CHESS EXPLAINED

THE MAIN-LINE SLAV

David Vigorito

Exploring the dynamics of an intricate and robust opening
Chess Explained: The Main-Line Slav

David Vigorito
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+ check
++ double check
# checkmate
!! brilliant move
! good move
!? interesting move
?! dubious move
?
?? blunder
Ch championship
1-0 the game ends in a win for White
½-½ the game ends in a draw
0-1 the game ends in a win for Black
(D) see next diagram

Dedication

To my fiancée Heather Denison, for her love and support

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I am happy to present this book, my first for Gambit, on the Main-Line Slav. The purpose of this work is to give the reader a good understanding of all of the lines arising after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ¤f3 ¤f6 4 ¤c3 dxc4. This is not intended as a theoretical manual, although I shall delve into the complicated theoretical lines when necessary, especially in the most critical and topical variations.

The Main-Line Slav is a classical opening and has been played not only in several World Championship matches, but also by most of today’s top grandmasters. The list of players that have employed the Main-Line Slav includes World Champions Alekhine, Euwe, Smyslov, Petrosian, Kasparov, Kramnik, Khalifman, Ponomariov, Topalov and Anand. The list of top modern players is even more extensive: Akopian, Aronian, Bacrot, Bareev, Beliavsky, Bu Xiangzhi, Carlsen, Gelfand, Grischuk, Harikrishna, Ivanchuk, Kamsky, Kasimdzhanov, Lautier, Malakhov, Morozevich, Rublevsky, Sakaev, Shirov, I.Sokolov, Van Wely, Wang Yue and Yakovenko. The really amazing thing about these lists is that every player on them has played the Main-Line Slav with both colours. Not only is the Main-Line Slav undoubtedly sound, but it leads to very interesting positions.

My personal interest in this opening is long-standing. The Main-Line Slav has been a mainstay of my own repertoire for over a decade, and I firmly believe that an understanding of the structures and piece-play will be the leading factor in the reader’s success when employing this opening. Firstly, let’s examine how we reach our standard positions.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 (D)

This move defines the Slav complex. 2...e6 is also quite solid, and this move is examined in James Rizzitano’s Chess Explained: The Queen’s Gambit Declined. By playing 2...c6, Black indicates his desire to develop the c8-bishop before playing ...e6.

Sometimes White will use the tricky move-order 3 ¤c3 ¤f6 4 e3. Here the desirable development 4...£f5 runs into the annoying 5 cxd5 cxd5 6 £b3!, exploiting the weaknesses on b7 and d5. Nevertheless, 4 e3 is rather committal, as White has also locked in his own queen’s bishop. Black has a few ways to play. He can reply 4...e6, heading into the Semi-Slav Defence. Now that White has committed to 4 e3 there are no 5 £g5 lines to worry about. Another option is 4...a6, with a Chebanenko Slav. Again, because White has committed to 4 e3, Black has a smaller set of lines to learn. A less common alternative is 4...g6. This hybrid of the Slav and Grünfeld is called the Schlechter Defence. Black can also play 3...dxc4, giving up the centre immediately. All four options are playable, and Black’s choice is largely a matter of taste.

Black must also be ready to face the Exchange Slav, 3 cxd5 cxd5.

3...£f6 4 ¤c3 (D)

Here, too, White could play 4 e3, when Black can head for a Semi-Slav with 4...e6 (these lines
are covered by Reinaldo Vera in Chess Explained: The Meran Semi-Slav) or stay in Slav territory with 4...f5 (or 4...g4). Compared to the line mentioned above, 5 cxd5 cxd5 6 b3 is less dangerous because there is less pressure on the d5-pawn, so Black can defend b7 comfortably with 6...c7. Once again, 4...a6 is a major option here too.

As on the previous move, 4 cxd5 cxd5 is the Exchange Slav.

4...dxc4

One of the virtues of the Slav Defence is its flexibility. Both 4...e6 (the Semi-Slav), and 4...a6 (the Chebanenko Slav) are important options.

The immediate 4...f5?! again runs into 5 cxd5 cxd5 6 b3.

This book will concentrate on 4...dxc4, with which Black cedes the centre in order to develop his c8-bishop. There is also the possibility of playing ...b5, making it difficult for White to recover the pawn on c4.

It is the position after 4...dxc4 (see next diagram) that constitutes the Main-Line Slav.

5 a4

This is the most important move. By preventing ...b5, White ensures that he will recover the pawn. The solid 5 e3 also enables White to recover the pawn, but following 5...b5 6 a4 b4 White will have to waste time moving his knight around. The aggressive 5 e4 grabs the centre immediately but this is a true gambit, as White will not get his pawn back. Both of these moves are covered in Chapter 7.

5...f5 (D)

Black has alternatives to this natural developing move. The Bronstein Variation, 5...g4, is rather risky, while the Smyslov Variation, 5...a6, is slightly passive. Both moves are examined in Chapter 6.

Now White is at a crossroads. There are two main bodies of theory, and the resulting middlegames that arise are quite different.

Dutch Variation

6 e3

This is the classical choice. White recovers the pawn immediately.

6...e6 7 xc4xb4

Black takes advantage of the hole on b4 created by White's 5th move and hinders the advance e4 at the same time.

8 0-0 (D)
INTRODUCTION

This is the starting point of the Dutch Variation. Black already has a decision to make regarding his move-order: he can play either 8...\(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{bd7}\) or 8...0-0. The difference between them is discussed in the first two chapters of the book. Against either move White will have to make a choice between two principled ways of fighting for the advantage: he can aim to play a quick e4 by choosing 9 \(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{e2}\) (Chapter I) or he can try to corral Black's f5-bishop by playing 9 \(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{h4}\) (Chapter 2). Both plans lead to middlegames that require understanding of typical positions more than concrete theoretical knowledge.

Central Variation

6 \(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{e5}\) (D)

This is the other main branch of play.

This ambitious continuation sees White attempt to dominate the centre with f3 and e4. If White is able to do this without making any concessions, Black's f5-bishop could be locked out of play, so Black must take concrete measures again this plan. There are four main ways of fighting White's intentions.

The first two see Black play 6...\(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{bd7}\), challenging the white knight. After 7 \(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{x}\texttt{c4}\) Black again has a choice. 7...\(\texttt{\texttt{W}}\texttt{c7}\) intends a quick...

...e5, whereupon the play can quickly become very sharp. This is examined in Chapter 3. More solid is 7...\(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{b6}\) 8 \(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{e5}\) a5, when Black will usually follow up with ...e6 or ...\(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{f}\texttt{d7}\), depending on White's play. This approach is covered in Chapter 4.

Black's other two methods to fight White's plan begin with 6...e6. After 7 f3 Black can play a piece sacrifice with 7...\(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{b4}\) 8 e4 \(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{x}\texttt{e4}\) or else strike in the centre with 7...c5. These methods are both discussed in Chapter 5.

In general, the play after 6 e3 mostly requires a more general understanding of the structures that arise, while 6 \(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{e5}\) necessitates a bit more concrete knowledge. Because of this, the prospective player of the black pieces is well advised to have something worked out against 6 \(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{e5}\). The sword cuts both ways, however, and White must know quite a few different systems in order to play 6 \(\texttt{\texttt{Q}}\texttt{e5}\) himself!

I hope the reader enjoys this work as much as I enjoyed writing it and I wish everyone much success in this rich opening with both colours!

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November 2008
The four games in this chapter examine the main lines arising after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Qf3 Qf6 4 Qc3 dxc4 5 a4 Qf5 6 e3 (the Dutch Variation) 6...e6 7 Qxc4 Qb4 8 0-0 where White follows up with 9 Qe2. White will aim to advance in the centre with e4, and Black can react to this plan in a few different ways. It is important for Black to be prepared to meet this advance, and the move-order that Black chooses will generally commit him to certain middlegame plans. This chapter is fundamental to understanding the Main-Line Slav because both sides develop in a very natural and classical manner, so we see the clash of ideas in its purest form.

The Games

Game 1 (Harikrishna-Vescovi) examines the real ‘main line’ of the Slav. Black allows e4 by playing 8...0-0 9 Qe2 Qbd7 (or 8...Qbd7 9 Qe2 0-0) and prepares to strike back in the centre with ...c5 or ...e5. After 10 e4 Qg6 11 Qd3 Qh5 12 e5 Qd5 13 Qxd5 cxd5 the pawn-structure is determined for the middlegame. The play is surprisingly rich, with both sides having reasonable options on almost every move. In the game White is able to reach an endgame with the bishop-pair and a space advantage. Harikrishna’s instructive play shows the long-term chances that are possible for White in these kinds of positions.

Game 2 (Siebrecht-Peralta) sees Black prevent e4 using the move-order finesse 8...0-0 9 Qe2 Qg6. This allows White to grab the bishop-pair with 10 Qe5 Qbd7 11 Qxg6 hxg6, but Black gets a very solid position in this line. This variation is not overly theoretical, which explains its popularity. Patience is required by both sides in this type of middlegame. White must hope that he will eventually make something of the bishops, while Black must try to achieve meaningful counterplay. In our featured game, there is an exchange of inaccuracies, and later White gets sloppy and Black scores with a kingside attack.

Game 3 (Pelletier-L’Ami) looks at a formerly topical pawn sacrifice. After 8...Qbd7 9 Qe2 Qg6, White correctly plays 10 e4 anyway and Black snatches the pawn with 10...Qxc3. Instead the prudent 10...0-0 would head for the strategic waters of Game 1 and many players use this move-order to do just that. After 11 bxc3 Qxe4 12 Qa3 Black cannot easily castle kingside. This line has lost much of its former popularity because few players relish the task of withstanding White’s attack, but it still appears viable. Here we see White offer up a second pawn to fuel his initiative, and Black ends up having to bail out by giving up two minor pieces for a rook. Materially speaking, this should be fine, but the rooks have little scope and White narrowly misses winning the ending.

Game 4 (Leko-Gelfand) examines a different approach altogether, with Black playing an early ...Qg4. After the exchange on f3, White has the bishop-pair, but his central control on the dark squares is diminished. This is a solid, if somewhat passive, line for Black. White introduces the interesting novelty 15 Qf5 and an endgame arises that is very pleasant for White. A struggle revolves around the mobility of White’s kingside pawn-majority. Black unexpectedly loses a piece and despite tenacious resistance, White’s technique carries him through in the end.
DUTCH VARIATION: WHITE PLAYS 9 \( \text{f2} \)

Game 1

Penteala Harikrishna – Giovanni Vescovi

FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2005

1 \( d4 \) \( d5 \) 2 \( c4 \) \( c6 \) 3 \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 4 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{dxc4}} \) 5 \( a4 \) \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) \( (D) \)

\[ \text{W} \]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
1 \text{d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 f3 f6 4 c3 dxc4 5 a4 f5} \\
6 e3
\end{array}
\]

6 \( e3 \)

This is the most fundamental move – White simply prepares to recapture the c4-pawn in the most natural way. He will choose his middlegame plan only after completing kingside development.

6... \( \text{e6} \) 7 \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) \( \text{\textit{b4}} \)

Black takes advantage of the weakened b4-square and at the same time holds back White’s e4 advance. Often the pressure on the a5-e1 diagonal is a nuisance for White.

8 0-0

White is now ready to play \( \text{we2} \), intending e4. Black can simply allow this or try to prevent it in a couple of different ways.

8...0-0 \( (D) \)

This is already an important decision. If Black plans to play the main line, as in this game, it does not make much difference if he castles or plays ... \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) first. The choice may depend on how Black wants to play against \( \text{\textit{h4}} \) ideas (covered in the next chapter). However, if Black wants to prevent e4, he must know which position he is aiming for. 8... \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) 9 \( \text{we2} \) \( \text{\textit{g6}} \) forces White to offer a pawn sacrifice if he wants to play e4 (Game 3), while

8... \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) 9 \( \text{we2} \) 0-0 10 e4 \( \text{\textit{g6}} \) is an alternate route to the Main Line examined in this game.

9 \( \text{we2} \)

Note that 9 \( \text{\textit{b3}} \) leads to nothing after 9... \( \text{\textit{e7}} \), protecting both the b4-bishop and the b7-pawn. (We should note that this is a significant difference between the 8...0-0 and 8... \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) move-orders, since 8... \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{b3}} \) poses Black more problems, especially if he wishes to avoid a draw – see the notes to Game 6.)

9 \( \text{\textit{h4}} \) is the only other move to fight for an advantage. This is covered in Chapter 2.

9... \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \)

Black simply allows White to carry out his plan. This may seem like a concession, but Black hopes that he will be able either to exert pressure on White’s centre, or to strike back with ...c5 or ...e5. Black can also prevent e4 with the prophylactic 9... \( \text{\textit{g4}} \), although this allows White to grab the bishop-pair with 10 \( \text{\textit{e5}} \). This approach is covered in Game 2. Another idea is 9... \( \text{\textit{g4}} \). This plan is examined in Game 4.

10 e4 \( \text{\textit{g6}} \)

Not 10... \( \text{\textit{xc3}} \)? because of 11 exf5!. Now, however, Black threatens ... \( \text{\textit{xc3}} \), winning the e4-pawn.

11 \( \text{\textit{d3}} \) \( (D) \)
This is the best way of dealing with the threat to the pawn.

11 e5 is a rarely-played alternative. White's centre loses its flexibility without getting anything in return. After 11...d5 it is not easy for White to achieve anything on the kingside. Black's g6-bishop is like a rock, while the c4-bishop is not contributing much to White's play. After 12 e4 (12 exd5 cxd5 13 d3 is similar to the main game, but Black has not spent time on ...h5-g6) 12...e7 13 d1 e8 14 a5 a6 15 h4 h6, Black's pieces all stand well and he can prepare ...c5 at his leisure, Lund-Vigorito, Budapest 2003.

White has created his ideal pawn set-up. Black has to decide how to fight against White's centre.

11...h5

By pinning the f3-knight, Black prepares to break in the centre instead with ...e5. Black can also fiddle about with 11...h6 or 11...e8 but the text-move is more direct.

The immediate 11...c5 is considered to be a mistake because of 12 e5!. Now 12...xd3? 13 wxd3 d5 gets crushed by 14 g5! g6 15 w3 h5 16 xe6!, and after 12...d5 13 exd5 exd5 14 xg6 hxg6 Black's pawn-structure looks very creaky. However, 12...cxd4 is not so clear. After 13 exf6 dxc3 14 xg7 xc3 15 d1 c7! 16 bxc3 xc3 17 b2 xb2 18 xb2+ g8 19 c1 e5 20 xg6 hxg6 21 d4 ac8 22 h4 White certainly had compensation for the pawn in Smyslov-Penrose, Amsterdam Olympiad 1954, but it is not so clear that Black is actually worse. White has also tried 13 a2, but 13...d5 14 xg6 hxg6 15 xb4 xb4 16 d4 c8 looks pretty solid for Black. So while 11...c5 looks a bit risky, it is probably not as bad as it is made out to be.

12 e5

Because Black has spent a tempo moving his bishop from the solid g6-square, White makes his move in the centre. After 12 f4 both 12...e8 and 12...e7 prepare ...e5 again. White can play 13 e5 d5 14 exd5 cxd5, but it is not clear that f4 is such a great square for White's bishop. For one thing, ideas of f4-f5 are off the table for a long time. 12...d5 (D)

Now White has a choice to make.

13 xd5

White changes the pawn-structure, and clarifies the position. He can also maintain the tension with 13 e4. This is a totally different approach. White keeps the knights on the board, hoping to develop an initiative on the kingside. This is a double-edged approach because Black has a very strong knight on d5, and he can also strike in the centre with ...c5. Black has two sensible replies:

a) 13...c5! was considered bad for a long time, but it has been resurrected by Timman. White has:

a1) 14 g3 is inaccurate. After 14...xf3 15 xf3 cxd4 16 c4 White wins back his pawn, but he has wasted time with his queen and his centre has been undermined. Then 16...g6 17 h6 (17 xd4 wc7 leaves White
struggling to protect his e5-pawn, and indeed 18 \texttt{h6 ffc8 19 \texttt{ac1 e5 saw the pawn fall in \texttt{Paschall-Donaldson, Lindsborg 2002)}} 17...\texttt{e8 18 \texttt{wdx4 c5 19 \texttt{we4 a6 was quite comfortable for Black in \texttt{Kobylin-Dzhakaev, Krasnodar 2004}}}.

a2) 14 \texttt{g5} is considered the critical response. Timman’s innovation was 14...	exttt{wc7!} (instead, 14...	exttt{wa5?! 15 \texttt{b5! is annoying}) 15 \texttt{h6! 16 d2 wd8!}. Now Timman cites 17 \texttt{xc5 (instead 17 \texttt{xb4?! \texttt{xb4 18 \texttt{xc5 xxc5 19 xxf3 xxc3 20 \texttt{xf3 xdx4 21 we4 xdx3 22 wxb4 b6, as in \texttt{Wojtkiewicz-Timman, Reykjavik 2000}, gives Black a very comfortable major-piece middlegame, because the only real weakness on the board is White’s e5-pawn) 17...\texttt{xc5 18 dxc5 xdx2 19 wdx2 xxf3 20 gxf3 wc7 21 f4 \texttt{ad8 22 xc4 a5 as giving Black compensation for the pawn. This has not been tested in practice, one reason being that 13 \texttt{e4 has basically vanished from tournament play.}}

b) 13...\texttt{e7 is the traditional move. Black returns the bishop to the kingside and covers the g5-square. Now 14 \texttt{g5? loses a piece to 14...\texttt{xf3}, so White usually plays 14 \texttt{g3 g6 15 xg6 (D), which gives Black a decision to make.}}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

B

b1) 15...\texttt{fxg6 is played frequently, and indeed the recapture with the f-pawn is a common idea in the Slav. Black opens the f-file for his rook and can sometimes even take the initiative on the kingside. Nevertheless, I believe this recapture is inaccurate here and gives White better chances of retaining an edge. The problem is that the e6-pawn is a long-term weakness, and if Black opens the position with ...c5 this is more likely to prove important. In practice Black has chosen to manoeuvre with his pieces, but White’s space advantage can mean a long and passive defence for Black. 16 \texttt{e4 h6 (16...\texttt{xf5 17 a5 g5 18 \texttt{d2 a6 19 b4 \texttt{xb8 20 xab1 xg6 21 g3 xc7 22 xc3 h6 23 xfd2 xdb5 24 xc4 \texttt{wd5 25 wc2 was Yermolinsky-Khmelnytsky, USA Ch, Parsippany 1996; Black has no counterplay and the weaknesses of the c5- and d6-squares are a headache for him) and now 17 a5 is a typical method. White gains space and prevents ...a5, which would secure the b4-square for Black’s pieces. 17...a6 18 \texttt{e1! (another typical idea – the knight does very little on f3, and from d3 it will eye the important f4-, b4- and c5-squares) 18...\texttt{we8 19 xdx3 g5 20 b4 wg6 21 xdc5 xxc5 22 xxc5 \texttt{ad8 23 xc6 xdx6 24 xdx6 xc7 25 xca3 was played in \texttt{Oll-Wojtkiewicz, New York 1994}. The protected passed pawn on d6 gives White a lasting advantage.}}

b2) 15...\texttt{hxg6 is a sounder continuation. Black will be able to play a quick c5 to make room for his pieces. The danger here is that White will get a knight to g5 and play \texttt{wg4-h4}, but this is difficult to achieve. Several games by Akopian have shown the soundness of Black’s position. 16 \texttt{e4 c5 17 xdx1 (instead 17 \texttt{eg5 cxd4 18 xdx4 xxe8 19 wh4 xdx5 is given by Sadler, and is very solid for Black, while 17 xdx3 wdb6?! 18 xdx5 exd5 19 dxc5 xxc5 20 xc3 xdx6 21 a5 a6 22 xac1 xac8 was fine for Black in Xx Jun-Akopian, Moscow Olympiad 1994; Black has good posts for all of his pieces and the e5-pawn is just as weak as the d5-pawn) 17...cxd4 18 xdx4 xcc8 19 xdx3 xcc7 20 xcl \texttt{wb8 and the weakness of the e5-pawn is already giving White problems, Gabriel-Akopian, Baden-Baden 1996.}}

13...\texttt{cxd5}

We have reached a French pawn-structure (or Caro-Kann, if you prefer, because Black’s queen’s bishop is outside the pawn-chain) which offers interesting strategic possibilities for both sides. White has a space advantage, while Black has a solid position and can take comfort in the fact that he has exchanged one
minor piece, which helps give him enough room to manoeuvre.

14 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}e3! (D)

This is the point of White’s play started with 12 e5. The queen move does several things. The pin on the f3-knight is now broken, and White immediately creates a threat of $\text{Qg}5$. For example, if Black plays the careless 14...$\text{Qb}8$? (a standard regrouping, as we shall see, but here it is poorly timed) White has 15 $\text{Qg}5$!, when 15...$\text{Qg}6$ loses to 16 $\text{Qxg}6$ $\text{hxg}6$ 17 $\text{Wh}3$. Instead, 15...h6 does not help either. White can still play 16 $\text{Wh}3$, or even 16 $\text{Qh}7$, with the idea 16...$\text{Qe}8$ 17 $\text{Qf}6$+! $\text{gx}f6$ 18 $\text{Wxh}6$ with a strong attack.

The position after 14 $\text{W}e3$ is very important in the Main-Line Slav. Black has a number of viable options.

14...$\text{Qe}7$

This is the most common continuation. Black is ready to capture the knight should it hop to g5. Because of White’s direct and strong reply, recently Black has started checking the alternatives more thoroughly:

a) 14...h6 has been a frequent choice, but I think that Black should avoid this weakening move, especially as it leaves the h5-bishop out on a bit of a limb.

a1) 15 $\text{Qd}2$ $\text{W}e7$ (15...$\text{Wa}5$ is the same) 16 $\text{Qxb}4$ $\text{Wxb}4$ 17 $\text{Qh}4$! plays against the h5-bishop, when after 17...$\text{Qa}8$ (17...f5?! 18 $\text{exf}6$ $\text{Qxf}6$ 19 f4 $\text{Qb}8$ 20 h3 $\text{Qc}6$ 21 g4 $\text{Qe}8$ 22 $\text{Qf}3$ gave White the better bishop and pawn-structure in Werle-Sadykov, World Under-18 Ch, Oropesa del Mar 2001) and now 18 f4? (Marra-Bella, correspondence game 1981) is bad due to Rogozenko’s 18...$\text{Qb}6$! intending...$\text{Qc}4$. If 19 $\text{b}3$, then 19...$\text{Qc}3$ 20 $\text{Qd}7$ threatens...$\text{Qe}2$!. 18 a5 $\text{Qb}8$! is about equal.

a2) By 15 $\text{Qe}1$! (D) White prepares f4-f5 and the knight may come back into play on d3, where it will control many important squares.

Now Black has:

a21) 15...$\text{Qg}6$ 16 $\text{Qxg}6$ $\text{fxg}6$ 17 $\text{Qd}3$ (17 $\text{Qc}2$ is also possible, when Black should probably just play 17...$\text{Qe}7$, instead of 17...$\text{Qa}5$ as in Bacrot-Gustaffson, Bundesliga 2003/4) 17...$\text{Qe}7$ 18 $\text{Wh}3$ $\text{Qf}5$ leaves Black solid but White certainly has some initiative, Smejkal-Portisch, Budapest 1975.

a22) 15...f5 16 $\text{exf}6$ $\text{Qxf}6$ 17 $\text{Qb}5$ (17 $\text{Qg}3$ $\text{Qac}8$ 18 $\text{Qb}5$ $\text{Qb}8$ 19 $\text{Qd}3$ a6 20 $\text{Qxb}4$ $\text{axb}5$ 21 $\text{Qd}2$ $\text{bxa}4$ 22 $\text{Qxa}4$ $\text{Qc}6$ 23 $\text{Qxc}6$ $\text{Qxc}6$ 24 $\text{Qc}3$ $\text{Qg}6$ 25 $\text{Wxg}6$ $\text{Qxg}6$ did not lead to much in Van Wely-Pelletier, Merida 2005) 17...$\text{Qb}8$ 18 $\text{Qd}3$ a6 19 $\text{Qxb}4$ $\text{axb}5$ 20 a5 $\text{Qa}6$ 21 $\text{Qd}3$ $\text{Qc}8$ 22 $\text{Qd}2$ $\text{Qc}2$ 23 $\text{Qac}1$ $\text{Qc}8$ 24 $\text{Qxc}2$ $\text{Qxc}2$ 25 $\text{Qc}1$ $\text{Qxc}1+$ 26 $\text{Qxc}1$ $\text{Qg}6$ 27 $\text{Qe}5$ gave White an enduring advantage in Gelfand-Lauter, Horgen 1994.

a23) 15...$\text{Qxe}1$ 16 $\text{Qxe}1$ (16 $\text{Wh}3$ $\text{Qa}5$! 17 $\text{Wxh}5$ $\text{Qd}2$ is equal) 16...$\text{Qg}6$ 17 $\text{Qf}1$ $\text{Qc}8$ 18 $\text{Qd}2$ $\text{We}7$ 19 a5 $\text{Qb}8$ 20 $\text{Qec}1$ $\text{Wd}7$ 21 $\text{Qb}4$ $\text{Qxc}1$ 22 $\text{Qxc}1$ $\text{Qc}8$ 23 $\text{Qc}5$ gave White a space advantage and the bishop-pair in Beliavsky-Ribli, Slovenian Team Ch, Bled 2000.

b) 14...$\text{Qe}8$ is a relatively recent finesse. Black overprotects e6 and prepares...$\text{Qf}8$,
which will cover the sensitive e6-, h7- and g6-squares. 15...Qd1 (15.Qg5 Qg6 transposes to 14...Qg6 15.Qg5 Qe8 below, although Black has avoided 15.Qxg6; another idea is 15.Qd2!? Qxd2 16.Qxd2 Qc8 17.a5 Qb8 18.Qb5 Qf8 19.Qb3, which gave White a slight edge in Berkes-Portisch, Hungarian Ch, Heviz 2003) 15...Qc8 16.f4 Qxe1 17.Qxe1 Qg6 is equal. After 18.f1 Qc2 19.b3 Wb5 20.Qb5 (Topalov-Kramnik, World Ch rapid playoff (game 1), Elista 2006), 20...Qe4! 21.Qxd7 Qxg2+ 22.Qf1 Qxh2 23.Qxe8 Qh1+ 24.Qf2 Qh2+ is a draw, because 25.Qg3?? Wd8! leads to mate.

b) 14...Qg6 15.Qg5 (15.Qxg6 fxg6 16.Qg5 Qe8 17.Wh3 Qf8 does not trouble Black, although 15.Qe2 could be tried, when Black can even respond with the equally coy 15...Qh5) 15...Qxe8! 16.f4 Qxd3 (16...Qc8 17.g4, as in Pelletier-Deviatkin, Moscow 2003, should be met by 17.Qxd3 18.Wxd3 Qf8 with a solid position) 17.Wxd3 f5! (D).

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W
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Black blocks the kingside while he has the chance. White can reply:

a) 18.Qe3 Qf8 19.Qh1 Qc8 (chasing the knight away with 19...Qe7 looks safer: 20.Qf3 Qc8 21.h3 Wc7 22.Qfc1 Wd7 23.Qg1 Wc7 24.Qg1 Wd7 25.Wb3 ½-½ Yakovenko-Rublevsky, Russian Ch, Moscow 2006) 20.g4 Wd7 21.Qg1 Wd7 22.Qf3 Qc4 23.Qg2 fxg4 24.Qxg4 Qxa4 25.Qag1 g6 26.h4 Qb4 27.h5 Wb5 with sharp play was the famous game Topalov-Kramnik, World Ch match (game 2), Elista 2006.

c) 18.Wb5 has gone unmentioned by commentators, even though it wins a pawn! After the accurate 18...Wb7 19.Wxb7 (19.Qxe6 a6 20.Wxb7 Wab8 21.Wxd5 Wxe6 is better for Black because of his active pieces) 19...h6! 20.Qh3 (20.Qf3 Qxe5! 21.Wxe7 Qxf3+ 22.Qxf3 Qxe7 is also good for Black) 20...a6! White must head for a draw with 21.Qe3 Qeb8 22.Wc7 Qc8 ½-½ Gulko-Vigorito, USA Ch, Tulsa 2008, because 21.a5 Qeb8 22.Wc6 Qc8 23.Wa4 Qc4! gives Black tremendous compensation for the pawn.

c) 18.g4 is a sharp try, which commits White to a controversial piece sacrifice: 18...h6! 19.Qxe6 (retreating would simply allow Black to capture on g4, and 19.gxf5 is worse in view of 19...hxg5 20.f6 Qg4 21.Wg6 Qxf6!, Cordova-A.Kovalyov, South American Junior Ch, Buenos Aires 2007) 19...Qxh2 20.gxf5 Qc7 (20...Qc6 is also possible, one point being that 21.Wb5 can be met by the counterattack 21...Wf4!, when 22.Wxb4 Qc2 23.Qd2 a5! is winning for Black and 22.Wxd5+ Qf8 also looks insufficient for White because Black’s pieces will be very active) 21.Qe1 Qh8 22.Qg1 Wf8 is given as better for Black by Timman, but matters are still not so clear.

c) 18.Qh1!? is an interesting idea. After 18...Qf8 19.Qg1 Qc7 20.Qf3 Qc8 21.Qd2 White intends a quick g4. The bishop may go to c3, or in the case of b3, it will cover the c3-square.

15.Qg5!

This forcing continuation is White’s latest attempt to squeeze something from the position. The coming simplifications do not make things as easy for Black as was once thought. Black’s defences have held up well against other moves:

a) 15.Qe1 was a favourite of Gligorić, but without Black’s weakened kingside (compared to the position after 14...h6), it does not look too threatening. After 15...Qg6 (15...Qc8 is also logical, because 16.f4 is met by the clever trick 16...Qc5!) 16.f4 Qc8 (16...Qxd3 17.Qxd3 f5 18.exf6 Qxf6 19.Qh2 a5 20.Qae1 Qd6 was agreed drawn here in Gligorić-Khalifman, Plovdiv 1986, but White has 21.f5 exf5 22.Wf3 threatening both Wxd5+ and Qg5) 17.g4 Qxd3 18.Qxd3 Qc4 19.Qd2 Wb6 20.Qc3 f5 21.exf6 Qxf6 22.Qe5 Qxe5 23.fxe5 Qcc8 ½-½ was Gligorić-Donaldson, Lone Pine 1981.
b) 15 \( \texttt{d2} \) is a common and flexible move. The bishop supports \texttt{b4} and can go to \texttt{c3} if necessary to shore up the \texttt{d4}-pawn. 15...\texttt{b8}! (the knight heads to its ideal square on \texttt{c6}) 16 \texttt{c}6 (White could also try to seize space on the queenside immediately with 16 \texttt{b4} or 16 \texttt{a5}) 16...\texttt{g6} 17 \texttt{f4} \texttt{c}6 18 \texttt{g4} (or 18 \texttt{c}3 \texttt{w}e8 19 \texttt{g4} \texttt{f5} 20 \texttt{g5} \texttt{h}2-\texttt{h}5 \texttt{Gligoric-Donaldson, Vancouver 2000}) 18...\texttt{f5} 19 \texttt{exf6} \texttt{xf6} 20 \texttt{a}3 \texttt{w}e8 21 \texttt{h}3 \texttt{h}8 22 \texttt{d}1 has been played a few times. White has space while Black is very solid, and both sides have pawn weaknesses.

15...\texttt{xg5} 16 \texttt{xg5} \texttt{g}6 (D)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{W} \\
\end{array}
\]

17 \texttt{e2}!

This is the point of White’s play – White simply holds on to the bishop-pair. Instead 17 \texttt{xg6} fxg6 18 \texttt{g4} \texttt{f}5, as in Bacrot-Akopian, European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005, does not get White anywhere.

After the text-move, the position is not so easy for Black despite his smooth development. In addition to the bishop-pair, White has a space advantage and the possibility of pressing on either wing. The one weak spot in White’s position is the pawn on \texttt{d4}, but it is difficult for Black to bring any meaningful pressure to bear upon this pawn.

17...\texttt{xg5}

If Black avoids the exchange of queens with 17...\texttt{b6}, then 18 \texttt{w}e7! is rather annoying. Instead, rerouting with 17...\texttt{b8} is thematic. 18 \texttt{xd8} (18 \texttt{w}e3! ? \texttt{c}6 19 \texttt{d2} was Shabalov-Vigorito, Las Vegas 2005, and here Donaldson suggests 19...\texttt{b6} 20 \texttt{c}3 \texttt{a}5 with some counterplay) 18...\texttt{x}d8 19 \texttt{d2} \texttt{c}6 20 \texttt{c}3 \texttt{d}c8 21 \texttt{a}5 \texttt{a}6 gave Black a solid position in Topalov-Bu Xiangzhi, Bilbao (blindfold) 2007, but it seems White still has a little something with his bishop-pair.

18 \texttt{xg5}

With a space advantage and the bishop-pair, White holds a nagging edge in the endgame. Black has no counterplay.

18...\texttt{f6}

After 18...\texttt{d}c8, 19 \texttt{b}5 is a problem because the desired 19...\texttt{b}8 fails to 20 \texttt{e}7. The immediate 18...\texttt{b}8 19 \texttt{fc}1 \texttt{c}6 is relatively best, at least forcing one of White’s pieces to defend the \texttt{d4}-pawn.

19 \texttt{fc}1 (D)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\end{array}
\]

Black already feels very uncomfortable. It is becoming difficult for him to coordinate his pieces because he cannot play ...\texttt{b}8-c6.

19...\texttt{a}6 20 \texttt{h}4!

Gaining more space and forcing Black to make a decision concerning the kingside pawn-structure.

20...\texttt{f6}

After 20...\texttt{h}6 21 \texttt{d}2 Black is faced with allowing \texttt{h}5, gaining more territory and fixing the kingside pawns on dark squares. If he plays 21...\texttt{h}5 himself, his bishop will be tied to the defence of the \texttt{h}-pawn for the foreseeable future.

21 \texttt{exf6}

The disturbance in the pawn-structure favours White, because his bishops can operate more easily all over the board.
21...\(\text{Qxf6}\)
Perhaps 21...gx\(\text{f6}\) was a better try, hoping to get some counterplay in the centre.
22 f3 \(\text{c2}\)
This temporary closing of the c-file brings Black little relief.
23 \(\text{a3!}\) \(\text{f7}\) 24 \(\text{f2}\) \(\text{c6}\) (D)

25 b4!
This is a typical method in this kind of structure. The further advance of the b-pawn is very unpleasant. Black’s pieces are pushed back and White’s pawns will be closer to queening as the position simplifies.
25...\(\text{d7}\) 26 b5 \(\text{xc8}\) 27 a5
Fixing the a-pawn with 27 bxa6 bxa6 28 a5 also looks very good.
27...\(\text{xb5}\) 28 \(\text{xb5}\) \(\text{f6}\) 29 \(\text{a2}\) \(\text{b3}\)
29...\(\text{g6}\) was a better try, but Black was understandably loathe to remove the bishop from the battle on the queenside.
30 \(\text{xc8}\) \(\text{xc8}\) 31 \(\text{h2}\) \(\text{c4}\)
Exchanging rooks with 31...\(\text{c2+}\) 32 \(\text{xc2}\) \(\text{xc2}\) does not help after 33 \(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{gxf6}\) 34 \(\text{c6}\)!
32 \(\text{xc4}\) dxc4 33 \(\text{xb7}\) \(\text{g6}\) 34 a6
Black’s c-pawn is not dangerous, because White controls the queening square.
34...\(\text{f6}\) 35 a7 \(\text{a6}\) 36 \(\text{xf6}\)!
White simplifies into an easily winning rook endgame.
36...\(\text{xh6}\) 37 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{a5}\) 38 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{a4}\) 39 \(\text{c3}\) h5 40 g4 \(\text{g6}\) 41 g5 \(\text{h7}\) 42 \(\text{e7}\) 1-0
Black is in zugzwang. After 42...\(\text{g6}\) 43 f4 \(\text{h7}\) 44 d5! exd5 45 f5 Black will soon have to give up his rook or be mated.

Game 2
Sebastian Siebrecht – Fernando Peralta
Binissalem 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{f6}\) 4 \(\text{c3}\) dxc4 5 a4 \(\text{f5}\) 6 e3 e6 7 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{b4}\) 8 0-0-0 9 \(\text{e2}\) \(\text{g6}\)

This prophylactic move is a solid alternative to the main line of Game 1. If Black really wants to prevent e4, this is the safest way to do so. Black develops easily and has plenty of room for his pieces. This all comes at a price though, as White can easily grab the bishop-pair while slightly weakening Black’s pawn-structure.

Black can also choose to stop e4 physically with 9...\(\text{d4}\) (D).

Usually White has chosen to meet this with an undoubtedly sound pawn sacrifice (line ‘c’), but there are alternatives.

a) 10 \(\text{xe4}\) does not look critical. 10...\(\text{xe4}\) 11 \(\text{d1}\) (11 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{g6}\) 12 \(\text{b3}\) has also been played, but this does not look too dangerous either) 11...\(\text{d7}\) 12 \(\text{d3}\) \(\text{f6}\) 13 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{d6}\) was very comfortable for Black in Sunye-Vescovi, São Paulo 2005.
b) 15 $\texttt{d2}$ is a common and flexible move. The bishop supports b4 and can go to c3 if necessary to shore up the d4-pawn. 15...$\texttt{b8}$! (the knight heads to its ideal square on c6) 16 $\texttt{c1}$ (White could also try to seize space on the queenside immediately with 16 b4 or 16 a5) 16...$\texttt{g6}$ 17 f4 $\texttt{c6}$ 18 g4 (or 18 $\texttt{c3}$ $\texttt{e8}$ 19 g4 f5 20 g5 $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ Gligorić-Donaldson, Vancouver 2000) 18...f5 19 exf6 $\texttt{xg6}$ 20 $\texttt{c3}$ $\texttt{e8}$ 21 h3 $\texttt{h8}$ 22 $\texttt{d1}$ has been played a few times. White has space while Black is very solid, and both sides have pawn weaknesses.

15...$\texttt{xg5}$ 16 $\texttt{xg5}$ $\texttt{g6}$ ($D$)

17 $\texttt{e2}$!

This is the point of White’s play – White simply holds on to the bishop-pair. Instead 17 $\texttt{xg6}$ fxg6 18 $\texttt{g4}$ $\texttt{f5}$, as in Bacrot-Akopian, European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005, does not get White anywhere.

After the text-move, the position is not so easy for Black despite his smooth development. In addition to the bishop-pair, White has a space advantage and the possibility of pressing on either wing. The one weak spot in White’s position is the pawn on d4, but it is difficult for Black to bring any meaningful pressure to bear upon this pawn.

17...$\texttt{xg5}$

If Black avoids the exchange of queens with 17...$\texttt{b6}$, then 18 $\texttt{e7}$! is rather annoying. Instead, rerouting with 17...$\texttt{b8}$ is thematic. 18 $\texttt{xd8}$ (18 $\texttt{e3}$!? $\texttt{c6}$ 19 $\texttt{d2}$ was Shabalov-Vigorito, Las Vegas 2005, and here Donaldson suggests 19...$\texttt{b6}$ 20 $\texttt{c3}$ $\texttt{a5}$ with some counterplay) 18...$\texttt{d6}$ 19 $\texttt{d2}$ $\texttt{c6}$ 20 $\texttt{c3}$ $\texttt{dc8}$ 21 a5 a6 gave Black a solid position in Topalov-Bu Xiangzhi, Bilbao (blindfold) 2007, but it seems White still has a little something with his bishop-pair.

18 $\texttt{xg5}$

With a space advantage and the bishop-pair, White holds a nagging edge in the endgame. Black has no counterplay.

18...$\texttt{f8}$

After 18...$\texttt{ac8}$, 19 $\texttt{b5}$ is a problem because the desired 19...$\texttt{b8}$ fails to 20 $\texttt{e7}$. The immediate 18...$\texttt{b8}$ 19 $\texttt{fc1}$ $\texttt{c6}$ is relatively best, at least forcing one of White’s pieces to defend the d4-pawn.

19 $\texttt{fc1}$ ($D$)

Black already feels very uncomfortable. It is becoming difficult for him to coordinate his pieces because he cannot play ...$\texttt{b8}$-$\texttt{c6}$.

19...$\texttt{a6}$ 20 $\texttt{h4}$!

Gaining more space and forcing Black to make a decision concerning the kingside pawn-structure.

20...$\texttt{f6}$

After 20...$\texttt{h6}$ 21 $\texttt{d2}$ Black is faced with allowing $\texttt{h5}$, gaining more territory and fixing the kingside pawns on dark squares. If he plays 21...$\texttt{h5}$ himself, his bishop will be tied to the defence of the h-pawn for the foreseeable future.

21 $\texttt{xf6}$

The disturbance in the pawn-structure favours White, because his bishops can operate more easily all over the board.
DUTCH VARIATION: WHITE PLAYS 9 \( \text{\#}e2 \)

21...\( \text{\#}xf6 \)
Perhaps 21...\( \text{\#}xf6 \) was a better try, hoping to get some counterplay in the centre.

22 \( \text{\#}c2 \)
This temporary closing of the c-file brings Black little relief.

23 \( \text{\#}a3! \text{\#}f7 \) 24 \( \text{\#}f2 \text{\#}c6 \) (D)

25 \( \text{\#}b4! \)
This is a typical method in this kind of structure. The further advance of the b-pawn is very unpleasant. Black's pieces are pushed back and White's pawns will be closer to queening as the position simplifies.

25...\( \text{\#}d7 \) 26 \( \text{\#}b5 \text{\#}xc8 \) 27 \( a5 \)
Fixing the a-pawn with 27 \( \text{\#}xa6 \text{\#}xa6 \) 28 \( a5 \) also looks very good.

27...\( \text{\#}xb5 \) 28 \( \text{\#}xb5 \text{\#}f6 \) 29 \( \text{\#}a2 \text{\#}b3 \)
29...\( \text{\#}g6 \) was a better try, but Black was understandably loathe to remove the bishop from the battle on the queenside.

30 \( \text{\#}xc8 \text{\#}xc8 \) 31 \( \text{\#}b2 \text{\#}c4 \)
Exchanging rooks with 31...\( \text{\#}c2+ \) 32 \( \text{\#}xc2 \text{\#}xc2 \) does not help after 33 \( \text{\#}xf6 \text{\#}xf6 \) 34 \( \text{\#}c6! \).

32 \( \text{\#}xc4 \text{\#}xc4 \) 33 \( \text{\#}xb7+ \text{\#}g6 \) 34 \( a6 \)
Black's c-pawn is not dangerous, because White controls the queening square.

34...\( \text{\#}c6 \) 35 \( \text{\#}a6 \) 36 \( \text{\#}xf6! \)
White simplifies into an easily winning rook endgame.

36...\( \text{\#}xf6 \) 37 \( \text{\#}e3 \) 38 \( \text{\#}d2 \text{\#}a4 \) 39 \( \text{\#}c3 \)
\( \text{\#}h5 \) 40 \( \text{\#}g4 \text{\#}g6 \) 41 \( \text{\#}h7 \) 42 \( \text{\#}e7! \) 1-0
Black is in zugzwang. After 42...\( \text{\#}g6 \) 43 \( f4 \text{\#}h7 \) 44 \( d5! \text{\#}exd5 \) 45 \( f5 \) Black will soon have to give up his rook or be mated.

Game 2

Sebastian Siebrecht – Fernando Peralta

Binissalem 2004

1 \( \text{\#}d4 \text{\#}d5 \) 2 \( \text{\#}c4 \text{\#}c6 \) 3 \( \text{\#}f3 \text{\#}f6 \) 4 \( \text{\#}c3 \text{\#}xc4 \) 5 \( a4 \)
\( \text{\#}f5 \) 6 \( \text{\#}e3 \) 7 \( \text{\#}xe4 \) 8 ...0-0-0 \( \text{\#}e2 \text{\#}g6 \)

This prophylactic move is a solid alternative to the main line of Game 1. If Black really wants to prevent e4, this is the safest way to do so. Black develops easily and has plenty of room for his pieces. This all comes at a price though, as White can easily grab the bishop-pair while slightly weakening Black's pawn-structure.

Black can also choose to stop e4 physically with 9...\( \text{\#}e4 \) (D).

Usually White has chosen to meet this with an undoubtedly sound pawn sacrifice (line 'c'), but there are alternatives.

a) 10 \( \text{\#}xe4 \) does not look critical. 10...\( \text{\#}xe4 \)
11 \( \text{\#}d1 \) (11 \( \text{\#}d2 \text{\#}g6 \) 12 \( \text{\#}b3 \) has also been played, but this does not look too dangerous
either) 11...\( \text{\#}d7 \) 12 \( \text{\#}d3 \text{\#}f6 \) 13 \( \text{\#}d2 \text{\#}d6 \) was very comfortable for Black in Sunye-Vescovi, São Paulo 2005.
b) 10 \(\text{a2} \text{c7}\) (10...\(\text{d6}\) 11 \(\text{d5} \text{xe5}\) 12 \(\text{dxe5} \text{c5}\) 13 \(\text{d1}\) was better for White in A.Rychagov-Guliev, Moscow 1997) 11 \(\text{d3} \text{g5}\) 12 \(\text{d5} \text{xd3}\) 13 \(\text{xd3} \text{f6}\) 14 \(\text{c4} \text{c5}\) 15 \(\text{f4} \text{c7}\) was unusual, but equal, in Lugovoi-Bareev, Russian Ch semi-final, Kazan 2005.

c) 10 \(\text{d3}\) (this pawn sacrifice of Euwe’s is still considered to be important) 10...\(\text{xc3}\) 11 \(\text{bxc3} \text{c6}\) 12 \(\text{e2} \text{xe5}\) 13 \(\text{d5} \text{a3}\) 14 \(\text{a3} \text{e8}\) 15 \(\text{a1} \text{b6}\) 16 \(\text{e1} \text{c7}\) 17 \(\text{c5}\) (it is too early to return the pawn: 17...\(\text{b4}\) 18 \(\text{xe4} \text{xe4}\) 19 \(\text{xc6} \text{xe6}\) 20 \(\text{xc6}\) was much better for White in Euwe-Alekhine, World Ch match (game 17), The Hague 1937) 18 \(\text{c3}\) (18 \(\text{e4}\) allows Black to simplify the position by returning the pawn with 18...\(\text{c4}\) 19 \(\text{xb4} \text{axb4}\) 20 \(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{b6}\) 18...\(\text{e8}\) 19 \(\text{d8}\) gave White good compensation in Van Wely-Ni Hua, Moscow 2005.

d) 10 \(\text{e5}\)!? is the latest try. After 10...\(\text{d7}\) 11 \(\text{x7} \text{xa7}\) 12 \(\text{a2} \text{c7}\) 13 \(\text{f3} \text{f6}\) 14 \(\text{e4}\) \(\text{g6}\) 15 \(\text{e3} \text{c7}\) 16 \(\text{c1}\) White had a stable advantage in Topalov-Bu Xiangzhi, Sofia 2008. The knight is heading to d3, where it will control the important squares b4, c5 and e5.

