

Chapter 11 – The Fianchetto with 4...bxc6

1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6 3.♙f1-b5 g7-g6



A logical continuation. Black fianchettoes his king's bishop, increasing central pressure.

Here White has many different possibilities, but we will begin to study only the move advocated by Chebanenko:

4. ♙b5xc6

In the Introduction, I have already spoken of the negative impression this unprovoked exchange initially made on Garry Kasparov, but how the thirteenth world champion later revised his opinion. I personally consider that this paradoxical move is the strongest continuation in this position.

What is White's idea? He wants to determine at once the enemy pawn structure, and, depending on which pawn Black recaptures with on c6, to plan his subsequent strategy.

After a long search, Chebanenko came to the conclusion that in the event of ...b7xc6, White does best to castle kingside, and after ...dxc6, to castle queenside. Subsequent practice has con-

firmed the truth of my trainer's conclusions, although it has also shown that after ...dxc6, kingside castling is quite unpleasant for Black as well.

In any case, it is useful to determine the structure right away, else Black may at some point play ...♚b6 and avoid the doubled pawns altogether.

4. ... b7xc6

Now White would very much like to detach the d7 pawn from its neighbours.

5. 0-0 ♙f8-g7

6. ♙f1-e1

- A) 6...f6
- B) 6...e5
- C) 6...♚b6
- D) 6...♘h6
- E) 6...♚c7
- F) 6...♘f6

A) 6. ... f7-f6

The plan with an immediate ...f7-f6 or ...g6-h6 and then ...f6 is quite passive, although Black does obtain a very solid position and retains the hope that White will overestimate his chances, become diverted on queenside actions, and allow a quick counterattack on the king (for example, after ...g6-g5-g4).



7. c2-c3 g8-h6
8. d2-d4 c5xd4
9. c3xd4 0-0
10. b1-c3

● 10.h3 g7-f7 11.b3 d6 12.g2 f5 13.c2 fxe4 14.cxe4 e7-d7 15.g3 e6-f6 16.e3 a5 17.a1 a8-e8 18.d5 cxd5 19.cxd5 b6-b7 20.cxb6 axb6 21.d2 e6-c6= Bologan-Yakovich, Novgorod 1995;

● Another plan also deserves attention, in which White develops his queen's knight to d2: 10.b3! g7-f7 11.b2 d6 12.g2 a6 13.c1 c8 14.b4 An important move. White not only prevents the advance ...c6-c5 and takes square a5 away from the enemy queen, but also seizes space on the queenside and opens up new routes for his pieces: the queen can come to a4, and the knight via b3 to a5. 14...e5 15.g3 b6 16.g3 e4 17.c2

White has prevented both breaks ...a5 and ...c5, and taken more space. He has simple and promising play. 17...e6 18.h3 a6 19.a5 Looking at the c6 pawn. Black tries to break his bonds, but only creates new weaknesses, whilst giving White a protected passed pawn in the centre. 19...c5 20.bxc5 dxc5 21.d5 e7-d7 22.d2 d6 23.a4 Consistently playing for the squeeze, since otherwise the enemy knight could come via b5 and jump into d4. 23...g6 24.a1 g7 25.dxc4 cxc4 26.c3 b8 27.cxc4 cxc4 28.cxc4 b3 29.g2± Morozevich-Kasimdzhanov, Wijk aan Zee 2002. Despite the outward simplicity, the endgame is very unpleasant for Black, as his bishop is clearly weaker than White's powerful knight. In the end, White realized his advantage.

10. ... d7-d6



11. h2-h3

● The main theoretical move, although I can well believe that Fischer's move 11.c4 is stronger. Even so, I prefer the modest pawn move;

● 11.c4! By immediately attacking the pawn on c6, White also prepares the transfer of the king's knight to c4 and even, if possible, to a5. 11...b6

11...♗d7!? 12.e5 fxe5 13.dxe5 ♘f5
 14.♗g5 ♖b6 15.♘d5 cxd5 16.♗xd7
 dxe5 17.♗xd5+ e6 18.♗d2 h6
 19.♗e3± Salem-Lopez, Guines 1994.
 12.♘d2! ♘f7 12...♗a6!?. 13.♘c4 ♗a6
 14.♗e3?! Subsequently the following
 theoretical recommendation appeared:
 14.♗xa6 ♗xa6 15.♘a5! ♜fc8 16.♗e3
 ♞ab8 17.b3 f5 18.exf5 gxf5 19.♞ac1±.
 Probably it is easier to play White here,
 but it is very difficult to exploit his mini-
 mal advantage. Black has the two bishops,
 sufficient open lines and a compact pawn
 structure in the centre. 14...♗xa4
 15.♘xa4 f5 16.exf5?! 16.f3! fxe4 17.fxe4
 ♘h6 18.h3± or 17...d5 18.♘a5!±.
 16...♜xf5 17.♞ac1 ♜fc8 18.♘a5 ♗d7
 18...c5! 19.b3 ♞ab8 20.♘c3 ♘f8 21.a3
 ♘h6! 22.b4 ♘f5= Fischer-Spassky, Sveti
 Stefan/Belgrade 1992 (m/13).



11. ... ♘h6-f7

11...♗d7 12.b3 ♗a5 Here it is not en-
 tirely clear where the bishop should go,
 to d2 or b2; both make sense. 13.♗d2
 The bishop went to b2 in the following
 game: 13.♗b2 ♗h5 14.♘e2 g5 15.♘g3
 ♗f7 16.♞c1 ♞ac8 17.♗d2± Borgo-
 Zontakh, Cutro 1998. 13...♗a6 14.♗c2
 ♘f7 15.♞ad1 ♞ad8?! 16.♗c1 ♗a5
 17.♗b2 ♗h5 18.♘e2 A well-known ma-

noeuvre: the queen must be evicted from
 the kingside so as to ensure that White's
 king does not come under attack.
 18...♞b8 19.♘g3 ♗b5 20.e5!± Bologan-
 Todorov, Aubervilliers rapid 2003.

White has everything ready for this break,
 and in various lines, the black bishop on
 d7 will be hanging. White has firmly
 seized the initiative.

12. b2-b3



12. ... ♗d8-a5

The alternative is 12...♗d7 13.♗b2 ♗c7
 14.♞c1 ♗b7 15.♞c2 ♞ad8 16.♞d2 By
 transferring the rook to the d-file, White
 gets ready to carry out the advance d4-d5
 or e4-e5. 16...♞fe8 17.♗a1 A manoeuvre
 in the style of Réti, creating a battery on
 the long diagonal. 17...♗e6 Even without
 this small provocation, White would
 probably play d4-d5. However, Black was
 likely already fed up with marking time
 and wanted to bring about some kind of
 sharpening of the position. 18.d5 ♗d7
 19.dxc6 ♗xc6 20.♘d4 ♗d7 21.♘c2 ♗e5
 22.f4 ♗h6 23.♘d5 ♗e6 24.♘ce3 ♘d7
 25.♞c2± Glek-Ballo, Senden 1998. White
 has seized space in the centre and now
 begins to fight for the open c-file.

13. ♗c1-b2

13. ♖d2 ♜h5 14. ♜c1 ♙d7 15. ♘e2 ♘g5
16. ♘xg5 (16. ♙xg5 fxg5 17. ♘g3 ♜h6
18. e5 g4 19. hxg4 ♙xg4 20. exd6 exd6
21. ♜xc6 ♜ac8 22. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 23. ♜e2
♜f4) 16...fxg5 17. ♙e3 ♜h4 18. f3
♙xh3, Bologan-Motylev, Zvenigorod
2002.

13. ... ♙c8-d7

13... ♜h5 14. ♜d3 ♘g5 15. ♘xg5 fxg5
16. e5±.

14. ♜a1-c1 ♜a8-c8

15. ♜d1-e2 e7-e5

16. ♜e1-d1±

It is unfavourable for Black to exchange on d4, because then the pawns on c6 and d6 become convenient objects of attack. Therefore White can quietly strengthen his position, waiting for the optimum moment to exchange on e5.

B) 6. ... e7-e5

One of the main continuations for Black in this position – he wishes to act as aggressively as possible in the centre.



B1) 7.b4

B2) 7.c3

B1) 7. b2-b4

This gambit idea is not such a rare thing in the Sicilian, and there is even the specific variation 1.e4 c5 2.b4!?, the idea of which is to seize the centre with pawns. Sometimes the move b2-b4 is prepared, by playing a2-a3.

In this position, the idea of 7.b4, introduced into practice by Robert Fischer, is to try to break through to the dark squares in the enemy position, in the first instance d6, which has been weakened by the king's bishop moving to g7.

7. ... c5xb4

8. a2-a3



8. ... c6-c5

● 8...b3 9.cxb3 ♘e7 10. ♙b2 d6 11.d4 exd4 12. ♙xd4 f6 13. b4 0-0 14. ♘c3 ♙e6 15. ♜d2 ♜d7 16. ♙e3 ♜fd8 17. ♜ad1± Grabarczyk-Weglarz, Lubniewice 1995;
● 8...bxa3 looks very risky, although here too Black has many defensive resources: 9. ♘xa3 d6 10.d4 exd4 (10... ♘e7 11.dxe5 dxe5 12. ♜xd8+ ♙xd8 13. ♘c4 f6 14. ♙e3± Boix Moreno-Fluvia, La Pobla de Lillet 1996) 11.e5 dxe5 12. ♘xe5 ♙e6 13. ♜f3 ♘e7 14. ♘xf7! ♘xf7 15. ♙g5 0-0 16. ♙xe7 ♜d7 17. ♙xf8 ♜xf8 18. ♜d3± Klundt-Hübner, Bad Wiessee 1997.

9. a3xb4 c5xb4
 10. d2-d4 e5xd4
 11. ♖c1-b2

Black does not have time to defend all his weaknesses and should therefore strive to minimize his losses.

11. ... d7-d6
 12. ♖f3xd4 ♜d8-d7

It is essential to defend against the knight's entry into c6. Spassky's suggestion 12...♜b6 is an inferior way of doing this, because of 13.♘d2! (threatening ♘c4) 13...♙xd4 14.♘c4 ♙xf2+ 15.♗h1 ♜c5 16.♘xd6+ ♔e7 17.♞f1 ♜xd6 18.♜f3!☞, and White's attack is extremely dangerous.

13. ♘b1-d2 ♙c8-b7

13...♘e7 14.♘c4±.

14. ♘d2-c4 ♘g8-h6

14...♘e7 15.♘b5±.



Robert Fischer

15. ♘d4-f5!?

Fischer strives to get the maximum out of his position, although the simple 15.♘b5, promising White a small but lasting advantage, was probably objectively stronger.

15. ... ♙g7xb2
 16. ♘c4xd6+ ♔e8-f8
 17. ♘f5xh6



17. ... f7-f6

Previously it was considered that Black could put up a tenacious resistance with 17...♙xa1 18.♜xa1 ♜xd6 19.♜xh8+ ♔e7 20.♜xh7 ♜e6, but Rybka shows that after the accurate 21.♜g7 (bringing the queen back into play) White has a practically winning position.

18. ♘d6-f7! ♜d7xd1
 19. ♞a1xd1 ♔f8-e7
 20. ♘f7xh8 ♞a8xh8
 21. ♘h6-f5+!!±

Fischer-Spassky, Sveti Stefan/Belgrade 1992 (m/11).

The second knight jump to the 'forbidden' square f5 proves even more effective than the first. White deprives his opponent of the bishop pair and reaches a technically winning endgame.

B2) 7. c2-c3

A solid and reliable continuation, which White prefers more often than anything else.



7. ... ♘g8-e7

7... ♖b6 8. ♘a3 ♙a6 Not allowing the knight to c4. 9. d3 d6 9... ♘e7 10. ♙e3 (White gets nothing after 10. ♘c4 ♖c7; Now the threat is b2-b4, and Black must do something about it) 10... ♖xb2 (10... 0-0 11. b4±; 10... d5 11. exd5 cxd5 12. ♖a4+ ♖c6 13. ♖xc6+ ♘xc6 14. ♙xc5 ♙xd3 15. ♙ad1 ♙e4 16. ♘b5± Sutovsky-Tomicic, Szeged 1994) 11. ♙xc5 ♖xc3 12. ♖c1±. The bishop on c5 is extremely strongly posted, and White has a large positional advantage. 10. ♘d2 Tempting, but more effective is 10. d4 cxd4 11. cxd4 exd4 (11... ♘e7 12. dxe5 dxe5 13. ♖a4 ♙b5 14. ♖c2±) 12. e5 dxe5 (12... d5 13. ♘xd4 ♘e7 14. ♙g5±) 13. ♘e5 ♙xe5 (13... ♘e7 14. ♘ac4 ♖c5 15. b3±) 14. ♙xe5+ ♘f8 15. b4! with a strong initiative for White, Iordachescu-Ljubisavljevic, Campobasso 2006. 10... ♘e7 10... ♙xd3? 11. ♘dc4±. 11. ♘dc4 ♖c7 12. f4± A typical device – White attacks the pawn at e5 from the flank and the d-pawn remains in reserve. Black faces a difficult defence.



