

2A

Grandmaster Repertoire

**Boris
Avrukh
1.d4
King's Indian
& Grünfeld**



Tired of bad positions? Try the main lines!

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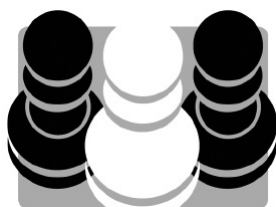


Grandmaster Repertoire 2A

King's Indian and Grünfeld

By

Boris Avrukh



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Grandmaster Repertoire 2A — King's Indian and Grünfeld

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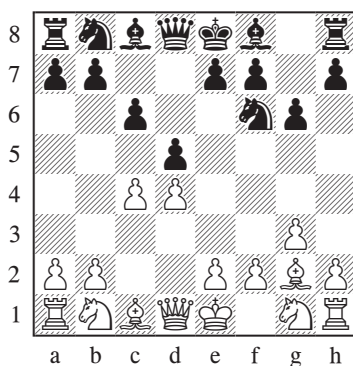
Preface

I am extremely excited to release this third volume of my new series of 1.d4 repertoire books, which replaces the older *Grandmaster Repertoire* Volumes One and Two (henceforth abbreviated to *GM 1* and *GM 2*). Volume 2A is mainly devoted to the challenge of taking on two of Black's most popular and dynamic defences: the Grünfeld and the King's Indian. The former takes up the first four chapters, with the latter comprising Chapters 5-15. The final two chapters continue the theme of Black's kingside fianchetto, dealing with the closed Benoni followed by a tricky move order with an early ...c5.

For readers who liked my recommendations in *GM 2*, I have good news: I decided to retain the Fianchetto System as my weapon of choice. However, there have been enormous changes within several variations, which should come as no surprise. Nearly eight years have passed since *GM 2* was published, which is a tremendous length of time for modern chess theory. This is especially true for the many new ideas I presented in my previous work, many of which have been tested extensively. Some of my previous ideas succeeded in putting the lines in question 'out of business', while in other cases Black players managed to find reliable antidotes to my recommendations. After giving my repertoire a thorough overhaul, I am quite proud of both the modifications and the new ideas I have introduced in this book. Here is a brief glimpse at a few of the most important changes:

The Grünfeld

I decided new directions were needed against two of Black's main options. Firstly, Chapter 1 deals with the rock-solid **3...c6** and **4...d5**, when I will be recommending:



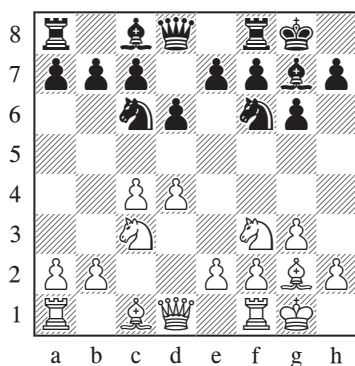
5. ♔a4!?

White intends to exchange on d5 without allowing Black to recapture with the c6-pawn. Black has tried several replies but so far White's results have been excellent. I have presented a lot of new ideas, many of which were discovered when I worked on this variation with Boris Gelfand some years ago.

The next three chapters deal with the structure arising after **4...d5 5.cxd5 ♖xd5**, which I call the Dynamic Grünfeld. After dealing thoroughly with the various sidelines, we will eventually work our way up to the big main line arising after **9...♞e8** (variation E of Chapter 4). In *GM 2* I offered **10.♞e1**, but a huge amount of practical testing and analysis has revealed more than one satisfactory solution for Black. Instead I am recommending **10.♜h4!?**, a recent trend which has yielded excellent results so far. Once again, I have presented a lot of original ideas and analysis to create fresh problems for Black.

The King's Indian

Out of the many changes in this new volume, perhaps the most radical ones have come in the **6...♜c6** variation. After **7.0-0** we reach the following position.



Firstly, **7...e5** has come into fashion as of late. I developed some nice ideas after **8.dxe5 ♜xe5 9.b3**, which I was able to put to the test in a recent game against the American prodigy Awonder Liang; see Chapter 8 for more about this. Against **7...a6** and **7...♞b8**, which are essentially the same concept, I have chosen **8.b3**, taking White's play in a completely different direction from *GM 2*. The main point is to meet **7...a6 8.b3 ♞b8** with the surprising **9.d5**, which I believe offers White excellent prospects, as you will see in Chapter 10.

Other Lines

The final two chapters cover a couple of important sidelines. The Reluctant (closed) Benoni contains a lot of subtleties, and I have significantly improved upon my coverage from *GM 2*. Finally, **3...c5** is a tricky move order which I completely overlooked in *GM 2*. Chapter 17 shows an excellent solution for White, with an important novelty in the most critical line.

I know a lot of chess readers have been waiting for my latest ideas against the Grünfeld and King's Indian Defences in particular, and I hope my new work will satisfy their expectations.

Boris Avrukh
Chicago, December 2017

Key to symbols used

±	White is slightly better
∓	Black is slightly better
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+–	White has a decisive advantage
–+	Black has a decisive advantage
=	equality
≡	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
?	unclear
N	Novelty
corr.	Correspondence game
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
!?	a move worth considering
?!	a move of doubtful value
#	mate

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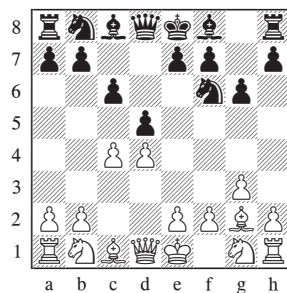
The Week in Chess

Electronic/Internet resources

ChessBase Magazine
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Chapter 1

Grünfeld



Solid with ...c6

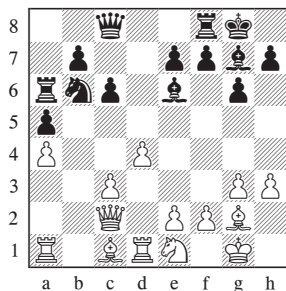
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6 4.♙g2 d5

5.♙a4

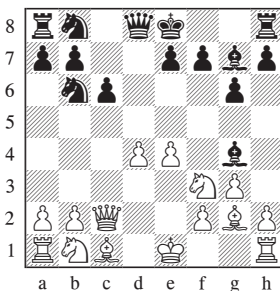
A) 5...a6	8
B) 5...♗bd7 6.cxd5 ♗b6 7.♙b3 cxd5 8.♗c3 ♙g7 9.♗f3 0-0 10.0-0	9
B1) 10...♙f5	10
B2) 10...♗e4	11
C) 5...dxc4 6.♙xc4	13
C1) 6...♙e6	13
C2) 6...♙g7	14
D) 5...♙g7 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7.♗f3	17
D1) 7...0-0	18
D2) 7...♗b6	19
E) 5...♗fd7 6.cxd5 ♗b6 7.♙d1! cxd5 8.♗c3	21
E1) 8...♗c6	21
E2) 8...♙g7	22

C2) after 16...♙c8



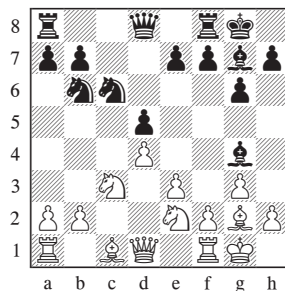
17.♗d3!N

D2) note to 8...♙g4



10.♗bd2!N

E2) after 11...♙g4



12.f3!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6

If Black wishes to play the ...c6/...d5 set-up, he cannot afford to delay it, as the following lines demonstrate:

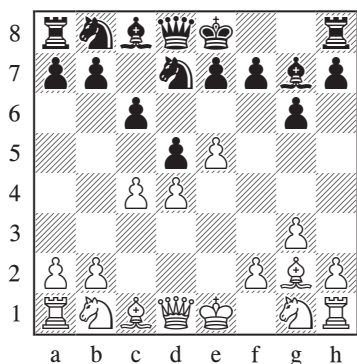
3...♙g7 4.♙g2 c6 5.e4 d5?!

It's too late for this.

5...d6 is better, but this obviously transposes to a King's Indian set-up. After 6.♘c3 0–0 White can even play 7.♘ge2!? (7.h3 e5 8.♘f3 also seems fine) 7...e5 8.0–0 ♘bd7 9.h3 and Black has nothing better than converting to the main King's Indian lines by exchanging on d4.

6.e5 ♘fd7

I also checked 6...♘g8 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.♘c3 e6 9.♘ge2 (the immediate 9.h4!?N was worth considering) 9...a6 10.h4 h5 11.♙g5 ♖a5 12.a3 and White's advantage was beyond any doubt in Vakhidov – Jarmany, Birmingham 2016.



7.cxd5 cxd5 8.♙xd5

It's no problem to spend time grabbing the central pawn.

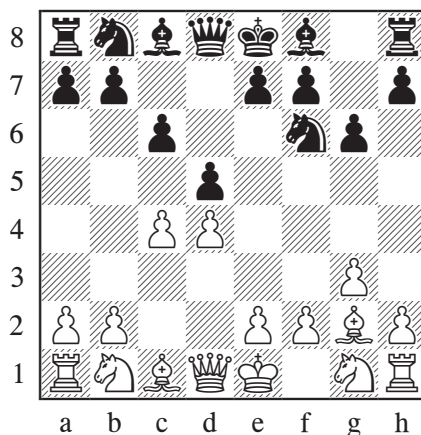
8...♘b6 9.♙g2 ♘c6 10.♘e2 ♙g4 11.♘bc3 0–0 12.h3

Black failed to prove any compensation in P. Horvath – Srienzi, Austria 2008.

4.♙g2

In *GM 2* I recommended 4.♘f3 d5 5.b3, but since that time Black has found several reliable responses against the b2-b3 set-up.

4...d5



5.♖a4

This move is my new attempt to cause problems against Black's ultra-solid set-up. The theory is still developing but so far White's results have been encouraging.

We will analyse A) 5...a6, B) 5...♘bd7, C) 5...dxc4, D) 5...♙g7 and E) 5...♘fd7.

A) 5...a6

I have always regarded this as a solid alternative to the more common tries, and it's not surprising to see a few top-level games on the database.

6.cxd5 b5

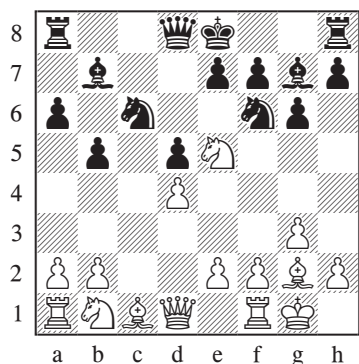
This is obviously the point behind Black's previous move.

7.♖d1!

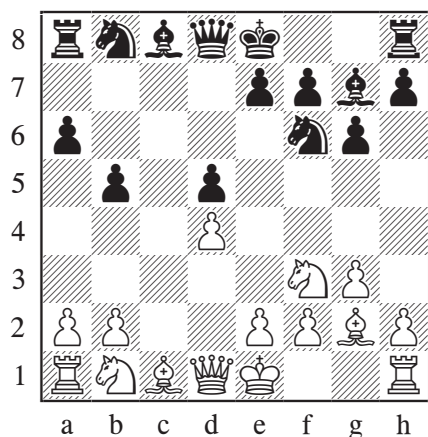
7.♖b3 cxd5 seems less challenging for Black.

7...cxd5 8.♘f3 ♙g7

8...♘c6 occurred in Michalik – Kraus, Ostrava 2016. I would suggest: 9.♘e5!?N ♘b7 (it's important that Black fails to solve his problems by means of 9...♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘e4, when 11.♙e3!± gives White the better game) 10.0–0 ♙g7



11. d3! 0-0 12. e3 White has some accomplishments: the c5-square is weak and can be used as a long-term outpost for White's pieces, and Black's light-squared bishop is passively placed on b7. (Note that the hasty 12. d5 is less clear after 12... b6.)



9.a4!?N

It seems to me Black has no problems whatsoever after 9.0-0 d6. Alternatively, 9. f4 is a sensible move but Black was able to hold without too many problems in Carlsen – Mamedyarov, Wijk aan Zee 2016.

The text move is my own idea, intending to weaken Black's queenside.

9...b4

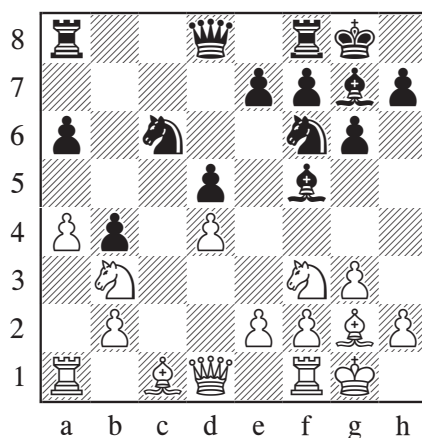
In the event of 9...bxa4 White should not rush to recapture. I suggest: 10. d3 0-0

11.0-0 d6 (worse is 11... b7?! 12. xa4 d4 13. f4 and White develops some initiative) 12. f4 f5 13. d5 b4 14. xa4 White has good prospects on the queenside.

Blocking the queenside seems like Black's most natural response. A logical continuation would be:

10.0-0 0-0 11. dbd2 d6 12. db3 f5

12... d4 13. f4 b7 14. d3 e6 15. fcl also gives White a slight pull.



13. f3 f8 14. fcl

I will leave it for the readers to test my novelty and analyse further if they wish. I think White has the easier game, with chances for an advantage due to the vulnerability of Black's queenside.

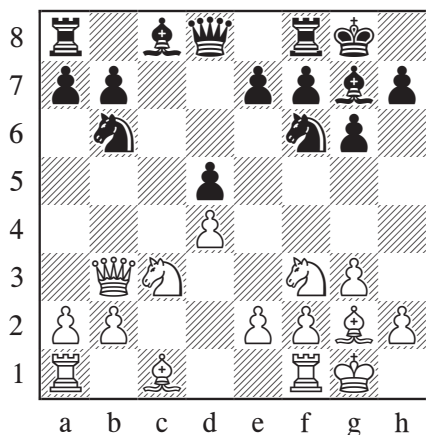
B) 5... dbd7

This isn't such a popular move, but it's a natural and sensible option to consider.

6.cxd5 db6 7. b3 cxd5

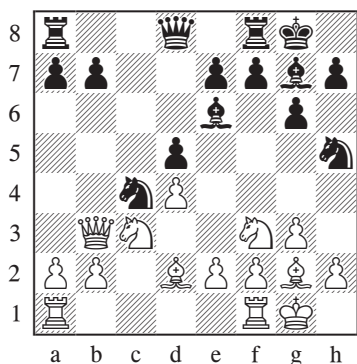
7... bxd5? makes no sense: 8. e4 db6 9. de2 g7 10.0-0 0-0 11. d1 e6 12. c2+ White got an easy advantage in Vaganian – Siebrecht, Dresden 2007.

8. dc3 g7 9. df3 0-0 10.0-0



After a series of obvious developing moves, Black must decide how to proceed. The main options are **B1) 10...♙f5** and **B2) 10...♙e4**.

Another possibility is: 10...♙e6 11.♙f4 ♗h5 (11...♙e4N is met by 12.♙fc1! and White has numerous ideas to seize the initiative on the queenside) 12.♙d2 ♙c4 Now in Markus – Miljkovic, Bar 2015, White should have played:



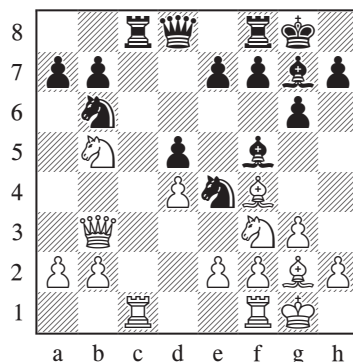
13.♙fd1!N ♙b8 14.♙c1!? Threatening ♗g5. 14...♙a5 (14...h6 is strongly met by 15.♙e5!) 15.♙b4 ♙c6 16.♙a3 h6 (after 16...b5 White obviously has 17.♙c5) 17.b3 White keeps an edge due to his better coordinated pieces.

B1) 10...♙f5 11.♙e5!?

I find this move the most interesting option.

11.♙f4 may also give chances for an edge.

For instance: 11...♙c8 12.♙ac1 ♙e4 13.♙b5 (13.♙e5 ♙xc3 14.♙xc3 ♙xc3 15.♙xc3 ♙d7 16.♙c1 ♙xe5 17.dxe5 e6∞)

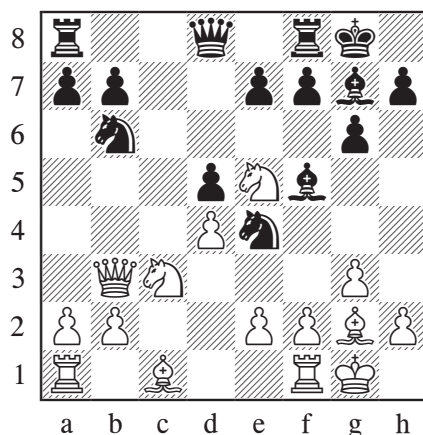


13...a6N (13...♙c4 14.♙xa7 ♙a8 occurred in Skomorokhin – Van der Merwe, Lille 2014, when 15.♙xb7N would have left Black struggling for compensation) 14.♙a3 ♙e8 15.♙xc8 ♙xc8 16.♙c1 ♙d6 17.♙b4±

11...♙e4

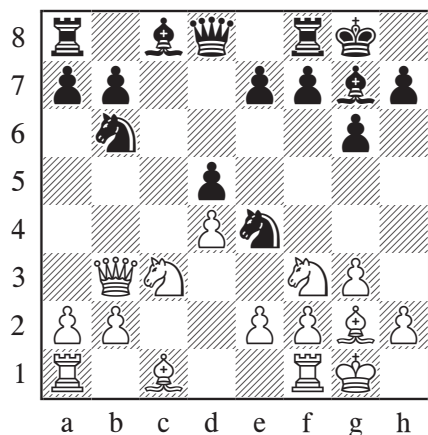
Another game continued 11...♙c8 12.♙d1 h6?! 13.a4 and White soon won the b7-pawn in Abhishek – Zhrebtsova, Moscow 2017.

The present position was reached in Ponomariov – Kovchan, Kiev 2008. Now I like:



12.a4!N a5 13.♙b5

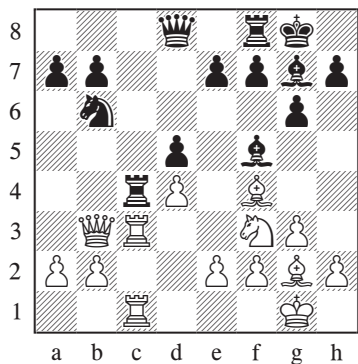
White has the better game.

B2) 10...♟e4

This has been the most popular continuation.

11.♟f4 ♟xc3

Another direction is 11...♟f5 12.♟fc1! and Black failed to equalize in a couple of games: 12...♟xc3 (after 12...♟c8?! 13.♟b5! ♟xc1† 14.♟xc1 ♟c4 15.♟xa7± White won a pawn in Foygel – Kelleher, Marlboro 2001) 13.♟xc3 ♟c8 14.♟ac1 ♟c4



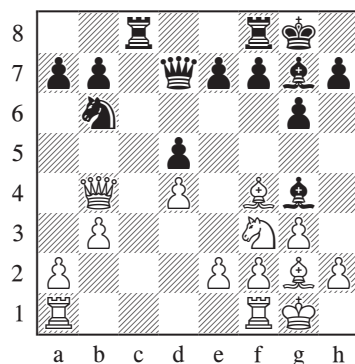
15.♟xc4! dxc4 16.♟a3± Matamoros Franco – Montoliu Cervero, Linares 2016.

12.♟xc3!

12.bxc3 has been played in some games but the text move is stronger.

12...♟f5

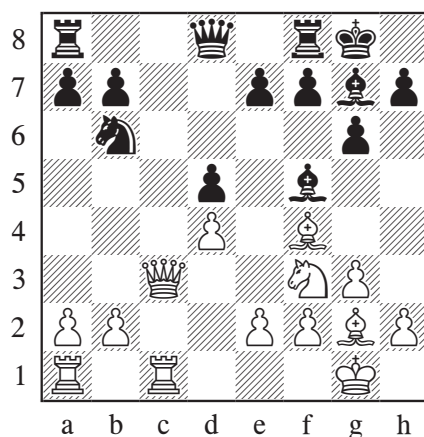
Black has also tried 12...♟g4, after which I like 13.b3!?, restricting the black knight. I found one game from here, which continued: 13...♟c8 14.♟b4! This is an excellent square for the queen. 14...♟d7 Cernousek – Bednar, Prague 2014. This would have been an appropriate moment to play:



15.♟e5!N Sacrificing a pawn to seize the initiative. 15...♟xe5 16.dxe5 ♟xe2 17.♟fe1 ♟g4 18.♟d4 With huge positional compensation.

13.♟fc1

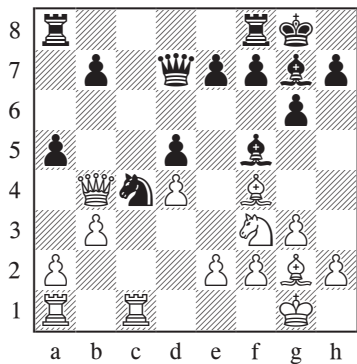
Generally I like to keep the other rook on a1 in order to support a possible a4-a5 advance. Despite the near symmetry of the position, it is surprisingly hard for Black to neutralize the pressure.

**13...♟d7**

I checked two other moves as well:

13...♖c8 is hardly a good idea as 14.♞a5! is awkward to meet. 14...♘c4 (in the event of 14...a6N I like the calm 15.b3! and it is hard to find any good ideas for Black) 15.♞xa7 ♘xb2 16.♞xb7 White was simply a pawn up in Demina – Druzhinina, Elista 2001.

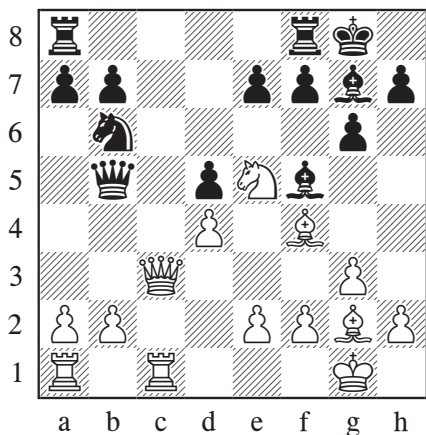
13...♘c4 14.♞b4 ♞d7 15.b3 a5 occurred in Stachowiak – Kulas, Gora Swietej Anny 2014, and now I have the following improvement to offer:



16.♞e1!N ♘d6 17.♘e5 ♞e6 18.a4! Fixing the vulnerable a5-pawn, and ...b6 would leave the c6-square loose. White is better.

14.♘e5! ♞b5

I discovered a significant improvement over the game Vadasz – Hevesi, Sarospatak 1995.

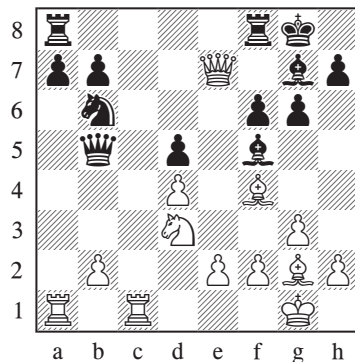


15.a4!N

Black can capture two pawns, but neither option holds much appeal for him.

15...♞xe2

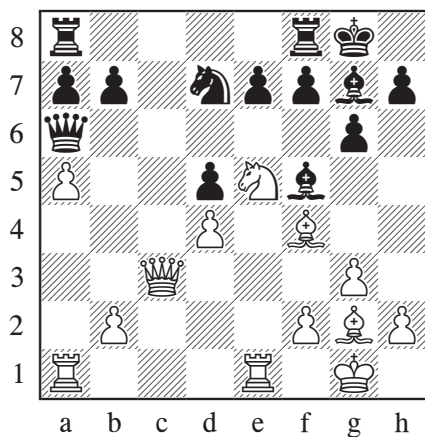
15...♘xa4 16.♞a3 f6 (16...♘b6 17.♖c5 ♞e8 18.♖c7± sees White regain the pawn with a big advantage) 17.♘d3 ♘b6 18.♞xe7



White has regained the pawn and stands clearly better, especially taking into account that 18...♙xd3?? loses on the spot to 19.♖c7!.

16.♖e1 ♞a6 17.a5 ♘d7

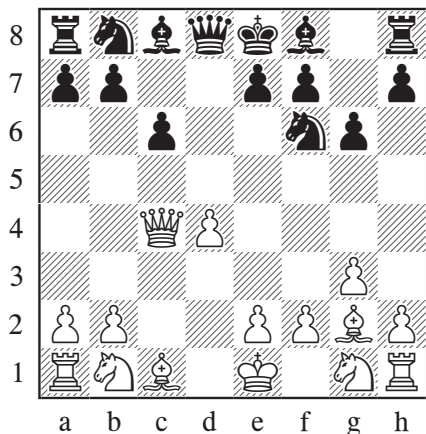
17...♘c4 runs into a huge tactic: 18.♘xf7!! and if 18...♖xf7 19.♙xd5 ♘d6 20.♖xe7 Black is crushed.



18.♘d7 ♙xd7 19.♖xe7 ♙c6 20.♙e5!

White is much better, due to the poor position of Black's queen.

C) 5...dxc4 6. ♖xc4

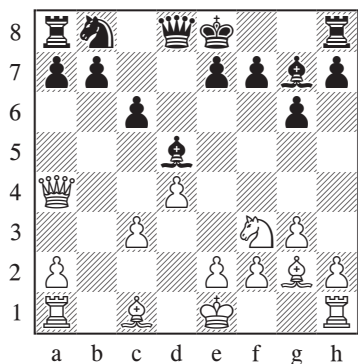


Black can chase the queen immediately with C1) 6...♙e6 or develop his kingside first with C2) 6...♙g7.

C1) 6...♙e6 7. ♖a4 ♜bd7

This seems like the logical follow-up.

7...♙d5 8. ♜f3 ♜e4 fails to equalize after: 9. ♜c3! ♜xc3 10. bxc3 ♙g7 Now in Cernousek – Neuman, Rakovnik 2013, White opted for the super-aggressive 11. h4!?, but I prefer normal development with:



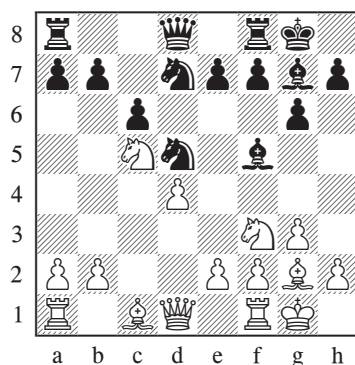
11.0-0 ♜d7 12. ♖e1 ♜f6 13. c4 ♙e4 14. ♙f4 0-0 15. ♖ac1 White has nice central control.

8. ♜f3 ♜b6 9. ♖d1

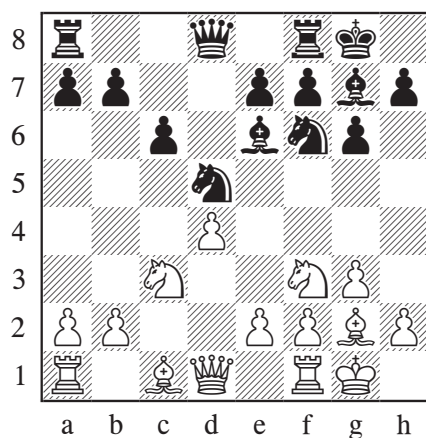
This retreat seems best, as 9. ♖c2 gives Black the option of ...♙f5.

9...♙g7 10.0-0 0-0 11. ♜c3 ♜bd5

It is important to meet 11...♜fd5 with 12. ♜e4! in order to avoid the knight trade while aiming at c5. 12...♙f5 13. ♜c5 ♜d7 occurred in Maiovrov – Sivuk, Moscow 2016, and here I think White should have played:



14. e4! ♜xc5 15. exf5 ♜e4 16. fxg6 hxg6 17. ♖e1 ♜d6 18. h4 I like White's chances with the two bishops and Black's slightly vulnerable kingside, although Black is still pretty solid.

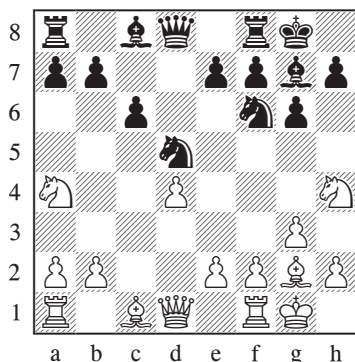


12. ♜a4!

Once again, it is essential to avoid the knight exchange.

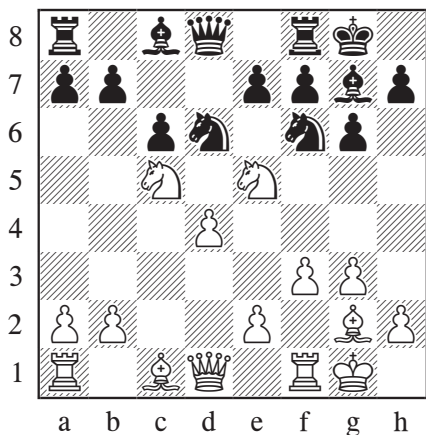
12...♘e4

12...♙f5 13.♘h4 (13.♘e5!?N could be an interesting alternative) 13...♙c8 occurred in Dydyshko – Urban, Dzwirzyno 2004. This was a perfect time for White to gain some space in the centre with:



14.e4N ♘b6 15.e5 ♘e8 16.♘c5 Black is under serious pressure.

13.♘e5 ♘df6 14.f3 ♘d6 15.♘c5 ♙c8

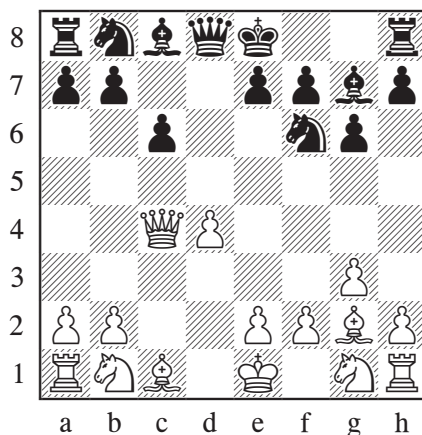


16.e4 b6 17.♘cd3 ♙b7 18.♙e3

White achieved everything he could have wished for out of the opening in Sargissian – Svidler, Rogaska Slatina 2011.

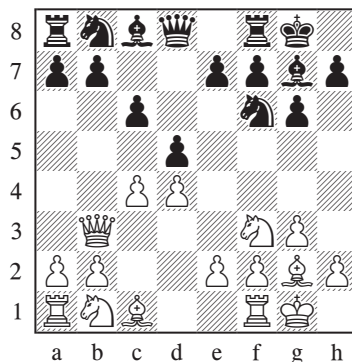
C2) 6...♙g7

It's not obvious that Black can benefit from chasing the queen, so I consider this move the main line.



7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0

The position after Black's 6th move has occurred in just fourteen games on my database; but after the last move the number has jumped to more than 500! The usual sequence has involved White meeting the ...c6/...d5 plan with ♙b3, reaching the following position:



Now 7...dxc4 8.♙xc4 transposes to our repertoire. Despite the vast number of games, I regard 7...dxc4 as a concession; if this was the best Black could do, then I would have had no hesitation in recommending the ♙b3 plan for White. When dealing with this variation from

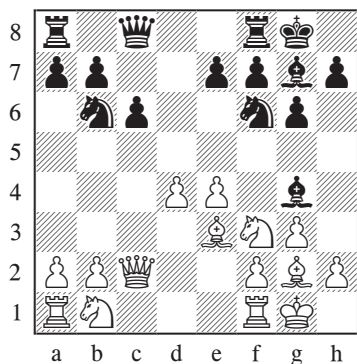
Black's perspective in *GM 8*, I recommended 7...♖b6! as the best way to play.

For the purposes of our repertoire, it would be counterproductive to analyse every possible option for Black from 500 games, as the chances of arriving here through our move order are quite small. Therefore I will just cover Black's most important options, giving you enough ideas to be able to handle anything else that Black may try.

8...♙f5

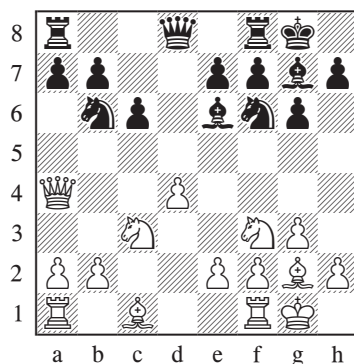
This is Black's first choice among top players. I will mention the two most common alternatives:

8...♘bd7 9.♖c2! (I like this prophylactic move, although 9.♘c3 ♘b6 10.♗d3 is also promising, as shown in a bunch of games) 9...♘b6 The following model game is quite impressive: 10.e4 ♙g4 11.♙e3 ♖c8



12.a4! ♙h3 13.a5 ♙xg2 14.♙xg2 ♘bd7 15.h3 ♙e8 16.♘bd2± White had a commanding position in Stupak – Sieciechowicz, Krakow 2012.

8...♙e6 9.♗a4 ♘bd7 10.♘c3 ♘b6



11.♙c2!?

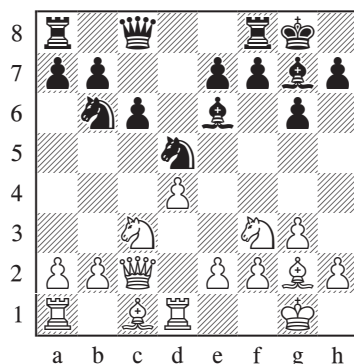
11.♙d1 transposes to variation C1 above. It is hard to say if the text move is a real improvement; I will just include a few lines to let you decide for yourself.

11...♘fd5 12.♙d1!

In the aforementioned variation I gave 12.♘e4 and said that White had to avoid trading knights, but here 12...♙f5 would be slightly annoying. The text move is a better way to utilize the queen's presence on c2 rather than d1.

12...♖c8

Now in Mochalov – B. Jaracz, Pardubice 2006, White played 13.e4. I would rather not rush this move, but instead build up slowly with:

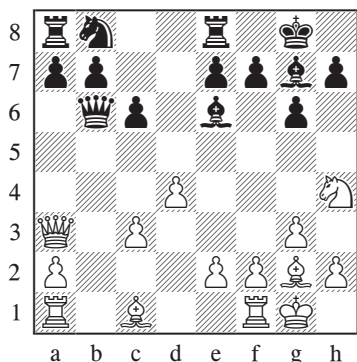


13.♙d2N ♘xc3 14.♙xc3 ♘d5 15.♙d2

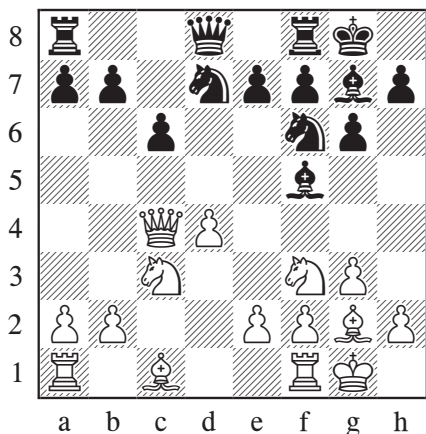
White maintains a slight but long-term pull.

9.♘c3 ♘bd7

9...♘e4 looks premature to me. I like the following continuation: 10.♚b3 ♚b6 11.♘h4! ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♙e6 13.♚a3 ♜e8 Sargissian – Dragun, Warsaw 2012. Once again, I would prefer to refrain from e2-e4 and instead improve the pieces with:



14.♙f4N ♚a6 15.♚xa6 ♘xa6 16.♞fb1 The pressure on the queenside is unpleasant for Black.



10.h3?!

This rare move is the fruit of my serious work before the 2012 World Championship, when I helped my friend Boris Gelfand in his preparation for Vishy Anand. I would like to add that Black is doing well after most of White's other main tries.

10...♘e4

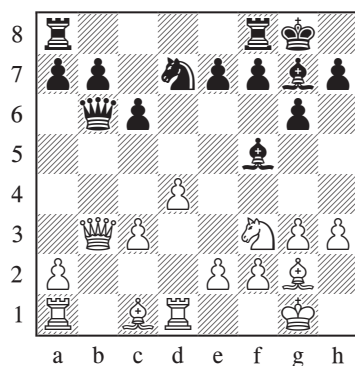
This simplifying move has been played in all three of the games in which White's last move occurred.

11.♚b3!

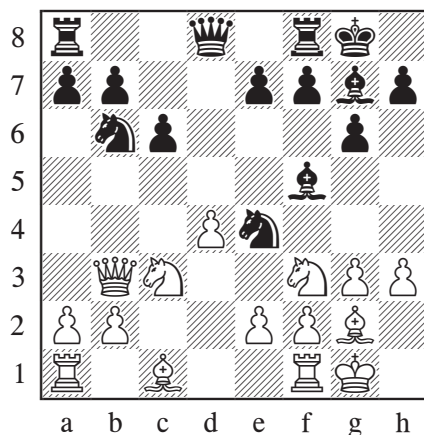
Other moves are not impressive at all. The queen move was a novelty which I analysed during my collaboration with Boris. He never had a chance to play it in the match, but I was able to use it in an important game in the Istanbul Olympiad later in the year.

11...♘b6

If 11...♚b6 then 12.♞d1! is a good way to maintain the tension, especially taking into account that 12...♘xc3 13.bxc3 should favour White:



13...♚xb3 14.axb3 ♙c2 is an important possibility to check, but after 15.♞d2 ♙xb3 16.♞b2 ♙d5 17.♞xb7± White regains the pawn and will pick up an extra one of his own.



12.a4!

This often proves to be an important device in positions with a black knight on b6.

12...a5

A difficult decision: Black blocks the a4-pawn but destabilizes his knight.

In my ChessBase annotations I mentioned the following alternative: 12...♞d6 13.a5 (13.♞e1!? is also promising) 13...♙e6 14.♞c2 ♞d5 (14...♞bc4 runs into the unpleasant 15.a6!) 15.e4± and White keeps a nice advantage.

13.♞d1 ♞a6

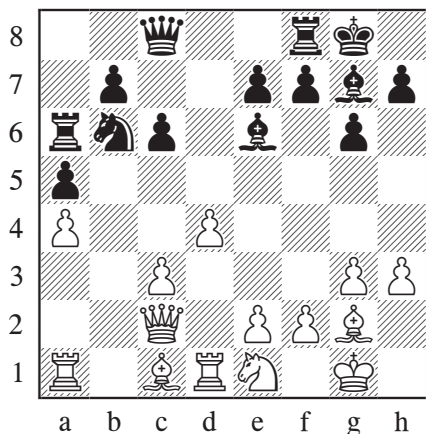
13...♞d6 can be met by 14.♞e1 (14.♞e5!? is also worthy of consideration) 14...♙e6 15.♞d1 ♞d5 16.♞g5! with the better game for White.

14.♞e1!

The knight is eyeing the c5-square.

14...♙e6 15.♞c2 ♞xc3 16.bxc3 ♞c8

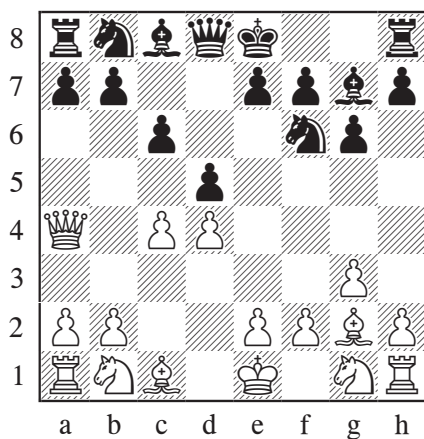
Now in Avrukh – Gupta, Istanbul (ol) 2012, I missed a clever idea:

**17.♞d3!N**

I played 17.♞h2 and allowed my opponent to get back into the game with 17...c5!.

17...♙xh3 18.♙xh3 ♞xh3 19.♞b1!

The threat of ♞c5 forces Black to move his knight away (either immediately or after 19...♞f5 20.♞e1), allowing White to capture the b7-pawn with a clear advantage. Despite my inaccuracy on move 17, I benefited from my work with an elite player and scored an important victory for the Israeli team.

D) 5...♙g7**6.cxd5**

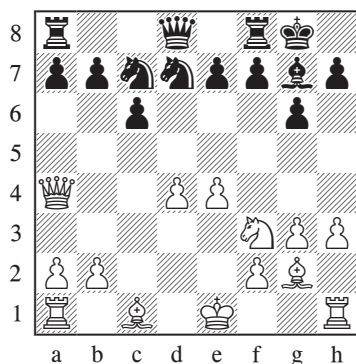
An obvious move, as the whole point of the ♞a4 variation is to stop Black from recapturing with the c-pawn.

6...♞xd5 7.♞f3

The position resembles the dynamic Grünfeld variation from Chapters 2-4, but each side has made an unusual move. White's queen clearly does not along on a4, but Black's ...c6 move does nothing except take away the best square from the b8-knight.

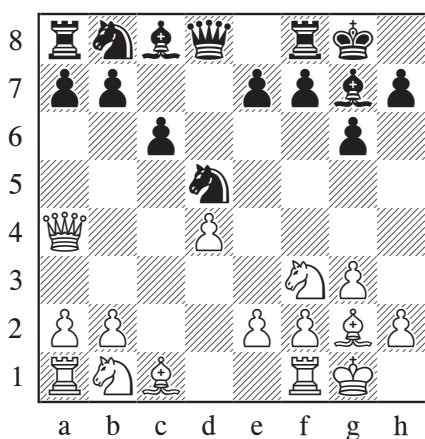
Black's two main options are **D1) 7...0-0** and **D2) 7...♞b6**.

7...♙g4 8.♞bd2 ♞d7 9.h3 ♙xf3 10.♞xf3 0-0 11.e4 ♞c7 occurred in Eljanov – Ipatov, Baku 2015, when White's most precise continuation would have been:



12.♙e3 N e5 13.♞d1 White's bishop pair and strong centre should promise him a long-term pull.

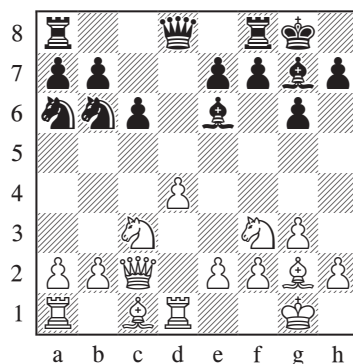
D1) 7...0-0 8.0-0



8...♙g4

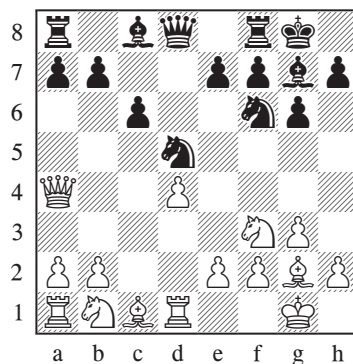
This looks like a natural choice, and it has been the most common move so far. I checked two other continuations:

8...♞a6 9.♞d1 is an important move, strengthening the central pawn. There is only one game here; but after the further moves 9...♙f5 10.♞c3 ♞b6 11.♞b3 ♙e6 12.♞c2 we have transposed to quite a lot of other games. Play may continue:



12...♞b4 13.♞b1 a5 It may seem strange that White had to jump so many times with his queen, but Black hasn't really accomplished anything and after 14.e4! White had an obvious advantage in Romanishin – Huzman, Kherson 1989.

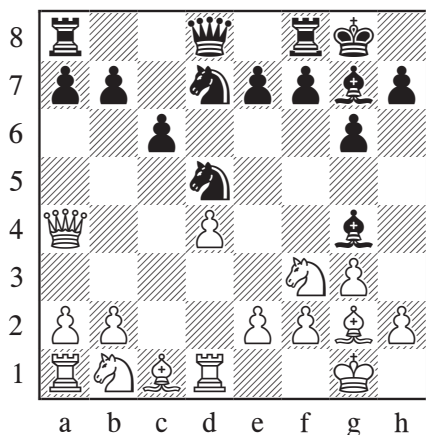
8...♞d7 Here too, I like the flexible 9.♞d1, which has only occurred twice. 9...♞7f6 (9...♞c7 is rather an unfortunate square for the black queen. 10.e4 ♞5b6 11.♞c2 ♞e8 occurred in Clemens – Riefner, Germany 1980, when 12.a4 N a5 13.♞a3! would have been strong. White can easily meet 13...e5 with 14.d5, with a clear plus.)



10.♞c3 ♞b6 This position occurred in Cherniaev – Doggers, Triesen 2014. Here I would suggest the quiet 11.h3N, when 11...♞d8 12.♞e5 looks good for White.

9.♞d1 ♞d7

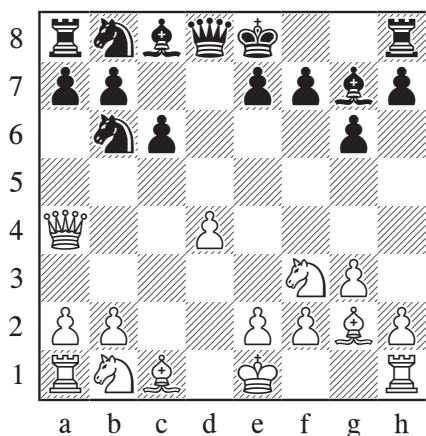
A few other moves have been played, but the character of the position remains about the same. This position was reached in Stephan – Niccoli, London 2015. There was no reason for White to refrain from the natural developing move:



10. Nc3! N d7 b6 11. Bb3

White has the usual slight advantage.

D2) 7... d b6



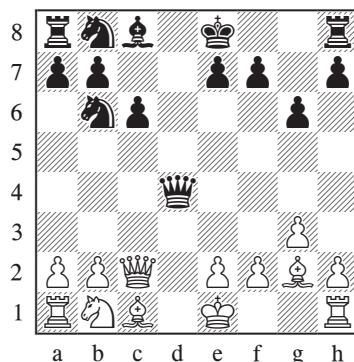
8. Bc2

8. B d1? c5 would make things easy for Black. The text move offers a pawn sacrifice for long-term compensation.

8... g4

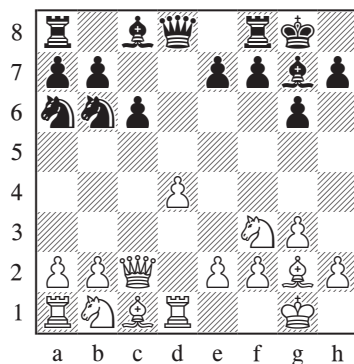
Three other moves are worth mentioning:

8... gxd4 has only occurred in one game. 9. dxd4 Bxd4 In Bukal – Bogut, Dubrovnik 2008, White should have continued:



10. Nc3 N 0-0 11. g h6 (11.0-0 N a6 12. B d1 is also worthy of consideration) 11... Re8 12.0-0 Readers can analyse this in more depth if they wish, but I am happy to leave it here and say White has lasting compensation due to the disappearance of Black's dark-squared bishop.

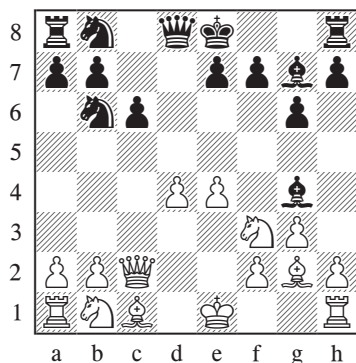
8...0-0N has not been tried here but it transposes to a few games after White's next. 9.0-0 N a6 10. B d1! N (Black got a decent game after 10. Nc3 g4 11. B d1 N b4 12. B b1 B c8! 13. g5 N d4d5 in Fressinet – Gelfand, Paris/St Petersburg 2013)



The text move strengthens White's centre while preparing to meet 10...♖b4 with 11.♖c3! ♘4d5 12.♖e1, when everything is under control.

Finally, we must consider:

8...♙f5!? 9.e4 ♙g4



10.♘bd2!N

An important improvement over 10.♘e5 ♙e6, which was far from clear in Tkachiev – Vachier-Lagrave, Aix les Bains 2007.

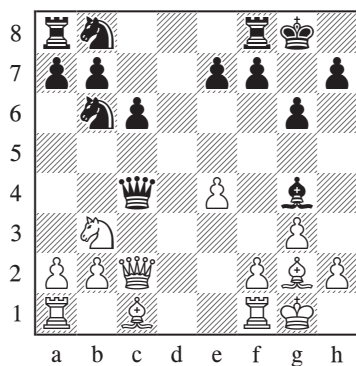
10...0-0

After 10...♙xd4 11.♘xd4 ♖xd4 12.h3 ♙e6 13.0-0= White can count on lasting compensation, due to the absence of Black's dark-squared bishop.

11.0-0

Here we have another slight variation on the same pawn sacrifice:

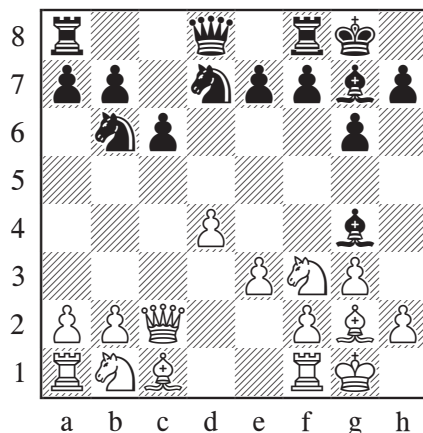
11...♙xd4 12.♘xd4 ♖xd4 13.♘b3 ♖c4



14.♖d2! ♘8d7 15.♘a5 ♖b5 16.h3 ♙e6 17.b3
With a promising initiative for the pawn.

9.e3 ♘8d7 10.0-0 0-0

This position was debated by two strong GMs in a recent game, which we will follow for a few more moves.



11.♘bd2 c5 12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♘xf3

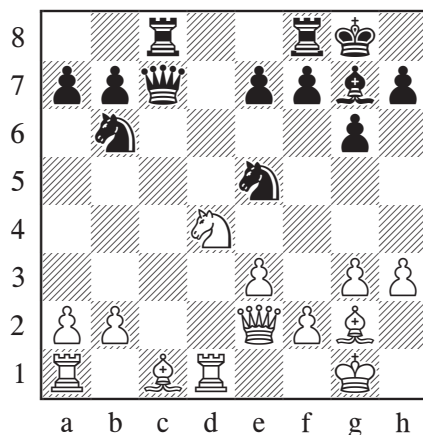
White should be better: he has the two bishops and Black has no special counterplay.

13...♖c8 14.♖e2 ♖c7 15.♖d1

15.♙d2!?N looks good as well.

15...cxd4 16.♘xd4 ♘e5

In Bluebaum – Mista, Germany 2017, White should have played:



17.♔d2N ♖c6

Or 17...♖ec4 18.♔b4 with an obvious edge.

18.♖xc6 bxc6 19.♔e1 c5 20.a4

White keeps a pleasant edge.

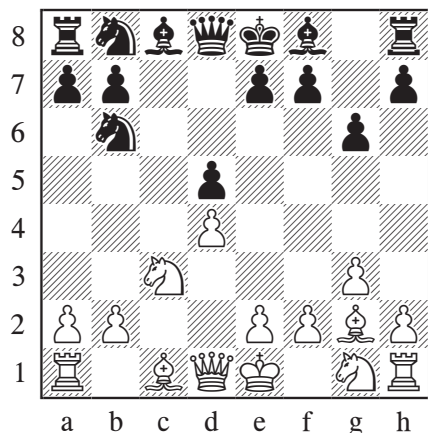
E) 5...♖fd7

This has been Black's most popular reply, and it's also the move I recommended for Black in *GM 8*.

6.cxd5 ♖b6 7.♔d1!

Studying this move is exactly what convinced me to recommend this system.

7.♔b3 cxd5 8.♖c3 ♖c6 has proven quite reliable for Black; the queen has little to do on b3.

7...cxd5 8.♖c3

In *GM 8* I only considered a set-up with an early ♖f3 by White, as had been played in the few games up to that point. However, more recently it became clear that White could pose more problems by developing the knight to e2 or even h3 in certain cases.

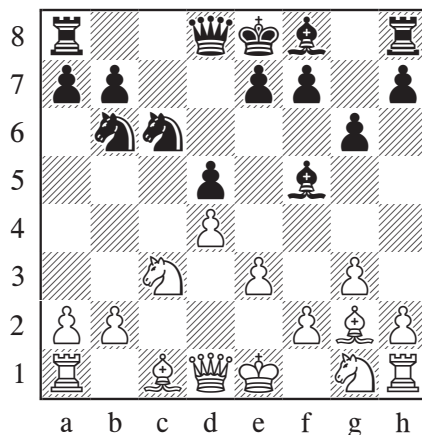
We will analyse **E1) 8...♖c6** and **E2) 8...♔g7**.

E1) 8...♖c6 9.e3

As hinted previously, White should start with this move to give the knight the option of going to e2.

9...♔f5!?

9...♔g7 transposes to variation E2 below. The text move is an important alternative, preparing ...♖b4.

**10.♖h3!?N**

The point behind Black's set-up can be seen after 10.♖ge2 ♖b4! 11.0-0 ♔c2 12.♔e1 ♔f5 (12...♔d3 is also good) and White found nothing better than accepting the repetition in Kazhgaleyev – Gelfand, Almaty (blitz) 2016.

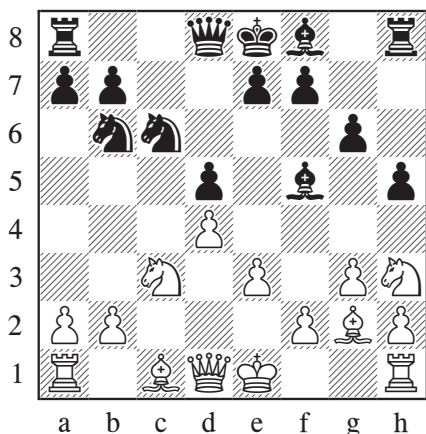
I think my new move is the best way to nullify the ...♖b4 plan without wasting time on a2-a3.

10...h5

This seems like the best response.

With the knight on h3, White is much better prepared for 10...♖b4. Play continues 11.0-0 ♔d3 (after 11...♔c2 we have 12.♔f3) 12.♖e2 ♔a6 13.♖hf4± and Black has not really accomplished anything.

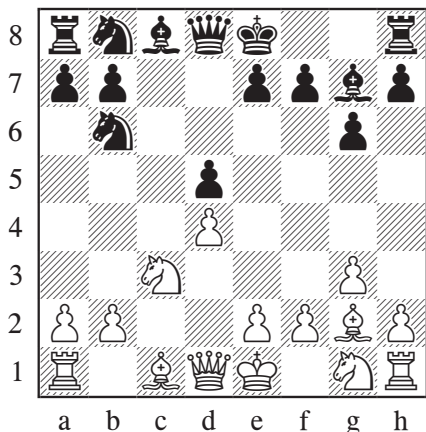
10...♔g7?! is inaccurate in view of 11.♘f4 and Black has problems defending the d5-pawn, as 11...e6? runs into 12.g4!.



11.♘f4 e6 12.h3

I will leave it for the readers to test this position and analyse further if they wish. A complex game lies ahead, but I think Black faces the more difficult challenges: the f5-bishop is short of squares and the ...h5 move has permanently weakened his kingside.

E2) 8...♔g7



9.e3

Let me remind you that 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.0-0 0-0 is pretty harmless.

9...♘c6

9...0-0 10.♘ge2 ♘c6 is a simple transposition.

10.♘ge2 0-0 11.0-0

Why do I believe that White can aspire to an advantage from this near-symmetrical position? One reason is the misplaced knight on b6; another is the flexible placement of the knight on e2, where it has slightly better prospects than on f3.

11...♔g4

This has been the most popular continuation. Both of the following moves deserve attention:

I had developed White's set-up during my work with Boris Gelfand, but to my great surprise it was employed a few years later by Veselin Topalov, not exactly the most positional player! His game against Anish Giri continued:

11...♔e8 12.b3 e5

Hardly a good idea, as White is well placed to play against the isolated pawn.

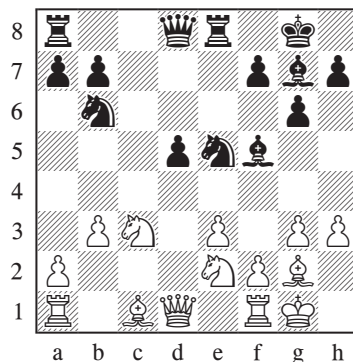
13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.h3

This is the natural, human reaction.

Meanwhile, the engine is not really concerned about the g4-square, and proposes 14.♔b2!N ♔g4 15.♘b5! with a nice edge for White.

14...♔f5

Now White should have played:



15.♔a3N

15.♘d4 ♘d3 16.♖e1 ♘a6 led to complex play in Topalov – Giri, London 2015. The text move is simpler, with the following illustrative line:

15...♙d7 16.g4! ♘d3 17.♙c5

White is better.

11...e6 12.b3

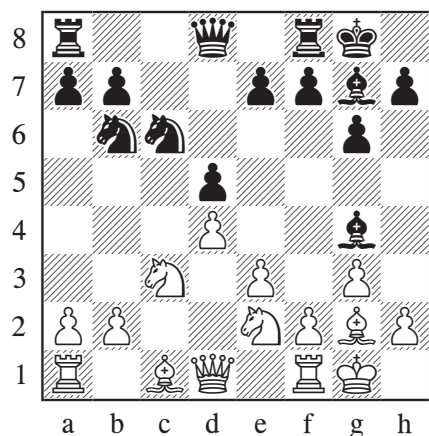
White is not aiming for a serious advantage from the opening, but rather wants to prove that his position is easier to play. This notion is supported by the two games in which this position has occurred.

12...a5 13.♙d2!?

The other game continued 13.a4 ♘d7 14.♙a3 ♖e8 15.♙d2 ♘c8 16.♘f4 ♖b8 when, in Roiz – Wagner, Dresden 2015, White should have played 17.♖fc1N ♘8e7 18.♘b5 ♘f5 19.♘d3, maintaining a useful edge.

13...♖e8 14.♙a3 ♘b4 15.♘b5 ♙f8 16.♖fc1 ♖b8 17.♘f4±

Black's position was already becoming unpleasant in Tkachiev – Brookes, Stockholm 2016.

