attacking with 1 e4

- All possible defences to 1 e4 are covered
- Written by a battle-hardened 1 e4 player

Fed up with having to learn so much opening theory? Struggling to keep up with all the latest developments? Then this book will be the answer to all your problems! Grandmaster John Emms offers a new arsenal of opening weapons with which to attack to your unsuspecting opponents. Starting with the move 1 e4, the reader is armed with systems against all possible black defences. In each case learning ideas is more important than memorising long variations, so this repertoire should be ideal for players who don’t have the luxury of being able to spend countless hours studying theory. Each line is easy to learn and play, but will they will still pose your opponent difficult problems to solve over the board.

John Emms is one of Britain’s strongest Grandmasters and was a member of the England team which played in the 2000 Chess Olympiad in Istanbul. He has also carved out a reputation for being an excellent chess writer and has many works under his name. He is co-author of the very popular openings bible Nunn’s Chess Openings, also published by Everyman Chess

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attacking with 1 e4

by John Emms

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Books

Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings volumes A-E (Sahovski Informator 2001)
Nunn's Chess Openings, Nunn, Burgess, Emms and Gallagher (Everyman 1999)
Closed Sicilian, King (Everyman 1997)
Winning with the Closed Sicilian, Lane (Batsford 1992)
Beating the Anti Sicilians, Gallagher (Batsford 1995)
Bishop's Opening, Harding (Batsford 1976)
Vienna Game, Lane (Everyman 2000)
Play the Open Games as Black, Emms (Gambit 2000)
The Ultimate King's Indian Attack, Dunnington (Batsford 1997)
Play the French, Watson (Everyman 1996)
The Complete French, Psakhis (Batsford 1992)
Opening Preparation, Dvoretsky and Yusupov (Batsford 1994)
The Ultimate Pirc, Nunn and McNab (Batsford 1998)
A Killer Chess Opening Repertoire, Summerscale (Everyman 1999)
Modern Defence, Speelman and McDonald (Everyman 2000)
The Scandinavian, Emms (Everyman 1996)
The Complete Alekhine, Burgess (Batsford 1992)
New Ideas in the Alekhine, Burgess (Batsford 1995)

Periodicals

Informator
ChessBase Magazine
The Week in Chess
Chess
British Chess Magazine
This is a book aimed for those who want a opening repertoire based on 1 e4. Moreover, this is an openings book for those who have neither the time nor the inclination to learn reams and reams of the latest modern opening theory. When possible, I've deliberately avoided recommending variations which require massive memorisation, or variations where the assessment changes at every super-grandmaster tournament. No main line Najdorfs, Dragons, Spanish Openings and Petroffs here!

In general I've opted for 'opening systems', in which learning the major ideas is just as important as learning the actual variations. Even though I've often steered away from main lines, I've made sure that I've chosen openings with some pedigree. Many of my recommendations have been played at one time or another by world class players (even World Champions).

I have, however, resisted the temptation for an 'all-in-one' solution. For example, the King's Indian Attack can be played against virtually every defence to 1 e4, However, it's generally thought that it's at its most effective when played against the French Defence; it's my choice here, but only against the French. I've opted for a good variety of systems, ones which will give you practice in a wide number of positions (it's generally thought to be good for your chess to familiarise yourself with different types of openings, rather than sticking to just one).

I've paid particular attention to the psychological aspect when choosing these opening systems. I've endeavoured to come up with lines which make Black feel uncomfortable (I've often drawn on my own experiences for this). I've also avoided virtually all of Black's gambits, even if they are considered incorrect at the highest levels. It's just not most players' cup of tea to win an early pawn and then try and grovel out into an ending. Playing White should be more fun than that!

Sometimes, within an opening, I've given White more than one choice of variation. I've generally done this when there is little to pick between two or three lines, or when I've decided that a particularly sharp line needs a good back-up if something new is discovered for Black. Certain lines will favour certain players: you can make your own choices.

I've opted for a 'variation by variation' approach; I still believe that this is the best way of studying a new opening. I've also tried to paint as realistic picture as possible; I'll certainly say when a particular line is scoring well for White, but I'll also give the best de-
fences for Black. If Black plays the best moves he may equalise – that’s just chess for you. But even so, I’ve strove to ensure that Black has no easy way to reach a dull equality. Even the equal positions here give White good chances to play for the win!

I won’t go into the specifics of the repertoire here. This can be discovered as you turn the pages.

Finally I would like to thank all those who have helped me in some way or another with this book. Special thanks go to Jonathan Rowson for some thoughts and recommendations.

John Emms
Kent
June 2001
CHAPTER ONE

Attacking the Sicilian:
The Closed Variation

1 e4 c5 2 \( \text{c3} \)

The Closed Sicilian is a solid and, at the same time, aggressive way of meeting 1...c5. It's true that White builds up slowly in the opening, but the overall aim is an eventual attack on the black king (I admit that, technically speaking, this could be said about any opening; after all, the eventual aim is always checkmate!). Seriously though, the Closed Sicilian is the perfect weapon for players wanting a heavyweight battle, but not having the time or inclination to study the main lines of the Open Sicilian. Indeed, even some of the most seasoned professional players are getting fed up of trying to find the faintest of edges against the Najdorf, Dragon, Scheveningen, Sveshnikov etc, and are turning their attention elsewhere.

The Closed Sicilian has a good pedigree; advocates include former World Champion Boris Spassky and England's top two, Michael Adams and Nigel Short. Unlike some anti-Sicilians, there's no easy way for Black to reach dull equality; even if Black plays the best moves a tense struggle will certainly lie ahead.

While researching the Closed Sicilian for this book, it's become apparent to me how logical White's moves are. It's certainly more important to learn the ideas than the concrete lines (although both would be ideal), even though I'm presenting the variations in a structured way. A final point is that there is still much uncharted territory and ample opportunity for players to express new ideas in this opening.

Main Line 1:
Black fianchettoes the king's bishop

1 e4 c5 2 \( \text{c3} \)

This move is important. White wants to fianchetto his king's bishop, but before he does so he eliminates the possibility of Black playing 2...d5 (2 g3 d5 is playable for White, but that's outside our repertoire!).

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

Other black options will be studied later in this chapter.

3 g3 \( \text{g6} \)

Black's most popular and successful way of dealing with the Closed Sicilian is to follow suit with his own fianchetto. The bishop on g7 will have a great influence over events in the centre and on the queenside.

4 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{g7} \) 5 d3

The above is the normal move order to reach this position, but are there others, for example 1 e4 c5 2 \( \text{c3} \) g6 3 g3 \( \text{g7} \) 4 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{c6} \) 5 d3.
Now we will concentrate on Black’s three main choices from this position:

A: 5...e6
B: 5...b8
C: 5...d6

Before moving onto Black’s main moves, let’s take a brief look at other possibilities for Black.

a) 5...d6 is likely to transpose to Variation C1 after 6...e3 d6.

b) Likewise, 5...e5 will transpose to Variation C2 after 6...e3 d6.

c) 5...b6 is unusual, but quite playable. White should continue as normal with 6...e3. Hort-Toran Albero, Palma de Mallorca 1969, continued 6...b5 7...d2 d6 8...h3...d7 9...e6 e6 10...d1...d7 11...h6 0-0 12...g5...xg7 13...f4 f5 14...g5 and Black’s slightly weak kingside gave White the advantage.

6...e3!

It must be said that 6...e4 is also very possible, but in the main I’m recommending playing the Closed Sicilian with an early...e3 and...d2. The reasons for this are threefold: firstly, I believe lines with...e3 and...d2 to more direct and aggressive than those with an early f2-f4; secondly, there is less theory for the white player to learn and lastly, I think lines with...e3 and...d2 are easier to play.

More often than not, White will later offer the exchange of bishops with...e3-h6, thus weakening Black’s control over the dark squares on the kingside. Indeed this is one of White’s key ideas here.

6...d4!? Black occupies the all-important d4-square. The knight is actively placed here and it certainly prevents White from playing d3-d4 in the near future. The knight is also reasonably secure on d4, being protected by both the bishop on g7 and the pawn on c5. However, the d4-square isn’t an outpost in the strictest sense of the word - White can fight for its control by moving the c3-knight and playing c2-c3.

Other possibilities for Black include:

a) 6...d6 transposes to Variation C4. In fact this move is Black’s most popular choice and may well be Black’s best option.

b) 6...a5!? 7...d2 (7...d2 8...d4 8...d7 9...c1 d6 10...b3...c7 looks okay for...
Black) 7...d4 8 f4 dxe7 9 f3 d6 10 0-0 transposes to Variation C43.

c) 6...dxe7? 7 dxc5 Wc5 8 dxe3 dxe3+ 9 bxc3 Wxc3+ 10 d2 Wc5 11 e2 and Black has no compensation for losing his dark-squared bishop, Jansa-Langer, Budapest 1999.

7...dxe2!

With this surprising move White immediately makes use of the unprotected state of the c5-pawn in order to challenge the d4-knight.

7...dxe7

Or:

a) 7...d5 8 c3 dxe2 9 dxe2 dxe4 10 dxe5! exd3 11 d4 d2+ 12 Wxd2 dxe2 13 d2 d6 14 d5 d5 e5 16 dxe5 dxe5 17 dxe1 d7 18 d1 and White has a terrific lead in development, Barczay-Uhlmann, Trencianske Teplice 1979.

b) 7...dxe2 8 dxe2 dxe2 9 d1 d7 (9...d5+? loses to 10 d2 dxe3 11 d2 dxe2 12 d1 C3 10 dxe5 and the exchange of the c5-pawn for the b2-pawn is favourable for White. Black can now grab a pawn with 10...d5+ 11 d4 dxe2, but following 12 c4 White has excellent compensation.

c) 7...b6 8 d4! cxd4 9 e5 d8 10 f4 f6 11 d3 fxe5 12 fxe5 Wc7 13 dxe4 dxe5 14 d2 dxd4 15 dxe4 Wc5 16 d3 d5 17 d1 and Black was simply overrun in Spassky-Figuransson, Belfort 1988.

8 c3 dxe2 9 dxe2 d6

Black can also protect the c5-pawn with 9...d6. Following 10 d4 cxd4 we have:

a) 11 dxd4 e5! 12 d6 looks equal, but not 12...o-d7?! 13 d6! d7 14 0-0 e8 15 d1 d7 16 a4 d6 17 b4 e8 18 d3 Wc8 19 a5 bxa5 20 b5, which was very good for White in P.Kovacevic-Peev, Pancevo 1989.

b) 11 dxd4 d7 12 0-0 0-0 0-13 f4 d5 14 e5 dxe2 15 dxe2 g5 and I prefer White, Bronstein-Korobov, Minsk 1983.

10 d4

White was also slightly better after 10 d2 d6 11 d4 c6 12 d4, as in Smyslov-Renter, Parnu 1947, but the text move looks more direct.

10...cxd4 11 dxd4 0-0 12 0-0

12...a6 13 d2

White has an easy plan and a comfortable edge; the d6-pawn is vulnerable and White can increase the pressure along the d-file. King-Domont, Swiss League 1999, continued 13...d7 14 h6 e5 15 dxe7 dxe7 16 d2 e6 17 f4 f6 18 d3 d8 19 d1 d5 20 d1 a5 21 d5 d4 22 d2 dxf5 23 exf5 and White eventually won.
B)

5...\textit{b}b8!?

With this move Black delays showing his hand on the kingside and immediately prepares for the ...b7-b5-b4 push. This will gain important space on the queenside, force the white knight away from c3 and increase the scope of Black's dark-squared bishop. It must be said that 5...\textit{b}b8 has little independent value and usually transposes to lines considered later. Here we will look at possible deviations for Black.

6 \textit{a}e3

Once again preparing \textit{d}d2 and incidentally attacking the c5-pawn.

6...\textit{d}d4!?\textit{ }

Once again occupying the d4-square. Alternatively:

a) 6...d6, transposing to Variation C3, is Black's most obvious choice.

b) 6...b5!? 7 \textit{w}d2 (7 \textit{a}xe5 b4 8 \textit{a}a4!? \textit{w}a5 b3 is an interesting looking exchange sacrifice) 7...b4 8 \textit{d}d1 d6 9 \textit{e}e2 once again leads us to Variation C3.

7 \textit{a}ce2!?

Following the same recipe as in Variation A. 7 \textit{g}e2 or 7 \textit{w}d2 are likely to transpose to Variation C3.

7...\textit{a}xe2 8 \textit{a}xe2 \textit{a}xb2 9 \textit{b}b1 \textit{g}7

9...\textit{w}a5+? once again loses to 10 \textit{d}d2 \textit{x}xa2 11 \textit{x}xb2! \textit{w}xb2 12 \textit{c}c3.

10 \textit{a}xc5

10...\textit{w}a5+?! 11 \textit{a}b4 \textit{w}xa2 12 \textit{c}4 once again gives White immense compensation for the pawn. After 10...d6 11 \textit{d}d4 \textit{x}d4 12 \textit{x}d4 \textit{d}d7 13 \textit{f}4 (Sarfaty-Rogers, Wellington 1988) Rogers gives 13...\textit{e}e7 14 \textit{d}d2 \textit{f}f6 as being equal. However, White could deviate earlier, keeping the dark-squared bishops on with 11 \textit{e}e3 or 11 \textit{b}4, in either case with a slight edge for White.

C)

5...d6

This sensible move is Black's most popular choice. Black opens a diagonal for the c8-bishop, but other than this, he keeps all options open as to how he will develop both on the kingside and queenside.

6 \textit{a}e3

6 \textit{f}4 is also very playable, but as I've said
before, we are mainly concentrating on \( \text{d,e3} \)

lines for this repertoire.

Now Black must make an important choice. The main options are:

\begin{itemize}
  \item C1: 6...\( \text{d}f6 \)
  \item C2: 6...\( \text{e}5 \)
  \item C3: 6...\( \text{b}8 \)
  \item C4: 6...\( \text{e}6 \)
\end{itemize}

Others possibilities include:

a) 6...\( \text{d}a5 \) 7 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{b}8 \) (7...\( \text{c}5 \) 8 \( \text{f}4 \) transposes to C43) 9 \( \text{h}3 \) 0-0 10 \( \text{d}f3 \) \( \text{xf3}+ \) 11 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{b}8 \) 12 \( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{b}5 \) 13 0-0 and White will push his pawns on the kingside, Arwanitakis-Mitter, Graz 1999.

b) 6...\( \text{d}d4 \) is another transpositional move: 7 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{b}8 \) (7...\( \text{c}5 \) 8 \( \text{f}4 \) transposes to C22) 8 \( \text{ge2} \) \( \text{b}5 \) transposes to Variation C32.

c) 6...\( \text{b}5 \) 7 \( \text{e}5! \) \( \text{d}7 \) (7...\( \text{b}7 \) 8 \( \text{d}x\text{e}6 \) \( \text{d}x\text{e}6 \) 9

\( \text{d}x\text{b}5 \) \( \text{d}d7 \) {Ljubojevic-Miles} and now Miles gives 10 \( \text{d}e2 \) with an advantage to White) 8 \( \text{d}x\text{d}6 \) \( \text{d}x\text{d}6 \) and now:

c1) 9 \( \text{d}d6 \) \( \text{d}c7 \) (9...\( \text{b}4 \) 10 \( \text{d}d5 \) \( \text{d}x\text{b}2 \) 11 \( \text{d}b1 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 12 \text{c3} gives White an edge – Romanishin) 10 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{b}4 \) 11 \( \text{d}e4 \) 0-0 12 \( \text{h}6 \)

c4 13 \( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 14 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 15 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 16

\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 17 \( \text{g}4 \) and White has a clear plus, Romanishin-Torre, Indonesia 1983.

c2) 9 \( \text{e}4! \) \( \text{d}e7 \) (9...\( \text{b}4 \) 10 \( \text{d}e4 \) \( \text{d}x\text{b}2 \) 11 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 12 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{dxe}5 \) 13 \( \text{d}3 \) is good for White) 10 \( \text{d}x\text{b}5 \) 0-0 11 \( \text{d}x\text{d}6 \) \( \text{d}x\text{b}2 \) 12 \( \text{b}1 \)

\( \text{e}6+ \) 13 \( \text{d}e2 \) \( \text{c}3+ \) 14 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{g}7 \) and Black has insufficient compensation, Lebredo-R.Hernandez, Bayamo 1984.

d) 6...\( \text{h}5 \)? is an adventurous move. Black aims to activate his h8-rook with ...\( \text{h}5\text{h}4 \). A good reply to this is 7 \( \text{h}3 \), which prevents a black piece coming to \( \text{g}4 \) and prepares to answer ...\( \text{h}5\text{h}4 \) with \( \text{g}3\text{g}4 \).

\begin{itemize}
  \item C1)
  \item 6...\( \text{d}f6 \)
\end{itemize}

A very sensible move, one of the first that springs to mind. Having said that, on my database this move is actually less popular than 6...\( \text{d}b8 \), 6...\( \text{e}5 \) and 6...\( \text{e}6 \).
It may seem like a sweeping statement, but I've always thought that ...\(\text{\#f6}\) and ...e7-e5 don't really mix that well in the Closed Sicilian, and I'm not alone in this belief. On the other hand, none other than Garry Kasparov has played this move, so it certainly deserves some respect, and it's true that White is already committed to h2-h3 and d\(\text{\#}\)3.

8 \(\text{\#ge2}\)

One of the points of Black's play is that 8 f4 can be met by the annoying 8...\(\text{\#h5}\)! 9 \(\text{\#ge2}\) d\(\text{\#}\)4, which looks quite pleasant for Black.

8...0-0 9 0-0 d\(\text{\#}\)4

More recently two of Adams' opponents has played the inventive 9...b5?! After 10 \(\text{\#xb5}\) (10 f4 b4 11 d\(\text{\#}\)5 d\(\text{\#}\)x\(\text{\#}\)5 12 exd\(\text{\#}\)4 d\(\text{\#}\)4 13 fxe5 d\(\text{\#}\)xe2+ 14 w\(\text{\#}\)xe2 d\(\text{\#}\)xe5 is fine for Black) 10...b8 we have:

a) 11 a4 a6 12 c\(\text{\#}\)3 bxc3 13 c\(\text{\#}\)c4 b8 14 f4 exf4 15 c\(\text{\#}\)xf4 c\(\text{\#}\)a5 (Adams gives 15...c\(\text{\#}\)5 16 d\(\text{\#}\)xe5 d\(\text{\#}\)xe5 17 c\(\text{\#}\)d5 c\(\text{\#}\)x\(\text{\#}\)d5 18 exd\(\text{\#}\)5 w\(\text{\#}\)d6 19 w\(\text{\#}\)d2 c\(\text{\#}\)d7 as unclear) 16 c\(\text{\#}\)d2 c\(\text{\#}\)d7 17 c\(\text{\#}\)a2 with a roughly level position, Adams-Kasparov, Linares 1999.

b) 11 d\(\text{\#}\)e3 a6 12 b4 a5 bxc3 13 c\(\text{\#}\)c4 b8 14 c\(\text{\#}\)g5 b6 (14...c\(\text{\#}\)a6+? 15 c\(\text{\#}\)d5 c\(\text{\#}\)x\(\text{\#}\)d5 16 exd\(\text{\#}\)5 c\(\text{\#}\)e7 looks unclear) 15 c\(\text{\#}\)xf6 c\(\text{\#}\)xf6 16 d\(\text{\#}\)d5 d\(\text{\#}\)g7 17 c\(\text{\#}\)b1 c\(\text{\#}\)xb1 18 w\(\text{\#}\)xb1 and White had the tiniest of edges in Adams-Topalov, Dos Hermanas 1999.

10 f4 b8

Or 10...c\(\text{\#}\)xe2+ 11 c\(\text{\#}\)xe2 exf4 12 c\(\text{\#}\)xf4 c\(\text{\#}\)d7 13 d\(\text{\#}\)d2 c\(\text{\#}\)c6 14 w\(\text{\#}\)h2 c\(\text{\#}\)d7 15 c\(\text{\#}\)3 and White has the straightforward plan of doubling rooks on the half-open f-file, promising him some advantage, Kujiff-Sunye Neto, Amsterdam 1983.

11 d\(\text{\#}\)d2 c\(\text{\#}\)e8 12 c\(\text{\#}\)f2 b5 13 a3 a5 14 d\(\text{\#}\)a1 b4 15 d\(\text{\#}\)xb4 d\(\text{\#}\)xb4 16 c\(\text{\#}\)d1 c\(\text{\#}\)xe2+ 17 w\(\text{\#}\)xe2 c\(\text{\#}\)a6 18 f5

Ostojic-Memic, Wiesbaden 1994. In the diagrammed position White's extra space on the kingside guarantees him some advantage, so black players would do well to take a second look at 9...b5?!.

C12)

7...0-0 8 f4

Naturally d\(\text{\#}\)d2 is also possible, but the idea of e\(\text{\#}\)3-h6 is less enticing when Black hasn't weakened his dark squares by moving the e\(\text{\#}\)-pawn.

8...b8

Black follows the logical plan of expansion on the queenside by preparing...b7-b5-b4. After 8...e5 9 c\(\text{\#}\)ge2 (9 d\(\text{\#}\)f3 d\(\text{\#}\)h5! targets the g3-pawn) 9...exf4 (9...d\(\text{\#}\)h5?! 10 f5! d\(\text{\#}\)f6?! 11 g4! was clearly better for White in Jurkovic-Voitsekhovsky, Pardubice 1995, but of course Black's play here was pretty awful) 10 c\(\text{\#}\)xf4 b8 11 0-0 b5 12 a3 a5 13 w\(\text{\#}\)d2 b4 14 c\(\text{\#}\)xb4 c\(\text{\#}\)xb4 15 c\(\text{\#}\)c2 c\(\text{\#}\)b7 16 w\(\text{\#}\)f2 c\(\text{\#}\)a8 17 c\(\text{\#}\)af1 c\(\text{\#}\)a2 18 b3 White can hope to take advantage of the semi-open f-file, Moldovan-Nevednichy, Bucharest 1995.

9 d\(\text{\#}\)f3 b5 10 0-0 b4 11 c\(\text{\#}\)e2 a5
An important alternative here is 11...\( \text{d}7 \)!, freeing the g7-bishop and attacking the b2-pawn. Now 12 \( \text{b}1 \) is answered by 12...\( \text{a}5 \) and 12 c3 \( \text{a}6 \) 13 \( \text{f}2 \) bxc3 14 bxc3 \( \text{a}5 \) was fine for Black in Tischbierek-Van Wely, Antwerp 1998. Instead I prefer 12 \( \text{c}1 \)!, for example 12...a5 13 g4 \( \text{b}6 \) 14 f5 \( \text{d}4 \) 15 \( \text{exd}4 \) cxd4 16 \( \text{h}6 \).

12 g4 \( \text{a}6 \)

Or 12...\( \text{e}8 \) 13 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 14 f5 \( \text{b}5 \) 15 h4 a4 16 h5 a3 17 b3 \( \text{bd}4 \) (King prefers 17...\( \text{c}3 \) 18 \( \text{xc}3 \) bxc3, intending...\( \text{b}4 \)!) 18 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{xf}3+ \) 19 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 20 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 21 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 22 hgx6 hxg6 23 \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 24 \( \text{h}3 \) and Black has no good answer to White’s inevitable attack, Berg-Dinstuhl, Richmond 1994.

13 f5 a4 14 \( \text{f}4 \) c4 15 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 16 g5

We are following Iuldachev-Tisdall, Jakarta 1997, which continued 16...\( \text{d}7 \) 17 d4 c3 18 b3 \( \text{xf}3+ \) 19 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 20 \( \text{g}4 \) a8 21 \( \text{af}1 \) a5 22 h4 and White had an impressive looking kingside attack.

C22

6...e5

This move is one of Black’s most solid options available. Immediately he takes a vice-like grip on the d4-square and thus rules out for a long time the possibility of d3-d4. On the other hand, some players might be averse to blocking the long diagonal and hence restricting the affect of the g7-bishop on the queenside. Nevertheless, a study of the diagram quickly points to the fact that White’s main pawn break is f2-f4, a move which will allow the g7-bishop back into the game. In view of this, it’s really no surprise that White still often angles for the exchange of dark-squared bishops with \( \text{d}2 \) and \( \text{h}6 \).

7 \( \text{d}2 \)

7 f4 will tend to reach the same position as the main line after 7...\( \text{e}7 \) 8 \( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 9 0-0 \( \text{d}4 \) 10 \( \text{d}2 \).

Now Black has two main choices:

C21: 7...\( \text{e}6 \)

C22: 7...\( \text{g}7 \)

7...\( \text{d}4 \) 8 f4 \( \text{e}7 \) 9 \( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 10 0-0 transposes to Variation C22.

C21)

7...\( \text{e}6 \)
Delaying the development of the kingside and thus ruling out $\text{h6}$ for the time being.

8 $f4$ $\text{exf4}$

Another possibility is 8...$\text{d4}$ 9 $\text{d1}$P (to chase the knight away with c2-c3) 9...$\text{exf4}$ (9...$\text{xf6}$ 10 $\text{fxe5}$ $\text{dxe5}$ 11 c3! wins a pawn for White) 10 $\text{gxh4}$ $\text{d7}$ 11 c3 $\text{d6}$ 12 $\text{f3}$ 0-0 13 0-0 $\text{h8}$ (intending ...f7-f5) 14 $\text{g5}$ $\text{c8}$ 15 $\text{f2}$ f6 16 $\text{f3}$ f5 17 $\text{h1}$! (planning $\text{g3}$) 17...$\text{e6}$ 18 $\text{g3}$ $\text{c8}$ 19 $\text{g5}$ $\text{g8}$ 20 $\text{h4}$ $\text{h6}$ 21 $\text{f3}$ and White had a useful edge in the game G.Gioridadze-San Segundo, Vigo 1994.

9 $\text{xf4}$ $\text{d4}$

9...$\text{h6}$? is a little played but interesting idea. Black prevents $\text{h6}$ and prepares $\text{g6}$-$\text{g5}$ and ...$\text{g7}$-$\text{g6}$. Following 10 $\text{f3}$ $\text{g7}$ 11 0-0 $\text{d7}$ 12 $\text{d1}$! d5! 13 $\text{f2}$ g5! 14 $\text{e3}$ d4 15 $\text{e2}$ $\text{g6}$ Black was fine in the game Neumeier-Loginov, Oberwart 1994. However, 12 $\text{d1}$ was a little too accommodating in my mind. I prefer 12 $\text{e3}$! (preparing d3-d4) 12...$\text{d4}$ 13 $\text{ab1}$ g5 14 a3.

10 $\text{f3}$ $\text{xf3}$+ 11 $\text{xf3}$ $\text{d7}$

12 0-0

12 0-0 0-0 13 $\text{h6}$ $\text{a5}$ 14 $\text{d1}$ 0-0-0 was equal in the game Sturua-Loginov, Borzoni 1984.

12...0-0 0-0 13 $\text{ab1}$ $\text{e7}$ 14 b4!

White has a useful attack on the queenside, M.Buckley-Mirzoeva, World Girls Under-18 Championship, Oropesa del Mar 1999.

C22)

7...$\text{g7}$

The normal square for the $\text{g8}$-knight in this system. With this move Black prepares to castle and blocks neither the $\text{g7}$-bishop nor the f-pawn.

8 $f4$

Naturally White can also play for the immediate exchange of bishops with 8 $\text{h6}$?, but in comparison to Variation C44 (6...$\text{e6}$ 7 $\text{d2}$ $\text{g7}$ 8 $\text{h6}$), Black is much better placed here. In effect he is a tempo ahead, because in the other line Black usually plays ...e6-e5, increasing his dark-squared grip once the bishops have been exchanged. For this reason I believe it's better for White to delay $\text{h6}$ until later. Nevertheless, 8 $\text{h6}$ is still playable, for example 8...0-0 9 $\text{a5}$ $\text{g7}$ 10 $\text{f4}$ $\text{d4}$ 11 $\text{f3}$ $\text{g4}$! 12 0-0 and now:

a) 12...$\text{d7}$? (Ljubojevic-van der Wiel, Tilburg 1983) 13 $\text{fxe5}$ $\text{f3}$+ 14 $\text{xf3}$ $\text{dxe5}$ 15 $\text{a4}$ $\text{g4}$ 16 $\text{f2}$ and White wins a pawn (Van der Wiel).

b) 12...$\text{xf3}$! 13 $\text{xf3}$! $\text{b6}$ 14 $\text{d1}$! c4 15 $\text{e1}$ $\text{xd3}$ 16 $\text{exd3}$ $\text{ac8}$ 17 c3 $\text{f3}$ 18 $\text{xf3}$ f5! was very good for Black in Narayana-King, Calcutta 1993. King suggests 14 $\text{ab1}$ as an improvement for White, after which the position looks roughly equal.

8...$\text{d4}$

Black can also try to do without this move, for example 8...0-0 9 $\text{f3}$ $\text{b8}$ (9...$\text{d4}$ 10 0-0 transposes to the main line) 10 0-0 and now:

a) 10...$\text{b5}$! 11 $\text{fxe5}$ $\text{xe5}$ 12 $\text{xe5}$ $\text{xe5}$ 13 $\text{d4}$ (13 $\text{h6}$?) 13...$\text{xd4}$ 14 $\text{xd4}$ b4 15 $\text{d5}$ and I prefer White.

b) 10...$\text{exf4}$ 11 $\text{xf4}$ f5!? (it looks tempting to strike back on the kingside but White's pieces are better placed to exploit the open space; 11...$\text{b5}$ looks stronger, after which I would carry on with 12 $\text{h6}$) 12 $\text{h6}$ b5 13 $\text{a4}$ $\text{g7}$ 14 $\text{ae1}$ and the black king is a little bit exposed, the consequence of ...f7-f5 and the exchange of dark-squared bishops. The conclusion of A.Ledger-Duncan, British
League 1997 is quite instructive: 14...b4 15
\( \text{Q}d5! \) fxe4 16 dxe4 \( \text{Q}g4 \) 17 \( \text{Q}g5 \) \( \text{W}d7 \) 18
\( \text{Q}f6! \) \( \text{B}xf6 \) 19 \( \text{B}xf6 \) \( \text{B}xf6 \) 20 \( \text{W}f4+ \) \( \text{Q}f5 \)
(20...\( \text{Q}g7 \)) 21 \( \text{W}f7+ \) \( \text{Q}h6 \) 22 \( \text{W}xh7+ \) \( \text{Q}xg5 \) 23
\( \text{W}h4 \) is mate.) 21 \( \text{exf5} \) \( \text{W}xf5 \) (21...\( \text{Q}xf5 \) 22 \( \text{W}g4 \) wins, while after 21...\( \text{gxf5} \) 22 \( \text{W}h4 \) White’s attack is decisive.) 22 \( \text{W}xh6+ \) \( \text{Q}xg5 \) 23 \( \text{Q}f1 \)
\( \text{W}xf1+ \) 24 \( \text{Q}xf1 \) \( \text{B}b6 \) 25 \( \text{W}f4+ \) 1-0.
9 \( \text{Q}f3 \) 0-0 10 0-0

![Chess Diagram]

Now we have a further split:

**C221: 10...\( \text{Q}g4 \)**

**C222: 10...\( \text{exf4} \)**

Other possibilities are:

a) 10...\( \text{Q}b8?! \) (preparing ...b7-b5) 11 \( \text{Q}d1 \)
b5 12 c3 \( \text{Q}xf3+ \) 13 \( \text{Q}xf3 \) b4 14 fxe5 (14 \( \text{Q}f2 \)
\( \text{exf4} \) 15 \( \text{Q}x4 \) \( \text{Q}c6 \) 16 \( \text{Q}h6 \) bxc3 17 bxc3
\( \text{Q}xh6 \) 18 \( \text{W}xh6 \) \( \text{W}f6 \) 19 \( \text{W}f4 \) \( \text{W}e5 \) was a little better for Black
in Niebling-Ivanchuk, Frankfurt 1998). 14...bxc3 15 bxc3 \( \text{Q}xe5 \) 16
\( \text{Q}h6 \) \( \text{Q}g7 \) 17 \( \text{Q}xg7 \) \( \text{Q}xg7 \) 18 d4 \( \text{W}b6 \) 19
\( \text{Q}e3 \) \( \text{Q}a6 \) 20 \( \text{W}f2 \) cxd4 21 cxd4 \( \text{Q}c6 \) 22 \( \text{Q}d1 \)
and the idea of \( \text{Q}d5 \) gives White a pull,

b) 10...\( \text{W}b6?! \) (this looks a bit one
dimensional, but in fact it has useful nuisance value) 11 \( \text{Q}ab1 \) \( \text{Q}d7 \) 12 a3 \( \text{Q}ac8 \) 13 \( \text{Q}h1 \) a6
14 \( f5?! \) (a typical sacrifice; 14 \( \text{Q}f2?! \), keeping the tension, is another possibility) 14...\( \text{gxf5} \)
15 \( \text{Q}h6 \) f6 16 \( \text{Q}h4 \) fxe4 17 dxe4 \( \text{W}f7 \) 18
\( \text{Q}xg7 \) \( \text{Q}xg7 \) 19 \( \text{Q}d1 \) c4 20 \( \text{Q}e3 \) e6 21 c3
\( \text{Q}b3 \) 22 \( \text{W}e2 \) and White has enough compensation
for the pawn, An.Rodriguez-

![Chess Diagram]


**C221**

10...\( \text{Q}g4 \) 11 \( \text{Q}h4?! \)

11 \( \text{Q}f2 \) is the solid approach:

a) 11...\( \text{Q}xf3+ \) 12 \( \text{Q}xf3 \) \( \text{Q}xf3 \) 13 \( \text{Q}xf3 \) \( \text{exf4} \)
14 \( \text{Q}x4 \) d5 15 \( \text{Q}f1 \) \( \text{W}d7 \) 16 \( \text{W}h6 \) \( \text{Q}ae8 \) 17
\( \text{Q}xg7 \) \( \text{Q}xg7 \) 18 \( \text{W}f4 \) gave White an edge in
Hort-Ostojic, Hastings 1967.

b) 11...\( \text{W}d7 \) 12 \( \text{Q}af1 \) \( \text{exf4} \) 13 \( \text{Q}xf4 \) \( \text{Q}xf3+ \)
14 \( \text{Q}xf3 \) \( \text{Q}xf3 \) 15 \( \text{Q}xf3 \) b5 16 \( \text{W}h6 \) b4 17
\( \text{Q}xg7 \) \( \text{Q}xg7 \) 18 \( \text{Q}d1 \) and I prefer White,
Short-Nataf, FIDE World Championship,
New Delhi 2000.

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

Or 11...\( \text{exf4}?! \) and now:

a) 12 \( \text{Q}xf4 \) \( \text{W}d7 \) 13 \( \text{Q}f2 \) b5 14 \( \text{Q}h6 \) \( \text{Q}ae8 \)
15 \( \text{Q}af1 \) b4 16 \( \text{Q}xg7 \) \( \text{Q}xg7 \) 17 \( \text{Q}d1 \) \( \text{Q}xd1 \)
(eliminating the knight, which would otherwise influence White’s attack from c3). 18
\( \text{W}xd1 \) d5 19 c3 \( bxc3 \) 20 \( bxc3 \) \( \text{Q}xc6 \) 21 \( \text{Q}f3 
22 \( \text{W}f6+ \) \( \text{Q}g8 \) 23 c4 (Romanishin-
J.Horvath, Balatonberenyi 1993) and now
King suggests 23 \( \text{Q}f3 \).

b) 12 \( \text{Q}xf4?! \) \( \text{Q}e6 \) 13 \( \text{Q}f2 \) d5 14 \( \text{Q}h6 \) (the
same old story; off come the bishops
and Black’s kingside is weakened) 14...\( \text{A}c8 \) 15
\( \text{Q}xg7 \) \( \text{Q}xg7 \) 16 \( \text{Q}f1 \) f6 17 \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{Q}xd5 \) 18
\( \text{Q}e4 \) and White is slightly better,
Liljedahl-Spassky, Gothenburg 1971.

This position is ripe for further investigation. Possibilities include:

a) 12 \( \text{Q}f2 \) f6 and now:
a1) 13 fxe5?! releases the tension much too soon, giving Black unnecessary counterplay on the half-open d-file; 13...dxe5 14 \(\text{\&}b1!?\) b6 15 c4 \(\text{\&}ad8\) 16 \(\text{\&}c3\) g5! was good for Black in Orlov-Lerner, St Petersburg 1997.

a2) 13 \(\text{\&}a1\) (preparing f4-f5) 13...exf4! 14 gxf4 f5! and Black has equalised.

a3) 13 f5?! (Black always has to be wary of this positional sacrifice) 13...gx f5 14 \(\text{\&}a1\) fxe4 15 dxe4 and White has reasonable compensation for the pawn.

b) 12 f5?! gxf5 13 \(\text{\&}h6\) \(\text{\&}g6?\)! (13...fxe4 looks more resilient) 14 \(\text{\&}xg7\) \(\text{\&}xg7\) 15 h3 \(\text{\&}xh4\) 16 gxh4 f4 (16...\(\text{\&}h5\) 17 \(\text{\&}g5+\) \(\text{\&}g6\) 18 exf5 f6 19 \(\text{\&}g4\) is good for White) 17 hxg4 \(\text{\&}xg4\) 18 \(\text{\&}h8\) 19 \(\text{\&}d5\) \(\text{\&}xh4\) 20 c3 and White went on to win, Todorovcic-Velikov, Marseille 1990.

c) 12 \(\text{\&}e1\)? looks interesting, for example 12...f6 13 f5!? gxf5 14 \(\text{\&}d5?!\) fxe4 15 \(\text{\&}xe7+\) \(\text{\&}xe7\) 16 dxe4

and White will follow up with c2-c3, followed by \(\text{\&}f5\). White's position is easy to play and I believe he has more than enough compensation for the pawn.

C222)
10...exf4

Releasing the tension in the centre is probably Black's most reliable course of action.

11 \(\text{\&}x f4\)

White recaptures with the bishop and keeps alive the possibility of \(\text{\&}h6\). 11 gx f4 f5! puts an immediate block on White's kingside ambitions.

11...\(\text{\&}x f3\)+

Or 11...\(\text{\&}g4\) 12 \(\text{\&}x d4\) \(\text{\&}x d4\) (12...\(\text{\&}x d4\)? 13 \(\text{\&}b5\)! a6 14 \(\text{\&}x d6\) g5 15 \(\text{\&}x b 7\) \(\text{\&} b 6\) 16 \(\text{\&} g 6\) \(\text{\&} x b 7\) 17 \(\text{\&} x g 5\) was very good for White in Fahnenschmidt-Gauglitz, German Bundesliga 1994) 13 \(\text{\&} h 1\) and White has a comfortable edge. He can play \(\text{\&} h 6\), answering ...\(\text{\&} e 8\) with \(\text{\&} e 3\), followed by doubling on the f-file.

12 \(\text{\&} x f 3\) \(\text{\&} b 6\)!

I believe this was originally played by the Hungarian Grandmaster Lajos Portisch in a game against Bent Larsen. White would love to double on the f-file, but this annoying move prevents this plan, at least for the time being. Now White must simply protect the b2-pawn.

13 \(\text{\&} b 1\) \(\text{\&} e 6\) 14 \(\text{\&} e 3?!\)

Alternatively:

a) 14 \(\text{\&} g 5?!\) (this simply loses time) 14...\(\text{\&} c 6\) 15 \(\text{\&} e 3?\) \(\text{\&} e 5\) 16 \(\text{\&} h f 1\) \(\text{\&} g 4\) 17 \(\text{\&} f 4\) c4+ 18 \(\text{\&} h 1\) \(\text{\&} x d 3\) 19 \(\text{\&} x d 3\) \(\text{\&} d 4\) 20 h3 \(\text{\&} e 3\) 21 \(\text{\&} e 1\) \(\text{\&} x g 2\) 22 \(\text{\&} x g 2\) \(\text{\&} c 6\) and Black's bishop pair promise him an advantage, Larsen-Portisch, Rotterdam 1977.

b) 14 \(\text{\&} h 6\) (exchanging the bishops looks logical) 14...\(\text{\&} a 8\) 15 \(\text{\&} x g 7\) (15 \(\text{\&} h 1!?\)) 15...\(\text{\&} x g 7\) 16 \(\text{\&} h 1\) f6 17 a3 d5 18 b4 \(\text{\&} x b 4\) 19 \(\text{\&} x b 4\) \(\text{\&} c 7\) 20 \(\text{\&} b 5\) \(\text{\&} d 7\) 21 \(\text{\&} d 4\) \(\text{\&} g 8\) with
an unclear position, Adams-Kramnik, FIDE World Championship, Las Vegas 1999.

14...\(\text{d}c6\) 15 \(\text{ff}1\)

The Hungarian GM Forintos gives this prophylactic move in ECO. White takes the sting out of ...\(\text{d}e5\) or ...\(\text{d}d4\). In a way 15 \(\text{f}2\) looks more natural, as White keeps the option of doubling rooks on the f-file. However, after 15...\(\text{d}e5\)! White has to expend another tempo with 16 \(h3\), as 16 \(b4\) \(\text{g}4\)! 17 \(\text{bxc}5\) \(\text{exc}5\) 18 \(\text{cxb}6\) \(\text{xd}2\) 19 \(\text{xd}2\) \(\text{xf}2\) 20 \(\text{xf}2\) \(\text{axb}6\) results in a winning position for Black.

15...\(\text{dd}4\)

Or 15...\(\text{d}e5\) 16 \(b4\) ? \(\text{c}7\) 17 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{c}6\) 18 \(\text{bxc}5\) \(\text{dxc}5\) 19 a3 a6 20 \(\text{c}3\), followed by \(\text{d}5\).

After 15...\(\text{d}d4\) A.Ledger-Emms, British League 2000, continued 16 a3 \(\text{ac}8\) 17 \(\text{d}1\) \(\text{a}2\) (17...\(\text{f}5\)?) 18 \(\text{a}1\) \(\text{e}6\) (or 18...\(\text{b}3\) 19 \(\text{c}1\)) 19 \(\text{b}1\) \(\text{a}2\) 20 \(\text{a}1\) and a draw was agreed, as it’s difficult for White to make any progress.

Instead of 16 a3, White could try 16 \(\text{f}2\)?, an interesting loss of tempo now that ...\(\text{d}e5\) is no longer possible. White can consider following up with a2-a3 and b2-b4, while with c2 protected, White has the option of \(\text{h}6\). If Black’s queen leaves b6 (to take the sting out of b2-b4) White goes back to the older plan, for example 16...\(\text{c}7\) 17 \(\text{h}6\) b5 18 \(\text{f}1\) b4 19 \(\text{d}1\) and White fill follow up with c2-c3.

C31) 6...\(\text{b}8\)

A very flexible continuation. Black refuses to commit himself at all on the kingside and immediately begins preparations for a queenside offensive with ...\(b7-b5-b4\).

7 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{b}5\)

7...\(\text{e}2\) transposes to Variation C42.

8 \(\text{g}2\)

White blocks neither the \(f\)-pawn nor the dark-squared bishop with f2-f4, so White keeps both plans of f2-f4 and \(\text{e}3-h6\) available.

Now Black has an important choice: whether or not to occupy the \(d4\)-square.

C31: 8...\(\text{b}4\)

C32: 8...\(\text{d}4\)

C31)

8...\(\text{b}4\)

Here we look at variations where Black, in general, refrains from playing ...\(\text{d}4\).

9 \(\text{d}1\) \(\text{e}5\)

Clamping down on the \(d4\)-square is Black’s most solid option, but there is also something to be said for keeping the long diagonal free of obstacles.

a) 9...\(\text{a}5\) 10 0-0 \(\text{a}6\) 11 \(f4\) \(\text{c}8\) (11...\(\text{c}7\)?) 12 \(\text{b}1\) \(\text{f}6\) 13 \(\text{f}2\) 0-0 14 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{c}7\) 15 \(g4\) c4 16 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}7\) 17 \(\text{g}4\) b3 18 axb3 \(\text{c}xd3\) 19 \(\text{c}xd3\) \(\text{xb}3\) 20 \(\text{c}1\) \(\text{b}7\) 21 f5 and White has a strong kingside attack, Van Putten-Middelburg, Dutch League 1996. The
rest of the game is attractive: 21...d4 22 h6+ g7 23 f6+ cxf6 24 xd7 b6 25 gx6+ h8 26 d4 xe3+ 27 dxe3 xd7 28 h1 b4 29 f3 d4 30 c2! c2 31 w6 h6 g8 32 wxh7+ 1-0.

b) 9...e6 10 0-0 dge7 11 h6! (White sticks to the main plan of exchanging bishops) 11...0-0 12 xg7 xg7 13 f4 e5 14 f5! f6 15 e3 d4 16 f2 d7 17 af1 g5 18 h4 h6 19 c1 e8 20 c3 and White has a healthy space advantage on the kingside, Ramik-Belunek, Czech League 1999.

c) 10...h5!? prevents h6 ideas, but slightly weakens the kingside. White should now head back to f2-f4 plans. 10 h3! f6 11 f4 b6 12 f2 e6 13 e3 a5 14 c4 c7 15 e5!

15...dxe5 16 xc5 and White has a clear advantage, A.Ledger-O'Shaughnessy, British League 1998.

d) 9...d6!? (this may be the best of Black's alternatives) 10 h6!? (10 h3 0-0 11 f4 d7 12 0-0 a5 13 g4 a6 14 f5 d5 15 h6 d4 16 xg7 xg7 17 f4 a4 18 e3 a3 was unclear in Kosten-Georgiev, Toulon 1999) 10...0-0 11 xg7 xg7 12 e3 &b7 13 0-0 d4 14 f4 e6 15 g4 xe2+ 16 we2 d7 17 g5 and I prefer White, De Jager-Hoeksema, Dutch League 2000.

10 0-0 dge7

Black continues to develop sensibly. 10...h5 should once again be answered by 11 f4 h4 12 f5! and Black already looks to be in trouble.

11 h6 0-0 12 xg7 xg7

13 a3!?

Alternatively White can play 13 d3 d4 14 f6 15 h2 a5 16 c3 dxe2+ 17 xe2 exf4 18 xf4 f5 19 e1 with an unclear looking position, Veresan-Shtyrenkov, Volgograd 1994.

13...a5 14 axb4 axb4 15 c3 e6 16 f4 f6 17 e3 a5 18 d1

Bricard-Foisor, St Affrique 1999. Black's position is solid enough, but White has still more possibilities, including d3-d4.

C32)

8...d4

Occupying the important d4-square.

9 0-0 b4

Black pushes the knight back to d1. Other moves include:

a) 9...e6 10 d1 d7 11 c1! (11 xd4 cxd4 12 h6 0-0 13 xg7 xg7 14 f6 was equal in Spassky-Portisch, Mexico (3rd matchgame) 1980) 11...b4 (11...b4 transposes to the main line) 12 c3 dc6 13 h6 d5 14 xg7 xg7 15 edx5 dxe5 16 c3 cde7 17 b3 d6 18 d4 dxe3 19 fxe3 cxd4 20 edx4 and White's central structure promises a small edge, Markarov-Inarkiev, Moscow 1998.

b) 9...h5!? is very ambitious! With this move Black rules out h6 for a long time and prepares to make use of the h8-rook on
its home square. The downside of the advance 9...h5 is that it's another non-developing move.

18 \( \text{d}2 \text{e}6 \) 19 \( \text{c}2 \text{d}7 \) 20 \( \text{f}2 \) with a roughly level position in J. Houska-Nicoara, Saint Vincent 1999. The rest of the game is an illustration of White's continuing attacking chances in this line: 20...

\( \text{b}6 \) 21 \( \text{d}1 \text{g}4 \) 22 \( \text{f}2 \text{x}d1 \) 23 \( fxe5! \text{xc}2 \) 24 \( \text{xf}7+ \text{d}8 \) 25 \( \text{w}x\text{g}7 \text{e}8 \) 26 \( \text{g}5 \text{dx}e5 \) 27 \( \text{dx}e7+ \text{xe}7 \) 28 \( \text{f}8+ \text{e}8 \) 29 \( \text{f}7 \text{a}4 \) 30 \( \text{h}3 \text{be}6 \) 31 \( \text{xe}6 \text{xe}6 \) 32 \( \text{b}7 \text{b}6 \) 33 \( \text{c}7+ 1-0. \)

10 \( \text{d}1 \)

10...e6

At the present time this logical move, preparing \( \text{d}e7 \), is Black's most popular choice, but there are some other enticing alternatives:

a) 10...a5!? (continuing the policy of no commitment on the kingside) 11 \( \text{c}3 \) (11 \( \text{d}1 \)) \( \text{xe}2+ \) 12 \( \text{xe}2 \text{a}6 \) and now:

a1) 13 \( \text{e}1! \) (this move looks out of place) 13...a4? 14 \( \text{w}2 \)a3! and Black has good counterplay – Gelfand.

a2) 13 \( \text{f}4 \) (! it's time to start the launch on the kingside) 13...a4 14 \( \text{d}1 \) is a promising suggestion from Gelfand. White removes the rook from the long diagonal and takes some sting out of Black's queenside play. In particular 14...a3 can now be answered by 15 b3, keeping the queenside relatively closed. At some point Black must try and catch up in development, while White can continue to push on the kingside.

b) 10...e5!? (once more clamping down on the d4-square – this is a very sensible ap-
At first sight this makes a strange impression, as now White has two knights nesting on the back rank. However, White’s whole idea is to evict the d4-knight with c2-c3, swap bishops with $\text{h6}$ (at some point Black must complete development on the kingside) and then advance his knights back into the game. This plan can be very effective.

11...$\text{a5}$?

This suggestion from the American GM Joel Benjamin has caught on over the last few years; at the present time it’s the most popular move at Black’s disposal.

The main alternative is the developing 11...$\text{e7}$, which looks very sensible, although it does allow White to carry out his plan. After 12 c3 $\text{bxc3}$ 13 $\text{bxc3}$ $\text{d6}$ 14 $\text{h6}$ 0-0 15 $\text{xg7}$ $\text{xg7}$ 16 $\text{e3}$ Black has a few options:

b1) 14 $\text{f4}$ $\text{xf4}$ 15 $\text{xf4}$ 0-0! (15...$\text{e6}$ 16 $\text{d2}$ $\text{c6}$ 17 $\text{h6}$ 0-0 18 $\text{g7}$ $\text{g7}$ 19 $\text{e3}$ looks a bit better for White, A.Ledger-Cherniaev, Hastings 2000) 16 $\text{d2}$ $\text{c6}$ 17 $\text{h6}$ (17 $\text{h1}$! $\text{e5}$ was at least okay for Black in Uritzky-Tesarsky, Tel Aviv 1997) 17...$\text{a6}$ 18 $\text{g7}$ $\text{g7}$ 19 $\text{d2}$ $\text{e5}$ 20 $\text{f1}$ with a roughly level position.

b2) 14 $\text{d2}$? (going back to Plan A with $\text{h6}$) 14...0-0 15 $\text{h6}$ and White will follow up with $\text{g7}$, $\text{e3}$ and either d3-d4 or f2-f4.

c) 10...$\text{xe2+!}$ (Black doesn’t wait for c2-c3 and prevents White from playing $\text{c1}$) 11 $\text{wxe2}$ $\text{h6}$ 12 a3 a5 13 $\text{axb4}$ $\text{cxb4}$? (13...$\text{xb4}$ 14 $\text{e5}$! $\text{g4}$ 15 $\text{exd6}$ $\text{xd6}$ 16 $\text{f4}$ e5 17 $\text{d2}$ 0-0 18 h3 $\text{f6}$ 19 $\text{e3}$ gives White an edge) and now Adams-Anand, Dortmund 1998, continued 14 $\text{d2}$? $\text{d7}$ and Black was better. However, Klaus Bischoff’s suggestion of 14 $\text{e5}$! looks good, for example 14...$\text{xe5}$ 15 $\text{c7}$ $\text{b7}$ 16 $\text{xb7}$ $\text{xb7}$ 17 $\text{we5}$ 0-0 18 $\text{xa5}$ $\text{d7}$ 19 $\text{e3}$ and White has a clear advantage.

11 $\text{d1}$!

At first sight this makes a strange impression, as now White has two knights nesting on the back rank. However, White’s whole idea is to evict the d4-knight with c2-c3, swap bishops with $\text{h6}$ (at some point Black must complete development on the kingside) and then advance his knights back into the game. This plan can be very effective.

12 $\text{a3}$?

This move, counterattacking on the queenside, is the latest word on this line. Previously the main line was 12 c3 $\text{bxc3}$ 13 $\text{bxc3}$ $\text{c6}$! Now $\text{c3}$ isn’t possible due to $\text{xb3}$ – one of the points of 11...$\text{a5}$. In contrast 13...$\text{b3}$? loses to 14 $\text{b2}$! and 13...$\text{b5}$ 14 $\text{b3}$ $\text{c7}$ 15 d4 is good for White. White has a few options after 13...$\text{e3}$, but Black seems to be okay, for example 14 $\text{f4}$ e5 15 $\text{d3}$ $\text{ge7}$ 16 $\text{b2}$ $\text{e6}$ 17 $\text{c4}$ $\text{c7}$ 18 $\text{c2}$ 0-0 19 $\text{ab1}$ with an equal position, J.Houska-Calzetta, Saint
After 12 a3!? Black has some fresh problems to solve. It’s not clear what his best continuation is.

a) 12...\( \text{ch}7 \) (natural, but not good) 13 \( \text{xd}4 \) (this anti-positional move works well here) 13...\( \text{exd}4 \) 14 \( \text{db}3 \) \( \text{wb}6 \) 15 axb4 and White is simply a pawn up.

b) 12...\( \text{wa}4 \) 13 \( \text{xd}4 \) (once again White gives up the dark-squared bishop) 13...\( \text{exd}4 \) (13...\( \text{xd}4 \) 14 \( \text{db}3 \) is good for White) 14 b3 \( \text{wa}6 \) 15 \( \text{db}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 16 \( \text{dc}4 \) 0-0 17 \( \text{de}2 \) and Black has some problems on the queenside, A.Ledger-Shaw, Port Erin 1998.

c) 12...\( \text{ce}6 \) 13 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{wb}6 \) 14 axb4 \( \text{xb}4 \) 15 e5!? \( \text{xe}5 \) 16 \( \text{xb}4 \)!! (16 \( \text{xa}7 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 17 d4 \( \text{xd}4 \) 18 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{ed}7 \) was okay for Black in Mason-Abayasekera, British League 1997) 16...\( \text{xb}4 \) 17 \( \text{xa}7 \) and now S.Lalic-Dishman, British League 2001 continued 17...\( \text{xd}3 \)!! 18 \( \text{xd}3 \) (the immediate 18 \( \text{ce}6+ \) \( \text{f}8 \) 19 \( \text{a}8 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 20 \( \text{d}7 \) may be even stronger) 18...\( \text{xb}3 \) 19 \( \text{ce}6+ \) \( \text{f}8 \) (or 19...\( \text{xd}8 \) 20 \( \text{d}2 \) and there is no good defence to \( \text{a}5+) 20 \( \text{a}8 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 21 \( \text{d}7 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 22 \( \text{h}6+ \) \( \text{g}7 \) 23 \( \text{xc}8 \) \( \text{hx}6 \) 24 \( \text{xe}6+ \) and White eventually converted her advantage. In his notes in Chess, Richard Palliser gives 17...\( \text{f}6 \)! as an improvement for Black, but concludes that White is still better after 18 d4 \( \text{xd}4 \) 19 \( \text{xd}4 \) 0-0 20 \( \text{e}3 \).

d) 12...\( \text{wa}6 \) looks like a sensible move. In comparison to line 'b', after 13 \( \text{xd}4 \)? \( \text{xd}4 \) White does not gain a tempo on the queen with 14 b3. Perhaps White should play 14 \( \text{db}3 \) instead, but this line could certainly do with a practical test.

C4)

6...\( e6 \)

This is perhaps Black’s most flexible move. You can see its attractions immediately: Black keeps the long h8-a1 diagonal open and prepares ...\( \text{ge}7 \), once again not blocking the bishop. Black’s position is very fluid and can be enhanced by such moves as ...\( \text{d}4 \) and perhaps ...\( \text{ec}6 \) and/or ...\( \text{b}8 \) with ...b7-b5-b4.

7 \( \text{wd}2 \)

Preparing to meet ...\( \text{ge}7 \) with \( \text{h}6 \). Now Black has a choice:

C41: \( 7...\text{d}4 \)

C42: \( 7...\text{b}8 \)

C43: \( 7...\text{wa}5 \)

C44: \( 7...\text{ge}7 \)

C41)

7...\( \text{d}4 \)

This advance looks premature, as the knight is soon kicked away. As a very general rule in the Closed Sicilian, Black should wait for both \( \text{e}3 \) and \( \text{f}3/e2 \) before playing ...\( \text{d}4 \). Then \( \text{xd}4 \) is often impossible as it allows ...\( \text{xd}4 \) forking \( \text{c}3 \) and \( \text{e}3 \), while after \( \text{d}1 \) and \( \text{c}2-c3 \) Black has the option of exchanging knights on e2 or f3.
8 \( \text{Qd1!} \)

Preparing to kick the knight away with c2-c3, after which White will be ready to play \( \text{Qh6} \) (once the g8 knight moves).

8...\( \text{Qe7} \)

Or:

a) 8...f5 looks a bit too weakening. After 9 c3 \( \text{Qc6} \) 10 \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 11 exf5 exf5 12 0-0 0-0 13 h3 \( \text{Qd7} \) 14 c4 \( \text{b6} \) 15 \( \text{Qxc3} \) \( \text{Qae8} \) 16 \( \text{Qxe1} \) White had an advantage in Spassky-B.Ivanovic, Niksic 1983 (Black has a slightly weaker king and White has good control over d5).

b) 8...\( \text{Qf6} \) doesn’t really fit in well with \( \ldots \text{e7-e6} \). Svetushkin-Bologan, Linares 1999, continued 9 c3 \( \text{Qc6} \) 10 h3 b6 11 f4 \( \text{Qa6} \) 12 \( \text{Qe2} \) d5 13 e5 \( \text{Qd7} \) 14 0-0 \( \text{f6} \) 15 c4 \( \text{Qe7} \) 16 f5! \( \text{Qxe5} \) 17 \( \text{Qf4} \) exf5 18 \( \text{Qe6} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 19 \( \text{Qxg7+} \) \( \text{Kh8} \) 20 \( \text{Qxf5} \) gxf5 21 \( \text{Qf4} \) and White was better. Instead of entering these complications, White could also simply opt for 10 \( \text{Qh6} \), which looks good enough for an edge.

9 c3 \( \text{Qxc6} \) 10 \( \text{Qh6!} \)

Naturally.

10...0-0 11 h4

White was also better after 11 \( \text{Qxg7} \) \( \text{Qxg7} \) 12 f4 e5 13 \( \text{Qe3} \) exf4 14 gxf4 f5 15 \( \text{Qc2} \), Zaichik-Hazai, Kecskemet 1983.

11...f6 12 \( \text{Qxg7} \) \( \text{Qxg7} \) 13 \( \text{Qe3} \) e5 14 \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) 15 h5 g5 16 d4

White has a comfortable positional advantage, Ljujobевич-Small, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1984.

8 \( \text{Qf3!} \)

A tricky move, which is an interesting attempt to exploit Black’s move order. If White is not happy with this, then 8 \( \text{Qge2} \) should transpose to earlier lines, for example:

a) 8...b5 and now:

a1) 9 0-0 \( \text{b4} \) 10 \( \text{Qd1} \) transposes to Variation C31.

a2) 9 d4? b4 10 \( \text{Qd1} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) 11 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qge7} \) 11...\( \text{Qc5} \) 12 \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qa5} \) 13 \( \text{Qb3} \) \( \text{Qa4} \), \( \text{Qd4} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) 15 f4 \( \text{Qa6} \) 16 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qc4} \) 17 \( \text{Qf2} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 18 \( \text{Qxd4} \) 0-0 19 0-0 was better

22
...e7-e5, but on the other hand, now d3-d4 has been ruled out and White's knight is committed to f3: 9 0-0 Qe7 10 Qh6 0-0 11 Qxg7 Qxg7 12 Qh4 Qd4 13 Qae1 f5 14 exf5 Qxf5 15 Qxf5+ Qxf5 16 f4 was slightly better for White in Narciso Dublan-Catalan Escale, Barcelona 1996.

9 0-0?

9 d4!? looks logical, but after 9...b4 10 Qe2 Qa5 11 b3 Qf6 the attack on the e4-pawn is rather awkward (this is no problem when White's knight is on e2). 12 e5 Qe4 (12...dxe5 13 dxe5 Qxd2+ 14 Qxd2 Qd7 15 f4 is pleasant for White) 13 Qd3 d5 looks unclear, for example 14 dxe5 Qc7 15 0-0 Qxc5 16 Qd4? (A.Ledger-Collier, British League 1998) and now 16...Qc6! is good, as 17 Qxc5 loses to 17...Qf8.

9...b4 10 Qd1 Qd4 11 Qe1!!

11 c3 Qxf3+ 12 Qxf3 Qe7 13 Qh6 0-0 14 Qxg7 Qxg7 15 d4 looks roughly level. After 11 Qe1!? we've reached a position similar to Variation C32, except that the knight is on e1, rather than c1.

11...Qe7 12 Qh6 0-0 13 Qxg7 Qxg7 14 c3

Also interesting is 14 f4? e5 15 c3 Qdc6 16 Qe3.

14...bxc3 15 bxc3 Qdc6

White now has to decide where to put his knights:

a) 16 Qe3 d5 17 exd5 (17 Qg4?! f5 18 exf5 exf5 19 Qh6+ Qh8 20 Qe3 d4 was
Attacking with 1 e4

slightly better for Black, S.Lalic-G.Jones, British League 2001) 17...exd5 18 dxc2 d4 19 cxd4 exd4 20 dxc6 Wxd4 21 c2 is equal.

b) 16 dxc2? may be stronger, for example 16...d5 17 exd5 exd5 (17...exd5 18 dxe3) 18 d4 cxd4 19 dxc6 Wxb6 20 d3 and White has an edge due to Black’s isolated d-pawn.

C43)

7...Wa5

Recommended by Joe Gallagher in Beating the Anti-Sicilians. Black delays developing the g8-knight, pins the knight on c3 to the white queen and supports ...b7-b5.

8 f4!? A slight departure from our normal lines. White’s idea is to play as in the f4 lines where Black’s queen is already committed to the a5-square.

White can also continue with 8 Qc2, for example 8...d4 9 0-0 e7 10 dxe5 0-0 11 e3 and now:

a) 11...d8 12 d1 b6 13 c3 dxe3 14 axb3 d7 15 b6 e5 16 a7 a7 17 f4 f6 18 d3 with an edge for White in Rohde-Rechlis, Beersheba 1987.

b) 11...Wb6 12 d1 0-0 13 dxe5 14 e3 dxe5 15 b6 e5 16 a7 a7 17 f4 e5 18 f4 exf4 19 dxf4 d6 20 e2 c4 21 d4 fxe4 22 dxe4 d5 was unclear in Spraggett-Vaisser, Oropesa del Mar 1996.

8...Qe7 9 Qf3 d4

If Black delays this move, then White can contemplate advancing with d3-d4, for example 9...0-0 10 0-0 d8 11 d4! cxd4 12 Qxd4 Qxd4 13 Qxd4 and White has a pleasant game.

10 0-0 Qac6?!

Adding extra support to d4. Black has two significant alternatives:

a) 10...0-0 11 d5 (11 e5? Wxe5 is fine for Black) 11...d8 (11...dxe5 12 fxe5 Wd8 13 Qxe7+ Qxe7 14 d4 was slightly better for White in Jurkovic-Bakalarz, Ceske Budejovice 1995) 12 Qxe7+ Qxe7 13 c3 Qc6 (J.Houska-Ioseliani, Bundesliga 1999) and here I like the simple 14 d4.

b) 10...Qd7 and now:

b1) 11 dxe4? cxd4 12 Qe2 Wxd2 (12...Wc5 13 Qf2 0-0 14 e3 Qc6 15 Qab1 fxe8 is better for White) 13 Qxd2 Qc8 14 c3 dxc3 15 Qxc3 is equal according to Dornev.

b2) 11 Wb2? Qxf3+ (after 11...Qd6 Dornev gives 12 e5!), which looks good for White, for example 12...dxe5 13 Qxe5 Qxe5 14 fxe5 0-0 15 Qe4!) 12 Qxf3 with a further split:

b21) 12...d3! 13 bxc3 Wxc3 14 e5! and the absence of Black’s dark-squared bishop gives White excellent compensation for the pawn.

b22) After 12...0-0 both 13 d4 and 13 e5? look promising.

b23) 12...Qd6 13 e5! (Dornev) 13...dxe5 14 Qxe6 Qc6 15 fxe5 Wc7 16 Qxc5 Qxe5 17 Qae1 Qg7 18 d4 and White has a strong attack.

11 e5? This pawn break is typical for the f4 lines of the Closed Sicilian, although it’s quite rare in this actual position. If White wants a quieter life he could consider either 11 a3 or 11 f2.

11...dxe5

Taking the pawn is too risky: 11...Qf3+ 12 Qxf3 dxe5? (Short suggests 12...d5!) 13 Qxc6+ bxc6 14 fxe5 Qxe5 15 Qf2 and White hits both f7 and c5.
12 \(\text{\textit{Qxe5 0-0}}\)

Or 12...\(\text{\textit{Qxe5}}\) 13 \(\text{\textit{fxe5 Qxe5}}\) 14 \(\text{\textit{Qf2}}\) and now:

- a) 14...f5 15 \(\text{\textit{Qe4! Qc7 16 \textit{Qxc5 Qxc5}}\) 17 c3 and White regains the piece with an advantage.

- b) 14...0-0 15 \(\text{\textit{Qe4 Qf5}}\) (15...f5 16 e3! \(\text{\textit{Qd7 17 \textit{Qxc5!}}\) is good for White} 16 \(\text{\textit{Qxc5 b6}}\) (or 16...\(\text{\textit{Qxb2}}\) 17 g4! \(\text{\textit{Qxa1 18 Qxa1}}\) 17 \(\text{\textit{Qxf8! Qd4 18 Qxd4 Qxd4 19 Qd6 f5}}\) (19...Qf5 20 Qb4 Qa4 21 Qf6+ Qg7 22 Qe5 Qxc2 23 Qxa8 was clearly better for White in Dudek-Schmenger, Germany 2000) 20 Qf6+ (20 Qf2!) 20...Qg7 21 Qe8+ Qf7 22 Qxa8 Qxe8 23 c3 Qe2 24 Qac1 Qe3 25 Qe1 and White’s two rooks and two bishops should outweigh the queen, knight and bishop, Rohacek-Kottnauer, Bratislava 1948.

