starting out: the king's indian

Ideal for those wanting to understand the basics of the King's Indian.

The King's Indian is one of the most exciting defences in chess and is favoured by ambitious and aggressive players. At the highest level it has been a major weapon for World Champions Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov. In this easy-to-read guide, Grandmaster Joe Gallagher goes back to the basics of the King's Indian, studying the key principles of its many variations. Throughout the book there are numerous notes, tips, warnings and exercises to help the improving player, while important strategies, ideas and tactics for both sides are clearly illustrated.

- User-friendly design to help readers absorb ideas
- Concentrates on the key principles of the King's Indian
- Ideal for the improving player

Joe Gallagher is an English Grandmaster who has been living in Switzerland for a number of years and is a regular member of the Swiss national team. His many books have deservedly earned him a reputation as a first class writer. His previous works include *The Magic of Mikhail Tal* and *The Trompowsky*.

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JOE GALLAGHER

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Introduction

Is the King's Indian the opening for me?

If your attitude to playing Black in chess is to try and neutralise White's slight advantage by careful defensive play, then the answer is no. In that case you should be looking for a book on something like the Queen's Gambit Declined or the Queen's Indian.

If, on the other hand, you are a bit of a risk taker, you want to battle for the initiative right from the start, launch counter-attacks rather than meekly reacting to the opponents threats and lure White into over-extending himself, then the answer is a resounding yes! If you choose to play the King's Indian you will also be in exalted company. The two greatest chess players of all time (arguably), Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov, have both been, at one time or another, big fans of the King's Indian. The King's Indian is, in fact, one of Black's most popular responses to 1 d4. The majority of variations in this book start after the moves 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6.

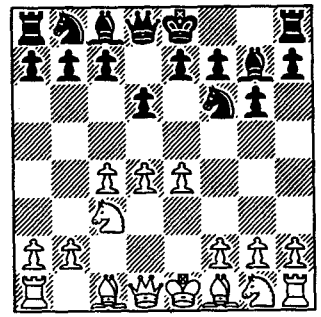


Diagram 1
The King's Indian Defence

White has been allowed to construct a large pawn centre while in return Black has taken the time to develop his dark-squared bishop to its potentially most active diagonal. This bishop is usually referred to as the King's Indian bishop and Black's progress is often closely tied up with the fortunes of this piece. When it becomes active it can be a wonderful piece that wins the game while, on other occasions, when Black mishandles the opening, it can end up as a truly miserable creature that costs Black dear.

White's dominance of the centre is only a temporary state of affairs, as once Black has castled he will stake his claim there by playing either ...e7-e5 or ...c7-c5. His choice is usually determined by what White plays over the next couple of moves but, in general, King's Indian players prefer to play ...e7-e5. In fact, there is little point in discussing general strategy any further in this Introduction as it can vary greatly from variation to variation.

History and popularity

Although the King's Indian was played occasionally in the 19th century it wasn't until the 1920's that it established itself as a regular opening. Even then it failed to make a real impression and it was only in the late 1940's that the King's Indian really took off. Much of the credit for this is due to the famous Soviet grandmasters David Bronstein and Isaac Boleslavsky who devoted much time and energy to the analysis of the opening. Other famous players who played their part in the development of the King's Indian were the Argentinian grandmaster Miguel Najdorf and the Yugoslav Svetozar Gligoric. Since then the King's Indian has enjoyed spells of great popularity and other periods of relative quiet. Chess fashion is often dictated by the champion of the day. When there is a champion who doesn't like to take too many risks then the quiet variations rise to the surface. This happened when Anatoly Karpov ruled the chess world from the mid-1970's to the mid-1980's. The popularity of the King's Indian declined during this period but when Garry Kasparov took over in the mid-1980's there was an explosion of interest in this opening.

The King's Indian has long been popular at club level. One of the reasons for this is that it can not only be played against 1 d4, but also against moves such as 1 c4 and 1 Nf3. These flank openings can cause considerable difficulty for certain Black variations, but not for the King's Indian as Black can just adopt the same set-up as if White had played 1 d4. In fact, very often White will play d4 later on and we transpose directly back into the King's Indian. For example, here are two alternative move orders:

1) 1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 g6 3 e4 d6 4 d4 Bg7 and we are back in the main line.

2) 1 Nf3 Nf6 2 g3 g6 3 Bg2 Bg7 4 0-0 0-0 5 c4 d6 6 d4 and we have transposed into the Fianchetto Variation.

Objective and layout

As can be gauged from the title, this is not an opening book aimed at the expert player who has already played the King's Indian for many years (although it may still serve as a useful refresher course in basic King's Indian strategy). Instead it should be of most use to inexperienced players or slightly more experienced players who wish to take up the King's Indian for the first time. Heavy theoretical variations have been kept to a minimum and the emphasis has been placed on explaining the ideas behind the moves in the early stages of the game.

The opening has been covered in a systematic manner and the material split up into ten chapters. By far the most important variation in the King's Indian is the Classical and this is reflected by the fact that it takes up the first four chapters. Each of the other major variations has its own chapter devoted to it while the final chapter covers a number of the lesser played systems. Each chapter is then further split up into several sub-sections and the variations are examined through a short theoretical section followed by illustrative games.

Throughout the book I have drawn attention to the most important King's Indian concepts by way of notes, tips and warnings. There is also a sprinkling of exercises to test you on some of the recurring tactical themes in the King's Indian.

Another feature of the book is that each sub-section has one paragraph entitled 'Theoretical?' and another 'Statistics'. Under 'Theoretical?' we discuss whether it is necessary to burn the midnight oil learning variations or whether it is possible to get by simply on general principles. The statistics section is a useful guide to which side has performed better in each variation. However, statistics can be misleading and I have pointed this out when I think it is the case.

I have done my best to be as objective as possible but there is an inevitable slight bias towards Black. There are a couple of reasons for this. The first is that the majority of players buying this book will be looking to play the King's Indian with Black and the second is that I, myself, have used the opening as my main weapon in over 20 years of international chess. As a consequence I may occasionally be peering at the Black position through rose-tinted spectacles.

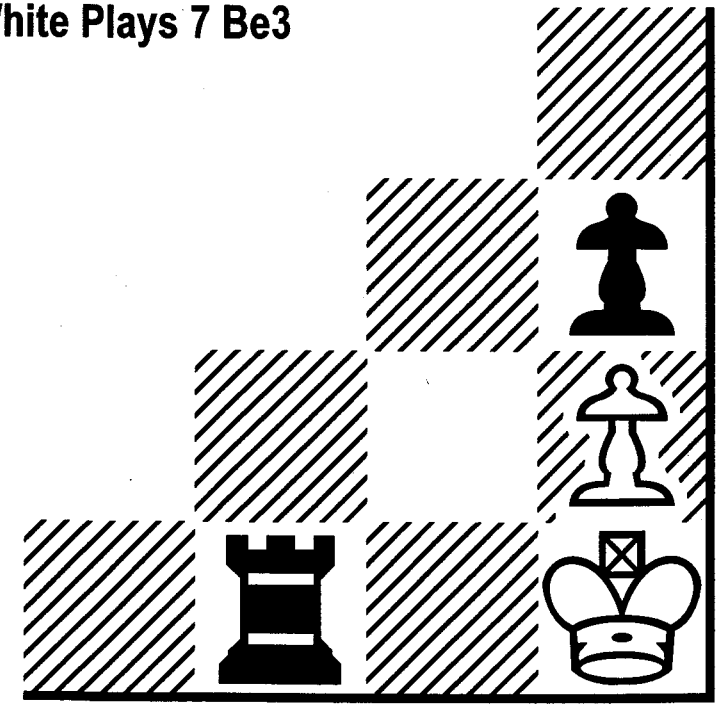
The King's Indian is a massive topic and each of the chapters in this book have already had at least one whole book written on them (and even some of the sub-sections have had books written on them!). As you progress in chess you will no doubt feel the need to consult more specialist books but my hope is that this book will start you off on your King's Indian journey full of confidence.

Joe Gallagher
Neuchâtel
March 2002

Chapter One

The Classical Variation: Alternatives to 7 0-0

- Introduction
- White Plays 7 dxe5
- White Plays 7 d5: The Petrosian System
- White Plays 7 Be3



Introduction

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 (Diagram 1)

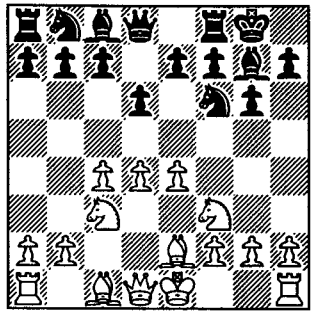


Diagram 1
The Classical Variation

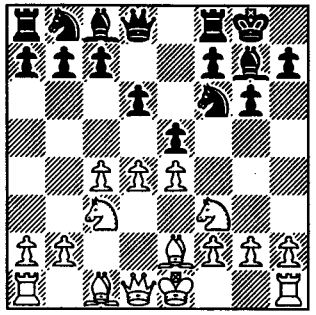


Diagram 2
Black stakes a claim

In The Classical Variation White just concentrates on developing his pieces to sensible squares. 6 Be2 makes more sense than 6 Bd3 as the latter interferes with the protection of the weakest point in the white camp, the d4-square.

NOTE: The d4-square is slightly weak because having played e4 and c4 this square can no longer be protected by pawns.

In many variations of the King's Indian Black will form a plan whose aim is to occupy or control this square. Although the d4-square is weak, or potentially weak, that does not mean that White has made a mistake playing the moves e4 and c4 as they have given him a powerful centre and a space advantage. Chess is all about give and take.

This is by far the most important variation in the King's Indian. That is why it takes up four of the ten chapters in this book.

6...e5! (Diagram 2)

This is an important move. Black stakes his claim in the centre. At first sight it may appear that White can just win a pawn but you can read all about this in the Exchange Variation below. The alternatives deserve a quick mention.

1) 6...Nbd7 is played sometimes by those who fear the exchange of queens. It is however a lot less flexible and after 7 0-0 e5 we have transposed to Chapter 2.

2) 6...Na6 is playable, again transposing to Chapter 2 after 7 0-0 e5.

3) 6...c5 is an alternative strike in the centre but Black will have to be willing to play a Benoni after 7 d5 or a Sicilian after 7 0-0 cxd4 8 Nxd4. Very few players play the King's Indian in order to play 6...c5.

4) 6...Bg4 is a solid line which aims to exchange the bishop for the knight on f3. The idea of this is to slacken White's control of d4. Again it is not really in the style of the King's Indian. A real King's Indian player will preciously guard his light-squared bishop until he can sacrifice it on h3.

After 6...e5 White usually plays 7 0-0 and this is the subject of the next three chapters. This chapter deals with the alternatives.

White Plays 7 dxe5

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 (Diagram 3)

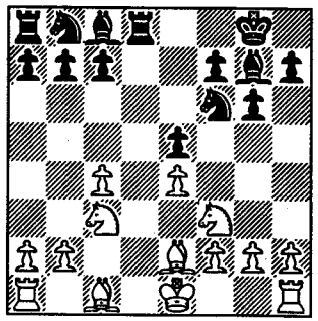


Diagram 3
Not the most adventurous line

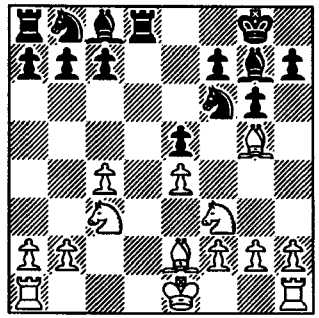


Diagram 4
How should Black deal with the pin?

I shall start this book with the Exchange Variation of the King's Indian. That is because there are a lot of players who say, 'Oh, I would really like to play the King's Indian, but can't they just exchange queens and get a really boring endgame? I'd better stick with the Queen's Gambit Declined.' Well, stick with the Queen's Gambit if you want but there is no reason to be afraid off this endgame. It's White who has to play accurately to hold the balance and it's not so boring if you know what you are doing.

Anyway, here is my view on this exchange variation which I reproduce from another book I wrote on the King's Indian some years ago (*Beating the Anti-King's Indians*, Batsford 1996).

'Practitioners of the Exchange Variation can be divided into three categories. Firstly, there are the endgame lovers who play this system with the intention of grinding you down in a long boring endgame. These people deserve some respect, although our main feeling towards them should be one of sympathy for having such a feeble system against the King's Indian. The second category are the psychologists. These are the tricky characters who select this variation because they feel that it is the most unpleasant for you to play against, especially if you are noted as a tactical player. The third, and in my experience by far the most numerous category are wimps. They select this variation with the idea of killing the game and achieving an easy draw. On no account should they be given one until every last possibility has been exhausted. Perhaps they will achieve their objective, if they play extremely well, but they should at least be made to suffer.'

As you can imagine, I don't think too highly of this variation. My views have not changed at all. Let's have a look at some more moves:

9 Bg5 (Diagram 4)

White now threatens 10 Nd5.

Exercise 1: You may have spotted 9 Nxe5?. How does Black respond?

9...Re8

9...c6 is a modern line which can lead to sharp play but can also fizzle out easily. 9...Rf8 is also a good move but we are going to concentrate on the reliable variation that was played by Bobby Fischer.

10 Nd5

10 0-0-0 is played much less often but it is not inferior to 10 Nd5. It usually leads to a lengthy manoeuvring game. One possibility for Black is to play 10...Na6 while another typical example is 10...h6 11 Be3 c6 12 Ne1 Be6 13 Nc2 Bf8 14 f3 a6!? 15 Rd2 b5 16 b3 Nbd7 17 Rhd1 Rec8 with an edge for Black, Ludden-Nijboer, Amsterdam 1997.

10...Nxd5 11 cxd5 c6!

Black doesn't want to be left with a weak pawn on an open file.

12 Bc4

After 12 d6?! The pawn would be isolated in the enemy camp.

12...cxd5 13 Bxd5 Nd7!

13...Nc6 or 13...Na6 have also been played but against these moves White does have the chance of a nagging edge.

The position after 13...Nd7 is covered in Games 1 and 2.

Theoretical?

It's not very theoretical – a small slip is not going to cost you the game – but if Black wants to punish the wimps then he should know his system well. By the way, contrary to the normal practice in this book, I'm just covering this variation from the Black view point. White should not play chess like this.

Statistics

All the statistics given in this book are taken from MegaBase 2002, a collection of over 2 million games from international tournaments compiled by ChessBase.

After 7 dxe5 White has scored 49% in just over 3000 games. Not very

impressive when you could consider that on average White scores 54%. A very high 53% of games have finished in draws and many of those have finished around move 10. This variation is, evidently, often the choice of those who have agreed to a day off.

Illustrative Games

Game 1
☐ Salgado ■ Gallagher
L'Hospitalet 1992

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 Bg5 Re8 10 Nd5 Nxd5 11 cxd5 c6! 12 Bc4 cxd5 13 Bxd5 Nd7! (Diagram 5)

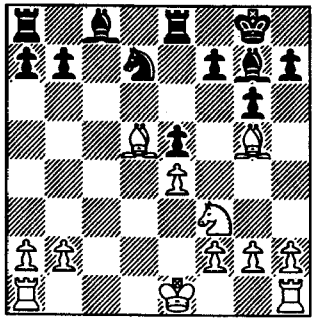


Diagram 5
Black's most accurate deployment

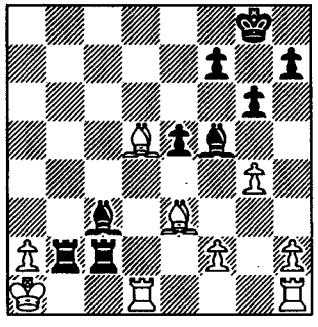


Diagram 6
White will be mated

Black now threatens to gain the bishop pair by 14...Nf6.

NOTE: Bishops work well in tandem and, assuming the position is not totally blocked, it is usually a slight advantage to have two bishops against bishop and knight or two knights.

14 Nd2!

The only way to maintain equality. By defending his e-pawn White renders the ...Nf6 idea harmless. A mistake that White plays quite often is 14 Rc1?!. What could be more natural than to put the rook on an open file? The problem is that after 14...h6 15 Be3 (15 Bh4 g5 16 Bg3 Nf6 is also good for Black) 15...Nf6 White would be in trouble if he allowed ...Nxd5. That means he has to go in for 16 Bb3 Nxe4 17 Rc7 Be6 18 Bxe6 Rxe6 19 Rxb7 Ra6 20 a3 Nd6! when Black has an edge because he has a mobile central pawn majority and White has still not completed his development. This position was reached in Teschner-Fischer, Stockholm IZ 1962. The young Bobby failed to win but other players have since registered the full point in this ending.

14...Nc5 15 Nc4?!

A slight mistake as it allows Black some tricks based on ...Nxe4, while the knight may also get booted by ...b7-b5 at some point.

Best is 15 0-0-0! and after 15...Ne6! (not 15...Nd3+ 16 Kb1 Nxf2 17 Rdf1! and wins) 16 Be3 Nf4 17 Bxf4 exf4 both 18 Kb1 Be6! 19 Bxe6 Rxe6 20 f3 f5! and 18 f3 Be6 19 Nb3 Bxd5 20 Rxd5 f5! lead to equality. Note how in both cases Black plays ...f7-f5 to activate his rooks.

15...Bf8

This keeps the knight out of d6 and also transfers the bishop to a more active post. There is not much life on the long diagonal.

16 0-0-0

On the last move castling queenside was best. Now it is rather risky. The alternative 16 0-0 can be seen in the next game.

16...Be6 17 Kb1 Rac8

17...Nxe4 18 Bxe4 Bxc4 19 Bxb7 Rab8 is fine for Black but I wanted more. I saw a sneaky way to improve this line.

18 Be3?

Thank you very much. White falls for the trap. He should have played 18 Rhe1 when 18...Bxd5 19 exd5 should be slightly better for Black as White's d-pawn is more likely to turn out weak than strong.

18...Nxe4! 19 Bxe4 Rxc4 20 Bxb7 Rb8 21 Bd5 Bf5+ 22 Ka1 Rc2

Now White suddenly realised that the intended 23 Bb3 fails to 23...Rxb3! 24 axb3 Rc6! and there is no way to stop Ra6 mate. The only chance to resist was 23 Rb1 (although Black is winning after 23...Bc5 24 Bxc5 Rxc5 25 Rbd1 Rc2) but White just picked up his other bishop and played...

23 Bxa7? Rbxb2 24 Be3 Bb4 25 g4 Bc3! (Diagram 6) White resigns

Now that's what I like to do to people who exchange queens in the King's Indian.

Game 2
☐ Acebal ■ Gallagher
Candas 1992

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 Bg5 Re8 10 Nd5 Nxd5 11 cxd5 c6 12 Bc4 cxd5 13 Bxd5 Nd7! 14 Nd2! Nc5 15 Nc4 Bf8 16 0-0 Be6 17 Bxe6 Rxe6! (Diagram 7)

At first glance one could dismiss this position as dead drawn, but a closer inspection will reveal a sizeable initiative for Black. His rooks are more active, White's bishop is offside on g5 and the knight on c4 will soon be hit by ...b7-b5.

18 f3 b5 19 Ne3 h6 20 Bh4 Nd3 21 Nd5 Rc8 22 b3 Rc2 23 Rfd1 Nb4! 24 Nxb4 Bxb4 25 Bf2 a6! 26 a3 Bd2!

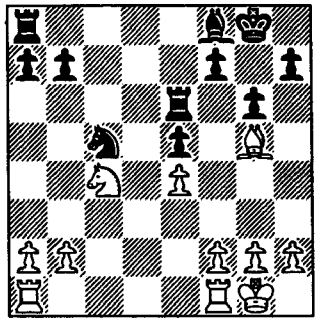


Diagram 7
Black has the initiative

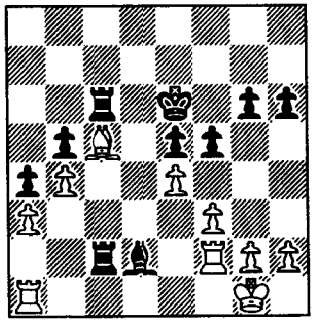


Diagram 8
What is Black's easiest win?

People often talk about the power of doubled rooks on the seventh rank (and they have power as we saw in the previous game), but a rook and bishop? In fact, White is totally paralysed and can only watch while Black calmly improves his position.

27 Bc5 a5 28 Kf1 Rc6 29 b4 a4 30 Rab1 Kg7 31 Ra1 f5 32 Kg1 Kf6 33 Rf1 Ke6 34 Rf2? (Diagram 8)

This loses material but passive defence would also have lost. One plan for Black would be to play ...f5-f4 followed by ...Be3+

34...R6xc5! 35 exf5+ gxf5 36 Rxd2 Rxd2 37 bxc5 Rc2 White resigns

White Plays 7 d5: Petrosian System

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 d5 (Diagram 9)

The Petrosian System is the name given to the variation where White blocks the centre and follows up with Bg5. It is named after one of the all time greats, the 1963-69 World Champion Tigran Petrosian. The current World Champion (well, at least one of them) Vladimir Kramnik also played this variation extensively in his formative years. The wily Armenian, as Petrosian was often called, was famous for his deep, strategic, and often negative play. His philosophy was to stop the opponent's threats before they even thought of them. The reason he played Bg5 against the King's Indian was to prevent Black from moving his knight on f6 and playing ...f7-f5. Black can still arrange ...f7-f5 but only by playing some awkward-looking moves or making positional concessions. The variation was very popular in the 1960's and in its heyday certain people saw it as the refutation of the King's Indian. Its popularity didn't last and it slipped away into relative obscurity before enjoying a short renaissance period in the early 1990's.

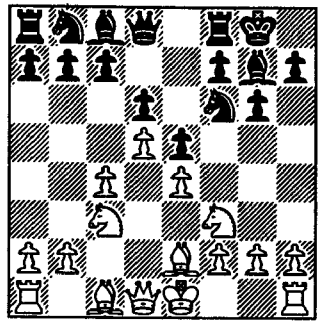


Diagram 9
The Petrosian System

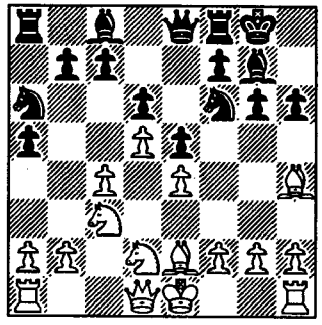


Diagram 10
Breaking the pin

Why doesn't White play 7 d5 so often these days?

The reason this line is not so popular anymore is that White has made a positional concession of his own. He has blocked the position before it was necessary. 7 0-0 (or 7 Be3) keeps Black guessing as to White's intentions in the centre. In principle, White is not against blocking the centre but he expects Black to pay for this clarification of the position. Examples of payment are when Black plays ...Nc6 (Chapters 3 and 4) as then White can gain a tempo with d4-d5 and force the knight to an inferior square, or when Black plays the move ...Re8. Then White often blocks the centre as the rook is misplaced on e8. It now belongs on f8 to support the advance ...f7-f5.

Let's look at some moves after 7 d5.

7...a5

This is considered to be the most flexible response. Black plans to play ...Na6-c5 and doesn't want to be immediately kicked away by White playing b2-b4.

NOTE: The idea of playing ...a5 to secure the c5-square for a black knight is seen throughout the book. This is one of Black's key strategical ideas in the King's Indian.

There are two other Black moves. 7...Nbd7 is the subject of Game 3 while 7...Na6 also gets a mention there.

8 Bg5 h6

This is sensible. It is useful for Black to have the possibility of breaking the pin with ...g6-g5, even if it is not always wise to employ it.

9 Bh4 Na6 10 Nd2

Now White will be able to play f3 if his bishop gets in any danger.

10...Qe8 (Diagram 10)

Black breaks the pin without resorting to the positionally suspect move ...g6-g5. He plans to move his knight from f6 to h7 in order to create threats on the kingside. White's long term ambitions are on the queenside but he may have to play further consolidating moves on the kingside first. This strategically complex line is covered in Game 4.

Theoretical?

Nearly all the variations in the Classical King's Indian are theoretical and this is no exception. Black will need to know a good plan if he wants to get out of the opening with a playable position.

Statistics

With 7 d5 White scores an average 54%. If we take the main line of the Petrosian System (see previous diagram) White scored 53% from around a thousand games. In the line from Game 3 where Black chases the bishop with ...g6-g5 White's score jumps to 58%.

Illustrative Games

Game 3
□ **Lyrberg** ■ **Bologan**
Oslo 1994

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 d4 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 d5 Nbd7

7...Na6 is another way to develop the knight when one possible continuation is 8 Bg5 h6 9 Bh4 g5 10 Bg3 Nxe4! 11 Nxe4 f5, regaining the piece, as if the knight moves Black plays ...f5-f4 trapping the bishop on g3. This position is considered to be about level. The only problem with 7...Na6 is that White can reply 8 Nd2!?, preventing the knight from moving to c5 because of b2-b4.

8 Bg5

8 0-0 Nc5 9 Qc2 a5 is an old variation not seen much these days. After 10 Bg5 h6 11 Be3 Black has many possibilities but one reliable line is 11...Nfd7 12 Nd2 f5 13 exf5 gxf5 14 f4 exf4 15 Bxf4 Ne5 with equality.

8...h6 9 Bh4 g5 10 Bg3 Nh5

This used to be the main line of the Petrosian. Black breaks the pin but at the cost of weakening his kingside. This was exactly the sort of thing Petrosian had in mind when he started playing Bg5. Most Black players have gone off this line because of White's next move.

11 h4! (Diagram 11)

Before Paul Keres discovered this move White used to play 11 0-0. Keres was more of an attacking player than Petrosian and he added spice to many opening variations. With h4 White strives to open lines on the kingside. He is not worried about his pawn structure being compromised as after ...Nxg3 the open f-file will be very useful.

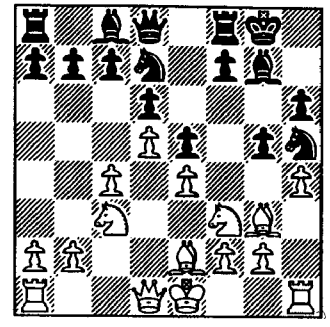


Diagram 11
Attacking the weakened kingside

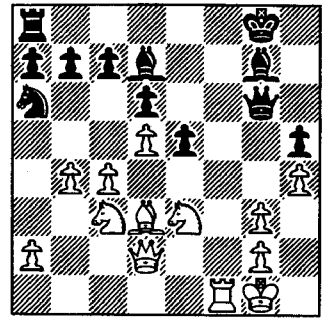


Diagram 12
Taking control of the light squares

11...Nxg3

Another key variation is 11...Nf4 12 hxg5 hxg5 13 Qc2! Nxg2+ 14 Kf1 Nf4 15 Bxf4 gxf4 (15...exf4 16 e5! threatens Qh7 mate) 16 Kg2! when White follows up with Rag1 and king back to f1. He has dangerous attacking chances on the kingside.

12 fxg3 g4 13 Nh2 h5 14 0-0 f5

If Black doesn't play ...f7-f5 now he may never get the chance again. White would attempt to build his position by playing Rf2, Nf1-e3 and then the other rook to the f-file.

15 Rxf5!

This was supposed to be a suggestion of Kramnik after his game with Kasparov, but much to my surprise I now see that it had already been played back in 1982 by the editor-in-chief of this book, IM Byron Jacobs. The game Kramnik-Kasparov, Linares 1994 had continued with the standard 15 exf5 but after 15...Nc5 16 b4 e4! 17 Rc1 Nd3! 18 Bxd3 exd3 19 f6 Rxf6 20 Qxd3 Qf8 Black's potentially active bishops compensated for his exposed king position and the rather unimportant pawn he is down.

15...Rxf5 16 exf5 Nc5 17 Qd2! Qf6 18 Rf1 Bxf5 19 Nxg4! Qg6

Black could try sacrificing his queen with 19...hxg4 20 Bxg4 Bxg4 21 Rxf6 Bxf6 but after 22 Qh6 Bg7 23 Qg5 Bd7 24 b4 he is in big trouble. White will follow up with moves such as h4-h5 and Ne4.

20 Ne3 Bd7 21 b4 Na6 22 Bd3! (Diagram 12)

White's plan is to exchange bishops and take complete control of the light squares. He certainly doesn't mind if Black picks up the odd pawn on the kingside while he is doing this.

22...Qxg3 23 Bf5! Rd8 24 Ne4 Qxh4 25 g3 Qe7 26 Bxd7 Qxd7 27 Nf5 Rf8 28 Qg5 Black resigns

Game 4
□ **Mariano** ■ **Cvitan**
Mendrisio 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 d5 a5 8 Bg5 h6 9 Bh4 Na6 10 Nd2 Qe8 11 0-0

Sometimes White delays castling but this shouldn't deter Black. He should just adopt exactly the same plan as in the game.

11...Nh7!

This is the only way to develop play on the kingside.

12 a3

White now threatens to play b2-b4 because after an exchange of pawns on this square the black knight on a6 will be pinned.

12...Bd7 13 b3

Most White players take the threat of ...a5-a4 seriously and resign themselves to this loss of tempo. There are a few who ignore it but the position after 13 Rb1 a4 is considered very comfortable for Black. The point is that 14 b4 can now be met by 14...axb3 15 Nxb3 b6 when it will be difficult for White to generate any sort of queenside play at all.

13...h5



WARNING: When Black plays ...h6-h5 in this variation White must immediately check to see if his bishop on h4 is safe. It certainly isn't here as Black now threatens 14...g5 and 15...h4.

14 f3

White safeguards his bishop.

14...Bh6 (Diagram 13)

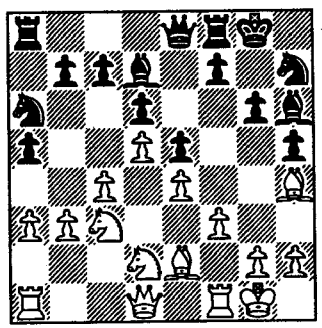


Diagram 13
A new diagonal for the bishop

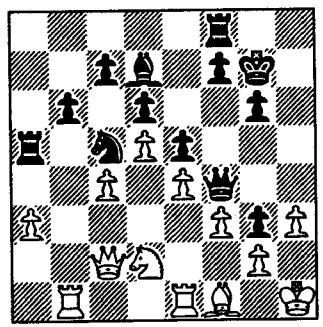


Diagram 14
White is positionally lost

The bishop is heading for e3. White must now decide if he is going to allow this move and live with the active bishop, to allow ...Be3 but exchange bishops, or to prevent it altogether. In general, White would prefer to avoid an exchange of bishops because this will weaken his control of the dark squares.

In this book you will often see phrases like 'White has complete control of the light squares' or 'Black dominates the dark squares'. I remember from my early days as a chess player that this can be a difficult concept to grasp. Basically, control of a colour complex usually happens when the opponent's bishop of that colour is missing and the central pawns are on the opposite colour to the missing bishop. For example, if White has pawns on f3, e4, d5 and no dark-squared bishop he can be said to be weak on the dark squares. If Black can then get his own bishop on this diagonal (g1-a7) then it can be said that he controls the dark squares. It can be so important that players are often willing to give up an exchange to achieve this control.

15 Bf2?!

The majority of players prefer to tolerate the active bishop. The main line runs 15 Rb1 Be3+ 16 Kh1 Bc5! 17 Qc1 with a complex game. The problem with dropping the bishop back to f2 is that it allows Black a free hand on the kingside. On h4 it kept the black queen under wraps.

15...Qe7! 16 Qc2 h4 17 Rab1 Bf4! 18 Rfd1 Qg5 19 Kh1 Nf6

The way Black has developed his kingside play is very typical for this variation. A key idea now is ...Nh5-g3+ while the attack can also be supported by ...Kg7 and ...Rh8.

20 Bf1! Nh5 21 Ne2 Ng3+! 22 Bxg3 hxg3 23 Nxf4 Qxf4 24 h3 Kg7 25 b4

Finally White gets to play an active move on the queenside.

25...b6 26 bxa5?

However, his second active move is a mistake which costs him the game. White's position on the kingside is quite perilous in the long term but he has at least weathered the initial storm. Probably the last thing he was expecting was to fall to pieces on the queenside.

26...Nc5!

Threatening 27...Ba4. Sacrificing the exchange would be hopeless because of the powerful black pawn on g3. It's better to have two rooks than one when there are tactical possibilities on the back rank.

27 Re1 Rxa5 (Diagram 14)

White's position is a disaster. He has weaknesses on the queenside and a bishop condemned to life behind his own pawns.

28 Qc3 Rh8 29 Qe3 g5 30 Qxf4 gxf4 31 Ra1 Rha8 32 Nb1 f5 White resigns

White Plays 7 Be3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 Be3 (Diagram 15)

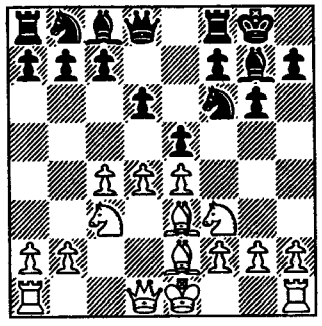


Diagram 15
The Gligoric System

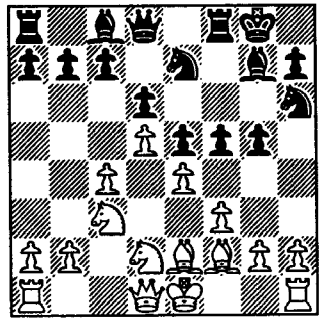


Diagram 16
Very double-edged

This line is often known as the Gligoric System after the world class Yugoslav grandmaster and King's Indian expert Svetozar Gligoric. He was the first to popularise it. These days a lot of strong players use it occasionally, including the 3 K's Korchnoi, Karpov and Kasparov, but very few play it all the time.

What is the thinking behind 7 Be3?

The main idea is to avoid the theoretical battles that arise after 7 0-0 Nc6 without having to either exchange on e5 or block the centre with d5. The point is that the position after 7 Be3 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Nd2! is favourable for White as he has managed to post his dark-squared bishop and the king's knight on their ideal squares. Normally he can have one or the other but not both. The only problem with 7 Be3 is that Black can play 7...Ng4 forcing the bishop to move again. This leads to highly complex strategical battles as can be seen from the material below.

7...Ng4

Black accepts the challenge White has offered. There are a number of important alternatives:

1) 7...Na6 8 0-0 transposes to Chapter 2. This is a perfectly reasonable way for Black to play if that line is in his repertoire.

2) 7...h6!? is a favourite of John Nunn who raised its profile by using it in against top class opposition. The idea is to play ...Ng4 but without allowing White to play Bg5. The main line runs 8 0-0 Ng4 9 Bc1 Nc6 10 d5 Ne7 11 Ne1 f5 12 Bxg4 fxg4 with a most unusual kingside pawn structure. Black will now play ...g6-g5 and ...Ng6-f4 while White will seek his fortune on the queenside. Most theoretical sources agree that White has slightly the better chances.

3) 7...exd4 is not such a bad move as Black is often able to create

counterplay by a quick ...c7-c6 and ...d6-d5. For example, 8 Nxd4 Re8 9 f3 c6 10 Qd2 (10 Bf2!?) 10...d5 11 exd5 cxd5 12 0-0 Nc6 13 c5 and now 13...Rxe3!? is the famous exchange sacrifice that first occurred in Karpov-Kasparov, New York 1990 (11th game of the world championship match).

8 Bg5 f6

Now White's bishop has to move again but Black's knight on g4 is also awkwardly placed.

9 Bh4

The most common. The bishop remains on the kingside and will be looking to eventually settle on f2 (after moves like Nd2 and f3). Some players prefer to go home with the bishop. 9 Bc1 is seen in Game 6.

9...Nc6

9...g5 10 Bg3 Nh6 is an interesting alternative after which White usually blocks the centre with 11 d5 or exchanges queens with 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 Qxd8 Rxd8 13 Nd5 Na6 14 0-0-0 Be6. The former is the more promising strategy.

10 d5 Ne7 11 Nd2 Nh6 12 f3 g5

Black can also slow down White on the queenside with 12...c5!?. One possible continuation is 13 Rb1 with the idea of b4 while another is to change the character of the game by playing 13 dxc6!? bxc6 14 b4.

13 Bf2 f5 (Diagram 16)

This very double-edged position is the subject of Game 5.

Theoretical?

It is not one of the more theoretical lines of the King's Indian and there is plenty of scope for improvisation by both sides. However, as we shall see below it is a line that scores very heavily for White so Black is definitely advised to learn a system.

Statistics

With 7 Be3 White has scored 62% from over 3000 games. Many Black players appear to be all at sea in this line. For example there are over 400 games with 7...Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Nd2, the line I warned about in the Introduction. Here White scores a massive 75%. Against 7...Ng4 White scores 58%, still good but within the bounds of respectability.

Illustrative Games

Game 5
□ **Shulman** ■ **Bakhtadze**
Holon 1995

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 Be3 Ng4 8 Bg5 f6 9 Bh4 Nc6 10 d5 Ne7 11 Nd2 Nh6 12 f3 g5 13 Bf2 f5 14 c5

Few White players are willing to castle in this position but there is a sizeable group who try and block the kingside by playing 14 h3 Ng6 15 g4. After 15...fxg4 16 hxg4 Nh4 17 Rh2 c5! the chances are about equal. Both sides have good outposts on the kingside. White will follow up with Nf1-g3-f5 and Black with ...Nf7-h8-g6-f4.

14...g4

14...Ng6 is also played quite often. White usually plays 15 g3 to keep the knight out of f4 after which Black has an interesting pawn sacrifice: 15...g4 16 fxg4 f4! with attacking chances on the f-file.

15 fxg4 Nxg4 16 Bxg4 fxg4 17 0-0 Ng6 18 Nc4

In order to avoid the line in the next note White could have played 18 cxd6 cxd6 19 Nc4. John Nunn believes that Black is OK after 19...Qc7, although his is a minority view.

18...a6?!

Black is worried about White taking on d6 and playing Nb5. However, he would have done better to play 18...dxc5! 19 Bxc5 Rxf1+ 20 Qxf1 b6 21 Be3 Ba6 with a roughly level game. The text creates a hole on b6 that White is quick to take advantage of.

19 Be3 Nf4 20 g3 Nh3+ 21 Kg2 (Diagram 17)

In this position White has a clear advantage. The knight on h3 may look menacing but it has no support. The black pawn on g4 actually blocks lines on the kingside and prevents Black from creating any serious threats. The open f-file is only good for exchanging pieces and the more pieces that are exchanged the more pronounced White's advantage on the queenside will become.

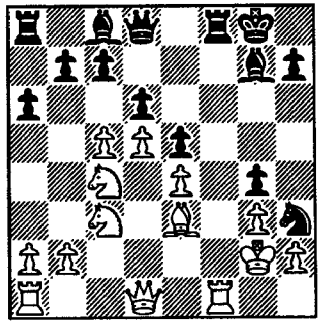


Diagram 17
Black has no counterplay

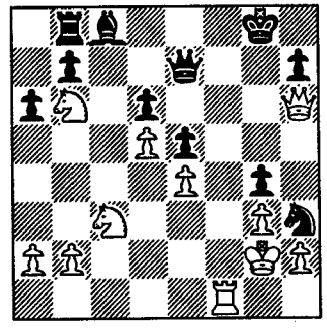


Diagram 18
White attacks on the kingside!

21...Bf6 22 cxd6 cxd6 23 Nb6 Bg5!?

Black seeks to complicate the game but White keeps his cool.

24 Rxf8+ Qxf8 25 Qe2!

This solid move is the strongest. After 25 Bxg5 Qf2+ 26 Kh1 Qxb6 White has lost control of the position.

25...Bxe3 26 Qxe3 Rb8 27 Rf1 Qe7 28 Qh6 (Diagram 18)

Suddenly the black king is in a precarious position. His next move cost him his d-pawn but other moves were no better. For example, 28...Ng5 29 Nxc8 Rxc8 30 Qh5 and White wins the g-pawn.

28...Bd7 29 Nc4 b5 30 Nxd6 Rb6 31 Nf5! Rxh6 32 Nxe7+ Kh8 33 Rf8+ Kg7 34 Rd8 Black resigns

I would have played one more move as after 34...Rf6 if White carelessly plays 35 Rxd7?? then 35...Rf2+ 36 Kh1 Rf1+ 37 Kg2 Rg1 is mate. Instead White should just play 35 Nd1! when the only way to save the bishop, 35...Rd6, loses to 36 Nc8!.

NOTE: The stronger players become, the earlier they resign as they understand how hopeless the situation is. Still, there is nothing to be gained by resigning too early. The above was definitely one move too soon.

Game 6
□ I.Sokolov ■ Shirov
FIDE World Championship, Las Vegas 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 0-0 5 e4 d6 6 Be2 e5 7 Be3 Ng4 8 Bg5 f6 9 Bc1

This retreat is not played so often here but it is still an important variation as it can be reached via another move order (see below).

9...Nc6 10 0-0

Blocking the centre with 10 d5 is a reasonable alternative. The position after 10 0-0 is more commonly reached via the move order 7 0-0 Nc6 8 Be3 Ng4 9 Bg5 f6 10 Bc1. The reason White usually plays 10 Bc1 there, as opposed to 10 Bh4, is that having already castled kingside he doesn't want to encourage Black to advance his pawns there.

10...f5

Black has a wide choice. 10...Nh6 and 10...Kh8 lead to complex games while the variation 10...exd4 11 Nxd4 Nxd4 12 Qxd4 f5 13 Qd5+ Kh8 14 Bxg4 fxg4 15 Be3 c6 16 Qd3 Be6 17 Rad1 Be5 18 Bd4 leads to a much quieter game.

11 Bg5

11 d5 Ne7 12 Ng5 Nf6 occurs occasionally. This is similar to Games 23 and 24.

11...Qe8!

11...Bf6 12 Bxf6 Nxf6 13 exf5 Bxf5 14 d5 Ne7 15 Ng5 is supposed to be a little better for White.

12 dxe5

After 12 d5 Black has tried many knight moves. 12...Ne7 or 12...Nd8, intending ...Nf7, are the best choices.

12...dxe5 13 h3

13 Nd5 is probably a better move although after 13...Qf7 the position is thought to be about equal.

13...Nf6 14 Bd3 Be6 15 Re1 Qf7 16 c5? (Diagram 19)

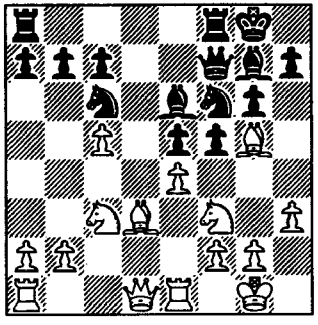


Diagram 19
White's c-pawn becomes a target

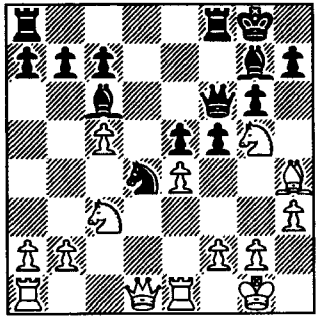


Diagram 20
The black queen pins and wins

Some of White's last moves may have been questionable but this is the real mistake as the c-pawn just gets into trouble. After something like 16 Bxf6 Bxf6 17 Nd5 White shouldn't be worse.

16...Nd7! 17 Bb5 Nd4 18 Bxd7 Bxd7 19 Bh4?! Bc6 20 Ng5 Qf6! (Diagram 20)

Black threatens to win a piece with ...h7-h6 and there is no good discovered attack with the knight. Of course 21 Nf3 is just met by 21...Nxf3+ and 22...Qxh4.

21 exf5 gxf5 22 Ne2

After 22 Qh5 h6 23 Nge4 Qf7! the queens will be exchanged leaving White facing the double threat of ...fxe4 and ...Nc2.

22...Rad8 23 Nxd4 Rxd4 24 Qh5 h6! White resigns

After 25 Nf3 Bxf3! Black wins a piece.

Summary

1) The Exchange Variation deserves all the stick I have given it. I have nothing against exchanging queens and trying to win an end-game, but only when it is positionally justified. Here it certainly isn't.

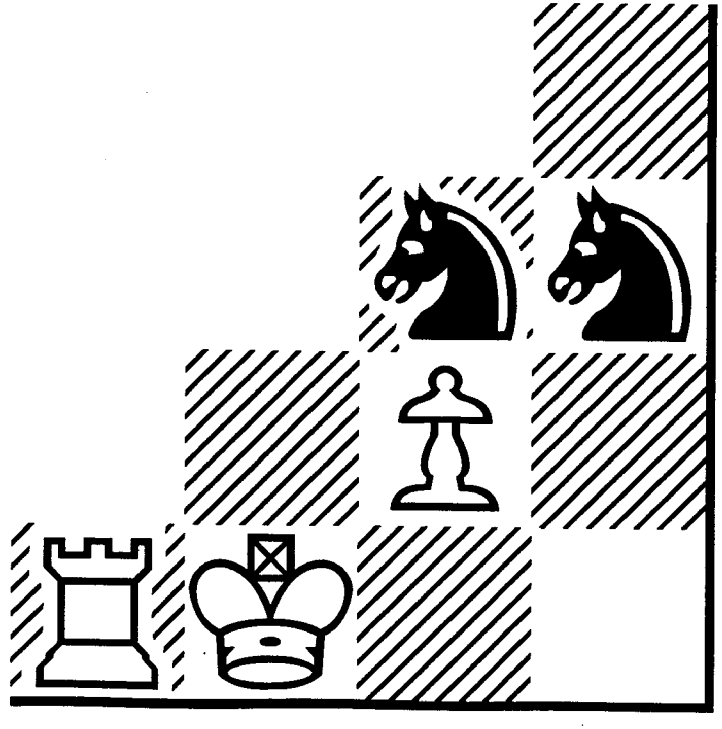
2) The Petrosian System is a much more serious alternative to 7 0-0 and a genuine way for White to play for an advantage. However, most players believe it is a little premature for White to block the centre.

3) The Gligoric System is a dangerous line which has plenty of high level support. The line with 9 Bh4 is more dangerous than 9 Bc1.

Chapter Two

The Classical with 7 0-0: Alternatives to 7...Nc6

- The Modern 7...Na6
- The Old 7...Nbd7
- Black Exchanges with 7...exd4



The Modern 7...Na6

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Na6 (Diagram 1)

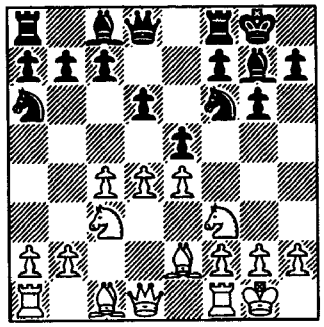


Diagram 1
The modern approach

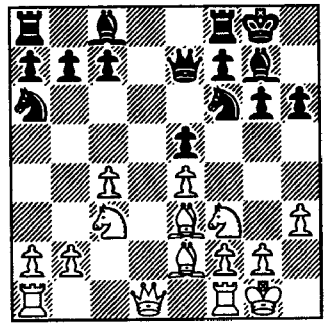


Diagram 2
Inviting Nd5

This is by far the most topical line in this chapter. It is a totally new system that has developed in the 1990's. It has become an important refuge for those who want to play the King's Indian but don't want to get involved in the heavy theoretical battles that often arise from 7...Nc6.

Isn't the knight badly placed on the edge?