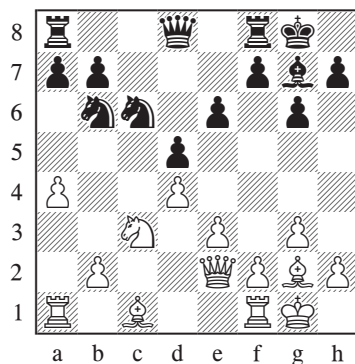


12.f3!N

I thought it could be an interesting idea to prevent Black from trading his light-squared bishop, as usually it is hard to find a good role for this piece.

12.h3 is playable but not best, as Black is generally happy to exchange the bishop anyway. 12...♙xe2 13.♙xe2 ♖c8 14.♘d2 e6 15.♖fc1 ♙e7 Black was solid in Kazhgaleyev – Nepomniachtchi, Almaty 2016.

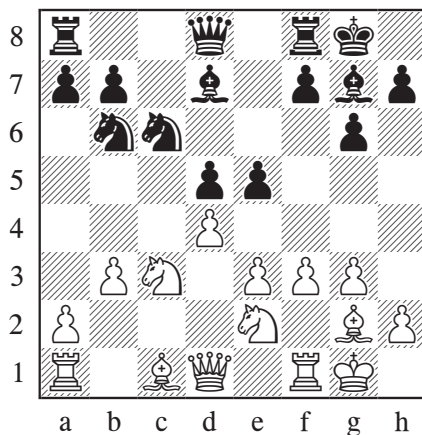
12.a4 is a decent alternative. A logical reply would be 12...♙xe2N (12...e6?? was a horrible blunder, and after 13.f3 Black could have resigned already in Saduakassova – Lei Tingjie, Al Ain 2015) 13.♙xe2 e6



14.b3 ♖c8 15.♘d2 White can certainly play this position in the hope of exploiting his bishop pair in the long run, though Black's position remains pretty solid.

12...♙d7 13.b3 e5

In the event of 13...♖e8 14.♙a3 e6 (14...e5 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 is similar to our main line) 15.♙d2 White can seriously consider the e3-e4 break.

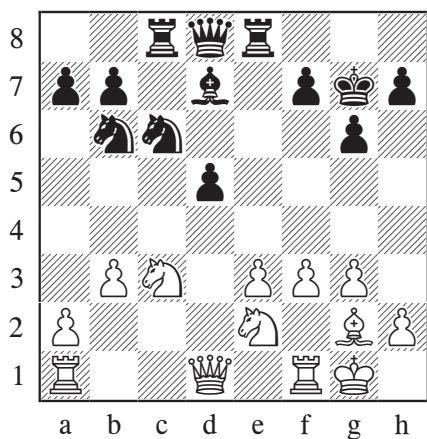


14.dxe5 ♖xe5

14...♙xe5 15.♙a3 ♖e8 16.♖c1 is also better for White.

15.♙a3 ♖e8 16.♙c5!

A surprising idea, but the exchange of dark-squared bishops favours White. An illustrative line is:

16...♖c8 17.♙d4 ♗c6 18.♙xg7 ♔xg7**19.♙d2 ♙e7 20.♙f2**

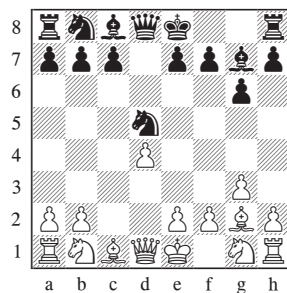
White is slightly better, as I don't see enough activity on Black's side to compensate for the isolated pawn.

Conclusion

5.♙a4 is a promising and relatively fresh way to meet the ...c6 Grünfeld. Both 5...dxc4 and 5...♙g7 lead to versions of the dynamic Grünfeld structure where White has chances to press with his central majority, while Black is deprived of the active ...♗c6 move. Black's other options lead to a symmetrical ...cxd5 structure, but each of them involves some concession from him: 5...a6 followed by ...b5 gives White targets on the queenside, while 5...♗bd7 and 5...♗fd7 both lead to a knight being misplaced on b6. I was able to improve White's play in many lines, and overall I would say he has decent chances of an opening edge.



Grünfeld



Dynamic Grünfeld

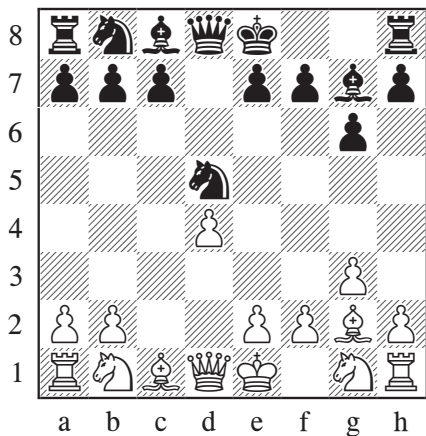
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5

6.♘f3

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1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5



6.♘f3

6.e4 is an important option but I am happy to stick with the recommendation from *GM 2*.

In this chapter we will analyse A) 6...♘c6 and B) 6...0-0.

6...♘b6 is the big main line, which will be covered in Chapters 3 and 4.

A) 6...♘c6 7.e3

7.0-0 is inaccurate due to 7...♘b6! 8.e3 e5, which is well known to be fine for Black.

In my previous work I recommended 7.♘c3. Since that time, however, 7...0-0 8.0-0 e5!? has emerged as a promising new idea, the main point being to meet 9.♘xd5 with 9...e4!. I was unable to find anything attractive to suggest for White; for instance, 10.♘e5 ♗xd5 11.♘xc6 ♗xc6 and Black is doing fine.

7...0-0 8.0-0 ♖e8

8...♘b6 is by far the most common move but 9.♘c3 simply transposes to the big main line, as covered in Chapter 4.

8...♙g4?! has also been tried but it makes no sense to me. 9.h3 ♙d7 10.♙h2 e6 This occurred in Suba – Gonzalez Aguirre, Villa de Albox 2001, when the natural 11.e4N ♘b6 12.♘c3± would have been clearly better for White.

9.♘c3!

9.♗e2 e5 looks okay for Black.

9...♙f5?

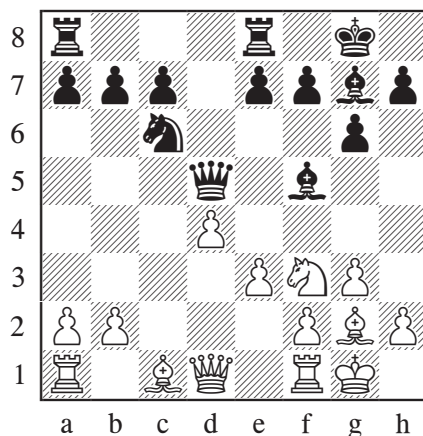
This move keeps the game in independent territory, but it is simply bad.

9...♘xc3 10.bxc3 e5 transposes to variation B1, which will be analysed shortly.

9...♘b6 once again leads to the big main line, as covered in Chapter 4.

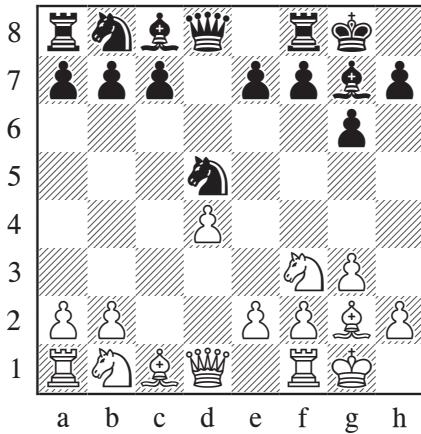
10.♘xd5 ♗xd5

In Oney – Kovan, Kusadasi 2004, White should have continued with:



11.♘h4!N ♙e4 12.f3 ♙f5 13.♘xf5 ♗xf5 14.f4±

The g2-bishop is extremely strong, and Black has a hard time finding counterplay as ...e5 has been prevented.

B) 6...0-0 7.0-0

In this position 7...♖b6 is by far Black's first choice, and it once again leads to the big main line after 8.♗c3 ♗c6 9.e3.

This chapter will deal with the alternatives **B1) 7...♗c6**, **B2) 7...♗a6**, **B3) 7...c6** and **B4) 7...c5**.

B1) 7...♗c6 8.e3

8.♗c3 reaches a position discussed under 7.♗c3 in the notes to variation A, where I mentioned that 8...e5!? is a good option for Black.

8.e4 ♗b6 9.d5 ♗a5 leads to a big theoretical tabiya which, in my opinion, does not promise White any advantage.

8...♞e8

8...♗b6 9.♗c3 is another possible transposition to Chapter 4.

9.♗c3 ♗xc3

9...♗b6 is the same story as in the previous note.

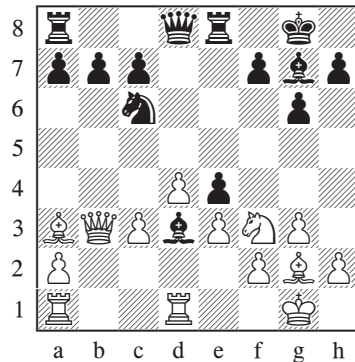
10.bxc3 e5 11.♙a3

This seems like a good way to develop while maintaining the central tension.

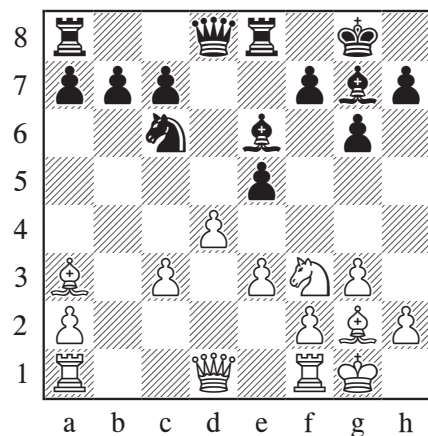
11...♙e6

After 11...♞b8 12.♗d2 I see nothing better than 12...♙e6, transposing to the main line below.

Another game continued: 11...♙f5 12.♞b3 ♗d3?! This is the wrong idea. (12...♞b8N is better, though I still like White after 13.♞fd1±) 13.♞fd1 e4 This occurred in D. Bekker-Jensen – Lindinger, Hamburg 1999, and now White missed a nice idea:



14.♞xd3!N exd3 (14...exf3 should be met by 15.♙h1! [rather than 15.♙xf3 ♗e5!]) 15...♗a5 16.♞d1 and the f3-pawn is falling) 15.♞xb7 ♞d7 16.♗g5 ♗a5 17.♞d5! With a decisive advantage.

**12.♗d2 ♞b8 13.♞c2**

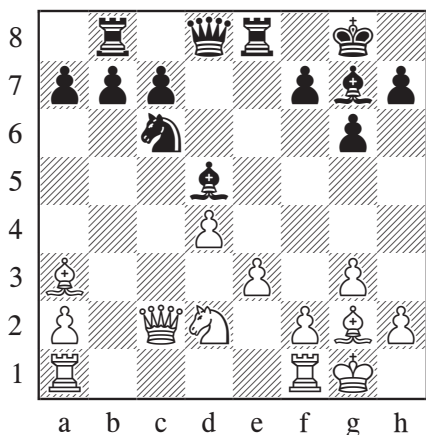
From this square, the queen protects the a2-pawn and frees up the rook on a1.

13. ♖a4 is another good option. 13... ♗d7 14. ♖fd1 exd4 15. cxd4 ♕d5 Now in Zile – Bowman, Brisbane 1951, the simple 16. ♕xd5N ♖xd5 17. ♖b3± would have retained a pleasant edge.

13...exd4

Black releases the central tension in order to prepare ... ♕d5. The immediate 13... ♕d5? would be impossible in view of 14. e4 and Black loses a piece.

14.cxd4 ♕d5



15. ♖fd1

A good prophylactic move, preventing tactical ideas connected with a piece sacrifice on d4.

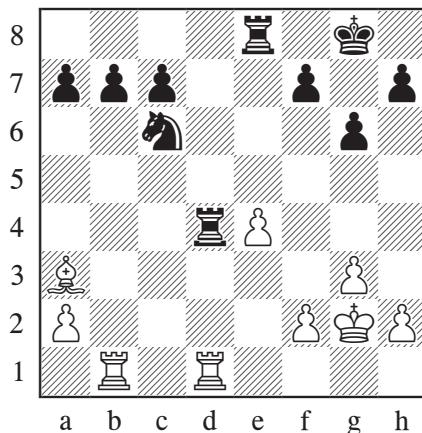
15... ♕xg2 16. ♔xg2 ♗d5† 17. ♖f3 ♖bd8 18. ♖ab1 ♖d7 19. ♖dc1±

White's pressure on the queenside gave him a pleasant advantage in Csom – Okhotnik, Hungary 2002. It is important to mention that the following tactical trick does not quite work for Black:

19... ♕xd4?! 20. ♖d1! ♖e5 21. e4! ♗c6 22. ♖xd4

22. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 23. ♖xb7± is also excellent for White.

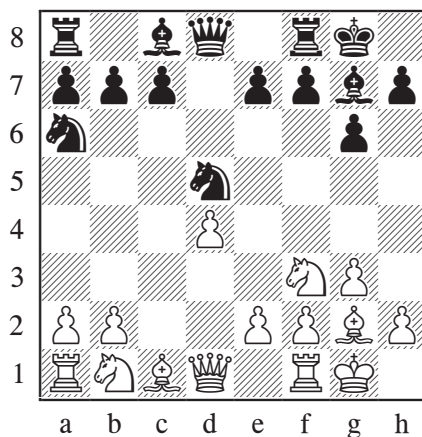
22... ♖xd4 23. ♖xc6 ♖xc6



24. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 25. ♖xb7 ♖xe4 26. ♖xa7±

The endgame is difficult for Black.

B2) 7... ♖a6



8. ♖c3

I think this is the most promising direction. Black's three main responses are **B21)** 8... ♖xc3, **B22)** 8... ♖b6 and **B23)** 8... c5.

8... ♕e6!?

This has been played only once, but it seems like quite an interesting move.

9. e4 ♖b6?!

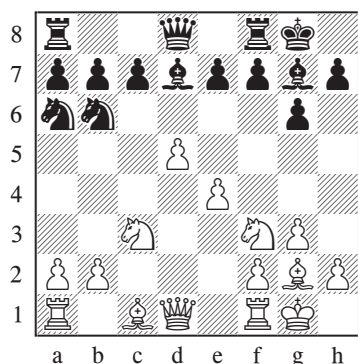
This cannot be a good idea though, as it allows White to seize too much space.

9...♞xc3 10.bxc3 ♟c4 11.♖e1 c5 seems more logical to me, although I still prefer White's chances after 12.♟f4; for instance, 12...♞a5 13.♞d2 ♟e6 14.d5 ♟d7 15.♞c1 and White keeps an edge.

10.d5 ♟d7

White is also better after 10...♟g4 11.h3 ♟xf3 12.♞xf3.

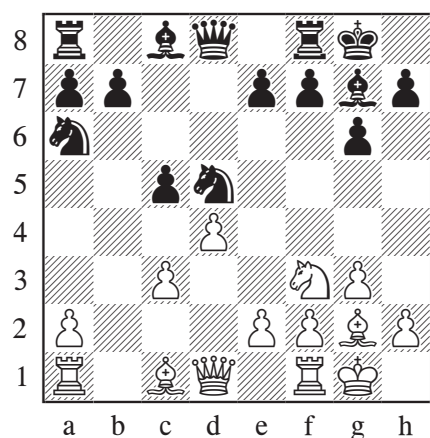
This position was reached in Meier – Mikhalechishin, Steinbrunn 2005. Natural and strong would have been:



11.♟f4!N c6 12.♟e5!

With a pleasant edge for White. (12.♖e1 is also good.)

B21) 8...♞xc3 9.bxc3 c5



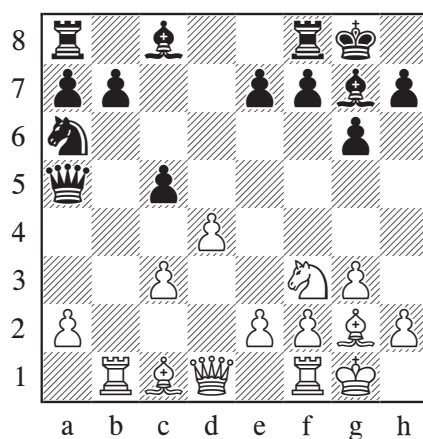
This looks like a thematic continuation for the Grünfeld, but Black's problem is his misplaced knight on a6.

10.♞b1

White's pressure is rather unpleasant. One example continued:

10...♞a5

Ptacek – Pataridis, Czech Republic 1996. Now White's play can be improved with:



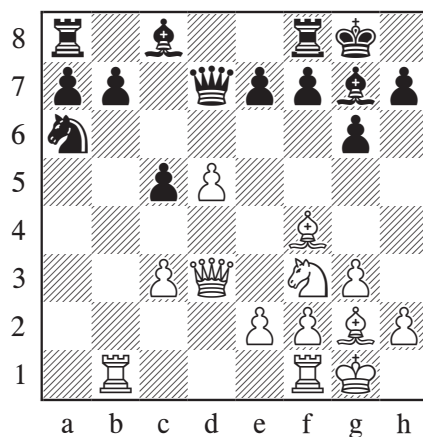
11.♟f4!N ♞xa2

The other pawn is untouchable: 11...♞xc3? 12.♞a4! and the threat of ♞fc1 decides.

12.♞d3

White has fantastic compensation, for instance:

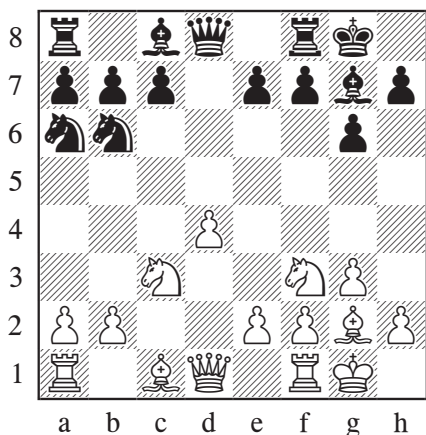
12...♞e6 13.d5 ♞d7



14.♘e5 ♖d8 15.♘c4!

Black's position is too passive. (15.h4!? also gives White a great position for a mere pawn.)

B22) 8...♘b6



9.♘f4

9.e4 ♘g4 10.d5 is another idea; White has achieved an extremely high score from here, but I think Black's position is okay after 10...♖d7.

9...c5

9...c6

This move has achieved reasonable results, but such a passive strategy cannot be enough for equality.

10.♖c1

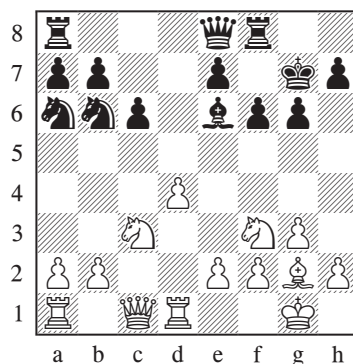
A nice multi-purpose move: White not only intends to trade the dark-squared bishop by ♘h6, but also vacates the d1-square for his rook.

10...f6

I also considered: 10...♞e8 11.♞d1 ♘g4 Two games arrived at this position, but for some reason neither White player continued 12.♘e5N ♘e6 13.e4, with the clearly better position.

11.♘h6 ♘e6 12.♘g7 ♖xg7 13.♞d1 ♖e8

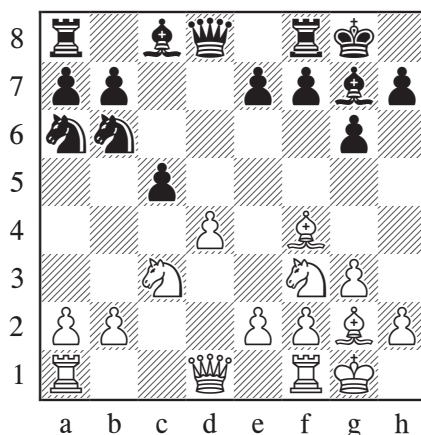
This was Boehlig – Nun, Warsaw 1978. A natural continuation would have been:



14.e4 ♖d8 15.h3

White maintains the better chances thanks to his extra space and central control.

After the text move I found a new idea.



10.♘e5!?N

10.d5 doesn't work so well in view of: 10...♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♖xd5 12.♖c1 ♖h5!∞ Rodriguez Céspedes – Vilela de Acuna, St Spiritus 1989.

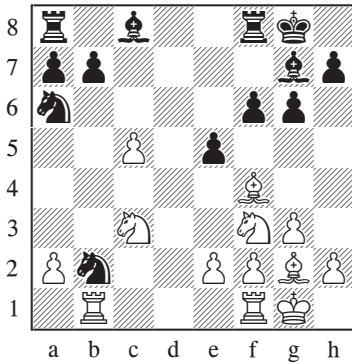
10.dxc5 was my previous recommendation and it still seems like a decent try for an edge. My new suggestion is more ambitious.

10...♘xc5

Other options are hardly any better:

10...cxd4?! 11.♘g7 ♖xg7 12.♘xd4± gives White easy, Catalan-style queenside pressure.

10...f6 11.dxc5! ♖xd1 12.♞axd1 ♜c4 13.♙f4
 ♜xb2 14.♞b1 e5



15.♜xe5! fxe5 16.♙c1 White exploits the trapped knight on b2 to reach a clearly better endgame. 16...♜xc5 17.♞xb2±

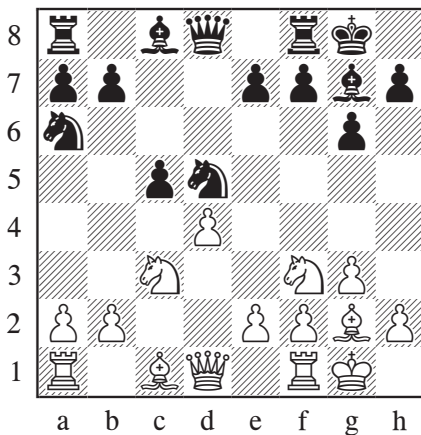
11.dxe5

The change in the pawn structure gives White more space, and the ...c5 advance has left some holes in Black's position. A likely continuation is:

11...♖xd1 12.♞fxd1 ♞b8 13.♞ac1

White has a promising position due to the poor coordination of Black's minor pieces.

B23) 8...c5



9.♜xd5 ♖xd5 10.♙e3 ♖h5

Black's position remains problematic after this, but other options are even worse:

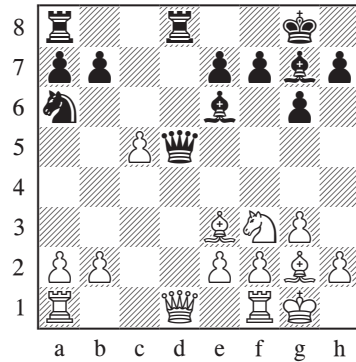
10...♞d8?

This move simply loses a pawn.

11.dxc5 ♙e6

11...♙xb2 doesn't help, since after 12.♖xd5 ♞xd5 13.♞ab1 ♙f6 14.♜d2 ♞d8 15.♞xb7! ♙xb7 16.♙xb7+ White's c-pawn should be the deciding factor.

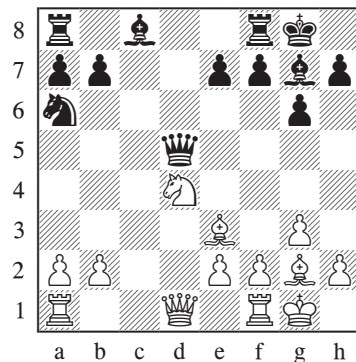
In A. Williams – J. Littlewood, Brighton 1972, White could have obtained a winning position by means of:



12.♜d4!N ♖c4 13.b3 ♖b4 14.a3 ♖c3 15.♙c1 ♖b2 16.♙xb7 ♞ab8 17.♜xe6! ♞xd1 18.♞fxd1 fxe6 19.♙xa6+–

With a decisive advantage.

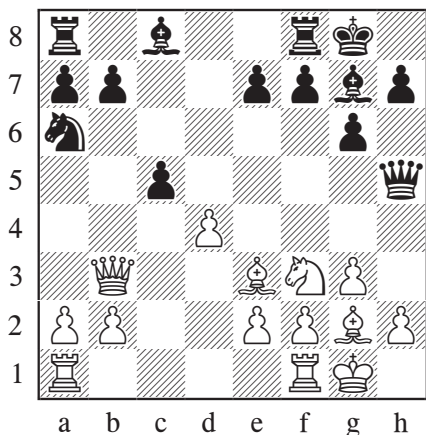
10...cxd4 11.♜xd4 (11.♙xd4?! ♞d8 12.♙xg7 ♜xg7 was much less convincing in Gereben – Seret, Nice [ol] 1974) and now I considered:



11...♖d6N (11...♗h5 may be better, but in that case White can either transpose to the note to Black's 11th move in the main line with 12.♗b3 or deviate with 12.♙c1!?) 12.♗d2 ♖d8 13.♙fd1 ♗b6 14.♗c3 Once again, White is clearly better.

11.♗b3

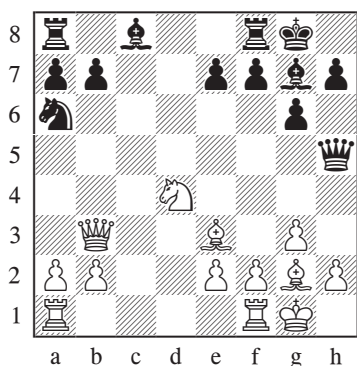
It looks like Black faces serious problems here and he cannot hope for adequate play.



11...b6

I also checked:

11...cxd4 12.♘xd4



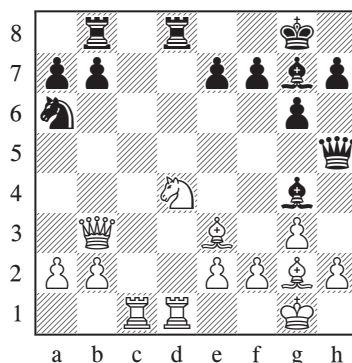
12...♖b8

The activation of Black's knight by means of 12...♘c5 looks pretty natural, but it does not come close to solving his problems: 13.♗a3 ♘f6 14.♙ac1 ♘d7 15.♙fd1 and White was

dominating in Paroulek – Svancer, corr. 1968.

13.♙ac1 ♖d8 14.♙fd1 ♘g4

Now in Sjugirov – Abdyjapar, Kazan 2013, White missed a strong idea:



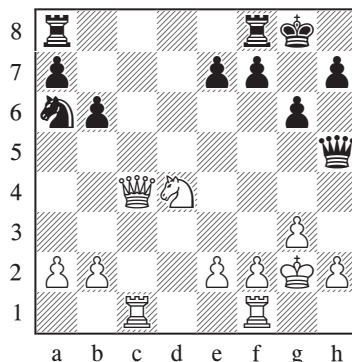
15.♘f3!N ♖xd1† 16.♙xd1 ♘e6 17.♗a3

White will soon pick up a pawn.

12.♙ac1 ♖b8?

This has been played in both games, but it leads to big problems for Black.

12...♘h3N is more challenging but the strong 13.♗c4! leaves White firmly in control, due to the following line: 13...cxd4 14.♙xd4 ♘g2 15.♘xg2 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 White's knight is heading for c6, where it will be extremely powerful.

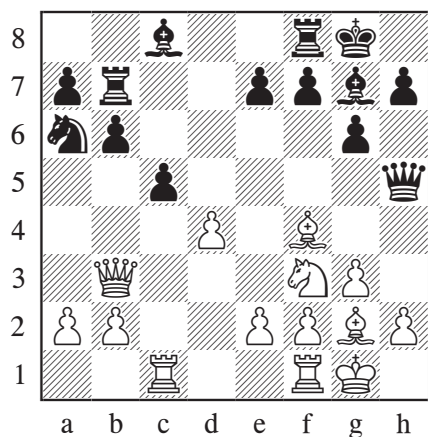


16...♘c5 (16...♗c5 17.♗xc5 ♘xc5 18.♘c6! e6 19.b4 is similar) 17.b4 ♘d7 18.♘c6 ♙fe8

19.♔d4! White is clearly better, thanks to the strong knight.

13.♙f4! ♜b7

This position was reached in Y. Porat – Mart, Netanya 1971, and one later game. Both times White played 14.♘e5 and won, but even stronger would have been:



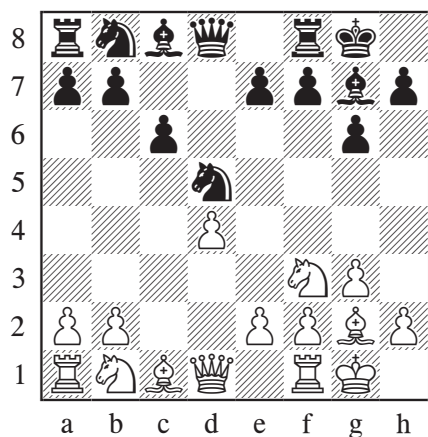
14.♘g5!N h6

14...♞d7? is impossible due to 15.♙f3 and Black's queen is trapped.

15.♙f3 ♙g4 16.♘xf7!+-

This is the most precise winning move, although the simple 16.♙xb7 hxg5 17.♙e5 should also suffice.

B3) 7...c6



This move has been played in several hundred games but it is rather passive. Black makes no attempt to challenge the enemy centre, and White can comfortably develop his pieces.

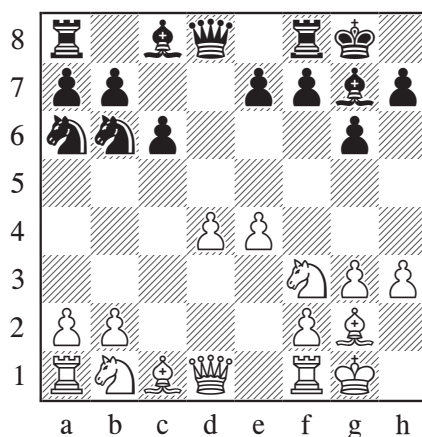
8.e4

8.♞a4 would transpose to variation D1 of the previous chapter, but there is clearly no point in putting the queen on a4 after this move order. The text move is stronger and more ambitious.

8...♘b6 9.h3!

After expanding in the centre, it is important to prevent ...♙g4. Now we must consider B31) 9...♘a6 and B32) 9...♘d7.

B31) 9...♘a6

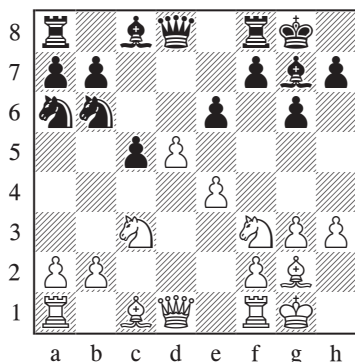


10.♘c3 ♙e6

10...♘c7 11.a4 a5 12.♞b3 ♘a6 13.♙e3 ♘b4 occurred in Bacrot – Kosteniuk, Geneva 2013, when White should have continued: 14.♞fd1N Bacrot opted for the other rook. After the text move White has a pleasant positional advantage, and is ready to meet 14...♙e6?! with the powerful 15.d5! cxd5 16.♘g5 ♙d7 17.exd5±.

An important alternative is:
10...c5!? 11.d5 e6

This feels very much in the spirit of the Grünfeld, and Black has achieved pretty good results with it. Nevertheless, the fact that he has wasted a tempo with ...c6-c5 should be significant. So far White has only tried 12.♔g5 and 12.♔f4, but I concluded that it would be preferable to start with a flexible waiting move:



12.♔e1! N

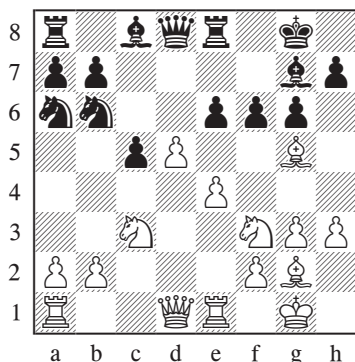
Developing the rook while vacating the f1-square for the light-squared bishop, which may prove surprisingly beneficial, as the following lines demonstrate.

12...♔e8

12...exd5 13.exd5 ♖c4 14.♔f1! ♖d6 15.♔g5 ♔f6 16.♔f4± is excellent for White.

13.♔g5 f6

13...♔d7 14.♔f1! creates the powerful threat of ♔b5.

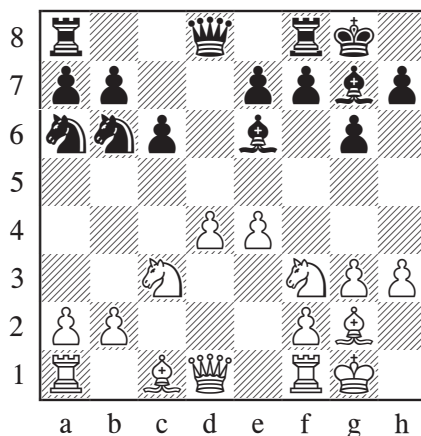


14.♔e3 ♖c4 15.♔f1!

Once again this move proves useful.

15...♖xe3 16.♔xe3

White is clearly better.



11.a4!?

I still like my previous recommendation. It has been tested a few more times since *GM 2* was published.

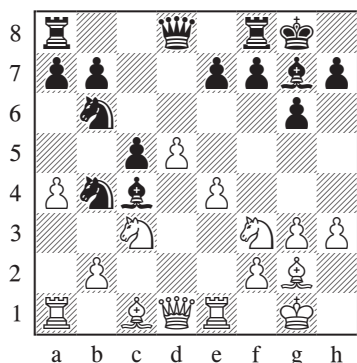
11...♔d7

Black has tried several other moves:

11...♖c4 was a fairly logical try in Meissner – Littke, corr. 2013. My choice would be 12.♔b1! N, and after something like 12...♖b4 13.b3 ♖d6 14.♔e2 I prefer White.

11...h6 guards against ♖g5 ideas, but 12.♖e2! N prepares to harass the bishop in a different way. (On the other hand, 12.a5 ♖c4 13.♔a4 ♔c8 14.b3 b5! 15.axb6 axb6 gave Black a good game thanks to White's misplaced queen in Thorhallsson – Gretarsson, Iceland 1993.) A logical continuation is: 12...♔c4 13.b3 ♔xe2 14.♔xe2 c5 15.a5 ♖d7 16.♔d1 ♔c8 17.e5! White has a strong initiative.

11...♔c4! N has not been played but it looks quite critical, and is the engine's first choice – at least for a while. 12.♔e1 c5 13.d5 ♖b4 Black appears to be getting nice play, but a good reply is:



14.a5 ♖d7 15.e5! ♖d3 16.e6! ♖xe1 17.♖xe1
White has a powerful initiative.

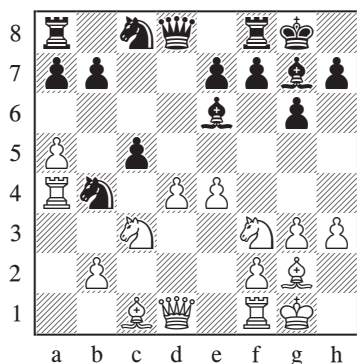
A final option is:

11...♖b4 12.a5! ♖c8

It's important to mention that 12...♖c4N can be met by 13.♖a4 ♖d3 14.d5!, leading to complications which favour White.

13.♖a4! c5

This position was reached in Diaz Perez – Fernandez Rivero, Havana 2013. Now a strong improvement is:



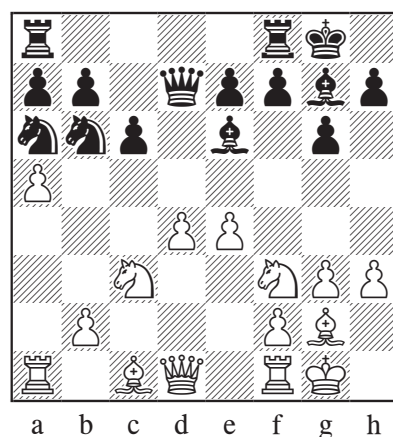
14.dxc5!N ♖d3 15.e5

White has excellent chances. Here is an illustrative line:

15...♖xc5 16.♖d4 ♖xa5 17.b4 ♖a1 18.♖d5 ♖xd5 19.♖xd5 ♖e6 20.♖b3 ♖a6 21.♖a5±

With a huge positional advantage.

12.a5



12...♖c4

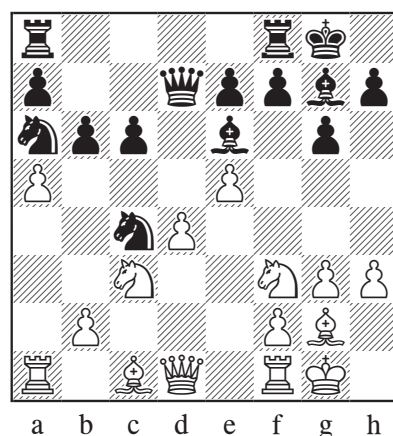
12...♖c8N 13.♖h2 ♖d6 14.♖f4 ♖fd8 15.♖e1± gives White the better chances, but this was the lesser evil for Black.

13.e5!

Suddenly Black's knight is in danger of being trapped, almost in the middle of the board.

13...b6

Obviously 13...♖xh3? allows 14.b3 and the knight is lost.

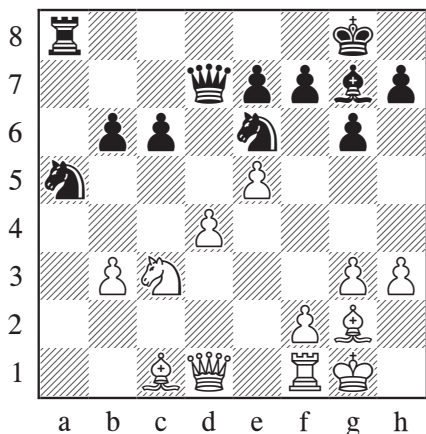


14.axb6 axb6 15.♖g5!

White successfully develops his initiative.

15...♖c7 16.♖xa8 ♖xa8 17.♖xe6 ♖xe6 18.b3 ♖a5

Up to now White had done everything right in A. Mastrovasilis – Panagiotopoulos, Thessaloniki 2004, but here I found an improvement:



19.♕e3!N

Threatening 20.d5.

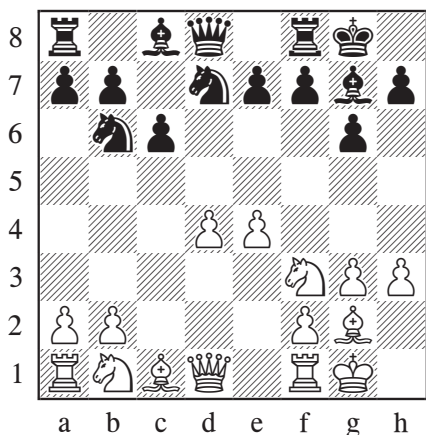
19...♘c7

This seems like the logical reply, but it runs into:

20.b4! ♘c4 21.b5±

Black faces serious problems.

B32) 9...♘8d7



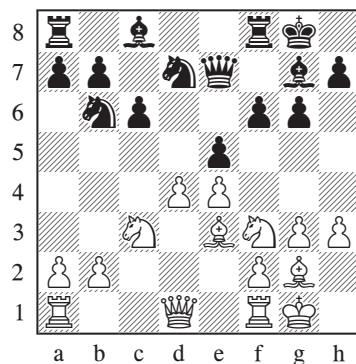
10.♘c3 e5

If Black refrains from this move he gets a passive position without any real play, for instance: 10...♘f6 11.b3 h6 12.♕e3 White obtained her optimal set-up with an obvious edge in Kursova – Bannikova, Novokuznetsk 2007.

11.♕g5 ♖e8

Alternatives are hardly satisfactory for Black.

11...f6 12.♕e3 ♖e7 has occurred in three games, but White has yet to find the best continuation:



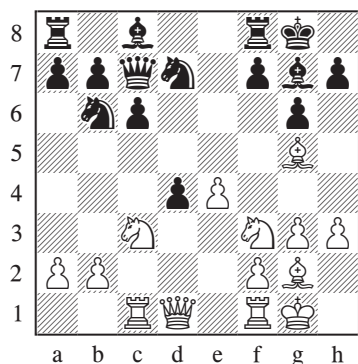
13.♖b3†!N ♖h8 14.d5 (14.♖ad1 is also clearly better for White) 14...cxd5 15.exd5 White's active pieces and passed d-pawn secure his advantage.

11...♖c7 12.♖c1

12.d5 also looks strong.

12...exd4

A fairly recent game continued 12...h6?, which is surprisingly bad in view of: 13.♕e7! ♘c4 (13...♖e8? loses to 14.♘b5! ♖b8 15.♕d6 and Black's queen is trapped) 14.♕xf8 ♕xf8 15.♖e2 White was winning in Herrmann – A.D.V. Nguyen, Leipzig 2016.



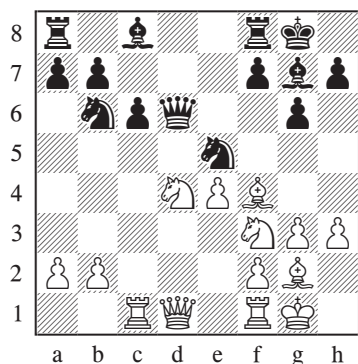
13. d5!

This is the point of White's previous move.

13... ♖b8 14. ♖bxd4 ♘e5 15. ♙f4 ♗d6?

15... ♜e8 is better, although White keeps a pleasant edge after 16. ♖c2 ♗d6 17. ♘xe5 ♙xe5 18. ♙xe5 ♖xe5 19. ♜cd1 followed by f2-f4.

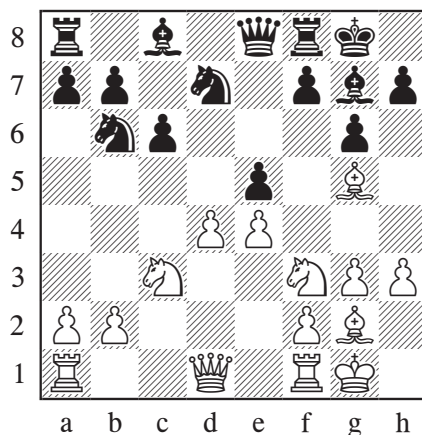
Now in Turova – Marinina, Samara 2003, White failed to capitalize on the following tactical opportunity:



16. ♘xc6! N ♗xd1 17. ♘e7+ ♙h8 18. ♜fxd1 ♘xf3+ 19. ♙xf3 ♙xh3 20. ♜c7+

White is clearly better.

After the text move I have a new idea.

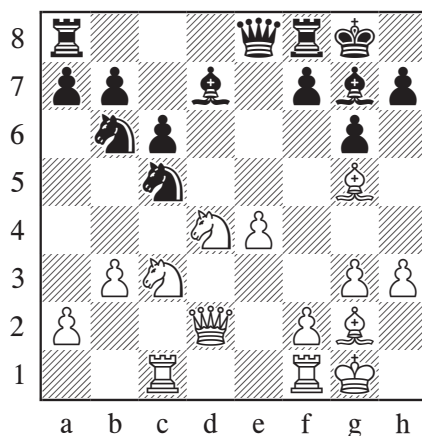


12. b3! N

12.d5 doesn't yield much in view of 12...h6! 13. ♙e3 cxd5 14. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 15. ♖xd5 ♘f6 16. ♖xe5 ♘xe4 with equality, Baburin – Enders, Germany 2000.

The text is a good positional move, restricting the knight on b6. The following illustrative line looks pretty logical:

12...exd4 13. ♘xd4 ♘c5 14. ♜c1 ♙d7 15. ♖d2

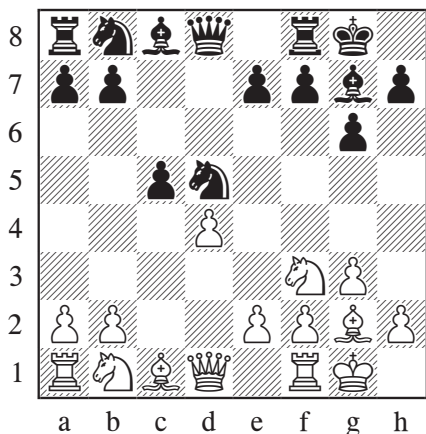


15... ♖c5 16. ♙e3 ♜ad8 17. f4 ♖e7 18. ♜fd1±

White maintains a pleasant edge, thanks to his spatial superiority and, of course, the inactive knight on b6.

B4) 7...c5

This is the most important theoretical branch of the present chapter.

**8.e4**

Once again, I decided to go with White's second most popular move. I didn't find any advantage after 8.dxc5 ♖a6 9.♗g5 e6 10.♗e4 ♕d7! 11.♗bc3 ♘c6, when Black's position looks perfectly playable.

We will analyse three knight moves: **B41) 8...♗b4**, **B42) 8...♗b6** and **B43) 8...♗f6**.

B41) 8...♗b4

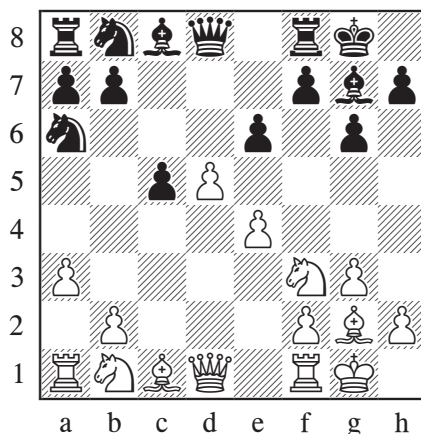
I don't think this is the best square for the knight.

9.d5 e6

Black is not ready for complications, as happened in the following encounter: 9...c4 10.♖a3 f5 11.exf5 ♕xf5 12.♗d4! Black is in trouble, and after the further inaccuracy 12...♕xd4?! 13.♖xd4 ♗8c6 14.♖xc4 ♕d3 15.♖b3+ White obtained a winning position in Kustar – Nogrady, Budapest 1993.

10.a3 ♗4a6

Black has won both games from this position, but this has nothing to do with the objective evaluation at this stage of the game.

**11.♗c3 exd5 12.exd5**

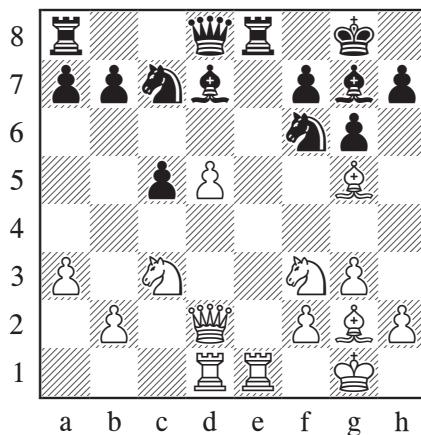
Now it's obvious that Black's knight is misplaced on a6.

12...♗d7

The more recent attempt 12...♗c7 is no better: 13.♕g5 f6 14.♕e3 ♗ba6 15.d6 ♗e6 16.♖d5 Despite his eventual defeat, White's advantage was overwhelming at this point in Pasztor – M. Horvath, Hungary 2013.

13.♕g5 ♗f6 14.♖d2 ♗c7 15.♖ad1 ♕d7 16.♖fe1 ♖e8

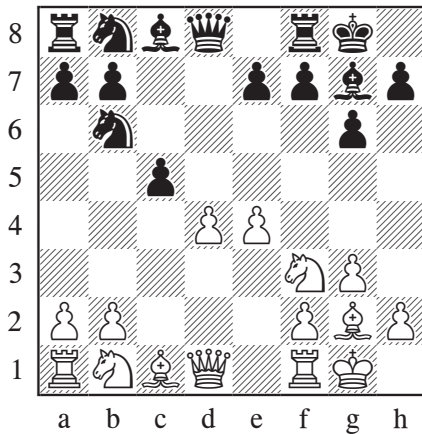
This occurred in Matchett – May, Bognor Regis 1959. The natural continuation would be:



17. ♖e5N±

With a clear advantage.

B42) 8... ♖b6

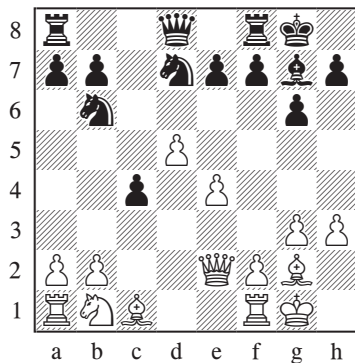


9.d5

9.dxc5 ♖xd1 10. ♖xd1 ♖a4 gives Black no problems.

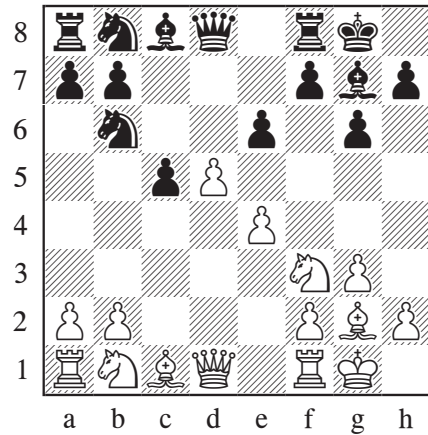
9...e6

9... ♔g4 has been tried, but Black cannot hope for equality after giving up his light-squared bishop: 10.h3 ♔xf3 11. ♖xf3 ♖8d7 12. ♖e2 c4 In Smyslov – Simagin, Moscow 1961, White should have played:



13. ♖a3!N The following line looks pretty natural to me. 13... ♖c8 14. ♔e3 (also after 14. ♖b1 ♖e5 15. ♔e3 White is clearly better) 14... ♖a4 15. ♖ab1 c3 16. b3 ♖b2 17. f4! ♖a5

18. ♖c2 ♖xa2 19. ♖b5! The threat of ♖a1 means that Black loses at least a piece.

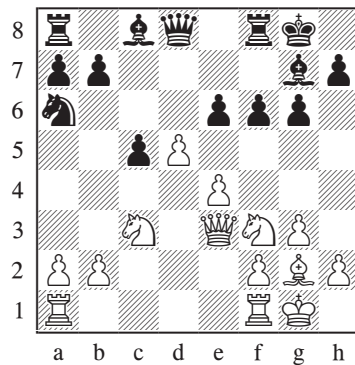


10. ♖c3 exd5

10... ♖a6 11. ♔g5! f6

11... ♖d7 hardly makes any sense; White simply plays 12. ♖e1 when Black's queen is misplaced.

12. ♔e3 ♖c4 13. ♖e2 ♖xe3 14. ♖xe3

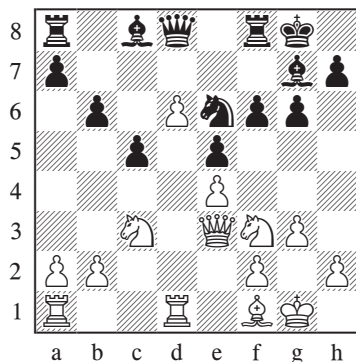


14...e5

White is also clearly better after: 14...exd5 15. ♖xd5 ♔e6 16. ♖ad1 ♖a5 Germek – Milic, Zagreb 1949, and now 17.e5!N± would have been strong.

15. ♖fd1 b6 16. ♔f1 ♖c7 17. d6 ♖e6

In Vasilev – Brankov, Sunny Beach 2015, White should have continued:



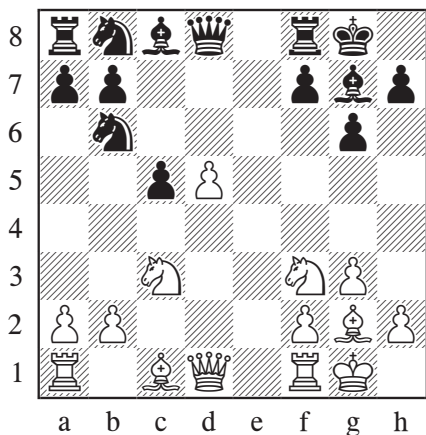
18. Qc4N Qd7

The threat was 19.d7.

19. Qb5 Qh8 20. Qxe6 Qxb5 21.a4

White keeps the better game, thanks to his strong passed pawn.

11.exd5



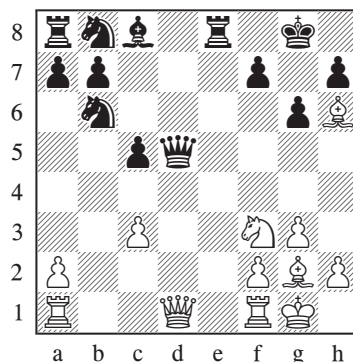
11... Qc4

Rerouting the knight to the blockading square on d6 is a typical plan. Let's have a look at Black's other options:

11... Qa6 12. Qg5! Once again, this thematic move seems annoying for Black. 12... Qd7 13. Re1 f6 Black has to do something to stop the rook from penetrating to e7. (I also checked 13... Re8N, when the simple 14. Qxe8+ Qxe8 15. Qd2 followed by Re1 gives White some initiative) 14. Qf4 Qd8 15. d6± White was

clearly better in Safin – Purushothaman, New Delhi 2007.

11... Qxc3 wins a pawn but is obviously a risky decision. 12. bxc3 Qxd5 13. Qh6 Re8 (13... Qxd1N 14. Qaxd1 Re8 would have been safer, but 15. Qg5 Qg4 16. Qd6 Qd7 17. Qxb7 maintains clearly better chances for White)



14. Qd2! Qd8 15. Qe4 White develops a dangerous initiative with simple moves. 15... Qc6 16. Qg5 Qxd1 17. Qf6+ Qh8 18. Qaxd1 Re8 19. Qh6± Black was losing the exchange in Sakhatova – Levitina, Moscow 1983.

11... Qf5 12. Qg5 Qd7

12... Qf6 has been played, although personally I have never understood why Black would offer the exchange of dark-squared bishops in this sort of position. 13. Qxf6 Qxf6 14. Qh4! Qd7 15. Qxf5 Qxf5 16. d6 White has a nice pull, and after the further 16... Qab8 17. Re1 Qfd8 18. Re7 Qc8 19. Qd5! he easily prevailed in Petrosyan – Sargsyan, Yerevan 2016.

13. Re1 f6

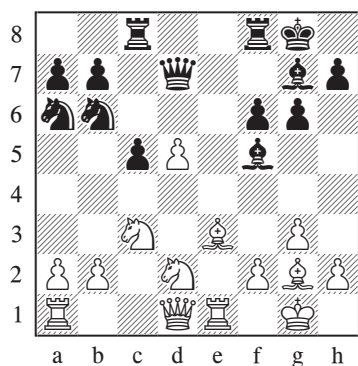
If Black has to make this move, it's not a good sign for him.

I examined the following attempt to improve Black's play: 13... h6N 14. Qe7! (after 14. Qf4 g5! 15. Qe5 f6 16. Qxb8 Qxb8 Black seems fine) 14... Qc8 15. a4! Qc4 (15... Qa6 16. d6!

This move often proves strong when Black's knight cannot jump to c6. 16...♖b4 17.♗e5 ♜e6 18.f4!± 16.♞e2 ♜d6 17.♗b5! (In the event of 17.♙xd6 ♞xd6 18.♗e5 ♞xe5 19.♞xe5 ♙xe5 20.♞xe5 ♜d7 21.♞e7 ♞e8! there is nothing special for White.) 17...♗xb5 18.axb5 c4 19.b6! White has the initiative thanks to his strong passed pawn.

14.♙e3 ♗a6 15.♗d2 ♞ac8

This position was reached in Bocharov – Makarov, Krasnoyarsk 2007, and now I managed to improve White's play with:

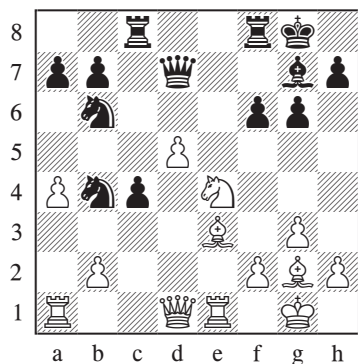


16.a4!N ♗b4

This is the critical try.

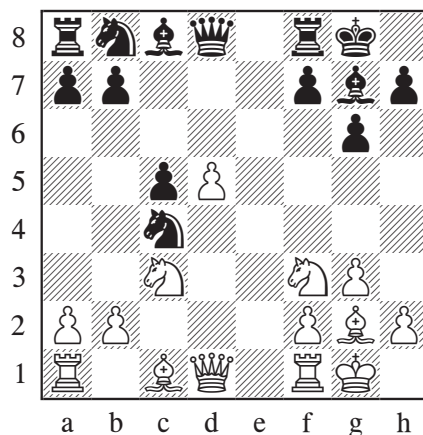
White has an easier time after 16...♞cd8 17.a5 ♗c8 18.♗de4!±.

17.♗de4 ♙xe4 18.♗xe4 c4



19.♗c5 ♞f7 20.♗e6 ♞fe8 21.♙xb6! axb6 22.♙f1±

White's advantage is overwhelming.



12.♞e1!N

12.♞b3 ♗d6? soon led to big problems for Black after 13.♙g5 ♙f6 14.♙f4! ♗a6 15.♙xd6 ♞xd6 16.♗e4 ♞d8 17.♗xf6† ♞xf6 18.♞fe1 ♞b8 19.♗e5± in N. Pert – Howell, Halifax (rapid) 2004.

However, 12...♗a5!N is an improvement, when 13.♞a4 ♙d7 14.♞f4 ♗a6 15.♙e3 h6 reaches a complex game.

12...♗d7

This looks stronger than 12...♗a6 13.♙f1! ♗d6 14.♙g5 when it seems to me that White has much better chances, for instance: 14...♙f6 (14...♞b6 15.♗a4!±) 15.♙xf6 ♞xf6 16.♙xa6 bxa6 17.♗e5 White has an obvious advantage thanks to his better pawn structure.

