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## The Modern Benoni & Castling Long Tactics by IM Nikolay Minev

<i>ECO</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Rd</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Year</i>
A65	Hulmes	Subramanian		US Open	1968
A70	Packroff	Hodac		Corr.	1991
A70	Daverio	Wojtkiewicz		Geneva	1995
A70	Oestenstad	Bjarnehage		Norway-Sweden,	1984
A60	Vaganian	Hodgson		Sochi	1986
A70	Flear, G.	King	ch	Great Britain	1985
A70	Murshed	Dejkalo		Polanica Zdroj	1986
A61	Lopez	Cordoba		Seville	1987
A60	Razzak	Schepel	ol	Novi Sad	1990

Castling long in the Modern Benoni is considered a dubious, if not crazy, idea for White. Theory often makes no mention of such possibilities, probably because most of the practical experiments end in disaster, as in the following typical examples.

### *Modern Benoni A65*

**A. Hulmes**

**S. Subramanian**

*US Open 1968*

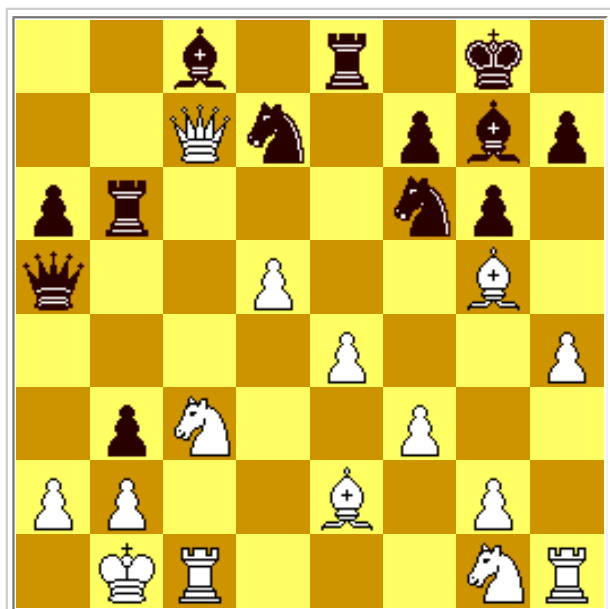
**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.Bg5 Bg7 8.Qd2 O-O 9.Bd3 Re8 10.O-O-O?**

Castling long is unsuitable here. Black's pawn majority on the queen's wing advances quickly and destroys the shelter of the King before White can organize counterplay in the center or on the other wing. 12.Nge2 or 12.f3 h6 13.Be3! are transpositions into theoretical main lines.

**10...a6 11.Kb1 b5 12.f3 Nbd7 13.Rc1 Rb8 14.h4 c4 15.Be2 b4 16.Nd1 c3 17.Qf4 Qa5 18.Qxd6 Rb6 19.Qc7 b3!**

The Battering Ram, which opens files and the big dark diagonal.

**20.Nxc3**



**20...Nxd5! 21.exd5 Nc5!! 22.a3**

There is no adequate defense. If 22.g4 bxa2+ and wins.

**22...Bf5+ 23.Ka1**

Or 23.Ne4 Nxe4 24.Bd3 Nd2+ 25.Bxd2 Bxd3+ 26.Ka1 Qxa3 mate.

**23...Qxa3+! 24.bxa3 Bxc3+ 25.Rxc3 b2+ 0-1**

Opening files on the queenside is usually an easy task for Black in this opening, made feasible in many cases by the sacrifice of one or two pawns.