On a superficial reading of the position the knight is indeed badly placed on the edge of the board. The move would appear to go against the basic chess principles of controlling the centre. However, once we look a little more closely we can see that this is not the case. White will not be able to hold the tension in the centre forever and at some point he is either going to take on e5 or play d5. In both cases the knight on a6 is poised to jump into c5, one of its best squares in the King's Indian. On other occasions Black, himself, may relieve the central tension by playing ...e5xd4 and here, too, the square c5 becomes available to the knight. If for some reason Black is unable to play ...Nc5 then there is an alternative method of bringing it back into play: ...c7-c6, followed by ...Nc7 and ...Ne6.

The move ...Na6 is more flexible than the old 7...Nbd7 line that we study below as it doesn't interfere with the development of the rest of Black's queenside.

8 Be3

This is the most common move and the position is important for the King's Indian as it can also arise via the move order 7 Be3 Na6 8 0-0.

The other main line is 8 Re1 and that is covered in Game 8. The other alternatives are:

1) 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 Qxd8 Rxd8, as usual, offers White nothing.

2) 8 d5 Nc5 9 Qc2 a5 was considered briefly in Game 3.

3) 8 Bg5 has become quite popular. The variation 8...h6 9 Bh4 Qe8 10 Bxf6 Bxf6 11 c5!, which has occurred quite often, is not totally reliable for Black. It is simpler to play the more direct 9...g5 10 Bg3 (10 dxe5 Nh5 11 Bg3 Nxg3 12 hxg3 dxe5 just transposes) 10...Nh5 when 11 d5 Nf4 transposes to a line in the Petrosian system which is not considered dangerous for Black and 11 dxe5 Nxg3 12 hxg3 dxe5 is level.

8...Ng4

Just as in the 7 Be3 variation the bishop is not allowed to settle on this square.

9 Bg5 Qe8!

In the early days of the variation Black often played 9...f6 but went off this line because of the continuation 10 Bc1 c6 11 h3 Nh6 12 c5!.

10 dxe5

This exchange is considered to be the most accurate move. After 10 h3 h6! 11 Bc1 exd4 12 Nxd4 Nf6 13 Bf3 Black has demonstrated on a number of occasions that the move 13...Nh7!, intending ...Ng5, gives him a comfortable game.

10...dxe5 11 h3

11 Nd2 is an important alternative. Black can try:

1) 11...h6 12 Bh4 Nf6 13 Nd5 Qd8?! (13...g5 14 Bg3 c6 15 Ne3 Nc5 is more solid with good equalising chances for Black; he does have a hole on his f5-square but he will always be able to take a white knight that occupies this square) 14 f4! and now Black must sacrifice his queen. After 14...Nxd5! 15 Bxd8 16 Qb3 Nxf1 17 Nxf1 Rxd8 he probably does not have quite enough compensation.

2) Recently Black has started playing 11...f6!? and has been doing fine after both 12 Bh4 h5 and 12 Bxg4 fxg5.

11...h6

11...f6 is also playable here.

12 Bd2

White can win a pawn with 12 hxg4 hxg5 13 Nxg5 Qe7 14 Nh3 but Black has excellent compensation on the dark squares after 14...Bh6. His main plan now will be to manoeuvre the knight from a6 to d4.

12...Nf6 13 Be3 Qe7!? (Diagram 2)

This crazy-looking queen move, which seems to invite Nd5, is designed to prevent White from playing c5. It has become the main line and is featured in Game 7.

Theoretical?

The *raison d'être* of this variation was to avoid all the heavy theory that surrounds 7...Nc6. However, any line that is extensively tested in top class chess for ten years or so is bound to develop a decent body of theory. That is what has happened here. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

Statistics

After 7...Na6 (including 7 Be3 Na6 8 0-0) White has scored 57% from 1600 games. Not bad, but what is very interesting is that in the position after 13...Qe7, the main line from Game 7, White has only managed 46% from just over 100 games. With 8 Re1 White has scored 58%.

Illustrative Games

Game 7
□ Tukmakov ■ Gallagher
Basel 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 d6 5 e4 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Na6 8 Be3 Ng4 9 Bg5 Qe8 10 dxe5 h6 11 Bd2 dxe5 12 h3 Nf6 13 Be3 Qe7 14 Nd5

The obvious move but 14 a3 is an important alternative. White's plan is to play b2-b4 and c4-c5 to gain space on the queenside and potential use of the outpost on d6. A typical continuation is 14...c6 15 b4 Nh5 16 c5 Rd8! (16...Nc7?! 17 Qd6!) 17 Qc1 Kh7. Now White can ruin Black's pawn structure with 18 Bxa6 but this is very double-edged as his bishop is an important piece. If he doesn't take then Black will follow up with ...Nc7. The general consensus is that Black is doing OK here.

14...Qd8!

Certainly not the horrible 14...Nxd5 15 cxd5 after which the pawn structure is very much in White's favour. There is no need to take the knight. It's much better to drive it away with ...c7-c6.

15 Qc2

White defends his pawn on e4. There are a couple of alternatives:

1) 15 Nxf6+ Qxf6 16 c5 Nb8! followed by ...Nc6 gives Black an equal game. Note that Black has to go via b8 as 16...Nb4 loses a pawn to 17 Qd2.

2) 15 Qc1 Nxe4 16 Bxh6 is quite risky for Black so he should play 15...Kh7 and after 16 Rd1 sacrifice his queen with 16...Nxe4! 17 Nb6 axb6 18 Rxd8 Rxd8. The rook, piece and central pawn give him full compensation.

NOTE: This is already the second queen sacrifice we have seen in this variation. Amongst players starting out, the queen is often treated with exaggerated respect but more experienced players are sometimes willing to exchange it for a collection of other pieces.

15...c6 16 Nxf6+ Qxf6 17 Rfd1 Qe7

Black's plan is to play ...f7-f5.

18 c5 Nc7 19 b4 Kh7 20 a4 f5 21 b5 fxe4! (Diagram 3)

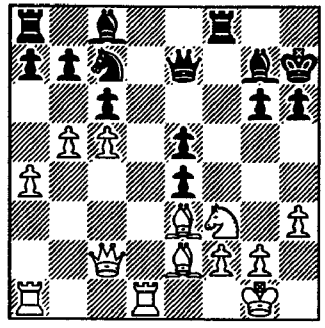


Diagram 3
Black takes control of d5

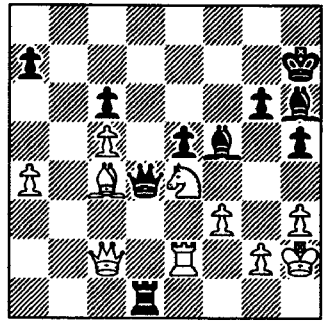


Diagram 4
Black's pieces circle like vultures

Black is not interested in playing for a kingside attack with ...f5-f4 as White's queenside play is already well advanced. No, his idea is to occupy d5 which White made available when he played c4-c5.

22 Nd2 Nd5 23 Nxe4 Bf5 24 Ra3 Rad8 25 f3 Nxe3!

Black's knight was a fine piece but after White played f3, to reinforce his knight on e4, he weakened all the dark squares on his kingside. He probably thought that this didn't matter so much because Black's bishop is quite passive on g7 but there is a very thematic way to bring this piece into the game.

26 Rxe3 Rxd1+ 27 Bxd1 Rd8 28 bxc6 bxc6 29 Be2 h5!

Once the King's Indian bishop, as it's usually known, makes its presence felt the White position crumbles with remarkable speed.

30 Bd3 Bh6 31 Re1 Rd5 32 Kh1 Qh4 33 Re2 Qd8!

Suddenly White is getting into trouble on his back rank. The bishop on h6 covers a number of important squares in the white camp.

34 Bc4 Rd1+ 35 Kh2 Qd4! (Diagram 4)

Threatening mate in two starting with ...Bf4+.

36 Rf2 Rc1!

The bishop on c4 is lost.

37 Qb3 Bxe4 38 Bg8+ Kh8 White resigns

Game 8
☐ **Portisch** ■ **Cramling**
Marbella 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 d6 5 e4 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Na6 8 Re1

A relatively unassuming continuation. White decides to reinforce his e-pawn and await developments. One of the points behind White's play is that once his e-pawn has been overprotected (his next move will be Bf1) then he may be in a position to block the centre with d4-d5. Black would normally like to meet this with ...Nc5, attacking the e-pawn, and then ...a7-a5 to secure the position of the knight on c5. However with the e-pawn already protected ...Nc5 can be met by b2-b4.

8...c6

This move has several points. It covers the d5-square and opens a path to the queenside for the black queen. It also enables Black to meet d4-d5 with ...c7-c5 without having to worry about White capturing *en passant*. Once the centre is blocked the pawn on c5 and the knight on a6 make quite a good defensive queenside combination.

9 Bf1 Bg4

This move creates the simple threat of ...e5xd4 and is designed to try and force White to block the centre with d4-d5.

If Black wants to simplify the game then 9...exd4 is a respectable alternative. After 10 Nxd4 Ng4 11 h3 Qb6! 12 hxg4 Qxd4 a typical continuation has been 13 g5 Nc5 14 Bf4 Qxd1 15 Raxd1 Be5 16 g3 and now 16...b6! is thought to be best. This last move is directed against an exchange sacrifice on d6 (it is important that the knight is defended) which had caused Black problems after other moves.

10 Be3?!

A very instructive error which allows Black to simplify to an equal endgame. White should have played 10 d5 when 10...c5, blocking the centre at once, is played most often these days. A typical continuation then is 11 h3 Bd7 12 Bg5 h6 13 Be3 with a dour struggle ahead.

10...Bxf3 11 Qxf3 Ng4! (Diagram 5)

A nice trick. If White takes the knight then Black regains the piece by taking on d4 while on other moves Black will just play ...Nxe3.

12 Qxg4 exd4 13 Bg5 f6

White still has two pieces attacked and must lose one of them.

14 Bd2 f5! 15 Qh3

After 15 exf5 dxc3 White's queenside pawn structure will be ruined.

15...dxc3 16 Bxc3 Bxc3 17 Qxc3 fxe4 18 Rxe4 Nc5 19 Re2 Qf6 20 Qxf6 Rxf6 21 Rd1 a5 (Diagram 6)

The endgame is level despite the imbalances in the position. Black has one weakness on d6 but this can be easily defended. White has a bishop, which should be a slight advantage, but its activity is somewhat restricted by the pawn structure. Black's knight also has a solid central base, which is important for a knight fighting a bishop.

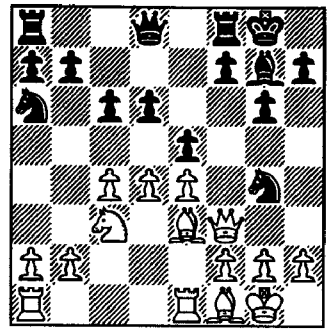


Diagram 5
Black equalises through exchanges

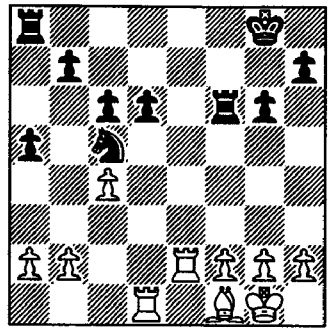


Diagram 6
The endgame is level

22 f3 Kf7 23 Rd4 Re8 24 Rxe8 Kxe8 25 Kf2 Ke7 26 Be2 g5 27 Bd1 Ke6 28 Ke3 d5!? 29 cxd5+ cxd5 30 h4 h6 31 hxg5 hxg5 32 Rg4 Rf5 33 Bc2 Re5+ 34 Kd2 Kd6 35 b4 axb4 36 Rxb4

Each pawn exchange brings the draw ever closer.

36...Kc6 37 g3 b5 38 Bd1 Nb7 39 f4 gxf4 40 gxf4 Rf5 41 Rd4 Kc5 42 Kc3 Nd6 43 Bg4 Rf6 44 Bf3 b4+ 45 Kd3 Rf5 46 Bg4 Rf6 47 Bf3 Rf5 48 Bg4 Rf6 Draw agreed

The Old 7...Nbd7

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nbd7 (Diagram 7)

This line is no longer very popular as it doesn't put enough pressure on the white centre.

In days gone by it was once the main line of the King's Indian but it was first surpassed by 7...Nc6 and now by 7...Na6 as well.

8 Be3!

This is the line that is causing the most trouble for Black. White has tried a whole host of other moves. In Game 9 we shall examine 8 Qc2 while 8 d5 Nc5 is a system that can arise from several variations. It was briefly considered in Game 3.

8...c6

Again Black has a wide choice. The most interesting is 8...Ng4 with similar play to the 7 Be3 line in the last chapter. However, the fact that Black has already committed himself to ...Nbd7 means that he

has an inferior version. A possible continuation is 9 Bg5 f6 10 Bc1! c6 11 h3 Nh6 12 Be3 with a better game for White.

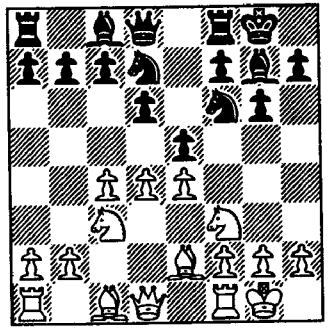


Diagram 7
The old way to play

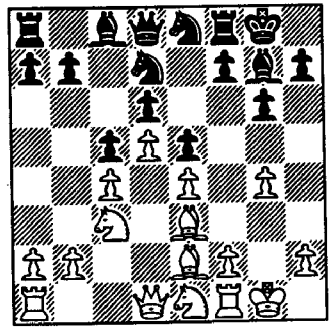


Diagram 8
A cramping attempt

9 d5

It is more inviting for White to block the centre once Black has played ...c7-c6.

9...c5 10 Ne1 Ne8

Black prepares the traditional ...f7-f5.

11 g4! (Diagram 8)

The best move. It doesn't stop ...f7-f5 but ensures that the g-file will open after Black has played it. As we shall see in game 10 White is the one who is able to make use of this dangerous file.

Theoretical?

It is not overly theoretical but as I found out from personal experience (Game 10) things can go horribly wrong if you don't know what you're doing and you're up against a well-prepared opponent.

Statistics

This line has a long history and is still played by a lot of amateurs who have older books on the King's Indian. Therefore there are a lot of games. After 7...Nbd7 White has scored 54% from over 6000 games. If we look a little closer things are not quite as healthy for Black as they appear at first sight. There are over 1000 games with 8 d5 and there White has only managed 45%. With the main lines 8 Be3 and 8 Qc2 White has scored 60% from nearly 2500 games.

Illustrative Games

Game 9
□ **Biriukov** ■ **Svidler**
St Petersburg 1997

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 0-0 5 Nf3 d6 6 Be2 Nbd7 7 0-0 e5 8 Qc2 Nh5!?

The start of a very interesting plan. The main line is 8...c6 9 Rd1 Qe7 10 d5 c5 11 Bg5 with a small advantage for White.

9 Rd1

9 Bg5 f6 10 Be3 Nf4 is another possibility but both 11 Rad1 Nxe2+ 12 Qxe2 Rf7 and 11 Bxf4 exf4 are all right for Black.

9...Nf4 10 Bf1 c5! (Diagram 9)

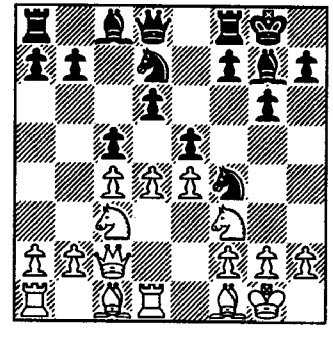


Diagram 9
Black takes control of d4

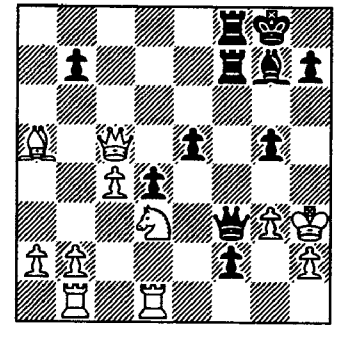


Diagram 10
White has no defence

This is the big idea. Black plans to play ...Ne6 and occupy the d4-square with his knight. Of course White can exchange in the centre and do the same with his knight but this just means a level game.

11 Nb5?!

I don't like this move. 11 d5 is better while 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 Bxf4 exf4 13 e5 is another interesting continuation.

11...cxd4 12 Nxd6

12 Bxf4 exf4 13 Nfxd4 Ne5 is also fine for Black.

12...Ne6 13 Rb1 a5 14 Ne1 Ndc5 15 Nxc8 Rxc8

Black already has the advantage. His strong passed pawn may be going nowhere for the moment but it is an asset that is going to keep White occupied in the long term. Black now opens lines on the kingside to start an attack there.

16 Bd3 f5 17 f3

After 17 exf5 Black takes the bishop before recapturing on f5.

17...Qh4 18 Qe2 Rc7! 19 Bd2 Rcf7

Black calmly improves his position.

20 g3 Qh5 21 Bxa5?

Not the most relevant piece on the board but White was in deep trouble anyway. Now he loses by force.

21...Nxd3 22 Qxd3 Nc5 23 Qa3 fxe4! 24 Qxc5 exf3 25 Nd3 f2+ 26 Kg2 Qf3+ 27 Kh3 g5 (Diagram 10) White resigns

Black threatens mate starting with ...g5-g4+ and ...Bf6+. There is no defence, for example 28 Nxe5 Qh5+ 29 Kg2 f1Q+ 30 Rxf1 Qe2+ and Black wins.

Game 10
□ Pelletier ■ Gallagher
Neuchâtel 2001

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nbd7 8 Be3 c6 9 d5 c5 10 Ne1 Ne8 11 g4! f5

It is too late to change plan.



NOTE: There is an old chess saying: Better a bad plan than no plan at all.

12 gxf5 gxf5 13 exf5 Nb6?! (Diagram 11)

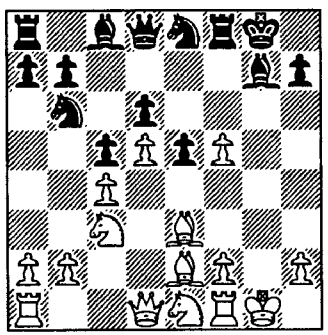


Diagram 11
Don't play ...Nb6 in the King's Indian

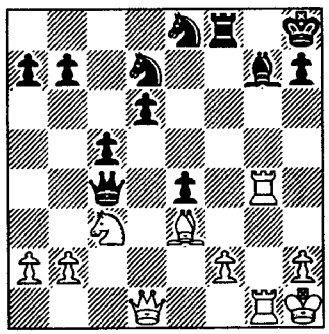


Diagram 12
White sets a trap

This was the first time I played 7...Nbd7 for many years (and the last) and just before the game I looked up the theory in the encyclopaedia. This was the way it suggested Black should play. At the board I became extremely reluctant to play ...Nb6 (see my comments in Game 60), much preferring the look of 13...Ndf6 14 Bd3 e4 15 Nxe4 Nxe4 16 Bxe4 Bxf5 with some compensation for the pawn. But in the end I decided to stick with the theoretical recommendation. Within a few

moves I absolutely hated my position as I could find no counterplay against White's slow but sure build up on the kingside.



TIP: A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing. If you are unsure, or don't understand the theory then it is better to follow your own instincts. Even if it doesn't always work out you should at least learn something.

14 Kh1

White's plan is nice and simple: tuck the king away in the corner, play Rg1 and Nf3 and then double rooks on the g-file.

14...Bxf5 15 Rg1 Nd7 16 Nf3 e4!? 17 Ng5

I had been hoping for 17 Bg5?! when I was going to sacrifice my queen with 17...exf3! 18 Bxd8 fxe2 19 Qxe2 Rxd8. The position is far from clear and Pelletier, most sensibly, doesn't get involved.

17...Ndf6 18 Rg3 Qe7 19 Qd2 Kh8 20 Rag1 Rd8 21 Qd1!

White is planning to play Bf1-h3 in order to swap off the bishop on f5 but he doesn't want to play 21 Bf1 as Black has the reply 21...Nh5.

21...Rd7 22 Bf1 Qe5 23 Ne6?

A mistake which lets Black back into the game. White should have continued with 23 Bh3.

23...Bxe6 24 dxe6 Qxe6! 25 Bh3 Qxc4 26 Bxd7 Nxd7

The black position has improved dramatically over the last few moves. White now sets a trap which I fall straight into. It should be pointed out that from a practical point of view I was still likely to lose at this stage I had about a minute against an hour (for ten moves)

27 Rg4!? (Diagram 12) 27...Ndf6?

After 27...Bxc3 28 bxc3 Ne5 Black is fine. Now he gets killed on the dark squares.

28 Rxg7! Nxg7 29 Qxd6 Ne6?

This goes down but 29...Qf7 30 Bxc5 with Bd4 coming did not inspire.

30 Qe5! Qa6 31 Bh6 Rf7 32 Qb8+ Nf8 33 Bxf8 Black resigns

Black Exchanges in the Centre with 7...exd4

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 exd4 (Diagram 13)

This line was never very popular as it was thought to concede a slight advantage to White without a fight. Then in the mid-1990's the Russian Grandmaster Igor Glek introduced some new ideas and the line suddenly became fashionable for a while. White appeared to have come to terms with all these new ideas when there was a twist to the tale. One of the lines that was thought to be most promising for White was suddenly rendered totally harmless (see Game 11). There should still be other ways for White to get an edge but 7...exd4 is better than it was previously thought to be.

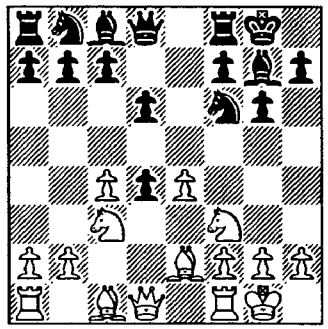


Diagram 13
Black clears the centre

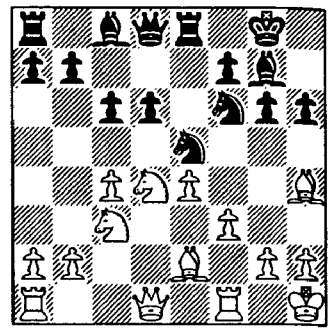


Diagram 14
A tricky position

8 Nxd4 Re8 9 f3 c6

9...Nc6 is Glek's move and that is considered in Game 11. The text is the old line where some new ideas have also been introduced.

10 Kh1

White makes a prophylactic move with his king.

NOTE: Prophylaxis is the term given to the concept of preventing an opponent's threat before it really exists.

10 Be3?! is a well known inaccuracy as 10...d5! allows Black to equalise the game. The main line runs 11 cxd5 Nxd5 12 Nxd5 cxd5 13 Qb3 Nc6! 14 Rad1 Nxd4 15 Bxd4 Bxd4+ 16 Rxd4 Qf6 17 Qxd5 Be6 18 e5! Bxd5 19 exf6 Rxe2 20 Rxd5 Re6 21 Rd7 b5 and Black should hold.

10...Nbd7 11 Bg5

After 11 Bf4 Black should sacrifice a pawn with 11...Nh5 12 Bxd6 Ne5!? (12...Qf6). This line is often recommended for White by the theoreticians but very few players are willing to risk it in practice. Black should get good attacking chances on the kingside.

11...h6 12 Bh4 Ne5 (Diagram 14)

Now:

1) 13 Qd2? loses a pawn to 13...Nxe4!. That is one reason the bishop was driven back to h4.

2) 13 f4!? Neg4 14 Bxg4! Bxg4 15 Qd3 Bc8! (the bishop was worried about being cut off by ...f7-f5) 16 Rae1 Qc7 17 h3 Nd7! was the strange continuation of Wells-Gallagher, British Ch. Scarborough 2001. Despite the fact that most of Black's pieces are on the back rank and that White's are all actively deployed Black seem to be doing fine. After the further moves 18 Qd2 Qa5 19 e5!? dxe5 20 f5 g5 21 Bg3 Nf6 the players chickened out and agreed a draw in this unclear position.

3) 13 Nc2 Be6 14 Ne3 is probably the critical test of Black's strategy.

Theoretical?

There are quite a few new ideas floating round here but I wouldn't call it very theoretical. I was willing to play it in the above game after preparing on my computer for just one hour. I'd never studied it before in my life.

Statistics

After 7...exd4 White has scored 58% from around 1400 games. In the Glek line with 9...Nc6 he scores the same while in the old line with 9...c6 10 Kh1 White has scored a heavy 61%.

Illustrative Games

Game 11
□ **Piket** ■ **Nedev**
European Championship, Ohrid 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 exd4 8 Nxd4 Re8 9 f3 Nc6 10 Be3 Nh5 (Diagram 15)

The only way to create play. Black now has ideas of ...f7-f5 and ...Nf4.

11 Qd2

After 11 f4 Black just replies 11...Nf6. He is quite happy to invest two tempi to provoke White into weakening e4, especially as after 12 Bf3 he has the strong reply 12...Bg4!. The point is that after 13 Bxg4?! Nxg4 14 Qxg4 he can take on d4 while 14 Nxc6?? loses to 14...Qh4!, threatening mate and ...Nxe3. After 12...Bg4 play usually continues 13 Nxc6 Bxf3 14 Qxf3 bxc6 with an equal game.

11...f5

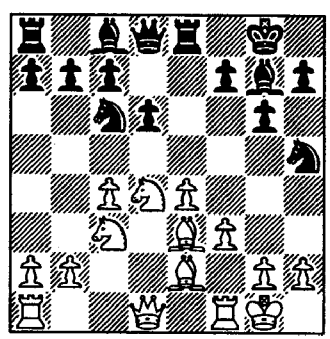


Diagram 15
Black prepares the usual ...f7-f5

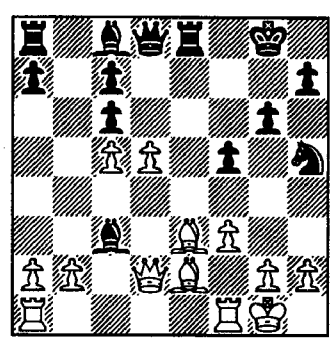


Diagram 16
Black gives up the Indian bishop!

11...Nf4 is another possibility as if White takes on f4 Black takes on d4. This was quite popular until White started playing the simple 12 Rfd1!. After both 12...Nxe2+ 13 Ncxe2 and 12...Nxd4 13 Bxd4 Qg5 14 Bf1 Bxd4+ 15 Qxd4 White's extra space gives him a small but lasting advantage and such positions are difficult to defend.

12 Nxc6 bxc6 13 c5?!

Until recently this move was awarded an '!' as nobody had spotted the tactical resource that allows Black to force a draw. A better line is 13 exf5 Bxf5 when White should avoid 14 g4? because 14...Bxc3! followed by 15...Qe7 ensures that Black doesn't lose a piece. Instead, after 14 Bd4 Nf6 15 Rfe1 c5 16 Bf2 Qd7 17 Rad1 Qf7 18 b3 White, again, has a small plus because of his better pawn structure and safer king.

13...d5!

Black suffered with other moves but they are now all redundant.

14 exd5

14 Bg5 is the only way to continue the game but it looks OK for Black after 14...Qd7!.

14...Bxc3! (Diagram 16)

This is the big new idea.



NOTE: Sometimes even obvious tactical continuations are missed by strong players when the first move would normally be considered as a positional mistake. It is harder for King's Indian players to see tactics that involve giving up the King's Indian bishop.

15 bxc3

15 Qxc3? f4! costs White a piece. The original game in this line, Krivoshey-Gutman, Rovno 2000 continued 16 Bc4 Rxe3 17 d6+ Be6 18 Bxe6+ Rxe6 19 Qb3 Qd7 20 Rae1 Rae8 21 Rxe6 Rxe6 22 Re1 Ng7 23 dxc7 Kf7 24 Re4 Qxc7 and Black soon won.

15...Qe7 16 Kf2 Qh4+ 17 Kg1 Qe7 18 Kf2 Qh4+ Draw agreed

Summary

1) This chapter contains several important lines of the Classical. They are ideal for those who wish to avoid the theoretical battles of the next two chapters. They may also be of interest to players who do not wish to put all their eggs in one basket and prefer flexible play.

2) 7...Na6 has become important. It was virtually unknown at the start of the 1990's but rapidly developed into a major system. It is not easy for White to prove an advantage with either of the main lines.

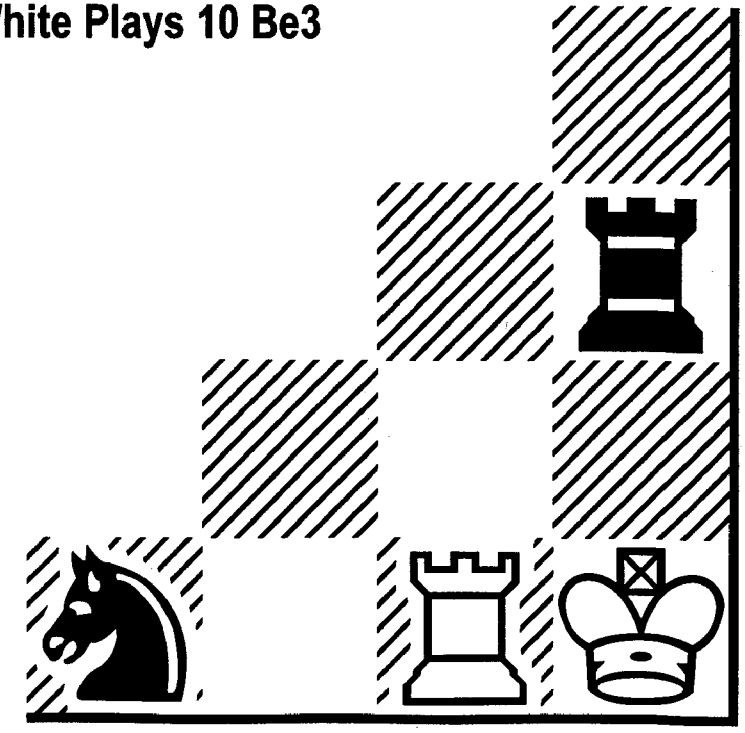
3) 7...Nbd7 is no longer popular. Nowadays it is mainly of historical interest with very few strong players willing to employ it regularly.

4) 7...exd4 looks reasonable. It is probably a little better for White but there are quite a few pitfalls for him to avoid.

Chapter Three

The Classical with 7 0-0 Nc6: The Main Line 9 Ne1

- Introduction
- Main Lines with 10 Nd3
- White Blocks the Kingside with g2-g4
- White Plays 10 Be3



Introduction

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nc6

In the previous chapter we saw various seventh move alternatives for Black. Now we are moving into the main line, the heart and soul of the King's Indian. By playing 7...Nc6 Black leaves White little choice but to close the centre. He is even willing to have his knight driven to the inferior e7-square in order to achieve this central clarification. The reason Black wants the centre closed is that he wants to attack on the kingside and this is not possible with a fluid centre.

8 d5

The only serious alternative is 8 Be3. This would be played more often if it wasn't for the reply 8...Re8!. This leads to a completely equality after 9 d5 Nd4! 10 Nxd4 exd4 11 Bxd4 Nxe4 12 Nxe4 Rxe4 13 Bxg7 Kxg7 and a dull, level game after 9 dxe5 dxe5 and a subsequent exchange of queens. Black can also go fishing in murky waters with 8...Ng4!? when 9 Bg5 f6 10 Bc1 transposes directly to Game 6.

8...Ne7 (Diagram 1)

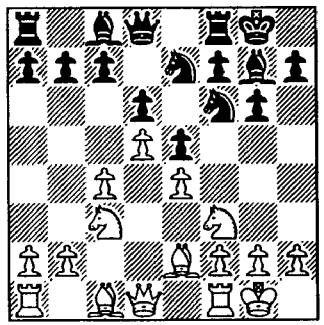


Diagram 1
The centre is blocked

We have now reached the starting point for the most heavily analysed variation in the King's Indian. The material is spread over two chapters. Here we shall look at the old main line with 9 Ne1 whilst the next chapter deals with the important alternatives 9 b4 and 9 Nd2.

9 Ne1

Why does White retreat a well developed piece?

Well, now that the centre has been duly closed the players will have to look for active play on the wings. White's pawns on d5 and c4 give him a space advantage on the queenside so it is logical that he attacks

on that side of the board. Black will attack on the kingside. However, there is not much chance of an attack until he seizes some space on this side of the board. This will be achieved by moving his knight from f6 and advancing the f-pawn. In order to preserve his central structure White would like to meet ...f7-f5 with f2-f3. Therefore he has to move his knight from f3. He doesn't have to move it at once but if he does so it prevents Black's most active move with the king's knight, ...Nh5. That is the thinking behind 9 Ne1 (and 9 Nd2). There is an alternative plan for White. He can leave his knight on f3 and meet ...f7-f5 with Ng5 and a subsequent Ne6. For example, 9 b4 Nh5 10 Re1 f5 11 Ng5 is the main line of the Bayonet Attack.

9 Ne1 or 9 Nd2?

So once White has decided to move his knight, the next question is where? Well, that is a matter of taste. After 9 Ne1 White often follows up with Nd3 which will make it easy for him to organise c4-c5. However, once c4-c5 has been played it is not easy to find an offensive role for the knight on d3 so it usually retreats to f2 to help in the defence of his king. On other occasions White leaves the knight on e1 and tries to force through c4-c5 with the help of Be3.

9 Nd2 envisages a more aggressive role for the knight. Once White has played c5 this knight will move into c4 after which it will be perfectly placed to take part in the demolition of Black's queenside. The drawbacks to this approach are that it might not be so easy to achieve c5 without the help of this knight and that the kingside will have less protection against Black's attack. As I said both approaches are equally valid and 9 Nd2 is considered in the next chapter.

9...Nd7

Just like White before him, Black has a choice of knight retreats (he is going to play ...f7-f5). The alternative, 9...Ne8, is less common for a couple of reasons. Firstly, on e8 the knight does not control the e5-square so White can contemplate variations based on f4. Secondly, the knight on e8 does nothing to slow down c4-c5. For example, after 10 Be3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 Bf2 White can play c4-c5 next move without further preparation.

After 9...Nd7 White usually chooses between 10 Nd3 and 10 Be3. They each have their own section. He can also play 10 f3 followed by g2-g4 and this is found in the section on blocking up the kingside.

Main Lines with 10 Nd3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Nd3 f5 11 Bd2

White normally waits for Black to play ...Nf6 before playing f2-f3. This gives Black the chance to make the positional mistake 11...f4 which is strongly met by 12 Bg4!.

NOTE: An exchange of light-squared bishops is usually in White's favour. Because of the central pawn structure Black's bishop is more active and normally plays an important role on the kingside.

11...Nf6 12 f3 f4

So the stage is set. Black closes the centre in anticipation of an attack against the white king. This is the real starting point of the variation and in a tournament game this position would often be reached after just a couple of minutes play.

13 c5

13 g4 is considered in the next sub-section.

13...g5 14 cxd6

Sometimes White plays 14 Rc1 first but it just transposes after 14...Ng6 15 cxd6 cxd6.

14...cxd6 (Diagram 2)

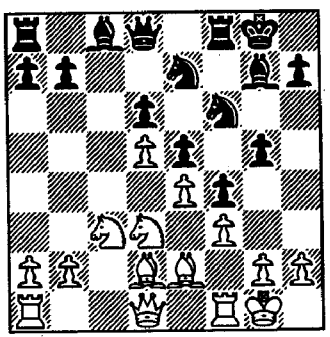


Diagram 2
The battle begins

Now White has two lines. 15 Rc1 is the subject of Game 12 and 15 Nf2 is covered in Game 13.

Theoretical?

At master level we are in the most theoretical territory of the King's Indian. However, as both sides have relatively straightforward plans to follow it should be easy enough to get by without learning everything off by heart.

Statistics

With 9 Ne1 as a whole White has scored 58% from over 5000 games. From the diagram position above White has also scored 58%. Above average, but not dramatically so.

Illustrative Games

Game 12
□ **Roeder** ■ **Hebden**
Bern 1992

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Nd3 f5 11 Bd2 Nf6 12 f3 f4 13 c5 g5 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 Rc1 Ng6 16 Nb5

White plans to invade on c7. Black must prevent this.

16...Rf7

NOTE: You will see this move time and time again throughout our coverage of the Classical King's Indian. The rook now both defends along the second rank and can move to g7 or h7 where it can play an important role in the assault on the white kingside.

17 Qc2 Ne8

It may seem like a concession for Black to retreat the knight but another way to look at it is that it's only because this knight on e8 does such a wonderful job of holding up the White queenside attack that Black can play in this fashion at all.

18 a4

Note that 18 Nxa7 fails to 18...Qb6+. White needs to play a2-a4 so that he can meet 18...a6 with 19 Na3 and not have to worry about Black playing ...b7-b5.

18...h5 19 Nf2 Bf8 20 h3

After 20 Nxa7 Black can't take the knight because of 21 Qxc8. He has two choices:

1) He can steer the game into a roughly equal endgame with 20...Rc7. Endgame, what endgame you may ask? Well, here it is: 21 Ba5 Rxc2 22 Bxd8 Rxe2 23 Nxc8 Rxa4 24 Nd3 g4. The position is still very messy but it has usually ended peacefully.

2) He can play 20...Bd7!? in the hope of making White pay the price on the kingside for his queenside greed. A typical continuation is 21 Nb5 Rg7 22 h3 Nh4 23 Qb3 Kh8! with ...g5-g4 to follow...

20...Bd7!?

The highly theoretical alternative is to play 20...Rg7 21 Qb3 Nh4 and force through ...g5-g4 as quickly as possible. The verdict here is that White has slightly the better chances.

21 Qb3 Qb8!? (Diagram 3)

This move needs some explaining. White's idea is to double rooks on the c-file and play Nc7. Black can stop this by taking the knight, which is not good, or by chasing it away with ...a7-a6. The problem with ...a7-a6 is that after Na3 the knight will have an equally dangerous outpost on b6 which he can easily reach via the c4-square. Black

has found another solution. He is going to play ...Be7-d8 to cover the c7 and b6-squares. The bishop is also just one step away (...Bb6) from the diagonal of its dreams.

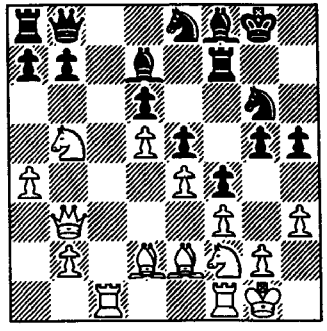


Diagram 3
Intending ...Be7-d8 to cover c7

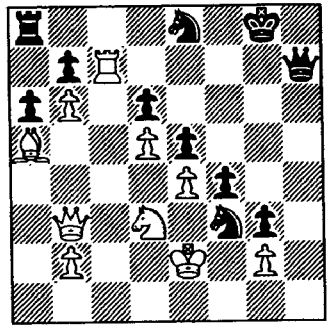


Diagram 4
The decisive stroke

22 a5

White understands Black's plan and takes control of the b6-square.

22...Rg7 23 Rc3?!

Perhaps not the best square for the rook as it interferes with the protection of the a-pawn.

23...Be7 24 Ra1 Bd8 25 Rcc1 Nh8!?

Black intends to re-position his knight on h6 in order to force through ...g5-g4. This is still his long term ambition.

26 Na3 a6!

Preventing White from exchanging off Black's bishop with Bb5.

27 Nc4 Bb5 28 Kf1 Nf7 29 Be1 Nh6 30 Nb6 Bxb6 31 axb6 Bxe2+ 32 Kxe2 Qd8 33 Nd3 g4

It wasn't such a bad idea for White to evacuate his king to the centre but Black's kingside play still gives him the initiative.

34 hxg4 hxg4 35 Bf2 Nf7 36 Rh1 g3 37 Be1 Qg5 38 Ba5

White chooses this square for his bishop as he's planning an exchange sacrifice with Rc7.

38...Qg6 39 Rac1 Ng5 40 Rc4 Rh7 41 Rxh7 Qxh7 42 Rc7 Nxf3!! (Diagram 4)

Now 43 Kxf3 Qh5 mate and 43 gxf3 Qh2+ followed by ...g2 are out of the question so White takes the queen.

43 Rxh7 Nd4+ 44 Ke1 Nxb3 45 Rxb7 Nxa5 46 Ra7 Rb8 47 b4 Nc4 48 b7 Kf7 49 Nc5 dxc5 50 bxc5 Ke7 51 c6 Nc7 52 Ke2 Kd6 White resigns

Game 13
□ **Rogers** ■ **Sznapik**
Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Nd3 f5 11 Bd2 Nf6 12 f3 f4 13 c5 g5 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 Nf2

In the previous game we saw White playing 15 Rac1 followed by Nb5. This time White is not in such a rush to play Nb5 but prefers a slower set-up with Qc2 and Rfc1.

15...h5 16 h3 Ng6 17 Qc2 Rf7

The main drawback to White's system is that the knight on f6 doesn't have to retreat to e8. This means that Black can play a quick ...g5-g4 and he should do so even if it means sacrificing a pawn. The text is a useful move as the rook is more active on the second rank but it was also possible to play ...g5-g4 at once.

18 Rfc1 a6?!

Black prevents Nb5 but the white knight now has another way into Black's position. 18...g4! 19 fxg4 hxg4 20 hxg4 Ne8! is the right idea. Black's plan is to regroup with ...Bf6-h4. Anything can happen.

19 a4! Bf8 20 a5

White is threatening Na4-b6 so Black must react before it's too late.

20...g4

20...b5 21 axb6 Qxb6 22 Na4 Qa7 23 Ba5! is similar but even worse for Black as he has no chances on the kingside.

21 fxg4 hxg4 22 hxg4 b5 23 axb6 Qxb6 24 Na4 Qa7 25 Ba5! (Diagram 5)

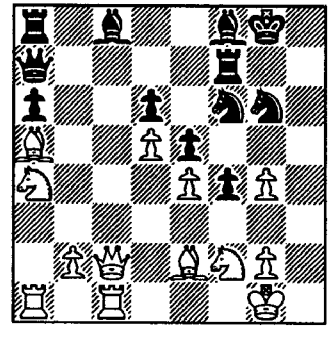


Diagram 5
White takes control of the queenside

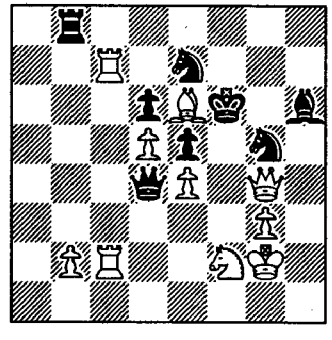


Diagram 6
And now a beautiful finish

25...Rb8 26 g5! Nh7

Or 26...Ng4 27 Bxg4 Bxg4 28 Qc6! with advantage to White.

27 Nb6 f3!?

The only chance is to give up material to open lines on the kingside.

28 Bxf3 Rxb6 29 Bxb6 Qxb6 30 Qxc8 Nxg5 31 Rxa6 Qe3?

With 31...Qxb2 Black would have retained hope, although White has a clear advantage after 32 Qc2!.

32 Ra3 Qb6 33 Qg4 Bh6 34 Rc2 Kh7 35 g3! Rg7 36 Bg2 Rf7 37 Rac3 Ne7 38 Qe2 Rg7 39 Kh2 Kg6 40 Bh3 Rf7 41 Be6 Rf8 42 Kg2 Qd4 43 Qg4 Rb8 44 Rc7 Kf6 (Diagram 6) 45 Qf5+! Nxf5 46 Ng4+ Kg6 47 exf5+ Black resigns

47...Kh5 48 Nf6 mate!

White Blocks the Kingside with g2-g4

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7

In the previous section we saw how all Black's kingside play revolved around playing the move ...g5-g4. If he didn't play this move there was no attack. So White's logic is easy to understand. All he needs to do is stop Black from playing ...g5-g4 and then the queenside attack will decide the game in his favour. However, whilst it is true that the move ...g2-g4 slows down the black attack one can't advance a pawn two squares in front of one's own king without creating weaknesses and new targets. The two most important factors in the position for Black now are the possibility of invading on the h-file and a potential sacrifice on g4. The square on h4 can also be a useful outpost.

We are going to look at two separate systems for White.

1) 10 Nd3 f5 11 Bd2 Nf6 12 f3 f4 13 g4 is covered in Game 14.

2) 10 f3 f5 11 g4 (Diagram 7) is covered in Game 15.

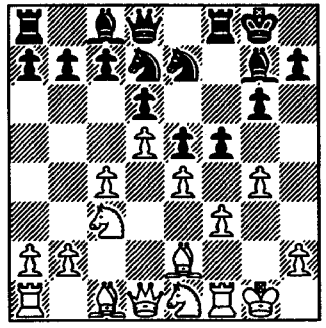


Diagram 7
Blocking off the black attack

The main difference between the two is that in Game 14 the black pawn is already on f4 whilst in Game 15 it is still on f5. The position is obviously more tense in the second example whilst in the first Black also has the possibility of meeting 13 g4 with 13...fxg3.

Theoretical?

Less so, than the rest of this chapter. Some key ideas are essential knowledge but otherwise it should be possible to get by mainly on general principles.

Statistics

White's overall score after 13 g4 (Game 14) is high at 60% but there is a big difference depending on what Black plays. After 13...fxg3 White scores a whopping 73% from 67 games whilst when Black plays 13...g5 he just scores an average 54% from 150 games.

The line from Game 15 with 10 f3 and 11 g4 has netted White 58% from over 450 games.

Illustrative Games

Game 14
□ **Gyimesi** ■ **Cvitan**
Chiasso 1994

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Nd3 f5 11 Bd2 Nf6 12 f3 f4 13 g4 g5

The alternative 13...fxg3 doesn't look so bad. The position after 14 hxg3 is probably just slightly better for White but, as we saw in the statistics, Black has scored terribly here. A typical continuation is 14...c6 15 Be3 h6 16 Kg2 g5 17 Nf2 cxd5 18 cxd5 Ng6 19 Rh1 Rf7 20 a4 with good play for White, Lutz-Fedorowicz, Porz 1988. It's very difficult for Black to do anything.

14 Be1

White needs to cover the h4-square and he usually does it straightaway.

14...h5 15 h3 Ng6 16 c5 Rf7 17 b4 Bf8 18 Kg2

White wants to be in a position to meet ...Rh7 with Rh1.

18...Be7 19 Bf2 Qf8!

A good multi-purpose move. The two most important points are that it frees d8 for the black bishop (remember Game 12) and creates x-ray pressure down the f-file. For example, if White now carelessly moved his queen Black would be able to sacrifice a piece on g4 and regain it with ...f4-f3+. Additional points to ...Qf8 are that it keeps the c5-pawn under pressure and also brings the queen nearer to the h-file (...Qh6).

20 Nb5 Bd8 21 a4 Bd7 (Diagram 8)

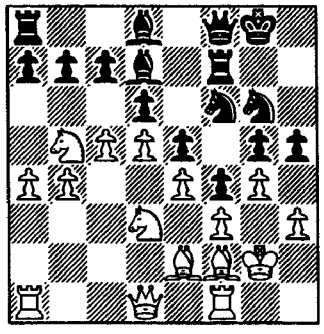


Diagram 8
Both sides' defences are rock solid

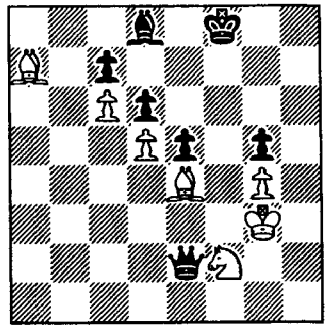


Diagram 9
Black cannot make progress

22 Nc3 Be7 23 Nb5 Bd8 24 Nc3 a6

Black decides to play for a win and is immediately rewarded by an error from White.