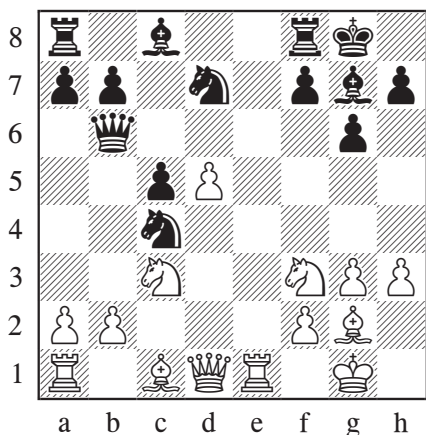
13.h3

I like this prophylactic move, covering the g4-square and waiting for Black to decide what to do with his knights.

13.♞e2 is also decent: 13...♗d6 14.♙f4 (14.♙g5 Black can be met comfortably with 14...♗f6) 14...♞e8 15.♞d2 ♗f6 16.♞xe8† ♗fxe8 17.♞e1 ♙f5 18.h3 It seems to me that White has the better chances in this complex middlegame.

13...♞b6

I also examined 13...h6 14.♔f1 ♖d6 (after 14...♗ce5 15.♗xe5 ♗xe5 16.♗xh6! ♗xh6 17.♞xe5 it is hard to believe that Black has enough compensation) 15.♗f4 ♗b6 16.♞c1± and White keeps a pleasant edge.



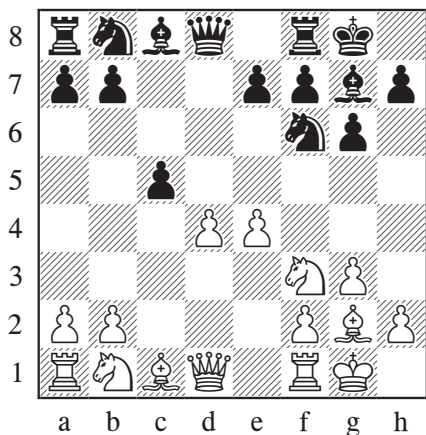
14.♞e2!

The rook is active on the open file, but it also plays a valuable defensive role in protecting the b2-pawn.

14...♗f6 15.b3 ♗d6 16.♗f4

White keeps the better chances.

B43) 8...♗f6



This is by far Black's most popular reply.

9.e5

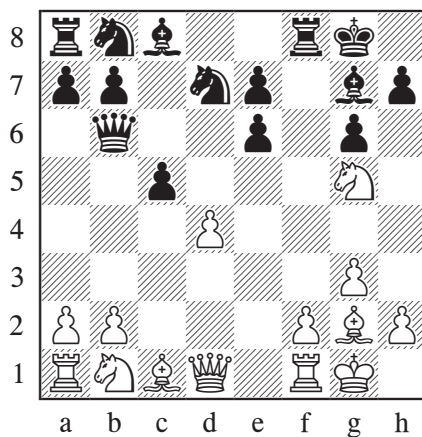
We will analyse **B431) 9...♗fd7** followed by **B432) 9...♗d5**.

B431) 9...♗fd7

In *GM 2* I remarked that this move has not become popular due to the response that follows. The only changes to my analysis have been the additions of a few games that took place since my previous work was published.

10.e6! fxe6 11.♗g5 ♞b6

11...♗b6 has occurred only once, in Ludwig – Hinz, email 2012. The recommendation from *GM 2* still looks good: 12.♞e1!N ♗c6 (12...♗xd4 13.♗xe6 ♗xe6 14.♞xe6† ♗h8 15.♗xb7 ♗d8 16.♗a3! also gives White a pleasant edge) 13.dxc5 ♗a4 14.♗xe6 ♗xe6 15.♞xe6† ♗h8 16.♗c3 ♗xc5 17.♞e3± White keeps the upper hand thanks to his pair of bishops.



12.♞e2 cxd4

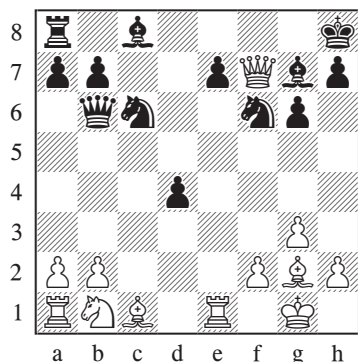
I mentioned this move as a sideline in *GM 2* but have promoted it to the main line here, as it has been played in a handful of games in the interim period.

The other possibility is:

12...♗c6 13.♞xe6† ♗h8 14.♗f7† ♞xf7

15. ♖xf7 cxd4 16. ♞e1 ♜f6

We have been following the game Borovikov – Gutman, Senden 2005. Later on Black managed to get adequate compensation for the exchange, but here White missed a strong manoeuvre:



17. ♞a3!N

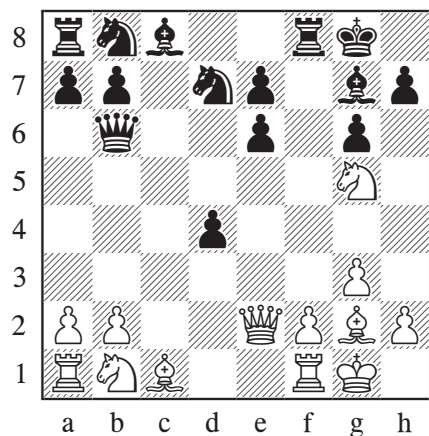
The knight comes to c4 with great effect. Here is an illustrative line:

17... ♙f5 18. ♞c4 ♞c5

18... ♞a6 19. ♙xc6 ♞f8 20. ♞xe7 ♞xc6
21. ♞e5 ♞d5 22. ♙f4±

19. b4! ♞xb4 20. ♙a3

White has a large advantage.



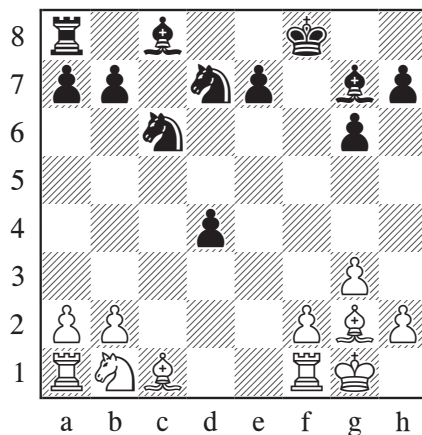
13. ♞xe6!†

This seems like the most practical decision. White wins the exchange and trades queens, thereby reducing Black's activity.

13. ♞xe6 was played in one game but things are not so clear after the surprising 13... ♞c6!N 14. ♞xf8 ♞xf8, when Black has interesting compensation.

13... ♞xe6 14. ♞xe6 ♞c6 15. ♞xf8 ♞xf8

15... ♞xf8 is hardly a good alternative in view of 16. ♞d2N and White is firmly in control.



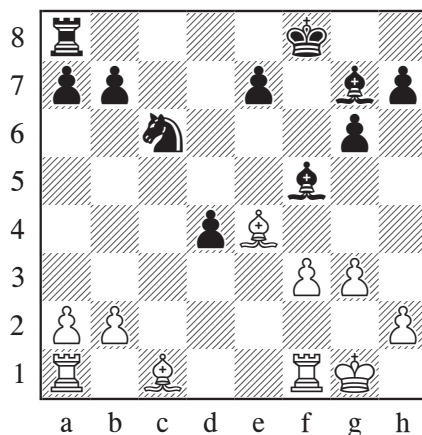
16. ♞d2 ♞c5

16... ♞f6 17. ♞b3! e5 18. ♙g5 ♙f5 19. ♞c5 was also excellent for White in Kantsler – Zaslavsky, Haifa 2010.

The text move was played in a recent game, but White easily achieved a winning position:

17. ♞e4 ♞xe4 18. ♙xe4 ♙f5 19. f3

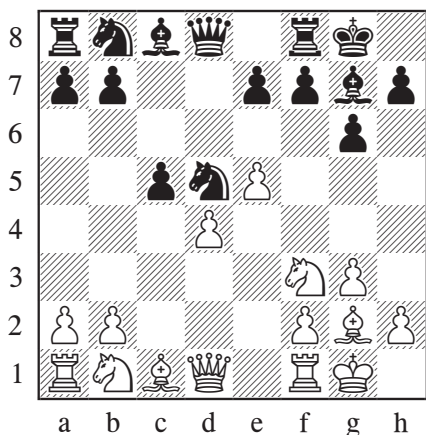
The machine's recommendation of 19. ♙xf5! gx5 20. f4! also looks promising.



19...♖d8 20.♙d2 d3 21.♖ab1 ♔e8 22.♗g2±

Black failed to prove any compensation in Alavi – Vahidov, Tehran 2016.

B432) 9...♘d5

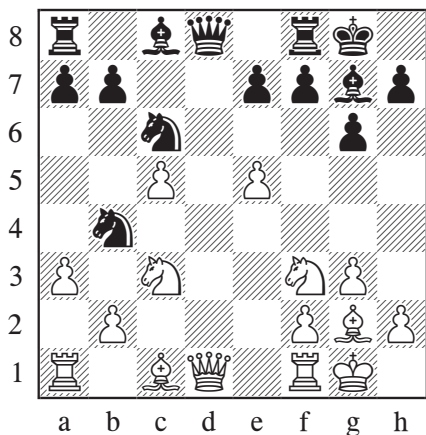


10.dxc5

The challenge for Black will be to regain the sacrificed pawn without making too many concessions. He may try **B4321) 10...♘b4** or **B4322) 10...♘c6**, as well as the main line of **B4323) 10...♘a6**.

B4321) 10...♘b4 11.♘c3 ♘8c6 12.a3

12.♞a4!?N is also interesting but I see no reason to deviate from my previous recommendation.

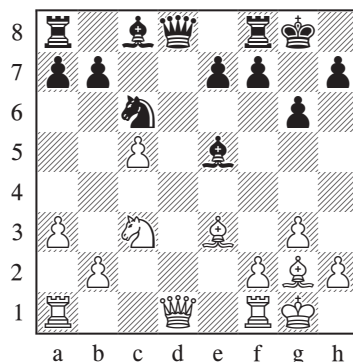


12...♘d3 13.♙e3

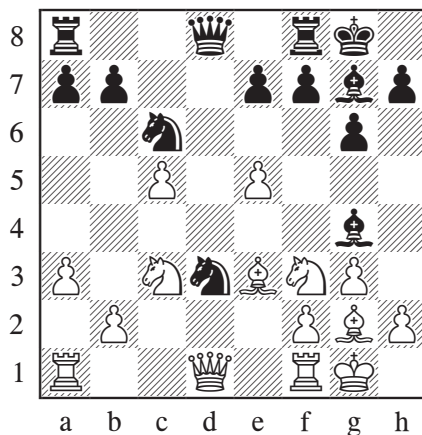
White is ready to give back his extra pawn in order to ensure a preferable position.

13...♙g4

I think Black should have regained the pawn by means of 13...♘dx5N, although White retains the better chances after: 14.♘xe5 ♙xe5



15.♞e1! In *GM 2* I offered a different move as leading to a slight edge, but the text is stronger still. Black is under unpleasant pressure, with ideas such as ♖d1, ♙h6 and ♘d5 in the air.



14.♞b3!N

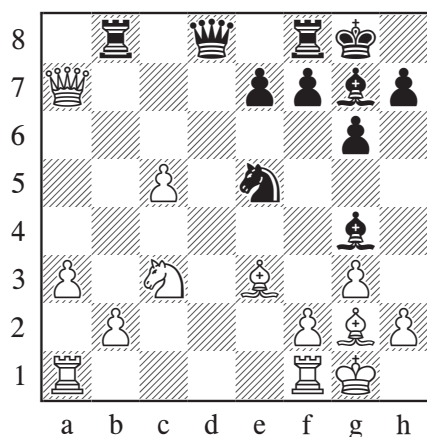
This is a significant improvement over 14.h3 ♙xf3 15.♞xf3 ♘dx5, as seen in Botvinnik – Bronstein, Moscow (19) 1951.

14...♘dx5

After 14...♖d7 15.♜fd1! the pin along d-file is extremely inconvenient for Black. For instance, 15...♞ad8 16.♜e1 ♜xd1 17.♞xd1 ♜xe5 18.♜xd3 ♜xd3 19.♞e4 and White is already winning.

The other possibility is: 14...♞xf3 15.♞xf3 ♜dx5 16.♞g2 ♖d3 17.♞ad1 ♖c4 18.♖b5! and White is better.

15.♜xe5 ♜xe5 16.♖xb7 ♞b8 17.♖xa7



17...♞xb2

No better is: 17...♜f3† 18.♜h1 ♞xb2 19.♞ad1 ♜d2 20.♞xd2 ♞xd2 21.♞xd2 ♖xd2 22.♜d5±

18.♜d5 ♞e8 19.♞g5!

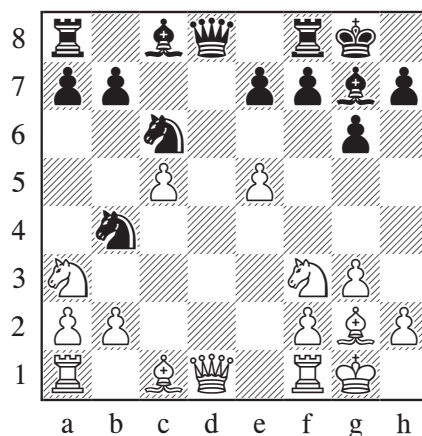
Black fails to get adequate compensation for the pawn.

B4322) 10...♜c6 11.♜a3!

This is the right way to fight for the advantage.

11...♜db4

11...♞g4 12.♖b3 ♞b8?! occurred in Wade – Boxall, Chester 1952, and here the simple 13.♞d1N e6 14.h3 ♞xf3 15.♞xf3 would have given White a clear plus.

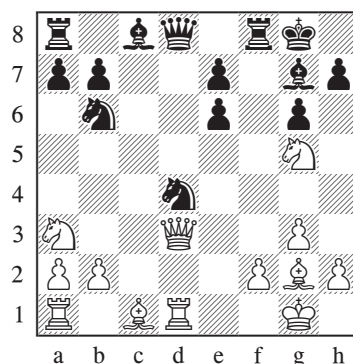


12.♖a4!N

White's statistical results against this line have been poor, but this important improvement should stack the odds in his favour. White simply intends to complete development and aim for a favourable position after Black has regained the pawn.

12...♞g4

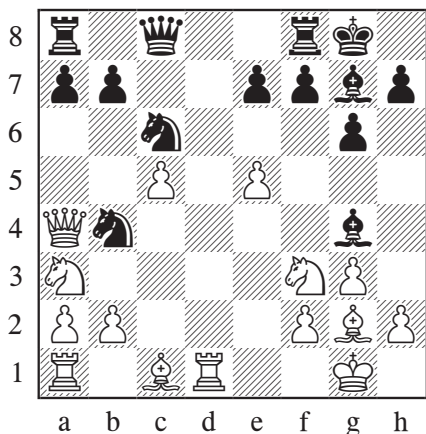
12...♜d3?! is inferior in view of 13.♞d1 ♜xc5 14.♖c2 ♜d7 15.e6! (15.♞f4 gives White slightly better chances but he can do better) 15...fxe6 16.♜g5 ♜d4 17.♖d3 and Black is in trouble, for instance: 17...♜b6



13.♞d1 ♖c8

18.♜b5! e5 19.♜xd4 exd4 20.♖b3† e6 21.♜xe6 ♞xe6 22.♖xe6† ♜h8 23.♞f4± White dominates the board thanks to his bishop pair.

13...♖e8 is met strongly with 14.♘b5, when Black can't solve his problems with 14...♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♕xd1 in view of 16.♗xb4 ♕xe5 17.♕h6!±.

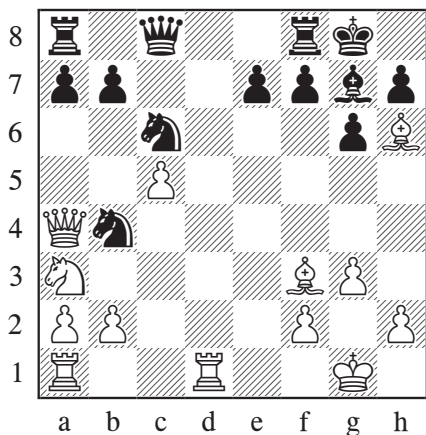


14.♕f4!

This is an important improvement over my previous analysis.

14.♘c4 was my recommendation in *GM 2*. However, to my great surprise I discovered that Black has 14...b5! 15.cxb6 (15.♗xb5? ♘c2 is bad for White, due to the threat of ...♕xf3 followed by ...♘d2d4) 15...axb6 16.♗b3 ♗e6 with powerful compensation.

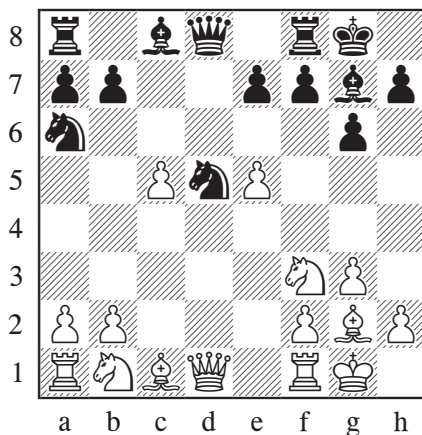
14...♕xf3 15.♕xf3 ♕xe5 16.♕h6 ♕g7



17.♕xg7 ♕xg7 18.♘c2 ♘xc2 19.♗xc2

White has a pleasant pull thanks to his strong light-squared bishop and mobile majority on the queenside.

B4323) 10...♘a6



This remains Black's most popular choice. Here I would like to propose an improvement over my analysis in *GM 2*.

11.♗d4!

11.♗e2 can be met by 11...♘xc5 12.♖d1 b6! followed by ...♕a6 and Black is doing fine.

Previously I recommended 11.a3 but recently Black has found an antidote: 11...♘xc5 12.b4 ♘e6 13.♗b3 ♘b6 14.♖d1 ♗c7 15.♘c3 This was my main line in *GM 2*, but the improvement 15...♗c4! gives Black a reliable position, as demonstrated in a few games.

11...♘db4

11...♕f5?! is hardly an option in view of 12.a3±.

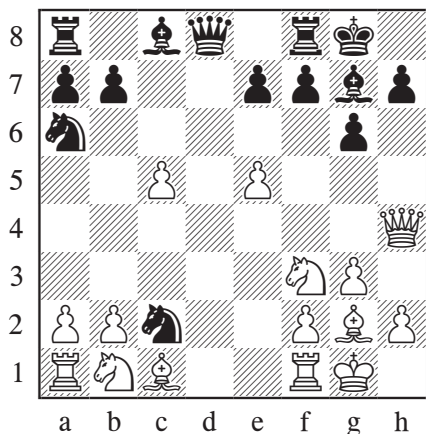
12.♗h4!

White intends to sacrifice the exchange for a big initiative.

12.♗c3 occurred in N. Nguyen – Safarli, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013. I feel that the queen

is a bit shaky on this square, and Black could have played 12...♙f5!? with an unclear game.

12...♘c2



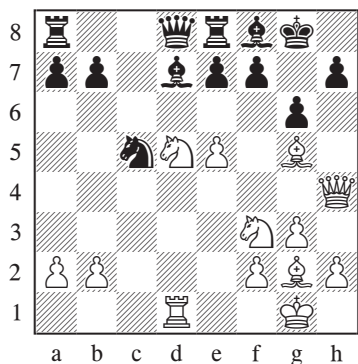
13.♙g5!N

This is more accurate than 13.♘c3, despite White's quick win in the following game: 13...♘xa1 14.♙h6 Here Black should have played 14...♙xh6!N (rather than 14...♘c2? 15.♖d1 ♗c7? 16.♘d5 ♗xc5 17.♘g5+– with a decisive attack, Martinovic – Fercec, Porec 2010) 15.♗xh6 f6 and I don't see anything better than equality for White.

The next couple of moves are virtually forced.

13...♗e8 14.♘c3 ♘xa1 15.♖d1!?

White has a second promising continuation: 15.♖xa1 ♘xc5 16.♖d1 ♙d7 17.♘d5 ♙f8



18.♙h6 ♘e6 19.♙h3! With a powerful initiative for the small material investment.

15...♗c7 16.♘d5 ♗d7 17.♙e6!?

17.♙xe7 ♗g4 18.♖xa1 ♗xh4 19.gxh4 also looks promising for White.

17...♗xe6

17...fxe6? runs into 18.♘f6! exf6 19.♖xd7 ♙xd7 20.♙xf6 with an overwhelming advantage.

18.♘xe7† ♖xe7 19.♙xe7 ♙d7 20.♖xa1 h6 21.♙d6

White keeps the better game.

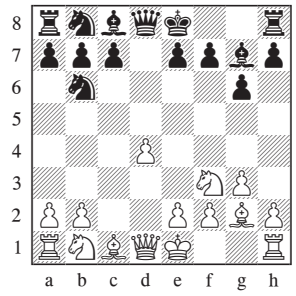
Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with several significant sidelines in the dynamic Grünfeld. 6...♘c6 and 6...0–0 7.0–0 ♘c6 are liable to transpose to the big main lines, but each option has its own nuances we should be aware of. We then looked at 7...♘a6 and 7...c6, finding that neither option is good enough to equalize, but that White nonetheless needs to keep his wits about him.

The main subject of this chapter was Black's immediate attempt to challenge our central pawn with 7...c5. I recommend 8.e4, when Black's knight can go in several directions. In some lines White has long-term positional pressure while in others the play becomes more concrete – but I think I have shown that White has the easier game, with chances to build a significant advantage in many of the lines.

Chapter 3

Grünfeld



6... Nb6

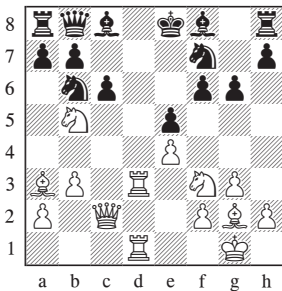
Variation Index

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.Nf3 Nb6

7.Nc3

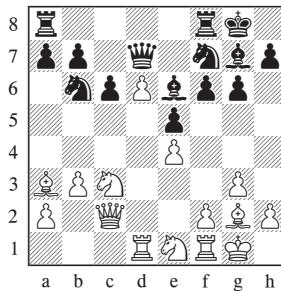
A) 7...c5?!	49
B) 7...Nc6 8.e3 e5 9.d5	50
B1) 9...Nb4	50
B2) 9...Na5	51
B3) 9...Ne7 10.e4	53
B31) 10...c6!? 11.d6 Ng8 12.b3 f6	
13.0-0 Nh6 14.Ba3 Nf7 15.Qc2!?	53
B311) 15...Nxd6	54
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B32) 10...Bg4 11.h3 Bxf3 12.Qxf3 c6 13.0-0	56
B321) 13...cxd5	57
B322) 13...0-0	61

B311) after 19...Bb8



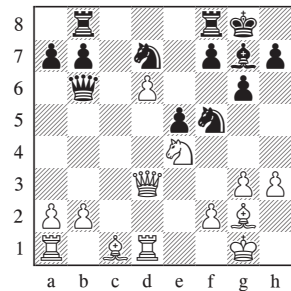
20.Bd8+!!

B312) after 17...0-0



18.f4!N

B321) note to 17...Nd4



19.Bb1!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5 5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.♖f3 ♖b6

This is Black's most exact way of reaching the most popular set-up with knights on b6 and c6. The point is that, after 6...0-0 7.0-0 ♖b6 8.♖c3 ♖c6, White has an important alternative in 9.d5 – although for our purposes it makes no difference, as I recommend 9.e3 anyway.

7.♖c3

We will start by analysing the dubious A) 7...c5?!, before beginning our investigation into the main line of B) 7...♖c6.

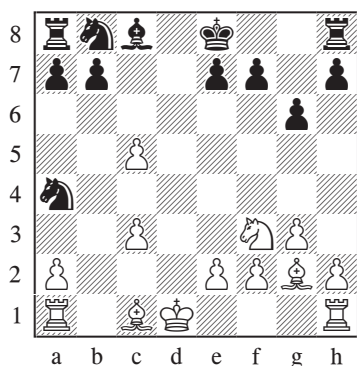
7...0-0 8.0-0 ♖c6 allows White the additional possibility of 9.d5 but, as mentioned above, I prefer 9.e3. See the next chapter for detailed coverage of this popular variation.

A) 7...c5?!

This direct central challenge is clearly premature.

8.dxc5 ♖xd1†

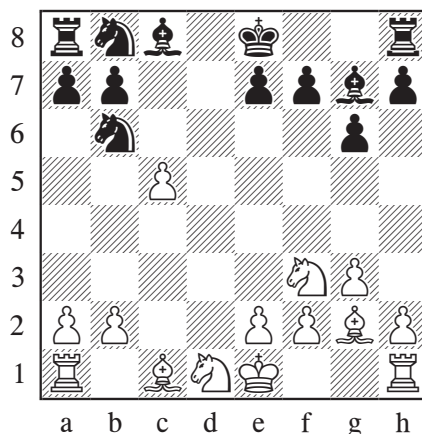
No better is: 8...♙xc3† 9.bxc3 ♖xd1† 10.♖xd1 ♖a4



11.♖e5! ♖d7 12.♖xd7 ♙xd7 13.♙xb7 ♖d8 14.♙f3± Black had no real compensation in Wisham – Blair, corr. 2011.

9.♖xd1N

A natural improvement over 9.♖xd1, as occurred in Ding Liren – Zhao Yuanhe, China 2014.



9...♖a4 10.♙e3

Black has a few possible ways to regain his pawn, but in each case White retains a clear advantage in piece activity.

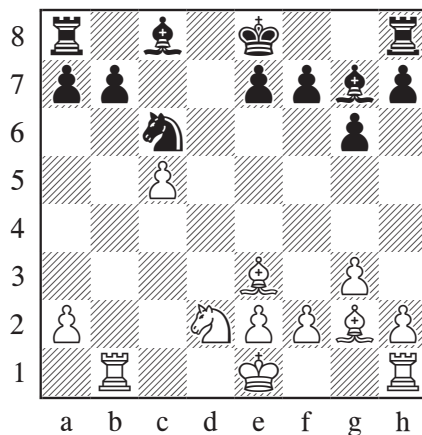
10...♖c6

Other moves do not change the assessment, for instance:

10...0-0 11.♖d4 ♖xc5 12.♖c3± and White is clearly on top.

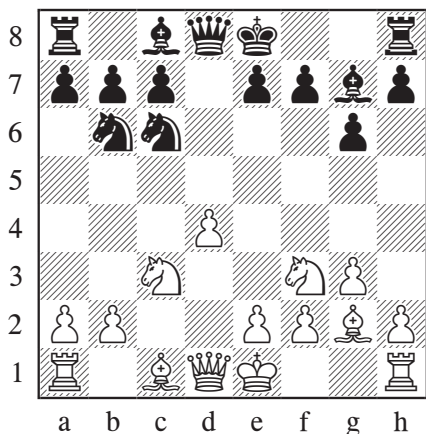
10...♖xb2 11.♙d4 ♙xd4 12.♖xd4 ♖xd1 13.♖xd1 0-0 14.0-0± Black is under pressure here too.

11.♖d2 ♖xb2 12.♖xb2 ♙xb2 13.♖b1 ♙g7



14.0–0 0–0 15.♖f1±

White maintains an obvious advantage.

B) 7...♘c6

This is the most popular move order for Black.

8.e3

8.d5?! is not really an option in view of 8...♙xc3† 9.bxc3 ♖xd5. (This would not be the case in the similar position with both sides having castled as, instead of bxc3, White can capture on c6 – although this is a moot point for our repertoire, since I recommend meeting ...♘c6 with e2–e3 in any case.)

The alternative 8.0–0 allows: 8...♘xd4!? 9.♘xd4 ♖xd4 10.♘b5 ♖c4 11.a4 0–0=

8...e5

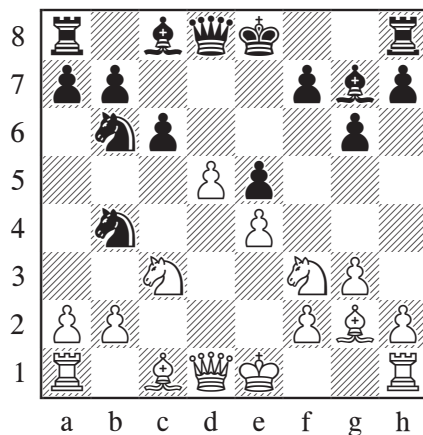
8...0–0 is the big main line, which will receive dedicated coverage in the next chapter. The text move is an important alternative, which we will analyse in the remainder of the present chapter.

9.d5

Now Black has three main possibilities:

B1) 9...♘b4, B2) 9...♘a5 and B3) 9...♘e7.

9...e4?! 10.dxc6 ♙xc3† 11.bxc3N (11.♘d2!? ♙g7 12.♙xe4 ♖b8 was also somewhat better for White in Schenk – Van Muenster, Germany 2013, but the text move is simpler) 11...♖xd1† 12.♙xd1 ♙g4 13.cxb7 ♖b8 14.♙e2 ♘a4 15.♙d2± White keeps an extra pawn.

B1) 9...♘b4 10.e4 c6**11.0–0!**

I don't know how this move and the associated game of Aronian escaped my attention during my work on *GM 2*.

11.a3 ♘a6 12.0–0 was my previous recommendation. It leads to an interesting game and may promise White an edge, but Black has a lot of ideas and play becomes quite complicated. The text move is simpler and more convincing.

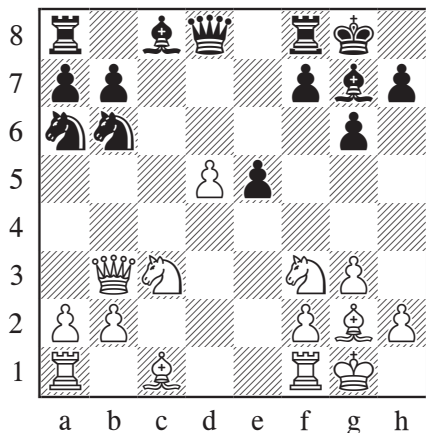
11...cxd5

11...0–0N is a new move which nevertheless transposes to some existing games. I suggest 12.♖b3 ♘a6 13.♙e3 when I don't see anything better for Black than 13...cxd5 14.exd5, transposing to the main line below.

12.♖b3 ♘a6

I also checked 12...d4N 13.♖xb4 dxc3 14.a4!↑ with promising play for White.

13.exd5 0–0



14.♕e3

14.♕g5 is also promising, and led to a convincing win for White in Aronian – L'Ami, Enschede 2005, but the text move looks simpler and stronger.

14...♕f5

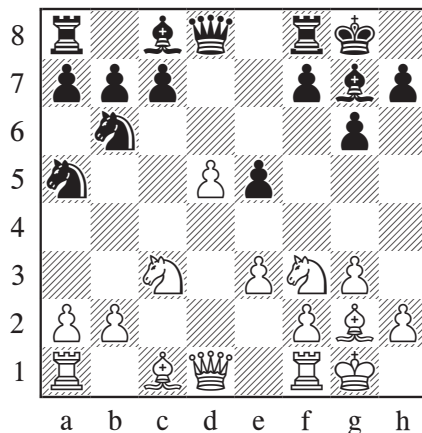
Other moves have been tried, but there's no need to analyse every option as White's position is excellent and easy to handle. The text move was played in Moser – Lehner, Austria 2010; White has several good options, but my preference is:

15.♘d2!?N±

With a pleasant advantage.

B2) 9...♘a5 10.0–0 0–0

10...c6?! 11.dxc6 ♘xc6 12.e4 0–0 occurred in Skarba – Sorenfors, corr. 2008, when 13.a4N↑ would have given White a pleasant version of a typical structure for this variation.



11.b3!?

This is quite a significant change from my previous work.

In *GM 2* I recommended the classical 11.e4, but I have since come to realize that things are far from clear after: 11...c6 12.♕g5 f6 13.♕e3 cxd5 14.♕xb6 ♖xb6 15.♘xd5 ♗d8 16.♖c1 ♘c6 17.♗b3 ♖f7 18.♗fd1 ♕e6 19.♕f1 All this was given in *GM 2*, but I now believe that 19...♗f8! gives Black a reliable position.

11...e4

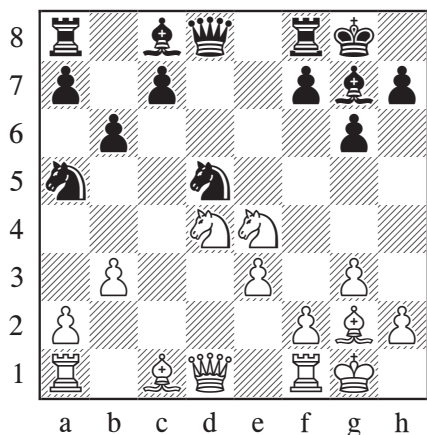
This is the only move to have been tried. The next few moves will be virtually forced.

11...c6 12.dxc6 ♘xc6 13.♕a3 ♖e8 14.♘e4↑ can hardly be an improvement for Black.

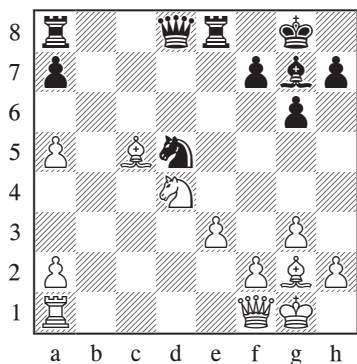
12.♘d4 ♘xd5 13.♘xe4 b6

In the most recent game Black tried 13...♗e7, but after 14.♕d2 ♘c6 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.♖c1 he had a clearly worse position in Jumabayev – Darini, Doha 2016.

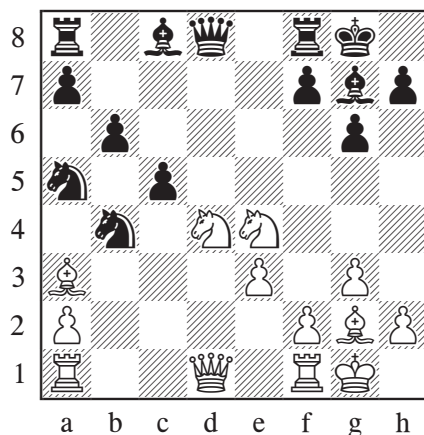
Here I favour a new idea:

**14.b4!?N**

14.♙a3 has been tried in three games but without too much success, since after 14...c5 White has always moved his knight away from the centre, leaving Black with a comfortable position. However, I discovered that 15.♘xc5!N bxc5 16.♙xc5 is surprisingly interesting. A relatively brief check revealed the following line as critical: 16...♖e8 17.b4 ♙a6 18.bxa5 ♙xf1 19.♚xf1



19...♖c8 20.♖c1 ♙h6! Black maintains equal chances. Nevertheless, the whole line requires deeper investigation and interested readers are invited to analyse it for themselves.

14...♘xb4 15.♙a3 c5**16.♘xc5!**

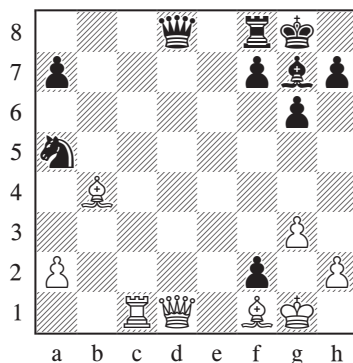
Obviously this was the idea behind White's 14th move.

16...bxc5 17.♙xa8 ♙a6 18.♙g2 ♙xf1 19.♙xf1

The position is quite sharp but I like White's chances. For example:

19...♘b7

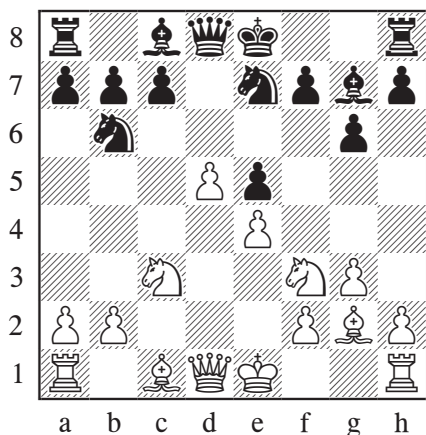
An important line continues: 19...cxd4?! 20.♙xb4 dxe3 21.♖c1 exf2†



22.♙g2!± White wins the exchange.

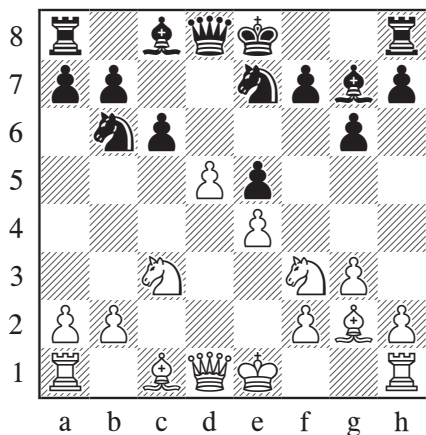
20.♙g2 ♚b6 21.♖b1

The bishop pair ensures White's advantage.

B3) 9...♗e7 10.e4

Unlike the previous variation, e3-e4 is necessary here to defend the d5-pawn. In the remainder of this chapter we will analyse **B31) 10...c6!?** and **B32) 10...♗g4**.

10...0-0 11.0-0 transposes to variation D2 of the next chapter – although that line can easily revert back to variation B32 of this chapter. The fact that Black can castle at many different points in the opening makes for a lot of possible transpositions, but I think (hope!) I managed to point out the great majority of them.

B31) 10...c6!?

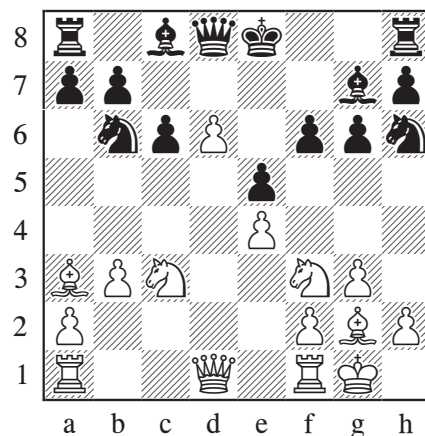
In *GM 2* I marked this move as dubious and only analysed it in a note. However, it has since been played by some strong GMs, so it deserves a closer look.

11.d6

This is undoubtedly the most principled response. Obviously Black's previous move was only possible because of the delay in castling, which enables his knight to retreat to g8.

11...♗g8 12.b3

I am happy to follow the line from *GM 2*.

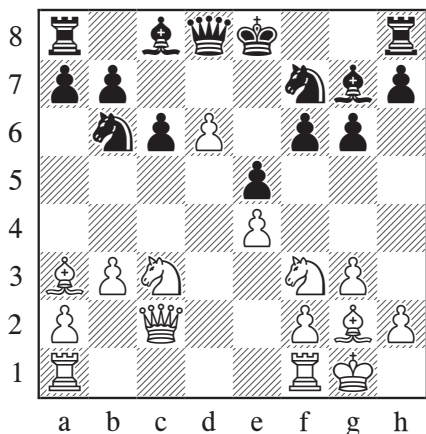
12...f6 13.0-0 ♗h6 14.♗a3**14...♗f7!**

This is Black's best try.

In *GM 2* I analysed the following line: 14...♗e6 15.♞c2 0-0?! (15...♗f7! is more resilient, and transposes to variation B312 below) 16.♞ad1 ♞f7 (now it is too late for 16...♗f7? in view of 17.d7! and White wins the exchange) 17.♗e1! The knight is heading for the ideal c5-square. 17...♗c8 18.♗a4! Preventing Black from covering the outpost by means of ...b6. 18...♞e8 19.♗c5± White had a considerable advantage in Poliakov – Plischki, Marianske Lazne 2009.

15. ♖c2!?

15. ♖d3 has been played in a few more games, presumably to keep d6 defended, but I prefer the text move.

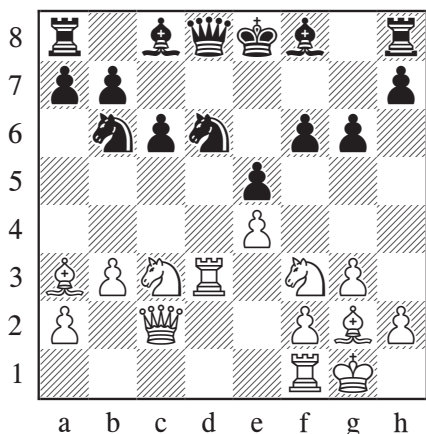


Now **B311)** 15... ♖xd6 is an important option, but **B312)** 15... ♗e6 is my main line.

B311) 15... ♖xd6

Grabbing the pawn is risky but it does not lose by force, so it is important to see how White should develop his initiative.

16. ♖ad1 ♗f8 17. ♖d3

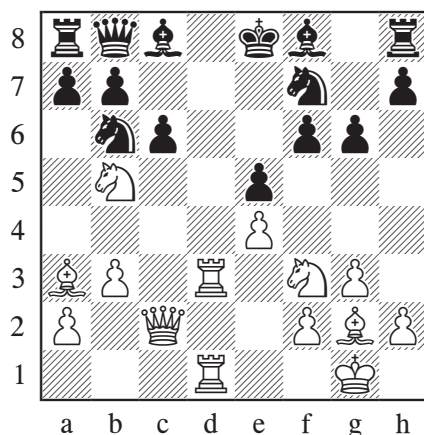


Threatening to double rooks is simple and strong.

17... ♖c7

17... ♗e6?! 18. ♖fd1 ♖bc8 19. ♖a4!± is extremely dangerous for Black. After the text move I discovered a nice line, which is almost forced.

18. ♖fd1 ♖f7 19. ♖b5 ♖b8



20. ♖d8†!!

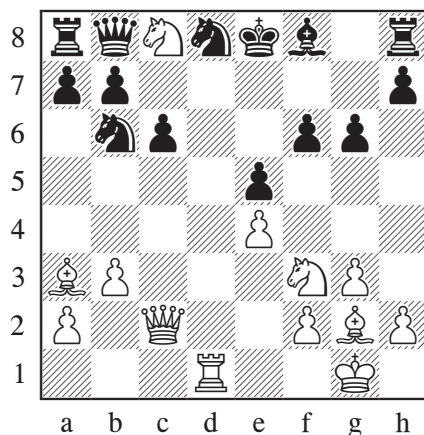
Truly a remarkable idea.

20... ♖xd8 21. ♖d6† ♗e7

After 21... ♗xd6 22. ♗xd6 Black loses his queen.

22. ♖xc8† ♗e8

Black cannot play 22... ♗f7 23. ♖xd8 ♖xc8? in view of 24. ♖c4† ♗g7 25. ♖d7† and White wins.



23. ♘d6† ♕xd6 24. ♖xd6 ♖c7!

Pretty much the only move, since 24...♙f7 25. ♖d2 ♙g7 allows 26. ♖xf6! with a decisive attack.

25. ♖c5 ♖e7 26. ♖a5!

White wants to develop his initiative with ♗h3 next. Amazingly, Black does not have many useful moves.

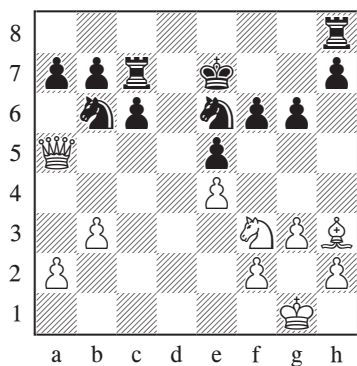
26...♖c8

Black wants to block the dark-squared bishop. The immediate 26...c5? loses to 27. ♖xb6!, so Black needs to move his rook first.

Incidentally, castling would be a good move, were it not for the fact that Black has already moved his king!

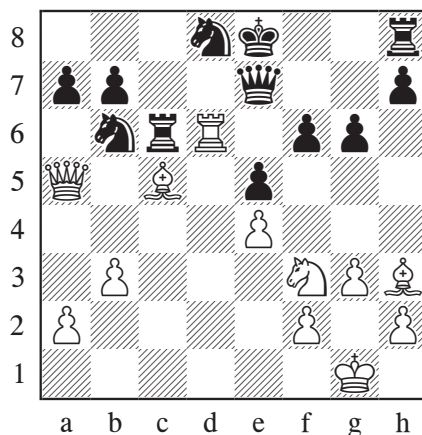
27. ♗h3 c5

Another important line is 27...♖c7 28. ♖e6 ♘xe6 29. ♗xe7 ♙e7, reaching a position where Black would be fine if it were not for the powerful blow:



30. ♘xe5! With an ongoing initiative.

28. ♗xc5 ♖c6

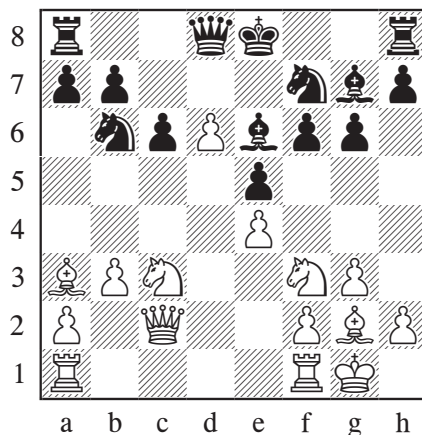


29. ♖e6 ♖xe6 30. ♗xe6 ♘xe6 31. ♗e3!±

The final detail is that Black loses the a7-pawn, so White maintains the better chances.

B312) 15...♗e6

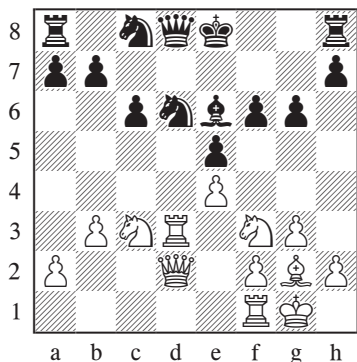
This seems like the safer choice, with Black hoping to catch up on development and pick off the d6-pawn later in the game. However, White can build a strong initiative here too.



16. ♖ad1 ♖d7

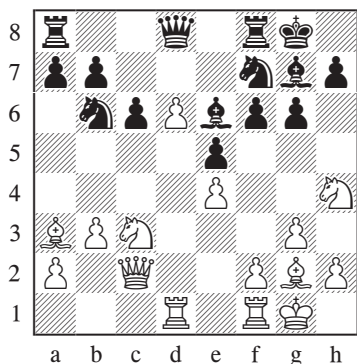
I checked a couple of important alternatives.

16...♗f8 wins the d6-pawn but allows White to seize the initiative: 17. ♖d3 ♕xd6 18. ♗xd6 ♘xd6 19. ♖d2 ♖bc8



20. ♖h4! (20. ♖d1 ♖e7 21. ♖xd6 ♜xd6 22. ♗xd6 ♗xd6 23. ♖xd6 ♜e7 24. ♖d2 ♖ad8 is not clear at all) 20...0-0 21. f4! White has a lot of activity for the sacrificed pawn.

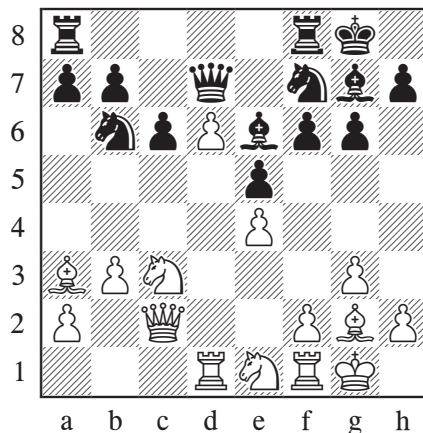
16...0-0 17. ♖h4! (White should refrain from winning the exchange, as 17. d7 ♖xd7 18. ♙xf8 ♙xf8 gives Black a lot of positional compensation)



17...♖e8 (17...♗d7 18. f4 is clearly better for White) 18. ♖d3 ♜d7 19. ♖a4! With promising play for White.

17. ♖e1 0-0

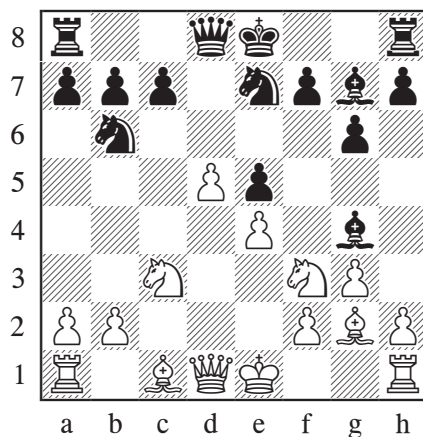
This position was reached in Dosi – Knobel, corr. 2009, when White should have continued:



18. f4! N g4 19. ♖d2 exf4 20. gxf4 ♖ad8 21. ♖d3

With a great position for White.

B32) 10...♙g4



By developing the bishop, Black vacates the c8-square for the knight in order to prepare ...c6.

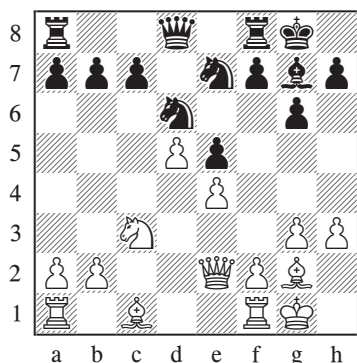
11. h3

11.0-0 c6 12. h3 ♙xf3 13. ♗xf3 is just a transposition.

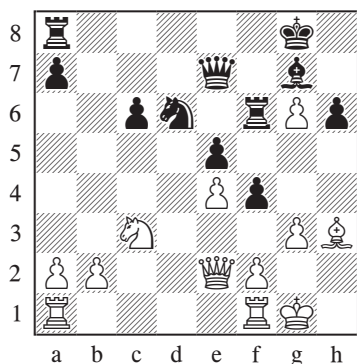
11...♙xf3 12. ♗xf3 c6

I also considered 12...0-0 13.0-0 ♜c4 (13...c6 transposes to variation B322 below) with the natural idea to transfer the

knight to d6. However, it is important to understand that if Black fails to challenge White's pawn centre, he will not have enough play to oppose White's bishop pair. Here is a good illustrative example: 14.♞e2 ♘d6



15.h4! A strong positional move, intending to activate the bishop via h3. 15...f5 16.♞h3 c6 17.♞g5 h6 18.♞xe7 ♞xe7 19.dxc6 bxc6 20.h5! f4 21.hxg6 ♞f6 This occurred in Djuric – Z. Nikolic, Cetinje 1991, and now White should have played:

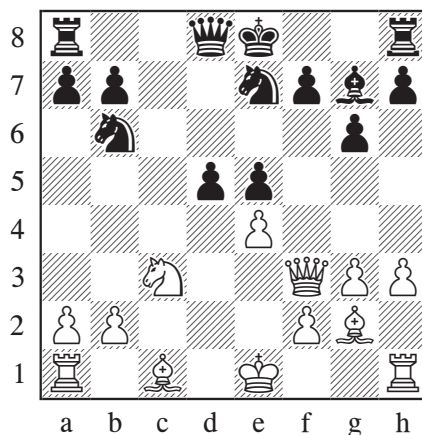


22.♞f5! ♘xf5 23.exf5 ♞xf5 24.♞c4† ♞h8 25.♞e4 White has the classical advantage of a dominant knight versus a bishop on g7 which is blocked by its own pawns.

13.0–0

Black can either exchange in the centre immediately with **B321) 13...cxd5** or maintain the tension with **B322) 13...0–0**.

B321) 13...cxd5



14.exd5!

This is the stronger recapture.

14.♘d5 should be met by: 14...♘bxd5 (unfortunately I mixed up the move order and quickly fell into an unpleasant position after 14...♘exd5?! 15.exd5 ♞d6 16.♞b3 0–0 17.♞d2 ♞fc8 18.♞b4 ♞d7 19.d6± in Grischuk – Avrukh, Kemer 2007) 15.exd5 (15.♞d1 0–0 16.exd5 transposes to the note to White's 15th move in variation B322 below, where Black is also fine) 15...♘f5 Black had a reliable position in N. Pert – A. Zhigalko, Turin (ol) 2006.

14...♘f5 15.d6!

This aggressive continuation is the only way to fight for the advantage.

Other moves give Black nothing to fear. For instance, 15.b3 0–0 16.♞a3 ♘d4 17.♞d3 ♞e8 18.♞ac1 ♘c8 and the second knight will be transferred to d6 with good play for Black, Bocharov – Roiz, Sochi 2007.

15...♞b8

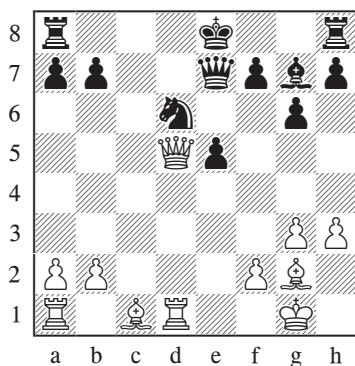
The d-pawn is taboo:

15...♘xd6? 16.♞d1 ♞e7

Or 16...♞c7 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.♞xd5 ♞d8

19.♙g5 f6 20.♙e3± with a near-decisive advantage.

17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.♚xd5



18...♙d8

18...0-0 doesn't help after 19.♚a5 ♖b8 20.♙e3 ♘c8 21.♙dc1! and it's hard to believe Black can hold this position.

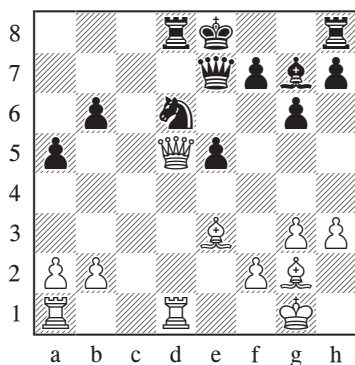
19.♙e3 b6

This is forced, as ♙c5 was a devastating threat. Now White has a nice manoeuvre:

20.♙d2!

Threatening ♙b4.

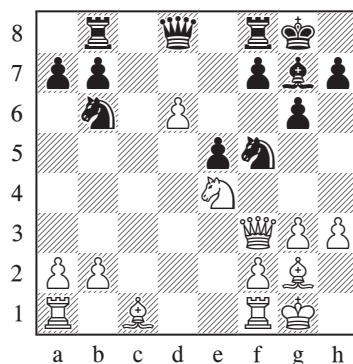
20...a5 21.♙e3



With a large advantage.

16.♙d1

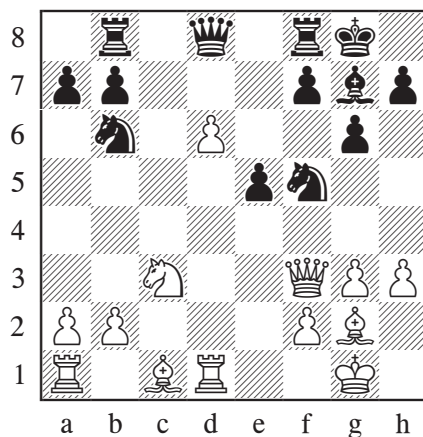
16.♘e4!?N is also worthy of consideration. Play may continue: 16...0-0 (16...♘d4 17.♚a3±; 16...h6 17.♚a3 0-0 18.♚xa7±)



17.♙g5! f6 18.♙e3 I will leave it for readers to investigate this line more deeply if they wish. My general impression is that it looks promising for White.

16...0-0

We are following a well-known game from 2001 between Van Wely and Leko, which arrived here via transposition.

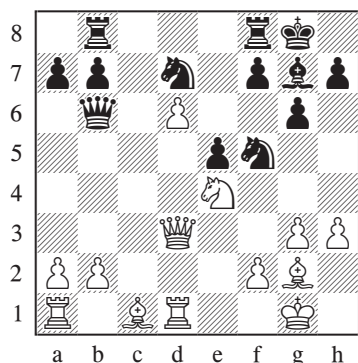


17.♙d3!

Van Wely introduced this move as a novelty, and Black has not yet managed to find a reliable antidote. Previous games had seen 17.♙e3 (which Yelena Dembo gave as her main line in her 2007 book *Play the Grünfeld*), but after 17...♘d4 18.♙xd4 exd4 19.♘b5 ♘c4 Black holds his own.

17...♘d4

One of the latest attempts to repair this line featured 17...♖d7 18.♗e4 ♗b6 and Black went on to win in Mchedlishvili – Savchenko, Subic Bay 2016. However, White has a simple improvement:



19.♖b1!N This maintains a pleasant edge for White, for instance: 19...h6 (19...♖d4 20.♗e3 does not change much) 20.g4! ♖d4 21.♗e3 ♗a6 22.♗xa6 bxa6 23.♖h1!± White has an obvious advantage due to his bishop pair and strong passed pawn.

17...♗d7

This move was recommended by Dembo, albeit without any further analysis or comments. It has been tested in a bunch of games, from which White has scored heavily. The strongest reply is:

18.b3!

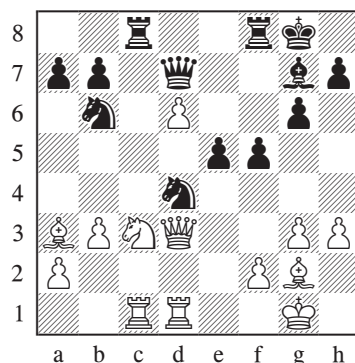
I also looked at 18.♗e4, as played in Bailet – Coenen, Cappelle-la-Grande 2014, but 18...♖bc8!N is an improvement which restricts White to a smaller advantage than in our main line.

18...♖d4 19.♗a3 f5

Black has tried a few different plans and move orders, but White has a great position in all cases. Here are a couple of examples: 19...♖fc8 20.♖ac1 f5 21.♗e3! White was clearly better in Cernousek – Efroimski, Groningen 2013.

19...♖bc8 20.♖ac1 ♖fd8 21.♖h2± and Black did not have much to oppose White's powerful passed pawn in Siedentopf – Kyas, Germany 2013.

20.♖ac1 ♖bc8



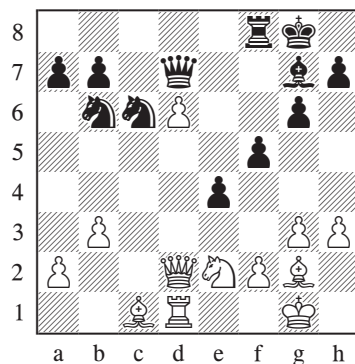
21.♗e2!

The time has come to challenge Black's strong knight.