\(\text{\textit{Qxc5}}\) with good compensation for the pawn. This seems right, especially as 20...e5 21 Qe1 Qe8 22 Qxe5! Qxe5 23 Qxd4 wins for White. However, Doney’s suggestion of 17...f6!? is a very tough nut to crack. After 18 Qe4 e5! Black hangs on, as 19 Qf6? fails to 19...Qd8.

- c) In view of the above variation White may want to consider deviating with 13 \(\text{\textit{Qxc6?!}}\). I prefer White after both 13...\(\text{\textit{bxc6 14 Qf2}}\) and 13...\(\text{\textit{Qxc6 14 Qf2}}\).

\(\text{\textit{C44)}}\)

7...\(\text{\textit{Qge7}}\)

An important position for the assessment for 8 f4. White has several possibilities:

- a) 13 Qxc6?! Qxc6 14 Qc4 Qa6 15 Qxc5 Qd8 with good compensation for the pawn. Black will follow up with ...b7-b6 and ...Qb7

- b) 13 Qae1!? and now:

  b1) 13...f5?! 14 Qxc6 Qxc6 15 Qxc6.bxc6 16 Qd1! Qxa2 7 Qxc5 Qd8 18 b3 Qb8 19 Qf2 and White’s better pawn structure gave him an advantage in Short-Kasparov, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

  b2) Black should be brave and grab a pawn with 13...Qxe5! 14 fxe5 Qxe5 15 Qh6 Qg7 16 Qxg7 Qxg7 17 Qf2 and now Short gives 17...f5 18 Qe4 Qxe2 19 Qc1 Qd4 20 Qe5 with good compensation for the pawn. This seems right, especially as 20...e5 21 Qe1 Qe8 22 Qxe5! Qxe5 23 Qxd4 wins for White. However, Doney’s suggestion of 17...f6!? is a very tough nut to crack. After 18 Qe4 e5! Black hangs on, as 19 Qf6? fails to 19...Qd8.

8 Qh6!

Of course!

8...0-0

After 8...Qxe6 9 Qxe6 Qd4 10 0-0-0 Qec6 11 Qge2 White is better simply because Black cannot castle for the moment. Hort-Hodgson, Wijk aan Zee 1986, continued 11...Qd7 12 Qxd4 exd4 13 Qe2 Qa4 14 Qb1 Qa4 15 c3 dxc3 16 Qxc3 Qb4 17 d4 Qc8 18 Qg7 Qf8 19 Qh1 Qa5 20 Qd5 Qa4 21 Qf6 Qc6 and now 22 Qh4! would have been very strong.

9 h4

Or 9 Qxg7 Qxg7 10 h4 h6 11 f4 f6 and now 12 g4 Qd4 13 Qh3 Qec6 14 0-0-0 f5 was unclear in Smyslov-Brinck Clausen, Copen-
hagen 1986, but maybe the quieter 12  \( \text{Qf3} \) gives White an advantage.

9...\( \text{hxh6} \)

Black has to be very careful, for example 9...\( \text{Qd4} \) 10 0-0-0 f5 11 h5 \( \text{gxf7} \) 12  \( \text{Qh3} \)  \( \text{hxh6} \) 13 \( \text{Wxh6} \) \( \text{g7} \) 14 \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{fxe4} \) 15 \( \text{hxg6} \) \( \text{Qd5} \) 16 \( \text{gxf7+} \) \( \text{Qh8} \) 17 \( \text{Wf6} \) \( \text{We8} \) 18 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{Wg6} \) 19 \( \text{Wf8+} \) and Black resigned, Dworakowska-Madejska, Brzeg Dolny 1995.

10 \( \text{Wxh6} \) f6!

At first sight this move only seems to weaken Black's position further, but in fact this clever move is directly aimed against the idea of h4-h5.

11 \( \text{Qd2!} \)

Now it's White's turn to be careful. 11 \( \text{f4?} \) fails to 11...\( \text{Qd4!} \) 12 0-0-0  \( \text{Qd5!} \), while 11 \( \text{h5?} \) runs into 11...\( \text{g5} \), and Black will trap White's queen with ...\( \text{Wh8} \) and ...\( \text{Qg8} \).

After 11 \( \text{Wd2} \) Black may be doing okay theoretically, but White's position is easier to play and in practice White has scored quite heavily from this position.

11...\( \text{e5} \)

Freeing the c8-bishop, Black now sensibly opts to put his pawns on dark squares.

12 \( \text{f4} \)

Or 12 \( \text{h5} \) g5 13 \( \text{h6!} \) (13 \( \text{f4} \) h6 and Black's position is rock-solid) 13...\( \text{Qg6} \) 14 \( \text{Qd5} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 15 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 16 \( \text{Qxe2} \) d5 17 \( \text{Qexd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 18 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qxe7} \) 19 0-0-0  \( \text{Qxe3} \) 20 \( \text{Qxe3} \) \( \text{d4} \) 21 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{Qxe3+} \) 22 \( \text{fxe3} \) \( \text{Qd5} \) 23 \( \text{Qd2} \) b6 24 c4 \( \text{Qxe4} \) 25 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qad8} \) 26 g4 and White's bishop is superior to Black's knight, Golubovic-Boyd, Cannes 1996.

Most players would prefer White in this position. Here are three practical examples:

a) 12...\( \text{exf4} \) 13 gxf4 \( \text{Qg4} \) 14  \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Wd7} \) 15 \( \text{Qxg4} \) \( \text{Qxg4} \) 16  \( \text{Qge2} \) d5 17 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qd4} \) 18 0-0-0  \( \text{Qxe2} \) 19  \( \text{Qxd5} \) 20 h5 and White has a strong attack, Shaw-Berry, Marymass 1999.

b) 12...\( \text{g4} \) 13 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 14 h5? \( \text{gxf6} \) 15 f5 \( \text{Qf7} \) 16 \( \text{Qxg4} \) \( \text{h4} \) 17 \( \text{Qh4} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 18 \( \text{Qd1} \) \( \text{Qf2} \) 19  \( \text{Qh8} \) 20 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qg8} \) 21 0-0-0 with an edge to White in A.Ledger-Novikov, Port Erin 1996. The rest of the game is interesting: 21...\( \text{Qd8} \) 22  \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qd4} \) 23 \( \text{dxe4} \) \( \text{Qf7} \) 24 \( \text{Qxd8} \) \( \text{Qxd8} \) 25 \( \text{Qxd8} \) \( \text{Qxa2} \) 26  \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qa5} \) 27 \( \text{Qf8} \) \( \text{Qa1+} \) 28  \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qa6} \) 29 \( \text{Qd5} \) \( \text{Qd6} \) 30 \( \text{Qe8} \) \( \text{Qf7} \) 31 \( \text{Qxg8} \) 32 \( \text{Qh6+} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 33 \( \text{Qxf7} \) 34  \( \text{Qxh7+} \) \( \text{Qg8} \) 35 \( \text{Qxb7} \) \( \text{Qa6} \) 36 \( \text{Qc7} \) \( \text{Qa5+} \) 37  \( \text{c3} \) 38  \( \text{Qf8} \) 39  \( \text{c6} \) \( \text{b5} \) 39 \( \text{Qf6+} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 40 \( \text{Qg6+} \) \( \text{Qf7} \) 41  \( \text{Qf6+} \) \( \text{Qa5} \) 42 \( \text{Qa6} \) 1/2-1/2.

c) 12...h5 13  \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 14 0-0  \( \text{Qd4} \) 15 \( \text{Qf2} \) \( \text{e6} \) 16  \( \text{Qxf4} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 17  \( \text{Qh2} \) 18 \( \text{Qd1} \) \( \text{exf4} \) 19 \( \text{Qxf4} \) d5 20 \( \text{Qc3} \) and White has good pressure on the kingside, Hamdouchi-Bezold, France 1999.

**Points to Remember**

1) The plan of  \( \text{Qg3} \), \( \text{Qd2} \) and then \( \text{h6} \) is often positionally desirable, especially if Black has moved his e-pawn. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops leaves the black king
without his most powerful defender and weakens the dark squares on the kingside \(f6\) and \(h6\).

2) More often than not, Black plays his g8-knight to the e7-square. If he plays it to f6 instead, then a good long-term plan for White is a kingside pawn storm, involving h2-h3, g3-g4-g5 and f4-f5. White gains time by attacking the knight along the way.

3) One of Black’s normal ideas is to occupy the d4-square with a knight, and to gain space on the queenside with ...b7-b5-b4, chasing the White knight away from c3. White often reacts to this plan by playing \(\mathcal{Q}d1\), before preparing to eject the knight from d4 with c2-c3. Often this is done in conjunction with removing the king’s knight from either f3 or e2, so as not to allow Black a simplifying exchange after c2-c3 (see Variation C32, for example).

4) Black must be careful not to play \(\mathcal{Q}d4\) too early, as this can sometimes be punished (see Variation A).

5) If Black refrains from playing \(\mathcal{Q}d4\) White is sometimes in a position to play an advantageous d3-d4.

**Main Line 2:**
**Black plays ...e6 and ...d5**

1 e4 c5 2 \(\mathcal{Q}c3\) e6

White immediately strikes back in the centre. Black’s d-pawn will become isolated and White hopes to benefit from this. Unusually for the Closed Sicilian, play becomes very sharp at an early stage.

Black’s main choice are:

A1: 5...\(\mathcal{Q}f6\)!?
A2: 5...cxd4

Another interesting option here is 5...\(\mathcal{Q}c6?!\) 6 dxc5 (6 \(\mathcal{Q}g2?!\)) 6...d4 7 \(\mathcal{Q}e4\) \(\mathcal{Q}xc5\) and now 8 \(\mathcal{Q}xc5\) \(\mathcal{W}a5+\) 9 \(\mathcal{Q}d2\) \(\mathcal{W}xc5\) 10 \(\mathcal{Q}g2\) has been given as advantageous to White in some texts, but I think the matter is far from clear after the accurate counter 10...\(\mathcal{f}5\)!.
to expose White's queen too early. Alternatively, White has 6...g2 cxd4 and now:
  a) 7 cxe2 dxc6 8 dxd4 c5 9 gxe2 0-0 10 0-0 c4 and Black has a very comfortable
  game. Schubert-Kereky, Budapest 2000, continued 11 b3 e8 12 e1? fx2+! 13 xf2
  wb6+! 14 ef1 c4 and White was in big
trouble (15 exe4 exe4 16 g2 a8 wins for
  Black).
  b) 7 wxd4 c6 8 wa4 d4 9 dxe2 d7
  and Black is not worse here – White's queen
  is awkwardly placed.

6...c6

6...g4!!? 7 g2 cxd4 forces White to re-
capture with 8 wxd4, but the big difference
with the previous note is that the black
bishop is already committed to g4, so after
8...c6 9 wa4 the white queen is now well
placed (there are tactical possibilities against
the light-squared bishop).
  a) 9...b4 10 0-0 0-0 11 g5 and the
  pressure on the d5-pawn gives Black some
  problems.
  b) 9...c5!? 10 cxd5!? (10 0-0 0-0 11
g5 d4 12 xf6 xf6 13 e4 wc7 14 fe1
  is a safe way to play) 10...xe2 11 g5!(11
  xf6+? xf6 12 wc4+ d8! 13 xe2 xe8
  14 c3 xe3 15 fxe3 d4 16 wc4 xe3+
  and White's king was in trouble in
  Tsekhovsky-Gorelov, Aktubinsk 1985)
  11...0-0 12 xf6 wc8 13 d2 with a very
  unclear position. White's a pawn up, but
  his king is wandering around in the centre.
  However, it's not clear if Black can take
  advantage of this.

7 g2 cxd4 8 wxd4 b4

Or:
  a) 8...c7 9 0-0 0-0 10 e1 g4 11 wb3
  b4 12 wd2! (White's queen is awkwardly
  placed at the moment but Black is in no
  position to exploit this and his pieces will soon
  be pushed back) 12...e8 13 h3 c8 14 wd1
c5 15 xe8+ xe8 16 c3 b6 17 h2
d7 18 wd2 e8 19 d1 d8 20 a3 d6
  21 cxd5 cxd5 22 xd5 and White went on
to win in Kupreichik-Lau, Meisdorf 1996.

A1) 5...f6!? 6 ge2!!?
b) 8...g4 9 d3 c6 11 x3xe6 11 x3xe6 fxe6 12 0-0 0-0 13 x5g5 h6 14 x5d2 d7 15 e1 and White’s two bishops plus the weakness on e6 promises White a clear plus. Fischer-Berktok, Novi Sad 1970. 9 0-0 0-0 10 x5g5 x5xc3 11 bxc3 h6 12 x5f6
12 x5f4 x5g4 13 d3 d7 14 x5f3 e1=fe8 looked okay for Black in Spassky-Garcia Gonzalez, Linares 1981.
12...x5f6

Both sides have pawn weaknesses here, but White is slightly more active. Now White must make a choice between grabbing on d5 or increasing the pressure on the queenside.
a) 13 x5d5? d8 (13...x5h3 14 x5g2 x5xg2 15 x5xg2 x5d8 16 x5f3 x5xd4 17 x5xf6 x5xf6 18 cxd4 x5xd4 19 x5d1 gave White a tiny edge in Maslik-Babayev, Bratislava 1993, while Black had no compensation for the pawn after 13...x5xd4? 14 x5xd4 x5xd4 15 x5cxd4 x5d8 16 c4, Vershinin-Yurkov, Briarns 1995) 14 x5c6 x5bc6 15 x5f3 x5f3 16 x5xf3 c5 with an unclear position; Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn in the form of light square control and White’s doubled c-pawns.

b) 13 x5b1 (I think this causes Black more problems) 13...x5d8 14 x5e1 x5b8 (14...x5xd4 15 x5xd4 x5xd4 16 cxd4 b6 17 c4 x5e6 18 x5e5 won a pawn in Parkanyi-Orsso, Budapest 2000) 15 x5b5 x5e6 16 f4 x5xd4 17 cxd4 b6 18 x5e5 x5bc8 19 x5b3 x5g6 20 c3 occurred in

Morovic Fernandez-Iglesias, Leon 1993. White can claim an edge here; his pieces are still more active – White’s bishop is superior to its counterpart.

A2)
5...x5c4

Black’s main answer to 5 d4. White’s queen is forced out into the open.
6 x5d4 x5f6 7 x5g5

We’ve now reached a position similar to the Goring Gambit Declined (with colour reversed), which arises after 1 c4 e5 2 x5f3 x5d6 3 d4 exd4 4 c3 d5 5 cxd5 x5d5 6 x5cxd4 x5g4. This line of the Goring is considered at least equal for Black and possibly more. In the Closed Sicilian the extra move for White is g2-g3, which in some lines is probably a slight hindrance.

7...x5e7

7...x5c6 8 x5b5 x5e7 transposes in the main line. White should take this path, as 8 x5f6 x5xd4 9 x5xd8 x5c2+ 10 x5d2 x5xa1 11 x5g5 d4 12 x5f5 x5d6 13 x5b5+ x5f7 14 x5xd7+ x5xd7 16 x5e2 x5ac8! 16 x5xa1 x5c5 looks good for Black. In this line g2-g3 is definitely a hindrance.

8 x5b5+ x5c6 9 x5f6 x5f6 10 x5c5 x5c3+

Also possible for Black is 10...x5b6? 11 x5xb6 axb6 12 x5e2 (or 12 x5d5 x5xb2 13 x5c7+ x5d8 14 x5xa8 x5xa1 15 x5xb6 x5f5 and Black has some compensation for the
pawn) 12...0-0 13 a3 a5, which looks roughly level.
11 bxc3 w7+ 12 xe7+ xe7 13 0-0-0 e6 14 d2 d6!

I believe Black best way to equalise is to activate his king, which should find a pleasant home on c5. Gdanski-Wojtkiewicz, Warsaw 1993, continued 14...h6 15 xe1 d6 and now King’s suggestion of 16 d4 keeps an advantage for White – the d5-pawn is more vulnerable than the c3-pawn.
15 xe1

Lane-Nunn, Stroud 1980 now continued 15...c5! 16 c4? (16 a4 is equal) 16...xc4 (16...xd8? 17 xc6 bxc6? 18 d4 g4 19 e5+ b4? 20 d4! and White had a winning attack. However, Black’s king was far too adventurous here. 19...b6 would have been stronger, while Lane points out that earlier 17...xc6 18 d4+ c7 19 xe6+ fxe6 20 xe6 xhe8 leads to a level rook ending.

B1)
5...d4

Theoretically speaking, this move is meant to be inferior to 5...e6, but in my opinion things are not so clear.
6 w2+!

This move interferes with Black’s development plans. Notice that 6 e4? f5 leaves the knight with nowhere to go. However, 6 d5 is playable, for example 6...d6 (6...f6? 7 e2+! 7 d3 e6 8 e2 g7 9 x7 e7 e7 10 f4 0-0 11 0-0 g4 12 x6 x6 with an equal position, Klinger-Rovid, Budapest 1993.
6...e7
6...e6? 7 x7 is obviously bad, while 6...e2?? 7 d5 xe2+ 8 xe2 gives White a big lead in development – 8...e6 can be answered very effectively by 9 b4! The line 6...e7 7 d5 bc6 8 d3 is also good for White – Black is rather tied up.
7 d5 c6 8 d3 e6 9 f4!
9 xe7 gains the bishop pair, but allows Black to complete his development with ease. Following 9...xg7 10 f3 0-0 11 0-0 e8 12 g5 d5 Black has equalised comfortably.
9...d7
9...d7?? 10 xe6 x6 11 x6 fxe6 12 f3 is clearly better for White: the backward pawn on e6 is a real weakness.
10 g4!

This energetic move, played by the Ger-
man FM Rene Borngässer, may well be White's best chance for an advantage. Two other moves come into consideration. 10 \( \text{d}5 \text{e}6 11 \text{f}4 \text{d}7 12 \text{d}5 \) is good for a draw if that's what White wants (this was actually how Davies-Beim, Tel Aviv 1992 ended). The other try is simple development with 10 \( \text{f}3 \text{f}6 11 0-0 0-0, \) although this looks reasonably comfortable for Black. For example 12 \( \text{e}5 \text{xe}5 13 \text{w}xe5 \text{e}8 14 \text{h}5 (14 \text{xb}7? \text{f}8 15 \text{g}5 \text{h}6 16 \text{h}4 \text{b}8 and ...g5 is coming) 14...\text{b}6 and Black was better in Westerinen-Ihonen, Kuopio 1992.

10...\( \text{f}6 \)

This allows White to gain a large space advantage on the kingside, but it's not easy to suggest worthwhile alternatives. 10...\( \text{h}6 11 \text{h}5! 0-0 (11...\text{xe}4? 12 \text{xe}7+ \text{f}8 13 \text{xh}6 \text{w}e5 wins for White, while 11...\text{xe}4 12 \text{h}3 \text{g}5 13 \text{xe}7+ \text{f}8 14 \text{h}6 is promising) 12 \text{xe}6 \text{gxe}6 13 0-0-0 looks good for White – Black's kingside is a bit of a mess. The move 10...h6! prevents the immediate g4-g5, but White could consider following up with 11 h4!?

11 g5 \( \text{g}4 12 \text{d}5 \text{ge}5 13 \text{f}4 \)

\[ \text{B21: } 6 \text{ge}2 \]
\[ \text{B22: } 6 \text{d}3 \]

6 \( \text{ge}2 \text{d}4 7 \text{e}4 \text{xe}4 8 \text{xe}4 \text{d}7! \)

Prepared to attack the bishop with ...\( \text{f}6 \) is Black's most solid response to White's play. After 8...\( \text{e}7 9 0-0 \text{c}6 10 \text{d}3 0-0 11 \text{f}4 \) White has an advantage – the bishop is well centralised on e4 and it's hard for Black to challenge it.

9 0-0 \( \text{f}6 10 \text{g}2 \text{d}6 11 \text{c}3! \)

Challenging the centre gives Black something to think about and the chance to go wrong. 11 d3 0-0 12 \( \text{f}4 \text{g}4 13 \text{xd}6 \text{w}xd6 14 \text{h}3 \text{d}7! 15 \text{f}4 \text{e}8 16 \text{w}d2 \text{c}6 is very comfortable for Black.

11...d3!?

Black has two alternatives to this ambitious move:

a) 11...\text{dxc}3! 12 \text{dxc}3! reveals one of the points of White's move order. 12...0-0 13 \text{w}c2 is very uncomfortable for Black – the
g2-bishop pressurises b7 and Black will have some problems after $\text{xd1}$.

b) 11...0-0 (this is Black's safest response)
12 $\text{cxd4 cxd4}$ 13 $\text{d3 e8}$ 14 $\text{d4}$ (14 $\text{d4}$ $\text{xe3}$ 15 $\text{hxg3}$ $\text{xd4}$ and Black is very active - King) 14...$\text{wb6}$ 15 $\text{wxb3}$ $\text{a5}$ 16 $\text{c2}$ $\text{f5}$
17 $\text{d2}$ (17 $\text{xb7}$ $\text{ab8}$ 18 $\text{g2}$ $\text{bc8}$ gives Black too much compensation for the pawn)
17...$\text{b4}$ 18 $\text{xb4}$ $\text{xb4}$ 19 a3 $\text{b5}$ and the position looks equal, Hug-Ribli, Lucerne 1982 – both d-pawns are weak.

12 $\text{d4}$ 0-0

12...$\text{xf4}$? 13 $\text{a4+}$ $\text{d7}$ 14 $\text{e1}$ $\text{f8}$
15 $\text{xf4}$ is very good for White; the bishop can develop with b2-b3 and both the d3- and b7-pawns are vulnerable.

13 $\text{xd3}$

White must get rid of this troublesome pawn, otherwise it would be very difficult to finish developing.

13...$\text{xe3}$

Regaining the pawn with this discovered attack.

14 $\text{xe3}$ $\text{xd3}$ 15 $\text{f3}$!

White must challenge Black's dominating queen.

15...$\text{f3}$

Against 15...$\text{d8}$ King gives 16 $\text{wx3}$ $\text{xd3}$ 17 $\text{e1}$, with the idea of $\text{f1}$.

16 $\text{xf3}$ $\text{h3}$

Or 16...$\text{d8}$ 17 $\text{h3}$ (17...$\text{b8}$ 18 $\text{d4}$)
18 $\text{xf4}$ $\text{e8}$ 20 $\text{d1}$ $\text{d3}$ 21 $\text{e2}$, followed by $\text{d1}$, is good for White) 18 $\text{xb7}$
$\text{ab8}$ 19 $\text{g2}$ $\text{xb2}$ 20 $\text{xe4}$ 21 $\text{e1}$!
$\text{xd2}$ 22 $\text{e2}$ and the black knight is trapped as in the game Dudek-Kern, Bundesliga 1997.

17 $\text{xb7}$!

17 $\text{d1}$ $\text{g4}$, exchanging off one of the bishops, eases Black's task.

17...$\text{e8}$

After 17...$\text{f1}$ 18 $\text{xa8}$ $\text{d3}$ 19 $\text{f3}$
$\text{e8}$ 20 $\text{b3}$ White is slowly untangling, leaving Black with little compensation for the pawn deficit.

18 $\text{g2}$

In this position White remains a pawn to the good, but Black's activity and White's undeveloped queenside balances the scales.

a) 18...$\text{g4}$? loses the initiative. After 19 $\text{b3}$ $\text{e2}$ 20 $\text{a3}$ $\text{e8}$ 21 $\text{f2}$ White was clearly better in Thimognier-Muneret, correspondence 1991.

b) 18...$\text{xe2}$ 19 $\text{xe2}$ $\text{e2}$ 20 $\text{f2}$ $\text{e8}$
21 $\text{d4}$ $\text{cxd4}$ 22 $\text{cxd4}$ $\text{d3}$ 27 $\text{f5}$ 24 $\text{h3}$
$\text{d5}$ 25 $\text{d4}$ $\text{cxd4}$ 26 $\text{cxd4}$ $\text{d3}$ 27 $\text{g5}$ h6 28 $\text{d1}$ $\text{h5}$ 29 $\text{e1}$ $\text{e2}$ 30 $\text{xh5}$ $\text{xh5}$ 31 $\text{d5}$
$\text{d6}$ 32 $\text{d6}$ ($\text{e8}$ (in the stem game Spassky-Kasparov, Bugojno 1982, the players agreed a draw here) 33 $\text{g4}$ $\text{g6}$ 34 $\text{xf5}$ $\text{xf5}$ 35 $\text{d5}$
$\text{g4}$ 36 $\text{hxg4}$ $\text{xf4}$ 37 $\text{xf4}$ $\text{d7}$ 38 $\text{xf5}$
$\text{xe2}$ 39 $\text{e5}$ $\text{xd6}$ 40 $\text{xe7}$ ½-½ J.Claesen-
Chuchelov, Belgian League 1998. In the final position White's extra pawn is meaningless – the position is drawn.

B22)

6 d3?!

In most people's view this is more combative than 6 $\text{dxe2}$, the reason being that after Black plays ...$\text{d5}$-$\text{d4}$ and White replies with $\text{d4}$, White can answer ...$\text{dxe4}$ by recapturing with the pawn, thus creating an asymmetrical pawn structure and a more unbalanced position.

6...$\text{d4}$

Black may also refrain from this central advance, for example 6...$\text{e7}$ 7 $\text{dxe2}$ 0-0 8
0-0 $\text{c6}$ 9 $\text{f5}$ $\text{d4}$ 10 $\text{xf6}$$\text{xf6}$ 11 $\text{d4}$
\( \text{c7 12} \text{f4 f5 (12...e8 13 e1 f8, as in Panukhchian-Poluljahov, Anapa 1991, is also possible) 13 e1 c8 14 d5 e6 15 xxe7+ xxe7 16 wh5!} \)

Larsen-Suetin, Copenhagen 1965, continued 16...f5 17 e2 wd7 18 ae1 d5 19 d6! wxd6 20 wxf5 f6 21 xb7 b8 22 e7 and White was a pawn to the good.

7 xe4 dxe4 8 dxe4 e6

Or 8...d6 9 de2 c6 10 0-0 0-0 11 a3!? (the immediate 11 f4 looks reasonable) 11...a5 12 f4 e5 13 c3 wh8!? (13...fxe4 looks stronger) 14 cxd4 dxd4 15 e5 c5 e7 16 e3 d6 17 wc2 db8 18 b1 e7 19 c3 and White had a very pleasant position in A.Ledger-Stephenson, British Championship 1998 - White’s minor pieces have much more scope than their counterparts.

9 de2 e7

9...e6!? with ideas of...c4, is another option for Black. Now 10 f4 c4 11 d3 d6 12 0-0 0-0 13 f4 e6 14 b3 was unbalanced in Lagvilava-Skripchenko, FIDE Women’s World Championship, New Delhi 2000, while after 10 0-0 d6 11 f4 xf4 12 xf4 0-0 13 wh5 f5 14 e1, Kovalevskaya-Skripchenko, Belgrade 2000, I slightly prefer White, as the two bishops may become very useful when the position opens up.

10 0-0 0-0 11 f4 e8

Black can also try to exchange a pair of minor pieces with 11...g5, for example 12 c3 (12 e1 e8 13 d5? or 12 d5 look interesting) 12...xf4 13 xf4 e6 and now the game Short-Topalov, Sarajevo 1999 finished abruptly after 14 wh5 b6 15 e5 d5 16 g5 wd7 17 f6 wh8 18 h3 e6 19 xg7+ xg7 20 g5+ and it’s perpetual check.

12 d5

I very much like White’s well centralised knight here. Donev-Felsberger, Austrian Team Championship 1995, continued 12...d6 13 c4 dxc3 (13...e7 14 g5 wd7 15 xe7 xe7 16 f4 b6 17 d3 b7 18 ae1 is better for White according to Donev) 14 bxc3 b8 15 wc2 e6 16 d1 f6 17 f4 xf4 18 xf4 xe7 and now White kept an edge with 19 dxe6 xe6 20 d5, but it is also possible to play more aggressively with 19 e5!? (threating e6) 19...c4 20 e6, followed by the move 21 e4.

Important Points

1) Line A is very tricky and could lead to success, even against experienced players. Theoretically speaking, however, Black should be fine.

2) Line B is more of a serious try for the advantage, 5...d4 is not as bad as some people have made out, while lines with d2-d3 (B22) are probably White best chance for an advantage or, at the very least, a complex position.
Other Variations:
Black plays typical Sicilian moves

Playing the Closed Sicilian, you are bound to face many lines with \( \ldots \mathcal{c}c6 \) and \( \ldots g7-g6 \), or \( \ldots e7-e6 \) and \( \ldots d7-d5 \). Some opponents, however, will carry playing typical Sicilian moves, regardless of how you carry on. This may include a classical set-up with \( \ldots d6 \), \( \ldots e6 \), \( \ldots \mathcal{c}c6 \) and \( \ldots \mathcal{f}6 \), or an early queenside expansion with \( \ldots a6 \) and \( \ldots b5 \). We will take a brief look at these lines here.

1 e4 c5 2 \( \mathcal{c}c3 \)

2...\( \mathcal{d}c6 \)

Alternatively:

a) 2...d6 is a move order often chosen by Najdorf players. The reason is that after 2...\( \mathcal{d}c6 \) 3 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \) or 3 \( \mathcal{g}ge2 \) White has the possibility of playing for an Open Sicilian where Black has committed his knight to \( c6 \) and thus cannot play the Najdorf. With 2...d6 3 \( \mathcal{g}ge2 \) (or 3 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \)) 3...\( \mathcal{f}f6 \) 4 d4 \( \mathcal{c}xd4 \) 5 \( \mathcal{c}xd4 \) \( a6 \) Black has his beloved set-up.

This doesn’t really affect the Closed Sicilian player. Following 3 g3 \( \mathcal{d}c6 \) 4 \( \mathcal{g}g2 \) g6 5 d3 \( \mathcal{g}g7 \) we have transposed directly to ...g6 lines. Otherwise 4...\( \mathcal{f}f6 \) transposes to the text.

b) 2...e6 3 g3 d6 4 \( \mathcal{g}g2 \) \( \mathcal{f}f6 \) 5 d3 \( \mathcal{e}7 \) 6 f4 0-0 (Black can miss out ...\( \mathcal{d}c6 \) altogether, but this shouldn’t concern White - normal development and expansion on the kingside is still the key) 7 \( \mathcal{d}f3 \) \( \mathcal{d}bd7 \) 8 0-0 a6 9 h3 b5 10 g4 and White develops an attack on the kingside as normal.

c) 2...a6 (Black pays for an early queenside expansion) 3 g3 b5 4 \( \mathcal{g}g2 \) \( \mathcal{b}b7 \) 5 d3 e6 5...g6 6 \( \mathcal{e}e3 \) d6 7 \( \mathcal{w}d2 \) \( \mathcal{g}g7 \) 8 \( \mathcal{g}ge2 \) \( \mathcal{c}c6 \) 9 0-0 h5 10 h3 \( \mathcal{d}d4 \) was played in Shaw-MacKay, Scottish Championship 1993; now I like the usual plan of 11 \( \mathcal{d}d1 \) e6 12 \( \mathcal{c}c1 \) \( \mathcal{e}e7 \) 13 c3 \( \mathcal{d}c6 \) 14 \( \mathcal{c}c2 \) 0-0 15 \( \mathcal{h}h6 \) 6 f4 d6 (after 6...d5 White can play 7 e5) 7 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \) \( \mathcal{d}d7 \) 8 0-0 b4 9 \( \mathcal{g}ge2 \) \( \mathcal{g}gf6 \) (Spraggett-Gelfand, Moscow Olympiad 1994), and now I like 10 b3?, preventing ...c5-c4.

3 g3 \( \mathcal{f}f6 \) 4 \( \mathcal{g}g2 \) d6

Black can also play for a delayed ...d7-d5.

4...e6 5 f4!? (or 5 d3 d5 - see the 2...e6 and 3...d5 line) 5...d5 6 e5 \( \mathcal{d}d7 \) 7 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \) \( \mathcal{e}e7 \) 8 0-0 0-0 9 d3 \( \mathcal{h}h8 \) 10 \( \mathcal{h}h1 \) b5 11 \( \mathcal{d}d2 \) b4 12 g4 \( \mathcal{f}f6 \) 13 exf6 \( \mathcal{d}xf6 \) 14 h3 and White will follow up with \( \mathcal{g}g3 \), Lukin-Sveshnikov, St Petersburg 1994.

5 d3 e6

It’s not too late for a fianchetto; for 5...g6 6 h3 \( \mathcal{g}g7 \) 7 \( \mathcal{e}e3 \) brings us back into ...g6 lines.

6 f4!

With Black avoiding a fianchetto, it makes much more sense to play f2-f4, followed, in time, by a kingside pawn storm.

6...\( \mathcal{e}e7 \) 7 \( \mathcal{f}f3 \) 0-0

7...a6 is a normal Open Sicilian move but it has less point here, although it does prepare ...b7-b5. Spraggett-Vilalta, Manresa
1995, continued 8 0-0 0-0 9 h3 \(c\)7 10 g4!
(starting the usual expansion) 10...\(e\)8 11 g5
\(\square\)d7 12 \(\square\)e2 b5 13 \(\square\)g3 \(\square\)b7 14 \(\square\)h2 \(\square\)ad8
15 \(\square\)g4 \(\square\)b6 16 \(\square\)h5 d5 17 \(\square\)e1 \(\square\)d4 18
\(\square\)f2 dxe4 19 dxe4 b4 20 \(\square\)h1 \(\square\)c4 21 c3
bxc3 22 bxc3 \(\square\)b5 23 a4 \(\square\)bd6 24 \(\square\)e2 \(\square\)a5
25 \(\square\)b1 \(\square\)dc4 26 f5 exf5 27 \(\square\)xf5 \(\square\)d6 28
\(\square\)f1 \(\square\)c8 29 \(\square\)f4 \(\square\)e6 30 \(\square\)g1 \(\square\)c4 31 \(\square\)f3
\(\square\)d7

32 \(\square\)e5! \(\square\)xg5 33 \(\square\)xg7 \(\square\)xe4 34 \(\square\)xe4
1-0 (after 34...\(\square\)xe4 35 \(\square\)xe4 there is no good defence to \(\square\)g6+).
8 0-0 \(\square\)b8

Black has many possible ways to develop, but White's reaction is normally the same, for
example 8...\(\square\)d7 9 h3 \(\square\)d4 (9...\(\square\)b8 10 g4 b5
11 f5 b4 12 \(\square\)e2 \(\square\)e8 13 \(\square\)e1 \(\square\)e5 14 \(\square\)xe5
dxe5 15 \(\square\)e3 was better for White in Pinto-
Panken, Parsippany 2001) 10 \(\square\)e3 \(\square\)xf3+ 11
\(\square\)xf3 \(\square\)c6 12 \(\square\)e2 \(\square\)c7 13 \(\square\)f2 \(\square\)e8 14 g4
\(\square\)d7 and White is better, Hickl-Martens, Groningen 1988 – Black is passive and has
no obvious plan.
9 h3 d5 10 g4

Naturally 10 \(\square\)e1 is also possible, but
White has no need to fear an exchange of
queens here.
10...\(\square\)xe4 11 dxe4 \(\square\)c7

Black correctly declines the exchange. After
11...\(\square\)xd1 12 \(\square\)xd1 White's advantage holds in the endgame – he will gain more
space with e4-e5 and \(\square\)e4.
12 e5 \(\square\)d8 13 \(\square\)e1 \(\square\)e8 14 \(\square\)e3

White has more space and an active position. Spraggett-Lesiege, Vancouver 1998,
continued 14...\(\square\)d4 15 \(\square\)f2 b5 16 \(\square\)h2 b4 17
\(\square\)e4 \(\square\)a6 18 \(\square\)fc1 \(\square\)b6 19 \(\square\)fd2 f6 20 exf6
gxf6 21 \(\square\)b3 \(\square\)b7 22 \(\square\)g1 \(\square\)g7 23 \(\square\)ad1 e5
24 f5 and White converted his undoubted
advantage on the kingside into the full point.
1 e4 e5 2 c4

The Bishop's Opening is probably the most straightforward line to play against 1...e5; White is playing a 'system', and there is relatively little theory to learn. That said, there's still a bit of theory in this chapter – you can't get away with knowing nothing!

The Danish legend Bent Larsen had quite a bit to do with the popularisation of the Bishop's Opening. Before him it was used very rarely at the highest levels, but Larsen used it to beat many grandmasters in the 70s and 80s and showed it could be used as a good weapon. In more recent times players such as Gary Kasparov, Vishy Anand, Vladimir Kramnik and Michael Adams have used it, especially when they've fancied having a day off from heavy theoretical battles.

One of its major appeals is that it cuts out many of Black's popular defences in the Open Games (1 e4 e5). For example, White completely bypasses the super-solid Petroff Defence (1 e4 e5 2 f3 f6), plus all of Black's infinite number of defences against the Ruy Lopez (no need to learn crazy Schliemann lines – 1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 b5 f6! – or to be bored to death by Kramnik's 'Berlin Wall' – 1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 b5 d6). Black only really has one main defence in 2...f6 (other second moves often transpose to this anyway), so this is a major time-saver on the learning front.

The system that I'm advocating is an aggressive one where White plays c4, d2-d3, c3 and then, if possible, the pawn-break f2-f4. This is followed by f3 and (again if possible) 0-0.

This can be played against various black set-ups, but White must also be prepared to be flexible; Some black systems are aimed at countering this plan, and on those occasions it's better for White to play without f2-f4.

Main Line:
Black plays 2...f6

1 e4 e5 2 c4 f6
Attacking 1...e5: The Bishop’s Opening

This is by far the most popular choice for Black at move two. Black develops his king’s knight, prepares to castle and attacks the e4-pawn.

3 \text{d}3

With this move we are choosing to play a ‘Bishops Opening Proper’, rather than transposing into the Vienna Game with 3 \text{c}3. Often the Bishop’s Opening transposes in to the Vienna in any case (for example, 3 \text{c}3 \text{c}6 4 \text{d}3 gives us another route to Variation B). Choosing the \text{d}3 move order, though, cuts out some of Black’s options, although I should say it also gives Black some extra ones. For example, after 3 \text{c}3 White has to be concerned with 3...\text{b}4 and 3...\text{x}e4, both of which are perfectly playable moves. With 3 \text{d}3 we avoid these lines; the other side of the coin is that White has to prepare for 3...\text{d}5 (this is not such a problem) and the very popular 3...\text{c}6.

![Chess Diagram]

Now we will take a look at these black possibilities:

A: 3...\text{c}6
B: 3...\text{c}e6
C: 3...\text{e}c5
D: 3...\text{d}5
E: 3...\text{e}7

3...\text{d}6 is a passive move, which is seen from time to time. White should continue with the plan of f2-f4, for example 4 \text{c}3 \text{e}6 5 \text{b}3!? \text{c}6 6 \text{f}4 \text{e}7 7 \text{f}3 0-0 8 0-0

and White stands better.

A)

3...\text{c}6

![Chess Diagram]

This line, attributed to Louis Paulsen, is perhaps the critical test of the Bishop’s Opening. Black immediately tries to take the initiative in the centre by preparing the logical...\text{d}7-\text{d}5 advance. White must now abandon any fanciful ideas of launching his f-pawn (4 \text{f}4 is effectively met by the simple 4...\text{d}5). Instead White must prepare to do battle in the centre.

4 \text{f}3

The most logical move, attacking the pawn on e5 and trying to take advantage of the fact that Black no longer has the c6-square for his knight.

Black can react in the following ways:

A1: 4...\text{d}5
A2: 4...\text{e}7

Or:

a) 4...\text{d}6 is likely to transpose to Variation A2 after 5 0-0 \text{e}7.

b) 4...\text{w}c7 also transposes to Variation A2 after 5 0-0 \text{e}7.

A1)

4...\text{d}5 5 \text{b}3!

With this move White keeps the pressure on the black centre, without releasing any of the tension. 5 exd5 exd5 6 \text{b}5+ \text{d}7!
comfortable for Black, while 6 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}b3 allows Black to develop with 6...\texttt{\textbf{\&}}c6.

Now Black must deal with the threat to his e5-pawn. His choice are:

A11) 5...\texttt{\textbf{\&}}d6
A12) 5...a5!?

Alternatively:

a) 5...d4? runs into 6 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}g5.

b) 5...dxe4 6 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}g5 and now:

b1) 6...\texttt{\textbf{\&}}c5?! 7 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xf7 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}b6 8 0-0! (but not 8 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xh8?? \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xf2+ 9 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}f1 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}g4 10 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}d2 e3 and Black wins) 8...\texttt{\textbf{\&}}g4 (8...f8 9 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xe5 leaves White a clear pawn up) 9 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xh8 and I don't see any real compensation for Black.

b2) 6...e6 7 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xe6 fxe6 8 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xe4 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xe4 9 dxe4 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xd1+ 10 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xd1 and Black's doubled e-pawns are a permanent liability in the ending, Honfi-Lukacs, Hungary 1975.

c) 5...\texttt{\textbf{\&}}b4? (the point of this mover is to provoke c2-c3, so that White no longer has this square for his knight) 6 c3 (or 6 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}d2 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xd2+ 7 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xd2 dxe4 8 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xe2 9 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xe2 10 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}d3 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}d7 11 c3 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xe5 12 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xe5 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}f6 13 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}d4 and White's pressure on f7 gives him an edge, Larsen-Nunn, London 1986) 6...\texttt{\textbf{\&}}d6 7 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}g5 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}e6 8 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}bd2 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}bd7 9 d4 exd4 10 exd5 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xd5 11 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xd5 exd5 12 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xd4 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}e7+ 13 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}e3 0-0 14 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}f5 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}e5 15 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xd6 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}xd6 16 0-0 and White was better in the game Yudasin-Alterman, Tel Aviv 1994–the d5-pawn is a permanent weakness for White to target.

A11)
5...\texttt{\textbf{\&}}d6
The most logical move. Black develops a bishop, defends the e-pawn and prepares to castle.

I'll now give two ways forward for White:

A111) 6 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}c3
A112) 6 exd5?!

A111)
6 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}c3

Until recently this was virtually the only choice, but Black's equalising prospects in Variation A1112 have forced White to look elsewhere for an advantage.

Now we will look at the following lines:

A1111) 6...\texttt{\textbf{\&}}e6
A1112) 6...dxe4

Or 6...d4 7 \texttt{\textbf{\&}}e2 c5 (7...\texttt{\textbf{\&}}a6?! 8 c3 dxc3 9
With this move Black tries to keep his centre intact, but practice has shown this to be a difficult task.

7 $\text{g5}$!

Stepping up the pressure on d5.

7...$\text{g5}$

Or:

a) 7...$\text{bd7}$ 8 exd5 $\text{cx}d5$ 9 $\text{xd}5$ wins a pawn.

b) 7...d4 8 $\text{e2}$ $\text{bd7}$ (8...$\text{xb}3$ 9 $\text{xb}3$ and White can continue with $\text{g3-f5}$) 9 $\text{xe6 fxe6}$ 10 c3 $\text{dxc3}$ 11 $\text{bxc3 h6}$ 12 $\text{xf6}$ $\text{xf6}$ 13 0-0 0-0 14 $\text{g3}$ was better for White in Nun-Tichy, Czech Team Championship 1999.

8 0-0 $\text{bd7}$ 9 $\text{e1}$ 0-0-0

A major alternative for Black is 9...0-0 and now:

a) 10 $\text{h4}$, with idea of $\text{f3}$ and $\text{f5}$ gives White an edge – Nunn.

b) 10 $\text{d2}$ $\text{c7}$ 11 exd5 $\text{xd5}$ 12 $\text{e4}$ $\text{e7}$ (Traut-Kappes, correspondence 1987)

13 $\text{d4}$! and I prefer White.

c) 10 exd5?! and now there’s another split:

1) 10...$\text{xd5}$ 11 $\text{d4}$ $\text{b8}$ (Sikorakarch, correspondence 1989) 12 $\text{d2}$ $\text{c7}$

2) 10...$\text{xd5}$ 11 $\text{d2}$ b6?! (11...d4 is more resilient) 12 $\text{xf6}$ $\text{xf6}$ 13 $\text{xe5}$ d4 14 $\text{b1}$ $\text{d4}$ 15 $\text{c3}$ $\text{xb3}$ 16 $\text{b4}$ $\text{a6}$ 17 $\text{b5}$ $\text{a4}$

18 $\text{a3}$ and White is a clear pawn up, Nunn-Murray, Lucerne Olympiad 1982.

10 exd5 $\text{cxd5}$ 11 $\text{e2}$

Black now has many possible moves, but none seems to reach equality:

a) 11...$\text{c5}$ 12 d4 exd4 13 $\text{xd4}$ with pressure on e6, Packroff-Kohn, correspondence 1984.

b) 11...$\text{b4}$ 12 a3 $\text{xc3}$ 13 $\text{xc3+}$ $\text{c3}$ 14 $\text{bxc3}$ 15 $\text{h4}$ 16 $\text{g5}$ 17 $\text{d4}$ and White has an excellent pair of bishops, Koch-Mohaupt, correspondence 1965.

c) 11...$\text{c7}$ 12 $\text{xf6}$ $\text{xf6}$ 13 $\text{xd5}$ $\text{xd5}$

14 $\text{b4}$! $\text{xb4}$ 15 $\text{xd5}$ is better for White, Honfi-Radulov, correspondence 1982.

d) 11...$\text{h6}$ 12 $\text{xf6}$ $\text{xf6}$ 13 $\text{xe5}$ d4 14 $\text{xe6+}$ $\text{f6}$ 15 $\text{b1}$ and White is a pawn up.

e) 11...d4 12 $\text{xe6}$ $\text{f6}$ 13 $\text{e4}$.

f) 11...$\text{d8}$ 12 d4! exd4 (12...e4 13 $\text{xe4}$) 13 $\text{xd4}$ $\text{b4}$ 14 $\text{f4}$ $\text{xc3}$ 15 $\text{bxc3}$ $\text{e4}$

16 $\text{e3}$ $\text{xe3}$ 17 $\text{b5}$ $\text{w6}$ 18 $\text{xa7+}$ $\text{d8}$

19 $\text{c3}$ $\text{c5}$ 20 $\text{b5}$ $\text{d6}$ 21 $\text{a5}$ 1-0


g) 11...$\text{b8}$ 12 $\text{xf6}$ (12 $\text{h4+?}$) 12...$\text{xf6}$

13 $\text{xe5}$ d4 14 $\text{b1}$ $\text{c7}$ 15 $\text{f4}$.
A1112)
6...dxe4!?

Until recently this move has been mysteriously overlooked, or at least underestimated. Kramnik, however, has shown that Black has good equalising chances with it.

7...dxe4

White can’t really hope for much after the quiet 7...dxe4 8...dxe4, but Black must still be a little careful, for example 8...g5?! (8...b4+ is safer) 9...g5! 0-0 10...xh7!!...xh7 11...h5+...g8 12...g5...c7 13...d1...d7 14...d3...c5 15...g3...e7 16...h6...f6 17...g6...a5+ 18...d8 19...xg7...xb3 20...h6...d2+ 21...xd2...xd2 22...xf6+...h7 23...xd2 and White went on to win in Markov-Gabriel, Pula 2000.

7...g5 8...xe4 9...xe4...f5

This is stronger than 9...a6?! 10...h5!...c7 11...g5! h6 12...e4...e7

13...xh6 gxh6 14...g6+...h8 15...xh6+...g8 16...h4 and White has a very strong attack, Tischbierek-Beliavsky, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

10...f3

10...a6 11...xd6...xd6 12...f3...e6 was equal in Anand-Kramnik, Frankfurt (rapid) 1998.

10...xe4

Or 10...g6 11...h4...xe4 12...xe4...d7 13...c5 14...c2...e7 15...g5!...f6 16...d2 and White has a tiny edge due to the bishop pair, as in Kieffer-Altermann, Recklinghausen 1998.

11...dxe4...d7 12...c3...a5 13...a4

13...a4 allows Black to gain space with 13...a4 14...c2...c5.

13...c5 14...c2...b5 15...0-0

Adams-Kramnik, Tilburg 1998, continued 15...c7 16...d1...ab8 17...xb5...xb5 18...g3...b4 19...xb4...xb4 20...d2 and in this level position the players agreed a draw.

A112)
6...dxe5!?

This move looks quite promising.

6...dxe5

After 6...dxe5 White can play:

a) 7...e6 (or 7...c6 8...g5...e6 9...c3 and Black’s centre is under pressure) 8...g5

b) 6...d7 9...c3...a5 10...e1 0-0 11...d2 and we have transposed to note ‘c2’ to Black’s ninth move in Variation A1111.
b) 7 g5! d4 8 Bd2 0-0 9 0-0 Qc6 10 Re1 a6 11 h3 h6 12 h4 Re8 13 Qc4 and White was a bit better, Benjamin-Nielsen, FIDE World Championship, Las Vegas 1999.
7 0-0 0-0

8 Re1

White also kept initiative in Malisov-Birnboim, Israeli Championship 1996, after 8 Bd2 c7 9 Re1 d7 10 e4 h6 11 h3 Qf6 12 g3 Re8 13 d2 a5 14 a3 a4 15 a2 c5 16 h2 e6 17 f3 f7 18 dg4 Qxg4 19 hxg4 f4 20 xexe6 xexe6 21 de4 Qd4 22 wd1 xe6 23 xd2 dxe8 24 xxd4 exd4 25 f3 e6 26 g3 de8 27 Qg2.

8...Qd7

Or 8...Re8 9 Bd2 c7 10 Qe4 Qg4 11 h3 h5 12 Qg3 Qg6 13 Qg5 Qd7 14 h4 Qa6 15 Qxg6 hXg6 16 d4 exd4 17 Wxd4 and White has the advantage of the bishop pair in an open position, Tsekhovsky-Azgamov, Yerevan 1982.

9 Bd2 Re8 10 Qe4 Qc7 11 Qg5 f6 12 d2 Qh8 13 h3

I quite like the idea of the immediate 13 d4!? as well.

13...Qh8

see following diagram

We are following the game Bosboom-Raetke, Hafnarfjordur 1998. White now keeps a small plus by opening the centre with 14 d4 exd4 15 Qxd4.

A12)
5...a5!? 

Black gains space on the queenside by threatening to trap White's light-squared bishop. This move came into fashion after the Russian GM Evgeny Bareev utilised it against world number one Garry Kasparov.

6 Qc3

This was Kasparov's choice, but 6 a3!? is also interesting:

a) 6...a4 7 a2 d6 8 Qc3 dxe4 9 g5 0-0 10 Qgxe4 Qxe4 11 Qxe4 Qg7!? (11...Qf5!) 12 Wh5! Qd7 13 0-0 We8 14 f4 and White has a very strong attack, LaneHenris, Brussels 1995.

b) 6...d6 7 Qc3 and now:

b1) 7...Qe6 8 exd5 Qxd5 (8...cxd5!? 9 Qxd5 Qxd5 10 0-0 0-0 11 Qe1 Qd7 12 d4 Qe8 13 Qg5 and White is better, Zhelnin-Raetke, Smolensk 2000.
b2) 7...dxe4 8 Qg5 0-0 9 Qxe4 Qxe4 10 Qxe4 &g5 11 Wf3 &xe4 12 dxe4 Qa6 13 0-0 Qc7 14 Qd1 and the bishop pair gives White the tiniest of edges, Atlas-Rabiega, Austrian League 2000.

6...&b4

Kasparov’s idea after 6...d4 is 7 Qxe5! dxc3 8 Qxf7.

7 a3 &xc3 + 8 bxc3 Qbd7

Alternatively:

a) 8...&g4?! 9 exd5 Qxd5 10 h3 &xc3 11 &xf7+! - Kasparov.

b) 8...a4 9 &a2 Qbd7 10 exd5 cxd5 (or 10...Qxd5 11 &e2 Qd2 0-0 12 0-0 Qe8 13 Qxe1 h6 14 c4 Qf5 15 &c3 c4 16 Qd2 and the position will open up for White’s bishop pair, Dam-Bosboom, Leeuwarden 1993) 11 0-0 0-0 12 &g5 Wc7 13 Qd2 b6 14 &ae1 Qe8 15 Qh4 Wc6 16 Qf5 Wc6 17 f4!

\[\]

and Black’s centre is crumbling, Berkvens-Jonkman, Essent 2000.

c) 8...Wc7!? is an untried suggestion from Kasparov.

9 exd5 Qxd5?!

Keeping the centre intact with 9...cxd5 looks more natural, although this would undoubtedly come under attack from the white pieces. After 10 0-0 0-0 11 Qe1 we have:

a) Both 11...c4 12 Qd4 Qc5 13 &g5 &e6 14 &a2 h6 15 &h4 and 11...a4 12 &a2 &e8 13 &g5 are given by Kasparov; in each line White appears to be more comfortable.

b) 11...Wc7 (Kasparov gives this a ques-

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tion mark, but is it really so clear?) 12 Qxe5 Kasparov (12 &b2? is less committal) 12...Qxe5 13 &f4 (Kasparov stops here) 13...&e8! 14 d4 &g4 15 f3 Qxf3+ 16 Wxf3 Qd7 and this looks unclear to me.

10 0-0 0-0

10...a4? 11 &xd5 cxd5 12 Qxe5 is good for White.

11 Qe1! Qe8

Kasparov has some impressive analysis refuting 11...Qxc3. The main line runs 12 Qd2 &b5 13 &b2 &c5 14 &a2 e4 15 &g5! exd3 16 &e5! &e6 17 Qh7! &e8! (17...Qg7 18 Qb5+ Qg8 19 &xe6 fxe6 20 Qh8+ Qf7 21 Wf4+ Qe7 22 Wg5+ Qd7 23 Wxg7+ 18 &g5! dxc2 19 Qxc2 Qg5 20 &d1 &d7 21 Qxe8+ Qxe8 22 Wg6 and White’s attack is decisive.

12 c4! Qe7

Kasparov also gives the lines 12...Qc7? 13 &b2 f6 14 c5+ &h8 15 d4 and 12...a4!? 13 cxd5 axb3 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 Wxc2 bxc6 16 &b2!.

13 &g5! h6 14 Qe4

Once again the potential of the bishop pair promises White an advantage. Kasparov-Bareev, Linares 1993, continued 14...a4 15 &a2 c5 16 Qd6 Qf8 17 c3! Qg6 18 &b1! Qh6 19 Qxc8 Wxc8 20 Wf3 and White was better.

A2)

4...&e7

With this move, Black shows he is quite
content to develop before making plans in the centre. More often than not, Black will simply play ...d7-d6, rather than ...d7-d5.

5 0-0
5 GNUC5?? Wf5+ has caught out more than one person. Another move, though, is 5 GCC5 (see Variation E).

5...d6

Alternatively:

a) 5...b5!? trying to claim space on the queenside, is an interesting strategy. Emmers-Sokolov, Hastings 2000, continued 6 5b3 d6 7 c4 a5 8 5b6d2 (8 a4??, preventing Black's expansion on the queenside, is a suggestion of the Hungarian GM Peter Lukacs; he gives 8...b4 9 5d1 0-0 10 d4 Wxd7 11 5b6d2 with a slight advantage to White) 8...a4 9 5c2 0-0 10 d4 Wxd7 11 5e1 5e8 12 5f1 5f8 13 5g3 Wc7 (13...5b7??) 14 h3 g6 15 5c3 5g7 16 Wd2 5f8 17 5d3 5e6 18 5ac1 5d7 and now, instead of 19 c4?! exd4 20 5xd4 bxc4 21 5xe6 5xe6 22 5xc4, I should have kept an edge with 19 5b1 c5 20 d5 5d8.

b) 5...5c7!? (keeping options open with the d-pawn) 6 5e1 0-0 and now:

b1) 7 5bd2?! d5 8 5b3 5bd7 9 exd5 10 5xex4 exd4 11 5xd4 looks interesting) 9...exd5 10 c4 d4 11 5xd4 5c5 12 5b5 5d8 13 5xe5 5xd3 14 5e2 (Larsen-Yusupov, Linares 1983), and here Larsen gives the equalising 14...5c5! 15 5f3 5g4 16 5e3 5xe3 17 5xe3 5f4 18 5e1 5d3.

b2) 7 5b3 d6 (7...5a6 8 d4! d6 9 c3 is good for White) 8 5b7d7 9 d4 b5 10 5b2d2 (10 a4??) 10...5a5 11 5f1 a4 12 5c2 5e8 13 5g3 5b6 and the position was level, Mainka-Mikhalchisin, Dortmund 1998.

b3) 7 h3! d5 8 exd5 cxd5 9 5b3 5c6 10 5c3 and Black centre is under some pressure. Note that the natural 10...5e6 is met by 11 5xc5! 5xc5 12 5f4 5fd7 13 d4, and White wins material.

6 5e1

White has two other possibilities here:

a) 6 5b3 0-0 7 c4 5g4? (7...5bd7 8 5e1 5c5 9 5c3 5g4 10 h3 5h5 11 5bd2 5e6 reaches the same position after eleven moves) 8 5bd2 5bd7 9 h3 5h5 10 5e1 5c5 11 5c2 5e6 12 5f1 5d7 (12...5e8 13 5h2 5g5 14 d4 gave White a pull in Psakhis-Teshkovsky, Vilnius 1980) 13 5g3 5xf3 14 5xf3 5g6 15 5c3 5g5 and Black has equalised, Gelfand-Yusupov, Munich 1994.

b) 6 h3! (preventing black ideas involving 5g4) 6...0-0 7 5e1 5bd7 8 a4?! a5 (8...d5 9 exd5 cxd5 10 5a2 e4 11 dxe4 dxe4 12 5g5 5c5 13 5c3 was clearly better for White in Vogts-Magerramov, Baku 1980) 9 5c3!? h6 (9...5c5? 10 d4 exd4 11 5xd4 5e8 12 5f3 gave White an edge in Lau-Treppner, German Bundesliga 1982, while 9...5c7 is a suggestion from ECO) 10 5a2 5e8 11 d4 5f8 12 5c3 5c7 13 5h4 b6 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 5f3 5c5 16 5f5 and White has a very powerful bishop on a2, Vogt-Chekhov, Halle.
1981.

6...0-0 7 .bd2 7d7 8 a3 8c5
8...h6?! is a bit slow: White is better after 9
.a2 e8 10 f1 i8 11 g3 e6 12 xex6
.xe6 13 d4 (Larsen-Torre, Brussels 1987).
White also keeps a typical edge after 8...w7
9 .a2 b5 10 f1 a5 11 g3 c5 12 c3 e6
13 d4 .a2 14 xex2 e6 15 b3 fe8 16
d2 f8 17 b2 ad8, as in the game An-

9 .a2

9 f1 d5 10 exd5 cxd5 11 a2 e4 12
dxe4 xex4 13 c3 a6 14 e4 dxe4 led to an
early handshake in Hastings 1997/8, although there is still much to
play for in the final position.

9...e8 10 f1 f8 11 g3 g6

Lukacs suggests 11...e6? as an
improvement.

12 h3 g7 13 c3 d5 14 exd5
14 b4 cd7 15 g5 also looks better for
White.

14...xd5 15 g5 f6 16 e3

We've now reached a very important
crossroads. Black must choose between:

B1: 4...c5
B2: 4...a5
B3: 4...b4

Other moves are less important:
a) 4...e7 (this passive move is seen from
time to time) 5 f4! d6 6 d3 0-0 (or 6...exf4 7
xf4 d5 8 b3 xbd3 9 axb3 0-0 10 0-0
and White has the better structure and more
active pieces, Mirumian-Ho Cheng Fai, Yer-
evan Olympiad 1996; note that 6...g4 7 0-0
d4?! 8 fxe5 dxe5? fails to 9 xf7+! 7 0-0
9 g4 (or 7...d4 8 fxe5 xex5+ 9 e3 dxe5
10 g3 and White has an automatic kingside
attack, Mirumian-Fala, Czech League 1998)
8 h3 (8 c5?! is also interesting; G.Mohr-
Rozaklis, Ikaria 1993 led to a quick
conclusion after 8...e7 9 f5 xex5 10 bx5
xex4 11 xh3! xxc2 12 b4 xxa1 13 g5 c6
14 xf6 h5 15 g3 xh5 16 bxg6 15 g6+ 1-0)
8...xex5 9 xex5 d4 10 xex2 c6 11 a4
and I prefer White. Isaacson-Assar, Munich
1958, continued 11...w7 12 e5 c5 13 f5 a6

B)

3...c6

Along with 3...c6, this is a very popular
move. Black simply develops another piece
(knights before bishops!), and keeps his op-
tions open over the placement of his dark-
squared bishop.

4 c3

This is the move which keeps White's op-
tions open regarding the f2-f4 thrust. 4 f3
would simply transpose into the Two
Knights Defence, which lies outside the rep-
ertoire.
14 a5 $\text{Cc6}$ 15 g4 h6 16 $\text{Cd5}$ $\text{Cxd5}$ 17 $\text{Cxd5}$ and now 17...$\text{Cxa5}$ is answered by 18 $\text{Cd2}$ $\text{Cc6}$ 19 $\text{Cxe6}$. 

b) 4...d6 5 f4 $\text{Da5}$ (5...$\text{Cc7}$ transposes into the previous note) 6 f5! $\text{Cxc4}$ 7 dxc4 g6 8 g4 gxf5 (8...h5? 9 g5 $\text{Cfh7}$ 10 f6 incarcerates Black's kingside pieces) 9 gxf5 $\text{Cfd7}$ 10 $\text{Cf3}$ $\text{Cc6}$ 11 $\text{Cfh3}$! $\text{Cg8}$ 12 $\text{Cf2}$ a6 13 $\text{Cxe3}$ b5 14 0-0-0 $\text{Bxc4}$ 15 $\text{Wc2}$ $\text{Bb8}$ 16 $\text{Wc4}$ $\text{Wb7}$ 17 $\text{Hhg1}$ $\text{Exg1}$! 18 $\text{Exg1}$ and White has a strong initiative, Morovic Fernandez-Yurtsev, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

B1)

4...$\text{Cc5}$

With this natural move Black develops his dark-squared bishop onto its most active square.

5 f4!

The most aggressive move. White aims to reach a position that can also arise from the King’s Gambit Declined.

5...d6

Black has two noteworthy alternatives:

a) 5...$\text{Cf6}$? 6 $\text{Cf1}$ (6 $\text{Cf5}$?) and now:

a1) 6...$\text{Dg4}$! 7 $\text{Cf1}$! $\text{Cg5}$ d5! 8 exd5 exf4 9 dxc6? $\text{Whxg5}$! was awful for White in A.Ledger-Yeo, British League 1998, but 7 $\text{Cxe2}$? also looks fine) 7...$\text{Cxf6}$ 8 $\text{Cxf6}$ $\text{Dxf6}$ 9 $\text{Dxf3}$ and White has the use of a very nice half-open h-file.

a2) 6...exf4 7 $\text{Cxf4}$ $\text{Da5}$ 8 $\text{Cg5}$ $\text{Dxc4}$ 9 dxc4 $\text{Cc7}$ 10 $\text{Dd4}$ d6 11 0-0-0 $\text{Bxe6}$ 12 e5

8 $\text{Dxe7}$ $\text{Dxe7}$ 14 $\text{Df1}$ and White has some pressure in the centre, Skytte-De Vreugt, Yerevan 2000.

b) 5...d5! 6 $\text{Dxd5}$ $\text{Cxc5}$ 7 $\text{Cxd5}$ $\text{Cg4}$? 8 $\text{Dxc4}$ $\text{Cc7}$ 9 $\text{Bb3}$ exf4 10 $\text{Dxf4}$ $\text{Dd4}$; Here Korneev believes that Black has some compensation for the pawn, but after 11 $\text{Df1}$ I don’t see it.

6 $\text{Df3}$

With this move we transpose into a variation of the King’s Gambit Declined, which arises after 1 e4 e5 2 f4 $\text{Cc5}$ 3 $\text{Cf3}$ d6 4 $\text{Cc3}$ $\text{Cf6}$ 5 $\text{Cf4}$ $\text{Cc6}$ 6 d3. Theoretically speaking, Black hasn’t found a clear route to equality from here, and from a practical viewpoint White has scored quite reasonably from this position (57% on my database; the average for White is 55%).

Black now has three main moves:

B11: 6...$\text{Dg4}$
B12: 6...0-0
B13: 6...$\text{Da6}$

a) After 6...$\text{Dg4}$ White has no need to venture into the complications of 7 $\text{Dg5}$ (they may well be good for White), because 7 $\text{Dxe2}$ leads to a safe and substantial advantage, for example 7...$\text{Cf2}$+ 8 $\text{Cf1}$ $\text{Dd4}$ 9 $\text{Dxc4}$ $\text{Dxd4}$ 10 $\text{f5}$ $\text{Bh4}$ 11 g3 $\text{Wh3}$+ 12 $\text{Bh2}$ $\text{Bxg2}$+ 13 $\text{Cf1}$ $\text{Bc6}$ 14 $\text{Cf3}$ $\text{Df6}$ 15 $\text{Dg5}$ and Black is very cramped, Kopal-Kalivoda, Czech Team Championship 1995.

b) 6...$\text{Da5}$! (this move is underrated) 7
After 1. e4 b3! (7 f5?! allows 7... Qxc4 8 dxc4 b4! 9
Qd3 Qxc3+ 10 bxc3, after which White is left
with the so-called ‘Irish Pawn Centre’ –
not a recommendation!) 7... Qxb3 8 axb3 a6
9 Qe2 (preparing Qe3) and now:
   b1) 9... Qe7 10 Qe3 Qxe3 11 Wxe3 0-0
(11... Qd7?! 12 fx5 Qg4 13 Wd2 Qxe5 14
Qd5 gave White the initiative in Mitkov-
Rocha, Porto 2000) 12 0-0 and White has a
slight advantage.
   b2) 9... Qg4 10 fx5 (10 f5 h6 11 Qe3
Qd4 12 0-0 0-0 13 h3 Qxf3 14 Qxf3 Qe8
was equal in Tischbierek-Smagin, Dresden
1985) 10... Qxe5 11 Qe3 and White will con-
tinue with 0-0.
   c) 6... Qe6 7 Qb5! a6 (7... Qd7 8 Qa4 Qd4
9 Qxd7+ Qxd7 10 Qxc5 dxc5 11 0-0 Qxf3+
12 Qxf3 0-0 13 Qg3 gives White good at-
tacking chances on the kingside, Emm-
Anand, Oaekham 1986) 8 Qxc4+ bxc6 9 f5!
(9 fx5 dxe5 10 Qe2 and 11 Qe3 also prom-
ises an advantage – Black has no real com-
ensation for his split pawns on the queen-
side) 9... Qc8 (or 9... Qd7 10 Qe2 Qb8 11
Qd1 Qb5 12 c3 a5 13 Qe3 Qc8 14 0-0 Qa6
15 Qc4 Qb6 16 Qh1 Qxe3 17 Qxe3 Qd7 18
g4 f6 19 g5 with a clear advantage, Fedorov-
Norri, European Team Championship, Pula
1997) 10 h3 Qe7 11 Qg4

11... Qb7 12 Qe2 d5 13 Qd2 Qd7 14
0-0-0 d4 15 Qa4 Qd6 16 g5 and White has
the initiative on the kingside, W.Adams-
Yerhoff, Pittsburgh 1946.

