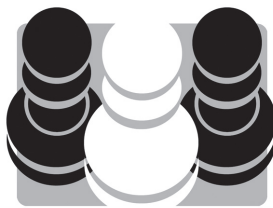


*Grandmaster Repertoire*

# The Nimzo-Indian Defence

By

**Michael Roiz**



Quality Chess  
[www.qualitychess.co.uk](http://www.qualitychess.co.uk)

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# Preface

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My madness for chess started in 1989, when as a six-year-old kid I saw my father playing with my uncle. Back then, I could see chess in almost everything, and I started to collect and explore every chess book I could find. Those were tough times in the Soviet Union and it was not easy to get good chess books, but my parents did their best to support my hobby. So in 1990 I was lucky enough to have plenty of books at my disposal, including David Bronstein's tournament book about the Zurich 1953 Candidates. There were many spectacular games in this book, but I was especially impressed by the Geller – Euwe encounter, where the former World Champion played the Nimzo-Indian and scored a memorable victory in counterattacking style, using the exciting motif of a rook sacrifice. The influence of this game was so significant that for the next ten years I avoided getting doubled c-pawns in my games!

When I look back on my childhood career, I can understand why I did not play 3.♘c3 with White and allow the Nimzo-Indian – it is one of most complex openings from a strategic point of view, and the arising positions are sometimes tough to handle, even for grandmasters, so it would be impossible for a young child. Even after many years of playing the Nimzo-Indian with both colours, and analysing various systems with top players (including preparing for the Anand – Gelfand World Championship match in 2012, where the Nimzo played an important role) I still fail to evaluate some positions properly, and so does the engine!

So when Quality Chess asked me to write a book on this opening, focusing on Black's side, I found this project very challenging and this appealed to me. Indeed, White has a large choice of possibilities even on the 4th move – therefore, a thorough evaluation of all the possible responses for Black is difficult to say the least.

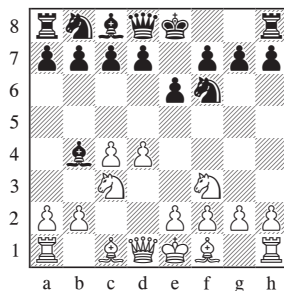
The concept of this book is to enable players to feel knowledgeable enough in any system they may encounter when playing the Nimzo-Indian. So I offer a complete repertoire for Black after 3...♗b4.

I feel I have succeeded in improving my own understanding of the Nimzo-Indian, and I hope to share this knowledge with the reader. Best of luck in your journey with the Nimzo-Indian.

Michael Roiz  
Beer Sheva, December 2016

# Chapter 8

## Various 4th Moves



### 4. Nf3

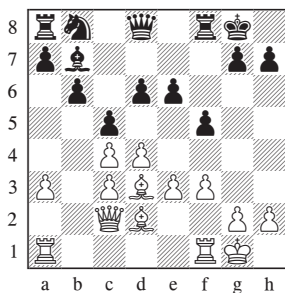
### Variation Index

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nf3

4...c5

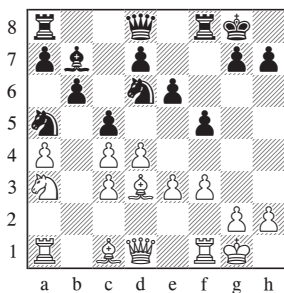
A) 5. Qc2	110
B) 5. dxc5	111
C) 5. d5	112
D) 5. a3	112
E) 5. g3 Nc6	115
E1) 6. a3?!	115
E2) 6. d5	116
E3) 6. dxc5	117

D) note to 10. Nc1



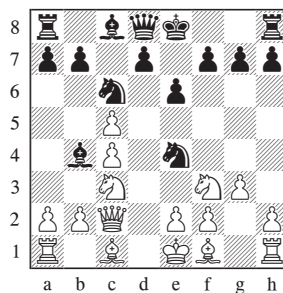
13... Nc6!N

D) after 14. Nc3



14... Qe7!N

E3) after 7. Qc2



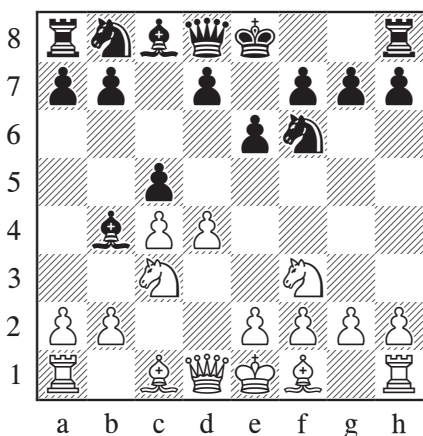
7... Qxc3!N

### 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♘b4 4.♗f3

This move was first seen back in 1887(!), but it was mainly explored by the great players of the 1920s and 1930s: Alekhine, Euwe, Rubinstein and others. Developing the knight in this way keeps White's position quite flexible, and the dark-squared bishop can still be placed on g5 in the future. Nowadays this can be considered as an invitation to debate the Romanishin System – most White players prefer to enter it via this move order rather than with 4.g3.

### 4...c5

4...b6 is also highly topical, with a Nimzo/Queen's Indian hybrid, and moves such as 4...0-0 and 4...d5 are of course possible, the latter being a Ragozin. But I will recommend the text move, directly challenging the d4-pawn and keeping the game in pure Nimzo-Indian territory.



The options we will cover in this chapter are A) 5.♞c2, B) 5.dxc5, C) 5.d5, D) 5.a3 and E) 5.g3. The last move is by far the most important, and the analysis of it will continue into the next chapter as well.

There are three other significant moves, but each of them transposes to a separate variation. 5.♞b3 has been covered in variation C of

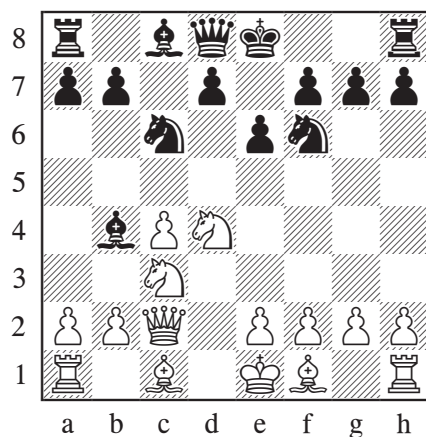
Chapter 2. 5.♞g5 is a harmless sideline of the Leningrad System – see the note on 5.♗f3 at the start of Chapter 4. And finally, 5.e3 0-0 is variation B of Chapter 10.

### A) 5.♞c2

This leads to a harmless line of the Classical System with 4.♞c2 c5, where White responds with 5.♗f3 instead of the more critical 5.dxc5.

### 5...cxd4 6.♗xd4 ♗c6

White has to take care of the d4-knight, so it's obvious that the queen is misplaced on c2.



### 7.♗xc6

The modest 7.e3 0-0 8.♞e2 d5 9.♗xc6 bxc6 10.0-0 ♞e7 11.b3 e5 didn't pose Black any problems in Yakimenko – Popilski, Golden Sands 2014.

### 7...dxc6 8.a3 ♞e7 9.♞f4 ♞a5!

The ...e6-e5 advance will solve the problem of the c8-bishop. Black is already completely fine, and in the following game he was able to take over the initiative.

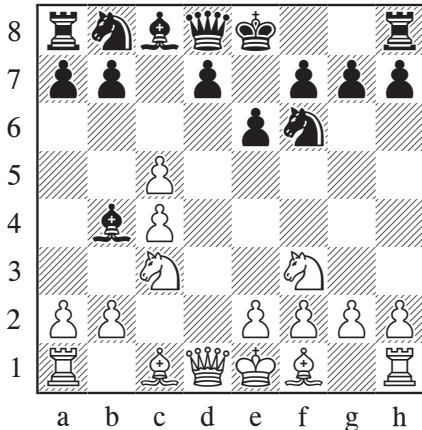
### 10.e3?! ♗h5!

Gaining the advantage of the bishop pair.

### 11.♞d3 e5 12.♞g3 g6 13.♞e2 ♗xg3 14.hxg3 ♞e6

Black was better in Fedoseev – Narayanan, Pune 2014.

### B) 5.dxc5



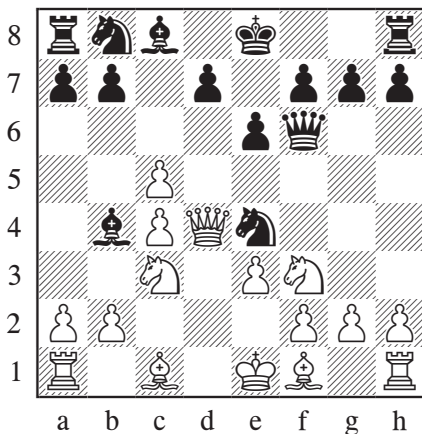
This offers comfortable play after:

### 5...♖e4! 6.♖d4

Also harmless is 6.♙d2, as played in Marwitz – Kolesov, Germany 2003: 6...♙xc3N 7.♙xc3 ♖xc3 8.bxc3 ♖a6 9.g3 0–0 10.♙g2 ♖xc5 11.♖d4 ♖b8 White has to take care to equalize.

### 6...♖f6 7.e3

7.♖xf6 gxf6 8.♙d2 ♙xc3 9.bxc3 ♖a6 gave Black comfortable play in Medvedev – Pantykin, Novokuznetsk 2009.



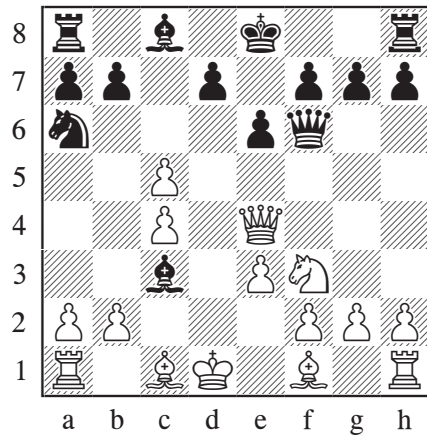
### 7...♖a6!