25 b5? axb5 26 Rb1

Here is an example of the x-ray pressure on the f-file at work. After 26 axb5 (26 Nxb5 Bxb5 27 axb5 will be similar) 26...Rxa1 27 Qxa1 the white queen has been dragged away from the defence of f3 so Black can play 27...hxg4 28 hxg4 Nxg4! 29 fxg4 f3+. So 26 Rb1 was not a deep pawn sacrifice but the only chance to complicate the game.

26...bxa4 27 Rxb7 a3!

Black is just going to use this pawn to distract the attention of White's pieces from the kingside.

28 c6 a2!? 29 Ra7 Nh4+! 30 Kg1 Rxa7 31 Bxa7 hxg4 32 hxg4 Bxg4! 33 fxg4 f3 34 Rxf3

34 Bxf3 would lose to 34...Nxe4!. All these combinations work because of Black's pawn on the 7th rank.

34...Nxf3+ 35 Bxf3 Nxe4?

Black takes the wrong pawn. 35...Nxd5! would have won easily.

36 Bxe4 Rf1+ 37 Qxf1 Qxf1+ 38 Kxf1 a1Q+ 39 Kg2 Qxc3

39...Qxa7 comes to the same. Black's combination has resulted in an endgame with an overwhelming material advantage – queen and pawn against two pieces – but unfortunately for him his king and bishop are eternal prisoners of the pawn chain. It is impossible to make any progress. Black played a few more moves to enable the sad news to sink in.

40 Be3 Qc2+ 41 Nf2 Qe2 42 Ba7 Kf8 43 Kg3 Qa6 44 Be3 Qe2 45 Ba7 (Diagram 9) Draw agreed

Game 15
□ **Pinter** ■ **Nunn**
Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 f3 f5 11 g4

So, another system where White tries to block the kingside. This version of g2-g4 was very popular in the 1980's but the eventual conclusion was that there was too much tension in the position for g2-g4 to be successful. Then White players started to wait for Black to play ...f5-f4 before playing g2-g4 and that is what we have just seen.

11...Kh8

Black's idea is to improve the position of the knight on e7 by playing ...Ng8. This introduces the possibility of playing ...Bh6 or ...Ngf6. Note that 11...f4? would be a serious mistake as after 12 h4! Black won't be able to create any play at all on the kingside. If he ever plays ...g6-g5 then White replies h4-h5 and if he plays ...h7-h5 White replies g4-g5.

TIP: In this variation Black should only consider playing ...f5-f4 when White has a bishop on e3.

12 Ng2

White's idea is to play h2-h4 so that if Black tries to exchange his 'bad' bishop by playing ...Ng8 and ...Bh6 he just gets kicked back by g4-g5. White can also play 12 Be3 or 12 Nd3.

12...a5

Black secures c5 for his knight, a particularly good square now that the white knight can no longer go to d3. With f6 earmarked for the other knight Black hopes to create strong pressure against e4.

13 h4 Nc5 14 Be3 Ng8 15 Rb1 Bd7 16 b3 b6 17 a3?! a4! 18 b4 Nb3

White's next move is played to prevent ...Nd4.

19 Nb5 Nf6 20 exf5 gxf5 21 Nc3 e4! 22 g5 Nh5 23 fxe4 f4!? (Diagram 10) 24 Bd2 Nxd2 25 Qxd2 Qe8 26 Bf3 Ng3 27 Rfe1 Be5

Black has sacrificed a pawn for total control of the dark squares. This ...e5-e4, fxe4 ...f5-f4 motif is an important theme in the King's Indian and other examples can also be found in the book.

28 Ne2 Nxe4!? 29 Bxe4 f3 30 Nef4 fxg2 31 Nxg2 Qh5 32 Qd3 Bg4 33 Re3 Qf7 34 Qd2 Qg7 35 Rd3 Rf7 36 Re1 Raf8 37 Ne3 Rf4 38 Ng2 R4f7 39 Ne3 Bh5 40 Rf1? (Diagram 11)

White should have played 40 Ng2 again with some chances to hold.

40...Rxf1+ 41 Nxf1 Rf4 42 Qe1 Bd4+ 43 Kg2 Qe5 44 Ng3 Bg4!

Black could win the queen with 44...Bf2 but he doesn't want to allow White to get a rook and a piece for it.

45 b5 Bf2 46 Qxf2 Bh3+! White resigns

White resigned because of 47 Kg1 Qa1+!.

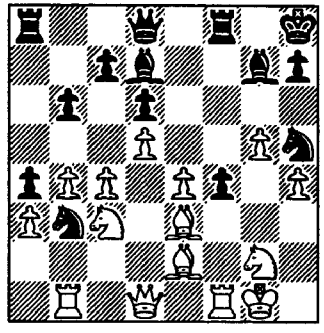


Diagram 10
An important motif

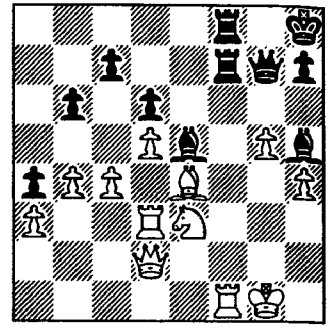


Diagram 11
Now White loses by force

White Plays 10 Be3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Be3

The moves **10...f5 11 f3 f4 12 Bf2 g5 (Diagram 12)** are now almost universally played so we will take this as our starting position.

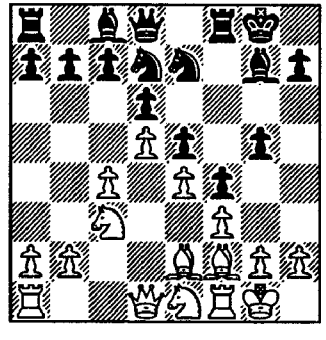


Diagram 12
The plans are clear!

This variation represents the King's Indian in its purest form. White will attempt to tear Black limb from limb on the queenside while Black will endeavour to hang, draw and quarter White on the kingside. Sometimes both players succeed and then Black wins. That is the advantage of attacking the king.

Pros and cons of 10 Be3

When I first started playing the King's Indian I just assumed that 10 Be3 lost by force. I couldn't believe that anyone would be so generous as to let ...f5-f4 be played with gain of tempo. Of course, I now realise that things are not so simple. The bishop on f2 is now perfectly placed to assist in the queenside attack while in other lines it becomes the white king's most valuable protector. However, it is also a target for a black pawn landing on g3.

Black's strategy

Black's main strategy in this line is based around playing ...g5-g4-g3. He doesn't care if it costs him a pawn as in return he will get open lines and outposts for his pieces. Perhaps the most important black piece in this line is the light-squared bishop. This is because if White meets ...g4-g3 with h2-h3 then Black will be able to sacrifice his bishop to rip open the white king position. You will see numerous examples of such sacrifices in the material below. The manoeuvre ...Rf6-h6, in order to gain a quick attack on the h-file, is also important.

From the diagram position White has tried many moves but we shall concentrate on the two main lines 13 a4 and 13 Rc1.

Theoretical?

It can be as theoretical as you want it to be. I could, for example, have easily filled up the whole book on just this variation. On the other hand, you could get by relatively well on general principles as the basic plans are quite straightforward.

Statistics

As a whole White has scored 56% from 1600 games with this variation. If we delve a little deeper White has scored 63% with 13 a4, the current main line. With 13 Rc1 White has scored 54% but if Black replies 13...Rf6 (Games 18 and 19) then White is down to 38% from 42 games! Korchnoi, who has been responsible for much of the theory in this variation, has scored 75% from 40 games with 10 Be3.

Illustrative Games

Game 16
□ **Korchnoi** ■ **Xie Jun**
Wentzou 1995

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Be3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 Bf2 g5 13 a4 Ng6

Black has an interesting, and in my opinion stronger alternative in 13...a5. That is covered in Game 17. 13...Rf6 is not thought to be so

good here because of 14 Nb5 b6 15 a5. Certain players have tried 13...a6 followed by ...Rf6.

14 a5

Korchnoi likes to get his pawn to a5 in this variation. He is probably already thinking about the new queen that is coming his way!

14...Rf7 15 b4

White has a major alternative here in the pawn sacrifice 15 c5!? Nxc5 16 Bxc5 dxc5 17 Bc4 Kh8 18 a6. Black has been under some pressure in this variation as well.

15...Bf8 16 c5 Nf6

NOTE: As a general rule Black keeps his knight on d7 as long as possible in order to make White work harder to play c4-c5. For example if Black had played 13...Nf6? – a common mistake – White can play 14 c5 without needing to prepare it with b2-b4 and without having to sacrifice a pawn.

17 c6! (Diagram 13)

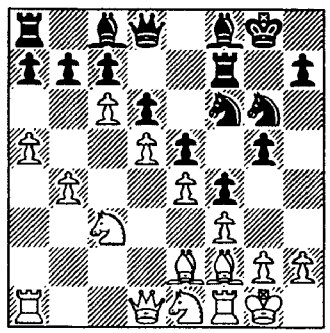


Diagram 13
One way into the queenside

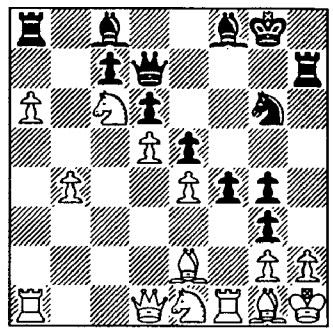


Diagram 14
What should White play?

Most players exchange on d6 in this type of position and try and invade on c7, but Korchnoi likes this c5-c6 move. He placed his pawn on a5 first so that Black couldn't block up the queenside with ...b7-b6.

17...h5

Black doesn't take on c6 as after 17...bxc6 18 dxc6 White will have use of the d5-square.

18 Kh1

Before he concentrates on his queenside attack, White makes one prophylactic defensive move on the kingside. It is important to have g1 free for his bishop so that it can retreat there when Black eventually plays ...g4-g3.

18...Rh7 19 cxb7 Bxb7 20 a6! Bc8 21 Nb5

It didn't take long for the queenside attack to bear fruit. The a-pawn is doomed and with White's pawn already on a6 Black must deliver mate or lose the game.

21...g4 22 Nxa7 g3 23 Nc6 Qd7 24 Bg1

It is much too dangerous to accept the pawn. After 24 hxg3 fxg3 25 Bxg3 h4 followed by ...Nh5 Black has a massive kingside attack. That sort of variation is the cornerstone of Black's strategy.

24...Ng4?

I suspect Black is in a bad way already but she should have tried either 24...h4 or 24...gxh2.

25 fxg4 hxg4 (Diagram 14) 26 Bxg4!

By returning the piece White exchanges queens and forces an ending where the a-pawn is bound to have the final word.

Exercise 2: White would have happened to White if he had played 26 a7?

26...Qxg4 27 Qxg4 Bxg4 28 Nf3 Bxf3 29 Rxf3 Nh4 30 a7

There was still time for White to lose tragically: 30 Rfa3 f3 31 gxf3?? g2 mate. Korchnoi just keeps his rook on f3 to avoid any tricks. The a-pawn is going to collect far more than any exchange he may lose on the kingside.

30...Bg7 31 Ra5 gxh2 32 Bf2 Nxf3 33 gxf3 Kf7 34 Rb5 Bf6 35 Rb7 Kg6 36 b5 Kh6 37 Rb8 Rh8 38 Rxh8+ Bxh8 39 Bh4! Rg8 40 Kxh2 Black resigns

White is going to play Bd8.

Game 17
□ **Koutsin** ■ **Frolov**
Kiev 1995

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Be3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 Bf2 g5 13 a4 a5!?

This is an attempt to punish White for his move order. By blocking the queenside with ...a7-a5 and ...b7-b6 Black makes it very difficult for White to achieve his most dangerous queenside advance c4-c5.

14 Nd3 b6

The consistent follow-up. There is no point playing ...a7-a5 if Black just allows White to play c4-c5 afterwards.

15 b4

White must play b2-b4 at some point but there is a school of thought which believes that White should first shore up his kingside defences with 15 Be1 h5 16 Nf2 Nf6 17 h3 and only then play b4. As usual Black will aim for ...g5-g4.

15...axb4 16 Nb5

The immediate 16 Nxb4 is also possible with an unclear position after

16...Nf6 17 Nc6 Nxc6 18 dxc6 Qe8.

16...Nf6 17 Be1?!

The plan of taking on b4 with the bishop looks too optimistic. It was still possible to play 17 Nxb4, meeting 17...g4 with 18 Bh4!. Black should probably play one solid move, 17...Bd7, before embarking on his kingside attack.

17...g4 18 Bxb4

Because the knight on b5 no longer protects e4 (as it did from c3) Black was able to play ...g5-g4 without further preamble. After 18 fxg4 Nxe4 Black's central pawns are potentially deadly.

18...g3 19 h3 Bxh3! (Diagram 15)

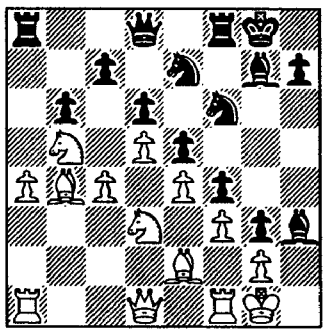


Diagram 15
The thematic sacrifice

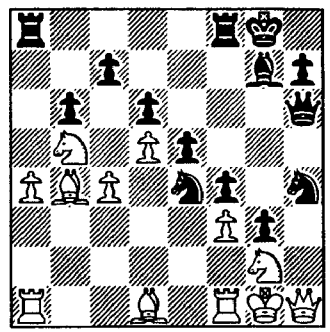


Diagram 16
What now for Black?

This bishop was born to lay down its life on h3. If Black delays then White will reinforce his defences with Re1 and Bf1. There is no reason to delay!

20 gxh3 Qd7 21 Qc2

The only variation that Black needed to calculate before sacrificing is 21 Kg2? Ng6 22 Rh1 Nh4+ 23 Kg1 Nxe4! 24 fxe4 f3 and White gets blown away. He didn't need to look at anything else because if White can't play Kg2 then Black will pick up the crucial pawn on h3.

21...Qxh3 22 Bd1 Ng6 23 Qg2 Qh6! 24 Qh1 Nh4 25 Ne1

If White can play just one more move, 26 Ng2, then he can beat off the attack. It's time for another sacrifice to keep up the momentum.

25...Nxe4!

For those of you who have been checking the variations in the notes this can come as no surprise.

26 Ng2! (Diagram 16)

26 fxe4 f3 is completely hopeless for White.

26...Rf5?!

Black had another fascinating possibility: 26...Nxf3+! 27 Bxf3 Qxh1+ 28 Kxh1 Nf2+ 29 Rxf2 gxf2 30 Rf1 (there is nothing better, e.g. 30 Be4 Rxa4!) 30...Rxa4 31 Ba3 Rxc4 32 Rxf2 and the rook and five pawns should beat the three minor pieces. This looks more convincing than Black's choice in the game.

27 fxe4 f3 28 Bxf3 Nxf3+ 29 Rxf3 Qxh1+ 30 Kxh1 Rxf3 31 Kg1!

Not falling for 31 Nxc7 Rxa4! 32 Rxa4 Rf1 mate.

31...Rb3?

Black needed one careful defensive move to keep the advantage. After 31...Bf8 32 Nxc7 Rc8 it is important that the d6-pawn is defended.

32 Nxc7! Rf8 33 Be1?! Bf6! 34 Nb5 Be7 35 Ra3 Rxa3 36 Nxa3 Rf3 37 Nc2 Bg5 38 Bb4 h5 39 Nce1 Rf6 40 a5 bxa5 41 Bxa5 Rf2 42 Bc7 Be7 43 Ne3 Re2 44 N1g2 Ra2 45 c5 Ra1+ 46 Nf1 h4 47 Nxh4 Bxh4 48 Bxd6 Re1 49 c6 Rxe4 50 c7 Rc4 51 Bxe5 Kf7 52 Nxg3 Bxg3 Draw agreed

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Game 18
□ **Borges Mateos** ■ **Pecorelli**
Cali 2000

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1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 0-0 5 e4 d6 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Be3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 Bf2 g5 13 Rc1 Rf6!

In practice the most common reply to 13 Rc1 is 13...Ng6 but then Kozul's pawn sacrifice 14 c5!? Nxc5 (14...dxc5 is worse) 15 b4 Na6 leaves Black on the defensive. 13...Rf6 is certainly more fun to play. The basic idea is to play ...Rh6 and ...Qe8 and if White fails to take the necessary defensive precautions then Black plays ...Qh5 and mates him.

14 Nd3 Rh6 (Diagram 17)

Before we see White getting crushed a few times I shall just outline his main defensive strategies:

1) White can play Kh1 in order to meet ...Qh5 with Bg1. Black would then love to land a knight on g3 but more often he ends up playing for ...g5-g4.

2) White can play Be1 and Nd3-f2 so that he can meet ...Qh5 with h2-h3. Assuming that White arrives in time (i.e. he is not going to get blown away by a sacrifice on h3) then Black should switch strategies and play ...Rg6 (without ...Qh5), ...h7-h5 and ...g5-g4. This, for example, is the way the no-nonsense American Grandmaster Yermolinsky plays with White (15 Be1!).

3) White can play g2-g4. In practice this tends to occur out of desperation when it is already too late, but if White played it on move 14, for example, it would be quite acceptable.

Now my conscience is clear (I've told White how to defend) we can return to the main theme of the day which is checkmating White in double quick time.

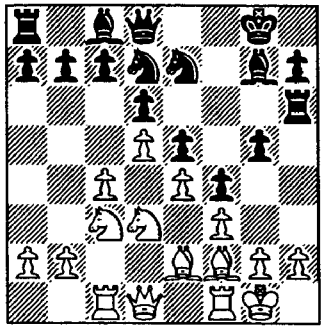


Diagram 17
How might White defend?

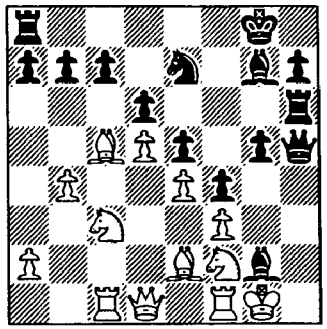


Diagram 18
Black piles his way through

15 b4 Qe8 16 c5?

16 Kh1 was necessary.

16...Qh5 17 h3 Nxc5!

The prosaic 17...Nf6 also does the trick. White can't stop the devastating sacrifice on h3.

18 Bxc5 Bxh3! 19 Nf2 Bxg2! (Diagram 18) 20 Ng4 Qh1+ 21 Kf2 Qh4+ 22 Kg1 Rh5 White resigns

White could have played on a little with 23 Qe1 (only move to stop ...Qg3) but after 23...Qh3 Black will soon be winning on material, if nothing else, as White can't save the bishop on c5 or the rook on f1.

Game 19
□ **Opalic** ■ **Socko**
Passau 1999

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1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 0-0 5 e4 d6 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Be3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 Bf2 g5 13 Rc1 Rf6! 14 b4 Rh6 15 c5 (Diagram 19) 15...a6

This has been played on several occasions to prevent Nb5 but I don't see the need for it. For example, after 15...Qe8! 16 Nb5 Qh5 White's only move to stop mate is 17 h4 (17 h3 Bxh3) but Black still gets a very strong attack with 17...gxh4 followed by ...h4-h3. Who cares about the queenside!

Instead of 16 Nb5 White can play 16 Kh1 and now Black should play 16...Nf6! and after 17 Nb5? (17 Nd3 is better) 17...Qh5 18 Bg1 (Diagram 19)

Exercise 3: White threatens Nxc7 and appears to have stopped all the threats on the kingside with his last move 18 Bg1. What should Black play? Very difficult, but this contains a key idea in this sort of attack. As a hint take note of the '!' that I gave to Black's 16th move.

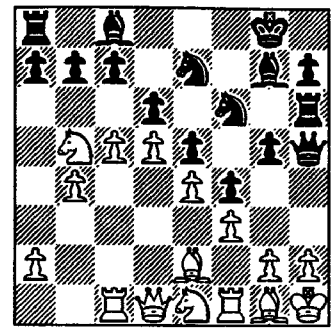


Diagram 19
What should Black play?

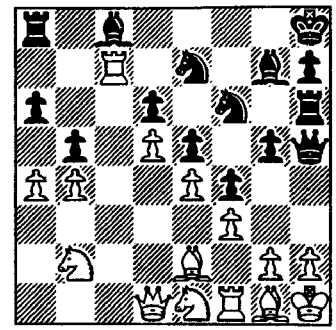


Diagram 20
What this time for Black?

16 Na4

The idea of this move is to keep the knight on d7 tied down as if it moves White can exchange on d6 and then play Nb6.

16...Qe8 17 Kh1 Kh8!? 18 cxd6 cxd6 19 Rc7 b5 20 Nb2 Nf6 21 a4 Qh5 22 Bg1 (Diagram 20) 22...Nfxd5! 23 Rxc8+

White removes the bishop as after 23 exd5 Nf5! 24 h3 Ng3+ 25 Kh2 it would have sacrificed itself on h3. Of course this is the same trick as above in a slightly different guise.

23...Rxc8 24 exd5 Nf5 25 h3 e4 26 Kh2 e3 27 Ned3 Nh4 White resigns

Black's next move is ...Nxg2. White should have played the prophylactic Bg1 at some point (move 18, for example).

Summary

1) This chapter is very heavily theoretical but there are general rules and strategies to help you through the maze.

2) The lines with 10 Nd3 are not seen quite as often as they used to be and a lot of players have forgotten the theory. I suspect White would score rather well if he studied this line carefully.

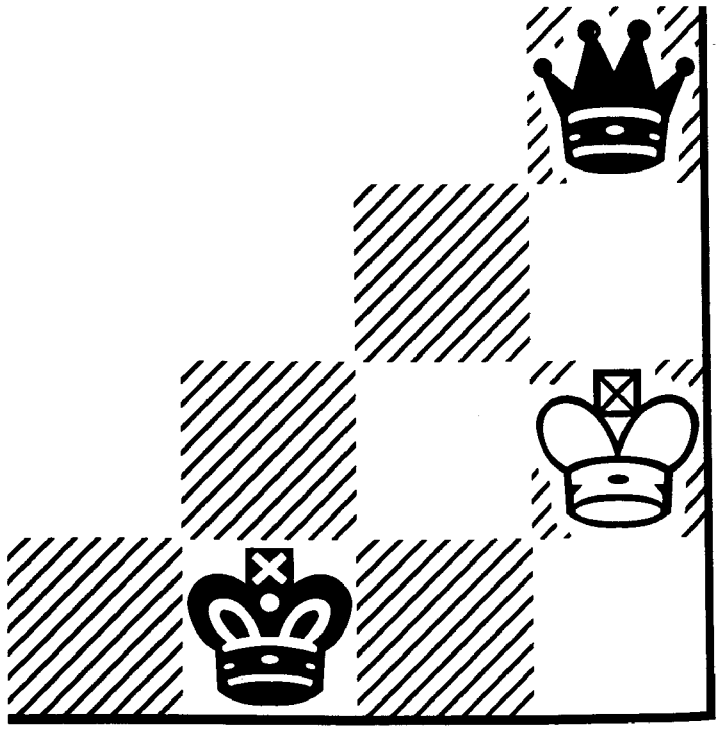
3) The lines where White blocks the kingside with g2-g4 can be frustrating for Black but if he is patient and builds up his position then something usually turns up. A sacrifice on g4 or an invasion down the h-file are the ideal scenarios.

4) The lines with 10 Be3 are often quite thrilling. If you just want to improve your tactical skill, then you could do a lot worse than immersing yourself in these variations. The plan with ...Rf6-h6 can be highly rewarding. I have to admit that the coverage above has been slightly biased in Black's favour but it is a truly dangerous system.

Chapter Four

The Classical with 7 0-0 Nc6: Alternatives to 9 Ne1

- The Bayonet 9 b4: Alternatives to 10 Re1
- The Bayonet 9 b4: The Main Line 10 Re1
- White Plays 9 Nd2



The Bayonet 9 b4: Alternatives to 10 Re1

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 b4 Nh5 (Diagram 1)

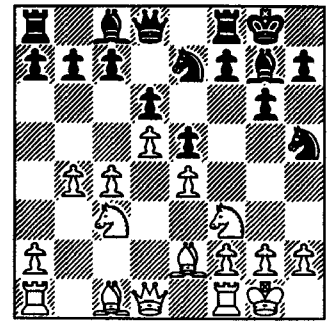


Diagram 1
The Bayonet Attack

Over the last six or seven years the Bayonet Attack has been one of White's main success stories in the King's Indian. Prior to this 9 b4 was generally thought to be a poor relation to 9 Ne1 and 9 Nd2. It was rarely ever seen in top class chess. Strange, you may think, as 9 b4 is the obvious way for White to force through c4-c5 as quickly as possible. The reason why the move was not trusted was that it allowed Black to play the active 9...Nh5, whilst after moves like 9 Ne1 or 9 Nd2 the black knight, in order to get out of the way of the f-pawn, would have to retreat. Attitudes began to change after White discovered the move 10 Re1 (in reply to 9...Nh5). This is considered in the next section. In this section we shall deal with White's 10th move alternatives.

First, though, it should be pointed out that Black has another possibility on his 9th move, namely 9...a5. The idea behind this is to exploit the fact that White can't play 10 a3 because of the pin on the a-file. A typical continuation is 10 Ba3 axb4 11 Bxb4 Nd7 (to stop c4-c5) 12 a4 Bh6 13 a5 f5 14 Bd3 with an edge for White.

10 g3 is the old main line of the Bayonet Attack. White prevents ...Nf4 at the cost of weakening his king position. He plans to meet ...f7-f5 with Ng5 followed by Ne6. Black will have to take this knight and White will recapture with dxe6. In the long run the pawn on e6 is doomed but he will hope to develop compensation, mainly on the light squares. This is examined in Game 20.

10 c5 is the main alternative. White gets on with his queenside play and will take the knight when it gets to f4. This is seen in Game 21.

Theoretical?

The theory is not so new but it still exists. An unprepared Black player will be in trouble against both 10 g3 and 10 c5.

Statistics

Things are a bit closer than in the 10 Re1 line below. White scores 53% with 10 g3 and 51% with 10 c5, in each case from around 300 games.

Game 20
□ **Van Wely** ■ **Fedorov**
European Team Championship, Batumi 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 b4 Nh5 10 g3 f5

In an ideal world Black would like to play ...h7-h6 before ...f7-f5 to prevent the white knight sortie into e6. The problem is that after 10...h6 11 Nd2! White is threatening to take on h5 and Black has to retreat his knight before he can push his f-pawn.

11 Ng5 Nf6 12 f3

White needs to support his pawn on e4.

12...f4

This is the direct approach. Alternatives include 12...c6 and the immediate 12...h6.

13 Kg2

White takes a time out to improve his king position. Van Wely is the leading expert on this line and in his most recent games he experimented with 13 b5. The idea is to prevent Black from playing ...c7-c6 but after 13...fxg3 14 hxg3 h6! 15 Ne6 Bxe6 16 dxe6 Qc8 17 Nd5 (otherwise White loses the pawn on e6 for nothing) 17...Qxe6 18 Nxc7 Qh3! Black has some dangerous threats on the kingside. If White plays 19 Nxa8 Black has at least a perpetual. Van Wely's idea was to play 19 Rf2 to prevent this. In his first game against Golubev he was successful but in the second, against Degraeve Black sacrificed a piece with 19...Nxe4! and won a fine game. Van Wely promptly gave up 10 g3, a line he has been playing since he was in short trousers.

13...c6! (Diagram 2)

This is a desirable move as after the sequence Ne6 ...Bxe6, dxe6 White can no longer play Nd5.

14 Qb3

Alternatively:

1) 14 b5 c5! 15 Qd3 Ne8 (threatening ...Nxd5) 16 Ne6 Bxe6 17 dxe6 Qc8 18 Nd5 Qxe6. White doesn't have much compensation for the pawn as with the position blocked his bishops are ineffective. It will

still be very difficult for Black to win as his extra pawn is the backward one on d6.

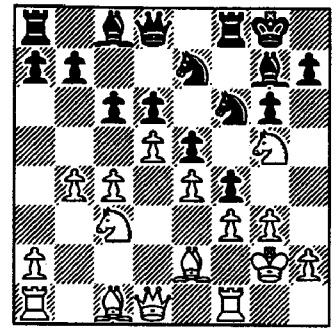


Diagram 2
Preventing a later Nc3-d5

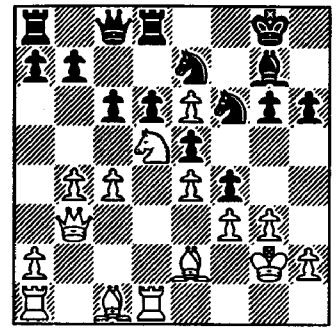


Diagram 3
White plays Nd5 anyway!

2) 14 c5 is very aggressive and probably best met by 14...h6 as on 15 Ne6 Bxe6 16 dxe6 Black can play 16...d5!. Instead, 15 Bc4! leads to a very complex game.

14...h6

When Black feels he is ready for Ne6 he plays this move; otherwise he just keeps on improving his position.

15 Ne6 Bxe6 16 dxe6 Qc8 17 Rd1 Rd8

Exercise 4: Why didn't Black play 17...Qxe6?

18 Nd5!? (Diagram 3)

White was faced with the choice of letting his e6-pawn go for insufficient compensation or sacrificing a piece to ensure that it survives for the rest of the game. This sacrifice is known from similar positions but normally White gets more direct play than he does here.

18...cxd5 19 cxd5 g5

It is very hard to believe that White has enough for the piece. Van Wely has assessed this position as unclear but he didn't repeat it. Still, as the game shows, it is not easy for Black to make progress.

20 Bd2 Rf8 21 g4 h5 22 h3 Ng6 23 Rdc1 Qb8 24 Be1 hxg4 25 hxg4 Ne8 26 a4 Bf6 27 a5 Bd8 28 Qa4 Nf6 29 Ra3 Kg7 30 Bf2 Rh8 31 Rac3 Be7 32 Rc7 Rh6 33 Qa1 Qh8 34 Rh1 Nxg4!? 35 fxg4 f3+ 36 Bxf3 Nf4+ 37 Kg1 Rxh1+?

Black got fed up with all the quiet manoeuvring and sacrificed a piece for an attack. However, it is only good enough for a draw. Fedorov should have contented himself with perpetual check: 37...Ne2+! 38 Kg2 (38 Bxe2 Rxh1+) 38...Nf4+ 39 Kg1 Ne2+.

38 Bxh1 Qh3 39 Qd1 Rh8 40 Rxe7+ Kg6 41 Bf3 Qh2+ 42 Kf1 Rc8

43 Rf7 Qh3+ 44 Kg1 Rc3 45 Rxf4 gxf4 46 Bg2

White has a decisive advantage although the game was eventually drawn on move 87.

... Draw agreed

Game 21
□ Kamsky ■ Kasparov
New York Intel (rapid) 1994

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 b4 Nh5 10 c5 Nf4

This is the main line. 10...h6 and 10...f5 are also played from time to time.

11 Bxf4 exf4 12 Rc1

Not only has White given up his strong bishop but he has also opened the long diagonal for Black's bishop. He hopes to justify his play by removing all his pieces from this diagonal, leaving Black's bishop pointing at thin air. He will also be looking to use the d4-square for his knights now that Black no longer has a pawn on e5. Occasionally White defends the knight with his queen and against both 12 Qb3 and 12 Qd2. Black's best strategy is then to play ...Bg4xf3 in order to assume control of e5.

12...a5!?

More common is 12...h6 followed by ...g6-g5 and ...Ng6, but this is a good moment to challenge White's supremacy on the queenside. The main points in favour of the immediate 12...a5 are that it develops the rook on a8 and that Garry Kasparov plays it!

13 cxd6

A more solid continuation is 13 a3.

13...cxd6 14 Nb5

White is willing to give up his pawn on b4 in order to get a rook to the 7th rank.

14...Bg4 15 Rc7 axb4 16 Qd2

16 Qb3 can also be met by 16...Bxf3 with similar play.

16...Bxf3! (Diagram 4) 17 Bxf3 Be5 18 Rxb7?!

This has been played a couple of times but I would prefer 18 Rfc1.

18...Qa5 19 Nd4 Qxa2 20 Qxa2 Rxa2 21 Rxb4 Rfa8 22 Bg4?!

After 22 Nc6 Nxc6 23 dxc6 Rc2 White will lose his passed pawn but can at least activate his bishop by 24 Bd1 Rxc6 25 Bb3. Perhaps Black should have played 21...Bxd4 to avoid this.

22...Bxd4 23 Rxd4 g5

Black now threatens to achieve a strategically won game by the manoeuvre ...Ng6-e5. White could have played 24 Bh5 to prevent ...Ng6 but then Black would have calmly improved his position with ...Rb8

and ...Kg7-f6. Kamsky decides to allow the knight into e5 and instead pins his hopes on breaking up the black pawn structure. With best play the position may be a draw but it is very unpleasant to defend.

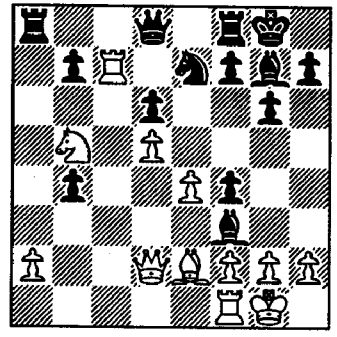


Diagram 4
Taking control of the dark squares

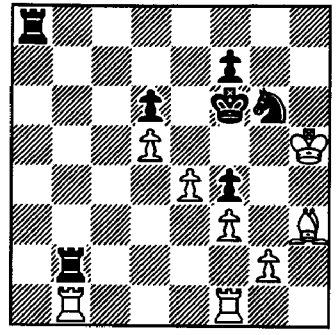


Diagram 5
The white king is in trouble

24 h4 gxh4 25 Kh2 Ng6 26 Kh3 Rb2 27 Bf5 Ne5 28 Kxh4 h6 29 Bh3 Kg7 30 Rdd1 Raa2 31 f3 Ng6+ 32 Kg4 Kf6 33 Rb1 h5+!

Suddenly the white king finds itself in a mating net.

34 Kxh5 Ra8! (Diagram 5) 35 Kg4

If 35 Rxb2 Rh8+ 36 Kg4 Rh4 mate.

35...Rh8 36 g3 Rh2

White stopped the mate but at the cost of his bishop.

37 Rh1 R8xh3 38 Rxh2 Rxh2 39 gxf4 Rg2+ 40 Kh3 Nxf4+ 41 Kh4 Ke5 42 Rb7 Kd4 43 Rxf7 Ke3 White resigns

The Bayonet 9 b4: The Main Line 10 Re1

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 b4 Nh5 10 Re1 (Diagram 6)

What is the point of 10 Re1?

The simple idea behind 10 Re1 is to meet 10...Nf4 with 11 Bf1. The bishop on f1 is very well placed defensively and it turns out that, despite its active appearance, the knight on f4 is actually quite poorly placed. There is nothing for it to attack and it can even get in the way of Black's kingside play. Black will also have to be constantly on the lookout for White playing Bxf4 at a favourable moment.

It took quite a while, and cost an awful lot of points, before Black players appreciated all this. Meanwhile, everyone was playing 9 b4. The old main lines, 9 Ne1 and 9 Nd2, just disappeared. The results

went overwhelmingly in White's favour. However, the tide finally appears to be turning. The main problem for Black was not the strength of 10 Re1, but the fact that he was playing too ambitiously. The King's Indian attracts players who are looking for a sharp struggle. Instead of trying to prove equality they were trying to destroy the Bayonet Attack. They didn't realise that the best way to destroy the Bayonet Attack is to prove equality! Once equality has been established, white players are bound to turn their attention elsewhere. This has been happening over the last year or so and we are beginning to see a bit less of the Bayonet Attack and a bit more of other variations in the King's Indian.

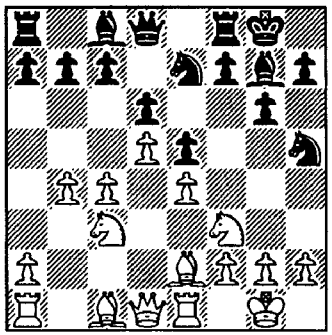


Diagram 6
The mysterious 10 Re1

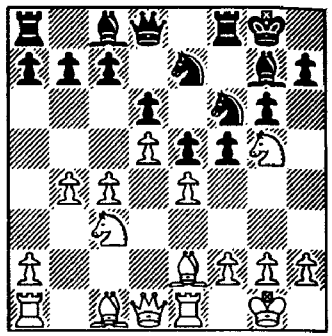


Diagram 7
The knight retreats

10...f5

There is no need for Black to commit himself to ...Nf4 (although this is examined in Game 22). Instead, he looks at the move ...Nh5 in the same way he would look at ...Ne8 or ...Nd7 – as a means of clearing the way for Black's traditional King's Indian advance ...f7-f5.

11 Ng5

This is the critical test and the move that originally put many Black players off playing 10...f5. As in the line with 10 g3, the knight is heading for e6.

11...Nf6! (Diagram 7)

White was threatening 12 Bxh5 so the knight had to move. 11...Nf4 has also been played but it is less reliable than the text (12 Bxf4 exf4 13 Rc1 appears to favour White). From f6 the knight exerts more influence on the centre. Now White has two ways to defend his centre. In Games 23 and 24 we see 12 Bf3 while Game 25 deals with 12 f3.

Theoretical?

Extremely.

Statistics

Grim reading for Black. White has scored 62% in just over 900 games with 10 Re1. Not so many games but remember this variation only started a few years ago. Black does a bit better when he plays with 10...f5 and 11...Nf6 but White still scores a healthy 58%.

Illustrative Games

Game 22
□ **Kobalija** ■ **Smirnov**
Russian Championship, Elista 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 b4 Nh5 10 Re1 Nf4 11 Bf1 a5!? 12 bxa5 Rxa5 13 a4 c5

13...f5 can be played at once as 14 Bxf4 exf4 15 e5 dxe5 16 Nxe5 is not so good now because of the reply 16...Qd6!. White usually meets 13...f5 with 14 Nd2 and several games have continued 14...fxe4 15 Ndxe4 Nf5 16 Nb5! with advantage to White.

14 Nb5 Ra6 15 Ra3! Nh5

A rather sad retreat. Black wants to play ...f7-f5 but can't because of the usual 16 Bxf4 exf4 17 e5. An alternative strategy is to play 15...h6 followed by ...g6-g5 and only then ...f7-f5 but numerous games have shown this is also insufficient for equality.

16 g3 Kh8 17 Nh4! Ng8

White's last two moves have been designed to prevent ...f7-f5, e.g. 17...f5? 18 exf5 Nxf5 19 Nxf5 Bxf5 20 g4 and White wins a piece.

18 Ng2 Nhf6 19 Bb2 Nd7 20 Qa1 (Diagram 8)

White is preparing to play f2-f4!. His pieces have more scope so it makes sense for him to open the position.

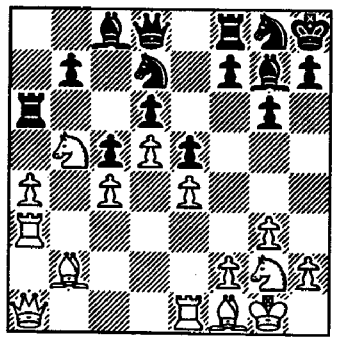


Diagram 8
Preparing to open up with f2-f4

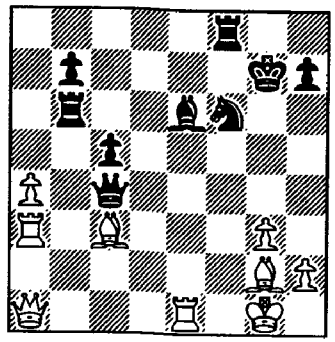


Diagram 9
The long diagonal pin is decisive

20...f5?!

Black should have stayed passive with 20...Nh6 21 f4 f6. It won't be much fun but at least he won't get blown away in the centre.

21 exf5 gxf5 22 f4!

Now there is nothing Black can do to prevent the sacrifice on d6.

22...Ne7 23 Nxd6! Rxd6 24 fxe5 Rb6 25 Bc3!

White wants to play e6 so he must first move his bishop.

25...Ng6 26 e6 Nf6 27 Nh4! Ne7 28 Bh3 Nexd5?!

Rteurning the material is hopeless because White is able to take the bishop on g7 and catch Black in a deadly pin on the long diagonal.

29 cxd5 Qxd5 30 Bg2 Qc4 31 Nxf5 Bxe6 32 Nxg7 Kxg7 (Diagram 9) 33 a5! Rd6 34 Ra4 Qd3 35 Rf4 Bd5 36 Rg4+ Kf7 37 Bxf6 Rxf6 38 Qe5?!

38 Qb1! was a quicker and more elegant way to win. The point is that after 38...Qxb1 White doesn't recapture but flicks in 39 Bxd5+. 38...Qd2 is also impossible on account of 39 Qxh7 mate.

38...Be6 39 Qh5+ Ke7 40 Qxc5+ Qd6 41 Rg7+ R8f7 42 Rxf7+ Rxf7 43 Qd5 Qd7 44 Qxb7 Black resigns

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Game 23
☐ **Babula** ■ **Degraeve**
Istanbul Olympiad 2000

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 b4 Nh5 10 Re1 f5 11 Ng5 Nf6! 12 Bf3

White defends his centre with pieces and envisages that his bishop on f3 will become active when the long diagonal opens. He can also defend his centre with a pawn move. 12 f3 is the subject of Game 25.

12...c6 (Diagram 10)

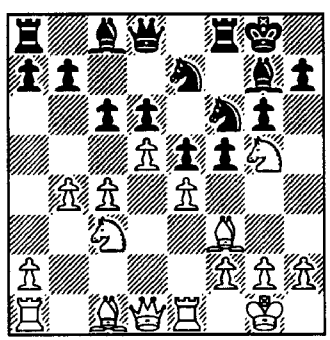


Diagram 10
A safer approach for Black

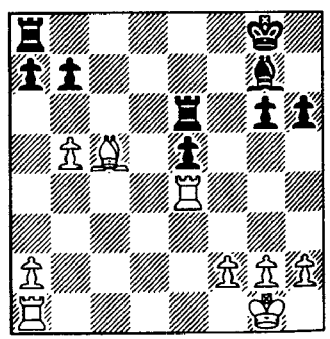


Diagram 11
Black is OK in the endgame

The tension in the centre is increased. Playing ...c7-c6 also gains space for Black on the queenside.

13 b5

White is waiting for Black waste time on ...h7-h6 before carrying out his Ne6 plan. The sharper 13 Be3 is the subject of the next game.

13...cxd5 14 cxd5 h6 15 Ne6 Bxe6 16 dxe6 fxe4 17 Nxe4 Nxe4 18 Bxe4 d5 19 Ba3

This is why White played 13 b5.

19...dxe4 20 Qxd8 Rfxd8 21 Bxe7 Re8 22 Bc5 Rxe6 23 Rxe4 (Diagram 11)

At first glance his endgame may look slightly better for White because Black has a central pawn restricting the activity of his bishop. In practice though he has had very little difficulty as his rooks are active and his king can come quickly to the centre.

23...a6! 24 b6 Rc8 25 Be3 Bf6 26 Rd1 Rd8 27 Rb1 Rc6 28 g4 h5 29 Kg2 Kf7 30 Kf3 Ke6 31 Ra4 Rf8 32 Kg2 Rfc8 33 h3 Rc4 34 Rxa6 bxa6 35 b7 Rb8 36 Ba7 Rxb7 37 Rxb7 Ra4 Draw agreed

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Game 24
☐ **Xu Jun** ■ **Ye Jiangchuan**
Shanghai 2001

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 b4 Nh5 10 Re1 f5 11 Ng5 Nf6! 12 Bf3 c6 13 Be3

This is an attempt to lure Black into playing 13...f4 after which White would calmly return home with 14 Bc1. The move ...f5-f4 takes all the pressure off the centre so White is quite happy to spend two moves to achieve this. Black should now go in for the exchanging sequence that we have already seen in the previous game.

13...cxd5 14 cxd5 h6 15 Ne6 Bxe6 16 dxe6 fxe4 17 Nxe4 Nxe4 18 Bxe4 d5 (Diagram 12)

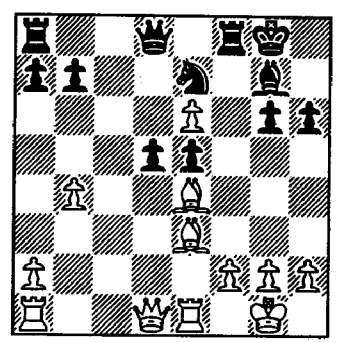


Diagram 12
A dynamically equal position

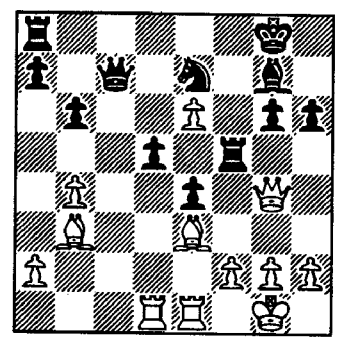


Diagram 13
Black consolidates his defences

19 Bc2

19 Bc5 dxe4 20 Qxd8 Rfxd8 21 Bxe7 leads to the same ending as before, the only difference that the white pawn is on b4 instead of b5.

19...b6

Black must stop White from playing Bc5.

White has two active bishops, a safer king and a passed pawn on e6, which although likely to die, may seriously annoy Black in the process. In Black's favour is his strong centre and the fact that he is likely to emerge a pawn ahead. He must tread very carefully, though, as it will be easy to have a tactical accident as White's rooks and bishops pile pressure on the centre.

20 Qg4 e4!

Black will now make his presence felt on the dark squares. Black went through a lot of suffering before he found this move.

21 Rad1 Qc7 22 Bb3 Rf5! (Diagram 13)

An excellent move which defends the pawn on d5, prepares to double rooks on the f-file and cuts communications between the queen and the pawn on e6. What more could you ask? Practice has shown that White can only hope for equality in this position.

23 Rd2 Qc3

Black should avoid 23...Bc3 24 Rc1 but the new FIDE World Champion, 18 year old Ruslan Ponomariov, has played 23...Raf8.

24 Qd1 Rd8 25 b5 Qc8 26 Bd4 Bxd4 27 Rxd4 Qc5

Black can't play 27...Qxe6 because of 28 Rdxe4!.

NOTE: In this line Black should always make sure, before capturing on e6, that White doesn't have such a tactic.

28 Re2 Rdf8 29 a4 Re5 30 h3 Draw agreed

Game 25
□ **Quinn** ■ **Shirov**
European Team Championship, Leon 2001

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1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 d4 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 b4 Nh5 10 Re1 f5 11 Ng5 Nf6 12 f3

In the previous games White defended his centre with 12 Bf3 but this ultimately led to its destruction. This time White prefers to defend his centre more solidly with a pawn.

12...Nh5!? (Diagram 14)

This is the very latest stuff. Black only went back to f6 last move because White was threatening to play Bxh5. Now that this is no longer possible Black cheekily returns to h5.

13 g3

White decides that ...Nf4 is a threat and prevents it. He has also tried 13 c5 and 13 Kh1 but without success. However, this line is still in its

infancy and I would expect White to soon come fighting back with new ideas.