- | | |
|------------|-------|
| 8. d2-d4 | c5xd4 |
| 9. c3xd4 | e5xd4 |
| 10. ♘f3xd4 | 0-0 |
| 11. ♘b1-c3 | d7-d6 |

Maybe the most accurate move of all here is 11... ♙b8, not allowing the bishop to move from c1. White certainly does not want to play b2-b3, seriously weakening the long diagonal, which leaves 12. ♘b3 d5. This sharp move runs into an unpleasant retort. If 12... ♖c7, then 13. ♙g5, provoking the opponent into playing ...f7-f6 and blocking his bishop on g7, but he, of course, will prefer to avoid that. Therefore 13... ♙e8 (13... d6 14. ♖c1 – creating an unpleasant vis-à-vis of queen and rook along the c-file – 14... ♙a6 15. ♖d2 f6 16. ♙f4 ♘c8 17. ♘c5! ♖b6 18. ♘3a4 ♖b5 19. ♘d7+– Zagrebelny-Dolgener, Budapest 1993) 14. ♖d2 d6 15. ♙f4 ♙e5 16. ♙xe5 dxe5 17. ♘a4 ♙e6 18. ♘ac5 ♙xb3 19. ♘xb3 ♙bd8 20. ♖c3 ♙d7 21. ♙ad1 ♙ed8 22. ♙xd7 ♙xd7 23. h3± Oral-Van de Pol, Hengelo 1996. 13. ♙g5 d4 Taking on e4 is impossible because of the loss of a piece. The pawn on d4 only looks strong at first sight; in reality, it is a new weakness in Black's camp, especially after the accurate reply 14. ♘a4 h6 14... ♙e8 15. ♙f4 ♙b4 16. ♘ac5 ♙b5 17. ♖c1±. 15. ♙f4 ♙b5 16. ♘ac5 g5 17. ♙g3 f5 18. f3.



Analysis diagram

An important move. White opens a path for his bishop to retreat and at the same time secures the e4 pawn, which seriously limits the action of the knight on e7. 18...fxc4 19.fxc4 ♘g6 20.♖c2 ♜f4 21.♚c4+ ♞h7 22.e5 ♚d5 23.♚xd5 cxd5 24.♙xf4 gxf4 25.♜d3 ♙f5 26.♞a1±

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 12. ♙c1-g5 | ♙c8-b7 |
| 13. ♖d1-d2 | ♞f8-e8 |
| 14. ♞a1-d1 | ♖d8-b6 |
| 15. ♙g5-e3 | ♖b6-a5 |
| 16. ♜d4-b3 | ♖a5-h5 |
| 17. ♙e3-d4 | |



The exchange of dark-squared bishops is favourable for White, mainly because it is useful to relieve the opponent of his pair of bishops, and also because after the exchange, the defence of the pawns at d6 and c6 becomes a rather thankless task.

17. ... f7-f6
 18. ♖d2-f4 ♞a8-d8
 19. ♙d4xa7±

Bologan-Bogdan, Neptun 1990. White has an extra pawn and an excellent position. In the end, I managed to lose the game, but it was a very long time ago!

- C) 6. ... ♖d8-b6

Black attacks the pawn on b2. But this threat is easily met – White makes natural developing moves, and later even wins a tempo, by exploiting the less than ideal position of the queen on b6.



7. ♜b1-a3 ♙c8-a6

The pawn cannot be taken because of the pin (from b1) or the fork (from c4), whichever tactical motif White prefers.

8. d2-d3 ♜g8-f6
 9. ♜a3-c4 ♖b6-c7
 10. e4-e5

White goes over to the attack and with the help of a small tactic, is able to deprive his opponent of his castling rights.

10. ... ♜f6-d5
 11. ♜c4-d6+ ♞e8-f8
 12. ♜d6-e4±

Bologan-Troyke, Dresden 1996.

D) In reply to the immediate **6...♟g8-h6** White at once creates a pawn pair in the centre:



7. c2-c3 0-0
8. d2-d4 c5xd4
9. c3xd4

- D1) 9...d6
D2) 9...d5

D1) If **9...d7-d6**, White plays the subtle prophylactic move **10.h2-h3**, immediately restraining two enemy minor pieces, the knight and the bishop on c8.

10. ... f7-f6
11. ♞b1-c3



11. ... g6-g5

An aggressive move – Black wants to seize the initiative on the kingside at once. But his pieces are not sufficiently harmoniously placed to create serious threats.

Black can start by making several developing moves – **11...♞f7 12.♞c2 ♞d7 13.♞e3 ♞a5 14.♞ad1 ♞ab8 15.b3** and only now revealing his true plans with **15...♞h5** Black wants to play ...g5-g4, or ...g5, ...♞g6, ...h5 and only then ...g4, depending on the situation. Of course, White should prevent this, so as not to fall under an attack. **16.♞e2** This move shows that the black queen can get into trouble on the kingside. Now **16...♞xh3** is not possible because of the double blow **17.♞f4**. Consequently, Black decides to return the queen to the left half of the board. **16...♞b5 17.♞d3** White creates a battery along the c-file and ties his opponent's forces to the defence of the c6 pawn. **17...♞b7 18.♞c3 ♞fc8 19.♞c1 ♞f8 20.♞d2** A multi-purpose move – under the right circumstances, White is prepared to start a kingside attack. **20...♞a8 21.♞3c2 ♞g7 22.♞c3±** Rausis-Filipovic, Basel 2007. Black has a solid but passive position. White can choose on which part of the board to carry out his assault, after due preparation.

12. ♞f3-h2

Prophylaxis against ...g5-g4. White also establishes control over the square h5, from which he wishes to exclude the black queen.

12. ... ♞d8-e8
13. ♞c1-e3 ♞a8-b8
14. ♞d1-d2

14.♞e2 is in no way worse, continuing to observe the light squares.

14. ... ♖e8-h5

15. f2-f3±

White cuts off his opponent's aggressive kingside intentions at the roots, and intends to become active himself on the other wing, with ♖ac1, ♘a4 (or ♘e2) and soon.

D2) 9. ... d7-d5



The most determined response. Yes, Black leaves himself a backward pawn on c6, but he wants to attack the enemy pawn centre at once. In addition, White now does not have time for the prophylactic h2-h3.

10. e4-e5

Of course, the white pawns on e5 and d4 are not a great sight for the bishop on g7, but Black hopes to be able to remove this barrier.

10. ♘e5?! is not good, because of 10...dxe4 (but not 10...♗b7 11. ♘c3 f6 12. ♘d3 e6 13. ♘c5± Zhu Chen-Docena, Doha rapid 2006) 11. ♘c3 ♘f5 12. ♘xc6 (And. Nikitin-Yakovich, Tomsk 1997) 12... ♖d6 13. d5 ♗xc3 14. bxc3 ♗b7±.

10. ... f7-f6

10...♗g4?! does not bring any particular dividends, because of 11. ♘bd2! 11.h3 ♗xf3 12. ♖xf3 ♘f5=. 11...♖b6 12.h3 ♗xf3 13. ♘xf3 and the black minor pieces are offside. Nor does 13...c5 14.dxc5 ♖xc5 15. ♗g5± help.



A great impression was made on me by Luke McShane's game, in which he completely smothered Black's pieces.

11. e5-e6

Putting a bone in Black's throat. It may be that White will eventually be unable to defend this pawn, but in order to win it, Black will have to expend a great deal of effort, and during this time, the white pieces will take up their ideal positions.

11. ... ♖d8-d6

12. ♖d1-e2 a7-a5

13. b2-b3 ♘h6-f5

14. ♗c1-a3 ♖d6-f4

15. ♘b1-c3!

White plays for positional domination, without worrying about the pawn.

15. ... ♘f5xd4

16. ♘f3xd4 ♖f4xd4

17. ♘c3-a4 ♖d4-a7

18. ♗a3-c5 ♖a7-c7

19. ♗c5-d4☞



McShane-Yakovich, Stockholm 2000/01.
Just look how beautifully and powerfully White has managed to post his pieces! In the near future, the knight will come to c5, and White, despite the one pawn deficit, has a clear positional advantage.

E) 6. ... ♖d8-c7

The idea of this fairly rare move is to strengthen control over square e5, and not allow the white pawn to advance there, followed by an attack on the pawn with the move ...f7-f5.



- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 7. h2-h3 | d7-d6 |
| 8. c2-c3 | f7-f5 |
| 9. e4xf5 | ♙c8xf5 |
| 10. d2-d4 | c5xd4 |
| 11. ♘f3xd4 | e7-e5 |
| 12. f2-f4! | |

White does not hurry with the exchange on f5 and for the moment, invites Black to do his worst.

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 12. ... | ♞g8-e7 |
| 13. f4xe5 | d6xe5 |
| 14. ♞d4xf5 | ♞e7xf5 |
| 15. ♞b1-d2 | |

Black has a bunch of pawn weaknesses and does not even have the bishop pair by way of compensation.

- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 15. ... | ♞f5-d6 |
| 16. ♖d1-f3 | ♜h8-f8 |
| 17. ♖f3-d3 | ♜f8-f7 |
| 18. ♞d2-c4 | ♞d6xc4 |
| 19. ♖d3xc4± | |

Macieja-Kotanjian, Martuni 2007.

F) 6. ... ♞g8-f6

A cunning move; in this variation, Black has a whole range of interesting ideas.



7.e4-e5

- 7. ♞c3?! 0-0 8.e5 ♞d5 9. ♞xd5 9. ♞e4 d6 10.exd6 exd6= 9...cxd5 10.d4 d6=;
- 7.c4 d6 8.e5 ♞g4, and Black no longer has to worry about his weak pawns on c6 and c5, since White has weakened himself on the d-file;

● Another principled variation is 7.c3 0-0 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 d5 10.e5 ♘e4 11.♘bd2 c5 11...♙f5 12.♘b3 f6 13.♙f4 g5 14.♙e3 a5 15.exf6 exf6 16.♖c1 ♖b6 17.♗e2± M.Krupa-Zawadzka, Krakow 2008. 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♘b3 ♘xb3 13...♘e4 14.♘bd4 e6 15.♙e3 ♙d7 16.♗d3 ♗b8 17.♗a3 a5 18.♗ac1± Tiurin-Savitskiy, Salekhard 2007. 14.♗xb3 d4 15.♗d1 ♙e6 16.♗a3 ♖b6 17.♗xe7 ♙g4 18.♙f4 ♙xf3 19.gxf3 ♗xb2 20.♗c5 ♗fd8 21.♙g5 ♗e8 22.f4± Alexeev-Novik, Kirishi rapid 2007.

7. ... ♘f6-d5

8. c2-c4

White is also promised a small advantage after 8.d4 cxd4 9.♗xd4 0-0 10.♗h4 d6 (10...f6!?) 11.♙h6.

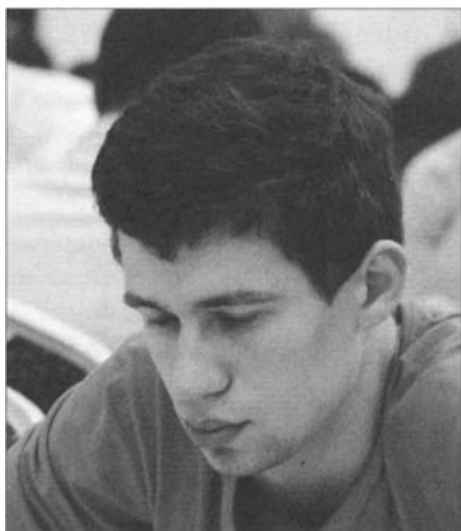
8. ... ♘d5-c7

The knight heads to e6, in order later on to fight for the squares d4 and f4. If 8...♘b6 9.d4 cxd4 10.♗xd4 the knight on b6 remains out of play. After 10...0-0 11.♗h4 White plays ♙h6, ♘c3, ♗ad1, obtaining a marked advantage.



F1) 9.d4

F2) 9.b3



Evgeny Alexeev

F1) Up to now, in general, everybody has played 9.d2-d4, but in recent times, this line has encountered problems.

9. ... c5xd4

10. ♗d1 xd4



10. ... 0-0

● 10...♙b7!? 11.♘c3 ♘e6 12.♗h4 h6 13.♘d4!? c5 14.♘xe6 dxe6 15.♗g3 0-0 16.h4!±;

● 10...d5!? 11.♘c3 ♘e6 (11...0-0 12.♗h4±) 12.♗h4 h6 13.♘d4 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4 ♙e6 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.b3±;

● 10...d6 11.♙h6 ♘e6 12.♚e3 0-0
13.♙xg7 ♘xg7 14.♘bd2 ♚b6 15.♚c3
♜b8 16.exd6 exd6 17.b3± Al Sayed-
Amanov, Doha 2006.

11. ♚d4-h4



11. ... f7-f6

Alternatives do not offer Black much solace:

● 11...d6 12.♙h6 ♘e6 13.♘c3 f6
14.♙xg7 ♘xg7 15.exf6+ ♜xf6 (with the
idea of ...♜f4) 16.♘g5! ♘xg5 17.♚xg5±,
Kasparov-Salov, Dortmund 1992;

● 11...d5?! 12.♙h6 f6 13.♙xg7 ♘xg7
14.♘c3± Glek-Cacco, Porto San Giorgio
1999;

● 11...♘e6 12.♙h6 ♜b8 (12...d5
13.♘c3 f5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.♞ad1 ♙b7
16.♞d2 ♙xh6 17.♚xh6 d4 18.♞xd4!±,
Magomedov-Myo Naing, Kuala Lumpur
1993) 13.b3 d5 14.♘c3 f6 15.♙xg7
♘xg7 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.♞ad1±,
Komliakov-Rakhimov, Moscow 1997.

12. ♘b1-c3!? ♘c7-e6

White can count on a small advantage af-
ter 12...fxe5 13.♘xe5 ♜f5 14.♘g4 ♘e6
15.♘h6+ ♙xh6 16.♚xh6 ♚c7 (also in-
sufficient is 16...d5 17.cxd5 cxd5
18.♘e2) 17.♚h4 ♜h5 18.♚g3 ♚xg3
19.hxg3.