B111) 6... Qg4
Pinning the knight. This is Black’s most
logical move and also the most popular.
7 Qa4!

White gets ready to exchange this knight
for the bishop on c5. With this done, White
will be able to castle kingside.
Black now has two main tries:
B111: 6... Qxf3
B112: 6... Qb6

Alternatively:
   a) 7 Qh5 8 Qxc5 dxc5 9 f5 Qf6 10 Qe3
Qd6 11 h3 Qxf3 12 Qxf3 Qa5 13 Qb5+ c6
14 Qa4 b5 15 Qd2! Qb7 16 Qb3 and White
was better, J.Kristiansen-Nielsen, Danish
   b) 7 Qd4 8 Qxc5 dxc5 9 Qc3! Qxf3+ 10
gxf3
10...\h5 (10...\textit{\texttt{x}xe4?} 11 0-0! wins material) 11 \textit{\texttt{w}e}2 (but now 11 fxe5?! is answered by 11...\textit{\texttt{w}xe4!}) 11...\textit{\texttt{w}d}6 (or 11...\textit{\texttt{w}e}7 12 0-0 0-0-0 13 \textit{\texttt{w}f}2 \textit{\texttt{d}7} 14 \textit{\texttt{w}g}3 and I like White, Pantaleoni-Molzahn, correspondence 1993) 12 \textit{\texttt{g}1} g6 13 fxe5 \textit{\texttt{x}xe5} 14 \textit{\texttt{e}3} and White's two bishops and pawn centre give him a clear advantage.

\textbf{B111})

7...\textit{\texttt{f}3} 8 \textit{\texttt{w}xf3} \textit{\texttt{d}4} 9 \textit{\texttt{w}d}1!

For the record, 9 \textit{\texttt{g}3}? is also promising, albeit in a more complicated way.

9...\textit{\texttt{b}5} 10 \textit{\texttt{xf}7}+

This sacrifice is much stronger than 10 \textit{\texttt{xc}5} bxc4! 11 fxe5 dxc5 12 exf6 \textit{\texttt{xf}6}, which looks at least equal for Black.

10...\textit{\texttt{xf}7} 11 \textit{\texttt{xc}5} \textit{\texttt{xc}5}

Black should accept the material. 11...\textit{\texttt{xf}4}? 12 \textit{\texttt{b}3} \textit{\texttt{d}6} (or 12...\textit{\texttt{xb}3} 13 axb3 g5 14 0-0, followed by g2-g3) 13 0-0 g5 14 g3! fxg3 15 \textit{\texttt{hxg}5} gxh2+ 16 \textit{\texttt{h}1} \textit{\texttt{x}g}5 17 \textit{\texttt{wh}5}+ \textit{\texttt{e}7} 18 \textit{\texttt{wxg}5} left Black in big trouble in the game Lane-S.Jackson, British Championship 1989.

12 fxe5 \textit{\texttt{d}7} 13 c3

It was the Russian grandmaster Yuri Balashov who came up with this move, which is more accurate than 13 0-0+ \textit{\texttt{g}8} 14 c3 \textit{\texttt{xe}5}!. As Tim Harding wrote in Bishop's Opening, Balashov's improvement appears to guarantee White a slight initiative at worst, and a winning attack if Black tries to hold his extra material. This is remarkable since White is undeveloped! Nothing much has happened in the past 28 years to alter this assessment.

\textbf{13...\textit{\texttt{d}6}}

If Black tries to return the piece immediately with 13...\textit{\texttt{xe}5}, White has the very strong reply 14 \textit{\texttt{h}5}+ and now

a) 14...\textit{\texttt{g}8} 15 \textit{\texttt{xe}5} \textit{\texttt{wh}4}+ (15...\textit{\texttt{c}2} loses after 16 \textit{\texttt{d}2} \textit{\texttt{xa}1} 17 \textit{\texttt{e}6}+ \textit{\texttt{f}8} 18 \textit{\texttt{f}1}+) 16 g3 \textit{\texttt{f}3}+ 17 \textit{\texttt{e}2} \textit{\texttt{xe}5} 18 \textit{\texttt{gxh}4} and White is a clear pawn ahead. Note that 18...\textit{\texttt{d}8} 19 \textit{\texttt{g}5} \textit{\texttt{xd}3} loses material after 20 \textit{\texttt{f}4}.

b) 14...\textit{\texttt{g}6} 15 \textit{\texttt{xe}5} \textit{\texttt{c}2}+ 16 \textit{\texttt{d}2} \textit{\texttt{xa}1} 17 \textit{\texttt{f}1}+ \textit{\texttt{g}8} 18 \textit{\texttt{e}6}+ \textit{\texttt{g}7} 19 \textit{\texttt{f}7}+ \textit{\texttt{h}6} 20 \textit{\texttt{h}3}+ \textit{\texttt{g}5} 21 \textit{\texttt{d}1} mate.

c) 14...\textit{\texttt{g}6} 15 \textit{\texttt{f}1}+ \textit{\texttt{e}8} 16 \textit{\texttt{g}5} \textit{\texttt{d}7} 17 \textit{\texttt{cxd}4} \textit{\texttt{xd}4} 18 0-0-0 and White has a clear plus – Black's king is stuck in the centre.

d) 14...\textit{\texttt{e}6} 15 \textit{\texttt{h}3}+! (15 \textit{\texttt{cxd}4} \textit{\texttt{xd}4} 16 \textit{\texttt{f}5}+ \textit{\texttt{d}6} 17 \textit{\texttt{f}4} \textit{\texttt{e}ad} 8 is unclear – Harding) 15...\textit{\texttt{f}7} (or 15...\textit{\texttt{d}6} 16 \textit{\texttt{cxd}4} \textit{\texttt{cxd}4} 17 \textit{\texttt{f}4} and Black's king is on a dizzy walk) 16 0-0+ \textit{\texttt{g}8} 17 \textit{\texttt{cxd}4} \textit{\texttt{xd}4}+ 18 \textit{\texttt{e}3} \textit{\texttt{wd}6} 19 \textit{\texttt{ad}1} and again Black is in big trouble, for example 19...\textit{\texttt{e}7} 20 \textit{\texttt{xc}5}! \textit{\texttt{xc}5}+ 21 \textit{\texttt{d}4} \textit{\texttt{b}6} 22 \textit{\texttt{wh}5}!

14 0-0+ \textit{\texttt{g}8}

Also possible is 14...\textit{\texttt{g}8} 15 d4 \textit{\texttt{cxd}4} 16 \textit{\texttt{cxd}4} \textit{\texttt{xe}5}?! (Korchnoi's idea; 16...\textit{\texttt{h}6} 17 \textit{\texttt{b}3} \textit{\texttt{e}8} 18 \textit{\texttt{e}3} leaves White with excellent compensation for the piece) 17 dxe5 \textit{\texttt{xd}1} 18 \textit{\texttt{xc}1} \textit{\texttt{f}7} and White has an endgame advantage, Rahman-Lodhi, Dhaka 1995.

15 d4 \textit{\texttt{cxd}4} 16 \textit{\texttt{cxd}4}

\textbf{see following diagram}

The stem game Balashov-Matanovic, Skopje 1970 concluded 16...\textit{\texttt{we}7}? 17 \textit{\texttt{e}3} \textit{\texttt{f}8} 18 d5 \textit{\texttt{xf}1}+ 19 \textit{\texttt{xf}1} \textit{\texttt{d}8} 20 e6 \textit{\texttt{f}6} 21 \textit{\texttt{c}1}! \textit{\texttt{xe}4} 22 \textit{\texttt{xb}5}+ c6 23 \textit{\texttt{xc}6}! \textit{\texttt{f}8} 24 \textit{\texttt{c}1} \textit{\texttt{g}8} 25 \textit{\texttt{c}7}! \textit{\texttt{d}6} 26 \textit{\texttt{e}8}+ \textit{\texttt{f}8} 27 \textit{\texttt{exg}7}+! 1-0. Instead of 16...\textit{\texttt{we}7}, Black should restrict White's advantage by giving
back the piece with 16...\&xe5! 17 dxe5 \&xd1 18 \&xd1 \&e7.

Alternatively:
a) 9 0-0 is the developing move White would like to play. Unfortunately Black can equalise with 9...\&xf3! (but not 9...\&d4? 10 fxe5 dxe5 11 \&xf7+, as in Mitkov-Mikhalevski, Mamaia 1991) 10 \&xf3 (10 gxf3 is answered by 10...\&a5, and 10 \&xf3 by 10...\&d4 11 \&d1 b5) 10...\&d4 11 \&g3? b5 12 c3 bxc4 13 cxd4 cxd3 14 \&xd3 0-0.

b) 9 a3? has the same motive as 9 c3 – to retain the c4-bishop, However, White has problems as the d4-square isn’t covered. After 9...exf4?! 10 \&xf4 \&h5? (10...d5?! 11 exd5 \&xd5 12 \&e4+ \&f8! was unclear in Finkel-Mikhalevski, Israel 1999) 11 \&e3 (11 \&g5 \&xf3 12 \&xf3 \&xg5 13 \&xf7+ \&d7 14 \&xh5 \&xg2 is probably a bit better for Black) 11...\&e5 12 \&b3 \&f6 Black has sufficient counterplay.

9...0-0

9...d5 10 exd5 \&xd5 11 h3! \&xf3 12 \&xf3 \&xf4 13 0-0 0-0 14 \&xf4 exf4 15 \&xf4 \&d7 16 d4 was better for White in Todorovic-Blaqojevic, Herceg Novi 2001; he has a strong centre and a superior minor piece.

Interesting, however, is the immediate 9...exf4?! 10 \&xf4

Now after 10...d5 11 exd5 \&xd5 12 \&e4+ \&f8 13 \&g3 White has a clear advantage.

Stronger, however, is 10...\&h5? and now:

a) 11 \&g5? with a further split:

a1) 11...\&xf3? 12 \&xf7+! \&f8 (12...\&xf7
Attacking 1...e5: The Bishop's Opening

loses to 13 \( \text{b}3+) 13 \text{wx}f3 \text{wx}g5 14 \text{dx}h5+ and White is a pawn ahead.

a2) 11...f6 12 \text{d}3 \text{e}5 13 \text{b}3 sees the point of inducing ...f7-f6: Black queen has no
route to the kingside.

a3) 11...\text{wx}g5! 12 \text{xf}7+ \text{e}7 13 \text{d}xg5 \text{hx}d1 14 \text{xf}1 (14 \text{hx}d1 \text{h}6 15 \text{ax}h5 \text{hxg}5
16 \text{e}2 \text{xa}2 looks equal) 14...\text{d}4 15 \text{c}4
\text{e}5 and Black will regain his pawn.

b) 11 \text{e}3 \text{e}5 12 \text{b}3! (12 0-0? \text{d}x\text{c}4
13 \text{dxc}4 \text{w}e7 was fine for Black in Zukertort-
Anderssen, Leipzig 1877, while 12 \text{b}5+ \text{c}6
13 \text{d}4 \text{xf}3 14 \text{g}x\text{f}3 \text{cxb}5 15 \text{dxe}5 \text{xe}5 16
\text{w}x\text{d}8+ \text{e}8 17 \text{xb}6 \text{d}3 looks equal)
12...\text{xf}3 13 \text{g}x\text{f}3. Now after 13...\text{h}4+ 14
\text{d}2 Keres assessed the position as better for
White. Instead Black should play 13...\text{f}6!
and now:

b1) 14 0-0 \text{d}4 15 \text{xf}4 \text{wx}f4 16 \text{d}4 \text{g}6
17 \text{e}1 was equal in De Vilder-Kroeze, Bus-
sum 1995.

b2) 14 \text{d}4? \text{wx}f3 (14...\text{xf}3+ 15 \text{e}2 \text{g}5
16 \text{d}5 \text{c}6 17 \text{e}5!) 15 \text{wx}f3 \text{d}x\text{f}3+ 16 \text{e}2
\text{h}4 17 \text{a}1 and the two bishops and open
lines gives White reasonable compensation
for the pawn.

10 0-0 \text{ex}f4

10...\text{d}5 11 \text{ex}d5 \text{d}x\text{d}5 12 \text{h}3 \text{xf}3 13
\text{wx}f3 \text{xf}4 14 \text{xf}4 \text{ex}f4 15 \text{fx}f4 is better
for White, as discussed in the note to Black's
9th move.

After 10...\text{d}5 White can keep the bishop
with 11 \text{b}5, for example 11...\text{e}7 12 \text{b}4
\text{c}6 13 \text{f}5 \text{d}5 14 \text{e}1 \text{a}7? 15 \text{a}4 \text{dxe}4 16
\text{dxe}4 \text{e}8 17 \text{b}3 and White kept the ad-
vantage in Tait-Hawkins, correspondence
1993.

11 \text{xf}4 \text{h}5

After 11...\text{e}5 12 \text{xe}5 \text{dxe}5 13 \text{h}3 \text{xf}3
14 \text{wx}f3 \text{e}7 15 \text{f}2! White will follow up
with \text{af}1 and perhaps g2-g4-g5, increasing
the pressure on f7.

12 \text{e}3

Also possible is 12 \text{d}2? \text{xf}4 13 \text{xf}4
and now:

a) 13...\text{xf}3 14 \text{xf}3 \text{e}5 15 \text{g}3! \text{h}8
(15...\text{xc}4? loses to 16 \text{h}6 \text{g}6 17 \text{h}3!) 16
\text{b}3 and White is better, Kuijf-Leventic,
Mitropa Cup 1995.

b) 13...\text{e}6! 14 \text{xe}6 fxe6 15 \text{g}4 \text{f}6 16
\text{d}4 \text{e}7 and Black has equalised, Torres-
Pergericht, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

12...\text{e}5?

After 13 \text{b}3 \text{h}8 (Arizmendi Martinez-
Jonkman, Reykjavik 2000) Black has promis-
ing counterplay with ...f7-f5.

The queen sacrifice with 13 \text{xe}5? looks
more critical. Play continues with 13...\text{xd}1
14 \text{xf}7 \text{e}7 (14...\text{xf}7 15 \text{xf}7 is good for
White) 15 \text{xd}6+ \text{h}8 16 \text{d}7+ \text{g}8 17
\text{xd}1 (naturally White can take a draw via a
perpetual, but why not play for more?
17...\text{xf}6 18 \text{e}5 \text{b}5 19 \text{b}3 \text{c}5 (19...\text{xf}7 20
\text{d}4!) and now, instead of 20 \text{d}1 \text{c}4!,
which was unclear in Mitkof-Sharif, Lyon
1993, White should play 20 \text{xc}5!! (Fritz
20...\text{xc}5+ 21 \text{d}4, when White has the ad-
vantage despite having only a minor piece for
the queen. For example 21...\text{b}6 22 \text{exe}6
\text{exe}6 23 \text{e}5+ \text{g}7 24 \text{d}7, 21...\text{a}7 22
\text{exe}6, \text{exe}6 23 \text{d}3!, or 21...\text{e}7 22 \text{exe}6 \text{exe}6
23 \text{d}3! \text{xf}7 24 \text{xf}6.

B12)

6...0-0

A sensible looking move, but in some
ways Black is just 'casting into it'.

7 \text{f}5

Establishing the impressive pawn wedge,
which is the basis of a quick kingside attack. White can also play for an advantage, as against 6...g4, with the move 7 a4, for example 7...b6 8 axb6 axb6 9 fxe5 (9 0-0 a5! is annoying, while after 9 a3? exf4 10 xf4 d5 11 exd5 e8+ 12 f1 axd5 13 dxc7 g4 Black has compensation for the pawn) 9...d5 10 axe5 dxe5 11 g5 (11 0-0? wdd4+ 12 h1 axe4! 11 wff3?) 11...d6 12 w3 13 g3 14 h4 and White has an edge, Ochsner-A.Christiansen, Aarhus 1983.

7...h6

Black takes steps to prevent the annoying pin with g5. Alternatives include:

- 7...a5 8 g5 c6 9 a3 b5 (9...xc4 10 dxc4 h6 11 h4 a5 12 w2 a4 13 g4 gave White a strong attack in Nun-Lehner, Oberwart 1992) 10 a2 b7 11 g4 and White's initiative is very threatening, Becker-Lejlic, Berlin 1997.

- 7...d4 8 g5 c6 9 a3 h6 10 h4 b5 11 a2 a5 12 g4 g5 13 xg6 xg4 14 xf7+ w7 15 xxd4 xxd4 (Fischer-Puto, Cicero simultaneous 1964) and now the great man could have won with 16 xf6+ xf6 17 xg4 xg4 18 d1.

8 d5

8 w2?! is dubious on account of 8...d4 9 xxd4 exd4! 10 d5 (or 10 a4 xg5!) 10...xd5 11 xd5 c6 12 b3 xg5!.

8 a3?, giving the bishop an escape square on a2, is playable though. The game Jakubowski-Lopusiewicz, Koszalin 1998, continued 8...d4 9 xxd4 exd4 10 d5 xxd5 11 c6 12 b3 w4+ 13 g3 w3 14 w3 15 e8 16 f1 d5 17 d2 d6 18 d2 d7 18 0-0-0 dxe4 19 dxe4 c5 20 c4 h5 21 w3! w7 22 g5 and White went on to win the game.

8...d4

Black should consider 8...a5?, although after 9 xf6+ xf6 10 g4 11 dxc4 White still has a powerful attack.

9 xfx6+ wfx6 10 xxd4 xxd4 11 c3 b6 12 w5!

In the game Hebden-Martinovsky, London 1986, Black played 12...c6, and now Gary Lane's suggestion of 13 g4 gives White an awesome attack.

B13)

6...a6

With this move Black expends a tempo in order to nullify the threat of g4 and thus he preserves his dark-squared bishop. White has quite a few ways to proceed now, but I will just be concentrating on two suggestions:

B131: 7 f5

B132: 7 d5

B131)

7 f5 h6

Once again Black takes steps to prevent g5.

The other possibility is here to attack
the bishop with 7...\texttt{\underline{a}a5}, for example 8.\texttt{a3†} (8.\texttt{\underline{g}5 b5!} 9.\texttt{\underline{b}3 c6} 10.\texttt{\underline{d}2 \underline{b}6} looks unclear) 8...\texttt{\underline{x}xc4} 9.\texttt{\underline{x}xc4 h6} (or 9...\texttt{c6 10.\underline{\underline{g}5} b5} 11.\texttt{\underline{d}3 \underline{b}xc4} 12.\texttt{\underline{w}xc4} a5 13.\texttt{\underline{x}xf6 gxf6} 14.\texttt{\underline{a}4 \underline{a}6} 15.\texttt{\underline{w}c3 \underline{a}7} 16.\texttt{\underline{w}xc6+ \underline{\underline{e}7}}) 17 0-0-0 with a clear advantage, Schlechter-Janowski, Budapest 1896). After 9...\texttt{h6} White can proceed in two ways:

a) 10.\texttt{\underline{w}d3} 0-0 11.\texttt{\underline{\underline{e}3}} gives White an edge according to ECO (but not 11.\texttt{\underline{f}3}! as in Nikolaev-Faibisovich, USSR 1975).

b) 10.\texttt{\underline{w}e2†} also looks reasonable, for example 10...\texttt{\underline{d}7} 11.\texttt{\underline{\underline{e}3} \underline{\underline{x}e3}} 12.\texttt{\underline{\underline{x}e3} b5} 13.\texttt{c5} 0-0? (13...\texttt{\underline{b}8} is stronger) 14 0-0-0 \texttt{\underline{w}b8} 15.\texttt{\underline{g}4}! \texttt{\underline{\underline{x}g4}} 16.\texttt{\underline{d}2}! \texttt{\underline{w}h8} 17.\texttt{\underline{\underline{h}1}} \texttt{\underline{\underline{d}6}}

18.\texttt{\underline{x}g7!} \texttt{\underline{x}g7} 19.\texttt{\underline{g}1+ \underline{\underline{h}7} 20.\texttt{\underline{\underline{g}5†} \underline{\underline{h}8}} (20...\texttt{\underline{x}h5?} 21.\texttt{\underline{w}xg5 wins}) 21.\texttt{\underline{e}6! \underline{\underline{h}7} 22.\texttt{\underline{x}xh6 \underline{g}8} 23.\texttt{\underline{g}8}! \texttt{\underline{x}g7} 24.\texttt{\underline{w}xg7 mate, Hartston-Richardson, London 1983.}

8...\texttt{\underline{\underline{d}5}}

It's also possible to keep the light-squared bishop with 8.\texttt{a3†} and now:

a) 8...\texttt{\underline{g}4} 9.\texttt{\underline{w}e2 \underline{\underline{\underline{f}2†}} 10.\texttt{\underline{\underline{f}1} \underline{a7} 11.\texttt{\underline{f}6}} 12.\texttt{\underline{g}4} and again Black is cramped on the kingside, Buchanan-Robertson, Scottish Championship 1996

b) 8...\texttt{\underline{g}6†} 9.\texttt{\underline{x}g6 \underline{x}g6} 10.\texttt{\underline{\underline{d}5} \underline{\underline{x}d5}} 11.\texttt{\underline{x}d5 \underline{\underline{w}e7}} (Perez-Garcia Bueno, Mondariz 2000) 12.\texttt{\underline{w}e2! \underline{\underline{e}6} 13.\texttt{\underline{\underline{c}6†} \underline{bxc6} 14.\texttt{\underline{\underline{e}3}} \underline{\underline{x}e3} 15.\texttt{\underline{\underline{x}e3}} and I prefer White: it's not clear what Black should do with his king.

c) 8...\texttt{\underline{e}7} 9.\texttt{\underline{w}e2} 11.\texttt{\underline{g}6} 10.\texttt{\underline{x}g6} \texttt{\underline{x}g6} 11.\texttt{\underline{d}2} \texttt{\underline{h}5} 12.\texttt{\underline{\underline{g}7} 13.\texttt{\underline{f}1} \texttt{\underline{e}6} 14.\texttt{\underline{x}e6} \texttt{\underline{x}e6} 15 0-0-0 16.\texttt{\underline{\underline{e}3} \underline{\underline{w}e7} 17.\texttt{\underline{x}xc5} \texttt{\underline{d}x5} 18.\texttt{\underline{w}f2} 19.\texttt{\underline{d}2} with an edge, Schiffer-Von Bardeleben, Frankfurt 1887

d) 8...\texttt{\underline{w}e7†} 9.\texttt{\underline{d}5} \texttt{\underline{x}d5} 10.\texttt{\underline{\underline{x}d5} \underline{\underline{d}7}} 11.\texttt{\underline{c}3} 0-0-0 12.\texttt{\underline{w}e2} 13.\texttt{b4 \underline{\underline{b}6} 14.\texttt{\underline{f}xg6 \underline{\underline{f}xg6}} 15.\texttt{\underline{\underline{e}3}! \underline{\underline{x}e3}} 16.\texttt{\underline{w}xe3 \underline{\underline{b}8}} 17 0-0-0 \texttt{\underline{d}f8} 18.\texttt{\underline{a}4} and White's pawn attack on the queenside is virtually decisive, Emmas-Olesen, Hillerod 1995

e) 8...\texttt{\underline{d}4†} (a suggestion of the Scottish grandmaster Paul Motwani) 9.\texttt{\underline{\underline{x}d4} \underline{\underline{d}4} 10.\texttt{\underline{\underline{d}5} (10.\texttt{\underline{f}3†})} 10...\texttt{\underline{\underline{x}d5} 11.\texttt{\underline{\underline{x}d5} 12.\texttt{\underline{\underline{b}3} 13.\texttt{b6?}}} with an unclear position.

8...\texttt{\underline{a}5}

Given the chance, Black should whip the bishop off. Instead 8...\texttt{\underline{\underline{d}4}} 9.\texttt{\underline{\underline{f}3}+} 10.\texttt{\underline{x}f3} 11.\underline{\underline{x}f6+} \texttt{\underline{w}xf6} 12.\texttt{\underline{g}4} 13.\texttt{b5} 14.\texttt{\underline{\underline{b}7} 15.\texttt{\underline{h}4} 16.\texttt{\underline{g}5} 17.\texttt{\underline{\underline{e}7}} 16.\texttt{\underline{f}6} \texttt{\underline{g}6} gave Black many problems in Tomescu-Bracaglia, Padova 1999.

9.\texttt{\underline{b}4†}

9.\texttt{\underline{w}e2} 10.\texttt{\underline{\underline{b}3} \underline{\underline{x}b3} 11.\underline{\underline{x}f6+} \texttt{\underline{w}xf6} 12.\texttt{\underline{a}xb3 \underline{\underline{b}7} 13.\texttt{\underline{e}3}} as in Gallagher-Davidovic, Szolnok 1987, is probably enough for a small advantage.

9...\texttt{\underline{\underline{d}5}}

English GM Stuart Conquest gives the line 9...\texttt{\underline{\underline{x}c4} 10.\underline{\underline{x}f6+} \texttt{\underline{w}xf6} 11.\texttt{\underline{b}x\texttt{c}5 \underline{\underline{a}5} 12.\texttt{\underline{\underline{b}2}, assessing the position as slightly better for White.}

10.\texttt{\underline{b}x\texttt{c}5}
The game Conquest-Smejkal, German Bundesliga 1996, continued 10...\&xf6 11 \&b3 dxc5 12 \&xe5 \&xb3 13 axb3 \&d4!? (13...\&xf5 14 \&b2 \&e6 15 0-0 gives White good play on the dark squares) 14 \&xe4 15 dx e4 \&xe4+ 16 \&e2 \&xe2+ 17 \&xe2 \&xf5 18 \&d2! and White's knight was worth slightly more than Black's three extra pawns.

In his notes to the game Conquest suggests 10...\&xc4, giving the unclear continuation 11 exd5 \&a5 12 \&d2 b6 13 c6 (13 exb6 cxb6 14 \&xa5 bxa5 15 0-0 \&xf5 16 \&xe5 dxe5 17 \&xf5 \&xd5 18 d4 \&xd4+ 19 \&xd4 exd4 20 \&e1 looks equal) 13...\&xf5 14 0-0 0-0 15 \&e1.

B132)

7 \&d5

This move has been played by the young Belarusian grandmaster Alexei Fedorov. It certainly makes more sense to move this knight to d5, now that \&a4 is no longer effective.

7...\&g4

Alternatives include:

a) 7...\&e6!? 8 \&xf6+ \&xf6 9 f5 \&xc4 10 \&g5 and White wins. This trick is well worth remembering.

b) 7...\&b5? 8 \&xf6+ \&xf6 9 \&d5 \&b7 10 fxe5 dxe5 11 \&f1 0-0 12 \&g5 1-0 Delanoy-Carrasco, Paris 1994.

c) 7...\&xd5 8 \&xd5 0-0 (after 8...\&e7 9 c3 \&g4 10 h3 \&xf3 11 \&xf3 White will con-
tinue with \&d2 and 0-0-0, while after 8...\&e6 9 \&xc6+ bxc6 10 fxe5 dxe5 White plays 11 \&e2 and \&e3) 9 f5 (here comes the attack!) 9...\&d4 10 c3 (10 \&xd4 \&xd4 11 \&h5 c6 12 \&b3 d5 13 c3 \&a7 14 \&f3 dx e4 15 dx e4 \&b6 16 \&d2 c5 17 0-0-0 was also good for White, Hrsee-Wiechert, Kirchheim 1990) 10...\&xf3+ 11 \&xf3 c6 12 \&b3 b5 13 h4 \&h8 14 g4 \&a7 15 \&g5 f6 (or 15...\&b6 16 f6! g6 17 \&h6) 16 \&d2 d5 17 0-0-0 and White's attack is stronger, Al.Sokolov-Karpachev, Nizhni Novgorod 1998.

d) 7...\&g4!? 8 \&e2 \&f2+ 9 \&f1 (this looks stronger than 9 \&d1, which was played in Rahman-Booth, Los Angeles 1991) 9...\&d4 10 \&xd4 \&xd4 11 c3 \&a7 12 h3 (12 f5?) 12...\&f6 13 fxe5 dxe5 14 \&g5 \&e6 15 \&f3 \&xd5 16 \&xd5 c6 17 \&b3 and White can follow up with \&e2 and \&h1.

8 c3

8...0-0

Again Black has a few alternatives:

a) 8...\&h6? (preparing ...\&e6) 9 f5 (9 h3 \&e6) 9...g6 10 fxe6 fxe6 11 b4 \&a7 12 \&e2 and White will play \&e3.

b) 8...\&xd5 9 \&xd5 0-0 (9...\&xf4 10 0-0-0 11 d4 \&b6 12 0-0 was good for White in Sonnet-Poupinel, correspondence – Black's bishop on b6 is out of the game) 10 h3 (10 f5?) 10...\&e6 11 \&xc6 bxc6 12 f5 \&c8 (Jackson-Bisguier, Ventura 1971) and here I like 13 \&e2, planning \&e3.

c) 8...\&h5 9 f5! h6 (9...\&e7 10 \&g5 f6 11
\( \text{\#e3 is good for White - Bangiev} \) 10 b4! \( \text{\#a7} \) 11 \( \text{\#e3} \) \( \text{\#e7} \) (after 11...\( \text{\#xe3} \) 12 \( \text{\#xe3} \) \( \text{\#xf3} \) 13 \( \text{\#xf3} \) \( \text{\#f6} \) 14 0-0 0-0 White will continue with 15 \( \text{\#h1} \) and g4-g5) 12 \( \text{\#xa7} \) \( \text{\#xd5} \) 13 \( \text{\#xd5} \) \( \text{\#xa7} \) 14 0-0 \( \text{\#f4} \) 15 \( \text{\#b3} \) h5 16 d4 \( \text{\#e7} \) 17 \( \text{\#d2} \) h4 18 \( \text{\#ae1} \) and White was better, Fedorov-Fyllingen, Aars 1999.

After 8...0-0 White has a few promising tries:

a) 9 h3 \( \text{\#xf3} \) (but not 9...\( \text{\#e6}! \) 10 \( \text{\#xf6+} \) \( \text{\#xf6} \) 11 f5 \( \text{\#xc4} \) 12 \( \text{\#g5!} \) 10 \( \text{\#xf3} \) \( \text{\#a5} \) 11 b4 \( \text{\#xc4} \) 12 \( \text{\#xf6+} \) \( \text{\#xf6} \) 13 bxc5 \( \text{\#a5} \) 14 \( \text{\#xd6} \) \( \text{\#xd6} \) 15 0-0.

b) 9 b4 \( \text{\#a7} \) 10 h3 \( \text{\#xf3} \) 11 \( \text{\#xf3} \) \( \text{\#xd5} \) 12 \( \text{\#xd5} \) \( \text{\#xf4} \) 13 \( \text{\#xf4} \) \( \text{\#f6} \) 14 \( \text{\#c1} \) and I like White's bishop pair, Sebestyen-Hermann, Sopot 1991.

c) 9 f5 \( \text{\#b8?!} \) 10 h3 (10 \( \text{\#g5?!} \) 10...\( \text{\#xf3} \) 11 \( \text{\#xf3} \) \( \text{\#xd5} \) 12 \( \text{\#xd5} \) c6 13 \( \text{\#b3} \) a5 14 \( \text{\#g4} \) \( \text{\#h8} \) 15 \( \text{\#g5} \) f6 16 \( \text{\#d2} \) a4 17 \( \text{\#e6} \) and again White is a little better, Laird-Sharif, Jakarta 1978.

B2)

4...\( \text{\#a5} \)

Despite Black breaking the 'golden rule' of moving the same piece twice in the opening, 4...\( \text{\#a5} \) should not be underestimated. We've already seen how effective it can be to exchange this knight for the light-squared bishop, so expending a couple of tempi to do this is by no means an extravagance. Indeed, many white players see this as a spoiler's move, as the positions that arise are not as sharp as the ones arising after 4...\( \text{\#b4} \) or 4...\( \text{\#c5} \) 5 f4!

5 \( \text{\#f3?!} \)

A speciality of the Australian grandmaster Ian Rogers, this move has also recently found support elsewhere. The thinking behind this is that the queen is well placed on f3, so White moves it there before playing \( \text{\#ge2} \).

The older line is 5 \( \text{\#ge2} \) \( \text{\#xc4} \) (5...c6 is also possible) 6 dxc4 \( \text{\#c5} \) 7 0-0 (but not 7 \( \text{\#g5?} \) \( \text{\#xf2+} \) ) 7...d6 8 \( \text{\#d3} \) and now:

a) 8...c6 9 b3! (9 \( \text{\#a4?!} \) 9...\( \text{\#e6} \) 10 \( \text{\#a4} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) (10...\( \text{\#b6?} \) 11 \( \text{\#a3} \) \( \text{\#c7} \) 12 \( \text{\#ad1} \) puts lots of pressure on d6) 11 \( \text{\#xc5} \) \( \text{\#xc5} \) 12 \( \text{\#e3} \) b6! (12...\( \text{\#e7} \) 13 \( \text{\#a3} \) b6 14 \( \text{\#xc5} \) dxc5 15 f4 gives White an bigger advantage) 13 f4 \( \text{\#f6} \) 14 \( \text{\#a3} \) \( \text{\#b7} \) 15 \( \text{\#c3} \) (15 f5??) 15...\( \text{\#c7} \) 16 \( \text{\#ad1} \) 0-0-0 17 \( \text{\#b2} \)
and White is more comfortable, Short-Karpov, Tilburg 1991.

b) 8...\(\text{\textasciicircum}e6\) (this seems more reliable than 8...\(c6\)) 9 \(b3\) 0-0 10 \(\text{\textasciicircum}e3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}xe3\) 11 \(\text{\textasciicircum}x\text{c}3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}h8\) 12 \(\text{\textasciicircum}d1\) (12 \(f4\)?) 12...\(b6\) 13 \(h3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}d7\) 14 \(\text{\textasciicircum}g3\) with an equal position, Tischbierek-Kuzmin, Biel 1993.

5...\(\text{\textasciicircum}x\text{c}4\) 6 \(\text{dxc}4\) \(d6\)

6...\(\text{\textasciicircum}b4\)? is interesting. Rogers-Tunasy, Singapore 1997, continued 7 \(\text{\textasciicircum}ge2\) \(d6\) 8 \(h3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}e6\) 9 \(b3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}d7\) 10 0-0 0-0 11 \(\text{\textasciicircum}g3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}f6\) 12 \(\text{\textasciicircum}xf6\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}xf6\) 13 \(\text{\textasciicircum}b2\) and a roughly equal ending was reached.

7 \(\text{\textasciicircum}ge2\)

If White wants to avoid any \(\text{\textasciicircum}g4\) ideas, then playing 7 \(h3\) now looks like a good idea.

7...\(\text{\textasciicircum}e6\)

Or 7...\(\text{\textasciicircum}g4\) 8 \(\text{\textasciicircum}g3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}xe2\) 9 \(\text{\textasciicircum}xe2\) (White can get away with ‘casting by hand’ as the centre is fairly closed) 9...\(\text{\textasciicircum}e7\) 10 \(\text{\textasciicircum}d1\) 0-0 11 \(\text{\textasciicircum}f1\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}d7\) 12 \(\text{\textasciicircum}g1\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}e6\) 13 \(b3\) \(c6\) 14 \(a4\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}d8\) 15 \(a5\) \(a6\) 16 \(h3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}c7\) with a level position, Rogers-Beliavsky, Polanica Zdroj 1996.

8 \(\text{\textasciicircum}b3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}e7\)

After 8...\(c6\) 9 \(\text{\textasciicircum}e3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}e7\) 10 \(h3\) 0-0 11 \(g4\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}a5\) 12 \(\text{\textasciicircum}d2\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}c7\) 13 \(\text{\textasciicircum}g4\)? White can play for a kingside attack.

9 \(\text{\textasciicircum}h3\) 0-0 10 0-0 \(c6\)

Gaining some control over \(d5\) but, at the same time, weakening the \(d6\)-pawn. A.Ledger-Spanton, Port Erin 1998 went instead 10...\(\text{\textasciicircum}d7\) 11 \(\text{\textasciicircum}g3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}g5\) 12 \(\text{\textasciicircum}d5\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}xc1\) 13 \(\text{\textasciicircum}xc1\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}xd5\) 14 \(\text{\textasciicircum}xd5\) \(g6\) 15 \(c4\) \(a5\) 16 \(\text{\textasciicircum}e1\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}g5\) 17 \(\text{\textasciicircum}g4\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}xg4\) 18 \(hxg4\) and White held an endgame advantage. The rest of the game is quite instructive: 18...\(\text{\textasciicircum}b6\) 19 \(\text{\textasciicircum}f3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}g7\) 20 \(\text{\textasciicircum}f2\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}f6\) 21 \(a3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}d7\) 22 \(\text{\textasciicircum}c3\) \(h8\) 23 \(h1\) \(h6\) 24 \(\text{\textasciicircum}e3\) \(h8\) 25 \(\text{\textasciicircum}e2\) \(a7\) 26 \(c\text{c}1\) \(d5\) 27 \(b1\) \(c8\) 28 \(c\text{c}3\) \(d7\) 29 \(b5\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}aa8\) 30 \(c2\) \(h2\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}f6\) 31 \(h1\) \(h5\) 32 \(g5\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}d7\) 33 \(g4\) \(hxg4\) 34 \(\text{\textasciicircum}xc7!\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}a8\) 35 \(d6\) 1-0.

11 \(\text{\textasciicircum}d1\) \(w\text{c}7\) 12 \(d3\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}d8\) 13 \(a4\) \(a5\) 14 \(\text{\textasciicircum}a3\)

see following diagram

White's position is slightly more comfortable; Black must always be aware of pressure on his vulnerable \(d6\)-pawn. The game Rogers-Sinclair, New Zealand Championship, continued 14...\(\text{\textasciicircum}d7\) 15 \(d2\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}ad8\) 16 \(d5!\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}xd5\) 17 \(\text{\textasciicircum}xd5\) \(c8\) 18 \(\text{\textasciicircum}e4\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}xd5\) 19 \(\text{\textasciicircum}xd5\) \(b6\) 20 \(\text{\textasciicircum}e1\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}d8\) 21 \(\text{\textasciicircum}e2\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}a8\) 22 \(\text{\textasciicircum}f5\) \(c7\) 23 \(\text{\textasciicircum}c7\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}e3\) 24 \(\text{\textasciicircum}c8\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}d8\) 25 \(\text{\textasciicircum}fa3\) \(d8\) 26 \(\text{\textasciicircum}ec8\) \(g4\) 27 \(\text{\textasciicircum}g3\) and Rogers eventually converted his advantage.

This move is considered by many leading players to be Black's safest response at move four. I also gave this as my recommendation for Black in Play the Open Games as Black. By pinning the knight Black prepares the freeing advance...\(d7-d5\), which in turn makes White very wary of opening up too quickly with \(f2-f4\). For example, the immediate 5 \(\text{\textasciicircum}f4?\) \(d5\) \(\text{\textasciicircum}xd5\) 7 \(\text{\textasciicircum}ge2\) \(d4\) gives Black very
active play.

5 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}2 \)

Protecting the knight on c3 and keeping the option open of playing f2-f4. 5 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}2 \) is sharper than the alternatives 5 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{g}5 \) and 5 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}3 \).

5...d5

The most consistent reply. Against other moves White can castle and then play for f2-f4. For example, 5...0-0 6 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{g}5 \) h6 7 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}f6 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}f6 \) 8 0-0 d6 9 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}5 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}8 \) 10 c3 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{a}5 \) 11 b4 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{b}6 \) 12 a4 a6 13 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}b6 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}b6 \) 14 f4 and White was better, Malivaneck-Kulhanek, Czech Team Championship 1998.

6 exd5 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}5 \) 7 0-0

7...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}6 \)

Protecting the knight is the most popular choice, but Black does have two major alternatives:

a) 7...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}c3 \) 8 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}c3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}c3 \) 9 bxc3 0-0 10 f4! \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{a}5 \) 11 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{b}3 \) exf4 12 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xb}3 \) 13 axb3 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}5 \) (or 13...f6 14 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{h}5 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}6 \) 15 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}8 \) 16 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{c}5 \) ! and White won a pawn in Mirumian-Biolek, Czech Team Championship 1998) 14 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}1 \) f6 15 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{g}3 \) c5 16 c4! (White has a nice diamond shaped pawn structure!) 16...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}6 \) 17 c3 b6 18 d4 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}4 \) 19 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}d4 \) b5 20 d5 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{c}5 \) + 21 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{h}1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}8 \) 22 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}7 \) 23 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}4 \) and White's passed pawns are very threatening, Lengyel-Von Buelow, Vienna 1996.

b) 7...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}c3 \) 8 bxc3 and now:

b1) 8...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}6 \)?! 9 f4 (or 9 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{g}3 \) 0-0 10 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{h}5 \) !?) 9...0-0 10 f5 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{h}4 \)! (10...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{a}5 \) looks stronger) 11 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}5 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}7 \) 12 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{h}5 \) 13 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}1 \) f6 14 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{h}8 \) 15 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}3 \) and White has the makings of a strong kingside attack, Levitsky-Nikolaev, Kiev 1903.

b2) 8...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{c}7 \) 9 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{g}3 \) (9 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}4 \) ?) 9...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{a}5 \) 10 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{b}3 \) 0-0 11 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{h}5 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}b3 \) 12 axb3 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}8 \) 13 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}6 \) 14 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}2 \) (there doesn't seem too much wrong with grabbing a pawn by 14 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}e5 \) 14...f6 15 d4 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}6 \) 16 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}7 \) 17 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) 18 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{b}4 \) 19 c3 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}8 \) 20 c4 and White was more active, A.Ledger-Mestel, British Championship 1997.

b3) 8...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{c}5 \) 9 d4!? (9 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{g}3 \) 0-0 10 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{h}4 \) 11 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}6 \) 12 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{c}2 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}7 \) 13 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{b}1 \) b6 was equal in D.Ledger-Kennaugh, British Championship 1998, but White could try 10 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{h}5 \) !?.

After 9 d4 it's very risky for Black to accept the pawn sacrifice:

b31) 9...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) 10 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) 11 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) (after 11...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) 12 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{a}3 \) looks strong – 12...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xa}1 \) loses after 13 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}2 \) + \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}6 \) 14 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}6 \) 15 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{b}3 \) + \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}7 \) 16 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}1 \) ) 12 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}2 \) + \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{f}8 \) 13 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{e}5 \) 14 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xc}5 \) + \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xc}5 \) 15 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}1 \) and White has more than enough compensation for the pawn.

b32) 9...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{d}6 \) 10 a4!? 0-0 11 a5 a6 12 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{g}3 \) was interesting in Richards-Ford, British League 1999. Note that it's too risky for Black to try and win a pawn with 12...\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{x}g3 \), as after 14 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{fxg}3 \) !? \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) + 15 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd}4 \) 16 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{a}3 \) White keeps the advan-
After 7...e6 I'm giving two possibilities for White.

**B31:** 8 \( \Box x d 5 \)
**B32:** 8 \( \Box e 4 ! ? \)

**B31)**

8 \( \Box x d 5 \)

Traditionally this has been White's most popular choice. The knight is removed from d5 in preparation for f2-f4.

8...\( \Box x d 5 \) 9 f4

**9...0-0**

Preparing to castle queenside with 9...\( \Box d 7 \) is probably too slow. White can immediately gain a tempo with 10 \( \Box x d 5 \), and after 10...\( \Box x d 5 \) 11 fxe5 0-0-0 12 c3 \( \Box e 7 \) 13 d4 \( \Box x e 5 \) 14 \( \Box f 4 \) \( \Box d 7 \) 15 \( \Box b 3 \) White is in control.

10 f5

The point of White's previous play. Instead of meekly exchanging on e5, the f-pawn moves further forward and acts as a spearhead for a white attack on the kingside.

10...\( \Box x c 3 \)

A difficult decision to have to make. With this move Black gives up the bishop pair and cedes the d4-square as a possible outpost. On the other hand, White's queenside pawn structure is compromised, and, if kept, the dark-squared bishop could actually prove to be a liability. The other main option is 10...f6 and now:

a) 11 \( \Box g 3 \) \( \Box f 7 \) 12 \( \Box c e 4 \) (12 \( \Box c 3 \) \( \Box a 5 \) 13 \( \Box h 1 \) \( \Box b 6 \) 14 \( \Box d 2 \) a5 15 a3 \( \Box d 4 \) 16 \( \Box c 1 \) \( \Box e 7 \) 17 \( \Box c e 4 \) c5 18 \( \Box g 4 \) \( \Box f d 8 \) 19 \( \Box e 3 \) a4 20 \( \Box f 2 \) \( \Box a 6 \) was unclear in Mitkov-Motwani, Yerevan Olympiad 1996) 12...\( \Box h 8 \) 13 a3 \( \Box a 5 \) 14 \( \Box h 1 \) \( \Box x d 4 \) 15 \( \Box e 3 \) with a tense position, Mitkov-Norri, European Team Championship, Pula 1997

b) 11 \( \Box x d 5 \) (it seems logical to eliminate Black's light-squared bishop) 11...\( \Box x d 5 \) 12 \( \Box g 3 \) and now:

b1) 12...\( \Box c 5 + \) 13 \( \Box h 1 \) \( \Box a d 8 \) 14 \( \Box e 4 \) \( \Box b 6 \) 15 \( \Box d 2 \) and here Black should offer the exchange of bishops with 15...\( \Box a 5 ! \). Instead Emms-Eames, London 1997, continued 15...\( \Box d 4 ? \), which lost material after 16 c4! \( \Box c 6 \) 17 c5 \( \Box x c 5 \) 18 \( \Box c 1 \) \( b 6 \) 19 b4.

b2) 12...\( \Box f 7 \) 13 \( \Box e 4 \) \( \Box f 8 \) 14 \( \Box e 3 \) \( b 6 \) 15 \( \Box h 5 \) was better for White in Kosteniuk-Shchekachev, Moscow 2000 – White can follow up with \( \Box f 3 - h 3 \).

11 bxc3 f6 12 \( \Box g 3 \)

12 c4?! is inaccurate: Emms-Parker, Cambridge 1996, continued 12...\( \Box f 7 \) 13 \( \Box b 1 \) \( \Box h 5 ! \) 14 \( \Box e 1 \) \( \Box x e 2 \) 15 \( \Box x e 2 \) \( b 6 \) 16 \( \Box e 3 \) and now instead of 16...\( \Box d 4 \), Black should play 16...\( \Box d 6 \) 17 \( \Box f 3 \) \( \Box d 4 \) 18 \( \Box x d 4 \) \( \Box x d 4 + \) 19 \( \Box f 2 \) \( \Box f d 8 \), when if anything Black is better due to White's inferior pawn structure.

12...\( \Box e 8 \)

12...\( \Box e 7 \) 13 c4 \( \Box c 6 \) 14 \( \Box a 3 \) \( \Box d 7 \) 15 \( \Box g 4 \) looks promising for White.

13 \( \Box g 4 \) \( \Box h 8 \)
We are following the game A.Ledger-Twyble, British League 1999. After 14 a4 \textbackslash{w}d7 15 \textbackslash{a}a3 \textbackslash{m}ad8 16 \textbackslash{m}ae1 e4?! a very unclear position arose.

\textbf{B32)}

\textbf{8 \textbackslash{a}e4}

This move has been played with some success by the young Romanian player Vigen Mirumian. I think I underestimated the strength of this move when studying it for \textit{Play the Open Games as Black}. Objectively speaking, Black should be okay, but he has to play accurately.

\textbf{8...\textbackslash{a}e7}

Alternatively:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [a] 8...h6 9 \textbackslash{g}g3 \textbackslash{w}d7?! 10 \textbackslash{h}h5! 0-0-0 (10...0-0 allows 11 \textbackslash{x}d5 followed by \textbackslash{f}f6+) 11 \textbackslash{x}g7 \textbackslash{g}g4 12 f3 f5 13 \textbackslash{x}xf4 \textbackslash{x}xe4 14 dxe4 \textbackslash{w}xg7 15 \textbackslash{x}d5 \textbackslash{c}c5+ 16 \textbackslash{h}h1 and White went on to win in Mirumian-Brestak, Komarno 1997
  \item [b] 8...\textbackslash{w}d7 9 \textbackslash{g}g5 0-0-0 10 \textbackslash{a}xe6 \textbackslash{w}xe6 11 \a3 \textbackslash{c}c5 12 b4 \textbackslash{f}8 13 \textbackslash{c}c3 \textbackslash{c}ce7 14 \textbackslash{w}f3 c6 15 \textbackslash{e}e1 and White has strong pressure, Mirumian-Kolar, Czech Team Championship 1998.
  \item [c] 8...0-0 9 \textbackslash{g}g5 (9 \textbackslash{g}g3?! may be stronger) 9...\textbackslash{g}g4 10 f3 \textbackslash{h}h5 11 \textbackslash{c}c4 \textbackslash{h}h8 12 \textbackslash{a}4g3 \textbackslash{c}g6 13 \textbackslash{h}h1 \textbackslash{c}ce7 14 f4 \textbackslash{x}f4 15 \textbackslash{x}xf4 \textbackslash{x}f4 16 \textbackslash{x}f4 \textbackslash{d}d6 17 \textbackslash{w}f3 \textbackslash{x}f4 18 \textbackslash{w}xf4 was equal in Winawer-Alapin, Berlin 1897.
\end{itemize}

Now the game Mirumian-Barglowski, Trinec 1998, continued 10...\textbackslash{w}d7 11 \textbackslash{g}g5 \textbackslash{x}g5 12 \textbackslash{x}g5 f6 13 \textbackslash{d}d2 \textbackslash{b}6 14 \textbackslash{x}e4+ \textbackslash{w}xe4 15 f4 \textbackslash{x}xf4 16 \textbackslash{x}f4 \textbackslash{w}e5 17 \textbackslash{f}f5! and White had a strong attack. 10...\textbackslash{f}f4?! however, looks more resilient. In Dumont-Cipolli, Sao Paulo 1995, Black equalised after 11 \textbackslash{x}xf4 \textbackslash{x}f4 12 \textbackslash{e}e2 g6 13 \textbackslash{w}f3 \textbackslash{x}xc4 14 \textbackslash{x}c4 \textbackslash{e}d4 15 \textbackslash{x}xd4 \textbackslash{x}xd4 16 b3 f5 17 \textbackslash{c}c3 c6 18 \textbackslash{e}e2 (18 \textbackslash{a}a1?) 18...\textbackslash{c}e4 19 \textbackslash{x}f4 \textbackslash{w}xc2 20 \textbackslash{a}a1 \textbackslash{b}4 21 \textbackslash{c}e2 \textbackslash{w}c3.

\textbf{C)}

\textbf{3...\textbackslash{c}c5}
Another natural move. Black develops his dark-squared bishop and prepares to castle.

4...d6

Keeping the option open of f2-f4.

4...d6

Also possible is 4...c6!? and now:

a) 5 f4!? exf4!? (5...d6 see Short-Speelman below) 6 gxf4 (6 e5 d5 7 exf6 Wxf6 looks at least equal for Black) 6...d5 7 exd5 cxd5 8 e5+ Qd6 9 d4 Qd6 10 f3 0-0 11 0-0 Qg4 12 Qe2 Qe4 13 c3 f6 14 d3 Wd7 15 Wb3 Wae8 16 Wae1 with a roughly level position, Jaksland-Cooper, Hastings 1995.

b) 5 Qf3 d6 (5...d5 6 b3 dxe4 7 Qg5 0-0 8 Qxe4 looks nice for White) 6 0-0 0-0 (6...b6 7 d4? Qbd7 8 Qe3 Qc7 9 Qg5! Qe0 10 Qxh7+ Qxf7 11 Qe6 Wc7 12 Qxc7 Qb8 13 dxe5 Qxe5 14 Qxa7 Wxc7 15 Qxb8 Wxb8 16 Wd4 was better for White in Tischbierke-Sokolov, Antwerp 1998) 7 e2 Wc7 and now White should continue with 8 Qb3 Qbd7 9 Qg3.

5 f4!? 

White once again aims to transpose into the King's Gambit Declined, but here Black has extra options:

C1: 5...Qg4
C2: 5...c6

Alternatively:

a) 5...c6 6 Qf3 transposes to Variation B1.

b) 5...c6 6 Qf3 b5 7 Qb3 Wc7 8 e2 (8 Qf1?) 8...Wbd7 9 Wf1 Qb4 (9...Qb6? intending ...Qc5, may be stronger) 10 fxe5 dxe5 (Short-Speelman, London [2nd matchgame] 1991) and now 11 Wf2! 11...0-0 12 Qh4 looks strong for White.

c) 5...Qxg1 (this exchange on g1 is rarely good for Black, as White can always castle long) 6 Qxg1 Qg4 7 Wd2 exf4 8 Wxg4 Qbd7 9 h3 Qh5 10 g4 Qg6 11 h4 was good for White in Tartakower-Jankowitsch, Hamburg 1910.

C1)

5...Qg4

This looks very enticing for Black, but in fact it's White who has all the fun!

6 f5!

The only move, but a good one.

6...Qf2

Or:

a) 6...h5 7 Qh3 Wf4+ 8 Wf1 Qc3+ 9 Qxe3 Qxe3 10 Qd5 Qb6 11 Wd2 gives White a clear advantage, Honfi-Witkowski, Munich Olympiad 1958.

b) 6...Wxh4+ 7 g3 Wf5 (or 7...f2+ 8 Wf1 Qxg3 9 hxg3 Wxh1 10 Wxg4) 8 h3 Qxg1 9 Wxg4 Wxg4 10 hxg4 Qb6 11 g5 and White makes use of the half-open h-file.

7 Wf5

Now Black must deal with the threat of mate.

7...g6

Other defences are:
A more sober approach from Black.

6...axe6

6...axe6? 6...c6 7...f3 looks like a playable alternative for White. Following 7...0-0 I like 8...a4.

6...axe6 7...f3

7...fxe6 8...c6 9...e3...xe3 10...xe3 0-0 was equal in Spielmann-Tarrasch, Bad Kissingen 1928.

7...e4?!?

7...0-0 is met by 8...a4. After 7...a6 8...xe5 9...xe5?!...d4! 10...g4...xg4 11...f2+ 12...d1 0-0 Black had an attack in Vasiensiu-Olarasu, Sovata 1998, so White should be content with 9...g5.

8...xe4 0-0 9...a4!...b4+

9...xe4? loses to 10...d4...xf4 11...xc5.

10...c4...a5 11...b4...b6 12...xb6 axb6 13...d4 0-0

Now 13...axe4 is met by 14...d4!...xc3 15...d2.

14...b5!...c7 15...b3...d7 16...d4 d5

We are following the game Short-Speelman, London (4th matchgame) 1991. Here Kavalek suggests 17...g5, leaving White with an advantage.
3...d5!?

This move is just about playable, but probably a bit too ambitious. Black’s e5-pawn comes under tremendous pressure early on. Indeed, in the main line, Black sacrifices the pawn, but practice has shown that he doesn’t get enough compensation.

4 exd5 cxd5 5 f3 e6

5...g4 6 h3 xf3 7 xf3 c6 8 0-0 is obviously nice for White.

6 0-0

6...e7

A major alternative here is 6...g4!? 7 e1 and now:

a) 7...e7 transposes to the note to Black’s seventh move.

b) 7...f6? loses to the trick 8 xel.

c) 7...c5? 8 h3 (now 8 xel? loses to 8...xf2+! 9 xf2 h4+) 8...h5 9 d4!

xd4 10 g4! and White wins material.

d) 7...d6 (the best move; I can find nothing devastating against this) 8 h3 e5 9 c3 (9 d4? xxf3! 10 xf3 xld4! 11 xed5 xed5 12 xed5 xd2 is very unclear) 9...c3 10 bxc3 e7 and White is better, but Black’s position is quite playable.

7 e1 d6

Or 7...g4 8 h3 xf3 (8...h5 9 g4 e6 10 xe5 xe5 11 xe5 b6 12 b3 transposes to the text) 9 xf3 d4 (9...f6 10 b5 d6 11 c6+ bxc6 12 g3 is clearly better for White – Larsen) 10 g4! xed2 (after 10...0-0 11 xe5 f6 12 d1 White is just a clear pawn ahead, Larsen-Berger, Amsterdam 1964) 11 xe5 c6 (or 11...xa1 12 x7 f8 13 h6 xd7 14 xd5+ d6 15 g4+) 12 x7 f8 13 xe5! and White wins.

8 b3 g4

With this move Black is ready to sacrifice a pawn. 8...f6 9 c3 0-0 10 h3 f5 11 e4 was good for White in Vallejo Pons-Baena, Cala Galdana 1994, but 9 f4 looks even stronger.

9 h3 h5 10 g4 g6 11 xel ae5 12 ae5 0-0 13 c3 h8 14 d2

Black has some compensation for the pawn in the shape of White’s loose kingside, but White is well developed to cope with this. Play continues with 14...f5 15 h4! d6 16 e2 e8 and now both 17 e6 fxe4 18 hxg4 c6 19 e4 (Dolmatov-Chekhnov,
USSR Championship 1980) and 17 gxh5 \e5 18 \e6! \xe2 19 \xf2 \d7 20 \e4 \e7 21 \c3 \f6 22 \xf6 \xf6 23 \h1 c5 24 \g1 (Kuczynski-Breutigam, Germany Bundesliga 1996) led to white victories.

**E)**

3...\e7

At first sight this looks like a passive move, but it's actually quite deceptive. Black plans to castle quickly and then strike in the centre with...\d7-d5 (with or without...c7-c6).

4 \e3 0-0

Alternatively:

a) 4...\c6 5 f4 \d6 6 \f3 transposes to Variation B, note to Black's fourth moves.

b) 4...\c6? 5 \f3 0-0 (5...\d6 6 0-0 0-0 transposes) 6 0-0 (6 \xe5? d5 7 \b3 \d4 8 \xf7 \xf7 9 \e2 looks interesting) 6...\d6 7 \h3 b5 8 \b3 8...\d7 9 a3 (9 \e3 \c7 10 \b4 \b5 11 \e2 d5 12 \xd5 \c6 13 \c1 d4 14 \d2 \b7 15 \g3 a5 was unclear in Vogt-Garcia Gonzales, Leningrad 1977) 9...\e5 10 \a2 \e6 11 \xe6 \xe6 12 \d4 and White was slightly better in the game Mirumian-Comp P Conners (a computer), Lippstadt 1999.

5 f4 \xf4

5...\d6 6 \f3 \e6 7 0-0 once again transposes to Variation B, note to Black's fourth moves. In general Black is trying to avoid playing the passive...\d7-d6.

6 \xf4 \c6 7 e5

7...\e8

Black has two interesting alternatives:

a) 7...d5?! 8 exf6 \b4 9 \b3 \xf6 (9...\e8+ 10 \f1 \xf6 11 \f3 \xc3 12 bxc3 \xc3 13 \b1 and White won, Keogh-De Bruycker, Ostend 1975) 10 \g2 d4 11 0-0 \d6 12 \xb8 \e7 13 bxc3 \c5+ 14 d4 and White is winning, Pulkkinen-Norri, Finnish Championship 1995.

b) 7...\d5! 8 \xd5 (8 \xd5 \cxd5 9 \b3 \d6 10 \f3 \xe5 11 \e5 looks interesting) 8...\cxd5 9 \xd5 \d6 10 \f3 \c6 11 \xf6 \xd6 12 \e2 \xf4 13 \dxf4 \d4 14 \d2 \d7 and Black has some compensation for the pawn, Pulkkinen-Pihlajasalo, Finnish Team Championship 1997.

8 \f3

Another idea here is 8 d4!, for example 8...\g5 (or 8...\d5 9 \d3) 9 \xd2 \xf4 10 \xf4 \d6 11 \f3 \xc5 12 \xe5 \g6 13 \d3 \f6 14 0-0-0 and White has a good lead in development, Del Rio-Kopp, Hessen 1992.

8...\d6 9 \xf6 \g6

Or 9...\xd6!? 10 \d2 \c7 11 \e3 \g4 12 \e4 \d7 13 0-0 \xf3 14 \xf6 15 \b3 \b5 16 \f4 \d8 17 \ae1 \h8 18 \f1 and White is more active, Larsen-Nikolic, Buenos Aires 1992.

10 \b3 \d7 11 \d4 \b6

After 11...\f6 12 0-0 \g4 13 \d2 \f4 14 \f6 \c4 15 \e3 \f6 16 \ae1 White has a good attacking position, Pulkkinen-Salimaki, Helsinki 1999. This whole line
seems to be something of a Finnish speciality!

12 0-0 \(2 \text{c4} 13 \text{d3} \)

White has a good attacking position, with play on the half-open f-file and a powerful bishop on b3. Kharlov-Kuzmin, Alushta 1992, continued 13...\(2 \text{f5} 14 \text{we2} \text{d4} 15 \text{ad1} \text{f6} 16 \text{wxf2} \text{h5} 17 \text{d5} \text{xf3} 18 \text{xc3} \text{f6} 19 \text{xc6} \text{b4} 20 \text{exb7} \text{bb8} 21 \text{wc6} \text{xb7} 22 \text{xd6} \text{xd6} 23 \text{wb7} \text{c5}+ 24 \text{wh1} \text{and White went on to win.}

Other Second Moves for Black

1 e4 e5 2 \(2 \text{c4} \)

2...\(2 \text{f6} \) is by far Black’s most popular choice against the Bishop’s Opening. There are, however, quite a few playable alternatives, although sometimes these merely transpose to 2...\(2 \text{f6} \) lines. We shall look at the following lines:

A: 2...\(2 \text{c6} \)
B: 2...\(2 \text{e5} \)
C: 2...\(2 \text{c6} \)

Or:

a) 2...d6 could well transpose into earlier lines involving ...d7-d6. One independent example is 3 \(2 \text{c3} \text{c6} 4 \text{d3} \text{f6} 5 \text{dxe2} \text{e7} 6 0-0 0-0 7 \text{exe6} \text{fxe6} 8 \text{d4} \text{c6} 9 \text{d5} \text{exd5} 10 \text{exe5} \text{c5} 11 \text{f3} \text{d3} 12 \text{f4} \text{and White was better in Vogt-Braun, Strausberg 1971.}

b) 2...\(2 \text{f5} \) is the so-called Calabrese Counter Gambit; this looks incredibly risky, but it’s not that bad! Here are a couple of interesting tries for White:

b1) 3 d3 \(2 \text{f6} \) and now:

b11) 4 f4?! is given by ECO (amongst others), but 4 \(2 \text{d6} \) seems an effective reply, for example 5 \(2 \text{f3} \text{fxe4} 6 \text{dxe4} \text{dxe4} 7 \text{fxe4} 7 \text{d5}!\); 7 \(2 \text{d5} \text{f6} 8 \text{fxe5} \text{dxe5} 9 \text{exd5} \text{d6} \text{looks equal} \)

b2) 3 \(2 \text{f3} \) looks more sensible. After 4 \(2 \text{d6} 5 0-0 \text{c5} 6 \text{dxe5} \text{d6} 7 \text{f5} \text{it’s Black who’s playing the King’s Gambit Declined with a tempo less. White can try to make use of this extra tempo, for example, 7...\(2 \text{d5} 8 \text{xf6} \text{f6} 9 \text{d5} \text{d8} 10 \text{b4} \text{dxe4} 11 \text{bxc5} \text{fxe4} 12 \text{dxe4} \text{exf3} 13 \text{xf3} \text{and White is better.}

b2) 3 \(2 \text{f3} \) (why not?) 3...\(2 \text{exe4} \) (or 3...\(2 \text{f6} \) 4 \(2 \text{f5} \text{exe4} 5 \text{dxe4} \text{f4} \) \text{after which Black has trouble castling; 3...\(2 \text{f6} \) look interesting) 4 \(2 \text{c3} \text{wh4}+ (4...\text{d5} 5 \text{dxe5} 4 \text{f6} 5 \text{d3} \text{c6} 6 \text{xf4} 6 \text{d5} \text{cxd5} 8 \text{b3} \text{b4} 9 \text{w2}+ \text{f7} 10 \text{d3} \text{e8} 11 \text{c5}+ \text{f8} 12 \text{d4} \text{was better for White in Westerner-Kiltti, Jyvaskyla 1994; both this and the next reference came via the move order 1 e4 c5 2 f4 \text{exf4} 3 \text{c4} \text{f5} \) \text{5 \text{f3} 6 \text{dxe6}+ \text{exf6} (5...\text{fxe6} 6 \text{dxe4} \text{f6} 7 \text{d3} \text{wh5} 8 \text{dxf6}+ \text{gx6} 9 \text{d4} \text{looks good for White) 6 \text{d3} \text{wh5} 7 \text{d3} \text{fxe4} 8 \text{dxe4} \text{we5} 9 \text{we2} \text{g5} 10 \text{c5} \text{and White has a strong attack, Anderssen-Mayet, Berlin 1855.}

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A) 2...\(\text{c}6\) 3 \(\text{c}3\) \(\text{c}5\)

Or:

a) 3...\(\text{f}6\) transposes to 2...\(\text{f}6\) 3 \(\text{c}4\) \(\text{c}6\).

b) 3...\(\text{d}6!\) 4 d3 (or, for the more adventurous, 4 \(\text{f}4!\) exf4 5 d4 \(\text{h}4+\) 6 \(\text{f}1\) \(\text{g}4\) 7 \(\text{d}3\)) 4...\(\text{a}5\) 5 \(\text{b}3\) (5 \(\text{f}4!\)) 5...\(\text{xb}3\) 6 \(\text{xb}3\) and White follows up with f2-f4.

c) 3...g6 4 d3, followed by f2-f4.