We now return to 9...\(\text{g6}\) (D):

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram.png}
\end{center}

10 \(\text{e5}\)!

Instead 10 \(\text{e4}\)?! fails to 10...\(\text{xc3}\) 11 \(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 12 \(\text{a3} \text{e8}\), when White has very little for his pawn.

The natural move 10 \(\text{d1}\) is too tame. After 10...\(\text{d7}\) it is not easy for White to do anything constructive because 11 \(\text{e5}\)?! \(\text{xe5}\)! 12 \(\text{dxe5} \text{d7}\) 13 \(\text{f4} \text{e7}\) leaves Black standing quite well. All of his pieces, especially the g6-bishop, are active, and the attempt to fight for the initiative with 14 \(\text{a2}\) is well met by 14...\(\text{b6}\) (14...\(\text{a5}\) 15 \(\text{b4} \text{c7}\) 16 \(\text{a3} \text{b6}\) 17 \(\text{b3} \text{e5}\) is also quite good) 15 \(\text{b3}\) (or 15 \(\text{xb4} \text{xb4}\) 16 \(\text{b3} \text{xc4}\) 17 \(\text{xc4} \text{xc4}\) 18 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{d8}\) 15...\(\text{c5}\) with a great position for Black.

10...\(\text{bd7}\) 11 \(\text{xc6}\)

White must capture immediately, because 11 \(\text{d1}\)! \(\text{xe5}\) transposes to the previous note.

11...\(\text{hxg6}\) (D)

White has the bishop-pair, but Black has a very solid position, a slight lead in development, and the chance to play in the centre with an eventual...c5 or...e5 break. Compared to the previous game, White does not have much of a space advantage, but it is also less likely that White will become overextended. An interesting feature of this line is that it is usually easier for Black to develop constructively – the queen goes to a5 and the rooks come to the centre. White will usually play \(\text{d2}\), but then he has to figure out how to arrange his major pieces. Because Black is so solid and it is not so easy for White to advance in the centre, recently White has been examining some rather unconventional continuations over the next few moves.

12 \(\text{d1}\)

The immediate 12 \(\text{e4}\)! is premature because the d4-pawn is a bit loose. After 12...\(\text{d6}\) 13 \(\text{c5}\) (no better is 13 \(\text{d3} \text{d4}\) or 13 \(\text{e3} \text{c3}\) 14 \(\text{bxc3} \text{e4}\) 13...\(\text{d4}\) 14 \(\text{xe6}\) (14 \(\text{exf6} \text{xc4}\) 14...\(\text{f6}\) 15 \(\text{e6}\) 16 \(\text{e4}\) \(\text{e5}\) White does not have enough for the pawn.
A relatively new try is the aggressive 12 \( \mathcal{D}a2! \), by which White tries to muscle in the e4 advance. After 12...\( \mathcal{D} \)d6 (12...\( \mathcal{D} \)e7 is also possible, if somewhat passive) 13 e4 e5 White initiates complications with 14 f4! (D).

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}
\end{figure}
\end{center}

14...exd4 (instead 14...\( \mathcal{W} \)b6 loses a piece, but it still may be playable! 15 \( \mathcal{W} \)h1 exd4 16 e5 \( \mathcal{W} \)e8 17 \( \mathcal{W} \)e2 \( \mathcal{D} \)xe5! 18 fxe5 \( \mathcal{D} \)xe5 19 \( \mathcal{D} \)f4 \( \mathcal{D} \)xc4 20 \( \mathcal{W} \)xc4 \( \mathcal{D} \)e4 gave Black reasonable play in Golod-U.Zak, Tel-Aviv 2000) 15 e5 \( \mathcal{D} \)c5 (the pawn fork does not win a piece for White after all, but he hopes to use it to generate an initiative, possibly with the further advance e6, cracking open Black’s position on the light squares; it seems, however, that Black has sufficient resources) 16 \( \mathcal{W} \)h1 \( \mathcal{D} \)d5 17 b4?! (White does not have the development to support the e6 advance just yet) 17...\( \mathcal{D} \)e7 (17...\( \mathcal{D} \)xb4 18 \( \mathcal{D} \)xb4 \( \mathcal{D} \)xb4 19 e6 looks dangerous for Black) 18 a5 \( \mathcal{D} \)e8 19 \( \mathcal{D} \)d2 \( \mathcal{D} \)f8 20 \( \mathcal{W} \)e4 \( \mathcal{W} \)d7 21 \( \mathcal{W} \)xd4 \( \mathcal{D} \)ed8 was unclear in Van Wely-Z.Almasi, Polanica Zdroj 2000. Black is still very solid and although White has recovered his pawn and has the bishop-pair, all of his pawn advances mean that his position could easily become overextended.

12...\( \mathcal{W} \)a5 (D)

Black can also play 12...\( \mathcal{W} \)e7 but it looks rather passive compared to the text-move. After 13 e4 e5 14 d5 \( \mathcal{D} \)b6 both 15 dxc6 and 15 \( \mathcal{D} \)b3 have scored well for White.

After the text-move, Black has a nice, active position with good development, but he will have to be careful on the light squares, especially after advancing with ...c5 or ...e5. If White can successfully meet these breaks with d5, Black’s position can cave in quickly. White has the bishop-pair, but his dark-squared bishop is passive and his queenside weaknesses make it somewhat difficult for him to advance in the centre. Often the middlegame sees White trying to slow the pace down a bit because Black can mobilize all of his pieces so quickly. If White can get properly developed without making any major concessions, he can look forward to gradually exploiting the long-term advantage of the bishops.

13 \( \mathcal{D} \)d2

This obvious developing move is the most natural reply to the attack on c3, but because this can render it difficult for White to make any headway without allowing an exchange of dark-squared bishops, White has tried lashing out with a couple of aggressive alternatives:

a) 13 e4 and then:

a1) 13...\( \mathcal{D} \)xc3 14 bxc3 \( \mathcal{W} \)xc3 is rare, but there is no specific reason why Black should avoid this. 15 \( \mathcal{D} \)d2 \( \mathcal{W} \)xd4! 16 \( \mathcal{D} \)b4 \( \mathcal{W} \)e5 17 \( \mathcal{D} \)xf8 \( \mathcal{W} \)xf8 should be fine for Black, with two pawns for the exchange, and 15 \( \mathcal{D} \)a3 can be met by 15...\( \mathcal{W} \)b4 or even 15...\( \mathcal{W} \)a5, when although White certainly has some compensation, Black can be satisfied with the opening, having an extra pawn and solid position. Of course this will not suit everyone.

a2) 13...e5 is more conservative and is the most common move in practice. 14 d5 \( \mathcal{D} \)b6 15 \( \mathcal{D} \)b3 (15 dxc6 bxc6 16 \( \mathcal{D} \)d3 \( \mathcal{W} \)fd8 is not bad for Black – he has active pieces and play on the dark squares and d- and b-files, and the c6-pawn
coves the b5- and d5-squares) 15...\(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d8 16 \(\text{\textbf{g}}\)g5 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xc3 17 bxc3 cxd5 18 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)b5 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xb5 19 axb5 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xe4!!? 20 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd8 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd8 21 \(\text{\textbf{a}}\)xa7 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)c5 gave Black reasonable compensation for the exchange in Antić-Sakaev, Herceg Novi 2001.

b) 13 \(\text{\textbf{d}}\)a2 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xa4 (both 13...\(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d6 and 13...\(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e7 are safer, but they allow White to play 14 e4) 14 e4 (14 b3?! does not work after 14...\(\text{\textbf{w}}\)a5 15 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xb4 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xa1 16 \(\text{\textbf{d}}\)a2 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)b1! 17 \(\text{\textbf{a}}\)a3 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)f5 18 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xf8 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xf8, when Black was just a pawn up in C.Bauer-Z.Almasi, European Team Ch, Batumi 1999) 14...\(\text{\textbf{w}}\)a5 15 e5 (15 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xb4 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xb4 16 b3 \(\text{\textbf{a}}\)fe8 looks insufficient for White) 15...\(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d5 16 h4. White is playing for a direct attack. Black has:

b1) 16...\(\text{\textbf{w}}\)fe8 17 \(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d3 \(\text{\textbf{g}}\)b6 (Hübner's suggestion of 17...\(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e7 18 \(\text{\textbf{h}}\)h3 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)f8 is solid enough, although White still has attacking chances after 19 h5) 18 \(\text{\textbf{a}}\)b3 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)b5 19 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)c2 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)f8 20 h5 gave White the initiative in Gomez Esteban-V.Georgiev, Elgoibar 1998.

b2) With 16...c5!? Black strikes at the centre immediately. 17 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd5 (the untried 17 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xb4!? looks tempting, because 17...\(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xa1 18 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd5 exd5 19 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd5 gives White a strong initiative) 17...exd5 18 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e3 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)b6 19 \(\text{\textbf{a}}\)xb4 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xb4 20 h5 gxh5 21 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xh5 \(\text{\textbf{a}}\)fe8 22 \(\text{\textbf{a}}\)a3!? gave White some initiative for the pawn in Nayer-Skachkov, St Petersburg 2003.

We now return to 13 \(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d2 (D):

\begin{center}
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\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

13...\(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d8 (D)

This centralization is very logical. The rook can help control the important d5-square and Black will be ready to contest the d-file should it open up. Black can play 13...e5 immediately, but this allows 14 d5! \(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d8 (14...cxd5 15 \(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d5 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd5 16 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xb4 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xb4 17 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd5 is very nice for White) 15 dxc6 bxc6 16 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)c1 e4. Black has some activity, but with the bishop-pair and better pawn-structure, White looks for choice after either 17 \(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d4 or Kramnik's suggestion 17 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)c2.

\begin{center}
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14 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e1

White drops back his bishop so it does not obstruct the d-file. The immediate 14 e4 can be met by 14...\(\text{\textbf{b}}\)b6, hitting the c4-bishop as well as the d4-pawn. Now, however, because the d4-pawn is secure, White is finally threatening to play e4. This is the most popular way to play the position. Other moves:

a) 14 \(\text{\textbf{b}}\)b3 can transpose to the game after 14...\(\text{\textbf{b}}\)b6 15 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e1, or Black can play the immediate 14...e5 15 dxe5 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xe5.

b) 14 \(\text{\textbf{a}}\)a2 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd2 15 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xd2 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xd2 16 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd2 is not too threatening. After 16...\(\text{\textbf{b}}\)b6 17 b3 (17 \(\text{\textbf{b}}\)b3 a5 is equal) 17...\(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d7 18 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)c2 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)xd4 19 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)xd4 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e8 20 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)c3 e5 21 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e2 exd4 22 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd4 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e4 Black even developed some initiative and went on to win in Blackburn-Shaw, European Union Ch, Liverpool 2006.

c) 14 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)e1 is an odd move. White is not really creating any pressure on the e1-a5 diagonal, if that is what he was hoping for. After 14...e5 15 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e4 (instead 15 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e2 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd2 16 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xd2 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xd2 17 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd2 exd4 18 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd4 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e5 19 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)c2 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)xc4 20 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)xc4 \(\text{\textbf{d}}\)d5 was equal in Jaeschke-Shaw, Bad Wiessee 2003) 15...\(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd2 16 \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)xf6+ \(\text{\textbf{c}}\)xf6 17 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd2 \(\text{\textbf{w}}\)xd2 18 \(\text{\textbf{x}}\)xd2 exd4 19 \(\text{\textbf{e}}\)e4...
DUTCH VARIATION: WHITE PLAYS 9  

(keeping the pawns intact with 19  \(\text{xd1}\) is more solid) 19...\(\text{d7}\) 20  \(\text{f3}\)  \(\text{fd8}\) 21  \(\text{xd1}\) a5 Black had a comfortable ending in Zhidkov-Skachkov, Naberezhnye Chelny 2006.

We now return to 14  \(\text{e1}\) (D):

14...\(\text{b6}\)

Before breaking in the centre, Black takes control of the d5-square. This is a solid approach, although Black has also tried to do without this move:

a) 14...c5 15  \(\text{d5}\) exd5 16  \(\text{xd5}\) (16  \(\text{xd5}\)  \(\text{xe1}\) 17  \(\text{xe1}\)  \(\text{xd5}\) 18  \(\text{xd5}\)  \(\text{f6}\) 19  \(\text{xb7}\)  \(\text{d2}\) gives Black counterplay) 16...\(\text{xd5}\) 17  \(\text{xd5}\)  \(\text{xe1}\) 18  \(\text{xe1}\)  \(\text{f6}\) 19  \(\text{b5}\) was drawn in Beliavsky-Gelfand, Lvov 2000, although White still maintains a slight initiative.

b) 14...e5 15  \(\text{d5}\) (this is the most critical, as 15  \(\text{c2}\) [eyeing the g6-pawn] 15...exd4 16  \(\text{xd4}\)  \(\text{e5}\) 17  \(\text{a2}\) c5 18  \(\text{dd1}\)  \(\text{a6}\)! controls c4 and d3, giving Black a comfortable position, Atalik-Haznedaroglu, European Team Ch, Plovdiv 2003) 15...exd5 (15...\(\text{e4}\) 16  \(\text{xc6}\)  \(\text{bxc6}\) transposes to the note to Black’s 13th move) 16  \(\text{xd5}\)  \(\text{c5}\) 17  \(\text{w4}\) looks a bit more comfortable for White due to his good light-square control.

15  \(\text{b3}\) e5

Black finally breaks in the centre. After playing this move, Black must always pay attention to his g6-pawn (because the f-pawn is pinned by White’s bishop on b3), but in practice this has not been too troubling for Black.

16 dxe5  \(\text{wxe5}\) (D)

The opening is over and it is time to take stock. White has the two bishops and a slightly healthier-looking pawn-majority. Black is well centralized, has a very solid position with good dark-square control on the queenside and some prospects for counterplay on the kingside as well by ...\(\text{g4}\) or ...g5-g4. White would love to be able to play e4, but this is not easy because the pawn advance will give Black even better control of the dark squares in the centre. The course of the middlegame will focus on Black’s piece activity – if White can neutralize Black’s counterplay, he can hope to gradually exploit his bishop-pair.

17  \(\text{c2}\)

Tickling the g6-pawn. White can also rush to simplify himself with 17  \(\text{xd8}\)  \(\text{xd8}\) 18  \(\text{d1}\). Black usually chooses to keep one pair of rooks on the board with 18...\(\text{e8}\) because White cannot penetrate on the d-file anyway. Retaining one set of rooks also gives Black better chances of gaining active counterplay at some point. Black will follow with ...a5 or ...g5 and should have sufficient play to hold the balance.

Prophylactic moves such as 17 g3 and 17 h3 are also possible.

17...\(\text{xd1}\) 18  \(\text{xd1}\) g5

Black removes his g-pawn from attack. Black can also get adventurous with 18...\(\text{g4}\) although after 19 h3! (instead 19 g3?!  \(\text{h5}\) 20 h4  \(\text{e5}\) gives Black very good play, and 19  \(\text{xg6}\)  \(\text{h2+}\) 20  \(\text{f1}\)  \(\text{h1+}\) (20...\(\text{f6}\) 21  \(\text{xg6}\)) 21  \(\text{e2}\)  \(\text{h2}\) (Black is heading down a dead end) 22  \(\text{e4}\)  \(\text{f1+}\) 23  \(\text{d2}\)  \(\text{xc3+}\) 24  \(\text{xc3}\)  \(\text{e8}\) 25  \(\text{c2}\) c5 26  \(\text{b1}\) c4 27  \(\text{c2}\) c3 28  \(\text{xc3}\)  \(\text{xf2}\) 29  \(\text{e5}\) f6
30 b3+ 1-0 was Werle-L’Ami, Groningen 2001.

19 h3 (D)

This just gives something for Black to latch onto. Calmly strengthening the position with 19 d3! intending d4 was stronger, because 19...g4 20 g3 does not lead anywhere now that the black queen cannot go to h5.

19...a5

Black secures both his bishop on b4 and the dark-squares on the queenside. This typical idea is solid enough, but Black could also play 19...g4, immediately creating counterplay on the kingside.

20 d3! bd7

20...g4 is still possible, although now White can force the exchange of queens with 21 hgx4 dxc4 22 d4 because the check on h2 is not fatal and both of Black’s knights are attacked.

21 d4 (D)

21...e7

Instead 21...xd4 22 xd4 gives White just the kind of ending that he is looking for.

22 c2 e8

By keeping the queens and one pair of rooks on the board, Black can hope for counterplay.

23 d3 g6 24 e2 e5 25 e4 g7 26 g3?! This weakening looks unnecessary. 26 b3 e7 is better, with approximate equality. White has the bishop-pair but it is difficult to exploit this because White cannot do much without exchanging dark-squared bishops. This is a typical situation with Black’s bishop entrenched on b4 opposing White’s passive bishop on e1.

26...e7 27 b3 h8 (D)

28 g2 e5 29 e2 g4! 30 hxg4

Suddenly Black has serious kingside play. 30 h4 f3, with...g5 coming, also does not look too appetizing for White.

30...fxg4 (D)
31 \textit{\textbf{Qe4}?!}  
This is a blunder, but after 31 \textit{\textbf{Qc2}} or 31 \textit{\textbf{Nd4}}, 31...\textit{\textbf{Wg5}} heads to the h-file.
31...	extit{\textbf{Qxe1}} 32 \textit{\textbf{Qxe1}} \textbf{Wb4}!  
Attacking most of White's pieces.
33 \textit{\textbf{Qc2}} \textit{\textbf{Qh2+} 0-1}  
Black wins after either 34 \textit{\textbf{Qf1}} \textit{\textbf{Qh1+}} or 34 \textit{\textbf{Qg1}} \textit{\textbf{Qf3+}}.

**Game 3**

\textbf{Yannick Pelletier – Erwin L’Ami}

\textit{Bundesliga 2006/7}

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \textit{\textbf{Qf3}} \textit{\textbf{Qf6}} 4 \textit{\textbf{Qc3}} dxc4 5 a4 \textit{\textbf{Qf5}} 6 e3 e6 7 \textit{\textbf{Qxc4}} \textit{\textbf{Qb4}} 8 0-0 \textit{\textbf{Qbd7}} 9 \textit{\textbf{We2}} \textit{\textbf{Qg6} (D)}

With this move-order, Black attempts, or at least pretends to attempt, to prevent both e4 and \textit{\textbf{Qe5}}. However, White still can, and should, advance in the centre.
10 e4!  
This pawn sacrifice is the only way to challenge Black's move-order. 10 \textit{\textbf{Nd1}} 0-0 11 \textit{\textbf{Qe5}?!} is not dangerous. This transposes to the note to White's 10th move in the previous game.
10...	extit{\textbf{Qxc3}}

Black can grab the e4-pawn because his bishop is not hanging on f5 any more. In practice Black often plays 10...0-0 transposing back into Game 1. Using this move-order can at least make White burn some time deciding to offer the pawn sacrifice.
11 bxc3 \textit{\textbf{Qxe4}} 12 \textit{\textbf{Qa3} (D)}

White prevents Black from castling kingside. There is also some latent pressure on the e-file because if the e4-knight moves there is the possibility of \textit{\textbf{Qxe6}!}. After White moves his c4-bishop, there will be chances to increase the pressure with the pawn advances c4 and a5. Theoretically, Black seems to be doing alright, but the position is very dangerous for Black and because of this it is not too popular any more. Nevertheless, Black has a solid position and an extra pawn, and the position is not without risks for White either.
12...	extit{\textbf{Wc7}}

Black prepares to castle queenside. The second pawn is really too hard to digest after 12...	extit{\textbf{Qxc3}?!} 13 \textit{\textbf{Wb2}}. With \textit{\textbf{Wxb7}} coming, and the bishop controlling f8, Black's king has no good shelter.

After the text-move, Black may also consider grabbing the c3-pawn because b7 is protected, and ...c5 becomes possible, blocking White's a3-bishop. Black's main defensive scheme will be to play ...\textit{\textbf{Qd6}} and castle queenside. He will then have the possibility to break in the centre with ...c5 or, more frequently, ...e5. White has a decision to make.
13 \textit{\textbf{Fe1}?!}
White prefers to use his king’s rook to bring pressure to the e-file, even though the c3-pawn remains loose. This is a promising way to handle the position, but other moves have been tried as well:

a) 13 \( \text{b}2 \) is a little inflexible. 13...c5 (Black can also try 13...0-0-0 and 13...d6) 14 dxc5 \( \text{dxc}5 \) 15 b5 0-0 (15...0-0-0!?) 16 xd7 \( \text{xd}7 \) 17 xf8 xf8 18 a5 c5 was Gulko-Kreiman, USA Ch, San Diego 2006. Black has a pawn and a very solid position for the exchange.

b) 13 e3 again commits the queen rather early. 13...0-0-0 14 a5 \( \text{he}8 \) 15 e7 (this is an interesting manoeuvre; the bishop has done its job on the a3-f8 diagonal, so White looks to bring it to the g3-square to bear down on Black’s queenside) 15...f4 18 e4 e4 exchanging queens) 17...f5 18 xd2 f4 (trying to blunt White’s dark-squared bishop; now 18...f4 can be met by 19 e4 e4 20 c1) 19 f3 xd2 20 xd2 hf8 21 f1 was

c) 13 d2 (D) has enjoyed some popularity, but it clarifies the position rather early, and this helps Black arrange his defences.

\[
\text{B}
\]

13...\( \text{xd}2 \) (13...\( \text{df}6 \)?! wastes time and justifies White’s play: 14 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 15 e1 0-0-0 16 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{he}8 \) 17 f3 d6 18 f1 b8 19 c8 20 c5 gave Black good central counterplay in M.Gurevich-Gulko, Brussels (rapid) 1992.

c1) 15 \( \text{e}3 \) 0-0 16 d5 17 f1 b6 18 xb6 xb6 was fine for Black in Piket-Anand, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 1993.

c2) 15 d5 and here instead of 15...0-0 (Van Wely-Hutters, Tåstrup 1992) Black can play 15...0-0-0! threatening both \( \text{b}6 \) and \( \text{f}6 \), winning another pawn. 16 dxe6 is answered by 16...\( \text{b}6 \) 17 e4 c4 18 xc4 d3 winning the exchange.

d) 13 e1 is White’s main alternative. 13...0-0-0 (after 13...c5, 14 b5 0-0 15 xd7 xd7 16 e5 d5 17 f3 d6 18 xc5 gave White a pleasant advantage in Ikonnikov-Sashikiran, Vlissingen 2005, while 14 e5 xe5 15 dxe5 0-0-0 16 a2 also looks good) 14 a5 (D).

This is an important position in the pawn-sacrifice line. Both sides have made all natural moves so far. White must find a way to increase the pressure on the queenside, often with a timely push of the c-pawn combined with the a6 advance. Meanwhile Black usually does best to fight back in the centre. From here Black has tried:

d1) 14...\( \text{d}6 \) 15 b3 h5 16 h3 \( \text{he}8 \) 17 a6 b6 18 c4 gave White a typical initiative in Ivanchuk-Lautier, Linares 1994.

d2) 14...\( \text{b}8 \) 15 e7?! (this is an interesting manoeuvre; the bishop has done its job on the a3-f8 diagonal, so White looks to bring it to the g3-square to bear down on Black’s queenside) 15...e8 16 h4 a8 17 b2 (17 d2 allows the annoying 17...f4 18 e4 e4 exchanging queens) 17...f5 18 d2 f4 (trying to blunt White’s dark-squared bishop; now 18...f4 can be met by 19 e4 e4 20 c1) 19 f3 xd2 20 xd2 hf8 21 f1 was
Ehlvest-Schwartzmann, New York 1996. White has good compensation, although it is probably not enough for a real advantage against accurate play.

**d3)** With 14...\(\text{He}8\), Black does not sit idly, and instead prepares counterplay in the centre with ...e5. 15 \(\text{Q}h4\) (White ensures that he will have two bishops against two knights and gains time by chasing off the e4-knight; he can also flick in 15 a6 b6 before playing 16 \(\text{Q}h4\) but there is no need to commit the queenside structure just yet, while 15 \(\text{W}b2\) \(\text{Q}b8\) 16 \(\text{Q}h4\) is another possibility) 15...\(\text{Q}d6\) 16 \(\text{A}b3\) (the immediate 16 \(\text{Q}xg6\) \(\text{hxg6}\) 17 a6 b6 18 \(\text{A}b3\) \(\text{Q}f5\) 19 \(\text{W}f3\) \(\text{Q}f6\) 20 \(\text{A}f1\) \(\text{Q}d5\) 21 g3 e5 gave Black counterplay in Vigorito-Stamnov, Las Vegas 2001) 16...e5 and with 17 \(\text{W}f3\) White hopes to create some pressure against the f7-pawn, although after 17...\(\text{Q}f6!\) Black is well centralized and should have sufficient counterplay.

We now return to 13 \(\text{Qe}1!?\) (D):

13...\(\text{Q}xc3\)

Now that Black has covered the b7-pawn, this second pawn-grab is critical. Of course, the natural 13...0-0-0 is also possible. 14 \(\text{W}b2\) \(\text{He}8\) 15 a5 e5 16 \(\text{A}b1\) (with threats involving \(\text{Q}d6\)) 16...e5 17 \(\text{Q}f1\) gave White compensation in Beliavsky-Akopian, Novosibirsk 1993. Retreating the c4-bishop to f1 has its points, because White may play g3 and \(\text{Q}g2\), taking aim at Black’s king position.

Instead 13...c5 looks very risky, but it is probably not so bad. After 14 d5 0-0-0 (trying to keep the position closed with 14...e5 15 \(\text{Q}d3!\) \(\text{Q}xc3\) 16 \(\text{W}d2\) \(\text{Q}xd3\) 17 \(\text{W}xd3\) \(\text{Q}xa4\) 18 d6 led to trouble in Hübner-Hertneck, Munich 1994) 15 dxe6 fxe6 16 \(\text{A}xe6\) \(\text{He}8\) gave Black counterplay in Gershon-Arutinian, World Junior Ch, Erevan 1999.

14 \(\text{W}e3\)

White can also try 14 \(\text{W}b2!?\) \(\text{Q}e4\) 15 a5 \(\text{Q}df6\) (15...\(\text{Q}d6\) 16 \(\text{Q}xe6!\)) 16 \(\text{Q}e5\), as in the game Hübner-Beliavsky, Munich 1994. Black is two pawns up, but his position still looks very shaky.

14...\(\text{Q}e4\)

Black would like to play 14...\(\text{Q}d5\), but this brings nothing but trouble after 15 \(\text{Q}xd5\) \(\text{cxd5}\) 16 \(\text{Q}g5!\) (16 \(\text{Q}ac1\) is also good), threatening to detonate on e6.

15 \(\text{Q}e5\)

15 \(\text{Q}g5\) looks too ambitious after 15...\(\text{Q}df6\), when the sacrifices on e6 do not work.

15...\(\text{Q}xe5\) 16 dxe5 \(\text{W}b6\)

If Black grabs the pawn with 16...\(\text{W}xe5\) White should not try to win a piece with 17 f3 because of 17...\(\text{W}c3\), but instead play 17 \(\text{Q}d3\) f5 18 \(\text{Q}xe4\) fxe4 19 \(\text{Q}ad1\), when Black has a lot of trouble with his king and the presence of opposite-coloured bishops just helps White’s attack.

17 \(\text{W}f4\) (D)

17...0-0-0

White has a strong initiative for the sacrificed pawns, so Black correctly offers back some material. 17...\(\text{W}d4?\) 18 \(\text{W}h4\), threatening mate on e7, was crushing in Lutz-Bareev, Munich 1994.

18 \(\text{W}xe4\) \(\text{Q}xe4\) 19 \(\text{W}xe4\) \(\text{W}d4\)
Black heads for an endgame because his king will feel much safer without queens on the board, but his position is still rather unpleasant.

20 \text{\textit{Qxe4}} \text{\textit{Qxd4}} 21 \text{\textit{Nc1 b6 22 Qd6 Qb7 (D)}}

With a rook and two pawns for the two bishops, Black does not appear to stand so badly, but it is not easy to create open lines for the rooks or utilize his queenside pawns. White will create pressure against the black king and he can easily bring his own king to the centre.

23 \text{\textit{Qf1 a6}} 24 \text{\textit{Qe2 b5 25 Qb3}}

Keeping lines closed and daring Black to wreck his pawn-structure.

25...\text{\textit{Qd8}} 26 \text{\textit{Qe3 Qxd6}}

This looks like the best practical decision. After 26...\text{\textit{Qg4}} 27 g3 intending f4, Black’s rooks would both be locked out of play.

27 \text{\textit{Qxd6 Qxd6}} 28 a5 \text{\textit{Qc7}} 29 f4 \text{\textit{Qd8}} 30 \text{\textit{Qd1}}

Not 31...c5 32 \text{\textit{Qd1+ Qc7}} 33 \text{\textit{Qxd8 Qxd8}} 34 \text{\textit{Qb7}}.

32 \text{\textit{Qd4 c5+ 33 Qc3 Qc7}} 34 \text{\textit{Qd1+ Qe7}} 35 \text{\textit{g4 b6}} 36 h4 g6 37 \text{\textit{Qd2 c4}}

A risky decision, giving White’s king an entryway into Black’s queenside.

38 \text{\textit{Qd1 Qc5}} 39 \text{\textit{Qb4 Qc7}} 40 \text{\textit{Qc3 Qc5}} 41 \text{\textit{Qb4 Qc7}} 42 \text{\textit{Qe4}}

White correctly declines the repetition. Black is very solid but he has no counterplay.

42...\text{\textit{Qf5}} 43 \text{\textit{Qxf5 Qxf5}} 44 \text{\textit{Qf3 Qf6}} 45 h5 \text{\textit{Qg7}} 46 \text{\textit{Qc5}}

White decides to go forward with his king. 46 \text{\textit{Qd6}} was another possibility.

46...c3 47 \text{\textit{Qc1 Qc7}}+ 48 \text{\textit{Qc6 b4}} 49 \text{\textit{Qb6 Qc8}} 50 \text{\textit{Qb7 Qd8}} 51 \text{\textit{Qxa6 Qb8}} 52 \text{\textit{Qb7 Qd8 (D)}}

53 \text{\textit{Qc6}}

53 \text{\textit{Qb5! Qd2}} 54 a6 would have won rather easily, but this move does no harm.

53...\text{\textit{Qb8}} 54 \text{\textit{Qb7 Qd8 \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}}}

A strange repetition and a lucky escape for Black. 55 \text{\textit{Qb5}} still wins.

Game 4

Peter Leko – Boris Gelfand

\textit{Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006}

1 \text{\textit{d4 d5}} 2 \text{\textit{c4 c6}} 3 \text{\textit{Qf3 Qf6}} 4 \text{\textit{Qc3 dxc4}} 5 \text{\textit{a4 Qf5}} 6 \text{\textit{e3 e6}} 7 \text{\textit{Qxc4 Qb4}} 8 0-0 \text{\textit{Qbd7}}

Black can also play 8...0-0 9 \text{\textit{Qe2 Qg4}}, but after 10 \text{\textit{Qd1}} (10 h3 \text{\textit{Qxf3}} 11 \text{\textit{Qxf3 Qbd7}} transposes to the main game) 10...\text{\textit{Qbd7}} 11 e4 \text{\textit{Qa5}}, Black does not get his queen to h5 in time to double White’s pawns. After 12 h3 \text{\textit{Qxf3}} 13 \text{\textit{Qxf3}} we have transposed to Kasparov-Bareev in the note to Black’s 12th move.

9 \text{\textit{Qe2 Qg4 (D)}}

This uncommon but solid line represents a completely different approach. Now that White
has moved his queen, Black tries to slow down White’s play by trading off his bishop because White will move his queen again in recapturing. The exchange will allow Black to strike back on the dark squares in the centre with ...c5 or ...e5. Compared to Game 2, Black is able to give up the bishop without compromising his own pawn-structure, but here White will be able to achieve the e4 advance more easily, because his queen will defend the c3-knight laterally from the f3-square.

10 h3

Posing the question to the bishop is considered the most accurate response. White can also play 10 d1 but this allows Black to swing his queen quickly to h5: 10...a5 11 e4 (the endgame after 11 d2 h5 12 h3 xf3 13 xf3 14 gx f3 is also fine for Black) 11...h5 (grabbing the pawn with 11...b6 12 b3 xc3 13 bxc3 xc3 is also possible, but with the bishop-pair and a strong centre, White’s compensation is obvious). White can now allow an ending or sacrifice a pawn:

a) 12 h3 xf3 13 xf3 xf3 14 gx f3 0-0 15 e3 d8 16 e2 a5 was solid for Black in Kramnik-Bacrot, Turin Olympiad 2006. The fact that even Kramnik could not grind out this endgame speaks to the soundness of Black’s position.

b) 12 d3 is an enterprising choice from the Topalov laboratory. White keeps the queens on the board and fights for the initiative by means of a pawn sacrifice. 12...e5 13 h3 xf3 14 xf3 exd4 15 g4! c5 16 a2 0-0 17 f5 e7 18 e5 d3! (Black returns the pawn by diverting White’s bishop to create a safe square for his queen, because the immediate 18...xd5 19 g5 we6? loses after 20 xb4) 19 xd3 xd5 20 g5 we6 21 xb4 xb4 22 c4 xd5 23 d1 ae8! allowed Black to develop normally and hold the balance in Topalov-I.Sokolov, Hoogeveen 2006.

10...xf3

This is Black’s idea. Instead 10...h5 is pretty solid. 11 d1 0-0 12 e4 can lead to similar play to Game 1, but here Black may find it difficult to challenge White in the centre, so he could quickly be lacking for space. After 12...we7 (D) White has:

a) 13 e5 d5 14 xe4 f5!? (14...h6 15 g3 g6 is more solid) 15 exf6 xf6 16 g3 xf3 17 xf3 was Elianov-Bu Xiangzhi, Wijk aan Zee 2007. Black’s pawn-structure is a little loose, but all of his pieces are active so he should have sufficient counterplay.

b) 13 g4 g6 14 d3 (White gains space and keeps the tension in the centre) 14...h6 (14...e5 fails to 15 dxe5 xe5 16 xe5 xe5 17 f4 smothering Black’s kingside; 14...ac8 is more solid, although I prefer White after 15 a5 because of his extra space) 15 f4 ac8 16 a5 17 g3 b6 18 a1 was very pleasant for White in Pelletier-Bu Xiangzhi, Biel 2007. White has a big space advantage and Black lacks counterplay.

11 xf3 0-0 12 d1 e8
because after ...cxd5 this bishop will be hanging.

Black can also play 12...a5 13 e4 e5 14 d5 \(\text{Q}b6\) (14...\(\text{Q}x\text{c}3\) 15 bxc3 exd5 16 \(\text{Q}x\text{d}5\) \(\text{Q}x\text{d}5\) 17 \(\text{Q}\text{x}d5\) gives White the initiative) 15 \(\text{B}b3\) \(\text{Q}x\text{c}3\) 16 bxc3 cxd5 17 exd5 \(D\), and now:

a) 17...\(\text{R}f\text{c}8\) doesn’t look very logical, because the rook has little to do on a8. After 18 c4! \(\text{Q}d\text{b}d7\) 19 \(\text{B}b2\) \(\text{B}b6\) 20 \(\text{B}a\text{b}1\) White had the initiative in Krush-Khuzman, Montreal 2006.

b) With 17...\(\text{R}a\text{c}8\), Black hopes to blockade the c- and d-pawns, so White must play very energetically, using his bishop-pair and passed d-pawn to disturb Black. Here too 18 c4! is best: 18...\(\text{R}f\text{e}8\) (18...\(\text{Q}x\text{c}4\) 19 \(\text{B}g5\) intending d6 leaves Black very off-balance) 19 \(\text{d}d2\) \(\text{W}a6\) 20 d6 \(\text{Q}b6\) 21 \(\text{Q}c3\) \(\text{R}c6\) 22 a5! (increasing the scope of the bishops and setting up various pins) 22...\(\text{R}d\text{d}6\) 23 \(\text{A}a4\) \(\text{A}x\text{d}1+\) 24 \(\text{A}x\text{d}1\) gave White tremendous pressure for the pawn in Kasparov-Bareev, Novgorod 1994.

13 e4

White can also play more simply with 13 \(\text{Q}e4\) but after 13...\(\text{Q}x\text{e}4\) 14 \(\text{W}x\text{e}4\) \(\text{W}a5\) Black is well developed, and it is hard for White to create any kind of initiative. One reason for this lies in the queenside weaknesses, most noticeably on b4, which make it difficult for White to get his dark-squared bishop quickly into play. 15 \(\text{W}c2\) \(\text{Q}b6\) 16 \(\text{d}d3\) g6 17 e4 \(\text{R}d8\) was fine for Black in Beliavsky-Ivanchuk, Munich 1994.

13...e5 14 \(\text{Q}e3\)

14 dxe5 \(\text{Q}x\text{e}5\) 15 \(\text{W}f5\) \(\text{W}a5\) gives Black no trouble. The advance 14 d5 is less effective here, because after 14...cxd5 White must take with the bishop, and 15 \(\text{Q}x\text{d}5\) \(\text{B}b6\) 16 \(\text{Q}e3\) \(\text{R}c5\) is equal.

14...\(\text{W}a5\) \(D\)

The most active continuation. 14...\(\text{W}e7\) is also possible. White can play 15 d5 (or maybe even 15 \(\text{W}f\text{f}5!\) again), because after 15...\(\text{Q}b6\) (15...cxd5 16 \(\text{Q}x\text{d}5\) 16 \(\text{B}b3\) cxd5 17 \(\text{Q}x\text{d}5\) \(\text{B}x\text{d}5\) 18 \(\text{Q}x\text{d}5\) both 18...\(\text{Q}x\text{d}5\) 19 \(\text{Q}x\text{d}5\) and 18...\(\text{Q}c5\) 19 \(\text{g}5\) give White some pressure.

15 \(\text{W}f5\)

An interesting new try. White brings some pressure to bear upon the centre and creates an unusual line-up of queens on the 5th rank. Alternatives:

a) After 15 d5, 15...\(\text{Q}x\text{c}3\) 16 bxc3 cxd5 17 \(\text{Q}x\text{d}5\) \(\text{Q}c5\) 18 c4 turned out poorly for Black in Guilko-Lakdawala, USA Ch, San Diego 2004, but Black can improve by throwing in 15...\(\text{Q}b6\) first. For example, 16 \(\text{Q}a2\) \(\text{Q}x\text{c}3\) 17 bxc3 cxd5 18 exd5 \(\text{Q}x\text{c}3\)!! 19 \(\text{Q}d2\) \(\text{W}x\text{f}3\) 20 \(\text{Q}a5\) \(\text{W}f4\) with chances for both sides in the ending.

b) 15 \(\text{Q}e2\) is interesting. The white knight heads to g3, when Black may come under pressure on the kingside. Sliding across the board with \(\text{B}b3\) may also become an option. After 15...\(\text{Q}f8\) (the immediate 15...exd4 16 \(\text{Q}x\text{d}4\) \(\text{Q}e5\) is also possible) 16 \(\text{Q}g3\) exd4 17 \(\text{Q}x\text{d}4\) \(\text{Q}e5\) 18 \(\text{Q}x\text{e}5\) \(\text{Q}x\text{e}5\) 19 \(\text{B}b3\) White maintained some pressure in Sashikiran-Morozevich, Biel 2004.

15...exd4

Black cooperatively heads into the endgame. 15...g6 just creates weaknesses in Black’s
position, but he could try holding the centre with 15...\(\text{f}e8\).

16 \text{\textit{\textbf{\text{Wh}}}xa5 \textit{\textbf{\text{a}}}xa5 \textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}xd4 \textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}e8 18 \text{\textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}3 (D)}

White has a pleasant advantage because he has the bishop-pair and more space. Even though it will take some time, it will be easier for White to advance on the kingside than it will for Black to push his queenside pawns, because ...c5 will greatly weaken the d5-square, which can be used by White's pieces. Probably Black should hold positions like this, but it is not a pleasant task.

18...a6

It was certainly worth considering eliminating one of White's bishops with 18...\textit{\textbf{\text{b}}}b6.

19 \textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}f2 \textit{\textbf{\text{e}}}e5 20 \textit{\textbf{\text{a}}}e2

Leko was critical of this move, preferring 20 \textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}f1 so that he has the option of fighting for the f4-square with \textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}e2.

20...\textit{\textbf{\text{c}}}d8 21 \textit{\textbf{\text{e}}}e3 (D)

Black hopes to fix the dark squares on the kingside.

21...h5

22 g4 hgx4 23 hxg4 \textit{\textbf{\text{g}}}g6 24 \textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}xd8! \textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}xd8 25 \textit{\textbf{\text{g}}}g3

Now White is ready to push his f-pawn, so Black must put the pressure back on e4.

25...\textit{\textbf{\text{e}}}e8 26 \textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}d1

White takes over the d-file after all.

26...\textit{\textbf{\text{c}}}c7+ 27 \textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}f2 \textit{\textbf{\text{e}}}e7 28 \textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}f1 \textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}f4 (D)

Black has realized his plan of controlling the dark squares, but it is only temporary.

29 g5!

Otherwise Black would secure his knight by playing ...g5 himself.

29...\textit{\textbf{\text{h}}}7??

29...\textit{\textbf{\text{h}}}6h5 is better.

30 \textit{\textbf{\text{a}}}xf4?

Leko missed the chance to play the amazing 30 e5!, which breaks Black's control of f4. If 30...\textit{\textbf{\text{xe}}}5, then 31 \textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}d8+ \textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}f8 32 \textit{\textbf{\text{c}}}c5 wins, and 30...\textit{\textbf{\text{e}}}e6 31 \textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}f4 is awful for Black.

30...\textit{\textbf{\text{xf}}}f4 31 \textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}d8+ \textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}f8 32 \textit{\textbf{\text{g}}}g6

White tries a last trick.

32...b5?

32...\textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}d7! 33 \textit{\textbf{\text{a}}}a8 \textit{\textbf{\text{d}}}d2+ would give Black enough counterplay.

33 \textit{\textbf{\text{h}}}h3! \textit{\textbf{\text{fx}}}g6 34 \textit{\textbf{\text{a}}}a8 \textit{\textbf{\text{b}}}xa4?! (D)

Falling for a trick. 34...\textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}f7 was the best try, although after 35 a5! Black is still under pressure.

35 \textit{\textbf{\text{f}}}f1!

Essentially winning a piece. The rest is not easy, but Leko gets there in the end.
Black gives up the piece immediately to gather as many pawns as he can and free his position. After 38 ... h5 39 f3 f6 40 e5+ f7 41 d3 Black will never escape the pin.

39 e5+ c6 40 fxe5 fxe5 41 dxe6 dxe6 42 c6 a6 b7 43 f4+ e5 44 e3 c5 45 d3+ d5 46 a5 d6 47 cxa4 d5 48 a5 d6 49 a4 d5 50 b2 c4 51 b4+ e4 52 c5 g3 53 c6 g4 54 c4+ f5 55 d4+ f4 56 c6+ f5 57 b4 (D)

57...g3
Leko suggests that 57...e7 would have given better chances to resist.

60...e7+ 61 c4+ f5 62 xg3 g5 63 f3+ e4 64 f7 e8 65 g7 f4 66 d3 d8+ 67 e2 e8+ 68 f2 b8 69 f7+ e4 70 d7 g4 71 b3 b4 72 d2+ f4 73 d3 f5 74 g3 e5 75 c4+ e4 76 e3+ d4 77 xg4 h8 78 f3 h8 79 e2 1-0

Conclusions

The main line of Game 1 can be reached with two different move-orders: 8...0-0 9 e4 10 e4 or 8...d7 9 e2 g6 (daring White to sacrifice a pawn) 10 e4. After 11 d5 g5 12 e5 d5, 13 e4 is not so dangerous, so these days White prefers the forcing continuation 13 xxd5 cxd5 14 e3! This leads to interesting play with chances for both sides. The old response 14...e7 looks rather unpleasant for Black after 15 g5, so 14...g6 or 14...e8 should be preferred, with an interesting middlegame in store.

If Black wants to prevent the e4 advance, 8...0-0 9 e2 g6 is the most solid line at his disposal. After 10 c5 d7 11 xg6 h5 12 d1 a5 White can achieve a slight edge at best. Black has easy development and enough space, but he must play purposefully or else White’s bishop-pair could quickly become strong.

Grabbing a hot pawn with 8...d7 9 e2 g6 10 e4 c3 11 cxb3 e4 is a rare choice for Black these days, and this may actually make it a good choice! Black’s position is certainly precarious, but careful study could allow Black to score well if he is not too greedy and knows how to create counterplay (often with ...h8 and ...e5). I wonder sometimes if players of the white pieces choose 10 e4 with the secret hope that Black does not test them by grabbing the pawn...

The approach with a quick ...g4 leads to a different kind of game. Black often secures a good pawn-structure, but it is not easy to contain White’s bishop-pair and dynamic centre. Although this line has had its bouts of popularity at high level, I think the middlegames are easier to handle for White, and that Black has a much smaller margin of error.
In this chapter, instead of trying to push in the centre with e4, White seeks to hunt down Black’s f5-bishop with the manoeuvre $\text{h4}$. This is most commonly played after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 $\text{f3 f6}$ 4 $\text{c3 dxc4}$ 5 a4 $\text{f5}$ 6 e3 e6 7 $\text{xc4 b4}$ 8 0-0 0-0 (or 8...$\text{bd7}$), although White also frequently plays 6 $\text{h4}$, forcing Black to make an early decision. Usually Black cannot avoid the trade of knight for bishop, but he can generally choose how and where it is exchanged. The resulting middlegames are generally very strategic in nature and offer chances to both sides.

The Games

**Game 5** (Moiseenko-Swathi) examines the structure arising after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 $\text{f3 f6}$ 4 $\text{c3 dxc4}$ 5 a4 $\text{f5}$ 6 e3 e6 7 $\text{xc4 b4}$ 8 0-0 0-0 9 $\text{h4}$ $\text{bd7}$ 10 $\text{xf5}$ exf5. In the game Black plays a quick ...c5 to discourage e4, but White manages to play it anyway, based on a typical pawn sacrifice to open the position for White’s pair of bishops. Black declines the pawn, but his pieces lose their coordination. After White gets $\text{h6}$ in, Black neglects his back-rank problems and loses material to some rather elementary tactics.

**Game 6** (Sakaev-Kasparov) sees White play $\text{h4}$ before Black castles. White is wary of playing $\text{h4xg6}$ because it will open the h-file for Black’s rook. When Black decides to preserve the bishop with ...$\text{h5}$, White does not respond critically with g4 and he quickly loses the initiative. Kasparov’s forceful play gives him a better ending, which he duly converts into victory. In the notes to this game we also examine lines with a quick $\text{b3}$ by White.

