

Category – Semi Open Game

Opening Move Sequence – 1 e4 d6, 2 d4 Nf6, 3 Nc3 g6

ECO Codes – B07 and B09

This opening, also called Ufimtsev Defense or Yugoslav Defense, is named after Grandmaster Vasja Pirc who was a Slovenian. It is fairly new in origin and was considered unsound as late as 1930s. In it as in hyper modern openings Black undermines the Whites center with pieces after allowing it to form unhindered by pawns. As such it may be difficult to understand and play for some players.

Pirc falls under the category of Semi-open Game openings that begin with 1 e4 without 1 ... e5. Pirc Defense has the ECO codes B07 to B09.

Moves and Variations

1 e4 d6

2 d4 Nf6

3 Nc3 g6

Black will generally play Bg7 later. In fact the sequence in which these moves are made is not material in Pirc. One listed above is the most common sequence. When the Nf6 is delayed the variation is called Robatsch Defense.

Deviations

If instead of above Black plays 3 ...c6 the opening is called Pribyl System or Czech Defense. but can end in Pirc after Black plays g6. If Black plays Qa5 or e5 he is aiming to dispute the White's center. Black playing b5 indicates a desire to find initiative in Queen-side

Instead of 3 Nc3 White can play 3 f3 as a surprise weapon. The Game will transform to King's Indian Defense after 3 ... g6. If 4 c4, Black can play 3... e5 to avoid King's Indian and to arrive at Old Indian after 4 d5. This can also be transformed to Classical or Tarrasch Variation in French, or to Blackmar-Diemer Gambit.

The alternative 1 e4 d6, 2 d4 Nf6, 3 Nc3 e5, gaining ground in tournament play, with even play after 4 dxe5 dxe5, 5 Qxd8+ Kxd8, 6 Bc4 Be6, 7 Bxe6 fxe6. To avoid equalization White can move 4 Nf3 to transform to Philidor Defense.

Austrian Attack (1 e4 d6, 2 d4 Nf6, 3 Nc3 g6, 4 f4)

After creating an extensive center through pawns on d4, e4 and f4, White can launch an attack on the King-side. Black can defend by moving c5 against the center.

Classical or Two Knights System (1 e4 d6, 2 d4 Nf6, 3 Nc3 g6, 4 Nf3)

Again White has created a formidable center. In reply Black after castling takes up a solid defensive position. White has to preserve the pieces to be successful here.

150-Attack and Argentine Attack

Placing the Bishops at e3 and Queen at d2 is a useful ploy for White against King's Indian and Sicilian Dragon Defenses. White can use the same tactic against Pirc as well. In fact players have done so throughout the history of this opening.

Argentine Attack was invented by Argentine players in 30s and 50s and continues; 4 f3 Bg7, 5 Be3 c6, 6 Qd2 b5. but lost popularity after it was demonstrated that White does not gain much after 5 ...0-0, 6 Qd2 e5.

When the move f3 is avoided initially the variation is called 150-Attack. Play may continue 4 Be3 Bg7, 5.Qd2 0-0, 6 0-0-0 c6 (also Nc6), 7 f3 b5, 8.h4. Though many other move sequences are possible, especially with Nf3 added . Black can improve by playing c6 as 4th or 5th the moves.

Other rare possibilities for White are 4 Bc4 , 4 Bg5 and 4 g3 followed by 5 Bg2 .

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