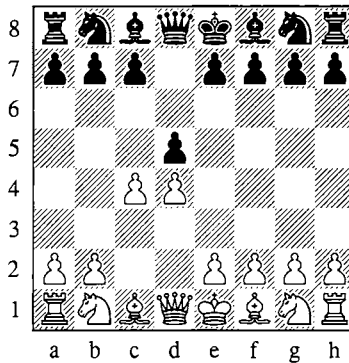
# Chapter 7: The Chigorin

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♟c6 In the **Chigorin** Black chooses piece-play over supporting his centre, so it is relatively easy for us to secure a space advantage – the trick is to find an accurate move order that limits Black’s counterplay. My solution is: 3.♟c3 ♟f6 4.♟f3 dxc4 Now 5.e4 looks like our kind of move, but it allows Black to play 5...♟g4, so I opt to develop first with: 5.♟g5 This is an old favourite of mine, and I will show how to use it as an effective weapon.



# Chapter 8: Minor Lines

The final chapter is a hotchpotch of minor lines.



The lines covered include the Triangle Variation (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♟c3 c6), the Albin Counter-Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5) and the Von Hennig-Schara Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♟c3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4). Naturally this chapter also covers many other lines, as this is a complete repertoire.

I have explained the ideas behind the repertoire and shown a few moves, so it’s time to dive into the details.

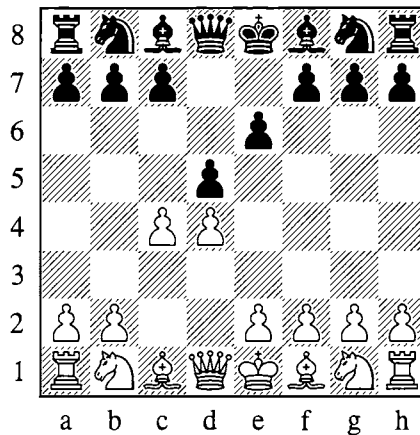
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# Chapter 1

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## Queen's Gambit Declined

*And did we tell you the name of the game, boy  
We call it Riding the Gravy Train  
– Pink Floyd*



**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6**

Follow the Patriarch

page 13

The 3...♗e7 move order

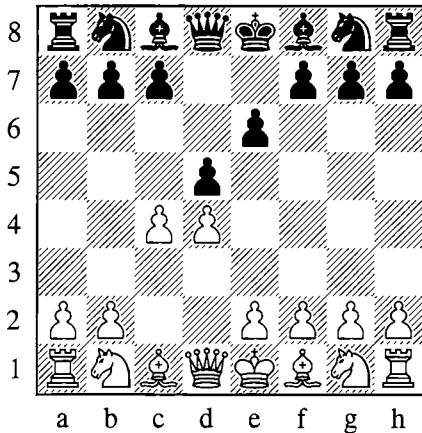
page 16

The Mainline

page 21

3...♗e7

page 31

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6**

The real Queen's Gambit: Black defends d5 and stays solid. It is one of the most respected openings in all chess theory and has been used by every World Champion. Fortunately, they have also had to face it, so we will have some of the greatest guides possible.

**3.♟c3 ♘f6**

Black plays according to the old philosophy: first equalize, and then play for a win. Black's choice of opening should not be thought of as unambitious, but rather as realistic. After all it is White who must come up with something. It is only fair: he has the serve, remember.

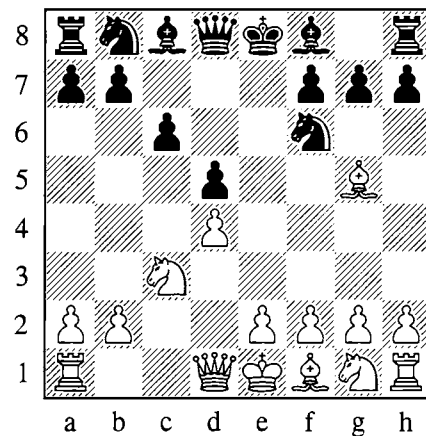
Translated to moves, Black will continue ...♟e7 and ...0–0 with a safe king. Afterwards the queenside can be attended to. Here the bishop on c8 needs special care. It is the real problem child of the entire Queen's Gambit Declined, because its natural route to freedom was blocked by 2...e6. Often it can come fully alive on b7. The knight on b8 can go to d7 and help Black to increase his influence in the centre with ...c5.

One mainline is 4.♘f3 ♟e7 5.♟g5 0–0 6.e3 and now instead of the ancient masters' solid but rather passive 6...♘bd7, the modern elite throws in the little move 6...h6. Then 7.♟xf6 does not do much for White other than lose

the bishop pair, while after the standard 7.♟h4 Black can either release the tension with the Lasker variation 7...♘e4 or play the flexible Tartakower system with 7...b6. Generally speaking, White's pieces quickly get to good squares and he has a slight positional initiative, but Black has no real weaknesses, so it is difficult to gain anything tangible. In the new century White has had some success with 5.♟f4. Even so, after 5...0–0 6.e3 both the old move 6...c5 and the popular 6...♘bd7 seem viable. Fortunately there is a third option. One that immediately changes the nature of the battle.

**4.cxd5 exd5 5.♟g5**

The Exchange Variation. White fixes the pawn structure in a way that gives him a slight but long-lasting positional edge. Usually Black safeguards d5 with ...c6 and we have the typical Carlsbad structure.

**5...c6**

White has tried to play on both flanks. Usually he begins with 6.♞c2 to prevent Black's problem bishop from going to the great square f5, then White continues with e3, ♟d3, ♘f3 and either castles long and launches an offensive on the kingside with h3 and g4, or castles short and begins positional play on the

queenside with ♖b1 followed by b2-b4-b5, the so-called minority attack.

It is true that Black does not have immediate counterplay. For example, the natural strike in the centre with c6-c5 will most likely lead to severe problems if White just takes it and isolates the black d-pawn. But you don't play the Queen's Gambit with Black to get active piece-play, do you? No, you play it to get a firm position, and that is exactly what you get after the normal moves ...♗e7, ...0-0 and ...♖bd7 followed by the clever regrouping ...♞e8 and ...♖f8. The king's position is well defended and, although placed on the last few ranks, the black pieces are ready to counter any aggression. In the early days of this variation White often ran headfirst into a wall.

However, the legendary World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik found, almost by accident, an interesting set-up for White based on his flair for dynamic pawn play. After the moves ♗c2, e3, ♗d3 he developed the knight more flexibly with ♖ge2 and after 0-0 came the key move f3! preparing the break e3-e4. So White could also play in the centre. This strategy is very promising and was also a favourite of Botvinnik's pupil, the brilliant attacking player Garry Kasparov.

As an appetizer, let's see three famous Botvinnik wins that show White's prospects in full bloom.

## Follow the Patriarch

Botvinnik was well known for his deep opening preparation, but you can't work out everything in the lab: chess is a practical game. Even in our computer age you still have to make your own decisions at the board – at least sometimes! In the following masterpiece Botvinnik was provoked by the creative Estonian, Paul Keres, and had to come up with something new. In fact, he came up with the foundation for our whole system.

## GAME 1

Botvinnik – Keres

Moscow 1952

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5  
5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.e3 0-0 7.♗d3 ♖bd7 8.♞c2  
♞e8 9.♖ge2 ♖f8 10.0-0 c6 11.♞ab1

Preparing the typical minority attack.

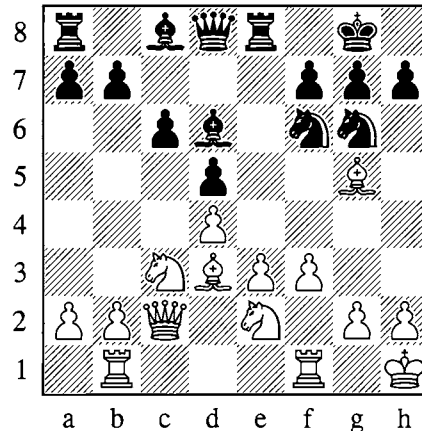
11...♗d6?!

This threatens 12...♗xh2† 13.♖xh2 ♖g4† and ...♞xg5, but the move is inaccurate.

12.♖h1

Now on ...♗xh2 White has the intermediate move ♗xf6 winning instantly.

12...♖g6 13.f3!



We are witnessing the birth of a profound strategy. Black was ready to gain the bishop pair with ...h6, so White needed an active continuation. 13.f3 prepares play in the centre with e3-e4.

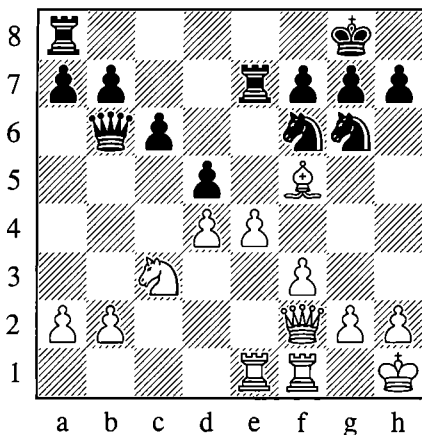
13...♗e7

Black admits his failure. After 13...h6 14.♗xf6 ♞xf6 15.e4 White already has a serious initiative.

**14.♖be1**

Botvinnik adapts to the new situation. No minority attack today! The plan is to play e3-e4, but first he improves his pieces and at the same time prevents any counterplay: prophylactic play in its very essence. The break will come eventually and with extra force if it is properly backed up. Too hasty was 14.e4 dxe4 15.fxe4 ♖g4 when Black gets good counterplay.

14...♞d7 15.♙xe7 ♜xe7 16.♞g3 ♞f6 17.♝f2  
♙e6 18.♞f5 ♙xf5 19.♙xf5 ♝b6 20.e4!



Finally.

20...dxe4 21.fxe4+

White has strong pressure. The further advance e4-e5 is in the air, gaining more space and establishing an outpost on d6 for the knight.

21...♞d8 22.e5 ♞d5 23.♞e4

Simple stuff: the knight is going to d6.

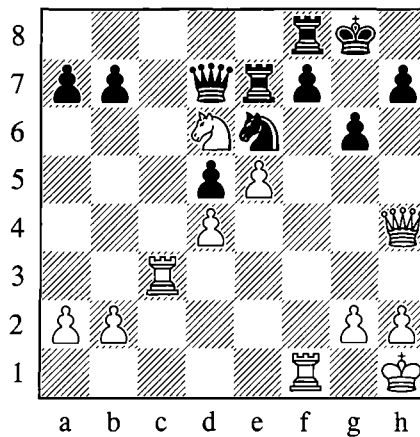
23...♞f8 24.♞d6 ♝c7 25.♙e4

Botvinnik wants to eliminate the strong knight on d5 and at the same he vacates f5 for his own knight.

25...♞e6 26.♝h4 g6 27.♙xd5 cxd5 28.♝c1  
♝d7 29.♝c3+-

The positional dominance transforms into a strong attack. Black is beyond salvation.

29...♞f8



30.♞f5! ♞fe8

Or 30...gxf5 31.♞g3+ ♞g7 32.♝f6 and mate on g7.

31.♞h6+

Even stronger than taking the exchange. Soon Black will lose everything.

31...♙f8 32.♝f6 ♞g7 33.♝cf3 ♝c8 34.♞xf7  
♝e6 35.♝g5 ♞f5 36.♞h6 ♝g7 37.g4

1-0

After this game Botvinnik refined the system, so when the opportunistic Danish fighter Bent Larsen allowed it some years later, the Patriarch was more than ready.

**GAME 2**

**Botvinnik – Larsen**

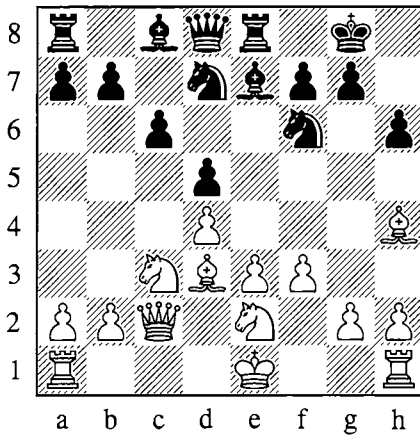
Noordwijk 1965

1.c4 e6 2.♞c3 d5 3.d4 ♞f6 4.cxd5 exd5  
5.♙g5 c6 6.e3 ♙e7 7.♝c2 0-0 8.♙d3 ♞bd7  
9.♞ge2 h6

This looks natural but it is a small weakening

of the kingside. Better is the standard ...♞e8 and ...♘f8.

10.♙h4 ♞e8 11.f3!



This time Botvinnik hurries to take the desired set-up.

11...c5

Now that White has softened the pawns in the centre somewhat, especially the pawn on e3 is loose, this counter-strike gains in strength.

12.0–0 a6 13.♞ad1 b5

Black quickly seeks counterplay on the queenside before White can make use of his superiority in the centre and on the kingside. Botvinnik had the chance to play dxc5 with a small positional advantage, but he had a fondness for closed positions.

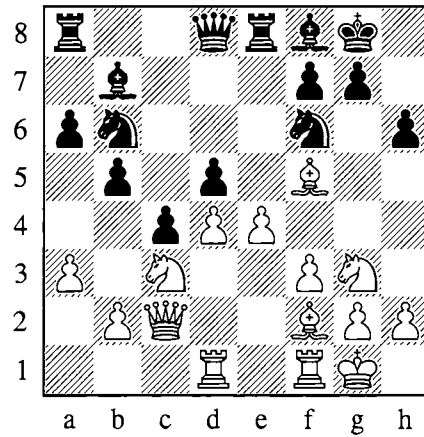
14.♙f2 c4 15.♙f5 ♘b6?!

Here Black should have taken the opportunity to disturb White a little more with 15...b4! with acceptable play.

16.♘g3 ♙f8 17.a3

Now it will not be so easy for Black to play ...b4.

17...♙b7 18.e4



The typical break. Apparently, as soon as it comes White has promising play.

18...g6 19.♙h3 a5 20.e5

Simply taking more space.

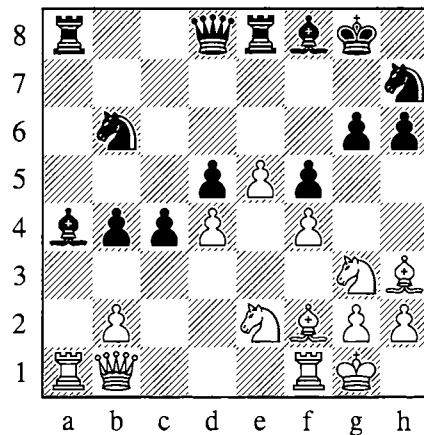
20...b4 21.♘ce2 ♘h7 22.f4

The offensive on the kingside will dictate the rest of the game. Mate, after all, is valued above all else in chess.

22...♙c6 23.♞a1 ♙a4 24.♞b1 f5

White was ready to play f4-f5 himself.

25.axb4 axb4



26.♘xf5! gxf5 27.♙xf5

An instructive piece sacrifice: White removes any obstacles in front of his pawns. Black is badly coordinated and it is difficult for him to organize a defence.

27...♖e7 28.♘g3

Even stronger was the direct 28.♙g6! ♜ed8 29.f5 followed by f6.

28...♙d7 29.♙d7 ♘xd7 30.♖g6† ♖g7  
31.♖c6± ♜xa1 32.♜xa1 ♖f7 33.♞a7 ♘xe5?!

The text loses, but 33...♘b8 34.♖b6 ♘d7  
35.♖a5 ♜e7 36.f5 was also pretty hopeless.

34.dxe5 ♖e6 35.♖xe6† ♜xe6 36.♘f5  
♜c6 37.♘f1 c3 38.bxc3 bxc3 39.♙e3 ♙c5  
40.♙xc5 ♜xc5 41.♞a1 ♘f8 42.♘e2 ♘e6  
43.g3 h5 44.♘d3 d4 45.♘d6 ♜c7 46.♘e4  
♘h7 47.f5 ♘d8 48.♘f6† ♘h6 49.♘d5 ♜b7  
50.e6 ♘c6 51.♞a6 ♘e5† 52.♘xd4  
1–0

### The 3...♙e7 move order

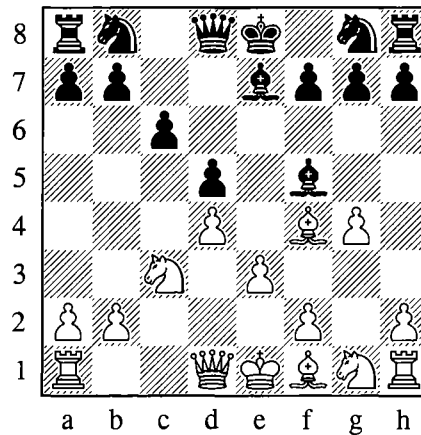
Annoyed by the normal Exchange variation, Black began to play the cunning move order 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙e7. Here the exchange 4.cxd5 exd5 is not so scary because White cannot follow up with ♙g5 and after the normal 5.♙f4 Black can play 5...c6 6.e3 ♙f5, solving the problem of his light-squared bishop. Still, it is not so easy as it looks at first sight. White can throw a spanner in the works as demonstrated by – of course – none other than Botvinnik.

## GAME 3

### Botvinnik – Petrosian

World Ch., Moscow (14) 1963

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙e7 4.cxd5 exd5  
5.♙f4 c6 6.e3 ♙f5 7.g4!



Immediately irritating the bishop. If 7...♙g6 then 8.h4 is very annoying, because the pawn is taboo: 8...♙xh4 9.♖b3 b6 10.♞xh4! ♖xh4 11.♘xd5 winning. There will be more about this in the Theory section.

7...♙e6 8.h3

A quiet move that simply secures the new space White has gained on the kingside. Botvinnik kept working on the system, and in 1970 he launched the more energetic 8.h4! against Spassky – this time it is a genuine pawn sacrifice! The complications seem to favour White and it will be our mainline.

8...♘f6 9.♙d3

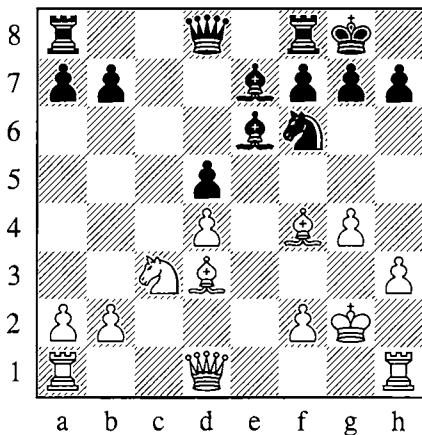
A few games later in the match the opening was repeated and Botvinnik now varied with 9.♘f3 ♘bd7 10.♙d3 ♘b6!? 11.♖c2 ♘c4 12.♘f1 ♘d6 13.♘d2 ♖c8 14.♘g2 ♘d7 15.f3 g6 16.♞ac1 ♘b6 17.b3, Botvinnik – Petrosian, Moscow (18) 1963. Again White was slightly better, but in a long manoeuvring game Botvinnik misplayed just before the time control and suddenly found himself in a bad ending. Petrosian took the point and later the match as well.

9...c5 10.♘f3 ♘c6 11.♘f1 0–0 12.♘g2 cxd4

In another World Championship match, nearly 20 years later, 12...♞c8 was played, but

White was still better after 13.♖c1 ♜e8 14.dxc5 ♙xc5 15.♟b5 ♙f8 16.♟fd4±, Korchnoi – Karpov, Merano (13) 1981. An alternative was 12...c4.

13.♟xd4 ♟xd4 14.exd4±



White has a pleasant position; Black stands rather passively and can only think about defending. Although the pawn structure is symmetrical, it is not so easy for Black to play, and even the great master of defence did not manage to hold the game.

14...♟d7?!

Better was 14...♜c8 or 14...♙d6.

15.♜c2 ♟f6 16.f3 ♜c8 17.♙e5 ♙d6 18.♜ae1 ♙xc5 19.♜xe5 g6 20.♜f2 ♟d7 21.♜e2 ♟b6 22.♜he1 ♟c4 23.♙xc4 ♜xc4 24.♜d2

It is knight against bad bishop. Black is slowly but surely outplayed.

24...♜e8 25.♜e3 a6 26.b3 ♜c6 27.♟a4 b6 28.♟b2 a5 29.♟d3 f6 30.h4 ♙f7 31.♜xe8† ♙xe8 32.♜e3 ♙f7 33.g5!

Softening the dark squares and giving the white pieces more potential entry points.

33...♙e6 34.♟f4 ♙f7 35.♟d3 ♙e6 36.gxf6 ♜xf6 37.♜g5 ♜xg5† 38.hxg5 a4 39.bxa4 ♜c4 40.a5 bxa5 41.♟c5 ♙f5 42.♟g3 a4

43.♟f4 a3 44.♟e5 ♜b4 45.♟d3 ♜b5 46.♟d6 ♟f7 47.♟c6 ♙xd3 48.♜xd3 ♜b2 49.♜xa3 ♜g2 50.♟xd5 ♜xg5† 51.♟c6 h5 52.d5 ♜g2 53.d6 ♜c2† 54.♟d7 h4 55.f4 ♜f2 56.♟c8 ♜xf4 57.♜a7†  
1–0

After this remarkable lesson we are ready to get to work. The Botvinnik games are rather old, but their essence is as true today as it was back then. Ideas with f3 and e4 are very much alive and kicking in modern chess, which we will witness in three more games.

Black often tries to avoid these lines by varying early, so first the theory leading to the mainline will be examined in detail. And at the end of the chapter the popular 3...♙e7 move order will get its own treatment, both with a theory section and three further illustrative games.

## Theory

The Exchange Variation is especially rich with move orders and transpositions. Usually you get to the mainline one way or another, but here is an overview of the various sidelines.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♟c3 ♟f6

The move order 3...♙e7 is covered at the end of the chapter.

Naturally Black has other possible third moves, but they will be covered in later chapters:

If 3...c6 then 4.♟f3 when 4...♟f6 is a Semi-Slav (Chapter 4) or 4...dxc4 leads to the Noteboom (Chapter 8).

3...c5 leads to the Tarrasch Defence (Chapter 6).

3...dxc4 naturally allows 4.e4 when 4...c5 5.d5 leads us into the Queen’s Gambit Accepted (Chapter 2).

3...♔b4 is covered in Chapter 8.

#### 4.cxd5 exd5

On 4...♟xd5 White takes the centre by 5.e4 ♟xc3 6.bxc3 with advantage. The position then resembles a Semi-Tarrasch – see Chapter 8 for more details.

#### 5.♙g5 c6

The question is if Black can do without this move.

5...♙e7 6.e3 0–0

But definitely not 6...♙f5? 7.♙xf6 ♙xf6 8.♚b3 attacking b7 and d5, while 6...♟bd7 7.♙d3 ♟f8 looks a bit too sophisticated. After 8.♚c2 ♟e6 9.♙h4 g6 10.♟ge2 ♟g7 11.f3± White is better.

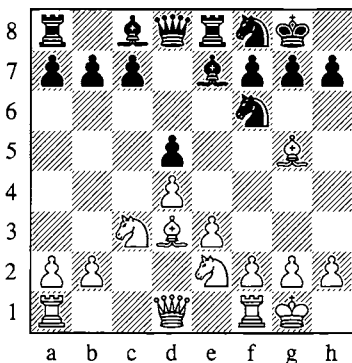
7.♙d3 ♟bd7

Here 7...h6 8.♙h4 b6, as in the Tartakower, leads to a normal small plus for White after 9.♟ge2 ♙b7 10.0–0 ♟bd7 (or 10...♟e4 11.♙xe7 ♚xe7 12.♚c1±) 11.f3 c5 12.♙f2!±.

8.♟ge2 ♚e8 9.0–0

9.♚c2

9...♟f8



Now 10.♚c2 will most probably transpose to the mainline after 10...c6 but White has an interesting possibility in:

10.b4! ♙xb4

Or 10...♟g6 11.b5 with extra space on the queenside.

11.♙xf6 gxf6 12.♟xd5! ♚xd5 13.♚a4

Attacking e8 and b4, so White wins the piece back.

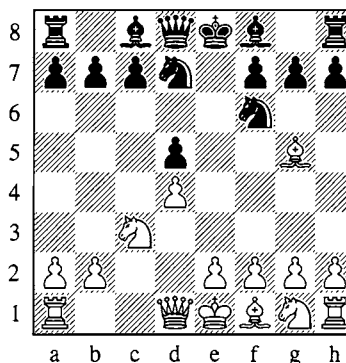
13...♙h3 14.♟f4 ♚a5 15.♚xa5 ♙xa5 16.♟xh3±

With an advantage in the endgame because of the much better pawn structure. Black should stay passive with 16...♟e6. Instead after the active:

16...c5?! 17.dxc5 ♟e6 18.♚ac1 ♚ec8 19.♙f5 ♚xc5 20.♙xe6 ♚xc1 21.♙xf7† ♟xf7 22.♚xc1 ♚d8 23.♟f1 ♚d2 24.a4 ♚a2 25.♚c4

White was a pawn up in Bareev – Lputian, Montecatini Terme 2000.

An important trick to know arises after 5...♟bd7:



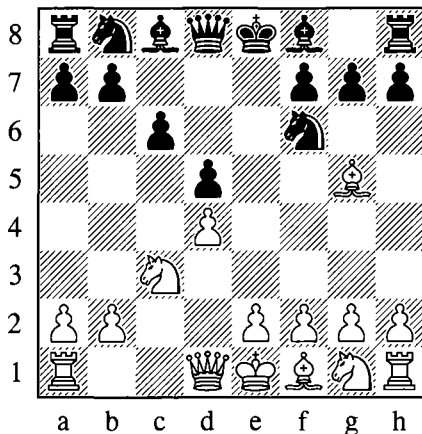
At first sight it drops a pawn, but in fact after 6.♟xd5? ♟xd5! 7.♙xd8 ♙b4† 8.♚d2 ♙xd2† 9.♟xd2 ♟xd8 it is White who drops a piece.

Therefore the right way to react is simply 6.e3 when play will most likely transpose to the mainline. There is a unique set-up though, which is reached after 6...c6 7.♙d3 ♙d6!± but White should be able to gain a plus in many ways. For example, 8.♚c2 h6 9.♙h4 0–0 10.♟ge2 (or 10.♟f3) 10...♚e8 and here a simple positional solution is 11.♙g3±. If Black continues his experiment and answers 8.♚c2 with 8...♟f8, with the idea ...♟g6 and ...h6, then we can play 9.♟ge2. (The standard move in our repertoire. In this

exact position alternatives such as 9.♘f3 or 9.0-0-0 also look good.) 9...♘g6 10.♘g3 (again 10.0-0-0! is tempting) 10...0-0 11.0-0 h6 12.♙xf6 ♗xf6 13.f4 ♘e7 14.f5± Zaichik – Arkhipov, Moscow 1987.

5...♙b4 Trying to get a Ragozin or Nimzo-Indian type of game is possible, but White can benefit from the fact that his knight is not on f3 yet and instead can go to e2 and thus neutralize any nuisance the pin on the c3-knight may otherwise have caused. A typical example is 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.♙d3 h6 8.♙h4 0-0 9.♘ge2 ♖e8 10.0-0 c6 11.♗c2 Eljanov – B. Savchenko, Moscow 2010. White has a comfortable version of the Exchange variation; the bishop on b4 is simply misplaced.

Finally 5...♙f5? 6.♙xf6! is a simple refutation.



### 6.♗c2

Preventing ...♙f5. 6.e3 usually transposes, but Black can try 6...♙f5! 7.♗f3 ♙g6 8.♙xf6 ♗xf6 9.♗xf6 gxf6 which, I admit, looks awful at first sight. Actually White is only marginally better and Nigel Short has almost made a living out of defending it.

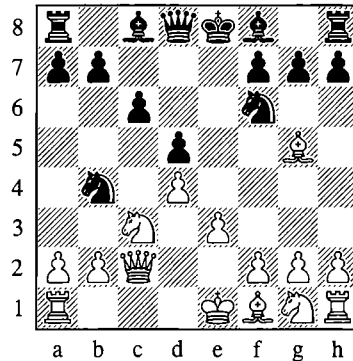
### 6...♙e7

The only way to try to take advantage of the early ♗c2 is:

### 6...♘a6

With the idea to play ...♘b4 and ...♙f5. If White stops the manoeuvre with 7.a3 the knight jumps to c7 and e6 instead, with unclear play. It is best just to allow the knight move.

### 7.e3 ♘b4



Where should the queen go?

### 8.♗b1!

After the natural 8.♗d2 ♙f5 9.♖c1 a5 10.a3 ♘a6 it is not so easy for White to get anything. Even Kasparov did not succeed: 11.♘ge2 h6 12.♙f4 ♘d7 13.♘g3 ♙e6 14.e4 ♘b6 15.exd5 ♘xd5 16.♘xd5 ♗xd5 17.♙c4 ♗xg2 18.♗e3 0-0-0 19.♙xe6† fxe6 20.♗xe6† ♖d7 21.♗e8† ♖d8 22.♗e6† ½-½ Kasparov – Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

On 8.♗d1 ♙f5 9.♖c1 the surprising queen sortie 9...♗a5!∞ gave Black lots of counterplay in Ehlvest – Short, Manila (ol) 1992.

### 8...g6 9.♗d1!

Very refined. White has voluntarily lost a tempo, but Black’s free move was ...g6 and it ties his queen to the defence of the knight, thus ruling out all ...♗a5 possibilities.

### 9...♙f5

9...a5 10.a3 ♘a6 11.♙d3± was pleasant for White, Dokhoian – Vaganian, Tilburg 1994. 10.♖c1 a5 11.a3 ♘a6 12.♗b3!

But this was even worse! Actually Black played 12...♙c8, admitting her failure, in Srebrnic – Repkova, Sibenik 2007.

**7.e3 ♖bd7**

Black could try to get the bishop out with 7...♙g4 but after the energetic 8.h3! ♙h5 9.f4 h6 10.♙xf6 ♙xf6 11.g4 ♙g6 12.f5 ♙h4† 13.♗d2 ♙h7 14.♗f3 it is still trapped, now just on the other side of the board!

**8.♙d3 0–0**

An important alternative is:

8...♗h5 9.♙xe7 ♜xe7

Black gets rid of some of the pressure on his position, but the price is high. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops guarantees White a long-lasting positional plus because his remaining bishop is better than Black's.

10.♗ge2

With Kasparov as our guide, we will stick to this set-up, but there is no need to make the move automatically.

The knight could also be strong on f3 in this particular variation, as in 10.0–0–0 ♗b6 11.h3 g6 12.♗f3 ♗g7 13.g4 ♙e6 14.♗b1 0–0–0 15.♗a4 h5 16.♗e5 hxg4 17.hxg4 ♜c7 18.♗c5 ♗b8 19.a4 with a big advantage, Khairullin – Nepomniachtchi, Plovdiv 2008. Instead of 15...h5, Black does better to play 15...♗xa4 16.♜xa4 ♗b8 with a normal game. John Cox advocates for the black cause in his inspiring book *Declining the Queen's Gambit*. I agree that the position is playable for both sides. Still, after 17.♜c1 I feel that White is slightly better as – in my opinion – is more or less always the case in these Exchange structures.

10...g6 11.0–0–0

The most aggressive. Simply 11.0–0 is of course also possible.

11...♗b6 12.♗g3

12.h3 followed by g4 is interesting, or just 12.♗b1.

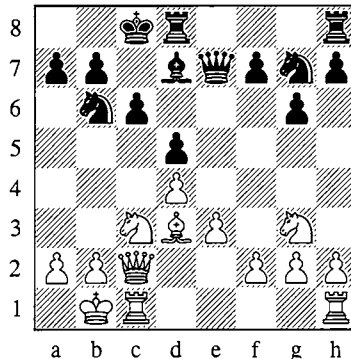
12...♗g7 13.♗b1 ♙d7

Or 13...♙e6 14.♜c1 0–0–0 (14...h5 15.h4±)

15.♗a4 with similar play, while 13...h5

invites a break in the centre with 14.♙he1 ♙e6 15.e4!?

14.♜c1 0–0–0



15.♗a4! ♗xa4 16.♜xa4 ♗b8 17.♜c3

White has the initiative. His heavy pieces exert strong pressure on the black king's position.

17...b6 18.♙a6

Also good is 18.♙a3 or 18.♙hc1.

18...♗e6 19.♙hc1 ♙he8 20.♜b3 ♜d6 21.♗f1 ♗a8 22.♗d2!?

A key moment: Kasparov leaves the h-pawn en prise. If Black takes it he can play ♗f3 and ♗e5 with tempo. Andersson focused too much on the defence and did not dare to try his luck, although the complications were okay for him.

22...♗c7 23.♙f1 ♗e6?! 24.g3 ♜c8 25.♙g2 ♜c7 26.h4 ♜d8 27.♗f3

White has creatively regrouped and Kasparov finishes the game in his well-known style: calculating like a monster.

27...♙c8 28.♜a4 c5 29.♗g5! ♗xg5 30.hxg5 ♙b7 31.dxc5 bxc5 32.♜f4! ♜xf4 33.gxf4 d4 34.♙xc5 ♙xc5 35.♙xb7† ♗xb7 36.♙xc5 dxe3 37.fxe3 ♙e8 38.♙e5! ♙xe5 39.fxe5 ♗c6 40.♗c2 ♗d5 41.b4 ♗xe5 42.a4 f6 43.gxf6 ♗xf6 44.b5 1–0

Kasparov – Andersson, Reykjavik 1988.

8...♗f8 9.♗ge2 ♗e6 10.♙h4 g6 with the idea ...♗g7 and ...♙f5 is a well known set-up for Black. The regrouping is rather slow

and White has the freer game after: 11.0–0 0–0 (11...♗g7 12.f3 ♕f5?! 13.e4) 12.♖ab1 Preparing the minority attack. 12...♗g7 13.f3 ♗f5 14.♕f2 ♗d6 15.♖be1 (There was no need to give Black the c4-square by playing 15.b4.) Instead White switches his attention to the centre and the kingside. 15...♗e8 16.♗g3± Dronov – Latronico, corr. 2006.

### 9.♗ge2

This is the most flexible and is our repertoire choice. 9.♗f3 is of course legal, and is also very popular.

### 9...♗e8 10.0–0

Black gets his share of the chances if White castles long. Instead White keeps control and retains slightly better prospects.

### 10...♗f8

By far the most common move, but a couple of alternatives are worth mentioning.

10...h6 11.♕h4 ♗e4 12.♕xe7 ♖xe7 is a popular try. White can continue 13.♖a1 followed by f3, but Black is fairly solid. However instead of 11.♕h4, the clever 11.♕f4! throws a spanner in the works. Then ...♗e4 is no longer possible and ...h7-h6 has just weakened the kingside. It also makes the manoeuvre ...♗d7-f8-g6 impossible. A key tactical point is that 11...♗h5? fails to 12.♗xd5. A standard Exchange variation trick – naturally 12...cxd5 would lose the queen to 13.♕c7.

10...♗e4 can be answered in a similar way by 11.♕f4.

### 11.f3

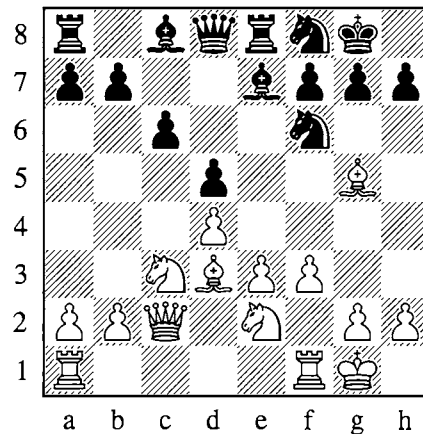
We have reached the mainline.

**Conclusion:** Black can vary his moves a lot early on, but he cannot disturb the soundness of White’s position, and it seems that to

every black try there is an antidote. The most important sideline is without a doubt 8...♗h5. It is easy to play for Black and quite solid. Still, the positions in which both players castle long are somewhat in White’s favour.

## The Mainline

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♕g5 c6 6.♖c2 ♕e7 7.e3 ♗bd7 8.♕d3 0–0 9.♗ge2 ♗e8 10.0–0 ♗f8 11.f3



White intends to take the centre with e3-e4. If he succeeds, this is an extremely powerful strategy as we have seen Botvinnik demonstrate. Positionally speaking there are some pros and cons of the move 11.f3. Let’s take the positive first. On f3 the pawn covers the important square e4 and thereby prevents Black’s liberating move ...♗e4 for good. On the negative side the pawn on e3 is weakened, which often gives Black the chance to strike in the centre with c6-c5, because if White takes with dxc5 then ...♕xc5 attacks e3.

Black has three normal moves in this position – he can develop with 11...♕e6, try to simplify with 11...♗h5, or improve his pieces with 11...♗g6 – and they will be covered in Game 4-6. Seldom seen lines are:

11...h6 12.♙h4 ♘e6 13.♞ad1 White is very comfortable, while the knight on e6 looks clumsy.

11...g6 12.♞ad1 ♘e6 13.♙h4 ♘h5 14.♙xe7 ♞xe7 15.♞d2 ♞d6 16.♙c2 ♙d7 17.e4!± ♞f8 18.♙b3 dxe4 19.fxe4 f6 20.d5 cxd5 21.♘xd5 ♞c5† 22.♔h1 ♞ef7 23.♞c1 ♞b5 24.♘d4 ♞a6 25.♙c4 ♞a4 26.b3 ♞a3 27.♘c7! ♘xc7 28.♙xf7† ♞xf7 29.♞xc7 White won material in Peralta – Lettieri, Badalona 2006.

11...c5 12.♙xf6! ♙xf6 13.dxc5 ♞xe3 14.♞ad1± Now d5 is weak. 14...♙e6 15.♙e4 The point. 15...d4 16.♘b5 d3 17.♙xd3 ♞e7 18.♘d6 b6 This was Mozetic – Abramovic, Novi Sad 1995, and here 19.♙e4! ♞d8 20.♘f4 would have been crushing.

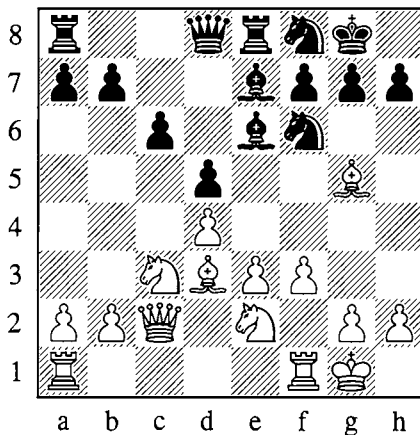
The young World Champion Garry Kasparov crushed many of his opponents in the 80s with his trademark dynamic chess. The Exchange Variation of the Queen's Gambit was very suitable for that purpose.

## GAME 4

### Kasparov – Andersson

Belfort 1988

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5  
5.♙g5 c6 6.♞c2 ♙e7 7.e3 ♘bd7 8.♙d3 0-0  
9.♘ge2 ♞e8 10.0-0 ♘f8 11.f3 ♙e6



Black develops a piece and prepares ...♞c8 and ...c5 with counterplay.

### 12.♞ae1

It is the classic dilemma: where to put the rooks. White wants to break with e3-e4 and expects Black to take with ...dxe4, when he will take back with fxe4 and open the f-file. Therefore the king's rook should stay on f1, but what about the other one? Well, it would also be good on d1 protecting d4 but, true to his style, Kasparov chose the most aggressive square.

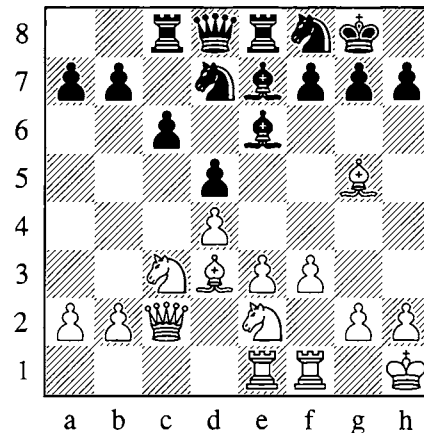
### 12...♞c8 13.♔h1

Prophylaxis – the king steps away from the a7-g1 diagonal.

### 13...♘d6d7

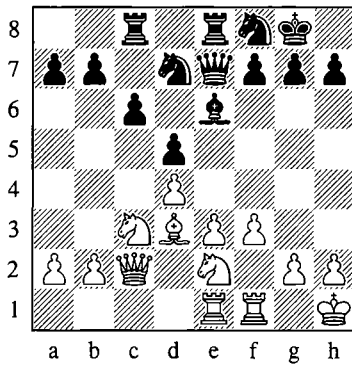
A typical way to release some of the pressure. Black was not quite ready for the counter-strike ...c5 because White just takes and switches to positional mode with play against the isolated queen's pawn. 13...c5 14.dxc5 ♙xc5 15.♘d4± or 15.♙b5 ♘8d7 16.♞d2.

13...a6!? was a possible waiting move.



### 14.♙xe7 ♞xe7

The other recapture is also worth considering: 14...♞xe7



I will give examples of two moves:

A) After 15.  $\text{d}g3$   $\text{d}b6$  16.  $\text{w}f2$   $\text{c}5$  17.  $\text{a}3$   $\text{a}6$  White found a very imaginative thrust: 18.  $\text{f}4!$ ?  $\text{f}6$  19.  $\text{e}4$   $\text{d}xe4$  20.  $\text{d}cx4$   $\text{c}xd4$  21.  $\text{d}h5!$   $\text{w}f7$  22.  $\text{w}h4!$  Black was in big trouble and after 22...  $\text{d}c4$  23.  $\text{d}d6$  he lost material in Bareev – Yusupov, Frankfurt 2000.

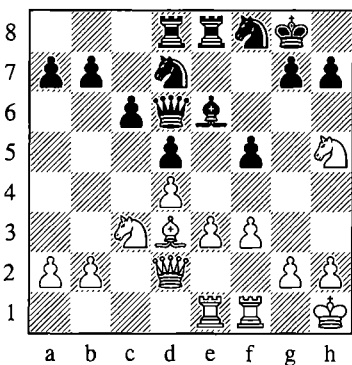
B) 15.  $\text{d}f4$   $\text{w}d6$  16.  $\text{w}d2$

Also interesting is: 16.  $\text{w}f2$   $\text{f}6$  17.  $\text{d}xe6$   $\text{d}xe6$  18.  $\text{f}4$   $\text{d}f8$  19.  $\text{e}4$   $\text{d}xe4$  20.  $\text{d}xe4$   $\text{w}d5$  So far this is Carlsen – Ivanchuk, Leon 2009, which continued 21.  $\text{d}d1$ . However, stronger was 21.  $\text{f}5!$   $\text{d}xd4$  22.  $\text{w}g3$   $\text{d}xe4$  23.  $\text{d}xe4$   $\text{d}xf5$  24.  $\text{w}h3$   $\text{d}d6$  25.  $\text{d}c7\pm$ .

16...  $\text{d}cd8$  17.  $\text{d}h5$

With annoying pressure; this has been tried in a correspondence game:

17...  $\text{f}5$



In Lambert – Shishkin, e-mail 2008, White tried 18.  $\text{w}c2$  and later drew.

18.  $\text{d}g3$  would have been met by 18...  $\text{g}6$ .

Instead, a promising option was:

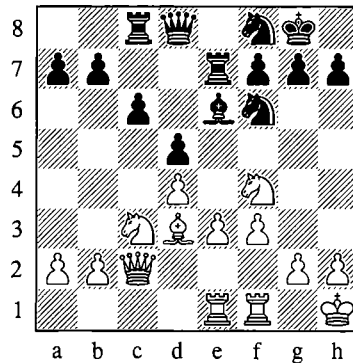
18.  $\text{d}f4\pm$

The knight returns, but the pawn stays on  $\text{f}5!$

15.  $\text{d}f4$   $\text{d}c7?!$

Too clumsy. More natural was:

15...  $\text{d}f6$



16.  $\text{w}d2$

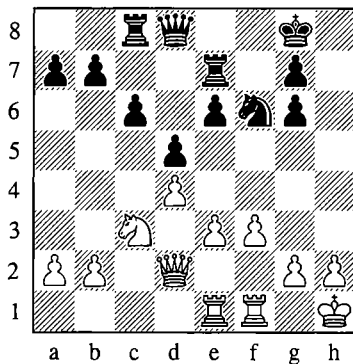
White could consider 16.  $\text{g}4!$ ?  $\text{N}$  when a possible continuation is 16...  $\text{g}5$  17.  $\text{d}h3$   $\text{h}6$  18.  $\text{f}4$   $\text{d}xg4$  19.  $\text{fxg}5\uparrow$ .

16...  $\text{d}g6$

This looks solid instead of 16...  $\text{b}5?!$  17.  $\text{e}4!$   $\text{b}4$  18.  $\text{d}a4$   $\text{d}xe4$  19.  $\text{fxe}4$   $\text{w}xd4$  20.  $\text{e}5!$  winning material. 20...  $\text{d}f5$  21.  $\text{exf}6$   $\text{d}xe1$  This was Bareev – Asrian, New York 1998, when the simplest was 22.  $\text{d}xe1$   $\text{d}d8$  23.  $\text{w}c1$   $\text{d}xd3$  24.  $\text{d}d1$   $\text{w}xf6$  25.  $\text{d}xd3$   $\text{d}d4$  26.  $\text{b}3$   $\text{w}d6$  27.  $\text{d}ab2\pm$ .

Even after the text White can force matters:

17.  $\text{d}xe6$   $\text{fxe}6$  18.  $\text{d}xg6$   $\text{hxg}6$



19.e4

19.a3!?

19...dxe4 20.fxe4 e5 21.d5

When Black should still be careful, for example 21...cxd5 would allow: 22.exd5 ♖d6 23.♗g5!

Instead Black should seek counterplay with:

21...b5!±

For example:

22.a3 a5 23.♗g5 b4 24.axb4 axb4 25.♗xg6?

White could keep the balance with: 25.♘d1 cxd5 26.exd5 ♗xd5 27.♘e3 ♖d3 28.♘g4 ♞e6 29.♘xf6† gxf6 30.♞xf6 ♞xf6 31.♗xf6 ♞f8 32.♗e6† ♘h7 33.♗e7† ♘g8=

25...bxc3 26.♞xf6 cxb2 27.♞xc6? ♞f7 28.♗e6 ♞a8 29.♞a6 ♞b8

0–1 Bontems – Sergiev, e-mail 2007. Not the result we are seeking, but of course I have suggested improvements above.

**16. ♗f2**

Prophylaxis, prophylaxis! You can almost feel the proud teacher standing behind his favourite pupil.

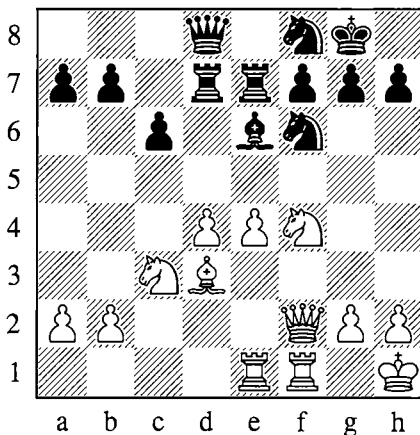
16...♘f6 17.e4!

Finally.

17...dxe4 18.fxe4

Now Black could play 18...♘g4 19.♗g1 ♘g6, but after 20.♘e6 ♞xe6 21.♙c4 the bishop is a monster and f7 is weak.

18...♞cd7

**19.d5!**

This highlights the dynamic possibilities of such central pawns.

19...cxd5 20.♙b5 ♞c7

Black did not have a good way to give up material:

20...dxe4 21.♙xd7 ♞xd7 22.♘xe6 ♘xe6 23.♘xe4 ♘xe4 24.♞xe4±

20...d4!? 21.♙xd7 ♙c4 22.♗xd4 ♙xf1 23.♞xf1 ♞xd7 24.♗xa7 with a pawn more.

21.exd5 ♙d7 22.♙e2!

Threatening d6, but not 22.d6? ♞xe1 23.♞xe1 ♞xc3.

22...♞c8 23.♗xa7

White has simply won a pawn.

23...b6 24.♗a6 ♘e4 25.d6!? ♘xd6 26.♘fd5 ♞e5 27.♗xb6

Kasparov has managed to get two connected passed pawns and he quickly gets the point as well.

27...♘f5 28.♗xd8 ♞xd8 29.♙d3 ♞xe1 30.♞xe1 ♘g6 31.a4 ♘d4 32.a5 ♘f8 33.♙xg6 hxg6 34.♞d1 ♘e6 35.♘b6 ♙c6 36.♞xd8† ♘xd8 37.b4 ♘e6 38.b5

1–0

**Conclusion:** The solid Swede Ulf Andersson was blown away by Kasparov's energetic play in the centre, but from a theoretical point of view 15...♘f6 is more critical. Also worth noting is the possibility to play 12.♞ad1 instead of 12.♞ae1. It is nice to be able to vary.

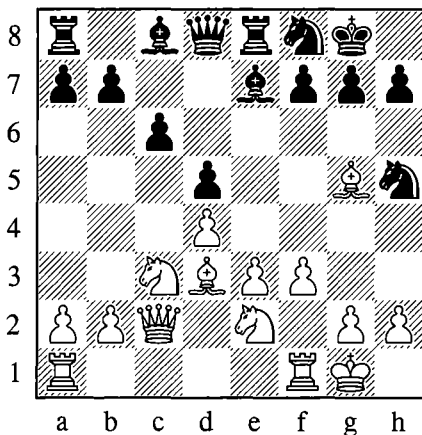
In the next game Black tries to simplify but his knight drifts to the rim and White forces e3-e4 through.

## GAME 5

Bernasek – Talla

Czech Republic 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5  
5.♙g5 ♙e7 6.e3 0-0 7.♙d3 ♘bd7 8.♘ge2  
♙e8 9.0-0 ♘f8 10.♙c2 c6 11.f3 ♘h5



Black releases some of the pressure.

12.♙xe7 ♙xe7

12...♙xe7

On this I once played:

13.♙d2 f5

More solid is 13...♘e6 14.♙ad1 g6.

14.♙ae1 ♙e8

My opponent really wanted to prevent e3-e4...

15.e4!

...but for tactical reasons it is still possible.

15...fxe4 16.fxe4 dxe4 17.♘xe4 ♙e6

Not 17...♙xe4? 18.♙xe4 ♙xe4 19.♘f4 ♙f5  
20.♙e5.

18.♘2c3 ♙d8 19.♙g5! h6 20.♙h4 ♘h7  
21.♘c5

White has overwhelming pressure.

21...g5 22.♙xh7 ♙xh7 23.♙e4 ♙d7 24.♙b1  
♙e7 25.♙xe7 ♙xe7 26.♙g6 ♙g7 27.♙xh5  
♙xd4 ♘h1 ♙e8 29.♙xh6 ♙xc5 30.♙e6 ♘

♘h7 31.♘e4 ♙d4 32.♘f6 † 1-0

Schandorff – Lauridsen, Copenhagen 1997.

Instead of 13.♙d2, more straightforward is:

13.e4 dxe4 14.fxe4 ♙g4

Or 14...♘e6 15.d5 ♘c5 16.♙ad1.

15.♙ad1

White is better with his dynamic pawn centre.

15...♙d7

15...♙d6 16.♙c1 ♙d8 17.♙g5! f5 18.e5  
♙d7 19.♙xf5 ♙xf5 20.♙xf5 ♙e8 21.♙g4 g6  
22.♙xh5 and White was winning in Lesiege  
– Khassanov, St Augustin 1999.

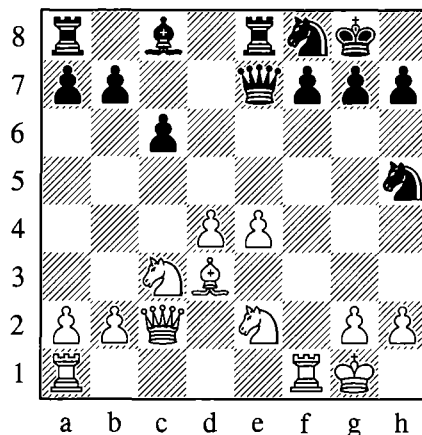
16.e5 g6 17.♙c4 ♘e6 18.♙e4 ♙xe2 19.♘xe2  
♙b6 20.♙xf7! ♘xf7 21.♙f1 ♘g7 22.♙xe6  
♙e7 23.♙b3±

With an attack, Aleksandrov – Denker,  
Reno 1999.

13.e4 dxe4

If Black keeps it closed with 13...♙e6 White  
grabs more space with a huge advantage:  
14.e5±

14.fxe4



14...♙e6

The safest move. It is tempting to play more  
actively, but the position cannot bear it as the

knight on the rim is especially in danger. I will offer two examples:

14...♗g4 15.e5!

15.♗f2 followed by ♗af1 is also good, but 15.e5 is more forcing.

15...♗ad8 16.♘e4

On the way to d6: f7 is the weak spot in Black's camp and it can also be attacked by ♗c4.

16...♘g6

16...♘e6 17.♘d6 ♗xd6 18.exd6 ♗xd6 19.♗xh7+ ♘f8? (19...♘h8 20.♗f5±) 20.♗g6 1–0 Aleksandrov – Jasnikowski, Warsaw 2005.

17.♗ad1

There was no reason to allow 17.♘d6 ♗xd6 18.exd6 ♗xd6 with compensation for the exchange, but maybe 17.♗c4 was even better.

17...♗f8 18.h3 ♗xe2 19.♗xe2 ♘hf4 20.♗c4 ♘h8

20...♘d5 21.♗f3 ♘gf4 was more stubborn, but White is clearly better anyway. If nothing else he can always play ♘d6.

21.♗f3 f6 22.exf6 gxf6 23.♘g3

The position was very promising for White in Ivanchuk – Yusupov, Brussels 1991.

14...♗g5 15.e5!

And White even threatens ♘e4 with tempo.

15...♗g4 16.♘e4 ♗e3+ 17.♘h1 ♗ad8

17...♗xe2 18.♗xe2 ♘f4 19.♗c4 ♘4e6 20.♘d6+–

18.♗ae1 ♗xe2?!

18...♗h6 19.♗b3 ♗e7 20.♗c4 gives White pressure.

19.♗xe2 ♗h6 20.♗b3 ♘e6 21.♘d6

White was winning, Chiong – Delay, Geneva 1993.

### 15.♗f2

Just planning to double rooks, but again the simple advance deserved attention and

is probably the most promising: 15.e5 ♗ad8 16.♘e4 ♗d5 17.♗f2 ♗xe4 18.♗xe4 g6 19.♗af1± and f7 was not easy to protect, Bruzon – Soppe, Buenos Aires 2005.

After 15.e5, instead of 15...♗ad8, Black could try:

15...f6!?

This gives some counterplay.

16.♗ae1

16.♘e4 fxe5 17.dxe5 ♗d5 18.♘d6 ♗g5

19.♘c3 (19.♗f2! ♗xe5 20.♗af1±) 19...♗xe5

20.♘d5 cxd5 In S. Foisor – Pourkashiyani, Heraklio 2004, Black was fine.

16...♗ad8 17.♘e4! fxe5 18.dxe5 ♗d5 19.♘2c3

19.♘d6!?

looks like a good try. Black does not quite get enough for an exchange:

19...♗xe5 (19...♗g5 20.♘d4 ♗xe5 21.♘f7!

♗xf7 22.♘f3) 20.♘xe8 ♗e3+ 21.♘h1 ♗xe8

22.♗c4

19...♗xe5! 20.♘f6+ ♗xf6 21.♗xf6 ♗e1+

22.♗f1 ♗xf1+ 23.♗xf1 ♘f6

Black had compensation for the queen in

Krush – Johannessen, Bermuda 2002, but a

more recent correspondence game suggests that it may not be enough.

24.♗a4 a6 25.♗b4 ♗d7 26.♘d5!

This is the improvement on the Krush game

which continued 26.♘a4 ♘e6 27.♘b6 ♗f7.

26...♘d5 27.♗c4 ♘f7 28.♗e1± g6 29.♗h4

♘g7 30.♗d4+ ♘g8 31.g4 ♘e6 32.♗e5 ♘f7

33.♗h8 ♘f8 34.g5 ♘e8 35.♗e5+ ♘d8 36.h4

♘c7 37.h5 gxh5 38.♗f6+ ♘e8 39.♗e2 ♘g6

40.♗xh5 ♘d5 41.♗h8+ ♘e7 42.♗xh7+ ♘d8

43.♗xg6 ♘c7 44.♗f5 ♘e7 45.♗e5+ ♘b6

46.♗e3+ ♘c7 47.♗g4 ♗d5 48.♗xe7+

1–0 Gonzaga Grego – Bhandarkar, e-mail 2009.

### 15...♘f6

Instead a more recent game continued:

15...♗ad8 16.♗af1 ♘g6 17.e5 ♗g5 18.♘e4

♗e3 19.♘d6 ♗xd6 20.exd6 ♘f6 21.♗f5 ♘h4

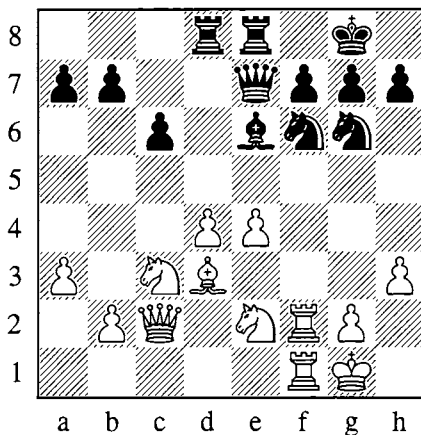
22.♗xe6 ♗xe6 23.♘g3 ♗xd6 24.♗c5 ♗xc5

25.dxc5 ♖e5 26.♟f4 ♘g6 27.♞a4 a6 28.♞b4 h5 29.♞xb7 ♞xc5 30.♘f5 ♘e5 31.♘h6† ♗h7 32.♘xf7 ♘eg4 33.♘d8 ♞c2 34.h3 ♘e3 35.♞xf6 ♞xg2† 36.♗h1 ♞d2 37.♘e6 ♞d1† 38.♗h2 ♞d2† 39.♗g1 1–0 Onischuk – Gutierrez, Monterrey 2010.

### 16.h3 ♘g6

16...♞ad8 17.♞af1 ♘g6 transposes.

### 17.♞af1 ♞ad8 18.a3



Preparing to take more space with b4.

### 18...c5?!

One week later the same two players met again and now Black had an improvement ready:

18...♞f8 19.b4

19.♘a4!? b6!?

19...b6!

19...a6 20.♘a4± ♘d7 21.e5 ♞h4 22.♘f4 was good for White in Bareev – Ahlander, Naestved 1988, but 19...a5!? was possible.

20.♘a4

20.♞d1± is a good way to regroup, keeping some advantage. If Black plays actively with 20...a5 then simply 21.b5.

20...♞d7 21.♘g3 ♞e6!

This was a little annoying for White in Bernasek – Talla, Czech Republic 2007,

because he did not want to take the repetition with 22.♘e2.

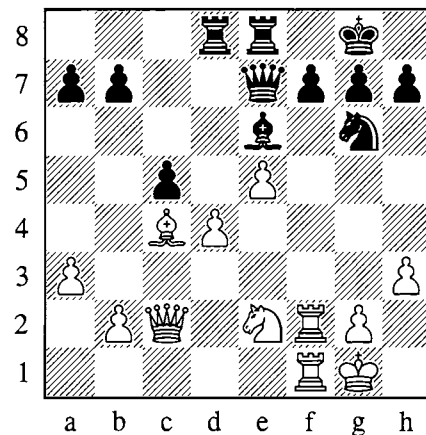
### 19.e5 ♘d5 20.♘xd5 ♞xd5

Black would rather play 20...♞xd5 when 21.♘f4 ♘xf4 22.♞xh7† ♗h8 23.♞xf4 cxd4 was considered satisfactory for him since the game Vaissier – Bricard, France 1998. However it did not take mankind’s new helper more than a second to come up with 21.♘c3! ♞e6 22.d5! ♞xd5 23.♘xd5 ♞xd5 24.♞c4 when the threats are overwhelming. If f7 falls, everything falls. Black could give an exchange with 22...♞xd5 23.♘xd5 ♞xd5 but it is not good enough. White plays 24.♞d1 with a big advantage.

### 21.♞c4

Here Black should give up the exchange and play 21...cxd4, but I can only repeat myself: it is not good enough. After 22.♞xd5 ♞xd5 23.♘xd4 ♞xe5, as in Luciano – Brunello, Riga del Garda 2004, 24.♞a4! ♞d8 25.♞e2 would have been strong.

### 21...♞dd8?



22.♞xf7! ♞xf7 23.♞xf7 ♞xf7 24.♞xf7† ♗xf7 25.♞xc5

It’s over.

25...b6 26.♞c4† ♗f8 27.e6 1–0

**Conclusion:** The plan with the early e3-e4 gives a strong initiative. It is interesting to follow up with a quick e4-e5 as well, gaining more space and securing more squares for the white pieces.

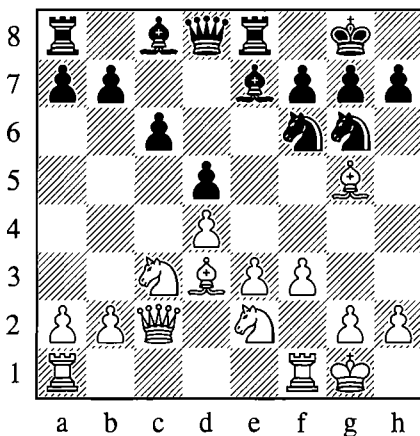
In our next game the Danish grandmaster Curt Hansen first improves his f8-knight before developing the queenside. Still, he quickly runs out of good moves.

## GAME 6

Sasikiran – Cu. Hansen

Malmö 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5  
5.♙g5 c6 6.♗c2 ♙e7 7.e3 ♘bd7 8.♙d3 0-0  
9.♘g6 ♜e8 10.0-0 ♘f8 11.f3 ♘g6



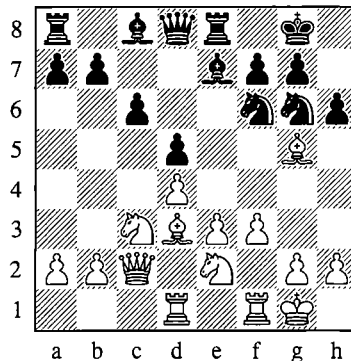
Black improves the position of the knight. It covers the squares f4 and h4, so the bishop on g5 won't get back again, but why should it?

### 12.♜ad1

You should sit on your hands and keep saying “Prophylaxis” to yourself. 12.e4 is premature as Black answers 12...dxe4 13.fxe4 ♙e6 14.♜ad1 ♘g4! with counterplay.

### 12...♙e6

Black can try to get the bishop pair with: 12...h6!?



However this cannot be recommended even if White does decide to take on f6:

13.♙xf6 ♙xf6

The problem is White gives up his second bishop as well and gets a passed pawn in the centre:

14.♙xg6! fxg6 15.e4 g5 16.e5 ♙e7 17.f4

With a firm initiative.

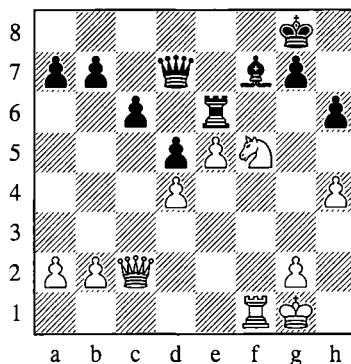
17...gxf4 18.♘xf4 ♜f8

18...♙g5 19.♗g6

19.♘g6 ♜xf1† 20.♜xf1 ♙e6 21.♘e2

The knights are indeed very good!

21...♗d7 22.h4 ♜e8 23.♘g3 ♙f7?! 24.♘xe7† ♜xe7 25.♘f5 ♜e6



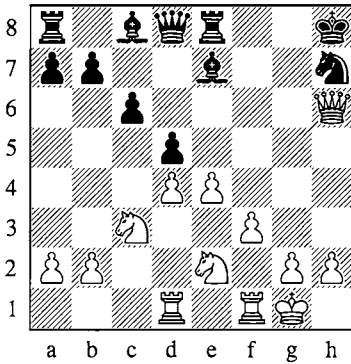
26.♘d6±

Kasparov – Barua, Internet 2000.

If this was not bad enough, White can also answer 12...h6 by sacrificing the bishop, which a couple of correspondence games have shown leads to a promising position:

13.♙xh6! gxh6 14.♙xg6 fxg6 15.♖xg6† ♕h8 16.♖xh6† ♖h7 17.e4♙

The complete games are fun to play through, and show the tendency for White’s pawns to roll straight through.



17...♙g5

17...♖d6 18.♖xd6 ♙xd6 19.e5 ♙e7 20.f4 ♖g8 (20...♖f8 21.h3 ♕g8 22.g4) 21.f5± ♙g5 22.♖d3 b6 23.♖h3 ♙d2 24.♖b1 ♙b4 25.♖bc3 ♖g5 26.♖hf3 ♕g7 27.h4 ♖g4 28.♖f4 ♖xf4 29.♖xf4 ♙e7 30.♕f2 ♙d7 31.♖d1 ♖f8 32.♖e3 ♙d8 33.♖g1 ♕h8 34.♖f3 ♙c7 35.f6 1–0 Pligin – Makowski, e-mail 2008.

18.♖h5 ♖g8 19.e5 ♖f8 20.f4 ♙e7 21.h3 ♙f5 22.♕h2 ♖g7 23.♖g1 ♖af8 24.♖f3 ♙c2 25.♖c1 ♖g6 26.g4 ♖g5 27.♖e3 ♖h7 28.♖cf1 ♖e6 29.♖d2 ♙e4 30.♖e3 ♖f7 31.♖xe4 ♖xe4 32.♖xe4 dxe4 33.f5 ♖g5 34.♕g3 ♖f3 35.♖xf3 exf3 36.♕xf3 ♙g5 37.♖f4 ♖h7 38.f6 ♙xf4 39.♕xf4 ♖xh3 40.♕f5

1–0 Van Schyndel – Bomba, e-mail 2008. Over-the-board Black might have played on, but White is certainly winning.

If instead:

12...♖h5

Black succeeds in exchanging the dark-

squared bishops, but White gets the break e3-e4 in a little too easily.

13.♙xe7 ♖xe7

13...♖xe7 14.e4 ♖hf4 15.e5 ♖xd3 16.♖xd3 ♖e8 17.f4 f5 18.♖c1 ♖e7 19.b4± White was better on both flanks and even had knight against bad bishop, Schandorff – Bank Friis, Bellinge 1991.

14.e4 ♖g5 15.f4!?

15.♖d2 with a slightly better endgame is also possible.

15.exd5 cxd5 16.♙xg6 hxg6 17.♖d2 ♖xd2 18.♖xd2± Kleinsorgen – Whitmarsh, e-mail 2004, is another version.

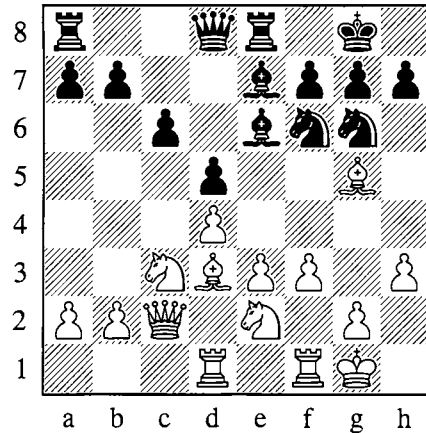
15...♖hxf4 16.♖xf4 ♖xf4 17.♖d2 ♖h3† 18.♕h1 ♖xd2 19.♖xd2 ♖g5 20.exd5 cxd5 21.♖xd5 ♖d8

21...♖b8 is more stubborn.

22.♖c7! ♖b8 23.d5 f6 24.d6 ♖f7 25.♙c4 ♕f8 26.♖e1± ♖e5? 27.♖xe5

White won in Solmajer – Ursic, Ljubljana 2006.

### 13.h3



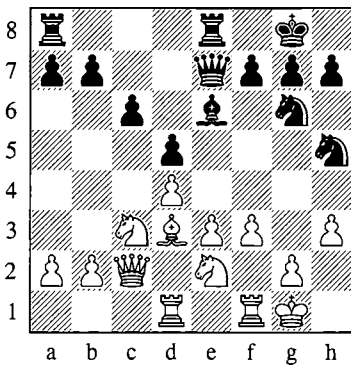
Taking control of g4 and preparing the break e3-e4. There were sensible alternatives in 13.♕h1 and 13.♖g3.

### 13...♖c8

Black continues to develop his pieces. The

c-file in connection with the break c6-c5 could give counterplay. Less ambitious would be the by now standard plan to exchange bishops:

13...♘h5 14.♙xe7 ♖xe7



15.g4!?

White responds in a non-standard way, but on closer inspection the move makes perfect sense. White takes more space on the kingside and he keeps his positional advantage. The weaknesses the move creates can hardly be exploited by Black's passive forces.

15.♙xg6 hxg6 16.e4 dxe4 17.fxe4 ♜ad8 18.♞f3 g5= 19.♞df1 f6 20.♞e3 ♘f4 21.e5 ♘xe2† 22.♞xe2 f5 23.♞d2 ♞f8 24.b3 ♖b4 ½–½ Hnatovsky – Zielinski, e-mail 2008.

15.♞f2!?

15...♘f6 16.♞d2

16.♘g3 is a good alternative.

16...c5

16...♞ad8∞

17.♘g3

17.dxc5 ♖xc5 18.♙b5 ♞ed8 19.♞d4±

17...♞d6 18.f4 cxd4

18...c4 19.♙c2 ♘h4 20.♞de1

19.exd4 ♙d7 20.g5 ♘e4?!

20...♙xh3 21.gxf6 ♙xf1 22.♞xf1 ♖xf6 23.♙b5 ♞ed8

21.♙e4 dxe4 22.♘gxe4±

White has won a pawn, Marzolo – Neuillet, Montlucon 1997.

13...♘d7 14.♙xe7 ♖xe7 15.e4 dxe4 16.fxe4 ♘b6 This was Studnicka – Knechtel, Aschach 2003, and 17.♘f4 ♘xf4 18.♞xf4 ♞ad8 19.♞f2 is a little better for White.

#### 14.a3

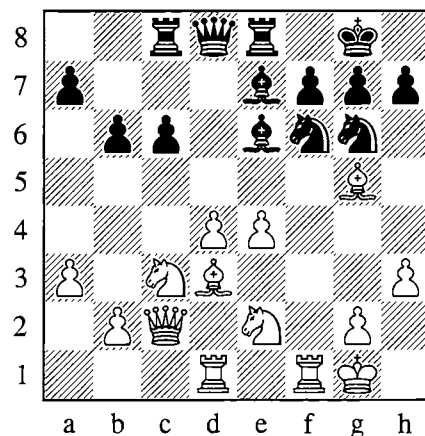
White hesitates, but he could and should strike at once: 14.e4! dxe4 15.fxe4± with a typical advantage. In the first games to reach this position, Black tried to generate play on the queenside with ...b5 or ...♞a5, but White kept good positional control with the move ♙e3. A new game confirms this verdict: 15...♘h5 16.♙e3 ♖d7 17.e5± ♙xh3 18.♙f5 ♙xf5 19.♞xf5 ♖xf5 20.♞xf5 And the knight was trapped, Yakovich – Mokshanov, St Petersburg 2011.

#### 14...b6?!

This is just weakening.

14...♘d7 15.♙xe7 ♖xe7 was the most solid, although White probably keeps a slight edge with quiet play. The tempting 16.e4 would backfire after 16...dxe4 17.fxe4 c5! with the point 18.d5 ♙xh3! 19.gxh3 c4 winning back the piece with good play.

#### 15.e4! dxe4 16.fxe4



White has achieved the thematic break and Black already has big problems.

16...♖c7

Now it was too late for 16...♘d7 17.♙xe7 ♜xe7 because 18.♙a6! highlights the downside of the move ...b6: 18...♞cd8 19.d5 or 18...♞c7 19.♘b5.

17.e5

Or 17.♙e3± with good centralization.

17...♘d5 18.♙xe7 ♜xe7 19.♘xd5 cxd5?!

Better was 19...♙xd5 20.♘c3±.

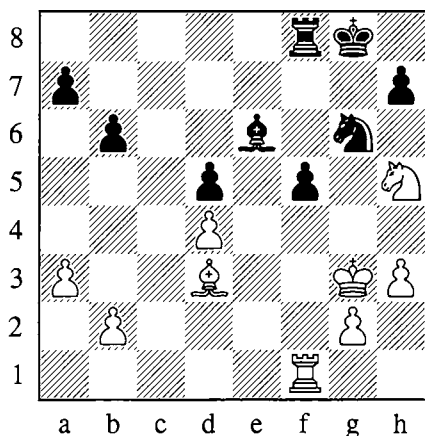
20.♞d2 ♜f8 21.♞e3±

White can slowly regroup and intensify the pressure on the kingside.

21...♞h4 22.♞f3 ♞ce8 23.♞df1 f6

Black is seeking counterplay but he only ends up with a very tangible weakness.

24.exf6 ♞xf6 25.♞xf6 gxf6 26.♞g3! ♞g5 27.♘h2 ♞xg3† 28.♘g3 ♞f8 29.♘h5 f5 30.♘g3



White takes control of the dark squares and in the end the king penetrates to e5 and decides the game.

30...♘e7 31.♞c1 ♞c8 32.♞xc8† ♙xc8 33.♘f4 ♘f7

Or 33...♘g6† 34.♘g5 ♘f7 35.♘g3.

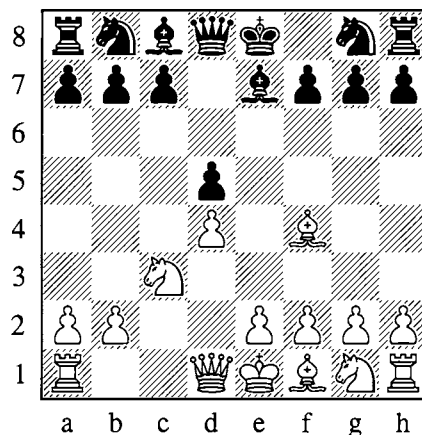
34.♘e5 ♘c6† 35.♘xd5 ♙b7 36.♘f4 ♘f6 37.♘c4 ♘g5 38.g3 h5 39.d5 ♘a5† 40.♘d4 h4 41.♘e2 hxg3 42.♘xg3 ♘f4 43.♘e2† ♘f3 44.♘c1 ♙c8 45.b4 ♘b7 46.♘e5 f4 47.♘e2 ♙xh3 48.♘xf4 ♙d7 49.♘e6 1–0

**Conclusion:** This game is another excellent example of how good White’s position is when he manages to play a well-timed e3-e4.

### 3...♙e7

We now turn to the interesting 3...♙e7 move order. Many things are similar, yet many things are different.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙e7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♙f4



5...c6

Since Black has been unable to solve all his problems in the mainline, the experimental 5...♘f6 6.e3 ♙f5! has become very fashionable. See Game 9 for details. Or for the solid 6...0–0, see Game 10.

6.e3

The standard move 6.♞c2 to prevent ...♙f5 should be an obvious idea by now, and it is playable of course. Usually Black answers

6...g6 followed by the bishop move anyway. Another way of getting the problem bishop into play is 6...g4 7.e3 h5 8.d3 g6. The real reason that we play 6.e3 is that in this particular instance we do not want to prevent ...f5. On the contrary, we hope for it!

### 6...f5

Sometimes Black plays solidly with...

#### 6...d6

...although it loses a tempo and exchanges his better bishop. White should be content with the positional benefits that are handed to him on a silver plate. Having said that, White needs a little sense of reality as well, because he is only slightly better and the battle is yet to come.

#### 7.f2

A flexible move that has been popular with world-class players. Instead 7.d6 e6 8.d3 is a straightforward way to play and 7.g3, keeping the tension and inviting Black to open the h-file for the white rook, is a good choice as well.

#### 7...e7

Black also chooses the most flexible method. On 7...f6 Grischuk came up with a creative and aggressive set-up 8.h3! (8.d6 e6 9.f4 is safe) 8...0-0 9.g4 with some initiative. 9...e8 10.d6 (10.g2) 10...e6 11.g3 e6 12.c2 (12.g5 fd7 13.b3 c7 14.0-0-0 c5) 12...a5 13.d3 a6 14.a3 g6 15.ce2 eac8! (15...ec8) 16.d2 a8 17.c1 c7 18.f3 e7 19.f2 eae8! 20.xa5 e8 21.f1 e6 22.b4 d8 23.g2 g7 24.d2 Black did not have enough for a pawn in Grischuk – Kasimdzhanov, Tripoli (5.4) 2004.

#### 8.d6 e6 9.g3 0-0 10.d3 d7 11.c2

11.0-0

#### 11...f6 12.0-0-0!

The most dangerous line for Black.

#### 12...d7 13.b1

White is positionally better and can slowly build up an offensive on the kingside. Black's problem is that if he advances his pawns on the queenside, he will create new weaknesses in his own camp and give White extra possibilities.

#### 13...c5?! 14.dxc5 xc5 15.e4!

This blows the position open.

#### 15...d4

Or 15...dxe4 16.fxe4 xe4 17.e4 f5 18.f5 xf5 19.xf5 fxf5 20.d7±.

#### 16.f2 b6 17.f4!

Winning a pawn because of 17...xd4 18.b5 e5 19.d7.

#### 17...g4 18.h3 eac8 19.e2 de5 20.c2 d7g6 21.b3±

This was Morozevich – Topalov, Nice 2008.

Black can also just develop with 6...f6 but this move is unambitious and does not even try to gain any of the possible advantages of the 3...e7 move order. White continues normally with 7.d3 0-0 8.c2 d7 9.f2 (or 9.f3) with a pleasant position.

### 7.g4

Borvinnik's concept, but 7.f2 is also possible and less forcing.

### 7...e6

The safe retreat. Instead 7...g6 8.h4 is highly unpleasant for Black:

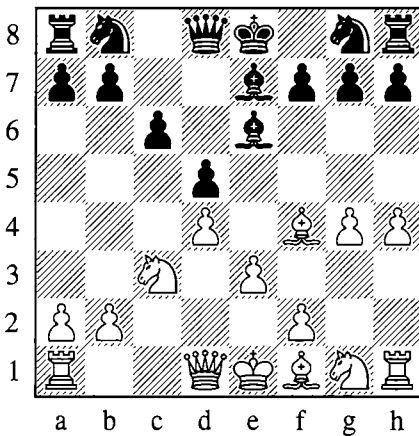
8...h5 9.g5 d6 10.f2 e7 11.b3 is good for White.

8...hx4?! 9.b3 b6 10.xh4! xh4 11.d5! is decisive, as mentioned in the introduction, but let's continue the analysis a little: 11...cd5 12.b5! (or 12.d5 de7 13.xa8 0-0 14.xb8 xg4 15.g2 c8 16.xa7 xb8 17.xb8 xb8 18.c1 and we have an ending with a pawn more) 12...d7

13.♙xd7† ♖f8 (13...♗xd7 14.♞xd5†)  
14.♞xd5 ♞d8 15.♙d6† ♖e7 16.♞b7 Black is completely tied up and will soon lose material.

8...h6 9.h5 (9.♖f3 ♖d7 10.♙d3 is also good for White) 9...♙h7 10.♙d3 ♙xd3 11.♞xd3 ♖f6 12.f3± We can already fantasize about a white knight on f5. That actually didn't happen in the game, primarily because Black sought quick counterplay, and ended up with new problems. 12...♞b6 (12...♙d6 13.♖ge2) 13.♖ge2 ♖a6 14.0–0–0 c5?! 15.♙e5 cxd4 16.♙xd4 ♞c6 17.♗b1 ♖c7 18.♞f5 ♞d8 19.♖f4 0–0 20.g5 White had a strong attack in Dreev – Miralles, France 2008.

### 8.h4!



The Patriarch's dramatic refinement. White expands further on the kingside and puts maximum pressure on Black. 8.h3 is probably enough for a small plus, but no more than that.

### 8...♖d7

It is still very risky to take the pawn with 8...♙h4: see Game 7.

Let's have a quick survey of seldom-played moves:

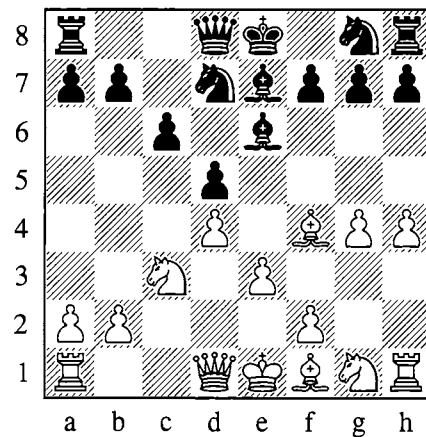
8...♖f6 9.g5 ♖e4 10.♙d3 ♞a5 11.♗f1 ♖xc3

12.bxc3 ♖d7 (12...♞xc3 13.♞b1♖) 13.♖e2 0–0–0 14.a4 and White is much better, Ki. Georgiev – Lputian, Istanbul (ol) 2000.

8...c5 9.♙e5!? ♙f6 10.♙xb8 ♞xb8 11.g5 ♙e7 12.♙g2 (12.♙h3!?) 12...h6 13.♖ge2 hxg5 14.hxg5 ♞xh1† 15.♙xh1 ♙xg5 16.♞a4† ♗f8 17.dxc5 White is slightly better, Dautov – Lputian, Istanbul (ol) 2000. This game was played four rounds after the Georgiev game, so 8...c5 was Lputian's attempt to improve on 8...♖f6 – White won both games.

8...♙d6 9.♖h3!± ♖e7 10.♙d3 h6 11.♞f3† ♖g6 12.♙xd6 ♞xd6 13.♖f4! ♖xf4 14.exf4 f6 15.0–0–0 ♖d7 16.♙g6† ♗d8 17.f5 ♖f8 18.♙h5 ♙d7 19.♞he1 ♖h7 20.♞e3 ♙e8 21.♙g6 ♙xg6 22.fxg6 ♖f8 23.♞f5 ♗c7 24.♞de1 ♞d8 25.♞e7† ♞d7 26.♞e8 Black was completely tied up in Yakovich – Arlandi, Saint Vincent 2000.

8...♞b6 9.♞b1 and 8...h6 9.♞b3 ♞b6 10.f3 does not change much compared to the mainline.



### 9.h5

Taking yet more space.

White has a new and interesting way of increasing the pressure on the kingside:

9.g5!?

The idea is a long-term pawn sacrifice after:

9...h6 10.g6! fxc6

The young Dutch talent Anish Giri declined the pawn and drew easily, but White's play can be improved: 10...dxc6 11.gxf7+ xf7 12.f3 (12.f3!?) 12...h5 13.f5 0-0 14.fg4 h6 15.fg3 h5 16.fg4 h6 17.fg3 h5 ½-½ Morozevich – Giri, Reggio Emilia 2012.

11.f3 dxc6 12.f2

Black is already in trouble.

12...f6

Or 12...g5 13.hg5 fg5 14.fg3 f6 15.fge2 h5 16.0-0-0 h4 17.e4! h6 18.f4 g5 19.f2 dx4 20.fxe4 with a strong initiative for the pawn, Brodsky – Jojua, Cappelle la Grande 2012.

13.0-0-0 de7 14.fge2 f5 15.e4! dx4 16.fxe4 fxe4 17.fxe4 d5

Peralta – Barsov, Catalonia 2012. Now 18.fhe1!N would make the black king uncomfortable.

9...fb6

With normal moves Black will soon find himself in a precarious situation. He should seriously consider Karpov's imaginative:

9...d6

When after 10.fhx6 gxh6 Black's shattered pawns would effectively stop White's expansion on the kingside. Instead:

10.f2 d6 11.f2

Or 11.f3 g5!±.

11...d6

11...d4! was more in the spirit of the position. 12.fxc4 dxc4 13.fhx6 gxh6 is fine for Black. 14.fh3 fd6 15.f4 f6 16.f2 fe7 17.f2 0-0-0 18.f3 fb4 19.f2 fhe8 20.fhe1 c5 with active play, as in Mueller – Daurelle, e-mail 2001, so 12.f3 fd6∞ with a complicated and demanding position should occur. Another benefit of the knight on h6 is that Black can throw in

the counter-strike f7-f5 at an appropriate moment.

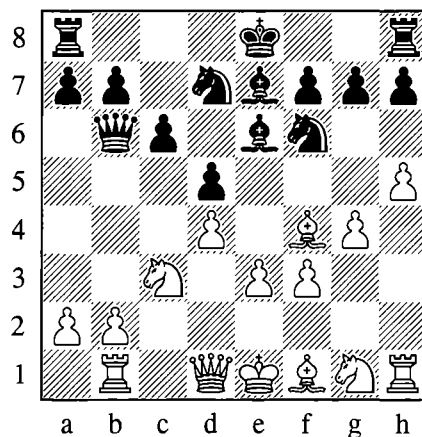
12.fh3 fx4 13.fxf4± fd7 14.fg1 g5 15.fhg6

15.f3!?

15...fhg6 16.f2 de7 17.f3 g5 18.f3 0-0-0 19.fh1 f6 20.fg1 df7 21.fg3 fd6 22.fxd6 dxd6 23.f3

White had a good ending though it was later drawn in Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow 1985.

10.f2 d6 11.f3



White has the better chances. His far advanced pawns will always be a thorn in Black's eye. They can advance further with many direct threats, especially if Black castles kingside, and his dilemma is that he probably has to castle right into the fire because the alternatives are even worse. The king cannot stay much longer in the middle and castling queenside is not really an option with the white bishop covering c7 and b8 and the rook already behind the b-pawn: White would play b2-b4 very fast with a big attack. Statistics back up this evaluation. The position after 11.f3 has been played a dozen times and White has a huge score. See Game 8 for more details.

**Conclusion:** The theory after 3...de7 is rather complicated, but in general Black has had

problems coming up with a proper response to White’s expansion on the kingside. 9...♖h6 is very interesting though, and leads to highly original positions. In practical play you will probably meet 6...♗d6 more often, but it leads to the well-known Exchange structure play that is comfortable for White.

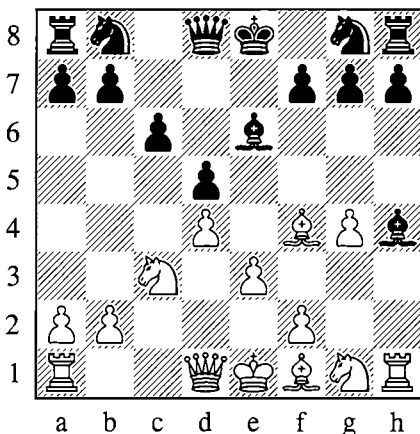
When you sacrifice a pawn, you should always ask yourself: what happens if my opponent takes it?

## GAME 7

### Gulko – Lputian

Glendale 1994

1.c4 e6 2.♖c3 d5 3.d4 ♗e7 4.cxd5 exd5  
5.♗f4 c6 6.e3 ♗f5 7.g4 ♗e6 8.h4 ♗xh4



#### 9.♗b3!

This is very annoying for Black, who cannot answer with 9...♗b6 because the pawn-grabbing bishop would be en prise. This means Black has to weaken his position.

#### 9...b6

The smallest concession, but a better practical choice may be the bizarre looking: 9...g5!?, when there are three options:

10.♗xb7N gxf4 11.♗xh4 ♖d7 12.♖f3 fxe3  
13.fxe3 ♖b8 14.♗xc6 ♖xb2∞

10.♗e5 f6 11.♗h2

11.♗xb7!N fxe5 12.♗xa8 ♗b6 13.0–0–0  
♗xf2 14.♗d3!± e4 15.♖a4 ♗b5 16.♖h3  
exd3 17.♖xf2 d2† 18.♖xd2 ♗b4† 19.♖c1  
♗e1† 20.♖d1 ♗g3 21.♗b7 ♖e7 22.♗h3  
♗d6 23.♗c2

11...♗xg4! 12.♗xb7 ♗e7

Black saves himself with an unsuspected counterattack:

13.♗xa8 ♗xe3† 14.♗e2 ♗xf2† 15.♖f1

Nor 15.♖d1 ♗d3† 16.♖c1 ♗e3#.

15...♗h4 16.♗xb8† ♖f7 17.♖d1 ♗xe2†  
18.♖xe2 ♗f3† 19.♖g1 ♗xe2 20.♗g3 ♗g4  
21.♖g2 ♗xd4

Probably a mistake in the database:

21...♗e4† is more forcing and my guess as the actual move in the game.

22.♖h2 ♖e7 23.♗xh8 ♗xg3† 24.♖xg3 ½–½

With a perpetual, Vaisser – Geller, Sochi 1982.

10.♗h2 ♗b6

10...b6 11.♖f3 must be good for White and 10...♗xg4?, trying to copy Geller’s play, is a mistake due to a little difference: 11.♗xb7 ♗e7 12.♗xa8 ♗xe3† 13.♗e2 ♗xf2† (Or 13...♗xf2† 14.♖f1 ♗h4 15.♗xb8† ♖e7 16.♖xd5†! and here is the difference! 16...cxd5 17.♗d6† ♖e8 18.♗b5†) 14.♖d2 ♗g3 15.♗xg3 ♗xg3 16.♗xg4 and White was winning in Vaisser – Diaz, Havana 1985.

11.♖f3

11.♗xb6 axb6 12.♖f3 ♗xg4 13.♖xh4 gxh4  
14.♗e5 f6 15.♗d6 ♖e7 16.♗xh4 h5

11...♗xb3 12.axb3 ♗xg4 13.♖xh4 gxh4  
14.♗e5

14.♗xb8 ♖xb8 15.♗xh4 h5 16.♗xa7 ♖e7

14...f6 15.♗xb8 ♖xb8 16.♗xh4 h5 17.♗xa7  
♖e7

Black has good chances to hold the ending.

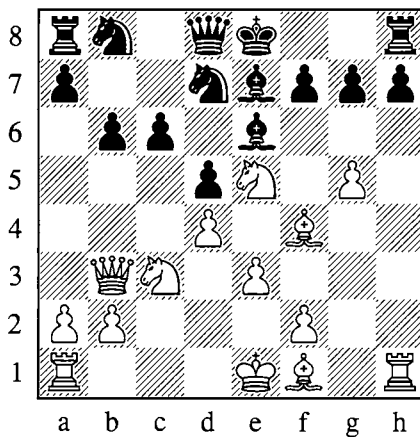
## 10. ♖f3 ♗e7 11. ♖e5

White has great compensation for the pawn. We see the effect of the little move b7-b6: now the c6-pawn is a new soft spot and Black cannot develop the knight from b8. On the kingside the open h-file is significant and also gives Black some headaches.

## 11... ♖f6

Two years later Lputian tried to improve with 11...g5 12. ♗g3 ♖f6 13. ♗e2 ♗c8 14. ♗c1 but was nevertheless caught in White's grip. After 14...♖bd7?! 15. ♖b5! it was already more or less over: 15...♖c5 16. dxc5 cxb5 17. ♗xb5† ♖f8 18. ♖c6 ♖e4 19. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 20. ♗d6† ♖f6 21. ♗b4 ♖g7 22. c6 ♖xd6 23. ♗xd6 With a strategically winning position, Yusupov – Lputian, Baden-Baden 1996.

## 12.g5 ♖fd7



## 13.g6!

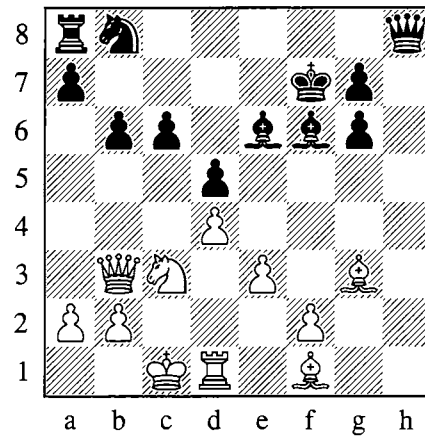
A spectacular breakthrough: on 13...fxg6 White has 14. ♖xg6!

## 13... ♖xe5 14. ♗xe5 ♗f6 15. ♗xh7 0-0 16. ♗g3 fxg6 17. ♗h2

“Harmony”, the ancient choir hummed in the background. Look at the position. White's play is fluid and coherent. He is ready to castle long, play ♗d3 and ♗dh1 with enormous

pressure. Black's forces, on the other hand, are badly coordinated.

## 17... ♖f7 18.0-0-0 ♗h8 19. ♗xh8 ♗xh8



## 20.e4!

White keeps his opponent busy.

## 20... ♗h5

Or 20...dxe4 21. ♗c4 with a decisive attack.

## 21. ♗e1 ♖d7 22.exd5 ♗xd5 23. ♖xd5 cxd5 24. ♗g2

Winning d5 and the game.

## 24... ♗c8† 25. ♖b1 ♗e8

Or 25...♗c4 26. ♗b5.

## 26. ♗xd5† ♖f8 27. ♗h1 ♗f5† 28. ♖a1 ♖e7 29. ♗a3† ♖d8 30. ♗d6 ♗c2 31. ♗c6 ♗f5 32. ♗c7† ♖e7 33. ♗d6†

1-0

**Conclusion:** You should not lose sleep because you have left the h-pawn en prise. Taking it is extremely dangerous for Black, but maybe 9...g5 keeps him alive.

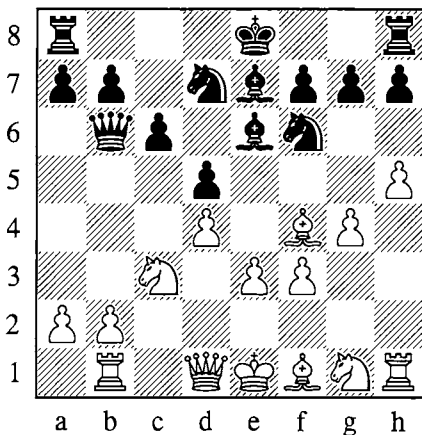
The next game shows that White's offensive on the kingside often leads to a direct attack.

## GAME 8

Knaak – Geller

Moscow 1982

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙e7 4.cxd5 exd5  
5.♙f4 c6 6.e3 ♙f5 7.g4 ♙e6 8.h4 ♘d7 9.h5  
♞b6 10.♞b1 ♘gf6 11.f3



## 11...h6

A difficult decision: the h6-pawn halts the white pawns for now, but at the same time it creates a target in Black’s camp. A year after this game Geller tried to do without it:

11...0–0 12.♙d3 c5 13.♘ge2 ♜ac8

Apparently with good counterplay.

14.♔f1

14.g5!?

14...cxd4 15.exd4 ♙d6

*ECO* suggests the regrouping 15...♘b8!?

16.♔g2 ♘c6 17.a3 ♘a5 with unclear play.

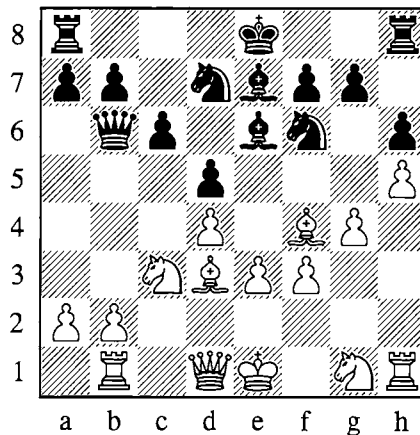
To me White seems much better after 18.g5

♘d7 19.♞c2 f5 20.♞be1.

16.♞d2 ♘e8 17.♔g2

White nevertheless had a pleasant position while Black lacked a plan, Beliavsky – Geller, Moscow 1983.

## 12.♙d3



## 12...c5

The most natural. In the game that started it all Black found counterplay on the queenside by advancing all of his pawns, or did he in fact create weaknesses?

12...♞a5 13.♘ge2 b5 14.♘c1 ♞d8 15.♘b3

Maybe ♙c2 and ♘d3 is a better way.

15...0–0 16.♘e2

Too much manoeuvring: sometimes the Patriarch was a little too fond of keeping the position closed. 16.g5 hxg5 17.♙xg5 was more to the point and looks good for White – compare it to the main game.

16...a5 17.♘g3 a4 18.♘c1 c5

Suddenly Black is very active.

19.♘f5

19.♙xb5? ♞a5†

19...♙xf5 20.♙xf5 cxd4 21.exd4 ♞b6 22.♘e2

♙d6 23.♞d2 ♙xf4 24.♘xf4 ♜fe8† 25.♔f1

♘b8 ½–½

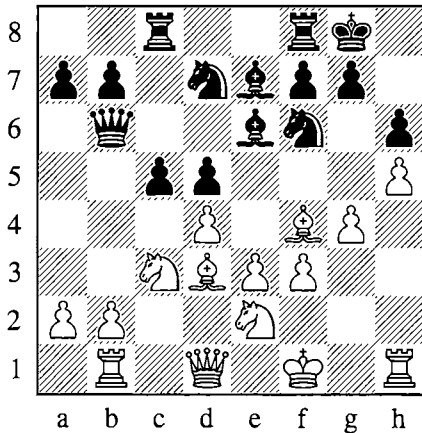
Botvinnik – Spassky, Leiden 1970.

## 13.♘ge2 ♜c8

13...cxd4 14.exd4 ♜c8 15.♔f1 was Kruppa – Kolesnik, Minsk 2000, but 14.♘d4 seems simpler.

13...c4 14.♙c2 ♞a5 15.♔f2 b5 16.a3 ♞b6 17.b3 cxb3 18.♞xb3 a6 was played in Riazantsev – Sanikidze, Dresden 2007, and now 19.♘g3 seems correct, aiming at f5.

14. ♖f1 0–0



15.g5!

Instructive. White uses the pawn on h6 to open lines against Black's king.

15...hxg5 16. ♕xg5 ♜fe8

16...♖g4 may look like an interesting tactical blow, however it backfires after 17. ♕f4 c4 18. ♕c2 ♖h6 19. ♗d2.

17. ♗e1

Preparing to transfer the queen to the g-file.

17...cxd4 18.exd4

18.♖xd4!? is more positional, but Knaak wants to attack.

18...♖h7 19. ♕xe7 ♜xe7 20. ♗g3 ♖df8

Or 20...♗c7 21. ♖f4.

21. ♖f2

White is ready for an assault along the g-file. Black should foresee a scenario like this when contemplating whether to play 11...h6.

21...f6 22. ♕c2

White sees that d5 is a little weak and regroups to exploit this.

22...♕f7 23. ♕b3 ♜ce8 24. ♜bd1 ♖g5 25. ♖f4

Increasing the pressure on d5.

25...♗d6 26. ♜d3 b5 27. ♗g4 ♜d7 28.h6!

Black's position is falling apart.

28...g6 29. ♖cxd5 a5 30.h7† ♖gxh7 31. ♖xg6! 1–0

Black lost on time, but 31...♖xg6 32. ♖e7†! wins quickly for White anyway.

**Conclusion:** It is very unpleasant for Black to be so cramped on the kingside. With the pawn on h6 White has a clear target and can open the position when he feels like it.

The modern way for Black to play, with ...♖f6 and ...♕f5, leads to sharp play but, as demonstrated in the following fine correspondence game, White apparently has a way to keep control and secure a slight edge.

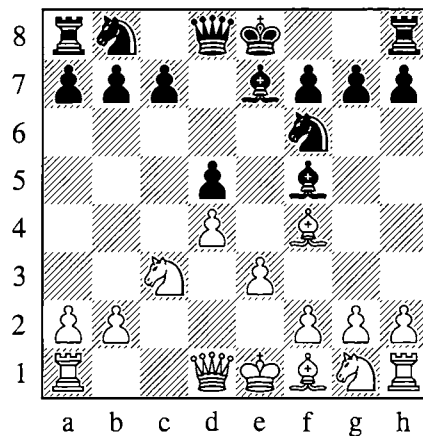
## GAME 9

Chytilek – Frey

Correspondence 2003

1.c4 e6 2. ♖c3 d5 3.d4 ♕e7 4.cxd5 exd5 5. ♕f4 ♖f6 6.e3 ♕f5!?

A popular, but somewhat risky treatment. In the next game I examine the solid 6...0–0.



The modern treatment.

**7. ♖ge2!?**

A flexible choice. The move White wants to play to exploit Black’s early bishop move is 7. ♖b3 but after 7... ♖c6! things are not so clear:

8.a3

This is a drastic way to prevent ... ♖b4.

8... ♖a5 9. ♖a2

9. ♖a4† c6

9...0–0 10. ♖f3 c5! 11. dxc5 ♖xc5 12. ♖d1

Or 12. ♖b5 ♖c6 13. ♖e2 a6 14. ♖c3 d4 and Black has no problems whatsoever: 15. exd4 ♖xd4 ½–½ Volkov – Khalifman, Dagomys 2008.

12. b4 ♖b6 13. bxa5 ♖xa5 14. ♖e5 ♖c8

15. ♖c1 ♖e4 16. ♖b2 f6 17. ♖d4 ♖xc3

18. ♖xc3 ♖c7 and Black wins is the tactical justification.

12... ♖c2 13. ♖d2 ♖b3 14. ♖b1 ♖c8

Black had the upper hand in Sasikiran – Ponomarev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

8. ♖xb7 ♖b4

This is risky for White.

9. ♖c1

9. ♖b5† is tempting but after 9... ♖f8! White has some problems getting his queen back to safety. A recent example continued: 10. ♖c1 a6 11. ♖e2 ♖e8! 12. a3 Accepting the inevitable fate. 12... ♖b8 13. ♖a7 ♖a8 14. ♖b7 ♖b8 15. ♖a7 ♖a8 ½–½ Moiseenko – Shomoev, Moscow 2007.

9...0–0 10. a3?!

Or 10. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 11. ♖xc7 ♖fc8 12. ♖g3 ♖e4 and Black is very active. 13. a3 ♖xc3 14. ♖xc3 ♖a2! In Djurhuus – Olafsson, Reykjavik 1996, White had to surrender the c-file or sacrifice an exchange.

Best is probably 10. ♖f3 ♖c2† 11. ♖xc2 ♖xc2 12. ♖xc7 ♖c8 13. ♖a6. Now in Lopez Martinez – Gongora Reyes, Varadero 2000, Black rather naively tried to copy Yusupov’s play with 13... ♖xb7? 14. ♖xb7 ♖ab8 15. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 16. ♖c6 ♖xb2 17.0–0 only to find himself a clear pawn down. Correct

was the computer solution 13... ♖b4! with adequate play.

10... ♖c2† 11. ♖xc2 ♖xc2 12. ♖xc7 ♖c8 13. ♖a6 ♖xb7 14. ♖xb7 ♖ab8 15. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 16. ♖a6 ♖xb2 17. ♖ge2 ♖b6 18. ♖c8 ♖xa3

Black was clearly better with the bishop pair and strong passed a-pawn in Ehlvest – Yusupov, Linares 1991.

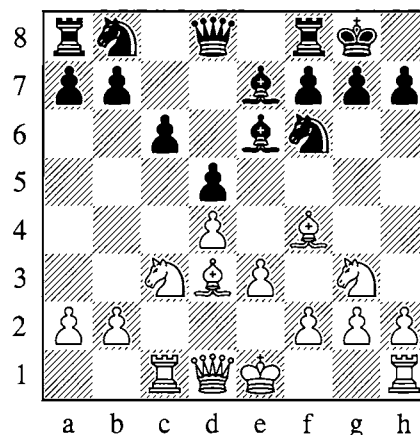
**7...0–0 8. ♖c1**

Directed against a quick c7-c5 from Black.

On the natural 8. ♖g3 ♖e6 9. ♖d3 Black immediately counters with 9...c5! 10. dxc5 ♖xc5 11.0–0 ♖c6 12. ♖c1 d4! trying to liquidate the whole centre. White has some initiative after both 13. ♖b5 ♖b6 and 13. ♖ce4 ♖e7 so it is not dead equal yet and maybe some improvement can be found.

**8...c6 9. ♖g3 ♖e6**

After 9... ♖g6 10. h4 is strong, e.g. 10...h6 11. h5 ♖h7 12. ♖d3 ♖xd3 13. ♖xd3 and the white knight has the great attacking square f5.

**10. ♖d3**

White is slightly better. He has long-term possibilities on the kingside and he can perhaps break in the centre or even play positionally on the queenside. As usual in the Queen’s Gambit

Exchange structure, it is not easy for Black to create active counterplay, but he can rely on a solid and sound position.

### 10...♖bd7

In a clash with his great rival Kasparov, Karpov played:

10...♞e8

The game was a quick draw but White seemed better all the way and had several opportunities to play differently.

11.♞b3!?

11.0–0 seems more natural when 11...♖bd7 transposes to the main game.

11...♞b6 12.♞c2

White's claim is that the black queen is misplaced on b6.

12...♖bd7 13.0–0 g6 14.h3

Very modest. 14.a3 was interesting, and if 14...a5 then 15.h4! with play all over the board: 15...♞ac8 16.h5 c5 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.♞xg6! This looks crushing but Black can decline the offer: 18...cxd4! 19.exd4 ♞xd4 20.♖ge2 ♞b6 and everything is still possible.

14...♞f8 15.♖ge2 ♞ac8 16.♞d2

Here 16.♖a4 or 16.♞g5 were good alternatives.

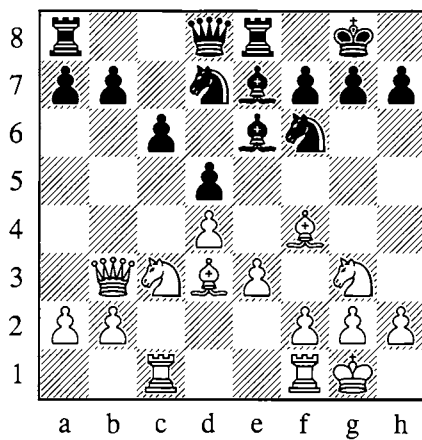
16...♖h5 17.♞h2 ♖g7 18.g4

Preventing ...♞f5.

18...♞d8 19.f3 ♖b6 20.b3 ♞a3 21.♞c2 ½–½

Kasparov – Karpov, Seville (12) 1987.

### 11.0–0 ♞e8 12.♞b3!



### 12...b5

This looks strange at first sight, but then you realize that there is a tactical problem with the natural way to protect b7:

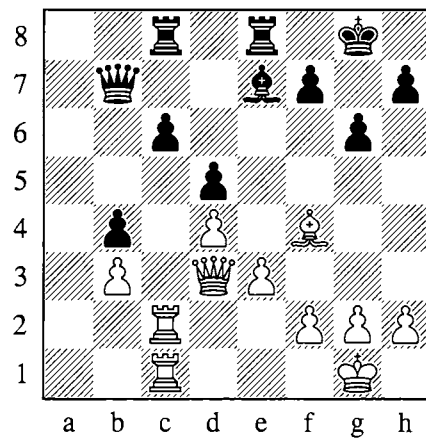
12...♞b6 13.♖b5! That's it: the rook on c1 takes part in the execution of the queen after 13...cxb5 14.♞c7! ♞a6 15.♞xb5+.

12...♖b6 runs into the same: 13.♖b5! ♞f8 (not 13...cxb5 14.♞c7 ♞d7 15.♞xb5 ♞c8 16.♞xb6) 14.♖c7 ♞c8 15.♖xe6 fxe6 16.♖e2 and White is better.

### 13.♖f5 ♞xf5 14.♞xf5 g6 15.♞h3 a5 16.♖e2

Straightforward positional play: White puts pressure on the weak c6-pawn.

16...a4 17.♞d3 ♞b6 18.♞c2 b4 19.♞xd7 ♖xd7 20.♞fc1 ♞ac8 21.b3 axb3 22.axb3 ♖f8 23.♞g3 ♖e6 24.♖f4 ♖xf4 25.♞xf4 ♞b7



The position has simplified, but the static elements are the same. Black is tied to the defence of the backward pawn on c6, and White can switch his attention to the kingside and try to open a new battleground there.

26.h3 ♞b6 27.♞d1 ♞b7 28.♞f3 ♞a6 29.♞e5 ♞d8 30.h4! ♞xh4 31.♞g4 ♞e7 32.♞d7

White has activated his queen with tempo and now wins the pawn back on c6 when all his pieces are very active.

32...♖a3 33.♗xc6 ♖xc1†

Or 33...♗cd8 34.♞b7 ♞xb3 35.♗c7 and White controls the seventh rank, for example 35...♖f8 36.♗f6! ♗xf6 37.♗xf7† ♖g8 38.♗xh7! ♗f8 39.♗cc7.

34.♗xc1 ♗xc1† 35.♖h2 ♗cc8 36.♞xd5

White collects a free d-pawn: the game is decided.

36...♗f8 37.♞b5 ♗e6 38.f4 ♗a8 39.d5 ♗ea6  
40.e4  
1–0

**Conclusion:** The flexible 7.♗ge2!? leads to typical Queen’s Gambit Exchange play, where White has some positional advantage. There are also some strong tactical possibilities – notice the strength of 12.♞b3!

## GAME 10

Wojtaszek – Fressinet

Wijk aan Zee 2011

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♗e7

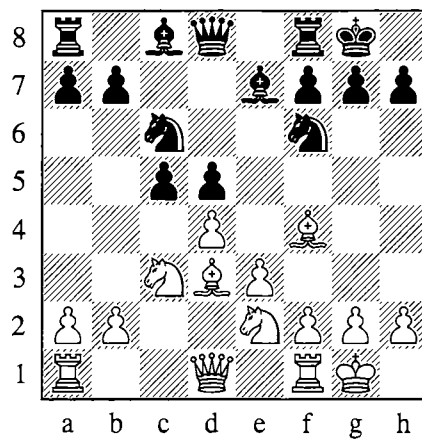
In the 2011 Candidates tournament it seemed as though almost all the participants had prepared the Queen’s Gambit Declined as Black. Its solidity definitely suits match play and its popularity at the highest level gave this classical opening a boost at all levels. The move order mainly used was 3...♗e7, which I see as a clear sign that the world elite agree with me that the normal Exchange structure simply favours White.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4 ♗f6 6.e3 0–0

This plan connected with an early ...c5 is a

very straightforward equalizing attempt. Often it results in a typical isolani position.

7.♗d3 c5 8.♗ge2 ♗c6 9.0–0



9...♗g4

The most active continuation.

9...cxd4 10.♗xd4 ♗xd4 11.exd4± White is more active in a rather symmetrical position. Here is a fresh example: 11...♗d7 12.♗e1 ♗c6 13.a3 ♗e8 14.b4 with some positional initiative, Rodshtein – Radulski, Plovdiv 2012.

9...♗e6 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.♗c1 ♗d6 has been played by the ultra-solid German grandmaster Fridman. The position closely resembles our mainline. White has an edge after the simple 12.♗xd6 ♞xd6 13.♗b5 ♞e5 14.♗ed4± as in Bocharov – Zvjaginsev, Magnitogorsk 2011.

9...c4 is probably asking too much, but at least it avoids the IQP scenario. 10.♗c2 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗h5 was Salem – Tregubov, Moscow 2010, and now 12.♗g5!N creates some pressure.

10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.h3

The most exact. On 11.♗c1 Black can try 11...d4.

11...♗xe2 12.♗xe2 ♗d6

Playing in the same style as Fridman. The problem is that Black is too focused on making a draw. In positions like this with an isolated d-pawn, he will always be positionally slightly inferior and it might be a long day.

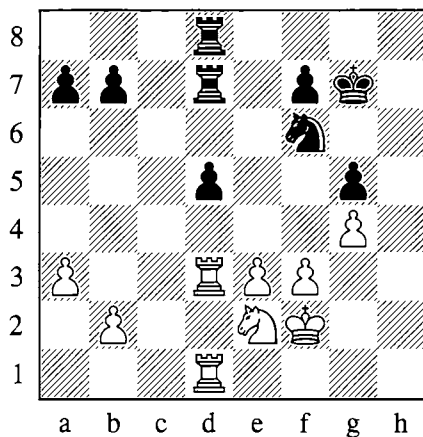
13. ♖b3 ♙xf4 14. ♗xf4 ♜d6 15. ♝fd1 ♝fd8  
16. ♝ac1 ♖b4

Hoping for an easy defence in the ending, but it will not turn out that way. After the queen exchange White can afford to expand with his pawns on the kingside without having to fear a counterattack.

17. ♜xb4 ♗xb4 18. a3 ♗xd3 19. ♝xd3 ♝d7  
20. g4! h6 21. f3 ♝ad8 22. ♝cd1 g6 23. ♖f2  
♖g7 24. h4!

Forcing Black to play ...g5, which will weaken his kingside.

24...g5 25. hxg5 hxg5 26. ♗e2



There is a big hole on f5 just waiting for the white knight.

26... ♗g8 27. ♗d4 ♗e7 28. ♖g3 ♝h8 29. f4!

The initiative matters; White keeps forcing Black to solve concrete problems.

29... ♖g6 30. ♗f3

30. f5† ♖f6 31. ♗f3 was more exact. The pin

on the d-file will allow White to get in e3-e4.

30... ♙xf4† 31. exf4 f6 32. f5†

32. ♗d4 was more flexible.

32... ♖f7 33. ♝e1 ♝c7 34. ♗d4 a6 35. ♝de3  
♗c6 36. ♗f3 ♝e7 37. g5! fxg5 38. ♖g4 ♝he8  
39. ♝xe7† ♝xe7 40. ♝h1

White tries one last idea. Black has defended quite well and should be able to draw after 40... ♝e4† or 40... ♝e2, but exhausted by the tough course of the game the strong Frenchman blunders on the last move before the time control.

40... d4? 41. ♗xg5† ♖f6 42. ♖f4

Now the white rook will enter the game with great effect.

42... d3 43. ♗e4† ♖f7 44. ♝h3 d2 45. ♝d3  
1–0

**Conclusion:** The 5... ♗f6 and 6... 0–0 line is solid for Black, but in the typical IQP positions that arise White is always somewhat better.

**Chapter Conclusion:** The Exchange Variation is a simple and strong way for White to meet the orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined. The fixed pawn structure is slightly to White's advantage and at the same time contains enough positional and tactical venom to worry Black. The plan with f3 and e4 in particular is surprisingly difficult for Black to meet, as we have seen time and again throughout the chapter. Therefore, many players choose the 3... ♙e7 move order, but also here the Exchange structure gives White good prospects.

The play is often strategically deep with few forcing lines, so it is important to know the standard plans and typical middlegame scenarios. Remembering the exact moves is secondary.

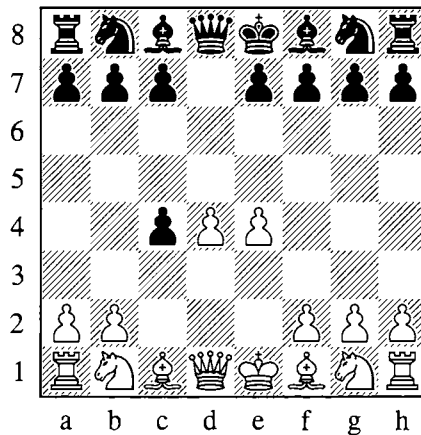
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# Chapter 2

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## Queen's Gambit Accepted

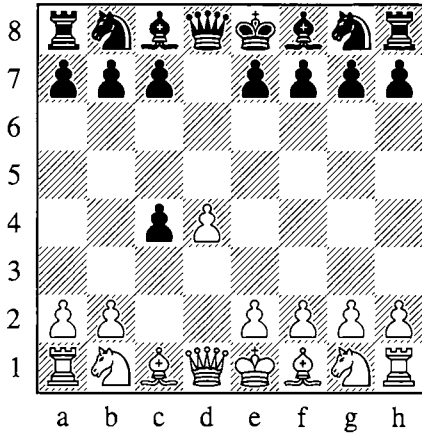
*You're gonna need a bigger boat*  
– Chief Brody, *Jaws*



**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4**

The 3...b5 Variation	page 45
The 3...c5 Variation	page 47
The 3...e5 Variation	page 53
The 3...♘c6 Variation	page 70
The 3...♘f6 Variation	page 75

## 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4



And now to something completely different. Black voluntarily gives up the centre and still pretends to be happy, though it is against all classical chess principles.

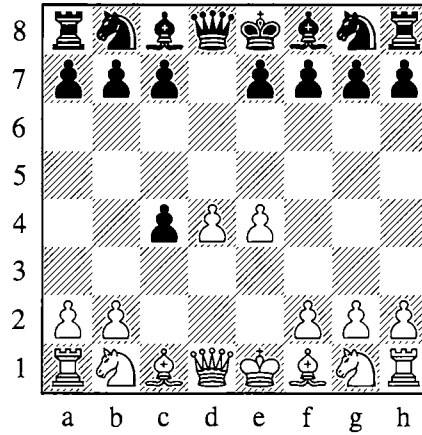
The Queen's Gambit Accepted is a very cunning system. Black did not take on c4 to keep the pawn, it is merely an exchange. And that is more or less the philosophy behind the opening. No matter what active measures White takes, Black will try to neutralize them as soon as possible. Black will use his flexibility to attack White's centre with pawns, pieces or both, depending on how White proceeds. And Black will use the same flexibility to create a healthy structure without weaknesses. It is a very concrete way to play and White risks not getting a real game at all, just a sterile draw.

A very natural reaction is to play 3.♘f3 followed by e2-e3 and then take the pawn back. For a long time the mainline was 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♙xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.a4, where White claimed a slight positional edge. The interesting positions with an isolated queen's pawn after 7...♘c6 8.♙e2 cxd4 9.♙d1 ♙e7 10.exd4 0-0 11.♘c3 were intensely debated. These days Black is thought to be okay after 11...♘d5. Instead White switched his attention to a sharper set-up with 7.♙b3. Here the IQP positions after 7...♘c6 8.♘c3 cxd4 9.exd4 ♙e7

are more dangerous for Black. White has had some success with the interesting 10.♙g5 0-0 11.♙d2, and 10.♙e1 is also a good try. Still, it is complicated and double-edged to put it mildly, and Black can also refrain from taking on d4 and instead play, for instance, 7...b5.

However there is an obvious solution for White: just take the centre and play:

## 3.e4



White takes all the space he can and gets two wonderful central pawns. That is something! Instead of the narrow lines with just a tiny edge, White goes for the big fish.

On the downside, the impressive centre has no backup and White has not regained the pawn yet, so more time will have to be wasted. In other words, White is a bit overstretched just now, but only for a few more moves, then everything will be in order. Black should use the momentum and strike at once at the centre, trying to force White to make a concession. Many believe that Black's most logical options are the natural pawn strikes, 3...c5 or 3...e5, but seeking more sophisticated piece-play with 3...♘c6 or 3...♘f6 also has many fans. Trying to keep the pawn with 3...b5 cannot be recommended, because it gives White a free hand to build a strong initiative, but of course it deserves to be examined.

## The 3...b5 Variation

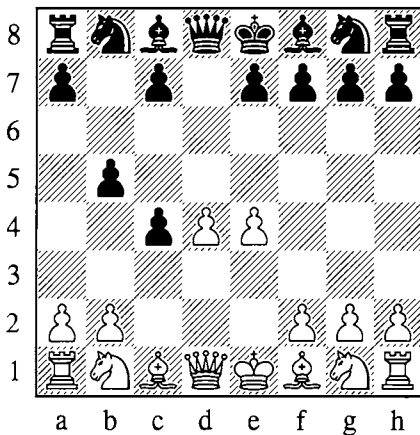
– Isn't that just a pawn?

### GAME 11

Ponomarev – I. Sokolov

Zafra 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 b5



4.a4

Immediately confronting Black's pawn phalanx.

4...c6

Or 4...b7 5.axb5 bxc4 6.dxc3 b7 7.f3 f6 8.bxc4 e6 9.0-0 e7 10.dxe5 and White was better in Ribli – Pr. Nikolic, Reykjavik 1988.

5.axb5 cxb5 6.dxc3 d7

This looks awkward, but he had to protect the pawn. Natural moves like 6...a6 7.dxb5 or 6...b6 7.d5 b7 8.f4 are clearly insufficient.

7.f3

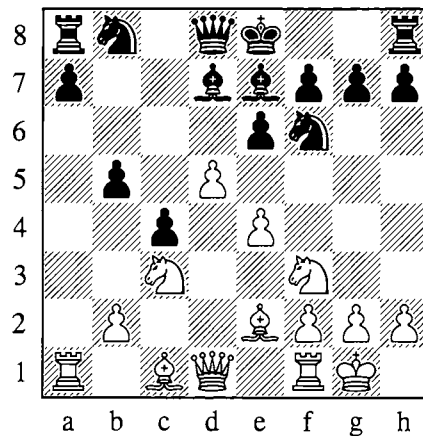
The most natural move, but Hans Berliner in *The System* claims that 7.d5! is probably even stronger. One point being 7...e6 8.dxe6

fxe6 9.dxb5! where the queen protects the knight via the check on h5.

7...e6 8.b2 f6 9.0-0 e7

No better is 9...b4 10.d5! bxc3 11.bxc3 exd5 12.exd5 0-0 13.dxe5 f5 14.f3 a5 15.d4 with strong positional compensation for the pawn, Zarnicki – Slipak, Villa Martelli 2007. Black can hardly move as ...bd7 allows the terrible d6.

10.d5!



10...exd5

The stem game went 10...b4 11.d6! and Black either had to give up his important dark-squared bishop or withdraw further. Zaltsman choose the latter: 11...f8 12.e5 bxc3 13.exf6 and Black's development was horrible, Yermolinsky – Zaltsman, St Martin 1993.

11.exd5

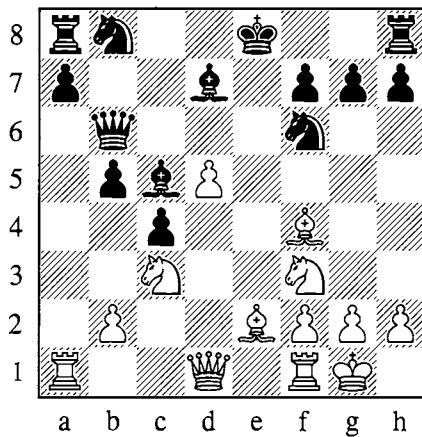
Also possible was 11.e5 de4 12.xd5 c6 13.xd8+ xd8 14.d4 xc3 15.bxc3 with an initiative in the endgame.

11...b6 12.f4

Now 12...d6 seems solid after 13.d6 xd6 14.d4 b6 but then 15.b3! destroys the nice pawns and after 15...b4 16.d4 xa4

17. ♖xa4 c3 18. ♗b5† ♜bd7 19. ♗e1† Black is rather exposed.

12... ♗c5



13. ♗xc4!?

An amazing sacrifice. Ponomarev calculates that his long-term threats are more important than a piece. Very bravely played indeed.

13... ♗xc4 14. ♖e2† ♜f8

14... ♜d8 15. ♜e5 is worse.

15. ♜e5 ♗f5?

Black does not have time for this. 15... ♜g8, to get the king out of the way, was more sensible, but 16. ♗g5 keeps a lot of play for the piece.

16. ♜a4 ♖b5 17. ♜xc5 ♖xc5 18. ♜xc4

Threatening ♗d6†.

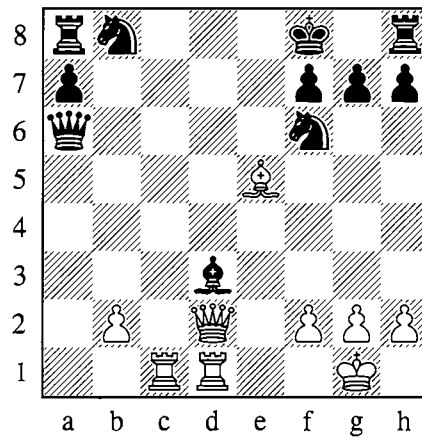
18... ♖d4 19. ♗e5 ♗d3 20. ♖d2 ♖xd5

Or 20... ♖xc4 21. ♗fc1 ♖xd5 22. ♗c8† and taking on h8.

21. ♗fd1

21... ♗xf6 was also good.

21... ♖xc4 22. ♗ac1 ♖a6



23. ♗xf6!

Simple and effective. Black cannot take back: 23... ♖xf6 24. ♗c8† or 23... ♗xf6 24. ♖h6†.

23... ♜d7 24. ♗c3

Calmly played. Black is still a piece up, but it is impossible to keep everything together.

24... ♗b5 25. ♖g5

Attacking g7.

25... ♜f6

25... ♗f6 fails to 26. ♖d5 ♗b8 27. ♗b4† ♜e8 28. ♗e1†.

26. ♖c5† ♜g8 27. ♗xf6

Again this move, and again Black does not take back: 27... ♖xf6 28. ♖c8† or 27... ♗xf6 28. ♗c3.

27... ♗h6 28. ♗c3

And calmly back, almost like déjà vu.

28... ♗e8 29. ♗d6 ♖b7 30. ♖f5

With strong pressure. Black will never solve the problem with his king and the opposite-coloured bishops only make things worse. Facing nothing but difficulties, Black blunders a piece.

30... ♖e7 31. ♖xb5

1-0

**Conclusion:** Yes, a pawn is a pawn, and an initiative is an initiative! The problem with 3...b5 is that it gives White too much free play in the centre.

## The 3...c5 Variation

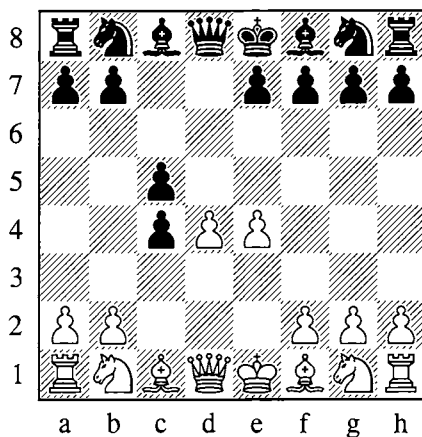
For a long time this was thought to be a good countermeasure. These days it is found to be too lightweight.

### GAME 12

P.H. Nielsen – Karjakin

Hastings 2002

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 c5



4.d5

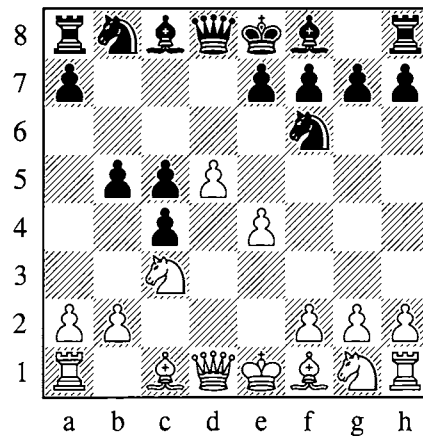
Taking space. The ending after 4.♟f3 cxd4 5.♞xd4 ♞xd4 6.♞xd4 ♟d7 7.♟xc4 ♞c6 is nothing.

4...♞f6

4...e6 is the safe option, and it is examined in the next game.

5.♞c3 b5

Very sharp and consistent.



6.♟f4!

The forcing 6.e5 b4 7.exf6 bxc3 8.bxc3 is tempting but not convincing. 8...♞d7 (or even 8...♞a5!?) 9.♞a4 exf6 (9...gxf6) 10.♟f4 ♞b6 11.♟xc4 ♟d6 and Black is okay.

6...♟a6

This looks strange: one gets the feeling that Black is asking too much, so it is no great surprise that the move is practically refuted in this game. Black had some problems because the other ways to protect b5 had drawbacks too:

a) 6...a6 7.e5 b4 8.exf6 bxc3 9.bxc3

White is a tempo up compared to the variations after 6.e5. Still it is not totally clear:

a1) 9...♞a5 10.♞c1 gxf6 11.♟xc4 is pleasant for White. 11...h5?! (11...♞d7) 12.♞f3 ♞d7 13.0-0± ♞b6?! 14.♟c7! ♞a7 15.d6 White was already winning in Legky – Peric, Cannes 2000.

a2) 9...gxf6 10.♟xc4 is of course good for White.

a3) 9...♞d7 10.♞a4 ♞b6

10...gxf6 11.♟xc4

10...exf6? 11.♞c6! ♞a7 12.♞b1 leaves Black tied up, e.g. 12...♟e7 13.d6.

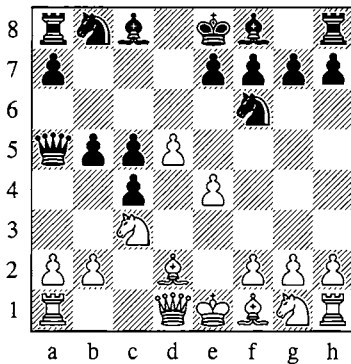
11.fxe7

11.♙xc4 ♖xf6 12.♘e2 seems simple and strong.

11...♙xe7 12.♙xc4 ♖b2 13.♞c1 ♙d6 14.♙e3

This was Markeluk – Juarez, Buenos Aires 1989, and now 14...0–0! offers compensation after 15.♖b3 ♞b8 16.♖xb2 ♞xb2.

b) 6...♖a5 7.♙d2 (avoiding 7.e5 ♘e4)



With the following possibilities:

b1) 7...e5!? 8.dxe6

8.f4 ♘bd7 9.♘f3 ♙d6 is okay for Black.

8...♙xe6

8...fxe6 9.e5 ♘fd7 10.♖g4 is dangerous for Black.

9.e5 ♘fd7 10.f4

10.♖f3 ♘b6 11.a4 b4 12.♘b5 ♘a6 13.♙xc4! is an interesting improvement, when 13...♙xc4 14.♖c6† ♘e7 15.♘d6 gives White a big attack, e.g. 15...♙d5 16.♘f5† ♘d8 17.♙g5† f6 18.exf6! ♙xc6 19.fxg7† ♘c7 20.gxh8=♖ c4 21.♖xh7† ♙d7 22.♙f4† ♘b7 23.♘e3 and White should be able to convert his extra material into a full point.

10...g6 11.♖f3 ♘b6 12.♘e4 ♖a6 13.♘f6† ♘d8

The position was unclear in Komperda – Hebrard, corr. 2000.

b2) 7...♘bd7!? 8.♘f3

Again 8.f4 is not convincing: 8...b4 9.e5 bxc3 10.♙xc3 ♖c7 11.exf6 ♘xf6∞

8...♘g4 9.e5 ♘g4 10.e6!

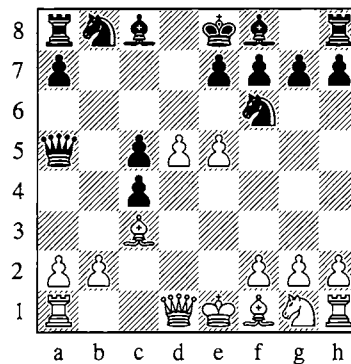
This blow tips the balance in White's favour. 10...fxe6 11.dxe6 ♘b6 12.♘g5! ♘f6 13.♖f3 bxc3 14.♖c6† ♘fd7 15.♙xc3 ♖a4 16.exd7† ♙xd7 17.♖f3 ♖c6 18.♖f7† ♘d8 19.0–0–0

With a winning position, Bergsson – Michiels, Differdange 2007.

b3) 7...b4 8.e5 bxc3

8...♘g4 9.e6! Again we see this resource. 9...♘f6 10.♙xc4! fxe6 11.dxe6 ♙b7 (11...bxc3 12.♙xc3 ♖c7 13.♖a4† ♘c6 14.♘f3 ♙b7 15.0–0–0 and Black will not survive) 12.♘d5! ♘c6 (12...♘xd5 13.♙xd5 ♙xd5 14.♖h5† g6 15.♖xd5+–) 13.♙xb4! ♖d8 (13...cxb4 14.♘xf6† exf6 15.♖d7#) 14.♙xc5 ♘xd5 15.♖xd5 ♖xd5 16.♙xd5 White was winning in Van Wely – Azmaiparashvili, Istanbul 2000.

9.♙xc3



9...♖a6

After 9...♖c7 10.exf6 exf6 11.♙xc4 ♖d6 (on 11...♙d6 12.♖e2† is annoying) 12.♘e2 ♙e7 13.0–0 0–0 14.♘g3 White had an overwhelming position and quickly won: 14...♖f4 15.d6! ♖xc4 16.dxe7 ♞e8 17.♖f3 ♖a6 18.♘h5 1–0 Sherbakov – Shaginjan, St Petersburg 1999.

10.exf6 exf6 11.b3

Winning back the pawn with a positional advantage.

11...♙e7 12.♙xc4 ♖d6 13.♘e2 0–0 14.0–0 f5  
15.♗d3

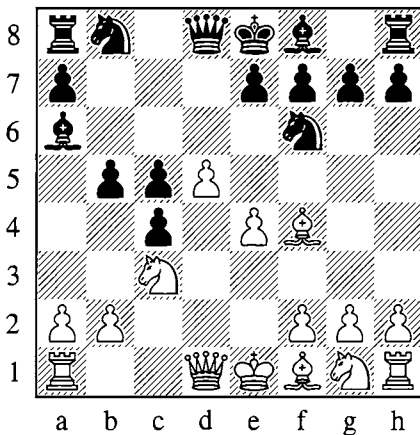
Shirov once played 15.♙e1 ♘d7 16.♘g3 g6  
17.♙xe7!? sacrificing an exchange. 17...♗xe7  
18.d6 And gaining good compensation.  
18...♗h4 19.♗d5 ♖b8 20.♘xf5!? And now  
gave away a piece as well. 20...gxf5 21.♙e1

15...g6 16.♙d2 ♙f6

16...♘d7 17.♙f4 ♘e5 18.♗g3

17.♙f4 ♙e5 18.♙xe5 ♗xe5 19.♘c3

White was strategically winning in Lempert  
– Bukhman, St Petersburg 1993.



7.♘f3!

A strong novelty at the time.

7.e5 b4 8.exf6 bxc3 9.bxc3 gxf6∞

This has been played with great success by  
Ponomarev.

10.♖b1 ♙g7 11.♗g4?! ♗xd5! 12.♙e2

Not 12.♗xg7 ♗e4†.

12...♗e4 13.♖xb8† ♖xb8 14.♙xb8 ♗b1†  
15.♙d1 0–0

With good play for the piece.

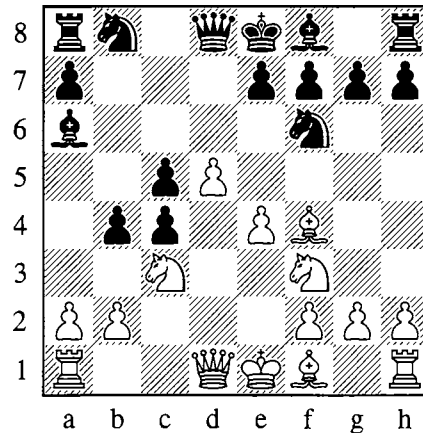
16.♙c7 ♖c8 17.♗f4?! ♗b7 18.♙a5 ♗b5

19.♙c7 ♗b2 20.♘e2 e5 21.♙xe5 fxe5

Black was winning in Khalifman –  
Ponomarev, Neum 2000.

Or instead of 10.♖b1, 10.♘e2 ♘d7 11.♗a4  
♗b6 12.g3 ♗b5 13.♗c2 ♘b6 14.♙g2 ♙b7  
15.♙d1 e6! and White had problems with his  
d-pawn in Volkov – Ponomarev, Ohrid 2001.

7...b4



8.♙xb8!

The beginning of a long forced variation.

8...bxc3 9.♗a4† ♗d7 10.♗xa6 cxb2 11.♖b1  
♖xb8 12.♙xc4!

12.♘e5 ♗b7? 13.♖xb2! 1–0 Shirov –  
Mortylev, Moscow 2001, was a quick knockout.

The improvement soon came: 12...♗c7!  
13.♗a4† ♘d7 14.♘xc4 g6 15.♗c6 ♘d8  
16.♗xc7† ♘xc7 17.♖xb2 ♖xb2 18.♘xb2  
♙g7 This was good for Black in Ivanisevic –  
Charalbashev, Antalya 2002.

12...♖b6

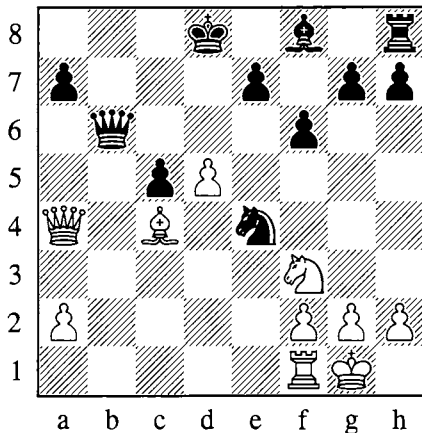
12...♗b7 lets the b-pawn live: 13.♗a4†  
♘d7 14.0–0 but White has a strong initiative.  
14...♗b4 15.♗c6 ♘d8 (not 15...♗xc4  
16.♖xb2 ♖d8 17.♘e5) 16.♙a6 with a firm  
grip: 16...h5 17.e5 ♗b6 18.e6 fxe6 19.♖fd1 is  
winning.