21...e4 22.♗d2 ♖xc1

22...♗xe2† 23.♗xe2 ♖xc1 24.♗xc1 ♖c8 was seen in Rasmussen – M. Andersen, Hillerod 2010, when the simple 25.♗f4N would have secured White's advantage.

23.♗xc1 ♖c6

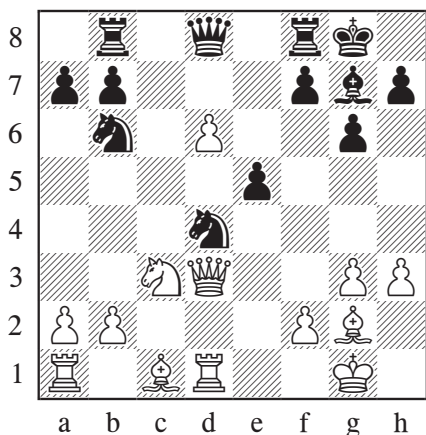


24.f3!

It's important to open up our light-squared bishop.

24...♗e5 25.fxe4 fxe4 26.♗c2

White was clearly better in Kunzelmann – Nigrin, corr. 2012.



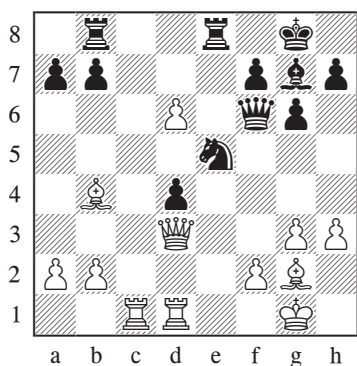
18. ♖b5!

It is important to trade Black's powerful knight.

18... ♗d7!?N

This continuation was recommended by Ftacnik in *ChessBase Magazine* 81 as a possible improvement.

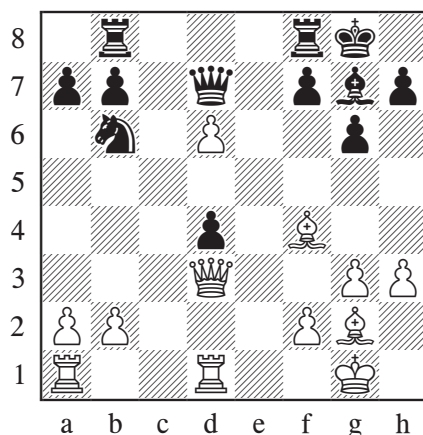
The stem game continued: 18... ♖d7 19. ♖xd4 exd4 20. ♗d2 ♗e8 (20... ♖e5 was a better try, though after 21. ♗b3 ♗e8 22. ♗b4 White maintains a stable edge.) 21. ♗ac1 ♗f6 22. ♗b4 ♖e5



23. ♗xd4! This elegant exchange sacrifice quickly decides the game. 23... ♖f3† 24. ♗xf3 ♗xd4 25. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 26. d7 ♗ed8 27. ♗d6 White won easily in Van Wely – Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

18... ♖c8 was tried in a later game, but after 19. ♗e3 ♖xd6 20. ♖xd4 exd4 21. ♗xd4± White's bishop was clearly superior to Black's knight in the arising open position in Inarkiev – Birnboim, Ohrid 2009.

19. ♖xd4 exd4 20. ♗f4

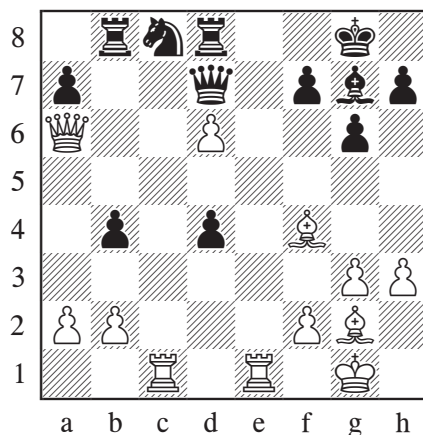


20... ♖c8 21. ♗a3 ♗d8 22. ♗e1! b5 23. ♗ac1 b4

All these moves are logical, and were given by Ftacnik. At this point, however, he only investigates 24. ♗b3, but White can improve with:

24. ♗a6!

White is much better, as the following lines demonstrate.



24...♖xd6

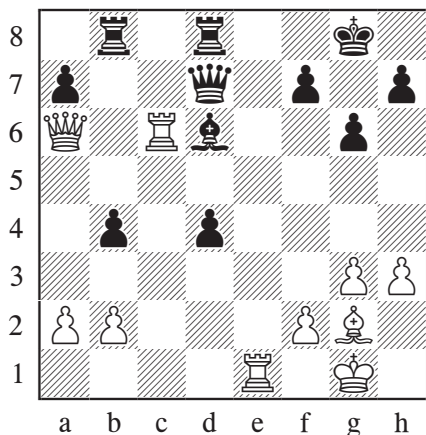
24...♖b6 runs into the strong 25.♖c7!.

25.♖c6 ♖f8

After 25...♖b6 26.♖xb6 axb6 27.♖xb6 the b4-pawn is falling.

26.♖xd6 ♖xd6

Now White can win material with a small combination.



27.♖xd6! ♖xd6 28.♖e8† ♔g7 29.♖xd6 ♖xd6 30.♖xb8 d3

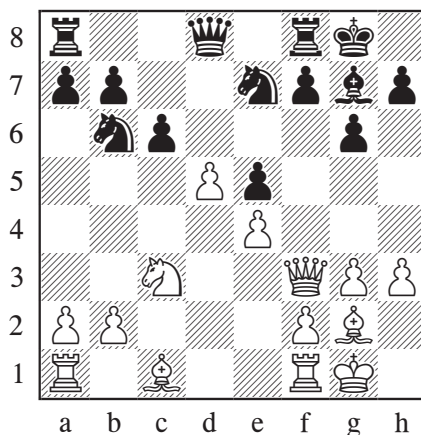
Black narrowly manages to win back the piece, but he will remain a pawn down.

31.♖xb4 d2 32.♖f3 d1=♖† 33.♖xd1 ♖xd1† 34.♔g2±

White has excellent winning chances.

B322) 13...0-0

This has been less popular than 13...cxd5 via the present move order. However, the resulting position has been tested in many more games, most of which arrived here via a different move order involving castling at an earlier turn.



14.♖d1 cxd5 15.exd5!

I strongly prefer this recapture, as I like to keep the additional pair of knights on the board.

15.♖xd5 ♖bxd5 16.exd5 ♖d6 is quite acceptable for Black, who will activate his knight with ...♖f5-d4.

15...♖f5

Black would be happy to have one of his knights on d4 with the other on d6, but of course White has no intention of allowing this.

16.d6!

This thematic idea is familiar to us from the previous variation. It is important for White to increase the influence of his light-squared bishop.

16...♖d4

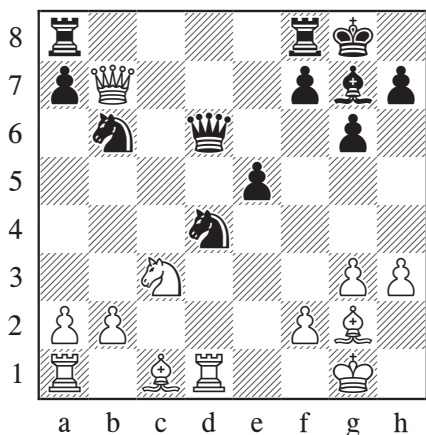
16...♖b8 transposes to variation B321 above (incidentally, this was the move order which occurred in Van Wely – Leko).

16...♖xd6?? is impossible due to 17.♖e4 ♖bc4 18.♖xd6 ♖xd6 19.♖a3 and White wins.

17.♖xb7 ♖xd6

We have reached the critical position of the whole line. It looks as though Black has

achieved his goals: he has eliminated White's passed pawn and his knight is perfectly placed in the centre. Nevertheless, White's bishop pair is an important factor which should offer him the better chances in the long run.



18. ♗g5!

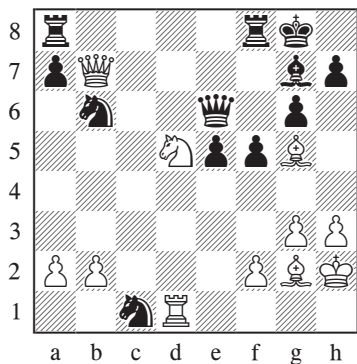
White must strive to maximize the activity of his bishops. The immediate threat is ♗e7.

18... ♖e6

18... ♖fe8? 19. ♘b5 ♗c5?! occurred in Fritz – D. Andersen, Calvia 2010, and now the simple but elegant 20. ♘c7N ♖eb8 21. ♘a6! could have decided the game on the spot.

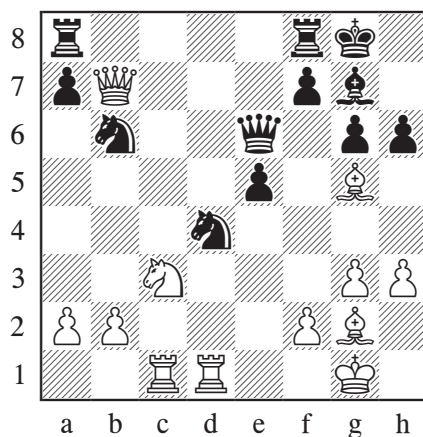
19. ♖ac1 h6

19...f5?! would be premature in view of: 20. ♘d5! ♘e2† (20...e4? loses to 21. ♖c7 ♗e5 22. ♖e7! ♗d6 23. ♗h6 with a decisive attack) 21. ♘h2 ♘xc1



22. ♘c7 ♖f7 23. ♘xa8 ♖xb7 24. ♗xb7 ♘xa8 25. ♗d5† ♘h8 26. ♖xc1 ♘b6 27. ♗e6± White is the clear favourite in the endgame, thanks to his powerful bishops.

19... ♗c8 is a reasonable move; still, after 20. ♘h1 h6 21. ♗e3 ♖d8 22. b3± White enjoyed a pleasant edge in Reinhart – Siefring, corr. 2011.



20. ♗e3 ♖fd8

Having driven White's dark-squared bishop away from the h4-d8 diagonal, it is logical for Black to put a rook on d8. We will follow a game which provides a nice example of how White should handle the position.

21. ♗a6 ♖ac8 22. b3!

It is essential to cover the c4-square in order to keep Black's knight restricted on b6.

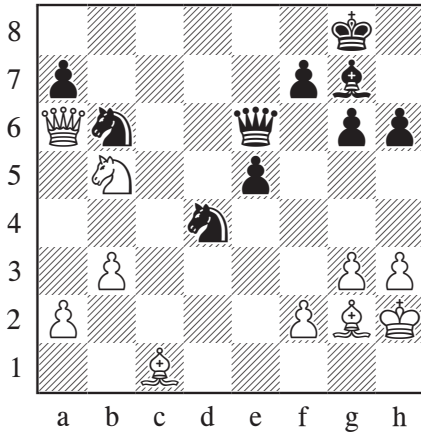
22... ♖c7 23. ♘h2

Another prophylactic move, avoiding a potential knight fork on e2 and thus preparing ♘b5.

23... ♖dc8 24. ♘b5

It's the right time to strike!

24... ♖xc1 25. ♖xc1 ♖xc1 26. ♗xc1



26...♙c8 27.♙xc8† ♖xc8 28.♙f1

The endgame was unpleasant for Black in Martyn – Jo. Hodgson, Birmingham 2006, thanks to two key factors: White's bishop pair and his ability to create a passed pawn on the queenside.

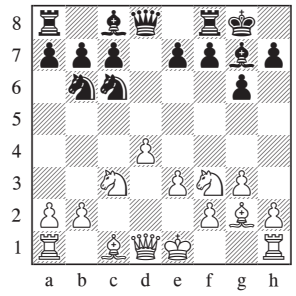
Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the important option of 6...♖b6, which we meet with 7.♖c3. Then 7...c5?! 8.dxc5 is poor for Black, who will have to go out of his way to win back the pawn while White establishes a clear advantage in piece activity.

7...♖c6 is a better option, after which 8.e3 e5 9.d5 led to the main branching point of the chapter. When analysing both 9...♖b4 and 9...♖a5, I found useful ways to improve on my recommendations in *GM 2*. On the other hand, after 9...♖e7 10.e4, my suggestions remained pretty much the same, but the multitude of recent games meant that I had to analyse more deeply and consider a wider range of options for Black. Both 10...c6!? and 10...♙g4 deserve close attention, but my analysis indicates that Black still has some problems to solve in all variations.

Chapter 4

Grünfeld



Main Line with 8...0-0

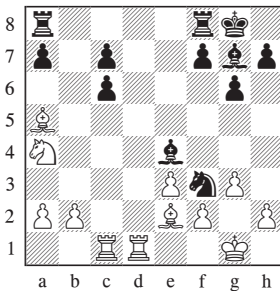
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♗g2 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♘f3 ♘b6 7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.e3 0-0

9.0-0

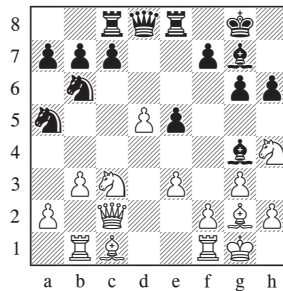
A) 9...♗g4	65
B) 9...♗e6	65
C) 9...a5	67
D) 9...e5 10.d5	69
D1) 10...e4	69
D2) 10...♘e7	70
E) 9...♗e8 10.♘h4!? e5 11.d5	71
E1) 11...♘e7	73
E2) 11...♘b4	74
E3) 11...♘a5 12.♗b1!	76
E31) 12...h6	77
E32) 12...e4	78
E33) 12...♘ac4	79

D1) note to 15...♗b8



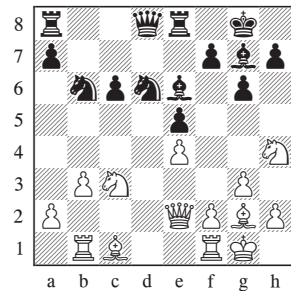
19.♗g2!N

E31) note to 13...♘ac4



15.♗e4!N

E33) after 16...♗e6



17.♗d1!N

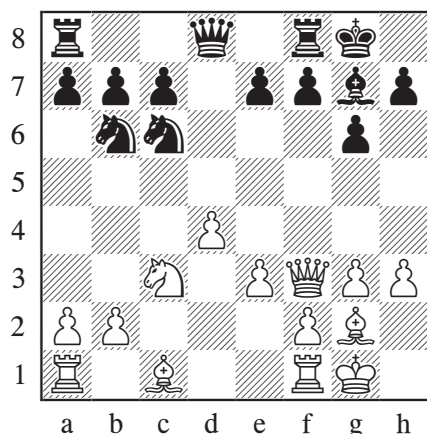
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♘f3 ♘b6 7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.e3 0–0

This natural move leads to the most complex and theoretically critical parts of our repertoire against the Grünfeld.

9.0–0

After this natural move, Black must make an important choice. We will analyse A) 9...♙g4, B) 9...♙e6, C) 9...a5, D) 9...e5 and E) 9...♖e8, the last of which is the most fashionable direction nowadays.

A) 9...♙g4 10.h3 ♙xf3 11.♖xf3



Trading the light-squared bishop for the f3-knight cannot be a good idea for Black.

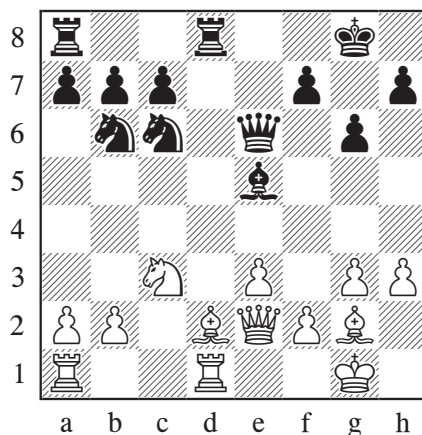
11...e5 12.dxe5!

This is easier than 12.d5 ♘e7 13.e4, after which 13...c6 transposes to variation B322 of the previous chapter.

12...♙xe5 13.♖e2 ♖e7 14.♙d2 ♗fd8 15.♗fd1 ♗e6

15...♙g7 16.♙e1± also gives White a pleasant advantage.

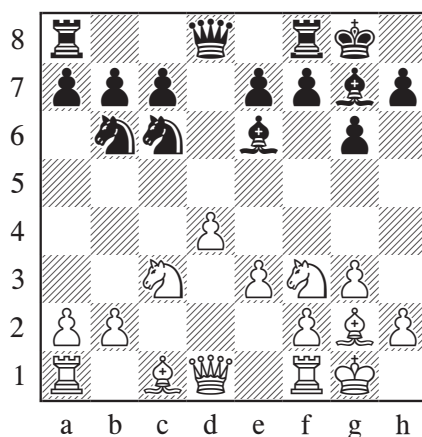
The text move was played in Krejci – Hrabusa, Pardubice 2010. A natural improvement is:



16.♖ac1N ♘c4 17.♙e1±

With an obvious advantage for White.

B) 9...♙e6



The bishop eyes the c4-square, as well as the kingside (after ...♗c8). The drawback is that the ...e5 break becomes impossible for the moment.

10.b3!

Covering the c4-square is clearly White's best choice.

10...♗c8

This is the most important move to consider, especially in light of Black's solid results from

this position so far. Other moves are easier to deal with:

10...h6 11.♖b2 a5 12.♗e4! ♖b4 13.♗c5 ♕c8 14.♞e2 c6 15.♞fd1± White was much better in Jedlicka – Matuszewski, Frydek Mistek 2011.

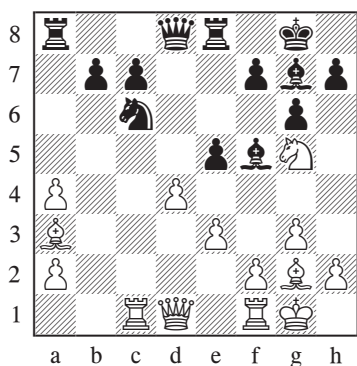
10...a5

Against this move, I suggest following White's play in a brilliant model game:

11.♕a3! ♞e8

After 11...♗b4 12.♞c1 h6 13.♞e2 c6 14.♞fd1± White was able to arrange his pieces optimally in Schulz – Luecke, Germany 1997.

12.♞c1 a4 13.♗g5! ♕f5 14.♗xa4 ♗xa4 15.bxa4 e5



16.♗xf7!

Not too difficult, but still an elegant tactical blow.

16...♗xf7 17.♞b3† ♗f6 18.♞xb7 ♗a5 19.dxe5† ♗e6 20.♞f3 ♞d3 21.♞fd1

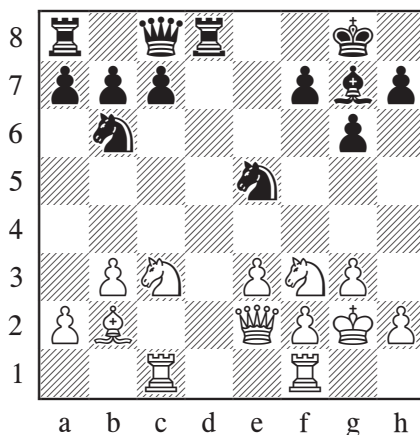
Black resigned in Vukic – P. Popovic, Skender Vakuf 1980.

11.♕b2 ♕h3

Trading the light-squared bishops certainly counts as an achievement for Black, but it costs him valuable time which White can use to coordinate his remaining pieces in the ideal way.

12.♞c1 ♕xg2 13.♗xg2 ♞d8 14.♞e2 e5 15.dxe5 ♗xe5

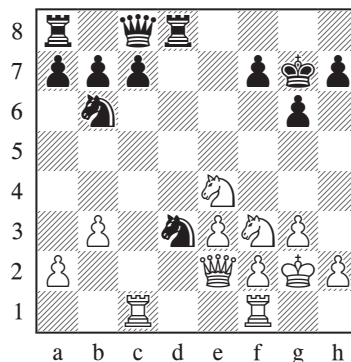
This position was reached in Kharitonov – Zaichik, Vilnius 1978, and now the natural improvement would be:



16.♗e4!N ♗xf3

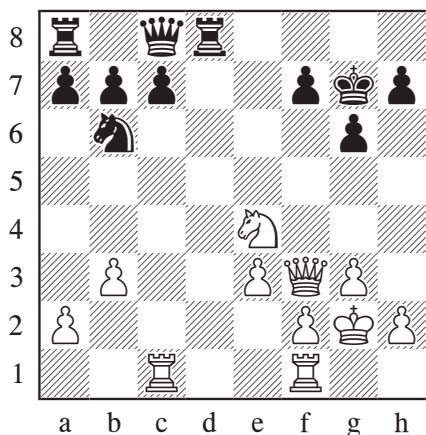
16...♞f5 can be met comfortably by 17.♕xe5! ♕xe5 18.♗c5 ♞ab8 19.e4 with an obvious positional superiority, due to the difference in the strength of the knights.

The tactical point behind White's last move is that 16...♗d3 walks into the following rebuttal: 17.♕xg7 ♗xg7



18.♞fd1! ♗xc1 19.♞b2† ♗f8 20.♞h8† ♗e7 21.♞f6† ♗e8 22.♞xc1 White has a huge attack in return for the sacrificed exchange.

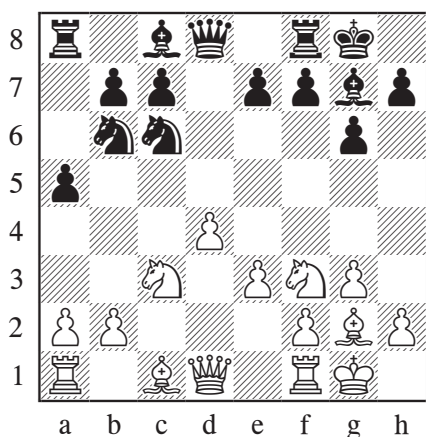
17. ♖xg7 ♔xg7 18. ♖xf3



18... ♗d5 19. ♖fd1 c6 20. ♖c5

Followed by e3-e4, when White will exert obvious pressure with no risk.

C) 9...a5



Advancing the a-pawn is a thematic idea in this variation; Black intends to grab more space on the queenside. However, by playing it immediately he gets a slightly worse version of the more popular 9...♞e8 10.♞e1 a5 line, as here White can look to develop his bishop to a3, gaining a tempo against the rook on f8.

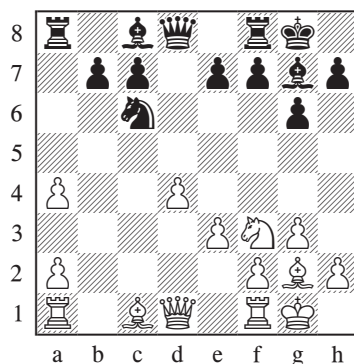
10.b3 e5

This has been Black's most popular choice, but several other options have been tried:

First of all, 10...♞e8 11.♖a3 leaves Black with nothing better than 11...e5, transposing to our main line.

Clearly dubious is:

10...a4?! 11. ♖xa4 ♗xa4 12.bxa4



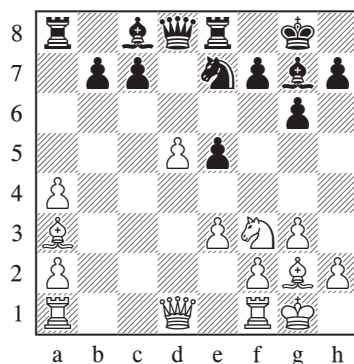
12...e5

12...♖f5 occurred in Covic – Plakalovic, Jahorina 2003, when 13. ♖h4N ♖d7 14.♞b1± would have given White an obvious advantage.

Also after 12...♖e6N 13.♞b1 ♖a7 14.♞c2 ♞a8 15. ♖h4! Black fails to prove sufficient compensation for the pawn.

13.♖a3 ♞e8 14.d5 ♖e7

Black eventually prevailed in Leenhouts – Danin, Bussum 2009, but this is no reflection on the opening. Here I found a nice improvement:



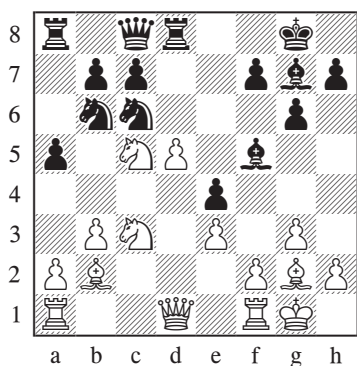
15. ♖g5!N

The key idea is revealed after:

15...h6 16. ♖e4 ♖xd5 17. ♖b3↑

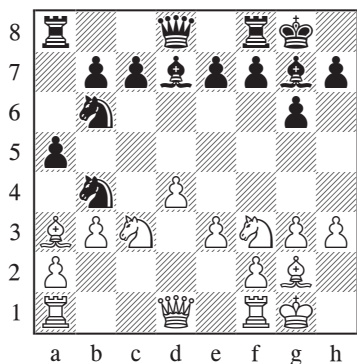
The position is unpleasant for Black, due to the simple threat of ♖ad1.

10...♗f5 11. ♖b2 ♖d7 12. ♖g5!? Not only preventing Black's plan of ...♗h3, but also sending the knight towards the c5-square. 12...♖fd8 13. ♖ge4 e5 14. ♖c5 ♖c8 15. d5 e4 In Korchnoi – F. Olafsson, Stockholm 1962, White should have continued with the natural:



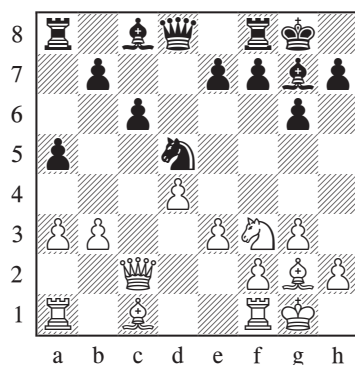
16. ♖e2N ♖xd5 17. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 18. ♖xe4 ♗xb2 19. ♖xb2 ♗xe4 20. ♗xe4 ♖d6 21. ♖fd1± With a pleasant edge.

10...♗g4 should be met by: 11. h3 (11. ♖a3 ♖c8 justified Black's play in Gorelov – Tseshkovsky, Minsk 1985) 11...♗d7 (also after 11...♗e6N 12. ♖a3 ♖d5 13. ♖a4 ♖db4 14. ♖e2± White is slightly better) 12. ♖a3 ♖b4

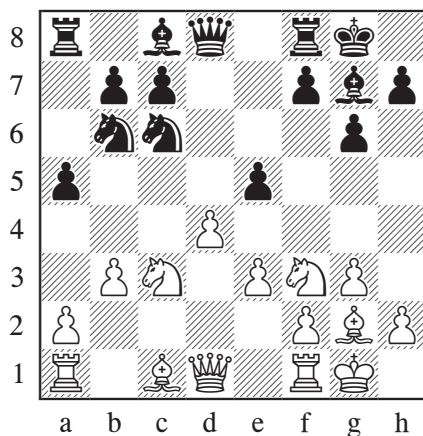


13. ♖c1 ♖d6d5 14. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 15. ♖e5 c6 16. ♖d3 White was obviously better in Gleyzer – C. Sadler, corr. 2013.

10...♖b4 11. a3! This looks like the simplest solution. (11. ♖b2 was my suggestion in GM 2, but 11...a4 12. ♖xa4 ♖xa4 13. bxa4 ♖d5 seems pretty decent for Black) 11...♖4d5 12. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 13. ♖c2 c6 This occurred in Salmoiraghi – Marin, Bratto 2010. White has a few attractive ideas, but I prefer:



14. ♖e5N ♗e6 15. ♖d1 White has a pleasant advantage, which is typical for this structure when Black fails to find counterplay.



11. ♖a3 ♖e8 12. dxe5 ♖xe5

Black has never played 12...♖xd1, which is understandable, as 13. ♖axd1 ♖xe5 14. ♖d4± leaves White with a clear edge in piece mobility.

13.♟d4!

This is more ambitious than 13.♟xe5 ♟xe5 14.♞c1, when White had just a slight edge in Naranja – Taimanov, Palma de Mallorca 1970.

13...c6

With this typical move, Black restricts the bishop on g2 as well as both of the white knights.

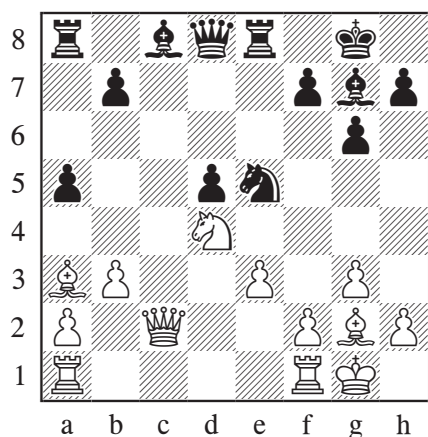
Black has also tried 13...♟g4?! but without much success: after 14.♞c2 c6 15.h3 ♟e6 16.♞ad1± White was clearly better in Ali Marandi – Tuncer, Celje 2016.

14.♞c2 ♟d5

14...a4 was a more recent try in Lloyd – Angelov, corr. 2011. I suggest the calm 15.h3!?N, when it is not so clear what Black can do to improve his position. An illustrative line is 15...axb3 16.axb3 ♟f8 17.♟xf8 ♞xa1 18.♞xa1 ♞xf8 19.f4 ♟ed7 20.e4 with the better game for White.

15.♟xd5 cxd5

In Sokolsky – Arulaid, Moscow 1959, a simple and strong continuation would have been:

**16.♟b2N ♟e6 17.♞ac1 ♞c8 18.♞d2**

White has an excellent position playing against the isolated pawn.

D) 9...e5

This is Black's clear second choice in terms of overall popularity. Generally speaking it has fallen out of fashion, but it is still used by strong players from time to time.

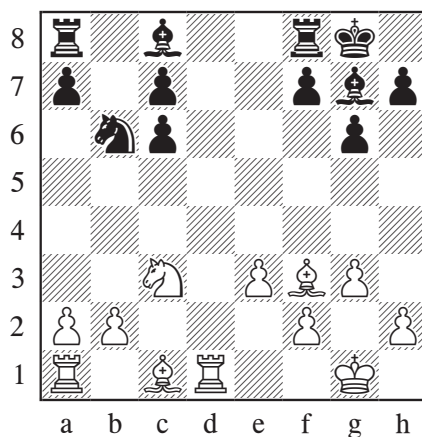
10.d5

Now Black chooses between **D1) 10...e4** and **D2) 10...♟e7**.

10...♟a5 reaches a position which has already been examined via the 8...e5 move order – see variation B2 of the previous chapter.

D1) 10...e4

This used to be considered a reliable choice for Black, before the following game occurred.

11.dxc6 ♞xd1 12.♞xd1 exf3 13.♟xf3 bxc6**14.♟d2!**

Practice has shown that 14.♟xc6 ♞b8 offers Black sufficient compensation for the pawn, thanks to his piece activity.

14...♟c4 15.♟a4 ♞b8

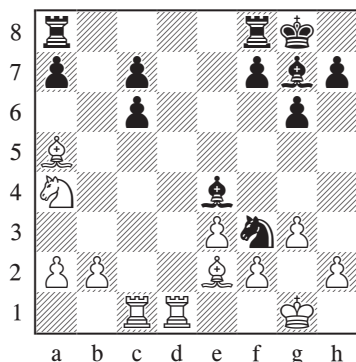
15...♟xb2?? would be a decisive mistake: 16.♟xb2 ♟xb2 17.♞ab1 ♞b8 18.♟c1+–

15...♗f5

Black has also tried this bishop move, but without any success. The following line is especially convincing:

16.♖a1 ♖e5 17.♗e2 ♗e4 18.♗a5 ♖f3†

Blecken – Von Alvensleben, Germany 1996. Here White should not be afraid of Black's threats and should calmly play:

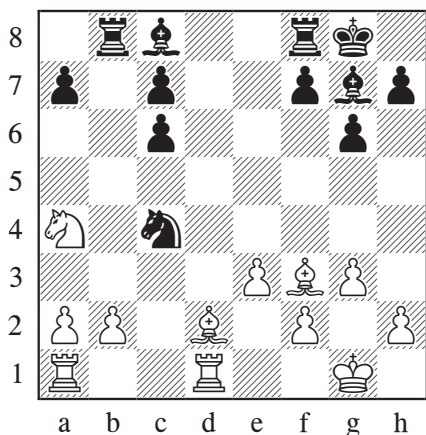


19.♔g2!N ♖e1†

Or 19...♖d4† 20.♔f1 ♖xe2 20.♔xe2 and Black's bishop pair can hardly make up for his ruined pawn structure.

20.♔f1 ♖f3 21.♖c5 ♖xh2† 22.♔g1 ♖f3† 23.♔g2! ♖h4† 24.♔h3 ♗f3 25.♗xf3 ♖xf3 26.♔g2 ♖e5 27.♗xc7±

White is clearly better, due to Black's weak pawns on the queenside.

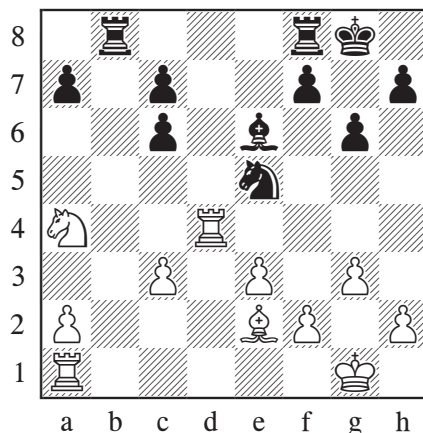


16.♗c3 ♗xc3 17.bxc3 ♖e5 18.♗e2!

An accurate move. In the event of 18.♗g2 Black has 18...♖b5! intending ...♖a5, with decent counterplay.

18...♗e6 19.♗d4!

The arising endgame is highly unpleasant for Black.

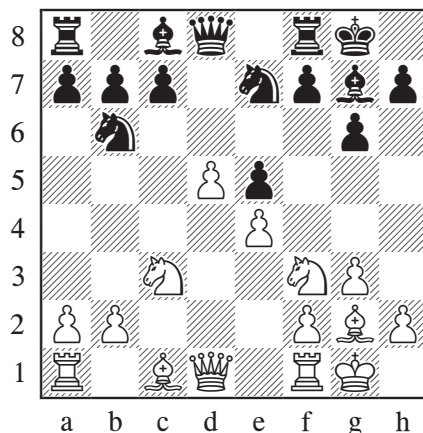


19...♖d7 20.♗ad1 ♖b6 21.♖c5

White enjoyed a serious advantage in Tkachiev – Sutovsky, Dresden 2007.

D2) 10...♖e7 11.e4

This usually leads to a line from the previous chapter. Here we will deal with a few independent possibilities.



11...♞c4

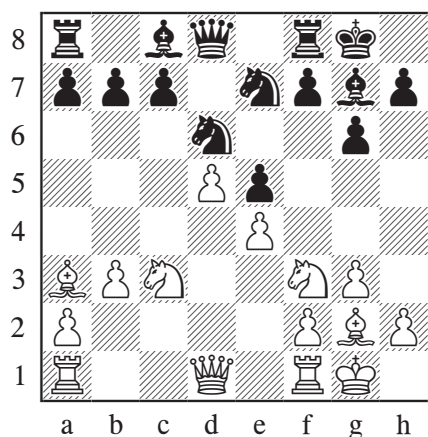
Transferring the knight to d6 may seem like a nice idea, but it costs Black too much time.

11...♙g4 is by far the most common choice, when 12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♞xf3 c6 reaches variation B322 of the previous chapter.

After 11...f5 12.♞b3 ♖h8 White has several good moves, but strongest is 13.exf5! ♞xf5 (Black is not helped by either 13...gxf5 14.♞g5± or 13...♙xf5 14.♞g5±) 14..♙g5 with an obvious initiative.

12.b3 ♞d6 13.♙a3

I find this the most natural development. White has an excellent position, for instance:

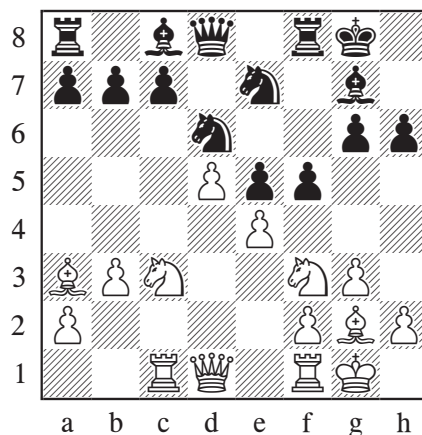
**13...h6**

13...f5?! is premature in view of the thematic 14.♞g5! f4 15.♞e6 ♙xe6 16.dxe6 ♞c6 17.♞d5± with a big advantage, as in Stohl – L. Horvath, Germany 2005.

14.♞c1 f5

14...♙d7 was seen in Degardin – Rouffignac, Chalons en Champagne 2015, when the simple 15.♞e1!N f5 16.♞d3± would have led to White's obvious advantage.

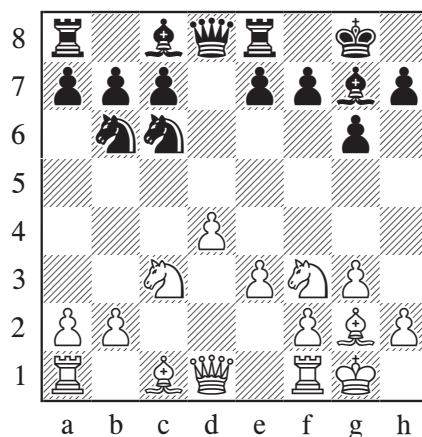
The text move was played in Krant – Shure, New York 1992. Now I like:

**15.♞e1!N**

Targeting the e5-pawn, and more or less forcing Black to block the centre.

15...f4 16.♞a4

White has an easy initiative on the queenside. He has a number of strong ideas, such as ♞c2 attacking the c7-pawn, or ♞c5-e6.

E) 9...♞e8

Finally we come to the big main line, the theory of which has evolved massively since *GM 2* was published. Around that time, my ideas after 10.♞e1 were causing serious problems; yet slowly but surely, Black has discovered reliable countermeasures.

A few years later, the subtle options of 10.a3 and 10.h3 became popular. The theory has been developing in these directions and Black has once again managed to find some good lines. For this book, I decided to recommend White's latest big idea in this variation.

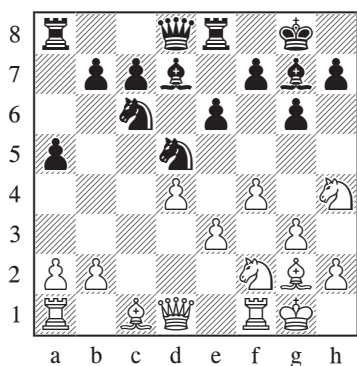
10.♘h4!?

The idea behind this odd-looking move is clear and simple. White is threatening to play 11.f4, which would make the ...e5 break almost impossible, and so Black is more or less forced to play that move immediately if he wishes to obtain any counterplay. By the way, almost all of the 70+ games with this move took place from 2013 onwards, with Levon Aronian being the first high-profile player to try it.

10...e5

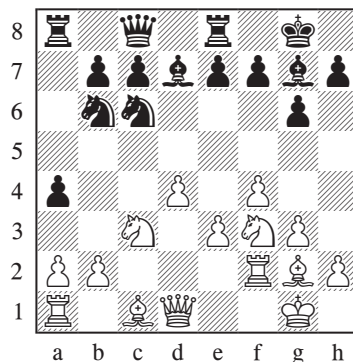
Other moves enable White to carry out his plan. Here are a couple of examples:

Aronian's game continued: 10...♙d7 11.f4 a5 12.♘e4 (12.♞e2N is a good alternative) 12...♘d5 13.♘f2 (there is also nothing wrong with the natural 13.♙d2N) 13...e6



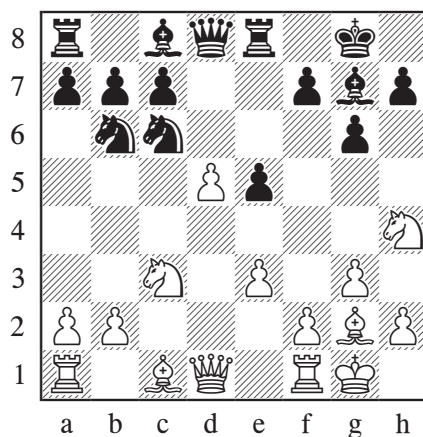
This position occurred in Aronian – Ragger, Warsaw 2013. Instead of Aronian's 14.e4, which looks tempting but left the pawn centre a little loose, White should have consolidated with 14.♘f3!N. In that case, he would have kept a nice positional pull due to his space advantage and central clamp.

10...a5 11.f4 a4 is not much of an improvement; White maintains a comfortable edge, as was convincingly demonstrated in the following game: 12.♞f2 ♙d7 13.♘f3 ♞c8



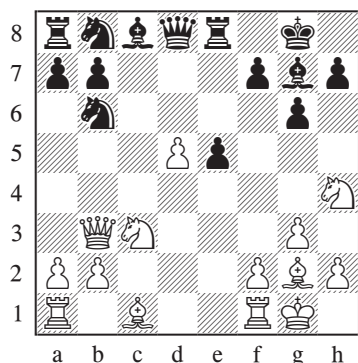
14.♘e4! The knight is heading for c5. 14...♞d8 15.♘c5 ♙e8 16.♞f1 e6 17.♙d2 White had an excellent position in Grachev – Sivuk, Loo 2014.

11.d5

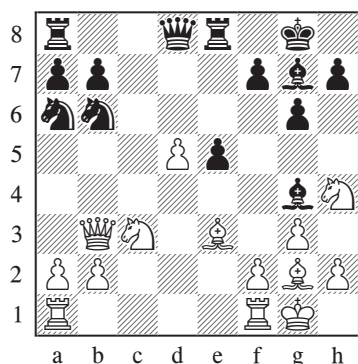


Black faces an important decision. We will analyse E1) 11...♘e7, E2) 11...♘b4 and E3) 11...♘a5.

11...♘b8 has been tried a couple of times but is hardly a serious equalizing attempt: 12.e4 c6 13.♞b3! cxd5 14.exd5

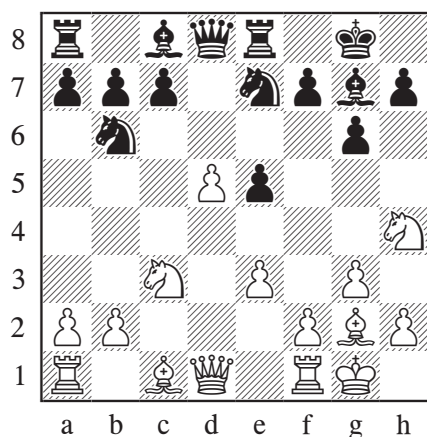


14...a6 (14...f5 was met strongly in the following game: 15.f3 h6 16.e3 d8d7 17.d6† h7 18.b5 e4 19.d2± Dobrov – Preotu, Philadelphia 2014) 15.e3 g4 In D. Rombaldoni – David, Boscotrecase 2014, White should have continued:



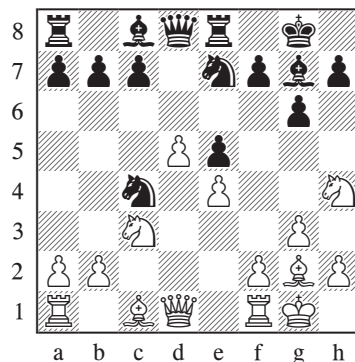
16.♖a1!N ♖c8 17.♗b5 With an obvious edge.

E1) 11...♗e7



12.e4 ♗d7

12...♗c4 was seen in Perez Mauricio – Perez Garcia, Linares 2016, when I like the following plan for White:



13.b3N ♗d6 14.♗a3 f5 15.♞c1± Without the ...c6 break available, Black's position looks passive.

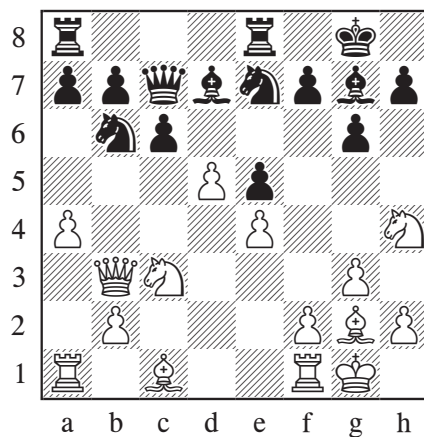
13.♞b3 c6 14.a4!

This is a thematic idea in this variation.

14...♞c7

14...cxd5N 15.exd5 ♞c8 looks a bit more challenging, but I still like White's chances after 16.♞d1.

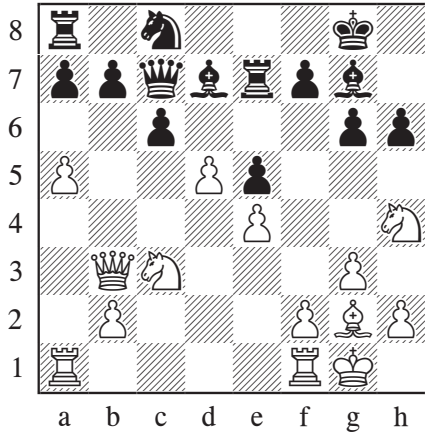
Here I found a nice way to improve White's play from Hernandez Camen – Mesaros, Durban 2014:



15. ♖g5!N

With the following point:

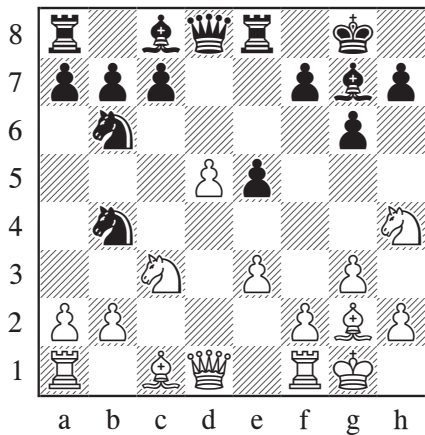
15...h6 16. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 17.a5 ♘c8



18. ♘xg6! fxxg6 19.d6† ♕e6 20.dxe7!

White emerges with an extra exchange.

E2) 11...♘b4

**12. ♖b3!N**

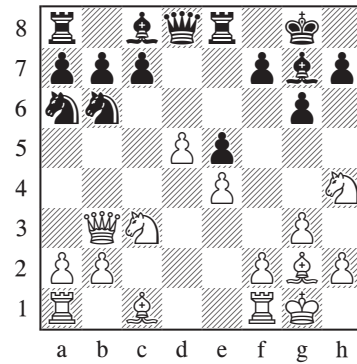
This is my new idea. So far White has only tried 12.e4 and 12.a3, but Black has been doing reasonably well. One of the key model games continued 12.a3 ♘a6 13. ♖c2 ♖e7 14.e4 c6 15.dxc6 bxc6 16. ♘f3 ♘c5! and Black went on to demonstrate that his active piece play was just as important as

his weakened pawn structure in Wang Hao – Li Chao, China 2013.

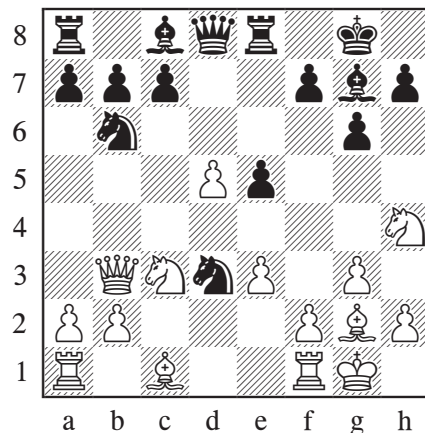
12...♘d3

12...c5 13.e4± gives White a positional plus.

12...♘a6 13.e4 also gives White a pleasant game. Compared with the game noted above, it may look as though White will lose time after ...♘c5, but the queen can happily drop back to c2. If anything, White may actually benefit from not having played a2-a3, as the b3-square has not been weakened. Here are a few brief lines:



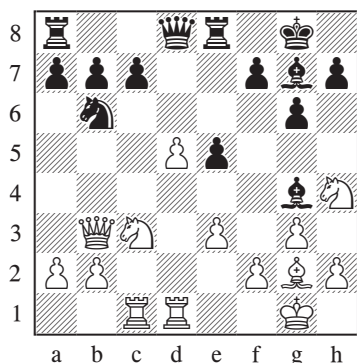
13...♘c5 (after 13...c6 White should keep his pawn on d5: 14. ♖e3 cxd5 15.exd5 f5 16. ♘f3 White has a lot of activity and the queen is ideally placed on b3) 14. ♖c2 c6 15. ♖e3 ♘a6 16. ♖fd1±



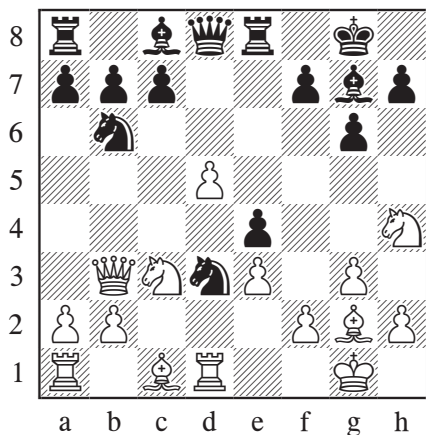
13.♖d1 e4!?

This active move seems like the critical try.

13...♘xc1 14.♙axc1 ♕g4 (14...a6 15.♘e4! looks promising for White)



15.♕f3 ♕d7!? (15...♕xf3 16.♘xf3 e4 17.♘d4! also favours White) 16.e4 I like White's chances; most of his pieces are more active than their black counterparts, and this seems more relevant than Black's bishop pair.

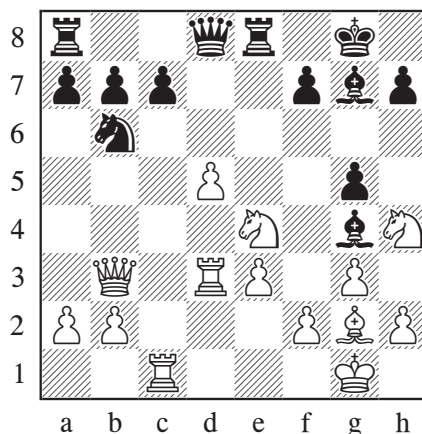
**14.♘xe4 ♘xc1 15.♙axc1 ♕g4!**

15...g5? is easily refuted by the elegant 16.d6!.

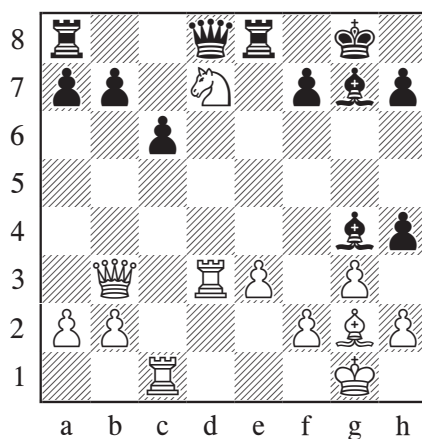
The text move is a better try, and leads to concrete, forcing play.

16.♖d3 g5

This is Black's idea, exploiting the instability of White's knights. Fortunately, we have a tactical resource available.

**17.d6! c6!**

17...cxd6? turns out badly for Black: 18.♘xd6 ♕e6 19.♘xe8 ♖xe8 20.♖b4 gxf4 21.♖xf4±

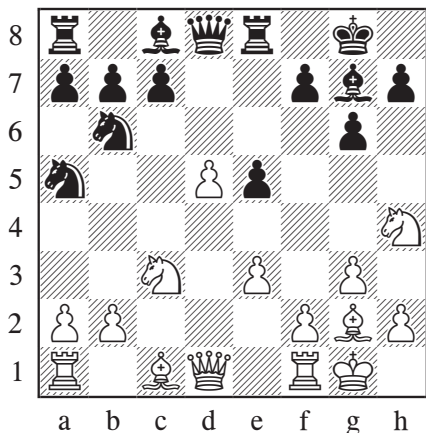
18.♘c5 gxf4 19.d7 ♘xd7 20.♘xd7**20...♖c7**

20...♖e7!? 21.♖xb7 picks up a pawn for not much compensation.

21.♘c5

The position remains complex, but I prefer White's chances due to his better pawn structure.

E3) 11...♘a5



12.♞b1!

12.e4 has achieved good results but I believe it is premature, and 12...c6 gives Black a good position.

The text move is the best try for an advantage. White removes the rook from the long diagonal in order to prepare b2-b3 at the right moment. Black's three most important replies are **E31) 12...h6**, **E32) 12...e4** and **E33) 12...♘ac4**.

Other moves are less problematic. Here are a few examples:

12...f5 13.e4 f4?!

This looks like a natural try, but advancing pawns on the kingside is too optimistic with Black's knights far away on the other wing.

14.b3!

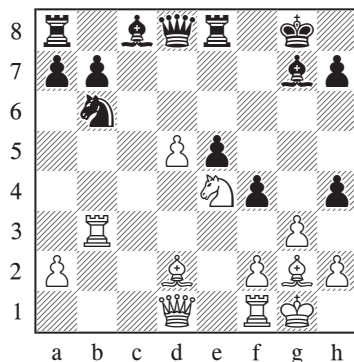
This move is an important part of White's strategy. The a5-knight is cut off from the game and becomes a clear target.

14...c6 15.♘d2 cxd5 16.exd5 g5 17.♖e4!

The best reaction.

17...♘xb3 18.♞xb3 gxh4

This occurred in Houska – Balaian, Mamaia 2016. White has several good continuations but my favourite is:

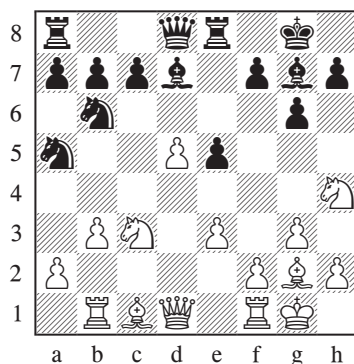


19.♞b4!N

White's central pawn is untouchable and her advantage is obvious.

12...♘d7 13.b3

Once again, this restricting move should be White's top priority.



13...e4?

13...c6 is better, but after 14.d6 ♘e6 15.♘a3 ♘d7 16.♞d2 White was clearly on top in Jojua – Chkhaidze, Tbilisi 2015.

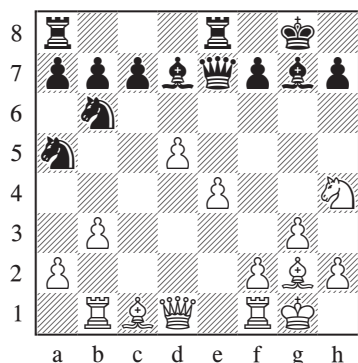
The text move is critical in the sense that it initiates tactical complications, but it can be refuted by relatively simple means.

14.♘xe4! g5

This is the consistent follow-up.

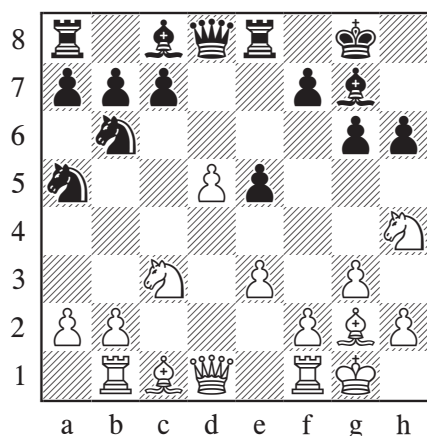
14...♞b5 15.♘d2 f5 16.♖c5+— gave White an overwhelming position in Vigorito – Niemann, Charlotte 2016.

15.♘xg5! ♞xg5 16.e4 ♞e7



17. ♖d2! ♜c5 18. ♙b2 ♙xb2 19. ♖xb2+–
White's advantage was decisive in
Dumitrache – Ollier, Avoine 2015.

E31) 12...h6



This seems a bit slow but it was played by Navara a few years ago. Black has a concrete idea to prepare ...g5.

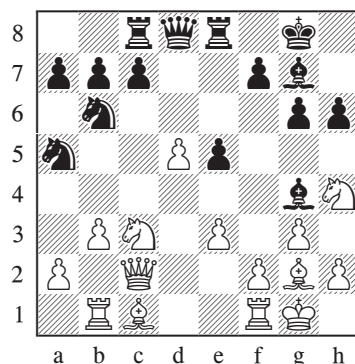
13. ♜c2!

White gets ready to meet ...g5 with ♜f5, while also freeing the d1-square for the rook and protecting the knight on c3.

13... ♖ac4

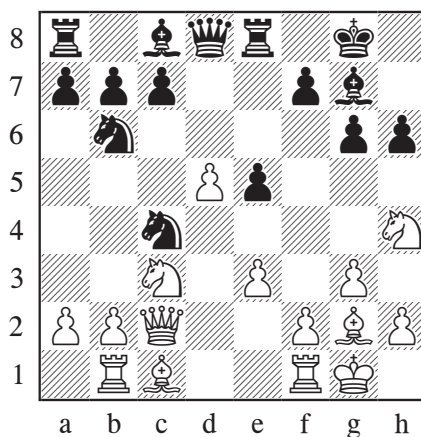
13... ♙g4?! allows the well-known idea of 14.b3, shutting the knight out of the game. 14... ♜c8 This position occurred in Mareco – Navara, Gibraltar 2014. White went on to win

a fine game, but he missed something even stronger at this point:



15. ♜e4!N ♙d7 16. ♜b4 An unusual way of trapping the knight. 16...g5 17. ♜f3 e4 18. ♜d2+– Black cannot avoid significant material losses.

The text move is a better try for Black. Still, White has a good position and we have an excellent game to follow.

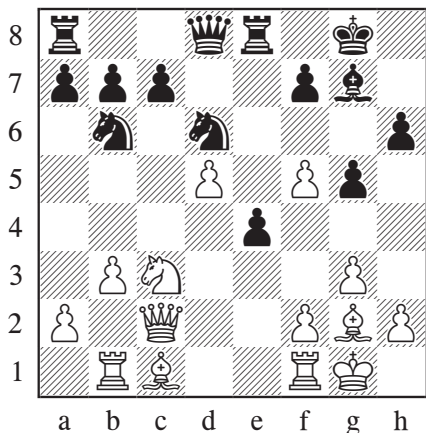


14.b3 ♖d6 15.e4 g5!?