**Game 7** (Carlsen-Gelfand) investigates the immediate 6 $\text{h4}$. Black responds with the provocative 6...$\text{g4}$. After 7 h3 $\text{h5}$ 8 g4 $\text{g6}$ 9 $\text{xg6}$ hxg6 we have a typical case where White has the bishop-pair and space while Black has good development and a solid position. When White errs with 12 $\text{f1}$?, Black quickly seizes the initiative. White is quickly saddled with structural weaknesses and he is overrun by Black’s active knights and rooks.

**Game 5**

**Alexander Moiseenko – Ghate Swathi**

*Montreal 2006*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 $\text{f3 f6}$ 4 $\text{c3 dxc4}$ 5 a4 $\text{f5}$ 6 e3 e6 7 $\text{xc4 b4}$ 8 0-0 0-0 9 $\text{h4}$ (D)

This is a completely different approach from the one we saw in Chapter 1. White is less interested in advancing in the centre and he grabs the opportunity to corral Black’s bishop. The position after Black’s next move can, and frequently does, arise via the move-order 8...$\text{bd7}$ 9 $\text{h4}$ 0-0 as well.

9...$\text{bd7}$

Black allows the exchange of minor pieces on f5, drastically changing the pawn-structure. Here the retreat 9...$\text{g6}$ is rather compliant. After 10 $\text{xg6}$ hxg6 White can play 11 $\text{c2}$!
12...\texttt{bd}7 12...\texttt{d}d1 (D) with good chances for an advantage.

If we compare this position to Game 2, White's queen is on c2 instead of e2. This is a subtle improvement, because the c3-knight is already protected, and in fact we saw earlier that White often spends a tempo playing \texttt{c}2 in the 9 \texttt{w}e2 lines. Also note that ...e5 can be difficult to achieve because then White could play \texttt{x}g6.

9...\texttt{g}4 is a popular alternative. After 10 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{h}5 (10...\texttt{d}d5 11 \texttt{x}g4 \texttt{x}h4 12 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{xc}3 13 \texttt{bxc}3 \texttt{xc}3 is met by 14 \texttt{a}3!, when Black's king is very uncomfortable) 11 \texttt{g}4 (D) we have a common situation in the \texttt{h}4 lines.

Black will acquiesce to the exchange of his bishop, but he wants to lure White's pawns forward first. This is double-edged – White gains a lot of space, but he may become overextended. After 11...\texttt{g}6 (11...\texttt{d}d5 12 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{g}6 13 \texttt{a}2 \texttt{e}7 14 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{b}6 is also possible) 12 \texttt{x}g6 \texttt{hx}g6 13 \texttt{e}4 the position is unclear. White has the bishop-pair and space, but the g4-pawn looks rather out of place. Black can complete his development with 13...\texttt{bd}7 or strike immediately at the centre with 13...c5.

10 \texttt{xf}5 \texttt{xf}5 (D)

This is an important pawn-structure in the Main-Line Slav. At first it looks like Black has just ruined his pawn-structure and given White the bishop-pair as well, but matters are not so simple. The f5-pawn helps Black to control e4, and in some cases it may advance to f4 to disrupt White's control of d4. If Black can get a bind on the e4- and d5-squares, he might even be able to play for a kingside attack. It is also not always so easy for White to develop his c1-bishop, in part because of the queenside weaknesses created by 5 a4. White will often try to play f3 and e4, even as a pawn sacrifice. This can lead to a very strong initiative for White,
but his ‘hanging’ central pawns may also become vulnerable. Because Black is slightly ahead in development, sometimes he will be the one trying to open the position with ...c5. The structure is quite delicate for both sides – White may break with e4 or d5, while Black can strike with ...c5 or ...f4. A lot depends on the specifics of each position, and both sides must take extreme care with their next few moves.

11...We2

White attacks the f5-pawn and covers c3. He may then continue with Ud1 or f3, or both. Instead 11 Wf3 is another way of hitting f5, but it is much less flexible, because White cannot expand in the centre. After 11...g6 12 h3 Wa5 13 De2 Wae8 14 b3 De4 Black had a nice grip on the central squares in Polugaevsky-Ivanchuk, Biel 1989.

11...g6

This obvious defence of the f5-pawn is by far the most common move. Having given up his light-squared bishop, Black does not object to erecting a light-squared pawn-chain. Nevertheless, this move creates some weaknesses around the black king. This may become important if White can achieve the e4 advance because the f-file may open up for White’s rook and both Kg5 and Kh6 become possibilities. Black would then have to be very wary of pressure coming down on f6 and f7.

A case can certainly be made for the alternative 11...Db6!? (D).

This move avoids creating weaknesses on the kingside because Black will be able to play ...Wd7 to protect the vulnerable pawn on f5. Now:

a) 12 Ae2 is a bit passive. 12...Wd7 13 Ca2 (13 a5 Db5 14 a6 b6 15 Dd2 Ac8 16 Fe1 Fe8 17 Dxd5 cxd5 18 Wd3 Dxd2 19 Wxd2 h5 is quite solid for Black, and he even went on to win in Filippov-Wang Yue, Moscow 2005) 13...Dd6 14 b4 Ac8 15 Dd2 De4 16 Dc1 Dd5 17 Dd3 We7 18 Ab1 Fe8 19 g3 g6 20 Dc5 h5 was Pomerleau-Vigorito, Philadelphia 2006. This is an ideal set-up for Black. He has a grip on the centre and attacking chances on the kingside.

b) After 12 Dd3 Black will indeed be forced to play 12...g6, but from d3 the bishop is less active (there is no more pressure on f7) and the d4-pawn will be more vulnerable, making it more difficult for White to engineer an advance of his e-pawn. The bishop may also be misplaced because ...Dd5-b4 becomes an additional possibility. 13 a5 Db5 14 a6 b6 15 Dd2 Ac8 16 Wb3 Dd6 17 Dxd5 cxd5 18 Fc1 Wd7 19 g3 We6 20 Dg2 h5 was fine for Black in Kasimdzhanov-Bu Xiangzhi, Doha 2006 and the game was drawn in a few moves.

c) It is generally better for White to keep the bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal, where it controls d5 and eyes the slightly weak f7-pawn. Thus: 12 Ab3 Wd7 13 a5 (D).

This is a typical idea for White to gain space and prevent ...a5. The pawn may even advance to a6 to weaken the light squares in Black’s camp, while Aa4 becomes a distinct possibility as well. 13...Db5 14 f3 (14 Ab2 Ac8 15
\(\text{Ca}4 \text{B}xd2 16 \text{B}xd2 \text{Ba}e8 17 \text{C}c5 \text{C}e4 18 \text{C}xe4 \text{B}xe4 19 g3 \text{B}ce8\) was solid enough for Black in Ehlvest-Donaldson, Stratton Mountain 2003) 14...\text{B}fe8 15 \text{C}xd5 \text{C}xd5 (15...\text{c}xd5? 16 \text{C}a4) 16 e4 (White tries to seize the initiative) 16...\text{B}f6! (Black keeps the f-file closed) and now White has tried:

c1) 17 \text{Be}3 \text{B}h8 18 \text{B}a4 \text{B}f8 19 \text{B}g5 fxe4!
(Black does not fear doubled pawns because White's d4-pawn will also be weak after the coming simplifications) 20 \text{B}xf6 \text{g}xf6 21 fxe4 b5 22 axb6 axb6 23 \text{B}c4 (this leads to mass simplifications) 23...b5! 24 \text{B}xc6 \text{B}xd4+ 25 \text{B}h1 \text{B}xe4 26 \text{B}xe4 \text{B}xe4 27 \text{B}xf7 \text{B}e2 28 b3 \text{B}e7 was soon drawn in Onishchuk-Rublevsky, Poikovsky 2007.

c2) 17 \text{B}c4 \text{B}f8 18 \text{B}g5 (after 18 \text{f}xf5 \text{B}ad8 19 \text{B}h1 \text{B}e7 20 \text{B}c2 a draw was agreed in Kramnik-Anand, Linares 2000) 18...\text{f}xe4 19 \text{f}xe4 \text{B}xe4 20 \text{B}xf6 \text{g}xf6 21 \text{B}ad1 \text{B}ae8! and Black's piece activity maintained the balance in Lautier-Bareev, Enghien-les-Bains 2003.

12 \text{f}3 (D)

This is the most ambitious. White hopes to make use of the rook on the f-file, where it may assist in an attack on the kingside.

12...\text{Be}8 (D)

Black logically lines up his rook against White's queen in preparation for ...c5. Instead 12...\text{Be}8? allows 13 \text{B}xf7+ \text{B}xf7 14 \text{B}b3++. After playing ...\text{exf}5, Black must always mind the f7-square carefully. The natural 12...\text{Be}7?! runs into 13 \text{e}4! because 13...\text{fxe}4 14 \text{fxe}4 \text{B}xc3 15 \text{bxc}3 \text{B}xe4 16 \text{B}b3 leaves Black's kingside under tremendous pressure. However, 12...\text{B}b6 and 12...\text{B}b6 both put some pressure on d4 and are worthy alternatives.

\text{W}

\text{B}

13 \text{B}h1

White tucks his king away in anticipation of the centre opening up. The immediate 13 \text{e}4?! would be met by 13...\text{B}b6, attacking both c4 and d4. This double attack is frequently part of Black's defence in many positions in the Dutch Variation. Thus 13 \text{B}a2 is another prophylactic move that White can try. He also has a couple of aggressive options:

a) 13 \text{B}f2 covers the d4-pawn and swings the queen over to the kingside. After 13...c5, White removes his bishop from the glare of the c8-rook with 14 \text{B}a2 (D).

\text{B}

Black is in no rush to capture on d4, because this would free White's c1-bishop. It appears that White will have trouble playing e4 now,
but Black must be careful, because the advance may come in the form of a sacrifice. For example, 14...a6 15 \textit{h}1 \textit{b}6 16 \textit{h}4 \textit{f}e8 (now may be the time for 16...\textit{cxd}4) 17 \textit{dxc}5 \textit{dxc}5 18 \textit{e}4! and White developed a strong attack in I.\textit{Sokolov-De Vreugt}, Amsterdam 2001.

b) 13 \textit{d}1 would seem to indicate that White wants to play in the centre. After 13...\textit{w}e7, 14 \textit{e}4!? is a sharp try by Onischuk. White offers up a pawn even though his rook has left the f-file. Black can play:

b1) 14...\textit{f}xe4 15 \textit{dxe}4 \textit{dxe}4 16 \textit{fxe}4 \textit{c}5 (Black fixes White’s pawn-centre, but the b4-bishop is locked away from the kingside) 17 d5 \textit{w}d6 18 a5 \textit{a}6 19 \textit{f}1 \textit{c}e8 (Black surrenders the exchange because 19...\textit{d}e5 20 \textit{h}6 gives White the initiative) 20 \textit{h}6 \textit{c}e5 21 g3 f6 22 \textit{x}f8 \textit{xf}8 23 \textit{f}4 left Black with too little for the exchange in Onischuk-Shirov, Poikovsky 2006.

b2) 14...\textit{bxc}3 15 bxc3 \textit{fxe}4 16 \textit{fxe}4 and now 16...\textit{w}xe4 17 \textit{w}f2 gives White compensation according to Onischuk. This may not be so bad for Black, but there is also 16...\textit{dxe}4(?), when Onischuk claimed 17 \textit{e}1(?) as winning for White, although 17...\textit{f}e8 holds (e.g., 18 \textit{d}3?! \textit{w}h4!). However, 17 \textit{a}3 c5 18 \textit{e}1 \textit{f}e8 19 \textit{d}3 looks strong; e.g., 19...\textit{d}f6 20 \textit{e}2 intending \textit{ae}1.

13...c5 14 \textit{a}2 (D)

White must meet the threat of ...\textit{cxd}4. Instead 14 \textit{a}2 \textit{a}5 (14...\textit{b}6 is also good) 15 \textit{dxc}5 \textit{xc}5 (15...\textit{w}e7 16 b4 \textit{xb}4 17 \textit{xb}4 \textit{wxc}5 is similar) 16 b4 \textit{xb}4! is a typical trick. After 17 \textit{xb}4 \textit{wc}7 Black wins back the piece, and 18 \textit{xf}7+ \textit{xf}7 is about equal.

14...\textit{b}6

14...\textit{w}b6 is another idea. White can retain the tension with 15 \textit{d}1 or 15 \textit{w}f2, or release it by 15 \textit{dxc}5 \textit{xc}5 16 \textit{e}4!? \textit{fxe}4 17 \textit{g}5 with sharp play.

15 \textit{dxc}5

If White plays 15 \textit{w}f2 now, Black might even try 15...f4!? to fight for the initiative.

15...\textit{xc}5 (D)

Black’s pieces are coming into play very quickly, but White’s next move shows that Black will not be so well coordinated when the position opens up.

16 \textit{e}4! \textit{w}e7

Because recapturing with the rook on f5 looks a bit funny, 16...\textit{fxe}4 may seem more natural, but it is risky to open the f-file. After 17 \textit{fxe}4 (17 \textit{h}6!? also looks dangerous for Black) 17...\textit{g}4 18 h3 \textit{w}h4 (Babula-Haba, Karlovy Vary 2005), Babula suggests 19 \textit{w}e2 because 19...\textit{h}5? loses to 20 \textit{f}4.

Instead 16...\textit{xc}3 17 bxc3 \textit{wc}7 is also possible, when Babula gives 18 \textit{exf}5 \textit{xf}5 19 \textit{ae}3, heading for d4. White clearly has some compensation for the pawn, but Black’s pieces are all reasonably well placed.

17 \textit{wb}3

Before capturing on f5, White tries to disturb the coordination of Black’s pieces yet further.

17...\textit{a}5

This is a strange way to protect the bishop. Instead 17...\textit{a}5, or even 17...\textit{xc}3 18 bxc3 \textit{wc}7 transposing to the previous note, comes into consideration.
18 əh6 əc8 19 exf5 əxc3
Black is forced to part with the bishop, because after 19...əxf5? 20 əfe1, Black's queen is overloaded trying to protect both the f7-square and the b4-bishop.
20 bxc3 əxf5 21 əad1 (D)

White’s bishops generate strong pressure around the king, so Black must be careful.
21...əfd5?
This is a blunder. It was better to chase off White’s bishop with 21...əh5 to prepare...əfd5 or...əc4. The knights need firm outposts if they are to compete with the bishops.
22 a5 əc4
Probably Black saw 22 a5 and was counting on this, but his pieces are not as stable as they may appear to be.
23 əfe1
Black has tactical problems because of his weak back rank.

23...əce3 (D)
23...əc7 fails to the simple 24 əxc4, and after 23...əd7 24 əxc4 əxc4 25 əxc4 White will win the knight and be left with rook and two bishops for the queen. Therefore Black must walk into a pin.

24 əxd5
24 əxe3 əxe3 25 əd3 is even simpler because after 25...əe5 White has 26 ədx3! əxe3 27 əxe3 əxe3 28 əxf7+ əh8 29 əf6#.
24...əxd5 25 əxe3 əa3
Black tries some back-rank tricks himself, but they are not so effective.
26 h3 əxb3 27 əxb3
The black rooks are no match for White’s rook and two bishops.
27...əh5 28 əf4 əb5 29 c4 əxa5 30 əe7 əf5 31 əg3 a5 32 əxb7 a4 33 əa2 əd8 34 əa7 əd1+ 35 əh2 əd2 36 əxa4 əxf3 37 c5 əg7 38 c6 f6 39 c7 əc3 40 əc4 1-0

Game 6
Konstantin Sakaev – Garry Kasparov
European Clubs Cup, Rethymnon 2003

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 əf3 əf6 4 əc3 dxc4 5 a4 əf5 6 e3 e6 7 əxc4 əb4 8 0-0 əbd7 9 əh4
If either the main line of Game 1 or the pawn sacrifice of Game 3 lacks appeal to White, then 9 əh4 is a popular alternative. However, in comparison with 8...0-0 9 əh4 lines, here White may need to use a little more care chasing the bishop around, because Black has not yet castled and...hxg6 would open the file for the h8-rook.
9 əb3 (D) is another possibility for White. This is an attempt to exploit the fact that Black has played...əbd7 instead of...0-0 (after 8...0-0, 9 əb3 is relatively harmless as Black can safely reply 9...əe7).
DUTCH VARIATION: WHITE PLAYS 9 \( \text{a}4 \)

Now 9...\( \text{b}7 \)! can be met by 10 \( \text{d}a2 \) because the b7-pawn is loose. Therefore Black has two options:

a) 9...\( \text{w}b6 \) is risky. 10 e4 (10 \( \text{h}4 \) is also possible, but the text-move is more critical) 10...\( \text{g}4 \) (10...\( \text{xe}4 \) 11 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 12 \( \text{xe}6 \) is good for White, but 10...\( \text{g}6 \)?? 11 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 12 \( \text{a}5 \) \( \text{xa}5 \) 13 \( \text{xe}6+ \) \( \text{d}8 \) 14 \( \text{e}5 \), while highly risky for Black, remains unresolved theoretically) 11 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 12 \( \text{dxe}5 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 13 \( \text{wc}3 \) (13 \( \text{wb}6 \) \( \text{xb}6 \) 14 \( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 15 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 15 \( \text{wc}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) is equal. Now we return to 9 \( \text{h}4 \) (D).

b) 9...\( \text{a}5 \) is supposed to allow White to force a draw, but this may not be so. White has:

b1) 10 \( \text{a}2 \) and now:

b11) 10...\( \text{b}7 \) allows White to head for a draw after 11 \( \text{wb}7 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 12 \( \text{wa}6 \) \( \text{a}8 \) 13 \( \text{wc}6 \) \( \text{c}8 \) with a perpetual attack on White’s queen. In practice, White usually prefers 11 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{e}4 \) (11...\( \text{g}6 \) is also fine) 12 \( \text{c}3 \), when both 12...\( \text{d}5 \) and 12...\( \text{b}6 \) have done alright for Black.

b12) Black can try 10...\( \text{c}5?! \) to avoid the draw. This is not such an unusual idea, because after 11 \( \text{xb}4 \) \( \text{xb}4 \) Black has a good grip on the centre and White’s dark-squared bishop is difficult to activate.

b2) 10 \( \text{h}4 \) is often preferred if White wants to fight. Black has a choice:

b21) 10...\( \text{g}6 \) 11 \( \text{g}3 \) and now 11...\( \text{b}6?! \) 12 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{hxg}6 \) 13 \( \text{d}1 \) has scored well for White, so Black should consider keeping the bishop with 11...\( \text{h}5 \)??.

b22) 10...\( \text{g}4 \) 11 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 12 \( \text{g}3 \) (12 \( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 13 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 14 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) was Ki.Georgiev-Bacrot, Turin Olympiad 2006; these positions are often difficult to assess – White has a lot of space, but his position could prove to be a bit loose) 12...0-0 13 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) (the d4-pawn is hanging, so Black snags the white bishop) 14 \( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 15 \( \text{wc}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) is equal.

Now we return to 9 \( \text{h}4 \) (D).
so Black should aim for ...c5. A good example of this plan for Black will be seen in the next game.

d) 10 g3 is a typical waiting move. White protects the h4-knight 'just in case' and also shields the h2-pawn along the h2-b8 diagonal in anticipation of capturing on g6. Black can castle, wait with 10...a5, or preserve his bishop with 10...h5.

e) Opening the h-file by 10 hxg6 appears to be rather cooperative, but White is not really likely to get mated on h2. After 10...hxg6 11 h3 Black could castle queenside after 11...wc7 with complicated play, or just play the simple 11...0-0 considering the move h3 a somewhat wasted tempo. Play would then be similar to that of Game 2.

f) 10 be2 prevents any ...h5 ideas, but is a bit slow. The bishop was certainly more active on the c4-square. After 10...0-0 11 hxg6 hxg6 12 wc2 (D) we have a familiar structure.

This position is similar to Game 2, except that White has played wc2 and be2 instead of we2 and xd1. After 12...xc8, Black has a solid position and he can follow up with ...wa5 or ...we7, aiming for the usual ...c5 or ...e5 breaks.

10...h5!

The compliant 10...0-0?! 11 hxg6 hxg6 12 wc2! is a little better for White. His bishop is still active on c4, so it is difficult to play ...e5 because of wxg6. Black has trouble finding counterplay because it is not easy to break in the centre. A very high-level example continued 12...xc8 13 xd1 wb6 14 e4 c5?! Whenever Black plays this advance (or ...e5, for that matter), he must be well prepared to meet d5. That is not the case here: 15 d5! we5 16 we2 exd5 17 wxd5 wxd5 18 wxd5 was clearly better for White in Kasparov-Anand, Linares 1993. White has the bishop-pair and the initiative, while Black is especially soft on the light squares.

11 wb3?!

The safe 11 be2 xc2 12 xc2 0-0 13 b3 xc8 14 h2 wa5 15 xf3 xd8 resulted in a sterile equality in Zilberstein-Vigorito, Reno 2005.

11 g4 is sharper. Now 11...xd5 hits the h4-knight, and then 12 xg2 xg6 leads to a complicated fight. There will be a typical battle of White's space and initiative against Black's compact, counterpunching position. White has tried 13 xg2, 13 xa2 and 13 f4?! with varying success.

11...a5 (D)

12 g4

This seems a bit inconsistent after deciding against this double-edged advance on the previous move. However, it is not easy for White to find a good plan, and the alternatives are not without risks:

a) 12 f4 is an advance that must always be made with very careful consideration. The e4-square is weakened and a ...c5 break will leave White's structure looking very shaky. After 12...0-0 13 xf3 (13 g4 xc4 14 hxg4 xh4 15 gxh5 wg3+ leads to a draw) 13...xb6 14 be2 c5! 15 xa2 xc8 16 xb4 exb4 Black's active pieces and central control prevented White from

b) 12 \textit{a}2 \textit{e}7 (both 12...\textit{d}6 and the untried 12...\textit{d}5 are also attractive possibilities) 13 \textit{w}xb7 \textit{b}8 14 \textit{w}a6 (14 \textit{w}xc6? \textit{b}6) may be playable for White, but it looks very risky.

12...\textit{g}6!? 

Already there was a draw to be had after 12...\textit{x}g4 13 bxg4 \textit{g}4+ 14 \textit{g}xh4 \textit{h}xg4 15 \textit{w}g4+ with perpetual check. Perhaps Sakaev was hoping for this, but Kasparov plays for a win.

13 \textit{g}2

This reluctant retreat is far from ideal, but 13 \textit{w}xb7 \textit{h}xg6 is not very attractive with the weaknesses on the h-file.

13...0-0 14 \textit{f}4 e5!

Black is ahead in development and White has several pawn weaknesses, so Black opens up the position. The fact that White can obtain the bishop-pair at any time is of no comfort because he has trouble developing properly.

15 \textit{dxe}5

This activates Black’s pieces. It was safer to play 15 \textit{w}xb7 \textit{h}xg6 16 \textit{d}d1, when White can shore up his king’s position with \textit{f}1 if necessary.

15...\textit{xe}5 16 \textit{e}2 \textit{fd}7 17 \textit{w}xb7 \textit{x}g6 \textit{w}xg6!

The knight eyes the h4-square and makes way for its d7 counterpart. Instead 17...\textit{hxg6} is met by 18 \textit{g}4, preventing ...\textit{c}5, and getting fancy with 17...\textit{c}5 18 \textit{w}e2 \textit{fxg6} allows 19 \textit{d}a2.

18 \textit{dd}1 (D)

White can also play 18 \textit{e}4 \textit{wh}4 19 \textit{h}2 (19 \textit{g}2 \textit{e}7 and Black will play ...\textit{h}4+ with tempo) although his position still looks shaky after the aggressive 19...\textit{h}5 or the calm 19...\textit{ad}8.

On the surface, White’s position after the text-move looks quite reasonable. He has the bishop-pair and his weaknesses do not look too serious. Nevertheless, grabbing the bishop-pair has cost White time and the structural weaknesses cannot be repaired. More importantly, Black has a chance to prevent White from developing properly. Positions like this in the Slav are not unusual and they have a common theme: Black needs to cause White trouble before he gets organized. Often small tactics are needed to prevent White from catching up.

18...\textit{c}5!

This fine move keeps White off-balance.

19 \textit{ad}8

If White keeps the queens on with 19 \textit{w}c2, Black will start an attack with 19...\textit{wh}4. After 20 \textit{g}2, both the straightforward 20...\textit{ad}8 and the sharper 20...\textit{ae}8, intending to engineer ...\textit{f}5 or ...\textit{e}6-g5, are good for Black. White’s king position is just too loose. Exchanging queens may look safe enough, but now White comes under fire on the other side of the board.

19...\textit{xb}3 20 \textit{xa}8 \textit{xa}8 21 \textit{bb}1 \textit{dd}8 (D)

The queenside weaknesses created by White’s 5th move are quite telling. White can hardly move. This game is a great illustration of what may happen if White is unable to develop quickly. Despite the bishop-pair, the pressure on the a5-e1 diagonal and d-file means that Black is happy to play with knights in an open position.
22 \( \text{d1} \)
22 \( \text{d4} \text{e4} \text{c5} \) is no improvement for White.
22...\( \text{xc1} \) 23 \( \text{xc1} \text{xe5} \) 24 \( \text{b3?} \)
Instead, 24 \( \text{d4?!} \text{d3} \) 25 \( \text{b1} \text{xb2} \) 26 \( \text{b3} \text{a3} \) 27 \( \text{g5} \text{xf8} \) does not help much, but
24 \( \text{c2} \) keeps White in the game. 24...\( \text{c4} \)
(24...\( \text{xc3} \) 25 \( \text{xc3} \text{d2} \) 26 \( \text{c4} \) is certainly
better for Black, but White can probably hold)
25 \( \text{d1!} \text{b8} \) 26 \( \text{c4} \) (26 \( \text{b1} \text{xb2} \) 26...\( \text{xb2} \)
27 \( \text{d7} \) gives White some counterplay.
24...\( \text{d2} \) 25 \( \text{c2} \text{xc3!} \) 26 \( \text{xc3} \text{xf8} \) (D)
28 \( \text{c1} \)

There is hardly any other move. Black’s rook
and knight coordinate wonderfully in the end-
ting.
28...\( \text{g5!} \) 29 \( \text{c2} \)
After 29 \( \text{e1} \text{b2} \) Black wins the h3-pawn.
29...\( \text{xe4} \) 30 \( \text{e1} \text{xc2} \) 31 \( \text{xc2} \text{xc3} \)

With an extra pawn and the better minor
piece, the rest is simple for Kasparov.
32 \( \text{d2} \text{d5} \) 33 \( \text{b3} \text{e7} \) 34 \( \text{d3} \) 35
\( \text{d4} \) 36 \( \text{h4} \) 37 \( \text{b5} \text{c7} \) 38 \( \text{f4} \) 39
\( \text{e4} \text{c5} \) 40 \( \text{c2} \text{xa4!} \) 0-1

Game 7
Magnus Carlsen – Boris Gelfand
Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006

1 \( \text{d4} \text{e5} \) 2 \( \text{c4} \text{c6} \) 3 \( \text{f3} \text{f6} \) 4 \( \text{c3} \text{dxc4} \) 5 \( \text{a4} \)
\( \text{f5} \) 6 \( \text{h4} \) (D)

This sortie is quite popular. White forces a
decision from Black regarding his bishop.
6...\( \text{g4?!} \)
This provokes White to advance his pawn in
order to justify the knight’s lunge to h4. Black
has several other moves as well:

a) 6...\( \text{e6} \) usually leads to the position reached
in Game 5 after 7 \( \text{xf5} \text{exf5} \) 8 \( \text{e3} \text{b4} \) 9 \( \text{xc4} \)
0-0 10 0-0 \( \text{bd7} \). This is a safe choice if Black
feels comfortable in this kind of structure.
b) 6...\( \text{g6} \) is too compliant. After 7 \( \text{xf6} \)
h\( \text{x6} \) White has a pleasant choice between 8 \( \text{e3} \)
and 8 \( \text{e4} \).
c) 6...\( \text{c8} \) invites a repetition after 7 \( \text{xf3} \),
but White can also play 7 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{xc4} \) exd4 9
exd4 with a structure more reminiscent of a
Petroff or Queen’s Gambit Accepted.
d) 6...\( \text{d7} \) (D) is one of Black’s more ambi-
tious continuations. The bishop may be a bit
passive here, but it is still developed and may
help support ...\( \text{b5} \). The white knight also re-
mains out on a limb. White has tried:
d1) 7 \( \text{e4} \text{e6} \) 8 \( \text{xf3} \) (if 8 \( \text{xc4} \), then 8...\( \text{xe4} \)
takes advantage of the loose knight on h4) 8...\( \text{b5} \)
9 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{d5} \) 10 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{b4} \) gave Black counterplay
in Ftačník-Azmaiparashvili, European Ch, Sil-
vri 2003.

d2) 7 \( \text{e3} \) is more restrained, but it is also
more stable. White will play for \( \text{e5} \) and \( \text{f3} \),
exerting pressure on both the h1-a8 diagonal and f7. After 7...b5 8 \( \text{Qf}3 \text{e}6 9 \text{Qe}5 \text{a}5 10 \text{Qf}3 \text{a}7 11 \text{g}4 \text{h}6 12 \text{h}4 White had an initiative for the pawn in Moiseenko-Gagunashvili, European Ch, Silivri 2003.

D) 7 g3 is another idea. White supports the h4-knight and hopes to develop Catalan-like compensation. Black’s most aggressive counter is Ivanchuk’s 7...e6 8 \( \text{Qg}2 \text{c}5!\). After 9 d5 (the point is that 9 \( \text{Qxb}7 \text{c}6 10 \text{Qxa}8 \text{Qxa}8 \text{gives Black good counterplay}) 9...exd5 10 \( \text{Qxd}5 \text{Qc}6 11 \text{Qc}2 \text{Qxd}5 12 \text{Qxd}5 \text{Qb}4 13 \text{Qe}4+ \text{Qe}7 14 \text{Qxc}4 0-0 Black was better in Nyvåck-Ivanchuk, European Ch, Antalya 2004.

7 h3

This is the most consistent choice and is by far White’s most common move. He avoids weakening his kingside and creates the possibility of developing his bishop on the long diagonal. After 7 f3 Black can play 7...h5 8 g4 \( \text{Qg}6 \) or consider retreating the bishop with 7...\( \text{Qh}8 \) or 7...\( \text{Qe}6 \)!? to leave the h4-knight offside.

7...h5 8 g4 \( \text{Qg}6 \) 9 \( \text{Qxg}6 

White could also delay this exchange with 9 \( \text{Qg}2 \text{e}6 10 0-0, \) although it is not apparent how White derives any real benefit from this.

9...hxg6 (D)

10 e3

A solid choice, and the most popular move. White avoids any more weakening pawn-pushes and prepares to recapture the pawn on c4. Alternatives:

a) 10 e4 is more aggressive, but it looks rather loose. 10...e6 (Black develops normally; he could also strike in the centre with 10...e5!? immediately) 11 \( \text{Qxc}4 \text{Qb}4 12 \text{f}3 \text{c}5! 13 \text{dxe}5 \text{Qa}5 14 \text{Qb}5+ \text{Qfd}7 15 \text{Qc}3 0-0 16 \text{Qe}2?! \text{Qxc}5 was at least equal for Black in Ward-Hillarp Persson, St Helier 1999.

b) 10 g5 \( \text{Qd}5 \) 11 e4 \( \text{Qb}4 \) 12 \( \text{Qe}3 \text{c}5 13 \text{Qxc}4 \) (after 13 dxe5 \( \text{Qd}7! \) both 14 \( \text{Qxc}4 \text{Qxe}5 \) and 14 f4 \( \text{Qc}5 \) give Black good play) 13...exd4 14 \( \text{Qb}3 \text{Qc}7 \) (14...d3+ is interesting) 15 \( \text{Qxd}4 \text{Qc}6 16 \text{Qa}6 \text{Qxa}6 17 0-0-0 \text{Qc}5 18 \text{Qc}2 \text{Qe}6 19 \text{Qe}3 \text{Qd}6 20 \text{Qe}2 \text{a}6 \text{\( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \) Ponomariov-Grishchuk, Calvia Olympiad 2004.}

10...e6 11 \( \text{Qxc}4 

White would like to fianchetto his bishop by 11 \( \text{Qg}2 \) with the hope of recapturing the pawn with \( \text{Qe}2\text{xc}4, \) but Black can immediately head for the weakened d3-square: 11...\( \text{Qa}6! \) 12 \( \text{Qe}2 \text{Qb}4 \) 13 0-0 (not 13 \( \text{Qc}4? \text{Qc}2+ \)) 13...\( \text{Qd}3 \) and Black will play ...\( \text{Qb}4 \) with a good game.

11...\( \text{Qb}4 \) (D)
Black can be pretty satisfied with the outcome of the opening. Because of White's g4 lunge, it is not easy for him to castle in this otherwise typical Slav structure. Black can continue with ... \texttt{wa5} and ... \texttt{bd7} before deciding where to put his king.

12 \texttt{f1}?

Perhaps fearing his opponent's preparation, Carlsen deviates from his previous games. However, this artificial move is simply too ambitious. White wants perfect development with \texttt{g2} and 0-0, but after Black's reply White certainly regretted this decision. Other moves are more sensible:

a) 12 \texttt{f1} makes sense – White tucks his king away. 12... \texttt{bd7} 13 \texttt{g2 wa5} is about equal.

b) 12 \texttt{f3} \texttt{bd7} 13 \texttt{f1} \texttt{wa5} 14 \texttt{e4} \texttt{xe4} 15 \texttt{xe4} 0-0-0 gave Black an active position in Shipov-Sakaev, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2004.

c) 12 \texttt{d2} \texttt{bd7} (or 12... \texttt{wa5}) 13 \texttt{g5} \texttt{d5} 14 \texttt{e4} \texttt{b5} 15 \texttt{b3} a5 16 \texttt{we2} leads to unbalanced play. This position had been tried a couple of times by Carlsen.

12... \texttt{d5}!

White is immediately punished for his backward development.

13 \texttt{f3}

After 13 \texttt{g1} White will manage to play \texttt{g2}, but his king will not find a happy home.

13... \texttt{wa5} 14 \texttt{g2} \texttt{c5}!

Gelfand is not interested in grabbing pawns. Instead, he develops rapidly, bringing his knight to its most active post on \texttt{c6}. This game is a good example of the side with the knight-pair opening the position quickly to exploit a lead in development.

15 \texttt{dxc5} \texttt{c6} 16 0-0 0-0 17 \texttt{f4} \texttt{xc5} (D)

Black has beautiful classical development. White still must find a way to get his queenside pieces out. Just as in the previous game, White's acquisition of the bishop-pair has left him overextended and behind in development. This is not to say that grabbing bishops is a bad idea. Often the side with the bishop-pair must 'slow things down' in order to avoid an early accident. Only when the position is stabilized can the bishop-pair's latent power hope to be exploited.

18 \texttt{g5}?!  

This does not help. Instead of pushing pawns, White should at least develop with 18 \texttt{e2} \texttt{fd8} 19 \texttt{d2}, even though Black holds the initiative here as well.

18... \texttt{fd8} 19 \texttt{we2} \texttt{xc3} 20 \texttt{xc3} \texttt{d5} (D)

A positional nightmare. White's queenside pawns are split and the black knights are tremendous. Black's development advantage means that his rooks will take the c- and d-files, and his king is much safer than White's. White's position creates a good illustration of the dangers of pushing so many pawns – if you lose control of the space gained by the pawn advances, numerous weaknesses may remain behind them.

21 \texttt{wb5}  

White strains to activate his pieces. Both 21 \texttt{c4} \texttt{c3} and 21 \texttt{d2} \texttt{a5} (heading to \texttt{c4}) are awful for White.

21... \texttt{xc3} 22 \texttt{b1}
DUTCH VARIATION: WHITE PLAYS 9 \( \text{\(\text{\#h4}\)} \)

Perhaps \( 22 \text{ab}3 \text{wc}2 23 \text{wb}3 \) (23 \( \text{wx}b7 \)) loses the queen to \( 23...\text{ab}b8 24 \text{wa}6 \text{\text{\#db4}} \) would have been a better chance. At least White can move.

\[ \text{22...\text{\#db4} 23 \text{we}2 \text{\#ac}8 24 \text{\#e}4 \text{da}5 \text{25 \#b}2 \text{wc}4 26 \text{wg}2 (D) \]

It is rare for two bishops to be so outclassed by two knights, especially in such an open position. The bishops occupy the long diagonals, but they attack nothing while Black’s knights and rooks are ready to pour themselves into White’s position.

\[ \text{26...\text{\#b}3} \]

Black plays for maximum activity. He could also consolidate his extra pawn with \( 26...\text{b}6 \) or \( 26...\text{\#d}5. \)

\[ \text{27 \#xb}7 \text{\#d}2 28 \text{\#f}3 \text{\#d}8 29 \text{\#e}5 \text{\#e}5 \]

White’s light-squared bishop is almost out of squares.

\[ \text{30 \#bc}1 \text{\#c}2 31 \text{\#c}6 (D) \]

\[ \text{31...a}6 \]

In a dominant position, Black takes yet another square away from White’s floundering king’s bishop. Still, \( 31...\text{\#b}3 \) is more precise. After \( 32 \text{\#b}1 \) (or \( 32 \text{\#b}5 \text{wc}5) 32...\text{\#xe}3! 33 \text{we}3 \text{\#d}3 \) White can resign.

\[ \text{32 \#f}2 \text{\#b}3 33 \text{\#ef}1 \text{\#d}4 \]

\[ 33...\text{wc}5 \] is even quicker.

\[ \text{34 \#e}4 \text{\#xc}6 35 \text{\#xb}4 \text{\#xf}2 36 \text{\#xf}2 \text{\#c}1+ 37 \text{\#g}2 \text{\#xe}3 38 \text{\#b}7? \]

\( 38 \text{\#d}6 \) was the only move to play on, but White’s position is lost in any case.

\[ \text{38...\text{\#d}2 0-1} \]

There is no good defence to ...\text{\#e}4.

Conclusions

The structure that arises after the exchange \( 10 \text{\#xf}5 \) \( \text{ex}f5 \) is quite tense and gives chances to both sides. After \( 11 \text{wc}2, 11...\text{g}6 \) is the most common way to defend the f5-pawn, but Black must be very careful because if the position opens up, his kingside weaknesses could be telling. The manoeuvre \( 11...\text{\#b}6 \) followed by \( 12...\text{\#d}7 \) has become more popular recently, and this solid line would be my choice.

If Black plays the move-order with \( 8...\text{\#bd}7 \), then \( 9 \text{\#h}4 \) is somewhat less forcing than it is after \( 8...0-0 \), because White is in less of a hurry to capture on \( g6 \), thus opening the h-file for Black. This gives Black the option of playing a quick \( \text{\#h}5 \), maintaining some tension. White can still hunt down the bishop with a timely g4 advance, but this is double-edged because it weakens the white kingside. When White plays a quick \( \text{\#b}3 \), the position becomes tense across the board, and the position can be difficult to evaluate. If Black does not like these murky positions, he can always leave the bishop on f5, heading to the structure of Game 5.

When White plays \( 6 \text{\#h}4 \), Black can again allow the capture on f5 with \( 6...e6 \) if he prefers that type of pawn-structure. Instead \( 6...\text{\#d}7 \) aims to hold on to the c4-pawn, while \( 6...\text{\#g}4 \) is a good choice. White must weaken himself with g4 in order to round up Black’s bishop, and then the h-file is opened immediately. Black gets a very solid position without having to know too much theory.
Central Variation: Black Plays

6...\(\text{bd7}\) 7\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{c7}\)

This chapter introduces the Central Variation, 6 \(\text{de5}\). This is a very different approach from the classical development of the Dutch Variation. White would like to build a broad pawn-centre with f3 and e4. This is a very ambitious plan, and White may lag behind in development. The games in this chapter and the next see Black challenging the white knight immediately with 6...\(\text{bd7}\) (for 6...\(\text{e6}\), see Chapter 5). After 7\(\text{xc4}\), this chapter examines 7...\(\text{ic7}\), by which Black intends to open the position with ...e5. Usually White allows this by playing 8 g3, preparing not only the fianchetto of the f1-bishop, but also the development of White’s queen’s bishop to f4, where it may annoy Black’s queen. The play in the Central Variation is usually very concrete, and this chapter is no exception.

The Games

**Game 8** (Aronian-I.Sokolov) examines the older variation with 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{f6}\) 4 \(\text{c3}\) dxc4 5 a4 \(\text{f5}\) 6 \(\text{de5}\) \(\text{bd7}\) 7 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{c7}\) 8 g3 e5 9 dxe5 \(\text{xe5}\) 10 \(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{fd7}\) 11 \(\text{g2}\) f6. This line was first given a serious examination in the 1937 World Championship match between Alekhine and Euwe. Both players were happy to play either colour and refinements of both sides’ play were developed. After 12 0-0, in our main game Black plays the modern 12...\(\text{xc5}\), which had been championed by Morozevich. Aronian shows his deep preparation and sacrifices the exchange to generate a promising initiative. Although Black may be alright theoretically in this line, with the clock ticking, Sokolov was unable to deal with the mounting pressure and he quickly succumbed to Aronian’s purposeful play.

**Game 9** (Ki.Georgiev-Bu Xiangzhi) introduces Morozevich’s brainchild 11...\(\text{g5}\)!? It is mostly due to this tactical counterblow that 7...\(\text{wc7}\) has seen such a revival in the past decade. This move was quite shocking when Morozevich unleashed it against none other than Kasparov in 2000. Nowadays this move is not so surprising, but the final word has hardly been spoken. Our featured game sees Georgiev sticking to Kasparov’s original antidote 12 \(\text{xe3}\). This positional approach leads to very unusual positions where both sides have their trumps. After 12...\(\text{xf4}\) 13 \(\text{xf5}\) 0-0-0 14 \(\text{wc2}\), Bu plays the interesting 14...\(\text{g6}\) and gradually assumes the initiative. This game serves as a good example of Black maintaining pawn tension while keeping a watchful eye on the centre. After one slip from Georgiev, Bu is relentless and wins a fine game.

**Game 10** (Jobava-Grishchuk) delves into the tactical ramifications of 12 \(\text{xe5}\) and 12 \(\text{xe5}\) in Morozevich’s line. While the latter is not looking very dangerous, the former move especially leads to very complex play where both players must be well prepared. Jobava is a player renowned for his home preparation, and Grishchuk is soon caught in a web of tactics. With opposite-side castling, one slip is all it takes and Jobava crashes through with a direct attack on Black’s king.
This continuation generally leads to sharper play than 6 e3. White intends to play the ambitious f3 and e4, creating a broad pawn-centre while locking Black's f5-bishop out of play. Black can allow this plan and hope to fight back tactically by playing 6 ... e6, which is considered in Chapter 5, or he can challenge White in the centre immediately, as he does here and in Chapter 4.

6 ... $\text{bd}7 7 \text{xc}4 \text{c}7$

Black intends to play ... e5, opening the position. A solid alternative is 7 ... $\text{b}6$, which is discussed in the next chapter.

8 g3 (D)

Because White has moved his king's knight three times already, he must be wary of falling behind in development. This move allows White to fight for the initiative by preparing both $\text{f}4$ and the fianchetto of the king's bishop. Instead 8 f3 e5 and 8 $\text{g}5$ e5 are considered to be fine for Black. An interesting idea is 8 $\text{d}2$ with the point that 8 ... e5? loses to 9 dxe5 $\text{xe}5$ 10 $\text{f}4$! with a double attack on e5 and f5. Instead Black should prefer 8 ... e6 or 8 ... $\text{b}6$, when the white queen may end up looking silly on d2. One example is 8 ... $\text{b}6$ 9 $\text{e}5$ e6 10 f3 0-0-0! 11 a5 $\text{bd}5$ 12 c4 $\text{b}4$ 13 $\text{f}2$ (if 13 exf5 then 13 ... $\text{x}d4$ 14 $\text{e}2$, when both 14 ... $\text{d}6$ and 14 ... exf5 give Black good play) 13 ... $\text{x}d4 !$, which gave Black the initiative in Muham­mad-Khachian, Lindsborg 2004.

8 ... e5 9 dxe5 $\text{xe}5$ 10 $\text{f}4$

White pins the knight in order to maintain some tension. Instead 10 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{xe}5$ 11 $\text{g}2$ $\text{c}5$ is very comfortable for Black.

10 ... $\text{fd}7$

Black acquiesces to moving the knight again because after he secures the e5-knight, he may follow with ... $\text{d}8$ and ... $\text{c}5$. White's queen may feel uncomfortable because the b3-square is vulnerable to a knight invasion.

Black can also play 10 ... $\text{d}8$ 11 $\text{c}1$ $\text{d}6$ 12 $\text{x}d6+$ $\text{x}d6$ 13 $\text{g}2$ and then either 13 ... 0-0 or 13 ... $\text{e}7$. Black has a solid position, but White can be happy with his effortless acquisi­tion of the bishop-pair.

11 $\text{g}2$ (D)

The tricky 11 e4 $\text{e}6$ 12 $\text{h}5$ can be met with the clever 12 ... $\text{g}5 !$, exploiting both the hole on f3 and the loose c4-knight.

Suddenly White is the one with a develop­ment lead, but Black's position is quite solid and White lacks an obvious pawn-break.

11 ... f6
This is a very sturdy continuation. Black simply reinforces the e5-knight. Instead 11...\textit{f}6 12 \textit{d}xe5 \textit{d}xe5 13 0-0 \textit{e}7?! (in an earlier game, Alekhine had played 13...\textit{f}6 14 \textit{c}2 \textit{a}5 as Black, and this gives Black chances to equalize according to Kasparov) 14 \textit{c}2! \textit{d}8 15 \textit{f}d1 0-0 16 \textit{b}5 gave White the initiative in Alekhine-Euwe, World Ch match (game 1), Amsterdam 1935.

The sharp alternative 11...\textit{g}5?! is considered in the next two games.