13. ♘c3-e4

● 13.♙d2 fxe5 14.♘xe5 ♜f5±;

● 13.exf6 exf6 13...♜xf6 14.♘g5 ♘f8
15.♘ge4 ♜e6 16.♙g5 d6 17.♞ad1 ♚c7
18.♜e3 ♜b8 19.b3 ♜b4 20.♙h6± Al.
Kharitonov-Markos, Oropesa del Mar
1999; 13...♙xf6 14.♘g5±. 14.♙e3
14.♘e4 d5; 14.♚g3 f5 15.♚d6 ♙a6±.
14...f5! I think this is White's best chance.
Now White should exchange queens, af-
ter which his pressure is undoubtedly re-
duced. Weaker is 14...♜b8 15.♜e2 ♚a5
16.♘d1 ♜b4 (16...f5 17.♙h6!±) 17.a3
♜b8 18.♞ed2± Sutovsky-Tibensky,
Kaskady 2002. 15.♚xd8 ♜xd8 By accu-
rate play, Black should achieve equality.
16.♞ac1 16.♘a4 d5 17.cxd5 cxd5
18.♘g5 d4 19.♘xe6 ♙xe6 20.♙f4 ♙f7±
Warakomski-Kryvoruchko, Cappelle la
Grande 2007. 16...d5 17.cxd5 cxd5
18.♙d2 ♜b8=.

13. ... f6xe5

● 13...d6 14.exd6 exd6 15.♙e3 d5
(15...f5!? 16.♘eg5 h6 17.♘xe6 ♚xh4
18.♘xh4 ♙xe6 19.♘xg6 ♜fe8 20.♞ad1
♙xb2 21.♞xd6 ♙xc4 22.♞xc6 ♙xa2±)
16.♞ad1 ♚a5 17.♘c3 g5 18.♚g3 dxc4
19.♚d6±;
● 13...g5 14.♚h5 ♚e8 15.♚xe8 ♜xe8
16.exf6 exf6 17.♘d6 ♜f8 18.♙d2±.



14. ♖e4-g5

Black is also fine after 14. ♖f5 ♖xg5 15. ♗xg5 ♜b6 16. c5 ♜xb2.

14. ... ♖e6xg5

15. ♗c1xg5 ♜d8-c7

Black threatens the unstoppable ...d7-d5, while after the capture on e7, he has prepared ...♜f4.

F2) 9. b2-b3!?



I cannot say that this is absolutely new, but it is a very rare and interesting concept. The idea is to defend as much as possible the crucial e5-square, which the white pawn will then occupy.

9. ... 0-0

● 9...f5 10. ♗b2 0-0 (Dombrowski-Lewandowski, Gdansk 2007) 11. ♖c3 d6 12. ♖a4±;

● 9...♖e6 10. ♖c3 0-0 11. ♗b2 d6 (11...d5!?) 12. ♖a4 (an important move; White defends the e5 pawn just in time and takes the enemy c5 pawn under observation) 12...dxe5 13. ♗xe5 f6 14. ♗b2±. Black has quite an unpleasant position. His knight is tied to the defence of the c5 pawn, and his bishop on g7 is blocked in. If Black should at some point end up playing ...f6-f5, then he will have terrible weaknesses in his camp;

● 9...d6 (a logical move – Black wishes to exploit the weakening of the long diagonal) 10. ♗b2 0-0 (10...♖e6 11. ♜c1 – by defending the bishop, White is ready to exchange on d6)



Analysis diagram

11. exd6! (this small trick allows White to change the situation in his favour) 11...exd6 12. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 13. h3± Sooner or later, White will advance d2-d4 and organize pressure against the c6 and d6 pawns;

● 9...f6 10. ♗b2 0-0 10...fxe5 11. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 12. ♖xe5 0-0 13. ♖c3 ♜e8 14. ♖f3 d6 15. d4 cxd4 (15...♗g4 16. dxc5 ♗xf3 17. gxf3 dxc5 18. ♜e5±) 16. ♖xd4 ♗d7 17. ♜e3±. White has more space, he controls the centre better and the opponent's e7 pawn requires defence. 11. exf6 exf6 12. ♖c3 d6 13. d4±



Emil Sutovsky

Here too, White has an advantage in development and a space advantage. For the moment, Black's bishop on g7 is shut in and if he wants at some point to release it, by playing ...f6-f5, then this will in turn block the bishop on c8.

10. ♖c1-b2 ♘c7-e6
11. ♘b1-c3



11. ... ♘e6-d4

- White is better after 11...d6 12. ♘a4 f6 13. exd6 exd6 14. d4;
- 11...d5 12. ♘a4 dxc4 (if 12...d4, then 13. ♖a3 ♗a5 14. d3, creating the unpleasant threat 15. ♗d2. Black has problems with the defence of the pawn on c5) 13. bxc4 ♜b8 14. ♗c2±. The black knight is tied to the c5 pawn, and because of this, his light-squared bishop cannot come into play.

- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 12. ♘f3xd4 | c5xd4 |
| 13. ♘c3-a4 | d7-d5 |
| 14. ♗d1-e2 | d4-d3 |
| 15. ♗e2xd3 | ♙c8-f5 |
| 16. ♗d3-c3± | |

Once again, the system of neutralizing Black is applied. If the dark-squared bishops come off the board, then White is better. Meanwhile, the pawn on e5 fulfils the role of limiting the bishop on g7.



Conclusion:

Aggressively-minded players often sacrifice the b-pawn, in order to set in motion their pawn avalanche. But White can also achieve this effect more calmly, by skilful exploitation of the breaks c2-c4 and e4-e5. And all thanks to the opponent's doubled pawns.

Chapter 12 – The Fianchetto with 4...dxc6

1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6 3.♙f1-b5 g7-g6 4.♙b5xc6 d7xc6



As we have seen, in the variation with 4...bxc6 Black often ends up with an unwieldy, inflexible pawn mass in the centre, which only obstructs his own bishops. In this line, Black immediately opens the diagonal for the bishop on c8, and the d-file for his queen. Admittedly, it is still not so simple to activate the light-squared bishop, since as a rule, White puts a pawn on h3, and restricts the bishop's possibilities.

5. h2-h3

I usually play this move, although 5.d3 is also possible. In my opinion, there is no significant difference between the two. The plan with d2-d3 and h2-h3 was invented by Chebanenko in 1977, before a game in the USSR under-20 championship, in which his pupil, Viktor Komliakov, had to meet one of the strongest juniors of that time, Sergey Dolmatov.

5. ... ♙f8-g7

White can immediately place his pieces and pawns so as to meet White's plan of f2-f4, by playing 5...e5 6.d3 f6 7.♘c3 ♘h6 8.♙e3 ♘f7 9.♘d2 b6. In this case, it makes

sense for White to go over to the alternative plan with b4: 10.a3 ♙g7 11.b4±.

6. d2-d3



The main theoretical continuation in this position is 6...♘f6, which will be examined in Chapters 13 and 14. Here, we will look at Black's other possibilities.

- A) 6...e5
B) 6...h6
C) 6...b6

A) 6. ... e7-e5

This is somewhat premature. Usually after 4...dxc6, White develops his queen's knight to c3. But here, when the pawn is already on e5, the knight changes course in order to win an important tempo later by attacking this pawn.



7. ♖b1-d2 ♜g8-e7

7...♖h6 8.♖c4 f6 9.♙e3 b6 10.a4 0-0 We already know what follows after 10...a5, so here we will look at another, more modest continuation for Black. 11.a5 ♙e6 This position occurred in a game of mine at the Reggio Emilia tournament, against an Italian amateur. I won a long endgame, having had the advantage the entire game. 12.0-0 ♜c7 13.♞a3 White strengthens the pressure along the a-file, inviting his opponent to play ...b6-b5. In this case, the a-pawn can become very weak. 13...♞fd8 14.axb6 axb6 15.♜a1 ♞xa3 16.♜xa3 ♜f7 17.♞a1± and White's heavy pieces are ready to penetrate down the a-file. Black has weak pawns on b6 and c5, and at some moment, the break b2-b4 can be very unpleasant for him.

8. ♖d2-c4 ♜d8-c7
9. 0-0 0-0
10. ♙c1-e3 b7-b6
11. a2-a4 a7-a5

11...♙e6 12.a5 ♞ad8 13.axb6 axb6
14.♜e2 ♞a8 15.♜g5 ♙xc4 16.dxc4±



12. b2-b4!

A brilliant idea, which I learned from Chebanenko. These days, this tactical motif has become well-known, of course. But the first one to play it was another Chebanenko pupil, Viorel Iordachescu, in a game against Alexander Lysenko (Bucharest 1993).

12. ... a5xb4
13. a4-a5 b6xa5
14. ♙e3xc5 ♙c8-e6
15. ♜f3-d2

A simple and strong move. The knight on c4 plays a very important role, so it is important first to strengthen it, and only then to concern oneself with regaining the sacrificed material.

- Weaker is 15.♙b6 because of 15...♜b8 16.♜fd2 ♜d5!, but not 16...a4 17.♜b1±;
- Unclear play results from 15.♙d6 ♜d8∞.

15. ... f7-f5

15...f6 16.♖a4 followed by ♖a1, and Black will have two pawns hanging, on a5 and b4.

16. e4xf5 ♙e6xc4

17. ♘d2xc4 e5-e4

18. f5xg6±

18.♖xa5 ♖xa5 19.♘xa5 ♖xf5 20.♙xe7 ♖xa5 21.♙xb4 ♖a1 22.♖g4 ♖xf1+ 23.♙xf1 exd3 24.♖e6+ ♖f7 25.♖c8+ ♙f8 26.cxd3, and Black resigned in Manescu-Kreisler, Faaker See 2003.

B) 6. ... h7-h6?!

A cunning move, the idea of which is to prevent a later ♙e3, ♖d2 and ♙h6.



7. 0-0!

A useful developing move, keeping the possibility of playing ♘d2-c4 in reply to ...e7-e5. Black has comfortable play after 7.♘bd2 ♘f6 8.♘c4 ♖c7.

7. ... e7-e5

7...♘f6 8.♙e3 b6 9.♖c1, transposing into the main line.

8. ♘b1-d2 ♙g8-e7

8...♖c7 9.♘c4 b5 10.♘cd2± followed by ♘b3, battling for the c5-square.

9. ♘d2-c4 ♖d8-c7

10. ♙c1-e3 b7-b6

11. a2-a4

We have reached a familiar situation, with the inclusion of the moves 0-0 and ...h6; probably this inclusion is in favour of White, who would also stand well without the inclusion of these moves.

11. ... a7-a5

12. b2-b4 a5xb4

13. a4-a5 b6xa5

14. ♙e3xc5±

Porth-Pöck, Germany 2003.

C) 6. ... b7-b6

An interesting idea. It has been played several times by Vladimir Kramnik, in particular in a game against myself.



C1) 7.♘c3

C2) 7.0-0

C1) 7. ♘b1-c3

If White intends to castle kingside, then there is no sense in hurrying with the development of his knight to c3.

It is better to await Black's reaction, keeping in reserve the option $\text{♟}b2$ in reply to ...e7-e5. This is all the more the case, given the fact that ...b7-b6 is not an obligatory part of Black's plans against 7.0-0.

7. ... e7-e5



7...♟h6 8.♙e3 8.a3 0-0 9.0-0 ♖c7
10.♙e3 f5 11.♙xh6 ♙xh6 12.exf5 ♙xf5
13.♖e2 ♙f4 14.d4 ♖d7 15.♞fe1 cxd4
16.♖c4+ ♞f7 17.♟e2 b5 18.♖xd4±
Svidler-Ivanchuk, Kallithea 2008. 8...f6
9.0-0 9.♖d2 ♟f7 10.0-0-0 (10.e5 0-0
11.0-0-0 ♙e6 12.♞he1 fxe5 13.♟g5 ♙d5
14.♟xf7 ♞xf7 15.f3 ♖d6⇒ S.Zhigalko-
Teterev, St. Petersburg 2008) 10...e5
11.g4±; 9.♖e2!? e5 10.♟d2 ♟f7 11.a3
♖e7 12.a4 0-0 13.a5 ♙e6 14.0-0 f5
15.exf5 gxf5 16.f4↑. 9...0-0 9...e5 10.a3
a5 11.♟a4 ♞b8 12.b4! (Rublevsky-
Iskusnikh, St. Petersburg 1999) 12...cxb4
13.axb4 axb4 14.♖d2 ♟f7 15.♖xb4±
10.a3 10.♟d2!?, opening the path of the
f-pawn. 10...♟f7 11.b4 f5 12.♙d2 ♖d6
13.♞b1 e5 14.♟a4 c4? 14...cxb4 15.axb4
f4 followed by ...g5, ...h5, ...♖g6. 15.dxc4
fxe4 16.♟g5 After this move, the Black
bishops remain passive. 16...♟xg5
17.♙xg5 ♖d4 18.♖e2 ♙e6 (Rublevsky-
Ponomarev, Moscow 2002) 19.♟b2 h6
20.♞fd1 ♖c3 21.♖e3 ♖xe3 22.♙xe3±



S.B. Hansen

8. 0-0

8.♙e3 ♟e7 9.♖d2 h6 10.g4 ♙e6
11.0-0-0 ♖d7 12.♞hg1 0-0-0 13.♟e2
(13.b3 f6 14.♖e2 h5 15.♟d2 hxg4
16.hxg4 g5 17.a4 ♟g6⇒ Gunnarsson-
V. Georgiev, Novi Sad 2009) 13...♟b7
14.♟b1 ♟c8 15.♟g3 ♟d6 16.♟f5 f6
17.♟xg7 ♖xg7 18.♖e2 g5 19.c4 h5
20.♟d2 ½-½, S.B.Hansen-Lund, Den-
mark 2008/09.

8. ... ♟g8-e7



9. a2-a4 a7-a5
10. ♟f3-d2

10. ♖e2 0-0 with mutual chances.

10. ... ♗c8-e6

After 10...0-0 11. ♖c4 ♗e6 12. ♗e3
White has a small advantage.

11. ♖c3-e2 0-0

12. f2-f4 f7-f5!

With the initiative for Black, Bologan-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2004.

C2) **7. 0-0**

C21) 7...♖h6

C22) 7...e5!?

7...♖f6 8. ♖c3 – see 6...♖f6.