13...Bf6!

Black wants to force Ne6 and this is much stronger than 13...h6 as the g7-square is vacated for the knight on h5.

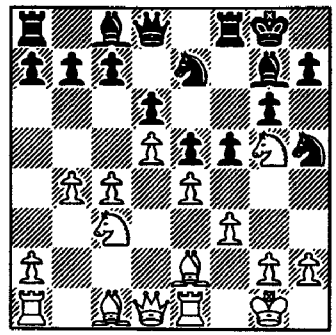


Diagram 14
The knight returns to h5!

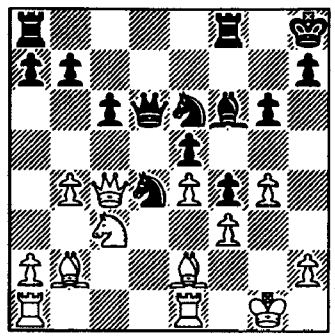


Diagram 15
Black is a pawn up for nothing

14 Ne6 Bxe6 15 dxe6 f4

This keeps the centre closed and seriously reduces the threat from the white bishops.

16 g4 Ng7 17 Qb3?

After this move there is no hope for White as when a black knight lands on d4 it is going to be with tempo. If he had played 17 c5 he might have got some compensation for the pawn he is going to lose.

17...Nc6 18 c5 Kh8 19 Bb2 Nd4 20 Qd5 Ngxe6 21 cxd6 c6!

Now White doesn't even get control over d5.

22 Qc4 Qxd6 (Diagram 15) 23 b5 Rac8 24 bxc6 Rxc6 25 Qd3 Nxe2+ 26 Qxe2 Rxc3! White resigns

White gives up the ghost as 27 Bxc3+ is met by 27...Qc5+ followed by 28...Qxc3.

White Plays 9 Nd2

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Nd2 (Diagram 16)

Until 9 b4 took over in the mid-1990's this had become the most popular variation in the Classical King's Indian. Most of the world's top players took one side or another in a long running theoretical debate. Then, almost overnight, it all went quiet. That doesn't mean it won't be back so it remains an extremely important variation.

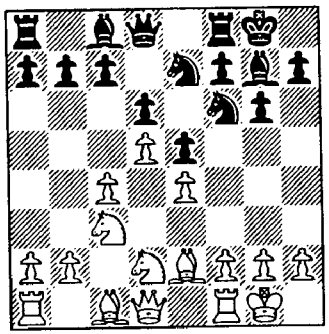


Diagram 16
9 Nd2 – the old favourite

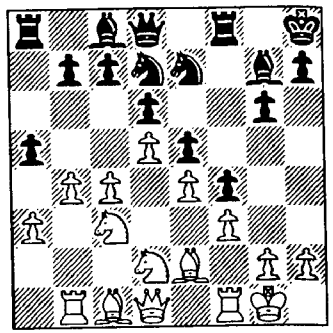


Diagram 17
The pawn storm begins

What is the idea of 9 Nd2

We have already talked about this move in the introduction to the previous chapter. Basically, White is taking prophylactic action against Black's attack. He will now be able to defend his centre, if need be, by playing f2-f3, while the knight on d2 can look forward to playing an important role in the queenside attack. Once White has played c4-c5 the knight will be able to occupy the fine square on c4.

Black's strategy?

In fact after 9 Nd2 very few Black players are willing to get involved in a direct race. Against 9 Ne1, for example, Black just gets on with the game not minding too much that White's attack on the queenside is a bit quicker than his on the kingside. The point is that his prize at the end is much greater – the white king – and is worth suffering a bit for. But, in this 9 Nd2 line, if Black decides to get involved in such a race, he can easily end up with his queenside in tatters before his own attack has even got out of the starting blocks (see Game 26).

So, if Black is not going to challenge White to a race he must take some action to slow down the white attack. The most radical way to prevent White from playing c4-c5 is for Black to play it himself. However, after 9...c5 White has new targets on the queenside and by playing Rb1 and b4 he is able to develop the initiative. The main line after 9...c5 runs 10 Rb1 (10 dxc6 bxc6 11 b4 is another possibility) 10...Ne8 11 b4 b6 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 Nb3 f5 14 Bg5! with an edge for White.

Black has another way to slow White down on the queenside.

9...a5!

The point is that after White plays a3 he is still in no position to play b2-b4 because of the pin on the a-file. Therefore he needs another

move (usually Rb1) in order to be able to play b2-b4. Playing ...a7-a5, therefore, saves Black a tempo.

10 a3 Nd7

Black retreats his knight in order to play ...f7-f5, and chooses the d7-square (as opposed to e8) in order to hold up c4-c5 as long as possible.

Black has an interesting alternative in 10...Bd7 (considered in Game 27). This slows White down even more on the queenside as 11 Rb1 can be met by 11...a4.

11 Rb1 f5 12 b4 Kh8

A semi-waiting move that has displaced all other moves. How did Black arrive at such a decision? Well, the two most obvious moves, 12...f4 and 12...Nf6 both have their drawbacks. Black doesn't want to move his knight from d7 just yet as it is holding up c4-c5 and 12...f4 allows White to play 13 Bg4. Therefore, by a process of elimination Black arrives at 12...Kh8. Of course this is not just a waiting move. Black now has the g8-square available for manoeuvres such as ...Ng8-f6 and the king is safer in the corner, especially if ...c7-c6 is played.

13 f3

An important alternative is 13 Qc2 which has occurred in literally hundreds of games. Play usually continues 13...Nf6 14 f3 axb4 15 axb4 when Black has two strategies. He can either start his kingside attack by 15...f4 or 15...g5, or he can increase the central tension with 15...c6. The latter is a speciality of the Russian grandmaster Dolmatov and he has scored well with it.

13...f4 (Diagram 17)

Black declares his hand. He is going to pawn storm on the kingside. This most complex position is the subject of Game 28.

Theoretical?

Massively so I'm afraid.

Statistics

With 9 Nd2 White has an overall score of 58% in over 2600 games. When Black allows White a free hand on the queenside with 9...Ne8 or 9...Nd7 White scores 60%. Not too bad for Black considering their theoretical reputation, and in fact he scores worse with the solid 9...c5, just 37%. In the main line with 9...a5 White scores 56%.

Illustrative Games

Game 26
□ **Beliavsky** ■ **Solak**
Europe Championship, Saint Vincent 2000

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8

d5 Ne7 9 Nd2 Nd7

9...Ne8 is an alternative but it often just transposes when Black returns the knight to f6.

10 b4 f5 11 f3

White can also play 11 c5!? at once.

11...Nf6

Now 11...f4 would certainly be met by 12 c5.

12 c5 f4 13 Nc4 g5 14 a4

A strong case can also be made for 14 Ba3.

14...Ng6 15 Ba3 Rf7 16 b5 Ne8?! 17 a5 Bf8 18 Na4 h5 19 b6 (Diagram 18)

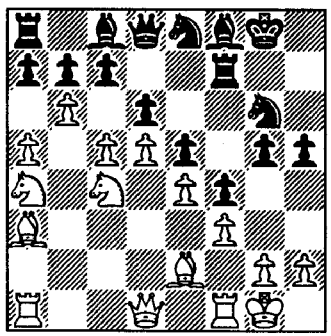


Diagram 18
White's attack is miles ahead

19...Bd7 20 bxc7 Qxc7 21 a6 bxa6 22 c6 Bc8 23 Nab2 Rg7 24 Nd3 Nh8 25 Nf2 Nf7 26 h3

Beliavsky's last four moves really rubbed the salt in Black's wounds. Instead of going for the kill on the queenside he adopts the same defensive set-up we saw in Chapter 3, with the difference that instead of White just having attacking chances on the queenside Black has already been wiped out in that part of the board. The game concluded:

26...Nh6 27 Rb1 Qd8 28 Bb4 Nf6 29 Rb3 a5 30 Bxa5 Qe8 31 c7 Qg6 32 Rb8 g4 33 hxg4 hxg4 34 Rxa8 Bd7 35 c8Q Bxc8 36 Rxc8 g3 37 Nh3 Nf7 38 Bb4 Ng5 39 Bxd6 Qh5 40 Bxf8 Nxh3+ 41 gxh3 Qxh3 42 Bxg7+ Kxg7 43 Rc7+ Kg8 44 Rf2 gxf2+ 45 Kxf2 Qh4+ 46 Kg2 Black resigns

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Game 27
□ **Nemet** ■ **Gallagher**
Zürich 1995

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8

d5 Ne7 9 Nd2 a5! 10 a3 Bd7 11 b3

White takes a time out to prevent...a5-a4. The point is that after 11 Rb1 a4 12 b4 axb3 13 Nxb3 b6 the white attack is going to be even slower than it is after playing b2-b3, Rb1 and then b3-b4.

11...c6!?

There are a number of alternatives such as 11...Ne8, preparing ...f7-f5, and 11...c5 but the text is very interesting.

12 Rb1

The obvious move, preparing b2-b4, but it may be better to play 12 Bb2. Theory then considers the best move to be the paradoxical 12...c5. The logic behind first playing ...c7-c6 and then ...c6-c5 is that in this position the bishop is actually better off on c1 where it doesn't impede White's play on the b-file.

12...Qb8!?

Black's play is far from typical for the King's Indian. He wants to meet b4 by playing ...b7-b5 (after some suitable exchanges) when he will have as many good squares for his pieces on the queenside as White. The immediate 12...b5!? also leads to interesting play.

13 b4 cxd5

The move order is important as on 13...axb4 White has the option of recapturing with the rook.

14 cxd5 Rc8 15 Bb2 axb4 16 axb4 b5! (Diagram 19)

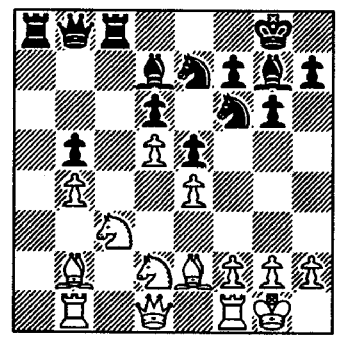


Diagram 19
Black blockades the queenside

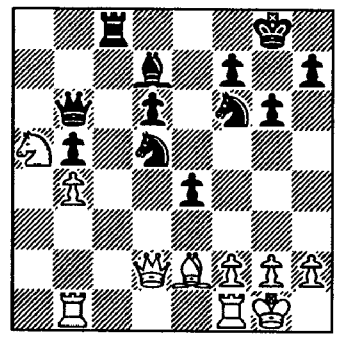


Diagram 20
Black has the better chances

17 Bd3!?

This is an interesting idea. White overprotects e4, thereby making any exchange sacrifice difficult to carry out, and plans to follow up with Qe2, tying Black to the defence of the b-pawn.

17...Qb6 18 Nb3?!

But this is dubious. The knight heads for a5, not a particularly good

square as Black has c6 so well defended. Better was 18 Qe2 Bh6 19 Nf3 Nh5 20 g3 Rab8 21 Ra1 f5 with a very double-edged game.

18...Bh6! 19 Na5 Rc7 20 Be2

White admits the failure of his opening strategy. He plans to defend his knight with Qd3 but Black now has a strong exchange sacrifice.

20...Rxc3! 21 Bxc3 Nxe4 22 Be1 Rc8 23 Bf3 Nf6 24 Bd2 Bxd2 25 Qxd2 e4 26 Be2 Nexd5 (Diagram 20)

With two strong pawns for the exchange the black position is better.

27 Rb3 Be6 28 Rc1 Rxc1+ 29 Qxc1 e3! 30 fxe3 Nf4 31 Rb2

Forced as Black was threatening both 31...Nxe2+ and 31...Bxb3.

31...N6d5 32 Bf1

White could have tried to hold the e-pawn with 32 Kf2 but then 32...Nxg2! 33 Kxg2 Nxe3+ gives Black a crushing attack.

32...Nxe3 33 Kh1 Qd4 34 Nb3? Qe5 35 Na5 Nxf1 36 Nc6 Ng3+ 37 hxg3 Qh5+ 38 Kg1 Ne2+ 39 Rxe2 Qxe2 40 Nd4 Qe4 41 Qd2 Bc4 42 Kh2 Qd3 White resigns

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Game 28
□ Ljubojevic ■ Kasparov
Linares 1993

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Nd2 a5 10 Rb1 Nd7 11 a3 f5 12 b4 Kh8 13 f3 f4 14 Nb3?!

This is a rather feeble way of preparing c4-c5 as the knight will be passively placed once c4-c5 has been achieved. Remember this knight was supposed to go to the aggressive c4-square. Let's take a look at some of the alternatives.

1) In the late 1980's and early 1990's there were quite a few games that went 14 c5 axb4 15 axb4 dxc5 16 bxc5 Nxc5 17 Nc4. The open lines on the queenside gave White good compensation for the pawn. Black then made the important discovery that he should refrain from the exchange on b4. For example, after 14...dxc5 15 bxc5 Nxc5 Black can meet 16 Nc4 with 16...a4 when it is not easy for White to generate threats.

2) 14 Na4 is a crude way to support c4-c5 and Dr. Nunn believes that this decentralising move is best met by 14...axb4 15 axb4 c6.

3) 14 Qc2 also prepares the advance c4-c5 by making the pawn sacrifice to dangerous to accept. Black can try and hold it up with 14...b6 but he can also get on with his kingside attack, e.g. 14...g5 15 c5 axb4 16 axb4 Nf6 17 Nc4 h5 with a double-edged game.

14...axb4 15 axb4 g5 16 Bd2?

White opts for the leisurely plan of invading down the a-file. It is too slow. Kasparov believes the only chance is to block it up with 16 g4.

16...Ng6 17 Ra1 Rxa1 18 Qxa1 Nf6 19 Qa7

Now it's too late to block the kingside as after 19 g4 fxg3 20 hxg3 Nh5

21 Kg2 Ngf4+! 22 gxf4 gxf4 Black has a crushing attack.

19...g4 (Diagram 21)

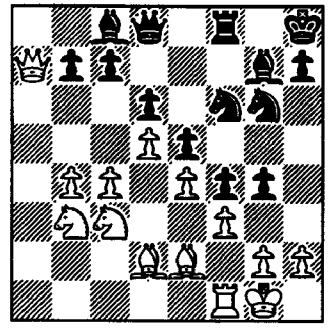


Diagram 21
Black's attack is much faster

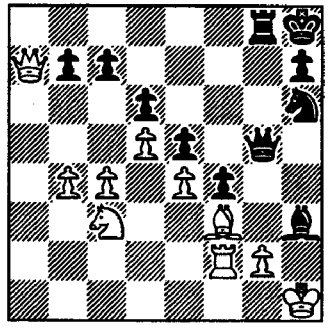


Diagram 22
The thematic capture is decisive

20 fxg4 Nxg4 21 h3

White could have tried 21 Bxg4 Bxg4 though after 22 Qxb7 Nh4 Black's attack is decisive according to Kasparov.

21...Nh6 22 Be1 Rg8 23 Nd2 Bf6!

Clearing the g-file and preparing to play ...Bh4 . Once dark-squared bishops are exchanged it will be easy for Black on the kingside.

24 Kh1 Bh4 25 Nf3 Bxe1 26 Nxe1

After 26 Rxe1 Nh4 27 Rg1 Nxf3 28 Bxf3 Qh4 the game will also be decided by Black sacrificing his bishop on h3.

26...Nh4 27 Rf2 Qg5 28 Nf3 Nxf3 29 Bxf3 Bxh3 (Diagram 22) White resigns

A possible finish is 30 Qxb7 Bxg2+ 31 Rxg2 Qh4+ 32 Kg1 Qe1+ 33 Kh2 Rxg2+ 34 Bxg2 Qg3+ 35 Kh1 f3 36 Qc8+ Ng8 and wins.

Summary

1) This chapter contains the two variations that have dominated King's Indian theory over the last decade or so.

2) In the 10 Re1 line of the Bayonet Attack, Black should not consider 9...Nh5 as the first step on a journey to f4, but as a means of preparing ...f7-f5, It is still better to play 9...Nh5 than 9...Ne8 or 9...Nd7 as White is encouraged to waste a tempo with 10 Re1 or to weaken his kingside with 10 g3.

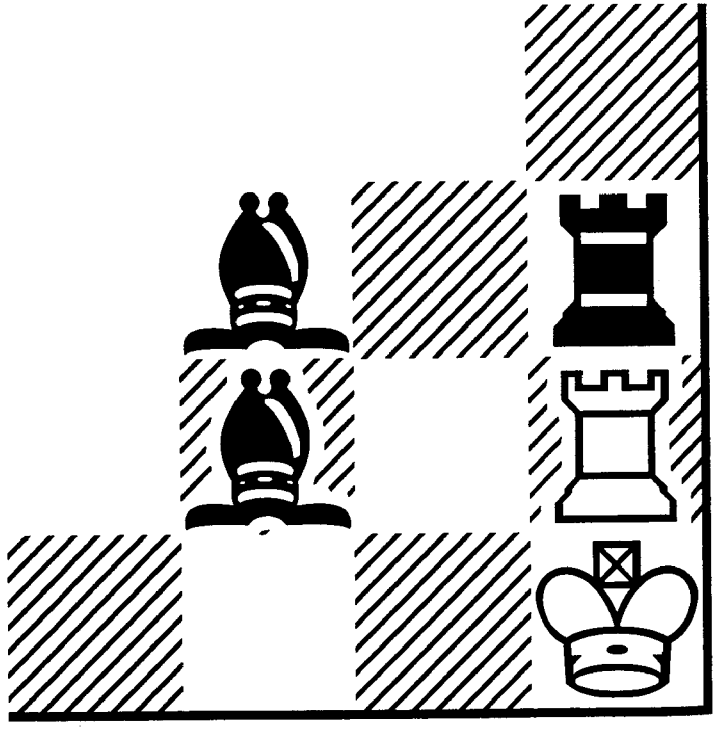
3) Black should not be overambitious. Equality is a good result.

4) Against 9 Nd2 Black should reply 9...a5!. This slows down White's queenside play and doesn't relinquish any of Black's attacking ideas.

Chapter Five

The Sämisch Variation

- Black Sacrifices a Pawn with 6...c5
- The Panno: 6...Nc6
- The Traditional 6...e5
- White Plays 6 Bg5 (or 6 Nge2)



1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 (Diagram 1)

Look at the following list of names: Botvinnik, Tal, Petrosian, Spassky, Karpov, Kasparov, Kramnik. What do they have in common? Yes, they are all post war World Champions and yes, they are amongst the greatest players ever to hail from the USSR (Russia). The other thing they have in common is that they have all played the Sämisch! Many more names can be added to the list (Korchnoi, Shirov etc), so it is clear that the Sämisch is a high class variation which needs to be treated with respect. Having said that, its popularity is no longer what it used to be. I see it as the Grand Hotel of the King's Indian – an imperial variation that is slightly over the hill. That is not meant to be cruel to the Sämisch, as I play it myself quite often, but it has clearly slipped a long way behind the Classical in the King's Indian popularity stakes. It is currently vying for second place along with the Fianchetto variation.

The Sämisch owes its name to the German Grandmaster Fritz Sämisch. He is also famous for a line in the Nimzo-Indian – 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 a3 – where White also constructs a big centre supported by f3.

What are the ideas behind the move 5 f3?

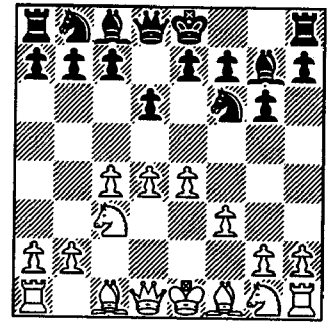


Diagram 1
The ever-popular Sämisch

1) It defends e4 so creates a secure and stable centre.

2) With his centre so stable White can start an attack on the kingside. Be3, Qd2, Bh6, g2-g4 and h2-h4 are typical moves when White wishes to carry out this plan. On other occasions White may attack on the queenside. The Sämisch is a flexible variation which does not commit White to any particular course of action.

3) The move f2-f3 secures the square e3 for White's bishop. It can now take up residence there without having to worry about ...Ng4.

The move f2-f3 also has certain drawbacks. 'Ask the knight on g1

what he thinks of the move f3' was a famous comment from the Ukrainian Grandmaster and raconteur Eduard Gufeld. In return for having such a strong centre White accepts that his kingside development is going to be rather clumsy.

What are the main ways to combat the Sämisch?

Black has three distinct strategies.

1) Black can strike in the centre in Benoni fashion with ...c7-c5. Over the last decade or so this has supplanted all other variations and become the main line of the Sämisch. This is the subject of Section 1.



NOTE: The Benoni is a sister variation of the King's Indian which normally starts 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 Nc3 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 e4 g6 followed by ...Bg7. Variations in the King's Indian where Black plays ...c7-c5 and White replies d4-d5 lead to a similar structure.

2) He can delay his central strike in favour of queenside play. The most common way to do this is to play 6...Nc6, 7...a6 and 8...Rb8 so that Black can play ...b7-b5 at a moment's notice. This is called the Panno Variation and is the subject of the second section.

3) He can strike in the centre with the traditional King's Indian move ...e7-e5. This is the subject of the third sub-section.

The above variations all assume that White plays 6 Be3. In our fourth section we shall take a look at the alternative 6th moves for White, principally 6 Bg5.

Black Sacrifices a Pawn with 6...c5

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 c5 (Diagram 2)

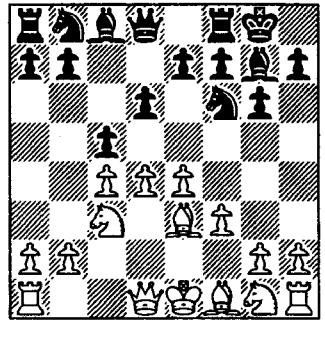


Diagram 2
A pawn sacrifice

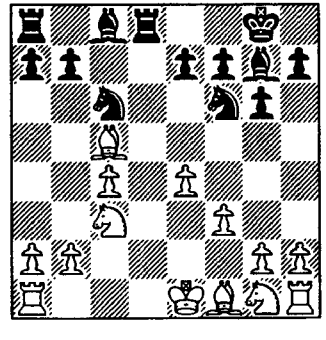


Diagram 3
The g7-bishop is looking good

It has long been understood that playing ...c7-c5 is one of the most desirable ways for Black to meet the Sämisch. It keeps the long diagonal

open and gives Black the best chance of exploiting the weak dark squares in the white camp. The problem is that 6...c5 simply loses a pawn. In the past there were a few players who tried 6...b6, not to fianchetto the queen's bishop, but just to support the move ...c7-c5. But wasting a whole tempo in this way was a little too much to demand from the black position. And then, when Black was going through a rough patch in the other variations, the King's Indian analysts decided to try and rehabilitate this dubious pawn sacrifice. Their findings changed the whole landscape of the Sämisch. Its decline in popularity over the last few years can be solely attributed to this variation.

7 dxc5 dxc5 8 Qxd8

For a while White tried to make the line 8 e5 Nfd7 9 f4 work, but by challenging White's grip in the centre immediately with 9...f6 Black can neutralise this system. The key variation is 10 exf6 Nxf6! 11 Qxd8 Rxd8 12 Bxc5 Bf5! when the most important factor in the position is that White, having played c2-c4 and f2-f4, has no control over the important central squares e4 and d4.

8...Rxd8 9 Bxc5 Nc6 (Diagram 3)

What exactly does Black have for his pawn?

1) The long diagonal has been opened and the King's Indian bishop has a very bright future.

2) Black has a decent lead in development. He has four pieces in play to two of White's. Furthermore, the presence of a pawn on f3 seriously hinders the development of White's kingside that will, at best, be laborious.

3) White has a big hole on d4 as well as several other squares on the queenside which Black's knights will be eager to occupy.

4) The white king can easily find itself exposed to enemy fire.

All these points put together would be worth far more than a pawn if it wasn't for the fact that White has one big trump of his own – the possibility to play Nd5. The Gambit Accepted is examined in Games 29 and 30, while in Game 31 we shall see an example of the Gambit Declined.

Theoretical?

The variation is not overly theoretical. Both sides need to know one or two key ideas which can be picked up from the material. Black should know about 10...a5 and 10...Nd7 in the respective lines to the Gambit Accepted whilst White should probably steer clear of this line and concentrate on the Gambit Declined.

Statistics

The statistics tell a sorry tale for White. In the Gambit Accepted, from

nearly 450 games he has managed a paltry 47%. It is a little better in the Gambit Declined but still very poor at 49%.

Illustrative Games

Game 29
☐ **Kramnik** ■ **Shirov**
Bundesliga 1992

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 c5 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 Bxc5 Nc6 10 Ba3

What is the point of this bishop move? Well, one of Black's main ideas is to play ...Nd7. The knight is not doing very much on f6 so it often retreats to d7 in search of a new home (c5 or e5 for example). In doing so it also gets out of the way of the bishop on g7. 10 Ba3 can, therefore, be considered as a prophylactic retreat so that the bishop on c5 will no longer be attacked if Black plays ...Nd7.

10...a5!

Black introduces the possibility of attacking White's queenside with ...Nb4.

11 Rd1

White almost always plays this. 11 Nd5 Nxd5 12 cxd5 Nb4 13 0-0-0 e6! was fine for Black in Beliavsky-Nunn, Amsterdam 1990.

11...Be6

This is better than exchanging on d1 as that would only help the white king to a better home on the queenside.

12 Nd5 Nb4! (Diagram 4)

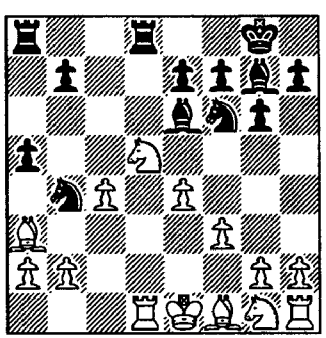


Diagram 4
Coming ready or not!

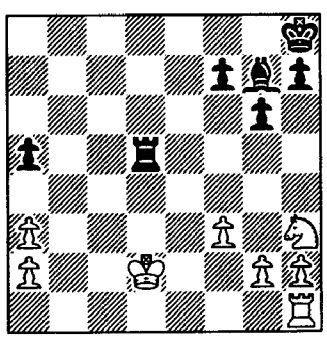


Diagram 5
White's extra pawn is worthless

The logic behind ...Nb4 is not difficult to understand. Black has a massive lead in development so he seeks to complicate the game before White can consolidate. There is also the little matter of ...Nc2+ on the cards, which will deprive White of his dark-squared bishop and ruin his pawn structure.

13 Nxe7+

13 Bd3 Bxd5 14 cxd5 Nxd3+ 15 Rxd3 e6 is not dangerous for Black, while lines that White should definitely avoid are 13 Nxb4 Rxd1+ 14 Kxd1 axb4 15 Bxb4 Rxa2 and 13 Bxb4?! axb4 14 Nxb4 Nd7! 15 Rd2 Nc5, as in both cases his position is on the verge of collapsing.

13...Kh8 14 Rxd8+

White can also keep rooks on the board with 14 Nd5. Play will develop along similar lines, e.g. 14...Nc2+ 15 Kf2 Nxa3 16 bxa3 b5!.

14...Rxd8 15 Nd5

White is two pawns up but miles behind in development. He will now try and complete his development under the cover of his one good piece, the knight on d5. If Black takes the knight then White will recapture cxd5 and obtain a strong passed pawn.

15...Nc2+

Black starts with the obvious move.

16 Kd2

This walks into a pin but neither can White claim an advantage with 16 Kf2. After 16...Nxa3 17 bxa3 b5! 18 Nh3 Rc8 Shirov gave 19 Nhf4 with equality.

16...Nxa3 17 bxa3 b5!

This is the star undermining move. White's control of d5 is soon to be history.

18 Nh3 Draw agreed

A draw was agreed in view of the variation 18...bxc4 19 Bxc4 Nxd5 20 exd5 Bxd5 21 Bxd5 Rxd5+ (Diagram 5). The strong bishop certainly compensates for the useless extra a-pawn.

Game 30
☐ **Dreyer** ■ **Watanabe**
Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 c5 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 Bxc5 Nc6 10 Nd5 Nd7!

It was the discovery of this possibility that alerted Black to the fact that 6...c5 might be a good way to meet the Sämisch. After the game Karpov-Barle, Ljubljana-Portoroz 1975, which went 10...Nxd5 11 cxd5 Bxb2 12 Rb1 Bc3+ 13 Kf2 with advantage to White, the general consensus was that 6...c5 was a dubious pawn sacrifice. During the next ten years only a few die-hards tried it but after the discovery of 10...Nd7! everyone jumped on board.

11 Nxe7+?!

After this capture it is doubtful whether White can even maintain the

balance. The critical variation is 11 Bxe7 Nxe7 12 Nxe7+ Kf8 13 Nd5 Bxb2 14 Rb1 Bg7 (Diagram 6).

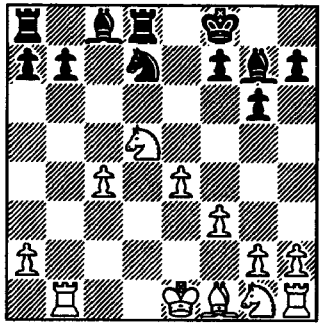


Diagram 6
Black has full compensation

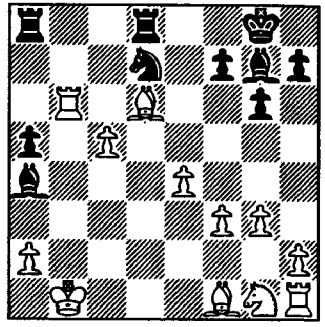


Diagram 7
The white defences cannot hold

For his pawn Black has an extremely strong dark-squared bishop and a couple of weak white pawns on the queenside to take aim at. It is quite notable that even players like Karpov and Korchnoi have struggled to make anything out of the extra pawn in this position. A typical continuation is 15 Nh3 Nc5 16 Nf2 Be6 17 Be2 Rac8 18 0-0 Rd6 19 Rfd1 Ra6 20 Rd2 Ra3 with good play for Black, Korchnoi-J.Polgar, Roquebrune 1992.

NOTE: This ...Rd6-a6 manoeuvre to attack the white pawns is certainly worth bearing in mind.

11...Nxe7 12 Bxe7 Bxb2! 13 Rb1

The position after 13 Bxd8 Bxa1 is very promising for Black as he is able to co-ordinate his forces quicker than White.

13...Bc3+ 14 Kd1

It is not an improvement for the king to head the other way. After 14 Kf2 Bd4+ 15 Kg3 (15 Ke1 Re8) 15...Re8 16 Bg5 Nf6! it will come under heavy fire.

14...Re8 15 Kc2 Bg7 16 Bd6 Ne5! 17 g3?

This move mystifies me. What is it for? Perhaps White should have settled for 17 Bxe5 Rxe5 18 Ne2 Ra5 19 Nc3 when Black can just play 19...b6 and develop his queenside. This is more promising than regaining the pawn with ...Bxc3 and ...Rxa2.

17...Bd7! 18 Rxb7 Bc6 19 Rb4 a5! 20 Rb6 Red8 21 c5

After 21 Bxe5 Ba4+! 22 Kb2 Bxe5+ 23 Ka3 Bc2 the white king is in serious trouble.

21...Ba4+ 22 Kb1 Nd7! (Diagram 7) 23 Rb5

This move has more than a whiff of desperation about it but White

saw that on the natural 23 Rb7 Nxc5! he cannot play 24 Bxc5 on account of 24...Rd1 mate! He would have to play 24 Rb6 after which Black has many ways to win. I'll leave you to take your pick.

23...Nxc5?!

A bit flash. Why not 23...Bxb5 24 Bxb5 Nxc5! 25 Bxc5 Rac8 when White can't move his bishop from c5 on pain of checkmate?

24 e5

24 Bxc5 Rd1 is mate and 24 Rxc5 Rxd6 won't last for long.

24...Bxb5 25 Bxb5 Rab8! 26 Bxb8 Rxb8 27 Kc2 Rxb5 28 f4 Na4 29 Nf3 Rb2+ 30 Kd3 Rxa2 31 Kc4 Rb2 32 Ra1 Rb4+ 33 Kd5 Nc3+ 34 Kc5 Bf8+ 35 Kc6 a4 36 Nd2 Rd4 37 Nf3 Rc4+ 38 Kd7 a3 White resigns

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Game 31
□ **Belotti** ■ **M.Piket**
Lugano 1989

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 c5 7 Nge2

White declines the offer and supports his centre. He could also play 7 d5 at once but this allows Black more options with his queen's knight as it is not committed to the double-edged posting on e5.

7...Nc6

7...cxd4 is also possible and leads to a much quieter sort of game. The text re-affirms Black's commitment to the Benoni.

8 d5

Sometimes White waits with 8 Qd2 but Black can wait too with moves like 8...e6. Quite often White ends up playing d4-d5 under less favourable circumstances than if he had done so at once.

8...Ne5 9 Ng3 e6 10 Be2 cxd5 11 cxd5 a6

Black prepares to play ...b7-b5, his main source of counterplay in the Benoni. There is another interesting idea involving ...h7-h5, followed by ...Nh7, ...h5-h4 and ...f7-f5. An example of this plan in action can be found within the notes to Game 38.

12 a4 Bd7 (Diagram 8)

Black is going to play ...b5 even if it costs him a pawn. He will develop counterplay on the open files on the queenside. When playing 12...Bd7, Black should be aware that he is depriving his knight on e5 of its only retreat square.

13 0-0

The most natural move but it allows Black to carry out his plan unhindered. There are a couple of sharp alternatives that need to be examined:

1) 13 f4 is obviously a critical test of Black's whole strategy. The piece sacrifice 13...Nfg4!? is worthy of close scrutiny but it is safer to play 13...Neg4. After 14 Bd2 h5 15 h3, I think Black should settle for

15...Nh6 (15...h4 has been played) 16 e5 Nh7 17 0-0 Nf5. A central majority is of course a dangerous weapon but here White has pushed it before he was ready to support it.

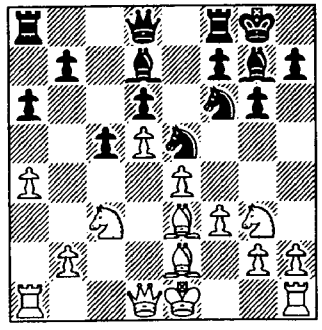


Diagram 8
Black will play ...b7-b5 regardless

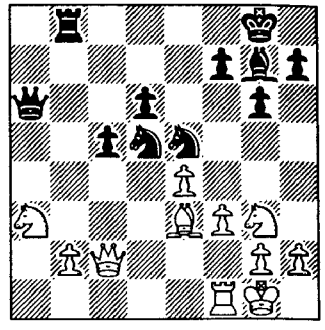


Diagram 9
A typical tactic in the Benoni

2) 13 h3. This little move is perhaps the most dangerous for Black to face. White wants to kick the knight with f4 but without the complications of the previous line. Play usually continues 13...b5 14 f4 Nc4 15 Bxc4 bxc4 16 0-0 and now I like 16...Ne8!?. This may look very passive but there are a number of points in its favour. It takes the sting out of e4-e5 and increases the activity of Black's queen and bishop. Black will now consider striking at the white centre with ...f7-f5 while not forgetting that pressure along the b-file is his main plan.

13...b5! 14 axb5

14 h3 Rb8 15 b3 is an attempt to take all the squares away from the knight on e5 before attacking it. After 15...Ne8 16 Rc1 bxa4 17 bxa4 Rb4! Black has a good game. The variation 18 Bxa6 Qa5 certainly doesn't trouble him.

TIP: I can't stress strongly enough how in sharp positions one should not be tied down to defending weak pawns. Give them up in return for the initiative or some positional compensation.

14...axb5 15 Rxa8 Qxa8 16 Bxb5

16 Nxb5 Bxb5 17 Bxb5 Rb8 is good for Black.

16...Bxb5 17 Nxb5 Qa6 18 Na3

White retreats here in order to cover the c4-square. In another game, Nikolaev-Belov, Podolsk 1991, he preferred 18 Nc3 but eventually ran into a combination similar to the one that caught Belotti in the main game. After 18 Nc3 play continued 18...Rb8 19 Qc2 Qd3! (if the queens are exchanged b2 will drop) 20 Qf2 Nc4 21 Nd1 Nxd5! 22 exd5 Nxe3 23 Nxe3 (23 Qxe3 Bd4) and now Black should have just played 23...Bd4 24 Re1 Rxb2 when White loses his knight on e3.

18...Rb8 19 Qc2 Nxd5! (Diagram 9)

Here we go again.

NOTE: Always be on the look out for such combinations in Benoni-style positions. They are no accident. They are inherent in the position.

20 exd5 Rxb2! 21 Qxb2

If White doesn't take the rook he will drop his knight on a3.

21...Nxf3+! 22 Rxf3 Bxb2 23 Nc2 Qd3 24 Rf2 Qxd5

So the dust has settled and Black's combination has netted him queen and three pawns against rook and two minor pieces. This is a clear material advantage especially in the endgame.

25 Bh6 Be5 26 Nf1 f5 27 g4 f4 28 Bxf4 Bxf4 29 Rxf4 Qe6 30 h4 d5 31 g5 d4 32 Rf2 c4 33 Rf4 d3 34 Nd4 Qe5 White resigns

The Panno Variation

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 Nc6 (Diagram 10)

This variation was very popular in the 1970's and 1980's but is not seen quite so often today. Not because there is anything wrong with it but because 6...c5 has become so fashionable.

7 Nge2

This is the right square for the king's knight as it protects the sensitive d4-square. You will understand why it is sensitive as you progress through the material. It is true that the move blocks the other kingside pieces in but this is of no great importance.

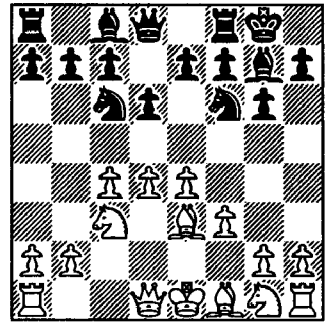


Diagram 10
The Panno variation

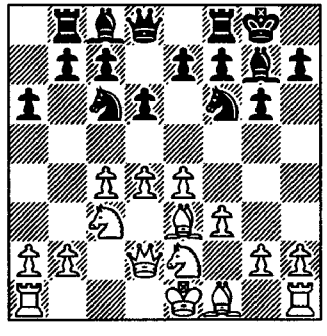


Diagram 11
A typical Panno

7 d5 is not such a good idea as after 7...Ne5 the white position is over-extended. He has played too many pawn moves and not enough piece

moves. Black will challenge in the centre with ...c7-c6 or ...e7-e6 (or both) and does not mind if White attacks the knight again with f2-f4 as this will further loosen his position.

7...a6

7...e5? would be a mistake as after 8 d5 the knight on c6 has no active square. Whilst this central strike is very much part of Black's thinking, he must wait for the optimum moment. This usually means delaying until the knight on e2 has moved away. Then the black knight will be able to jump into d4 when White plays d5.

7...a6 may look like a strange non-developing move but it is an essential component in Black's deep plan. His thinking is along the following lines: White is planning to launch an attack on the kingside and if he does this he is going to want to castle queenside. Therefore, I'd better make sure that the queenside is a hostile environment for his king. This means that I'll have to be ready to play ...b7-b5 to open lines in this part of the board. So let's play ...a7-a6 and ...Rb8 and see if he still dares to castle.

8 Qd2 Rb8 (Diagram 11)

This is the basic starting position of The Panno. White's natural developing moves have now been exhausted so it is decision time. Does he start a kingside attack knowing that Black will be able to counterattack on the queenside or does he choose a more circumspect plan? This is mainly a question of style. If you revel in do or die tactical battles then 9 h4 is the move for you. This is examined in Games 32 and 33. If you don't wish to burn your boats then 9 Nc1 is the main alternative. This is covered in Game 34.

Theoretical?

The play can be extremely sharp but there is no need to learn everything off by heart. It is more important to understand the methods of attacking as the details are always going to be different.

Statistics

White has scored just 51% from 2831 games. Better than against 6...c5 but still well below the average. My comments about the Sämisch looking like an imperial variation that is slightly over the hill are beginning to seem quite appropriate. I wrote that before I checked the statistics.

Illustrative Games

Game 32
□ Rivas ■ Mestel
Marbella 1982

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 a6 7 Qd2 Nc6 8

Nge2 Rb8 9 h4 h5

Black spends a tempo to hold up the advance of White's h-pawn. This is the main line. In the past the positions after 9...e5 10 d5 Na5 11 Ng3 c5 12 h5 and 9...b5 10 h5 e5 11 d5 Na5 12 Ng3 were also extensively tested but the consensus now is that these lines favour White.

10 Bh6

10 0-0-0 is covered in the next game, while certain White players like to play 10 Nc1. Play is identical to Game 34 except for the inclusion of the moves h2-h4 and ...h7-h5. It is difficult to say whom this favours but some of the differences are pointed out within Game 34.

After 10 Bh6 Black has an important decision to make. Should he let White exchange bishops on g7 or should he capture himself on h6. The latter looks foolhardy as it brings the white queen to an extremely menacing position. However, it also draws it away from the defence of the white queenside, and in particular the b2-square. See the next game for an example of Black exchanging on h6.

10...b5

Black starts his attack.

11 Bxg7 Kxg7 12 0-0-0 e5

12...bxc4 is obviously an alternative. After 13 Nf4 it is probably not a good idea for Black to try and hang on to the pawn with 13...Na5 because of the reply 14 e5. Instead he should play 13...e5.

13 dxe5

Better than blocking the centre. Black can meet 13 d5 with 13...Na5.

13...Nxe5

13...dxe5 14 Qe3! followed by Nd5 promises White a small advantage.

14 cxb5 axb5 15 Nf4 b4 16 Ncd5 Nxd5 17 Nxd5 c5 18 f4 Nc6 19 f5! (Diagram 12)

A pawn on f6 supported by the knight on d5 is a potent force.

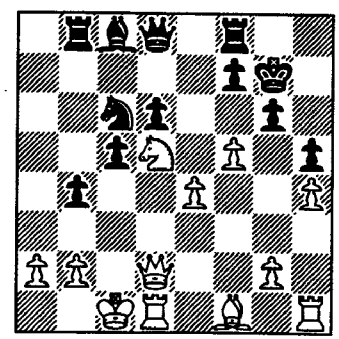


Diagram 12
White begins his attack

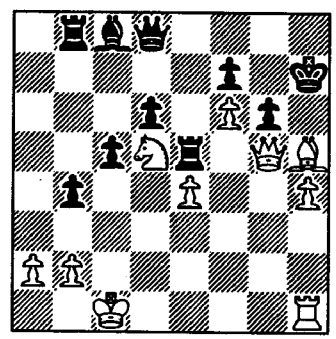


Diagram 13
What now for White?

19...Ne5 20 g4! Nxg4 21 Be2 Nf2?

He should have played 21...Nf6 although White is better after 22 Qf4!.

22 f6+ Kh7 23 Bxh5! Nxh1 24 Rxh1 Re8

After 24...gxh5 25 Qg5 Black is either mated by Qg7 or Qxh5.

25 Qg5! Re5 (Diagram 13)

Black was relying on this move to repulse the attack.

26 Ne7!!

There is nothing like a queen sacrifice to make the chessplayer's pulse race. The black king is now caught in a mating net.

26...Qg8

The main line of the combination was 26...Rxg5 27 hxg5 Qxe7 (27...gxh5 28 Rxh5 mate and on other moves White moves the bishop away with checkmate) 28 fxe7 when the passed pawn decides the game. For example, 28...Be6 29 Bd1+! Kg8 30 Ba4.

27 Bd1!

White is certainly not sidetracked by 27 Nxg8? Rxg5 28 hxg5 Kxg8. After the bishop retreat the threat is 28 h5! Rxg5 29 hxg6 mate.

27...Kh8 28 Qh6+ Black resigns

It's mate in 3.

Game 33
☐ **Muir** ■ **Fedorov**
European Team Championship, Batumi 1999

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Nge2 a6 7 Bg5 Nc6 8 Qd2 Rb8 9 h4 h5 10 0-0-0 b5 11 Bh6 Bxh6 12 Qxh6 e5 13 d5?! (Diagram 14)

This looks like a mistake as the black attack is the quicker. How do you think Black was planning to meet 13 g4? (Diagram 14)

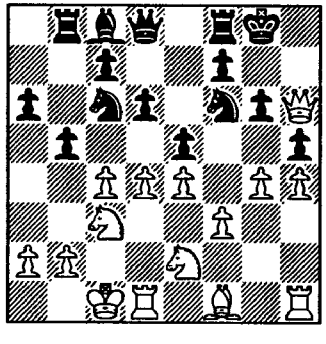


Diagram 14
How should Black respond?

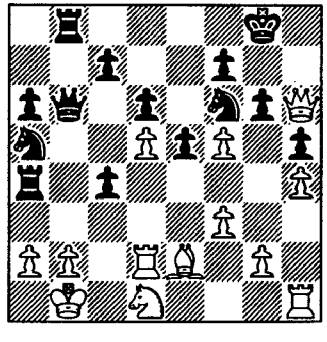


Diagram 15
What now for Black?

Certainly not by 13...hxg4 when 14 h5 gives White a crushing attack. The answer is by the sacrifice 13...Bxg4! 14 hxg4 Nxg4. A piece is a relatively small price to pay to ensure that the kingside stays closed whilst there is still every chance of Black developing an attack against the white king.

White should probably play 13 dxe5.

13...Na5 14 Ng3 bxc4 15 Be2 Rb4 16 Nf1 Bd7 17 Ne3 Qb8! 18 Rd2 Qb6 19 Nf5 Bxf5 20 exf5 Rb8! 21 Nd1

White's problem is that he is only attacking with one piece while Black is attacking with a whole armada. For example, after 21 fxg6 Rxb2 22 gxf7+ Kxf7 White doesn't even have a check.

21...Ra4!

With b2 heavily protected Black switches the attack to the a2-square.

22 Kb1 (Diagram 15)

Or 22 Nc3 Nb3+! 23 axb3 Ra1+ 24 Nb1 Qxb3 with a decisive attack.

22...Nb3!! 23 axb3

23 Rc2 Rxa2! 24 Kxa2 Qa5+ 25 Kb1 Qa1 mate is not an improvement.

23...Qxb3 24 fxg6

It's a case of too little too late.

24...Qa2+ 25 Kc1 Qa1+ 26 Kc2 Rab4 27 Bf1? Rxb2+ 28 Nxb2 Rxb2+ White resigns

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Game 34
☐ **Michenka** ■ **Hagara**
Trinec 1998

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 Nc6 7 Qd2 a6 8 Nge2 Rb8 9 Nc1

OK, says White, your last couple of moves have scared me off castling queenside. I'm just going to castle kingside and try and show that those moves are now a waste of time.

9...e5!

With the white knight no longer protecting d4 Black seizes his chance to play ...e7-e5.

10 d5

10 Nb3 is also played from time to time when 10...cxd4 11 Nxd5 Ne5 gives Black a reasonable game.

10...Nd4 11 Nb3

11 Bxd4 exd4 12 Qxd4 would be risky even if it wasn't for the tactical shot 12...Nxe4!. Black now attacks the queen with his bishop and 13 Qxe4 loses to 13...Re8.

11...c5!

This sort of pawn sacrifice should become second nature to Panno players and it certainly leads to a sharper fight than 11...Nxb3 12

axb3 c5, which is a solid but uninspiring way for Black to play.

12 dxc6

White must accept the offer as otherwise Black has cemented his knight in on d4 free of charge.