## Modern Benoni A70

## Packroff

## Hodac

*Corr. 1991*

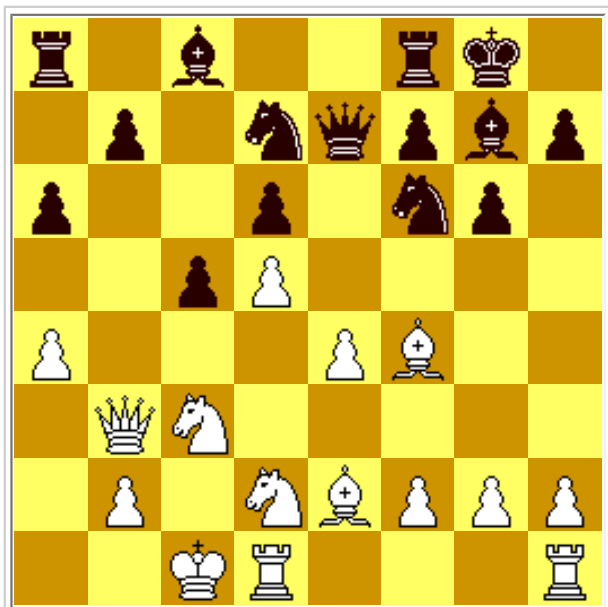
**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Bf4 a6 8.e4 Bg7 9.Qa4+ Bd7**

But not 9...Qd7?? 10.Bb5! Theory recommends 9...Kf8 10.Be2 Qe7 11.O-O Nbd7, a variation which is not fully analyzed and listed as unclear.

**10.Qb3 Bc8 11.a4 O-O 12.Be2 Qe7!?**

An interesting proposition by GM Tarjan, which is omitted in *ECO* for no discernible reason.

**13.Nd2 Nbd7 14.O-O-O?**



Bravery has its limits. White should play 14.O-O.

**14...b5! 15.axb5 axb5 16.Bxb5 Ba6 17.Bxa6 Rxa6 18.Bg5 Rb8 19.Qc2 Ra1+ 20.Ndb1 Ne5 21.Qe2 c4 0-1**

Very often Black can open files on the queenside even without sacrifices and still be far ahead in the attack against the opposing King.

*Modern Benoni A70*

**E. Daverio**

**GM A. Wojtkiewicz**

*Geneva 1995*

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Bf4 a6 8.a4 Bg7 9.e4 Bg4 10.h3 Bxf3 11.Qxf3 O-O 12.Bc4?!**

*ECO's 12.Bd3 Ne8 13.O-O Nd7 is considered to lead to approximately equal chances.*

**12...Qc7 13.O-O-O? Nbd7 14.Qe3 Rfe8 15.Bg5 Qb6**

Already possible is 15...Nxe4 16.Nxe4 f5 17.f3 fxe4 18.fxe4 Ne5 or 18...b5 with a better game, but Black is searching for a more decisive attacking plan. Now 16...Nxe4! is a deadly threat and Black gains an important tempo for the advance of his queenside pawns.

**16.f3 Qb4 17.Ba2 b5 18.axb5 axb5 19.Bb1 Ne5 20.Qe2 c4 21.h4 Nfd7 22.Be3 Rec8 23.h5 Nd3+ 24.Bxd3 cxd3 0-1**

In the heat of a tactical fight, when the desire for victory is very high, long castling is often a wrong and fatal decision.

*Modern Benoni A70*

**B. Oestenstad**

**Peter Bjarnehage**

*Norway-Sweden, Stockholm 1984*

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Bf4 a6 8.e4 Bg7 9.Qa4+ Bd7 10.Qb3 Qe7!?**

A very interesting forgotten novelty, probably worthy of further investigation.