12 0-0

Resolving the tension with 12 \textit{d}xe5 should not be dangerous. Black has:

a) 12...\textit{d}xe5?! 13 a5 \textit{a}6 14 0-0 \textit{d}6 15 \textit{e}4 \textit{e}7 16 \textit{w}b3 \textit{g}6 17 \textit{f}d1 \textit{f}7 18 \textit{w}c3 0-0 19 \textit{g}5! gave White a large advantage in Van Wely-I.Sokolov, Dutch Ch, Rotterdam 1998. We shall see this trick again.

b) Gaining time by 12...\textit{fxe5}! looks better. Black’s remaining knight can still head to c5 and his dark-squared play will at least make up for the slight weakness in his pawn-structure. This structure can arise in many different positions, and in general Black is active enough to hold the balance. 13 \textit{g}5 (trying to provoke Black, though 13 \textit{e}3 is also possible) 13...\textit{c}5 14 0-0 \textit{e}7 (14...a5 is also OK) 15 \textit{c}xe7 \textit{w}xe7 16 \textit{a}3 a5 17 \textit{c}1 0-0 18 \textit{w}e3 \textit{ad}8 was fine for Black in Kasimdzhanov-Sashikiran, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

12...\textit{c}5

This is the modern interpretation of 11...\textit{f}6 which was used a lot by Morozevich before his 11...\textit{g}5 creation. Black lags in development, but the pieces he does have out are active and he may play ...\textit{d}8 with tempo. White must play very deliberately and strive for active play, since otherwise his queenside weaknesses may cause him some problems. Other moves have proved somewhat lacking:

a) 12...\textit{e}6 (there is no need for this voluntary retreat) 13 \textit{d}xe5 \textit{fxe5} 14 \textit{e}3 \textit{c}5 15 \textit{w}c1 \textit{xe}3 16 \textit{w}xe3 is pleasant for White.

b) 12...\textit{d}8 13 \textit{c}1 \textit{e}6 (13...\textit{e}7 14 \textit{d}xe5 \textit{d}xe5 allows 15 \textit{d}5! and 13...\textit{w}b8? 14 \textit{e}4 \textit{e}7 15 \textit{w}c3 0-0 16 \textit{ad}1 \textit{e}6 17 \textit{d}xe5 \textit{d}xe5 18 \textit{g}5! gave White a big advantage in Euwe-Alekhine, World Ch match (game 20), Amsterdam 1935) 14 \textit{e}4! \textit{b}4 (both 14...\textit{e}7 15 a5 \textit{a}6 16 \textit{d}1 0-0 17 \textit{c}3 and 14...\textit{xc}4 15 \textit{w}c4 \textit{xc}4 16 \textit{xc}7 \textit{c}8 17 \textit{f}4 are also very pleasant for White) 15 a5 0-0 16 a6 gave White the initiative in Euwe-Alekhine, World Ch match (game 1), The Hague 1937.

We now return to 12...\textit{c}5 (D):
...dxe4 is fine for Black) 17...\(\text{Q}e6\) gave Black good play in Iskusnykh-Morozevich, Russian Clubs Cup, Maikop 1998. He has a nice grip on the d4-square.

c) 14 \(\text{fxe5}\) gives up the bishop-pair to try to exploit the lead in development. This is risky because White will be weak on the dark squares. 14...f5 15 \(f4\) (the consistent move, but it weakens the dark squares further and Black may play ...c5 with tempo) 15...\(\text{d}d8\) (the immediate 15...exf4 has also scored well) 16 \(\text{g}g4?!\) (16 \(\text{e}2\) exf4 17 gxf4 \(\text{Q}b3\) 18 \(\text{e}d1\) c5 19 \(\text{h}h1\) f4 is also very comfortable for Black) 16...exf4 17 gxf4 d3 18 \(\text{h}h1\) c5 was already much better for Black in Sakaev-Morozevich, Kishinev 1998. White has too many weaknesses on the dark squares.

13...\(\text{g}6\)

Black keeps his bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal so that White cannot play \(\text{b}1\) or \(\text{c}2\).

Trying to throw in 13...\(\text{d}8\) is not so good because after 14 \(\text{Q}cd5!\) (a typical trick) 14...\(\text{d}7\) 15 \(\text{fxf5}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 16 \(\text{e}3\) the bishop-pair gives White some advantage.

Retreating with 13...\(\text{e}6\) is feasible though. After 14 b4 \(\text{d}8\) 15 \(\text{b}1\) (15 \(\text{e}2\) \(\text{a}6\) 16 b5 \(\text{b}4\) 17 \(\text{e}4\) c5 18 bxc6 bxc6 leaves Black’s pawn-structure a little shaky, but all of his pieces are very active) 15...\(\text{b}3\) (15...\(\text{a}6\) is also playable, though 16 b5 \(\text{b}4\) does not come with tempo) 16 \(\text{cd5!}\) cxd5 17 \(\text{xb}3\) looks a little better for White.

14 \(\text{b}4!\)

White must fight for the initiative. His development lead has grown, but he needs a way to open the position for his pieces. Black’s temporary lack of control of b4 gives White the leverage he needs on the queenside.

14...\(\text{e}6\) (D)

Again, 14...\(\text{d}8\) can be met with 15 \(\text{cd5!}\). After 15...cxd5 16 bxc5 \(\text{xc5}\) 17 \(\text{xd5}\) White has the initiative.

15 \(\text{b}3\)

An interesting moment. White attacks the knight on e6 and avoids ...\(\text{d}8\) ever coming with tempo. By delaying b5, White temporarily denies the black bishop the c5-square. It is much less dynamic to advance with 15 a5, because after Black fixes the queenside with 15...a6! he will not have to worry about White opening lines with b5. After 16 \(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}6\) 17 \(\text{cd5}\) \(\text{f}7\) Black was fine in Aronian-Gelfand, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

Playing the immediate 15 b5 certainly looks the most consistent, but this does weaken the dark squares and Black may be able to take advantage of this. After 15...\(\text{d}8\) 16 \(\text{b}3\) Black has:

a) 16...\(\text{f}7\) is too slow. 17 \(\text{xe5}\) fxe5 18 bxc6 bxc6 19 \(\text{ab}1\) gives White some initiative. The position has opened up, and Black’s pieces are just not active enough. For example, after 19...c5 20 \(\text{b}2\) \(\text{g}6\) 21 \(\text{bd}1\) e7 22 \(\text{xd}8\) \(\text{c}5\) 23 \(\text{b}5!\) \(\text{xb}5\) 24 \(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{d}7\) 25 \(\text{d}1\) a6 26 \(\text{c}6\) Black could hardly move in Halkias-Drenchev, Kavala 2005.

b) 16...\(\text{d}4\) 17 \(\text{b}2\) \(\text{c}5\) 18 \(\text{fc}1\) (note the trap 18 \(\text{e}4\) ? \(\text{xe}4\) 19 \(\text{xe}4\) g5, when Black wins a piece, while 18 \(\text{xe5}\) fxe5 19 \(\text{e}4\) should be met by 19...\(\text{e}7\) 18...\(\text{e}7\) (Black removes the queen from both the c-file and the pin of White’s f4-bishop) 19 bxc6 bxc6 20 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{b}4\) 21 \(\text{c}4\) \(\text{xc}4\) 22 \(\text{xc}4\) c5 23 e3 \(\text{e}6\) 24 \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{xf}4\) 25 \(\text{c}6+\) \(\text{f}8\) 26 \(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{e}5\) 27 \(\text{c}1\)? (27 \(\text{xb}4\) \(\text{cxb}4\) 28 \(\text{xb}4\) +, with compensation, was better) 27...a5 and the powerful bishops and control of the d-file gave Black excellent play in Bacrot-Gelfand, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

15...\(\text{f}7\)

After the obvious 15...\(\text{d}4\) White has 16 \(\text{b}2\), when the knight is not so stable; for example, after 16...\(\text{d}8\)? White has the typical trick 17 \(\text{cd5!}\). The immediate 15...\(\text{xf}4\) 16 gxf4 leaves Black facing an unpleasant check
on e6 combined with the b5 advance. Black is too far behind in development.

16 \textbf{wb}1! (D)

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

\[\text{Diagram}
\]

16...\textit{\textbf{Q}}\textit{xf4}

This is very natural, but it appears to be a mistake as White's initiative develops quickly. Alternatives:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) 16...\textit{\textbf{Q}}e7 17 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf4 18 gxf4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g6 (18...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c4?! 19 e3 (if 19 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xg7+, then 19...\textit{\textbf{Q}}f8 20 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf4) 19...0-0 20 b5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}ad8 21 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c1 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d7 22 a5 gives White a strong queenside initiative, E. Atalik-Haznedaroğlu, Turkish Ch, Istanbul 2006.
  
  b) 16...\textit{\textbf{Q}}d8 17 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c1 (17 b5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c5!) 17...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xf4 18 gxf4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g6 19 \textit{\textbf{Q}}cd5 and now 19...\textit{\textbf{Q}}d7?! 20 \textit{\textbf{W}}e4+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}e7 21 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe7 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe7 22 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe7 23 b5 gave White a clear initiative in the endgame in Khuzman-Arencibia, Montreal 2006, but 19...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xd5 20 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd5 \textit{\textbf{W}}d6! looks fine for Black.
  
  17 gxf4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g6

  White cannot protect the f4-pawn, but he is well ahead in development and is quick to exploit this.

  18 b5!

  Finally prying open the queenside. If White can win control of d5, his knights will pour into Black’s position.

  18...\textit{\textbf{W}}xf4

  After 18...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xf4 19 bxc6 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xg2 both 20 \textit{\textbf{W}}e4+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}e5 21 \textit{\textbf{W}}xg2 and 20 cxb7 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b8 21 \textit{\textbf{Q}}cd5 are promising for White.

  19 \textit{\textbf{E}}d1!

  19 bxc6 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d6 gives Black counterplay.

  19...\textit{\textbf{Q}}d6

Black has also tried 19...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c5 here. After 20 bxc6 0-0 (20...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xe3 21 fxe3 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe3+ 22 \textit{\textbf{Q}}h1 0-0 23 cxb7 is no improvement for Black) 21 cxb7 the monster b7-pawn is the most important factor in the position, Zhao Xue-Gerasimovich, European Clubs Cup (Women), Kemer 2007.

20 \textit{\textbf{W}}xd6!

White plays with great energy. Every move adds fuel to the fire.

20...\textit{\textbf{W}}xd6 21 bxc6 (D)

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

\[\text{Diagram}
\]

21...0-0?

It is understandable that Black wanted to get his king to safety, but this allows his queenside to be destroyed. It was better to try to hold things together with 21...bxc6, when White has:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) 22 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f5 \textit{\textbf{W}}d7 23 \textit{\textbf{W}}b4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e7 24 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d6+ (24 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe7 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe7 25 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xc6+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}f8 26 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe7 27 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xa8 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xa8 is good for Black) 24...\textit{\textbf{Q}}f8 25 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d1 leaves White with definite compensation, but Black is still quite a bit of material ahead.
  
  b) 22 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b5 looks stronger, because all of White’s pieces participate. 22...\textit{\textbf{W}}d7 (22...cxb5 23 \textit{\textbf{W}}e4+) 23 \textit{\textbf{W}}b4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e7 24 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d1 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d5 gives Black chances to defend even if the position looks a lot more fun to play for White.

22 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b5 \textit{\textbf{W}}c5

After 22...\textit{\textbf{W}}f4 Aronian gives the funny line 23 cxb7 \textit{\textbf{Q}}ae8 24 \textit{\textbf{W}}f5 with the idea 24...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xe3 25 \textit{\textbf{W}}xf4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf4 26 fxe3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xg2 27 a5!, when Black is defenceless against the queenside pawns.

23 cxb7
The extra exchange is little consolation for Black. The b7-pawn and White’s nimble minor pieces soon overrun Black’s position.
23...\textit{a}b8 24 \textit{w}f5 (D)
24...\textit{e}e5
Both 24...\textit{w}b6 and 24...\textit{w}b4 are better tries, but Black was already in serious time-pressure.
25 \textit{w}c2! \textit{w}b6
Aronian indicates that 25...\textit{w}b4 is better, but after 26 \textit{h}b1 \textit{w}a5 27 \textit{c}d6 the position is still pretty miserable.
26 \textit{w}c7 \textit{h}d8 27 \textit{e}c1
Threatening \textit{w}xb8 followed by \textit{c}c8+.
27...\textit{w}a6 28 \textit{c}f5 \textit{w}b6
If 28...\textit{w}xa4 White has 29 \textit{e}e7+ followed by \textit{c}c8.
29 \textit{w}xb8 \textit{a}xb8 30 \textit{c}c8+ \textit{w}d8 31 \textit{c}xa7

White mops up.
31...\textit{e}e8 32 \textit{h}xd8 \textit{h}xd8 33 \textit{d}d5+ \textit{f}7 34 \textit{e}e7+ \textit{f}8 35 \textit{e}ec6 1-0

Game 9
Kiril Georgiev – Bu Xiangzhi
Gibraltar 2008

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \textit{f}f3 \textit{f}f6 4 \textit{c}c3 \textit{d}xc4 5 a4
\textit{f}f5 6 \textit{e}e5 \textit{b}d7 7 \textit{c}x\textit{c}4 \textit{w}c7 8 g3 \textit{e}5 9 dxe5
\textit{e}xe5 10 \textit{a}f4 \textit{f}d7 11 \textit{g}2 g5!? (D)

This surprising move was unleashed by Alexander Morozevich against Kasparov in 2000. Although he lost the game, many strong players took notice, and Morozevich’s line has been taken up by such players as Shirov, Gelfand, Grischuk, Bareev and Van Wely. The tactical justification of 11...g5 lies in the loose knight on c4. White already has a difficult decision to make.
12 \textit{e}e3
This positional move was Kasparov’s original choice. By removing the knight from attack with tempo, White forces Black’s response. At first this looks like a positional refutation, because White’s knight will be very strong on f5 and Black’s kingside pawns will be split. However, White has weaknesses of his own, especially on the dark squares on the queenside. The exchange of opposite-coloured bishops creates an unusual positional situation. Each side will be very strong on the colour of their remaining bishop, and this is enhanced by the pawn-structure. Both sides have their trumps and an interesting middlegame will ensue with both sides fighting for the initiative.

The tactical alternatives 12 \textit{c}cxe5 and 12 \textit{c}xe5 are considered in the next game.
12...\textit{g}xf4 13 \textit{g}xf5 0-0-0 14 \textit{w}c2 (D)
White removes his queen from the d-file. After the immediate 14 0-0, 14...\textit{c}c5 15 \textit{w}c2 transposes to the note to Black’s 14th move, and 14...\textit{g}6 15 \textit{w}c2 to note ‘b’ to White’s
15th move. Black could also try 14...fxg3 15 hgx3 h5! now that White has committed to castling kingside.

Now each side’s dominance over a colour complex is clearly apparent. White has a firm grip on light squares such as f5 and e4, while Black controls c5 and b4. Black’s pawn-structure may look a bit ragged, but a timely ...fxg3 and ...h5-h4 can do a lot to eradicate Black’s weaknesses.

14...\(\mathcal{g}6!\)?

This flexible move is a relatively new development. From g6 the knight can help support the advance of the black h-pawn to h4, and Black may be able to challenge White’s hold on f5 with ...\(\mathcal{c}7\) at some point.

\[14...\mathcal{c}5\ 15\ 0-0\ \mathcal{e}6\ (15...fxg3\ 16\ hgx3\ a5\ (15...fxg3\ 16\ hgx3\ a5\ is also possible) reaches a common position. White has:

a) 16 a5 is always a double-edged idea. Often Black will play ...a5 himself to solidify his grip on the b4- and c5-squares. By pushing his pawn to a5, White gains some space and increases the scope of his a1-rook, but the pawn itself may become weak. 16...a6 (Black should almost always react in this way both to fix the white a-pawn and to prevent its further advance, which would greatly soften up the light squares around the black king) 17 \(\mathcal{a}4\) fxg3 18 hgx3 \(\mathcal{b}8\) is unclear.

b) 16 \(\mathcal{a}d1\) \(\mathcal{c}5\) 17 \(\mathcal{e}4\) \(\mathcal{b}4\) 18 \(\mathcal{c}1\) (White wants to clarify the tension on the kingside, but this costs a tempo) 18...fxg3 19 hgx3 \(\mathcal{x}d1\) 20 \(\mathcal{x}d1\) \(\mathcal{d}8\) 21 \(\mathcal{h}3\) \(\mathcal{b}8\) 22 \(\mathcal{g}2\) a5 23 b3 \(\mathcal{h}2-\mathcal{h}2\) Kramnik-Morozevich, Astana 2001.

c) 16 \(\mathcal{e}4\) fxg3 17 hgx3 \(\mathcal{g}7\) 18 \(\mathcal{x}g7\) \(\mathcal{x}g7\) 19 b4 h5 20 b5 h4 was unclear in Gyi­mesi-Acs, Balatonlelle 2002. It seems that both sides have good play!

d) The centralization of the white queen by 16 \(\mathcal{e}4!\) looks the strongest. 16...fxg3 17 hgx3 a5 (D) leads us to what was once considered a critical position:

\[\begin{array}{c}
B
\end{array}\
\begin{array}{c}
W
\end{array}\]

However, a discovery by Nielsen, which was introduced by Johannessen, appears to have closed the door on this particular variation: 18 \(\mathcal{b}5!!\) cxb5 19 axb5 \(\mathcal{c}5\) 19...\(\mathcal{d}7\) 20 \(\mathcal{x}a5\) \(\mathcal{b}8\) 21 \(\mathcal{f}a1\) \(\mathcal{b}6\) 22 \(\mathcal{a}7\) does not help, but 19...b6 20 \(\mathcal{f}c1\) \(\mathcal{c}5\) may be a better try, although White still has a strong attack) 20 \(\mathcal{e}3\) \(\mathcal{g}4\) (after 20...\(\mathcal{c}d7\), 21 \(\mathcal{a}7\) \(\mathcal{c}4?\) 22 \(\mathcal{a}c1\) was winning for White in S.Porat-Gonda, Budapest 2005, and 21 \(\mathcal{f}c1\) \(\mathcal{c}5\) 22 b6 \(\mathcal{w}b6\) 23 \(\mathcal{a}x5\) \(\mathcal{c}x5\) 24 \(\mathcal{w}e5\) \(\mathcal{w}c7\) 25 \(\mathcal{e}7+\) \(\mathcal{b}8\) 26 \(\mathcal{c}6+\) \(\mathcal{bxc6}\) 27 \(\mathcal{x}c5\) also looks very good) 21 \(\mathcal{w}c3\) \(\mathcal{e}4\) (21...\(\mathcal{w}e5\) 22 \(\mathcal{w}f3\) \(\mathcal{w}e4\) 23 \(\mathcal{w}xe4\) \(\mathcal{xe}4\) 24 \(\mathcal{a}xe4\) left White with a healthy extra pawn in L.Johannessen-Shirov, Bundesliga 2004/5) 22 \(\mathcal{a}xe4\) \(\mathcal{x}c3\) 23 bxc3 b6 24 \(\mathcal{d}4\) was Shirov-Harikrishna, Foros 2006. Again, White is a healthy pawn up.

Black will have to find something here if 14...\(\mathcal{c}5\) is to remain a viable option.

15 \(\mathcal{e}1\)

White tries to create more pressure against the black queenside. Alternatives:

a) 15 a5 is possible, but again, although this advance is often tempting, it actually reduces White’s options. Advancing with b4-b5
and sacrifices with \( \mathcal{Q}b5 \) are no longer realistic. 15...a6 16 0-0 fxg3 17 hgx3 h5 18 \( \mathcal{Q}c1 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b8 \) is nice for Black. White played the desperate 19 \( \mathcal{Q}b5? \) axb5 20 a6 in Rahman-Al Modiahk, Turin Olympiad 2006. Here the simplest is 20...\( \mathcal{Q}d5 \), when Black should win.

b) 15 0-0 a5?! (15...fxg3 16 hxg3 should be compared with the note to Black's 16th move) 16 \( \mathcal{Q}d1 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b8 \) 17 \( \mathcal{Q}ac1 \) transposes to the main game.

c) 15 0-0-0 is a completely different idea. White avoids the race of opposite-side castling and looks to give the play a more positional vein. 15...\( \mathcal{Q}b8 \) 16 \( \mathcal{Q}e4 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b4 \) 17 \( \mathcal{Q}d4 \) a5 18 \( \mathcal{Q}hd1 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d5 \) 19 \( \mathcal{Q}fd6 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b6 \) 20 \( \mathcal{Q}h3 \) h5! gave Black sufficient counterplay in Gelfand-Morozevich, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2004.

15...\( \mathcal{Q}b8 \) 16 0-0 (D)

16...a5

Black can also release the tension immediately with 16...fxg3 17 hxg3 h5. After 18 b4 (18 \( \mathcal{Q}b5 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b6 \) 19 \( \mathcal{Q}bd4 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d5 \) 20 \( \mathcal{Q}fd1 \) h4 gave Black counterplay in Banikas-Wang Yue, Gibraltar 2008) 18...h4 19 b5 cxb5 20 \( \mathcal{Q}b1 \)!? (20 \( \mathcal{Q}xb5 \) \( \mathcal{Q}xc2 \) 21 \( \mathcal{Q}xc2 \) is pretty even) 20...hxg3 21 \( \mathcal{Q}xg3 \) \( \mathcal{Q}f4 \) 22 \( \mathcal{Q}fd1 \) \( \mathcal{Q}c5 \) Black had the stronger attack in Pogorelov-Handke, Barcelona 2004.

17 \( \mathcal{Q}fd1 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b6 \)

17...\( \mathcal{Q}c5 \)!? is very solid. After 18 b4?! axb4 19 \( \mathcal{Q}e4 \) \( \mathcal{Q}a7 \) 20 \( \mathcal{Q}fd6 \)! fxg3 21 hxg3 Black defused White's play with 21...\( \mathcal{Q}c5 \)! in Woodward-N.Pert, British League (4NCL) 2004/5.

18 \( \mathcal{Q}e4 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b4 \) (D)

This position is rather typical for the 12 \( \mathcal{Q}e3 \) line. White totally dominates the light squares while Black controls the dark squares. Black will normally play ...fxg3 and ...h5-h4 both to eliminate some weaknesses and to bother the white king. The next few moves see both sides strive for the initiative.

19 \( \mathcal{Q}d4 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d5 \) 20 \( \mathcal{Q}xd8+ \) \( \mathcal{Q}xd8 \) 21 \( \mathcal{Q}d1 \) h5 22 e3 \( \mathcal{Q}xe3 \)

Note that it is only because Black kept the tension between the f4- and g3-pawns that he has this possibility now.

23 \( \mathcal{Q}xe3 \) h4 24 \( \mathcal{Q}f5 \) hxg3 25 hxg3 \( \mathcal{Q}e7 \! \! 

By eliminating the f5-knight, Black is gradually able to reduce the effect of White's lightsquare control while retaining his own trumps.

26 \( \mathcal{Q}xe7 \) \( \mathcal{Q}xe7 \) 27 \( \mathcal{Q}xd8+ \) \( \mathcal{Q}xd8 \) 28 \( \mathcal{Q}d2 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d4 \) (D)

White must already be careful because Black is so well centralized.
29 \( \text{Qf3?!} \)
29 \( \text{Qe4} \) maintains approximate equality.

29...\( \text{Wd3!} \)
Suddenly White’s queenside pawns are looking vulnerable.

30 \( \text{Wc3} \)
30 \( \text{Wxd3} \) \( \text{Qxd3} \) 31 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{Qc1} \) 32 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qb4} \)
costs White a pawn.

30...\( \text{Wd1+} \) 31 \( \text{Kh2?!} \)
Perhaps 31 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{fxe5} \) is a better try because 33...\( \text{Qxe5+} \) 34 \( \text{Qxe1} \) \( \text{Qxe1} \) 35 \( \text{Qxe4} \) corrals the black knight. White cannot win it because Black has...\( \text{b4} \), but it will be very difficult for Black to win the game. Instead 33...\( \text{Qb4} \) is better, although after 34 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Wxe1+} \) 35 \( \text{Qg2} \) Black still has work to do.

31...\( \text{Qg4+} \)
Winning a couple of pawns for nothing.

32 \( \text{Qh3} \) \( \text{Qxf2+} \) 33 \( \text{Kh2} \) \( \text{Qd6} \) 37 \( \text{Qc4} \)
White manages to regain one of the pawns, but the position clarifies and Black’s queen-and-knight tandem gives him a strong attack.

37...\( \text{Wb4} \) 38 \( \text{Qxd6} \) \( \text{Wxd6} \) 39 \( \text{Wxa5} \) \( \text{Qg4+} \) 40 \( \text{Qh3} \) \( \text{Qe5} \) 41 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{(D)} \)
41...\( \text{Wd4} \)
41...\( \text{Wd7+} \) 42 \( \text{Qg2} \) \( \text{Wd4} \) is even better.

42 \( \text{b3} \)
Now Black cannot take the bishop because of perpetual check.

42...\( \text{b6} \) 43 \( \text{Wf1} \) \( \text{Qf7} \) 44 \( \text{We2} \) \( \text{Wd6} \) 45 \( \text{Wc2} \)
46 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{We1} \) 47 \( \text{Qf5} \) \( \text{Qd5} \)
Black’s king assists the advance of his queenside pawns. It is difficult for White to create any trouble for the black king because he has no dark-square control.

48 \( \text{Qh7} \) \( \text{b5} \) 49 \( \text{Qf5} \) \( \text{We3} \) 50 \( \text{Wd1+} \) \( \text{Qc5} \) 51 \( \text{Qc2} \) \( \text{b4} \) 52 \( \text{Qh7} \) \( \text{c5} \) 53 \( \text{Wf1} \)
If 53 \( \text{Qc2} \) then 53...\( \text{Qc6} \) followed by...\( \text{Qd4} \) and even...\( \text{Qe3} \) will win the b3-pawn.

53...\( \text{Wd2+} \) 54 \( \text{Qg1} \) \( \text{Wf3} \) 55 \( \text{Qg2} \) \( \text{Wxb3} \) 56 \( \text{Wf4+} \) \( \text{Qd4} \) 57 \( \text{Qg8} \) \( \text{Wb2} \) 58 \( \text{Wf1} \) \( \text{Wc1+} \) 59 \( \text{Qg2} \)?
This is just a blunder, but the position was lost anyway.

59...\( \text{Wb8+} \) 0-1

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**Game 10**

**Baadur Jobava – Alexander Grischuk**

*Calvia Olympiad 2004*

1 \( d4 \) \( d5 \) 2 \( c4 \) \( c6 \) 3 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 4 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( dxc4 \) 5 \( a4 \)

\( \text{Qf5} \) 6 \( \text{Qe5} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 7 \( \text{Qxc4} \) \( \text{Wc7} \) 8 \( g3 \) \( e5 \) 9 \( dxe5 \)

\( \text{Qxe5} \) 10 \( \text{Qf4} \) \( \text{fd7} \) 11 \( \text{Qg2} \) \( g5 \) 12 \( \text{Qxe5} \)

This is White’s sharpest continuation. White has another tactical alternative in 12 \( \text{Qxe5} \), although this is not looking too dangerous these days. After 12...\( \text{Qxf4} \) 13 \( \text{Qxd7} \) 0-0-0! 14 \( \text{Wd4} \) (if White does not play this, Black will stand well with his bishop-pair and good development) 14...\( \text{Wxd7} \) 15 \( \text{Wxf4} \) (the point of Black’s play is that 15 \( \text{Wxf4} \) leads to difficulties for White after 15...\( \text{Wd2+} \) 16 \( \text{Qf1} \) \( \text{Wxb2} \) 17 \( \text{Qe1} \)

\( \text{b4} \) 18 \( \text{Wf6} \) \( \text{Qc2} \), when White will start shedding material and his king and h1-rook are both poorly placed) 15...\( \text{Wd6} \) \( \text{(D)} \).

Black has good compensation for the pawn due to his excellent development. His initiative often persists into the endgame, so Black frequently offers an exchange of queens. Some examples:

a) 16 \( \text{Wd4} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 17 \( \text{Wxd7+} \) \( \text{Qxd7} \) 18 \( \text{Qe4} \)

\( \text{Qxe4} \) 19 \( \text{Qxe4} \) and here both 19...\( \text{Wd4} \) (Rogzenko-L.Johannessen, Gothenburg 2004) and 19...\( \text{Qe5} \) (Erdos-N.Pert, Budapest 2003) offer
Black good compensation in return for the sacrificed pawn.

b) 16 \(\text{wc1 wb8} 17 \text{a5 (17 0-0 h5!?)}\) 17...\(\text{a6} 18 0-0 \text{we7} 19 \text{xa4 xc7} 20 \text{hxh4 xg8} 21 \text{wh1 xg4} 22 \text{xf4} \text{xf4} 14 \text{gave Black enough play in Kempinski-Morozevich, Bled Olympiad 2002.}


12...\(\text{e5} 13 \text{d4} (D)

White must play sharply to justify giving up his bishop. Queenside castling looks risky, but White must develop quickly to fuel his initiative. Other moves have not troubled Black:

a) 14 \(\text{e4 xc4}\) 15 \(\text{xc4 a5+} 16 \text{xc3} 0-0 0-0 17 0-0 \text{wb4} gives Black the initiative.

b) 14 \(\text{xc5} \text{xe5}\) 15 \(\text{xe5}\) 0-0 0-0 17 \(\text{e4} \text{e6}\) was Wang Lei-Zhukova, Women’s World Cup, Shenyang 2000. White controls the e4-square, but Black’s bishop-pair more than makes up for this. White also has weaknesses on the queenside.

b) 14 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{g6}\) (14...\(\text{e6}\) also looks OK) 15 0-0-0 \(\text{wb6}\) 16 \(\text{e4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 17 \(\text{f4}\) \(\text{wd4}\) 18 \(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{gfxf4}\) 19 \(\text{gxf4}\) \(\text{d7}\) 20 \(\text{d6}\) 21 \(\text{xd6}\) 0-0 0-0 22 \(\text{hhd1}\) \(\text{he8}\) 23 \(\text{h3}\) \(\text{xe3}\) 24 \(\text{fxe6}+\) \(\text{xc7}\) 25 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{xe6}\) 26 \(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{d5}\) only gave Black chances to win the ending in Alekseev-Bu Xiangzhi, Nizhny Novgorod 2007.

14...\(\text{e7}\)

Grishchuk plays a solid developing move, protects the f6-pawn, and prepares to castle. Other moves are not without risk:

a) 14...\(\text{xc4}\) releases the tension and gives White easy play. 15 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{d6}\) and now 16 \(\text{e4}\) \(\text{h3}\) 17 \(\text{d3}\) \(\text{e5}\) 18 \(\text{f5}\) \(\text{xf5}\) 19 \(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{c8}\) 20 \(\text{e4}\) 0-0 21 \(\text{h4}\) gave White some initiative in Jobava-Külaots, Istanbul 2004. White could consider varying with either 16 \(\text{h4}\) (to stop ...\(\text{h3}\)) or 16 \(\text{e4}!\), when White’s development lead and light-square play give him a pleasant initiative.

b) 14...\(\text{d8}\) involves a pawn sacrifice, but it is playable. 15 \(\text{we3}\) \(\text{e7}\) 16 \(\text{xd8}\) (not 16 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 17 \(\text{xa7}\)?? \(\text{xc3+}\) 18 \(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{a3}\#) 16...\(\text{xd8}\) 17 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 18 \(\text{xa7}\) 19 \(\text{d1+}\) \(\text{c8}\) 20 \(\text{wd4}\) \(\text{xd4}\) 21 \(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{c5}\) 22 \(\text{c2}\) \(\text{e6}\) was I. Sokolov-Harikrishna, Hoogeveen 2005. Black’s bishops gave him enough counterplay to draw, although holding a pawn-down endgame is not exactly everyone’s cup of tea.

c) 14...\(\text{e6}\) is the sharpest continuation. By attacking the c4-knight, Black forces White to play very forcefully. 15 \(\text{f4}\) introduces wild complications: 15...\(\text{xf4}\) 16 \(\text{gfxf4}\) \(\text{xc4}\) 17 \(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{f7}\) 18 \(\text{xf8}\) \(\text{xf4}\) 19 \(\text{b1}\) \(\text{g6}\) (\(D\)) reaches a complicated position that has occurred in a couple of high-level games.

This is the point of White’s play. The pin on the a1-h8 diagonal forces Black’s response.

13...\(\text{f6}\)

Black has no choice. 13...\(\text{g7??}\) loses at once to 14 \(\text{d6}\)++, and sacrificing the exchange with 13...\(\text{xc4}\) 14 \(\text{wh8}\) 0-0-0 comes to nothing after 15 \(\text{fw6}\)!!.

14 0-0-0
c1) 20 a2?! d3 21 h3 xd1 22 xd1 d8 23 f1 c4+ 24 a1 c5 25 e6?! (better is 25 g8 with the idea 25...e7 26 xf8+! forcing perpetual check) 25...e7 26 f5 xf5 27 xf5 g7 28 xg7 xg7 gave Black a better ending in Gelfand-Morozovich, Amber Blindfold, Monte Carlo 2005.

c2) 20 a1 is a subtle improvement, avoiding any checks on the a2-g8 diagonal. 20...c3 21 a2? (21 h1f1 is also possible, when instead of 21...xf1 22 xf1 with an attack, Black could try 21...c2+ 22 a2 c4+ 23 b3 c5 21...c2+? (21...xg2 22 d4 f5 had to be tried) 22 xc2 xc2 23 f1 gave White too strong an initiative in Gelfand-Morozovich, Amber Blindfold, Monte Carlo 2005.

15 _e3 (D)

Instead 15 _ex5 _xe5 16 _xe5 fxe5 is about even, and 15 _e4 d8 16 c3 _xc4 17 _xc4 _e5 18 xd8+ _xd8 19 d1+ _c8 gives Black good play.

15...e6

Although this move is quite playable, Black has also investigated 15 _g6. From here the bishop takes the e4-square away from the white queen and Black often follows with ...b6. The g6-bishop may be vulnerable to an h4-h5 advance, but in practice Black has not done badly. White has tried:

a) 16 _e4 b6 17 _xg6+ hxg6 18 _e4 _b4 (the immediate 18...c5 is also possible) 19 d4 was Adianto-Zhou Jianchao, Asian Ch, Cebu City 2007. Here 19...c5 looks alright for Black.

b) 16 _e4 f5 (Black holds his own in the coming tactical melee, although 16...b6 looks like a reasonable alternative) 17 _c4 _xe4 18 _xe5 _xe5 19 _xe5 _f5 20 g4 _e6 21 _xe4 _f6 22 _f3 _xg4 23 _d1 _xf3 24 _xf3 0-0-0 was equal in Ris-Al Modiahki, Gibraltar 2007.

c) 16 _h3 is not very challenging. 16...b6 17 _xb6 axb6 was at least equal for Black in Izoria-Akopian, European Clubs Cup, Saint Vincent 2005.

d) 16 h4!? b6 17 _xb6 axb6 18 h5 _f7 19 f4 _xf4 20 _xf4 _d7 21 _f5 _c5 with an unclear ending, Salvador-Abdulla, Lodi 2006.

16 _e4 _b3 17 _d2 0-0

Black 'castles into it'. This is the correct decision because Black is able to activate all of his pieces. Instead 17...d7 18 _f5 _c5 19 _e3 _c5 20 _e4 (20 _e4 _xe4 21 _xe4 _d5 22 _ed6+ _xd6 23 _xd6+ _c7 got White nowhere in Tikkanen-Haba, Ceska Trebova 2007) 20... _xe4 21 _xe4 _c5+ 22 _xc5 _xc5 23 _c2 _d5 24 _e4 _e6 25 _g7+ _f7 26 _xe6 _xe6 27 _hd1 left White with a nagging edge in Sargissian-Bu Xiangzhi, Tegernsee 2007 due to his control of the d-file and Black's pawn weaknesses and exposed king.

18 h4 gxh4?

But this is taking things too far. Black should play the active 18...c5! 19 hxg5 (after 19 _g4 Black should just play 19..._xg4 20 _xg4 _xf2 with an unclear position, as 21 hxg5 can be met by 21...f5 and 21 _d7 allows 21..._xg3) 19...fxg5 20 _h3 (D).

This is a critical position for the evaluation of 12 _xe5. Black's king position looks shaky,
but his pieces are very active and he has counterplay on the dark squares. Black has:

a) 20...\texttt{h8}?! 21 \texttt{f5} \texttt{xe3} and here instead of 22 \texttt{fxe3} \texttt{g8}, as in Aronian-Bu Xiangzhi, Stepanakert 2005, White should play 22 \texttt{xh7}+! \texttt{wxh7} 23 \texttt{xe7} \texttt{xd2}+ 24 \texttt{xd2} with a big advantage.

b) 20...\texttt{f7} 21 \texttt{f5} (21 \texttt{f5} \texttt{xe3} 22 \texttt{fxe3} \texttt{af8} 23 \texttt{g4} looks about even) 21...\texttt{h8} 22 \texttt{f4} \texttt{gxf4} 23 \texttt{xf4} \texttt{c4} 24 \texttt{d4} \texttt{b6} was unclear in Vitiugov-Sakaev, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

c) 20...\texttt{xf2} was suggested by Scherbakov and looks best. Not only does Black capture a pawn, but the e3-knight is also undermined. 21 \texttt{f5} \texttt{h6}! 22 \texttt{g4} (22 \texttt{hxh6} is met by 22...\texttt{xe3}, while 22 \texttt{ed1} \texttt{xf5} 23 \texttt{xf5} \texttt{af8} 24 \texttt{we4} \texttt{t6} gives Black excellent play for the exchange) 22...\texttt{g4} 23 \texttt{xe4} \texttt{f7} 24 \texttt{d7} \texttt{e8} 25 \texttt{xf7} \texttt{exe4} 26 \texttt{xf2} \texttt{xe4} 27 \texttt{f3} \texttt{g7} and Black has compensation in the endgame.

\textbf{19} \texttt{wh4}

White just has a strong attack for nothing.

\textbf{19...\texttt{f7}}

It is too late for 19...\texttt{c5}. After 20 \texttt{g4} \texttt{g4} 21 \texttt{wxf4}+ \texttt{g7} 22 \texttt{wf5} attacks the c5-bishop and threatens \texttt{d7}.

\textbf{20 \texttt{f5} \texttt{h8} 21 \texttt{e4}}

White's pieces flood into Black's position.

\textbf{21...\texttt{af8} 22 \texttt{f4} \texttt{c4}} \textit{(D)}

\textbf{23 \texttt{g7}!}

This clearance sacrifice destroys Black's defences.

\begin{center}
\textbf{W} \quad \textbf{B}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
23...\texttt{xe7} 24 \texttt{wh7} \texttt{f5} 25 \texttt{wh5} \texttt{h4} 26 \texttt{xf5}+ 1-0
\end{center}

\textbf{Conclusions}

The old method of play with 11...f6 remains a solid option for Black. White must play with great energy in order to make anything of his development advantage. A typical idea that both sides must watch for is the pseudo-sacrifice \texttt{d5}! (the knight could come from c3 or e3 in response to a poorly-timed ...\texttt{d8}). White will usually have to try to play b4-b5 in order to open the position, but the timing of this break is critical.

Morozevich's 11...g5 is alive and kicking. 12 \texttt{d3} \texttt{xf4} 13 \texttt{xf5} 0-0-0 14 \texttt{c2} leads to very rich play. Both sides dominate one colour-complex, and with frequent opposite-side castling the play is very interesting strategically. Right now 14...\texttt{g6} looks like a solid option for Black.

Jobava favourite, 12 \texttt{xe5}, remains White's sharpest option. Giving up this bishop combined with queenside castling looks rather suspect positionally, so White must fight vigorously for the initiative after 12...\texttt{xe5} 13 \texttt{d4} \texttt{f6} 14 0-0-0. Following 14...\texttt{e7} 15 \texttt{e3}, both 15...\texttt{e6} and 15...\texttt{g6}, while complicated, look adequate for Black.

White's other option, 12 \texttt{xe5}, is not looking too dangerous if Black plays accurately and is willing to sacrifice a pawn.
In this chapter we look at the solid 7...\( \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash b6}} \). Black avoids the complications of the previous chapter and aims for a more positional game. This approach has been championed by I.Sokolov and has been played by the likes of Anand, Shirov, Kasparov, and several of the new generation of Chinese grandmasters. Black chases White's centralized knight, and he will play ...\( \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e6}} \) or even ...\( \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e5}} \) depending on White's reaction.

The Games

**Game 11** (Peng Zhaoqin-Liu Xianglin) sees White playing (after 1 \( \texttt{\textit{d4 \textit{d5}} \textit{c4 \textit{c6}} \textit{f3 \textit{f6}} \textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbackslash c3}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbackslash x c4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbackslash b6}}}} \)) the direct 8 \( \texttt{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e5}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f3}}}} \textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textit{d7}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{c4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}} \)). Black challenges White with the obligatory 9...\( \texttt{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{f7}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b7}}}}} \). After 10 \( \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{o}} \textit{d7}} \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c4}}}}} \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}}}}} \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f7}}}}} \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d7}}}}} \) White has several approaches, most of which allow a quick ...\( \texttt{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e5}}}} \) with good counterplay on the dark squares. Here White tries the radical 11 \( \texttt{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{f4}}}} \), which prevents ...\( \texttt{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e5}}}} \) but weakens the e4-pawn. Black grabs the central pawn but never manages to get castled and White's escalating pressure eventually crashes through.

**Game 12** (Bhat-Peralta) examines the traditional 9 \( \texttt{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{g3}}}} \). White plays for a modest edge, first completing his development before advancing in the centre. This approach has been considered to give White some advantage, but it is not looking too threatening these days. After an exchange of knights, Black gradually equalizes and eventually takes over the initiative when White rushes to release the tension in the position.

**Game 13** (Ibrahimov-Moradiabadi) looks at the modern 9 \( \texttt{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{g5}}}} \). It is not so common for White to develop this way in the Slav. Both sides complete their development and an endgame is quickly reached which looks equal at first. After White's clever 22nd move (which had been invented by Gelfand) it becomes clear that White has a slight but nagging initiative. After a couple of careless moves by Black, he is doomed to passive defence and eventually succumbs to the pressure.

**Game 11**

**Peng Zhaoqin – Liu Xianglin**

**Jinan 2005**

1 \( \texttt{\textit{d4 \textit{d5}} \textit{c4 \textit{c6 \textit{f3 \textit{f6}} \textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{c3}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbackslash x c4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbackslash b6}}}}}}}}} \))

If Black wants to avoid the complications of the Morozevich Variation and the piece sacrifice of Chapter 5, this is a good line to play. Most of the lines are fairly calm, and while Black's position is very solid, there are also opportunities to play for a win without taking big positional or tactical risks.

8 \( \texttt{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e5}}}} \)
White keeps his centralized knight. Other moves are not very dangerous:

a) 8 e3 e6 (8...dxc4 9 dxc4 e6 is also fine, but 8...a5?! 9 wb3! is troublesome) 9 a5 (it is rather late for 9 de5 because Black can develop comfortably with 9...b4) 9...dxc4 10 dxc4 d4! is a logical suggestion by Atalik. The position resembles a 6 e3 Slav, but here Black has exchanged a pair of knights, so White’s slight space advantage is not too troublesome.

b) 8 de3 g6 9 g3 (9 a5 can be met by the simple 9...bd7 10 g3 e6 or the enterprising 9...bd5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 wb3 e6 12 dxe5 cxd5 13 dxe7 dxe7 14 wb3+ d7 15 wxd7+ d7 with good compensation for the pawn) 9...a5 10 g2 e6 11 0-0 b4 12 f4 d7 is also fine for Black. A nice example was 13 h3 d5 14 cxd5 dxe5 15 de4 dxe4 16 de5 d6 17 d3 d6 18 f2 d8 19 dxe4 dxe4 20 g2? d2! and Black wins a pawn, Karpinski-Zhang Pengxiang, Linares 2002.

8...a5

Black holds up the white a-pawn to secure his b6-knight. Continuing the chase with 8...bd7?! is a well-known mistake due to 9 wb3!, when the double attack on b7 and f7 means that White can at least win a pawn. After 9...xe5 10 dxe5 g4 11 wb7 dxe5 12 f4 g6 White played a vigorous sequence to gain even more: 13 e4! d7 14 f5 d5 15 f4 f6 16 dxe5 fxe5 17 d1 gave White a crushing position in Kasparov-Timman, Riga 1995.

Black can also play 8...e6, but this gives White a promising choice between 9 f3 d7 10 a5 (10 dxd7 dxd7 11 e4 is also pleasant for White) and 9 a5 d5 10 a6!? d4 11 axb7 b8 12 f3! d2 13 f2 d1 14 e4 with a dangerous initiative.

9 f3

White consistently tries to build a broad pawn-centre. The alternatives 9 g3, 9 g5 and 9 e3 are considered later in this chapter.

9...d7 (D)

This is the point of Black’s play. It is important to challenge White in the centre before he can play e4. This move again tries to remove White’s strong knight from e5, and Black may also get the opportunity to strike back in the centre with ...e5 himself, challenging White on the dark squares.

10 dxd7

White gains time to play e4 and avoids making any concessions with his pawn-structure. There are a few alternatives, of which only one is dangerous:

a) 10 d3 is very tame. Black can choose between 10...dxd3 11 wb3 e5 and 10...e5 11 e4 exd4 12 e2 e6 13 d4 d4 14 d4 c4, as in Bozinočić-Atalik, Biel 2006, in both cases with good counterplay.

b) 10 f4 dxe5 11 dxe5 f6?! (Black eliminates the pressure on g7 and is able to develop harmoniously; 11...d4 is another possibility) 12 g3 g6 13 e4 e6 14 e2 b4 15 0-0 0-0 16 f2 f5 17 wb3 h8 18 e5 (18 wb3?! f7 19 we5 d4 20 dxc4 dxc4 gives Black the initiative) 18...d5 was equal in P.H.Nielsen-I.Sokolov, Reykjavik 2001.
c) 10 e4 is White’s best alternative. Black has:

1) 10...g6 is unusual, but it is sensible. 11 wB3 (11 Qxg6 hxg6 12 Qe3 e5 is pleasant for Black, while 11 Qxd7 Qxd7 transposes to the main game) 11...Qxe5 12 dxe5 e6 13 Qe3 Qb4 14 Qd1 Qd7 was fine for Black in Jansen-I.Sokolov, Dutch Ch, Leeuwarden 2002.

2) 10...Qxe5 (D) and now:

   a) 14...wc7 15 Qa2 Qd6 16 wb3 Qc7 17 Qac1 Qab8 18 Qfd1 gave White a comfortable edge in the game Navara-A.Ledger, British League (4NCL) 2005/6.

   b) 14...Qc8 prepares ...c5, which will give him some counterplay against White’s a-pawn. After 15 Qa2 Qe7 16 Qc1 c5 17 dxc5 Qxc5 18 Qxc5 Qxc5 19 Qb3 Qc8 20 Qd4 Qxa4! 21 Qxa4?! (21 wxd8 Qxd8 22 Qxa5 is even) 21...Qxa4 22 Qxa4 Qb6+ 23 Qf2 Qc2 24 Qwb5 Wc3 25 Wd3 Qxe2 26 Qxe2 Qxb3 Black was a pawn up for nothing in Sarkar-Bournival, Sturbridge 2007.

   11 e4 Qg6 (D)

   White has built up his pawn-centre in the most thematic way – the purpose of the Central Variation. Black has achieved something too – namely the exchange of a piece – and now he is ready to strike back in the centre with ...e5, if allowed.

