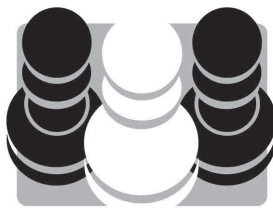


Grandmaster Repertoire 2A

King's Indian and Grünfeld

By

Boris Avrukh



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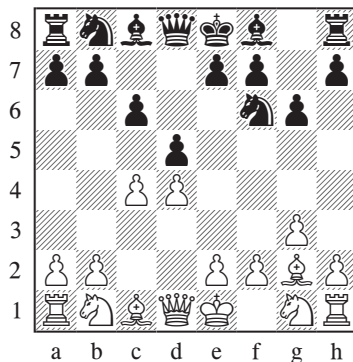
Preface

I am extremely excited to release this third volume of my new series of 1.d4 repertoire books, which replaces the older *Grandmaster Repertoire* Volumes One and Two (henceforth abbreviated to *GM 1* and *GM 2*). Volume 2A is mainly devoted to the challenge of taking on two of Black's most popular and dynamic defences: the Grünfeld and the King's Indian. The former takes up the first four chapters, with the latter comprising Chapters 5-15. The final two chapters continue the theme of Black's kingside fianchetto, dealing with the closed Benoni followed by a tricky move order with an early ...c5.

For readers who liked my recommendations in *GM 2*, I have good news: I decided to retain the Fianchetto System as my weapon of choice. However, there have been enormous changes within several variations, which should come as no surprise. Nearly eight years have passed since *GM 2* was published, which is a tremendous length of time for modern chess theory. This is especially true for the many new ideas I presented in my previous work, many of which have been tested extensively. Some of my previous ideas succeeded in putting the lines in question 'out of business', while in other cases Black players managed to find reliable antidotes to my recommendations. After giving my repertoire a thorough overhaul, I am quite proud of both the modifications and the new ideas I have introduced in this book. Here is a brief glimpse at a few of the most important changes:

The Grünfeld

I decided new directions were needed against two of Black's main options. Firstly, Chapter 1 deals with the rock-solid **3...c6** and **4...d5**, when I will be recommending:



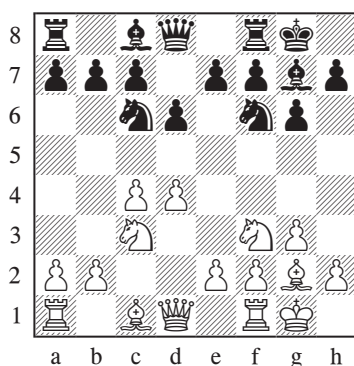
5. ♖a4!?

White intends to exchange on d5 without allowing Black to recapture with the c6-pawn. Black has tried several replies but so far White's results have been excellent. I have presented a lot of new ideas, many of which were discovered when I worked on this variation with Boris Gelfand some years ago.

The next three chapters deal with the structure arising after $4...d5$ $5.cxd5$ $\text{N}xd5$, which I call the Dynamic Grünfeld. After dealing thoroughly with the various sidelines, we will eventually work our way up to the big main line arising after $9...Bb8$ (variation E of Chapter 4). In *GM 2* I offered $10.Bb1$, but a huge amount of practical testing and analysis has revealed more than one satisfactory solution for Black. Instead I am recommending $10.Nh4!$, a recent trend which has yielded excellent results so far. Once again, I have presented a lot of original ideas and analysis to create fresh problems for Black.

The King's Indian

Out of the many changes in this new volume, perhaps the most radical ones have come in the $6...Nc6$ variation. After $7.0-0$ we reach the following position.



Firstly, $7...e5$ has come into fashion as of late. I developed some nice ideas after $8.dxe5$ $\text{N}xe5$ $9.b3$, which I was able to put to the test in a recent game against the American prodigy Awonder Liang; see Chapter 8 for more about this. Against $7...a6$ and $7...Bb8$, which are essentially the same concept, I have chosen $8.b3$, taking White's play in a completely different direction from *GM 2*. The main point is to meet $7...a6$ $8.b3$ $Bb8$ with the surprising $9.d5$, which I believe offers White excellent prospects, as you will see in Chapter 10.

Other Lines

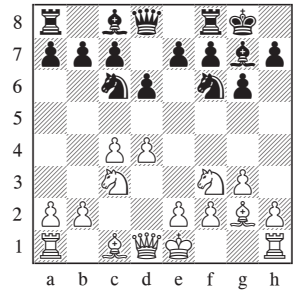
The final two chapters cover a couple of important sidelines. The Reluctant (closed) Benoni contains a lot of subtleties, and I have significantly improved upon my coverage from *GM 2*. Finally, $3...c5$ is a tricky move order which I completely overlooked in *GM 2*. Chapter 17 shows an excellent solution for White, with an important novelty in the most critical line.

I know a lot of chess readers have been waiting for my latest ideas against the Grünfeld and King's Indian Defences in particular, and I hope my new work will satisfy their expectations.

Boris Avrukh
Chicago, December 2017

Chapter 8

King's Indian



6...Nc6 – Sidelines & 7...e5

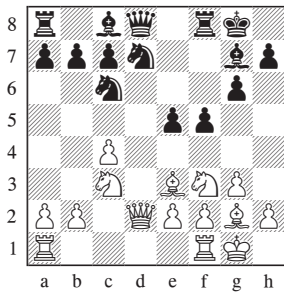
Variation Index

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.O-O 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6

7.0-0

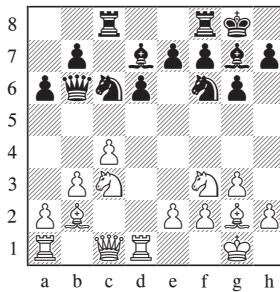
| | |
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| A) 7...Na5 | 155 |
| B) 7...Nd7 | 156 |
| C) 7...Bd7 | 157 |
| D) 7...e5 8.dxe5 | 160 |
| D1) 8...dxe5 9.Bg5 | 161 |
| D11) 9...Qxd1 | 161 |
| D12) 9...Be6 | 162 |
| D2) 8...Nxe5 9.b3! | 163 |
| D21) 9...Re8 | 164 |
| D22) 9...Nxf3† 10.Bxf3 | 165 |
| D221) 10...Bh3 | 166 |
| D222) 10...Ne4!? | 166 |

B) note to 9...Nb6



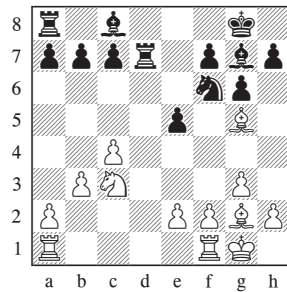
11.Ng5!N

C) note to 13...b5

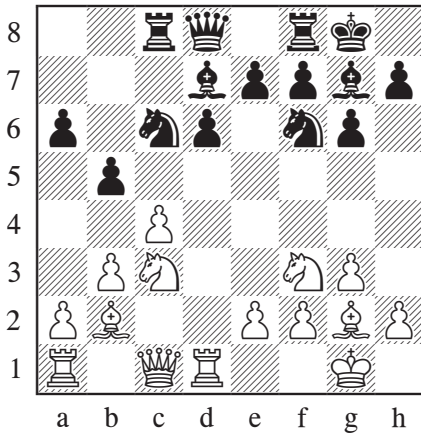


14.Ne1!N

D21) after 12...Re8



13.Na4!N

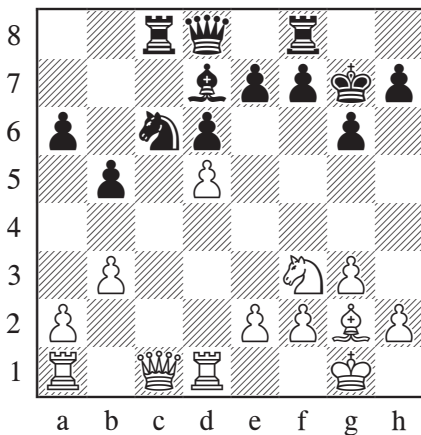


14. ♖d5 ♗xd5

Black has nothing better.

14... ♗e8 runs into an effective counter: 15. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 Now in Schreiner – Watzka, Austria 2013, the simple 16. c5!N would have secured White's advantage.

15. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 16. cxd5



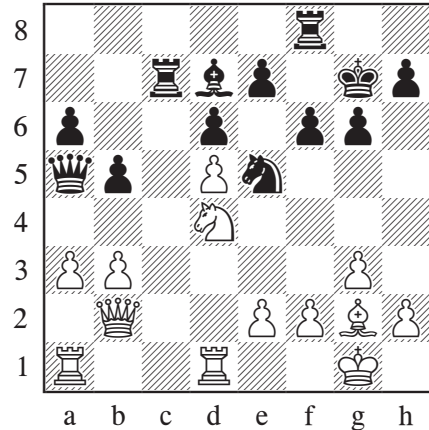
16... ♗e5N

Black needs to improve over 16... ♗a5? 17. ♗b2† ♗g8 18. ♗d2± when White had a large advantage due to the poorly placed knight in KhademaIsharieh – Kostitsina, Maribor 2012.

The text move is clearly a better try. I developed the following line for White:

17. ♗b2 f6 18. ♗d4 ♗a5 19. a3 ♗c7

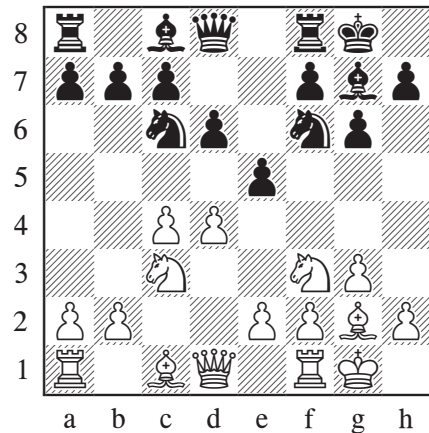
19... ♗c3 achieves nothing due to 20. ♗a2 ♗c7 21. h3 ♗fc8 22. ♖h2 and f2-f4 is coming next.



20. h3 ♗fc8 21. ♖h2 ♗b6 22. f4 ♗f7 23. ♗d3

White has a lasting advantage due to the passive knight on f7.