**11.Qxb7?!**

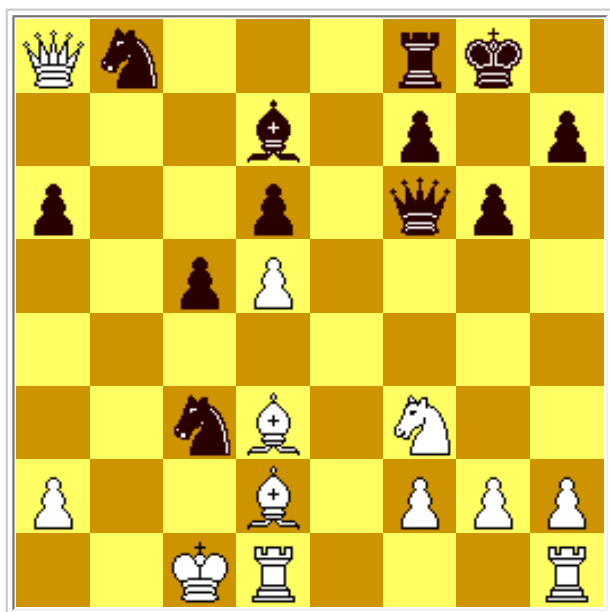
It seems that after 11.Bxd6 Qxd6 12.Qxb7 O-O 13.Qxa8 Qb6, Black has more than enough compensation for the sacrificed Exchange. Perhaps the best continuation for White is 11.Nd2.

**11...Nxe4 12.O-O-O?**

This grants Black strong attacking possibilities, while 12.Nxe4 Qxe4+ 13.Be3, and if 13...Qb4+ 14.Qxb4 cxb4 15.Bd4 or 15.Nd4 looks playable.

**12...Bxc3! 13.Qxa8 O-O 14.bxc3 Qf6 15.Bd2 Nxc3 16.Bd3**

Maybe 16.Qb7 offers more resistance. Now the attack is irresistible.



**16...Na4! 17.Qb7 Bb5! 18.Bc3 Qxc3+ 19.Bc2 Nb2 20.Ne1 Nc4 21.Nd3 Na3 22.Ne1 Qa1+ 23.Kd2 Nc4 + 24.Ke2 Qe5+ 25.Kf1 Na5+! 0-1**

So far, so bad, for White's experiments with castling long. But praxis also reveals some situations in which castling long is the best and most successful continuation for White.

*Modern Benoni A60*

**GM Rafael Vaganian**

**GM Julian Hodgson**

*Sochi 1986*

**1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 c5 3.d5 e6 4.c4 exd5 5.cxd5 Bd6?**

This original variation is today almost out of business, and this game was one of the first blows against it.

**6.Nc3 O-O 7.Bg5**

According to *ECO*, 7.g3 is stronger.

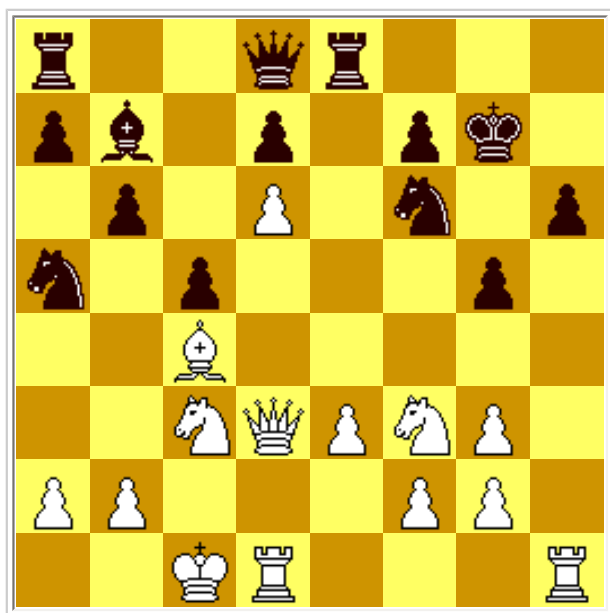
**7...Re8?!**

Theory recommends 7...h6 8.Bh4 b5 9.Bxf6 Qxf6 10.Nxb5 Na6 with compensation for the pawn.

**8.e3 h6 9.Bh4 g5?**

Better is 9...Qe7, but I don't think it's enough for equality, as *ECO* claims.

**10.Bg3 Bxg3 11.hxg3 Kg7 12.d6! b6 13.Bc4 Bb7 14.Qd3 Nc6 15.O-O-O! Na5**



**16.Bxf7! Kxf7 17.Rxh6 Bxf3 18.gxf3 1-0**

For if 18...Rg8, 19.Qf5 and 20.Ne4 or 18...Ng8, 19.Qg6+ Kf8 20.Rh8.