Rather than defending a slightly worse position, Black tries to create counterplay.

16. ♜f5 ♙xf5 17.exf5 e4

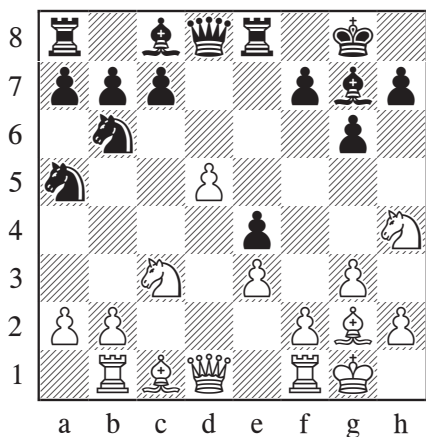
Obviously this was the idea behind Black's 15th move, but it does not solve all his problems.



18.♙b2 ♜xf5 19.♞xe4

White maintained a pleasant edge in Kharitonov – Duzhakov, Voronezh 2016.

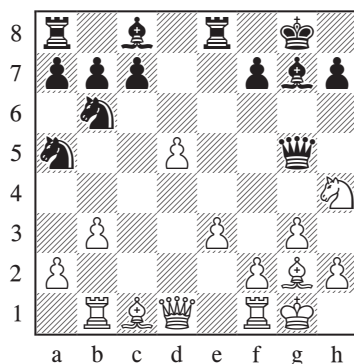
E32) 12...e4



This dynamic move is an important option to consider.

13.♞xe4 ♞xd5

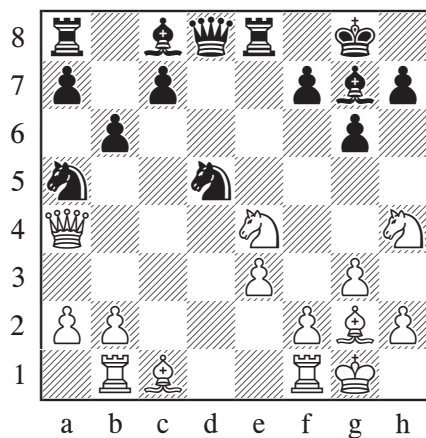
13...g5? runs into an elegant rebuttal: 14.♞xg5! ♞xg5 15.b3! Black is in trouble, as was demonstrated in the only game where this position occurred:



15...♞d7 16.e4 ♞e7 17.♞f5 ♞f8 18.♞c2 b6 19.b4 ♞b7 20.♞xc7 Black's position was a disaster in Li Chao – Tomczak, Germany 2014.

14.♞a4 b6

14...♞c6?! does not help; after 15.♞d1 ♞e6?! 16.♞c5 White was almost winning in Kantor – Agdelen, Porto Carras 2015.



15.b4! ♞c4

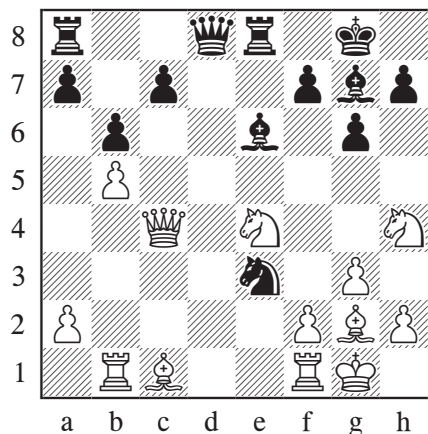
15...♞xe4?! 16.♞xe4 ♞c3 does not work for Black: 17.♞c2 ♞xe4 18.bxa5 ♞b7 19.f3 ♞c5 20.♞b2± White was clearly better in Khismatullin – Salem, Sharjah 2014.

16.b5!

Simple and strong. Black's pieces in the centre are unstable.

16...♙e6 17.♖xc4! ♜xe3!N

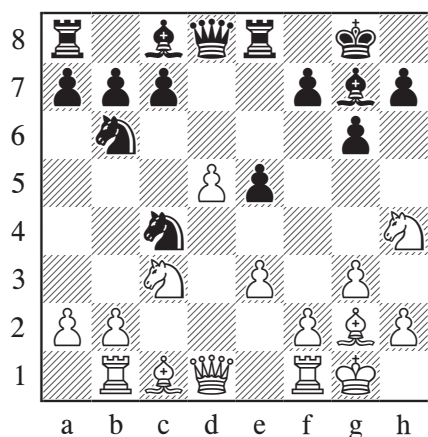
After 17...♜c3? 18.♖xc3 ♙xc3 19.♜xc3+- Black's queen was no match for White's three pieces in Maletin – Sazonova, Izhevsk 2014.



The text move is an improvement, and indeed the only playable move. Nevertheless, White keeps some advantage after the forced sequence:

18.♖e2 ♜xf1 19.♖xf1 ♙xa2 20.♞b2! ♙e6 21.♙g5

Materially Black is okay with a rook and two pawns against two knights, but he still has problems dealing with White's considerable piece activity.

E33) 12...♜ac4

We have seen several lines in which Black's knight became stranded on a5 after b2-b3, so this move is a natural choice.

13.e4 c6

This has been played in all three of the games from this position so far.

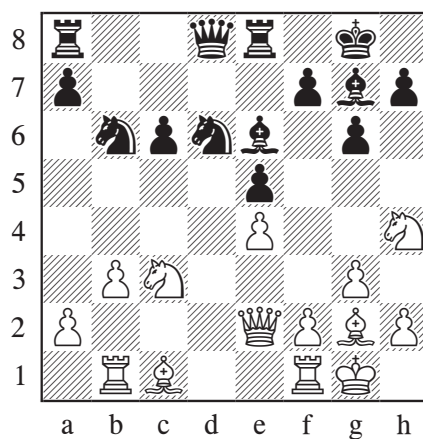
13...♜d6N should be met by 14.b3, with a possible transposition to the main line after 14...c6. Perhaps Black could experiment with some other plan, but I like White's chances in the complex middlegame; his ideas include developing the bishop to b2 or a3, attacking the weak c7-pawn, and possibly throwing in a4-a5 at some point.

14.b3 ♜d6 15.dxc6 bxc6

I have no doubt that White should have an edge now that Black's queenside structure has been weakened.

16.♖e2 ♙e6

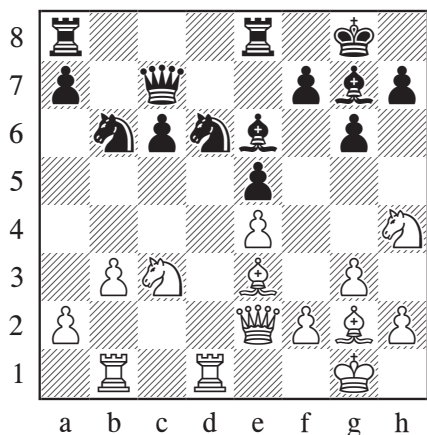
16...♖c7 occurred in Maletin – Drygalov, Chelyabinsk 2016, when the simple 17.♙e3N would have maintained White's positional pressure.

**17.♞d1!N**

17.♙a3 proved to be a waste of time after 17...♞e7! 18.♞fd1 ♞d7 and Black eventually

was able to hold in Vasquez Schroder – Djukic, Tromso (ol) 2014. This led me to conclude that e3 is the best square for White's dark-squared bishop.

17...♔c7 18.♕e3±



White maintains a pleasant edge.

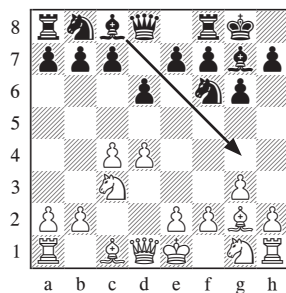
Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with one of the most theoretically critical parts of our Fianchetto Grünfeld repertoire. From the initial tabiya after 9.0–0, the options of 9...♕g4, 9...♕e6, 9...a5 and 9...e5 all carry some logic, but also a certain drawback of one kind or another, which White can try to exploit with resolute play.

9...♗e8 remains the most important option by far, adding weight to a future ...e5. In the last few years 10.♘h4!? has emerged as the biggest challenge to Black's set-up. 10...e5 is virtually forced if Black wants to obtain any counterplay, and after 11.d5 the character of the play depends on which square Black chooses for his attacked knight. The theory is still developing and you should certainly keep an eye on future games; but at the time of writing White is achieving good results, and I have presented a number of new ideas which will enable you to create problems for your opponents.

Chapter 5

King's Indian



Early ...g4 Lines

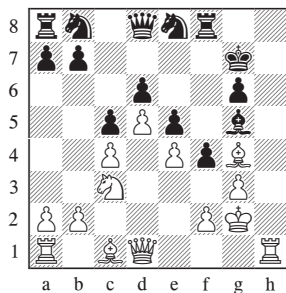
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♘g7 4.♘g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6

6.♗f3

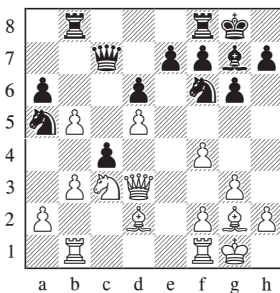
A) 6...♘g4	82
B) 6...c6 7.0-0 ♘g4 8.h3 ♘xf3 9.♘xf3	83
B1) 9...e5	83
B2) 9...♗bd7	85
C) 6...♗c6 7.0-0 ♘g4 8.d5	86
C1) 8...♘xf3	86
C2) 8...♗a5 9.♗d2	88
C21) 9...c6?!	88
C22) 9...c5 10.♖c2	90
C221) 10...e5	91
C222) 10...a6 11.h3 ♘d7 12.b3 b5	
13.♘b2 ♖b8 14.♖ab1	92
C2221) 14...e5	93
C2222) 14...bxc4	94
C2223) 14...♖c7	96

B1) after 17...♘g5



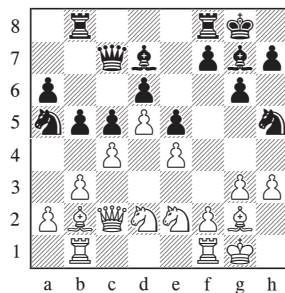
18.♖f3!N

C1) after 15...c4



16.♖e2!N

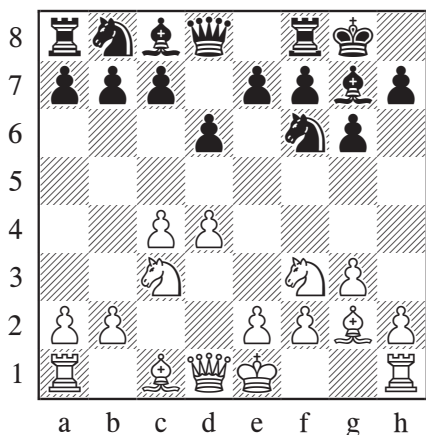
C2223) after 16...♗h5



17.g4!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0
5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3

Once again I recommend the Fianchetto System, which I believe to be an excellent practical choice against the King's Indian. Many theoretical developments have taken place since *GM 2* was published. Some of my recommendations just needed some fine-tuning in light of recent games, but in other variations I decided to steer the game in a completely different direction from before.



In this chapter we will consider a few set-ups involving an early ...♙g4 from Black. We will start with the immediate **A) 6...♙g4**, before moving on to **B) 6...c6 7.0-0 ♙g4** and finally **C) 6...♘c6 7.0-0 ♙g4**. Those who have read *GM 2* will notice that the material is organized differently in this volume. 6...c6 and 6...♘c6 are separate topics with their own branches of theory, but the common theme of the early ...♙g4 is the reason why these lines have been grouped together in one chapter.

Here is a quick summary of Black's other main options:

6...c5 7.d5 transposes to the Reluctant Benoni, as analysed in Chapter 16.

6...c6 (without an early ...♙g4) is covered in Chapters 6 and 7.

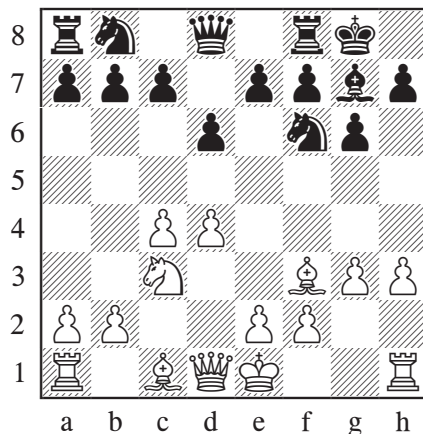
6...♘c6 (without an early ...♙g4) can be found in Chapters 8-10.

6...♘bd7 is the big main line, which is analysed in Chapters 11-15.

A) 6...♙g4

This version of the ...♙g4 plan leads to an easy advantage for White.

7.h3 ♙xf3 8.♙xf3



8...♘c6

8...c6 9.0-0 transposes to variation B below.

9.e3 ♘d7 10.♙g2 e5

10...a5 occurred in Sakaev – Mrva, Istanbul (ol) 2000. I still like my recommendation from *GM 2*: 11.h4N h5 (11...e5 12.d5 ♘b4 13.a3 ♘a6 14.♖b1 f5 15.e4± does not change the evaluation) 12.0-0 e5 13.d5 ♘b4 14.e4± and White is significantly better.

11.d5 ♘e7 12.e4 f5 13.h4!

This is the key idea for White in this line. The bishop will go to h3, where it exerts a lot of influence over the light squares. The fact that

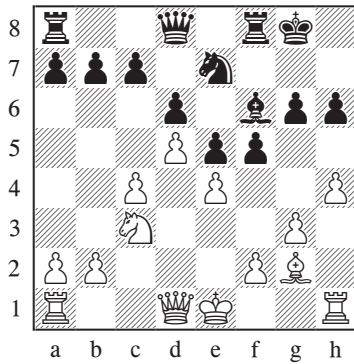
White has not yet castled makes the advance of the h-pawn even more appealing.

13...dxf6 14.g5 h6

14...f4?! 15.g3 h6 16.e6† h8 17.xf6 xf6 18.g4± left White with the vastly superior bishop in Terekhov – Dzhangirov, Kiev 2012.

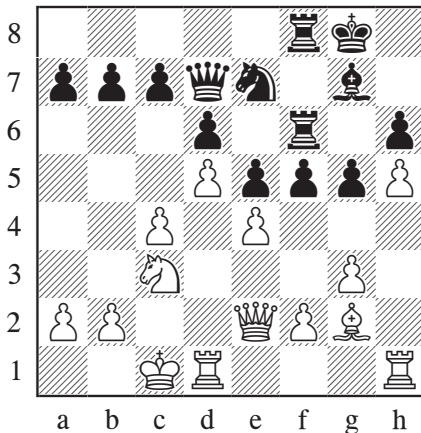
15.xf6 xf6

This is Black's latest try. An older game continued 15...xf6 and here I recommend:



16.d3!N (this is stronger than 16.h5 g5 17.hxg6 f4 when things were not so clear in Portisch – Sznepik, Amsterdam 1984) 16...h5 17.0-0-0 g7 18.b1 Followed by h3; White is better.

16.h5 g5 17.e2 d7 18.0-0-0 af8

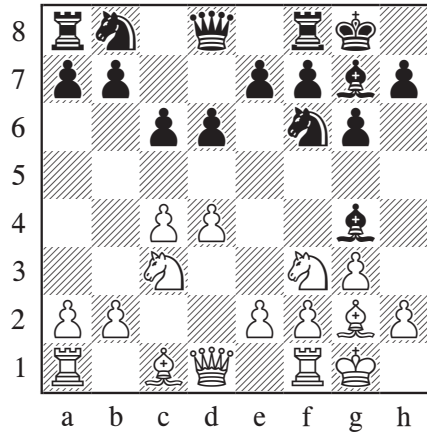


19.exf5 dxf5 20.d4 e4 21.g6f7 22.g3 a4

22.xf5 xf5 23.b1±

White had the classic positional advantage of a knight blockading on e4 versus the restricted dark-squared bishop in Greiner – Rhodes, corr. 2011.

B) 6...c6 7.0-0 g4

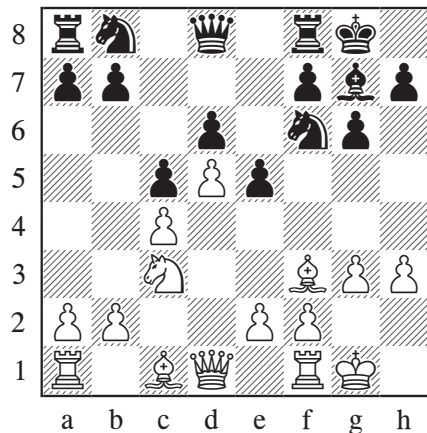


6...c6 is an important option for Black, as evidenced by the fact that the next two chapters are devoted to it. However, combining it with the early ...g4 is a rare choice in tournament practice and rightly so, as Black can hardly hope to equalize after the following exchange.

8.h3 xf3 9.xf3

We will analyse B1) 9...e5 and B2) 9...bd7.

B1) 9...e5 10.d5 c5

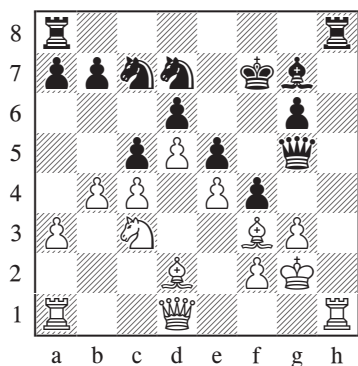


Blocking the centre does not promise Black adequate play.

11.e4 ♖e8

11...♖b7 leads to variation B2 below.

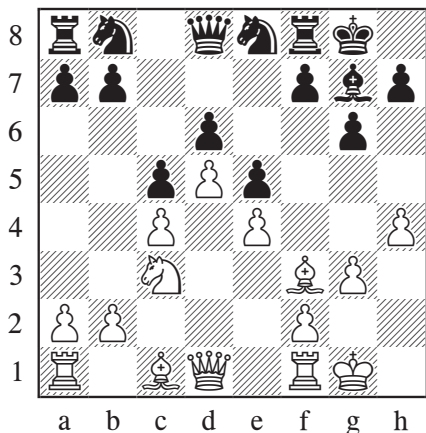
Another instructive game continued: 11...♖a6 12.a3 ♖c7 13.♕g2 ♖d7 14.h4! Again we see this thematic idea. 14...f5 15.h5 f4 16.hxg6 hxg6 17.♕d2 ♖g5 18.♖h1 ♖f7 19.b4 ♖h8



20.♖a4! ♖b6 21.♖b3 ♖xh1 22.♖xh1 ♖d7 23.♖h4!± White subsequently went wrong and lost in Tukmakov – Klaric, Zadar 1997, but at this stage of the game he was clearly better.

12.h4!

Yet again, this pawn advance is the key idea which enables White to deal with the ...f5 advance.

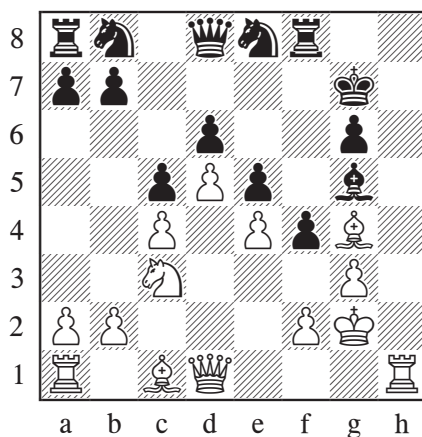


12...f5 13.h5 f4 14.hxg6 hxg6 15.♕g4

White's unopposed light-squared bishop takes up a commanding outpost.

15...♕h6 16.♖g2 ♖g7 17.♖h1 ♕g5

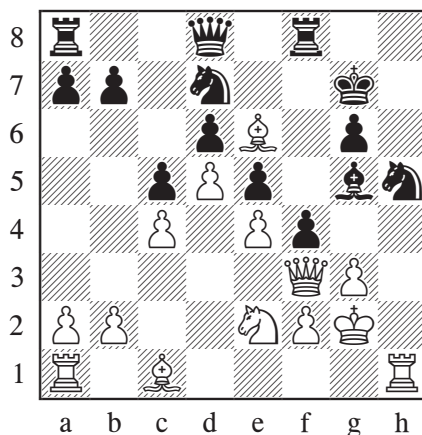
In Sturua – Bloess, Hamburg 1999, White's most accurate way forward would have been:



18.♖f3!N ♖f6

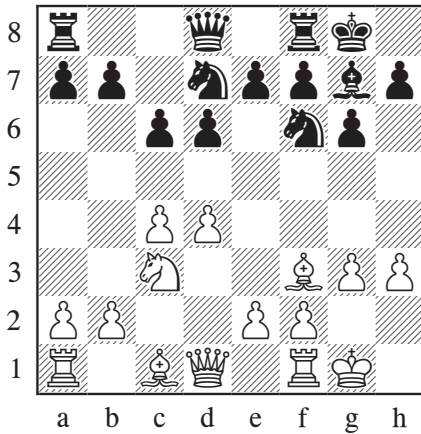
18...fxg3? is impossible in view of 19.♕xg5 ♖xg5 20.♖h7+! ♖xh7 21.♖xf8 followed by the rook's decisive arrival on h1.

19.♕e6 ♖bd7 20.♖e2 ♖h5



21.♖xh5! gxh5 22.♕f5

White has a tremendous initiative for the exchange.

B2) 9...♘bd7

This move is a bit more flexible, but the fact remains that Black will struggle to find counterplay after giving up the light-squared bishop.

10.e4

Just about any sensible move should maintain a slight edge, but taking space in the centre makes sense to me.

10...e5

This has been by far the most popular choice. I don't see much point in analysing alternatives, as the whole line is unimpressive for Black.

It is worth mentioning that 10...♞a5 leads to variation B32 of Chapter 7 on page 141.

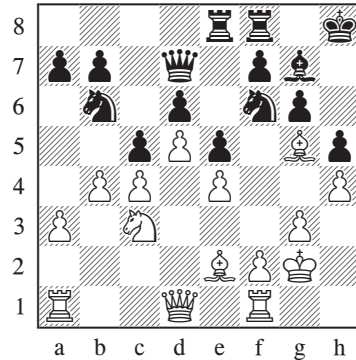
11.d5 c5

11...cxd5 12.cxd5± gives White a typical advantage for such positions. See variation B31 of Chapter 7 for an illustration of how White may develop his play from this type of situation.

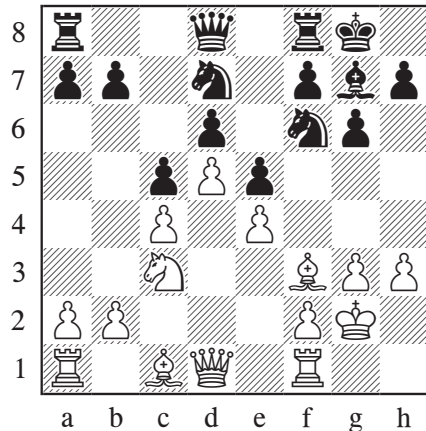
12.♖g2

As usual, the most important idea is to get ready to meet ...f5 with h4-h5. The exact move

order does not matter too much, so I will present another nice example where White built up a substantial advantage: 12.a3 ♖h8 13.h4 h5 This way Black prevents h4-h5 but more or less abandons the plan of ...f5, so White can slowly prepare his play on the queenside. 14.♗g5 ♘b6 15.♗e2 ♞d7 16.♖g2 ♞ae8 17.b4



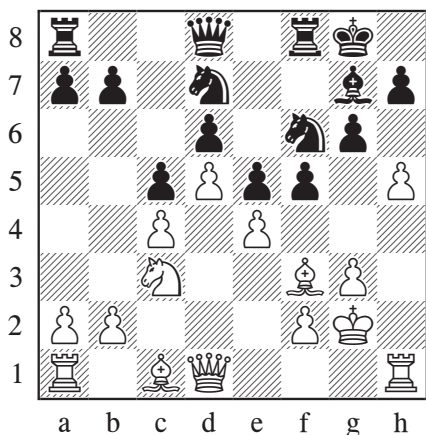
17...♘h7 18.♗e3 ♞c8 19.bxc5 dxc5 20.a4 ♘f6 21.♞b3 ♘a8 22.a5± In Rochev – Fox, Bunratty 2001, White had the bishop pair and a better structure, while Black had no counterplay whatsoever.

**12...♗e8**

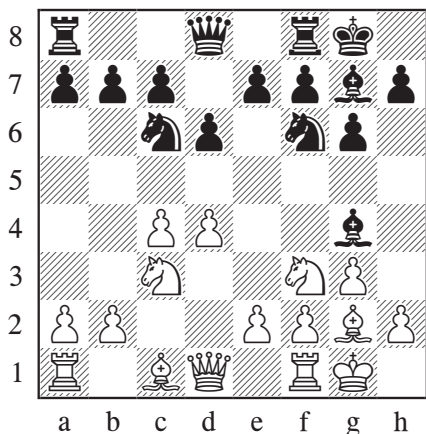
12...♖h8 13.h4 ♘g8 14.h5 ♗h6 has been tried in a more recent game, but swapping off the bad bishop does not solve Black's problems: 15.♞h1 ♗xc1 16.♞xc1 g5 17.h6 a6 18.♗g4± Leiva – Principe, Lima 2016.

13.h4 f5 14.h5 ♖ef6 15.♞h1

White's chances are already much higher. In the following game, a few more unfortunate decisions saw Black quickly fall into a hopeless situation.

**15...fxe4 16.♗xe4 ♖xe4 17.♙e4 ♔f6 18.♙e3 g5 19.h6 ♙xh6 20.♖h5**

Black resigned in Ki. Georgiev – Illi, Lugano 1986.

C) 6...♗c6 7.0-0 ♙g4

This is the most serious of the ...♙g4-themed options in the present chapter. The point is that, with the knight already on c6, Black is in a better position to attack the dark squares in the centre, so White has to think more

carefully about provoking the exchange on f3. In recent years, the present line has become a favourite weapon of a few Polish GMs.

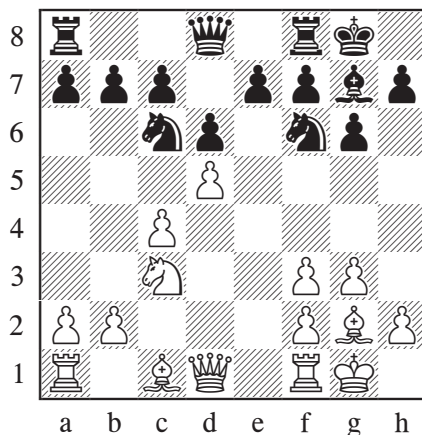
8.d5

As I mentioned in *GM 2*, 8.h3 ♙xf3 9.♙xf3 (9.exf3 d5 10.cxd5 ♗xd5 11.f4 e6 12.♗xd5 exd5 13.♙e3 ♗e7=) 9...♗d7 10.e3 e5 is not so convincing.

The text move was my previous recommendation. It has been debated in several games since *GM 2* was published, but Black has not shown any ideas to change my opinion that concrete play leads to a clear edge for White. We will analyse **C1) 8...♙xf3** followed by the main line of **C2) 8...♙a5**.

C1) 8...♙xf3 9.exf3

9.♙xf3? would be a serious error, as after 9...♗e5 White's light-squared bishop and c4-pawn are both vulnerable.

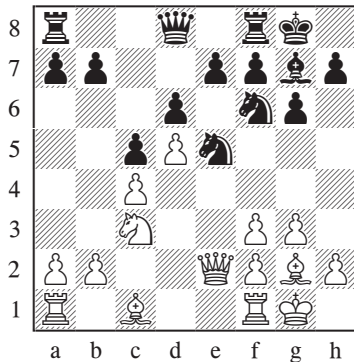


Recapturing with the pawn leads to a clearly favourable position for White. His bishop pair is the most significant feature of the position and the doubled f-pawns are no problem; on the contrary, the open e-file makes the e7-pawn a long-term target for White's heavy pieces.

9...♖a5

Other knight moves do not really change the evaluation:

9...♖e5 10.♖e2 c5 (10...♖e8 11.f4 ♖ed7 12.♙e3± is a dream position, as Black has no activity, while White can slowly improve his position all over the board. It has happened in several games and White has amassed a heavy score.)



11.f4 ♖ed7 12.♙d2 ♖e8 13.♖d3 ♖f8 14.f5± White was clearly better in M. Pavlovic – Blehm, Cappelle-la-Grande 1995.

9...♖b8

The most accurate way to meet this move is: 10.♖b3

This interferes with Black's plan of 10...c6 followed by ...cxd5, and forces him to make a mini-concession to save the b7-pawn.

10...♖c8

10...b6 looks extremely suspicious, as Black seriously weakens his light squares on the queenside. The text move is a better try but it still misplaces the queen.

11.f4 ♖a6

In the event of 11...c6 12.♖e1 ♖e8 13.♙e3 cxd5 14.cxd5 ♖a6 15.♖ac1 the poor placement of Black's queen becomes apparent. 15...♖d7 16.♖b5±

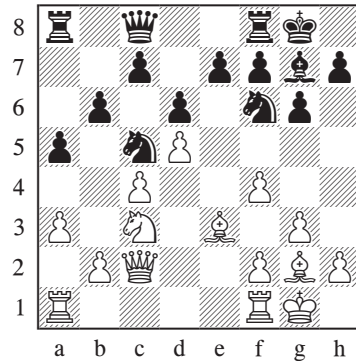
12.♙e3 b6

12...♖g4 runs into 13.♙h3! and, once again, Black's queen proves to be badly placed.

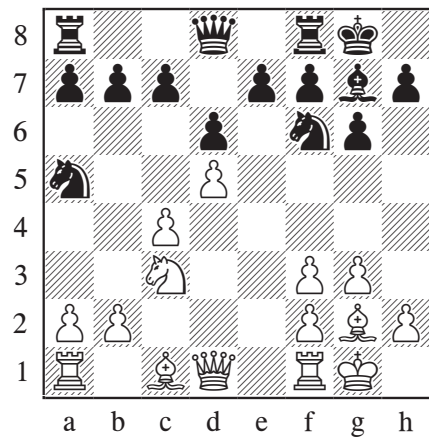
13.a3 ♖c5 14.♖c2 a5

14...♖g4 15.♖ae1± is also great for White.

We have been following Izeta Txabarri – Fernandez Ramos, Leon 1998. White's superiority is obvious, and he could have increased it with:

**15.b4N ♖a6 16.♖ab1**

With a huge positional advantage.

**10.♖d3**

10.♖e2 is also good.

10...c5

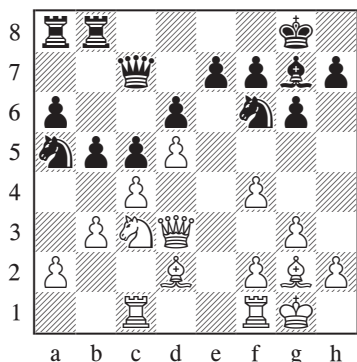
10...♖d7 11.b3 doesn't change much.

11.♙d2

Developing another piece. White's usual plan from here is to play b2-b3 and ♖d1-e3 to bolster his queenside.

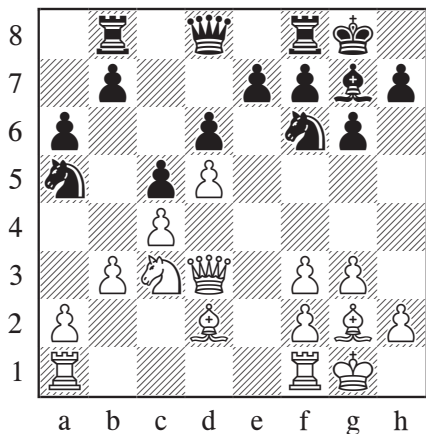
11...a6 12.b3 ♖b8

I also considered: 12...♞c7 13.f4 ♖fb8 14.♞ac1 b5



15.♘d1! White carries out his main positional idea in this line. 15...bxc4 16.bxc4± White was clearly better in Krogius – Kraidman, Bad Liebenzell 1996. Black can hardly create counterplay on the queenside because of the misplaced knight on a5, while White can slowly improve his position on the kingside and in the centre.

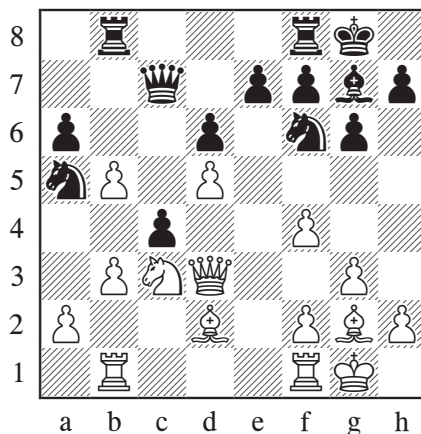
The text move looks more natural but White has more than one way to keep a clear advantage.

**13.f4!?**

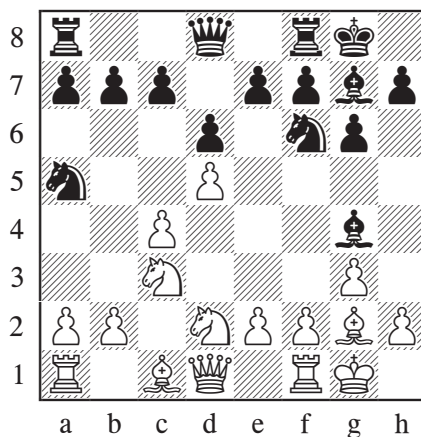
13.♞ac1 b5 14.♘d1± is a good alternative, keeping everything under control.

13...♞c7 14.♞ab1 b5 15.cxb5 c4

This occurred in Ismagambetov – Galappaththi, Istanbul (ol) 2012, when White should have played:



16.♞e2!N cxb3 17.axb3 axb5 18.♘a2!± With an obvious advantage.

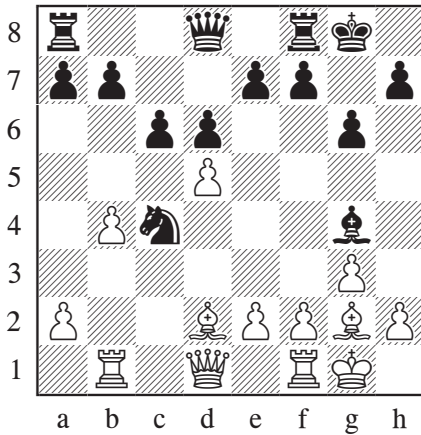
C2) 8...♘a5 9.♘d2

We will consider the dubious C21) 9...c6?! followed by the correct C22) 9...c5.

C21) 9...c6?!

This is not really playable for Black, in view of the following pretty forced sequence.

10.b4 ♘xd5 11.cxd5 ♙xc3 12.♖b1 ♙xd2
13.♙xd2 ♘c4



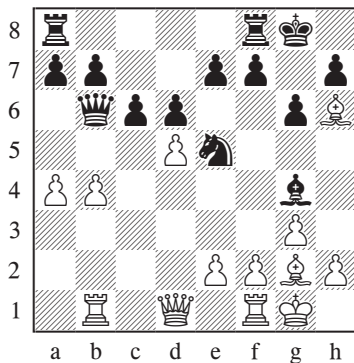
14.♙h6!

In view of the threat of ♖d4, Black has to give up the exchange for inadequate compensation.

14...♘e5

This is Black's best try, which I faced in the Dresden Olympiad in 2008.

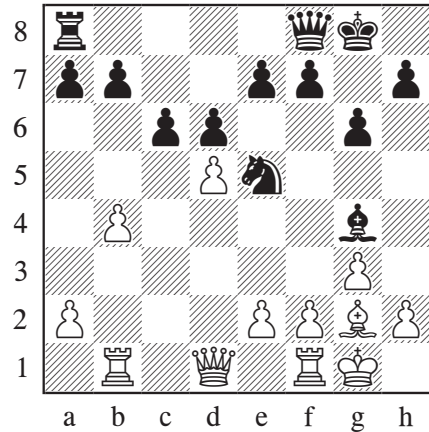
14...♖b6 occurred in Blagojevic – Mujic, Tuzla 1990, when 15.a4!N would have been close to winning for White, for instance: 15...♘e5 (or 15...♖fc8 16.a5 ♖b5 17.♖d4 ♘e5 18.f4+–)



16.h3 ♙c8 17.♙xf8 ♘xf8 18.a5± Black clearly does not have enough for the exchange.

15.♙xf8 ♖xf8

In Avrukh – Ezat, Dresden (ol) 2008, I went wrong, despite having a choice between two excellent options:

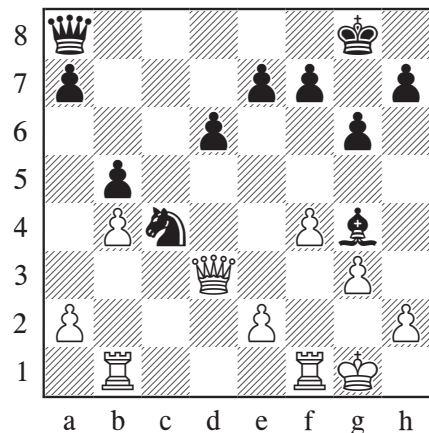


16.f4!N

The simple 16.dxc6N bxc6 17.♖c1 also yields a clear advantage.

16...♘c4 17.♖d3 cxd5 18.♙xd5 b5 19.♙xa8 ♖xa8

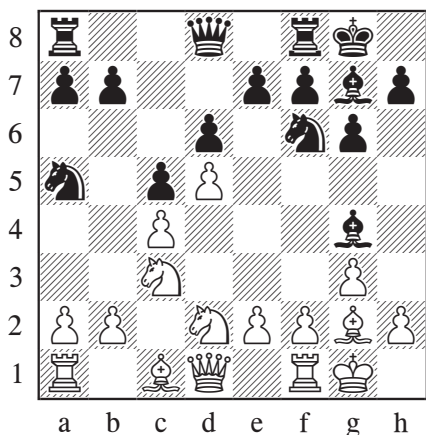
During the game I was afraid to go for this position, but there should be nothing to fear after:



20.e4 ♖c6 21.♖d4!±

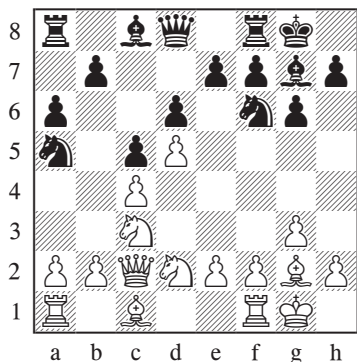
White is much better.

C22) 9...c5



10. ♖c2

I find this to be more flexible than 10.h3, which is quite popular as well. The reason why I decided to recommend this line is best explained by comparing it to the main line of the Yugoslav Variation, which occurs after: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d6 5.♘c3 0-0 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 a6 8.d5 ♘a5 9.♘d2 c5 10.♖c2



The difference looks rather symbolic at first sight, as in our line we have Black's light-squared bishop on g4, whereas in the Yugoslav Variation Black has played ...a6 instead. However, it is important to appreciate that the offside knight on a5 makes the Yugoslav Variation slightly dubious for Black from a positional point of view, but in concrete terms Black can obtain

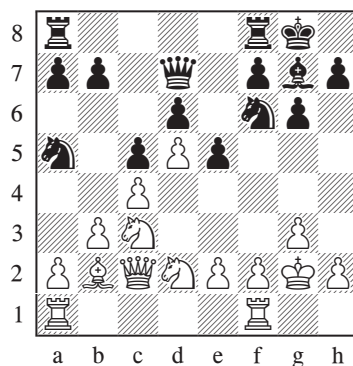
just enough counterplay by means of 10...♖b8 11.b3 b5 12.♙b2 bxc4 13.bxc4 ♙h6, followed by a lot of forcing variations. In our position Black needs to spend one more tempo to obtain his typical play on the queenside, which makes a crucial difference in such a double-edged system. White's ideas include consolidating the queenside, beginning with b2-b3 and ♙b2, and playing in the centre with ♖ae1, e2-e4, and f2-f4. If Black plays ...e5, we will often react with dxe6, meeting ...fxe6 with ♘ce4 – although in certain cases we will leave the pawn where it stands and play the blocked position.

C221) 10...e5 is worth considering, but **C222) 10...a6** is the main plan for Black.

Black has also tried trading the light-squared bishops:

10...♖d7 11.b3 ♙h3 12.♙b2 ♙xg2 13.♔xg2

In all three games, Black continued: 13...e5



14.dxe6!

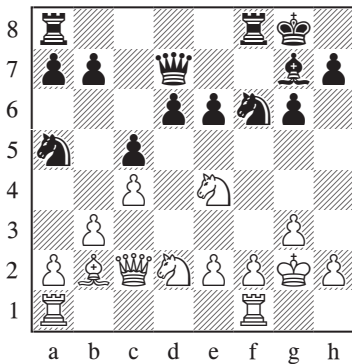
Taking en passant is the right decision here, as Black's centre is loose.

14...fxe6

14...♖xe6? is worse due to 15.♘d5! and it's bad news for Black, since the knight is untouchable: 15...♘xd5? 16.cxd5 ♖xd5† 17.e4 ♖e6 18.♙xg7 ♔xg7 19.♖c3†+ followed by 20.♖xa5.

15. ♖ce4

The logical follow-up, as mentioned earlier.



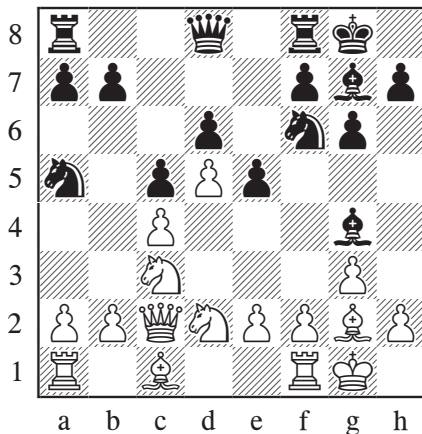
15... ♖e8

I also examined the following nice line:
 15... ♖c6 16. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 17. ♖xf6† ♖xf6
 18. ♖e4 ♖f7 19. ♖ad1 ♖d4 20. ♖d3
 ♖c6 21. b4!± with the better game for
 White.

16. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 17. ♖ad1 ♖c6 18. f4 b6 19. ♖f3

White maintained a solid positional pull in
 Sebenik – Markovic, Baku (ol) 2016.

C221) 10...e5



11. b3!

This time White should refrain from
 capturing en passant, as 11. dxe6 ♖xe6 12. b3
 d5= is fine for Black.

With the text move, White seems to accept a
 blocked centre, but he will soon be ready to
 open things up with f2-f4, after which Black's
 misplaced knight on a5 will be a telling factor.

11... ♖d7

Another option is:

11... a6

Intending a queenside expansion. Here I
 developed the following line for White:

12. ♖b2 b5 13. ♖ae1

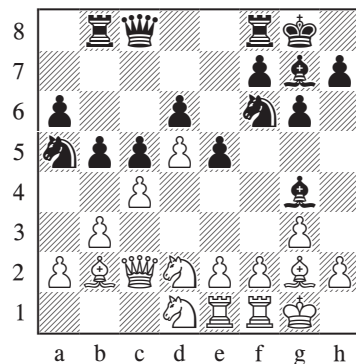
White's general plan includes e2-e4, ♖d1-e3
 and eventually f2-f4, with a massive advance
 in the centre.

13... ♖b8

13... ♖d7 14. e4 ♖g4 15. f3 ♖h6 occurred in
 Tregubov – Gavrilov, St Petersburg 1994,
 when White should have followed the
 aforementioned plan with 16. ♖d1!N. In the
 event of 16... f5 17. f4 White is much better
 prepared for the central confrontation, once
 again due to Black's poorly placed knight on
 a5.

14. ♖d1 ♖c8

This position was reached in Stippekoehl –
 Volkmer, Germany 1993. Here White could
 have initiated favourable complications by
 means of:



15. f4N! exf4

15... ♖e8 16. fxe5 dxe5 17. ♖f2 ♖b7 18. ♖d3
 also leaves White positionally better.

16. ♖xf4!

16.gxf4 is also promising but the text move is stronger.

16...♖h5 17.♙xg7 ♜xg7

Recapturing with the king would allow

18.♞c3†, winning the knight on a5.

18.♗e4

18.♞c3!? b4 19.♞b2± is also excellent.

18...f5

In the event of 18...♗e8 19.♞d2 ♜b7

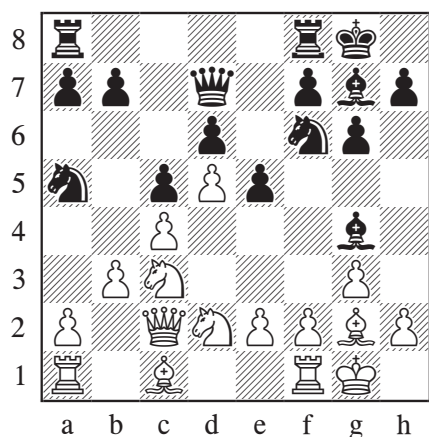
20.♞ef1± Black's position remains difficult.

19.♗xd6 ♞d7 20.♞d2 b4

After 20...♞xd6 21.♞xa5 Black has no compensation for the missing pawn.

21.♞xg4! fxe4 22.♗e4 ♗b7 23.♗df2±

White has fantastic compensation for the exchange.



12.♙b2 ♙h3 13.♗ce4!

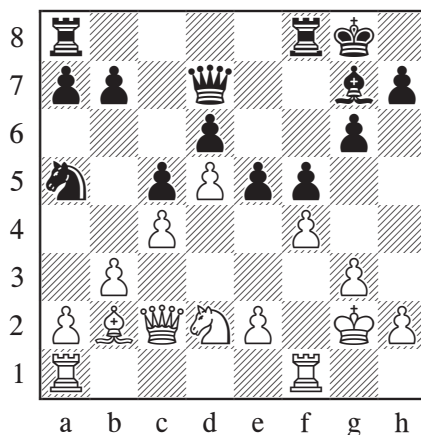
A surprisingly strong idea. White is ready to follow up with f2-f4, and ...f5 is not an acceptable reply due to the ♗g5-e6 invasion.

13...♙xg2

13...♗xe4 is strongly met by 14.♙xh3! ♞xh3 15.♗xe4 ♞d7 16.f4± with an obvious advantage.

14.♗xf6† ♙xf6 15.♗xg2 ♙g7 16.f4 f5

All this happened in Webb – Nicholson, Morecambe 1975. Now a clear improvement would be:



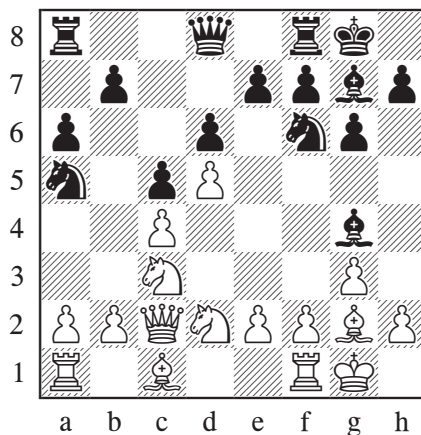
17.fxe5 N dx e5

17...♙xe5 18.♙xe5 dxe5 19.e4 is also great for White, for the same reason as in the main line.

18.e4 b6 19.exf5 gxf5 20.♗f3 ♞ae8 21.♞ae1 e4 22.♗g5±

White is clearly better, mainly due to Black's misplaced knight.

C222) 10...a6

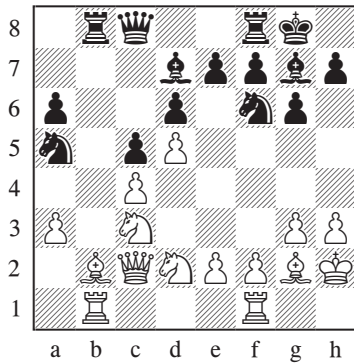


This is a more thematic choice. Black plays in the spirit of the Yugoslav Variation but, as I explained earlier, the lost tempo will count against him.

11.h3 ♙d7 12.b3 b5 13.♙b2 ♞b8 14.♞ab1

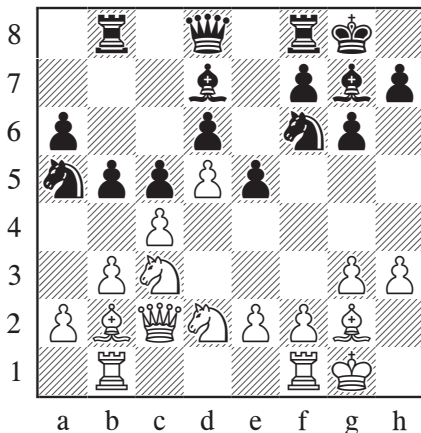
White has developed his remaining pieces and consolidated his queenside. I examined three main tries for Black: **C2221) 14...e5**, **C2222) 14...bxc4** and **C2223) 14...c7**.

14...c8 has been played in a few games since *GM 2* was published, but Black falls short of equality after: 15.♖h2 bxc4 16.bxc4 ♖b4 17.a3 ♖b8 (17...♖b7 occurred in Banucz – B. Socko, Warsaw 2011. Here I like 18.♙a1!N ♖c7 19.♖xb7 ♜xb7 20.♞ce4! ♞xe4 21.♞xe4 and White has a pleasant edge.)



18.e4! White's play in the following game was quite instructive: 18...♞c7 19.♞e2 e6 20.♙c3 exd5 21.cxd5 ♖fc8 22.f4± Manaenkov – Bohak, corr. 2012.

C2221) 14...e5

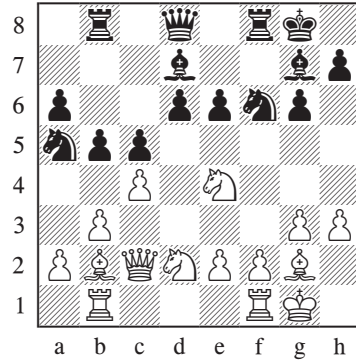


This time, taking en passant works well.

15.dxe6! ♙xe6

I also checked the other recapture: 15...fxe6 16.♞ce4

Black's centre is pretty unstable.

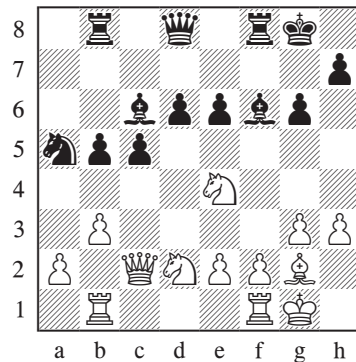


16...♙c6

16...♞xe4 occurred in Unzicker – Kavalek, Lugano 1970. Here I propose 17.♙xg7N ♙xg7 18.♞xe4 ♙c6 19.♖fd1 ♙xe4 20.♙xe4 and Black still struggles due to his misplaced knight.

17.cxb5 axb5 18.♙xf6 ♙xf6

I found a couple of games in which 19.♖bd1 was played, but I believe White has a more interesting idea at his disposal:



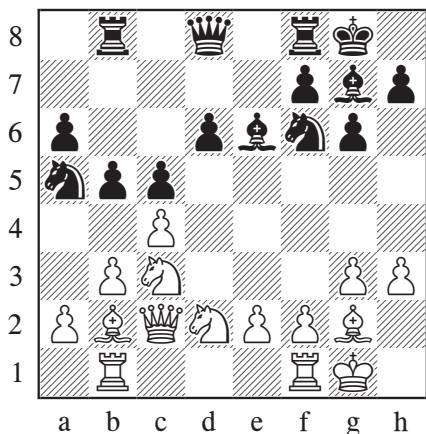
19.b4!±N

The following sequence looks forced. 19...cxb4 20.♞xf6† ♖xf6 21.♙xc6 ♖fc8 22.♞d3 ♖xc6

22...♘xc6 23.♙xd6 and White keeps an edge due to his better structure.

23.♞xb4

White keeps some pressure.

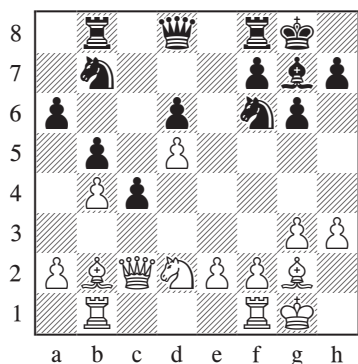


16.♘d5 bxc4

Black also has a hard time after other moves:

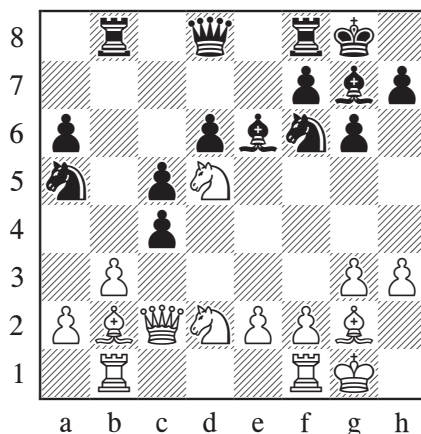
16...♘xd5 17.cxd5 ♙f5 18.e4 ♘d7 19.♙xg7 ♘xg7 20.f4 f6 21.♞be1± White was much better due to his strong centre and Black's offside knight in Paunovic – Marjanovic, Tivat 1995.

16...♙xd5 17.cxd5 c4 18.b4 ♘b7 is hardly an improvement.



In Ermeni – Asmar, Baku (ol) 2016, the simple 19.a4!N± would have maintained White's clear advantage.

The text move was played in I. Almasi – Zsinka, Hungary 2000, and now White could have kept control with a surprising exchange:



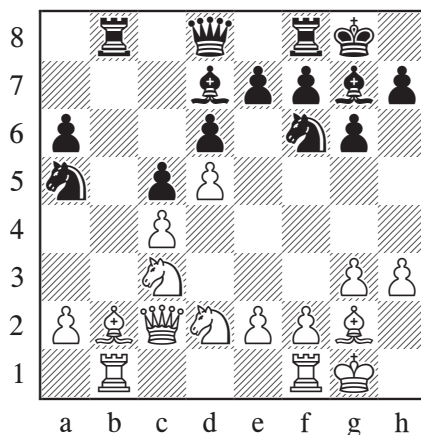
17.♙xf6!N ♙xf6 18.bxc4

The loss of the dark-squared bishop is irrelevant, for instance:

18...♙g7 19.♞xb8 ♙xb8 20.♞b1 ♙d8 21.♙a4 ♙d7 22.♙a3±

White keeps a solid positional advantage.

C2222) 14...bxc4 15.bxc4



15...e5

I checked three other possibilities:

15...♖c7 16.e4 is analysed on the next page: see 15...bxc4 16.bxc4 in the notes to variation C2223 below.

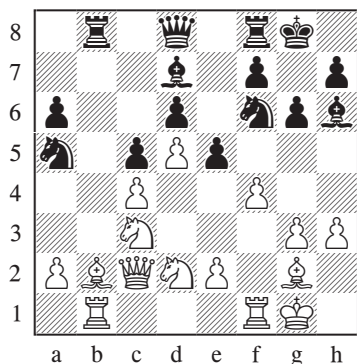
15...e6 16.♕a1! is a nice positional move. 16...exd5 17.♖xb8 ♖xb8 18.♘d5! ♘xd5 19.♙xg7 ♙xg7 20.♙xd5 The simplifications worked in White's favour in I. Horvath – Licina, Budapest 1994.

15...♙h6

This is a thematic idea in the Yugoslav Variation but it doesn't work as well for Black here due to the delay in organizing his queenside counterplay. This has given White time to place his rook on b1, where it protects the dark-squared bishop and nullifies the potential exchange sacrifice on b2.

16.f4 e5

16...♘h5 17.♙h2 e5 is another important possibility. Black appears quite active, but in reality he has only weakened his position. 18.dxe6! fxe6 19.♘ce4 ♖e7 occurred in Velikov – Lenz, Graz 1987, and now the simple 20.♖d3!N ♘b7 21.♙c3 ♙c6 22.♖b6+– would have given White an overwhelming positional advantage.



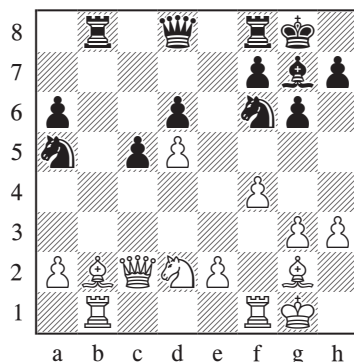
17.dxe6 ♙xe6

17...fxe6! 18.♘ce4 gave White an even bigger advantage in Masse – Song, Montreal 2012.

18.♘d5!

The key move.

18...♙xd5 19.cxd5 ♙g7



In Davies – Rayner, Wrexham 1994, White should have continued:

20.♙c3!N±

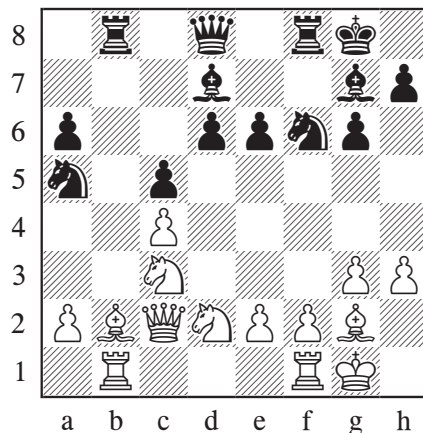
With a clear positional superiority. As is so often the case in these lines, the misplaced knight on a5 is key.

16.dxe6

Once again, opening the centre is the best idea.

16...fxe6

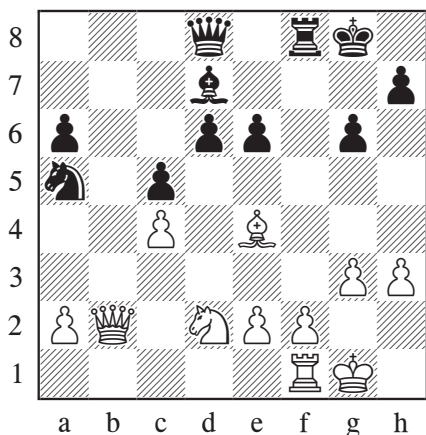
16...♙xe6, as occurred in Johansson – Moen, Gausdal 1986, should have run into the thematic 17.♘d5!N with much the better game for White.