It is too early for 7...♖xc3?!, as 8.♙d2! gives Black some problems to solve.

### 8.♖xe4N

Inferior is 8.♙d2 ♙xc3 9.♙xc3 ♖xc3 10.bxc3 ♖xc5, and Black was obviously better in Ulanov – Molchanov, Togliatti 2014.

### 8...♙xc3† 9.♖d1



### 9...♙xb2!

Less convincing is 9...♖xc5 10.♖c2 ♙e5 11.♖xe5 ♖xe5 12.♙d2, when White's bishops may cause Black significant problems in the long run.

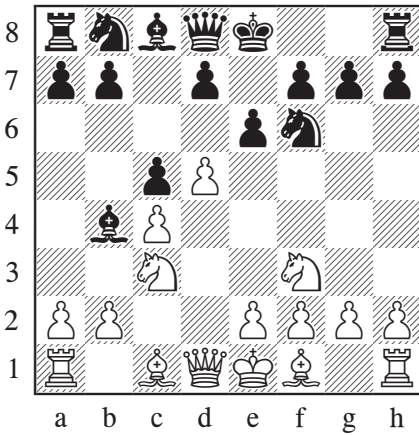
### 10.♙xb2 ♖xb2 11.♖d4 ♖xd4† 12.exd4 b6!

Creating some breathing room for the bishop, while forcing the following exchange to the benefit of the rook on a8.

### 13.cxb6 axb6 14.♖d2 ♙b7 15.♙e2 ♙e4=

Preventing ♖hb1. Both sides have a weak pawn in this endgame, and overall the chances are equal.

C) 5.d5



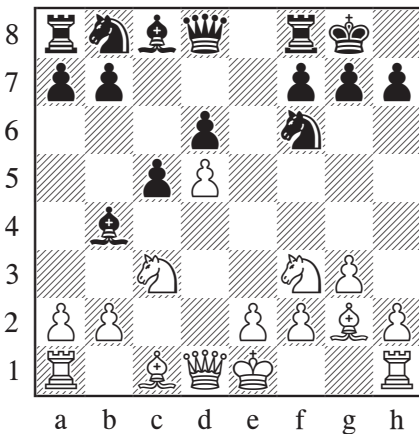
Gaining space does not seem to be effective in this situation – the d5-pawn becomes vulnerable when White cannot support it by e2-e4.

5...exd5 6.cxd5 d6 7.g3

7.♗g5 transposes to a line of the Leningrad System which was covered in variation B1 of Chapter 4.

7.e3 0–0 8.♕d3 will be covered via the 4.e3 move order – see variation B1 of Chapter 10.

7...0–0 8.♗g2



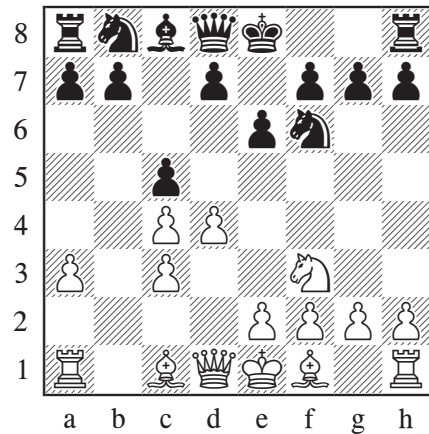
8...♘e4! 9.♕d2

9.♖c2 ♗f5 10.♘h4 ♘xc3 11.♘xf5 ♘xa2† 12.♕d2 ♕xd2† 13.♗xd2 ♖b4 14.♗c3 f6̄ doesn't offer White adequate compensation for the pawn.

9...♕xc3 10.bxc3 ♘d7

Black had excellent play in Fritz – Soelter, Lieme 2004, due to his control of the e4-outpost.

D) 5.a3 ♕xc3† 6.bxc3



In comparison to the usual Sämisch System, White's active possibilities are limited – it's difficult for him to gain control over e4.

6...0–0

Since pinning the f6-knight isn't effective in this situation, there is no reason to reject this natural move.

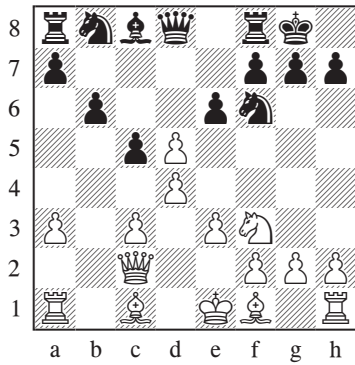
7.e3

It is amazing how one line can transpose to another in chess. Here is one more example:

7.♖c2 d5 8.e3

8.♕g5 is completely harmless after 8...cxd4 9.cxd4 dxc4 10.♗xc4 b6. This way of handling the position resembles the Classical System as covered later in the book. 11.e3 ♕a6 12.♗a4 ♕xf1 13.♖xf1 ♖bd7=

8...b6 9.cxd5



9...♙xd5

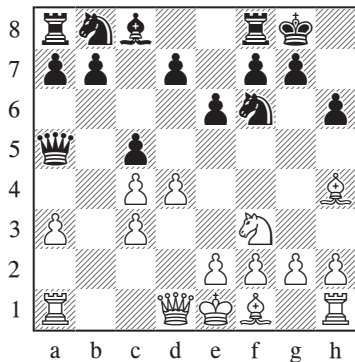
This suddenly takes the game into Classical paths – see variation B2 of Chapter 21, where this position arises after 4.♙c2 d5 5.cxd5 ♜xd5 6.e3 c5 7.a3 ♘xc3† 8.bxc3 0–0 9.♘f3.

Incidentally, 9...exd5! 10.c4 cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♙b7 is also perfectly playable for Black.

Let's see why pinning the knight on f6 achieves nothing for White:

7.♙g5 h6 8.♙h4 ♙a5!

Exploiting the lack of harmony in White's camp.

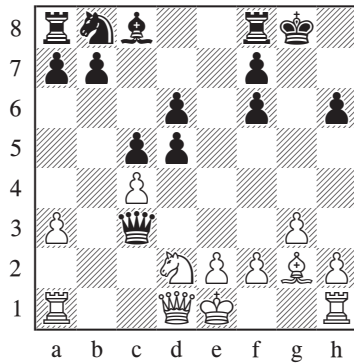


9...♙xf6?!

This pawn sacrifice is dubious, but it's the only way to fight for the initiative.

The passive 9.♙c2 is not in the spirit of the position: 9...♘e4 10.♙c1 d5 11.e3 cxd4N Black grabbed the a3-pawn in one game, but the text move is much easier: 12.♘xd4 ♘c6 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♙d3 ♙e8 15.0–0 ♙d7=

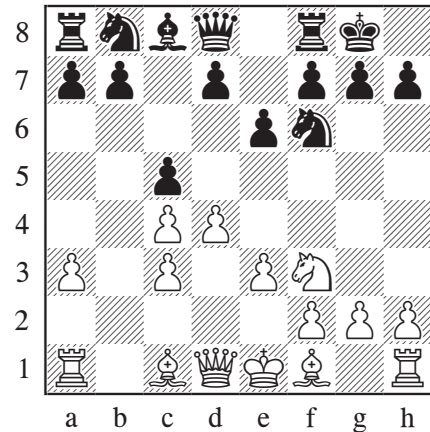
9...♙xc3† 10.♘d2 gxf6 11.d5 d6 12.g3 exd5 13.♙g2



This interesting position was reached in the game Ivanisevic – Kravtsov, Jerusalem 2015. White was trying to exploit the opponent's exposed kingside structure, but Black actually has no reason to deviate from the 'greedy' approach:

13...d4N 14.0–0 f5 15.♙b1 ♘c6 16.♙b3 ♙a5 17.e3 ♙e8†

The reduced material leaves White with insufficient attacking potential.



7...b6

There is also nothing wrong with 7...d5, but I like the text move – it allows Black to keep control over the e4-square without letting White get rid of the weak c4-pawn.

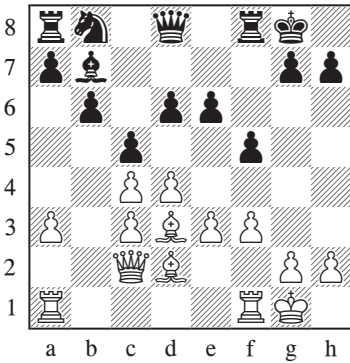


**8.♔d3 ♘b7 9.0-0 ♖e4**

This theoretical position can be reached via various move orders. Practice proves that it is difficult for White to make the bishops work effectively.

**10.♞e1**

Also possible is 10.♞d2, but the immediate exchange of knights also doesn't bother Black: 10...♞xd2 11.♔xd2 f5 12.f3 d6 13.♞c2 (13.e4 fxe4 [13...f4!?] 14.fxe4 ♜xf1† 15.♞xf1 ♞c6 16.♞f2 ♞f6 offers Black a very comfortable endgame)

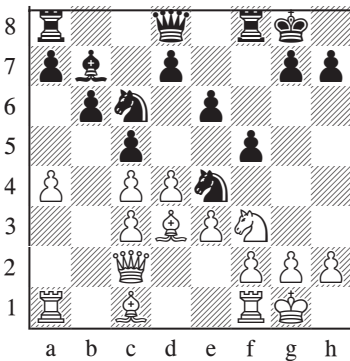


This was played in Orr – Joyce, Armagh 1994, and could be well met by: 13...♞c6!N 14.e4 f4 15.e5 h6 16.exd6 ♞xd6 With excellent play for Black.

**10.♞c2 f5 11.a4**

After 11.♞d2 ♞xd2 12.♔xd2 ♞c6 Black's chances were already preferable in Gevorgyan – Papin, Samara 2015.

**11...♞c6**

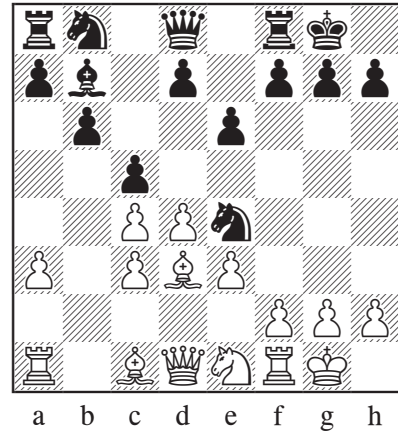


**12.♞d2?!**

12.♔xe4N is better, but after 12...fxe4 13.♞d2 d5 Black has at least equal chances.