D) 7...e5



8. dxe5

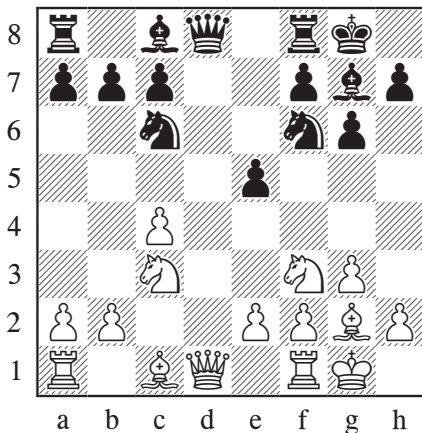
This is a significant change from my previous work. In *GM 2*, I recommended

8.d5 and showed some nice ideas for White after 8...♗e7 9.e4, but neglected to consider 8...♗b8!, which has led to good results for Black in recent years. I was unable to find any advantage for White against this line, which is why I now prefer to exchange on e5.

Before moving on, it is worth mentioning that 8.h3!? is an interesting alternative, but some of the ensuing variations look pretty double-edged to me.

After the text move, Black must obviously choose between D1) 8...dxe5 and D2) 8...♗xe5.

D1) 8...dxe5



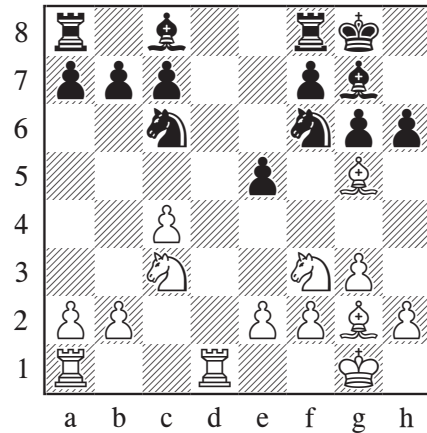
This recapture is the more desirable option for Black from a structural point of view. However, the open d-file and the constant possibility of a knight jump to d5 present Black with some difficulties.

9.♙g5

Black's main candidates are D11) 9...♗xd1 and D12) 9...♙e6.

9...h6?! runs into 10.♗xd8 ♖xd8 11.♙xf6 ♙xf6 12.♗d5 ♗g7 13.♗xc7 ♖b8 14.e4! when Black has no compensation for the missing pawn.

D11) 9...♗xd1 10.♖fxd1 h6



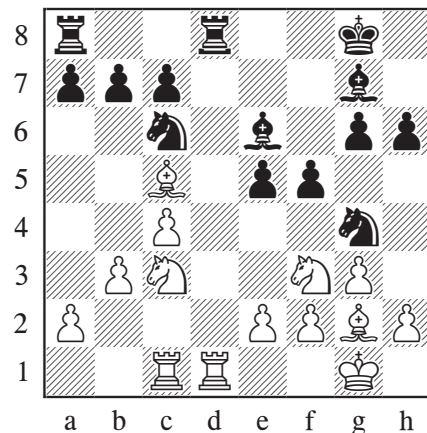
This gives White a pleasant endgame advantage after:

11.♙e3! ♙e6 12.b3 ♖fd8 13.♖ac1

Given the chance, White will improve his position with ♗e1-d3-c5.

13...♗g4 14.♙c5 f5

In Barbasco – Kostiuk, Balatonlelle 2000, White missed a nice way to increase his advantage:



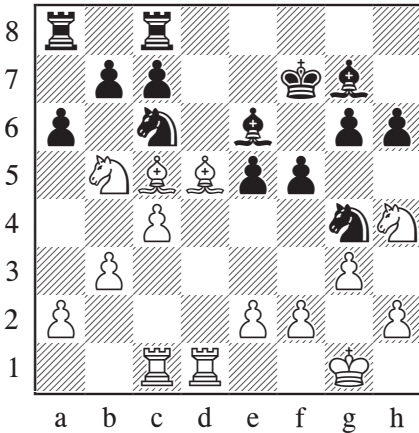
15.♗b5!N

The following line is more or less forced.

15...♖dc8 16.♘h4 ♔f7

16...g5? runs into the elegant tactical trick 17.♙d5! and Black is in trouble.

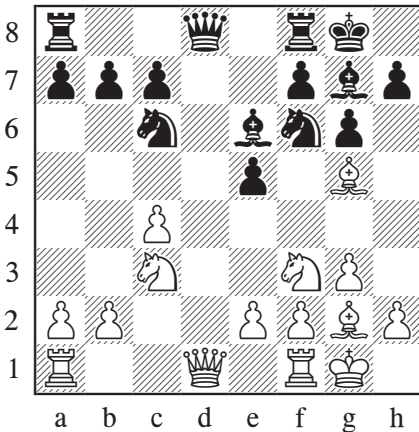
17.♙d5 a6



18.♙xc6 bxc6 19.♘a7!

White keeps an obvious advantage.

D12) 9...♙e6



This seems a better try, but I still like White's chances after:

10.♖c1!?

10.♖a4 has been the most popular move, while 10.♘d5 and 10.♘d2 have also occurred many more times than the text. However, as we

will soon see, the c4-pawn is poisoned. Other advantages of the text are that it prepares ♖d1 and, less obviously but equally importantly, prevents Black from playing ...h6 in the near future.

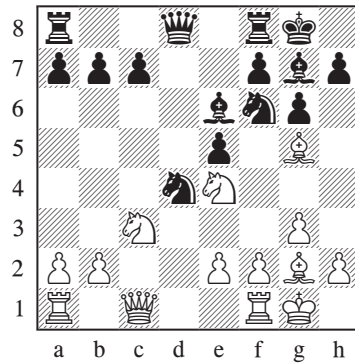
10...♙c8

This has been Black's usual reply.

10...♙xc4?!

Black gobbled the pawn in one game but it's hardly a good idea.

11.♘d2 ♙e6 12.♘de4 ♘d4



13.♘h1!?

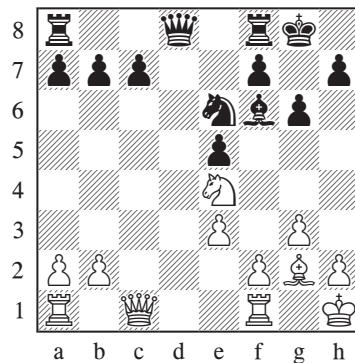
13.e3N ♘f5 14.♖d1 ♖e7 15.♘xf6† ♙xf6 16.♙xf6 ♖xf6 17.♙xb7 is a simple route to a clear positional advantage.

The text move is also promising, and in the game Black failed to solve his problems.

13...♙f5?! 14.e3 ♙xe4 15.♘xe4 ♘e6?

A tactical blunder, but Black's position was difficult in any case.

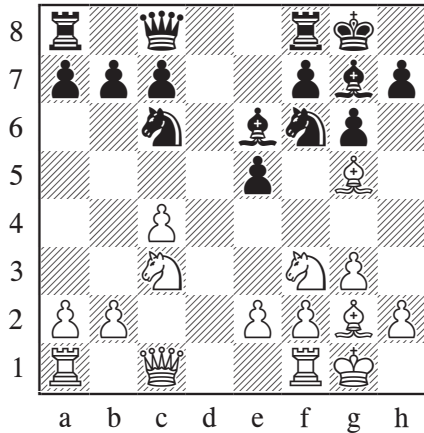
16.♙xf6 ♙xf6



Up to now White had played a nice game in Sprecic – Nurkic, Tuzla 2003, but here he surprisingly missed a simple tactical solution:

17.♞d1N ♞e7 18.♞d7!

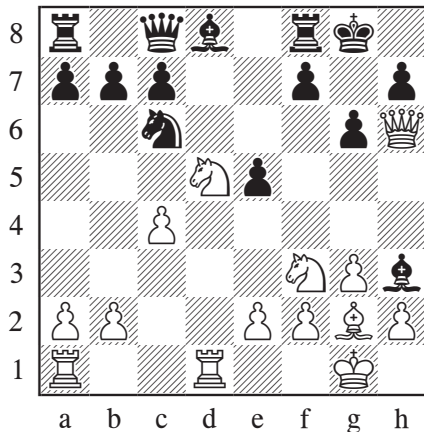
Winning on the spot.



11.♞d1 ♖h3

Black was under serious positional pressure after 11...♖d7 12.b3 f6 13.♖h6 ♜f7 14.♞xg7 ♜xg7 15.♖d2 ♖e7 16.♖de4± in Thybo – Britton, Hastings 2016.

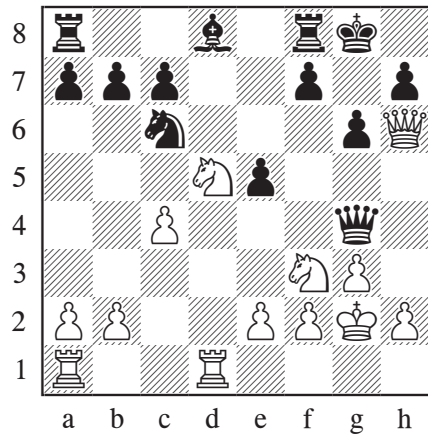
12.♞xf6 ♞xf6 13.♖d5 ♖d8 14.♞h6



14...♞xg2 15.♜xg2 ♞g4?

15...f6N would have been a better bet, although even here White can continue with 16.h4! ♜f7 17.♞e3, maintaining the pressure.

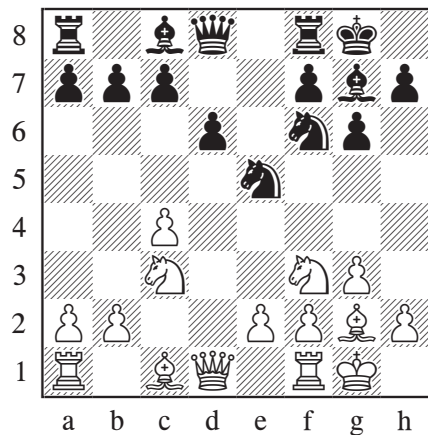
In Vallejo Pons – Pavlidis, Tallinn 2016, White's strongest continuation would have been:



16.♖e3!N ♞e4 17.♞d7±

With an obvious advantage.

D2) 8...♖xe5



9.b3!

9...♖xe5 dx5 has been much more popular. White keeps an edge here too, and can definitely press for a while, but I believe Black should be able to hold the position.

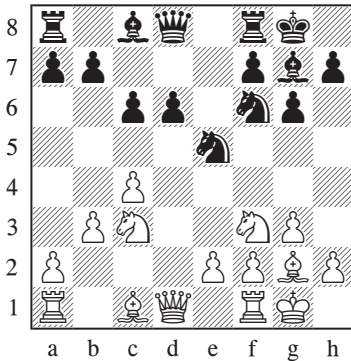
The text move is my first choice, as I really enjoy playing the white side of the resulting pawn structure. We will consider D21) 9...♞e8 and D22) 9...♖xf3†, after first checking a few minor alternatives:

9...a6?! would be a strange choice, and has never been played from this position; I only mention it because the resulting position has sometimes been reached via the 7...a6 move order; see 9...♞xe5 in the notes to variation A4 of Chapter 10 on page 189.