White's long castling can be helpful for creating a quick concentration of forces and launching an attack while Black's King is still in the center. Below are two such examples from the same variation.

*Modern Benoni A70*

**GM G. Flear**

**GM D. King**

*Great Britain (ch) 1985*

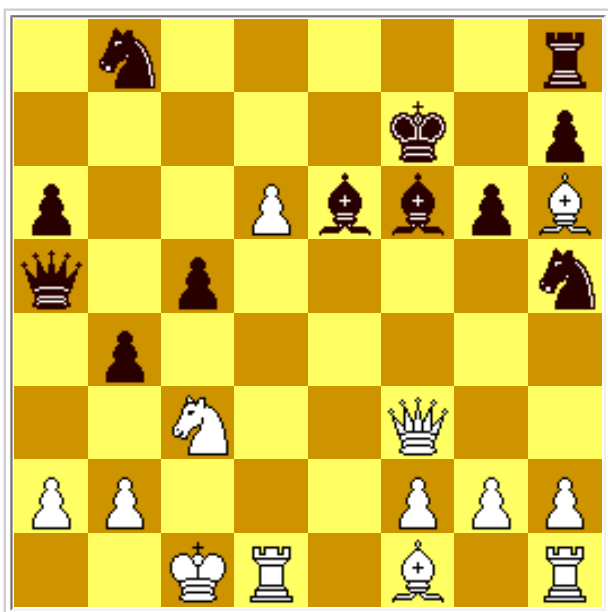
**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Bf4 a6 8.e4 b5 9.Qe2! Be7**

The theoretically better option 9...Nh5 leads to a slightly better game for White after 10.Bg5 Be7 11.Bh6 Bf8 12.Qe3.

**10.e5!? Nh5?**

If 10...dxe5, 11.Bxe5 O-O? 12.d6! Bxd6 13.O-O-O and White wins but 11...Nbd7 12.O-O-O or 12.Bg3 is unclear.

**11.Bh6 dxe5 12.O-O-O f6 13.Nxe5! fxe5 14.Qxe5 Kf7 15.d6 Bf6 16.Qd5+ Be6 17.Qxa8 Qa5 18.Qf3 b4**



**19.Bc4!! Bxc4 20.Qb7+ 1-0**

*Modern Benoni A70*

**GM N. Murshed**

**Dejkalo**

*Polanica Zdroj 1986*

**1.d4 e6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 exd5 4.cxd5 g6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Bf4 Nf6 7.Nf3 a6 8.e4 b5 9.Qe2! Ra7?! 10.e5 Re7 11.O-O-O!?**

A forgotten novelty. *ECO* deals only with 11.Be3, which is also a good continuation.

**11...dxe5 12.Bg5 Nbd7 13.g3! b4 14.d6 bxc3 15.dxe7 cxb2+ 16.Qxb2 Qxe7 17.Bh3 Bg7 18.Bxd7+ Bxd7 19.Qb8+ Qd8 20.Qxd8+ Kxd8 21.Nxe5 1-0**

Let's take a look at the other side of this topic. Practice shows that Black castles long on very, very rare occasions. Here also tactics comes to the fore immediately and the games are usually short.

*Modern Benoni A61*

**IM Mario Campos Lopez**

**GM Miguel Illescas Cordoba**

*Seville 1987*

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Bf4 Bg7 8.Qa4+ Bd7 9.Qb3 b5 10.Bxd6 Na6**

A new, but probably not so good idea. Theory recommends 10...Qb6 11.Be5 O-O 12.e3 c4 13.Qd1 Na6 with compensation for the pawn.

**11.e4 c4 12.Qa3 Qb6**

The threat 13...b4 is very strong and it seems that White is in trouble.