4 \(\text{g}4!\) ?

This aggressive move contains a devilish trap and causes Black quite a few problems. For the more sedate minded White can play 4 d3 d6, transposing to Variation B, although Black could also try 4...\(\text{a}5!\).

After 4 \(\text{g}4!\)? Black must decide what to do about the attack on the g7-pawn. He has two main options, both of which result in a weakening of his position:

A1) 4...\(\text{f}6\)

A2) 4...g6

Or 4...\(\text{f}8\) 5 \(\text{g}3\) d6 (alternatively, 5...\(\text{f}6\) 6 \(\text{g}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 7 d3 h6 8 \(\text{d}4\) \(\text{b}6\) 9 \(\text{x}6\) \(\text{a}x\) \(\text{x}6\) 10 \(\text{f}4\) was better for White in the game Rogers-Olarasu, Saint Vincent 2001) 6 \(\text{g}2\) \(\text{d}4\) 7 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{x}4\) 8 \(\text{d}4\) \(\text{e}6\) 9 \(\text{x}6\) \(\text{f}6\) 10 \(\text{dxc}5\) \(\text{dxc}5\) 11 \(\text{b}3\) \(\text{c}8\) 12 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 13 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{f}7\) 14 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{g}6\) 15 \(\text{g}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 16 d3 and Black's king was very uncomfortably placed, Anand-Ravisekhar, New Delhi 1986.

A1)

4...\(\text{f}6\)

A very natural reaction, defending g7 and attacking f2 at the same time, but...

5 \(\text{d}5!\) \(\text{xf}2+\) 6 \(\text{d}1\)

And suddenly Black is in some trouble. There are threats to both g7 and c7. More importantly, though, Black's queen is lacking retreat squares.

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

This looks a bit desperate, but alternatives show how much danger Black is in.

a) 6...g6 7 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{d}4\) 8 d3 (threatening c2-c3) and now:

a1) 8...\(\text{d}6\) 9 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xh}3\) 10 \(\text{f}1!\) f5 11 \(\text{xh}3\) \(\text{b}6\) 12 c3 \(\text{c}5\) 13 b4 and White won, Ford-Blackburn, Bruges 1999.

a2) 8...\(\text{d}6\) 9 c3 \(\text{c}5\) 10 b4! wins a piece.

a3) 8...\(\text{f}8\) 9 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}8\) 10 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}6\) 11 \(\text{f}6+\) 1-0 Stripunsky-Oparau, Passau 1997.

a4) 8...\(\text{f}6\) 9 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{f}6\) 10 \(\text{f}1\) \(\text{d}6\) 11 c3 \(\text{c}5\) 12 b4 and again White wins, Emmick-Hawkins, British Championship 1986.

b) 6...\(\text{f}8\) 7 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{d}4\) 8 d3 d6 9 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xh}3\) 10 \(\text{f}1!\) \(\text{e}6\) 11 c3 and Black's queen is trapped.

c) 6...\(\text{e}7\) 7 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{d}4\) 8 \(\text{xg}7\) \(\text{g}6\) 9 d3 \(\text{f}7\) 10 \(\text{f}1\) \(\text{d}8\) 11 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{f}8\) 12 \(\text{xf}8+\) 1-0 Leisebein-Tuchtenhagen, correspondence 1990.

7 \(\text{xg}7\) \(\text{xh}3\) 8 \(\text{d}5!\)

8 \(\text{xh}8+\) is less accurate. The game Moody-Thompson, Trenton 1994, continued
Attracting with 1 e4

8...\textit{xe}7 9 \textit{exd}5? \textit{wxg}2 10 \textit{dxc}6 d6! 11 \textit{xe}2 \textit{g}4 and it was White who had to resign!

8...\textit{xf}8 9 \textit{wxh}8 \textit{wxg}2 10 \textit{dxc}6

\textbf{10...d6}

Or 10...\textit{hxh}1 11 \textit{we}5+ \textit{e}7 12 \textit{gg}3 \textit{xc}6 13 \textit{g}8+ 1-0 Leisebein-Andre, correspondence 1990. After 10...d6 the game Leisebein-Fiebig, correspondence, concluded 11 \textit{cx}b7 \textit{g}4+ 12 \textit{e}1 \textit{e}4+ 13 \textit{e}2 \textit{b}8 14 d3 \textit{wxh}1 15 \textit{h}6 \textit{e}7 16 \textit{g}5+ 1-0.

\textbf{A2)}

\textbf{4...g6}

\textbf{5 \textit{f}3}

5 \textit{gg}3? also promises White an edge after 5...\textit{xf}6 6 d3 \textit{d}6 7 \textit{ge}2 and now:

a) 7...\textit{e}6?! 8 \textit{gg}5 \textit{h}5 (after 8...\textit{h}6? 9 \textit{h}4 and 8...\textit{xc}4? 9 \textit{h}4 White makes use of the pin on the knight) 9 \textit{h}4 \textit{g}6? (better is 9...\textit{d}7 10 \textit{d}5) 10 \textit{xf}6! \textit{xf}6 11 \textit{xf}6

\textbf{\textit{xf}6} 12 \textit{xe}6 and White is a pawn up, Bangiev-Steinkohl, Dudweiler 1996.

b) 7...\textit{h}5 8 \textit{ff}3 \textit{f}6 (8...\textit{e}6 9 \textit{dd}5 \textit{xc}5 10 \textit{ex}d5 \textit{e}7 11 \textit{bb}5+ \textit{f}8 12 c3 \textit{h}6 13 \textit{g}4 \textit{g}7 14 \textit{dd}3 \textit{b}6 15 \textit{h}4 gave White a strong attack in Conquest-Kristensen, Esbjerg 1992, 9 \textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 10 \textit{gg}5 \textit{h}5 11 \textit{dd}5 \textit{b}6 12 \textit{dd}3 \textit{h}6 13 \textit{dd}2 \textit{g}7 14 \textit{dd}4 15 \textit{dd}1 c6 16 \textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 17 c3 when White's bishop pair and Black's dark-squared weaknesses give White a clear edge, Stripunsky-Tolstikh, Volgograd 1994.

\textbf{5...\textit{xf}6}

5...\textit{xf}6 6 \textit{dd}5 \textit{xf}3 7 \textit{xf}3 \textit{bb}6 8 d3, Capablanca-Gomez, Panama 1933, gives White a pleasant ending – the weakness that... \textit{g}7-\textit{g}6 creates is quite noticeable.

\textbf{6 \textit{ge}2 d6 7 d3 \textit{gg}4}

Or 7...\textit{h}6 8 \textit{h}3 \textit{e}7 9 \textit{g}4 (9 \textit{a}4?! 9...\textit{e}6 10 \textit{g}5 \textit{g}8 11 \textit{dd}5 \textit{xc}5 12 \textit{xc}5 \textit{dd}8 13 \textit{h}4 \textit{c}6 14 \textit{bb}3 \textit{ee}6 15 \textit{gxh}6 and White was better in Milutinovic-Savic, correspondence 1972.

\textbf{8 \textit{gg}3 \textit{h}6}

8...\textit{e}6 transposes to note 'a' to White's fifth move, while 8...\textit{d}7 9 \textit{hh}4 is good for White.

\textbf{9 \textit{f}4 \textit{e}7 10 \textit{dd}5 \textit{xd}5 11 \textit{wx}g4}

We have been following the game Larsen-Portisch, Santa Monica 1966, which continued 11...\textit{xf}6 12 \textit{wh}3 \textit{aa}5?! 13 \textit{bb}5+ c6 14 \textit{a}4 b5 15 \textit{bb}3 and White was clearly better. Larsen suggests 11...\textit{ee}3 as an improve-
ment, but White still holds the advantage after 12 \( \text{dxe}3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 13 \( f5 \).

**B)**

2...\( \text{c}5 \)

The Symmetrical Defence. This is most likely to transpose into one of the lines we have already studied.

3 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \)

3...\( \text{d}6 \) transposes to Variation A, while 3...\( \text{f}6 \) 4 \( \text{d}3 \) transposes to 2...\( \text{f}6 \) 3 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 4 \( \text{c}3 \).

4 \( \text{d}3 \)

4 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{xg}1 \) 5 \( \text{hxg}1 \) \( \text{h}4 \) is a bit annoying, but the immediate 4 \( \text{a}4 \) looks playable.

4...\( \text{d}6 \)

4...\( \text{f}6 \) 5 \( \text{f}4 \) transposes to Variation C in the Main Line.

5 \( \text{a}4 \)!

White will exchange off Black’s dark squared bishop, and then he will play for \( f2-f4 \).

5...\( \text{g}7 \)

Or:

a) 5...\( \text{b}6 \) 6 \( \text{a}3 \) (6 \( \text{xb}6 \) \( \text{xb}6 \) 7 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{a}5 \)!) 6...\( \text{f}6 \) 7 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 8 \( \text{xb}6 \) \( \text{xb}6 \) 9 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{fxe}6 \) 10 0-0 0-0 11 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 12 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{h}4 \) 13 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 14 \( f3 \) and White’s better pawn structure gives him an small edge, Evans-Addison, New York 1969.

b) 5...\( \text{f}6 \) 6 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 7 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 8 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 9 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 10 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 11 \( f4 \) \( \text{xg}2 \) 12 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xh}2 \) 13 0-0-0 0-0 14 \( \text{d}7 \) 15 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{g}2 \) 16 \( \text{dg}1 \) \( \text{f}3 \) 17 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{g}2 \) 18 \( \text{w}1 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 19 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{cxd}4 \) 20 \( \text{xd}7+ \) \( \text{xd}7 \) 21 \( \text{d}2 \) \( g5 \) 22 \( \text{g}1 \) and finally Black’s queen is trapped, Mitkov-De Vreugt, Bolzano 1999.

c) 5...\( \text{a}5 \) ? 6 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) (6...\( \text{xc}4 \)?) 7 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{xb}3 \) 8 \( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 9 \( \text{e}2 \), followed by \( f2-f4 \).

6 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 7 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{ef}4 \) 8 \( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 9 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{ce}5 \) 10 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 11 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{w}5 \) 12 \( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{xc}1+ \) 13 \( \text{xc}1 \) 0-0 0-14 \( \text{c}3 \)

We are following the game Mitkov-Stojcevski, Skopje 1998. White once again has the advantage of the bishop pair in an open position. White’s next move will be to castle kingside.

**C)**

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

Aiming for a quick counter with \( ...d7-d5 \).
3 d4! d5
Or 3...♘f6 4 dxe5 ♧a5+ (4...♗xe4 5 ♧e2 is better for White – Keres) 5 ♨c3 ♧xe4 (5...♗xe5 6 ♧f3 and Black's queen is kicked around) 6 ♨f3 d5 7 exd6 ♨xd6 8 ♨b3 and I prefer White.
4 exd5 cxd5 5 ♨b5+ ♨d7 6 ♨xd7+ ♨xd7 7 ♨c3
Also possible is 7 dxe5 ♧xe5 8 ♧e2 (8 ♨e2 ♧f6 9 0-0 ♨e7 10 ♨bc3 gives White an edge – Lisitsin) 8...♗e7 9 ♨c3 0-0 10 ♩f4 ♩g6 11 ♩g3 h5 12 h4 ♧f6 13 0-0-0 ♧c5 14 ♧f3 ♨d6 15 ♨xd6 ♨xd6 16 ♩d4 and White can hope to put pressure on the isolated d-pawn, Zifroni-Boim, Ramat Hasharon 1993.
7...♗g6 8 dxe5 ♧xe5 9 ♧e2 ♧e7 10 ♨e3 ♨c6 11 0-0 0-0-0 12 ♩f3 ♧c7 13 ♩d4 ♧a5 14 ♩b3

White has some awkward pressure on the d5-pawn. Marcelin-Boim, Herzeliya 2000, continued 14...♗b4 15 a3 ♧g4 16 ♩xg4+ ♩xg4 17 ♩xd5 and White was better.

Important Points

Lines with f2-f4:
1) Be aware of the cramping effect on Black's position after a suitable f4-f5.
2) Remember the idea of ♤a4, attempting to trade off the knight for Black's dark-squared bishop. This is normally a positionally desirable exchange and will allow White to castle kingside.
3) Remember also that Black has the same idea of ...♗a5, attacking the bishop on c4. Sometimes it's worth expending a tempo to keep the bishop with a2-a3 or c2-c3.
4) If the idea of ♤a4 is not suitable, White has different approaches: he can consider queenside castling, or neutralising Black's dark-squared bishop with ♧e2 and ♨e3.
5) Watch out for ...♗g4, although usually this move is not as threatening as it looks!

More generally:
1) f2-f4 is not usually a good idea if Black can strike out effectively with ...d7-d5 – see the Main Line, Variation A as an example of this.
2) Often ♤f3 is a good answer to ...c7-c6, as now Black cannot defend the e-pawn with ♤c6.
3) In the Main Line, Variation A1, White has to decide when it's best to keep the tension in the centre and when it's best to play exd5. Likewise, Black has to decide whether to try and keep his centre intact, or to play a simplifying ...dxe4.
CHAPTER THREE

Attacking the French: The King’s Indian Attack

1 e4 e6 2 d3

2 d3 introduces the King’s Indian Attack (KIA), a very respectable system, which can actually be played against most defences to 1 e4. For example, White can play 1 e4 c5 2 ∆f3 and 3 d3, 1 e4 c6 2 d3 and even 1 e4 e5 2 ∆f3 ∆c6 3 d3 (the only reasonable defence which avoids the KIA is 1 e4 d5).

However, the King’s Indian Attack is probably most effective, and certainly most popular, when it is played against the French Defence. The point is that Black is already committed to the move ...e7-e6, even though in a lot of lines he would prefer his e-pawn to be on either e7 or e5! Indeed, in Main Line 2 we shall be looking at variations where Black loses a tempo early on to play the desirable ...e6-e5, (1 e4 e6 2 d3 ∆c6 3 ∆f3 e5? being one extreme example).

The King’s Indian Attack has been utilised by many world class players. One could list World Champions Mikhail Botvinnik, Vassily Smyslov and Tigran Petrosian, while Bobby Fischer turned to it when he was having trouble proving any advantage in the main lines of the French. More recent advocates include such attacking geniuses as Alexei Shirov and Alexander Morozevich.

White’s idea is pretty straightforward and easy to play. To a certain extent White plays the same moves regardless of how Black plays. The set-up involves developing moves such as ∆d2, ∆gf3, g2-g3, ∆g2, 0-0 and ∆e1.

Here’s a typical position, White having just played the move ∆e1. A characteristic plan of action would begin with the move e4-e5. This ‘pawn wedge’ on e5 acts as a catalyst for a kingside attack, as it gives White plenty of space to manoeuvre on the kingside, and it deprives Black the use of the f6-square, the normal position for a defensive knight. White can follow up e4-e5 with such moves as h2-h4, ∆f1, ∆f4, ∆h2-g4 and perhaps h4-h5-h6. It’s easy to see how a potentially lethal attack can arise, especially if Black is not careful. Naturally White will alter
his general plan according to which set-up Black chooses, but this plan of a kingside attack crops up many times.

I can’t promise a theoretical advantage in all lines of the KIA, but even when Black chooses the best defences, positions arise which are lively and knife-edged; this is why the KIA is a favourite weapon for the attacking player.

Main Line 1:
Black plays ...d7-d5 and ...c7-c5

1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 d2 c5 4 g3 f3 c6 5 g3

At all levels this is the most popular way of handling the black side of the King’s Indian Attack. With the moves ...d7-d5 and ...c7-c5, Black has claimed a fair share of the centre and can develop comfortably. Indeed, as we shall now see, Black has a number of different development methods from which to choose.

A: 5...f6
B: 5...g6
C: 5...d6

Here are some rare alternatives.

a) 5...g7 6 g2 (6 h4??, planning to meet 6...g6 with 7 h5, looks worth a try) 6...g6 7 0-0 g7 transposes to Variation B.

b) 5...b6 6 g2 b7 7 0-0 f6 transposes to Variation A.

c) The game Dyce-Mikuev, Elista Olympiad 1998, followed an original course after 5...g5!? (the chances of meeting this move are quite slim; I found only one example on my database) 6 exd5 exd5 7 w2+ e6 8 h3 w7 9 xe6 fxe6 10 d3 h6 11 h4 g4 12 d5 and White was better.

A) 5...d6

A very popular choice. With this move Black plans to develop classically; he will continue with ...e7, and this is followed by ...0-0 or, more ambitiously, by ...b7-b6, ...w7 and ...0-0-0.

6 g2 e7

6...d6 is generally frowned upon as it doesn’t mix well with ...f6. In particular Black will generally have to expend a tempo preventing a later e4-e5 by White, which would otherwise fork two pieces. After 7 0-0 0-0 8 e1 the threat of e4-e5 forces Black to act immediately:

a) 8...c7 9 c3 d4 (9...e5 10 exd5 cxd5 11 c4 puts annoying pressure on the e5-pawn, for example 11...f6 12 d4! cxd4 13 cxd4 b5 14 c3 and Black’s position is riddled with weaknesses) 10 cxd4 cxd4 11 e5 d7 12 c4 b8 13 g5 f6 14 exf6 xf6 15 f5 16 exf5 h6 17 d2 and White held the advantage in Oratovsky-Gravel, Montreal 1998 - White’s pieces are well placed and Black has some problems along the half-
open e-file.

b) 8...\textcolor{red}{\textit{c7 \textit{e2}} (once again threatening e4-e5) 9...dxe4 10 dxe4 e5 11 c3 b6 12 h3 a5 13 a4! \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{a}6 14 \textit{\textsc{c}4}}}! (this self-pin is easily broken) 14...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{e}8 15 \textit{\textsc{f}1 \textit{\textsc{e}8} 16 \textit{\textsc{c}2 \textit{\textsc{b}7}}} 17 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{h}4 \textit{\textsc{c}7} 18 \textit{\textsc{f}5 \textit{\textsc{xc}4} 19 \textit{\textsc{xc}4 \textit{\textsc{d}6}}} 20 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{xd}6 \textit{\textsc{xd}6}}} with a clear plus for White in Loginov-

with a clear plus for White in Loginov-

with a clear plus for White in Loginov-

with a clear plus for White in Loginov-

with a clear plus for White in Loginov-

b) 8...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{c7}}} 9 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{e2}}} (a sneaky move order) 8 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{e1}}} h6!? 9 c3 (9 e5?! \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{d}7} 10 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{e}2}}} g5! 11 h3 h5! gives Black a quick attack against the e5-pawn; White must always be careful of this when playing an early e4-e5) 9...b6 10 a3 (now 10 e5 gives Black counterplay after 10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{d}7} 11 d4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{cxd}4}} 12 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{cxd}4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{b}4}}, while 10 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{exd}5}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{cxd}5} 11 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{c}4 \textit{\textsc{b}7} 12 \textit{\textsc{a}4 \textit{\textsc{d}8}}} was equal in Jansa-Marjanovic, Nis 1983) 10...a5!? (10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{b}7}} transposes to Variation A12) 11 a4!? (securing the b5-square; 11 e5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{d}7} 12 d4 also looks good as Black no longer has ...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{b}4}} ideas) 11...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{a}6} 12 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{exd}5}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{xd}5} 13 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{c}4 \textit{\textsc{d}8} 14 \textit{\textsc{e}2}}} f6 15 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{d}2 \textit{\textsc{d}7} 16 h4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{h}b}7 17 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{h}2 \textit{\textsc{d}8} 18 \textit{\textsc{g}4 \textit{\textsc{c}8} 19 \textit{\textsc{w}d1 \textit{\textsc{a}6} 20 \textit{\textsc{w}b3 and I prefer White, Seeman-

Alternatively:

a) 7...b5?! (beginning early queenside operations, but this is too loose) 8 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{cxd}5}}! \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{cxd}5} 9 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{c}4}}} bxc4 10 dxc4 0-0 11 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{f}5} 12 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{exd}5}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{b}2}} was clearly better for White in Schöneberg-Zinn, Germany 1972: White's pieces are well placed and Black has weak pawns on the queenside.

b) 7...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{c7}}} (a sneaky move order) 8 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{e1}}} h6!? 9 c3 (9 e5?! \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{d}7} 10 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{e}2}}} g5! 11 h3 h5! gives Black a quick attack against the e5-pawn; White must always be careful of this when playing an early e4-e5) 9...b6 10 a3 (now 10 e5 gives Black counterplay after 10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{d}7} 11 d4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{cxd}4}} 12 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{cxd}4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{b}4}}, while 10 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{exd}5}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{cxd}5} 11 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{c}4 \textit{\textsc{b}7} 12 \textit{\textsc{a}4 \textit{\textsc{d}8}}} was equal in Jansa-Marjanovic, Nis 1983) 10...a5!? (10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{b}7}} transposes to Variation A12) 11 a4!? (securing the b5-square; 11 e5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{d}7} 12 d4 also looks good as Black no longer has ...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{b}4}} ideas) 11...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{a}6} 12 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{exd}5}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{xd}5} 13 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{c}4 \textit{\textsc{d}8} 14 \textit{\textsc{e}2}}} f6 15 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{d}2 \textit{\textsc{d}7} 16 h4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{h}b}7 17 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{h}2 \textit{\textsc{d}8} 18 \textit{\textsc{g}4 \textit{\textsc{c}8} 19 \textit{\textsc{w}d1 \textit{\textsc{a}6} 20 \textit{\textsc{w}b3 and I prefer White, Seeman-

see following diagram

Now Black faces a major decision: whether to castle kingside or to develop on the other wing.

A1: 7...b6

A2: 7...0-0

Planning to develop the bishop on a6 or, more normally, b7. This move is also an indication that Black is more likely to castle on the queenside.

8 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textsc{e}1}}
8...\textit{\textbf{b7}}

Alternatively Black can play a cunning move order with 8...\textit{\textbf{c7?!}}, not yet committing the bishop to b7. After 8...\textit{\textbf{c7}} White can play:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[a)] After 9 a3 Black should play 9...\textit{\textbf{b7}}, when 10 c3 transposes to Variation A12.
  \item[b)] 9 c3 \textit{\textbf{a6?!}} (this is Black's idea: the bishop develops on a6 and hits the d3-pawn)
  \begin{itemize}
    \item[10] exd5 (10 e5?! \textit{\textbf{d7}} 11 d4 \textit{\textbf{cxd4}} 12 \textit{\textbf{b4}} is very annoying for White) 10...\textit{\textbf{cxd5}}
    \item[11] \textit{\textbf{d4}} 0-0 12 a4 \textit{\textbf{d8}} 13 \textit{\textbf{b3}} \textit{\textbf{f6}} 14
    \item[15] \textit{\textbf{a2}} \textit{\textbf{d7}} 15 \textit{\textbf{d1}} \textit{\textbf{fd8}} with an equal position in Frias-Cifuentes Parada, Wijk aan Zee 1991.
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

c) 9 e5?! \textit{\textbf{d7}} and now:
\begin{itemize}
  \item[c1)] 10 \textit{\textbf{f1?!}} \textit{\textbf{dxe5?!}} (10...\textit{\textbf{b7}} 11 \textit{\textbf{f4}}
  \begin{itemize}
    \item[transposes to Variation A11]
    \item[11] \textit{\textbf{cxe5}} \textit{\textbf{dxe5}}
    \item[12] \textit{\textbf{d6}} (12...\textit{\textbf{f6}} 13 \textit{\textbf{d3}} \textit{\textbf{d7}} 14 \textit{\textbf{g4}}
    \item[15] \textit{\textbf{d6}} 15 \textit{\textbf{cxe5}} \textit{\textbf{fxe5}} 16 \textit{\textbf{xe5}} gives White a slight edge due to Black's backward pawn on e6 - 16...\textit{\textbf{xe5}} is answered by 17 \textit{\textbf{h5!}})
  \item[13] \textit{\textbf{h5}} \textit{\textbf{g6!}} (13...\textit{\textbf{g6}} is answered by 14 \textit{\textbf{xe5}})
  \item[14] \textit{\textbf{xe5}} \textit{\textbf{xf4}} 15 \textit{\textbf{c6+}} \textit{\textbf{f8}} 16 \textit{\textbf{xa8}} \textit{\textbf{g2}}
  \item[17] \textit{\textbf{g2}} \textit{\textbf{f7}} 18 \textit{\textbf{g3}} with an unclear position. White is the exchange up but will face some uncomfortable moments on the kingside.
  \item[c2)] 10 \textit{\textbf{c2}} with a further split:
  \begin{itemize}
    \item[c21)] 10...\textit{\textbf{b7}} 11 \textit{\textbf{h4!}} (preventing...\textit{\textbf{g7-g5}})
    \item[11...\textit{\textbf{h6}} 13 \textit{\textbf{h2}} \textit{\textbf{d8}} 14 \textit{\textbf{g4}}
    \item[15] \textit{\textbf{f8}} (14...\textit{\textbf{g5}} 15 \textit{\textbf{h5}} \textit{\textbf{f8}} 16 \textit{\textbf{c3}} \textit{\textbf{e8}} 17 \textit{\textbf{d2}}
    \item[f5] 18 \textit{\textbf{exf6}} \textit{\textbf{xf6}} 19 \textit{\textbf{f5}} and White has a firm grip on the e5-square, Bates-Vallin, Witley 1999)
    \item[15] \textit{\textbf{f4}} \textit{\textbf{g5}} 16 \textit{\textbf{hxg5}} \textit{\textbf{hxg5}} 17 \textit{\textbf{d2}} with a typically complex position, C.Hansen-Kasparov, La Valetta 1980; White's pieces are more actively placed but Black may be able to use the open h-file at some point.
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
10 c4!?

Striking out at the d5-pawn. If this pawn moves, White will gain possession of the important e4-square.

The more traditional method for White is with 10...d4 and now:

a) 10...g5!? (the normal pawn lunge: Black is striking back on the kingside and undermining White's support of the e5-pawn) 11...dxe5? 12...xe5 dxex5 13...xd5 dxex5 14...xe5 dxe5 15...xe4 16...e4 is slightly better for White: Black's king has no safe place to hide) 12...c4 d4 13...d5 exd5 (or 13...g8?! 14...xe7 dxex7 15...a3 g4 16...h4 a5 17...a4 e8 18...b1 d8 19...f4 and White's king is much safer than Black's, Masola-Cristobal, Mar del Plata 1993) 14...xd5 g4 15...xe6 c6 16...f6 17...e4 g2 18...xe6 f3 19...dxex8 dxex1 20...d6 h7 21...g5 f3 22...d7 e7 23...h4 and White is a pawn up as in the game Schlenker-Raicevic, Linz 1980.

b) 10...c7 11...f4 0-0 0-0 12...h6 13...d2...d8 14...h5! (taking the sting out of...g7-g5) 14...g5? (or 14...d8 15...h3 f8 16...h2 d4 17...d4 h4 18...g2 f5 19...f4 20...xf4 f5 21...xf6 gxh6 22...d2...xg2 23...xg2, which was unclear in Kasparov-Sturua, Tbilisi 1976) 15...h5...xg6. Now Konstantinopolsky-Banas, correspondence 1985, continued 16...e3 h5 17...dxex5? (this trick occurs quite often in the KIA – see later) 17...exd5 18...d8 19...xd7+...xd7 20...xe7?...xe7 21...h3+...g4 22...e1 and White went on to win. More resilient, however, is 20...dxe7! 21...e5...f5, after which the position is still very unclear.

10...d4

This advance looks very natural, but it's actually quite accommodating to White, who now posesses the important e4-square. Black should consider alternatives.

11...b4!? 11...xd5...xd5 (or 11...exd5 12...f1 0-0 13...a3...c6 14...h4 and White will continue with...f4 and...h1h2) 12...e4 (once again White has the e4-square under control) 12...dxe2!? 13...xa2...xa2 14...b3! b5 15...c2...xb3 (15...h5 16...e2 picks up the bishop) 16...xb3...b8 17...d6+...xd6 18...xd6 0-0 19...g5...f6 20...c3...b6 with a complex position, although I prefer White's attacking chances to Black's queenside pawns, Ree-Vogel, Leeuwarden 1974.

11...c7 (this could arise from the move order 8...h5 9...d7 10...b7 and may well be Black's most promising move) 10 exd5 (11...h5! dxc4 12...d5 g5! puts White's e5-pawn under early pressure, Hracek-Kveinys, European Team Championship, Debrecen 1992) 11...exd5 12...d4? (12...d6?) 12...h8! (12...exd4 13...b3 regains the pawn) 13...h1...d6 14...e3...d8 15...f5 0-0 16...h4 with a complex position, Milanovic-Arsovic, Belgrade 1989.

11 h4!

11...e4?...dxe5 12...dxe5...dxe5 13...xg5...xg2 14...xg2 bxc5 15...xe5 looks pretty equal, while ECO just gives 11 a3...c7 12...e2 g5 (Banaz-Novak, Trenianske Teplice 1974) as unclear. 11...h6! looks like an improvement, as counterplay involving...g7-g5 is suppressed.

11...c7

Or 11...h6 12...h5! (preparing to meet...g7-g5 by capturing en passant) 12...c7 13...e2
0-0-0 14 a3 \text{d}g8 15 b4! (opening up the queenside) 15...g5 16 hxg6 \text{hxg}6 17 bxc5 bxc5 18 \text{b}b1 h5 19 \text{e}e4 h4 20 \text{f}f4 hxg3 21 fxg3 \text{a}a8 22 \text{b}b5 a6 23 \text{b}b2 \text{w}a5 24 \text{e}eb1 \text{c}c7 25 \text{d}d6 \text{x}d6 26 exd6+ \text{c}c8 27 \text{e}e5 \text{d}xe5 28 \text{x}xe5 \text{h}hg8 29 \text{f}f3

fxg5 17 \text{x}xe5 \text{w}d7 18 \text{hx}g5 \text{hx}g2 19 \text{x}g2 with a large advantage for White. Black has problems down both the e- and h-files. The game concluded 19...\text{w}e8 20 \text{x}xe8 \text{f}xe8 21 \text{f}f4 \text{f}f7 22 \text{e}e2 \text{f}f8 23 \text{f}f3 \text{h}6 24 \text{g}xh6 \text{gx}h6 25 \text{a}4 \text{a}e8 26 \text{h}h1 a6 27 \text{b}3 \text{a}7 28 g4 \text{g}6 29 \text{d}d6 \text{g}7 30 \text{x}xe6 \text{f}f7 31 \text{f}5 \text{c}c6 32 \text{b}8 1-0.

29...\text{x}xe5 (29...f5 loses to 30 \text{x}xc6+!! \text{xc}6 31 \text{xc}6 \text{x}g3+ 32 \text{x}g3 \text{x}g3+ 33 \text{f}2) 30 \text{xa}8+ \text{d}d7 31 \text{b}b7+ \text{x}d6 32 \text{b}b6+ \text{c}c6 33 \text{xc}6+ \text{e}e5 34 \text{f}f1 1-0


12 \text{e}e4!

This pseudo pawn sacrifice is very effective, although White was also better after the quieter 12 \text{w}e2 0-0-0 13 a3 \text{h}6 14 \text{f}f1 \text{d}g8 15 \text{h}h2 g5 16 hxg5 \text{hxg}5 17 \text{d}d4 \text{h}5 18 \text{d}d2 \text{g}8 19 b4, as in Harston-Trikaliotis, Siegen Olympiad 1970.

12...\text{x}xe5

12...0-0-0 is probably safer. White should reply with 13 \text{f}4 \text{h}6 14 \text{h}5!, followed by a2-a3 and b2-b4!.

13 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5

13...\text{w}e5 14 \text{d}d5 \text{xc}5 15 \text{xb}7 is better for White – he has the bishop pair and can expand on the queenside with a2-a3 and b2-b4.

14 \text{f}4

\textbf{see following diagram}

Now Jadoul-Kruszynski, Copenhagen 1988, continued 14...0-0 15 \text{h}5 \text{f}6 (15...f5? loses to 16 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 17 \text{g}5) 16 \text{g}5!
the kingside with 11 e5 \(\text{dx}d7\) 12 \(\text{f}f1\) \(\text{ae}8\) 13 \(\text{f}4\).

**10...0-0-0**

Black has quite a few alternatives:

a) After 10...0-0 White reverts back to Plan A with 11 e5 \(\text{dx}d7\) 12 d4 \(\text{cx}d4\) 13 \(\text{cx}d4\) (now a2-a3 has proved useful in preventing \(\text{dx}b4\)) 13...\(\text{a}a5\) 14 \(\text{f}f1\) \(\text{fc}8\) (preparing \(\text{wc}2\)) 15 b4 \(\text{c}c4\) 16 h4 b5!? (16...a5 17 b5!) 17 \(\text{g}5\) with the initiative on the kingside, Psakhis-Paunovic, Minsk 1986.

b) 10...a5 and now:

b1) 11 a4!? expends a tempo in order to win the b5 square as an outpost; this is a common theme. Again we have a further split:

b11) 11...0-0 12 e5 \(\text{dd}7\) 13 d4 g5 14 \(\text{d}d1\) (preparing \(\text{d}3-b3\)) 14...h6 15 \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{db}8\) (or 15...g4 16 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{cx}d4\) 17 \(\text{b}5!\)) 16 \(\text{c}3\) \(\text{a}6\) 17 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{wd}7\) 18 \(\text{c}c1\)

![Diagram 1](image1)

and White had the initiative in Psakhis-Kohlweyer, Vienna 1990.

b12) 11...0-0 12 e5 \(\text{dd}7\) 13 \(\text{we}2\) (13 d4 \(\text{cx}d4\) 14 \(\text{cx}d4\) \(\text{db}4\) gives Black counterplay) 13...\(\text{ae}8\)? (13...\(\text{fe}8\) 14 \(\text{f}f1\) f5 15 \(\text{xf}6\) \&\(\text{xf}6\) 16 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{ff}8\) 17 h4 \(\text{c}c7\) 18 \(\text{h}2\) \&\(\text{e}5\) 19 h5 gives White good attacking chances on the kingside, Knezevic-Jovicic, Yugoslavia 1975) 14 \(\text{f}f1\) f6 15 \(\text{xf}6\) \&\(\text{xf}6\) 16 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{dc}5\) with a very messy position, Ostermeier-Breutigam, German Bundesliga 1988.

b2) 11 \(\text{f}f1\)? (perhaps White does best to ignore ...a7-a5) 11...0-0-0 12 \(\text{wb}3\)? \(\text{a}6\) 13 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{wb}7\) 14 e5 \(\text{dx}d7\) 15 c4 h6 16 \(\text{cx}d5\) \(\text{ex}d5\) 17 h4 c4 18 dxc4 \(\text{xc}4\) 19 \(\text{wc}2\) and I prefer White, Hall-B.Sorensen, Danish Team Championship 1999 – Black’s king is a bit vulnerable.

c) 10...dxe4 (Black normally avoids this exchange as it gives up the control over the e4-square, but here White’s a2-a3 and c2-c3 encourages Black to open things up a little) 11 dxe4 \(\text{dd}8\) 12 \(\text{we}2\) 0-0 13 e5 \(\text{dx}d7\) 14 h4 b5 (14...\(\text{wc}8\)? 15 a4 \(\text{wa}8\) 16 \&\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{a}5\), as in Varavin-Vunder, St Petersburg 2000, looks interesting) 15 a4 b4 16 \(\text{dc}4\) \(\text{db}6\) 17 \(\text{xb}6\) axb6 18 \(\text{f}4\) bx\(\text{c}3\) 19 bx\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{a}5\) 20 h5 h6 21 \(\text{ab}1\) with an unclear position, Varavin-Moskalenko, Leningrad 1989.

10...dxe4 11 \(\text{we}2\) h6

Preparing the advance ...g7-g5. The game Mkrtchian-Kovaljov, Tallinn 1997, varied with 11...\(\text{a}6\) 12 e5 \(\text{dd}7\) 13 h4 h6 14 h5! (we already know the idea behind this move) 14...g6 15 hxg6 fxg6 16 \&\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{f}8\) 17 b4! and White’s attack is quicker.

**12 b4!**

![Diagram 2](image2)

Softening up Black’s queenside pawn structure.

**12...g5**

Alternatively:

a) 12...c4!? 13 \(\text{ex}d5\) \(\text{cx}d3\) (13...\(\text{dx}d5\) 14 dxc4 \(\text{xc}3\) 15 \(\text{f}f1\) \(\text{f}6\) 16 \(\text{b}3\) \(\text{d}4\) 17 \(\text{a}2\) g5 18 \(\text{c}2\) \(\text{b}8\) 19 c5 \(\text{bx}c5\) 20 \(\text{xc}5\)
Attack with 1 e4

\( \text{dxc5 21 } \text{axc5 wasn’t a pleasant experience for me in } \text{Jansa-Emms, Hillerod 1995 – Black has only one defensive pawn left on the queenside and even that isn’t much use)} \)

14 \( \text{wx}d3 \text{ } \text{dxd5 15 } \text{dxe2 } \text{f6 16 } \text{b2 } \text{b8 17 c4 } \text{axb2 18 } \text{xb2 } \text{f6 19 } \text{c5! and again White’s attack is faster, Psakhis-Nikitin, Berlin 1991.} \)

b) 12... \text{dxe5 (a suggestion from Mark Dvoretsky)} 13 \text{exd5 } \text{e3+ 14 } \text{cxd5 } \text{dxd5 15 } \text{b2 } \text{d6 16 } \text{bxc5 bxc5 17 } \text{d4! c4 18 } \text{d2 } \text{b6 19 } \text{dxb7+ } \text{dxb7 20 } \text{a4!, followed by } \text{a3, promises White the advantage.} \\

13 \text{bxc5!?} \\

Or:

a) ECO only gives 13 \( \text{b3 dxe4 14 } \text{dxe4 g4 15 } \text{d2 d5 5 as unclear in Osmanovic-Martinovic, Sarajevo 1981.} \)

b) 13 \text{h3? } \text{d6 14 } \text{d3 c4 15 exd5 cxd3 16 } \text{d3 d5 17 } \text{c2 d6 18 } \text{b2 dxe7 19 c4 } \text{h6 20 } \text{b2 and once again White looks to have the safer king, Krasch-Niklasch, Budapest 1993.} \\

13... \text{dxe5 14 } \text{b3 } \text{e7 15 exd5 } \text{dxe5 16 } \text{b2} \\

Now Black has a choice of ways forward:

A21: 8... \text{dxe4} \\
A22: 8... \text{d7} \\
A23: 8... \text{b6} \\
A24: 8... \text{b5} \\

A21)

8... \text{dxe4} \\

The King’s Indian Attack would lose a lot of its sting if Black were able to successfully simplify in the centre like this. Fortunately this exchange almost always helps White more than Black. White now has more presence in the centre than Black, and after e4-e5 White will be able to use the important e4-square.

9 \text{dxe4 } \text{b5} \\

Alternatively:

a) 9... \text{b6 10 e5 } \text{d7 (10... } \text{d5 11 e4} \\

White must now look to advance both the c- and d-pawns in order to prise open the queenside. Fries Nielsen-Cramling, Copenhagen 1982, continued 16...g4 17 \text{d4 h5 18 c4 } \text{f6 19 } \text{b5 } \text{d7 20 d4! a6 21 d5! xxb5 22 cxb5 } \text{d5 23 } \text{c1 } \text{h8 and now 24 } \text{bxc6 } \text{xc6 25 } \text{a6+ seems to be winning for White; for example, 25... } \text{c7 26 } \text{e5+} \\

\( \text{d6 27 } \text{d4 or 25... } \text{b8 26 } \text{a5! bxa5 (26... } \text{a8 27 } \text{e5+ } \text{d6 28 } \text{xd5 } \text{d5 29 } \text{xd6+ } \text{xd6 30 } \text{b1) 27 } \text{e5+ } \text{d6 28 } \text{xd6+ } \text{xd6 29 } \text{c6.} \)

A2)

7...0-0 \\

This is still Black’s most common choice, despite White scoring a healthy 60% from this position on my database. Black gets his king out of danger, at least for the time being, and will concentrate on creating counterplay on the queenside.

8 \text{e1} 
\( \text{\textsc{db}4} 12 \text{\textsc{d}d}6 \text{\textsc{xd}6} 13 \text{\textsc{ex}d}6 \text{\textsc{b}7} 14 \text{\textsc{c}4} \text{\textsc{w}d}7 15 \text{\textsc{a}3} \text{\textsc{a}6} 16 \text{\textsc{f}4} \text{looks good for White} - \text{the passed d-pawn is a real thorn in Black's side}) 11 \text{\textsc{e}e}4 (11 \text{\textsc{d}d}4! \text{\textsc{cx}d}4 12 \text{\textsc{a}x}e6 \text{\textsc{xb}8} 13 \text{\textsc{a}b}3 \text{also looks good for White}) 11...\text{\textsc{a}6} 12 \text{\textsc{f}4} \text{b5} 13 \text{c}3 \text{and White was better in Petrosian-Kan, Moscow 1955. The game continued} 13...\text{\textsc{wb}6} 14 \text{\textsc{c}c2} \text{\textsc{fd}8} 15 \text{h}4! \text{\textsc{f}f}8 16 \text{h}5 \text{\textsc{ac}8}?! (16...\text{\textsc{h}6} 17 \text{\textsc{h}6}! \text{White's attack on the kingside was far more effective than Black's on the other wing}) 14 \text{\textsc{exg}5} \text{h}6
\begin{center}
\textbf{Diagram}
\end{center}

Now Shirov-Estrada Gonzalez, French League 1995, continued 15 \text{\textsc{wc}2}! (15 \text{\textsc{e}e}4 \text{\textsc{w}b6} 16 \text{\textsc{we}2} is slightly better for White) 15...\text{\textsc{hxg}5} 16 \text{\textsc{gx}g}5 \text{g}6 17 \text{\textsc{xe}6} \text{\textsc{fx}e}6 18 \text{\textsc{wx}g}6+ \text{\textsc{h}8} 19 \text{\textsc{e}4} \text{and White had a very strong attack.}

\textbf{A22)}

8...\text{\textsc{w}c}7

In anticipation of e4-e5, Black develops his queen to put extra pressure on that square. There is a question mark, however, as to whether the queen is well placed here. On the minus side White has tricks involving \text{\textsc{f}1}, \text{\textsc{f}4} and then \text{\textsc{e}3}x\text{d}5. It's surprising how often this theme works for White.

9 \text{\textsc{e}5} \text{\textsc{d}d}7

9...\text{\textsc{g}4} is a little loose. White was clearly better after 10 \text{\textsc{we}2} \text{f}6 11 \text{\textsc{ex}f}6 \text{\textsc{xf}6} 12 \text{\textsc{b}3} \text{b}6 13 \text{c}4! \text{\textsc{d}xc}4 14 \text{\textsc{dx}c}4 \text{e}5 15 \text{\textsc{h}3} \text{\textsc{h}6} 16 \text{\textsc{ax}h}6 \text{\textsc{gx}h}6 17 \text{\textsc{h}2} in Savon-Radulov, Sinaia 1965.

10 \text{\textsc{we}2} \text{\textsc{b}5}

Black has two major alternatives:

a) 10...\text{\textsc{b}6} (with this move Black's bishop will not be blocked when it goes to a6, but in general Black's counterplay on the queenside is slower) 11 \text{\textsc{f}1} \text{\textsc{a}6} 12 \text{\textsc{h}4} and now:

a1) 12...\text{\textsc{d}4} (this idea is double-edged; after the exchange Black has play down the half-open c-file, but the pawn on d4 can become vulnerable) 13 \text{\textsc{xd}4} \text{\textsc{cx}d}4 14 \text{\textsc{f}4}

and White had a big endgame plus in the game Badea-Danilov, Bucharest 1998. In particular the bishop on g2 is a very strong piece.

10 \text{\textsc{e}5} \text{\textsc{d}d}5 11 \text{\textsc{e}e}4 \text{\textsc{w}c}7 12 \text{\textsc{c}3} \text{\textsc{b}7}

12...\text{\textsc{xe}5} 13 \text{\textsc{xe}5} \text{\textsc{w}e}5 14 \text{\textsc{c}4} \text{\textsc{bxc}4} 15 \text{\textsc{c}3} \text{\textsc{w}d}6 16 \text{\textsc{xd}5} \text{\textsc{ex}d}5 17 \text{\textsc{xd}5} \text{\textsc{e}6} 18 \text{\textsc{a}a}8 is winning for White - Shirov.

13 \text{\textsc{g}6} \text{\textsc{g}x}g6

Safer is 13...\text{\textsc{h}6} 14 \text{\textsc{xe}7} \text{\textsc{cx}e}7 15 \text{a}4 \text{a}6, but White still enjoys some advantage after 16 \text{\textsc{d}6}. 

75
\[ \mathcal{A} \mathcal{c} 8 15 \mathcal{A} \mathcal{c} 1! \text{(the other rook is required to cover b2)} 15...\mathcal{D} c 5 16 \mathcal{D} h 2 \mathcal{D} h 8? \text{ (Black should play 16...\mathcal{D} a 4, which is answered by 17 \mathcal{A} a b 1) 17 \mathcal{D} f 3 \mathcal{A} a 4 18 \mathcal{A} x d 4 \mathcal{A} x b 2 19 c 4 and White wins material, Berg-Rian, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.} \]

\[ a2) 12...\mathcal{F} e 8 13 \mathcal{A} f 4 \mathcal{F} f 8 14 h 5 h 6 15 \mathcal{D} h 2 \mathcal{D} h 7 16 \mathcal{W} d 2 c 4 17 d x c 4 \mathcal{A} x c 4 18 \mathcal{D} g 4 \mathcal{F} f 8 19 c 3 \mathcal{A} a d 8 20 \mathcal{W} c 2 a 5 21 \mathcal{A} a d 1 and White has a pleasant space advantage, Quinteros-Bjelajac, Novi Sad 1982. \]

\[ b) 10...f 6? 11 e x f 6 \mathcal{O} x f 6 12 \mathcal{O} x b 3 \text{ and now:} \]

\[ b1) 12...\mathcal{D} d 6 13 c 4 (or 13 \mathcal{O} g 5 e 5 14 c 4 ?) 13...\mathcal{D} d 7 14 \mathcal{A} c 3 b 6 15 \mathcal{A} a c 1 \mathcal{A} a e 8 16 d 4! and the tension in the centre favours White, Materia-Nunn, Birmingham 1975 \]

\[ b2) 12...\mathcal{D} d 7 13 \mathcal{A} f 4 \mathcal{D} d 6 14 \mathcal{A} x d 6 \mathcal{W} x d 6 15 \mathcal{O} e 5 \mathcal{O} e 5 16 \mathcal{W} x e 5 \mathcal{W} x e 5 17 \mathcal{D} x e 5 \text{ (the weakness on e6 gives White a slight pull) 17...\mathcal{A} a c 8 18 d 4! b 6 19 d x c 5 b x c 5 20 c 4 \mathcal{D} g 4 21 \mathcal{A} x c 2 d x c 4 22 \mathcal{O} x a 5 \mathcal{O} b 5 23 a 4 and White went on to win, Reshevsky-De Winter, Siegen Olympiad 1970.} \]

\[ 11 \mathcal{A} f 1 b 4 \]

Alternatively:

\[ a) 11...\mathcal{A} a 6 \text{ (it seems strange putting the bishop in front of the a-pawn, but Black plans a quick-fire...\mathcal{F} e 8 and...\mathcal{D} d 4) 12 h 4 \mathcal{F} f 8 13 \mathcal{A} f 4 \mathcal{D} d 4? \text{ (but this is too early; Black should prepare it with 13...\mathcal{W} b 6) 14 \mathcal{A} x d 4 c x d 4} \]

\[ 15 \mathcal{A} x d 5! \text{ (this standard combination is often advantageous to White) 15...e x d 5 (in} \]

\[ \text{Votava-Stoeck, Turnov 1996, Black simply gave up the pawn with 15...a 5 b 5?!) 16 e 6 \mathcal{D} d 6 17 e x d 7 \mathcal{W} x d 7 18 \mathcal{A} x d 6 \mathcal{W} x d 6 19 \mathcal{A} a c 1 with a clear advantage to White. Black's bishop is looking silly on a6 and White will follow up with \mathcal{D} h 2-f 3 and \mathcal{W} e 5, picking up the loose d 4-pawn.} \]

\[ b) 11...a 5 \text{ (this may transpose to the text, but here we will concentrate on lines where Black refrains from playing an early...b 5-b 4) 12 h 4.} \]

Now Black has a further choice:

\[ b1) 12...\mathcal{D} d 4?! 13 \mathcal{A} x d 4 c x d 4 14 \mathcal{A} f 4 \mathcal{A} a 6! \text{ (planning...\mathcal{A} c 6) 15 \mathcal{A} h 2 (15 \mathcal{A} x d 5?! is ineffective here due to the surprising} \]

\[ \text{zwischenzug 15...\mathcal{A} b 4! 16 \mathcal{W} e b 1! - 16 \mathcal{A} e c 1} \]

\[ \text{exd 5 17 e 6 \mathcal{A} x e 6 18 \mathcal{W} x e 6 \mathcal{W} f 4 19 \mathcal{W} x d 7 loses to 19...\mathcal{W} x c 1! - 16...exd 5 17 e 6 \mathcal{W} c 6 18 \]

\[ \text{exd 7 \mathcal{A} x d 7 and Black is okay) 15...\mathcal{A} c 6 16 \mathcal{A} a c 1 \mathcal{A} a 6? \text{ (Black should play 16...\mathcal{W} b 6) 17} \]

\[ \mathcal{A} x d 5! \text{ (now this works well) 17...exd 5 18 e 6 } \]

\[ \text{\mathcal{W} d 8 19 exd 7 \mathcal{A} e 6 20 \mathcal{W} g 4 f 5 21 \mathcal{H} h 5 \mathcal{W} x d 7 22 \mathcal{A} f 3 g 6 23 \mathcal{H} h 6 \mathcal{A} f 6 24 \mathcal{A} x e 6 \mathcal{A} x e 6 25} \]

\[ \mathcal{A} e 5! \text{ and White had a big advantage in Fischer-Geller, Netanya 1968. This game} \]

\[ \text{concluded 25...\mathcal{A} x e 5 26 \mathcal{A} x e 5 \mathcal{W} d 7 28 h 5 \mathcal{A} g 3 29 \mathcal{H} x g 6 g x f 2+ 30 \mathcal{A} x f 2 \mathcal{H} g 6} \]

\[ 31 \mathcal{W} x g 6+ \mathcal{W} x g 6 32 \mathcal{A} g 5 \mathcal{A} f 7 1-0.} \]

\[ b2) 12...\mathcal{A} a 6 13 \mathcal{A} f 4 \mathcal{F} f 8 14 \mathcal{A} e 3 \mathcal{W} d 8 \]

\[ \text{(14...\mathcal{D} d 4? 15 \mathcal{A} x d 4 c x d 4 16 \mathcal{A} x d 5 is good for White again) 15 \mathcal{A} a c 1 (15 h 5?!) 15...b 4 16} \]

\[ c 4 b x c 3 17 b x c 3 \mathcal{A} a b 8? \text{ (Uhlmann suggests} \]
removes a defender from the kingside) 15
\(\text{e}_4\) \(w_a7\) 16 \(h_5\) \(w_f\) 17 \(h_6\) \(g_6\) 18 \(c_3\) \(bxc3\) \(e_3\) \(d_7\) 20 \(g_5\) and White has annoying pressure on the dark squares around the black king, Benko-Csom, Palma de Mallorca 1971.

15 b3

Uhlmann gives 15 \(\text{x}d_5\) \(e\) 5 16 \(e_6\), with a slight plus top White, while 15 \(a3!?\) transposes to note to Black’s 13th.

After 15 b3, the game Vasiukov-Uhlmann, Berlin 1962, continued 15...\(\text{a}7\) 16 \(h_5\) \(a8\) 17 \(h_6\) \(g_6\) 18 \(\text{x}d_5!\) \(e\) 5 19 \(e_6\) \(d_8\) 20 \(f_7+\) \(h_8\) (20...\(\text{f}8\) 21 \(g_5!\) \(xg_5\) 22 \(xg_5\) \(xg_5\) 23 \(e_8+\) or 20...\(\text{x}f_7\) 21 \(w_d6+\) \(f_8\) 22 \(g_5\) \(xg_5\) 23 \(d_6+\) are winning for White) 21 \(c_5\) \(cxe5\)

14 \(\text{e}3\)

Lining up \(\text{x}d_5\) ideas, as well as \(\text{g}4\).

14...\(a4\)

Or:

a) 14...\(\text{f}8\) 15 \(\text{x}d_5!\) \(e\) 5 16 \(e_6\) \(d_6\) 17 \(x_d6\) \(w_xd6\) 18 \(e\) 7 \(w_xd7\) 19 \(g_5!\) \(d_4\)
(19...\(h_6\) 20 \(h_3\) \(f_5\) 21 \(e\) 6) 20 \(w_h5\) \(h_6\) 21 \(d\) 7 and White wins a pawn, D.Gross-Petrik, Guarapuava 1995

b) 14...\(b\) 6 (this stops \(\text{x}d_5\) tricks but
8...b6

This move shouldn't concern White too much. Indeed, Black often winds up playing ...b6-b5, arriving a tempo down on Variation A24. These positions are worth studying, however, as Black often stumbles into them after having played an earlier ...b7-b6, before deciding to castle short.

9 e5 c6

Or 9...e8 10 d1 f5 11 exf6 xf6 12 e3 c6 (Jansa-Kostro, Polanica Zdroj 1968), and now Uhlmann recommends 13 c3, intending c4.

10 d1 a6

Or 10...b7 11 h4 and now:

a) 11...b5 12 d1 h2 a5 13 g4 a4 14 a3 b4 (Ciocaltea-Zivkovic, Bar 1977), and now 15 h5, intending h5-h6, looks stronger than the game continuation of 15 g5.

b) 11...h6 12 d1 h2 e8 13 g4 f8 14 c3 c8 15 h3 a5 16 d2 b5 17 d4 and White was doing well in Liberson-Murey, Reykjavik 1975. The rest of the game is interesting; White successfully sacrifices on the kingside and crashes through: 17...cxd4 18 cxd4 b6 19 xh6 gxh6 20 d2 d7 21 f4 d8 22 f1 h8 23 d3 g8 24 xh6 g6 25 xg6 fxg6 26 f6 xf6 27 exf6 e5 28 f8 29 ac1 1-0

11 h4 c8

Or 11...e8 12 h3 d8 13 f4 c7 14 d2 d8 15 d2 and White gradually builds up the pressure, Petrosian-Barcza, Budapest 1952.

12 d1 h2 b5 13 g5

13 h5! also comes into consideration.

13...b4

We are following the game Ljubojevic-Korchnoi, Sao Paulo 1979. Here Korchnoi erred with 14 d4, and after 14...c4 15 d4 c3! 16 bxc3 bxc3 17 f4 c4 18 ec1 e2 19 a3 c6 20 c1 a6 Black was doing well. Instead White should continue actions on the kingside with 14 c1! or 14 g4 (Carbilo).

A24)

8...b5

Black's most popular and ambitious move. Queenside operations are not delayed any further.

9 e5

After 9 e5 Black has a choice of knight retreats:

A241: 9...e8

A242: 9...d7

A241)

9...e8

This is much less popular than 9...d7, al-
though it is not clear whether there is any particular reason for this.

10 \( \text{Qf1} \)

White carries on operations on the kingside.

10...b4

Alternatively:

a) 10...\( \text{Qc7} \) 11 h4 \( \text{Qd7} \) 12 h5 b4 13 h6 g6 14 \( \text{Qf4} \) \( \text{Qb5} \) 15 \( \text{Qc1} \) was unclear in Reinderman-Bischoff, Venlo 2000.

b) 10...f6? (this seems premature) 11 exf6 \( \text{Qxf6} \) (11...gxf6 12 \( \text{Nh6} \) 13 c4 \( \text{Qc7} \) 14 cxd5 \( \text{Qxd5} \) 15 a3 \( \text{Nh8} \) 16 \( \text{Qc1} \) and Black's pawn structure leaves a lot to be desired, Borik-Sonntag, German Bundesliga 1995) 12 \( \text{Nd3} \) 13 \( \text{Qxe5!} \) 13 c4! \( \text{Qc7} \) 14 \( \text{Qg4} \) e5 15 \( \text{Qxf6+} \) gxf6 (15...\( \text{Qxf6!} \) 16 cxd5 \( \text{Qxd5} \) 17 \( \text{Qxe5!} \) is strong for White) 16 cxd5 \( \text{Qxd5} \) 17 \( \text{Qd2!} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) 18 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) 19 \( \text{Nh6} \) 20 \( \text{Nh7} \) 21 \( \text{Wh5} \) and Black's position was full of weaknesses, Dolmatov-Meyer, Philadelphia 1991.

11 h4 a5 12 \( \text{Qh2} \)

12 \( \text{Qf4} \) a4 13 a3 (Fischer's recipe – see also Variation A2421) 13...bxa3 14 bxa3 \( \text{Qc7} \) 15 h5 \( \text{Qb5} \) 16 h6 g6 17 c4 \( \text{Qbd4} \) 18 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 19 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Nh7} \) 20 \( \text{Qb1} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) was equal in Sandipan-Davies, Dhaka 2001.

12...a4

\( \text{Qh8} \) 18 \( \text{Qxe7} \) \( \text{Qxe7} \) 19 h5 h6! (preventing h5-h6) was unclear in McShane-Davies, British League 1997.

b) 13 \( \text{Qg4} \) a3 14 h5 f5 15 exf6 gxf6 16 bxa3 bxa3 17 \( \text{Qh6+} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 18 c4!, with a complicated position, Szabo-Darga, Winnipeg 1967.

13...a3 14 bxa3 \( \text{Qd4} \)

The more miserly 14...bxa3 should be considered.

After 14...\( \text{Qd4} \) 15 axb4 cxb4 16 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qb5} \) Black has some compensation for the pawn, but it's probably not quite enough, Musil-Velimirovic, Portoroz/Ljubljana 1975.

A2421)

9...\( \text{Qd7} \)

This is by far Black's most popular retreat.

10 \( \text{Qf1 a5 11 h4 b4} \)

Or:

a) 11...a4 12 a3! b4 13 \( \text{Qf4} \) transposes to Variation A2421.

b) 11...\( \text{Nh7} \) 12 \( \text{Qh2} \) a4 (Pavlov-Sveshnikov, Moscow 1977) and now White should play 13 a3!.

12 \( \text{Qf4} \)

\( \text{Qh8} \) 18 \( \text{Qxe7} \) \( \text{Qxe7} \) 19 h5 h6! (preventing h5-h6) was unclear in McShane-Davies, British League 1997.

b) 13 \( \text{Qg4} \) a3 14 h5 f5 15 exf6 gxf6 16 bxa3 bxa3 17 \( \text{Qh6+} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 18 c4!, with a complicated position, Szabo-Darga, Winnipeg 1967.

13...a3 14 bxa3 \( \text{Qd4} \)

The more miserly 14...bxa3 should be considered.

After 14...\( \text{Qd4} \) 15 axb4 cxb4 16 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qb5} \) Black has some compensation for the pawn, but it's probably not quite enough, Musil-Velimirovic, Portoroz/Ljubljana 1975.

A2421)

9...\( \text{Qd7} \)

This is by far Black’s most popular retreat.

10 \( \text{Qf1 a5 11 h4 b4} \)

Or:

a) 11...a4 12 a3! b4 13 \( \text{Qf4} \) transposes to Variation A2421.

b) 11...\( \text{Nh7} \) 12 \( \text{Qh2} \) a4 (Pavlov-Sveshnikov, Moscow 1977) and now White should play 13 a3!.

12 \( \text{Qf4} \)

Here we will look at two possible ideas for Black, which are closely linked.

A2421: 12...a4

A2422: 12...\( \text{Qa6} \)

A2421)

12...a4
This move has been criticised, perhaps unfairly, in some texts.

12...a4 13 a3!

Bobby Fischer’s important move, which breathed new life into this variation for White. The main point is that Black is prevented from playing ...a4-a3 and thus weakening the c3- and d4-squares. From a practical viewpoint White has scored very well from this position.

13...bxa3

Given as the ‘main line’, but in my opinion this may be a slight inaccuracy. 13...a6? loses a pawn after 14 axb4 cxb4 15 a4! but Black’s compensation is considerable after 15...c5 16 a1 b3. In which case, White might have nothing better than to transpose to Variation A2422 with 14 e3 or 14 h2.

14 bxa3 a6

14...c4! 15 b6? (better is 15...xf3+) 16 cxd4 cxd4 17 g4 gave White a strong attack in Sasikiran-Reefat, Kalambakam 2000.

15 e3 a5

Or:

a) 15...b5?! 16 c4! is strong – compare with Variation A2422.

b) 15...d4 16 c4! b3 (after 16...b6 17 cxd5 cxd5 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 cxd4 cxd4 20 cxa4 cxd3 21 cxd4 White was simply a pawn up in Geurink-Tondivar, Leeuwarden 1995) 17 cxd5! cxd5 18 cxd5 19 cxd5 and White has excellent compensation for the exchange, for example 19...g5 20 e6 fxe6 21 c6 22 b7 23 c6 24 a6 was very good for White, Gheorghiu-Uhlmann, Sofia 1967. 21 c6 f6 (Vogt-Schauwecker, Swiss League 1994)

see following diagram

and now 22 a2! looks strong, for example 22...h8 (22...4 23 c7 c8 24 c6!) 23 c6 f6 (23...xg5 24 a6 h8 25 g5! 23...c6 24 f6) 24 c6 f6 25 e4! 26 c4 27 e4 and despite being the exchange up, Black has serious problems dealing with the threat of e5.

16 h3

16 a5! also looks good, for example 16...b8 17 h3 b6 (17...h6 18 c7) 18 g4 c8 19 h5 a5 20 b4 21 wh6 e7 22 g4 e8 23 f6+ x6 24 gx6 25 f4 and White’s attack is looking very dangerous, Eisenmann-Drechsler, correspondence 1988.

16...d4 17 f4!

Strange at first sight, but 17 a4 would block the queen’s route to the kingside.

17...c6 18 a5

White has a very menacing attack. We are following the stem game Fischer-Miagmasuren, Sousse Interzonal 1967, which continued 18 d5 19 d2 c5 20 a5 21 h5 f8 22 c2 c3 23 f6! e8
(23...gxf6 24 exf6 $\text{h}8 25 \text{g}3 \text{d}5 26 \text{h}6! \text{g}8 27 \text{g}5 \text{c}7 28 \text{g}2! - Black has no good defence to $\text{e}4 - 28...\text{g}e8 29 \text{g}e4 \text{xf}6 30 \text{xf}6+ \text{g}7 31 \text{ab}1 \text{we}7 32 \text{g}4 and White has a winning advantage) 24 \text{e}4 \text{g}6 25 \text{g}5 \text{xe}4 26 \text{xe}4 \text{c}4 27 \text{h}5 \text{cxd}3 28 \text{h}4 \text{a}7 (or 28...\text{dxc}2 29 \text{hxg}6 \text{c}1+ 30 \text{xc}1 \text{xc}1+ 31 \text{h}2! \text{fxg}6 32 \text{xh}7 \text{hxh}7 33 \text{h}8+ \text{g}8 34 \text{h}8+ \text{g}7 35 \text{g}7 \text{mate}) 29 \text{g}2! \text{dxc}2 30 \text{wh}6 \text{f}8

31 \text{wh}7++! 1-0 (31...\text{hxg}6 32 \text{hxg}6+ \text{hxg}6 33 \text{e}4 is mate).

A2422)

12...\text{a}6

This move has taken over the mantle of being the main line.

13 \text{g}2h2

Also interesting is 13 \text{g}5!? and now:

a) 13...\text{xe}5? (this gives White a free at-
tack) 14 \text{hxg}5 \text{e}7 15 \text{wh}5 \text{b}7 16 \text{g}2 \text{d}4 17 \text{g}4 \text{xc}2 18 \text{f}6! \text{xf}6 19 \text{gxf}6 \text{h}8 20 \text{fxg}7+ \text{g}xg7 21 \text{g}5+ 1-0 Minkov-Hanzel, correspondence.

b) 13...\text{h}6 14 \text{g}3, followed by \text{g}4 or \text{h}5.

c) 13...\text{e}8! (the best defence) 14 \text{g}4 (14 \text{g}5 \text{xe}5 15 \text{hxg}5? f5! blocks the White attack; players should be aware of this defence) 14...\text{h}8! (14...a4? 15 \text{dxe}6! 1-0 was the abrupt conclusion of Bronstein-Uhlmann, Moscow 1971, while 14...\text{b}6 15 \text{h}5 \text{b}5 16 \text{f}3 \text{h}8 17 \text{h}6 \text{g}6 18 \text{g}5 \text{a}4 19 \text{f}4 \text{xe}5 20 \text{dxe}5 \text{e}7 21 \text{e}3 \text{a}7 22 \text{g}4 gave White a strong attack on the dark squares, Van der Weide-Visser, Dutch League 1995) 15 \text{f}2 \text{xe}5!? (Black should play 15...\text{d}4 or 15...a4) 16 \text{hxg}5 \text{d}4 17 \text{xc}1 \text{a}4 18 \text{f}3 \text{b}3 19 \text{axb}3 \text{axb}3 20 \text{dxc}4 \text{cxd}4 21 ... \text{d}2 and the d-pawn is dropping off, Baur-Schneider, Badenweiler 1994.

It's also possible to play as in Variation A2421 with 13 \text{e}3 a4 14 a3 \text{b}5! (14...\text{bxa}3 15 \text{bxa}3 transposes to Variation A2421) 15 \text{h}5 (after 15 c4 we see the point of Black not exchanging on a3; he can play 15...\text{bxc}3! 16 \text{bxc}3 \text{a}5 17 \text{ab}1 \text{c}6 18 c4 \text{dxc}4 19 \text{dxc}4 \text{b}8 and Black is even better, Damjanovic-Uhlmann, Monte Carlo 1968) 15...\text{c}8 16 \text{g}4 c4 17 d4 c3 18 \text{bxc}3 \text{bxa}3 19 \text{h}6 and once again we have a very finely balanced position, J.Kristiansen-Sorensen, Lyngby 1989.