17. ♖ce4! ♜xb2 18. ♜xb2 ♜xe4 19. ♙xe4

19. ♜xe4!?N would have been strong as well; for example, 19... ♙xb2 (or 19... ♜xc4 20. ♜b3 ♜a5 21. ♜d3±) 20. ♜xb2 ♜xc4 21. ♜c3 d5 22. ♜xc5± with a big advantage.

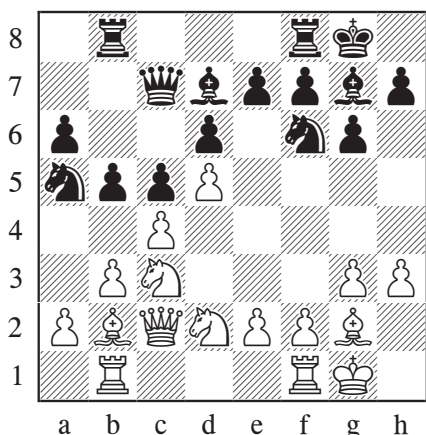
19... ♙xb2 20. ♜xb2



20... ♙c6 21. ♙xc6 ♜xc6 22. ♜b7 ♜d4 23. e3 ♜f5 24. ♜e4±

White kept a solid advantage due to his active queen and Black's pawn weaknesses in Raupp – Kukofka, Kirchheim 1982.

C2223) 14... ♜c7



This time Black improves his queen without doing anything too committal. White should respond by gaining space in the centre.

15.e4 e5

I considered two other main possibilities.

15...bxc4 16.bxc4 ♜b4

16...e5 17. ♜e2 transpose to the note on 16...bxc4 in the main line below.

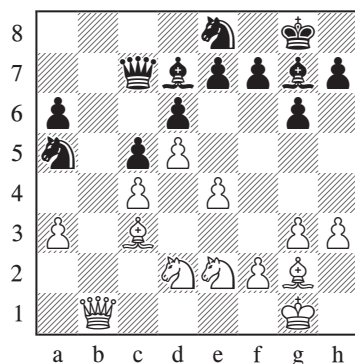
The text move has been tried a few times since *GM 2* was published, but it doesn't impress me.

17.a3 ♜b6

A later game saw 17... ♜b7 18. ♜e2 ♜fb8 19. ♙c3 ♜e8 20. ♜xb7 ♜xb7 when, in Rohan – Lin Chen, Olongapo City 2015, White should have played 21. f4!N with an obvious advantage.

18. ♜e2 ♜fb8 19. ♙c3 ♜xb1 20. ♜xb1 ♜xb1† 21. ♜xb1 ♜e8

Hera – Miton, Gorzow Wielkopolski 2014. Despite trading both sets of rooks, White remains better after:



22. ♙xg7N ♜xg7 23.f4

White has a useful space advantage and the knight on a5 is still misplaced.

15...e6 16. ♜d1!

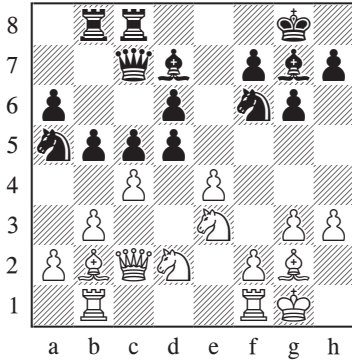
This time White's knight is heading to e3. For the time being, there is no need to spend time on f2-f4.

16... ♜fc8

Another good example is: 16...bxc4 17.bxc4 exd5 18.cxd5 ♜fe8 19. ♜e3 ♜b4 20. ♙c3 ♙a4 21. ♜c1 ♜xb1 22. ♜xb1 ♜d7 23. ♙a1! White

had an almost decisive positional advantage in Stangl – A. Gretarsson, Reykjavik 1993.

17.♖e3 exd5



18.cxd5!N

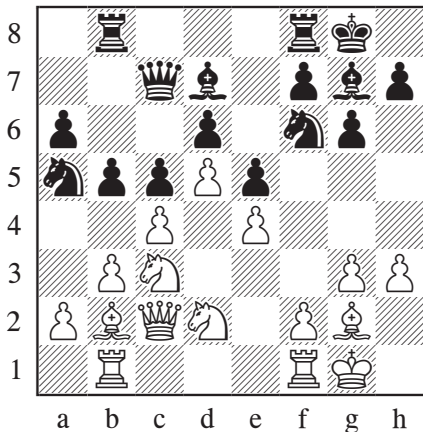
18.exd5 was also clearly better for White in Tkachiev – Krstic, Medulin 2002, but the pawn structure after the text move looks even more favourable for him.

18...c4

This seems like the only idea which should be of any concern.

19.♖fc1! ♖d8 20.bxc4 ♖xc4 21.♖exc4 bxc4 22.♖c3

White keeps a solid positional pull.



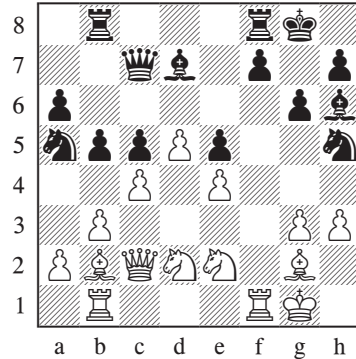
16.♖e2!

16.dxe6 fxe6 is not so great here, as the usual ♖ce4 follow-up is not available. Instead we should prepare f2-f4.

16...♖h5

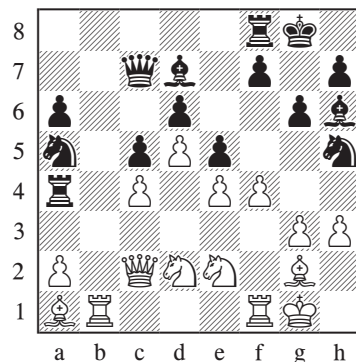
I checked two other options:

16...♖h6 17.f4 ♖h5 occurred in Andrejic – M. Markovic, Valjevo 2016, and now White has a surprising tactical idea: 18.fxe5N dxe5

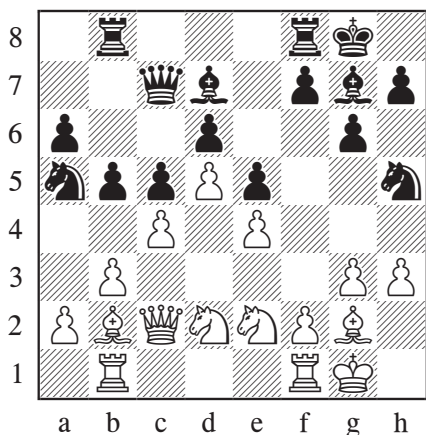


19.g4! ♖f4 (or 19...♖g7 20.♖f3 ♖e3† 21.♖h1 f6 22.♖c3 ♖h6 23.g5! and White crashes through) 20.♖xf4 ♖xf4 21.♖xf4 exf4 22.e5+– With a decisive initiative.

16...bxc4 17.bxc4 ♖b4 18.♖c3 ♖a4 19.♖a1 ♖h6 20.f4 ♖h5 This happened in Wiewiora – Kanarek, Krakow 2013, and now White missed a strong idea:



21.♖f3!N ♖b4 (21...f6 is met by 22.a3± when Black's rook is in danger) 22.♖bf1 f6 23.♖a3 White has a great position.

**17.g4!N**

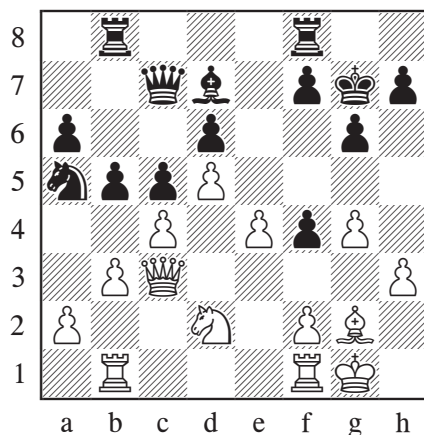
An important improvement over my recommendation from *GM 2*.

17.f4 is the obvious move, but I found an interesting resource for Black. 17...bxc4 18.bxc4 ♖xb2 19.♖xb2 exf4 20.gxf4 Now in I. Mason – R. Cooper, corr. 2011, Black regaining the exchange by taking on b2, leading to some advantage for White, just as I analysed in *GM 2*. However, when I checked this line again I realized that Black can improve with 20...f5!N, with interesting compensation.

17...♟f4

Maybe 17...♟f6 is the lesser evil, but it's a clear concession and White is obviously better after 18.♟g3.

18.♟xf4 exf4 19.♟xg7 ♟xg7 20.♟c3†

**20...f6**

20...♟g8?! 21.♟f6 wins material.

21.g5

White keeps some initiative; the pressure on the f6-pawn is annoying for Black, and the knight on a5 remains a problem as always.

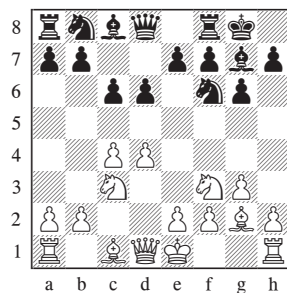
Conclusion

Both 6...♟g4 and 6...c6 7.0–0 ♟g4 can be met by pretty much the same formula: h2-h3, followed by recapturing on f3 with the bishop, with a slight edge. In the event of a blocked pawn centre after ...e5 and d4-d5, the key concept to remember is utilizing the h4-h5 advance to counter Black's intended ...f5.

6...♟c6 7.0–0 ♟g4 is a different matter, as the immediate h2-h3 does not work so well with the knight already on c6. Instead I recommend 8.d5 ♟a5 9.♟d2, leading to a version of the Yugoslav Variation where ...♟g4 is not the most useful way for Black to spend a tempo. This tips the balance somewhat in White's favour, although the game remains sharp and it is worth familiarizing yourself with the typical plans and manoeuvres, as well as a few concrete lines.

Chapter 6

King's Indian



6...c6

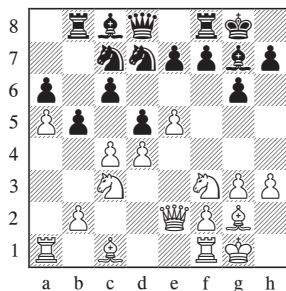
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 c6

7.0-0

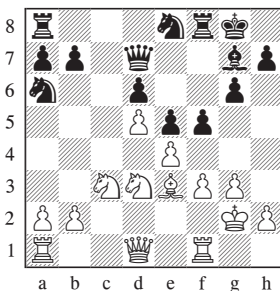
A) 7...♗e6	100
B) 7...a6 8.e4	101
B1) 8...b5	102
B2) 8...♗g4	106
C) 7...♘a6 8.e4	108
C1) 8...♘c7	109
C2) 8...e5	110
D) 7...♗f5 8.♘e1	114
D1) 8...d5	114
D2) 8...♖c8	116
D3) 8...e5	117
D4) 8...♗e6	122

C1) after 13...b5



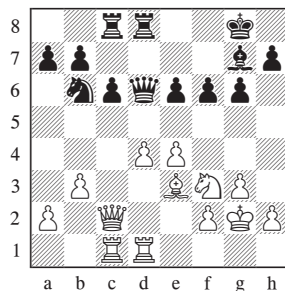
14.c5!N

D3) note to 10...♘a6



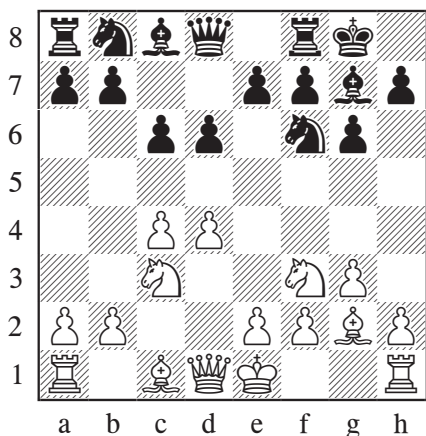
16.♖a4!N

D4) note to 12...♘a6



23.a4!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3
d6 6.♘f3 c6



This popular move leads to a heavy blast of theory, with many possible set-ups and transpositions. My analysis from *GM 2* has not only been improved and updated, but also reorganized into a few chapters.

7.0-0

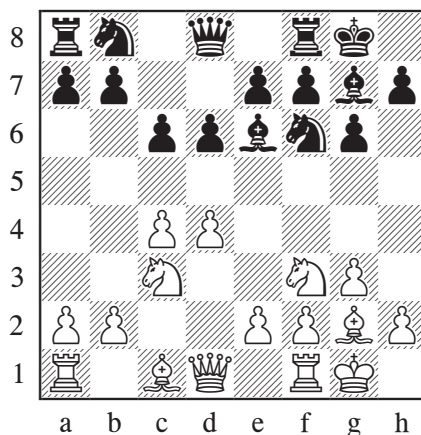
This will be our tabiya. Black has a wide choice, but in general I regard White's chances as slightly better. In this chapter we will analyse A) 7...♙e6, B) 7...a6, C) 7...♘a6 and D) 7...♙f5.

7...♙g4 was covered in variation B of the previous chapter.

7...♞b6 and 7...♞a5 will be covered in the next chapter.

7...♘bd7 8.e4 hardly leaves Black with anything better than 8...e5, leading to the main lines of the 6...♘bd7 complex, which will be examined in Chapters 13-15.

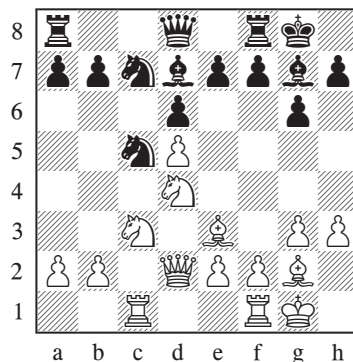
A) 7...♙e6



This is a thematic idea in the 6...c6 set-up (see variation D4 at the end of this chapter for another example of it) but I don't think it makes much sense in this concrete situation. White obtains the better chances with simple play.

8.d5 cxd5 9.cxd5 ♙d7

9...♙g4 is hardly an improvement: 10.♘d4 ♘a6 11.h3 ♙d7 12.♙e3 ♘e8 (12...♘c5 occurred in Krueger – Tardel, Germany 2002, and now 13.b4N ♘a6 14.♞b3 would have secured White's advantage, thanks to his space superiority) 13.♞c1 ♘ec7 14.♞d2 ♘c5 In Morovic Fernandez – Almeida Quintana, Havana 2012, White should have played:

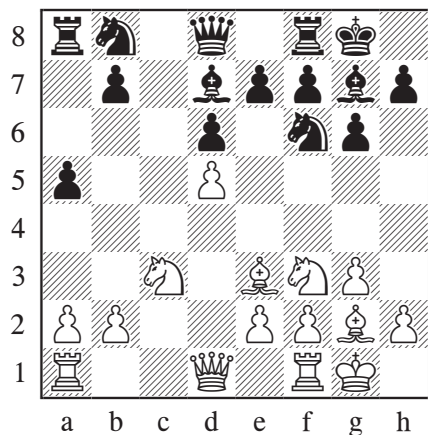


15.b4N ♘5a6 16.a3± With a suffocating space advantage.

10.♙e3 a5

Also after 10...♘a6 11.♙d4 ♚a5 12.e4 White has clearly better chances.

The text move was played in Blagojevic – Sorgic, Belgrade 2009. Black takes some space on the queenside but remains clearly worse after:

**11.h3N**

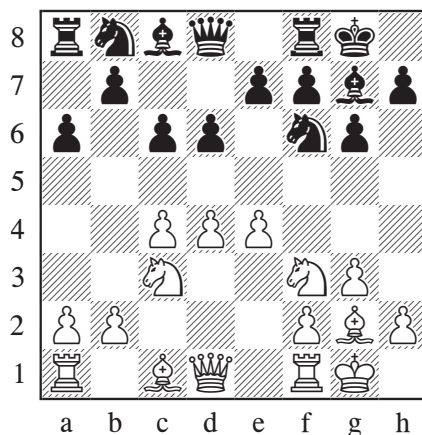
Preventing any ...♘g4 ideas, thus stabilizing the bishop on e3.

11...♘a6 12.♘d4 ♘c5 13.♙d2±

White has a considerable space advantage and a potentially useful outpost on b5. An obvious plan for the next few moves will be to prepare a pawn advance to b4 to evict the knight from c5.

B) 7...a6

This has been tested in hundreds of games, but it has never become popular at a high level. Only a few GMs, such as Kozul, Krum Georgiev and Vladimir Onischuk, have played it with much regularity.

8.e4

Gaining space in the centre is natural and strong. In *GM 2 I* only covered the direct **B1) 8...b5**, but it is also worth analysing the more subtle **B2) 8...♙g4**.

8...♘fd7

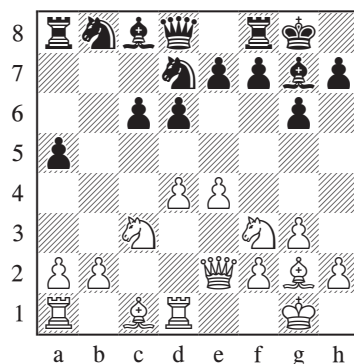
This move has also been tried by some strong players, but I find it too passive.

9.♙e2 b5

9...e5 10.♙g5 ♚c7 occurred in Landenbergue – Ballmann, Arosa 1990, and now the natural 11.d5!N would have crystallized White's advantage.

10.♙d1

Black's set-up does not make much sense to me. Here is a good model game:

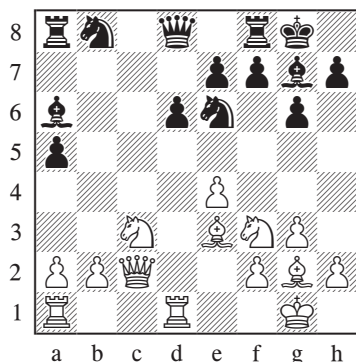
10...bxc4 11.♙xc4 a5 12.♙e2**12...♙a6**

Even worse is 12...e6 13.♗g5 f6 14.♗f4 ♖b6, as occurred in Jukic – Zakic, Kladovo 1991, when the simple 15.♖ac1N± would have given White a large advantage.

13.♖c2 c5 14.dxc5!

The arising pawn structure would be decent for Black, if not for White's next idea.

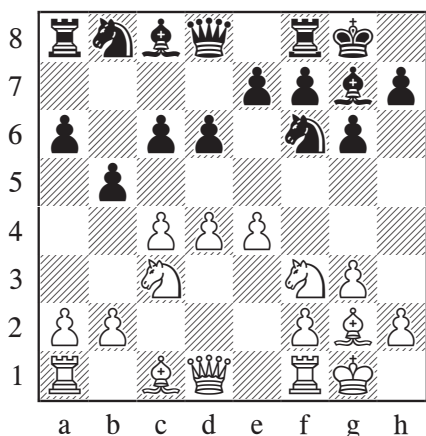
14...♗xc5 15.♗e3 ♖e6



16.e5! ♖c6 17.exd6 exd6 18.♖d2±

White obtained a clear positional plus in Sturua – Kr. Georgiev, Katerini 1992.

B1) 8...b5



9.e5

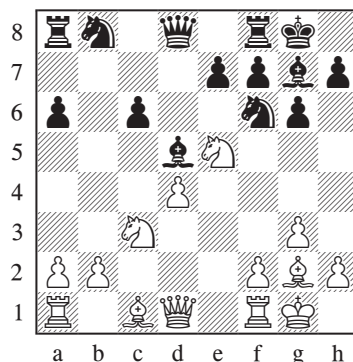
White carries out his plan, gaining space in the centre while chasing the knight away.

9...♗e8

This seems like Black's best try. The alternatives are easy to handle:

9...dxe5 10.♗xe5 bxc4 11.♗xc4 ♗e6 12.♗e5 ♗d5

Now White gets a clear advantage with:



13.♗xd5!N

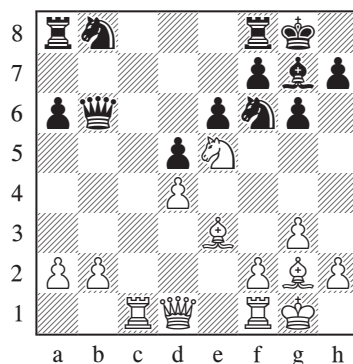
Black obtained reasonable play after 13.♖a4 ♗xg2 14.♗xg2 ♗d5 in Mednis – Pacis, Manila 1991.

13...cxd5 14.♗e3

Black has repaired his pawn structure, but White keeps the upper hand thanks to his bishop pair and active pieces. My analysis continues as follows:

14...e6 15.♖c1 ♖b6

White also remains in control after 15...♗bd7 16.♖a4 ♗xe5 17.dxe5 ♗d7 18.f4 ♗b6 19.♖d4 ♗c4 20.♗f2 followed by b2-b3.

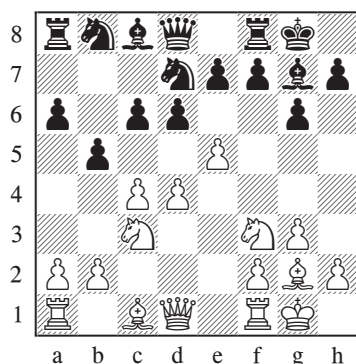


16. ♖c2 ♜bd7 17. ♖c6

White has much better chances.

9... ♜fd7

This seemingly natural retreat actually makes Black's position harder than in the main line.

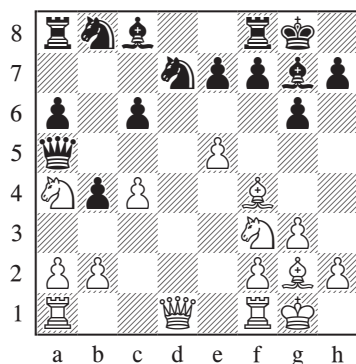


10. ♗f4 b4

10... ♜b6 occurred in Kirk – P. Andreev, Brighton 2013, when 11. c5! N dxc5 12. dxc5 ♖xd1 13. ♖fxd1 ♜6d7 14. ♜e4 would have put Black under serious pressure.

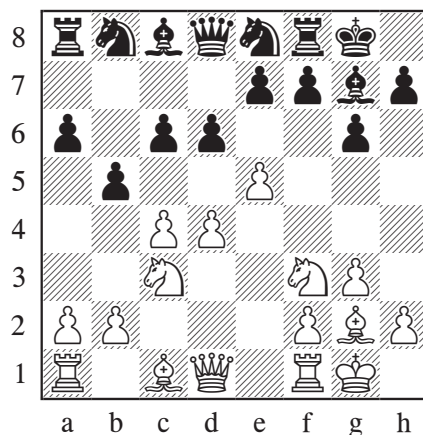
10... dxe5 11. dxe5 does not much change much. For instance, 11... ♜c5 12. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 13. ♖fd1 ♖e8 14. ♜d4 is highly unpleasant for Black.

11. ♜a4 dxe5 12. dxe5 ♖a5



13. ♖e1 ♜b6 14. ♜xb6 ♖xb6 15. ♗e3±

White had a clear positional plus in Kveinys – Edvardsson, Reykjavik 2007.



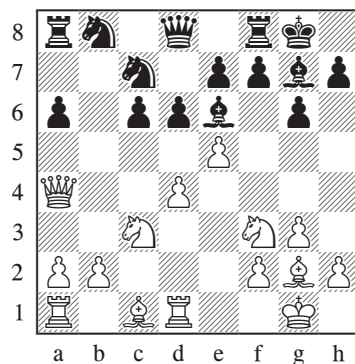
10. ♖e2 bxc4

Once again, Black can try different moves but he remains worse in all variations.

10... ♜c7 11. ♖d1 bxc4

11... d5 12. b3 h6 occurred in Spasov – Krnic, Vrnjacka Banja 1984, and now 13. ♗e3N ♗e6 14. ♖d2 ♜h7 15. cxd5 ♜xd5 16. ♖ac1 would have offered White a clear positional advantage.

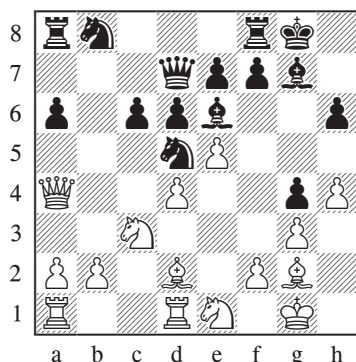
12. ♖xc4 ♗e6 13. ♖a4



13... h6 14. ♗f4 g5 15. ♗d2 ♖d7 16. h4 g4 17. ♜e1 ♜d5

17... ♖a7 18. ♜d3± and White was much better in Zhidkov – S. Farago, Budapest 2003.

The text move is a relatively recent try, but it wasn't much help to Black in the following game.



18. ♖d3 a5 19. ♖ac1 ♜b6 20. ♗c2 ♕f5 21. ♕f4 d5 22. b3±

Maack – Debnar, corr. 2011.

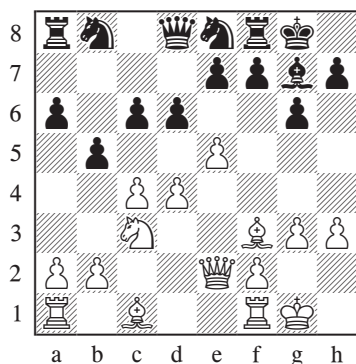
Here is another excellent example of White's chances:

10... ♗g4 11. h3

11. ♕f4 ♜c7 led to an eventual win for White in Cmilyte – M. Socko, Germany 2012, but I find this continuation less convincing than our main line.

11... ♗xf3 12. ♗xf3

White's strong light-squared bishop gives him clearly better chances, even after sacrificing a pawn, as in the model game we are following.

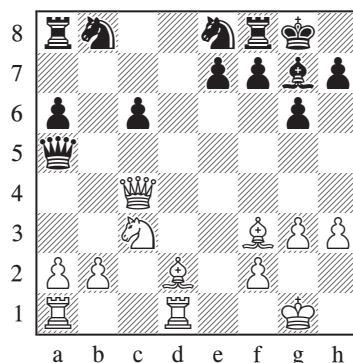


12... bxc4

I also checked 12... ♜c7 13. ♕e3 dxe5 14. dxe5 ♕xe5 15. ♖ad1 ♗c8 16. ♕h6 ♕g7 17. ♕xg7 ♜xg7 18. ♗xe7± and Black's position looks horrible.

13. ♗xc4 dxe5 14. dxe5 ♕xe5 15. ♖d1 ♗a5 16. ♕d2 ♕g7

16... ♗c7 17. ♖ac1 ♖a7 18. ♗e2 ♜f6 19. ♜a4± gives White fantastic play for the sacrificed pawn.



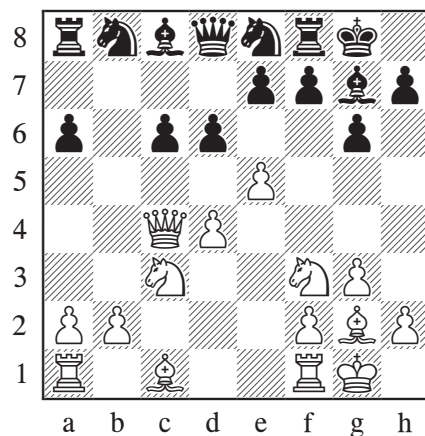
17. ♜d5! cxd5

17... ♗d8 18. ♕f4! cxd5 19. ♕xd5 ♜d6 20. ♕xd6 ♖a7 21. ♕a3 ♖d7 22. ♖ac1 keeps a big advantage for White.

18. ♕xa5 dxc4 19. ♕xa8 ♜d6 20. ♖d2±

White converted his extra exchange in Terreaux – Weiss, Internet 2003.

11. ♗xc4

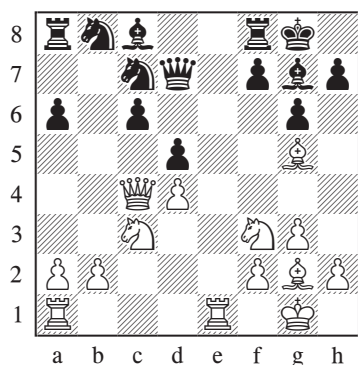


11... a5

Here too, Black has tried a few different moves, none of which comes close to equalizing.

11...♙e6 12.♖a4 ♘c7 13.♗e1 h6 14.exd6 exd6
15.♙f4 g5 occurred in Ljavidansky – Suetin,
Tallinn 1965, and now the simple 16.♙e3N
♗d7 17.♗ac1 would have maintained White's
advantage.

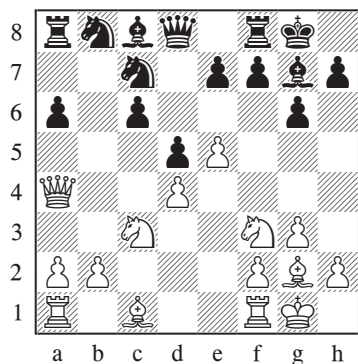
11...♘c7 12.exd6 exd6 13.♙g5 ♗d7 14.♗fe1
(14.d5 ♘xd5 15.♘xd5 cxd5 16.♗xd5 ♙b7
17.♗d2 ♘c6 was acceptable for Black in
Csom – F. Portisch, Budapest 1976) 14...d5
In Thesing – Schoene, Germany 1997, White
retreated the queen to b3, but I prefer:



15.♗a4!N The queen is less exposed here (for
instance, if a rook arrives on b8), and it also
defends the d4-pawn while keeping an eye
on the weakness on c6. Play may continue
15...♘e6 16.♙e3 a5 17.♗ac1 ♙b7 18.♘g5±
and White has definite pressure.

11...d5 12.♖a4 ♘c7

This blocked central structure invariably
favours White, as the following line
illustrates.



13.♙e3 ♘b5 14.♗ac1 ♘d7 15.♗c2 ♘b6

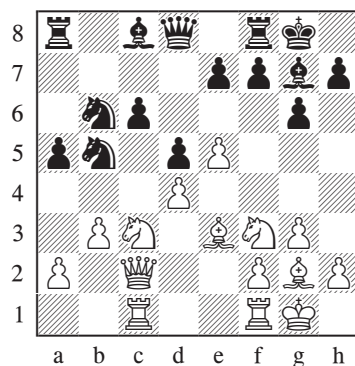
Otherwise White would have followed up
with ♘a4.

16.b3

It is essential to take control over the c4-
square in order to restrict the knight on b6.

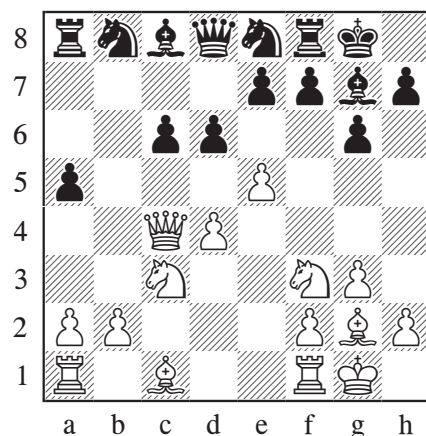
16...a5

This occurred in Lempert – Kozlov, Moscow
1990. Now the cleanest continuation for
White would have been:



17.♗d2 a4 18.♘xb5 cxb5 19.♗c5 ♙d7
20.♗fc1±

Maintaining a clear advantage.

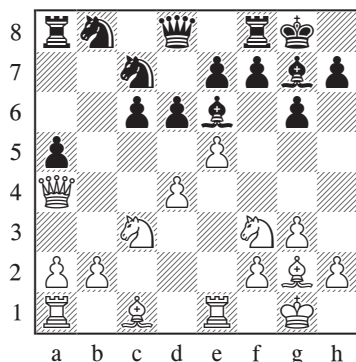


12.♗e1 d5

Somehow Black has scored 3/3 with this,
but this has nothing to do with the merits of
his position at this stage.

12...♙a6 13.♖a4 d5 is hardly an improvement:
14.♙d2 ♖b6 15.♖c2± and White's positional
advantage was undisputable in Ruck –
Suskovic, Zagreb 1999.

12...♙e6 13.♖a4 ♘c7 occurred in Dorfman
– Kr. Georgiev, Warsaw 1983. I think White
should have continued with:



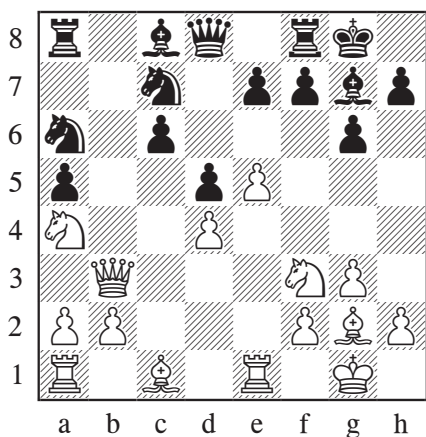
14.exd6N exd6 15.♙f4 ♖d7 16.♖ac1
Maintaining a pleasant edge.

13.♖b3

13.♖a4 ♘c7 occurred in the two other
games. White stands better here too, but I
would prefer to keep the a4-square available
for the knight rather than the queen.

13...♙a6 14.♙a4 ♘ec7

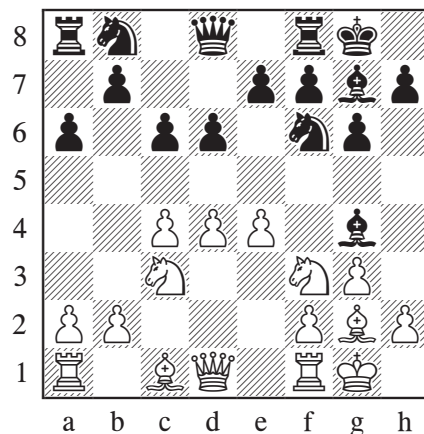
In J. Cobb – Sherwin, Bristol 2009, White
should have played:



15.♙d2±

Maintaining a comfortable advantage.

B2) 8...♙g4



I did not consider this move in *GM 2*, but
it's a pet line of the Ukrainian Grandmaster
Vladimir Onischuk. Black discourages a quick
e4-e5 and keeps ...b5 in reserve. The obvious
drawback is that Black gives up the bishop pair.

9.h3 ♙xf3 10.♖xf3!

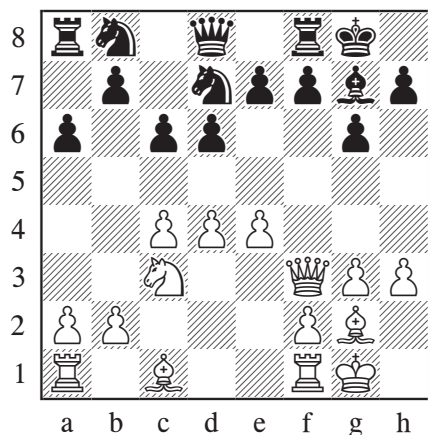
This has been less popular than 10.♙xf3 but
I prefer it.

10...♘fd7

This modern approach has been Black's most
popular and best-scoring move.

10...♘bd7 11.♙e3 e5 12.♖fd1 ♖e7 was seen
in V. Sokolov – Damjanovic, Zenica 1963,
and now the simple 13.d5N would have given
White better chances.

10...e5 11.d5 a5 12.♖d1 ♙a6 occurred in
Jojua – V. Onischuk, Konya 2011. In the
game White exchanged on c6 and went on to
win, but I would prefer 13.♙g5N h6 14.♙e3±,
maintaining an obvious edge in the closed
structure.



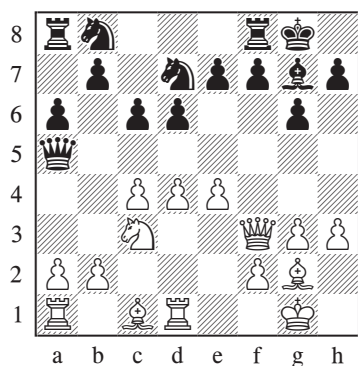
11.♖d1 ♘b6

Black has tried a couple of other moves:

11...b5 is unimpressive, as White can simply defend the c4-pawn with 12.♗e2. One example continued: 12...♗a5 13.a3 b4?! 14.axb4 ♗xb4 (14...♗xa1? 15.♕g5+–) In Ippolito – Jankovic, Philadelphia 2012, the simple 15.♕e3N would have secured White's obvious advantage.

11...♗a5

This position has arisen in several games, with a range of moves occurring, but nobody has played what I consider most natural:



12.a4!N c5

White is well prepared to meet 12...b5?! with 13.b4! ♗xb4 14.axb5. A nice additional point is that 14...♗xc4? 15.♖a4 ♗e6

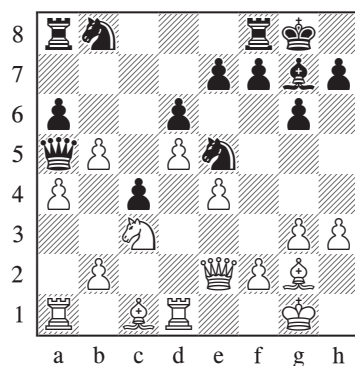
16.bxc6 is winning for White, as 16...♗xc6 runs into 17.d5.

13.d5 b5

13...♗b6 14.♗e2 is of no concern, as 14...♕xc3 15.bxc3 ♗xc3 16.♕h6! gives White a powerful initiative.

13...♗e5 14.♗e2 b5 runs into the powerful 15.♕g5!. After the forced 15...b4 16.♗b1± Black has run out of play on the queenside, while White has a lot of options for developing his kingside initiative.

14.cxb5 ♗e5 15.♗e2 c4

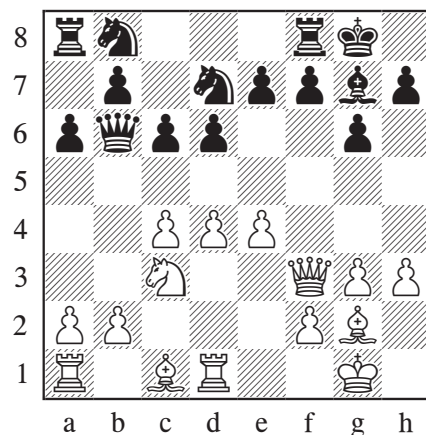


Black appears to be getting some counterplay, but it's no problem after:

16.♕g5 ♗d3 17.♖a3 ♗e8 18.♗b1±

White's accurate play yields a clear advantage.

V. Onischuk has drawn this position twice with Black. I suggest a new idea:

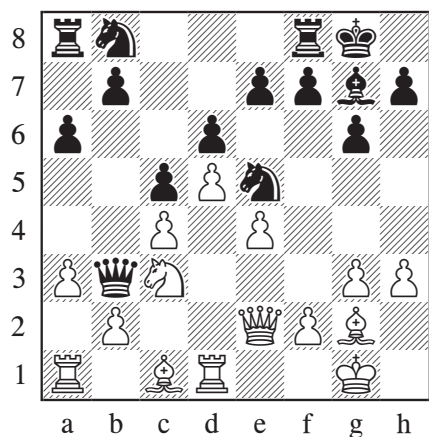


12. ♖d3! N c5

12...e5 looks pretty pointless after 13.d5 ♖c5 14.♖c2, when it is not clear what the black queen is doing on b6.

13.d5 ♖e5 14.♖e2 ♖b4 15.a3! ♖b3

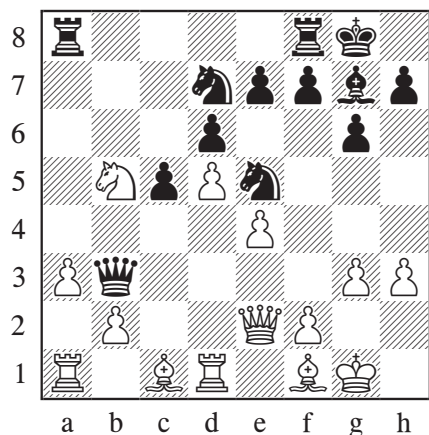
15...♖xc4? is impossible in view of 16.♖c2!, when Black is helpless against the threat of f2-f4 followed by ♗f1.

**16. ♗f1 b5**

Black has to get this move in before White plays a3-a4 or f2-f4.

17.cxb5 axb5 18. ♖xb5 ♖bd7

It looks as though Black has interesting compensation, but White has an important resource.

**19.a4!**

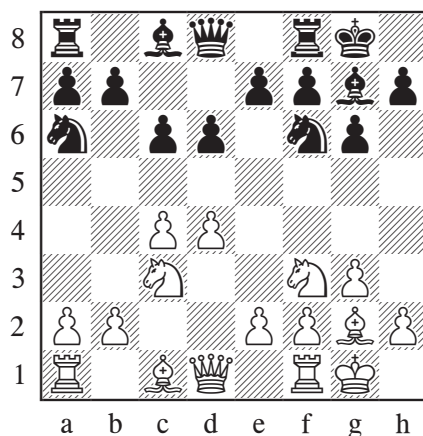
The point is revealed in the following line.

19...♖xa4?

Black should not play this, but other moves allow the simple plan of ♖a3 and b2-b3, consolidating the queenside with better chances.

20. ♖xa4 ♖xa4 21. ♖c3

Followed by f2-f4, trapping the enemy knight.

C) 7... ♖a6

Victor Bologan used to play this move but he abandoned it a long time ago. Over the past decade or so, it has only rarely been tested at GM level. Not much has changed since *GM 2* was published, so I have only slightly expanded the coverage to include a few recent games and other minor options which I forgot to mention previously.

8.e4

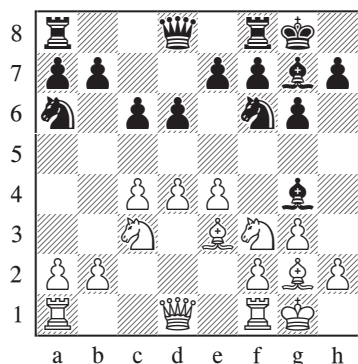
We will consider **C1) 8... ♖c7** followed by **C2) 8...e5**.

A third option is:

8...♗g4 9.♗e3

I still prefer this rare move over the more popular 9.h3. White intends to continue

developing with ♖d2, rather than spending time on pawn moves.

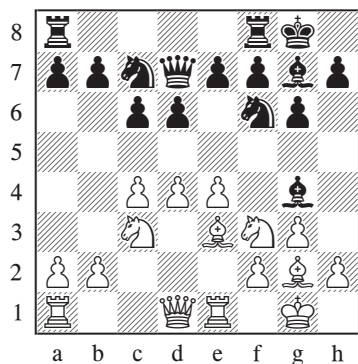


9...♗d7 10.♞e1 ♘c7

White's previous move was directed against 10...♘h3?!, which is strongly met by 11.e5! ♙xg2 12.♙xg2 ♘g4 13.♙f4 dxe5 14.dxe5 and Black's knight is obviously misplaced on g4.

10...♞fd8 was tried more recently in Bombek – Durica, Banska Stiavnica 2013. Black's last move does not change much, so White can respond with any of 11.b3N, 11.♗d2N or 11.♗b3!N, keeping a space advantage and a generally more comfortable game.

After the text move, White's play from Schmitz – Suedel, corr. 1986, can be significantly improved with:



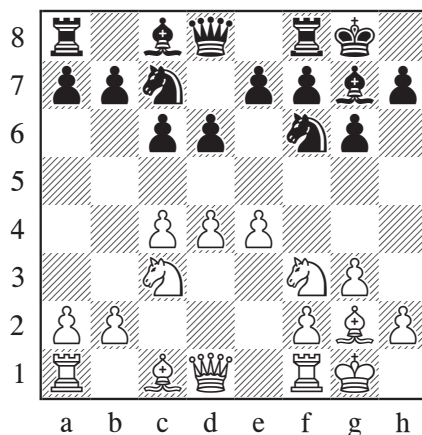
11.e5!N

My line from *GM 2* continues:

11...dxe5 12.♘xe5 ♙xd1 13.♘d7 ♘xd7 14.♞axd1

White has a long-term edge thanks to his bishop pair.

C1) 8...♘c7



9.h3 ♞b8

This passive set-up enables White to claim the advantage by fairly simple means.

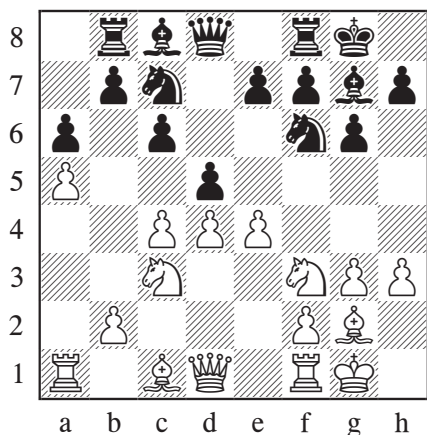
9...b5 10.e5 ♘fe8 occurred in Fraczek – Marek, Chorzow 2007, and now 11.c5!N would have given White a considerable space advantage and at least slightly better chances.

10.a4 a6

10...a5 is a typical idea after provoking White's last move, but Black has wasted too much time, and after 11.♞e1 White was clearly better in Godes – Koenig, Muenster 1990.

11.a5 d5

11...♘d7 12.♙e3 e6 13.♗d2 left Black in a passive position and his attempt to get some counterplay on the queenside backfired: 13...b5 14.axb6 ♘xb6 15.b3 ♘d7 16.♞fb1 Black was left with significant weaknesses in his pawn formation in Bui Vinh – Duong Thuong, Dong Thap 2004.

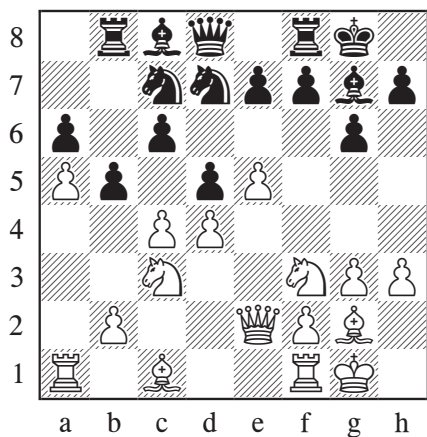


12.e5 ♖d7

12...♗e4 13.♖a4 doesn't solve Black's problems either.

13.♙e2 b5

This occurred in Guldberg – Petersen, Aalborg 1995, and here I still like my recommendation from *GM 2*:



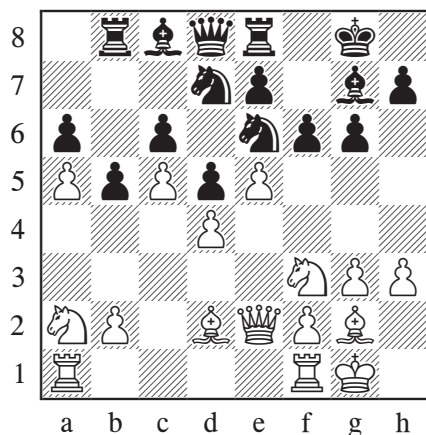
14.c5!N

Gaining space and preventing any opening of lines on the queenside. Here is an illustrative line.

14...♗e6 15.♗d2 ♖e8 16.♗a2!

The knight is heading for the ideal b4-square.

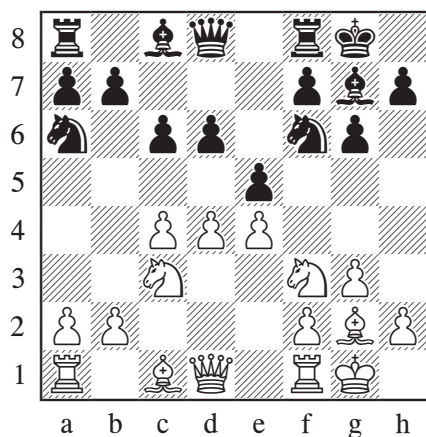
16...f6



17.♗b4 ♗b7 18.exf6 exf6 19.♗fe1

White's chances are clearly higher, as Black's position is cramped and he will be tied to the defence of the a6- and c6-pawns for a long time.

C2) 8...e5



This seems like an overall better try for Black than the previous line. The resulting position resembles the main lines from Chapters 13-15, except that here the knight is on a6 instead of d7. Transpositions are possible, especially after a subsequent ...exd4 and ...♗c5, but it is hard to see any great benefit for Black in having the knight on a6. On the other hand, there are some slight drawbacks as the knight does not

have the e5- or b6-squares available, and the e5-pawn is less well defended.

9.h3

This is the standard prophylactic move to secure the e3-square for the bishop.

9...♖b6

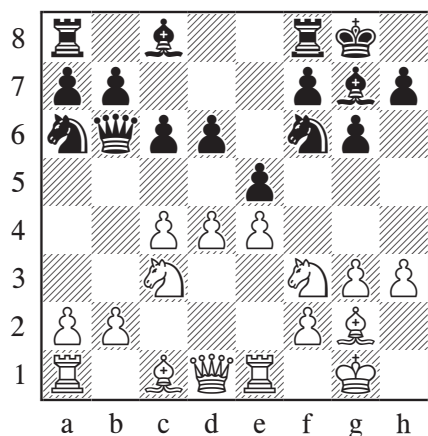
This is a typical move, putting pressure on White's centre as well as the b2-pawn, which prevents White from developing the bishop to e3.

9...♖a5 transposes to variation B42 of the next chapter.

9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♜e8 11.♙e3 ♘c5 reaches a popular position which will be examined in variation B22 of Chapter 13.

10.♞e1

White is using the same set-up as in Chapter 15, the tabiya of which features the almost-identical position with the black knight on d7 instead of a6.



10...exd4

The main alternative is:

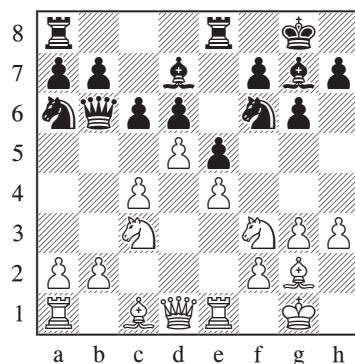
10...♞e8 11.d5!

This is the perfect moment to block the centre, as Black's rook and queen are both

misplaced in the ensuing structure. If Black follows up with ...♘c5, either with or without exchanging on d5, play will transpose to either variation A1 or A2 of Chapter 15, so here we will look at a few lines where he keeps the knight on a6.

11...♙d7

11...cxd5N 12.cxd5 ♙d7 13.♞b1! also favours White.



12.♙e3!

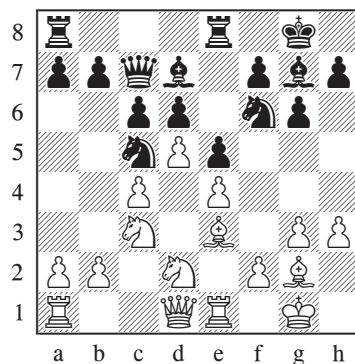
With the c-pawns still on the board, White can save time by omitting ♞b1, as the b2-pawn is poisoned.

12...♖c7

12...♖xb2? loses to 13.♘a4 ♖a3 14.♙c1 ♖b4 15.♙d2 ♖xc4 (or 15...♖a3 16.♞e3+-) 16.♙f1 and Black's queen is trapped.

13.♘d2 ♘c5

This occurred in Barsov – Gofshtein, Hoogeveen 1999, when a good continuation would have been:

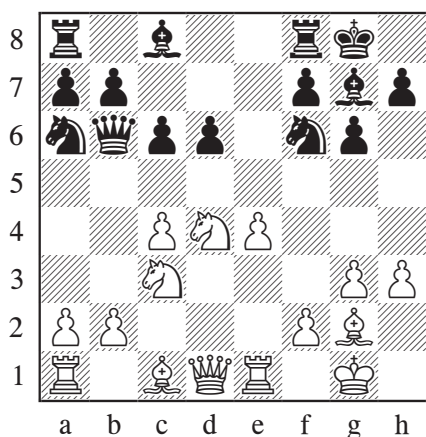


14. ♖f1! N±

White is doing well; the reader is invited to refer to variation A2 of Chapter 15 for more information about the thematic plans and manoeuvres in such positions.

11. ♖xd4

Since *GM 2* was published there have been hardly any new games in this position, so I made only minor additions to my previous analysis.



11... ♖e8

This is the main line in the analogous position with the knight on d7 instead of a6, and I think it is Black's best try here. Two other moves have been tested:

11... ♖d7

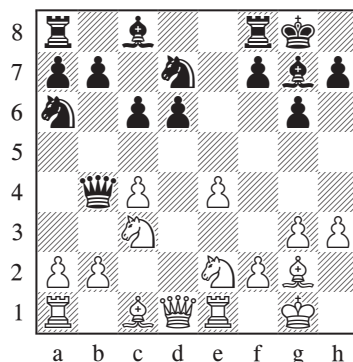
This is a reasonable attempt to make use of the fact that the other knight is on a6, and it forced me to find a new concept for White (which I suggested in *GM 2* but which has yet to be tested):

12. ♖de2! N

Black got a great position after 12. ♖c2 ♖e5 13. ♖e3 ♖a5 14. ♖f1 ♖e6 15. ♖a3 ♖b4 in Trifunovic – D. Bekker-Jensen, Witley 1999. I also wasn't satisfied with 12. ♖b3, as occurred in Lemanczyk – Agrafenin, corr. 2012.

12... ♖b4

In the event of 12... ♖e5 13. b3 ♖c5 14. ♖e3 ♖ed3 15. ♖f1 Black's activity has come to an end, and White will soon drive Black's knight away from d3 by means of ♖d2 followed by ♖ad1.



13. ♖f4 ♖xc4

After 13... ♖e5 14. b3 White keeps everything under control.

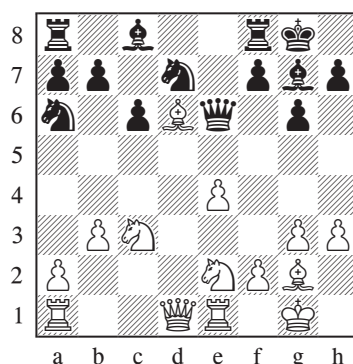
14. b3

14. ♖xd6 ♖e8 is less clear.

14... ♖e6 15. ♖xd6!?

This keeps the game more complicated.

15. ♖xd6 ♖e5 16. ♖ad1± is a simpler route to a slight edge.



15... ♖d8 16. ♖f4 ♖e8

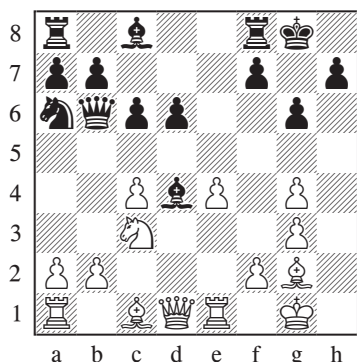
16... ♖f6 17. e5! is an important point. The tactical justification is revealed after 17... ♖xe5? 18. ♖xe5 ♖xd1 19. ♖axd1 ♖g5 20. h4 and White wins.

17. ♖c2 ♜e5 18. ♜ad1±

White keeps the upper hand.

11... ♜g4 12. hxc4 ♙xd4

12... ♖xd4 doesn't solve Black's problems either: 13. ♖e2 ♙e6 14. ♙f1 ♜b6 15. ♙f4 ♜ad8 16. ♜ad1± and White kept the upper hand in Tregubov – Iskusnyh, Novgorod 1997.



13. ♙e3 ♙xe3 14. ♜xe3 ♙e6

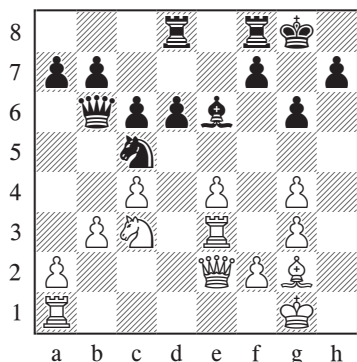
14... ♖xb2?? loses the queen after 15. ♜b1 ♖a3 16. ♜a4 ♖xa2 17. ♙f1! followed by ♜a1 or ♜b2.

15. b3

15. ♙f1!? ♜ad8 16. ♜b1 followed by b2-b4 comes into consideration as well.

15... ♜ad8 16. ♖e2 ♜c5

This position occurred in Medic – Rogic, Bled 1997, and here I suggest:



17. g5N ♜d7 18. f4±

White keeps a stable edge.

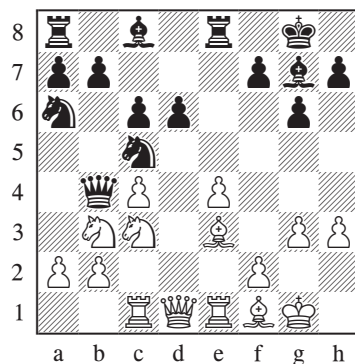
12. ♜b3!?

This was my novelty from *GM 2*, which has since been tested in one game. White releases the pressure on the b2-pawn and prepares to develop with ♙e3, while harassing Black's queen. By the way, in the analogous position from the main line with the knight on d7 instead of a6, the same move can be met by ... ♜e5, with an annoying attack on the c4-pawn, whereas here Black has no such ideas.

It is worth briefly noting that 12. ♜c2?! would be inaccurate. White is hoping for 12... ♜c5, which transposes to variation B32 of Chapter 15, but a better reply is 12... ♙e6!, when Black benefits from the absence of the knight from d7.

12... ♙e6

I also examined 12... ♜d7 13. ♙e3 ♜b4 14. ♙f1 ♜dc5 15. ♜c1 with the following idea in mind:



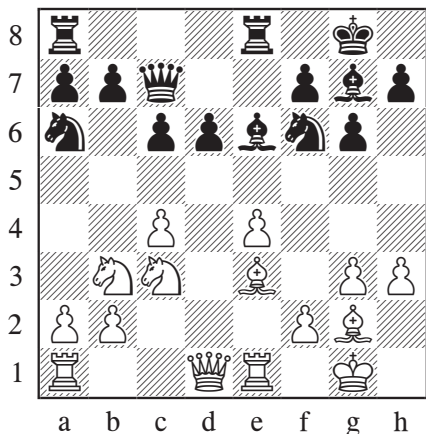
15... ♜a4 16. a3! ♜xc3 17. ♜xc3! ♖a4 18. ♙d4 White neutralizes the enemy counterplay and keeps the better chances.

13. ♙e3 ♜c7

This was Black's choice in the aforementioned game.