**12...♞xd2 13.♔xd2 ♖a5 14.♞fe1 ♞f6**

Black had a better structure and the more harmonious position in Matinian – Bocharov, Voronezh 2015.



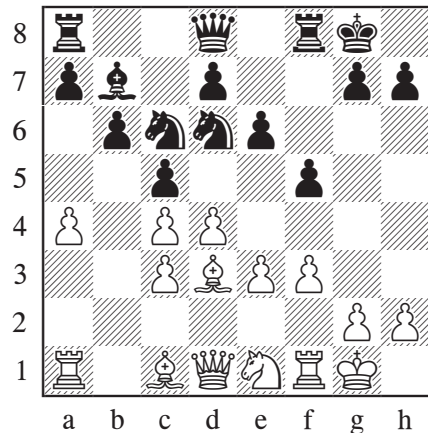
**10...f5!**

The same concept as in the lines above – White should not be allowed to push e3-e4!

**11.f3 ♞d6 12.a4**

After 12.♔e2 ♞e7 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♞b1 ♔c6 Black had a clear advantage due to his better pawn structure in Yurtaev – Timman, Yerevan (ol) 1996.

**12...♞c6**



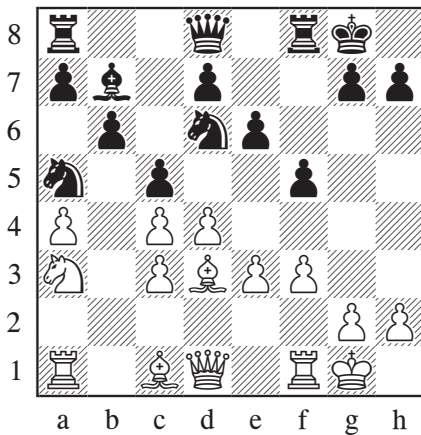
## 13.♘c2?!

White chooses the wrong way to handle the position – the c4-pawn isn't worth such measures.

Better was 13.dxc5 N bxc5 14.♙a3 ♘e5 15.♙xc5 ♗c7 16.♙xd6 ♗xd6 17.♙e2 ♗c7= when Black gets full compensation for the pawn, but not more.

## 13...♘a5 14.♘a3

This position arose in Lautier – Gelfand, Biel 1997, when Black's strongest continuation would have been:



## 14...♗e7!N 15.♗e2 e5!♞

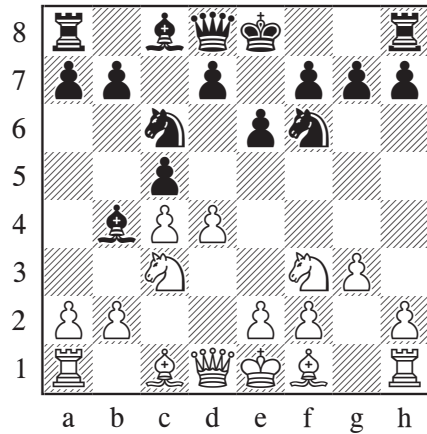
Securing a definite advantage.

## E) 5.g3

Finally we arrive at the main line, which can also be reached via 4.g3 c5 5.♘f3.

## 5...♘c6

This move is somewhat provocative – it looks like White is being invited to seize a lot of space with gain of tempo by pushing d4-d5. However, the pin on the c3-knight offers Black various tactical resources, so this idea is justified. Two more common moves are 5...cxd4 and 5...0-0, but after much analysis, I like what is happening after the knight move.



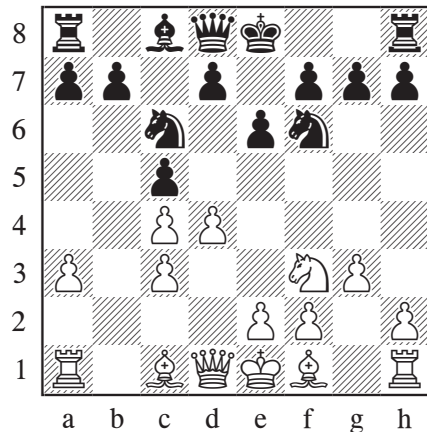
The lines we will consider in depth in this chapter are **E1) 6.a3?!**, **E2) 6.d5** and **E3) 6.dxc5**. The main line is 6.♙g2 and we will cover it in the next chapter.

6.♗d3?! runs into 6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘e5, and after 8.♗c2 ♘xc4 9.♙g2 (9.♗b3 ♙xc3† 10.♗xc3 d5 11.♙g2 0-0) 9...0-0 10.0-0 d5 White did not have much for the missing pawn in Plastowez – Wiechert, Mannheim 1994.

## E1) 6.a3?!

This is too slow.

## 6...♙xc3† 7.bxc3



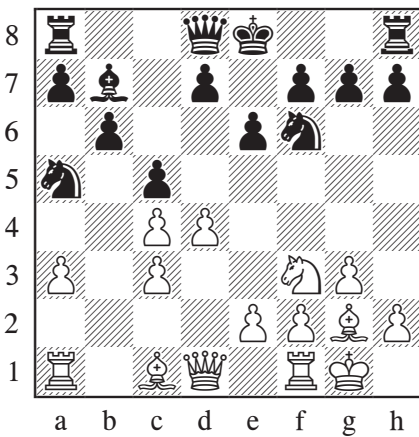
7...b6

It makes sense to neutralize the pressure along the long diagonal as soon as possible.

8.♔g2 ♚b7 9.0-0

9.♗e5 can even be met by: 9...♘e5!?:N (the simple 9...♗a5 is also fine) 10.♙xb7 ♘xc4 11.♙xa8 ♖xa8 12.0-0 ♗c6 Black's position seems preferable from the human point of view, since White's rooks are useless in the closed position that arises.

9...♗a5



10.♙g5!?:N

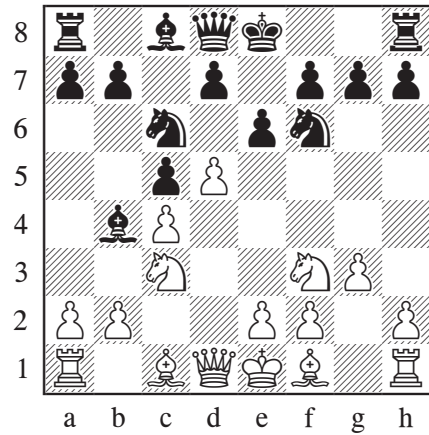
This may be White's best attempt to justify his opening play, although it still doesn't inspire confidence in his set-up.

After 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.♙f4 ♘xc4 Black was obviously better in Starc – Morovic Fernandez, Pula 2000.

10...♘xc4 11.♗e5 ♙xg2 12.♖xg2 ♗xe5 13.dxe5 h6 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.♗d6

White has some compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but Black is the only one who can realistically fight for the advantage.

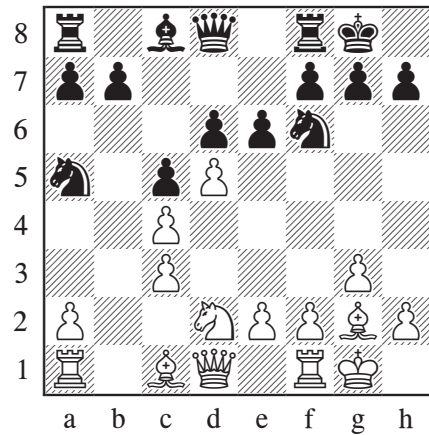
E2) 6.d5



Seizing space with gain of tempo is amongst White's most natural replies. However, closing the long diagonal helps Black to develop the queenside pieces and attack the c4-pawn.

6...♙xc3† 7.bxc3 ♗a5 8.♗d2 0-0 9.♙g2 d6 10.0-0

After a series of obvious moves, Black now has to decide how to finish his development.



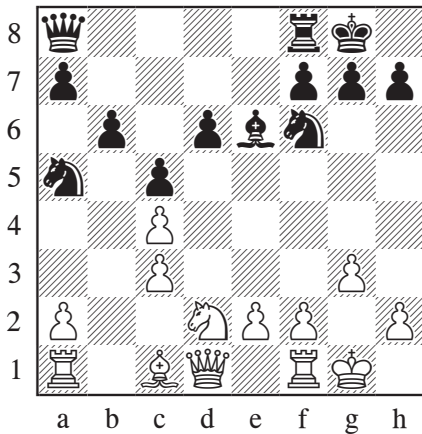
10...b6!?

I like this concrete approach – White will not be given time to protect the c4-pawn.

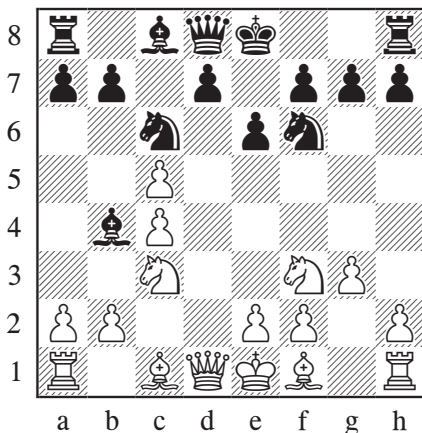
10...♗e8 11.e4 b6 12.♗e1 ♙a6 13.♙f1 led to a long, strategic battle in Miladinovic – Short, Istanbul (ol) 2000.

**11.dxe6**

11.e4?! ♕a6 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.e5 dxe5  
14.♕xa8 ♖xa8♞ leads White to an inferior  
position.

**11...♕xc6 12.♕xa8 ♖xa8****13.f3 ♘xc4 14.♘xc4 ♕xc4♞**

Black had an extra pawn plus long-term  
positional compensation for the exchange  
in Gulko – Kuzmin, Tashkent 1984. Black's  
minor pieces coordinate nicely, while it is not  
so clear what White should do with his rooks  
and bishop. The loss of the g2-bishop also  
means that White's king could be vulnerable  
in the long term.