13...a4 14 a3

Once again following Fischer's idea of preventing Black from playing ...a4-a3. An example of White allowing the advance is the following: 14 \text{d}c1? a3 15 b3 \text{c}8 (15...\text{a}7 16 \text{g}5 \text{b}5 17 \text{wh}5 \text{h}6 18 \text{g}3 \text{c}8 19 \text{g}4 \text{h}8 20 \text{f}1 \text{b}8 21 ... \text{d}2 \text{c}6 22 \text{h}3 was unclear in Polugaevsky-Guyot, France 1993) 16 \text{g}4 \text{d}4 17 \text{dxc}4 \text{cxd}4 18 \text{h}2 \text{c}7 19 \text{g}4 \text{h}8 20 \text{f}3 \text{c}3 21 \text{g}5 \text{xe}5 22 \text{dxe}5 \text{h}6. Now in the game P.Claesen-Muir, European Team Championship, Batumi 1999, White played passively
with 23 \( \text{Qf3?} \), and after 23...\( \text{Wb2!} \) Black went on to win. Instead Horn analyses the following variation to a draw: 23 \( \text{Qxf7+!} \) \( \text{Qxf7} \) 24 \( \text{Wxe6} \) \( \text{Qf8} \) 25 \( \text{Wxa6} \) \( \text{Wxf2} \) 26 \( \text{Wd6} \) \( \text{Wd2} \) 27 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Wh2} \) 28 \( \text{Wh1} \) \( \text{Qf2} \) 29 \( \text{Wc6} \) \( \text{Wc3} \) 30 \( \text{Wxa8+} \) \( \text{Qf8} \) 31 \( \text{Wxf8+} \) \( \text{Whx8+} \) 32 \( \text{Whx2} \).

14...\( \text{Qb5} \)

Alternatively:

a) 14...\( \text{c4?!} \) 15 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{c3} \) 16 \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{bxc3} \) 17 \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{Qb6?} \) (Kaidanov suggests that 17...\( \text{h6} \) is stronger, against which White should play 18 \( \text{Qh3} \) and \( \text{Wh5} \)) 18 \( \text{Wh5} \) and now:

a1) 18...\( \text{Qh6} \) 19 \( \text{Qg4}! \)

19...\( \text{hxg5} \) (or 19...\( \text{Qxd4} \) 20 \( \text{Qxh6+} \) \( \text{gxh6} \) 21 \( \text{Whxh6} \) \( \text{Qxg5} \) 22 \( \text{Qxg5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 23 \( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 24 \( \text{exf6} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 25 \( \text{Qe5} \) and White wins) 20 \( \text{hxg5} \) \( \text{g6} \) (20...\( \text{Qxd4} \) loses after 21 \( \text{Qf6+} \) \( \text{gx6} \) 22 \( \text{gx6} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 23 \( \text{exf6} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 24 \( \text{Qe5}! \) 21 \( \text{Wh6} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 22 \( \text{Qf6+} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 23 \( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{Qf5} \) 24 \( \text{Wh3} \) and Kaidanov assesses this as winning for White, which seems correct. After 24...\( \text{Qd7} \) 25 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{Qd6} \) 26 \( \text{Wh6} \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 27 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 28 \( \text{Qh3} \) Black has no good defence.

a2) 18...\( \text{Qxg5} \) 19 \( \text{Qxg5} \) \( \text{Wxe8} \) 20 \( \text{Qf6!} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \)? (20...\( \text{Qxf6} \) is more resilient, but Kaidanov’s 21 \( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 22 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 23 \( \text{exf6} \) \( \text{Qh8} \) 24 \( \text{Qxe8} \) \( \text{Qxe8} \) 25 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qcb8} \) is still clearly better for White) 21 \( \text{Qg4} \) and White’s attack proved to be much too strong, Kaidanov-Nijboer, Elida Olympiad 1998. The game concluded 21...\( \text{Qf5} \) 22 \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{Wh8} \) 23 \( \text{Qxg7+} \) \( \text{Qxg7} \) 24 \( \text{Qf6} \) \( \text{Wh8} \) 25 \( \text{Qf6} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 26 \( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{Qae8} \) 27 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 28 \( \text{Qf4} \) \( \text{Qc4} \) 29 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{Qc8} \) 30 \( \text{Qab1} \) \( \text{f5} \) 31 \( \text{Qxf6} \) 1-0.

b) 14...\( \text{bxa3} \) 15 \( \text{bxa3} \) \( \text{Qb8} \) 16 \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 17 \( \text{c4}! \) \( \text{Qb6} \) 18 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 19 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 20 \( \text{e6} \) and the complications favour White, Kaidanov-S. Anderson, Dallas 1996.

The position after 14...\( \text{Qb5} \) is rich in possibilities and gives both sides ample opportunity to play for the win. Here are some examples:

a) 15 \( \text{Qh3} \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 16 \( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{Qc8} \) 17 \( \text{Qc1?!} \) (17 \( \text{h5?!} \) or 17 \( \text{Qg5} \) look stronger.) 17...\( \text{Qd4} \)! 18 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 19 \( \text{Qd1} \) \( \text{bxa3} \) 20 \( \text{bxa3} \) \( \text{Qe3} \) 21 \( \text{Qc1} \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 22 \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 23 \( \text{Qb2} \) \( \text{Qc8} \) 24 \( \text{Qxc3} \) \( \text{Qxc3} \) and Black has more than enough compensation for the exchange in C. Hansen-Ye Jiangchuan, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

b) 15 \( \text{Qg5?!} \) and now:

b1) 15...\( \text{Qd4?!} \) 16 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{Qb3} \) 17 \( \text{Qa2} \) (incarcerating the rook!) 17...\( \text{Qc8?!} \) (17...\( \text{Qc7?!} \) may be stronger; the position is unclear after 18 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{dxc4} \) 19 \( \text{Qxa8} \) \( \text{Qxa8} \) 20 \( \text{dxc4} \) \( \text{Qxc4} \) 21 \( \text{Qxc2} \) \( \text{Qxc2} \) 22 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qb6} \) 23 \( \text{Qwe4} \) 18 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{dxc4} \) 19 \( \text{dxc4} \) \( \text{c6} \) 20 \( \text{Qxc6} \) \( \text{Qxc6} \) 21 \( \text{axb4} \) \( \text{Qb6} \) 22 \( \text{Qc2} \) \( \text{g6} \) 23 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 24 \( \text{Qg4} \) and White was better in Jansa-Krallmann, Hamburg 1995.

b2) 15...\( \text{Qe8} \) 16 \( \text{Qh5} \) \( \text{Qxg5} \) (16...\( \text{h6} \) 17 \( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{hxg5} \) 18 \( \text{hgx5} \) \( \text{Qg5} \) is a defensive trick) 17...\( \text{Qd4} \) (Fleitas-Perez, Cuba 1998) and now, according to Perez, White can keep the advantage with 18 \( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) 19 \( \text{Qe3} \).
5...g6 is an ambitious move and a popular choice, especially at grandmaster level. From g7 Black’s fianchettoed bishop controls the vital e5-square, and thus puts pressure on White’s spearheading pawn, if and when it arrives there. The bishop also provides protection to the black king, if he castles short. On the other hand, the move ...g7-g6 does weaken the dark squares on the kingside, and White can always hope to take advantage of this later on.

6  \( \text{Qg2} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 7 0-0 8  \( \text{Qge7} \)

7...\( \text{Qf6} \) has always been less popular, perhaps because it blocks the bishop on g7. More recently, however, it’s been used by some strong grandmasters, so we should take a quick look. One possibility is 8 \( \text{exd5!} \), when 8...\( \text{exd5} \) 9  \( \text{Qe1} \)+ is annoying for Black, while 8...\( \text{Qxd5} \) transposes to Variation B1.

Instead, Adams-Khalifman, Dortmund 2000, continued 8 c3 0-0 9 e5 \( \text{Qd7} \) 10 d4 b5 11 \( \text{Qe1} \) b4 12 \( \text{Qf1} \) a6 13 h4 bxc3 14 bxc3 \( \text{Qa5} \) 15 \( \text{Qd2} \) b6 16 c4 \( \text{Qa4} \) 17 cxd5 \( \text{Qxd5} \) 18 \( \text{Qxd1} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 19 dxc5 and White held a slight plus.

After 7...\( \text{Qge7} \) I’m giving White a choice of two different approaches. Variation B1 is tricky, but Variation B2 offers White more serious chances for an opening advantage.

**B1:** 8 \( \text{exd5!} \)

**B2:** 8  \( \text{Qe1} \)

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8  \( \text{exd5!} \)

Immediately releasing the tension, White plans to open the centre as quickly as possible, perhaps making use of Black’s uncastled king. This is a deceptively tricky line, although Black should be okay, if he knows what he’s doing.

8...\( \text{exd5} \)

For a long time the natural looking 8...\( \text{Qxd5!} \) was considered wrong after 9 \( \text{Qb3} \) b6 10 c4 \( \text{Qde7} \) 11 d4, when apparently the position opens up to White’s advantage. For example, Csom-Ivkov, Ljubljana/Portorož 1973, continued 11...\( \text{cxd4} \) 12 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 13 \( \text{Qg5} \) f6 14 \( \text{Qe3} \) 0-0 15 \( \text{We2} \) e5 16 \( \text{Qb5} \) and White’s pieces were much more active than their counterparts. However, 11...\( \text{Qa6!} \) is much stronger, after which Black seems to be fine. Perhaps White should consider diverging with 9 \( \text{Qe4!} \).

9  \( \text{d4!} \)

I believe this is an idea of the well-known Russian International Master and trainer Mark Dvoretsky. White offers a pawn to mess up Black’s pawn structure. If this pawn can be regained then White usually keeps an advantage.

**B1:**

9...\( \text{Qxd4} \)

9...\( \text{Qxd4} \) leads to a similar position to the text after 10 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) (10...\( \text{Qxd4} \) 11 \( \text{Qb3!} \) is annoying for Black; after 11...\( \text{Qg7} \) 12 \( \text{Qxc5} \) White has an edge due to the weakness
of the isolated d5-pawn) 11 b3 c6? (11...b6 12 e1 e6 13 g5! is strong) 12 e1+ e6 13 f4 0-0 14 c5 and White has reasonable compensation for the pawn.

For those black players not willing to accept the sacrifice there’s the enticing 9...c4, gaining space on queenside. However, this move has its own drawback in that it leaves the d5-pawn backward and inevitably vulnerable. Here’s an excellent example of White exploiting this: 10 c3 f5 11 e1 0-0 12 f1 h6 13 h4 (preventing g6-g5) 13...e8 14 f4 d7 15 e5! xe5 16 xe5 f6 17 f4 g5 18 hxg5 hxg5 19 d2 g4 20 f3 xf3 21 xf3 g4 22 h1! f5 23 h5 f8 24 a5

b) 10...g4?! 11 h3 xf3 12 xf3 0-0 13 f4 and White retains positional compensation for the sacrificed pawn” – Dvoretsky.

11 f4

In the stem game Dvoretsky-Vulfson, USSR 1986, White played 11 g5! f5 12 e1+ e6 13 g4! d6 14 fxg4! dxd4 15 dxd4 dxd4 16 dxd5 0-0 17 c6 wc5 18 f3 and emerged from the complications with an edge. Dvoretsky, however, gives 11...0-0! as an improvement, with the continuation 12 fxg4 f5!, when White’s pressure on d5 is compensated by Black’s pressure on b2.

11...0-0

11...d3?! 12 c3 f5 is similar to the text. White could also try 12 cxd3? xb2 13 b1 g7 14 bd4 wa5 15 b5, although after 15...0-0 the best I can see is a draw by repetition after 16 xc7 h8 17 b5.

12 b6

In the excellent book Opening Preparation Dvoretsky claims White has the better chances here, but it’s certainly not clear-cut.

12...d3 13 c3!

White must allow Black a passed pawn on d3 for the moment. 13 cxd3?! xb2 would actually lead to a position which is normally reached (with colour reversed) via the move order 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 f6 5 c3 g6 6 b3 g7 7 cxd5 0-0 8 c2 g7 9 f3 d6 10 g5 f5 11 0-0 a3 12 d6 exd6 13 xxb7. The position after 13
Axb7 is known to be good for White, so 13 cxd3 certainly cannot be recommended!
13...f5

This is a critical position for the assessment of 8 exd5. White has some compensation and certainly if he picks up the d3-pawn he will be better, but that's quite a big 'if'.

a) 14 a.c5 w.b5 achieves little for White.
b) 14 d.h4 d.f8 (or 14...d.f4 15 a.c5 w.b5 16 f.f3 f.f5!) 15 a.c5 w.c7 16 a.e1 a.e4 17 f.f3 f.f5 18 d.xf5 d.xf5 19 a.h3 20 h.xg3+ 21 a.g2 d4 was unclear in Vinkelbergstrom, Lindesberg 1993

c) 14 a.c1 d.f8 15 a.c5 w.c7 16 a.h4 a.e6 17 w.xd3 (17 w.f3 d.f5 18 a.h4 a.e6 19 a.f3 ½-½ was the end of Poettinger-Novkovic, Vorarlberg 1995) 17...d.e5 18 a.c2; White has succeeded in regaining the pawn and keeps an edge due to his better structure. However, in this last line Black could try the interesting 16...a.e4? when both 17 f.f3 f.f5! and 17 dxe4 dxe4 18 bxe4 d.ad8 are unclear.

In conclusion, 8 exd5 is very tricky and certainly worth a try, but it seems more logical to delay this capture until Black has committed himself.

B2)
8 a.e1

This flexible move, maintaining the tension in the centre, is White's most popular choice.

Now Black must make an important decision: whether to castle or to leave his king in the centre and develop elsewhere.

B21: 8...0-0
B22: 8...b6

Alternatively:

a) 8...w.c7 (the queen is not necessarily well placed here) 9 exd5! exd5 9...d.xd5?! 10 a.b3 b6 11 c.f4! d.de7 12 d.d4 exploits White's pressure on the long diagonal) 10 d4 c4 (10...d.xd4? 11 d.xd4 d.xd4 12 a.b3 a.g7 13 a.f4 a.d8 14 w.xd5 w.xd5 15 w.xd5 a.xb2 16 a.ab1 a.f6 17 d.xc5 leaves White with a dominating position, while after 10...cxd4 11 a.b3 a.g4 White gains time on the black queen with 12 a.f4) 11 a.f1 0-0 12 c3 and White will follow up with a.f4.

b) 8...d.xe4? 9 d.xe4 b6 10 a.g5 a.b7 (10...a.xb2 11 d.f6+ a.xf6 12 w.xe6 0-0 13 a.e5 is horrible for Black) 11 w.d2 and the dark squares around the black king are looking very shaky. Abello-Riff, Bescanon 1999, concluded 11 w.c7 12 a.f6 a.g8 13 a.xg7 a.xg7 14 a.f6+ a.f8 15 w.h6 a.f5 16 d.xh7+ a.e7 17 w.g5+ a.d7 18 a.f6+ a.c8 19 a.e8 and Black resigned.

c) 8...d4 (an obvious space gaining move which blocks the centre; there is, however, a major drawback to this move) 9 e5! (now that White has possession of the e4- and c4-squares, this advance is stronger than normal) 9...w.c7 10 a.c4 0-0 11 a4 and White’s
pieces are well placed.

d) 8...h6 (the idea of this move is to support the pawn thrust ...g6–g5–g4 which can be effective when White has pushed e4–e5 – the e5-pawn can become vulnerable) 9 exd5!? (White is aiming for a more favourable version of Variation C1, with \(\text{N}\)e1 being more useful than ...h7–h6; 9 h4 is the most popular move, transposing after 9...b6 to Variation B222) 9...exd5 (9...\(\text{Q}\)xd5 10 \(\text{Q}\)b3 b6 11 c4 \(\text{Q}\)de7 12 d4 cxd4 13 \(\text{Q}\)fxd4 again causes Black problems along the long diagonal) 10 d4 cxd4 11 \(\text{Q}\)b3 \(\text{Q}\)g4 (11...\(\text{Q}\)b6 12 \(\text{Q}\)f4 0–0 13 \(\text{Q}\)d6! – here the inclusion of \(\text{N}\)e1 and ...h7–h6 really helps White – 13...\(\text{N}\)e8 14 \(\text{Q}\)c5 \(\text{Q}\)c7 15 \(\text{Q}\)fxd4 and Black has no compensation for his weak isolated d5-pawn) 12 h3 \(\text{Q}\)xf3 13 \(\text{Q}\)xf3 0–0 14 \(\text{Q}\)f4 and White has the usual positional compensation for the pawn.

B21)

8...0–0

Previously the more direct 9 e5 \(\text{Q}\)c7 10 \(\text{Q}\)e2 was thought to be strong, but Black’s play in variation ‘b’ casts doubt upon this.

a) 10...b6 11 \(\text{Q}\)f1 \(\text{Q}\)a6 12 \(\text{Q}\)f4 \(\text{Q}\)ad8 13 h4 \(\text{Q}\)d4 14 \(\text{Q}\)h2 \(\text{Q}\)b4 15 \(\text{Q}\)d2 (White’s attack is automatic) 15...\(\text{Q}\)fe8 16 \(\text{Q}\)g4 \(\text{Q}\)ed5 17 \(\text{Q}\)h6 \(\text{Q}\)h8 18 \(\text{Q}\)g5 \(\text{Q}\)d7 19 a3 \(\text{Q}\)c6 20 \(\text{Q}\)f6 21 \(\text{Q}\)xf6 h5 22 \(\text{Q}\)h6+ \(\text{Q}\)f8 23 \(\text{Q}\)g5 \(\text{Q}\)xf6 24 \(\text{Q}\)h7+ \(\text{Q}\)g7 25 \(\text{Q}\)xf6 \(\text{Q}\)xf6

26 \(\text{Q}\)f5!! \(\text{Q}\)xf5 (it’s mate after 26...\(\text{Q}\)xf5 27 \(\text{Q}\)g5, 26...\(\text{Q}\)xf5 27 \(\text{Q}\)g5, or 26...e5 27 \(\text{Q}\)g5+ \(\text{Q}\)e6 28 \(\text{Q}\)g7+ \(\text{Q}\)d6 29 \(\text{Q}\)f6+ \(\text{Q}\)e6 30 \(\text{Q}\)e8) 27 \(\text{Q}\)xe8 \(\text{Q}\)g7 28 \(\text{Q}\)ae1 \(\text{Q}\)d8 29 \(\text{Q}\)g5 c4 30 \(\text{Q}\)h8 \(\text{Q}\)e6 31 \(\text{Q}\)h6+ \(\text{Q}\)f6 32 \(\text{Q}\)e8 1–0 Ciocalteanu, Romania 1976.

b) 10...g5! 11 h3 (11 \(\text{Q}\)xg5 \(\text{Q}\)xe5 looks okay for Black) 11...h6 (11...\(\text{Q}\)g6?) 12 \(\text{Q}\)b3 b6 13 d4 \(\text{Q}\)g6 14 \(\text{Q}\)e3 cxd4 15 \(\text{Q}\)xd4 \(\text{Q}\)xd4 16 \(\text{Q}\)bxd4 \(\text{Q}\)d7 with an unclear position, Movsesian-Ulibin, Dresden 1994.

9...h6

This move nearly always seems to follow h2–h4, but Black does have other options:

a) 9...e5 certainly prevents White from playing e4–e5, but loosens the centre. White can claim an edge using quieter means, for example 10 exd5 \(\text{Q}\)xd5 11 c3 b6 12 \(\text{Q}\)c4 \(\text{Q}\)e8 13 \(\text{Q}\)b3 \(\text{Q}\)b7 14 \(\text{Q}\)g5 \(\text{Q}\)d7 15 \(\text{Q}\)e4 \(\text{Q}\)e6 16 a4 \(\text{Q}\)d8 17 a5, as in Lau-Löffler, German Bundesliga 1989.

b) 9...\(\text{Q}\)c7 10 h5! h6!? (10...b6 looks stronger) 11 hxg6 fxg6 12 \(\text{Q}\)h7 13 \(\text{Q}\)b3 d4 14 cxd4 cxd4 15 e5 \(\text{Q}\)d7 16 \(\text{Q}\)c5 and
Black has many weaknesses, Mortensen-Agdestein, Espoo 1989.

c) 9...d4 10 e5! w c7 11 w c2 A d5 12 A f1 and White will continue with A h2-g4.

d2) 21...hxg5 forces White to show the true depth of his idea. 22 hxg5 w c7 23 A f6+ A xf6 24 gx f6 d c8 25 g4! and now:

d21) 25...A c2 26 A h1+ A g8 27 A xc2 A xc2 28 w f4! Ac3+ 29 A g3 and White wins.

d22) 25...A h4+ 26 A g3 A xc2 27 w g5! A h8 28 A h1 A g8 29 A c3! A a5 (what else? - 29...A f8 loses after 30 A xe4 A xe4 31 A xe4 A e8 32 A h7 A c5 33 A h1 A f8 34 A g7) 30 A d1!! A c7 31 A xe4 A xe4 32 A xe4 A xe5+ 33 A g2 and A h1 will be decisive.

d23) 25...A c3+ 26 A xe3 A x c2 (Black will be mated after 26...A dxe3 27 A h1+ A g8 28 A xe3) 27 A c2!! (another diagram please!)

28 h5 and Black resigned, Solomunovic-Horther, Germany 1999.

After this move Black cannot defend his position:

d1) 21...w c7 22 A f6+ A xf6 (or 22...A h8 23 g4! hxg5 24 hxg5 A h4+ 25 A g3 A xf6 26 gx f6 A h7 27 A xe4) 23 A xf6 A c8 24 A d1 A g7 25 w f4 A a5 26 A h1 b4 27 A x g7 A x g7

see following diagram
Now White’s spearhead pawn on e5 has been eliminated so Black is less likely to come under the same sort of pressure on the kingside. Black’s pieces could become active and he has use of the semi-open f-file. On the other hand, there are other causes for concern, including Black’s airy kingside and the pressure down the half-open e-file.

12 \( \text{\textbackslash d}b3 \)

Planning \( \text{\textbackslash a}f4 \). Also possible is 12 \( \text{\textbackslash c}h2 \) (planning \( \text{\textbackslash g}4 \)) 12...\( \text{\textbackslash f}7 \) 13 \( \text{\textbackslash g}4 \) \( \text{\textbackslash d}6 \) (13...e5 14 c4! looks good for White) 14 \( \text{\textbackslash b}3 \) \( \text{\textbackslash h}7 \) 15 c4 and now in Oratovsky-Maiwald, Vejen 1993, Black erred with 15...\( \text{\textbackslash d}7 \)!, allowing White to claim an advantage with 16 \( \text{\textbackslash e}3 \) b6 17 d4!. Oratovsky suggests 15...b6 as an improvement, giving 16 \( \text{\textbackslash e}3 \) \( \text{\textbackslash b}7 \) 17 \( \text{\textbackslash w}c1 \) as unclear.

12...\( \text{\textbackslash w}d6 \)

12...b6?! is too slow; White simply plays 13 \( \text{\textbackslash f}4 \), followed by \( \text{\textbackslash w}d2 \). 12...e5 is playable, however. White should continue with 13 \( \text{\textbackslash h}2 \) \( \text{\textbackslash d}6 \) 14 \( \text{\textbackslash g}4 \) \( \text{\textbackslash x}g4 \) 15 \( \text{\textbackslash w}xg4 \) \( \text{\textbackslash a}f8 \) 16 \( \text{\textbackslash e}2 \), when the bishop pair promises an edge.

13 d4

13 \( \text{\textbackslash f}4 \)! \( \text{\textbackslash x}f4 \) 14 \( \text{\textbackslash g}x4 \) \( \text{\textbackslash x}b2 \) gives Black excellent compensation for the exchange, while 13 \( \text{\textbackslash e}3 \) b6 14 \( \text{\textbackslash w}d2 \) \( \text{\textbackslash h}7 \) 15 \( \text{\textbackslash f}4 \) is once again answered by 15...\( \text{\textbackslash x}f4 \)! 16 \( \text{\textbackslash g}x4 \) \( \text{\textbackslash d}7 \) 17 d4 \( \text{\textbackslash a}8 \) with an unclear position, Sheremetieva-M. Socko, Kishinev 1995.

13...\( \text{\textbackslash c}x\!d4 \) 14 \( \text{\textbackslash f}x\!d4 \) e5 15 \( \text{\textbackslash b}5 \)

\[
\text{\textbackslash includegraphics}[width=\textwidth]{image}
\]

French GM Joel Lautier assesses this double-edged position as slightly better for White, but White must play accurately to bear this assessment out. The game Skorchenko-Kiseleva, Krasnodar 1998, continued 15...\( \text{\textbackslash w}d8 \) 16 c4 \( \text{\textbackslash b}6 \)! 17 \( \text{\textbackslash w}e2 \) dxc4 18 \( \text{\textbackslash w}x\!c4+ \) \( \text{\textbackslash d}\!e6 \) 19 \( \text{\textbackslash w}e2 \) \( \text{\textbackslash f}5 \) 20 \( \text{\textbackslash h}1 \) \( \text{\textbackslash a}f8 \) and Black was very active. Instead of 17 \( \text{\textbackslash w}e2 \), White should play 17 \( \text{\textbackslash e}3 \) d4 18 \( \text{\textbackslash d}2 \) \( \text{\textbackslash e}6 \) 19 \( \text{\textbackslash d}6 \) \( \text{\textbackslash a}f8 \) 20 \( \text{\textbackslash e}4 \) \( \text{\textbackslash e}6 \) 21 \( \text{\textbackslash c}e5 \) \( \text{\textbackslash f}5 \) 22 b4 and I prefer White.

B22)

8...b6

This is Black’s most popular move. For the time being he keeps White guessing about where his king will go and instead prepares to fianchetto the c8-bishop. White now has three very playable alternatives:

B221: 8 exd5
B222: 8 h4
B223: 8 c3

9 e5?! releases the tension too early and allows Black an easy plan of undermining the support of the pawn: 9...\( \text{\textbackslash c}7 \) 10 \( \text{\textbackslash w}e2 \) \( \text{\textbackslash h}6 \) (preparing...g6-g5) 11 h4 g5! (anyway) 12 hxg5 hxg5 13 \( \text{\textbackslash b}xg5 \) \( \text{\textbackslash x}e5 \) 14 \( \text{\textbackslash x}e5 \) \( \text{\textbackslash e}5 \) and Black is better – Dvoretsky.

B221)

8 exd5

This move is very direct.

9...\( \text{\textbackslash x}d5 \)
After 9...exd5 10 d4! White once again reaches a more favourable version of Variation B1 – \( \text{Ke}1 \) is more useful than ...b7-b6. Black has three possible replies:

a) 10...\( \text{cxd4} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{b3}} \) \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) 0-0 13 \( \text{\textit{x7}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{bxd4}} \) and the isolated pawn on d5 is more of a weakness than a strength

b) 10...\( \text{\textit{f5?!}} \) (this is tricky) 11 c4! \( \text{\textit{b4?!}} \) (11...\( \text{\textit{cxd4}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{a5}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) and 11...\( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) 0-0 13 \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd1}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{xd1}} \) bxc5 15 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) both are clearly favourable for White) 12 \( \text{\textit{cxd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{c2}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{d6?!}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{h4}} \) \( \text{\textit{x1}} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{xf5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf5}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{xa8}} \) \( \text{\textit{d3}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{xe2}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{xe2}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) \( \text{\textit{d4}} \) and Black’s vulnerable king on d7 gives White an advantage.

c) 10...0-0 11 \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) bxc5 12 \( \text{\textit{b3}} \) \( \text{\textit{b6}} \) 13 c3 c4 14 \( \text{\textit{bd4}} \) and White has a nice outpost on d4, Oratovsky-Kiriakov, Vejen 1993.

Now White has the unexpected blow 14 \( \text{\textit{xe6?!}} \), leaving Black with two options:

a1) 14...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{xe6}} \) \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{g7}} \) (16...\( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{h6}} \) left Black in big trouble, Howell-Sohn, Bled 1995) 17 \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{e5?!}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf7}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{h6}} \) and White has a very strong attack, Komliahov-Moskalenko, Noyabrsk 1995.

b) 14...\( \text{\textit{e7?!}} \) (Peter Horn – this surprisingly calm retreat, exploiting the pin on the d-file, is enough to keep a balanced position) 15 \( \text{\textit{xb7}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{e3}} \) (16 \( \text{\textit{xc8}} \) loses to 16...\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \), when Black threatens both to capture on c8 and ...\( \text{\textit{x2}} \) 16...\( \text{\textit{c4}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{xe6}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd1}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{xd1}} \) with an equal position. In fact, best play from here looks to be 18...\( \text{\textit{xb2}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{xd8}} \) \( \text{\textit{f7}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) \( \text{\textit{g7}} \) 21 \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) with a draw by perpetual check.

Given Black’s resources in the above line, maybe White should consider a more positional route with 14 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \), for example 14...0-0 15 a4 e5 16 \( \text{\textit{b5}} \) a6 17 \( \text{\textit{a3}} \) \( \text{\textit{c6}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) and the pressure on Black’s queening ensures that White maintains a slight plus, Tringov-Janosevic, Belgrade 1969.

12 \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{e6}} \)

Following 13...\( \text{\textit{c7}} \) White can play quietly with 14 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \), or else try 14 \( \text{\textit{xd5?!}} \) \( \text{\textit{exd5}} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) \( \text{\textit{c4}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{e5}} \).

Here White can win a pawn with 14 \( \text{\textit{c6?!}} \) \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) \text{\textit{exd5}} 16 \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \), but after Horn’s suggestion of 16...\( \text{\textit{ae8?!}} \) White has nothing better than to force a draw with 17
A multi-purpose move. White prevents ...g6-g5 and in some positions he can soften up the black king's side with h4-h5. As well as this, White is not committing himself just yet in the centre.

9...h6

The most common reply, keeping White's pieces out of g5 and preparing to answer h4-h5 with ...g6-g5.

10 c3

The move c2-c3 is useful in that some lines White is ready to play e4-e5, quickly followed by d3-d4. On the other hand Black can try to benefit from the fact that the d3-pawn is now more vulnerable.

After 10 exd5! Black must be very careful – the insertion of h2-h4 and ...h7-h6 is sometimes to White's advantage.

a) 10...exd5!? (this is probably Black's safest move) 11 d4?! (we've seen this idea before) 11...cxd4 12 h3 g4 13 f4 0-0 14 wd2 xf3 15 xf3 h7 16 e2 wd7 17 ae1 and White has the usual structural compensation for the pawn, Shirov-G.Hernandez, Merida 2000.

b) 10...d5! (this can lead to great complications) 11 d4! cxd4 12 h3 and now:

b1) 12...b7 13 f4! (13...dxc4 14 b5 0-0 15 d6 is annoying for Black, but is probably better than the text) 14 cxd4 c8 15 xe6!

Here we see an important difference to Variation B221. The insertion of h2-h4 and ...h7-h6 has left the g6-pawn very weak. After 15...fxe6 16 xe6+ f7 17 wg4 f6 (or 17...d6 18 xf6+ xf6 19 xe7 xe2 20 d5+ ef8 21 f4 and Black is unlikely to survive against White's queen and rampaging bishops) 18 c4 h5 19 ef4 xc4 20 xf6+ xf6 21 wc2 White had reached a winning position in Kaiszauri-Mortensen, Gladsaxe 1979.

b2) 12...0-0! 13 dxc4 dxc4 14 d4 a6 and now once again White can win a pawn with 15 c6 wd7 16 d5 exd5 17 wd5, but Black has sufficient counterplay after either 17...wd5 18 de7+ h7 19 dxe5 fe8 or 17...fd8? 18 c4 wd5 19 cxd5 ed7 (notice though that in comparison to Variation B221, 17...ae8? now loses as the white king has the h2-square). In view of this, White should consider instead both 15
c3 and 15 h5!?

10...a5

Another common move by Black, who continues to gain space on the queenside. If allowed Black will follow up with ...a5-a4(-a3), but normally White puts a stop to this advance straight away. Another point to Black's move is that it prepares ...a6.

Notice that Black is still in no hurry to commit his king to the kingside. After 10...0-0?! White is now ready to advance with 11 e5, knowing that Black will hardly be able to undermine White's protection of e5 with ...g6-g5 now that the king is stuck on the kingside. After 11 e5, White's attack should flow smoothly, for example 11...a6 12 f4 b5 13 e3 d4 14 cxd4 cxd4 15 d2 b4 16 e2 c8 17 h2 d5 18 g4 h7 19 h5!

and b2-b3, gives White an advantage) 14 cxd4 cxd4 15 f4 0-0 16 e5! and White keeps a small advantage. Yudasin-Jukic, Bern 1989, continued 16...xe5 17 xe5 xe5 (17...b7?) 18 xe5 d6 19 xe2 xe6 20 xe2 c6 21 xe6! fxe6 22 c4 d7 23 xb6 e8 24 c1 and Black's weakened position more than compensates for the sacrificed material.

12 exd5 cxd5

After 12...exd5 White plays for d3-d4 with 13 b3! and now:

a) 13...d4 14 fxg4 hxg4 15 cxd4 is strong for White.

b) 13...0-0 14 d4! c4 15 b2 (now the bishop on a6 is misplaced) 15...c8 16 f1 e6 17 f4 d7 18 b3! and White will increase the pressure with e3, Benjamin-Eingorn, Saint John 1988.

13 c4

and White has good pressure on the kingside, Vavra-Sulava, Charleville 2000.

11 a4

Preventing Black's expansion plans and claiming the b5-square.

11...a6

A natural move, targeting the vulnerable pawn on d3.

Black's other common choice here is the slightly strange looking 11...a7!?, vacating the dangerous h1-a8 diagonal and thus avoiding many tactical problems. White should now continue 12 exd5 exd5 (12...cxd5 leads to similar lines to text) 13 b3 d4 (a point of ...a7 - 13...0-0 14 d4! c4 15 b2, followed

By recapturing on d5 with the knight, Black has neutralised any d3-d4 ideas by White, but in return White's knight now has a very favourable outpost on c4. Black will always have to think twice about playing ...xc4, as this would leave him vulnerable on the light squares and prone to tactics along the long diagonal. Here are two possible continuations:

a) 13...0-0 14 b3 b8 15 d2 e8 16 ad1 b7 17 c1 a8 18 a3 e5 19 d2 de7 20 de4 c8 21 b5 and White has made good use of his outposts, Lau-Jackelen,
Bad Wörishofen 1989.

b) 13...\texttt{w}c7 14 \texttt{wb}3 (14 \texttt{h}5?! \texttt{g}5! 15 \texttt{d}xg5 \texttt{hxg}5 16 \texttt{axd}5 0-0! is not what White wants, while 14 \texttt{a}3?! \texttt{d}8 15 \texttt{b}5 \texttt{xb}5 16 \texttt{axb}5 \texttt{ce}7 was fine for Black in Khomlov-Pähtz, Varna 1987; 14 \texttt{we}2 looks okay though) 14...\texttt{d}8 15 \texttt{d}2 0-0 16 \texttt{ad}1 and White has a small advantage.

B223)
9 \texttt{c}3

Here White follows a more positional course than with 9 \texttt{exd}5 or 9 \texttt{h}4.

9...\texttt{a}5

We've already discussed the ideas behind this move. Black does, however, have many alternatives:

a) 9...\texttt{wc}7?! (Black's queen is misplaced and there are now some tricks both along the e-file and the possibility of a later \texttt{f}4) 10 \texttt{exd}5! \texttt{exd}5 11 \texttt{d}4! \texttt{cxd}4 12 \texttt{d}xe4 \texttt{d}xe5 13 \texttt{d}x5 \texttt{c}6 14 \texttt{c}4 0-0 15 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{b}7 16 \texttt{g}2 left Black with a horrible pin along the long diagonal, Filipowicz-Jaracz, Mikolajki 1991) 11 \texttt{xf}1 0-0 12 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{wd}7 and Black's pieces aren't ideally placed, Yurtav-Dvoretzky, Frunze 1983. Here Dvoretsky suggests 13 \texttt{h}4.

b) 9...\texttt{h}6 10 \texttt{d}4?! (White doesn't have to resort to these violent means; 10 \texttt{h}4 transpose to Variation C222, while 10 \texttt{exd}5?! \texttt{exd}5 11 \texttt{d}4 \texttt{cxd}4 12 \texttt{d}xe4 \texttt{cxd}4 13 \texttt{cxd} 0-0 looks equal) 10...\texttt{cxd} 11 \texttt{cxd} 12 \texttt{cxd} 13 \texttt{d}xe4 (12...0-0 is safer – 13 \texttt{e}5 \texttt{a}6 14 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{d}7 15 \texttt{h}4 \texttt{c}8 16 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{h}7 17 \texttt{d}2 was slightly better for White in Van der Weide-Podzielny, Essen 2000) 13 \texttt{xe}4 \texttt{d}5 (13...\texttt{b}7 14 \texttt{f}4 0-0 15 \texttt{d}f6+! wins material) 14 \texttt{a}4+ \texttt{f}8 (14...\texttt{wd}7 15 \texttt{d}3) 15 \texttt{b}3 \texttt{g}8 16 \texttt{a}3 \texttt{d}7 17 \texttt{c}4 \texttt{c}8 18 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{d}6 19 \texttt{d}6! \texttt{c}7 20 \texttt{ac}1 and White has a good initiative. Kochetkov-Kalegin, Minsk 1994, continued 20...\texttt{f}8?

21 \texttt{xe}6! and White had a crushing attack.

c) 9...\texttt{b}7 looks sensible. Now White could continue with noncommittal moves such as 10 \texttt{we}2 or 10 \texttt{h}4, but there is a case for 10 \texttt{e}5?! here, even though Black has yet to castle and can arrange...\texttt{g}6-\texttt{g}5. After 10 \texttt{e}5 we have:

c1) 10...\texttt{wc}7 11 \texttt{d}4! (the point of 9 \texttt{c}3 – White builds the pawn chain) 11...0-0 (or 11...\texttt{cxd}4 12 \texttt{cxd}4 \texttt{b}4 13 \texttt{a}4\texttt{+} \texttt{ec} 14 \texttt{e}3 and the knight will be pushed away with \texttt{a}2-\texttt{a}3) 12 \texttt{h}1 \texttt{h}6 13 \texttt{h}4 \texttt{b}8 14 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{c}8 15 \texttt{c}1 \texttt{f}5 16 \texttt{wd}2 \texttt{f}8 17 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{cxd}4 18 \texttt{cxd}4 \texttt{d}xe3 19 \texttt{wx}e3 and White has a comfortable edge, Van der Weide-Baklan, Groningen 1996.

c2) 10...\texttt{g}5?! (the critical move) 11 \texttt{d}xe5 12 \texttt{d}f3 \texttt{d}5 13 \texttt{g}6 (12...\texttt{xf}3?! 13 \texttt{w}xf3 0-0 14 \texttt{wh}5 is very good for White according to Moiseev) 13 \texttt{d}4 \texttt{h}6 14 \texttt{h}3 \texttt{d}7 15 \texttt{a}4 (Black's king won't want to be on the kingside, so White discourages queenside castling) 15...\texttt{c}6 (15...\texttt{a}5?! – Moiseev) 16 \texttt{d}4
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€xf4 17 €xf4 and Black’s king has problems finding a really safe place, Yurtacgulko, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

d) 9...0-0 and now:

d1) 10 exd5! €xd5 (10...exd5 11 €b3 h6 12 a4 a5?! 13 d4 c4 14 €bd2 €g4 15 b3 cxb3 16 €xb3 €bb8 17 €a3 was very pleasant for White in Spraggett-Munoz Sotomayor, Elista Olympiad 1998 – both d5 and b6 are sensitive) 10...€xd5 11 €c4 €c7 12 a4 €b7 13 h4 h6 14 €d2 €ae8 15 €c1 €h7 16 €c2 €h8 with an unclear position, Todorcevic-Miralles, Marseille 1987.

d2) 10 e5 (this is the move which 10...0-0 encourages, but Black can still hit out with ...g6-g5; if White is not happy playing this line he could choose either 10 h4 or 10 €e2) 10...€c7 11 €e2 (11 d4 cxd4 12 cxd4 €bd4 gives Black counterplay) 11...g5!? 12 €xg5? (12 h3 is also possible, for example 12...h6 13 €f1 €g6 14 d4 a5 15 €e3 cxd4 16 cxd4 €a6 17 €d2 with a small plus for White, Iuldachev-Murugan, Kuala Lumpur 1993) 12...€xe5 13 €de4!?

First played by the Belarussian IM German Kochetkov, this move is much stronger than the previous choice of 13 f4? €xe2 14 €xe2 €a6, when Black was clearly better in Höhn-Pedersen, Duisburg 1992. After 13 €de4 Black must make another decision:

d21) 13...h6 14 f4 €f5 15 €d6 €g6 16 €xc8 hxg5?! (16...€xc8 17 €f3 reduces White’s advantage) 17 €xe7+ €xe7 18 €d6

€fe8 19 €xe7 €xe7 20 €xd5 and White was a clear pawn to the good in Van der Weide-Van de Mortel, Leeuwarden 1996.

d22) 13...dxe4! has only been ‘refuted’ by some dodgy published analysis, and it looks quite playable to me. White plays 14 €f4 €f6 (14...€d5? loses after 15 €xe4 €d8 16 €xh7+ €h8 17 €h5) and now 15 €xh7?! €xh7 16 €xe4+ €g6 17 €h5+ €g8 18 €g5 €c5 19 €xc6 €b8! is very unclear, as is 15 €xe4!? e5 16 €xh7+ €h8 17 €h5 (17 €e4?! €e6 18 €h5?? – the refutation – loses to the simple 18...€g4) 17...€g4! 18 €xg4 exf4 19 €e4.

d23) 13...€g6 14 f4! €c7 15 €f3 h6 16 €f3 15 17 €e3 €a6 18 €d1 and White has a slight pull, Maje-Tu Hoang Thong, Elista Olympiad 1998.

e) 9...€a6!? is yet another playable move, immediately putting pressure on the d3-pawn.

White now has:

e1) 10 €a4! is a tricky move. Black should play 10...b7, rather than 10...€xd3?! 11 exd5 b5 12 €a6 €b8 13 €b7, which is good for White.

e2) 10 exd5 and now 10...exd5! 11 d4! cxd4 (11...0-0 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 €b3 c4 14 €bd4 left White better in Bates-G.Buckley, Hampstead 1998) 12 €a4 €b7 13 €xd4 0-0 14 €f2 leaves White with the usual pressure against the isolated d5-pawn. Perhaps Black should play 10...€xd5, when 11 €a4 €b7
12 d4 cxd4 13 \( \Box \times d4 \Box \times d7 \) looks equal.
\( e3 \) 10 \( \Box \times f1?! \) 0-0 11 e5 h6 12 h4 \( \Box \times c7 \) 13 \( \Box \times a4! \) \( \Box \times c8 \) 14 d4 and White has an edge, Minic-Marjanovic, Bar 1980.
10 a4 \( \Box \times a6 \)

Alternatively:

a) 10...h6 11 exd5 (for 11 h4 see Variation C222) 11...exd5 12 \( \Box \times b3! \) 0-0 13 d4 c4 14 \( \Box \times d2 \) \( \Box \times f5 \) (or 14...\( \Box \times e6 \) 15 b3 \( \Box \times cxb3 \) 16 \( \Box \times x b3 \) h6 17 \( \Box \times a3 \) with advantage, Ostermeyer-Jackelen, Porz 1988) 15 b3 \( \Box \times d5 \) (15...\( \Box \times cxb3 \) 16 \( \Box \times x b3 \) leaves Black with pawn weaknesses on d5 and b6, the second weakness being a consequence of...\( \Box \times a7-a5 \) 16 \( \Box \times f1 \) (16 bx\( c4 \) dxc4 17 \( \Box \times a3 \) should be considered) 16...\( \Box \times x f1 \) 17 \( \Box \times x f1 \) \( \Box \times cxb3 \) 18 \( \Box \times x b3 \) and White is slightly better, Zolnierowicz-Gleizerov, Bydgoszcz 2000.

b) 11 exd5 \( \Box \times d5 \)

Giving White an outpost on c4, but after 11...exd5 White reverts to Plan A with 12 \( \Box \times b3 \) 0-0 (12...d4 13 \( \Box \times fxd4 \) makes good use of the pins) 13 d4, for example 13...\( \Box \times c4 \) 14 \( \Box \times d2 \) \( \Box \times f5 \) 15 b3 \( \Box \times cxb3 \) 16 \( \Box \times x b3 \) \( \Box \times b8 \) 17 \( \Box \times a3 \) and White is clearly better, M.Müller-Glek, Berlin 1994.

12 \( \Box \times c4 \)

The knight is very well placed here and I feel this is enough to give White the edge in the position...

12...0-0 13 h4

13 \( \Box c2 \) \( \Box c7 \) 14 \( \Box \times d2 \) h6 15 h4 \( \Box \times d8 \) 16 h5?! g5 17 \( \Box \times g5?! \) was interesting in Vogt-Kindermann, Biel 1990, which continued 17...hxg5 18 \( \Box \times x g5 \) f6! (18...\( \Box \times d8 \) 19 h6 \( \Box \times h8 \) 20 h7+! \( \Box \times h7 \) 21 \( \Box \times h5+ \) \( \Box \times g8 \) 22 \( \Box e4 \) f6 23 \( \Box x d5 \) \( \Box x g5 \) 24 \( \Box x e5 \) \( \Box x e6 \) 25 \( \Box x e6+ \) \( \Box g7 \) 26 \( \Box x g5+ \) \( \Box h7 \) 27 \( \Box g2! \) wins for White, as does 18...\( \Box \times f6 \) 19 \( \Box x f6 \) \( \Box x h6 \) 20 \( \Box f3 \) 19 \( \Box x e6+ \) \( \Box h7 \) 20 h4 \( \Box e5 \) with a very unclear position.

13...\( \Box c7 \) 14 h5! \( \Box d8 \) 15 \( \Box e2 \) \( \Box f e8 \) 16

\( h x g 6 \) \( h x g 6 \) 17 \( \Box g 5 \)

White has considerable attacking chances on the kingside. We've been following the game Kaidanov-Zapata, New York 1993, which now continued 17...\( \Box c5? \) 18 \( \Box e4 \) \( \Box b7 \) 19 \( \Box h 4 \) \( \Box f 6 \) 20 \( \Box d 4 \) \( \Box h 7 \) (20...\( \Box x e 4 \) 21 \( \Box x e 4 \), intending \( \Box g 5 \) and \( \Box e 3-d 5 \) 21 g4! (planning \( \Box e 3-h 3 \) 21...\( \Box x d 3 \) 22 \( \Box f 1 \) \( \Box d 7 \) 23 \( \Box e 3 \) \( \Box d 8 \) (according to Dimitry Gurevich, 23...g5! keeps the balance) 24 \( \Box h 3 \) \( \Box x e 4 \) 25 \( \Box x h 7+ \) \( \Box f 8 \) 26 \( \Box h 6 \) f6 27 \( \Box e 1 \) \( \Box b 7 \) 28 g5! \( \Box x g 5 \) 29 \( \Box h 8+ \) and Black resigned.

C)

5...\( \Box d 6 \)

5...\( \Box d 6 \) introduces another reliable system for Black, who intends to follow up with...\( \Box g 7 \) and 0-0. In many ways this line is similar to Variation C, the only difference being that the bishop is developed on d6.
rather than g7. It’s less active on d6, but on the other hand Black has not had to weaken his dark squares on the kingside with ...g7-g6.

6...h4

This ambitious move, planning kingside expansion with f2-f4, was introduced at the highest level by Bobby Fischer. Although less common than 8...h6, 8...h4 has scored better and I believe it reaches more complex positions. For the record I believe 8...h6 is playable, but the line 8...d7 9 c3 d6 10 e5 seems to be extremely solid for Black – White simply cannot advance with e4-e5.


b2) 9...e6 10 exd5 exd5 11 c4 e6 12 e1 f7 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 e4 e7 15 h4 h6 16 d4 c4 17 c5 and Black hasn’t entirely justified weakening his kingside, Sedina-Mrdja, Porto San Giorgio 1996.

c) 8...b5 9 f4 and now:

- c1) 9...e5 11 c5+ 11...h1 12 dxe4 bxc4 13 c3! b6 14 h5 and White can build up an attack on the kingside. Nevednichy-Saltaev, Tiraspol 1994, continued 14...g6 15 g5 h6 16 d3 f5 17 xf5 exf5 18 h6 e7 19 e1 c8 20 e3!

After 8...h4 we will look at the following black options:

C1: 8...b6
C2: 8...c7
C3: 8...d7

Black also has some other possibilities:

a) 8...f5 9 f4 d7 transposes to Variation C3.

b) 8...g5? (outrageous, but not that bad!) 9 h3 (not 9 g4? h6 10 h3 h8 11 e1 e5 and White is driven back, Sadiku-Nikcevic, Pula 1990) and now

- b1) 9...g6 10 b1? (for those not so keen on this redevelopment, 10 b3? looks worth a try) 10...f6 11 exd5 exd5 12 e1 b5 13 c3 c5 14 d4 c4 15 g5! f6 16 g5 b4 17 h5 h8 18 e5 and White had a strong attack, Nevednichy-Vasilescu, and now 20...xb2? loses immediately to 21 c5! xc5 22 g5.

- b2) 9...f6 (restraining White’s e-pawn) 10 h1 (avoiding any trouble along the g1-a7 diagonal) 10...c4 11 d3 dxe4 12 dxc5 e5 (12...h7?!) 13 a4 b4 14 b5 and now Wolff-Spangenberg, Buenos Aires 1997, continued 14...c5? 15 xe7+ xe7 16 d5+ xd5 17 exd5 a5 18 xe5+ f5 19 d6 xd6 20 d5+ h8 21 a8 xe8 fxe5 22 fxe5 xc2 23 g5 and White won. Horn gives 14...xf5 as an improvement, continuing 15 xf5 exf4 16 d4! xd4 17 xd4 a8 18 e4 cxf4 19 xf4, when White has an edge – on an open board the bishop on g2 is stronger than the knight on e7.

- c3) 9...f5? (blocking the f4-pawn; this is a common idea for Black) 10 exd5 (10 c3 b8 11 exf5 exf5 12 d3 b4 13 d4 14 e1 h6
15 \( \text{d}2 \) was unclear in Meier-Bönsch, Berlin 1992) 10...exd5 11 \( \text{Q}d3 \) h6 12 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{W}b6 \) 13 \( \text{e}3 \) d4 14 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 15 c3! \( \text{e}8 \) 16 \( \text{cxd4} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) 17 \( \text{c1} \) with a tense position in Stripunsky-Goldin, Philadelphia 2000 – it’s not clear whether Black’s pawn on \( d4 \) is a strength or a weakness.

d) 8...\( \text{wc7} \) 9 f4 f6 10 c3 \( \text{d}7 \) 11 \( \text{ae1} \)! (Nevednicny-Horvath, Odorheiul Secuiesc 1993, continued 11 \( \text{b}3 \) d4 12 c4 a6 13 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{ab8} \) 14 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{e}8 \) 15 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}7 \) and now White should have played 16 \( \text{h}1 \)) 11...\( \text{ae8} \) 12 \( \text{f}1 \) b5 13 a4 \( \text{a}6 \) 14 axb5 axb5 15 exd5 \( \text{xd5} \) 16 f5 and White was slightly better, Vujosevic-Fogarasi, Budapest 1990.

C1)

\begin{align*}
8... & \text{b6} \\
\text{A sensible move. Black prepares to activate his bishop via either b7 or a6.} \\
9 & \text{f4 dxe4} \\
\text{Alternatively:} \\
a) 9...\text{f5} (we’ve already seen the motives behind this move) 10 \text{exf5} \text{exf5} 11 \text{d}3 \text{c7} 12 \text{c}3 \text{a6} 13 \text{e}1 \text{ae8} 14 \text{e}3 \text{h6} 15 \text{d}4 \text{d8} 16 \text{f2} and White was better in Dvoretzky-Chekhov, Sverdlovsk 1987. Both sides have outposts, but it’s easier for White to use c5 than it is for Black to use e4. \\
b) 9...\text{f6} 10 \text{d}3 \text{c7} 11 \text{we1} (White is slowly building up on the kingside) 11...\text{b8} 12 \text{e}3 \text{e5} 13 \text{f5} \text{a6} 14 \text{d2} \text{c4!} (after 14...\text{d4} 15 \text{f2} White will continue with g3-
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
g4, & \text{h3, h2-h4 and g4-g5} 15 \text{dxc4} \text{d4} \\
(15...\text{dxc4} \text{16 c3 makes the bishop on a6 look rather silly}) 16 \text{f2} \text{b5} 17 \text{c5!} 18 \text{b4} \\
\text{w1} & \text{xf1} 19 \text{xf1} and White has good light square control for the exchange. Jarcz-Haba, Koszalin 1999, continued 19...\text{a5} 20 \\
\text{b3} & \text{ec6} 21 \text{e1} \text{e7} 22 \text{xax5} \text{xax5} 23 \\
a3 & \text{bxa3} 24 \text{b4!} \text{c6} 25 \text{b5} \text{d3} 26 \text{xd3} \text{b4} \\
27 & \text{c4} \text{xc2} 28 \text{xc2} \text{d4}+ 29 \text{g2} \text{xa1} \\
30 & \text{xf7}+ \text{xf7} 31 \text{c4}+ \text{f8} 32 \text{g6}+ \\
xhx6 & 33 \text{fxg6} \text{c8} 34 \text{we6}+ \text{d8} 35 \text{c6} 1-0. \\
10 & \text{dxe4} \text{a6} \\
\text{Naturally gaining a tempo on the f1-rook, although interestingly the Slovakian GM} \\
\text{Ftcnik gives this move a dubious sign.} \\
11 & \text{e1} \text{c7} \\
\text{Alternatively:} \\
a) 11...\text{c4} 12 \text{c3!} (once again this kills the bishop on a6 – 12 \text{e}5 \text{c5+} 13 \text{h1} \text{c3}! 14 \\
\text{bxc3} \text{e}8 \text{was Black’s idea}) 12...\text{c5}?! \\
(12...\text{c5+} 13 \text{h1} \text{e5} 14 \text{f5} \text{c8} was still \\
good for White in Dvoretsk-Mihalcsin, Tbilisi 1980; Dvoretsky suggests 15 \text{h5,} \\
followed by g3-g4-g5) 13 \text{e}5 \text{c5+} 14 \text{h1} \text{d5} 15 \text{e}4 \text{b7} 16 \text{h5!} \text{e7} 17 \text{g4!} with \\
a very strong attack, Fischer-Ivkov, Santa Monica 1966. The rest of game is quite \\
instructive: 17...\text{xe4} 18 \text{xe4} \text{g6} 19 \text{h6} \\
\text{d5} 20 \text{f3} \text{e8} 21 \text{fxg6} \text{fxg6} 22 \text{d4!} \text{wd7} \\
23 & \text{d4!} \text{ad8} 24 \text{d5} \text{h8} 25 \text{d6} \text{xf6} 26 \\
exd6 & \text{e8} 27 \text{d4} \text{g4} 28 \text{ad1} \text{dg8} 29 \text{f7!} \\
and Black resigned on account of 29...\text{xf7} \\
30 \text{e5+} \text{g4} 31 \text{wh7 mate.}
b) 11...e5!? 12 f5 f6 13 dx1 dx1 14 xf1 (14 xf1? prevents...c5-c4) 14...c5 15 c3 (15 \(g4\)?) 15...c5+ 16 e3 ex3+ 17 dx3 \(a5\) 18 \(wx8\) and the players agreed a draw

12 c3

12 e5!? is interesting. Following 12...\(wd7\)
(12...\(wd4+?!\) 13 \(wh5!\) Black has two choices:
  a) 13...\(wh1\) 14 whf2 15 wh1 whd8? (15...\(ce2\) is a stronger defence) 16 wh4!
\(wx2\) 17 \(fg5\) h6 18 \(w6+!\) gxf6 19 \(xe4\)
\(d3\) (19...\(f2\) 20 \(e3!\) 20 \(wh6!\) \(xe4+\) 21
\(xe4\) \(d5\) 22 \(exf6\) and Black resigned, Got-
tardi-Harding, correspondence 1990
  b) 13...\(d4!\) and now:
    b1) 14 \(xa8\) \(xa8\) (but not 14...\(xc2\) 15
\(xe4\) g6 16 \(wd1\) \(xa1\) 17 \(d3\) and the
  knight on a1 is trapped) 15 \(d1\) \(b7\) gives
Black good compensation for the exchange,
according to Chekhov.

    b2) 14 \(xe4\) \(xe5\) 15 \(d3\) \(ad8\) 16 c3
\(e2+\) 17 \(f3\) \(xc1\) 18 \(ad1\) \(f6\), with an
unclear position, Bologan-Horvath, Vienna
1996.

12...\(wd3\)

12...\(wd7\) 13 e5 \(ad8\) 14 \(wh5\) was good
Now Black compounded his difficulties
with 14...f5? and after 15 \(exf6\) \(xf6\) 16
\(e4\) \(h6\)? 17 \(xh6!\) White was winning

13 e5 \(wd7?!\)

Dolmatov suggests 13...b5?! as an
improvement, although I still prefer White's
attacking chances on the kingside to those of
Black's on the queenside after 14 \(ce4\) c4 15
\(g4\) \(b6+\) 16 \(wh1\).

14 \(ce4\) \(ad8\) 15 \(wg4\)

Black is facing a rather daunting attack on
the kingside. The game Dolmatov-Lautier,
Polanica Zdroj 1991, continued 15...\(xe4!\)
(Dolmatov suggests 15...\(h8\) 16 \(xe4\) \(g6\)
17 \(b3\) \(ce7\) 18 \(c2\) \(f5\) 19 \(g5\) 20 \(wh5\)
\(h6?!\) (Dolmatov gives the line 20...\(h6?!\)
21 \(xe6\) \(xe5\) 22 \(xf5\) g6 23 \(wh4\) \(x6\) 24
\(x5\) \(xe5\) 25 \(x5\) \(xe5\) 26 \(xe5\) \(e8\) 27
\(e8+\) \(xe8\) 28 \(f2!\), when White's rook
and two bishops outweigh Black's queen) 21
\(h4\) b5?! 22 \(wh2\) b4 23 \(wh2\) \(f5\) 24 \(h5\)
\(d8\) 25 \(f4\) \(c6\) 26 \(g4\) \(d7\) 27 \(h6\) \(d7\) 28
\(xg7\) \(d7\) 29 \(d1\) and Black was
positionally lost.

C2)

A non-committal move. Black puts his
bishop on a safer square and awaits White's
plan.

9 f4 f5

Black chooses to block White's f-pawn.
Alternatives are:

a) 9...\(dxe4\) 10 \(dxe4\) b6 (10...f5?! doesn't
work very well with...\(dxe4\); after 11 \(f3\) \(b6\)
12 \(exf5\) \(x5\) 13 \(d1\) Black's position was full
of weak squares in Nevedichy-Florescu,
Bucharest 1998) 11 c3! \(a6\) 12 \(d1\) and we
have reached Variation C1.

b) 9...f6 10 \(d3\) \(d5\) (10 \(exd5?!\) \(d5\) 11 \(d1\)
b6 12 c3 \(wd7\) 13 \(h3\) \(b7\) 14 d4 c4 15
\(x2\) \(f8\) 16 \(f1\) b5 17 \(d3\) was better for
White in David-Rodgaard, Moscow Olym-
piad 1994 – Black's d5-pawn looks rather
vulnerable) 10...\(d4\) 11 \(dxe4\) \(x1\) 12 \(d1\)
and the extra space on the kingside grants
White an edge in this ending, Sznem-

c) 9...\(g6?!\) 10 \(xg6\) (10 \(h3?!\)
10...\(xg6\) 11 \(f3\) (11 e5?! 11...\(d4\) 12 \(x4\)
b6 13 \(e3\) (13 \(d2?!\) is more ambitious)
13...\(a6\) 14 \(d2\) \(x1\) 15 \(d1\) \(d8\) with
Attacking with 1 e4

a level position, Radulov-Damjanovic, Sarajevo 1971.

10 c3 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{h}8 \) 11 exf5 exf5 12 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{d}3 \text{e}6 \)
13 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{e}1 \text{g}8 \)

Sznapik-Holm, Polanica Zdroj 1972, continued instead with 13...\( \text{\textregistered} \text{d}7 \) 14 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{g}5 \text{g}8 \) 15 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{h}5 \text{a}6 \) 16 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{d}2 \text{a}8 \) 17 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{e}2 \text{h}6 \) 18 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{f}3 \text{c}8 \) 19 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{a}1 \text{d}6 \) 20 a3 c4 21 dxc4 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{xc}4 \) 22 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{c}1 \) d4 23 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{d}3 \text{b}6 \) 24 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{h}1 \text{d}6 \) and now White should probably capture on d4. Instead he played for tricks with 25 g4? and was rewarded after 25...dxc3?? (25...\( \text{\textregistered} \text{e}3 \))! 26 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{g}6+ \).

14 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{d}2 \text{d}7 \) 15 a3 a5 16 a4!

We are following the game Ciocaltea-Liberson, Netanya 1983. White's position is slightly more comfortable than Black's - he has both e5 and b5 under his control.

**C3)**

8...\( \text{\textregistered} \text{d}7 \) 9 f4 f5

This is a solid approach: Black stops White advancing too far on the kingside. The price for luxury is giving away the e5-square, although it's not that easy for White to take advantage of this.

10 exd5

Great complications were created in the game Vasiukov-Krasenkov, St. Petersburg 1994, after 10 c4?! b5?! (10...d4 is safer) 11 cxd5! exd5 12 exf5 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{b}4 \) 13 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{d}3 \) c4?! 14 dxc4 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{c}5+ \) 15 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{h}1 \) dxc4 16 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{g}5 \text{xf}5 \) 17 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{d}2 \) (17 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{d}5+ \) \( \text{\textregistered} \text{h}8 \) 18 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{xh}7 \text{xd}5 \) 19 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{xhf}8 \text{c}6 \) gives Black good compensation)

In this section we look at lines where Black refrains from playing ...c7-c5. The most promising alternatives to this move are lines with an early ...b7-b6 (A) or lines with ...\( \text{\textregistered} \text{c}6 \) and ...e6-e5 (B), although this second approach does effectively lose a tempo.

3...\( \text{\textregistered} \text{f}6 \)

Alternatively

a) 3...\( \text{\textregistered} \text{c}6 \) 4 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{gf}3 \text{gf}6 \) transposes to Variation B, as does 4...e5 5 c3 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{f}6 \).

b) 3...dxe4 (Black does better to delay this exchange) 4 dxe4 e5 5 \( \text{\textregistered} \text{gf}3 \) (White has
A) 4...b6

A move favoured by French Defence stalwarts Alexei Dreev and Evgeny Bareev. Black’s play is very much directed towards punishing an early g2-g3 from White. Indeed, in this position 5 g3 dxe4! 6 dxe4 8 b7 looks fine for Black, for example 7 g2 dxe4 8 c5 d3! or 7 e2 a6 8 c4 c6 9 d7 d1 10 f7 d8 11 c5 c7 12 a3 b7 13 d1 d3, as in Zhang Zhong-Dreev, Shenanyang 1999. Instead of 5 g3, I’m advocating two different approaches here for White.

A1: 5 e5
A2: 5 c3!

A1)

5 e5 d7 d4 c5 7 c3

A good waiting move. After 7 a6 8 xa6 xa6 we reach a position which can also be reached via a French Tarrasch after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 d2 d6 4 e5 d7 5 d3 c5 6 c3 b6 7 g3 a6 8 xa6 xa6, where White’s space advantage gives him a small plus. One example here is 9 0-0 e7 10 a3? (10 e2 c7 11 dxe5 bxc5 12 c4 0-0 13 c1 a5 14 exd5 exd5 15 e6 a5 16 e5 fxe5 17 fxe5 d6 18 b5 f6 was unclear in Frolov-Moskalenko, Simferopol 1990) 10 a4 c7 11 d1 d8 12 f1 f6 13 g3 c6 14 h3 h4 15 d1 f4 16 a4 a6 17 c3h2 b5 18 d7 19 a5 axb5 20 bx a8+ a8

Now we shall look at two main possibilities for Black

A: 4...b6
B: 4...a6

4...dxe4 is likely to transpose to lines similar to B1.
21 f4 ¤c7 22 ¤e3 b4 23 f5! and White went on to convert his advantage, Dolmatov-Rakic, Frunze 1983.

8 ¤b5!

A clever move, anticipating ...¤a6 from Black. After 8 ¤d3 ¤a6 Black gains a tempo on the line we were discussing in the previous note.

8...¤a6

After 8...a6 9 ¤a4 b5 10 ¤c2! the bishop has found its best diagonal, while its black counterpart is stuck on c8.

Another possibility is 8...a5 9 0-0 ¤a6 10 a4 ¤c8 11 c4! ¤c6 12 cxd5 exd5 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 ¤b3 ¤b4 15 ¤d2 0-0 16 ¤xa5 c4 17 ¤xb4 ¤xb4 18 ¤c6 and White was better, Turner-Conquest, British Championship 1997.

9 a4

The point of White's previous move. White is only willing to exchange bishops at a cost; following a recapture on b5 the pawn cramps Black and makes it difficult for him to develop his queenside.

9...0-0

Despite the statement above, it doesn't make sense for Black to opt out of exchanging bishops with 9...¤b7, for example 10 0-0 ¤c6 11 ¤e1 cxd4 (or 11...¤c8 12 ¤f1 c4 13 ¤g3 h5 14 b4 cxb3 15 ¤xb3 ¤a5 16 ¤c2 ¤c4 17 ¤d2 h4 18 ¤g1 h3 19 g3 a6 20 ¤xc4 dxc4 21 ¤e4 0-0 22 ¤e2 b5 23 axb5 axb5 24 ¤g4 and White was clearly better, Anand-Dreev, London {rapid} 1995) 12 ¤xd4 ¤c7 13 ¤f3 0-0 14 ¤xc6 ¤xc6 15 ¤g5 ¤d8 16 ¤xd8 ¤xd8 17 b4 and White has a typical 'good knight versus bad bishop', Anand-Dreev, London (rapid) 1995.