9...♞h5 occurred in Le Quang An – Hoang, Ho Chi Minh City 2017, when 10.♞xe5N ♞xe5 (or 10...dxe5 11.♞a3±) 11.♞b2 would have given White an easy advantage.

9...c6

I would like to suggest a new concept here:



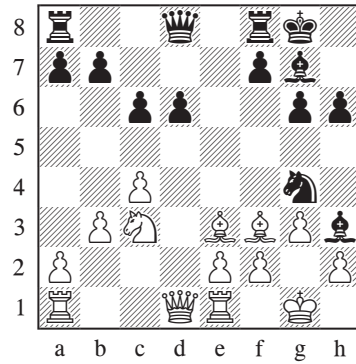
10.♞g5!±N

White has mostly chosen either 10.♞xe5 (which is pretty harmless) or 10.♞b2, which places the bishop on a slightly suboptimal square.

I believe the bishop is most active on the c1-h6 diagonal. I was debating between the text move and the immediate 10.♞e3, but decided it would be best to provoke ...h6 in order to have the option of ♞d2 with gain of tempo. The position does not lend itself to a lot of concrete analysis, but I want to show one illustrative line:

10...h6 11.♞e3 ♞xf3† 12.♞xf3 ♞h3 13.♞e1 ♞g4

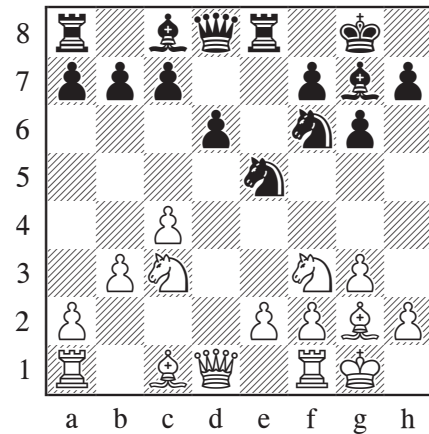
13...♞e8 allows White to arrange his pieces optimally: 14.♞d2 ♞h7 15.♞ad1 with solid pressure.



14.♞xg4! ♞xg4 15.♞d4 ♞e8 16.♞d2

I don't see a good way for Black to make up for his vulnerable pawn structure.

D21) 9...♞e8



10.♞xe5!

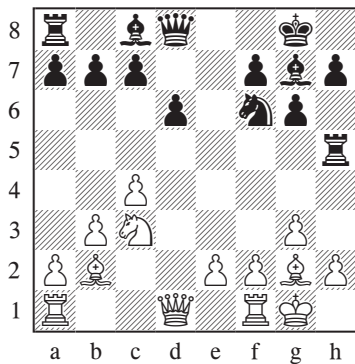
A normal move such as 10.♞b2 should offer White a slightly better game, but I like the text move even more. The point is that the extra b2-b3 move offers White a much better version of the ensuing queenless position.

10...dxe5

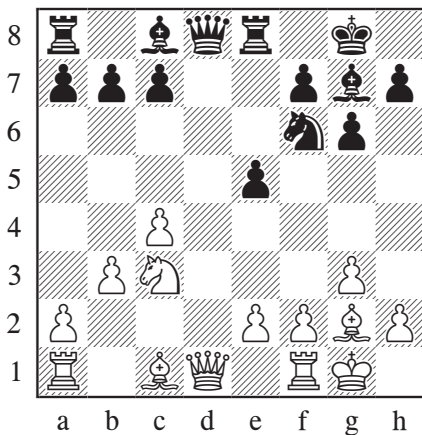
This is certainly the move that Black would like to play.

In the event of 10...♞xe5 11.♞b2, Black's rook is misplaced and the following attacking idea is unlikely to succeed: 11...♞h5 (11...♞e8

12.♙d2 ♜b8 13.♞ad1 led to a comfortable edge for White in Nina – Franco, Lima 2004)



12.e4 This is a logical, human reaction. (The computer suggestion of 12.♙d2!N ♖g4 13.h3 ♗f6 14.h4 looks advantageous as well, as Black has no way forward on the kingside.)
 12...♙h3 13.♙xh3 ♞xh3 14.♙g2 ♙d7 15.f3 ♞h5 16.g4!± White was clearly better in Mamedov – Bortnyk, Tallinn 2016.



11.♙xd8 ♞xd8 12.♙g5!

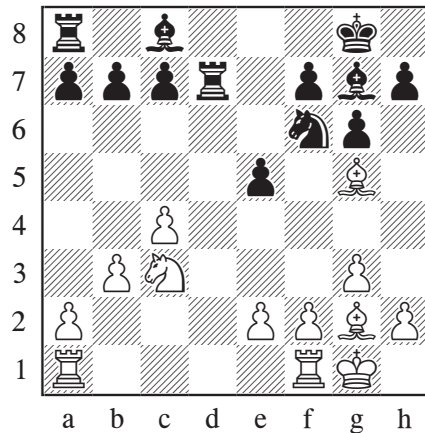
In the analogous position in the 9.♗xe5 dxe5 line, Black's best move is ...♞d4, gaining time by attacking the c4-pawn. The fact that he does not have that resource makes a huge difference here.

12...♞d7

12...♞e8? is much worse, and after 13.♗b5

♞e7 14.♞ad1 White was close to winning in Safronov – Sufiyarov, Ufa 1999.

This position was reached in Schunk – Hentze, Germany 2008, and now White should have played:



13.♗a4!N ♞e7 14.♗c5

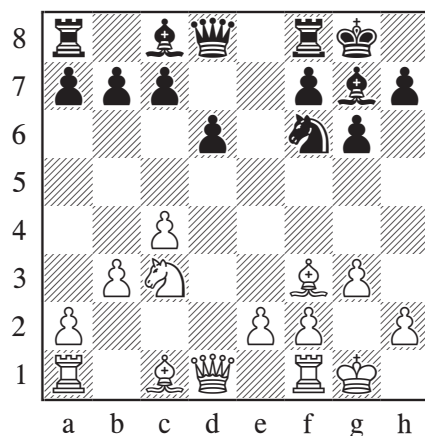
With strong pressure. It's important to mention the following line:

14...c6?

This natural defensive move does not work due to:

15.♗e4! ♞e6 16.♙xf6 ♙xf6 17.♙h3+–
 Black loses material.

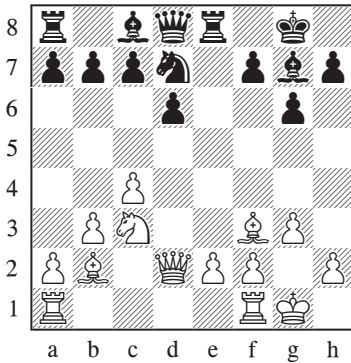
D22) 9...♗xf3† 10.♙xf3



This pawn structure should favour White; his light-squared bishop is strong, and his knight may occupy the d5-outpost in the future. If Black tries to solve those problems by means of ...c6, he will be left with a backward d-pawn.

Black's two main options are **D221) 10...♗h3** and **D222) 10...♘e4!?**.

In the event of 10...♞e8 I think the most accurate move is 11.♞d2!N. (The advantage of this over the obvious 11.♗b2 is to have the possibility of meeting ...♗h3 with ♞d1.) 11...♘d7 12.♗b2 We have transposed to a bunch of games. Here are a few brief examples:



12...a5 (after 12...♘c5 13.♘d5 ♗f5 14.♗xg7 ♘xg7 15.b4 ♘d7 16.♘e3 ♗e4 17.♗xe4 ♞xe4 18.♞d5 White was clearly better in Roghani – Tahbaz, Sowme'eh Sara 2015) 13.♞fd1 ♘c5 14.♘d5 White kept a pleasant positional edge in Andersson – Spitzer Isbert, Sanxenxo 2003.

D221) 10...♗h3

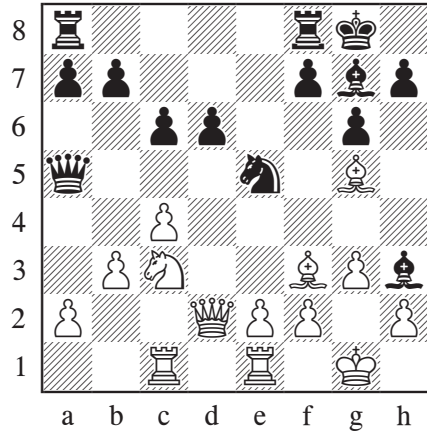
This way Black develops with tempo, but his positional problems remain.

11.♞e1 c6 12.♗g5!

12.♗b2 is playable but, when the knight is still on f6, I think White should take the opportunity to develop the bishop more actively. I only found one game from this position, which continued:

12...♞a5 13.♞d2 ♘d7 14.♞ac1 ♘e5

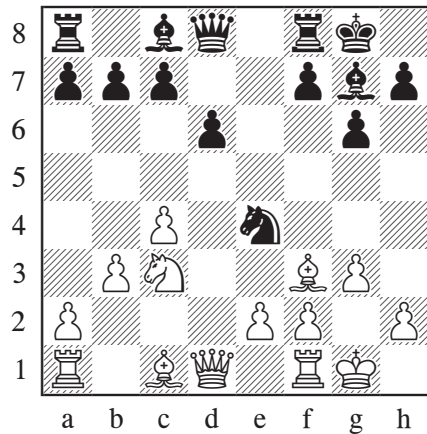
In Gaydukov – Makhnev, corr. 2003, White should have played:



15.♗h1N f6 16.♗h6

White maintains a pleasant edge.

D222) 10...♘e4!?



Black tries to solve his problems by utilizing the long diagonal to force simplifications. I faced this move in a recent game, which we will follow.

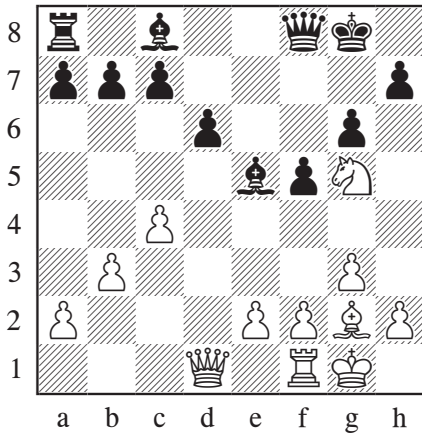
11.♘xe4!