12 f4!?  
This direct move has become popular. White prevents ...e5 and seizes space. Others:

   a) 12 h4 should be met with 12...h5!, when it is not clear what White has achieved. Now 13 f4 (this further weakens the g4-square) 13...e6 14 Qc4 Qf6 15 f5? really takes things too far. 15...exf5 16 e5 Qg4 17 Qf4 Qh4 was V.Mikhailovski-I.Sokolov, Vlissingen 2000. Although the g6-bishop is immobile, White does not have enough for the pawn because of the strong knight on g4.

   b) 12 d5 is a radical attempt to disturb Black’s development. After 12...e5 (this is a
tactical idea – Black does not worry about his pawns being split, but 12...\texttt{Wb6} is also possible) 13 dxe6 fxe6 Black’s pawn-structure is somewhat weakened, but he has good piece-play, especially on the dark squares. White has tried:

b1) 14 \texttt{c4} \texttt{Wb6}! (Black offers a pawn and seizes the g1-a7 diagonal) 15 \texttt{xe6} \texttt{dxe6} 16 \texttt{We2} \texttt{d8} 17 \texttt{c3} \texttt{c5} 18 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 19 \texttt{a2}?! (this ends disastrously) 19...\texttt{d3} 20 \texttt{f1} \texttt{f8} 21 \texttt{d1} \texttt{h5} 0-1 Beliavsky-Tukmakov, Slovenian Team Ch, Bled 2001. Detonation will follow on f3.

b2) 14 \texttt{c3} \texttt{c5} 15 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 16 \texttt{c4} \texttt{xd1}+ 17 \texttt{xd1} \texttt{e7}! (after 17...\texttt{d8}+ 18 \texttt{c2} \texttt{e7} 19 \texttt{hd1} e5 20 \texttt{xd8} \texttt{xd8} 21 \texttt{d1}! the white knight headed to c4 to put pressure on the a5- and e5-pawns in Miles-Kirov, Cappelle la Grande 1994) 18 \texttt{c2} \texttt{hd8} 19 \texttt{h1} \texttt{e8}!. Now...b5 becomes a possibility and the position was even in Rogozenko-Kuporosov, Gelsenkirchen 1996.

c) 12 \texttt{c3} \texttt{(D)} is a very natural developing move, but it does allow Black to realize his strategic plan of contesting the central dark squares. Black has a couple of ways to go about this:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{image.png}
\end{center}

\begin{itemize}
\item[c1] 12...\texttt{e5} 13 dxe5 \texttt{dxe5} is solid, but with his extra space in the ending White seems to maintain a small edge:

\begin{itemize}
\item[c11] 14 \texttt{b3}?! \texttt{b4} 15 \texttt{e2} f6! 16 0-0 \texttt{e7} 17 \texttt{a2} \texttt{c5} 18 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5}+ 19 \texttt{h1} \texttt{f7} 20 \texttt{c3} \texttt{xc3} 21 \texttt{xc3} 0-0-0 22 \texttt{f2} (22 \texttt{fd1} \texttt{b3}) 22...\texttt{c7} gave Black an excellent endgame in Bocharov-A.Rychagov, Moscow 2006.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[c12] 14 \texttt{f4} (White need not avoid the exchange of queens) 14...\texttt{xd1}+ 15 \texttt{xd1} \texttt{d7} 16 \texttt{e2} f6 17 \texttt{g4} \texttt{d8} 18 0-0 \texttt{e7} 19 \texttt{d2} h5 20 \texttt{h3} \texttt{c5} 21 \texttt{e1} was a little bit better for White in Nakamura-Bu Xiangzhi, Reykjavik 2004.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[c2] 12...\texttt{b6} looks sufficient. Black avoids the exchange of queens and prepares to castle queenside to bring further pressure to bear upon the centre. 13 \texttt{d2} e5! and here:

\begin{itemize}
\item[c21] After 14 \texttt{d1} 0-0-0! Black puts immediate pressure on the centre, because 15 d5 \texttt{c5} 16 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} gives Black good play, as shown in several games.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[c22] 14 h4 exd4 15 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{c5} 16 0-0-0 0-0-0 17 g3 f6 18 \texttt{h3} \texttt{xd4} 19 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 20 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{c7} is very comfortable for Black, Atalik-I.Sokolov, Sarajevo 2001.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[c23] 14 dxe6 \texttt{c6} 15 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5}! (after 15...\texttt{xc5} White can create favourable complications with 16 \texttt{d6}! according to I.Sokolov; for example, 16...\texttt{xb2} 17 \texttt{d5}! \texttt{xaxa} 1+ 18 \texttt{f2} \texttt{xb2}+ 19 \texttt{g3} \texttt{xd5} 20 \texttt{b5}+ \texttt{xb5} 21 \texttt{axb5} 16 \texttt{d6} \texttt{xe5} 17 \texttt{xe5}+ \texttt{xex5} 18 0-0-0 f6 19 \texttt{c2} \texttt{f2} Bareev-Rublevsky, FIDE World Cup (rapid), Khanty-Mansiisk 2005. 12...\texttt{e6} 13 \texttt{c4}
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[c24] White develops aggressively, unconcerned about the fate of the e4-pawn. Other moves do not trouble Black much:

\begin{itemize}
\item[a] 13 \texttt{d3} \texttt{d6} 14 \texttt{c3} \texttt{b4} 15 \texttt{c2} 0-0 16 \texttt{h3} \texttt{e7} 17 g4 (too ambitious – 17 0-0 is more sensible) 17...\texttt{c5} 18 0-0-0? (recklessness, though 18 dxc5 \texttt{fd8} is very comfortable for Black) 18...\texttt{xc3} 19 \texttt{xc3} c4 20 \texttt{xc4} \texttt{xe4} was winning for Black in Sa.Williams-N.Pert, British League (4NCL) 2007/8.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[b] 13 \texttt{f3} \texttt{d6} (Black attacks the d4-pawn, exerts pressure on e4, and gives his bishop a square on h5) 14 d5? (better is 14 e5 \texttt{d5} 15 \texttt{xd5} \texttt{wd5} 16 \texttt{xd5} exd5, although even here Black has nothing to complain about) 14...\texttt{b4} left White’s centre under tremendous pressure in Lacrosse-Jovanić, Pula 2007.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[b] We now return to 13 \texttt{c4} \texttt{(D)}:
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[13] \texttt{b4}
\end{itemize}

\item[c] The bishop goes to its usual square and exerts pressure on White’s e4-pawn. Nevertheless, it seems that this move leads to trouble, so
Black should investigate the more solid alternatives:

a) 13...\(\text{Qf6}\) 14 \(\text{Wd3?!}\) (14 \(e5\) \(\text{Qe4}\) 15 0-0 \(\text{Qb4}\) 16 \(\text{Qe2}\) 0-0 17 \(\text{Qe3}\) \(\text{We7}\) is pretty solid for Black, Beliavsky-Acs, Paks 2004) 14...h6?! (14...\(\text{b6}\) looks like a better attempt to stir up trouble) 15 f5 exf5 16 exf5 \(\text{Qh7}\) 17 0-0 was better for White in Cox-Shaw, British League (4NCL) 2005/6.

b) 13...\(\text{b6}\) 14 \(\text{b3}\) \(\text{Qh4}\) 15 g3 \(\text{Qh3}\) 16 \(\text{Qf2}\) \(\text{b4}\) is interesting, Y.Vovk-Ni Hua, Capelle la Grande 2007.

14 0-0! \(\text{xc3}\)
Declining the pawn with 14...\(\text{b6}\) 15 \(\text{b3}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) is also uncomfortable for Black after 16 \(\text{Qf3!}\) f5 (16...\(\text{Wxd4+}\) 17 \(\text{Qe3}\) \(\text{Qd8}\) 18 f5) 17 exf5 exf5 18 \(\text{Qe1+}\), Trent-Shaw, British League (4NCL) 2004/5.

15 \(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 16 \(\text{Qa3}\)
This gives White good play, but he could also choose 16 \(\text{We2!}\) \(\text{b6}\) (16...\(\text{d5}\) 17 \(\text{Qd3}\)) 17 \(\text{Qxe6}\) fxe6 18 \(\text{Wxe4}\) \(\text{d5}\) 19 \(\text{Qe1}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 20 \(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qf7}\) 21 \(\text{Qb1}\) with a strong initiative, J.Eriksson-Welin, Malmö 2003.

16...\(\text{b6}\) 17 \(\text{b3}\) (D)
White has good compensation for the pawn. His piece placement is similar to that in Game 3, but here Black’s king is not likely to find safety on the queenside.

17...\(\text{Qf6}\)
Another idea is 17...\(\text{d5}\) intending ...f5.

Black has also tried 17...h5 (by preventing g4, Black secures f5 for his bishop) 18 \(\text{We2}\), when 18...\(\text{d5?!}\) (this gives up control of b1 and weakens the f5-square; 18...\(\text{f5}\) is more consistent) 19 \(\text{ab1!}\) (not 19 c4? \(\text{xc4}\) 20 \(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{Wxd4+}\); perhaps Black was seduced by this tactical possibility) allowed White strong pressure on the b-file and Black had problems surviving in Shulman-Wojtkiewicz, Stillwater 2005.

18 \(\text{Qf2}\)
White takes a moment for some prophylaxis by covering g2 and prepares \(\text{We2}\) by avoiding any ...\(\text{d3}\) skewers.

18...h5
Black fortifies his position on the kingside light squares. 18...0-0-0 is also possible, but Black’s king position is still not very secure – White can even swing a rook to b2 to put pressure on Black.

19 \(\text{We2}\) \(\text{Wf5}\)
Black is trying to play actively. 19...\(\text{f5}\) is safer, even though it is not easy to see where Black is heading. It is difficult to get his rooks into action, while White’s play is very easy.

20 \(\text{Qe1}\) \(\text{Qd3}\) 21 \(\text{Wb2!}\) (D)
Threatening $\text{gx}e6$.

21...$\text{Dd}7$ 22 $c4$ $w_f6$

Black tries to hold up a $d5$ breakthrough by pinning the $d4$-pawn, but this fails. 22...$\text{Df6}$ is well met by 23 $\text{Ke}5$ $w_h7$ 24 $d5$ with a strong initiative.

23 $w_d2!$ $\text{Df5}$
23...$w_xd4$ 24 $\text{Dd1}$ wins for White.

24 $\text{Dd6}$

White is patient. The immediate 24 $d5$ is also very strong.

24...$h4$ 25 $c5$ $w_g6$

Black should have prevented the coming breakthrough with 25...$h3$ 26 $g3$ $\text{Dd}8$ although the position remains depressing.

26 $d5!$ $\text{Hh}5$ 27 $dxe6$ $f_xe6$ 28 $\text{Df}2$ $\text{Df8}$ ($D$)

29 $\text{Dc}4$

White calmly improves his position and may swing over to the $b$-file. The immediate 29 $\text{Dxf8}$ $\text{Dxf8}$ 30 $\text{Dxe6}$ $\text{Dxe6}$ 31 $\text{Dxe6}$ is also strong, but there is no hurry.

29...$\text{Dg}4$ 30 $\text{Dxe}3$

30 $f5!$ $\text{Dxf5}$ 31 $\text{Dxf8}$ $\text{Dxf8}$ 32 $\text{Dxe6}$ $\text{Dxe6}$
33 $\text{Dxe6}$ is instantly decisive.

30...$h3$?

Giving White access to $g3$ only makes things worse.

31 $\text{Dg}3!$ $\text{Ad}8$ 32 $\text{Wb}2$ $\text{Wf}5$ 33 $\text{Wx}g7$
33 $\text{Wxb7}$ is also crushing.

33...$\text{Dxd}6$ 34 $\text{Cxd}6$ $\text{Cc}5+$ 35 $\text{Dg}3$ $\text{Dh}7$ 36 $\text{Dx}g4$ $\text{Cc}4$ 37 $\text{Dxe}3$
37 $\text{Dxe6+}$ $\text{Dxe6}$ 38 $\text{Dxe6+}$ $\text{Df}8$ 39 $\text{Df5+}$ $\text{Df7}$ 40 $\text{Dh}8+$! is even quicker.

37...$\text{Dg}3$ 38 $\text{Dx}h3$ $\text{Dd}4+$ 39 $\text{We}3$ $\text{Dxd}6$ 40 $\text{Df}5$ $\text{Dd}7$ 41 $\text{Dd}6$ $\text{Cc}8$ 42 $\text{Dx}a5$ $\text{Dd}4+$ 43 $\text{Dh}1$
$\text{Dd}7$ 44 $\text{Wa}8+$ 1-0

Game 12

Vinay Bhat – Fernando Peralta

Badalona (open) 2006

The fianchetto of White’s bishop has long been held in high regard and is considered to give White a slight advantage. In recent years Black has been refining his defensive methods and now it is difficult for White to obtain any meaningful initiative.

9...$\text{e}6$

This is by far the most popular move, but Black can also challenge White’s e5-knight immediately with 9...$\text{Dxd}7$, as he did in the previous game. After 10 $\text{Dxd}7$ $\text{Wxd}7$ (10...$\text{Dxd}7$ 11 $\text{Dg}2$ $\text{e}6$ 12 0-0 $\text{Db}4$ 13 $\text{e}4$ compares unfavourably with the main game because White can play $\text{e}4$ in one go) 11 $\text{e}4$ (instead, 11 $\text{Dg}2$ $\text{h}3$ 12 $\text{Dxh}3$ $\text{Wxh}3$ 13 $\text{Dh}3$ $\text{a}6$ 14 $\text{d}5$ $\text{e}6$ is fine for Black, because 15 $\text{Dxe}6$ $\text{Wxe}6$ is even and 15 $\text{Dxc}6$ can be met by 15...$\text{Dg}2$ followed by
...\text{wxc6}) 11...\text{h}3 12.\text{a}xh3 \text{w}xh3 13 \text{w}b3 \text{a}6 (D).

Black's pieces are awkwardly placed on the queenside, but he intends ...\text{e}6 and ...\text{b}4, and White must act quickly if he is to achieve anything meaningful. White has tried:

a) 14 \text{e}3 \text{e}6 15 0-0-0 (15 \text{d}5 \text{b}4 16 \text{dxe6 wxe6 17 wxe6+ fxe6 was equal in Gyimesi-Bu Xiangzhi, Bundesliga 2006/7) 15...\text{b}4 16 \text{d}5 \text{exd}5 17 \text{exd}5 0-0 18 \text{dxc6 bxc6 19 w}c2 \text{xc3 20 bxc3 d}5 21 \text{c}5 \text{e}8 was fine for Black in Flumbort-Tischbierek, Zehlendorf 2007.

b) 14 \text{f}4 \text{e}6 15 \text{e}5?! \text{b}4 (Black develops aggressively; instead, 15...\text{f}6 creates a weakness on e6 for White to target by 16 \text{c}7 \text{b}4 17 0-0-0 with the idea \text{d}2-f4) 16 \text{xg}7 \text{g}8 17 \text{e}5 \text{g}2 18 0-0-0 \text{xc}3 19 \text{bxc3} (19 \text{xc3 \text{xc}4 20 \text{he}1 \text{d}5 was unclear in Aronian-Carlsen, Candidates match (game 6), Elista 2007 - Black has play on the light squares, but his rooks do not coordinate well) 19...\text{w}x e4 20 \text{c}4 \text{w}e 21 \text{c}5 \text{d}5? (21...\text{w}c4+ 22 \text{w}xc4 \text{xc}4 is better, although even here White is for choice after 23 \text{f}4) 22 \text{d}e1! \text{w}h5 (22...\text{w}xf2 23 \text{h}f1 does not help Black) 23 \text{xb}7 was crushing for White in Wang Hao-Caruana, Reykjavik 2008.

10 \text{g}2 \text{b}4 11 0-0 0-0 (D)

Black can also try 11...h6, which has been played by Anand. Then:

a) 12 \text{e}4 \text{h}7! looks OK for Black because it is not easy for White to set up his major pieces effectively due to the presence on the d- and e4-pawns.

b) 12 f3 0-0 (12...\text{c}2!?) 13 \text{e}4 \text{h}7 14 \text{e}3 \text{fd}7 is about even. After 15 \text{w}e2 \text{xe}5 16 \text{dxe5 \text{d}7 17 \text{fd}1 \text{w}e 7 18 \text{f}4 \text{fd}8 19 \text{w}f2?! \text{f}6! Black even took over the initiative in Ves­covi-Anand, São Paulo (rapid) 2004.

c) White should probably just continue 12 \text{e}3, which would transpose to the game after 12...0-0.

12 e3

Instead 12 \text{g}5 \text{h}6 13 \text{xf}6 \text{xf}6 is not dangerous, and 12 \text{e}4 \text{xc}3 13 \text{exf}5 \text{xd}4 costs White a pawn.

12...h6

Black can also consider challenging White’s knight immediately with 12...\text{fd}7!?. After 13 \text{e}4 \text{g}6 14 \text{hxg}6 \text{hxg}6 White has tried:

a) 15 \text{e}5 \text{c}5! 16 \text{xb}7 \text{b}8 17 \text{g}2 \text{exd}4 18 \text{xd}4 \text{c}5 gave Black good compensation for the pawn in Gyimesi-Gagunashvili, European Team Ch, Plovdiv 2003.

b) 15 \text{w}e2 \text{e}5 16 \text{e}3 \text{exd}4 17 \text{xd}4 \text{w}e 18 \text{fd}1 \text{fe} 19 \text{c}2 \text{w}6 (both 19...\text{c}5 and 19...\text{ad}8 look sensible) 20 \text{d}2 \text{c}4 21 \text{xc}4 \text{xc}4 and here instead of 22 \text{b}3? \text{dd}2!, as in Jobava-Felgaer, FIDE Knockout, Tripoli 2004, when 23 \text{e}3 fails to 23...\text{xb}3, White could have played 22 \text{Ac}1! with some advantage because now 22...\text{dd}2? 23 \text{e}3 wins for White because there is no rook hanging on a1.

13 \text{w}e2 \text{h}7 14 \text{d}1 (D)

14...\text{fd}7

It is natural to try to exchange off the strong e5-knight, but Black could also play 14...\text{w}e7 15 \text{e}4 \text{fd}8 (15...\text{fd}7 16 \text{xd}7 transposes to
the main game) 16 Ʌf4 Ʌac8. One possibility is 17 Ʌd3 Ʌxd4!? 18 Ʌe3 e5 with interesting play.

15 Ʌxd7

White avoids losing time by exchanging knights, and he is also able to seize the centre. However, this gives Black enough room for his pieces, and White should consider keeping more tension with the retreat 15 Ʌd3!? Then Black has tried:

a) 15...Ʌe7 16 e4 e5 17 dxe5 Ʌxe5 18 Ʌxe5 Ʌxe5 19 Ʌe3 Ʌc5 20 Ʌac1 Ʌxe3 21 Ʌxe3 Ʌc4 22 Ʌd4 Ʌxd4 23 Ʌxd4 Ʌb6 24 b4 gave White pressure in Gu Xiaobing-Li Shilong, Shandong 2007.

b) 15...Ʌxd3 16 Ʌxd3 (16 Ʌxd3 Ʌe7 17 f4 f6 18 e4 e5 19 Ʌe3 exd4 20 Ʌxd4 Ʌc5 and now 21 Ʌxc5 Ʌxc5+ 22 Ʌh1 Ʌad8 was fine for Black in Hillarp Persson-Sakaev, European Ch, Dresden 2007, but White could have tried 21 Ʌxd1 with a small edge) 16...Ʌe7 and here both 17 Ʌc2 e5 18 dxe5 Ʌxe5 19 e4 Ʌe6 20 Ʌe3 Ʌfd8 21 Ʌe2 Ʌc4 22 Ʌdc1 Ʌxc2 23 Ʌxc2 (Kacheishvili-Zhou Jianchao, Jinan 2005) and 17 e4 Ʌfd8 18 Ʌe2 e5 19 d5 Ʌf6 20 Ʌe3 Ʌc5 21 Ʌac1 Ʌxe3 22 Ʌxe3 Ʌc4 23 Ʌe2 exd5 24 exd5 Ʌd6 25 Ʌe1 Ʌe8 26 Ʌb5 (Ki.Georgiev-Megaranto, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007) leave White with some advantage.

15...Ʌxd7 16 e4 Ʌe7 17 Ʌe3 (D)

Both sides have played natural moves and developed in a harmonious way. White has completed his development and advanced in the centre. Black has a little less space, but he has managed to exchange off White’s e5-knight and he may break in the centre with a timely ...e5 or ...c5. Firstly, he must decide how to arrange his rooks.

17...Ʌfd8

This is by far the most common move, but 17...Ʌfe8 and 17...Ʌad8 have also been played.

18 d5 (D)

White tries to blast open the position. After the more solid 18 Ʌac1, Black can develop with 18...Ʌc8 or try to exert pressure on the e4-pawn with 18...Ʌf6, which essentially forces 19 f3.

18...Ʌe5

Black keeps the tension and refuses to extend the scope of White’s g2-bishop.

The alternative is 18...exd5 19 exd5, and then:

a) 19...Ʌxc3 20 dxc6!? Ʌf6 21 cxd7 Ʌxd7 and now 22 Ʌxd7 Ʌxd7 23 Ʌb5 allowed White to maintain some initiative in Ruck-F.Berkes,
Hungarian Ch, Heviz 2003 because of the pressure on the b7-pawn, while 22 \( \textit{wb5} \) may be even better.

b) 19...\( \textit{ac8} \) and after 20 \( \textit{ac1 e5} \) 21 h3 \( \textit{e8} \) 22 \( \textit{e4} \) (Bareev-I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 2004) Bareev points out that Black could play 22...\( \textit{cd8} \) 23 dx6 \( \textit{xc6} \) with equality. Instead 20 dx6 bxc6 21 \( \textit{h3} \) looks pleasant for White, even after Bareev’s indicated 21...f5 22 \( \textit{g2} \) \( \textit{g6} \).

19 dxe6

After 19 \( \textit{xc5} \) both 19...\( \textit{xc5} \) and 19...\( \textit{xc5} \) are about equal.

19...\( \textit{fxe6} \) (D)

We have seen this type of structure before in the Central Variation. The slight weakness in Black’s pawn-formation is counterbalanced by the activity of all of his pieces. Black also has good control of the dark squares, which will be accentuated by the exchange of dark-squared bishops.

20 \( \textit{h3} \)

White cannot develop an initiative, so he tries to put pressure on the e6-pawn, even though this does not lead anywhere. Instead 20 \( \textit{ac1 ex3} \) 21 \( \textit{xe3 xc5} \) 22 \( \textit{f1} \) \( \textit{h3} \) 23 \( \textit{b1 wc5} \) 24 \( \textit{xc5 xc5} \) 25 f3 \( \textit{g6} \) 26 \( \textit{f2 e5} \) 27 \( \textit{c4+ f7} \) 28 \( \textit{xf7+ xxf7} \) gave Black a comfortable endgame in Nayer-Wang Yue, China-Russia match, Ergun 2006.

20...\( \textit{xe3} \) 21 \( \textit{xe3 c5} \) 22 \( \textit{we2} \)

Note that advancing with 22 e5 gives Black’s remaining bishop more scope than it does White’s.

22...\( \textit{g6} \)

This slightly improves the position of the bishop and also gives Black’s king a little more room.

23 \( \textit{ac1} \) (D)

23...\( \textit{b3} \)

The porosity of White’s queenside begins to show.

24 \( \textit{xd8+ xd8} \) 25 \( \textit{d1 d4} \) 26 \( \textit{we4 b5} \)!

Black activates his dormant queenside majority.

27 axb5 cb5 28 \( \textit{wd3} \)

Not 28 \( \textit{xb5} \) \( \textit{f3+} \), winning the d1-rook.

28...\( \textit{b4} \) 29 \( \textit{b5 e5} \)

Black seizes the dark squares.

30 \( \textit{a1 h7} \) (D)

This is a nice little move, removing the king from any checks on the a2-g8 diagonal or the back rank.
31 \( \text{g}2 \)
Not 31 \( \text{x}a5? \) \( \text{c}6 \).
31...\( \text{w}e5 \) 32 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \)
White keeps getting pushed back.
33 \( \text{w}e2 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 34 b3 \( \text{c}1+ \) 35 \( \text{xc}1 \) \( \text{w}c1+ \) 36 \( \text{f}1 \) a4 37 h4 axb3 38 h5 \( \text{f}7 \) 39 \( \text{w}f3 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 0-1

**Game 13**

**Rasul Ibrahimov – Elshan Moradiabadi**

*Abu Dhabi (open) 2007*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 4 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 5 a4 \( \text{f}5 \) 6 \( \text{e}e5 \) \( \text{bd}7 \) 7 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 8 \( \text{e}e5 \) a5 9 \( \text{g}5 \)

Because Black has been holding firm against 9 f3 and 9 g3, recently players of the white pieces have tried a couple of different approaches. The text-move is logical enough – White develops his queen’s bishop before determining how he will arrange his centre. Another fresh continuation is the apparently modest 9 e3. This looks harmless, but White has the possibility of pestering Black on the kingside with g4. Black has:

a) 9...\( \text{fd}7 \) allows 10 \( \text{xf}7 \) \( \text{xf}7 \) 11 \( \text{f}3 \) e6 12 g4, although even this is not so clear.

b) 9...\( \text{bd}7 \) 10 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 11 dxe5 \( \text{d}7 \) 12 e4 \( \text{e}6 \) 13 \( \text{xb}7 \) is not clear, but White’s game looks preferable.

c) 9...h6 is solid. After 10 g4 \( \text{h}7 \) 11 \( \text{g}2 \) e6 12 0-0 \( \text{d}6 \) 13 f4 0-0 Black has a reasonable position.

d) 9...e6 is very natural, but the play can sharpen considerably. After 10 g4 \( \text{g}6 \) 11 h4 \( \text{d}6 \) ! 12 h5 \( \text{xe}4 \) White can play 13 f3 \( \text{xe}5 \) 14 fxe4 \( \text{g}3+ \) 15 \( \text{d}2 \) (Milanović-Velcheva, Kavala 2007) or 13 \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 14 \( \text{g}2 \) (Mchedlishvili-I.Sokolov, Villarrobledo (rapid) 2007) in both cases with an unclear game.

e) 9...g6 is Black’s main continuation. It is not very common for Black to fianchetto his king’s bishop in the Slav, but here it is quite reasonable. 10 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{xd}3 \) 11 \( \text{xd}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 12 \( \text{b}3 \) 0-0 13 0-0 \( \text{fd}7 \) 14 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{c}7 \) (better than 14...e5 15 dxe5 \( \text{xe}5 \) 16 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 17 e4 \( \text{c}7 \) 18 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 19 f4 \( \text{g}7 \) 20 e5 with a large advantage for White in Jobava-Nogueiras, Havana 2005) 15 e4 \( \text{c}8 \) 16 f3 \( \text{d}8 \) was played in Jobava-Shirov, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2007. Then 17 \( \text{e}3 \) looks about equal.

We now return to 9 \( \text{g}5 \) (D):

**B**

9...\( \text{h}6 \)
Black chases White’s bishop and gives his own a haven on h7. Instead 9...\( \text{fd}5 \) looks risky in view of 10 e4!? \( \text{xc}3 \) 11 bxc3 \( \text{xe}4 \) 12 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 13 c4 \( \text{e}4 \) 14 \( \text{e}3 \), with a nice initiative for White. The combative 9...g6 is also possible, but I suspect White is doing well after 10 f3!.

The text-move looks the most reliable because White does not really want to take on f6 anyway. By flicking in this move, Black creates a haven for his bishop on h7 and he can also play ...g5 if necessary.

10 \( \text{h}4 \) e6
10...\( \text{bd}5 \) is a solid alternative favoured by Chinese players. In practice, White has headed for an ending with 11 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 12 \( \text{xb}6 \) \( \text{xb}6 \) 13 f3, although this does not look too threatening. 13...\( \text{fd}7 \) (13...\( \text{c}2 \) 14 e4 \( \text{e}6 \) is also reasonable) 14 \( \text{xd}7 \) (14 e4 \( \text{xe}5 \) 15 dxe5 \( \text{e}6 \) intending ...\( \text{d}7 \) looks OK for Black) 14...\( \text{xd}7 \) 15 e4 \( \text{g}6 \) 16 d5 \( \text{e}5 \) 17 0-0-0 \( \text{c}5 \) 18 \( \text{c}4 \) f6 19 \( \text{b}1 \), Gelfand-Bu Xiangzhi, World
Team Ch, Beersheba 2005, and now 19...\texttt{e7} is equal according to Gelfand.

11 e4 \texttt{h7} 12 f3
With ...g5 in the air, White must safeguard his e4-pawn.

12...\texttt{e7} 13 \texttt{f2} 0-0
The immediate 13...\texttt{fd7} 14 \texttt{d3} 0-0 15 \texttt{e2} transposes to the game.

14 \texttt{e2} \texttt{fd7} 15 \texttt{d3} (D)

White has a strong centre, but Black is slightly ahead in development and he can prepare to strike in the centre.

15...\texttt{c8}

Black prepares ...c5. It is also possible to prepare ...e5 with 15...\texttt{d6} 16 0-0 \texttt{c7}. After 17 g3 e5 18 \texttt{c1 exd4} 19 \texttt{b5} \texttt{b8} 20 \texttt{xd4 d8} 21 b3 \texttt{e5} 22 \texttt{c2 exd3} 23 \texttt{xd3} \texttt{d7} Black had a solid, if somewhat passive position in Kasimdzhanov-Ki.Georgiev, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

16 0-0 c5 17 dxc5 \texttt{xc5} 18 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 19 \texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 20 \texttt{xd8} \texttt{xd8} 21 \texttt{fd1} (D)

Both sides have played logically to reach this position. Despite the considerable simplifications, Black must be careful. The b6-knight is awkwardly placed and the h7-bishop needs to get into play.

21...\texttt{cc8}

After 21...\texttt{xd1}+ 22 \texttt{xd1} \texttt{f8} 23 \texttt{d6} \texttt{c6} 24 \texttt{d8+} \texttt{e7} 25 \texttt{b8} \texttt{c7} 26 \texttt{f2} White retained a nagging edge in Zhao Xue-Ruan Lufei, Women’s Zonal, Beijing 2005, although even here Black’s position is hard to crack.

22 \texttt{ab1}!

An interesting idea, introducing the possibility of b4. The direct 22 \texttt{f2} \texttt{f8} (Black is ready to play ...\texttt{d7-c5}) 23 \texttt{xd8+} \texttt{xd8} 24 \texttt{a3} (threatening \texttt{b3}) can be met by 24...\texttt{d4!}, as pointed out by Gelfand.

22...\texttt{f5}!

Black must get his h7-bishop into play. The inferior 22...\texttt{f8} 23 \texttt{xd8+} \texttt{xd8} 24 b4! \texttt{d4} 25 bxa5 \texttt{xa4} 26 \texttt{d1}! leaves Black in major difficulties, Gelfand-Felgaer, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2005. Black is essentially a piece down in trying to defend his queenside.

23 \texttt{f2} \texttt{xe4} 24 \texttt{xe4} (D)

24...\texttt{f8+}

This is a somewhat odd decision. The rook will have little to do on the f-file. Instead 24...\texttt{f8} 25 \texttt{xd8+} \texttt{xd8} 26 \texttt{e3} (26 b4 should lead to a draw after 26...\texttt{d4} 27 bxa5 \texttt{xa4} 28 \texttt{xa4} \texttt{xa4} 29 \texttt{xb7} \texttt{xa5}) 26...e5 27 \texttt{b5} \texttt{d4} 28 \texttt{f1+} \texttt{e7} 29 \texttt{f3}?! was agreed drawn
here in A. Grigorian-Kuzubov, Kirishi 2007. Black could have played 29...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{e}4!} 30 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{g}}\texttt{3}} (30 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}e4 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{5}+} is Black’s point) 30...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{5}+} 31 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}5+} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}5 32 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}}\texttt{g7+} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{f}}6} when Black has some initiative.
\texttt{25 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}3} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}4+} }

This also looks suspicious. White’s flexible knight will prove to be more nimble than Black’s bishop.

\texttt{26 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{e}4 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{c}4} 27 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{6} }}

White’s rook now causes some trouble in the black camp.

\texttt{27...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}8 28 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{b}}6} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{b}}4} 29 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}b5} }

This is good enough to keep an edge, but 29 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{b}4 axb4 30 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}2} looks even stronger. Black will have trouble holding on to his front b-pawn. The h7-bishop simply does not participate in the fight.

\texttt{29...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{b}5} 30 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{b}5} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}8 31 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{b}}\texttt{6} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}6} }}

After 31...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}2} 32 b4! axb4 33 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{b}4 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}}\texttt{g}2 34 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}}\texttt{b}7 the black king and bishop are both uncomfortable and the white a-pawn is dangerous.

\texttt{32 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}1} b6 33 b3 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{f}}8 34 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{4} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}7} 35 h4 (D) }

\texttt{B}

Black’s position remains unpleasant.

\texttt{35...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{g}}8}}

Black hopes to get in ...e5 somehow in order to get counterplay against White’s queenside pawns.

\texttt{36 e5?!}

There was no hurry to play this. The prophylactic 36 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}3} was called for.

\texttt{36...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{h}}7?}}

A better try is 36...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}5}, taking advantage of the unprotected e5-pawn in order to get in ...b5, with counterplay.

\texttt{37 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}6!}}

Now the rooks leave the board and the knight shows its superiority.

\texttt{37...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}6 38 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}6+} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}7 39 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{4} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}2} 40 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{b}6+ \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}6} 41 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{4}+} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}6} 42 \texttt{g3} }}

White is patient. The a5-pawn is not going anywhere.

\texttt{42...g5 43 hxg5 hxg5 44 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{a}5+ \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}7 45 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}5 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}1} 46 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}4 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}2} 47 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}3 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}1} 48 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}4 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}6} 49 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}3 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}2} 50 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}4 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}6} 51 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{4}+} \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}6} 52 b4 1-0}}}

\textbf{Conclusions}

The solid 7...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{b}}6 8 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{5} a5} is holding up well. The critical 9 f3 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{f}}7 10 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}7 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}7} 11 e4 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{g}}6} can lead to very sharp play where Black seems to be holding his own. 12 f4 e6 13 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}4} is an interesting try. Here Black should probably investigate 13...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{f}}6} and 13...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{b}}6, because the pawn-grab with 13...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{b}}4 looks too risky.

If White plays a kingside fianchetto with 9 g3, Black is advised to develop in a classical vein with 9...e6, because 9...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{f}}6 10 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}7 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}7} 11 e4 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{h}}3 12 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}}\texttt{h}3 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}}\texttt{h}3 13 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{b}}3 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{a}}6} 14 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{f}}4} e6 15 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}}5 makes Black’s natural development very difficult. After 9...e6 10 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{g}}2 \texttt{\textit{b}}4 11 0-0 0-0 12 e3 h6 13 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}2 \texttt{\textit{h}}7 14 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}1 \texttt{\textit{f}}7 Black seems to be holding up nicely against 15 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}7, so maintaining the tension with 15 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{d}}3 looks like the best try for a small edge.

The modern attempts 9 e3 and 9 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{g}}5 lead to interesting play, but should not threaten the viability of Black’s system. 9 e3 gives Black a few options, with 9...h6 and 9...g6 looking the most solid. 9 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{g}}5 is best met by 9...h6, and after 10 \texttt{\textit{\texttt{h}}4 both 10...\texttt{\textit{\texttt{f}}5 and 10...e6 give Black excellent chances for gradually equalizing the game.}
In recent years, the variation with 6 \( \text{Qxe5} \) \( \text{e6} \) has been very much overshadowed by Morozevich’s 11...\( g5 \) in the 6...\( \text{Qbd7} \) 7 \( \text{Qxc4} \) \( \text{Wc7} \) variation as well as the solid 7...\( \text{Qb6} \) from the previous chapter. Nevertheless, 6...\( \text{e6} \) is a very important move and can lead to a few distinct types of middlegames. In order to combat White’s plan of expansion in the centre following 7 f3, Black must take very concrete measures in order to get a playable game. Historically, the ‘piece sacrifice’ variation of Game 14 was the main line of 6...\( \text{e6} \) because it seemed like a counterattacking system, but White has refined his play and Black nowadays faces a rather thankless task to draw. The two systems beginning with 7...\( \text{c5} \) aim to equalize more gradually. The fact that it is difficult for Black to play for more than a draw in the 6...\( \text{e6} \) lines is one of main reasons for the move’s decline in popularity. However, even if the main lines in this chapter are not as common as they once were, they are still important for theory and anyone looking to play White in the Central Variation would be well advised not to take any of these lines too lightly.

### The Games

**Game 14** (Onishchuk-Grishchuk) examines the sharp 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 4 \( \text{Qc3} \) dxc4 5 a4 \( \text{Qf5} \) 6 \( \text{Qe5} \) \( \text{e6} \) 7 f3 \( \text{b4} \) and the piece sacrifice that follows when White plays the critical move 8 e4. This was once an extremely popular line, but nowadays top players shy away from this variation. Following the almost forced sequence 8...\( \text{Qxe4} \) 9 fxe4 \( \text{Qxe4} \) 10 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Wxd4} \) 11 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Wxe4} \) 12 \( \text{We2} \) \( \text{Qxd2}+ \) 13 \( \text{Qxd2} \) \( \text{Wd5}+ \) 14 \( \text{Cc2} \) \( \text{Qa6} \) 15 \( \text{Qxc4} \), the tactical 15...\( b5 \) is looking dubious, so Black usually castles. Both 15...0-0-0 and the game’s 15...\( \text{Qe}5 \) 0-0 are pretty solid, but the general consensus is that Black is suffering a bit to achieve nothing more than a draw. It is more fun to play a piece up than a piece down! In this game Black is on the cusp of equality when a single mistake allows White to seize the initiative for good.

**Game 15** (Alekseev-Wang Yue) begins our coverage of 7...\( \text{c5} \). After 8 e4 this game examines 8...\( \text{cdxd4} \), which was promoted by Sadler. Historically, this line has been viewed as something of a drawing attempt following 9 exf5 \( \text{b4} \) (9...\( \text{Cc6} \) leads to a very unpleasant endgame for Black) 10 \( \text{Qxc4} \) dxc3 11 \( \text{Wxd8} \) \( \text{Wxd8} \) 12 \( \text{Cc2} \) \( \text{Cxb2} \) 13 \( \text{Cxb2} \) \( \text{Qe7} \). Black had just found the keys to drawing the resulting endgames with little trouble, when Alekseev uncorked the spectacular 12 \( \text{Qxf7}+\). This shot sacrifices a rook in a queeness middlegame(!) for the initiative. This game is very convincing and probably spells the end of 8...\( \text{cdxd4} \).

**Game 16** (Ponomariov-Rublevsky) covers Black’s latest anti-6 \( \text{Qe5} \) variation – Kramnik’s super-solid 8...\( \text{Qg6} \) (after 6...\( \text{e6} \) 7 f3 c5 8 e4). Now White may try to avoid an endgame with 9 d5, but this has not brought him anything special so far. Theory had always considered the position arising after 9 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{cdxd4} \) 10 \( \text{Wxd4} \) \( \text{Wxd4} \) 11 \( \text{Qxd4} \) to favour White, and for many years, that was that. Then in his 2006 World Championship match with Topalov, Kramnik defended this endgame with surprising ease. In this game we take a look at the developments in the endgame that follow 11...\( \text{Qfd7} \) 12 \( \text{Qxd7} \) \( \text{Qxd7} \) 13 \( \text{Qxc4} \). Kramnik’s 13...\( a6 \) remains solid and the game’s 13...\( \text{Cc8} \) has been holding up as well.
CENTRAL VARIATION: BLACK PLAYS 6...e6

Game 14
Alexander Onischuk – Alexander Grishchuk
Biel 2007

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 f3 f6 4 c3 dxc4 5 a4
f5 6 e5 e6 (D)

This natural move looks very solid, but it can lead to very wild play. Instead of challenging White’s knight with 6...bd7, Black intends to develop rapidly. He must often rely on tactics to justify his play; otherwise White will dominate the centre.

7 f3
White continues with his plan.

7...h4

This is Black’s sharpest response, although it essentially commits Black to a piece sacrifice. The alternative 7...c5 is covered in the next two games, while other moves would simply be met by 8 e4 “for free”.

8 e4
White accepts the challenge. There are a few ways to avoid the coming complications, although they do not promise much. The radical 8 g4 (or 8...g6 9 h4 c5) 9 d2 c5 10 e4 de3! (Burgess) and 8 h4 c5 9 dxc5 a5 10 d4 xc5 11 xc4 0-0 12 e4 d6 13 d3 g3+ 14 d1 g6 both look more fun for Black, but there are a couple of solid options available:

a) 8 g5 h6 9 h4 c5 10 dxc5 and here:
   a1) 10...xd1+ 11 xd1 bd7 12 xd7 0-0-0 13 e4 xd7+ 14 c2 h7 15 xc4
   a2) 10...a5 is a little better for White – the h7-bishop is out of play.

b2) 12 xd1 (this time White’s development is too slow to justify this) 12 d8+ 13 c1 c6 14 e4 h7 15 f2 d7 16 d3 xc5 17 xc5 xc5 18 c2 f5 gave Black a strong initiative in Akopian-Oll, New York 1994.

b1) 12 xd1 (this time White’s development is too slow to justify this) 12 d8+ 13 c1 c6 14 e4 h7 15 f2 d7 16 d3 xc5 17 xc5 xc5 18 c2 f5 gave Black a strong initiative in Akopian-Oll, New York 1994.
while 15 \( \text{b6} \text{d5} \) is even worse) 14...\( \text{gxf6} \) 15 \( \text{xa8} \text{a1} \) 16 \( \text{b6} \text{c6} \) 17 \( \text{xa8} \text{xa8} \) 18 e3 \( \text{xc5} \) gave Black good compensation for the exchange in Beliavsky-Bareev, USSR Ch, Kiev 1986.

These lines allow White to play with fewer risks than in the game (aside from the drawing option at move 10 below), but Black is able to strike in the centre effectively leading to equal play.

8...\( \text{xe4} \)

Instead 8...\( \text{xe4} ? 9 \text{fxe4} \text{h4+} 10 \text{e2} \) does not give Black enough, and 8...\( \text{g6} ? 9 \text{xc4} \) gives White exactly what he wants.

9 \( \text{fxe4} \text{xe4} \) (D)

This is the only try for an advantage, although Black should certainly be aware of White’s other options. 10 \( \text{f3} \text{xd4} \) 11 \( \text{xf7+} \text{d8} \) 12 \( \text{g5+} \text{xe5} \) 13 \( \text{xg7} \text{xc3+} \) 14 \( \text{xc3} \text{c2} + 16 \text{e1} \text{c3} + \) is a well-known drawing line. 10 \( \text{a3} ? \) is a tricky move, but after 10...\( \text{h4+} \) 11 \( \text{g3} \text{e5} \) 12 \( \text{hxg3} \text{xe5} \) 13 \( \text{g4} \text{h2} \) 14 \( \text{d1} \) Hübner’s suggestion 14...\( \text{h2} ! \) leaves White struggling.

10 \( \text{d2} \)

This is without doubt a critical position for the whole line with 8 e4. This unbalanced position has been seen hundreds of times in master play, and poses challenges for both sides. Black has three pawns for the piece and White’s king is exposed, but often White can successfully fight for the initiative. Black must also be careful about what type of endings he goes into. If he cannot get his pawns moving, White’s extra piece will be more important. Often White’s king can play a vital role in the endgame too. Black has to be particularly careful about his queenside falling, because White can focus all of his pieces (including this king) in that direction.

Nevertheless, it is not all doom and gloom for Black – the white position is not so easy to handle either. Any mistake could prove very costly because White’s king is exposed and he still needs to get developed. Now it is decision time for Black – there are three distinct methods of play.

14...\( \text{a6} \)

Instead 14...\( \text{b5} \) is supposed to lose to 15 \( \text{c5} \) 16 \( \text{xb5} \), although Cox points out that after 16...\( \text{xb5} \), if White plays 17 \( \text{xe4} \) 0-0 18 \( \text{xa8} \text{xe5} \) 19 \( \text{f3} \text{a6} \), matters are not easy for him at all. Also note that 17 \( \text{xf7} \) ? \( \text{xf7} \) 18 \( \text{f3} + \) fails to the cross-check 18...\( \text{f5} + \). Therefore, I would suggest 17 g4!. This move covers the f5-square and prepares \( \text{g2} \). White’s extra piece and initiative look worth more than Black’s pawns.

15 \( \text{xc4} \) (D)
15...0-0

This is probably the most solid move. Black gets his own king to safety. There are two common alternatives:

a) 15...0-0-0 (D) was the main line for a long time.

b) 15...b5 tries to solve Black's problems with tactics. It would be nice if this move worked, but it appears to go too far. 16 axb5 cxb5 17 c3 cxb5 18 d1! (D) (instead 18 b6 c5+ 19 b3 c6 20 xb5 e3+ 21 c2 f2+ is a draw, as is 18 xb4 bx4 19 xc4 b8+ 20 a3 a5+ 21 a4+ xa4+ 22 xa4 xb2, when White has the 'wrong' rook's pawn) and here:

b1) 18...xc4 19 xd5 d5+ is a rather miserable attempt to create some kind of fortress. This has been tried a few times with depressing results.

b2) 18...c5 19 e5 d5+ 20 xd5 b4+ 21 b3 xd5 22 e2 0-0 23 xd5 exd5 24 a5 was Kramnik-Shirov, Linares 2000. Materially speaking, this looks OK for Black, but in fact White is much better. Black's a-, b- and d-pawns are all weak, and White's knight, bishop, and king will certainly overpower Black's second rook. I tried to make this line work for Black once (perhaps unsurprisingly, the computers think it is equal) but I strongly got the sense that White would eventually queen the b2-pawn, and that was that.

b3) 18...a2+ is an idea from Sammour-Hasbun that makes a fight of it, although it too seems insufficient after 19 b3 xc4+ 20 xa2 a5+ 21 b1 0-0 22 xc4 ab8 and now either 23 wa2 (Krush-Fang, Philadelphia 2001)

15...0-0

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Black gets his queen's rook into play immediately. If Black can exchange queens, his king will help protect his queenside pawns. However, the black king is less safe on the queenside if queens remain on the board. White has:

a1) 16 we5 f6 17 we3 (17 xd5 cxd5 compares unfavourably with the main game because Black's queenside pawns are not so vulnerable) 17...b8 18 e2 and now the move 18...e5! (18...xg2 19 h1 xh2 20 xg7 b4+ 21 b3 d5 22 f3 is another story), which was first played by Ivanchuk, made White realize that the whole we5-e3 finesse was not so clever. Black has a good grip in the centre with counterplay brewing in the shape of ...we6, ...d5 and ...hd8.

a2) White should not be in such a hurry to offer an exchange of queens: 16 e3! and now:

a21) 16...c5 is pleasant for White after either 17 b3 or 17 e2.

a22) 16...b8 17 e2 xg2 (17...a8 18 g4!) 18 h1 xh2 19 xg7 also favours White.

a23) 16...c5 17 e2 xg2 18 h1 xh2 19 xg7! (long ago, this move was dismissed as a blunder) 19...d4 (19...d3 20 h1! is the tactical point) 20 xd4 xe2+ 21 d2 d8 22 xc5 xd2+ 23 b3 xb2+ 24 a3 d2 25

\[\text{\textcopyright Kramnik-Shirov, Dortmund 1996.} \]

White will have to watch out for tricks with his king so exposed, but an extra rook is an extra rook.
or 23 \( \mathcal{D}d3 \) (Sarkar-Vigorito, USA Ch, San Diego 2006) gives White the better chances, although Black is not without tricks.