13.♗a3 ♘xe4 14.♖xb2 ♗b7

If 14...♘d6 to keep the position closed then  
15.♖xb6 axb6 16.♘e5 ♗b7 and now White

has a brilliant combination: 17.♔b5† ♖xb5  
 18.♗a4 ♗xd5 19.♗xb5† ♖d8 20.♗xb6† ♖c8  
 21.0–0! ♗xe5 22.♞d1 Winning. 22...♗c7  
 23.♗a6† ♗b7 24.♗a4 Threatening ♗e8†.

15.♞xb6 ♗xb6 16.0–0 f6 17.♗a4† ♖d8



18.d6!

A spectacular breakthrough. White gives up another pawn and open more lines into the black position.

18...e5

18...♖xd6 19.♔e6 Threatening mate on d7.  
 19...♖b5 (or 19...♗b7 20.♖d2 followed by ♗b1) 20.♞b1 a6 21.♗b3 And White has 22.a4 to come.

19.♔e6 ♗b7 20.♗a5†

1–0

A very young Karjakin saw 20...♗b6 21.♞b1! and resigned.

**Conclusion:** The ultra-sharp variation with 3...c5 and 5...b5 was effectively put out of business by the Danish theorist Peter Heine Nielsen's powerful play.

Black has a much more positional approach, but it does not seem sufficient either.

## GAME 13

### Greenfeld – Gyimesi

Tel Aviv 2001

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 c5 4.d5 e6 5.♔xc4

Another popular road leading to Rome is 5.♖c3 exd5 6.♖xd5 ♖e7 7.♔xc4 ♖xd5 8.♔xd5.

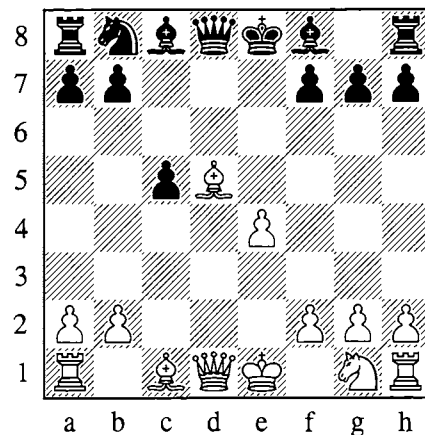
5...♖f6

After 5...exd5 6.♔xd5 the position is already tricky for Black because 6...♖f6? allows 7.♔xf7†.

6.♖c3 exd5 7.♖xd5

7...exd5!? is also possible.

7...♖xd5 8.♔xd5



8...♔e7

This looks like a fantastic position for White with the great bishop on d5. Then you realize that Black can kick it away or exchange it with ...♖d7-b6 or ...♔e6. In fact White has to play exactly to keep a positional edge.

Black can also play: 8...♔d6 9.♖f3 (9.♗h5!? 0–0 10.♖f3 was introduced in a simul by the legendary Paul Keres in 1961. Even these

days it looks very strong.) 9...0-0 10.0-0 ♖c7 11.h3 ♘d7 12.♗e2 ♘b6 13.♙b3 ♙e7 14.♙d2 ♙d7 15.♞ac1± Beliavsky – De la Villa Garcia, Szirak 1987.

**9.♘e2**

Going to c3, so White can take back on d5 with the knight and keep a piece on this fine outpost. However, 9.♘f3 is also playable.

**9...0-0 10.0-0 ♖a6**

Planning ...♘c7 next.

10...♘d7 11.♘c3 ♘b6 12.♙f4

This will often transpose, but there are exceptions:

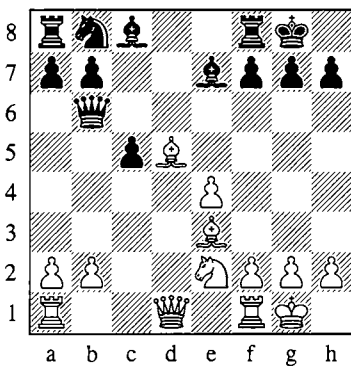
12...♙g5 13.♗f3

13.♙d6!? ♙e7 14.e5 was proposed by Sakaev. After 14...♙xd6 15.exd6 the pawn is taboo and remains a thorn in the middle of Black’s position. This line does indeed look good.

13...♙xf4 14.♗xf4 ♗e7 15.a4 ♙e6 16.a5 ♙xd5 17.exd5 ♘c8 18.♞fe1 ♗d7 19.♗c4! ♘d6 20.♗xc5

White won a pawn in Winants – Afek, France 2002.

10...♗b6 11.♙e3



11...♘c6

11...♙g4 12.♗d2 ♘c6 13.f3 ♙e6 14.♘f4 is very pleasant for White. 14...♘b4 15.♙xe6 fxe6 Solozhenkin – Kallai, France 1996, and

now 16.♗c3! seems strong. The queen eyes the weak c-pawn and is ready to go to the excellent square c4.

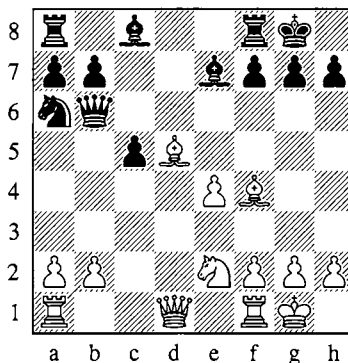
12.♗d2 ♙e6 13.♘f4 ♘e5 14.b4! ♗xb4 15.♗xb4 cxb4 16.♘xe6 fxe6 17.♙xe6† ♖h8 18.f4 ♘d3 19.♞ad1 ♞ad8 20.♙d5

In Granda Zuniga – Gendler, Yerevan 1996, White’s bishop pair and better pawn structure secured him a good ending.

**11.♙f4 ♘c7**

The creative player Yochanan Afek has a special liking for this variation. His results however are poor.

11...♗b6



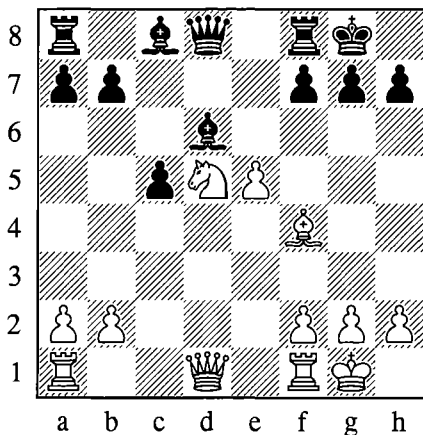
From this position Afek has had a couple of disasters:

12.♗d2 ♙e6 13.♘c3 ♘b4 14.a3 ♘xd5 15.exd5 ♞ad8? (15...♙d7 was forced but then 16.d6 is great for White.) 16.♗e2 1-0 Rogers – Afek, Hoogeveen 2006. White wins a piece on the e-file.

It turns out that White can play even more forcefully: 12.♘c3! ♗xb2 13.♗f3 ♘b4 14.♗g3 ♖h8 15.a3 ♙f6 16.e5 ♘xd5 17.♘xd5 ♙d8 18.e6 ♙f6 19.♞ab1 ♗c2 20.e7 ♞g8 21.♘xf6 1-0 Sanikidze – Afek, Nuernberg 2011.

**12.♘c3 ♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♙d6 14.e5!**

Pushing Black further back.

**14...♙b8**

The bishop has other squares but no perfect solution:

14...♙c7 15.e6! wins an exchange. 15...♙xf4 16.e7 ♙xh2† 17.♙h1 ♖d6 18.exf8=♖† ♙xf8 19.♖h5 ♙e5 20.♗fe1 (perhaps stronger is 20.♗ae1 so the rook is not attacked on a1) 20...♙xb2 21.♖xh7 ♖h6† 22.♖xh6 gxf6 23.♗ab1 ♙d4 24.♙c7 ♗b8 25.♗e8† ♙g7 26.♙b5 ♙f5 27.♗xb8 ♙xb1 28.♙xd4 cxd4 29.♗xb7 ♙xa2 30.♗xa7 ♙b1 31.♗d7 d3 32.♙g1 ♙f6 33.f3 ♙c2 34.♙f2 With good winning chances in the endgame, although Black managed to hold in Galyas – Nemeth, Budapest 2001.

14...♙e7 15.e6 ♙xe6 16.♙xe7† ♖xe7 17.♙d6 ♖f6 18.♙xf8 ♗xf8 19.♖c2± Beliavsky – Kallai, Hungary 2009. Again White is an exchange up.

**15.♖b3**

15.♖f3 ♙g4 16.♖e4 kept the central control in Gofshtein – Afek, Tel Aviv 1996, but 15...f6!? could be tried.

**15...♙e6 16.♗ad1 b6 17.♙g3**

Preparing f2-f4.

17.♖f3 ♙xd5 18.♗xd5 ♖e7 19.♗fd1 ♖b7 was Orr – Afek (here he is again), Gausdal 2003, when 20.♖g3 looks good for White.

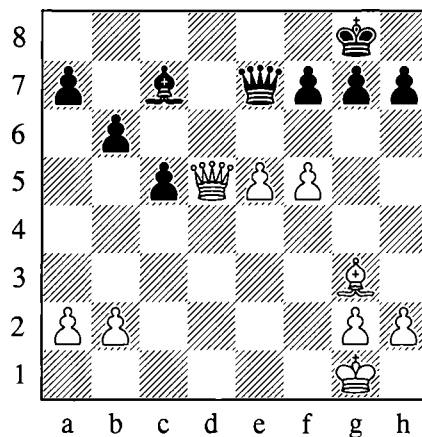
**17...♙c7 18.f4 ♙xd5**

There is no way to avoid this exchange: the knight is too powerful on d5 and must be removed. The price is high though, as surrendering this bishop leaves Black's light squares rather weak.

**19.♗xd5 ♖e7 20.f5**

Keeping all the positional trumps.

20.♖a4, eyeing d7 and a7, was tempting but after 20...♗fd8 21.♗xd8† ♗xd8! 22.♖xa7 ♗d2 23.b3 ♖d8 Black has compensation for the pawn.

**20...♗ad8 21.♗fd1 ♗xd5 22.♗xd5 ♗d8 23.♖d3 ♗xd5 24.♖xd5**

White's centralized queen completely dominates the position. Black lacks counterplay or even a plan, while White can slowly but surely advance his pawns on the kingside and activate his king.

**24...h6**

24...♖d8 25.♖xd8† ♙xd8 leads to a very passive bishop ending, where White keeps good winning chances after 26.♙f4 g6 27.g4 ♙f8 28.♙f2 ♙e8 29.♙e3 ♙d7 30.♙e4.

24...h5 gives Black better chances to hold.

25.♙f4 ♖h7 26.g3 g5!?

This transforms his position, but does not improve it. Psychologically it is difficult to remain passive for very long.

27.fxg6† fxg6 28.g4 ♖g7 29.♖g2 b5 30.♙g3 ♖h7 31.h4 a6 32.g5 hxg5 33.hxg5 c4 34.a3

White has all the time in the world and maybe takes it a bit too easy: 34.e6! ♙xg3 35.♖xg3 ♖g8 36.♖f3 ♖f8 37.♚e5 seems winning.

34...♖g7 35.♙f4 ♖f8 36.♖f3 c3?!

The last chance was 36...♚d8.

37.bxc3 ♚xa3 38.♚c6

White finally breaks through.

38...♙d8?! 39.e6

The credits can begin. The film is over and the audience heading towards the exit.

39...♖g8 40.♙d6

1–0

**Conclusion:** White gets a pleasant position if Black just stays solid. The popularity of 3...c5 is over, which is easy to understand. The sharp tactical variations and the more quiet positional ones are all just better for White. As simple as that!

## The 3...e5 Variation

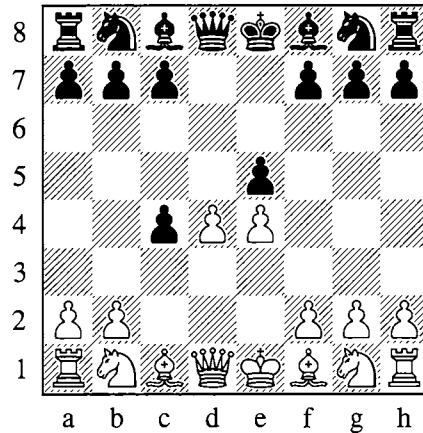
The most popular move by far. It is direct and concrete, yet positionally founded as well.

### GAME 14

Sauberli – Bilsel

Correspondence 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5



4.♖f3

Good simple development, just allowing Black to take on d4, is best.

4.dxe5 ♚xd1† 5.♖xd1 ♖c6 6.f4 ♙g4†, followed by ...0–0–0, gives Black the initiative.

4.d5 ♖f6 5.♖c3 c6 6.♙xc4 b5 7.♙b3 b4 and e4 is hanging.

4...♙b4†

A tempting check. The mainline however is 4...exd4, which will be examined in the next few games.

5.♖c3

5.♖bd2 c3 and suddenly the Queen's Gambit is a genuine gambit.

Or 5.♙d2 ♙xd2† 6.♚xd2 exd4 and the simplifications make it easier for Black. Instead of 6.♚xd2, White could try 6.♖bxd2! exd4 7.♙xc4 with the usual compensation. This has been played a lot without reaching a clear conclusion.

Anyway I prefer the main line, which keeps more pieces on the board.

5...exd4 6.♖xd4

The ending 6.♚xd4 ♚xd4 7.♖xd4 ♖f6 8.f3 could also be tried.

**6...♖e7**

There is an alternative:

6...♗e7!? 7.♗xc4 ♘f6

7...♗xe4† 8.♗f1 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 is extremely dangerous, for instance 9...♗e6 10.♗a4† ♘c6 11.♗g5 ♗xc4† 12.♗xc4 ♘ce7 13.♗e1 ♗g6 14.h4 ♗f8 15.♗xc7 f6 16.♗h3 ♗d3†? 1–0. A big mistake in a hopeless position or a strange way to resign? Shirov – Huebner, Dortmund 1992.

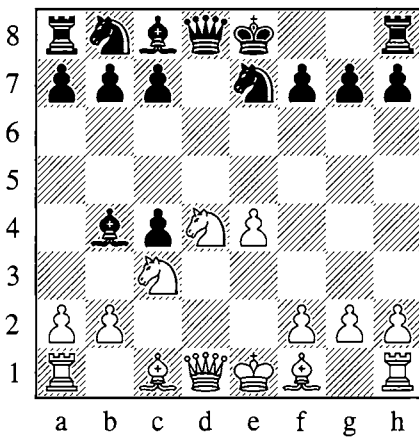
8.0–0 0–0

And now:

9.♗f4

With the idea e4-e5, looks good, especially since Black still hardly can take the bait:

9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♘xe4 11.♗e1±

**7.♗xc4**

White has an interesting option here if he is willing to gambit a pawn: 7.♗f4!? ♗xc3† 8.bxc3 ♘g6 9.♗g3 ♗e7 10.♗xc4 ♗xe4† 11.♗e2 ♗xe2† 12.♗xe2 with excellent compensation. The stem game Bareev – Rublevsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005, continued 12...0–0 13.♗xc7 ♗d7. And here 14.♗b1 or 14.♗f3 both look somewhat better for White.

**7...♘bc6 8.♗e3 0–0**

It is legal to simplify with: 8...♘xd4 But there is no guarantee that life will be any simpler.

An easy solution for White is: 9.♗xd4 ♗xd4 10.♗xd4 0–0 11.a3 ♗xc3† 12.♗xc3 ♗e6 13.♗e2 In Topalov – Kharlov, Tripoli 2004, the pair of bishops gave White the advantage in the ending.

More complicated but probably also stronger is:

9.♗xd4 0–0 10.a3

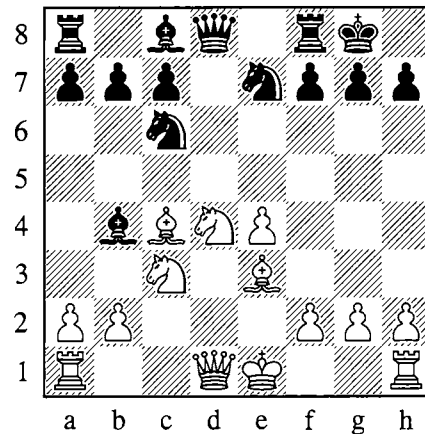
10.0–0 ♘c6 11.♗e3 ♗xd1 12.♗fxd1 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♗e6 was played in Van Wely – Azmaiparashvili, Ohrid 2001. Now 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.♗d7 ♗ac8 16.f4 ♗f7 17.♗ad1 would give White an edge.

10...♗a5 11.0–0 ♗b6

11...♘g6 12.♗c5 ♗e8 13.♗a4± was Grunberg – Penrose, corr. 1987, and on 11...♘c6 12.♗c5 is disruptive.

12.♗xb6 axb6 13.f4

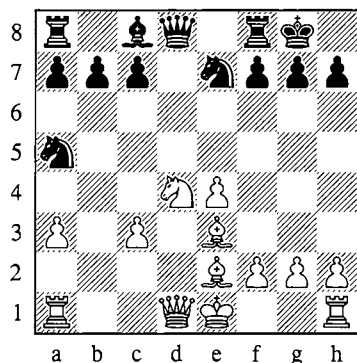
This is pleasant for White, who has a strong majority on the kingside, Van Wely – Romanishin, Moscow 2004.

**9.♘db5**

This knight move is the modern favourite. It attacks c7 and thus swapping queens is a threat.

In the early 1990s White had some success with:

9.a3 ♗xc3† 10.bxc3 ♘a5 11.♗e2



Now at least a couple of moves are worth a look, but in particular the second line:

11...d7 12.0-0 ♖e7 13.♗c2

White was slightly better in Bareev – Ivanchuk, Dortmund 1992. His pair of bishops and good central control has more weight than the somewhat shattered pawn structure.

An interesting improvement for Black is:

11...f5!?

Since the first edition of this book no less a QGA expert than Rublevsky has tried my novelty 11...f5 and with success:

12.♗a4

My original analysis ran: 12.exf5 ♘xf5 (12...♘d5) 13.♘xf5 ♙xf5 14.0-0 ♖xd1 15.♗axd1 b6

12.♘b3 ♘ec6

12...b6 13.♗d1 ♙d7 14.♙b5 ♙xb5 15.♗xb5 ♗d6 16.♘xf5 ♗xa3 17.♘xe7+ ♗xe7 18.♗d7?! ♗xe4 19.0-0 c6 20.♗e2 ♗f7

In Morovic Fernandez – Rublevsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009, White did not have enough for a pawn.

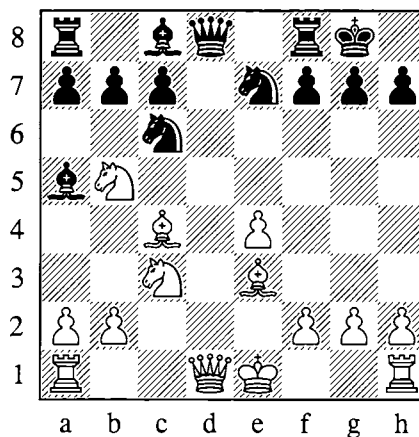
9.0-0 ♘xd4 10.♙xd4 ♘c6 11.♙e3 ♙xc3 12.bxc3 ♗e7 leads to typical positions for this line and is absolutely playable for White.

9...♙a5

Protecting c7.

9...♙d7 is too passive. 10.a3 ♙a5 11.b4 ♙b6 12.♙xb6 axb6 13.f4 ♘a7 14.♘xa7 ♗xa7 15.0-0 This is clearly better for White: 15...♘g6 (or 15...♙h8 16.♗b3 ♗e8 17.♗ad1 with strong pressure, Vyzhmanavin – Bagirov, Podolsk 1992) 16.♗f3 With good prospects on the kingside, Bacrot – Lautier, Val d'Isere 2002.

9...♙e6 is interesting. 10.♙xe6 fxe6 11.♗xd8 (11.♗b3!? could be tried) 11...♗axd8 12.♘xc7 ♙f7 Black has compensation. 13.♘7b5 a6 14.♘a3 b5 15.♘c2 ♙xc3+ 16.bxc3 ♗d3 17.♙d2 ♗fd8 18.0-0-0 ♗c8 Azmaiparashvili – Nogueiras, Yerevan 1996, and now 19.♘e1 ♗dd8 20.♘f3 is a possible improvement.



10.♗h5!

A surprising queen sortie. It is rather active on h5 and at the same time it vacates d1 for the rook.

The mainline is:

10.0-0 a6 11.♘d4 ♘xd4 12.♙xd4 ♗d6

But White has no advantage whatsoever, as Rublevsky in particular has often demonstrated.

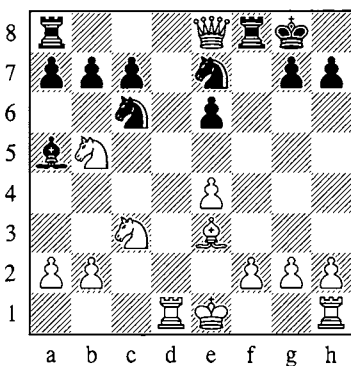
13.♙e3

13.♗c1 ♙e6 14.♙xe6 ♗xe6 15.♙c5 ♗fd8 16.♗b3 ♗xb3 17.axb3 ♙xc3 18.♙xe7 ♗d7 19.♗xc3 ♗xe7 20.♗d1 ♗f8 ½-½ Volkov – Rublevsky, Saint Vincent 2005.

13...♙e6 14.♖b3  
 14.♙e2 ♙xc3 15.bxc3 ♖c6 16.♗d4 ♜fd8  
 17.♗b4 ♘g6 18.♞fd1 ♚e5 19.♞d4 ♞d6  
 20.♞ad1 a5 21.♗a3 ♚c4 22.♙xc4 ♙xc4  
 23.f3 ♞xd4 24.cxd4 b5 25.♗b2 f5 26.d5  
 ♗d7 27.exf5 ♗xf5 ½–½ Dao Thien Hai –  
 Rublevsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005.  
 14...♙xc4 15.♗xc4 ♖c6 16.♗xc6 ♚xc6  
 17.♚d5 ♞fe8 18.f3 ½–½  
 Khalifman – Tkachiev, Shenyang 2000.

### 10...a6

The master of this variation played instead  
 10...♙e6, so this move is probably preferable.  
 11.♙xe6 fxe6 12.♞d1 ♗e8 13.♗xe8

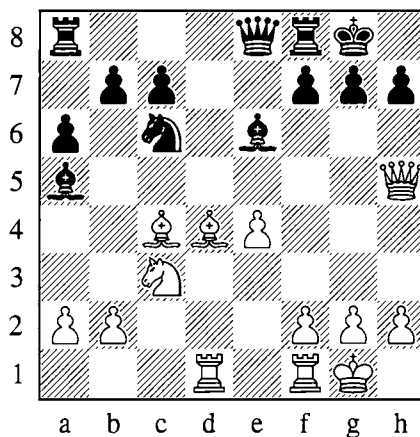


Rublevsky has tested both recaptures:

13...♞axe8 14.♚e2 White had a better  
 endgame in Bologan – Rublevsky, Tomsk  
 2006. Let's see a bit more: 14...♚e5 15.♚a4  
 ♚7g6 and here I like 16.g3±.

Later Rublevsky tried to take back with  
 the other rook. Oh, this eternal dilemma...  
 13...♞fxe8 14.♚e2 a6 15.♚d4 ♚xd4† 16.♞xd4  
 ♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♞ad8 18.♞hd1 (Keeping a rook  
 on the board with 18.♞b1!?N makes sense.  
 After 18...♚c6 19.♞xd8 ♚xd8 20.c4± White  
 can continue to put pressure on his opponent  
 for a long time.) 18...♚c6 19.♞xd8 ♞xd8  
 20.♞xd8† ♚xd8 And Black held in Onischuk  
 – Rublevsky, Poikovsky 2010.

11.♞d1 ♗e8 12.♚d4 ♚xd4 13.♙xd4 ♚c6  
 14.0–0 ♙e6



15.♙xg7!

A deep sacrifice that destroys the opponent's  
 king position.

15...♚xg7 16.♗g5† ♚h8 17.♗f6† ♚g8  
 18.♚d5!

There will be no perpetual check of course.  
 White has calculated a long way, and judged  
 that Black's pieces are too scattered and  
 uncoordinated to help the defence in time.

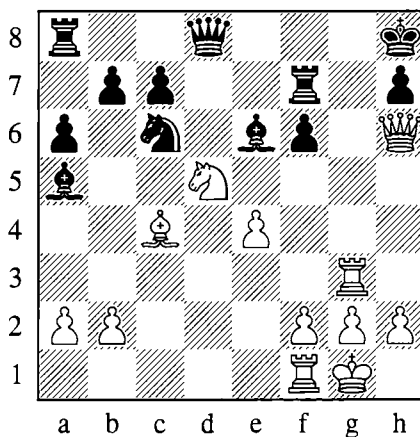
18...♗d8

18...♙xd5 19.♞xd5 loses at once.

19.♗h6 f6 20.♞d3

A typical rook shift along the third rank.

20...♚h8 21.♞g3 ♞f7



22. ♖f4!

The final blow.

22... ♖e5

Not 22... ♗xc4 23. ♖g6† ♗g8 24. ♖e5† and mates.

23. ♗xe6

White has won the piece back and is a pawn up with an attack. The game is over, or at least it would be if this was an old-fashioned correspondence game: nobody wants to spend stamps on a position like this. But it was a modern e-mail game, so Black continued.

23... ♗f8 24. ♗h4 ♗g7 25. ♗f5 ♗f7 26. ♗h3 ♗e8 27. ♗d1 c6 28. ♖h5 ♖g6 29. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 30. ♖xf6 ♗e7 31. ♗xg6 ♗xg6 32. e5 h6 33. f4 ♖g7 34. g4 ♗c7 35. ♖g2 ♗xe5 36. fxe5 ♗xe5 37. ♖h5† ♖f8 38. ♗d8† ♖e7 39. ♗hd3 ♗d5 40. ♗8xd5 cxd5 41. ♖f3 ♗b6 42. ♗b3 ♗xb3† 43. axb3 ♖e6 44. ♖f4 d4 45. ♖e4 1–0

**Conclusion:** White played a great attacking game, but it does not bury the whole variation with 4... ♗b4†. Black can and probably should follow the expert Rublevsky’s example and take the somewhat worse ending on move 10.

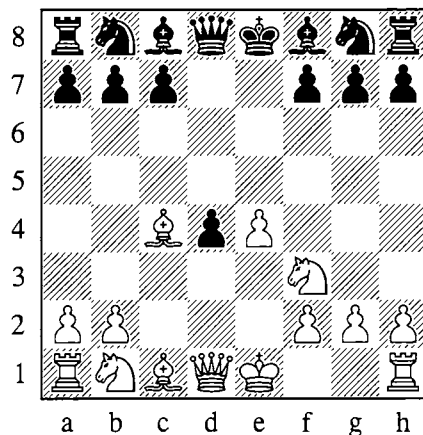
We now turn to the more normal 4...exd4.

## GAME 15

Grote – Thelen

Correspondence 1998

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e4 e5 4. ♖f3 exd4 5. ♗xc4



Quick development is the essence of White’s opening strategy. There is no need to be concerned about the sacrificed d-pawn. Most probably it will be won back with some positional advantage and if not... well at least Black will be forced into some extreme measures which will add strength to White’s initiative.

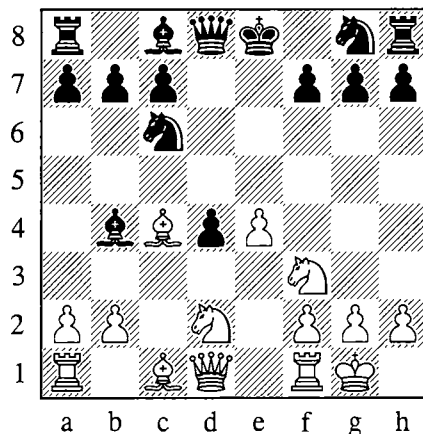
5... ♗b4†

The mainline 5... ♖c6 will come into focus in the next games, while protecting the pawn with 5...c5 backfires after 6. ♖e5 ♗e6 7. ♗xe6 fxe6 8. ♗h5† g6 9. ♖xg6 ♖f6 10. ♗h3.

6. ♖bd2

The most complicated. Also playable is of course 6. ♗d2.

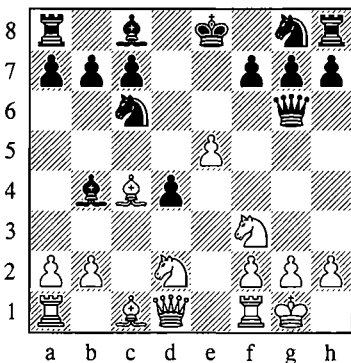
6... ♖c6 7.0–0



## 7...d6

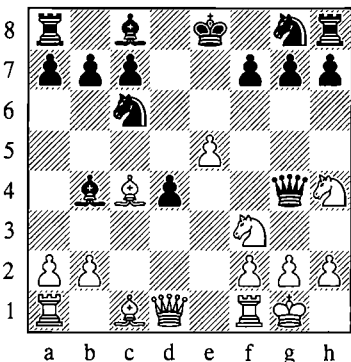
The most straightforward move, but I shall also consider a few others: A) 7...f6, B) 7...e6 and C) 7...xd2.

A) 7...f6 8.e5 g6



I will offer a choice of promising continuations: A1) 9.dh4 and A2) 9.d3!.

A1) 9.dh4 g4 10.d3



Black's position looks risky.

10...e6 11.e6 fxe6 12.b3 g7

Instead Wojtaszek – Granda Zuniga, Pamplona 2010, continued 12...0-0-0!? 13.h3 e4 14.xe6+ b8 15.a3 e7 16.f5 g6 17.e7 gxe7 18.g5 d5 19.xd5 xd5 20.ad1 and White was slightly better in the ending.

13.h3 e4 14.xe6

In Yusupov – Mikhalchishin, Frunze 1981,

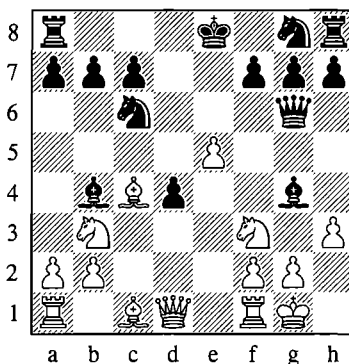
White had an edge. For example:

14...d5 15.xd5 dx6 16.f5

A2) 9.d3!?

This could be a serious improvement, especially if you like to attack instead of playing endings. Play quickly becomes very tactical.

9...g4 10.h3!



10...hx3

10...hx3 11.xf3 0-0-0 12.f4

11.g5! e6 12.xe6 fxe6 13.d4 d8 14.d3!

Everything works neatly.

14...f7 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.b3 c5 17.e4

Black has been outplayed.

17...e7 18.e6 h5 19.e3 xe5 20.xc5 xc5 21.ad1 xd1 22.xd1 dg6 23.f7+

1-0 S. Zhigalko – Chadaev, Moscow 2011.

B) 7...e6 8.e6 fxe6 9.d3

9.b3 also looks good: 9...d7 10.d4 0-0-0 11.g5±

9...d3

Not 9...e5 10.dxe5! dx5 11.h5+ dg6 12.b5+ c6 13.xb4.

9...d7!? 10.dxd4 dx4 11.xd4 xd4 12.dxd4 f7 is somewhat similar to the Rublevsky ending from before. Black is solid, but the weak pawn on e6 is a target. White is slightly better after natural moves such as e3 or f4.

10.♙e3 ♘f6 11.♘bd4 ♘xd4 12.♘xd4

This is good for White: ♖a4† is a threat and 12...♗d7 13.♗b3 or 12...♗e7 13.♗xd3 both seem convincing.

C) 7...♙xd2 8.♙xd2 ♘ge7 looks flexible, but f7 is a weak spot. 9.♘g5 ♘e5 (9...0–0?! loses to 10.♗h5 h6 11.♘xf7 ♗xf7 12.♙xf7† ♘h7 13.f4+–, Niederwieser – Hebesberger, Austria 2010.) 10.♙b3 h6 11.f4! hxg5 12.fxe5 0–0 13.♙xg5 With a strong attack. 13...♙e6 14.♙xe6 fxe6 15.♗xf8† ♗xf8 16.♗g4 ♗f7 17.♗f1 ♗g6 18.h4 ♘c6 19.h5 ♘xe5 20.♗f4 ♗xh5 21.♗xe5 ♗e8 22.♗xc7 d3 23.♙d2 1–0 Xu Jun – Ardiansyah, Jakarta 1987.

### 8.e5

This is a special feature of the 3...e5 variation: the white e-pawn can go ahead and disturb the knight on f6, gaining time for the initiative.

8...♘d5 9.♘b3 ♘b6 10.♙g5

The most forcing. The alternative is 10.♙b5 when it was thought that Black could equalize with 10...♗d5. The new 11.♙xc6† ♗xc6 12.♙g5! has put that evaluation in doubt (see the next game).

10...♙e7 11.♙xe7 ♗xe7 12.♙b5 ♙d7 13.♙xc6 ♙xc6 14.♘fd4 ♙d5 15.♗g4 0–0

The critical position. White has space on the kingside, a very threatening queen, and a great outpost on f5 for the knight. In practical play, however, Black’s defences have been difficult to overrun. It seems that if he protects against the mate on g7 by simply playing ...g6, he is asking White to come up with a new threat, and it has not been easy to find one.

### 16.♗fe1

16.f4 g6 has been played more often, but it has not scored as well.

### 16...♗d7

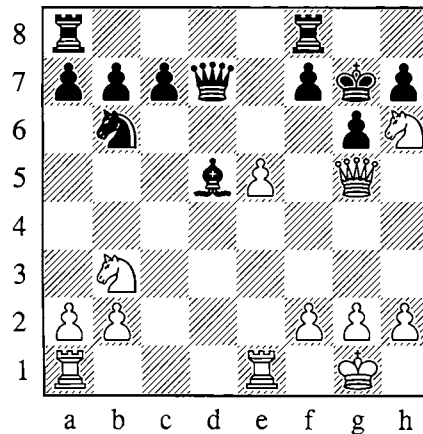
16...g6 17.♘f5 ♗d7 just transposes, but

16...♙e6 is probably the safest, though 17.♘xe6 fxe6 18.♘d4 ♗ae8 19.♗ad1± gives White an edge based on the space advantage and the weak e6-pawn, Hnatovsky – Vujanovic, corr. 2002.

### 17.♘f5 g6 18.♘h6† ♘g7

18...♘h8 19.♗f4 ♗e7 20.♘c5! puts Black under heavy pressure.

### 19.♗g5



Black’s position is rather delicate. One wrong move and it will immediately be over!

### 19...♙xb3?!

A mistake!

Also bad is 19...f6?! 20.exf6† ♗xf6 21.♗e7† ♗xe7 22.♘f5† ♗xf5 23.♗xe7† ♗f7 24.♗e5† ♘g8 25.♘c5 and White should win, although he only drew in Kasparov – Huebner, Skelleftea 1989.

The only chance is:

19...♙e6

There can follow:

20.♘c5 ♗d8 21.h4

White keeps his space.

21...♘d5 22.♗ac1 b6 23.♘xe6† fxe6 24.♗c6!

Right in the middle of it all.

24...♖d7 25.♙ec1 ♖ac8 26.♘g4 ♜f5 27.♘f6  
27.♗d2! keeps the pressure.  
27...♙xg5 28.♘xd7 ♜f5 29.♘f6 ♙xe5 30.♘xd5  
♙xd5 31.♙xc7† ♙xc7 32.♙xc7† ♖h6 33.♙xa7  
♙d1† 34.♖h2 ♙d2 35.f3 ♙xb2

Black held the rook ending in Sherbakov – Blauert, Calcutta 2002.

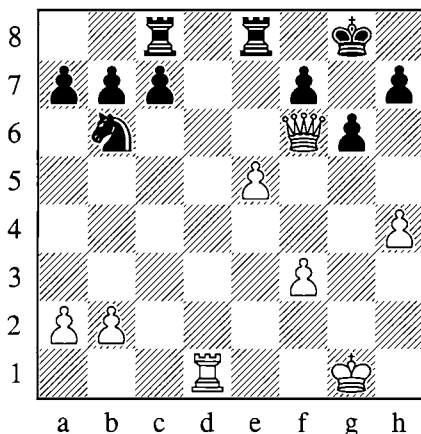
20.♗f6!

A spectacular refutation of 19...♙xb3.

20...♖xh6 21.♙e4

Preventing the threat of ♖h4 mate will cost Black a lot of material.

21...♙d1 22.f3 ♙xf3 23.gxf3 ♖h3 24.♙d1  
♖h5 25.♖h4 ♖xh4 26.♖xh4† ♖g7 27.♖e7  
♙ac8 28.h4 ♜fe8 29.♖f6† ♖g8



30.h5! gxf3

Black could not allow the pawn to come to h6, but now his structure collapses and the queen gains access to his position.

31.f4

Better was 31.♖f2 ♙e6 32.♙g1† ♖f8  
33.♖g7† ♖e7 34.♖g5† ♖f8 35.♖xh5 with an  
easy win.

31...♙e6 32.♙d8† ♙xd8 33.♖xd8† ♖g7  
34.♖xc7 ♘d5 35.♖xb7 ♘xf4 36.♖xa7 ♙xe5

Now Black can continue the fight. In the end the white pawns decide though.

37.♖c7 ♙e4 38.♖f2 ♘e6 39.♖c3† ♖g6  
40.b4 ♙f4† 41.♖e2 ♙h4 42.b5 ♘f4† 43.♖f1  
♙h1† 44.♖f2 ♙h2† 45.♖g1 ♙xa2 46.♖c6†  
♖g5 47.b6 f5 48.♖c8 ♘e2† 49.♖f1 ♘g3†  
50.♖e1 ♙a1† 51.♖d2 ♘e4† 52.♖c2  
♙a2† 53.♖b1 ♙a4 54.b7 ♙b4† 55.♖c2 h4  
56.b8=♖ ♙xb8 57.♖xb8 ♖g4 58.♖d3 ♖f3  
59.♖e5 ♘g3 60.♖d5† ♖f4 61.♖d8 ♖g4  
62.♖g8† ♖f3 63.♖xh7

1–0

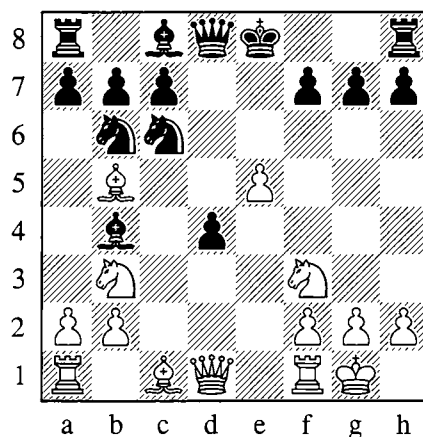
**Conclusion:** This is a sharp variation where White is always slightly on top. Black could chicken out with 16...♙e6, but White would keep some positional advantage anyway.

## GAME 16

Aronian – Stevic

Plovdiv 2010

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5 4.♘f3 exd4  
5.♙xc4 ♙b4† 6.♘bd2 ♘c6 7.0–0 ♘f6 8.e5  
♘d5 9.♘b3 ♘b6 10.♙b5!



This was thought to be harmless because of 10...♖d5 hitting the bishop. However

White just takes on c6 and gains a big lead in development.

### 10...♞d5

10...♙d7 11.♞e2!? 0–0 was Wojtaszek – Gajewski, Chotowa 2009, and now 12.♞d1!N creates pressure.

### 11.♙xc6†! ♞xc6

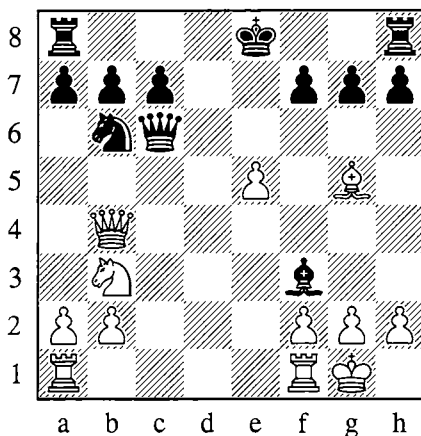
11...bxc6 doesn't look positionally sound after 12.♞xd4±.

### 12.♙g5

12.♙d2!? is a good alternative. For example: 12...♙xd2 13.♞xd2 ♞g6 14.♖fxd4 0–0 15.f4± ♙f5 16.♞ac1 c6 17.♞c3 h6 18.♗c5 ♞ab8 19.♞g3 ♞h5 20.e6 fxe6 21.♗dx6 ♞f7 22.♞d4 g6 23.♗d8 ♞g7 24.♞e1 ♗d5 25.♞e8† ♖h7 26.♗de6 ♙xe6 27.♗xe6 1–0 Khismatullin – A. Mastrovasilis, Plovdiv 2012.

### 12...♙g4 13.♞xd4! ♙xf3 14.♞xb4

Threatening mate in one!



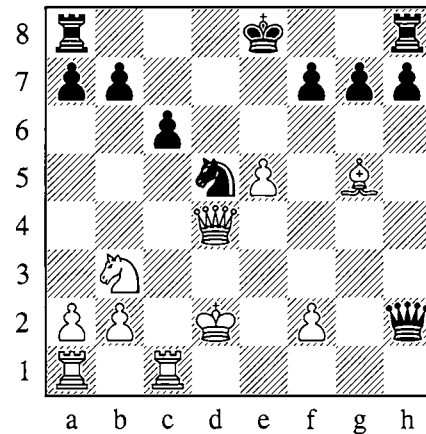
### 14...♗d5 15.♞d2 ♙xg2

A desperate combination that doesn't work, but 15...♙h5 16.♞ac1 ♞e6 17.♗c5 was no better.

### 16.♞fc1! ♞e6 17.♖xg2

The king can escape via f1.

### 17...♞g4† 18.♖f1 ♞h3† 19.♖e1 c6 20.♞d4 ♞xh2 21.♖d2



White has consolidated and should win with the extra piece.

### 21...♞h3 22.♞h1 ♞f5 23.♞ag1 f6 24.exf6 gxf6 25.♖c1 c5 26.♞a4† ♖f7 27.♙d2 ♗b4 28.♗d4 cxd4

28...♗d3† 29.♖b1 cxd4 30.♞b3† ♖e7 31.♖a1 and the difference in king safety decides.

### 29.♞b3† ♗d5 30.♞xb7† ♖e6 31.♞c6† ♖f7 32.♞g7† ♖xg7 33.♞b7† 1–0

**Conclusion:** This simple and direct line with 10.♙b5 seems very promising for White.

The check on b4 is always debatable, but the main move is 5...♗c6.

## GAME 17

### Bareev – Estrada Nieto

Canada 2006

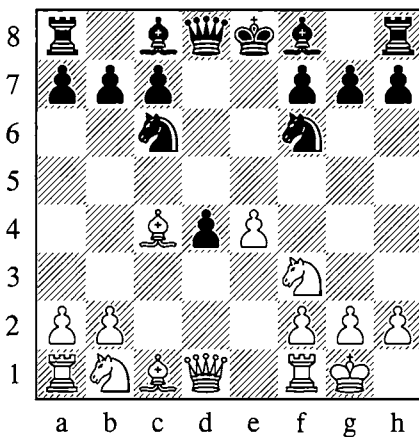
### 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5 4.♗f3 exd4 5.♙xc4 ♗c6 6.0–0

The normal move. White simply completes his kingside development as quickly as possible. I have to admit I changed the move order to make it fit. In reality Bareev played 6.♖b3 when 6...♗d7 7.♗d2 ♘f6 8.0–0 led to the game. Against 6.♖b3 critical is 6...♗b4† 7.♗bd2 ♗e7 with unclear play.

### 6...♗f6

The mainline 6...♗e6 is covered in the next game.

A rare alternative is 6...♗c5. White should reply 7.♖b3! ♗e7 8.e5 ♗b6 9.♗g5 ♗f8 10.♞e1↑ as in Sandipan – Grigoryan, Moscow 2012.



### 7.♖b3!

It is important to play actively. 7.e5 ♗e4 8.♞e1 ♗c5 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗xe7 ♗xe7 11.♗xd4 ♗xd4 12.♖xd4 ♗e6! is just equal. 13.♗xe6 (or 13.♗f1 ♗d8 14.♖e3 0–0 15.♗c3 a5 16.♞ad1 c6 17.♗e2 b6 18.f4 ♗xd1 19.♞xd1 ♗d8 20.♗d4 ♗xd4 21.♖xd4 f6 ½–½ Lofgren – Vayser, corr. 2003) 13...♗xe6 14.♖e4 0–0–0 15.♗c3 ♗d4 16.♖e3 ♗g5 17.♖xg5 ♗xg5 18.♞ac1 a6 19.♞e2 ♞hd8 ½–½ Karpov – Lautier, Monte Carlo 1999.

### 7...♗d7 8.♗d2!

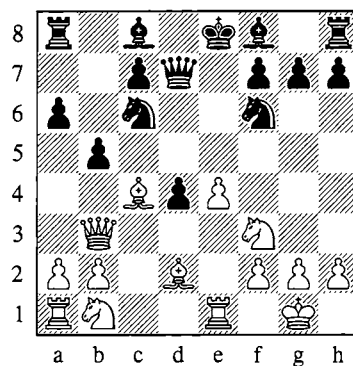
Preventing ...♗a5.

Kasparov once played the more direct 8.♗g5 in an exhibition game against a computer. But it was way back in 1985, so there was no Centrino processor to worry about! 8...♗e5 9.♗b5 c6 10.f4 ♗eg4 11.♗c4 ♗h6 12.♗d2 ♗c5 13.♗df3 With good compensation for the pawn, Kasparov – Comp Constellation 36K, Hamburg 1985.

### 8...♗c5

Protecting the extra d-pawn. Several other moves have been tried:

### 8...a6 9.♞e1! b5



10.♗d5 ♗xd5 11.exd5† ♗e7 12.♗xd4 ♗b7 13.♗c6! ♗xc6 14.dxc6 ♖xc6 15.a4 With a strong initiative. 15...0–0–0 16.axb5 axb5 17.♞c1 ♖d5 This was Khalifman – Bauer, Istanbul 2000, and now 18.♖c3 would create overwhelming threats.

### 8...a5 9.♞e1 a4 10.♖b5! ♗d8 11.e5 ♗g4

11...♗g8 12.♗xd4 ♗e7 13.♗c3 c6 14.♖b6 and Black was completely outplayed in Sakaev – Lautier, Las Vegas 1999.

### 12.♗xd4

Taking the pawn back.

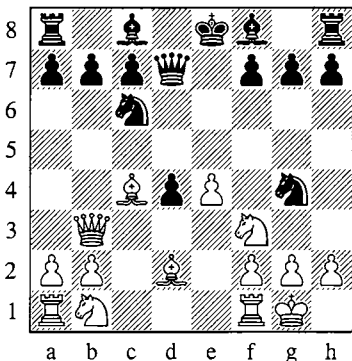
### 12...♗e6 13.♗xe6

Even better was 13.♗xe6! fxe6 14.h3. e.g. 14...c5 15.♗xe6! ♖xb5 16.♗c7† ♗d7 17.♗xb5 ♗c6 18.♗lc3 winning.

13...fxe6 14.h3 ♖xb5 15.♗xb5† c6 16.♗xc6† bxc6 17.hxg4

With a pawn more in Morovic – Stevic, Pula 1999.

8...d4

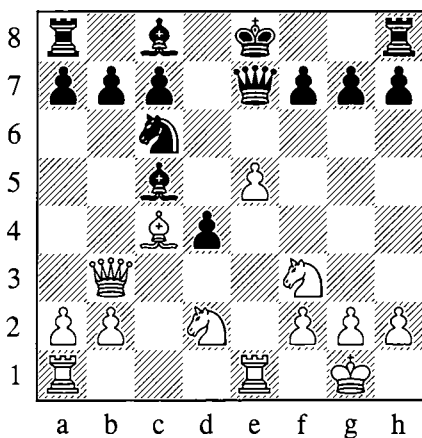


9.e5! (9.♖b5N a6 10.♙xc6 bxc6 11.h3 ♘h6 12.♙g5 gives active play and also looks promising for White) 9...♗f5 10.♙e1 ♙e7 11.♙d3 ♗e6 12.♘a3! ♗xb3 13.axb3 White has a strong initiative for the pawn, even without queens. For example: 13...♙e6 14.h3 ♘h6 15.♖b3 0–0–0 16.♘xa7+ ♘xa7 17.♙xa7 ♙c5 18.♙a8+ ♘d7 19.♙a5 ♙b6 20.♙b5 ♙a8 21.♙xb6! cxb6 22.♘d4+ Kopasov – Rován, e-mail 2009.

9.e5 ♘e4 10.♙e1 ♘xd2 11.♘bxd2

Black is far behind in development. He would love to play 11...0–0 but then 12.e6 is a killer.

11...♗e7



12.e6!

Cutting Black’s position in two.

12...f5

Forced. 12...fxe6 13.♙xe6 ends in a disaster on the e-file.

13.♗d3 0–0 14.♘b3 ♙b6 15.♘bxd4

Winning the pawn back with all the positional plusses remaining. In particular, the passed pawn on e6 makes Black’s position utterly hopeless.

15...♘xd4 16.♘xd4 ♙xd4 17.♗xd4 c5 18.♗d5 g6 19.♙ac1 a5 20.a4 ♙a7 21.♙cd1 b6 22.♗c6 ♘g7 23.♗xb6 ♗c7 24.♗b3 ♗e7 25.♙e5

1–0

**Conclusion:** This variation with 6...d4 is a sideline and after this game it will remain a sideline!

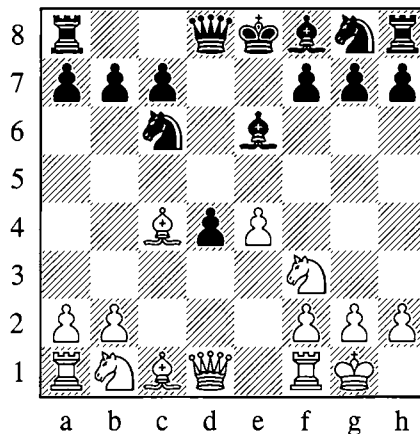
The big mainline is of course 6...e6.

## GAME 18

Schandorff – A. Rasmussen

Denmark (ch) 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5 4.♘f3 exd4 5.♙xc4 ♘c6 6.0–0 ♙e6!?

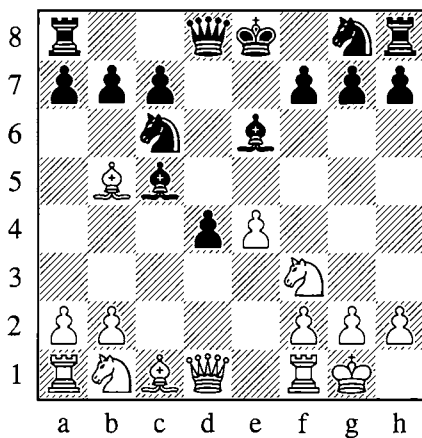


The sharp mainline. Black creates some imbalance instead of playing safe. The arising positions are very double-edged and all three results are plausible.

### 7.♙b5!?

Also a sharp reaction. White could regain the pawn with 7.♙xe6 fxe6 8.♞b3 ♞d7 9.♞xb7 ♜b8 10.♞a6 ♝f6 11.♞bd2 ♙d6 with a very interesting position. This is the absolute mainline of the whole 3...e5 complex. White has a superior structure, but Black has kept the d-pawn and has active pieces and control of the important e5-square. If Black plays the 6...♙e6 line you can safely assume that he is well prepared for this position. With 7.♙b5 White takes the game in a totally different direction, even though structure vs. piece activity is still a key element. To begin with, White threatens the d4-pawn, so Black must protect it.

### 7...♙c5

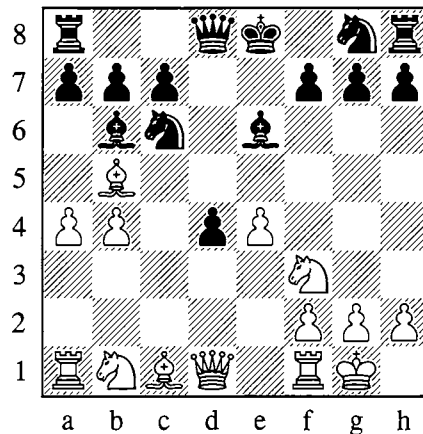


### 8.b4!

Very energetic play. White gains a tempo by harassing Black's bishop and prepares to play ♙b2 conquering the important d4-pawn. Also very popular is 8.♞bd2 ♝ge7 9.♞g5! with complications.

### 8...♙b6 9.a4!

Complications are also what we have on the board now. By threatening to trap the black bishop, White hopes to force his opponent to weaken his queenside. It is important to gain some positional concessions, as 9.♙b2 ♝ge7 10.♙xd4 0-0 leads to exchanges but no advantage.

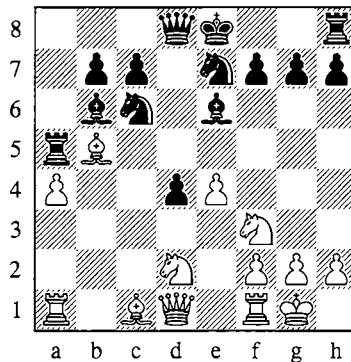


### 9...a6

The alternative is:

### 9...a5 10.bxa5 ♜xa5

Which at first sight might seem like a blockade on the queenside. However after: 11.♞bd2 ♝ge7



### 12.♞g5!

Black has problems. White will simply remove the light-squared bishop and thereby get the excellent c4-square for his knight.

### 12...0-0

12...♖d7 13.♜xe6 ♜xe6 14.♜c4 0–0  
(14...♞a8 15.♜xb6 cxb6 16.♞xd4±)  
15.♜xa5 ♜xa5 16.♞a3 and Black did not  
have enough for the exchange in Ushenina  
– Korbut, St Petersburg 2004.

13.♞h5 h6 14.♜xe6 fxe6 15.♜c4 ♞a8  
16.♞xh6!

A spectacular sacrifice. Preparing it a little  
more with 16.♞a3 also made sense.

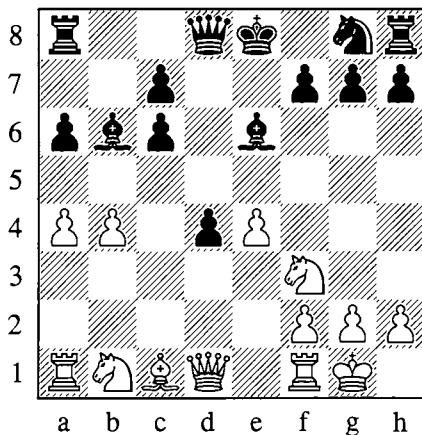
16...gxf6 17.♞xh6 ♞a7 18.♞a3 d3 19.♜d2  
♞f7 20.♞xd3 ♞f8 21.♞g3† ♞g7 22.♞c4 ♜d4  
23.♞xe6† ♜xe6 24.♞xe6† ♞f7 25.♞xg7†  
♜xg7 26.♞e5† ♞f6 27.♞xc7

With too many pawns for the piece.

27...♞b6 28.♞g3† ♜g6 29.♞g4 ♞f8 30.♜f3  
♞c5 31.a5 ♞f7 32.h4 ♞f4 33.♞g5 ♞xg5  
34.♜xg5 ♞e7 35.g3 ♜e5 36.♜g2 1–0

Lafarga Santorroman – Kulvietis, corr. 2002.

### 10.♞xc6† bxc6

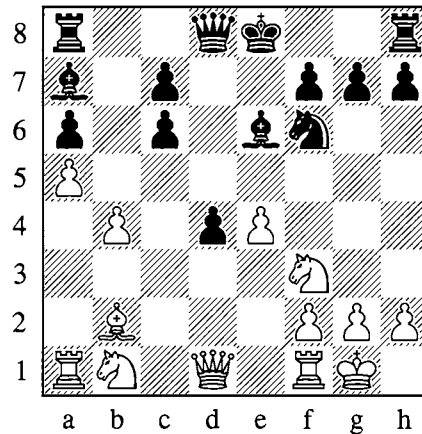


### 11.a5

11.♞b2 ♜f6 is usually just another way to  
reach the game position after 12.a5 ♞a7, but  
Ponomariov has experimented with 11.♜bd2!?  
♜f6 12.♞c2 0–0 13.♞xc6, as in Ponomariov  
– Sasikiran, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007, when he  
regained the pawn although the position is  
very double-edged.

### 11...♞a7 12.♞b2 ♜f6

Instead 12...♞d6 13.♜a3! gives White the  
initiative. For example: 13...♞xb4 (13...♞d8  
14.♜c2 ♞g4 15.h3 ♞xf3 16.♞xf3 ♜e7  
17.♞fd1 d3 18.♞a3 d2 19.♞c3 0–0 was agreed  
drawn in Shishkin – Nyzhnyk, Kiev 2010, but  
after 20.♞xd2 White is better) 14.♞c1 0–0–0  
15.♜c2 ♞c4 16.♜cxd4 ♞xd4 17.♜xd4 1–0  
Figura – Baptista, e-mail 2009.



The critical position.

### 13.♞xd4

The other capture is interesting as well:

13.♜xd4 ♞xd4 14.♞xd4 ♜xe4  
14...♞b8!? 15.♞d2 ♜xe4 16.♞b2 with  
complications, Laznicka – Sasikiran, Kolkata  
2008.

### 15.♞xg7

15.♞e1 ♞d5?! 16.♞d3 c5 17.♞xe4 cxd4  
18.♜c3 ♞b3 19.♞xd4 was positionally great  
for White in Onischuk – Nisipeanu, Foros  
2007, but the simple 15...♜f6 is solid.

15...♞g8 16.♞e5 ♞h3 17.♞g3 ♜xg3 18.hxg3  
♞xd1 19.♞xd1 ♞e6

Black’s pawns are scattered, but actually they  
are difficult to attack. The opposite is the  
case with the b4-pawn as we shall see.

20.♜c3 ♞g4! 21.♞ab1 ♞b8 22.f4! ♞f5 23.♞b2  
♞xg3 24.♜a4 ♜f8 25.♜c5 ♞a8

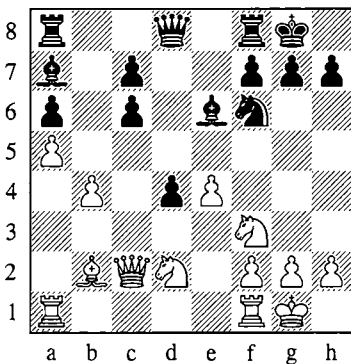
White had to give up a pawn, but he gained  
excellent compensation. The black rook is

passive on a8, however his bishop is quite strong and there are few entry points in the position, so Black should be able to hold it.  
 26.♟f2 ♖c3 27.♞bd2 ♖c4 28.♞d4 ♖xd4  
 29.♞xd4 ♟e7

And it should be a draw. White kept the initiative and little by little Black made some inaccuracies that could have cost him the game in Aronian – Shirov, Elista 2007. It is much easier to attack than to defend.

Topalov just ignored the d4-pawn and played:  
 13.♞bd2 0–0 14.♞c2

With pressure on c6. Actually this was my primary focus when preparing for the game. I wanted to play like Topalov, but the more I looked at it, the less I could make it work. In the game Black immediately answered with a mistake losing a tempo.



14...♞g4?

Letting White off the hook.

15.h3 ♟f6

Sad, but 15...♞e3 16.fxe3 dxe3 17.♞b3 e2†  
 18.♞f2 was not good enough.

16.♞e5 ♟d7 17.♞fe1

Even better was 17.♞fd1! ♞e7 18.♞df3 when the rook is more active.

17...♞e7 18.♞df3 c5 19.bxc5 ♞xc5 20.♞d2 ♞e7 21.♟a3 c5 22.♞xd4

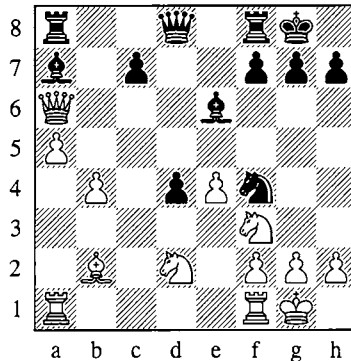
White regained the pawn with a positional advantage, Topalov – Nisipeanu, Vitoria Gasteiz 2007.

What I didn't like was:

14...♞h5! 15.♞xc6 ♟f4

With very tricky counterplay.

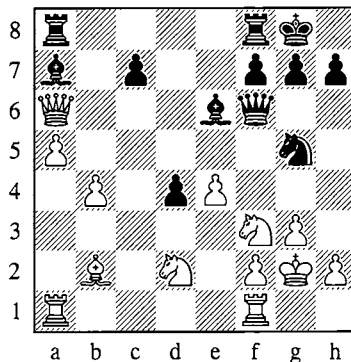
16.♞xa6



My worries have since been confirmed by a brilliant correspondence game where Black, by the way, also improved on my analysis with a nice long-term piece sacrifice:

16...f5!

My original analysis was: 16...♞f6 17.g3 (17.♞fc1 ♟xg2! initiates tactical complications that seem okay for Black: 18.♞xc7 ♟h4 19.♟xh4 ♞g5† 20.♞g2 ♞xd2 21.♞xa7 ♞xb2) 17...♞h3† 18.♟g2 ♟g5 Threatening ...♟h3† winning the queen.

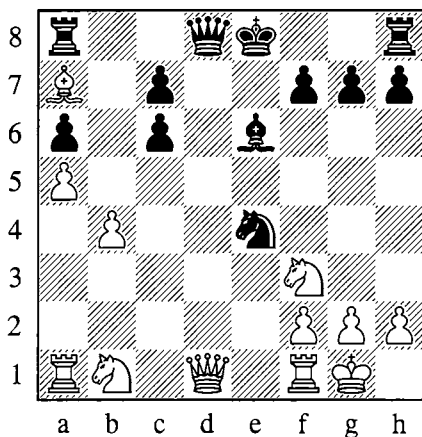


19.♞d3 ♟h3† 20.♟g1 ♟xf1 21.♞xf1 ♟xf3† 22.♟xf3 c5 With fine play for Black because of the finesse 23.b5? c4!

17.g3 fxe4! 18.gxf4 ♟d5, 19.♞xe4 ♞xf4 20.♞fd2 ♞g5† 21.♟h1 ♞xe4 22.♞xe4 ♟xe4† 23.f3 ♟d5 24.♞e2 ♞h5 25.♞g2 ♞f8

26.♖a3 ♜f4 27.♞g3 ♞f5 28.a6 h5 29.h3 ♞e4  
 30.♞g1 ♞e7 31.♞g2 d3 32.♙xg7 h4 33.♞g4  
 ♞xg4 34.hxg4 ♞e3 35.♙c3 ♞xf3  
 0–1 Hunger – Moll, e-mail 2009.

13...♜xe4 14.♙xa7



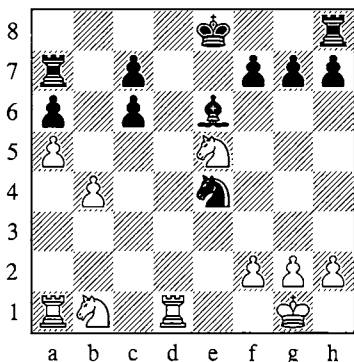
14...♞xa7

A new move, but it was safer to exchange queens first:

14...♞xd1 15.♞xd1 ♞xa7

We shall return to this position below.

16.♜e5



16...♞b7

Black’s best bet is 16...♙d5 and although White won the latest duel I feel it should have been a draw. 17.f3 ♜d6 (17...♜f6) 18.♜c3 f6 19.♜xd5 fxe5 20.♜c3 ♞b7 21.♞ab1 ♜e7 22.♞e1 ♜f7 23.♜e4 ♞hb8

24.♞bc1 ♞xb4 25.♞xc6 ♞b1 26.♞xb1 ♞xb1†  
 27.♜f2 ♞b2† 28.♜g3 ♜d7 29.♞xa6±  
 Pashikian – Babujian, Yerevan 2012.

17.♜xc6

In my preparation I thought that White had an edge in the ending. I still believe so. But now I think Black should avoid all this by playing 16...♙d5.

17...♜d6

White threatened mate on d8 and 17...0–0 18.f3 ♜d6 19.♜c3± just moved the king further away.

18.♜c3

The new Chinese star Wang Yue tried 18.♜a3 ♜d7 19.♞ac1 and protected the c6-knight just in time. After 19...f6 20.♜c4! ♙xc4 21.♞xc4 ♞b5 22.f3 ♞e8 23.♞c2 he had a small but long-lasting advantage, Wang Yue – Zhang Pengxiang, Beijing 2008.

18...♜d7

The knight on c6 restricts Black so he tries to kick it away.

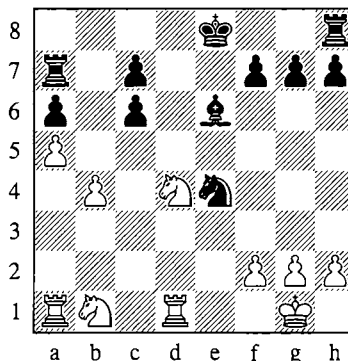
19.♜e5† ♜c8 20.♞ac1! f6 (20...♞xb4? 21.♞xd6) 21.♜c6 ♞e8 22.f3

Lybin – Mrazik, corr. 2003. The knight is back on c6 and White keeps some pressure in the ending.

The key point to the above line is Black’s improvement on move 16. Fortunately it is not only Black who can explore new territories; White can get in his improvement first:

16.♜d4

This may be the solution.



16...♙d5

16...♞b7 17.♜xc6 with a transposition to the main line of 16.♜e5.

16...c5 17.♜c6 ♞a8 18.f3 ♜f6 19.bxc5± Volkov – Kunin, Bad Wiessee 2011.

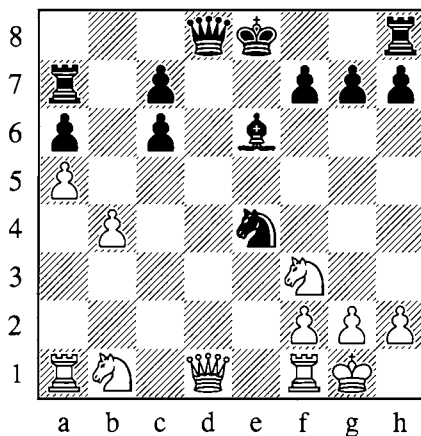
17.f3 ♜d6 18.♜c3 ♞b7 19.♞ac1

19.b5 axb5 20.a6 ♞a7 21.♜dxb5 cxb5 22.♞xd5 ♜e7 23.♜xb5 ♜xb5 24.♞xb5 ♞ha8=

19...♜d7 20.♜c2

20.♜a4N ♞xb4 21.♜c5† ♜c8 22.♜xa6 ♞c4 23.♞xc4 ♙xc4 24.♜c5♞

20...♞d8 21.♜a4 ♜e7 22.♜c5 ♞a7 23.♞xd5!? ½–½ Feco – Staroske, e-mail 2009. Instead Kaufman suggests that White can try 23.♞d2 ♞aa8 24.♜e3±.



15.♜d4 0–0

Immediately returning the pawn. Worse was 15...♙d5 16.f3 ♜g5 17.♜c3♞ or 15...♞d5 16.f3 ♜f6 17.♜c3 with a strong initiative.

16.♜xc6 ♞f6

Defending tactically by attacking the rook on a1. It was not too late to head for an ending: 16...♞xd1 17.♞xd1±

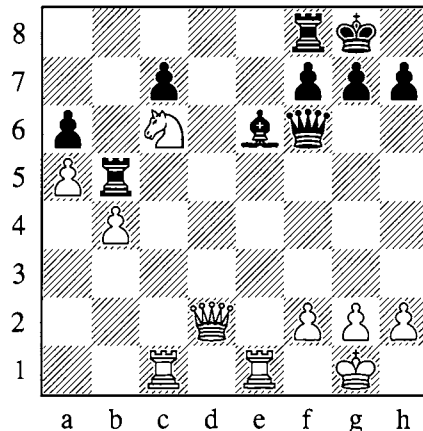
17.♜d2

17.♞a3 ♞b7 was unclear.

17...♜xd2

Interesting was 17...♜c3 but a safe solution for White seems to be 18.♞e1 ♞b7 19.♜e4! ♜xe4 20.♞xe4± which is similar to the game.

18.♞xd2± ♞b7 19.♞ac1 ♞b5 20.♞fe1



White has a small but definite edge. In the following moves I concentrate the play on the dark squares, where Black's bishop can be of no use.

20...♜h8 21.♞e3 h6 22.♞f3 ♞h4 23.♞d4!

A perfect centralization of the queen, especially since Black can hardly exchange it.

23...♞g5

23...♞xd4 24.♜xd4±

24.♞c3 ♞e8 25.♞g3!

The culmination of White's dark-squared strategy: Black is forced to ruin his pawn structure on the kingside as well.

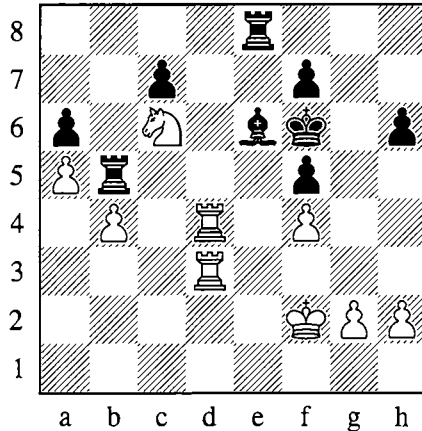
25...♞f6 26.♞xf6 gxf6 27.♞d3 ♙f5 28.♞d4 ♙e4 29.f3 ♙f5

29...♙xc6 30.♞xc6 ♞e2 31.♞xc7 ♞g5 32.g4+–

30.♜f2 ♜g7 31.♞c3 ♙e6 32.♞e3 ♞a8 33.♞ed3 ♙c8 34.♞c3 ♙e6 35.♞c2 f5

Desperately seeking some activity.

36.♖cd2 ♘f6 37.♞h4 ♔g5 38.♞hd4 ♘f6  
39.♞2d3 ♞e8 40.f4



White has a strategically winning position, as Black has too many weaknesses on both flanks to withstand the pressure forever. With my last move I created the possibility of quickly transferring my rooks from one flank to the other via the third rank.

40...♙c8 41.♞h3 ♔g7 42.♞e3 ♙e6 43.♔e2  
♞a8 44.♞e5 ♞xe5† 45.♜xc5

Also possible was 45.fxe5!? ♞e8 (45...f6) 46.♔f3 f6 47.♞d8 ♞xd8 48.♜xd8 ♙d5† 49.♔f4 ♙xg2 50.♜e6† ♔f7 51.♜xc7 and White is winning.

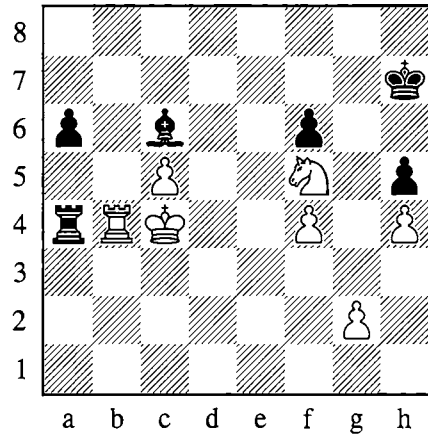
45...♙b3 46.♞d3 ♙a4 47.♞c3 c6 48.♔d2  
♞b8 49.♞g3† ♔h7 50.♔c3+ c5

Hopeless was 50...♞b7 51.♞d3 ♔g7 52.♞d7 ♞xd7 53.♜xd7.

51.bxc5 f6 52.♜c4 ♙c6 53.♜d6 h5 54.h4  
Simpler was 54.♜xf5.

54...♞b1 55.♜xf5 ♞b5 56.♔c4 ♞xa5 57.♞b3  
And here 57.♜e7.

57...♞a4† 58.♞b4



58...♙d5†?

We were in time trouble. 58...♞a1 was the only move.

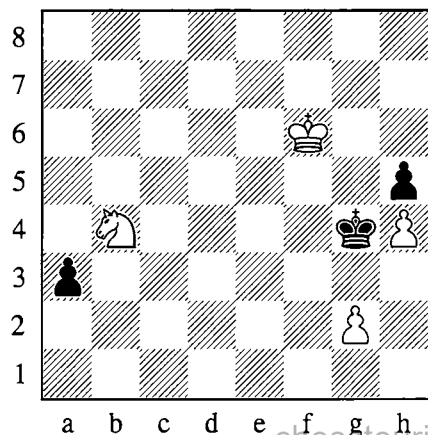
59.♔xd5! ♞xb4 60.c6

The passed pawn decides.

60...♞b5† 61.♔e6

Better was 61.♔d6 ♞xf5 62.c7 ♞xf4 63.c8=♞ ♞xh4 64.♔e7+ ♞g4 65.♞f5† ♔h6 66.♞xf6† ♞g6 67.♞h8† ♔g5 68.♔f7 and it is over. The text is okay though, but in the end wins by just a single tempo.

61...♞c5 62.♜e7 a5 63.♔d6 ♞c1 64.c7  
♞d1† 65.♔c5 ♞c1† 66.♔d6 ♞d1† 67.♜d5  
♞c1 68.♔d7 a4 69.c8=♞ ♞xc8 70.♔xc8 a3  
71.♜b4 ♔g6 72.♔d7 ♔f5 73.♔e7 ♔xf4  
74.♔xf6 ♔g4



75.g3! ♖xg3 76.♗g5 ♜f3 77.♙xh5 ♜e2  
78.♗g5 ♜d2 79.h5 ♜c3 80.h6  
1–0

**Conclusion:** What to think of a game like this one? Well the word “fight” comes to mind, and I think this is the key to understanding the popularity of this variation. With 6...♗e6 Black is creating very unbalanced play that will never be dull. White has certain positional plusses as always, but he has to constantly strive for the initiative to maintain an advantage.

From a theoretical point of view the position after 12...♖f6 is extremely important. I think White has an edge because of his better structure, but it is playable for Black, who often has active pieces to compensate for the positional deficits.

### The 3...♖c6 Variation

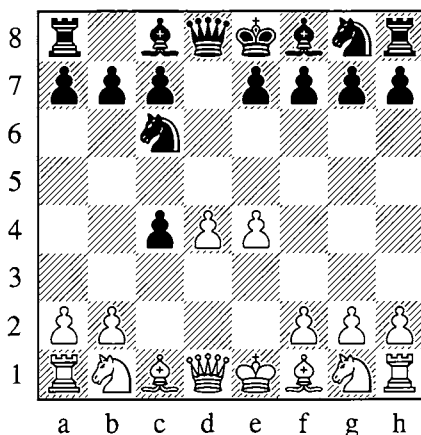
So far Black has attacked the centre with pawns. He can also use his pieces and force tense play from the very beginning.

## GAME 19

Sargissian – Hillarp Persson

Copenhagen 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 ♖c6



A provocative and popular move that creates associations with the Chigorin, 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♖c6!?. Black attacks the white centre with pieces and apparently does not mind tactical complications, but in reality he is aiming to achieve a sound set-up. However White does not have to be cooperative.

### 4.♖f3

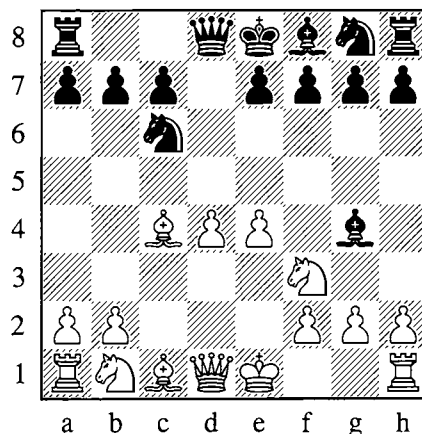
Allowing the pin after 4...♗g4.

4.d5 ♖e5 is more messy than good and after 4.♗e3 ♖f6 5.f3 e5 6.d5 ♖e7 7.♖c3 ♖g6 8.♗xc4 a6 9.♖ge2 ♗d6 Black has his desired formation.

### 4...♗g4 5.♗xc4!?

A sharp try.

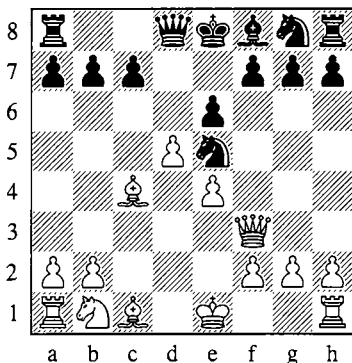
More standard is: 5.d5 ♖e5 6.♗f4 ♖g6 7.♗e3 e5 8.♗xc4 a6 9.0–0 ♖f6 10.♖c3 (Kaufman suggested the somewhat more flexible 10.♖bd2 with a slight positional plus.) 10...♗d6 Experience has shown that 11.♗e2 0–0 12.♖d2 ♗d7 is playable for Black, who has good piece coordination and he can often get his share of the play on the queenside with ...b5 or ...c6. Still, objectively speaking, White has chances of a small positional advantage after a natural move like 13.♙c1.



**5...e6**

Perhaps safer is:

5...♙xf3 6.♗xf3 e6 7.d5 ♘e5



Now White has a simple new idea:

**8.♖c3**

The old line was: 8.♙b5† c6 9.♗c3 cxb5 10.♗xe5 ♗d6 11.♗xd6 ♙xd6 Black is okay in the ending: 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.♘c3 a6 14.♙e3 ♘f6 15.f3 ♖c8= Ovod – Kovalevskaya, Moscow 2007.

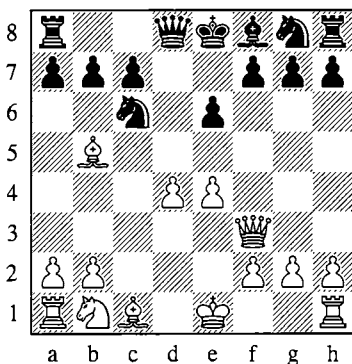
8...♘xc4 9.♗xc4 exd5 10.♗b5† c6 11.♗xb7 ♗c8 12.♗xc8† ♖xc8 13.exd5 cxd5 14.0–0±

White can play against the IQP, Ippolito – Krush, Mesa 2010.

After 5...♙xf3 6.♗xf3 e6, instead of 7.d5, White can try:

**7.♙b5!?**

Sacrificing a pawn. Now there is a split:



a) 7...♗xd4 8.0–0 (8.♘c3N ♙d6 9.♙e3 ♗f6 10.♙xc6† bxc6 11.♗e2♖) 8...♙d6 9.♘c3 ♘ge7 10.♙e3 ♗e5 11.♗h3 g5 With double-edged play, Piesina – Vorotnikov, Soviet Union 1979.

b) 7...♙b4† 8.♘c3 ♗xd4 9.♙xc6† bxc6 10.0–0 White is ahead in development and he has good compensation for the pawn. Also the doubled pawns on the c-file are rather vulnerable. With a further split:

b1) 10...♘e7 11.♙e3

11.♙f4!? ♖c8 12.♖f1 ♗f6 13.♗e3

11...♗f6 12.♗g3 0–0

Muschik – Krallmann, Germany 2002.

b2) 10...♘f6 11.♙e3 ♗c4 12.♖f1 ♗a6

This was J. Christiansen – L. Hansen, Aalborg 1994, and now:

13.♙d4! ♙e7 14.e5

This is awkward for Black.

14...♘d7

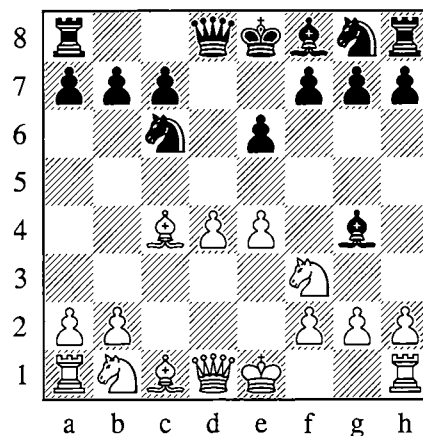
Or if 14...♘d5 then 15.♘d5 exd5 16.♗g3.

15.♘e2 ♘b8

What else?

16.b3 0–0 17.♖c4

With a big positional advantage.

**6.♙e3**

6.♙b5 is also possible.

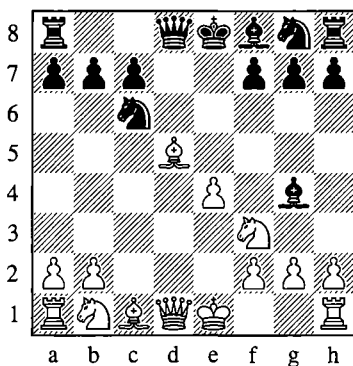
Most promising however is perhaps:

6.d5!? exd5

6...♙xf3 7.♖xf3 ♘e5 8.♗c3

7.♙xd5

With good chances of an advantage.



7...♗f6

7...♗d7 8.♗b3† Ward – Sadler, Swansea 1995.

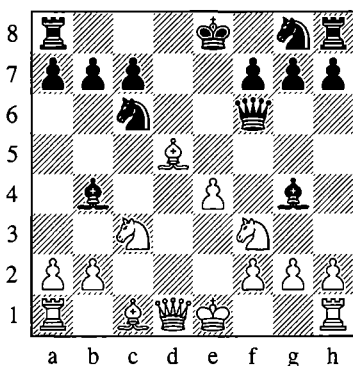
7...♘f6 8.♙xc6† bxc6 9.♗c2N

7...♙b4† 8.♙d2

8.♘c3

8.♗a4!?

8...♙b4



And now my new idea:

9.h3!N ♙xf3

9...♙xc3† 10.bxc3 ♗xc3†? is elegantly

refuted by 11.♙d2 ♙xf3 12.♙xc3 ♙xd1

13.♙xc6† bxc6 14.♙xg7.

10.♗xf3 ♗xf3 11.♙xc6† bxc6 12.gxf3 ♙xc3†

13.bxc3

With a complex ending where White has somewhat better chances.

6...♙xf3

Black takes the opportunity to weaken White's pawns.

6...♘f6 7.♘c3 ♙b4

This would transpose to a well known position from the Chigorin that more often arises after the move order 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘c3 dxc4 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.e4 ♙g4 6.♙e3 e6 7.♙xc4 ♙b4. To be known is not the same as to be respected and after:

8.♗c2

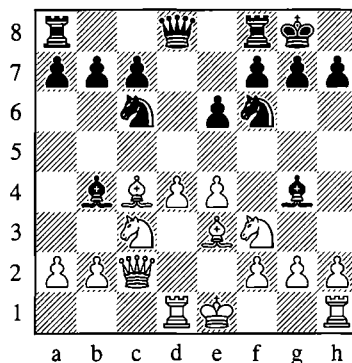
8.♗d3!?

8...0-0 9.♙d1

White is slightly better.

9.0-0 also looks strong, but after the surprising 9...♙xc3 10.bxc3 ♗e7 11.h3 ♙xf3 12.gxf3 ♗f8! 13.♙d3 b5 Black has created counterplay out of nothing. 14.e5 ♘d5 15.♙xh7† ♘h8 16.♙e4 b4 17.♙xd5 exd5 18.♘d2 ♘a5 19.♘e2 ♘c4 20.♙d2 c5 With good play for the pawn in Shirov – Morozevich, Amsterdam 1995.

Returning to 9.♙d1, we will consider three replies:



9...♙xf3 10.gxf3 ♘h5 11.e5 ♘e7 12.0-0 c6 13.♘h1

Planning ♗g1. White is slightly better.

13...♘d5 14.♘xd5 cxd5 15.♙d3 g6 16.♗c1 ♙a5 17.♗a4 ♙b6 18.♗g1

With play on both flanks.

18...♖g7 19.♗b4 ♜b8 20.♞g4 f6?

Allowing a killing blow:

21.♙xg6!

1–0 Persson – Boucher, corr. 2004. Black resigned because:

21...hxg6 22.♞xg6

This would be hopeless. For example:

22...♗h7 23.♞h6† ♗g8 24.♞g1 ♜f7 25.exf6 ♞xf6 26.♙g5 ♞xh6 27.♙xd8 ♞xd8 28.♗e7 ♞h7 29.♗xe6† ♗h8 30.♗f6

9...♖e7 10.♙e2 ♙xc3† 11.bxc3 c5 12.0–0 ♗c7 13.♗b1 b6 14.h3 ♙h5 15.g4 ♙g6 16.♙d3 ♞fd8 17.♖e5 ♗b7 18.♖xg6 ♖xg6 19.dxc5 ♖e5 20.♙c2 ♖c4 21.♙c1 ♗c6 22.cxb6

Black does not have enough for the pawn.

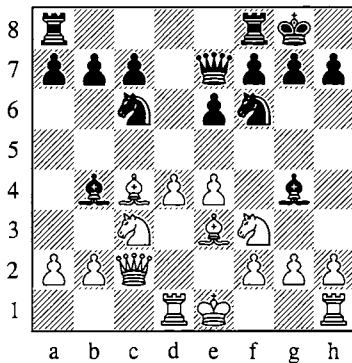
22...♖xb6 23.e5 ♖fd5 24.♙xh7† ♗h8 25.♙e4 ♗xc3 26.♞fe1

White had control in Elwert – Gather, corr. 1999.

26...♗xh3?! 27.♞d3 ♗xg4† 28.♞g3 ♗h5 29.♗g2

Followed by the decisive ♞h1.

9...♗e7



White has a choice of replies:

10.♙b5 e5 11.♙xc6 bxc6 12.0–0 (12.dxe5 ♖d7) 12...♙d6 (12...exd4!?) 13.dxe5 ♙xe5 14.♖e2 ♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♗e6 16.♖g3 and White was clearly better, Belozero – Bigaliev, Kolontaev 1997.

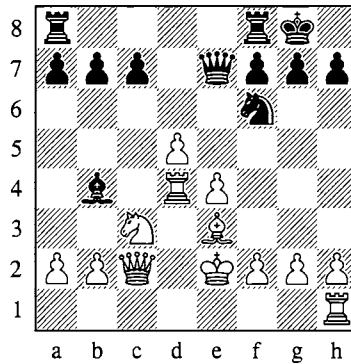
White can also search for something even more convincing with:

10.♙e2!

A speciality of the Bulgarian grandmaster Kiril Georgiev. Black is tempted to sacrifice a pawn.

10...e5 11.d5 ♖d4 12.♖xd4 exd4 13.♞xd4 ♙xe2 14.♗xe2!

But the white king is surprisingly safe.



14...♖g4

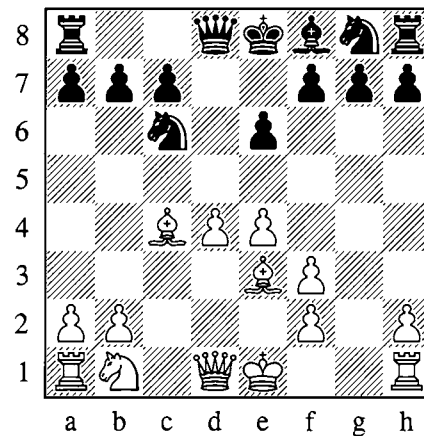
Or 14...♙c5 15.♞d2 ♙xe3 16.♗xe3! as in Georgiev – Morozovich, Tilburg 1994.

15.♖d1 ♙c5 16.♞c4 ♖xe3 17.♖xe3 ♙xe3 18.♗xe3±

Georgiev – Miladinovic, Niksic 2008.

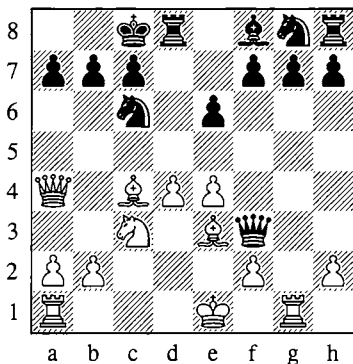
6...♙b4† 7.♖c3 ♖f6 is the same.

7.gxf3



**7...♟b4†**

A natural move. Black wants to complete his development and castle kingside as quickly as possible. 7...♞f6 with the idea of castling long has also been popular. The d-pawn is suddenly a target. White has tried many things, but probably he should fight hard for the initiative and be ready to sacrifice a pawn with 8.♘c3 0-0-0 9.♞a4 and now 9...♞xf3 (or 9...♘xd4 10.0-0-0) 10.♞g1 with good compensation.



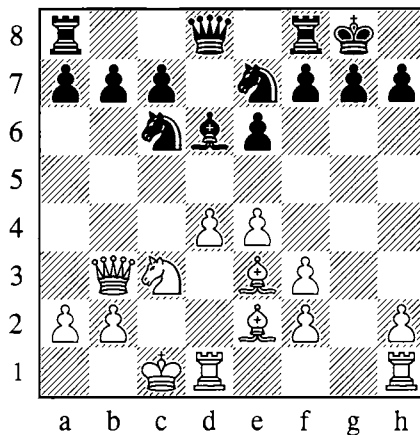
That was what I thought originally. In fact it may just be a forced draw after 10...♟b4 11.d5 exd5 12.exd5 ♞e8! 13.dxc6 ♞xe3† 14.♔f1 ♟c5! and White has nothing better than a repetition. 15.♞g3 (15.♞g2 ♘f6) 15...♞h1† 16.♞g1 ♞f3 17.♞g3 ½-½ Ding –Timofeev, Moscow 2011.

**8.♘c3 ♘ge7**

A flexible set-up, but White's centre must count for something.

**9.♞b3 ♟d6**

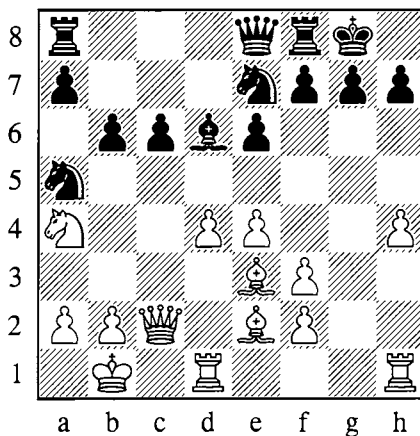
9...♟a5, to put the bishop on b6, falls foul of the typical break in the centre: 10.0-0-0 ♟b6 11.d5! exd5 12.♟xd5 ♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♞c8 14.♞hg1 The threats were impossible to parry. 14...♘e7 15.♘xe7 ♔xe7 16.♞xg7 ♟xe3† 17.fxg3 ♞e6 18.♞b4† ♔f6 19.♞c3† ♔e7 20.♞c5† ♔e8 21.♞g5 White won in a few moves, Komljenovic – Ehlvest, Linares 1994.

**10.♟e2 0-0 11.0-0-0**

White has a clear advantage. His strong centre secures a lot of space and the open g-file gives rise to optimistic attacking ideas.

**11...♘a5 12.♞c2 c6 13.♘a4 b6 14.♔b1**

This is not really necessary, but White spends some time improving his king's position. It is prophylactic thinking, and should by now be quite familiar.

**14...♞e8 15.h4!**

The h-pawn is a ram to knock holes in the enemy's fortress.

**15...♘b7 16.h5 ♞d8 17.e5 ♟b8 18.♟d3 ♘f5**

Giving up a pawn, which was more or less forced. 18...g6 19.♘c3 with the plan of ♘e4

exploiting the weak dark squares around the black king. 18...h6 19.♙xh6 gxh6 20.♖dg1† ♔h8 21.♗d2 and mate on h6.

**19.♙xf5**

19.♗hg1!?! seems even stronger. Black can hardly move without making some concession.

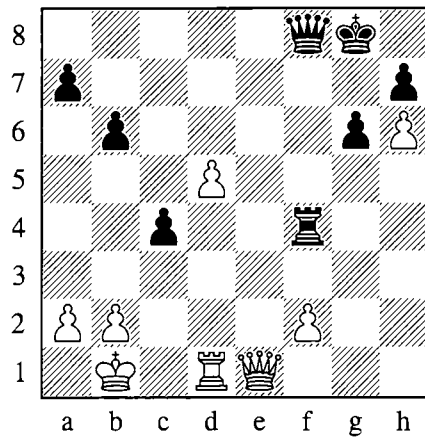
**19...exf5 20.♗xf5 f6**

Now Black has some counterplay.

**21.exf6 ♖xf6 22.♗g4 ♖f7 23.♘c3**

Back into play.

**23...♘d6 24.♙g5 ♖c8 25.d5 c5 26.h6 g6 27.♘e4 ♗f8 28.♖he1 ♖f5 29.f4 c4 30.♗f3 ♖e8 31.♘xd6 ♙xd6 32.♗c3 ♖xe1 33.♗xe1 ♙xf4 34.♙xf4 ♖xf4**



**35.d6!**

The strong passed pawn quickly decides the issue.

**35...♗f5† 36.♔a1 ♗d7 37.♗e3 ♖f7 38.♗d4 b5 39.♖e1 ♗c6 40.♗e5 ♗d7 41.♗e8† 1-0**

**Conclusion:** 3...♘c6 leads to sharp and complex play. White can try to keep control with 5.d5, but I like to take up the challenge and answer with a double-edged strategy as well.

The complications seem to be advantageous for White but beware of the transposition to the Chigorin, where the play is rather messy. In chess, psychology is an important factor. After all, you are facing a guy who plays the QGA, so he is probably disciplined and not a fan of chaos. If you reached the position via the Chigorin, then I would prefer to play more safely – which you can see in the chapter about this bizarre opening.

**The 3...♘f6 Variation**

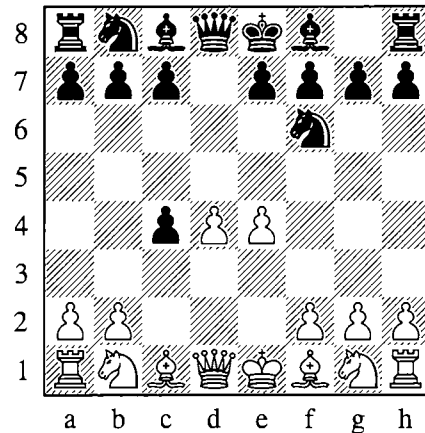
A profound move. Black invites the e4-pawn forward.

**GAME 20**

**Sakaev – Mikhalchishin**

Budva 2002

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 ♘f6**



This line is as provocative as 3...♘c6, but positionally more sound. Black attacks the centre with a piece and tries to lure White into advancing the pawn with tempo, when the knight will have a fine square on d5. Nevertheless White should take up the challenge. After all, he gains more space

and that will determine the play for a long time.

#### 4.e5 ♖d5 5.♙xc4 ♜c6

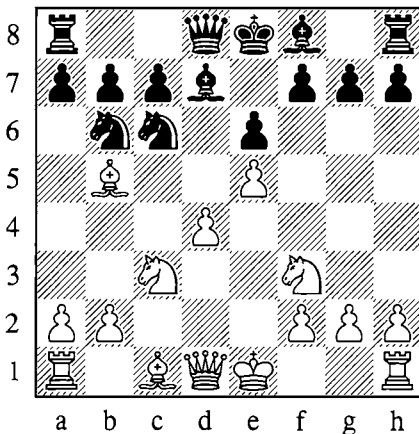
Black keeps developing his pieces. Unfortunately for him, he will be pushed back within a few moves. The slightly more sophisticated 5...♜b6 is the mainline and will be examined in the next game.

#### 6.♜c3 ♜b6

Best. 6...♜xc3 7.bxc3 and 6...e6 7.♜f3 both give White too much freedom.

6...♙e6 continues the fight for the important d5-square, but after 7.♙b3 it is difficult for Black to untangle.

#### 7.♙b5 ♙d7 8.♜f3 e6



White's extra space has already influenced the play: to keep control over the key square d5, Black played ...e7-e6 before his light-squared bishop had time to develop, so it seems it will remain passively placed on d7. In reality, the bishop is on its way to the excellent square c6. Black will move his knight from c6 to b4 or e7, clearing the bishop's path.

#### 9.0–0

Accepting his fate. 9.a3 ♜e7 10.♙d3 ♙c6 is no big achievement for White: the knight

on e7 can go to d5, f5 or g6! Still, White is probably slightly better after 11.0–0 due to his extra space.

9.♙d3!? ♜b4 10.♙b1 is an alternative way of solving the problem with the bishop. In the following game it worked rather well: 10...♙c6 11.0–0 ♙e7 12.a3 ♜4d5 13.♜e4± ♞d7 14.♙d2 ♜c4 15.♙c1 ♜cb6 16.♞e1 0–0–0 17.♞c2 ♜b8 18.♜c5 ♙xc5 19.dxc5 ♜c8 20.♜d4 ♜de7 21.♜xc6† ♜xc6 22.b4 ♜8e7 23.♙b2 ♞d2 24.♞xd2 ♞xd2 25.♙c3 ♞d7 26.♙e4 ♜d4 27.g3 ♜ec6 28.f4 ♜b5 29.♙b2 ♞d2 30.♙c1 ♞d4? 31.♙xc6 bxc6 32.a4 ♞hd8 33.axb5 cxb5 34.♙e3 ♞xb4 35.c6 1–0 Khismatullin – Kharlov, Moscow 2011.

#### 9...♜b4

The natural route to d5: 10.♙d3 is discouraged. And 9...♜b4 also avoids sealing the bishop on f8, as the alternative does:

#### 9...♜e7 10.♙d3 ♙c6

Black is effectively a tempo down compared to the line given above (as White's 0–0 is far more relevant than a2-a3). I will offer two completely different ways of combating it:

#### a) 11.♜g5 h6 12.♞h5 g6 13.♜ge4! ♙g7 14.♞g4 ♜f5 15.♙e3

Black has still not solved his king's problems, Beliavsky – Portisch, Thessaloniki 1984.

#### b) 11.♞e1 ♞d7 12.♙e3 0–0–0 13.♞c1 ♜b8 14.a3 ♜bd5 15.♜e4! ♜f5 16.b4 b6?

16...♜fxe3 17.fxe3 f5 is unclear. 17.♞e2 ♜fxe3 18.fxe3 f5

This was Campora – Borges Mateos, Madrid 2007, and now White could win instantly with the little combination:

#### 19.exf6 gxf6 20.♜xf6! ♜xf6 21.♜e5

#### 10.♙e2 ♙c6 11.a3 ♜4d5 12.♞c2

Preparing the standard move ♜e4.

After the immediate:

12. ♖e4

Black can reply:

12... ♖f4! 13. ♗xf4 ♗xe4

Removing the knight that White had hoped would be a lasting influence.

14. ♖g5 ♗g6 15. ♗f3 ♖b8

This seemed solid enough for Black in Korchnoi – Sadler, Arnhem 1999. A possible continuation is:

16. ♗e3 ♗e7 17. ♖h3 0–0 18. ♖f4 c6 19. ♖xg6 hxg6

Followed by ... ♖d5.

12... ♖xc3

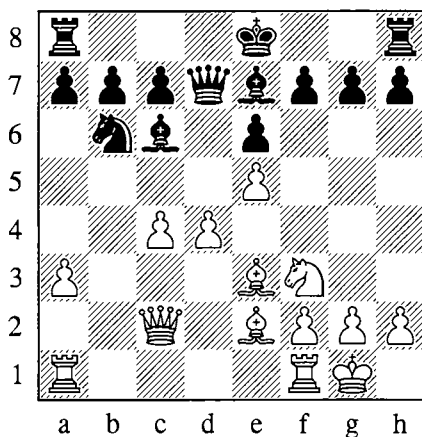
A risky decision. In the long run Black will have difficulties holding back White's central pawns.

As ever, there are alternatives:

12... ♗e7 13. ♖e4 h6 14. ♗d3± a6 15. ♖c5! ♗xc5 16. dxc5 ♖d7 17. ♖e1 ♖e7 18. ♗e4 White's space gave him a clear advantage in Gavrikov – Brunner, Biel 1995.

12... ♖d7 13. ♖e4 ♗b5 14. ♖c5 ♗xc5 15. dxc5 ♗xe2 16. ♖xe2 ♖c8 17. ♗d2 ♖ce7 18. ♖ac1± Again the extra space secures some positional advantage. The knight on d5 is good of course, but you can play around it.

13. bxc3 ♗e7 14. ♗e3 ♖d7 15. c4



Taking d5 under control – a great psychological victory!

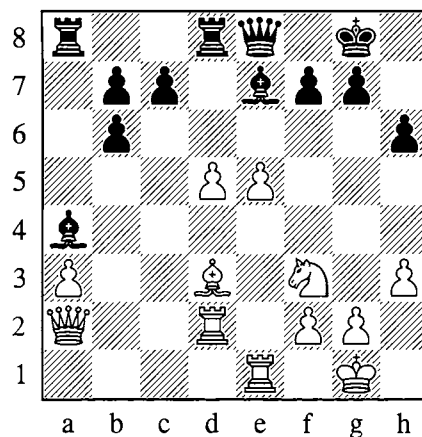
15... ♖c8 16. ♖a2 0–0 17. ♖fd1 ♖fd8 18. h3 ♖e8 19. ♖d2

White is in no hurry; he could have played d5 at once.

19... h6 20. ♖ad1 ♗a4 21. ♖c1 ♗c6 22. ♖cd1 ♗a4 23. ♖e1 ♗c6 24. d5!

The thematic break. White gives away his bishop pair but in return gets two fantastic central pawns.

24... exd5 25. ♗xb6 axb6 26. cxd5 ♗a4 27. ♗d3 ♖a8



28. e6!

Very energetic and direct play by Sakaev. He weakens the white squares around the black king. The final assault is not far off.

28... ♗d6 29. ♖e5 ♗xe5 30. ♖xe5 f6 31. ♖e3 ♖e7 32. ♖c4 ♗e8 33. ♖e4 g6 34. ♖g3 ♖g7 35. ♗c2?!

Probably time trouble. 35. e7 ♖d6 36. ♖xg6! ♗xg6 37. ♖xg6 ♖xg6 38. ♗xg6 won at once.

35... ♖d6 36. ♖e2 ♖a5 37. ♖xg6!

Now he sees it.

37...♙xg6 38.♚xg6 ♖xg6 39.♙xg6

The e-pawn will cost Black a rook.

39...♞xa3 40.e7 ♞a8 41.e8=♞† ♞xe8  
42.♞xe8† ♔g7 43.♙e4

1–0

**Conclusion:** A good illustration of what extra space can do. Black has the nice square d5, but White's extra room to manoeuvre tells.

Probably 5...♗b6 is Black's best bet.

## GAME 21

Bu Xiangzhi – Karjakin

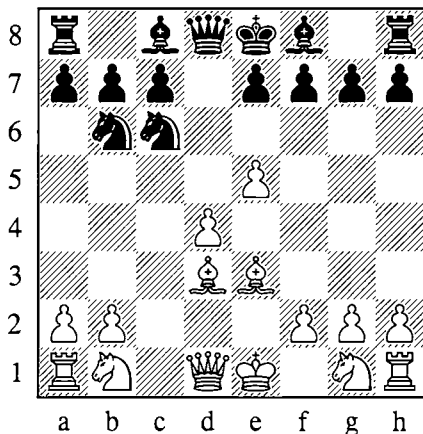
Bilbao 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗d5  
5.♙xc4 ♗b6 6.♙d3

6.♙b3 is also popular and leads to complex play, but I think 6.♙d3 is more positional, especially in connection with the following move.

6...♗c6 7.♙e3

Instead 7.♗e2 is seen in most games, when 7...♙g4 8.f3 ♙e6 is the mainline. I like 7.♙e3 because it causes Black some trouble figuring out what to do with the light-squared bishop, which cannot go to f5 or g4.



7...♗b4

An interesting resource found in the mid-80s in the Soviet Union, but made popular when Short launched it in his legendary match with Karpov in 1992.

7...♙e6 8.♗c3

Now there are three moves to consider:

8...♙c4

Another way to try to solve the problem with the light-squared bishop.

9.♙xc4 ♗xc4 10.♞b3 ♗6a5 11.♞c2 e6  
12.♗f3 ♗c6 13.a3

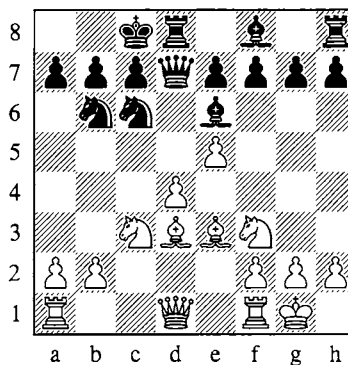
Preventing ...♗b4.

13...♗b6 14.0–0 ♗e7 15.♗e4 ♗ed5 16.♙d2  
♙e7 17.♞fe1 ♞d7 18.b4±

In Sargissian – Granda Zuniga, Zafra 2007, we see the typical scenario: Black has an excellent outpost on d5 for his knight, but overall White's space counts for more.

Black could also try moving the queen and castling long:

8...♞d7 9.♗f3 0–0–0 10.0–0



With sharp play that favours White:

10...♙g4

10...♗b4 11.♙e2 ♙f5 12.♗h4! e6 13.♞c1±  
Anastasian – Ovetchkin, Abu Dhabi 2009.

10...f6 11.♗e4!± Greenfeld – Murali  
Krishnan, Mumbai 2010.

10...♙f5 11.♙xf5 ♞xf5 Antonsen – Haubro,  
Copenhagen 2010. 12.a4!N with the

initiative.

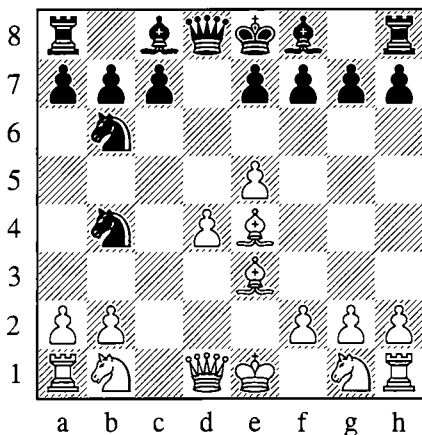
10...♙c4 11.♙xc4 ♘xc4 12.d5! ♖6xe5  
13.♗xe5 ♖xe5 14.♙d4 ♖c6 15.♙a4 ♖b8  
16.♙xa7 e6 17.♙ac1 exd5 18.♖a4 1-0  
Potkin – Sarbok, Aix-les-Bains 2011.  
11.h3 ♙h5 12.♙c1 e6 13.♙e4±  
Archer – Itter, e-mail 2002.

8...♙d5 9.♖f3 e6 10.0-0± Space!

7...g6 8.♖c3 ♙g7 This time it is the dark-  
squared bishop that Black is trying to improve.  
9.♖ge2 0-0 10.♙e4 ♖b4 11.♙b3 a5 12.♖f4±  
e6 13.a3 ♖4d5 14.♖fxd5 exd5 15.♙xd5 a4  
16.♙a2 ♙a5 17.♙c4 ♖xc4 18.♙xc4 White is  
a pawn up, Timman – Korchnoi, Pula 1997.

7...e6 8.♖f3±

8.♙e4



8...f5

The point – White will have to make a  
concession. If Black plays less boldly, say  
8...c6, then White's extra space should, as  
usual, secure an edge.

Some strong players have tried a new idea:

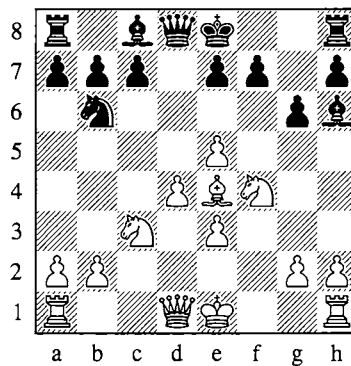
8...♖4d5!? 9.♖c3 ♖xe3 10.fxe3 g6

With complicated play.

11.♖ge2

White has also tried 11.♙f3 and 11.h4.

11...♙h6 12.♖f4



12...0-0

12...♙xf4 13.exf4 c6± was solid but rather  
passive in Sasikiran – Volokitin, Wijk aan  
Zee 2009.

13.0-0 c5 14.♙d3 ♙g7 15.a4 a5 16.♙ad1  
cxd4 17.exd4±

White has an excellent position; a recent  
game concluded:

17...♙d7 18.b3 ♙c6 19.h4 ♙c8 20.h5 ♙xe4  
21.♖xe4 ♖d5 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.♖e6 ♙xf1†  
24.♙xf1 ♙b6 25.♙h3 ♙xe5 26.♖g5 ♙xd4†  
27.♖h1

1-0 Vovk – Semcesen, Lviv 2011.

9.exf6

Nobody has allowed 9.♙f3 f4! 10.♙xf4 ♙f5  
with numerous threats.

9...exf6 10.♖c3

10.a3 allows 10...f5 with good counterplay.

10...f5 11.♙b1

Karpov has ventured 11.♙f3 but did not  
really get anything: 11...♖4d5 12.♙d2 ♙e6  
13.♖h3 ♙e7 14.0-0 0-0 15.♙e1 ♙f7 16.♖xd5  
♖xd5 17.♙c2 ♙d7 18.♖g5 ♙f6 19.♖xf7 ♙xf7  
20.♙b3 c6 Karpov – Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 2003.

11...♙d6

Or 11...♖4d5 12.♖f3 and now 12...♙d6  
transposes, while 12...♙e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♙d2

c6 15.♞e1± was Gelfand – Ponomarev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

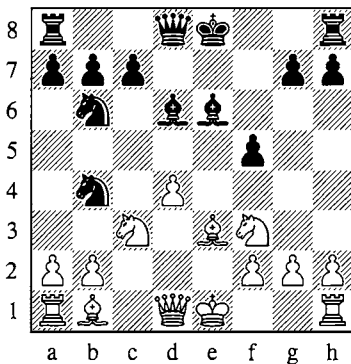
11...♙e7 12.♘f3 0–0 13.0–0 would be similar.

### 12.♘f3 ♘4d5

Black also has:

12...♙e6!?

With complex play.



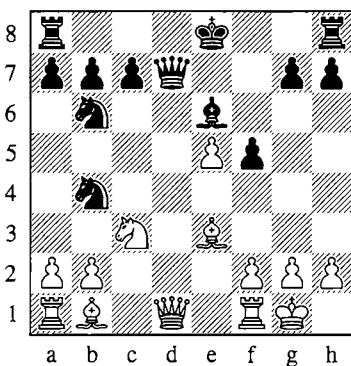
13.0–0

13.♘g5 ♙d7 14.0–0 ♞f6 15.a3 ♘4d5  
16.♘xd5 ♘xd5 17.♞f3 c6 18.♙a2 h6  
19.♘h3 ♘xe3 20.fxe3 0–0–0 Skytte –  
A. Rasmussen, Odense 2011.

13...♞d7

Planning to castle long. (Of course castling short was also legal.) When I was preparing for my game against Allan Stig Rasmussen in the 2012 Danish Championship I found a strong novelty:

14.♘e5!N ♙xe5 15.dxe5



15...0–0–0

15...♞xd1 does not equalize.

16.♞c1!?

With a promising position, for instance:

16...h6 17.♙c5 ♘d3 18.♙xd3 ♞xd3 19.a4  
♘d5? 20.♘b5! a6 21.♞d1 ♞e4 22.♙d6

And wins!

### 13.♙g5

Disrupting Black's development.

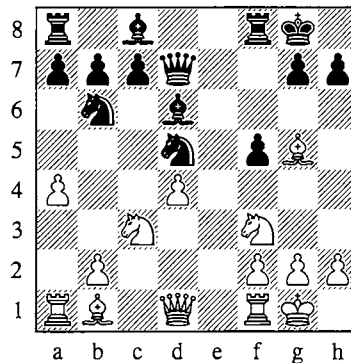
13...♞d7

Clumsy, but 13...♙e7 loses a tempo: 14.♙d2  
0–0 15.0–0 with a pleasant position for White.  
For example, 15...♘xc3 16.bxc3 ♙e6 17.♞e1  
♙d5 18.♙d3 ♘c4 19.♙xc4 ♙xc4 20.♘e5 ♙f7  
21.♘xf7 ♞xf7 22.♞b3± Shirov – Ponomarev,  
Linares 2002.

### 14.0–0 0–0 15.♞e1

A natural developing move. Interesting was:

15.a4

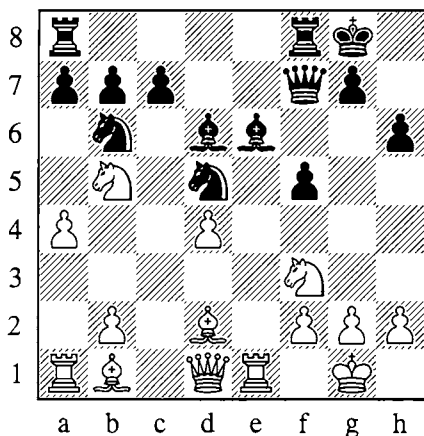


15...♞f7 (15...a5 16.♙a2 c6 17.♘e5 ♙xe5  
18.dxe5 ♞f7 19.♘xd5 ♘xd5 20.♙xd5 cxd5  
21.♞d4 f4 22.f3± Martinovic – Gagare,  
Chennai 2011.) 16.♙a2 The bishop comes  
alive. 16...♙e6 17.a5 ♘d7 18.♘b5± ♘5f6  
19.♙xe6 ♞xe6 20.♞c1 ♞fc8 21.♞c2 ♞d5?!  
22.♘xd6 cxd6 23.♞xc8† 1–0 Saunders –  
Milligan, corr. 2001. Black threw in the towel  
a bit early. 23...♞xc8 24.♞xc8† ♘f7 25.♞c7  
was not much fun, though it is far from over.

15...h6 16.♔d2 ♖f7 17.a4

Preparing to chase the knight with a4-a5. Also playable is 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.♙c2 ♙d7 19.♘e5 ♙xe5 20.♞xe5 c6 and now 21.♙b3 ♞fe8 22.♙xd5 cxd5 23.♙f4 ♞xe5 24.♙xe5 ♞c8 was not enough to win in Anastasian – Van den Doel, Gothenburg 2005, but simply 21.♞f3 ♞fe8 22.♞ae1 and White is better.

17...♙e6 18.♘b5!



Bu relentlessly harasses his opponent. Black's opening play has left a hole on e5 and somewhat weakened his kingside, but now Bu also points at the queenside as a possible new frontier.

18...♘f6

There is no easy solution.

18...♘c4 19.♙a2 ♘xd2 20.♞xd2 ♞fd8 is not satisfactory, as 21.♞e2 offers pressure.

18...a6 19.♘d6 cxd6 This at least covers the e5-square, but after 20.a5 White is better after both the passive 20...♘d7 and the more complicated 20...♘c4 21.♙c1 b6 22.♞e2 ♘c7 23.axb6 ♘xb6 24.♙f4.

19.a5 ♘bd5 20.a6

Very instructive play: White fixes a permanent weakness on a7. Later it will decide the game.

20...b6 21.♞e2 ♘e4

Giving up a pawn, as instead 21...♞fe8 22.♘e5! ♙xe5 23.dxe5 ♘d7 24.♞f3 was horrible.

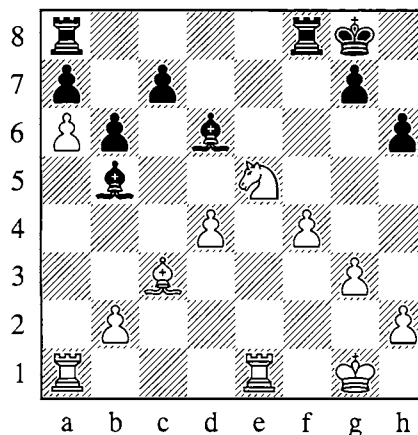
22.♙xe4 fxe4 23.♞xe4 ♙f5 24.♞h4 ♙d3

24...♙d7 25.♘d6 cxd6 26.♞g3, hitting d6, is also good for White.

25.♘c3 ♘xc3

25...♘b4!?, to introduce some complications, was maybe a better try.

26.♙xc3 ♞f4 27.♞xf4 ♞xf4 28.♘e5 ♙b5 29.g3 ♞ff8 30.f4



This was a blindfold rapid game, but White exploits his pawn advantage in exemplary style.

30...♞ad8 31.♙g2 c5 32.dxc5 ♙xc5 33.h4 ♞fe8 34.h5 ♙d6 35.♙h3 ♙xe5

Of course the opposite-coloured bishops give Black some drawing chances, but maybe this is not the wisest thing to do anyway. Now a7 is really weak and difficult to defend, and White can keep pressing for the full point without any risk.

36.♖xe5 ♜xe5 37.♙xe5 ♘f7 38.g4 ♜d3†  
 39.♗h4 ♜d7 40.♙b8 ♙e2 41.b4 ♙b5 42.♙e5  
 ♗e6 43.♞a3 ♗f7 44.g5 hxg5† 45.fxg5 ♞e7  
 46.g6† ♗g8 47.♙b8 ♞e4† 48.♗g3 ♞e8?

This looks like a mouse slip. 48...♞e7  
 49.♗f4±

49.♙xa7 ♞a8 50.♙xb6

1–0

White will get passed pawns on both wings.

**Conclusion:** Positionally, 3...♗f6 is not completely sound. White simply gets too much space for Black to equalize and the move 5...♗b6 does not alter this view.

**Chapter Conclusion:** The Queen's Gambit Accepted is a very concrete opening, so it is fitting to answer sharply and resolutely with 3.e4. The variations are rich and complicated: every line contains difficult positional and tactical motifs, and you have to know a lot to be confident with White. However, I think the games show that at the bottom line White is on top! I admit that 3.e4 is a demanding move to play, but sometimes you need bigger equipment.

The key elements to mastering 3.e4 are to make use of the extra space and to always fight for the initiative.

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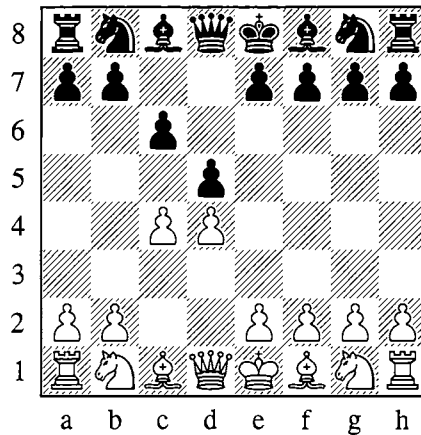
# Chapter 3

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## The Slav

*Good news for the people who love bad news*

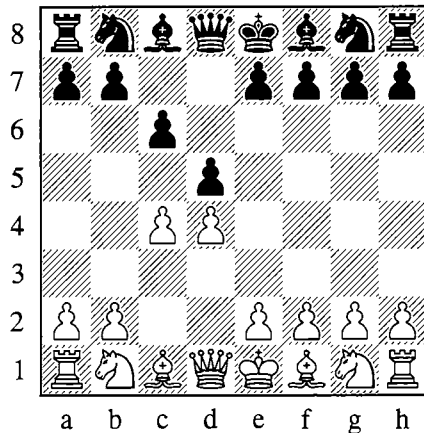
– Modest Mouse



**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6**

The Rare 3...dxc4	page 85	The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0–0	page 106
The 5...♘a6 Variation	page 88	The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...b5 etc.	page 108
The 5...♙g4 Variation	page 90	Kramnik's ending	page 110
The 5...e6 Variation	page 94	The Mainline - Part Two:	page 116
The Mainline: 5...♙f5 6.♘e5	page 99	The Classical Move – 11...f6	page 118
The 6...♘a6 Variation	page 101	Morozevich's 11...g5	page 123
The Mainline – Part One:	page 103	Sokolov's Variation – 7...♘b6	page 128
The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0–0–0	page 103		

## 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

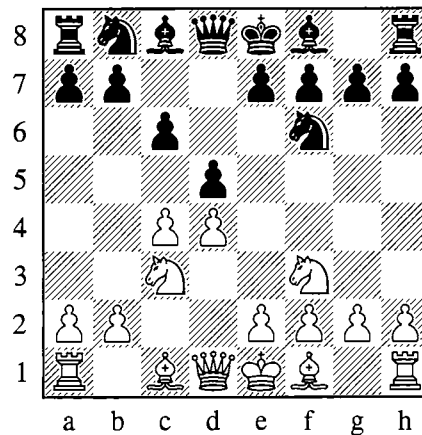


The Slav. One of the most popular openings in modern chess. Black protects d5 and secures his influence in the centre. If White takes on d5 with  $cx\!d\!5$  then Black just takes back with his c-pawn and the status quo is maintained. In contrast to the Queen's Gambit Declined with  $2...e6$ , Black does not close the diagonal for his light-squared bishop and hopes to bring it out to  $f5$  or  $g4$ . This is all fairly easy to grasp but the real secret of the Slav is much deeper. Actually Black plans to play  $...dxc4$  voluntarily! It turns out that the innocuous looking move  $2...c6$  not only protects d5, but can also help to follow up  $...dxc4$  with  $...b5$  securing the pawn.

3.  $\text{d}\!f\!3$   $\text{d}\!f\!6$ 

Black can disrupt matters by venturing  $3...dxc4$ . On  $4.e3$  he can continue sharply with  $4...b5$  or try the interesting  $4...g6!$ ?. Game 22 shows that White gets the upper hand but  $3...dxc4$  should not be underestimated.

$3...e6$   $4.\text{d}\!c\!3$  is a frequently employed move order to reach the Semi-Slav or the Triangle variations, which are both covered later in the book.

4.  $\text{d}\!c\!3$ 4... $dxc4$ 

The Slav move. Black breaks the symmetry to get chances of his own.  $4...e6$  would of course lead to the Semi-Slav – see Chapter 4.  $4...a6$  is the a6-Slav – see Chapter 5. A few alternatives need to be mentioned:

$4...g6$  is a mix between the Slav and the Grünfeld. A simple answer is  $5.cxd5$   $6.\text{g}\!f\!4\pm$  with a good Exchange Slav, as the bishop is misplaced on  $g7$ .

$4...g\!f\!5$  is premature, as  $5.cxd5$   $6.\text{b}\!b\!3$  is annoying.

$4...b\!b\!6$  is occasionally played. A simple reaction is  $5.e3$   $g\!f\!5$  (safer but not satisfactory is  $5...g\!g\!4$   $6.h3$   $g\!f\!3$   $7.\text{b}\!b\!xf\!3\pm$  and White enjoys the pair of bishops)  $6.\text{d}\!e\!5!$  with the idea  $6...e6$   $7.g4$   $g\!g\!6$   $8.h4\pm$ .

## 5.a4

Preventing  $b7-b5$ . Afterwards White will win the pawn back.

5... $g\!f\!5$ 

Again the main Slav move. Black develops the light-squared bishop to an active post and fights for control over the important  $e4$ -square. However there are many other possible moves:

5...♞a6 The knight is perhaps on its way to the good square b4. The problem is that it does nothing to fight for the centre. White naturally continues 6.e4 – see Game 23.

5...♙g4 is an alternative way to develop the bishop, but there is a drawback: White can activate his knight with 6.♞e5 and gain the better prospects – see Game 24.

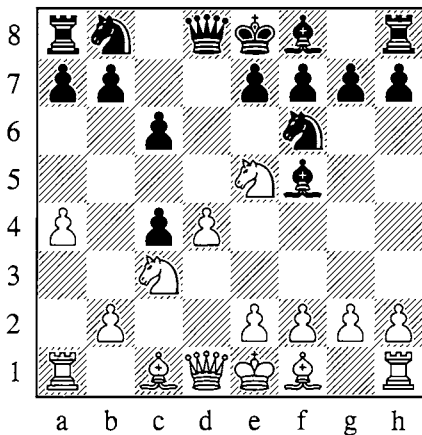
5...e6 almost looks too modest, but it is a very solid line – see Game 25 and 26.

Occasionally Black tries to confuse his opponent with 5...♞d5, but a good response is 6.e3 ♞xc3 7.bxc3 b5 8.♞e5 ♞d5 9.♙e2 ♙f5 10.f3±.

Also possible is 5...c5 when 6.e4 cxd4 7.♞xd4 ♞xd4 8.♞xd4 e5 9.♞db5 ♞a6 10.♙xc4± leads to a pleasant endgame for White.

Finally, 5...a5 6.e4 ♙g4 7.♙xc4 e6 8.0–0 ♙b4 9.♞d3!? ♙xf3 10.gxf3 ♞bd7 11.f4 looked promising for White in Avrukh – Welling, Kemer 2007.

6.♞e5



This is our repertoire choice. White plans to play f3 followed by e4, taking the centre. Black

has many counter-ideas and the play generally becomes very sharp.

More balanced is 6.e3 e6 7.♙xc4 ♙b4 8.0–0 0–0 with a typical Slav position. White can try to expand in the centre with 9.♞e2 but even after 9...♞bd7 10.e4 ♙g6 Black is very solid, as has been confirmed in hundreds of games. 6.♞e5 is a more direct way of playing. It will be covered in great detail in Games 27-35, but first I will deal with the rare Slav lines.

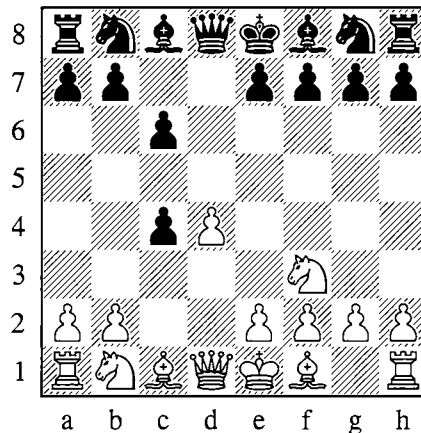
## The Rare 3...dxc4

### GAME 22

Delchev – Sommerbauer

European Team Championship, Leon 2001

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♞f3 dxc4

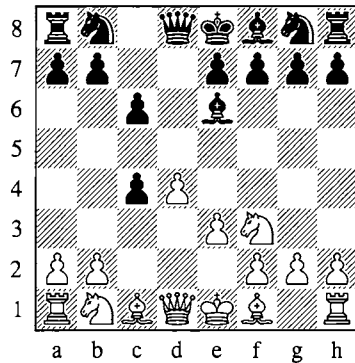


4.e3 b5

The most natural, but there is another move: 4...♙e6!?

By protecting the pawn, Black disturbs the harmony of White's play. Fortunately the bishop also obstructs Black's own development.

The most promising reply is:



5. ♖c3

Fighting for the initiative.

White can go for the c-pawn: 5.a4 ♖f6 6. ♖a3 but then Black gets counterplay with 6...c5 and is close to equality.

5...b5

5...♖f6 6. ♖g5 ♗d5 (6...♞c8 7. ♗e2 ♗d5 8.e4 h6 9.exd5 hxg5 10.dxc6 ♖xc6 11.d5 ♖e5 12.♗xg5 a6 13.♞d4 ♞f5 14.h4 b5 15.0-0 was good for White in Braziulis – Voveris, e-mail 2009) 7.e4 h6 8.exd5 hxg5 9.dxc6 ♖xc6 10.d5 ♖e5 11.♗xg5 is good for White.

6. ♗e2

Taking advantage of the clumsy bishop on e6. White just develops: he is not afraid of being a pawn down.

6.a4 b4 7. ♖e2!? ♖f6 8. ♖f4 is an interesting new way of playing that also looks quite good.

6...♖f6 7.0-0 g6

7...♗g4 8.a4 b4 9. ♖e5! ♗xe2 10. ♖xe2 was good for White who is ready to take his pawn back, Gusan – Taras, corr. 2005.

8. ♖g5 ♗c8

Similar is 8...♗d7 9.b3 h6 10. ♖ge4 ♖xe4 11. ♖xe4 cxb3 12.axb3 ♗g7 13.♗d2 0-0 14.♗a5 ♞c8 15.♞c1± with great positional compensation for the pawn, Nikitin – Chuprikov, Russia 2008.

9.b3

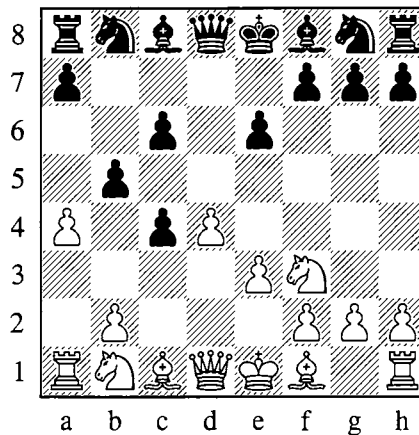
9.a4 is another way to get good play for the pawn.

9...h6 10. ♖ge4 b4 11. ♖xf6† exf6 12. ♖e4 f5 12...c3 13.a3 ♗f5 14. ♖g3 ♗e6 15.axb4 ♗xb4 16.♗a3 ♞e7 17.♗xb4 ♞xb4 18. ♖e4 (18.♞d3N ♖d7 19.♞fc1±) 18...♖d7 So far this is Brynell – Gleizerov, Stockholm 2010, and now I suggest: 19.♗c4!N 0-0 20.♗xe6 fxe6 21.♞c2 f5 22. ♖xc3±

13. ♖c5 c3 14.a3 ♗xc5 15.dxc5 ♗a6 16.♞c2 0-0 17.axb4 ♗xe2 18.♞xe2 ♞d5 19.♞c2 a5 20.bxa5 ♞xc5 21.♗d2 ♖a6 22.♗xc3±

Wang Yue – Zhang Pengxiang, Shandong 2007.

5.a4 e6



A key position that can also be reached from the Queen's Gambit Accepted. In fact, that is how it came about in this particular game. I changed the move order to make it fit, but in reality it was 1.c4 e6 2. ♖f3 d5 3.d4 dxc4 4.e3 b5 5.a4 c6.

6.axb5

The most straightforward.

Interesting alternatives are 6.b3 and 6. ♖c3.

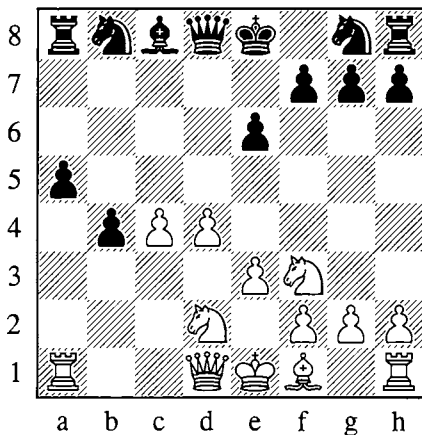
6...cxb5 7.b3

White wins the pawn back. If ...cxb3 then b5 hangs with check.

## 7...♙b4†

This forces complications, but it probably is an unsound approach. Even so, it was too late for safe alternatives. 7...♘f6 8.bxc4 bxc4 9.♙xc4± has been seen in several games. With good development, an extra pawn in the centre and a potential weakness on a7, White is better.

## 8.♙d2 ♙xd2† 9.♘bxd2 a5 10.bxc4 b4



This is Black's cunning idea. He gets two connected passed pawns on the queenside, but they are not so dangerous. White is ahead in development and his big centre should count for more. The position is very similar to "the Triangle" variation, which is covered in Chapter 8.

## 11.♙d3

11.♘e5 ♘f6 12.♙a4† has been suggested, but after 12...♘fd7 13.c5 0–0 14.♘dc4 ♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♙b7 16.c6 ♙a6! 17.♙xa6 ♙xa6 18.0–0 f6 19.♘d3 ♙xc6 Black held in Adams – Rausis, Yerevan 1996. Furthermore Black can try 12...♙d7.

However White can also vary. After 11.♘e5 ♘f6 interesting is 12.♙e2 0–0 13.♙f3 ♙a6 14.0–0 ♙c7 15.c5! ♘d5 16.♘e4 ♙d7 17.♙d3 a4 18.♘g5 g6. This is Leutwyler – Khenkin, Helsingor 2011. White has a promising position after 19.♙fb1N b3 20.h4.

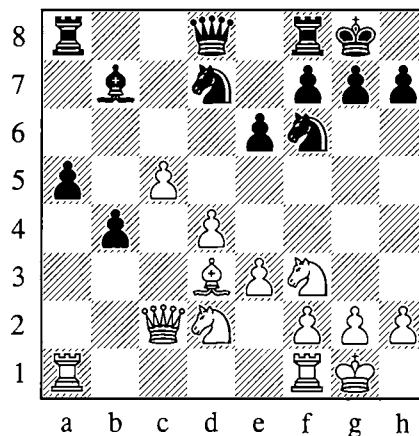
## 11...♘f6 12.0–0 0–0 13.♙c2

A good alternative is 13.e4 e5 14.♙c2! exd4 15.e5 ♘fd7 16.♙xh7† ♘h8 17.♙e4 when the d4-pawn is weak. 17...♙a6 18.♘b3 ♙c7 19.♙fe1 a4 20.♘bxd4 ♘xe5 21.♙xa4± ♘xf3† 22.♘xf3 ♙xa4 23.♙xa4 ♙xc4 This was Kakageldyev – Ivanov, Ashkhabad 1996, and now 24.♙a5! with the threat ♙h5† was very strong.

## 13...♘bd7

If 13...♙b7 then 14.e4 creates a big centre: 14...♘h5 15.e5 h6 16.♙h7† ♘h8 17.♙e4± Lannaioli – Raessler, corr. 2002.

## 14.c5 ♙b7



## 15.♙b5

15.e4 h6 16.♙b5 ♙c7 17.♙a2 ♙c6?! 18.♙xc6 ♙xc6 19.♙fa1 was very good for White in L.B. Hansen – Engqvist, Gausdal 1990, but Black should have tried 17...♙a6.

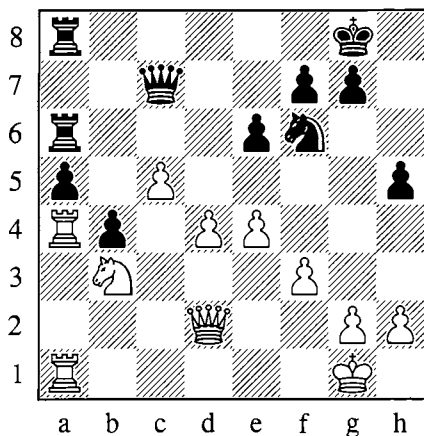
## 15...♙c7 16.♙fc1 ♙c6 17.♙xc6 ♙xc6 18.♙a4!

Blockading the pawns.

## 18...♙a6 19.♙ca1 ♙fa8 20.♘b3 ♙c7 21.e4±

The black pawns are effectively blocked; now the big white centre can show its muscles.

21...♖b8 22.♗e5 ♗c6 23.♗xc6 ♜xc6 24.f3  
♞c7 25.♞d2 h5?!



26.d5!

The breakthrough.

26...exd5 27.exd5 h4 28.d6 ♜c6 29.♞g5  
♗d7 30.♞xa5 h3 31.♗d4 ♞xa5 32.♞xa5  
♞c8 33.♗f5 ♞xa5 34.♞xg7#  
1-0

**Conclusion:** It is risky for Black to give up the centre with 3...dxc4 and 4...b5. The black pawns on the queenside can be blocked while the white centre is much more dynamic.

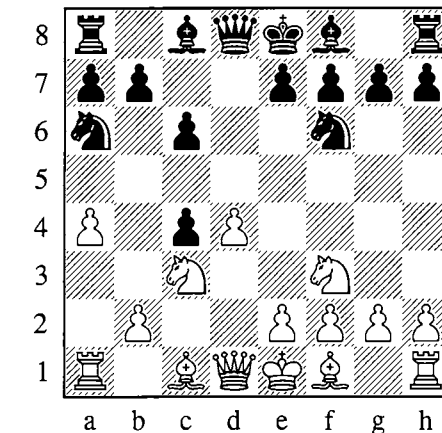
## The 5...♗a6 Variation

### GAME 23

Mikhalevski – Rabinovich

Dieren 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 dxc4 5.a4  
♗a6



A sideline, but not without its logic. The knight has a fine square on b4 and the bishop can still be developed to an active post at g4. The drawback is that White gets the chance to grab the centre. A chance he should definitely take.

6.e4 ♗g4 7.♗xc4 ♗xf3

Destroying the white pawn chain. Playing more quietly with 7...e6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♞e2 ♗b4 11.♞a1 ♞a5 12.h3 ♗h5 13.♞fd1± looks like a more typical Slav position, where White has the usual better chances due to his extra space.

8.gxf3 e6

8...♗b4 9.0-0 e6 10.♗h1 ♞a5 11.♞g1 h6 12.♗e3 0-0-0 13.♞b3 ♗b8 14.♗e2 also seemed promising for White in Avrukh – Kogan, Israel 2008.

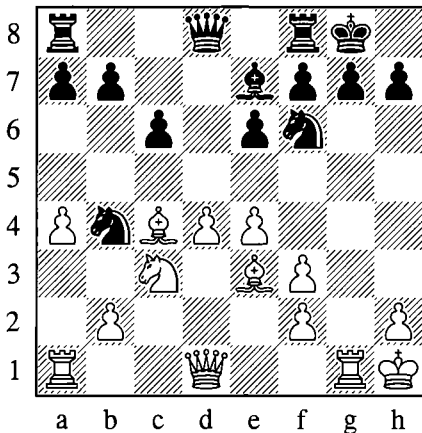
It is easier for White to get something going against the black king than the other way around.