12...bxc6

Were you wondering why Black doesn't play 12...Nxb3 first? The point is that White doesn't recapture at once on b3 but throws in 13 c7! when 13...Nxd2 14 cxb8Q is not recommended and, after 13...Qxc7 14 axb3, White has kept the b-file closed and has a fine outpost on d5.

13 Nxd4 exd4 14 Bxd4 (Diagram 16)

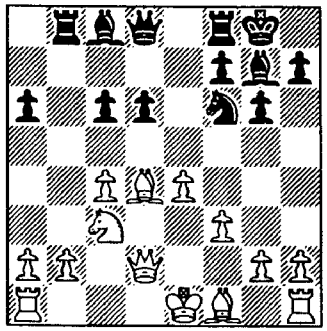


Diagram 16
Black has counterplay with ...d6-d5

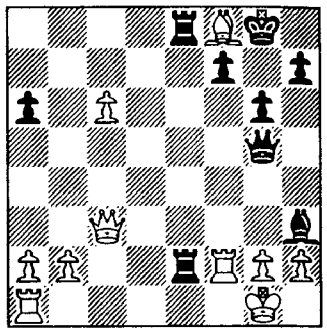


Diagram 17
An unexpected tactical shot

In return for his pawn Black has a lead in development and some interesting tactical ideas based on the fact that the white king is still two moves away from evacuating the centre (to castle queenside is almost unthinkable in such a position). It stands to reason that Black's plan is to blast open the centre whilst the white king is still in residence.

If you recall, in Game 32 it was pointed out that this position can also be reached with the inclusion of the moves h2-h4 and ...h7-h5. On a couple of occasions I shall be asking you to move your h-pawns up the board so we can compare the differences. They can be important.

14...Re8

Black decides he wants maximum activity before he plays ...d6-d5, as this is, of course, the move that is going to blast open the centre. 14...d5!? also comes into consideration, as does 14...Be6 followed by 15...d5. This last line is more effective with the pawns on h4 and h5.

15 Be2 d5 16 cxd5 Rb4?!

This leads to some fascinating tactical variations but it is probably better for Black to play 16...cxd5 17 e5 Nd7 18 f4 f6. White usually returns the pawn now with 19 e6, leading to a roughly level game after either 19...Nf8 or 19...Rxe6.

17 Bc5

The move ...Rb4 created the nasty threat of 17...Nxe4 followed by ...Rxd4. White can prevent this with 17 e5 but then 17...Nxd5 18 Nxd5 Rxd4! 19 Qxd4 Bxe5 (or 19...Rxe5) gives Black excellent compensation for the exchange.



NOTE: In such positions the dark-squared bishop is usually worth at least a rook. With all the key pawns on light squares the dark squares in both camps are extremely vulnerable.

17...Nxe4! 18 fxe4

After 18 Nxe4 Rxb2 Black has a decisive attack.

18...Bxc3 19 Qxc3 Rbxe4

This is the point of Black's combination. He now regains his sacrificed piece, but White is not too unhappy as he finally gets his king to safety.

20 0-0 Rxe2 21 dxc6! Qg5?!

With the pawns on h4 and h5 Black would have been able to play ...Qxh4 here. His attacking chances would then fully compensate for the advanced passed pawn White has on c6. With the pawns still at home Black should probably have settled for 21...Qc7 with reasonable chances to save the game.

22 Rf2! Bh3?

At first sight this looks like a terribly strong move as 23 g3 disastrously weakens the white king position and after 23 Qxh3?? Qxc5 White gets mated. However, White has a wonderful bishop sacrifice of his own.

23 Bf8!! (Diagram 17)

The sort of move that a computer program would see in a nanosecond but a human might not find after staring at the position for hours. The first point is that White now threatens Qg7 mate. Black has two ways to take the bishop but 23...Kxf8 loses to 24 Qh8+ and 25 Rxe2+ and 23...Rxf8 loses to 24 Rxe2. Black can stop the mate with 23...f6 but then 24 Qc4+ R2e6 25 c7 is winning for White. The only other possibility is to block the diagonal with a rook.

23...R2e5 24 Bd6 Re3 25 Bf4! Rxc3 26 Bxg5 Rc5 27 Bf4 Bc8 28 c7

The presence of opposite-coloured bishops offers Black some hope of achieving a draw but with a passed pawn so far advanced the game is always likely to be decided by a tactical blow. The remaining moves were:

28...g5 29 Bd6 Rc6 30 Rd1 f5 31 Rfd2 f4 32 h4 Bg4 33 Rf1 h6 34 hxg5 hxg5 35 Rd5 Kh7 36 Rxg5 Be2 37 Re1 Rxd6 38 Rxe2 Rd1+ 39 Kh2 Black resigns

Black Plays the Traditional 6...e5

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 e5 (Diagram 18)

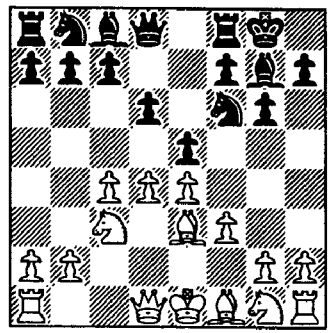


Diagram 18
The traditional 6...e5

The traditional approach appears to be mainly of historical interest at the moment. It has fallen some way behind the two previous variations in the popularity stakes. The problem is that after 6...e5 7 d5 White is well placed to meet the attack with ...f7-f5. Compare this position to the Classical where White often retreats his knight from f3 in order to be able to support his centre with f2-f3. In the Sämisch the pawn is already there. 6...e5 was popular at the highest level until about 10 years ago with its main supporter being the then World Champion Garry Kasparov. Nothing really bad happened to 6...e5, it just became another victim of 6...c5's success. Black has always struggled to equalise in this line.

White has two main strategies after 6...e5. He can hold the centre with 7 Nge2, reserving the option to play d5 later, or adopt a totally different plan as we see in the main line of Game 35.

The alternative is to block the centre at once with 7 d5. Black will then usually look for counterplay on the kingside with a quick ...f7-f5, whilst White will concentrate more on the queenside. This is examined in Game 36.

Theoretical?

There are certain things worth knowing. If White is going to play the line with 11 c5 in Game 35 it will certainly pay to study this beforehand. After 7 d5 general principles take over but again, White should know something about Bronstein's famous queen sacrifice.

Statistics

At last White fights back. In the line with 7 Nge2 he has scored an excellent 60% in 1779 games. With 7 d5 he has notched up a very respectable 57% in nearly 3000 games.

Illustrative Games

Game 35
□ **Istratescu** ■ **Akopian**
European Championship, Ohrid 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 e5 7 Nge2 c6 8 Qd2 Nbd7 9 0-0-0

In Karpov-Kasparov, Linares 1993, White played the slightly cowardly 9 Rd1 and suffered one of the most humiliating defeats of his career. After 21 moves Karpov had seven pieces left (not including pawns) and they were all on the back rank!

9...a6 10 Kb1

White can also launch a kingside attack with any one of 10 g4, 10 h4 or 10 Bh6. Black will then retaliate with moves such as ...b7-b5 and ...Qa5. In practice Black has usually won the mating race.

10...b5 11 c5!? (Diagram 19)

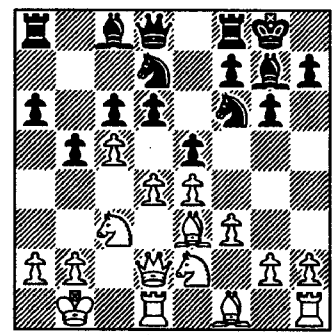


Diagram 19
White piles the pressure on

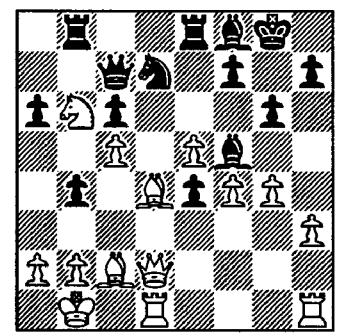


Diagram 20
Black's position is a nightmare

11 c5 has been known for some time but underestimated until recently. Its main supporter is the German Grandmaster Graf, formerly known as the Uzbek Grandmaster Nenashev. Confused?

11...b4

Black has two pawn captures. 11...dxc5 is obviously bad because of 12 dxe5, while 11...exd4 12 Nxd4 dxc5 13 Nxc6 is less clear but also

promising for White. Black has also tried 11...Qe7 but the position after 12 cxd6 Qxd6 13 dxe5 Qxd2 14 Rxd2 Nxe5 15 Nc1, with the idea of Nb3-c5, looks quite pleasant for White.

12 Na4 d5

Old theory said that 12...Qa5 13 b3 was fine for Black, but 13 Qc2 is the improvement.

13 dxe5 Nxe5 14 Nb6 Rb8 15 Ng3 Be6?!

After this White gets a powerful bind in the centre. 15...Qe7 or 15...Re8 have been suggested as better tries.

16 Bd4 Qc7 17 f4! Ned7 18 e5 Ne4 19 Nxe4 Bf5 20 Bd3 dxe4 21 Bc2 Rfe8 22 h3 Bf8 23 g4 (Diagram 20)

Black is getting crushed all over the board.

23...Nxc5 24 gxf5 Rxb6 25 fxg6 hxg6 26 Qe3 Nd7 27 Bxb6 Nxb6 28 Qxe4 c5 29 h4 Black resigns

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Game 36
☐ **A.Kuzmin ■ Sakaev**
Doha 1993

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 e5 7 d5 Nh5

7...c6 is the main alternative, with which Black battles for space on the queenside. With the text he concentrates on kingside play.

8 Qd2 f5

8...Qh4+ is interesting when on 9 Bf2 Black can play either 9...Qf4 or 9...Qe7. The critical line is 9 g3 Nxg3 10 Qf2 (10 Bf2? Nxf1 11 Bxh4 Nxd2) 10...Nxf1! 11 Qxh4 Nxe3 (Diagram 21). This is Bronstein's famous queen sacrifice. After either 12 Ke2 or 12 Qf2 Black plays 12...Nxc4 and has two minor pieces and two pawns for the queen. Normally, not quite enough, but he also has a very compact position which will be hard to break down. The theoretical verdict is slightly better for White but anything can happen in such a position.

9 0-0-0 Nd7

9...f4 would condemn Black to a passive game.

NOTE: In the King's Indian it is not normally a good idea for Black to block the position with ...f4 when White's king is on the queenside.

10 exf5!? gxf5 11 Bd3 Nc5

11...e4 12 fxe4 f4 13 Bf2 Ne5 is a thematic blockading sacrifice that can occur in a number of King's Indian variations. Here it is thought that Black has insufficient compensation after 14 Nf3.

12 Bc2 Qh4 13 b3 e4?!

13...Qe7 is better, retreating after having forced White to weaken the long diagonal.

14 Bg5! Bxc3 15 Bxh4 Bxd2+ 16 Kxd2 Nf4 17 Nh3

It would be a mistake for Black to take on h3 as the white rooks and

bishops could whip up a strong attack against the exposed black king.

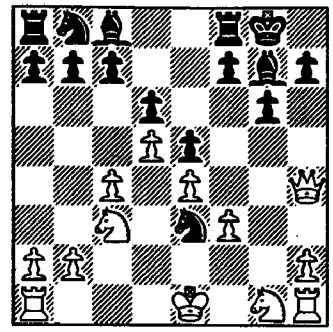


Diagram 21
An unusual material imbalance

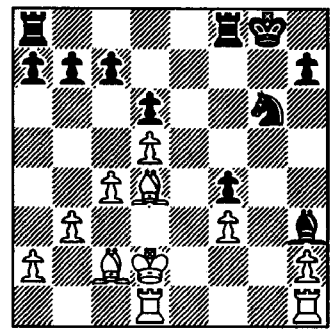


Diagram 22
The endgame is good for White

17...Ng6 18 Bf2 f4 19 Bxc5 exf3 20 gxf3 Bxh3 21 Bd4 (Diagram 22) 21...Bf5 22 h4 Bxc2 23 Kxc2 Rf5 24 h5 Ne5 25 Rdg1+ Kf7 26 Bxe5 Rxe5 27 Rh4 Rf5 28 Rgg4

White wins a pawn and tortured Black until the 75th move before agreeing a draw.

... Draw agreed

White Plays 6 Bg5 (or 6 Nge2)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Bg5 (Diagram 23)

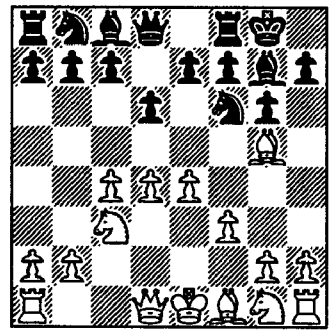


Diagram 23
An adventurous bishop move

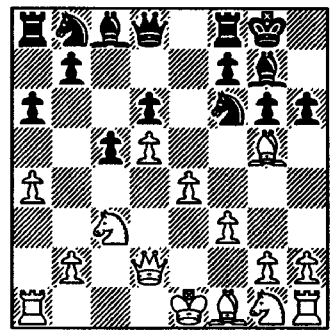


Diagram 24
Black sets a trap

Until recently this was an unusual move for White to play in the Sämisch. The reason that most White players avoided Bg5 was that it

did nothing to prevent 6...c5. When White realised that 6 Be3 didn't prevent it either many of them thought they may as well play 6 Bg5. In most lines the bishop is more active here, although on other occasions White may miss the protection of d4 that is provided by Be3. Often Black will kick the bishop away with ...h7-h6, after which it returns to e3. In certain variations ...h7-h6 harms Black, while in others it makes no difference (when he plays with ...h7-h5 for example).

6 Nge2 is another tricky move order that is played quite often nowadays. However, it is of little independent value as at some point White usually plays Be3 or Bg5 transposing into the main lines. 6...a6!? (flexible) and 6...c5 are probably Black's most reliable replies, whilst 6...Nc6 7 Bg5 and 6...e5 7 Bg5 are probably slightly in White's favour.

6...c5

This is played much more often then any other black move so we shall take it as our main line. A quick word about the other possibilities:

1) 6...e5?? was played 43 times according to Megabase with Black scoring 24%, very respectable when you consider that he is just lost after 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 Nd5!.



WARNING: Be careful about playing ...e7-e5 when White has a bishop on g5. This applies to other lines in the King's Indian as well.

2) 6...Nc6. The Panno is thought to be slightly less reliable with the bishop on g5. A possible line is 7 Nge2 a6 8 Qd2 Rb8 9 d5!? (for some reason this move is never played with the bishop on e3 but considered quite dangerous here) 9...Ne5 10 Nd4 c5 11 Nc2 b5 (9...Nh5 may be a better try) 12 cxb5 axb5 13 Bxb5 and a number of games have demonstrated that Black doesn't have quite enough for the pawn.

7 d5 e6 8 Qd2 exd5 9 cxd5

White can also play 9 Nxd5 and this is covered in Game 37.

9...a6 10 a4 h6 (Diagram 24) 11 Be3

Exercise 5: Why didn't White play 11 Bxh6?

The position after 11 Be3 is examined in Game 38.

Theoretical?

For Black it's more important to know that he can't stay passive in this position than to know heaps of theory. For White there are one or two traps that he should avoid falling into but again general knowledge is more helpful than specific variations.

Statistics

White really goes to town here. With 6 Bg5 he scored 58% in over 2600 games, while with 6 Nge2, when it doesn't transpose to other lines, he amassed 64% from 439 games. However, White scored most of his points against the inferior lines and when Black plays properly things are much closer.

Game 37
□ **Hauchard** ■ **Krakops**
Cappelle la Grande 1997

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Bg5 c5 7 d5 e6 8 Qd2 exd5 9 Nxd5!?

White takes advantage of the pin to try and establish a stronghold on the weak d5-square.

9...Be6 10 Ne2 Nc6!?

The text seemingly allows White to gain complete control over d5 but Black has spotted a tactical solution to his positional problems.

11 Nec3 Bxd5 12 Nxd5 h6! (Diagram 25)

Exercise 6: What does Black have in mind after 13 Bxh6?

13 Nxf6+ Bxf6 14 Bxh6 Bxb2! 15 Rb1

Black's idea was to meet 15 Qxb2 with 15...Qh4+. White tries to avoid this exchange but after the next move he has no choice.



TIP: If you couldn't solve the exercise above, try again now!

15...Bc3! 16 Qxc3 Qh4+ 17 g3 Qxh6 18 Qd2 Qh5 19 Bg2 Nd4 20 0-0 b6 (Diagram 26)

At first glance it looks like Black is doing well because he has a massive knight on d4 and White a passive bishop on g2. However, White has more play with his pawns so he is not worse. Black, in particular, must stop White from playing e4-e5 under favourable circumstances.

21 f4 Rae8 22 Rbe1 Kg7 23 h3 f6 24 a4 Re7 25 a5 bxa5!? 26 Qxa5 Nc2 27 g4 Qh8 28 Re2 Nd4 29 Ref2 Qh4

I'm slightly puzzled as to why Black didn't go here straightaway.

30 Qa6 Rd7 31 e5 fxe5 32 fxe5 Rxf2 33 Rxf2 dxe5 34 Qc8 Qe7 35 Bd5 Rd8 36 Qa6 Rf8 37 Rxf8 Qxf8 38 Qxa7+ Kh6 39 Kg2 Ne2 40 h4 Nf4+ 41 Kg3 Ne2+ 42 Kg2 Nf4+ 43 Kg3 Ne2+ Draw agreed

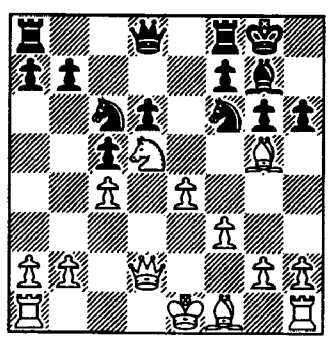


Diagram 25
Do you recognise the theme?

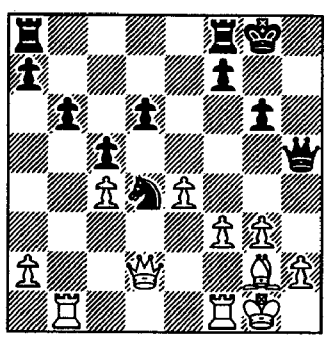


Diagram 26
The position is level

Game 38
☐ Rogers ■ Gallagher
Lugano 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Bg5 c5 7 d5 e6 8 Qd2 exd5 9 cxd5 a6 10 a4 h6 11 Be3

In an ideal world White would like to crush Black by playing f2-f4 and e4-e5. A mobile central majority is a very dangerous weapon. However, as Black often creates play on the kingside first, White's other main plan is to play b2-b4. If the pawn on c5 can be dislodged White obtains a very nice outpost on d4 for his minor pieces.

11...h5

A semi-waiting move. The pawn doesn't have to move yet but Black doesn't want to play either 11...Re8 or 11...Nbd7. 11...Re8 deprives the knight of this square and 11...Nbd7 is well met by 12 Nh3! Ne5 13 Nf2. The square f2 is an ideal home for a white knight in this set-up.



TIP: In order to avoid Nh3 Black should not play ...Nbd7 until White has played Nge2.

12 Nge2 Nbd7 13 Nf4!?

This awkward-looking move is of a purely defensive nature. The idea is to prevent Black's active plan of ...Nh7 and ...f7-f5. With the knight on f4 it will take an awful lot of arranging to play ...f7-f5 without allowing the knight to hop into e6 or take on g6.

Another move that White plays quite often is 13 Nd1. His idea is to achieve the ideal set-up for his knights by playing Nec3 and Nf2. Note how this has takes four moves whilst if Black had played ...Nbd7 before White played Nge2 then it takes just two to reach the same position. A possible continuation after 13 Nd1 is 13...Re8 14 Nec3 Nh7 15 Be2 f5 16 0-0 Bd7 17 Nf2 Qh4 with chances for both sides.

13...Ne5 14 Be2 Bd7 15 0-0 Ne8 16 Rfb1 a5! (Diagram 27)

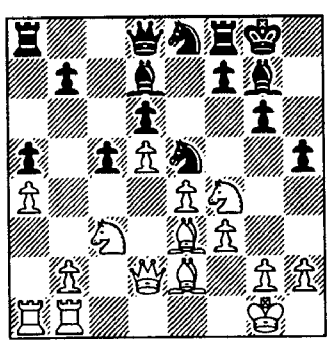


Diagram 27
White is thwarted on the queenside

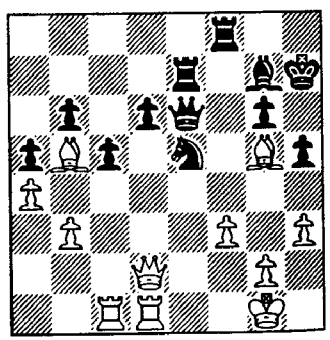


Diagram 28
What now for Black?

A most unusual way for Black to defend in this line but White's rooks are now rather silly. He was of course planning to play b2-b4.

17 Nb5 Bxb5 18 Bxb5 Nc7 19 Bf1 Qd7

The hole on b5 is well covered. Black's plan is still to play ...f7-f5, but only after suitable preparation.

20 Rd1 Kh7 21 h3 b6 22 b3?! f5! 23 exf5?!

23 Be2 would have been more solid although after exchanging pawns on e4 Black has quite a promising position.

23...Qxf5 24 Rac1?! Rae8 25 Bb5 Re7

White is under a lot of pressure so he decided to sacrifice a pawn in order to open the position for his bishop pair. He overlooked, however, a most powerful counter-sacrifice from Black.

26 Ne6? Nxe6 27 dxe6 Qxe6 28 Bg5 (Diagram 28) 28...Nxf3+!

No, Black doesn't have to move his rook. The white king position is now ripped to shreds.

29 gxf3 Bd4+ 30 Kh1

The obvious move is 30 Kg2 in order to defend the f-pawn but Black takes it anyway! 30...Rxf3! 31 Kxf3 Qxh3+ 32 Kf4 Qg4 is checkmate.

30...Rxf3 31 Bf1 Qe4! 32 Kh2

32 Bg2 Rxh3 mate is rather nice.

32...Ref7!

Now White can't stop ...Rf2.

33 Qg2 Rf2 34 Kh1 Rxg2 35 Bxg2 Rf3! White resigns

The finish I had in mind was 36 Kh2 Rf2 37 Rg1 Be5+ 38 Kh1 Qf3! when 39 Bxf3 fails to 39...Rh2 mate and Black is threatening the unstoppable 39...Qxh3+.

Summary

1) The Sämisch is one of the most important lines in the King's Indian. It is an aggressive system but also one in which White has a secure and solid basis.

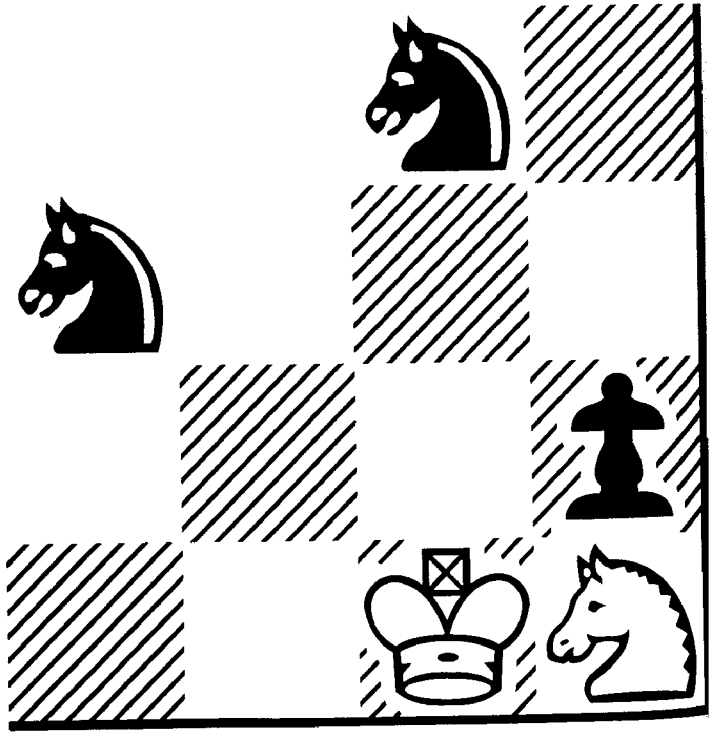
2) 6...c5! has dented the Sämisch's popularity somewhat in recent times. The pawn sacrifice is hardly ever accepted by White anymore. Because of this 6 Be3 is no longer automatically considered as the best move. Nowadays White plays 6 Bg5 and 6 Nge2 almost as often.

3) The other lines in the Sämisch have suffered a bit because of the popularity of 6...c5. However, the Panno remains an extremely rich variation full of complex play, while Black is still struggling to equalise with 6...e5 (as he has been for 50 years).

Chapter Six

The Fianchetto Variation

- The Classical 6...Nbd7 with 8...exd4
- The Classical 6...Nbd7: Other Systems
- The Panno Variation: 6...Nc6



1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 (Diagram 1)

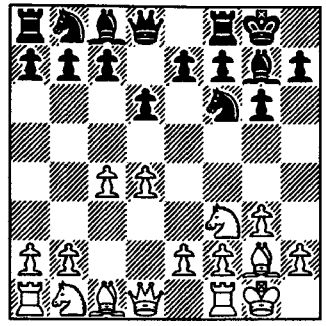


Diagram 1
The Fianchetto variation

The Fianchetto Variation is characterised by White developing his king's bishop to g2. It is one of the most popular lines against the King's Indian at grandmaster level, especially amongst players from the former Soviet Union. It is a solid line where it is difficult for Black to obtain active play by the standard means we see elsewhere in this book. In fact the normal plan of attacking on the kingside is simply no longer viable, at least in the early stages of the game. Firstly, because the bishop on g2 affords extra protection to the white king and secondly because, unlike in other lines, White has no intention of blocking the centre. Attacking on the wing is a risky business when the centre is fluid. White's basic plan in this variation is to stifle Black's active play and gradually use his space advantage.

Before moving on, you should be aware that certain players prefer to transpose into a Grünfeld when White plays the Fianchetto variation. The Grünfeld is, basically, a King's Indian where Black plays ...d7-d5 instead of ...d7-d6 and is beyond the scope of this book.

The Classical 6...Nbd7 with 8...exd4

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nbd7

Black prepares to establish a central foothold by playing ...e7-e5.

7 Nc3

Other moves that crop up from time to time are 7 Qc2 and 7 b3 but the text is by far the most common (and logical). Incidentally White's move order is not set in stone. Quite often he develops his queen's knight before fianchettoing but it all usually comes to the same thing.

7...e5 8 e4

Sometimes White plays 8 h3 but play usually just transposes back

into the main lines. For example, 8 h3 exd4 9 Nxd4 Re8 10 e4 (nothing better) is the main line of this section.

8...exd4

It is anti-positional for Black to concede the centre in this fashion but as he has a concrete method of developing counterplay in mind we shall forgive him. 8...a6 and 8...c6 are considered in the next section.

9 Nxd4 Re8 10 h3

In the long run it is very hard for White to get by without this useful little move. He wants to develop his bishop to e3 and he wants to rule out a black knight (or bishop) coming to g4.

10...a6! (Diagram 2)

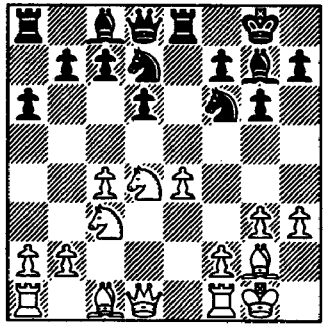


Diagram 2
A typical classical fianchetto position

The first sign that Black has something special in mind. In the old days he would play moves such as ...c7-c6, ...Nc5 and ...a7-a5 and try and hold the balance, often unsuccessfully. The problem was that it was very difficult to generate active play. 10...a6 reveals Black's aggressive intentions. It is the first preparatory move in the queenside pawn storm Black is planning. His next move will be 11...Rb8 and then he will follow up with ...c7-c5, to kick the knight from d4, and then ...b7-b5. Sometimes Black throws in ...Ne5 before advancing his pawns, on other occasions he just leaves it on d7. This whole system has become known as the Gallagher Variation after I popularised it some years ago. In the first two games below we shall see the black plan working like a dream, while in the third we meet the line that has proved most unpleasant for Black.

Theoretical?

White is definitely advised to learn one system as if he just plays natural moves without thinking he can easily find himself in a hopeless position. For Black it is more important to know the key ideas.

Statistics

If we take the position after 10...a6 White has scored 54% in just over 200 games. Exactly what he is expected to score. This means the variation is no worse or no better than any other. There are relatively few games as the line has no history.

Illustrative Games

Game 39
□ **Hohler** ■ **Gallagher**
Bern 1994

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nbd7 7 Nc3 e5 8 e4 exd4 9 Nxd4 Re8 10 h3 a6 11 Re1 Rb8 12 Be3

White has various ways to deploy his pieces on moves 11 and 12. Basically, Black follows the same plan against them all but must be more careful against 12 Rb1 (see Game 41).

12...c5 (Diagram 3)

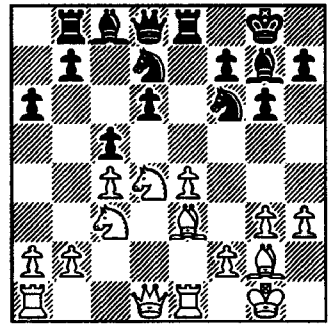


Diagram 3
A radical thrust for the initiative

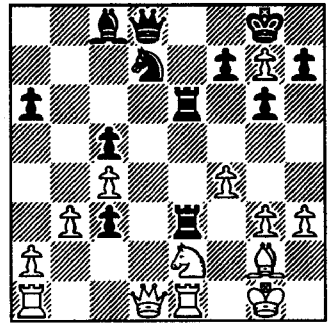


Diagram 4
Now Black has the central pressure

This is the move that shocks the positional men. Not only does Black give himself a backward d-pawn on an open file but he also cedes control of d5.

NOTE: Modern chess players are not so worried about such static details. They are more interested in the dynamics of the position. Black wants to grab the initiative and if that means sacrificing material or making positional concessions – so be it.

13 Nde2 Ne5

This is more promising than the immediate 13...b5.

14 b3 b5 15 f4 Ned7

Black must retreat here as 15...Nc6 is strongly met by 16 e5!.

Black now has the same position as if he had played 13...b5 at once but White has been given two extra moves for free! The claim is that these moves actually harm the white position. The move b3 weakens White on the long dark diagonal while the move f4 means that the bishop on e3 is no longer protected.

16 Qxd6 b4

The reason that Black can get away with such opening play is that he is not really attacking on the queenside at all – White's central play would crush an attack there – but is attacking in the centre himself. The queenside demonstration is just the means employed to destabilise White's e4-point. It can no longer be held.

17 e5!

After 17 Na4 Nxe4 18 Bxe4 Rxe4 both the rook on a1 and the bishop on e3 are hanging. Now you should have a clearer understanding of why Black encouraged the moves b3 and f4.

17...bxc3 18 exf6?

A serious mistake. White should have played 18 Nxc3! Nh5 19 g4 Bf8 20 Qd2 Ng7 when he has a couple of pawns and a strong grip in the centre for the piece. The position can be considered unclear.

18...Rxe3 19 fxg7 Rb6! 20 Qd1 Rbe6 (Diagram 4)

The fine rook manoeuvre has left White stuck in an awkward pin.

21 Rc1 Qf6 22 Qc2 Qe7 23 Kf2 Nf6 24 Rcd1 Bb7 25 Bd5 Bxd5 26 cxd5 R6e4 27 Rd3 c4!

Opening the a7-g1 diagonal so that the queen can get at the king.

28 Rxe3 Rxe3 29 d6 Qa7 30 Qc1?

White had to try 30 bxc4 though after 30...Ne4+ 31 Kg2 both 31...Nxd6 and 31...Qa8 win comfortably for Black.

30...Ne4+ 31 Kg2 Rxg3+! White resigns

In view of 32 Nxg3 Qf2+ 33 Kh1 Nxg3 mate.

Game 40
□ **Whiteley** ■ **Gallagher**
Royan 1989

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nbd7 7 Nc3 e5 8 e4 exd4 9 Nxd4 Re8 10 h3 a6 11 Re1 Rb8 12 b3

A typical prophylactic move from White in this variation. He defends c4 before Black can attack it. There is no longer much point to ...Ne5 so Black gets on with the attack at once.

12...c5 13 Nc2

The knight retreats here, rather than e2, to defend the rook on a1 (important in certain variations), and so as not to interfere with the rook on e1's protection of e4.

13...b5! 14 cxb5

Black would continue in the same way after 14 Qxd6.

14...axb5 15 Qxd6 Rb6!

The white e-pawn has sufficient protection for the moment so Black brings up the heavy artillery to bombard it. Note that this time he delayed ...b5-b4 for a move as after 15...b4 16 Na4 the queen's rook can no longer be transported to the centre.

16 Qd1 b4 17 Na4 Rbe6 18 Bb2 Qe7

White had defended his e-pawn by tactical means: 18...Nxe4? 19 Bxg7 Kxg7 20 Bxe4 Rxe4 21 Rxe4 Rxe4 22 Nxc5! is favourable for White.

19 Ne3 Bb7 20 f3

You may wonder why Black has been piling up on the e-pawn if all White needs to do is to play this simple pawn move to defend it. The whole point is, though, that Black has been trying to force this little pawn move as it seriously weakens the white kingside. Black will now switch his attack to the dark squares in this sector of the board. It may have been better for White to return the pawn with 20 e5.

20...Nh5! 21 Bxg7 Kxg7 22 g4 Nf4 23 Qd2 Ne5 (Diagram 5)

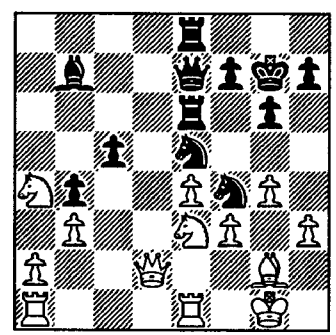


Diagram 5
What wonderful knights!

Black now threatens 24...Nxh3+ 25 Bxh3 Nxf3+ so there is no time for White to prevent Black taking control of the d-file. Rather than dying quietly White initiated complications with 25 Nf5+ but these quickly turned sour. Here are the remaining moves.

24 Rf1 Rd8 25 Nf5+ gxf5 26 Qxf4 Nd3 27 Qe3 f4!? 28 Qd2 c4! 29 bxc4 Qd7 30 a3 Qxa4 31 axb4 Qd7 32 Qc3+ Qd4+ 33 Qxd4+ Rxd4 34 Rfd1 Red6 35 Ra7 Rd7 36 Kf1 Rxc4! 37 Rxb7 Rxb7 38 Rxd3 Rcxb4 39 Rd2 Rb1+ 40 Kf2 R7b2 41 Rxb2 Rxb2+ 42 Kg1 Kf6 43 h4 Ke5 44 g5 h6 45 h5 hxg5 46 Bh3 Kd4 47 Bg4 Ke3 48 Kf1 Rh2 49 Kg1 Rh4 50 Kf1 f6 51 Kg2 Ke2 52 Kg1 Rxg4+ White resigns

Game 41
□ **Schwartzman** ■ **Nisipeanu**
Bucharest 1994

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nbd7 7 Nc3 e5 8 e4 exd4 9 Nxd4 Re8 10 h3 a6 11 Re1

For a while it became fashionable for White to withdraw his knight from d4 before it was hit with ...c7-c5. The moves 11 Nb3 and 11 Nde2 are usually described as prophylactic but I prefer to call them cowardly. White is just trying to avoid complications at all costs. The knight was, after all, perfectly well placed in the middle and could only be dislodged by Black taking positional risks. Not surprisingly, Black is able to find adequate counterplay by 'normal' means.

1) 11 Nb3 Ne5 12 c5 (12 Qe2 Be6!) 12...dxc5 13 Nxc5 Qe7 14 Nb3 Be6 15 Qc2 Rad8, Spassov-Van Wely, Munich 1992. Black's active pieces more than compensate for White's central pawn majority.

2) 11 Nde2 Nb6 (11...Rb8!?) 12 b3 Nxe4! 13 Nxe4 Rxe4! 14 Bxe4 Bxa1 15 Bg2 Bf6 16 Nf4 Rb8 17 Be3 Bd7 18 Bxb6 cxb6 19 Qxd6 Bc6 20 Qxd8 Rfxd8 21 Nd5 Draw agreed Nikolic-Gelfand, Wijk aan Zee 1992.

11...Rb8 12 Rb1! (Diagram 6)

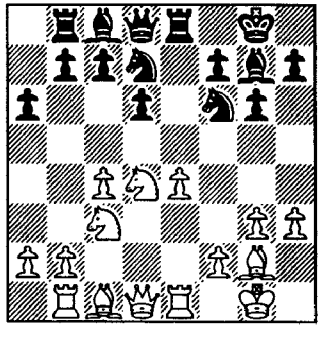


Diagram 6
Preparing for Black's queenside action

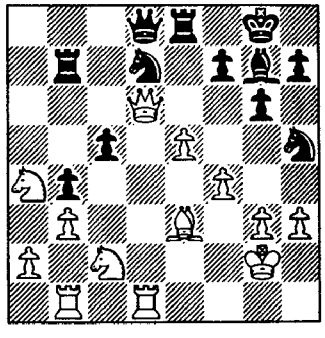


Diagram 7
White's position is overwhelming

This innocuous-looking move has caused Black quite a few problems. I think White players found this move by a process of elimination. It doesn't do a lot but on the other hand it doesn't do any harm either. It doesn't interfere with the defence of the e-pawn (12 Be3), it doesn't expose White on the long diagonal (12 b3) and it doesn't deny White the chance for Qxd6 (in certain games White played an early Qc2).

Not only did White players try and make the ...c7-c5 and ...b7-b5 advance less appetising (12 Rb1) but some of them decided to prevent it altogether. The most obvious way to do this is 12 a4. At first White players were reluctant to play such an anti-positional move. The point

is that if Black meets 12 a4 with 12...a5 (12...Nc5 and 12...Ne5 are also possibilities with ...a5 sometimes coming later) he obtains outposts for his pieces on c5 and b4. However, just as Black can get away with his anti-positional advance ...c7-c5, White, too, can get away with a2-a4 because of the time Black has spent on the now useless moves 10...a6 and 11...Rb8.

12...Ne5 13 b3 c5 14 Nc2 b5?

A mistake. The queenside advance simply doesn't work in this position. Black's attempts to rehabilitate the variation have centred around 14...Be6 or 14...Nc6. Originally I had assumed that if Black couldn't play ...b7-b5 his position would be bad, but this doesn't seem to be the case. For example, Yin Hao-Ye Jiangchuan, Shanghai 2000 went 14...Nc6 15 a4 Be6 16 Bb2 h5 17 Qd2 Nh7! 18 Red1 Be5! 19 f4 Bg7 20 Kh1 Qa5 with an unclear game.

15 cxb5 axb5 16 f4 Ned7 17 Qxd6 b4

There is no good way for Black to continue. 17...Nh5 18 Qd3! c4 19 Qe3 is also good for White.

18 Na4 Bb7 19 e5 Nh5 20 Rd1 Bxg2 21 Kxg2 Rb7 22 Be3 (Diagram 7)

Black is a pawn down with a terrible position. His attempts to confuse the issue are, not surprisingly, easily dealt with.

22...g5 23 Qd5 gxf4 24 gxf4 Qc8 25 Qf3 Nxe5 26 Qxh5 Qc6+ 27 Kf2 Qe4 28 Qe2 Rbe7 29 Nxc5 Qf5 30 Rg1 Ng6 31 Qd3 Qxh3 32 Rh1 Qc8 33 Rh5 Qg4 34 Qf5 Black resigns

Black resigned as he can't keep the queens on.

The Classical 6...Nbd7: Other Systems

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nbd7 7 Nc3 e5 8 e4 (Diagram 8)

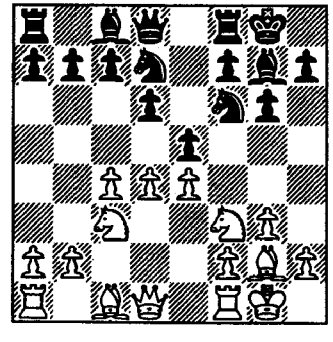


Diagram 8
A balanced position

We are now going to take a look at a couple of alternatives to exchanging on d4. They are the old main line with 8...c6 and the quite fashionable continuation 8...a6.

8...c6 takes control of the square d5 and opens a path to the queenside for the black queen. Black tries to hold the centre for a while but at some point, unless White takes action first, he usually takes on d4 to gain use of the e5 and c5-squares for his knights. White, as usual, will just be looking to consolidate in the early stages of the game. If he can neutralise Black's early tricks his space advantage should give him some advantage in the latter stages of the game. This, at any rate, was the theory until the move 10 c5!? turned up. This line is covered in Game 42.

The move 8...a6 is a tricky and flexible waiting move. The basic idea is the same as in the Gallagher Variation – to aim for active play on the queenside with ...b7-b5. This time, though, Black delays his decision on whether to exchange on d4. It all depends on what White does next. The basic rule is that if Black can play b5 without having to concede the centre (...e5xd4) then he will do so.

Theoretical?

The line with 10 c5 in Game 42 is very theoretical while White must certainly know about the trap in the 9...Qa5 line. If Black is going to play 8...a6 he should at least know against which moves he exchanges on d4 and which he can play the immediate ...b5.

Statistics

After 8...c6 9 h3 (this takes in all the transpositions from 8 h3 c6 9 e4) White has scored a very healthy 61% in around 3500 games. Black fares better with 8...a6 where White has scored 55% from 450 games. Despite the preponderance of games with 8...c6 Black is playing 8...a6 at least as often nowadays.

Illustrative Games

Game 42
□ **Filippov** ■ **Sepp**
Novgorod 1995

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 d4 Bg7 4 Nc3 0-0 5 g3 d6 6 Bg2 Nbd7 7 0-0 e5 8 e4 c6 9 h3 Qb6

9...Qa5!? is another idea. In the main line there is a nasty trap that White should know about. After 10 Re1 exd4 11 Nxd4 Ne5 12 Bf1 Re8 13 Be3 Be6 14 Nxe6 Rxe6 White has quite often played 15 Rb1? (Diagram 9) with the idea of playing b4.

Exercise 7: What does Black play now?

Better here are 15 Kg2 and, perhaps better, 13 Rb1 followed by b2-b4.

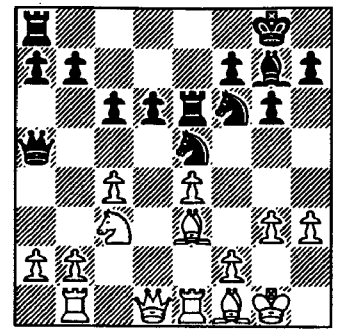


Diagram 9
Black has a trick

10 c5!?

This aggressive move is a danger that a King's Indian player trying to hold the centre must take into account. We already saw a similar idea in Game 35. The old line was 10 Re1 Re8 (or 10...exd4 11 Nxd4 with an edge for White) 11 d5. White usually waits for Black to play ...Re8 before blocking the centre as the rook now has no point on e8. After 11...Nc5 12 Rb1 a5 13 Be3 Qc7 14 Nd2 White's position is to be preferred.

10...dxc5 11 dxe5 Ne8 12 e6!? (Diagram 10)

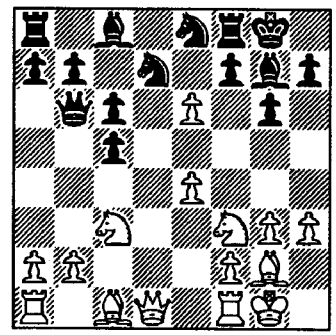


Diagram 10
A disruptive pawn sacrifice

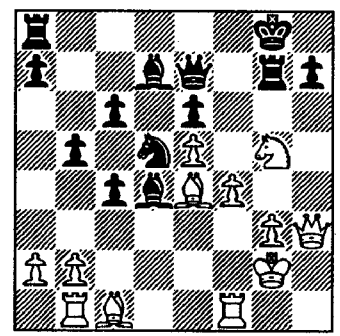


Diagram 11
White has a decisive attack

White sacrifices a pawn for a kingside attack. In the early games of this variation White usually played 12 Na4.

12...fxe6 13 Ng5 Ne5

The other way to defend the e-pawn, 13...Nc7, is also met by f2-f4.

14 f4 Nf7

14...c4+ 15 Kh2 Nd3 enables Black to establish a strong knight on d3 but the problem is that after 16 e5! his bishop is locked out of the game. The text is designed to make sure that the bishop escapes before White plays e5.

15 Nxf7 Bd4+! 16 Kh2 Rxf7 17 e5 Nc7 18 Ne4 Nd5 19 h4!

The bishop on d4 may look very nice but there is one major drawback to its position – it is totally cut off from the defence of his king.

19...Qd8 20 h5 Rg7 21 Ng5 gxh5?

This is a rather panicky move. Black had the right idea when he brought his queen back to defend on move 19. He should have continued in that vein and played 21...Qe8.

22 Qxh5 Qe7 23 Be4 Bd7 24 Qh3 c4 25 Rb1 b5 26 Kg2! (Diagram 11)

White wishes to transfer a rook to the h-file in order to make his attack irresistible.

26...c5 27 f5! Bxe5 28 fxe6 Bc6 29 Rf7 Rxf7 30 exf7+ Kf8 31 Qh6+ Black resigns

The bishop on c6 is the first to bite the dust.

Game 43
□ **Filippov** ■ **Lyrberg**
Minsk 1996

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1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 d4 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 Nc3 Nbd7 7 0-0 e5 8 e4 a6 9 h3

We have already seen that White is very fond of the move h2-h3. In this particular instance it may not be the most accurate as it allows Black to carry out his queenside advance. Let's have a look at a couple of important alternatives.

1) 9 Re1 is well met by 9...exd4 10 Nxd4 Ng4!. The first point is that if White takes on g4 Black takes on d4 and this simplification is in Black's favour. Secondly, if White kicks the knight with 11 h3 Black replies 11...Qf6! counter-attacking against the knight on d4.

2) 9 Qc2 is played quite often as now 9...b5?! 10 cxb5 axb5 11 Rd1! is quite promising for White. After 9 Qc2 Black usually reverts to the Gallagher System as White will no longer be able to play the move Qxd6. For example, 9...exd4 10 Nxd4 Re8 11 Rd1 Rb8 followed by the usual advance on the queenside.

9...b5!

This may look like a sacrifice but the pawn can't be taken. After 10 cxb5 axb5 11 Nxb5? Ba6! Black wins material. After 9...b5 the central situation has become very tense. White must now decide what pawn exchanges he is going to make.

10 cxb5

This exchange can be considered a slight concession as White gives up a central pawn for a wing one and at the same time opens the a-file for the black rook. More often we see the exchange in the centre with 10 dxe5 dxe5.

10...axb5 11 b4

An attempt to blockade the position on the queenside. It is perfectly feasible for Black to just play 11...c6 and aim, in the long run, to occupy the square on c4 with a knight. Instead, Black decided to challenge White at once.

11...c5!? (Diagram 12) 12 bxc5

A safer continuation was 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 bxc5 b4 14 Nd5 Nxc5 with an equal game.

12...b4 13 Ne2 Bb7!

This is the main point behind Black's play. Now there will be no tactical problems on the long diagonal as there would have been after the immediate 13...Nxe4. All the central pawns are about to vanish which means that the advantage will be with the more active side.