**E3) 6.dxc5**

Releasing the pressure in the centre should  
be met with:

**6...♘e4**

I like this aggressive move. Since 7.♕g2  
would simply drop material, White is obliged  
to waste a tempo to protect the knight.

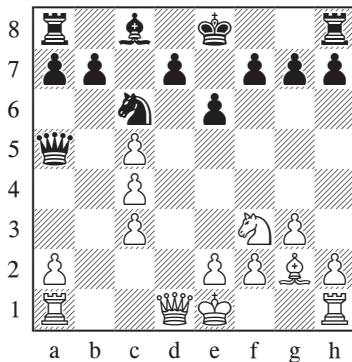
**7.♖c2**

Clearly dubious is 7.♖d3?! as in Name –  
Jatoba de Oliveira Reis, Dois Irmaos 2008, in  
view of 7...♕xc3†N 8.bxc3 ♘xc5 9.♖e3 b6  
10.♕a3 d6 11.♕g2 ♕b7♞.

White's only other plausible continuation is:

**7.♕d2 ♘xc3 8.♕xc3**

8.bxc3 ♕xc5 9.♕g2 0–0 10.0–0 d6♞ simply  
leaves White with an ugly pawn structure.

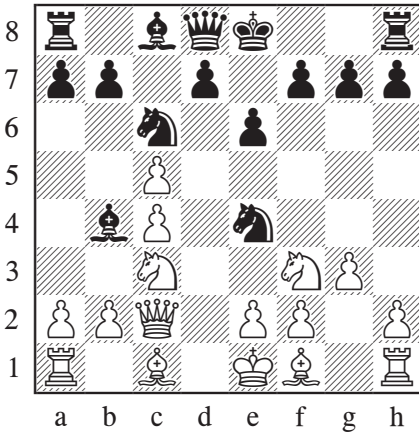
**8...♕xc3† 9.bxc3 ♖a5 10.♕g2****10...♖xc5!**

The other capture would be a mistake:  
10...♖xc3†?! 11.♘d2 0–0 12.0–0 b6  
13.e3 bxc5 14.♘e4 ♖xc4 15.♖d6 White  
has a powerful initiative, which more than  
compensates for the pawn.

**11.♘d2 0–0 12.0–0 b6 13.♖a4 ♕b7=**

Black had successfully neutralized the  
pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal in Giorgadze  
– Novikov, Lvov 1986. Although the position  
is objectively equal, in a practical game it is  
White who will face the greater challenge not  
to end up in a bad endgame with a rotten  
queenside structure.

This position has been seen five times in practice. In all those games, the knights were exchanged on c3, seemingly automatically. I would like to suggest something better:



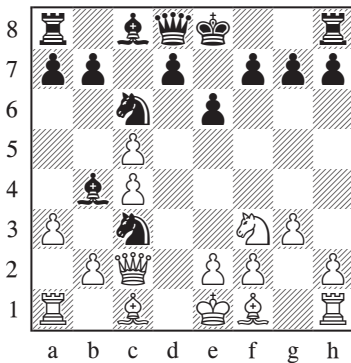
7...♙xc3!N

To understand the necessity for this improvement, we must consider the alternative.

7...♞xc3

In Farago – Dely, Budapest 1978, the obvious 8.bxc3 ♙xc5 led to a fine position for Black. However, I discovered a great new idea for White:

8.a3!!N



8...♞xe2†

8...♙a5?! runs into 9.axb4! ♙xa1 10.bxc3 and White is clearly better, with ♙g2 and

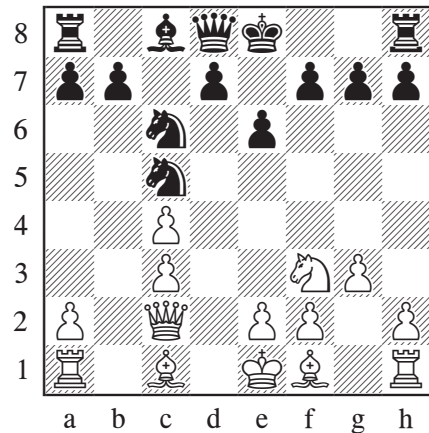
0–0 to follow shortly. Note how strong White’s tripled pawns are!

8...♙xc5 is safer, but 9.♙xc3 0–0 10.b4 ♙e7 11.♙b2 ♙f6 12.♙d2± is pleasant for White. 9.axb4 ♞xc1 10.♙xc1 ♞xb4 11.♙c3 ♙f6 12.♙xf6 gxf6 13.♙d2 ♞a6 14.♞d4 ♞xc5 15.♙g2

White has at least enough compensation for two pawns; the poor bishop on c8 is going to have no moves for a long time.

8.bxc3 ♞xc5

Even though the knight is somewhat less effective in fighting for the dark squares, Black’s position still looks quite attractive due to having stable squares for both knights and potential play along the c-file.

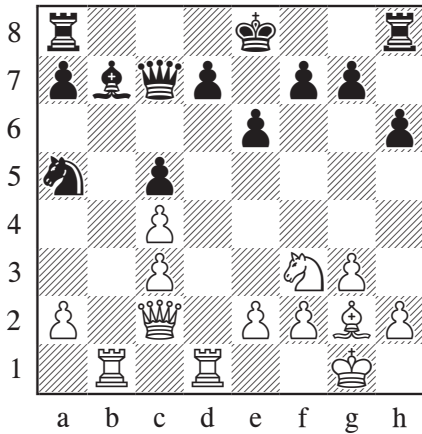


9.♙g2

9.♙e3 b6 10.♙xc5 bxc5 11.♙g2 ♙b7 12.♞b1 ♞a5 13.0–0 would transpose to the same position.

Black has better chances after: 9.♞d4 ♞e5 10.♙a3 d6 11.♞d1 ♙d7 12.♞b5 ♙xb5 13.cxb5 ♞c8

9...b6 10.0–0 ♙b7 11.♙a3 ♞a5 12.♙xc5 bxc5 13.♞ab1 ♙c7 14.♞fd1 h6



## Conclusion

4.♘f3 is one of the most ambitious ways of meeting the Nimzo. White keeps a flexible position and avoids blocking the dark-squared bishop, thus retaining the option of the annoying ♗g5 pin. I recommend the direct 4...c5, when the ambitious 5.d5 exd5 6.cxd5 illustrates the main drawback of having the knight on f3: it will be difficult for White to play e2-e4, which means that the d5-pawn will be vulnerable.

By limiting White's active possibilities Black gets a comfortable position. I should mention that Black is not obliged to castle, as the king may feel safe in the centre, as in the following line:

### 15.♘d2 ♗xg2 16.♙xg2 ♖e7!?

Followed by ...♖ab8, intending to swap the rooks and put pressure on White's doubled pawns.

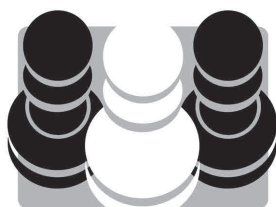
5.g3 is the most significant option, when I suggest the provocative 5...♗c6, putting pressure on the centre. Once again White has a choice, but in this chapter I looked at the relative sidelines, saving the main line for the next chapter. Black has a mostly comfortable ride in the variations examined here, although it's worth familiarizing yourself with the novelty on move 7 of variation E3, as the alternative could lead to problems if your opponent happens to be armed with the big improvement I found for White.

*Grandmaster Repertoire*

# The Queen's Indian Defence

By

**Michael Roiz**



Quality Chess  
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# Preface

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Following the success of my previous book *Grandmaster Repertoire – The Nimzo-Indian Defence*, I was delighted when Jacob Aagaard and John Shaw offered me the opportunity to write a companion volume covering the Queen's Indian and Catalan from Black's perspective, making for a complete repertoire after 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6. As a long-time 1.d4 player, I have used a variety of weapons against the Queen's Indian and have also incorporated it into my Black repertoire. Despite all this experience in my playing career, I could never have imagined how strategically rich this opening is, until I analysed it for this book. Even though the Queen's Indian has a reputation for solidity, certain variations can lead to extremely sharp, double-edged play.

I believe the Queen's Indian and Nimzo-Indian combine perfectly, since Black's strategic goals are similar in both openings: he develops quickly and aims to control the centre with pieces initially, while keeping a flexible pawn structure. In this book we will encounter a few lines where an early ♗c3 allows Black to transpose to a pleasant version of a Nimzo-Indian with ...♗b4. Moreover, I have endeavoured to make our complete repertoire as compact as possible, which is one reason why I opted to meet 3.g3 with 3...♗b4†, after which 4.♗c3 would lead straight to Chapter 7 of my Nimzo-Indian book.

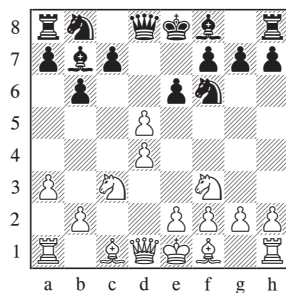
Apart from making the repertoire theoretically robust and sharing numerous theoretical novelties, one of my main goals in this book has been to share my knowledge of certain thematic pawn structures such as hanging pawns, isolated d5-pawn, Hedgehog structure and more. It is worth mentioning that it is mostly Black who gets to choose which structure to enter, and the correct decision will depend on how well his pieces will coordinate in the resultant positions, as well as taking into account the opponent's set-up. For instance, after 4.g3 ♗a6 5.♗bd2 White's ability to exert pressure on the centre is limited, so 5...d5 becomes more appealing. If, on the other hand, White goes for some other 5th-move option which enables his knight to go to the more active c3-square, then I would refrain from fixing Black's central structure so soon.

The Queen's Indian is justifiably popular at all levels and has proven its reliability even in World Championship matches. I hope the readers will enjoy this book and find many useful things for their chess education.