9.♗e3

White could wait a little with this move. 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♗h1 0-0 11.♞g1 g6 12.f4 is a good alternative, for instance 12...♞a5 13.♞f3 ♞ad8 14.♗e3 ♞b4 15.♞e2 ♗c7 16.a5! seemed very promising for White in Rogozenko – Shirov, Germany 2001.

**9...♖b4 10.0–0 ♙e7 11.♙h1!**

Once again we see this instructive manoeuvre.

**11...0–0 12.♞g1**

The rook gets to the open file and hits Black's king position.

**12...♙h8**

The king steps out of the way; 12...g6 13.f4 just increases the problems.

**13.f4 c5**

Black naturally tries to find counterplay. 13...♞d7 as in Hoelzl – Drazic, Zadar 2009, should be met by 14.a5N with some advantage.

**14.dxc5 ♞c8**

14...♞c7 is worse: 15.e5 ♖d7 Stefansson – Gretarsson, Alborg 1998, and now 16.♖b5 ♞c6† 17.♞g2 ♖xc5 18.♖d6 b6 (or 18...♙d6 19.exd6 with the idea ♞d4) 19.f5 gives White a strong initiative.

**15.e5 ♖d7**

The intermediate check with 15...♞c6† is nothing: 16.♞g2 ♙ad8 17.♞b3 ♖fd5 18.♙b5 ♞c7 19.♖e4 Black has not regained the pawn.

In his notes for ChessBase the winner suggested

15...♖fd5, but it is refuted by 16.♙xd5! exd5 17.♖b5 ♙xc5 18.♞c1 b6 19.♖d6 ♞c6 20.♙d4±.

**16.♖e4 b6?!**

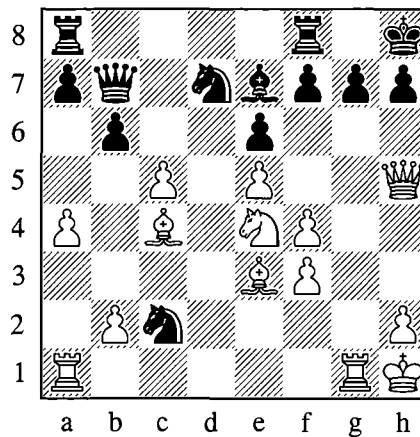
On 16...♖xc5 White had 17.♖d6, but 16...♞c6 should have been tried. Now White gets a promising attacking position.

**17.♞h5! ♞b7**

Or 17...♖xc5 18.♙xc5 bxc5 19.♞g3! with overwhelming threats. The other rook can come to g1 and the rook on the third rank can switch to h3 as well.

**18.f3**

Now Black had to try 18...g6, but he totally misses White's biggest threat.

**18...♖c2?****19.♞xg7!**

A powerful finish.

**19...♙xg7 20.♖f6!**

The king cannot get away and will be mated on h7.

**20...♖xf6 21.exf6† ♙xf6 22.♞g1† ♙h8 23.♙d3**

1–0

**Conclusion:** The 5...♖a6 variation is a little passive. White takes the centre with 6.e4 and if Black later disrupts White's pawn structure with ...♙xf3 then after gxf3 the rook quickly comes to the g-file with direct attacking chances. All in all, a very pleasant variation for White.

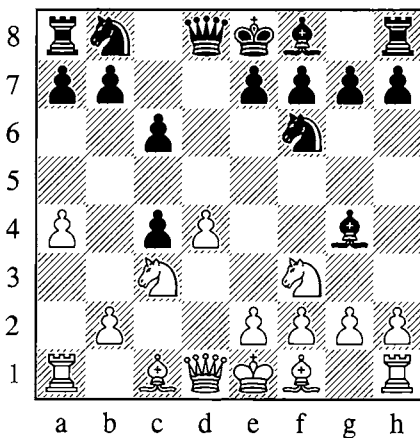
## The 5...♙g4 Variation

### GAME 24

Coleman – Tait

Correspondence 1994

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♖f3 ♖f6 4.♖c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♙g4



Black gets the bishop out. Of course White can take the centre with 6.e4, but it is even more tempting to win a tempo on the newly developed piece.

#### 6.♖e5 ♙b5

The standard move. However White should be aware of the tricky line:

#### 6...♖bd7!?

With the point 7.♖xg4 ♖xg4 8.e4 e5! 9.♙xg4 exd4 with good compensation for

the piece. This line was suggested by Palliser as a surprise weapon for Black in *Dangerous Weapons: The Queen's Gambit*. A safe choice for White is 8.e3 ♖gf6 9.♙xc4 e6 10.0-0 ♙b4 which looks like a normal Slav where Black has given up his light-squared bishop for a knight. His structure is solid, but with the pair of bishops and more space White should be better after something like 11.♙c2 0-0 12.♙d1 ♙a5 13.e4±.

White can just take the pawn back with:

7.♖xc4

After:

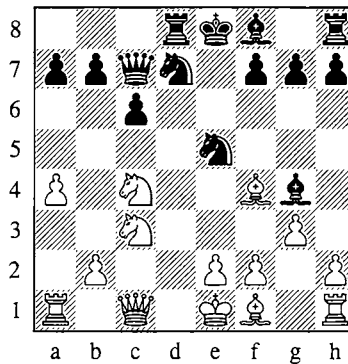
7...♙c7 8.g3 e5 9.dxe5 ♖xe5 10.♙f4

Play is very similar to the ♙f5-Slav which will be covered below.

10...♙d8

10...♖fd7? 11.♖xe5 ♖xe5 12.♙d4 highlights the difference: the bishop on g4 hangs.

11.♙c1 ♖fd7



Now Palliser's analysis goes: 12.♙xe5 ♖xe5 13.♙e3 f6 14.f4 ♙e6! Which seems fine for Black, for instance: 15.b3 b6 16.fxe5 ♙c5 17.♙c1 ♙xc4 18.bxc4 ♙xe5 and Black has compensation.

In light of this, the simple 12.♙g2 springs to mind. It must be better for White, but the position should be carefully compared with the ♙f5-lines.

#### 7.f3

Preparing to seize the centre.

7...♖fd7

The refined move.

On 7...e6 White could continue automatically with 8.e4 but there is a more interesting possibility:

8.g4!

And now there are three options:

8...♖fd7 9.h4 ♙e7 10.♙e3 ♜xe5 11.dxe5 ♙xh4† 12.♙xh4 ♙xh4† 13.♙f2 ♙h2 14.♜e4 ♙xe5 Beliavsky – Cornette, Linares 2003. 15.♜d6† ♚e7 16.♜xc4 ♙d5 17.♙b3± ♚d8 18.♙xb7† ♜d7 19.e4 ♙g5 20.gxh5 White is winning material.

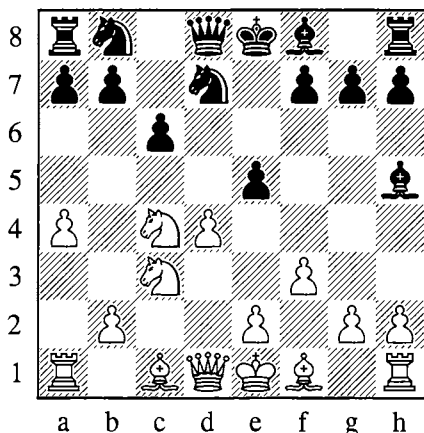
8...♜d5 9.e4 ♙h4† 10.♚e2 ♜xc3† 11.bxc3 ♙g6

After 11...f6 12.♜xc4 ♙f7 13.♜e3 the black queen is feeling uncomfortable.

12.♙f4 ♜d7 13.♙b1 0–0–0 14.♙g3 ♙f6 15.♜xc4 h5 16.♙h3 h4 17.♜d6† ♙xd6 18.♙xd6 ♙g5 19.♙b4± Joppich – Kribben, corr. 2005.

8...♙g6 9.h4 h6 10.♜xg6 fxg6 11.e4 c5 12.d5! exd5 13.e5 is very promising.

8.♜xc4 e5



A typical counter-strike.

9.e4

If White takes the pawn with 9.♜xe5 ♜xe5 10.dxe5 then 10...♜d7 11.f4 ♙b4 follows with great compensation.

The big mainline is 9.♜e4 ♙b4† 10.♙d2 ♙e7 when the simplest is 11.♜xe5 ♜xe5 12.dxe5 ♜d7 13.♜d6† ♙xd6 14.exd6 ♙xd6 15.♙c3± with the pair of bishops in an open position.

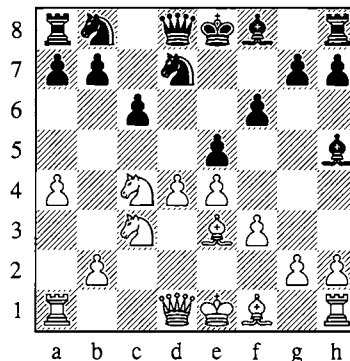
However, after some study, I like 9.e4 more and more. It has been neglected by theory basically because the complications have been misjudged. In fact it is very poisonous, as some correspondence games show.

9...♙h4†

The main move, but after this game Black will probably be forced to search in new directions:

9...exd4 10.♙xd4 is no good: White is positionally dominant.

9...f6 10.♙e3



10...♙f7

10...♙b4 is also possible, but White can secure an edge in various ways. For example: 11.dxe5 ♜xe5 12.♙b3 ♙e7 13.♜xe5 fxе5 14.♙c4± Romanko – Sergienko, Russia 2008.

11.♙e2

11.a5±, taking b6 from the black knight, is a good alternative.

11...♖b6 12.d5 ♘8d7

The wild 12...♘d5 13.exd5 cxd5 is countered by 14.♗b3! dxc4 15.♗xb7 ♘d7 16.0–0–0 ♖c8, Zpevakova – Dolgov, corr. 2002, and now 17.f4 to open lines looks very strong.

13.0–0

Maybe better is 13.a5 ♘xc4 14.♙xc4 ♙c5 15.♙xc5 ♘xc5 16.b4 when White has taken over the initiative: 16...♘d7 17.0–0 0–0 18.♗d3 and White's extra space gives room for optimism.

13...♘xc4 14.♙xc4 ♙c5 15.♙xc5 ♘xc5 16.a5 0–0 17.b4 cxd5 18.♙xd5 ♙xd5 19.♘d5 ♘e6 20.♖c1 ♗h8 21.♘c7 ♘xc7 22.♗xd8 ♖fxd8 23.♖xc7

White had the more active rook in Izeta Txabbarri – Lima, Leon 1997, but Black held the game.

9...♙b4 10.dxe5 0–0 11.♙e3

Just developing. White has also had success with the sharper moves 11.h4 and 11.♙f4.

11...♗e7 12.♙e2 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.0–0± ♗e7

Or 14...♙xc3 15.bxc3 ♗xc3 16.♙d4 with excellent compensation.

15.a5 ♘d7 16.♗b3 ♙c5 17.♙xc5 ♘xc5 18.♗c4 ♖ad8 19.♖fd1 ♗h8 20.♗b4 ♖de8 21.♙f1 f6 22.♘a4 ♘xa4 23.♗xe7 ♖xe7 24.♖xa4 ♙f7 25.♖d6 ♖c7 26.♖ad4 ♗g8 27.♖d7 ♖xd7 28.♖xd7 ♖b8 29.b4±

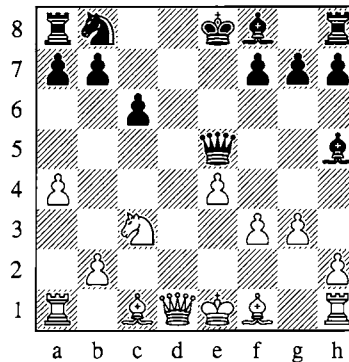
With a great ending, Grischuk – Korotylev, Moscow 2006.

### 10.g3

10.♗e2 is interesting and probably also fine, but White can already force matters.

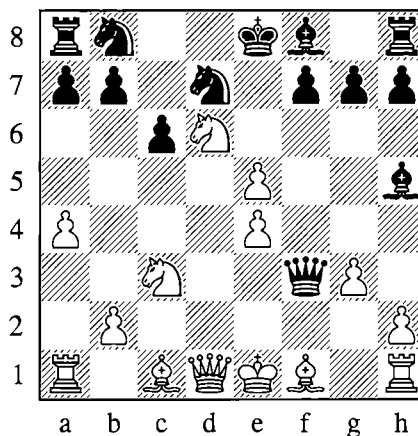
### 10...♗f6 11.dxe5 ♗xf3

11...♘xe5 is very rarely tried. Probably because of: 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5



13.♙f4 White has very good play. (13.g4 is also good, for instance: 13...♙g6 14.f4 ♗e7 15.f5 ♗h4† 16.♘d2 ♘d7 17.♘c2 0–0–0 18.♗e2 Winning a piece. 18...♘e5 19.♙f4 ♘xg4 20.fxg6 ♙d6 21.♙xd6 ♖xd6 22.gxf7 ♖f6 23.♗e1 ♗h6 24.♗g3 1–0 Leitao – Cubas, Santos 2010.) After 13.♙f4 play might continue: 13...♗a5 14.h4 h6 15.g4 ♙g6 16.h5 ♙h7 17.♗b3±

### 12.♘d6†



### 12...♗d8

The alternatives are not attractive:

12...♙xd6 13.♗xd6! ♗xh1

Black has a rook more, but after:

14.♙g5

His king is in dire straits. In fact White wins by brutal force:

14...f6 15.exf6 ♟xf6

Or 15...gxf6 16.♙xf6 ♟xf6 17.♚e6†.

16.♙xf6 gxf6 17.♚e6† ♔f8

Or 17...♔d8 18.♚xf6† ♔c7 19.♚e5† ♔d7

20.♚h5 followed by castling long.

18.♚xf6† ♔g8 19.♚g5† ♙g6 20.0–0–0 ♚f3

21.♚e7

The most precise.

21...♔a6 22.♙c4† ♙f7 23.♚d7 ♔g7

23...♚f8 24.♚g5#

24.♚g5† ♔f8 25.♚xb7 1–0

Vayser – Wickens, corr. 1990. Material will soon be pouring in. A possible continuation is:

25...♚b8 26.♚h6† ♔g8 27.♙xf7† ♚xf7

28.♚xf7 ♔xf7 29.e5

The other move also fails to impress:

12...♔e7

Again White is ready to sacrifice the rook:

13.♚b3 ♟c5 14.♙c4 ♚xh1 15.♚xc5

It does not look nice for the black king.

15...♔d7 16.♙g5† f6 17.exf6† gxf6 18.♙xf6†!

♟xf6 19.♚e5† ♔d7 20.♚f5† ♔e7 21.e5! ♚f3

22.exf6† ♔xd6 23.♚d1† ♚xd1†

Losing, but 23...♔c7 24.♚a5† b6 25.♚e5† leads to mate.

24.♟xd1 ♚e8† 25.♔f2 ♚e5 26.♚f4 ♙xd1

27.♙c4 c5 28.f7 ♙g7 29.♚d2† ♔c7 30.♚xd1

h5 31.♚d3 ♚d8 32.♚g6 ♙f8 33.♚f6 ♙d6

34.♔f3 ♚f8 35.h3 ♚e1 36.g4 ♚h1 37.g5

♚xh3† 38.♔f2 ♚h2† 39.♔g1 ♚h4 40.♙e6 ♚f4

41.♙f5 c4 42.g6 ♙c5† 43.♔g2 ♚f2† 44.♔g3

h4† 45.♔xh4 ♚h2† 46.♔g3 1–0

Pastore – Dolgov, corr. 2002.

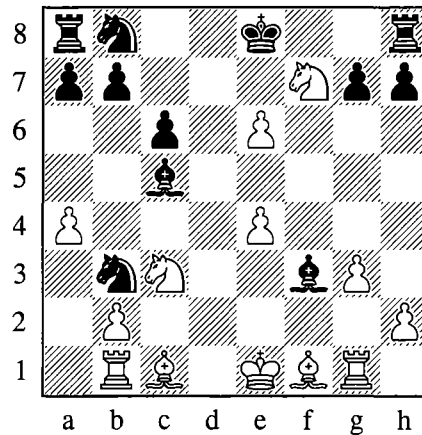
13.♚xf3 ♙xf3 14.♟xf7† ♔e8 15.e6! ♟c5

Not 15...♙xh1? 16.exd7† ♟xd7 17.♟xh8.

16.♚g1 ♟b3

Attacking the other white rook. If Black saves his own with 16...♚g8 then White just plays 17.♙c4±.

17.♚b1 ♙c5



Again attacking a rook! Like before, bad is 17...♚g8 18.♙c4.

18.♟xh8

White had finally had enough. Interesting was 18.♙c4 ♙xg1 19.♙xb3 ♚f8 20.♟d6† ♔e7 21.♟xb7 which looks crushing. To begin with, ♙g5† is a threat. 21...h6 22.♙f4 and now ♙d6†. It seems winning.

18...♟xc1 19.♚xc1 ♙xg1 20.♙e2 ♙xe2

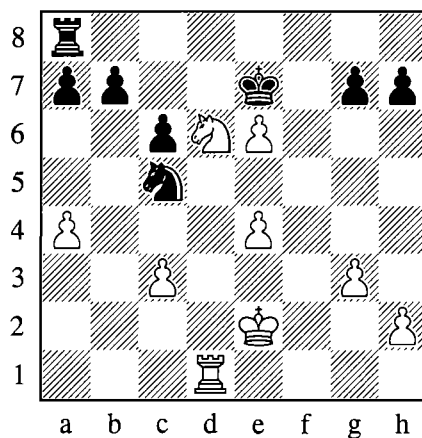
21.♔xe2 ♙d4

The two players played a theme match in this variation. Also tried was 21...♙b6 but after 22.♚f1 ♟a6 23.♚f7 it was even worse.

22.♟f7 ♔e7 23.♚d1 ♙xc3 24.bxc3 ♟a6

Not 24...♔xe6 25.♟d8† ♔e7 26.♟xb7.

25.♟d6 ♟c5



**26. ♖xb7! ♜xa4**

26... ♖xb7 27. ♗d7† ♜xc6 28. ♗xb7 is a lost rook ending, but 26... ♜xe4 was the best chance to stay in the game.

**27. ♗d7† ♜xc6 28. ♗xg7**

Now White is a clear pawn up.

**28...a5**

Or 28... ♜xc3† 29. ♜d3 ♖b5 30. ♗xh7.

**29. ♜d3 ♖b6 30. ♜c5† ♜f6 31. ♗xh7 a4 32. ♗c7**

1–0

**Conclusion:** The once popular 5... ♗g4 faces a serious crisis after 6. ♜e5 ♗h5 7. f3 ♜fd7 8. ♜xc4 e5 9. e4.

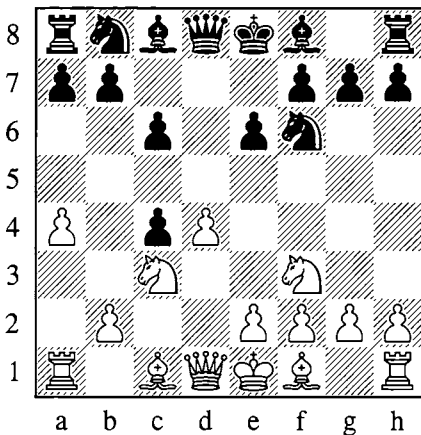
### The 5...e6 Variation

#### GAME 25

Eljanov – Drozdovskij

Ukraine (2) 2006

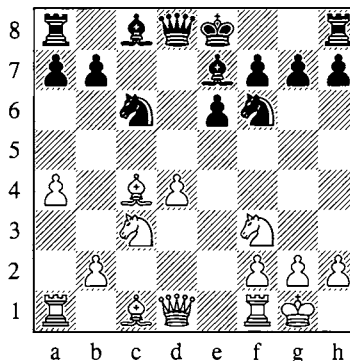
**1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♜f3 ♜f6 4. ♜c3 dxc4 5. a4 e6**



A very solid way of playing that has become quite popular recently.

**6.e4**

The natural move – White grabs the centre at once. But be aware that this move is actually a double-edged pawn sacrifice. The great majority of White players continue with the safer 6.e3, planning to take on c4 with the bishop just like in the Queen’s Gambit Accepted. And after 6...c5 7. ♗xc4 ♜c6 8.0–0 cxd4 9. exd4 ♗e7 that is exactly what we have: a position from the QGA.



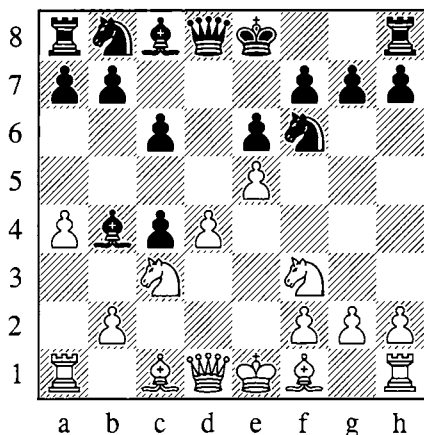
The difference is that the white pawn is on a4 instead of a2. Black intends to exploit this fact by the manoeuvre ... ♜c6-b4 and eventually to d5. Even the problem bishop can get an active role after ... ♗c8-d7-c6. All in all, Black’s position has proved to be very solid and he has good chances to keep the balance. However, White has by far the easier play: he has more space and some initiative in a typical isolated queen’s pawn middlegame. Moves such as 10. ♗e2, 10. ♗g5 and 10. ♗e1 have all been tried with success. It is worth investigating further and having one of these lines in reserve, as a second serve may pay off, but as our main line I have chosen the much less explored and more confrontational 6.e4.

**6...♗b4**

Attacking e4. Black must go in for the fight, as 6...c5 7. ♗xc4 is simply good for White.

## 7.e5

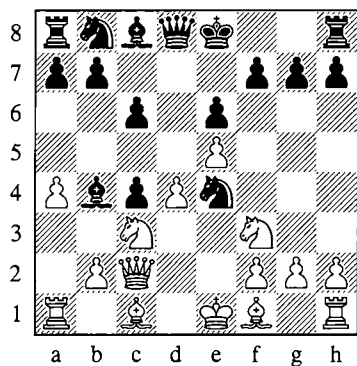
The most forcing. Good alternatives are 7.♖c2 and 7.♙g5. In all cases White has decent compensation.



## 7...♘d5

The great attacking player Alekhine was confronted three times with:

7...♘e4 8.♖c2



## 8...♞d5

He simply continued:

9.♙e2

Planning to castle. Black is badly coordinated and behind in development.

9...c5

9...0-0 10.0-0 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♙e7 12.♘d2 c5 13.♙xc4 ♞d8 14.♞e4 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♙d7 16.♙d3 g6 17.♙a3± Alekhine – Helling, Dresden 1936.

10.0-0 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 cxd4 12.cxd4

Later he varied with 12.♘d4 ♙c5 13.♘f3 ♘d7 14.♞d1 ♞c6 15.♙xc4± Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Nottingham 1936, when 15...♙xf2† 16.♞xf2 ♞xc4 17.♙a3 would have left the black king stranded in the centre.

12...c3 13.♙d2 ♞a5 14.♙xc3 ♙xc3 15.♞a3 ♘c6 16.♞xc3 ♙d7 17.♞b1±

Alekhine – Euwe, Holland (19) 1935.

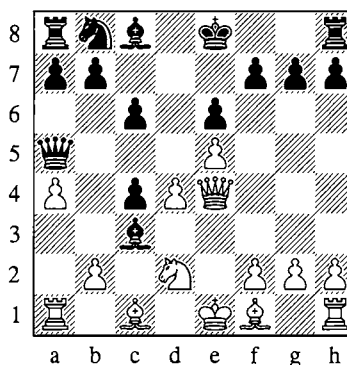
Recently, instead of 8...♞d5, Black has tried:

8...♞a5!?

But after:

9.♞xe4 ♙xc3† 10.♘d2!

White comes out on top.



10...♙xb2

10...♙b4 11.♙xc4 ♘d7 was Arkell – Marusenko, Penarth 2011. Now the simple 12.♞e2N was good.

11.♙xb2 c3 12.♙c1 cxd2† 13.♙xd2 ♞d5 14.♞g4♞g6 15.♞c1 f5

More solid is 15...♘d7 but after 16.♙b4 the black king is caught in the centre, Wegman – Kuhl, e-mail 2008.

16.♞f4 b6 17.♙e2 ♙a6 18.♙f3 ♞b3 19.h4 ♞d3 20.h5 ♘f7

In Johannessen – Ogaard, Oslo 2009, White could have won in style with 21.d5!N blasting open lines. For example, 21...cxd5 22.♞c7† or 21...exd5 22.♞g5 and the new option of e5-e6 will come in very handy.

**8.♙d2 b5**

The most straightforward. The alternatives are inferior:

8...♙xc3 9.bxc3 b5 10.♘g5

This is a much better version of the main game for White. It can quickly be transformed into an attack. For example:

10...h6

10...f6 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♙e2 a6 13.♙f3 with annoying pressure. Black blundered with 13...h6 14.♙h5†! ♘xh5 15.♗xh5† ♔d7 16.♘f7 ♗e8 17.♗g6 ♗g8 18.♙f4 and White was completely winning in yet another Alekhine game, Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany 1929.

11.♘e4 0–0 12.♗h5 ♗e7 13.♙g5! ♗c7 14.♘f6†!

Winning by force.

14...♘xf6 15.exf6 ♗d8 16.h4 ♗d5 17.fxg7 ♗e4† 18.♙e2 ♗e8 19.♗xh6 ♗h7 20.♗xh7† ♔xh7 21.axb5 ♙b7 22.♙xc4 ♔xg7 23.h5 cxb5 24.♙xb5 ♙xg2 25.h6† ♔h7 26.♗g1 ♙c6 27.♙f6 ♙xb5 28.♗g7† 1–0

Weber – Rizzi, corr. 1999.

8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♙e7 10.♙xc4

This is pleasant for White.

10...c5 11.♗e2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘c6 13.♗e4

With good centralization.

13...♙b4 14.♗a2

Maybe 14.♗d1 is more precise.

14...♙xd2† 15.♗xd2 ♘b4 16.♙b5† ♔f8

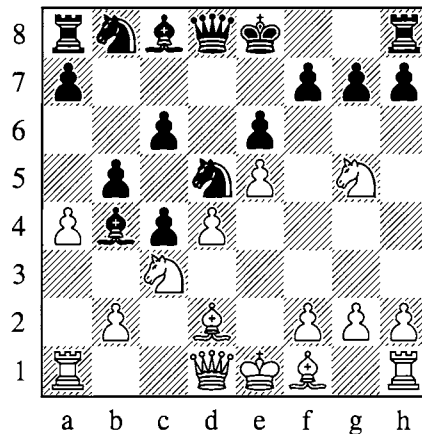
Dydyshko – Shvedchikov, Passau 1994, and now simply 17.0–0±. Black's king will be a source of concern.

**9.♘g5!?**

A very aggressive idea.

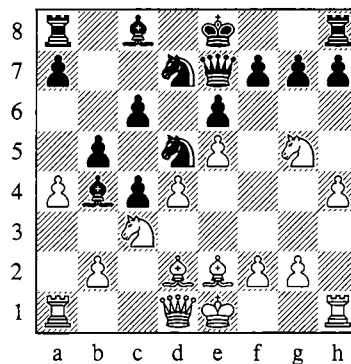
Instead 9.axb5 ♙xc3 10.bxc3 cxb5 11.♘g5 ♘c6 12.♗h5 ♗e7 13.♙e2 b4 gives Black adequate counterplay. However the brand new idea 13.h4! has turned the tables (see next game).

The immediate 9.♙e2 with long-term compensation is of course possible.

**9...♙e7**

A good defensive move. Very dangerous is 9...0–0 10.♗c2 f5 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♙e2 with good compensation. 12...♗e7 13.0–0 ♙b7 14.♙g4! h6 15.♙xe6† ♔h8 16.♗ae1 hxg5 17.♙xg5 White had very powerful play for the piece in Jakubowski – Loeffler, Gausdal 2005.

One of the experts of this line, the Israeli grandmaster Postny, has tried 9...♗e7. After 10.h4 ♘d7 11.♙e2

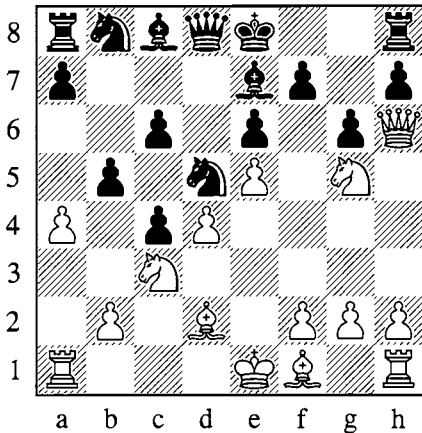


11...c5! Black liberates himself: 12.♘xb5 cxd4 13.0–0 d3 14.♙f3 0–0 15.♙xb4 ♗xb4 16.♙xd5 exd5 17.♘c7 ♘xe5 18.♘xa8 ♗b8† Rodshtein – Postny, Israel 2008. 10.h4 was too nonchalant. White should instead try

10.♙e2, which looks good. A tempo is very important.

Speaking of a tempo, 9...h6 just helps the knight to get to e4.

10.♖h5 g6 11.♗h6



11...♘b4

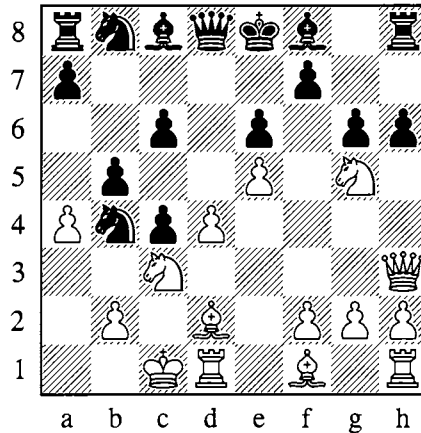
Safer was 11...♙f8 12.♗h3 ♙e7 inviting a repetition. White declines of course! 13.♘ce4 f5 14.exf6 ♘xf6 was Vazquez Igarza – Gonzalez Garcia, Casar de Caceres 2007, and now I like 15.♘c5. The question is whether Black can enter the complications after 15...♗xd4 16.♘ce6 ♗xb2. After 17.♙d1 the tension is high and a small inaccuracy would mean a zero on the scoreboard. A possible continuation is 17...♙b4 18.♘c7† ♘d8 19.♗g3 ♘bd7 20.♙xc4 bxc4 21.♙xb4 ♗xb4† 22.♙f1 with a strong attack for the piece and at least a draw.

11...♘c3 12.bxc3 ♙f8 13.♗h3 ♙e7 14.♘e4 ♗d5 15.♗e3 ♙b7 16.♙e2 ♘a6 17.♙f3 gives White easy play. For example: 17...♗d7 18.axb5 cxb5 19.0–0 0–0 20.♙f1 ♘b8 21.♙c1 ♘c7 22.d5! exd5 23.♗xa7† ♘c8 24.♘c5 ♙xc5 25.♗xc5+– Brynell – Rodriguez Lopez, Palma de Mallorca 2009.

12.0–0–0!

Time is crucial in such sharp positions. White develops and simultaneously protects against the fork on c2. The king's position is a bit open though, so you should be careful.

12...♙f8 13.♗h3 h6



A critical position. I believe White has two simple and very promising lines, and a third which just gives fair compensation. Unfortunately Eljanov chose the latter. Well, he did not have all the time he needed and a computer to aid him. He was not writing a book either, he was just playing a game.

14.♘ce4

14.axb5 ♗a5 15.♙xc4± or 14.♘ge4 ♙e7 15.axb5 ♗b6 16.♙xc4 ♗xd4 17.♗g4± both look good.

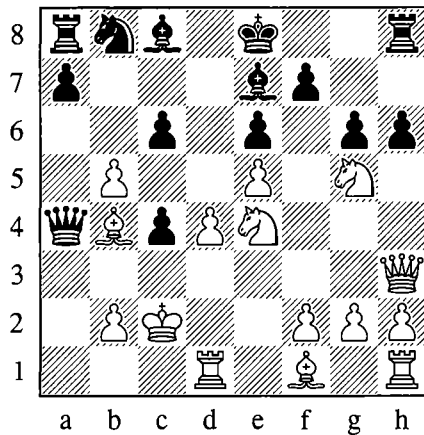
14...♙e7 15.axb5

15.♘d6† ♙xd6 16.exd6 ♘d5 17.♘e4 f5 seems fine for Black: 18.♙g5 ♗a5 19.♘c5 c3

15...♗a5

Black penetrates with his queen, and the game should end in a perpetual check.

16.♙xb4 ♗a1† 17.♘c2 ♗a4† 18.♘c1 ♗a1† 19.♘c2 ♗a4†

**20.♔d2?!**

The year this game was played, the Ukrainian Championship was organized as a knock-out tournament. Eljanov had lost the first game and had to play for a win, even if he knew it was suicidal.

**20...♙b4† 21.♔e3?**

21.♔c1 was still a draw.

**21...♚xd1**

Now Black wins.

22.♙xc4 ♚xh1 23.♗xf7 ♚c1† 24.♔f3 ♔xf7  
25.♚h4 g5 26.♚h5† ♔g7 27.g3 ♚xc4  
0–1

**Conclusion:** The sharp gambit 6.e4 is worth a try. White quickly gets a great attacking position in most lines, but he should study Postny's 9...♚e7 which seems to be Black's best bet. However, even here, the new move 10.♙e2 gives White good compensation.

The game above focused on 9.♗g5 but a new idea in the 9.axb5 line has strengthened White's chances there, as we shall now see.

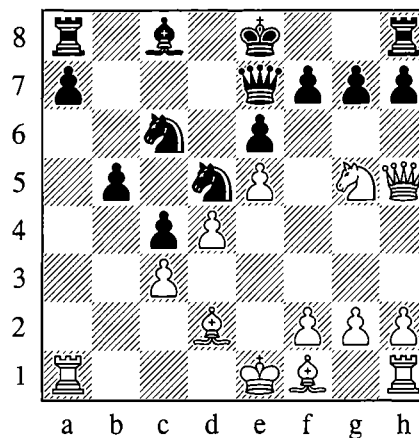
**GAME 26****Morozevich – Jakovenko**

Sochi 2012

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 dxc4 5.a4  
e6 6.e4 ♙b4 7.e5 ♗d5 8.♙d2 b5 9.axb5  
♙xc3 10.bxc3 cxb5 11.♗g5 ♗c6

Black develops and counts on quick counterplay with ...b5-b4.

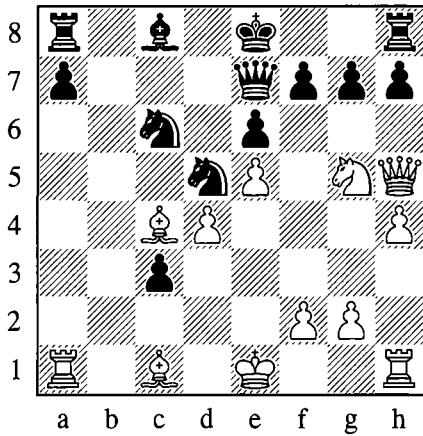
11...h6 12.♚h5! g6 (12...0–0 13.♗e4 ♗c6  
14.h4!? f5 15.♗d6 ♙d7 16.♚h3 ♙e8 17.♚d1  
♚e7 18.g4 was very unclear, but White won a  
hardcore fight in Matlakov – Bologan, Plovdiv  
2012.) 13.♚h3 f5!? 14.exf6 e5 So far this is  
Anand – Eljanov, Bremen 2012. I suggest:  
15.g4!N ♚xf6 16.♗e4 ♚e7 17.dxe5 ♚xe5  
18.♙g2±

**12.♚h5 ♚e7****13.h4!**

A promising new idea. Previously White had usually played 13.♙e2, with unconvincing results.

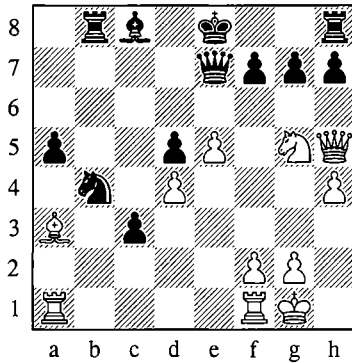
**13...b4 14.♙xc4 bxc3 15.♙c1!**

The bishop can go to a3.



15...dxd4

Morozevich had already won a miniature in this line. 15...dcb4 16.0-0 a5 17.♙a3 ♖b8?! 18.♙xd5 exd5



19.e6! g6 (19...♙xe6 20.♘xe6 ♗xe6 21.♞fe1) 20.exf7† ♗xf7 21.♞fe1† 1-0 Morozevich – Khairullin, Jurmala 2012.

16.0-0

With a big attack. Black cannot castle because of the mate on h7, and ♙a3 is in the air.

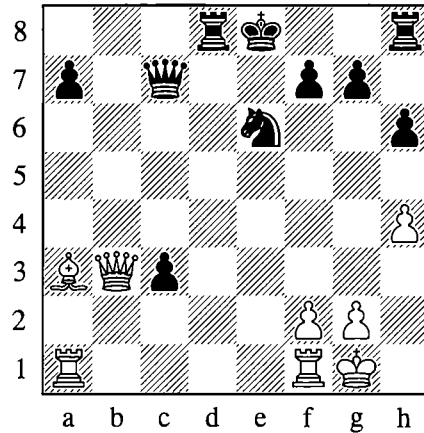
16...h6

A new move. 16...♗c7 17.♞d1 g6 18.♗g4 ♘c6 19.♙a3 ♘xe5?! 20.♙b5† ♙d7 21.♘xe6! ♗b7 22.♙xd7† ♗xd7 23.♘g7† 1-0 Gupta – Sumets, Visakhapatnam 2011.

17.♙xd5 exd5 18.♙a3

Here it comes.

18...♗c7 19.e6! ♙xe6 20.♘xe6 ♘xe6 21.♗xd5 ♞d8 22.♗b3



Black's king is caught in the centre. That's pretty hopeless on such an open board.

22...h5 23.♞fe1 ♞h6 24.♗b4

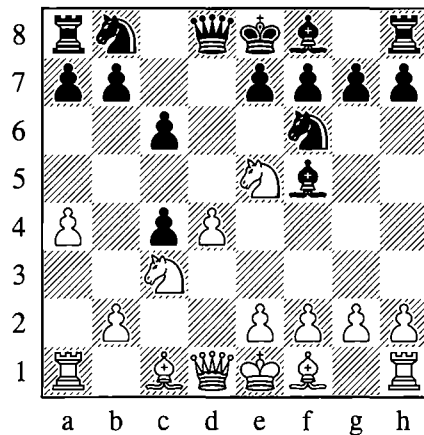
Threatening ♗f8†.

24...♙d7 25.♞ac1 ♞b8 26.♗a4† ♙c8 27.♙b4 1-0

**Conclusion:** This new idea of 13.h4 seems very promising for White. Overall the 6.e4 gambit is in excellent shape.

**The Mainline:** 5...♙f5 6.♘e5

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♙f5 6.♘e5



Black has two major lines. The complicated 6...e6 which will be covered in Part One, and the old 6...♟bd7 which will be covered in Part Two. Before that we will look at quite a tricky sideline: 6...♟a6 – see Game 27.

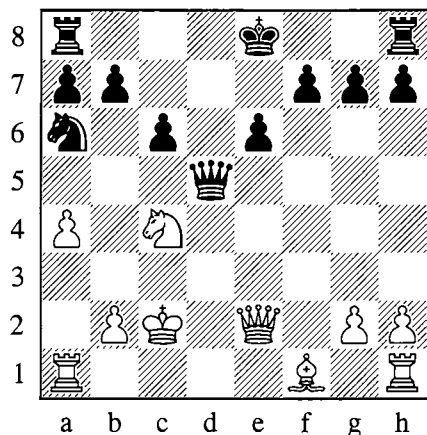
### 6...e6 7.f3

White prepares to take the centre with e4, shutting the black bishop out of the game. 7.♟xc4 c5 was nothing.

### 7...♞b4

Black defends tactically. He allows White to carry out his plan because he has an interesting piece sacrifice ready. Instead of retreating, Black will part with the problem f5-bishop, get three pawns in the process, and at the same time force the white king out into the open. For a long time this sharp approach was considered satisfactory for Black, but in the computer age the advantage has definitely tipped to the white side and the popularity of this line has declined.

8.e4 ♞xe4 9.fxe4 ♟xe4 10.♞d2 ♚xd4  
11.♟xe4 ♚xe4† 12.♚e2 ♞xd2† 13.♟xd2  
♚d5† 14.♟c2 ♟a6 15.♟xc4



After some pretty forced moves (as I have no interest in trying to force a draw with 10.♚f3) we have arrived at this interesting

position, which can be considered the starting point of the bishop sacrifice line. Apparently Black is very active and White has problems with both his king and his development. That is a superficial judgement though. In reality, White has good chances to untangle and in the long run, especially in endings, the bishop has proved to be stronger than the three pawns. This line was a vital part of Vladimir Kramnik's White repertoire when the young Russian made his way into the world elite in the 90s. I have collected a trio of his games that show how he handles three different set-ups for Black: long castling, short castling or the direct assault 15...b5. They are Games 28-30. Enjoy.

Speaking of Kramnik, he has also influenced the black side and recently promoted a sideline.

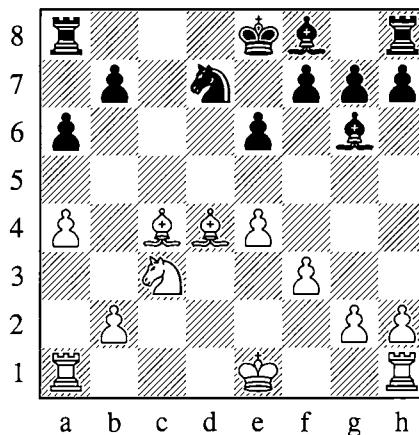
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♟f3 ♟f6 4.♟c3 dxc4 5.a4  
♞f5 6.♟e5 e6 7.f3 c5

This used to be considered dubious.

### 8.e4 ♞g6

But the bad reputation was because Black generally tried 8...cxd4, which is indeed rather loose. The bishop move was thought to be a positional disaster.

9.♞e3 cxd4 10.♚xd4 ♚xd4 11.♞xd4 ♟fd7  
12.♟xd7 ♟xd7 13.♞xc4 a6



## 14. ♖e2 ♜g8

The ending looks good for White but in the notorious World Championship match against Topalov, Kramnik drew fairly easily with Black. However White can safely press for the full point.

See Game 31 if you want to know how it is best done.

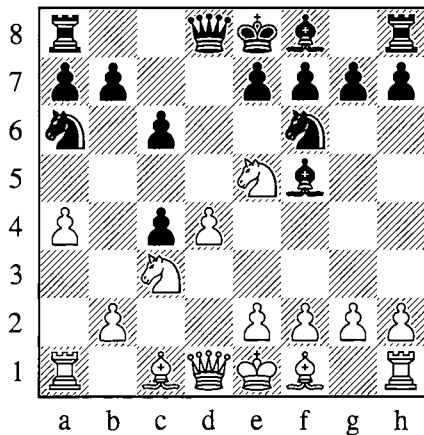
## The 6... ♖a6 Variation

## GAME 27

Navrotescu – Itkis

Romania 1998

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4. ♖c3 dxc4 5. a4 ♙f5 6. ♖e5 ♖a6



A tricky line that scores quite well, but only because many White players answer automatically with 7.f3, but in this unusual case 7.e3 is the correct path.

## 7.e3

On 7.f3 Black plays 7... ♖d7 and gets good counterplay after 8. ♖xc4 e5! with one point being 9.dxe5 ♜h4† and ... ♜xc4.

## 7... ♖b4

The idea: Black activates the knight and threatens ... ♖c2†.

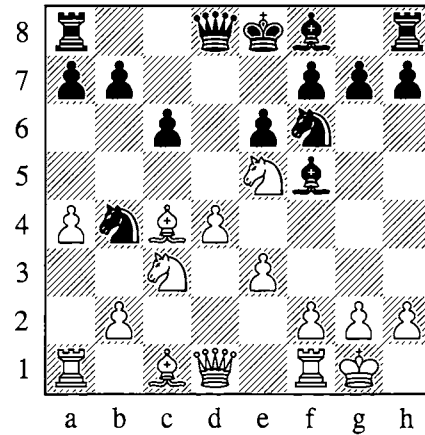
## 8. ♙xc4

White can also use tricks.

## 8... e6

Not 8... ♖c2† 9. ♜xc2 ♙xc2 10. ♙xf7#.

## 9.0–0



## 9... ♙e7

The normal solid approach. There are two other possibilities, however they are somewhat speculative.

## 9... ♙d6 10. ♜e2 ♖c2

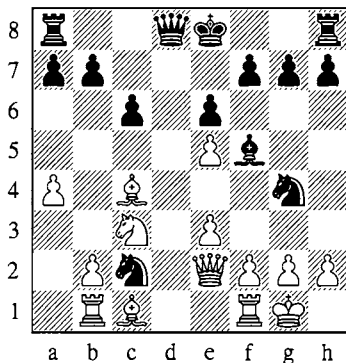
In his recent book on the Slav, Lakdawala recommends 10...h6 11.e4 ♙h7 12. ♙f4 0–0, but of course White is for preference. Moves such as 13. ♜ad1 or 13. ♙g3 would give a nice pull.

## 11. ♜b1 ♙xe5

11... ♖d5 12. ♙d2 ♖b6 and now the new move 13. ♙b3 is very promising. For instance: 13... ♙xe5 14.dxe5 ♙d3 15. ♜g4 ♙xf1 16. ♜xg7 ♜f8 17. ♜xf1 ♜xd2 18. ♜d1 ♜xd1† 19. ♖xd1 ♖a1 20. ♙xe6! fxe6 21. ♜xb7 ♜d8 22. ♖c3± The queen and lots of pawns completely dominate the two rooks and knight.

12.dxe5 ♖g4

This used to be a pet line of Pia Cramling. She had to search for something else, because in this game her opponent refuted it!



13.e4! ♗d4 14.♞d3 ♗xe5 15.♞g3

And there is trouble all over.

15...f6 16.♞xg7 ♜f8 17.exf5 ♗xc4 18.♞xb7 ♗d6 19.♞xh7 ♗6xf5 20.♙e3±

White had a pawn more in the game Gyimesi – P. Cramling, Gibraltar 2006.

9...♙c2!? 10.♞e2 ♗d7

This was played by Kramnik against Carlsen, although just in a blitz game! At least White should be able to get the standard advantage based on space.

11.♗xd7 ♞xd7 12.a5 ♙e7 13.♗a2 ♗xa2 14.♞xa2 ♙g6 15.♞d1 0–0 16.e4 ♞ad8 17.f3 ♗h8 18.♙f4 f5 19.exf5 ♙xf5 20.♙e5± c5?!

Carlsen – Kramnik, Moscow (blitz) 2008, and here the young star missed the winning: 21.g4 ♙g6 22.♙xe6!

10.♞e2 h6

Giving the bishop a retreat square. 10...0–0

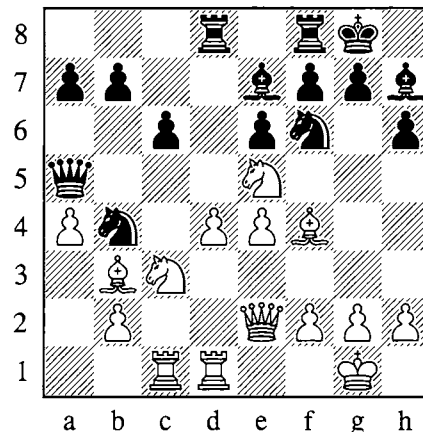
11.e4 ♙g6 12.♞d1 is worse for Black. In addition to his space superiority White can take the bishop pair with ♗xg6 whenever he likes.

10...♙c2!? is most simply met by 11.♗a2 to force away the annoying bishop.

11.e4 ♙h7 12.♞d1 0–0 13.♙f4 ♞a5

13...♞e8 14.♞ac1 ♙f8 was too passive: 15.♞f3 ♞e7 16.♙g3± ♗d7 17.♗g4 ♞ad8 18.h3 ♙g6 19.♗e2 f6 20.♙h4 ♞f7 21.♗f4 ♙h7 22.♞b3 and White was winning in Ruck – Ivanisevic, Kladovo 2001.

14.♙b3 ♞ad8 15.♞ac1



Black has great difficulties improving his position. The lack of space begins to tell, and the bishop on h7 is a headache that just won't go away.

15...♗d7

Trying to exchange White's strong knight, but it can move in a new direction.

16.♗c4 ♞a6

The queen found the last square available.

17.♞f3 ♗h8

On 17...c5 White's biggest problem is choosing between 18.d5 or 18.♗b5.

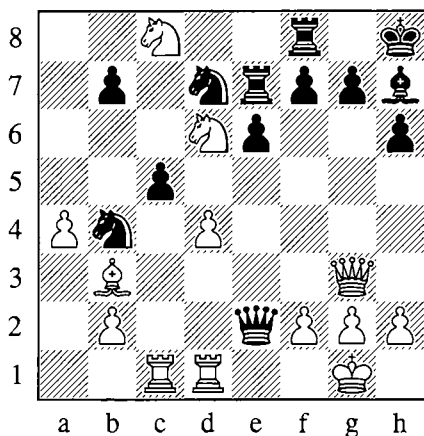
18.♙c7! ♞c8 19.♙d6 ♞ce8

Not 19...♙xd6 20.♗xd6 attacking c8 and f7.

20.♞g3

The pressure is already decisive. Black tries to get some counterplay, but only hastens his downfall.

20...c5 21.♘b5 ♖c6 22.♗xa7 ♗xe4 23.♙xe7  
♞xe7 24.♗d6 ♗e2 25.♗ac8



Trapping the rook.

25...♗d3 26.♗xe7 ♗xc1 27.♞xc1 cxd4  
28.h4 ♗e5 29.f4

Unfortunately he missed the spectacular  
29.♗xe5! ♗xe5 30.♗xf7 ♞xf7 31.♞c8 ♙g8  
32.♗g6 ♗h7 33.♗xe5. In the end the extra  
piece decides, though the technical phase is  
not as convincing as the opening phase.

29...♗c6 30.♗xc6 bxc6 31.♞xc6 ♗xb2  
32.♞c7

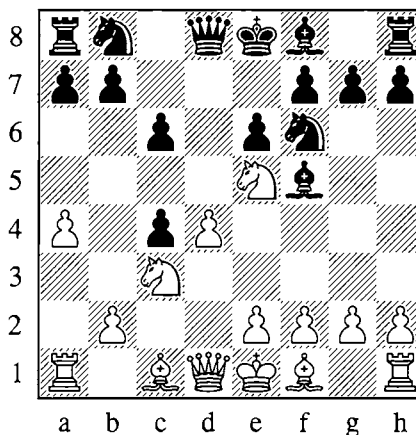
32.♗xf7! ♞xf7 33.♞c8 ♙g8 34.♙xe6 and  
game over.

32...♙g6 33.♗h2 d3 34.f5 exf5 35.♗xf7  
♙xf7 36.♞xf7 ♞xf7 37.♙xf7 ♗b4 38.♙h5  
♗xa4 39.♗h3 ♗d7 40.♗f3 d2 41.♗b3  
g5 42.♙d1 ♗d4 43.♗g3 g4 44.♗h2 h5  
45.♗c7 ♗f2 46.♗d8 ♗h7 47.♗g5 ♗d4  
48.♗xh5 †  
1-0

**Conclusion:** 6...♗a6 should be answered by  
7.e3 ♗b4 8.♙xc4 threatening mate. White will  
castle next and get the usual advantage based  
on space.

## The Mainline – Part One

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 dxc4 5.a4  
♙f5 6.♗e5 e6



It is time to study the mainline of 6...e6. As  
explained in the introduction to this chapter,  
the key position is on move 15. Black has to  
make a choice between 15...0-0-0, 15...0-0,  
or a rarer 15th move. We shall thus consider  
this line in three sections.

## The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0-0-0

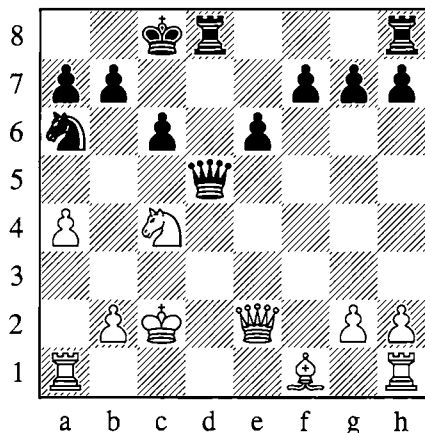
### GAME 28

Kramnik – Shirov

Dortmund 1996

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 dxc4  
5.a4 ♙f5 6.♗e5 e6 7.f3 ♙b4 8.e4 ♙xe4  
9.fxe4 ♗xe4 10.♙d2 ♗xd4 11.♗xe4 ♗xe4 †  
12.♗e2 ♙xd2 † 13.♗xd2 ♗d5 † 14.♗c2 ♗a6  
15.♗xc4 0-0-0

Black gets the king out of the way and  
activates a rook at the same time. Sounds  
good, but the drawback is that it will not be  
easy to create serious threats against the white  
monarch without weakening his own king's  
pawn shelter.



### 16. ♖e3

Attacking a7. A refinement from the often tried 16. ♖e5 f6 17. ♖e3 when 17... ♖b8 18. ♙e2 e5 is quite solid for Black.

### 16... ♖c5

Black has alternatives:

#### 16...c5

A solid choice, but a bit inflexible.

17. ♖b3 ♖b4 18. ♗c1 ♖c6 19. ♖a3

The king heads for some kind of safety.

19... ♖b8?! 20. ♖g3† e5 21. ♖xg7

Grabbing a pawn.

21...f5 22. ♖g3 ♗hg8 23. ♖c3 ♖d4 24. ♖a5 ♗g6 25. ♖b3

Eliminating the knight with a clear advantage.

25...b6 26. ♖xd4 exd4 27. ♖b3 d3 28. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 29. ♖b3 ♗g4 30. ♗d1 c4† 31. ♖c3 b5 32. b3 cxb3 33. axb5 ♗xb5 34. ♙xd3 ♗c5† 35. ♖xb3 ♗xg2 36. ♗df1 ♗g5 37. ♗f3

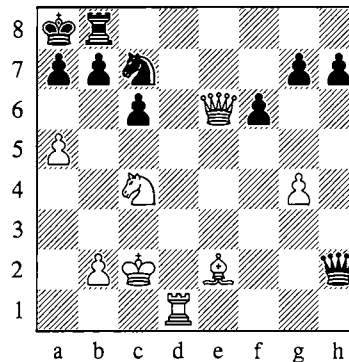
White wins the f5-pawn and holds onto his own last pawn, Schandorff – Jelling, Denmark 1996.

16... ♖b8 17. ♙e2 ♖a8 18.g4

This gives White a nice grip of the position.

18...f6 19. ♗hd1 ♗g2 20. ♗xd8† ♗xd8 21. ♖xe6 ♖xh2 22. ♗d1± ♗b8 23. a5 ♖c7

Black allows a spectacular finish:



24. ♖b6†! axb6 25. axb6 ♖a6

25... ♖xe6 26. ♗a1#

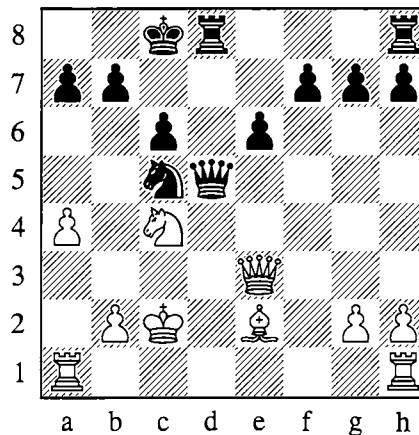
26. ♗a1 ♗d8 27. ♖e7 ♗d6 28. ♗xa6† ♖b8

29. ♖xd6† ♗xd6 30. ♗a3

White won in Kramnik – Ki. Georgiev, Moscow (ol) 1994.

16... ♖b4† 17. ♖b3 c5 18. ♗c1 transposes to 16...c5.

### 17. ♙e2



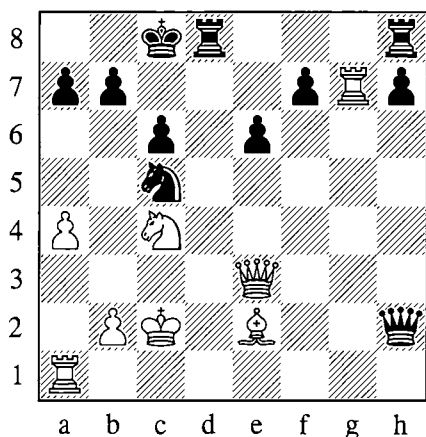
### 17... ♖xg2

After 17... ♖f5† the white king must do a little dance: 18. ♖c3 ♖f6† 19. ♖b4 ♗d5 20. ♖a3 but ends up in relative safety. 20... ♗hd8 21. ♗ad1 We have a typical bishop vs. three pawns position which should be advantageous for the piece in the long run, for instance 21... ♖g5 (or 21... ♖e7 22. ♖a2) 22. ♖xg5 ♗xg5 23. ♗xd8†

♔xd8 24.♙f3± Agdestein – Cu. Hansen, Reykjavik 1995.

26.♖b3 b6 27.♗f8† ♔b7 28.♗xf7† ♔a6 29.♗f3

18.♖hg1 ♗xh2 19.♖xg7!



A strong novelty at the time, which more or less finished Black's interest in this variation. Kramnik's move was thought to be impossible because of the obvious strike 19...♖d3, but the Russian found a remarkable countermeasure.

19...♖d4!?

Shirov comes up with a creative try. He sacrifices a rook but gets five(!) pawns and some attack. However when the initiative is over, White's heavy pieces take control.

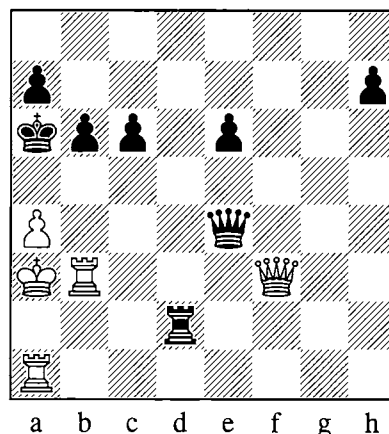
If 19...♖d3 then 20.♖h1! is the only move, but such a strong one that it immediately turns the tables: 20...♗xh1 21.♙xd3 ♗d5 22.♖xf7± and Black is left with some weak pawns.

20.♗xd4 ♗xe2† 21.♘d2 ♖d8 22.♗xc5 ♖xd2† 23.♔b3 ♖xb2† 24.♔a3 ♖d2 25.♖g3

Kramnik protects his king. Then he is ready to go for the black pawns.

25...♗e4

25...♖d3† is nowhere near a perpetual check. After 26.♖xd3 ♗xd3† 27.♔b2 ♗d2† 28.♔b3 ♗d3† 29.♗c3 ♗d5† 30.♔b2 ♗g2† 31.♔a3 the white king easily escapes.



29...♗f3!?

More resistance could have been made with the queens still on the board.

30.♖xf3 ♔a5 31.♖f4 ♖d3† 32.♔b2 ♖h3 33.♖e1 ♖h2† 34.♔b3 ♖h3† 35.♔c2 ♖h2† 36.♔d3 ♖h6 37.♖fe4 c5 38.♖xe6 ♖h3† 39.♖1e3 ♖h1 40.♖3e4 ♖h3† 41.♔c4 ♖g3

Or 41...♔xa4 42.♖e1 ♖a3 (42...♖h4† 43.♖6e4 ♖xe4† 44.♖xe4 a5 45.♖e1 ♔a3 46.♖b1 is easy) 43.♖b1 followed by ♖e7.

42.♖h6 a6 43.♖xh7 ♖g5 44.♖b7 ♖h5 45.♖e6 ♖h4† 46.♔d5 ♖b4 47.♖c6 ♖d4† 48.♔e5 ♖b4 49.♖b8

1-0

Black is in zugzwang. On 49...♖b1 White has 50.♖xc5†.

**Conclusion:** After 15...0-0-0 16.♗e3, attacking a7, is rather uncomfortable for Black, especially since 16...♘c5 17.♙e2 ♗xg2 18.♖hg1 ♗xh2 19.♖xg7! with the point 19...♖d3 20.♖h1! leads to a clear advantage for White.

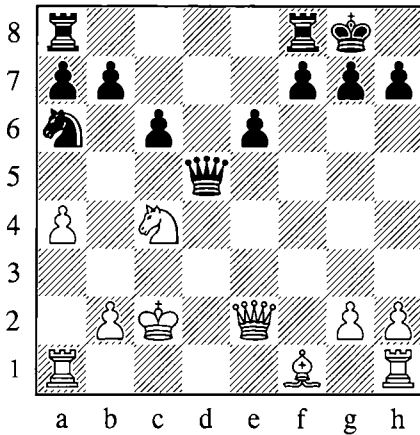
## The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0-0

### GAME 29

Kramnik – Haba

Germany 1993

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♖c3 dxc4  
5.a4 ♙f5 6.♗e5 e6 7.f3 ♙b4 8.e4 ♙xe4  
9.fxex4 ♗xe4 10.♙d2 ♖xd4 11.♗xe4 ♖xe4†  
12.♖e2 ♙xd2† 13.♗xd2 ♖d5† 14.♗c2 ♗a6  
15.♗xc4 0-0



Black evacuates his king to the other side compared to the previous game. It makes a lot of sense – the king protects the pawns on the kingside, which were rather vulnerable in the aforementioned game. As a benefit, Black can also play aggressively on the queenside, throwing his pawns in the face of the wandering white king. So White also needs a change of strategy.

#### 16.♖e5

Also possible is 16.♖f3 ♖c5 17.♗b1 ♗b4 18.♙e2 ♙ad8 19.♙c1 ♙d4 20.♙a3 and White has got his king out of the way and developed both rooks. Still, after 20...♙fd8 Black is very active. Kramnik easily defended the position with Black: 21.g4 ♖g5 22.♙b3 a5 23.h4 ♖g6†

24.♗a1 ♗c2† 25.♗a2 ♗b4† 26.♗a1 ♗c2† ½-½ Van Wely – Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

16.♖e3 does not impress much. 16...♙fd8 17.♙e2 ♗b4† 18.♗b3 b5! Very nice. Unfortunately it leads almost by force to a draw. 19.♗xb4 bxc4 20.♙xc4 ♙ab8† 21.♗c3 ♖a5† 22.♗c2 ♙d2†! 23.♖xd2 ♙xb2† 24.♗xb2 ♖xd2† 25.♗b3 a5 26.♙hcl ♖b4† ½-½ Blomstrand – Johnsen, corr. 1997

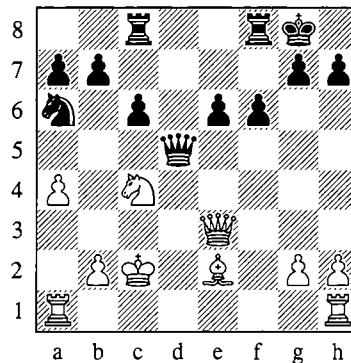
#### 16...♙fd8

The eternal chess question: where to put the rooks?

16...♙ab8 17.a5 (preventing ...b5) 17...f6 18.♖xd5 cxd5 19.♗e3 (19.♗d2 ♙fc8† 20.♗b1 is just as popular and probably just as good) 19...♙fc8† 20.♗b1 ♗c5 (20...♗f7 is the alternative, but it does not change the evaluation.) 21.♙a3 White again manages to develop smoothly. 21...f5 22.♙e2 ♗e4 23.♙d1± Onischuk – Grischuk, Biel 2007.

16...♙ac8 17.♙e2 f6 18.♖e3

White could not exchange queens, but now it turns out that the black queen is not safe in the middle of the board.



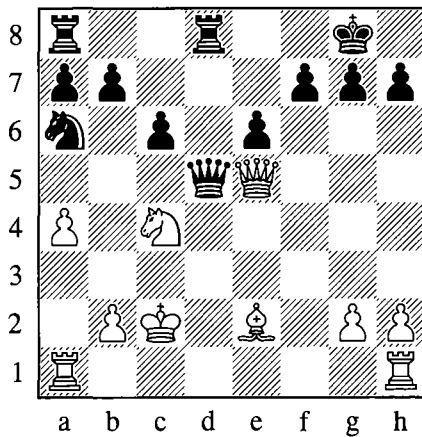
18...b5

18...♖f5† 19.♗b3 ♗c5† (19...b5 20.axb5 ♖xb5† 21.♗c3 ♗b4! [21...♗c7 22.♗c4

♖d5 23. ♜xe6† ♕h8 24. ♖a5 transposes]  
 22. ♜xe6† ♕h8 23. ♖a5 ♖d5† 24. ♕c2 This  
 has been tried in a few games; Black does  
 not have enough for a piece.) 20. ♕a2 ♖xa4  
 21. ♖hf1 ♜c2 22. ♖f2!± ♖b6 23. ♖d6 ♖cd8  
 24. ♕f3 ♜a4† 25. ♕b1 ♜xa1† 26. ♕xa1  
 ♖xd6 27. g4 White gradually won in Price –  
 Ratering, corr. 1999.  
 19. ♖ad1 ♜f5† 20. ♕d3 ♜g4  
 Not 20... ♖b4† 21. ♕b1 ♖xd3 22. ♖d6!  
 21. ♖d6± ♖cd8 22. ♕f5! ♜xa4†  
 22...exf5? 23. ♜e6† ♕h8 24. ♖f7† mates.  
 23. ♕b1 ♖xd6 24. ♖xd6 exf5 25. ♜e6† ♕h8  
 26. ♖xc6 ♖b8 27. ♖c8

White was winning in Gretarsson – Bjornsson, Iceland 1993.

### 17. ♕e2



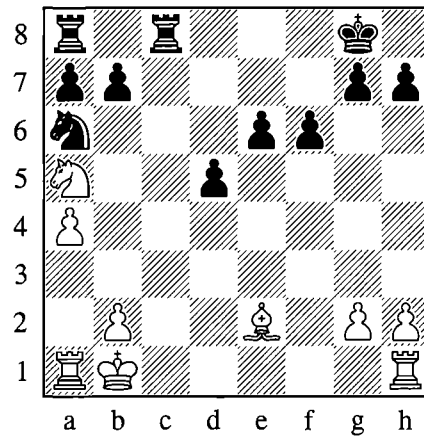
### 17...f6

This is the move Black wants to play. Seen in the light of what follows, he could consider the relatively unexplored 17... ♖c5 when 18. g3± seems like a plausible answer.

### 18. ♜xd5 cxd5 19. ♖a5 ♖dc8†

19... ♖ac8† is much the same.

### 20. ♕b1



A typical ending for this variation. It seems that the bishop is always stronger than the three pawns, and here White also has a small initiative on the queenside that is actually quite annoying for Black.

### 20... ♖b4!?

Sacrificing the b-pawn for some activity.

The normal move is:

20... ♖c5

But after:

21. ♖c1

White has pressure.

21... ♕f8

21...b6?! 22. b4 bxa5 23. bxc5±

22. ♖a3 ♖e4!?

22...b6 23. ♖ac3

23. ♖xc8† ♖xc8 24. ♖xb7 ♖c7 25. ♖a5 e5

26. ♖d3 d4 27. ♖b3 ♕e7 28. ♖d1 ♖b7 29. ♕a2

♖c7 30. ♖e1

This was Vujadinovic – Marez, corr. 2000, and Black did not have enough compensation.

### 21. ♖xb7 ♖ab8 22. ♖a5 ♖c2 23. ♖e1

Protecting everything. White will untangle with the usual move ♖a3.

### 23... ♖d2

Another try is:

23...e5 24. ♖a3 ♖xb2†

24...♞c5 25.♘b3 ♞c2 26.a5 d4 27.♞a4 d3 28.♙f3 ♘f8 29.♞d1 f5 30.♞xd3 ♞xg2 31.♙xg2 ♘xd3 32.♙d5 ♘e7 33.a6 was good for White in Zawadka – Gardarsson, corr. 2006.

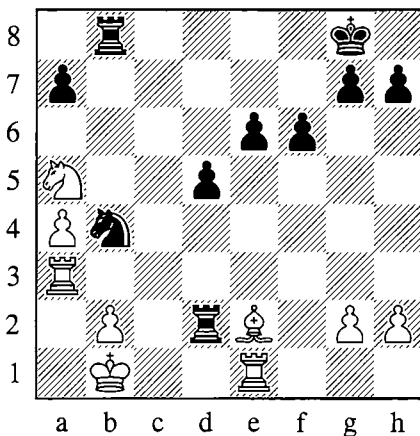
25.♘xb2 ♘d3† 26.♘c3 ♘xe1

Black has again gained a third pawn for the piece, but his knight is stranded on the wrong side of the border.

27.g3 ♘f7 28.♘d2 ♘g2 29.♞a2 d4 30.♘c6 ♞b1 31.♘xa7 ♘e3 32.a5 1–0

Runting – Alingh Prins, corr. 1994.

24.♞a3



24...♘c2

Again 24...♞xb2† 25.♘xb2 ♘d3† 26.♘c3 ♘xe1 27.g3 leaves the knight in trouble.

25.♘c1 ♞xe2

In another game Black tried 25...♘xa3 26.♘xd2 ♞xb2† 27.♘c3 ♞b8 but his knight was still in trouble. 28.♙d3 e5 29.♞a1 ♞c8† 30.♘b3 ♘c4 31.♘xc4 dxc4† 32.♙xc4† With a winning position, Winkler – Benassi, corr. 1998.

26.♞xe2 ♘xa3 27.bxa3 ♞b6 28.♞c2

White is winning.

28...♞a6 29.♞c5 ♘f7 30.♘b2 ♘e7 31.♘c3

♘d7 32.♞b5 g5 33.♘b4 h5 34.♞b7† ♘c8 35.♞f7 1–0

**Conclusion:** On 15...0–0 White plays 16.♞e5 with the intention of exchanging queens and getting a good ending. That is exactly what happens in the mainline after 16...♞fd8 17.♙e2 f6 18.♞xd5 cxd5 19.♘a5 with pressure on the queenside.

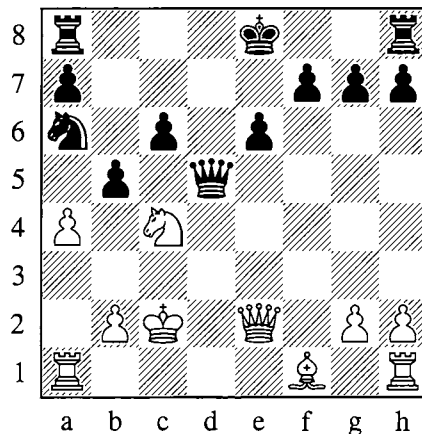
## The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...b5 etc.

### GAME 30

Kramnik – Shirov

Linares 2000

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♙f5 6.♘e5 e6 7.f3 ♙b4 8.e4 ♙xe4 9.fxe4 ♘xe4 10.♙d2 ♞xd4 11.♘xe4 ♞xe4† 12.♞e2 ♙xd2† 13.♘xd2 ♞d5† 14.♘c2 ♘a6 15.♘xc4 b5



Very sharp. Black tries to exploit the white king's risky position.

There are some rare alternatives:

15...♞f5† 16.♘c3 White follows up with

♖e5 next, with good control. One example is 16...0-0 17.♖e5 ♖f2 18.♖e3 ♖xe3† 19.♜xe3 with a pleasant ending, Schandorff – Jelling, Silkeborg 1988.

15...♜b4† 16.♞b3 and the check has been given prematurely.

15...♞e7

Black anticipates an ending, and so places his king actively in the centre.

16.♖e5 ♖hd8 17.♙e2 f6

Better is 17...♖xe5 18.♜xe5 ♜b4† 19.♞b3 ♙d2 20.♙f3 ♜c2 21.♙ad1 ♜d4† 22.♞c3 ♜xf3 23.gxf3 ♙d5 24.♜c4± Herbst – Piermattei, corr. 1999.

18.♖e3!

Now it will not be an ending and the king is ridiculous on e7.

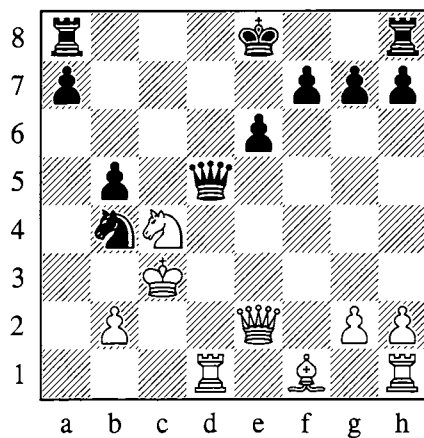
18...♜b4† 19.♞b3 a5 20.♙ad1 ♖f5 21.♖c3± b5 22.♜xa5! c5 23.♙xb5 ♙xa5 24.♙hf1 ♖h5 25.g4 ♖e5 26.♖xe5 fxe5 27.♙xd8 ♞xd8 28.♞c4 ♞e7 29.♞xc5 ♜d5 30.b4 ♙a8 31.♙c6 ♙c8 32.b5 e4 1-0

Kramnik – Hodgson, Groningen 1993.

16.axb5 ♜b4†

Not 16...cxb5 17.♙xa6.

17.♞c3 cxb5 18.♙d1!



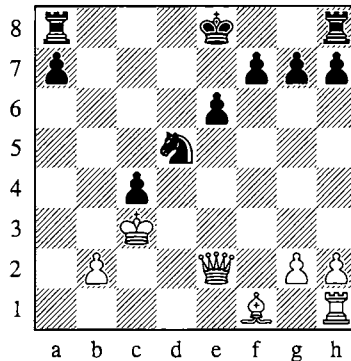
The most convincing.

18.♞xb4 bxc4 19.♖xc4 ♖b8† 20.♞a3 has been played by Karpov, but 20...♖a5† 21.♖a4† ♖xa4† 22.♞xa4 ♖xb2 looks like a position Black can easily defend.

18.♜b6 is a tactical blow that peters out to a draw. 18...♖c5† 19.♞b3 ♜c6! 20.♖xb5 ♖e3† 21.♞c2 ♖f2† 22.♞c3 (not 22.♙e2 0-0) 22...♙d4† ½-½ Shirov – Khalifman, Ter Apel 1997.

18...♖c5

Black could also try: 18...bxc4!? 19.♙xd5 ♜xd5† A surprising but also very speculative queen sacrifice.



White has a decision to make: in the line's famous debut Topalov did not find a way to make progress: 20.♞c2 0-0 21.♖e4 ♙fc8 22.h4 ♙c5 23.♙h3 ♙ac8 24.♙a3 a5 25.♞c1 h5 26.♙d4 ½-½ Topalov – Anand, Dos Hermanas 1997.

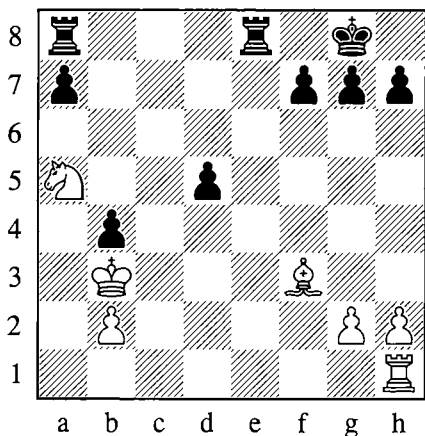
20.♞xc4 ♖b8 is unpleasant, but a computer may get away with it. For a human the best move is certainly:

20.♞d2! Just going to the kingside with the king. 20...0-0 21.♖e5 ♙ac8 22.♙e2 ♙fd8 23.♙c1 ♜b6† 24.♞e1 ♙d5 25.♖e3 ♖b5 26.♙c2 g6 27.g4 White finally has time to start some active operations. The material advantage

should decide, especially if combined with an initiative. 27...♖cc5 28.♗d2 ♘d5 29.♞e5 ♞b3 30.h4 h6 31.♙f2 a5 32.♙f3 ♗d3 33.♞e2 ♞b3 34.♞d6 ♘b4 35.♙e4 ♘d3† 36.♙f1 ♞e5 37.♞c7 ♞c5 38.♞d8† ♙g7 39.♞d4† e5 40.♞d6 ♞bb5 41.♙xd3 1–0 Salov – Illescas, Dos Hermanas 1997. This game was played only a few days after the Topalov – Anand game.

19.♞e5 ♘d5† 20.♞xd5 b4†  
20...♞xd5 21.♘d6† ♙f8 22.♞xd5 exd5 23.♙xb5± also gives White good winning chances, but maybe Black also has more chances to hold!

21.♙b3 ♞xd5 22.♙e2 0–0 23.♞xd5 exd5 24.♘a5 ♞fe8 25.♙f3



White will win at least one of Black’s weak pawns to begin with, and the white pieces coordinate very well, so Black will be forced onto the defensive. Rooks are not good defenders, and Shirov always strives for counterplay anyway so he takes some chances and goes down with a bang. However, the position would be tough to hold even by more sturdy play.

25...♞ac8 26.♗d1! ♞e3† 27.♙a4 b3 28.♞xd5 g6 29.♗d7±

There are weak points at a7, b3 and f7.

29...♞c2 30.♙a3 ♙g7

30...♞xf3!? 31.gxf3 ♞xh2 and running with the h-pawn looks desperate and it is, but it was the last chance.

31.♞xa7 h5 32.h3 h4 33.♞b7 ♞c5 34.♙b4 ♞f5 35.♞c7 g5 36.♘xb3 ♞f4† 37.♞c4 ♞xc4† 38.♙xc4 f5 39.♘d4 ♙f6 40.b4 ♞e1 41.b5 ♙e5 42.♘c6† ♙d6 43.b6 ♞c1† 44.♙b5 g4 45.b7 ♞b1† 46.♘b4 ♙c7 47.hxg4 fxg4 48.♙e4 1–0

**Conclusion:** 15...b5 looks like great fun, but in the end it is White who is laughing.

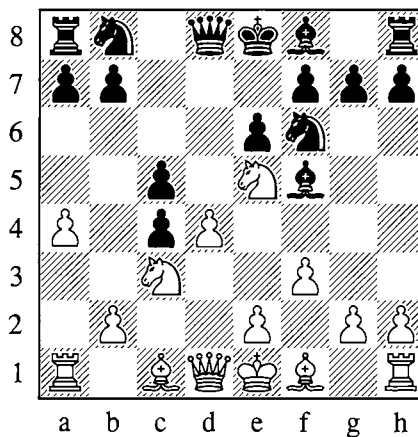
### Kramnik’s ending

#### GAME 31

Maletin – Amonatov

Russia 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♙f5 6.♘e5 e6 7.f3 c5

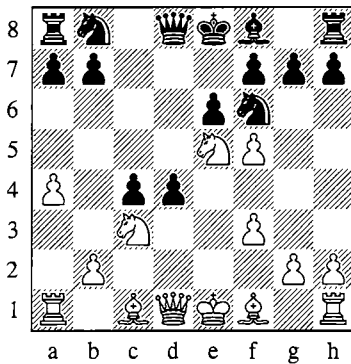


This move had a bad reputation, but Kramnik launched a very deep defensive idea in the World Championship match against Topalov, so now it needs to be taken seriously.

**8.e4 ♘g6!**

This was considered a positional mistake because the bishop is buried here.

The sharp alternative is 8...cxd4 This leads to complications that favour White after: 9.exf5



Now there is a split:

9...♖c6 10.♖xc6 bxc6 11.fxe6 fxe6 12.♗e2 dxc3 13.♗xe6† ♗e7 14.♗xe7† ♕xe7 15.bxc3 ♘d5 16.♕xc4 ♘xc3 17.♗d2 ♘d5 18.♖b1 ♘b6 19.♕b3 0–0–0† 20.♗c2± White had a pleasant ending with a strong pair of bishops in Saul – Parisi, corr. 2001. Furthermore 16.♕d2 is interesting.

9...♕b4 10.♕xc4 dxc3 11.♗xd8† ♗xd8 12.♘xf7†

12.♗e2 is safer and should give a small plus, but why not force the play if it is good?

12...♗e7

No easier is 12...♗e8 13.bxc3 ♕xc3† 14.♗e2 ♕xa1 15.fxe6 ♖g8 16.♕a3 ♕d4 17.♖b1± b6 18.♕b5† ♘bd7 19.♕c6 ♖c8 20.♘d6† ♗e7 21.♘xc8† ♗xe6 22.♘xa7 and White had won a pawn in Alekseev – Wang Yue, Nizhny Novgorod 2007.

13.bxc3 ♕xc3† 14.♗e2 ♗xf7 15.fxe6† ♗e8 16.♖b1

With good compensation for the piece. Black has major problems coordinating his forces.

16...♘c6 17.♖xb7 a6 18.♕a3

Black's position looks precarious.

18...♕e5 19.♖d1 h5 20.♕d3

Simply winning.

20...♗d8 21.♖xg7 ♖a7 22.♕f5† ♗c8 23.♖xa7 ♘xa7 24.e7† ♗c7 25.f4 ♕xf4 26.♕b2 ♕g5 27.♕e5† ♗b6 28.♖d8 ♖e8 29.♕xf6 ♖xe7† 30.♕xe7 ♕xe7 31.♖h8 1–0

Klausen – Alfredsson, corr. 2007.

**9.♕e3**

9.d5 keeps the game in a middlegame, but the text leads almost by force to a slightly better endgame.

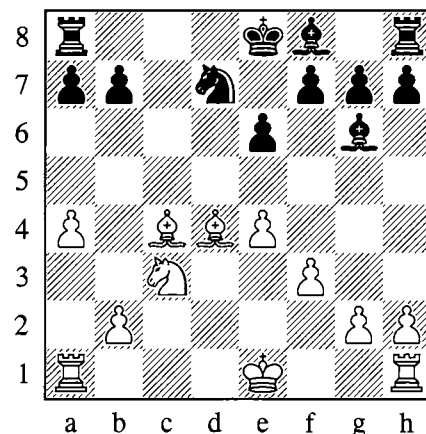
**9...cxd4 10.♗xd4**

Apparently simple and strong, but Kramnik's deep preparation will soon reveal that it is not so easy. Possible was 10.♕xd4 but after 10...♘fd7 Black seems okay.

**10...♗xd4 11.♕xd4 ♘bd7**

11...♘fd7 is the more common move order, but it just transposes.

Not to be recommended is 11...♘c6 12.♖xc6 bxc6 13.a5 ♘d7 14.♕xc4 e5 15.♕e3 ♕b4 16.♗e2 ♗e7 17.♖hcl with advantage to White, Huebner – Pelletier, Germany 1998.

**12.♘xd7 ♘xd7 13.♕xc4**

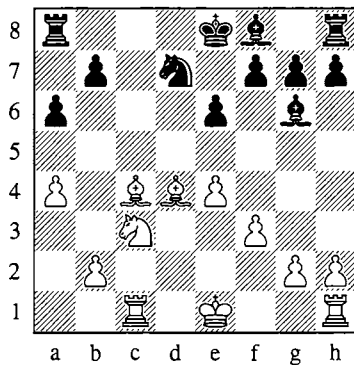
This looks good for White who has more space and some very active bishops. Black is behind in development and the bishop on g6 is out of play, just like the old books said.

### 13...Bc8

A little inaccurate because White gets an extra option.

In the famous stem game Kramnik played: 13...a6 14.♔e2 ♖g8! The point. Black protects g7 and is ready to move the bishop out and put the king on e7 with normal harmony. Later he can play ...f6 and bring the light-squared bishop back into the game via f7 or e8. It is a slow manoeuvre, but Black has no real weaknesses and White has difficulty finding anything to shoot at. Anyway, Topalov couldn't. 15.♖hd1 ♖c8 16.b3 ♗c5 17.a5 ♗e7 18.♘a4 ♗b4 19.♘b6 ♘xb6 20.♗xb6 f6 21.♗d3 ♖c6! 22.h4 ♖gc8 23.g4 ♗c5 24.♖ad1 ♗xb6 25.♗d7† ♗f8 26.axb6 ♖xb6 27.♖1d6 ♖xd6 28.♖xd6 ♖c6 29.♖xc6 bxc6 30.b4 e5 31.♗xa6 ½–½ Topalov – Kramnik, Elista (6) 2006.

Very convincing, but then White had success against 13...a6 with an interesting idea: 14.♖c1



At first things were looking good for White:

14...♖c8 15.♘e2! ♖g8 16.h4 h6 17.♗f2 ♖c6 18.b4! ♗d8

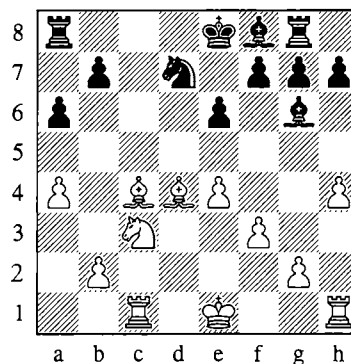
18...♗xb4 19.♗xa6!

18...e5 19.♗e3 ♗xb4 20.♗xa6! ♗e7 21.♗xb7 ♖xc1 22.♖xc1± Gyimesi – Bogosavljevic, Bihac 2010.

19.h5 ♗h7 20.b5 axb5 21.♗xb5 ♖xc1 22.♖xc1 g5 23.♗xd7 ♗xd7 24.♗e5 ♗d8 25.♖c7 f6 26.♘d4 ♗xe4 27.♘xe6† ♗e8 28.fxe4 fxe5 29.♖xb7 1–0

Gyimesi – Bindrich, Germany 2008.

Then Anand copied Kramnik's deep play twice in another World Championship match against Topalov. Anand found a better way for Black: 14...♖g8! 15.h4



Twice Anand was able to hold this position, but he clearly suffered along the way.

15...h6 16.♗e2 ♗d6 17.h5 ♗h7 18.a5 ♗e7 19.♘a4 f6 20.b4 ♖gc8 21.♗c5 ♗xc5 22.bxc5 ♖c7 23.♘b6 ♖d8 24.♘xd7 ♖xd7 25.♗d3 ♗g8 26.c6 ♖d6 27.cxb7 ♖xb7 28.♖c3 ♗f7 29.♗e3 ♗e8 30.g4 e5 31.♖hc1 ♗d7 32.♖c5 ♗b5 33.♗xb5 axb5 34.♖b1 b4 35.♖b3 ♖a6 36.♗d3 ♖ba7 37.♖xb4 ♖xa5 38.♖xa5 ♖xa5 39.♖b7† ♗f8 40.♗e2 ♖a2† 41.♗e3 ♖a3† 42.♗f2 ♖a2† 43.♗e3 ♖a3† 44.♗f2 ♖a2† 45.♗e3 ♖a3† 46.♗f2 ½–½ Topalov – Anand, Sofia (3) 2010.

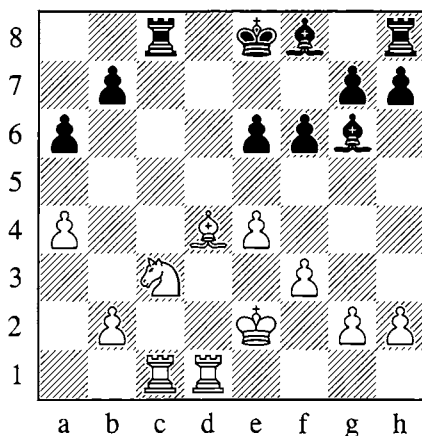
15...h5 16.♘e2 ♗d6 17.♗e3 ♘e5 18.♘f4 ♖c8 19.♗b3 ♖xc1† 20.♗xc1 ♗e7 21.♗e2 ♖c8 22.♗d2 f6 23.♘xg6† ♘xg6 24.g3 ♘e5 25.f4 ♘c6 26.♗c3 ♗b4 27.♗xb4† ♘xb4

28.♞d1 ♖c6 29.♞d2 g5 30.♜f2 g4 31.♞c2  
 ♞d8 32.♜e3 ♞d6 33.♞c5 ♖b4 34.♞c7†  
 ♜d8 35.♞c3 ♜e7 36.e5 ♞d7 37.exf6† ♜xf6  
 38.♜e2 ♖c6 39.♜e1 ♖d4 40.♞d1 a5 41.♞c5  
 ♖f5 42.♞c3 ♖d4 43.♞c5 ♖f5 44.♞c3 ½–½  
 Topalov – Anand, Sofia (5) 2010.

#### 14.♞b5!

If the bishop retreated Black would gain the option of playing ...a7-a5 in one move.

14...a6 15.♞xd7† ♜xd7 16.♜e2 f6 17.♞hd1  
 ♜e8 18.♞ac1±



White has some positional pressure. Black's king is floating and a constant problem. The bishop wants to go back to f7, but where should the king be then? And also b7 is weak. Instead 18.♞b6 ♞c5 19.♞xc5 ♞xc5 20.♞d6 ♜e7 21.♞ad1 ♞e8 22.♞6d3 a5 23.♜e3 ♞c6= did not achieve much in Bocharov – Amonatov, Voronezh 2007.

After the disappointing draws (see above) Topalov launched the interesting 18.a5! against Anand and won! See the next game.

#### 18...♞c6

Losing a tempo. Better is:

18...♞e7

Although White still has a slight positional

initiative, Black has drawn every game so far. Here are some examples:

19.a5

19.♞b6 ♞f8 20.♖a2 ♞xc1 21.♖xc1 e5  
 22.♖d3 f5± 23.♖xe5 fxe4 24.♖xg6 exf3†  
 25.gxf3 hxg6= Atalik – D. Mastrovasilis,  
 Kalamaria 2010.

19...♜f8

19...♜f7 20.♞b6

20.♖a2

20.♖a4 ♞xc1 21.♞xc1 ♞e8 22.♞c8 ♜f7  
 23.♜d2 e5 24.♞b6 ♞g8 25.♖c5 ♞xc5  
 26.♞xc5 ½–½ De Vassal – Leemans, e-mail  
 2009.

20...♜f7 21.♞b6 ♞xc1 22.♞xc1 ♞d6 23.♞c7  
 ♜e7

In So – P.H. Nielsen, Amsterdam 2010, Black had played accurately and still had to be precise later to hold the draw.

19.♖a2 ♞xc1 20.♖xc1 ♞e7 21.♞b6 e5  
 22.♖d3 ♞f7?

Correct was 22...♜f7 23.♞c1 ♞d6± and Black blocks the door. White probably continues 24.♞c5 or ♞c7 with a pull.

23.♞c1± ♞d8 24.a5

Black is completely tied up. If 24...♜d7 then 25.♖c5† wins on the spot.

24...♜e7 25.♞c8 ♞e8 26.♞b8

Winning a pawn.

26...♞c4 27.♞xb7† ♜f8 28.♜e3 ♞e7 29.♞c5  
 ♞b5 30.b4

And now with a winning position.

30...h6 31.♞b6 ♞c4 32.♞b7 ♞xc5† 33.♖xc5  
 ♞d8 34.♞c7 ♜g8 35.♞c6 ♞b5 36.♞b6 ♞c4  
 37.h3 h5

37...♞a8 was passive and White could open a second front with g3 followed by f4.

38.♖xa6 ♞d3† 39.♜f2 ♞d2† 40.♜e1 ♞e2†

41.♔d1 ♖xg2 42.♘c5 ♖a2 43.a6 ♖h7  
44.♔c1 ♖h6 45.♖b7 h4

If 45...♙xa6 46.♖a7 ♙c4 47.♖xa2 ♙xa2  
48.b5 and the pawn goes all the way.

46.a7 ♖g5 47.♔b1 ♖f4 48.b5 g5 49.♘a6  
1–0

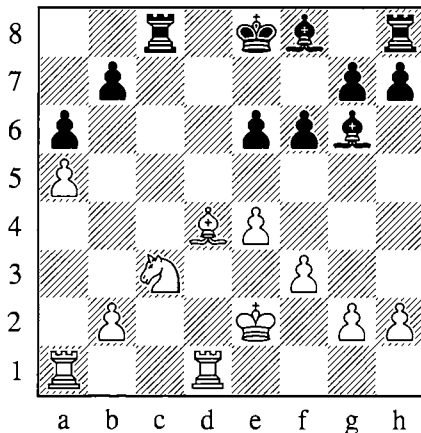
**Conclusion:** Kramnik's endgame variation should not be underestimated, but its value shouldn't be exaggerated either. White is slightly better and, if it isn't Kramnik you are facing, you have good winning chances. If it is Kramnik, then take the draw and get on with your life.

## GAME 32

Topalov – Anand

Sofia (8) 2010

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4  
♙f5 6.♘e5 e6 7.f3 c5 8.e4 ♙g6 9.♙e3 cxd4  
10.♖xd4 ♖xd4 11.♙xd4 ♘fd7 12.♘xd7  
♘xd7 13.♙xc4 ♖c8 14.♙b5 a6 15.♙xd7†  
♖xd7 16.♔e2 f6 17.♖hd1 ♔e8 18.a5!



Fixing the queenside. White intends to play ♙b6 next with a dominating position. Sometimes the knight can use the a4-square as well.

18...♙e7

Black's alternatives include:

18...♖c6 19.♖ac1 ♙d6 20.♘a4 ♖xc1 21.♖xc1  
♔f7±

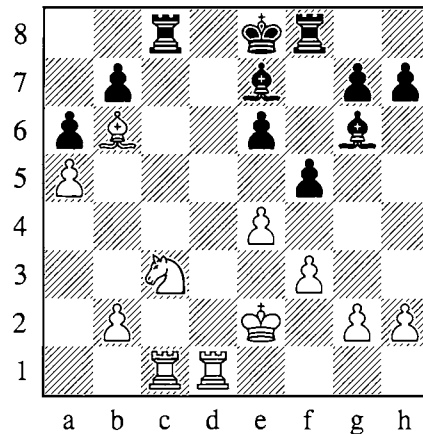
18...♙b4 19.♖a4N If Black takes on c3 White takes back with the bishop and then tries to infiltrate with the rooks along the b- and d-files.

19.♙b6 ♖f8

Planning to get the rook into play, either with ...♖f7, ...♙f8 and then finally ...♙d7, or by pushing ...f6-f5 with direct counterplay.

20.♖ac1 f5

20...♖f7!?! was possible.



21.e5

White should keep the position closed to make it as hard as possible for Black to activate his pieces. At the moment the g6-bishop is completely shut out; Anand tries to fix this.

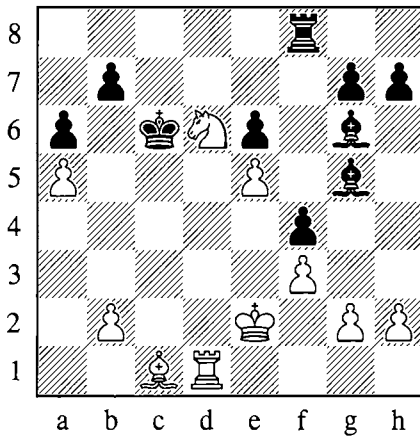
21...♙g5 22.♙e3 f4?!

Better was 22...♙xe3 23.♔xe3 f4†. For instance 24.♔d4 ♔e7 25.♘e4 ♙xe4 26.♔xe4 g5 and White is only slightly better in the rook ending.

23.♘e4!

With a little tactic Topalov improves his knight's position dramatically.

23...♞xc1 24.♜d6† ♔d7 25.♙xc1 ♕c6



26.♙d2

Probably not best. As the game continuation shows, a position with opposite-coloured bishops quickly arises and although it seems very promising for White at first, in fact it is just a draw. Instead strong was 26.♞d4!±.

26...♙e7 27.♞c1† ♕d7 28.♙c3 ♙xd6  
29.♞d1 ♙f5 30.h4 g6

30...♕c7 31.exd6† ♕d7±

31.♞xd6† ♕c8

Not 31...♕e7 32.♞b6 ♞b8 33.♙d2.

32.♙d2

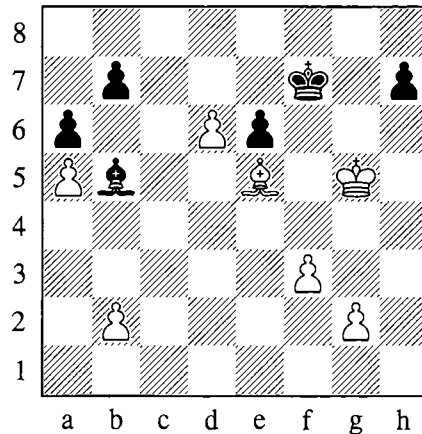
White is winning a pawn, but the rooks come off and it is drawish. Similar is 32.♞d4 h6! 33.♞xf4 ♙d3†.

32...♞d8! 33.♙xf4 ♞xd6 34.exd6

The passed pawn is easily blockaded. White's only hope of winning is to penetrate with his king, but if Black is careful he can prevent this.

34...♕d7 35.♕e3 ♙c2 36.♕d4 ♕e8 37.♕e5

♕f7 38.♙e3 ♙a4 39.♕f4 ♙b5 40.♙c5 ♕f6  
41.♙d4† ♕f7 42.♕g5 ♙c6 43.♕h6 ♕g8  
44.h5 ♙e8 45.♕g5 ♕f7 46.♕h6 ♕g8  
47.♙c5!? gxh5 48.♕g5 ♕g7 49.♙d4† ♕f7  
50.♙e5 h4 51.♕xh4 ♕g6 52.♕g4 ♙b5  
53.♕f4 ♕f7 54.♕g5



54...♙c6?

After defending stoutly for many moves, Black loses it all in one move; this happens all the time, at least to humans. Tiredness combined with the psychological impact of being under severe pressure for a long period of time explains this. Machines do not have such problems. They just keep playing the best move! In this case that was 54...♙d3 protecting the h-pawn with the bishop; the king can stop the d-pawn.

55.♕h6 ♕g8 56.g4

Black will end up in zugzwang and White will get to the d-pawn with his king. For example: 56...♙e8 57.g5 ♙d7 58.♙g7! ♙e8 59.f4 ♙d7 60.g6! hxg6 61.♕xg6 ♙c6 62.♕f6 and it is over.

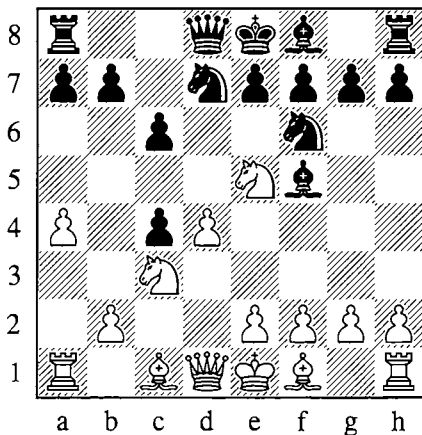
1–0

**Conclusion:** Topalov's 18.a5! keeps some pressure. Objectively speaking the position should be drawn, but it is tough to hold such an ending with Black.

The previous two games give a good flavour of Kramnik's ending. White has no refutation but Black has no fun. Perfect play by Black may hold a draw, but few mortals get close to perfection.

### The Mainline – Part Two

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♗c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♕f5 6.♗e5 ♗bd7



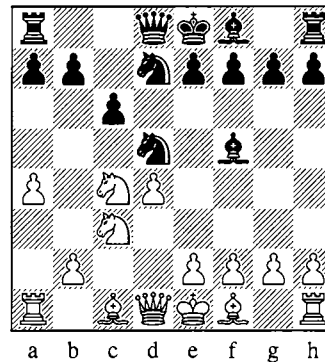
This old move is currently riding a wave of popularity. The foundation for the grand comeback was laid by a series of discoveries from the creative mind of the Russian star Alexander Morozevich.

7.♗xc4 ♖c7

The classical move. The modern interpretation is 7...♗b6 8.♗e5 a5, often referred to as the Sokolov Variation. On the one hand, a deserved tribute to the great Slav fighter, Ivan Sokolov, but on the other, maybe also an urgent need to name a variation in the modern Slav after someone other than Morozevich.

Speaking of Morozevich, he even came up with:

7...♗d5!?



With the point of striking next with ...e5.

A good antidote is:

8.g3

Also interesting is 8.f3 e5 9.e4 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♕e6 11.♖b1±.

8...e5 9.♕g2 exd4 10.♖xd4 ♖f6 11.♖xf6 ♗7xf6 12.♗xd5 cxd5 13.♗e3

With a better ending for White.

13...♕e6

13...♕b4† 14.♕d2 ♕xd2† 15.♗xd2 ♕e4 16.f3 ♕g6 17.♖hc1 ♗d7 18.♗c2 ♗d6 19.♗d4 a6 20.♕h3± was certainly no improvement in Babula – Lehner, Austria 2006.

14.0–0 ♕c5 15.♖d1 0–0 16.♗xd5 ♗xd5 17.♕xd5 ♖ad8 18.e4 ♕xd5 19.exd5 ♖d7 20.♖b1 a5

This was played in the stem game Kasparov – Morozevich, Astana 2001, and now best was:

21.♕e3

It is doubtful if Black has enough for the pawn.

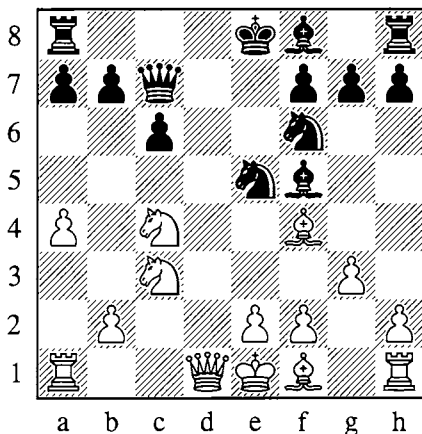
7...♗d5 is ultimately a surprise weapon. If White is not paralysed by shock, he should get a safe edge. With 7...♗b6 it is another story. In Game 35 it will come under close scrutiny.

A much simpler issue is 7...e6, which is too cooperative: after 8.f3 ♕b4 9.e4 ♕g6 10.♕e2± White gets what he wants.

8.g3

White wants to fianchetto his light-squared bishop and at the same time ♕f4 is prepared.

8...e5 9.dxe5 ♖xe5 10.♙f4



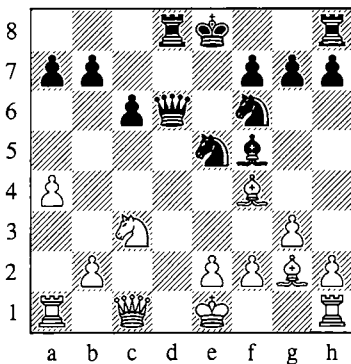
10...♖fd7

A couple of other moves should also be mentioned: A) 10...♞d8 and B) 10...♖fg4?

A) 10...♞d8

This is an old mainline that is seldom seen nowadays.

11.♞c1 ♙d6 12.♖xd6† ♞xd6 13.♙g2



The bishop pair gives White the upper hand. We shall look at three continuations:

A1) 13...♞e7 14.0-0 a5 15.♖d1! 0-0 16.♞c3 ♖g6 17.♙g5 ♞xe2 18.♙xf6 gxf6 19.♖e3 ♙e6 20.♞xf6 and White had a strong initiative in Kasparov – Ki. Georgiev, Paris (rapid) 1995.

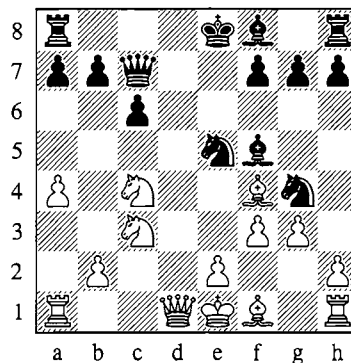
A2) 13...a5 14.0-0 would transpose to the line below, but White can also try 14.♞e3!?.

A3) 13...0-0 14.0-0 a5 15.♞e3 ♖fg4 16.♞b6 ♞b4 17.♞xb4 axb4 18.♖a2 ♖g6 19.♞fd1!? (19.♙c1) 19...b3 20.♖c3 ♖4e5 21.♞xd8 ♞xd8 22.♙c1 h5 23.a5± In Ding Liren – Wang Yue, Xinghua Jiangsu 2011, White was clearly better; he rapidly turned this into a winning position after 23...h4 24.f4 h3 25.♙f1 ♖g4 26.e4 ♙c8 27.♙xh3.

B) 10...♖fg4?

A rare move that is notable mainly because a very young Magnus Carlsen once played it (he was so young he was rated just under 2600). White can refute this move but he must be willing to give up his queen to do so.

11.f3!+-

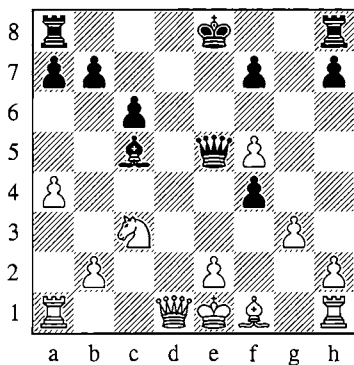


Black can try at least three tricks but White has all the winning answers.

B1) 11...♞d8 12.fxg4! ♞xd1† 13.♞xd1 f6 14.gxf5 White's rook and two minor pieces far outweigh the queen.

B2) 11...♞e7 12.fxg4! ♖d3† 13.♞xd3! (13.♖d2?? ♖xf4 14.♖c1 ♙e6 is better for Black) 13...♙xd3 14.♖d6† ♖d7 15.0-0-0 White will soon have three minor pieces and a raging attack for the queen.

B3) 11...g5 12.fxg4 gxf4 13.♖xe5 ♞xe5 14.gxf5 ♙c5



White just needs to find one more accurate move: 15.♖d3! Black's attack is over and White retains his extra piece. Instead P.H. Nielsen – Carlsen, Drammen 2004, continued 15.♖c2? 0–0–0 16.♗e4 fxg3! 17.♙g2 ♖d6. White eventually won but Black had enough play for the piece at this point.

10...♘fg4? allows some pretty refutations, but you are unlikely to be lucky enough to have a chance to play them.

### 11.♙g2

The starting position for an old variation that had been tested in hundreds of games. Then along came Morozevich and pang! A whole new concept saw the light of day: a stunning idea that mixed deep positional understanding with a flair for the extravaganza.

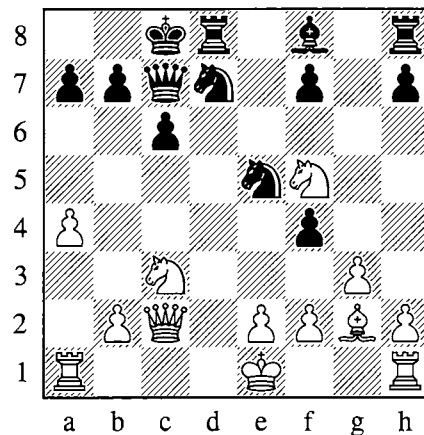
### 11...g5

Black's best move. It has almost completely replaced the classical set-up with 11...f6. But of course the old variation should not be forgotten. In Game 33 it will be examined.

### 12.♘e3

This was Kasparov's reaction when confronted with Morozevich's novelty over the board. Later White has tried many sharper things based on 12.♙xe5 or 12.♘xe5, but Black seems to have adequate countermeasures. Kasparov's knight move seeks a small but stable positional advantage.

12...gxf4 13.♘xf5 0–0–0 14.♖c2



A key position that has been heavily debated over the last few years. White hopes that the knight on f5 will give him the better chances but it is much more complicated than that – see Game 34 for the details.

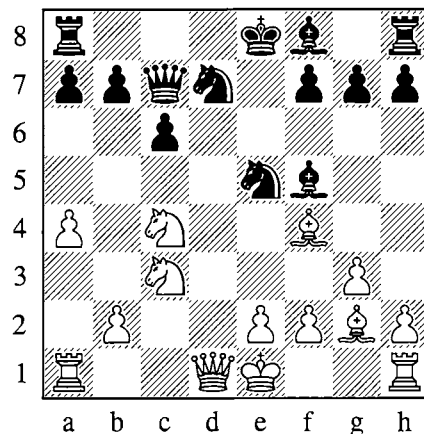
## The Classical Move – 11...f6

### GAME 33

Aronian – I. Sokolov

Wijk aan Zee 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4  
5.a4 ♙f5 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘xc4 ♖c7 8.g3 e5  
9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♙f4 ♘fd7 11.♙g2

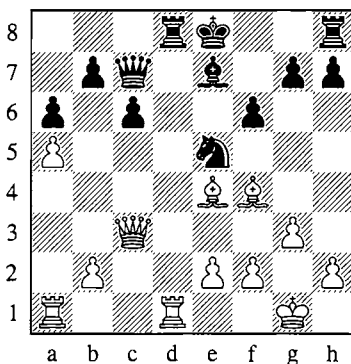


**11...f6**

The classical move: Black protects the knight on e5. There are a number of rare options:

a) 11...♙e6 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♚d4 f6 14.a5 a6 15.♘e4 ♙d5 16.0-0 ♙e7 17.♞fd1 ♞d8 18.♞c3 ♙xe4

A sad necessity because 18...0-0 19.♞xd5! ♞xd5 20.♘xf6† ♙xf6 21.♙xd5† drops a pawn.  
19.♙xe4



White had a large advantage with the pair of bishops in Browne – Unzicker, Wijk aan Zee 1981.

b) 11...♞d8 12.♞c1 f6 13.0-0 ♙e6 14.♘e4! is good for White:

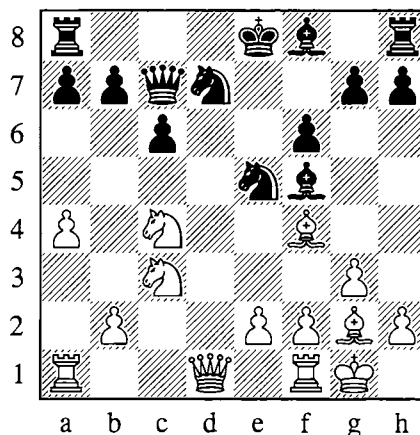
14...♙b4 15.a5 0-0 16.a6 bxa6?! 17.♘xe5 ♘xe5 18.♘c5 ♙xc5 19.♞xc5± Euwe – Alekhine, Holland 1937.

14...♙xc4 15.♞xc4 ♘xc4 16.♙xc7 ♞c8 17.♙f4± ♙e7 and now 18.♞fc1 or 18.♙h3 gives White both a strong initiative and a positional advantage.

14...♙e7 15.a5 a6 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5 17.♘c5 ♙c8 18.♞c3 0-0 19.♞fd1± In Sretr – Pletanek, corr. 1984, the structure on the queenside was very favourable for White.

c) 11...♙e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♞c1 f6 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♘d5! ♞d8 16.♘xe7† ♞xe7 17.♙g5 ♞e6 18.a5 h6 19.♙e3± Razuvaev – Bronstein, Yaroslavl 1982. The bishops are nice.

11...g5 is of course the big mainline these days. It will be examined in the next game.

**12.0-0****12...♘c5**

Morozevich's attempt to revive the old mainline. The move was a necessary lifeline because the known moves were clearly in crisis.

Let's have a look:

12...♙e6 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5

13...♘xe5 14.♞c2 ♙d6 15.♘e4 with good play for White, Timman – Hebert, Rio de Janeiro 1979.

14.♙g5

A finesse designed to make Black weaken himself.

14.♙e3 ♙c5 15.♞c1 is also fine and should give White a small but safe advantage.

14...h6

Or 14...♙c5 15.♘e4.

15.♙e3 ♙c5

If 15...♙e7 then 16.♞c2 is annoying for Black because 16...0-0? loses to 17.♙xh6.

16.♞c2

The effect of the move ...h6 is seen: g6 has been weakened and makes an excellent entry square for the white queen.

16...0-0-0 17.♖g6 ♔b3

17...♘f8 18.♗e4 ½-½ Simon – Marez, corr. 2000, didn't say much. A possible continuation is 18...♘d7 19.a5±.

18.a5! ♔xe3

Or 18...a6 19.♔h3 ♘b8 20.♗xg7 ♜hg8 21.♗h7 ♔xe3 22.fxe3 ♘c5 23.♗xc7† ♘xc7 24.♜f5± Van Seben – Le Duigou, corr. 2004.

19.fxe3 ♘c5 20.♞a3

White has the initiative.

20...a6? 21.♞xb3 1-0

Khalifman – Gabriel, Bad Wiessee 1998.

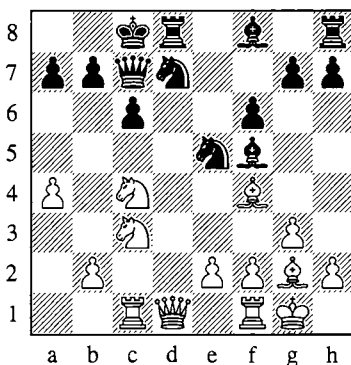
On 21...♘xb3 follows 22.♗e6† ♘b8 23.♗xb3.

12...0-0-0

This is risky and should be met by the brand new:

13.♞c1!

13.♞c1 can be answered by 13...♘c5!∞.



13...♘c5

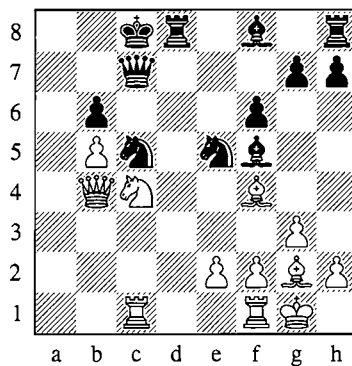
13...♘b6 14.♘xb6† ♗xb6 15.♘d5! ♗xb2 16.e4 ♔e6 17.♞c2 (17.♞b1 was suggested by Kaufman: 17...♗a3 18.♗c2) 17...♗a3 18.♗d4 ♔xd5 19.exd5 c5 20.♞b1 ♞d7 21.♔xe5 fxe5 22.♗c4 1-0 Kulaots – Esen, Istanbul 2010.

14.♗e1 a5

14...♘b8 15.b4 ♘b3 16.♘b5! ♗e7 17.♘xe5 fxe5 18.♞xc6! bxc6 19.♗c3 ♗e6 20.♔xe5†

♘b7 21.♘c7 ♗g6 22.♗xb3 ♔d6 23.♔xd6 ♗xd6 24.♘b5 ♗e6 25.♗c3 ♔e4 26.♔xe4 1-0 Mareco – Alonso, Buenos Aires 2010.

15.♘b5! cxb5 16.axb5 b6 17.b4 axb4 18.♗xb4



With a big attack in return for the piece; for example:

18...♔e6

18...♔d6 19.♔xe5 fxe5 20.♔c6 ♔d7 21.♞fd1 ♔xc6 22.bxc6 ♗xc6 23.♘xb6† ♘c7 24.♘d5† ♘c8 25.♗a5 ♜he8 26.♘b4 ♗c7 27.♗a8† ♗b8 28.♗c6† ♗c7 29.♞xd6 ♞xd6 30.♗xe8† ♘b7 31.♘d3 ♞c6 32.♘xe5 ♞b6 33.♘d3 1-0 Mareco – Toniutti, Asuncion 2011.

19.♞a1! ♔xc4 20.♔xe5 ♗xe5 21.♗xc4 ♔d6 22.♗f7!

This accurate move is the key.

22...♞hf8

22...g6 23.♗a7 ♔c7 24.♞fc1!+-

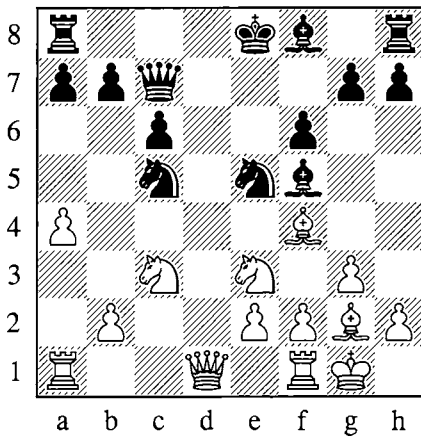
22...f5 23.♔c6!

23.♗xg7 ♔b8 24.♞fc1 ♗c7 25.♔h3† f5 26.♗h6 ♞f7 27.♗h5 ♞df8 28.e4

In Quaresma – Ciucurel, corr. 2010, Black's resistance was crumbling. White will soon have three pawns for the knight and a continuing attack.

Finally, 12...♞d8 13.♞c1 ♔e6 transposes to note b of Black's 11th move.

13.♘e3



White regroupes with tempo and is ready to kick the black knight back with b2-b4. 13.e4 also looks like a decent try.

### 13...♙g6

The most popular. The intermediate move 13...♞d8?! has a tactical flaw: 14.♜cd5! ♞d7 15.b4 cxd5 16.♜xf5 ♞xf5 17.bxc5 ♙xc5 18.♞b3 with a very promising position, Almeida Quintana – Mestre Bellido, Barbera del Valles 2007.

The other retreat is:

13...♙e6

This is best met by:

14.b4 ♞d8 15.♞b1

The text is stronger than 15.♞c2 ♜a6 16.b5 ♜b4∞.

15...♜b3

15...♜a6 16.b5 ♜b4 is not so attractive now that it does not come with tempo. 17.bxc6 bxc6 18.♞c1 a5 19.♜b5! ♞d7 20.♞d1 ♞c8 21.♜d4 ♙c5 22.♜xe6 ♞xd1† 23.♞xd1 ♞xe6 24.♞c1± Wells – Hanley, Scarborough 2001.

16.♜ed5! cxd5 17.♞xb3

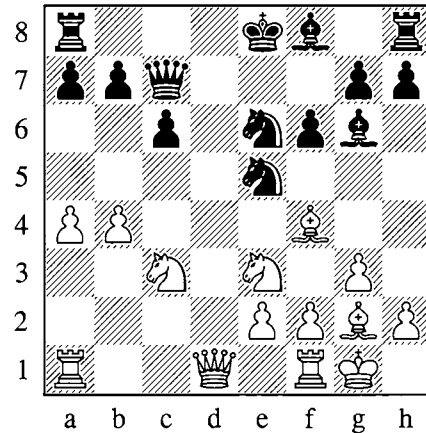
To relieve some of the pressure Black must enter an inferior ending.

17...♞c4 18.♞xc4 ♜xc4 19.♞fd1 ♙xb4 20.♜xd5 ♙a5 21.♞ac1±

C. Williams – Verducci Silvelo, corr. 2006.

### 14.b4 ♜e6

14...♞d8 can be answered with the by now familiar 15.♜ed5! cxd5 16.bxc5 ♙xc5 17.♞b3 and White regains the pawn with an active position. 17...0-0 18.♞fd1 ♜h8 19.♜xd5 ♞f7 20.h3 ♙f5 21.e4 ♙e6 22.a5± b6 23.axb6 axb6 24.♞c3 ♞c8 25.♙e3! Now b6 is weak, Alekseev – Fressinet, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.



### 15.♞b3

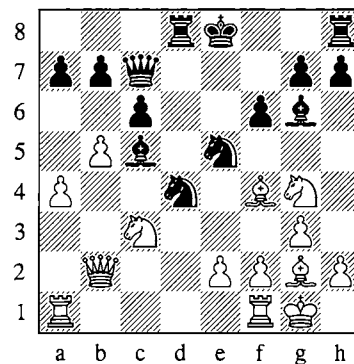
A new attempt.

15.b5 ♞d8 16.♞b3 ♜d4 17.♞b2 ♙c5

Previously this had been seen in a lot of games. White has come up with an interesting improvement:

18.♜g4!

This seems promising.



18...0-0

18...♙h5 19.h3 0–0 20.♖e4 cxb5 21.♙xe5 fxe5 22.♟a1 b6 23.e3 ♘e6 24.axb5± Shirov – Hector, Malmo 2011.

18...♘e6 19.♙xe5 fxe5 20.bxc6 bxc6 21.♖e4 ♙d4 22.♟a2 ♙f7 23.♟a3 ♟e7 24.♟xe7† ♜xe7 25.♟a1 h5 26.♘e3 ♙xe3 27.fxe3 ♙g6 28.♟xc6 ♙xe4 29.♙e4± Ding Liren – Ma Qun, Hefei 2011.

19.♖e4 cxb5 20.axb5 ♙b6 21.♟a1 ♟e7 22.♘e5 ♙xe4 23.♙xe4 fxe5 24.♙e3± Gusan – Piccoli, e-mail 2009.

### 15...♙f7

15...♘d4 16.♟b2 ♟d8 is too loose because of the well known tactic 17.♘cd5! ♘df3† 18.♙xf3 cxd5 19.♙xd5 and White was winning in Conquest – N. Berry, Turin (ol) 2006.

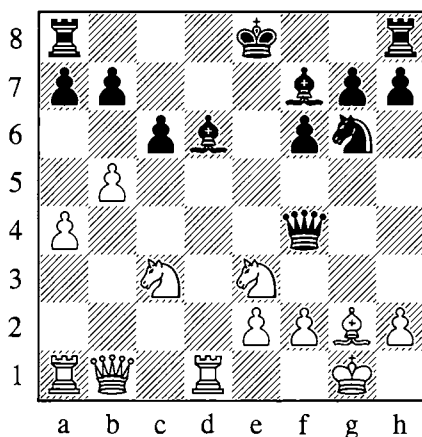
### 16.♟b1 ♘xf4

Again 16...♟d8 could be considered, but then 17.♟c1 ♘xf4 18.gxf4 ♘g6 19.b5 ♟xf4 20.bxc6 ♙d6 21.♟e4† ♟xe4 22.♘e4 bxc6 23.♘d6† ♟d6 was Pogorelov – Peralta, Seville 2006, and now the simple 24.♙xc6† ♜f8 25.♟ab1 ♟d8 26.♟b7 is clearly better for White.

### 17.gxf4 ♘g6 18.b5!

Active play with direct threats.

### 18...♟xf4 19.♟d1 ♙d6

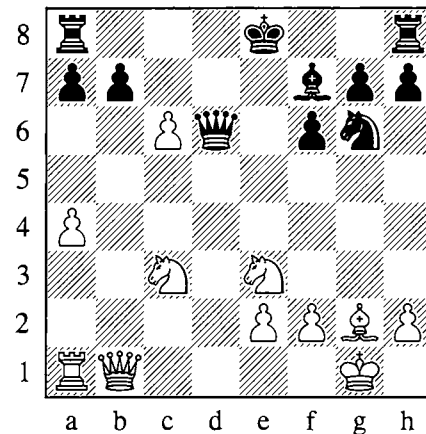


In another game Black tried 19...♙c5 but after 20.bxc6 0–0 21.cxb7 ♟ab8 22.♘cd5 Zhao Xue – Gerasimovitch, Kemer 2007, it was already over.

### 20.♟xd6!

A spectacular exchange sacrifice.

### 20...♟xd6 21.bxc6



### 21...0–0

Now White gets what he wants: a protected passed pawn on the seventh rank.

Better is 21...bxc6 when 22.♘b5 ♟d7 23.♟b4 is not quite as deadly as it appears: 23...♘e7 24.♟d1 ♙d5 25.♘d5 cxd5 26.♙xd5 ♘xd5 27.♟xd5 ♟e7 28.♘d6† ♜f8 29.♟c4 h5 30.♘f5 ♟e8 31.♟d3 ♟h7 32.♟d7 White has good compensation for the exchange, but Black is not in the coffin yet. 32...♟e6 33.♟e7 ♟c6 34.h4 ♟e8 35.♟xa7 ♟e4 36.♟b3 ♟g4† 37.♜h1 ♟e4† 38.f3 ♟e6 39.♟b7 ♜g8 40.♘e7† ♟xe7 41.♟xe7 ♟h3† 42.♜g1 ½–½ Verleur – Turkov, corr. 2006.

### 22.♘b5

In a later game White took at once on b7: 22.cxb7 ♟ab8 And only then the knight move: 23.♘b5 ♟b6 24.a5 ♟a6 25.♘c7 ♟xe2 26.♟b5 ♘f4 27.♟xe2 ♘xe2† 28.♜f1 ♘f4

29.♙e4 f5 30.♙c6 ♖g6 31.♞c1 ♜e5 32.a6 The protected pawn on b7 was a decisive factor in Babula – Ribli, Austria 2008.

22...♞c5 23.cxb7 ♞ab8 24.♞f5

If White could exchange queens Black would have no counterplay whatsoever and he could fully enjoy the passed pawn.

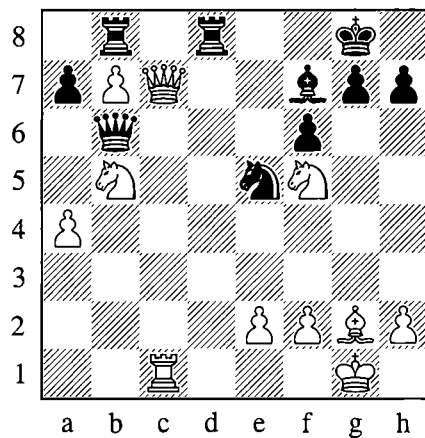
24...♜e5 25.♞c2 ♞b6 26.♞c7

He insists.

26...♞fd8 27.♞c1 ♞a6 28.♜f5

The defence cracks.

28...♞b6



29.♞xb8!

An elegant finish.

29...♞xb8 30.♞c8† ♞d8 31.♜xa7 ♙e8  
32.♞xd8 ♞xd8 33.♙d5† ♙f7 34.♜e7† ♞f8  
35.♜ec6  
1–0

**Conclusion:** Aronian's direct approach is a serious blow to the whole variation and it will probably scare away the last believers in the classical set-up.

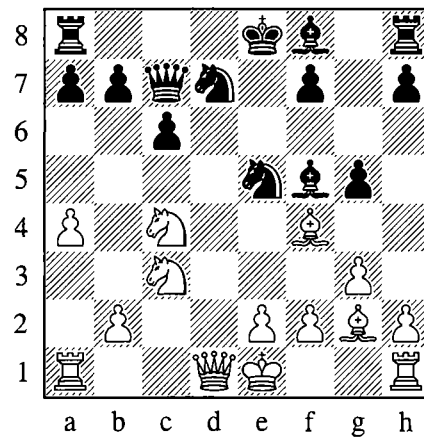
## Morozevich's 11...g5

### GAME 34

Volokitin – Inarkiev

Russia 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♜f3 ♜f6 4.♜c3 dxc4  
5.a4 ♙f5 6.♜e5 ♜bd7 7.♜xc4 ♞c7 8.g3 e5  
9.dxe5 ♜xe5 10.♙f4 ♜fd7 11.♙g2 g5!?



This crazy but creative move of Morozevich is the current mainline.

12.♜e3

The positional approach. 12.♙e5 ♜xe5 13.♞d4 f6 has held up fine for Black and 12.♜xe5 gxf4 13.♜xd7 0–0–0 14.♞d4 ♞xd7 15.♞xf4 ♙d6 gives good play for the pawn. Black's dominance on the dark squares makes it difficult for White to get anything going.

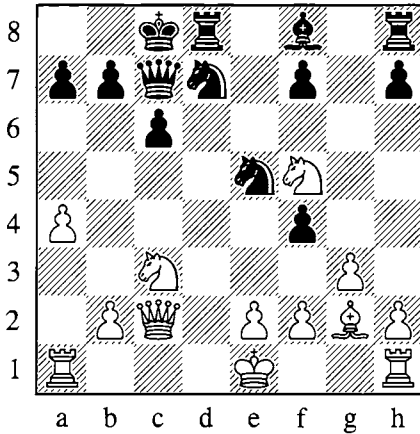
12...gxf4 13.♜xf5

A nice square for the knight.

13...0–0–0 14.♞c2

We have already reached a strategically complicated position. The opposite-coloured bishops give both sides a clear dominance on each colour complex. Furthermore, White

will most probably castle kingside so there are attacks and counterattacks in the air as well. Black has tried a variety of moves here.



#### 14...d5

The mainline. The knight is on its way to e6 and at the same time White is prevented from castling long, just in case. However there are many interesting alternatives.

#### A) 14...b4 15.0-0 f3 16.h3 g4 h5 17.f3

Threatening d5.

17.d2 f8 18.f3d1± is a good alternative.

#### 17...f6 18.d3

18.a5!? a6 19.d4 is another way to play.

#### 18...b8 19.f5 e7

19...f4∞ is suggested by the computer.

#### 20.f4 a5 21.f3

White was slightly better in Grischuk – Tukmakov, Odessa 2007.

#### B) 14...b8 15.0-0

As we shall see in line C, White can also choose plans involving 15.0-0-0!?

#### 15...f3 16.h3 h5

This is similar to line A.

#### 17.f3

17.f3d1 is also possible. Then 17...h4? doesn't work due to: 18.d4 h4 f4 19.g4 d4 20.f5

#### 17...f6

17...d4 18.d5 e5 19.d4 c5 20.e3 f6 21.b4 d4 22.exd4 h4 23.b5 hxg3 24.fxg3 c8 25.bxc6 1-0 Kacheishvili – Iotov, Richardson 2012.

#### 18.a5 h4 19.d4 h4 f4

A typical blow in this line.

#### 20.g4 d4 21.f3 e8 22.f5 h6 23.f3 h2+ 24.f1 g8 25.e4

Apparently White has control, but Black finds another hidden resource.

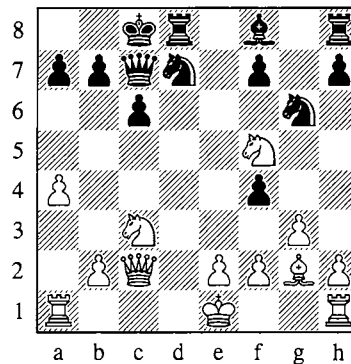
#### 25...d5 26.f5 h5 27.f2 28.f3+ f3d8 28.f2 g8 29.f3

This was Babula – Ragger, Germany 2008, and here he had:

#### 29...e3+! 30.f3 e3 f3 31.f3g3+ f3g3+ 32.f3 f4±

Black has chances to draw. Okay, in this position the attack after ...f4 was not convincing, but beware of the idea. An alternative for White is the perhaps more exact 17.f3d1.

#### C) 14...d6



As I said above, White usually castles short, but in this case there are good reasons for going long. Firstly, the e5-knight has stepped away towards the kingside, helping prepare ideas with ...h7-h5-h4. Secondly, the line with castling short leads to very forcing play where Black is currently holding his own. Let's have a quick look:

15.0–0 ♖b8 16.♙fc1 a5 17.b4

This is the line on which White was pinning his attacking hopes.

17...axb4 18.♘b5 ♗e5 19.♘bd4

19.♙xc6!? looks fun at first but after, say, 19...♙c8 20.♗d2 ♙xc6 21.♗xd7 ♙c5 the position is unclear but roughly balanced; in fact, White probably has to take more care than Black.

19...♙c5 20.♘b3 h5

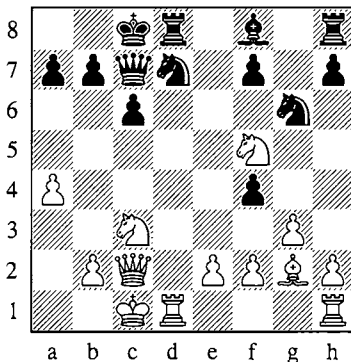
This is the well known game Carlsen – Wang Yue, Nanjing 2009. Now every analyst and his computer agrees White should have played 21.a5 which leads to even more complications but probably no advantage. Instead the game continued:

21.♙ab1?! ♙a7 22.♙xc6 f3 23.h3

When if Black had found 23...♘e7! he would have been much better.

Now let's see the line I recommend:

15.0–0–0!?



15...♖b8

The most common move.

15...♙b4 16.♘a2 ♙f8 hopes for a draw, but White has no reason to agree. 17.♙d4 ♘de5 18.♙hd1 ♙xd4 19.♙xd4 f3 20.h3 ♖b8 21.♖b1 a5 In Krylov – Vazquez Igarza, Moscow 2010, White should have played 22.f4!± when he dominates the d-file after 22...♘d7 23.♗d1 or 22...♘g4 23.♗d3.

16.♘e4 ♙b4 17.♙d4±

White has the more solidly placed pieces and preferable structure. It is only an edge as Black's pieces also have reasonable activity and exchanging on g3 followed by ...h7-h5-h4 may simplify matters. The game will be decided in the middlegame, but White starts with slightly better chances. For example:

17...a5

An important alternative is: 17...♗b6 18.♙hd1 ♘de5 19.♘fd6 a5 20.♖b1!? (A high-level game showed Black's simplifying hopes in full effect: 20.♙h3 h5 21.♙f5 f3 22.h3 h4 23.♙xg6 f3 24.g3 h4 25.e3 ♗c7 26.♘b5 ♙xd4 27.♘xc7 ♙xe4 28.♖b1 ♖xc7 29.f4 ♙xe3 30.fxe5 ♙he4 31.♗g2 ♙xe5 32.♗xg6 ♙e1 ½–½ Gelfand – Morozevich, Sochi 2004.) 20...♙hf8 (Now 20...h5 could be met by: 21.♗c1 f3 22.h3 h4 23.f4!?) 21.♙h3 h5 22.♗c1± Raijmakers – Dolgov, e-mail 2009.

18.♙hd1 ♘de5

After 18...♘b6 19.♘c5 ♙xd4 20.♙xd4 ♙xc5 21.♗xc5 White has an edge. For example Rodshtein – Shankland, Biel 2011, continued: 21...♙e8 22.♙f3 ♙e5 23.♗c2 ♗c8 24.♘d6 ♗e6 25.♖b1 ♙d5 26.♙xd5 ♘xd5 27.♗c5 ♘b4 28.♘c4 Now Black could have gone close to equality with 28...f3 29.h3 ♘h4! with the point 30.g3?? ♗g6† mating. Instead he lost after 28...♗h3? 29.♗d6† ♖a7 30.♗d4† ♖b8 31.♗d8† ♗c8 32.♗xc8† ♖xc8 33.♘d6† ♖c7 34.♘xf7+–.

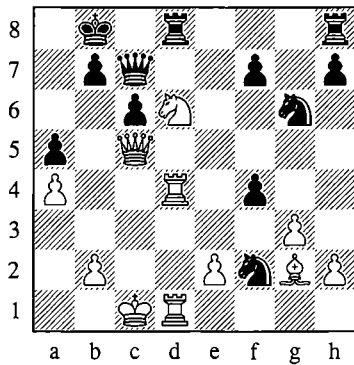
19.♘fd6

A more direct approach than 19.♖b1 h5 when Black was nearing equality in Rodshtein – Holzke, Biel 2011.

19...♘g4

Instead 19...♗b6 would transpose to the 17...♗b6 variation and is the safest course, as the threat to f2 created by 19...♘g4 is less powerful than it looks.

20.♘c5! ♙xc5 21.♗xc5 ♘xf2



22. ♖xb7

Tempting, but only good enough for a draw. The calm 22. ♖1d2!± was immensely strong. One idea then is to slowly manoeuvre a rook to b3 when Black will have to give up the exchange on d6. A more direct but similarly motivated plan is b2-b4.

22... ♖xd4 23. ♖xd4 ♗xb7??

Losing rapidly.

Correct was 23... ♗xb7 when White has an easy draw but no forced win. For example: 24. ♗b5† ♗a7 25. ♗xc6 ♖e5□ 26. ♗c5† ♗b8 27. ♗b5† ♗a7=

24. ♗xa5 ♗c7 25. ♖b4† ♗c8 26. ♗a6† ♗d8 27. ♖b7 ♗c8 28. ♗b6† ♗e8 29. ♖b8 ♗xb8 30. ♗xb8† ♗e7 31. ♗a7† ♗f6 32. ♗xf2

1–0 Feller – Kazhgaleyev, Livry Gargan 2009.

Finally, 14...fxg3 15.hxg3 might be a little premature because White can still castle long.

### 15.0–0 ♖e6

Interesting is the more positionally founded: 15...fxg3 16.hxg3 a5

It seems White can get a small advantage:

17. ♖fd1 h5 18. ♖xd8† ♗xd8 19. ♖e4

The obvious 19. ♖d1 gives Black good counterplay which enables him to keep the balance: 19... ♗f6 20.e4 h4 for instance 21.f4 ♖g6 22.e5 ♗e6 23. ♖e2 hxg3 24. ♖d6† ♗xd6 25. ♖xd6 ♗g4 26. ♗xc5 ♗xe2 27. ♖xc6† bxc6 28. ♗xc6† ♗d8 29. ♗b6† ♗e8 30. ♗b8† ♗d7 31. ♗d6† ♗c8 ½–½ Johannessen –

L'Ami, Germany 2006.