C21) **7. ... ♖g8-h6**

This was played against me by the Belorussian GM Sergey Zhigalko at the European Championship 2009. At the board, I decided to work out the disadvantages of Black's last two moves 6...b6 and 7...♖h6?: they do not really accord with general central strategy and, to my mind, they do not go well together either.



C211) 8. ♖c3

C212) 8.a4

White has an interesting idea, involving the sacrifice of the exchange and a pawn for control of the dark squares: **8. ♗d2 f6** **8...♗xb2!?** **9. ♖a3 ♖g8** **10. ♖c4 ♗xa1** **11. ♖xa1 f6** **12.e5**. I am not sure that White has sufficient compensation for the exchange and a pawn, but this idea could certainly be worth trying in something like rapid chess. **9.e5 0-0 10.exf6 exf6** **11. ♗c3 ♖f7** **12. ♖bd2 ♖d6** **13.b3 ♗e6** **14. ♖e1 ♖d7** **15. ♖c4 ♖f5** with counterplay in Shirov-Radjabov, Leon rapid 2004.

C211) **8. ♖b1-c3 0-0**

8...f6 **9. ♗e3 e5** **10. ♖h2 0-0** **11.f4 exf4** **12. ♖xf4 f5** **13. ♖d2 g5** **14. ♖ff1 f4** **15. ♗f2 ♖f7** **16. ♖f3 h5** Tomilova-Korbut, Dagomys 2004.

9. ♗c1-e3 f7-f6



10. a2-a3

● **10.a4 a5** **10...♖f7?! 11.a5 ♖b8** **12.axb6 axb6** **13. ♖h2 f5** **14.exf5 gxf5** **15.f4 ♗e6** **16. ♖f3 c4** (Sanduleac-Kotronias, Eforie Nord 2008) **17. ♖a7±** **11.d4 cxd4** **12. ♖xd4 ♖xd4** **13. ♖xd4 ♗d7** **14. ♖fd1 ♖fb8** **15. ♖d2 ♖f7** **16. ♖ad1 ♖b7** **17. ♖de2 ♗e8** **18.f4 e5±** Chernyshov-Bocharov, Sochi 2006;

● 10. ♖d2 ♘f7 11. ♘h2 e5 12. f4 exf4
13. ♙xf4 ♘e5 14. ♚af1 ♙e6 15. ♚4f2 ♙f7
16. ♘f3 ♘xf3+ 17. ♙xf3 ♖d7 18. b3 ♙e8
19. ♘h1 ♙h8 20. ♙h6 (Kovalevskaya-
Cmilyte, Plovdiv 2008) 20...f5±.

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 10. ... | a7-a5 |
| 11. ♘f3-h2 | e7-e5 |
| 12. ♖d1-d2 | ♘h6-f7 |
| 13. ♙a1-b1 | a5-a4 |
| 14. f2-f4 | e5xf4 |
| 15. ♙e3xf4 | ♙c8-e6 |
| 16. ♘g1-h1 | f6-f5 |
| 17. ♘h2-f3 | |

Yakovenko-Cherniaev, Krasnodar 2002.

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 17. ... | f5xe4 |
| 18. ♘c3xe4 | c5-c4 |
| 19. d3-d4 | ♙e6-d5 |
| 20. ♙b1-e1 | ♙f8-e8± |



C212) 8. a2-a4

The idea of this move is to provoke the opponent into creating weaknesses on the queenside, and then attack them.

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| 8. ... | a7-a5 |
| 9. ♙c1-e3! | |

One of the consequences of White's previous move: after 9...♙xb2 10. ♘a3 the knight on a3 will now be defended.

I realized that White can do without the move ♘c3 and first develop the bishop, only deciding later where to place the knight, depending on the situation on the board.



9. ... f7-f6

9...♙xb2 10. ♘a3 ♙g7 10...♘g8 11. ♘c4 ♙xa1 12. ♖xa1 f6 13. ♙b1 – White has rich compensation for the sacrificed material; 10...♙xa1? 11. ♖xa1 – Black has a rook and knight hanging. 11. ♙b1 ♙e6 12. ♘c4 ♙xc4 13. dxc4 ♖c7 The only move, in order not to lose all his queenside pawns. 14. ♖d2 ♘g8 Again the only move. 15. ♙fd1± White has a large advantage in development and excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| 10. ♘b1-a3 | e7-e5 |
| 11. ♘a3-c4 | |

11.c3 0-0 12. ♖b3+ ♘f7 13. ♘c4 ♙e6!? (13...♙a6 14. ♙fd1 ♙e6 15.d4±) 14. ♖xb6 (14. ♙fd1 ♘d6=) 14...♖xd3 15. ♘xa5 ♙fb8 16. ♖xc6 ♙a6 17. ♙fd1 ♙xc6 18. ♙xd3 ♙a6 19. ♙xc5 ♙xa5 20. b4 ♙a6 21. a5 ♙f8±.

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 11. ... | ♙c8-e6 |
| 12. ♘f3-d2 | |

White reinforces the knight on c4, which keeps the entire enemy queenside under pressure, and prepares to become active on the kingside, by playing f2-f4.

12. ... ♖a8-a6

A useful prophylactic move. In the event of 12...♟f7 the same brilliant idea of Chebanenko's follows:



13.b4!! axb4 (13...cxb4 14.♙xb6 ♖e7 15.♙xa5±) 14.a5 bxa5 15.♙xc5 ♙f8 16.♙b6 ♖b8 17.♙xa5 ♙e7 18.♙b6±. It is interesting that at first, Zhigalko wanted to play 12...♟f7 at once, but then he spotted the idea of b2-b4, and stopped and thought for a long time. He chose a more solid continuation, but his time expenditure later took its toll and his subsequent time-pressure enabled me to win the game.

13. f2-f4 e5xf4 14. ♙e3xf4 ♟h6-f7 15. ♖d1-f3

Maybe 15.♟e3± was stronger and safer, in order to prevent Black's only active idea, which is ...f6-f5.

15. ... 0-0 16. ♟g1-h1 ♖a6-a7 17. ♟c4-e3

17.♖f2 ♟e5! (17...f5 18.exf5 ♙xf5 19.♙ae1) 18.♟e3 ♖d4 19.b3 ♙af7±.

17. ... b6-b5

Step by step, Black prepares counterplay on the queenside. It will not pose White a big problem if he undertakes a few preventive measures.

18. ♖f3-f2 ♖a7-d7

Bologan-S.Zhigalko, Budva 2009.

The somewhat slow course of the game slightly weakened my attentiveness, and I forgot that Black can also create some sort of threat.

Here I played 19.♟f3, overlooking the excellent reply 19...♟g5!. Instead, I should have played 19.b3± and White prevents both of his opponent's active plans and retains a small opening advantage.

C22) 7. ... e7-e5!?



8. a2-a3

The most popular plan. This set-up has often been used as Black by Grandmaster Kotronias, although in the majority of cases he has stood worse, so one can draw the conclusion that on the whole, this line is better for White. The alternatives are also interesting, but weaker than 8.a3:

● 8.a4 ♖e7 9.♗e3 9.a5 ♗e6⇒. 9...a5
10.♖a3 f6 11.♖c4 11.c3 ♗e6⇒. 11...♗e6
12.b3 g5 12...0-0 13.♖b1 ♖c8 14.♖d2
♗f7 15.♖h2 ♖aa7 16.♖g4± Lakos-
Dudas, Hungary 2001. 13.♖fd2 ♖g6
14.b4!? axb4 15.a5 bxa5 16.♗xc5 ♗f8□
17.♗b6 ♖d7 18.♗xa5 ♖b8 18...♖a6!?.
19.♗b6 ♗e7 20.♖a7 ♖b7 21.♖a8+ ♖f7
22.♖xh8 ♖xh8 23.♗e3 ♖g6♖
Jackova-Dembo, Gothenburg 2005;

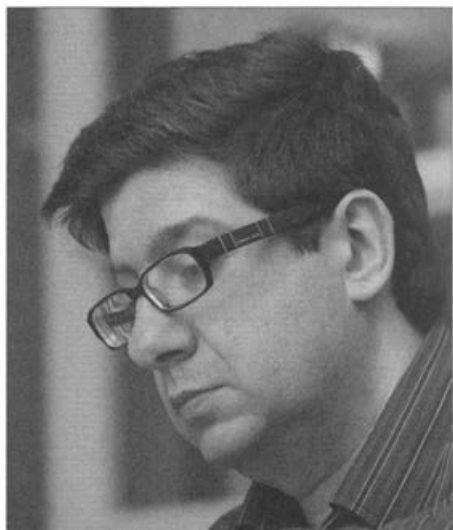
● By analogy with the examples looked
at earlier, White can also play 8.♖bd2
here, directing the knight to c4, in order
then to carry out the advance b2-b4.
8...♖h6 9.♖c4 f6 10.♗e3 ♗e6 11.a3
♖f7 12.b4 cxb4 13.axb4 f5 14.♖e2 f4
15.♗c1 g5 16.♗b2 ♗xc4 17.dxc4 h5
18.♖e1± Alexeev-Mamedyarov, Elista
2008.



8. ... f7-f6

Now White realizes his main idea.

The alternative is 8...a5 9.♗e3 ♖e7
10.♖bd2 ♗a6 10...a4 11.b4 axb3
12.♖xb3. White has very simple play
here – he advances a4-a5 and destroys his
opponent's queenside pawn structure.
Here is a comparatively new example:
12...f5 13.a4 f4 14.♗d2 ♖d6 15.♗c3
♖b8 16.♖b1 g5 17.♖b2 ♖g6 18.♖bd2
b5 19.axb5 cxb5 20.♖a7 ♗f6 21.♗a5



Vasilios Kotronias

♖c6 22.♖c7 ♖d6 23.♖c4 ♖e6 24.♖xc5
0-0 25.♗c7 ♖b7 26.♖a5 ♖a7 27.♖xb5
♗d7 28.♖b6 ♖xb6 29.♗xb6 ♖a6
30.♖c4 g4 31.hxg4 ♗xg4 32.♖fd2+–
Anand-Radjabov, Monaco 2009. 11.♖b1



Analysis diagram

A relatively fresh idea: White wants to
create pressure against the pawn on b6
and thus prepares the break b2-b4. In ad-
dition, in some cases, the queen came
come to a2. 11...h6 12.♖c4 f5 13.♖a2!
Once Black has weakened the a2-g8 diag-
onal, placing the queen here becomes
very unpleasant for him. 13...♗xc4 Not

13...f4?? 14.♟cxe5. 14.♟xc4 a4 14...f4
 15.♟d2 ♟d6 16.b4 cxb4 17.axb4 a4
 18.b5±. 15.b4 ♟d7 16.♞ab1 ♟c8
 17.bxc5 b5 18.♟a2 ♟f7 19.♟b2±
 A. Zhigalko-Mamedov, Moscow 2009.

9. b2-b4

White is ready to undouble his opponent's pawns, because in return he obtains several real positional plusses. Most of all, he now has more pawns in the centre, and in addition, the rook on a1 comes into play and exerts pressure on the pawn on a7.

9. ... c5xb4
 10. a3xb4 ♟g8-h6



11. c2-c4!

The latest word in this variation. White takes advantage of the fact that the knight has not yet gone to c3, in order to seize space on the queenside.

Some other possibilities for White:

● 11.♟bd2 ♟f7 12.♟b2 0-0 13.d4 exd4
 14.♟xd4 ♞e8 15.♞e1 ♟e6 16.♞a3 ♞e7
 17.♟a1± Zhang Zhong-Kotronias, Port Erin 2004;

● 11.♟a3 0-0 11...♟f7 12.c4 0-0 13.b5
 c5 14.♟c3 ♞b8 15.♟d5 ♞b7 16.♟b2
 ♟d6 17.♟d2 f5 18.f4 exf4 19.♟xg7
 ♞xg7 20.♞xf4 ♟e6 21.e5 ♟e8 22.♟b3

♟d7 (T.Kosintseva-Kotronias, Moscow 2007) 23.♟f1!? ♟g7 24.♟fe3 ♟h5
 25.♞f2 f4 26.♟g4?. 12.b5 c5 13.c4 ♟e6
 14.♟c3 ♟d7 15.♟b2 ♟f7 16.♟d5 ♟xd5
 17.exd5 ♞ae8 18.♟d2 ♟d6 19.♟e4 ♟xe4
 20.dxe4 ♞f7 21.♞a3± Rublevsky-Kotronias, Warsaw 2005;

● 11.♟b2 ♟f7 12.♟c3 0-0 13.♟e2 ♞e8
 14.♟h2 ♟f8 15.♟e1 ♟d6 16.♟h1 ♟e7
 17.♟c3 ♟d7 18.♟d2 ♟c7⇒ Tkachiev-Kotronias, France 2007.

11. ... 0-0
 12. ♟b1-c3 ♟h6-f7
 13. ♟c1-b2

Black has good counterplay in the event of 13.c5 b5 or 13.b5 c5 14.♟d5 f5.

13. ... f6-f5
 14. e4xf5

14.♞e1?! ♞e8 15.♟e2 ♟d7 16.♞ad1
 ♟c7 17.♟c2 ♞ab8 18.♟b3 a6 19.exf5
 gxf5 20.♟e2 c5⇒ S.Zhigalko-Kotronias,
 Dresden 2008.

14. ... g6xf5

Of course, capturing with the bishop is not good, because then White gets an excellent central square for the knight:
 14...♟xf5?! 15.♟e4 ♟d7 16.♟e2±.

15. ♟c3-e2



15. ♖e1 ♜e8± is less promising. With the text, White opens the diagonal of the bishop on b2 and prepares to transfer the knight to h5, closer to the enemy king. Black already faces something of a crisis.

15. ... e5-e4

15... ♜e8 16. ♘g3±.