11.♗xe4 ♗xc3 gives too little for White.

11...♗xa1 12.♗g5 f6 13.♗h6 ♗e5 14.♗xf8

♟xf8 15.♙g2 f5 16.♞g5

16.f4 ♟b2! was okay for Black in Jablonicky – Goban, Slovakia 2004. The text move is better; despite Black's bishop pair, he still faces some difficulties in developing his queenside pieces.



16...♟e7

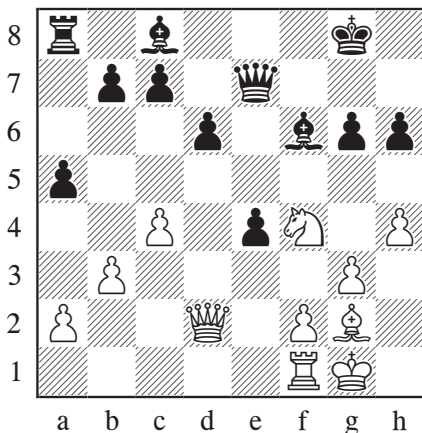
Black most probably should have preferred something like 16...c6N, although after 17.♟d3 I still like White.

17.♟d2 ♙f6 18.h4! a5 19.e4!

White's initiative almost plays itself.

19...h6 20.♞h3 fxe4 21.♞f4

Black's extra pawn will not survive for long, and he has several weak pawns to worry about.



21...♙f5 22.♞d5 ♟g7 23.♞xf6† ♟xf6
24.♟d5† ♟f7 25.♟xb7 ♟e8 26.♟e1

I was much better and eventually converted my advantage against one of the most talented youngsters in the US in Avrukh – Liang, Chicago 2017.

Conclusion

6...♟c6 is a flexible move which can be played with many possible follow-ups in mind. The sidelines 7...♞a5, 7...♞d7 and 7...♙d7 are not so bad, but White has good chances to get an advantage against them, as you would expect. 7...e5 is a more serious option, when 8.dxe5 is a major change from my work in *GM 2*. 8...dxe5 9.♙g5 puts Black under positional pressure, regardless of whether or not he exchanges queens. 8...♞xe5 seems like Black's best bet but 9.b3! is a good reply. Black has several possibilities, but the pawn structure almost always favours White, as long as he gets to develop his pieces on normal squares. 9...♞xf3† 10.♙xf3 ♞e4!? seems like the only serious attempt to stop that from happening, but the continuation of Avrukh – Liang shows that Black faces problems here too.

Abridged Variation Index

The Variation Index in the book is 6 pages long. Below is an abridged version giving just the main variations, not the sub-variations.

Chapter 1

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6 4.♙g2 d5 5.♖a4

| | |
|-------------|----|
| A) 5...a6 | 8 |
| B) 5...♗bd7 | 9 |
| C) 5...dxc4 | 13 |
| D) 5...♙g7 | 17 |
| E) 5...♗fd7 | 21 |

Chapter 2

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5 5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.♗f3

| | |
|------------|----|
| A) 6...♗c6 | 26 |
| B) 6...0-0 | 27 |

Chapter 3

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5 5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.♗f3 ♗b6 7.♗c3

| | |
|-------------|----|
| A) 7...c5?! | 49 |
| B) 7...♗c6 | 50 |

Chapter 4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5 5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.♗f3 ♗b6 7.♗c3 ♗c6 8.e3 0-0 9.0-0

| | |
|------------|----|
| A) 9...♙g4 | 65 |
| B) 9...♙e6 | 65 |
| C) 9...a5 | 67 |
| D) 9...e5 | 69 |
| E) 9...♖e8 | 71 |

Chapter 5

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3

| | |
|------------|----|
| A) 6...♙g4 | 82 |
| B) 6...c6 | 83 |
| C) 6...♗c6 | 86 |

Chapter 6

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 c6 7.0-0

| | |
|------------|-----|
| A) 7...♙c6 | 100 |
| B) 7...a6 | 101 |
| C) 7...♗a6 | 108 |
| D) 7...♙f5 | 114 |

Chapter 7

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 c6 7.0-0

| | |
|------------|-----|
| A) 7...♖b6 | 128 |
| B) 7...♖a5 | 134 |

Chapter 8

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♗c6 7.0-0

- A) 7...♗a5 155
B) 7...♗d7 156
C) 7...♙d7 157
D) 7...e5 160

Chapter 9

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♗c6 7.0-0 ♙f5 8.d5 ♗a5 9.♗d2

- A) 9...c6!? 169
B) 9...c5 172

Chapter 10

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♗c6 7.0-0

- A) 7...a6 185
B) 7...♞b8 191

Chapter 11

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♗bd7 7.0-0

- A) 7...a6 203
B) 7...c5 204
C) 7...e5 206

Chapter 12

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♗bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.♗xd4

- A) 9...♗e5 219
B) 9...♞e8 220

Chapter 13

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♗bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3

- A) 9...a6 242
B) 9...♞e8 246

Chapter 14

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♗bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♞a5 10.♞e1

- A) 10...♞b4 262
B) 10...♞e8 263
C) 10...exd4 266

Chapter 15

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♗bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♞b6 10.♞e1

- A) 10...♞e8 280
B) 10...exd4 285

Chapter 16

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♗c3 g6 5.♗f3 ♙g7 6.g3 0-0 7.♙g2

- A) 7...♗a6 300
B) 7...e5 308

Chapter 17

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c5 4.dxc5!

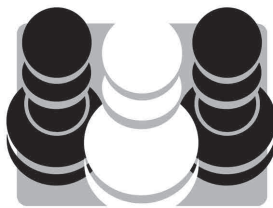
- A) 4...♗a6 324
B) 4...♞a5† 327

Grandmaster Repertoire 2B

Dynamic Systems

By

Boris Avrukh



Quality Chess
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Preface

After what has seemed like a uniquely long year, I have completed the fourth and final volume of the updated *Grandmaster Repertoire* series on 1.d4. Those familiar with the first three books in the series already know that the current one does not feature any flagship openings such as the Queen's Gambit, Grünfeld or King's Indian. Instead, it tackles the no-less-difficult challenges of the Dutch Defence, the Benko and Budapest Gambits, the Modern Defence, and various other systems which are slightly out of the mainstream, but which are nonetheless capable of posing serious practical problems, as I have observed in my experience as a coach. To meet the various challenges, I have proposed the following advancements over my previous work:

Dutch Defence

I recommend meeting the Stonewall, Classical and Leningrad systems of the Dutch in broadly the same way as in my 2010 book *Grandmaster Repertoire 2 – 1.d4 Volume Two* (henceforth abbreviated to *GM 2*), but with a multitude of updates and refinements to improve White's play, as well as correcting some move-order and transpositional issues which I previously overlooked.

Benoni Systems & Benko Gambit

Against the Czech Benoni and various 1.d4 c5 systems, I have once again provided an improved version of my previous coverage. In the case of the Benko Gambit though, I have abandoned the Fianchetto Variation in favour of the main line with 6.♖c3 and 7.e4. I believe this poses more serious problems for Black, and am looking forward to future developments in this variation.

Budapest Gambit

I am happy to change my original prescription of 4.♗f3 in favour of 4.♗f4, in light of the discovery of 4...g5 5.♗d2!, after which White's position seems extremely promising.

Modern & Other Defences

The final part of the book contains a mix of updates and brand new recommendations. One such instance occurs after 1.d4 d6, when I am no longer recommending 2.♗f3 – not that there is anything wrong with that move, but a game between L'Ami and Mamedyarov inspired me to choose 2.c4 instead. The resulting type of position is one that I find both interesting and advantageous for White.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the entire team at Quality Chess, with whom I have been working intensively since 2007! My collaboration with them has greatly contributed to my career as a chess coach and helped enshrine my name among the pantheon of opening theoreticians. I am forever grateful to QC for offering me such a platform. Having now completed my tenth book, I have decided to take a break from writing to pursue other chess-related projects, and I have no doubt the wisdom I have gleaned from my time as a QC author will prove invaluable in my future endeavours.

Boris Avrukh
Chicago, February 2019

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| | | |
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1.d4 f6 2.c4

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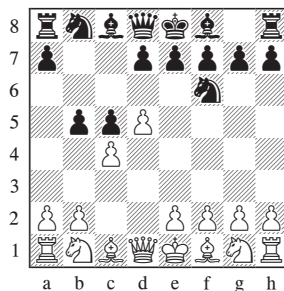
Minor Lines

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Chapter 14

Benko Gambit



Sidelines

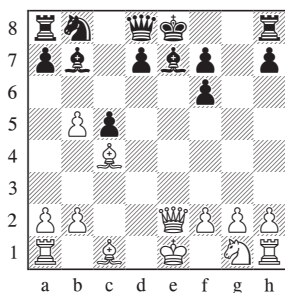
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5

4.cxb5

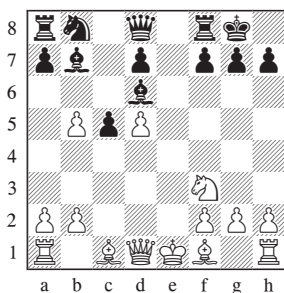
| | |
|---|-----|
| A) 4...e6 5.♘c3 exd5 6.♘xd5 ♙b7 7.e4! | 282 |
| A1) 7...♘xd5 | 283 |
| A2) 7...a6 8.bxa6 ♘xa6 9.♙c4 ♘b4 10.♘f3 | 284 |
| A21) 10...♘fxd5 | 285 |
| A22) 10...♘bxd5N | 286 |
| B) 4...a6 5.bxa6 e6 6.♘c3 exd5 7.♘xd5 | 287 |
| B1) 7...♙xa6 | 288 |
| B2) 7...♘xa6 | 289 |
| B3) 7...♘xd5 | 290 |
| B4) 7...♙e7!? | 291 |

A) note to move 7



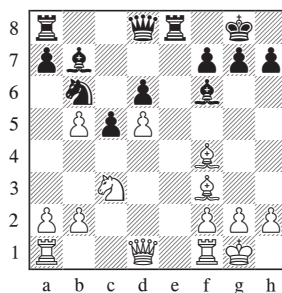
11.♙f4!N

A1) note to 8...d6



10.♙d3!N

A1) after 14...♙f6



15.a4!N±

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5

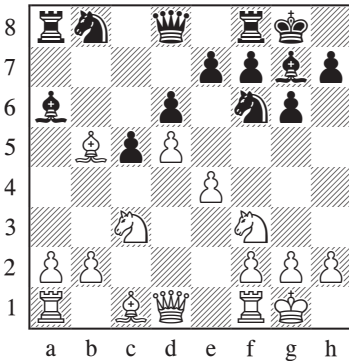
Once again I recommend accepting the gambit, but there will be an important change of direction from my previous work, as we will no longer be following up with a kingside fianchetto.