19... ♖xe4 20. ♗xe4 ♗f6 21. ♖d1 ♗b4

A recent example instead went: 21... ♗c5 22. ♗h3 ♗b8 23. ♗h4 ♗xh4 24. ♖xh4 ♗c7 25. ♗f1 ♖d8 26. ♖xd8 ♗xd8 27. b3 ♗e7 28. ♖f5 ♗f6 29. ♖d6 h4 30. gxh4 ♗xh4 31. f4 ♖g6 32. e3 b5 33. ♖xf7† ♗c7 34. ♗e2 ♗e7 35. f5 ♖f8 36. e4 ♖d7 37. e5 ♖c5 38. f6 ♗xf6 39. exf6 ♖e4 40. ♗g2 ♖xf6 41. ♖e5 bxa4 42. bxa4 ♗d6 43. ♖xc6 ♗c5 44. ♗d3 ♖d7 45. ♖xa5 ♗b4 46. ♖b7 ♖e5† 47. ♗d4 ♖c4 48. ♗c6 ♖d2 49. ♖c5 ♖b1 50. ♖d3† ♗a5 51. ♗c5 ♖d2 52. ♖b2 ♖b3† 53. ♗c4 ♖c1 54. ♗b5 1–0 Zhou Jianchao – Maletin, Moscow 2011.

22. ♗h3 ♗b8 23. ♗d4 ♖e8

Perhaps Black can defend more stoutly by following one of the games below:

23... ♗c7 24. ♗e3 ♖g6 25. ♗a7 ♖e5 26. ♖d4 ♖g4 27. ♗xg4 hxg4 28. e3 ♗h6 29. ♗f1 ♗f6 30. ♗g1 ♗h6 31. ♗f1 ♗f6 ½–½ Jakovenko – Akopian, Astrakhan 2010.

23... ♗e6 24. ♗g2 ♖g6 25. ♖e3 ♗e7 26. ♗c4 ♗f6 27. ♗d4 ♗e7 28. ♗c4 ♗f6 29. ♗d4 ♗e7 ½–½ Mekhitarian – Bu Xiangzhi, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010.

And now the endgame after:

24. f4 ♖g4 25. ♗xg4 ♗xd4† 26. ♖xd4 hxg4 27. ♗f1 ♗c7 28. ♖c4 ♖d8

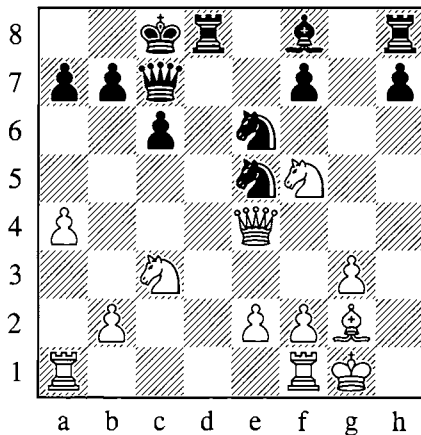
Llorente Zaro – Andriasian, Hecceg Novi 2006, was unclear but more or less balanced.

I think White can improve with 24. ♗g2 keeping an edge. Black on his part can probably also play better (as we saw on move 23) however this does not change the overall impression that White is somewhat better in this structure.

### 16. ♗e4

16. ♖ad1 ♗c5 17. ♖e4 ♗b4 is known to be satisfactory for Black. For example, 18. ♗c1 fxg3 19. hxg3 ♖xd1 20. ♖xd1 ♖d8 21. ♗h3 ♗b8 22. ♗g2 a5 23. b3 ½–½ Kramnik – Morozevich, Astana 2001.

## 16...fxg3 17.hxg3



## 17...h5

Seeking quick counterplay, but White's attack comes first. The position was not at all easy though, as the following examples show:

## 17...a5

This tries to close the queenside, but doesn't close a thing!

18.♖b5! cxb5 19.axb5 ♖c5 20.♗e3→ ♖g4  
20...♖cd7 21.♗a7 is hopeless: 21...♖c4  
22.♞ac1 ♙c5 23.♖e7† ♙xe7 24.♞xc4 ♙c5  
25.♞fc1 ♗b8 26.♞xc5† ♖xc5 27.♙h3† 1-0  
Porat – Gonda, Budapest 2005.

21.♗c3 ♗e5 22.♗f3 ♗e4 23.♗xe4 ♖xe4  
24.♙xe4±

White was a clear pawn up in Johannessen – Shirov, Germany 2004.

## 17...♖c5

Teasing the queen.

## 18.♗h4 ♖g6 19.♗h5

But it finds a new safe square.

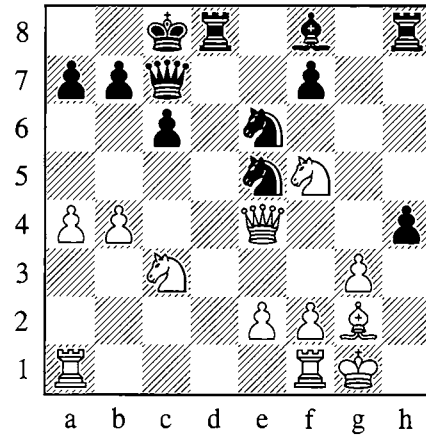
## 19...a5

19...♖b8 20.♞ad1 ♖e6 21.e3 ♙c5 22.♖h6  
♞h8 23.♞xd8† ♞xd8 24.♗f5 ♞f8 25.♞d1±  
J. Rodriguez – Lafarga Santorroman, corr.  
2003.

20.♞ad1 ♞xd1 21.♞xd1 ♖e6 22.e3 ♗e5  
23.♖e4 ♖c7 24.♗f3 h5 25.♖fd6! ♙xd6  
26.♗xf7† ♙e7 27.♗xg6 ♖c5 28.f4 ♗e6

29.♗xe6 ♖xe6 30.♖f2± Grischuk – P.H. Nielsen, Internet 2004.

## 18.b4 h4



## 19.♖b5!

Kind of standard, yet always spectacular.

## 19...cxb5

Of course Black tests the sacrifice: on 19...♗b8 follows 20.♖xa7† ♗xa7 21.♗xe5.

## 20.♞fc1 ♖c6 21.axb5 hxg3 22.bxc6

He even had time for 22.♖xg3.

## 22...gxf2† 23.♖xf2 b6 24.♞a6!

The culmination of Volokitin's powerful play. He simply threatens ♞ca1 and Black has no defence.

## 24...♙xb4

Desperation. 24...♞h2 25.♞ca1 ♖b8  
26.♞xa7 ♗xa7 27.♞xa7 ♖xa7 28.♗c4 and the queen quickly gets in and decides.

25.♗xb4 ♖d4 26.♖e7† ♖b8 27.e3+- ♞h6  
28.♖d5 ♖xc6 29.♗f4 ♗xf4† 30.exf4

White has repelled Black's tricks and has a won ending.

## 30...♞h2 31.♞a2 ♞g8 32.♖f1 ♖d4 33.♖e7

♖g8 34. ♖c6† ♖xc6 35. ♗xc6 ♗2h6 36. ♗ac2  
 ♗xc6 37. ♗xc6 ♗d8 38. ♗f6 ♗d7 39. ♗f3 ♗c7  
 40. ♗h5 a5 41. ♗xf7 a4 42. ♗e2 a3 43. ♗xd7†  
 ♗xd7 44. ♗f7 ♗d6 45. ♗d3 ♗c5 46. f5 b5  
 47. ♗a2  
 1–0

**Conclusion:** Morozevich's 11...g5 leads to extremely demanding positions. With 12. ♖e3 gxf4 13. ♖xf5 White gets a wonderful knight on f5 that can help both to defend and to attack. However the opposite-coloured bishops make many of the variations rather balanced and unfortunately all three results are possible.

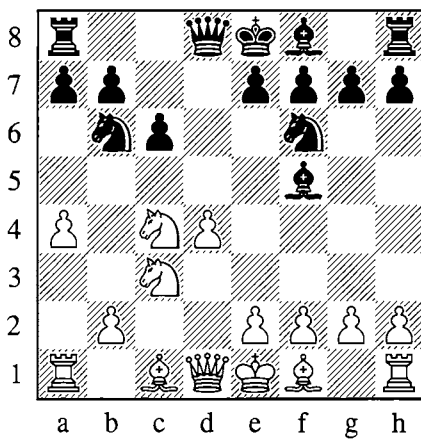
## Sokolov's Variation – 7...♖b6

### GAME 35

Avrukh – Grigoriants

Russia 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4. ♖c3 dxc4 5.a4  
 ♗f5 6. ♖e5 ♖bd7 7. ♖xc4 ♖b6



An increasingly popular line pioneered by the fighter Ivan Sokolov. The line is suggested by Vigus in his book *Play the Slav*, so it is very important to know.

8. ♖e5

White does best to keep some pieces on the board.

8...a5

Black has a rather rare alternative.

8...e6 9.a5!?

Not the only move, but a logical way to exploit Black's omission of the usual 8...a5.

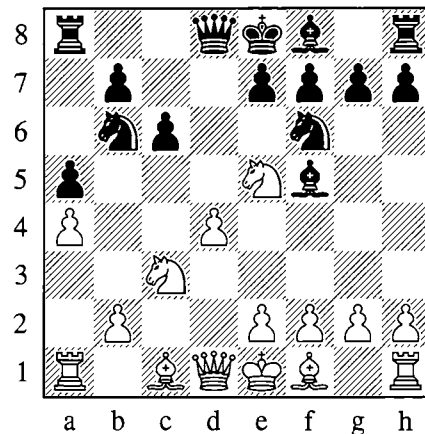
9...♖bd7

This was played by Huebner, who is a Slav expert, so his choice is significant.

The other way is 9...♖bd5 10.f3!? (10.a6 ♖b4 is a messy line for those who like to analyse). The position after 10.f3 is almost unexplored, but White seems to have promising play with ideas of e2-e4 or a5-a6. For example: 10...♗b4 11. ♗d2 ♗xa5 12.e4 ♖xc3 13.bxc3 ♗g6 14. ♗a6! A neat trick to undermine c6. It would be more usual for a5-a6 to perform this role, and that's one reason why Black generally blocks the a4-pawn with 8...a5.

10.a6 ♖xe5 11.axb7 ♗b8 12.dxe5 ♗xd1†  
 13. ♖xd1 ♖e4 14. ♗xa7 ♗b4† 15. ♖c3 ♗c5  
 16. ♖xe4 ♗xa7 17. ♖d6†

White had excellent compensation for the exchange in Veingold – Huebner, Finland 2007, and went on to win.



9. ♗g5

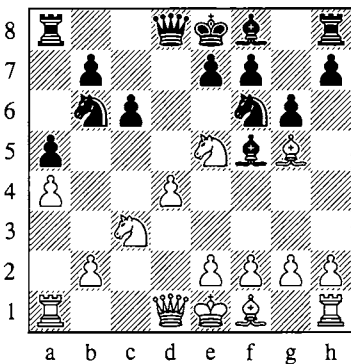
The obvious 9.f3 is not so clear after 9...d7 10.d7 d7 11.e4 g6. Often Black will strike at the white centre with ...e7-e5 leaving White rather vulnerable on the dark squares.

Instead many players go for a small but safe edge with 9.g3. After 9...e6 10.g2 b4 11.0-0 0-0 12.e3 h6 13.e2 h7 14.d1 d7 then 15.d3 keeps some pieces on the board and e4 will come next with a slightly more pleasant position for White because of the extra space. However, Black has a firm structure and good chances of counterplay. In the practical games with this line Black has held on very well and scored almost fifty percent. With the more direct 9.g5 White develops actively and quickly. He is ready to answer 9...e6 with 10.e4 so Black is immediately under some pressure.

**9...h6**

A necessary prelude to playing ...e6. Another move is currently on the cutting edge of theory and that is the Grünfeld-like:

9...g6!?



White has a couple of options, 10.f3 and 10.e3:

**10.f3**

This sharp move is worth a try, but it is also risky.

**10...g7**

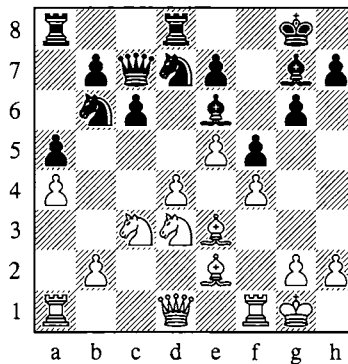
Worse is 10...h6?! 11.h4 g7 12.e4 e6 13.e2 0-0 14.f2 c7 15.0-0 d5 16.g3 d6 17.c2 d7 18.f4± Babula – Kulaots, Dresden 2007, and h6 turned out to be a weakness.

**11.e4 e6 12.e3 0-0 13.e2 d6**

13...d8 14.0-0 d6 15.f2 d4 16.dxc4 dxc4 17.dxc4 dxc4 18.e2 b6 19.f1 e6 20.a1± P. Horvath – To, Budapest 2009.

**14.0-0**

14.d3!? might improve, for instance: 14...d7 15.e5 c7 16.0-0 f8 17.f4 f5 Deviatkin – Barbosa, New Delhi 2012.



And now 18.f3!N secures some advantage. 14...d7 15.f4 a8 16.c1

This was unclear in Daus – Bergmann, corr. 2007. Black could consider 16...f5.

**10.e3**

White should be able to get a positional plus with this modest move.

**10...g7 11.d3 e6**

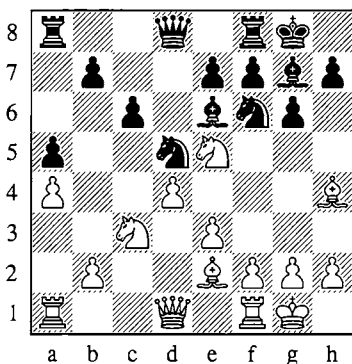
11...xd3 12.d3 is pleasant for White: 12...bd5 13.b3 b6 14.xb6 dxb6 15.a3 d7 16.e2± 0-0 17.b3 fe8 18.f4 a7 19.d1 With a better ending, Sargissian – Felgaer, Lugo 2007.

**12.e2**

Vacating d3 for the knight.

**12...bd5**

12...d5 13.d3 b4 was Sargissian – Sokolov, Zafra 2007, when 14.c5 must be better for White. Vigus suggests 14...f5 15.0-0 d7 gives unclear play. However 16.dxd7 (16.dxb7 ♖b6) 16...xd7 17.c4± is my opinion.  
13.h4 0-0 14.0-0



14...c5

14...d7 15.d3 f5 16.f3 b4 17.dxb4 axb4 18.a2 b3 19.dcl f7 20.dxb3 ♖b6 21.a3 e5 22.a5 ♖b4 23.♗e1 ♗d6 24.♗c1

In Li Shilong – Wang Yue, Xinghua 2012, Black did not have enough for a pawn.  
14...b4 15.ccl ♗c8 was Ragger – Caruana, Budva 2009. After 16.f4N White is slightly better.

15.d5 e4 16.f3 cxd4 17.fxe4 fxe5

Grischuk – Carlsen, Baku 2008, and now:

18.exd4!

This gives White the initiative after either 18...g7 19.ccl± or 18...f4 19.f3.

Instead of 9...g6, Black could also try the tricky:

9...d5!?

White responds sharply:

10.e4! dxc3 11.bxc3 fxe4 12.♗b3 f5 13.c4 fxe4 14.♗e3 f5 15.f2

This gives good compensation for the pawn.  
15...h6

If 15...d7 then 16.g4! f6 17.d5! is strong because 17...cxd5 18.cxd5 fxd5 19.f5

f6 20.fxc6 bxc6 21.f3d1 wins for White.

16.fh4 g5 17.fh5 f6

17...h7 18.f3 e6 19.0-0 Riedener – Williamson, e-mail 2009.

18.d5!

This is even stronger than my original recommendation of 18.f3 h7 19.f3d3 f7 20.f3 when White's position was easier to play in Kuljasevic – Milman, Washington 2006.

18...cxd5 19.f3 a6 20.f3 h7 21.f3g3

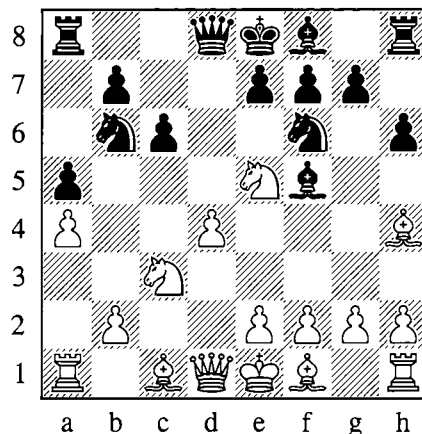
In Maduekwe – M. Petrov, e-mail 2008, White had excellent compensation. The rest of the game is worth a quick look as it shows Black's problems very well.

21...g4 22.fg4 dxc4 23.f7 dx5 24.fxe5 fg4 25.fg4 e6 26.f2 b6 27.fxb6 fxb6 28.0-0

Black's pieces will never be able to work together.

28...f6 29.f3d3 f7 30.f3 ♗e6 31.f3 c3 f7 32.f3 f5 33.h4 f8 34.g3 f4 35.f3b5 fg7 36.fxa5 fd4 37.f8 ff7 38.f3d7 fd1+ 39.f2 h5 40.f4 d4 41.f3c8 fb1 42.f3d8 fl1 43.f3d4 fb3 44.f2 fb1 45.f3d5 fg1+ 46.f2 fl1 47.f2d3 48.f8 f7 49.f3d8 fd8 50.f3fl1 fd4 51.f3e1 1-0

## 10.f4



## 10...e6

If instead:

10...♖bd5

White can get a good ending with:

11.♟b3

Too tame is 11.e3 e6 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♟xd3 ♗e7 14.0–0 0–0 15.♞ad1 ♖d7 16.♗xe7 ♟xe7 17.f4 ♞fd8 18.♟e2 ½–½ Moskalenko – Pozo Vera, Torredembarra 2011.

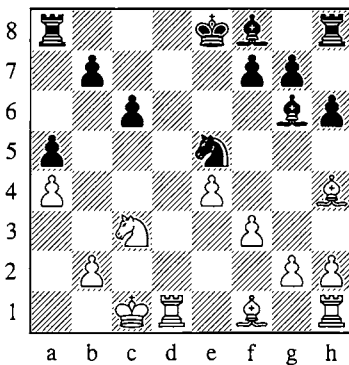
11...♟b6 12.♟xb6 ♖xb6 13.f3 ♖fd7

Interesting is 13...♗c2 14.e4 e6 when the bishop will be surprisingly safe on b3 in the middle of the white camp. Still 15.♗d3 ♗b3 16.♗f2 (The immediate 16.♗e2 is also fine: 16...♗e7 17.♞hc1 ♖fd7 18.♖xd7 ♗xd7 19.♗xe7 ♗xe7 20.♞a3 ♗c4 21.♗xc4 ♖xc4 22.♞b3 ♞hb8 23.e5! ♞a6 24.♖b5! ♖xb2 25.♖c7 ♞a7 26.♞xb2 ♗d7 27.♖xe6 fxe6 28.f4 White has good practical winning chances in the rook ending, Ribli – Naumann, Germany 2008.) 16...♗b4 17.♗e2 ♖fd7 18.♖xd7 ♗xd7 19.♖a2! ♗xa2 (not 19...♖xa4 20.♖c1 or 19...♗xa4 20.♖xb4 axb4 21.d5) 20.♞xa2± P.H. Nielsen – Dziuba, Plovdiv 2008, and White had the bishops and the space.

14.♖xd7

14.e4 ♖xe5 15.dxe5 ♗e6 16.♗f2 ♖d7 17.f4 g6 eventually held for Black in Cmilyte – Ruan, Ekaterinburg (2.1) 2006, but the extra space certainly makes White's position much easier to play.

14...♖xd7 15.e4 ♗g6 16.0–0–0 e5? 17.dxe5 ♖xe5



This happened between the same two players, and now Cmilyte effectively decided the outcome with a tactical blow:

18.♖d5! cxd5 19.♗b5† ♖c6 20.exd5 ♗b4 21.dxc6 0–0 22.c7 ♞ac8 23.♗g3

White won in Cmilyte – Ruan, Ekaterinburg (2.6) 2006.

Instead of the unfortunate 16...e5 Black should play the more modest 16...e6 and just accept having less space. White has no reason to complain though. He – or rather she – is the only one who can play for a win.

The alternative 10...g5 weakens the kingside: 11.♗g3 ♗g7 12.e3 ♖fd7 and now 13.♗d3!± Harikrishna – Becerra Rivero, Lubbock 2008.

**11.e4 ♗h7 12.f3 ♗e7 13.♗f2 0–0**

The immediate 13...♖fd7 will most probably lead to the same position after 14.♖d3.

**14.♗e2 ♖fd7**

The standard reaction for Black in this variation: White withdraws his knight rather than exchanging it, to keep maximum pressure on Black and use the extra space.

**15.♖d3 ♗d6**

The other option is:

15...♞c8 16.0–0 c5

This has been popular, but White can liquidate to a pleasant ending, where Black feels the absence of the h7-bishop:

17.dxc5 ♖xc5 18.♖xc5 ♗xc5 19.♗xc5 ♞xc5 20.♟xd8 ♞xd8 21.♞fd1 ♞cc8 22.♞ab1

Preparing b4.

22...♗f8 23.♞xd8† ♞xd8 24.b4 ♞d4 25.bxa5 ♖xa4 26.♖d1 ♞d2 27.♗f1 ♞d7 28.♞c1±

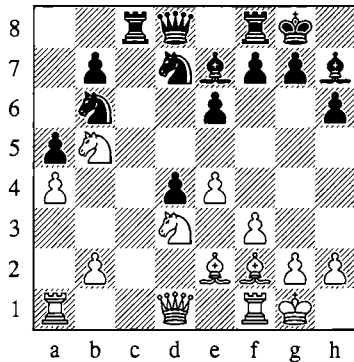
Gelfand – Felgaer, Khanty Mansyisk 2005. The knight on a4 and bishop on h7 do not coordinate very well.

Later Kozubov showed that Black had better chances to hold with the active: 22...f5 23.♗f2

fxe4 24.fxe4 ♖f8 Grigorian – Kuzubov, Kirishi 2007.

However White can improve on 17.dxc5. The latest word is:

17.♘b5!? cxd4



18.♙xd4

Maybe White can even improve upon the improvement! 18.♘xd4 ♘c4 19.♙c1 is promising. For example: 19...♙g5 20.f4 ♙h4 21.g3 ♙e7 22.♙g4! Threatening ♘xe6. 22...♘d6 23.♙xc8 ♘xc8 24.♙e2 ♘d6 25.♙f3± Rawlings – Rau, e-mail 2009.

18...♘c4 19.b3 ♘d6 20.♙d2 ♘xb5 21.axb5 e5 22.♙f2 ♘c5 23.♙d1 ♘d7 24.b6! ♙a8 25.♙e1 ♘xb6 26.♙xa5 ♘d7 27.♙d5 ♙c7 28.♙c1 ♙fc8 29.♙xc7 ♙xc7 30.♘xe5 ♘xe5 31.♙xe5

Black did not have enough for the pawn in Sargissian – Wang Yue, Pamplona 2007.

16.♙c1

A very exact move. White is ready to meet ...♙c7 with ♘b5.

On the immediate:

16.0–0

Black has prepared a typical liberation plan with:

16...♙c7 17.g3 e5

White maintained a small plus after:

18.♙c1 exd4 19.♘b5 ♙b8 20.♘xd4 ♙d8 21.b3 ♘e5 22.♙c2 ♘xd3 23.♙xd3 ♘d7 24.♙fd1

But Black had the usual firm Slav structure, Kasimdzhanov – Ki. Georgiev, Khanty-Mansyisk (2.3) 2007.

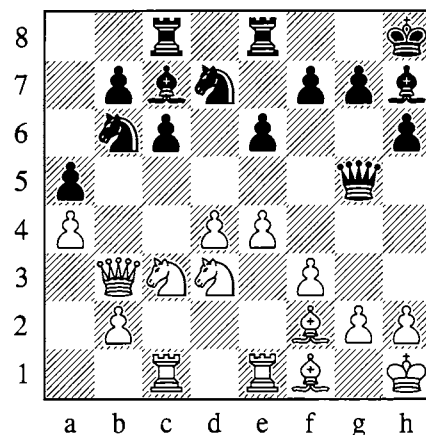
16...♙e7 17.♙b3 ♙c7 18.0–0

Now White is clearly better: Black has no obvious counter-strikes.

18...♙ac8 19.♘h1 ♘h8 20.♙fe1 ♙g5 21.♙f1

He has all the time in the world and slowly regroups. Black, on the other hand, lacks space and has difficulties in improving his pieces.

21...♙fe8?!



22.♘e5! ♘xe5 23.dxe5 ♘d7 24.♙xb7 ♘xe5 25.♙g3!

Threatening f3-f4.

25...♙e7 26.♘b5! ♙b8

Not 26...cxb5 27.♙xe5 ♙xe5 28.♙xe7 ♙xe7 29.♙xc8†.

27.♙xe7 ♙xe7 28.♙ed1 ♙f8 29.♘d6 f6 30.♙xe5 fxe5 31.♙xc6

With very forceful play White has won a pawn and has an overwhelming position.

31...♙d7 32.♙e2 ♙g6 33.h4 ♘h7 34.♘b5 ♙b7 35.♙a6 ♙c8 36.b3 ♙f7 37.♙c4 ♙f4 38.♙xa5

1–0

**Conclusion:** The new line 9...g5 could soon be making headlines. The best answer is probably 9...g6 where theory is still in its infancy.

**Chapter Conclusion:** You will often have to face the Slav. This opening is popular at all levels and, after having seen the illustrative games in this chapter, it is easy to understand why. Although our focus is on the white side of the board, one cannot help noticing that this opening is full of deep positional subtleties, and the tactical motifs are almost unlimited. So strategic understanding and concrete preparation will pay off.

After 5.a4 the minor lines will remain minor. If White knows what he is doing, he can count on a plus. The real test is 5...f5. Here our repertoire with 6.dxe5 is a reliable line that gives good chances of gaining an advantage. You especially have to be ready to face Morozevich's 11...g5 and Sokolov's 7...b6. They both lead to very demanding positions and nothing is completely clear, so be careful out there!

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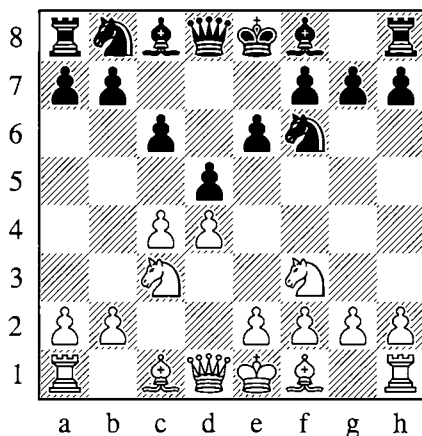
# Chapter 4

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## The Semi-Slav

*Karma Police arrest this man  
he talks in maths  
he buzzes like a fridge  
he's like a detuned radio*

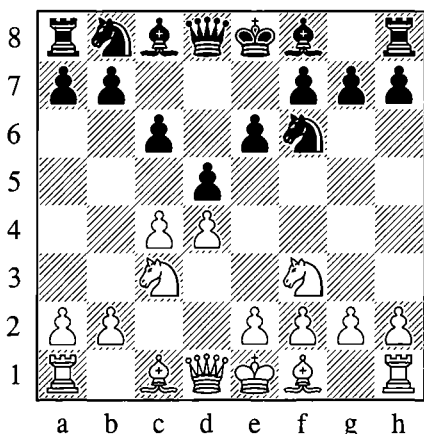
– Radiohead



**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6**

The Botvinnik Variation	page 135
The Moscow Variation	page 136
The Cambridge Springs	page 137
Queen's Gambit Declined	page 137
Theory: Botvinnik Variation	page 137
Theory: Moscow Gambit	page 166
Theory: Cambridge Springs	page 197
Theory: QGD	page 211

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♖c3 e6



The Semi-Slav, one of the most computer analysed and debated openings in the new millennium. Black reinforces his d5-strongpoint, but most importantly he also activates the typical Slav-idea of ...dxc4 followed by ...b5.

### 5.♗g5

The most active and critical response. It often leads to extreme complications and the resulting positions are very double-edged to put it mildly, so you should be willing to gamble a little to play it. And you shouldn't be allergic to computers either. With good knowledge of the basics, at least some of the current theory, and a lot of self-confidence, then 5.♗g5 is a tremendous weapon. Many of the variations are balancing on the cutting edge and a new move can always overturn the evaluations. Therefore it is absolutely essential to follow closely what is happening in the chess world. Suddenly a stunning idea will turn the common belief upside down. Fortunately it is fun to research. And in these modern times it can be fun to analyse as well. It is important to realize that chess is no longer a deep strategic game where you try to be creative at the board. It has become a much more concrete game, and a lot of clashes are decided right in the

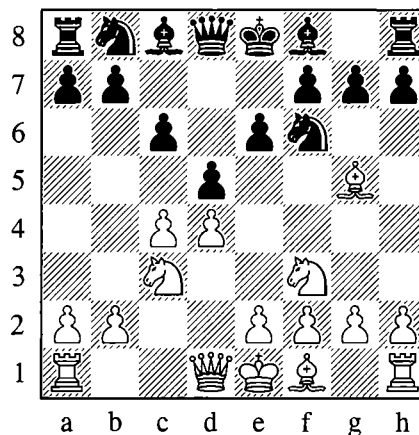
opening. This will also be the case in the Semi-Slav, so if you have a problem with that then 5.♗g5 is not suited for you. If, on the other hand, you don't mind letting Fritz analyse a critical position while you have a beer in the bar, then we are speaking the same language.

The modest 5.e3 is a simple and popular alternative. Here too the play can quickly become rather sharp if both sides insist. After 5...♘bd7 6.♗d3 dxc4 7.♗xc4 b5 8.♗d3 we have the starting position of the Meran. And the fancy 6.♞c2 ♗d6 7.g4 is also an interesting approach by White. Both variations deserve further investigations and could serve as an alternative to 5.♗g5. But you shouldn't be deceived: they are also very theoretical and difficult to play for both sides. It seems there are no shortcuts. If White is unable to keep his initiative then all hopes for an opening advantage will vanish. This is very much the characteristic of the whole Semi-Slav complex.

After 5.♗g5 the play divides into several big lines.

## The Botvinnik Variation

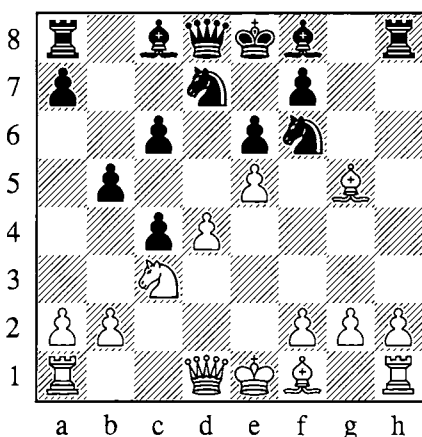
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♖c3 e6 5.♗g5



5...dxc4

The Botvinnik variation: Black goes all-in. White should be better and has to call. That is why there is no need to search for easy sidelines already. I will mention a few of them in the Theory section on the way down mainstreet anyway, because they give the possibility of varying the play, which could be useful if some problems should arise in one of the mainlines – and that is a real possibility. Actually, so real that it is more or less bound to happen.

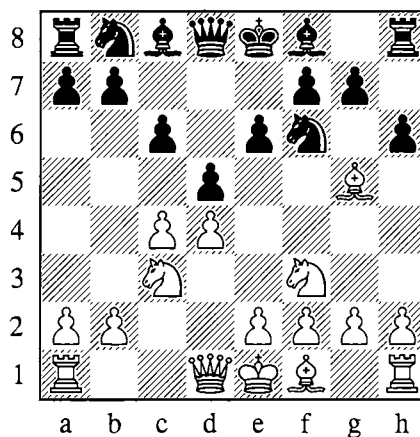
6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♖h4 g5 9.♘xg5 hxg5  
10.♗xg5 ♖bd7



White wins the piece back and is going to be a pawn up. It is not clear what Black has got in return, but his big pawn majority on the queenside is a factor that should not be underestimated. White's free h-pawn could also tell, but in practice it has been surprisingly difficult to get it going. Generally, normal chess logic ceases to apply in the Botvinnik variation and the tactical skirmish is just about to begin. We will return to it in the Theory section.

### The Moscow Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♖f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5  
h6

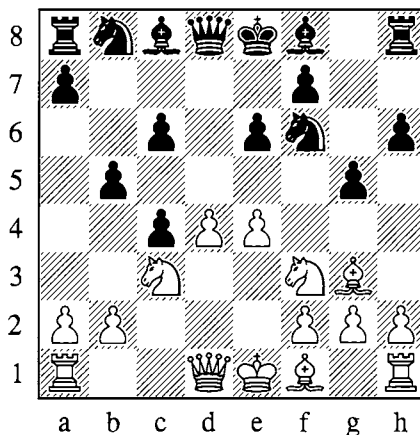


The Moscow variation: a sophisticated improvement of the Botvinnik. Of course White can play solidly and take on f6, but it is more natural to withdraw the threatened bishop.

6.♗h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5

The difference.

8.♗g3 b5



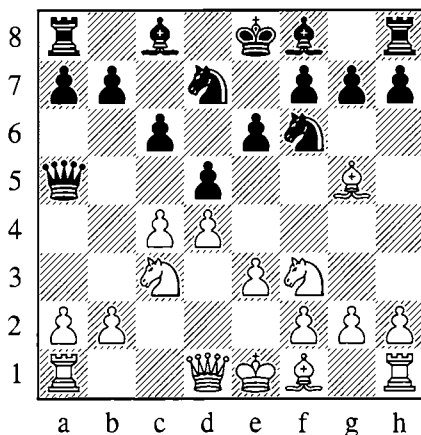
Here it is White who has sacrificed a pawn. This time the compensation is obvious. White is ahead in development and Black's kingside is weakened and can be attacked with h4. Still, is it worth more than a pawn, that's the question.

## The Cambridge Springs

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♟f3 ♟f6 4.♟c3 e6 5.♞g5 ♟bd7

The Botvinnik and Moscow variations both lead to chaotic play, so some Black players instead try to have more control. A popular move is 5...♟bd7.

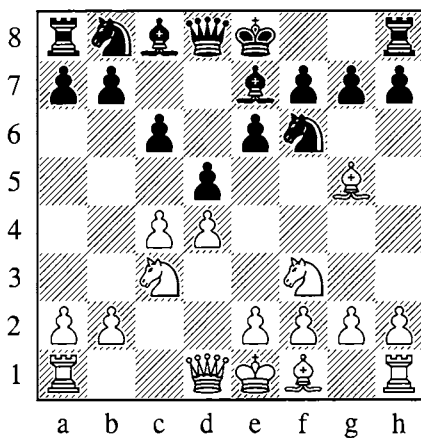
6.e3 ♞a5



The Cambridge Springs. Black pins the white knight and threatens ...♟e4. White has to react energetically to keep the initiative.

## Queen's Gambit Declined

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♟f3 ♟f6 4.♟c3 e6 5.♞g5 ♞e7



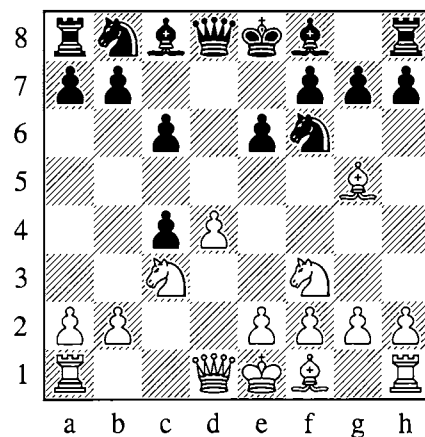
Finally Black can choose just to play a Queen's Gambit Declined position. It looks firm, but ...c6 has been played prematurely and White has no difficulties getting some positional advantage.

It may seem odd at first glance to cover the Cambridge Springs and the QGD in the chapter on the Semi-Slav rather than, say, Chapter 1 – the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation. However, there is logic to my choice: with my repertoire Black can only reach the Cambridge Springs and the QGD via the Semi-Slav move-order. If Black had played 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♟c3 ♟f6 we would of course play 4.cxd5.

With the structure explained, it is time for the wild Botvinnik Variation.

## Theory: Botvinnik Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♟f3 ♟f6 4.♟c3 e6 5.♞g5 dxc4



6.e4

The natural move. White takes the centre and simultaneously threatens to recapture the pawn on c4 and exploit the pin on the dark knight by e5.

An alternative is 6.a4 ♞b4 7.e4 where White

can answer 7...b5 with 8.e5 and 7...c5 with 8.♗xc4. Black's most solid approach is 7...♗xc3† 8.bxc3 ♖a5 9.e5 ♘e4 10.♗d2 ♗d5 and now 11.a5 gives White the chance to enjoy an initiative.

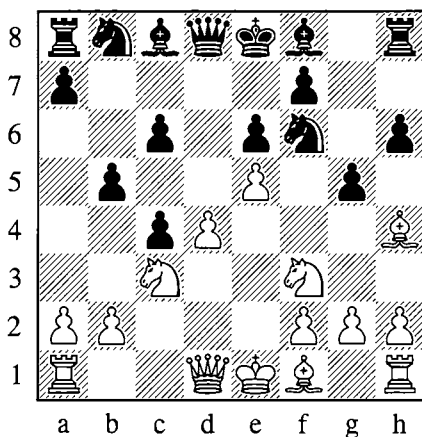
### 6...b5 7.e5

Again an alternative is 7.a4, but now Black can hold onto the pawn with 7...♗b6 which has scored very well for him.

### 7...h6

Black has to break the pin.

### 8.♗h4 g5

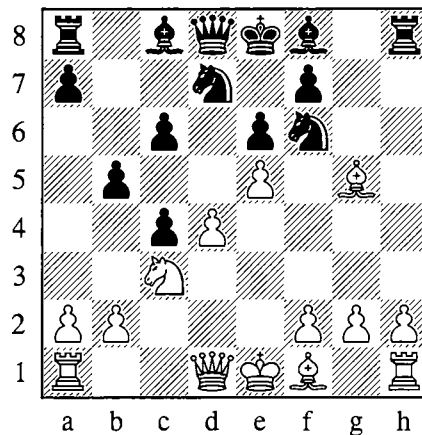


### 9.♘g5 hxg5

Sometimes Black tries the tricky 9...♘d5 but it is not correct. White answers 10.♘xf7! and gets the upper hand. Game 36 shows how.

### 10.♗xg5 ♘bd7

The standard reaction. Possible is 10...♗e7 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.♗xf6 ♖xf6. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops has left Black with big holes on c5 and d6, which could be useful for the white knight. Game 37 highlights this issue.

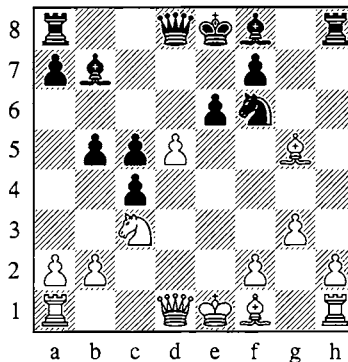


### 11.g3

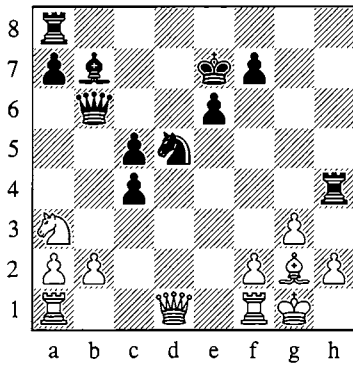
An important moment.

White could take on f6 immediately by 11.exf6 when 11...♗b7 12.g3 c5 13.d5 ♗b6 14.♗g2 0–0–0 15.0–0 is just another way to reach the mainline.

Black gets some additional possibilities on move 13 though, of which 13...♗h6 and 13...♗c7 deserve to be mentioned, but especially 13...♘xf6 has been a problem.

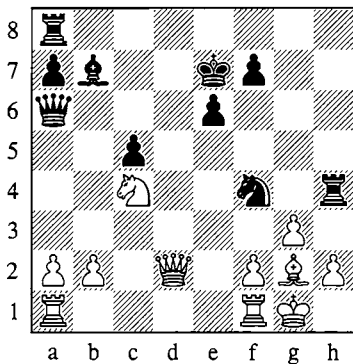


The spectacular mainline goes: 14.♗g2 ♗e7 (14...♗h6!? 15.♗xf6 ♖xf6 16.0–0 0–0–0 17.♘xb5 a6 18.♘c3 exd5∞) 15.0–0 ♘xd5 16.♗xe7 ♘xe7 17.♘xb5 ♗b6 18.♘a3 ♗h4!



Now the path diverges:

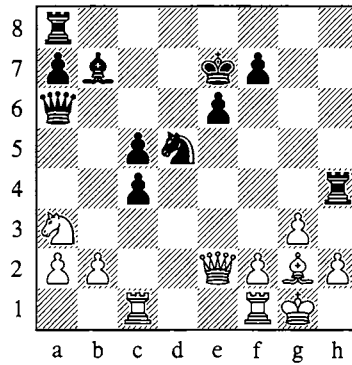
19.♖d2 ♜f4! 20.♜xc4 ♚a6



And White has been unable to prove anything but a draw. For example: 21.♙fc1 ♙g8 22.♙xb7 ♚xb7 23.♚d6+ ♜f6 24.♚e5+ ♜e7 25.♚xc5+ ♜f6 26.♚e5+ ♜e7 27.♜e3 ♜e2+ 28.♜f1 ♜xc1 29.♜f5+ ♜d7 30.♚d6+ ♜e8 31.♙xc1 exf5 32.gxh4 ♚h1+ 33.♜e2 ♚xc1 34.♚b8+ ♜e7 35.♙xg8 ♚c4+ 36.♜d2 ♚f4+ 37.♜e1 ♚c1+ 38.♜e2 ♚c4+ 39.♜d2 ♚f4+ ½-½ Jobava – Rodshtein, Pamplona 2007.

In view of the forced draw above, this is the moment to deviate and the right way to do so is:

19.♙c1! ♚a6 20.♚e2



Although the position is very complicated White seems to get the upper hand, primarily because Black's ...♜f4 idea can be countered. The following two correspondence games illustrate the wild play that may result:

20...♙g8 21.♙xc4 ♜f4 22.♚e5 ♜xg2 23.♚xc5+ ♚d6 24.♚c7+ ♚d7 25.♙d1 ♙d5 26.♚c5+ ♜e8 27.♚c8+ ♚d8 28.♙xd5 exd5 29.♙c5 ♜e1 30.♚b7 ♜f3+ 31.♜f1 ♜d2+ 32.♜e2 ♙e4+ 33.♜xd2 ♙e7 34.♚c8 ♙d7 35.♚xd8+ ♜xd8 36.♜c2 ♙g6 37.♜d4 ♙f6 38.f3 ♙a6 39.♜c6+ ♜e8 40.♜b8 ♙xa2 41.♜xd7 ♜xd7 42.♙xd5+ ♜c6 43.♙f5 ♙xb2+ 44.♜c3 ♙xh2 45.♙xf7 a5 46.♙f5 ♙g2 47.g4 ♜b6 48.g5 ♙g1 49.♜b3 ♙b1+ 50.♜a2 1-0 Baum – Roberts, e-mail 2008.

20...♜f4 21.♚e5 ♜xg2 22.♚g5+ f6 23.♚g7+ ♜e8 24.gxh4 ♜f4 25.♚g8+ ♜e7 26.♚h7+ ♜e8 27.h3 ♚c6 28.♚g8+ ♜e7 29.♚g7+ ♜e8 30.♜h2 ♜h5 31.♚g6+ ♜e7 32.♜xc4 ♚f3 33.♚g4 ♚f4+ 34.♚xf4 ♜xf4 35.♙g1 ♜e2 36.♙g7+ ♜f8 37.♙xb7 ♜xc1 38.h5 ♙d8 39.h6 ♜g8 40.♙xa7 ♙d4 41.♜e3 f5 42.a4 ♜d3 43.a5 ♙a4 44.b3 ♙a2 45.♙g7+ ♜h8 46.♜c4 ♙xf2+ 47.♜g3 f4+ 48.♜h4 ♙a2 49.♜d6 ♜e5 50.♜e4 ♜f3+ 51.♜g4 ♜d4 52.♜g5 1-0 Kolesar – Montella, e-mail 2008.

### 11...♙b7

Here Black has a chance to prove the downside of the move-order 11.g3, namely by

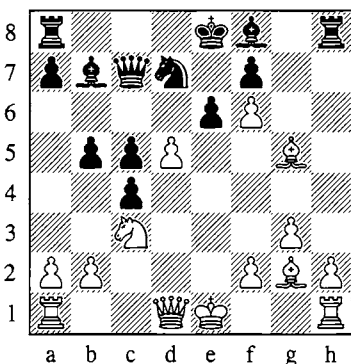
playing 11...♙g8 12.h4 ♜xg5 13.hxg5 ♘d5. White must think more about the initiative than material, and respond actively with 14.g6 fxg6 15.♙g4. See Game 38 for the current status of this interesting line.

The other try, 11...♙a5 12.exf6 b4 13.♘e4 ♙a6, may be a little disturbing for White, but if he knows his stuff he will be able to castle comfortably and Black's operations on the queenside might be premature. See Game 39.

## 12.♙g2 ♙b6

The normal move, but also seen is:

12...♙c7 13.exf6 c5 14.d5



Now we have two options:

14...♙e5†

This is a mistake due to:

15.♙e2 0–0–0

15...♙xg5? simply loses to 16.dxe6! ♙xg2 17.exd7† ♘xd7 18.f4! ♙xg3† 19.hxg3 ♜xh1† 20.♘f2 ♜xa1 21.♘g2 1–0 Glembek – Heyn, corr. 2000.

16.dxe6 ♙xe2† 17.♘xe2 ♙xg2 18.e7 ♙xe7 19.fxe7 ♜dg8

And now:

20.h4!

This is a promising exchange sacrifice.

20...♙g6 21.♘xb5 ♜e6† 22.♘d2 ♙xh1 23.♜xh1 a6 24.♘a3±

Lesiege – Khassanov, Montreal 2001.

Instead of 14...♙e5† Black can try:

14...b4

But then comes:

15.d6! ♙b6 16.♘e4 0–0–0 17.0–0 ♙d5

17...♘e5 18.♙e2 ♙d5 19.♜fd1 is just good for White who is more than willing to give up an exchange to get rid of Black's light-squared bishop:

19...♙c6 20.a3 b3 21.♜xd5! exd5 22.♘c3 ♙xd6 23.♘xd5± Filippov – Bocharov, Tomsk 2004.

Or 19...♘c6 20.♜ac1 ♙xd6 21.♜xc4! ♙xc4 22.♙xc4 with good play, as in P.H. Nielsen – Smeets, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

18.a3 b3 19.♙f4 ♙c6 20.f3

White is better.

20...♙xe4

Or 20...♙h6 21.♙d2 ♙xf4 22.♙xf4± Arakelov – E. Volkov, Dubna 2007.

20...e5!? avoids ♙d2 as in the mainline, so instead I suggest: 21.♙g5N (21.♙d2 ♙xd6 22.♙e2 ♙c7 23.♜ad1 ♘f8∞; 21.♙e3 ♙xe4 22.fxe4 ♘b6∞) 21...♙xe4 22.fxe4 ♘b6 23.a4†

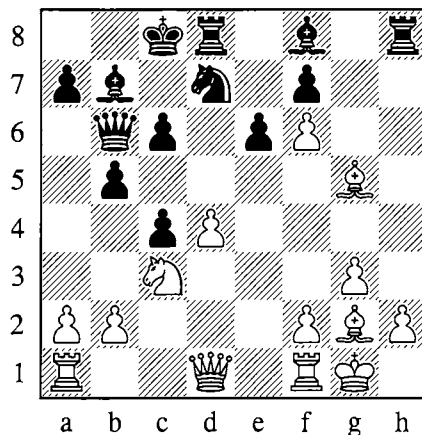
21.fxe4 e5

Kaidanov – Hillarp Persson, Turin 2006, and now I like 22.♙d2 ♙xd6 23.♙c3±.

## 13.exf6 0–0–0

13...c5 14.d5 leads to the same thing.

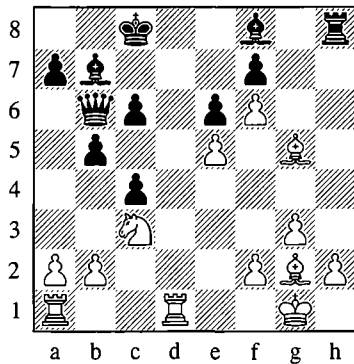
## 14.0–0



## 14...c5

The normal way of seeking counterplay. Black should confront White in the centre and on the queenside, where he has a massive pawn superiority. A few other moves have been tried, but they do not solve the demands of the position.

14...♖e5 15.dxe5! ♜xd1 16.♞fxd1



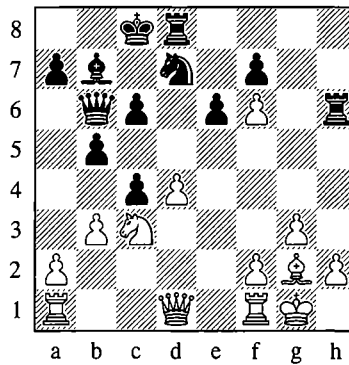
After the positional queen sacrifice White is clearly in the driver's seat. He has almost total dominance and Black cannot use his queen for much.

One example is 16...♙c5 17.♗e4 ♙d4 18.♗d6† ♗c7 19.♗xf7 ♞f8 20.♗d6 ♙xe5 21.♙e3 ♞a6 22.♗e4 ♙c8 23.♙c5 ♞xf6 Vilela – Frey Beckman, Havana 1985, and now 24.♙e7! ♞f7 25.♙d8† ♗b8 26.♗c5 would have trapped the queen.

If aided by machines, Black might just be able to hold. Here is a new example: 16...c5 17.♙f4 b4 18.♗e4 ♙d5 19.♞xd5 exd5 20.♗g5 ♙h6 21.♗xf7 ♙xf4 22.gxf4 ♞f8 23.♙xd5 c3 24.bxc3 bxc3 25.♗d6† ♗c7 26.♞c1 c2 27.♙b3 ♞g8† 28.♗f1 ♞g4 29.♞xc2 ♞c6 30.♙e6 ♞xf4 31.♗g1 ♞f3 32.♞xc5† ♗b6 33.♞b5† ♗c6 34.♙d5† ♞xd5 35.♞xd5 ♗xd5 36.♗c8 ♗xe5 37.♗xa7 ♞xf6 ½–½ Schranz – Kireev, e-mail 2009.

14...♙h6 15.♙xh6 ♞xh6 16.b3

White opens the position.



16...cxb3

16...c5 17.d5 cxb3 18.♞xb3 a6 19.a4 b4 20.dxe6 ♞xe6 21.♞xe6 fxe6 22.♙xb7† ♗xb7 23.♗e4± Bozyavkin – Genchev, e-mail 2008.

17.axb3 ♗xf6 18.♞d2 ♞h5 19.♞fd1 e5 20.♗e2 exd4 21.♗f4 ♞hh8 22.b4

With a positional grip. Black feels the absence of his dark-squared bishop.

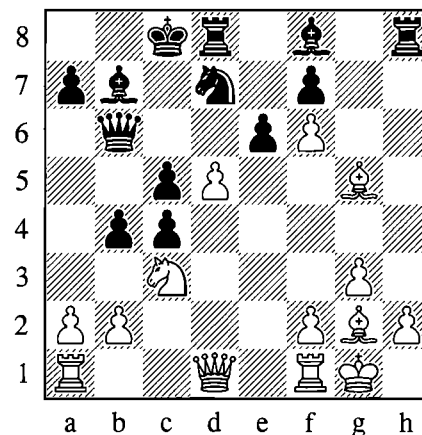
22...♗b8 23.♗d3 ♞d6 24.♗c5 ♞h8 25.h4

Run Forrest, run!

25...♙c8 26.♞a3 ♗d5 27.♞da1 ♗c3 28.♞xa7 ♞xa7 29.♞xa7 ♗xa7 30.h5 ♗b6 31.♞e1 ♗a2 32.♗e4 ♞d5 33.h6 1–0

Withey – Perrin, corr. 2007.

15.d5 b4



Another important crossroads.

**16. ♖a4**

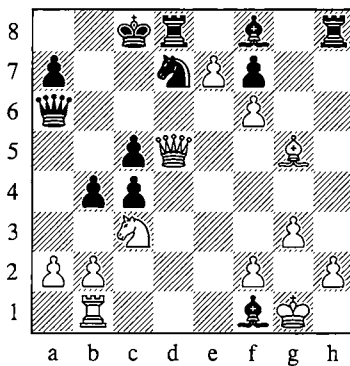
This move gives Black the most problems. The alternative is the stunning:

**16. ♜b1**

This leads to extremely sharp variations full of sacrifices and counter-sacrifices. Black seems to hold in the critical positions, but let's have a quick look. 16...bxc3 17.bxc3 is too dangerous for Black. Instead he should play:

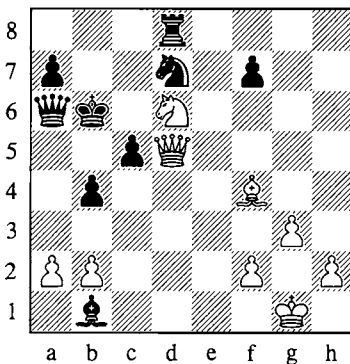
16...♞a6 17.dxe6 ♙xg2 18.e7 ♙xf1

18...♙b7 and 18...♙a8 are interesting attempts.

**19. ♞d5**

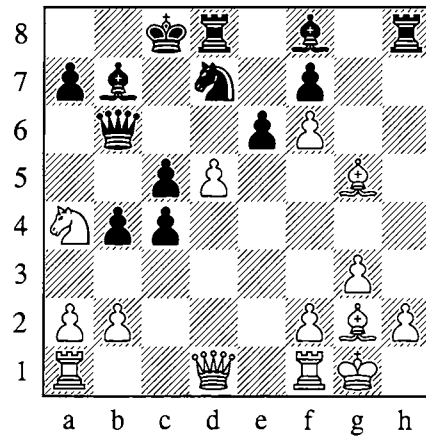
A fantastic position. White is a rook down and everything hangs everywhere.

19...♙e7 20.fxe7 ♙d3 21.♖e4 ♙xb1 22.♖d6† ♙c7 23.♙f4 ♙b6 24.♖xc4† ♙b5 25.♖d6† ♙b6 26.exd8=♙† ♞xd8



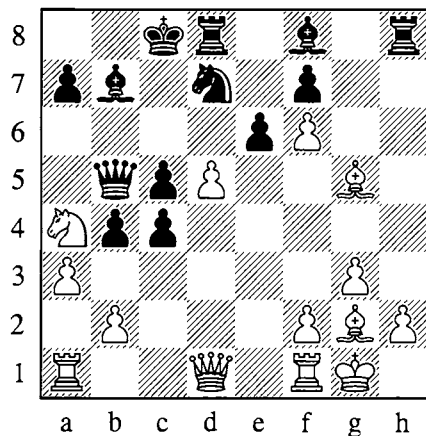
27. ♖c4†

Playing for more than a draw is risky: 27.a4 bxa3 28.♖c4† ♞xc4 29.♞xc4 a2 27...♙b5 28.♖d6† ♙b6 29.♖c4† ♙b5 ½–½ Topalov – Kramnik, Dortmund 1996.

**16... ♞b5**

The queen had to be moved, but where to? 16...♞b5 has been the traditional answer, but also interesting is 16...♞a6 – see Game 40.

16...♞d6, however, cannot be recommended. 17.♙f4 e5 18.♙e3 ♙h6 19.♞c1 ♙e3 20.♞xe3 is just good for White. 20...♙a6 21.a3 ♙b8 22.h4 ♞dg8 23.♖xc5 ♖xc5 24.axb4 ♖b7 1–0 Kramnik – Ivanchuk, Novgorod 1996. An early resignation by Chucky. The finish could be 25.♞a3 ♙c7 26.♞fa1 ♙b5 27.♞xa7 ♞b8 28.♞1a5 ♙d7 29.♞5a6 and wins.

**17.a3**

Trying to open the queenside for the white pieces. 17.dxe6 ♟xg2 is complicated, but Black has done well in the games that have been played with it.

### 17...exd5

Almost the only move left.

a) 17...♟h6 18.♟xh6 ♞xh6 is known to be risky:

a1) 19.dxe6 ♟xg2 20.exd7† ♞xd7 21.♞c1 This is given by Pedersen as good for White. If we continue a bit with: 21...♟xf1 22.♞xh6 ♞xa4 23.♞xf1 c3 It seems that Black gets good counterplay. Instead White could play:

a2) 19.axb4 cxb4 20.b3 c3 21.♞d4

This looks promising.

21...♟xd5 22.♞xc3! bxc3 23.♞xc3† ♗b8 24.♞d4 ♟xg2 25.♞d6† ♗b7 26.♞xa7† ♗xa7 27.♞c7† ♟b7 28.♞a1† ♞a6 29.♞xa6† ♗xa6 30.♞xd8

With a winning position: the pawns begin to tell.

30...♟c6 31.b4 ♞h5 32.♞c7 ♞e5 33.f4 ♞f3† 34.♗f1 ♞xh2† 35.♗e2 ♟b5† 36.♗d2 ♞f1† 37.♗c3 ♞xg3 38.♞xf7 ♞e2† 39.♗d2 ♞xf4 40.♞xh5 1–0

Traut – Rudwall, corr. 1997.

b) 17...♟xd5 18.♟xd5 exd5 19.♞xd5 ♞xa4 20.axb4

Vigorito likes 20.♞fd1 and after 20...♞b5 21.axb4 ♞b7 22.♞xf7 you can understand why.

20...♞b6 21.♞xf7 ♞d7 22.♞xa7

This is an idea of Korchnoi.

22...♞xf7 23.♞xf7 cxb4 24.♟e3 ♞d7 25.♞xd7 ♞xd7 26.♞c1 ♞xf6 27.♞xc4† ♗d7 28.♟d4 ♞h6

The ending does not win by itself, but the three pawns give White good practical chances as the following game confirms.

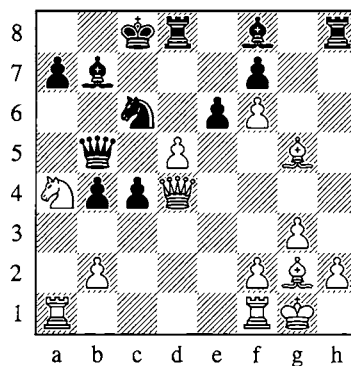
29.♗g2 ♗e6 30.♞c6† ♟d6 31.♟e3 ♞h5 32.♟f4 ♞d5 33.h4 ♞e4 34.♞b6 b3 35.♟xd6 ♞xd6 36.♞xb3 ♞d2 37.♗f3 ♞xf2 38.♞e3† ♗f5 39.♞e2 ♞xe2 40.♗xe2 ♞e4 41.♗f3 ♞d2† 42.♗g2 ♗g4 43.b4 ♞c4 44.b5 ♞b6 45.♗f2 ♞c4 46.♗g1 ♞b6 47.♗f2 ♞c4 48.♗e2 ♞b6 49.♗e3 ♞d7 50.♗d4 1–0

Mason – Hanison, corr. 2000.

c) 17...♞b8 18.axb4 cxb4 19.♞d4

19.♞g4 is also possible, but 19.♞d4 and the following queen sacrifice is very tempting. After 19.♞g4 play can continue: 19...♟xd5 20.♞fc1 ♞c6 21.♟xd5 ♞xd5 22.♞xc4 ♞xg5 (22...♗d7 23.♞ac1 ♞xg5 24.♞e4 ♞d8 25.♞a8 ♗e8 26.♞c8 ♞d5 27.♞xa7 ♞a5 28.♞xd8† ♞xd8 29.♞b6 ♞d1† 30.♞xd1 ♞xd1† 31.♗g2 ♟c5 32.♞a8† ♞d8 33.♞c6† ♗f8 34.♞xc5† ♗e8 35.♞b5† ♗f8 36.♞d7† ♗e8 37.♞e5† ♗f8 38.♞xb4† ♗e8 39.♞a4† ♗f8 40.h4 ♞h6 41.♞b4† ♗e8 42.♞a4† ♗f8 43.♞a7 ♞h7 44.b4 1–0 Wicklund Hansen – Castro, Internet 2005.) 23.♞d4 ♗b8 24.♞xc6 ♞xg3† (of course 24...♞xc6 allows 25.♞f4† ♟d6 26.♞xg5) 25.fxg3 ♞xc6 26.♞d1 ♞c7 (26...♟h6 27.♞c5 ♗a8 28.♞e4 ♞xe4 29.♞xe4 with a better ending) 27.b3 ♗c8 28.♞e4 ♗b8 This has been tested in some correspondence games. So far Black has managed to hold the balance, but the position looks favourable for White.

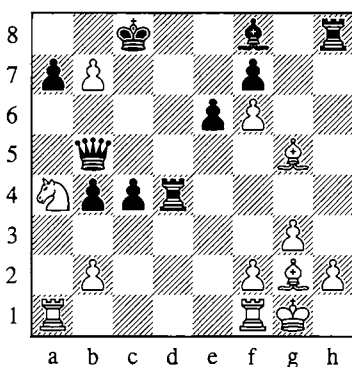
19...♞c6



20.dxc6!?

20.♘b6†! is a good alternative. 20...axb6  
21.dxc6 ♙xc6 22.♙xc6 ♚xc6 23.♗g4  
The position is complicated, but White seems better due to his safer king. 23...♙c5 (23...♗b7 is a better try) 24.♙a7! ♖d7 25.♙xd7 ♗xd7 26.h4 ♗c7 27.h5 e5 28.h6 ♙d4 29.♗e2 b3 30.♙e3 ♗d5 31.♖d1 ♗c6 32.♗g4 b5 33.♙xd4 exd4 34.♙xd4 ♗e5 35.♗d7† ♗c5 36.♗a7† ♗c6 37.♗d7† ♗c5 38.♙f4 ♗xb2 39.♙f5† ♗b4 40.♗xb5† ♗c3 41.♙f3† 1–0 Carlsen – Smeets, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

20...♙xd4 21.cxb7†



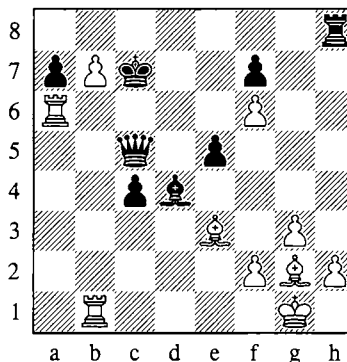
This protected passed pawn on the seventh rank will be a constant nuisance for Black.

21...♗c7

21...♗b8 makes a difference. After 22.♙e3 e5 23.b3! c3 24.♙fd1 ♙h6 25.♙xd4 (25.♙xd4 ♙xe3) 25...exd4 26.♙xd4 c2 27.♙c4 Black must force an ending. 27...♗xc4 28.bxc4 Now White is doing well after 28...c1=♗† 29.♙xc1 ♙xc1 30.♗c5 a5 31.♙d5±. So Black should prefer 28...♖d8! 29.♙f3 c1=♗† 30.♙xc1 ♙xc1 31.♗c5 ♖d6 with an extremely unclear ending that seems to be in some kind of balance. Here is the latest try: 32.♗g2 a5 33.g4 ♙f4 34.h4 b3 35.♗xb3 a4 36.c5 ♙xf6 37.♗d4 a3 38.♙d5 ♙a6 39.♗c2 f6 40.♗f3 ♙c1 41.c6 a2 42.h5 a1=♗ 43.♗xa1 ♙xa1 44.♙e4 ½–½ Aberg – Kroes, Internet 2010.

22.♙e3 e5

22...♖d5 23.♙xa7 ♗xb7 24.♗b6 or 22...♙c5 23.♗xc5 ♗xc5 24.♙a6 ♗b8 25.♙c6 is worse. 23.♗c3! bxc3 24.bxc3 ♙c5 25.cxd4 ♙xd4 26.♙fb1 ♗c5 27.♙a6



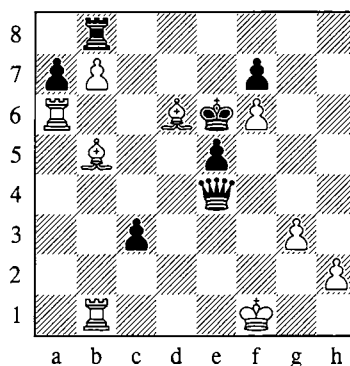
27...♙b8

Black can probably save himself with:  
27...c3! 28.♙c6† ♗xc6 29.♙xc6 c2 30.♙c1 ♗xc6 31.♙xc2† ♗xb7 32.♙xd4 exd4 33.♙d2 ♖d8 34.♗f1 d3 35.♗e1 a5 36.h4 ♗a6 37.♙a2 ♙e8† 38.♗d1 ♙e6 39.♙a3 ♙xf6 40.f4 ♗b5 ½–½ Trembecki – Stoeckert, e-mail 2009.

28.♙c1!

The bishop goes the other way around and decides the game.

28...c3 29.♙a3 ♗c4 30.♙d6† ♗d7 31.♙c6† ♗e6 32.♙b5 ♙xf2† 33.♗xf2 ♗d4† 34.♗f1 ♗e4

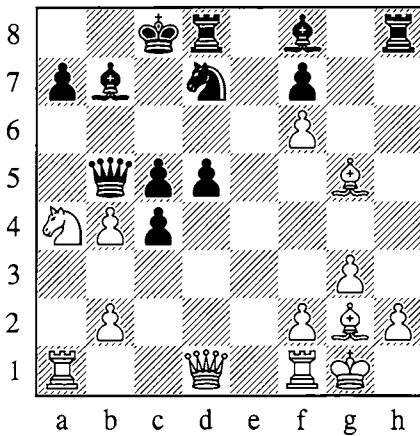


35.♙e1! ♗h1† 36.♗f2 ♗xh2† 37.♗f3 ♙xb7 38.♙xe5† ♙b6 39.♙c4† ♗d7 40.♙xa7† ♗c8

41.♞c7† 1–0

Kamsky – Kramnik, New York 1994.

18.axb4



18...cxb4

This is the main position in the Botvinnik variation and it will be analysed in Games 41 and 42. Sometimes Black has tried to confuse matters with:

18...d4!?

But after:

19.♙xb7† ♖xb7 20.♘c5† ♙xc5

Bad is 20...♘c5 21.♞f3† ♖b6 22.bxc5† ♙xc5 23.♙d2 ♙b4 24.♙xb4 ♞xb4 25.♞a6†

21.bxc5 ♘c5 22.♞e1

The black king's position is too open and White has won some convincing correspondence games.

22...♘e6

Or 22...♘b3 23.♞e7† ♞d7 24.♞f3† ♖b6 25.♞ae1 ♞c6 26.♞f5 ♘c5 27.♙d2 ♞d5 28.♞1e5 ♞hd8 29.♞xf7 ♘d3 30.♞xd5 ♞xd5 31.♞e4 ♘c5 32.♞e1 ♞d7 33.♞xd7 ♞xd7 34.♞e7 1–0 Hayakawa – Tanti, corr. 2006.

23.♙d2 ♞h5 24.h4 ♞xd1 25.♞exd1 ♞d5 26.♞dc1 ♞c8 27.♞a4 ♞dc5 28.♖f1 a5 29.g4 ♖a6 30.f3 c3 31.bxc3 dxc3 32.♙e3 1–0

Bredenhof – Ward, corr. 2007.

## GAME 36

Kund – Jimenez

Correspondence 2005

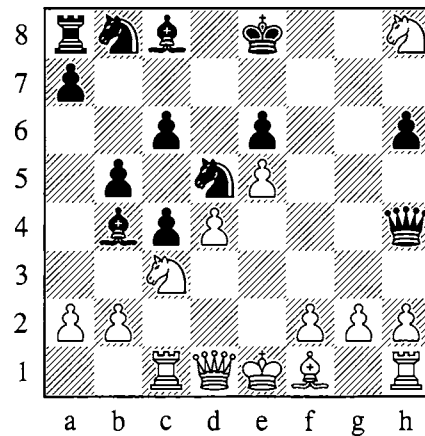
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♙g5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♘xg5 ♘d5?!

A tricky line to face over the board, but the good news is that if White knows his stuff, he wins.

10.♘xf7! ♞xh4 11.♘xh8

The knight is difficult to trap.

11...♙b4 12.♞c1



12...c5

Black strikes at the centre. The text is probably the best move, but if you did not know the variation the move you would fear would of course be:

12...♞e4†

The problem seems to be:

13.♙e2 ♘f4

This looks grim. In fact it is good for White.

14.a3 ♘g2† 15.♖f1 ♘e3† 16.fxe3 ♞xh1† 17.♖f2 ♞xh2† 18.♖e1 ♙e7

Or 18...♞g1† 19.♖d2 ♞xd1† 20.♞xd1 ♙xc3† 21.bxc3 ♘d7 22.♞g1. White

penetrates the kingside before Black is fully coordinated. 22...♙b7 23.♞g8† ♖e7 24.♞g7† ♖d8 25.♜f7† ♖c7 26.♙g4 c5 27.♙xe6 ♞b8 28.♜xh6 ♙c8 29.♙xd7 1–0 Ionov – Pera Lucas, Balaguer 1997.

19.♖d2 c5

Or 19...a5 20.♞g1.

20.♜xb5 cxd4 21.♞xc4 ♜a6 22.♞xd4 ♙c5 23.♞f1 ♙xd4 24.♞f7† ♖d8 25.♜xd4 ♞g2 26.♞f8† ♖d7 1–0

Timman – Ljubojevic, Buenos Aires 1980.

### 13.dxc5 ♜d7

13...♞g5 14.♙e2 is not good enough: the check on h5 is disturbing for Black.

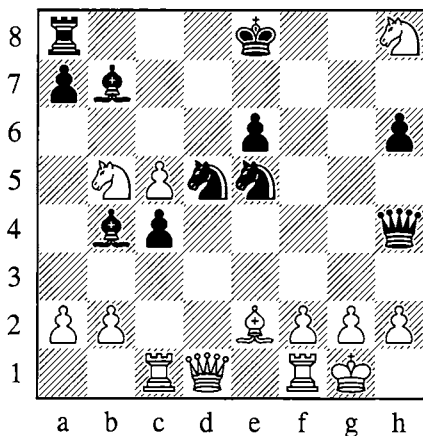
### 14.♙e2 ♜xe5 15.0–0

The simplest. 15.♙h5† ♖e7 is less clear.

### 15...♙b7

If 15...♙xc3 then 16.♞xc3! is strong because 16...♜xc3 17.♙h5† ♖f8 18.♞d6† ♖g8 19.♞xe5 is winning for White, as in Nemet – Karaklajic, Yugoslavia 1979.

### 16.♜xb5



### 16...0–0–0

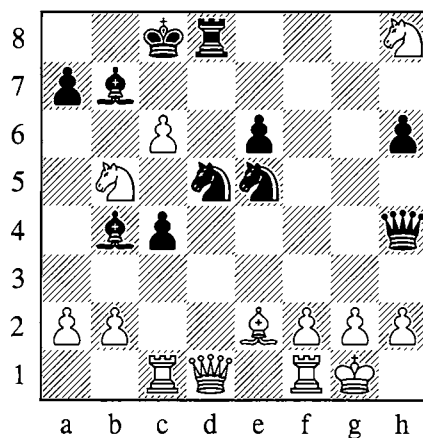
Other moves have also had a hard time.

16...♙xc5 17.♜g6! ♜xg6 18.♞xc4 ♜df4 (or

18...♞e7 19.♙h5) 19.♞xc5 ♞d8 20.♜d6† ♞xd6 21.♙b5† ♖f7 22.♞xd6 ♞g4 23.♞c7† ♖g8 24.♞xb7 ♜h3† 25.♖h1 ♜xf2† 26.♞xf2 1–0 P.H. Nielsen – Sveshnikov, Kemerovo 1995.

16...♞d8 17.♞a4 (17.♙h5†! ♖d7 18.♜d6 just wins) 17...♜f4? (17...♙c6 should have been tried) 18.♜d4† ♖f8 19.♜xe6† ♜xe6 20.♞xb4 ♙c6 21.f4 ♖g8 22.♞e1 ♞xe1 23.♞xe1 1–0 Gulko – Vera, Yucatan 1999.

### 17.c6!



This smart intermediate move quickly decides the issue.

### 17...♜f4

Unfortunately he could not take on c6: 17...♙xc6 18.♜xa7† followed by ♜xc6 or 17...♜xc6 when 18.♜xa7†! ♜xa7 19.♞xc4† wins the black queen.

### 18.♞c2!

The most precise.

### 18...♞d2 19.♞h7 ♙e7

19...♜xe2† 20.♖h1 ♞e7 21.cxb7† ♖b8 22.♞e4 ♜d3 23.♞c6 ♞xb7 24.♞e8† ♞c8 25.♞xc8† ♖xc8 26.♞xc4† ♖b7 27.g3 and White wins.

20.♖ce1 ♜xc2 21.♞g8† ♔d8 22.♘d6†  
1–0

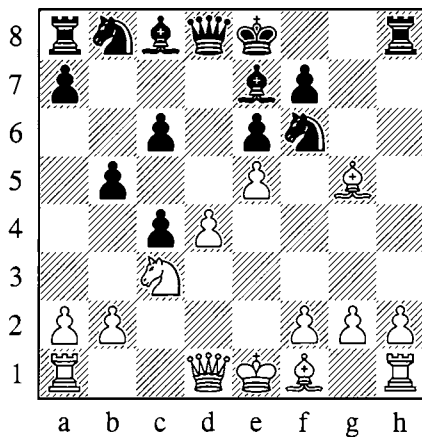
**Conclusion:** 9...♘d5?! is refuted by 10.♘xf7!.

## GAME 37

Castellano – Parkes

Correspondence 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♙g5  
dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♘xg5 hxg5  
10.♙xg5 ♙e7



11.exf6 ♙xf6 12.♙xf6

White could also withdraw the bishop to e3, but it makes sense to exchange them as Black is left with a lot of holes on the dark squares.

12...♞xf6 13.g3 ♘a6

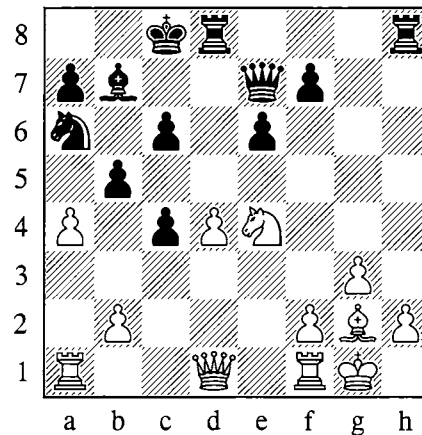
13...♙b7 14.♙g2 ♘a6 transposes.

14.♙g2 ♙b7 15.♘e4

White centralizes the knight and drives the black queen away from the good square f6. If instead 15.0–0 0–0–0 the d-pawn already hangs. White has also tried to sharpen the play with the more direct 15.a4 or 15.♘xb5, but I think the text move is the most convincing.

15...♞e7 16.0–0 0–0–0 17.a4

After completing development White starts active operations on the queenside. Black has no real attacking chances on the kingside, so he should turn to the centre for counterplay. Also, he would like to activate the knight, but it is easier said than done. If it moves from a6 to b4 the white knight gets a great outpost on c5.



17...♙b8

A good way to start: Black improves his king's safety.

Keeping the position closed with 17...b4 is a positional concession. After 18.♖c1 f5 19.♘d2 ♜xd4 20.♖xc4 ♜hd8 21.♖xd4 ♖xd4 22.♞c2± as in Brewer – Cody, corr. 1992, White is well coordinated and the free h-pawn is a real factor.

The other alternative is 17...f5, when it is tempting for White to force the play with 18.axb5 cxb5 19.♖xa6 ♙xa6 20.♘c5 This looks very strong, but by giving back material Black can get an unclear ending: 20...♞xc5! 21.dxc5 ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 b4 Also interesting is 22...♙b8. 23.♖a1 ♙b5 24.♖xa7 c3 25.bxc3 bxc3 The c-pawn enables Black to hold.

The right way to meet 17...f5 is:

18.♖c3 b4

Not 18...e5 19.axb5 cxb5 20.♖xb5 ♙xg2 21.♙xa6!

19.♖e2 c5

19...e5 20.♙c2 exd4 21.♙xc4± is pleasant for White.

Also 19...♖c5!? 20.♙c2 ♖b3 21.♙ad1 ♙a6 as in Bartholomew – Becerra Rivero, Philadelphia 2008, could be tried, but it looks suspicious.

20.♙c2

Careless is 20.♙xb7† ♙xb7 and Black threatens ...♙xh2.

20...♙xg2

20...♙h7 21.h4 ♙d5 Rodrigues – Boino, Lisbon 2000, and now 22.♙ad1 ♖b8 23.♖f4± was strong.

21.♖xg2 ♙b7† 22.f3 ♙d5 23.♙ad1 b3

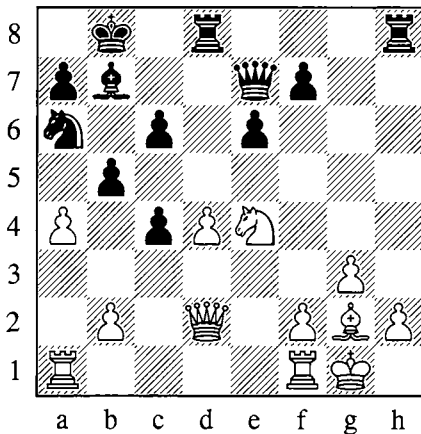
23...c3 24.bxc3 b3 25.♙b2 is not enough.

24.♙c3 ♖b4 25.♖f4 ♙c6 26.♙xc4±

Walach – Olsar, Karvina 2006.

18.♙d2

The queen plans to enter on the dark squares. Because of the early bishop exchange, Black has difficulties covering them all.



18...♖b4

Smyslov once played 18...b4 in a Candidates match against a very young Kasparov. The veteran drew the game, but after 19.♙ac1 f5

20.♖g5 e5 21.♙xc4 c5 22.♙xb7 ♙xb7 23.♙e3 exd4 24.♙e5† ♖a8 Kasparov – Smyslov, Vilnius (5) 1984, White could have taken the pawn with 25.♙xf5±.

18...e5 19.axb5 ♙xd4 20.♙a5 cxb5 21.♙xb5 ♙h6 22.♙fe1± ♖c7 23.♙c5 ♙xc5 24.♖xc5 ♙xg2 25.♖xg2 Black was left with many pawn weaknesses in Hoffmann – Vishnu, Vlissingen 2011.

19.♙fd1

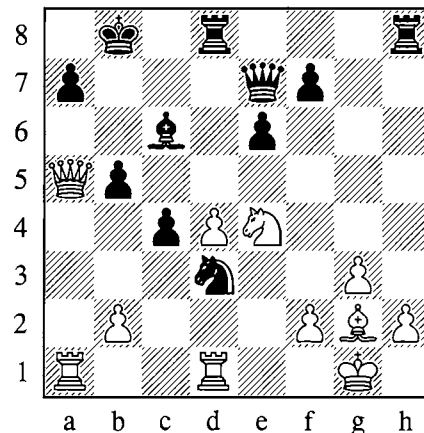
The ending after 19.♙f4† ♙c7 20.♙xc7† ♖xc7 is pretty unclear.

19...♖d3

A tempting square, but this knight move is tactically refuted.

19...e5 20.♖c5 wasn't much better though. A simple variation is 20...♖d3 21.♖xd3 cxd3 22.dxe5 ♙xe5 23.axb5 (23.♙a3 is also good) 23...cxb5 24.♙xb7 ♖xb7 25.♙a5 ♙c5 26.♙a6† ♖b8 27.b4± as pointed out by Khalifman. We can analyse a bit further: 27...♙b6 28.♙xb6† axb6 29.♙a3 ♙d4 30.♙axd3 ♙xb4 31.♙d7 and I think White wins the rook ending.

20.axb5 cxb5 21.♙a5 ♙c6



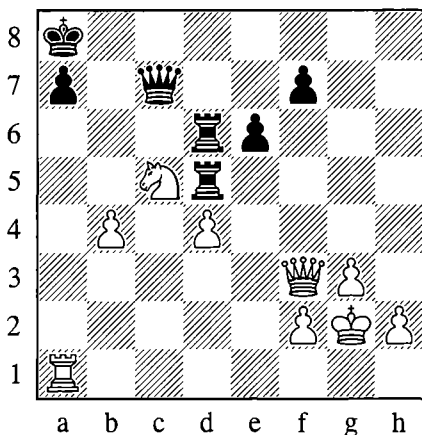
22.♙xd3! cxd3 23.♖c5

Finally the knight arrives on this wonderful square. For the exchange White gets a long-term attack.

23...♙xg2 24.♜xg2 ♔a8 25.♞xb5 ♝d6  
26.♞xd3

And two pawns.

26...♞c7 27.♞c3 ♜h5 28.b4 ♜hd5 29.♞f3



29...f5

A mistake in a bad position.

More stubborn was 29...♞b6 but White should be winning. The computer fancies 30.♜g1!?. Black can't take on b4 because of ♖a6 and on 30...♞e7 31.♞e1 with the threat ♞xd5 is very annoying.

30.♖xe6 ♞b7 31.♖c5 ♞xb4 32.♞a6 ♞b8  
33.h4

Black is helpless.

33...♞d8 34.♖e6  
1-0

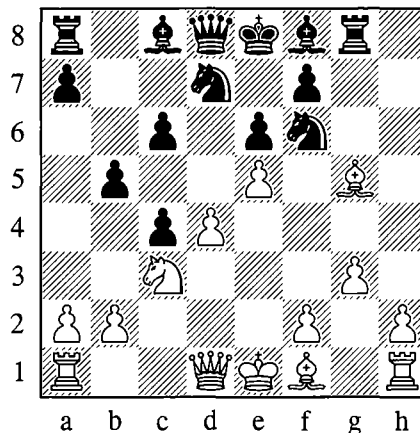
**Conclusion:** The 10...♙e7 variation is interesting, but the exchange of the dark-squared bishops benefits White.

## GAME 38

Cheparinov – Pavasovic

Dresden Olympiad 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♖f3 ♖f6 4.♖c3 c6 5.♙g5  
dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♖xg5 hxg5  
10.♙xg5 ♖bd7 11.g3 ♞g8



12.h4

12.♙h4 misplaces the bishop, but interesting is 12.♙xf6 ♖xf6 13.exf6 ♞xf6 14.♙g2 ♙b7 15.a4. However following 15...0-0-0 16.axb5 cxb5 17.♙xb7 ♔xb7 18.♖xb5 ♙b4 ♖ Black gets adequate counterplay after 19.♖c3 ♞xd4 or 19.♖f1 a5.

12...♞xg5

The point.

13.hxg5 ♖d5

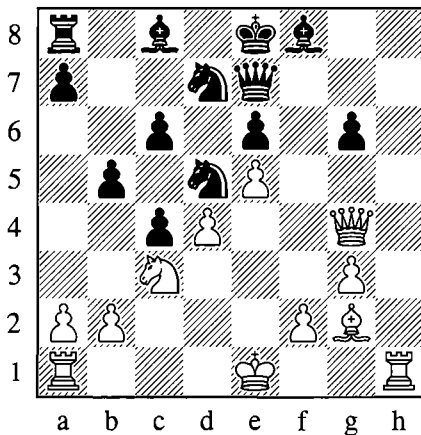
Black has a very compact position. White must grasp the initiative by any means: otherwise Black's two pieces for a rook will begin to tell.

14.g6!

Destroying Black's pawn structure and giving White some concrete targets.

**14...fxg6 15.♖g4 ♗e7**

15...♗a5?! 16.♖xe6† ♘d8 is refuted by a strong piece sacrifice: 17.♙g2 ♘xc3 18.♙f1! ♘d5 19.♖xc6 ♘5b6 Knaak – Van der Wiel, Lugano 1989, and here 20.e6 is crushing, for instance 20...♘b8 21.e7†! ♙xe7 22.♖h7† with a mating attack.

**16.♙g2**

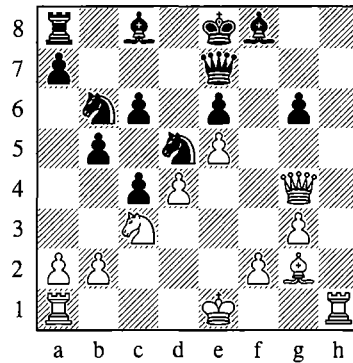
White simply develops and intensifies the pressure. Instead 16.♖xg6† ♗f7 could lead to an unclear ending where Black certainly has no reason to complain.

**16...♙d8**

The latest trend: Black wants to get his majesty into safety on the queenside.

Several other moves have been tried:

16...♙g7 17.♖xg6† ♗f7 18.♖g4! ♘f8 19.♘e4± has been known to be good for White since Dautov – Gabriel, Altensteig 1994. Black could try 17...♙d8, but then again it would make more sense to begin with 16...♙d8, as in the main game.

**16...♘7b6****17.a4**

17.♖xg6† ♗f7 18.♙e4 ♖xg6 19.♙xg6† ♘d7 20.♖h7† ♙e7 21.♘e4 ♙c7∞

17.♙e4 ♘d8 (17...♖b4 18.♖xg6† ♘d7 19.♖h7† ♙e7 20.♗f7 wins for White.

For example: 20...♙b7 21.♙xd5 ♘xd5 22.0–0–0 ♖e8 23.a3 ♗a5 24.♘e4 ♗d8 25.♘f6† ♘xf6 26.exf6 ♗a5 27.♖xe8† ♙xe8 28.♖xe7† ♙f8 29.♖h1 ♙g8 30.♖g7† 1–0 Solomon – Sjugirov, Budapest 2008.) 18.♖xg6 (18.♙xd5!?!N) 18...♙d7 19.♖h7 (19.♙xd5!?!N as in the main game) 19...♖b4± 20.♖b1 ♘xc3 21.bxc3 ♖xc3† 22.♙e2 ♗a3 23.♖bh1 ♖b2† 24.♙f3 ♖c3† 25.♙e2 ♖b2† 26.♙f3 ♖xd4 Black plays for a win, but he should have taken the draw. 27.♗f6† ♙c7 28.♖xe6 ♙b8 29.♗f6 ♙c5 30.♖1h2 c3? 31.♖xd7 ♘xd7 32.♖h8† ♙f8 33.♖xf8† ♘xf8 34.♖xc6 ♘d7 35.♖b7# 1–0 Bacrot – Sasikiran, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

**17...♖b4**

A better chance is: 17...bxa4!? 18.♖h8 ♙d7 19.♖xg6† ♘d8 20.♘xa4 ♖b4† 21.♙f1 ♙c7∞ For example: 22.♖c2 ♘xa4 23.♖xa4 ♖b5 24.♖xc4 ♖xb2 25.♙xd5 exd5 26.♖a2 ♖xa2 27.♖xa2 a5 28.♖h7 ♘d8 29.f4 ♙f5 30.♖f7 ½–½ Van Unen – Raykin, e-mail 2009.

**18.♖xg6† ♘d8 19.♗f7!**

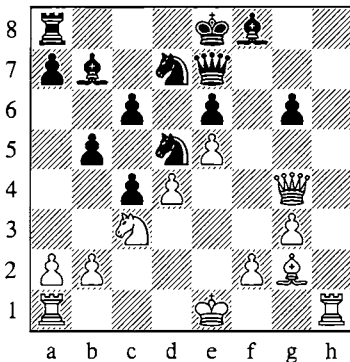
This looks very strong, judging from the following correspondence game.

**19...♙d7**

Or 19...♘xc3 20.♙xc6.

20.♙xd5 ♖xd5 21.♗f1 ♕e8 22.♖xd5 ♙xf7  
 23.♗xb4 ♙xb4 24.♞h8† ♕e8 25.axb5 c3  
 25...cxb5 26.♞a6±  
 26.bxc3 ♙xc3 27.♞c1 ♙xd4 28.♞xc6 ♙xe5 1–0  
 Wingo – Turoczi, corr. 2007.  
 29.♞xe8† ♗xe8 30.♞xe6† ♗f7 31.♞xe5 and it  
 is all over.

16...♙b7



17.♞xg6†

17.♙xd5!?! exd5 18.♞xg6† ♖f7 19.♞xf7†  
 ♗xf7 20.f4 gives White some impressive  
 pawns but is anything but clear. A recent  
 game continued: 20...♗g8 21.e6 ♖f6  
 22.0–0–0 b4 23.♖a4 c5? (23...♖e4∞ and  
 Black should be okay) 24.♖xc5 ♙xc5  
 25.dxc5 White was much better in Amanov  
 – Mulyar, Philadelphia 2011.

17...♞f7 18.♞xf7† ♗xf7 19.♖e4

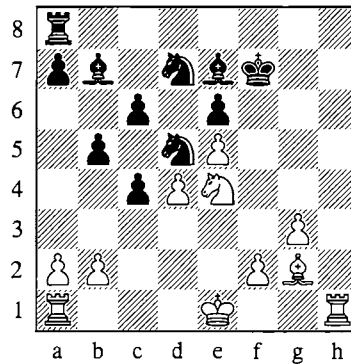
19.♞h7† also looks pretty good. For  
 example: 19...♙g7 20.♙xd5 exd5 21.e6†  
 ♗g6 22.♞xg7† ♗xg7 23.exd7 ♞d8 24.f4  
 ♞xd7 25.♗f2± However, White's advantage  
 may just be optical. 25...b4 26.♖a4 ♙c8  
 27.g4 ♗f6 28.♞h1 ♞g7 29.g5† ♗f7 30.♖c5  
 a5 31.♞h6 ♞g6 32.♞h8 ♞g8 33.♞h7† ♞g7  
 34.♞h6 ½–½ Zubov – De Magalhaes,  
 e-mail 2009.

19...♙e7

Less challenging is: 19...♙b4† 20.♗e2 ♖f8  
 21.♞h6 ♙e7 22.f4 ♞d8 23.♞ah1† ♗g7  
 24.♞6h5 ♖b4 (24...b4 25.♖g5) 25.♖g5

♞d7? 26.♖xe6† ♖xe6 27.♞h7† ♗g8  
 28.♞h8† ♗f7 29.♞h7† ♖g7 Redpath –  
 Rainfray, Dublin 2000, and here best is  
 30.♙h3 ♞d8 31.e6† ♗g6 32.♞h6#.

Or 19...♗g7 20.♖g5 ♙b4† 21.♗e2 ♖f8  
 22.♞h4 ♙e7 23.♞g4 ♙xg5 24.♞xg5† ♗f7  
 25.♞h1 ♖e7 26.♞h6± Cade – Canizares  
 Cuadra, corr. 2005. The rooks are coming.  
 19...♗g8 20.0–0–0 c5 21.♖d6?! (21.♞h5  
 cxd4 22.♞xd4 was much better) 21...♙c6  
 22.♞h5 ♙xd6 23.exd6 cxd4 24.♞xd4 ♖7f6  
 25.♞e5 ♗f7 26.a4 a6 27.♙h3 ♙d7 White  
 could not breakthrough, which means that  
 Black will take over, Perrin – Kasperski,  
 e-mail 2008.



20.♖d6†

20.♗e2 ♗g7 21.♞h5 ♖f8 was solid for Black  
 in Elsness – Sveshnikov, Porto Carras 2011.  
 20...♙xd6 21.♞h7† ♗g8  
 21...♗e8 22.exd6±  
 22.♞xd7 ♙b4† 23.♗e2 ♙c8 24.♞d8† ♙f8  
 25.♙xd5 cxd5 26.♞h1 ♙b7 27.♞d7 ♙c6  
 28.♞c7 ♙e8 29.f4 ♞d8?

The last chance was: 29...a5↗ For example:  
 30.g4 a4 31.f5 a3 32.♞ch7 exf5 33.gxf5  
 axb2 34.♞h8† ♗f7 35.♞8h7† ♗g8=

30.g4

Black has no counterplay and White's rooks  
 and pawns easily finish him off.

30...♞d7 31.♞c8 ♞e7 32.f5 ♙d7 33.♞xf8†  
 ♗xf8 34.f6 ♞e8 35.♞h8† ♗f7 36.♞h7† 1–0  
 Vladimirov – Conquest, Alma-Ata 1989.

16...♙a6 17.♖xg6†  
17.♙xd5!?

17...♗f7 18.♙e4 ♖xg6

On 18...♙b4 the novelty 19.a3 is strong:  
19...♙xc3† 20.bxc3 ♘f8 21.♗xf7† ♕xf7  
22.♕d2± and White’s play on the kingside  
will dictate events.

19.♙xg6† ♕d8 20.♘d5 cxd5 21.♙f7! ♙b4†  
22.♕e2 ♘f8 23.a3 ♙e7 24.f4 ♙c8

This was Ploenes – Ax, corr. 1996, and now  
the correct way is:

25.g4±

16...♗f7 17.♙e4

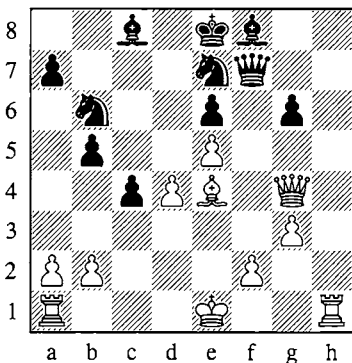
17.♙xd5N exd5 18.e6 ♗f6 19.exd7† ♙xd7

17...♘e7 18.♘xb5

Forcing the play.

18.0–0–0 ♙a6 was fine for Black in Beliavsky  
– Kramnik, Linares 1993, but 18.♗h8 is a  
serious alternative.

18...cxb5 19.♙xa8 ♘b6 20.♙e4



20...♙d7

20...♘bd5 21.f3! (The recommended  
move was 21.♗h8, but the American expert  
comes up with an interesting new concept.)  
21...♕d8 22.♕f2 ♕c7 23.♗h8† ♙g7  
24.♗h7 ♕b6 25.♗ah1 ♙d7 26.a3 a5 This  
was Yermolinsky – Onyekwere, Las Vegas  
2006, and with 27.♗1h6! ♙e8 28.♗xg7  
♗xg7 29.♗xe6† ♙c6 30.♗h1± he could have  
reaped the harvest.

21.♗h8 ♙c6 22.f3!

White intends to take back with the pawn  
if Black exchanges bishops, thereby keeping  
the key square d5 under control.

22...♕d7

22...♘bd5 23.♕f2 ♘b4 24.a3 ♘d3†  
25.♙xd3 cxd3 26.♗d1± ♗f5 27.♗xf5 gxf5  
28.♗xd3 ♙d5 29.♗c3 ♘c6 30.♕e3 ♕f7  
31.♗h7† ♙g7 32.♗h2 ♕g6 33.♗hc2 ♘a5  
34.♗c7 a6 35.♗a7 ♘c4† 36.♕e2 a5 37.b3  
♘xa3 38.♗c8 ♙h6 39.♗g8† ♕h5 40.♗h7  
1–0 Shirov – Morovic, Las Palmas 1994, was  
another victory for the rooks.

23.♕e2 ♙g7

23...♘f5 24.♕f2 ♙g7 25.♗h7 does not  
change much.

24.♗h7 ♘bd5

White has an open line to work with and the  
rooks are difficult to keep down.

25.a3

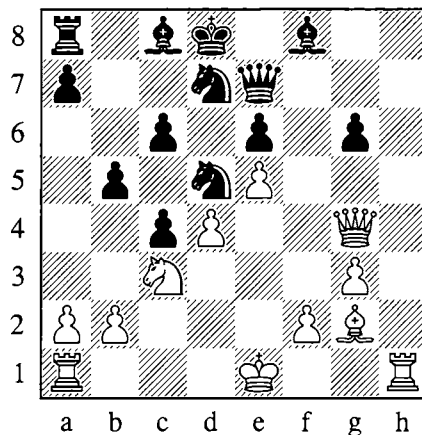
25.♗ah1 is also natural.

25...♘f5

Schmidt – Treiber, corr. 1996. A possible  
continuation is:

26.♙xf5 exf5 27.♗g5 f4 28.♗h6 ♙xh6  
29.♗xf7† ♕e6 30.♗h7 ♙g5 31.g4± a5 32.♗ah1  
b4 33.axb4 axb4 34.♗g7 ♘e7 35.♗h8 ♕d7  
36.♗b8 c3 37.bxc3 bxc3 38.♗b3 c2 39.♗c3  
♙a4 40.d5

White wins – analysis by me, and Fritz!



17.♙xd5!

An important decision. White improves Black's pawn structure, but also takes away many of the dynamic possibilities in the position and renders Black's queenside rather passive.

The immediate 17.♟xg6 would allow 17...♞b4 with counterplay.

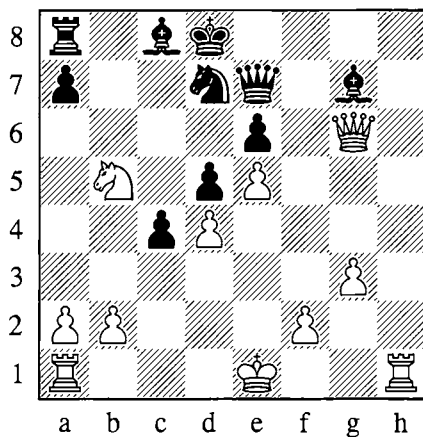
17...cxd5 18.♟xg6 ♔g7

Best.

18...♞b8 19.♞h7 ♞e8 20.♟xe8† ♔xe8 21.f4± gives White the usual pull in the ending: 21...b4 22.♔e2 ♔a6 23.g4 c3 24.b3 ♔d3 25.f5! ♞b6 26.♔f4 ♔e4 Bacrot – Fressinet, Val d'Isere 2002, and here 27.♞h8 with the idea 27...exf5 28.g5 would have been very strong.

18...♔a6 19.a4 ♞e8 20.♟xe8† ♔xe8 21.axb5 ♔b7 happened in Antic – Ivanisevic, Budva 2003, and now 22.♞h7± was the right way.

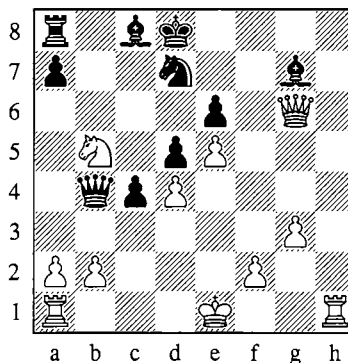
19.♔xb5



19...♔f8

Pavasovic had the diagram position earlier in 2008 and ventured:

19...♞b4†



Now 20.♔c3 ♞xb2 21.♟g5† ♔c7 22.♞c1 ♔f8 23.0–0 ♔b6 24.♟g6 ♔d7± was Pr. Nikolic – Pavasovic, Plovdiv 2008, and Black was happy, but after analysing the opening some more he probably became afraid of:

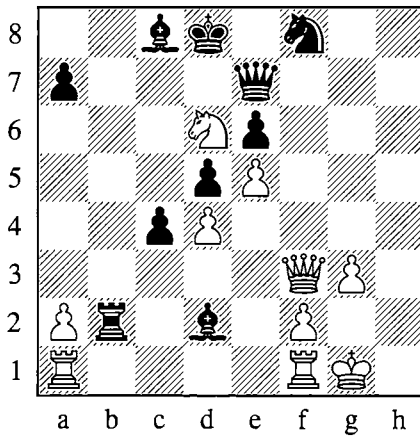
20.♔f1! ♞xb5 21.♟xg7 ♞xb2 22.♞e1 ♞b6 23.♞h6 a5 24.♟g8† ♔c7 25.♟xe6 ♟xe6 26.♞xe6 ♔c5 27.♞e7† ♔d8 28.♞h7 ♔e6 29.♞b1 This looked very promising for White in Skeels – Simmelink, corr. 2006, although the game was eventually drawn.

In a later game, instead of 29.♞b1, White simply pushed all his passed pawns. That seems even more convincing. 29.f4 ♞b8 30.f5 ♔g5 31.♞h8† ♔c7 32.e6 ♔e4 33.g4 c3 34.♔g2 ♞b4 35.e7 ♔d7 36.♞d1 ♞a4 37.♔f3 ♔d6 38.e8=♔† ♔xe8 39.♞xe8 ♞xd4 40.♞xd4 c2 41.♞exe4 c1♞ 42.♔g3 ♟g1† 43.♔h4 ♔c6 44.♞f4 ♟e1† 45.♔g5 ♟e5 46.♞d3 ♟g7† 47.♔h4 ♟h8† 48.♔g3 ♟e5 49.g5 ♟e1† 50.♔g4 ♟e2† 51.♞df3 ♟g2† 52.♔h5 ♟h1† 53.♔g6 ♟h8 54.f6 ♟g8† 55.♔h5 ♟h7† 56.♔g4 ♟f7 57.♞e3 ♔d6 58.♞e7 ♟f8 59.♞f5 d4 60.g6 d3 61.♞ee5 1–0 Cerrato – De Carlos Arregui, e-mail 2009.

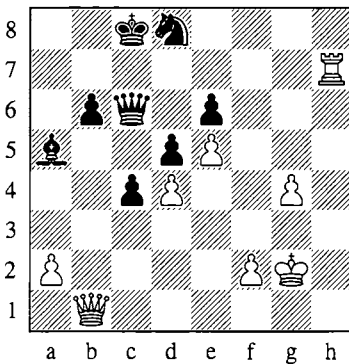
20.♟g4

Also possible is 20.♟c2!N ♞b4† 21.♔c3 ♞b8 22.0–0–0±.

20...♞b8 21.♔d6 ♞xb2 22.0–0 ♔h6 23.♟f3 ♔d2

**24.♞ab1**

In a later game White came up with a new, but not quite convincing, version of Cheparinov's plan: 24.♞a3 ♞b6 25.♞ab1 ♖g6 26.♞xb6 axb6 27.♞b2 ♙a5 28.♞b5 ♞d7 Now Black is fine. 29.♞b1 ♞g7 30.♞b5 ♞d7 31.♞b1 ♖h8 32.♙g2 ♖f7 33.♖xc8 ♙xc8 34.♞h1 ♖d8 35.♞h7 ♞c6 36.g4



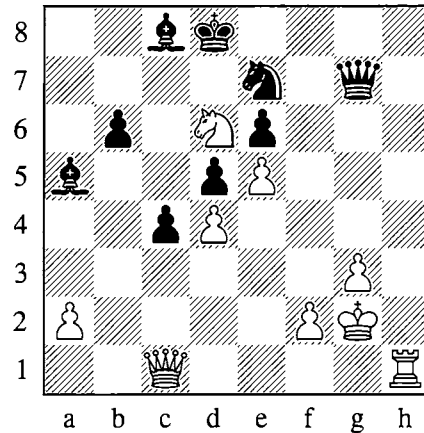
36...c3? (36...♙d2 37.♞c2 c3 would have favoured Black) 37.♞c2 ♞b5? Probably we are witnessing the horrors of time trouble. 38.g5 ♞b2 39.♞a4 1–0 Diermair – Delorme, Merlimont 2011.

**24...♞b6 25.♞xb6 axb6 26.♞a3 ♙a5**

White was threatening to penetrate on the queenside, but Black managed to close the door just in time. Then Sargissian switches to the other flank.

**27.♙g2 ♖g6 28.♞h1 ♞g7 29.♞c1**

And now it becomes difficult to cover all the squares.

**29...♖e7****30.♞h8!**

The rook is immune due to the fork ♖f7†.

**30...♙d7 31.♞h1! ♞g4 32.♞h7**

White penetrates and quickly decides the game.

**32...♞g6 33.♞h4 ♙d2 34.♖xc8 ♖xc8 35.♞d8† ♙c6 36.♞xc8†**

Or rather, he could have forced resignation if he had played 36.a4 with a mating attack.

**36...♙b5 37.♞e8† ♞xe8 38.♞xe8 ♙c3 39.♞xe6 ♙xd4 40.♞e8 c3 41.e6 c2 42.♞c8 ♙c5 43.e7 c1=♞ 44.e8=♞† ♙b4 45.♞e2**

It is still more than good enough.

**45...d4 46.♞h8 ♙c3 47.♞h1 ♞c2 48.♞xc2† ♖xc2 49.f4 b5 50.♞h5**

**1–0**

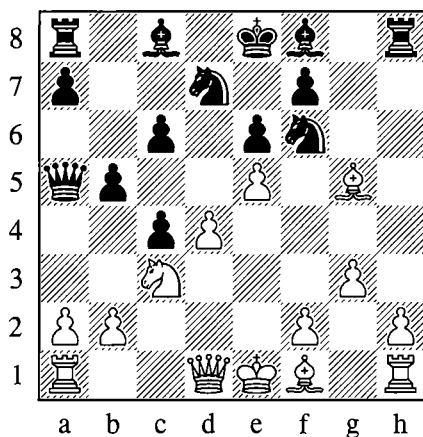
**Conclusion:** The ...♞g8 and ...♞g5 idea leads to a permanent material imbalance. White should strive for the initiative by playing 14.g6 followed by 15.♞g4. Later on the rooks can flash their muscle power.

## GAME 39

Raffel – Roth

Correspondence 1958

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♗c3 e6 5.♕g5  
dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♖h4 g5 9.♗xg5 hxg5  
10.♕xg5 ♗bd7 11.g3 ♖a5



With a quick offensive on the queenside, Black hopes to disrupt White's normal development.

**12.exf6 b4**

Sometimes Black starts with:

12...♗a6

After the normal moves 13.♖f3 b4 14.♗e4 this transposes to the recommended mainline – see the next note. Since I propose a different set-up as our repertoire move, we need to vary here as well. The obvious way to do so is by playing:

13.a3

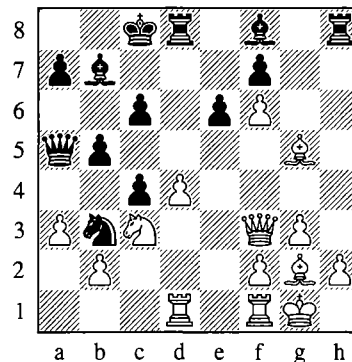
When Black may regret not playing ...b4 when he had the chance.

Play continues:

13...0-0-0 14.♕g2 ♗c5 15.0-0 ♗b3 16.♖f3 ♖b7

16...♗xd4 17.♖e4 looks good for White who is much better coordinated.

17.♖ad1



17...b4

17...♗xd4 18.♖e4 ♖b6 19.♕e3 ♕c5  
20.♖e5!± Ding Liren – Filippov, Manila  
2010, concluded: 20...♖d7 21.♖d2 ♖hd8  
22.♖fd1 a5 23.h4 ♖a7 24.h5 ♖b6 25.h6  
♖b8 26.♖xb8† ♗xb8 27.♕xd4 ♕xd4  
28.♖xd4 ♖xd4 29.♖xd4 ♖xd4 30.♗d5  
1-0

18.♗e4 bxa3 19.bxa3 ♕xa3

Cheparinov has tried 19...♖d5 but after  
20.♕e3 ♕xa3 21.h4 c3 22.♖e2 ♖b2 23.♖c2  
♗a1 24.♖xa1 ♕xa1 25.♗c5 ♖xc5 26.dxc5  
♖b2 27.♖d1± Nakamura – Cheparinov,  
Cuernavaca 2006, White was in charge.  
The h-pawn is much more dangerous than  
Black's pawns on the queenside.

20.♖a1!?

A new move that seems very intriguing.

20.♕e3 ♖h5 21.♖xh5 ♖xh5 leads to a  
double-edged ending.

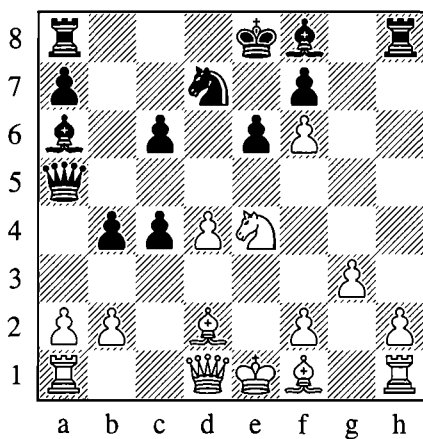
20...♗xa1 21.♖xa1 ♖xd4 22.♖xa3 ♖d1†  
23.♖xd1 ♖xa3 24.♗d6† ♗b8 25.♗xf7 ♖f8  
26.♗e5

White has great positional compensation for the queen.

**13.♗e4 ♕a6**

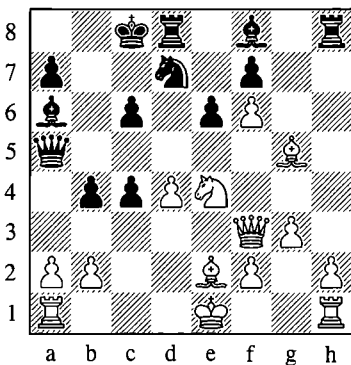
Black intends to meet 14.♕g2 with 14...c3 preventing castling.

14.♕d2!?



A forgotten move. I first noticed it when the young Russian grandmaster Inarkiev used it at the end of 2008. Back in 2009 I wrote: “It has only been played in a handful of games, but White has won them all, so I guess we will see more of it.” Since then unfortunately Black has also won a game or two!

The line recommended by Pedersen and Khalifman is 14.♞f3 0–0–0 15.♙e2 and White manages to castle.



The mainline goes 15...♙b7 16.0–0 ♞d5 17.♙e3 c5 18.♘d2 ♘xf6 19.dxc5 c3 20.bxc3 bxc3 21.c6 ♞xc6 22.♞ac1 ♘d5 23.♙d4 and White is better, Mikhalevski – N. Pedersen, Aarhus 1997.

Black clearly had an improvement up his sleeve since they kept playing the line. One option is 18...cxd4 19.♞xd5 exd5

20.♙xd4 ♙c5! and Black is definitely still alive.

Black can also vary even earlier with: 15...e5!? 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♞f5† ♖b7 18.0–0 ♞d5 and Black is fine. For example: 19.a3? c3! 20.♙xa6† ♞xa6 21.♞f4 cxb2 22.♞ab1 ♞e2 23.h4 ♘d3 24.♞e3 ♞xe3 25.♙xe3 bxa3 26.♘c3 ♞d8 0–1 Lalith – Sethuraman, Chotowa 2010.

#### 14...♞d5

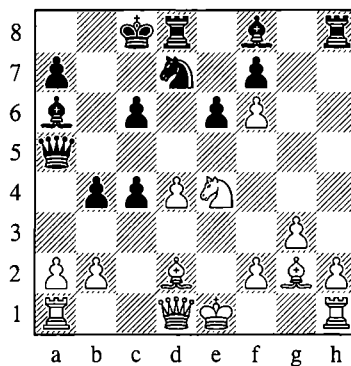
The standard centralization of the queen.

Inarkiev's opponent instead played:

14...0–0–0

Now White could consider 15.♞f3!?N but instead he replied:

15.♙g2



15...♘e5

15...♘e5 should be met by 16.♞f3 ♘xe4 17.♞xe4 ♞d5 18.♞xd5 cxd5 19.h4 ♙g7 20.♙xb4 ♙xd4 21.♙c3 ♙xc3† 22.bxc3± and not 16.♘xf6? c3 17.♞f3 cxd2† 18.♘d1 ♙b5 19.h4 ♞xd4 20.♙f1 ♙g7 21.♘g4 f5 22.♘h2 ♙f6 23.♙xb5 ♞xb5 24.♘f1 ♞d3 25.♞e2 ♙xb2 26.♞xe6† ♖b8 0–1 Aloma Vidal – Baghdasaryan, Kavala 2010.

16.0–0

If 16.dxe5 then 16...c3.

16...♞xd4 17.a3

Or 17.♙xb4!? ♞b6 18.♙d2.

17...♞b6 18.axb4 ♙xb4 19.♞e1 ♙xd2

20. ♖xd2 ♜hd8 21. ♗e4 ♖d3 22. ♖e3

Again there is another interesting option:  
22. ♖a5!?

22... ♗b7

Inarkiev – Yu Yangyi, China 2008, and here  
23. h4

seems to give White the upper hand in a complicated position.

14... c3 15. bxc3 bxc3 16. ♗xc3 is rubbish.

15. ♗g2 ♖xd4 16. 0–0

16. ♗f4 is another move. Black did not survive after 16... ♖xb2 17. 0–0 in Gros – Burguete, San Jose 1997, but 16... ♖xd1† 17. ♖xd1 ♗b5 18. h4 ♖c5 19. ♖xc5 ♗xc5 20. ♗e5 0–0 is maybe not so clear.

16... 0–0–0 17. ♗e3!

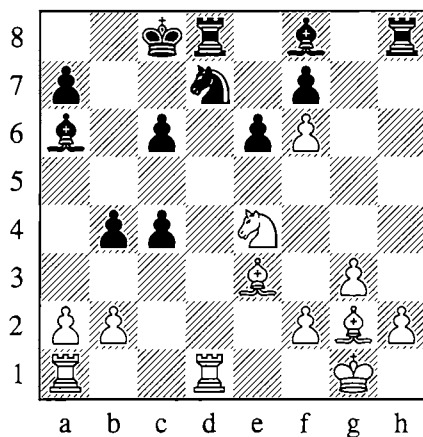
Simple and strong. The queen exchange does not make the positional advantage go away. On the contrary.

That said, 17. ♖c2 also looked good.

17... ♖xd1

17... ♖xb2 is no better: 18. ♖d6† ♗xd6 19. ♖xd6 ♖b8 20. ♖c5±

18. ♖fxd1



White has good control and is much better. In the game Black blunders and loses more or less instantly, but it was not easy to find a lasting defence anyway. Maybe a move like 18... ♗h5 should be tried.

18... ♖b6? 19. ♖xd8† ♗xd8 20. ♖g5

Just winning.

20... ♗c7

On 20... ♗e8 there was 21. ♗xb6 axb6 22. ♗xc6†.

21. ♗f4† ♗c8 22. ♖xf7 ♖g8 23. ♗xc6 ♖d5

24. ♗e5 ♖g6 25. ♖d1 ♗b7 26. ♗xb7† ♗xb7

27. ♖d8†

1–0

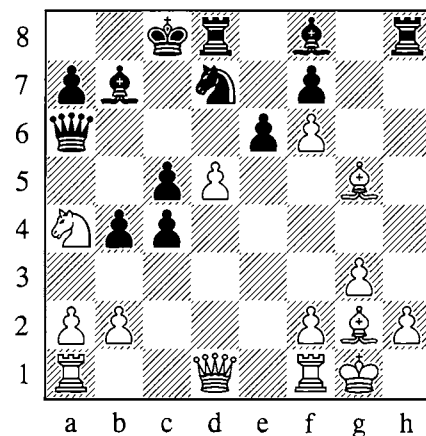
**Conclusion:** The new old move 14. ♗d2!? puts the traditional ♖a5-line out of business, that is with 12... b4, but Black can still try 12... ♗a6 when 13. a3 is natural.

## GAME 40

A. Kovacevic – Simmelink

Correspondence 2006

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4. ♖c3 e6 5. ♗g5 dxc4 6. e4 b5 7. e5 h6 8. ♗h4 g5 9. ♖xg5 hxg5 10. ♗xg5 ♖bd7 11. exf6 ♗b7 12. g3 c5 13. d5 ♖b6 14. ♗g2 0–0–0 15. 0–0 b4 16. ♖a4 ♖a6



Black sidesteps the mainline. Putting the queen on the a-file just urges White even more to open the position, but Black has a specific tactical liquidation of the d5-pawn in mind.

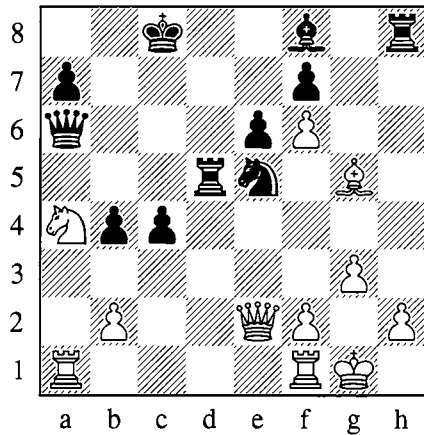
### 17.a3 ♙xd5

That's it.

### 18.♙xd5 ♜e5

Winning the piece back.

### 19.♚e2 ♜xd5 20.axb4 cxb4



Black succeeded with his little operation, but his queen is momentarily vulnerable on a6, which White exploits to activate his knight.

### 21.♞c3

Actually c4 is also rather weak. A new try is 21.♞fc1!?. After 21...♚c6 22.♙f4 ♞d3 23.♞xc4! ♚xc4 24.♞c1 ♚xc1† 25.♙xc1 ♖b7 26.♙e3 White was better in Braun – Naumann, Nuernberg 2008. So instead Black should probably reply 21...♚b5 22.♙f4 ♙h6∞ with good counterplay, Kacheishvili – Yang, Saint Louis 2011.

### 21...♞a5

Black could also offer the exchange with 21...♚c6 but White is not forced to take it. 22.♙f4 bxc3 23.♙xe5 ♞d2 24.♚e1 ♙c5 25.bxc3 With ♙d4 coming, 25...♞d3 (or 25...♞hd8

26.♙d4 ♞b2 27.♙xc5 ♚xc5 28.♚e4± Alexa – Necessary, corr. 2005.) 26.♙d4 ♚f3 27.♞a5 ♙b6 Rahman – Sriram, Calcutta 2001, and now 28.♞a4 ♚d5 29.♙xb6 axb6 30.♚a1 is decisive.

The correct move is:

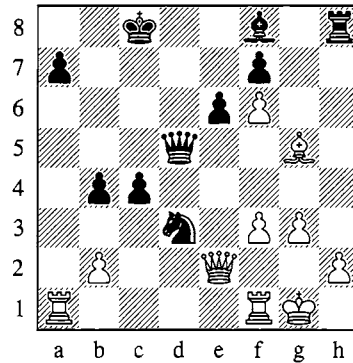
21...♚d6! 22.♞xd5

Now there is nothing better.

22.♞a7 leads to a forced draw, for instance: 22...bxc3 23.♞a8† ♖d7 24.♞a7† ♖e8 25.♞a8† ♖d7 26.♞a7† ♖e8 27.♞a8† ½–½ Ganguly – Shirov, Melilla 2011.

22...♚xd5 23.f3 ♞d3

23...♙c5† 24.♙e3 ♞d3 will be a transposition, but White can try 24.♖g2.

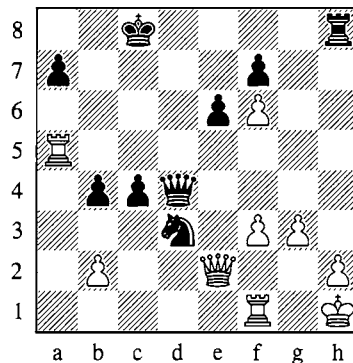


White has a choice of two promising lines. Neither line allows White to force a win, so you will have to play some moves on your own!

24.♙e3 ♙c5 25.♙xc5 ♚xc5† 26.♖h1

26.♖g2!?

26...♚d4 27.♞a5



27...♞d8

27...♞xb2! has been recommended a few places as being good enough for equality (for example, by Scherbakov). It does look a good move, but White can try 28.♙g5! with tricky ideas of ♙g4 or ♙g7.

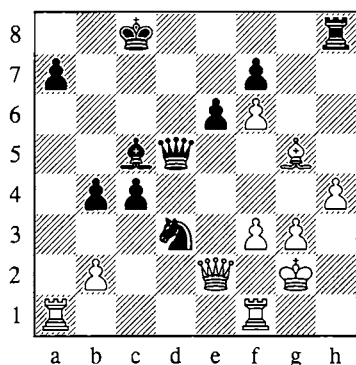
28.♙fa1 ♞d7 29.h4 ♞xb2 30.h5 ♞d3 31.h6 b3 32.h7 ♞d8 33.♙g2 b2 34.♞h1

34.♞d1!+- ♞h8 35.♞c2 ♞xh7 36.♙a4

34...♙c7 35.♙g5 ♞c1 36.♞c2 ♞d2† 37.♞xd2 ♞xd2† 38.♙h3 ♞d8 39.♙g8 b1=♞ 40.h8=♞ ♞f5† 41.♙h4 ♙xg8 42.♞xg8 ♞xf6† 43.♙h3 ♞h6† 44.♙g2 ♞d2†

½-½ Grischuk – Shirov, Porto Carras 2011.

24.h4 ♞c5† 25.♙g2



25...♙b7

25...♞d8 26.♙fd1

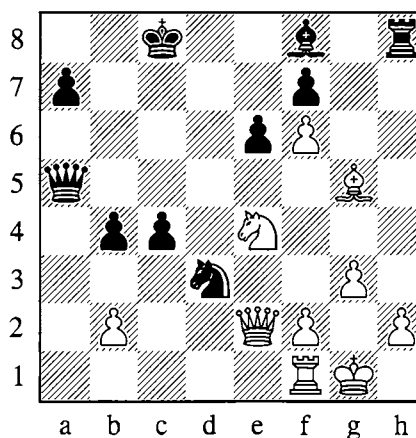
25...♞d4 26.♙ab1

Now Kaufman suggested:

26.♙fd1 ♞d8 27.♞d2!?

Instead Ivanchuk – Shirov, Novgorod 1994, continued: 26.♙a5 ♞d4 27.b3 ♞b6 28.♙a2 c3 29.♞d1 ♞d8 30.h5 a5 31.g4 ♞f4† 32.♞xf4 ♞xd1 33.♞xd1 ♞xd1 34.h6 ♙a6 (34...e5! 35.♞g5 ♙c6 would have drawn) 35.g5 ♞d8 36.♙f1 ♞d4 37.♙e2 e5 38.♞e3 ♙b5 39.h7 ♞h8 40.♞xd4 exd4 41.g6 fxg6 42.f7 ♙c6 43.♙d3 ♙d7 44.♙e2 a4 45.♙e8 axb3 46.♙xh8 b2 47.♞d8† 1-0

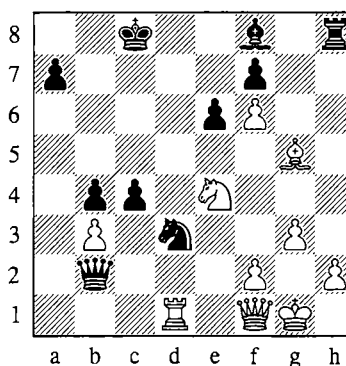
22.♙xa5 ♞xa5 23.♞e4 ♞d3



24.♙e3

White introduces the threat of ♞g5.

A good alternative is 24.b3. Let's see some lines: 24...♞e5 25.♞d1 ♞b2 26.♞f1



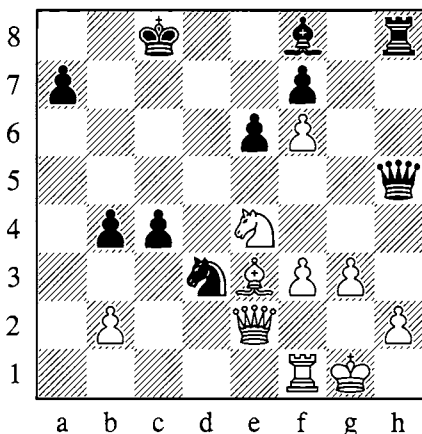
White has a promising position as the following continuations illustrate. 26...♞c2 (26...♞d4 27.♞d2 ♞xf2† 28.♞xf2 ♞xf2 29.♙xf2 ♞xh2† 30.♙f3 cxb3 31.♞xb3± Kaufman) 27.h4 ♞h5 28.bxc4 ♞e5 29.♞d2 ♞h6 30.f4 ♞xg5 31.hxg5 ♞h3 32.fxe5 ♞xg3† 33.♙f2 ♞xg5 34.♞e2 ♞b2 35.♙e1 ♞f5† 36.♙g2 ♞g5† 37.♙h3 ♞g8 38.♞f3 ♞xe2 39.♙xe2 ♙b7 40.♙a2 ♙a8 41.♞g5 a5 42.♞xf7 b3 43.♞d2 a4 44.♞d8† 1-0 Legemaat – Ootes, e-mail 2009.

24...♞h5

This threatens mate and offers an ending

where the strong pawn majority on the queenside would be a significant factor. Fortunately White can parry both.

### 25.f3



White is ready to undermine the black knight with b2-b3. In the game Black tries to defend tactically. The question is if he has any alternatives.

### 25...a5

25...b3 26.♙g5! ♖b7 27.h4 paralyzes the black queen. In Mueller Alves – Simmelink, corr. 2006, White won quickly: 27...♙b4 28.g4 ♗h7 29.♞c1! ♙a5 (29...♘xc1 30.♗xc4 or 29...♞c8 30.♞xc4 ♞xc4 31.♗xd3) 30.♞xc4 ♞d8 31.h5 1-0

To answer my own question: Black does have an alternative! And this is it:

25...♗e5 26.♗c2

26.b3N ♗b2! 27.♗xb2 ♘xb2 28.♙xa7 (28.bxc4 ♖b7) 28...c3

26...♗b5

Maybe 26...♘xb2!? 27.♞b1 b3 28.♗xb2 ♗xb2 29.♞xb2 a5 and Black's pawns balance the extra piece. For example: 30.♞b1 a4 31.♘d2 a3 32.♘xc4 a2 33.♞c1 ♖b8 34.♙d4 ♙b4 35.h4 ½-½ Ponting – Def, e-mail 2009.

27.♘d2 ♘xb2 28.♗xb2 c3 29.♗a2 cxd2 30.♗xd2 ♗d5 31.♞c1† ♖b7 32.♗c2 ♗d7 33.♗a2 a6 34.♗a5 ♗d6 35.♙c5 35.f4!

35...♗c6 36.♗xb4† ♖a8 37.♖g2 ♞h5

This is Hebden – Howell, Torquay 2009, and now 38.♞d1!N would have won instantly.

### 26.b3

Going for the black queen with 26.♙g5 looks tempting just like in the last note: 26...♗h3 27.g4 a4 28.♞c1 ♘e5 29.♞xc4† ♘xc4? (29...♖b7 was forced) 30.♗xc4† 1-0 Luhn – Noble, corr. 2007.

### 26...a4

Not 26...cxb3 27.h4.

### 27.h4! axb3

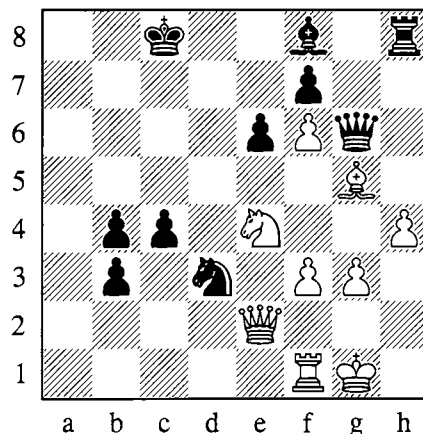
A mistake. Black should get the queen out while it was still possible, however total satisfaction was far off: 27...♗e5 28.bxc4 ♘c5 29.♖g2 ♞g8 (29...♘xe4 30.♙f4) 30.♙xc5 ♙xc5 31.♞d1 b3 32.h5± Daus – Moreno Carretero, corr. 2007.

27...♗f5 28.bxc4 is similar.

### 28.♙g5

The queen is out of play.

### 28...♗g6



**29.♞c1!**

The tactics work in White's favour.

**29...b2**

29...♘xc1 30.♞xc4† ♘b7 31.♞b5† ♘c8  
32.♞c6† ♘d8 33.♙e3 mates.

**30.♞xc4† ♘c5† 31.♞xc5†! ♘xc5 32.♞c2 b1=♞† 33.♞xb1 ♘xe4 34.fxe4**

Black defended well, but his open king's position and the bad coordination of the heavy pieces makes it a hopeless task.

**34...b3 35.♙f4 ♞h5 36.♞xb3 ♞c5† 37.♙g2 e5 38.♙g5 ♞d4 39.♙f3 ♞d8 40.h5**

White is no longer afraid of an ending.

**40...♞a1 41.♙g4 ♞e1 42.♞e3 ♞b4 43.h6 ♞h8 44.♞c1† ♘d7 45.♞d2† ♞xd2 46.♙xd2**

If the white king gets to f5 then it is over. Thus forced is 46...♙e6 but then 47.♙g5 ♞a8 48.♙h5 ♞h8 49.♙h4 ♘d7 50.g4 and the g-pawn steps up decisively: 50...♙e6 51.g5 ♘d7 52.g6 fxg6† 53.♙xg6

Black realized it was hopeless and resigned.

1–0

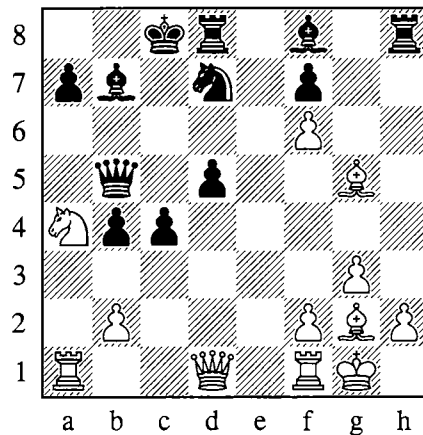
**Conclusion:** The sideline 16...♞a6 is in deep trouble. The toughest defence is 21...♞d6! but even here the lines I suggest will put Black under pressure.

## GAME 41

### Strangmueller – Sakai

Correspondence 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♙g5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♘xg5 hxg5 10.♙xg5 ♘bd7 11.g3 ♙b7 12.♙g2 ♞b6 13.exf6 0–0–0 14.0–0 c5 15.d5 b4 16.♘a4 ♞b5 17.a3 exd5 18.axb4 cxb4

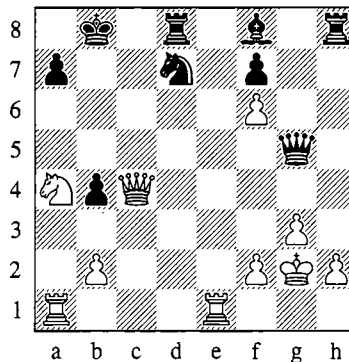
**19.♙f4**

A relatively new move. White takes control over the dark squares around the black king and it is not easy to find an adequate answer. There are, as ever, alternatives:

**19.♞e1**

This is another interesting try. White creates the possibility of putting the rook on e7, which could be a bomb in the middle of Black's position. In his book on the Semi-Slav Vigorito praises the idea, but unfortunately it is a good illustration of what happens over and over again in such an ultra-sharp opening as the Botvinnik variation: a new move completely changes the verdict. The thematic line goes:

19...d4 20.♞xd4 ♙xg2 21.♙xg2 ♞xg5 22.♞xc4† ♘b8



23.♞ed1

And White wins according to Vigorito.

23.♞ac1 ♠d6 24.♞c6 ♞d2 25.♔g1 ♞xh2!  
also held for Black in Topalov – Shirov, Sofia  
2009: 26.♞e2 ♞d3 27.♞e3 ♞d2 28.♞e2  
♞d3 29.♞e3 ♞d2 30.♞e2 ½–½

After 23.♞ed1 Vigorito gave the apparently  
convincing line:

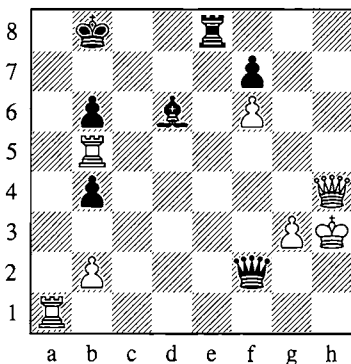
23...♞h5 24.♞d5 ♞xh2† 25.♔f3 ♞h6  
26.♞b5† ♔b6 27.♔xb6 ♞xf6† 28.♔g2 axb6  
29.♞e4+–

But then came the following correspondence  
game:

23...♞f5! 24.♞d5 ♞xh2†! 25.♔xh2 ♞xf2†  
26.♔h3 ♠d6! 27.♞b5†

Not 27.♞xd6 ♞h8†.

27...♔b6 28.♞h4 ♞e8 29.♔xb6 axb6



Despite being an exchange up, White's  
position is very uncomfortable with no  
shelter for the king.

30.♞d5 ♔b7 31.♞ad1 ♞h8! 32.♞xd6 ♞xh4†  
33.♔xh4 ♞h2† 34.♔g4 ♞xb2

Black has good winning chances, as the rest  
of the game clearly demonstrated:

35.♔h3 b3 36.♞d7† ♔c6 37.♞7d6† ♔b5  
38.♞f1 ♞e5 39.♞dd1 ♞h5† 40.♔g2 b2  
41.♞de1 ♞d5† 42.♔h3 ♞d3 43.♞d1 ♞h7†  
44.♔g2 ♔c4 45.♞de1 b5 46.♞f4† ♔c5 47.♞ff1  
♔b4 48.♞f4† ♔a5 49.♞ff1 ♔a4 50.♞g1  
♞c2† 51.♔f3 ♞c6† 52.♔g4 ♞xf6 53.♞gf1  
♞g6† 54.♔h3 ♔a3 55.♞f3† ♔a2 56.♞f2

b4 0–1

Repanic – Ljubicic, corr. 2006.

19.♠e3

This has traditionally been the mainline.  
White is slightly better, but Black's position  
is rather compact and difficult to overcome.  
A recent example highlights the way Black  
usually gets counterplay.

19...♔c5 20.♞g4† ♞d7 21.♔xc5

The stunning 21.♞g7 is nothing for White  
after 21...♠xc7 22.fxg7 ♞g8 23.♔xc5 ♞xg7.

21...♠xc5 22.♠xc5

22.♞g7 ♞hd8 23.♠xc5 ♞xc5 24.♠h3 ♔c7  
25.♠xd7 ♞xd7 26.♞g5 ♔b6 and Black is  
ready to push ...d5-d4 with great play for the  
exchange.

22...♞xc5 23.♞fe1

23.♞g7 was possible and probably best.

23...♞hd8

Note that if 23...♔c7 24.♠h3 then Black  
should play 24...♞xh3N 25.♞xh3 d4 with  
dangerous play on the long diagonal.

24.♞e7 ♔c7 25.♞ae1 ♠c6 26.♞f4†

Or again 26.♞g7.

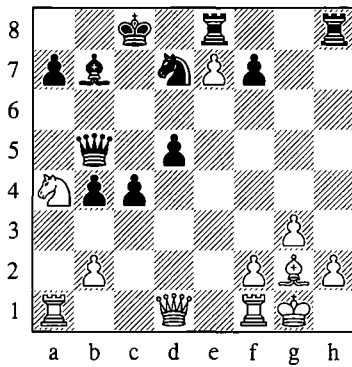
26...♔b6 27.♠h3 ♞d6 28.♞xf7 d4 29.♞e5 ♞d5  
30.♞e6 d3 31.♠g4 d2 32.♠d1 ♞f5 33.♞c7†  
♔b5 34.♞e3 ♞d5 35.f3 ♞d4 36.♞fe7 ♠xf3  
37.♠xf3 d1=♞† 38.♠xd1 ♞xd1† 39.♞e1  
♞d4† 40.♔h1 ♞d5† 41.♔g1 ♞d4† 42.♔h1  
♞d5† 43.♔g1 ½–½

Kasimdzhanov – Ragger, Dresden (ol) 2008.

19...♔c5

The standard reaction and the only move  
that has been played, but let's check some  
alternatives.

If 19...♠h6 to exchange the bishops, then  
20.♠d6!? looks annoying, because on 20...♠f8  
White has 21.♠e7. However, recent games  
suggest that Black might actually hold after:  
21...♠xe7 22.fx7 ♞de8



And now 23. Re1 Rh7 and next he will play ...f6 or even ...f5 and attack the e7-pawn. For example: 24. b3 c3 25. Wd4 f6 26. Wxa7 Rhxe7 27. Rxe7 N Rxe7 28. Qh3 Qc7 29. Qf1 Wc6 30. Wa5+ Qc8 31. Qh3 c2 32. Rcl d4 33. Qxd7+ Qxd7 34. Qc5+ Qe8 35. Qxb7 Rxb7 36. Rxc2 Wxc2 37. Wa8+ Qf7 38. Wxb7+ Qg6 39. Wxb4 d3=

Another recent example was: 23. Wd4 Rh6 24. b3 Rxe7 25. Rfc1 Qe5 26. Qc5 c3 27. Rxa7 Qc6 28. Wg4+ Rhe6 29. Qxe6 fxe6 30. Ra4 Wc5 31. Wg8+ Qd7 32. Qf1 d4 33. Qc4 Qa5 34. Wb8 Wc6 35. f3 Qxc4 36. Rxb4 Qb6 37. Rxd4+ Qd5 38. We5 Wc7 ½–½ Giri – Smeets, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

However this discussion is rather academic because the simple 20. Wd2! looks highly promising. See the next game.

On other moves such as 19... Qxf6, 19... Re8 or 19... Wc6 the centralization of the white queen with 20. Wd4 seems quite strong.

### 20. Qxc5 Qxc5 21. Re1

White even has a promising alternative in: 21. h4

This threatens Qh3+.

21... Qc6 22. Re1 d4

Vigorito suggests 22... Qb7 as an improvement, but then 23. Re7+ looks thematic, for instance 23... Qxe7 24. fxe7 Rde8 25. Wd4 a5 26. We5± with great play

for the exchange.