Michael Roiz  
Rishon LeZion, October 2018

# Chapter 6

## Petrosian System



### 6.cxd5

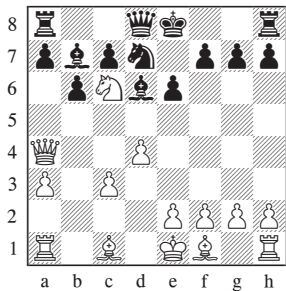
### Variation Index

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.a3 Bb7 5.Nc3 d5 6.cxd5

6...Nxd5

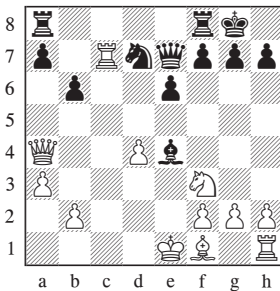
A) 7.e4?!	104
B) 7.Qa4†	106
C) 7.Nxd5 Qxd5!	110
C1) 8.g3	110
C2) 8.e3	112

B) note to 8.Nxd5



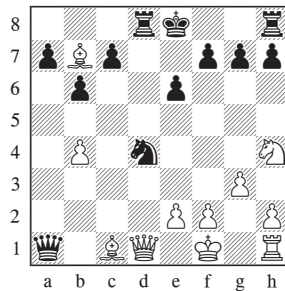
10...Qh4!N

B) note to 9.Qc2



13...Bfc8!!N

C1) note to 9.Qe3



14...Qc3!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♘b7 5.♘c3 d5 6.cxd5

This is White's most popular choice by a considerable margin.

6...♘xd5

As usual, we avoid the more rigid ...exd5 pawn structure where possible.

This chapter will deal with some minor options: **A) 7.e4?!**, **B) 7.♖a4†** and **C) 7.♘xd5**.

7.♘d2 and 7.e3 are analysed in the next chapter, while the big main line of 7.♗c2 can be found in Chapter 8.

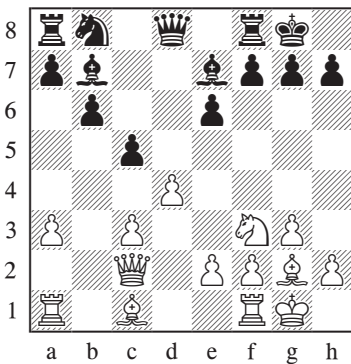
7.♘g5 ♘e7 leads back to variation D1 of the previous chapter.

7.g3

The fianchetto set-up is playable but it contains no real venom here, as Black is well placed to contest the light squares.

7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♘e7 9.♘g2 0–0 10.0–0 c5 11.♗c2

This seems like White's best try. After 11.♘e3 ♘d7 12.♗d3 ♗c8 13.a4 ♘f6 Black had a comfortable game in Al-Zendani – Le Quang, Guangzhou 2010.



11...cxd4

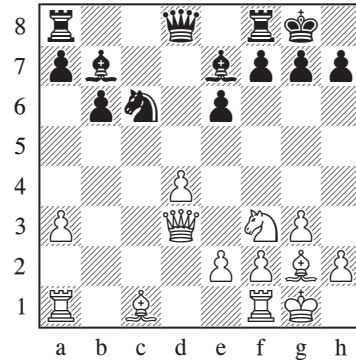
11...♘d7?! allows a thematic trick: 12.♘g5! ♘xg5 13.♘xb7 ♗b8 14.♘g2± White had

a small edge with virtually no risk in Vi. Kovalev – Avdeenko, Tomsk 2008.

12.cxd4

12.♘g5? d3! 13.♗xd3 ♗xd3 14.exd3 ♘xg2 15.♘xg2 ♗d8† leaves White in a depressing endgame due to his pawn weaknesses.

12...♘c6 13.♗d1 ♗c8 14.♗d3

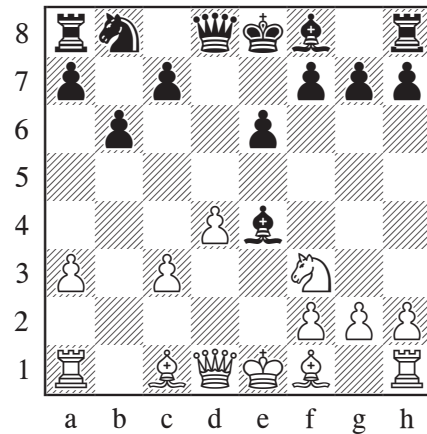


This occurred in Loureiro – Sunye Neto, Sao Jose de Rio Preto 1995. The simplest continuation is:

14...♘f6N=

Black has no problems.

**A) 7.e4?! ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♘xe4**

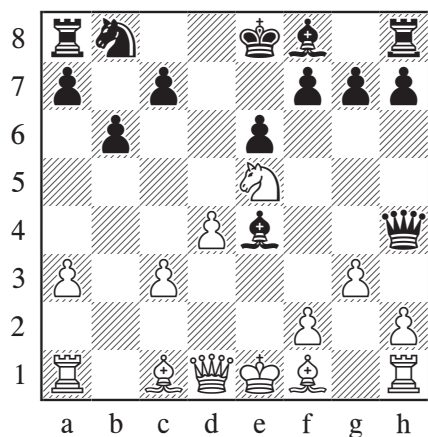


This pawn sac has been tried by several strong players but White's compensation is questionable.

**9. ♖e5 ♜h4!**

This move may appear artificial but it serves an important purpose in limiting White's activity on the kingside – especially with regard to the queen.

9...c6? cannot be recommended. True, after 10. ♖e2 ♙g6 11. h4 ♜d5 Black went on to win in Piket – Korchnoi, Roquebrune 1992, although White certainly has compensation at this stage. However, 10. ♜h5! is a finesse which puts Black's 9th move out of business. The point is revealed after 10... ♜c7N (10...g6 11. ♖e2 ♙f5 12. g4 ♜d5 13. gxf5! ♜xh1 14. ♖xf7!+– was devastating in Hart – B. Watson, Auckland 2010) 11. ♖e2 ♙g6 12. h4± when Black is in trouble.

**10.g3****10... ♜d8!**

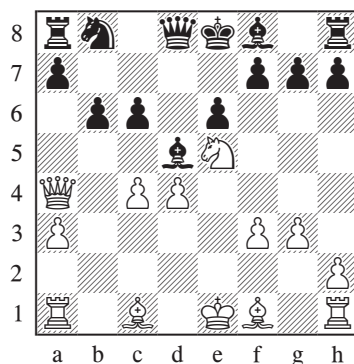
The queen is not really wasting time, as White's development has been disrupted and he now has to spend another tempo safeguarding his rook.

10... ♜f6 is less accurate; after 11. ♖b5† c6 12. f3! ♙d5 13. ♖e2 b5 14. a4 White has promising play for the pawn.

**11. ♖g1**

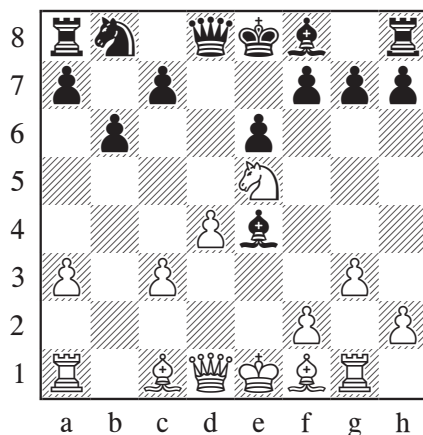
11. ♖b5†? c6 12. f3 cxb5 13. fxe4 ♖d7± was poor for White in A. Mikhalievski – A. Sokolov, Biel 1992.

11. ♜a4†?! is not much better. Play continues 11...c6 12. f3 ♙d5 13. c4 and now a serious improvement is:



13...b5!N (in the game Black tried to get too clever with 13... ♖e4?, after which 14. ♖e3! left White with a strong initiative for the pawn in Kopasov – M. Kaufmann, email 2003) 14. cxb5 ♙d6† Black has returned the extra material to reach an excellent position where White suffers from serious weaknesses.

We have been following the game Aoz Linares – Veingold, Barcelona 1992. Black has a few good options but the most promising seems to be:



11...♔d5!N 12.♘b5†

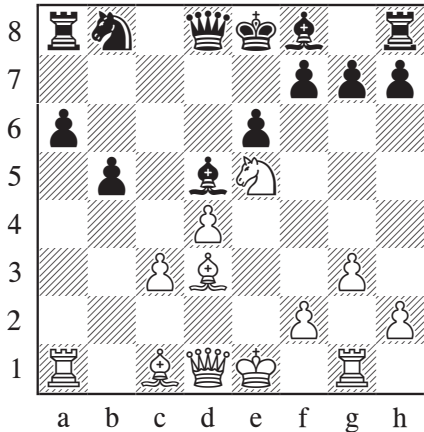
Black would be happy to provoke 12.c4, when 12...♘b7 leaves the light-squared bishop restricted, thus limiting White's active possibilities. Play might continue 13.♞a4† c6 14.♙e3 ♘e7 15.♙g2 0-0 when, aside from being a pawn down, White's king faces an uncertain future.

12...c6 13.♘d3 b5!

Securing the future of the excellent bishop on d5.

14.a4 a6 15.axb5 cxb5

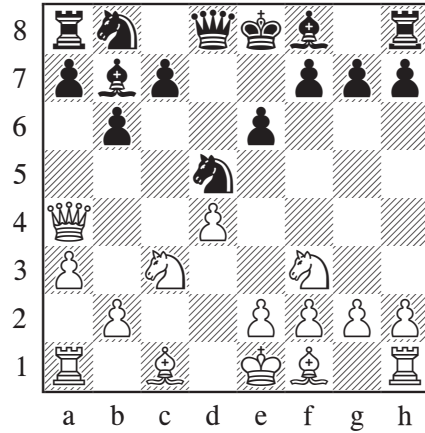
My analysis continues:



16.c4 bxc4 17.♞a4† ♘d7 18.♙xc4 ♙xc4 19.♘xc4 ♙e7 20.♘e5 f6 21.♘c6 ♞c7

The game goes on, but White is clearly struggling to find compensation for the pawn.