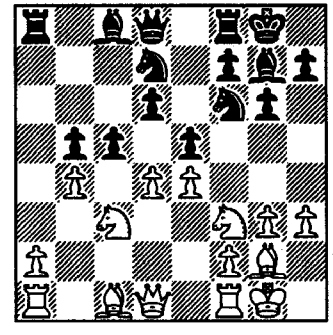


Diagram 12
Black assaults the white centre

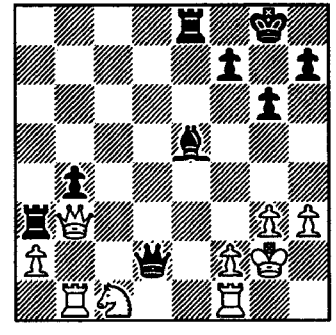


Diagram 13
White is embarrassed on the third rank

14 cxd6 Nxe4 15 dxe5 Nxe5 16 Nxe5 Bxe5 17 Bh6 Re8 18 Rb1

On 18 d7 Black just plays 18...Re7 and takes the pawn next move.

18...Qxd6 19 Qb3

Exchanging queens was certainly an option though Black has a slight advantage in the ending as White's pawn on a2 is weaker than Black's on b4.

19...Nd2 20 Bxd2 Bxg2 21 Kxg2?

21 Bxb4 Qc6 probably looked to risky for White as Black gets to keep the powerful light-squared bishop, but the game just looks like a draw after 22 Rfc1 Qb7 23 Bc3 Qxb3 24 axb3 Bxh3.

21...Qxd2 22 Nc1?

White's previous error should have just cost him his a-pawn (22 Qd1 is relatively best) but he must have planned all along to defend it in this fashion. Now he loses his king or queen.

22...Ra3! (Diagram 13)

Only now did White realise that if he moves the queen 23...Rxg3+! leads to a mating attack.

23 Nd3 Rxb3 24 Rxb3 Bc3 White resigns

The Panno Variation: 6...Nc6

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nc6

The Panno Variation is the other popular way for Black to meet the Fianchetto Variation. It is named after the Argentinean Grandmaster Oscar Panno. He was a very consistent man. It seems that he liked to play the same moves irrespective of what White did. We have already seen the Panno Variation of the Sämisch where Black played ...Nc6, ...a7-a6 and ...Rb8 in order to prepare ...b7-b5. Now we have the Panno Variation of the Fianchetto where Black plans ...Nc6, ...a7-a6 and ...Rb8 in order to prepare ...b7-b5.

7 Nc3 a6 8 d5

The other main line is 8 h3 and that is examined in Games 45 and 46.

8...Na5 (Diagram 14)

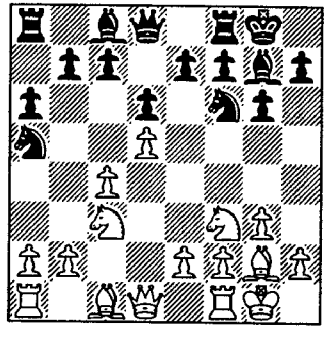


Diagram 14
Is the knight bad on the edge?

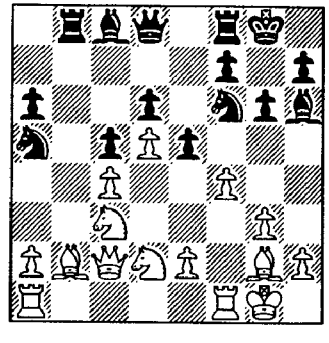


Diagram 15
Black is sniping from the wings

One of the first things you are taught when you learn how to play chess is that knights are badly placed on the edge of the board. Little rhymes have even been made up to help drum this point home. 'A knight on the rim is dim' is a particular favourite of chess teachers. And yet, here we have a major opening system, where a knight voluntarily takes up a precarious-looking position on the edge of the board. Nor should this position be compared with other variations of the

King's Indian where Black plays ...Na6, as that piece is usually just *en route* to the healthy c5-square. Here the knight on a5 is really stuck. So why does Black play like this? Well, it is all part of his scheme to develop pressure against the white queenside, and in particular the c4-square. This pressure will be increased when he plays the move ...b7-b5 and he hopes that the white pieces will end up tied down defending c4. The most likely scenarios are that the knight on a5 either emerges triumphant on c4 or it just drops off.

9 Nd2 c5

Black must prevent b2-b4.

10 Qc2

White reinforces his knight on c3 against the long range pressure from the bishop on g7. The point is that once Black plays ...b7-b5 he is going to need to reply b2-b3.

10...Rb8 11 b3 b5 12 Bb2 Bh6

A surprising switch after seven consecutive moves on the queenside. It is not inconsistent, though, with Black's overall strategy. He now threatens to take on d2 and then on c4 so White has to block the bishop out with f4. This weakens the kingside and White's central position so Black will try and develop threats there while White is still tied down defending c4. Basically, Black can't make any further progress on the queenside. He needs to open a second front.

13 f4

Why doesn't White just play the solid 13 e3, you may well ask? Well, he would if he could but he can't. After 13...bxc4 14 Nxc4 lets the knight on a5 off very lightly and 14 bxc4 Bf5! 15 Nce4 (15 e4 Bxd2!) 15...Nxe4 16 Bxe4 Bxe4 17 Nxe4 Nxc4! is very good for Black.

13...bxc4 14 bxc4 e5! (Diagram 15)

This position has been reached literally hundreds of times in top class chess. The tactical justification for Black's last move is that 15 fxe5 fails to 15...Bxd2!. After 14...e5 play usually continues 15 dxe6 Bxe6 16 Nd5 and this is the subject of Game 44. If you have gained the impression that Black has the initiative and White has been merely reacting to his threats then you are not mistaken. White has been willing to suffer because that horrible knight still remains on a5.

Theoretical?

The main lines of the Panno are very theoretical. You should certainly know it well up to move 15. There are many traps, especially for White, to avoid. Even grandmasters playing White have been known to emerge from the opening with their position in tatters.

Statistics

The diagram position above after 14...e5 has been reached nearly 300

times in international chess with White scoring 53%. The position after 8 h3 Rb8, the subject of Games 45 and 46, has occurred just over a thousand times with White scoring 54%. In the Panno as a whole White scored 57%.

Illustrative Games

Game 44
□ **Yusupov** ■ **Kindermann**
Baden Baden 1992

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nc6 7 Nc3 a6 8 d5 Na5 9 Nd2 c5 10 Qc2 Rb8 11 b3 b5 12 Bb2 Bh6 13 f4 bxc4 14 bxc4 e5! 15 dxe6 Bxe6

This keeps up the pressure on c4. 15...fxe6 16 Nce4! is good for White.

16 Nd5 Rxb2!?

We are still knee-deep in theory. There are many examples in this book of Black giving up the exchange to remove the opposing dark-squared bishop. One can't fault the logic of it here as the dark squares on White's kingside were weakened when he was forced to play f2-f4. However, as Black seems to be struggling in the main line, serious thought should be given to the alternative 16...Bxd5 17 cxd5 Ng4.

17 Qxb2 Bg7 18 Qc1!

Practice has shown this to be the best square. After 18 Qa3 Nxc4! 19 Nxc4 Nxd5 20 Rac1 Nb4 Black has no cause for complaint.

18...Bxd5 19 cxd5 Ng4 20 Rb1 Bd4+ (Diagram 16)

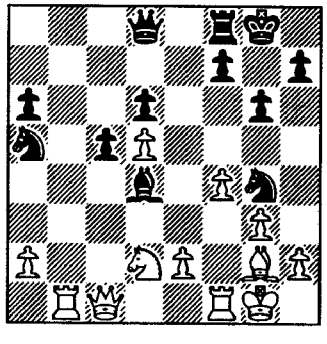


Diagram 16
Black attacks on the dark squares

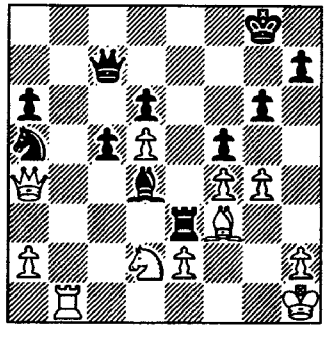


Diagram 17
Now White attacks the light squares

The attack on the dark squares begins. Black has also played the immediate 20...Ne3.

21 Kh1 Ne3

Note how Black is in no rush to take the exchange back. After 21...Nf2+ 22 Rxf2 Bxf2 23 Nf3 White has the advantage. The black forces are totally disjointed and White will also have a powerful centre after he has played e4.

22 Qa3 Re8 23 Qd3 Qa8

Black would prefer to take the bishop on g2 and the pawn on d5 than the rook. White doesn't give him the option.

24 Bf3! Nxf1 25 Nxf1 Qa7

So Black could finally find nothing better than taking the rook. With the text he plans to play ...c5-c4.

26 Nd2 Re3 27 Qc2 f5?

Black plays like a man with a death wish. Now his king is totally exposed. Other moves would have left him only a bit worse.

28 Qa4 Qc7 29 g4! (Diagram 17)

White goes straight for the jugular. He is going to infiltrate on the light squares.

NOTE: Opposite-coloured bishop positions tend to favour the attacking side as if he attacks on the colour complex of his bishop then the opposing bishop is often reduced to the role of spectator.

29...fxg4 30 Bxg4 Kg7 31 Nf3 Bf6 32 Be6 c4 33 f5! Rxe2 34 Rg1 Rf2? 35 Qe8! Black resigns

Black can't stop 36 Rxg6+! hxg6 37 Qxg6+ and Qg8 mate.

I hope you haven't thought that I have forgotten to comment about that knight on a5. I was just saving it for the end. White took great care to stop it from getting into play. By the end it just looked ridiculous, stuck on a5 while his king was coming under fire.

NOTE: One can sometimes get away with having a badly-placed piece in the opening, but as the game progresses and pieces are exchanged the drawbacks become more apparent. 2 against 1 is more dangerous superiority of force than 7 against 6.

Game 45
□ **Partenheimer** ■ **Nunn**
Bundesliga 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nc6 7 Nc3 a6 8 h3

This is the main alternative to 8 d5.

8...Rb8 9 e4

Certain players prefer to play 9 Be3 in order to keep the long diagonal open for the bishop on g2.

9...b5

9...e5 10 Be3 (10 d5 is also good) can easily lead to a passive position. If Black wants to play like this then he is better off with 6...Nbd7.

10 e5 Nd7

Black has an important alternative in 10...dxe5. This leads to a very messy endgame after 11 dxe5 Qxd1 12 Rxd1 Nd7. If White now plays 13 cxb5 then Black takes on e5. Therefore White must sacrifice a pawn with 13 e6 and after 13...fxe6 14 cxb5 axb5 15 Bf4 b4 16 Na4 Nb6 17 Nxb6 Rxb6 the position is difficult to assess.

11 e6

The main line is 11 cxb5 and that is considered in the next game.

11...fxe6 12 d5 exd5 13 cxd5

This position is generally quoted as unclear as, in return for the pawn he has sacrificed, White has some nice squares for his pieces.

13...Na7

Twenty years ago, in the battle of the doctors, Dr Nunn lost this position with Black against Dr Hübner. In that game he played 13...Na5. He obviously did not let the intervening years go to waste.

14 Nd4 Nf6 15 Re1 b4 16 Nce2 c5! 17 dxc6 e5 18 Nb3 d5 (Diagram 18)

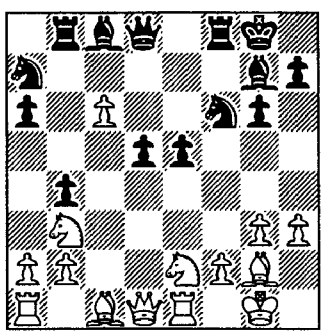


Diagram 18
Black has taken over the centre

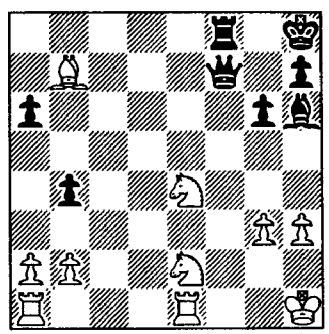


Diagram 19
A very deep resignation!

Black's enterprising play has earned him a big centre and he now threatens to re-establish his material advantage with 19...Nxc6. White could try 19 c7 but after 19...Qxc7 20 Bxd5+ Nxd5 21 Qxd5+ Kh8 there are glaring holes on the light squares around his king.

19 Bg5 Nxc6 20 Bxf6 Qxf6 21 Qxd5+ Kh8!?

21...Rf7 would have prevented 22 Qxc6, but Black encourages it.

22 Qxc6 Qxf2+ 23 Kh1 Bb7 24 Qxb7 Rxb7 25 Bxb7 e4 26 Nd2 Bh6 27 Nxe4 Qf7 (Diagram 19) White resigns

Perhaps White was just demonstrating that he too had seen the variation 28 Bc6 Qc4 29 Bb7 Qb5 30 Nd6 Qd7! when Black threatens not only the knight on d6 but also a decisive check on h3.

Game 46
□ **Arkell** ■ **Buckley**
South Wales Masters 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nc6 7 Nc3 a6 8 h3 Rb8 9 e4 b5 10 e5 Nd7 11 cxb5 axb5 12 Ng5!

White now has two threats. The first is to take the bishop on c6 and the other is to play 13 e6. Black has no choice but to sacrifice a piece for White's centre pawns. There are several ways to do this.

12...dxe5

The position after 12...Nxd4 13 Qxd4 Nxe5 14 Qh4 h6 has occurred in numerous games between the two stalwarts of the weekend tournament circuit, Keith Arkell and Mark Hebden. Black has only two pawns for the piece but if he can get his centre rolling White may find that he has very few good squares on which to put all his pieces. Still, the current view seems to be that after 15 Nf3 Nxf3 16 Bxf3 e6 17 Qxd8 Rxd8 18 a4! White has the better chances in the endgame.

13 Bxc6 exd4 14 Nxb5

14 Ne2 h6 15 Nf3 e5 would be an example of the black centre rolling. White should steer clear of this.

14...Rb6 (Diagram 20)

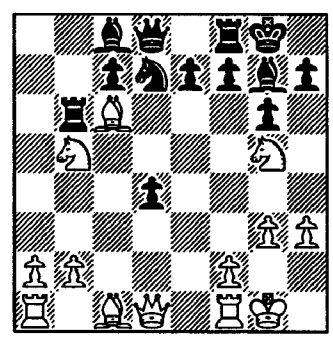


Diagram 20
A critical position

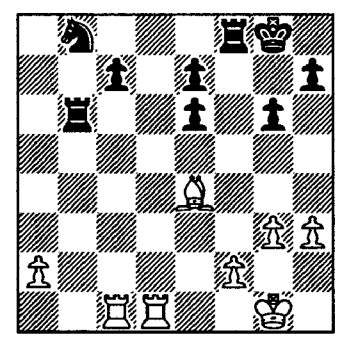


Diagram 21
The endgame is good for White

White is a piece for a pawn up but in a bit of a tangle. If the bishop retreats Black just takes the knight so let's have a look at his other attempts to save the piece.

1) He can protect the bishop with his queen. 15 Qf3 obviously won't do because of 15...Ne5, while 15 Qc2 also fails to do the job on account of 15...d3! 16 Qc4? (16 Qxd3 limits the damage) 16...Ne5 17 Qh4 and Black calmly stops the mate threat with 17...h6.

2) White can exchange his bishop for the black knight. That certainly

saves the piece, but after 15 Bxd7 Qxd7 16 Na3 h6! Black's next move will be ...Qxh3 with very strong play on the light squares.

3) He can defend his bishop with 15 Na7. Most of White's efforts have concentrated around this move. The variations are complicated but the fact is that after 15...Nb8! the white knight will not return from its foray deep into enemy territory. For example, 16 Nxc8 Rxc6 17 Na7 Rb6! or 16 Bg2 Bb7 17 a4 Bxg2 18 Kxg2 c6 and in both cases it is only a matter of time before Black regains the piece with, at least, an equal game.

4) Arkell chooses another method. He doesn't try and save the piece but returns it in order to take the game into a favourable endgame.

15 Nxd4! Nb8!

Now White has two pieces attacked and must lose one of them.

16 Nde6! Qxd1 17 Rxd1 Bxe6 18 Nxe6 fxe6 19 Be4!

The first new move but it wouldn't surprise me if Arkell had already played this in previous unpublished games. A previous game, Salov-A. Kuzmin, USSR 1981, had concluded 19 Bg2 Bxb2 20 Rb1 Bd4! 21 Be3 Bxe3 22 fxe3 Nd7 23 Rxb6 Draw agreed.

19...Bxb2 20 Rb1 Bxc1 21 Rbxc1 (Diagram 21)

The difference with the game above is that Black can no longer play 20...Bd4 as the white rook on b1 is defended. White now has a clear advantage in the endgame. The remaining moves were:

21...Na6 22 Rd2 Rfb8 23 Kf1 Rd6 24 Re2 c5 25 Rc3 Rbb6 26 Bd3 Nb4 27 Bc4 Kf7 28 Rce3 Kf6 29 Rf3+ Kg7 30 Rfe3 Kf6 31 a4 Nd5 32 Rf3+ Kg7 33 a5 Rb7 34 a6 Ra7 35 h4 h5 36 Re5 Nb6 37 Bxe6 Rxa6 38 Rf7+ Kh6 39 Rxe7 c4 40 Rc5 Ra1+ 41 Kg2 Re1 42 Rcc7! Rd7! 43 Rexd7 Nxd7 44 Bxd7 Re7 45 f4! c3 46 f5! Kh7 47 f6 Rf7 48 Kf3? Rxf6+ 49 Ke2 Rf7 50 Kd1 Kh6 51 Kc2 Rf3? 52 Rxc3 Rf7:53 Bc8 Rf6 54 Kd2 g5 55 hxg5+ Kxg5 56 Rc5+ Kg6 57 Ke3 h4 58 g4 h3 59 Rh5 Rb6 60 Bf5+ Kg7 61 Rxh3 Rb3+ 62 Bd3 Black resigns

Summary

1) The Gallagher variation is a very sharp line which is based as much upon psychology as anything else. The players who play this line with White like to feel they are in control of the situation. They don't mind complications, but in their own time after they have built up their position first. They are not especially fond of the chaos that can arrive from the word go in this variation.

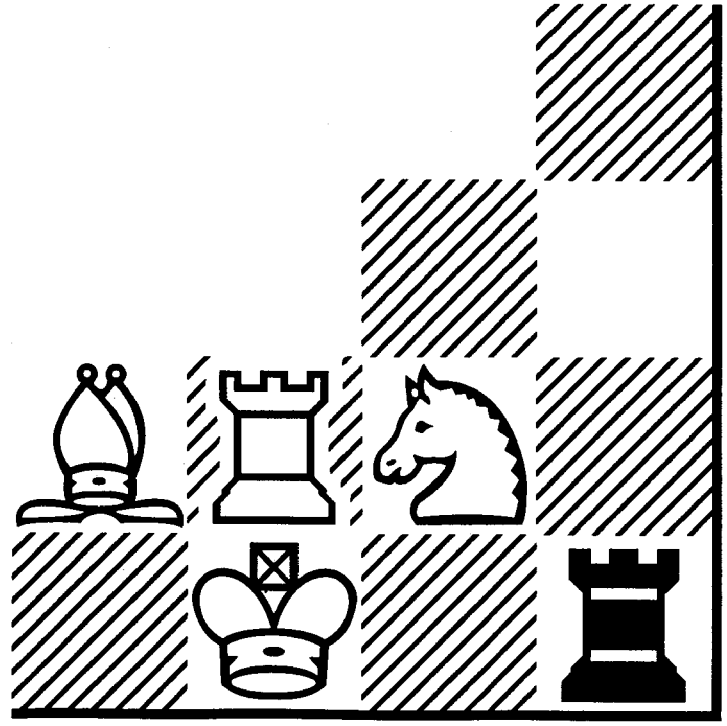
2) 8...a6 has become a very respectable line. At the moment it looks like one of the best ways for Black to play against the Fianchetto.

3) The Panno Variation can also lead to extremely complex double-edged games after both 8 d5 and 8 h3. Theoretically speaking, Black is struggling to prove equality.

Chapter Seven

The Four Pawns Attack

- 6...c5: The Main Line 7 d5 e6 8 Be2 exd5 9 cxd5
- 6...c5: Early Deviations
- The Modern 6...Na6



1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 (Diagram 1)

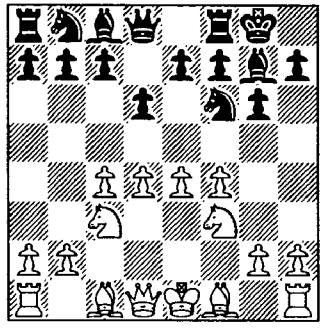


Diagram 1
The Four Pawns Attack

The Four Pawns Attack is the most aggressive way for White to meet the King's Indian. It is a truly dangerous system for the unprepared player to face. By the fifth move White has constructed a massive centre with the simple intention of blowing Black away. He will hope to achieve this by advancing e4-e5 at the right moment. If you had a centre like this a hundred years ago then it was assumed that victory was only a matter of time. Since then chess has moved on and strategies have been devised for combating such centres.

What are the methods of combating such a centre?

Black must counter in the centre straightaway. While White has been moving pawns Black has been moving pieces and acquired a small lead in development. Black must try and open the position before White has consolidated. If he succeeds, then the drawbacks to White's risky strategy may become apparent. By moving all his central pawns forward he has weakened a whole group of squares behind the centre. If the centre can be liquidated then Black may well be able to establish advanced outposts on squares such as e3 or d3. But that is a long way in the future and a big 'if'. The Four Pawns Attack is a respectable variation that has evolved over the decades. The centre cannot be destroyed so easily. The point is, though, that if Black doesn't try he is likely to be heading to the showers around move 20.

In the King's Indian Black usually counters in the centre by ...e7-e5 or ...c7-c5. In the Four Pawns Attack Black has traditionally played ...c7-c5 as it was thought too difficult for him to arrange ...e7-e5. Whilst 6...c5 is still the main line and the subject of our first two sub-sections, a new method for Black based on 6...Na6 followed by ...e7-e5 has emerged in recent times. This is the subject of our third sub-section.

6...c5: The Main Line 7 d5 e6 8 Be2 exd5 9 cxd5

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 7 d5 e6 8 Be2 exd5 9 cxd5 (Diagram 2)

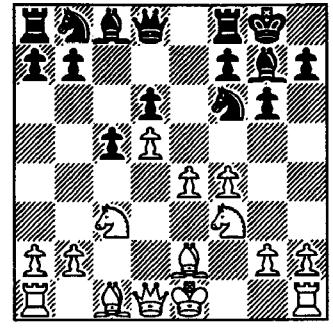


Diagram 2
A typical Four Pawns position

The moves leading up to this position will be examined in the next sub-section. Here we shall start our coverage with Black's 9th move. He has three options. The solid 9...Bg4, the sensible but risky 9...Re8 and the wild 9...b5. They have each been allocated a game.

Theoretical?

The main line of the Four Pawns Attack is extremely theoretical. This is the case in nearly all sharp variations as the slightest slip can cost the game. With 9...Bg4 Black might be able to reduce the workload a little but if you want to play 9...Re8 then you should be prepared to burn the midnight oil.

Statistics

In just over 2000 games from the diagram position White has scored 56%. White has scored 69% against 9...b5 when he plays 10 e5. After 9...Re8 White has scored 60% but only 48% against 9...Bg4. It looks like solid is best in the Four Pawns Attack.

Illustrative Games

Game 47
□ **Banikas** ■ **Gallagher**
French League 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 7 d5 e6 8 Be2

exd5 9 cxd5 Bg4

This is Black's most solid and reliable way of meeting the main line of the Four Pawns Attack. The idea behind 9...Bg4 is to exchange the bishop for the knight on f3. Without the knight White will find it difficult to play e4-e5. There is another reason why Black should exchange a pair of minor pieces. He has less space than White and, therefore, will find it difficult to accommodate a full set of pieces.



TIP: With less space it is usually a good idea to exchange pieces. This reduces the importance of a space advantage as your pieces will no longer have to battle each other for precious squares. In this particular example Black will no longer have to worry about whether to put his knight or bishop on d7.

10 0-0

Black's last move did not actually prevent White from playing 10 e5 – it just rendered it harmless. The position after 10 e5 dxe5 11 fxe5 Nfd7 12 e6 Bxf3! 13 Bxf3 Ne5 is thought to be about level.

10...Nbd7 11 Re1

11 h3 Bxf3 12 Bxf3 Re8 13 Re1 just transposes. White does have the option of the ultra-aggressive 13 g4 but this is very risky. Black should reply 13...h6 and meet 14 h4 with ...h5!.

11...Re8 12 h3 Bxf3 13 Bxf3 (Diagram 3)

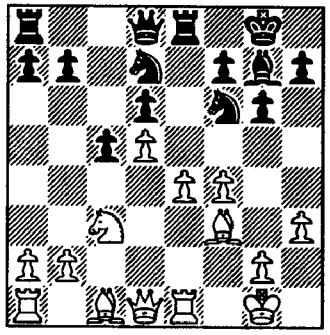


Diagram 3
A typical centre vs queenside situation

The most important factor in the position is the unbalanced pawn structure. White has a 2-1 majority in the centre whilst Black has 3-2 in his favour on the queenside. Pawn majorities need to be pushed so White will be looking to play e4-e5 and Black to expand on the queenside. Normally it is an advantage to have an extra central pawn but here this is counter-balanced by the fact that it is easier for Black to advance his majority.

13...Qa5!

This is the most accurate way to prepare ...b7-b5.

14 Be3

White could also contemplate 14 a4 to stop ...b7-b5 but after 14...c4! 15 Be3 Nc5 16 Bxc5 (otherwise the knight infiltrates on d3) 16...Qxc5+ 17 Kh1 Nd7! the black pieces co-ordinate well.

14...b5 15 a3 Nb6! 16 e5

16 Bf2 is an important alternative. White more or less abandoned this move after the game Kozul-Nunn, Wijk aan Zee 1991. Play continued 16...Nc4 17 Qc2 Nd7 18 Be2 Rab8 19 a4 b4 20 Bxc4? bxc3 21 b3 a6! (this keeps the bishop out of b5) 22 Rec1 Nb6 23 Bf1 c4! 24 Bxc4 Nxc4 25 bxc4 Rb2 with a winning position for Black. Vaisser, however, has tried to rehabilitate this line for White. Instead of 20 Bxc4 he gives 20 Nb5! Nxb2 21 Nxd6 b3 22 Qb1 Nxa4 23 Ra3! as unclear. To be honest, nobody really knows what's going on in this position.

16...Nc4! 17 exf6 Nxe3 18 Rxe3 Rxe3 19 fxg7 Rae8 (Diagram 4)

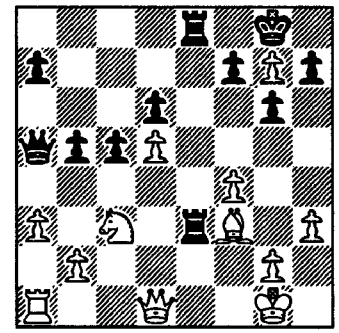


Diagram 4
Black has more than enough play

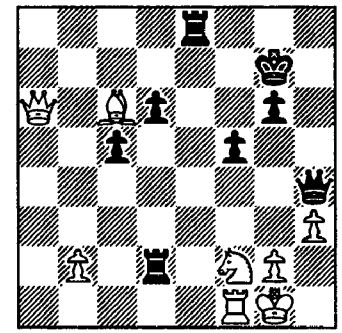


Diagram 5
White forces Black to find the win

This is the position Black had in mind when he embarked on the complications with 15...Nb6. White has a slight material advantage but this is compensated for by the fact that the black rooks are extremely active and the mobility of the white bishop is restricted by the pawn on d5. The pawn on g7 is of course doomed.

20 f5 b4 21 axb4 Qxb4 22 Qd2 Qh4! 23 fxg6 hxg6 24 Rf1 a6! 25 Nd1

Amazingly enough, this is the first new move of the game. Previously 25 Qf2 Qd4 26 Kh1 R3e5! had been played. White can probably hold the ending but it is more pleasant for Black.

25...R3e5 26 Nf2 f5 27 Bd1?! Kxg7 28 Qa5?! Rxd5 29 Bf3 Rd4 30 Qxa6 Rd2! 31 Bc6?? (Diagram 5)

White totally lost the plot over the last few moves and he caps it off with an outright blunder. 31 Qa3! still offered hope.

31...Re1!

Now 32 Rxe1 Qxf2+ 33 Kh2 Qxe1 just loses a piece. Black is threatening 32...Qxf2+ anyway and the only way to stave off immediate defeat is by 32 Nh1. After the game my opponent said that he would rather resign than play such a sick move.

32 Qb7+ Kh6 33 Ng4+ fxg4 34 Qf7 Rxf1+ 35 Qxf1 Kg7! White resigns

---

Game 48
□ **Vaisser** ■ **Bauer**
French Cup 1992

---

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 7 d5 e6 8 Be2 exd5 9 cxd5 Re8 10 e5

This leads to enormous complications. White can also defend his e-pawn:

1) Not with 10 Qc2? as there is the trick 10...Nxe4! 11 Nxe4 Bf5 12 Bd3 Bxe4 13 Bxe4 Qe7 14 Nd2 f5 when Black regains the piece and remains a pawn to the good.

2) 10 Nd2, however, is an important alternative. The current view is that Black obtains good play after 10...Na6 11 0-0 Rb8!.

10...dxe5 11 fxe5 Ng4 12 Bg5

12 0-0 Nxe5 leads to a similar sort of position. The passed d-pawn is always going to provide White with some compensation for the pawn.

12...Qb6

After this move Black will at least get a pawn for his troubles. If he plays 12...f6 he will have no compensation for his suffering. A typical continuation is 13 exf6 Bxf6 14 Qd2 Bxg5 15 Qxg5 Qxg5 16 Nxg5 with an advantageous endgame for White.

13 0-0 Nxe5 14 Nxe5

14 d6 is also played quite often. Vaisser gives the following exciting variation as best play: 14...c4+! 15 Kh1 Qxb2! 16 Rc1 Nxf3 17 Bxf3 Bxc3 18 Rb1! Qxa2 19 Bd5 Bf5 20 Rxf5 gxf5 21 Bxf7+ Kxf7 22 Qh5+ Kf8 23 Bh6+ Bg7 24 Qxf5+ Kg8 25 Qd5+ Kh8 26 Bxg7+ Kxg7 27 Qg5+ with a draw by perpetual check.

14...Bxe5 15 Bc4 (Diagram 6)

White plans an attack against the f7-square.

15...Bf5!? 16 Nb5

White needs to play d6 even if it costs him dear.

16...a6! 17 d6!

White can't back out now. He is willing to sacrifice the kitchen sink to get at the black king.

17...axb5 18 Bxf7+! Kxf7 19 Rxf5+! gxf5 20 Qh5+ Kf8!

Vaisser relates how for many years this move was thought to lose because of some erroneous analysis which even he believed. 20...Kg7 is also good enough for a draw but 20...Ke6 loses.

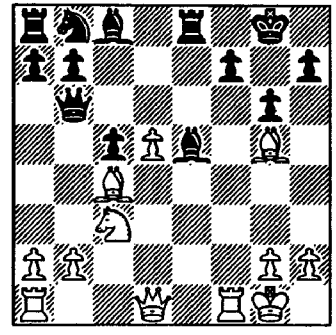


Diagram 6
White has a strong attack

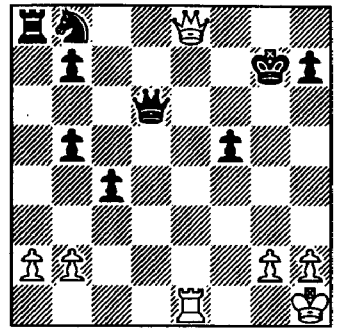


Diagram 7
How should Black defend?

21 Bh6+

In a later game (Vaisser-Apicella, French Ch. 1996) White made a half-hearted winning attempt with 21 Qxh7 but after 21...Qxd6 22 Bh6+ Qxh6 23 Qxh6+ Bg7 24 Qd6+ Kg8 25 Qd5+ Kh8 26 Qxf5 Nc6 27 Qh5+ Kg8 28 Qd5+ Kh7 29 Qf5+ he took the perpetual check. Black has more than enough material for the queen so White would only risk losing by playing on.

21...Bg7 22 Bxg7+ Kxg7 23 Qxe8 c4+ 24 Kh1 Qxd6 25 Re1 (Diagram 7) 25...Qf8!

This came as a great shock for Vaisser. According to theory at the time Black was supposed to play 25...Ra6 here and lose after 26 Re7+ Kh6 27 Qf8+ Kg5 28 Qg8+. After Bauer's new move it quickly dawned on Vaisser that if he didn't take perpetual check it was going to be he who lost the game.

26 Qe5+ Kg8 27 Qd5+ Kh8 28 Qe5+ Draw agreed

That is about as theoretical as it gets in the King's Indian. In his book on the Four Pawns Attack, Vaisser spends the equivalent of 80 (yes, that's eighty) pages purely on the analysis of 9...Re8.

Game 49
□ **Blokh** ■ **Kichev**
corr USSR 1991

---

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 7 d5 e6 8 Be2 exd5 9 cxd5 b5?!

This move has led a chequered existence. First it was the main line and then was condemned as unsound. Then it bounced back because of 10...Nfd7 but now it is on the way out again. The tactical justifica-

tion lies in the fact that Black can meet 10 Bxb5 with 10...Nxe4! 11 Nxe4 Qa5+ 12 Nc3 Bxc3+ 13 bxc3 Qxb5. 12 Kf2 is better but after 12...Qxb5 13 Nxd6 Qa6 Black has good compensation for the pawn.

10 e5! (Diagram 8)

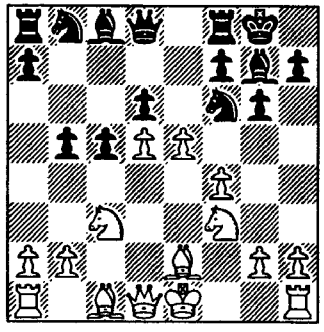


Diagram 8
White strikes in the centre

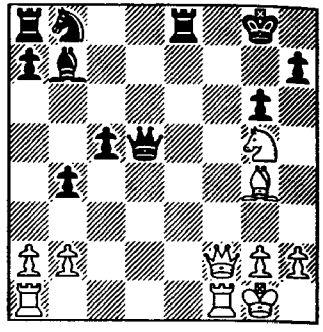


Diagram 9
Black must accept a lost endgame

10...dxe5

The Ukrainian grandmaster Frolov had some initial success with 10...Nfd7 until it was established that 11 Bxb5! leaves Black in a difficult position. After 11...dxe5 12 0-0 White should meet both 12...Ba6 and 12...Qb6 with 13 a4!. The d-pawn is very strong in this position.

11 fxe5 Ng4 12 Bg5 f6

As in Game 48 Black has the choice between this move and ...Qb6. 12...Qb6 is not quite as effective here as the pawn on b5 gets in the way of the queen but Vaisser still considers it the lesser evil.

13 exf6 Bxf6 14 Qd2 Re8

Both 14...Bxg5 15 Nxg5!? and 14...Bf5 15 0-0 b4 16 Nd1 Nd7 17 Nf2! are in White's favour. The main problem for Black is White's d-pawn.

15 0-0 b4 16 Nd1 Bb7 17 Nf2! Bxg5 18 Nxg5 Nf6 19 Ng4! Nxg4 20 Bxg4 Qxd5 21 Qf2! (Diagram 9)

Because of his exposed king Black is forced into an ending where he loses the exchange immediately.

21...Qd4 22 Qxd4 cxd4 23 Be6+ Rxe6 24 Nxe6 Nc6 25 Rf6 Ne5 26 Raf1 Nd7 27 Rf7 Bd5 28 Rg7+ Kh8 29 Rxd7 Bxe6 30 Rxd4 Bxa2 31 Rxb4 a5 32 Rb7 Black resigns

6...c5: Early Deviations

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 7 d5

This is by far the most common reaction. White blocks the centre and

plans to follow up with e4-e5. He can also play 7 dxc5 and this leads to a completely different sort of game. That is the subject of Game 51.

7...e6

The most logical move. Black plans to exchange on d5 in order to open the e-file for his rook. There is another strategy which involves sacrificing the b-pawn in order to gain some open files on the queenside for his major pieces. This usually starts with 7...b5!? 8 cxb5 a6!.

8 Be2

White prepares to castle. An alternative is to play 8 dxe6. A very different sort of position will arise where White hopes that his active pawns on e4 and f4 will enable him to develop a kingside attack. The main drawback to 8 dxe6 is that after 8...fxe6 9 Bd3 Nc6 the knight has easy access to White's main weakness, the hole on d4.

8...exd5 (Diagram 10)

Now the main line is 9 cxd5 but in Game 50 we examine the alternative capture 9 exd5.

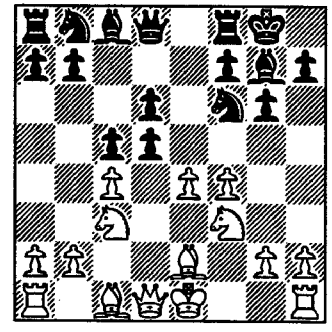


Diagram 10
White has three possible moves

The speculative 9 e5?! enjoyed a period of popularity in the 1980's but was discarded because of the reply 9...Ne4!. On a rare return to top level chess, Barsov-Ye Jiangchuan, FIDE World Championship, Moscow 2001, White had nothing new to show. After 10 cxd5 Nxc3 11 bxc3 Nd7! 12 e6 fxe6 13 dxe6 Nb6! 14 0-0 Bxe6 15 Ng5 Bd5! Black was a pawn up with active pieces. 10 Nxd5 is also possible but after 10...dxe5 11 fxe5 Nc6 12 Bd3 f5 Black has a good game.

Theoretical?

Nowhere near as theoretical as the previous section but Black should at least know the initial plan against each line. He ignores these variations at his peril, as the statistics below make only too clear.

Statistics

With 7 dxc5 White has scored 61% from 419 games and with 9 exd5, 52%. White has also done well with the rare 8 dxe6, scoring 63%. I think there are a whole load of King's Indian players out there who haven't got a clue what to do against these moves.

Illustrative Games

Game 50
□ **Conquest** ■ **Mestel**
Hastings 1986/87

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 d6 3 Nc3 g6 4 e4 Bg7 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 7 d5 e6 8 Be2 exd5 9 exd5

This is a more cautious and less popular approach than 9 cxd5. White keeps the pawn structure balanced and hopes that his extra space will be enough for an edge. However, his position would be much healthier if his pawn were back on f2. On f4 it blocks in the bishop on c1 and weakens squares on the e-file. Black's main goal should be to stop White from advancing f4-f5.

9...Bf5

The most logical move, immediately taking control of e4. A more radical idea is 9...Nh5!? 10 0-0 Bxc3 11 bxc3 when Black must now blockade the f5-square. He can do this at once with 11...f5 or with 11...Ng7 intending ...Nf5. In the case of the latter White may sacrifice a pawn with 12 f5 to open the position but Black has done OK in practice.

10 0-0 Re8 11 Bd3

Black plans to meet 11 Nh4 with 11...Ne4!, not fearing the shattering of his kingside pawn structure. In return he will increase his grip in the centre, e.g. 12 Nxf5 gxf5 13 Nxe4 fxe4 is fine for Black.

11...Qd7!

Better than 11...Ne4 12 Nxe4 Bxe4 13 Bxe4 Rxe4 14 Ng5! as White can obtain good attacking chances by playing f4-f5 next move.

12 h3

White plans to lift Black's blockade by playing g4 – risky, as we shall see. Again 12 Nh4 would have been met by 12...Ne4!.

12...Na6 13 a3

A standard reaction to prevent ...Nb4.

13...Nc7 14 g4

White had prepared this advance with his 12th move. It doesn't mean that it's good. 14 Qc2 is well met by 14...b5!. Black will be more than happy if he can exchange his b-pawn for the d-pawn as this will give him more control in the centre and liberate his knight on c7.

14...Bxg4!? (Diagram 11)

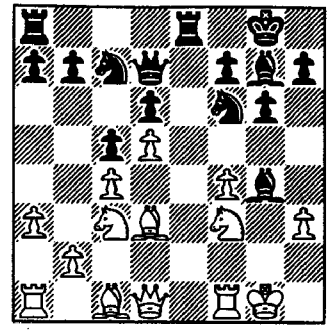


Diagram 11
This sacrifice guarantees a draw

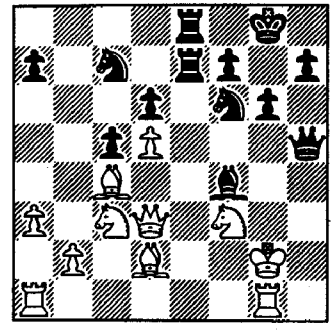


Diagram 12
A second bishop sacrifice!

An interesting, though not necessarily courageous decision. The point is that it is very easy for a grandmaster to calculate that the sacrifice guarantees at least a draw. 14...Bxd3 15 Qxd3 b5! 16 cxb5 Reb8 17 a4 a6 is a reasonable alternative with good Benko-style compensation for the pawn.



TIP: When playing a sacrifice you don't have to work out everything in advance. If you see a position a few moves ahead which looks fine then go for it. You can continue your calculations when you get there, but this time with full sight of the board.

15 hxg4 Qxg4+ 16 Kh2 Qh5+ 17 Kg2 Qg4+ 18 Kh2

White cannot avoid the draw as 18 Kh1 Qh3+ 19 Nh2 Nh5 lands him in trouble. The moment of decision has arrived for Black.

18...b5!?

Mestel plays for the win, but with a most surprising move on the queenside. We saw a similar idea in the notes to move 14 – Black wants to weaken White's protection of d5 as if this pawn drops then more Black pieces can come flooding into the attack.

19 Rg1 Qh5+ 20 Kg3?

Straightaway Black is rewarded for his bravery. Conquest chooses the wrong square for his king. He should have played 20 Kg2.

20...bxc4 21 Bxc4 Re7!

Black prepares to double rooks on the e-file.

22 Qd3 Bh6 23 Kg2

White was worried about 23...Bxf4+ 24 Bxf4 Qg4+ so he makes this rather sad admission of his earlier mistake.

23...Rae8 24 Bd2 Bxf4!! (Diagram 12)

With the investment of a second piece the Black attack becomes irresistible.

25 Bxf4 Qg4+ 26 Bg3

This is why the white king had retreated from g3 – so he would have this defence. However, it is still not enough to save him.

26...Re3 27 Qf1 Nh5! 28 Kh2 Rxf3 29 Qh3 Qxc4 White resigns

Game 51
☐ I.Sokolov ■ Xie Jun
Dutch Team Championship, 1999

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 7 dxc5 Qa5!

If it wasn't for this move then 6...c5 would not be the main line against the Four Pawns Attack. Few Black players are willing to defend the passive position that arises after 7...dxc5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 e5.

8 Bd3

8 cxd6 Nxe4 should be avoided at all costs by White.

8...Qxc5 9 Qe2

White plans Be3 and 0-0. Much of the play will now revolve around the battle for the d4-square. Black will play moves such as ...Nc6, ...Bg4xf3 and ...Nf6-d7, all of which increase his control of d4, while White will try and defend it with Be3, Qf2 and a rook to the d-file.

9...Nc6 10 Be3 Qa5 11 0-0 Bg4 (Diagram 13) 12 Rc1

Advancing the queenside pawns too early can lead to trouble. Terzic-Cvitan, Bosnia 1999 continued 12 a3 Nd7 13 b4 Qh5 14 Qd2 Bxf3 15 Rxf3 Nd4 16 Rh3? Qxh3! 17 gxh3 Nf3+ and Black won the exchange and the game.

12...Nd7 13 Qf2 Nc5 14 Bb1 Bxf3 15 gxf3

Recapturing with the queen would allow Black to occupy the d4-square. Besides, White is happy to take with the pawn as he hopes to develop an attack along the semi-open g-file.

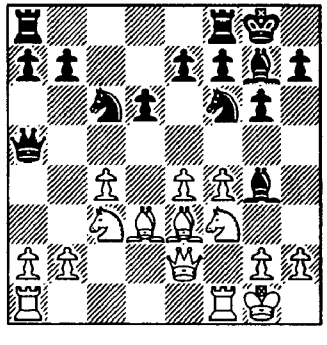


Diagram 13
The battle revolves around d4

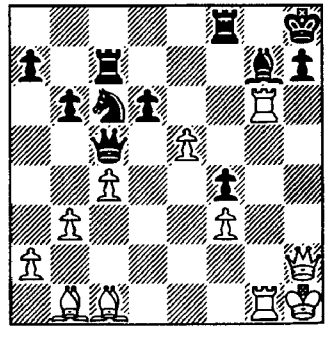


Diagram 14
The bishop on b1 joins the attack

15...Na4

NOTE: It is usually a good idea for Black to swap of the white knight on c3 in the King's Indian. This is true here, as without the knight Black will find it easier to develop an initiative on the queenside and will no longer have to concern himself with White playing an annoying Nd5.

16 Nxa4 Qxa4 17 Rfd1 b6?!

I don't like this move as it leaves the black queen cut off from the kingside theatre. A better plan for Black was demonstrated in Topalov-Dolmatov, Elenite 1995: 17...Rac8 18 b3 Qa5 19 Rd5 Qc7 20 Rcd1 b6 21 a3 Rfd8 22 h4 e6 23 Rg5 Qe7 24 h5 Qf6. Now there is no mating attack as the black queen helps in the defence. The game was eventually drawn in 75 moves.

18 Kh1 Rac8 19 h4! Rc7 20 h5 Nb4 21 hxg6 fxg6 22 b3 Qa5 23 Rg1! Kh8?!

Black had probably intended 23...Qh5+ here but after 24 Kg2 and 25 Rh1 the queen will have to go back to the queenside.

24 Rg5 Qa3 25 Qh2 e5

Black wanted to stop White playing e4-e5 as that would bring the long range bishop on b1 into the attack.

26 Rcg1 Nc6 27 Rxg6 exf4 28 Bc1 Qc5 29 e5! (Diagram 14)

Despite Black's efforts White gets to play this move anyway. There is nothing to be done for Black now.

29...Nxe5 30 Re6 Bf6 31 Qh6 Black resigns

The Modern 6...Na6

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 Na6 (Diagram 15)

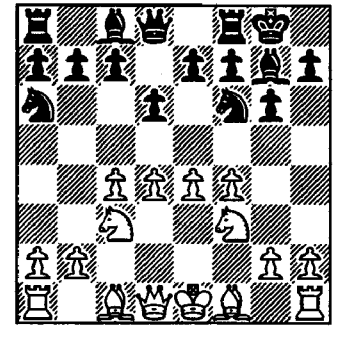


Diagram 15
6...Na6: A provocative move

At the start of the 1990's the move ...Na6 became extremely fashionable in many variations of the King's Indian. Nobody seriously assumed that Black could play it against the Four Pawns Attack, but he can! It even received the ultimate seal of approval when Garry Kasparov started playing it. Nowadays it is almost as popular as 6...c5.

What is the point of 6...Na6?