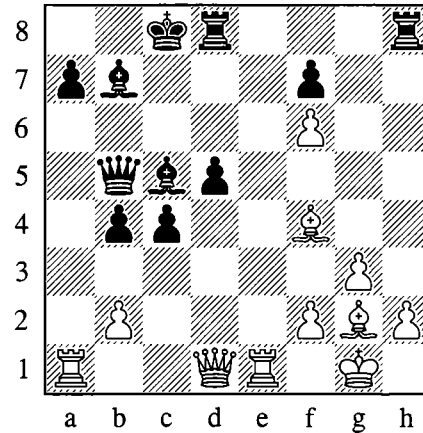
23. Wg4+ Rd7 24. Ra5! Wb6

24... Wxa5 25. Qxc6

25. Wf5 Qxg2 26. Rxc5+ Qc6 27. Re7 Rhd8

28. Rxf7

White is winning, Porper – Lock, Guernsey 2006.

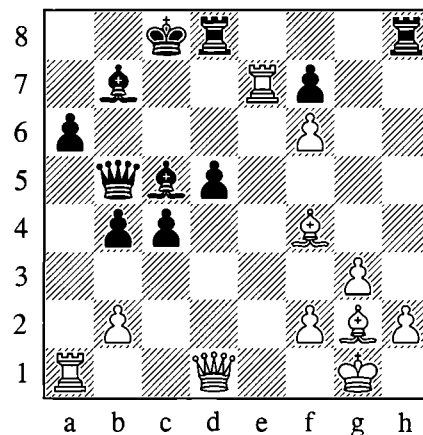


### 21...a6

21... Wd7 22. Re7 Qxe7 23. fxe7 Wxe7 24. Wd4 a6 25. Wb6 is no better.

Or 21... d4 22. Wg4+ Wd7 23. Wg5 and it is over. For example: 23... Qxg2 24. Wxc5+ Wc6 25. Wxb4 Wb7 26. Wxc4+ Qc6 27. Rac1 1–0 Heinis – Spiess, Basel 2012.

### 22. Re7



Standard by now.

22...♙xe7 23.fxe7 ♖dg8 24.♚d4

With complete dominance.

24...♗d7 25.♚e5 ♚c5 26.♙f3 ♗e8 27.♚d1  
1–0

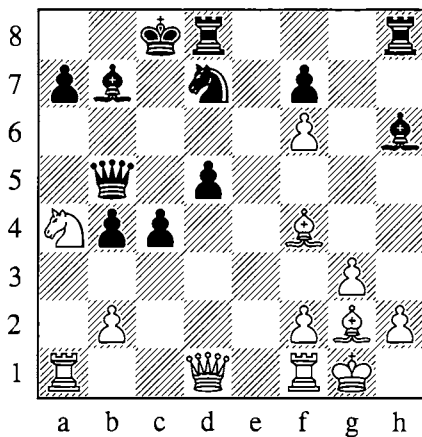
**Conclusion:** The mainline Botvinnik is also in dire straits after the simple but strong 19.♙f4. Notable is the rook manoeuvre to e7, where White gives up an exchange for complete dominance on the dark squares.

## GAME 42

Nakamura – Smeets

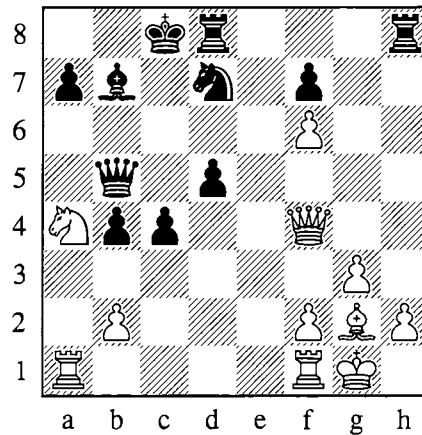
Wijk aan Zee 2011

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♖c3 e6 5.♙g5  
dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♗xg5 hxg5  
10.♙xg5 ♗bd7 11.g3 ♙b7 12.♙g2 ♚b6  
13.exf6 c5 14.d5 0–0–0 15.0–0 b4 16.♗a4  
♚b5 17.a3 exd5 18.axb4 cxb4 19.♙f4 ♙h6



This is the position mentioned in the previous game where White has improved on “old” theory with:

20.♚d2! ♙xf4 21.♚xf4



This looks quite promising for White.

21...♙c6

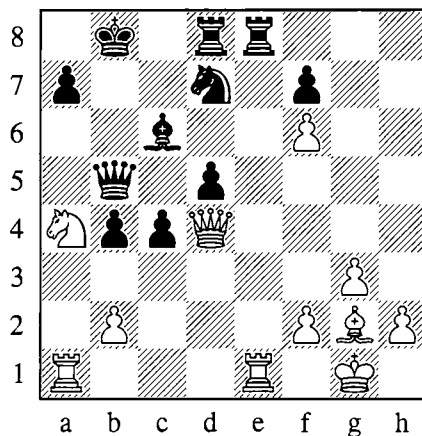
21...♗c5 22.♗xc5 ♚xc5 23.♚fe1 ♚d7 was Zakhartsov – Michalczak, Guben 2011. Now I recommend 24.h4!N threatening ♙h3. For example: 24...♚c7 25.♙h3† ♗b8 26.♚e7±

21...d4!? was suggested by Nakamura. 22.♗c3 ♚e5! 23.♙xb7† ♗xb7 24.♚f3† ♗b8 25.♗d5 ♚h5 26.♚xh5 ♚xh5 27.♗xb4 and White keeps some pull in the ending, though Black should probably hold.

22.♚d4 ♗b8 23.♚fe1±

White has excellent control.

23...♚he8



24.♞e7

The right idea, but one move too soon.  
24.♟f4†!N ♖c8 25.♞e7 was very strong.

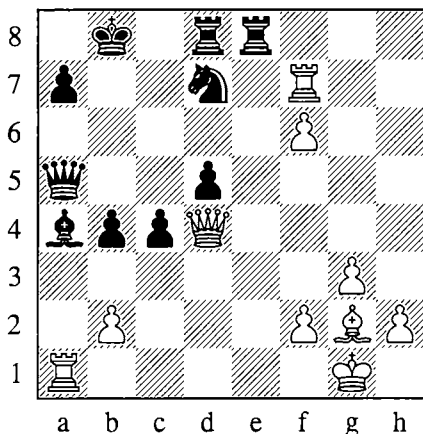
24...♟a5

Now Black gets counterplay; Nakamura decides to sacrifice a piece.

25.♞xf7

Now 25.♟f4† would be met by 25...♟c7.

25...♙xa4



26.♙xd5

26.h4! is strong according to Nakamura, but the text is not bad either.

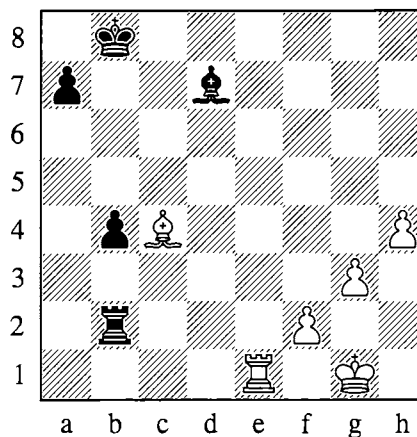
26...♟c5 27.♟f4† ♘e5 28.♙e4 ♞d7

Probably stronger was 28...♙d7 but after 29.♞g7 ♟c7 30.♙g2 White nevertheless has excellent chances with his army of pawns and threats along the long diagonal.

29.♞g7 ♙b5 30.♞xd7 ♙xd7 31.♙g6 ♞f8  
32.♞e1

Winning the piece back. The ending is pretty unclear though.

32...♟d6 33.♟xe5 ♞xf6 34.♟xd6† ♞xd6  
35.♙f7 ♞d2 36.♙xc4 ♞xb2 37.h4



Three passed pawns versus two! It must be good for White, but it is not so easy. The trick is to advance your own pawns and at the same time make it hard for the opponent to do the same. Well, easier said than done.

37...♙g4?!

37...♞c2 38.♙d3 ♞c3 39.♙g6 a5 40.h5 ♞c6 is a much tougher defence.

38.♙g2 a5 39.♞e5 ♞c2 40.♞b5† ♖c7  
41.♙d5 ♞d2 42.♙f7

Black loses his a-pawn after which the position is technically lost.

42...♙d7 43.♞xa5 ♙c6† 44.♖f1 ♙f3 45.♞a1  
♖d6 46.♙b3 ♞d3 47.♞b1 ♖c5 48.♖e1  
♖b5 49.♙d1! ♙xd1 50.♞xd1 ♞c3 51.h5 b3  
52.♖d2 ♞c8 53.♞c1 ♞f8 54.f4 ♖b4 55.♞h1  
♖a3 56.♖e3 b2 57.g4 ♞c8 58.♞b1 ♖a2  
59.♞xb2† ♖xb2 60.h6 ♖c3 61.g5  
1-0

**Conclusion:** Nakamura's 20.♟d2 pushes opening theory even further into the middlegame; in this case, the 'push' is in White's favour. With perfect play (and a computer helping) it is possible Black might scrape a draw, but for practical purposes it is fair to say White has the better chances.

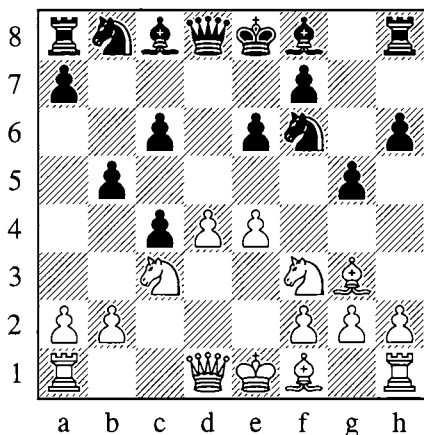
**Botvinnik conclusion:** The Botvinnik Variation leads to many fascinating lines, but at the moment White seems to be on top in all of them, so it is no wonder that the world's top players have already left the sinking ship and climbed on board the Moscow.

### Theory: Moscow Gambit

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♙c3 e6 5.♙g5 h6 6.♙h4

This is the sharpest choice, which is known as the Anti-Moscow Gambit. The normal Moscow 6.♙xf6 ♗xf6 7.e3 ♘d7 8.♙d3 dxc4 9.♙xc4 g6 10.0-0 ♙g7 has been tested in many games and so far Black's pair of bishops seems to balance White's extra space and freer play.

6...dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♙g3 b5



The Moscow Variation's similarity to the Botvinnik is striking, but so are the differences. Here Black is a pawn up instead of being one down! White has long-term positional compensation though: a strong centre with the further advances d4-d5 or e4-e5 constantly in the air gives a lot of dynamic quality. Furthermore Black has exposed himself on both flanks and almost invites White to play a4 and h4. Let's stop a moment at that last

point: the weakening of the kingside is the most significant and therefore a quick h2-h4 could be strong.

9.♙e2

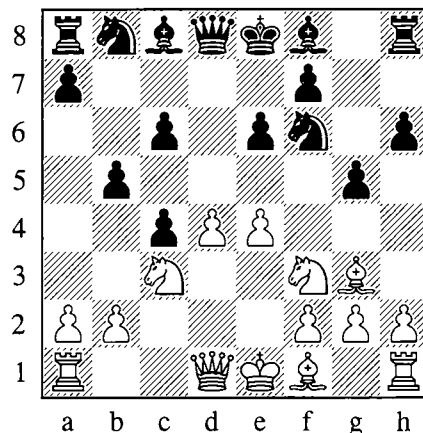
A good developing move.

Also possible is the immediate 9.h4 or 9.♘e5 but neither is currently troubling fans of the Semi-Slav. A recent example of 9.♘e5 was Nakamura – Anand, Sao Paulo 2011, which continued 9...♘bd7!? 10.♘xc6 ♗b6 11.d5 ♙b7 and Black was okay.

As will become clear, my favoured move is 9.♙e2, but later on I will suggest two anti-Moscow lines for White. They are 9.♙e2 ♙b7 10.h4 and 9.♙e2 ♙b7 10.e5!?. I mention this split now because White can try to reach the latter line using a different move order – 9.e5. We shall study this 'secondary' line now:

### The e4-e5 Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♙c3 e6 5.♙g5 h6 6.♙h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♙g3 b5



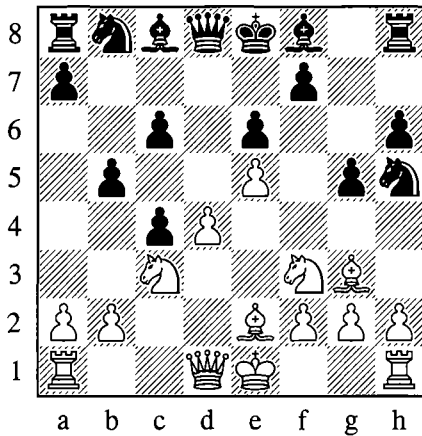
9.e5

A couple of points should be made about the move order White choose to reach my intended

'secondary' line. The question is whether to start with 9.e5 or 9.♘e2. As usual with move orders, there are pluses and minuses. I want to play 9.e5 because then White has a weapon that answers both the Moscow *and* Botvinnik variations (for the latter the sequence would be 5.♘g5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♘h4 g5 9.♘g3). But 9.e5 allows a line that 9.♘e2 effectively prevents. Therefore objectively I believe 9.♘e2 is more accurate. We shall now look at the 'extra' line that 9.e5 allows.

9.♘e2! ♘b7 10.e5 ♖h5 11.a4! transposes to the main line.

9...♖h5 10.♘e2



10...♖xg3!

This is the additional line a 9.e5 exponent must be ready for.

The line that White wishes to see (and likely *will* see if he chooses 9.♘e2) is:

10...♘b7 11.a4!

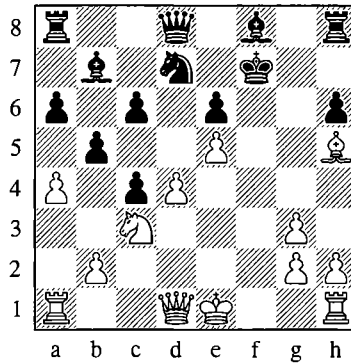
This should be thrown in before White sacrifices the piece.

11.♖e4? as in Relange – Buturin, Ubeda 1997, can be hit by: 11...c5!N 12.♖xc5 ♘xc5 13.dxc5 ♖c6

11...a6 12.♖xg5! ♖xg3 13.♖xf7 ♖xf7 14.fxg3

In this sharp position we will consider the critical 14...♖g8 and 14...♖e8, but let's start with the easier to defeat 14...♖d7.

a) 14...♖d7 15.♘h5†

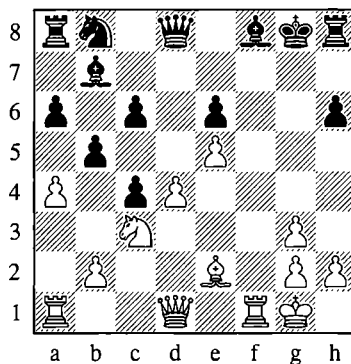


Black is in trouble whichever way his king chooses:

15...♖e7 16.♖g4 ♖b6 17.0-0 ♖d7 18.♖f7+ ♘e7 19.♖e4 ♖c7 20.♖xe6 ♖c8 21.♖d6+

15...♖g7 16.0-0 ♖h7 17.♖e2! This creates massive threats. One is the obvious ♖f4 but there is also a sneakier idea of ♘g6. For example: 17...♘e7 18.♘g6!? with the point 18...♖xg6? 19.♖c2+ ♖g7 20.♖f7+! and Black is dead.

b) 14...♖g8 15.0-0



15...♖d7

15...c5 opens up the b7-bishop just to lose it to a flurry of checks and captures: 16.♙xc4! bxc4 17.♖g4+ ♗g7 18.♗xe6+ ♖h7 19.♗f5+ ♗g8 20.♗f7+ ♖h7 21.♗xb7 Despite the trauma of the last few moves, Black is still just about alive: 21...♗xd4+ 22.♖h1 ♘d7 23.♗ad1 ♗hf8 24.♗g1 ♗fb8 25.♗f3 ♗xe5 26.♗xd7±

15...♗h7 16.♗g4 ♗c8 17.♘e4♞ Over the board, White’s compensation is likely to be transformed into an advantage. For example: 17...♖h8 18.axb5 cxb5 19.♗f3 ♗e7 20.♘f6 ♗xf6 21.exf6 ♗b7 22.♗e3 ♘c6 23.♗ad1 ♗d6 24.♗xe6±

16.♘e4 c5

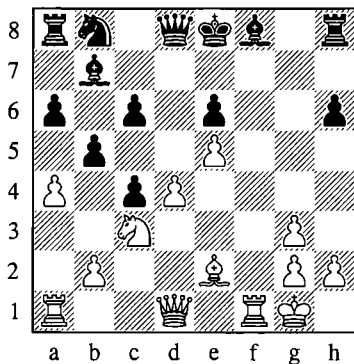
As ever, this pawn break provokes wild tactics.

The steadier 16...♗h7 still offers White a continuing initiative after 17.♗g4♞.

17.♙xc4 bxc4 18.♗g4+ ♗g7 19.♗xe6+ ♖h7 20.♗f5+ ♗g8 21.♗f7+ ♖h7 22.♘f6+ ♘xf6 23.exf6 ♗xd4+ 24.♖h1 ♗xg2+ 25.♖xg2 ♗hg8 26.fxg7 ♗xb2+ 27.♖h3 ♗xg7 28.♗xc4±

Somehow we have ended up with level material, but White clearly has the safer king, which is worth at least an edge.

c) 14...♖e8 15.0-0♞



15...♗e7!

The black king is obviously not going to stay on e8 for long – it is heading for the queenside, but the timing of the march is

significant.

The immediate 15...♘d7 allows a powerful rook on the 7th: 16.♗f7+ ♗e7 17.♗g4 ♖c7 18.♗xe6 ♗f8 19.♗g7 Now the real test is 19...♘d7 20.♗g4♞. White has an easier task against 19...♖b6 20.d5± as given by both Anand and Scherbakov.

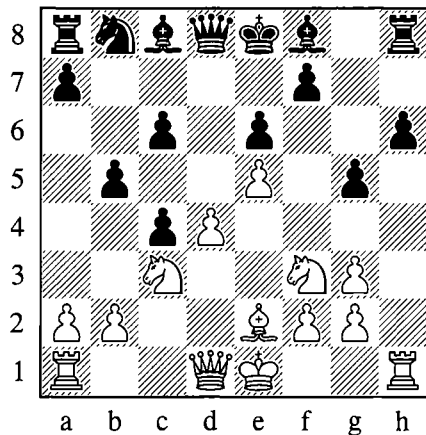
16.♘e4 ♘d7

16...c5 is of course the usual break, but in this case it blasts open the area of the board where the black king was hoping to hide. 17.♘d6+ ♗xd6 18.♗h5+ ♖d7 19.dxc5→ The attack is looking good. For example: 19...♗d5 20.cxd6 ♗b6+ 21.♖h1 ♘c6 22.♗f7+ ♖c8 23.♗f3±

17.♗f7 ♖c8 18.♗g4 ♘d7 19.♗xe6 ♖b8♞

White has only two pawns for the piece but Black’s position is desperately tough to play.

11.hxg3



11...♘d7

Black can try various moves.

11...a6 12.♘e4 ♗b4+ disrupts Black more than it does White: 13.♖f1 ♘d7 (13...♗e7 14.♗h5!±) 14.b3!± N. Pert – Collas, Birmingham 2006.

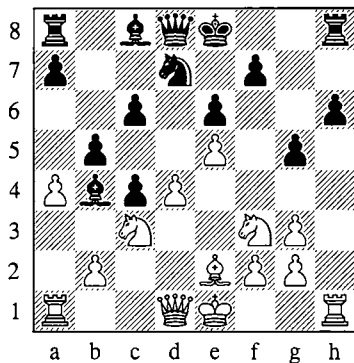
11...♗b4 12.a4 ♗b7 13.♖f1 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♘d7 15.♘d2 was promising for White in

Hein – Heller, Bensheim 2005. And even more promising was the tricky 15.♞c1! with threats against g5. The queen should choose c1 rather than d2 so that 15...f6 can be met by 16.axb5 cxb5 17.♞b1! hitting b5 and g6.

11...♙b7 12.♘e4 ♙e7 So far this is Deues – Gschwendtner, Bavaria 2002, and now White has a punchy novelty: 13.♘fxg5!N ♙xg5 14.♘d6† ♘f8 15.♘xb7 ♞c7 16.♘d6 ♙e7 17.♙h5 ♙xd6 18.exd6 ♞xd6 19.♞f3 ♞e7 20.a4!☞

### 12.a4 ♙b7

Instead 12...♙b4 was Halldorsson – Erenburg, Reykjavik 2004.



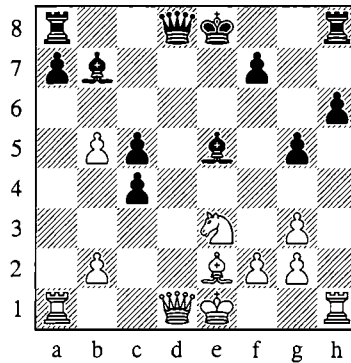
Now a couple of lines should be considered:

If 13.♞d2 then 13...f6 was given by Dreev and now White should try 14.♘f1!N fxe5 15.♞e3±. White is also better after 13...c5 14.d5 ♙b7 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.♞e3±.

A new idea is 13.♘f1N which looks good after both 13...♙xc3 14.bxc3 ♙b7 15.♘d2± and 13...♙b7 14.axb5 cxb5 15.♘xb5 ♘b6 16.g4±.

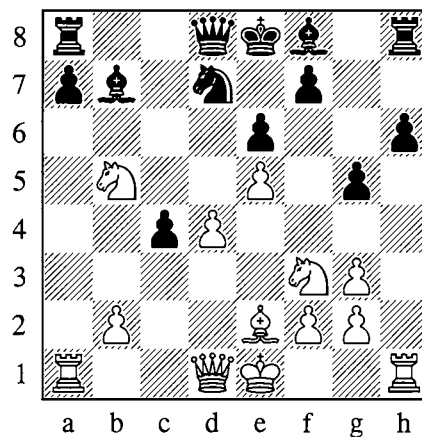
### 13.axb5 cxb5

13...c5 was given by Dreev but White can seize an edge with precise play: 14.d5 exd5 15.♘xd5 ♙g7 16.♘e3 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♙xe5



And now correct is: 18.♘xc4! (instead 18.♞xd8† fades out to equality after 18...♘xd8 19.♘xc4 ♙d4 20.♙f3 ♙xf3 21.gxf3 ♞e8† 22.♘f1 ♞e6=) 18...♞xd1† 19.♙xd1 ♙c7 20.♙f3±

### 14.♘xb5



### 14...g4?!

14...♞b6!?N needs to be tested.

### 15.♘d2 ♙xg2 16.♞h2 ♞b6 17.♞xg2 ♞xb5 18.♘xc4±

In Nakamura – Kleiman, Las Vegas 2007, White had the better of it.

**Conclusion:** The lines 9.e5 and 9.♙e2 ♙b7 10.e5 frequently transpose, but the former allows the additional line we saw above. The correct assessment depends largely on the

untested 14...♖b6!?. It looks a tough test so I would recommend the 9.♗e2 order.

## 10.♘d2 – sidelines

### GAME 43

E. Hansen – D. Yang

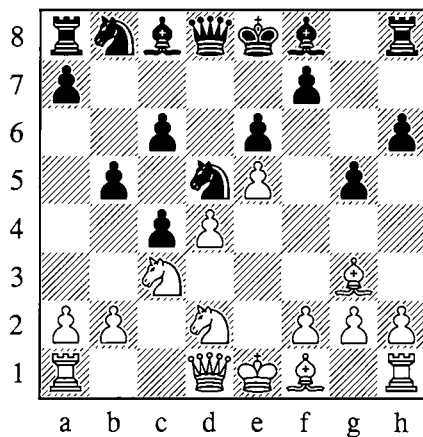
Lubbock 2010

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5  
h6 6.♗h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♗g3 b5 9.e5

As we know, the alternate move order is 9.♗e2! ♗b7 10.e5 ♘d5 11.♘d2.

9...♘d5 10.♘d2!?

The careless 10.♗e2? allows 10...♖a5!.



10...♘d7

This is the usual move, but we should also have a quick scan through some rare ideas. Since we are talking about rare replies to a rare line, many of these positions have not been seen in many games – often they have not been played in *any* games.

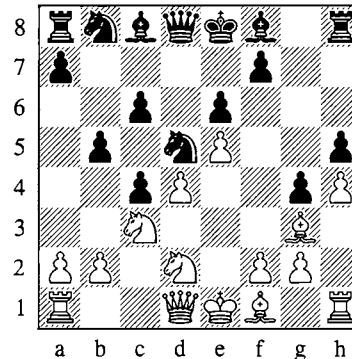
10...♗b4 11.♘de4 ♖a5 12.a3!N looks pleasant for White.

10...♖a5!? 11.♘de4 b4!? is untested and

unclear. Perhaps then 12.♘xd5 cxd5 12.♘f6+ ♘d8 13.b3 when Black's extra pawn is secure but eventually his king may suffer. For the moment, the position is closed enough but that will not always be the case.

10...h5!? 11.h4 g4

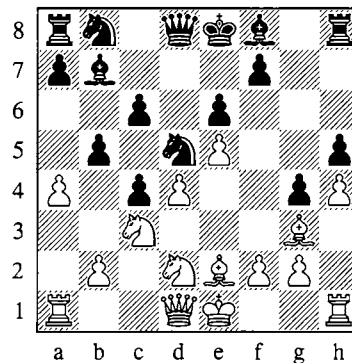
This looks logical.



Kogan – Stripunsky, Toronto 2000, continued:  
12.a4

In a previous game Kogan had played 12.♗e2 so we can take 12.a4 as a prepared improvement.

12...♗b7 13.♗e2



13...♘xc3

Black tries to punish White's move order which has left g2 undefended, but this plan backfires.

The more standard 13...a6 would head towards a typical position for this line after 14.♘de4.

14.bxc3 c5 15.axb5 ♖xg2 16.♖g1 ♕d5  
17.♜xc4 ♕xc4 18.♕xc4

The pawn trades have helped White greatly, as it is the black king which is in trouble.

18...♜d7 19.♕f1 cxd4 20.♕g2 dxc3 21.♕c6 ♞c7?

Black was under huge pressure anyway, but now he is dead lost.

22.♞d4! c2 23.♜e2 ♕g7 24.♕xa8 0–0 25.♞xa7 c1=♞ 26.♞xc1 ♞xc1 27.♞xd7 ♕h6 28.♕e4 1–0

**11.♕e2 ♞b6**

The other queen move is also worth a look:

11...♞a5!?

Mileika – Klovans, Soviet Union 1955, continued:

12.0–0! ♕b7 13.a4 ♜xc3 14.bxc3 ♞xc3 15.♜e4 ♞b3

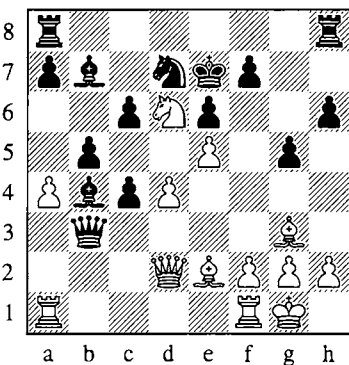
Now White put his queen on c1 immediately, but instead I would recommend:

16.♞d2!N ♕b4

This must have been the move Mileika was concerned about.

17.♜d6† ♜e7

17...♕xd6 18.exd6 c3 19.♞e3



Now White has an attractive choice of moves:

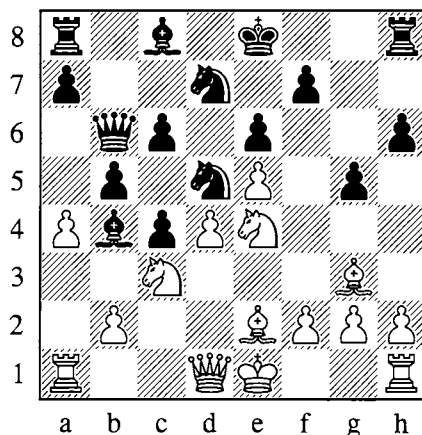
18.♞e3 ♞xe3 19.fxe3 The exchange of queens lessens the danger to the black king, although opening the f-file does make it a tempting

option. Black may just about scrape a draw, as the following fun line illustrates: 19...♕xd6 20.exd6† ♜e8 21.♕h5 ♞h7 22.♞xf7 ♞xf7 23.♞f1 ♜d8 24.♕xf7 c3 25.♕xe6 b4 26.♕e5 c2 27.♞c1 ♜xe5 28.dxe5 ♕c8 29.♕b3 ♕f5 30.e6 ♞b8 31.e4 ♕xe6 32.♕xe6 b3 33.♕xb3 ♞xb3 34.♞xc2 ♜d7 35.e5 ♞b4 36.♞f2 ♜e6 37.♞f6† ♜xe5 38.d7 ♞d4 39.♞xh6 ♞xd7 40.♞xc6 g4 After all that White is a pawn up, but the rook ending should be a draw.

18.♞c1 An awkward-looking square but soon the black king will be under fire. For example: 18...♞ab8 19.♕f3 ♕a8 20.axb5 cxb5 21.♕xa8 ♞xa8 22.♜xb5 a5 23.f4

**12.a4 ♕b4 13.♜de4**

White has a highly appealing position.



13...c5 14.0–0! cxd4 15.♜xb5 d3 16.♜ed6† ♕xd6 17.♜xd6† ♜e7 18.♕f3 ♞d4

So far so good from White, but now he begins to lose his way.

**19.b3?!±**

Although White retains an edge after this move, it is not best and marks the start of a sequence of shaky moves.

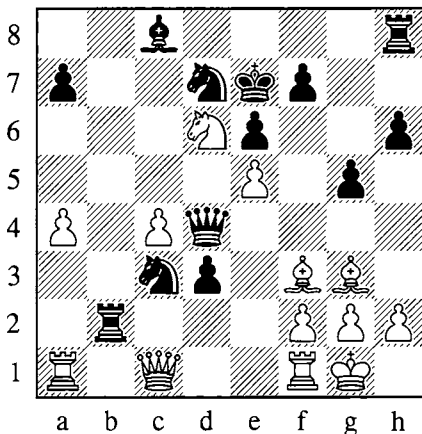
Most accurate was: 19.♜b5!N For example: 19...♞c5 20.b4!! ♞xb4 21.♕xd5 exd5 22.♞f3

♙f8 (22...♙c5 23.♙ae1!+- threatening e5-e6)  
23.♙ab1 ♗c5 24.♙h5±

19...♘c3 20.♙c1?!

Now the last of White's advantage ebbs away.  
Better was: 20.♘b5 ♘xb5 21.axb5±

20...♙b8 21.bxc4 ♙b2



22.♘b5?!

White could still hold on to equality with:  
22.♙xb2! ♘e2† 23.♙xe2 dxe2 24.♙xe2=

22...♘b5 23.axb5 d2♠

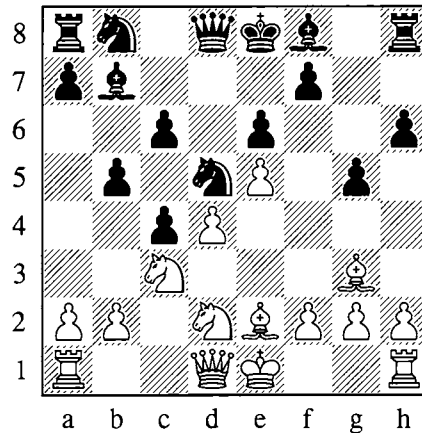
The rest of the game is not relevant to our opening preparation, but Black eventually collected the full point.

...0-1

**Conclusion:** The above game ended disappointingly (so much so that I omitted the end of it) but in the lines above White is generally doing well.

### Rare 11th moves

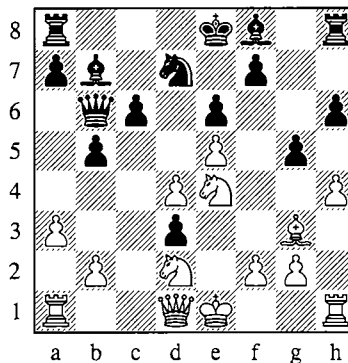
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♙g5  
h6 6.♙h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♙g3 b5 9.♙e2 ♙b7  
10.e5 ♘d5 11.♘d2



11...♘d7 is almost universally played, but we should have a quick look at unusual alternatives. Note that the moves below are very rare indeed – generally they have been played only once or twice.

11...a6 12.0-0 is likely to transpose elsewhere as the following independent gambit line is unsound: 12...h5? 13.♙xh5 ♘f4 14.♙xf4 gxf4 15.♘de4 ♘d7 16.♙g4+- Milekic – Markovic, Belgrade 2010.

11...♘b4 12.a3 ♘d3† 13.♙xd3 cxd3 Black gets rid of the potentially dangerous light-squared bishop, but the new d3-pawn is a weakling. 14.♘ce4 ♘d7 15.h4 ♙b6



Babula – Palecek, Brezova 2010, continued  
16.♙g4 h5 which was very messy, but instead  
16.♘b3 was simple and promising.

11...♖xc3 12.bxc3 c5 can be met by 13.♗f3 very likely followed by ♖e4, with good compensation.

11...♗e7 is not ridiculous but feels needlessly committal compared to the main line – the b8-knight surely belongs on d7 but the bishop may have options other than e7. Hillarp Persson – Hector, Sweden (ch) 2006, continued 12.♖de4 ♖d7 13.h4! with compensation.

11...c5? is just unsound: 12.♖xb5 a6 13.♖d6† ♗xd6 14.exd6± Williams – Zimmermann, Graechen 2009.

**Conclusion:** White should be happy to see Black's rare 11th moves. The real challenge is 11...♖d7, which we shall study next.

11...♖d7

### GAME 44

Shyam – Siddharth

Visakhapatnam 2011

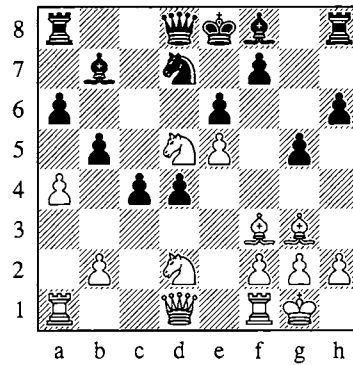
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♖f3 ♖f6 4.♖c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♗g3 b5 9.e5 ♖d5 10.♖d2!? ♗b7 11.♗e2 ♖d7 12.a4 a6 13.0-0

White must be careful with his move order. The sloppy 13.♖de4?! allows: 13...c5! 14.axb5? ♖xc3 15.♖xc3 This was Williams – Grandadam, Lenzerheide 2010, and now Black could have inflicted maximum punishment with: 15...cxd4!N 16.♗xd4 ♗xg2 17.♗g1 axb5!→

13...♗b6

The immediate break with ...c6-c5 is highly risky:

13...c5 14.♗f3 cxd4 15.♖xd5

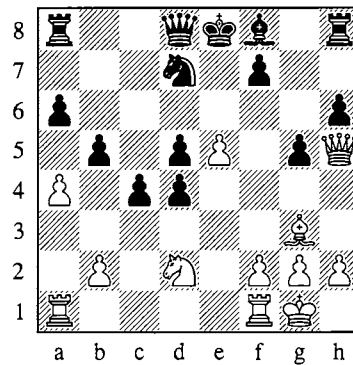


15...♗xd5

15...exd5 is hit by: 16.e6! fxe6 17.♗h5† ♖e7 18.♖f3→

16.♗xd5 exd5 17.♗h5

But not 17.♗e1?! ♗b4!±.



Clearly White hopes to get in e5-e6; Black is worse as the following lines show:

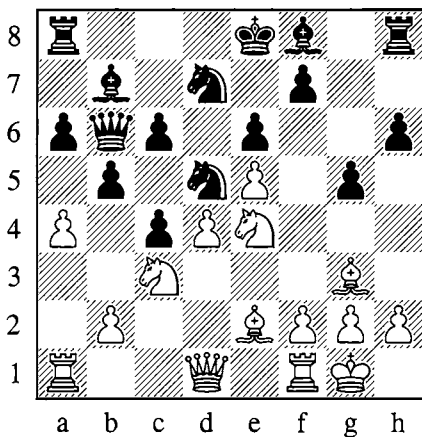
17...♖c5 18.e6 ♖xe6 19.♗fe1 ♗c8 20.♖f3 ♗g7 21.♗xe6† ♗xe6 22.♗e1 ♗xe1† 23.♖xe1 d3 24.h4 0-0 25.♖f3 f6 26.♗g6 ♗fe8 27.♗f5 ♖h8 28.hxg5 hxg5 29.♗c7! ♗e2 30.♗a5±

17...♗e7 18.♖f3! (18.axb5 ♖c5 19.e6 ♖xe6 20.♗f3±) Now White has an edge after either 18...♖c5 19.♖xd4 ♖e6 20.♖f5 ♖g7 21.♖xg7† ♗xg7 22.axb5 ♗e6 23.♗a5 0-0 24.♗fa1± or 18...♗e6 19.axb5 ♗g6 20.♗xg6 fxg6 21.♖xd4±.

14.♖de4

This is White's standard piece setup in this variation. The knight hop from f3 to d2 to e4 not only improves the knight but also clears the d1-h5 diagonal and, in some cases, allows a good f2-f4 break.

Now the absolute main line is 14...0-0-0 which we will see in the next game. But for now let's see some less common alternatives.

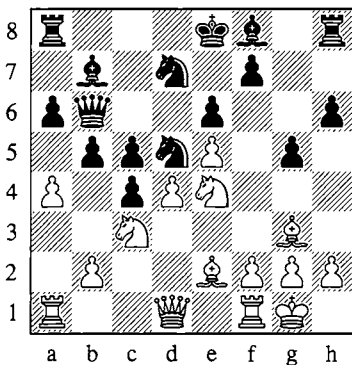


#### 14...♙e7

Steady development, but Black can also try the almost inevitable ...c6-c5 break now:

#### 14...c5

This is one of the critical lines where Black tries to kill the game to a draw.



#### a) 15.♘xd5

This leads more or less by force to a draw.  
15...♙xd5

15...exd5?! 16.♙g4± Stoczek – Krejci, Ostrava 2010.

16.♘c3 cxd4 17.♘xd5 exd5 18.♙h5 ♙e7!

18...♙g7?! 19.e6!±

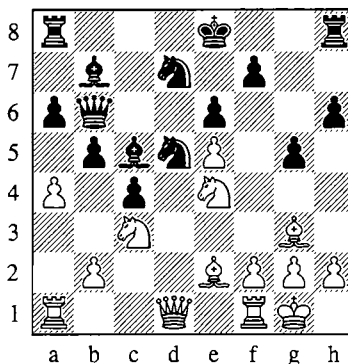
19.e6 ♜xe6 20.♞e1 ♞f6 21.♙g4 0-0! 22.♙xd7

♙d6 23.axb5 axb5 24.♞xa8 ♞xa8 25.♙xd6

♞xd6 26.♙xb5 d3 27.h4 ♞b8 28.hxg5

½-½ J. Houska – Sykora, e-mail 2007.

#### b) 15.dxc5 ♙xc5



In Tumanov – Yagupov, St Petersburg 2003, White went wrong with 16.♙h5?! ♘xc3 17.♘xc3 ♞d8♞.

Correct was 16.♙f3!N and now 16...0-0 17.h4♞ or 16...♘xc3 17.bxc3 ♙xe4 18.♙xe4 ♞d8 19.axb5 axb5 20.♞h5 ♙e7 21.h4♞. It is worth continuing a little as a nasty trap is lurking further down the line: 21...♘c5 22.♞fe1 ♘xe4 23.♞xe4 ♞d3 24.hxg5 ♞xg3? 25.♞d4!±

#### 15.♘d6†

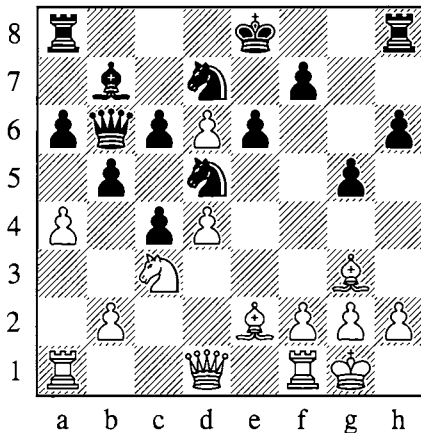
White should avoid 15.♞d2?! c5!♞ but there is a worthy alternative: 15.a5! ♞a7 16.♙h5 ♞h7

The only game to reach this position turned into an unclear mess after: 17.♘xd5 cxd5 18.♘d6† ♙xd6 19.exd6 0-0-0 20.f4 Delorme – Berescu, Creon 2011 (20.♞e1!?!∞) 20...♘f6!N 21.fxg5 ♘xh5 22.♞xh5 ♞xd4† 23.♞f2 ♞g8 24.gxh6 f5∞

So instead I suggest: 17.♖g4!?!N 0–0–0 18.♞fd1 One plausible and enjoyable line is: 18...♗a8!?! 19.♙xf7!?! ♞xf7 20.♞xe6 ♞g7 21.♞xh6 ♞gg8 22.♘xd5 cxd5 23.♘d6† ♙xd6 24.♞xd6 ♘f8 25.♞e7 ♘g6 26.♞xg5 ♙c6 27.f4 The three pawns look preferable to the piece, especially taking into account the black king's exposure.

**15...♙xd6 16.exd6**

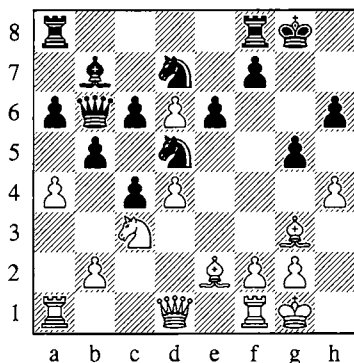
Decision time for Black – which way should his king go?



**16...0–0–0?!**

My analysis suggests this is the wrong choice.

16...0–0 17.h4♞



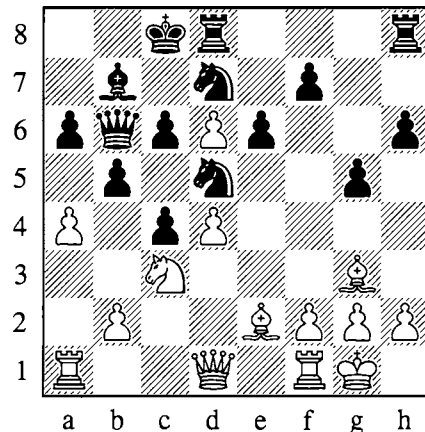
17...c5

This looks like Black's best try.

White is a little better after: 17...gxf4 18.♙xh4 c5 19.♘d5 ♙xd5 20.dxc5 ♞xc5 21.♙e7 ♞fb8 22.♞a3!± For example: 22...♗h7 23.♞h3 (23.♞c2† f5 24.♞d2 ♞g8 25.♞xh6† ♗xh6 26.♞h3† ♗g6 27.♞g3† ♗f7 28.♙h5† ♞g6 29.♙xg6† ♗g8 30.♙xf5† ♗h8=) 23...♞g8 24.g3 ♙b7 25.♞d2 ♞g6 26.♙h5 ♞xg3† 27.♞xg3 ♞xh5 28.f3± 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.♞d2 f6 20.♙g4 ♞ae8 21.♘e2♞

White has a promising position but nothing is clear yet.

Black can delay deciding his king's fate with 16...c5 but White has good play after either 17.♙f3 ♘xc3 18.bxc3 cxd4 19.♙xb7 ♞xb7 20.♞xd4 or 17.dxc5 ♞xc5 18.♙f3♞.



17.♞d2

17.♞e1!N was more flexible. 17...f5 18.♙e5±

17...f5 18.♙e5 ♘xe5 19.dxe5 ♘f4 20.♞fe1♞ ♗b8 21.♙f1 ♞hg8 22.♘d1 ♞g7 23.♞e3 h5 24.b3 c5

Black could try 24...♘d5!?! but White keeps an edge with precise play: 25.♞h3 ♘f4 26.♞c3 ♘d5 27.bxc4! (27.♞c2 cxb3 28.♞b2 f4 29.♞xb3 g4∞) 27...♘xc3 28.♞xc3 b4 29.c5!±

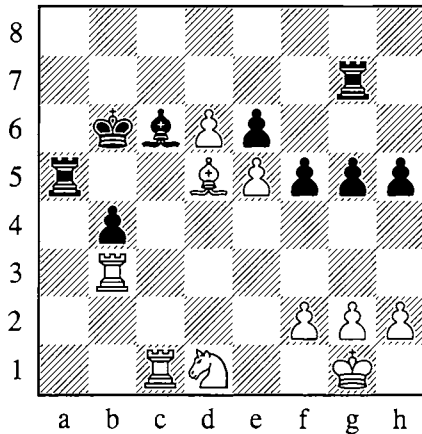
**25.axb5 axb5 26.♞a5!**

Making the most of his pluses. White would have just an edge after 26.bxc4 b4±.

26...♞xa5 27.♞xa5 ♘c6

27...♞d5 was no better: 28.♞e1 ♞b4  
29.bxc4 ♞c2 30.♞e2 ♞d4 31.♞b2 ♞c6  
32.♞axb5 ♞xe5 33.♞c3±

28.bxc4 ♞b4 29.♞xc5± ♞b7 30.♞a5 ♞b6  
31.♞a1 ♞a8 32.c5! ♞xc5 33.♞c1† ♞b6  
34.♞b3 ♞d5 35.♞c4 ♞a5 36.♞xd5



36...♞xd5?!

This makes White's task easier, but Black would still be lost after, for example: 36...♞xd5  
37.♞xb4† ♞b5 38.♞bc4! ♞b7 39.♞c3 ♞xe5  
40.♞a4† ♞a7 41.♞c5 ♞d5 42.♞a4† ♞b8  
43.♞b4+–

37.♞xb4† ♞b5 38.♞xb5† ♞xb5 39.♞c3†  
♞c4 40.♞e4† ♞d4 41.♞f6 ♞b7 42.d7 ♞b8  
43.♞xd5 ♞xe5

43...♞xd5 44.d8=♞† is equally simple.

44.♞e7

1–0

**Conclusion:** The lines above are very sharp, but White has promising play in all cases.

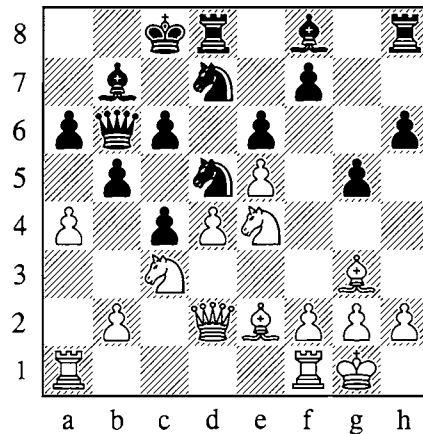
14...0–0–0

## GAME 45

Hracek – Elsness

Porto Carras 2011

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♞c3 ♞f6 4.♞f3 e6 5.♞g5  
h6 6.♞h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♞g3 b5 9.e5 ♞d5  
10.♞d2 ♞b7 11.♞e2 ♞d7 12.a4 a6 13.0–0  
♞b6 14.♞de4 0–0–0 15.♞d2



15...c5?!

A natural try but it allows White to play a powerful sequence of moves.

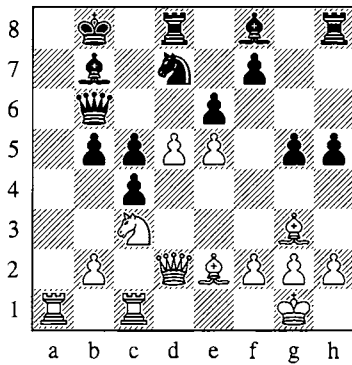
It is telling that the best move has not been played yet – we are in relatively unknown territory:

15...♞b8!N

Now I suggest:

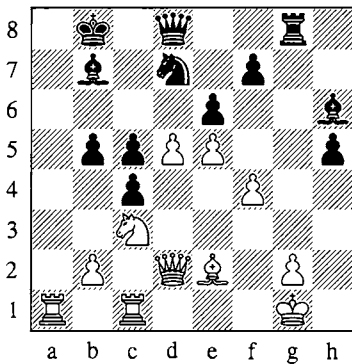
16.♞fc1!? c5 17.♞xd5 ♞xd5 18.♞c3 ♞b7  
19.axb5 axb5

19...cxd4 allows White a powerful attack  
after: 20.♞a4 ♞xb5 21.♞xc4 ♞b4 22.♞d3→  
20.d5 h5



The play started wild and is getting wilder. White must decide whether his h-pawn should move one square or two:

21.h4 gxh4 22.♙xh4 ♗h6 23.♙xd8 ♖xd8  
24.f4 ♖g8



Opening the g-file so quickly on move 21 has helped Black. 25.dxe6! The wisest course is to bail out with a draw. 25...♖xg2† 26.♔f1 fxe6 27.♖d6† ♔c8 28.♕xb5 ♖g1†! 29.♔xg1 ♖g8† 30.♔f2 ♖g2† 31.♔e1 ♖g1† 32.♙f1 ♖e3† 33.♙e2 ♖g1†=

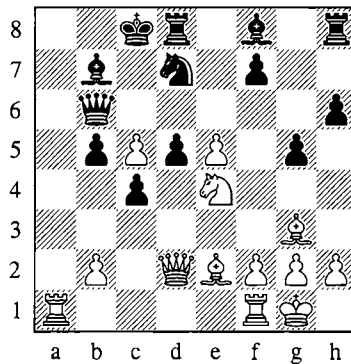
21.h3! White will keep the g-file closed even if it costs material. For example: 21...♙h6 22.♖e1 h4 23.♙h2 g4 24.♙g4 ♙xc1 25.♙xc1= For the exchange White has the bishop pair and, more importantly, by far the safer king.

### 16.axb5 axb5

16...♕xc3 17.♕xc3 axb5 18.d5 transposes.

### 17.♕xd5 ♙xd5

The problem with 17...exd5 is 18.dxc5.



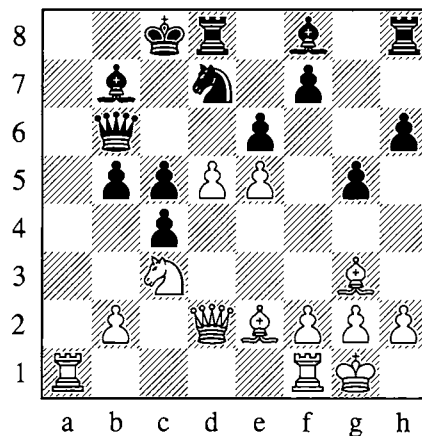
Black must give up his dark-squared bishop with 18...♙xc5 19.♕xc5 ♖xc5 20.♙h5= when White has great play. Black would like to be able to play 18...♕xc5? but after 19.♕xc5 ♙xc5 White has the nasty 20.♙g4†±.

### 18.♕c3 ♙b7

Instead Babula – Hoffmann, Delmenhorst 2011, continued: 18...♕b8 19.♕xd5 ♖xd5 20.♙f3 ♖xd4 21.♖e2 ♙g7 22.♖a8 ♖hd8 23.♖fa1± White has a slight advantage. Let's quickly follow the rest of the game, as it shows a typical pattern – White's plus grows and grows. 23...b4 24.h3 b3 25.♖1a4 ♖b5 26.♔h2 ♖8d7 27.♖e1± ♖d3 28.♖4a5 ♖b6 29.♖e4 c3 30.♖xb8† ♖xb8 31.♖a8 ♖7d5 32.♖a4 1–0 The lesson is that these positions are tough to play, especially with Black!

### 19.d5±

White's play flows beautifully.

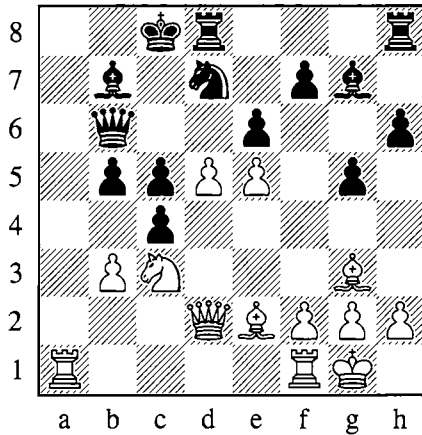


**19...♙g7?!**

Black could limit the damage with: 19...f5  
20.exf6 ♖xf6 21.♙e5 ♙g7 22.♚c2!±

**20.b3±**

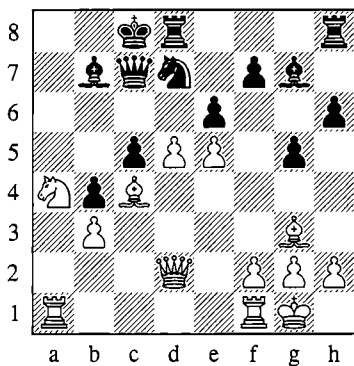
White has great play; in fact, Black usually gets wiped off the board if he is unwise enough to reach this position.

**20...♜xe5**

Black is in deep trouble whatever he plays.

20...♙xe5 was Stocck – Najer, Wheeling 2010:  
21.♙xe5!N ♜xe5 22.♚e3! ♚d6 23.♞f1 exd5  
24.♜xb5 ♚e7 25.bxc4+– For example: 25...d4  
26.♙g4! ♜b8 27.♚a3 ♙c6

20...b4 21.♜a4 ♚c7 22.♙xc4



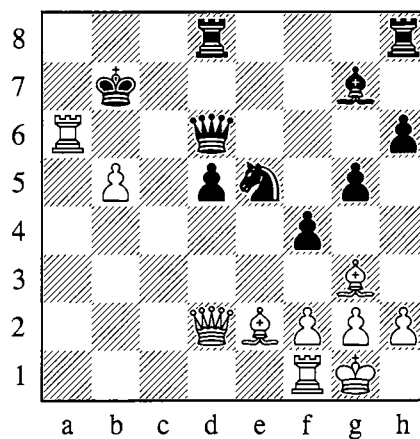
22...♙xe5 was played in Williams –

Thorhallsson, Reykjavik 2012, and now  
23.♞fc1!+– would be a winning novelty!  
22...♜xe5 would not have helped as 23.♚e2!  
exd5 24.♙b5+– is crushing.

**21.bxc4 exd5**

21...b4 should be met by: 22.♚e3! ♜f3†  
23.♙xf3 ♙xc3 24.dxe6! Now White is much  
better after 24...♙d4 25.♚e2± and even worse  
is: 24...♙xa1?! 25.♙g4!+–

22.cxb5 f5 23.♜a4 ♚d6 24.♜xc5! f4  
25.♜xb7 ♜xb7 26.♞a6

**26...♚e7**

If 26...♚c5 then 27.♙xf4! gxf4 28.♞c1 ♜c4  
29.♞xc4 dxc4 30.♙f3† ♜c8 31.♚xf4 but to see  
that this was the way to win is quite difficult.

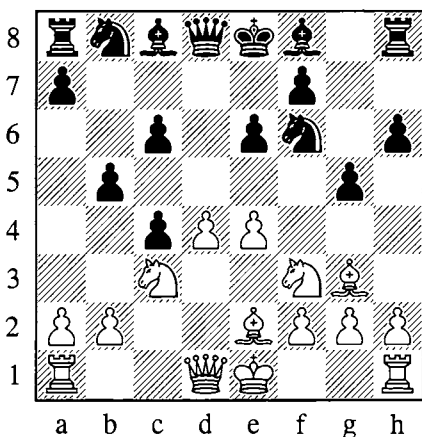
27.♞fa1 ♚c5 28.♞c1 ♜c4 29.♞xc4 dxc4  
30.♙f3† ♜c7 31.♙xf4† gxf4 32.♚xf4† ♙e5  
33.♚e4 ♚xb5 34.♞c6† ♜d7 35.♚f5†  
1–0

**Conclusion:** As noted at move 15, it is significant that Black's critical defence has not been tested yet.

Overall, White's anti-Moscow system with 9.♙e2 ♙b7 10.e5 (or 9.e5) is highly promising and less explored than the main lines.

### 9. ♖e2 – Rare 9th Moves

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4. ♖c3 e6 5. ♗g5 h6 6. ♗h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8. ♗g3 b5 9. ♗e2



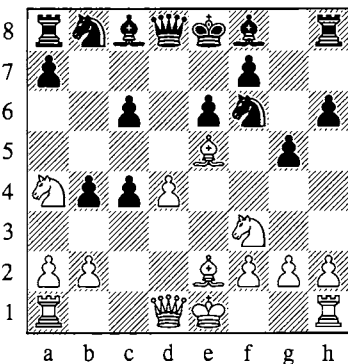
The best move is 9... ♗b7 and we shall study that later. Other tries can quickly lead to trouble, especially if Black is driven by greed.

9...b4 10. ♖a4 ♖xe4

Black wins a central pawn but neglects normal development.

11. ♗e5 ♖f6

On 11... ♗g8 there follows 12. ♖c2. Then 12...f5 13. ♗xc4 g4 14. ♖d2 ♖xd2 15. ♖xd2 ♗g6 16. ♗c1 ♖a5 17. ♖c5 ♖d7 18. ♖d3± and Black's position is full of holes, Rodriguez – Pecha, corr. 2001. That means Black has to withdraw the knight with 12... ♖f6 when 13.0-0 or ♗xc4 gives White a pleasant initiative.



12. ♖c5! ♗g8

12... ♗xc5 13.dxc5 ♖bd7 14. ♗d6±

Or 12... ♗g7 13. ♗xc4 0-0 14. ♖c2 ♖bd7 15.h4 gxh4 (15...g4 16. ♖g5!→) 16. ♖xd7 ♗xd7 17. ♗xh4± Sakaev – Kobalia, St Petersburg 1998. White can castle queenside and launch a big attack.

13. ♖c2 ♖bd7 14. ♖xd7 ♗xd7 15.0-0 ♖d5 16. ♖d2!?

16. ♗xc4

16...f6 17. ♗g3 ♖f7 18. ♖h7† ♗g7 19. ♗h5† ♖e7 20. ♖xh6 ♗e8

P.H. Nielsen – T. Thorhallsson, Reykjavik 2001.

21. ♗g4 c3 22.bxc3 bxc3 23. ♖c4±

Another way is:

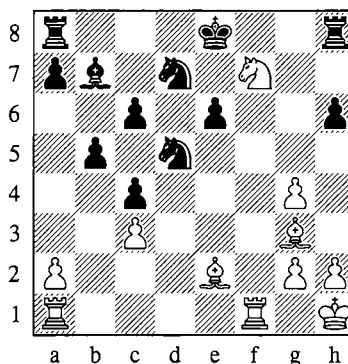
9... ♗b4 10. ♖c2 g4 11. ♖e5 ♖xd4 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♖xe4 14. ♖d2

Black is three pawns up, but terribly weak on the dark squares: White just has to open up the position with f2-f3 to get going.

14... ♖bd7 15.f3 ♖d5 16. ♖f4 ♖c5†

16... ♗g8 17. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 18.fxg4 e5 19. ♖xh6± Goldin – Ippolito, Philadelphia 1999.

17. ♖h1 ♖e7 18.fxg4 ♖d5 19. ♖xf7† ♖xf7 20. ♖xf7±



This has been tested in some correspondence games. White has a strong initiative after either:

20...♖h7 21.♗d6† ♕d8 22.a4 bxa4 23.♙xc4  
 ♗e3 24.♙h4† ♕c7 25.♗e8† ♖b7 26.♞fb1†  
 ♗b6 27.♙e2 ♙d7 28.♗f6 ♞f7 29.c4 e5 30.c5  
 McKenzie – Le Bled, corr. 2006.

Or 20...0–0 21.♗xh6† ♕h7 22.♞xf8 ♗xf8  
 23.g5 ♗xc3 24.♙f3 ♙d7 25.♗g4  
 Geissler – Zolochovsky, corr. 2006.

9...♗h5

This is a tactical mistake:

10.♙e5

This misplaces the rook.

10...♞g8 11.♙xb8 ♞xb8 12.♗e5 ♗f4 13.♗xc6  
 ♞b6 14.♗xb8 ♗xg2† 15.♕f1 ♗f4 16.♙xc4!  
 a6

16...bxc4 17.♞a4† ♕e7 18.♞xa7†! ♞xa7  
 19.♗c6† ♕d7 20.♗xa7 is nice.

17.♞b3 ♞xb8 18.a4 b4 19.♗e2±

With an exchange more.

9...♗bd7 is also imprecise. With 10.d5 White  
 gets promising play – see Game 46.

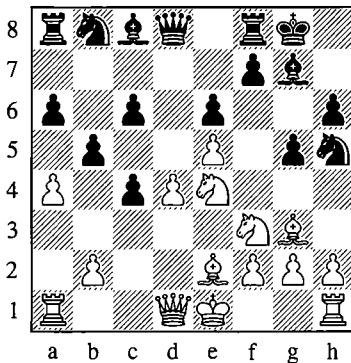
9...♙g7!?

A relatively rare move but certainly worth  
 considering.

10.e5 ♗h5

10...♗d5 11.a4

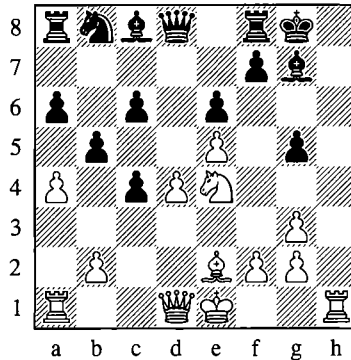
11.a4 a6 12.♗e4 0–0



13.♗fxg5

A tempting sacrifice.

13...♗xg3 14.hxg3 hxg5

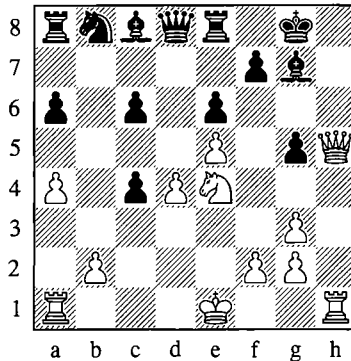


15.♙xc4

Hardcore.

Slightly less extreme is: 15.♞c2 f5 16.exf6  
 ♞xf6 17.♗xf6† ♞xf6 18.♞h7† ♕f7 19.♞a3  
 ♞xd4 20.♞f3† ♕e7 21.♞g6 (21.♞g6!?)  
 21...♞xb2 (21...♕d6∞) 22.♞h7 ♕d6  
 23.♞xg7 White was better in Gupta –  
 Sethuraman, Aurangabad 2011.

15...bxc4 16.♞h5 ♞e8



Now Grover – Gagarin, Moscow 2012,  
 continued with 17.0–0–0 and eventually  
 ended in a win for White, but I am not  
 totally convinced by his compensation here.  
 Instead I suggest the direct:

17.♞h7† ♕f8 18.♞h5

The g5-pawn will drop since 18...f6? loses to  
 19.♞g6. The toughest defence is:

18...♞xd4 19.♞xg5 ♞xe5 20.♞xe5 ♙xe5

Black has plenty of material for the queen,

but White has a powerful initiative after the accurate:

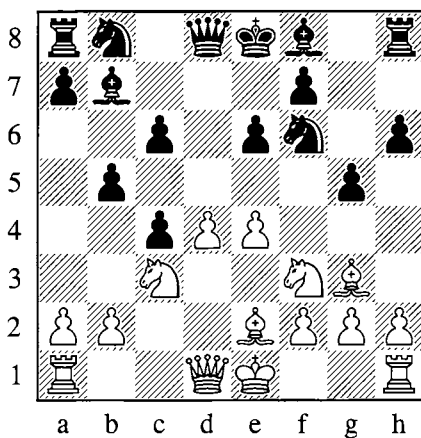
21.♖h5! ♜d7 22.f4!

The key idea is to turn the knight into a monster on d6.

**Conclusion:** Black has some interesting tries at move 9 but the most reliable is 9...♙b7 which we shall study next.

## The 10.h4 Mainline

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♟f3 ♟f6 4.♟c3 e6 5.♙g5  
h6 6.♙h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♙g3 b5 9.♙e2 ♙b7



### 10.h4

This thrust is the most direct and disruptive for Black who will have to pay for moving his pawns on the kingside. In practice White has often chosen a different path with 10.0-0 ♜bd7 11.♟e5 ♙g7 12.♟xd7 ♟xd7 13.♙d6, but after the cool 13...a6 all attempts to generate a serious advantage have so far failed and White seems stuck.

As we saw above, 10.e5 is a promising and less explored alternative.

### 10...g4

Black tries to keep the position closed.

Again greed backfires:

10...b4 11.hxg5 bxc3 12.bxc3!

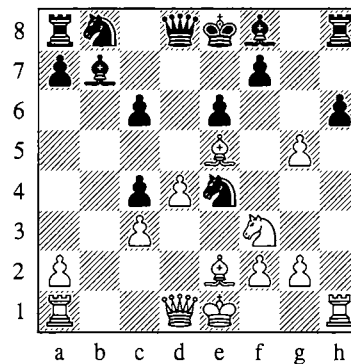
A spectacular piece sacrifice.

12...♟xe4

On 12...♟fd7 13.g6! fxg6 14.♟h4 is good.

14...♙g8 15.♟xg6 ♖a5 (15...♙xg6 16.♙h5 ♟f7 17.♙xg6† ♟xg6 18.♖h5† ♟h7 19.♖f7† ♟h8 20.♙h4 ♖c8 21.♙g5+–) 16.♙h4 ♖xc3† 17.♟f1 ♟b6 18.♙h5 ♟d7 19.♙h3 ♖b2 20.♙f3+– ♙d6 21.e5 ♙a3 22.♙b1 ♖xa2 23.♙a1 ♖b2 24.♙fxa3 c3 25.♖f3 ♟c7 26.♟f8 c2 27.♖f7† ♟d6d7 28.♟xe6† ♟b6 29.♖f4 ♙a6† 30.♟g1 ♙c4 31.♟c5 ♖b1† 32.♟h2 c1=♖ 33.♙xb1† ♖xb1 34.♙f7 ♙xg2† 35.♟xg2 ♖f1† 36.♟h2 ♙xf7 37.♙d8† 1–0 Raijmaekers – Einarsson, corr. 2004.

13.♙e5



13...♟xc3

Black has passed the point of no return, as simply moving the rook will not work: 13...♙h7 14.♖b1 This highlights the power of the queen: it attacks black pieces all over the board. 14...♖a5 15.♟d2! And after this precise blow it is all over. 15...f5 (15...♟xd2 16.♖xb7 or 15...♖xc3 16.0–0) 16.gxf6 c5 17.♟xe4 ♙xe4 18.♙h5† ♟d8 19.♖xe4 ♖xc3† 20.♟e2 ♖d3† 21.♖xd3 cxd3† 22.♟xd3 With a winning position, Rogozenko – Filipenko, Internet 2001.

Returning to 13...♟xc3:

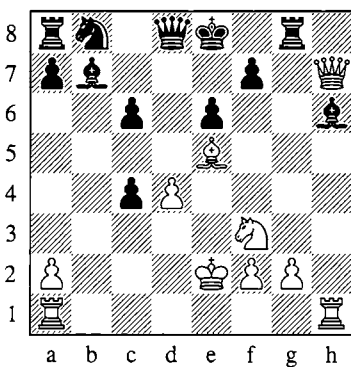
14.♖c2 ♟xe2 15.♟xe2 ♙g8

Black could also sacrifice the rook: 15...♖d7 16.♙xh8 hxg5 17.♗h7 ♖a5 Only move. (17...g4 18.♗e5 ♗xe5 19.♙xe5 ♖d5 20.♗ah1 c5 21.♗xf7 ♖e4† 22.♖xe4 ♙xe4 23.♗c7 cxd4 24.♗h8 ♖b8 25.♙xd4 ♙d3† 26.♗e3 ♖b1 27.♙c5 ♖e1† 28.♗f4 ♖e4† 29.♗g3 1–0 Stohl – Kuczynski, Germany 2002) 18.♖b1 ♙a6 19.♗f1 g4 20.♗e5 ♗xe5 21.♙xe5 ♖a3 And now first 22.♗h8 ♗d7 23.♗h7 ♗e8 depriving Black of the right to castle, then 24.♙d1 ♙b5 25.♗g1±.

Or 15...c5 16.♙xh8 hxg5 17.♗ad1 ♖c7 18.♗e5 ♙xg2 19.♗h7 cxd4 20.♗xd4 ♗c6 21.♗xf7 1–0 Seipel – Tokmachev, corr. 2003, was a quick KO. The finish could be 21...♗xd4† 22.♙xd4 ♖c6 23.♗d6† ♖xd6 24.♖g6† ♗d8 25.♙f6†.

16.gxh6 ♙xh6 17.♖h7!

Even stronger than 17.♗xh6.



17...♗g6

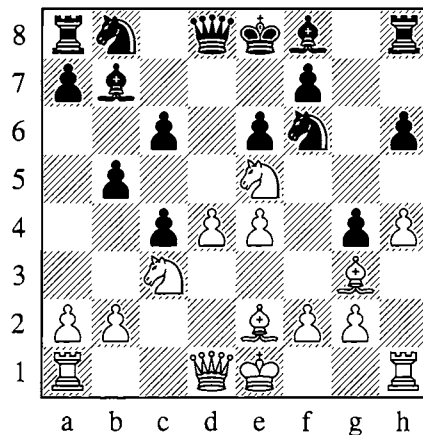
17...♗f8 18.♗xh6 ♗d7 19.♙g7 c5 20.dxc5 ♖a5 21.♗f1 ♙xf3 22.gxf3 ♖xc5 23.♙xf8 (23.♗h5!? ♖c6 24.♙xf8 ♗xf8 25.♖e4 should be a better version than the game.) 23...♗xf8 24.♖c2 c3 25.♖a4† ♗e7 26.♖h4† ♗e8 27.♗h5 ♖c6 28.♖e4 ♖c8 29.♖xc6† ♗xc6 30.♖a5 ♗g6 31.♖a3 ♗f4 32.♖c1 ♗d5 33.♖xa7 ♖c4 34.♗e2 The strong knight on d5 and the passed pawn on c3 gave Black fair compensation for the exchange in Orsolich – Boyd, Internet 2010, but of course note the improvement on move 23.

18.♗xh6 ♗xh6 19.♖xh6 ♗d7 20.♙d6 ♖f6 21.♗h1 ♖xh6 22.♗xh6 0–0–0 23.♗g5

White wins the pawn back with a better ending, for instance:

23...f6 24.♗xe6 ♖e8 25.♗d2 ♗xe6 26.♗h8† ♗f8 27.♖xf8† ♗d7 28.♙c5±

11.♗e5



The starting position of the h4-variation: Black is in a serious dilemma.

As should be clear by now the aggressive ...b5-b4 cannot be recommended:

11...b4 12.♗a4 ♗xe4 13.♙xc4 ♗xg3

No better was 13...h5 14.♖e2 ♗xg3 15.fxg3 ♗h6 16.0–0 f5 17.d5! ♖a5 18.♖xf5! ♖xa4 19.♖xf8† ♗xf8 20.♖f2† ♗e7 21.♖f7† ♗d6 22.♖f8† ♗c7 23.d6† ♗b6 24.♙b3 ♖b5 25.♖d8† ♗c5 26.♖c1† ♗d4 27.♖g5 1–0 Stohl – Pavasovic, Portoroz 1999.

14.fxg3 ♗d7 15.♗xf7! ♗xf7 16.♖xg4 ♖e7 17.0–0† ♗e8 18.♙xe6 ♙c8

This was Khalifman – Dreev, Elista 1998. Khalifman continued 19.♖ae1 and won a nice game, but the computer claims that White can win on the spot:

19.♖f7! ♖xf7

19...♖d6 20.♖e1 ♗d8 21.♙xd7 ♙xd7 22.♗c5!

20.♙xf7† ♗xf7 21.♖f1† ♗e8 22.♖e4† ♗d8

23.d5 cxd5 24.♖d4 ♖g8 25.♗xd5

Attacking both rooks.

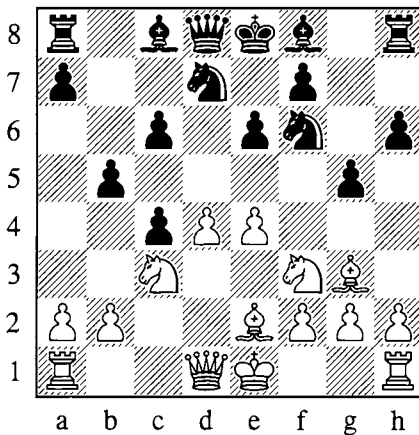
Black has three respected options. First of all it is tempting to speed up development and offer the g4-pawn as bait. That could be done by either 11...♖bd7 – see Game 47 – or 11...♖g8 – see Game 48. Finally Black can protect g4 with 11...h5. That is covered in Game 49.

## GAME 46

Ferrini – Richardson

Correspondence 2003

1.d4 d5 2.♖f3 ♖f6 3.c4 e6 4.♖c3 c6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 g5 7.♗g3 dxc4 8.e4 b5 9.♗e2 ♖bd7



**10.d5!**

Seizing the initiative.

**10...♗b7**

Taking on d5 is not good:

10...exd5 11.exd5 b4 12.dxc6 bxc3 13.cxd7† ♗xd7 14.bxc3 ♗xd1† 15.♖xd1 ♗g7 16.♗xc4± Yermolinsky – Hayward, Las Vegas 2002.

10...cxd5 11.exd5 ♖b6

11...♖c5 12.0–0†

12.dxe6 ♗xe6

12...♗xd1† 13.♖xd1 ♗xe6 14.♗e5 ♗g7 15.♖xb5± gives White a good ending with active pieces and some weak black pawns.

13.♖d4 ♗b4

13...a6 14.0–0 ♗g7 15.♗f3 ♖bd5 16.♖xd5 ♖xd5 17.♖xe6 fxe6 Solozhenkin – Alavkin, St Petersburg 1999, and now 18.♖e1 is decisive: 18...♗f7 19.♗h5† ♗g8 20.♖xe6

14.0–0 0–0

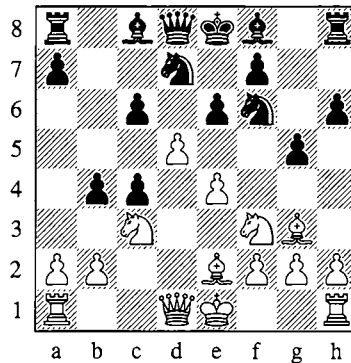
Belavsky – Bacrot, Bugojno 1999, when the simplest was:

15.♖xe6 fxe6 16.♖xb5±

10...♖c5 is also suspicious: 11.dxc6 ♗xd1†

12.♖xd1 a6 13.♗e5 ♗e7 14.h4 g4 15.♖d4 0–0 16.f3 gxf3 17.gxf3± Van Wely – Nakamura, Bastia 2007.

Finally we have 10...b4:



This has been played in several games, but the complications tend to lead directly to a positional advantage for White:

11.dxe6 bxc3 12.exd7† ♗xd7

Worse is 12...♗xd7 13.bxc3 ♖xe4 14.♗d4 ♖xg3 15.hxg3 ♖g8 16.♖d1 ♗g7 17.♗xc4 ♗e7 18.♖d4 ♖c8 19.0–0± Mercadal Benejam – Lopepe, corr. 2001.

13.♗c2 cxb2

Not 13...g4 14.♖d1 ♗b7 15.♖e5 ♗xb2 16.♗a4 ♗b5 17.♖d8† 1–0 Belavsky –

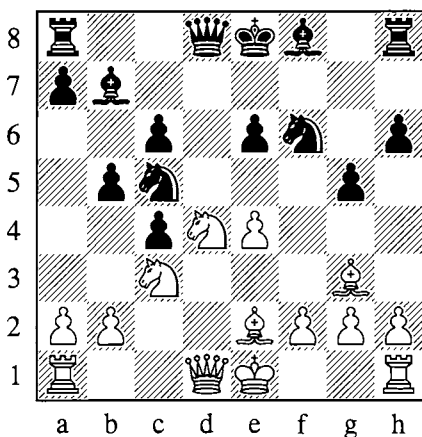
Bacrot, Albert 1999.

14. ♖xb2 ♙g7 15. ♗e5 ♜b7 16. ♜a3 a5 17. 0–0  
♜b4 18. ♜c1 0–0 19. ♗xf6

Or 19. ♗xc4!? ♗xe4 20. ♞e1 ♗xe5 21. ♗xe5.  
19... ♗xf6 20. e5 ♙g7 21. ♗xc4 ♜b8 22. ♜c2  
♜e7 23. ♜fe1±

Kuhne – Noack, corr. 2001.

11. dxe6 fxe6 12. ♗d4 ♗c5



13. e5 ♗d5 14. ♗h5†

The king is forced to take a walk.

14... ♗d7

Running towards safety on the queenside. Staying in the centre with 14... ♗e7 leaves Black without many prospects: 15. 0–0 ♙g7 16. ♜g4 ♜d7 17. ♞ad1± ♗d3 18. ♗e4 ♗5f4 19. ♗xf4 ♜xd4 20. ♗xg5! ♜xf4 21. ♜xe6† ♗d8 22. ♞xd3†! ♗c7 (or 22... cxd3 23. ♜d6† ♗c8 24. ♗f7) 23. ♜e7† ♗b6 24. ♗e6 ♜xe5 25. ♞e3 ♗f8 26. ♜xf8 ♞hx8 27. ♞xe5 and White won in Vermeulen – Sherwood, corr. 2004.

15. 0–0 ♗c7

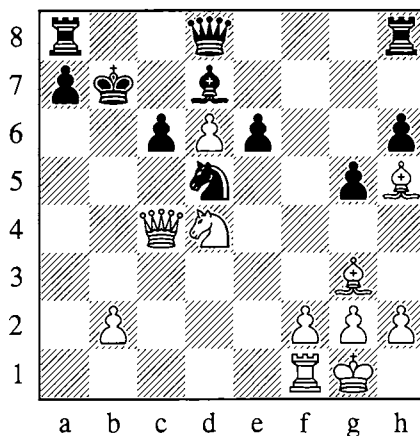
Weakening the structure further with 15... b4 16. ♗ce2 has not gone well for Black.

16. ♗e4!

Nice. On 16... ♗xe4 there is 17. ♗xe6†.

16... ♗c8 17. ♗d6! ♗xd6 18. exd6† ♗b7

19. a4! ♗xa4 20. ♞xa4 bxa4 21. ♜xa4 ♗d7  
22. ♜xc4



Black is busted. The knight goes to b3 next and then lands on c5 with devastating effect.

22... ♞f8 23. ♗b3 ♞b8 24. ♗c5† ♗a8 25. ♞a1

The strongest: it threatens ♞xa7† and mate next move. In the stem game White also won after 25. ♜a6 ♜b6 26. ♜a3 Stohl – Ziegler, Germany 1999, when 26... ♞bd8 could have prolonged the fight a bit, but probably not changed the result.

25... ♞b5 26. ♗e2 ♞f7 27. ♜a4

Winning the exchange back, while the grip on the position remains. The end comes quickly.

27... ♜b8 28. ♗xb5 cxb5 29. ♜e4 ♜c8  
30. ♜g6 ♞f5 31. ♜g7 ♗b6 32. ♗xe6 ♗a4  
33. ♗c7† ♗b8 34. ♗e5 h5 35. ♗d4 g4 36. ♞c1  
♗b6 37. ♗xb6 axb6 38. b4  
1–0

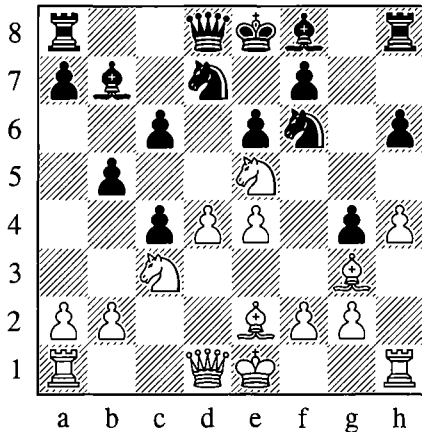
**Conclusion:** 9... ♗bd7 is an inaccuracy that White can immediately punish by 10.d5! with a strong initiative.

## GAME 47

Grischuk – Gelfand

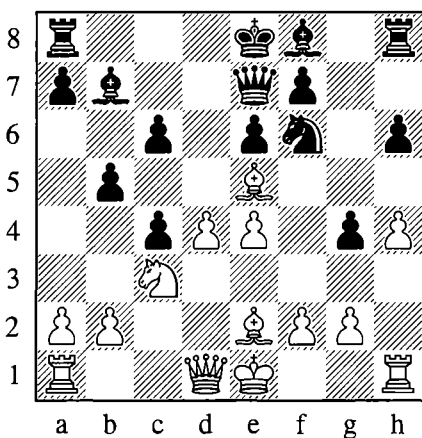
Odessa 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♖c3 e6 5.♙g5  
h6 6.♙h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♙g3 b5 9.♙e2 ♙b7  
10.h4 g4 11.♘e5 ♘bd7



Black makes no attempt to hold onto the extra pawn and instead gives priority to finishing his development and getting rid of the strong knight on e5. Of course White is not obliged to take on g4.

12.♘xd7 ♜xd7 13.♙e5 ♜e7



14.0-0

Grischuk prefers to keep playing a gambit.

14.♙xg4 leads to unclear play after: 14...♙g8  
15.♙f3 ♘d7 16.♙g3 e5 (16...0-0-0 17.♜c2  
e5∞) 17.d5 ♘c5 18.0-0 0-0-0

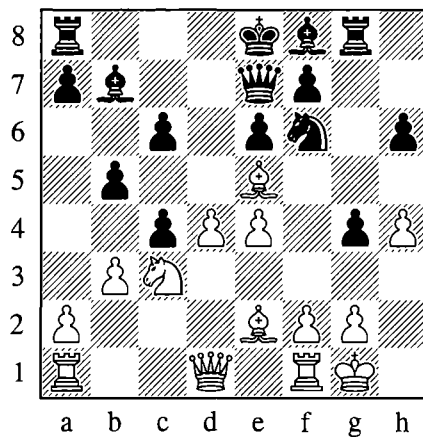
In view of Black's improvement on move 18, White could consider playing the standard break b2-b3 right now: 14.b3!? Now 14...cxb3 15.axb3 gives the usual strong compensation for the pawn, and in this situation Black cannot answer it with 14...b4 15.♘a4 c3 because 16.♘c5 is simply good for White. The real challenge is 14...♙g8 which looks a tough nut to crack.

14...♙g8

Actually Grischuk had previously lost a game, also in rapid, to another Semi-Slav expert, Dreev, but after 14...h5 15.♜c2 ♙h6 16.b3 cxb3 17.axb3 he had fine compensation, Grischuk – Dreev, Mainz 2005. Also, instead of 15.♜c2, why not play 15.b3.

That's what I wrote in the first version of this book. My words must have been heard: 15.b3 ♙h6 16.bxc4 0-0 17.c5± Harika – Khismatullin, Chalkis 2010.

15.b3



This move is usually the right way to challenge Black's typically very solid pawn structure in the Moscow. If Black takes on b3 then lines are opened for White and he can calmly intensify the pressure, while it is not obvious how Black can liberate himself and get counterplay.

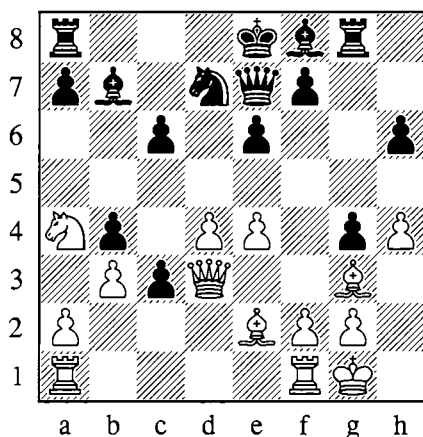
### 15...b4

On 15...cxb3 16.axb3 b4 White activates the knight by 17.♙xf6 ♜xf6 18.e5 ♜xh4 19.♘e4 with good compensation: 19...g3!? (or 19...♙e7 20.g3 ♜h5 21.♙a6 and Black's queenside will be exposed) 20.♘f6† ♔d8 21.fxg3 ♜xg3 22.♘h5 ♜e3 23.♜f4 ♜e7 24.♙c4± The black rook in the middle of White's position misses its friends.

### 16.♘a4 c3

It is risky for Black to open the position before he has completed development: 16...♘xe4 17.♜c2 c5 18.♙xc4 ♙g7 19.♙xg7 ♜xg7 20.♜ae1 ♘d6 21.♘xc5 ♘xc4 22.bxc4! ♙c6 Riazantsev – Vitiugov, Moscow 2008, and now 23.♘d3 ♜xh4 24.d5 ♙d7 25.♘e5± would put Black in a precarious position.

### 17.♜d3 ♘d7 18.♙g3



### 18...e5

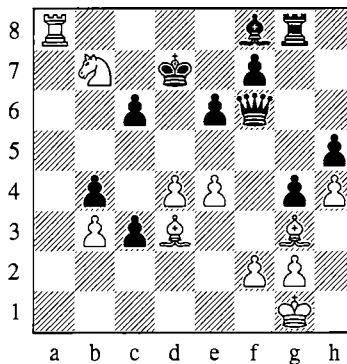
Instead Black should play:

### 18...h5!

This is a major improvement that may save the day for Black.

### 19.a3 a5 20.♜fd1

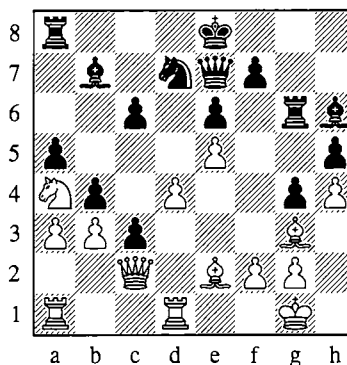
20.axb4 axb4 21.♘c5 provokes wild tactics where White has a draw at best: 21...♜xa1 22.♘xb7 ♘e5! 23.♜xa1 ♘xd3 24.♜a8† ♔d7 25.♙xd3 ♜f6 (25...♜e8!? is also okay)



Now in Grischuk – Aronian, Ohrid 2009, White went wrong: 26.♙e5? (26.e5 ♜h6 27.♜a7 ♔c8 28.♘a5 c2 29.♜a8† ♔c7 30.♜a7† is a draw. Black should avoid 30...♔b6? as White still has a draw after 31.♜a6† ♔c7 32.♜a7† but also has the option of going for the win with: 32.♜xc6†! ♔b8 33.♜xc2) 26...♙d6 27.♙xf6 ♜xa8 28.♔f1 ♜a1† 29.♔e2 ♜a2† 0-1

### 20...♜g6 21.♜c2 ♙h6 22.e5

White has enough compensation for the pawn and can continue to press, but objectively Black should be able to hold the balance, as a couple of e-mail games have demonstrated.



22...♖b8

22...♞d8 23.♙d3 ♞g8 24.♙e4 ♖f8 25.♞e2 ♖g7 26.axb4 axb4 27.♞c4 ♞a8 28.♙c2 ♙a6 29.♞xc6 ♞gb8 30.♞e4 ♖f8= Black is covering everything, Arounopoulos – Legemaat, e-mail 2008.

23.♙d3 ♞g8 24.axb4 axb4 25.♙e4 ♞a8 26.♞d3 ♖f8 27.♞c4 ♞a5 28.♖c5 ♖xc5 29.dxc5 ♞xc5 30.♞d3 ♖g7 31.♞xa5 ♞xa5 32.♞d7 ♞c5 33.♞xb7 c2 34.♙xc2 ♞xc2 35.♞d7 ♞f5 36.♞xb4 ♞a8 37.♖h2 ♞a2 38.♞e7 ♖g6 39.♞d4 ♞c2 40.♞d8 ♖h7 41.♞e7

½–½ Cortes Olivares – Corti, e-mail 2008.

A clear pattern emerges when one studies cutting edge Semi-Slav games in the database – the correspondence players defend like machines and hold the draw, while over-the-board, Black often cracks.

19.♞ad1 ♙g7 20.d5

White tries to open the position while Black's king is still stuck in the centre.

20...♞d6 21.♙xg4

Finally he takes it.

21...cxd5 22.exd5 0–0–0

It was of course tempting to get the king away from the centre, but maybe he chose the wrong flank.

Possible was 22...♞c8 23.♞c2 ♙f6 24.♙f5 ♖f8 and anything can still happen.

23.a3! ♙a6 24.♞e3

Black's queenside is full of holes.

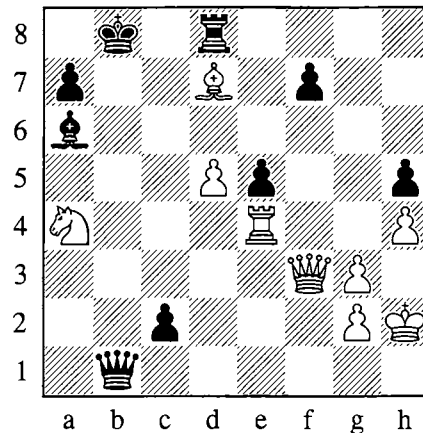
24...h5

Not 24...♙xf1 25.♞xa7.

25.♙f5 ♖b8 26.♞fe1 ♙h6 27.♞f3 ♙d2 28.axb4 ♙xe1 29.♞xe1

White has excellent compensation for the exchange: e5 is weak and the knight has a key square on c5.

29...♞xb4 30.♞e4 ♞xb3 31.♙xd7 ♞xg3 32.fxg3 ♞b1† 33.♖h2 c2



Black puts everything on this passed pawn.

34.♖c5

34.♞f6 won instantly: 34...♞xd7 35.♞h8† ♖c7 (35...♙c8 36.♞c4) 36.♞xe5† ♞d6 37.♞c3† ♖d7 38.♖c5† ♖d8 39.♞h8† ♖c7 40.♖xa6† ♞xa6 41.♞c4† ♖d7 42.♞c8† ♖e7 43.♞xa6

34...♙b7

The last chance was 34...c1=♞ but then 35.♖xa6† ♖b7 36.♞b4† ♞xb4 37.♖xb4 ♞xd7 38.d6† and White still has a dangerous initiative.

35.♞f6 ♞b6 36.♞xe5† ♞c7 37.♞xc7† ♖xc7 38.♞c4 ♙xd5 39.♞xc2 ♖d6 40.♙a4 ♞b8 41.♖d3

1–0

**Conclusion:** A tense game where White always had the initiative. Note that 15.b3 is a typical idea in many lines of the Moscow and is often a great way to combat Black's otherwise impressive pawn structure. In this particular case Black's improvement on move 18 suggests 15.b3 is only enough to achieve a roughly balanced position. So the same idea one

move earlier – 14.b3 – is worth considering, although even here Black is looking solid if he finds the right reply.

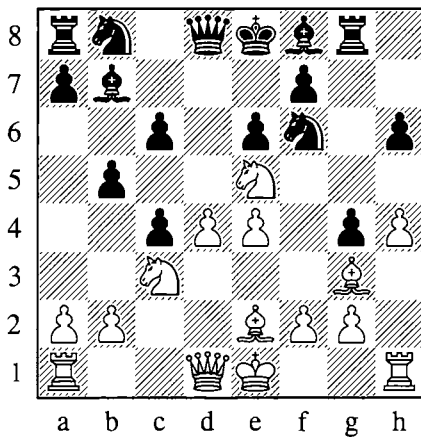
This sort of change is typical in sharp main line openings – it is rare to find a totally new concept, but it is common for new tactical points to force changes in detail and move order.

## GAME 48

Ruiz – L. Andersen

Correspondence 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♙g5  
h6 6.♙h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♙g3 b5 9.♙e2 ♙b7  
10.h4 g4 11.♘e5 ♗g8



12.♘g4

Actually I like another move-order more:

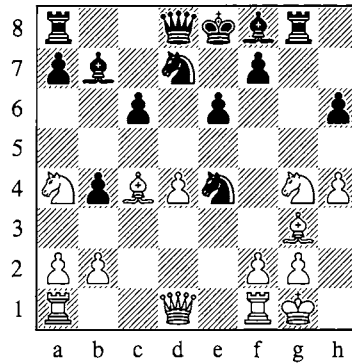
12.0–0 ♘bd7 13.♘g4

This is because it takes away Black's extra possibility with ...b4 and ...c5 – see next note. If Black does not transpose to the main game with 13...♘g4 14.♙g4 he can instead try:

13...b4!?

Then there could follow:

14.♘a4 ♘xe4 15.♙xc4



Once again Black's strategy of opening up the position with his own king in the centre is at least questionable. The evaluation should be based on concrete analysis though and things are not so clear:

15...♙a5 16.♗c1 0–0–0 17.♙h2 ♙d6 18.♙d3  
♙xh2† 19.♘h2 ♘df6 20.♙xe4 ♘xe4 21.♘c5  
♘xc5 22.♗xc5 ♙xa2 23.b3 ♙b2 24.♘f3 ♗g4  
25.♗c2! ♗gxd4

25...♙a3 26.♘e5 ♗gxd4 27.♙f3  
26.♘d4 ♙xd4 27.♙h5±

Nakamura – Dreev, Stepanakert 2005, seems good for White. So far so good.

And outright bad is: 15...♘g3 16.fxg3 ♙e7  
17.♘c5± Vitiugov – Stripunsky, Internet  
2005.

However interesting is:

15...h5 16.♘e3 ♙f6

Avrukh – Akopian, Crete 2007, when the critical line is:

17.♙xh5 ♙h6

17...0–0–0!? 18.♗ad1 ♘xg3 19.fxg3 ♙h6  
improves for Black. White should exchange  
queens and avoid the following: 20.♙f3 c5  
21.♙f2 ♙d6 22.g4 ♘f6! 23.♘xc5 (23.g5  
♗xg5) 23...♘g4 24.♘g4 ♗g4 25.♘xb7  
♙h2†! 26.♘xh2 ♗xh4† 27.♙xh4 ♙xh4†  
28.♘g1 ♘xb7 29.♗xf7† ♘b8 30.♙xe6 ♙e4  
31.d5 ♙c2 32.♗df1 ♙xb2† T. Schmidt –  
Jacot, e-mail 2008.

18. ♖xh6 ♙xh6 19. ♖fe1 ♜xg3 20. ffg3 0–0–0  
21. ♜h2

And Black has some compensation after:  
21... ♖g7

12... ♜xg4 13. ♙xg4 ♜d7

Instead Black can try to solve his problems by force:

13... b4 14. ♜a4 c5

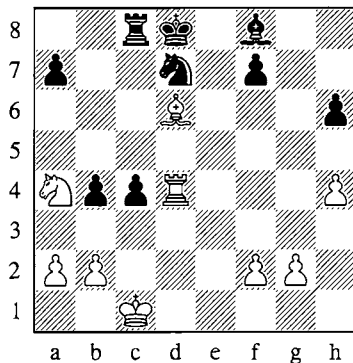
And after:

15. d5

15. ♙xe6!? fxe6 16. ♖h5† ♜e7 17. ♜xc5 looks fun and could be worth investigating.

15... exd5 16. exd5 ♖xd5 17. ♖xd5 ♙xd5  
18. 0–0–0 ♖xg4 19. ♖xd5 ♜d7 20. ♖e1† ♜d8  
21. ♖ed1 ♖d4 22. ♖1xd4 cxd4 23. ♖xd4 ♖c8  
24. ♙d6

An ending is reached that looks slightly better for White, but probably it should be nothing.



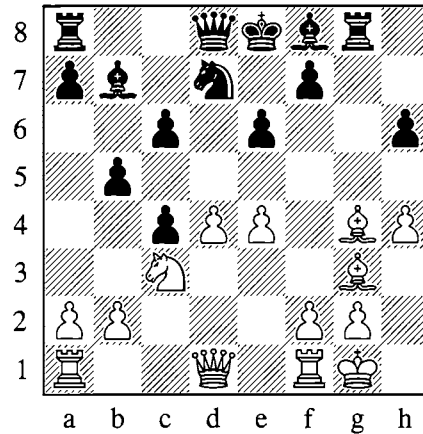
24... ♜e8 25. ♖e4† ♜d8 26. ♙xf8 ♜xf8 27. a3  
bxa3 28. bxa3 ♖c6 29. ♜b2 ♖f6 30. ♖e2

White had good winning chances because the black c-pawn is very weak, Grischuk – Anand, Mexico City 2007.

Later Black improved with 24... ♙xd6 25. ♖xd6 ♜e7 26. ♖xh6 ½–½ Riazantsev – Karjakin, Dagomys 2008. After 26... ♖g8 27. g3 ♜f6 White's rook is out of play and 27. ♖a6 ♖xg2 28. ♖xa7 is about equal.

24... ♙e7 is probably even simpler. For example: 25. a3 bxa3 26. ♙xa3 ♖c6 27. ♜c3 ♙f6 28. ♖e4 ♜c5 29. ♙xc5 ♖xc5 30. ♜c2 ♙g7 and the strong bishop compensates for the weak pawns, Cesetti – Lanc, e-mail 2008.

14.0–0



14... ♖b6

14... ♜f6 15. ♙f3 ♖b6 16. ♖d2 ♖d8 17. ♖f4! ♙g7 18. ♖fd1 was good for White in Vermeulen – Richardson, corr. 2003.

14... b4 15. ♜a4 ♙a6 16. ♙h5 ♙b5 17. ♜c5 ♙xc5 18. dxc5 ♖e7 19. ♖e1 ♖xg3 20. ffg3 ♖xc5† 21. ♜h2 0–0–0 22. ♙xf7 and Black did not have enough for the exchange, Ronczkowski – Mercadal Benejam, corr. 2004.

15. ♙h5

A key move: the bishop attacks Black's weak spot on f7 and makes it harder for him to castle long. Another standard try is 15. a4 with play on the queenside.

15... ♜f6 16. ♙e5 ♜xh5 17. ♖xh5

The queen replaces the bishop.

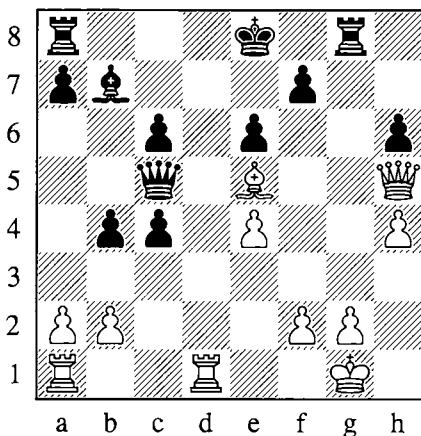
17... b4

Seeking counterplay. Instead 17... ♖d8 18. ♖ad1 ♖d7 19. ♖fe1± was Atalik – Markus, Jahorina 2003.

18. ♖a4 ♜b5 19. ♗c5!

A great positional pawn sacrifice.

19... ♙xc5 20. dxc5 ♜xc5 21. ♞fd1



The black king will remain in the centre and White's super-bishop on e5 is from another planet from its rival on b7, so White has more than enough for the pawn. Also, opposite-coloured bishops tend to favour the side with the initiative.

21... ♞g6 22. ♞d2 ♜b5

Or 22... c3 23. bxc3 bxc3 24. ♞c2 ♜a5 25. ♞xc3± Zpevakova – Jones, corr. 2007.

23. a4 bxa3 24. ♞xa3 a5 25. ♞a1

Also strong is 25. ♞f3±.

25... c5 26. ♜f3 ♜c6 27. ♞e1

1–0

Black resigned – still a pawn up but with no prospects whatsoever.

**Conclusion:** If Black wants to return the pawn then 11... ♞g8 is probably not the way to do it. White gets equal material and keeps a strong initiative, which is almost too much to ask for.

## GAME 49

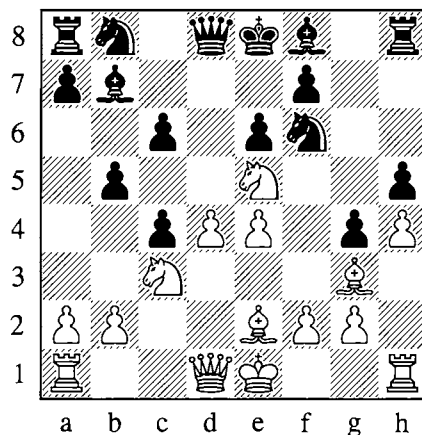
Grischuk – Karjakin

Sochi 2008

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♗f3 ♗f6 4. ♗c3 e6 5. ♙g5 h6 6. ♙h4 dxc4 7. e4 g5 8. ♙g3 b5 9. ♗e5

An experimental move-order, which in this game just transposes. For more details about the pros and cons please see the Theory section. 9... ♙e2 ♙b7 10. h4 g4 11. ♗e5 h5 is the normal way.

9... h5 10. h4 g4 11. ♙e2 ♙b7

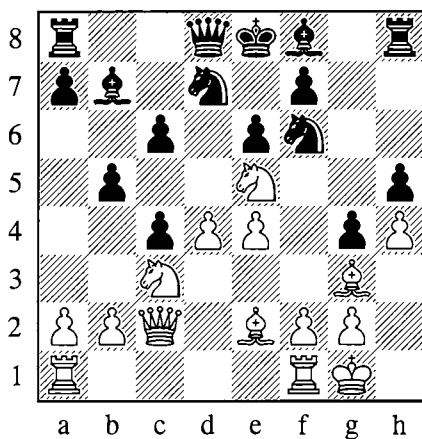


Black is guarding his g-pawn, but having moved his pawn-chain from h6-g5 to h5-g4 has certainly not hidden the holes on his kingside, and the pawns can still be attacked.

12. 0–0

Here, and again on the next move, it was also possible to confront Black's pawn-chain with f2-f3 to open the position, but I like Grischuk's style. He develops smoothly and makes all his pieces work well together.

12... ♗bd7 13. ♜c2



### 13...♖xe5

Black must get rid of the annoying knight. And you don't have to write home to your Mom and tell her about the alternatives:

13...♗g7 14.b3 (14.♗ad1 is also natural) 14...cxb3 15.axb3 a6 16.♗ad1 0–0 17.♖d3 c5 (17...♗b6 18.e5 ♖d5 19.♖xd5 cxd5 20.♖f4 and h5 falls) 18.♖xc5 ♖xc5 19.dxc5 ♗c8 20.b4± Skrondal – Lovik, Norway 2008.

13...♗b6 14.♗ad1 ♗e7 15.b3 cxb3 16.axb3 ♗c8 17.♖xd7 ♖xd7 18.e5 a6 19.♗b1! (anticipating ...c5) 19...c5 20.d5!± exd5 21.♖xd5 ♗xd5 22.♗xd5 ♗e6 23.♗fd1 ♖b6 24.♗d6 White is winning, Zontakh – Dlugosz, Krakow 2000.

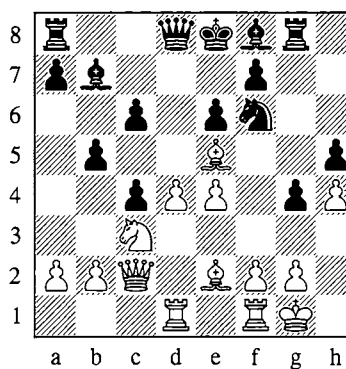
13...♗g8 14.♗fd1 ♖xe5 15.♗xe5 ♖d7 16.♗g3 ♗g7 17.d5! ♗e7 18.a4! White already has a powerful initiative. 18...b4 19.dxc6 ♗xc6 20.♖b5 ♗xb5 21.axb5 ♖b6 22.♗d6 ♗xh4 23.e5± Babula – Montes, Dresden 2008.

### 14.♗xe5 ♗g7

The most natural, but it has also been popular to put the rook on the g-file.

14...♗g8 15.♗ad1

Which rook? 15.♗fd1 looks just as good.



15...♖d7 16.♗g3 ♗b6 17.b3 cxb3 18.axb3 ♗b4

18...a6 19.e5 c5 20.d5 exd5 21.♖xd5 ♗xd5 22.♗xd5 ♗e7 23.♗fd1 ♖f8 24.e6!? ♗xe6 25.♗e5 ♗c6 26.♗e1 ♖g6 27.♗xh5 ♗d8 28.♗xg4± Kordts – Makovsky, corr. 2001.

19.e5 ♗xc3 20.♗xc3

White has a significant positional advantage despite the missing pawn, Gilimshin – Petraitis, corr. 2004.

Black has also tried:

15...♗g6

But this is artificial.

16.♗f4 ♗e7 17.b3

On the recommended move 17.g3, as played by Sakaev, Black should try either 17...♗a5 or 17...♗b4.

17...cxb3

17...b4 18.♖a4 c3 gives Black impressive pawns, but White succeeded in breaking them up and building a direct attack in the following game: 19.♖c5! ♗c8 20.♗c4 ♗a5 21.♖d3 ♗b7 22.♖e5 ♗g7 23.a3! bxa3 24.b4 ♗xb4 25.♗b3 ♗b6 26.♗h6 ♗h7 27.♗g5 ♗e7 28.♗xc3 ♖xe4 29.♗e3 ♖d6 30.♗xe7 ♖xe7 31.♗g5† f6 32.♗g6 ♗ah8 33.♗xe6! ♗d8 (33...♖xe6 34.♗fe1) 34.♖d7 1–0 Dhanish – Dothan, corr. 2006.

18.axb3 a6 19.g3 ♗b6 20.e5 ♖d5 21.♖xd5 cxd5 22.f3

Very illustrative: the kingside is easily opened and White both wins material and

penetrates the black position.

22...♞c8 23.♞b1 gxf3 24.♙xf3 ♘d7 25.♙xh5  
♞g7 26.♙h6! ♞xg3† 27.♘h2 ♞cg8 28.♞h7  
1–0

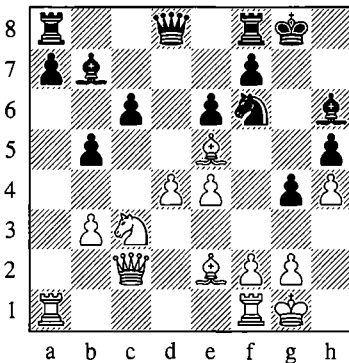
Voyna – Kramer, corr. 2000.

14...♙h6

This looks a bit extravagant.

15.b3 cxb3 16.axb3 0–0

But is in fact not so clear.



17.♞fd1

17.♙d3 is possible.

17...♞e7

17...♘e8 and 17...♘d7 can be answered with

18.♙g3 with good long-term compensation.

18.♙g3 ♘d7

18...♞fd8 19.e5

18...a5 19.e5 ♘d5 20.♘e4 ♞fd8 21.♙d3  
♘b4 22.♞b1 ♘f8 23.♘d6 ♘xd3 24.♞xd3  
a4 25.♞h7 1–0 Rogetzer – Strengell, e-mail  
2009.

19.e5 f5 20.exf6 ♘xf6

Krush – Erenburg, Las Vegas 2007, and  
now 21.♙d3± would emphasize White's good  
control of the white squares. The pawn chain  
h5-g4 is actually quite loose.

**15.b3!**

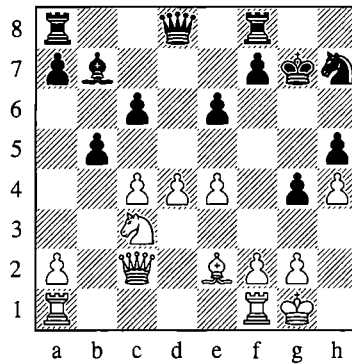
Very standard by now, however 15.♙g3 and  
15.♞ad1 are good alternatives.

**15...cxb3**

Aronian found an interesting alternative:

15...0–0!? 16.bxc4 ♘h7! 17.♙xg7 ♘xg7

Both d4 and h4 are hanging.



18.♞ad1

Dreev suggested 18.♞d3 ♞xh4 19.cxb5  
♞fd8 20.♞ac1 ♞ac8 and Black seems to be  
okay.

18.cxb5 ♞xd4 is nothing.

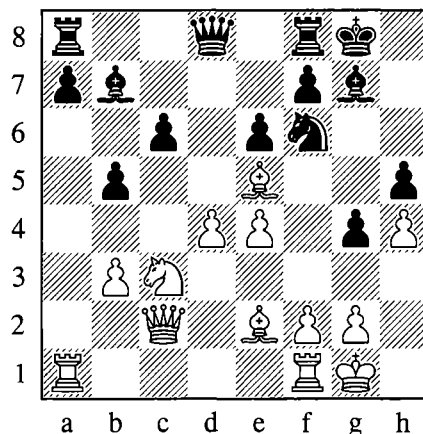
18.d5 cxd5 19.exd5 bxc4 20.dxe6 ♞xh4∞  
Maletin – Van Wely, Budva 2009.

18...♞xh4 19.cxb5 cxb5 20.♘b5 ♞ac8  
21.♞d3 g3!

Aronian missed this nice idea and played  
21...♞fd8 but after 22.d5 exd5 23.♞d4†  
♘g8 24.♞xa7 ♞e7 25.e5 ♞xe5 26.♞xb7  
♞b8 27.♞c7 ♞xe2 28.♘d4 ♞c4 29.♞e5±  
Black had problems with his kingside pawns  
in Grischuk – Aronian, Linares 2009.

22.fxg3 ♞xe4 23.♞xe4 ♙xe4 24.♙xh5 ♘g5=

**16.axb3 0–0**



17. ♖g3

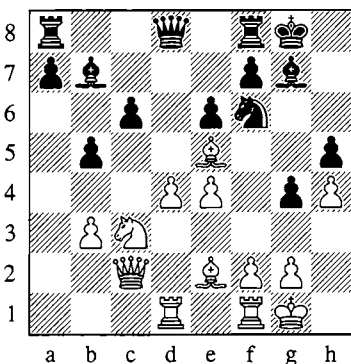
A very important decision. Grischuk has a flair for attacking chess, no doubt about that. He knows it must be very risky for Black to take on d4 with the queen, so he doesn't waste time with the preliminary 17. ♖ad1, but moves the bishop immediately creating the threat e4-e5.

Actually 17. ♖ad1 is also quite good. It is a move you can make automatically without thinking, and a dozen players have done that – made the move I mean, I don't know about the thinking part – with good results. White always has fine long-term compensation for the pawn in these types of position.

Grischuk's move forces the pace more and looks promising, but let's check the other option:

17. ♖ad1

Black has tried different moves:



17... ♘d7 18. ♗xg7 (18. ♗g3!?) 18... ♗xg7 19. e5 f5 20. exf6 ♗xf6 21. ♖fe1 ♘d5 22. ♘d5 exd5 23. ♗d3 ♖xh4 24. ♖e6 ♖f6 25. g3 ♖g5 26. ♖e5 ♖h6 27. ♖e7 ♖f7 28. ♖de1 ♗c8 29. ♖e2 ♖f6 30. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 31. ♖e5 ♖f6 32. ♖c7 1-0 Daus – Blauhut, corr. 2006.

17... ♘h7 18. ♗xg7 ♗xg7 19. g3 ♖b6 20. e5 ♖ad8 21. ♗d3 f5 22. exf6 ♗xf6 23. ♘e2 c5 24. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 25. dxc5 a6 26. ♘f4 ♗d5 27. ♗c2± White

has good winning chances in the ending, as e6 and h5 are weak, Karason – Mayer, corr. 2002.

17... ♖e7 18. ♗g3 b4 19. ♘a4 c5!? 20. ♘xc5 ♖fc8 21. f3 ♘d7 22. fxg4 ♘xc5 23. dxc5 ♖xc5 24. ♗c4 ♖d8 25. ♖e2 ♖a5 26. gxh5 ♖xd1 27. ♖xd1 ♖c5 † 28. ♗f2 ♖e5

28... ♖xh5 29. ♖d8 † ♗h7 30. ♖xh5 † ♖xh5 31. ♗d3+- 29. h6 ♗f6

29... ♗xh6 30. ♖d8 † ♗h7 31. ♗d4 ♖f4 32. ♖h8 † ♗g6 33. ♗xe6! fxe6 34. h5 † ♗f7 35. ♖h7 † ♗e8 36. ♖xb7±

30. ♖g4 † ♗h7 Christensen – Selyanchin, corr. 2005.

31. ♗d4 ♖h5 32. ♖xh5 ♗xd4 † 33. ♖xd4 ♖xh5 34. ♗d3 ♗xh6 35. ♖xb4 ♗c6 36. g3±

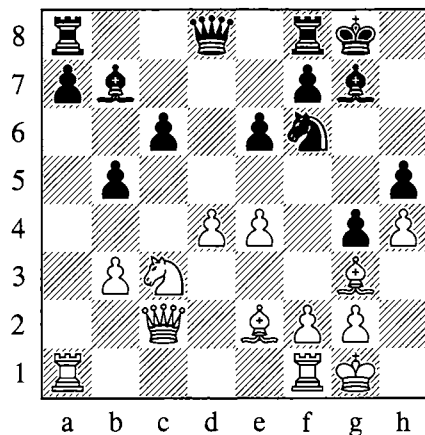
With a pawn more.

17... ♘e8 18. ♗xg7 18. ♗g3!?

f5 (Dreev suggests 18... ♗xd4!? 19. e5 c5 with the idea 20. ♘xb5? ♖d5 and wins. Instead White should continue with 20. ♗d3 with complications.) 19. exf5 exf5 20. ♖c1 ♖f6 21. ♗f4 with good positional compensation, Neto – Avotins, corr. 2004.

18... ♘g7 19. e5 f5 20. exf6 ♖xf6 21. ♗d3 Interesting is 21. g3! ♖ad8 22. ♘e4 ♖h6 23. ♖c5 ♘f5 24. ♘g5 with active play for White, Dessaulles – Goldschagg, e-mail 2009.

21... ♘f5 22. ♗xf5 exf5 Black held in Taucius – Figueiras, corr. 2005.



**17...c5**

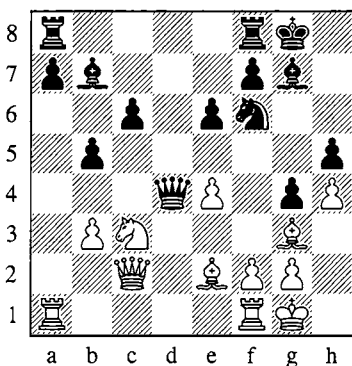
This liberates the passive bishop on b7 and seeks active counterplay. Black does not mind that material equality will be restored.

17...b4 18.♠a4 ♠d7 19.♠ad1 ♣e7 20.♠c5 ♠xc5 21.dxc5 ♠fd8 22.♠d6± ♠d4 23.e5 ♠xd6 24.cxd6 ♣f8 25.♣e4 ♠b6 Avrukh – Sargissian, Germany 2007. Now 26.♣xb4 takes the pawn back and leaves Black with a miserable position.

After 17...b4 18.♠a4, instead of 18...♠d7, Black's most recent try is: 18...c5!? 19.♠xc5 ♠c8 This is an intelligent way to try to solve the opening problems. 20.♣d3 ♠xc5 21.dxc5 ♠xe4 22.♣xd8 ♠xd8 23.♠xa7 ♠xc5 24.♠d1 ♠xd1† 25.♠xd1 ♠d5 26.♠c7 ½–½

This was Leitao – Matsuura, Sao Paulo 2008. In the game Black succeeded, but White could instead try: 20.♠c4 ♠xc5 21.dxc5 ♠xe4 22.♠fd1

17...♣xd4 is indeed extremely risky.



There are now two moves to consider. It's the same old question: which rook?

**18.♠fd1**

Originally I thought this was the correct answer, but now I have a different view.

**18...♣c5!**

18...♣b6 19.e5 ♠d5 20.♠e4† is good for White. This has been tested: 20...♠fd8

21.♠g5 ♠f8 22.♠f1 ♠e7 23.♣h7 ♠f5 24.♣xh5 ♣c7 25.♠d3 ♣e7 26.♠f4 ♠d5 27.♠h7† ♠g8 28.♠g5 ♣b4 29.♠f6† ♠f8 30.♠xf5 exf5 31.♣h7 1–0 Rychagov – Ovetchkin, Bhubaneswar 2009.

**19.b4**

19.♠d6 ♣b6 20.♠xf8 ♠xf8 offers Black good compensation, although White might instead consider 20.e5.

**19...♣xb4 20.♠d6**

20.♠ab1 ♣e7 21.♠d6 ♣e8 22.e5 ♠d5 23.♠e4 f5 24.exf6 ♠xf6 25.♠xf6† ♠xf6 looks fine for Black, who has a lot of pawns, Tritt – Kuerten, e-mail 2009.

**20...c5 21.♠xf8 ♠xf8 22.e5****22.♠ab1 ♠xe4**

22...♠e4 23.♠xb5 c4 24.♣xc4 ♣b2 25.♠xa7 g3! 26.fxg3 ♠xg3 27.♠f1 ♠d5 28.♣c1 ♠e2† 29.♠xe2 ♣xe2 30.♠xd5 exd5 31.♠d4 ♣xe5† Zubac – Contreras Poblete, Internet 2009.

So that makes the correct answer:

**18.♠ad1!**

Leaving the other rook on f1 cuts out any irritating threats with ...g4-g3.

**18...♣b6**

Now 18...♣c5 19.♠d6 ♣b6 is strongly met by 20.e5! when ♠e4-g5 is a dangerous prospect.

18...♣b4 also favours White after: 19.e5 (19.♠d6 c5) 19...♠d5 20.♠e4 (Dreev)

19.e5 ♠h7 20.♠d3 f5 21.exf6 ♠xf6 22.♠fe1☞ Dell'Isola – Nicholson, e-mail 2008.

17...♠d7 18.e5 f5 19.exf6 ♠xf6 20.♠ad1 ♣e7 21.♣g6 ♣f7 22.♣g5 maintained strong pressure. Black tried to return the pawn with 22...b4 23.♠a4 c5 24.♠xc5 ♠e4 25.♣e3 ♠xc5 26.dxc5± but it was no longer satisfactory, Pashikian – Ter Sahakyan, Yerevan 2008.

17...♠e8 18.e5 ♣xd4 19.♠ad1 ♣c5 20.b4! ♣xb4 21.♠e4 is a good illustration of how dangerous this set-up is. White has sacrificed

his entire queenside, so the attack had better work. 21...♖h6 22.♞d7 ♘c8 23.♞d8 ♖b7 24.♞xe8! ♜fxe8 25.♜f6† ♜f8 26.♞h7 ♙d2 27.♙xg4! ♜e7 (27...hxg4 28.h5 ♞ed8 29.♙h4) 28.♙xh5 ♜f8 29.♜e4 c5 30.♜d6 ♙d5 31.♙xf7 1–0 Dhanish – Misiunas, corr. 2006.

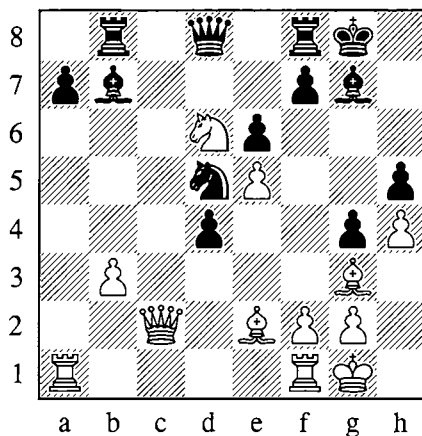
### 18.e5

18.dxc5 b4 19.♞ad1 ♞c8 20.♜b5 ♜xe4 21.♙d6 ♞d8 is unclear.

### 18...♜d5

In a recent game Black tried 18...♜d5 but after 19.♜e4 ♙xe4 20.♞xe4 cxd4 21.♙d3± it ended in a massacre on the light squares. 21...f5 22.exf6 ♜xf6 23.♞xe6† ♜h8 24.♞f5 ♞d5 25.♙e5 ♞ae8 26.♞fe1 ♞e7 27.♞a6 ♜g8 28.♞e2 ♞c5 29.g3 ♞c1† 30.♜h2 ♞c5 31.♞e6 ♞ff7 32.♞c2 1–0 Shulman – Baramidze, Dresden (ol) 2008.

### 19.♜xb5 cxd4 20.♜d6 ♞b8



### 21.♞d2

In a correspondence game White successfully employed 21.♙c4 and after 21...♜b4 22.♞d2 ♙d5 23.♞fe1 a5 24.♞ac1 ♞b6 25.♜e4! was strong: 25...♙xe4 26.♞xe4 d3 27.♙f4 ♜h7 28.♙g5 f6 29.exf6 ♙xf6 30.♙xe6 ♙xg5 31.hxg5 ♞d6 32.♙c4 g3 33.fxg3 ♞xg3 34.♞e7† ♜g6 35.♞b2 1–0 Van Unen – Lanc, corr. 2007.

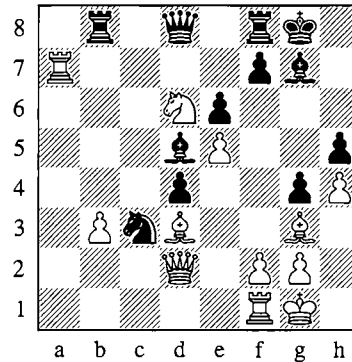
The problem is that 24...♙xc4 25.♞xc4 ♜d5 seems to hold without any problems.

### 21...♜c3

21...a5 22.♙c4 ♜b4 23.♞ad1 d3 24.♞e3 ♙d5 25.♙xd3 ♜xd3 26.♞xd3± Rawlings – Koch, e-mail 2010.

### 22.♙d3 a5

22...♙d5 23.♞xa7 leaves Black struggling.



Black can take on b3 either way, but White is doing very well regardless.

23...♞xb3 allows White to keep up the pressure with 24.♞fa1 ♜d5 25.♞1a3 ♜c7 26.♙b1 ♙c4 27.♙c2 d3 28.♞xd3 ♙xd3 29.♞xd3 f5 30.exf6 ♞xf6 31.♞h7† ♜f8 32.♙e5 ♞a8 33.♙xf6 ♞xf6 34.♞xc7 1–0 Akobian – K. Szabo, Gibraltar 2009.

23...♙xb3 has been tried and perfectly illustrates Black's problems in this line: 24.♞fa1 ♜d5 25.♞1a3 ♜c7 26.♙b1 ♙c4 27.♙c2 d3 28.♞xd3 ♙xd3 29.♞xd3 f5 30.exf6 ♞xf6 31.♞h7† ♜f8 32.♙e5 ♞a8 33.♙xf6 ♞xf6 34.♞xc7 1–0 Akobian – K. Szabo, Gibraltar 2009.

### 23.♞a3 ♙d5 24.♙c2

A nice regrouping: the bishop move protects b3 but also prepares ♞d3.

### 24...♞b6

The position is very complicated and it is hard to find the right plan. Here Black had a few alternatives.

24...f5 25.exf6 ♖xf6 (25...♞xf6 26.♞e1 ♞b6 27.♘c4 transposes to the note after Black's 25th move) 26.♞d3 ♞h6 27.♞xa5 ♙xb3 (27...♞a8 28.♞c5 ♞a7 29.♞e1 ♞d8 30.b4± Surkus – Mercadal Benejam, e-mail 2008) 28.♙xb3 ♞xb3 29.♞g5± Black will have to pay for his open king position.

24...a4!? was perhaps best. 25.♞d3 (25.bxa4 ♞b2 is unclear: Black is ready to sacrifice the exchange) 25...f5 26.exf6 ♞xf6 and now finally 27.bxa4 and White could come out on top in this tense position. After all, he can also flirt with sacrificing the exchange with ♞xc3.

24...♞c7 25.♞d3 ♞f8 26.♞h7† ♘f8 27.♙d3! ♙xb3 28.♙f4 White has a long-term initiative. Black's extra pawns are blocked and cannot do anything. For example: 28...a4 29.♞c1 ♞d7 30.♞aa1 ♞a5 31.♞e1 ♞b6 32.♞xh5± ♘d5 33.♙h6 ♙xh6 34.♞xh6† ♘e7 35.♞g5† ♘f8 36.h5 ♞d8 37.♞h6† ♘e7 38.♙b5+ ♞h8 39.♞g5† f6 40.exf6† ♞xf6 41.♘f5† ♘f7 42.♘h6† ♘e7 43.♘g8† ♞xg8 44.♞xg8 ♞d8 45.♞h7† ♞f7 46.♞xf7† ♘xf7 47.♙xa4 ♙c4 48.♙d1 g3 49.♞a7† ♘f6 50.fxg3 1–0 Rawlings – Mayr, e-mail 2009.

### 25.♞e1 a4

Now it probably comes too late, but the position was difficult anyway.

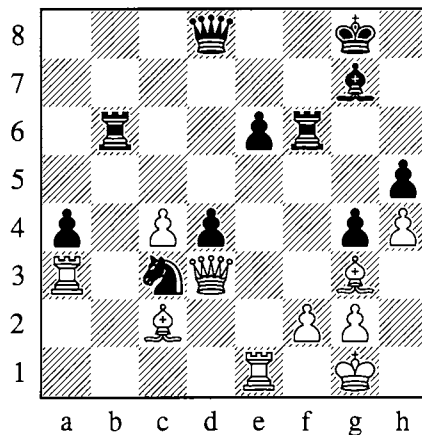
25...f5 26.exf6 ♞xf6 27.♘c4 is the normal way, when White is clearly better. This position has been tested: 27...♞a6 28.♞g5! ♞f8 29.♞aa1 a4 30.♙d3 ♞f5 31.♞g6! ♞f6 32.♘e5 ♞xg6 33.♘xg6 ♘f7 34.♘e5† ♞xe5 35.♙xe5 ♞a5 36.bxa4± Pierzak – Pezzica, e-mail 2008.

25...♞xd6 is a more drastic solution, but it is hardly sufficient after 26.exd6 f5 27.♙d3 followed by ♙c4.

26.♞d3 f5 27.exf6 ♞xf6 28.♘c4 ♙xc4

Not good. 28...axb3 29.♞h7† ♘f8 30.♞a7 lost instantly, for instance 30...♞b7 31.♞xb7 ♙xb7 32.♙d6†, but 28...♞f5 to block the dangerous diagonal was the best chance, even though it costs at least an exchange: 29.♘xb6 ♞xb6 30.♞d2±

### 29.bxc4



White threatens ♞xc3. Black has to move the queen away, which loses the important d4-pawn.

29...♞e7 30.♞xd4 ♞xa3 31.♞xb6 e5 32.♞d8† ♞f8 33.♞a5 e4

Karjakin finds the last resource.

### 34.♙xe4

But Grischuk keeps it simple. 34.♞xc3 ♞xf2 35.♙e5 ♞c5 36.♙xg7 ♞xc2† 37.♞d4 ♞xd4† 38.♙xd4 ♞xc4 was unnecessary, especially since 39.♞xe4 enters a pin and 39...a3 draws.

34...♘xe4 35.♞xe4 a3 36.♞e3 ♞f7 37.♞xa3 ♞xc4 38.♞a5

Attacking h5.

38...♞f7 39.♞e5 ♞h6 40.♞d8† ♘h7 41.♞e7 1–0

On 41...♞f5 42.♞c7 ♞g6 43.♙e5 wins at once.

**Conclusion:** Another great performance by Grischuk. The Russian star is like a fish in the water in these complicated affairs. So could you be. Play over the game a few more times and get a feel for this dynamic initiative. It is notable that Grischuk again uses the 15.b3 break.

**Moscow Variation Conclusion:** The Moscow Variation is at the very cutting edge of modern opening theory. Many of the lines are strangely balanced: White has a good long-term initiative for the pawn, but perhaps not more than that. In a practical game, however, it will be difficult for the black player to find his way through this tactical maze. And that's why it often pays off to play razor-sharp chess with White – you will dictate events and psychologically it is much more pleasant to attack than to defend.

If White wishes to sidestep the mainlines then a promising route is either 9.e5 ♖d5 10.♗d2!? or the related (and frequently transpositional) 9.♗e2 ♗b7 10.e5 ♖d5 11.♗d2. The play is still sharp but little theory has developed here, at least so far! My analysis above starts the debate...

Of course the Moscow and the Botvinnik Variations both lead to hair-raising complications and there is a lot of theory, but you don't have to know everything by heart to play them. And please remember that even though FIDE has made the game faster and faster over the years, you are actually still allowed to think at the board.

### Theory: Cambridge Springs

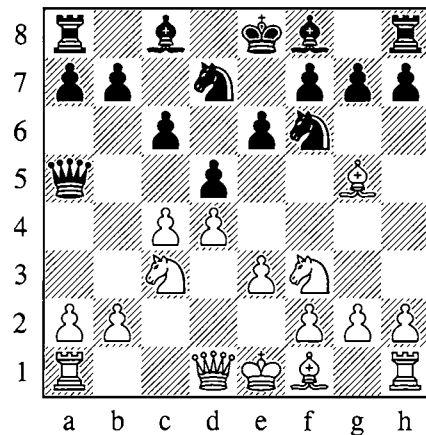
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 e6 5.♗g5 ♗bd7 6.e3

White could transpose to a Queen's Gambit Exchange variation with 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e3.

This structure is rightfully considered easier for White to play, so it could be a good practical choice. However, when I recommended the Exchange variation in Chapter 1 it was with the knight on e2. Here it is on f3, so that would create some discrepancy and also the Cambridge Springs is hardly something to be afraid of.

6...♗a5

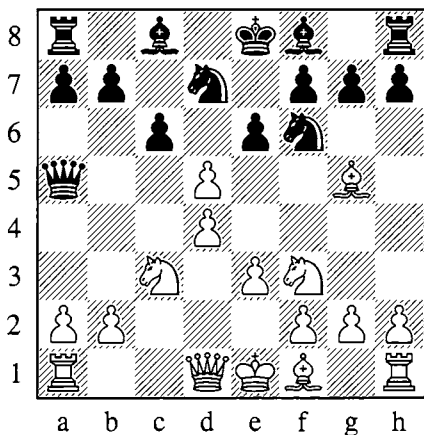
It was also possible to transpose to a Queen's Gambit Declined with 6...♗e7 while other bishop moves such as 6...♗b4 or 6...♗d6 do not quite meet the positional demands of the situation. On 6...♗b4 a simple answer is 7.cxd5 and no matter how Black takes back he will get an inferior Exchange Variation, and on 6...♗d6 there is nothing wrong with 7.♗d3.



The old Cambridge Springs line has regained some popularity, primarily because many Black players want to play the Semi-Slav and are reluctant to try the chaos of the Botvinnik or Moscow Variations. They are therefore in search of something solid. With the queen move Black pins the white knight and creates the possibility of ...♗e4.

7.cxd5

The sharpest. If White wants a more positional game he can opt for 7.♘d2 instead, but the chances to get an opening advantage will be much smaller.



7...♗xd5

The real CS move, but of course it is possible to take back with a pawn.

7...cxd5

This is symmetrical, but the knight is passive on d7.

8.♗d2

Directed against ...♗e4.

8.♗d3 ♗e4 9.0–0 was also possible.

8...♗b4 9.♖b3 0–0 10.a3 ♗d6

If 10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 b6 then 12.♖b4.

11.♗d3 a6 12.0–0 b5 13.e4 dxe4 14.♗dxe4 ♗e7 15.d5!

A thematic break.

15...♗e5

15...exd5 16.♗xd5 ♗xd5 17.♖xd5 ♗b6 18.♖a2! ♗e6 19.b4 ♖a4 20.♖e2 and the black queen is in trouble.

16.d6 ♗d8

16...♗xd6 17.♗xd6 ♗xd3 18.♗xf6 gxf6 19.♗ce4 wins.

17.♗xf6† gxf6 18.♗e4 ♖a7 19.♗h6 ♖e8 20.♖c2 b4 21.axb4 ♖xb4 22.♖a4 ♖xd6 23.♗xh7† ♗h8 24.♖h4 f5 25.♖h3 ♗g4 26.♗xf5 ♗xh6

Gritsak – Grabarczyk, Glogow 2001, and here 27.♖c1 would have won instantly.

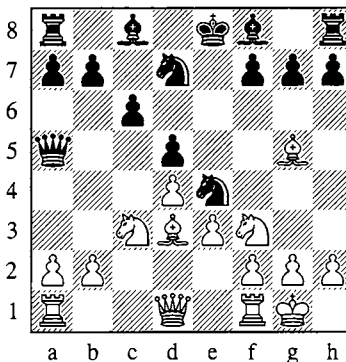
7...exd5

This creates a QGD Exchange structure after all, but with the queen misplaced on a5.

8.♗d3 ♗e4

Otherwise the queen's position does not make sense:

9.0–0



Black now has various options, but White will come out on top:

9...♗xc3

Taking the pawn is too risky.

10.bxc3 ♖xc3 11.e4 dxe4 12.♖e1 f5 13.♖c1 ♖a3

13...♖b4 14.♗h4 ♗f6 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.♖h5† ♗d8 17.♗c4 ♗d6 18.♗g6 ♖e8 19.♖xh7 ♖b6 20.♖g7 ♗b4 21.♖ed1 e3 22.fxe3 ♖xe3 23.♗h1 ♗d6 24.♗e5! ♖b4 25.♖b1 ♗f8 26.♖h8 1–0 Tummes – Klugstedt, corr. 1993.

14.♗h4 ♗f6

Or 14...♗b6 15.♖h5† g6 16.♗xg6 hxg6 17.♖xh8 ♖xd3 18.♖g8 ♖a3 19.♖c5 ♗d5 20.♗h6.

15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.♖h5† ♗d8 17.♗c4 ♗b4 18.♖ed1 ♗d2 19.♖c2 ♗g5 20.d5

Opening the position.

9...♗df6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♗e5 ♗d6 12.f4±

9...♖xg5 10.♗xg5 ♖f6

On 10...♞d8 or 10...♙e7 White gets 11.f4 in and on 10...h6 11.♞h5 is strong.

11.h3

Black was ready to play ...h6 followed by ...♙g4.

11...h6 12.♗f3 ♙b4

Or 12...♙d6 13.♗e5 0-0 14.f4 c5 15.♞f3 cxd4 16.exd4 ♙b4 17.♗e2 ♞d8 18.a3 ♙f8 19.♞ad1 ♙d7 20.♗c3± Borovikov – Eggert, Nettetal 2004. White quickly launched a pawn offensive on the kingside.

13.♞c2 0-0 14.a3

14.♗e5 is also fine.

14...♙xc3 15.bxc3 c5 16.♞b2 ♞c7 17.a4±

Grischuk – Godena, Saint Vincent 2005.

There is yet another approach:

7...♗e4

This is tricky, but not that good.

8.dxe6 fxe6 9.♙h4 ♙b4 10.♗d2 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♙xc3 12.♞c1 ♗f6

Worse is 12...e5 13.♙c4 or 12...0-0 13.♞c2 ♙b4 14.♙d3.

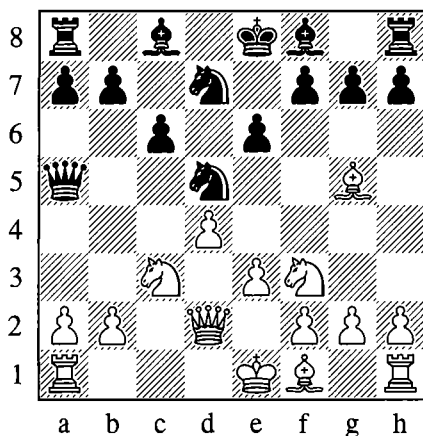
13.♙d3 ♙d7 14.♞c2 e5

14...c5 loses a pawn after 15.♙xf6 gxf6 16.♞h5† and ♞xc5.

15.dxe5 ♙xe5 16.0-0

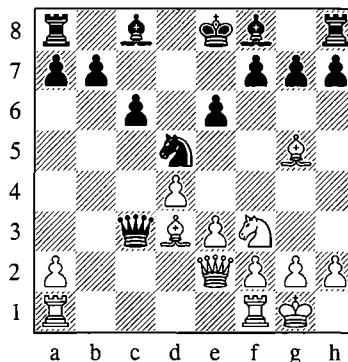
Gorelov – Novopashin, Volgodonsk 1981, and the threat of ♗c4 gives White the initiative.

8.♞d2



8...♙b4

Black intensifies the pressure on the c3-knight. Another way to do that is: 8...♗7b6 9.♙d3 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♗d5 (or 10...♗a4) 11.0-0 ♞xc3 12.♞e2



A typical scenario in the Cambridge Springs: Black has won a pawn by his consistent exploitation of the pin on the c3-knight, but he has fallen way behind in development. Game 50 shows how it can continue.

9.♞c1 h6

Usually Black wins this tempo on the bishop by playing ...h6 but it is possible to do without it. In their famous Candidates match Smyslov tried some other moves against Kasparov, but he was severely punished.

9...e5 10.a3! ♙d6 (10...♙xc3 11.bxc3 ♞xa3 12.e4 ♗5b6 13.♙d3♞) 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♗xe5 ♙xe5 13.b4! ♙xc3 14.♞xc3 ♗xc3 15.bxa5 ♗e4 16.♙f4 0-0 17.f3 ♗f6 18.e4 ♞e8 19.♗f2 a6 20.♙e2 ♙e6 21.♞b1 ♞e7 22.♞hd1 ♞ae8 23.♞b2 ♙c8 24.♞bd2 ♞d7 25.♞xd7 ♗xd7 26.g4 ♗c5 27.♙e3 ♗d7 28.g5± In Kasparov – Smyslov, Vilnius (9) 1984, Black lacked counterplay.