B) 7.♞a4†



We have, in the previous chapter, already seen a few incarnations of this queen check, which White hopes will disrupt our development and provoke a concession of some kind. This approach was employed by Garry Kasparov back in 1983, and has been used by many other GMs.

7...♘d7

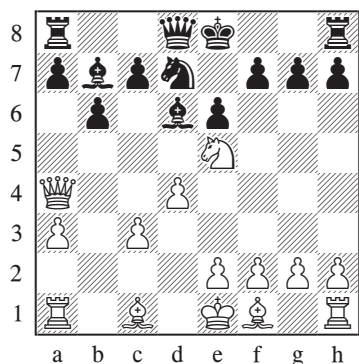
I favour this natural developing move.

7...♞d7 8.♞c2 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 leaves Black with a less harmonious set-up compared with variation B of Chapter 8.

7...c6 is playable and has scored well for Black; nevertheless, I regard this move as a slight concession.

8.♘d5

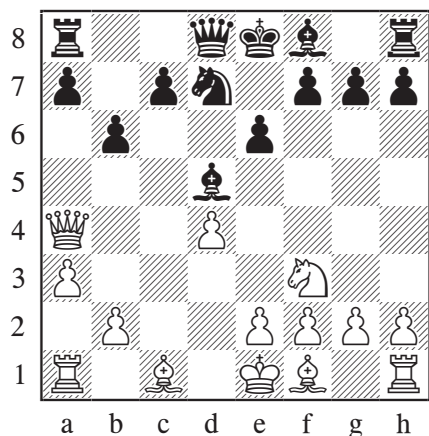
8.♘e5?! ♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♙d6 gives White absolutely nothing, for instance:



10. ♖xd7 (10. ♖c6?? could have led to disaster for White in Petronic – Ostojic, Belgrade 1989, if Black had only found 10... ♖h4!N with the deadly threat of ... ♖c5. White has no real choice but to retreat with 11. ♖b4, when 11...c5+ leaves him hopelessly uncoordinated and behind in development.) 10... ♖xd7 11. ♖xd7† ♖xd7 12. f3 f5 13. e3 c5 Black had the more pleasant game in Dzagnidze – A. Muzychuk, Khanty-Mansiysk 2014.

### 8... ♗xd5

8...exd5 was Korchnoi's choice, which brought him a draw against Kasparov in Game 3 of their 1983 Candidates match. However, blocking the diagonal of the b7-bishop is an indisputable achievement for White, so most strong players have preferred the bishop recapture.



### 9. ♖c2

This is the most ambitious try; White wants to establish a strong pawn centre.

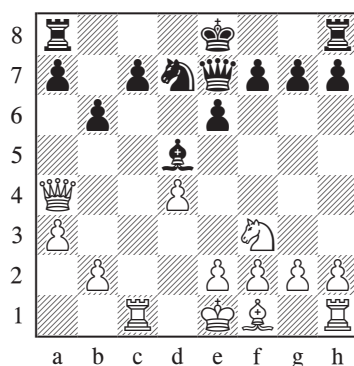
### 9. ♗g5

This move is popular yet harmless. Azmaiparashvili has played it three times; strangely, his opening play became worse each time, as shown in the examples below.

### 9... ♗e7 10. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 11. ♖c1?!

This is the most interesting move to analyse, as long as it's from Black's side of the board! White is playing with fire, attacking a pawn at the expense of his development.

11. ♗e5 is safer, when 11...a6 12. ♖xd7† ♖xd7 13. ♗xd7 ♗xd7 14. f3 f5 gave Black comfortable equality in Azmaiparashvili – Grischuk, Moscow (rapid) 2002, which was the first of the aforementioned games of the Georgian GM.



### 11...0-0!

Naturally we can sacrifice the c-pawn.

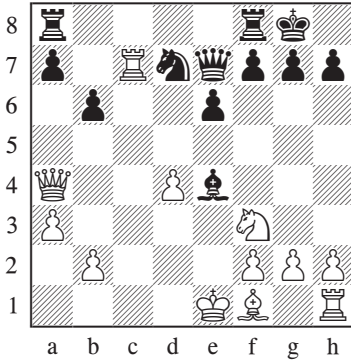
### 12. ♖xc7

Obviously this is the critical move to consider. It's extremely risky though: White not only expends another tempo, but also opens the c-file which Black can now use to invade. I checked two other ideas:

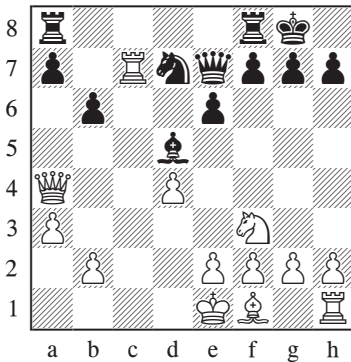
a) 12. e3 is safer but Black is at least equal after: 12...c5 13. ♗b5 ♖f6 14. dxc5 bxc5 15. 0-0 ♖ab8 16. ♖a5 This was Buhmann – Cvitan, Pula 2003, and now 16... ♖b6!N

would have caused White some problems, with ... $\text{Rfb8}$  or perhaps ... $\text{Qxf3}$  followed by ... $\text{Wb7}$  coming soon.

b)  $12.\text{e4?}$  was Azmaiparashvili's bizarre attempt to improve, but it can be refuted by:  $13...\text{Qxe4}$   $13.\text{Rxc7}$



$13...\text{Rfc8!!N}$  ( $13...\text{Qc5!?$   $14.\text{dxc5}$   $\text{Wxc7}$   $15.\text{Wxe4}$   $\text{Wxc5}$  gave Black a good position with rook against two minor pieces in Azmaiparashvili – Macieja, Ermioni Argolidas 2006, but the text move is even better)  $14.\text{Rxd7}$   $\text{Wf6}$  Threatening to win the rook with ... $\text{Qc6}$ , while also setting up attacking ideas against White's king.  $15.\text{Wd1}$   $\text{Wf4}$   $16.\text{Qc4}$  ( $16.\text{Qd2}$   $\text{Qc6}$  traps the rook)  $16...\text{Qxf3}$   $17.\text{Wxf3}$   $\text{Wc1}\dagger$   $18.\text{Qe2}$   $\text{Wxc4}\dagger$   $19.\text{Qe3}$   $\text{Rf8}\mp$  White will be hard pressed to keep his position together with his king placed in such a way.



$12...\text{Qc5!}$

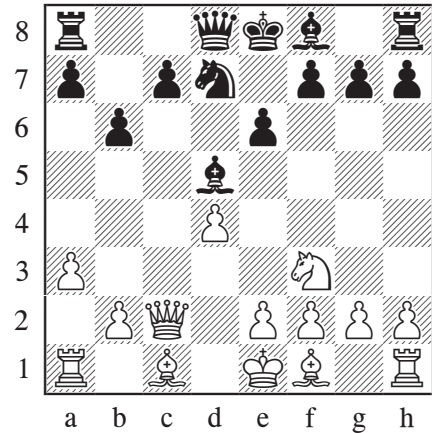
Conveniently escaping the pin while activating the knight.

$13.\text{Rxe7}$   $\text{Qxa4}$   $14.\text{Qd2}$

$14.\text{b3}$   $\text{Qxb3}$   $15.\text{Qd2}$   $\text{Qa2}$   $16.\text{e4}$   $\text{Rfc8}$  was horrible for White in Bonin – Adorjan, New York 1986.

$14...\text{Rfc8}$   $15.\text{Qg5}$   $\text{Qb3}$

Black had a dangerous initiative in Azmaiparashvili – Kramnik, Cap D'Agde (rapid) 2003.



$9...\text{Qe7}$

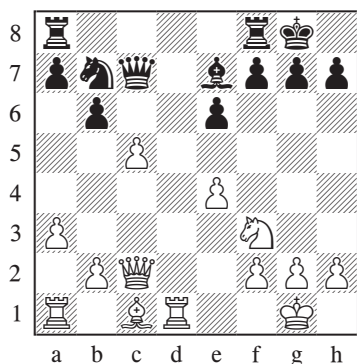
The other natural continuation  $9...c5$   $10.\text{e4}$   $\text{Qb7}$   $11.\text{Qf4!}$  offers White some more activity.

$10.\text{e4}$

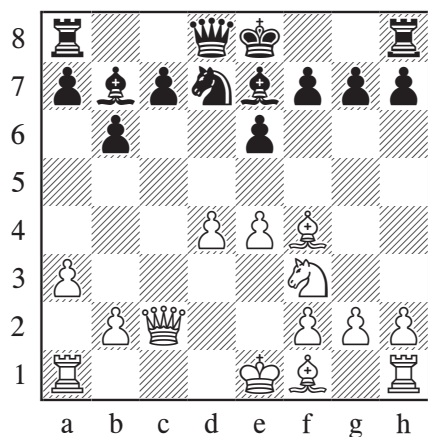
$10.\text{Qf4N}$   $\text{Rc8}$   $11.\text{e4}$   $\text{Qb7}$  transposes to the main line.

$10...\text{Qb7}$   $11.\text{Qf4}$

$11.\text{Qb5}$  has achieved a plus score for White but  $11...0-0$   $12.\text{Qc6}$   $\text{Qc5!}$  is a nice resource which enables Black to unblock the c-pawn at once.  $13.\text{Qxb7}$  (after  $13.\text{dxc5N}$   $\text{Qxc6}$   $14.\text{cxb6}$   $\text{Wd6}$   $15.\text{bxc7}$   $\text{Rac8}$   $16.0-0$   $\text{Wxc7}$   $17.\text{Qd4}$   $\text{Qb7}$  Black's excellent bishops provide full compensation for the pawn)  $13...\text{Qxb7}$   $14.0-0$   $c5$   $15.\text{Rd1}$   $\text{Wc7}$   $16.\text{dxc5}$  Here I found a slight improvement over Mchedlishvili – Werle, Emsdetten 2010:



16...Rxc5 17. Re2 Rfd8= Black has no problems.



### 11...Rc8

11...c5N is possible although 12.dxc5 gives Black something to think about, since 12...Qxc5 13.Qb5† forces the king to move. The text move is a simpler solution.