My main line from *GM 2* continued 13...c5 14. ♙f1 ♜d7 15. ♜b1 ♜e5 16. ♜d2±

and White's army is much better mobilized for the battle ahead.



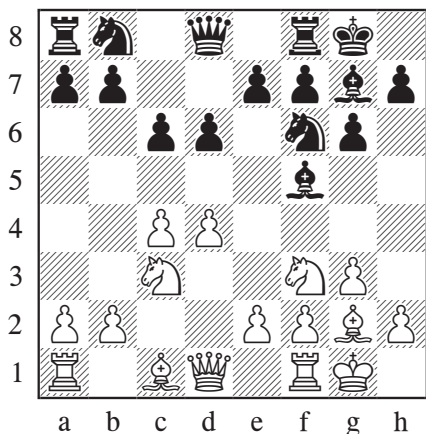
14. ♖e2

Black has no more active ideas and White soon takes control.

14... ♜ad8 15. ♜ac1 ♜c8 16. ♕h2 ♜b8
17. ♜d4±

Mu Ke – Yang Kaiqi, China 2013.

D) 7... ♕f5



In *GM 2*, I remarked that this move was fashionable. Today that is even more true, as many strong players continue to use it.

8. ♘e1

This was my recommendation in *GM 2* and I see no reason to deviate from it. The idea is simply to play e2-e4 with gain of tempo, and later reroute the knight to d3 or perhaps c2, according to circumstances.

We will analyse D1) 8...d5, D2) 8... ♜c8, D3) 8...e5 and D4) 8... ♕e6.

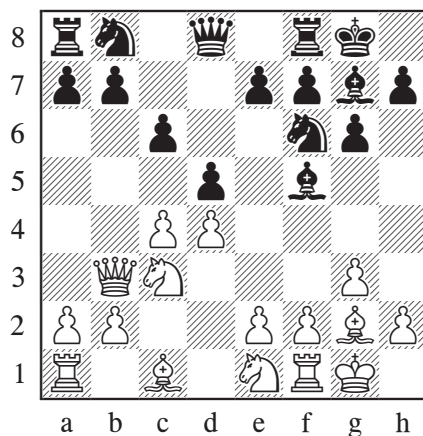
8... ♜d7 9.e4 ♕h3 will transpose to variation D2.

D1) 8...d5

This would be a good positional move, if it were not for the following concrete problem.

9. ♜b3!

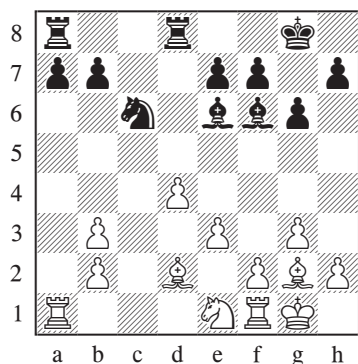
Attacking the pawns on d5 and b7.



9... ♜b6 10.cxd5 cxd5

This is the most tenacious option.

White's task is much easier after: 10... ♜xb3?!
11.axb3 cxd5 12. ♘xd5 ♘c6 13. ♘xf6† ♕xf6
14.e3 ♜fd8 15. ♕d2 ♕e6



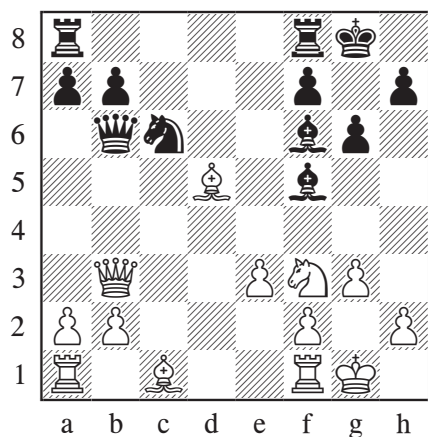
In Leibbrand – Walther, Germany 1992, the simple 16.♖a3N would have left White with a healthy extra pawn.

11.♖xd5 ♖xd5 12.♙xd5 ♖c6

White has won a pawn but he needs to play accurately to neutralize Black's activity.

13.e3 e5 14.dxe5 ♙xe5 15.♖f3 ♙f6

Here I found an improvement over my previous recommendation.



16.♙xb6N

I presented 16.e4 as a novelty in *GM 2*, and it recently received a practical test. Play continued: 16...♙xb3 17.axb3 ♙h3!? (my line in *GM 2* ended with 17...♙g4 18.♖g2± when Black does not have enough compensation) 18.♙e1 (18.♙d1 ♙g4) 18...♖b4 White eventually won in Anchutin – Egorov, St

Petersburg 2017, but improvements exist for both sides. In general, White is pressing in this line, but Black has fair chances to hold with accurate play.

16...axb6 17.e4

I believe that doubling Black's queenside pawns gives White an improved version of the above note.

17...♙h3

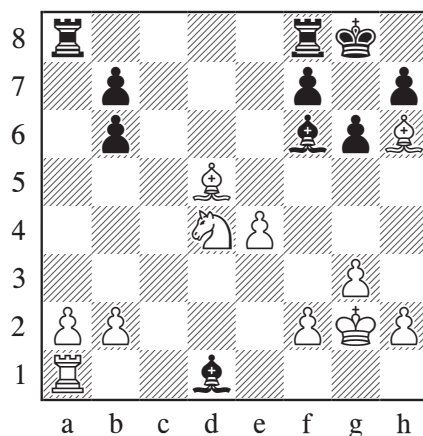
Once again, 17...♙g4?! is an inferior choice for Black. Play continues 18.♖g2 ♖b4 19.♙xb7 ♙a7 20.e5!± and White keeps a big advantage.

18.♙d1!

White has to be ready to deal with the pin resulting from Black's next move, but he can avoid any problems with some simple tactics.

18...♙g4 19.♖g2 ♖d4 20.♖xd4! ♙xd1 21.♙h6

Black faces a choice between two difficult endgames.



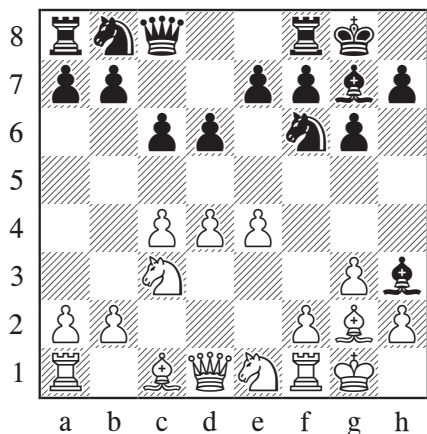
21...♙g4

21...♙xd4 22.♙xf8 ♖xf8 23.♙xd1 ♙xb2 24.♙d2 gives White a serious advantage; the opposite-coloured bishops are of no real help to Black.

22. ♖xf8 ♜xf8 23. ♘b5 ♖xb2 24. ♖b1±

Black is doomed to passive defence.

D2) 8... ♖c8 9.e4 ♗h3



10. ♗xh3!

I recommended this in *GM 2* and it has since been tested in several games, although 10.f3 and 10.♘d3 remain the two most popular choices.

10... ♖xh3 11.f3

With ...♗g4 prevented, Black has no real attacking chances. White always has the option of ♘d3-f2 if he really needs to drive the queen away, but he should not be in any hurry to do so, as the queen is actually not well placed on h3. It does nothing to support Black's queenside play, and White may even threaten to trap it with g3-g4 in some lines. By the way, White's plan has another small practical advantage in that it can be used irrespective of whether Black starts with 8... ♖c8 or 8... ♖d7.

11... ♗a6

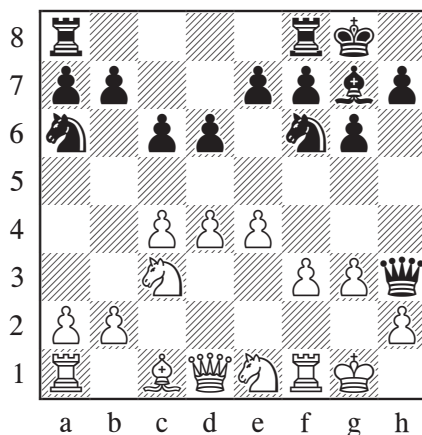
Since *GM 2* was published Black has tried several moves, but in each case White keeps a pleasant edge with simple play.

11... ♗h6?! eventually yielded a draw for Black in Brynell – Hillarp Persson, Orebro 2013,

but 12. ♗xh6N ♖xh6 13.f4± would have given White a commanding space advantage.

11... ♖c8 12. ♗e3 ♗bd7 occurred in Bukal – Hristodorescu, Plovdiv 2012, when 13. ♘d3N± would have been the natural choice.

11...c5 12.d5 gives White a pleasant version of a Benoni; after the further 12... ♗bd7 13. ♘d3 ♗b6 14. ♗f2 ♖d7 15. ♖d3 e6 16. ♗d2 exd5 17.exd5 a6 18.b3± White kept the upper hand in Brynell – Hoi, Koge 2013.



12. ♘d3 ♖d7

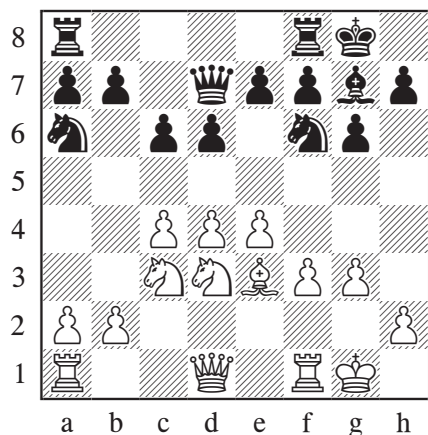
I will keep this as my main line. Black avoids any possibility of getting his queen trapped after g3-g4 (even though it is not an immediate threat) and supports the ...b5 push.

12...e5 13.d5 cxd5 14.cxd5 h5 15. ♗e3 ♖d7 16.a4 ♖fc8 17. ♖d2± gave White a pleasant edge in Stefansson – Rukavina, Rijeka 2010.

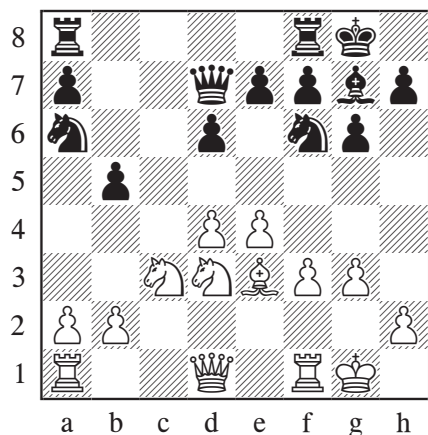
12... ♗c7 13. ♗e3 (after 13.g4 h5= White can force a draw with ♗f4-g2 and so on, but he has nothing more) 13... ♖c8 14. ♖c1± Hechl – Kreutz, corr. 2011.

13. ♗e3

White could also consider 13.a4, preventing the ...b5 advance.

**13...b5**

Another game continued 13...♞e8 14.a4 ♞ec7 15.♞a3!? ♞e6 16.d5 cxd5 17.exd5 ♞ec5 18.♞xc5 dxc5 19.♞d2± and White was better again in Chiburdanidze – C. Foisor, Gothenburg 2005.

14.cxb5 cxb5**15.♞b3!?N**

This recommendation of mine remains untested. Although I like the queen on b3, it is worth mentioning that 15.♞d2 was also slightly better for White in Cvitan – Loncar, Tucepi 1996.

More recently, 15.♞c1 gave White a small edge in Senthil – Del Rey, New Delhi 2015, but

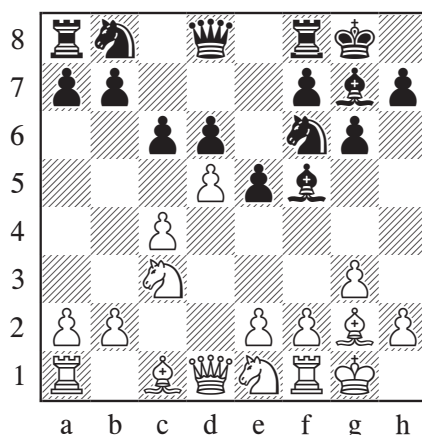
I would prefer to keep a second rook on the queenside.

15...♞c7

A worse plan for Black is: 15...♞ab8 16.d5 ♞fc8 17.a4! This shows the value of keeping a rook on a1. 17...b4 18.♞e2 With an obvious edge for White.

16.♞fc1 ♞fc8 17.♞c2 ♞e6 18.♞ac1 a6 19.♞e2±

White enjoys a pleasant positional advantage, thanks to his extra space and the favourable tension along the c-file.

D3) 8...e5 9.d5

This leads to a typical King's Indian central structure, with somewhat better chances for White. He will almost certainly be able to gain time with e2-e4, and the e1-knight is well placed to go to d3.

9...cxd5 10.cxd5 ♞a6

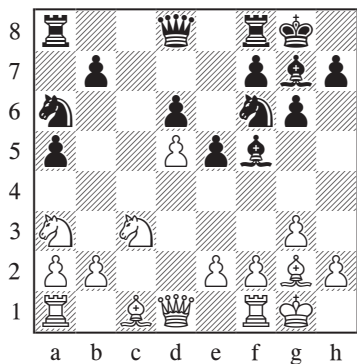
The knight cannot go to d7 as this would leave the f5-bishop trapped, so the text move is natural and popular. I examined two alternatives:

10...a5

Black grabs more space on the queenside, but White has an excellent reply.

11.♖c2! ♖a6 12.♘a3

White seizes the opportunity to send his knight towards the newly created outpost on b5.



12...♖c8

Black tried to improve with 12...♗d7 13.e4 ♘g4 in Kappes – Even, email 2014. I recommend 14.♗e2N, a logical continuation being 14...f5 15.♘c4 ♗c7 16.h3 ♘f6 17.♗e3 ♘c5 18.exf5 gxf5 19.a4± and White remains slightly better.

13.♗d2

13.♗e3 is a worthy alternative: 13...♘d7 (13...♘g4 14.♗d2 leaves Black's knight misplaced; I also checked 13...♘c5 14.♘c4, intending 14...♘ce4 15.♗b3 ♘xc3 16.bxc3 and White is better, due to the Black's weak pawns on the queenside) 14.♘cb5 ♘b6 This occurred in Ilincic – Khmelniker, Budapest 2004, and now the simple 15.♗d2N ♘b4 16.♗fc1 would have given White a serious initiative on the queenside.

13...♘c5

13...♘b4N seems like a better try; still, after 14.♗c1 ♗b6 15.b3! followed by ♘c4, White's chances are somewhat preferable.

14.♘c4

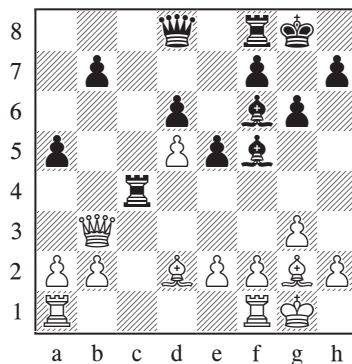
Now that Black has blocked his rook, it gives White a good opportunity to put the knight on the optimal c4-square, leaving the other knight to go to b5 when the time is right.

14...♘ce4

14...b6 15.♗g5! h6 16.♗xf6 ♗xf6 17.♘b5 offers White a stable edge.

15.♘xe4 ♗xc4 16.♘xf6 ♗xf6 17.♗b3

Now Black is in trouble.



17...♗c7?!

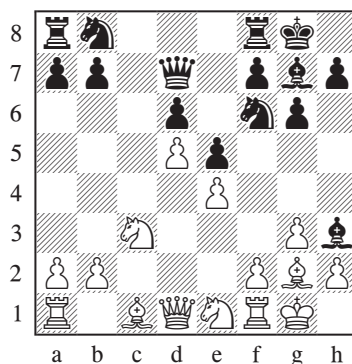
17...♗c2 is a better try although 18.♗h6 forces Black to give up the exchange, due to White's threat of e2-e4. 18...♗xe2 and now the precise 19.♗f3! ♗c2 20.♗xf8 ♘xf8 21.♗g4! gets rid of Black's bishop pair, leaving White with a clear advantage.

18.♗xa5±

White won a pawn in Quinteros – Hansson, Reykjavik 1986.

10...♗d7 11.e4 ♗h3

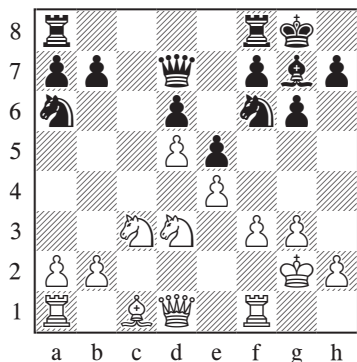
As is usually the case in positions with a closed centre, White has nothing to fear from the exchange of light-squared bishops. He gains a few tempos to develop his play on the queenside, and his remaining bishop complements the central pawns on the light squares.



12.♖d3 ♗xg2

12...♖a6 13.f3 ♗xg2 14.♖xg2 is another possible move order.

13.♖xg2 ♖a6 14.f3



14...♖e8

I checked four other possibilities:

a) 14...♖ac8 15.♗e3 b6 occurred in Kahleys – Gruettemeier, Germany 2013. The simple 16.♖c1!N would have been clearly better for White, especially keeping in mind that 16...♖c5? allows 17.♖b4 followed by invading on c6.

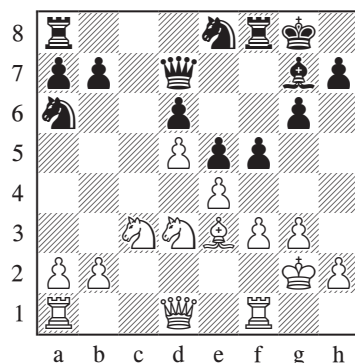
b) It is important to point out that 14...♖h5 is well met by 15.g4!, when the following thematic pawn sacrifice doesn't work: 15...♖f4† 16.♖xf4 exf4 17.♗xf4 f5 18.exf5 gxf5 19.g5! and Black has nothing like sufficient compensation for the pawn.

c) 14...♖c5 15.♖xc5 dxc5 occurred in Carril Garcia – Barlov, Sanxenxo 2012. White could have played 16.♗a4!N ♗e7 17.♗g5 h6 18.♗e3 b6 19.♗b3 ♖e8 20.a4 ♖d6 21.a5±, with typical positional pressure for this structure.

d) 14...♖fc8 is more of a passive waiting strategy. 15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.a4 Preparing the ♖b5 jump. 16...♖c5 This was Tondivar - Van der Veen, Hoogeveen 2007, and now 17.♖xc5N dxc5 18.a5! ♖d6 19.♗a4 reaches the kind of position where White almost always stands better, thanks to his passed pawn and queenside pressure.

15.♗e3 f5

Two games reached this position, with White opting for the soft 16.♗e2 and 16.♗d2, both of which allowed Black to create counterplay. My improvement is:

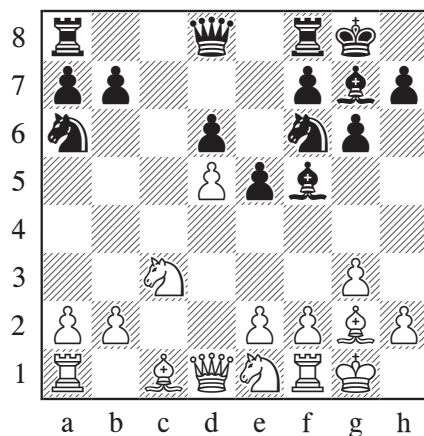


16.♗a4!N

An endgame would be depressing for Black, so this move essentially gains an important tempo.

16...♗e7 17.♖ac1 ♖f6 18.♖b5! fxe4 19.fxe4 ♖g4 20.♗d2±

White keeps the better chances.



11.e4 ♗d7

Black may also try:

11...♗g4 12.f3 ♗d7

12...♗b6† is an idea to interfere with White's ♗e3 plan, and was played by a King's Indian specialist a few years ago.

However, it should be easy for White to get back on track. 13.♖f2 ♕d7 14.♘d3 ♜fc8 was seen in Zygouris – Kotronias, Athens 2014, and now 15.♞e2N± would have been a natural move to prepare ♕e3, with a much easier game for White.

13. ♕e3

White should establish control over the g1-a7 diagonal before doing anything else.

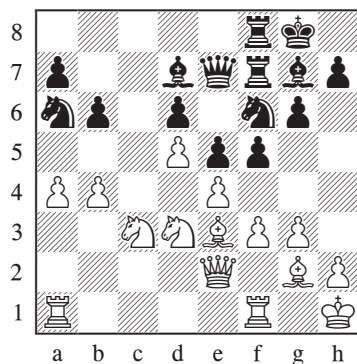
13... ♘e8

13...♘h5 is a natural attempt to prepare kingside play. In Matnadze – Zozulia, Patras 1999, White missed a nice idea: 14.♞b3!N There is no convenient way to defend the b7-pawn. 14...♞b8 This avoids any structural weakening, but Black can hardly hope to achieve much on the kingside with his queen so far away. (14...b6 is well met by 15.♞a3! ♘c5 16.b4 ♘b7 17.♞a6 and White seizes the initiative) 15.♘d3 f5 16.a4 White keeps the better chances.

14. ♘d3 f5 15. ♞d2 ♘f6 16. ♖h1

This useful prophylactic move enables White to meet ...fxe4 with fxe4, without having to worry about ...♘g4 in reply.

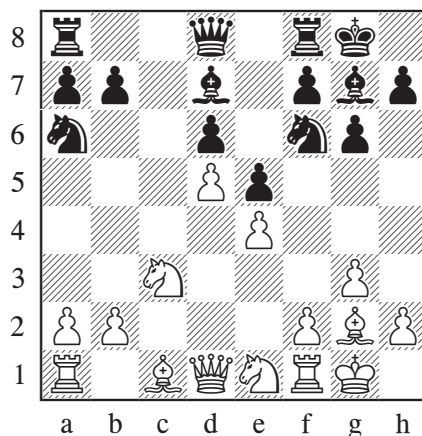
16... ♜f7 17.b4 b6 18.a4 ♞e7 19. ♞e2 ♜af8



This complex position arose in Matnadze – Zozulia, Patras 1999. (The game actually featured the 13...♘h5 move order as noted above, but the knight later returned to f6, converting to the line given here.) I like the following idea for White:

20. ♕g5N h6 21. ♕d2!

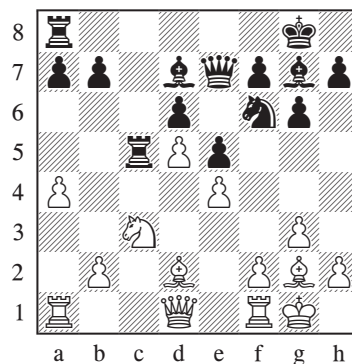
White prevents ...f4 and keeps better chances.



12. ♘d3 ♞a5

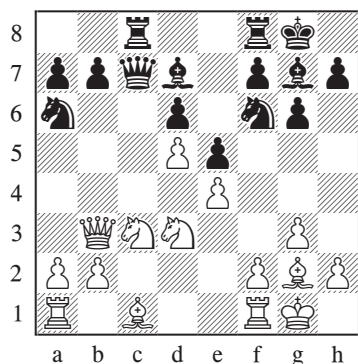
I examined a few other options:

12...♞e7 is not really a 'King's Indian move', but anyway it's a pleasure to follow Kasparov's play for a few more moves: 13.a4 ♜fc8 14.♕d2 ♘c5 15.♘xc5 ♜xc5



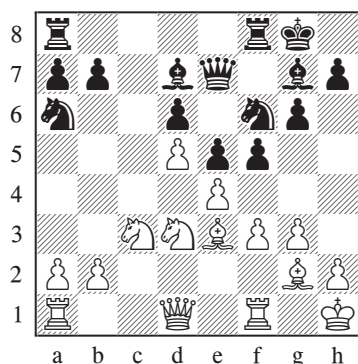
This was Kasparov – Adams, New York (rapid) 1995. I believe the most accurate continuation would have been 16.♞b3N b6 17.♘b5 ♘e8 18.♜fe1, when White is undoubtedly better.

12...♜c8 13.♞b3 ♞c7 has occurred in two games, but White did not find the best continuation in either of them:



14. ♖b5! N ♜b8 (14... ♜b6 is worse, and after 15.a4 Black will suffer) 15. ♙d2 White keeps the better chances.

12... ♗e8 13. ♙e3 f5 14.f3 (14.f4 ♗f6 looks double-edged to me) 14... ♗f6 15. ♖h1 ♜e7 This happened in Danielsen – Hoi, Copenhagen 2012. I believe White should have started taking ground on the queenside by means of:



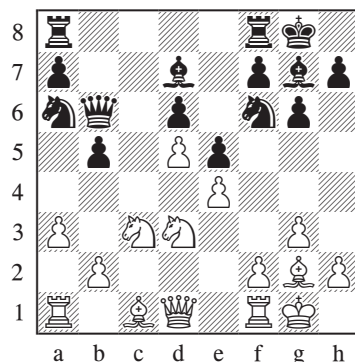
16.a4! N White has the easier play, while it is not so clear how Black will make progress on the kingside.

12...b5

This is rather a double-edged move: Black gains some space on the queenside, but at the same time makes his pawns more vulnerable. The weakness of the c6-square might also prove important in the future.

13.a3 ♜b6

13... ♜b8 occurred in Bates – Bisby, England 2012, when the simple 14.b4N ♗c7 15. ♙d2 would have maintained all of White's pluses. This position was reached in Badea – Scalcione, Nereto 2000. I developed the following line for White:

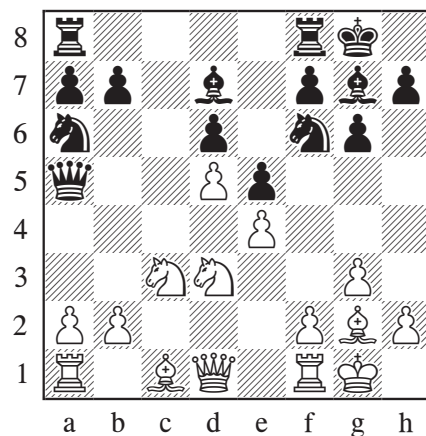


14. ♙e3N ♜b7 15.f3

This ensures that the bishop on e3 will have a safe future, as well as preparing the following rook manoeuvre.

15... ♜fc8 16. ♜f2

White will soon be able to double rooks along the c-file, with every chance to be successful on the queenside.



13. ♙d2 ♜fc8 14. ♜c1

I find this to be White's most natural and best continuation. I presented it as a novelty in *GM 2*, over the previously played

14.b4 and 14.a3, and my idea was tested in a game the next year.

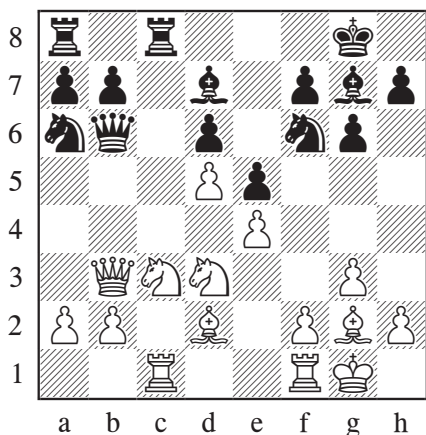
14...♖d8

14...b5 is comfortably met by 15.a3.

15.♖b3 ♖b6

In *GM 2* I gave the following illustrative line: 15...♖ab8N 16.♖a3 ♖f8 17.f3 White has good chances to increase his advantage on the queenside, while Black is doomed to passivity.

The text move was played in Sundorf – Podzielný, Senden 2011, when White continued with 15.h3?! and was soon outplayed. Instead I suggest:



16.♖xb6N

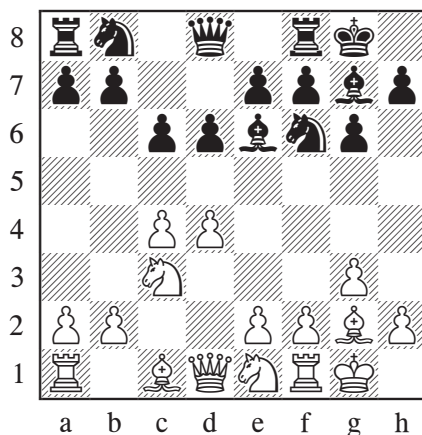
With a bit of care, White should be able to neutralize Black's activity along the open a-file.

If White prefers not to change the pawn structure, then 16.♖a3!?N is a good alternative. 16...♖c7 17.♗e3 ♖a6 18.♖xa6 ♖xa6 19.f3± and White is better here too.

16...axb6 17.♗fe1 ♖c5 18.♗f1!

White is better, thanks to his extra space and the potential weakness of Black's b-pawns.

D4) 8...♗e6



This retreat has been a popular choice. Rakhmanov in particular has achieved excellent results with it in the last few years, but almost all his opponents reacted with an immediate d4-d5.

9.b3

9.d5 is worth considering, but after 9...cxd5 10.cxd5 ♗d7 I failed to find an advantage for White. Compared with variation A of this chapter, the knight is worse on e1 than f3, and Black's activity on the queenside fully makes up for White's space advantage.

9...d5 10.cxd5 ♖xd5

The alternative is:

10...cxd5

This gives White a favourable version of a symmetrical Grünfeld. Black has wasted time with ...d6-d5 and even more so with ...♗f5-e6, as his bishop will probably have to move again soon.

11.♖d3 ♖c6

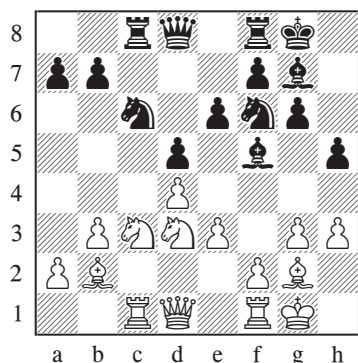
Black could also start with 11...♗f5; it makes no real difference.

12.e3 ♗f5 13.♗b2

White has the more comfortable position, as demonstrated in the following recent games.

13...♖c8

After 13...♙xd3 14.♖xd3 e6 15.♞ac1
 ♜e7 16.♜a4± White had a long-term pull
 thanks to the bishop pair in Donchenko –
 Gaehwiler, Biel 2016.
 14.♞c1 h5 15.h3 e6

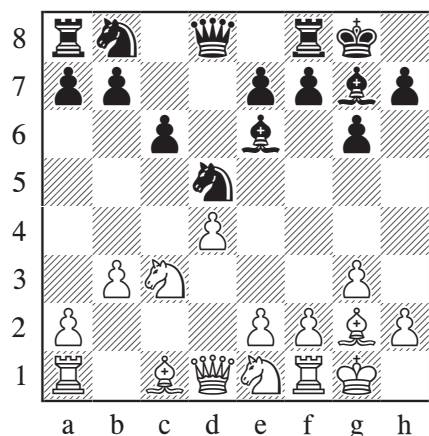


16.♜e5!

Suddenly Black has a problem with his light-squared bishop.

16...g5 17.♜b5 a6 18.♜xc6 ♜xc6 19.♞xc6
 bxc6 20.♜c3

White was obviously better due to Black's
 vulnerable queenside pawn structure in Howell
 – Timman, Isle of Man 2017.



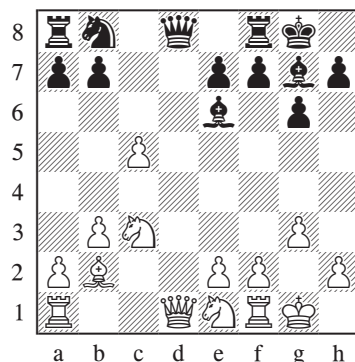
11.♙b2

The same pawn structure occurred in some
 of the lines in Chapter 1. White intends
 to consolidate with moves like ♞c1, e2-e3
 and ♜d3, which should generally assure

him of an edge due to his extra space in the
 centre.

11...♜xc3

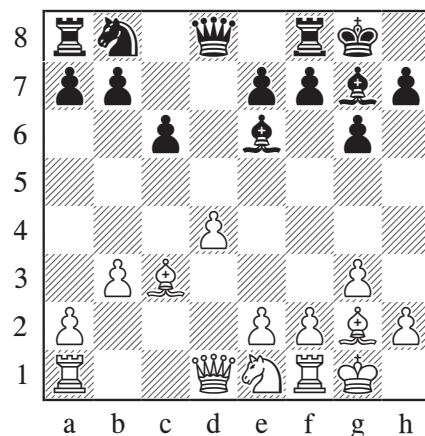
11...c5?! enables White to win a pawn:
 12.♙xd5! ♙xd5 13.dxc5 ♙e6 In Radnai –
 Gaehwiler, Budapest 2016, White should have
 played:



14.♖c1!N ♜c6 15.♜f3 ♜a5 16.♜a4! Black
 has no real compensation.

11...f5 has also been played, but it does not
 equalize. 12.♜a4 ♜d7 13.♜d3 b6 14.e3 ♞c8
 15.♞c1 ♜7f6 16.♜e2 White had a pleasant
 edge in Badea – Vaidya, Odorheiu Secuiesc
 1992.

12.♙xc3



12...♖a6

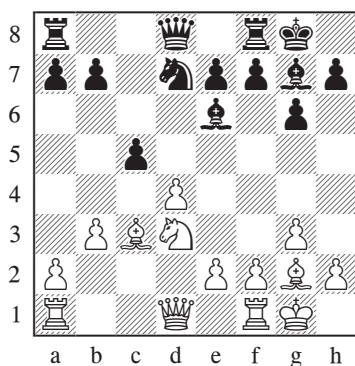
This move has scored well for Black so far, so I will take it as the main line. I checked a couple of other possibilities as well:

12...♘d7 13.♘d3N

White should not rush with 13.e4?! as Black easily solves his problems with: 13...c5! 14.♖c1 cxd4 15.♙xd4 ♖a5 Drasko – Roiz, Internet 2004.

13...c5

The following line is important:

**14.e3!**

In *GM 2* I gave a line with 14.♘f4, but the text move is stronger and much simpler.

14...cxd4

14...♖b8 15.♘f4 is hardly acceptable for Black.

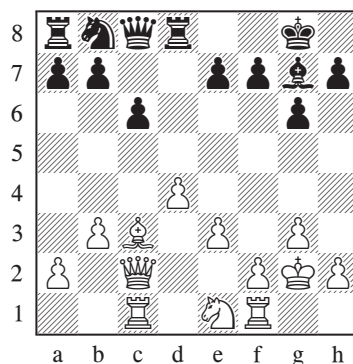
15.♙xd4 ♙xd4 16.exd4

The isolated pawn is not weak, and Black is clearly under pressure. The g2-bishop is very powerful, the b7-pawn is under fire, and the knight may cause trouble by going to c5 or f4 next.

12...♖c8

Against this move, I found no reason to change my analysis from *GM 2*.

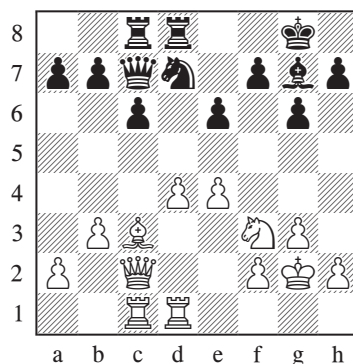
13.♖c1 ♘d8 14.e3 ♙h3 15.♖c2 ♙xg2 16.♙xg2 16.♘xg2!?N is a viable alternative, with ideas such as ♖fd1, e3-e4 and ♘e3.

**16...♘d7 17.♘f3 ♖c7**

17...♘f6 can be met by 18.♖fe1 followed by e3-e4.

18.♖fd1 ♖ac8 19.e4 e6

This is more or less a typical position for the present variation. Black has a solid position, but he is not completely equal because of White's strong pawn centre and extra space. We will follow an illustrative game for a few more moves.

**20.♙d2!**

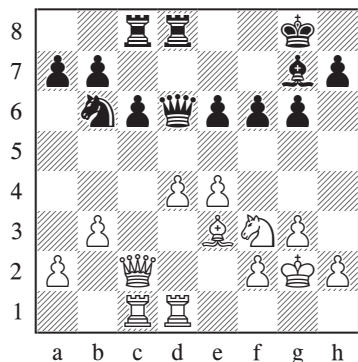
This bishop will be more active on the c1-h6 diagonal. Moreover, the open c-file means that ...e5 can now be met by d4-d5.

20...♖d6 21.♙g5 f6

The fact that Black felt the need to play this move is clearly a good sign for White. Obviously Black's pawn on f6 restricts his bishop and makes his king slightly more exposed.

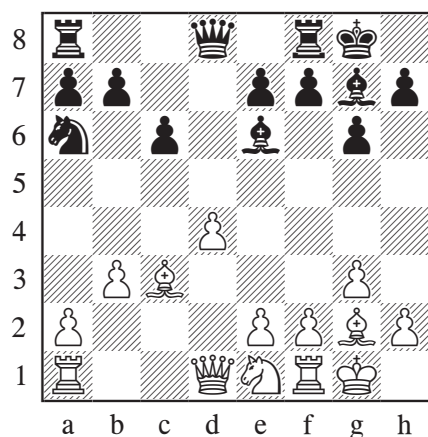
22. ♖e3 ♜b6

We have been following Cvitan – Tratar, Rabac 2003. This is the right moment to improve White's play:



23. a4! N f5 24. ♕f4 ♖a3 25. ♞e1

White retains the better chances in a complicated position.



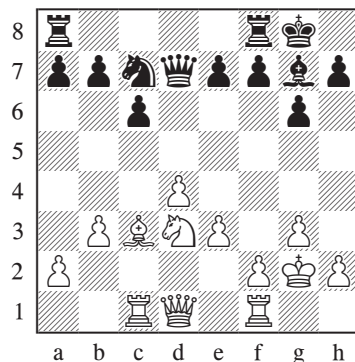
13. ♞c1!

I presented this natural move as a novelty in *GM 2*, and it has since been tested in a few games.

13. e3 is less precise: 13... ♕d5 14. ♞c1 (after 14. e4 ♕e6 15. ♖d2 ♜c7 16. ♞d1 ♜b5 17. ♕b2 ♖b6 Black's pressure against the d4-pawn gives him good play) 14... ♕xg2 15. ♜xg2 ♖d5† 16. ♖f3 ♖xf3† 17. ♜xf3 A draw was agreed here in Mikhalechishin – Tratar, Sibenik 2007.

13... ♜c7

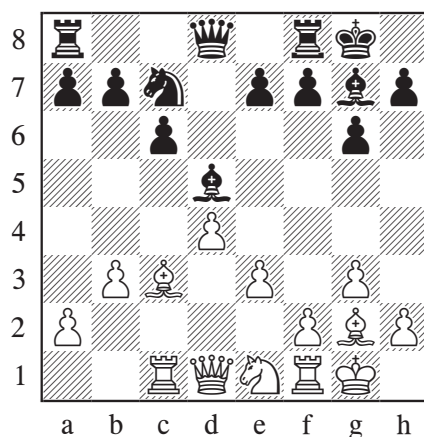
In the second game, Black varied with: 13... ♖d7 14. e3 ♕h3 15. ♜d3 ♕xg2 16. ♜xg2 ♜c7



This was D. Nguyen – Ramnath, Ho Chi Minh City 2016, and now either 17. ♖f3 N± or 17. ♖e2 N± would have maintained better chances for White, thanks to his extra space and central control.

14. e3 ♕d5

I also examined 14... ♜b5 N 15. ♕b2 ♕d5 16. ♜d3 (16. f3 ♕h6! would be slightly annoying) 16... ♕xg2 17. ♜xg2 ♖d5† 18. f3± and White is better.



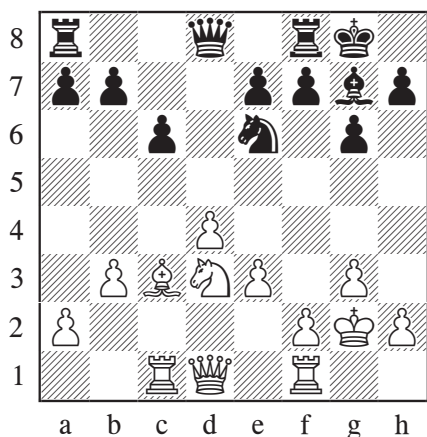
15. ♜d3

My line from *GM 2* was 15. e4 N ♕e6 16. a4! f5 17. ♜d3 fxe4 18. ♜c5! ♖b8 19. ♜xe4 ♜d5

20.♙b2± with an edge for White, who can generate pressure along the e-file. You could certainly consider this as well, but for this book I prefer a more restrained approach, avoiding any big changes in the position until the pieces have been developed to good squares.

15...♙g2 16.♙xg2 ♖e6

16...a5 17.♖c2 gives White the usual slight edge.



**17.♖e2 ♖d5† 18.f3 ♗fd8 19.♗fd1 ♗ac8
20.♙b4!±**

White kept the usual space advantage in
Krishna – Ramnath, Chennai 2015.

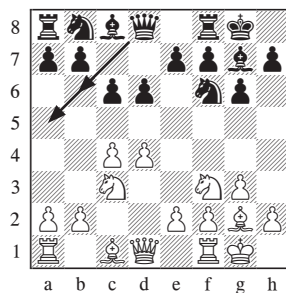
Conclusion

6...c6 is a flexible move which can lead to all kinds of positions. After the obvious 7.0–0 we looked at four main options (with more to follow in the next chapter). Firstly, 7...♙e6 is not much of a challenge, as 8.d5 gives White an easy game thanks to his space advantage. 7...a6 8.e4 also gives White a lot of central control, although the analysis after 8...♙g4 contains some important nuances which are worth knowing. We then looked at 7...♖a6, when 8.e4 e5 resembles some of the main lines from later chapters. Black should probably take the opportunity to transpose to one of those lines, otherwise the knight may prove to be misplaced on a6.

Finally we looked at 7...♙f5, which is by far the most popular and important of the options examined in this chapter. I recommend 8.♖e1 intending e2–e4. Then 8...d5 seems premature due to 9.♖b3, attacking b7 and d5. 8...♖c8 (or 8...♖d7) 9.e4 also gives White easy play, as exchanging the g2-bishop is not much of an achievement for Black. 8...e5 is a better option, although I still like White's chances after 9.d5. And finally, 8...♙e6 9.b3 d5 10.cxd5 gives Black a choice of recaptures, each of which leads to some kind of Grünfeld structure where Black is solid, but suffers from a slight lack of space and limited prospects of counterplay.



King's Indian



7...♔b6 & 7...♔a5

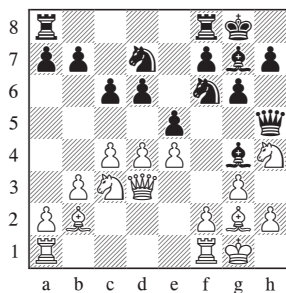
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♘g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 c6

7.0-0

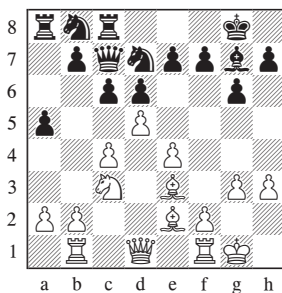
A) 7...♔b6 8.b3	128
A1) 8...♔a5	128
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A3) 8...e5	132
B) 7...♔a5 8.e4	134
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B4) 8...e5 9.h3	148
B41) 9...♙e6	148
B42) 9...♘a6	149
B43) 9...exd4	151

A1) after 12...e5



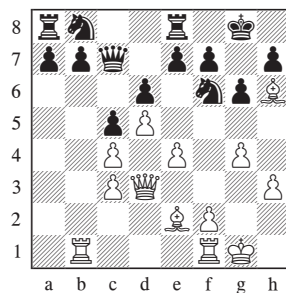
13.h3!N

B1) after 15...♔c7



16.h4!N

B33) after 17...♔c7



18.f4!N→

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♘g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 c6 7.0-0

In this chapter we will conclude our investigation of the 6...c6 complex by considering two queen moves: A) 7...♙b6 and B) 7...♙a5.

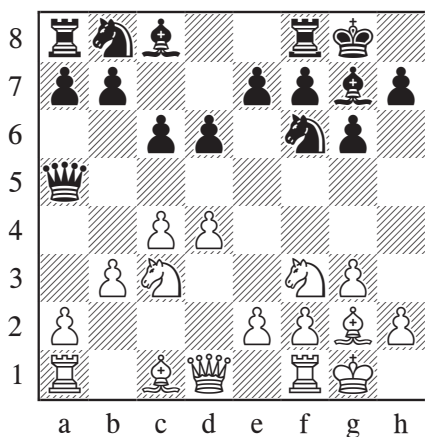
A) 7...♙b6

This is quite a popular and tricky sideline. My recommendation on the next move is the same as in *GM 2*, but I made some important changes in the lines that follow.

8.b3

Now A1) 8...♙a5, A2) 8...♘bd7 and A3) 8...e5 all require attention.

A1) 8...♙a5



Black wants to transfer his queen to h5, and reasons that the attack on the c3-knight will reduce White's options, justifying the lost tempo with the queen. Still, the whole idea strikes me as too artificial.

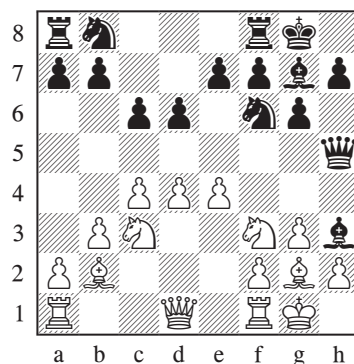
9.♘b2

9.♙d2 has been more popular but I see no reason to refrain from the most natural developing move. For some reason White has scored poorly in the database, but this

has nothing to do with the quality of Black's opening scheme.

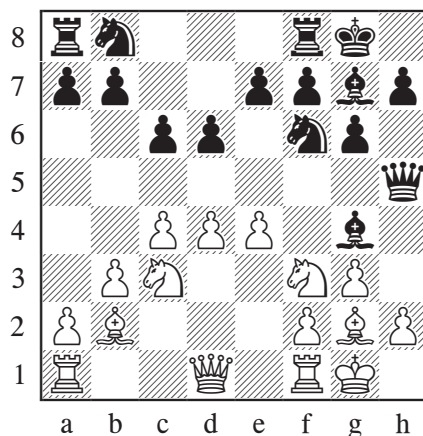
9...♙h5 10.e4 ♘g4

10...♘h3 was played in Aloma Vidal – Cuenca Jimenez, La Roda 2010, when White failed to find the best reply:



11.♙e1! N White threatens to push the e-pawn, as I pointed out in *GM 2*. 11...♘g4 (11...♘g2 12.♙xg2 e5 13.h3 leaves Black's queen misplaced on h5) 12.♘h4 ♘xg2 13.♙xg2 Black achieves nothing on the kingside and White is in full control.

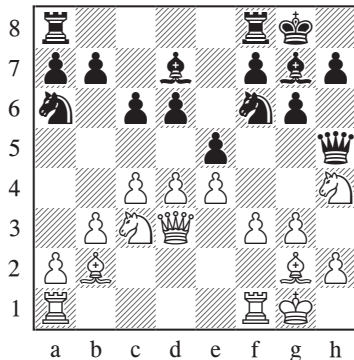
10...♘a6 was a more recent try, but after 11.e5 dxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘g4 13.♘f3 ♙a5 14.h3 ♘h6 15.♙e2± Black's opening strategy had clearly failed in Dvirnyy – Markus, Skopje 2013.



11.♖d3 ♜bd7

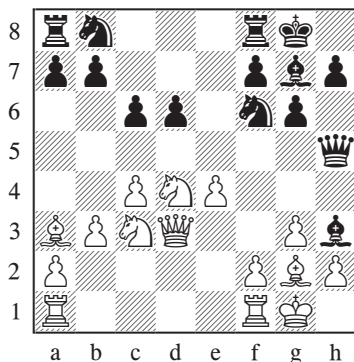
Black has tried two other moves:

11...♞a6 was seen in Barrionuevo – Converset, Buenos Aires 2011, when 12.♞h4!N would have been good for White. For instance: 12...e5 13.f3 ♞d7



14.♞d1! ♞fe8 15.♞e3± White regroups to reach a harmonious position, while the queen still looks weird on h5.

11...e5 occurred in Akshay – D. Petrosian, Visakhapatnam 2012, and now 12.♞a3N looks promising, for instance: 12...exd4 13.♞xd4 ♞h3 As usual, the bishop exchange does not achieve much.



14.f3 ♞xg2 15.♞xg2 ♞a6 16.♞ad1 ♞ad8 17.♞e3±

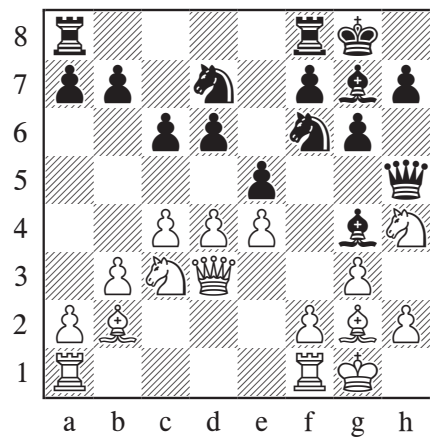
12.♞h4!

This ambitious move underlines the misplacement of Black's pieces on the kingside.

12.♞fe1 is too soft, and 12...e5 was okay for Black in Roiz – Carlsen, Rishon Le Zion (blitz) 2006.

12...e5

12...g5?! 13.♞f5 ♞xf5 14.exf5± was poor for Black in Kolosowski – M. Rudolf, Mrzezyno 2011.

**13.h3!N**

This is stronger than 13.f3 ♞e6 14.♞e2, as occurred in Friedrich – Lorscheid, Wuerttemberg 1995.

13...♞e6 14.d5

White has an excellent position, as my analysis from *GM 2* demonstrated.

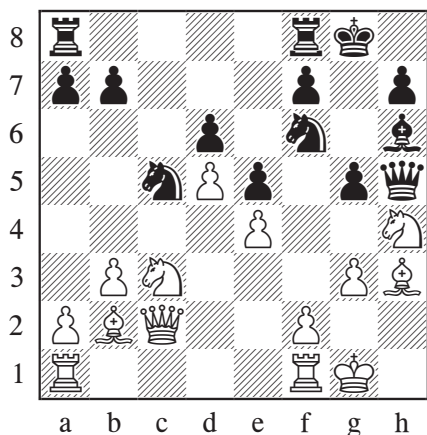
14...♞c5 15.♞d2 cxd5 16.cxd5 ♞h6

16...♞d7 runs into the surprising 17.♞c1!, when Black has to give up his g-pawn in order to defend against the threat of ♞f3.

17.♞c2 ♞xh3

Obviously 17...♞d7? loses to 18.♞f3.

18.♞xh3 g5



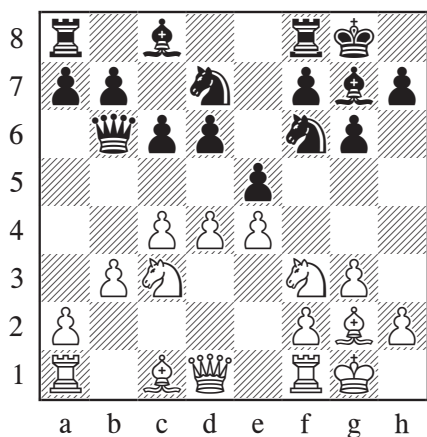
19. ♖f5! ♜xh3 20. f3

Despite being temporarily a pawn up, Black's position is difficult to handle, for instance:

20...g4 21. ♜f2!+-

Black is helpless against the threat of ♜h2.

A2) 8... ♖bd7 9. e4 e5



10. ♜b1!

I now believe this prophylactic move to be White's best.

10.d5 ♖c5 should be fine for Black.

10. ♜e1 was my suggestion in *GM 2*, but after 10...exd4 11. ♖a4 (11. ♖xd4 ♖g4! is fine for Black) 11...♜d8! 12. ♙f4 ♜e8! Black proved to be okay in De Oliveira – Pugh, corr. 2013.

10...exd4

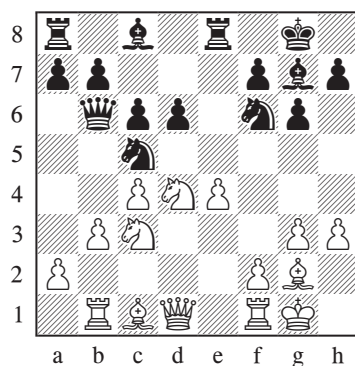
This is Black's usual reply.

10...♜e8

This has also been played in a number of games. I suggest:

11. h3 exd4 12. ♖xd4 ♖c5

12... ♖xe4?! is not a good idea: 13. ♖xe4 and now both 13... ♙xd4 14. ♖xd6± and 13... ♜xd4 14. ♖xd6 ♜xd1 15. ♜xd1 ♜d8 16. ♙g5 f6 17. ♙e3± leave Black in obvious difficulties.



13. ♙e3!N

This simple move is much stronger than 13. ♜e1 ♙d7 14. ♙e3 ♖fxe4 15. ♖xe4 ♖xe4, as occurred in Bagaturov – Kotronias, Chania 2000. Despite having a lot of interesting possibilities connected with the discovered attack against the enemy queen, I was unable to find anything conclusive.

13... ♜c7

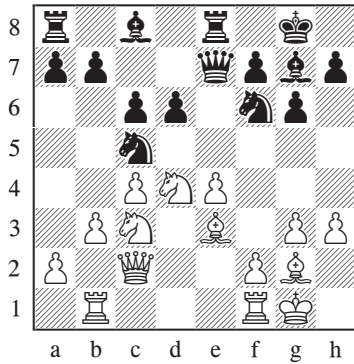
13... ♖fxe4?! doesn't work in view of 14. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 15. ♖e6 and Black will be in trouble after losing his dark-squared bishop. Black can try giving up his queen with 15... ♙xe6 16. ♙xb6 ♖c3, but 17. ♜xd6 axb6 18. ♜be1 leaves White much better.

13...a5 allows 14. ♜c2 when White can comfortably arrange his pieces on their best squares.

14. ♜c2 ♜e7

This is the only reasonable attempt to

disrupt White's plan of optimally arranging his pieces. However, we have a good reply:



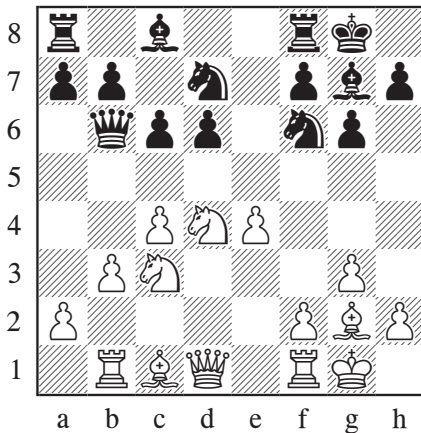
15.♖b6! ♔d7 16.♕c1

Preventing all counterplay.

16...a5 17.♖e2! ♗f8 18.♖d1

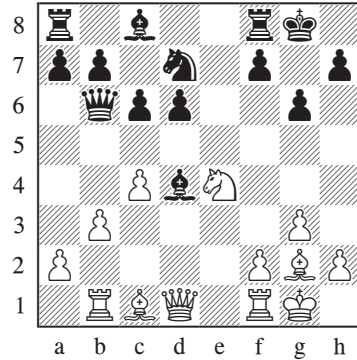
White completes his regrouping and has excellent prospects in the middlegame.

11.♘xd4



11...♘c5

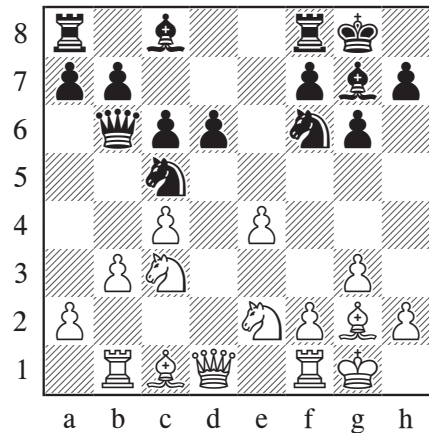
An important alternative is: 11...♘xe4 12.♘xe4 ♔xd4 (12...♗xd4?! is never played with good reason, as after 13.♕e3 ♗xd1 14.♖bxdl White is clearly better) White has tried a few seemingly attractive moves from here without finding anything convincing. However, a recent correspondence game showed a near refutation of Black's play:



13.b4! ♕g7 14.♘xd6 ♘f6 15.c5 ♗c7 16.♕f4 ♘h5 17.♕e3 a6 18.a4 ♖d8 19.b5± White had an overwhelming advantage in T. Williams – Terreaux, corr. 2014.

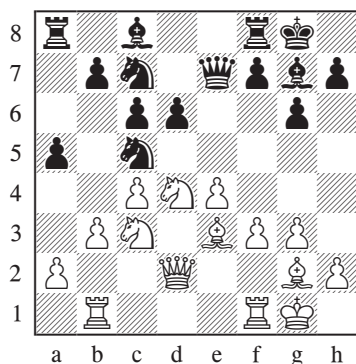
12.♘de2!

Avoiding possible tricks along the h8-a1 diagonal. White will slowly but surely bring his pieces to the right squares, while Black has a hard time finding counterplay.



12...♖e8

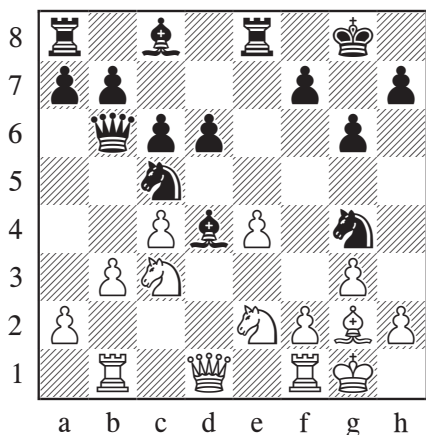
Another direction is: 12...a5 13.♕e3 ♗c7 14.f3 Playing this move is not such a bad thing when h2-h3 has not been played. White will strengthen his position and eventually play f3-f4 when the time is right. 14...♘e8 15.♘d4 ♗e7 16.♗d2 ♘c7 In F. Olafsson – Timman, Amsterdam 1976, White should have continued:



17.f4!N With the idea to meet 17...f5 with: 18.exf5 ♗xf5 (18...gxf5 19.♖fe1 is also clearly better for White) 19.♘xf5 gxf5 20.♗bd1 ♗7e6 21.♗e2± White has a solid positional advantage.