16. ♙b2xg7 e4xf3

17. ♙g7xf8 f3xe2

18. ♚d1xe2 ♙g8xf8

19. ♜f1-e1

Nominally, Black has a small material advantage, but objectively, White's position is clearly better of course. Black has an insecure king, badly coordinated pieces and many pawn weaknesses.



19. ... f5-f4

On 19... ♙d7 the reply 20. ♚b2!± is very unpleasant, taking control of the long Black diagonal.

20. ♚e2-e4

A triple blow – that is how many weak pawns Black has!

20. ... ♜d8-f6

21. ♜e4-e8+ ♙f8-g7

Maciej-Kotronias, Kusadasi 2006,

22. b4-b5! f2-f3

23. ♜e8xc6±



Conclusion:

By taking on c6 with the d-pawn, Black counts on activating (or exchanging) his bishop on c8, but White immediately starts playing to restrict it, by placing his pawns on light squares. At move six, Black does best to continue developing his kingside, and the move 6... ♘f6 will be the subject of the next two chapters, 13 and 14. On the other hand, any change of the pawn structure by Black at such an early stage of the game is hardly likely to be correct. Having seen his opponent's plans, White can immediately make the appropriate adjustments in his own set-up and obtain then advantage.

Chapter 13 – Black Plays 4...dxc6 and 6...♘f6

1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6 3.♙f1-b5 g7-g6 4.♙b5xc6 d7xc6
5.h2-h3 ♙f8-g7 6.d2-d3 ♘g8-f6



The most natural and flexible continuation. Black completes the development of his kingside and, for the moment, does not determine the central pawn structure.

7. ♘b1-c3

White wants to gradually prepare queenside castling – at least, that is the way Chebanenko taught his pupils to play the position.

But in 2003, I had a training session with Garry Kasparov, and we came to the conclusion that another plan, involving the immediate 7.0-0, is also very unpleasant for Black. In recent times, many players have started playing like this, and have achieved very good results. This plan is examined in Chapter 14.

- A) 7...0-0
- B) 7...e5
- C) 7...c4
- D) 7...♘d7

- A) 7. ... 0-0
- 8. ♙c1-e3



- A1) 8...♘d7
- A2) 8...♙a5
- A3) 8...c4
- A4) 8...b6

- A1) 8. ... ♘f6-d7
- 9. ♙d1-d2 ♙f8-e8

Black plans the set-up e5 and ♖e7, after which he will be able to transfer the knight via f8 and e6 to d4.

9...♖b6 10.♖b1 ♖c7 11.♙h6 e5 12.♙xg7 ♗xg7 13.♘h2 ♘f6 14.0-0 ♙e6 15.f4 exf4 16.♗xf4 ♘h5 17.♗f3 ♖e5 18.♖bf1± Rublevsky-Ivanovic, Niksic 1997.

10. ♙e3-h6!? **e7-e5**

10...♘f8 11.h4 ♙g4 12.♙xg7 ♗xg7 13.♖g5 ♙xf3 14.gxf3 ♘e6 15.♖e3±.

11. h3-h4 **♙g7xh6**

12. ♖d2xh6 **f7-f6**

13. 0-0-0

Of course, 13.h5?? g5 is bad, when the queen is trapped.

13. ... **♘d7-f8**

14. ♖d1-g1

My plan is very simple – I want to play g4-g5 and then h4-h5.

14. ... **♙c8-g4**

15. ♘f3-h2 **♙g4-d7**

16. g2-g4 **♖d8-e7**



Black wants to answer 17.g5 with 17...♖g7, forcing the exchange of queens, and consequently, before continuing with the pawn storm, I retreat my queen.

17. ♖h6-e3 **♘f8-e6**

18. g4-g5

White creates a serious threat: 19.♘g4.

18. ... **f6xg5**

19. ♘h2-f3

The knight changes course and immediately hits two pawns – g5 and e5.

19. ... **♖e7-f6**

20. ♘f3xg5

In similar structures, it is useful to exchange knights, because the black knight is a very good defender, which practically single-handedly covers Black's numerous weaknesses.

20. ... **♗e8-f8**

21. ♘g5xe6 **♙d7xe6**

22. ♖e3xc5 **b7-b6**

23. ♖c5-e3±

Bologan-Yustus, Dimitrovgrad 1988. White has won a pawn, and later won the game.

A2) **8. ...** **♖d8-a5**



A slightly strange-looking, but quite playable move.

9. 0-0 **♗f8-d8**

Black's idea is to advance ...c5-c4, but this threat is easily met.

10. ♖f3-d2 b7-b6

Even without this move, the queen is not well placed on a5, but now it is surrounded on all sides by its own pawns.

11. f2-f4 ♖f6-d7
 12. ♖d2-c4 ♜a5-a6
 13. a2-a4 ♜a6-b7
 14. ♜d1-e1 ♜b7-c7
 15. ♜e1-h4

White has easy play and dominates the whole board.

15. ... ♙c8-a6
 16. ♖c4-d2 ♙g7-f6
 17. ♜h4-f2 ♙d8-f8
 18. ♖d2-f3 ♙a8-d8
 19. ♙g1-h1 ♙a6-c8
 20. ♙a1-e1 ♙f6-g7
 21. f4-f5 ♖d7-f6
 22. ♜f2-h4±

Bologan-Grigore, Neptun 1990.



Garry Kasparov

A3) 8. ... c5-c4



By sacrificing a pawn, Black hopes to open the game somewhat, and thanks to his two bishops wants to obtain compensation. However, White can ignore this move and quietly continue his development.

9. 0-0 c4xd3
 10. c2xd3 ♜d8-a5

Unfortunately for Black, he will not be able to play ...c6-c5, fixing the pawn on d3.

11. d3-d4 ♙c8-e6
 12. ♜d1-c2 h7-h6
 13. a2-a3 ♙f8-d8
 14. b2-b4 ♜a5-h5
 15. ♖c3-e2

The standard reaction to the black queen's appearance on h5: by now the fork ♖f4 is threatened and Black does not have time for ...♙xh3.

15. ... ♜h5-b5
 16. ♖e2-f4 ♜b5-c4
 17. ♜c2-b1 ♜c4-b3
 18. e4-e5 ♖f6-e8
 19. ♖f4xe6 ♜b3xe6
 20. b4-b5±

Kasparov-Gouveia, Rio de Janeiro 1996.

Both black minor pieces are very badly placed, whilst White has already begun an attack on the queenside. In 2003, Kasparov and I discussed this variation and came to the conclusion that the plan with 8...c4 is not dangerous for White, precisely because of the quiet reply 9.0-0.

A4) 8. ... **b7-b6**

The main continuation, which has, for example, been played successfully several times by Peter Leko.

9. ♖d1-d2



A41) 9...♟e8

A42) 9...e5

Slow is 9...♞e8 10.a3 a5 (if 10...e5 White obtains control over the queenside with 11.b4! cxb4 12.axb4±) 11.0-0 ♞d7 12.♟h2 ♟f8 13.f4 f5 14.♞ae1 ♟e6 15.exf5 gxf5 16.♟f3 ♞d4 17.♟e5 ♟e6 18.♞f2 ♟xe5 19.fxg5 ♟h8 20.♟xd4 ♞xd4 21.♟e2 ♞xf2+ 22.♞xf2± Rublevsky-Andersson, Polanica Zdroj 1997.

A41) 9. ... **♟f6-e8**

Black begins the transfer of the knight to d4. The plan is not bad, but it is very slow; during this time, White can create real threats on the kingside.

10. 0-0-0

● 10.♟h6 f6 11.e5 ♟e6 12.0-0 ♟d5 12...♞d7 13.♟xg7 ♟xg7 14.♞fe1 ♟f5 15.♟e4 ♟d5 16.♞ad1 ♞d4 17.♟h2 ♞ad8± Buchal-Arnold, Germany Bundesliga B 1998/99. 13.♟h2 c4 14.♟g4 f5 15.♟xg7 ♟xg7 16.♟h2 cxd3 17.♞xd3 e6 18.♞fe1 ♞e7 19.♞ad1 ♞ad8± Delchev-Mensch, Metz 2002;

● It is also logical to exploit the knight's departure from the kingside and start an attack there: 10.h4 ♟g4 10...h5 11.0-0-0 ♞c7 12.♟g5 ♟e6 13.♟xe6 ♟xe6 14.f3 and g2-g4. 11.h5 Maybe 11.♟h2 is stronger, not allowing the enemy bishop to g4; after 11...♟e6 12.h5, White begins a direct attack on the enemy king. 11...♟xf3 12.gxf3 e5 13.0-0-0± Komliakov-Dolmatov, Moscow 1977.

10. ... **♟e8-c7**
 11. ♟e3-h6 **♟c7-e6**
 12. h3-h4 **♟g7xh6**
 13. ♞d2xh6 **f7-f6**
 14. ♟c3-e2



White is ready to exchange one of his knights on d4 when Black puts his knight on this square, but he wants to ensure that the opponent recaptures with a pawn.

14. ... ♖f8-f7
 15. g2-g4 ♜e6-d4
 16. ♜f3xd4 c5xd4
 17. ♖d1-g1±

Bologan-Kharlov, Azov 1991. White will follow up with g4-g5 and h4-h5, developing a very strong attack on the king.

- A42) 9. ... e7-e5
 10. ♖e3-h6 ♜d8-d6

Weaker is 10...♜e7 because of 11.0-0-0 (White also has the good alternative 11.0-0 ♜e8 12.♜h2 followed by the exchange on g7 and f2-f4) 11...♜h5 12.♜e2 (over-protecting the important square f4) 12...f6 13.g4 ♖xh6 14.♜xh6 ♜g7 15.♜d2± Kuczynski-B.Socko, Polanica Zdroj 1999. White will continue with f2-f4 and develop an initiative on the kingside.



A421) 11.0-0-0

A422) 11.g4

A421) 11.0-0-0 a7-a5

Leko's favourite set-up, which has served him well for some years. Black wants to put his bishop on a6 and then, depending on the situation, play a5-a4 or c5-c4.

In any case, Black hopes to become active on the queenside. However, in recent times White has managed to pose his opponent new problems.

Insufficient for equality is 11...♜e6 12.♜b1 b5 13.♜e2 a5 14.♖xg7 ♜xg7 15.♜g5 (seizing the chance to exchange the enemy bishop) 15...h6 16.♜xe6+ fxe6 (Adams-Hausrath, Breda 1999) 17.f3±. White has a solid position and later he will decide what to do with it – whether to play c2-c3 and d3-d4, or to prepare an attack on the kingside.



12. ♜f3-h2!?

12.♖xg7 ♜xg7 13.g4 13.♜h2!? a4 14.♜g4 ♜g8 15.♜e2!? (15.♜b1 a3 16.b3 ♜d4 17.♜h2 b5 18.♜f3 ♜d6 19.♜e2 ♖e6 20.g3 ♖ad8 21.♜g5 c4 22.f4 cxd3 23.cxd3 f6 24.♜f3 c5 25.♜e3 ♜e7 26.♜c3 ♖d7 27.h4 b4 28.♜e2 ♖g4± Grischuk-Leko, Moscow 2002) 15...♖xg4 16.hxg4 ♜e6 17.♜b1 ♜xg4 18.f3 ♜e6 19.g4 f6∞ Grischuk-Ponomarev, Moscow 2002. 13...a4 14.♜e2 b5 15.♜g3 b4 16.♜g5 ♖e8 17.♜d2 a3 18.bxa3 h6 19.♜e3 ♖e6, Shirov-Leko, Dortmund 2002.

12. ... a5-a4

13. ♜h2-g4!

A very strong move. Black cannot take on g4, because this would open the h-file, but it is also difficult to tolerate the knight on g4.

13. ... **a4-a3**
 14. **b2-b3†** **♙c8xg4**
 15. **h3xg4**



15. ... **♙g7xh6**

15...♙xg4 16.♙xg7 ♖xg7 17.♔g5 (an important move – it is vital to remove the knight from g4 as soon as possible, from where it defends all the holes in Black's kingside) 17...♔d7 18.f3 ♔d4 19.♙d2 ♙f6 20.♙e2 ♔d6 21.♔h6+ ♖g8 22.g4 ♙fd8 23.♙g3 ♔f8 24.♔h4, and White's attack is very strong.

16. ♔d2xh6 ♔d6-d4
 17. ♔h6-h4! ♔d4xc3
 18. ♔h4xf6 ♙a8-d8
 19. ♙h1xh7! ♔c3-b2+
 20. ♖c1-d2 ♙d8xd3+
 21. ♙d2xd3 ♔b2-d4+
 22. ♙d3-e2 ♔d4xe4+
 23. ♖e2-f1 ♙g8xh7
 24. ♙d1-d3

1-0, Oratovsky-Alvarez, Albacete 2002.
 I have deliberately given the whole game by another pupil of Chebanenko. He showed great promise, studied in the

Botvinnik-Kasparov school, and took prizes in the USSR junior championship, even playing on a level with Kramnik, but then somehow he fell short, and in the end, only became a grandmaster.

A422) 11.g2-g4



An aggressive thrust. Thanks to his solid position in the centre, White can afford such play.

11. ... **♙c8-e6**

The alternative is 11...a5 12.♙xg7 ♖xg7 13.♔e3 a4 14.a3 (a useful move with a view to an endgame – Black has a light-squared bishop, so in almost any endgame it will be unpleasant to have his pawns fixed on light squares) 14...♙e8 15.♙d2 (as we have already seen many times, the knight heads for c4, at the same time, freeing the f-pawn) 15...♙e6 16.♙e2±. I think this position is favourable for White. He has prevented the counterplay with ...c5-c4 and is ready to undertake activity on the kingside.

12. ♔d2-e3 **a7-a5**
 13. ♙c3-e2 **a5-a4**
 14. **a2-a3** **b6-b5**
 15. ♙f3-d2

15. ♖g3 is a mistake, because it is not so simple for White to create real threats on the kingside, whilst Black will now have a free hand on the other wing. For example, 15... ♖e8 16. 0-0 f6 17. ♖d2 ♜d8 18. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 19. f4 exf4 20. ♜xf4 ♜xf4 21. ♜xf4 c4 ♞ Ponomariov-Leko, Linares 2003.