16 \( \mathcal{W}e5 \)

With the black king far away from the vulnerable black queenside pawns, White is happy to exchange queens. Instead, 16 \( \mathcal{W}f3 \) \( \mathcal{W}e5 \) 17 \( \mathcal{D}b1 \) \( \mathcal{D}b4 \) 18 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \) \( \mathcal{W}a8 \) 19 \( \mathcal{D}d4 \) 20 \( \mathcal{D}a3 \) \( \mathcal{D}f8 \) gives Black sufficient counterplay, K.I.Gory-Georgiev-Shirov, Sarajevo 2000.

16...\( \mathcal{D}a8! \) (D)

This little prophylactic move is currently considered to be the most accurate. Black will place his rooks on \( b8 \) and \( c8 \) in the ensuing endgame. 16 ... \( \mathcal{D}c8 \) dissuades the exchange of queens but it is White who holds the initiative after 17 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \) \( f6 \) 18 \( \mathcal{W}f5+ \) 19 \( \mathcal{D}d3 \) \( \mathcal{W}g4 \) 21 \( \mathcal{D}d6 \). Instead 16...\( \mathcal{D}f5+ \) looks logical, but after 17 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \) \( f6 \) 18 \( \mathcal{W}xd5 \) (18 \( \mathcal{W}e3 \) \( \mathcal{W}f5+ \) 19 \( \mathcal{D}b3 \) (19 \( \mathcal{D}c3 \) \( \mathcal{D}c7+ \! \)) \( \mathcal{D}b5 \) 18...\( \mathcal{D}xd5 \) 19 \( \mathcal{D}a5! \) we can see the point of 16...\( \mathcal{D}a8! \) – the b7-pawn is already protected.

17 \( \mathcal{W}f5 \)

17 a5

This is a typical way to gain space and cramp the black queenside in the endgame.

Instead 17 \( \mathcal{D}d1 \) allows 17...\( \mathcal{D}b4+ \) 18 \( \mathcal{D}c1 \) \( \mathcal{D}a2+ \) 19 \( \mathcal{D}c2 \) \( \mathcal{D}b4+ \) with an immediate draw.

17 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \) also comes up short: 17...\( \mathcal{D}b4+ \) 18 \( \mathcal{D}b3 \) (after 18 \( \mathcal{D}c3 \) \( b5 \) 19 \( \mathcal{D}hd1 \) \( f6 \) 20 \( \mathcal{W}g3 \) \( \mathcal{W}e4 \) things are looking pretty doggy for White, Kramnik-Van Wely, Tilburg 1998) 18...\( b5 \) 19 \( \mathcal{W}xd5 \) \( \mathcal{X}d5 \) 20 \( \mathcal{D}d6 \) \( \mathcal{D}c6+ \) 21 axb5 \( \mathcal{D}f8 \) 22 \( \mathcal{D}c3 \) \( \mathcal{X}d6 \) 23 \( \mathcal{A}a6 \) (23 \( \mathcal{B}xc6 \) \( \mathcal{X}xc6+ \) 23...\( \mathcal{D}d4+ \)

24 \( \mathcal{D}d2 \) \( \mathcal{D}d3 \) when Black had good counterplay in Babula-Haba, Czech Ch, Luhačovice 2003. If 25 \( \mathcal{D}f3 \), then 25...\( \mathcal{D}e5 \) 26 \( \mathcal{W}xd6 \) \( \mathcal{D}c4+ \) 27 \( \mathcal{W}xd3 \) \( \mathcal{D}xd6 \) is much better for Black.

17...\( f6 \)

Black forces the exchange on \( d5 \). He could also play 17...\( \mathcal{W}f8 \) 18 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \) \( f6 \) 19 \( \mathcal{W}xd5 \) \( \mathcal{D}cxd5 \) \( \mathcal{D}c7+ \) \( \mathcal{D}d2 \) (the \( a5 \)-square is no longer available, but \( 20 \mathcal{D}e3 \) is also possible), which has similarities to the game.

The logical 17...\( \mathcal{D}b4+ \) 18 \( \mathcal{D}b3 \) \( c5 \) 19 \( \mathcal{W}xd5 \) \( \mathcal{X}d5 \) 20 \( \mathcal{D}e5 \) is considered to be somewhat better for White, although it is probably playable.

17...\( \mathcal{D}d8 \)? 18 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \) \( f6 \) 19 \( \mathcal{W}e3 \) has been tried by Haba a few times, and although he enjoyed little success, it deserves a closer look:

a) 19...\( \mathcal{D}d8 \)? 20 \( \mathcal{D}f1 \) \( \mathcal{D}f5+ \) 21 \( \mathcal{D}c3 \) \( \mathcal{D}d7+ \) 22 g4 (P.H.Nielsen-Haba, Bundesliga 2004/5) 22...\( \mathcal{D}d5+ \) is met by 23 \( \mathcal{W}xd5 \) \( \mathcal{W}xd5 \) 24 \( \mathcal{D}d1 \) followed by \( \mathcal{W}xe6+ \) and \( \mathcal{D}d6 \) with an attack.

b) 19...\( \mathcal{D}f7 \) 20 \( \mathcal{D}c1 \) \( \mathcal{D}b4 \) 21 \( \mathcal{W}d2 \) \( \mathcal{D}c5 \) 22 \( \mathcal{D}d1 \) \( \mathcal{W}d8 \) 23 \( \mathcal{W}xd8+ \) \( \mathcal{D}xd8 \) 24 \( \mathcal{W}c8+ \) \( \mathcal{D}f5 \) 25 \( \mathcal{D}d7+ \) and after 25...\( \mathcal{D}g6 \) 26 \( \mathcal{D}a3 \) White's pieces overpowered Black's queen in Ribli-Haba, Bundesliga 2001/2. However, after 25...\( \mathcal{W}e8 \) the game is likely to end in perpetual check.

18 \( \mathcal{W}xd5 \) \( \mathcal{D}cxd5 \) 19 \( \mathcal{D}e3 \)

Another important idea is 19 \( \mathcal{D}d2 \) \( \mathcal{F}c8+ \) 20 \( \mathcal{D}b1 \) \( \mathcal{D}d4 \) 21 \( \mathcal{D}a4 \) \( \mathcal{D}c6 \) 22 \( \mathcal{D}b3! \) \( \mathcal{D}f7 \) 23 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \), Vescovi-Gelfand, Bermuda 2004. Just like in the main game, Black had his chances to equalize, but after a couple of mistakes White prevailed.

19...\( \mathcal{F}c8+ \)

Now that the b7-pawn is unlikely to come under attack, 19...\( \mathcal{D}bc8+ \) also has its logic, although 20 \( \mathcal{D}b1 \) \( \mathcal{D}c5 \) 21 \( \mathcal{D}a3 \) f5 22 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \) \( \mathcal{D}e4 \) 23 \( \mathcal{D}d1 \) White still has some initiative. Following 23...\( \mathcal{D}c7 \) 24 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \) \( \mathcal{D}f5 \) 25 \( \mathcal{D}d4 \) \( \mathcal{D}d6 \) 26 \( a6 \) 27 \( \mathcal{D}e3 \) \( \mathcal{D}e8 \) 28 \( \mathcal{D}e1 \) \( \mathcal{D}e4 \) 29 \( \mathcal{D}b5 \) \( \mathcal{D}d7 \) 30 \( \mathcal{D}c1 \) \( \mathcal{D}c5 \) 31 \( \mathcal{D}d4 \) \( \mathcal{D}a8 \) 32 \( \mathcal{D}b4 \) 33 \( \mathcal{D}e4 \) 33 \( \mathcal{D}b5 \), Black's position soon fell apart in Anand-Khalifman, FIDE Knockout (rapid), New Delhi 2000.

20 \( \mathcal{D}b1 \) \( \mathcal{D}c5 \) (D)

21 \( \mathcal{D}a3! \)

Onischuk follows the plans laid out by Anand in the game mentioned above.

21...\( \mathcal{D}f5 \) 22 \( \mathcal{D}e2 \) \( \mathcal{D}e4 \) 23 \( \mathcal{D}d1 \) \( \mathcal{D}c5 \)
This is a good move, activating the rook while eyeing White's a5-pawn.

24 c2 f7 25 d4 f6 26 b3

This provokes a crisis, but it seems like Black can equalize. On the other hand, it is not easy for White to improve his position.

26...d6?

Black cannot take on a5 because of 26...xa5
27 c6, but after 26...e5! 27 b5 a6 28 c3
2xc3+ 29 bxc3 xa5 30 b6+ e7 31 d2
3c5 White should start thinking about making a draw.

27 g4!

Now Black's pawn-chain will be compromised and the presence of White's extra piece makes itself felt very quickly.

27...f4

After 27...g6, 28 h3 creates big problems for Black, because 28...c7 can be met by 29 g5+! The best chance was probably 27...e8 although after 28 gx5 exf5 29 h3 xa5 30 xh7 White is much better.

28 g5+ e7 29 h3 h8 30 g4 (D)

B

30...e5 31 e6

Black's kingside is coming undone.

31 xa5 32 xg7 e4

32...f7 33 f5 does not help Black.

33 f5+ d8 34 g6 f6

If 34...f2, then 35 xh7 g8 36 d6 xg4
(36...xg6 37 d7#) 37 e1 mates.

35 g7 e8

35...g8 is also met by 36 h5.

36 h5 1-0

Game 15

Evgeny Alekseev – Wang Yue

Russia-China match, Nizhny Novgorod 2007

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 f3 f6 4 c3 dxc4 5 a4
5f5 6 e5 e6 7 f3 c5 (D)

This logical move introduces a completely different approach from 7...b4. Black immediately strikes in the centre, hoping to dissuade White from his plan of central domination. Naturally, White is consistent.

8 e4 cxd4?!

This counterattack has been put under a cloud by this game. For a long time this line was considered to be a reasonable way to play for a draw (although nothing more that that, really). 7...c5 does not have to be abandoned just yet though, and Kramnik's solid alternative 8...g6 is covered in the next game.

9 exf5 b4

9...c6 is also not very much fun for Black after 10 xc6 bxc6 11 fxe6 fxe6 12 e2 (12 xc4 dxc3 13 bxc3 is another good line for White, one point being that 13...a5 can be met by 14 e2!! xc3+ 15 f1 xa1 16 xe6+ d8 17 e2! with a winning attack, Van
der Sterren-Petursson, San Bernardino 1992)
12...dxc3 13 \textit{f}xe6+ \textit{e}7 14 \textit{c}c4 \textit{w}xe6+ 15
\textit{f}xe6 cxb2 16 \textit{h}b2 \textit{b}4+ 17 \textit{e}2 \textit{e}7 18
\textit{c}c4 when the bishop-pair gave White a very
pleasant endgame in Topalov-Gelfand, Dos
Hermanas 1996.

10 \textit{f}xe4

10 fxex6+ dxc3 12 \textit{f}xe6+ \textit{e}7 14 \textit{c}c4 \textit{f}xe6+
15 \textit{e}2 \textit{e}7 leads to an end­
game discussed in note 'a' to White’s 12th
move, which is considered to be defensible for
Black.

Before the discovery of White's coming sac­
rificial play, 10 \textit{e}3 was briefly considered to
be promising. After 10...dxc3 11 \textit{f}xe6+ 12
\textit{f}xe6 \textit{e}7 13 bxc3, 13...
\textit{a}3+ 14 \textit{c}2
\textit{b}7 15 \textit{f}xd7\textit{f}xd7 16 fxe6 fxe6 17 \textit{c}c4
gave White a large endgame advantage in Bu
Xiangzhi-Atalik, Ottawa 2007, but instead the
cold-blooded 13...
\textit{b}3! 14 \textit{c}5+ \textit{e}8 15
\textit{c}c4 \textit{d}7 16 \textit{a}3 a5! leaves White with
nothing better than perpetual check after 17
\textit{d}6+ \textit{e}7 18 \textit{c}8++ \textit{e}8 19 \textit{d}6+ \textit{e}7 20
fxex6 fxe6 21 \textit{f}5++ \textit{f}7 22 \textit{d}6+ \textit{e}7, Bu

10...dxc3?!

Instead 10...\textit{w}d6?! 11 \textit{b}5+ \textit{c}6 12 \textit{f}4! gave Black big problems in Gelfand-Shirov,
Dortmund 1996.

The only real alternative is 10...\textit{c}c6 11 \textit{c}xc6
bxc6 12 fxex6 fxex6 13 \textit{w}e2, which is similar to
the lines we saw after 9...\textit{c}c6, and is likely to
transpose. At this point, however, Black may be
advised to bail out into that inferior ending.

11 \textit{w}xd8+ \textit{xd}8 (D)
a) 15...\( \text{g6} \) 16 \( \text{d3+ h5} \) 17 \( \text{h4 c6} \) (after \( 17...\text{xa1} 18 \text{f5! White will mate with} g4) 18 \( \text{b1 ae8} \) 19 \( \text{b5+ e5} \) 20 \( g4+ \text{xe4} \) 21 fxg4+ \( \text{xe4} \) 22 \( \text{g1+ h5} \) 23 \( \text{e5+ cxe5} \) 24 \( \text{g5+ xh4} \) 25 \( \text{e5} \) is winning for White.
b) 15...\( \text{e8} \) 16 \( \text{b1 c6} \) 17 \( \text{xb7 a6} \) 18 \( \text{a3} \) leaves Black all tied up.
15 \( \text{fxe6} \)
This works out well, but 15 \( \text{xe8} \) exf5 16 \( \text{f7 c6} \) 17 \( \text{d6+ d7} \) 18 \( \text{xf5 g6} \) 19 \( \text{d1+ c7} \) 20 \( \text{g7} \) is also very strong.
15...\( \text{g8} \) 16 \( \text{a3 d4} \) 17 \( \text{b1} \) (\( D \))
A rook down, White plays a rather calm move. Also possible is 17 \( \text{d1} \) (or 17 \( \text{d6+ d8} \) 18 \( \text{d1} \) 17...\( \text{c6} \) 18 \( \text{d6+ d8} \) 19 \( \text{b5} \), winning back some material while maintaining the initiative.

17...\( \text{b6} \)
If the white rook gets to b7, Black will never untangle.

18 \( \text{h5+ bd7} \) 19 \( \text{c6! c8} \)
19...\( \text{b8} \) looks more natural, but after 20 \( \text{d3! f2} \) 21 \( \text{e5} \) White starts to cash in.
20 \( \text{d6+ e7} \)
20...\( \text{d8} \) 21 \( \text{xc8 e8} \)! (after 21...\( \text{xc8} \) 22 exd7+, 22...\( \text{xd7} \) is not possible because of 23 \( \text{xd7+ xd7} \) 24 \( \text{d1} \) 22 \( \text{xa7 xe6+} \) 23 \( \text{f1} \) is not much of an improvement for Black.
21 \( \text{xe8++ xe6} \) 22 \( \text{xa7} \) (\( D \))

Now instead of being a rook up, Black is a pawn down!
22...\( \text{e5} \) 23 \( \text{d1} \)
23 \( \text{b5 d5} \) gives Black counterplay, but 23 \( \text{b7} \) was possible.
23...\( \text{xc6} \) 24 \( \text{xc6 e5} \) 25 \( \text{d8+ f5} \) 26 g4+ \( \text{g6} \) 27 h4 h6 28 h5+ \( \text{h7} \) 29 \( \text{f2} \) (\( D \))

White has an extra pawn and a positional advantage. Alekseev smoothly converts this into victory.
29...\textit{e}8 30 \textit{d}f4 \textit{d}6 31 \textit{d}d6 \textit{e}6

Black hopes to get some counterchances by exchanging bishop for knight.

32 \textit{xf4} \textit{xc6} 33 \textit{d}d4 \textit{e}c5 34 \textit{we}2 \textit{g}8 35 \textit{d}d3 \textit{f}7 36 \textit{d}d2 \textit{e}c7 37 \textit{e}3 \textit{a}7 38 \textit{e}c4 \textit{d}d5 39 \textit{d}d2 \textit{d}7 40 \textit{f}4+ \textit{e}6 41 \textit{e}4+ \textit{d}7 42 \textit{e}3 \textit{d}5 43 \textit{d}d4 \textit{d}6?

This just hangs the kingside. 43...\textit{e}c6 would have held out for longer.

44 \textit{e}5+ \textit{c}6 45 \textit{e}c4+ 1-0

\section*{Game 16}

\textbf{Ruslan Ponomariov – Sergei Rublevsky}

\textit{Candidates match (game 1), Elista 2007}

\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}

1 \textit{d}4 \textit{d}5 2 \textit{c}4 \textit{c}6 3 \textit{f}3 \textit{d}f6 4 \textit{c}c3 \textit{xc}4 5 \textit{a}4 \textit{f}5 6 \textit{e}e5 \textit{e}6 7 \textit{f}3 \textit{c}5 8 \textit{e}4 \textit{g}6 (D)

This rather obvious retreat had been virtually ignored by theory until Kramnik uncorked it in his 2006 World Championship match with Topalov. Kramnik achieved a draw after just a few accurate defensive moves, and since then, 8...\textit{g}6 has been a real headache to white players of the Central Variation. The drawback of this method of play is that although Black may gradually neutralize White’s pressure in the endgame, Black has very little chance to play for a win.

9 \textit{e}e3

White can avoid the endgame with 9 \textit{d}5. Although this does not look terribly threatening, it may catch on if White is unable to achieve anything in the main lines. 9...\textit{xd}5 and here:

a) 10 \textit{d}xg6?! is probably just a mistake. 10...hxg6 11 e5 and then:

a1) 11...\textit{d}fd7 12 \textit{w}xd5 \textit{dc}6 13 e6 (13 f4 \textit{we}7 14 \textit{we}4 0-0-0 gave Black a useful lead in development in Vitiugov-S.Kaplan, Biel 2007) 13...\textit{fxe}6 14 \textit{we}6+ \textit{we}7 15 \textit{we}e7+ \textit{xe}7 16 \textit{d}xc4 \textit{d}e5 17 \textit{d}d5 (17 \textit{e}e2 0-0-0 intending ...\textit{d}b4 is better for Black) 17...\textit{ed}3+ 18 \textit{e}2 \textit{d}xc1+ 19 \textit{axc}1 \textit{d}d4+ 20 \textit{f}2 0-0-0 was equal in Shirov-Gelfand, Moscow 2006.

a2) 10...\textit{d}h5 looks promising:

a21) 12 \textit{w}xd5 \textit{h}h4+ 13 g3 \textit{dxg}3 14 \textit{hxg}3 \textit{xe}3+ 15 \textit{d}d2 \textit{hxh}1 16 \textit{wb}7 \textit{xe}5 17 \textit{d}xc4 \textit{h}2+ 18 \textit{e}2 \textit{w}d4+ 19 \textit{d}d3 was Ribli-Nau­mann, Bundesliga 2006/7. Now Scherbakov’s suggestion 19...\textit{d}d6! looks good for Black.

a22) 12 \textit{d}xd5 is best met by 12...\textit{d}d7!, threatening both ...\textit{dx}e5 and ...\textit{dx}g3. Instead 12...\textit{d}g3 fails to 13 \textit{d}xc4 \textit{hxh}1? 14 \textit{d}f6+ \textit{e}7 (14...\textit{gx}f6 15 \textit{d}xf7+ \textit{e}7 16 \textit{ex}f6+) 15 \textit{d}g8+!, when White wins the queen after either 15...\textit{hxg}8 16 \textit{d}g5+ or 15...\textit{f}8 16 \textit{fx}f7+.

b) 10 \textit{ex}d5 is a more sober attempt to achieve something. 10...\textit{d}d6 11 \textit{dc}4 0-0 12 \textit{e}2 \textit{d}a6 13 0-0 \textit{d}b4 14 \textit{d}g5 h6 (14...\textit{d}d8 15 \textit{c}c1 \textit{a}6 16 \textit{h}h1 h6 17 \textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 18 \textit{d}e4 \textit{xe}4 19 \textit{fx}e4 \textit{we}7 20 \textit{a}5 \textit{d}d8 21 \textit{h}5 \textit{g}6 22 \textit{d}d6 \textit{xf}6 23 \textit{g}3, as in Kasimdzhanov-Ris, European Clubs Cup, Kemер 2007, has some similarity) 15 \textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 16 \textit{d}e4 \textit{xe}4 17 \textit{fx}e4 \textit{we}7 18 \textit{h}5 \textit{d}d8 19 \textit{we}2 \textit{e}5 (D).

Black is very solid here. The b4-knight could prove to be out of play, but Black should be able to create enough play on the kingside with ...\textit{g}6 and ...\textit{h}5 to hold the balance. Gradually pushing the queenside pawns is another possibility. A couple of examples:

b1) 20 \textit{h}h1 \textit{g}6 21 \textit{g}4 \textit{g}7 (there is no need to retreat the bishop; White’s central pawns may become dangerous if Black is not careful) 22 \textit{ae}1 \textit{fe}8 23 \textit{wd}1 \textit{wg}5 24 \textit{f}3 \textit{h}7 25 \textit{h}3
CENTRAL VARIATION: BLACK PLAYS 6...e6

\[ \text{?c2?! 26 \text{d}d1 \text{w}e7 27 \text{e}5! saw White break through in Radjabov-Bareev, Odessa (rapid) 2007.} \]

b2) 20 \text{ae}1 \text{g}6 21 \text{g}4 \text{g}7 22 \text{h}1 \text{h}5! 23 \text{h}3 \text{b}6 24 \text{d}d1 \text{w}c7 25 \text{g}3 \text{a}6 26 \text{g}2 \text{fe}8 was fine for Black in R.Ruck-P.Kiss, Hungarian Team Ch 2007/8. The ...b5 break is coming, and provides sufficient counterplay.

9...\text{cxd}4 10 \text{xd}4

10 \text{xd}4 \text{xc}6 11 \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 12 \text{xc}4 \text{a}5 13 \text{w}e2 1/2-1/2 Pelletier-Smyslov, Zurich 1998. With ...\text{c}5 and ...\text{d}8 coming, Black has sufficient play on the dark squares, and this approach has not found any takers on the white side.

9...\text{cxd}4 11 \text{xd}4 \text{fd}7 12 \text{xd}7

Other moves give White little: 12 \text{d}xg6 hxg6 13 \text{xc}4 \text{c}6 14 \text{e}3 \text{c}5 gives Black a good game; 12 \text{xc}4 \text{c}6 13 \text{e}3 \text{c}5 was equal in P.H.Nielsen-Hraček, Bundesliga 2005/6; and 12 \text{xc}4 \text{d}xe5 13 \text{xc}5 \text{xc}6 14 \text{b}5 \text{f}6 15 \text{g}3 0-0 0-0 16 \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 17 \text{e}2 \text{e}5 18 \text{hd}1 \text{b}4, as played in Castañeda-Amonatov, Internet 2006, is also no problem for Black.

12...\text{cxd}4 13 \text{xc}4 (D)

An endgame has been reached where White has a healthy space advantage. Black’s g6-bishop is out of play, but this may be of a temporary nature, and in practice White has been unable to cause Black too many problems. Defending this type of position in order to get half a point is certainly not to everyone’s taste though, and despite the variation’s theoretical success, it seems unlikely that this method of play will achieve much popularity at levels below those of the world’s top players.

13...\text{e}c8

This is a recent wrinkle in Black’s defensive scheme. Usually Black prevents any unwelcome visitors from appearing on b5 with 13...a6. White has then tried:

a) 14 \text{e}2 and now 14...\text{g}8! is the key to Black’s defence. By protecting the g7-pawn, Black can develop the f8-bishop and continue with ...\text{e}7 and ...\text{f}6, granting the g6-bishop a little more flexibility. 15 \text{hd}1 (15 \text{h}4 \text{c}8 16 \text{a}2 \text{c}5 17 \text{xc}5 \text{xc}5 18 \text{ac}1 \text{h}5 19 \text{b}4 \text{c}6 20 \text{b}1 \text{e}7 21 \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 22 \text{e}3 \text{b}8 23 \text{b}1 \text{f}5 gave Black enough play in Ponomariov-Rublevsky, Candidates match (game 5), Elista 2007) 15...\text{e}8 16 \text{b}3 \text{c}5 17 a5 \text{e}7 18 \text{a}4 \text{b}4 19 \text{b}6 \text{xb}6 20 \text{xb}6 \text{f}6 21 \text{d}3 \text{c}6! and Black will neutralize White’s pressure on the d-file with ...\text{d}6. The game was soon drawn in Topalov-Kramnik, World Ch match (game 6), Elista 2006.

b) 14 \text{h}4 (White gains more space and puts the question to the g6-bishop before Black can achieve ...\text{f}6 in comfort) 14...\text{e}8 15 \text{a}2 \text{h}6 (15...\text{h}5, as in Ponomariov-Rublevsky above, should also suffice) 16 \text{c}1 \text{c}5! (this is better than the unnecessary 16...\text{g}8 17 \text{e}2 \text{c}5 18 \text{xc}5 \text{xc}5 19 \text{b}1 \text{e}7 20 \text{xc}5 \text{xc}5 21 \text{h}5 \text{h}7 22 \text{e}1 \text{d}7 23 \text{d}2, when White had some advantage in Aronian-Kramnik, Rapid match (game 2), Erevan 2007) 17 \text{e}2 (17 \text{xc}7 \text{h}7 traps the bishop, although 18 \text{h}5 \text{xe}7 19 \text{hx}6 \text{xe}6 20 \text{g}4 is equal) 17...0-0-0 looks a little better for White, but it is difficult to prevent the gradual equalization of the position. The remainder of the game is rather
dull, but instructive: 18...\(\text{d6}\) (Black retains the bishop in order to keep c7 under control) 19 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{e5}\) 20 \(\text{f4}\) \(\text{xc1}\) 21 \(\text{xc1}\) \(\text{h7}\) 22 \(\text{f1}\) \(\text{b8}\) 23 \(\text{e2}\) \(\text{f8}\) 24 \(\text{g4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 25 \(\text{g2}\) \(\text{f6}\) (all part of the plan) 26 h5 \(\text{g8}\) 27 \(\text{a7}\) \(\text{a8}\) 28 \(\text{b6}\) \(\text{f7}\), Aronian-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2007. Black is ready to play ...\(\text{e8}\) with complete equality.

c) 14 \(\text{c1}\) is a relatively new try. White plays very concretely and fights for the c-file. 14...\(\text{c8}\) 15 \(\text{e2}\) (D) (15 \(\text{a2}\) \(\text{g8}\) 16 \(\text{e2}\) \(\text{b8}\) 17 \(\text{hd1}\) \(\text{c6}\) 18 \(\text{a6}\) \(\text{b4}\) 19 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{e7}\) 20 \(\text{cd1}\) \(\text{b8}\) 21 \(\text{d4}\) occurred in Zhang Zhong-Megaranto, Jakarta 2007, when 21...\(\text{c5}\) 22 \(\text{xc5+}\) \(\text{xc5}\) would have held White to a very slight edge) and now:

\[
\text{This move, combined with 13...\(\text{c8}\), constitutes Black's plan. Instead of covering the b5-square with ...\(\text{a6}\), Black completely gives it up in order to fix the dark squares on the queenside.}
\]

\[
\text{15 h4}
\]

It looks more accurate to play 15 \(\text{e2}\) first. After 15...\(\text{e8}\) 16 \(\text{b5}\) \(\text{c5}\) 17 \(\text{c3}\) b6 18 h4 \(\text{h5}\) 19 \(\text{hd1}\) \(\text{e7}\) 20 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{f6}\) 21 \(\text{ad1}\) \(\text{g8}\) 22 \(\text{d3}\) \(\text{e8}\) (22...\(\text{f8}\) fails here to 23 \(\text{a7}\), when 23...\(\text{xd3}\) is not check but 24 \(\text{xc8+}\) is – compare this to the main game) 23 \(\text{d6}\) \(\text{xd6}\) 24 \(\text{xd6}\) \(\text{f7}\) 25 \(\text{d2}\) White's position was certainly more pleasant in Wojtaszek-Wrig, Calvia 2007, although that did not prevent Black (who was almost 200 points lower rated than his opponent) from eventually holding the draw. As we shall see, the insertion of the moves of both h-pawns means that Black can sometimes ignore the threat to his g-pawn.

\[
\text{15...h5}
\]

Of course 15...\(\text{h6}\) is also feasible, but lately Black has preferred not to give up any more space in these positions.

\[
\text{16 c1}
\]

It seems that because White doubles on the d-file anyway, this may just constitute a loss of an important tempo compared to the Wojtaszek-Wrig game mentioned above. However, with the h-pawns already advanced, 16 \(\text{e2}\) can be met by 16...\(\text{c5}\) immediately, because 17 \(\text{b5}\) (17 \(\text{a7}\) \(\text{e7}\)! traps the bishop) 17...\(\text{xd4}\) 18 \(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{e7}\) is equal.

14...\(\text{a5}\)!? (D)
16...g8
Again, Black could have actually saved a tempo with the clever 16...c5, because after 17 d5 e7 18 xg7 Black has the tricky 18...d4 19 xc8 xc8. The possibility of a skewer on the back rank forces 20 h6, when 20...xb2 is equal.

17 e2 e5 18 b5 e7 19 c3 b6 20 hd1 f6 21 d2
Trying to steer the game towards Wojta­szek-Wirig above with 21 d3 can be met by 21...e5, when Black has no problems.

21...gd8 22 cd1 (D)

22...d8
Black is just in time to cover the d6-square.

23 a7
This sortie is not so scary now.

23...xd2+
Check! Compare this to the note to White’s 15th move. There White’s rook was on d3, so the equivalent move ...xd3 would have allowed xc8+.

24 xd2 e7 25 b5 c7 26 a7 c7 27 b5 c8 28 f4 (D)
White avoids repeating moves, but Black has a couple of ways to equalize.

28...e8
It is also possible to play 28...e5, but Black prefers not to cede the d5-square just yet— he has correctly assessed that giving up the bishop-pair is safe enough.

29 d6 d8 30 xe8 xe8
This is better than 30...xd1 31 xd1 xe8, when White can probe around on the kingside with g4 at some point. Keeping the rooks on the board makes it more difficult for White to play with such a free hand.

31 d2 g6 32 c1 d8 33 g3 e5 34 c3 e6
Now it is clear that White has nothing. The knight grips the dark squares on d4 and b4, which is very consistent with Black’s plan beginning with 14...a5.

35 c4 d4+ 36 xd4 xd4 37 b3 g6
1/2–1/2

Conclusions
The piece sacrifice starting with 7...b4 is not in such bad standing theoretically, but most players have moved away from this variation. It is easier to play the endings that usually ensue with an extra piece, so the fashion has turned towards fresher systems of defence. The piece sacrifice still requires Black to know quite a bit, and if one is willing to do some homework, the lines given in the previous two chapters lead to richer play as well as better winning chances.

The systems with 7...c5 have been played more with the intention of equalizing the game slowly rather than striving for counterplay. After 8 e4, the 8...cd4 line is looking like a dead variation. Kramnik’s 8...g6 is more solid, no doubt, but it is hardly an inspiring variation. White can play for an unbalanced middlegame with 9 d5 exd5 10 exd5, even though Black looks alright here. More often White heads for the endgame with 9 e3, when 15 e2 is looking like White’s best hope for an edge.
Black Avoids 5...\( \text{\textit{f}}_5 \): Bronstein and Smyslov Variations

The five games in this chapter tackle the lines where, after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \( \text{\textit{f}}_3 \) \( \text{\textit{f}}_6 \) 4 \( \text{\textit{c}}_3 \) dxc4 5 a4, Black does not play the main system with 5...\( \text{\textit{f}}_5 \).

The Bronstein Variation is defined by the aggressive 5...\( \text{\textit{g}}_4 \). After 6 \( \text{\textit{e}}_5 \) \( \text{\textit{h}}_5 \) the pin on the e2-pawn means that White already has a decision to make about how to complete his development. The Bronstein can be quite risky for Black if White plays the most principled lines, but some players are attracted to it because of the complications that often arise.

The Smyslov Variation is characterized by 5...\( \text{\textit{a}}_6 \). This quiet move aims for the b4-square while waiting for White to commit his e-pawn before playing the ...\( \text{\textit{g}}_4 \) pin. The positions that arise are a little passive, but Black is solid and there are methods for achieving counterplay, especially if White overextends himself.

The Games

**Game 17** (D.Femandez-R.Gonzalez) begins our coverage of the Bronstein Variation. After 6 \( \text{\textit{e}}_5 \) \( \text{\textit{h}}_5 \) White plays the main line, 7 f3, which prepares both to build a pawn-centre and to bother Black's bishop with g4 and even h4. Black plays the most common response, 7...\( \text{\textit{f}}_d7 \) 8 \( \text{\textit{xc}}_4 \) e5, striking back in the centre. White has several moves here, and he chooses the odd-looking but effective 9 \( \text{\textit{e}}_3 \). Soon White's kingside pawn-storm gives him a strong attack and Black is unable to cope with the problems that arise.

**Game 18** (Riazantsev-Zhao Jun) examines 7 h3. This little move is trickier than it first appears. After the critical 7...\( \text{\textit{a}}_6 \) 8 g4 \( \text{\textit{g}}_6 \) 9 \( \text{\textit{g}}_2 \) \( \text{\textit{b}}_4 \) 10 0-0 \( \text{\textit{c}}_2 \) 11 \( \text{\textit{d}}_2 \) \( \text{\textit{b}}_3 \), a very unusual position is reached. The next few moves see both sides fighting for the initiative. After a couple of errors by Black, White reaches a very pleasant endgame and his purposeful play brings home the point.

**Game 19** (Kaidanov-Zhang Pengxiang) covers the safe 7 g3. This continuation is hardly an attempt to refute Black's play, but it is a reasonable choice for players not ready to enter into the complications covered in the first two games. After a slight hesitation on White's part, Black grabs the initiative. The position is still close to equality when White impatiently lashes out in search of counterplay. This rebounds badly and Black quickly wraps up the game.

**Game 20** (Avrukh-Kogan) looks at the Smyslov Variation with White playing the aggressive 6 e4. Black takes the opportunity to double White's pawns with 6...\( \text{\textit{g}}_4 \) 7 \( \text{\textit{xc}}_4 \) \( \text{\textit{xf}}_3 \) 8 gxf3. When White quickly brings a rook to the g-file, Black chooses to castle queenside. The king is not perfectly safe here either, and White gets a comfortable edge. Complications follow, and both sides make mistakes, but the end result is a winning endgame for White. He makes a nice breakthrough which culminates in a clever zugzwang, forcing resignation.
Game 21 (Schekachev-Gozzoli) sees White meet the Smyslov with the calm 6 e3. Although not as aggressive-looking as 6 e4, this little move also gives White good chances for establishing some advantage. After 6...g4 7 xc4 e6 8 h3 h5 9 0-0 b4 10 e2 e7, White is ready to advance with e4 and g4, gaining a lot of space. Black manages to fight back from his cramped position, but a couple of inaccuracies land Black in big trouble in the endgame that ensues.

**Game 17**

**Daniel Fernandez – Renier Gonzalez**

*USA Ch, San Diego 2006*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 f3 f6 4 c3 dxc4 5 a4 g4 (D)

The Bronstein Variation is a sharp alternative to the main lines of 5...f5. Black allows e5 with tempo and hopes that the pin on the white e-pawn will cause some discomfort. If White hopes to punish Black’s provocative play, he will have to go into some rather complicated variations. Black will hope to get sufficient counterchances in these lines, but if White is well prepared, he has excellent chances of gaining a real advantage.

6 e5

Of course White grabs the chance to play this with tempo. Self-pinning with 6 e3 or 6 e4 can be met solidly by 6...e6 or sharply with 6...e5!?

6...h5

6...bd7 is an unusual sideline. After 7 xg4 xg4, 8 e4 is not so clear because of 8...e5!, when 9 xg4 exd4 is dangerous and 9 d5 gf6 gives Black reasonable dark-square play. However, 8 e3 gf6 9 xc4 e6 10 0-0 gives White a normal position similar to the 5...f5 6 e3 lines of the first two chapters. In this case White has effortlessly grabbed the bishop-pair and should enjoy a pleasant advantage.

7 f3 (D)

White intends to build a big pawn-centre. Black’s h5-bishop may get locked out of play, and an advance with g4 and h4 is another possibility, when the bishop could be in trouble.

The sharp 7 h3 and the solid 7 g3 are considered in the next two games. White can also play 7 xc4, which has been mostly ignored by everyone except Burgess. The critical line is 7...e6 8 b3 a6 9 e4 b4 10 f3 xe4 11 fxe4 h4+ 12 g3 xg4+ 13 f2 xh1 14 g2 xh2 15 e3 f3?! 16 xf3 h5+ 17 g4 xh4 with an unclear position that looks somewhat favourable to White. So it looks like 7 xc4 is yet another line Black needs to worry about.

7...fd7
This is Black’s principal continuation. Black challenges White’s strong knight and prepares the counter-attack ...e5. The apparently passive 7...e6 can also lead to some sharp play. White has:

a) 8 e4. Now 9 dxe4? fails to 9...dxe4! so White’s options are:

a1) 9 g4 and now 9...dxe4 10 fxe4 dx4+ 11 dxe2 f6 12 e2 cxe5 14 gxh5 a6 15 f3 was insufficient for Black in Gyimesi-Ilinicic, European Clubs Cup, Eupen 1999. Perhaps the simple 9...g6 should be preferred. After 10 h4 dxe4!? both 11 h5 dxe4 and 11 dxe7 wxe7 12 h5 dxe4 are unclear.

a2) 9 dxe2 b5 10 b3 d7 11 e4 dxe5 13 dxe5 was Aronian-Bu Xiangzhi, World Team Ch, Beersheba 2005. Bu gives 13...dxe1+ 14 xex1 xex3 15 bxc3 h5 16 g5 a6 as being better for Black, although White certainly has chances here as well.

b) 8 g4 (D) is critical:

b1) 8...d7?! 9 d7 (9 h4 e7 10 e3 dxe5 11 dxe5 xexh+ 12 xex4 xexh+ 13 f2 wh2 was unclear in Beliaiksky-Cornette, Linares 2003) 9...h4+ 10 d2 dxd7 11 gxh5 dxc5 (this looks fun, but the complications will favour White) 12 c2 b3 13 b1 0-0-0 14 e3 e5 15 c4! gave White a strong initiative in Aseev-Ulybin, Russian Ch, Samara 2000.

b2) 8...d5! 9 h4 (bad is 9 gxh5? wh4+ 10 d2 dxd4+, but 9 e4 wh4+ 10 c2 cxe4+ 11 bxc3 e6 12 b1 probably favours White) 9...b4!? 10 d2 e7 11 e4 (11 f2 b4 12 f4 f6 13 c4 c7 is given by Bu Xiangzhi)

11...xh4+ 12 e2 g6 13 exd5 cxd5 is an unclear piece sacrifice.

b3) 8...g6 is supposed to be bad, but matters are not so clear. 9 h4 c5 10 h5 (10 dxc5 c6 11 dxc6 c7! 12 d4 xex6 13 xex4 dxc5 was OK for Black in Rodshtein-Gupta, World Junior Ch, Erevan 2006) 10...d3! (a funny move) 11 exd3 (if 11 dxc5 then 11...wxd4!, but perhaps White should go for this) 11...xd4 12 dxc4 d6d6 13 exd3 dxc3 looked fine for Black in Khismatullin-Chuprikov, Voronezh 2007.

White must play very sharply and be well prepared to get anything against 7...e6.

8 dxc4 e5 (D)

This is the point of Black’s play. Without this counterblow, 7...d7 would make little sense. Now 9 dxe5? loses to 9...wh4+, and 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 dxe5 d7 makes it difficult for White both to hold on to the pawn and to develop normally. For a long time White’s main response was 9 d4, hoping to exploit the weak d6-square, but in recent years White has discovered several other promising ideas.

9 e3!?

White guards against the check on h4 and now he is ready to play g4, when he can both capture on e5 and play h4 to harass Black’s bishop. Often White can whip up a strong kingside attack very quickly. There are other important options:

a) 9 e4 is unusual, but it holds a certain appeal. 9...wh4+ (neither 9...b4 10 dxe5 nor 9...f6 10 c3 seems sufficient for Black either) 10 e2!? (10 g3 wh6 11 dxe5 wxf6 12 d6+...
Black Avoids 5...\( \text{f5} \): Bronstein and Smyslov Variations

\( \text{d8} \) 13 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 14 \( \text{xf7+} \) \( \text{e8} \) 15 \( \text{e6} \) \( \text{c5} \) is perhaps less clear, but also good for White af­

ter 16 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{xe1} \) 17 \( \text{xe8} \) or 16 \( \text{g1} \) (D) and now:
a) It should also be noted that 10...exd4 11 \( \text{xd4} \) is not good because of 12 \( \text{d6+} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 13 \( \text{xe8} \) \( \text{xd6+} \). A great trap.
b) 10...\( \text{b4} \) could use a few tests. 11 dxe5, 11...\( \text{e3} \) and 11...g4 all are interesting tries for White.

b) 9 \( \text{e4} \) is the traditional main line for White. 9...\( \text{b4} \)+

(9...\( \text{c7} \) fails to 10 \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 11 \( \text{xd8+} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 12 \( \text{xd8} \) 13 \( \text{f6} \) 14 \( \text{e6} \) \( \text{c5} \) and now 15 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 16 \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{f7} \) was solid enough for Black in Gladysz-Flear, Montpellier 2007, but Hü­́bner's idea 15 \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{d4} \) 16 \( \text{d2} \) looks much more testing.
c) 9...\( \text{g3} \) is another testing line. White simply

prevents the check on h4. Because 9...exd4 10 \( \text{xd4} \) leaves d6 weak, Black has tried:

c1) 9...\( \text{b4} \) 10 \( \text{dxe5} \). \( \text{e7} \) 10 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 11 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 12 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e7} \) (D) this is better than 10...\( \text{xd2} \) 11 \( \text{xd2} \) 0-0 12 \( \text{dxe5} \) reaches an important position:

\[ \text{W} \]

White has:

b1) 11 \( \text{exe5} \) is not so common, but it looks like a good try for a safe edge. 11...\( \text{exe5} \) 12 \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 13 \( \text{f6+} \) (13 \( \text{xb4} \) \( \text{xb4} \) 14 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d2} \) 0-0 16 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 17 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 18 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 19 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{f6} \) was fine for Black in Harikrishna-Acs, Paks 2006) 13...\( \text{xd6} \) 14 \( \text{exd6} \) \( \text{exe5} \) 15 \( \text{c3} \) gives White a pleasant edge in the middlegame after 15...\( \text{e7} \) 16 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 17 \( \text{e4} \) or the endgame in the case of 15...\( \text{xd1} \) 16 \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{f6} \) 17 \( \text{e4} \) because of the bishop-pair.

b2) 11 \( \text{xb4} \) leads to an endgame that Black seems to have worked out after 11...\( \text{xb4} \) 12 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d2} \) 13 \( \text{d2} \) 14 \( \text{ed6}+ \), and here:

b21) 14...\( \text{c7?} \) 15 \( \text{f5}+ \) (15 \( \text{xb7} \) is also possible) 15...\( \text{f6} \) 16 \( \text{d8} \) 17 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 18 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e4} \) 19 \( \text{b3}+ \) 20 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xa1} \) 21 \( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 22 \( \text{xa1} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 23 \( \text{b4} \) gave White a

space advantage and the initiative in the model game Kramnik-Damljanović, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

b22) 14...\( \text{d8} \) 15 \( \text{h4} \) (15 \( \text{xb7}+ \) \( \text{c7} \) 16 \( \text{ba5} \) \( \text{a6} \) 17 \( \text{exe3} \) \( \text{f6} \) \( \text{f6} \) 18 \( \text{exe3} \) \( \text{d4} \) gives Black good counterplay) 15...\( \text{f6} \) 16 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 17 \( \text{xb7}+ \) \( \text{c7} \) 18 \( \text{bd6} \) \( \text{d6} \) was equal in Chaba­nion-Flear, Montpellier 2006.

c) 9...\( \text{g3} \) is another testing line. White simply

prevents the check on h4. Because 9...exd4 10 \( \text{xd4} \) leaves d6 weak, Black has tried:

c1) 9...\( \text{b4} \) 10 \( \text{dxe5} \). \( \text{e7} \) 10 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 11 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 12 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e7} \) (D) this is better than 10...\( \text{xd2} \) 11 \( \text{xd2} \) 0-0 12 \( \text{dxe5} \) reaches an important position:

\[ \text{B} \]

White has:

b1) 11 \( \text{exe5} \) is not so common, but it looks like a good try for a safe edge. 11...\( \text{exe5} \) 12 \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 13 \( \text{f6+} \) (13 \( \text{xb4} \) \( \text{xb4} \) 14 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d2} \) 0-0 16 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 17 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 18 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 19 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{f6} \) was fine for Black in Harikrishna-Acs, Paks 2006) 13...\( \text{xd6} \) 14 \( \text{exd6} \) \( \text{exe5} \) 15 \( \text{c3} \) gives White a pleasant edge in the middlegame after 15...\( \text{e7} \) 16 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 17 \( \text{e4} \) or the endgame in the case of 15...\( \text{xd1} \) 16 \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{f6} \) 17 \( \text{e4} \) because of the bishop-pair.

b2) 11 \( \text{xb4} \) leads to an endgame that Black seems to have worked out after 11...\( \text{xb4} \) 12 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d2} \) 13 \( \text{d2} \) 14 \( \text{ed6}+ \), and here:

b21) 14...\( \text{c7?} \) 15 \( \text{f5}+ \) (15 \( \text{xb7} \) is also possible) 15...\( \text{f6} \) 16 \( \text{d8} \) 17 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 18 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e4} \) 19 \( \text{b3}+ \) 20 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xa1} \) 21 \( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 22 \( \text{xa1} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 23 \( \text{b4} \) gave White a

An early 9...exd4 is usually a mistake, be­

cause after 10 \( \text{xd4} \) White has a strong initia­

tive because of the vulnerable d6-square. Ideas like 0-0-0, \( \text{e4} \) and \( \text{e4} \) are in the air. 9...f6 is
worse here than it is against 9 g3 because White can quickly castle queenside. 10 dxe5 \( \mathcal{Q}xe5 \) 11 \( \mathcal{W}xd8+ \mathcal{Q}xd8 \) 12 \( \mathcal{Q}xe5 \mathcal{F}xe5 \) 13 0-0-0+ \( \mathcal{Q}c7 \) 14 g3 \( \mathcal{Q}e7 \) 15 \( \mathcal{Q}h3 \mathcal{Q}d8 \) 16 \( \mathcal{Q}xd8 \mathcal{Q}xd8 \) 17 \( \mathcal{E}d1 \) gave White a strong initiative in Shishkin-Mazurkov, Kiev Ch 2004.