10 0-0 cxd4

This is an improvement over the previously played 10...¤c8 11 ¤e2 ¤xb5 12 axb5 a6 13 c4 ¤b7 14 cxd5 ¤xd5 15 dxc5 ¤xc5 16 ¤c4, when White has a good initiative, Psakhis-Raicevic, Moscow 1986.

11 cxd4 wC8

Preparing to play ...¤c6.

12 ¤e1 c6 13 ¤e3! ¤b7

In a later game Bareev diverged with 13...¤xb5, and after 14 axb5 ¤d4 15 ¤c3 ¤b7 16 ¤f1 a6 17 bxa6 (17 ¤g5?!) 17...¤xa6 18 ¤xa6 ¤xa6 an equal position was reached, Adams-Bareev, Frankfurt 2000.

14 ¤f1 ¤fc8 15 ¤d2 ¤xb5 16 axb5 ¤a5

Adams-Bareev, Sarajevo 1999, continued 17 b3 a6 18 bxa6 ¤xa6 and now White finally began operations on the kingside with 19 h4!.

A2)

5 c3!?}

A tricky move, which perhaps gives Black more to think about than 5 e5.

5...¤e7

Black has various other tries:

a) 5...¤b7 6 e5 ¤fd7 7 d4 ¤e7 (7...c5 8
Attacking the French: The King's Indian Attack

\[b5f! 8 \text{d}3 c5 9 0-0 \text{a}6 \text{transposes to the note to the seventh move in Variation A1 (with both sides having played an extra move)}.

b) 5...c5 6 \text{wa}4+? \text{wd}7 (after 6...\text{d}7 7 \text{wc}2! the bishop misplaced on d7, while 6...\text{db}7 7 e5! \text{dg}8 8 \text{d}4 is also good for White) 7 \text{w}c2 \text{wc}7 8 \text{ae}2 \text{ae}7 (8...\text{ac}6!? 9 0-0 \text{dc}6 10 \text{ce}1 0-0 11 \text{df}1 \text{h}6 12 \text{gg}3 \text{dx}e4 13 \text{dx}e4 \text{b}7 \text{was roughly level in Bauer-Bareev, Cannes 2001}) 9 0-0 0-0 10 \text{ae}1 \text{a}6 11 \text{df}1 \text{dc}6 12 \text{gg}3 \text{dx}e4 13 \text{dx}e4 \text{xe}2 14 \text{wa}2 and White has a small plus, Nevednichy-Matulak, Odorhei Secuiesc 1995. The rest of the game is worth quoting: 14...\text{dc}8 15 \text{e}5 \text{d}6 16 \text{h}4 \text{h}6 17 \text{gg}4 \text{xe}8 18 \text{h}5 \text{gg}8 19 \text{ad}1 \text{db}8 20 \text{ce}4 \text{xd}1 21 \text{xd}1 \text{c}8 22 \text{ax}d8 \text{ax}d8 23 \text{bh}6! f5 24 exf6 gxh5 25 \text{hh}4 \text{bc}6 26 \text{gg}4+ \text{bh}7 27 \text{f}4 \text{wh}7 28 \text{gg}6 \text{c}4 29 \text{we}2 b5 30 g4 \text{gg}8 31 g5 \text{wd}7 32 \text{gg}4 \text{f}7 33 \text{gxh}6 \text{hxh}6 34 \text{ee}7+ \text{hh}8

6 \text{wa}4+
6 e5 \text{fd}7 7 d4 \text{c}5 \text{transposes to Variation A1.}

6...c6 7 \text{ae}2

It's also possible to swing the queen over to the kingside after 7 e5 \text{fd}7 8 \text{gg}4. Davies-Komarov, Saint Vincent 2000, continued 8...0-0 9 d4 c5 10 \text{bb}3 f5 11 \text{wg}3 \text{a}6 12 h4 \text{xf}1 13 \text{xf}1 a5 with an unclear position.

7...0-0 8 0-0 \text{wd}7!?  

Alternatively:

a) 8...\text{a}6 9 \text{ee}1 \text{wd}7 10 \text{ff}1 \text{fd}7 11 \text{gg}3 \text{d}6 12 \text{ex}d5 \text{xd}5 13 \text{wh}4! \text{dc}6 14 \text{hh}5 and Black is lacking defenders on the kingside. Oratovsky-Kalinitschew, Fuertth 1998, continued 14...\text{de}5 15 \text{xe}7 \text{xe}7 16 \text{h}6+ \text{gg}8 17 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 18 \text{d}4 \text{gg}7 19 \text{xe}7 \text{xe}7 20 \text{gg}5+ \text{hh}8 21 \text{ff}6+ \text{gg}8 22 \text{gg}5+ \text{hh}8 23 \text{ff}6+ \text{gg}8 24 \text{xf}6 and White was a clear pawn ahead.

b) 8...b5 9 \text{we}2 c5 10 d4 \text{wb}6 11 dxc5 \text{xc}5 12 \text{dd}3! \text{dc}6 13 \text{ex}d5 \text{xd}5 14 \text{bb}3 \text{gg}4 15 \text{xc}5 \text{xc}5 16 \text{aa}3 was Bologan-Bunzmann, Biel 1999. Here White's bishop pair and the weak pawn on d5 gives White a clear advantage.

9 \text{ee}1 \text{bd}7

see following diagram

9...c5 10 \text{ff}1 \text{cd}6 11 a3 a5 12 \text{wc}2 a4 13 \text{gg}3 \text{a}7 14 \text{gg}2 \text{dd}8 15 \text{ex}d5 \text{ex}d5 16 \text{ee}4 \text{h}6 was equal in Todorcevic-Ikisi, Yugoslav Team Championship 1994, but perhaps White can play more ambitiously with 11 \text{e}5?!?, for example 11...\text{dd}7 12 d4 \text{bb}7 13 a3 a5 14 \text{dd}3 \text{a}6 15 \text{bb}1!, intending \text{wc}2.

After 9...\text{bd}7 the game Orlov-Kruppa, St Petersburg 2000, continued 10 \text{wc}2 \text{bb}7 11 \text{ff}1 c5 12 \text{gg}3 \text{dd}6 13 \text{ff}1 \text{h}6 and Black had equalised. Perhaps retreating the queen on move 12 is not the right idea. Possible is 10 \text{ff}1!? (intending \text{e}4-e5), for example 10...\text{dd}7 11 e5 \text{ee}8 12 \text{gg}4! c5 13 d4, 10...e5 11 d4?! or 10...\text{cc}5 11 \text{wc}2 \text{aa}6 12 e5, all of which look interesting for White.

35 \text{wg}8+!! (what a move!) 35...\text{dd}8 36 \text{gg}6+ \text{hh}7 37 \text{ff}8+ 1-0.

c) 5...\text{a}6 6 \text{ee}2 \text{cc}7 7 0-0-0 (7...\text{dx}e4 8 \text{dx}e4 \text{xe}2 9 \text{we}2 0-0 10 e5 \text{dd}5 11 \text{ee}4 gives White a pleasant space plus) 8 e5 \text{ff}7 9 \text{ee}1 c5 10 \text{ff}1 \text{cc}6 11 \text{gg}4 \text{bb}8 12 \text{wa}4 (or 12 g3, with the idea of h2-h4 and \text{h}1-h2-g4) 12...\text{cc}8 13 \text{gg}3 \text{c}4 14 d4 b5 15 \text{wc}2 b4 16 \text{gg}4 \text{ee}8 17 \text{xe}7 \text{ee}7 18 \text{wd}2 f6 19 exf6 \text{xf}6 20 \text{gg}3 with an edge to White, Yudasin-Gelman, Chicago 1997 – Black’s bishop on a6 is out of the game.

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B1) 5...dxe4 6 dxe4 c5

Or 6...e5 7 b5! d6 8 0-0 0-0 9 c2 c7 10 e1 c6 11 f1 g6 12 c4 c7 13 a4 g4 14 xd2 b6 15 c3 e8 16 c4 a6 17 f5 b5 18 c3 c5 19 xf5 and White was better, Shchekachev-Schuetze, Bad Zwischen 1999.

7 b5 d7 8 0-0 0-0 9 e2

Dvoretsky also suggests 9 b4 b6 10 e2.

9...a6 10 d3 e5 11 b4 a7 12 c4 e8 13 g5 h6 14 h4 g4 15 a4 d7 e7 16 h3 h5 17 a4 e6 18 e3

We are following the game Dvoretsky-Orlov, Moscow (rapid) 1984, which continued 18...g5 19 g3 g7 (19...xe3 restricts White's advantage) 20 hxg4 c4 21 d5 a8 22 c4 g6 23 d3 a7 24 a4 xf2? 25 cxe7+ a7xe7 26 xf2 xe2 27 xg6 1-0.

B2) 5...a5

A useful restraining move; Black makes it harder for White to achieve the liberating b2-b4.

6 e2 e5

Also possible is 6...g6 7 0-0 g7 8 e1 (or 8 e5 d7 9 d4 0-0 10 e1 b6 11 d1 a6 12 c6 a6 13 h4 b5 14 h5 with a slight plus, Reinderman-Tondivar, Leeuwarden 1993) 8...0-0 9 d7 b6 10 c5 d7 11 d4 f6
for White, for example 10...\$g4 11 \$xd4 \$xd4 12 \$xe2 \$xe2 13 \$xe2 \$xd4 14 \$f3 \$d6 15 d4!.

9 \$b2

There's also something to be said about leaving the bishop on c1, especially if White is going to block the centre with c3-c4 (after the advance ...d5-d4). So White should consider 9 a3 d4 (or 9...\$e8 10 \$b1?) 10 c4!, followed by \$e1-c2 and \$b1.

9...\$e8

This looks better than 9...\$c7 10 a3! \$d8 11 b4 \$xe4 12 \$xe4 \$b6 13 \$c2 and I prefer White. Jakupovic-N.Pert, Yerevan 1999, continued 13...\$xb4 14 \$xb4 \$xa1 15 \$g4 16 h3 \$xf3 17 \$xf3 \$b8 18 \$c4 and White's advantage was evident.

7...\$c5?

A major alternative here is the more restrained 7...\$e7 and now:

a) 8 \$e1 0-0 9 \$c2 (9 b3 \$c5 10 \$c2 d4! 11 \$b2 dxc3 12 \$xc3 \$e8 13 a3 \$e7 14 \$b2 \$g4 15 h3 \$xf3 16 \$xf3 \$ad8 was equal in Bates-N.Pert, British League 1998) 9...\$h6 10 \$f1 \$e8 11 b3! (with the plan of a2-a3, \$b2 and b3-b4) 11...\$g4?! (11...d4! looks critical) 12 h3 \$h5 13 a3 \$d6?! 14 \$b2 \$b8? 15 \$xd5 \$xd5 16 c4 \$f4 17 g3 \$e6 18 \$e5 and White was just a clear pawn up, Dvoretsky-Ek, Wijk aan Zee 1975.

b) 8 b3 (I think this is more the point - it's not clear whether White needs the rook on e1) 8...0-0 9 \$b2 (9 a3 \$e6 10 \$b2 dxe4 11 dxe4 \$d7 12 \$c2 \$e8 13 \$c4 \$c5 14 b4 \$xc4 15 \$xc4 was slightly better for White in Mawald-Moor, Bern 1996) 9...\$e8 10 a3 \$f8 11 b4 (11 \$c2?) 11...\$xb4 12 \$xb4 \$xa1 13 \$xa1 b6 14 \$d1 (14 \$b5!) 14...\$b7 15 \$b3 \$d7 16 \$e1 b5 and the players agreed a draw in Visser-Psalakis, Groningen 1993, although White can still claim an edge after 17 \$a2 \$a8 18 \$b1 \$e8 19 \$exd5 \$xd5 20 d4!.

8 b3 0-0

8...d4 9 cxd4 \$xd4 10 \$b2 looks better

The game Lastin-Gavrilo, Moscow 1996, continued 10 \$c2 \$h5! (10...d4 11 cxd4 \$xd4 12 \$xd4 \$xd4 13 \$xd4 cxd4 14 \$ac1 \$e7 15 \$f3 looks better for White) 11 \$fe1 \$f4 12 \$f1 dxe4 13 \$xe4 \$a7 14 \$c1 \$g6 15 \$e3 \$g4 16 \$xa7 \$xa7 with a roughly level position.

As well as 10 \$c2, White can consider 10 a3!? d4 11 cxd4 (11 c4!? 11...\$xd4 12 \$c1 b6 13 \$xd4 \$xd4 14 \$xd4 exd4 15 f4.

Main Line 3:
Black plays ...c7-c5, but not ...d7-d5

1 e4 e6 2 d3 c5

2...c5 is actually a popular choice for
Attacking with 1 e4

French players who would rather play Sicilian type set-ups without ...d7-d5 against the KIA. There are many games and much theory on the line 3 d3 d6 4 g3 g6 (or 4...ge7 5 g2 g6), which is one of Black’s most respected lines against the King’s Indian Attack, and can obviously arise from both the French Defence and the Sicilian Defence. I must confess that rather than striving to find an advantage for White in these lines, I’ve taken something of a shortcut, but I hope you’ll agree that this is a good practical decision, which makes full use of our repertoire.

3 g3!

Keeping White’s options open.

3...d6

Naturally Black can still advance his d-pawn; 3...d5 4 d2 d6 5 gf3 transposes to Main Line 1.

A: 2...c6

B: 2...b6

Or:

a) After 2...b5 White should just develop sensibly, for example 3 g3 b7 4 g2 c5 5 f4 f6 6 f3.

b) 2...f5!? can be met in a few ways. 3 d3 dxe4 4 dxe4 f6 5 e5 d5 6 c4 d6 7 d3 looks good for White.

A)

2...d6

Or 2...e5 3 d3 d6, although White should also consider playing a souped-up King’s Gambit with 3 f4.

3 d3 e5?

3...d5 4 d2 d6 leads to Main Line 2.

With 3...e5 Black is trying to play a king’s pawn opening, claiming that White’s extra d2-d3 is of no real consequence.

4 d3!

Black was equal after 4 g3 c5 5 g2 d6 6 f4 d6 (6...f5!? 7 c3 a6, Shirov-Ivanchuk, Novgorod 1994. 4 d3 is Shirov’s improvement.

4...f6 5 g3

This is Shirov’s point. Now White is playing the so-called ‘Glek system’ (1 e4 e5 2 d3 d6 3 c3 c6 4 g3 f4), but with an extra tempo.

5...c5 6 g2 d6 7 0-0 a6 8 e3 g4 9 h3

Rare Moves for Black

We’ll finish off this section by looking at a few rare second moves Black has.
Shirov-Short, Yerevan Olympiad 1996, continued 9...\&xe3 10 fxe3 \&xf3 and here Shirov recommends 11 \&xf3 with a slight advantage to White.

B)

2...b6 3 g3 \&b7 4 \&g2 f5!?

This gives the variation its own character. For 4...d5 5 \&d2 and 4...\&f6 5 \&d2 d5 see Main Line 2.

5 \&f3

5 \&d2 \&f6 6 \&g3 is possible, as 6...fxe4 7 dxe4 \&xe4? 8 \&h4! d5 9 \&xe4 dxe4 10 \&h5+ \&d7 11 \&g5 looks very strong for White.

5...fxe4

5...\&f6 is less accurate, as after 6 e5 \&d5? 7 \&h4! Black has big trouble dealing with the treats of c2-c4 and \&h5+, for example 7...\&e8 8 \&h5+ \&d8 9 \&xd5 \&xd5 10 \&g5+ \&e7 11 \&g6!

6 \&g5 \&f6 7 0-0 \&e7 8 \&c3 0-0 9 dxe4 e5 10 \&e3

White should also consider the immediate 10 f4!?

10...\&a6 11 f4

The game Benko-Sills, USA 1967, continued 11...\&exf4 12 gxf4 h6 13 e5! \&e5 14 \&xe5 hxg5 15 \&xf6 \&xf6 16 \&d5+ \&h8 17 fxe5 \&b4 18 d1 \&xf1 19 \&h5+ \&g8 20 \&xf1 \&xc2 21 d2 \&xg5 22 \&xg5 \&e8 23 \&xe8+ \&xe8 24 \&d1 d6 25 \&d5 1-0

Important Points

Main Line 1

1) Think carefully before advancing with e4-e5; this lunge is usually more effective once Black has committed himself to castling kingside, or when White can easily support the advanced pawn.

2) If you play e4-e5, be wary of undermining attempts from Black, including the advance ...g7(g6)-g5.

3) Be aware of exd5 ideas, which can be advantageous to White in some lines, especially if Black is lagging behind in development. This motif is especially important in Variation B.

4) If White has played e4-e5 and Black pressures the pawn with ...\&c7, White should look out for tricks involving \&f4 and then capturing on d5 with a piece (see Variation A22).

5) In Variation A242, White often plays the move a2-a3, to prevent Black playing ...a4-a3. This idea was first adopted by Bobby Fischer.

6) Bear in mind ideas of h4 for White. In Variation B Black often meets this with ...h7-h6, preparing to meet h4-h5 with ...g6-g5. Similarly, White often meets and unprovoked ...h7-h6 with ...h2-h4, making Black think twice about playing ...g6-g5.

Main Line 2

1) If Black exchanges too early on e4, White can consider deploying his light-squared bishop on the f1-a6 diagonal.

2) If Black plays an early ...b7-b6, White often plays e4-e5, following up with d3-d4.
1 e4 c6 2 c4

The Caro-Kann has a reputation of being a very solid defence and is a favourite of, amongst others, Anatoly Karpov. All the main lines have withstood the test of time; they are unbelievably hard to break down (I should know – I've done my fair share of trying!).

2 c4, however, is a deceptively tricky move, which may simply be used as another way of reaching the popular Panov-Botvinnik Attack (1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 c4) after 2...d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4. However, by delaying the move d2-d4 White gives himself extra options; he can try to force Black into transpositions that may not be comfortable for the second player (this will become apparent when we study the theory and the numerous transpositions). It's true that Black also has extra options after 2 c4, but the white player has no need to fear these. In any case, the majority of Caro-Kann players will be attempting to steer the game back into a normal path with 2...d5, and it's here where White can adopt some devious move orders!

We shall concentrate on Black's two main replies to 2 c4. These are:

A: 2...d5
B: 2...e5!? 

2...e5!? is a strange looking move, but it's not so bad. In the game Gulko-Shabalov, Bern 1992, White kept the advantage after 3 d3 d5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 exd5 cxd5 6 b5+ c6 7 e2+! e7 8 c5 d7 9 xc6 bxc6 10 c3 d8 11 b3! e6 12 b2 f6 13 f3 d6 14 xd7 xd7 15 c3 h6 16 a4!.

A)

2...d5

This is by far the most popular choice for Black; on my database, games with 2...d5 outnumber games with 2...e5 by more than three to one.

3 cxd5

With our repertoire it really doesn't matter which way you capture first, as 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 comes to the same thing. Be wary of 3 exd5 d6?!, though. Now 4 dx6 c6 is known to give Black good play for the pawn, so White should react with 4 c3 cxd5 5 cxd5, transposing to the main line.

3...cxd5

Again Black could offer a pawn with 3...d6!? but White can simply decline with 4 c3.

4 exd5

Now Black must make a decision concerning the d5-pawn: whether to capture it with the queen or try and capture it with the
g8-knight.

A1: 4...Qf6
A2: 4...Wxd5

A1) 4...Qf6
This move is more popular than 4...Wxd5.

5 Qc3
White has various other playable moves here, including 5 Qb5+ and 5 Wxa4+, both of which try to hang onto the d5-pawn (for the time being at least). It's probable that an opponent will feel less prepared for 5 Qc3, which on first sight appears less critical. After all, Black can simply win his pawn back immediately.

A11: 5...Qxd5
A12: 5...g6!

Other moves are less important:

a) 5...Qbd7!? 6 Qf3 a6 7 d4 Qb6 8 Qe5 Qxd5?? (Oh dear! – 8...Qfxd5 is playable, but better for White) 9 Wb4+ Qd7 10 Qxd7! 1-0 Lautier-Bologan, Enghien-les-Bains 1999; 10...Wxd7 loses material to 11 Qb5. So even grandmasters have trouble getting to grips with 5 Qc3!

b) 5...a6?! 6 d4 g6 7 Wb3 (now we have a g6 variation of the Panov-Botvinnik Attack, where Black's ...a7-a6 is a bit irrelevant) 7...Qg7 8 g3 0-0 9 Qg2 Qe8 10 Qf3 Qd6 11 0-0 Qf5 12 Qc5 Wc8 13 Qc1 Qh3 14 Qh1 h5 15 Qf4 and White has a clear advantage, Keitlinghaus-Schuster, Bad Wörishofen 1997 – Black has no chance of regaining his pawn.

A11) 5...Qxd5 6 Qf3

Again we have a further split:

A111: 6...Qc6
A112: 6...e6
A113: 6...Qxc3

6...g6!? looks risky after 7 Wb3! Qb6
(7...Qxc3 8 Qc4! e6 9 Wxc3 or simply 8 Wxc3 is good for White) 8 Qb5+ and now:

a) 8...Qd7 9 Qe5 e6 10 Qe4! Qe7 11 d4
0-0 12 Qh6 Qe8 (or 12...Qxe5 13 Qxf8
Qxf8 14 dx5 Wd4 15 Qc3 Wxe5+ 16 Qe2
Qd7 17 0-0 and White converted his material advantage, Thesing-Trzaska, Dortmund 1992) 13 0-0 a6 14 Qxd7 Qxd7 15 Qf1 and

After 5 Qc3 Black has another decision to make. The possibilities are:

A11: 5...Qxd5
A12: 5...g6!
Black is rather tied up.

b) 8... Ng7 9 Ne5 e6 10 Nxe4! Nxe7 11 d4 
Nd6 12 d4 and White was better in Conquest-Astolfi, French League 1992.

b) 8...g6 9 0-0 Ng7 10 e1 0-0 11 Ra3 
Nb6 12 cxd6 cxd6 13 Wxa4 Wc7 14 d4 Ng5 15 Ng5 Wfc8 16 Nc5 and White has a pleasant bind on the position, Tkachiev-Van der Werf, Wijk aan Zee 1995.

0-0 0-0 Ne7 9-0 Bxc3 0-0 11 d3 b6 12 e1 transposes to Variation A1122.

10 e1

Normally White’s light-squared bishop is on either c4 (see Variation A1122) or d3. The position with the bishop on b5, however, is still very playable for White.

10...d7

Alternatively:

a) 10...Bxc3 11 bxc3 d7 (11...e6 12 
Bf6 Bxe7 13 Wc2 Wc7 14 g5 g6 15 Wxd3 
Bf6 16 Ba4 Ba5 17 e4 g7 18 a3 was very unpleasant for Black in Forster-Palat, Geneva 1996) 12 Wc2 Bxe8 13 Bb3 Bc8 14 h4 (14 Bb1! looks like a good alternative) 14...wa5 (14...Bh4 loses to 15 Wxe4, hitting h7 and h4) 15 Bb1 Bxc4 16 Bxb7 and White is very active, Belikov-Filipenko, Moscow 1998.

b) 10...e6 11 d4 Bb4 12 e5 a6 13 
Bc2 Bb5 14 Bg3 Bxh3 15 Bxh3 Bxh3 16 
Bd3 Bg3 17 Bxg3 Bc7 18 a4 and again White has an active position, Korchnoi-Serper, World Team Championship, Lucerne 1993.
c) 10...a6?! 11 ∆xc6! (weakening Black’s pawn structure – White will target the isolated c-pawn and the weak dark squares around it) 11...bxc6 12 ∆e5 ∆b7 (12...c5? 13 ∆c6 ∆xc3 14 bxc3 w7d7 15 ∆xe7+ wxe7 16 ∆a3! – Lukacs) 13 ∆a4 a5?! (13...wac8? 14 ∆d3! left Black in a very passive position in Karpov-Dreev, Cap d’Agde 2000) 14 ∆xc5 ∆xc5 15 dxc5 w7e7 16 w7g4 wfd8 17 w7h6 f6 18 w7c4 e5 19 w7d6 w7e8 20 w7g3 and White is better – Lukacs.

11 ∆d3?  
Also promising, and perhaps more consistent, is 11 wdx5! exd5 12 w7b3 and now:

a) 12...w7g4?! 13 ∆xc6 bxc6 14 ∆e5 w7b8 15 w7c6 w7xb3 16 w7xd8 w7d3 17 w7c6 w7f6 18 w7e3 and White is a clear pawn ahead, Damaso-Silva, Portuguese Championship 1996.

b) 12...a6 13 ∆xc6 ∆xc6 14 w7f4 (14 w7e5?) 14...f6 15 w7d2 a5 (to prevent the positionally desirable w7b4) 16 w7h4 w7e8 17 w7f5 w7f8 18 w7xe8 w7xe8 19 w7e1 w7d7 20 w7h3 w7h8 21 w7g4 g6 22 w7e3 f5 23 w7f3 with an unclear position, Peptan-Maric, European Women’s Team Championship, Batumi 1999.

b) 11...w7c8?! (this looks natural, but...) 12 w7xd5 exd5 13 w7e5 w7xe5?! (13...w7xd4 is probably stronger, although I still prefer White after 14 w7xh7+ w7h8 15 w7xd4) 14 w7xe5, w7c6?! (perhaps Black should give up the d-pawn with 14...w7f6? 15 w7h5! and now:

b1) 15...h6?! 16 w7xh6! g7xh6 17 w7xh6 gives White a winning attack.

b2) 15...g6 16 w7h6

Black is in some trouble, for example 16...w7g4? (16...f6 17 w7h5 w7c1!=) 18 w7xc1 w7e8 19 w7e1 was better for White in Belikov-Guliev, Moscow 1998) 17 h3! f6 18 w7xg6! hxg6 19 w7xg6+ w7h8 20 w7e3! and Black resigned in Vaganian-Serper, Groningen 1993, on account of 20...w7d7 21 w7g3.

12 w7e4 w7e8 13 w7d3

11...w7f6  
Or:

a) 11...w7c4 12 w7b1 w7c8 13 a3 w7xc3 14 bxc3 w7d5 15 w7d3 w7f6 16 w7g5 g6 17 c4 and White is better, Kiik-Maki Uuro, Vantaa 1994.

13 w7xd5 exd5 14 w7xd5 w7a5? 15 w7xc6 w7xc6 16 w7xe8+ w7xe8 gives Black good
counterplay for the pawn.

The game Balashov-Yandemirov, Moscow 1998, continued 13...h6 (13...g6!? 14 dxe5 (but not 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 dxe5?? gxe1+ 16
f5 g5 17 e4 xe8 and Black wins – Blatny) 14...d4 15 h7+, f8 16 wxe4
dxe5 (Blatny suggests 16...c8! as an improvement) 17 dxe5 dxe7 18 g4 g5 19 h4!
and White had a strong attack.

A112)
6...e6

A popular and solid move. With 6...e6, Black is inviting White back into a main line of the Panov-Botvinnik Attack again.

7 d4!

But White is not so accommodating! After 7 d4 we have the Panov-Botvinnik Attack, against which Black can play 7...e7 or
7...b4. For the record, against the latter line White has been struggling to find an advantage, both after 8 d2 0-0 9 d3 c6 10
c0-0 e7 (Karpov has used this line effectively with Black), and 8 c2 c6 9 d3
e5 10 a3 dx6 11 bx3 d4.

With 7 d4, White is making use of the fact that the d-pawn hasn’t yet moves, so Black has no ...b4 pin at his disposal. This
means we can simply bypass a lot of unwanted theory!

7...e7

Or:

a) 7...dx6 8 bx3 d7 9 0-0 0-0 10 d4
transposes to Variation A121.

b) 7 d6 8 b3 d7 9 d4 0-0 10 0-0
c6 11 a3 is a nice isolated queen's pawn
(IQP) position for White – Black misses his
defensive knight on f6. Kilk-Ovetchkin, St Petersburg 1999, continued 11...f6 12 e3
e5 13 a2 d4 14 d6 e7 15 w2
dxe3 16 fxe3 dxe7 17 e5 and White had
very active pieces.

8 0-0 0-0 9 d4

In this position Black has a choice:

A1121: 9...dxc3
A1122: 9...c6

Alternatively:

a) 10...c6 11 e1 transposes to A1122.

b) 10...d7 11 d3 c7 12 w2 e8
(grabbing on c3 looks very risky) 13 c4 g6 14
e7 d6 15 e5 d7 16 e4 w8 17 b1
and White was better, Anand-Adams, FIDE World Championship, Groningen 1997.

c) 10...e6 11 c3 b7 12 e1 d7 13
c4 and White has an edge, according to the
Danish IM Jacob Aagaard.

11 w2

Also enticing is the pawn offer with 11
d3? Onischuk-Liang Chong, Beijing 1998,
continued 11...c3 12 g5 c6 13 c1
wa3 14 e1 g6 15 b5 xg5 16 xg5 wa5
17...d3 a6 18...xc6 wxg5 19...f3 h8 20
c7 w5 21...c1...xa2 22...e3 wb2 23 h4
and White had unmistakable pressure.
11...d7 12...b2

White plans to drop his bishop back to d3
and play c3-c4. Here are two examples:
a) 12...f6?! (it looks natural to defend the
kingside, but perhaps the knight is better on
d7) 13...d3 b6 14...e5!...b7 15 f4 g6 16 c4
ad8 17...ae1 (17...ad1??) 17...b4 18...d1
we7 19...e3 a4 20...a8 21...h1 wb7 22
h3...d6 23...f3 and White’s position is
beginning to look threatening, Psakhis-
Porper, Israeli Championship 1996.
b) 12...b6 13...d3...b7 14 c4...e8 15
we3...xf3 16...xf3...f6 17...f1...ad8 18
ad1...c5 19...c2...b7 20...a4 and White’s
bishop pair compensate for the weakness of
the hanging pawns on d4 and c4, Alterman-
Khlin, Rostov 1993.

A1122
9...xe1

The most popular choice.

10...e1

We have now officially transposed into
the Semi-Tarrasch Defence! ECO gives the
route via 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3...c3...f6 4...f3
c5 5...xd5...xd5 6 e3...c6 7...c4...d4 8
exd4...e7 9 0-0 0-0 10...e1, but there are
seemingly endless ways of reaching this pos-
tion. The important thing to remember is
that White has very good chances of keeping
an advantage in this line. On my database
White has scored a healthy 64% from this
position.

The following moves are Black’s most
popular choices:
A11221: 10...a6!? 
A11222: 10...xc3 
A11223: 10...f6

Firstly, let’s look at a couple of less impor-
tant moves:
a) 10...b6?! (this is only playable after an
exchange on c3) 11...xd5 exd5 12...b5
(now...b7-b6 has merely created weaknesses
in the black camp) 12...d7? (12...b7
more resilient, although White kept a clear
positional advantage after 13...f4...d6 14
...xd6...xd6 15...c1 a6 16...xc6...xc6 17
...e5, Comas Fabrego-Pomes Marcet, Plaja
d’Aro 1994) 13...a4...b8 14...f4...xb5 15
...xb5 a6 16...a4...d6 17...xd6...xd6 18
...c1...a7 19...c2...e7 20...xe7...xe7 21
...c7...xc7 22...xc7 and White’s activity
gives him a virtually winning ending, Botvin-
nik-Alekhine, AVRO 1938.

b) After 10...f6 it’s another transposi-
tion! This position can also be reached via
the Queen’s Gambit Accepted, and it’s
known to be somewhat better for White.
One powerful example of White’s attacking
prospect is seen in the following line: 11...g5
b6 12 a3...b7 13...d3!...c8 14...ad1...e8 15
h4!
15...g6?! (15...\textit{\&}xd5 16 \textit{\&}xd5 exd5 17 \textit{\&}xe7 \textit{\&}xe7 keeps White's advantage to something more bearable for Black) 16 d5 \textit{\&}xd5 17 \textit{\&}xd5 exd5 18 \textit{\&}xd5 \textit{\&}xg5 19 hxg5 \textit{\&}xe1+ 20 \textit{\&}xe1 \textit{\&}f8 21 \textit{\&}f6+ \textit{\&}h8 22 \textit{\&}d7 \textit{\&}a8 23 \textit{\&}h3 h5 24 g4 and Black was forced to resign, Ribli-Wells, Szeged 1997.

\textbf{A11221)}

10...a6 11 \textit{\&}b3?!

11 \textit{\&}e2? is an interesting suggestion from Aagaard. Grabbing a pawn with 11...\textit{\&}b6 12 \textit{\&}b3 \textit{\&}xd4 is very risky; White has plenty of compensation after 13 \textit{\&}xd4 \textit{\&}xd4 14 \textit{\&}e3 \textit{\&}d8 15 \textit{\&}ed1. Instead Black should play 11...b5, after which 12 \textit{\&}xd5 exd5 13 \textit{\&}d3 \textit{\&}g4 14 \textit{\&}xh7+ \textit{\&}xh7 15 \textit{\&}e2+ \textit{\&}g8 16 \textit{\&}xe6 \textit{\&}xf3 17 gxf3 is unclear, while White could also simply drop back with 12 \textit{\&}d3.

After this retreat, we step back into Queen's Gambit Accepted territory. Instead Black can keep an independent flavour with 11...\textit{\&}xc3 12 bxc3 b5 and now:

a) 13 \textit{\&}d3 \textit{\&}b7 14 \textit{\&}c2 g6 15 \textit{\&}h6 \textit{\&}e8 (Matveeva-Anand, Fruenze 1987), and here Anand likes White after 16 a4!.

b) 13 \textit{\&}c2 (shifting to the more dangerous diagonal) 13...\textit{\&}b7 14 h4! with a further split:

b1) 14...\textit{\&}xh4 15 \textit{\&}xh4 \textit{\&}xh4 16 \textit{\&}e3 gives White a strong attack (compare with Variation A11222).

b2) 14...\textit{\&}f6 15 \textit{\&}g5 g6 (or 15...h6? 16 \textit{\&}d3 g6 17 \textit{\&}xe6! \textit{\&}xe6 18 \textit{\&}xg6+ \textit{\&}g7 19 \textit{\&}xh6 \textit{\&}f6 20 \textit{\&}h7+ \textit{\&}f7 21 \textit{\&}xg7 \textit{\&}xg7 22 \textit{\&}g6+ \textit{\&}f6 23 \textit{\&}xe6+ and White wins) 16 \textit{\&}g4 and White will continue with h4-h5, An.Sokolov-Kharitonov, Moscow 1990.

b3) 14...\textit{\&}a5? is an untried suggestion from ECO.

b4) 14...\textit{\&}d5 15 \textit{\&}g5 \textit{\&}f8 16 \textit{\&}d3 g6 17 \textit{\&}b3 \textit{\&}d6 18 h5 \textit{\&}xg5 19 \textit{\&}xg5 \textit{\&}f4 20 hxg6! hxg6 (or 20...\textit{\&}xg5 21 gxf7+ \textit{\&}xf7 22 \textit{\&}xh7+ \textit{\&}g7 23 \textit{\&}xe6+ \textit{\&}xe6 24 \textit{\&}xg7+ \textit{\&}xg7 25 \textit{\&}xe6) 21 \textit{\&}xe6 fx6 22 \textit{\&}xg6+ \textit{\&}f8 23 \textit{\&}e4 \textit{\&}f5 24 \textit{\&}h6+ \textit{\&}e7 25 \textit{\&}f4 \textit{\&}d3 26 \textit{\&}xe6+ \textit{\&}d8 27 \textit{\&}d6+ \textit{\&}e8 28 \textit{\&}e6+ \textit{\&}xe6 29 \textit{\&}f8+ 1-0 Muhudtindov-Nenashev, Swidnica 1997.

Another idea is 11...\textit{\&}e8 12 \textit{\&}d3 \textit{\&}xc3 (Aagaard criticises this; perhaps Black should try 12...\textit{\&}eb4?!) 13 bxc3 \textit{\&}f6 14 \textit{\&}c4 \textit{\&}d7 15 h4 \textit{\&}e7 16 \textit{\&}g5 \textit{\&}xg5 17 \textit{\&}xg5 and White is clearly better, An.Sokolov-Burger, Reykjavik 1990.

12 \textit{\&}f4 \textit{\&}a5

Or:

a) 12...\textit{\&}b4 13 \textit{\&}e5 \textit{\&}bd5 14 \textit{\&}g3 \textit{\&}d7 15 \textit{\&}xd5 \textit{\&}xd5 16 \textit{\&}xd5 exd5 17 \textit{\&}b3 \textit{\&}c8 18 \textit{\&}ac1 and Black is very passive, Christiansen-Kaidanov, Seattle 2000.

b) 12...b5 13 d5! exd5 14 \textit{\&}xd5 \textit{\&}xd5 15 \textit{\&}xd5 \textit{\&}b7 16 \textit{\&}h5 \textit{\&}f6 17 \textit{\&}ad1 and White's rooks are posted powerfully in the centre, Epishin-Jonkman, Amsterdam 2000.

13 d5!?
A new try. White got nothing after 12
\[\text{c2 b5 13 d5 exd5 14 \text{w}d3 \text{c}c6 15 \text{c}c7 \text{w}d7 16 \text{c}e5 \text{c}xe5 17 \text{c}xe5 \text{g}6 18 \text{c}xf6 \text{c}xf6 19 \text{c}xd5 \text{c}g7, Kasparov-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 1999.}\]
\[13...\text{cxb3} 14 \text{wxb3 exd5}\]
Or:
\[a) 14...\text{cxd5} 15 \text{c}ad1 (15 \text{c}xd5?! \text{c}xf4 15 \text{c}xd8 \text{c}xd8 16 \text{c}d1 and White has an edge, Gelfand-Shirov, FIDE World Championship, New Delhi 2000.}\]
\[b) 14...\text{c}d6 15 \text{c}xd6 \text{w}xd6 16 \text{c}ad1 exd5 17 \text{c}xd5 \text{c}xd5 18 \text{c}xd5 \text{w}f6 19 \text{c}d4 and Black has problems developing his c8-bishop, Kaidanov-D.Gurevich, Seattle 2000.\]
\[15 \text{c}ad1\]

13 \text{h}4!
White has scored very well with this move (70% on my database). The idea is to start a quick attack with \text{c}g5.
\[13...\text{c}a5!\]
Alternatives leave Black struggling:
\[a) 13...\text{w}d5 14 \text{c}b1 \text{c}ac8 15 \text{c}b5 and the b5-rook can swing over to help the kingside attack, Anand-Timman, Moscow 1992.\]
\[b) 13...\text{c}h4 14 \text{c}xh4 \text{w}xh4 15 \text{c}e3! \text{g}6 16 \text{c}h3 \text{w}f6 17 \text{c}h6 \text{c}fe8 18 \text{c}g4 \text{c}ac8 19 \text{c}g5 \text{w}g7 20 \text{w}h4 \text{f}5 21 \text{c}e1 \text{c}a5 22 \text{b}e3 \text{w}f7 23 \text{b}5 \text{c}c6 24 \text{c}xc6 \text{c}xc6 25 \text{c}c4 \text{d}d7 26 \text{c}f6 and Black has major dark-squared weaknesses around his king, Kasparov-Gonda, Cannes simultaneous 1988.\]
\[c) 13...\text{c}f6 14 \text{c}g5 \text{g}6 15 \text{w}g4 \text{h}5 (or 15...\text{c}c7 16 \text{h}5! \text{c}f5 17 \text{hxg6 hxg6 18 \text{c}xe6! \text{fxe6 19 \text{c}xe6 and White wins – Nunn}) 16 \text{w}g3 \text{d}d7 (16...\text{c}e7 17 \text{c}a3 \text{c}g8 18 \text{c}xe6! \text{fxe6 19 \text{c}xe6 \text{c}c7 20 \text{c}ae1 \text{f}7 21 \text{d}xg6 \text{d}d7 22 \text{d}xf7+ \text{c}xf7 23 \text{c}xf6+ \text{x}xf6 24 \text{w}e5+ \text{c}f7 25 \text{w}e6+ \text{c}e8 26 \text{w}f6+ was the grisly conclusion to C.Hansen-Ki.Georgiev, Kiljava 1984) 17 \text{c}e4 \text{g}7 18 \text{g}5 \text{g}7 19 \text{w}d6! and White has a decisive advantage, Onischuk-Magem Badals, New York 1998.\]
\[14 \text{c}g5\]
The natural follow-up, although Aagaard also suggests 14 \text{h}5!? and 14 \text{c}c2!?.
\[14...\text{c}xg5\]
This is virtually forced. After 14...\text{h}6 we have:

We are following the game Kramnik-Anand, Monaco (rapid) 2001. White kept an edge after 15...\text{c}e6 16 \text{w}xb7 \text{c}c5 17 \text{c}e5 \text{w}a5 18 \text{c}d4 \text{c}xd4 19 \text{c}xd4 \text{c}xd7 20 \text{c}d6 \text{c}c5 21 \text{w}c7 \text{c}xc7 22 \text{c}xc7 \text{c}f6 23 \text{c}g3.

\text{A112222)\n10...\text{c}xc3 11 \text{bxc}3 \text{b}6\nAfter 11...\text{c}6 12 \text{d}3, I can see nothing better for Black than 12...\text{b}6, after which White continues with 13 \text{h}4!.

12 \text{c}d3!\nAn important move. White quickly focuses his attention on the kingside, where Black is missing his normal defensive knight on f6.
\[12...\text{c}b7\]
a) 15 \textit{Wh}5? \textit{Ec}8! (15...\textit{Ad}5? 16 \textit{Ah}7 \textit{Ee}8 17 \textit{Axh6 gxh6} 18 \textit{Wh}xh6 f5 19 \textit{Ee}3 led to a quick win in Razuvayev-Farago, Dubna 1979) 16 \textit{Ah}7+ (16 \textit{Ah}7 \textit{Exc3! is unclear}) 16...\textit{Ah}8 and now, according to Nunn, White should repeat with 17 \textit{Ab}1 \textit{Gg}8 18 \textit{Ah}7+.

b) 15 \textit{Ah}7! \textit{Ee}8 16 \textit{Wg}4 \textit{Ah}8 17 \textit{Dg}5! \textit{Ef}8 18 \textit{Dxe}6! \textit{Fxe}6 19 \textit{Gg}6 \textit{Eg}5 (or 19...\textit{Gg}8 20 \textit{Wg}7+ \textit{Al}7 21 \textit{Gg}6+ \textit{Af}6 22 \textit{Ah}5) 20 \textit{Exe}6 and White wins – Nunn.

14...\textit{Gg}6 is only marginally stronger. Nunn gives the winning line 15 \textit{Wg}4! \textit{Ec}8 16 \textit{Ah}5 \textit{Exc3 17 hgx6 Gxd3 18 gxf7+ \textit{Ah}8 19 \textit{Exe}6. 15 \textit{Dxg}5

After 15 hgx5!? Black should play 15...\textit{f5}! (Pachman) 16 gx6 (not 16 \textit{Dxe}6? \textit{Dg}5!) 16...\textit{Wxg}6 17 \textit{Ee}2 \textit{Dac}8, which is unclear. 

15...\textit{Wd}5 16 \textit{Wg}4 f5 17 \textit{Wg}3

Both sides have weaknesses, but I prefer White’s position. The game Poluljahov-Balashov, St Petersburg 1998, continued 17...\textit{Dac}8 18 \textit{Ee}5 \textit{Wd}7 and now 19 \textit{Ee}1!? \textit{Dc}4 20 \textit{Ec}2 \textit{Dd}5 21 \textit{h}5 keeps White’s initiative going.

A11223)

10...\textit{f6} 11 \textit{Dc}4

Also interesting is 11 \textit{Ab}3 \textit{Dc}7 12 \textit{Dc}4 \textit{b}6 13 \textit{Dxf}6+ \textit{Dxf}6 14 \textit{Dg}5 \textit{Dg}6 15 \textit{Dc}5 \textit{Wd}6 16 \textit{Dxf}6 \textit{gx}f6 17 \textit{Wf}3 and White was better, Shavtvaladze-Bystron, Herculane 1994.

11...\textit{b}6

11...\textit{h}6, avoiding a later \textit{Dg}5, is not very common, but it certainly has something to said for it. In Kokkila-Karttunen, Tampere 1998, white kept an advantage after 12 a3 b6 13 \textit{Wd}3 \textit{Dc}7 14 \textit{Dd}2 \textit{Dc}7 15 \textit{Ead}1 \textit{Df}5 16 \textit{Dc}5.

12 \textit{Dxf}6+ \textit{Dxf}6

Or 12...\textit{Wx}f6 13 \textit{Dg}5 \textit{Wg}6 14 \textit{Dc}1 \textit{Dh}7 15 \textit{Dd}3 \textit{Wh}5 16 \textit{Ee}4 f5 17 \textit{Dxe}6 \textit{Dxd}4 18 \textit{Dxd}4 \textit{Wx}g5 19 \textit{Df}3 \textit{Wd}8 20 \textit{Wd}4 \textit{Dh}8 (Sokolov-Schlosser, German Bundesliga 1999), and now I like the move 21 \textit{Dd}1.

13 \textit{Dg}5

Normally an exchange of a pair of minor pieces helps Black in an IQP position, but here Black suffers as he has no good way to break the pin on the f6-knight and is reduced to allowing his kingside pawns to be broken.

13...\textit{Db}7 14 a3 \textit{Wd}6

Israeli IM Ilya Tsesarsky gives the line 14...\textit{h}6 15 \textit{Dh}4 \textit{Dc}8 16 \textit{Dc}2 \textit{Dh}8 17 \textit{Dc}5 \textit{g}5 18 \textit{Dg}3 \textit{Dc}4 19 \textit{Wf}3 \textit{Wxd}4 20 \textit{Dxf}7! and Black is in trouble.

15 \textit{Wxf}6 \textit{gx}f6

A113)
6...\textit{\textbf{xc}}c3

With this move Black immediately gives White the 'hanging' c- and d-pawns.

7 bxc3

7...g6

Logically Black follows up by fianchettoing his f8-bishop, thus securing a safe kingside. 7...e6 is not so good: 8 d4 e7 9 d3 0-0 10 0-0 \textit{\textbf{d}}d7 11 \textit{\textbf{e}}e1 \textit{\textbf{c}}7 12 c4 b6 13 b2 f6 14 \textit{\textbf{w}}d2 \textit{\textbf{b}}b7 15 \textit{\textbf{g}}g5 g6 16 h4 and White has a powerful attack, Sher-Ferguson, Hastings 1995.

8 d4

Or:

a) 8 h4?! is in some ways quite logical, but it's probably a little too ambitious. 8...g7! 9 c6 10 \textit{\textbf{b}}b1 \textit{\textbf{c}}7 11 a3 a5 left Black with a good position in An.Sokolov-Karpov, Linares (11th matchgame) 1987.

b) 8 b5+!? (this looks quite promising – White keeps the d-pawn at home for the moment) 8...d7 (8...d6 transposes to Variation A111, note to Black's seventh move) 9 a4! g7 10 0-0 0-0 11 a3 (11 \textit{\textbf{e}}e1? a6 12 f1 is another idea) 11...a6 (11...d6 12 \textit{\textbf{e}}e1 a8 13 d4 a6 14 f1 \textit{\textbf{c}}7 15 g5 h6 16 d4 was better for White in Balashov-Lastin, Elista 2000) 12 xd7 xd7 (Dautov gives 12...xd7 13 d4 e8 14 wb3 with an edge to White) 13 \textit{\textbf{e}}e1 \textit{\textbf{c}}6 14 b1 \textit{\textbf{f}}d8 15 c5! \textit{\textbf{w}}f5? (Black should play 15...e5! – Dautov) 16 d4 \textit{\textbf{d}}d7 17 \textit{\textbf{e}}e2 and

White has strong pressure down both b- and e-files, Christiansen-Dautov, Essen 1999.

8...g7 9 d3 0-0 10 0-0 \textit{\textbf{c}}c6 11 \textit{\textbf{e}}e1 g4

Black has quite a few alternatives here:

a) 11...e8 12 g5 e6 13 xe6!? (this move is fun, especially in a blitz game!) 13...xe6 14 c4 w6 15 c2 16 e1 c8 17 d2 h8 18 c4 w7 19 b3 e5 20 h4 exd4 21 h5 gxh5 22 xh5 f8 23 c2 w5 24 g3 xe1+ 25 h2 h6 26 xh6 g8 27 xg7 xf2 28 h7+ f7 29 g6+ g8 30 h6+ 1-0 Tal-Karpov, Brussels (blitz) 1987. Don't be surprised if Black has improvements in this last line, but certainly 13 xe6 is interesting.

b) 11...b6!? 12 g5 (12 c4 b7 13 f4 e6 14 c1 w7 11 h4 a6d8 16 h5 f7 was equal in Thesing-Gipslis, Pardubice 1995) 12 e8 13 c2 g4 14 f4 xf3 15 xf3 w6 16 c4 was roughly level, Fernandez Garcia-Magem, Spanish Championship 1998.

c) 11...w5 12 d2 g4 13 e4 e5 14 d5 e7 15 c4 w8 16 b3 f5 17 d6! and the complications favour White, Korneev-Evseev, Novgorod 1997.

12 e4 e8

Or 12...w7 13 b1 ac8 14 h3 xf3 15 xf3 a5! 16 g4 e6 17 d5! f5 18 dx6 xd1 19 xd1 xc3 20 xc2 a6 21 bxc2 b5 22 a3 1-0, Korneev-Oms Pallise, Linares 1998, on account of 22...e8 23 b1.

13 g5 w7 14 h3 xf3 15 xf3
Winants-C. Hansen, Wijk aan Zee 1994. White’s bishop pair promises him a slight edge.

A12] 5...g6

This move’s a bit cheeky. Black forgets about recapturing the d5-pawn for the time being and concentrates on developing the kingside. White should aim to punish Black by hanging onto his pawn as long as possible.

6 c4!?
6 wb3 g7 7 d4 would transpose to the ...g6 variation of the Panov-Botvinnik Attack. After 6 c4 White can aim to use the fact that the d-pawn is still on d2.

6...g7 7 d3 0-0 8 0-0 da6
Planning to increase the pressure on the d5-pawn with ...dc7. Alternatives are less testing:

a) 8 dbd7 9 d3! (in this line the pawn is better on d3, where it supports the bishop)
9...b6 10 wb3 f5 11 f4 ec8 12 fe1 df7 13 g5 dc5 14 wa3 and Black is in trouble, Kalinichev-Tischbierek, Berlin 1986.

b) 8...b6?! 9 d4 db7 10 wb3 da6 11 ce5 wd6 12 db5 wb8 13 d6 e4 14 g5 ec8 15 df8 16 fe1 and White has a dominating position, Balashov-Skatchkov, Novgorod 1998.

9 d4 dc7 10 wb3
Black answers 10 de1 with 10...fxd5!, after which 11 xd5 xd5 12 xd5 wd5 13 xe7 g4 gives Black good compensa-

In the game Korneev-Alavkin, Novgorod 1997, White kept an edge after 12...b7 (12...cxd5?!) 13 dc6 wd6 14 f3 e6 15 g3 fxg5 16 d5 a5 c8 17 ac1 d7 18 db7 b6 19 dc5 ec6 20 fd1.

A2)
4...xd5
With this move Black immediately recaptures the pawn, but White can now gain time by attacking the black queen.

5 dc3

5 wd6
The most popular retreat, but there are alternatives:

a) 5...\textit{\$e5+?!} (now White can gain further time with \textit{d2-d4}) 6 \textit{\$e2 \$g4 7 d4 \textit{\$xe2 8 \textit{\$xgxe2 \textit{\$a5 9 \textit{\$b3 \textit{\$b6 10 \textit{\$d5! \textit{\$xh3 11 \textit{\$axb3 \textit{\$a6 12 \textit{\$xa6 \textit{\$xa6 13 \textit{\$c7+ and White went on to win in Kiik-Nykanen, Jvvykskyla 1999.}

b) 5...\textit{\$d8 6 \textit{\$d4 \textit{\$f6 7 \textit{\$f3 e6 8 \textit{\$c4 \textit{\$e7 9 0-0 \textit{\$c6 10 \textit{\$xe2 0-0 11 a3 \textit{\$d8 12 \textit{\$d1 g6 13 \textit{\$c3 a6 14 b4 \textit{\$c7 15 \textit{\$ac1 \textit{\$d7 16 \textit{\$b1 \textit{\$e8 17 \textit{\$a2 and I prefer White, Finkel-Payen, Cannes 1996.}

6 \textit{\$d4 \textit{\$f6 7 \textit{\$f3}

It's time for those transpositions again! This particular position can also be reached via the c3 Sicilian after 1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 \textit{\$xd5 4 d4 exd4 5 cxd4 \textit{\$f6 6 \textit{\$c3 \textit{\$d6 7 \textit{\$f3. I'll stick my neck out a little and say that this is a good version of the c3 Sicilian - Black has given White extra options by exchanging early on d4.

7...e6

I can find no example of 7...\textit{\$g4? in this actual position, even though I believe White has nothing better than to reach a slightly favourable variation of the c3 Sicilian after 8 \textit{\$e2 e6 9 h3 \textit{\$h5 10 0-0 \textit{\$c6 11 \textit{\$b3!} (11 \textit{\$e3 \textit{\$c7 is known to be okay for Black)

11...\textit{\$b4 (11...\textit{\$xf3 12 \textit{\$xf3 \textit{\$xd4 13 \textit{\$a4+ \textit{\$d7 14 \textit{\$xd7+ \textit{\$d7 15 \textit{\$xb7 gives White an endgame edge due to the bishop pair) 12 \textit{\$c3 and now:

a) 12...\textit{\$xb3 13 \textit{\$xb3 \textit{\$e7 14 g4 \textit{\$g6 15 \textit{\$e5 \textit{\$b4 (15...0-0 transposes to the next note) 16 \textit{\$b5+ \textit{\$f8 17 \textit{\$xc1 a6 18 \textit{\$e2 \textit{\$fd5 19 \textit{\$xd5 \textit{\$xd5 20 \textit{\$f3 and Black's king is misplaced, Ravi-Neelotpal, Calcutta 1996.}

b) 12...\textit{\$e7 13 g4 \textit{\$g6 14 \textit{\$e5 0-0 15 g5

White has scored well from this position:

b1) 15...\textit{\$h5 16 \textit{\$c6 bxc6 17 \textit{\$d1! \textit{\$xb2 18 \textit{\$c1 \textit{\$b4 19 \textit{\$b1 c5 20 a3 \textit{\$xa3 21 \textit{\$xh5 \textit{\$xh5 22 \textit{\$xh5 \textit{\$xd4 23 \textit{\$xd4 \textit{\$xc1 24 \textit{\$xc1 \textit{\$xc1 25 \textit{\$c3 left White with a winning position in Sermek-V.Georgiev, Cannes 1996.}

b2) 15...\textit{\$d5 16 \textit{\$xc5 exd5 17 \textit{\$xc6 bxc6 18 \textit{\$xb4 \textit{\$b4 19 \textit{\$xc1 \textit{\$f5 20 a3 \textit{\$e7 21 \textit{\$xc6 \textit{\$xh3 22 b4 \textit{\$fd8 23 b5 and White has a dangerous queenside pawn majority, Smagin-Paschall, Bad Wiessee 1999.}

b3) 16...\textit{\$d7 17 \textit{\$xd7 exd5 18 \textit{\$xc1 \textit{\$f5 19 \textit{\$xc6 bxc6 20 \textit{\$xc6 20...\textit{\$a5 21 \textit{\$f3 \textit{\$fd8 22 \textit{\$d2 \textit{\$e6 23 \textit{\$xa5 \textit{\$ab8 24 \textit{\$g4! and White went on to win, Sermek-Sher, Bled 1993.

8 \textit{\$c4

8...\textit{\$g3? is interesting, for example 8...\textit{\$e7 9 \textit{\$g2 \textit{\$c6 10 0-0 0-0 (Down-Emms, Cambridge 1993) and now 11 a3 \textit{\$d8 12 \textit{\$f4 \textit{\$d7 13 \textit{\$e5 \textit{\$xe5 14 dxe5 favours White.
8...\textit{e}7 9 0-0 \textit{c}6

After 9...0-0 White has the chance to play 10 \textit{e}2! \textit{c}6 11 \textit{d}d1 \textit{b}4 12 \textit{g}5 \textit{b}d5 13 \textit{e}5 a6 14 \textit{f}3, with strong pressure on d5, Stoica-Przeworszczik, Timisoara 1987.

10 \textit{g}5

White has two enticing alternatives here:

a) 10 \textit{b}5? \textit{d}8 11 \textit{f}4 0-0 12 \textit{c}7 \textit{d}7 13 \textit{e}5 \textit{xe}5 14 \textit{dxe}5 \textit{e}8 15 \textit{a}5 \textit{b}6 16 \textit{a}2 a6 17 \textit{c}3 \textit{b}5 18 \textit{e}2 \textit{b}5 19 \textit{b}3 \textit{c}5 20 \textit{e}4 \textit{e}7 21 \textit{fd}1 was better for White in Blatny-Muse, Poznan 1986.

b) 10 \textit{e}2!? \textit{xd}4 11 \textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 12 \textit{b}5 looks dangerous, while the alternative 10...0-0 transposes to the note to Black's ninth move.

10...0-0 11 \textit{e}1

Black must play accurately to solve his problems here:

a) 11...a6?! 12 d5! \textit{a}5 (12...\textit{exd}5 13 \textit{cxd}5 \textit{w}x\textit{d}5 15 \textit{cxd}5 gives White a favourable ending) 13 \textit{e}d3 \textit{d}8 (13...\textit{exd}5? 14 \textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 15 \textit{cxd}5 and 13...\textit{exd}5? 14 \textit{cxd}5! \textit{wd}5 15 \textit{xf}6 are winning for White) 14 \textit{c}2 \textit{exd}5 15 \textit{hx}7+ \textit{f}8 16 \textit{e}d1 and Black's in some trouble, Godena-Lazarev, Cannes 1992.

b) 11...\textit{d}8! 12 \textit{b}5 \textit{b}4! (12...\textit{d}7 13 \textit{c}5 \textit{xe}5 14 \textit{dxe}5 \textit{d}5 15 \textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 16 \textit{d}6 is unpleasant for Black) 13 \textit{c}1 \textit{a}5 14 \textit{f}4 \textit{d}5 15 \textit{cxd}5 \textit{b}5 and Black was okay in the game Guseinov-Speelman, Baku 1983.

B) 2...e5!? 2...

Black takes advantage of the fact that White didn't play 2 d4. This is not such a popular choice for Black, perhaps because Caro-Kann players prefer to play 2...d5, rather than learning lines of the Old Indian or Kings Indian (more transpositions, I'm afraid!)

3 \textit{e}4

Attacking the e5-pawn, and making use of the fact that Black doesn't have the c6-square for his knight.

Now we shall take a look at Black's choices:

B1: 3...\textit{wa}5!? 3...

Alternatively:

a) 3...f5 (a kind of Latvian Counter Gambit) 4 \textit{e}2! \textit{fxe}4 5 \textit{axe}5 and now:

a1) 5...\textit{f}6 6 0-0 \textit{e}7 7 \textit{c}3 \textit{d}6 (7...d5 8 \textit{cxd}5 \textit{cxd}5 9 \textit{b}5+ \textit{d}7 10 \textit{exe}7 \textit{dxe}7 11 \textit{exe}5! won a pawn in Gofshtein-Hector, Manila Olympiad 1992) 8 \textit{g}4 \textit{xe}4 9 \textit{xe}4 \textit{d}5 10 \textit{cxd}5 \textit{d}5 11 d3 and Black will be left with a weak pawn in the centre.

a2) 5...\textit{h}4 6 \textit{c}3 \textit{d}6 7 \textit{g}4! \textit{a}6 8 \textit{xc}8 \textit{xc}8 9 \textit{g}4 \textit{d}5 10 0-0 \textit{f}6 11 \textit{xf}6+ \textit{gx}6 12 \textit{g}3 \textit{g}8 13 \textit{f}1 and Black's king has no safe place to hide, Sher-Hector, Vejle 1994.

b) 3...\textit{c}7 4 \textit{c}3 \textit{b}4 5 g3! (5 a3 \textit{xc}3
6 dxc3!? also looks like a promising way to play) 5...d6f6 6 g2 xc3 7 bxc3 dxe4 8 wxe2 d5 9 a3! e6 10 0-0 d7 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 e1 d6 13 ab1 0-0-0 14 xe5! xe5 15 d3 and White has a strong attack, An.Sokolov-Glek, Vilnius 1984.

c) 3...d6f6 4 e5! (this is a good version of the Petroff Defence – the insertion of c2-c4 and ...c7-c6 helps White) 4...d6 5 f3 dxe4 6 c3 and now:

c1) 6...g5 7 d4 e7 8 xg5 xg5 9 wxe2+ e7 10 g5 e6 11 xe7 xe7 12 d5 was better for White in Fernandez Garcia-Gil, Cala d’Or 1986.

c2) 6...f5 7 d3! xc3 8 dxc3! (the d6-pawn is vulnerable) 8...d7+! 9 e3 xd3 10 wxd3 d7 11 0-0 0-0 12 xe5 dxe5 13 h1 g6 14 xa7! g7 15 w3 w6 16 c5 f6 17 b6 xa2

18 xe5! 1-0 Beliavsky-Tavadian, Yaroslav 1982.

c3) 6...xc3 7 dxc3 e7 8 e2 (8 f4 is more ambitious; after 8...d6 White plays 9 wc2 and 0-0-0) 8...d7 9 0-0 0-0 10 f4 and White has an edge, Kuporosov-Meduna, Lazne Bohdanec 1994.

B1)

3...wa5?

A rather extravagant way of dealing with the threat to the e-pawn. Black’s idea is to keep the f8-a3 diagonal free so that the dark-squared bishop can develop to an active post.

In the game Lautier-Kuczynski, Polanica Zdroj 1991, White kept a useful edge after the moves 11...wb6 12 wc2 0-0 13 xc3 e6 14 xd1.
B2)
3...d6 4 d4

Now we will look at:

B21: 4...c6
B22: 4...d7

4...e6 5 dxe5! fxe5 6 dxe5 7 e3 e2 7 f6 7 e3 d7 8 h3 f3 9 f3 f3 e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 g3 gave White a comfortable edge in Hübner-Bachmann, Berlin 1999.

B21)
4...d4 5 dxe5! fxe5 6 dxe5 7 e2 8 f4!

It makes sense to open the position, as White has the bishop pair and Black's king is misplaced.

8...e6

Or:

a) 8...b4+ 9 e2! (9 d7 c6 10 d6 12 fxe5 c5 13 d7! g6! was equal in Nevednichy-Becerra Rivero, Yerevan Olympiad 1996) 9...d7 10 h3! is better for White, according to the Yugoslav IM Vojinovic.

b) 8...d7 9 fxe5 c5 10 f4 d3+ 11 d2 d4 12 d3 e8 13 h3 and White will follow up with c3, Gheorghiu-Malich, Romania 1983.

9 d3 d6

Or 9...c7 10 fxe5 fxe5 11 f4!

10 fxe5

Also possible is 10 g6! fxe5

White has a very active position. Here are some examples:

a) 13...d7 14 0-0-0 g6 15 f6 16 g6! (threatening g3) 15...c5 16 f3 a8 17 f6! f6 18 d7 cxd7 19 f7 d4 20 e2 c6 21 g7 and White wins an exchange.

b) 13...h6 14 e3 g5 15 0-0-0 f6 16 f6! (Kaidanov-Blocker, Washington 1994), and here Kaidanov gives 16...d7 17 c4 as better for White.

c) 13...a6 14 0-0-0 f8 15 g3! c5 16 g3! d4 17 d4! exd4 18 d4 gave White a very strong attack against the black king in Berkovich-Vainshtein, Israel 1994. The rest of the game is of some interest: 18...b8 19 h4! e8 20 g3+ b6 21 a4+ a5 22 c5 b6 23 b8+ a4 24 d6 f8 25 h3 b5 26 c5 a5 27 b4 (or 27...b4 28 b7 c4 29 b6 a3+ 30 a1+ and Black resigned on account of mate after either 29...a4 30 b3, or 29...a6 30 f1.

120
B22)

4...\( \text{Dd7} \) 5 \( \text{Ec3} \) \( \text{Dgf6} \) 6 \( \text{xe2} \)

Black must now make a decision as to where to develop his dark squared bishop

B221: 6...\( \text{xe7} \)
B222: 6...g6

Variation B221 leads to a line of the Old Indian Defence, while B222 reaches a line of the King's Indian Defence!

B221)

6...\( \text{xe7} \)

7 \( \text{0-0} \) \( \text{0-0} \)

After 7...a6 White has scored very well with 8 \( \text{h4} \):

a) 8...\( \text{xe4} \) 9 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 10 \( \text{xd6+} \) is obviously bad news for Black.

b) 8...\( \text{xe4} \) 9 \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 10 \( \text{xe7+} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 11 \( \text{f3} \) and White will follow up with b2-b3 and \( \text{a} \)3 - Ribli.

c) 8...\( \text{xd4} \) 9 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 10 \( \text{xb6} \) (10 \( \text{f5} \) and 10 \( \text{c3} \) also promise an edge) 10...\( \text{xb6} \) 11 \( \text{c3} \) and Black has to worry about his weak d6-pawn, V.Ivanov-Shchukin, St Petersburg 1999.

d) 8...\( \text{g6} \) (preventing \( \text{f5} \), but weakening the dark squares on the kingside) 9 \( \text{Aa6} \) \( \text{f8} \) (against 9...\( \text{b6} \)?? Ribli gives 10 \( \text{dxe5?} \) dxe5 11 \( \text{b1} \), intending b2-b4) 10 \( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 11 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{g7} \) 12 \( \text{f4} \) and White has an impressive looking pawn centre, Dreev-Serper, Tunja 1989.