We will consider **A) 4...e6** but **B) 4...a6** is definitely the main move.

4...g6

Occasionally Black delays his counterplay in favour of completing his kingside development first. As a rule, White follows the same general plan as in the main lines, but gets an easier version, so it's enough to give just a few brief examples.

5.♘c3 ♘g7 6.e4 d6 7.♗f3 0-0 8.♙e2 a6 9.0-0 axb5 10.♙xb5 ♙a6



11.♞e2!

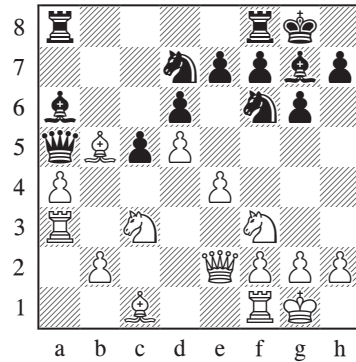
This is the most precise way of implementing the “light-squared strategy” which I will refer to again, both in this chapter and what follows.

11...♞a5 12.a4 ♗bd7

Another good example continued: 12...♙xb5 13.♗xb5 ♞b4 14.♗c3 ♗bd7 15.♙d2 ♞fb8 16.♞fb1 ♞b7 In Martinez Rodriguez – Renteria Becerra, Mondariz 2011, the simple 17.♗b5N ♗e8 18.♙c3± would have secured White a big advantage.

13.♞a3!

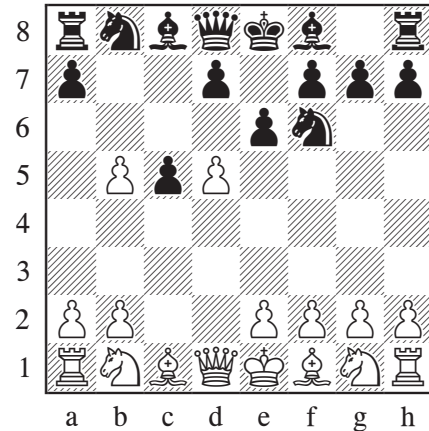
A thematic move in this type of Benko position.



13...♗e8 14.♙g5 ♙xc3 15.♙xa6 ♞xa6 16.♞xa6 ♞xa6 17.bxc3 ♗ef6 18.♗d2±

White remained a healthy pawn up in Krysa – Torella, Neuquen 2017.

A) 4...e6



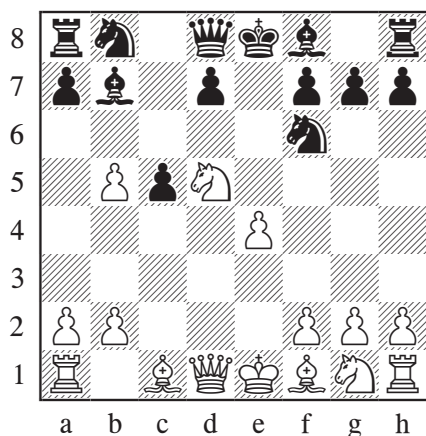
Playing ...e6 is not unheard of in the Benko Gambit, but usually it happens after White has committed himself in some way that makes Black's central action especially appealing. In the present situation, Black's plan is not so easy to justify.

5.♗c3 exd5

5...♙b7?! 6.e4 is hardly playable for Black.

6.♗xd5 ♙b7 7.e4!

7. ♖xf6† ♜xf6 is also playable but I prefer the text move.



A1) 7... ♖xd5 is worth considering but I consider A2) 7... a6 the most serious option.

Accepting the central pawn is suicidal:

7... ♖xe4? 8. ♕c4!

White's initiative plays itself.

8... ♕e7

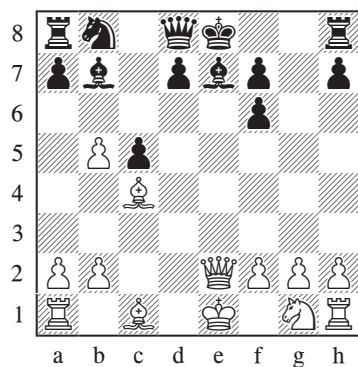
8... ♕d6 9. ♖g4 0-0 10. ♕h6 ♕e5 11. ♖f3 ♕xb2 12. 0-0 ♖d6 13. ♕g5 gave White a decisive attack in Huuskonen – Bostrom, Finland 1977.

9. ♖e2 ♖f6

9... ♖d6 10. ♕g5 f6 11. ♕f4 ♖xc4 12. ♖xc4 d6 13. 0-0-0 → was also bad news for Black in Kunze – Partys, Rijeka 2010.

10. ♖xf6† gxf6

White has more than one winning move but my preference is:



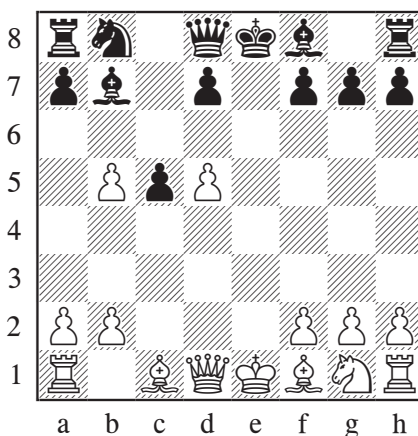
11. ♕f4!N ♖a5†

11... ♕xg2 loses to 12. ♕xf7† (or 12.0-0-0+–) 12... ♖xf7 13. ♖h5† when White can either win back the bishop or go straight for the king.

12. ♖f1 d5 13. ♖e1 ♖d8 14. ♕d3

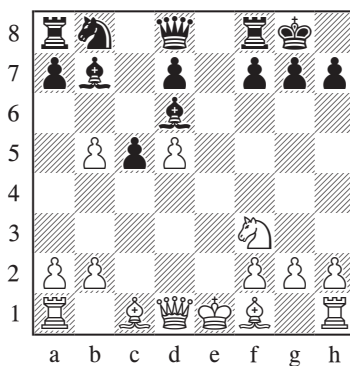
White has a crushing initiative.

A1) 7... ♖xd5 8. exd5



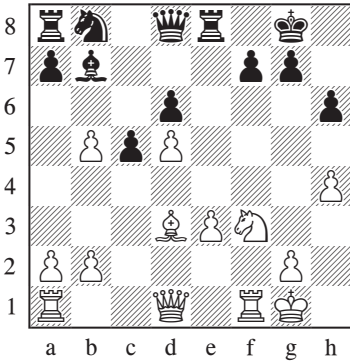
8...d6

8... ♕d6 9. ♖f3 0-0 was tried in one of the more recent games in this line, Spindelboeck – Theuretzbacher, Austria 2017. White developed his bishop to e2 but he should have played more actively with:



10. ♕d3!N ♖e8† 11. ♕e3 There is no reason to worry about 11... ♕f4 12.0-0 ♕xe3 13. fxex3 d6, when the surprising 14. h4! enables White

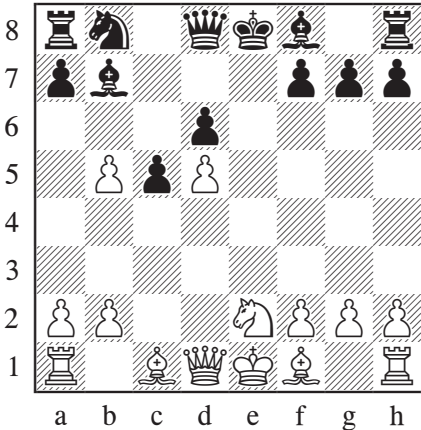
to seize the initiative on the kingside. The key point is revealed after: 14...h6



15. ♖g5!! hxg5 16. ♗h5 With a crushing attack.

9. ♘e2!

The knight is heading to c3 in order to cement the d5-pawn.



9... ♗e7 10. ♘c3 0-0 11. ♗e2 ♘d7

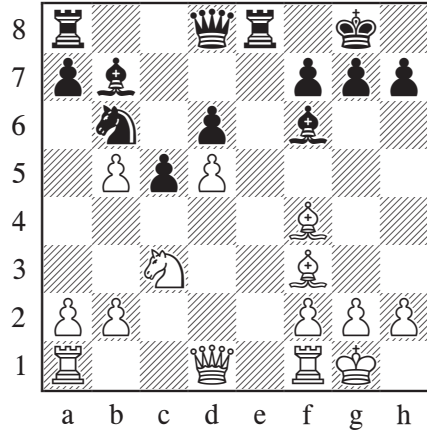
11...a6 has also not yielded much success for Black; after 12.0-0 axb5 13. ♗xb5 ♘d7 14. ♗f4± he failed to create any compensation in Neelotpal – Boidman, Hofheim 2014.

12.0-0

International Master Dimo Werner has played this position four times with Black. His last attempt continued:

12... ♖e8 13. ♗f4 ♘b6 14. ♗f3 ♗f6

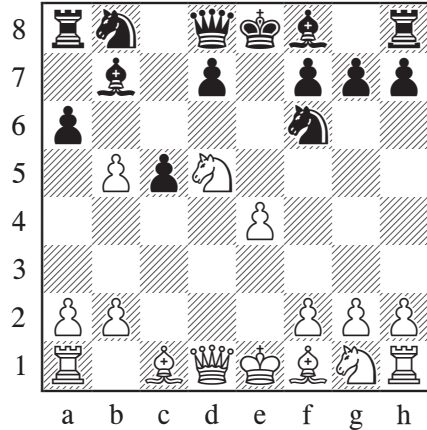
Here I found a logical improvement over Citak – D. Werner, Budapest 2007:



15.a4!N±

White is obviously better.

A2) 7...a6

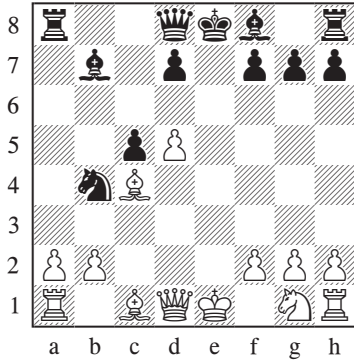


Compared with the previous line, Black keeps a bit more tension in the position, although White should still have the better chances.