9...f6 10.♙h4 e5 11.♙d3 0-0 12.0-0 exd4

12...♞e8 13.♞c2

13.exd4 ♞d8 14.a3! ♙xc3 15.bxc3 ♗f8

15...♞xa3 16.c4 ♗b4 17.♙f5 ♗a6 18.♞a1

♞b4 19.♞c2 ♗f8 20.♙e4♞

16. ♖g3 ♗e6 17. ♖fe1 ♗f7 18. c4 ♖xd2 19. ♗xd2 ♗b6 20. ♗b3 ♗a4 21. ♗f1 ♖d7 22. ♗a5 ♗e6 23. d5 ♗d4 24. dxc6 ♗xc6 25. ♗xc6 bxc6 26. c5±

Kasparov – Smyslov, Vilnius (3) 1984. The bishop pair is very strong.

The most interesting line is:

9...c5 10.a3

10. ♗c4!? is promising. See Game 53 with ...h6 and ♗h4 inserted.

10...♗xc3 11.bxc3

As usual, it is dangerous to try:

11...♖xa3

When Khalifman gives:

12.e4 ♗5f6 13. ♗d3 ♖a5 14.d5! exd5 15.exd5 0–0

15...♗xd5 16. ♗c4↑

16.0–0 ♗xd5

16...h6 17. ♗xh6! gxh6 18. ♖xh6 wins.

17. ♗xh7† ♗xh7 18. ♖xd5 ♗g8 19. ♗e7 ♖e8 20. ♖fe1♖

White's impressive bishop dominates the black position and he will have good attacking chances on the kingside.

But Black can play:

11...b6

Then 12. ♗d3 h6 will transpose to something in the mainline that we try to avoid. Instead we can take the ending, when a recent example went:

12.c4 ♖xd2† 13. ♗xd2 ♗5f6 14. ♗e2 ♗a6 15.f3

With ...h6 and ♗h4 included, the bishop often returns to f2 where it coordinates well with the other troops, so here it is maybe a slight disadvantage to have the bishop on g5.

15...0–0 16. ♗f2

16.0–0 was more natural and looks slightly better for White.

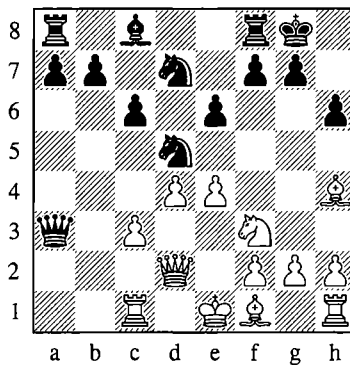
16...h6 17. ♗h4 ♖fe8 18. ♖hd1 cxd4 19.exd4 e5 20. ♗b3 ♖ac8 21.a4 e4 22. ♗xf6 ♗xf6

23.d5 exf3 24.gxf3 ♗f8 25. ♗f1 ♖ed8 26. ♗d4 ♖c5 27. ♗b3 ♖c7 28. ♗d4 ♖c5 29. ♗b3 ♖c7 30. ♗d4 ♖c5

With a draw by repetition, Meier – Carlsen, Dresden 2008.

### 10. ♗h4 c5

After: 10...0–0 11.a3 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♖xa3 13.e4



White again gets a good play for a pawn. Game 51 shows how the initiative can unfold.

### 11.a3

The standard move, however 11. ♗c4 is an interesting way to avoid the ending. See Game 53 for more details.

### 11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 b6

The positional choice: Black prepares ...♗a6 to exchange his problem bishop. Even worse than before is:

12...♖xa3 13.e4 ♗5f6 14. ♗d3 ♖a5 15.d5! exd5 16.e5 ♗e4 17. ♗xe4 dxe4 18. ♖d6

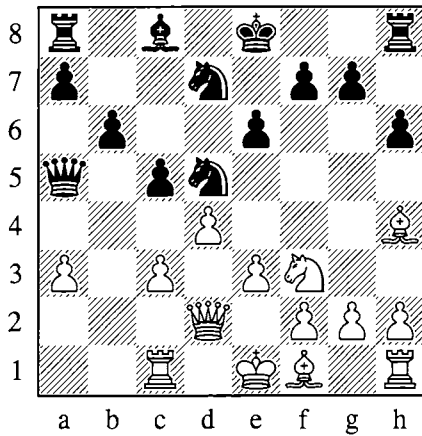
Threatening mate.

18...g5 19. ♗xg5! ♖b6

19...hxg5 20. ♗xg5 f6 21.exf6 and it is over.

20. ♗xe4 ♖xd6 21. ♗xd6† ♗f8 22.f4± ♗b6 23.0–0 ♖g8 24.f5

And Black never got out, Petursson – Halasz, Naestved 1988.

**13.c4**

The modern solution. White is content with a slightly better ending, where the pair of bishops hopefully can claim their right. Traditionally White has played:

13.♙d3 ♘a6 14.0–0 cxd4 15.♙xa6 ♖xa6  
16.♗xd4

16.cxd4 0–0 17.e4 ♘5f6 18.♗e3 ♗ac8  
should be okay for Black who is ready to swap rooks on the c-file.  
16...0–0 17.e4 ♘f4 18.♗xd7 ♘e2† 19.♙h1  
♘xc1 20.♗xc1 ♗xa3 21.♗d2 ♗ac8 22.♘d4

But this position is considered fine for Black these days.

22...a6

This move prevents ♘d4-b5-d6 and prepares b6-b5 followed by ...♗c4.

23.f4

23.f3 b5 24.♗e1 ♗c4 25.♘e2 ♗fc8 and it is not easy to improve White's position. 26.♗a1 ♗b2 27.♗b1 ♗c2 28.♗d1 ½–½ Simeonov – Lindqvist, corr. 2007.

23...♗c4 24.e5 b5 25.♘e2 ♗c5 26.h3 a5  
27.♗f1 b4 28.cxb4 axb4

The passed pawn gave Black the upper hand, Braun – Fridman, Bad Woerishofen 2008.

13.e4

This is nothing.

13...♘5f6 14.♙d3 ♙b7 15.d5 c4! 16.dxe6

cxd3 17.exd7† ♘xd7 18.♗xd3

This position has been considered fine for Black since an old game between Kramnik and Ivanchuk. A later correspondence game confirmed this:

18...♘c5!? 19.♗d6 f6

Now White could not find anything better than giving up a piece.

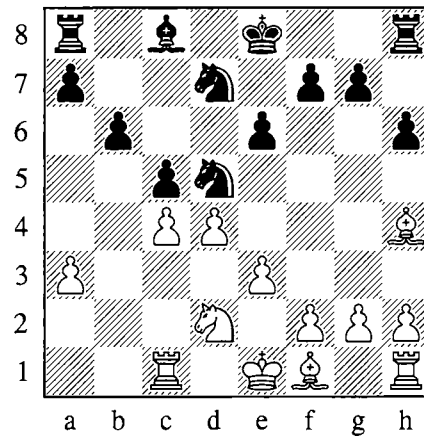
20.♙xf6 gxf6 21.♗xf6 ♗f8

Rost – May, corr. 2001, and the finish could have been:

22.♗e5† ♙f7 23.♗c7† ♙g8 24.♗g3†

With perpetual check.

13...♗xd2† 14.♘xd2



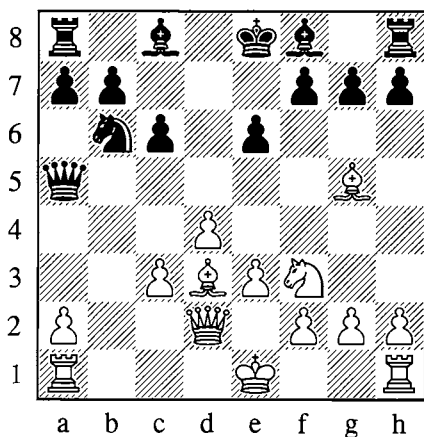
Black must withdraw the knight to e7 or f6. White continues with the flexible f3 and ♙e2. The other bishop can always return to f2 with a harmonious position. Game 52 tells more.

**GAME 50**

**Mehlhorn – Drosson**

Correspondence 2003

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♙g5  
♘bd7 6.e3 ♗a5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♗d2 ♘7b6  
9.♙d3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3

**10...d5**

Black can also win the pawn with:

**10...d4**

Because 11.♞c1 allows 11...♜xc3 and 11.c4 ♟b4 is even worse.

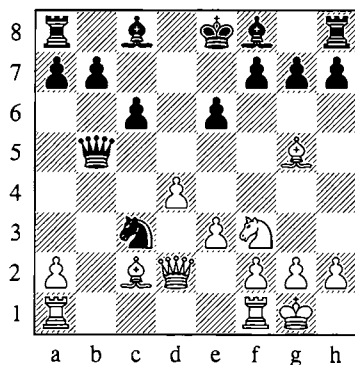
White should of course just give up the pawn and accept the inevitable.

**11.0–0 ♞xc3 12.♞e2**

The knight looks funny on a4, but Black can harass the white queen by keep threatening to exchange. A pawn down, White prefers to wait a little before going into an ending.

**12...♞b2 13.♟c2 ♞b5**

Another line is: 13...♜c3 14.♞d3 ♜d5 15.♟b3 h6 16.♟h4 ♞c3 17.♞e2 ♟a3 18.♜e5 with good compensation.

**14.♞d1 ♜c3 15.♞d2****15...♜e2†**

Or 15...♟b4 16.♟d3 when 16...♞a5 is

a mistake after Khalifman's 17.a3 ♟xa3 18.♞fb1 b5 19.♞b3 b4 20.♞axa3 bxa3 21.♞xc3 ♞xc3 22.♞xc3 a2 23.♞a3± and 16...♞a4 17.a3 ♟a5 18.♞b2 f6 19.♟h4 ♜d5 20.♞fc1♞ was Magerramov – Sherbakov, Cheliabinsk 1991. The black queen is not safe and White is ready with moves such as ♞c2, threatening ♟xh7.

15...h6 16.♟h4 (16.♞xc3!N hxg5 17.♞ab1 ♞d5 18.e4 ♞d8 19.d5†) 16...♜e2† 17.♞h1 ♟b4 18.a4 ♟xd2 19.axb5 ♟b4 20.bxc6 bxc6 21.♜e5 a5 22.♜xc6 ♟b7 23.♜xb4 axb4 24.♞xa8† ♟xa8 25.♟a4† ♞f8 26.♟d8 ♜c3 27.♟b3 ♟d5 28.♟a5 ♟xb3 ½–½ Kopsa – J. Andersen, e-mail 2009.

16.♞h1 ♟b4 17.a4! ♟xd2 18.axb5 ♟c3 19.♞a2 Black has to go to extremes to avoid losing his knight.

**19...♟d7**

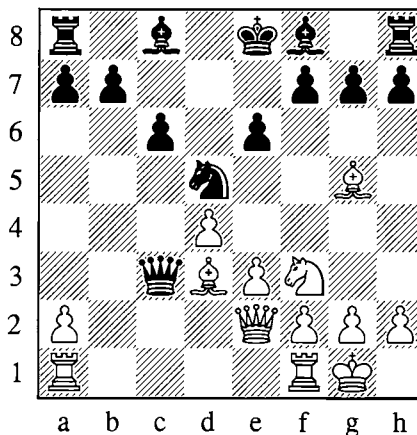
19...h6 20.bxc6 bxc6 (20...hxg5 21.♟e4±) 21.♟a4 ♟d7 22.♟h4 g5 23.♞xe2 gxh4 24.♞c2 ♟a5 Pankratov – Kariz, corr. 1997. 25.♜e5±

**20.♟d3**

20.♟e4 also looks good.

20...h6 21.♟h4 g5 22.♟xe2 gxh4 23.♞c1 ♟b4 24.♜e5 ♟d6 25.♜xd7 ♞xd7 26.bxc6† bxc6 27.♟f3 ♞hc8 28.♞a6±

Gerstner – Jirovsky, Germany 1999.

**11.0–0 ♞xc3 12.♞e2**

Black has no real weaknesses, but he is terrible behind in development, and his vulnerable queen almost guarantees that he will lose even more time getting her back to safety. White has more than enough for the pawn and should be in no hurry. The compensation is of a long-term positional kind: the extra space, the easy piece-play. Black will without doubt be able to castle, but he will have great trouble developing his queenside.

### 12...♙d6

12...♙e7 13.♙xe7 ♘xe7 14.♘e5 ♘g6 15.♙xg6 hxg6 16.a4!? (16.♙fc1) 16...♙a5 17.♙fc1 g5 18.h3 f6 19.♘c4 ♙c7 20.e4±  
Eingorn – Meister, Bad Wiessee 2008.

### 13.♘d2

Activating the knight.

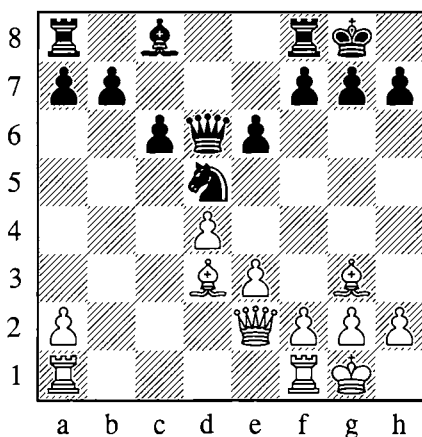
### 13...♙a5

Black should be alert. A careless move like 13...0-0? would after 14.♘c4 ♙c7 15.♙ab1 cost the queen because there is no satisfactory defence against ♙b3 or ♙fc1.

### 14.♘c4 ♙c7 15.♘xd6†

A simple decision. White just takes the bishop pair and secures good play, especially on the dark squares. 15.♙h5 has also been tried but it is not as clear-cut.

### 15...♙xd6 16.♙h4 0-0 17.♙g3



The bishops exert strong long distance pressure. Poor Black still has to develop the queenside.

### 17...♙d7

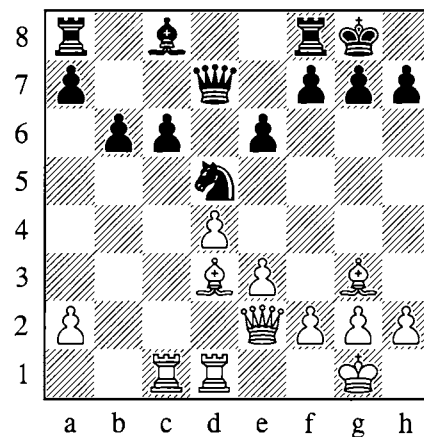
Protecting c6 and preparing ...b7-b6 followed by ...♙b7. On 17...♙e7 White could try the new move 18.e4±.

### 18.♙ac1

Also possible is 18.♙fc1 ♘b4 19.♙c4 b6 20.e4 a5 21.a3 ♘a6 22.♙e3 ♙b7 23.♙e2 b5 24.♙e5 f6 25.♙g3 ♙ad8 26.♙d1 f5 27.f3 a4 28.♙ac1± Innocenti – Fleischanderl, corr. 2004. Black's position does not impress.

### 18...b6 19.♙fd1

White centralizes the rooks and finishes his development. The compensation will not go away and he is in no hurry. The stem game continued 19.♙b1 ♙b7 20.♙d3 g6 21.♙fd1 ♙ad8 22.♙e2 f5 23.♙e5 with compensation, Gligoric – Shengelia, Panormos 1998. But as Panczyk and Ilczuk proclaim, 20...f5 would have been better with unclear play.



### 19...f5

A double-edged decision, but on 19...♙b7 comes: 20.e4 ♘e7 21.♙c4 (after 21.♙b2N play can continue 21...f5 22.f3 ♙ad8 23.♙c2±) 21...♙h8 22.h4! f5 23.h5 f4 24.♙h4 f3

25.gxf3 ♖g8 26.♙g3± For example, Vuckovic – Flear, Aix-les-Bains 2011, finished: 26...♗e8 27.♔g2 ♜d8 28.♗e3 h6 29.♗h1 ♗f7 30.♙e5 ♖f6 31.♗h3 ♔h7 32.♗ch1 ♖d7 33.♙d6 ♗fe8 34.♙g3 c5 35.dxc5 ♖xc5 36.♙e5 ♙g8 37.♙g6 ♜de8 38.♗h3 ♖d7 39.♙xg7 ♗xg7 40.♙xg7† ♙xg7† 41.♙g3 1–0 The British grandmaster Glenn Flear has many years of experience with the Cambridge Springs, so to see him being treated this way should be a wake-up call for Black: this opening is too difficult!

20.e4 ♖e7

20...fxe4 21.♗xe4 g6 creates a weakness. White can put the queen on g4, play the bishop to e5, and then h2-h4-h5.

21.♙e5

Nice bishop.

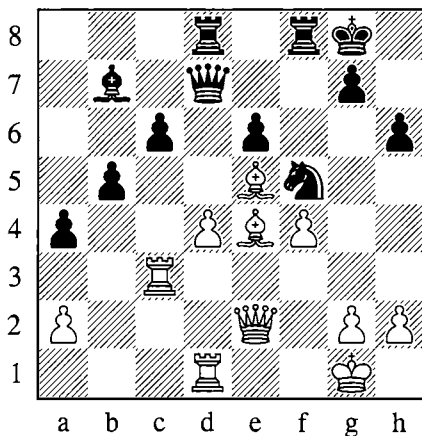
21...♙b7 22.♗c3 ♜ad8 23.♙c2 fxe4

Otherwise the rook would go to h3 with an attack.

24.♜a3 a5 25.♗b3

First he creates some new weak spots in the black camp.

25...b5 26.♙xe4 ♖f5 27.♗c3 h6 28.f4 a4



29.g4 ♖e7 30.g5

White launches a direct assault.

30...♖f5 31.gxh6 ♖xh6 32.♙g3 ♗f7 33.♗h5 ♖f5 34.♙dd3!

1–0

Nice. If 34...♖xg3 then simply 35.♙xg3 and g7 falls in connection with the check on h7.

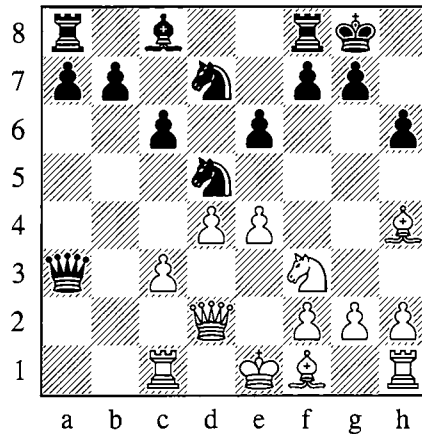
**Conclusion:** A typical display if Black goes for an early win of a pawn. His bad development and the strong pair of bishops will make the rest of the game an unpleasant uphill struggle.

## GAME 51

Kramnik – Bruzon

Turin Olympiad 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♖f3 ♖f6 4.♖c3 e6 5.♙g5 ♖bd7 6.e3 ♗a5 7.cxd5 ♖xd5 8.♗d2 ♙b4 9.♗c1 h6 10.♙h4 0–0 11.a3 ♙xc3 12.bxc3 ♗xa3 13.e4



Another pawn sacrifice, another initiative.

13...♖e7

13...♖5b6 14.♙d3 ♗e8 15.0–0 e5 16.♙g3 exd4 17.cxd4± just opened the position to White's advantage in Kramnik – Lobron, Frankfurt 1995.

14.♙d3 ♖g6 15.♙g3 e5

Seeking influence in the centre.

The alternative is:

15...b6 16.0–0

And 16.h4 would very likely have been even stronger.

16...♙b7

But with:

17.e5 ♖e7 18.h4

White took the initiative.

18...c5 19.h5 ♙xf3 20.gxf3 ♘h4 21.♖f4 ♘f5  
22.♙xf5 exf5 23.♗xf5 ♖e6 24.♗e4 f5 25.d5!  
♖e8 26.♗f4±

P.H. Nielsen – Cu. Hansen, Esbjerg 2002.  
White's central pawns are some sight.

16.0–0

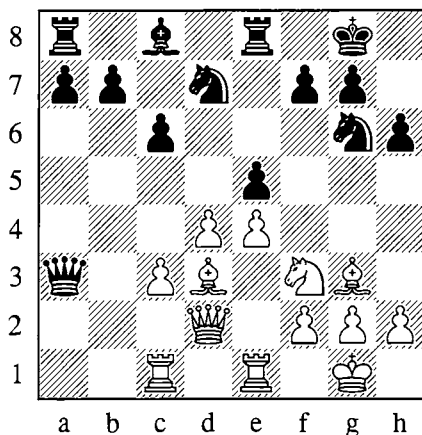
16.h4 was also possible, but Kramnik just finishes development. It is clear he believes in the long-term prospects of White's position.

16...♖e8

16...♖e7 has been played in a correspondence game, but it does not change much. White can continue 17.♖fe1 like Kramnik or even 17.h4!?

17.♖fe1

After 17.h4!? exd4 18.cxd4 ♘f6 19.e5 ♘d5 20.h5 ♘f8 it is not easy to break down Black's defences. For example: 21.♘h2 ♖b4 22.♖d1 a5 23.♘g4 a4 with active counterplay, Nepomniachtchi – Esen, Moscow 2012.



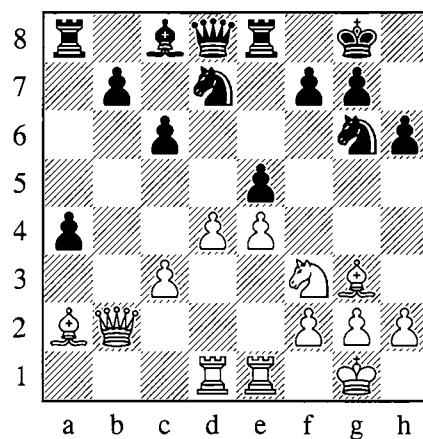
17...♖a5

No better is: 17...♖e7 18.♙b1 a5 19.h4 exd4 20.cxd4 ♘f6 21.♖c5! a4 22.h5 b6 (22...♘f8 23.♙h4±) 23.♖xc6 ♘xh5 24.♙a2 ♘h7 25.♙h2 b5 26.d5± Erdos – Volkmann, Vienna 2011.

18.♖b2 ♖d8

Black got his queen home, but Kramnik still doesn't hurry. Slowly but surely he improves his pieces. He has a nice centre and good prospects on the kingside, while Black's majority on the queenside will not be a real threat for long.

19.♙b1! a5 20.♖cd1 a4 21.♙a2



Kramnik has coordinated his pieces beautifully. He found an active post for the light-squared bishop where it points all the way down to the weak spot f7 and at the same time blocks Black's passed a-pawn.

21...♖e7 22.♖c1 ♖a5

Black tries to get his rook out without developing the c8-bishop at all.

23.♖d2 exd4

Releasing the tension mainly benefits White, but Black's position was not easy to play. 23...b6 could be answered by 24.h4 when Black should perhaps try 24...♘f6 25.♘xe5 ♘xe5 26.♙xe5 ♖xe5 27.dxe5 ♖xe5 with some compensation for the exchange.

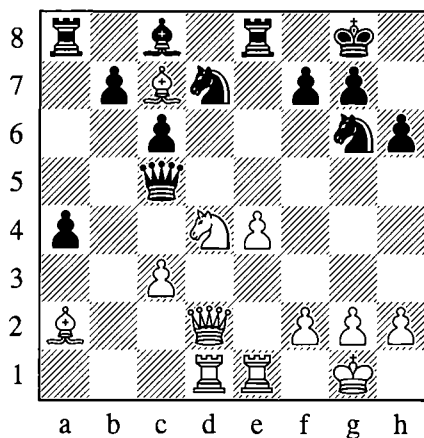
24. ♖xd4

The most dynamic option.

24... ♖c5

24... ♖de5 25.f4±

25. ♙c7 ♗a8



26. ♙xf7†!

The culmination of Kramnik's remarkable handling of this bishop.

26... ♗xf7 27. ♖a2† ♖f8

In his notes in *Informant* the winner mentions the nice detail 27... ♗f6 28. ♙d8†! with mate in a few moves.

28. ♖e6† ♗xe6 29. ♖xe6

The black king is caught: White will follow up with ♗e3 and ♗f3. Black cannot move the knight from d7 because of the weak back rank.

29... ♖e7 30. ♗e3 ♖e8 31. ♗f3 ♖h5 32. ♙d6 1–0

On 32... ♖g5 then 33. ♗f7 decides.

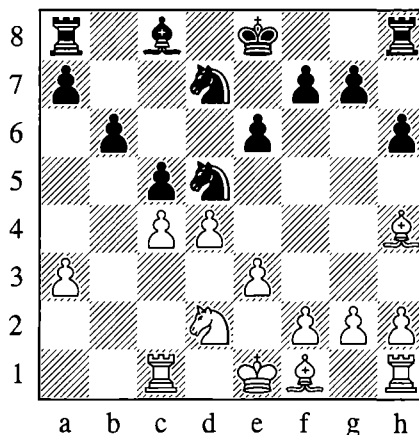
**Conclusion:** This game is another illustration of the long-term dangers that await Black if he takes the pawn. Such positions are almost impossible to defend over-the-board.

## GAME 52

Bubir – Nemeč

Correspondence 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. ♖c3 ♖f6 4. ♖f3 e6 5. ♙g5 ♖bd7 6.e3 ♖a5 7.cxd5 ♖xd5 8. ♖d2 ♙b4 9. ♗c1 h6 10. ♙h4 c5 11.a3 ♙xc3 12.bxc3 b6 13.c4 ♖xd2† 14. ♖xd2



14... ♖5f6

This is the most solid option.

Black has an alternative that looks tempting:

14... ♖e7

The knight can jump to f5 and harass the white bishop. However, the bishop does not really mind returning to f2, and Black's knights may be misplaced. These are the words; let's translate them into some practical examples:

15.f3

15. ♙d3 is also popular. One high-level example is: 15...f5 16. ♙g3 ♙b7 17.0–0 ♖f7 18. ♗fd1 ♗ac8 19.d5↑ Kramnik – Shirov, Shanghai 2010. Later Shirov improved with 15... ♙b7 16.f3 f5 17.0–0 ♖f7 18.g4! (18. ♗fd1!?) 18...g5 19. ♙f2 h5 20.gxf5 exf5 21.h4 gxh4 22. ♙xh4 ♖g6 23. ♙g3 h4 24. ♙h2∞ Vachier Lagrave – Shirov, Khanty-

Mansiysk 2010.

15...♖f5 16.♙f2 ♘d6  
 Or 16...♙a6 17.♙d3 ♜c8 (17...♙e7!? 18.0–0  
 ♜hd8 19.♜fd1 ♜ac8 20.a4 ♘d6 21.♙f1 e5  
 22.d5 f5 was Carlsen – Ivanchuk, Leon 2009.  
 Now 23.e4!N would have been good for  
 White.) 18.g4! ♘d6 19.♙g3 ♙e7 20.♙f2±  
 ♜hd8 21.♜hd1 ♘b8 22.h4 ♘b7 23.d5!  
 exd5 24.♙f5 ♘d7 25.cxd5 g6 26.♙b1 c4  
 27.h5 ♘dc5 28.e4 g5 29.♘f1 ♘b3 30.♜c3  
 ♘d6 31.a4 f6 32.♘e3± Potkin – Malakhov,  
 Russia 2008.

17.♘b3  
 17.♙d3 is of course also fine.  
 17...♙a6 18.dxc5 bxc5 19.e4 ♜c8 20.♙e2 ♘b7  
 21.♙d2 ♘b6 22.a4 ♙e7 23.a5 ♘d7 24.♜hd1  
 f6 25.♙c3±

Tasic – Norman, corr. 2006. Space and  
 bishops!

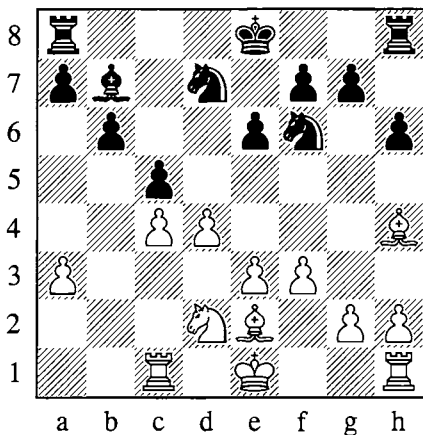
**15.f3**

A key move, but White could also develop  
 the light-squared bishop first.

**15...♙b7**

Black could try 15...0–0 with the idea of  
 developing the bishop on a6. For example,  
 16.♘b3 cxd4 17.exd4 ♙a6 18.♙f2 ♜fe8  
 19.♙e2 e5 and Black was almost equal in  
 Moiseenko – Krasenkow, Mulhouse 2011.

**16.♙e2**



**16...♜c8**

The right square for the rook, but both sides  
 could just as well have started by castling short  
 and then Black could have played ...♜ac8 with  
 a transposition.

The following games took a more original  
 course:

16...0–0 17.0–0 cxd4  
 17...♜fe8 18.♜fe1 ♜ac8 19.♙f1± Vaganian –  
 Krasenkow, Barcelona 2007.  
 18.exd4 e5 19.c5! bxc5 20.dxe5  
 With the idea 20...♘xe5 21.♜xc5.  
 20...♜fe8

Grischuk – Filippov, Tripoli 2004, and now  
 both 21.♘c4 and 21.f4 would have been very  
 good for White.

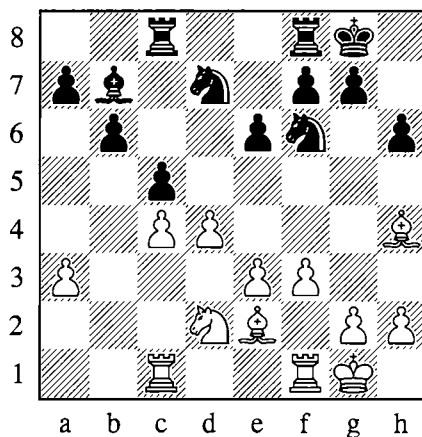
**16...♙e7**

Keeping the king in the centre is not  
 necessarily a good idea.

17.0–0 ♜hd8 18.♜c2!?  
 18.♘b3  
 18...♜ac8 19.♜fc1 ♙c6 20.♘b1 ♘f8 21.♙f2  
 ♘d8d7 22.♘c3 a6 23.a4±

Black did not find a plan and now he suffers,  
 Babula – Ashton, Pardubice 2008.

**17.0–0 0–0**



**18.a4**

A good positional idea. The further advance a4-a5 would attack Black's pawn chain. It was also possible just to centralize the other rook and see what Black intends to do. 18.♞fd1 ♞fe8 19.♙d3 ♙a6 20.♙f1 cxd4 21.exd4 ♞c6 22.a4 ♞ec8 23.♞a1 e5 Obviously this is the plan, but there was never a good time to execute it. 24.d5 ♞d6 25.a5 ♘c5 26.♞db1± Zontakh – Romanko, Russia 2008.

**18...♞fd8 19.♘b3 g5 20.♙f2 a5**

A drastic decision, but otherwise White would play a5 himself.

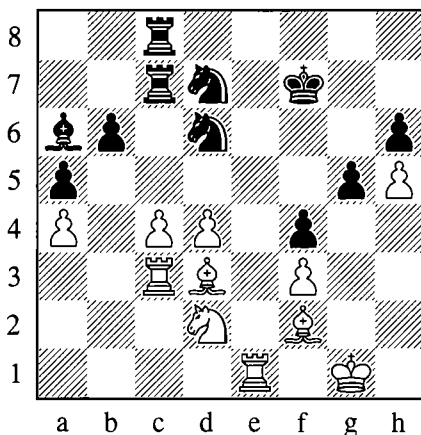
21.♞fd1 cxd4 22.exd4 ♘f8 23.♙e3 ♘e7 24.♘d2 ♙c6 25.♞a1 ♘h5 26.♞e1 ♘f8 27.g3 ♘g7 28.g4

Taking squares from the knight.

**28...f6 29.h4 ♘f7 30.h5±**

White does not mind closing the position. He fixes the black pawn on h6, where it might later be hit by the unopposed dark-squared bishop. Furthermore, the weakness on b6 will always be there and the dynamics are on White's side in the centre and on the kingside, so there will be good winning chances.

30...♘e8 31.♙f2 ♙b7 32.♞ab1 ♙a6 33.♞ec1 ♘d6 34.♙d3 f5 35.♞c3 ♞c7 36.♞e1 ♞dc8 37.gxf5 exf5 38.♙g3 f4 39.♙f2

**39...♘g8**

It was difficult to find a move. 39...♘xc4 40.♘xc4 ♙xc4 41.♞ec1 lost an exchange and on 39...♘f8 White advances 40.d5.

**40.♞e6!**

Penetrating Black's position.

40...♘xc4 41.♞g6† ♘f8 42.♘xc4 ♙xc4 43.♞xh6

Not only winning the black h-pawn, but also creating a strong passed pawn.

**43...♘e7**

Not 43...♙xd3 44.♞h8† ♘g7 45.♞xc8.

44.♞h7† ♘d6 45.♙f5 ♘f6 46.♞h6 ♞f8 47.♞g6 ♙d5 48.♞xc7 ♘xc7 49.h6 ♙xf3 50.d5!

Decisive.

**50...♙h5**

Or 50...♙xd5 51.♙d4 ♘d7 52.h7.

51.♞xg5 ♞h8 52.h7 ♘xh7 53.♞xh5 ♞g8† 54.♘f1 ♘f6 55.♙e6 ♞g6 56.♞f5 ♘g4 57.♞f7† ♘d6 58.♙xb6 ♘e3† 59.♙xe3 fxe3 60.♘e2

1-0

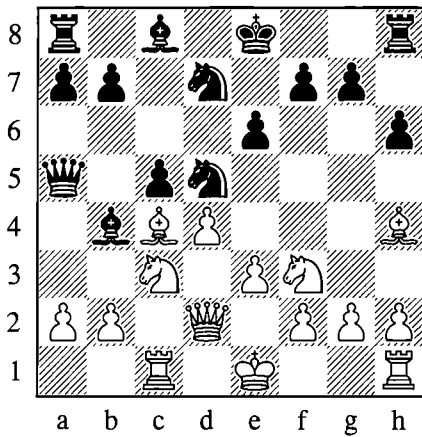
**Conclusion:** The ending is probably the best Black can get, but still it is nice for White.

**GAME 53**

Anand – Shirov

Wijk aan Zee 2011

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♙g5 ♘bd7 6.e3 ♞a5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♞d2 ♙b4 9.♞c1 h6 10.♙h4 c5 11.♙c4!?



White keeps the tension and avoids the ending. This move was thrust into the spotlight when it brought White two wins in two days at Wijk aan Zee. Black is faced with a difficult choice and it seems there is no easy solution.

### 11...♟xc3

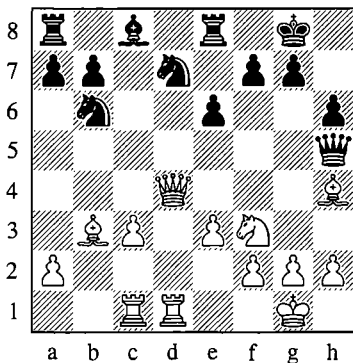
The day before this game Aronian had surprised Shirov with the ♟c4-idea. Shirov replied:

11...cxd4 12.♞xd4! ♟xc3† 13.bxc3

White's pawn structure is shattered, but he has the bishop pair.

13...0-0 14.0-0 ♟5b6 15.♟b3 ♞e8 16.♞fd1±

Black has problems developing his queenside. 16...♞h5



### 17.♟g3

17.e4!N would have kept a strong grip on the position, for instance 17...♟c5?! 18.♟c2

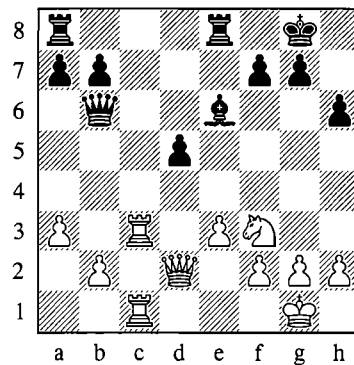
♟d7 19.e5 ♞ac8 20.g4 trapping the queen. 17...e5 18.♞b4 e4 19.♟e1 a5 20.♞d4 ♟c5 21.♞b1 ♟xb3 22.♞xb6 ♟c5 23.c4 ♟e6 24.♞d5 ♟xd5 25.♞xc5 ♞ed8 26.cxd5 ♞xd5 27.♞c2 b5 28.♞b2 b4

Black's activity should have given him a draw, but in fact he lost a long game in Aronian – Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

A couple of other moves are also worth mentioning:

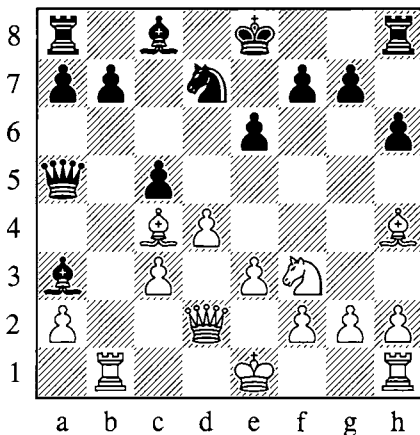
11...♟7b6 12.♟xd5 ♟xd5 13.a3 ♟xc3 14.bxc3 ♟e7 15.♟xe7 ♟xe7 16.0-0± Solak – Blagojevic, Herceg Novi 2005.

11...0-0 12.♟xd5 exd5 13.♟e7 ♞e8 14.♟xc5 ♟xc5 15.dxc5 ♞xc5 16.0-0 ♟e6 17.a3 ♟xc3 18.♞xc3 ♞b6 19.♞fc1±



A positional dream. Still, in the following correspondence game Black held without any problems! Food for thought. 19...♞ac8 20.♟d4 ♞xc3 21.♞xc3 ♞c8 22.h3 ♞c4 23.b3 ♞c5 24.♞c2 ♞xc3 25.♞xc3 a6 26.b4 f6 27.a4 ♟d7 28.a5 ♞d6 29.♞b3 ♞e5 30.♞c2 ♞d6 31.♞d2 ♞c7 32.♟b3 ♞c4 33.♟c5 ♟c6 34.♟e6 ♟f7 35.♟d4 g6 36.♟h2 ♟d7 37.♟e2 ♟e6 38.♟g1 h5 39.♞b2 ♟d7 40.♟d4 ♟g7 41.♞a3 ♟b5 42.♟h2 ½–½ Migliorini – Pietrocola, e-mail 2008.

### 12.bxc3 ♟a3 13.♞b1±



White has a dynamic centre and pressure down the b-file.

### 13...a6

Black is seeking counterplay, but more cautious play with short castling should have been preferred.

### 14.♙e2 0-0 15.0-0 b5 16.c4!

Immediately exploiting Black's newly created soft spots.

### 16...♙b4

Or 16...♗xd2 17.♘xd2 cxd4 18.exd4 bxc4?! 19.♘xc4 and the bishop is trapped.

### 17.♗c2 ♙b7 18.♞fd1 bxc4

18...♞ac8 can be met by 19.d5.

### 19.dxc5 ♘xc5

19...♙c6 was tougher.

### 20.♞d4! ♞ab8 21.♘e5 ♙d5 22.♙e7!

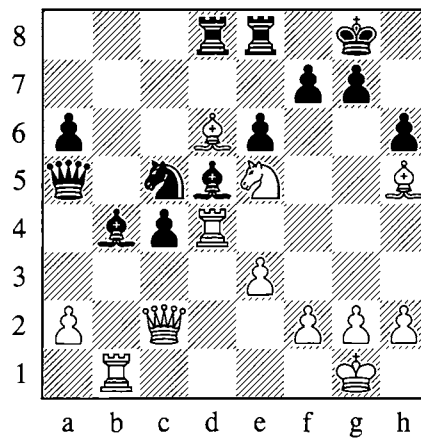
Black has plenty of work to do with protecting all his loose pieces on the queenside, so with some clever moves the World Champion creates, almost out of nothing, a devastating attack on the other flank.

### 22...♞fe8 23.♙d6 ♞bd8

23...♞b7 24.♘xc4 ♙xc4 25.♗xc4 ♙a3

26.♞xb7 ♘xb7 27.♙xa3 ♗xa3 28.♗xa6 and White has a pawn more.

### 24.♙h5!



Here it comes!

### 24...♞xd6 25.♙xf7† ♔f8 26.♙xe8

After 26...♔xe8 27.♗g6† ♔d8 28.♘xc4 ♙xc4 29.♞xd6† ♔c7 30.♞d4 Black would drop a lot of material.

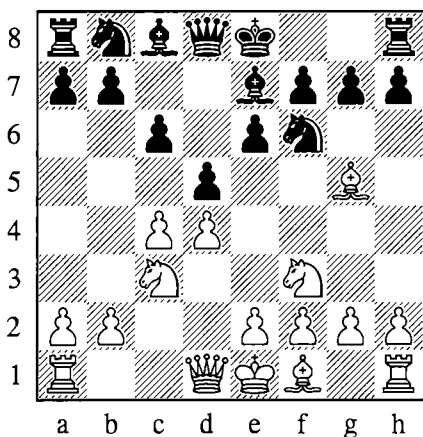
1-0

**Conclusion:** The promising idea of 11.♙c4 avoids the ending and puts Black under severe pressure.

**Cambridge Springs Conclusion:** The Cambridge Springs is not the easy solution to the question posed by 5.♙g5 that Black might have hoped for. It is solid on the surface, but with active and coherent moves White gains the initiative. He should not be afraid to sacrifice a pawn on the way. If Black takes it, he will suffer. Black does best by keeping his structure intact and trying to develop, but even here he cannot solve all the problems and ends up in an inferior ending. Or if White feels like fighting in a middlegame, the new idea of 11.♙c4 is promising.

### Theory: QGD

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♟f3 ♟f6 4.♞c3 e6 5.♙g5 ♙e7



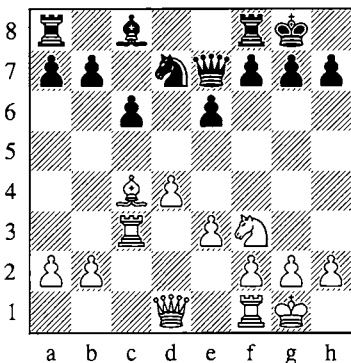
Black just develops and plays a classical Queen's Gambit Declined. The move ...c6 makes it quite passive though, and White gets a rather free game just by making natural moves.

6.e3 0-0

Or 6...♞bd7 first will be the same thing.

7.♙d3 ♟bd7 8.0-0 h6

Winning a useful tempo, but actually also giving White an important extra possibility. The alternative is the old liberating manoeuvre: 8...dxc4 9.♙xc4 ♟d5 10.♙xe7 ♟xe7 11.♞c1 ♟xc3 12.♞xc3



Here play divides.

12...c5

This try to solve his positional problems leaves Black with a rather passive position after:

13.♙b5 cxd4 14.♟xd4 ♟f6 15.♞d1±

When it is not clear how the problem child on c8 shall be developed.

15...b6

On 15...a6 16.♙e2 b5 17.♟e5 is annoying.

16.♟e5

Khalifman proposes 16.♞dc1 when 16...♞d8 17.♟e5 is a possible continuation and White should be happy.

16...♞d8

Gotti – Long, Nice 1938. Now:

17.♟d4 ♞d5 18.♟c7 ♟xc7 19.♞xc7 ♙d7 20.♙xd7 ♟xd7 21.e4 ♞d6 22.♞c6 ♞xc6 23.♟xc6 ♟c5 24.f3

This gives White a pleasant ending with more space and active pieces.

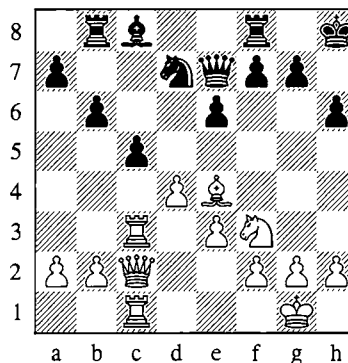
12...b6

Developing the bishop makes Black regret that the pawn is still on h7.

13.♙d3 c5 14.♟c2

Winning a tempo.

14...h6 15.♙h7+ ♟h8 16.♙e4 ♞b8 17.♞c1



It is difficult for Black to free himself.

17...♙b7

Or 17...f5 18.♙c6.

18. ♖xb7 ♝xb7 19. dxc5 ♜xc5

19...bxc5 20. ♖d1±

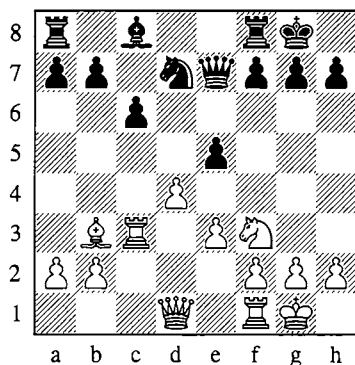
20. b4 ♜a6 21. a3±

Black has no counterplay and White will press for the rest of the game.

12...e5

The standard break.

13. ♖b3



This is a good prophylactic answer. Again Black has a choice:

13...exd4 14. exd4

White quickly develops a strong initiative on the kingside.

14...♞f6 15. ♖e1 ♜d6 16. ♜e5 ♜d5

It is wise to block the dangerous diagonal.

16...♙f5 17. ♜xf7! ♝xf7 18. ♙xf7 ♜xf7

19. ♜b3 ♜f8 20. ♜xb7 ♝b8 21. ♜xa7

♝xb2 22. ♝xc6 ♜b4 (22...♜xc6 23. ♜a3†)

23. ♝ec1± Kolehmainen – Versili, corr. 2005.

And 16...♙e6 17. ♙xe6 fxe6 18. ♜b3 ♜d5

19. ♝g3 ♜e7 20. ♜d3 ♝ae8 21. ♝g4 ♝f7

22. ♝ge4± with strong pressure, Kacheishvili – Petrosian, Batumi 2003.

17. ♝g3 ♙e6

On 17...♙f5 18. ♜f3 ♙g6 19. h4! is strong:

19...♞f6 and now the novelty 20. ♝g5!

renews the threat to play h5.

18. ♜h5 ♜b4 19. ♖e4 ♜d2 20. ♜d3

White nicely combines active operations with a positional grip.

20...♝ae8 21. ♝e2

Black is pushed back.

21...♞f6

Or 21...♜a5 22. ♙xd5 cxd5 23. ♜g5 g6 24. h4 with a strong initiative on the kingside, Stengelin – Swahnberg, e-mail 2009.

22. ♜f3 ♜h6 23. ♙xe6 ♝xe6 24. ♝xe6 fxe6

Skeels – Zielinski, corr. 2005.

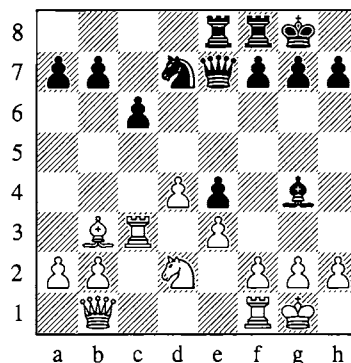
25. ♜e2±

13...e4 14. ♜d2 ♞f6 15. ♝c5 ♙g4 16. ♜b1 ♜d7

16...♙e2 17. ♝e1 ♙d3 18. ♙c2 ♙xc2 19. ♜xc2±

17. ♝c3 ♝ae8

Better is returning with 17...♞f6 asking White if he can make any progress. Then Capablanca answered 18. ♝e1 with some advantage.



18. ♜xe4!

A nice transition into a favourable endgame.

18...♜xe4 19. ♜xe4 ♝xe4 20. f3 ♙xf3 21. gxf3

♝ee8 22. d5! cxd5 23. ♙xd5 b6 24. ♝c7

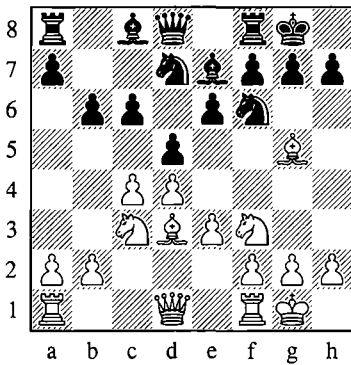
Keeping the structure with 24. e4 was also possible.

24...♞f6 25. ♙b3 ♝xe3 26. ♝xa7 g5

Lobron – Fahnenschmidt, Germany 1993, Now 27. ♙c4± would have secured White's advantage.

If Black instead keeps the tension and just tries to finish development with:

8...b6



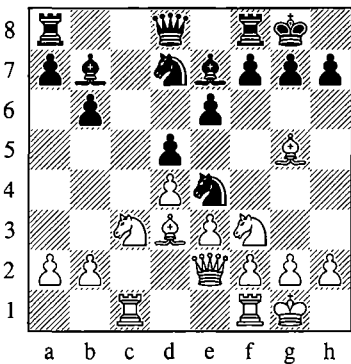
He will still be pushed on the defensive.  
 9.cxd5  
 A good moment to release the tension:  
 White gets much freer piece play.  
 9...cxd5

The typical QGD move 9...exd5 also fails to equalize: 10.♞c2 ♜b7 11.♞ad1! h6 12.♙h4 ♜e8 13.♞fe1± ♘e4 14.♙xe4 ♙xh4 15.♙h7† ♗h8 16.♙f5 ♙e7 17.e4! dxe4 18.♘xe4 ♗g8 19.♘e5± ♘f6? 20.♘xf7! ♗xf7 21.♘xf6 gxf6 22.♞b3† ♗f8 23.♞h3 ♙b4 24.♞xh6† 1–0 R. Krueger – Gschwendtner, Bad Wiessee 2002.

10.♞c1 ♙b7 11.♞e2

The position is reminiscent of an Exchange Slav. White's admittedly slight positional pressure is very hard to meet in practice.

11...♘e4



12.♙f4

Instead after 12.♙xe7 ♞xe7 13.♘b5 ♞fc8

14.♘c7 ♞ab8 15.♙a6 ♘dc5 16.♙xb7 ♘xb7 17.♘a6 ♞a8 18.♘e5 ♘d8 Black was protecting everything in Wang Yue – Gagunashvili, Nakhchivan 2011.

12...♘d6 13.♘e5

Also strong is 13.♘b5 ♘e8 14.♞c2 ♞c8 15.♞fc1 ♞xc2 16.♞xc2 ♞a8 17.♞b3 a6 18.♘c7 ♘xc7 19.♞xc7 ♙d8 20.♞c2± Solari – Arias Duval, corr. 2003.

13...♘xc3 14.♞xc3 ♞c8 15.♞fc1 ♞xc3 16.♞xc3 ♙d6 17.♙g5±

White has the c-file and attacking chances; Black now blundered:

17...♙xe5? 18.dxe5 h6 19.exf6 1–0

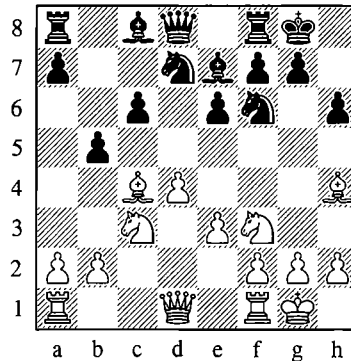
Black resigned in Lerner – Auvinen, Helsinki 1992, realising that ...hxg5 is answered by ♞h5.

The waiting move 8...♞e8 does not make much sense, as White has even better waiting moves himself in ♞c1 or ♞c2.

The typical Slav idea 8...dxc4 9.♙xc4 b5 is covered in the next note, because here it makes good sense to include the moves ...h6 and ♙h4.

9.♙h4 dxc4 10.♙xc4 ♘d5

Interesting is the modern interpretation: 10...b5!?



11.♙d3

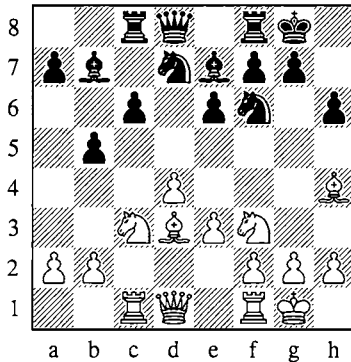
The bishop can also go to e2: 11.♙e2 ♙b7 12.a3± In Smeets – Sveshnikov, Vlissingen

2011, White had a slight advantage which quickly grew after: 12...d5?! 13.♙xe7 ♜xc3 14.♙xd8 ♜xd1 15.♙e7 ♞fe8 16.♞fxd1 ♞xe7 17.♞ac1±

10...♙b7

On 11...a6 12.a4 is annoying. Then 12...b4 13.♙xf6 ♜xf6 14.♜e4± or 12...♙b7 13.♞c1 ♞c8 14.♞e2± and it is not easy for Black to get in the freeing move ...c6-c5.

12.♞c1 ♞c8



13.♞e2

This is by far the most common move, but I am no longer convinced it is best.

A recent idea is: 13.♜e5!? b4 (13...♜e5 is a critical test: 14.dxe5 ♜d7 Now White can try either 15.♙g3 ♜c5 16.♙b1 ♞xd1 17.♞fxd1 or perhaps more likely 15.♙xe7?! ♞xe7 16.f4 with a small advantage) 14.♙xf6! ♜xf6 15.♜e4± White had an edge in Finegold – Kaidanov, Saint Louis 2011, and after 14...c5?! 16.♜xc5 ♙xc5 17.dxc5 ♞a5 18.c6 ♙a8 19.f4 he was a pawn up.

13...b4 14.♜a4 c5

14...♞a5 15.b3 c5 quickly turned out badly for Black in Ki. Georgiev – Houska, Gibraltar 2008. (Instead 15...g5! 16.♙g3 c5 is the way to do it. For example: 17.♞fd1 cxd4 18.♜xd4 ♞fd8 19.♙b5 ♜c5 20.♜b2 ♜fe4 21.♜c4 ♜xg3 22.♜xa5 ♜xe2± 23.♙xe2 ♙a8 24.♙f3 ♜e4 25.♞xc8 ♞xc8 26.♜ac6 ½-½ Neuer – Klatt, e-mail 2009.) 16.♙b5 ♙c6 17.♙xc6 ♞xc6 18.dxc5 ♜xc5 19.♜e5 ♞c7 20.♜xc5 ♞xc5 21.♞xc5 ♙xc5

22.♙xf6 ♙xf6 23.♜d7 ♞d8 24.♜xf6± ♜g7 25.♜h5± ♜f8 26.♞c1 And a pawn was lost. But as shown above, Black's play could be improved on move 15.

15.♙a6!

Black managed to play ...c5, but after this fine positional move the light-squared bishops will be exchanged and White will gain some entry points on the queenside.

15...♙xa6 16.♞xa6 ♜e4

16...cxd4 17.♜xd4 ♜c5 18.♜xc5 ♙xc5 19.♙xf6 ♙xf6 20.♜b3 ♙b6 21.♞xc8 ♞xc8 22.♞xc8 ♞xc8 23.♞c1 ♞d8 24.♜f1 f5 25.♜e2 ♞d5 26.♞c4 ♞b5 27.g3± White had decent winning chances in the ending in Ragger – Sethuraman, Moscow 2012.

17.♙xe7 ♞xe7 18.♞c2± e5

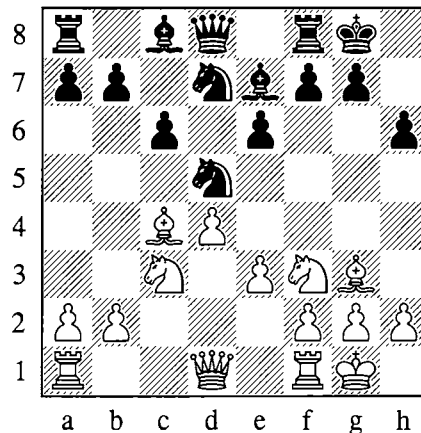
Not 18...♞cd8 19.♞c6 f5 20.dxc5± Goldin – Barua, Reno 1999. 20...♞c8 21.♞b5 ♜dxc5 22.♞xb4

19.♞fc1 exd4 20.exd4 ♞fe8 21.h3 ♜b8 22.♞d3 ♜d7

Kazhgaleyev – Gurevich, Dresden 2008, and now 23.♜d2 ♜xd2 24.♞xd2 would win the c-pawn for nothing.

Overall 10...b5!? is worthy of close attention by White. In the main line Black's improvement in the note to move 14 looks close to equal. Thus I suggest deviating earlier with either of the rare moves 11.♙e2 or 13.♜e5!?

11.♙g3!?



The normal move is 11.♙xe7 ♜xe7 12.♞c1 ♜xc3 13.♞xc3 when we have a position from the QGD Lasker variation. Here too White has good chances to achieve a small advantage, but why not go for more?

With more space it is common knowledge that it is good to keep many pieces on the board, that's the logic behind 11.♙g3. See Game 54 for the conclusion.

## GAME 54

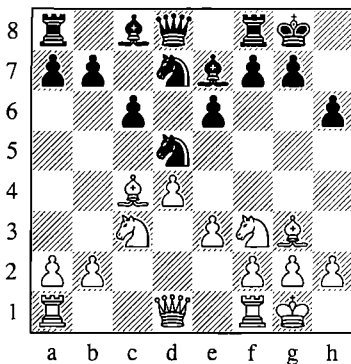
Halkias – Mchedlishvili

Yerevan 1999

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♙b4† 4.♙d2 ♙e7

An odd move order for this book, but it will return to normal service shortly: both sides lose a move this way.

5.♘c3 d5 6.♙g5 ♘bd7 7.e3 0-0 8.♙d3 c6 9.0-0 h6 10.♙h4 dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♘d5 12.♙g3



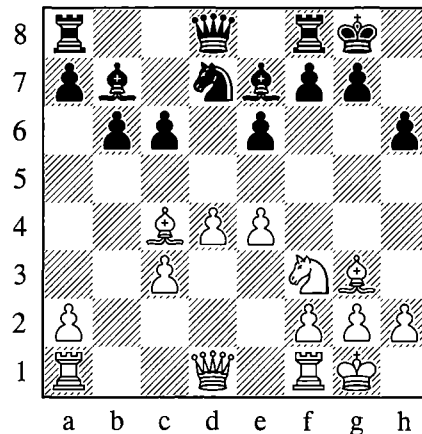
12...♘xc3

Standard. The inclusion of the moves 12...♘7f6 13.♞c1 doesn't solve anything. 13...♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♘e4 (14...c5 15.♘e5 ♘e4 16.♙f4 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♙g5 18.♙xg5 ♜xg5 19.♙d3 ♘d6 20.♞c7± Gruenberg – Elserth, Novi Sad 1990) 15.♙e5 ♙a3 16.♞c2 ♜a5 17.♜d3 ♘d6 18.♙b3 b6 19.♞b1 ♙a6 20.c4 ♞fd8 21.e4± Gilles – Lautenbach,

corr. 2004, and the space began to be felt.

13.bxc3 b6 14.e4 ♙b7

White's strong centre gives him the better chances. Often the space superiority can be transformed into a direct attack.



15.♞e1

Natural development. White has also had success with 15.♜d3 b5 (15...♘f6 16.♞ad1 c5?! 17.d5± Ruether – Soergel, Bavaria 2001) 16.♙b3 c5 17.♙c2 c4 (17...cxd4 18.e5 g6 19.♘xd4 with an attack) 18.♜e2 a5 19.♞ad1 ♞e8 20.♞fe1± Agdestein – Adianto, Novi Sad 1990.

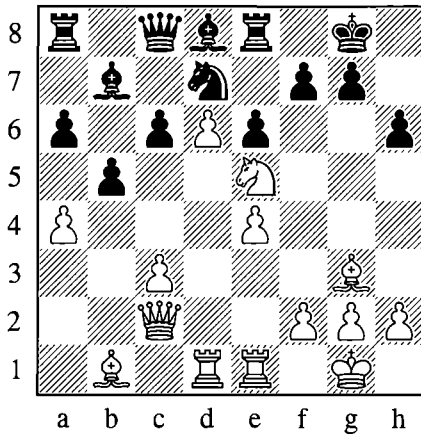
15...♘f6 16.♜c2 ♞e8 17.♞ad1 ♜c8 18.a4

This takes more space and prevents some of Black's active operations on the queenside. Additionally, White prepares the bishop manoeuvre ♙c4-a2-b1 when the canon is pointing directly at the black king. It is clear that White has won the opening duel.

18...♘d7 19.♙a2 b5 20.♙b1 a6 21.d5!

Opening lines: the queen eyes h7.

21...♘f8 22.d6 ♙d8 23.♘e5 ♘d7



24. ♖xf7!

A spectacular finish.

24... ♕xf7 25. e5 ♖f8

Apparently everything is covered.

26. d7!

But now the knight is forced back again and the white queen can enter the position and decide the outcome.

26... ♖xd7 27. ♖g6† ♕f8 28. ♖h7 ♗b6  
29. ♗g6

1-0

**Conclusion:** With 11. ♗g3 (okay, 12. ♗g3 with this game's funny move order) White keeps the pieces on the board. It's simple and promising.

**QGD Conclusion:** Transposing to the old solid QGD is the same as accepting a slightly inferior game from the beginning. Black is close to equality in the various ...dxc4 lines. Close: yes! But still far away.

**Chapter Conclusion:** With 5. ♗g5 against the Semi-Slav White follows the strategy outlined for the entire book: swift and active development, and a preference for taking the centre should the opportunity arise. And it sure does. In the Botvinnik and Moscow variations Black puts all his money on early flank operations of a somewhat suspicious nature. White gets the centre and a lot of dynamic possibilities to attack the far-advanced black pawns. Especially the Botvinnik seems in crisis, but White can also expect an initiative against the popular Moscow, although it is never totally clear. If Black tries to chicken out with a Cambridge Springs or classical Queen's Gambit, then White will come out on top anyway, often with a slight but long-lasting positional edge.

So with 5. ♗g5 you really send a message to your opponent. Let's continue the brilliant Radiohead song quoted at the beginning of the chapter: "This is what you get, this is what you get, this is what you get, when you mess with us."

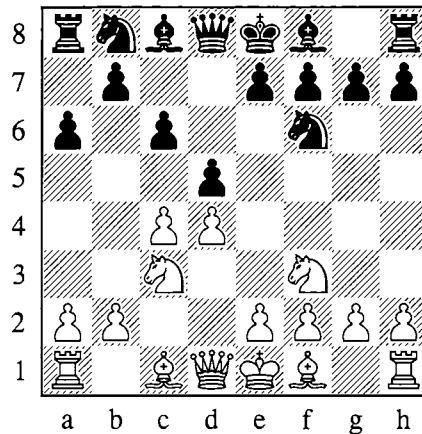
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# Chapter 5

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## The a6-Slav

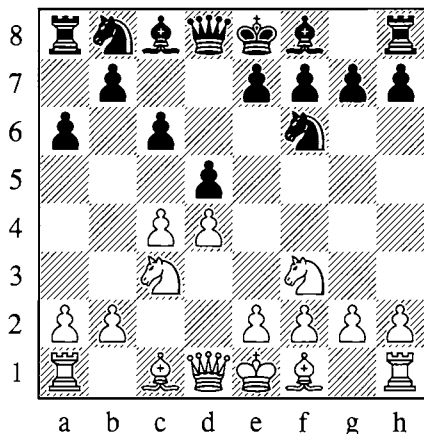
*This whole world is wild at heart and weird on top*  
– Lula, *Wild at Heart*



**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6**

The 5...b6 Variation	page 219
The 5...♗g4 Variation	page 221
The 5...g6 Variation	page 224
The 5...♗f5 Variation	page 227
The 5...♞bd7 Variation	page 231

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♙c3 a6



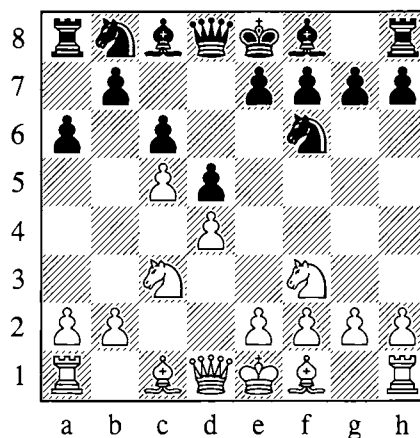
This is post-modern chess. Although the point of the little move ...a6 is obscured by the clouds, no one is surprised any longer when it appears on the board. The a6-Slav was introduced into top level tournaments back in the 90s and, despite several attempts to refute it, this provocative sideline has become a well established and respected opening enjoying enormous popularity at all levels. Its name still varies though. From just the basic facts like “The a6-Slav” to “The Chebanenko Slav”, celebrating its Moldavian roots, to the eccentric but meaningful “The Chameleon” because Black adopts very different set-ups depending on what White does.

It is true that the further course of the game is still very much in disguise, but we can make a few statements about the nature of the position after ...a6. The light-squared bishop is always an issue in the Queen's Gambit. Here, after the preliminary move ...a6, Black is ready to develop the bishop to f5 or g4 because he no longer needs to fear ♖b3 by White as it can now be answered by the cool ...♗a7. Also, given the chance Black can consider advancing with ...b7-b5 grabbing space on the queenside. Or he can take on c4 in typical Slav style and protect the pawn with ...b5. On the kingside

there are different scenarios too. Black can play ...e7-e6 and get a kind of Queen's Gambit Declined position or he can play ...g7-g6 and fianchetto the dark-squared bishop with some resemblance to the Grünfeld.

Korchnoi once gave 4...a6 a question mark and called it a waste of time. Instead you could see it as an intelligent waiting move forcing White to show his hand. Well I won't make you wait any longer. Here is what we play!

5.c5



A principled move. White closes the position and takes away many of Black's dynamic possibilities. With 5.c5 White gains more space and highlights a clear defect of the move ...a7-a6: the weakening of b6. Another principled move is 5.a4, which effectively stops all Black's expansions on the queenside, and lately White has had success with 5.e3 b5 6.c5!? as well. Generally speaking, White can expect a little positional plus in most of the lines, but Black has a very solid structure and his flexible position gives good possibilities for counterplay.

After 5.c5 the position is strategically very demanding. Black can hope to attack the white centre with ...b7-b6 or ...e7-e5 at an appropriate moment, and he is also free to

develop the problem child from c8 to f5 or g4, either at once or perhaps a little later. Translated to moves, we will examine in turn 5...b6, 5...♙g4, 5...g6 and end with the two most common tries, 5...♙f5 and 5...♘bd7.

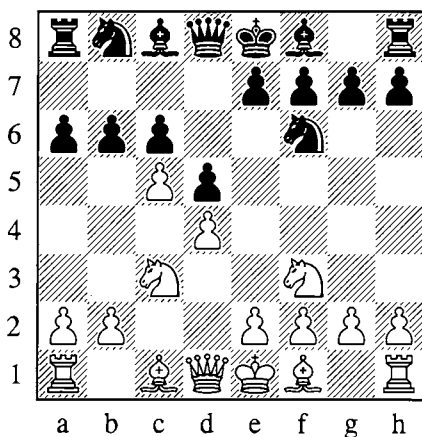
## The 5...b6 Variation

### GAME 55

Soln – Crepan

Slovenia 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.c5 b6



Trying to “exchange” the hole on b6.

#### 6.cxb6 ♗xb6

Often Black plays the flexible:

6...♘bd7

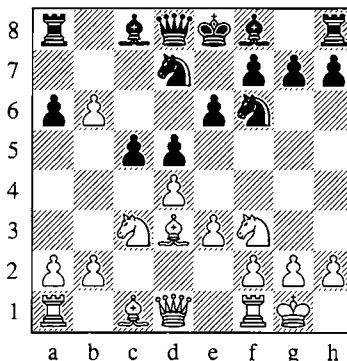
The idea is not to follow up with ...♘xb6 because the knight is somewhat misplaced there, but rather to quickly play ...e6 and ...c6-c5, and thereby get rid of the backward c-pawn. Play can continue:

7.e3 e6

7...♗xb6 8.♙d3 g6 is not clever, as 9.b3 ♙g7 10.♙a3! emphasizes: 10...♗a5 11.♗c1 and Black did not know how to get rid of

the pressure on e7, Inarkiev – Onoprienko, Moscow 2008.

8.♙d3 c5 9.0–0



9...♗xb6

9...♘xb6 10.b3 ♙b7 11.♙a3±

9...♙b7 10.♘a4 c4 11.♙c2 ♘xb6 12.♙d2 ♘bd7 13.b3 cxb3 14.axb3± Caruana – Rublevsky, Dagomys 2010.

10.b3 cxd4 11.exd4 ♙d6

Or 11...♙e7 12.♙f4 0–0 13.♘a4 ♗a7 14.♙c1 ♙b7 15.b4! ♙fc8 16.♘c5±. For example, Gelfand – Feller, Ohrid 2009, finished: 16...♗b6 17.a4 ♙xc5 18.bxc5 ♗a5 19.♘e5 ♘xe5 20.♙xe5 ♘d7 21.♙d6 ♙c6 22.♙c2 ♗b4 23.♙b1 ♗c4 24.♗d2 g6? 1–0 Black resigned as 25.♙b3 would trap his queen.

12.♙b2 0–0 13.♗e2± ♙b7

With 13...a5 14.♘a4 ♗a7 15.♙ac1 ♙a6 Black tries to simplify. Still 16.♙xa6 ♗xa6 17.♗xa6 ♙xa6 18.♙c2 ♘b8 19.♘e5 ♘fd7 20.♙fc1 f6 21.♘d3 ♘f7 22.f4 gave White a nice ending with good control in Kamsky – Navara, Baku 2008.

14.♘a4 ♗a7 15.♘e5 ♙fc8 16.♙ac1

White has a good grip on the position and it is difficult for Black to find counterplay.

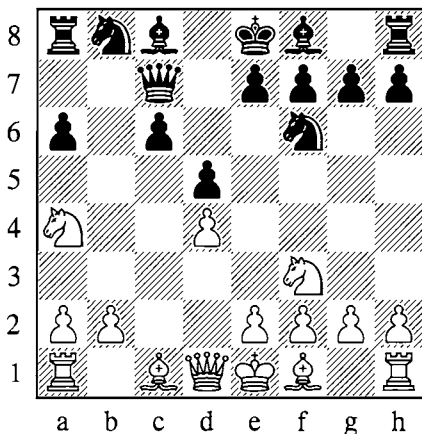
16...♙f8 17.♘d7 ♘d7 18.♙c2 ♙xc2 19.♗xc2 ♘f6 20.♘c5 ♙c8 21.b4 a5?! 22.♗a4 ♘e4 23.♙c1 ♙a8 24.a3 ♙c7 25.f3 ♘d6 26.♗xa5 ♗xa5 27.bxa5±

With a pawn more, Koneru – Cramling, Russia 2008.

## 7. ♖a4

Very logical. White points his finger at the new hole on c5. A quiet move like 7.e3 was of course also playable.

## 7... ♞c7



## 8.g3!

White plans ♕f4 to kick the black queen away and take even more control over the dark squares.

## 8... ♖e4

8... ♕g4 9. ♕f4 ♞a7 10. ♖e5 e6 was played in Duriez – Braakhuis, corr. 2001, and now White could have continued with the forceful 11.f3 ♕f5 12.g4 ♕b4† 13. ♖f2 ♕g6 14.h4±.

8...e6 has not been played yet, perhaps because 9. ♕f4 ♕d6 10. ♕xd6 ♞xd6 11.a3 ♖bd7 12. ♞c2 looks positionally depressing for Black.

## 9. ♕g2 ♖d7 10. 0–0 e6 11. ♕f4 ♞a7

It was safer to exchange the dark-squared bishops with 11... ♕d6 but it would leave Black positionally inferior.

## 12. ♖d2

Removing the strong knight on e4.

## 12... f5

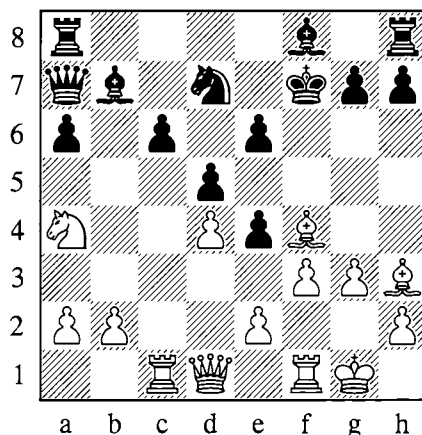
12... ♞xd4 13. ♖xe4 ♞xd1 14. ♞fxd1 dxe4 15. ♕xe4 was absolutely horrible.

## 13. ♖xe4 fxe4 14. ♞c1 ♕b7 15. ♕h3!

With Black's pieces diverted on the queenside, this attack on the lonely e6-pawn is very unpleasant. In fact Black can only protect the pawn with his king.

## 15... ♖f7 16.f3

Opening lines towards the black king and quickly creating decisive threats.



## 16... ♖f6

Or 16...exf3 17. ♞xf3 ♖f6 18. ♕e5 ♕e7 19. ♞d3 with overwhelming play.

## 17. fxe4 dxe4 18. ♕e5 ♞d8 19. e3 h5 20. ♞b3 ♞d5 21. ♖c3

Winning material.

21... ♞h6 22. ♖xe4 ♞g6 23. ♖c3 c5 24. ♖xd5 ♕xd5 25. ♞b8 ♞xb8 26. ♕xb8 cxd4 27. exd4 ♕xa2 28. ♞c7† ♖g8 29. ♞c8 ♖f7 30. ♞a1 ♕d5 31. ♞xa6 ♕e7 32. ♞a7 ♖e8 33. ♕f1 h4 34. ♕b5 ♖f6 35. ♕d6 ♞g5 36. ♞xe7† ♖g6 37. ♕d3† ♖h5 38. ♕f4 hxg3 39. ♕xg5 gxh2† 40. ♖xh2

1–0

**Conclusion:** 5...b6 displays a kind of domino effect: whenever Black gets rid of one hole, a new one appears.

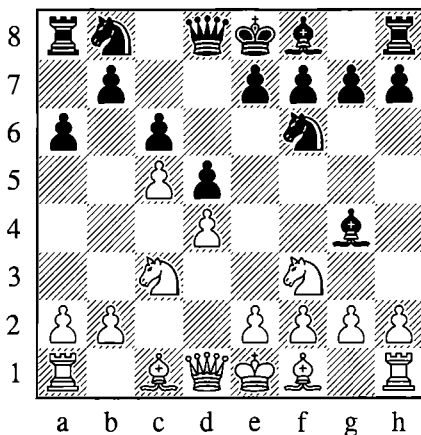
## The 5...♗g4 Variation

## GAME 56

Topalov – I. Sokolov

Wijk aan Zee 2004

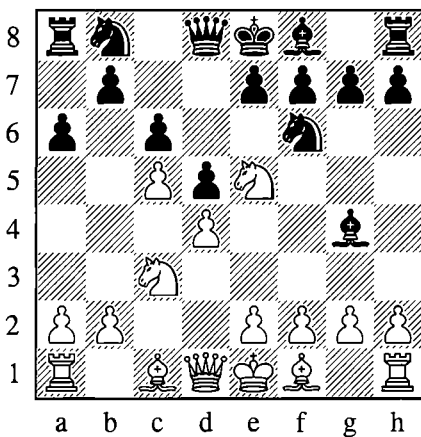
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.c5  
♗g4



This looks dubious: Black provokes the knight to jump to a great square with tempo.

6.♘e5

We say thanks.



6...♗h5

The most natural, but Black has two other tries.

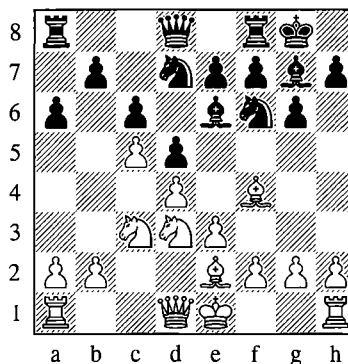
6...♗e6

This seems rather clumsy and after:

7.♗f4 ♘bd7 8.♘d3!

Black lacks space and has a peculiar bishop on e6.

8...g6 9.e3 ♗g7 10.♗e2 0-0



11.0-0 ♘e4

In a more recent game Black tried to improve with 11...♗f5 12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.♗xe5 ♘e4 14.♗xg7 ♘xc3 15.bxc3 ♗xg7 16.g4! ♗e6 17.♖b1 ♗d7 18.f4 f5 19.h3± Drozdovskij – Degtiarev, Differdange 2008. White will have a small plus forever, with chances on both flanks. A good practical alternative was 12.f3! to keep the pieces on the board.

12.f3 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 f5 14.♖b1 ♗a7 15.♗d2 ♗e8 16.♖b3±

This was great for White in Halkias – Degtiarev, Hamburg 2005. White can double rooks on the b-file to begin with and later switch the attention to the kingside as well.

6...♗f5

This is an active move, but after:

7.f3

The bishop is also exposed.

7...♘bd7

7...g6 allows 8.e4 when 8...dxe4? 9.♗b3 ♗xd4 10.♗f4 is too dangerous and 8...♗e6

9.♔e3 is simply good for White who will develop quickly and probably castle queenside.

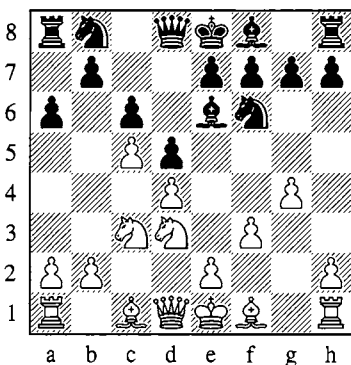
8.g4 ♕e6

8...♕g6? 9.h4 is awful.

9.♘d3

Again keeping the pieces on the board and making the e6-bishop look funny.

9...♘b8



10.♕e3

In his book on the Chebanenko Slav, Bologan proposes 10.♘a4 ♕c8 (10...♘bd7 11.♘f4) 11.♘b6 ♖a7 12.♕d2 ♘bd7 13.♕a5 ♗c7 14.♗d2 ♗b8 and Black is desperately trying to survive on the back ranks. He continues the analysis with 15.g5 ♘h5 16.♘xc8 ♗xc8 17.♕h3± which indeed looks very convincing.

10...♕c8 11.♕g2 e6 12.♗d2 ♕e7 13.♖c1 ♘fd7 14.0–0±

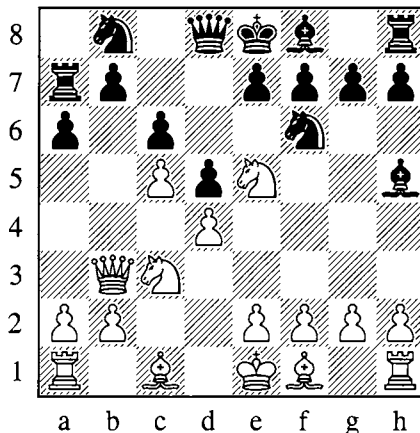
P.H. Nielsen – Agrest, Malmo 2004.

7.♗b3

This is always disruptive for Black, and most players tend to defend b7 with ...♖a7. The rook looks really silly there, but it is a built-in paradox of the a6-Slav that this is mostly a cosmetic impression. Later the rook goes back and joins the battle. In the meantime it is out of play, sure, but we must remember that it actually is the white queen that is forcing the rook to take this awkward

position, and the queen is not that great on b3 in the long run either. Quid pro quo. The alternative way to protect the pawn is ...♗c8, but that loses control over b6 and is not very flexible.

7...♖a7



8.e4!

True to his style Topalov hits hard if he is given the chance. Okay, sometimes the Bulgarian star plays a little too wildly, but here the move is justified. A quieter approach like 8.♕f4 ♘bd7 9.♘d3± would give the typical small advantage based on space.

8...e6

If Black takes the bait with 8...dxe4 then 9.♕e2! is strong. After 9...e6 10.♕xh5 ♘xh5 11.0–0 White's play has a nice flow and Black's pieces are rather badly coordinated – check out the rook on a7 and the knight on h5! 11...♘f6 (11...♗xd4?! 12.♘c4 is too dangerous.) 12.♕g5 ♕e7 13.♖ad1 0–0 14.♖fe1 ♘bd7 15.♘c4 ♖e8 16.h3 ♘d5 17.♕xe7 ♖xe7 18.♘xe4 ♘7f6 19.♘ed6± Iotov – Tzekov, Sunny Beach 2005. The control over d6 is more significant than over d5.

9.exd5 exd5 10.♕d3

Quick development. In a semi-open position like this the misplaced rook on a7 will be inconvenient for Black for a long time. It does not contribute to the fight for the open e-file, which White easily conquers.

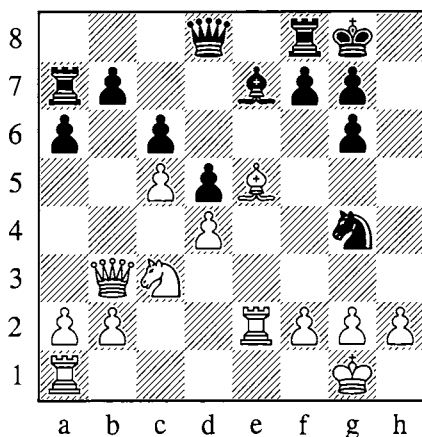
10...♖bd7 11.♗f4 ♜xe5 12.♗xe5 ♗e7 13.0–0 0–0 14.♞fe1 ♗g6

Or 14...♞d7 15.♗c7! ♞xc7 16.♞xe7 ♞d8 17.♞ae1 and the e-file gives White the upper hand, Svoboda – Karhanek, Stade Mesto 2004.

15.♗xg6 hxg6 16.♞e2

Preparing to double rooks with a clear advantage. However Black's response gives new possibilities.

16...♞g4



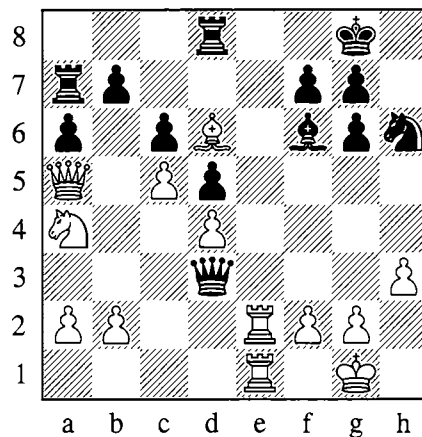
17.♞b6!

Using the vulnerable b6-square to penetrate Black's position.

17...♞a8

Voluntarily going to the corner just shows that something has gone wrong. The problem was that heading for the ending with 17...♞xb6 18.cxb6 ♞aa8 failed to the tactic 19.♗xg7.

18.♗c7 ♗f6 19.♗d6 ♞d8 20.♞a4 ♞h6 21.♞a5 ♞c8 22.h3 ♞f5 23.♞ae1 ♞d3

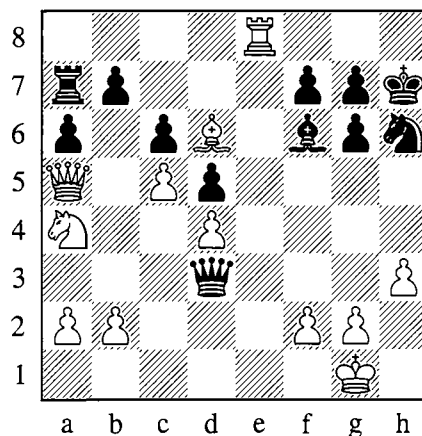


Sokolov is desperately searching for counterplay and, unexpectedly, it is provided by Topalov: after his fine play he fails to reap the harvest.

24.♞e8†

Convincing was 24.♗c7 ♞f8 25.♞b6 ♞f5 26.♞d7 and White is winning, e.g. 26...♞aa8 27.♞xf8 ♞xf8 28.♞d2 ♞b5 29.♞xb5 axb5 30.♗e5 with an exchange more.

24...♞xe8 25.♞xe8† ♞h7



26.♗e5

This lets the last chance slip away. 26.♞b6 ♗xd4 27.♗b8 ♞f5 28.♞e1 and the rook is trapped, but Black is very active.

26...♙xe5 27.dxe5 ♖b1† 28.♗h2 ♚e4  
Black holds the draw.

29.g3 ♚c2 30.♗g2 ♜f5 31.♚d8 ♜e3†  
32.♗g1 ♚d1† 33.♗h2 ♜f1† 34.♗g2 ♜e3†  
35.fxg3 ♚e2†  
½–½

**Conclusion:** After 5...♙g4 the white knight jumps to e5 with tempo and secures White a firm initiative.

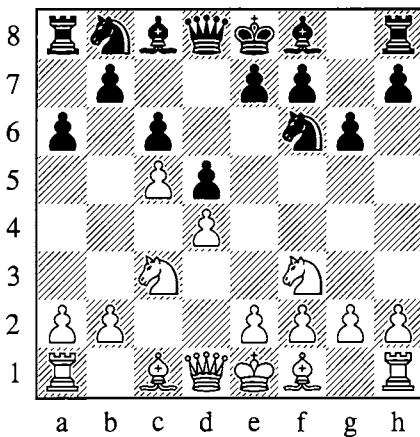
### The 5...g6 Variation

#### GAME 57

Eljanov – Kamsky

Russia 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♜f3 ♜f6 4.♜c3 a6 5.c5 g6

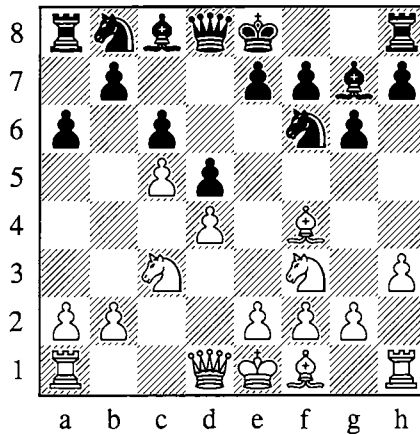


Black wants to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop and then just castle. This gives White the opportunity to develop his dark-squared bishop to a very nice position reinforcing the control over the important e5-square.

6.h3 ♙g7 7.♙f4

With the little move h3 thrown in, White will

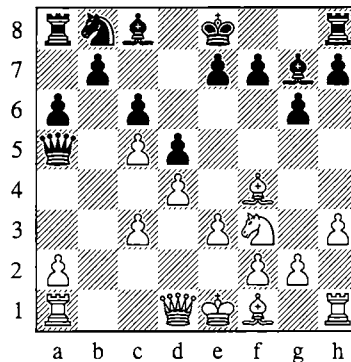
not be bothered by ...♜h5 by Black, because he then simply withdraws the bishop to h2.



7...0-0

7...♙f5 8.e3 ♜bd7 is a different version of the line where Black postpones castling. 9.♚b3 ♚c8 10.♙e2 ♜e4 11.0-0 0-0 12.♞fd1± Nakamura – Kamsky, Saint Louis 2010, continued: 12...h6 13.♙h2 ♞e8 14.♜a4 e5 15.♞ac1 exd4 16.♜xd4 ♙f8 17.♜xf5 gxf5 White must be much better, but Kamsky managed to generate enough counterplay to save the game: 18.♜b6 ♜xb6 19.♚xb6 ♙g7 20.♙d3 a5 21.♙f4 ♙e5 22.♙xh6 ♚b8 23.♞c2 ♞e6 24.♙f4 ♙xf4 25.exf4 ♚xf4 26.♚xb7 ♞b8 27.♚a7 ♞g6 28.♙f1 ♜g5 29.♞d3 ♞e8 30.♞g3 ♞e1 31.♞e2 ♜e4 32.♞xg6† fxg6 33.♚e7 ½–½

7...♜e4 8.e3 ♜xc3 9.bxc3 ♚a5



This is a tricky line if White is unfamiliar with it. For example, the obvious 10.♖b3 is not so good as 10...♘d7! prepares ...e7-e5 and threatens ...♗xc5. So more accurate is: 10.♗d2!? ♘d7 11.♖c1± Avoiding Black's cheapo. Play might continue: 11...e5 (11...♗f6 12.c4) 12.♙g3 0-0 13.♙e2 ♖e8 14.0-0 e4 15.c4 ♗d8 16.♗h2 when White keeps his edge.

### 8.e3 ♙f5!?

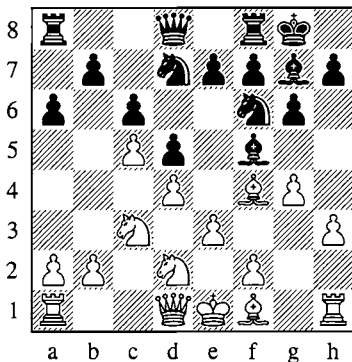
An interesting fighting idea. The normal – and probably best – move is 8...♗bd7 which would transpose to the 5...♗bd7 line as covered in Game 59.

### 9.♗b3

This disrupts Black's plans.

On 9.♙e2 could follow 9...♙e4 10.0-0 ♙xf3 11.♙xf3 ♗bd7 and Black will get in ...e7-e5 with good counterplay.

9.♘d2!? ♗bd7 10.g4! is a subtle positional idea.



10...♙e6 11.b4 a5 12.b5 ♗e4 13.♗dxe4 dxe4 14.♖c1± Carlsen – Kamsky, Nice 2009.

### 9...♖a7

On 9...♗c8 10.♙e2 ♙e4 Eljanov suggested the following line in his notes to the game in *New in Chess Magazine*: 11.♗h4! ♗fd7 12.♙g3

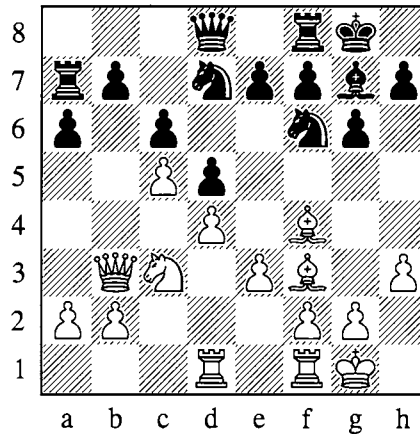
e5 13.♖d1± Black managed to play ...e7-e5, but his pieces stand clumsily and especially the knights are in each other's way. Instead of 10...♙e4, Kamsky has played 10...♗bd7 when the game transposes to 7...♙f5 above.

### 10.♙e2 ♙e4!?

Black follows his strategy; Kamsky wants to give up the bishop for the white knight.

10...♗e4 11.0-0 ♗d7 was Mikhalevski – Lobzhanidze, Groningen 1996, when 12.♖fd1± looks a normal edge. The same goes for 10...♗bd7 when White is just slightly better.

### 11.0-0 ♙xf3 12.♙xf3 ♗bd7 13.♖ad1



A critical position for the evaluation of the ♙f5-e4xf3 idea.

### 13...♗c8

Kamsky refrains from the obvious plan: playing ...e7-e5.

The natural move was 13...♖e8, but then White can advance first in the centre: 14.e4 dxe4 15.♙xe4 e6 16.♖fe1 ♗d5 17.♙g3± with more space and the pair of bishops.

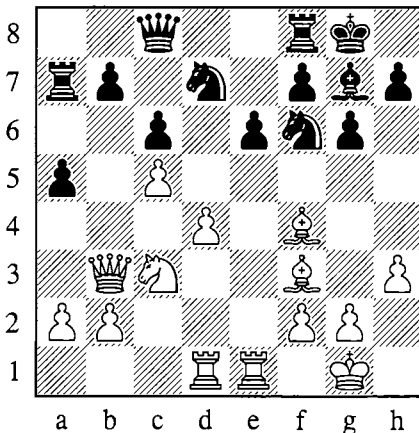
### 14.♖fe1 e6 15.e4 dxe4 16.♙xe4!

It is important to keep the knight. After 16.♖xe4 ♗xe4 17.♙xe4 ♖f6 18.♙f3 ♖d7 Black would be very solid and have the good d5-square for his knight.

### 16...a5

Not 16...♖xe4 17.♖xe4 when there is a big hole on d6.

### 17.♙f3



The opening stage is over and White can be satisfied. He has maintained the extra space he took with 5.c5 and in the meantime he has also gained the pair of bishops. Both factors are long-term assets. Here and now, a little manoeuvring game takes place and White's spatial superiority makes it easier for him to regroup, while it is evident that Black has more difficulties coming up with a plan.

17...♙a6 18.a3 ♖d8 19.♙g3 ♗e8 20.♖c2 ♗df6 21.♗a4 ♗d7 22.h4!

The opening of the h-file could be an important achievement for White.

22...♗c7 23.h5 ♗b5 24.♖c4 ♗c7 25.hxg6

A bit hasty: better was 25.♖c1 ♗b5 26.♖e3±.

25...hxg6 26.♖e2 ♗d5 27.♙xd5!?

Somewhat surprisingly, White gives away the bishop pair, but the knight on d5 was strong and White can still make something out of the d6-outpost.

27...cxd5 28.♙h4

28.♗c3 a4 29.♗b5 ♖c6 30.♗d6±

28...♙f8

On 28...♙e8 comes 29.♗c3.

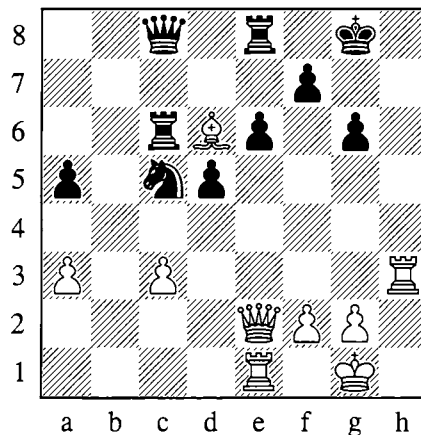
29.♗c3 b6

Black finally gets some counterplay.

30.♙e7 ♖e8 31.♙d6 bxc5 32.dxc5 ♙xc3?!

It is very risky to exchange the strong fianchetto bishop that protects the king. Better was 32...♙d8 33.♙c1±.

33.bxc3 ♖c6 34.♙d3! ♗xc5 35.♙h3



The positional advantage has led to a direct attack.

35...e5

Only move.

35...♙xd6 36.♖e5 or 35...♗e4 36.♙e5 f6 37.♖g4 ♗g7 38.♙xe4 dxe4 39.♙xf6† ♗xf6 40.♖f4† ♗g7 41.♖e5† and Black is mated.

36.♙xc5 ♖xc5 37.♚e3 f6

37...f5 38.♗h6 ♕f7 39.♖g3 ♖e6 40.♖b1 and Black cannot defend against the inclusion of the second rook into the attack: 40...♖c7 41.♖b8! ♗xb8 42.♗h7† ♕e8 43.♗h8† ♕d7 44.♗xb8 and wins.

Finally, 37...♗c6 38.♗h6 ♗f6 39.♗h7† ♕f8 40.♗h8† ♗xh8 41.♖xh8† ♕e7 42.♖xe5† wins a whole rook.

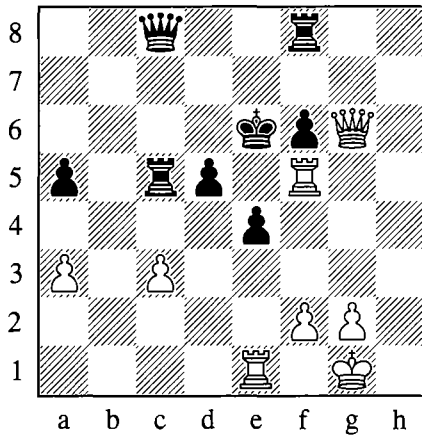
38.♗h6 ♕f7

Or 38...♖e7 39.♗xg6† ♖g7 40.♗h5.

39.♗h7† ♕e6 40.♗xg6 e4

Not 40...♖g8 41.♖xe5†! ♕xe5 42.♖e3† ♕d6 43.♗xf6† ♕c7 44.♖e7† winning.

41.♖h5 ♖h8 42.♖f5 ♖f8



43.♖d1!

With precise play Eljanov finishes the heavy piece attack in style. 43.f3 ♖xc3 was not so clear.

43...♗d7 44.♖h5 ♕d6 45.c4 ♗e6 46.♗g3† ♕d7 47.♖hd5† ♖xd5 48.♖xd5†

1-0

**Conclusion:** 5...g6 gives White easy play. With 6.h3 and 7.♙f4 White gets an active

bishop and good central control which, in connection with his space advantage, will be felt for a long time.

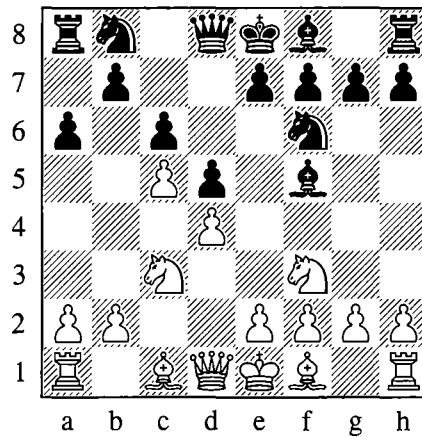
## The 5...♙f5 Variation

### GAME 58

Schandorff – Buhmann

Germany 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.c5 ♙f5

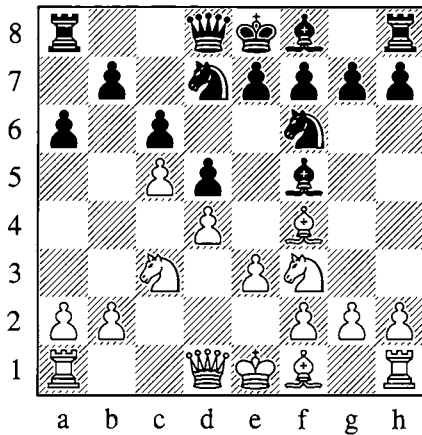


The most solid way. Black solves the problem with the light-squared bishop which often has an insecure future on c8, and always risks being locked out of the game. Furthermore 5...♙f5 avoids immediate infighting, so both sides can finish their development without too much concern. The extra space guarantees White a small plus in the ensuing middlegame but Black's structure is very solid and he has good chances to hold the balance.

6.♙f4

Natural development, but 6.♗b3 to harass Black on the queenside is a possible alternative, as is 6.♘h4!? trying to gain the bishop pair.

## 6...♖bd7 7.e3



## 7...e6

The great a6-Slav connoisseur Gata Kamsky has been experimenting with 7...g6 8.h3 ♗g7 when 9.♞b3 would send us back to the previous game.

White could also try 9.g4!?. For example: 9...♗e4 10.♗e2 ♗xf3 11.♗xf3 0–0 12.0–0 ♖e8 13.e4 dxe4 14.♖xe4 ♖c7 15.♗g2 ♖e6 16.♗e3 was somewhat better for White in Rusev – Diaz Nunez, Spain 2008. More logical was 12...♞e8 followed by ...e5, but even so White is better.

In his book about the Chebanenko Slav, Bologan proposes:

7...♖h5

Play can continue:

8.♗e5 f6

8...♖xe5 gives White easy play: 9.♖xe5 ♖f6 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♞xd3 with a pleasant space advantage.

More stubborn is 8...♖hf6 but again the simple 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♞xd3 gives White a plus.

9.♗g3 e5 10.♖h4! ♗g6

Not 10...♖xg3 11.hxg3 ♗e6 12.♖g6 ♞g8 13.♞xh7.

11.♞b3

Bologan only analyses 11.♖xg6 hxg6 12.♞c2 ♞h6 13.♗d3 e4 14.♗e2 ♖xg3 15.fxg3 ♞c7

which is absolutely fine for Black.

11...♞c7 12.0–0–0 ♗f7 13.♗e2 ♞b8

13...♖xg3 14.hxg3 g6 15.♞c2 ♗g7 16.♖f3 0–0 17.♖b1 ♞fb8 18.dxe5 ♖xe5 was Bartholomew – Ramirez, Mesa 2010, when I suggest 19.♖a4N with the possible continuation 19...♞e8 20.♖d4±.

14.♞c2 b6 15.cxb6 ♞xb6 16.♗g4

White set up some annoying threats in Pappier – Riedener, corr. 2006.

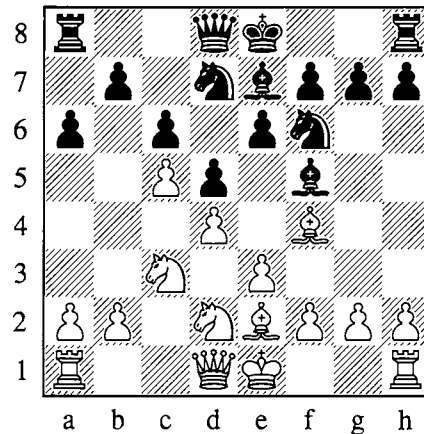
## 8.♗e2

The most precise move order is 8.♖d2 ♗e7 9.♗e2 which would transpose to the game.

## 8...♗e7

Because here Black had the extra option 8...♖e4, which reduces the pressure by exchanging a knight.

## 9.♖d2!



A promising way to regroup. It prevents the aforementioned ...♖e4 idea and opens the way for a pawn storm on the kingside if Black should be so naive as to castle without taking precautions. Later White will probably expand on the queenside with b2-b4 and a2-a4, the knight can go to b3 and from there maybe even to a5, attacking the soft spot in Black's camp – b7.

**9...♙g6**

Let's see what happens if Black castles into the storm:

9...0-0 10.g4! ♙g6 11.h4

With a strong initiative.

11...h6 12.g5 hxg5 13.hxg5 ♖h7 14.♙h5 ♖xg5

Or 14...♙f5 15.♙g4 ♙g6 16.♖b3 ♖a7 17.0-0-0 ♖xg5 18.♗dg1 with good play for the pawn on the open g- and h-files. The white queen can come back via d1 and join the other forces.

15.♙xg6 fxg6 16.♖g4 ♖f5 17.♙xg5 ♙xg5 18.f4 ♖f6 19.♖g2 ♙h6 20.♖xg6

With an overwhelming position, Kopasov – Nikologorsky, St Petersburg 2006.

Also popular is 9...h6 10.0-0 0-0 11.b4 with play similar to the main game.

**10.0-0**

White could also keep the tension for another move with:

10.b4

When Black has to worry if it is safe to castle or if it is still answered by g2-g4. Here is a typical example of the resulting middlegame from my own practice:

10...h6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♙g3 ♖e8 13.♖b3 ♖c7 14.a4 ♙h4 15.♙xh4 ♖xh4 16.f4

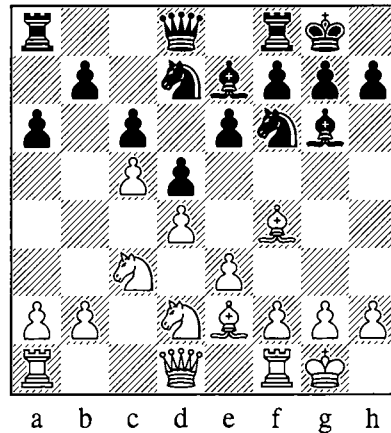
Preventing ...e5 and keeping the space advantage.

16...♖e7 17.♙d3 ♙xd3 18.♖xd3 ♖f6 19.♖d2 ♖fb8 20.♖f3 ♖e8 21.♖ab1 ♖h7 22.e4! dxe4 23.♖xe4 ♖e7 24.♖e5 f5 25.♖d6+ ♖f6 26.♖be1 ♖cd5 27.♖g6 ♖d7 28.♖e2

Winning material.

28...♖e8 29.♖e5 ♖c7 30.♖xe8 ♖xe8 31.♖b2 ♖d8 32.b5 axb5 33.axb5 ♖e4 34.♖f3 ♖h7 35.g3 ♖c8 36.bxc6 bxc6 37.♖b3 ♖d8 38.♖a1 ♖dc3 39.♖b4 ♖d5 40.♖a7 ♖d8 41.♖b3 ♖e2+ 42.♖g2 1-0

Schandorff – Rod. Perez, Istanbul (ol) 2000.

**10...0-0****11.♖c1**

A slightly unusual move. Of course I knew that the standard move is 11.b4, when Black answers 11...♖c8, but by putting my rook on c1, maybe Black would have second thoughts about placing his queen on the same file. At least it gave him something to think about and, with hindsight, he lacked this time for the crucial moves before the time control at move 40. Anyway, the position is closed and there is plenty of time to regroup and manoeuvre. But let's see the more direct 11.b4 as well.

**11.b4 ♖c8**

11...♖e8 could be an improvement. But even if Black gets in ...e5 it does not solve all of his problems. For example: 12.a4 ♙f8 13.♙g3 e5 14.♖b3 exd4 15.exd4 ♖c8 16.♖c1 ♙e7 17.b5 ♙d8 18.b6 White had lots of extra space in Gyimesi – Glud, Sabadell 2011.

**12.a4 b6 13.cxb6**

13.a5! b5 14.g4!? was played in a rapid game between Mamedyarov – Buhmann, Pardubice 2008. With the queenside closed, White expands on the kingside. This idea looks very promising.

**13...♖xb6 14.a5 ♖bd7 15.♖a4 ♖b7 16.♖a2 ♖fc8**

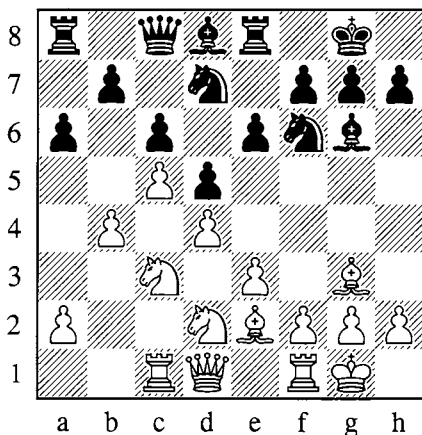
16...♖h5 17.♖fc1 ♖xf4 18.exf4 ♖fc8 19.♖c3 ♖c7 20.♖ac1 ♖ac8 21.♖b3 h6 The position was balanced in Grischuk – Movsesian,

Odessa 2010. This was a rapid game and somehow Black managed to get his queen trapped. 22.♔d1 ♕e4 23.g3 g5 24.♖c5 ♖xc5 25.bxc5 ♗b2 26.♞b3 ♗d2 27.♗b4 ♗xa2?! 28.♞b2 ♗xb2 29.♗xb2 And White won.

17.♞fc1 ♖h5

With fine counterplay, Gyimesi – Kovacevic, Murska Sobota 2007.

11...♞e8 12.♔g3 ♗c8 13.b4 ♔d8



A standard reaction. Black plans ♕e7-d8-c7 to exchange White's powerful bishop on g3.

14.♖b3

Piket once played 14.f4 to prevent Black's intended bishop exchange, but his own bishop on g3 looked rather artificial. 14...b6 15.cxb6 ♕xb6 16.♖a4 ♗b7 17.♗b3 ♔d8 18.♞c3 ♕e7 19.♖c5 ♖xc5 20.bxc5 ♗d7= Piket – I. Sokolov, Amsterdam 2000. Black has the freeing move ...♖e4 whenever he likes.

More natural is 14.a4 but with 14...e5 15.b5 axb5 16.axb5 exd4 17.exd4 ♔c7 Black solved most of his problems in the blitz game Grischuk – Movsesian, Moscow 2008.

14...♔c7 15.♔xc7 ♗xc7 16.f3!?

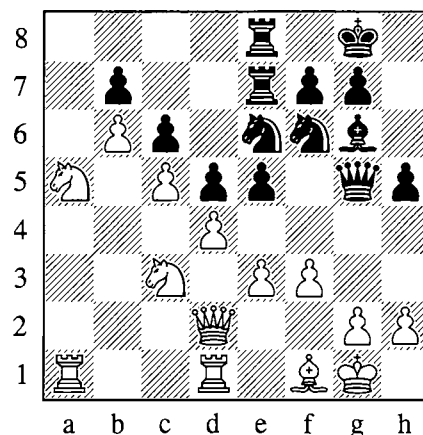
Another practical decision, just like 11.♞c1.

I allow Black to play ...e6-e5 because it leads to complicated play with chances for both sides. The standard move is 16.f4 and after 16...♖e4 the position is about equal, but it would have been much more difficult for me to play for a win.

16...e5 17.♗d2 h6 18.♞fe1 ♞e7 19.a4 ♖f8 20.b5 axb5 21.axb5 ♞ae8 22.b6!

Fixing the b7-pawn, which can later be attacked by ♞a7 and ♖a5.

22...♗c8 23.♞a1 ♗f5 24.♖a5 ♗g5 25.♞ed1 ♖e6 26.♔f1 h5



Black has his trumps on the kingside. The position is highly unclear and both players were drifting into time trouble.

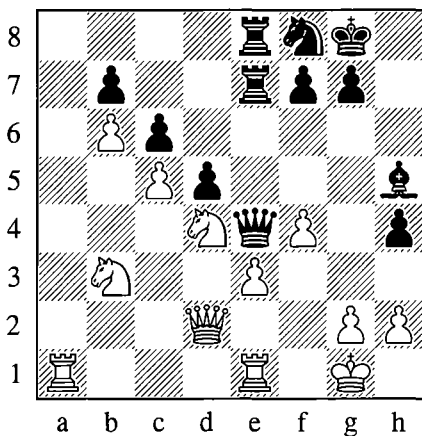
27.♖e2 h4 28.♖b3 ♔h5!?

Misplacing the bishop. Black had a good chance with 28...h3! when the obvious 29.g3 runs into the spectacular 29...♔c2! with the nasty point 30.♗xc2 ♗xe3† 31.♖h1 ♗xf3† 32.♖g1 ♖g4 winning.

29.dxe5 ♗xe5 30.♖ed4 ♖f8!?

Black is losing track, but it was not so easy anymore. A model variation is 30...♖xd4 31.♖xd4 ♗xe3† 32.♗xe3 ♞xe3 33.♖f5 ♞3e5 34.♖d6 ♞b8 35.♞a7 ♞e7 36.♞a6! where the importance of fixing b7 is highlighted.

31.♞e1 ♖g5 32.f4 ♗g6 33.♙d3 ♘e4  
34.♙xe4 ♗xc4



35.♗c2!

Trapping Black's queen and forcing a good ending where the weakness on b7 really can be felt.

35...♗xc2 36.♘xc2 ♙g6 37.♘cd4 ♘d7

Or 37...♞xe3 38.♞xe3 ♞xe3 39.♞a7 ♞e7  
40.♘xc6.

38.♞a7 ♘f6 39.f5 ♙h5 40.♘a5 ♞xe3  
41.♞xe3 ♞xe3 42.♘xb7 ♞e1† 43.♙f2 ♞d1  
44.♘f3!

With control. Not so convincing was  
44.♘xc6 ♘g4† 45.♙f3 ♘e5†.

44...♘e4† 45.♙e3 h3 46.g4! ♙xg4 47.♘d6  
♙xf3 48.b7 ♞b1 49.♞a8† ♙h7 50.b8=♗  
♞xb8 51.♞xb8 ♘g5 52.♘xf7 ♘xf7 53.♙xf3

White is winning: the rook is superior to the knight which lacks a secure outpost.

53...♘e5† 54.♙g3 ♙h6 55.♞e8 ♘d3  
56.♙h4 g5† 57.♙xh3 ♘xc5 58.♞c8 ♘e4  
59.♞xc6† ♙h5 60.♞g6 g4† 61.♙g2 d4  
62.♞e6 ♘g5 63.♞d6 ♘f3 64.♙g3 ♙g5 65.f6  
♙g6 66.♙xg4 ♘xh2† 67.♙f4

1-0

**Conclusion:** 5...♙f5 is a very solid way to play for Black: with the clever manoeuvre ...♙e7-d8-c7

Black neutralizes most of the pressure. Still White can use his extra space on the queenside to push for the point.

## The 5...♘bd7 Variation

### GAME 59

Shirov – Bologan

Germany 1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 a6 5.c5  
♘bd7

The mainline. Black fights for the important e5-square. Generally if he can achieve the break ...e7-e5 then he is happy.

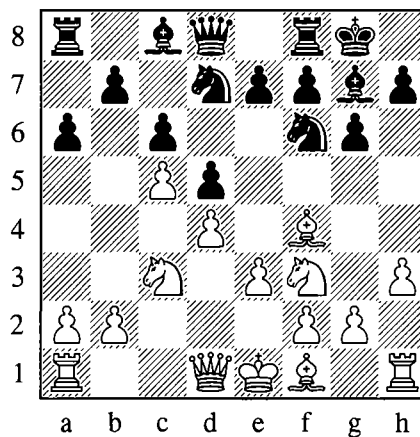
6.♙f4 g6

The classical approach. These days it has almost completely been replaced by 6...♘h5 which we will examine in the next game.

7.h3

Giving the bishop a retreat on h2.

7...♙g7 8.e3 0-0



The starting position of this old variation. Many roads leads to Rome, and in this particular game Bologan actually chose the move order 5...g6 6.♙f4 ♘g7 7.h3 0–0 8.e3 ♘bd7 as discussed earlier in Game 57. In the beginning of the history of the a6-Slav these ...g6-setups were quite common, but they are rather passive and lately attention has switched to more direct and forcing lines. However we could be witnessing a comeback of ...g6 because the position is still a hard nut to crack for White, at least theoretically. In practical play, though, he scores very well. The distinct space advantage and the good bishop on f4 gives at least a slight positional plus.

### 9.♙e2 ♘e8!

This deep manoeuvre shows the potential in Black's position. He wants to continue ...♘c7 and ...♙e8 followed by the desired thrust ...e7-e5. Other moves are somewhat inferior, but let's check the main alternatives.

### 9...♘e4 10.0–0 e5

10...f5 secures the knight. A good way to play for White was shown in the following game: 11.♙c1 ♙e8 12.♘a4 e5 13.dxe5 ♙e7 14.b4 ♘xe5 15.♘b6 ♙b8 16.a4 h6 17.b5 axb5 18.axb5 ♘g5 19.♘d4± With strong pressure in Mikhalevski – Roussel, Las Vegas 2006. 11.♘xe5 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♘xe5 13.♙xe5 ♙xe5 14.dxe5 ♙e8 15.♙d4 ♙e7 16.f4 f6 17.exf6 ♙xe3† 18.♙f2 ♙xd4 19.cxd4 ♙f8 20.g4 ♙xf6 21.♙b1±

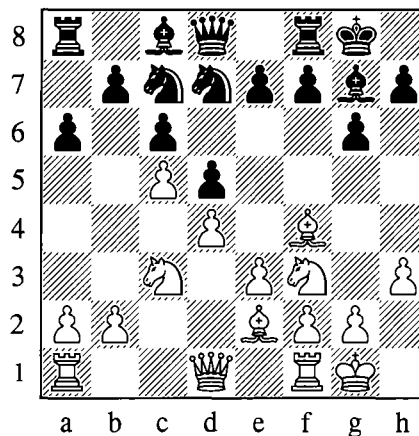
With a better ending for White, Bareev – Burmakin, Elista 1995. Hübner suggests 21.♙d3 ♙e6 22.♙f3, restraining Black, as even better in his ChessBase analysis.

9...b6 10.cxb6 ♙xb6 11.♙c2 c5 12.0–0 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♙b7 14.♘a4 ♙a7 15.b4± Movsziszian – Foisor, Lorca 2001.

9...♙e8 10.0–0 ♘f8 11.b4 ♘6d7

This is another way to get in ...e7-e5. 12.♙d2 e5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.♙xe5 ♙xe5 15.dxe5 a5  
Or 15...♙xe5 16.e4 with an initiative. 16.a3 ♙e7 17.f4 ♙d8  
17...f6 18.e4±  
18.♙ad1  
18.♙d3±  
18...axb4 19.axb4 ♙h4 20.♙f3 ♙e6 21.♙a1  
White kept the extra pawn in Izeta – Burmakin, Cappelle la Grande 1998.

### 10.0–0 ♘c7

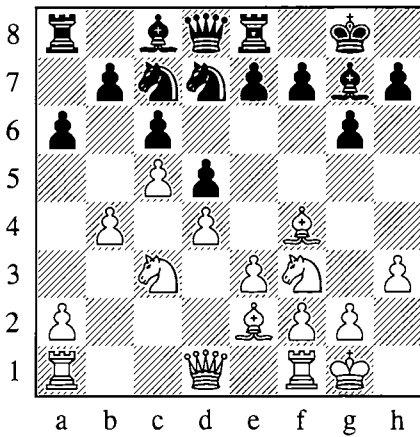


### 11.b4

The normal move, but a good try was 11.♙e1!? ♙e8 12.e4 dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♘d5 14.♙h2 which looks quite interesting. After 14...b6 15.♙c4! ♙b7 16.♙d2 h6, Rusev – Arnaudov, Athens 2008, White could have secured his big advantage with 17.♙ac1. 14...♘7f6 must be better, but even here White seems on top.

The sophisticated 11.♘a4 ♙e8 12.♙h2 should be met by the standard thrust 12...e5 when 13.♘b6 ♘xb6 14.cxb6 ♘e6 15.♙xe5 ♙xb6 16.♙xg7 ♘xg7 17.♙d2 ♘f5 18.b4 ♘d6 19.♙c3 ♙f5 was okay for Black in Eljanov – Dovzik, Simferopol 2003.

### 11...♙e8

**12.♞d2**

This leads to a slightly better position, but one that Black should be able to hold.

There is an alternative to stir up some more complications:

**12.♙g5!?**

Pinning the e-pawn.

**12...a5**

12...f6 13.♙h4 e5 14.dxe5 g5 15.♙g3 fxe5 16.e4! d4 17.♙c4† ♗h8 18.♗a4 ♖e6 19.♙xe6 ♙xe6 20.♗d2 ♗f6 21.♗b6 ♙b8 22.♙e1 ♙e8 23.♗dc4± This looks to me like a horrible King's Indian, Franic – Samovojska, Makarska Tucepi 1995.

**13.a3 b6 14.cxb6 ♗xb6 15.♞b3 ♙a6**

Nicely solving the problem with the bishop.

**16.♙xa6 ♙xa6=**

Hulak – Ibragimov, Djakovo 1994. Instead White could keep the tension with 14.♞c2!N with an edge.

**12...e5 13.♗xe5 ♗xe5 14.♙xe5 ♙xe5 15.dxe5 a5**

15...♙xe5 16.e4 a5 will transpose.

**16.a3**

The automatic answer. Instead 16.♗a4 axb4 17.♗b6 ♙b8 18.f4 f6 gives Black excellent counterplay.

**16...♙xe5 17.e4 axb4**

17...♞f6! 18.f4 ♙e8 19.e5 ♞h4 P. Horvath – Burmakin, Balaguer 2005, was an interesting attempt by the great a6-Slav expert Vladimir Burmakin. Black seems fine. One of his possibilities is ...♙xh3 and if White takes back there is a perpetual check.

**18.axb4 ♙xa1 19.♙xa1 ♞f6 20.♙d1**

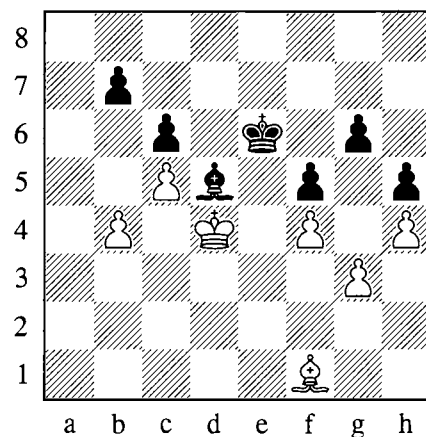
Instead 20.exd5 ♙xd5!= was Gelfand – Shirov, Linares 1994.

**20...dxe4 21.♞d8† ♞xd8 22.♙xd8† ♙e8 23.♙xe8† ♗xe8 24.♗xe4**

A fairly simple ending has been reached. With more space and good bishop vs. bad, White has some winning chances but objectively it should just be a draw.

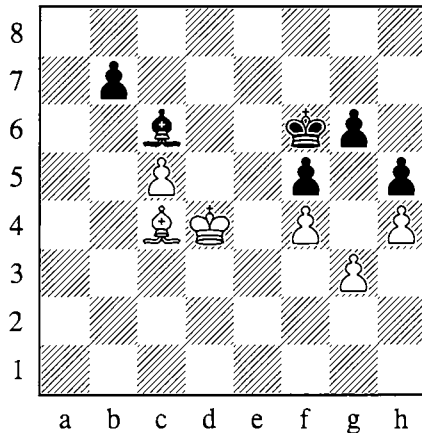
**24...♙e6 25.f4 ♗c7 26.♗c3 ♗d5?**

A little too cooperative, but easy to understand: Bologan believes that the bishop ending is a dead draw. But a bad bishop issue is always tricky. In a later game Black played 26...♗g7 27.♗f2 h6 28.♗e3 f5 and eventually held, Izeta – Magem, Zaragoza 1994.

**27.♗xd5 ♙xd5 28.♗f2 f6 29.♙g4 f5 30.♙e2 ♗f7 31.g3 ♗e6 32.♗e3 ♙g2 33.♙c4† ♙d5 34.♙f1 h6 35.h4 h5 36.♗d4**

36...♙h1 37.b5! cxb5 38.♙xb5 ♙c6 39.♙c4†  
♜f6?

39...♜e7 40.♜e5 is unpleasant, but it is not easy to make progress for White because the pawn ending 40...♙f3 41.♙d5 ♙xd5 42.♜xd5 ♜d7 is just a draw: 43.♜d4 ♜d8 44.♜c4 ♜c8 45.♜b5 ♜c7



40.♙d5!

Now it just wins.

40...♙xd5

There is no salvation in 40...♜e7 41.♙xc6 bxc6 42.♜e5.

41.♜xd5 ♜e7 42.♜e5 ♜d7 43.♜f6 ♜c6  
44.♜xg6 ♜xc5 45.♜xf5 b5 46.♜e6 b4  
47.f5 b3 48.f6 b2 49.f7 b1=♙ 50.f8=♙†  
♜c4 51.♙f4† ♜c3 52.♙e5† ♜d2 53.♙xh5  
♙b6† 54.♜f7 ♙c7† 55.♜g6 ♜e1 56.♙f3  
♙d6† 57.♜f5 ♙d7† 58.♜f4 ♙d6† 59.♜g4  
♙e6† 60.♙f5 ♙g8† 61.♜h3

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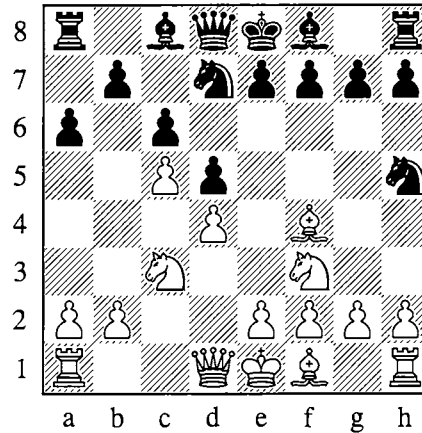
**Conclusion:** 5...♜bd7 followed by ...g6 is a solid set-up for Black, but again White's extra space should count for something.

## GAME 60

Krasenkow – Laznicka

Ostrava 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♞f3 ♞f6 4.♞c3 a6 5.c5  
♞bd7 6.♙f4 ♞h5



The sharpest and most popular choice.

7.♙d2!?

An unusual and rather intriguing concept, but the other moves are also interesting.

For a long period White just played:

7.e3 g6 8.♙d3

8.h4!? is an ultra-modern move that leads to double-edged play.

8...♙g7 9.0-0 ♞xf4

If 9...0-0 then 10.♙g5.

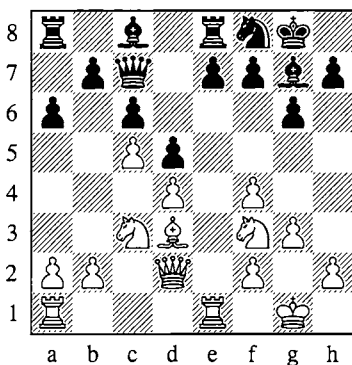
10.exf4 0-0

When the f4-pawn gave extra control over e5. Then a cunning way of regrouping for Black changed players' views.

Let us see an example from my own catalogue:

11.♙d2 ♙e8 12.♙fe1 ♙c7 13.g3 ♞f8

The new plan: Black prepares ...♙g4 and ...f6 to get in ...e5 after all.



14.Ξe3

However the last word may not have been said yet. Bologan proposes the new move 14.♖g2!? to be able to play h2-h3 and thereby prevent the annoying ...♗g4. For example: 14...f6 15.h3! ♗e6 16.♞c2 ♞d7 17.Ξh1 White is better, so perhaps the 7.e3 variation will have another boost of popularity. Curiously this interesting idea still awaits its first test.

14...f6 15.Ξae1 ♗g4 16.♗h4 e5 17.fxex5 fxe5 18.dxe5 ♗xe5

Black was already better in Hübner – Schandorff, Germany 2003.

Also popular is saving the bishop:

7.♗d2 ♗hf6 8.♞c2

Here 8.Ξc1 g6 9.h3 ♞c7 10.g3 with the idea ♗f4, gives White a small advantage, but Black is pretty solid after 10...♗g7 11.♗f4 ♞d8 12.♗g2 0–0 13.0–0 ♗h5 14.♗d2 f5 15.♗a4 e5 16.dxe5 ♗xe5.

8...♞c7

8...g6 9.♗g5 ♗g7 10.e3 0–0 11.♗e2 Ξe8 12.0–0 e5 13.b4± Laznicka – I. Popov, Yerevan 2007.

9.e4

A very direct way of playing, but maybe White is not strong enough to force matters.

9...♗xe4

9...e5!? 10.exd5 cxd5 11.b4 ♗e7 12.♗e2 0–0 13.0–0 e4 14.♗e1 ♗b8 15.♞c1 ♗e6 16.♗c2 ♗c6 17.Ξb1± Alekseev – Bacrot, Biel 2008.

10.♗xe4 dxe4 11.♞xe4 ♗f6 12.♞c2 ♗e6 13.♗e2 ♗d5 14.0–0 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 e6

Black was extremely solid in Krasenkow – Grabarczyk, Poland 2005.

Finally the finesse 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗d2 leads to similar play: 8...♗hf6 (8...♞c7!? 9.e4 dxe4 10.♗xe4 ♗df6 11.♗xf6† ♗xf6 12.♗c4 ♗f5 13.0–0 e6∞) 9.♞c2 ♞c7 10.e4 e5!? and the complications seemed okay for Black: 11.exd5 cxd5 12.b4 ♗e7 Now in Navara – Bacrot, Baku 2008, after 13.g3 0–0 14.♗g2 a5 White could not keep his structure intact. However, better was 13.♗e2 as in the above example in the 7.♗d2 line.

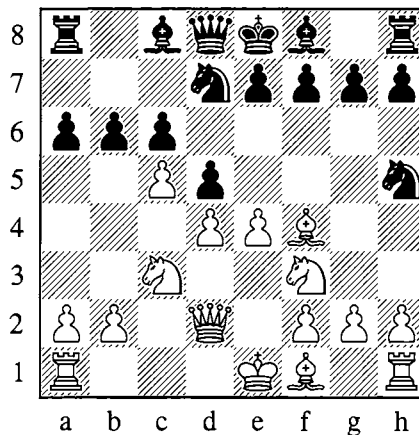
With 7.♞d2 White goes for quick development and active play, not minding giving up the pair of bishops.

7...b6

7...♗xf4 8.♞xf4 e6 9.e4 b6 will transpose to the main game.

8.e4

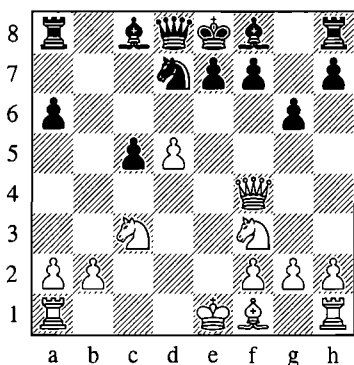
Active play is the theme.



8...♗xf4

Bacrot came up with:

8...bxc5!? 9.exd5 cxd4 10.♞xd4 c5! 11.♞d2 ♗xf4 12.♞xf4 g6



And had some kind of Benoni-structure.  
After:

13. ♖e5 ♜xe5 14. ♗xe5 ♜g8! 15. ♙c4 ♙g7  
16. ♗e2 ♙d4 17. 0–0 ♜f8

He had lost the right to castle, but the strong dark-squared bishop gave him fine play, Mamedyarov – Bacrot, Baku 2008.

Instead of 13. ♖e5, White could try the sharp: 13. d6!? exd6 14. 0–0–0 With great compensation, for instance: 14... ♙b7 15. ♙c4 ♗f6 16. ♗he1† ♜d8 17. ♗xf6† ♜xf6 18. ♖e5 ♜c7 19. ♖xf7 ♜g8 20. ♗e6 ♖e8 21. ♖d5† ♙xd5 22. ♙xd5±

Probably Black should answer 13. d6 with the cool 13...e6! when the d6-pawn in the middle of his position could be a nuisance but could also turn out to be a weakness. Black's bishop will again be strong on g7 and his rook can use the open b-file. Since the first edition of this book the position has been tested in a correspondence game; Black defended successfully: 14. ♖e5 ♗f6 15. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 16. ♙d1 ♙g7 17. ♙e2 ♙b7 18. 0–0 ♖d5 19. ♖xd5 ♙xd5 20. f4 ♙d8 21. ♗c1 g5 22. g3 gxf4 23. gxf4 ♙f6 24. ♜f2 ♗xd6 25. ♗xc5 ♜g8 26. ♙f3 ♙d8 27. ♗c8 ½–½ Foote – Brooks, e-mail 2009.

### 9. ♗xf4 e6 10. exd5 exd5

Less accurate is:

10...cxd5

Because of:

11. c6!

Also fine is 11. b4 bxc5 12. bxc5 ♙e7 13. ♙d3 ♙f6 14. ♗c1 0–0 15. 0–0± Brynell – Bromann, Denmark 2009.

11... ♖f6 12. ♙d3 ♙d6 13. ♖e5 ♗c7 14. 0–0 0–0 15. ♗ac1

White keeps the pawn on c6:

15...b5 16. ♗c2 b4 17. ♖a4 a5 18. ♖c5 ♙xc5 19. ♗xc5 ♙a6 20. ♙xa6 ♗xa6

Czakov – Aliavdin, Rewal 2007, and now 21. f3± takes away e4 from the black knight, when the strong passed pawn ties Black down and gives White a big long-term advantage.

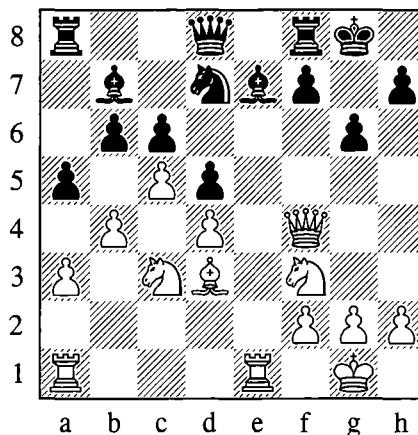
### 11. b4 ♙e7 12. ♙d3 0–0 13. 0–0 a5 14. a3 g6

Or 14... ♙f6 15. ♗d6 ♖b8 16. ♗xd8 ♙xd8 17. cxb6 ♙xb6 18. b5 ♙g4 19. ♖a4 ♙d8 20. ♖e5 cxb5 Prohaszka – Bui Vinh, Budapest 2008, when 21. ♙xb5 ♙f5 22. g4 ♙e6 23. ♖c5 would give White strong pressure.

### 15. ♗fe1

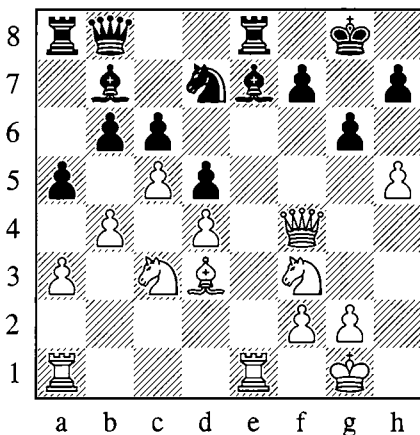
Krasenkow has also played more directly: 15. h4 ♙b7 16. h5 ♙f6 17. cxb6 axb4 18. axb4 ♖xb6 19. ♗xa8 ♖xa8 20. ♖a4 ♖c7 21. ♖c5 ♙c8 22. ♗a1± Krasenkow – Movsesian, Ostrava 2007.

### 15... ♙b7

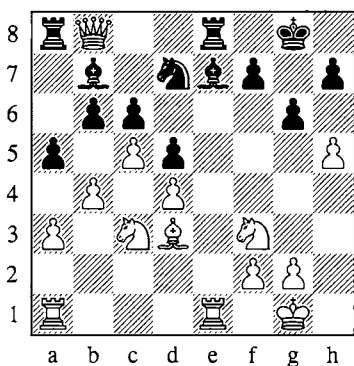


**16.h4!**

White is very active with the queen on f4 and he starts active operations on the kingside; Black lacks counterplay and has to sit tight.

**16...♞e8 17.h5 ♞b8****18.♞d2**

The queen exchange is objectively strong *and* sets a trap: 18.♞xb8!



18...♞axb8? Natural but completely wrong!  
 19.♞xd5! cxd5 20.♞b5 ♞f6 21.hxg6 bxc5  
 22.♞xe8 ♞xe8 23.gxf7† ♞xf7 24.bxc5± In  
 K. Murphy – Sladek, e-mail 2009, White  
 was much better and he finished efficiently:  
 24...♞a6 25.♞e5† ♞f8 26.♞c6 ♞f7 27.♞xe7†  
 ♞xe7 28.♞xe7 ♞xe7 29.♞e1† ♞d7 30.f3 ♞d3  
 31.♞e5 h6 32.g4 a4 33.♞f2 ♞c4 34.♞g3 ♞d3  
 35.♞f4 ♞c2 36.♞e3 1–0

Black had to play 18...♞xb8 when after  
 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.cxb6 ♞d7 White has to play  
 forcefully to keep an advantage: 21.bxa5 ♞xa5  
 22.♞e5!± The tactical point is that 22...♞xb6  
 allows 23.♞xg6! fxg6 24.♞ab1 as the defence  
 ...♞d8 is no longer possible.

**18...axb4 19.axb4 ♞xa1 20.♞xa1 ♞f6  
21.♞a4 ♞c7?!**

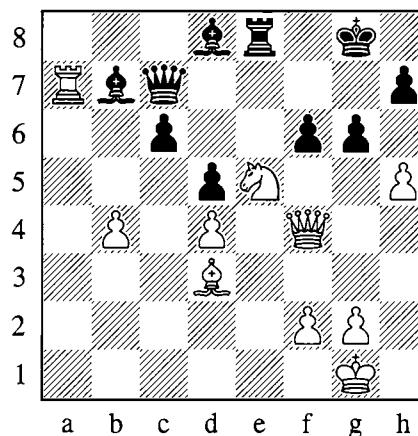
With 21...bxc5 22.bxc5 ♞f8 Black would  
 have had good chances to defend.

**22.cxb6 ♞xb6 23.♞xb6 ♞xb6 24.♞f4**

Back to this nice square.

**24...♞d8?!**

Removing a key defender: Better is 24...♞g7!.

**25.♞e5 ♞c7 26.♞a7! f6****27.hxg6!**

This strong knight sacrifice blows Black  
 away.

**27...fxe5 28.gxh7† ♞h8 29.dxe5 ♞g7  
30.♞a6!**

The point. White immediately wins material  
 back.

**30...♞f8 31.♞e3 d4**

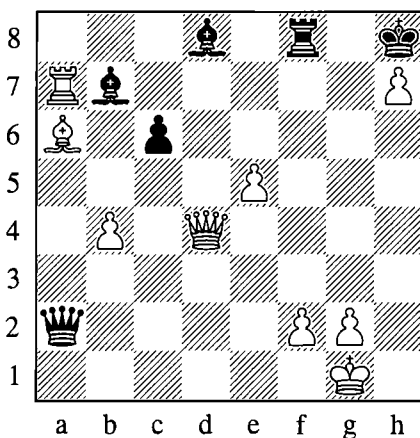
31...♞f7 32.e6 ♞e7 33.♞xb7 ♞xb7 34.♞a8

♖f6 35.e7 ♖xe7 36.♗xe7 ♝xe7 37.♞xd8†  
♔xh7 38.♞c8 with a won rook ending.

32.♗e4 ♖f7

Or 32...♗c7 33.♞xb7 ♖xe5 34.♗xe5† ♗xe5  
35.♗d3 and White holds onto the h7-pawn  
with an easy win.

33.♗xd4 ♖a2



34.e6† ♗f6 35.e7

1-0

**Conclusion:** With 5...♗bd7 6.♗f4 ♖h5 Black seeks active counterplay at once. However, the little explored move 7.♗d2!? sets him unusual problems. The critical reply is Bacrot's Benoni-like approach, which should be studied carefully. The latest evidence from correspondence chess suggests Black can hold a draw with perfectly accurate play (as is so often the case in sharp theory lines).