8 \( \text{xe3} \)

Now we have a further split. Black can play:

B2211: 8...\( \text{e8} \)
B2212: 8...\( \text{a6} \)

B2211)

8...\( \text{e8} \)

9 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{c5} \)

Closing the centre. Black's other options include:

a) 9...a5!? (trying to secure the c5-square for the knight) 10 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 11 \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{d5} \) 12 \( \text{c5} \) (12 \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{b4} \) 13 \( \text{a5} \) \( \text{xal} \) 14 \( \text{xa1} \) \( \text{b3} \) 15 \( \text{wa7} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 16 \( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{g5} \) was unclear in Z.Polgar-De Armas, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988) 12...a4 13 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 14 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{fd7} \) 15 \( \text{ad1} \) \( \text{wa5} \) 16 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d8} \) 17 \( \text{g4} \)!! \( \text{d6} \) (17...\( \text{g5} \)?) 18 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 19 \( \text{hxg4} \) \( \text{c8} \) 20 \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{dx5} \) 21 d6 and White was clearly better, Atalik-Vorobyov, Bled 2001.

b) 9...\( \text{cxd5} \) 10 \( \text{cxd5} \) \( \text{a5} \) 11 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 12 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{c7} \) 13 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h5} \) 14 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 15 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{b8} \) 16 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e4} \) 17 \( \text{gxf4} \) \( \text{g7} \) 18 \( \text{f3} \) and Black was passively placed in Psakhis-Escobar Forero, Linares 2001.

After 9...c5 White has three possible plans: to play for b2-b4, to play for f2-f4, or a mixture of both.

10 \( \text{xe1} \)

The knight comes to d3, where supports both b2-b4 and f2-f4.
White broke through with the typical pseudo-sacrifice 16 \( \text{Qxc5!} \) dxc5 17 d6, and now Illincic gives the variation 17...e8 18 dxe7 wxe7 19 d5 cxd5 20 cxd5, assessing the position as better for White.

B2212

8...a6

Preparing queenside counterplay with ...b7-b5.

9 d5 cxd5

Or 9...c5 10 d1 e8 11 w d2 (preventing ...g5) and now

a) 11...h6 12 g3! (preparing to meet ...bg5 with f2-f4) 12...d6f 13 f4 g4 14 xg4 xg4 15 fxe5 dxe5 16 d3 w d7 17 g2 f6 18 h3 h5 19 g4 g6 20 d1 and White is harmoniously placed, Wells-Martin, British Championship 1998.

b) 11...g6 12 d3 d7 13 h6 h8 14 h1 h6 15 f4 and again White has achieved the desired pawn break, Rowson-Summerscale, British Championship 1998.

10 cxd5

This is consistent with Black's eighth move. Another idea is to harass e3-bishop first with 10...g4 11 d2 b5 12 d1 g6 13 c2 and now:

a) 13...b6?! 14 b4! b7 15 c1 c8 16 b3 and White is better - Stohl.

b) 13...c5 14 f3 d7 (after 14...b4 White can safely play 15 xb4!, as 15...w b6 16...
...\square c6 \square cxe4+ 17 \spade 1 wins material for White) 15 b4 \diamond a4 16 \diamond c4 bxa4 17 \diamond a3! and White has a clear advantage, Chekhover-Hickl, German Bundesliga 1992.

11 \diamond d2 \diamond b6

Or:

a) 11...\diamond c4 12 \diamond cxe4 f5 13 a4 b4 14 a5 fxe4 15 \diamond cxe4 \diamond f6 16 \diamond xf6+ \diamond xf6 17 \spade b6 and Black’s queenside pawns are vulnerable, Psakhis-Zapata, Manila Olympiad 1992.

b) 11...\spade e8 12 b4 \spade g5 13 \spade xg5 \spade xg5 14 a4 and again White is making headway on the queenside, Psakhis-Herndl, Vienna 1998.

12 a4 bxa4

12...b4 is answered by 13 a5!.

13 \diamond x a4

13...\diamond x a4 14 \spade x a4 \spade d7! 15 \spade a3!

15 \spade c4 \spade x a6 16 \spade x a6 \spade g4! exchanges off the dark-squared bishop and promises Black counterplay.

After 15 \spade a3 White can make good use of his extra space on the queenside, for example:

a) 15...\spade b8 16 \spade b3 \spade e8 17 \spade b6 \spade b8 18 \spade f3 \spade b6 19 \spade x b6 \spade b8 20 \diamond c4 \diamond b5 21 \diamond f2 \diamond x c4 22 \diamond x c4 \diamond x b2 23 \diamond a1 \diamond x a1 24 \spade x a1 and Black faces a nightmare ending, S.Ivanov-Shchukin, St Petersburg 1998; a6 is dropping and Black will have to grimly defend the d6-pawn.

b) 15...\spade b5 16 f3 \spade h5 17 \spade x b5 axb5 18 \spade x a8 \spade x a8 19 \spade b3 \spade b8 20 \spade c1 \spade f4 21 \spade f1 and White was better in Yakovich-

Kremenetsky, Moscow 1996.

B222)

6...\spade g6

With this move Black aims for a King’s Indian set-up, although it’s one where he is already committed to the moves ...\diamond bd7 and ...\spade c7-c6.

7 0-0 \spade g7 8 \spade e3 0-0

Black’s main alternative is 8...\diamond g4!? 9 \diamond f5 10 \diamond c1 0-0 11 h3! \spade h6 12 \spade e3 and now:

a) 12...\spade c7 13 \spade c2 \spade f7 14 \spade d1 \spade e8 15 \spade f1 \spade h6 16 \spade x h6 \spade x h6 17 b4 and White begins activity on the queenside, Miles-Zapata, Manila 1990.

b) 12...\spade f7 13 \diamond c2 \spade h6 14 \spade x h6 \spade x h6 15 \diamond f1 \spade e7 16 c5! 17 d5! f5 (or 17...\spade b6?) 18 dxc6 bxc6 19 \spade a4! \spade x a4 20 \spade x a4, followed by \spade c1) 18 dxc6 bxc6 19 \spade d2 \spade g7 20 \spade d6! \spade x d6 21 \spade x d6 and Black’s queenside pawns are extremely weak, Nogueiras-Zapata, La Habana 1991.

9 d5 c5

Or:

a) 9...cxd5 10 cxd5 \diamond g4 11 \spade d2 transposes to the next note.

b) 9...\diamond g4 10 \spade d2 f5 (or 10...cxd5 11 cxd5 \spade h6 12 \spade c1 a6 13 a4 f5 14 exf5 gxf5 15 h3 \spade x d2 16 \spade x d2 \diamond g6 17 \diamond g5! and White’s better, Chekhover-Casper, Leipzig 1988) 11 \diamond g5 \diamond f6 12 b4 cxd5 13 cxd5 \spade e7 (13...\spade x e4? 14 \diamond e6! \spade x e6 15 dxe6 \spade h6 16 g4! left Black in total disarray in Ivanchuk-
Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1996) 14 \( \text{b}3! \) \( \text{dxe}4 \) 15
\( \text{dxe}4 \) \( \text{fxe}4 \) 16 \( \text{dxe}4 \) and the white knight
has an excellent outpost on e4.

10 \( \text{de}1 \)

Preventing \( \text{g}4 \) and preparing \( \text{d}3 \).

10...\( \text{de}8 \)

Preparing \( f7-f5 \). 10...\( a6 \) 11 \( a3 \) \( \text{h}8 \) 12 \( b4 \)
\( b6 \) 13 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 14 \( a4 \) \( f5 \) 15 \( a5 \) attacked the
base of Black's pawn chain in Shumiakina-

11 \( \text{g}4! \)

Anticipating \( f7-f5 \). White wishes to at-
tack along the g-file!

11...\( f5 \)

11...\( \text{Wh}4? \) proved to be a waste of time in
Gelfand-Ivanchuk, Kramatorsk 1989, after
12 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{h}8 \) 13 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 14 \( a3 \) \( \text{df}6 \) 15 \( b4 \).

12 \( \text{exf}5 \) \( \text{gx}f5 \) 13 \( \text{g}x\text{f}5 \) \( \text{b}6 \)

Or 13...\( \text{df}6 \) 14 \( \text{d}3 \) and now:

a) 14...\( e4 \) 15 \( \text{exe}4 \) \( \text{dxe}4 \) 16 \( \text{dxe}4 \) \( \text{xb}2 \)
17 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 18 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{h}4 \) 19 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{h}3 \) 20
\( \text{g}2 \) and White went on to win in Michael-
SEN-Lane, Wijk aan Zee 1995.

b) 14...\( \text{e}7 \) 15 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 16 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 17
\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 18 \( \text{xf}5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 19 \( \text{xf}5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 20
\( \text{e}4 \) and White has a very favourable ending,
C.Hansen-Djurhuus, Reykjavik 1996; The
d6-pawn is weak and the knight on e4 is a
monster.

14 \( \text{f}3! \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 15 \( \text{g}5 \)

White uses both the g-file and the e4-
square for the basis of an attack.

15...\( \text{We}7 \) 16 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{f}6 \)

16...\( \text{h}6?! \) is met by 17 \( \text{ge}4 \), while 16...\( \text{e}4 \)
17 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 18 \( \text{g}3?! \) is also good for White.

17 \( \text{g}3 \)

We are following the game Kramnik-
Knaak, Dortmund 1992, which continued

17...\( \text{h}8 \) 18 \( \text{d}2 \) (18 \( \text{g}3?! \), intending \( \text{g}1-
g2 \) and \( \text{g}1 \), is also promising) 18...\( \text{g}6 \) 19
\( \text{af}1 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 20 \( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 21 \( \text{b}3 \) and White was in
total control.

![Diagram](image)

**Important Points**

**Variation A**

1) Be aware of all the transpositional pos-
sibilities here. It may be very easy to lure your
opponent into unfamiliar territory.

2) There are many attacking possibilities
discussed in this chapter for White in IQP
and 'hanging pawns' positions. Familiarise
yourself with these.

**Variation B**

1) Don't feel too concerned about having
to face a 'King's Indian' set-up. It's only one
line, which is meant to be quite favourable to
White. Anyway, it's very possible that your
opponent will feel less comfortable than you!

2) The manoeuvre \( \text{f}3-e1-d3 \) is seen quite
often once the position is closed with \( \text{d}4-d5 \)
and \( ...c6-c5 \). From \( c3 \) the knight support
both the f2-f4 and b2-b4 breaks.
CHAPTER FIVE

Attacking the Pirc: The 150 Attack

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3 g6

The Pirc Defence appeals to the black player who likes to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop. This gives Black security on the kingside, where the bishop is used as a solid defender to the castled king. The Pirc is similar to the more popular King's Indian (1 d4 ∆f6 2 c4 g6) in another way; Black allows White to occupy the centre with pawns and generally only strikes back in the centre once his forces are co-ordinated. The Pirc is well suited to players who like to counter-attack, and its famous adherents include former Russian Champion Peter Svidler and Slovenian number one Alexander Beliavsky.

The way to attack the Pirc Defence that I'm advocating is with a very simple, but frighteningly effective system. White plays an early ∆e3 and ∆d2, lining up the two pieces along the c1-h6 diagonal. Then White often plays ∆h6, in order to exchange the dark-squared bishops. This is sometimes augmented by shoving the h-pawn down the board to attack Black's castled king. Then, in Fischer's words, 'pry open the h-file, sac, sac... mate!'

In recent years White's system has been dubbed 'the 150 Attack', a reference to the idea that this way of attack would be the first thing a club player would think of (a British grade of 150 is roughly equivalent to an Elo rating of 1800). I can still remember a comment from my Pirc playing days when, after having been checkmated by ∆g7, I was told that this was exactly what I should have expected, after having weakened myself with ...g7-g6 as early as move three! Experience of playing both sides of the Pirc has taught me that many black players feel uncomfortable playing against the 150 Attack, and more generally, when their 'Pirc bishop' is exchanged. The 150 Attack is an excellent weapon at club level, but it's also very popular at the highest levels: Gary Kasparov, Vishy Anand, Michael Adams and Nigel Short have all used it to good effect.

Before we move onto the theory, I should also point out that, to be comprehensive, as well as 3...g6 (the Pirc), we shall also be looking at less popular third move choices for Black, including 3...e5 and 3...c6.

After 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3, Black's has the following choices:

A: 3...e5!?  
B: 3...c6  
C: 3...g6

3...∆bd7 4 f4 e5 5 ∆f3 transposes to Line A.
A)

3...e5!?  
This move is not particularly common. Black's main idea is that 4 Ọf3 Ọbd7 transposes to the Philidor Defence (1.e4 e5 2 Ọf3 d6 3 d4 Ọf6 4 Ọc3 Ọbd7), without giving us the option to play the our beloved Bishop's Opening!  
4 f4!?  

4...exd4  
Black's alternatives include:  
a) 4...Ọg4 5 Ọd3 exd4 6 Ọxd4 d5 (6...Ọc6 7 Ọb5 Ọd7 transposes to main text) 7 Ọxd5 Ọxd5 8 exd5 c6 9 Ọe5+ Ọc7 10 d6 Ọxe5+ 11 fxe5 Ọd7 12 Ọf4 and White has a favourable ending, Leko-Zetocha, Hungarian League 1998.  
b) 4...Ọbd7 5 Ọf3 exd4 6 Ọxd4 c6 7 Ọe3 d5!? (this leads to great complications) 8 exd5 Ọc5 9 Ọd3 Ọe7 10 Ọd4 and now:  
   b1) 10...Ọb6 11 dxc6 bxc6 (11...0-0? 12 0-0-0 bxc6 13 Ọg1! Ọc7 14 g3 Ọd8?? 15 Ọd5! leads to two quick victories for Judit Polgar in the same year – J.Polgar-Rivas Pastor, Dos Hermanas 1993 and J.Polgar-Khalifman, Seville 1993; White wins after 15... Ọxd3 16 Ọxc7 Ọxd1+ 17 Ọxd1 Ọxg1 18 Ọxa8) 12 Ọe2 Ọa6 13 Ọd2 Ọbd5 14 Ọxd5 Ọxd5 15 Ọf5 Ọxe3 16 Ọxe7 Ọxd2+ 17 Ọxd2 Ọxe7 18 Ọxa6 Ọxf4 19 Ọae1+ and White has a slight advantage in this ending – the bishop is superior to the knight on the open board.  
b2) 10... Ọxd5 11 Ọxd5 cxd5 12 0-0-0 0-0 13 g3 Ọf6 14 Ọg2 Ọc4 15 Ọh1 Ọd7 16 Ọg1 and I prefer White, Galisot-Verheyen, Artel 2000.  
5 Ọxd4 Ọc6 6 Ọb5 Ọd7 7 Ọf2 Ọe7  
Also possible is 7...g6!? for example 8 Ọf3 Ọg7 9 Ọd2 0-0 10 0-0-0 a6 11 Ọxc6 Ọxc6 12 Ọhe1 Ọe8 13 e5 Ọg4 14 Ọg3 Ọh6 15 Ọe4 Ọf5 16 Ọf2 Ọxe4 17 Ọxe4 dxe5 18 Ọc3 Ọd6 19 Ọxe5 and White has an edge, Kotronias-Jansa, Gausdal 1995.  
8 Ọf3 0-0 9 0-0 a6 10 Ọd3 Ọb4 11 Ọd2  

White has a nice space advantage. The game Hector-Zagorskis, Roskilde 1998 continued 11...c5!? 12 e5 Ọxd3 13 cxd3 Ọe8 14 Ọd5 Ọb5 15 Ọa5 Ọd7 16 Ọb6 Ọd8 17 b4 Ọb8 18 Ọfd1 dxe5 19 dx5 exf4 20 d4 Ọe6 21 a4 and White has excellent compensation for the pawn.

B)

3...c6  
This is a relatively new defence, utilised by the Russian Anatoly Ufimtsev, and then popularised by some leading Czech players in the late eighties. Black very much keeps his options open and waits to see how White proceeds.  
4 f4!  
The most aggressive way to play against this system.  
4...Ọa5
With the obvious threat of ...\(\text{Qxe4}\), winning a pawn.
5 e5 \(\text{Qe4}\) 6 \(\text{Wf3}\)

Now Black has a choice of moves:
B1: 6...\(\text{d5}\)
B2: 6...\(\text{Qxc3}\)

B1)
6...\(\text{d5}\) 7 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qa6}\)!

This is an interesting idea from Julian Hodgson. Otherwise 7...\(\text{Qxc3}\) 8 \(\text{Qd2}\) gives White a big lead in development, while 7...c5 8 \(\text{Qxe4}\) dxe4 9 \(\text{Wxe4}\) cxd4 10 \(\text{Wxd4}\) \(\text{Qf5}\) 11 \(\text{Wd5}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) 12 \(\text{Qxa5}\) \(\text{Qxa5}\) 13 \(\text{Qb5}\) 0-0-0 14 c3 \(\text{Qc6}\) 15 \(\text{Qe3}\) worked out well for White in D. Ledger-Summerscale, British Championship 1999.

8 \(\text{Qge2}\)

One of the points of Black's idea is seen after 8 \(\text{Qxe4}\) dxe4 9 \(\text{Wxe4}\) g6!, planning ...\(\text{Qf5}\); Black has good pressure on the light squares.

8...\(\text{Qb4}\) 9 0-0

But not 9 \(\text{Qxe4}\) dxe4 10 \(\text{Wxe4}\) \(\text{f5}\)! 11 exf6 \(\text{Qxf5}\)! (unfortunately it was me who fell for this trick in the stem game against Hodgson).

9...\(\text{Qxd3}\) 10 \(\text{Qxd3}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) 11 \(\text{Qxc3}\) g6

Black must prevent White from steamrollering with f4-f5.

B2)
6...\(\text{Qxc3}\) 7 \(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Qf5}\)

Also possible here is 7...\(\text{Qd5}\)!? 8 \(\text{Wxc3}\)!

and now:

a) 8...\(\text{We4+}\) 9 \(\text{Qf2}\) dxe5 10 fxe5 c6 11 \(\text{Qf3}\) and White will follow up with \(\text{Qd3}\).

b) 8...dxe5 9 dxe5 \(\text{Qf5}\) 10 \(\text{Qf3}\) c6 11 \(\text{Qc4}\) \(\text{Qe4+}\) 12 \(\text{Qd1}\) \(\text{Qg4}\) 13 \(\text{Qe1}\) \(\text{Qxf3+}\) 14 \(\text{Qxf3}\) \(\text{Qg6}\) 15 \(\text{Qb3}\) b6 16 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qh5}\) 17 f5 \(\text{Qxf3+}\) 18 \(\text{Qc1}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 19 \(\text{Qe4!}\) \(\text{Qxb3}\) 20 axb3 and White has a strong initiative – Beliavsky.

c) 8...d5?! 9 \(\text{Qf3}\) dxe5 9...\(\text{We4+}\) 10 \(\text{Qd1}\) \(\text{Qd4}\) 11 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qxf3+}\) 12 \(\text{Qc1}\) \(\text{Qd5}\) 13 \(\text{Qxf3}\) \(\text{Qxf3}\) 14 \(\text{Qf1}\) \(\text{Qh5}\) 15 \(\text{Qb3}\) b6 16 d5 gives White a strong attack, while 9...b5 10 \(\text{Qe2}\) e6
11 0-0 \( \text{xe7} \) 12 a4 dxe5 13 \( \text{dxe5} \) b4 14 \( \text{We3} \) 0-0 15 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 16 c3 was good for White in Palliser-Hickman, Port Erin 1998) 10 \( \text{c4!} \) and now:

c1) 10...\( \text{we4+} \) 11 \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{g4} \) 12 \( \text{wb3} \) e6 13 \( \text{wb7} \) \( \text{xf3+} \) 14 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{xd4} \) (or 14...\( \text{xb2} \) 15 \( \text{c8+} \) \( \text{e7} \) 16 \( \text{b4+} \) \( \text{f6} \) 17 \( \text{d8+} \) \( \text{f5} \) 18 \( \text{g5} \) mate) 15 \( \text{gxf3} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 16 \( \text{c8+} \) \( \text{e7} \) 17 \( \text{fxe5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 18 \( \text{b7+} \) \( \text{d7} \) 19 \( \text{xa8} \) and White has a winning advantage.

c2) 10...\( \text{d8} \) 11 \( \text{b3} \) e6 12 \( \text{xb7} \) (Beiavsky-Bezdol, Portoroz 1996) 12...\( \text{d7} \) 13 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 14 \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{e4} \) 15 0-0-0 \( \text{b8} \) 16 \( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{a8} \) 17 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 18 \( \text{xb3} \) \( \text{xb3} \) 19 \( \text{wb3} \) and White has a clear advantage – Beiavsky.

22 \( \text{d5! exd5} \) 23 e6! \( \text{f6} \) 24 \( \text{g5} \) h6 25 \( \text{xe7}! \) \( \text{hxg5} \) and now Motwani points out that the quickest win is 26 \( \text{cc7} \) \( \text{e8} \) 27 \( \text{b4!} \) \( \text{xc7} \) 28 \( \text{xf7!} \) \( \text{e8} \) 29 \( \text{xe8+} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 30 \( \text{c7} \).

C1)
3...\( \text{g6} \)

Reaching the starting position of the Pirc Defence.

\( \text{4 e3!} \)

8 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xd3} \)

8...\( \text{g6} \) 9 \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 10 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 11 \( \text{cxd3} \) c5 12 c4 \( \text{xd4} \) 13 \( \text{b1} \) dxe5 14 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 15 \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{c7} \) 16 \( \text{e4} \) gave White a strong attack for the pawn in Kengis-Hausner, Luxembourg 1990.

\( \text{9 cxd3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 10 \( \text{bxc3} \) dxe5

10...\( \text{d7} \) may be more resilient. Black was okay in Beaumont-Lund, British League 1999, after 11 \( \text{xd5} \) cxd5 12 \( \text{b1} \) (12 a4?) 12...\( \text{b6} \) 13 \( \text{f3} \) e6 14 \( \text{e2} \) dxe5 15 fxe5 f6 16 a4 \( \text{e7} \) 17 \( \text{hc1} \) \( \text{c8} \).

11 \( \text{fxe5} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 12 \( \text{xf3} \)

White has an impressive centre and is ahead on development. The game Motwani-Adams, Moscow Olympiad 1994, continued 12...\( \text{e6} \) 13 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{d7} \) 14 \( \text{hb1} \) b6 15 a4 \( \text{c7} \) 16 a5 b5 17 c4 a6 18 \( \text{c1} \) 0-0 19 \( \text{cxb5} \) cxb5 20 \( \text{f7} \) \( \text{f8} \) 21 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{f8} \)

It's pretty straightforward stuff: White prepares \( \text{d2} \), followed possibly by \( \text{h6} \) and 0-0-0. Now Black has a decision. Black now generally develops his bishop with 4...\( \text{g7} \), but this can also be delayed. The choices are:

C1: 4...\( \text{g7} \)

C2: 4...\( \text{c6} \)
Attacking the Pirc: The 150 Attack

C1)

4...\textit{g7} 5 \textit{wd2}

And immediately we have another intersection. Black can play the following:

C11: 5...0-0
C12: 5...c6

Lesser alternatives are:

a) 5...\textit{Cc6} 6 \textit{b5} (6 \textit{f3}?) 6...0-0 7 \textit{ff3} a6 8 \textit{xxc6} bx\textit{c6} 9 \textit{h6} \textit{g4} 10 \textit{xxg7} \textit{xxg7} 11 \textit{ff4} \textit{xf3} 12 \textit{xf3} d\textit{d7} 13 0-0 (White's already a little better) 13...e5 14 \textit{ad1} e\textit{xd4} 15 \textit{xxd4} \textit{e6} 16 \textit{d1} b\textit{b8} 17 b\textit{3} b\textit{6} 18 \textit{h1} a\textit{5} 19 a\textit{1!} e\textit{5} 20 c\textit{c4} c5 21 f\textit{4} f\textit{6} 22 e\textit{5}! d\textit{xe5} 23 e\textit{4=} e\textit{7} 24 f\textit{5} and White has a very strong attack, Hebden-Beikert, France 1993.

b) 5...\textit{g4} (White used to play the cautious f3 to prevent this move, but more recently players have realised that 5...\textit{g4} isn't such a threat at all) 6 \textit{g5} h6 7 \textit{h4} and now:

b1) 7...c\textit{e6} 8 h\textit{3} d\textit{f6} 9 f\textit{4} b\textit{5} 10 \textit{d3} b\textit{4} 11 \textit{dce2} a\textit{5} 12 \textit{g3} h\textit{0} 13 0-0 d\textit{5}? (13...\textit{a6} is stronger, although White keeps an edge - Piket) 14 \textit{xf6} (Piket-Epishin, Dortmund 1994), and now 14...\textit{xf6} 15 e\textit{5} \textit{g7} 16 a\textit{3} and 14...\textit{exf6} 15 f\textit{5} are both promising for White.

b2) 7...\textit{g5} 8 \textit{g3} e\textit{5} 9 d\textit{xe5} \textit{dxe5} 10 0-0 0-0 b\textit{6} 11 f\textit{4} g\textit{f4} 12 \textit{xxf4} \textit{e} 6 13 \textit{d5} a\textit{6} 14 \textit{ff3} was better for White in Milican-Davis, correspondence 1990; Black can hardly contemplate castling kingside here.

C11)

5...0-0

Black 'safely' castles before developing queenside counterplay. This is not as popular as 5...c6 and, by committing his king early, Black has given White an obvious target to aim at.

6 0-0-0

The good news for white players is that, according to my database, White has scored a massive 74% from this position!

6...c6

Or:

a) After 6...\textit{c6} White can simply continue the attack with 7 \textit{h6}.

b) 6...\textit{g4} (preventing \textit{h6}) 7 \textit{g5} h6 8 \textit{h4} \textit{Cc6} 9 h3 \textit{d6} 10 \textit{f4} a6 11 g4 b5 12 e5 \textit{dxe5} 13 \textit{dxe5} \textit{fxe5}+ 14 \textit{e7} \textit{h7} 15 \textit{g2} and White has an excellent position, Yudasin-Janigava, Lvov 1987.

7 \textit{h6}!

White plays in a very direct manner. Black's defensive bishop must be exchanged!

7...b5

Black has to get going on the other side of the board. Here's an example of what can happen to Black if he plays too slowly: 7...\textit{e8}?! (planning...\textit{h8}, but the horse has bolted long ago...) 8 \textit{xxg7} \textit{xxg7} 9 f\textit{4} a\textit{5} 10 \textit{d3} \textit{g4} 11 \textit{d2} \textit{d7} 12 h\textit{3} \textit{xxf3} 13 \textit{xxf3} e\textit{5} 14 g\textit{4} (White's kingside attack is automatic) 14...\textit{d6} 15 \textit{e2} \textit{exf4} 16 \textit{xxf4} h\textit{6} 17 h\textit{4} g\textit{5} 18 \textit{b3} \textit{e7} 19 e\textit{5} \textit{dxe5} 20 \textit{hxg5} h\textit{xg5} 21 \textit{f5} \textit{e6} 22 \textit{wxg5+} \textit{f8} 23 \textit{f1} \textit{e7} 24 \textit{fxe6}! and Black resigned in Hübner-Nautsch, Germany 1981, on account of 24...\textit{xxf6} 25 d\textit{xe5}.

8 \textit{f3!}

Protecting the e4-pawn and thus taking much of the sting out of...b5-b4.

8...\textit{wa5}

8...\textit{wxh6} just seems to speed up White's attack, for example 9 \textit{wxe6} b\textit{4} 10 \textit{Cc2} \textit{wa5} 11 \textit{xb1} \textit{c6} 12 \textit{C1} (the knight does a great
Attacking with 1 e4
defensive job here; Black’s attack is going nowhere) 12...c8 13 h4 d8 14 e2 f8
15 d2 a5 16 f4 bd7 17 h5 g7 18 g4
df8 19 g5 de8 20 hxg6 hxg6 21 h4! c5 22
d5 d7 23 c4

23...f6 24 gg1 fxg5 25 xg5 df6 26 e5!
6h7 27 gg1 f5 28 e6 d4 29 xg6!!
xg1 30 xg7+ h8 31 xf5 e7 32 d4
h1 33 f4 e1 34 xd6 a4 35 xf7+ xf7
36 xf7 and Black resigned, Efimov-Sarno,
Reggio Emilia 1998.

An even quicker disaster befell Black in
the game Hamdouchi-Battikhi, Dubai 1995,
which continued 8...c7 9 h4 bd7 10 h5!
(there’s no point hanging around!) 10...e5 11
g4 exd4 12 xg7 dxc3 13 h6 exb2+ 14
xb1 d8 15 g5 and Black resigned, as
15...xh5 16 g5 gxh5 17 f6 leads to
mate.
9 f6 b4

After 9...e6 White has the clever retort
10 d5! (Oratsovsky) and now:
a) 10...a6 11 xg7+ h8 12 xg7+ h5 and White is simply a pawn up.
b) 10...xd2 11 xg7+ h8 12 xd2
(but not 12 xg7+?? xg7 13 xd2 e8 14
x6 c6 xc6 15 d5 xd5! with a back rank
mate trick) 12...e8 13 xc6 xc6 14 d5
and White regains the piece with some
advantage – Black’s pawns will be weak in
the ending.
c) 10...d8 11 xf6+ exf6 12 d5 and
White will continue with h2-h4-h5.

White’s attack is quicker than Black’s. The
game Matikozian-Minasian, Yerevan 1999,
continued 12...e4 (12...xh5?? loses to the
standard 13 xh5! gxh5 14 g5) 13 hxg6
fxg6 14 xg7 xg7, and now White missed
the very strong continuation 15 h6+ f7
(or 15...e8 16 f4 a6 17 x6) 16 h3
c3 17 g5+ e8 18 xh7!.

C12)
5...c6
This is Black’s most sensible approach. He
keeps his king in the centre, for the time
being at least, and prepares queenside
counterplay.
6 f3

130
Also very playable are 6 f3 and the immediate 6  \( \mathcal{A} \) h6, although I believe the latter line has lost a bit of its sting since Black players discovered the line 6  \( \mathcal{A} \) h6  \( \mathcal{A} \) xh6 7  \( \mathcal{W} \) xh6  \( \mathcal{W} \) a5 8  \( \mathcal{A} \) d3 c5!

After 6  \( \mathcal{A} \) f3, it's decision time again for Black. His main choices in this position are the following:

C121: 6...0-0
C122: 6...b5
C123: 6...\( \mathcal{W} \) a5

Alternatively:

a) 6...\( \mathcal{Q} \) g4 7  \( \mathcal{Q} \) g5 h6 8  \( \mathcal{Q} \) h4 0-0 9 h3  \( \mathcal{Q} \) f6 10  \( \mathcal{A} \) d3  \( \mathcal{W} \) c7 11  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xf6?! (normally White wouldn't consider this exchange, but here Black is forced to capture with the e-pawn) 11...exf6 12 0-0  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x7 13  \( \mathcal{Q} \) e2  \( \mathcal{W} \) e8 14 c3 and White has a slight advantage, Hebbend-Strikovic, Oviedo (rapid) 1993; Black will find it hard to activate his dark-squared bishop.

b) 6...\( \mathcal{Q} \) g4 (Black often waits for White to commit his bishop to d3 before doing this) 7  \( \mathcal{Q} \) e2 (the more aggressive 7  \( \mathcal{Q} \) d3?! is also promising, for example 7...\( \mathcal{Q} \) xf3 8  \( \mathcal{G} \) x3  \( \mathcal{Q} \) bd7 9 0-0-0  \( \mathcal{W} \) a5 10  \( \mathcal{Q} \) b1 b5?! 11  \( \mathcal{Q} \) h6  \( \mathcal{W} \) xh6 12  \( \mathcal{W} \) xh6  \( \mathcal{Q} \) b6 13  \( \mathcal{W} \) e1  \( \mathcal{Q} \) a4 14  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x4  \( \mathcal{W} \) x4 15 e5! dxe5 16 dxe5  \( \mathcal{Q} \) d5 17  \( \mathcal{W} \) g7  \( \mathcal{W} \) f8 18 e6! and White broke through, Gallagher-Ramseier, Zurich 1999) 7...0-0 8 h3  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x3 9  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x3  \( \mathcal{Q} \) bd7 10 0-0 (on this occasion White chooses a quieter life) 10...\( \mathcal{W} \) e8 11  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xd1  \( \mathcal{Q} \) c7 12 a4  \( \mathcal{W} \) a8 (12...a5 13  \( \mathcal{W} \) e2 e5 14 d5 exd5 15  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x5  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x5 16  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x5  \( \mathcal{Q} \) a6 17  \( \mathcal{Q} \) b5 was nice for White in Emms-Belov, German Bundesliga 1995) 13 g3 e5 14 d5?! \( \mathcal{Q} \) b6 15  \( \mathcal{W} \) d3 a5 16  \( \mathcal{W} \) a1 with a slight edge for White as in Gallagher-C.Hansen, Reykjavik 1998.

C121)

6...0-0 7  \( \mathcal{Q} \) h6

There's no reason to delay this move any longer; White wants to get rid of Black's defensive bishop.

7...\( \mathcal{Q} \) g4

Black has some other moves here:

a) 7...b5 8  \( \mathcal{Q} \) d3 transposes to Variation C1222.

b) 7...\( \mathcal{Q} \) bd7 8 0-0-0 b5 9  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7 10 e5! (this lunge in the centre, forcing Black to move his defensive knight, is usually very desirable) 10...\( \mathcal{Q} \) e8 11 h4 h5 12  \( \mathcal{Q} \) d3 \( \mathcal{Q} \) b6 13  \( \mathcal{Q} \) he1 with lots of pressure down the central files, Corvi-De Luca, Palermo 1998.

c) 7...\( \mathcal{W} \) a5 8 h4 (8 0-0-0  \( \mathcal{Q} \) g4 transposes to the note White's eighth move) 8...\( \mathcal{Q} \) g4 9  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7 10 e5 dxe5 11  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xe5 h5 12 f3  \( \mathcal{Q} \) e6 13  \( \mathcal{Q} \) c4  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xe4 14  \( \mathcal{W} \) x4  \( \mathcal{W} \) c7 15 0-0-0 with a slight advantage to White, Strupinsky-Vulicevic, New York 1998.

8  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7

8 0-0? is also dangerous:

a) 8...\( \mathcal{W} \) a5 9 h3 (American GM Joel Benn- jamin suggests the line 9  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7 10 e5 dxe5 11  \( \mathcal{Q} \) d4  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x3 13  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x6 14  \( \mathcal{W} \) x3  \( \mathcal{W} \) x3 11  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xh6  \( \mathcal{Q} \) bd7 12 h4  \( \mathcal{Q} \) h5 13  \( \mathcal{Q} \) g1  \( \mathcal{W} \) h8 14 f4  \( \mathcal{Q} \) df6 15 f5 and White's attack is very quick, Emms-Spraggett, Paris 1990.

b) 8...b5 9  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7 10 h3  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x3 11  \( \mathcal{Q} \) x3  \( \mathcal{Q} \) bd7 12 h4 b4 13  \( \mathcal{Q} \) e2  \( \mathcal{Q} \) a5 14  \( \mathcal{Q} \) b1 h5 15  \( \mathcal{Q} \) g1  \( \mathcal{Q} \) h8 16  \( \mathcal{Q} \) h3 and White has the initiative, Reenat-Nikolic, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

c) 8...\( \mathcal{Q} \) x3 9  \( \mathcal{G} \) x3  \( \mathcal{Q} \) bd7 10  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7 11 f4 and White can look to push with e4-e5.

d) 8...\( \mathcal{Q} \) bd7?! (this may be best) 9  \( \mathcal{Q} \) xg7
\(\texttt{\#xg7\ 10\ e5\ \texttt{\#xd5\ 11\ exd6\ exd6\ (11...\texttt{\#xc3\?}\ 12\ \texttt{\#xc3\ exd6\ 13\ d5+\ is\ good\ for\ White)\ 12\ \texttt{\#xd5\ cxd5\ 13\ \texttt{\#f4\ \texttt{\#xf3\ 14\ \texttt{\#xf3\ \texttt{\#g5+\ 15\ \texttt{\#b1\ \texttt{\#f6\ (Speelman-Piket,\ Tilburg\ 1992),\ and\ here\ White\ should\ play\ 16\ h4\ \texttt{\#g4\ 17\ \texttt{\#c2\ \texttt{\#xf3\ 18\ \texttt{\#xf3,\ which\ is\ roughly\ level.\}}}}}}}}}}}}

8...\texttt{\#xg7\ 9\ \texttt{\#g5!}}

We will frequently come across this idea. In the 150 Attack, Black's light-squared bishop is often a problem piece for him, as it has no useful role. Black sees it as an achievement if it can be exchanged. White, on the other hand, is often prepared to go out of his way to avoid such a trade. In this instance the bishop is left hitting thin air, and it will soon have to retreat after h2-h3.

9...h6 10 h3 \texttt{\#c8}

10...\texttt{\#h5?!} is answered by 11 \texttt{\#xf7! \#xf7}

12 g4, and White regains the piece with some advantage.

11 \texttt{\#f3}

We are following the game Degraeve-Ponomariov, Belfort 1998, which continued 12 e5 dxe5 13 \texttt{\#xe5 \texttt{\#bd7\ 14\ \texttt{\#g4\ \texttt{\#xg4\ 15\ hxg4\ \#h8\ 16\ f3\ \texttt{\#f6\ 17\ \texttt{\#c4\ b5\ 18\ \texttt{\#b3\ \#b7\ 19\ 0-0-0\ and\ White\ was\ better.}}}}}}}}

C122)

6...b5

A popular choice. Black delays castling for another move, expands on the queenside and threatens ...b5-b4. On the other hand, this also gives White a target on the queenside.

Often in this variation White abandons a direct kingside attack in favour of striking back on the queenside with a2-a4. The trick is to know when to do this!

7 \texttt{\#d3}

Now Black's main moves are:

C1221: 7...\texttt{\#g4}

C1222: 7...0-0

Alternatively:

a) 7...\texttt{\#g4?!} 8 \texttt{\#g5 f6 (or 8...h6 9 \texttt{\#h4\ g5 10 \texttt{\#g3\ e5\ 11\ dxe5\ \texttt{\#xe5\ 12\ \#e2\ \#e6\ 13\ 0-0-0-0\ 14\ \texttt{\#f1\ and\ Black\ has\ problems\ with\ his\ vulnerable\ c-pawn},\ Spraggett-Mezcuza\ Coronil,\ Cala\ Galdana\ 1994)\ 9\ \#h4\ e5\ 10\ h3\ \#h6\ 11\ \#e2\ exd4\ 12\ \#xb5\ \#e5\ 13\ \#bzd4\ with\ an\ extra\ pawn,\ Ermenkov-Popchev,\ Ikaros\ 1999.}}}}}

b) 7...a6 (this is too slow; the rest of the game is a severe example of what can happen to Black if he is not careful) 8 \texttt{\#h6 0-0-0 9\ dxe5\ dxe5\ 10\ \#d5\ 11\ h4\ \#b4\ 12\ h5\ \#xd3+\ 13\ \texttt{\#f1\ 14\ \#xg7\ \#xg7\ 15\ 0-0-0\ b4\ 16\ hxg6\ \#xg6\ 17\ \#h6+\ \#g8\ 18\ \#h4\ 1-0\ Spraggett-McTavish,\ Toronto\ 1995.}}}}

c) 7...\texttt{\#bd7\ 8\ h6\ \#xh6\ (8...0-0\ transposes\ to\ note\ 'b'\ to\ Black's\ eighth\ move\ in\ Variation\ C1222)\ 9\ \#xh6\ e5\ 10\ dxe5\ dxe5\ 11\ 0-0\ \#e7\ 12\ \#e1\ \#g4\ 13\ \#d2\ 0-0-0\ 14\ a4\ b4\ 15\ d1\ \#g7\ 16\ b3\ a5\ 17\ \#b2\ and\ the\ white\ knight\ will\ find\ a\ nice\ home\ on\ c4,\ Beliavsky-Marangunic,\ Slovenian\ Team\ Championship\ 1998.}}}}
Black looks to exchange his problem piece.

8 e5!?

This idea is fairly new. Instead of this, 8 \( \triangle g1? \) is an amusing retreat, which certainly prevents the exchange, and leaves Black’s bishop ‘hanging’ on g4; White will regain lost time with h2-h3 (for those not liking the aesthetic value of this move, 8 \( \triangle h4 \) probably comes to the same thing). Following 8..e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 h3 \( \triangle e6? \) (10...\( \triangle c8 \) 11 \( \triangle f3 \) \( \triangle bd7 \) actually reaches Variation C2, note 'b' to Black’s ninth move) 11 \( \triangle f3 \) \( \triangle bd7 \) 12 \( \triangle g5?! \) \( \triangle wc7 \) 13 \( \triangle xe6 \) \( \triangle xc6 \) 14 a4 b4 15 \( \triangle de2 \) a5 16 0-0 0-0 17 c3 \( \triangle ab8 \) 18 \( \triangle g3 \) bxc3 19 \( \triangle xc3 \) \( \triangle b3 \) 20 \( \triangle fc1 \) \( \triangle fc8 \) 21 \( \triangle a6 \) \( \triangle xc3 \) 22 \( \triangle xc3 \) \( \triangle c7 \) 23 \( \triangle b5 \) White was better in Ramesh-Hendriks, Amsterdam 2000.

8 0-0-0 looks natural, but Black achieves good counterplay after 8...\( \triangle bd7 \) 9 h3 \( \triangle xf3 \) 10 gxf3 a5 11 f4 b4 12 \( \triangle a4 \) \( \triangle b6 \) 13 \( \triangle xb6 \) \( \triangle xb6 \), Adams-Hodgkin, Dublin 1993.

8...b4

8...\( \triangle fd7?! \) 9 \( \triangle h6 \) 0-0 10 \( \triangle xg7 \) \( \triangle xg7 \) was unclear in Beckemeier-Tischbierek, German Bundesliga 1999. Perhaps White should settle here for 11 exd6 exd6 12 \( \triangle f4 \) \( \triangle e8+ \) 13 \( \triangle xe2 \).

9 \( \triangle e4 \)

Also interesting is 9 \( \triangle e2?! \) \( \triangle d5 \) 10 \( \triangle h6 \) 0-0 11 h4 and now:

a) 11...\( \triangle xf3 \) 12 gxf3 dxe5 13 \( \triangle xg7 \) (13 h5 \( \triangle f6 \) 14 hxg6 hxg6 15 \( \triangle xf8 \) \( \triangle xf8 \) and Black has good compensation for the exchange, Apicella-Hickl, Kaufbeuren 1996) 13...\( \triangle xg7 \) 14 h5 transposes to the next note.

b) 11...\( \triangle xe5 \) 12 \( \triangle xg7 \) \( \triangle xg7 \) 13 h5 \( \triangle xf3 \) 14 gxf3 \( \triangle d7 \) 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 h6+ \( \triangle f6 \) 17 \( \triangle g1 \) and Black is living very dangerously, S-B. Hansen-Yrjola, Reykjavik 2000.

9...\( \triangle xe4 \)

After 9...\( \triangle d5?! \) 10 \( \triangle h6! \) White has all the makings of a successful attack. Short-Irzhanko, Elista Olympiad, continued 10...0-0 11 h4! \( \triangle xf3?! \) 12 gxf3 dxe5 13 h5 \( \triangle f6 \) 14 \( \triangle xf6+ \) exf6 15 hxg6 fxg6 16 \( \triangle xf8 \) \( \triangle xf8 \) 17 dxe5 and Black didn’t last much longer.

10 \( \triangle xe4 \) d5

Or:

a) 10...\( \triangle xf3 \) 11 \( \triangle xf3 \) dxe5 12 0-0-0 a5 13 \( \triangle h6! \) and White has a strong attack; one possible line is 13...\( \triangle xh6 \) 14 \( \triangle xh6 \) exd4 15 \( \triangle g7 \) \( \triangle f8 \) 16 \( \triangle xd4 \) \( \triangle wb6 \) 17 \( \triangle hd1 \) \( \triangle a6 \) 18 \( \triangle d6l \).

11 \( \triangle d3 \) \( \triangle xf3 \) 12 gxf3 \( \triangle wb6 \)

12...a5?! looks a bit irrelevant. The game Leko-Beliavsky, Madrid 1998, saw a large White advantage after 13 h4! \( \triangle d7 \) 14 h5 \( \triangle wb6 \) 15 c4! bxc3 16 bxc3 e6 17 \( \triangle b1 \) \( \triangle wc7 \) 18 \( \triangle h6 \).

An important position for the evaluation of this line. Here are two practical examples:

a) 13 h4 \( \triangle d7 \) 14 h5 c5 15 dxc5 \( \triangle xc5 \) 16 \( \triangle e2 \) 0-0?! (16...e6 looks stronger) 17 \( \triangle xd5 \)
Attacking with 1 e4

Aa8 18 hxg6 hxg6 19 w4! and White was better, Deep Junior-6-Khalifman, Dortmund 2000.

b) 13 a3!? bxa3 14 b4! Qa6 15 c3 Qc7 16
•••••••••••••••••••••••••• 18 Qg1 and I prefer
White, who can attack on either side, Nguyen

C1222)

7...0-0 8 4h6

White wishes to trade bishops.

8...Qg4

Again Black is looking to exchange his
problem piece. Alternatively:

a) 8...b4!? (this unprovoked lunge just
drives the knight to where the action is – the
kingside) 9 Qe2 a5 10 Qg3 w7 11 4xg7
••••••••••••••••••• 12 ex5 13 dxe5 Qg4 14 w4 w6
15 0-0 f6 16 Aa1 Aa7 17 e6 and White has a
clear advantage, Dunnington-Fabris, Cappelle

b) 8...Qbd7!? 9 a4!? (after 9 e5! dxe5 10
•••••••••••••••••••••• 11 4xg7 4xg7 12 w4 w6
Black has a little trick: 12...•••••••••••••••••••••• 13 4xe5 4d6 14
••••••••••••••••••••••• 15 wxd6 exd6 with an equa-

tion) 9...b4 10 Qe2 a5 and now:

b1) 11 Qg3!? e5 12 dxe5 Qxe5 13 dxe5
dxe5 14 h4 w4 15 4xg7 4xg7 16 0-0-0 h5
17 w5 e6 is unclear (but not 17...Qh7??
18 Qh5+ 4h8 19 4f6! wxf2 20 Qxh7
•••••••• 21 Qd1 Qa7 22 h5 and Black
departed in Gaulin-Leygue, Besancorn 1999).

b2) 11 4xg7 4xg7 12 e5 (12 Qg3?)

12...dxe5 13 dxe5 Qg4 (13...Qd5 14 h4!,
intending h4-h5, gives White a very quick
attack) 14 Qf4 Qc5 15 Qc4 f6 16 e6 f5 (or
16...Qh6 17 Qe4 w6 18 b3 Qa6 19 Qxa6
••••••••••••••• 20 0-0-0 Qc7 21 w4 Qa6 22 Qd2
••••••••• 23 Qd4 and White’s better, Kaidanov-
Bishop, Las Vegas 1997) 17 h3 Qf6 18 w3
with a complex position, Ansell-Koneru,

9 Qxg7

Interesting is 9 a4!, which is more to gain
a tempo for kingside action rather than the
start of an attack on the queenside. After
9...b4 10 Qe2 (now the b-pawn needs to be
defended) 10...a5 11 Qg3 4bd7 12 h4!
White has the makings of a successful kings-
side offensive. The game Zapata-Schussler,
Santa Clara 1996, continued 12...e5 13 dxe5
•••••••••••••••• 14 h5! 4hx5 15 0-0 0-0 Qf5 16
Qxg7 4xg7 17 w5! and Black was unable to resist
White’s assault.

9...Qxg7 10 Qg5

Once again White avoids the exchange on
f3, 10 e5!? is probably a bit premature, but
still playable. After 10...dxe5 11 dxe5 Qd7
12 w3 Qc7 13 e6 Qxe6 14 Qg5 w5 15
Qxg6+ fx6 16 a4 wxe3+ 17 fx3 b4 18 Qe4
White has some compensation for the pawn,
Adams-Shirov, Dos Hermanas 1995.

10...e5

Or:

a) 10...h6 (obviously this is the critical test
of 10 Qg5) 11 h3! 4h5 (or 11...b4 12 hxg4!
••••••••••••••••••••••••• 13 4e6+ wxe6 14 Qxh6+ 4f7 15 e5!) 12 Qxf7! Qxf7 13 g4 and White regains the

piece with some advantage. This trick associa-
ted with Qg5 is worth remembering.

b) 10...b4?! 11 Qe2 w6?! (Black should play
11...h6) 12 f3 Qc8 13 h4 e5 14 h5 and
White’s attack plays itself. De la Riva
Aguado-Iruzubieta, Spanish Team Champi-
onship 1998, concluded 14...h6 15 dxe5 dxe5
16 hxg6 hxg5 17 w5 c5 18 w6+ and
Black resigned.

11 dxe5 dxe5 12 h3 Qc8 13 a4! b4 14
Qe2
b) 7...\( \text{g}4 \text{g}4 \text{e}5! \)? \text{dxe}5 (or 8...\( \text{c}4f6 \text{d}7 \text{e}6 \text{e}6 \text{e} \text{f} 30 \text{g} \text{g}3 \text{xf} 30 \text{e} \text{d} 11 \text{f} \text{e} 4! \text{wxd} 2+ 12 \text{f} \text{d} 2 \text{e} 7 13 \text{f} \text{a} 11) 9 \text{dx} \text{d} 7 \text{f} 10 \text{f} 4 \text{d} 8 (10...\text{dx} \text{e} 5 11 \text{dx} \text{e} 5 \text{d} 5 12 \text{dx} \text{d} 13 \text{f} \text{d} 2 14 \text{h} 3 \text{d} 15 \text{d} 4 \text{d} 16 \text{d} 15 \text{f} 15 \text{d} 3 \text{e} 6 with a small plus for White, Gadgil-Bogdanovski, European Team Championship, Batumi 1999.

White can combine play on the kingside with threats to Black weaknesses on the other wing. Here are two practical examples:

a) 14...\text{a}5 15 \text{f} 4 \text{d} 7 16 0-0 \text{e} 7 17 \text{f} 2 \text{e} 8 18 \text{f} 3 f 6 19 \text{g} 3 \text{exf} 4 20 \text{wxf} 4 \text{d} 6 21 \text{d} 1 \text{e} 8 22 \text{d} 4 \text{d} 5 23 \text{f} 1 \text{f} 1 with an edge for White, Sadler-Szmetan, Buenos Aires 1995.

b) 14...\text{c} 5 15 \text{w} \text{e} 3 \text{w} 7 16 0-0 \text{d} 6 17 \text{c} 3 \text{b} 7 18 \text{a} 5 \text{a} 6 19 \text{g} 3 \text{h} 6 20 \text{d} 3 \text{d} 8 21 \text{d} 2 \text{d} 7 22 \text{b} 3 \text{d} 6 23 \text{c} 4 and Black has pawn weaknesses on \text{c} 5 and \text{a} 6, Yagupov-Irzhavanov, Nizhnij Novgorod 1998.

C123)

6...\text{w} a 5

A solid choice that has been a favourite of grandmasters Julian Hodgson and Colin McNab. By moving the queen to \text{a} 5, Black puts White off casting queenside; White may have to look for another way forward.

7 h 3

With this move, preventing both ...\text{g} 4 and ...\text{g} 4, White signals his intentions of playing in a more positional manner. For those with more aggressive intentions there's 7 \text{d} 3?!, with the following variations:

a) 7...0-0 8 \text{h} 6 (8 \text{h} 3 transposes into the text) 8...\text{g} 4 9 0-0 \text{d} 7 10 \text{e} 7 \text{e} 7 11 \text{e} 2 \text{e} 5 12 \text{h} 3 \text{f} 3 13 \text{f} 3 \text{a} 8 14 \text{g} 4 \text{b} 6 15 \text{e} 2 \text{c} 4 16 \text{c} 4 \text{e} 8 17 \text{f} 4 with an unclear position, Khalifman-Bogdanovski, Paide 1999.

7...0-0

Or 7...\text{a} 6? and now:

a) 8 \text{a} 4 \text{b} 5 (8...\text{b} 4?) 9 \text{d} 3 \text{b} 4 10 \text{d} 2 \text{c} 5 11 \text{c} 3 \text{b} 3 12 \text{c} 3 0-0 13 \text{d} 8 and probably White's a bit better, Kinsman-Hodgson, British League 1998

b) 8 \text{a} 3 \text{b} 5 9 \text{d} 3? \text{d} 4 10 0-0 \text{d} 3 11 \text{c} 3 0-0 12 \text{h} 6 \text{b} 6 13 \text{e} 5 \text{e} 8 (13...\text{d} 5 looks stronger) 14 \text{d} 4 \text{e} 6 15 \text{f} 4 \text{f} 6 16 \text{e} 5 \text{e} 6 (Emms-Vigus, British Championship 2000), and now instead of my 17 \text{w} 4? \text{a} 4 18 \text{w} 6 \text{a} 4 19 \text{d} 4 \text{c} 4 20 \text{gxf} 3 \text{w} \text{xd} 4, when Black was better, I should have played 17 \text{e} 7 \text{e} 7 18 \text{e} 4 \text{a} 19 \text{e} 1, with an edge to White.

8 \text{d} 3 \text{d} 7 9 0-0 \text{e} 5

9...b 5 is met by 10 \text{d} 5! \text{d} 8 11 \text{xf} 6+ \text{xf} 6 12 a 4, and White begins to probe on the queenside.

10 \text{a} 4

Gaining space on the queenside. English GM Mark Hebden has preferred the slightly
more restrained 10 a3, and he has an ongoing theoretical debate with the Scottish Grandmaster and Pirc expert Colin McNab in this line. So far I can count three battles between the two (there may well be more). The latest encounter continued 10...\textit{a}e8 (10...\textit{c}c7 11 \textit{a}4!? \textit{b}6 12 \textit{a}5 \textit{b}5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 \textit{c}c2 \textit{a}6 15 \textit{c}4 bxc4 16 \textit{b}1 \textit{b}8 17 \textit{b}c3 \textit{h}5 18 \textit{a}4 \textit{d}8 19 \textit{a}1 \textit{b}7 20 \textit{w}e2 \textit{c}5 21 \textit{w}xc4 was better for White in Hebden-McNab, London 1994) 11 \textit{c}4 \textit{e}4d4 12 \textit{e}xd4 \textit{w}c7 13 \textit{e}f3 \textit{e}5 14 \textit{d}xe5 dxe5 15 \textit{f}d1 \textit{c}e6 and Black has equalised, Hebden-McNab, London 2000.

10...\textit{e}e8 11 \textit{f}d1

Interesting is 11 \textit{f}b1!? for example 11...\textit{w}c7 12 \textit{a}5 \textit{d}5 13 \textit{e}e1 dxe4 14 \textit{d}xe4 \textit{d}xe4 15 \textit{e}xe4 \textit{f}6 (15...\textit{e}xd4 16 \textit{e}xd4 is an edge for White) 16 \textit{h}6 \textit{x}h6 17 \textit{w}xh6 \textit{e}xd4 18 \textit{e}3 \textit{w}xh4+ 19 \textit{e}xh3 \textit{w}xh5 20 \textit{c}c4 and White has a dangerous attack, Smagin-Hebert, Montreal 2000.

5 \textit{w}d2

White carries on as normal.

5...\textit{b}5

5...\textit{g}7 6 \textit{d}f3 transposes to Variation C122, while 5...\textit{h}d7 6 \textit{d}f3 \textit{b}5 7 \textit{d}d3 transposes to the text.

6 \textit{d}d3 \textit{d}bd7 7 \textit{d}f3 \textit{e}5!? Or:

a) 7...\textit{g}7 8 \textit{h}6 reaches Variation C122.
b) 7...\textit{c}c7 8 0-0 \textit{e}5 (for 8...\textit{g}7 see Chapter Six, Variation C1) 9 \textit{a}4 \textit{b}4 10 \textit{d}e2 \textit{e}xd4 11 \textit{e}xd4 \textit{c}5 12 \textit{b}5! \textit{w}c6 13 \textit{c}c4 \textit{b}7 14 \textit{f}4 \textit{a}6 15 \textit{d}5 \textit{e}xd5 16 \textit{e}xd5 \textit{w}b6 17 \textit{e}fe1+ \textit{e}d8 18 \textit{g}5 and White went on to win in Nunn-McNab, Walsall 1992.

8 dxe5

There's also some sense in delaying this capture with 8 0-0 and now:

a) 8...\textit{g}4 9 \textit{g}5 \textit{f}6 10 \textit{h}4 \textit{h}6 11 \textit{w}d1 and Black must do something about the threat of h2-h3.
b) 8...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b7}}} 9 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{Ad1}}} (9 \textcolor{green}{\textit{\textbf{dxe5}} dxe5 10 h3 transposes to the text) 9...a6 10 a4 \textcolor{green}{\textit{\textbf{g7}}}
(10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e7}}}?!) 11 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{h6}} exd4 12 \textcolor{green}{\textit{\textbf{xd4}} b4 13 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{ce2}}} c5 14 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{f3}}} \textcolor{green}{\textit{\textbf{c7}}} 15 \textcolor{green}{\textit{\textbf{d4}}}
was better for White in Gelfand-Ponomariov, Biel 2000) 11 axb5 cxb5 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xh5?}}} axb5 14 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xe5}}} a6 15 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xa6}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xa6}}} 16 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{dxe5}}}
with a very unclear position, Kupreichik-Karasev, Minsk 1976.

8...dxe5

Or 8...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{dxe5}}} 9 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{dxe5}}} dxe5 10 h3 a6
(10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b7}?}} 11 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xb5}}} cxb5 12 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xb5}}}+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{d7}}} 13 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{c8}}} 14 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{d5}}}
and White wins) 11 a4
with an edge to White – Nunn.

9 h3

9 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{h6}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xh6}}} 10 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{wh6}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{e7}}}
effectively gains a tempo for Black, who will follow up with...
\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{w8}}}. With 9 h3 White signals his intentions to keep the dark squared bishops on
the board (it’s makes less sense to exchange bishops once Black has blocked his in with...
\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{e7}-e5}}). White’s chances will come in
the form of attacking Black’s new weaknesses on
the queenside.

9...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b7}}}

Or:

a) 9...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{we7}}} 10 0-0-0 (Nunn prefers 10 0-0
\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{c5}}} 11 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{fd1}}} 10...a6 11 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{he1}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{g7}}} 12 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{h6}}}
\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xh6}}} 13 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{wh6}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{b7}}} 14 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b1}}} 0-0-0 with an
equal position, Tolnai-Ftcacnik, Stara Zagora
1990.

b) 9...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{g7}}} 10 a4! b4 11 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e2}}} a5 12 c3 c5
(or 12...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xc3}}} 13 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xc3}}}, intending \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd2-c4}}}) 13
\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xc4}}} 14 0-0-0 0-0 15 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{fd1}}}
and White has a promising position, Nunn-Gelfand, Munich

10 0-0 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{g7}}}

It makes good sense for Black to complete
his development. The game Adams-Bisby,
Hastings 1995 is a graphic example of what
can happen to Black if he fails to do so:
10...a6 11 a4 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{we7}}}?! 12 axb5 cxb5 13 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xb5}}}!
axb5 14 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xa8}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xa8}}} 15 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{a1}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{d8}}} 16 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xb5}}}
\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e7}}} 17 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xe5}}}! \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xe4}}} 18 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} 19 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{a7}}}
\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f5}}} 20 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd7+}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} 21 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{b6}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{c8}}} 22 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{d4}}}
f6 23 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{c7}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{d8}}} 24 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{c3!}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{a8}}}
25 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{e3}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{c6}}} 26 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{c5!}}}
and Black resigned – White regain the
piece and keeps a decisive two-pawn
advantage.

11 a4 a6 12 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e2}}} 0-0 13 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{g3}}}

After 14 c4 b4 15 c5 a5 16 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{c2}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{fd8}}}
17 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{fd1}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e8}}} 18 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{c4}}} h6 19 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{d2}}}
White was slightly better, Palac-Ftcacnik, Ljubljana 1998.

Important Points

1) If you see a promising kingside attacking
idea, go for it! The 150 Attack is
specifically geared for this.

2) Useful attacking ideas include: exchanging
bishops with \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{h6}}}, forcing the defensive
knight to move with e4-e5, and opening the
h-file with h2-h4-h5.

3) Black will often try to exchange his
light-squared bishop for your knight on f3,
with...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{g4xf3}}}. Be aware of opportunities
when this can and should be avoided.

4) If Black lunges too quickly on the
queenside with...b7-b5, sometimes it’s better
for White to adopt a different plan involving
striking back with a2-a4.

5) Black sometimes keeps delays developing
his bishop to g7, preferring to keep it on
f8. Be aware that the exchange of bishops
with \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{h6}}} now effectively loses a tempo.
Attacking the Modern: The 150 Attack

1 e4 g6 2 d4 g7 3 c3 d6 4 e3

The Modern Defence is very closely related to the Pirc Defence. Indeed, one often transposes into the other. There are subtle differences, however. From Black's point of view, one of the advantages of the Modern Defence move order is that he has not committed his knight to f6 so early. This piece can be kept on g8, so that the g7-bishop is not blocked, and so that White is not able to exchange bishops quickly with h6. Black can begin queenside operations early on, only finishing development on the kingside when it suits him.

So why doesn't everyone play the Modern move order rather than the Pirc? Well, there's some good news for White as well. With the knight on g8, Black is still two moves from castling, and this can be hazardous if the position suddenly opens up. Another factor is that White can consider a very early pawn lunge with h2-h4-h5, making use of Black's lack of control over h5. One final factor is that White doesn't have to worry so much about the possibility of ...g4. Of course there are other reasons outside the 150 Attack as to why Black chooses the Pirc over the Modern, or vice-versa (playing the Modern mover-order allows 3 c4, for instance).

As well as the main move (3...d6), we shall also be having a quick look at third move alternatives for Black.

1 e4 g6 2 d4 g7 3 c3

Black now has three main choices:

A: 3...c5
B: 3...c6
C: 3...d6

A)

3...c5

This move is seen from time to time. Black is offering White the chance to transpose into a Benoni or an Open Sicilian. There is a third option...

4 dxc5! a5 5 d2 xcc5 6 d5
6...\(\text{d}a6\)

Or:

a) 6...\(\text{b}6\) 7 \(\text{b}b4!\) \(\text{c}c6\) 8 \(\text{b}b5\) \(\text{w}b7\) 9 \(\text{c}c3\) \(\text{f}6\) 10 \(\text{w}f3!?\) a6 11 \(\text{d}d3\) \(\text{c}c6\) 12 0-0-0 and White is better – Bangiev.

b) 6...\(\text{x}b2?\) 7 \(\text{b}b1\) \(\text{e}5\) (or 7...\(\text{a}3\) 8 \(\text{b}b3\) \(\text{w}d6\) 9 \(\text{a}a1\) \(\text{f}6\) 10 \(\text{a}a3\) \(\text{w}a3\) 11 \(\text{c}c7+\) \(\text{d}d8\) 12 \(\text{c}c8\) 8 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{c}c7\) 9 \(\text{b}b5\)! \(\text{c}c6\) 10 \(\text{b}b3\) \(\text{a}xb6!\) \(\text{axb6}\) 12 \(\text{b}b5\) \(\text{c}c5\) 13 \(\text{b}b4\) and the black queen is trapped.

7 \(\text{f}f3\) \(\text{e}6\) 8 \(\text{c}c3\) \(\text{xc}3\)+ 9 \(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{f}6\) 10 \(\text{w}d2\) 0-0 11 0-0-0

We are following Barle-Forintos, Maribor 1977. The absence of dark squared bishops leaves Black vulnerable on those squares.

B)

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

The Gurgenidze System, which is a kind of cross between the Modern and the Caro-Kann. Black prepares to play ...\(\text{d}7-\text{d}5\).

4 \(\text{e}3\)

White carries on in ‘150 Attack’ fashion.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{d7} 13 \text{gxh5 gxh5} 14 \text{hxh5} \text{e}6 15 \text{e}3 \\
\text{f5} 16 \text{g}4 \text{and White has a clear plus, Gyimesi-Barczay, Hungarian league 1995.}
\end{array}
\]

b) 7...\(\text{e}6\) 8 \(\text{e}x\text{f6} \text{xf6}\) 9 \(\text{h}6\) 0-0 10 \(\text{g}x\text{g7} \text{gxg7}\) 11 0-0-0 \(\text{w}d6\) 12 \(\text{e}1\) \(\text{b}5\) 13 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{b}4\) 14 \(\text{d}1\) \(\text{a}5\) 15 \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{c}5\) 16 \(\text{c}x\text{c}5 \text{xc}5\) 17 \(\text{b}3\) \(\text{d}7\) 18 \(\text{f}2\) \(\text{x}e5\) 19 \(\text{f}5\) \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{c}7\) 20 \(\text{w}d4\) and White has a good bind on the dark squares, Kholmov-Karlik, Pardubice 1999.

8 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}7\) 7 0-0-0 0-0 8+\)

8 \(\text{f}3\) is interesting. Kupreichik-Grigorov, Lvov 1986, saw 8...\(\text{e}4\) 9 \(\text{x}e4\) \(\text{f}6\) 10 \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{d}5\) 11 \(\text{h}6\) \(\text{a}x\text{h6}\) 12 \(\text{w}x\text{h6}\) \(\text{c}5\) 13 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{a}5\) 14 \(\text{e}4\) and White has a slight edge.

8...\(\text{f}6\) 9 \(\text{c}3\) 0-0 10 \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{e}6\) 11 \(\text{b}1\) \(\text{a}5\) 12 \(\text{h}4\)

J.Polgar-Dunnington, London 1988, continued 12...\(\text{h}5\) 13 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{a}4\) 14 \(\text{a}3\) \(\text{a}5\) 15 \(\text{w}a5\) \(\text{a}5\) 16 \(\text{e}1\) \(\text{a}8\) 17 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{f}5\) 18 \(\text{g}1\) \(\text{a}d8\) 19 \(\text{g}4!\) and White was better.

C)

3...\(\text{d}6\) 4 \(\text{e}3\)

Now Black has a further choice:

C1: 4...\(\text{c}6\)

C2: 4...\(\text{a}6\)

4...\(\text{f}6\) transposes into the Pirc Defence (see Chapter 5).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{C1)} \\
\text{C2)} \\
\text{C3)}
\end{array}
\]

4...\(\text{c}6\)
Black begins operations on the queenside.

5 \textit{\underline{\text{\textbf{\textdagger}}}d2}

White sticks to the normal '150 Attack' plan. He is now ready to play \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}h6 once the g8-knight moves. White will simply continue developing until the opportunity arises.

5...b5

5...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}d7 6 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}f3 b5 7 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}d3 transposes to the text.