8.bxa6 ♘xa6 9. ♗c4 ♘b4

A less accurate move order is:
9... ♘xd5 10.exd5 ♘b4

10...♖c7 occurred in Schimpf – Huber, Munich 2017, when 11.♙f4N d6 12.♗e2 ♙e7 13.0–0 0–0 14.a4 would have been clearly better for White.



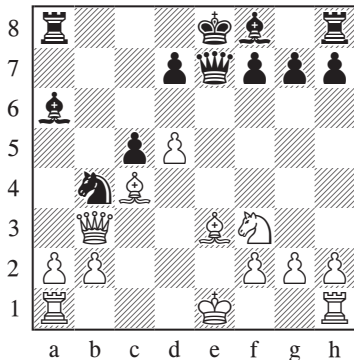
11.♙b3!N

11.♗f3N is the simplest repertoire choice, transposing to variation A21 below, but the text move is quite a tempting extra option against Black's chosen move order. My analysis continues:

11...♙a6

11...♙d6 12.♗f3 ♖e7† 13.♙e3 ♖e4 14.0–0 0–0 15.♗d2 ♖f5 16.a3 ♗c2 17.♙ac1 ♗xe3 18.fxe3 ♖h5 19.g3± leaves Black without enough for the pawn.

12.♗f3 ♖e7† 13.♙e3

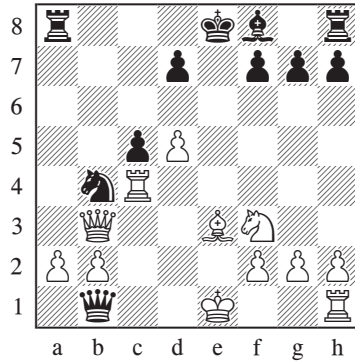


The critical line continues:

13...♖e4 14.♙c1!

With the following key idea.

14...♙xc4 15.♙xc4 ♖b1†



16.♙e2! ♖xh1 17.♙e4† ♙e7

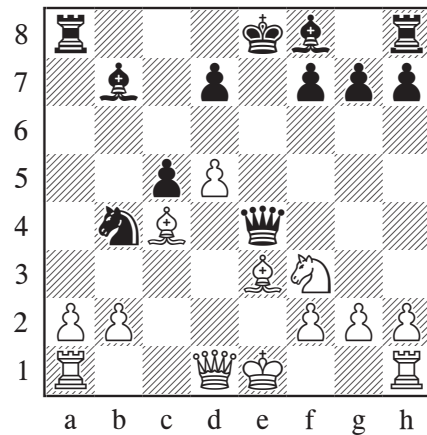
17...♗d8 loses to 18.♙xb4! cxb4 19.♙b6† ♗e8 20.♖e3† ♙e7 21.d6 and the attack is too strong.

18.d6 0–0 19.dxe7 ♖fe8 20.♙xc5 ♗c6 21.♗g5 Black is under serious pressure.

10.♗f3

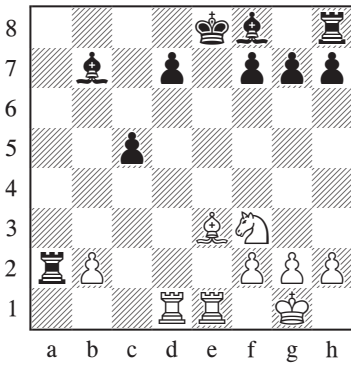
We will analyse A21) 10...♗fxd5 and A22) 10...♗bxd5N.

A21) 10...♗fxd5 11.exd5 ♖e7† 12.♙e3 ♖e4

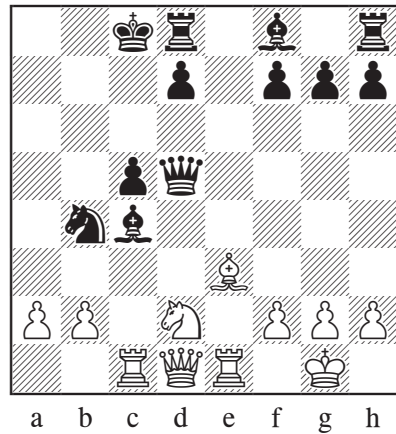


13.♙c1 ♙xd5

I also checked 13...♗xa2N 14.♙xa2 ♖xa2 15.0–0 when the threat of ♖e1 prevents Black from completing development. Play may continue: 15...♖xd5 16.♙e1 ♖xd1 17.♙cxd1

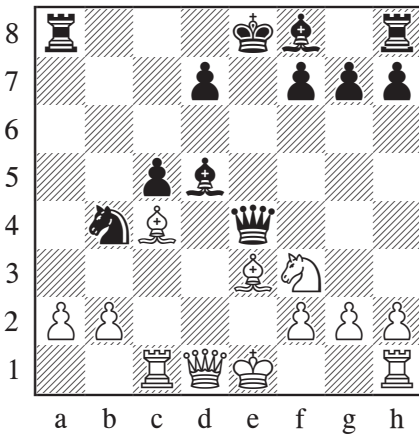


Even without queens, White's initiative is serious, for instance: 17...♖a6 18.♙f4† ♞e6 19.♘g5→



17.♙xc4!N ♘d3 18.♞f1 ♘xb2 19.♞b3 ♘xc4 20.♞b1+–

With a devastating attack.



14.0–0!

White utilizes a simple tactic to accelerate his development.

14...♙xc4 15.♘d2 ♞d5 16.♞e1!

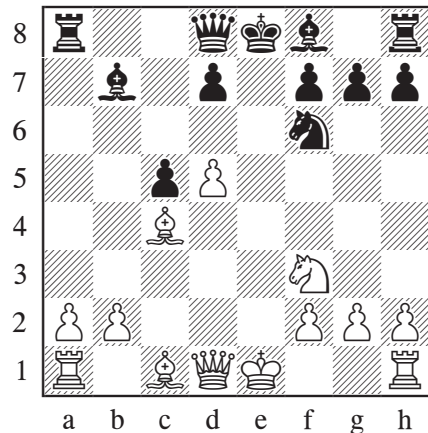
The key move.

Weirdly, the database shows another game from five years later between the same players, where White opted for the weaker 16.♙xc4?!. The reasons why Black repeated this line and White deviated with an inferior move remain a mystery to me.

16...0–0–0

In B. Toth – Capece, Reggio Emilia 1974, White could have decided the game with:

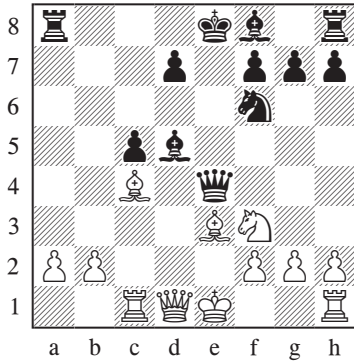
A22) 10...♘bxd5N 11.exd5



Although Black's last move was a novelty, the resulting position has occurred via transposition, as the knight went via c7 to d5 in one game.

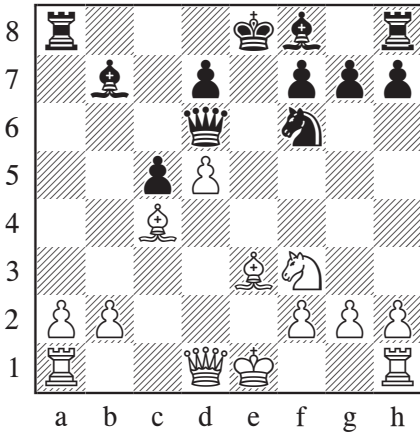
11...♞e7† 12.♙e3 ♞d6

It is also important to consider: 12...♞e4 13.♞c1 ♙xd5 (13...♘d5?! 14.0–0 is too dangerous for Black with his king stuck in the centre)



14.b3! ♕e7 15.0-0 ♕e6 (15...0-0 16.♖e1 wins material) 16.a4 ♗f5 17.♖e1 0-0 18.♗g5± White is significantly better.

We have been following Donner – Contedini, Lenznerheide 1964. An obvious improvement for White is:



13.0-0 ♕xd5

If 13...♕e7 then 14.♗h4! is extremely powerful; for instance, 14...g6 15.♗h6 ♕xd5 16.♖e1 and Black unavoidably loses material.

14.♕xd5 ♗xd5

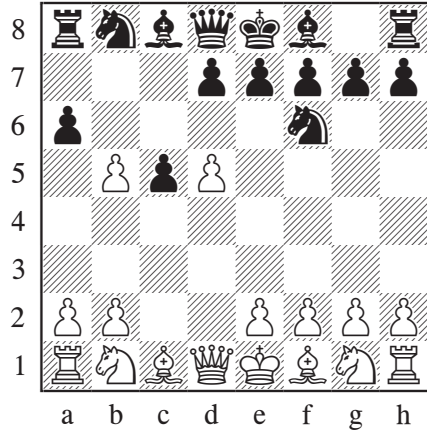
14...♗xd5 15.♖e1 ♕e7 16.♗f4! is nasty for Black.

15.♖e1 ♗xd1 16.♖axd1±

Despite the queen exchange, White's initiative is strong, especially considering

that 16...0-0 is not really an option due to 17.♗g5.

B) 4...a6



This is overwhelmingly the most popular choice.

5.bxa6

At this point Black's most popular choice has been 5...♕xa6, while 5...g6 is arguably the most theoretically challenging option. These two moves will be examined in Chapters 15 and 16 respectively.

Before then, we will consider a third option:

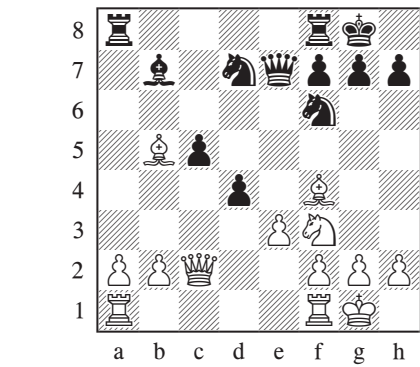
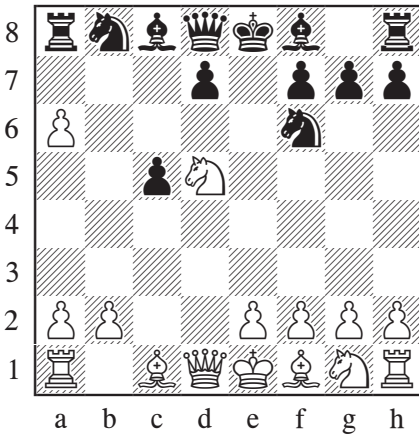
5...e6

Black aims for central play, in a similar fashion to variation A above, but he hopes that the exchanging of the b5-pawn will increase his active possibilities.