Accordingly White could return to less forcing lines such as 7.e3, 7.♗d2 or 7.♗g5. Especially Bologan's untested idea in the 7.e3 line is worth a try. All three of these alternatives offer interesting play in a tense middlegame – White has good chances of an edge but no direct refutations are possible against such a respectable opening.

**Chapter Conclusion:** The a6-Slav is a good fighting opening with many hidden layers. The logical 5.c5 leads to complicated play but is at the same time a rather simple antidote. It secures more space and generally makes White's position more pleasant to play in all variations.

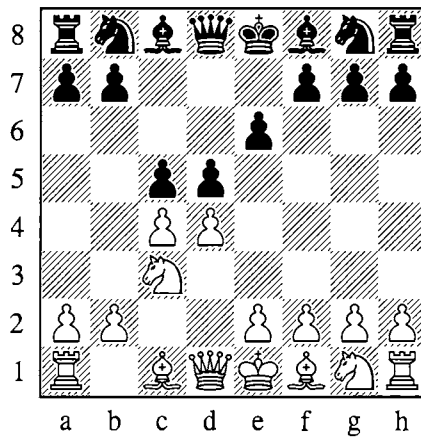
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# Chapter 6

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## The Tarrasch

*You don't need a weatherman  
To know which way the wind blows*  
– Bob Dylan



1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5

Positional Play	page 241
Theory	page 246
The 9...c4 Variation	page 250
The 9...♗e6 Variation	page 255
The 9...cxd4 Variation	page 258

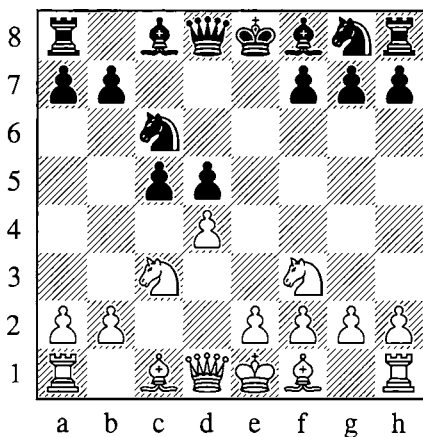
**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5**

The Tarrasch. Black plays actively from the beginning and does not mind getting an isolated queen's pawn, as he counts on quick development as dynamic compensation.

The problem with such an approach is that perhaps the activity and dynamic features will come to a halt and then all that is left is a weakness on d5 that just won't go away.

**4.cxd5 exd5**

The romantic 4...cxd4 is known as the Von Hennig-Schara Gambit. It has nothing to do with a traditional Tarrasch and is covered in the last chapter in the book, where strange gambits and other antiquities are stored.

**5.♘f3 ♘c6****6.g3**

The most natural development: from g2 the bishop will exert pressure on Black's vulnerable d5-pawn.

Since the first edition of this book something notable has happened in the Tarrasch. Not on the board, but by the publication of the latest member of the Grandmaster Repertoire series: *The Tarrasch Defence* by Jacob Aagaard and

Nikolaos Ntirlis. In the book the authors try to solve some of the opening's positional defects using an unusual level of tactical alertness and hefty computer analysis. We will see more of this attitude in the mainline.

The most surprising revelation in the book is perhaps the revival of the line:

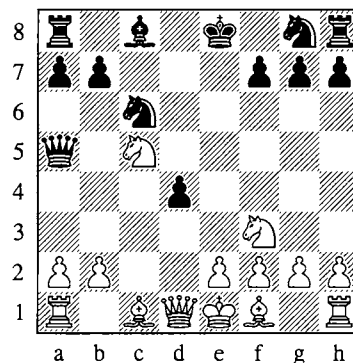
6.dxc5!?

Play may continue:

6...d4 7.♘a4 ♗xc5

7...b5?! 8.cxb6 axb6 9.e3 does not work for Black.

8.♘xc5 ♖a5†



9.♗d2

9.♖d2!? ♖xc5 10.a3 can also be tried.

9...♖xc5 10.♖c1 ♖b6 11.e3

With some initiative. A recent game went on:

11...♘f6 12.♗c4 0-0

The book recommends 12...dxe3 and there is much more in it. My coverage of 6.dxc5 is just a small appetizer!

13.0-0 ♗g4 14.exd4 ♘xd4 15.♗e3 ♗xf3 16.♖xd4! ♖xd4 17.♗xd4 ♗c6 18.♗fd1±

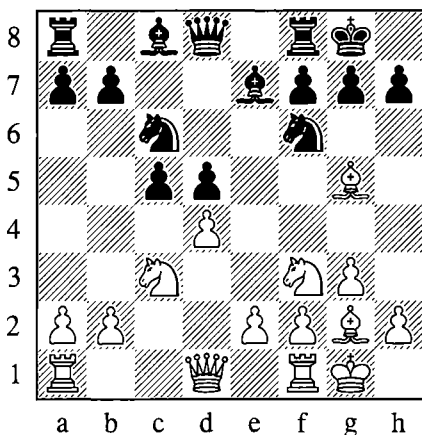
The bishops! Peek – Thornton, Gibraltar 2012.

So 6.dxc5 could be a good extra line in your repertoire. I am sure we will see much more of it in the near future.

**6...♘f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7**

Not much need be said – both sides complete development.

8.0-0 0-0 9.♔g5



By threatening the knight on f6, a defender of the d5-pawn, White renews his pressure against the soft spot in Black's camp. This is more or less the starting position of the Tarrasch. It has been heavily debated for many years without reaching a final verdict. The opening had its peak of popularity in the 80s when a young Garry Kasparov used it on his way to the World Championship. However, as we will soon see, it did not stand the test of Anatoly Karpov's persistent positional play in their first match. As a result, Kasparov abandoned the Tarrasch and the feeling that White is somewhat better lingered on. The opening is still a frequent guest in modern tournament play though, so it pays to have at least some idea of how to handle it. To show us, I have naturally chosen Karpov as our role model.

### Positional Play

Anatoly Karpov was a master of maintaining and increasing small advantages. This is an integrated part of great positional play in general and of the following game in particular. The game also showcases the characteristic Tarrasch elements: the key to understanding the opening is of course the

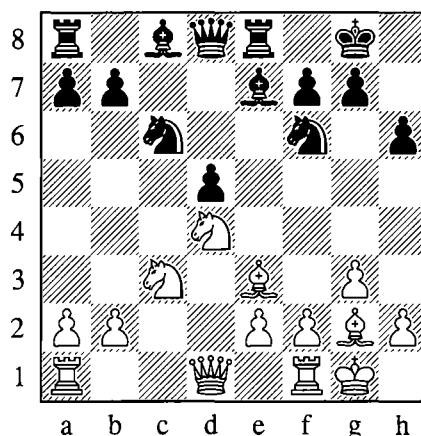
isolated d-pawn. From White's point of view this game nicely illustrates that the d-pawn is a structural deficiency in Black's position that can influence the course of play from beginning to end.

## GAME 61

Karpov – Kasparov

Moscow (9) 1984

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3  
♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♙g2 ♙e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♙g5  
cxd4 10.♘xd4 h6 11.♙e3 ♜e8



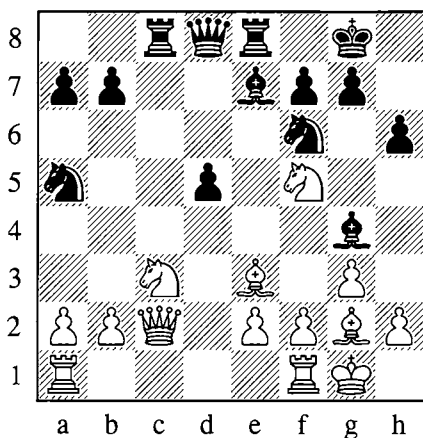
12.♞b3

An interesting move that was specially prepared by Karpov for the match. White puts d5 under pressure and forces Black to misplace his knight to kick the annoying queen back. For our repertoire I propose the even more aggressive queen sortie 12.♞a4, hitting the knight on c6. There will be much more said below when we get to the theory.

12...♘a5 13.♞c2 ♙g4 14.♘f5! ♜c8

Pinning the knight. Absolutely terrible was 14...♙xf5 15.♞xf5 when d5 is hopelessly weak. The modern solution however is 14...♙b4 15.♙d4 ♙xc3 16.♙xc3 ♜xe2 when White has

good compensation after 17.♖d3 or 17.♖d1, but nothing is clear.



### 15.♗d4!

Karpov is the first to deviate. He intensifies the pressure without premature exchanges.

Two games earlier in the match he played the natural:

15.♗xe7 ♜xe7 16.♞ad1

But after:

16...♞e8

Black had adequate counterplay.

17.h3 ♗h5 18.♗xd5

Karpov at least takes a pawn, but parting with the light-squared bishop that should be comforting the king is not without risk.

18...♗g6 19.♞c1 ♗xd5

Or 19...♗e4 and Black seems to hold the balance: 20.♞d2 ♗xd5 21.♗xd5 ♗xd5 22.♞xd5 ♗c4 23.♗c5 ♞e5 24.♞xc4 ♞exc5

With activity for the pawn, for instance 25.♞d3 ♞e6 hitting a2 and h3.

20.♞xd5 ♗c4 21.♗d4 ♞ec7 22.b3 ♗b6 23.♞e5 ♞d7 24.♞e3 f6 25.♞c5 ♞xc5 26.♗xc5 ♞xh3 27.♞d1

White keeps some initiative, but Black should hold. Kasparov chooses to weaken his position:

27...h5?! 28.♞d4! ♗d7 29.♗d6 ♗f7 30.♗d5 ♗xd5 31.♞xd5

White is still only marginally better, but in severe time trouble, Black blunders:

31...a6 32.♗f4 ♗f8 33.♞d3 ♞g4 34.f3 ♞g6 35.♗f2 ♞c2?

Kasparov should have chosen the ending: he won't get a second chance.

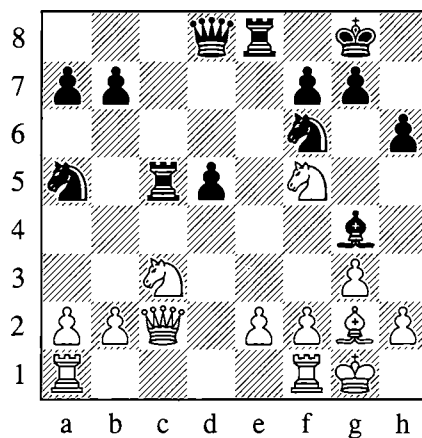
36.♞e3! ♞c8 37.♞e7 b5 38.♞d8 ♞xd8 39.♞xd8 ♞f7 40.♗d6

Black is tied up and loses material.

40...g5 41.♞a8 ♗g7 42.♞xa6 1-0

Karpov – Kasparov, Moscow (7) 1984.

15...♗c5 16.♗xc5 ♞xc5



The first phase is over. White has managed to exchange the dark-squared bishops, which is quite serious progress. He gains control over the important d4-square in front of the isolated pawn, and with every exchange Black's possibilities to play actively are drastically diminished.

### 17.♗e3

Attacking d5. White allows 17...d4 when the pin 18.♞ad1 is awkward to meet. At the time Kasparov bought the argument, but in his new book about the match he claims that Black can survive the complications and therefore should have tried the active move.

17...♗e6 18.♞ad1

White has control. The difference between the two armies is striking. White's pieces shoot at d5, while Black's are forced to defend. The opening has ended to White's advantage. Although objectively speaking White is probably still only slightly better, the trend is going up. Basically Black's initial activity is gone and he is just left with a weakness. That is not to say he can't hold, but the rest of the game will be a struggle and it will be played on conditions dictated by White.

18...♖c8 19.♗a4 ♜d8 20.♞d3 a6 21.♞fd1 ♘c4

Good active defending.

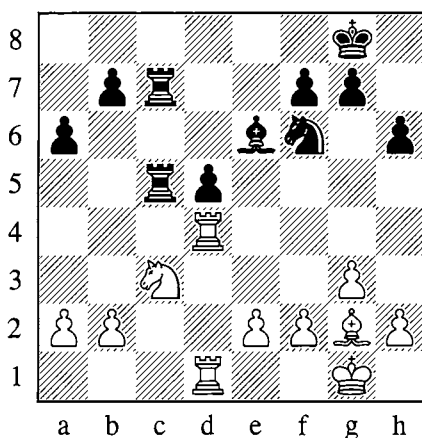
22.♘xc4 ♞xc4 23.♗a5

23.♗b3 was an interesting alternative.

23...♞c5 24.♗b6

Or here 24.♗a3 to keep the queens on.

24...♞d7 25.♞d4 ♗c7 26.♗xc7 ♞dxc7



The second phase is over. The queens have been exchanged, but the characteristics of the position are the same in the endgame. White's persistent pressure on d5 completely ties up Black, but it is not easy to break through. However it is obvious that there are only two possible results: either White wins or it is

a draw. Always a nice scenario in a practical game.

### 27.h3

Because of the great impact the finish of this game made, players were tempted to try this line themselves. A correspondence game even reached this very position, when White chose to deviate by just bringing his king to the centre. The rest of the game is rather instructive and shows that these simple endings are far from simple to defend:

27.♔f1 ♔f8 28.♔e1 ♞c4 29.e3 ♞xd4 30.♞xd4 ♞c5 31.♔d2 a5 32.a3 b6 33.b4 axb4 34.axb4 ♞c4 35.♞xc4 dxc4 36.h3 ♔e7 37.e4 ♘d7 38.f4 f6 39.♘b5!± Black got rid of the isolated pawn but the c-pawn is not looking too good either. White's spatial dominance also tells: Black can hardly improve his position and quickly goes down. 39...f5 40.e5 g5 41.♘d4 gxf4 42.gxf4 ♘f8 43.♙f1 ♘g6 44.♔e3 c3 45.♙d3 ♘h4 46.♔f2 ♙d7 47.♔g3 1–0

Raupp – J. Andersen, corr. 1986. On 47...♘g6 the simplest is probably ♘e2 and ♘xc3.

Please note that taking the pawn with 27.♘xd5 ♘xd5 28.♙xd5 ♙xd5 29.♞xd5 ♞xd5 30.♞xd5 ♞c2 just leads to a draw.

### 27...h5 28.a3 g6

Black puts all his pawns on the same colour as his bishop – the good thing about a bad bishop is that it can at least protect your pawns.

### 29.e3 ♔g7 30.♔h2

Karpov is an expert in slow regrouping. He plans ♙f3 and therefore protects the h3-pawn with the king, but here it is too slow. Instead he could have played the much more straightforward 30.♙f1, followed by f2-f3 and g3-g4 seizing more space on the kingside and maintaining the advantage.

**30...♞c4**

Kasparov uses the chance to simplify.

**31.♙f3 b5 32.♔g2 ♜7c5 33.♞xc4**

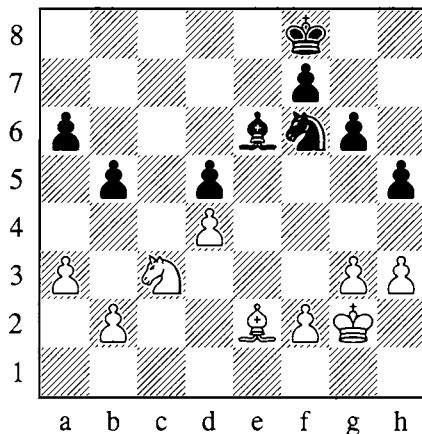
Practical chess. Karpov gives Black a difficult choice. How should he take back?

**33...♞xc4**

It was tempting to get rid of the d-pawn with 33...dxc4 but then White has the d-file and can penetrate with his rook. Also 33...bxc4 has its points but then 34.♞d4 followed by g4 is promising for White. In the end Kasparov just takes back with the rook maintaining the structure. He can safely do that because if White takes on d5 the black rook again gets to c2 and draws.

**34.♞d4**

Karpov needed a new plan.

**34...♔f8 35.♙e2 ♞xd4 36.exd4**

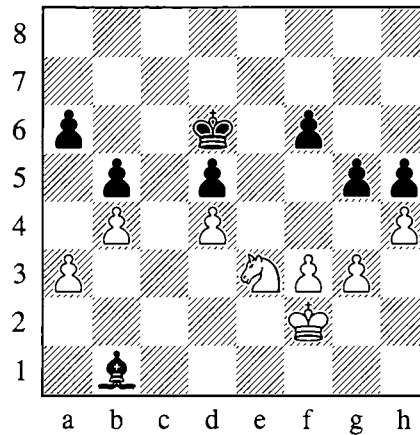
Phase three is over. The position has transformed into a symmetrical pawn structure. White is still slightly better because Black is left with a passive bishop that has to defend d5. Karpov of course keeps playing. He risks absolutely nothing and he can hope to get knight against bad bishop when there would be serious winning chances.

**36...♔e7 37.♘a2 ♙c8 38.♘b4 ♔d6 39.f3 ♘g8 40.h4 ♘h6 41.♔f2 ♘f5 42.♘c2**

The game was played in the good old days, so it was adjourned here. Black sealed his next move.

**42...f6 43.♙d3 g5**

Black defends actively, allowing White to get the knight vs. bishop ending. A defensive strategy could easily worsen Black's chances: 43...♘e7 44.♘e3 Perhaps threatening g4. 44...f5?! 45.♘g2 ♙d7 46.♔e3 With big holes on f4 and g5.

**44.♙xf5 ♙xf5 45.♘e3 ♙b1 46.b4**

The game has reached its final phase. White closes the queenside leaving Black with a permanent weakness on a6. That pawn can be attacked by the white knight from the great outpost c5, but then the black bishop defends it from c8 and so what? The only winning chance is to break in with the king and that can only happen on the seemingly closed kingside. Karpov nevertheless manages to do exactly that in amazing fashion. The next move is simply chess history. No more, no less. It is one of the most famous sequences from a World Championship match.

**46...gxh4?**

Blindly expecting White to take back, when Black withdraws the bishop to g6 and easily holds the position. True, White has the f4-square but his king and knight cannot both use it at the same time and therefore there is no real chance of making progress. In the light of what happens it is clear that Black should have played 46...♗e6 with good drawing chances.

#### 47. ♖g2!

White sacrifices a pawn to get access to the black fortress. This famous ending has been analysed by many experts including Dvoretsky, Marin, Mueller and of course Kasparov. This is an opening book and big chapters have been written on this ending – I just want to give some of the flavour of what is happening.

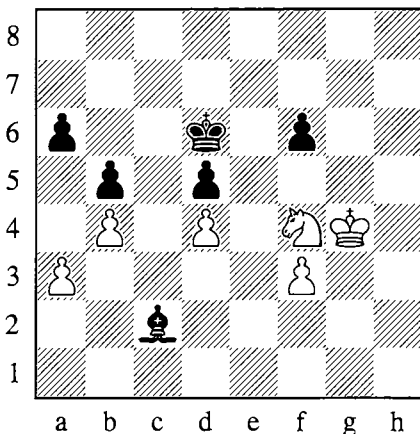
#### 47...hxg3† 48. ♗xg3 ♖e6

Or 48...♗g6 49. ♖f4 ♗f7 50. ♗h4 followed by ♖xh5.

#### 49. ♖f4† ♗f5 50. ♖xh5 ♗e6

White was threatening ♖g7† followed by ♖e8-c7.

#### 51. ♖f4† ♗d6 52. ♗g4 ♗c2



#### 53. ♗h5! ♗d1 54. ♗g6 ♗e7

The best chance, as 54...♗xf3 55. ♗xf6 was hopeless. White will regroup the knight so that

he can give a check and then gain e5 for his king. Then some more regrouping with the knight and the d5-pawn drops. Translated to moves it could be something like 55...♗g4 56. ♖g6 ♗f3 57. ♖h4 ♗g4 58. ♖f5† ♗c6 (58...♗xf5 59. ♗xf5 is a lost pawn ending) 59. ♗e5 ♗f3 60. ♖e7† ♗b7 61. ♖xd5 and wins.

#### 55. ♖xd5†?

The temptation was too great: a free pawn with check! However it turns out that the move is inaccurate. Correct was 55. ♖h5!, when White is winning even against the toughest resistance, as the experts have shown.

#### 55...♗e6 56. ♖c7† ♗d7?

Missing 56...♗d6 57. ♖xa6 ♗xf3 58. ♗xf6 ♗d5 and Black holds the draw.

#### 57. ♖xa6 ♗xf3 58. ♗xf6 ♗d6 59. ♗f5 ♗d5 60. ♗f4

The king wins a tempo on the bishop and gets back in time to defend d4.

#### 60...♗h1 61. ♗e3 ♗c4 62. ♖c5 ♗c6 63. ♖d3 ♗g2 64. ♖e5† ♗c3 65. ♖g6 ♗c4 66. ♖e7 ♗b7?

This loses rather quickly, whereas with 66...♗h1! Black could put up some resistance and it is generally accepted that the position is still drawn! Kasparov believes that, as shown in his analysis in the aforementioned book.

#### 67. ♖f5 ♗g2

The toughest defence was 67...♗d5 although it still loses: 68. ♗d3 ♗e6 and now Mueller proved that 69. ♖g7†! was the way to win. Marin had previously claimed White could win with 69. ♖e3, but Dvoretsky found a way to draw.

Sounds complicated? That's because it is. Even famous analysts can lose their way in such positions. If you enjoy this sort of thing, then check out the specialist books.

68. ♖d6† ♜b3 69. ♜xb5 ♜a4 70. ♜d6  
1–0

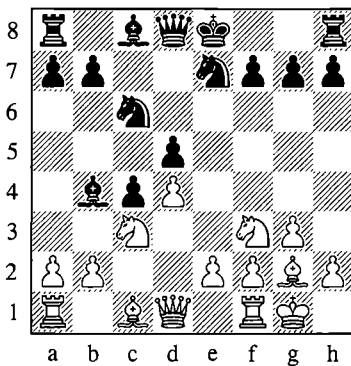
A good practical game. Actually, after the impressive opening play Karpov did not do much until the spectacular finish. Or so it seemed. In fact he managed to keep the game going without ever letting Black fully neutralize the weakness on d5, and it paid off in the end. So the game confirms the general belief that White has good chances of getting a small but long-lasting positional advantage against the Tarrasch.

## Theory

Usually Black enters the long mainlines that we cover below, but here is a mini-guide to early deviations.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. ♜c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5. ♜f3  
♜c6 6.g3 ♜f6

Sometimes Black tries:  
6...c4 7. ♙g2 ♙b4 8.0–0 ♜ge7



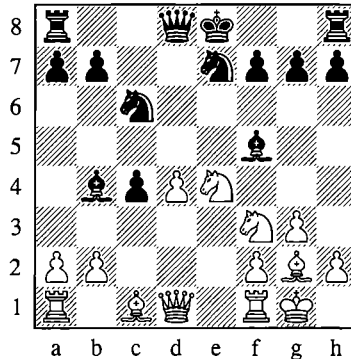
A very flexible system. The disadvantage is that it does nothing to hinder White from expanding in the centre with e2-e4:

9.e4

Here it makes sense to look at two lines. The main option is 9...0–0, but we should not neglect the alternative, 9...dxe4 10. ♜xe4, which is more risky. Black has three options:

a) 10... ♙g4 11.a3 ♙a5 12. ♜c5 ♙b6 13. ♜xb7  
♞c7 14.d5 ♞xb7 15.dxc6 ♞xc6 16. ♙f4 0–0  
17. ♜e5 ♞xg2† 18. ♜xg2 ♙xd1 19. ♞fxd1±  
Black had problems with his c-pawn in  
Drozdovskij – Jakimov, Kharkov 2007.

b) 10... ♙f5



11. ♜h4

A strong new idea is: 11. ♜e5! ♞xd4  
12. ♞xd4 ♜xd4 13.a3 ♙xe4 14. ♙xe4 ♜b3  
15. ♙e3! ♜xa1 16. ♞xa1 ♙d6 17. ♜xc4 With  
fantastic play for the exchange. For example:  
17... ♙c7 18. ♙xb7 ♞b8 19. ♙f3 ♙b6 20. ♙f4  
♞d8 21. ♞e1 ♞d4 22. ♜xb6 axb6 23. ♙e5 ♞a4  
24. ♙xg7 ♞g8 25. ♙c6† ♜d8 26. ♞d1† ♜c8  
27. ♙d7† 1–0 Berczes – Lundin, Stockholm  
2011.

11... ♙e6

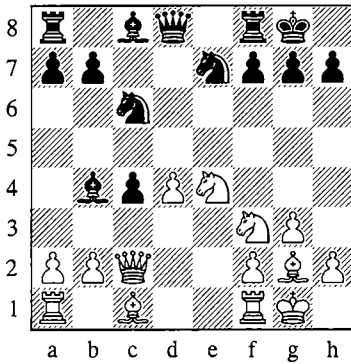
11... ♙xe4?! 12. ♙xe4 ♞xd4 13. ♞c2  
11... ♞xd4 12. ♜xf5 ♜xf5 13. ♞g4 ♞d7  
is not so clear. For example: 14. ♜c3 ♙xc3  
15.bxc3 0–0 16. ♙e4 g6 17. ♞d1 ♞e6 18. ♙d5  
♞f6 19. ♞xc4 ♞ad8 20.h4 h6 ½–½ Duran  
Rubies – Lopez de Lerma Ruiz, e-mail 2006.  
12.a3 ♙a5 13. ♜c5 ♞xd4 14. ♜xe6 fxe6  
15. ♞h5† g6 16. ♞e2 ♞d8 17. ♞xe6 ♞d6  
18. ♞e2 ♞d3?

18...0–0 19. ♙h6

19. ♙xc6†

1–0 Arencibia – Bruzon, Santa Clara 2005.  
On 19...bxc6 comes 20. ♞e5 hitting a5 and  
h8.

c) 10...0-0 11.♖c2

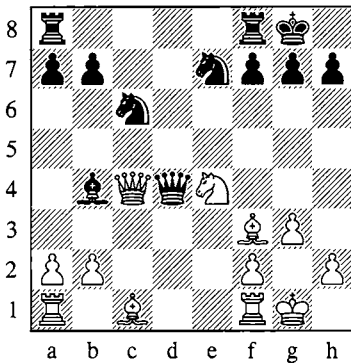


11...♗g4

11...♗f5 12.♘h4 and Black is in trouble, or 11...♞d5 12.♗e3 ♘g6 13.♘h4 ♞b5 14.♘xg6 hxg6 15.a3 ♗e7 16.d5! ♘a5 17.d6 ♗d8 18.♘c3 ♞a6 19.♙ad1± Reshevsky – Stahlberg, Zürich 1953. The d-pawn is a monster.

12.♞xc4 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♞xd4

13...♘xd4 14.♗g2 ♞c8? 15.♞xb4 ♘c2 16.♘f6† gxf6 17.♞g4† ♘g6 18.♙b1± Gual – Moskalenko, Paretana 2000.



14.♞b3±

14.♞e2 is also possible.

14...♘e5

On 14...♘f5!? 15.a3 ♗e7 White can choose between 16.♙d1 ♞b6 17.♞xb6 axb6 18.♘c3± with a pleasant ending, or the pawn grab 16.♞xb7 ♘e5 17.♗g2 ♙ab8 18.♞a6.

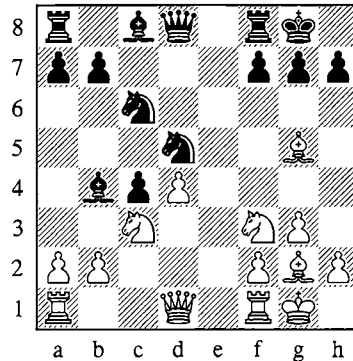
15.♗g2 ♞c4 16.♞xc4 ♘xc4 17.a3 ♗a5 18.♘c5± Black could not defend b7 in Gordenko – Arutiunov, Kiev 2002.

We have seen the problems with 9...dxe4, so let's return to the position after 9...0-0:

10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♗g5

This is the most annoying line for Black.

11.♘xd5 ♞xd5 12.♗e3 ♗f5 13.♘e5 also looks promising for White although Black has scored okay after either 13...♞b5 or 13...♗e4.



11...♞a5

11...f6 is somewhat inferior: 12.♘xd5 ♞xd5 13.♘e5 ♞b5 14.a4 ♞a6 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.♗d2 ♗xd2 17.♞xd2± ♗e6 18.♙f1 ♗f7 19.♙e7 ♙ad8 20.♞c3 ♙fe8 21.♙xe8† ♙xe8 22.♗f1 ♙d8 23.a5 ♞b5 24.♙c1± The weak pawns on the c-file begin to tell, Tregubov – Moskalenko, Alushta 1994.

Also 11...♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♗e7 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.♘e5 ♘d5 15.♙c1 ♗e6 16.♞e2 ♙c8 17.f4 ♙c7 18.f5 ♗c8 19.♞f3 ♘f6 20.♞f4± gave White a good grip, Brooks – Parkinen, corr. 2000.

12.♘xd5 ♞xd5 13.a3 ♗a5 14.♘e5 ♞b5 15.a4 ♞a6 16.♘xc6 bxc6 17.♞c2 ♗e6 18.♙f1 ♙ab8 19.♗f1± ♞b6

Black forces a lot of exchanges, but the problems remain.

20.♗xc4 ♞xd4 21.♗xe6 ♙xb2

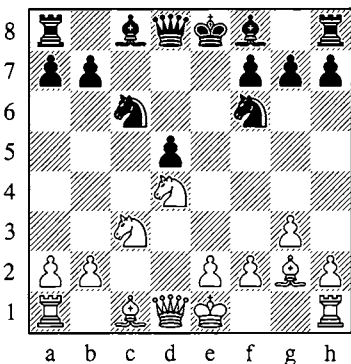
Or 21...fxe6 22.♗e3.

22.♗e3 ♙xc2 23.♗xd4 ♙xc1† 24.♙xc1 fxe6 25.♙xc6 ♙b8 26.♗xa7 ♙b4 27.♙a6 ♙xa4 28.♙g2 ♙a1 29.♗d4 ♙d1 30.♙a8† ♙f7 31.♙a7† ♙e8 32.♗xg7±

White managed to win the ending in Timoschenko – Tseitlin, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

### 7.♠g2 ♘e7

In the old days many Black players did not understand the subtleties of the opening and prematurely exchanged pawns in the centre just opening the position for White's initiative: 7...cxd4 8.♘xd4



### 8...♗b6

Safer but not quite good enough is 8...♙c5 9.♘b3 ♘b4 (or 9...♙b6 10.0-0 d4 11.♘a4 0-0 12.♘xb6 axb6 [12...♗xb6 13.♙g5] 13.♗d3 ♙e8 14.♙d1 ♙g4 15.f3 ♙h5 16.♘xd4 ♘xd4 17.♗xd4 ♗xd4† 18.♙xd4 ♙xe2 19.♙d2 with a good ending, Breazu – Jensen, corr. 1991) 10.0-0 ♙xc3 (10...♙e6 11.♙g5 could transpose) 11.bxc3 0-0 12.♙g5 ♙e6 (or 12...♙g4 13.h3) 13.♘c5 ♗e7 14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.c4 dxc4 16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♗d4 ♗d8 (no better is 17...♗b4 18.♙xf6 ♙xf6 19.♙ab1 ♗a4 20.♙b7 with an initiative, Varnusz – Lengyel, Budapest 1958) 18.♙xf6 ♙xf6 19.♗xc4 ♗d5 20.♙ac1± Rubinstein – Marshall, Breslau 1912. White has the better pawn structure and a nice positional advantage. Of course the great Rubinstein won the ending.

8...♙e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♙g5 is the mainline.

### 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.0-0 ♙e6

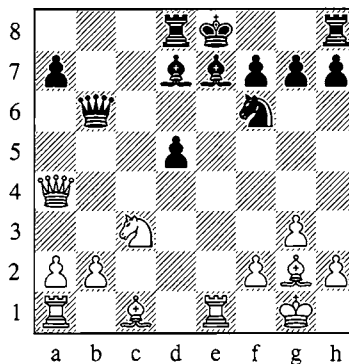
Worse is 10...♙a6 11.♗a4 ♙c4 12.b3 ♙b5

13.♗f4± ♙e7 14.♙e3 ♗b7 15.♘xb5 ♗xb5 16.♗c7 ♙a3 17.♗e5† ♘f8 18.b4! ♗xb4 19.♙ab1 ♗d6 20.♗c3 1-0 Rubinstein – Salwe, Vilnius 1909.

### 11.e4!

Another classic game continued 11.♘a4 ♗a5 12.♙e3 ♙c8 13.a3 c5 14.♘xc5. A fine positional combination that looks very promising. 14...♙xc5 15.b4 ♙xb4 16.axb4 ♗xb4 17.♙d4 0-0 18.♙xf6 gxf6 19.♙xa7 But it turns out that there are too few pieces left. 19...♙c4 20.e3 ♙fc8 21.♙a1 d4 22.exd4 ♙xd4 23.♗f3 ♘g7 24.♙fb1 ♗d6 25.h3 ♙c2 26.♙d1 ♙a2 27.♙ac1 ½-½ Rubinstein – Tarrasch, San Sebastian 1912.

11...♙d8 12.exd5 cxd5 13.♗a4† ♙d7 14.♙e1† ♙e7



### 15.♙xe7†! ♘xe7 16.♗a3† ♗d6

Another game went 16...♘e8 17.♙e3 d4 18.♙xd4! ♗xd4 19.♘b5 ♙xb5 20.♙e1† ♘e4 21.♙xe4† ♗xe4 22.♙xe4 and White won in Divanbaigyzand – Kaminski, corr. 1999.

### 17.♗xa7±

With a pawn for the exchange and the black king caught in the centre, White is much better.

### 17...♙a8 18.♗d4 ♙c6 19.♙f4 ♗e6 20.♙h3!

An elegant finish.

20...♗xh3 21.♗c5† ♘d8 22.♗b6† ♘e7 23.♗xc6 ♙hd8 24.♗c5† ♘e8 25.♙e1† ♗e6 26.♙xe6† fxe6 27.♙c7 ♙d7 28.♗c6 ♘f7 29.♗xa8 ♙xc7 30.♗b8 1-0

D. Fischer – Schaar, corr. 2000.

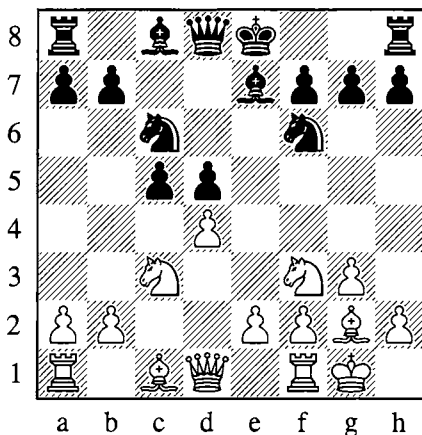
Black can also try to develop the light-squared bishop to either e6 or g4:

7...♙e6 8.0–0 h6 (8...♙e7 transposes to later variations.) Black is preventing ♗g5, so White just takes the bishop out on the other flank: 9.b3 a6 (9...♞c8 10.♙b2 b6 11.♞c1 ♙e7 12.e3 0–0 13.♗e2 ♙d6 14.♗e5 ♞e7 15.♗xc6 ♞xc6 16.dxc5 ♞xc5 17.♞xc5 ♙xc5 18.♗f4 ♞d8 19.♞a1± Ganguly – Dimakiling, Jakarta 2011.) 10.♙b2 ♞c8 11.e3 ♙e7 12.dxc5 ♙xc5 13.♗e2 0–0 14.♗f4 ♗e4 15.♞c1 ♙e7 16.♗d4 ♗xd4 17.♞xc8 ♞xc8 18.♙xd4 ♞c6 19.♞a1 ♙f6 20.♙xf6 ♗xf6 21.♞c1 ♞d7 22.♞c3± This is a dream position against the isolated d-pawn, Roiz – Akobian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

7...♙g4 8.♙e3 cxd4 9.♗xd4 ♙b4 10.0–0 0–0 And now, for instance, White can create positional pressure with the new move 11.♞b3±.

Finally, 7...c4 8.0–0 ♙b4 is a mix-up of two ideas. It could be met by 9.♙g5 ♙xc3 10.bxc3 h6 11.♙xf6 ♞xf6 12.♗d2 followed by e2-e4 with pleasant play.

### 8.0–0



### 8...0–0

8...cxd4 9.♗xd4 0–0 10.♙g5 transposes to the mainline.

There is an independent option:

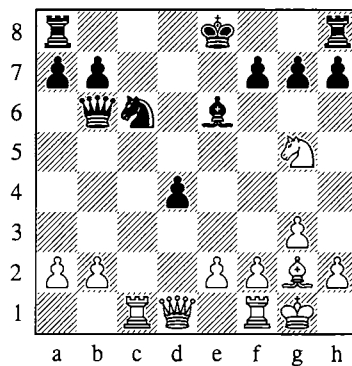
8...♙e6 9.dxc5

The text is more promising than 9.♙g5 ♗e4! 10.♙xe7 ♞xe7 11.♞c1 ♗xc3 12.♞xc3 c4 which is okay for Black.

9...♙xc5 10.♙g5 d4

10...0–0 transposes to the 9...♙e6 line is better. 10...♙e7 11.♗d4±

11.♙xf6 ♞xf6 12.♗e4 ♞e7 13.♗xc5 ♞xc5 14.♞c1 ♞b6 15.♗g5!



White takes the opportunity to play aggressively.

15...♙xa2

Not 15...0–0 16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♞c2 g6 18.♗xe6 fxe6 19.♞xc6± Tukmakov – Guera, Crans Montana 1999.

16.♞xc6

The novelty 16.♞d3 h6 17.♙xc6† bxc6 18.♞e4† ♗f8 19.♞xc6 also seems strong.

16...bxc6 17.♞a4 ♙b3 18.♙xc6† ♗d8 19.♞a3 White has good compensation.

19...♞xc6 20.♞xb3 ♞e8 21.♞xf7 ♞d7 22.♞f4 h6 23.♗f7† ♗e7 24.♗e5 ♞e6

This was Yaksin – Rakhmanov, Voronezh 2007, and now 25.♞a1 keeps the pressure.

### 9.♙g5

And we are back where we started. Black must react to the strong pressure on d5, and so he has three sensible moves: 9...c4, 9...♙e6 or 9...cxd4. Much less sensible is 9...h6?! when 10.♙xf6 ♙xf6 11.dxc5 is simply good for White. We will study these moves later in this chapter.

**Conclusion:** Black has an interesting set-up with 6...c4 7.♗g2 ♖b4 8.0-0 ♜ge7, but with 9.e4 White takes the initiative and gets the better chances. Otherwise there are few sensible ways to deviate. An early ...cxd4 opens the position to White's benefit and a premature development of the light-squared bishop tends to increase the problems rather than solve them.

## The 9...c4 Variation

This was once a popular sideline, but Black's results with it have faded. Often White seems to get a small but nagging positional advantage.

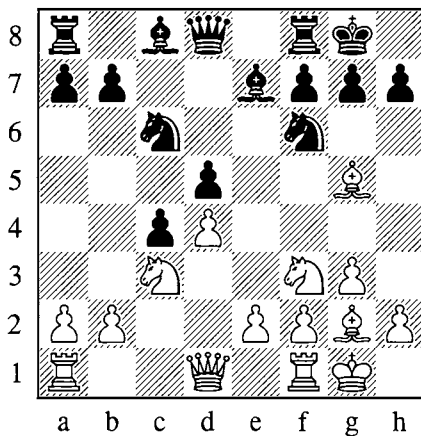
The following game is an excellent display by the young Chinese super-talent Wang Hao.

### GAME 62

Wang Hao – Iuldachev

India 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♙f3 ♜c6 6.g3 ♜f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗g5 c4



Black closes the position. The drawback of the move is that it releases the tension a bit too

soon: White takes the initiative by attacking the black centre.

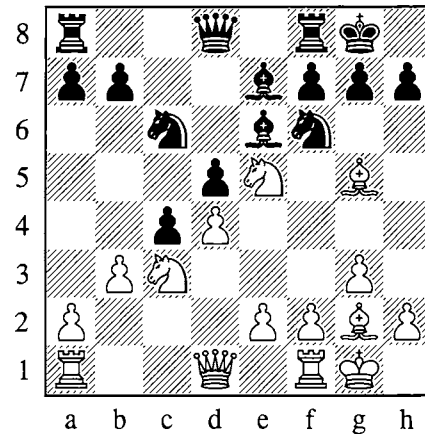
### 10.♙e5

This forward jump is very annoying for Black since 10...♙xe5 11.dxe5 would lose the d-pawn.

### 10...♗e6

Black had to reinforce d5.

### 11.b3



White continues the aggressive strategy and does not give Black time to consolidate.

### 11...♙a5

Black answers with an active move and tries to defend tactically.

11...cxb3 is a slight positional concession and after 12.♙xc6 bxc6 13.axb3 White is better. Play can continue 13...h6 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♙a4 ♗f5 16.♙d2 ♙d6 17.♙c5± P.H. Nielsen – Rogers, Turin (ol) 2006.

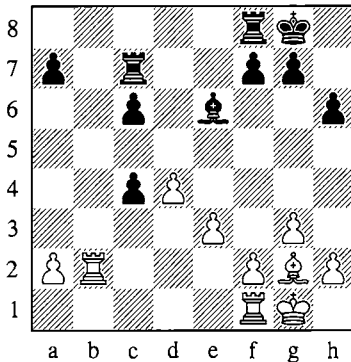
11...♙c8 12.bxc4 dxc4 13.♙b1 With strong pressure, for instance: 13...♙xd4 14.♙xb7

The most important alternative is:

11...h6

This new idea is heavily analysed in the aforementioned book *Grandmaster Repertoire 10: The Tarrasch Defence*. The critical position arises after:

12.♙xf6 ♖xf6 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.bxc4 dxc4  
15.e3 ♖a5  
15...c5 16.♗e4!  
16.♞c1 ♞ac8 17.♚a4 ♚xa4 18.♘xa4 ♙e7  
19.♗b2 ♙a3 20.♞c2 ♙xb2 21.♞xb2 ♞c7



Now White can try 22.♞c1. Aagaard and Ntirlis think it is just equal. I agree that the ending probably should be drawn, but I think White is slightly better.

The first practical test was A.S. Rasmussen – Aagaard, Denmark (ch) 2012, where White won, but an unfortunate early blunder was to blame after Jacob forgot his own analysis. More tests are needed to be sure of the verdict.

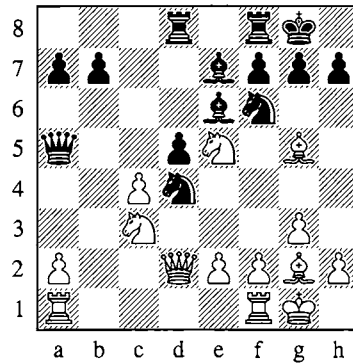
### 12.♚d2!

Precisely played. 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♗a4 has been played hundreds of times, but after 13...♞ab8 14.♚c2 ♞fc8 Black has good counterplay.

### 12...♙b4

Black again tries to be active.

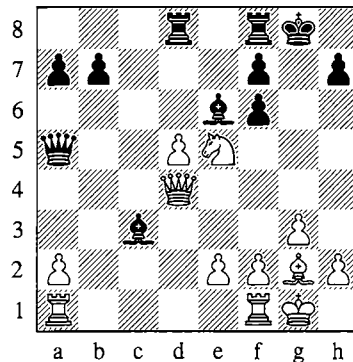
The alternative is the cunning 12...♞ad8. Now if 13.bxc4 ♘xd4! then this unexpected trick solves almost all of Black's problems.



Now there is a split:

14.♚xd4 dxc4 15.♚e3 ♙c5 Black wins the piece back, and White can hardly keep the game going. 16.♚f4 ♚xc3 17.♙xf6 gxf6 18.♚xf6 This was Malakhatchko – Meinhardt, Paris 2005, and now Black has a simple solution in 18...♙d6 when White does not have anything better than 19.♚g5† ♗h8 20.♚f6† ♗g8 with a draw.

Sargissian showed White can play more strongly: 14.cxd5 ♙b4 (Black has also tried 14...♚xc3 but after 15.♚xc3 ♘xe2† 16.♗h1 ♘xc3 17.dxe6 fxe6 18.♙xb7 White is a touch better) 15.♙xf6 gxf6 16.♚xd4 ♙xc3



17.♘c4! This was the new move (in an earlier game 17.♚h4 gave nothing). 17...♙xd4 18.♘xa5 ♙xa1 19.dxe6 ♙c3 20.e7 ♙xa5 21.exd8=♚ ♞xd8 22.♞b1 b6 23.♞c1 ♞d7 24.♙h3 ♞e7 25.e3 ♙b4 26.♞c4 ♙c5 27.♙f5

h6 28.♔g2± Sargissian – Halkias, Aix-les-Bains 2011. The ending is rather drawish and in the end the two players did indeed share the point. Before that, however, White had some pressure; you can play this position.

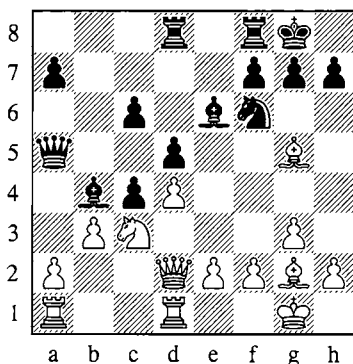
So, after 12...♞ad8 even though 13.bxc4 is playable after Sargissian's improvement, White should prefer:

13.♟xc6 bxc6 14.♞fd1

14.bxc4 dxc4 15.♙xc6 ♗b4 16.♞fc1 ♜b6 and Black wins the pawn back with fine play. 14.♟a4!? ♜xd2 15.♙xd2 cxb3 16.axb3 is a tempting try, but 16...♟e4 17.♙a5 ♞b8 18.♞fb1 ♙f5 gave Black enough counterplay in Brodsky – Ikonnikov, Le Touquet 2007. A possible improvement is 17.♙f4.

14...♙b4

This is Black's typical way of seeking active piece play.



Now White can take the opportunity to disrupt Black's kingside pawns with ♙xf6. However it is also possible to protect c3 with a rook, but which one?

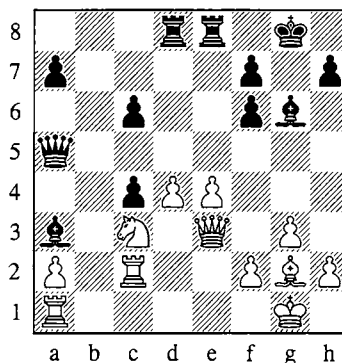
a) 15.♞ac1 c5! 16.♙xf6 gxf6 was fine for Black in Golod – Kristensen, Bornholm 2008. 17.bxc4 is answered by 17...cxd4! 18.♜xd4 ♙xc3 19.♜xc3 ♜xc3 20.♞xc3 dxc4 and Black's strong passed pawn even gives him the better chances in the ending.

b) The new move 15.♞dc1 is interesting though:

b1) Now 15...c5 is well met by 16.♙xf6 gxf6 17.bxc4 dxc4 18.d5! ♙xd5 19.♙xd5 ♙xc3 20.♜xc3 ♜xc3 21.♙xf7† ♞xf7 22.♞xc3± with a good rook ending. In this variation 17...cxd4 18.♜xd4 is no good because f6 hangs.

b2) So after 15.♞dc1 Black should probably try 15...♙a3, yet 16.♞c2 ♙f5 17.e4 looks good for White. Compared to the variation below, Black cannot play 17...♙g6 18.♟xd5! ♜xd2 19.♟xf6† gxf6 20.♙xd2 ♞xd4 21.♙e3±. This means Black is forced to take on e4 with the pawn, when White can play ♙xf6 followed by ♙xe4.

c) 15.♙xf6 gxf6 Black cannot take on c3 because of ♜g5 followed by mate. 16.♞dc1 ♙a3 17.♞c2 ♙f5 18.e4 ♙g6 19.bxc4 dxc4 20.♜e3 ♞fe8

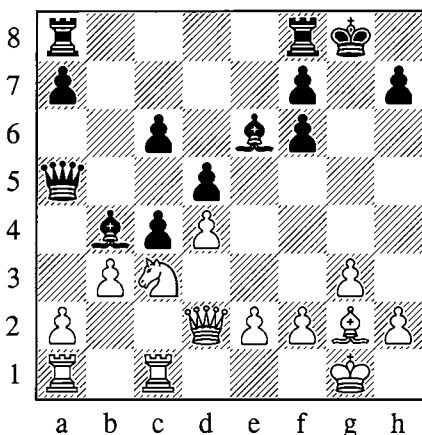


21.h4!? (21.♞d1 is more normal: 21...f5 and now 22.♟b1 ♙f8 23.♞xc4 or 22.♙f1!? fxe4 23.♙xc4 both look slightly better for White, but it is complicated and the advantage is far from stable.) 21...f5 22.♟b1 ♙f8 23.♟d2 fxe4 24.♞xc4 ♜d5 25.♞ac1 c5 26.♟b3 cxd4 27.♞xd4 ♜e5 28.♞xd8 ♞xd8 29.♜xa7 With a pawn more and some winning chances, Loginov – Yevseev, St Petersburg 2002.

13.♙xf6 gxf6

Not 13...♙xc3? 14.♖g5 g6 15.♗h6 and Black's ears will become red. Very red.

14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♗fc1

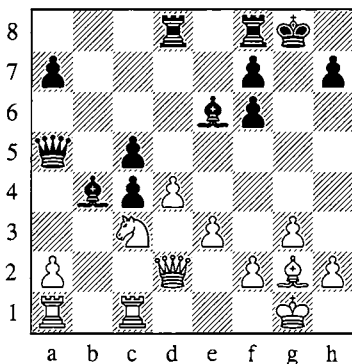


Black's active possibilities have more or less been exhausted and he is left with a permanently weakened pawn structure.

15...♗ac8

15...♙a3, with the hope 16.♗d1 ♖ab8∞, is refuted by 16.♞c2 ♙f5 17.e4.

15...♗ad8 16.bxc4 dxc4 17.e3 c5

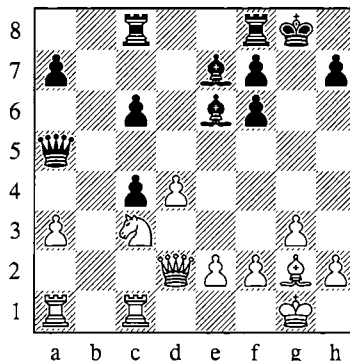


18.d5! ♙xc3 19.♗xc3 ♙xd5 20.♙xd5 ♗xd5 21.♗c2 ♖b8 22.♗xc4 ♖b4 23.♖b1 ♗xb1† 24.♗xb1 ♗b6 25.♗c2 f5 26.♗f4± With pressure against Black's weak pawns, Mamedyarov – Akobian, Gibraltar 2012.

16.bxc4 dxc4 17.a3! ♙xc3

The text is too submissive, but 17...♙xa3? did not work either. The pin on the a-file is lethal after 18.♗a2.

17...♙e7 is somewhat passive. On the other hand it does not simplify into a worse endgame, so probably Black should try it.



White's choice is how far to push the e-pawn:

18.e4 ♗fd8 19.d5 cxd5 20.exd5 ♙f5 21.♗f4 ♙g6 and Black was okay, Muhammad – Bluvshstein, New York 2003.

I originally wrote: "White should settle for a move such as 18.e3, just securing his structure and keeping a positional edge." Now my suggestion has been tried: 18.e3 ♗fd8 19.♗c2 ♖g7 20.♙f1 ♗c7 21.♗a2 c5 22.d5! ♙xd5 23.♘xd5 ♗xd5 Thingstad – Summerscale, London 2011. Now 24.♗xc4!N ♖e5 25.♙d3± and White has a strong attack against the weakened black kingside.

18.♗xc3

White goes for the ending.

He could also keep the pieces on:

18.♗xc3 ♗fd8 19.♗ac1 ♖d6

Better is 19...♖g7 20.♗f4 ♗g5, but 20.e3 keeps some advantage.

20.♗f4 ♗cd8 21.e3 ♖g7 22.h4!± c5 23.d5! ♙xd5 24.♙xd5 ♗xd5 25.♗xc4 ♗b6 26.♗g4†

♠h8 27. ♖f3

White has an initiative in the heavy piece middlegame.

27...f5

A better try was 27...♗g7.

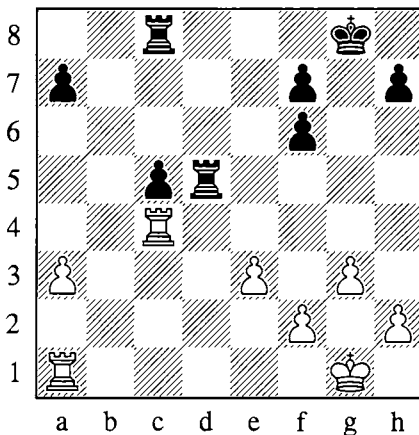
28.e4! fxe4 29. ♖xf7 ♗d6 30. ♖xc5 ♖xc5  
31. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 32. ♖f6† ♗g8 33. ♖xd8†

With a won queen ending.

33...♗f7 34. ♖d7† ♗f6 35. ♖xh7 ♖xa3  
36. ♖xe4 a5 37. h5 a4 38. ♖g6† ♗e7 39. ♖g7†  
♗e6 40. ♗g2 ♖b3 41. h6 ♖d5† 42. f3 1–0

Loginov – Monin, Budapest 1994.

18... ♖xc3 19. ♖xc3 ♖fd8 20.e3 c5 21.d5!  
♗xd5 22. ♗xd5 ♖xd5 23. ♖xc4



White has a pleasant rook ending. He can double rooks on the c-file and put pressure on the weak c5-pawn. At the same time the rook on c4 is exceptionally well placed because it can switch to the kingside along the fourth rank and shoot at the weak black pawns there as well.

23... ♖b8 24. ♖ac1 ♖b5

In another game Black tried to play as actively as possible even at the cost of a pawn: 24... ♖b3 25. ♖a4 ♖b2 26. ♖xa7 (better looks 26. ♖cc4! with the idea 26... ♖dd2 27. ♖f4±) 26... ♖dd2 27. ♖f1 c4 In M. Hoffmann – Kiik, Ohrid 2009, Black had some compensation, but it eventually slipped away: 28. ♗g2 c3

29. ♖c7 ♖dc2 (perhaps 29...c2 30. ♖c1 ♖a2 ♖a2 31. a4 ♗f8 32. g4 ♗g7 33. ♗g3 h6 34. h3 ♖a3 35. ♖d1 ♖ca2 36. ♖d7! ♖xa4 37. ♖cc7 c2 38. ♖xf7† ♗g8 39. ♖xf6 1–0

25. ♗g2 ♗g7 26. h4 ♗f8 27. ♖1c2 ♖a5 28. a4 ♖d6 29. ♖f4

29. ♖xc5 ♖xa4 30. ♖c7, to get on the seventh rank, was not so clear after 30...a6 31. ♖a7 f5 32. ♖cc7 ♖f6.

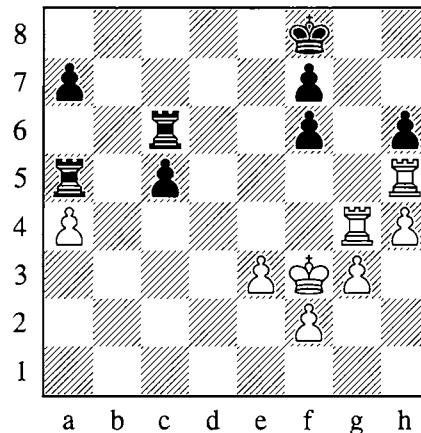
29... ♗e7 30. ♗f3 ♗e6 31. ♖e4† ♗d7 32. ♖g4 ♗e7 33. ♖cc4 ♖b6 34. ♖gf4 ♖e6 35. ♖c2 ♖c6 36. ♗g4 ♗f8 37. ♖cc4 h6!†

It was better to stay passive with 37... ♗g7 when 38. ♗h5 ♖ca6 39. ♖g4† ♗f8 is nothing for White because of 40. ♗h6? f5†.

38. ♗f3 ♖b6 39. ♖f5 ♖ba6

39... ♖c6 40. ♖h5 ♗g7 41. ♖g4† ♗h7 42. ♖d5 ♖c7 43. ♗e2±

40. ♖d5 ♖c6 41. ♖d8† ♗e7 42. ♖d5 ♗f8 43. ♖h5 ♗g7 44. ♖g4† ♗f8



Giving up the h-pawn, but 44... ♗h7 45. ♖d5 ♖c7 46. ♗e2 was also bad. The black pieces are scattered all over without any communication.

45. ♗e2

There is no hurry. First the king takes the enemy passed pawn under control.

45...♖a6 46.♗xh6 c4 47.♗h8† ♔e7 48.♗e4† ♔d6 49.♗d4† ♔c5 50.h5

White is winning.

50...f5 51.♗f8 ♖xa4 52.♗xf7 ♖a2† 53.♗d2 ♖a1 54.♗d1 ♖a2† 55.♗d2 ♖a1 56.♗xf5† ♔b4 57.♗b2† ♔c3 58.♗bb5 ♖a2† 59.♔f3 ♗b2 60.♗bc5 ♗bb6 61.g4 ♔d3 62.g5 c3 63.h6 c2 64.h7 1-0

**Conclusion:** 9...c4 solves the problem with the isolated d-pawn, because Black doesn't get one! What he often gets instead is a weak c-pawn, so at the end of the day he has not achieved anything.

### The 9...♗e6 Variation

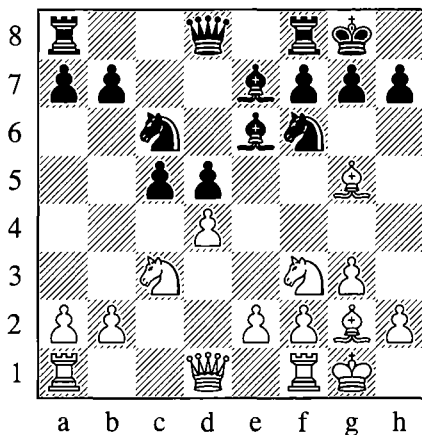
This looks like a solid choice, but White can force a very favourable ending.

## GAME 63

Yusupov – Spraggett

Quebec 1989

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♖f3 ♖c6 6.g3 ♖f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗g5 ♗e6



Just developing the last piece and defending d5. Additionally Black gets the option of playing ...♗e4. The reason the move has never caught on is that White can force a superior ending with good winning chances and almost no risk of losing.

### 10.dxc5

Keeping the tension with 10.♗c1 is of course also possible.

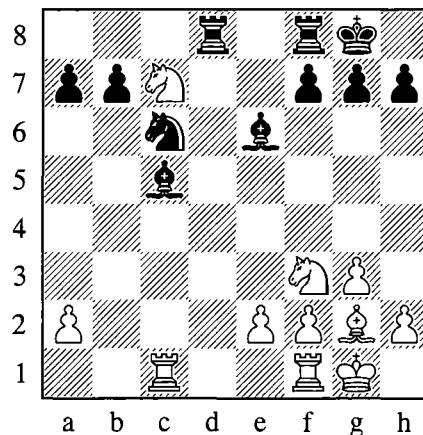
### 10...♗xc5

Not 10...d4 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♗e4.

### 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♗xd5 ♗xb2

Restoring material equality. There now follows an instructive transition to an interesting endgame.

### 13.♗c7 ♖ad8 14.♗c1! ♗xc1 15.♖axc1



The bishop on c5 hangs, so Black must either move it or defend it. White will then take on e6 eliminating the pair of bishops and weakening Black's pawn structure.

### 15...♗e7

Black wants to redeploy the bishop to f6 where it stands well. Let's have a closer look at the alternatives.

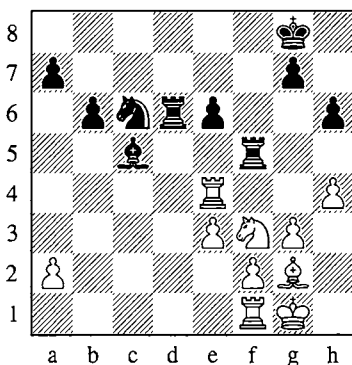
15...♗b6 16.♗xe6 fxe6 17.♗c4! A nice square:

White is slightly better. The following is a typical development of events: 17...h6 18.h4 ♜d6 19.♞e4 ♞f6 20.♙h3 Putting pressure on e6. 20...♗f7 21.♗g2 ♗e7 22.♞b1 ♞d5 23.♞b2 ♗d6 24.e3 ♗e5 25.♗d4 ♗d3 26.♞e2 ♙xd4? 27.exd4 e5? Black tries to solve all his problems in one go, but he missed White's next: 28.♞d2! Winning material. 28...♞xd4 29.♞xd4† exd4 30.♞xd3 And White won in L.B. Hansen – Antonio, Novi Sad (ol) 1990.

15...b6 16.♗xe6 fxe6 17.e3 h6 18.♞c4! ♞d6 19.♞e4

Once again we see this manoeuvre.

19...♞f5 20.h4



20...♗f7

In some correspondence games Black has played 20...♞fd5, but it does not really alter the position. White can play 21.♞b1 ♗f7 22.♙f1 and have the usual small positional pull.

21.♗h2 ♗e7 22.g4

White can expand on the kingside.

22...♞f8 23.g5 ♞d5 24.♙h3!? ♞d6

Or 24...♞xf3 25.♞xe6† ♗d7 26.♞g6†.

25.♗g3 ♞e8 26.♞c1 ♗d8 27.♞cc4

White keeps finding new ways to regroup.

Black can never completely neutralize the pressure.

27...a5?! 28.a4 ♗d7 29.♞c1 ♞d5 30.♙f1!

There is a nice square on b5.

30...♞e7 31.♙b5 ♗c7?

Necessary was 31...♙d6† 32.♗g2 ♞c5 but then 33.♞ec4 and White will still have all the fun.

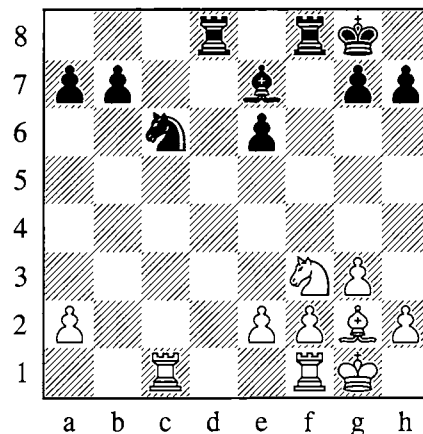
32.♗d4! ♗d8 33.♙c4

Winning at least a pawn.

33...♙d6† 34.♗g4 ♞c5 35.♞d1 hxg5 36.hxg5 ♗c8 37.♗xe6 ♗xe6 38.♞xd6 ♞xg5† 39.♗h4 ♞g6 40.♞dx6 ♞h6† 41.♗g5 1–0

Huzman – Stripunsky, Simferopol 1990.

## 16.♗xe6 fxe6



The position looks completely equal, especially with the opposite-coloured bishops. In fact, that is exactly wrong – because of the opposite-coloured bishops, White has a long lasting positional initiative.

I know this may be hard to believe, but I will explain the details in depth within the next few moves.

## 17.♞c4!

A key move. On c4 the rook is excellently placed. It can shift between the two flanks on the fourth rank, and it is very safe on a light square – as a consequence of the opposite-coloured bishops, White is clearly superior on the light squares. If you played through the two examples in the last note then this move would not come as a big surprise, but you

are probably lazy like me and just skimmed the text. That's a pity! Go back! Set up the position on your board or find the games in your database and see them for real. They will help you to get a feeling for the position. This particular variation is about excellent endgame technique and profound chess understanding.

### 17...♙f6

Also possible is 17...♞d6 18.♞fc1 ♞fd8 to exchange rooks. 19.h4 ♞d1† 20.♔h2 ♞xc1 21.♞xc1 h6 22.♕e1! (22.e3± was the normal set-up) 22...♞d2 23.♙xc6 bxc6 24.♞c2 ♞xc2 25.♕xc2 Kharitonov – Legky, Spasskoe 1996, and White had a better technical endgame.

### 18.e3!

Taking control of d4 and preventing the black knight from landing there to simplify. If there only remained opposite-coloured bishops the draw would be inevitable, but as long as there are other pieces on the board the opposite-coloured bishops actually help the aggressor because the weaker party cannot neutralize the bishop.

### 18...♞d6 19.h4!

White has a pawn majority on the kingside so it is natural to take some more space there. Furthermore White plans ♙h3, but it would be a bit silly to put the bishop in front of the h-pawn.

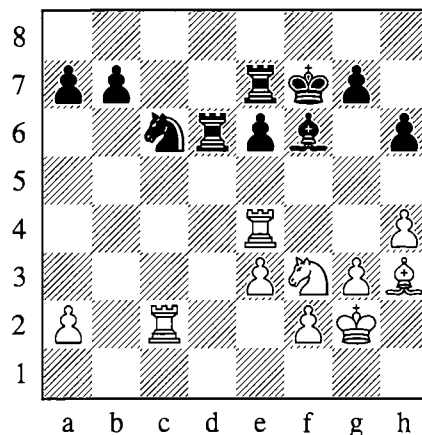
### 19...h6 20.♞e4

A strong centralization and it also prevents Black from playing ...♕e5, a move that so far has been impossible anyway because it would lose the b7-pawn.

### 20...♞fd8 21.♙h3

With concrete pressure on the weak spot e6.

### 21...♔f7 22.♔g2 ♞e8 23.♞c1 ♞e7 24.♞c2



Note the pattern in the diagram: White puts his pieces on white and his pawns on black to restrict Black's forces.

### 24...b6 25.♞f4 ♔g6 26.g4

The next phase begins. White cannot enjoy his position forever: he has to do something.

### 26...♙a1 27.♞c1 ♙b2 28.♞c2 ♙a1 29.a4

He could also have played the sharper 29.h5† ♔h7 30.g5 with an initiative.

### 29...♕e5

Black uses the opportunity to exchange the knights and simplify.

### 30.♕xe5† ♙xe5 31.♞f8 ♞dd7 32.f4 ♞c7 33.♞d2 ♙c3 34.♞d6

But White still has his rooks and he keeps finding active possibilities.

### 34...♔h7 35.g5 hxg5

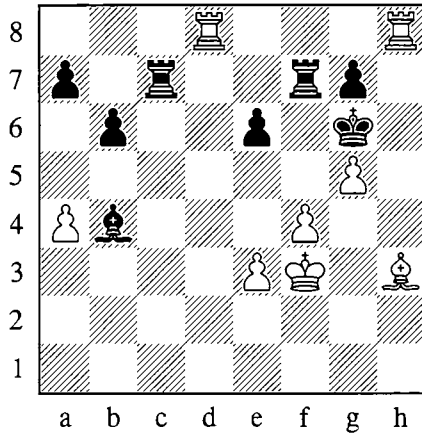
A careless exchange. Better was 35...g6 with chances to hold.

### 36.hxg5 ♙b4

Or 36...g6 37.♙xe6 ♙b4 38.♞d1! (that's the difference with an open h-file) 38...♞xe6 39.♞h1† ♔g7 40.♞fh8 and now to avoid mate Black has to play the drastic 40...♞c2† 41.♔f3 ♞xe3† 42.♔xe3 ♔f7 or maybe just resign.

**37.♞dd8**

Yusupov misses the wonderful mate 37.g6†!  
 ♖xg6 38.♙f5† ♖h6 39.♞h8#. However, the  
 move played wins rather easily all the same.

**37...♗g6 38.♗f3 ♞f7 39.♞h8**

The black king is trapped in a danger-zone.  
 White has ♙g4-h5 ready.

**39...e5 40.♙g4 exf4 41.♞d5!**

Now there is no defence against ♙h5†.

**41...fxe3† 42.♗g3**

1-0

**Conclusion:** Who says endings are boring?

**The 9...cxd4 Variation**

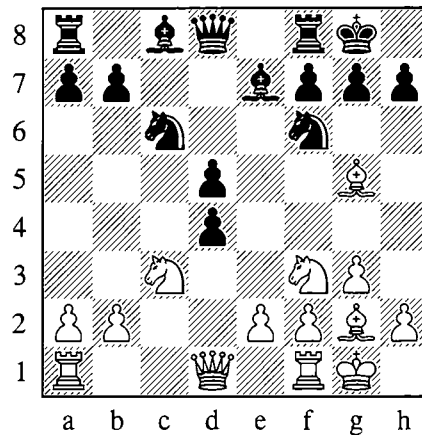
Finally we have reached the big mainline.

**GAME 64**

**Bocharov – Bezgodov**

Kazan 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3  
 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♙g2 ♙e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♙g5  
 cxd4



The mainline. Black releases the tension and  
 accepts the isolated d-pawn. He follows up by  
 hitting the bishop on g5 and thereby removing  
 most of the imminent pressure on d5.  
 However, as we saw in the Karpov – Kasparov  
 game, the d-pawn is a long-term weakness.

**10.♘xd4 h6**

This is almost universally played. Instead  
 10...♞e8 is well answered with 11.♞a4  
 ♙d7 12.♞fd1, as in the main game, while  
 the seemingly aggressive 10...♞b6 quickly  
 backfires after 11.♘b3 ♙e6 12.♙e3± with  
 control over the important squares d4 and  
 c5.

**11.♙e3**

White withdraws the bishop and overprotects  
 the important square in front of the isolated  
 pawn. Black's point was that 11.♙xf6 ♙xf6  
 is nothing for White because the knight hangs  
 on d4.

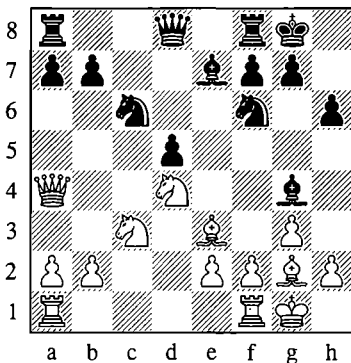
The other retreat 11.♙f4 is sometimes played  
 when Black answers 11...♙g4 with typical  
 Tarrasch play.

**11...♞e8**

A sound and deep move that prepares for  
 counterplay along the e-file, for instance after  
 ...♙f8 next.

If Black instead develops the light-squared bishop White will most probably get a good version of the game:

11...♙g4 12.♞a4



12...♞d7

12...♘a5 13.♞ad1 ♘c4 14.♙c1 ♘b6 15.♞b3 ♞d7 is similar to the next game, but here Black has a somewhat improved version. Instead White can play 14.♞b3 as suggested by Stefan Bücker and mentioned in *Grandmaster Repertoire 10*; this looks promising.

13.♞fd1±

White has pressure.

13...♙h3 14.♙h1

And to keep the pressure he avoids simplifications.

14...♞fd8 15.♘b3 ♞f5 16.♞b5

Black definitely had some problems to solve in Smejkal – Marjanovic, Vrsac 1977.

11...♙e6 12.♞a4 ♞d7 13.♞fd1± again is nice for White.

12.♞a4

A very direct approach that I like a lot, but also interesting is Karpov's direct attack on the d-pawn with 12.♞b3.

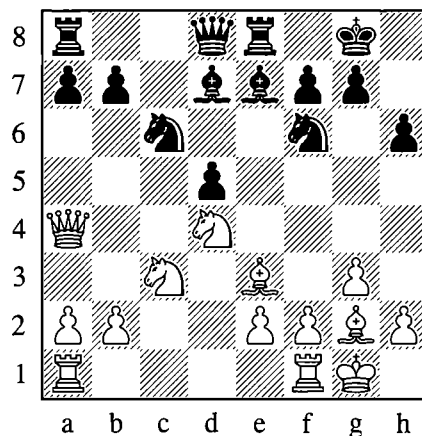
The natural 12.♞c1 ♙f8 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♘a4 ♙d7 15.♙c5 gains control over the dark squares: 15...♙xc5 16.♘xc5 ♙g4 17.♞e1 ♞a5 Yet Black has adequate

counterplay, as has been confirmed in many games.

12...♙d7

The pressure on the knight on c6 was a little awkward to meet. The main alternative 12...♘a5 is covered in the next game.

A sequence like 12...♘d4 13.♙xd4 gives White a dream Tarrasch position where Black has no counterplay, for instance 13...♙d7 14.♞b3 ♙c6 15.♞ad1 preparing ♙xf6 and ♙xd5.



13.♞fd1!

This is the rook we would rather place on d1, if possible. Of course ♞ad1 is playable too but that rook could be useful on c1.

To prove my point Suba has on several occasions started with:

13.♞ac1

When play can continue:

13...♘a5 14.♞c2 ♞c8 15.♞d3 ♘c4

15...♙g4?! 16.♘f5 ♙b4 17.♘xd5 ♘xd5

18.♙xd5 ♞f6 was Gajic – Madl, Thessaloniki

1984, when 19.♞xc8 ♞xc8 20.♘h6†! gxh6

21.♞e4, hitting both bishops, would have

won instantly.

16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.♙xd5 ♘xe3 18.♞xe3 ♙f6

19.♞d3

White has won a pawn though Black has some compensation, Suba – Vladimirov, Oviedo 1993.

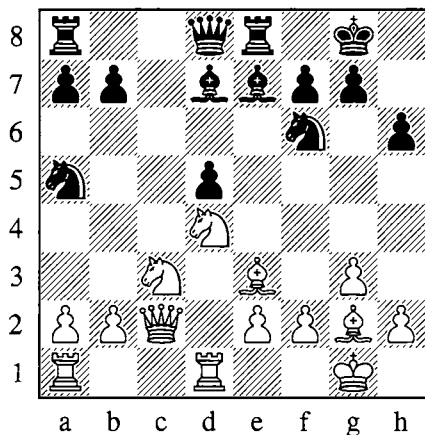
### 13...♖a5

There was no easy solution.

13...♖b4 14.♞b3 a5 15.a4 This gave White a small but steady advantage in Kaidanov – Akobian, Las Vegas 2001. After 15...♙c5?! 16.♖xd5 ♖fxd5 17.♙xd5 ♖xd5 18.♞xd5 ♞e7 19.♞d3 ♙xd4 20.♞xd4 ♙c6 21.♞d6 ♞xd6 22.♞xd6 ♞e4 23.b3 the advantage was transformed into an endgame with a pawn more.

13...♙c5 This looks active but costs the pair of bishops after 14.♖e6! fxe6 15.♙xc5 b6 16.♙d6. White is on top, for instance: 16...♖a5 17.♞d4 ♖c4 18.♙e5 ♞c8 19.♞ab1 ♞e7 20.h3 ♞c5 21.♙xf6 ♞xf6 22.♞xf6 gxf6 23.♖e4 dxe4 24.♞xd7± 1–0 Wang Yue – Petrosian, Tiayuan 2005.

### 14.♞c2

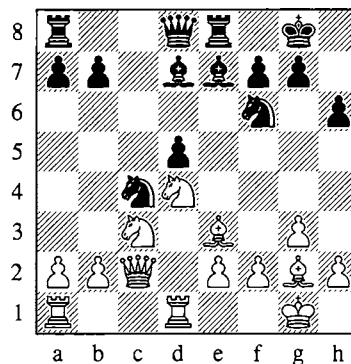


White's position is harmonious, while the black bishop on d7 is passive and the knight on a5 is temporarily out of play. In addition to all that, d5 is hanging.

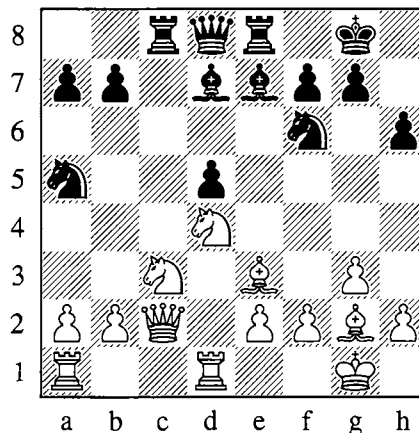
### 14...♞c8

Pinning the c3-knight is the most obvious move.

Also possible is 14...♖c4.



15.♖xd5 (White can also just move the bishop with 15.♙f4. For example: 15...♖b6 16.a4 a5 17.♞b3± And d5 was still weak in Korotylev – Gunina, Moscow 2012.) 15...♖xd5 16.♙xd5 ♖xe3 17.fxe3 This hardly gives Black enough for a pawn. For example: 17...♙g5 18.e4 ♞b6 19.♞b3 ♞xb3 20.axb3± Black had some serious defending ahead of him in Birarov – Soltau, corr. 2001.

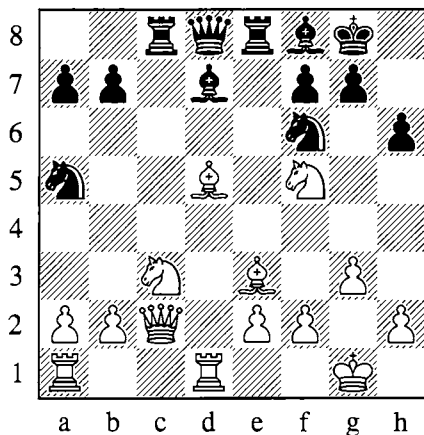


### 15.♖f5!

A standard move in such positions. Either Black must sacrifice the d5-pawn or part with the dark-squared bishop.

**15...♙f8**

He chooses the former, as most players do. Instead 15...♙e6 16.♘xe7† ♜xe7 17.♙d4 ♞d7 18.♞ac1± was very promising for White in Cvitan – Handoko, Zagreb 1985.

**16.♙xd5**

Winning a pawn. White should not be afraid to give up this otherwise important bishop as Black cannot generate a dangerous attack.

**16...♘xd5**

Black takes the bishop and gets some positional compensation. The alternatives have received rough treatment:

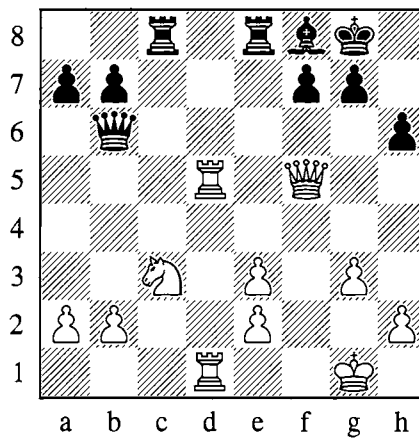
16...♞e5 17.♘xh6†! gxh6 18.♞g6† ♖h8 19.♙xf7 ♞xe3 This is Coelho – Cavalcanti, Guarulhos 2005, and here the computer likes 20.♞xd7! ♞xd7 21.♘d5! when White is winning.

16...♘c4 This is the last word from a stubborn Tarrasch player. 17.♞b3 ♘xd5 18.♞xd5 ♞e5 19.♞xe5 ♘xe5 Verleur – Soltau, corr. 2006, and now 20.♞d1 must be better for White.

**17.♞xd5 ♘c4**

Now Khenkin has tried to keep the bishop with 18.♙f4 and Ionov was tempted to take a

second pawn with 18.♙xa7, but Bocharov has other intentions.

**18.♞ad1! ♙xf5 19.♞xf5 ♘xe3 20.fxe3 ♞b6****21.♞d7!**

Going for the attack.

**21...♞xb2**

21...♞xe3† 22.♖g2 ♞e6 defends f7 but drops the b-pawn.

**22.♞xf7† ♖h8 23.♘d5?!**

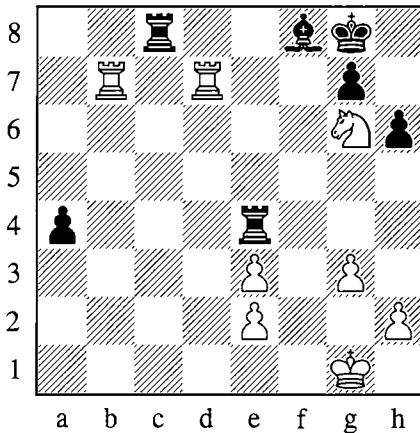
White missed the great move 23.♞1d6! when the threat is ♞xh6† mating, and ...♙xd6 is impossible because of the pressure on g7. The forced 23...♙e7 24.♞xe7 ♞xe7 25.♞xe7 ♞xc3 26.♞d8† ♞xd8 27.♞xd8† ♖h7 28.♞d3† ♞xd3 29.exd3 leads to a lost pawn ending for Black.

**23...♞xa2 24.♞f3**

White still has active play on the light squares and in the end Black succumbs to the pressure.

**24...a5 25.♘f4 ♞c2 26.♞1d3 ♞c6 27.♞g4 ♞e4 28.♘g6† ♖g8 29.♞xe4 ♞xe4 30.♞xb7 a4 31.♞dd7**

The more accurate move order was 31.♘xf8 which would probably transpose to the game continuation.



31...Bg4?

The astonishing 31...Bxe3! 32.Qxf8 Bxe2 holds.

32.Qxf8 Bxf8 33.Ba7

Now White has good winning chances.

33...Be8 34.Qf2 Bf8?!

Better was 34...Qh8 so g7 does not drop with check.

35.Qg2 Be8 36.Qf3 Bge4 37.Bxg7+ Qh8  
38.Bh7+ Qg8 39.Bxh6  
1-0

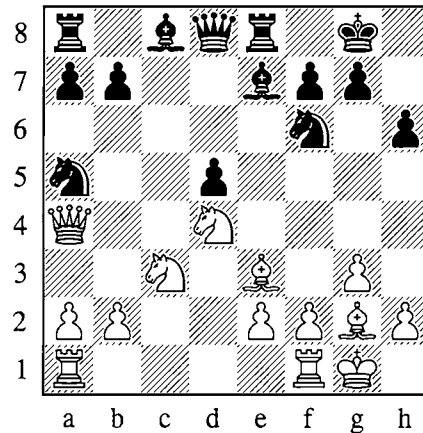
**Conclusion:** With 12.Qa4 White immediately puts pressure on Black's position. After 12...Qd7 13.Bfd1 Qa5 14.Qc2 Bc8 the key move 15.Qf5! is very strong.

## GAME 65

Leotard – Romanov

Correspondence 2001

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Qf3  
Qc6 6.g3 Qf6 7.Qg2 Qe7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Qg5  
cxd4 10.Qxd4 h6 11.Qe3 Be8 12.Qa4  
Qa5



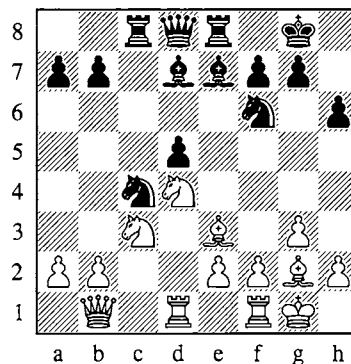
13...Bd1!

This time White takes the other rook to d1. Black's knight is on its way to c4, so White plans to retreat the bishop to c1 and still wants his rooks to be connected.

13...Qc4

The alternative is:

13...Qd7 14.Qc2 Bc8 15.Qb1 The queen steps out of the pin. 15...Qc4



And now there are two options:

16.Qf4 Qa5 17.Qb3 Qa6 18.Qxd5 Qxd5  
19.Qxd5 Qh3 20.Bfe1 Qf6 This was Bocharov  
– Reutsky, Moscow 2007, where Black was  
very active. Instead White could take the pawn:

16.Qxd5 Qxd5 17.Qxd5 Qxe3 18.fxe3 Qf6 As  
in Lechtynsky – Damjanovic, Vilnius 1978,

when White has a strong novelty: 19.  $\text{E}xf6!$   $\text{W}xf6$  20.  $\text{E}f1$   $\text{W}e5$  21.  $\text{E}xf7+$   $\text{Ch}8$  22.  $\text{E}xe8$   $\text{W}xe3+$  23.  $\text{C}g2$   $\text{E}xe8$  24.  $\text{W}d3$  White is a pawn up.

**14.  $\text{E}c1$**

As planned, the bishop gets out of the way.

**14...  $\text{E}d7$**

There is no ideal alternative:

**14...  $\text{Cb}6$**

Black becomes too passive and the weakness on d5 tells more and more.

15.  $\text{W}b3$   $\text{E}g4$  16.  $\text{E}e3$   $\text{E}c5$  17.  $\text{h}3$   $\text{E}d7$  18.  $\text{C}c2!$   $\text{W}c7$  19.  $\text{E}xc5$   $\text{W}xc5$  20.  $\text{E}d4$

White has managed to exchange the dark-squared bishops and has the typical small but clear anti-IQP advantage.

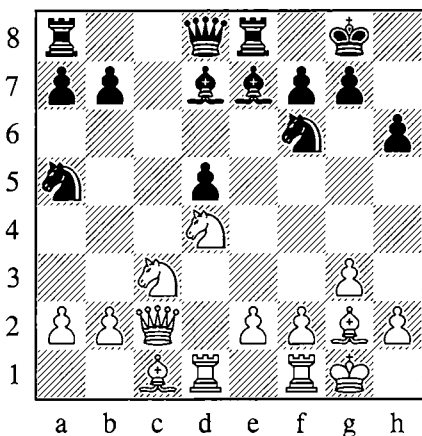
20...  $\text{E}ac8$  21.  $\text{E}fd1$   $\text{E}e6$  22.  $\text{Cb}4$   $\text{W}a5$  23.  $\text{Cb}xd5$   $\text{C}fxd5$  24.  $\text{C}xd5$   $\text{E}c5$  25.  $\text{e}3$   $\text{C}xd5$  26.  $\text{E}xd5$   $\text{E}b5$  27.  $\text{W}d3$   $\text{E}xd5$

Or 27...  $\text{E}xb2$  28.  $\text{E}xe6$   $\text{fxe6}$  29.  $\text{W}g6$   $\text{E}f8$  30.  $\text{W}xe6+$ .

28.  $\text{E}xd5$   $\text{E}xd5$  29.  $\text{W}xd5$   $\text{W}b6$  30.  $\text{b}3$

With a clear pawn more, Bellmann – Weber, corr. 1998.

**15.  $\text{W}b3$   $\text{Cb}a5$  16.  $\text{W}c2$**



White has managed to coordinate very well and d5 is ripe.

**16...  $\text{E}b4$**

Black defends tactically. The pin 16...  $\text{E}c8$  is well answered with 17.  $\text{W}d3$  but the sharper 17.  $\text{C}f5$  also seems good: 17...  $\text{W}b6$  18.  $\text{E}xd5$   $\text{C}xd5$  19.  $\text{E}xd5$  And White was a pawn up in Skembris – Martidis, Nea Makri 1990.

**17.  $\text{C}xd5!$**

White is up to the challenge. Instead 17.  $\text{C}f5$   $\text{E}xc3$  18.  $\text{bxc3}$   $\text{E}xf5$  19.  $\text{W}xf5$   $\text{W}c8$  is unclear.

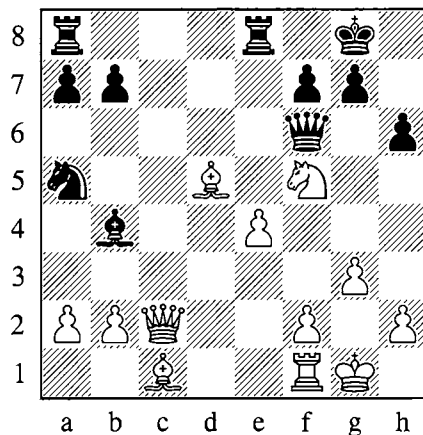
**17...  $\text{C}xd5$  18.  $\text{E}xd5!$**

A strong novelty. Lautier once played 18.  $\text{a}3?!$   $\text{E}c8$  19.  $\text{W}d3$  but he probably missed 19...  $\text{E}a4!$  though he managed to hold: 20.  $\text{b}3$   $\text{C}c3$  21.  $\text{bxa4}$   $\text{C}xd1$  22.  $\text{axb4}$   $\text{E}xc1$  23.  $\text{bxa5}$   $\text{Cb}2$  24.  $\text{W}b5$   $\text{E}xf1+$  25.  $\text{C}xf1$   $\text{Cd}1$  26.  $\text{W}d3$   $\text{Cb}2$  27.  $\text{W}b5$   $\text{Cd}1$  28.  $\text{W}d3$   $\text{Cb}2$  With a repetition, Lautier – Grischuk, Biel 2001.

**18...  $\text{E}h3$  19.  $\text{C}f5!$**

White sacrifices the exchange. Instead 19.  $\text{E}g2$  was nothing: 19...  $\text{E}xg2$  20.  $\text{C}xg2$   $\text{W}d5+$  21.  $\text{C}g1$   $\text{W}xa2$  and Black has regained the pawn.

**19...  $\text{W}f6$  20.  $\text{e}4$   $\text{E}xf1$  21.  $\text{E}xf1$**



White has a pawn and a fantastic bishop on d5 for the exchange.

**21...  $\text{E}f8$  22.  $\text{W}c7$**

White goes for a second pawn, but allows some counterplay. 22.♔d2 ♖ac8 23.♗a4 ♘c6 24.♙c3±, with play all over the board, was probably more convincing.

22...♘c6 23.♗xb7 ♘b4 24.♙b3 ♘d3 25.♙e3 ♘c5 26.♙xc5 ♙xc5

The opposite-squared bishops give Black some hope of holding. However, that White is still much better is beyond all reasonable doubt.

27.♖c1 ♖ac8 28.♔g2 ♖f8 29.♖c3

The rook is on its way to f3 to increase the pressure on Black's soft spot f7, but it is not as clear as it may appear. I would prefer a move like 29.♙d5, just stabilizing the position.

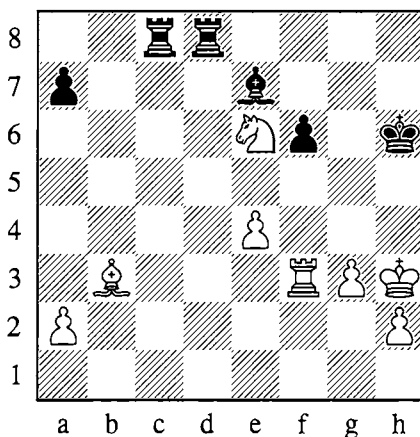
29...♔h7 30.♗d5 ♖fd8! 31.♗xf7 ♖d2

Suddenly Black becomes active. Who would have believed that a few moves ago?

32.♗xf6 gxf6 33.♘e3 ♖xb2 34.♘d5 ♖xf2† 35.♔h3

However it turns out that White keep some initiative even in the ending. To begin with, ♘f4 is threatened.

35...h5 36.♘f4 ♖d2 37.♘xh5 ♔h6 38.♘f4 ♖dd8 39.♘e6 ♙e7 40.♖f3



White's pieces begin to swarm around the naked black king. Suddenly it is clear that the opposite-coloured bishops help the attacker, just like the books tell us. White has the cunning idea of bringing the rook into a direct assault via f4 and then to g4 or h4.

40...♖h8 41.♔g2 ♔g6 42.♖f4 ♖h5 43.♖g4† ♖g5

Desperation, but 43...♔h7 44.♖g7† ♔h8 45.♖xe7 lost instantly as did 43...♔f7 44.♘c7† ♔f8 45.♖g8#. Finally, on 43...♔h6 decisive is 44.♘g7 ♖g5 45.♘f5†.

44.♘g5 fxe5 45.e5

White releases his rook and wins easily with the two extra pawns.

45...♖c5 46.e6 a5 47.♖d4 ♖e5 48.♔f3 ♔f5 49.h4 gxe4 50.gxe4 ♔g6 51.♔g4 ♔g7 52.♙c4 ♔f8 53.♖f4† ♔e8 54.♙b3 ♙d8 55.♖d4 ♙f6 56.♖c4 ♔d8 57.♖c2 ♙h8 58.♖d2† ♔e8 59.♖f2 ♖e4† 60.♖f4 1-0

**Conclusion:** After 12.♗a4 ♘a5 the move 13.♖ad1! keeps Black under pressure.

**Chapter Conclusion:** To be honest I think the Tarrasch is unsound. The isolated queen's pawn is no joke, so it is a nice opening to face. The biggest problem is mental: you must be able to shift to a positional mode and be content with a small but long-term advantage. If you can do this you have every reason to look ahead with optimism as the games in this chapter show.

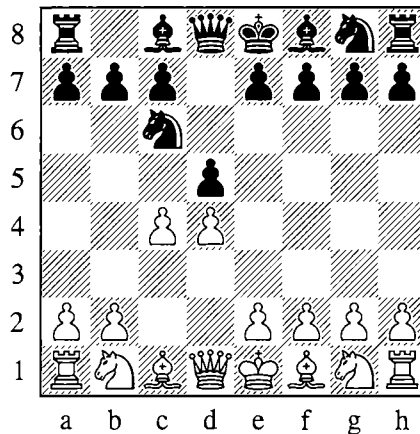
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# Chapter 7

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## The Chigorin

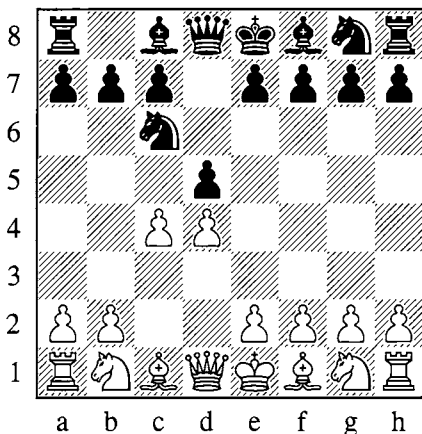
*I don't wanna be a product of my environment,  
I want my environment to be a product of me.*  
– Frank Costello, *The Departed*



1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♞c6

The System	page 266
The a6-variation	page 270
The active 4...♗g4	page 273
Early Deviations	page 276

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6



A provocative move. Quick development and direct confrontation: that's the game Black is playing. He is not hiding his aggressive intentions. As early as move 2 he initiates sharp piece-play full of tactics and allsorts of stuff. If you are looking for a quiet day at the office with the usual safe edge for White, then this is very annoying.

The Chigorin was considered unsound for a long period. The black knight's early outing seemed naive and mainly attracted romantics and hustlers, but then Morozevich started to play it and everything changed almost overnight. Some Russian imagination, coupled with many new ideas, and suddenly everybody wanted to be Moro. The theory of the Chigorin expanded and the opening had a much needed makeover. Many strong players got lost in the chaotic maze and the message to the rest of the world was clear – work had to be done! There was no simple route to a clear advantage for White.

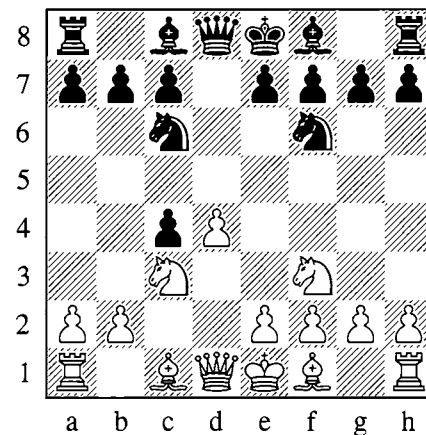
3.♘c3

The other main lines are 3.cxd5 ♖xd5 4.e3 e5 5.♘c3 ♗b4 or 3.♘f3 ♗g4. Black develops quickly and is very active: he is more than willing to concede the bishop pair in the fight for the initiative.

3...♘f6

3...dxc4 is usually just an alternate move order, but we will see more about this topic below.

4.♘f3 dxc4



A critical position. The normal 5.e4 leads to very complicated play after 5...♗g4, as we saw in the chapter on the Queen's Gambit Accepted. Since I have a choice, I prefer a more stable positional advantage that is as solid as a helmet while my opponent is throwing all his pieces at my face. After all, Black seems eager to burn his bridges and he could incur structural problems that will never go away. The move 5.e3, and then regaining the pawn with ♗xc4, is solid alright, but it seems too calm to really threaten Black. Before the Danish Championship some years ago, where I knew one of my opponents was a Chigorin aficionado, I did some serious work on this opening and found an active yet positional approach that has served me well ever since.

## The System

It is 9 o'clock in the morning in Germany. You are sitting at the board, but would rather have stayed in bed for at least another hour. The Bundesliga match is about to begin. Fortunately you are White against a lower rated

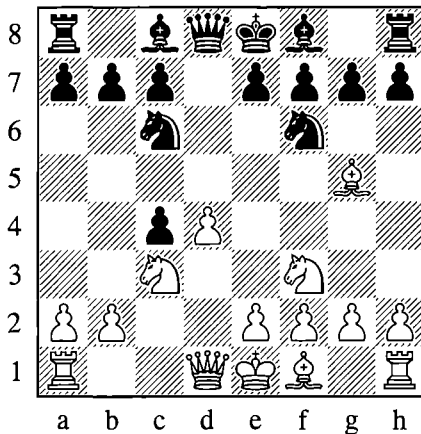
opponent and you intend just to play a quiet positional game waiting for an error. But then he surprises you with the sharp Chigorin. You had no idea that he even had this wild opening in his repertoire, so you didn't prepare for it at all. Thank God you have a system to rely on.

## GAME 66

### Schandorff – Willsch

Germany 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4  
5.♙g5



That's it! White develops the bishop to an active post and is ready to continue with e2-e3 and ♙xc4 with a good position.

#### 5...h6

Black immediately disturbs the bishop. This is by far the most common move, but there are others. The main alternative is 5...a6, with the idea of protecting the pawn with ...b7-b5. This is covered in the next game.

The speculative 5...♘d5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♘a5 has been tried by the Chigorin expert Miladinovic. A simple solution for White is 8.♙xc4! ♘xc4 9.♚a4† c6 10.♚xc4± with more

space and a pleasant position. A game of mine continued 10...g6? 11.♘e5 ♙e6 12.d5! cxd5 13.♚b5† ♙d7 14.♚xd5 ♙e6 15.♚xb7 ♚c8 16.♚b5† ♙d7 17.♚b3 ♙e6 18.♚b5† ♙d7 19.♘d7 ♚xd7 20.♚b1 and White was a clear pawn up, Schandorff – Olsson, Helsingor 2008. This is an opening book, so I suggest we leave the game here.

The active 5...♙g4 will backfire. 6.d5 ♙xf3 7.exf3! ♘e5 8.♚d4 ♘d3† 9.♙xd3 cxd3 10.0–0–0 and White regains the pawn with a very nice attacking position, Zhukova – Fakhiridou, Yerevan 1996.

#### 6.♙xf6

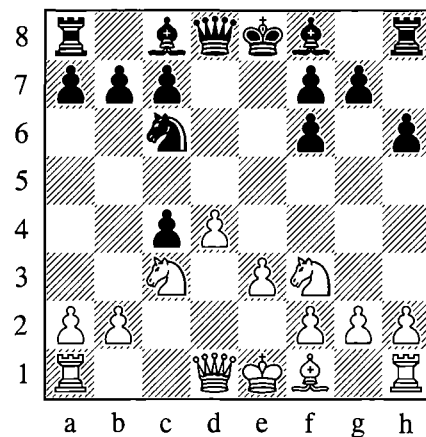
White gladly gives up the bishop for a knight to gain time and weaken Black's pawn structure.

The sharper 6.♙h4 a6 is more unclear. Black hopes to benefit from the inclusion of the moves ...h6 and ♙h4, but White still gets interesting play for the pawn with 7.e4, as analysed in detail by Avrukh in his popular book...

#### 6...exf6

The right recapture. After 6...gxf6 Black will never have a safe king, and if he later seeks active play with ...e5 he seriously weakens the light squares, especially the important square f5.

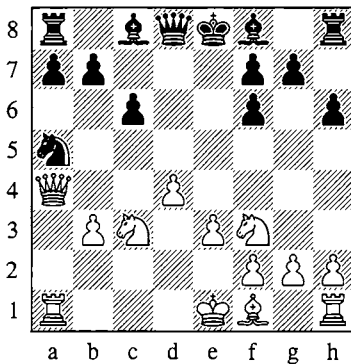
#### 7.e3



**7...♔d6**

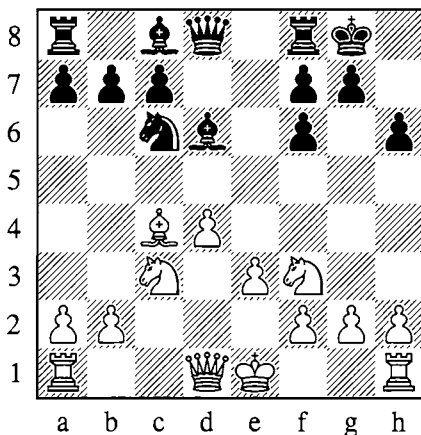
In my debut with this line Black played 7...♔b4 8.♙xc4 0–0 9.♖c2 ♙xc3! 10.♗xc3 ♗d6 11.0–0 ♙g4 12.♘d2 ♞ae8 13.♙d3 and White enjoyed his superiority in the centre, Schandorff – Lindfeldt, Nyborg 2001.

Dubious is 7...♘a5 because after 8.♗a4† c6 9.b4! cxb3 10.axb3 the knight is in trouble.



For example, 10...♗b6 11.♗xa5 ♗xa5 12.♞xa5 ♔b4 13.♞c5! wins material: 13...♙e6 14.♘d2 ♙xc5 15.dxc5 b6 16.♙d1 ♙e7 17.♙c2± Gyimesi – Korpics, Hungary 1999.

Safer is 10...b5, but 11.♘xb5! ♙d7 12.♘c3 ♗b8 13.♘a2 ♘b7 14.♙d3± is positionally undesirable for Black, Knudsen – Millstone, corr. 2001.

**8.♙xc4 0–0**

A rare moment – both sides were striving for exactly the same position! When I play 5.♙g5 I hope for 5...h6 so I can take on f6. For my opponent, something similar is the case. He plays 5...h6 and is probably a little afraid of the sharp 6.♙h4 so he also hopes for 6.♙xf6. At first sight you can understand him, as Black seems fine. He has easy development, the bishop pair, and perhaps some possibilities on the kingside later on. However after closer study I think White is slightly but distinctly better. White has a superior pawn structure which is very visible in the centre. Maybe even more important from a practical point of view is that White can generate some positional pressure on the queenside, while it is more difficult for Black to use his pawns on the kingside.

**9.♗c2**

Other natural moves are 9.0–0 and 9.a3 and often they will lead to the same position. The game is slow and strategic, so concrete moves are less important than plans.

**9...a6**

Only once have two top players reached this position and it was in a blitz game. 9...♘e7!? 10.0–0 c6 11.h3 ♙f5 12.e4 ♙g6 13.a4 a5 14.♞ad1 ♗b6 and Black was okay in Carlsen – Ivanchuk, Moscow (blitz) 2009. Probably the 13.a4 plan was not best. After a normal move such as 13.♞fe1 White is better for sure.

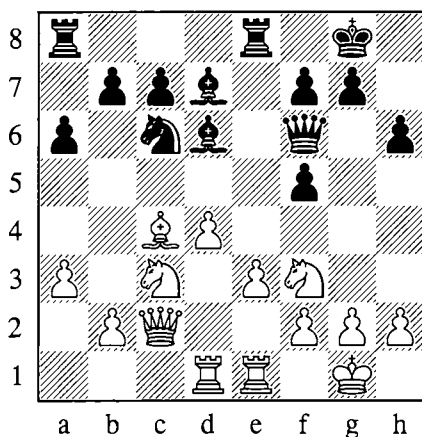
**10.a3 f5 11.0–0 ♗f6 12.♞ad1 ♞e8 13.♞fe1**

In another game White regrouped the knight with 13.♘d5 ♗d8 14.♘f4. After 14...♗f6 15.g3 ♙d7 16.b4± he had some positional pressure, Agrest – Brynell, Skara 2002.

**13...♙d7**

Both sides have completed their development without much drama. The strong centre is a long-term advantage, but it also gives some

dynamic possibilities connected to the break e3-e4.



#### 14.b4±

Simply taking more space on the queenside.

#### 14...g5?!

Black is eager to gain counterplay and he similarly takes more space on the kingside.

The difference between the two pawn moves is striking though. Black seriously weakens his own king's position by advancing its shelter. Instead he should have stayed calm with a move such as 14...♖ad8 or 14...♗g6.

#### 15.♕f1

A clever defensive move. White clears a good square for the f3-knight before it is kicked away.

Immediate action with 15.b5 ♖a5 16.♕f1 axb5 17.♖xb5 ♕xb5 18.♕xb5 c6 19.♕d3 or 15.e4 fxe4 16.♖xe4 ♗g6 was not so clear.

#### 15...g4 16.♖d2 h5 17.♖c4+ ♖e7?! 18.e4!

The break. White's pieces coordinate excellently.

#### 18...fxe4 19.♖xe4 ♗g6 20.♕d3

White is already winning. Equally strong was 20.♖e5 ♕xe5 21.dxe5 ♕f5 22.♕d3 ♕xe4

23.♕xe4 ♗b6 24.e6! fxe6 25.♗c1 followed by ♗g5†.

#### 20...♗h6

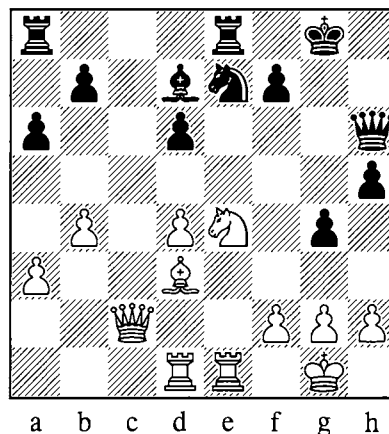
A better try was 20...♕f5 because the combination 21.♖exd6 cxd6 22.♗xe7? ♕xd3 23.♗xe8† ♗xe8 does not work due to back rank problems. Instead 21.♖e5! is strong, as in the previous note.

Not to be recommended was 20...♖f5 21.♖exd6 cxd6 22.♖g3 and the pin decides.

#### 21.♖exd6

Also good was 21.♖exd6 cxd6 22.♖b6 ♖ad8 23.♗c7 ♕e6 24.♗xb7.

#### 21...cxd6



#### 22.♗c7

Now I am winning material.

#### 22...♕a4 23.♖xd6 ♕xd1 24.♖xe8 ♗xe8 25.♗xe7

The text simplifies, but just as good was 25.♗xd1.

#### 25...♗xe7 26.♗xe7 ♗d2 27.♗e3 ♗b2 28.♕c4 ♕a4 29.h3

The extra pawn should decide.

29...g3 30.g3 ♖b1† 31.♗h2 ♗c2

Black could put up more resistance with 31...♗f5 although he always seems to end up in a difficult bishop ending: 32.♗g3! ♗d7 33.♗h4 (probably even stronger was 33.♗f1 ♗f8 34.♗f4 ♗g6† 35.♗h4) 33...♗f6† 34.♗g5† ♗xg5† 35.♗xg5 ♗xh3 36.♗xh5.

32.♗d5 ♗c6 33.♗g5† ♗f8 34.♗xc6 bxc6

Not 34...♗xf2† 35.♗g2.

35.♗c5†

With an easily won pawn ending.

35...♗xc5 36.dxc5 ♗e7 37.♗g3 ♗e6  
38.♗f4 ♗d5

38...f6 39.h4 is no better: 39...♗e7 40.♗f5 ♗f7 41.f4 and the king penetrates next.

39.♗g5 ♗c4 40.♗xh5 ♗b3 41.h4  
1–0

**Conclusion:** After 2...♗c6 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.♗f3 dxc4 the 5.♗g5 variation is interesting. If Black answers 5...h6, just take on f6 and enjoy the much better pawn structure.

## The a6-variation

The Queen's Gambit is not usually a real gambit, but it becomes one if Black takes on c4 and is able to follow up with ...a6 and ...b5.

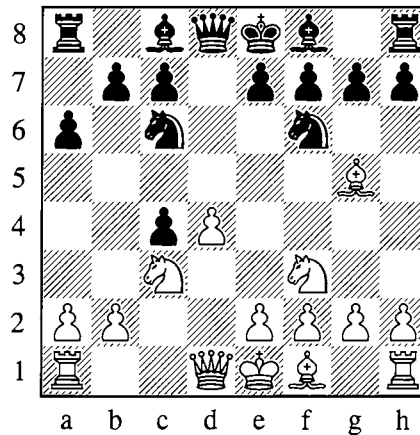
## GAME 67

Ivanchuk – Arencibia

Havana 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♗c6 3.♗c3 dxc4 4.♗f3 ♗f6  
5.♗g5 a6

A consistent try. Black prepares ...b5 protecting the c-pawn, so White must play actively.



6.d5 ♗a7

Another benefit from the little move ...a6: the knight has an extra square.

Instead

6...♗a5

leads to trouble after:

7.♗a4† c6 8.b4 cxb3 9.axb3 e6 10.♗d2!

The knight on the rim is more or less lost, but some accuracy is required, as 10.♗xa5? ♗xa5 11.♗xa5 ♗b4 would be embarrassing. After 10.♗d2! Black gets three pawns for the piece, but it should be good for White:

10...b6

Or 10...♗xd5 11.♗xd5 ♗xb3 12.♗c7† ♗xc7 13.♗xb3±

11.b4 ♗xb4 12.♗xb4 exd5 13.e3 c5 14.♗a3?! 0–0 15.♗e2 ♗c4 16.♗a2 ♗e6 17.0–0 b5∞ 18.♗xc4?! dxc4

And now the pawns were a real factor in P. Horvath – Antal, Budapest 2003, but much better would have been 14.♗b2!± 0–0 15.♗a4.

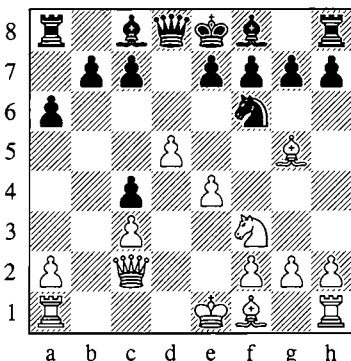
7.e4 ♗b5

Bringing the knight back into play and at the same time indirectly threatening White's e-pawn. Bad was 7...b5 8.e5.

8.♗a4!?

Winning the pawn back, which is always nice.

On the other hand it also made good sense to be fast and furious with:  
8. ♖c2 ♜xc3 9. bxc3



9...b5

9...h6 10. ♖h4 b5 11. ♜d4 c5!? 12. ♜c6 ♖d7 13. ♙e2 ♙b7 14. 0-0!? White plays hardcore and sacrifices another pawn. (The simple 14. ♜e5 ♖c7 15. ♙g3± was very good.) 14...♙xc6 15. dxc6 ♖xc6 16. a4 g5 17. e5 ♜d5 18. axb5 axb5 19. ♖xa8† ♖xa8 20. e6! fxe6 21. ♖g6† ♜d7 22. ♙g3± Soon ♙e5 is coming, Moskalenko – Perez Mitjans, Barbera del Valles 2009.

10. a4 ♖b8

Or 10...♙b7 11. ♙e2 h6 12. ♖h4 and now 12...g5 would seriously weaken the kingside, while looking for counterplay with 12...c6 13. dxc6 ♙xc6 14. e5! ♙e4 15. ♖d2 ♜d5 16. ♖d4 leaves Black's pieces rather vulnerable.

11. axb5 axb5 12. ♜d4 ♙d7 13. ♙e2

White has excellent compensation for the pawn.

13...♖c8 14. 0-0 c5 15. dxc6 ♙xc6 16. e5 ♙e4 17. ♖d2 ♜d5 18. e6! g6 19. exf7† ♜xf7

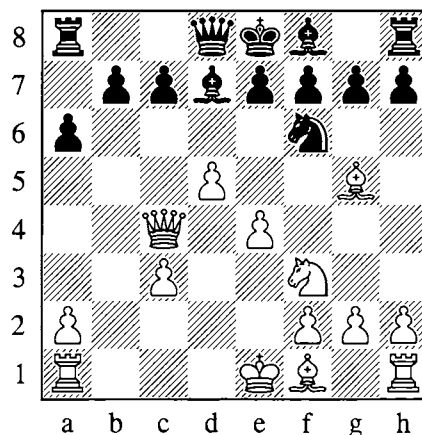
This was Berkvens – Bromann, Esbjerg 2003, and now the stunning 20. ♙g4! creates irresistible threats, for example 20...♖xg4 21. f3 ♖d7 22. fxe4† ♜f6 23. e5 winning.

8...♙d7 9. ♖xc4 ♜xc3

9...h6 10. ♖h4 g5 11. ♙g3 ♙g7 12. e5 ♜h5 13. e6 fxe6 14. dxe6 ♙c6 15. ♖d1 ♜d6 16. ♖d3

0-0 was fine for Black in Campora – Martinez Martin, Madrid 2007, but better was 10. ♙f4 as in the main game.

10. bxc3

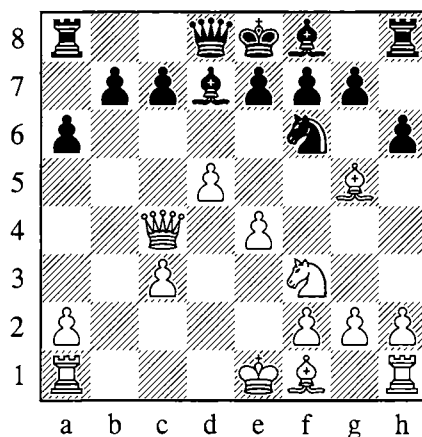


10...h6

Black has tried other moves as well:

10...♙b5 11. ♖d4 ♙xf1 12. ♜xf1 ♜d7 In Zakhartsov – Nachtkamp, Bad Wiessee 2011, Black was rather cramped. White should just complete his development with 13. g3 followed by ♜g2 with a pleasant position.

10...b5 11. ♖d4 c5 12. ♖d3 g6 13. ♙e2 ♙g7 14. 0-0 0-0 Cederstam-Barsk – Logdahl, Stockholm 2011. Now White should have gone for the bishops with 15. ♜e5.



**11. ♖f4**

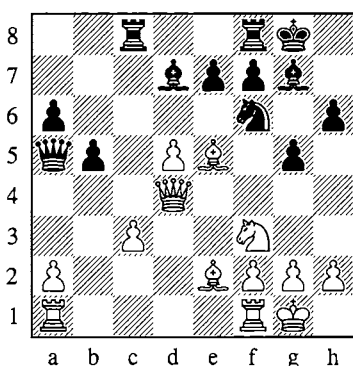
Probably the strongest, not just because it attacks c7, but it is also more flexible than the alternatives.

**11. ♖h4 b5**

Not 11...e6? 12.e5, but 11...g5!? 12.♗g3 ♗g7 is possible.

**12. ♖d3 c6 13. ♗e2 cxd5 14. exd5 g5**

An improvement could be 14...g6!? 15. ♗xf6 exf6 and Black is okay after 16. ♖e3† ♖e7 17. ♖d4 ♖d6 18. 0–0 ♗e7.

**15. ♗g3 ♖c8 16. ♗e5 ♗g7 17. ♖d4 ♖a5 18. 0–0 0–0**

This was Malmstroem – Migliorini, corr. 2002. Now after:

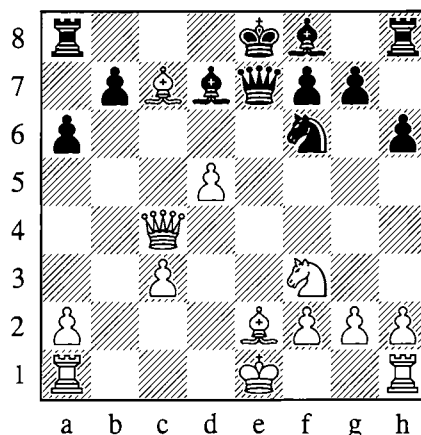
**19. ♖fe1N ♖fe8 20. ♗d3**

White has some pressure, especially since he can always confront Black's kingside with the move h2-h4.

Finally, 11. ♗xf6 exf6 followed by ...♗d6 is okay for Black.

**11...e6**

11...b5!? 12. ♖d4 leaves White nicely centralized. Yet after 12...e6 it is not so easy and following 13. ♗e2 exd5 14. exd5 ♗d6 15. ♗e5 0–0 16. 0–0 c5! 17. dxc6 ♗xe5 18. ♗xe5 ♗xc6 Black has almost equalized. Still, instead of 16. 0–0, by playing 16. ♗f3! White could prevent Black's sudden liberation and keep some pressure.

**12. ♗xc7 exd5 13. exd5 ♖e7† 14. ♗e2**

Ivanchuk has calculated well. The tactical motifs are on White's side and it is hard for Black to justify his sacrifice.

**14...b5**

On

**14...♗b5**

White has

**15. d6! ♖xe2† 16. ♖xe2† ♗xe2 17. ♗xe2 ♗d5 18. ♖ab1!**

A nice tactical solution.

**18...♗xc3† 19. ♗d3 ♗xb1 20. ♖e1†! ♗d7 21. ♗e5† ♗e6****21...♗c8 22. ♗b6 ♗xd6 23. ♖c1† ♗b8 24. ♗d7#****22. ♗g6† ♗d5!**

It is not over yet.

**23. ♗xh8 ♗xd6 24. ♗xd6 ♖xh8 25. ♗b4****25. ♖xb1 ♗xd6 26. ♖xb7 ♖d8!****25...a5 26. ♗xa5 ♖a8 27. ♗b4 ♗a3 28. ♖e7 ♗c4 29. a3 b5 30. ♗c3 ♗xa3 31. ♖xf7**

And White is better in the ending.

**15. ♖d4**

White is a pawn up, but Black can still put up a fight.

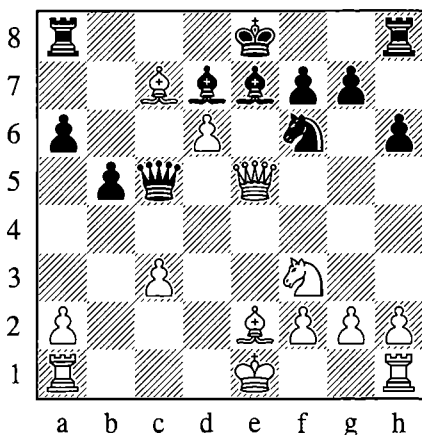
**15...♖c5?!**

But he chooses not to.

The only move was 15...♞e4 16.♙e5 ♞xd4 17.♜xd4 ♜xd5 18.♙f3 0–0–0! 19.♙xd5 ♞e8 20.0–0 ♞xe5 21.♙xf7 ♙d6 and the bishop pair gives some compensation.

White should consider playing for the initiative with 16.♞d1 ♞xd4 17.♜xd4 ♜xd5 18.♙a5 ♜f4 19.♙f3 ♞c8 20.0–0 which is probably stronger.

16.♞e5† ♙e7 17.d6!



Now everything goes White's way and Ivanchuk quickly picks up the point.

17...♞xe5 18.♜xe5 ♜d5

Or 18...♙d8 19.0–0–0 ♙xc7 20.dxc7 ♞c8 21.♜xd7 ♜xd7 22.♙xb5! ♞xc7 23.♞he1† ♜d8 24.♙xa6 ♞xc3† 25.♜b2+– with a pawn more.

19.dxe7 ♜xc7 20.♙f3 ♞c8 21.0–0–0 ♙e6 22.♜c6

Threatening ♞d8†.

22...♙d7 23.♞he1 h5 24.♜a7 ♞b8 25.♙c6 1–0

**Conclusion:** After 2...♜c6 3.♜c3 dxc4 4.♜f3 ♜f6 5.♙g5 Black's flank play with 5...a6 is well tamed by White's expansion in the centre: 6.d5 ♜a7 7.e4 ♜b5. As a bonus White can even choose between regaining the pawn with

8.♞a4!? or playing for quick development with 8.♞c2. Both seem good.

## The active 4...♙g4

So far we have focused on 4...dxc4. Instead, the aggressive bishop move 4...♙g4 is appealing to many Chigorin fans, but it is probably inaccurate. Let's have a look.

## GAME 68

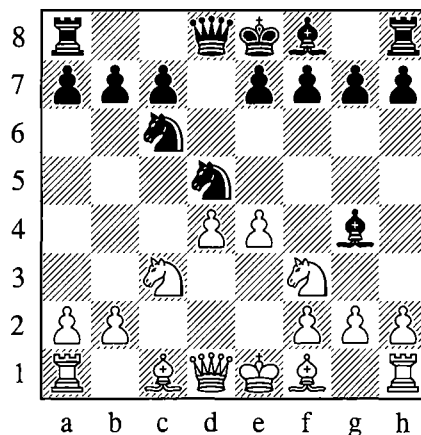
Ribli – Wittmann

Dubai (ol) 1986

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♜c6 3.♜c3 ♜f6 4.♜f3 ♙g4

The desired move. Unfortunately for Black, his influence in the centre is not secure and White can release the tension and take the initiative.

5.cxd5 ♜xd5 6.e4



6...♙xf3

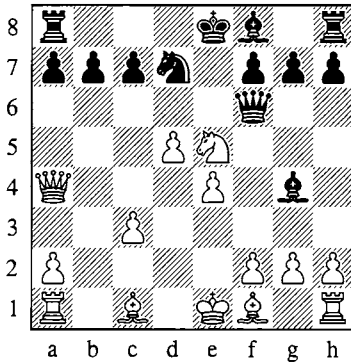
At least this weakens the white pawns.

Black has also tried:

6...♜xc3 7.bxc3 e5

7...e6 8.♞b1 gives White pressure and led to the following miniature: 8...♞b8 9.♞a4

♙e7? 10.♞xb7 ♚d7 11.♙b5 1–0 M. Popov – Schargin, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011.  
 8.d5 ♘b8  
 Now if 8...♙xf3 White can simply recapture with 9.♞xf3 keeping his structure intact.  
 9.♞a4† ♘d7 10.♘xe5 ♞f6



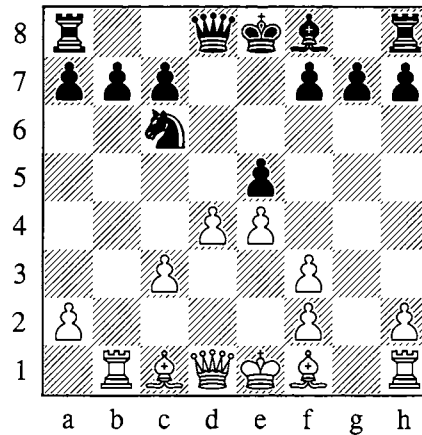
Black's idea is 11.♘d7? ♞xc3† however White can simply play:  
 11.♙e2!±  
 With a clear advantage.

### 7.gxf3 ♘xc3

Avoiding the exchange is no better:  
 7...♘b6 8.d5 ♘e5 9.f4  
 This is overwhelming for White. The following is a very convincing example:  
 9...♘d7 10.a4 c6 11.a5 ♘c8 12.a6  
 With a series of aggressive pawn moves Khalifman crushes his opponent.  
 12...♞c7 13.axb7 ♞xb7 14.♙a6 ♞c7 15.♞a4 cxd5 16.♘d5 ♞d6 17.♙b7 ♞b8 18.e5  
 White was completely winning. The finish came quickly:  
 18...♘cb6 19.♞xa7 ♞xb7 20.♞xb7 ♞xd5 21.♞a8† ♘xa8 22.♞c8# 1–0  
 Khalifman – Kaftan, Bad Wiessee 1997.

### 8.bxc3 e5 9.♞b1!

A key move. The pressure on b7 is not so easy to parry and Black feels the absence of the light-squared bishop.



### 9...♙d6

Black accepts the inevitable and just develops.  
 The alternatives are truly horrible:

9...♘a5? turns out badly after 10.♞b5 b6 11.♞a4 ♞d7 (or 11...c6 12.♞xe5† ♙e7 13.♙a3) 12.♞xa5 1–0 Burkart – Haubt, Germany 1989.

9...♞b8? 10.♞a4! is also precarious for Black, for instance 10...♞f6 11.dxe5 ♞xf3 12.♞xb7!+–.

Finally on 9...exd4 both 10.♞xb7 and 10.♞a4 seem very strong.

### 10.d5

A surprising decision.

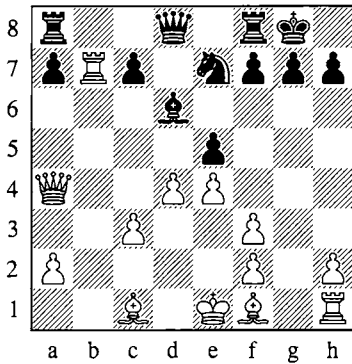
Taking the pawn is obvious but double-edged:  
 10.♞xb7 0–0

Black has some compensation, primarily because the white king will never be satisfied. There have just been a few practical examples:

11.♞a4

Possible is 11.d5 ♘e7 12.♞g1 ♘g6 13.♙g5 ♞d7 14.♞b3.

11...♘e7



Now there is a split:

12.f4 exf4 13.e5?

13.♙g2 was probably best.

13.♞xa7 ♞xa7 14.♞xa7 ♞d7 15.♞b7 f6 also looked good for White in Cao – Le Quang Liem, Ho Chi Minh City 2012, but the position was not so easy to play.

13...♙xe5! 14.♙g2

14.dxe5? ♞d5, hitting both rooks, is a fun line and probably what White overlooked.

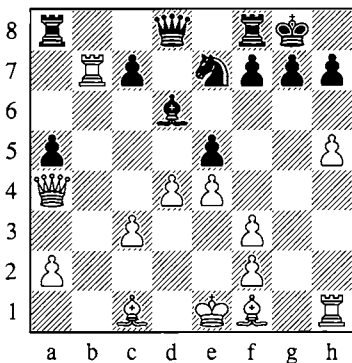
14...♙d6 15.♞xa7 ♞xa7 16.♞xa7 ♗g6

Now Black is better.

17.♙a3? ♞e7† 18.♗d1 ♙xa3

And now he was a piece up in Varelle – Dubois, Marseilles 2001.

12.h4!? a5 13.h5 This looks very promising and is the best route to follow.



For example: 13...exd4 14.♞xd4 c5 15.♞d2 ♞b8 16.h6 g6 17.♞xb8 ♞xb8 18.♙c4 ♗h8

19.♗e2 f6 20.♞d1 ♞d8 21.♞b2 ♞c7 22.♙b5 g5 23.♙xg5 ♙e5 24.♞xd8† ♞xd8 25.♙e3 ♞b8 26.a4 ♗g6 27.♞d2 ♗f4† 28.♗d1 1–0 V. Mikhalevski – Marzolf, Longeville-les-Metz 2011.

White could try to benefit from the second open line and use the other rook to hit g7 with 10.♞g1!? when Black cannot castle because of ♙h6. Then 10...exd4 11.cxd4 ♞e7 12.♙b5 (12.d5) 12...♗f8 13.♙e3 ♙xh2 14.♞h1 ♙d6 15.♙xc6 bxc6 16.♞a4 ♞f6 17.♗e2 ♞e6 18.♞hc1 f6 19.♞xc6± and White had some pressure in Hoffmann – Hermann, Germany 1992.

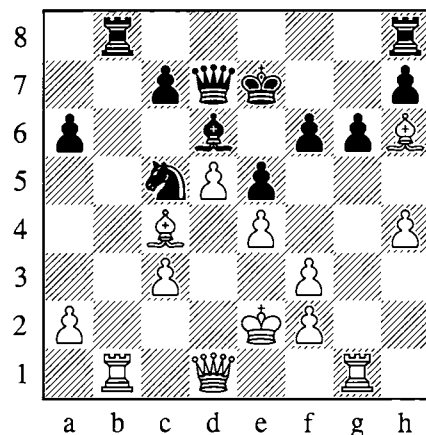
**10...♗b8!?**

The only move was 10...♗a5 when 11.♞a4† c6 12.♞g1 g6 13.c4 0–0 14.♙d2 b6! is quite solid for Black. With 15.♙h3 cxd5 16.cxd5 ♗b7 17.♞d7! ♗c5 18.♞xd8 ♞fxd8 19.♗e2± White keeps an edge in the ending with the bishop pair. If that is not enough, then worth a try is 11.♞g1 g6 and now 12.♙g5 or 12.♙h6.

**11.♞g1! g6 12.♞xb7±**

Now there is not much to show for the pawn.

12...♗d7 13.♙g5 f6 14.♙h6 ♗e7 15.h4 ♗c5 16.♞b5 a6 17.♞b1 ♞d7 18.♙c4 ♞ab8 19.♗e2



**19...♖a4**

Very cooperative: there was no reason to exchange queens. Black could have tried 19...♖xb1 20.♗xb1 ♖a4 although 21.♙b3 keeps White's advantage.

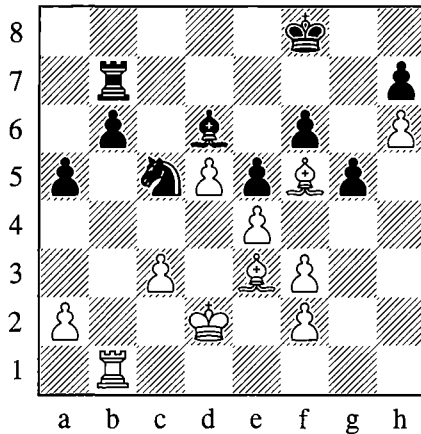
**20.♗xa4 ♘xa4 21.♙d2**

Black has no counterplay.

**21...♗a8 22.♘d3 ♖hb8 23.♘c2 ♖b6 24.♙e3 ♘c5 25.♖b4 ♖ab8 26.♖gb1 ♘d8 27.♙f1 ♘e7 28.♙h3 a5 29.♖xb6 cxb6 30.h5 g5 31.h6**

Fixing the weakness on h7.

**31...♘f8 32.♘d2 ♖b7 33.♙c8 ♖b8 34.♙f5 ♖b7**

**35.♙xh7!**

A drastic solution. The position remained very closed and White was in desperate need of an entry point.

**35...♖xh7 36.♖xb6 ♘b7 37.c4**

The queenside pawns are very strong. If Black tries to use his rook to stop them he has to leave the h-pawn and that will prove to be fatal.

**37...♙b4†**

Or 37...♖c7 38.c5 ♙xc5 39.♙xc5† ♘xc5 40.♖b8† ♘f7 41.h7 and wins.

**38.♘e2 ♖f7 39.♖c6**

Preparing c4-c5.

**39...♔g8 40.c5 ♔h7 41.♔d3**

The king joins the other forces and secures the victory with an impressive finish.

**41...♔xh6 42.♔c4 ♔h5 43.d6 g4 44.♖c7! ♘d8 45.♔d5 gxf3 46.c6 ♔g6 47.♖xf7 ♘xf7 48.♙c5**

1–0

**Conclusion:** The tempting 4...♙g4 is just asking for trouble and after 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 ♙xf3 7.gxf3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 e5, Ribli's 9.♖b1! is the punisher.

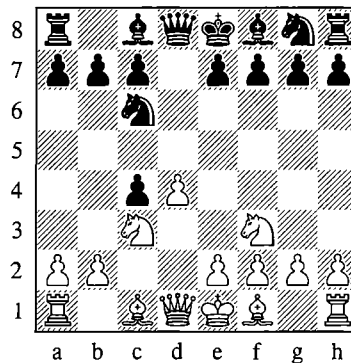
## Early Deviations

Black has few possibilities to avoid the lines presented above, so here is a quick overview of the lines to know.

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6**

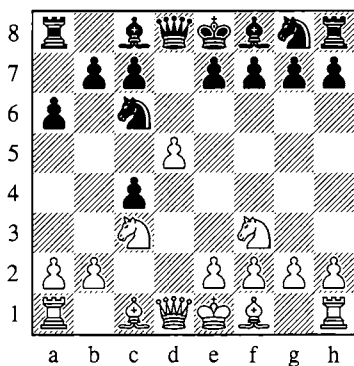
A logical move, but Black has two other options.

Firstly he could take on c4 at once. This could actually be the most precise move order: 3...dxc4 4.♘f3



But now Black should definitely play 4...♘f6 transposing to the main line. Other tries are insufficient.

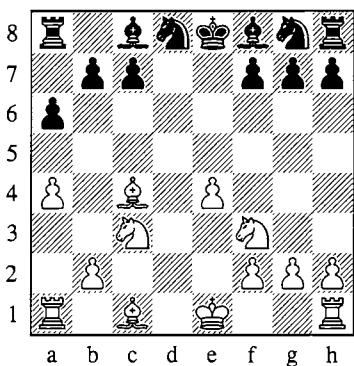
a) 4...a6 5.d5 is promising for White no matter where the knight goes:



a1) 5...d5 lands the knight in trouble as usual. 6.♖a4† c6 7.b4 cxb3 8.axb3 e6 9.♗d2! (not 9.♖xa5? ♖xa5 10.♞xa5 ♗b4) 9...b6 10.b4±

a2) 5...d7 We know this finesse by now. 6.e4 b5 7.a4 and the black pawns are under pressure. 7...b4 8.d2 e6 9.♗xc4± White has regained the pawn with advantage.

a3) 5...b8 6.a4 Preventing ...b5 and thereby restricting Black and trying to win the pawn back. (6.e4 b5 7.♗f4± was the alternative) 6...e6 7.e4 exd5 8.♖xd5 d2c6 9.♖xd8† dxd8 10.♗xc4

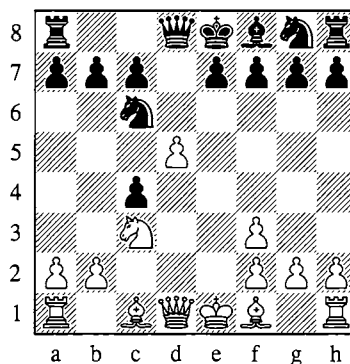


With active play for White which – even without the queens – should count for something. 10...♗d6 Schmidt – Vaassen, corr. 1990, and 11.e5 ♗b4 12.♗d2 ♗e6 13.d5

♗xd2† 14.♞xd2 ♗xd5 15.♗xd5 d2e7 16.♗e4± gives White the better ending.

b) 4...♗g4 5.d5 ♗xf3 6.exf3!

Once again this is the right capture.



6...d5

6...d5? 7.♖a4† c6 8.b4+–

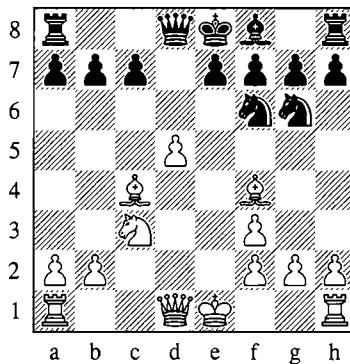
7.♗f4 d2g6

After 7...d3† 8.♗xd3 cxd3 White can choose between 9.d2b5, 9.♖xd3 and 9.0–0: they all seem very strong.

8.♗xc4!

With the point 8...d2xf4? 9.♗b5† c6 10.dxc6 and wins. Instead Black must play:

8...d2f6



And now the main line is 9.♗g3 while Ivanchuk has tried 9.♗e3. The third move is: 9.♖a4†!

This was a novelty when I suggested it in the first edition. It has now been tested in a correspondence game:

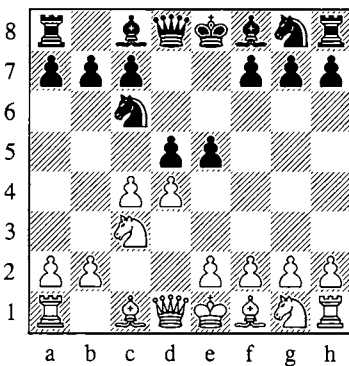
9...♖d7 10.♗e3 a6 11.♗e2 b5 12.♞b3 ♖h4  
12...♖f6 13.0-0± and Black won't survive  
for long.

13.0-0 ♖f5 14.a4 ♖xe3 15.fxe3 b4 16.♖e4  
g6 17.a5 ♗h6 18.f4 0-0 19.♞fd1 ♖f6 20.♖c5

Black was being crushed in Grkinic –  
Wisham, e-mail 2009. Overall, 9.♞a4! looks  
immensely strong, almost winning outright.

c) 4...e6 5.e3 (5.e4 is also good of course)  
5...♖f6 6.♗xc4 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♗b5!±  
Preventing ...e5 and keeping control,  
Schandorff – Olesen, Denmark 2004.

Black's second option is to play the Albin-like:  
3...e5



This is romantic, but hardly correct. After  
4.cxd5 ♖xd4 5.e3 ♖f5 it already starts to look  
suspicious. Play can continue 6.♖f3 ♗d6 7.e4  
♖fe7 8.♗b5† ♗d7 9.♞b3± and White has a  
small, but very pleasant, advantage.

#### 4.♖f3

Actually it is not only Black who can deviate.

White has the interesting possibility 4.cxd5  
♖xd5 5.♖f3. Then Black's two most obvious  
moves transpose to favourable lines for White:  
5...♗f5 6.♞b3 as shown below and 5...♗g4  
6.e4 which we know from the Ribli game.

However, the discussion is rather academic

because Black can always use the 3...dxc4  
4.♖f3 ♖f6 move order as mentioned above.

#### 4...♗f5!

The last attempt. Just like the 4...♗g4  
variation, it is rather risky though: Black's best  
move is 4...dxc4 transposing to our mainlines.  
Worth mentioning is 4...e6 5.♗g5 with a nice  
Queen's Gambit Declined for White, as the  
knight is misplaced on c6.

#### 5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.♞b3!

Taking the initiative with direct threats.