15. ... ♜a8-d8
 16. ♙h6xg7 ♜g8xg7
 17. f2-f4 e5xf4
 18. ♖e2xf4±



White has a comfortable advantage.

- B) 7. ... e7-e5



8. ♙c1-e3 ♜d8-e7
 9. ♜d1-d2 0-0
 10. ♙e3-h6

We have reached a position similar to ones we have already looked at.

10. ... ♖f6-e8

10...a5 11. 0-0-0 b5 12. ♖e2 ♜e8
 13. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 14. g4 c4 15. g5 ♖h5
 16. dxc4 bxc4 17. ♜d6 ♜xd6 18. ♜xd6±
 Rublevsky-Hossain, Yerevan 1996.

11. 0-0-0

It was still not too late to go over to the plan with kingside castling – 11. 0-0!? f6 12. ♖h2.

11. ... f7-f6
 12. ♙h6xg7

The bishop could also be retained with 12. ♙e3!?, since the bishop on g7 is not very active.

12. ... ♖e8xg7
 13. g2-g4 ♖g7-e6
 14. ♖c3-e2±

C) In reply to the immediate 7...c5-c4!? I do not recommend to capture the pawn, but play the very important move



8. ♙c1-e3!

The bishop takes control of the square c5 and prevents the impending move ...c6-c5.

● White also retains a clear advantage after **8.0-0 cxd3 9.cxd3 c5** 9...0-0 10.♙e3 ♖a5 11.d4±. **10.♙e3 b6 11.d4 cxd4** 11...♙b7 12.d5 0-0 13.♖b3 ♖c8 14.♟ad1 e6 15.♙g5 exd5 16.e5 c4 17.♖c2 ♘d7 18.♘xd5 ♙h8 19.♖c3 ♜e8 20.♙f6 ♘xf6 21.exf6 ♙f8 22.♘e7 ♙xe7 23.fxe7+ ♙g8 24.♟fe1 ♖c6 25.♖e5 ♜ac8 26.♟d6± Ponomarev-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2003. **12.♙xd4 0-0** 13.♖a4 ♖d7 14.♖b4 ♖d6 15.♖b5 ♖d7 16.♖e2 ♖b7 17.♟ad1 ♙d7 18.♘e5± Grischuk-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2003;
 ● 8.dxc4 ♖xd1+ 9.♙xd1 ♙e6±;
 ● **8.d4 b5 9.e5** 9.a3 c5 10.e5 ♘d5 11.♘e4 cxd4 12.♖xd4 ♙b7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♘c5 ♙c6 15.♖h4 ♘c7± Bologan-Komarov, France 2003. **9...♘d5 10.♘e4 ♙f5 11.♘g3 ♖d7=.**

8. ... c4xd3
9. c2xd3±



After d3-d4 White will soon stand better.

9. ... 0-0

● 9...e5 10.♖d2 (10.♖c2 ♖e7 11.♘e2 ♙e6 12.♖c3 ♘d7 13.♘f4) 10...0-0 11.0-0-0 ♖a5 12.♙b1 ♙e6 13.♙h6 b5 14.♙xg7 ♙xg7 15.♘g5 b4 16.♘xe6+ fxe6 17.♘e2 ♟ad8 18.♖c2± Iglesias-Ayas Fernandez, Sitges 2001;
 ● 9...♖a5 10.0-0 c5 11.♘d2!±.

10. ♖d1-d2 b7-b6

Spanton-Reijneveld, Guernsey 2006. 10...e5 11.0-0-0 transposes to 9...e5 10.♖d2 0-0 11.0-0-0.

11. d3-d4 ♙c8-a6
12. ♙e3-h6 ♖d8-c7
13. ♙h6xg7 ♙g8xg7
14. 0-0-0±

D) **7. ... ♘f6-d7**
8. ♙c1-e3



8. ... e7-e5

● The move **8...♖b6** looks somewhat unnatural. After **9.♖c1** White defends the pawn on b2 and is ready at the necessary moment to play his bishop to h6. There could follow: **9...♘f8 10.♘d2 10.♟b1 h6** 11.0-0 ♘e6 12.♘e2 ♖c7 13.a3 a5 14.♙d2 a4 15.♙c3 0-0 16.♙xg7 ♙xg7 17.♘h2± Rublevsky-Iskusnikh, Tomsk 2001. **10...♙e6 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♘b3 0-0** 13.♖e1 ♟fe8 14.f4± White begins an offensive in the centre and he already has the unpleasant threats of ♖f2 and ♙a4;
 ● **8...b6 9.♖d2 e5 10.♙h6 0-0 11.0-0-0 ♜e8 12.g4** Also interesting is 12.♙xg7 ♙xg7 in order, after 13.♘h2, to use square g4 for his knight: 13...♘f8 14.♘g4 ♙xg4 15.hxg4 f6 16.g3 a5 17.f4

♖a7 18.♘e2 ♜f7 19.♚e3 ♘g8 20.c3
 ♚e7 21.f5 g5 22.♘g1 b5 23.♘f3±
 Nevednichy-Garic, Nis 1995. 12...♘f8
 13.♘e2 a5 14.♞dg1 ♙f6 15.♙g5 ♘e6
 15...♙xg5 16.♘xg5 h6 17.♘f3 ♘g7
 18.g5 h5 19.♚c3 ♚d6 20.♘d2 b5 21.f4
 ♘g8 22.fxe5 ♚xe5 23.♚xe5 ♜xe5
 24.♘f3 ♜e7 25.♘d2±. 16.♙xf6 ♚xf6
 17.♞g3 ♞d8 18.g5 ♚g7 Bologan-Anand,
 New Delhi 2000. Here I should just have
 attacked the pawn, and maybe Anand
 would not have become world champion
 ☺: 19.♚c3 ♘d4 20.♘fxd4 cxd4 21.♚d2
 c5 22.f4 The pawns on f7 and e5 are cut
 off from one another, thanks to which
 White has the better pawn structure and
 the advantage.

9. ♚d1-d2



D1) 9...♚e7

D2) 9...h6

D1) 9. ... ♚d8-e7

10. ♙e3-h6 ♙g7xh6

10...♚f8 11.♙xg7 ♚xg7 12.♘e2 b6
 13.0-0-0 ♙a6 14.♚c3 0-0-0 15.♘d2 ♘b8
 16.f4 f6 17.g3 exf4 18.gxf4 ♜he8 19.h4
 ♚f7 20.b3 ♘f8 21.h5 ♘e6 22.hxg6 hxg6
 23.♘f3 ♙c8 24.♚e1 ♜h8 25.♚g3±
 Degraeve-Tregubov, Belfort 2002.

11. ♚d2xh6 f7-f6

12. ♘f3-d2

12.♘h4!? ♚f8 (12...♘f8 13.0-0 ♙e6
 14.f4 exf4 15.♞ae1 0-0-0 16.♚xf4♠
 Shirov-Predojevic, Sarajevo 2004)
 13.♚d2 ♚e7 14.0-0-0 f5 15.g3 f4
 16.♘g2 fxg3 17.fxg3 ♘f8 18.h4 h5
 19.♞df1 ♘e6 20.♞f2 ♘d4 21.♚g5±
 Ivanchuk-Filippov, Halkidiki 2002.

12. ... ♘d7-f8

13. f2-f4

Just in time, before the knight has
 reached e6.

13. ... e5xf4

White has a small advantage after
 13...♘e6 14.fxe5 fxe5 15.0-0-0 ♙d7
 16.♞df1 ♘d4 17.♘f3 0-0-0 18.♚g5.

14. ♚h6xf4 ♙c8-e6

15. 0-0 ♘f8-d7

A seemingly logical set-up: Black brings
 the bishop to e6 and the knight defends
 the pawn on f6, setting up a barrier on
 the f-file. But White finds an effective re-
 joinder.

16. ♞a1-e1 0-0



17. ♘c3-d5!

White has not managed to break in down the f-file, but it is not the end of the world – since not everything is rosy for Black on the neighbouring files either!

17. ... ♖e7-f7
 18. ♘d5-c7 ♜a8-d8
 19. ♗f4-d6±

Rublevsky-Kir. Georgiev, Panormo 2001. Suddenly Black has insoluble problems defending the bishop on e6.

D2) 9. ... h7-h6



The main continuation – many black players prefer to prevent the exchange of dark-squared bishops.

10.0-0

is the strongest continuation in my opinion.

- D21) 10...f5
 D22) 10...♗e7

- D21) 10. ... f7-f5
 11. e4xf5 g6xf5
 12. ♜a1-e1

Defending against the threat of ...f5-f4.

12. ... ♖e8-f7
 13. ♗d2-c1

Black has renewed the threat, so White frees the d2-square for his bishop.

13. ... ♖f7-g8
 14. ♘f3-h2

Now it is White who wishes to play f2-f4, breaking up Black's central pawn duo. His reply is more or less forced.

14. ... f5-f4
 15. ♙e3-d2



As a result, White gets square e4, and the e5 pawn becomes backward.

Overall, White's advantage is not great, but defending such a position as Black is extremely unpleasant.

15. ... ♘d7-f8
 16. ♗c1-d1 ♙c8-f5
 17. ♘c3-e4 b7-b6
 18. b2-b3 h6-h5
 19. ♙d2-c3 ♘f8-g6
 20. ♘h2-f3 ♗d8-d5
 21. ♘e4-d2 ♜a8-e8
 22. a2-a4 ♜e8-e7
 23. ♗d1-a1 ♖g8-h7
 24. ♜e1-e2 ♜h8-e8
 25. ♜f1-e1 ♖h7-g8
 26. ♖g1-h2±

Bologan-Sakaev, Hallsberg 1991.

Here, we can stop. White has tied his opponent's forces down to the defence of

the pawn on e5, and Black has no real counterplay. After a long struggle, I won on move 76, and the game was very important, as I finished in first place in this tournament, played so long ago.

D22) 10. ... ♖d8-e7



11. ♖f3-h2

Black cannot castle, because the pawn on h6 would be undefended. In the meantime, White carries out his main plan with f2-f4. Another possible plan is to attack on the queenside with 11.a3 followed by b2-b4. Black can take advantage of the fact that he has not yet castled and prepare an attack on the kingside: 11...Qf8 12.b4 Qe6 13.Qa4 b6 14.Qh2 After 14.bxc5 Black has the strong retort 14...b5!, while if 14.Qfb1, then 14...f5 15.Qd1 f4 16.Qd2 h5 17.bxc5 b5! and White's attack has come to nothing and now it is Black's turn: 18.Qc3 g5 19.Qf1 g4 20.Qg1 Qd4, Mokshanov-Sannikov, Kazan 2010. 14...f5 15.f3 f4 16.Qf2 h5 17.bxc5 b5 18.Qb2 g5 19.d4 exd4 20.Qd3 Qxc5 21.Qxc5 Qxc5 22.Qfd1 Qe6 Ponomarev-Kramnik, Linares 2003.

11. ... ♖d7-f8
12. f2-f4 e5xf4

D221) 13. ♖xf4

D222) 13. ♖xf4

D221) 13. ♖f1xf4



Counting on the idea that the pressure along the f-file will be unpleasant for Black.

13. ... ♖f8-e6

13...Qe6 14.Qf2 Qd7 15.Qe2 0-0-0 16.Qaf1 f6 16...f5 leads to weaknesses on the kingside: 17.Qf4 Qf7 18.exf5 gxf5 19.Qe2 Qde8 20.Qf4 Qd8 21.Qg3 Qg6 22.Qf3 with a small plus for White. 17.Qa5 17.Qf3 b6 18.Qf4 h5 19.Qh2 Qh6 20.Qf4 Qf7 21.Qh4 Qdg8 22.Qc3± Rublevsky-McShane, Istanbul 2003. 17...Qb8 18.b4 f5 19.bxc5 fxe4 20.d4 Qc4 21.Qa4 Qxe2 22.Qxe2 Qe6 23.c4± Svidler-Grischuk, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

14. ♖f4-f2 ♖e6-d4

15. ♖a1-f1 Qc8-e6

D2211) 16. ♖e2

D2212) 16. ♖g4

D2211) 16. ♖c3-e2

A quiet move, the aim of which is to exchange off Black's best-placed piece.



16. ... ♖d4xe2+

16...0-0-0 17.♗f4± ♕d7? 18.♗xg6! fxc6 19.♖f7± ♜e5 20.♗f4 ♜e8 21.♖xg7 ♗e6 22.♗g3+-.

17. ♖f2xe2 0-0-0

17...b6 18.b3 0-0-0 19.♜e1 ♗e5 (19...♜b7 20.♗d2 g5 transposes to the text game) 20.♗f3 (20.♗f4!=) 20...♗b8 21.d4 g5 22.dxc5 b5 23.♗d4 f6 24.♜a5± G. Meier-Eismont, Pardubice 2006.

18. b2-b3 b7-b6

18...g5 19.♗f3 ♖hf8, Chandler-Inarkiev, Gibraltar 2004, 20.b4 ♗d4 21.bxc5 ♗xc5 22.♜a5 ♗xe3+ 23.♖xe3 ♜b8 24.♖b1±.

19. ♜d2-e1



19. ...

♜c8-b7!?

The correct plan for Black is to advance the g- and h-pawns, whereas advancing ...f7-f5 in a favourable form is quite difficult.

● 19...♗e5 20.♗f3 – c?. 17...b6 18.b3 0-0-0 19.♜e1 ♗e5 20.♗f3;

● 19...g5!? 20.♗d2 h5 21.♗c3 ♗d4+ (21...♗xc3!? 22.♜xc3 g4 23.♜f6) 22.♗xd4 cxd4∞;

● 19...♜d6 20.♗f3 ♖de8 21.♗d2 g5 22.♗c3 ♗xc3 23.♜xc3 g4 (Kobalia-Batsanin, Sochi 2005) 24.hxg4 ♗xg4 25.♖ef2±.