### 12.Rd1

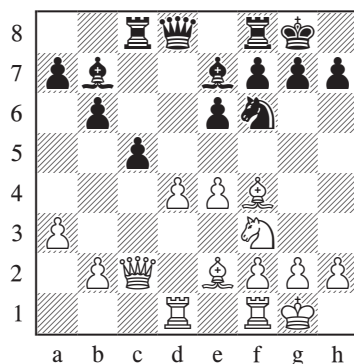
Other continuations don't bother Black either, for instance:

12.Qb5N 0-0 13.Qc6 Qxc6 14.Rxc6 Qb8 15.Ra4 Rd7 16.Rxd7 Qxd7 17.Qe2 c5 is equal.

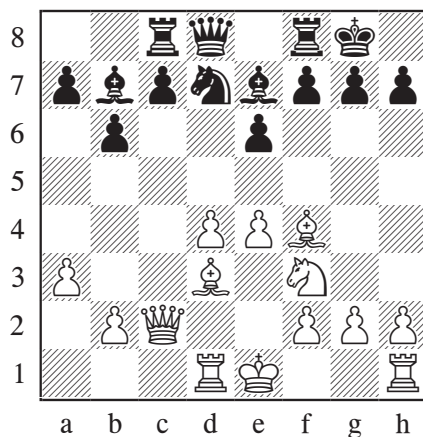
12.Qc4N Qf6 13.Qb5† c6 14.Qd3 c5 15.Re2 0-0 16.dxc5 Rxc5 17.0-0 Ra8= also gives Black no problems.

### 12...0-0 13.Qd3

13.Qb5!? c6 14.Qe2 occurred in Sanikidze – Matlakov, Gjakova 2016. My new idea is 14...Qf6N 15.0-0 c5! when any problems along the d-file are illusory, for instance:



16.dxc5 Rxc5! 17. Ra4 Ra8 18.e5 Qc6 19.Rb3 Qd5 Black has a comfortable game and the e5-pawn might become weak in the long run.



### 13...c5 14.d5

White relies on the power of the passed pawn. Keeping the c-file closed is also desirable for him.

### 14...c4!

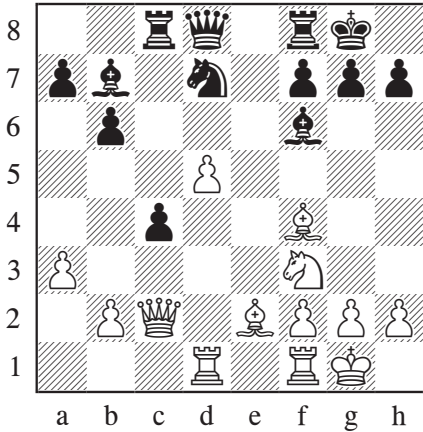
Fortunately, the rook still has some value on c8.

### 15.Qe2 exd5 16.exd5 Qf6 17.0-0N



White should not keep his king in the centre any longer.

The over-aggressive 17.h4 ♖e8 18.♗g5 ♘f8 led White nowhere in Kincs – Amstadt, Zalakarosi 2008.

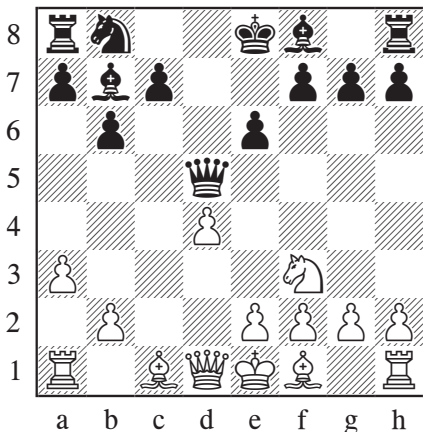


17...♖e8 18.♗e3 a6 19.a4 h6

White's pieces are rather ineffective and don't support the passer, so Black is at least not worse.

C) 7.♗xd5 ♖xd5!

White's opening play would be fully justified after 7...♗xd5 8.♖c2, when the position is the same as variation B except that Black's knight is on b8 instead of d7. Play may continue 8...♗e7 9.e4 ♗b7 10.♗f4± and White is doing well.

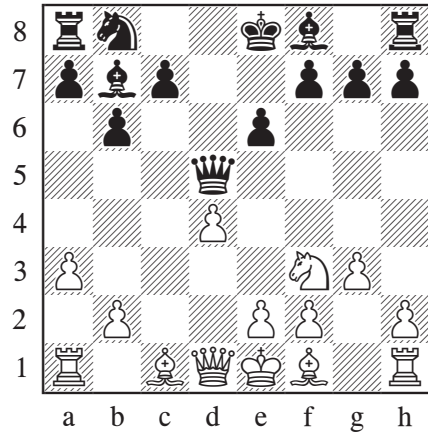


The text move is clearly best: the queen is active yet not vulnerable to attack, and Black has good control over the central light squares.

We will consider C1) 8.g3 and C2) 8.e3.

8.♗f4 has been played several times but it proves harmless after 8...♗d6, for instance: 9.♗xd6 ♖xd6 10.e3 0–0 11.♗d3 ♘d7= Nutiu – Parligras, Baile Tusnad 1999.

C1) 8.g3



This has been quite a popular choice; apparently the centralized queen is an inviting target. However, White comes under pressure in the centre after the following strong reply.

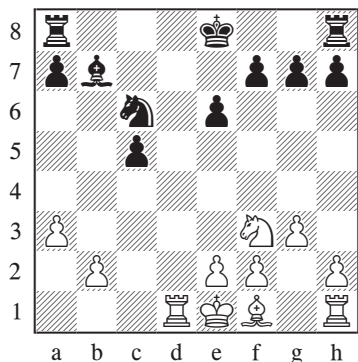
8...♗c6!

Another attractive option is:

8...c5!? 9.♗e3

9.♗g2?! ♗c6 10.♖a4 was seen in Mietner – Wegener, Recklinghausen 1999, when Black should have played 10...0–0–0!N 11.dxc5 b5!, punishing White for keeping the king in the centre for too long. For instance: 12.♖c2 ♗d4 13.♖d3 ♗b3 14.♖b1 ♖xd3 15.exd3 ♖xd3±

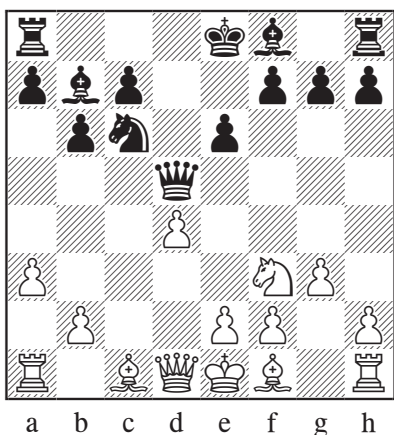
9...♗c6 10.dxc5 ♖xd1† 11.♖xd1 ♗xc5 12.♗xc5 bxc5



13.♞c1  
 13.♙g2 ♘d4 14.♘xd4 ♙xg2 15.♞g1 cxd4  
 16.♞xg2 0–0–0 is equal.

13...♙e7 14.♞xc5 ♞ac8

Black's development advantage fully compensated for the pawn in Salvatore – Wassilieff, corr. 2007.



9.♙e3

This is White's only way to maintain the balance.

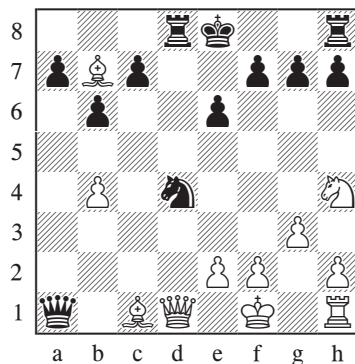
9.♙g2?!

This is the move White would like to play, but the following complications favour Black.

9...♘xd4! 10.♘h4 ♞a5† 11.b4 ♙xb4† 12.axb4 ♞xa1 13.♙xb7 ♞d8 14.♙f1

This position was reached in S. Ivanov – Anastasian, St Petersburg 1994, and a couple

of subsequent games. Black can obtain a clear advantage with the following improvement:



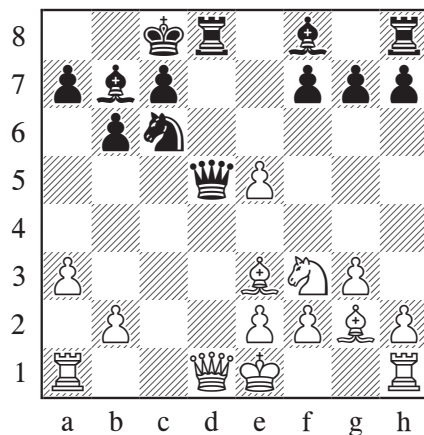
14...♞c3!N 15.♞d2

15.♙f4 0–0†

15...♞xd2 16.♙xd2 ♘b3 17.♙c6† ♙e7  
 18.♙c3 ♞d1† 19.♙g2 ♞xh1 20.♙xh1 ♞d8†

Black has excellent winning chances due to his extra queenside pawns, which will soon become passers.

9...0–0–0 10.♙g2 e5 11.dxe5



11...♘xe5N

This simple innovation is a safe equalizer, which sees Black regain the pawn in a comfortable situation.

The more complicated alternative is: 11...♞xd1†!? 12.♞xd1 ♞xd1† 13.♙xd1 ♘xe5

14.♙h3†! (after 14.♖g1 ♜xf3 15.♙xf3 ♙xf3 16.exf3 ♙e7= White suffers from an inferior pawn structure) 14...♗b8 15.♜xe5 ♙xh1 16.♜xf7 ♖g8 17.f3 The position is unclear and holds mutual chances, and a draw ensued in Uberos Fernandez – I. Jones, corr. 2016.