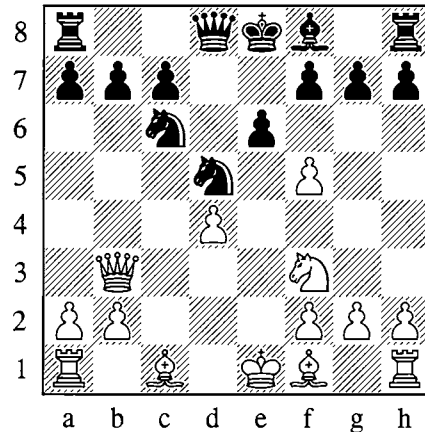
#### 6...e6

6...♖xc3 7.bxc3 ♞d7 is a clear improvement.  
Still, after 8.♗f4 White is better. Instead after  
8.e3 e6 9.♗b5 ♗d6 10.0-0 a6 Black was fine  
in Jurado Perez – Villar Ramos, e-mail 2007.

#### 7.e4

Not 7.♞xb7? ♖db4.

#### 7...♖xc3 8.exf5 ♖d5



#### 9.♗d2!N

A strong novelty.

Instead 9.♞xb7 ♗b4† 10.♖d1 ♖de7 11.♗b5  
0-0 12.♗xc6 ♞b8 13.♞a6 ♞b6 14.♞c4 ♖xc6  
15.fxe6 fxe6 16.♗e3 ♖a5 17.♞c2 ♞d5 gave

Black great play in Abbasov – Miladinovic, Colomiers 2008.

### 9...♖d6

9...♖b8 10.fxe6 fxe6 11.♗b5±

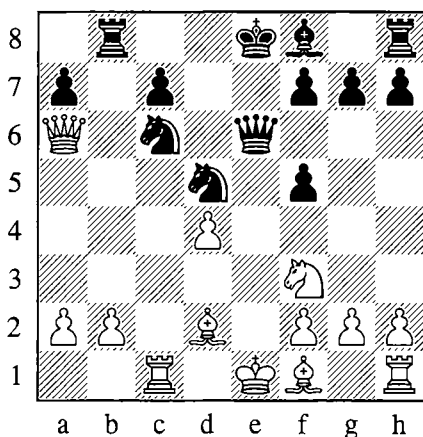
### 10.♖xb7!

Now that Black does not have a disruptive check on b4, this is strong.

### 10...♖b8 11.♖a6 exf5

Safer was 11...♗e7 but White is still much better after 12.♗c1 ♖b6 13.♖a4 0–0 14.♗b5.

### 12.♗c1 ♖e6†



This was Sargissian – Miladinovic, Plovdiv 2008, and now after the improvement:

### 13.♗d1!

White is completely winning. The knight on c6 is hanging and ♗b5 and ♗e1 are coming.

**Conclusion:** Black sometimes tries 3...dxc4, but after 4.♗f3 he does best to get back in line and transpose to the main variation with 4...♗f6. The alternatives are clearly worse. Also after 3...♗f6 4.♗f3 the attempt to avoid the dxc4-line with the seemingly active 4...♗f5 was blown to pieces by Sargissian's brilliant play.

White should be aware that he can also vary! After 3...♗f6 he has 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.♗f3 as an interesting extra option.

**Chapter Conclusion:** The 5.♗g5 variation is an easy-to-learn and rather attractive way of meeting the Chigorin. White fights for the initiative while also keeping a sound structure. As you have probably guessed by now, I don't think too highly of the Chigorin in general, so I am quite sure White can get an advantage in several ways. If you already have an antidote to it, then just stick with that, or else you can try 5.♗g5 and see if you like it.

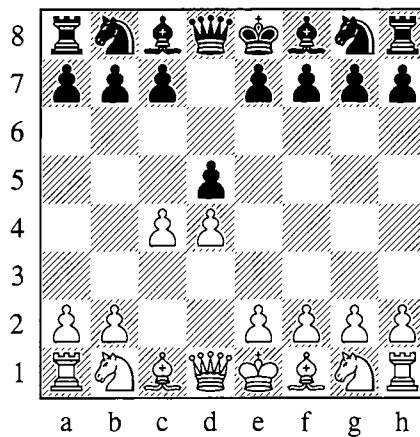
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# Chapter 8

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## Minor Lines

*Convince me that the truth is always grey*  
– The Killers



**1.d4 d5 2.c4**

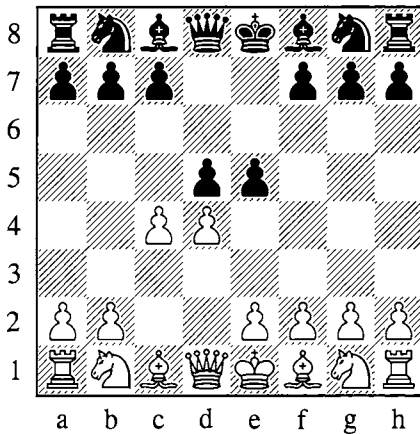
The Albin Counter-Gambit	page 281
The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit	page 285
The 2...♗f5 Variation	page 288
The Symmetrical 2...c5	page 292
The Marshall Variation	page 295
The Triangle Variation	page 297
The Semi-Tarrasch	page 305
The QGD with 3...♗b4	page 309

In this final chapter we will briefly examine Black's various other tries after 1.d4 d5 2.c4. These openings are very different from each other, but what they do have in common is that they are too small, too rare or too bad to have their own chapter.

We start with a classic.

## The Albin Counter-Gambit

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5

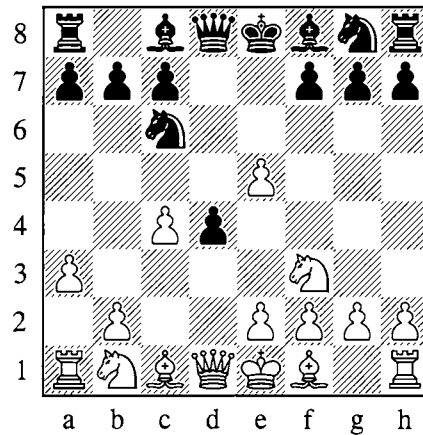


The Albin. Black counterattacks in the centre and answers White's gambit with a gambit of his own. Black sacrifices the e-pawn in search of central control and rapid development. The opening originates from the romantic era and is hardly correct. It received a boost when the inventive Russian Morozevich suddenly used it, but now the time has come to bury it again.

3.dxe5 d4

The positional point: Black's d-pawn hinders White's normal development, and Black is ready to follow up with ...dxc6, ...g4, ...cxd7 and then castle long with an active position.

4.f3 dxc6 5.a3!



A simple and very strong move: White plans b4 and e2 hitting the d-pawn. The traditional mainline has been 5.g3, but I believe the future belongs to 5.a3.

5...dxe7

The choice of Morozevich. Black intends ...dxe7 and capturing on e5. This will be examined in Game 69. Here we will take a look at the alternatives.

5...a5 Stopping White's expansion. 6.dbd2 Threatening d3 with an attack on the d-pawn. 6...g4 7.h3 exf3 (on 7...h5 8.cxb3 is strong) 8.fxf3 c5 9.h4!? dge7 10.h5± White has prevented ...dxe7 and is much better. 10...dxc8 11.f4 db6 12.c2 a4 13.h4!? e7 14.g3 e6 15.c1 da5 16.h3 c6 17.e6! fxe6 18.de5 d6 19.dg6 White was winning in Kujoth – Stoppel, corr. 1948.

5...f6 6.exf6 dxf6 7.e3 g4 8.e2 and Black has nothing for the pawn.

5...e6 6.dbd2 dge7 7.d3 exf3 (7...d5 8.cxd3±) 8.dxd4 d5 9.c2 dxd4 10.dxd4 cxd4 11.e3 xe5 12.exf4± The bishop pair rules, Ivanisevic – Khenkin, Subotica 2008.

5...g4 6.dbd2 e7 7.h3 h5 8.a4 0-0-0 9.b4 dx5 (9...b8 10.e2) 10.de5 xe5

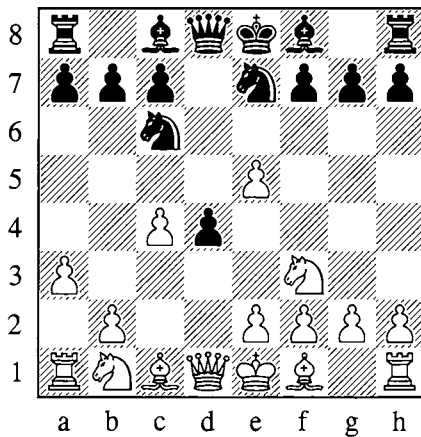
11.♙b2 ♘b8 12.g4 ♙g6 13.♙g2 ♜f6 14.♜f3 ♞f4 15.0–0± White simply wants to take on d4 and if Black takes back with the rook then e2–e3 is winning. 15...h5 16.♙xd4! ♞xd4 17.e3 ♞d6 18.♜xd4 h×g4 19.♞fd1 g×h3 20.♜c6† b×c6 21.♞d6 ♙xd6 22.♙xc6 ♞h5 23.c5 h2† 24.♙h1 1–0 P.H. Nielsen – K. Rasmussen, Denmark (ch) 2008.

## GAME 69

Topalov – Morozevich

Monte Carlo 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♜f3 ♜c6 5.a3 ♜ge7



6.b4 ♜g6

Black goes for the weak e5-pawn. Instead 6...♙g4 7.♙b2 ♜f5 8.♞d3 g6 has been played a couple of times. Avrukh suggests 9.♞e4! ♙xf3 10.exf3 ♙h6 11.f4 0–0 12.♜d2±.

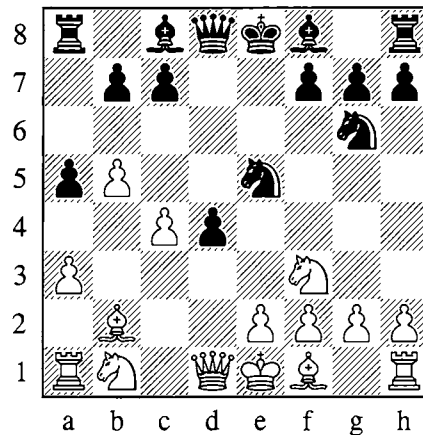
7.♙b2 a5

First he weakens White's pawn structure.

The immediate 7...♜gxe5 8.♜xe5 ♜xe5 9.e3 ♙e6 10.♙xd4 is definitely no improvement for Black, as a recent example demonstrated: 10...♜xc4 11.♞c2 ♜d6 12.♙d3 ♙e7 13.0–0

♙f6 14.♙xf6 ♞xf6 15.♜c3 c6 In Rusev – Bontempi, Mantova 2012, 16.♜e4!N ♜xe4 17.♙xe4 h6 18.b5± would have been simple and strong.

8.b5 ♜cxe5

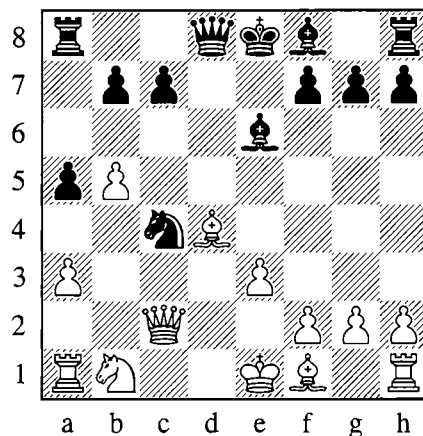


9.♜xe5

Here White could also go for a pleasant ending with: 9.♞xd4 ♞xd4 10.♙xd4 ♜xc4 11.e3 ♜d6 12.♜bd2 (12.♙e2 ♙d7 13.a4 ♜f5 14.♙c3 ♙b4 15.0–0 also gave White a slight pull in Ki. Georgiev – Bontempi, Arvier 2010) 12...♙d7 13.a4 f6 14.♙d3 ♙f5 15.♙e2± ♜e4? 16.g4! ♜xd2 17.gxf5 ♜b3 18.f×g6 ♜xa1 19.♙xa1± Stojanovic – Tadic, Vrsac 2007.

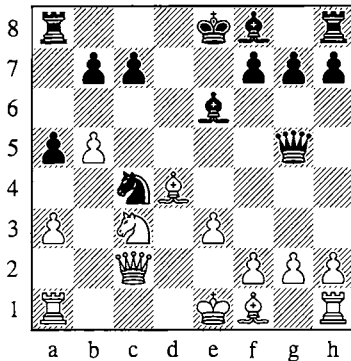
9.♙xd4 has also been tried, but is less clear.

9...♜xe5 10.e3 ♙e6 11.♙xd4 ♜xc4 12.♞c2



**12...♖d6**

Nigel Davies suggests 12...♗d5 in his book *Gambiteer 2*. It is hard to understand, after 13.♖c3 ♗g5



Now 14.f4 ♗g6 15.♗d3 f5 16.0-0± is simply good for White.

White has an even better solution: 14.♗xc4 ♗xg2 (Or 14...♗xc4 15.♗e4† ♗e7 16.♗xb7 0-0 17.♗c6 and White is a pawn up and will soon be able to castle.) 15.♗xe6! ♗xh1† 16.♗e2 ♗xa1 Tratar – Lyell, Palma de Mallorca 2009. Now 17.♖d5!N ♗xa3 18.♗f5 would have won quickly.

**13.♗d3 ♗g5 14.f4**

14.0-0 ♖xb5 is unclear.

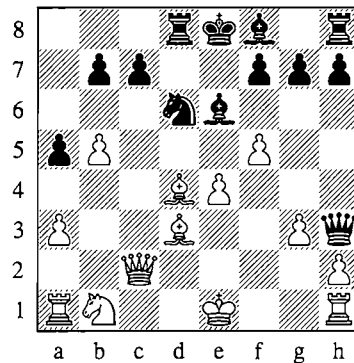
**14...♗h4†**

Another try was 14...♗d5 15.♖c3 ♗b3 but after Avrukh's precise 16.♗f2 ♖f5 17.♗xf5 ♗xf5 18.e4 0-0-0 19.0-0 (not 19.exf5 ♗c5!) 19...♗c4 20.♖d5!± Black is in dire straits because 20...♗xe4 drops the queen to 21.♖b6† cxb6 22.♗ac1.

**15.g3 ♗h5**

Better is 15...♗h3 when 16.♗f2 ♗e7 17.♖d2 0-0 18.♗xc7 ♗fe8 gives Black some compensation.

Instead Avrukh suggests: 16.e4 ♗d8 17.f5

**17...♖xe4**

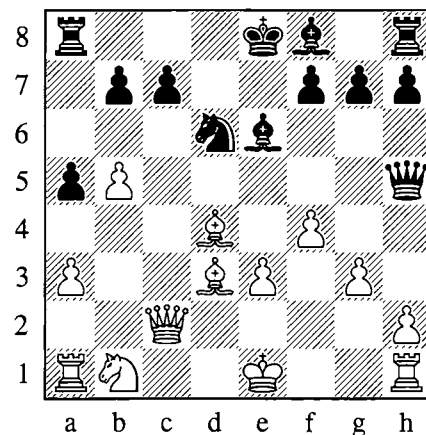
17...♗c4 18.♖c3 ♗xd3 (18...c5? was even worse in V. Popov – Potapov, Rijeka 2010: 19.bxc6 bxc6 20.♗xc4 ♖xc4 21.♖e2+ ♖xa3 22.♗xc6† ♗d7 23.♗f2 ♗d6 24.♗xg7 ♗g8 25.♗f6 1-0) 19.♗xd3 ♗e7 20.♖d5!

**18.fxe6 ♗xe6 19.♗c4 ♗e7 20.♗e3 ♖xg3**

20...♖d6 may look tricky, but it is well met by 21.♗e2 ♗e5 22.♗a2 when Black has insufficient compensation for the missing piece.

**21.hxg3 ♗xe3† 22.♗e2±**

White's extra piece is stronger than the three pawns in the ending.

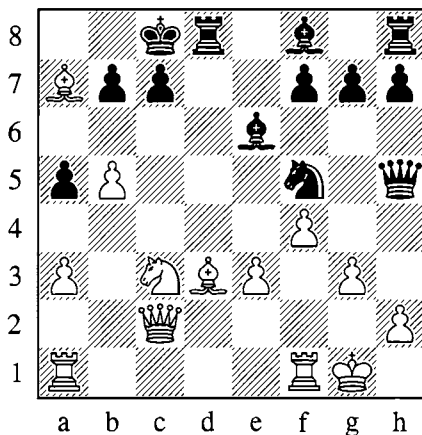
**16.♖c3 ♖f5 17.0-0 0-0-0**

Missing White's next, but the alternatives were not worth much anyway.

17...♔d6 18.♙xf5 ♙xf5 19.e4 ♙h3 20.e5  
♙e7 (20...♙xf1 21.exd6 ♙h3 22.♞e4† wins)  
21.♘d5±.

Or 17...♘d4 18.exd4 0–0 19.f5 ♙d7 20.♘d5  
♙d6 21.♘xc7!± ♙xc7 22.♞ac1 winning.

18.♙a7!



A wonderful move that simultaneously preserves the bishop and takes away a vital escape route from the black king.

18...♞g4 19.♘e4

This was a rapid game and Topalov misses the brilliant 19.♘a4! which threatens mate in one with ♘b6. The only move is 19...♘d7 but then comes 20.♞ad1 and it will soon be curtains.

19...♞d7 20.♞fd1?!

Topalov begins to stumble. 20.♘f2 ♞g6 21.♞fc1 was still overwhelming.

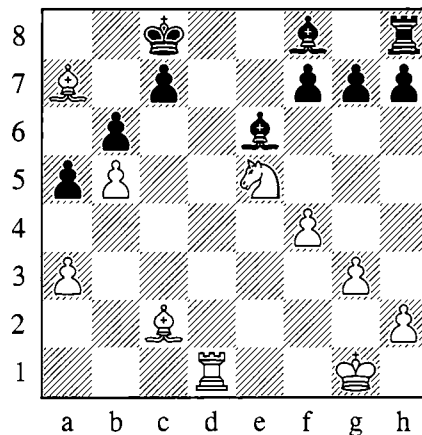
20...♞f3 21.♘g5 ♘xe3! 22.♘xf3 ♘xc2  
23.♙xc2 b6

Trapping the bishop and making certain that he wins the piece back. Remarkable defence by Morozevich, but there is no reason White should get into trouble.

24.♘e5?!

24.♞xd7 ♙xd7 25.a4 ♘b7 26.♘e5 ♙c5†  
27.♘g2 ♙e8 28.♙xb6 cxb6 29.♙e4† and  
24.♘g5 ♞xd1† 25.♞xd1 ♙c4 26.♙xb6 cxb6  
27.♙f5† were two variations where White surely would not lose.

24...♞xd1† 25.♞xd1



25...♙xa3!

The turning point: Black just takes this important pawn to begin with. The trapped bishop will not run away.

26.f5 ♙a2 27.♞a1 ♙c5† 28.♘f1 ♞e8 29.♞e1?!

29.♞xa2 ♞xe5 30.♙d3 ♘b7 31.♞e2 was the last chance. Opposite-coloured bishops always give hope of a draw.

29...f6 30.♘d3 ♞xe1† 31.♘xe1 ♙d6 32.♘c1  
♙d5 33.♙b3 ♙e4

It is all over.

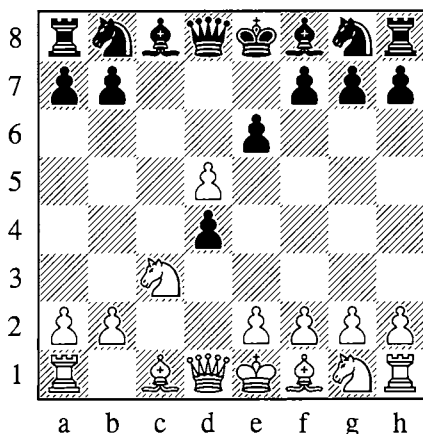
34.♙xb6 cxb6 35.♙e6† ♘c7 36.♘e2 ♙e5  
37.♘d3 ♘d6 38.♘e3 ♙d5  
0–1

**Conclusion:** 5.a3 seems to be a direct and dangerous weapon against the Albin Counter-Gambit.

We move straight on to another gambit.

## The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4



The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit uses a similar move order to the Tarrasch, but these two lines have little else in common. In this case, Black gives up a central pawn for quick development, but it is hard to believe it can be good.

5.♙xd4

5.♙a4† ♕d7 6.♙xd4 exd5 7.♙xd5 ♘c6 just transposes.

5...♘c6 6.♙d1 exd5 7.♙xd5 ♕d7

Play now takes on a surprisingly forced character.

8.♘f3 ♘f6 9.♙d1

9.♙b3 has also been tried, but then the queen is in the way – when you see the mainline you will understand why.

9...♕c5 10.e3

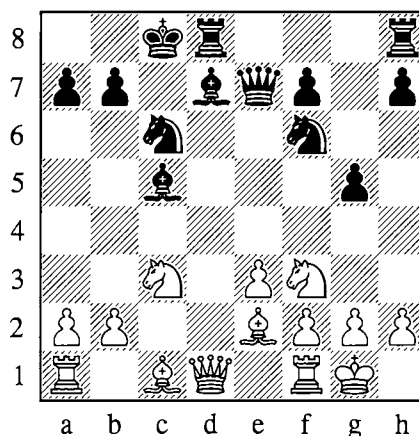
Kaufman recommends 10.a3 to be able to develop the dark-squared bishop before White plays e2-e3. For example: 10...♙e7 11.♕g5 or 10...0–0 11.♕f4. This is a logical idea and seems very promising.

10...♙e7 11.♕e2 0–0–0

Jonny Hector, the Swedish fighter with the mythological name, has been experimenting with 11...g5!?. 12.0–0 g4 13.♘d4 ♙e5 (13...h5 14.b4†), but after 14.♘xc6 ♕xc6 White can get away with taking a second pawn with 15.♕xg4±. At least my computer believes so.

11...0–0 12.0–0 ♜fd8 gives Black some compensation, but probably not quite enough for a pawn. For example, 13.a3 ♜ac8 14.♙c2 and White untangles.

12.0–0 g5



Black's offensive can quickly become rather uncomfortable for White. Fortunately he can strike back and wrench the initiative out of his opponent's hands.

13.b4!

That's it. One of the big advantages of being a pawn up is that you can return it at an appropriate moment. White's attack on the queenside turns out to be more dangerous than Black's on the kingside.

See Game 70 for the continuation:

## GAME 70

Illescas – Rodriguez Vargas

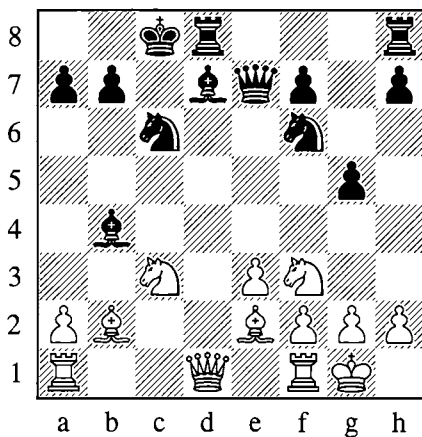
Catalonia 1996

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4  
5.♞a4† ♕d7 6.♞xd4 exd5 7.♞xd5 ♘c6  
8.♘f3 ♘f6 9.♞d1 ♖c5 10.e3 ♞e7 11.♖e2  
g5 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.b4! ♖xb4

Black must take the bait. 13...g4 14.♘d4  
♖xb4 would just transpose, while 13...♘xb4  
looks wrong. A good answer is 14.♘d4.

### 14.♖b2

Developing the bishop to a great diagonal.  
If 14.♞b3 then 14...♖e6 would be a little  
annoying.



### 14...g4

Black has an important alternative in:  
14...♞hg8 when White has tried many moves.

Most promising seems:

15.♞c2 ♖b8

Black can improve with Bronznik's  
suggestion of 15...g4. Then 16.♘d2 ♖b8  
and now White probably should harass the  
black bishop with 17.a3 ♖a5 18.♘c4±.  
16.♞f1 g4 17.♘d4 ♘xd4 18.♞xd4 ♖c6

19.♘b5!

Pay attention to this manoeuvre.

19...♘e4?

Black can play better moves, but White still  
has the advantage: 19...♞c8 20.♞f5 ♖xb5  
21.♖xb5 ♖c3 22.♖xc3 ♞xc3 23.♞f4† ♖a8  
24.♞d6± For instance, 24...♘e4 25.♞d7  
♞c5 26.♖f1.

20.♞xb4! ♞xb4 21.♖e5† ♘d6 22.♘d6 ♞xd6  
23.♞b1 1-0

This was Comas Fabrego – J. Rodriguez,  
Catalonia 1996. On 23...♞a3 24.♞xc6  
exploits two pawns.

White can even try:

15.♘b5 a6 16.a3! ♖c5 17.♞c1 ♘e4  
17...g4 18.♘d2 ♞g6 19.♖xf6 ♞xf6 20.♞xc5  
♞xc5 21.♘e4 ♞e7 22.♘xf6 ♞xf6 23.♞d6!  
♞xd6 24.♘d6† ♖c7 25.♘xf7 and White  
has won a pawn, Ezat – Pisk, Tanta 2000.

17...axb5 18.♖xf6 ♞xf6 19.♞xc5±  
18.♘c3± ♘xf2?!  
Bronznik gives 18...♘xc3 19.♞xc3 g4  
20.♘d4 ♖b8 but I think White can improve  
with 20.♘d2!.

19.♞xf2 ♞xe3 20.♞f1 ♞xf2† 21.♞xf2 ♖xf2†  
22.♖xf2 g4 23.♘h4 ♖b8 24.♘e4±

White's two pieces were much better than  
Black's rook and two pawns, Barrance –  
Fitzpatrick, corr. 2002.

Another option for Black is: 14...♖b8 15.♘d5  
♘xd5 16.♞xd5 f6 17.♞b3 ♖e6 18.♞a4 ♖d7  
19.a3 ♖d6 20.♖b5± White is slightly better  
and the game Scherer – Haag, e-mail 2006,  
showed how this advantage can grow: 20...a6?  
21.♖xa6! bxa6 22.♞xa6 ♖c7 23.♘d4 White's  
attack was too strong and soon proved decisive:  
23...♞b8 24.♞ac1 ♞b6 25.♞a7† ♞b7 26.♘b5†  
♖c8 27.♞a8† ♖b8 28.a4 1-0

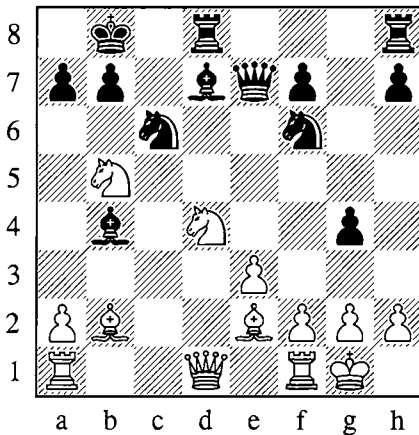
### 15.♘d4 ♖b8

15...♘xd4 16.♞xd4 ♖c5 17.♘d5! ♘xd5  
18.♞fc1 and Black is being crushed: 18...♞hg8

19.♞xc5† ♔c6 20.♙xg4† ♗b8 21.♞e5† ♗a8?!  
22.♞xd5 1–0 Comas Fabrego – Martin,  
Benasque 1995.

15...h5 or 15...♞hg8 are both answered by  
16.♖cb5 when 16...♗b8 would transpose to  
the next note.

### 16.♖cb5



The critical position. The battle is very tense, but White's progress on the queenside always seems to be a little ahead of Black's on the kingside. And the initiative matters, as we know by now. It has been a guiding star throughout the whole book.

### 16...♖e5

This is hardly the best move, judging from the fact that this game is over in four moves!

Black had two serious alternatives:

16...h5 17.♞a4 a6 18.♖xc6†

The text has always been played. I will take the opportunity to suggest the new move 18.♞ab1!N when play can develop something like this: 18...♞e4 19.♙d3! ♞xd3 20.♖xc6† ♙xc6 21.♞xb4 ♖d5 22.♙e5† ♗a8 23.♞b2 ♞h6 24.♖d4±

18...♙xc6 19.♙xf6 ♞e4!

19...♞xf6 20.♞xb4 axb5 21.♙xb5 was just a pawn down for Black in Polugaevsky – Zaitsev, Soviet Union (ch) 1968.

20.f3 ♞xe3† 21.♗h1 ♞xe2

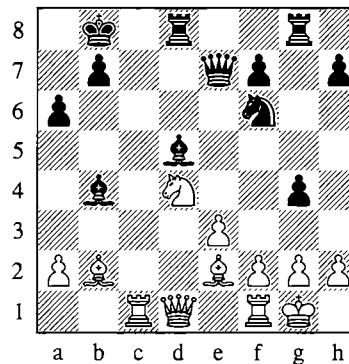
21...♙d2! is an interesting survival attempt.  
22.♞xb4 gxf3 23.♞f4† ♗a8 24.♖c7† ♗a7  
25.gxf3? ♞hg8 26.♙g5 ♞d3

And Black was winning in Krush – Kapnisis, Oropesa del Mar 1999. However with 25.♙d4† b6 26.♞f2 fxe2† 27.♗g1 the result would have been reversed. The finish could be 27...♞d3 28.♖e6! fxe6 29.♞c7† ♙b7 30.♞xb6† ♗b8 31.♞a7† ♗c8 32.♞c1†.

16...♞hg8 17.♞c1

The natural 17.♞a4 just leads to a perpetual after 17...a6 18.♖xc6† ♙xc6 19.♙xf6 ♞e4! 20.♙e5† ♗a8 21.♖c7† ♗a7 22.♖b5† ♗a8. Also 17.♞b3 has been tried frequently, but it is not so clear after 17...♖e4.

17...a6 18.♖xc6† ♙xc6 19.♖d4 ♙d5



20.♙c4

20.♖f5! gives White an edge. For example:  
20...♞e4 21.♖h4 ♙e6 22.♙d4 h5 23.♞b1 a5 24.a3 ♙c5 25.♙a6 ♙c8 26.♙d3 ♞xd4 27.exd4 ♞xd4 28.♙f5 ♞xd1 29.♞fxd1 ♞e8 30.♞b5 b6 31.♙xc8 ♗xc8 32.♗f1± In Mason – Palladino, e-mail 2008, White had some winning chances.

20...♞g5

20...♖e4! was assessed as unclear by Bronznik, which seems to be a fair assessment.

This makes White's improvement on the previous move especially relevant.

21. ♖xd5

Also possible was 21. ♖b3±.

21... ♖xd5

Or 21... ♖gxd5 22. ♖b3.

22. ♖c2 ♖h5 23. ♖f5± ♖d6 24. g3 ♖b4 25. ♖b1 ♖d7 26. e4 ♖f8

Firt – Pisk, Czech Republic 1998, and here 27. ♖fd1 ♖e8 28. ♖xd8† ♖xd8 29. a3 is winning a piece after either 29... ♖d3 30. ♖d1 or 29... ♖c6 30. ♖xc6.

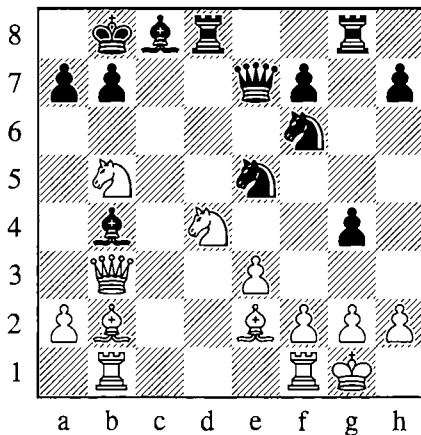
17. ♖b3 ♖hg8

17...a6 is countered with the spectacular 18. ♖e6! ♖f3† 19. ♖xf3 ♖xe6 20. ♖e5† ♖d6 21. ♖b2±.

18. ♖ab1±

White has strong pressure after the text, but 18. ♖e6 was again also possible.

18... ♖c8?!



19. ♖xa7! ♖e4

Or 19... ♖xa7 20. ♖b5† ♖b8 21. ♖xb4 ♖xb4 22. ♖xe5† winning.

20. ♖dc6†!

1–0

On 20... ♖xc6 21. ♖xc6† bxc6 there follows

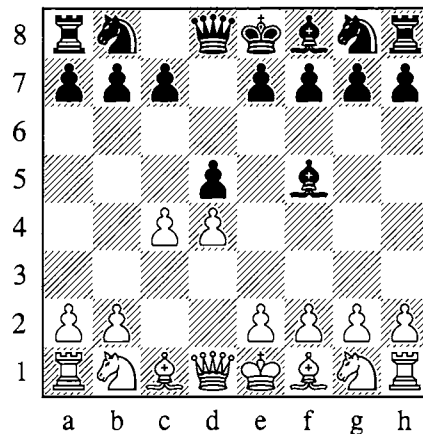
22. ♖e5†! ♖a8 23. ♖a4† ♖a7 24. ♖xb4 and White is completely winning.

**Conclusion:** The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit is surprisingly unclear, but with the precise 13.b4! White gives the pawn back and in return gets the initiative, which is much more important in such a sharp position.

Next we will consider a trio of rare second moves by Black. First, we have a provocative bishop move.

## The 2... ♖f5 Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♖f5



To complete the repertoire, we must look at an extravaganza of odd moves.

3. ♖c3

As I have emphasized earlier in the book, I like to meet these strange outbursts by Black in a positional way. Black hopes to provoke a tactical mess like 3. ♖b3 e5, and even the often played 3.cxd5 ♖xb1 4. ♖a4† c6 5. ♖xb1 ♖xd5 6. ♖f3 is only slightly better for White, as Black's position is solid.

3...e6 4. ♖f3 c6

The most natural choice.

If Black instead chooses to stay in the department of bizarre chess with:

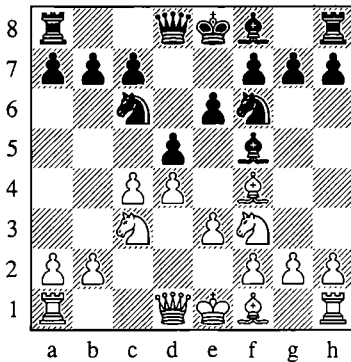
4...♖c6

Then White should not have too many problems gaining a positional advantage.

5.♙f4

The immediate 5.cxd5 also looks fine. In such QGD Exchange structures the knight is usually misplaced on c6.

5...♖f6 6.e3



6...♙e7

6...♙b4 is more active. Then 7.♞c1 when 7...0-0 8.a3 stops Black's momentum and 7...♖e4 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♙d3 0-0 10.0-0 is also a little better for White.

7.cxd5 ♖xd5 8.♙g3 0-0 9.♙e2 ♙b4 10.♞c1 ♙d6

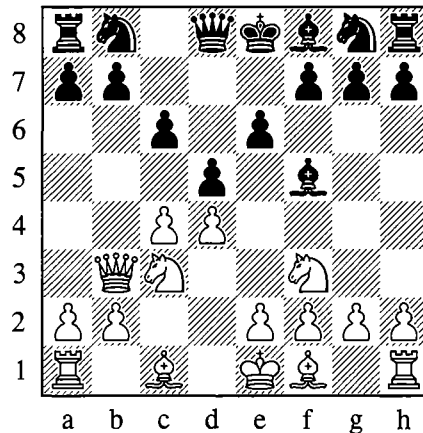
10...♖ce7 11.0-0 ♙d6 12.♖d2 ♞c8 13.e4 ♙xg3 14.hxg3 ♖c3 15.bxc3 ♙g6 16.♞d1± Horta – Vostrotin, corr. 2005.

11.0-0 ♙xg3 12.hxg3 ♞d6 13.♖d2 ♙g6 14.♙f3 ♖ce7 15.♞d1± c6 16.♖c4 ♞c7 17.e4 ♖b6 18.♖e5

White's extra space gave Black a hard time in Kramnik – Short, Horgen 1995.

If 4...♖f6 then 5.♞b3 ♖c6 6.♙g5 is simple and strong. 6...♖b4 is answered by 7.♞c1 and after 6...♖a5 7.♞a4† c6 8.♙xf6 gxf6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.e3 ♞b6 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.♙d3± Black has no compensation for his weakened pawn structure.

5.♞b3



It turns out that the early bishop development has left b7 rather weak.

5...♞b6

On 5...♞c7 White has the tactical finesse 6.♙f4! when 6...dxc4 7.♙xc7 cxb3 8.e4 ♙g6 9.a3 leads to a pleasant endgame. White will win the pawn back with ♖f3-d2 and prefers not to weaken his pawn structure. 9...♙e7 (9...a5 10.♖d2 a4 protects b3 but allows 11.♖xa4 ♞xa4 12.♙xb8 ♖f6 13.f3 ♞xd4 14.♖xb3 ♞a4 15.♙e2± Sutkus – Rufenacht, corr. 1996.) 10.♖d2 ♙d8 11.♙xd8 ♖xd8 12.♖xb3 ♖d7 13.♞c1 ♖e7 14.f3 ♞c8 15.♖f2± Kramnik – Hertneck, Germany 1995. As is so often the case, Black lacks space.

5...b6?! is too weakening and can be punished immediately with 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e4! dxe4 (or 7...♙xe4 8.♖xe4 dxe4 9.♖e5 ♞e7 10.♙c4 ♞b4† 11.♖e2 ♞xb3 12.♙xb3 and Black managed to exchange queens, but f7 will still fall with devastating effect) 8.♖e5 ♙e6 (8...♞c7 9.♙c4 ♙g6 10.♙f4 ♞b7 11.♖b5! cxb5 12.♙d5 ♙b4† 13.♖f1 ♞e7 14.♞c1 ♖d7 15.♙xa8 winning material, Nittschalk – Ganzer, corr. 2000) 9.♙c4 ♙xc4 10.♞xc4 ♞e7 11.♖xc6 ♞c7 12.d5 White already had a winning position in Ribli – Kurajica, Novi Sad 1982.

**6.c5 ♖c7**

This is the main move and will be covered in Game 71, but we will first check out the alternative.

**6...♗xb3 7.axb3**

This is good for White.

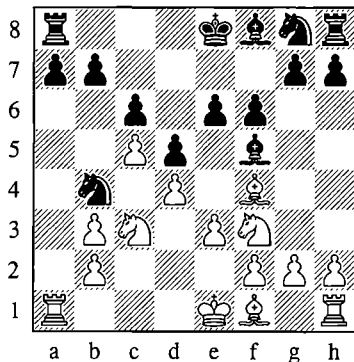
On 7...♗d7 comes 8.b4 a6 9.b5! cxb5 10.♗xb5, so the more common choice is:

**7...♗a6**

Black tries to hold back the white pawns.

**8.♗f4 f6**

After 8...♗f6 the safe choice is 9.e3 ♗b4 10.♗d2±, but White could try for more with 9.♗xa6!? bxa6 10.e3 ♗h5 11.♗c7 followed by ♗xa6 with great positional compensation for the exchange.

**9.e3 ♗b4****10.♗a4! ♗d3† 11.♗xd3 ♗xd3 12.♗d2±**

With a big lead in development. On 12...♗g6 White has b3-b4 and b5, so Black must misplace the bishop. A game of mine continued:

**12...♗b5 13.♗aa1 g5? 14.♗xg5!**

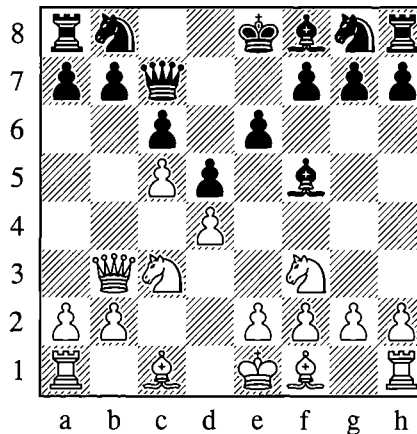
White scores a pawn, because on 14...fxg5 there is 15.♗e5 picking up the rook on h8.

**14...e5 15.♗e6**

I was winning in Schandorff – S. Petersen, Denmark 2008.

**GAME 71****Kramnik – Gelfand**

Wijk aan Zee 1998

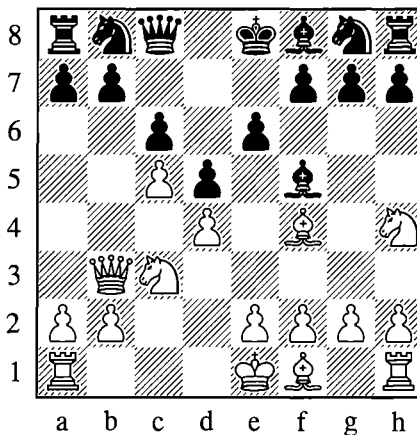
**1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♗f5 3.♗c3 e6 4.♗f3 c6 5.♖b3 ♗b6 6.c5 ♖c7****7.♗f4!**

Once again we see this tactical motif. Black cannot take the bishop because it would allow ♗xb7 and the rook on a8 is gone.

**7...♖c8 8.♗h4**

Kramnik goes for the bishop pair, which has always been one of his trademarks.

There was also a simple solution in 8.e3 ♗f6 9.h3 ♗e7 10.♗e2 ♗bd7 11.♖d1 0-0 12.b4± with play similar to the a6-Slav.



**8...♙g6**

Black could choose between different variations of the same unpleasantness:

8...♖e7 9.♗xf5 ♖xf5 10.e3 ♗d7 11.♙d3± ♙e7  
12.♞c2 g6 13.0–0 0–0 14.b4 ♙f6 15.♙xf5  
exf5 16.b5 White had the initiative, Schlosser  
– Khalifman, Germany 1997.

8...♙g4 9.h3 ♙h5 10.g4 ♙e7 11.♙e5! ♖f8  
12.♙g3± Khenkin – Gleizerov, Stockholm  
2004.

8...♙e4 9.f3 ♙g6 10.♗xg6 hxg6 11.e4± Gausel  
– Rowson, Oxford 1998.

8...♗f6 9.♗xf5 exf5 10.e3±

8...♙e7 9.♗xf5 exf5 10.e3± A recent example  
continued: 10...♗f6 11.♙e2 0–0 12.0–0 ♙d8  
13.♞c2 ♗e4 14.♗xe4 fxe4 15.f3 exf3 16.♞xf3  
♙c7 17.♙d3 h6 18.♙xc7 ♞xc7 19.♞af1 ♗a6  
20.♙h7+ ♖h8 21.♙g6 f6 22.♞f5 ♞e7 23.♞h5  
Black was very weak on the light squares in  
Ionov – Kovalenko, Sochi 2012.

**9.♗xg6 hxg6 10.e4**

The most active. 10.e3 was of course also  
playable.

**10...♗f6**

10...dxe4 11.♗xe4 and there is a big hole on  
d6.

**11.exd5**

Opening the position.

In a previous game Kramnik had played  
11.♙d3 dxe4 12.♗xe4 ♗xe4 13.♙xe4 ♙e7  
14.0–0–0 ♗d7 15.♖b1 ♗f6 16.♙f3 ♗d5, but  
Black was very solid in Kramnik – Short, Dos  
Hermanas 1997.

**11...♗xd5**

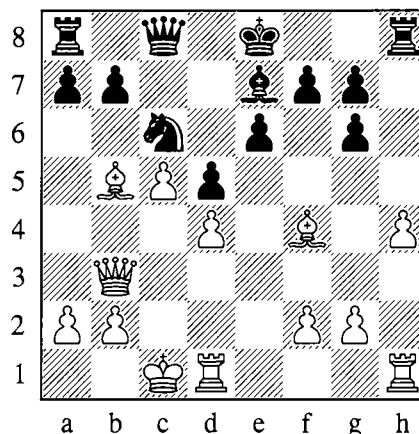
If 11...exd5 then 12.0–0–0 ♙e7 13.♞e1 is  
very awkward for Black.

**12.♗xd5 cxd5**

Or 12...exd5 13.0–0–0 and Black will  
experience trouble along the e-file. For example:  
13...♙e7 14.♞e3 ♖f8 15.♞e1 ♙f6 16.h4 ♗d7  
17.g4! 1–0 Seris Granier Gonzales – Raluy  
Lopez, e-mail 2006. Black's resignation may  
seem premature to over-the-board players, but  
his position is totally lost.

**13.♙b5†**

Again White chooses the sharpest line.  
13.♙xb8 ♞xb8 14.♙b5† ♖d8 15.g3 ♙e7 is  
not so clear. Black has lost the right to castle,  
but he will get counterplay after 16.0–0 ♙f6  
17.♞ad1 ♞c7 18.♞fe1 b6!?: as pointed out by  
Hübner in his ChessBase annotations.

**13...♗c6 14.0–0–0 ♙e7 15.h4**

White grabs space all over the board. Later  
he can maybe play h4-h5 and open the  
position under favourable circumstances. It  
is too dangerous to castle, so Gelfand's king is  
forced to remain in the centre. That is seldom  
a good sign.

**15...♖f8 16.♖b1 a6 17.♙a4 ♗a5?!**

Seeking counterplay, but it just backfires.

Better was 17...♖g8 but Black's position is  
difficult to play.

**18. ♖f3 b6?!**

Continuing the wrong plan.

**19. cxb6 ♗b7 20. ♝c1?!**

This works well in the game, but is actually a small slip.

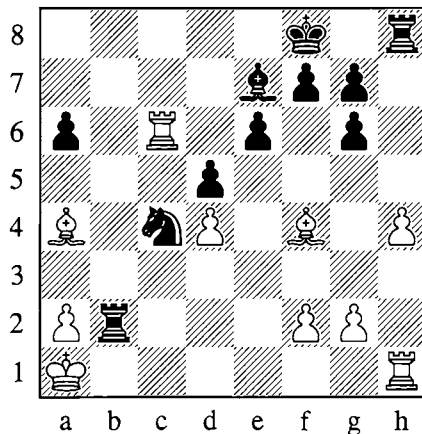
The violent 20.h5 g5 21.h6! was very strong: 21... ♖xb6 22. ♗e5 f6 and now 23. ♝c1! increases the pressure and puts Black in a hopeless position. He cannot get the knight back into play because 23... ♘c4 simply loses to 23. ♝xc4.

**20... ♖xb6 21. ♝c7**

Striking with 21.h5 was still interesting.

**21... ♝b8?!**

21... ♝d8 was rather unclear and should have been tried.

**22. ♖c3 ♘c4 23. ♝c6 ♖xb2† 24. ♖xb2 ♝xb2† 25. ♔a1**

Black has miscalculated: he is completely lost, because he cannot parry both White's threats of ♝xc4 and ♝c8†.

**25... ♔g8 26. ♝xc4 ♝xf2 27. ♝c8† ♔h7 28. ♝xh8† ♔xh8 29. g3 ♗a3 30. ♝d1 ♔g8 31. ♝d3 ♗e7**

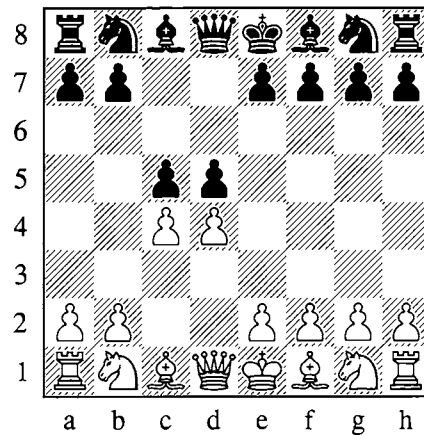
Or if 31... ♝f1† then 32. ♗d1.

**32. ♗c7 g5 33. hxg5 ♗xg5 34. ♔b1 ♗e7 35. ♗c2 g5 36. a4 f5 37. a5 ♗f6 38. ♗b6 f4 39. gxf4 gxf4 40. ♝d1 1–0**

**Conclusion:** The experimental 2... ♗f5 is well answered by 3. ♘c3 e6 4. ♘f3 c6 5. ♖b3 with good play in all variations.

Next is another unusual second move by Black. It poses the relevant question, what happens if your opponent does the same as you?

## The Symmetrical 2...c5

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c5**

Black tries to equalize by liquidating the centre. Pawns will inevitably be exchanged, but the advantage of moving first will be visible: White gets a pleasant positional initiative.

**3.cxd5**

The most natural choice.

**3... ♘f6**

A significant alternative is:

**3... ♖xd5**

But Black will lose time due to the exposed queen:

**4. ♘f3 cxd4 5. ♘c3! ♖a5**

5...♙d8 6.♚xd4  
6.♜xd4

This shows what I mean.

6...♜f6

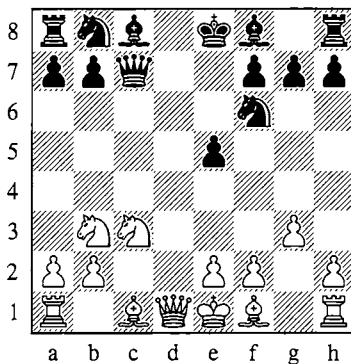
6...e5 7.♜b3

And now the simplest is probably:

7.g3±

For instance:

7...e5 8.♜b3 ♚c7



9.♙g2

The immediate 9.♙g5 is also interesting.

9.♙g2 creates ideas such as ♙g5 gaining control over the key square of d5. Let's continue the line:

9...♙b4 10.♚d3!

If Black takes on c3 White will be happy to exchange queens.

10...0-0 11.♙g5 ♜d8 12.♚f3 ♙xc3?! 13.♚xc3 ♜c6 14.0-0 ♙e6 15.♜ac1 ♜ac8 16.♙xc6! ♙xb3

16...bxc6 17.♜c5

17.♚xb3 bxc6 18.♙xf6 gxf6 19.♚f3 ♜d6

20.♜c4 ♙h8 21.♜fc1 ♚d7 22.b4 a6 23.a4 ♜b8

24.♜xc6

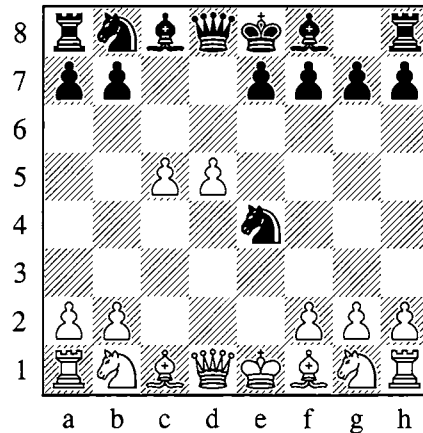
1-0 Fressinet – Degraeve, Belfort 2010.

4.e4

This is the sharpest and most promising line.

Instead 4.♜f3 cxd4 5.♚xd4 ♚xd5 6.♜c3 ♚xd4 7.♜xd4± leads to a slightly better endgame, but because of the many exchanges and the pawn symmetry, the risk of drawing is quite high.

4...♜xe4 5.dxc5



5...♜xc5

Not a great square for the knight.

The alternative is 5...♚a5†. This looks too risky though: 6.♙d2 ♜xd2 7.♚xd2 ♚xc5 8.♜a3 With the threat of ♜c1. 8...♙d7 9.♜c1 ♚b6 10.♜c4 White has a strong initiative. 10...♚f6 11.♜f3 g5 12.♜ce5 ♙h6 This was Goossens – Zaitsev, Belgium 2007, and now 13.♚b4 is clearly better for White.

Or 10...♚h6 11.f4

11.♚xh6 gxh6 12.♜f3 cannot be bad either. 11...♜a6

11...e6 12.d6 ♜c6 13.♜f3 f6 was suggested by Breutigam. A simple response is 14.♙e2 e5 15.fxe5 ♚xd2† 16.♙xd2 fxe5 17.♜he1±. 12.♜e5 ♚d6 13.♜xd7 ♚xd7 14.♜f3 e6 15.♙xa6 bxa6 16.0-0 ♜d8 17.♚e2 ♚xd5 18.♜fd1 ♚a5 19.♜xd8† ♚xd8 20.♚xa6 ♚b6† 21.♚xb6 axb6 22.♙f1 f6

H. Olafsson – Westerinen, Reykjavik 1997, and now White has 23.♜c7±.

6.♜c3

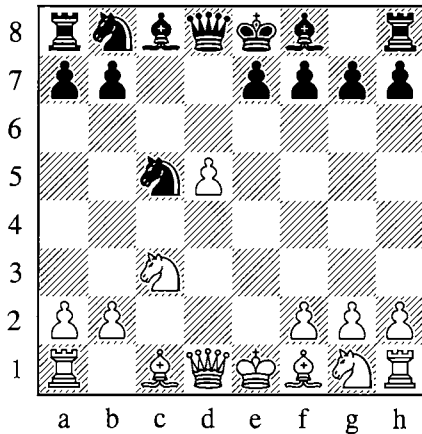
The most active move, which we will check out in Game 72. For those who love a small but steady positional advantage, it is worth considering 6.♜f3 e6 7.♜c3 exd5 8.♚xd5 with an initiative in the ending.

## GAME 72

A. Jorgensen – Casares Ripol

Correspondence 1995

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c5 3.cxd5 ♘f6 4.e4 ♘xe4  
5.dxc5 ♘xc5 6.♘c3



### 6...e5

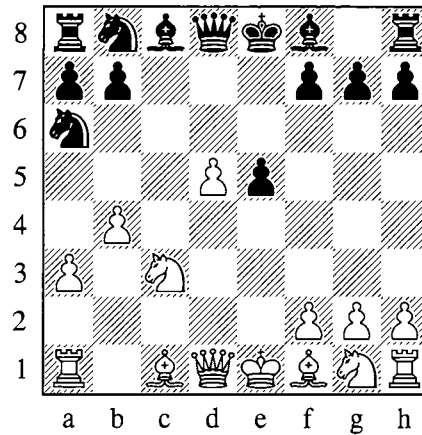
Black wants to close the position. This was recommended in a survey in ChessBase Magazine, but my guess is that the author Breutigam did not know this game.

Trying to keep liquidating pawns in the centre by means of 6...e6 runs into 7.b4! ♖f6 8.♗c2 ♘ca6 9.a3 exd5 (otherwise Black's position is just awful) 10.♘xd5! ♗e5† 11.♘e3 ♙e6 (He still cannot take the rook: 11...♗xa1 12.♗xc8† ♗e7 13.♘f5† ♗f6 14.♗d8† 1-0 Zambo – Papp Zoltan, Hungary 2002. 14...♗xf5 15.♙d3† and mate in a few moves.) 12.♙b2 ♗c7 13.♙b5† ♘c6 14.♘f3±

### 7.b4!

Anyway. Of course. Strangely this obvious idea is not mentioned by Breutigam. 7.♘f3 ♙d6 is less clear.

7...♘ca6 8.a3



The knight on a6 gives Black some positional headaches. It is not so easy to bring it back into the game, especially since its colleague on b8 also needs to get out. Actually, in the rest of the game neither of them moves!

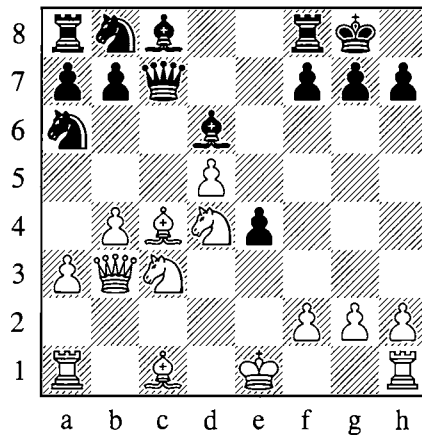
8...♙d6 9.♘f3 0-0 10.♙c4 e4

Maybe better is 10...♙f5.

11.♘d4 ♗c7?!

And here 11...♙e8.

12.♗b3±



12...♙xh2?

This loses. 12...♗e7 had to be played when 13.♘db5 leaves White on top.

13. ♖cb5 ♜e5 14. ♙b2

Black will not get out of this mess.

14...e3

If 14... ♜h5 then 15. ♖e6! fxe6 16. dxe6 ♖h8 17. e7 ♜e8 18. ♙f7 could follow.

15. ♖f3

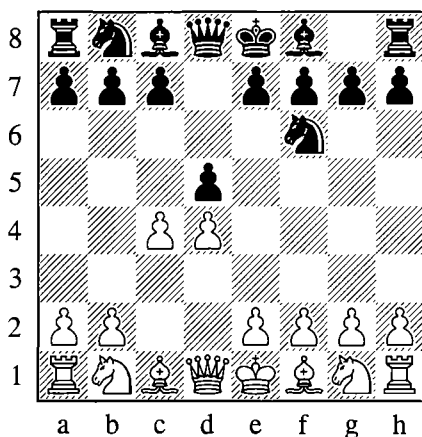
This wins a piece.

15...exf2† 16. ♖f1 ♜f4 17. ♜xh2 ♙g4 18. ♙e5 1–0

**Conclusion:** 2...c5 is too naive. White's lead in development gives him the edge in all variations.

### The Marshall Variation

1. d4 d5 2. c4 ♖f6



This is known as the Marshall Variation, but in contrast to some of the other opening lines named after the American grandmaster, it just surrenders the initiative and in general seems pretty unsound. In fact, it looks like a badly timed Grünfeld!

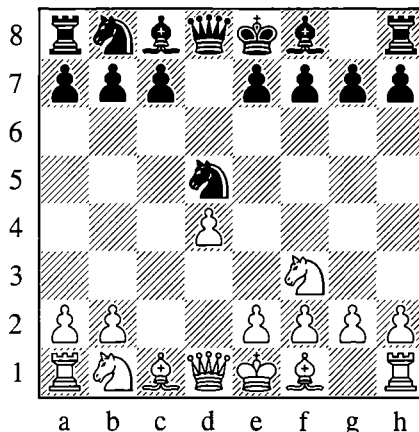
3. cxd5 ♖xd5

3... ♜xd5 4. ♖c3 ♜a5 5. ♖f3 c6 6. ♙d2± and Black regrets his early adventure with the queen.

3...c6 4. dxc6 ♖xc6 5. ♖f3 e5 6. e3 and it is doubtful that Black has enough for the pawn.

4. ♖f3

4. e4 ♖f6 5. ♖c3 e5 gives Black counterplay, though White will have a somewhat better ending after the simple 6. ♖f3 exd4 7. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 8. ♖xd4±.



4...e6

Black has a couple of other moves we should consider:

4...g6 5. e4 ♖b6 6. h3 ♙g7 7. ♖c3 0–0 8. ♙e2 ♖c6 9. ♙e3

White has a good Grünfeld where Black has not been able to exchange knights on c3.

9...e5

9...f5 10. exf5 ♙xf5 11. ♜b3† ♖h8 12. d5 ♖e5 13. ♖d4 ♖d3† 14. ♙xd3 ♙xd3 15. 0–0–0 ♙c4 16. ♜c2 ♖xd5 17. ♖e6 and White wins material.

10. d5 ♖e7 11. 0–0 f5 12. ♜b3 ♖h8 13. ♖g5 h6 14. ♖e6 ♙xe6 15. dxe6

Black is in deep trouble. For example:

15... ♖c6 16. ♙c5 ♜g8 17. ♖b5 ♖d4 18. ♖xd4 exd4 19. exf5 gxf5 20. ♙f3 ♜h4 21. ♜fe1 ♜f4 22. ♜ad1 ♙f6 23. ♙xb7 ♜ab8 24. e7 ♙e5 25. ♜xe5 ♖d7 26. e8=♜ ♜bxe8 27. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 28. ♙xd4† ♖e5 29. ♜f7

1–0 Tukmakov – Skok, Bled 1997.

If 4...♙f5 then 5.♖b3 points at b7. 5...e6 6.♘bd2! ♘b6 7.e4 ♙g6 8.♙b5† c6 9.♙d3 ♘8d7 10.0–0±

5.e4 ♘f6

Black’s cause is not helped by 5...♘b6 6.♘c3 ♙e7 7.♙d3 0–0 8.0–0 ♘c6 9.♙e3± or 5...♙b4† 6.♙d2 ♙xd2† 7.♖xd2.

6.♘c3

White has a nice position, as the following game shows.

### GAME 73

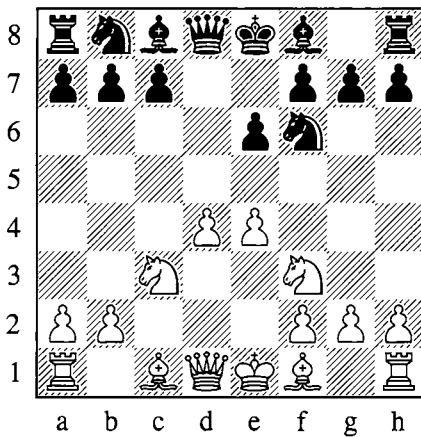
Shirov – Kaczmarek

Warsaw (rapid) 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.cxd5 ♘xd5 4.e4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6

In this move order Black could try 5...e5. That’s why it is more precise to play 4.♘f3.

6.♘f3



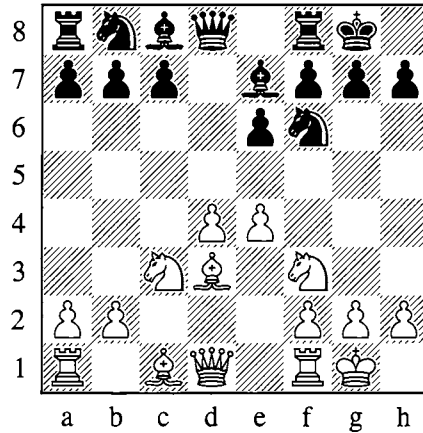
White has a pleasant position with his centre and extra space.

6...♙e7

6...♙b4 looks more active, but does not achieve anything. For example: 7.♙d3 0–0 8.0–0 c6 Very passive. 9.♙g5 ♙e7 10.♖c2

♘fd7 11.♙f4± c5 12.d5! ♘f6?! 13.d6! ♙xd6 14.♙xd6 ♖xd6 15.e5 White was winning a piece in Topalov – Pollmann, Frankfurt (simul) 1997.

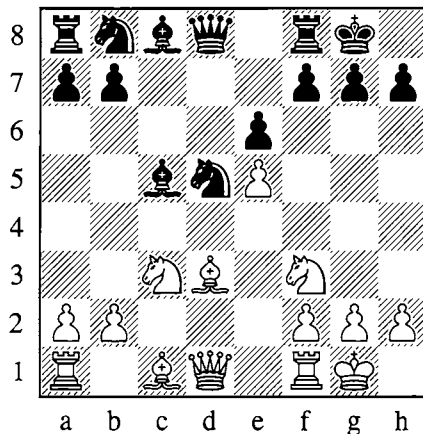
7.♙d3 0–0 8.0–0



8...c5

Black seeks counterplay, but it backfires. The alternative was to remain passive, which is no fun as the following game illustrates: 8...b6 9.♖e2 ♙b7 10.♙d1 ♘b7 11.♙f4± c5 So it is the same break anyway. Black’s position has few prospects; sooner or later he has to try something. 12.d5! exd5 13.exd5 ♙e8 14.♖c2 a6 15.d6 ♖b8 (15...♙f8 16.♘g5 g6 17.♙c4) 16.♘g5 ♘f8 17.♙c4 ♘e6 18.♙xe6 fxe6 19.♘xe6 1–0 Petrillo – Panizzi, corr. 1996.

9.dxc5 ♙xc5 10.e5! ♘d5



**11. ♖xh7!**

The classic sacrifice works perfectly here.

**11... ♗h8**

Accepting the offer would not help: 11... ♗xh7 12. ♖g5† ♗g8 (12... ♗g6 13. ♖c2† f5 14. exf6† ♗xf6 15. ♖ce4† ♗e7 16. ♖xc5† is a rout) 13. ♖h5 ♖e8 14. ♖xf7† ♗h8 15. ♖h5† ♗g8 16. ♖h7† ♗f8 17. ♖h8† ♗e7 18. ♖xg7#

**12. ♖d3**

Safe. With a pawn more and an attack, the victory should not be far off. However, it was possible to finish the game immediately with 12. ♖g5! g6 13. ♖g4 ♖e7 14. ♖h3 ♗g7 15. ♖ge4.

12... ♖c6 13. ♖g5 ♖xc3 14. bxc3 f6 15. exf6 gxf6 16. ♖e5!

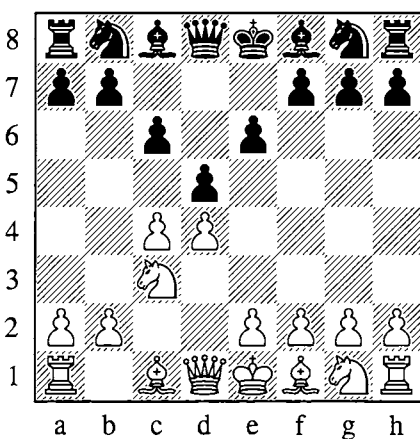
1–0

**Conclusion:** 2... ♖f6 is anti-positional; White gains the centre without any cost or effort.

And now for something completely different – a well respected opening system.

## The Triangle Variation

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♖c3 c6



The Triangle: a younger relative of the Semi-Slav. The Triangle is a popular move-order for many Black players who want to sidestep annoying variations like the Exchange Slav or the Catalan and still reach the well-trodden paths of the Semi-Slav. There are some original roads as well, as we will soon see.

**4. ♖f3**

Natural development.

White could also try the interesting Marshall Gambit 4. e4 dxe4 5. ♖xe4 ♖b4† 6. ♖d2 ♖xd4 7. ♖xb4 ♖xe4† 8. ♖e2 with a fantastic dark-squared bishop as compensation for the pawn. I think in our repertoire it fits better just to develop. After all, we are not afraid of the Semi-Slav.

If we were Meran supporters we would of course play 4. e3 when 4... ♖f6 5. ♖f3 transposes. Black, for his part, could vary with 4... f5!?

**4... dxc4**

The Noteboom Variation, in which Black strives for complications. Most players opt for 4... ♖f6 with a normal Semi-Slav, but there are other lines.

4... f5 is a kind of Stonewall Dutch which basically is outside the scope of this book. A simple and good way to continue is 5. ♖f4± with control over e5: 5... ♖f6 6. e3 ♖e7 (on 6... ♖d6 White is not forced to take, but can play 7. ♖d3) 7. ♖d3 0–0 8. h3! (also 8. ♖c2 and 8. 0–0 are normal) 8... ♖e4 9. g4 This is an interesting idea of Dreev, with play all over the board.

Sometimes Black even plays 4... ♖d7 or 4... ♖d6, but the problem with such moves is that they do nothing to fight for the centre and White can play e4 free of charge. Let's see:

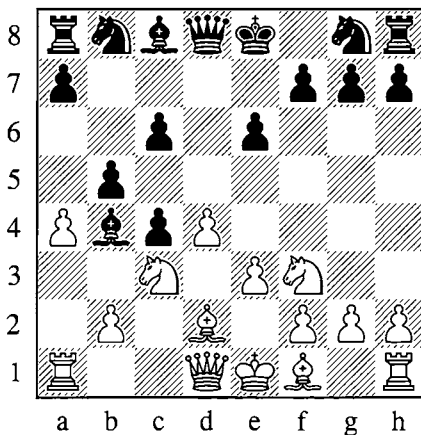
4...♖d7 5.e4 dxe4 6.♗xe4 ♘gf6 7.♙d3 ♗xe4  
8.♙xe4 ♗f6 9.♙c2 ♙b4† 10.♙d2 ♖a5 11.a3  
(also fine is 11.0–0) 11...♙xd2† 12.♖xd2  
♖xd2† 13.♗xd2 ♗e7 14.♖he1± White had  
a comfortable ending in Karpov – Korchnoi,  
Vienna 1986.

4...♙d6 5.e4 dxe4 6.♗xe4 ♙b4† 7.♙d2 ♙xd2†  
8.♖xd2± looks even worse.

### 5.a4

Preventing ...b5 and expecting to win the  
pawn back with a pleasant space advantage,  
but Black has a way to get in ...b5 after all.

### 5...♙b4 6.e3 b5 7.♙d2



Unpinning the knight and putting severe  
pressure on the black pawns.

### 7...a5

The mainline. Black has a deep positional  
manoeuvre planned that leads to highly  
unbalanced positions. He has tried many other  
moves though. Let's see the most important of  
them.

#### a) 7...♖b6 8.♗e5

This is dangerous for Black.

8...♗d7 9.axb5 ♗xe5 10.dxe5 cxb5 11.♗e4  
♙e7 12.♖g4 ♗f8 13.♖f4

This gave White excellent compensation for  
the pawn because of Black's uncastled king  
in an old Alekhine game. The master of  
attack finished in his usual sparkling style:

13...a5 14.♙e2 ♙b7 15.0–0 h5 16.♗g5 ♙xg5  
17.♖xg5 ♖h6 18.e4! h4? 19.♖xa5! f6

19...♖xa5 20.♙b4†

20.exf6 ♗xf6 21.♖xb5 1–0

Alekhine – Kashdan, New York 1929.

In this line 8...♗f6 is no better: 9.axb5 cxb5  
10.b3 ♗d5 11.♗xb5! c3 12.♗xc3 ♗xc3  
13.♖c2 ♗c6 14.♙xc3 (14.♗c4± was strong)  
14...♗xe5 15.dxe5 ♙b7 16.♙c4 ♙xg2 17.♖g1  
♙e4 18.♖xe4 ♙xc3† 19.♗e2 0–0? (19...♖d8)  
20.♖xg7†! ♗xg7 21.♖g1† ♗h8 22.♙d3 f5  
23.exf6 ♖c7 24.♖g7 White was winning  
in Bromberger – Cacco, Saint Vincent  
2005.

b) 7...♖e7 8.axb5 ♙xc3 9.♙xc3 cxb5 10.d5!  
This shows the bishop's potential. 10...♗f6  
11.d6 ♖b7 12.♙xf6 (12.b3 ♗e4 is more  
complicated) 12...gxf6 13.♙e2 a6 14.b3 cxb3  
15.♖xb3± Beliavsky – Feygin, Germany 2001.  
The d6-pawn is phenomenal and Black's pawns  
are seriously weakened.

c) 7...♙b7 8.axb5 (8.b3 is also possible)  
8...♙xc3 9.♙xc3 cxb5 10.d5 Again we see this  
motif. 10...♗f6 11.dxe6 ♖xd1† 12.♖xd1 ♙xf3  
(12...fxe6 13.♗d4±) 13.exf7† ♗xf7 14.gxf3  
♗c6 White's bishops and active rooks are a  
strong force. One example continued: 15.♖d6  
♖ac8 16.♖g1 ♖he8 17.♙h3 ♖c7 18.♖g5! ♖b8  
19.♖c5 ♖b6 20.♙a5 ♗xa5 21.♖xc7† ♗g6  
22.♖xb6 axb6 23.♙e6 ♗b3 24.♖b7 ♗c5  
25.♖xb6 1–0 Straeter – Rausis, Hastings 1996.

d) 7...♗f6 8.axb5 ♙xc3 9.♙xc3 cxb5 10.b3  
0–0 11.bxc4 bxc4 12.♙xc4 ♖c7 13.♖b3± a5  
14.0–0 ♙b7 15.♖fc1 ♗g4? 16.d5!± Piker –  
Kupreichik, Lvov 1988. On 16...exd5 comes  
17.♙d3 with numerous threats.

**8.♖b1!**

This relatively little known but very subtle move poses unusual problems for Black, as we shall see in Game 74. However, note that due to some new ideas for Black, my main recommendation is the line covered in Game 74.

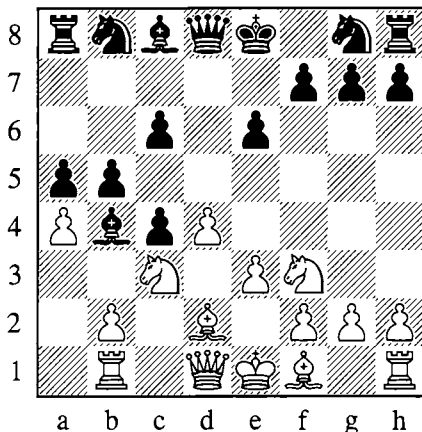
The traditional mainline is 8.axb5 ♙xc3 9.♙xc3 cxb5 10.b3 ♙b7 11.bxc4 (11.d5!?) 11...b4 12.♙b2 ♘f6 13.♙d3 0–0 14.0–0 ♘bd7 and now White's most popular move is 15.♗e1 planning to expand further in the centre. The variation is still far from resolved. Despite hundreds of tries White has not been able to find anything clear-cut yet. The big centre and the pair of bishops are important, but so are Black's two connected passed pawns!

Instead of 13.♙d3 an interesting new idea for White is the cunning 13.c5, which I analyse in Game 75.

**GAME 74****Elwert – Binder**

Correspondence 1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 ♙b4 6.e3 b5 7.♙d2 a5 8.♖b1



A difficult move to understand at first, but it is the surprising result of some aggressive prophylactic thinking. Here is the reasoning behind it: a key move for Black in the Noteboom is ...♙xc3 to save the b5-pawn, but now White introduces the idea of taking back with the pawn on c3 and opening the b-file for the rook, thus renewing the attack on b5.

**8...♙a6**

Therefore Black defends b5 in advance. There are other ways to do so.

## a) 8...♙d7

This looks clumsy, but is without a doubt Black's most solid option. White can easily finish his development and get the usual good long-term compensation for the pawn, but perhaps no more than that, as Black's position is rather solid.

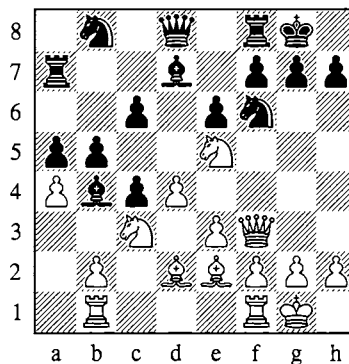
## 9.♘e5 ♘f6 10.♞f3

Activating the queen.

The more modest 10.♙e2 0–0 11.♙f3 ♖a7 12.0–0 was a good alternative.

10.g4!? 0–0 11.♙g2 ♘d5 (11...♖a7!?) 12.0–0 f6 13.♘xd7 ♞xd7∞ Matros – Chirila, Internet 2011.

## 10...♖a7 11.♙e2 0–0 12.0–0



## 12...♘d5

Two strong grandmasters have defended the black cause with deeper plans:

12...♙e7 13.♗fd1 ♞c8 14.e4?! b4 15.♘a2 c5! And Black breaks free. 16.♘xd7

♠bxd7 17.e5 cxd4! 18.exf6 ♙xf6 Harika – Yakovich, Chalkida 2009. Scherbakov suggests instead 14.g4 and I have a feeling that 13.♞fd1 perhaps was wrong. Anyway 12...♙e7 looks okay for Black.

12...♙e8 13.♞fd1 ♖d5 14.e4 f6! 15.♖g4 ♖b6 16.axb5 cxb5 And it is hard for White to come up with something concrete. For example, 17.d5 e5 was F. Mueller – Sengupta, Dresden 2011, and Black is just a pawn up. So 12...♙e8 also seems interesting. These new options for Black have made me slightly sceptical about the whole idea of 8.♞b1 – hence the new suggestion in the next game.

13.e4 ♖b6

Or 13...♖xc3 14.bxc3 ♙d6 15.♙f4.

14.♞g3

Also interesting is the new move 14.♞fd1 which increases the pressure. Black probably has to answer 14...♙e8. Taking the second pawn with 14...♙xc3 15.bxc3 ♖xa4 can be punished tactically with 16.♞g3 f6 17.♖xc4! bxc4 18.♙h6 ♞e7 19.♞xb8 ♖xc3 20.♞xf8† ♞xf8 21.♞xc3 gxh6 22.♙xc4 a4 23.♞g3† ♖h8 24.♞b1± with good play.

14...f6 15.♖xd7 ♞xd7 16.♞fd1 ♖a6 17.axb5 cxb5 18.d5! ♙d6

Or if 18...exd5 then 19.♙g4.

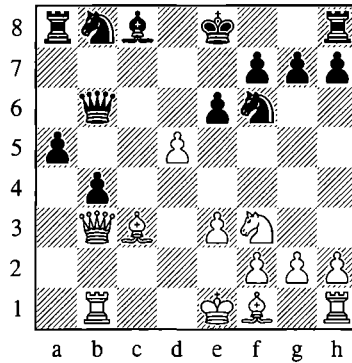
19.♞h3 exd5 20.♙g4 ♞e8 21.♙e6†

Even stronger was first 21.♙f5.

21...♖h8 22.♙e3 ♙c5 23.exd5

White seemed better, although the position was still fairly unclear, Mayo – Riera, Mataró 2005.

b) 8...♞b6 defends with the queen. 9.axb5 (9.b3 cxb3 10.♞xb3 ♙xc3 11.♙xc3 b4 12.d5!? ♖f6 13.♙xf6 gxf6 14.♞b2 cxd5 15.♞xf6 ♞f8 was unclear, but seemed okay in Beaumont – A. Shaw, corr. 1998) 9...cxb5 10.b3 Actually a new move, but the most obvious one in the position. 10...♙xc3 11.♙xc3 cxb3 (not 11...b4 12.bxc4) 12.♞xb3 b4 13.d5 ♖f6



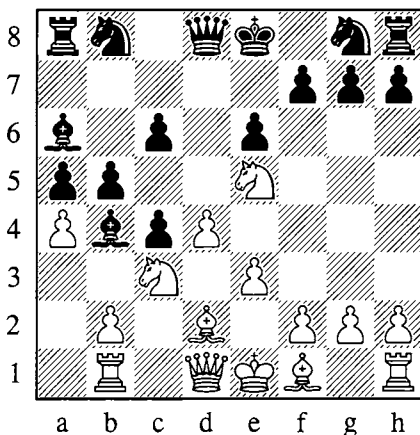
14.♙d4 (Scherbakov suggests 14.♞a4† ♙d7 15.♞a1 which I think looks very promising; it deserves practical tests.) 14...♞b7 15.♙xf6 gxf6 16.♙c4 With good play for the pawn. This has now been tested: 16...0–0 17.0–0 ♖a6 18.e4 (18.dxe6 would win the pawn back) 18...♞b6 19.♞bd1 e5 20.d6 ♖c5 21.♞e3 ♙e6 22.♖xe5 fxe5 23.♞g5† ♖h8 24.♞f6† ½–½ Harika – Joshi, Mumbai 2009.

c) 8...♙xc3 9.bxc3 The point. 9...♞d5 10.e4! ♞xe4† 11.♙e2 ♖f6 (if 11...♞d5 then 12.♖e5 with the threat of 13.♙f3) 12.axb5 cxb5 13.♞xb5± ♖bd7 14.♖e5 ♙a6 15.♞xa5 ♙b7 16.f3 ♞h4† 17.g3 ♞h3 18.♞xa8† ♙xa8 19.♞a4 ♙d5 20.♖f2 White was winning in Grachev – Doric, Pardubice 2005.

d) 8...♖f6 is a mistake: 9.axb5 ♙xc3 10.bxc3 cxb5 11.♞xb5± Once again we see the effect of the little rook move.

e) 8...bxa4 is a radical way to solve the problem with the b-pawn. White wins the pawn back and gets a distinct positional plus. 9.♙xc4 ♖f6 10.♖xa4 0–0 11.0–0 ♖bd7 12.♞c1± ♙b7 13.♙e2 ♞e7 14.♙xb4 ♞xb4 15.♖e1 ♙a6 16.♖d3 ♙xd3 17.♙xd3 ♖b6 18.♖c5 ♖bd7 19.♖a4 ♖b6 20.b3± Babula – Matlak, Czech Republic 1997.

9.♖e5



9...♖c7

The position was already full of poison.

9...♘f6

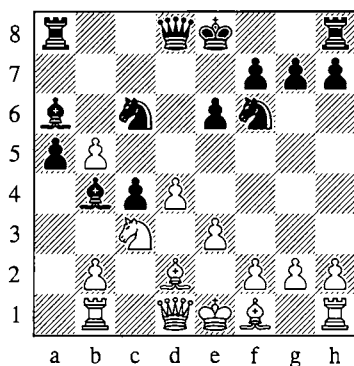
This looks more normal.

10.♘xc6

A surprising strike.

10.♖f3 is a good, more traditional, alternative.

10...♘xc6 11.axb5



11...♘xd4

Better was 11...♗b7 12.bxc6 ♘xc6±.

And even better was: 11...e5! 12.♘xc4 exd4 13.exd4 ♖xd4! Played by a computer (of course). 14.♖e2† ♘e5 15.bxa6 ♖xc4 16.♖xe5† ♘d7 And the game is balanced; both sides have trouble with their exposed kings. 17.♖f5† ♘d8 18.♗d1 ♗e8† 19.♗e3† ♘c7 20.a7 ♗xa7 21.♗d3 g6 22.♖xf6 ♖xd3

23.♖b6† ♘c8 24.♖xa7 ♘xc3† 25.bxc3 ♖b1† 26.♘e2 ♖xh1 27.♖c5† ½–½ Abeljusto – Sebichess, Internet 2007.

12.bxa6 ♘b3 13.♘xc4 ♘xd2 14.♖xd2 ♖xd2† 15.♘d2 ♘e4† 16.♘c2 ♘xf2

Delchev – Nikolov, Bulgaria 1991. And now 17.♗hf1 when White's strong a-pawn gives good winning chances.

9...♗a7 10.♘xc6 (again we see this small combination, and again a good alternative is 10.♖f3) 10...♘xc6 11.axb5 ♗b7 12.bxc6 ♘xc6 13.♘xc4 (13.f3± would secure a positional edge) 13...♖g5 Black had counterplay in Moskalenko – Malisauskas, Norilsk 1987.

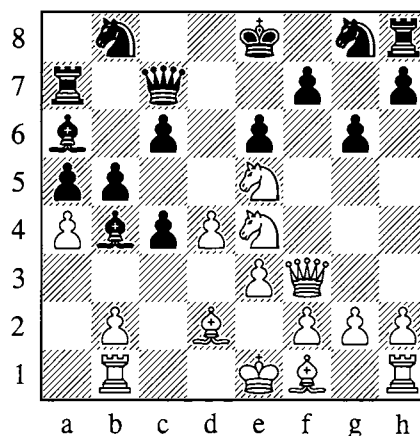
10.♖g4

White wants to provoke some weaknesses. The immediate 10.♖f3 has also been played, but the text move is stronger.

10...g6

10...f5 loses material: 11.♖h5† g6 12.♘xg6 ♖f7 (12...♘f6 13.♖h3 ♗g8 14.♘f4±) 13.axb5! hxg6 (not 13...cxb5 14.♖f3 and both rooks are hanging) 14.♖xh8 cxb5 Black did not have anything for the exchange, Bernal Moro – Candela Perez, Ponferrada 1997. A simple way to make progress is 15.h4 followed by h5.

11.♖f3 ♗a7 12.♘e4!



And now we see the effect: Black is very weak on the dark squares.

### 12...f5

12...♙xd2† 13.♚xd2! is no better.

### 13.♙xb4 axb4 14.♚c5

A nice square. White is clearly better.

### 14...b3 15.♙e2 ♙c8 16.0–0 ♚e7 17.♞fc1 ♞d6

17...0–0 should have been tried.

### 18.♞f4 ♚d7

Now it was too late: 18...0–0 19.♚xg6 ♞xf4 20.♚xf4 with horrible pawns.

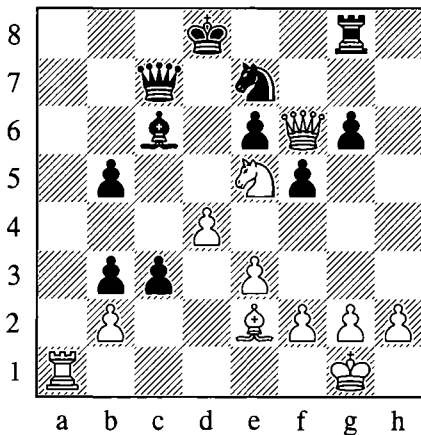
### 19.axb5 cxb5 20.♚cxd7 ♙xd7 21.♞h6

The queen enters on the kingside.

### 21...♙c6 22.♞a1

And the rook on the queenside.

### 22...♞c7 23.♞g7 ♞f8 24.♞xh7 ♞xa1 25.♞xa1 ♚d8 26.♞g7 ♞g8 27.♞f6 c3



### 28.♞a7!

A nice blow.

### 28...♙b7

Or 28...♞xa7 29.♚xc6†.

### 29.♞xe6

1–0

On 29...cxb2 White plays 30.♚f7† ♚e8 31.♚d6† ♞xd6 32.♙xb5†! ♚f8 33.♞xd6 b1=♞ 34.♙f1 and wins. This variation is quite possible to calculate in a correspondence game, so Black did not feel like seeing it played out. It reminds me of a little anecdote. In the Dresden Olympiad it was illegal to accept a draw before move 30. My Danish team-mate Peter Heine Nielsen suggested that then it should also be forbidden to resign before move 30!

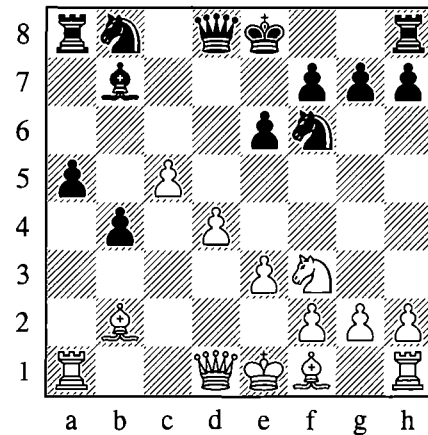
**Conclusion:** The interesting move 8.♞b1 was my original recommendation against the Noteboom. Now I am less convinced due to the possible improvements for Black at move 12 in the 8...♙d7 variation.

## GAME 75

### Lomineishvili – Melnikova

Dresden 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♚c3 c6 4.♚f3 dxc4 5.a4 ♙b4 6.e3 b5 7.♙d2 a5 8.axb5 ♙xc3 9.♙xc3 cxb5 10.b3 ♙b7 11.bxc4 b4 12.♙b2 ♚f6 13.c5!?

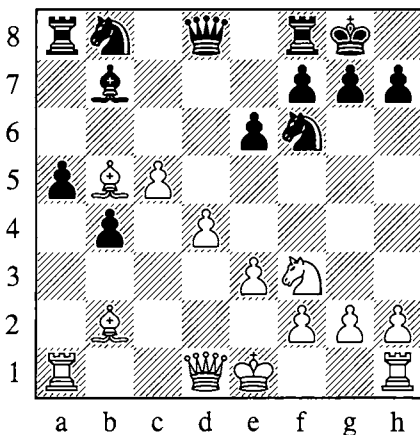


Another move that is difficult to understand.

I can imagine what you are thinking: ‘Is that really what I have to offer against the Triangle? Another sideline! How about taking this well-respected opening a bit more seriously?’ Well, actually I am! Basically the move 13.c5 is an attempt to win a tempo in one of the critical lines in the Noteboom.

More normal is 13.♔d3 0–0 14.0–0 ♖bd7 and here instead of moving the rook to e1, the Russian theoretician Dreev has tried 15.c5!? ♔c6 16.♔c2 ♗c7 17.♔a4 with a blockade of the passed pawns. Our idea with 13.c5 is simple: we want to play ♔b5 and ♔a4 thus sparing a move.

13...0–0 14.♔b5



14...♔c6

The most logical response, as the white bishop is very annoying on b5. Other moves include:

14...♗c7 15.0–0 ♔d5 (15...♖g4 16.g3 did not bring Black anything good in Peredy – P. Horvath, Pecs 1997) 16.♗e2 ♖c6 17.♗fc1 ♖e4 18.♖e1! As given by Scherbakov; next comes f2-f3.

14...♗d5 15.0–0 ♖c6 16.♗e2 ♖e7 (16...♖e4 17.♗fc1) 17.♗fc1 ♗fc8 18.♗f1 Protecting g2.

18...♔c6 19.♖e5 ♔xb5 20.♗xb5 ♗cb8 21.♗a4 ♗e4 22.♗b3 ♖f5 23.♗e1 ♗h4 24.e4 ♖e7 25.g3 ♗h3 26.f3± J. Johansson – Gunajew, Olomouc 2011.

14...♖c6 15.0–0 ♗d5 transposes to the line above.

15.♔a4

Mission accomplished. The bishop is here in two moves instead of in three! The question is how much it matters!

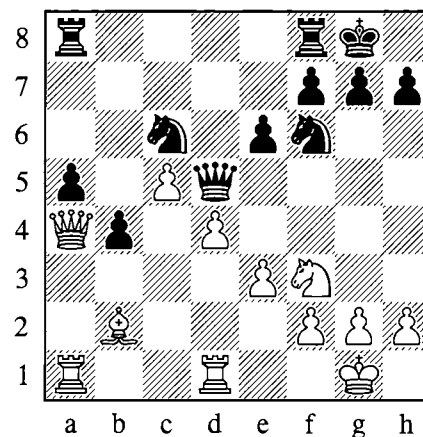
15...♔xa4

The simplest. If Black plays something flexible like 15...♗c7 16.0–0 ♖bd7 then White is effectively a tempo up on well-known lines. As long as the knight can be deployed on c6 it is an original story.

16.♗xa4 ♗d5

16...♗c7 17.0–0 ♖c6 is the other set-up. 18.♖d2 ♖d5 19.♖c4 f5 20.♖d6 ♗f6∞ is given by Scherbakov. I think 21.♗fe1 should give White good play. A sample variation is: 21...♗d8 22.e4 fxe4 23.♗xe4 ♗df8 24.f3±

17.0–0 ♖c6 18.♗fd1



18...♖e4

This looks natural, but is an inaccuracy.

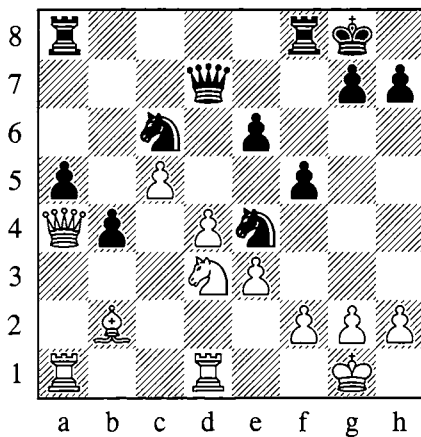
Antonsen – Krasenkow, Helsingor 2011, instead continued: 18...♞fc8 19.♘d2 (19.♘e5!?) 19...♘e4 This is a better version for Black compared to our main game. The game went on 20.♘f1 f5 and even here White can get some advantage with 21.♞!N ♘f6 22.♘d2±.

Instead of 20...f5 Black might consider 20...e5!? which looks less clear.

### 19.♘e1!

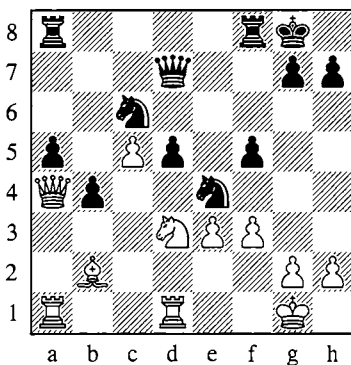
Preparing to kick the black knight back with f2-f3; as a bonus, the white knight will be excellent on d3.

19...f5 20.♘d3 ♞d7



### 21.♞

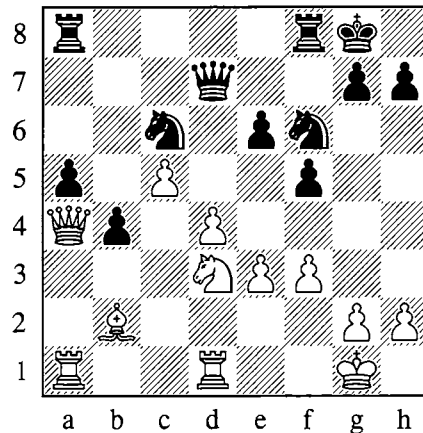
Instead I recommend 21.d5!N when after 21...exd5 22.f3 Black has an unpleasant choice.



If 22...♘g5 then 23.♘f4 ♞e8 24.♘d5 ♞a7 25.♞d3 gives White a secure advantage; Black's passed pawns are solidly blockaded and the bishop is a monster.

Or 22...♘f6 23.♞xf6 and now Black must accept the ugly 23...gx6 24.♘f4± as instead 23...♞xf6? 24.♘xb4! is winning.

### 21...♘f6



### 22.♘f2

Scherbakov proposed 22.d5. It looks good if Black replies 22...exd5? 23.♞xf6 ♞xf6?! 24.♘xb4 and White is winning, but the problem is 22...♘d5! when Black is fine after, for example, 23.e4 fxe4 24.fxe4 ♘e3 25.♘e5 ♞e8 26.♞xc6 ♞xc6 27.♘xc6 ♘xd1 28.♞xd1 ♞f7. I wonder if Scherbakov, who is a brilliant analyst, really meant 21.d5 and a typo crept in.

### 22...♘d5 23.♞d3 ♞ad8

Now it is unclear again. The rest of the game is worth seeing though, because it nicely illustrates how the play can develop if White succeeds in blockading the black passers and then advancing in the centre with e3-e4.

24.♘h3 ♘f6 25.♞dd1 ♔h8 26.♞b3 ♞e8 27.♞e1 h6 28.♞ad1 ♞a8 29.♞a4 ♘e7 30.♞a1 ♞xa4 31.♞xa4

A rook takes the queen's place.

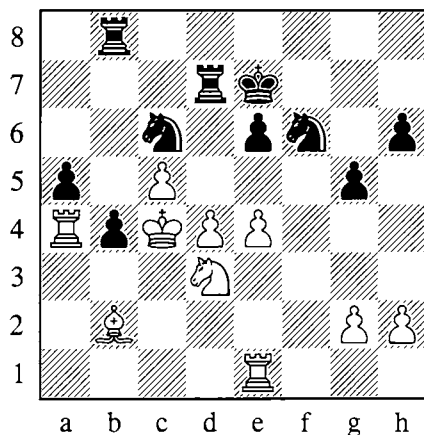
31...♖fd8 32.♘f4 ♖a6 33.♗ea1 ♗da8  
34.♘d3 ♘c6 35.♔f2

The king joins the party. There is a nice square on c4.

35...♗g8 36.♔e2 ♔f7 37.♔d2 ♗6a7 38.♔c2  
♗b8 39.♔b3 g5 40.♗e1 ♗d7 41.♔c4 ♔e7  
42.e4+

Finally this advance is achieved.

42...fxc4 43.fxc4



White has complete control; now Black misses a small combination and loses material.

43...♔f7?! 44.♗f1 ♔g6 45.♗xf6† ♔xf6  
46.d5† ♔e7 47.dxc6 ♗a7 48.♗e5  
1–0

**Conclusion:** The 13.c5 line represents a good positional set-up versus the Noteboom.

Since I now recommend the 13.c5 line for White, the reader may be wondering why I included the analysis on 8.♗b1 in the previous game. The answer is that in the sharp lines of the Noteboom the assessment can be changed by one clever new idea. I hope that the effectiveness of 8.♗b1 can be enhanced in the future by some devious attacking ploy that currently escapes me.

I also hope and expect that 13.c5, as a predominantly positional approach, will remain a reliable Noteboom antidote for years to come.

## The Semi-Tarrasch

The Semi-Tarrasch offers Black a way out of the normal Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 ♘xd5

Black avoids the typical Exchange Variation pawn structure with 4...exd5 and tries instead to play the solid Semi-Tarrasch.

5.e4

Of course White takes the centre.

5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 c5

Black seeks simplification.

After the natural 7.♘f3 we have a genuine Semi-Tarrasch, where Black usually continues 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♗b4† 9.♗d2 ♗xd2† 10.♗xd2 0–0 with a slightly passive but very solid position. However White does not have to be so cooperative. He can use the particular move order to his advantage by preventing the ...♗b4† idea. One way to do that is 7.♗b1, the other is:

7.a3!

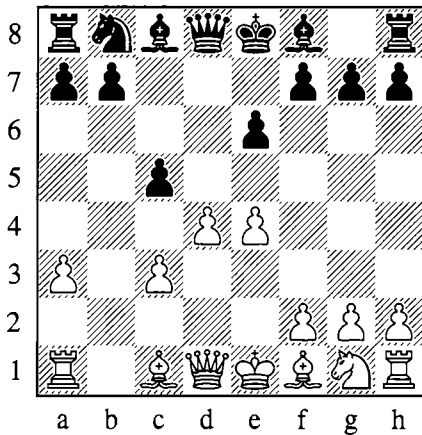
White hopes to use his extra space to build up some serious pressure on Black's kingside. Which is exactly what happens in the following game.

### GAME 76

Bareev – Hracek

Pardubice 1994

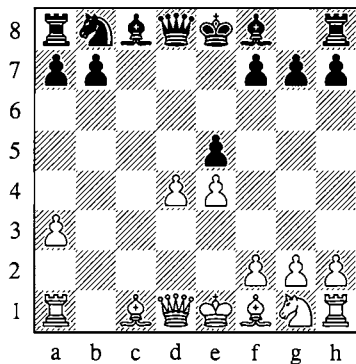
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 ♘xd5  
5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 c5 7.a3



Nice prophylaxis against ... $\text{b4}\dagger$ . White has the centre and much more space, so of course he is interested in keeping as many pieces on the board as possible.

7... $\text{e7}$

If 7... $\text{xd4}$  8... $\text{xd4}$  then 8... $\text{e7}$  9... $\text{f3}$  will just transpose. However Black can try: 8... $\text{e5}!$ ?



9... $\text{f3}$

9... $\text{d5}$   $\text{e6}$  10... $\text{f3}$   $\text{d7}$  11... $\text{e2}$  0-0 12...0-0  $\text{c5}$  was fine for Black in Martinovic – Saric, Zagreb 2012.

9... $\text{xd4}$  10... $\text{c4}$

A simpler approach is 10... $\text{xd4}$   $\text{Nxd4}$   $\text{xd4}$  11... $\text{xd4}$   $\pm$ .

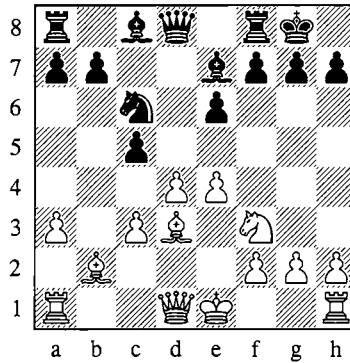
10... $\text{e7}$  11...0-0  $\text{c6}$  12... $\text{d5}$  0-0 13... $\text{b2}$   $\text{f6}$  14... $\text{e1}$   $\text{e6}$  15... $\text{xc6}$   $\text{bxc6}$  16... $\text{xd4}$   $\text{xd4}$  16... $\text{b8}!$ ?

17... $\text{xd4}$   $\text{d6}$  18... $\text{e3}$   $\text{xd1}$  19... $\text{exd1}\pm$

White had a pleasant ending in Aleksandrov – Rausis, Abu Dhabi 2005.

8... $\text{f3}$  0-0 9... $\text{d3}$   $\text{cxd4}$

After 9... $\text{c6}$  10... $\text{b2}$



White can transpose to the main line with 10... $\text{xd4}$  11... $\text{xd4}$ .

Black has also tried 10... $\text{b6}$  but it gives White easy play: 11...0-0  $\text{cxd4}$  12... $\text{cxd4}$   $\text{b7}$  13... $\text{e2}$   $\text{c8}$  14... $\text{a1}$   $\text{a5}$  15... $\text{d5}!$  White has a strong initiative. The d-pawn played a major role in the following: 15... $\text{exd5}$  16... $\text{exd5}$   $\text{f6}$  17... $\text{d5}$   $\text{c5}$  18... $\text{d6}$   $\text{g6}$  19... $\text{b1}$   $\text{xe5}$  20... $\text{xe5}$   $\text{e8}$  21... $\text{f6}!$   $\text{xe2}$  22... $\text{xd8}$   $\text{d5}$  23... $\text{xd5}$   $\text{xd5}$  24... $\text{d7}$   $\text{b7}$  25... $\text{f6}$   $\text{c4}$  26... $\text{d1}$  1-0 Bocharov – Mozharov, St Petersburg 2011.

10... $\text{xd4}$   $\text{c6}$

10... $\text{b5}$  just creates a weakness, so White can shift to positional mode: 11...0-0  $\text{b7}$  12... $\text{f4}$   $\text{a6}$  13... $\text{a4}!$   $\text{d7}$  14... $\text{e2}$   $\text{bxa4}$  15... $\text{xa4}$   $\text{f6}$  16... $\text{b1}\pm$  I. Sokolov – Teske, Calatrava 2007.

11... $\text{b2}$

Dynamic chess. The bishop is placed on the long diagonal pointing towards the black king. All that is needed is the pawn break  $\text{d4-d5}$  to make it come alive.

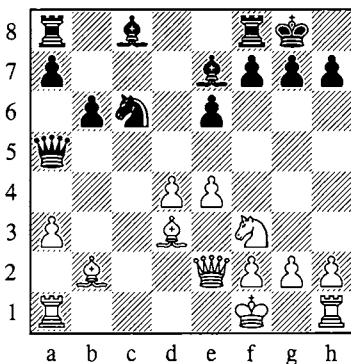
11... $\text{a5}\dagger$

Black tries to disturb White before his army is fully developed. White could play safe and

just offer the exchange of queens with 12.♚d2, but Bareev comes up with a very creative attacking scheme.

### 12.♔f1! ♖d8

Also possible is:  
12...b6 13.♚e2



### 13...♖d8

This is Khalifman's improvement over: 13...♗b7 14.h4 ♖ac8 15.♖h3 ♘b8 16.d5!? (16.♘e5±) 16...exd5 17.♖g3 f6? (17...g6∞) 18.♘d4 dxe4 19.♚g4 ♜f7 20.♗xe4 h5 21.♚f5 ♗xe4 22.♚xc8† ♔h7 23.♚xb8+ – Akobian – D. Gurevich, Tulsa 2008.

### 14.♔g1

More to the point is 14.♖d1!? ♗b7 15.h4. 14...♘b8 15.♘e5 ♗a6 16.♖d1 ♚a4 17.d5 exd5 18.exd5 ♗xd3 19.♖xd3 ♗f6 20.h4∞

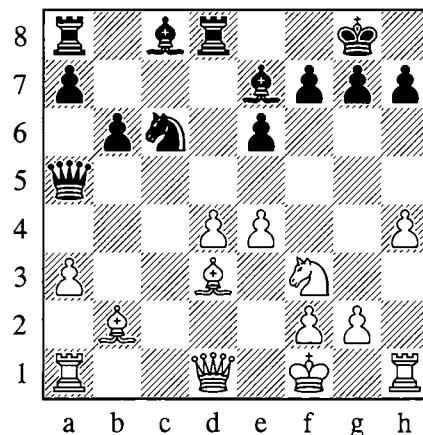
Vitiugov – Khalifman, Taganrog 2011, was very much unclear, so I prefer my suggestion at move 14.

### 13.h4!

The rook can enter the fight via h3 and g3, adding further pressure against Black's king position. The threats can quickly become serious. Both white bishops are ready to join the attack after pawn moves such as d4-d5 and/or e4-e5.

### 13...b6

Preparing ...♗a6.



### 14.♚e2

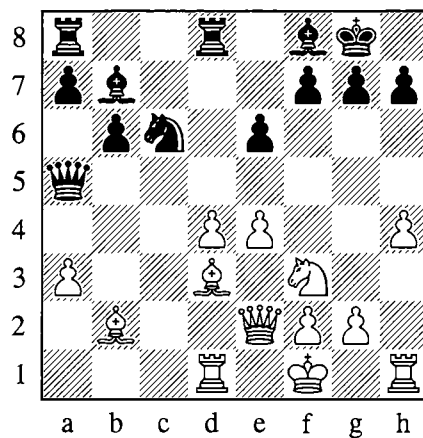
Preventing it.

### 14...♗b7

The most natural. Black could be insistent with 14...♘b8, but then 15.♘e5 ♗a6 16.♗xa6 ♚xa6 17.♚xa6 ♘xa6 18.♘c6 ♖d7 19.♖c1± gives White a pleasant positional advantage, Lafuente – Lopez Martinez, La Massana 2008.

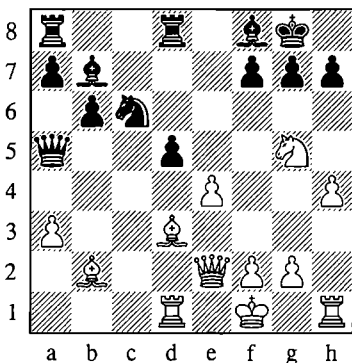
### 15.♖d1 ♗f8

Passive play will not save Black. However there was no easy solution: 15...♖d7 16.♖h3 ♖b8 And now the powerful pawn sacrifice: 17.d5! exd5 18.e5 This opens lines and leaves Black's king rather vulnerable. 18...h6 19.♘g5! ♗xg5 (or 19...hxg5 20.♚h5 g6 21.♗xg6 winning) 20.hxg5 d4 21.f4 It is all over. 21...g6 22.♖xh6 ♖e7 23.♚g4 ♔f8 24.f5 1–0 Raykin – Rogemont, corr. 1999.

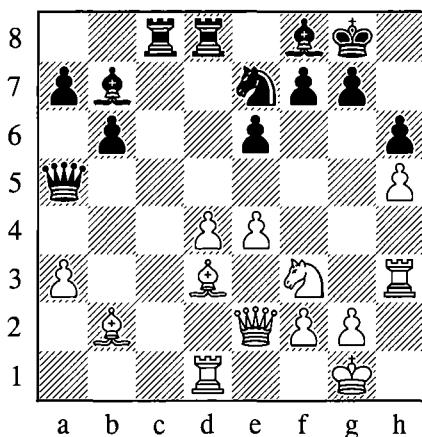


**16.♖h3**

A natural move, but White could strike immediately with 16.d5!. In such cases 16...exd5 would normally be met by 17.e5 but here White has the even better 17.♘g5! which wins directly.



There is no way to fend off the attack. For example, 17...g6 18.h5 or 17...h6 18.♗f3! hxg5 19.hxg5 and mate will follow.

**16...♗ac8 17.♙g1 ♘e7 18.h5 h6****19.d5!**

Again we see this instructive pawn sacrifice.

**19...exd5 20.e5 d4**

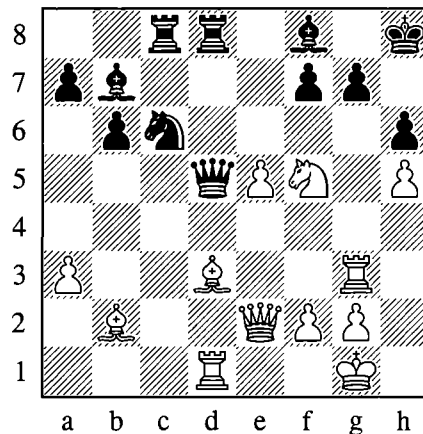
Black returns the pawn hoping for some simplifications – a hope, it turns out, which has nothing to do with reality.

**21.♘xd4 ♗d5 22.♗g3 ♘c6**

This allows the white knight access to the dream-square f5, when the attack will be irresistible. However, Black's position was beyond repair anyway.

**23.♘f5 ♙h8**

Every likely combination wins.

**24.♘xh6**

Just as strong was 24.♘xg7 ♗xg7 25.♗g4 ♗g8 26.♗f5 with a nasty threat of mate on h7.

**24...♗e6 25.♘xf7! ♗xf7 26.e6 ♗f4 27.h6**

The bishop on b2 is really the hero of the day.

**27...♘d4**

Or 27...♗xh6 28.♗h3.

**28.hxg7! ♗xg7 29.♗h5! ♗h6 30.♗xh6+ ♗xh6 31.e7**

The final blow.

**31...♗d5**

Nothing works: 31...♗e8 32.♗xd4+ or 31...♗d6 32.♗f5.

**32.♗e4**

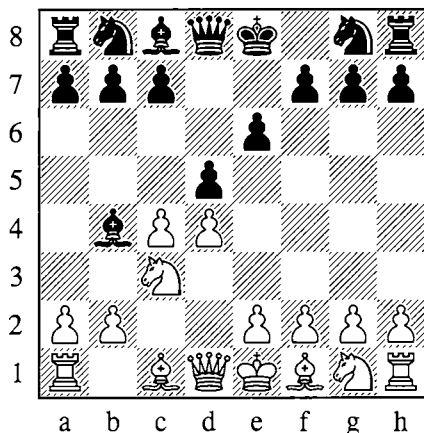
1-0

**Conclusion:** Black's attempt to reach a normal Semi-Tarrasch is countered by the clever 7.a3, when White benefits from his extra space and quickly gets a very promising position.

Our final line is a QGD-Nimzo hybrid.

### The QGD with 3...♟b4

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♞c3 ♟b4



Active development and pinning the white knight in a mixture of the Queen's Gambit Declined and the Nimzo-Indian Defence. After 4.♞f3 ♞f6 we would have the popular Ragozin Variation. However it is tempting to try to take advantage of the early bishop move.

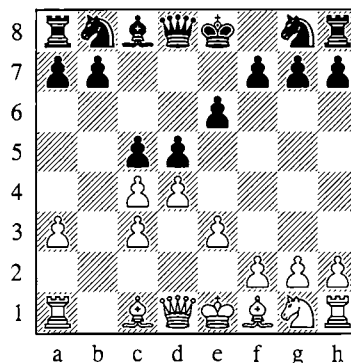
4.a3 ♟xc3† 5.bxc3 ♞f6

Black can try to avoid theory with the unusual 5...♞e7, but if White continues sensibly the knight can hardly be better placed on e7 than on f6. 6.e3 0–0 7.♞f3 c5 (7...b6 8.♟d3 h6 9.0–0 ♟a6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♟xa6 ♞xa6 12.♞d3 ♞c8 13.c4 dxc4 14.♞xc4± I. Sokolov – Giorgadze, Debrecen 1992) 8.♟d3 ♞bc6 9.0–0 dxc4 10.♟xc4 ♞c7 A Nimzo-Indian with a strange knight: 11.♟d3 e5 12.♞c2 h6 13.e4±

Also popular is:

5...c5!?

Here is a recent example:  
6.e3



6...♞c6

6...♞c7 7.♞g4!?

7.cxd5 exd5 8.♟d3 ♞ge7 9.♞b1

If 9.♞e2 then Black has scored well with 9...c4 10.♟c2 ♟f5.

9...0–0 10.♞e2 c4 11.♟c2 ♞b8 12.a4 ♟f5 13.♟a3 ♞e8 14.0–0 ♞d7 15.♞g3 ♟g6 16.f3 ♞f5 17.♟xf5 ♟xf5 18.e4 dxe4 19.♞c2 ♟g6 20.fxe4±

Grachev – Bakre, Biel 2011.

6.e3

Play has now transposed to a real Nimzo position, which can be reached with the move orders 1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 e6 3.♞c3 ♟b4 4.a3 ♟xc3† 5.bxc3 d5 6.e3 or 4.e3 d5 5.a3 and so on. In both cases Black has refrained from the most intriguing lines, and the game position is rightfully judged as somewhat more pleasant for White.

6...0–0

6...c5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♟d3 leads to the same position as later in the text, as does 6...b6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♟d3.

An independent line is 6...c6 with the idea of taking back on d5 with the c-pawn. The evaluation however is the same: 7.♞f3 0–0

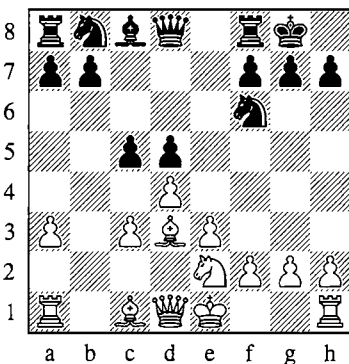
8.♔d3 b6 Black prepares ...♙a6. 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♖e2 And White prevents it. 10...♙b7 11.♙b2 ♘c6 (or 11...♗c8 12.♞c1 ♙a6 13.c4 dxc4 14.♙xc4 ♙xc4 15.♞xc4± I. Sokolov – Hou Yifan, Zafra 2007) 12.0–0 ♘a5 13.♘d2 ♞c8 14.f3± Kramnik – Morozevich, Nice 2008.

### 7.cxd5

White clarifies the pawn structure in a favourable way, just like in the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation.

### 7...exd5 8.♔d3 b6

Worth studying is: 8...c5 9.♘e2



Black has three options worthy of our consideration:

9...b6 10.0–0 ♙a6 is another transposition.

If Black instead drops the desired exchange of the light-squared bishops and opts for:

9...♘c6

He will nevertheless face the same white set-up:

10.0–0 ♞e8 11.f3 b6

If 11...♙d7 then I suggest: 12.♘g3 ♞c8 13.♞a2!?

12.♘g3 ♙b7 13.♞a2

An instructive rook transfer.

13...♞c8 14.♞e2 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♘a5 16.♞fe1± ♞c7

16...♙c6 17.♘f5 b5 18.e4±

17.♙h1 g6!? 18.e4 dxe4

So far this is Peralta – Ibarra Jerez, Barcelona 2008, and now White could have played the promising:

19.♘xe4 ♘xe4 20.♙xe4 ♙a6 21.♔d3 ♞xe2 22.♞xe2 ♙xd3 23.♞xd3

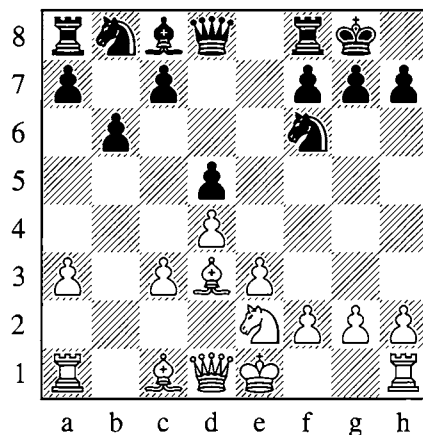
For instance:

23...♞d5 24.♞e8† ♙g7 25.♞e3±

9...♙g4 10.f3 ♙h5 11.♘f4 ♙g6 12.♙e2 ♘c6

13.0–0± White can take on g6 whenever he feels like it.

### 9.♘e2



### 9...♙a6

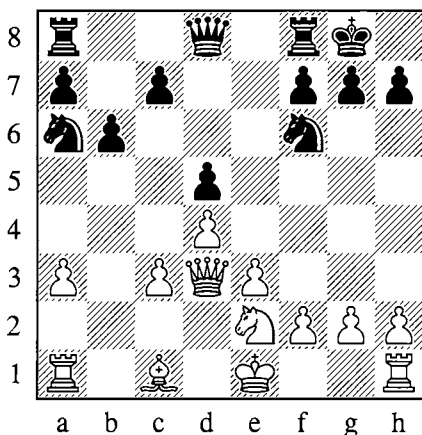
The culmination of Black's grand positional scheme. He exchanges White's good bishop and ends up with a knight against the passive remaining bishop on c1. The knight even has a potentially great outpost on c4. So what is wrong? Has White been outplayed so quickly? No! In this case the first impression does not last. Actually White's position is preferable and the reason lies in the dynamic pawn structure. White has a concrete plan of playing f3 and e4 with an initiative. Then the bishop will wake up and there are serious prospects on the kingside, just like we saw in the first chapter of this book. White's pawn power is very similar

to the situation in the Exchange Variation of the QGD.

9...c5 10.0-0 ♖a6 is the Borvinnik – Capablanca classic that follows right after this introduction.

### 10.♖xa6 ♜xa6 11.♙d3

Politely asking the knight what it intends to do.



### 11...♙c8

Probably best. Regrouping with 11...♜b8 12.0-0 ♜c6 13.f3 ♜a5 takes time and White can execute his own expansion in the centre: 14.♙a2 ♙e8 15.♜g3± c5 16.e4! cxd4 17.cxd4 ♙c8 18.e5 ♜d7 19.f4 ♙c7 20.♜f5 ♙c3 21.♙e2 ♙c6 22.♙d2 ♙c4 23.♙b4 ♙xe2 24.♙xe2± De Santis – Iotti, Arvier 2002.

### 12.f3

The most exact. 12.0-0 will usually transpose, but Black gets the extra option 12...♜b8 13.f3 ♙a6!? which is a little annoying.

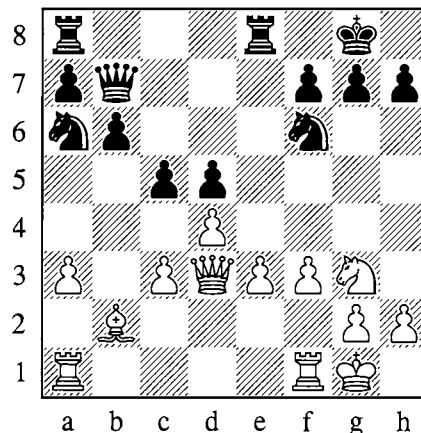
### 12...c5

Or 12...♙e8 13.0-0 c5, which is just a transposition.

### 13.0-0 ♙e8 14.♜g3 ♙b7

The fight for control over e4 continues.

### 15.♙b2



Also popular is transferring the rook with 15.♙a2 followed by ♙e2, but I like the bishop move more. I think White is slightly better, which I will back-up with a few examples.

15...c4 This is seldom a good idea – see the instructive final game. 16.♙d2 ♜c7 17.♙ae1 b5 18.♙f2! ♙e6 And now the break 19.e4± is made possible by the pressure along the f-file, Jurkiewicz – Romantowski, Olkusz 1995.

15...♜c7 16.♙ae1 ♙a6 17.♙d2 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♜b5 19.e4! ♜xa3 20.♜f5 With a strong attack. 20...h6 21.♙f4 ♜c4 22.♙c1 b5 23.♜xg7! ♜xg7 24.♙xh6† ♜g8 25.e5± Winning the piece back with interest, Hoi – Sanchez Martin, Copenhagen 2002.

15...♙e6 16.♙ae1 ♙ae8 17.c4 Opening lines for the bishop. I said it could turn out to be good. 17...cxd4 18.♙xd4±

The time has come to leave. This book started with some outstanding games by Borvinnik, so what better way to end it than by presenting another masterpiece by the Patriarch, created by his profound feeling for dynamic pawn structures.

## GAME 77

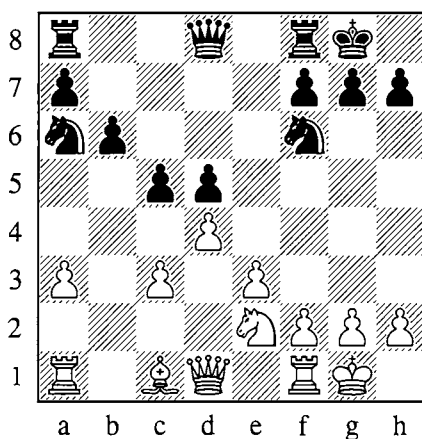
Botvinnik – Capablanca

Holland 1938

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟c3 ♞b4

Many places in the book I have changed the real move order of a game to explain my repertoire, but I cannot fiddle with this classic.

4.e3 d5 5.a3 ♞xc3† 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5  
8.♞d3 0–0 9.♟e2 b6 10.0–0 ♞a6 11.♞xa6  
♟xa6



12.♞b2?!

Imprecise. Better was 12.♞d3 when play can continue: 12...♟c7 (12...♞c8 sends us back to the previous analysis.) 13.f3 ♞e8 14.♟g3 ♟e6 15.♞b2 Another difficult middlegame is approaching with White having the usual plus.

12...♞d7 13.a4

Now on 13.♞d3 Black would have the rather annoying queen move 13...♞a4 already infiltrating on the queenside.

13...♞fe8?!

Black could have played the active 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 ♞fc8 followed by ...♞c4 and ...♞ac8 with a fine position. White could seriously consider 14.♟xd4, but of course Black is okay.

14.♞d3

Back to normal.

14...c4?!

Capablanca makes a deep strategic mistake. From a strictly positional view the move is desirable. Black closes the position and intends to follow up with the knight manoeuvre ♟a6-b8-c6-a5-b3, when the a4-pawn would be difficult to defend. However Capablanca completely misjudges the dynamic features in the position. If White manages to advance in the centre with f3 and e4 he will get a strong initiative that can quickly be transformed into a fierce attack. In that light, Black should have chosen 14...♞b7.

15.♞c2 ♟b8 16.♞ae1 ♟c6 17.♟g3 ♟a5

On 17...♟e4 White answers coolly with 18.♟h1 followed by f3, and then the white knight would return.

18.f3 ♟b3 19.e4! ♞xa4

Black has won the pawn, but White's advance in the centre leads to a direct offensive.

20.e5!

Gaining more space.

20...♟d7 21.♞f2 g6

Black is on the defensive. From now on he will have no spare time to breathe or consolidate. Here he is preventing the white knight from jumping to f5 and d6.

22.f4 f5

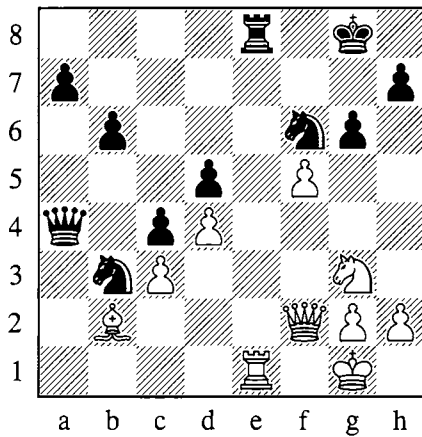
Otherwise White plays f5 himself.

23.exf6 ♟xf6 24.f5 ♞xe1

Black simplifies by trying to exchange all the rooks.

25.♞xe1 ♞e8

25...♞f8 26.♞f4 was not easy to defend, for instance 26...♞d7 27.♞e6± with pressure.



26. ♖e6!

Now the exchange will come at a high price: the passed e6-pawn will be very strong.

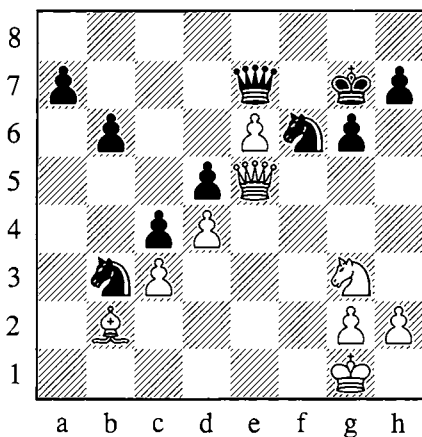
26... ♗xe6 27. fxex6 ♔g7 28. ♖f4

Activating the queen. Black is very vulnerable on the dark squares and White is already threatening 29. ♘f5† gxf5 30. ♖g5† and ♖xf6.

28... ♖e8 29. ♖e5

A little inaccurate, because now Black had the chance to put up some resistance with 29... h6. Simpler was 29. ♖c7† ♔g8 30. ♖e5, but then we would not have the following historic finish.

29... ♖e7



30. ♔a3! ♖xa3 31. ♘h5†!

A spectacular combination. White sacrifices two pieces to open the way for the e6-pawn.

31... gxf5 32. ♖g5† ♔f8 33. ♖xf6† ♔g8

Black has no defence. After 33... ♔e8 he is mated with 34. ♖f7† ♔d8 35. ♖d7#.

34. e7

There is no perpetual check, but this did not stop Black from giving a few checks anyway.

34... ♖c1† 35. ♔f2 ♖c2† 36. ♔g3 ♖d3†  
37. ♔h4 ♖e4† 38. ♔xh5 ♖e2† 39. ♔h4  
♖e4† 40. g4 ♖e1† 41. ♔h5

1-0

**Conclusion:** White should meet 3... ♔b4 with 4.a3 and get a good Nimzo-Indian. The dynamic pawn structure is known to us from the QGD Exchange Variation: White plays a quick f3 and hopes to follow with e4 gaining the initiative.

**Chapter Conclusion:** It is hardly surprising that White does not have many problems gaining the upper hand against Black's various minor lines. The exception is the Triangle move order leading to the Noteboom Variation, which is worthy of serious study.

We have been on a long journey through very different openings, which require skills ranging from positional and strategic understanding to hardcore calculation. Together, the chapters in this book give a good picture of how varied and complex the modern game has become. But it is also a collection of excellent chess, and I hope that will be the final impression. So long.

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# Index of Variations

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This index is self-explanatory with one exception – some of the variations have two page numbers next to them. This is because the coverage of some variations is split – an introduction to the themes of the line at the start of a chapter, and in-depth theoretical coverage later.

## Chapter 1 – Queen’s Gambit Declined

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3**

**a) 3...♗f6 4.cxd5 exd5**

4...♗xd5 5.e4 ♗xc3 6.bxc3 (18)

**5.♙g5 c6**

5...♙e7 6.e3 0–0 7.♙d3 (18)

5...♗bd7 6.e3 c6 7.♙d3 ♙d6 8.♞c2 (18)

5...♙b4 6.e3 ♗bd7 7.♙d3 (19)

**6.♞c2 ♙e7**

6...♗a6 7.e3 ♗b4 8.♞b1 (19)

**7.e3 ♗bd7**

7...♙g4 8.h3 (20)

**8.♙d3 0–0**

8...♗h5 (20)

**9.♗ge2 ♜e8 10.0–0 ♗f8 11.f3 ♙e6 (22)**

11...♗h5 (25)

11...♗g6 (28)

11...h6 (22)

11...g6 (22)

11...c5 (22)

**b) 3...♙e7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♙f4 c6**

5...♗f6 6.e3 ♙f5 (38)

6...0–0 7.♙d3 c5 (41)

7.♗ge2 0–0 8.♞c1 c6 9.♗g3 ♙e6 (39)

9...♙g6 10.h4 (39)

10.♙d3 ♗bd7 (40)

10...♞e8 (40)

11.0–0 ♞e8 12.♞b3 b5 (40)

12...♞b6 (40)

12...♗b6 (40)

**6.e3 ♙f5**

6...♙d6 (32)

6...♗f6 (32)

**7.g4 ♙e6**

7...♙g6 (32)

**8.h4 ♗d7**

8...♙xh4 9.♞b3 b6 (35)

9...g5 10.♞xb7 (35)

10.♙e5 (35)

10.♙h2 (35)

10.♗f3 ♙e7 11.♗e5 ♗f6 (36)

11...g5 (36)

8...♗f6 (33)

8...c5 (33)

8...♙d6 (33)

8...♞b6 (33)

**9.h5**

9.g5 (34)

**9...♞b6**

9...♗h6 (34)

**10.♞b1 ♗g6 11.f3 h6 (37)**

11...0–0 (37)

## Chapter 2 – Queen’s Gambit Accepted

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4**

**3...e5**

3...b5 4.a4 (45)

3...c5 4.d5 e6 (50)

4...♗f6 5.♗c3 b5 6.♙f4 (47)

5.♙xc4 ♗f6 6.♗c3 (50)

3...♗c6 4.♗f3 ♙g4 5.♙xc4 (70)

5.d5 (70)

5...e6 (71)

5...♙xf3 (71)

3...d1f6 4.e5 d1d5 5.♙xc4 d1b6 (78)  
 5...d1c6 6.d1c3 (76)  
 6.♙d3 d1c6 7.♙e3 d1b4 (78)  
 7...♙e6 (78)  
 7...g6 (79)  
 8.♙e4 f5 9.exf6 exf6 10.d1c3 (79)  
**4.d1f3 exd4**  
 4...♙b4† 5.d1c3 (53)  
**5.♙xc4 d1c6**  
 5...♙b4† 6.d1bd2 (57)  
**6.0-0 ♙e6**  
 6...d1f6 7.♙b3 ♙d7 8.♙d2 (62)  
**7.♙b5 (64)**  
 7.♙xe6 (64)

### Chapter 3 – The Slav

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.d1f3 d1f6**  
 3...dxc4 4.e3 b5 (85)  
 4...♙e6 (85)  
**4.d1c3 dxc4**  
 4...g6 (84)  
 4...♙f5 (84)  
 4...♙b6 (84)  
**5.a4 ♙f5**  
 5...d1a6 6.e4 ♙g4 7.♙xc4 (88)  
 5...♙g4 6.d1e5 ♙h5 (90)  
 6...d1bd7 (90)  
 7.f3 d1fd7 (91)  
 7...e6 (91)  
 8.d1xc4 e5 9.e4 (91)  
 5...e6 6.e4 ♙b4 7.e5 d1d5 (95)  
 7...d1e4 (95)  
 8.♙d2 (96)  
 5...d1d5 (85)  
 5...c5 (85)  
 5...a5 (85)  
**6.d1e5**  
 6...d1a6 7.e3 d1b4 8.♙xc4 e6 9.0-0 ♙e7  
 (101)

9...♙d6 (101)  
 9...♙c2 (102)  
**a) 6...e6 7.f3 ♙b4**  
 7...c5 8.e4 ♙g6 (100, 111)  
 8...cxd4 9.exf5 d1c6 (111)  
 9...♙b4 (111)  
 9.♙e3 (111)  
**8.e4 ♙xe4 9.fxe4 d1xe4 10.♙d2 ♙xd4**  
**11.d1xe4 ♙xe4† 12.♙e2 ♙xd2† 13.♙xd2**  
**♙d5† 14.♙c2 d1a6 15.d1xc4 0-0-0 (103)**  
 15...0-0 (106)  
 15...b5 (108)  
 15...♙f5† (108)  
 15...d1b4† (109)  
 15...♙e7 (109)

**b) 6...d1bd7 7.d1xc4 ♙c7**  
 7...d1d5 (116)  
 7...e6 (116)  
 7...d1b6 8.d1e5 a5 (128)  
 8...e6 (128)  
 9.♙g5 (128)  
 9.f3 (129)  
 9.g3 (129)  
 9...h6 (129)  
 9...g6 (129)  
 9...d1fd5 (130)  
**8.g3 e5 9.dxe5 d1xe5 10.♙f4 d1fd7 11.♙g2**  
**g5**  
 11...♙e6 (119)  
 11...♙d8 (119)  
 11...♙e7 (119)  
 11...f6 12.0-0 d1c5 (119)  
 12...♙e6 (119)  
 12...0-0-0 (120)  
**12.d1e3 gxf4 13.d1xf5 0-0-0 14.♙c2 d1c5**  
**(124)**  
 14...♙b4 (124)  
 14...♙b8 (124)  
 14...d1g6 (124)  
 14...fxg3 (126)

## Chapter 4 – The Semi-Slav

- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♙g5**  
 5...♙e7 6.e3 0–0 7.♙d3 ♘bd7 8.0–0 h6  
 (211)  
 8...dxc4 (211)  
 8...b6 (212)  
 8...♙e8 (213)
- a) 5...♘bd7 6.e3 ♗a5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5**  
 7...cxd5 (198)  
 7...exd5 (198)  
 7...♘e4 (199)
- 8.♗d2 ♙b4**  
 8...♘7b6 (199, 201)
- 9.♙c1 h6**  
 9...e5 (199)  
 9...f6 (199)  
 9...c5 (200)
- 10.♙h4 c5**  
 10...0–0 (200, 204)
- 11.a3**  
 11.♙c4 (208)
- 11...♙xc3 12.bxc3 b6**  
 12...♗xa3 (200)
- 13.c4**  
 13.♙d3 (201)  
 13.e4 (201)
- 13...♗xd2† (201, 206)**
- b) 5...dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♘xg5**  
**hxg5**  
 9...♘d5 10.♘xf7 (138, 145)
- 10.♙xg5 ♘bd7**  
 10...♙e7 (138, 147)
- 11.g3**  
 11.exf6 (138)
- 11...♙b7**  
 11...♙g8 (140, 149)  
 11...♗a5 (140, 155)
- 12.♙g2 ♗b6**  
 12...♗c7 (140)
- 13.exf6 0–0–0 14.0–0 c5**  
 14...♘e5 (141)  
 14...♙h6 (141)
- 15.d5 b4 16.♘a4**  
 16.♙b1 (142)
- 16...♗b5 (142, 161)**  
 16...♗a6 (142, 157)  
 16...♗d6 (142)
- c) 5...h6 6.♙h4**  
 6.♙xf6 (166)
- 6...dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♙g3 b5 9.♙e2**  
 9.h4 (166)  
 9.♘e5 (166)  
 9.e5 ♘d5 (170)  
 9...♘h5 (167)  
 10.♘d2 ♘d7 (170)  
 10...♙b4 (170)  
 10...♗a5 (170)  
 10...h5 (170)
- 9...♙b7**  
 9...b4 (179)  
 9...♙b4 (179)  
 9...♘h5 (180)  
 9...♘bd7 (180, 183)  
 9...♙g7 (180)
- c1) 10.e5 ♘d5 (170)**  
 10...♘h5 (167)
- 11.♘d2 ♘d7 (170)**  
 11...a6 (172)  
 11...♘b4 (172)  
 11...♘xc3 (173)  
 11...♙e7 (173)  
 11...c5 (173)
- c2) 10.h4**  
 10.0–0 (181)
- 10...g4**  
 10...b4 (181)
- 11.♘e5 ♘bd7 (183, 185)**  
 11...♙g8 (183, 188)  
 11...h5 (183, 190)  
 11...b4 (182)

## Chapter 5 – The a6-Slav

- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.c5  
 ♘bd7  
 5...♙f5 (227)  
 5...b6 6.cxb6 ♖xb6 (219)  
 6...♘bd7 (219)
- 5...♙g4 6.♘e5 ♙h5 (221)  
 6...♙e6 (221)  
 6...♙f5 (221)  
 7.♖b3 ♗a7 8.e4 (222)  
 8.♙f4 (222)
- 5...g6 (224)
- 6.♙f4 ♘h5  
 6...g6 (231)
- 7.♖d2  
 7.e3 (234)  
 7.♙d2 (235)  
 7.♙g5 (235)
- 7...b6 8.e4 ♘xf4  
 8...bxc5 (235)
- 9.♖xf4 e6 10.exd5 exd5 (236)  
 10...cxd5 (236)

## Chapter 6 – The Tarrasch

- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3  
 ♘c6 6.g3  
 6.dxc5 (240)
- 6...♘f6  
 6...c4 (246)
- 7.♙g2 ♙e7  
 7...cxd4 (248)
- 8.0–0 0–0  
 8...♙e6 (249)
- 9.♙g5 cxd4  
 9...c4 (249, 250)  
 9...♙e6 (249, 255)  
 9...h6 (249)
- 10.♘xd4 h6 11.♙e3 ♗e8  
 11...♙g4 (259)
- 12.♖a4  
 12.♖b3 (241, 259)  
 12.♗c1 (259)
- 12...♘a5  
 12...♘xd4 (259)  
 12...♙d7 13.♗fd1 (259)  
 13.♗ac1 (259)
- 13...♘a5 (260)  
 13...♘b4 (260)  
 13...♙c5 (260)
- 13.♗ad1 ♘c4 (262)  
 13...♙d7 (262)

## Chapter 7 – The Chigorin

- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♖c6 3.♗c3 ♗f6  
 3...e5 (278)  
 3...dxc4 4.♗f3 a6 (277)  
 4...♙g4 (277)  
 4...e6 (278)
- 4.♗f3  
 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.♗f3 (278)
- 4...dxc4  
 4...♙f5 (278)  
 4...♙g4 5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.e4 ♙xf3 (273)  
 6...♗xc3 (273)  
 7.gxf3 ♗xc3 (274)  
 7...♗b6 (274)  
 8.bxc3 e5 9.♙b1 (274)
- 5.♙g5 h6  
 5...♗d5 (267)  
 5...♙g4 (267)  
 5...a6 6.d5 ♗a7 (270)  
 6...♗a5 (270)
- 6.♙xf6 exf6 7.e3 ♙d6  
 7...♙b4 (268)  
 7...♗a5 (268)
- 8.♙xc4 0–0 (268)

## Chapter 8 – Minor Lines

- 1.d4 d5 2.c4  
 2...e6 3.♗c3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4 (285)  
 2...♙f5 (288)  
 2...e6 3.♗c3 ♙b4 (309)  
 2...e6 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 (305)  
 2...c5 (292)  
 2...♗f6 (295)
- a) 2...e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♗f3 ♗c6 5.a3 ♗ge7  
 5...a5 (281)  
 5...f6 (281)  
 5...♙e6 (281)  
 5...♙g4 (281)
- 6.b4 ♗g6  
 6...♙g4 (282)
- 7.♙b2 a5  
 7...♗gxe5 (282)
- 8.b5 ♗cxe5 9.♗xe5  
 9.♙xd4 (282)
- 9...♗xe5 10.e3 ♙e6 11.♙xd4 ♗xc4 12.♙c2  
 ♗d6 (283)  
 12...♙d5 (283)
- b) 2...e6 3.♗c3 c6 4.♗f3 dxc4  
 4...f5 (297)  
 4...♗d7 (298)  
 4...♙d6 (298)
- 5.a4 ♙b4 6.e3 b5 7.♙d2 a5  
 7...♙b6 (298)  
 7...♙e7 (298)  
 7...♙b7 (298)  
 7...♗f6 (298)
- 8.♙b1  
 8.axb5 (299, 302)
- 8...♙a6  
 8...♙d7 (299)  
 8...♙b6 (300)  
 8...♙xc3 (300)  
 8...♗f6 (300)  
 8...bxa4 (300)
- 9.♗e5 ♙c7 (301)  
 9...♗f6 (301)  
 9...♙a7 (301)