20. ♗e3-d2

g6-g5

21. ♗d2-c3

♗g7-d4+

22. ♗c3xd4

c5xd4

Rublevsky-Inarkiev, Poikovsky 2008.



23. ♗g4!?

Also good is 23.♜f2!? with the idea of ♗g4-f6, for example 23...h5 24.♗f3 c5 25.♗e5 ♖h7 26.♜f6 and White has a slight advantage.

Worse is 23.♖ff2?! h5 24.♗f1 ♖dg8, and Black takes over the initiative.

23. ...

♗e6xg4

23...♖dg8 24.♗f6 ♖g6 25.e5 h5 26.c4±.

24. h3xg4 h6-h5
 25. ♖e2-f2 ♜d8-f8
 26. ♜f2-f6! h5xg4
 27. ♖e1-g3 ♜h8-h7
 28. ♖g3xg4 ♜f8-h8
 29. ♖g4-f5!±

D2212) 16. ♖h2-g4



16. ... f7-f5

16...0-0-0 17.e5 17.♖xh6 leads to double-edged play: 17...f6 (17...♜df8 18.♖d1 b6 19.c3 ♖b5 20.♖f5 gxf5 21.exf5 ♙xa2 22.f6 ♙xf6 23.♜xf6 ♙e6 24.♙g5 ♜d7 25.♖f2 ♖b7 26.♜e1± Kveinys-Teske, Bad Wörishofen 2004) 18.♖d1 ♜h7 19.c3 ♖b5 20.♖g4 ♙xg4 21.hxg4, Turov-Maletin, Moscow 2005, and here Black should play 21...c4, breaking up the centre. 17...♙f5 18.♙xh6 ♙xe5 19.♖xe5 ♜xe5 20.♜e1 ♜c7 21.♙f4 ♜d7 (Warakomski-Brzeski, Warsaw 2009) 22.♙g5 ♜de8 23.♖e4 ♙xe4 24.dxe4±

17. ♖g4xh6 0-0-0

17...♜h4?! 18.exf5 gxf5 19.♖xf5! (this exchange sacrifice is the point of the whole adventure of taking on h6) 19...♙xf5 20.♜xf5 ♖xf5 21.♜xf5± Vokarev-Khasin, Koszalin 1999.

White has an extra pawn and the more promising position.

18. e4xf5 g6xf5
 19. ♖c3-a4 b7-b5
 20. c2-c3 b5xa4
 21. c3xd4 ♙g7xh6
 22. ♙e3xh6 ♜d8-g8
 23. ♜f2-e2±

D222) 13. ♙e3xf4!



This is the recapture I prefer.

13. ... ♖f8-e6

● After 13...♙e6?! White carries out his main idea – the transfer of the knight to the squares d6 and f6, which becomes possible after e5: 14.♙g3 g5 14...0-0-0? 15.♜f4. 15.e5! Intending ♖e4-d6. 15...♖g6 Or 15...♖d7 16.♖f3 0-0-0 17.♜ae1 ♖b8 18.♖e4f. 16.♖f3 0-0-0 17.♖e4 ♖b8 18.♜e3±;
 ● 13...♙d7 14.♜ae1 0-0-0 15.♖f3 g5 16.♙h2 ♖g6 17.♖e2 ♙e6 18.♖g3 c4 19.d4 ♖h4 20.c3 ♖xf3+ 21.♜xf3± Ovetchkin-Artamonov, Ekaterinburg 2008;
 ● 13...g5 14.♙e3 ♙e6 15.♜f2 ♖d7 16.a4 0-0 17.g4 b6 18.♜ae1 ♖e5 19.♖e2 ♖g6 20.♖g3 ♙xb2 21.♖f5

♙xf5 22.gxf5 ♖e5 23.♖b1 ♙d4
24.♙xd4 cxd4 25.f6 B.Socko-Michiels,
Antwerp 2009.

14. ♙f4-g3

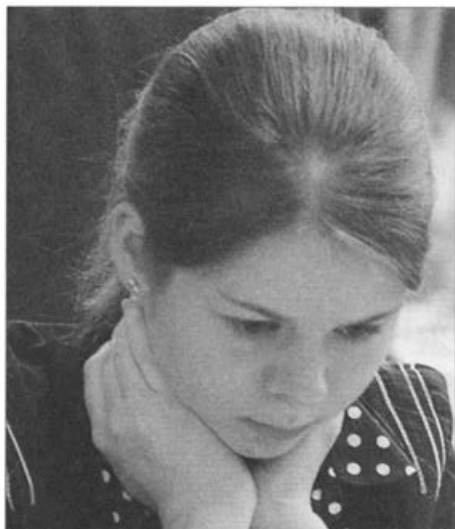
The bishops retreats to this square because White wishes to play e4-e5 followed by ♖c3-e4.



14. ... ♖e6-d4

● 14...0-0 15.e5 ♖d4 15...♖g5? 16.♖e1
♖d8 17.♖e4 ♖d4 18.♖f2 b6 19.♖ae1
♙e6 20.♖f6+ ♖h8 21.♙f4 g5 22.♙c1
♖f5 23.♖e4 ♙xf6 24.exf6 ♖g8 25.♖g4
♖f8 26.b3 ♖d4 27.♖e5± Janev-
Annageldiev, Istanbul 2006. 16.♖ae1
transposing into the main variation;

● 14...♖g5 15.♖e1 ♖d4 16.♖f2 Creat-
ing a threat against f7; note that on the
previous move, White could not play
15.♖f2? because of the obvious reply
15...♙d4. 16...0-0 16...♙e6?! (Zhu
Chen-Sukandar, Doha 2006) 17.♙h4!
♖h5 18.♖g4± with the threat of
19.♖f6. 17.♙d6! 17.♖h1!? ♖e7
18.♖ae1 ♙e6 19.e5 f5! (19...♖f5
20.♖e4 ♖xg3+ 21.♖xg3 ♖ad8
22.♖f3± Efimenko-Heinis, Gibraltar
2008) 20.exf6 ♙xf6 with mutual
chances. 17...♙xh3 18.♙f4 ♖xg2+
19.♖xg2 ♙xg2 20.♖xg2 ♖xc2 21.♖ad1



Tatiana Kosintseva

With three pawns for the knight Black has
sufficient material, but White dominates
the centre and his pieces cooperate well
together, so his position seems preferable.
21...♖ad8 22.♖d2 ♖d4 22...♖b4 23.♖fd1
♖a6 24.♖f3±. 23.e5 f5 23...h5 24.♖e4f.
24.exf6 ♖xf6 25.♖g4 ♖e6 26.♙xh6±
Leko-Van Wely, Dortmund 2005.

15. ♖a1-e1↑

Setting up the threat of 16.♖d5.



15. ... 0-0

● 15...♙e6 16.♖d5 cxd5 17.exd5 0-0
18.dxe6±;

● 15...f6 16.♟d5 cxd5 17.exd5 ♟e6
18.dxe6 0-0 19.d4± Dolzhikova-
Stavroyany, Kiev 2008.

16. e4-e5 ♟c8-f5

Black gets nothing from 16...♟f5 17.♟f2
h5 17...b6 18.♟f3 ♜d8 19.♟e4 ♟e6
20.b3 g5 21.g4 (21.♜c3±) 21...♟d4
22.♟xd4 cxd4 23.♟g3 c5 24.♟f6+
♟xf6 25.exf6 ♜b7 26.h4± Papin-
Stamenkov, Plovdiv 2008. 18.♟f3 b6
19.♟e4 ♜d8 20.g4! ♟h6 21.♜c3 ♟d4
22.♟xd4 cxd4 23.♟xd4+– G. Meier-
Nigalidze, Yerevan 2007.

17. ♟c3-e4 ♟f5xe4

18. ♜e1xe4 ♟d4-f5

● 18...h5 19.♟h4!? (19.♟f2 ♟f5
20.♟f3± Bologan) 19...♜c7 20.♟f6
♟h7 21.g4 ♟h6 22.♜f2 ♜g8 23.e6!+–
Kalegin-S. Sokolov, Kazan 2008;
● 18...♜ad8? 19.♟h4 g5 20.♟g4 ♟e6
(T. Kosintseva-Cmilyte, Turin 2006)
21.♟g3±.

19. ♟g3-f4



I like White's position: he has taken space in the centre and his pieces are harmoniously placed. The black knight on f5 is strong, but it can be driven away and the bishop on g7 is firmly shut out of play.

19. ... ♟g8-h7

20. ♟h2-g4 ♜a8-d8

Art. Minasian-Kalugin, Sochi 2008, and here White should play

21. ♜d2-c3

increasing the pressure on the long diagonal and threatening the move 22.♟f6+.

Play could continue:

21. ... ♟f5-d4

22. ♜f1-f2 ♜f8-e8

23. ♟g4-f6+ ♟g7xf6

24. e5xf6 ♜e7-f8

25. ♟f4-e5±

White threatens to win a pawn after the exchange on d4, and Black still has a badly placed queen.



Conclusion:

It seems to me that Black's attempt to avoid the standard attack with opposite-side castling, by means of 7...♟d7, is not good, precisely because White can switch to the plan of castling kingside. The classical 7...0-0 is stronger, using the so-called Leko set-up, with ...e7-e5, ...♜d6 followed by a pawn advance on the queenside. Here too, it is better for White to delay castling (especially queenside) and play in the centre.

Chapter 14 – The Immediate 7.0-0

1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6 3.♙f1-b5 g7-g6 4.♙b5xc6 d7xc6
5.h2-h3 ♙f8-g7 6.d2-d3 ♘g8-f6 7.0-0



7. ... 0-0

Black can try to win a tempo by playing 7...♘d7, since square f8 is not yet occupied by the rook, it can be used instead for the transfer of the knight to e6. There could follow: 8.♘c3 e5 9.♘h2 White should stick to his main plan of f4. 9...♘f8 9...h6?! 10.f4 – intending to seize space with the move – 10...exf4 11.♙xf4 0-0 12.♖d2 ♗h7 13.♙d6±; after 9...0-0 White takes play into the main variation with 10.♙e3↑. 10.f4 exf4 10...♘e6 11.fxe5 h5? 12.♘f3±. 11.♙xf4 ♘e6 12.♙e3 0-0 13.♘g4 Threatening ♘h6. 13...♖e7 13...f6 14.♖d2±; 13...♘d4 14.♘h6+↑. 14.♙h6 and White has a small advantage.

8. ♘b1-c3

A popular opening *tabiya*.



A) 8...♘e8

B) 8...♞e8

C) 8...♘d7

The immediate 8...e5?! does not work because of 9.♘xe5 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♙xe5 11.♘xc5±, and Black does not have full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

A) For many years, the position after **8...♟f6-e8?! was a stumbling block for Chebanenko and his pupils.**

The knight has a long road ahead of him, via c7 and e6 to d4, but when he finally occupies this central outpost, Black obtains an excellent position.

Can this be prevented? After all, three tempi is a lot. Finally, it was established that White has a very strong plan, involving the flank break a2-a3 and b2-b4. As a result, the move 8...♟e8 was declared dubious, but Black sometimes still plays it.

- 9. ♟c1-e3 b7-b6**
10. ♖d1-d2



- 10. ... e7-e5**

10...♟c7 11.♟h6 ♟e6 12.♟xg7 ♜xg7 13.♟e2 ♜d6 13...f6 14.♜e3 ♜d7 15.c3 ♟a6 16.♞ad1 ♞ad8 17.♞fe1 ♟c7 18.d4 e5 19.♞d2 exd4 20.cxd4 ♜e7 21.dxc5 ♞xd2 22.♟xd2 ♜xc5 23.♜xc5 bxc5 24.♟c3± Külaots-Lund, Borup 2008. 14.♟h2 Bad is 14.e5?!, but 14.♜e3± is worthy of attention. 14...♟d4 15.♟xd4 ♜xd4 16.c3 ♜d6 17.f4 ♟a6 18.♞f3∞ G. Meier-Hirneise, Saarbrücken 2009.

- 11. a2-a3**

White intends b2-b4, to strengthen his position on the queenside and in the centre.

- 11. ... ♟e8-c7**

11...a5 12.♟a4 ♞b8 13.b4 cxb4 14.axb4 b5 15.♟c5 a4 16.♟h6±.

- 12. b2-b4 c5xb4**
13. a3xb4 ♟c7-e6
14. ♟c3-e2

Another typical move; White reinforces his control of squares d4 and f4.

- 14. ... ♜d8-c7**

14...♟d4 15.♟exd4 exd4 16.♟h6±.

- 15. ♟e3-h6**



It is useful to deprive the opponent of the bishop pair and weaken the dark squares around his king. According to the theory of pawn islands, White should have some advantage, because all of his pawns are united, whilst Black has two pawn islands. But still more important are two other factors: Black has a bad bishop on c8 and the pawn on a7 needs permanent defence.

- 15. ... c6-c5**
16. ♟h6xg7 ♜g8xg7
17. b4xc5 ♟e6xc5
18. ♟f3-h2

White's strategy is very simple: he wants to play f2-f4, removing his opponent's last central pawn, and gradually set in motion his powerful central pawn mass.

18. ... f7-f5

An energetic retort, but it is not sufficient for equality.

19. e4xf5 c8xf5

After 19...gxf5 there is the unpleasant 20. ♖c3! ♕e6 21. ♕f3, and Black has great problems defending the e5 pawn.

20. ♕e2-g3

White has a small, but stable advantage; the opponent's position contains many pawn weaknesses, and his king is not very well defended.

20. ... ♕c5-e6

21. ♕g3xf5+ ♜f8xf5

22. ♕h2-g4 ♕e6-f4

23. ♜f1-e1 h7-h5

24. ♕g4-e3±

Tkachiev-Lautier, Cap d'Agde 2002.