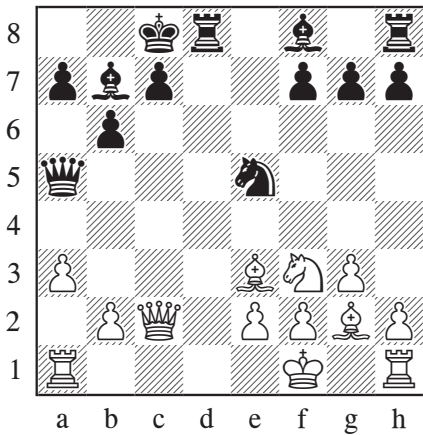
**12.♙c2**

In the event of 12.♙xd5 ♖xd5 (but not 12...♙xd5? 13.♙h3† ♜d7 14.0–0–0†) 13.0–0 ♜xf3† 14.♙xf3 ♖d8= Black has nothing to worry about.

I also checked 12.♙a4 ♗b8 13.0–0 ♜xf3† 14.♙xf3 ♖d7 15.♙c2 (15.♙xd7 ♖xd7=) 15...♙xf3 16.exf3 ♖d3 17.♙a4 ♖d7= when the activity of White’s pieces can be neutralized, while Black’s pawn structure is preferable in the long run.

**12...♙a5† 13.♗f1**

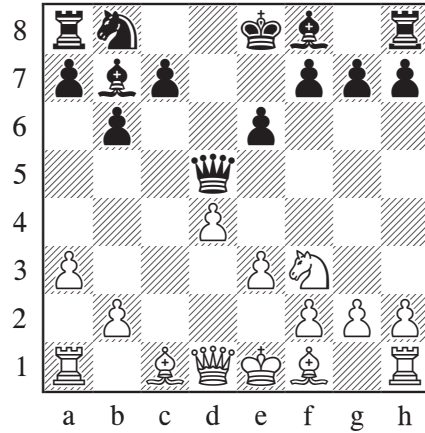
13.♙d2 ♜xf3† 14.♙xf3 ♙c5 is also level.



**13...♜g4 14.♙d4 ♙xf3 15.exf3 ♖xd4 16.fxg4 ♙c5=**

Black has no problems and the opposite-coloured bishops make a draw a likely outcome.

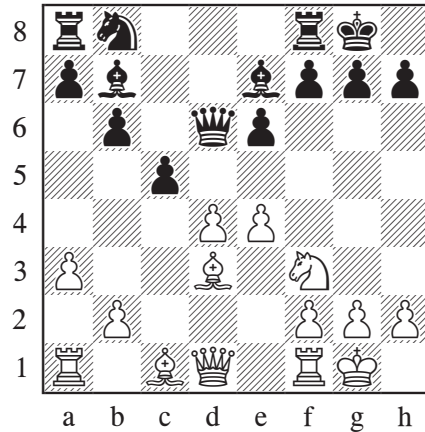
**C2) 8.e3**



This normal move was played in several game, including Fedorovtsev – Smirnov, St Petersburg 2005. Surprisingly, I can offer a normal developing move as a novelty.

**8...♙e7N 9.♙d3 c5 10.e4 ♖d6 11.0–0 0–0**

11...cxd4 is also good enough, for instance: 12.e5 ♖d7 13.♜xd4 0–0 14.♙e3 ♜c6=



**12.e5**

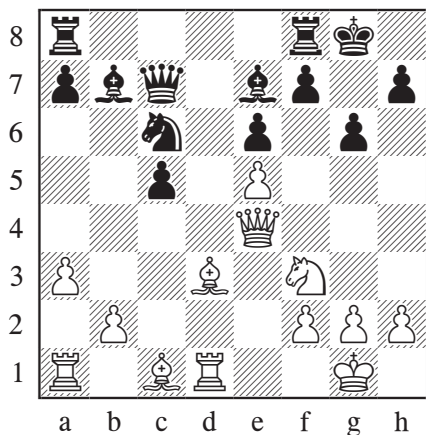
12.dxc5 can be met by 12...bxc5!?, in the style of some other lines we have seen, such as D41 from the previous chapter. Here too, after 13.♙e3 ♜c6= Black’s control over the d4-square and future play along the b-file compensates for the structural drawbacks.

12...♙d7 13.♙e2 ♘c6 14.dxc5 bxc5!

By now you should be expecting this choice of recapture!

15.♞d1 ♙c7 16.♙e4 g6

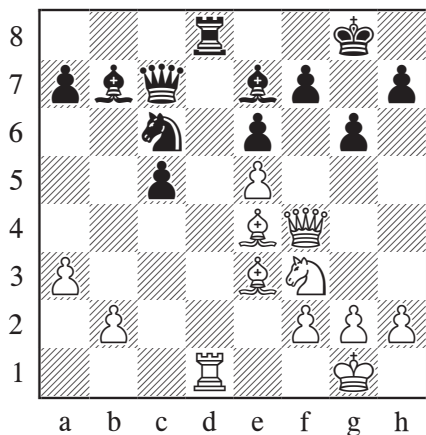
Black is not worse at all. Before completing development, White has to move his queen to avoid a nasty discovered attack.



17.♙f4 ♞fd8 18.♞e3 ♞d5

The vulnerability of the e5-pawn prevents White from developing any attack on the kingside.

19.♞e4 ♞xd1† 20.♞xd1 ♞d8



21.♞c1 ♙d7 22.h4

Other pawn moves on the kingside should be met in the same way.

22...♞d4↗

White can exchange the knight with either his knight or his bishop; either way, Black gets a passed pawn and a full share of the chances.

## Conclusion

This short chapter has dealt with a few sidelines after 6.cxd5 ♞xd5, beginning with the pawn sacrifice 7.e4!?. There is no doubt that White's gambit is objectively unsound, so all you have to do is remember some key lines and remain vigilant at the board.

7.♙a4† is not too challenging although please remember that, unlike the previous chapter where we blocked this check with ...♙d7, here we should prefer 7...♞d7 and recapture on d5 with the bishop.

Finally we considered 7.♞xd5 ♙xd5! when Black's queen is rather well placed in the centre, as evidenced by the lines after 8.g3 ♞c6! when White must play accurately to maintain the balance. 8.e3 is safer but this is clearly not an opening variation which will cause Queen's Indian players to lose sleep.

# Abridged Variation Index

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The Variation Index in the book is 9 pages long. Below is an abridged version giving just the main variations, not the sub-variations.

## Chapter 1

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6

- A) 4.♙g5 ♗b7 8
- B) 4.♙f4 ♗b4†!? 16

## Chapter 2

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.e3 ♗b7

- A) 5.a3 24
- B) 5.♙e2 26
- C) 5.♗bd2 29
- D) 5.♗c3 32

## Chapter 3

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.e3 ♗b7  
5.♙d3 d5

- A) 6.cxd5 40
- B) 6.0–0 41

## Chapter 4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.♗c3 ♗b7

- A) 5.♙d3 57
- B) 5.♙f4 58
- C) 5.♙c2 61
- D) 5.g3 68

## Chapter 5

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7  
5.♗c3 d5

- A) 6.♙a4† 75
- B) 6.♙f4 77
- C) 6.♙c2 79
- D) 6.♙g5 87

## Chapter 6

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7  
5.♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5

- A) 7.e4?! 104
- B) 7.♙a4† 106
- C) 7.♗xd5 110

## Chapter 7

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7  
5.♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5

- A) 7.♙d2 115
- B) 7.e3 118

## Chapter 8

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7  
5.♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7.♙c2 ♗xc3

- A) 8.♙xc3 139
- B) 8.bxc3 145

## Chapter 9

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3 ♗a6  
5.♗bd2 d5

- A) 6.cxd5 160
- B) 6.♙g2 164

## Chapter 10

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3 ♗a6  
5.♙a4 ♗b7 6.♙g2 c5

- A) 7.d5!? 180
- B) 7.0–0 182
- C) 7.dxc5 186

### Chapter 11

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3 ♘a6  
5.♙b3 c6!?

- A) 6.♙g2 204
- B) 6.♙f4 205
- C) 6.♙g5 209
- D) 6.♗c3 213

### Chapter 12

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3 ♘a6  
5.♙c2 c5

- A) 6.♙g2 ♗c6 221
- B) 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5 ♙b7 224

### Chapter 13

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3 ♘a6  
5.♙c2 c5 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5 ♙b7 8.♙g2  
♗xd5 9.0-0 ♗c6 10.♞d1 ♙e7

- A) 11.♗c3 237
- B) 11.a3 238
- C) 11.♙f5 242
- D) 11.♙a4 ♘f6 250

### Chapter 14

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3 ♘a6 5.b3  
♙b4† 6.♙d2 ♙e7

- A) 7.♙c3 266
- B) 7.♗c3 267
- C) 7.♙g2 0-0 8.0-0 d5 271

### Chapter 15

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3 ♘a6 5.b3  
♙b4† 6.♙d2 ♙e7 7.♙g2 0-0 8.0-0 d5  
9.cxd5 exd5 10.♗c3 ♞e8!

- A) 11.♙f4 287
- B) 11.a3 288
- C) 11.♞b1 290

- D) 11.♞c1 292
- E) 11.♞e1 293
- F) 11.♙c2 295
- G) 11.♗e5 300

### Chapter 16

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6

- A) 3.a3 315
- B) 3.e3 316
- C) 3.♙g5 318
- D) 3.g3 ♙b4† 4.♗d2 321

### Chapter 17

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 ♙b4† 4.♙d2 ♙e7  
5.♙g2 d5 6.♗f3 0-0 7.0-0 c6

- A) 8.♗a3! 335
- B) 8.b3 336
- C) 8.♗c3 338
- D) 8.♙f4 343
- E) 8.♙b3 347

### Chapter 18

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 ♙b4† 4.♙d2 ♙e7  
5.♙g2 d5 6.♗f3 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.♙c2  
♗bd7

- A) 9.♙g5 359
- B) 9.♞c1 361
- C) 9.a4! 363
- D) 9.♞d1 369

### Chapter 19

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 ♙b4† 4.♙d2 ♙e7  
5.♙g2 d5 6.♗f3 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.♙c2  
♗bd7 9.♙f4 b6

- A) 10.♗bd2 382
- B) 10.cxd5 384
- C) 10.♗c3 385
- D) 10.♞d1 391