6.♗c3 exd5

6...♗xd5 7.♗xd5 exd5 8.♗xd5 transposes to variation B3 below.

7.♗xd5

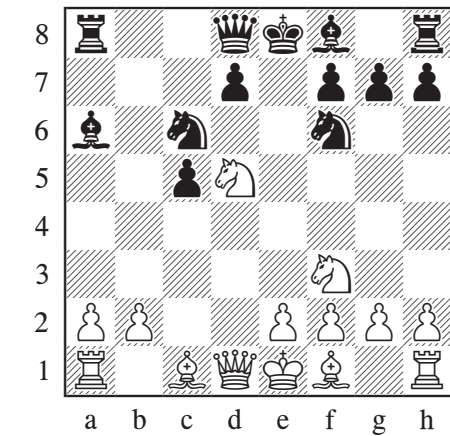
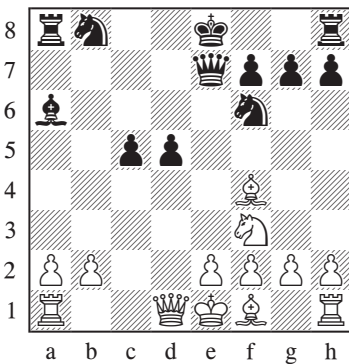


15...♙xf3 16.gxf3 ♘e5 17.♚e2 ♘d5 18.♙g3
White is clearly better.

At this juncture it is worth considering B1) 7...♙xa6, B2) 7...♘xa6, B3) 7...♘xd5 and B4) 7...♙e7!?

B1) 7...♙xa6 8.♘f3 ♘c6

8...♙e7 is worth checking, but the following line seems quite convincing for White: 9.♘xe7 ♚xe7 10.♙f4 d5



9.e4 ♙xf1 10.♙xf1 ♙e7 11.♘c3!

A simple yet powerful move, which I was able to discover over the board. White retreats the knight from its strong position but secures the e4-pawn and earns important time to consolidate his position.

11.♚a4! ♘bd7 12.e3 ♙b7 13.♚c2 0-0 This was Knol – Sitorus, corr. 2016, and now 14.♙b5N works well for White, mainly due to the fact that 14...d4 15.0-0 is not at all dangerous for him, for instance:

11...d6

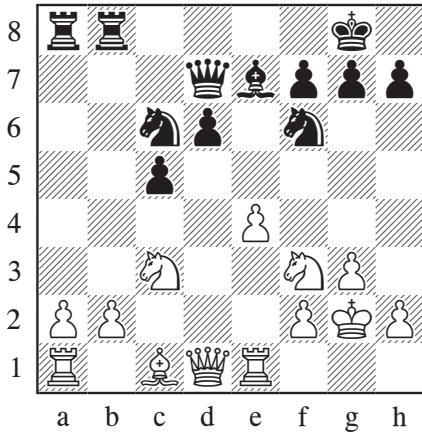
Another good example continued 11...0-0 12.g3 c4 13.♙g2 ♙e8 14.♙e1 ♙b4 15.♙g5± and White's advantage was beyond any doubt in Avalyan – Tomasi, Mamaia 2017.

12.g3 0-0 13.♙g2

Black is unable to create any serious counterplay, especially with his bishop on e7.

13...♚d7 14.♙e1 ♙fb8

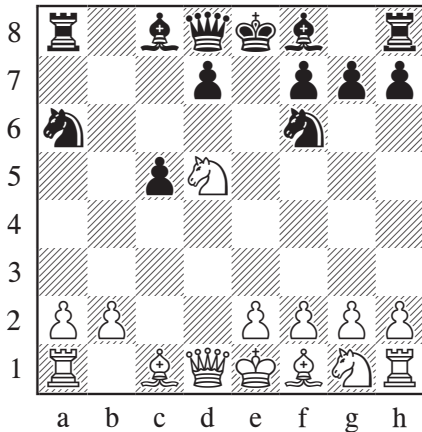
My game continued 14...h6 15.♔f4 ♘h5 16.♙e3 ♘f6 17.♞e2!? ♞fd8 18.♞c1 ♚e6 19.a3 ♞ab8 20.♚a4 and I enjoyed a healthy extra pawn in Avrukh – Terrieux, Sautron 2013.



15.b3 h6 16.♔b2 ♚b7 17.♚e2+

Black had no real compensation for the pawn in Steedman – Aymard, corr. 2015.

B2) 7...♘xa6



This has been a popular choice but it does not work too well for Black.

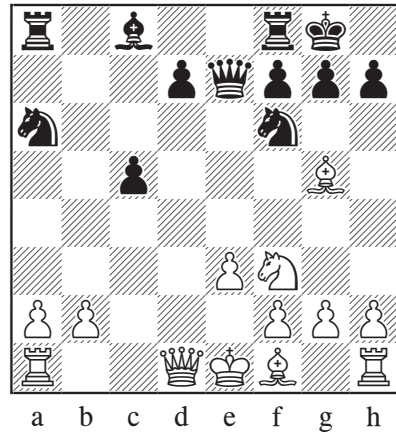
8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.♘xe7 ♚xe7 10.♘f3 0-0

10...h6 11.♙h4 does not really change anything; 11...0-0 12.e3 just reaches our main line below.

Another game continued 10...♙b7 11.e3 0-0 12.♙e2 d5 13.0-0+ and Black had no compensation whatsoever in Kalinowska – Stock, Plzen 2017.

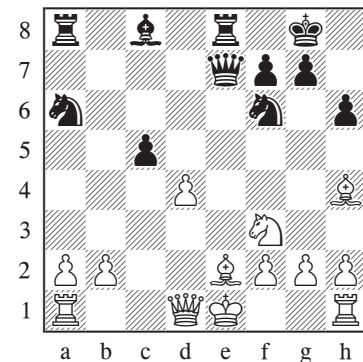
11.e3

The following sequence looks pretty natural:



11...h6 12.♙h4 d5 13.♙e2 ♞d8

13...d4!? 14.exd4 ♞e8 is an interesting attempt to open things up, but White keeps everything under control as follows:

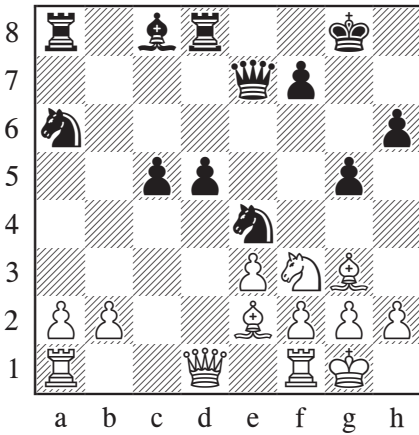


15.♙xf6! ♚xf6 16.0-0 ♞d8 17.a3! cxd4 18.♘e1 ♘c7 19.♘d3 White stabilized the position while keeping his extra pawn in Galje – Dijk, corr. 2016.

14.0-0 g5

Otherwise it is not clear how Black can claim any compensation for the pawn.

15. ♖g3 ♜e4



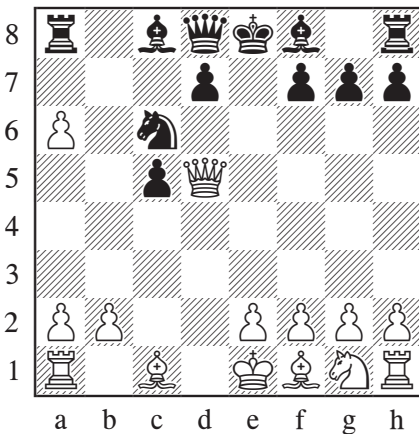
16. ♜d2!

It is essential to get rid of the strong knight.

16... ♜xg3 17. hxg3 ♖f5 18. a3±

This has occurred in four correspondence games. Even though Black only lost once and drew the other three, I believe White retains a solid advantage. Black does not have full compensation and faces an unpleasant battle for a draw.

B3) 7... ♜xd5 8. ♖xd5 ♜c6



9. ♖d2!

This has been a rare choice so far, but it works perfectly for White.

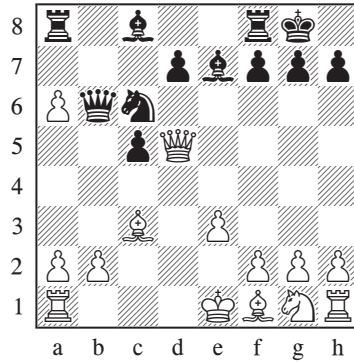
9... ♖xa6

Black has also tried:

9... ♖e7 10. e3 0-0

10... ♖b6 11. ♖c3 0-0 transposes.

11. ♖c3 ♖b6



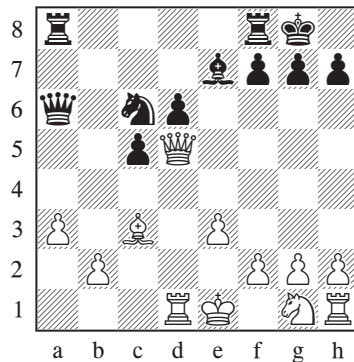
12. a3!

It seems to me that Black is in trouble after this precise move.

12... ♖xa6

Another good example continued 12... ♖f6 13. ♖xf6 gxf6 14. ♖b1 ♖xa6 15. ♖xa6 ♖a5† 16. ♖d2 ♖xa6 17. ♜e2± and Black's strategy had obviously failed in Hildebrand – Gierth, email 2012.

13. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 14. ♖d1 d6

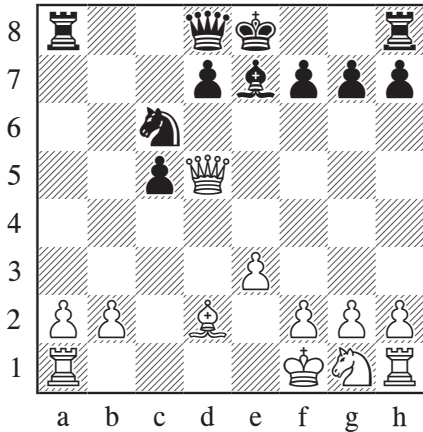


15. ♜e2±

White was a healthy pawn up in Brugger – Lovholt, corr. 2007.