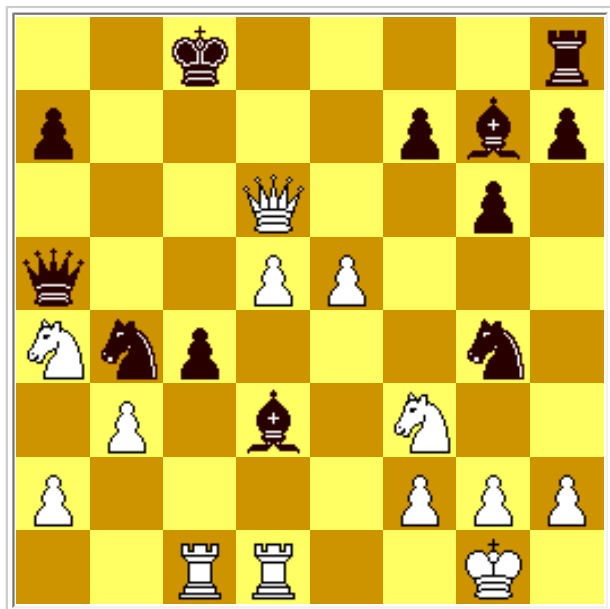
**13.Bxc4!**

A tactical solution! While White's King will find a safe haven, Black's King is forced to hide on the queenside, where he will face a fierce attack.

**13...bxc4 14.e5 Ng4 15.O-O O-O-O 16.b3!**

Black's position is already untenable.

**16...Bf5 17.Na4 Qa5 18.Rac1 Bd3 19.Rfd1 Rxd6 20.Qxd6 Nb4**



**21.Rxd3! Nxd3 22.Rxc4+ Kb7 23.Nc5+ Nxc5 24.Qc6+ Kb8 25.Rxc5 1-0**

*Modern Benoni A60*

**A. Razzak**

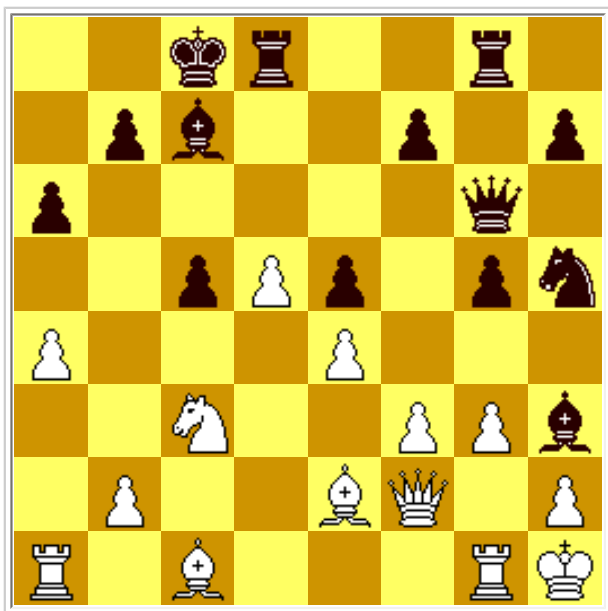
**K. Schepel**

*Novi Sad (ol) 1990*

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 a6!? 6.a4 Bd6 7.e4 Qe7 8.Bd3 Bc7 9.Nf3 d6 10.Nd2 Nbd7 11.O-O Ne5 12.Be2 g5! 13.f3?**

This helps Black's plans for long castling. Better is the immediate 13.Nc4.

**13...Nh5 14.g3 Rg8 15.Kh1 Qf6 16.Qe1 Qg6 17.Nc4 Bh3 18.Rg1 O-O-O 19.Nxe5 dxe5 20.Qf2**



**20...g4! 21.Qxc5 gxf3 22.Bxf3 Bg4! 23.Bg2? Nxg3+! 0-1**

In conclusion, our examples show that castling long in the Modern Benoni is always an invitation to immediate tactical play. It is a strategic decision, which, on relatively rare occasions, used in the right time and situation, can be successful.

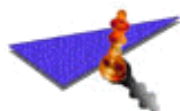
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