The basic idea is to enable Black to strike in the centre with ...e7-e5. He can't do this at once because after 6...e5 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 Nxe5 he is just a pawn down. If, though, he could play ...Nc5 in this position he would get serious counterplay against White's centre. This is the way Black plays against the most natural move 7 Be2 and that is examined in Game 52.

White players soon went off taking the pawn and started blocking the centre with d4-d5. At first they used to do this with the bishop on e2, but then realised that they may as well play 7 Bd3 if they are just going to block the centre. This move is covered in Game 53. 7 e5 is the most overtly aggressive move available to White (Game 54).

Theoretical?

Less than the main lines of 6...c5 but there are some concrete variations which have to be learnt.

Statistics

The statistics show that Black scores better with 6...Na6 than 6...c5. White only manages a slightly below par 52% from nearly 700 games.

Illustrative Games

Game 52
□ **Ca.Hansen ■ Berg**
Aarhus 1991

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 Na6 7 Be2 e5! 8 dxe5

It would be very risky for White to play 8 fxe5 dxe5 9 Nxe5, because of the riposte 9...c5!. Now 10 d5 allows 10...Nxe4 and after 10 Be3 cxd4 11 Bxd4 Qe7! with ...Rd8 to follow, White's position is very shaky.

If White plays 8 fxe5 dxe5 then it usually means that he is going to block the centre with 9 d5. This is a perfectly reasonable plan but through accurate play Black can hold the balance.

Exercise 8: After 9...Nc5 what happens if White defends the pawn with 10 Qc2? (Diagram 16)

After 9...Nc5 10 Bg5 h6 11 Bxf6 Qxf6 12 b4 Na6 13 a3 c5! the chances were about equal in Lautier-Kasparov, Amsterdam 1995. White has a

passed pawn but has given up his important dark-squared bishop and Black may be able to set up a blockade on the d6-square.

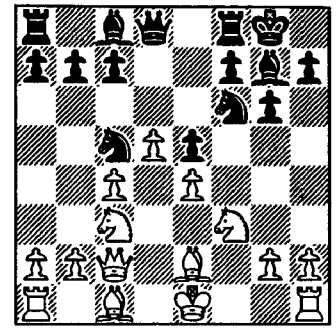


Diagram 16
Does Black have a trick?

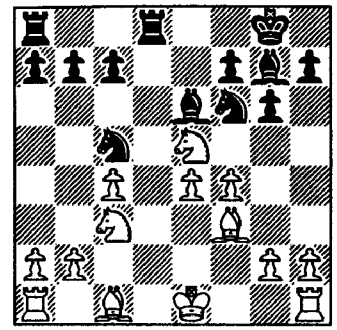


Diagram 17
Is White better here or not?

8...dxe5 9 Nxe5

9 fxe5 Qxd1+ 10 Bxd1 Ng4 is not good for White. 9 Qxd8 Rxd8 10 Nxe5 is an important alternative. After 10...Nc5 11 Bf3 Be6 there are two lines (Diagram 17):

1) 12 Nd5, at first glance, looks fantastic for White. He is a pawn up with knights on e5 and d5. What more could you ask? Strangely enough, after 12...Nfd7! it is Black who has the better game. He is going to exchange one of the knights and kick the other one away with ...c6. It turns out that behind the beautiful facade White's position is rather unhealthy. If White now plays 13 Nxc7?! he is in trouble after 13...Nxe5! 14 fxe5 Nd3+ 15 Kf1 Bxc4!. Instead, Naumann-Gallagher, Hastings 1990/91, continued 13 Nxd7 Rxd7 14 0-0 c6 15 Ne3 Rd4! 16 b3 Nxe4 17 Bb2 Nd2! with a good game for Black.

2) 12 0-0! leads to a totally drawn position after 12...Nfd7 13 Nxd7 Bd4+! 14 Kh1 Rxd7 15 Nd5 c6 16 Be3! cxd5 17 Bxd4 dxe4 18 Bxc5 exf3 19 Rxf3 Bxc4.

9...Nc5 10 Bf3 Qxd1+ 11 Kxd1 Rd8+ 12 Kc2

The best square for the king. After 12 Ke2 Be6 13 Nd5 Nfd7! play is similar to the previous note.

12...Nfxe4!

As this leads to a forced draw Black can try 12...Be6. I have analysed this extensively and concluded that the game is about equal.

13 Nxe4 Bf5 14 Re1 Bxe5! 15 fxe5 Rd4 (Diagram 18) 16 Kc3

16 b3 is an extremely risky winning attempt. After 16...Nxe4 17 Kb2 Nc5 18 Ka3 Nd3 19 Rd1 Re8!? Black's main idea will be to checkmate White by transferring a rook to the a-file.

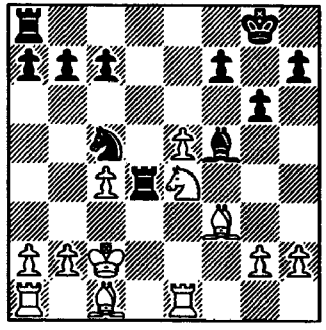


Diagram 18
Black regains the piece

16...Rd3+ 17 Kc2 Rd4 18 Kc3 Rd3+ 19 Kb4

Of course White could have just repeated here. Instead he heads for the hills and we end up with a much prettier finish.

19...Na6+ 20 Ka5 b6+! 21 Kxa6 Bc8+ 22 Kb5 Bd7+ 23 Ka6 Bc8+ 24 Kb5 Bd7+ Draw agreed

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Game 53
□ **Parker** ■ **Gallagher**
British League, Birmingham 2001

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 Na6 7 Bd3 Bg4!?

The immediate 7...e5 is also possible and after 8 fxe5 dxe5 9 d5 Black usually chooses between 9...c6 and 9...Nh5. It is not so good to play 9...Nc5 now as White can just keep his e-pawn protected with 10 Bc2.

8 0-0

If White plays 8 Be3 then Black can change plan with 8...c5 9 d5 e6.

8...Nd7

8...e5 9 fxe5 Nd7 10 Be3 c5! leads to the same position but White has other options on his 10th move. After the text Black threatens to take on d4 and 9 d5 c6 is fine for Black.

9 Be3 e5 10 fxe5 c5! (Diagram 19)

Black's central play has been most original (well, it was the first time it was played). At the end of the complications he will have gained control of e5. The main point is that 11 exd6 loses to 11...cxd4.

11 d5 Nxe5 12 Be2 Nxf3+ 13 Bxf3 Bxf3 14 Qxf3 Qe7

The game now revolves around the e5-square. If White can push e4-e5 Black will be in serious trouble. Black will have to play ...f6 to stop this but only after he has activated his bishop.

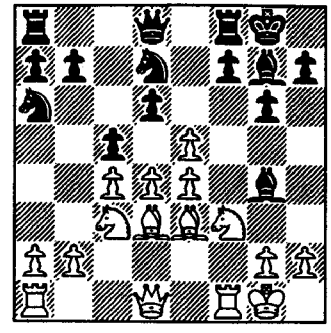


Diagram 19
Black undermines the dark squares

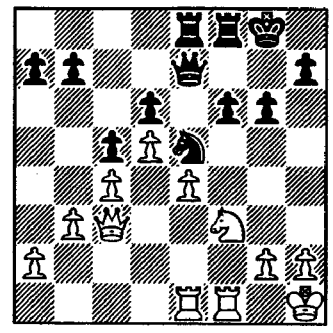


Diagram 20
Neither side can make progress

15 Bf4 Nc7 16 Qg3 Rad8 17 Kh1 Bd4! 18 Rae1 f6 19 Ne2 Be5 20 Ng1 Bxf4

This position was once thought to be better for White as Black adopted the incorrect plan of pushing the queenside pawns. What he has to do is manoeuvre the knight from c7 to e5.

21 Qxf4 Na6! 22 Qd2 Rde8

I decided to wait for Nf3 before moving my knight again. That is because White still has the option of playing Nh3-f4. In that case I want the knight back on c7 to cover e6 and can occupy e5 with the queen.

23 Nf3 Nb8! 24 Qc3 Nd7 25 b3 Ne5 (Diagram 20) 26 Nd2 Draw agreed

It is very difficult for either side to improve their position.

Game 54
□ **Videki** ■ **Gallagher**
Kecskemet 1990

---

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 Na6 7 e5!?

The most aggressive move at White's disposal.

7...Nd7 8 c5?!

But this is taking things too far. White gives up a pawn to secure a far advanced centre but Black can easily break it up. Others:

1) 8 h4, with the idea of mating Black down the h-file. Black must react in the centre before it's too late. He can either play 8...c5 or 8...dxe5 9 fxe5 c5. If White recaptures 9 dxe5 then 9...Nc5 10 Be3 Bg4 11 Be2 f6 gives Black good play according to Vaisser.

2) 8 Be2 c5 9 exd6 exd6 10 0-0 Nb6 11 d5 and, by roundabout means, we have reached the same pawn structure as in Game 50. After 11...Bg4 12 h3 Bxf3 13 Rxf3 f5 14 Bd2 Nc7 15 Bd3 Qf6 16 Kh1 Rae8

the game was level in Summerscale-Sasikiran, British Ch. 1999.

8...dxc5 9 d5 (Diagram 21)

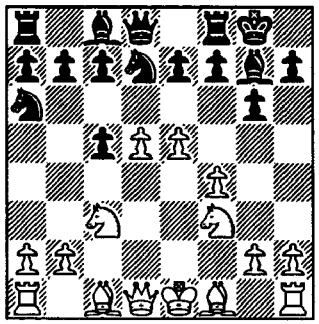


Diagram 21
Is the white centre strong or weak?

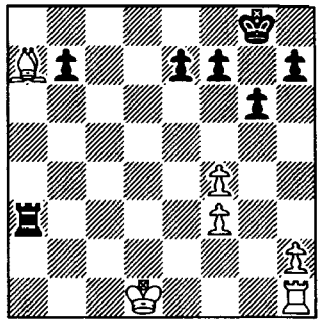


Diagram 22
The endgame is good for Black

9...Nb6 10 a3 Nb8!

The knight was no longer doing anything on a6. The plan is to play ...c7-c6 and break up White's big centre. 10...e6!? is also good.

11 Be3 c6 12 dxc6 Nxc6 13 Bxc5 Bg4 14 Be2 Rc8 15 Qxd8 Rfxd8 16 Rd1 Rxd1+ 17 Kxd1 Bxf3!

The start of a combination that leads to a better endgame for Black.

18 Bxf3 Nxe5! 19 Bxb6 Nxf3 20 Bxa7 Bxc3 21 bxc3 Rxc3! 22 gxf3 Rxa3 (Diagram 22)

Black now threatens ...Rxa7 and ...Ra1+. White can't play 23 Bd4 because of ...Rd3+ so the only move to save the piece is 23 Bg1. Then the simplest is to play 23...Rxf3 followed by ...Rxf4 with excellent winning chances for Black. Videki preferred a rook ending a pawn down.

23 Re1 Rxa7 24 Rxe7 Kg7 25 h4 Kf6 26 Rc7 Ra4 27 f5 Rf4 28 fxg6 hxg6 29 Ke2 b5 30 Rc6+ Ke7 31 h5 gxh5 32 Rc5 b4 33 Rxh5 Kd6 34 Ke3 Rc4 35 Rf5 b3 36 Rb5 Rc3+ 37 Ke4 Kc6 38 Rb8 Kc5 39 f4 Rc4+ 40 Ke5 Rb4 41 Rc8+ Kb5 White resigns

Summary

1) In the main line of the Four Pawns Attack 9...Bg4 is Black's most reliable line. 9...Re8 is also fine but only if you are willing to get involved in a tactical slugfest. 9...b5 is best left to the historians.

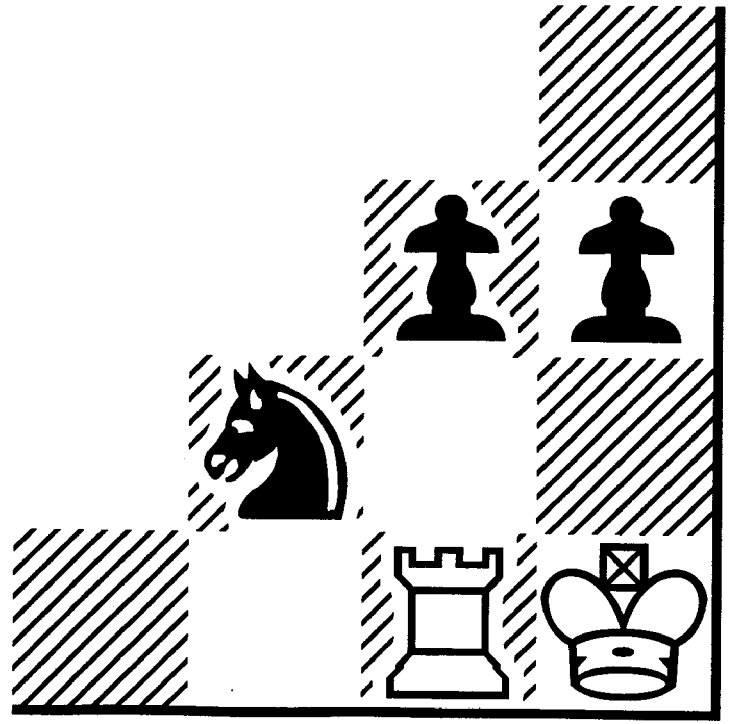
2) White's alternatives to the main line are not without venom. 7 dxc5, in particular, is a difficult variation where Black will have to play well to equalise.

3) 6...Na6 is not a bad choice and these days enjoys almost equal status to 6...c5.

Chapter Eight

The Averbakh Variation

- Black Plays (for) ...c7-c5
- Black Plays (for) ...e7-e5 (also 6...Na6)



1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Bg5 (Diagram 1)

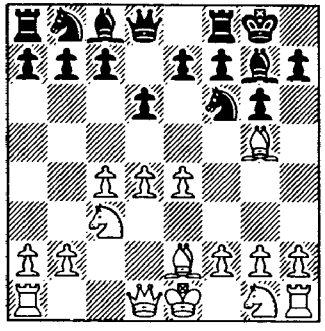


Diagram 1
The Averbakh System

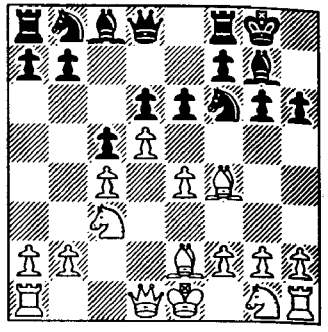


Diagram 2
A typical Averbakh

This line bears the name of the famous Russian Grandmaster Yuri Averbakh. It is a solid restraining system which, by preventing the immediate ...e7-e5, attempts to make it more difficult for Black to obtain his traditional kingside counterplay. What happens to 6...e5? Well, it just loses material after 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 Nd5 as Black can't cope with the double attack on f6 and c7.

After 6 Bg5 Black has an immediate decision to make. Should he abandon the idea of playing ...e7-e5? If he does then he can play ...c7-c5, with or without first throwing in the move ...h7-h6. This is the subject of our first sub-section. If Black is resolute in his desire to play ...e7-e5 then he will have to find a suitable preparatory move. In the past this meant playing either 6...Nbd7 or 6...h6, both of which have their drawbacks. In recent times, however, 6...Na6 has come to Black's rescue as a more flexible way of preparing ...e7-e5. This is considered in the second sub-section.

Black Plays (for) ...c7-c5

If you are going to play the King's Indian with Black you may be a little confused as to whether you should aim for ...c7-c5 or ...e7-e5. I tend to adhere to the following rule:

Play ...e7-e5 except when White develops his queen bishop early. Then it's time to start thinking (just thinking, mind you) about ...c7-c5. The move ...c7-c5 is likely to prise open the long diagonal (after ...e7-e5 it usually becomes totally blocked) and the absence of the white bishop from the queenside means that the dark squares there (such as b2) may become vulnerable to pressure from the g7-bishop.

The Averbakh Variation clearly comes into the group where ...c7-c5 deserves consideration. It is time to start considering the specifics.

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Bg5 c5

6...h6 7 Be3 c5 bears some similarities to the Gambit line that Black plays in the Sämisch. It is covered in Game 55.

7 d5

White blocks the centre. Another possibility is 7 dxc5 Qa5 8 Bd2 Qxc5 9 Nf3 Bg4 10 Be3 Qa5 11 0-0 Nc6 which leads to a quiet manoeuvring game with a small advantage for White. This position is also covered in Game 55 with the slight difference that the pawn is on h6 not h7.

7...h6

7...e6 8 Qd2 exd5 9 exd5 is slightly better for White. It is uncomfortable for Black in that he cannot break the pin. That is why he plays ...h7-h6 first even if it costs him a pawn. Other interesting alternatives are 7...Qa5 and the pawn sacrifice 7...b5.

8 Bf4 e6! (Diagram 2) 9 dxe6 Bxe6 10 Bxd6

10 Qd2 leads to a much sharper game:

1) Now 10...Kh7 is bad because of 11 Bxd6 Re8 12 e5 Nfd7 13 f4 f6 14 h4! with a powerful attack. The inclusion of the moves Qd2 and ...Kh7 is clearly in White's favour.

2) Black usually plays 10...Qb6 and after 11 Bxh6 Bxh6 12 Qxh6 Qxb2 13 Rc1 Nc6 14 h4! the normal move is 14...Ne5 which is supposed to be better for White after 15 Nh3. In a recent game, Khalifman-Babula, Bundesliga 2001, Black, who is a great expert in this line, tried 14...Nb4. White could play the safe 15 Qd2 but he preferred 15 Nd1 Qd4 16 Nf3 Qxe4 17 Ng5 with unfathomable complications.

10...Re8 11 Nf3 Nc6

Black has a much sharper line in 11...Qb6!? 12 Bxb8 Raxb8 13 Qc2 Nh5 with some compensation for the pawn.

The position after 11...Nc6 seems to lead, almost by force, to an endgame where White has an extra pawn but few winning chances. That is covered in Game 56.

Theoretical?

There is plenty of sharp stuff available but the main lines often lead to endgames or strategic manoeuvring battles. White can, in fact, get by with small amounts of theoretical knowledge as he can choose whether he wants complications or not. Black will have to be better prepared for all sorts of games.

Statistics

If you take the, on the whole, quiet lines with dxc5 then White scores 62%. In the lines where White meets ...c7-c5 with d4-d5 he scores 60%. In fact, statistically speaking, the Averbakh is one of most unpleasant variations for Black to face with an overall score of 59% in White's favour.

Illustrative Games

Game 55
□ **Milov** ■ **Shchekachev**
Amsterdam 2000

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Bg5 h6 7 Be3 c5!? 8 dxc5!

White has a couple of alternative strategies.

1) Blocking the centre with 8 d5 doesn't have a very good reputation here. After 8...e6 9 Qd2 exd5 10 cxd5 Re8 11 f3 we have a sort of Sämisch but with the white bishop on e2 misplaced.

2) The most critical alternative is 8 e5 dxe5 9 dxe5 Qxd1+ 10 Rxd1 Ng4 11 Bxc5 Nxe5 12 Nd5 Nbc6 but White has more or less given up on this line after extensive testing in the early 1990's. For example, taking the pawn with 13 Bxe7 just leads to a draw after 13...Nxe7 14 Nxe7+ Kh7 15 Nxc8 Raxc8 16 b3 Rfe8 17 Kf1 Rcd8 18 Rxd8 Rxd8 19 f4 Nc6 20 Nf3 Nb4 21 Kf2 Nxa2 22 Rd1. A more complex game arises from 13 f4 Ng4 but it, too, is thought to be satisfactory for Black.

8...Qa5

By threatening to play 9...Nxe4 Black gains the time to recapture with the queen on c5. The position after 8...dxc5 9 Qxd8 Rxd8 10 Bxc5 is nowhere near as promising as the similar position from the Sämisch. White's development is going to be much smoother.

9 Bd2

White can also play for an attack with 9 Qd2. This forces Black to play 9...dxc5 but White's results after 10 Bxh6 Rd8 11 Qe3 Bxh6 12 Qxh6 Nxe4 13 Rc1 Nc6 have been terrible.

9...Qxc5 10 Nf3 Bg4 11 Be3 Qa5 12 0-0 Nc6 (Diagram 3)

White's pawns on c4 and e4 give him a sort of clamp in the centre which makes it very difficult for Black to achieve active play.

13 Nd2 Bxe2 14 Qxe2 Rfc8 15 Rfc1 Nd7 16 Rab1 Kh7 17 f4 Nc5 18 Kh1 Na4 19 Nd1! Nb6 20 a3 Nd7 21 Nc3 a6?!

Black should have just retreated his queen at once. There is no hope of playing ...b7-b5 so the move ...a7-a6 just creates a hole on b6.

22 Nb3 Qd8 23 Rc2 Na5 24 Nd2 Qh8 25 Rbc1 Nc6 26 Nf3 Na5 27 Nd5 Nb3 28 Rd1 Qe8 29 Bf2!

The idea is to play Bh4 in order to force Black to move his e-pawn. There will then be a weak pawn on d6 which White can lay siege to. Black prefers to give up a pawn to let his pieces breathe. Passive defence would probably have met the same end.

29...e6 30 Nc3 Na5 31 Nd2 d5 32 exd5 exd5 33 Qxe8 Rxe8 34 cxd5 Rac8 35 Kg1 b5 36 Rdc1 f5 37 Na2!

If Black had any illusions about this position they would have ended

after this move. The knight is heading for the excellent b4-square.

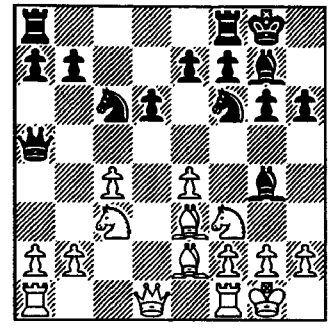


Diagram 3
White has a Maróczy-like bind

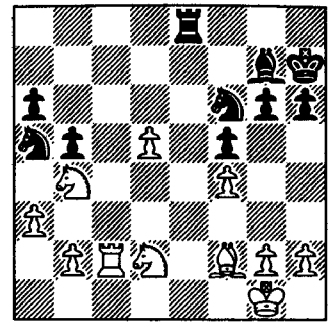


Diagram 4
White is in complete control

37...Rxc2 38 Rxc2 Nf6 39 Nb4 (Diagram 4) 39...Ng4 40 h3 Nxf2 41 Kxf2 Bd4+ 42 Kf1 Be3 43 g3 g5 44 fxg5 hxg5 45 Nxa6 f4 46 Nc7 Rd8 47 Kg2 Kg6 48 Nf3 Kf5 49 b4 Nc4 50 Nxb5 Ne5 51 d6 fxg3 52 Nxe5 Kxe5 53 Kxg3 Ke4 54 Rc7 Bf4+ 55 Kg4 Rh8 56 Re7+ Kd5 57 d7 Black resigns

Game 56
□ **Bareev** ■ **Akopian**
Moscow 1989

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Bg5 c5 7 d5 h6 8 Bf4 e6 9 dxe6 Bxe6 10 Bxd6 Re8 11 Nf3 Nc6 12 0-0

12 Bxc5? Qa5 is good for Black as he threatens the bishop and 13...Nxe4 while if White had played 12 e5 then he just drops the e-pawn after 12...Nd7.

12...Nd4! (Diagram 5)

Black cuts the communications between the white queen and bishop.

13 e5

The two obvious-looking alternatives are not very promising. After 13 Nxd4 cxd4 14 Qxd4 Nxe4! 15 Qxe4 Qxd6 Black's powerful bishop pair give him excellent compensation for the pawn, while after 13 Bxc5 Nxe2+ 14 Qxe2 Qc8! White is in trouble – if the bishop moves ...Bxc4 wins the exchange and if he defends it 15...b6 will force it to move anyway.

13...Nd7 14 Nxd4

There's nothing better.

14...cxd4 15 Qxd4 Nxe5 16 Bxe5 Qxd4 17 Bxd4 Bxd4 18 Rac1 Rad8 19 b3

There was no way to prevent Black invading to the seventh rank. For example, 19 Rfd1? Bxc3 20 Rxc3 Rxd1+ 21 Rxd1 Bxc4! and White's weak back rank will cost him another pawn.

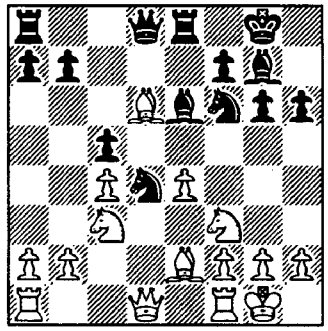


Diagram 5
A disruptive knight

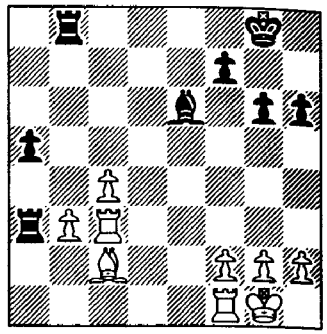


Diagram 6
Black has sufficient counterplay

19...Bxc3 20 Rxc3 Rd2 21 Bf3 Rxa2 22 Bxb7 Rb8 23 Be4 Ra3 24 Bc2 a5 (Diagram 6)

Practice has proved that Black's activity on the queenside is good enough for a draw. The immediate threat is 25...a4 because the b-pawn is pinned. White has a little trick that picks up a pawn on the kingside but the whole queenside is then liquidated and the 3 against 2 on the kingside offers White no winning chances.

25 Re3 Ra2!

There is no time for 25...Kg7 as after 26 h3! White's back rank is no longer weak and certain tactical variations no longer work.

26 Bxg6 Rb2! 27 Be4

The last chance for White was 27 Rb1, but then Black draws by 27...Rxb1 28 Bxb1 a4! 29 Ba2 Rd8! 30 Kf1 Rd1+ 31 Re1 Rd2 32 Ra1 axb3 33 Bxb3 Rb2 34 Ra8+ Kg7 35 Ba2 Rc2 36 Ra4 Bd7 37 Ra8 Be6.

27...R8xb3 28 Ra1 Bxc4 29 Rxb3 Bxb3 30 Rxa5 Ra2 31 Rxa2 Bxa2 32 f4 f6 33 Kf2 Kf7 Draw agreed

Black Plays for ...e7-e5 (also 6...Na6)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Bg5 Na6 (Diagram 7)

By defending his pawn on c7 Black prepares to play ...e7-e5 (see below for details).

7 Qd2

7 Qd2 is the most popular response to 6...Na6 but there are several important alternatives:

1) The solid 7 Nf3 when 7...h6 8 Bh4 e5 leads to a position examined in the introduction to the 7...Na6 line of Chapter 2. If Black wants to avoid this then 8...c6 is an interesting alternative.

2) The sharpest move is 7 f4 and that is examined in Game 58.

3) Another aggressive move is 7 h4. It was quite popular until the world class grandmaster Bareev lost a lot of games with it! A good line for Black is 7...e5 8 d5 h6 9 Be3 Nc5 10 Qc2 (10 f3 is well met by 10...Nh5) 10...c6! (Diagram 8)

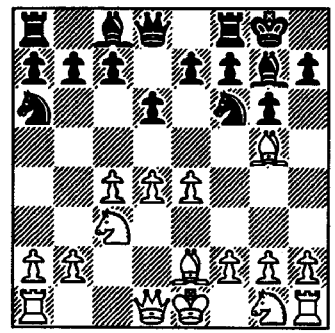


Diagram 7
Black prepares ...e7-e5

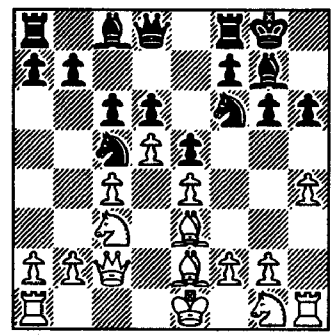


Diagram 8
Undermining the centre



NOTE: Black should open lines on the queenside at once White starts advancing his kingside pawns. See also the chapter on h3 Systems.

Exercise 9: Where does the knight go after 11 b4?

White should play 11 h5 with an unclear game after 11...cxd5 12 cxd5 Qa5.

7...e5 8 d5

8 dxe5 dxe5 9 Qxd8 Rxd8 10 Nd5 no longer concerns Black as with the knight on a6 defending c7 he can just play 10...Rd6. Nor does 10 Nxe5 cause Black any problems because of the reply 10...Nxe4!.

8...c6

Here, too, White is planning to push his kingside pawns so Black opens the queenside. This line is covered in Game 57. 8...Qe8 and 8...Nc5 are quite reasonable alternatives.

Theoretical?

A general understanding of how to play the King's Indian is more important than theory in this variation. Slight slips are unlikely to be fatal in the opening.

Statistics

We mentioned above how well the Averbakh scores in general. Against 6...Na6 its fortunes are rather mixed. With the main line 7 Qd2 White scores only 48% from nearly 500 games, but the sharp 7 f4 does much better, registering 63% from 135 games.

Illustrative Games

Game 57
□ **Ioseliani** ■ **Gallagher**
Biel 1990

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Bg5 Na6 7 Qd2 e5 8 d5 c6 9 f3

White defends the e-pawn and prepares to advance on the kingside.

9...cxd5 10 cxd5 Bd7 11 h4

11 g4 Qa5 12 Nh3 is less promising for Black. It is better to play 11...h6! 12 Be3 (12 Bxh6 Nxe4 13 Nxe4 Qh4+) 12...h5 13 h3 (13 g5 Nh7 14 h4 f6) 13...Nc5 14 0-0-0 Qb8 or 14...Qe8 to prepare ...b5. The chances are roughly equal.

11...Qa5 12 g4 h5! (Diagram 9)

This sort of pawn sacrifice is what the King's Indian is all about. Instead of submitting to White's will on the kingside Black battles for the initiative. To take the pawn White now has to give up the important dark-squared bishop.

13 Bxf6 Bxf6 14 gxh5 Kg7!

This is a key move which prepares ...Rh8 and rules out any invasion of the white queen on h6.

15 hxg6 fxg6 16 h5 Rh8! 17 h6+ Kh7

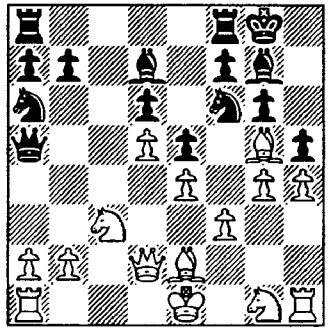


Diagram 9
Black opens the kingside!

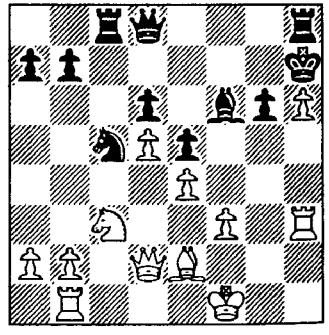


Diagram 10
White's king is in more danger

Did you think the black king was in danger? Well it isn't anymore (and never was). One couldn't ask for better protection than that offered by the pawn on h6. White won't even be able to sacrifice a piece for it. In fact, it is the white king that is starting to feel the draught. The queenside is full of holes so he prefers to make his home on g2.

18 Nh3 Bxh3! 19 Rxh3 Rac8 20 Kf1 Nc5 21 Rb1 Qd8! (Diagram 10)

The black pieces follow the white king to the kingside. White really begins to miss the dark-squared bishop now.

22 Kg2 Bg5 23 Qe1 Nd7 24 Qg3 Bf4 25 Qg4 Re8!

This keeps the white queen out of e6 and it will soon be driven back by the knight.

26 Kh1 Nf6 27 Qg2 Rg8 28 Bd3 Qd7 29 Bb5 Qf7 30 Bd3 g5 31 Ne2 Rg6 32 Qf2 a6 33 Ng3 Bxg3

The knight must not get to f5 and Black is more than happy to transform his advantage into a good knight versus awful bishop position.

34 Qxg3 Rxh6 35 Rg1 Rxh3+ 36 Qxh3+ Qh5 37 Qxh5+ Nxh5 38 Rg2

38 Rxg5 Nf4 39 Bb1 Rc4! followed by ...Rd4 would have been equally unpleasant. The extra pawn is useless.

38...Nf4 39 Rc2 Rxc2 40 Bxc2 Kg6 41 Kg1 Kh5 42 Kf2 Kh4 43 b4 b6 44 a3 Kh3 45 Ba4 Kh2 (Diagram 11)

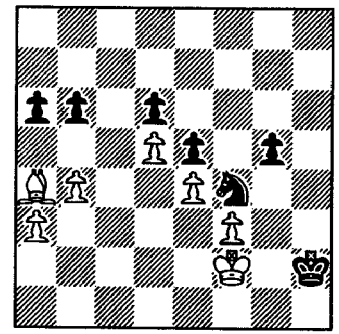


Diagram 11
Good knight vs bad bishop

The endgame is lost because a knight check at an appropriate moment will always force the white king to give ground.

46 Bd7 Nh3+ 47 Ke3 Kg2 48 Bc8 a5 49 bxa5 bxa5 50 Bf5 Nf2 51 Bd7 Kg3 52 Bc8 Nd1+ 53 Kd2 Nf2 54 Ke3 Nd1+ 55 Kd2 Nb2 56 Ke2 Nc4 57 Ba6 Nb6

Certainly not 57...Nxa3? 58 Bd3! when the black knight is trapped.

58 Ke3 Nd7 59 Bb5 Nf6 60 Be2 Nh5 61 Bb5 Nf4 62 Be8 Ng2+ 63 Ke2 Kf4 64 Bd7 Ne3 65 Ba4 g4! 66 fxg4 Nxg4 67 Kd3 Nf2+ 68 Kc4 Nxe4 69 Bc2 Ng3 70 Kb5 e4 71 Kxa5 e3 72 Bd1 e2 73 Bxe2 Nxe2 74 Kb4 Ke5 75 a4 Kxd5 76 a5 Nd4 77 a6 Ne6 White resigns

Game 58
□ **S.Mohr** ■ **Uhlmann**
Bundesliga 1994-95

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Bg5 Na6 7 f4!?

An aggressive move which leads to a strange version of the Four Pawns Attack. There are dangers for the white bishop outside the pawn chain but, on the other hand, Black is now prevented from playing ...e7-e5, and ...c7-c5 is not very promising with the knight on a6.

7...c6!?

This modest-looking move is probably best. Black plans to bring his knight back into play via c7 and establish a foothold in the centre by playing ...d6-d5. Most unusual for the King's Indian.

8 Nf3 Nc7 9 Qd2

White defends the f-pawn, so that 9...Ne6 can be met by 10 Bh4. There are a couple of alternatives:

1) The prophylactic retreat 9 Bh4 is becoming increasing popular. After 9...d5 10 e5 Ne4 we can already see the benefit of 9 Bh4 – the bishop is not attacked. Still, I think Black's position is all right after both 11 Nxe4 dxe4 12 Ng5 f6 13 exf6 exf6 14 Nxe4 Ne6 and 11 0-0 Bf5 12 Nxe4 Bxe4 13 Ng5 Bf5 14 g4 Bc8 15 f5 f6!.

2) 9 d5 is a more radical way to prevent ...Ne6 but 9...cxd5 10 cxd5 Nh5!, threatening ...f7-f6, gives Black reasonable play.

9...d5 (Diagram 12)

Finally Black reacts in the centre.

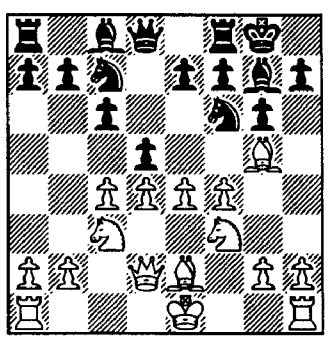


Diagram 12
An unusual thrust in the King's Indian

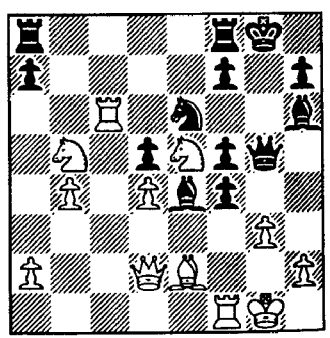


Diagram 13
Preparing the final assault

10 Bxf6

10 e5 is of course met by 10...Ne4.

10...exf6!

Black breaks the rules as after the natural 10...Bxf6 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 e5 Bg7 13 h4! White has attacking chances and a space advantage.

11 exd5

11 0-0 is well met by 11...dxe4 12 Nxe4 Bg4! when, by eliminating the knight on f3, Black will get pressure against d4.

11...cxd5 12 c5 Bf5!

Black is going to park his bishop on e4 and if White ever takes it will then be replaced by a strong passed pawn.

13 0-0 Be4 14 b4 Ne6 15 Rac1 f5 16 Nb5?!

Now White won't be able to remove the bishop on e4.

16...Bh6! 17 g3 g5!

Uhlmann still packs a punch even in his eighth decade.

18 Ne5? gxf4 19 c6 bxc6 20 Rxc6 Qg5 (Diagram 13)

Black was unable to play ...fxg3 on the previous move as the f4-pawn was pinned to his bishop on h6. Now with Black threatening this capture White can find nothing better than a desperate piece sacrifice.

21 Nxf7 Kxf7 22 Nd6+ Ke7 23 Nxe4 fxe4 24 b5 f3 25 Qb4+ Kf7 26 Qd6 Rae8 27 Bxf3 Kg8! 28 Bg2 Qe3+ 29 Kh1 Rxf1+ 30 Bxf1 Qf3+ White resigns

It's mate in two.

Summary

1) Don't play 6...e5!. It loses.

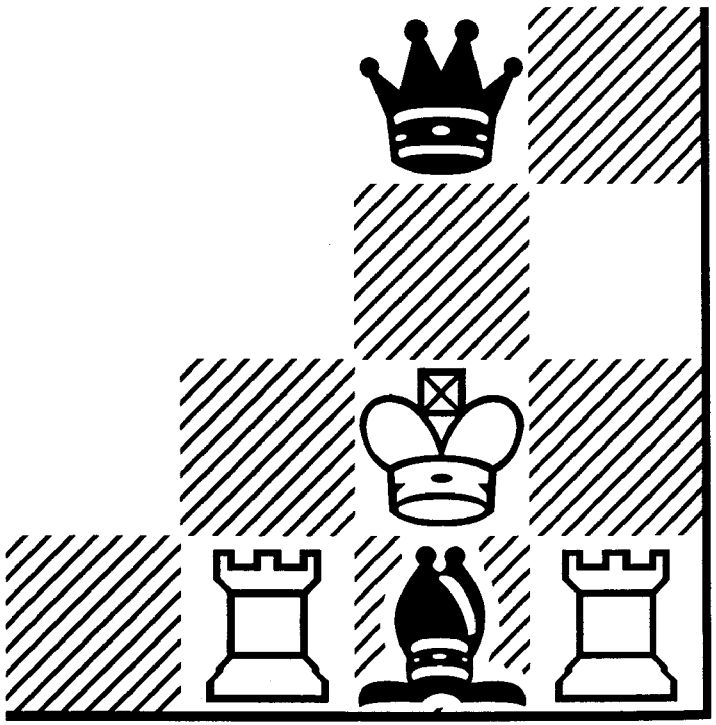
2) The lines with ...c7-c5 are perfectly playable for Black but by playing dxc5 White can steer the game into the sort of position that few King's Indian players feel really at home in.

3) In some ways the move 6...Na6 has disarmed the Averbakh. Black is now able to play ...e7-e5 without making any real concessions. As always with a knight on a6 Black should make sure that it doesn't stay stuck there out of play. This is particularly important when White plays 7 f4. There is an old saying: One badly placed piece makes the whole position bad.

Chapter Nine

White Plays an Early h2-h3

- White Plays 6 Bg5, Delaying Nf3
- White Plays 6 Nf3



1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 (Diagram 1)

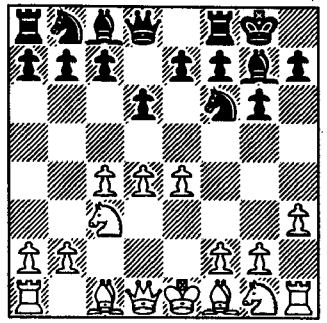


Diagram 1
The quiet 5 h3

Why does White play h3?

The move h2-h3 has two main ideas. The first is to support the advance g2-g4. This is played both to gain space on the kingside and to dissuade Black from playing ...f7-f5. The second idea is to pave the way for Be3 without having to worry about ...Ng4. Very often the bishop will go to g5 first but if Black attacks it with ...h7-h6 then it drops back to e3. The intentions behind h3 are similar to those behind f3 in the Sämisch Variation but the two variations usually lead to quite different types of games. In the favour of h2-h3 is the fact that White can still develop the king's knight to its natural home f3 and that the dark squares are not further weakened. On the other hand, h2-h3 does nothing to protect the all important e4-square.

How does Black battle against these h3 systems?

The first thing Black needs to do is stake his claim in the centre. It is possible to play with ...c7-c5 but this takes us into the Modern Benoni and outside the scope of this book. Anyway, it is more reliable for Black to play the traditional ...e7-e5. Black will usually play for ...f7-f5 even after White has played g2-g4. The move ...Qe8 to unpin the knight on f6 is a useful tool if Black doesn't want to let White have it all his own way on the kingside. On other occasions Black will advance on the queenside (...c7-c6, ...a7-a5, ...a5-a4, ...Qa5 are all typical moves) while sometimes he tries to play on both sides of the board simultaneously. The basic rule for Black is that he must play actively and with purpose. If he dithers in the opening then he might find that White suddenly has a clamp all over the board and that it is too late for offensive action. Then he will just have to await his fate.

White Plays 6 Bg5, Delaying Nf3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 Bg5 (Diagram 2)

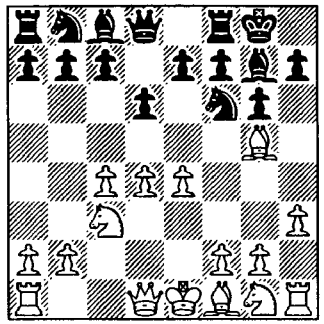


Diagram 2
White keeps the g1-knight at home

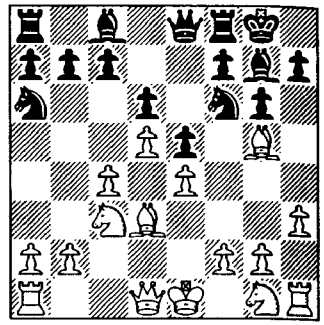


Diagram 3
Another unpin

In this section White delays the development of his king's knight as he usually prefers a set-up with Bd3 and Nge2.

6...Na6

Black prepares the traditional King's Indian central strike ...e7-e5. You have been warned elsewhere about playing ...e7-e5 with the bishop on g5.

7 Bd3

7 Nf3 e5 8 d5 transposes to Game 61 while after 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 Qxd8 Rxd8 10 Nd5 (10 Nxe5 Re8 11 f4 Nc5 regains the pawn with a good game) 10...Rd6! the game is level.

7...e5 8 d5 Qe8!? (Diagram 3)

This is the modern, dynamic approach to the King's Indian. The idea behind 8...Qe8 is to unpin the knight on f6 so that it can move and Black can play ...f7-f5. Black could also have unpinned with 8...h6 when the bishop normally drops back to e3. Black's idea in playing ...Qe8 is that in certain cases the bishop on g5 may actually turn out to be misplaced. It could end up just pointing into thin air, or it may block the g-file for the white rooks.

9 g4

The consistent follow-up. The main idea is to make Black think twice about playing ...f7-f5. If Black goes ahead with the ...f7-f5 plan, the g-file, where the black king is currently in residence, will open. However, the white king is probably not overjoyed about the g2-g4 advance either. His preferred home on g1 is now out of bounds so he will have to stay in the centre or risk the queenside.

9 Nge2 is a more solid alternative against which Black should still play 9...Nd7 and ...f7-f5.

9...Nd7

Black is not bluffed out by White's g2-g4. He is still going to play ...f7-f5 whatever the consequences for his king. Better that than a passive position with nothing to do.

This position is the subject of Games 59 and 60.

Theoretical?

It's not heavily theoretical but Black must know what he is doing and he must time his counterplay correctly. This will come with experience rather than rote learning of variations. The statistics make grim reading for Black as the white position, though not necessarily superior, is easier to handle.

Statistics

As I just mentioned, they are not good news for Black. After 6 Bg5 White has scored 65% from 1500 games. I assumed that Black's score was so bad because of all the dodgy Benonis (...c7-c5 instead of ...e7-e5) that are played, so I did another check on the position after 8...Qe8. That was even worse for Black with just 32% from 56 games.

Illustrative Games

Game 59
□ Zlotnikov ■ Gallagher
Arosa 1996

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 Bg5 Na6 7 Bd3 e5 8 d5 Qe8 9 g4 Nd7 10 Nge2 Ndc5

The immediate 10...f5 has also been played but the text is more accurate. Black wants to be in a position to recapture with the bishop if White takes twice on f5.

11 Bc2 f5 12 a3



WARNING: This may look like an unassuming little move but a3 spells danger for Black in this system. White is threatening to lock the knight on a6 out of the game. Black is forced to take action immediately and that means exchanging in the centre.

12...fxe4 13 Nxe4?

White should have played 13 b4 Nd3+ 14 Bxd3 exd3 15 Qxd3 in order to try and keep the knight on a6 out of the game. I had envisaged a neat way to get the beast back into play: 15...e4 16 Qd2 c5! 17 b5 Nb4! although the position is just unclear.

13...Nxe4 14 Bxe4 Nc5 15 Nc3

It is essential for White to keep a piece on e4 to prevent Black from advancing his e-pawn. Black must take quick action as if White has the time to consolidate then his blockade of e4 will give him a positional advantage.

15...b5! (Diagram 4)

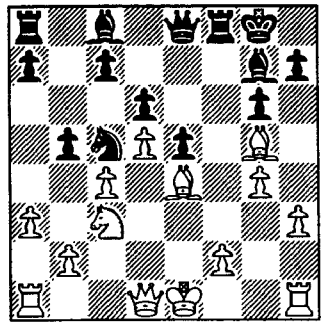


Diagram 4
Opening the queenside

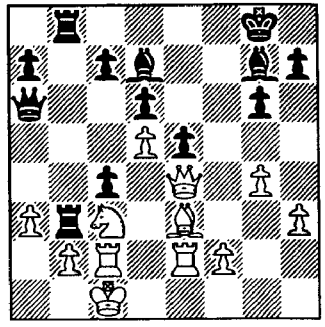


Diagram 5
What now for Black?

Not deep, but a visually surprising move. Of course 16 Nxb5 is impossible but Black's main point is that after 16 cxb5 Nxe4 17 Nxe4 Qxb5 the position has opened and White's king is very exposed. White prefers to give up a pawn to retain his blockade.

16 Be3 Nxe4 17 Nxe4 bxc4 18 Qc2 Qb5 19 0-0-0

The white king had a choice of evils.

19...Bd7 20 Rhe1

White plans to use his rooks on the second rank to defend b2.

20...Qa6 21 Nc3 Rae8?! 22 Rd2 Rb8!



TIP: Always admit your mistakes. Don't be too embarrassed or too pigheaded to retrace your steps if that is what the position requires.

23 Qe4 Rb3 24 Rc2 Rfb8 25 Ree2 (Diagram 5)

White has successfully defended his main weakness on b2. It is hard to see how Black can make further progress on the queenside. How can he increase the pressure? Well, ever since White played Qe4 the old adage that a queen is a bad blockader (the queen is too strong a piece to be reduced to the role of blockader) would not leave my head. If only the queen could be attacked then the white position is sure to fall apart.