10. e3 ♖xf1 11. ♜xf1 ♖e7

I found six correspondence games from this position, all of which ended in draws. Surprisingly, White never opted for the following natural continuation:



12. ♖c3 N 0-0

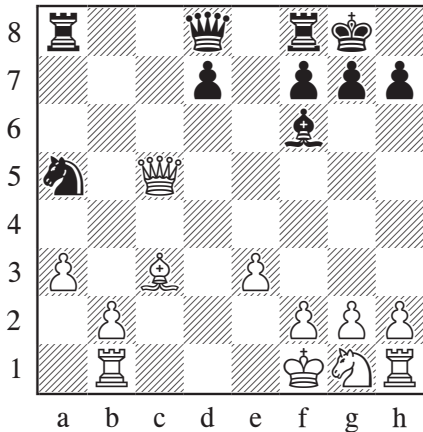
Or 12... ♖b4 13. ♖f3 0-0 14. a3 d5 15. ♖d1 with some advantage for White.

13. a3 ♖f6

13... ♖b4 also fails to impress after 14. ♖f3 ♖b6 15. ♖e2.

14. ♖xc5 ♖a5 15. ♖b1!

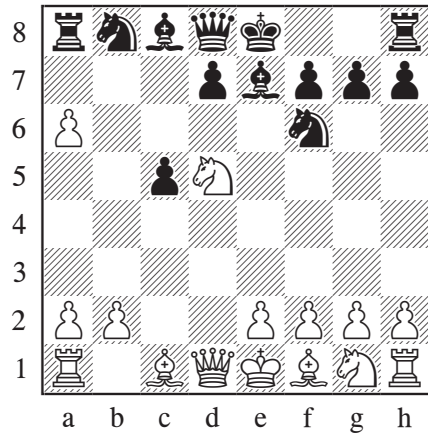
Black does not have enough activity. For instance:



15... ♖b3 16. ♖d5 ♖xc3 17. ♖xb3 ♖f6
18. ♖d3 ♖a5 19. ♖f3 ♖fb8 20. g3 ♖xb2
21. ♖xb2 ♖xb2 22. ♖xd7±

White has excellent winning chances.

B4) 7... ♖e7!?

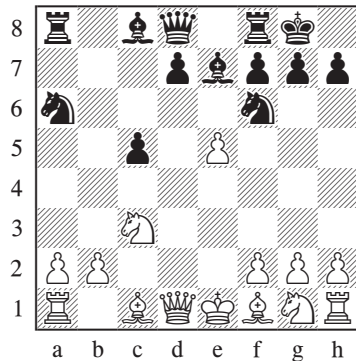


This isn't the most obvious choice but it has been tried in several correspondence games, and has surprisingly achieved a plus score for Black.

8. ♖xe7

This simple move is White's best bet.

I have to mention the remarkable line: 8.e4 0-0 9. ♖c3 ♖xa6 10.e5



10... ♖b7!! 11. exf6 ♖xf6 12. ♖f3 d5 13. ♖e2 ♖b4 14. ♖b5 d4 15. ♖c4 ♖e8† 16. ♖f1 d3

Black has full compensation for the piece, and has achieved a win and a draw from two correspondence games.

8...♖xe7 9.♙f4 d5 10.e3 0-0 11.♘f3 ♜d8

11...♙xa6?! 12.♙xa6 ♜xa6 13.0-0 gives White an extra tempo compared with the main line below.

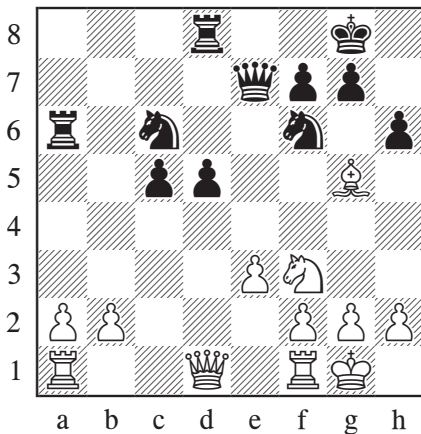
12.♙e2

In most games White has played 12.a3 or some other waiting move, hoping to gain a tempo after ...♙xa6. However, it is risky to leave the king in the centre and Black can play an active move such as ...♘e4 before taking on a6, so I prefer to simply develop and castle.

12...♙xa6

12...d4 13.♖b3 is good for White.

13.♙xa6 ♜xa6 14.0-0 ♘c6 15.♙g5! h6



16.♖e2N

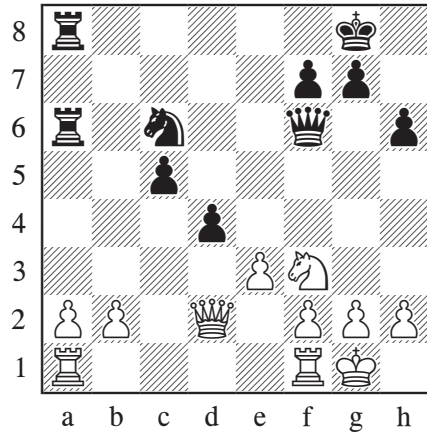
I found a game where White exchanged on f6, but we may as well hit the rook first.

16...♞da8

16...♞a7 17.♙xf6 ♖xf6 18.♞fd1 c4 19.h3± leads to a similar situation.

17.♙xf6 ♖xf6 18.♖d2 d4

In the event of 18...♖e6 19.a3 or 18...♞d8 19.b3, White easily stabilizes his position while retaining his extra pawn.



19.exd4

19.b3 dxe3 20.♖xe3 ♘d4 is pretty similar to our main line.

19...♘xd4 20.♘xd4 cxd4 21.a3 d3 22.♞ac1

Black certainly has some compensation but is doomed to a long defence.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on two Benko sidelines: 4...e6 and the related idea of 4...a6 5.bxa6 e6. In general, I am not too impressed with Black's attempts to generate counterplay in the centre. A lot of the lines lead to positions where White may face some technical challenges to convert his extra pawn, but he is nonetheless playing for a win with little risk – always a pleasant situation for a practical player.

Abridged Variation Index

The Variation Index in the book is 12 pages long. Below is an abridged version giving just the main variations, not the sub-variations.

Chapter 1

1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 e6 4.♘f3 d5 5.0-0
♙e7 6.c4 0-0 7.♘bd2

- A) 7...♘e4 9
- B) 7...♘c6 11
- C) 7...c6 16

Chapter 2

1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 e6 4.♘f3 d5 5.0-0
♙d6 6.c4 c6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♖c2

- A) 8...dxc4 27
- B) 8...♙d7 28
- C) 8...♘bd7 29
- D) 8...♖e8 32
- E) 8...♖e7 35
- F) 8...♘e4 39

Chapter 3

1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 e6 4.c4

- A) 4...♙b4† 60
- B) 4...♙e7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.0-0 63
- B1) 6...b6 64
- B2) 6...♘e4 65
- B3) 6...d6 66

Chapter 4

1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 e6 4.c4 ♙e7 5.♘f3
0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.♘c3

- A) 7...♘e4 75
- B) 7...♖e8 81

Chapter 5

1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 g6 4.♘f3 ♙g7
5.0-0 0-0 6.b3

- A) 6...♘e4 97
- B) 6...c5 98
- C) 6...d6 7.♙b2 100
- C1) 7...♘c6 101
- C2) 7...a5 103
- C3) 7...e5?! 107
- C4) 7...e6 111
- C5) 7...h6 114

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1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 g6 4.♘f3 ♙g7
5.0-0 0-0 6.b3 d6 7.♙b2

- A) 7...c6 120
- B) 7...♘e4 129

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1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 g6 4.♘f3 ♙g7
5.0-0 0-0 6.b3 d6 7.♙b2 ♖e8 8.c4

- A) 8...e5 142
- B) 8...♘c6 146
- C) 8...♘e4 148
- D) 8...♘a6 151

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- B) 2...♙g7 3.♘f3 174
- B1) 3...d6 174
- B2) 3...c5 176
- B3) 3...f5 181

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- B) 5...♗bd7 201

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1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.♗c3 d6 5.e4 ♗e7 6.g3

- A) 6...h5 214
- B) 6...♗a6 215
- C) 6...0-0 217

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- A) 4...♗d7 233
- B) 4...♗d7 238

Chapter 12

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e6 3.♗c3

- A) 3...♗f6 250
- B) 3...exd5 255
- C) 3...d6 258

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1.d4

- A) 1...c5 266
- B) 1...e6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 exd5 4.cxd5 274

Chapter 14

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5

- A) 4...e6 282
- B) 4...a6 5.bxa6 e6 287

Chapter 15

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 ♗xa6 6.♗c3 g6 7.e4

- A) 7...d6 294
- B) 7...♗xf1 297

Chapter 16

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 ♗g6 6.♗c3 ♗g7 7.e4

- A) 7...♗a5 311
- B) 7...0-0 312

Chapter 17

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4

- A) 2...e6 3.g3 e5!? 323
- B) 2...e5 3.dxe5 ♗e4 325

Chapter 18

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 ♗g4 4.♗f4

- A) 4...♗b4† 338
- B) 4...g5 339
- C) 4...♗c6 5.♗f3 ♗b4† 6.♗bd2 343
- C1) 6...f6 344
- C2) 6...♗e7 7.e3 ♗gxe5 8.♗xe5 ♗xe5 9.♗e2 b6 346

Chapter 19

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 ♗g4 4.♗f4 ♗c6 5.♗f3 ♗b4† 6.♗bd2 ♗e7 7.e3 ♗gxe5 8.♗xe5 ♗xe5 9.♗e2

- A) 9...d6 352
- B) 9...0-0 356

Chapter 20

1.d4 g6 2.c4 ♗g7 3.♗f3 d6 4.♗c3

- A) 4...c5 367
- B) 4...♗g4 372

Abridged Variation Index

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- A) 3...♗f5 416
- B) 3...e5 4.♗f3 419
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Chapter 23

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4

- A) 2...b6 441
- B) 2...e6 3.g3 b6 444

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1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 ♗c6 3.♗f3

- A) 3...d5?! 452
- B) 3...d6 453
- C) 3...e6 4.g3 458
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1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.♗c3

- A) 3...♗c6 464
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1.d4 e6 2.c4 b6 3.e4

- A) 3...♗b4† 484
- B) 3...♗b7 487

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- A) 3...♗e7 518
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1.d4

- A) 1...c6 2.c4 b5 539
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1.d4

- A) 1...e5? 565
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