Black's main alternative is 9 ... \( \mathcal{Q}g6 \). This guards against \( \mathcal{Q}e4 \), but White can play 10 h4! f6 (10 ... \( \mathcal{Q}e7 \) 11 h5 \( \mathcal{F}f5 \) 12 dxe5 0-0 13 h6 gave White a strong attack in I.Sokolov-Hellsten, Malmö 1995) 11 dxe5 \( \mathcal{Q}xe5 \) (11 ... fxe5 12 \( \mathcal{Q}d6+ \)) 12 \( \mathcal{W}xd8+ \mathcal{Q}xd8 \) 13 \( \mathcal{Q}xe5 \mathcal{F}xe5 \) 14 h5 (or even 14 0-0-0+!!?) 14 ... \( \mathcal{C}c2 \) 15 h6 \( \mathcal{Q}d7 \) 16 \( \mathcal{H}gxh7 \mathcal{Q}xh7 \) 17 a5 gave White pressure on both sides of the board in Krasenkow-Sapis, Polish Ch, Sopot 1997.

10 \( \mathcal{G}g4 \)

Again, White cannot play 10 dxe5?? because of 10 ... \( \mathcal{W}h4+ \) and 11 ... \( \mathcal{W}xc4 \). Playing g4 first cuts off the fourth rank. Instead 10 \( \mathcal{Q}xe5 \mathcal{Q}xe5 \) 11 dxe5 \( \mathcal{Q}d7 \) is fine for Black. After 12 \( \mathcal{Q}f2?? \) \( \mathcal{W}a5 \) 13 \( \mathcal{W}c2 \mathcal{Q}xe5 \) 14 e4? \( \mathcal{Q}xf3! \) 15 gxf3 \( \mathcal{Q}xf3+ \) 16 \( \mathcal{Q}d1 \mathcal{Q}d8+ \) 17 \( \mathcal{Q}c1 \mathcal{W}g5+ \) 18 \( \mathcal{Q}b1 \mathcal{Q}d2 \) Black was winning in Shaw-Radovanović, European Union Ch, Liverpool 2006.

10 ... \( \mathcal{G}g6 \) 11 dxe5 0-0

After 11 ... \( \mathcal{W}e7 \) 12 \( \mathcal{Q}d6+ \) (worse is 12 f4 \( \mathcal{W}h4+ \) winning the g4-pawn) 12 ... \( \mathcal{Q}xd6 \) 13 \( \mathcal{W}xd6 \) the bishop-pair gives White a better endgame, but this may still be Black’s best.

12 \( \mathcal{H}h6 \)

Instead 12 ... h5 allows White to open lines immediately with 13 \( \mathcal{G}xh5 \) \( \mathcal{W}d4 \) b5 15 \( \mathcal{Q}d6 \mathcal{W}a5 \) 16 \( \mathcal{G}g1 \) White had a strong attack in Izeta-Cruz Lopez, Subijana de Alava 1998.

13 \( \mathcal{G}g5 \)

Another way to crack Black open is with 13 h5 \( \mathcal{G}h7 \) 14 g5 \( \mathcal{H}xg5 \) 15 h6, Krasenkov-Sapis, Polish Team Ch, Lubniewice 1995.

13 ... \( \mathcal{H}h5 \)

Previously Gonzalez had tried 13 ... \( \mathcal{W}e7 \) 14 \( \mathcal{G}xh6 \) b5 15 axb5 cxb5 16 h5 \( \mathcal{G}h7 \) in Novikov-R.Gonzalez, USA Ch, San Diego 2004. White has many tempting possibilities here, such as 17 \( \mathcal{H}xg7 \), 17 \( \mathcal{W}d5 \) and even the game’s 17 \( \mathcal{G}g2?? \). The general impression is that Black’s counterplay is too slow.

14 \( \mathcal{G}h3 \)

White is not even behind in development, and he has an extra pawn and more space.

14 ... \( \mathcal{W}e7 \) 15 f4 \( \mathcal{H}d8 \)

If 15 ... \( \mathcal{L}e4 \) 16 0-0 \( \mathcal{L}xc3 \) 17 bxc3, White can add the bishop-pair and the d6-square to his multiple assets.

16 \( \mathcal{W}c1 \)

16 \( \mathcal{W}b3 \) is also possible, but White wants to avoid any ... \( \mathcal{Q}c5 \) ideas coming with tempo.

16 ... \( \mathcal{Q}c5 \) (D)

It looks like Black is developing counterplay, but White refuses to let go of the initiative.

17 \( \mathcal{F}f5 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b3 \)

Instead 17 ... \( \mathcal{G}h7 \) looks dreadful, but the threats of ... \( \mathcal{Q}b3 \) and ... \( \mathcal{Q}bd7 \) force White to act
immediately. After 18 f6 w f8 19 0-0 b b3 20 w e1 x a1 21 w x a1 White has excellent compensation for the small material investment, but Black can certainly fight.

18 b1 x a1?
18... w x f5 was a better practical try.

19 f x g6 b b3 20 0-0 f f8 (D)

After 20...f x g6 21 w x g6 Black cannot deal with the dual threats of 22 e e6+ and 22 f f5.

21 f f6!
There were other ways to win, but this is certainly the flashiest!

21... c c5
Also losing are 21...g x f6 22 g x f6 d d8 23 g x f7+ and 21...c c5 22 g x f7+ f f8 23 f f7 w x f7 24 d d6 w e7 25 w g6, threatening both 26 f f5 and 26 f f5.

22 g x f7+ h x f7 23 w g6
Now there is no defence against e e6.

23... a a6 24 f f7 w x f7 25 c c6 1-0

Game 18
Alexander Riazantsev – Zhao Jun

Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2006

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 f f3 f f6 4 c c3 d x c4 5 a4

5...g g 6 6 e5 h h 5 7 h3 (D)

B

This little move can lead to surprisingly sharp play. White will play g4 while avoiding any annoying checks on h4 which can occur after 7 f3. Black must play concretely to avoid slipping into a bad position.

7...a a6
This is Black’s sharpest response. Black aims for the c2-square. It is also possible to play 7...a b7 8 c c4 e e6 9 g g 4 h h 6 10 g g 2 a a5 11 0-0, when White has a kind of better version of Game 12, which should suffice for an edge.

8 g g 4 h h 6 9 g g 2
Instead 9 e3 is not very threatening. 9...a b4 10 a a5 e e6 11 c c4 h x g 6 12 h x g 6 looks an awful lot like Game 7, which was fine for Black.

9...a b4 10 0-0
After 10 a x g 6?! h x g 6 Black has a very solid position and White will have trouble recovering the c4-pawn.

10...c c2 11 w d 2 a a3 (D)

A very unusual position. It is not so easy for White to win back the c4-pawn and his queen looks a bit in the way on d2. However, Black is behind in development, and the b3-bishop looks rather strange. With White’s g2-bishop and e5-knight bearing down on c6, Black’s queenside may suddenly become somewhat fragile.

12 c c4
This is the sharpest continuation. White threatens the b4-knight as well as f f5, when f7 cannot be defended. The positional 12 a a5 is also possible, when the further advance of the a-pawn is in the air.
After the text-move, the obvious 12...\(\text{Qxe4}\)?
13 \(\text{Wxb4 \text{Qd6}}\) is refuted by the not-so-obvious
14 \(\text{Wxb7!}\) (D).

Therefore Black must head to c2 for more
adventures.

12...\(\text{Qc2}\) 13 \(\text{Qc5}\)
This is the point of White's play. Black is
vulnerable on the light squares on the queenside.

13...\(\text{Qc8}\) (D)
Of course 13...\(\text{Qxa1}\)? is impossible because
of 14 \(\text{Qxb7}\) and 15 \(\text{Qxc6+}\).

13...\(\text{Wxd4?!}\) also looks too risky: after 14
\(\text{Qxb7 \text{Qd5}}\) 15 \(\text{Wg5!} e6\) (both 15...\(f6\) 16 \(\text{Wh5+}\)
g6 17 \(\text{Qxg6 hxg6}\) 18 \(\text{Wxb8}\) and 15...\(\text{Wb6}\) 16
\(\text{Wf5 \text{Wxb7}}\) 17 \(\text{Wxf7+} \text{Qd8}\) look too dangerous
as well) 16 \(\text{Qe3 \text{Wxb2}}\) 17 \(\text{Qc5 h6}\) 18 \(\text{Qxd5}\)
\(\text{cxd5}\) 19 \(\text{Wf4}\) White has a strong attack.

14 \(\text{Qb1}\)
White could try the speculative 14 \(\text{Qxb7}\)
\(\text{Wb6}\) 15 \(\text{Qc5} \text{Qxa1}\) 16 \(\text{Wf4}\) intending g5. This
represents a serious material investment but
Black's undeveloped position is difficult to de­
defend.

14 a5, taking the b6-square away from Black's
queen, is another interesting idea. Then 14...\(e6\)
(14...\(\text{Qxa1}\) 15 \(\text{Qxb7}\) \(\text{Wc7}\) 16 \(\text{Qxc6+}\) \(\text{Wxc6}\) 17
\(\text{Qxc6}\) \(\text{Qxc6}\) 18 \(\text{Wf4}\) is much better for White,
because Black's pieces are so scattered) 15
\(\text{Qxb7}\) (15 a6 can be met by 15...\(b5\), when it is
not clear how White should continue) 15...
\(\text{Wxd4}\) 16 \(\text{Qxc6+}\) \(\text{Qxc6}\) 17 \(\text{Qxc6}\) \(\text{Wxd2}\) 18 \(\text{Qxd2}\) \(\text{Qxa1}\)
19 \(\text{Qxa1}\) looks better for White due to Black's
poor development and the weak a7-pawn.

14...\(\text{Wxd4}\)
This appears to be the best try. Other moves:

a) 14...\(\text{Wxd4}\) 15 \(\text{e3} \text{Qe6}\) 16 \(\text{Qxb7}\) \(\text{Wb6}\) (or
16...\(\text{Wxd4}\) 17 \(\text{Qxd2}\) 17 \(\text{Qa5} \text{Qxa4}\) 18 \(\text{Qxc4}\)
gives White a big advantage.

b) 14...\(e6\) 15 \(\text{Qxb7}\) \(\text{Wb6}\) 16 \(\text{Qa5} \text{Qb4}\) 17
\(\text{Qxc4!}\) (instead 17 \(\text{Qxc4} \text{Wxd4}\) 18 \(\text{Wxd4}\)
\(\text{Qxd4}\) 19 \(\text{e3} \text{Qc2}\) 20 \(\text{exd4}\) \(\text{Qxb1}\) 21 \(\text{Qd2} \text{Qxd2}\)
22 \(\text{Qxd6+} \text{Qe7}\) 23 \(\text{Qxc8+} \text{Qxc8}\) 24 \(\text{Qxb1} \text{Qd5}\)
was level in I.Farago-Pitschka, Salzburg 1999)
17...\(\text{Wxd4}\) 18 \(\text{Wxd4}\) \(\text{Qxd4}\) 19 \(\text{Qxb3} \text{Qxb3}\) 20
\(\text{Qd1}\) is better for White because Black's pawns
are more vulnerable.

15 \(\text{Qxb7} \text{Wxd2}\)
After 15...\(\text{Qa2}\), 16 \(\text{Qxc6} \text{Wxd2}\) 17 \(\text{Qxd2}\)
\(\text{Qxb1}\) 18 \(\text{Qxb1}\) is much better for White ac­
cording to Riazantsev, while 16 \(\text{Qxc6+}\) \(\text{Qxc6}\)
17 \(\text{Qxc6}\) \(\text{Wd5}\) 18 \(\text{Qd1}\) also looks very strong.
However, Black could try either of Riazantsev's
suggestions of 15...\(\text{Qd5}\) or 15...\(\text{Qxa4}\), both of
which look unclear.

16 \(\text{Qxd2} \text{Qxa4}\) (D)
White is two pawns down, but c4 will fall and Black is well behind in development.

17 e3

White cuts off one retreat of the c2-knight. 17 \texttt{\textbf{f}}c1 \texttt{\textbf{f}}d5 18 \texttt{\textbf{e}}e4 also looks good; for example, 18...f6 (18...\texttt{\textbf{d}}d4 loses to 19 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc4 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xe2+ 20 \texttt{\textbf{f}}f1, while 18...\texttt{\textbf{d}}b4 19 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc4 and 18...\texttt{\textbf{d}}b4 19 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc4 are also insufficient for Black) 19 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc2 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xe2 20 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc2 \texttt{\textbf{f}}xe5 21 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc4 and White has more than enough for the pawn.

17...\texttt{\textbf{e}}6

Riazantsev gives 17...\texttt{\textbf{d}}d5 18 \texttt{\textbf{b}}c1 (better than 18 \texttt{\textbf{f}}c1 \texttt{\textbf{b}}b3 19 \texttt{\textbf{a}}a5? \texttt{\textbf{a}}a2, trapping the rook) 18...\texttt{\textbf{b}}b3 (18...\texttt{\textbf{e}}6 19 \texttt{\textbf{d}}xc4 \texttt{\textbf{b}}b8 is a better try to hold on) 19 \texttt{\textbf{a}}a5 \texttt{\textbf{e}}6 20 \texttt{\textbf{d}}xc4 \texttt{\textbf{a}}a4 21 \texttt{\textbf{d}}xc4 \texttt{\textbf{d}}b4 22 \texttt{\textbf{b}}b1!. White threatens the a7-pawn and \texttt{\textbf{a}}a4 is also in the air, when the b4-knight will start looking rather unstable.

18 \texttt{\textbf{a}}a4 \texttt{\textbf{c}}c7 19 \texttt{\textbf{d}}bd6+

White grabs the bishop-pair.

19...\texttt{\textbf{d}}xd6 20 \texttt{\textbf{a}}xd6+ \texttt{\textbf{e}}e7 21 \texttt{\textbf{d}}e4 (D)

White’s pieces coordinate very well while Black’s forces are scattered. For starters, \texttt{\textbf{c}}c5 is threatened.

21...c5

After 21...\texttt{\textbf{d}}xe4 22 \texttt{\textbf{a}}xe4 the c2-knight is in trouble.

22 \texttt{\textbf{a}}xf6

Even better is 22 \texttt{\textbf{f}}c1 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d7 (22...\texttt{\textbf{b}}b8 23 \texttt{\textbf{c}}c3) 23 \texttt{\textbf{a}}a5, threatening b3. Black’s queenside pieces are a mess.

22...\texttt{\textbf{g}}xf6 23 \texttt{\textbf{b}}b3 \texttt{\textbf{c}}c6?!

White’s advantage becomes clear after this move. Even worse is 23...\texttt{\textbf{d}}d7?? 24 \texttt{\textbf{b}}c1 \texttt{\textbf{a}}a3 25 \texttt{\textbf{b}}b4! \texttt{\textbf{b}}b5 26 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc5 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc5 27 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc5+ \texttt{\textbf{e}}e8 28

26 \texttt{\textbf{b}}b4

White wins back the pawn and keeps a big advantage.

26...\texttt{\textbf{b}}b5 27 \texttt{\textbf{a}}xc5+ \texttt{\textbf{d}}d7 28 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d1+ \texttt{\textbf{c}}c8 29 \texttt{\textbf{e}}e7! f5 30 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xc7+ \texttt{\textbf{a}}xc7 31 \texttt{\textbf{g}}xf5 \texttt{\textbf{f}}xf5 32 \texttt{\textbf{f}}f3

White has the better pawn-structure, and all of his pieces are better than Black’s, including the king.

32...\texttt{\textbf{e}}e8 33 \texttt{\textbf{f}}f6 \texttt{\textbf{e}}e6 34 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d8+ \texttt{\textbf{b}}b7 35 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d4

36 \texttt{\textbf{h}}h6 36 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d7

This wins a pawn.

36...\texttt{\textbf{c}}c6 37 \texttt{\textbf{xf}}f7 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xf3+ 38 \texttt{\textbf{g}}g2 \texttt{\textbf{h}}h5 39

\texttt{\textbf{a}}xa7 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d5 40 \texttt{\textbf{b}}b8 \texttt{\textbf{b}}b4 41 \texttt{\textbf{f}}f3 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d3 42 \texttt{\textbf{g}}g3

\texttt{\textbf{c}}c5 43 \texttt{\textbf{f}}f8
White is happy to exchange the b3-pawn for f5 because he will have two connected passed pawns. Black’s h-pawn is of little consequence.

43...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}\texttt{b}3 44 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}}\texttt{f}4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}}\texttt{d}5 45 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}\texttt{f}5+ \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}\texttt{f}5+ 46 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}\texttt{f}5 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}2 47 \textit{\texttt{h}}4 h5 48 \textit{\texttt{d}}d8 \textit{\texttt{e}}e4 49 f3

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{g}}3}+ 50 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{f}}4} \textit{\texttt{e}}e2+ 51 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{g}}5} \textit{\texttt{g}}3 52 \textit{\texttt{c}}c7 h4 53 \textit{\texttt{g}}4 \textit{\texttt{e}}2 54 \textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{h}4 \textit{\texttt{e}}e6 55 \textit{\texttt{g}}4 \textit{\texttt{f}}6 56 \textit{\texttt{a}}5 \textit{\texttt{e}}6 57 \textit{\texttt{d}}d2 \textit{\texttt{d}}d5 58 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{a}}}5 \textit{\texttt{e}}6 59 \textit{\texttt{d}}d2 \textit{\texttt{d}}d5 60 f4! 1-0

The knight is trapped.

\section*{Game 19}

\textbf{Gregory Kaidanov – Zhang Pengxiang}  
\textit{World Team Ch, Beersheba 2005}

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \textit{\texttt{f}}\texttt{f}3 \textit{\texttt{f}}\texttt{f}6 4 \textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{c}3 dxc4 5 a4 \textit{\texttt{g}}4 6 \textit{\texttt{e}}5 \textit{\texttt{h}}5 7 g3 \textit{(D)}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{W} & \textbf{B} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

This calm continuation is surprisingly popular. White makes no attempt to punish Black for his provocative play and simply gets on with his development. It may seem as if the play would end up being similar to that in Game 12, where White also adopts a fianchetto, but here it is decidedly less threatening. It is difficult for White to push his e-pawn, and this in turn makes it harder for White to find a good square for his queen because the d4-pawn is loose. Ideally, White would like to play \textit{\texttt{e}}2 (as in Game 12), but in order to do this he would have to spend time playing h3 and g4 before e3 is possible. Although this approach is fairly safe for White, he has much less chance of gaining the initiative than after 7 f3 or 7 h3 (or even 7 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}\texttt{c}4).

7...\textit{\texttt{e}}6 8 \textit{\texttt{g}}2 \textit{\texttt{b}}4 \textit{(D)}

9 0-0

The immediate 9 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}\texttt{c}4 is also possible, but this gives Black the option of putting immediate pressure on the pinned c3-knight with 9...\textit{\texttt{d}}d5. This is another option that Black usually does not have when White fianchettoes. White has tried:

a) 10 \textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{c}2 allows Black to simplify with 10...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{b}}6} because the d4-pawn is hanging. Note that the greedy 10...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}\texttt{c}3 11 bxc3 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}\texttt{d}4?! is too risky in view of 12 cxb4 \textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{a}1 13 0-0 with \textit{\texttt{\texttt{b}}2} or \textit{\texttt{d}}d6+ coming.

b) 10 \textit{\texttt{d}}d3 \textit{\texttt{e}}7?! 11 0-0 0-0 12 e4 \textit{\texttt{b}}4 13 \textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{d}2 \textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{7} (Black wants to exert pressure on the d4-pawn as quickly as possible; instead 13...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{b}}}\texttt{a}6 14 b3 \textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{7} 15 \textit{\texttt{e}}2! \textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{a}8 16 \textit{\texttt{f}}\texttt{f}4 \textit{\texttt{g}}6 17 h4 gave Black problems with his bishop in Tukmakov-Oll, Rostov-on-Don 1993, but 13...\textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{7} is a sensible alternative) 14 h3 \textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{d}8 15 g4 \textit{\texttt{g}}6 16 \textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{d}1 \textit{\texttt{f}}\texttt{f}6 17 e5 \textit{\texttt{e}}7 18 \textit{\texttt{e}}\texttt{e}4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}4} 19 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}4} c5 20 \textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{d}6 \textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{d}6 21 exd6 \textit{\texttt{d}}\texttt{d}6 22 \textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{3} \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}5} gave Black good play in Onishchuk-R.Gonzalez, Lindsborg 2005.

c) 10 \textit{\texttt{b}}3 0-0 and here:

c1) 11 0-0 loses a pawn to 11...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}3} 12 bxc3 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}2 although after 13 \textit{\texttt{e}}\texttt{e}1 \textit{\texttt{c}}\texttt{4} 14 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}\texttt{c} White has decent compensation.
c2) 11 e3 a5 12 0-0 ♜d7 13 e4 ♜xb6 14 ♜xb6 ♛xb6 15 ♜e3 ♜e7 gave Black a solid position in Bocharov-A.Andreev, Tomsk 2003.

c3) 11 e4 ♜xc3 12 ♜xb4 (12 bxc3 ♛d4 13 cxb4 {13 ♛xb4?? ♜d1#} 13...♕xa1 14 0-0 ♛f6 is probably insufficient for White because there is no check on d6) 12...♕xb4! and Black threatens mate on d1. After the somewhat forced sequence 13 ♜e3 ♛d3 14 ♜f1 ♛xe4 15 ♜g1 ♜d5 16 ♛xb7 Black has 16...♕a6!, with the idea 17 ♛xa6 ♜b4.

c4) 11 ♜d2 a5 12 e4 ♜b6 13 ♜xb6 ♛xb6 14 ♜e3 c5! 15 d5 (15 dxc5 ♛a6) 15... ♜d7 16 0-0 ♜e5 17 h3 ♜f3+ 18 ♛h1 ♜d4 gave Black very good play in Leitao-Beliavsky, Erevan Olympiad 1996.

9...0-0

After 9...♕d5 I think White should play 10 ♜d2 (instead of committing the queen with the more common 10 ♛c2) with the idea 10...♕b6?? 11 a5 ♛xd4? 12 axb6 ♛xe5 13 ♛xa7!.

10 ♜xc4 a5 (D)

Black prevents a5 by White and solidifies his grip on the b4-square. White’s e-pawn is pinned, which makes it hard for him to find a constructive plan. With his next move White plans the g4 advance to kick away Black’s annoying bishop.

11 h3 ♜bd7 12 g4 ♜g6 13 ♜g5

If White plays 13 e4, Black can safely grab the e-pawn with 13...♕xc3 14 bxc3 ♜xe4, so White pins the f6-knight.

13...♛c7

After 13...♕e7 White can play 14 e4, not fearing the tactical sequence 14...♕xe4 15 ♜xe7 ♜xc3 16 ♜xd8 ♜xd1 because after 17 ♜e7 ♛f8 (no better is 17...♕d3 18 ♛xf8 ♛xf1 19 ♜xf1) 18 ♛a3 ♜d3 19 ♛d6 White wins material.

14 ♛h4

White hopes to gain control of the d6-square.

14...♕b6 15 ♛g3 ♛d8

It seems as though Black has wasted a lot of time, but White did spend several tempi bringing his bishop to g3.

16 ♛e5 ♛f7 (D)

17 ♜d3

After this passive retreat Black seizes the initiative. Better is 17 ♜xg6 hxg6, when Black has a very solid position, while White can be satisfied with the bishop-pair.

17...♕e4 18 ♛a2

This awkward move is the only way to protect the b-pawn without walking into an annoying pin.

18...♛b6 19 ♛f4 e5 20 ♛xg6

So White grabs the bishop after all, but it has cost him valuable time and Black has taken control of the centre.

20...hxg6 21 dx5 ♜dxe5 22 ♛c2 ♛ad8

Black’s pieces are all coming into the centre very quickly. 23...♔d2 is a threat.

23 ♛b1 (D)

This is rather passive. Instead 23 ♛e4 f5 24 b3! ♛d2 (not 24...♕a3 25 ♛b2) 25 ♜xd2 ♛xd2 26 ♛b1 is preferable, when Black’s weakened kingside gives White hopes of achieving counterplay, while 23 ♛f4 ♛d4 24 ♛e4 f5 25 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 26 ♛b3+ is also sensible.
After 28 \textit{Wf5 \textit{Wd8} Black intends to evict the queen with \dots \textit{g6 and 29 \textit{Ax}xe5 can be met by 29...\textit{Ax}xe5!.

28...\textit{Wd8}!

Black regroups his pieces.

29 \textit{Ax}xd7 \textit{Ax}xd7!

Instead 29...\textit{Wxd}7 30 \textit{Wf}5 gives White some counterplay.

30 \textit{Wc}2 \textit{Wf}6 31 e3 \textit{Ax}c5 32 \textit{Wc}4 \textit{Ax}d8

White's rook and bishops are all ineffective, but White's next move makes things worse.

33 f4 gxf4 34 exf4 \textit{Wd}4

34...\textit{Ax}d4!, intending \dots \textit{Ax}d3, is even better.

35 \textit{Wf}1?

After 35 \textit{Wxd}4 \textit{Ax}xd4 Black is better, but White can fight on with 36 \textit{Wc}2.

35...\textit{Wd}1! (D)

Suddenly the b3-pawn is falling and White's king is in trouble.

36 \textit{Wc}2 \textit{Ax}b3 37 \textit{Wh}4 \textit{Dd}2!

White cannot defend everything.

38 \textit{Ax}xd8 \textit{Ax}xc4 39 \textit{Wc}8+ \textit{Wh}7 40 \textit{Wc}4 \textit{Wd}7! 0-1

Game 20

\textbf{Boris Avrukh – Artur Kogan}

\textit{Maalot-Tarshiha 2008}

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \textit{Af}3 \textit{Af}6 4 \textit{Cc}3 dxc4 5 a4 \textit{Dd}6 (D)

The Smyslov Variation is a solid choice for those wishing to avoid the bulk of theory after

5...\textit{Af}5. Black's knight eyes the weakened b4-square and waits for White to push his e-pawn before developing his bishop from c8. The Smyslov is certainly safer than the Bronstein
Variation, but it is also easier for White to get an edge with fairly straightforward play.

6 e4

This is White’s most ambitious continuation. He grabs the centre and is unconcerned with the possibility of taking on doubled pawns. The quiet alternative 6 e3 is considered in the next game.

6...g4 7 exf3

This is the most forcing and principled move. Black should avoid 7...b4 because of the tactical trick 8 exf5! (threatening mate on f7) 8...e6 (8...h5 9 hxg5) 9 f3 with a big advantage to White.

Instead 7...e6 is popular. After 8 e3 (D) (8 0-0 is also possible and is likely to transpose) Black generally places a piece on b4:

a) 8...e7 9 0-0 0-0 10 h3 h5 11 g4 g6 12 e5 b4 and now both 13 xg6 and 13 w2 give White a secure plus.

b) 8...b4 seems unnatural to me – the a6-knight looks silly. 9 d3 (9 c2 xf3 10 gxf3 is similar) 9 xf3 10 gxf3 a5 (10...c7 has also been tried, but the knight looks silly here too) and here both 11 g1 and 11 e2 give White a nice position, with his strong centre and bishop-pair.

c) 8...b4 9 0-0 (White can also play 9 a5 if he is concerned with an early ...a5, but I do not think this is necessary, as we shall see) and Black has:

c1) 9...a5 looks dubious to me. The tempo spent securing the queenside certainly counts for something. After 10 h3! h5 (in the case of 10...xf3 11 xf3 c2 12 ad1 xe3 13 fx3 Black is not ready to castle and e5, or even d5, is coming) 11 g4 g6, with his development lead, White has many tempting continuations such as 12 d2, 12 e5 or the line-opening 12 d5.

c2) 9...e7 (D) gives White a choice:

   c21) 10 h3 and after 10...h5 11 g4 g6 both 12 d2 and 12 e5 look promising for White, but instead 10...xf3 11 xf3 c2 12 ad1 0-0 looks pretty solid.

   c22) 10 e2 0-0 11 a5 b5 12 axb6 (ignoring the pawn with 12 h3 or even 12 a6!? may be more promising) 12...xb6 13 b3 gives White a slight edge at best.

   c23) 10 e1 0-0 11 h3 is interesting, not allowing any ...c2 ideas.
8 gxf3 Qb4

Black can also play the immediate 8...e6 9 0-0 (Black need not fear the doubling of his pawns after 9 Qxa6 bxa6 10 Qd3 a5, when the pressure on the b-file gives Black even chances) 9...Qe7 10 Qh1 (as in the main game, White does not hurry to play Qe3, preferring kingside play) 10...e6 11 Qg1 g6 12 f4 Qa5 13 Wf3 Qad8 14 Qe3 Qb4 15 Qe2 Qc7 16 a5! (White threatens 17 Qa4, winning material) 16...Qxb5 17 e5 Qd5 18 Qxd5 exd5 19 Qxb5 Qxb5 20 Qxb5 cxb5 21 a6 gave White an enduring endgame initiative in Rogozenko-Shirov, Bundesliga 2000/1.

9 0-0 e6 (D)

10 Qh1

White quickly brings a rook to the g-file. Often White plays 10 Qe3 first, or gets there by transposition. This also gives White good chances after 10...Qe7 11 Qh1 0-0 12 Qg1 Qh8 13 f4! (13 Qe2 Wc7 14 Qc1 Qh5 15 e5 Qad8 16 Qb3 Qa5 17 Qe4 Qd5 gave Black a solid position in Sokolov-Conquest, Reykjavik 2000) 13...c5 14 dxc5 Wc8 (14...Wc7 15 e5 Qd7 16 Qe4 Qxc5 17 Qd6 Qad8 18 Qd4! f6 19 Wh5 also gave White the initiative in Stepanov-Gretarsson, Icelandic Ch, Arborg 1998) 15 e5 Qd7 (Mikhalievski suggests 15...Qfd5 but after 16 Qxd5 exd5 17 Qc1 Black will remain a pawn down) 16 Qe4 was difficult for Black in V.Mikhalevski-Al.Rabinovich, Dieren 1999.

10 a5 is another idea, but this seems unnecessary to me. The b4-knight is secure enough, so ...a5 is not such a threat. White’s play is on the kingside and in the centre, so there is no reason to give Black ...b5 possibilities. 10...Qe7 11 Qh1 0-0 12 Qg1 Qh8 13 f4 b5! (we shall see more of this idea in the next game) 14 axb6 axb6 15 Qxa8 Qxa8 16 Wf3 c5 17 dxc5 Qxc5 18 f5 Qd4 gave Black enough play in Onischuk-Zhang Pengxiang, Manila 2006.

10...Wa5

It looks a bit risky to delay development of the kingside, but Black intends to castle queenside. White also gets pressure after 10...Qe7 11 Qg1 g6 (after 11...0-0 12 e5 the possibility of 13 Qh6 forces the inconvenient 12...Qe8 although the knight will emerge via c7 and d5 or even g7 and f5 after ...g6) and here:

a) 12 Qe3 a6 13 a5 Wc7 14 Wb3 0-0 15 Qc2 (another idea is 15 Qa4 c5 16 dxc5 Qc6 17 Wa3) 15...c5 16 dxc5 Qxc5 17 Qh6 Qf8 18 Wc3 Qe7 and now White won a pawn with the unexpected 19 Qxe6! Wxc3 20 bxc3 fxe6 21 cxb4 in Lalic-Shaw, Liverpool 2007.

b) 12 Qh6 Qf8 13 Qe3 (White has gained a whole tempo) 13...Qe7 14 f4 Wa5 15 Qg5 Wc7 16 Wf3 Qh5?! 17 Qxh5 gxh5 18 Wxh5 gave White a powerful initiative in Izoria-Vunder, St Petersburg 2002.

11 Qg1 h6

This looks a bit loosening and it does not stem the pressure on the g-file. After 11...g6 12 Qg5 Wc7 13 a5 White is certainly better, but Black’s position remains pretty solid.

12 Qe3 0-0-0 (D)

13 Wb3 Qb8 14 Qe2 Qe8
This is not an uncommon manoeuvre. The knight does little on f6 now, and from here it may come to d6. If White plays e5, the knight may head for d5 via the c7-square.

15...\(\text{Na}d7\) (D)

This almost imperceptibly weakens the back rank. Avrukh does not miss his chance to exploit this with some neat tactics.

16...\(\text{Nc}5!\)

This is not a knockout blow, but it allows White to reposition his pieces very effectively. The knight was not doing much on c3, so it heads for c4 where it will have greater influence.

16...\(\text{Nbd}8\)

After 16...\(\text{cxb}5\) 17 \(\text{axb5 Nd8}\) 18 \(\text{Nf}4+\) \(\text{Ka}8\)? (18...\(\text{Nd}6\) 19 \(\text{Nxd}6+\) and 20 \(\text{Wxb}4\)) 19 \(\text{b6!} a6\) 20 \(\text{Wc}3\) Black cannot defend his back rank because 20...\(\text{Nd}6\) 21 \(\text{Nxa}6+!\) leads to mate.

17 \(\text{Na}3!\) \(\text{Nc}7\) 18 \(\text{a}5\) \(\text{Kc}7\) 19 \(\text{Kc}4\) (D)

19...\(\text{Nxd}4\)

An interesting practical decision. Black hopes to break White's initiative for a relatively small material investment. However, White does not have to bite.

20 \(\text{Ke}5!\) \(\text{Kf}8\) 21 \(\text{a}6\) \(\text{b}6\)

Instead 21...\(\text{Kxa}6\) 22 \(\text{Kxa}6\) \(\text{Kxa}6\) loses to 23 \(\text{Kxc}6+\).

22 \(\text{Wc}3\)

This preserves the advantage, but 22 \(\text{Kc}4\) is even stronger. After 22...\(\text{f}6\) 23 \(\text{Kxb}4\) \(\text{f}xe5\) 24 \(\text{Kx}f\)6+! White wins quickly.

22...\(\text{c}5\) 23 \(\text{Kxd}4\) \(\text{Wxd}4\)

If 23...\(\text{cxd}4\), then 24 \(\text{Kc}6+\) \(\text{Kxc}6\) 25 \(\text{Wxc6}\) \(\text{Kc}8\) 26 \(\text{Kd}4!\) intending \(\text{Kac}4\), is strong.

24 \(\text{Kxd}4\) \(\text{cxd}4\) 25 \(\text{Kc}4\)

Of course 25 \(\text{Kd}7+\) \(\text{Kc}8\) 26 \(\text{Kxf}8\) \(\text{Kxf}8\) should be winning for White, but he probably preferred to avoid any blockading possibilities.

25...\(\text{Kc}8\)

The only way Black can avoid various knight forks.

26 \(\text{Kd}1\) \(\text{Kc}5\) (D)

It is not so easy to breach Black's position, so White sacrifices the exchange back to seize the initiative.

27 \(\text{Kxb}4!\) \(\text{Kxb}4\) 28 \(\text{Kc}6\) \(\text{Kd}6\) 29 \(\text{Kxd}4\) \(\text{Wd}7\)

30 \(\text{Kxa}7\) \(\text{e}5\) 31 \(\text{Kd}1\) \(\text{Kc}8\) 32 \(\text{Kcb}5\) \(\text{Kxb}5\) 33 \(\text{Kxb}5+\) \(\text{Kc}7\)

White is clearly better but it is not obvious how he should break through. Avrukh finds an elegant solution.

34 \(\text{f}4!\) \(\text{f}6\) 35 \(\text{Wxe}5\) \(\text{Kxe}5\) 36 \(\text{f}4!\)
Again! The white rook will penetrate now.

36...exf4 37 e5 \textsc{\textit{xc}e5 38 \textsc{\textit{d}d}7+ \textsc{\textit{c}c}8}

Nothing is changed by 38...\textsc{\textit{b}b}8 39 \textsc{\textit{b}b}7+ \textsc{\textit{c}c}8 40 \textsc{\textit{d}d}7+.

39 \textsc{\textit{f}f}7

Threatening \textsc{\textit{f}f}8+.

39...\textsc{\textit{b}b}8 40 \textsc{\textit{b}b}7+ \textsc{\textit{c}c}8 41 \textsc{\textit{d}d}7+! \textsc{\textit{d}d}8 42 a7 \textsc{\textit{c}c}7 43 \textsc{\textit{c}c}6 \textsc{\textit{c}c}8

White can win a piece with \textsc{\textit{xc}c}7 and \textsc{\textit{a}a}8 at any time, but he instead played...

44 \textsc{\textit{g}g}2! 1-0

Black is in zugzwang; for example, 44...\textsc{\textit{g}g}5 45 \textsc{\textit{f}f}3 \textsc{\textit{h}h}5 46 \textsc{\textit{h}h}3 \textsc{\textit{h}h}4 (or 46...\textsc{\textit{g}g}4+ 47 \textsc{\textit{x}x}g4 \textsc{\textit{h}h}4+ 48 \textsc{\textit{x}x}g4 \textsc{\textit{f}f}3 49 \textsc{\textit{xf}f}3 \textsc{\textit{b}b}5 50 \textsc{\textit{x}x}b5, which is similar) 47 b3 \textsc{\textit{g}g}4+ 48 \textsc{\textit{x}x}g4 \textsc{\textit{f}f}3 49 \textsc{\textit{xf}f}3 \textsc{\textit{b}b}5 50 \textsc{\textit{x}x}b5 and White will win Black’s rook.

Game 21

Andrei Schekachev – Yannick Gozzoli

Paris 2003

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \textsc{\textit{f}f}3 \textsc{\textit{f}f}6 4 \textsc{\textit{c}c}3 dxc4 5 a4 \textsc{\textit{a}a}6 6 e3 (D)

With this modest continuation, White steers the game towards positions similar to those discussed in Game 4. In this case Black is able to pin White’s f3-knight immediately, but White hopes to demonstrate that the a6-knight will have less influence on the position than it would on d7.

6...\textsc{\textit{g}g}4 7 \textsc{\textit{xc}c}4 e6 8 h3 \textsc{\textit{h}h}5

After 8...\textsc{\textit{xf}f}3 9 \textsc{\textit{xf}f}3 \textsc{\textit{b}b}4 10 0-0 \textsc{\textit{e}e}7 11 \textsc{\textit{d}d}1 0-0 12 \textsc{\textit{e}e}2 White has a pleasant edge, so Black maintains the tension.

9 0-0 \textsc{\textit{d}d}4 10 \textsc{\textit{e}e}2 \textsc{\textit{e}e}7 (D)

The position is similar to those in Chapter 1, but here Black’s minor pieces are arranged a little differently. His knight is on b4 instead of his dark-squared bishop, and his other bishop is on h5 instead of f5. Here White has little trouble playing e4 (with bishops on b4 and f5 this would be harder) and \textsc{\textit{e}e}5 is a possibility, because Black’s queen’s knight is on b4 instead of d7. In order to advance in the centre, White will have to play g4 at some point. Black’s hope is that this loosening of White’s position, combined with Black’s inherently solid position, will give Black enough counterplay. All in all, it seems that White’s growing space advantage will secure him better chances, but he must be careful not to overextend.

11 \textsc{\textit{d}d}1

The immediate 11 g4 is also dangerous. White hopes to use the rook on the f-file. After 11...\textsc{\textit{g}g}6 12 c4 \textsc{\textit{d}d}7 (12...0-0 13 \textsc{\textit{f}f}4 \textsc{\textit{h}h}6 14 \textsc{\textit{ad}d}1 \textsc{\textit{h}h}7 15 \textsc{\textit{g}g}3 \textsc{\textit{h}h}8 16 \textsc{\textit{e}e}5 \textsc{\textit{d}d}7 17 \textsc{\textit{xd}d}7 \textsc{\textit{x}x}d7 18 d5! favourably opened the position for White in Gasanov-Arzumanian, Istanbul 2007) 13 \textsc{\textit{f}f}4 0-0 14 \textsc{\textit{ad}d}1 \textsc{\textit{e}e}8 15 \textsc{\textit{g}g}3 \textsc{\textit{h}h}6 16 \textsc{\textit{e}e}1! \textsc{\textit{h}h}7 17 f4 \textsc{\textit{b}b}6 18 \textsc{\textit{b}b}3 \textsc{\textit{c}c}5 19 dxc5 \textsc{\textit{xc}c}5+ 20
\[ \text{h2} \text{wc7 21 f5 White kept up the pressure in Sorokin-Bareev, Russian Ch, Elista 1996.} \]

11...0-0 12 g4

The immediate 12 e4 can be answered by 12...\text{xf3} because 13 \text{xf3} allows 13...\text{c2} 14 \text{b1} \text{xd4}.

Instead 12 a5 is a standard idea, by which White hopes to cramp Black on the queenside. Black then has:

a) 12...\text{e8} 13 \text{b3} c5 14 \text{b5} \text{xf3} 15 gxf3 a6 16 dxc5 \text{bd5} 17 \text{d6} \text{xd6} 18 \text{cxd6} \text{xd6} 19 \text{a4} \text{c5} 20 f4 was Bacrot-Smyslov, Match (game 6), Albert 1996. This has been considered to be clearly better for White, but I think this is due to the result of the game. I do not think Black's position is as grave as has been suggested, and one possible improvement is Hübner's idea 20...\text{fc8} 21 \text{d2} b5 22 axb6 \text{xb6}, when Black's counterplay certainly looks sufficient.

b) 12...b5! is a good way to gain counterplay. 13 \text{b3} \text{d7} 14 e4 \text{c7} 15 \text{e3} a6 16 \text{dc1} \text{b7} (D).

\[ \text{W} \]

This is a typical method. The queen is snug on b7 and Black will soon be ready to break out with ...c5. After 17 \text{a2} \text{xa2} 18 \text{xa2} \text{ac8} 19 g4 \text{g6} 20 \text{d2} c5! Black took over the initiative in N.Berry-Shaw, Edinburgh 2000.

12...\text{g6} 13 e4

Another idea is 13 \text{e5} c5 (13...\text{d7} 14 \text{xd6} hxg6 15 a5 looks a little better for White) 14 h4 (White wants to harass the b6-bishop) 14...\text{xd4} 15 \text{exd4} \text{fd5} 16 \text{h5} \text{c2} 17 \text{d2} \text{f4} 18 \text{wf3} \text{g5} 19 \text{a2}, which left Black somewhat off-balance in Bu Xiangzhi-Gretarsson, Reykjavik 2000.

13...\text{d7} (D)

\[ \text{W} \]

White has a nice space advantage, but Black's position remains very solid.

14 \text{f4}

White takes away the c7-square from Black's queen. Kramnik has preferred the aggressive 14 \text{e5}. Then 14...\text{xe5} 15 dxe5 \text{a5} 16 f4 \text{ad8} 17 \text{e3} h6 18 \text{g2} \text{h7} 19 \text{xd8} \text{xd8} 20 \text{d1} g5! gave Black counterplay in Kramnik-Ivanchuk, Amber Blindfold, Monte Carlo 1996.

14...\text{e8}

Black plays a useful waiting move and discourages any d5 ideas by White.

15 \text{b3}

Instead 15 a5 is met with the usual 15...b5 16 \text{b3} \text{wc8} intending ...\text{b7} and ...a6. White has also tried 15 ...\text{g3}; for example, 15...\text{a5} 16 h4!? h6 (after 16...h5 17 g5 Black is rather cramped, but this is safer nonetheless) 17 \text{g2} \text{h7} 18 g5! h5 (following 18...\text{hxg5} 19 \text{hxg5} \text{g5} 20 \text{dxe5} \text{wxg5} 21 \text{h1}, White's space, bishop, and kingside initiative give him good compensation for the pawn) 19 \text{dxe5} \text{dxe5} 20 dxe5 \text{wc5} 21 f4 \text{ad8} 22 \text{f2} \text{a5} 23 \text{wxh5} and White was a pawn up in Ovechkin-Rublevsky, Russian Ch, Tomsk 2001.

15...\text{a6}

This looks odd. Perhaps 15...\text{a5} is a better try.

16 \text{g3}

Now 16 a5! looks strong, because ...b5 is much less appealing for Black.
16...\textit{wa5} (D)

16...b5 looks more consistent, but White can ignore this advance. This plan is better for Black when White has played a5 first, because then Black can prepare ...c5, whereas here the pressure on the b5-pawn makes the freeing advance of the c-pawn more difficult.

17 \textit{dd2}!

White takes aim at the d6-square.

17...\textit{wb6}

This looks rather odd, but Black's position is not easy.

18 \textit{dc4 \textit{wa7} 19 h4}

White could also clamp down on the queenside with 19 a5 because 19...b5 20 axb6 \textit{db6} 21 \textit{de5} is very nice for White.

19...\textit{h6} 20 \textit{dd6} (D)

The knight cannot be tolerated; for example, 20...\textit{ed8} 21 h5 \textit{h7} 22 \textit{xf7}! \textit{xf7} 23 \textit{xe6}+! \textit{f8} (23...\textit{xe6} 24 \textit{c4}+ \textit{f6} 25 e5+ \textit{g5} 26 \textit{e2} is out of the question for Black) 24 e5 and White has a very strong attack.

21 \textit{xd6} c5?!

Black is hoping to get some counterplay.

21...a5 is very passive, but more solid.

22 \textit{a1c} cxd4 23 \textit{xb4 \textit{wb6} (D)}

Black cannot play 23...dxc3 because of 24 \textit{d7}.

24 \textit{bb5}

This enables White to keep his bishop-pair.

24...\textit{axb5} 25 a5 \textit{wa7} 26 \textit{xb5 \textit{df6} 27 f3}

The position appears to be very unpleasant for Black, but after his next move it becomes apparent that matters are not so clear.

27...\textit{wb8}!

The queen wiggles back into the game. Black would like to play 27...e5 but 28 h5 \textit{h7} 29 \textit{e7} is too strong, so Black looks for counterplay against White's weakened kingside.

28 e5

28 \textit{g2}? fails to 28...\textit{dxg4}! 29 fxg4 \textit{xe4}+ 30 \textit{h3} \textit{f4}, when White is in big trouble.

28...\textit{d5} 29 \textit{d6} \textit{d8}! 30 \textit{xd5 \textit{xa5} 31 \textit{xb7 \textit{xd5} 32 h5 \textit{h7}}}

This is fine, but it was simpler to play 32...\textit{h4} with the idea 33 \textit{g2} \textit{e4}! 34 fxe4 \textit{g4}+ with perpetual check.