B) **8. ... ♜f8-e8**



The idea of this is to preserve the dark-squared bishop from exchange when White plays the move ♕h6.

I personally do not see a great deal of sense in preserving the bishop on h8, but Black has the option of doing so, and we should look at it.

9. ♕c1-e3 b7-b6

10. ♖d1-d2 e7-e5

11. ♕e3-h6 ♕g7-h8

11...♕h5 12. ♕e2 ♖f6 13. ♕xg7 ♜xg7 14. ♜h2 h6 15. ♕fg1 ♖d6 16. ♜ad1 ♕d7 17. a3 ♜ad8 18. ♖c3 ♜h7 19. b4 f5 (Quezada Perez-Mamedov, Turin 2006) and now 20. ♕f3 gives White a slight advantage.

12. ♕f3-h2

In the next few moves, the debate will be for and against f2-f4.

12. ... ♕f6-h5

13. ♕c3-e2 ♕c8-e6

14. b2-b3



Before advancing the f-pawn, White should clear the a1-h8 diagonal and prevent his opponent's counterplay on the queenside.

14. ... a7-a5

15. a2-a4 ♜a8-a7

16. ♜a1-d1 ♜a7-d7

17. g2-g4

It favours White to keep as many pieces on the board as possible, so he drives the enemy knight away from the f4-square.

17. ... ♖h5-f6
18. ♔d2-e3

While engaged in such deep manoeuvres, it is important not to forget about the e4 pawn.

18. ... ♗h8-g7

An acknowledgement of the fact that the move ♗h8 did not make much sense, Valeanu-Czarnota, Budva 2003.

Right now, in this position, White should have made one more prophylactic move ...

19. ♜d1-b1±

... in order to cut off at the roots the threat ...c5-c4. After this, he could have exchanged bishops, finally played f2-f4 and gradually increased his pressure on the kingside.

- C) 8. ... ♖f6-d7
9. ♗c1-e3 e7-e5
10. ♔d1-d2

For 10. ♖h2 ♔e7 11. ♔d2 ♜e8 see 10. ♔d2 ♜e8 11. ♖h2 ♔e7 below.



- C1) 10... ♔e7

- C2) 10... ♜e8

- C1) 10. ... ♔d8-e7
11. ♗e3-h6

- C11) 11... ♗xh6

- C12) 11... ♜d8

- C13) 11... ♖f6

- C11) 11. ... ♗g7xh6
12. ♔d2xh6 f7-f6
13. ♖f3-d2



The knight is heading for c4, from where it can exert pressure on squares e5 and d6. This move also serves as prophylaxis against ...c5-c4.

For example, after 13. ♖h2 c4!⇒ Black obtains good counterplay.

13. ... ♜f8-f7
14. ♖d2-c4 ♖d7-f8
15. f2-f4±

White has played this key advance – Black lacks one tempo to put his knight on e6.

15. ... e5xf4
16. ♔h6xf4 ♖f8-e6
17. ♔f4-g3

White should not hurry with the exchange of queens, because then Black can gradually create counterplay: 17. ♖d6 ♘d4 18. ♕xe7 ♜xe7 19. ♝xf6 ♘xc2 20. ♞af1 ♙e6 21. ♘d6 b6=.

17. ... ♘e6-d4

This was the game Cabrilo-Matulovic, Budva 2002. Here it was essential for White to continue with

18. e4-e5

exploiting the potential of the knight on c4 to the maximum. For example:

18. ... ♘d4xc2
19. ♞a1-c1 ♘c2-d4
20. ♘c4-d6 ♝f7-f8
21. e5xf6 ♝f8xf6
22. ♝f1xf6 ♖e7xf6
23. ♝c1-e1 ♙c8-e6
24. ♘d6xb7 ♖f6-e7
25. ♘b7-d6

Less good is 25. ♘a5 ♝f8 26. b3 ♖g7∞.

25. ... ♞a8-d8
26. ♘d6-e4±

C12) 11. ... ♝f8-d8
12. ♙h6xg7 ♖g8xg7
13. ♘c3-e2



White prepares the break f2-f4. We should note that in several variations the white queen can come to c3.

13. ... ♘d7-f8
14. b2-b3 f7-f6
15. ♘f3-h2 ♘f8-e6
16. f2-f4

Even with the exchange of knights, White will later be able to develop an initiative along the f-file.



16. ... ♘e6-d4

16...exf4 17. ♘xf4 ♖d6 18. ♙h1 Removing the king from a possible check on d4. 18...♘xf4 19. ♝xf4 If it had not been for the prophylaxis on the previous move, this rook capture would have been impossible. 19...♙e6 20. ♞af1 ♝f8 21. ♘f3 White controls the situation well. Note that his pawns are all on light squares, limiting the opponent's bishop to the maximum extent. 21...♞ae8 Zavgorodniy-Sumets, Alushta 2003. Not 21...g5? because of the simple variation 22. ♘xg5 fxg5 23. ♝xf8 ♝xf8 24. ♖xg5+ ♙h8 25. ♝xf8+ ♖xf8 26. ♖e5+?. 22. ♞e1 ♙f7 22...g5? 23. ♝xf6! ♝xf6 24. e5?. 23. ♞h4 h5 23...g5 24. e5 ♝xe5 25. ♝xe5 gxh4 26. ♞e3∞. 24. ♝f4 with a small advantage for White.

17. ♖e2xd4 c5xd4
18. ♜f1-f2 ♙c8-e6
19. ♜a1-f1±

- C13) 11. ... ♘d7-f6
12. ♙h6xg7 ♙g8xg7
13. a2-a3!?



In the present situation, the plan with b2-b4 is very unpleasant for Black, because his queen is tied to the defence of the pawn on e5. White is promised less by 13.b3 ♘h5 14.♘e2 b6 15.a3 ♙g8 16.♘h2 a5 17.♚c3 ♚d6 18.f4 ♘xf4 19.♘xf4 exf4 20.e5 ♚d4+ 21.♚xd4 cxd4 22.♜xf4 c5 23.a4 ♜e8= Neelotpal-Harikrishna, New Delhi 2001.

13. ... a7-a5

If 13...♙d7, then 14.b4±. Black cannot take the pawn on b4 with the queen because of the loss of the b4 pawn after ♜fb1.

14. ♚d2-g5

- 14.♘d1 ♘h5 15.♘e3 ♘f4 16.♙h2 f6=;
- 14.♘e2 a4 15.♚c3 ♘d7 16.♘h2 f6 17.f4 exf4 18.♜xf4 ♘e5 19.♜af1 b5=.

14. ... ♜f8-e8
15. ♘f3-d2 b7-b6

- 15...♘h5 16.♚xe7 ♜xe7 17.♘a4±.

16. f2-f4 h7-h6
17. ♚g5-h4 ♙c8-a6
18. f4xe5 ♘f6-d7
19. ♚h4-g3 ♘d7xe5
20. ♜f1-f2 ♜a8-d8
21. ♜a1-f1 c5-c4
22. ♘d2-f3 ♘e5xf3+
23. ♜f2xf3 ♚e7-c5+
24. ♙g1-h1 ♜e8-e7
25. d3-d4! ♜d8xd4

- 25...♚xd4 26.♜d1±.

26. ♘c3-a4 ♚c5-g5
27. ♚g3-f2 ♜d4-d7
28. ♘a4xb6 ♜d7-c7
29. ♚f2-d4+ ♙g7-h7
30. ♜f1-d1±

- C2) 10. ... ♜f8-e8
11. ♘f3-h2



- C21) 11...♚e7

- C22) 11...b6

- C21) 11. ... ♚d8-e7
12. ♙e3-h6 ♙g7-h8

12...♙h6 13.♚xh6 f6 14.♘e2 White must not rush with f2-f4 – it is better to wait for ...♙f8, since then the black knight

cannot jump to e5. Nothing comes from 14.f4 exf4 15.♖xf4 (15.♙xf4 ♗g7±) 15...♙f8 16.♙f2 (16.♖g4 ♖e5±) 16...♖e5 17.♙af1 ♖e6=. In order to secure adequate play, Black quite quickly achieves his ideal set-up. 14...♖f8 15.f4 exf4 16.♖xf4 ♖g7 17.♙f2 c4 18.♙d1 cxd3 19.cxd3 ♖e6 20.♖g3 ♖d7 21.b3 ♙ad8 22.♖f4 ♖c5 23.♖f3 ♖f7 24.d4 ♖a5 25.e5 fxe5 26.dxe5 ♖g8 27.♖g5 The critical mass of five white pieces in the centre should lead to a quick conclusion.

- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 13. ♖h2-g4 | ♖d7-f8 |
| 14. ♖h6-g5 | f7-f6 |
| 15. ♖g4-h6+ | ♖g8-g7 |
| 16. ♖g5-e3 | ♖f8-e6 |
| 17. ♖c3-e2 | ♖e6-g5 |

17...b6 18.h4±.

18. ♖h6-g4

Black has good play after 18.h4 ♖xh6 19.♖h2 ♖g7 20.hxg5 ♖g8.



18. ... h7-h5

18...♖xg4 19.hxg4 ♙ad8 20.♖c3 ♖e6 21.f4 exf4 22.♖xf4 ♖d4 23.♙f2 ♖g8 24.♖c4+ ♖g7 25.b4 b6 26.bxc5 ♖xc5 27.♖xc5 bxc5 28.♙b1± Leko-Van Wely, Roquebrune rapid 2003.

19. ♖g4-h2



Peter Leko

Certainly, Black has managed to beat off the kingside attack, but look at his position! He has a mass of weaknesses, and the bishop on h8 evokes feelings of great sympathy.

Even so, a combinational solution is not possible: 19.♖xf6 ♖xh3+ 20.gxh3 ♖xf6 21.♖g2 ♖e6 22.♙h1 b6 23.♖g1 ♖g8 24.♖f3 ♖f6±.



- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 19. ... | ♙e8-d8 |
| 20. ♖d2-c3 | ♖g5-e6 |
| 21. f2-f4 | ♖e6-d4 |
| 22. ♙a1-e1 | ♖g7-h7 |
| 23. ♖h2-f3 | |



Note that all of White's pieces are very compactly placed, and exert strong pressure on Black's position. There is already a threat of fxe5 followed by a knight check on g5, and Black has to take measures against this.

23. ... c8-e6
 24. f4xe5 f6xe5
 25. f3-g5+ h7-g8
 26. g5xe6 d4xe6

Adams-Kramnik, Dortmund 2000.

27. a2-a3 a7-a5
 28. a3-a4±

White has a comfortable position, with a small, but stable advantage.

- C22) 11. ... b7-b6
 12. e3-h6



12. ... g7-h8

The exchange of dark-squared bishops allows White to advance f2-f4 in favourable circumstances and develop an initiative on the kingside: 12... f8 13. xg7 xg7 14. f4 exf4 15. xf4 f6 16. f2 e6 17. d2 d4 17... g5 18. f1 f4 19. e3 e6 20. e2 xe2+ 21. xe2±. 18. f1 f5 18... f8 19. e5 f5 20. g4 h4 21. e2 xe2+ 22. xe2 e6 23. f6±. 19. exf5 xf5 20. g4! e6 21. e4 e7 22. c3 b5 23. g5 and White is clearly better.

13. g1-h1

Grandmaster Lutz has also tried 13. g4, which allows Black to exchange a pair of knights: 13... f6 14. xf6+ Perhaps stronger is 14. g5!? xg4 15. hxg4 h6 (15... d6 16. f3 d7 17. g3 f8 18. g2 e6 19. e3±) 16. xf6 xf6 17. xh6 g5 18. h3 g7 19. f3 h8 20. g3 d4 21. g2, keeping an extra pawn and definite winning chances. 14... xf6 15. a4 d6 16. a5 e6 17. b3 – White has a purely symbolic advantage, Lutz-Leko, Budapest 2002.

13. ... d8-e7
 14. a1-e1 d7-f8
 15. c3-e2

This is typical in this type of position. White does not hurry to play the advance f2-f4, since in this case, the bishop on h8 would come to life again, but instead, quietly strengthens his position and prepares this break unhurriedly, paying careful attention to Black's manoeuvres. Premature is 15. f4 exf4 16. xf4 e6 17. f2 d4 18. f1 f6 19. d1 c4 with an unclear position.



15. ... ♘f8-e6
 16. b2-b3 a7-a5
 17. a2-a4

The queenside is fixed, and again, White invites his opponent to make a move.

17. ... ♙c8-d7
 18. f2-f4

White has everything ready and there is no sense in delaying this break any longer.

18. ... e5xf4
 19. ♘e2xf4 ♘e6-d4
 20. ♘f4-e2



An excellent move. White frees the e-file, along which he wants to exert pressure, and exchanges the strong enemy knight.

20. ... ♘d4xe2
 21. ♚e1xe2 b6-b5
 22. ♙h6-g5 ♙e7-d6

23. ♖h2-f3

Beginning play on the dark squares. Adams preferred 23.c4, which is also not bad: 23...f5 24.♙f4 ♙d4 25.e5 ♙e6 26.♘f3 ♙d7 (Adams-Leko, Dortmund 2002) 27.♚d1 bxa4 28.bxa4 ♙g7 29.♚ee1 ♚eb8±.

23. ... b5xa4
 24. e4-e5 ♙d6-b8
 25. b3xa4 ♙b8-b2

25...♙b4 26.c3±.

26. ♚e2-e1±

Black has an unpleasant position; his queen is shut out of play and White's threats on the kingside can become very dangerous.



Conclusion:

The plan with 7.0-0 is very direct, simple, easy-to-remember and very strong. At this moment, I do not see how Black can equalize. White usually has the resources to achieve f2-f4 and create pressure on the kingside. And sometimes, he prepares a2-a3 and b2-b4, in order to 'examine Black's credentials' on the opposite side of the board.