6 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}d3 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}d7 7 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}f3

\textbf{7...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c7}

At this point Black has many alternatives:

\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}a) 7...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b7 8 0-0 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c7 9 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}fe1 a6 10 a4 b4 11 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}e2 c5 12 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}g3 and White is fully ready for action on the kingside. Emmans-Mestel, British League 1998, continued 12...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c8?! (12...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}f6 is stronger) 13 c3 bxc3 14 bxc3 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}gf6 15 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}h6 0-0 16 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xg7 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xg7 17 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}g5 e6 18 e5! \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}g8 19 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}e4 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xe4 20 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xe4 d5 21 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd6 and White had a large advantage.

\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b) 7...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b6 8 0-0 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}g4 9 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}e1! (we've seen the idea of avoiding this exchange in the Pirc) 9...e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 a4 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c4 (11...b4 12 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}e2 a5 13 c3 b3 14 c4 is nice for White) 12 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xc4 bxc4 (12...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd2 13 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xf7+! \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xf7 14 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd2 b4 15 f3 and White wins a pawn) 13 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd8+ \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd8 14 a5 was clearly better for White in Delchev-Movsziszian, Andorra la Vella 1999 - Black's queenside pawns are very weak.

\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c) 7...a6 8 a4 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b7 9 0-0 and now:

\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c1) 9...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}gf6 10 e5!! dxe5 11 dxe5 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}g4 12 e6! fxe6 13 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}g5 is good for White.

\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c2) 9...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c7 10 axb5 cxb5?! (Adams gives 10...cxb5 11 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xa8+ \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xa8 12 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}a1 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b7 13 d5 b4 14 dxc6 bxc3 15 cxd7+ \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd7 16 bxc3 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}f6 with just a small advantage for White) 11 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}d5!

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Diagram}
\end{figure}
\end{center}

Now we have a further split:

\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c21) 11...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd5 12 exd5 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b8 13 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}a5 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b6 14 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xb5+! axb5 15 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xb5+ \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}d7 16 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c6 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xa1 17 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xa1 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}gf6 18 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}a8 and White went on to win in Hinks Edwards-Pein, British League 1998.

\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c22) 11...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}d8 12 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}a5! \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd5 (12...\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}c8?! 13 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd8+ \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xd8 14 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b4 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}gf6 15 e5 dxe5 16 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xe5 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xe5 17 dxe5 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}d7 18 f4 g5 19 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}fd1! left White in a winning position, Adams-Dunnington, Hastings 1995) 13 exd5 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b6 (Maljutin-Rashkovsky, Soviet Championship 1991), and now I like 14 b3, followed by c2-c4.

\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}8 0-0 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}gf6

Finally Black develops his g8-knight.

\textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}h6

Like clockwork, the bishop goes to h6.

9...0-0 10 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}e2 c5

It's also possible to challenge the centre with 10...e5. After 11 c3 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}b6 12 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}g3 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}e8 13 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xg7 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}xg7 14 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}h4 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}g8 15 f4 f6 16 \textit{\underline{\text{\textdagger}}}f2 White was better in Ambroz-Baum, Bad Ragaz 1993.

11 c3

This position has been reached on quite a few occasions. Here are some practical examples:
This move is similar to 4...c6 in that Black quickly organises queenside counterplay. However, in this line Black is more likely to try and arrange...\[b7, ...\[bd7 and ...c7-c5.

5 \[d2 b5 6 h4?  
White angles for a quick h4-h5. Black either prepares for this or prevents it.

6...h5  
Alternatively:

a) 6...\[f6 7 \[f3 \[bd7 (7...h6?) 8 0-0 \[b7 (8...h5 transposes to the text) 9 \[h6 \[xh6 10 \[xh6 e5 11 d5 \[e7 12 g4 b3 13 \[ce2 \[c5 14 \[g3 \[c8 15 \[d2 a5 16 h5 \[fd7 17 \[b1 \[b8 18 g5 \[a6 19 \[xa6 \[xa6 20 \[h3 \[d5 21 b3 a4 22 \[d2 \[d7 23 \[g4 \[ac5 24 \[h3 and White doubles on the h-file, A.Ivanov-Burnett, New York 2000.

b) 6...h6 (planning to meet h4-h5 with ...g6-g5) 7 0-0 \[d7 8 f4 h5 (White now gets a very good position, so perhaps the idea of...h7-h6 and then...h6-h5 is just too slow; on the other hand, if Black does nothing White will be in a position to play h4-h5) 9 \[d3 \[gf6 10 \[d3 \[db6 11 f5! (a crucial move; many would be tempted to play e4-e5 instead, but that would only give Black counterplay on the light squares) 11..\[g5 12 exf5 \[d4 13 \[e1! (another good move; it looks dangerous to give up the dark-squared bishop, but surprisingly Black cannot take advantage of the pin along the c1-h6 diagonal) 13...\[xe3 14 \[xe3 \[h6 15 \[g5 \[b7
16.b1 h8 (Black could grab a pawn for his troubles, although after 16...hxg2 17 h1h1 b7 18 c4 White continues as in the game) 17 c4x4 dxe4 18 xex4 d5 (or 18...dxe4 19 wxe4 xg5 20 h1xg5 xg5 21 w6+ b8 22 w7 and White captures on h5) 19 f3 d6 20 e1 d7 21 e2 d4 22 w3! xg5 (22...c6 23 xf7 wins) 23 hxg5 c6

24 g6! a8 (24...fxg6 25 e6 wc7 26 xex5) 25 gxh5 xh5 26 e6 wc7 27 xc6! 1-0 Adams-Hodgson, Southend 2001.

7 f3 d6 8 0-0-0 d7 9 h3

Also interesting is 9 e5?, for example 9...b4 10 a4 d5 11 g5 b7 12 c4! a5 (12...d7b6 13 xb6 xb6 14 wxb4 is good for White) 13 h3 d7b6 14 b3 w7d7 15 xb6 cxb6 16 e6! xe6 (16...wxex6 runs into 17 exf7!) 17 w3 0-0-0 18 w6g6 and White was better in Ye-Timman, Manila Olympiad. This could do with a further practical test.

9...d6

Or 9...b7 and now:

a) 10 e2 c8 11 g5 0-0 12 g4 b4 13 d5 xd5 14 exd5 b6 15 d4 d5 16 drf6 exf6 17 g1x5 and Black's kingside is starting to open up, Schmitzer-Alber, German Bundesliga 1991.

b) 10 g5 (this is a nice outpost for the knight once Black has played ...h7-h5) 10...0-0 11 g4 c5 12 gxh5 xh5 13 dxc5 b4 14 dx5 dxc5 15 h3 b6 16 xb6 wxb6 17 w2 a5 18 e5 and I prefer White, Karabalis-J. Schmidt, Bad Wildungen 1998.

After 9...d6 the game Adams-Speelman, Hastings 1989/90, continued 10 e3 b4 11 d2 a5 12 d3 (12 d5?) 12...c6 13 b1 wc7 14 e5 d5 15 exd6 exd6 16 g5 e6 17 e4 d7! with an unclear position.

Important Points

1) Look out for opportunities to exploit the fact that Black has delayed ...d6.

2) When black answers h2-h4 with ...h7-h5, the g5 square becomes a useful outpost for a white knight after d3-g5.

3) If Black lunges too quickly on the queenside with ...b7-b5, sometimes it's better for White to adopt a different plan involving striking back with a2-a4.

4) Look out for attacking ideas against Black's king, which often remains uncastled for a long time.
1 e4 d5 2 exd5

The Scandinavian Defence has been one of the fastest growing openings of recent years. Before then it was considered to be very much a 'second string' opening, and at grandmaster level it was only played by a few die-hards, including the Danish GM Bent Larsen and, after him, the Australian Ian Rogers. However, in the nineties a whole new generation of GMs started to appreciate that Black's chances in many of the main lines had been grossly underestimated. Suddenly the defence became very popular, and much new theory was created. At first, most of the new theory consisted of new ideas and improvements on old ones from Black's point of view, but more recently there have been fresh and important ideas for White as well. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the Scandinavian has probably passed its peak of popularity, but it remains a far more respected defence than it did a couple of decades ago.

After 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Black has two very different routes to choose from: 2...d6 and 2...wx d5. Against 2...d6 I was close to advocating 3 c4 c6 4 Qc3 cxd5 5 cxd5, transposing into the Caro-Kann chapter. However, I decided that after 3...e6? 4 dxe6 Qxe6 (The Icelandic Gambit), Black has far too much fun, especially at anything under grandmaster level. Instead I've opted for the tricky 3 b5+ (it's tricky in that it avoids some of Black's unusual lines against 3 d4).

Against 2...wx d5 I've been a bit more mainstream in my recommendations, although what I suggest against the popular 3 wa5 is quite rare, so there is still quite a bit uncharted territory here.

After 2 exd5 Black chooses between:
A: 2...f6
B: 2...wx d5

A)

2...f6 3 b5+

3...d7

Black's can offer a pawn sacrifice with 3...Qbd7 here, but instead of trying to hang
on to the pawn with the theoretical 4 c4, I'm advocating the simple 4 d3 exd5 5 d4 and now:

a) 5...e6 6 e2 (the bishop is happy to retreat now that it has forced Black to play the slightly passive ...d6) 6...e5 7 0-0 e7 8 c4 d5 9 c3 c6 10 dxe4 0-0 11 f1 a6 12 g5 and White has a nice edge, Sedina-Spinelli, Turin 1998.

b) 5...e6 6 0-0 e7 7 e1 0-0 8 f1 (White just plays simple chess) 8...c5 9 c4 d5 10 c3 cxd4 11 dxe4 and I prefer White, Jonkman-Fernandez Barrera, Linares 2000.

c) 5...g6 6 0-0 g7 7 e1 0-0 8 d2 d6 9 f1 d5 10 a4 c5 11 a5 cxd4 12 dxe4 c5 13 b5 a6 14 d6 and again White is better, Kogan-Carvalho, Loures 1997.

4 e2 d5 5 d4

5...e5

Moving the bishop to a more active square is Black's most popular choice here. Alternatives are:

a) 5...g6 6 c4 d6 7 c3 g7 (or 7...c6 8 c5 d5 b3) 8 c5! (White takes advantage of the unfortunately placing of Black's bishop) 8...d8 9 f3 e6 10 g5 e7 11 e4 h6 12 f6 0-0 13 0-0 xf6 14 xf6+ g7 15 e4 and Black has some dark-squared weaknesses on the kingside, Honfi-Blachmann, Bad Wörishofen 1991.

b) 5...e6 6 f3 e7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 d6 9 c3 and White has a typical space advantage, Matsuura-Silveira, Brasilia 2000.

6 f3

Note that this position can also be reached via the move order 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 f6 3 d4 cxd5 4 f3 c5 5 0-0 (with each side having played one move less). With our move order we have avoided certain possibilities for Black (the 'Portuguese Gambit' - 3...g4?, as well as 4...g4, and the main line with 4...g6). So, in a sense, we've tricked Black into our territory.

5...e6 7 0-0 e7

Or 7...d6 8 c4 d6 (8...b4 9 a3 0-0 10 d2 d6 11 b5 looks pleasant for White) 9 c3 e4 10 b3 c5 11 bxc3 c6 12 c5 e5 13 d5 and the players agreed a draw in Van der Weide-Remander, Leeuwarden 1997. They obviously had their own reasons for calling it off so soon; the final position is probably a bit for White.

8 a3

In order to prevent ...b4 after c2-c4. The immediate 8 c4?! is also interesting. Kupreichik-Gipslis, Aalborg 1993, continued 8...d8 9 a3 0-0 10 f4 c6 11 b5 c8 12 a3 a6 13 d5! axb5 14 dxc6 dxc6 15 cxb5 b8 16 a4 d3 17 e5 dxe5 18 dxe5 d6 19 d6 b4 and White's powerful queenside pawns were well worth the slight material disadvantage. In this line Black should probably prevent b5 with 10...a6 or 10...d6.

8...0-0 9 c4 d6

With this retreat Black leaves the f6-square available for his dark-squared bishop. Also possible is 9...d6 10 c3 c6 (10...e4? may be stronger, although White was still a bit better after 11 e5) dxe5 12 bxc6 c5 13 d5 d7 14 d2 e5 15 a4 a5 16 e4! d6 17 f3 d7 18 e1 g6 19 e2 f5 20 d3 in Skripchenko-Lautier-Liardet, Cannes 1997) 11 d4 e6 12 c3 d6 13 bxc6 h5 14 f3, Wang Zhi-Arkell, London 1997; White has the usual advantage that comes with having more space and the bishop pair.
10 \textit{\textsc{c3}} \textit{\textsc{c6}}

10...\textit{\textsc{f6}} 11 h3 \textit{\textsc{c6}} transposes to the text.

11 h3!? This idea has recently risen to prominence. One idea is to prevent Black from adding pressure on the d4-pawn with ...\textit{\textsc{g4}}, while there's also a sneaky trick lurking in the background. After 11 \textit{\textsc{a3}} \textit{\textsc{f6}} 12 b3 \textit{\textsc{c7}} 13 c5 \textit{\textsc{d5}} 14 \textit{\textsc{xd5}} exd5 15 b4 a6 Black was okay in the game Svidler-Terekhin, St Petersburg 1994.

11...\textit{\textsc{f6}} 12 \textit{\textsc{e3}}

12...\textit{\textsc{w7}}

Alternatively:

a) 12...\textit{\textsc{w7}}? walks into 13 g4! \textit{\textsc{g6}} 14 g5 and a piece goes – another point of 11 h3.

b) 12...h6 (preparing ...\textit{\textsc{w7}}) 13 b4 \textit{\textsc{c7}}

(13...a6 14 \textit{\textsc{b3}} \textit{\textsc{xd4}} 15 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} \textit{\textsc{xd4}} 16 \textit{\textsc{ad1}} e5 17 \textit{\textsc{xe5}} \textit{\textsc{f6}} 18 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} \textit{\textsc{xe5}} 19 \textit{\textsc{fd1}} c6 20 \textit{\textsc{g4}} was pleasant for White, Turov-J.Ivanov, Ubeda 2000) 14 \textit{\textsc{b3}} (14 b5 \textit{\textsc{a5}} 15 c5 \textit{\textsc{d5}} 16 \textit{\textsc{d2}} is also good for White, Kaminski-Gipslis, Cappelle la Grande 1998) 14...\textit{\textsc{fd8}} 15 \textit{\textsc{fd1}} a5 16 c5 \textit{\textsc{xd5}} 17 b5 \textit{\textsc{a7}} 18 \textit{\textsc{xd5}} exd5 19 \textit{\textsc{e1}} and White has a big space advantage on the queenside, Baklan-Melnik, Alushta 1999.

13 b4

13 g4!? is expansion on the wrong side. After 13...\textit{\textsc{g6}} 14 g5 \textit{\textsc{e7}} 15 b4 \textit{\textsc{ad8}} Black has reasonable counterplay, Stripunsky-Prokopchuk, Azov 1996.

13...\textit{\textsc{ad8}}

After 13...\textit{\textsc{fd8}} White can play as in the main text with 14 \textit{\textsc{b3}}.

14 \textit{\textsc{b3}}!?

Also interesting is 14 \textit{\textsc{a2}}? and now:

a) 14...\textit{\textsc{xd4}} 15 \textit{\textsc{xd4}}! \textit{\textsc{xd4}} 16 \textit{\textsc{d2}} with a further split:

a1) 16...e5 17 \textit{\textsc{b5}} \textit{\textsc{c7}} (17...\textit{\textsc{xe3}} 18 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} \textit{\textsc{xd4}} 19 \textit{\textsc{b3}} is good for White) 18 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} exd4 19 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} and the bishop pair gives White an edge.

a2) 16...\textit{\textsc{xe3}} 17 \textit{\textsc{xd7}} \textit{\textsc{xd7}} 18 \textit{\textsc{b3}} \textit{\textsc{g5}} 19 \textit{\textsc{d1}} and White's queen is worth more than Black's rook, bishop and pawn, Kovalevskaia-Anisimov, St Petersburg 1999 (this isn't always the case – see note 'b1').

b) 14...\textit{\textsc{a5}} 15 b5 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} and now:

b1) 16 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} \textit{\textsc{xd4}} 17 \textit{\textsc{d2}} \textit{\textsc{xe3}}! (17...e5 18 c5 \textit{\textsc{c8}} 19 \textit{\textsc{f3}} \textit{\textsc{a7}} 20 a4 \textit{\textsc{c7}} 21 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} exd4 22 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} xxd4 23 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} was good for White in Leconte-Fevrier, French League 2000) 18 \textit{\textsc{xd7}} \textit{\textsc{xd7}} 19 \textit{\textsc{b3}} \textit{\textsc{c5}} is fine for Black – the bishop is very well placed on c5.

b2) 16 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} \textit{\textsc{xd4}} 17 \textit{\textsc{d2}} e5 18 \textit{\textsc{xe5}} \textit{\textsc{xf2+}} 19 \textit{\textsc{xf2}} \textit{\textsc{xd2}} 20 \textit{\textsc{xd2}} \textit{\textsc{xd2}} 21 \textit{\textsc{xf5}} \textit{\textsc{e2}} 22 c5! is very unclear.

14...\textit{\textsc{xd4}}

Of course Black doesn't have to take the pawn, but after 14...\textit{\textsc{fe8}} 15 \textit{\textsc{fd1}} White has a big space advantage.

15 \textit{\textsc{xd4}} \textit{\textsc{xd4}} 16 \textit{\textsc{ad1}} e5 17 \textit{\textsc{b5}} \textit{\textsc{c7}}

18 \textit{\textsc{fe1}}?!

White can keep a small advantage after 18 c5!? \textit{\textsc{xd5}} 19 \textit{\textsc{bxd4}} exd4 20 \textit{\textsc{xd4}}
Here are a couple of practical examples from the diagram:

a) 18...c5 19 f1 w6 20 bxd4 exd4 21 xexe5 is a bit better for White, Hait-Ulko, Moscow (rapid) 1997 - Black's d-pawn is a bit vulnerable.

b) 18...w6 19 xxc7 e4 (after 19...a6 White should play 20 c3) 20 b5 c6 21 c5 xxb5 22 xxb5 d5 23 c4 d4 24 xxd4 xxd4 25 xxd4 exd4 26 w5f3! and White has a clear plus, Hait-Rasskazov, Moscow 1997.

B) 2...wxd5 3 xc3

Now Black's main moves are:

B1: 3...w8d8
B2: 3...w6d6
B3: 3...a5

B1)

3...w8d8

This looks a bit passive, but it does have some positive points (the queen is certainly less vulnerable on this square), and recently there's been a few top level games with this move.

4 d4 e6

4...g6 has been under a cloud ever since the crushing win for White in Fischer-Robatsch, Varna Olympiad 1962: 5 f4 g7 (5...h6 6 e5!) 6 d2?! e6 7 0-0-0 c6 8 h6 0-0 9 h4 a5 10 h5! gxh5 11 d3

8 g4!

White can aim for a small advantage with 8 0-0, but this move promises greater rewards.

B2)

8...e6

Or 8...c4 9 a1 xxe4 xxe4 (the exchange of these minor pieces normally helps White)

10 w5f3 d6 11 xbd7 12 d5d7 12 e3? (White
is better after 12 \text{f}4) 12...\text{xe}5 13 \text{dxe}5
\text{wa}5+ 14 \text{c}3 \text{xe}5 15 0-0 \text{e}7 16 \text{he}1
\text{g}5?! (16...\text{wa}5 is stronger) 17 \text{h}4! \text{xe}3+ 18
\text{xe}3 \text{c}5 19 \text{xe}6! 0-0 20 \text{b}3 and White
has a clear advantage. Sermek-Gerencer, Pula
1999, concluded 21 \text{wd}4 \text{a}4 22 \text{e}5 \text{wa}7 23
\text{c}2 \text{b}5 24 \text{h}5 \text{g}6 25 \text{wh}6 1-0.

9 \text{h}4 \text{bd}7

A major alternative is 9...\text{b}4 and now:

a) 10 \text{h}5 (this is probably good enough for
an edge):

a1) 10...\text{xc}3+?! 11 \text{bxc}3 \text{e}4 12 \text{f}3 \text{d}5
13 \text{d}3 \text{b}5 14 \text{h}6 \text{g}6 15 \text{g}5 (\text{Karsten
Müller}) – Black is in a very awkward pin.

a2) 10...\text{xc}2? 11 \text{wc}2 \text{xd}4 12 \text{f}4
\text{g}x\text{g}4 13 \text{eg}4 \text{wc}4 14 \text{h}6 and White has a
clear advantage – Müller.

a3) 10...\text{e}4 (this is Black’s best move) 11
\text{f}3 \text{d}5 12 \text{d}3 and White follows up with
\text{d}2 and \text{e}2.

b) 10 \text{f}3 (this leads to complications that
seem favourable for White) 10...\text{xc}2 11
\text{wc}2 \text{xd}4 12 \text{e}2 and now:

b1) 12...\text{b}5?! 13 \text{xf}7! (13 \text{b}3? \text{xc}3+ 14
\text{bxc}3 \text{xc}3+ 15 \text{f}2 \text{xa}1 16 \text{d}1 \text{c}3 was
unclear, Herrera-Del Rio Angelis, Santa Clara
2000) 13...\text{xc}3+ (or 13...0-0 14 \text{xe}6 \text{xf}7
15 \text{xf}7+ \text{xf}7 16 \text{d}2) 14 \text{f}1 0-0 15
\text{xe}6 and White is winning – Müller.

b2) 12...\text{xc}3+ 13 \text{bxc}3 \text{xc}3+ 14 \text{f}2
\text{xa}1 (this is the critical test) 15 \text{d}1 and
now Black must do something about the threat of \text{b}2.

b21) 15...\text{b}5 16 \text{xf}7! 0-0 17 \text{xe}6 \text{c}3
18 \text{b}2 \text{c}5+ 19 \text{g}2 \text{e}7 (19...\text{a}6 20
\text{xf}6 \text{xf}6 21 \text{g}5+ \text{h}8 22 \text{d}7 \text{fxg}5 23
\text{b}2+ mates) 20 \text{g}5+ \text{h}8 21 \text{c}2 and
White has an overwhelming attack; 21...\text{a}6 is
answered by 22 \text{d}7 and 21...\text{e}8, by 22
\text{h}5! and \text{h}6.

b22) 15...\text{c}3 16 \text{b}2 \text{b}4 17 \text{xf}7 0-0
18 \text{xf}6 \text{xf}6 19 \text{xe}6 \text{c}3 (or 19...\text{g}7 20
\text{h}5) 20 \text{d}8 \text{d}7 21 \text{xa}8 \text{d}4+ 22 \text{g}2
\text{d}2+ 23 \text{h}3 \text{g}7 24 \text{e}7 \text{f}4 25 \text{g}5+
\text{e}1 Perez-Lopez Martinez, Varadero 2000.

10 \text{xd}7 \text{wd}7 11 \text{h}5 \text{e}4 12 \text{xe}4
\text{xe}4 13 \text{e}3

White was still also a bit better after 13 \text{c}3
0-0 14 \text{e}2 \text{d}6 15 \text{d}2 \text{d}6 16 0-0
\text{e}8 17 \text{f}4 \text{c}7 18 \text{f}3 \text{c}5 19 \text{dxc}5 \text{bxc}5
20 \text{b}1 \text{c}6 21 \text{exc}6+ \text{xc}6 22 \text{e}2, Svidler-

13...0-0-0 14 \text{f}3

I prefer White. The game Lutz-Adams,
Frankfurt 1999, continued 14...\text{b}4+ 15 \text{c}3
\text{xc}3 16 \text{bxc}3 \text{xc}3+ 17 \text{c}2 \text{xa}1 18 \text{xa}1
\text{f}5 19 \text{gxf}5 \text{xf}5 20 \text{d}5 \text{cxd}5 21 \text{d}3 \text{b}8 22
\text{f}4+ \text{a}8 23 \text{d}4 and White kept his ad-
vantage.

B2)

3...\text{d}6 4 \text{d}4 \text{f}6 5 \text{f}3 \text{a}6

Or 5...\text{g}4 6 \text{h}3 \text{xf}3 (6...\text{h}5 7 \text{g}4 \text{g}6
8 \text{d}5 \text{c}6 9 \text{f}4 \text{d}5 10 \text{wd}2 \text{xf}4 11
\text{xf}4 \text{d}7 12 0-0-0 \text{exe}5 13 \text{dxe}5 \text{d}7 14
\text{d}3 \text{xd}3 15 \text{xd}3 and Black’s king is
stuck in the centre, Psakhis-Sygulski, Jurmala 1987) 7 \textit{Wxf}5 c6 8 \textit{Ae}3 e6 9 0-0 0 0-0 \textit{Wc}7 10 \textit{Bb}1 \textit{Qb}d7 11 \textit{Ac}1 \textit{Bb}6 12 g4 h6 13 h4 0-0-0 14 \textit{Ah}3 with a typical advantage, Bologan-Muse, Berlin 1995.

With 5...a6 Black prevents a white piece from moving to b5 and can also consider playing ...b7-b5 and ...\textit{Ab}7-b7. However, expending a tempo like this is a risky business, especially since Black has already lost time with his queen.

6 \textit{g3}?

6 \textit{Ac}2 and 6 \textit{Ae}3 are the main moves, but this move has arisen as an interesting possibility for White. One obvious point is that White prepares \textit{Af}4, attacking the black queen.

6...\textit{Ag}4

Alternatively:

a) 6...\textit{g6} 7 \textit{Ag}2 \textit{Ag}7 8 0-0 0 0-0 9 \textit{Ac}1 \textit{Cc}6 10 \textit{Af}4 \textit{Wd}8 11 d5! and Black is getting pushed off the board, Nevednichy-Kurajica, Ljubljana 1999.

b) 6...\textit{b5}! 7 \textit{Ag}2 \textit{Ab}7 8 0-0 e6 (8...c5 9 \textit{Af}4 \textit{Bb}6 10 \textit{Cc}1 \textit{Bd}7 11 d5 h6 12 a4 b4 13 \textit{Cd}2! \textit{Aa}7 14 \textit{Ac}4 \textit{Ad}8 15 \textit{Ce}4 was virtually winning for White, Tringov-Donchev, Bankia 1991) 9 \textit{Af}4 \textit{Wb}6 10 a4 \textit{Ac}6 11 \textit{Ae}3 \textit{Ag}4 12 \textit{Aa}2 \textit{Df}6 13 \textit{Wc}2 c6 14 \textit{Ag}5 0-0 15 \textit{Ce}4 with an edge for White, Beshkov-Hasangatin, Koszalin 1999.

and now:

a) 12...\textit{Wb}5 (Nataf-Fressinet, Vichy 2000) 13 \textit{g4}! \textit{Ag}6 14 \textit{Aa}4! (threatening \textit{Ab}3) 14...\textit{Dxd}5 15 \textit{Ac}3 \textit{Wb}4 (15...\textit{Ax}e3 16 \textit{Ax}e7+! 16 \textit{Dxd}5 \textit{Dxd}5 17 \textit{Dxd}5 e6 18 a3 \textit{Wb}5 (18...\textit{Wc}7 19 \textit{Ax}b7+ \textit{Ab}7 20 \textit{Wf}3+ \textit{Bb}8 21 \textit{Da}5 wins for White) 19 \textit{c4} \textit{Sc}8 20 \textit{Ax}b7+ \textit{Sc}7 21 \textit{Da}5+ \textit{Sc}8 22 \textit{Wf}3 and White is winning.

b) 12...\textit{Wd}6! and I must admit that I can’t find anything better than repeating with 14 \textit{Aa}4.

7...\textit{Af}3

After 7...\textit{h}5 8 \textit{Ag}2 \textit{Cc}6 9 0-0 0 0-0-0 10 \textit{g4} \textit{Ag}6 11 \textit{Ae}3 I prefer White, for example 11...\textit{h}5 12 \textit{g5} \textit{Ac}4 13 \textit{h}4 \textit{Ax}e3 14 \textit{Bxc}3, or 11...\textit{e}5 12 \textit{Ax}e5 \textit{Ax}e5 13 \textit{Bxe}5 \textit{Wxe}5 14 \textit{Wf}3.

8 \textit{Wf}3 \textit{Cc}6

8...\textit{Cc}6 can be answered by 9 \textit{Ae}3.
9 \( \text{\textit{e}3} \text{\textit{d}bd7} \)

9...\( \text{\textit{e}}6 \) 10 0-0-0 \( \text{\textit{e}}7 \) 11 g4 gives White the initiative – Glek.

10 0-0-0 \( \text{\textit{e}}6 \) 11 \( \text{\textit{f}4} \)

White has a small advantage, Glek-Kekelidze, Böblingen 2000.

B3)

3...\( \text{\textit{wa}5} \)

This is the main line of the Scandinavian.

4 d4 \( \text{\textit{f}6} \)

4...\( \text{\textit{c}6} \) can be met by the obvious and strong 5 d5.

The most critical alternative to 4...\( \text{\textit{f}6} \) is 4...\( \text{\textit{e}5} \), but this move has been under a cloud ever since the game Ivanchuk-Angelov, Varna 1987, which continued 5 dxe5 \( \text{\textit{e}6} \) 6 \( \text{\textit{d}3} \) \( \text{\textit{b}4} \) 7 \( \text{\textit{d}2} \) \( \text{\textit{g}4} \) 8 a3 \( \text{\textit{d}4} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{b}5} \) c6 (9...\( \text{\textit{x}xb5} \) 10 axb4 \( \text{\textit{xb}4} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{a}a}4 \) \( \text{\textit{xc}3} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{xb}4} \) \( \text{\textit{xd}1} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{ex}g}4 \) \( \text{\textit{xb}2} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{b}4} \) is winning for White) 10 0-0! \( \text{\textit{xf}3} \) (10...\( \text{\textit{xc}b5} \) 11 axb4 \( \text{\textit{xb}4} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{xc}b5}! \) \( \text{\textit{xb}5} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{xd}4} \) \( \text{\textit{d}7} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{f}3} \) gives White an extra pawn) 11 axb4 \( \text{\textit{xd}1} \) 12 bxa5 \( \text{\textit{xc}2} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{a}4} \) \( \text{\textit{e}7} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{xc}2} \) \( \text{\textit{xc}2} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{a}4} \) and White has a very favourable ending.

4...\( \text{\textit{c}6} \) 5 \( \text{\textit{f}3} \) \( \text{\textit{f}6} \) transposes to the text.

5 \( \text{\textit{f}3} \) \( \text{\textit{c}6} \)

Alternatively:

- a) 5...\( \text{\textit{f}5} \) 6 \( \text{\textit{d}2} \) c6 transposes to the text.
- b) 5...\( \text{\textit{e}6} \) 6 \( \text{\textit{d}2}! \) (6 \( \text{\textit{b}5} \) \( \text{\textit{d}7} \) 7 0-0 0-0-0 8 \( \text{\textit{e}2} \) 0 9 \( \text{\textit{xc}6} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{xc}6} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{e}5} \) \( \text{\textit{e}8} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{e}3} \) \( \text{\textit{d}5} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{xd}5} \) \( \text{\textit{xd}5} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{c}4} \) was slightly better for White in Belikov-Maljutin, Sochi 1990)
- c) 5...\( \text{\textit{g}4} \) 6 \( \text{\textit{h}3} \) \( \text{\textit{h}5} \) (6...\( \text{\textit{xf}3} \) 7 \( \text{\textit{f}3} \) c6 8 \( \text{\textit{d}2} \) \( \text{\textit{bd}7} \) 9 0-0-0 \( \text{\textit{e}6} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{b}1} \) gives White a typical edge – two bishops and more space) 7 \( \text{\textit{g}4} \) \( \text{\textit{g}6} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{e}5} \) e6 9 \( \text{\textit{g}2} \) c6 10 h4 \( \text{\textit{e}4} \) (10...\( \text{\textit{bd}7} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{xd}7} \) \( \text{\textit{xd}7} \) 12 d5 \( \text{\textit{c}5} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{h}3} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{f}1} \) \( \text{\textit{a}6} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{g}1} \) \( \text{\textit{e}4} \) 16 f3 \( \text{\textit{c}5} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{h}2} \) \( \text{\textit{d}6} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{h}3} \) and 10...\( \text{\textit{b}4} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{d}2} \) \( \text{\textit{b}6} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{h}5} \) \( \text{\textit{xd}4} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{f}3} \) \( \text{\textit{g}4} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{hxg}6} \) \( \text{\textit{g}6} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{f}1} \) are both better for White) 11 \( \text{\textit{a}e}4 \) \( \text{\textit{xe}4} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{f}3} \) \( \text{\textit{d}6} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{f}4} \) 6 14 \( \text{\textit{d}3} \) and White has the advantage, Popovic-Rogers, Vrsac 1987.

6 \( \text{\textit{d}2} \) \( \text{\textit{f}5} \)

After 6...\( \text{\textit{g}4} \) White should play 7 \( \text{\textit{h}3} \) \( \text{\textit{h}5} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{g}4} \) \( \text{\textit{g}6} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{e}5} \).

7 \( \text{\textit{e}4}? \)

7 \( \text{\textit{c}4} \) \( \text{\textit{e}6} \) is the main line at the moment, but with 7 \( \text{\textit{a}4} \) White keeps his options open regarding the development of the light-squared bishop.

7...\( \text{\textit{wb}6} \)

7...\( \text{\textit{wc}7} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{xf}6}+ \text{\textit{gxf}6} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{g}3} \)l (now the fianchetto is suitable; White blunts any ideas Black may have on the half-open g-file and points his bishop towards Black’s kingside)

9...\( \text{\textit{e}6} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{g}2} \) \( \text{\textit{d}7} \) 11 0-0 \( \text{\textit{e}4}? \) 12 \( \text{\textit{e}1} \) \( \text{\textit{f}5} \)

(12...\( \text{\textit{xf}3} \) was necessary) 13 \( \text{\textit{g}5}! \) \( \text{\textit{g}2} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{xe}6}+! \) \( \text{\textit{e}7} \) 15 \( \text{\textit{wh}5} \) \( \text{\textit{f}8} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{g}2} \) \( \text{\textit{f}6} \) 17
Attacking with 1 e4

\[ \text{x}f6 \text{x}f6 18 \text{fxh}7 0-0-0 19 \text{xf}8 \text{and Black resigned, De Firmian-Owen, Las Vegas 1995.} \]

8 \text{xf}6+ \text{gf}6

After 8...\text{xf}6!? White plays 9 \text{c}4!, pointing the bishop at Black's f7-pawn.

9 \text{c}4!?

White has other moves here:

a) 9 b4? e5 10 \text{c}4 \text{d}7 (or 10...\text{exd}4 11 0-0, followed by \text{e}1 – Blanny) 11 0-0 \text{g}6 12 \text{c}3 \text{c}7 13 \text{dxe}5 \text{fxe}5 14 \text{h}3 \text{b}6 15 \text{f}3 \text{c}7 17 \text{c}3 was very pleasant for White, Glek-Willemze, Utrecht 1999.

11 \text{e}1 0-0

Glek-Lau, Willingen 1999, continued 12 \text{h}4 \text{g}6 13 \text{g}6 \text{hxg}6 and now Glek unleashed the move 14 \text{xe}6!. Now 14...\text{fxe}6 15 \text{xe}6+ \text{f}7 16 \text{g}4 gives White a very strong attack. Instead Lau tried 14...\text{xd}4, but after 15 \text{d}1 \text{xc}2 17 \text{b}1 \text{b}2 18 \text{e}8\text{! Black was under tremendous pressure.}

Important Points

1) With 3 \text{b}5+ against 2...\text{f}6, White dictates the type of position that is reached. Black has less choice than against the main line with 3 \text{d}4.

2) In Variation A White generally looks to play an early c2-c4 to get rid of the black knight on d5.

3) In the main line (B3) White plays an early \text{e}4xf6+ and inflicts doubled pawn on Black.
Attacking the Alekhine: The Exchange Variation

1 e4 ¤f6 2 e5

The Alekhine is a counter-attacking defence in the same vein as the Modern or Pirc. With his first move Black actually invites White to gain time by attacking his knight with pawns. The result is that White has an impressive-looking centre after just a few moves. Black hopes that this centre will prove to be suspect to a quick attack.

For White I'm recommending the Exchange Variation (2 e5 ¤d5 3 c4 ¤b6 4 d4 d6 5 exd6), which is much easier to play than main line of 3 d4 (there's much less theory to learn), and, in my opinion, it gives White just as much chance of claiming an advantage from the opening.

The opening moves begin:

1 e4 ¤f6 2 e5 ¤d5

Or:

a) 2...¤e4 is a cheeky move which Black shouldn't really be allowed to get away with. White keeps an advantage simply by attacking the knight with 3 d3 ¤c5 4 d4 ¤e6, but 3 d4!, aiming to trap the knight in mid-board, is stronger. Then we have the following lines:

a1) 3...¢e6 4 ¤h3 (threatening f2-f3) 4...h6 5 ¤g4 d5 6 f3 h5 7 ¤f4 g5 8 ¤xg5 ¤xg5 9 ¤xg5 ¤e7 10 ¤g7 and White has a clear advantage – NCO.

a2) 3...f6 4 ¤d3 d5 5 ¤c3! and now we have:

a21) 5...¤xc3 6 ¤h5+ ¤d7 (6...g6 7 ¤xg6+ hxg6 8 ¤xh8 ¤b5 9 ¤h6 is winning for White) 7 bxc3 e6 8 c4 and again White is clearly better – Bückler.

a22) 5...f5 6 ¤f3 e6 7 g4! ¤g6 8 ¤xe4 dxe4 (or 8...¤xe4 9 ¤xe4 fx5 10 ¤d3 e4 11 ¤xe4 dxe4 12 ¤xe4±) 9 ¤xe4 ¤xe4 10 ¤xe4 ¤c6 11 exf6 ¤xf6 12 ¤e3 and White has a safe extra pawn.

b) 2...¤g8 3 d4 d6 4 ¤f3 ¤g4 5 h3 ¤h5 6 g4 ¤g6 7 ¤c3 e6 8 ¤f4 d5 9 ¤d3 and White has a good lead in development, Ernst-Welling, Copenhagen 1988.

3 c4 ¤b6 4 d4 d6 5 exd6

Now Black has a choice

A) 5...exd6

B) 5...¤xd6

5...exd6?! 6 c5 ¤e6+ 7 ¤e2 is good for White.

A)

5...exd6

see following diagram

5...exd6 is Black’s most solid choice. By keeping a symmetrical pawn structure Black is trying to keep White's opening advantage to a minimum.
Black sensibly prepares to castle. Other choices are not so good:

a) 6...dxc6? (this prevents d3, but now White can take advantage of Black playing an early...dxc6) 7 d3 g4 8 e2 e7 (8...xf3 9 xf3 xc4 10 w2+ w7 11 d5 is very good for White) 9 d5 xf3 10 xf3 e5 11 e2 0-0 12 b3 f6 13 b2 a5 14 0-0 e8 15 d2 ed7 16 ead1 c5 17 wc2 g6 18 fe1 g7 19 f1 and White has a small but secure advantage, Emms-Baburin, Port Erin 1997.

b) 6...g6 7 d3! (White is no longer afraid of the pin, as Black won't be able to keep it) 7...g4 8 h3 dxc3 (obviously 8...h5 loses to 9 g4 – a consequence of 6...e6 9 xf3 d6 10 d3 g7 11 0-0-0 0-0 12 h4! and White will continue in caveman fashion with h4-h5, Jepson-Westerinen, Manhems 1998.

To me this set-up with 7 d3 and 8 g2 seems quite promising for White, and in practice White has scored highly. Yet it's mentioned neither by NCO nor ECO! It's not particularly new: World Champions Alekhine and Fischer used it in their time, which serves as another recommendation.

Another important line is 8...g4 9 f3 h5 10 0-0 g6 11 xg6 hxg6 12 b3 (12 d5 e5 13 b3 g5 14 g3 bd7 15 c4 f8 16 wd2 f6 17 d5 also looks good for White, Cicak-Freisler, Czech League 1998) 12...f6 13 d4 (13 d5 de5 14 b2 0-0 15 g3 e8 16 g4 keeps an edge – Finkel) 13...d5 14 zxe6+ wxe6 15 c5 dxc8 16 a4 d7 17 d2! and suddenly Black's position looks a bit of a mess, Minasian-Nalbandian, Yerevan 1999.

9 0-0 f6

Or

a) 9...b4 10 b1 and now:

a1) 10...xc4? loses after the cunning 11 a3 c6 12 wd3!. This is a useful trick to remember.

a2) 10...a5 11 b3 e8 12 e3 a4 13 dxc4 dxc4 14 bxa4 dxc6 15 d5 c5 16 d6 c6 17 wc2 g6 18 h3 d5 19 cxd5 cxd5 20 ab1 and White's extra doubled a-pawn is of definite use, Kaminski-Baburin, Biel 1995.

b) 9...g4 10 f3 h5 11 f4 g6 12 xg6 hxg6 13 d5 e5 14 b3 (this queenside structure is good for White) 14...d7 15 a4 16 c2 w5 17 g4 w6 18 wc2 c6 19 e3 c7 20 f4 ed7 21 g5 ef8 22 d2 ef8 23 wb3 and White keeps an advantage, Djuric-Miles, Aegina 1993.

10 e3

10 b3!, preparing to answer...d4 with b1, is also a worthwhile possibility. White was better after 10...e8 11 e3 g4 12 h3 xe2 13 zxe2 d5 14 c5 d7 15 wd2 d8 16 b4, Kaminski-Miroshnichenko, Vienna 1995.

10...g4

10...b4!? is an enticing alternative. Now 11 a3c4, so White must cede the bishop pair. However, following 11 b3 (11 g3?!) 11...xd3 12 wd3 g4 13 f3 h5 14 g3 g6 15 wd2 h4 16 d5 e8 17 eae1 d7 18 c2 xg3 19 hgx3 a6 20 ef1 ef8 21 d4 White kept an edge in Sermek-Zelic, Makarska 1994. Interestingly, when the two players met again in the same line six years later, Black opted for 10...g4 instead.

11 h3 h5 12 wd2 g6 13 b3 xd3 14 xd3 d5 15 c5 c8
Sermek Zelcic, Pozega 2000, continued 16 b4 \texttt{Qxb4} 17 \texttt{Wb1} \texttt{Qc6} 18 \texttt{Wxb7} \texttt{Qxe7} 19 \texttt{Wad1} \texttt{Wd7} 20 \texttt{Wb5} \texttt{Qad8} 21 \texttt{Qfd1} and White kept an edge.

B)

5...\texttt{Qxd6}

This is slightly more popular, and certainly more ambitious, than the other recapture 5...\texttt{Qxd6}. The structure is now asymmetrical (Black now has an extra central pawn). He will continue development with the natural moves ...\texttt{g7-g6} and ...\texttt{Qg7}.

6 \texttt{Qc3} \texttt{g6} 7 \texttt{ae3} \texttt{Qg7} 8 \texttt{Qc1}

This system of developing the queenside early is very ambitious, and so far White’s results have been very encouraging. White is taking prophylactic measures against Black’s two major pawns in ...\texttt{e7-e5} and ...\texttt{d7-d5}. Kingside development will be completed only once Black has committed himself to a certain course of action.

8...0-0

8...\texttt{Qc6} 9 d5 \texttt{Qc5} 10 \texttt{Qc2} (an alternative is 10 \texttt{f4}? \texttt{Qg4} 11 \texttt{Qd4} \texttt{Qf6} 12 \texttt{Qf3} 0-0 13 \texttt{Qe2} e6 14 dxe6 \texttt{Qxe6} 15 b3 \texttt{Qc8} 16 0-0 \texttt{Qe7} 17 \texttt{Qg5} which was better for White in Akopian-Minasian, Armenian Championship 1995) 10...0-0 11 b3 transposes into Variation B1.

9 \texttt{b3}

Protecting \texttt{c4} and preparing to meet ...\texttt{d6-d5} with \texttt{c4-c5}.

Now Black has a choice:

B1: \texttt{9...Qc6}

B2: \texttt{9...f5}

B3: \texttt{9...e5}

White was better after 9...\texttt{f5} 10 d5 \texttt{Qa6} 11 \texttt{Qf3} \texttt{Qg4} 12 \texttt{Qe2} \texttt{Qxf3} 13 \texttt{Qxf3} \texttt{Qc5} 14 \texttt{b4} \texttt{Qxd7} 15 \texttt{Wb3} \texttt{Qc8} 16 \texttt{Qe2} \texttt{Qf6} 17 0-0, Yagupov-Petit, Ubeda 1996.

B1)

9...\texttt{Qc6}

This move, encouraging White’s d-pawn forward, has not scored well in practice.

10 d5 \texttt{Qe5} 11 \texttt{Qe2}!

Preparing f2-f4. In my database White has an enormous score from this position.

11...\texttt{f5}

Or:

a) 11...\texttt{a5} 12 f4 \texttt{Qed7} 13 \texttt{Qf3} \texttt{Qc5} 14 0-0 \texttt{Qg4} 15 \texttt{Qd4} \texttt{Qxf3} 16 \texttt{Qxf3} \texttt{Qxd4}+ 17 \texttt{Qxd4} \texttt{Qbd7} 18 \texttt{Qf1} \texttt{Wb6} 19 \texttt{Qe1} and Black’s e7-pawn is a major worry, Emms-McDonald, Hastings 1997/8.

b) 11...\texttt{e6} 12 f4 \texttt{Qed7} (12...\texttt{h6} 13 \texttt{Qd2} \texttt{Qg4} 14 \texttt{Qxg4} \texttt{Wh4}+ 15 \texttt{Qf2} \texttt{Qxg4} 16 h3 \texttt{Qxf5} 17 \texttt{g4} \texttt{Wd3} 18 \texttt{Qg2} \texttt{Qxd5} 19 \texttt{Qd1} and the black queen is trapped – Stoica) 13 dxe6 \texttt{Qxe6} 14 \texttt{Qxd6} e5 15 \texttt{Qf3} exf4 16 \texttt{Qxf4} \texttt{Qc5} 17 0-0 \texttt{Qg4} 18 h3 \texttt{Qxc3} 19 \texttt{hxg4} and White has a good extra pawn, V.Ivanov-Bagirov, Moscow 1995.

c) 11...\texttt{h5} 12 f4 \texttt{Qg4} 13 \texttt{Qd4} e5 (or
13...h6 14 \(\mathbf{c}3\) e5 15 dxe6 fxe6 16 \(\mathbf{x}g4\) hxg4 17 \(\mathbf{x}g4\) and Black is virtually lost, Howell-Trifunovic, Hastings 1995) 14 dxe6 \(\mathbf{d}f3\) with an edge, Benjamin-Segal, New York (blitz) 1998.

12 f4 \(\mathbf{g}4\) 13 \(\mathbf{d}d4\) e5 14 dxe6 \(\mathbf{x}e6\) 15 \(\mathbf{f}f3\) \(\mathbf{e}8\) 16 \(\mathbf{x}g7\) \(\mathbf{x}g7\) 17 0-0

We are following the game Howell-Panchenko, Hamburg 1995. The weakness of the d6-pawn promises White a solid advantage.

B2)

9...f5

If allowed, Black plans to gain space on the kingside with ...f5-f4.

10 \(\mathbf{g}3\)

Alternatively:

a) 10 \(\mathbf{d}f3\) f4 11 \(\mathbf{d}d2\) e5 gives Black unnecessary counterplay.

b) 10 d5!? and now:

b1) 10...e5 11 dxe6 \(\mathbf{x}e6\) (or 11...\(\mathbf{c}c6\) 12 \(\mathbf{d}h3\) \(\mathbf{d}d2\) h6 14 \(\mathbf{d}f4\) \(\mathbf{f}7\) 15 \(\mathbf{d}d5\) and White has a nice outpost on d5, Zhao Zong Yuan-Gluzman, Gold Coast 2001) 12 \(\mathbf{d}f3\) \(\mathbf{d}d2\) e5 14 \(\mathbf{e}c2\) \(\mathbf{d}d7\) 15 0-0 \(\mathbf{h}d8\) 16 \(\mathbf{d}b5\) and again Black has problems with his isolated d-pawn, An.Rodriguez-Borges, Sao Paulo 1997.

b2) 10...f4 11 \(\mathbf{d}d4\) e5 12 dxe6 \(\mathbf{x}d4\) 13 \(\mathbf{w}d2\) \(\mathbf{d}d6\) 15 \(\mathbf{d}f3\) \(\mathbf{w}e6\) 17 \(\mathbf{e}2\) d5 17 cxd5 \(\mathbf{d}8\) 18 0-0 \(\mathbf{d}x\)xd5 with a roughly level position, Milu-Ignatescu, Romania 1995.

10...

\(\mathbf{d}c6\)

A major alternative line is 10...e5 11 dxe6 dxe6 (11...\(\mathbf{d}d5\)?! 12 \(\mathbf{d}h3\) and White aims for that juicy d5 outpost again) 12 \(\mathbf{w}d8\) \(\mathbf{x}d8\) 13 c5! and now:

a) 13...\(\mathbf{d}6d7\) 14 \(\mathbf{c}c4\) \(\mathbf{f}8\) (14...\(\mathbf{h}h8\) 15 \(\mathbf{b}5!\), threatening both \(\mathbf{c}c7\) and \(\mathbf{d}6d\) 15 \(\mathbf{d}d5\) \(\mathbf{d}x\)6 16 \(\mathbf{x}e6\) bx6 17 \(\mathbf{c}c7\) \(\mathbf{d}d6\) 18 \(\mathbf{d}x\)a8 \(\mathbf{b}7\) 19 \(\mathbf{d}c7\) \(\mathbf{x}h1\) 20 \(\mathbf{d}e6+\) \(\mathbf{e}7\) 21 \(\mathbf{x}d8\) \(\mathbf{x}d8\) 22 c6 and White was winning in Pavasovic-Galje, Graz 1998

b) 13...f4 14 \(\mathbf{d}d2\) \(\mathbf{d}6d7\) 15 \(\mathbf{c}c4+\) and now:

b1) 15...\(\mathbf{h}h8\) 16 \(\mathbf{b}b5\) \(\mathbf{x}d5\) 17 \(\mathbf{c}c7\) b6 18 \(\mathbf{d}x\)a8 \(\mathbf{b}7\) 19 \(\mathbf{f}3\) \(\mathbf{x}a8\) 20 \(\mathbf{b}4\) \(\mathbf{d}e4\) 21 fxe4 dxe4 22 f3 \(\mathbf{x}d4\) 23 \(\mathbf{b}x\)x4 \(\mathbf{c}c5\) 24 \(\mathbf{f}3\) \(\mathbf{h}8\) 25 \(\mathbf{c}c5\) 26 \(\mathbf{x}g1\) 27 \(\mathbf{x}h1!\) and White is better – Ardeleanu. This final line could use a practical test.

11 d5 \(\mathbf{d}e5\) 12 \(\mathbf{c}c2\) e6 13 dxe6 \(\mathbf{x}e6\)

Ardeleanu-Grunberg, Buzias 1997. Now 14 \(\mathbf{h}h3\), preparing \(\mathbf{h}4\), looks good for White.

B3)

9...e5

This is Black's most critical response to
White’s set-up.

10 dxe5 dxe5

Once again capturing with the bishop is not really what Black wants. White had a pleasant edge after 10...\(\textit{\&}xe5\) 11 \(\textit{\&}f3\) \(\textit{\&}g4\) 12 \(\textit{\&}e2\) \(\textit{\&}xf3\) 13 \(\textit{\&}xf3\) \(\textit{\&}c6\) 14 0-0, Raetsky-Gutkin, Riazan 1982.

11 \(\textit{\&}xd8\) \(\textit{\&}xd8\) 12 c5! \(\textit{\&}6d7\)

It’s certainly worth remembering that 12...\(\textit{\&}d5\)? simply loses material after 13 \(\textit{\&}d1\) \(\textit{\&}e6\) 14 \(\textit{\&}c4\) (Benjamin-Johansen, Stockholm 1996).

13 \(\textit{\&}c4\) \(\textit{\&}c6\) 14 \(\textit{\&}f3\)

Also interesting is 14 \(\textit{\&}e4!\) ? \(\textit{\&}f8\) 15 \(\textit{\&}d6\) \(\textit{\&}c6\) 16 \(\textit{\&}f3\) \(\textit{\&}cd4\) 17 \(\textit{\&}g5\) \(\textit{\&}xg5\) 18 \(\textit{\&}xg5\) \(\textit{\&}d7\), as in Yagupov-Ukolov, Moscow 1996. White probably has a slight edge here too.

14...\(\textit{\&}a5\)

Or:

a) 14...\(\textit{\&}h6\) 15 \(\textit{\&}e4\) (15 0-0!? 15...\(\textit{\&}f8\) (15...\(\textit{\&}d5\) 16 \(\textit{\&}d5\) \(\textit{\&}f6\) 17 \(\textit{\&}xf6+\) \(\textit{\&}xf6\) 18 \(\textit{\&}d1\) \(\textit{\&}g7\) 19 0-0 \(\textit{\&}e8\) 20 \(\textit{\&}d2\) gave White something in Finkel-Drazic, Nova Gorica 1997, while Raetsky gives the line 15...\(\textit{\&}d4\) 16 \(\textit{\&}d6\) \(\textit{\&}xf3+\) 17 \(\textit{\&}xf3\) \(\textit{\&}f8\) 18 \(\textit{\&}g1\), which is also favourable for White) 16 \(\textit{\&}d6\) \(\textit{\&}d7\) 17 0-0 \(\textit{\&}e7\) 18 \(\textit{\&}xc8\) \(\textit{\&}xc8\) 19 \(\textit{\&}fd1\) \(\textit{\&}h7\) and White must aim to advance his queenside pawn majority, Gross-Bagirov, Berlin 1996.

b) 14...\(\textit{\&}d4\) 15 \(\textit{\&}g5\) \(\textit{\&}f8\) 16 \(\textit{\&}ce4\) \(\textit{\&}f5\) and now:

b1) 17 \(\textit{\&}xf7?!\) \(\textit{\&}xf7\) 18 \(\textit{\&}g5\) \(\textit{\&}h6\) 19 \(\textit{\&}e6\) (Olsson-Zetterberg, Borlange 1995), and here Black should play 19...\(\textit{\&}b5\) 20 \(\textit{\&}d5\) \(\textit{\&}f6\) 21 \(\textit{\&}xa8\) \(\textit{\&}xe6\), which is unclear.

b2) 17 0-0 \(\textit{\&}f6\) 18 \(\textit{\&}d6\) \(\textit{\&}xd6\) 19 \(\textit{\&}xd6\) \(\textit{\&}d7\) 20 a4 \(\textit{\&}c6\) 21 \(\textit{\&}fd1\) a6 22 f3 and White’s passed d-pawn gave him an edge in Dzhindzhiashvili-Alburt, US Championship 1996;

c) 14...\(\textit{\&}f8\) 15 \(\textit{\&}g5!\) \(\textit{\&}c6\) 16 \(\textit{\&}xe6\) \(\textit{\&}xe6\) 17 \(\textit{\&}xe6\) \(\textit{\&}xe6\) and White has a clear plus – Raetsky.

15 \(\textit{\&}e2\)

So far this position has been reached a few times in practice:

a) 15...\(\textit{\&}h6\) 16 0-0 \(\textit{\&}f8\) 17 \(\textit{\&}e4\) \(\textit{\&}c6\) 18 \(\textit{\&}d6\) \(\textit{\&}b8\) 19 a3 \(\textit{\&}f1\) \(\textit{\&}e6\) 21 b4 and White’s queenside pawns are beginning to roll, Hunt-Schnabel, Oxford 1998.

b) 15...\(\textit{\&}f8\) 16 0-0 \(\textit{\&}c6\) 17 \(\textit{\&}fd1\) \(\textit{\&}f5\) 18 \(\textit{\&}b5\) \(\textit{\&}e6\) 19 \(\textit{\&}d6\) \(\textit{\&}ab8\) 20 \(\textit{\&}g5\) \(\textit{\&}xg5\) 21 \(\textit{\&}xg5\), Mitkov-Dischinger, Sitges 1997; the big White knight on d6 gives him a plus.

c) 15...\(\textit{\&}c6\) 16 \(\textit{\&}b5\) \(\textit{\&}f8\) 17 \(\textit{\&}d6\) \(\textit{\&}e6\) 18 \(\textit{\&}c4\) \(\textit{\&}cd4\) 19 \(\textit{\&}g5\) and again White is better, Mitkov-Toth, Rio de Janeiro 2000.

d) 15...\(\textit{\&}b6\) 16 \(\textit{\&}xb6\) (16 \(\textit{\&}a4!\) ? \(\textit{\&}xc5\) 17 0-0 \(\textit{\&}c4\) 18 \(\textit{\&}b4\) \(\textit{\&}c6\) 19 \(\textit{\&}xc4\) \(\textit{\&}xb4\) 20 a3 \(\textit{\&}a6\) 21 \(\textit{\&}g5\) is very good for White, Kiik-Hautala, Tampere 2000) 16...\(\textit{\&}xb6\) 17 \(\textit{\&}b5\) \(\textit{\&}b7\) 18 0-0 \(\textit{\&}d5\) 19 \(\textit{\&}fd1\) \(\textit{\&}c6!\). (Finkel gives 19...\(\textit{\&}xe3!\) 20 \(\textit{\&}xe3\) \(\textit{\&}e4\) 21 \(\textit{\&}fd4\) \(\textit{\&}f8!\), with equal chances) 20 \(\textit{\&}xd5!\) \(\textit{\&}xd5\) 21 \(\textit{\&}c7\) \(\textit{\&}dd8\) 22 \(\textit{\&}xa8\) \(\textit{\&}xa8\) 23 \(\textit{\&}b5!\) and Black’s a-pawn is vulnerable, Varga-Llanos, Budapest 1999.

Important Points

1) White’s set-up in Variation B is very ambitious. White prevents Black from playing ...d7-d5 and encourages only ...e7-e5.

2) After ...\(\textit{\&}c6\) (Variation B), White should normally react with d4-d5. Black, with a backward pawn on e7, is slightly worse.

3) Be wary that you are making lot of moves on the queenside in Variation B. At some point you have to stop and think of developing your kingside!
Finally we should take a look at some unusual moves that Black can play on move one. There are twenty legal moves at Black’s disposal; as well as the ones we’ve already studied, I will draw the line with the following three:

A: 1...c6
B: 1...b6
C: 1...a6

Against anything else my advice is:
1) Try not to laugh (this is discourteous to your opponent).
2) Don’t think for hours trying to find a quick refutation; just play normal sensible moves and enjoy the game!

A)

1...c6

The Nimzowitsch Defence. This is a favourite of, amongst others, England’s first grandmaster Tony Miles.

2...c3

This move fits in well with our repertoire, as the natural 2...e5 3...c4 transposes to the Bishops Opening (see Chapter 2). Here we will deal with attempts by Black to stay strictly in Nimzowitsch territory.

2...e6

Or

a) 2...d6 3...d4 d5 4 e5 d7 5...f3 d6 6 h3 is better for White according to NCO. Black would like to challenge with ...c7-c5, but this is difficult with Black’s knight misplaced on c6.

b) 2...d6 3...d4 looks like a kind of Pirc/Modern Defence. After 3...g6 White can continue as against these openings with 4 e3 g7 5...d2.

3...f3?!?

I like this tricky move. Normal is 4 d4 b4, which is just a bit better for White.

3...b4

3...d5 should be answered by 4 b5.

4...e2!

A very nice idea. White deploys the knight on g3 and makes the bishop on b4 look a bit
silly.

4...\(\text{d} 7\)

4...\(\text{d} 5 \text{e} 5 \text{d} 4 \text{c} 6 \text{c} 3\) is good for White after either 6...\(\text{x} \text{c} 3\) \(\text{b} 3\) \(\text{d} 4\) or 6...\(\text{c} 5\) \(\text{b} 4 \text{b} 6 \text{b} 5\).

5 \(\text{d} 4 \text{d} 6 \text{g} 3 \text{f} 6 \text{c} 3 0-0 \text{d} 3 0 \text{e} 5 \text{f} 9 0-0 \text{e} 8 10 \text{h} 3\)

A Ledger-Miles, British Championship 1998. I like White’s position. His pieces are set up as in the Ruy Lopez, but Black has lost time with his dark-squared bishop and hasn’t got the usual Lopez counterplay on the queenside.

B)

1...\(\text{b} 6\)

This is Owen’s Defence (otherwise known as the Queen’s Fianchetto Defence). Another old favourite of Tony Miles, while more recently it’s been used by the 1999 FIDE World Championship finalist Vladimir Akopian and fellow Armenian Artashes Minaian.

2 \(\text{d} 4 \text{b} 7 \text{c} 3 \text{e} 6 \text{f} 3 \text{b} 4\)

4...\(\text{d} 5 \text{b} 5+! \text{c} 6 \text{d} 3\) is nice for White. Alekhine-Rozanov, Moscow 1908, continued 6...\(\text{f} 6 \text{c} 5 \text{d} 7 \text{g} 5 \text{e} 7 \text{g} 4 \text{f} 8\) 10 \(\text{x} \text{h} 7\) \(\text{x} \text{h} 7\) 11 \(\text{x} \text{x} 7\) \(\text{x} \text{g} 7\) \(\text{f} 8\) 13 \(\text{h} 4 \text{x} \text{h} 4\) 14 \(\text{x} \text{x} 4\) \(\text{x} \text{x} 4\) 15 \(\text{x} \text{g} 5\) \(\text{h} 1+ 16 \text{d} 2 \text{x} 2 17 \text{f} 6 \text{x} 5+ 18 \text{x} 5\) and White won.

5 \(\text{d} 3 \text{f} 6\)

After 5...\(\text{e} 7\) White should just continue playing natural moves, for example 6 0-0 \(\text{x} \text{c} 3\) 7 \(\text{b} \text{c} 3\) \(\text{d} 6\) 8 \(\text{a} 4 \text{a} 5 9 \text{e} 1\) 0-0 10 \(\text{f} 4 \text{f} 5\) 11 \(\text{e} 2 \text{d} 7\) 12 \(\text{f} 3 \text{b} 6\) 13 \(\text{x} \text{f} 5 \text{f} 5\) 14 \(\text{c} 4+ \text{h} 8\) 15 \(\text{e} 1 \text{g} 8\) 16 \(\text{e} 6 \text{e} 8\) 17 \(\text{d} 5 \text{d} 8\) 18 \(\text{d} 4\) and White was better, Crouch-Basman, London 1974.

6 \(\text{g} 5 \text{h} 6\) 7 \(\text{x} \text{f} 6 \text{f} 6\) 8 0-0 \(\text{x} \text{c} 3\) 9 \(\text{b} 3\)

9...\(\text{d} 5 \text{e} 5 \text{d} 5\) 11 \(\text{e} 5 0-0 12 \text{h} 5\) (or 12 \(\text{f} 4\)?) gives White good play on the kingside, Kramnik-Ehlvest, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

10 \(\text{d} 2 \text{e} 5\)

Or:

a) 10...\(\text{g} 6\) 11 \(\text{f} 4 \text{f} 5\) 12 \(\text{f} 3\) 13 \(\text{d} 5\) \(\text{x} 4\) 14 \(\text{x} 4\) 15 \(\text{e} 1\) \(\text{g} 6\) 17 \(\text{d} 3\) \(\text{b} 8\) 18 \(\text{d} 7\) \(\text{d} 7\) 19 \(\text{b} 5\) \(\text{e} 7\) (19...\(\text{e} 7\) is better – Minasian) 20 \(\text{c} 4\) \(\text{d} 4\) (Nikolaidis-Minasian, Panormo 1998), and now 21 \(\text{c} 4\) \(\text{c} 5\) 22 \(\text{e} 5\) is very good for White.

11 \(\text{f} 4\)

see following diagram

White has a promising attacking position. The game Dautov-Kengis, Daugavpils 1989, continued 11...\(\text{e} 4\) 12 \(\text{e} 5\)! \(\text{x} 5\) 13 \(\text{x} 5\) \(\text{g} 5\)
Attacking with 1 e4

14 \( \text{Nc3} \) \( \text{Nf3} + \) 15 \( \text{Nh1} \) 0-0 16 cxd4 and now best for Black is 16...\( \text{Nd7} \) 17 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e4} \) 18 \( \text{a4} \), and White will continue with e5-e6.

\[ \text{5 Bd2 e6 6 0-0 c5 7 dxc5!} \]

There are other ways to play, but this straightforward method guarantees White some advantage.

7...\( \text{Bxc5} \) 8 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{d5} \) 9 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 10 \( \text{a4} \)

10 \( \text{g5} \) also looks strong.

10...\( \text{b4} \) 11 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{bxc3} \) 12 \( \text{bxc3} \) 0-0 13 \( \text{c4} \)

\( \text{b4} \) 14 \( \text{b1} \)

C)

1...\( \text{a6} \)

The St George Defence. This had its fifteen minutes of fame when Tony Miles used it to sensationallly defeat World Champion Anatoly Karpov back in 1980. Is this the only opening that has scored 100% at the highest level? Despite this, Black's plan of early queenside expansion has never really caught on.

\[ \text{2 d4 b5 3 Nf3 Bb7 4 Bd3 Ng6} \]

Or 4...\( \text{e6} \) 5 0-0 \( \text{c5} \) 6 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{Nf6} \) 7 \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{h6} \) 8 \( \text{Nbd2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 9 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{d5} \) 10 \( \text{dxc5} \) \( \text{Bxc5} \) 11 \( \text{Nc4} \)

\( \text{e7} \) 12 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{bxa4} \) 13 \( \text{Bxa4} \) \( \text{c7} \) 14 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{b6} \)

15 \( \text{a6} \) \( \text{d6} \) 16 \( \text{exd6} \) \( \text{Bxd6} \) 17 \( \text{g4} \) and Black is in big trouble, Hennigan-Basman, British Championship 1991.

Faibisovich-Frog, St Petersberg 1993. After 14...\( \text{Bc7} \) 15 \( \text{Bb3} \) \( \text{Bc6} \) 16 \( \text{c5} \) White is ready to jump in with \( \text{Nc6} \).

Important Points

1) The continued utilisation of these openings by certain Grandmasters suggests that they are not so bad. Don't look for a direct refutation; just play normal developing moves.

2) If you study the suggested lines here, your opponent's unusual choices will lose much of their surprise value.
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