33 \textit{g2} \textit{a8}

Now 33...\textit{h4} can be met with 34 \textit{e7}! trapping the black queen. Taking the bishop allows back-rank mate.

White grabs the bishop-pair.

20...\textit{xd6}
Black must be careful because of his back rank.

36...h8

36...f6? allows 37 c8+ xc8 38 xc8+ f7 39 f8#, but 36...g5, creating some breathing room, is sensible.

37 f2 d2?! 38 xd1

Black will not be able to hold on to the pawn.

38...f6 39 f4?!

39 c5, with the idea 39...d3 40 e2, is more effective.

39...g6?

This does not help. After the paradoxical 39...g8 Black could fight on.

40 e7 1-0

Perhaps Black lost on time here, but his position has become pretty difficult in any case.

Conclusions

The Bronstein Variation, 5...g4, is looking quite risky. In the main line with 7 f3 d7 8 xc4 e5, White has several promising options. The traditional 9 e4 does not look too bad for Black if White heads into the endgame with 11 xb4, but 11 xe5 looks good enough for an advantage. The modern tries 9 e3 and 9 g3 look especially dangerous for Black, although the positions that arise are quite complicated.

The deceptively quiet 7 h3 also leads to great complications if both sides head down the main line. Black has to avoid some tricks, but even if he successfully navigates the right path, it is not easy to equalize. Probably Black will have to investigate options at move 14 or 15 which are mentioned in the notes to Game 18.

If all of these possibilities are not enough to worry Black, the rare 7 xc4 should also give Black something to think about.

If White plays quietly with 7 g3, Black should equalize without too much trouble. It is easier for Black to develop and create counterplay than in similar positions with Black’s bishop on f5.

Smyslov’s 5...a6 is much easier to learn. Black may not equalize, but the positions are quite solid and may suit positional players without the time or inclination to study the main lines with 5...f5 or the complexities of 5...g4. The ambitious 6 e4 is still a good try for an advantage. Black has to decide whether to double White’s kingside pawns. In any case, White’s space advantage gives him a pull and Black will have to hunker down and hope to get some eventual counterplay. Black must be careful not to fall too far behind in development, because White may open the position with d5 or attack along the g-file.

The simple 6 e3 also gives White good chances of an edge. Here, too, Black must be patient and wait for his chance. I think White should refrain from advancing with a5, because this can give Black the counterplay he seeks with ...b5 and ...a6, followed by bringing the queen to b7 in preparation of ...c5. If White leaves the queenside alone, Black may play ...a5, which is solid but does not actually create any active play for Black.
In this chapter we examine lines where, after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 4 f3 4 f6 4 c3 dxc4, White avoids the main continuation 5 a4. Our main topics are 5 e3 and 5 e4. These two continuations may appear to be similar, but they lead to very different types of games.

5 e3 is a calm move that tends to lead to a quiet middlegame that resembles some lines of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted. Black will usually develop his queen’s bishop to a6 or b7 instead of f5 or g4. White can recover the pawn quickly in the 5 e3 line if he so chooses.

On the other hand, 5 e4 (the Geller Gambit) is a real pawn sacrifice. White bets everything on his attacking chances, which although dangerous, should not trouble Black if he knows his stuff.

The Games

Game 22 (Grivas-Li Shilong) covers the line 5 e3 b5 6 a4 b4 7 4 b1. White does not immediately recover the pawn, instead opting to develop his kingside. Black is able to develop naturally enough while holding on to the pawn even though White can eventually win it back by force. Nevertheless, eventually recovering the pawn with the typical manoeuvre 4 b1-d2xc4 takes time and Black develops with no problems. When White forces the pace in an even middlegame, Black gradually takes over the initiative and wins with a direct attack on White’s king.

Game 23 (Nikolić-Atalik) sees White play 5 e3 b5 6 a4 b4 7 4 a2, when the double attack on the b4- and c4-pawns immediately restores material equality. Again, the time spent by White with his queen’s knight (in this case 4 c1-b3) allows Black to develop with no problems. In a dynamically-balanced middlegame, Black pushes a little too hard and forces an endgame where White’s dominance of the c-file gives him the better chances.

Game 24 (Wojtkiewicz-Donaldson) examines the main line of the Geller Gambit with 5 e4 b5 6 e5 4 d5 7 a4 e6 8 axb5. After 8...4 xc3 9 bxc3 cxb5 10 4 g5 4 b7 11 4 h5 g6 12 4 g4 4 e7 13 4 e2 Black has two good defences to choose from: 13...4 d7 (as played in the game) and 13...4 d5 (which may be even better). White forces matters too quickly and ends up in a bad endgame. After mutual inaccuracies, White suddenly resigns in a position that offers chances to hold. The options for Black discussed in this game have gone a long way towards discouraging White from playing the Geller Gambit in general, and 8 axb5 in particular.

Game 25 (Vitiugov-Amonatov) takes a look at the complicated 8 4 g5. This leads to murky positions where White’s compensation is rather vague. There are still unanswered questions here and the complicated positions will appeal to some players. Black plays the most forcing line, 8...h6 9 4 ge4 b4 10 4 b1 4 a6 11 4 bd2 4 f4. The strategic and tactical complications arising here lead to interesting play. In this game Black plays an interesting novelty and after both sides err in the complications, Black gets a better double-rook ending which he eventually converts to victory.
White has two other continuations here that are seen from time to time. Both involve a kingside fianchetto for White:

a) 5 \( \varepsilon e5 \) can be met by either 5...\( \varepsilon bd7 \) 6 \( \varepsilon xc4 \) b5 7 \( \varepsilon e3 \) b7 8 g3 c5 9 d5 a6 10 \( \varepsilon g2 \) g6 11 0-0 \( \varepsilon g7 \) with a decent, though unusual position, or with 5...b5, which transposes to line ‘b’ after 6 g3 \( \varepsilon b7 \) 7 \( \varepsilon g2 \).

b) 5 g3 b5 (less good is 5...\( \varepsilon f5 \) 6 \( \varepsilon g2 \) e6 because after 7 \( \varepsilon e5 \) White recovers the pawn without the weakening a4 advance; however, 5...g6 transposes to a decent line of the Grünfeld after 6 \( \varepsilon g2 \) g7 7 0-0 0-0, one point being that 8 \( \varepsilon e5 \) can be met by 8...\( \varepsilon g4! \) 6 \( \varepsilon g2 \) \( \varepsilon b7 \) 7 \( \varepsilon e5 \) a6! should be fine for Black. In similar Catalan positions, ...e6 is played very early. Here Black can delay this move, instead spending the tempo consolidating his queenside pawn-mass.

We now return to 5 e3 (D):

\[ \text{B} \]

This quiet continuation avoids a lot of theory, but it gives White little chance of achieving an advantage.

5...b5

Black must protect the pawn, even if he cannot hold it. After 5...\( \varepsilon f5?! \) 6 \( \varepsilon xc4 \) White has a Dutch Variation without having spent a tempo on the weakening a4 advance.

\[ \text{W} \]

This makes it more difficult for White to recapture the pawn. Not only does Black win time, but he gains b4 for his pieces and cramps White’s queenside. The risk of playing this way is that if c4 does fall, the b3-pawn could prove to be vulnerable. Practice has shown that if
Black keeps playing vigorously, he gets excellent chances. After 9 \texttt{\textit{d1}} e6 White has a few tries:

a) In reply to 10 \texttt{\textit{bd2}}, Black has the typical idea 10...\texttt{\textit{d5}}!. Black holds on to the pawn and the queen influences the light squares all over the board. After 11 \texttt{\textit{e2}} \texttt{\textit{bd7}} 12 0-0 (not 12 \texttt{\textit{xb3}? \textit{cxb3} 13 \texttt{\textit{xax6} \textit{a5+}}) 12...\texttt{\textit{b8}}! White has nothing better than the artificial 13 \texttt{\textit{d1}}, but both 13...\texttt{\textit{e4}} and 13...\texttt{\textit{b4}} discourage \texttt{\textit{c3}} and leave Black with better chances.

b) 10 \texttt{\textit{e5}} weakens the d4-square and Black can quickly seize the initiative with 10...c5!, when 11 \texttt{\textit{xc4}? \textit{xc4} 12 \texttt{\textit{xxc4} \textit{d5}}, hitting c4 and g2, is a disaster for White. Instead 11 \texttt{\textit{c3}} is more solid, but after 11...\texttt{\textit{xc4}} 12 \texttt{\textit{exd4}} both 12...\texttt{\textit{wc7}} 13 \texttt{\textit{wff3} \textit{b7} 14 \texttt{\textit{we2} \textit{b4} (Burgess) and 12...\texttt{\textit{b4}} 13 \texttt{\textit{xc4} \textit{xc4} 14 \texttt{\textit{xc4} \textit{c6}} look good for Black.

c) 10 \texttt{\textit{e2}} c5! 11 0-0 \texttt{\textit{c6}} 12 \texttt{\textit{e5} \textit{c8}} 13 \texttt{\textit{a3}} \texttt{\textit{cxd4}} 14 \texttt{\textit{xc4} \textit{d5}}! was better for Black in Timman-Kasparov, Match (game 2), Prague 1998. One point is that 15 \texttt{\textit{d6+} \textit{xd6} 16 \texttt{\textit{xax6} \textit{c6}} can be met by 16...\texttt{\textit{xf5} 17 \texttt{\textit{f4} \textit{c5} 18 \texttt{\textit{xc8} \textit{dxe3} 19 \texttt{\textit{h1} 0-0 20 \texttt{\textit{a6 d5}}, when Black is much better (Kasparov).

Black has a very acceptable isolated queen's pawn position. All of his pieces are active and the d4-pawn is well blockaded.
13 \( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{ce}5 \)

The simplifications do not help White to achieve anything. Instead 13 \( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{d}6+? \) can be met by 13...\( \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{xd}6 14 \texttt{\textit{A}} \text{xa}6 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{xd}4 \) winning a pawn, but White could keep the tension with 13 \( \texttt{\textit{A}} \text{e}3 0-0-0 14 \texttt{\textit{R}} \text{c}1 \), when the game is about equal.

13...\( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{xe}2 14 \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{xe}2 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{xe}5 15 \texttt{\textit{d}} \text{xe}5 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{d}5 \) \( (D) \)

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White has got rid of his isolated pawn, but it could become weak on e5 as well. White’s bishop is obstructed by his own e-pawn, while the exchange of light-squared bishops reduces White’s attacking chances. The simplifications also have left Black with the strongest minor piece – the knight which is cemented on d5.

16 \( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{d}2 \)

The endgame arising after 16 \( \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{b}5+ \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{d}7 \) also leaves Black with good chances.

16...0-0 17 \( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{c}4 \texttt{\textit{R}} \text{c}8 18 \texttt{\textit{b}} \text{3} \)

This enables Black to seize the initiative. Instead 18 \( \texttt{\textit{A}} \text{d}2 \) is solid enough, although the simplifications following 18...\( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{b}6 19 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{xb}6 \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{xb}6 20 \texttt{\textit{A}} \text{e}3 \texttt{\textit{R}} \text{c}5 21 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{xc}5 \texttt{\textit{R}} \text{xc}5 \) still slightly favour Black – the e5-pawn is more likely to be a weakness than a strength.

18...\( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{c}3! \)

This temporary invasion disturbs White’s piece coordination.

19 \( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{c}2 \texttt{\textit{R}} \text{c}5 20 \texttt{\textit{A}} \text{b}2 \)

If 20 \( \texttt{\textit{A}} \text{d}2 \), Black can play 20...\( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{e}2+ 21 \texttt{\textit{h}} \text{h}1 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{d}4 \) with the idea ...\( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{f}5 \) with some initiative.

20...\( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{d}5 \) \( (D) \)

Now that White has committed his bishop to the passive b2-square, the knight simply returns to d5.

21 \( \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{e}4 \texttt{\textit{g}}5 22 \texttt{\textit{g}} \text{3} \texttt{\textit{g}} \text{6} \)

Black offers up an endgame. Keeping the tension with 22...\( \texttt{\textit{R}} \text{fd}8 \) was a good option.

23 \( \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{f}3?! \)

White should certainly exchange queens, when after either recapture Black has only a slight advantage.

23...\( \texttt{\textit{f}} \text{6!} \) \( (D) \)

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Black is alert and transforms one advantage into another. Even though this allows White to activate his bishop, Black will quickly get a strong attack along the f-file.

24 \( \texttt{\textit{e}} \text{xf}6 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{xf}6 25 \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{e}2 \)

Trying to exchange to safety with 25 \( \texttt{\textit{A}} \text{xf}6 \) does not solve White’s problems after 25...\( \texttt{\textit{R}} \text{xf}6 26 \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{e}2 \texttt{\textit{R}} \text{c}8 27 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{e}3 \texttt{\textit{W}} \text{e}4 28 \texttt{\textit{A}} \text{ae}1 \texttt{\textit{R}} \text{f}3 \), when White is tied up.

25...\( \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{e}4 26 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{e}3? \) \( (D) \)

This just loses. White had to concede a pawn with 26 \( \texttt{\textit{g}} \text{g}2 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{xf}2 27 \texttt{\textit{Q}} \text{e}5 \).
100 CHESS EXPLAINED: THE MAIN-LINE SLAV

26...\texttt{\textgreek{g}5}!
Not only is White vulnerable on the light squares around his king, but the c2-square will prove to be decisively weak.

27 \texttt{\textdagger{}d1}
It is too late for 27 \texttt{\textgreek{g}2} due to the reply 27...\texttt{\textw{e}4+}.

27...\texttt{\textw{xf}2+} 28 \texttt{\textw{xf}2} \texttt{\textc{c}2!} 29 \texttt{\textw{e}3} \texttt{\textxf{2}!}
30 \texttt{\textxf{2} \textd{h}3+} 31 \texttt{\textg{g}2} \texttt{\textxf{2}+} 32 \texttt{\textx{h}3}
32 \texttt{\textw{h}1} gets destroyed by 32...\texttt{\textw{f}5! so White accepts his fate.}

32...\texttt{\textw{h}5\# (0-1)}

Game 23
Predrag Nikolić – Suat Atalik
Slovenian Team Ch, Bled 2002

White can also play 10 \texttt{\textw{e}2} immediately. After 10...\texttt{\texte{7} (I would prefer 10...a5, preventing the coming exchange and heading towards the continuation of the main game)} White exchanged bishops with 11 \texttt{\texta{6} \textxa{6} 12 \textw{xa6} \textw{b}6 13 \textw{c}4 0-0 14 \textd{d}2 a5 15 \textd{c}1 c5 16 \textd{b}3 \textw{c}8 17 \textw{c}1 in Serper-Bacrot, Cap d’Agde 2000. Black should be alright here, but he needs to be careful on the queenside light squares.

10...a5 11 \texttt{\textc{c}1 (D)}

Black should not experience any trouble getting in the \ldots{}c5 break. Now he can arrange his pieces in two different ways.

This leaves both the b4- and c4-pawns attacked and thus ensures that White will restore material equality immediately. However, the a2-knight is not well placed, and the time White spends getting this piece back in the game will allow Black to develop easily and achieve the \ldots{}c5 break.

7...e6 8 \texttt{\textxc{4} \textbd{7}}
Black has several possibilities such as 8...a5, 8...\texttt{\texte{7} and 8...\texttt{\textb{7}, but this is the most flexible continuation.}

9 0-0 \texttt{\textb{7} 10 \textd{d}2}
11...\*d6

Black intends to place his queen on e7. The alternative is 11...e7. Black will play ...\*bd5, ...
0-0, ...\*b8 and ...
\*ac8. After 12 \*b3 0-0 13 \*e2 c5 14 \*fd1 \*b6 15 \*e1 \*ac8 16 dx5 \*xc5 17 \*fxd4 \*fd8 18 f3 \*xb3 19 \*xb3 \*c5 20 \*f2 \*xd4 21 exd4 \*d5 Black had a good position in Czarnota-Fressinet, European Ch, Kusadasi 2006.

12 \*we2 c5 13 \*h3 0-0 14 \*fe1

It seems rather strange to place the king's rook here. A more logical development is 14 \*fd1 \*we7 15 \*e1 \*fd8 16 \*ac1 cxd4 17 \*fxd4 \*c5 with an equal position, Iotov-Atalik, European Ch, Dresden 2007.

14...\*we7

Black has developed harmoniously and is ready to bring his rooks to the centre. White releases the central tension in order to give his pieces some scope.

15 dxc5 \*xc5 16 \*fd4

White intends to play \*e1, f3, \*f2 and e4 to gain space and limit the scope of the b7-bishop. This is a slow but dangerous plan for the unwary. Black immediately takes concrete measures against this idea.

16...\*xb3 17 \*xb3

After 17 \*xb3, 17...\*e4 with the idea ...\*h4 gives Black some initiative. All of his pieces are pointed at the white king.

17...\*e5 (D)

Black creates the threat of ...\*d6, forking h2 and d4. The d4-knight cannot move because b2 is hanging. 17...\*e4 18 \*e1 \*fd8 was a good alternative.

18 \*wb5

If White wants to avoid weakening his kingside, then this is the only move. 18 \*e1? is a mistake because 18...\*d6 19 h3 \*xd4 20 exd4 (20 \*d1? \*c6) 20...\*xd4 gives Black a healthy extra pawn.

18...\*xd4

Black exchanges bishop for knight in order to create some imbalance. 18...\*d5 is a good alternative. Then the d4-knight is still pinned, and Black has ideas such as ...
\*a6 or ...
\*fd8. One tactical point is that 19 f3 can be met by 19...\*f6!, winning material.

19 exd4 \*d5 20 \*d1

Of course White hangs on to his light-squared bishop. The last thing White wants is a knight on d5 against his inferior dark-squared bishop.

20...\*e4 21 \*e3 \*d6 22 \*wd3 \*f5 23 \*ec5 \*fd8 24 \*ac1 (D)

Black has the better pawn-structure and his minor pieces are good, but White is not worse thanks to his control of the c-file and pressure against the a5-pawn.

24...\*f6 25 \*c7 \*g6 26 g3

This weakens the long diagonal, but White correctly assesses that this is not fatal. 26 f3? can be met by 26...e5!, because 27 dxe5 \*xf3! wins for Black.

26...\*xe3?!

Now 26...e5? 27 dxe5 \*f3? loses to 28 \*d7 because there is no mate on g2. However, keeping queens on with 26...\*f6 would hold the balance.

27 \*wxg6 hxg6 28 fxe3 e5
Black is playing aggressively, hoping to break into White's position. Nikolić responds coolly.

29 \texttt{f2}\\
29 \texttt{dxe5} \texttt{e6} 30 \texttt{f3} \texttt{a6}, intending ...\texttt{d2}, was Black's idea.

29...\texttt{exd4}?!\\
This allows the white king to come to e3. Black should have kept the tension. Atalik gives 29...\texttt{e6} 30 \texttt{f3} \texttt{ab8}!

31 \texttt{lc5} \texttt{exd4} 32 \texttt{xa5} \texttt{d3}! with counterplay.

30 \texttt{exd4} \texttt{e6} 31 \texttt{f3} \texttt{ab8}!

The active 31...\texttt{a6} can be met by 32 d5!, when Atalik gives 32...\texttt{d7} (32...\texttt{xd5}? 33 \texttt{c8} \texttt{ad6} 34 \texttt{xd8}+ \texttt{xd8} 35 \texttt{d1}) 33 \texttt{d1}! \texttt{xf8} 34 \texttt{lc5} \texttt{e7} 35 \texttt{d5e6}! with a big advantage for White.

32 \texttt{e3} \texttt{b3} 33 \texttt{lc5} \texttt{d8}+ 34 \texttt{d3} (D)

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White's active rooks give him good winning chances.

34...\texttt{xa4} 35 \texttt{xa5} \texttt{b5}+ 36 \texttt{xb5}!

White simplifies into a rook ending. His active king and passed d-pawn give him a decisive advantage.

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36...\texttt{xb5} 37 \texttt{c6} \texttt{bb8} 38 \texttt{xe8} \texttt{xe8} 39
\texttt{b7} f5 40 \texttt{xb5} g5 41 \texttt{h5} g6

A better try was 41...\texttt{f8} to try to push the f-pawn to get some counterplay.

42 b4 \texttt{f7} 43 \texttt{e5} \texttt{h8} 44 h5 \texttt{f6} 45 \texttt{c5} f4

46 \texttt{e4} \texttt{e8}+ 47 \texttt{e5} \texttt{h8} (D)

48 \texttt{gxf4}\\
It was more accurate to play 48 b6 first. Then 48...\texttt{xa2} 49 \texttt{gxf4} \texttt{gxf4} can be answered by 50 \texttt{b5}!

48...\texttt{gxf4} 49 b6 \texttt{f3}

This trick prolongs the game, but doesn't change the result.

50 \texttt{xf3} \texttt{h3}+ 51 \texttt{e4} \texttt{b3} 52 \texttt{d5} \texttt{xb6}

53 \texttt{e2} \texttt{a6} 54 \texttt{c5} \texttt{a5}+ 55 \texttt{c6} \texttt{a6}+ 56
\texttt{b5}

Black does not have enough room to keep checking.

56...\texttt{a3} 57 d5 g5 58 d6 \texttt{b3}+ 59 \texttt{c6} \texttt{c3}+ 60 \texttt{b7} \texttt{f7} 61 d7 \texttt{b3}+ 62 \texttt{c7} \texttt{c3}+ 63
\texttt{d8} \texttt{c1} 64 \texttt{e7}+ \texttt{f8} 65 \texttt{e5} \texttt{g1} 66 \texttt{f5}+ 67 \texttt{e1} 1-0

67 \texttt{c7} \texttt{e1}+ 68 \texttt{d6} \texttt{d1}+ 69 \texttt{d5} wins.

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\section*{Game 24}
\textbf{Aleksander Wojtkiewicz – John Donaldson}
\textit{Continental Open, Las Vegas 2001}

1 \texttt{d4} d5 2 c4 c6 3 \texttt{f3} \texttt{f6} 4 \texttt{c3} dxc4 5 e4 (D)

The Geller Gambit is White's most aggressive response to the Main-Line Slav. Unlike 5 e3, 5 e4 constitutes a real gambit. Theoretically, Black stands quite well, but White is not without attacking chances and Black must be very careful in the opening.

5...\texttt{b5}
Black defends the c4-pawn and threatens ...b4, undermining the defence of White's e4-pawn.

6 e5

Spassky used to have an affinity for 6...c2 but this is not considered dangerous. Black can develop normally while holding on to his extra pawn as long as he is wary of a d5 break.

6...d5 7 a4 e6 (D)

Black has tried other moves, but this move is the main line and it is rightfully more popular than all other tries combined.

8 axb5

White clarifies the position. The murkier alternative 8...g5 is considered in the next game.

8...c3 9 bxc3 cxb5 10 g5

White threatens both f3 and xf7.

10...b7 11 h5 g6

11...f7 12 e2 (12 xh7?! c6 13 xf8? xxd4! is a clever trap) 12...d5 13 xh7 c6

and now White should avoid 14 f6+? gxf6 15 xh8 xd4!, when Black is much better, and prefer 14...xf8 xf8, when he has won his pawn back and has the two bishops to boot.

12 g4 e7 13 e2

White has an alternative in 13 h4. The threat of h5 forces Black to react. He can try:

a) 13...h5 is the normal move. Black stops the h4-pawn in its tracks and gains time by attacking the white queen. 14 f4 xd5 15 hxg5 and now:

a1) 15...d5?! 16 h4 g8 17 g4 hxg4 18 h7 wd7 19 a3 gives White good attacking chances.

a2) 15...c6 16 h4 e7 17 g4 d5 transposes to line 'a3'.

a3) 15...d7 16 h4!? (White wants to play g4 without allowing ...h4, blocking the kingside) 16...b6 17 g4 d5 18 g3 c7 (18...d7 is another idea) 19 gxd5 gxd5 20 g6 fxg6 21 xg6+ f7 22 g3 g8 23 h3 0-0-0 24 axa7 f7 gave Black the initiative in Feher-Hajnal, Fuzesabony (rapid) 2004.

b) 13...h6!? 14 e4 d5 15 f3 a5 is interesting. It is not so easy for White to breach Black's defences, and trouble is brewing on the queenside. 16 h5 g5 17 e2 d7 18 0-0 b4 was better for Black in Olsson-N.Pert, European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005.

We now return to 13 e2 (D):

This is the main position for the Geller Gambit. White has ideas such as e4, f3, a3 or h4. Black would like to stabilize the position and secure his king's safety. Black has two
well-tested schemes of defence, so he has a major decision to make here.

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

13...\(\text{d}5\) is just as popular. Black anchors his bishop in the centre and overprotects the e6-pawn. White has:

a) 14 \(\text{e}4\) intends \(\text{h}6\), which both blocks Black's h-pawn and prevents him from castling. 14...\(\text{h}5\) 15 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{a}6\) (16 \(\text{f}3\) transposes to 'b1' below) 16...\(\text{c}8\) 17 \(\text{xf}6+\) \(\text{xf}6\) 18 \(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{g}8\) 19 \(\text{a}1\) \(\text{d}8\) 20 \(\text{f}4\) and now 20...\(\text{a}5\)?! 21 0-0 was unclear in Porper-Solak, European Ch, Dresden 2007. I prefer the cold-blooded 20...\(\text{xf}2\)! with the idea 21 \(\text{g}1\) \(\text{d}5\) 22 \(\text{a}h5\) b4! with good play for Black.

b) 14 \(\text{f}3\) and here:

b1) 14...\(\text{h}5\) 15 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 16 0-0 (16 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{b}4\) 17 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{g}5\) 18 \(\text{x}g5\) \(\text{e}7\) 19 \(\text{f}4\) 0-0 20 \(\text{c}x\text{b}4\) \(\text{w}b6\) 21 0-0 \(\text{xf}3\) 22 \(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{xd}8\) 23 \(\text{f}d1\) c3 was good for Black in Reeslager-Hübner, Bundesliga 1983/4, but White may improve somewhere here) 16...b4! 17 \(\text{a}6\) \(\text{c}8\) 18 \(\text{xd}5\) \(\text{e}6\) \(\text{w}a6\) 20 \(\text{f}7+\) \(\text{xf}8\) 21 \(\text{e}1\) \(\text{b}7\)! is probably insufficient for White, as pointed out by Burgess.

b2) 14...\(\text{c}6\) 15 0-0 \(\text{a}5\) 16 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{h}6\) 17 \(\text{d}6+\) \(\text{xd}6\) 18 \(\text{e}d5\) \(\text{exd}5\) 19 \(\text{e}x\text{b}4\) \(\text{w}b6\) 20 \(\text{a}3\) \(\text{b}4\) 21 \(\text{c}x\text{b}4\) \(\text{xb}4\) left White with insufficient compensation for the pawn in Kahn-Portisch, Hungarian Team Ch 2002/3. Black’s king can scoot to \(\text{g}7\) if necessary.

We now return to the position after 13...\(\text{d}7\) (D):

For a period in the 1980s, this continuation was thought to be promising. White attacks the b5-pawn and seems to threaten 15 \(\text{xc}4\) as well. It turns out that the latter threat is not real, so White should consider the alternatives:

a) 14 h4 15 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{b}6\) (15...\(\text{d}5\) is also possible) 16 \(\text{f}3\) (both 16 0-0 \(\text{a}5\)! and 16 \(\text{a}3\) \(\text{xa}3\) 17 \(\text{xa}3\) \(\text{a}5\) favour Black) 16...\(\text{xf}3\)? (16...\(\text{d}5\) 17 \(\text{w}f3\) 0-0 is interesting. One point is that 18 \(\text{g}4\) can be met by 18...\(\text{g}5\) 19 \(\text{a}5\) \(\text{w}d5\)!

b) 14 \(\text{f}3\) (D) is the main continuation.

Then 14...\(\text{c}8\)! is a key move. Black contests control of the long diagonal and the subtle coverage of the e6-pawn will give Black the defensive resource ...\(\text{f}5\) in many lines. White has:

b1) 15 \(\text{a}3\) fails to 15...\(\text{xf}3\) 16 \(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{a}6\)!

b2) 15 \(\text{b}7\) \(\text{xb}7\) 16 \(\text{e}4\) 0-0? looks fine for Black.

b3) 15 \(\text{e}4\) 0-0 16 \(\text{h}4\) (16 \(\text{h}6\) \(\text{f}5\)!?) 16...\(\text{f}5\) 17 \(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 18 \(\text{xf}6+\) \(\text{xf}6\) gives White a little bit of compensation, but objectively it looks insufficient.

14...\(\text{a}6\)! 15 \(\text{xc}4\)

It is probably better just to play 15 \(\text{f}3\) but the insertion of 14 \(\text{b}1\) and 14...\(\text{a}6\) is likely to be in Black’s favour. For one thing, \(\text{a}3\) ideas are off the table.

15...\(\text{c}7\)! (D)

16 \(\text{e}6\)?

This should lose quickly. 16 \(\text{xf}7\)? \(\text{xc}4\) 17 \(\text{xb}8\) is no better because of the tactical shot 17...\(\text{xe}5\)!.
16...\textit{c}e2 is relatively best for White, although 16...\textit{w}xc3+ 17 \textit{d}d2 \textit{w}c2 18 \textit{c}c1 \textit{w}b2! leaves White struggling. For example, 19 \textit{c}xf7 \textit{w}xf7 20 \textit{c}c7 \textit{w}b1+ 21 \textit{d}d1 \textit{w}e4+ 22 \textit{w}xe4 \textit{c}xe4 (Burgess) is better for Black because of his good development and two connected passed pawns.

16...\textit{f}xe6?!
Even stronger is 16...\textit{c}xe5!, when White is at a loss for a move.

17 \textit{w}xe6 \textit{f}f8 (D)

White may have a couple of pawns for the piece, but with no light-square control, it will be difficult to prevent Black from quickly taking over the initiative.

18 \textit{c}4
Relatively best was 18 0-0 although after 18...\textit{w}c6! 19 \textit{w}xc6 \textit{c}xc6 20 \textit{e}e6 \textit{b}b6 21 \textit{xf}8 \textit{xf}8 Black’s minor pieces will dominate the rooks.

18...\textit{w}c6 19 f3 \textit{c}c8 20 \textit{x}xb5? (D)

Exchanging queens is the only way to prolong the fight.

20...\textit{a}xb5?
Black returns the favour. 20...\textit{w}c3+ 21 \textit{d}d2 \textit{w}xd4 wins; after 22 \textit{b}xa6 \textit{d}d5 Black has an extra piece and the initiative.

21 0-0 \textit{w}xe6 22 \textit{c}xe6 \textit{f}f7 23 \textit{d}d1
23 \textit{b}xb5? \textit{a}6 costs White the exchange.

23...\textit{b}4 24 \textit{d}d2 \textit{d}d5
Instead 24...\textit{c}c4 25 \textit{d}d1 \textit{c}c1+ 26 \textit{c}c1 \textit{c}f8 27 \textit{c}c7+ \textit{d}d7 28 \textit{d} is not so clear.

25 \textit{f}f4 (D)

White is starting to get some counterplay, so Black sacrifices the exchange.

25...\textit{xf}4
This regains the initiative, but Black is starting to get low on pawns.

26 \textit{xf}4 \textit{b}3 27 \textit{d}d3 \textit{f}8 28 \textit{d}xb3
This appears desperate, but it is probably the best chance. The real surprise comes in just a couple of moves.

28...\(\text{\textipa{x}xb3}\) 29 \(\text{\textipa{x}xb3}\) \(\text{\textipa{e}6}\) 30 \(\text{\textipa{e}3}\) \(\text{\textipa{d}8}\) 0-1

Resignation seems a bit premature. After 31 \(\text{\textipa{d}3}\) \(\text{\textipa{c}5}\) White's pawns will begin to fall, but the limited number of pawns would still give him some chances to hold.

**Game 25**

**Nikita Vitiugov – Farrukh Amonatov**  
*Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006*

1 \(d4\) \(d5\) 2 \(c4\) \(c6\) 3 \(\text{\textipa{f}3}\) \(\text{\textipa{f}6}\) 4 \(\text{\textipa{c}3}\) \(dxc4\) 5 \(e4\) \(b5\) 6 \(e5\) \(\text{\textipa{d}5}\) 7 \(a4\) \(e6\) 8 \(\text{\textipa{g}5}\)  

This aggressive lunge is less explored than 8 axb5.

8...\(\text{\textipa{h}6}\)

This forcing move may seem to fall into White’s plans, but it is a good way to fight for the initiative. The main alternative is 8...\(\text{\textipa{e}7}\), with which Black hopes to avoid weakening his kingside. A couple of examples from many:

a) 9 \(\text{\textipa{g}e}4\) \(b4\) 10 \(\text{\textipa{b}1}\) \(f5\) has been considered good for Black, but 11 \(\text{\textipa{x}f}6\) \(\text{\textipa{x}f}6\) 12 \(\text{\textipa{x}f}6+\) \(\text{\textipa{x}f}6\) 13 \(\text{\textipa{x}c}4\) \(\text{\textipa{x}d}4\) 14 \(\text{\textipa{h}5+}\) \(g6\) 15 \(\text{\textipa{w}e}2\) \(\text{\textipa{w}e}5\) 16 \(\text{\textipa{w}e}5\) \(\text{\textipa{c}5}\) 17 0-0 0-0 18 \(\text{\textipa{d}2}\) gave White reasonable compensation for the pawn in Aronian-Kramnik, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 2007.

b) 9 \(\text{\textipa{h}4}\) \(h6\) 10 \(\text{\textipa{g}e}4\) \(b4\) 11 \(\text{\textipa{b}1}\) \(\text{\textipa{a}6}\) 12 \(\text{\textipa{w}g}4!\) \(\text{\textipa{w}f}8\) 13 \(\text{\textipa{b}d}2\) \(c3\) 14 \(\text{\textipa{c}4}\) \(\text{\textipa{x}c}4\) 15 \(\text{\textipa{x}c}4\)

8...\(\text{\textipa{b}6}\) 16 \(\text{\textipa{x}e}6!\) \(\text{\textipa{x}e}6\) 17 \(\text{\textipa{h}3}\) \(\text{\textipa{w}d}5\)? (17...\(\text{\textipa{w}d}7\)) 18 \(\text{\textipa{w}g}6\) gave White a decisive attack in S.Williams-Collins, Bunratty 2006.

9 \(\text{\textipa{g}e}4\) \(b4\) 10 \(\text{\textipa{b}1}\) \(\text{\textipa{a}6}\) 11 \(\text{\textipa{b}d}2\)

**B**

11...\(\text{\textipa{f}4}\)!

This is the most aggressive response. Black heads for the soft d3-square. 11...\(c3\) has also been tried, but after 12 \(\text{\textipa{c}4}\) \(\text{\textipa{x}c}4\) 13 \(\text{\textipa{x}c}4\) \(\text{\textipa{c}xb}2\) 14 \(\text{\textipa{x}b}2\) \(\text{\textipa{e}7}\) 15 0-0 0-0 16 \(\text{\textipa{w}g}4\) White has reasonable compensation for the pawn. Markov & Schipkov’s old suggestion 11...\(\text{\textipa{b}6}\) seems reasonable, even if it has not found any adherents.

12 \(\text{\textipa{w}g}4\)

The untried 12 \(\text{\textipa{x}c}4\) \(\text{\textipa{x}g}2+\) 13 \(\text{\textipa{x}g}2\) \(\text{\textipa{x}c}4\) is widely considered to be much better for Black. I actually think White still has some compensation here, although Black certainly has resources as well.

12...\(\text{\textipa{d}3}\) 13 \(\text{\textipa{x}d}3\) \(\text{\textipa{c}xd}3\) 14 0-0

14 \(\text{\textipa{d}6}\)? \(\text{\textipa{x}d}6\) 15 \(\text{\textipa{x}g}7\) is refuted by the positional exchange sacrifice 15...\(\text{\textipa{x}f}8\) 16 \(\text{\textipa{w}h}8\) \(\text{\textipa{x}d}4\) 17 0-0 \(\text{\textipa{d}7}\) 18 \(\text{\textipa{f}3}\) \(\text{\textipa{w}g}4\) 19 \(\text{\textipa{x}h}6\)
\textbf{WHILE AVOIDS 5 a4: THE QUIET 5 e3 AND THE GELLER GAMBIT} 107

\textit{Wh5!} 20 \texttt{Qg7 Wxh8 21 \texttt{Qxh8 \texttt{Qh6} (D), when Black's pawns are too strong.}

\textbf{W}

22 g4 (no better is 22 \texttt{Qf6 Qxf6 23 exf6 d2, Van Wely-Van der Sterren, Dutch Ch, Eindhoven 1991) 22...\texttt{Qe7} 23 g5 \texttt{Qxh8 24 gxh6 c5 25 Qf1 c4 gave Black a winning position in Fiorito-Smyslov, Buenos Aires 1990.}

\textbf{14...Qd5?!}

A fresh and logical idea. Alternatives:

\textbf{a)} \textit{14...Qd7 15 Qd6+ \texttt{Qxd6 16 Wxg7 \texttt{Qf8}?! (16...\texttt{Qf8} is not possible now because Black cannot take on d4 with his queen, but Burgess's suggestion 16...\texttt{Qxe5}! 17 dxe5 \texttt{Qe7 looks good) 17 exd6 Wg5 18 Wxg5 hgx5 looks better for White. Sacrificing the exchange with 19 \texttt{Qxe4}? d2 20 \texttt{Qxd2 Qxf1} 21 \texttt{Qxf1} is one appealing option.}

\textbf{b)} \textit{14...h5 15 Wf4 \texttt{Qe7 16 Qf3}?! (16 ...\texttt{Qc5} \texttt{Qxc5 17 dxc5 \texttt{Qd5} with the idea ...\texttt{Qd7 and ...Q0-0 should be at least equal for Black) 16...d2 17 \texttt{Qxd2 \texttt{Qxf1} 18 \texttt{Qxf1} gave White some positional compensation in Aronian-Arutinian, European Ch, Batumi 2002.}

\textbf{c)} \textit{14...h7?! is a cute little computer suggestion. Black overprotects the g7-pawn to discourage \texttt{Qd6+}.}

\textbf{15 \texttt{Qe1}}

After 15 \texttt{Qd6+ \texttt{Qxd6 16 Wxg7 \texttt{Qf8} 17 exd6 \texttt{Qd7} Black is ready to castle queenside, with an unclear position.}

\textbf{15...Qd7 16 Qf1?}

This allows Black to break up White's centre. \texttt{16...Qf3} is better. After 16...c5 17 dxc5 \texttt{Qxc5 18 \texttt{Qxc5 Wxc5} 19 Qe3, White's development lead gives some play for the pawn, although the d3-pawn remains a trump for Black.}

\textit{16...c5! 17 dxc5 \texttt{Qxe5 18 Qe3}}

Instead 18 Wg3 Qc6 leaves White struggling to justify his play. For example, 19 Qd6+ \texttt{Qxd6 20 cxd6 (20 Wxg7? \texttt{Qe5) 20...Q0-0-0? is one possibility. Nevertheless, this was probably White's best try.}

\textbf{18...Qg4 19 Qxd5 (D)}

\textbf{B}

\textit{19...Q0-0-0?!}

The cold-blooded 19...exd5! is much stronger. After 20 Wf6++ Qd8 21 He8+ (21 Qxg4 \texttt{Qxc5 is also much better for Black) 21...Qc7 22 Axa8 (insufficient is 22 Qxd5+ Qb7 23 c6+ Qxc6 24 Qxa8 Qxd5) 22...Qxf6 23 Qxa8+ Qb7 24 c6 Qxc6 25 Qe3 Qe4 26 Qc1+ Qc5 White runs out of steam.}

\textbf{20 Qxb4 Qb7 21 Qd2 Qd4 22 c6}

It was worth considering 22 Qd6+ \texttt{Qxd6 23 cxd6, when White will get some counterplay on the c-file and the dark squares.}

\textbf{22...Qxb4 23 cxb7+ Qxb7 24 Qxb4 Qxb4 25 Qc5+ Qb6 26 Qxd3 Qb3 (D)}

Black has some pressure, but White should hold.

\textbf{27 h3?!}

The more active 27 Qe4 Qf6 (27...Qxd3 28 Qxg4 gives White enough play) 28 Qd4 gives Black nothing concrete.

\textbf{27...Qxd3 28 Qxg4 Qhd8}

Now White has a pawn on g4 (instead of an active rook!) and Black has the more active rooks and king.

\textbf{29 Qac1}
White sheds a pawn in hopes of getting counterplay. 29 \( \text{e}4 \text{c}8 \text{d}4 \) 30 \( \text{h}a1 \text{a}5 \) with the idea \( \text{b}c5 \) is also difficult for White.

29...\( \text{f}3 \text{d}4 \) 30 \( \text{c}3 \text{e}1 \) 31 \( \text{c}3 \text{d}1 \)? 32 \( \text{f}1 \text{e}x1 \) 33 \( \text{c}c1 \text{a}5 \) 34 \( \text{b}8 \text{c}4 \) 35 \( \text{f}e2 \text{a}5 \) 36 \( \text{f}e3 \text{a}6 \) 37 \( \text{g}g8 \text{g}6 \)(D)

\( \text{c}2 \text{a}5 \) \( \text{c}c3 \text{d}5 \) 47 \( \text{f}8 \text{f}5 \) 48 \( \text{b}b8+ \text{c}6 \) 49 \( \text{g}g8 \text{d}6 \) 50 \( \text{d}d4 \text{b}5 \) 51 \( \text{a}8 \text{h}4 \) 52 \( \text{c}3 \text{g}5 \) 53 \( \text{h}h8 \text{x}g2 \) 54 \( \text{x}h4 \text{f}2 \) 55 \( \text{d}d4+ \text{e}5 \) 56 \( \text{e}e4+ \text{f}5 \) 57 \( \text{a}4 \text{xf}3+ \) 58 \( \text{c}2 \text{e}5 \) 59 \( \text{x}a5 \text{f}2+ \) 60 \( \text{c}3 \text{f}1 \) 61 \text{b}4 \( \text{f}4 \) 62 \text{b}5 \text{e}4 63 \( \text{a}2 \text{e}3 \) 64 \text{b}6 \( \text{h}b1 \) 0-1

**Conclusions**

The quiet 5 \( \text{e}3 \) is a very solid continuation, but it is not dangerous for Black if he knows a few useful schemes of development. After 5...\( \text{b}5 \) 6 \( \text{a}4 \text{b}4 \) 7 \( \text{b}b1 \text{a}6 \), the older continuation 8 \( \text{c}2 \) is well met by 8...\( \text{b}3 \)!. Here Black may not hold on to his extra pawn, but with accurate play he has excellent chances to seize the initiative. 8 \( \text{e}2 \) is more solid, but Black can equalize here with either the disruptive 8...\( \text{e}6 \) 9 \( \text{e}2 \text{e}7 \) 0-0 \( \text{e}7 \) 10 \( \text{b}d2 \) \( \text{c}3 \) or he can play the aggressive 8...\( \text{c}5 \).

The continuation 7 \( \text{c}a2 \) leads to slower play. White regains the pawn immediately but does little to disturb Black’s smooth development. Black can set up his pieces with ...\( \text{f}e7 \) and ...\( \text{b}b6 \) or with ...\( \text{d}d6 \) and ...\( \text{c}c7 \). In both cases, Black achieves the ...\( \text{c}5 \) break effortlessly.

The Geller Gambit leads to much sharper play, but White risks at least as much as Black does here. In the main line with 8 \( \text{a}x\text{b}5 \) White gets certain attacking chances, but if Black knows the defensive schemes with either 13...\( \text{d}7 \) or 13...\( \text{d}5 \) he has a solid position, an extra pawn, and ready-made counterplay on the queenside.

The modern 8 \( \text{g}5 \) is both more interesting and less explored, and it leads to complicated positions. 8...\( \text{h}6 \) remains the most reliable line for Black, and after 9 \( \text{g}4 \text{b}4 \) 10 \( \text{b}1 \text{a}6 \) 11 \( \text{b}d2 \) Black has more than one viable continuation. Again, White has some attacking chances but Black has both extra material and good counterplay.
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2  c4  c6 5
3  Qf3  Qf6
4  Qc3  dxc4 6

W

5  a4

Or:

a)  5  Qe5 97
b)  5  g3 97

c)  5  e3 97 5...b5 6  a4  b4:
   c1)  7  Qb1 97
   c2)  7  Qa2 100

d)  5  e4 102 5...b5 6  e5  Qd5 7  a4  e6:
   d1)  8  axb5 103
   d2)  8  Qg5 106

5  ...  Qf5 9

a)  5...Qa6 88:
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      b1)  7  g3 86
      b2)  7  Qxc4 79
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Now (after 5...Qf5):

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A)

6  Qe5 43

B

6  ...

Qbd7

6...e6 67 7  f3:
   a)  7...Qb4 67
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7  Qxc4

B

6  ...

Qbd7

6...e6 67 7  f3:
   a)  7...Qb4 67
   b)  7...c5 71 8  e4:
      b1)  8...Qxd4?! 71
      b2)  8...Qg6 74

7  Qxc4

B

7  ...

We7 43

7...Qb6 54 8  Qe5 a5 55:
   a)  9  e3 63
b) 9 f3 55
c) 9 g3 59
d) 9 g5 63

8 g3 e5
dxe5 dxe5 43
10 f4 fd7
11 g2

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11...f6 43
Now (after 11...g5!?):
12 e3 47
12 xe5 50
12 xe5 50

8 0-0 0-0 9

Or 8... bd7:
a) 9 wb3 34
b) 9 we2:
b1) 9... g6 21
b2) 9... g4 24
c) 9 h4 34:
c1) 9... 0-0 29
c2) 9... g6 35

9 we2 9

9 h4 29:
a) 9... bd7 29
b) 9... g6 29
c) 9... g4 30
9 ... bd7

9... e4 15
9... g4 24
9... g6 15

6 e3 9

6 ... e6
7 xc4 h6

10 e4 g6 9
Chess Explained books provide an understanding of an opening and the middlegames to which it leads, enabling you to find the right moves and plans in your own games. It is as if you were sitting at the board with a chess coach answering your questions about the plans for both sides, the ideas behind particular moves, and what specific knowledge you need to have.

The Main-Line Slav is one of the key battlegrounds of modern chess, with adherents among all levels of chess-players. It is notoriously difficult for White to prove any advantage against Black's solid set-up, while the lack of symmetry in the position provides scope for creative players to obtain winning chances with either colour. This book discusses all major lines following the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♙c3 dxc4. There are many strategic directions the play can take: sometimes the centre is blasted open and piece-play dominates, while in other cases the centre becomes fixed, or remains dynamic well into the middlegame. Vigorito dissects the most important themes and nuances, placing them firmly in the context of the practical struggle, making sure that readers will be familiar with the resources at their disposal, and understand when to employ them.

David Vigorito is an International Master from the United States. He plays regularly in high-level competitions, including the US Championship. He has written extensively for a variety of publications and is a chess teacher. This is his first book for Gambit.