25...g5!!

I particularly enjoyed the fact that the two key moves in this game were sacrifices of the knight's pawn (15...b5!). Black's plan is simple – to transfer his bishop to g6. The move ...g6-g5 had to be played at

once as otherwise White could prevent the manoeuvre with h4-h5.

26 Bxg5 Be8 27 f4

White allows the opening of the long diagonal in order to get some vague attacking chances of his own against the black king. The best chance was 27 Qf5 as after 27...Bg6 28 Qe6+ Kh8 29 Bf6 Bxc2 30 Bxg7+ Kxg7 31 Qe7+ White scrambles a draw by perpetual check. Black shouldn't be so greedy. With 28...Bf7 29 Qf5 c6! his big centre gives him the better prospects.

27...exf4 28 Qxf4 Bxc3!

This is not the sort of move one should play lightly and I didn't. I used up most of my remaining time making sure there would be no nasty surprises on the weakened dark squares around my king.

29 bxc3 Qxa3+ 30 Kd2 Rxc3!? (Diagram 6)

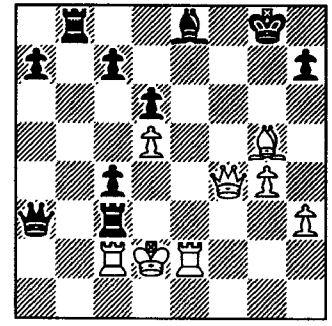


Diagram 6
Black keeps things simple

This is actually the safest move in the position as with best play it leads to a very favourable endgame.

31 Rxe8+?

The main line was 31 Rxc3 Rb2+ 32 Rc2 (32 Kd1 Ba4+ 33 Rcc2 Rb1+) 32...Rxc2+ 33 Kxc2 Qd3+ 34 Kc1 Qxe2 35 Bh6 Qe7 which should be winning for Black.

31...Rxe8 32 Rxc3 Qa2+! 33 Rc2

Or 33 Kd1 Qe2+ 34 Kc1 Qe1+ 35 Kc2 Re2+ and Black wins.

33...Qa5!+ 34 Rc3 Qxd5+ 35 Kc1 Re1+ 36 Kb2 Qb5+ 37 Ka2 Re2+ White resigns

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Game 60
□ **Agrest** ■ **Milov**
European Championship, Ohrid 2001

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1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 Bg5 Na6 7 Bd3 e5 8

d5 Qe8 9 g4 Nd7 10 a3 Nac5!?

Bareev once crushed me from this position after I decided to ignore the threat of b2-b4 in order to exchange off my bad bishop. After 10...f5 11 b4 f4 12 Bh4 Bf6 13 Bxf6 Nxf6 14 Nf3 c5?! 15 dxc6 bxc6 16 c5! the position had opened in White's favour. However, the solid 14...Qe7 would not have been so bad.

11 Bc2 a5 12 Nge2

12 b4 must be the critical test of Black's strategy. White probably felt it was premature to open the queenside with most of his kingside still at home. After 12...axb4 13 axb4 Rxa1 14 Qxa1 Na6 15 Qa3 I'm not quite sure what Milov had in mind. Most likely something violent based on ...f7-f5 and ...e5-e4, even at the cost of material.

12...Nb6! (Diagram 7)

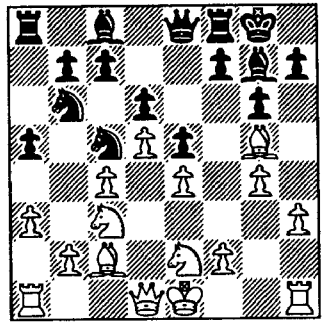


Diagram 7
Rules are made to be broken

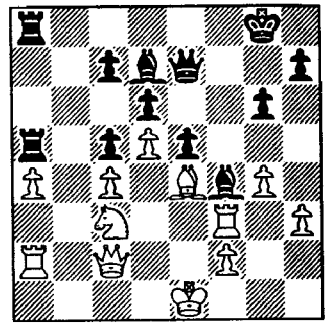


Diagram 8
Black can play on at no risk



WARNING: Do not move your knights to b6 in the King's Indian.

Confused by the '!'. Is it a misprint? No, just one of the exceptions that prove the rule. In general b6 is a very passive square for a knight in the King's Indian but here Black gains a tempo by attacking the pawn on c4. This tempo gives him the time to play ...f7-f5.

13 b3 f5 14 Rg1 fxe4 15 Nxe4 Nxe4 16 Bxe4 a4!

Black derives maximum benefit from the unusual position of his knight on b6. White's queenside structure will now be spoiled.

17 Nc3 axb3 18 Qxb3 Nd7 19 Be3 b6 20 Ra2 Qe7 21 Rg3 Nc5

This is such a good square for the knight that White feels obliged to give up his strong bishop for it. He then gets an outside passed pawn but it is not clear if this pawn is weak or strong.

22 Bxc5 bxc5 23 a4 Bh6 24 Ne2 Bd7 25 Qc2 Bf4 26 Rf3 Ra5 27 Nc3 Rfa8 (Diagram 8) Draw agreed

I would have been tempted to continue with Black.

White Plays 6 Nf3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 Nf3

The move order 5 Nf3 0-0 6 h3 is at least as common.

6...e5

There are several move orders Black can employ to reach the desired set-up. Most of them converge after a few moves. For example, 6...Na6 7 Bg5 e5 8 d5 takes us into Game 61.

7 d5

7 dxe5 dxe5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 Bg5 Re8 is very similar to Game 1. The fact that White has played h2-h3 instead of Be2 hardly makes any difference. You already know what I think about that variation.

7...Na6 (Diagram 9)

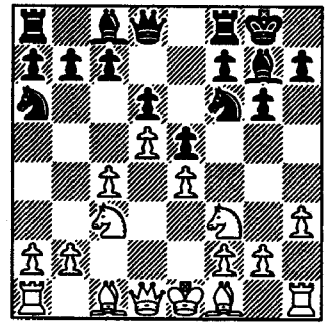


Diagram 9
White has a choice with the bishop

White has to decide where he is going to develop his queen's bishop. In Games 61 and 62 he plays 8 Bg5 while in Game 63 he plays 8 Be3.

Theoretical?

Whilst theoretical knowledge always helps this is not one of the more bookish lines. There is plenty of scope for original play.

Statistics

After 6 Nf3 White has scored 57% from 3175 games. When White plays 8 Bg5 (from Diagram 9) he scores heavily at 63% while with 8 Be3 he has scored only 47%. Krasenkov, perhaps the leading exponent of this line with the white pieces has scored a whopping 83% from 59 games. I think I'll play the Queen's Gambit next time I play him.

Illustrative Games

Game 61
□ **Krasenkov** ■ **Andonovski**
Panormo 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 h3 e5 7 d5 Na6 8 Bg5 Qe8 9 g4 Nd7!?

For a discussion about the ideas behind the last couple of moves, see the introduction to 6 Bg5.

10 Rg1 Kh8

Black must remove his king from the g-file before playing ...f7-f5.

11 a3!?

This motif of locking the knight on a6 out of the game is extremely well known from similar positions (see games 59 and 60) but is actually a novelty here. The normal White plan is 11 Qd2 Ndc5 and now either Nh4 to prevent ...f7-f5, or 12 0-0-0, allowing it but hoping to get play on the kingside.

11...f5 12 gxf5 gxf5 13 b4 (Diagram 10)

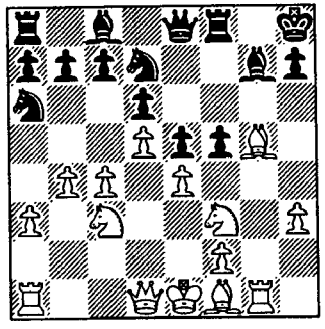


Diagram 10
Locking out the knight on a6

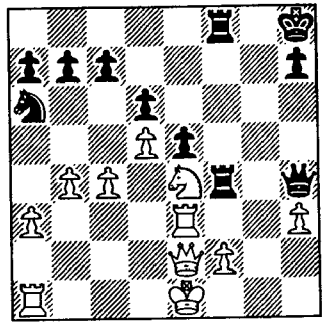


Diagram 11
Black to play. What is best?

13...Nf6

The game now revolves around the battle for the crucial e4-square. If White can maintain a blockade here he will have a good position. On the other hand, if Black can break the blockade and force through ...e4 the white king would be in for a torrid time.

14 Bd3 Nxe4 15 Nxe4 fxe4 16 Bxe4 Bf5 17 Nd2 Qg6!

A good move. Not only does Black threaten to take on e4 but also 18...h6 as the bishop on g5 is pinned. Krasenkov finds an imaginative solution.

18 Rg4! Qh5?

Oh dear, this is just hopeless. Black just heads straight for a terrible endgame. The one thing he shouldn't do in this position is exchange queens as then the white king no longer has any worries. Black should also avoid 18...Bxg4? 19 Qxg4 Qf7 20 Qh4 Qg8 21 Ke2 followed by Rg1. White has a light square bind and a dangerous attack.

The right move is 18...Bh6! which forces the exchange of Black's passive bishop for White's active one. After something like 19 Bxh6? Qxh6 20 Bxf5 Rxf5 21 Rg3 Raf8 22 Ne4 Rf4 23 Qe2 Qh4 24 Re3 (Diagram 11) White has maintained his blockade of e4 but Black has taken control of the dark squares, and in particular the f4-square.

Exercise 10: What should Black play now?

Instead of 19 Bxh6? Krasenkov would certainly have played 19 h4!. After 19...Bxg4 20 Qxg4 Qg7 he still has good compensation for the exchange but less than after 18...Bxg4 as now Black can exchange off the dark-squared bishops.

19 Rg3 Qxd1+ 20 Rxd1 Bd7 21 Ke2 Rf7 22 Rdg1 Raf8 23 Be3 b6 24 Nf3

The difference in activity between the opposing pieces is quite striking. What is that knight doing on a6?

24...Bf5 25 Bxf5 Rxf5 26 Ng5! Re8 Black resigns

The simplest way to win is 27 Ne6 Bf6 28 Bh6! with the devastating, and unstoppable, threat of Bf8.

Game 62
□ **J.Ivanov** ■ **V.Georgiev**
Salou 2000

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 h3 e5 7 d5 Na6 8 Bg5 h6

With 8 Bg5 White was actively encouraging this move which is often a liability for Black in the King's Indian.

9 Be3 Nc5 10 Nd2 a5 11 g4

A quieter line is 11 Be2 Bd7 12 0-0 (12 g4 would of course transpose into the main game) 12...Nh7!? with ...f7-f5 to follow.

11...c6

A useful rule of thumb in these lines is to play ...c7-c6 only in reply to White's g2-g4. After g2-g4 White's king won't be very safe on the kingside so he will usually be looking to castle long. It is therefore a good idea for Black to be ready to open lines in this sector of the board at a moment's notice. Playing ...c7-c6 is quite safe but Black must be more careful about taking on d5. If he mistimes this then the white pieces may become very active. A second rule of thumb for Black, therefore, is to only play ...cxd5 when he can follow up with ...b7-b5.

12 Be2 Bd7 (Diagram 12)

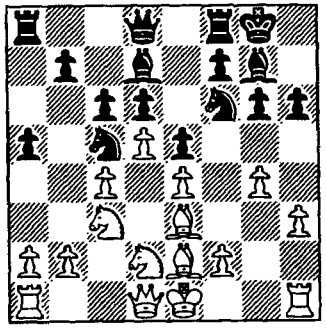


Diagram 12
Black prepares queenside play

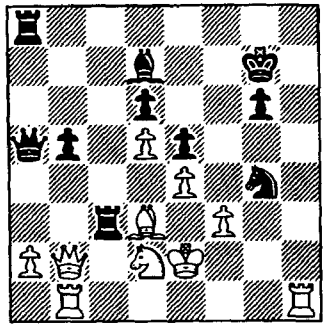


Diagram 13
Black attacks on both flanks

The plan is to play ...a5-a4 and ...Qa5 to develop an initiative.

13 h4 a4 14 h5

It is not such a good idea for White to ignore the threat of ...Qa5. However, even after 14 g5 hxg5 15 hxg5 Nh7 16 Nf3 cxd5 17 cxd5 Qa5 18 Qd2 Rfc8 19 Kf1 b5 Black had active play in Akesson-Gallagher, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

14...Qa5 15 f3 a3!

And this was the other threat. Ideally, White would like to meet this move with 16 b3 but this just loses the knight on c3. By exchanging his a-pawn for White's b-pawn Black gains a positional advantage.

16 Qc2 axb2 17 Qxb2 cxd5 18 cxd5 b5! 19 Rb1

The pawn could not be taken. 19 Nxb5 Rfb8 20 a4 Bxb5! and now 21 axb5 loses a rook and 21 Bxb5 Nd3+!, a queen.

19...Rfc8

It's not unusual for Black to sacrifice the h6-pawn in the King's Indian. In return he hopes to take control of the dark squares.

20 hxg6 fxg6 21 Bxh6 Nd3+! 22 Bxd3 Rxc3 23 Bxg7 Kxg7 24 Ke2

24 Be2 Rac8 was better but Black has more than enough for the pawn.

24...Nxg4! (Diagram 13) 25 Qb4

After 25 fxg4 Bxg4+ the only move not to lose the piece back at once is 26 Ke3 but then 26...Qb6! is mate.

25...Rxd3! 26 fxg4

26 Qxa5 Re3+! 27 Kf1 Rxa5 28 fxg4 Rxa2 is an even worse endgame.

26...Qxb4 27 Rxb4 Rg3 28 Rb2 Rf8 29 Kd1 Bxg4+ 30 Kc1 Rc8+ 31 Kb1 Be2 32 Re1 Bd3+ 33 Ka1 Rg2 34 Nb3 Rxb2 35 Kxb2 Rc4
White resigns

White loses a second pawn. An excellent game from Black.

Game 63
□ Kavalek ■ Kasparov
Bugojno 1982

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 h3 e5 7 d5 Na6 8 Be3

This time White doesn't bother to try and tempt ...h7-h6 out of Black but develops his bishop directly to e3.

8...Nh5

Black prepares ...f7-f5 in the most active fashion. This is the line that has put most White players off playing 8 Be3. The line with ...Nh5 is less good with a pawn on h6 (8 Bg5 h6 9 Be3 Nh5) as at some point White can gain an important tempo with Qd2.

The plan that Black used in Game 62 is also playable here. After 8...Nc5 9 Nd2 a5 10 g4 c6 11 Be2, the position is the same (as in Game 62) except for the fact that Black has a pawn on h7 instead of h6. This seemingly insignificant difference is enough to make the way Black played in the previous game unattractive (11...Bd7 12 g5!), but at the same time introduces a new possibility that wasn't really available to Black there. After 11 Be2, the Russian Grandmaster Dolmatov has patented the pawn sacrifice 11...a4!. The point is that White has to give up his important dark-squared bishop to win the pawn. Few grandmasters would take White after 12 Bxc5 dxc5 13 Nxa4 Qa5 14 Nc3 Bh6! (note this last move wouldn't have been available with a pawn on h6). If White doesn't take the pawn Black plays ...Qa5 with pressure on the queenside.

9 Nh2

This strange-looking move prevents the immediate 9...f5 as after 10 exf5 Black can no longer recapture with the pawn. That explains the thinking behind Black's next move.

9...Qe8 10 Be2 Nf4

10...f5 is a major alternative which Kasparov has also played. Black's main idea is to meet 11 exf5 with 11...Nf4 when White should settle for the roughly level position that arises after 12 0-0 Bxf5 rather than risk 12 Bxf4 exf4 13 fxg6 Qxg6 14 Kf1 Nc5 when Black has excellent compensation for the pawn.

11 Bf3 f5 12 h4?!

White's ambitious strategy is based on playing g3 to expel the knight (12 g3 Nxh3 is good for Black) but this is too risky with his king still in the centre. He should have played 12 0-0 with a roughly level game after 12...Nc5.

12...Qe7 13 g3 Nb4! (Diagram 14) 14 Qb3?

Kavalek had no doubt been shocked by Black's previous move but it is suicidal to keep his king in the centre. He had to play 14 0-0 against which Kasparov intended 14...g5!. The white king is certainly not out

of the woods yet. Taking the knight would have been too dangerous with the white king in the centre.

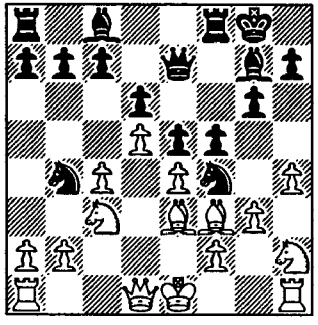


Diagram 14
Kasparov ignores his opponent's threat

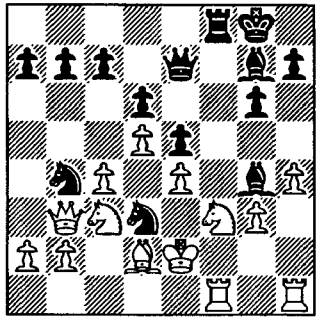


Diagram 15
How should White defend?

14...Nfd3+! 15 Ke2 f4 16 Bd2 fxg3?

Kasparov gives 16...Nxf2! 17 Kxf2 Nd3+ 18 Kg2 (18 Ke2 Nc5 followed by ...fxg3) 18...fxg3 19 Kxg3 and now the further sacrifice 19...Rf4! with a decisive attack.

17 fxg3 Rxf3! 18 Nxf3 Bg4 19 Rafl Rf8 (Diagram 15)

Black now threatens 20...Rxf3 21 Rxf3 Bxf3+ 22 Kxf3+ Qf6+ followed by an invasion on f2. To meet this White must defend the f2-square.

20 Nd1?

Kavalek does it the wrong way. He should have played 20 Be3! as this also gives his king a new square on d2. According to Kasparov this leads to a draw after the decoy sacrifice 20...Bh6!.

20...Qf7! 21 Be3 Bxf3+ 22 Kd2 Qd7 23 Rhg1 Qh3 24 a3 Bxe4 25 Rxf8+ Bxf8 26 axb4 Qh2+ 27 Kc3 Ncl White resigns

Summary

1) The systems with h2-h3 usually lead to a rich full-blooded struggle where Black must play actively to avoid been squashed.

2) The idea of a2-a3 and b2-b4 is an important stratagem for White to lock the knight on a6 out of the game. Unless Black has made gains in other parts of the board he will be in trouble if this happens.

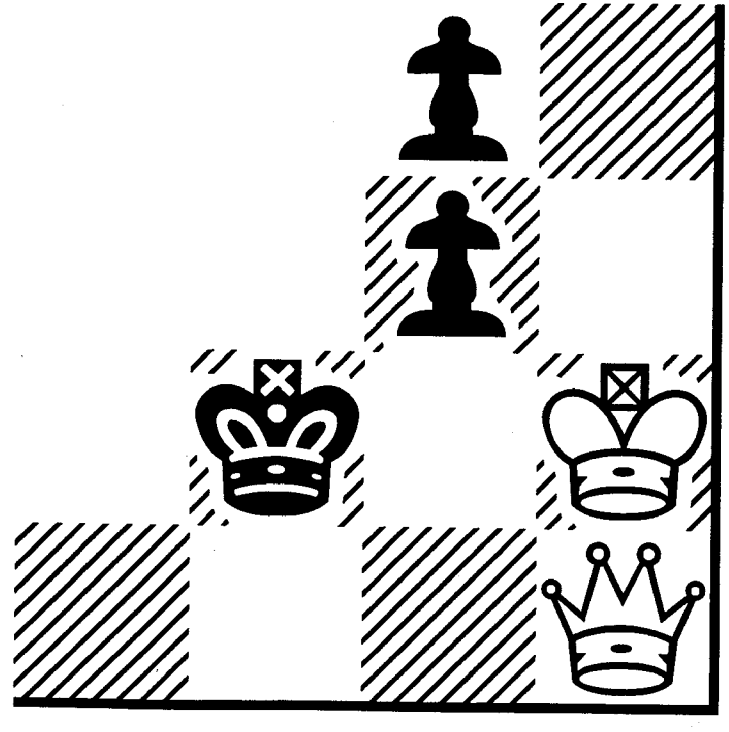
3) In the lines where Black plays ...f7-f5 White must keep control of the e4-square. If he fails to do so Black may be able to advance his e-pawn with devastating effect.

4) White scores much better when he plays with Bg5 rather than with Be3. In fact, it has become quite unusual for White not to play Bg5.

Chapter Ten

Other Systems

- 5 Bd3
- 5 Nge2
- The Smyslov Variation



This chapter contains three other variations in the King's Indian that occur from time to time. They are not necessarily worse than any of the other lines, just less fashionable.

5 Bd3

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Bd3 (Diagram 1)

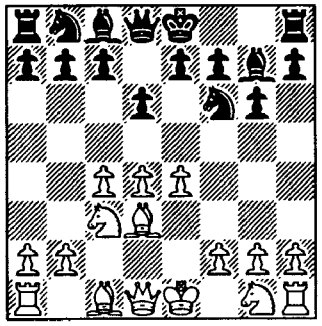


Diagram 1
Seirawan's favourite

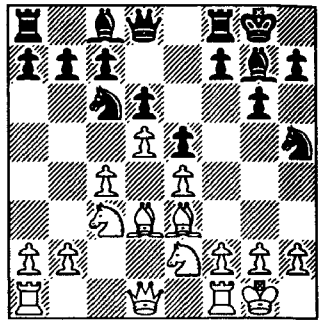


Diagram 2
Retreat or advance?

Some strong grandmasters play this system quite regularly and its main supporter over the years has been the former American Champion Yasser Seirawan.

Strategy

White has a simple plan. He will develop his kingside quickly with Bd3, Nge2 and 0-0 and be ready to meet any subsequent ...f7-f5 by Black with exf5 and f2-f4. This is a solid line in which Black's chances of a successful kingside attack are slim. The main drawback to an early Bd3 is that it slackens White's already rather shaky grip on d4. Therefore, it is no great surprise that Black's most popular defence is based on a quick assault against this point.

5...0-0 6 Nge2 Nc6

After 6...c5 7 d5 Black has to be ready to play a well known line in the Modern Benoni so that is beyond the scope of this book.

6...e5 is played surprisingly rarely. One example is Conquest-Hernandez, Havana 1996, which continued 7 d5 Nh5 8 0-0 f5 9 exf5 Bxf5!? 10 Bxf5 gxf5 11 f4 (11 Ng3 is interesting – see Game 64 for a similar idea) 11...Nd7 12 Qc2 a6 with chances for both sides.

7 0-0 Nh5!?

A most unusual move for the King's Indian. Black hardly ever moves this knight before playing ...e7-e5. This position has now become the

main battleground in the 5 Bd3 variation mainly because of dissatisfaction with the alternatives. Black used to play 7...e5 quite often but a number of games established that after 8 d5 Nd4 9 Nxd4 exd4 10 Nb5 Re8 11 Re1 Ng4 12 h3 a6 13 hxg4 axb5 14 cxb5 Qh4 both 15 Bf4 and 15 g3 give White a clear edge. He has a guaranteed passed pawn on the a-file and some pressure down the half open c-file.

8 Be3

This is the obvious way to defend d4 but White has two alternatives:

1) The obvious-looking 8 d5 has hardly ever been played. After 8...Ne5 9 f4 Nxd3 10 Qxd3 f5!? the situation is very double-edged.

2) 8 Bc2, currently White's most popular move, is covered in Game 64.

8...e5 9 d5 (Diagram 2) 9...Ne7!?

9...Nd4 looks more natural.

1) If White now plays 10 Rc1 Black has the time to play 10...c5 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 b4 c5! which secures the fine outpost on d4 for his knight. Admittedly, White now has d5 for his knight but you can't have everything in life.

2) 10 Bc2!? forces Black to exchange his knight. After 10...Nxc2 11 Qxc2 f5 12 exf5 gxf5 13 f4 Nf6 14 h3 White probably has a slight advantage.

10 Qd2 f5 11 exf5 gxf5 12 f4

12 Bg5 f4! led to a most complicated game in Christiansen-Gallagher, Bern 1996.

12...Ng6! 13 g3 Bd7 14 Rae1 a6 15 b3

The chances are about equal.

Theoretical?

Most of the lines in this chapter are played to avoid the masses of theory in other variations. Black players are also likely to be less familiar with them so can easily get in trouble. 5 Bd3 is an easy line to play for White if he just wants to get out of the opening with a reasonable position.

Statistics

White has scored 56% with 5 Bd3 from nearly 1900 games. In our main line with 7...Nh5, his score is about the same.

Illustrative Games

Game 64
□ **Piket** ■ **Fedorov**
Wijk aan Zee 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Bd3 0-0 6 Nge2 Nc6 7 0-0

Nh5 8 Bc2 e5 9 d5 Ne7

One of the main points behind 8 Bc2 was that Black can no longer play 9...Nd4. Now after 10 Nxd4 exd4 11 Nb5 White just wins a pawn.

10 a4 (Diagram 3)

White is basically waiting for Black to play ...f7-f5. This is the most common move at the moment but White has also waited with 10 Rb1 and 10 Kh1.

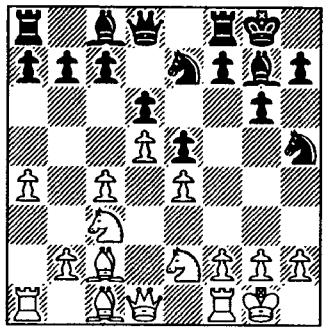


Diagram 3
White waits for ...f7-f5

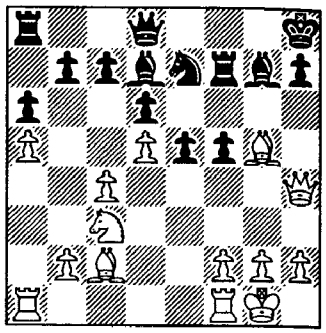


Diagram 4
How does White win material?

10...Kh8

Black waits too, but if he's not going to play ...f7-f5 then he should have played 10...a5 to prevent the further advance of White's a-pawn.

11 a5 f5 12 exf5 gxf5 13 Ng3

13 f4 is met by 13...Ng6. This type of position has proved OK for Black.

13...Nf4

Black avoids 13...Nxg3 14 fxg3! when his f5-pawn would be in constant need of protection and White has the option of playing g4 at some point. Note that if Black plays ...e5-e4 in this type of position he concedes two very useful squares to White – d4 and f4.

14 Nh5 Nxh5 15 Qxh5 a6?!

Black suddenly gets worried about the advance of the a-pawn. The action is on the kingside now. He should have played 15...Ng6.

16 Bg5 Bd7?

This is a blunder. 16...Bf6 17 Bxf6+ Rxf6 18 f4 is pleasant for White but had to be done.

17 Qh4! Rf7 (Diagram 4) 18 Bd1!

Ouch. Bh5 is going to cost Black an exchange.

18...Qf8 19 Bh5 Rf6 20 Qh3 Rh6 21 f4 Rxh5

Black probably got upset that White couldn't even be bothered to take his rook.

22 Qxh5 Ng6 23 Rae1 Re8 24 fxe5 Bxe5 25 Ne2 Bxb2 26 Nf4 Nxf4 27 Bxf4 Be5 28 Qh4 b5 29 axb6 cxb6 30 Kh1 a5 31 Qf2 a4 32 Bxe5+ dxe5 33 Qxb6 f4 34 c5 a3 35 Qb4 a2 36 Qb2 Qf6 37 Qxa2 Bb5 38 Rf2 Black resigns

5 Nge2

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nge2 (Diagram 5)

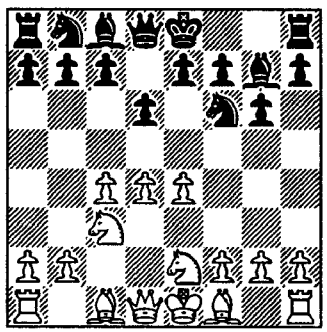


Diagram 5
A different way to develop

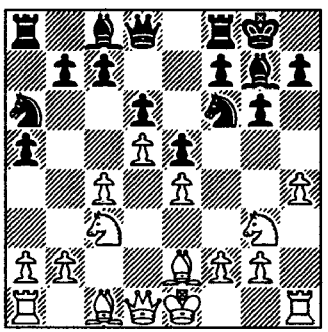


Diagram 6
White probes the kingside

This system was developed by Hungarian players in the 1960's and whilst it has never had a big following it remains quite a tricky system for Black to face.

White's strategy

To spend a couple of tempi manoeuvring the knight to g3 (that's where it is going) may seem like rather strange behaviour but from there it exerts influence over the e4- and f5-squares so it is not easy for Black to play on the kingside. That is perhaps the sophisticated part of White's strategy. The crude part is actually what most White players are interested in. They are going to play h2-h4-h5 and try and attack on the kingside. If Black blocks the h-pawn with ...h7-h5, they play Bg5 and try and make the sacrifice Bxh5 work.

Black's strategy

Because of the potential dangers for Black on the kingside there are quite a few players who prefer to delay castling and immediately start operations on the queenside with ...a7-a6, ...c7-c6 and ...b7-b5. If Black also refrains from playing ...e7-e5, which he usually does, he

must be careful that White can't break through in the centre with e4-e5. An alternative is just to play the normal King's Indian moves (...0-0, ...e7-e5) and let White do his worst.

5...0-0

Game 66 features the plan with Black advancing quickly on the queenside. Black can play either 5...a6 or 5...c6 but he must bear in mind that White still has the possibility of playing a Sämisch with 6 f3. In my opinion 5...a6 is the more flexible choice.

6 Ng3 e5 7 d5 a5 8 Be2

Game 65 features the immediate 8 h4.

8...Na6 9 h4 (Diagram 6) 9...c6

9...h5 is playable as long as after 10 Bg5 Black breaks the pin at once with 10...Qe8. Black can follow up with ...Nh7 and, after some preparation, ...f7-f5.

10 h5 Nc5 11 Be3

If White ever plays hxg6 then Black usually recaptures with the f-pawn.

11...cxd5 12 cxd5 Qb6!

The chances are about level.

Theoretical?

Both players should know about the possible sacrifices on h5, but other than that it's not too theoretical.

Statistics

Again White scores 56%, this time from 1600 games.

Illustrative Games

Game 65
□ **Liardet** ■ **Peng Xiaomin**
Geneva 1997

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nge2 0-0 6 Ng3 e5 7 d5 a5 8 h4 h5

8...c6 or 8...Na6 are alternatives with play likely to transpose to the theoretical section above.

9 Bg5 c6?!

9...Qe8! is a better move.

10 Be2 cxd5

Black would have liked to play 10...Qe8 or 10...Nbd7 but in both cases White takes on c6 and plays Qxd6.

11 Nxd5! Be6 12 Bxh5! (Diagram 7)

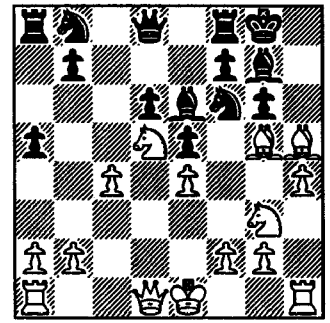


Diagram 7
The thematic sacrifice

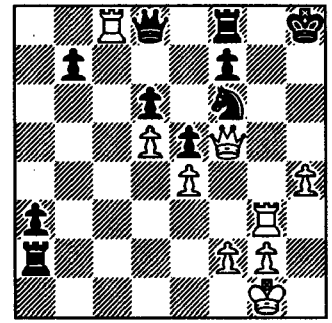


Diagram 8
A decisive deflection

The Chinese grandmaster playing Black pays the price for his sloppy opening play and allows White his thematic sacrifice.

12...Bxd5 13 cxd5 gxh5

Black should probably have played 13...Qb6 but it still looks bad after White retreats his bishop and plays h4-h5.

14 Nxh5 Nbd7 15 Qf3

White now has an unbreakable pin. It just remains for him to bring up the reinforcements and deliver mate.

15...Rc8 16 0-0 Rc2?! 17 Rfc1 Rxb2 18 Rc3! a4 19 Rac1 Rxa2 20 Qf5!

Now the rook on c3 will swing to the kingside.

20...a3 21 Nxg7 Kxg7 22 Rg3 Kh8 23 Bxf6+ Nxf6

23...Qxf6 24 Qh5+ and mate next move.

24 Rc8! (Diagram 8) Black resigns

An elegant finish and what an advertisement for this variation.

Game 66
□ **Liardet** ■ **Gallagher**
Lenk 1998

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nge2 a6

Forewarned is forearmed as the saying goes. During my preparation for this game I had noticed what Liardet did to his illustrious opponent in the previous game. I therefore decided it would be prudent to delay castling and aim for queenside play.

6 Ng3 c6 7 Be2

White can also play 7 a4 to prevent ...b7-b5 but then Black replies 7...a5!. Playing ...a7-a6 and ...a6-a5 may seem like a criminal waste of time but the point is that Black has secured a couple of useful out-

posts for himself on the queenside – b4 is obvious, but after he plays ...e7-e5 the c5-square will also fall into his hands. A possible continuation is 8 Be2 0-0 9 h4 e5 10 d5 Na6 11 Bg5 Nc5 12 Qc2 Qb6 13 Ra3 (to prevent ...Nb3-d4) 13...Bd7 with a comfortable game.

7...b5 8 cxb5

The immediate e4-e5 is not very dangerous as after an exchange on e5 White will have to take back awkwardly on d1. However, 8 0-0 0-0 9 e5! is quite good for White so Black should probably play 8...Nbd7.

8...axb5 9 b4 0-0 10 Rb1

I'm not too convinced by White's plan. He is playing half-heartedly on both wings.

10...Nbd7 11 0-0 Bb7 12 Bg5 h6 13 Be3 e5 14 Qc2 Qe7 15 Rfd1 exd4 16 Bxd4 h5 17 f3 Ne5 (Diagram 9)

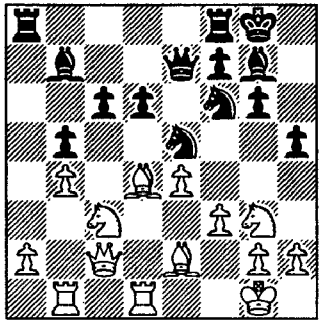


Diagram 9
Black has the better prospects.

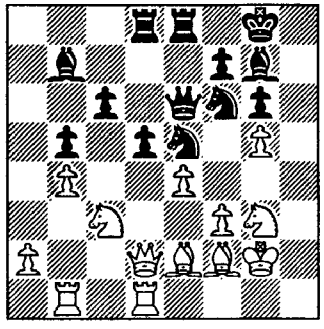


Diagram 10
How does Black continue?

White is kept occupied by the hole on c4 as the last thing he would want is a black knight establishing itself there. The move f2-f3, which was required to protect e4, has also slightly weakened the kingside.

18 Nf1 h4 19 Qd2!? Rfe8 20 Bf2 Nh5! 21 g4

21 Qxd6 Qg5 with ...Nf4 to follow is much too dangerous for White. I wasn't too unhappy to see the text either as the white king position is beginning to open up.

21...hxg3 22 hxg3 Rad8 23 g4 Nf6 24 Ng3 Qe6 25 Kg2?

White should have played 25 g5. Now he is losing.

25...d5! 26 g5 (Diagram 10) 26...Nxf3!

White had seen that 26...dxe4 27 Qxd8 wasn't so clear but completely overlooked this shot. Of course 27 Bxf3 just loses to 27...dxe4.

27 Qf4 Nxe4!

If White takes on f3 Black takes on c3 and if White takes on e4 Black recaptures defending his knight on f3.

28 Ncxe4 dxe4 29 Nxe4 Nd4 30 Bxd4 Rxd4 31 Bf3 Qxa2+ 32 Kg1 c5 33 Nf6+ Bxf6 34 Qxf6 Rg4+! 35 Kf1

35 Bxg4 Qg2 mate and 35 Kh1 Qf2! were alternative wins.

35...Qc4+ 36 Kf2 Re2+! White resigns

White resigned because of 37 Bxe2 Rg2+ 38 Ke3 Rxe2.

The Smyslov Variation

We shall now look at the Smyslov system where White plays an early Bg5. Play starts 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 Nf3 d6 (0-0) 5 Bg5 and now White will follow up with e2-e3 (Diagram 11).

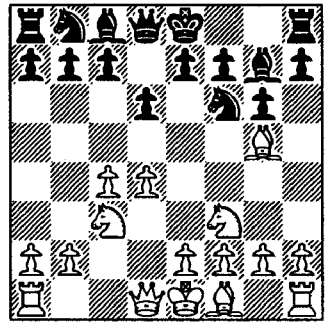


Diagram 11
Quiet, but dangerous

This can be quite a dangerous line for Black. In my early days as a King's Indian player I struggled a bit playing with ...e7-e5. The turning point for me came when I suddenly noticed a game where Smyslov was playing Black against his own system. He played with ...c7-c5 and won really easily. I copied him and my results improved dramatically. I therefore suggest that Black plays the Smyslov Defence to the Smyslov Variation. This is examined in Game 68.

Theoretical?

The knowledge required for Black is not too extensive but he should definitely be prepared for the Smyslov System. It can be unpleasant if he isn't prepared and it also has quite a large band of supporters.

Statistics

In the Smyslov system White has scored 56%. When Black plays with an early ...c7-c5 White scores even higher at 59% but this is because the vast majority of Black players don't follow up correctly.

Illustrative Games

Game 67
☐ Sharif ■ Mamedov
Abu Dhabi 2001

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 Nf3 0-0 5 Bg5 0-0 6 e3 Nbd7

Black prepares ...e7-e5. 6...c5! is the subject of the next game.

7 Qc2!

White wants to be able to meet ...e7-e5 with Rd1.

7...c6 8 Be2 a6

After 8...e5 9 Rd1 Qc7 10 0-0 h6 11 Bh4 another one of the points of Qc2 is revealed.

Exercise 11: Black would like to remove White's bishop with 11...g5 12 Bg3 Nh5 (Diagram 14) but this is not a good idea. Why?

9 0-0 h6 10 Bh4 e5 (Diagram 12)

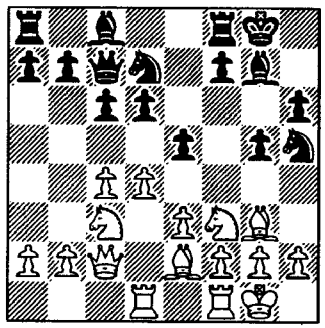


Diagram 12
Does Black get the bishop pair?

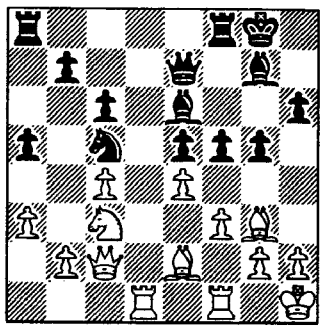


Diagram 13
A well-timed thrust

After preparing ...b7-b5 it seems strange not to play it. Nevertheless, the position after 10...b5 11 a3 Bb7 12 Nd2 is quite unpleasant for Black as I can testify from personal experience.

11 dxe5

There was no reason to release the central tension. 11 Rfd1 looks like a good move.

11...dxe5 12 Rad1 Qe7 13 a3 a5 14 Nd2 Nc5 15 Nb3 Nxb3 16 Qxb3 g5 17 Bg3 Nd7 18 f3 Nc5 19 Qc2 f5 20 Kh1 Be6 21 e4 (Diagram 13) 21...fxe4

Note how White only played e4 when the knight on c5 could no longer go to e6. It was possible for Black to play 21...f4 but after 22 Bf2 Rad8 White can play 23 Nd5! cxd5 24 cxd5 when he regains the piece with

a sizeable advantage.

22 Nxe4 Bf5 23 Bd3! Nxd3 24 Qxd3 Rad8 25 Qe2 Rfe8 26 Bf2 Bxe4 27 fxe4 Qc7 28 h3 Rxd1 29 Rxd1 Rd8 30 Kg1 Rxd1+ 31 Qxd1 Bf8 32 Qa4 b6 33 b4 axb4 34 axb4 c5? 35 b5 h5?! 36 Qd1 h4 37 Qd5+ Kg7 38 Be3 Black resigns

Game 68
☐ Pachman ■ Smyslov
Amsterdam 1994

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 Nf3 0-0 5 Bg5 d6 6 e3 c5 7 Be2

After 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 White would have to play well to draw the endgame. Sometimes White blocks the centre with 7 d5 when 7...h6 8 Bh4 e5 would be standard play, but Black could also try 8...Qb6, hoping to reach similar positions to the main line.

7...h6 8 Bh4 Bf5!? (Diagram 14)

There are a couple of good reasons for putting the bishop on f5. Firstly it enables Black to play ...Ne4. After the knights on f6 and c3 have disappeared the bishop on g7 becomes very powerful. The second reason is that it covers b1 and in a surprising number of variations this allows Black to mount a decisive assault against the b2-pawn.

9 0-0 Nbd7!?

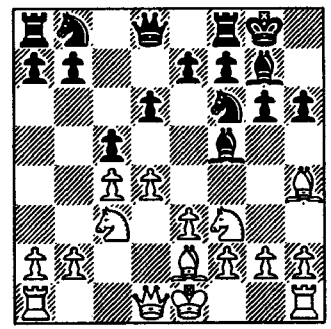


Diagram 14
Exploiting White's reticent e2-e3

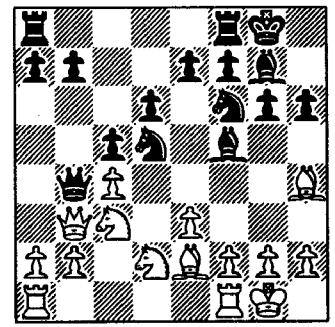


Diagram 15
White's bishop on h4 is loose

Preparing ...Qb6, which is not playable at once in view of 10 Bxf6 followed by Nd5. The immediate 9...Ne4 is an interesting alternative.

10 d5?!

A strange decision. 10 Rc1 is more logical so that White can meet 10...Qb6 with 11 b3. Still, in Law-Gallagher, British Championship 1997 Black had an attractive position after 11...Rfe8 12 h3?! g5! 13 Bg3 Ne4 14 Nxe4 Bxe4 15 dxc5 Nxc5 16 Nd4 Rad8.

10...Qb6! 11 Na4

Not a good square for the knight but both 11 Qd2 g5 12 Bg3 Ne4 13

Nxe4 Bxe4 and 11 Qb3 g5 12 Bg3 Ne4 13 Nxe4 Bxe4 14 Nd2 Bg6 seem to lose a pawn.

11...Qa5 12 Nd2 Nb6 13 Nc3

13 Nxb6 Qxb6 again leaves the b-pawn in difficulties. Now White hopes that his problems can be solved by advancing e4, but Smyslov was ready for that one.

13...Qb4! 14 Qb3 Nbxd5! (Diagram 15)

And now we know why Smyslov didn't succumb to any urge he may have felt to play ...g6-g5. The exposed position of the bishop on h4 is the key point in this simple, but pleasing combination.

15 cxd5

Or 15 Nxd5 Nxd5 16 Qxb4 Nxb4 17 Bxe7 Rfe8 18 Bxd6 Rad8 is winning for Black.

15...Qxh4 16 Qxb7 Qb4!

Black's last few moves illustrate well the power of the queen.

17 Qxb4

There is no choice for White as 17 Qxe7 Qxb2 loses material.

17...cxb4 18 Nb5 Nxd5! 19 Bf3 Bd3! 20 Bxd5 Bxb5 21 Bxa8 Bxf1 22 Be4 Ba6 White resigns

Summary

1) The systems in this chapter are not inferior systems for White, as can be seen from the statistics, they are just played a bit less often than the others.

2) 5 Bd3 is a solid system where White tries to reduce the impact of Black playing ...f7-f5. It appeals to players who don't want to work too much as White usually plays the same initial moves against whatever Black does.

3) White's main idea with 5 Nge2 is to play Ng3 and then advance his h-pawn. It is quite playable for Black to castle into this attack but he must take care about sacrifices on h5. Certain Black players prefer to delay castling to frustrate White's attacking ambitions.

4) The Smyslov system is an awkward line for Black if he insists on playing for ...e7-e5, but a relatively easy ride if he plays ...c7-c5.

Solution to Exercises

Exercise 1: 9 Nxe5 is just a bad move. After 9...Nxe4! 10 Nxe4 Bxe5 Black has the better game after both 11 Bg5 Rd4! and 11 0-0 Nc6. His forces are more effectively placed and the d4-square makes a nice home for any number of black pieces.

Exercise 2: He would have been mated after 26...Rxh2+! 27 Bxh2 Qh7. The sacrifice doesn't work after 26 Bxg4 as White can interpose a piece on h3 or h5.

Exercise 3: 18...Qh4!! – a wonderful move which vacates the h5-square for the black knight. If White now plays 19 Nxc7 then after 19...Nh5 he gets checkmated. Black is threatening ...Ng3 mate. Here are White's attempts to stop it:

1) 20 Bf2 Qxh2+!! 21 Kxh2 Ng3+ 22 Kg1 Rh1 mate.

2) 20 h3 Ng3+ 21 Kh2 Bxh3!.

3) 20 g3 Nxg3+ 21 Kg2 Bh3+ 22 Kf2 Nh1 double checkmate (still just 1 point).

The only chance for White after 18...Qh4!! is to play the sad 19 g3 to prevent ...Nh5. After 19...fxg3 20 Nxc7 (20 Ng2 Qh3!) 20...Ng6! Black still has a decisive attack, although the variations are quite complicated. I'll just show one: 21 Nxa8? Qxh2+! 22 Bxh2 Rxh2+ 23 Kg1 Nf4 24 Rf2 Nh3+ 25 Kf1 Rxf2 mate.

Exercise 4: 18 Rxd6! wins a crucial pawn as 18...Qxd6?? 19 c5+ costs Black his queen.

Exercise 5: 11 Bxh6, which is not that bad a move, is met by 11...Nxe4! 12 fxe4 Qh4+ 13 g3 Qxh6 14 Qxh6 Bxh6 15 Nxd6 Rd8 when Black has good compensation for the pawn. This is an important tactic in many lines of the King's Indian. Often it will be more devastating than in this example.

Exercise 6: After 13 Bxh6? Nxe4! 14 fxe4 Qh4+ Black regains the piece with advantage.

Exercise 7: 15...Nxe4! 16 Nxe4? (16 b4 limits the damage; Black replies 16...Nxc3) 16...Qxe1! 17 Qxe1 Nf3+ 18 Kh1 Nxe1 19 Rxe1 Rxe4 and Black emerges with a decisive material advantage.

Exercise 8: 10...Nfxe4! 11 Nxe4 Bf5 and now 12 Nfd2 fails to 12...Nxe4 13 Nxe4 Qh4+ and after 12 Bd3 Bxe4 13 Bxe4 f5 Black regains the piece with an active game (14 Bd3 e4).

Exercise 9: 11 b4? falls into Black's trap. After 11...Ncxe4! 12 Nxe4 Nxe4 13 Qxe4 Bf5 14 Qf3 e4 Black wins the rook on a1.

Exercise 10: Were you looking for a brilliant combination? Then you were wasting your time. The answer is 24...Nb8! and Black's one passive piece is brought back into play. After ...Nd7-f6 White's position is beginning to look decidedly shaky.

Exercise 11: It loses a pawn to 13 Nxg5! hxg5 14 Bxh5. Normally Black could meet 13 Nxg5 with 13...Nxg3 but he can't here as White is also threatening Qh7 mate.