13.♗e3 ♗g4 14.♗d4 ♗xd4

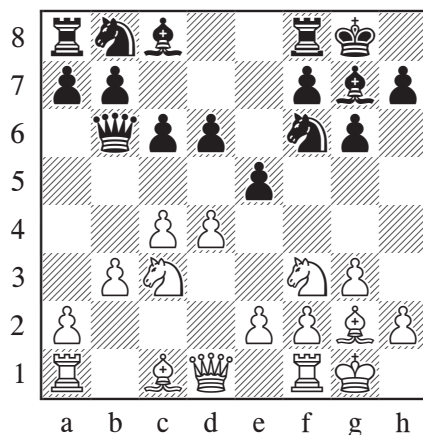
We have been following Abramovic – Geler, Tivat 2011. White is better after both recaptures, but the more convincing option is:



15.♗xd4!N ♗e5 16.h3 ♗cd3 17.♗ce2±

Black's opening strategy has obviously failed, and White is clearly better.

A3) 8...e5



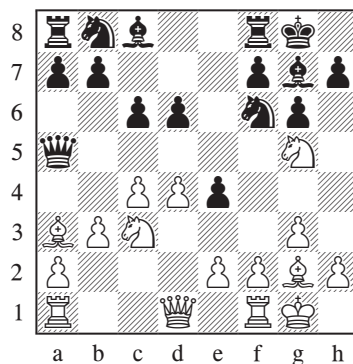
9.♗a3

This is another important change of direction.

9.d5 was my previous recommendation. Then 9...cxd5 10.cxd5 e4 11.♗g5 was my novelty from GM 2, which has been tested in a bunch of games. Even though White's results have been decent, I now find the positions after both 11...♗f5 12.♗e3 ♔d8 and 11...♗g4 12.♗b2 e3 13.f3 ♗f6 to be pretty unclear.

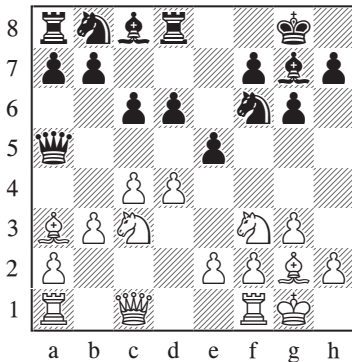
9...♗d8

The dubious 9...e4?! has been played a few times. Surprisingly, White has yet to find the best reply: 10.♗g5!N ♔a5 Otherwise Black loses a pawn.



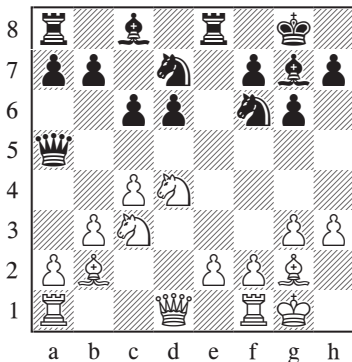
11.♖c1! Defending three pieces at the same time. 11...e3 12.f4± White is ahead in development and the pawns on e3 and d6 are weak.

9...♗a5 10.♖c1 ♖d8 has been played a couple of times. In both games White continued with b3-b4, but I don't see much point in pushing the queen away from a5. A natural improvement is:



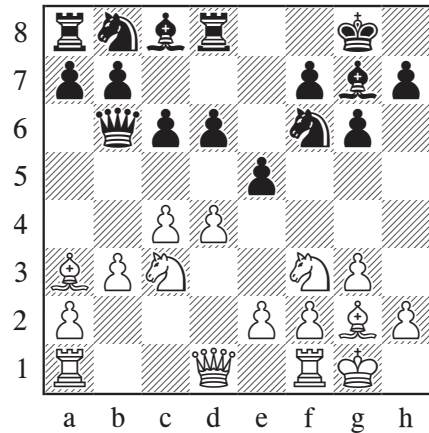
11.♖d1N exd4 (this is virtually forced, as 11...e4?! 12.♗d2 d5 13.♗e7! ♖e8 14.b4 wins material) 12.♗xd4 ♗h5 13.♗f3± White is much better.

White also has an easy game after: 9...exd4 10.♗xd4 ♗a5 11.♗b2 (11.♖c1!? also deserves consideration) 11...♖e8 12.h3 ♗bd7



13.e3!? (obviously 13.e4 is a valid alternative, but I like the idea of keeping the diagonal open

for the g2-bishop) 13...♗c5 14.♖c2 ♗b6 15.♖fd1 a5 16.a3 h5 17.♖ab1 ♗d7 18.♗a1± In Meier – Prusikin, Saarbruecken 2009, White had a harmonious position with a clear plan of attacking on the queenside.

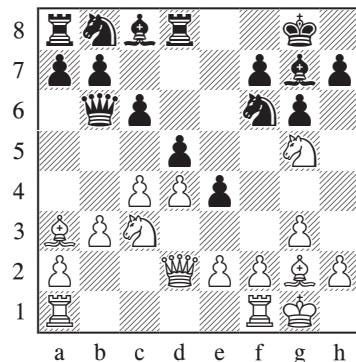


10.♗d2

10.♖c2!?N also deserves consideration, as 10...exd4 11.♗a4 ♗a5 12.♗xd4 looks quite promising for White.

10...♗g4

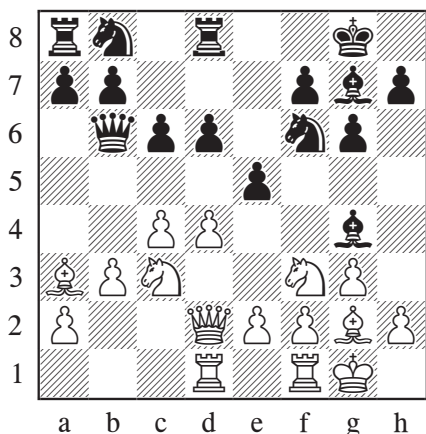
Obviously we must consider 10...e4N, but White is well placed to deal with it: 11.♗g5 d5



12.♗c5! ♖c7 (I also checked 12...♗a6 13.♗e7 ♖e8 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♖f4!→ with a nice initiative for White; but not 15.cxd5? e3! when Black wins material) 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.♗b5 ♖c6 15.♗xa7 White wins a pawn.

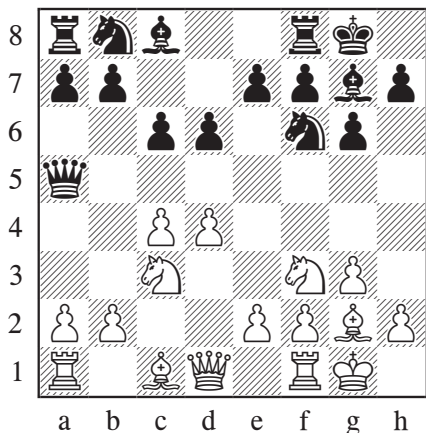
11.♖ad1

I only found one game from here, which continued:



11...♙xf3 12.♙xf3 exd4 13.♘a4 ♔c7
14.♙xd4 ♘e8 15.♙f4±

White obtained a pleasant advantage in Neverov – Sindarov, Al Ain 2015.

B) 7...♙a5

This is by far Black's most popular option.

8.e4

8.h3 is a reasonable alternative but, instead of transposing to our main line with 8...e5 9.e4, Black has other interesting options such as 8...♙e6 and 8...♙a6.

We will analyse four options: **B1) 8...♙e6**, **B2) 8...♙h5**, **B3) 8...♙g4** and **B4) 8...e5**.

B1) 8...♙e6

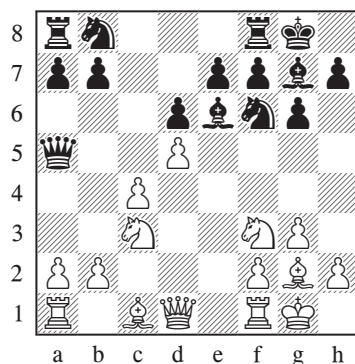
This is a decent option against 8.h3 but it's not so good here.

9.d5

I see no reason to refrain from this ambitious continuation.

9...♙g4

Obviously Black should refrain from 9...cxd5?! due to 10.exd5!, when the e7-pawn becomes a clear target. A good illustrative game continued:



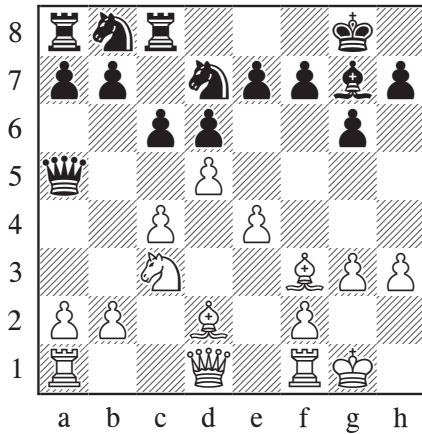
10...♙d7 11.♙e2 ♔e8 12.♙d2 ♙d8 13.♙e3 ♙c8 14.♙ac1 ♘g4 15.♙d4 e5 16.dxe6 ♙xe6 17.♙d1± White had an obvious positional advantage in Badea – Teodorescu, Herculane 1996.

10.h3 ♙xf3 11.♙xf3 ♙c8

In the event of 11...♙bd7 12.♙d2 ♘e5 13.♙e2± White remains on top thanks to his bishop pair and space advantage.

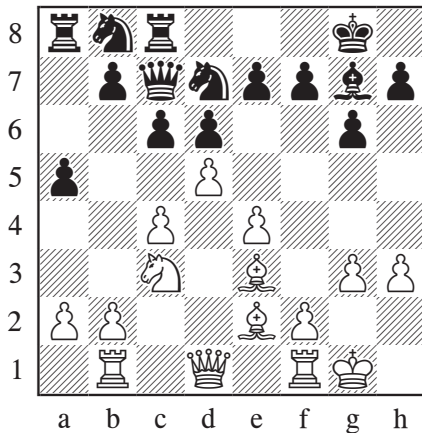
A more recent game continued 11...♙fd7 12.♙d2 ♘e5 13.♙e2 ♙b6, Kashlinskaya – Drozdova, Khanty-Mansiysk 2014, and now 14.♙b1N± would have preserved a typical advantage for White.

12.♔d2 ♖fd7



13.♔e2 ♗b6 14.♖b1 a5 15.♔e3 ♗c7

This occurred in Blagojevic – Arsovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1998, and here I found a strong idea for White:



16.h4!N

This move often works well after Black has traded his light-squared bishop for the knight on f3.

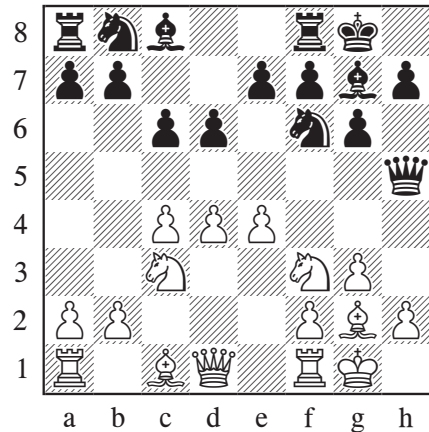
16...♖a6

After 16...h5 Black has to reckon on the dangerous idea of 17.g4!?: hxc4 18.♔xc4, followed by 19.h5. White has good chances to develop a dangerous offensive.

17.h5 ♖ac5 18.♗c2

White has an excellent position with lots of space, two bishops and active prospects on both flanks.

B2) 8...♗h5



Black is trying to drum up kingside play with ...♔g4 or ...♔h3, but White can easily prevent it.

9.♖g5

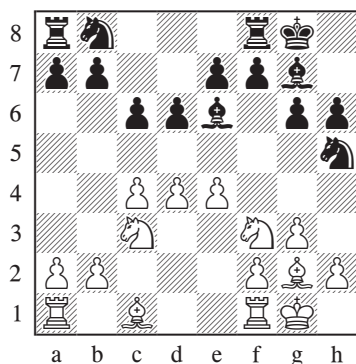
I find this more flexible than 9.e5 dxe5 10.♖xe5, which is the other popular reaction.

9...♗xd1

Black has some other options but the general picture is the same in most variations. One way or another, the queens will be exchanged and White will have a pleasant position thanks to his impressive pawn centre and well-placed pieces.

9...h6 10.♗xh5 ♖xh5 11.♖f3 ♔e6!?

Also after 11...♖a6 12.♔e3 ♔e6 13.b3 White maintains better chances, due to his spatial superiority. Here is a good example: 13...g5 14.♖fd1 f5 15.exf5 ♔xf5 16.♖e1 ♖f6 17.h3 ♖c7 18.♖ac1 ♖d7 Vasquez – Hamilton, Siegen (ol) 1970, and here White should have continued 19.♖d3N ♖ad8 20.d5 c5 21.f4, retaining the better chances.



12.e5!?

Most games have continued with 12.d5, which is certainly playable, but I am not really excited about opening the long diagonal for the g7-bishop.

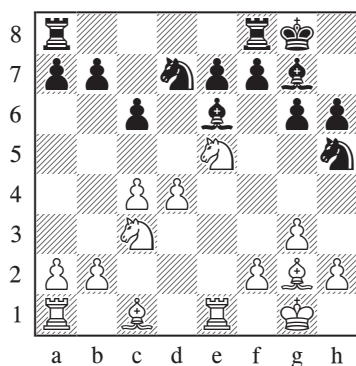
The idea of the text move is to restrict Black's knight on h5. I presented it as a novelty in *GM 2*, and it was finally tested in 2017.

12...♖d7!N

This is the most complex continuation and I will keep it as my main line.

12...♙xc4 13.g4 ♙xf1 occurred in Krishna – Sindler, Prague 2017. I still like my line from *GM 2*: 14.♙xf1N dxe5 15.dxe5 ♖d7 16.gxh5 g5 17.h4 g4 18.♖h2 ♖xe5 19.♙f4 I prefer White's chances; the minor pieces should do well against the rook and pawns.

13.♙e1 dxe5 14.♖xe5!



14...♗fe8

After 14...♖xe5 15.dxe5 ♗fd8 16.h3 the threat of g3-g4 becomes annoying for Black.

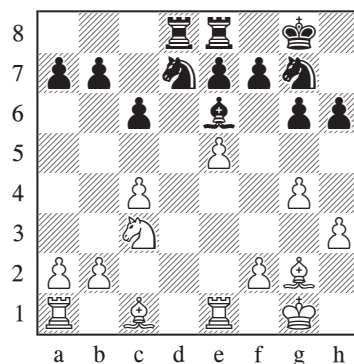
15.h3!

The immediate 15.♖xg6 ♙xd4∞ is not dangerous for Black, so White continues to build up his position.

15...♗ad8

15...♖hf6 allows an improved version of the aforementioned idea: 16.♖xg6 ♙xc4 17.b3! ♙e6 18.♙a3 with some initiative.

16.g4 ♙xe5 17.dxe5 ♖g7



18.b3!

18.♙xh6 ♙xc4 19.b3 ♙a6 is less convincing.

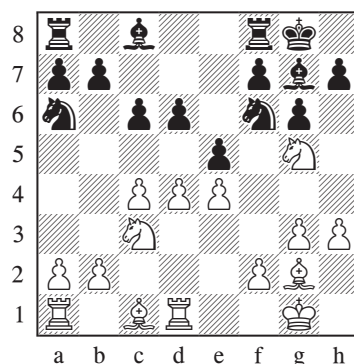
18...h5 19.f3 ♖c5 20.♙g5±

White keeps the upper hand thanks to his bishop pair, which could pay off in the long term.

9...♖a6 10.h3

This is a natural and useful move, which also forces Black to trade queens in view of the threat of ♙f3.

10...♙xd1 11.♗xd1 e5



12.♘f3!N

12.♙e3? is a mistake due to 12...exd4 13.♙xd4 ♖e8!, as in Rother – Jansa, Germany 1988. Black is threatening to play ...h6 and I do not see a comfortable way of defending the e4-pawn.

The text move seems to me to be an obvious improvement, as the knight has no further use on g5.

12...exd4

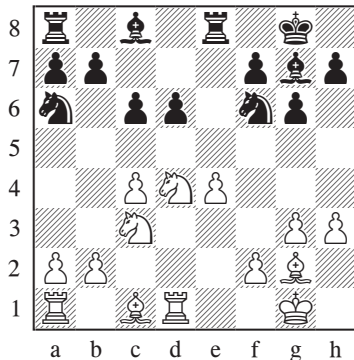
12...♖e8 can be met in typical fashion with 13.d5, underlining the fact that Black's rook is misplaced in the ensuing closed structure. Play may continue 13...cxd5 14.cxd5 ♙d7 15.♙e3 ♖ec8 16.♙f1 ♘c5 17.♘d2 with clearly better chances for White; even without queens, his space advantage is significant.

13.♘xd4 ♖e8

I checked two other possibilities:

13...♘c5 14.♘b3 ♖e8 15.♘xc5 dxc5 16.f4 ♙e6 17.e5 ♘d7 18.♘e4 White is obviously better.

13...♘d7 14.♘de2 ♘e5 15.b3 f5 16.♖xd6 fxe4 17.♙e3 ♘f3† 18.♙h1 and Black is about to lose his central pawn.



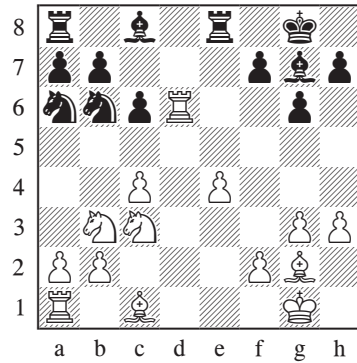
14.♘b3 ♘d7

14...♙f8 15.♙f4 ♖e6 holds the d6-pawn but looks awfully passive.

15.♖xd6 ♘b6

15...♘ac5 does not work in view of 16.♘xc5 ♘xc5 17.♙e3 ♙xc3 18.bxc3 ♘xe4

19.♙xe4 ♖xe4 20.♖d8† ♔g7 21.♖e1 f5 22.f3 ♖e6 23.♙f2 and White's initiative should be decisive.



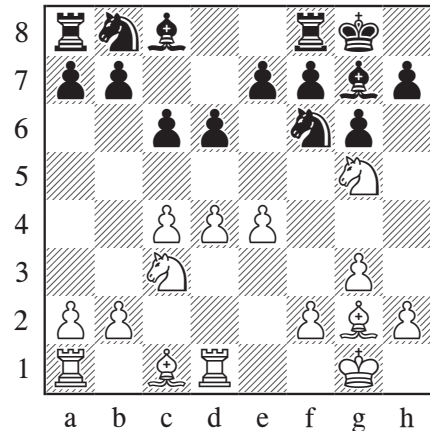
16.♙f1 ♙e5 17.♙f4!?

This isn't essential, but it seems like the simplest way to keep a clear advantage.

17...♙xd6 18.♙xd6

White has superb compensation for the exchange, due to Black's passively placed minor pieces.

10.♖xd1



10...e5

This has been Black's usual choice, gaining a foothold in the centre.

10...♘bd7 gives White a choice:

a) 11.f4 is an ambitious move, gaining space

in the centre, and was my recommendation in *GM 2*. However, Black can fight back with 11...h6 (or the immediate 11...e5!?, with similar ideas) 12.♘f3 e5!? 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.d5 ♖e8 followed by ...♙f8, as in Schwerteck – Steinbach, Lauffen am Neckar 2011. White may still be slightly better here, but Black at least has some play on the dark squares.

b) Therefore 11.♘f3 seems like a simpler option. A logical continuation would be 11...e5 12.h3 ♖e8, as in Rivas Pastor – Hernandez Gallardo, Onati 1994, when the thematic 13.d5N would have given White the usual slight advantage.

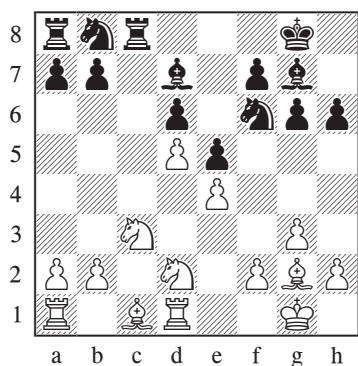
11.d5

11.♘f3 is another good option, when 11...♘bd7 transposes to the note above.

11...c5

Black is also slightly worse after other continuations. Here are a few examples:

A while after *GM 2* was published, 11...h6 12.♘f3 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♙d7 14.♘d2 ♖c8 occurred in a high-level game, which continued:



15.♙f1! ♙f8 16.f3 ♘a6 17.♘c4 White had a pleasant plus in Leko – Mamedyarov, Dortmund 2010, and later built up a winning advantage before going wrong and drawing.

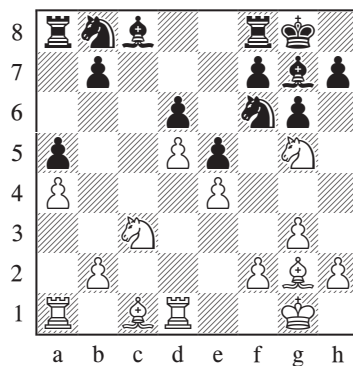
11...cxd5 12.cxd5

12.exd5!?N is an interesting alternative which I noted in *GM 2*, which remains untested. This method of recapturing is certainly worth considering in positions where Black has not yet driven the knight away from g5, as now it can go to e4 with good effect.

12...a6 13.a4 a5?

13...♘bd7 was better, although 14.♖a3 b6 15.♘f3± still favours White.

Black's last move was an unfortunate decision, as White is much better placed to take advantage of the b5-outpost than Black is with b4.



14.♘b5N

This is a bit more accurate than 14.♘f3, although White still went on to win convincingly after that move in Chiburdanidze – Mona, Abu Dhabi (rapid) 2007.

14...♘e8 15.♘f3 ♙g4

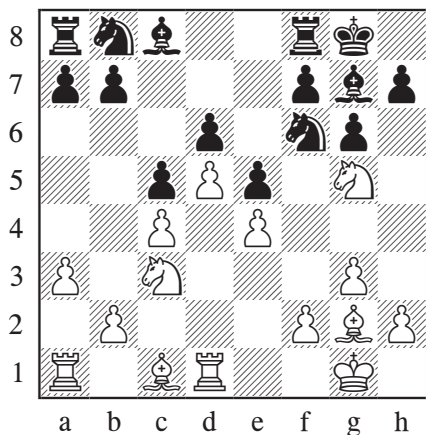
15...♘a6 is well met by 16.♘d2± followed by ♘c4.

16.h3 ♙xf3 17.♙xf3 ♘a6 18.♙e3

White is substantially better.

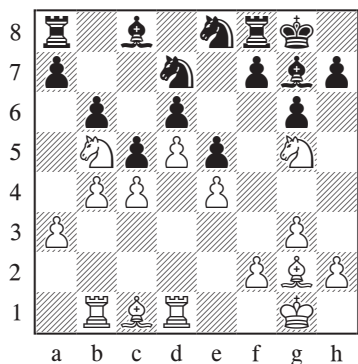
12.a3

White intends to build an initiative on the queenside, as is usually the case when this blocked structure occurs.

**12...h6**

This is Black's most recent try, but it doesn't change the assessment.

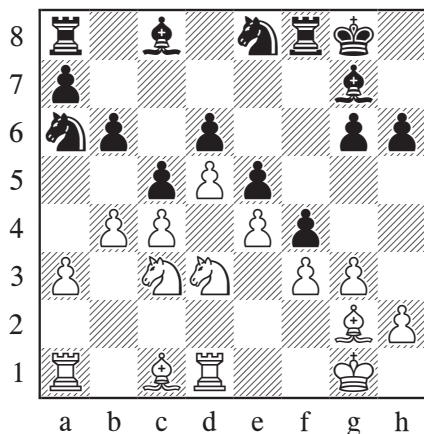
A previous game continued: 12...♘e8 13.b4 ♘d7 14.♖b1 b6 15.♘b5!? An interesting move, though it is far from the only good option. White is trying to make a nuisance of the knight in order to provoke ...a6, which will loosen Black's queenside.



15...♘d7 16.♖e1 h6 17.♘f3 ♔d7 18.♔d2 ♘h7 19.a4 Black had no real prospects on the kingside, and White continued developing his queenside play in Khismatullin – Gabdrakhmanov, Kazan 2007.

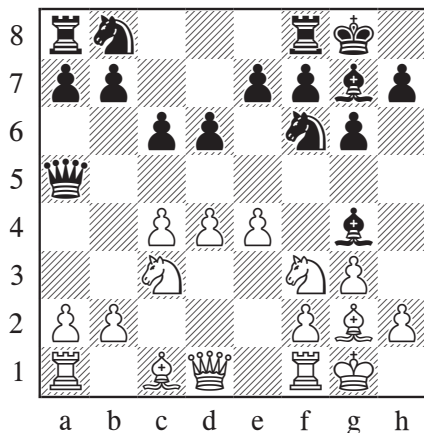
13.♘h3!? ♘e8 14.f3 f5 15.♘f2 f4 16.b4 ♘a6 17.♘d3 b6

Another problem for Black is that even when he does manage to carry out ...f5-f4, the absence of queens makes it hard for him to create meaningful threats on the kingside. The game continued:



18.♔d2 h5 19.♖a2 g5 20.♖b1 ♖f7 21.b5 ♘b8 22.a4 ♘d7 23.♘e2 ♔h6 24.gxf4 gxf4 25.a5±

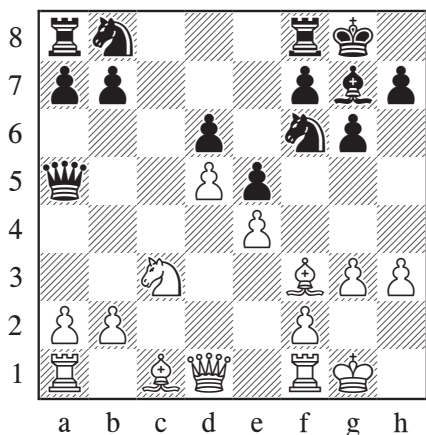
Black remained under pressure in Bacallao Alonso – Gomez Ledo, Panama City 2013.

B3) 8...♔g4

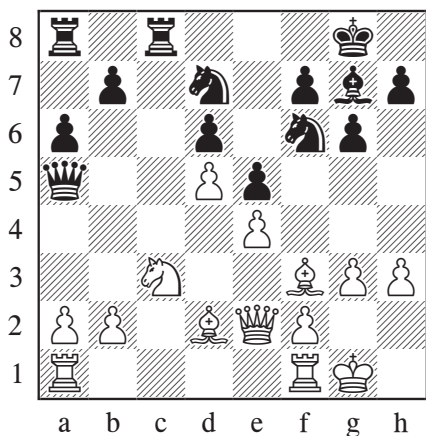
This move remains quite popular, but I find it hard to believe that Black can equalize by giving up his light-squared bishop.

9.h3 ♘xf3 10.♙xf3

Black has three main tries: **B31) 10...e5**, **B32) 10...♘bd7** and **B33) 10...♘fd7**.

B31) 10...e5 11.d5 cxd5 12.cxd5

Unlike most variations of the King's Indian, here Black intends to battle on the queenside. It is the only way to make sense of his position, especially the queen on a5.

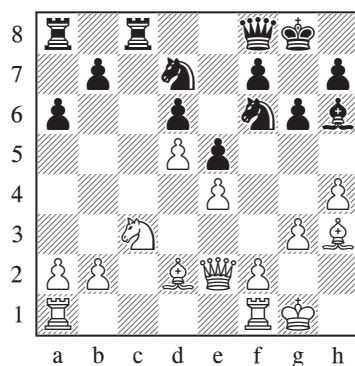
12...♘bd7 13.♙d2 ♖fc8 14.♙e2 a6

We have reached a typical early middlegame position for this variation. As I already mentioned above, I don't believe in Black's strategy of giving away his light-squared bishop. He is still in the game of course, but

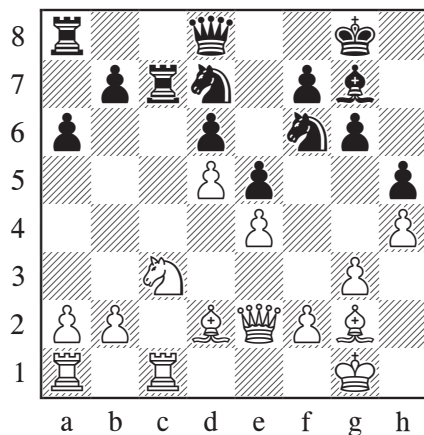
White's space advantage and bishop pair are important long-term trumps. From here, Black will usually try to force the trade of dark-squared bishops by means of ...h5 ...♘h7 and ...♙h6, or ...♙f8 and ...♙h6. White will try to avoid this exchange while also preparing to activate his own 'bad' bishop via h3. Let us see how these ideas may play out.

15.♖fc1

White can also begin an immediate transfer of his light-squared bishop with: 15.♙g2 ♙d8 16.h4 ♙f8 17.♙h3 ♙h6?! (Black should have settled for the modest 17...♖c7±)



18.♙g5! ♖c7 19.♖ac1 ♖ac8?! Under pressure, Black drops a pawn. 20.♙xf6! ♘xf6 21.♙xc8 ♙xc1 22.♙xb7! ♖xb7 23.♖xc1± Izoria – Khismatullin, Oropesa del Mar 2000.

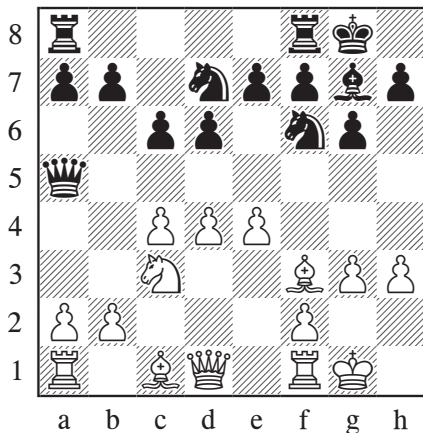
15...♙d8 16.h4 h5 17.♙g2 ♖c7

This position was reached in Marin – Grigore, Bucharest 1998. I think White should continue with:

10.♖c2 ♖ac8 19.♖ac1±

White's position is much easier to play. His space advantage is significant, and the bishop will go to the excellent h3-square next.

B32) 10...♘bd7



11.♗e2!?

This was my recommendation in *GM 2*, and I still find it the most interesting option.

The most popular move is still 11.♗e3, but after 11...c5 12.d5 ♖b4 13.♗b3 ♘b6 14.♗e2 a5 Black has reasonable counterplay.

11...♘e8

This is a logical attempt to generate counterplay on the central dark squares.

11...c5 runs into 12.e5! when Black is already in trouble, and after the further mistake 12...cxd4? 13.exf6 he was simply a piece down in Schreiner – Ebner, Austria 2011.

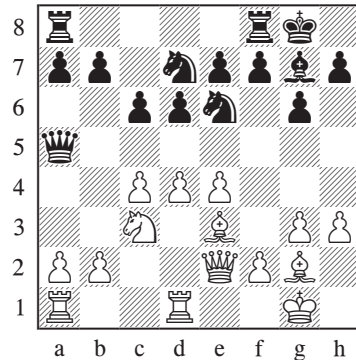
Most games have continued with 11...e5, but after 12.d5 cxd5 13.cxd5 a6 14.♗d2 ♖fc8 15.♖fc1 we get the same position as in variation B31 above.

12.♗d1 c5

Another game continued:

12...♘c7 13.♗e3 ♘e6 14.♗g2

I also found 14.♗g4!?N quite interesting, the point being to meet 14...h5 with 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.e5 dxe5 17.d5♗, with a promising initiative for the pawn.

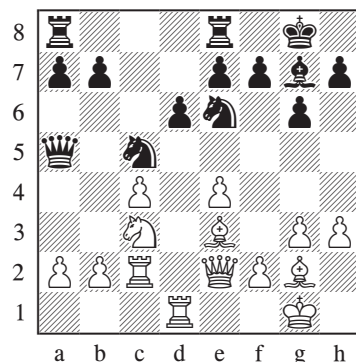


14...♖fe8 15.♖ac1 c5 16.dxc5 ♘dxc5

Black has achieved his aim of playing ...c5 and obtaining some space for his pieces. Still, White has an obvious space advantage and has mobilized his forces in an optimal way. His chances remain better, as shown by the game continuation.

17.♖c2!

This modest move prepares the ♘d5 jump, as the a2-pawn will now be untouchable in view of b2-b4, winning material.

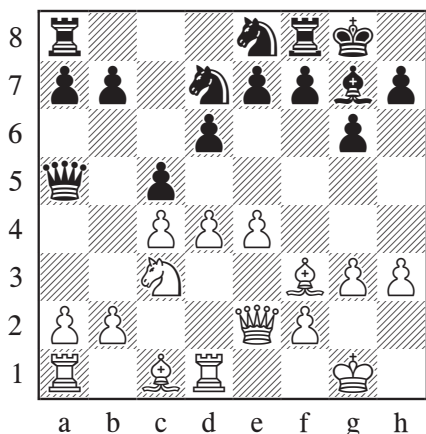


17...♖ac8 18.♘d5 ♘d7 19.b3 a6

19...♘e5N is a better try, but after 20.h4 ♘c6 21.♗h3 White keeps the upper hand.

20.h4 ♖d8 21.h5 ♜f6 22.hxg6 hxg6 23.♗h3

Black was under serious pressure in Izoria – Banikas, Yerevan 2000.



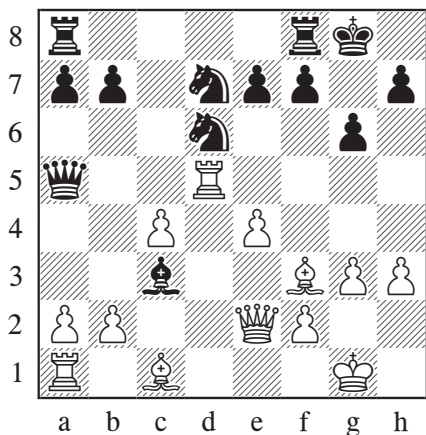
13.dxc5 ♗xc3

13...♜xc5 is strongly met by 14.b4! ♖xb4 15.♜d5 ♖a4 16.♜xe7 ♜h8 17.♖b1 and White keeps some advantage.

14.cxd6 ♜xd6 15.♗d5!

15.bxc3 ♜e5 16.♗g2 ♜exc4 gave Black a decent game in Baburin – Kaufman, New York 1997.

The text move was my novelty in *GM 2*, and it was subsequently used to good effect by one of the Quality Chess team.



15...♜c5N

This seems like Black's best try.

The game continued 15...♖a4?! 16.bxc3 ♜b6 17.c5 ♜xd5 18.exd5 ♜f5 19.g4 ♜g7 20.♖b1+ and White was dominating in Greet – D. Ledger, Canterbury 2010. Black's extra exchange is irrelevant, as White's bishops and central pawns are much too strong.

I also analysed:

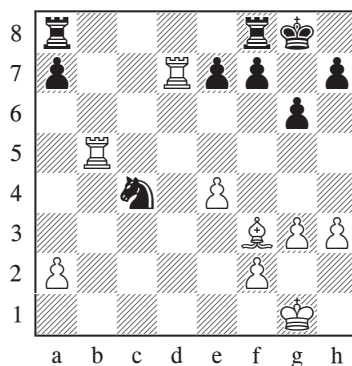
15...b5N 16.bxc3 ♖xc3

16...♜b6 17.c5 is similar to the game noted above. 17...♜xd5 18.exd5 ♜c4 (after 18...♜f5?! White takes complete control with 19.g4 or 19.♗d2) 19.♗h6 ♖xc3 20.♖e1 White has superb compensation for the exchange.

17.♗b2 ♖xc4 18.♖xc4 ♜xc4

Black temporarily has an extra pawn, but White wins it straight back while keeping the initiative.

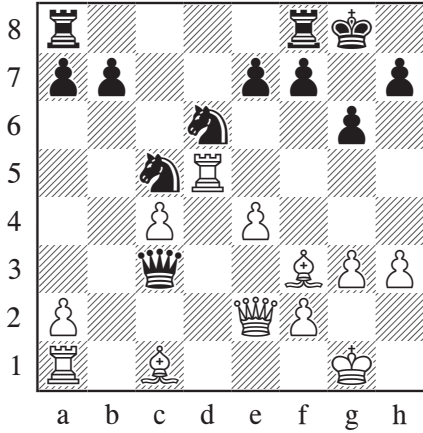
19.♖xd7 ♜xb2 20.♖b1 ♜c4 21.♖xb5



21...e6 22.♖c5 ♜b6 23.♖b7 ♖fb8 24.♖bc7

The arising endgame looks difficult for Black.

16.bxc3 ♖xc3

**17.♖b1!**

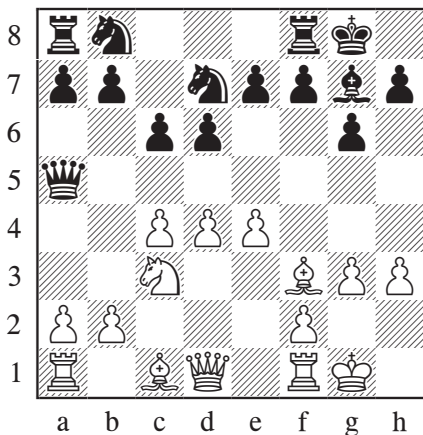
This is much stronger than 17.♗b2 ♖xc4 18.♗xc4 ♘xc4 19.♖xc5 ♗xb2 20.♖b5 ♘c4 21.♖xb7 e6 when Black has good chances to hold the endgame.

17...♖ac8 18.♗h6 ♖fd8

18...♖fe8 19.♗g4 ♘e6 20.e5 ♘xc4 21.♖xb7 also leaves Black with some problems to solve.

19.♖bd1 ♘e6 20.♗g4!

White keeps the initiative.

B33) 10...♘fd7

This has been Black's most common choice. The knight steps out of the way of the g7-bishop, while supporting ...c5.

11.♖b1!

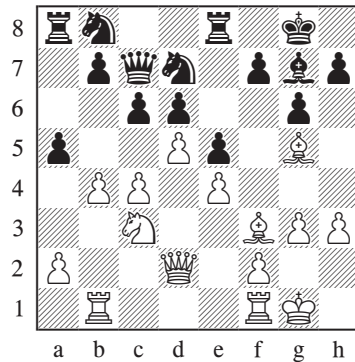
The more common 11.♗e3 seems less convincing to me after 11...♖b4 12.♖b3 a5.

11...c5

This is the consistent move, but I also checked three other ideas:

11...♖b4? is senseless here; after 12.♗e2 ♖b6 13.♗e3± Black had nothing to show for the lost tempos jumping with his queen in Aronian – Ahn, Batumi 1999.

11...a6 is passive and allows White to seize the initiative. 12.b4 ♖c7 13.♗g5 ♖e8 14.♖d2 e5 15.d5 a5 This position was reached in A. Petrosian – Micic, Dortmund 1998, and now I propose:



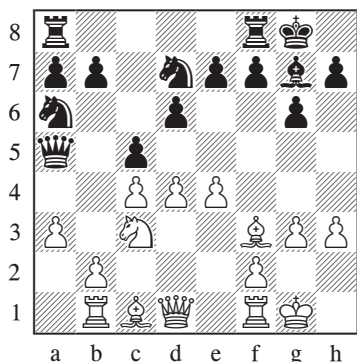
16.b5!N With the following tactical justification: 16...c5 17.b6! ♘xb6 18.♘b5 ♖d7 19.♗g4 f5 20.exf5 h5 21.♗e2 gxf5 22.♗xh5 ♖f8 23.♖e2 White has a huge positional advantage.

11...♘a6

This has been played in a couple of games. I suggest:

12.a3 c5

Otherwise b2-b4 would be excellent for White. Here I found a nice improvement:



13.dxc5 Nxc5 14.e5!

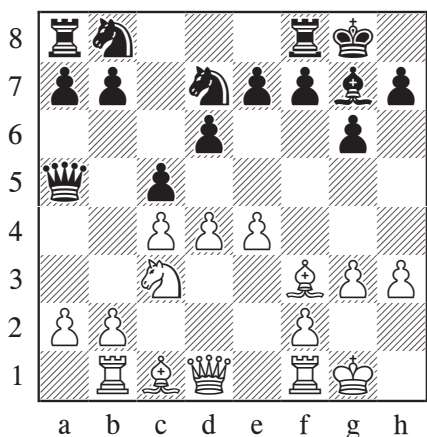
I really like the idea of activating our light-squared bishop.

14...Bxc4

14...Bxc4 15.Bxb7 Bxc4 16.Bxa8 Bxa8 17.Bd5 gives Black no real compensation for being the exchange down.

15.exd6 exd6 16.Bxb7 Bxb8 17.Bd5 Bc8 18.Bd4

White enjoys a pleasant positional advantage, thanks to his bishop pair and better pawn structure.



12.d5

12.e5!? is certainly interesting, but the text move offers White excellent chances.

12...Bxc3

This has been the usual choice. Black wins a pawn, but giving up the dark-squared bishop

carries obvious risks. I checked three other continuations.

12...a6

This is met strongly by:

13.Be2! Bf6

Black would like to play 13...b5 but it doesn't work. Play continues 14.cxb5 axb5 15.Bxb5 Bxc3 16.bxc3 Bxc3 17.a4± when, despite the material balance, White's bishop pair makes all the difference.

14.a4 Bxd8 15.Bg5 e6

This occurred in Izoria – Paragua, Heraklio 2002. White is better after any sensible move, but I especially like the following idea:

16.dxe6 Nfxe6 17.e5! dxe5 18.Bxd8 Bxd8 19.Bg4 Bf7

19...Bc6 20.Bxe6+ Bh8 21.Bd5 also gives White some advantage.

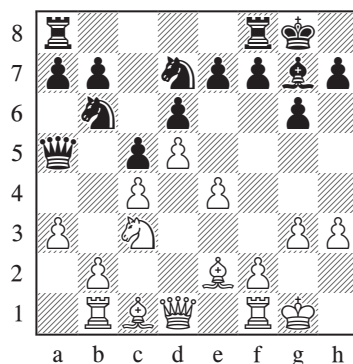
20.f4!

White has a serious initiative.

12...Bb6 13.Be2 B8d7 14.a3!

This concrete approach works well.

14.Bc2 Be5 would be less clear.



14...Bxc3! N

This seems like the only critical idea.

14...Bxa6 15.Bb5 left Black passively placed in Goldin – Har Zvi, Rishon Le Zion 1995. His queenside pieces are in each other's way, while White enjoys the bishop pair and a considerable space advantage.

15.bxc3 ♖xc3

Black wins a pawn but White obtains powerful compensation by simple means.

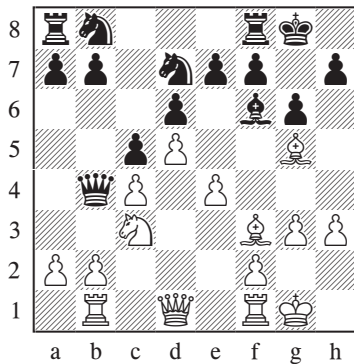
16.♗b2 ♗a5 17.♖c1

White has two strong bishops and good attacking chances.

12...♗b4 13.♗g5 ♗f6

13...♗b6?! is senseless, as Hillarp Persson pointed out in *ChessBase Magazine* 69. The point becomes clear after 14.♗e2!, when 14...♗xc4? 15.a3 ♗xa3 16.♗a2! ♖xe4 17.bxa3 is winning for White.

13...f6 14.♗d2 ♖xc4 also doesn't work for Black: 15.♗e2 ♖d4 (15...♗b4 16.♗b5 ♖xe4 is the same thing) 16.♗b5 ♖xe4 17.♗c7± This line was also indicated by Hillarp Persson.



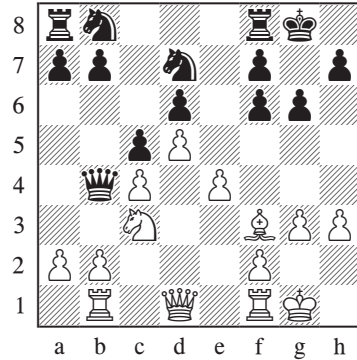
When I checked for recent games in this variation, I was surprised to see three correspondence games, all with the same player on Black's side, all of them resulting in wins for White.

14.♗xf6

14.♗h6!? ♗g7 15.♗xg7 ♗xg7 16.♗e2± was a suggestion from Marin, which was tested successfully in Glushenkov – Lanin, corr. 2012.

14...exf6

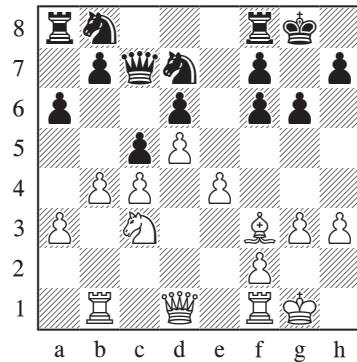
14...♗xf6 15.♗e2 favours White, as he has an easy plan of advancing his f- and e-pawns, while it is not clear how Black will find counterplay.



15.♗b5!

I like this energetic move, although the modest 15.♗e2 also favoured White in Marin – Hillarp Persson, Gothenburg 1999.

15...a6 16.a3 ♗a5 17.b4 ♖b6 18.♗c3 ♖c7 18...cxb4 19.axb4 ♖c7 20.♗e2 was clearly better for White in D. Bekker Jensen – Engelbert, Gausdal 2000.



19.♗b3

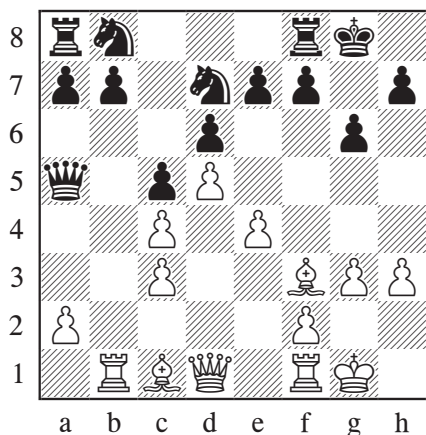
I will give this as the main line, as it was played in a relatively recent correspondence game, but the exact move order doesn't matter too much.

19.♗e2 ♖e8 20.♗b3 ♖a7 21.♗g2 also gave White a stable edge in Schlosser – Prusikin, Passau 1996.

19...♖e8 20.♖fc1 b6 21.♗e2 ♗g7 22.♗g2 h5 23.f4±

Black had no counterplay and White went on to win a nice game in G. Evans – Lanin, corr. 2012.

13.bxc3



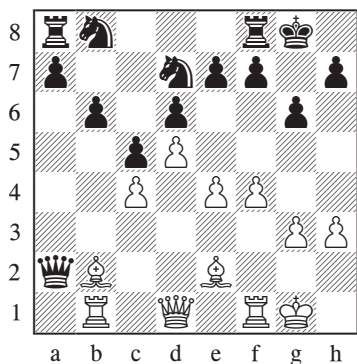
13...♖xa2

Black has also tried:

13...♖xc3?!

This has been the less frequent choice, for good reason, as it is extremely risky to open the long diagonal for White's dark-squared bishop.

14.♗e2 b6 15.♗b2 ♖a5 16.f4 ♖xa2



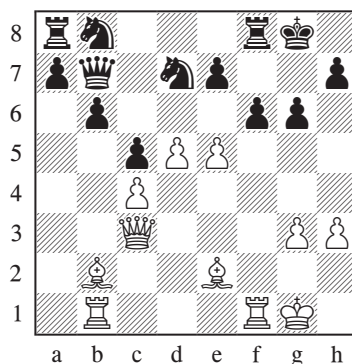
17.♖c2!

The most accurate, although 17.h4 also gave White a huge initiative in Rausis – Gross, Cairo 2002.

17...♖a6 18.e5 ♖b7

18...♖c8 19.♗g4 also gives White a dangerous attack.

19.♖c3 dxe5 20.fxe5 f6



21.exf6 exf6 22.♗g4 ♖c7 23.♖be1+

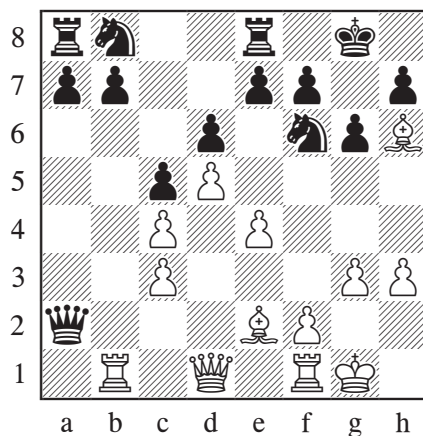
White soon smashed through the defences in Lemke – Melson, email 2000.

14.♗h6!

14.♖xb7 ♖e8 15.♖b3 ♖b6 16.♗e2 ♖a4 gave Black some counterplay in Bates – Snape, West Bromwich 2004. Rather than spending valuable time taking a pawn on the queenside, White should focus on his kingside offensive.

14...♖e8 15.♗e2 ♖f6

Here we have an important shift from GM 2.



16.♗d3!

This was played in the stem game from 1997, and I came to realize it is actually stronger than my 'improvement'.

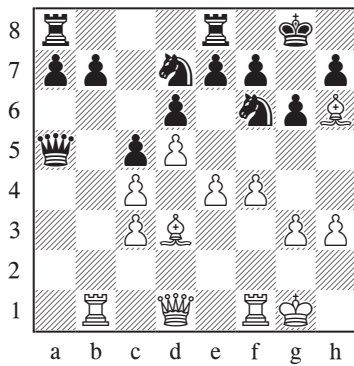
16.♔d3

I recommended this move in *GM 2* and it received a practical test the next year, when Black found the best reply:

16...♘bd7!

I only considered 16...♗a6 17.f4 ♘bd7 18.♗e2 ♖h8, as suggested by Dautov in *ChessBase Magazine* 57, after which 19.e5 ♘g8 20.e6 fxe6 21.dxe6 ♘df6 22.♕g5 followed by f4-f5 is dangerous for Black, as I gave in *GM 2*.

17.f4 ♗a5



18.♗d2

The engine suggests 18.♗e1!N as an improvement but after 18...♗c7 the assessment is not much different from the game continuation.

18...♗c7

The position was pretty unclear in Jankovic – Kozul, Marija Bistrica 2011. White clearly has compensation for the pawn, but Black is quite solid and there is no obvious way to break through. Let's return to the main line to see why my recommended continuation works better for White.

16...♗a5

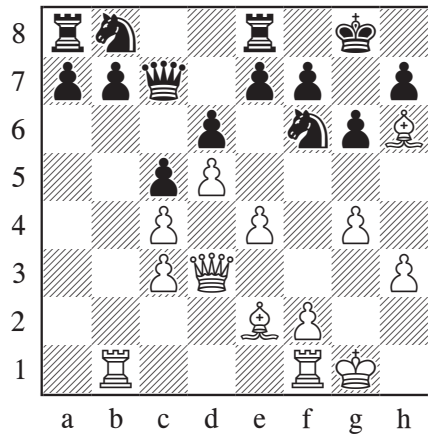
16...♗a6 17.f4 ♘bd7 18.g4→ is certainly not an improvement for Black; the queen should head for the more influential c7-square.

17.g4!?

Taking back the pawn with 17.♖xb7N ♘bd7 18.♗bb1 is a safe route to a slight edge to White. Compared with the Bates – Snape game noted on the previous page, Black has no annoying counterplay here. That said, White is completely justified in focusing on his kingside attack.

17...♗c7

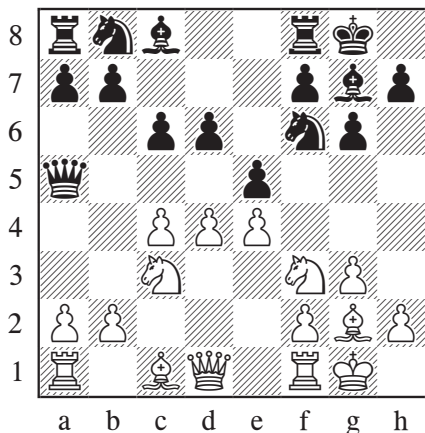
Finally, we have reached the point where a genuine improvement exists over Vaganian – Kozul, Pula 1997.



18.f4!N→

White has excellent prospects on the kingside. Compared with the Jankovic – Kozul game noted above, there are two factors in White's favour. One obvious point is that, by regrouping with ♗d3 (instead of ♔d3 and ♗d2), he has saved a tempo, so his kingside pawns are further advanced. The second point is that the bishop is better placed on e2 than on d3, as g4-g5 becomes a more serious threat since ...♘h5 is not really an acceptable answer. All this makes Black's position rather problematic; for instance, he is currently unable to finish developing with 18...♘bd7?, as 19.g5! will be terrible for him.

B4) 8...e5



This is Black's most popular and challenging move.

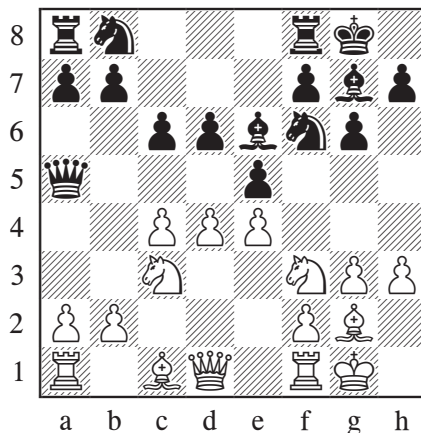
9.h3

White prepares g3 , without having to worry about ...g4 in reply. It is important to point out that $9...\text{bd7}$ is Black's most common reply by a long way, and this will be covered later under the $6...\text{bd7}$ move order. See Chapter 14, beginning on page 261, for full coverage of this important variation.

In the remainder of this chapter we will consider the alternatives **B41) 9...g6**, **B42) 9...a6** and **B43) 9...exd4**.

$9...\text{e8}$ does not have much independent value after: $10.\text{g3}$ ($10.\text{d5}$ also deserves consideration, as is often the case when Black commits his rook to e8) $10...\text{exd4}$ $11.\text{bd7}$ $12.\text{e1}$ This position will be covered under the move order $6...\text{bd7}$ $7.0-0$ e5 $8.\text{e4}$ c6 $9.\text{h3}$ a5 $10.\text{e1}$ exd4 $11.\text{bd7}$ e8 $12.\text{g3}$ – see variation C1 of Chapter 14 on page 267.

B41) 9...g6



As usual, I am rather sceptical about Black's concept of provoking d4-d5 at the cost of a tempo.

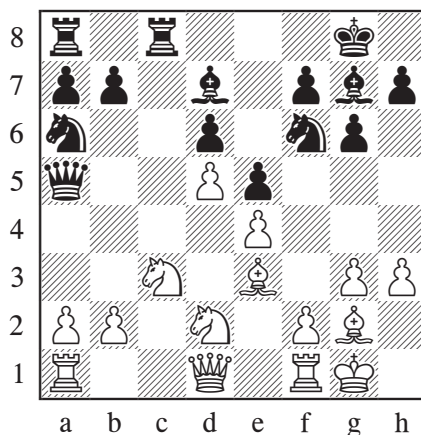
10.d5 cxd5 11.cxd5 g7 12.g3

We have already studied similar positions so I will not analyse this rare variation in much detail. A few illustrative lines are all you need to play these positions with confidence.

12...c8

$12...\text{a6}$ transposes to variation B42 below.

13.d2 a6

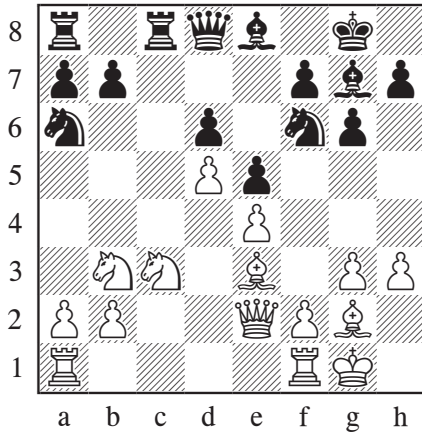


14.♘b3

14.a3!? also deserves consideration, with similar ideas as in variation B42 below.

14...♖d8 15.♗e2 ♘e8

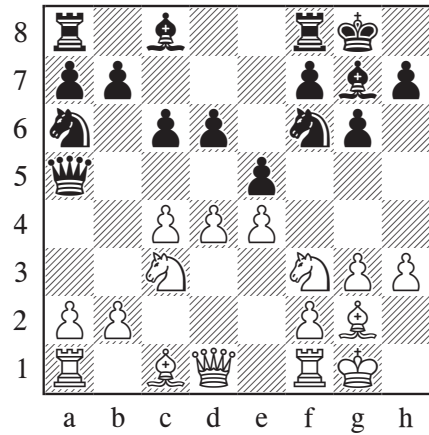
Here I developed the following variation:

**16.♖fc1!N**

16.♖ac1 gave White a small plus in Portisch – Kavalek, Skopje (ol) 1972, but I slightly prefer the other rook for a few reasons. Even though the a-file is likely to remain closed, it is good to have a second rook on the queenside, just in case some action takes place. Moving the king's rook also vacates the f1-square for the bishop, which could prove useful in some lines.

16...♘d7 17.♘b5 ♘dc5 18.♘xc5 ♘xc5 19.♖c2

The fact that all the action is taking place on the queenside, while Black does not have the slightest trace of counterplay on the other flank, makes it obvious that White's chances are much better.

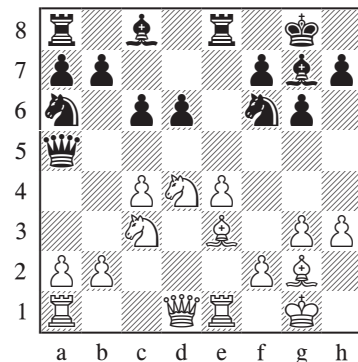
B42) 9...♘a6

This resembles variation C2 of the previous chapter, and it's hard to see what Black can accomplish with the knight on a6.

10.♘e3 ♘e6

Surprisingly, this has been Black's most popular choice.

After 10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♖e8 12.♖e1 it becomes clear that the combination of the queen on a5 and knight on a6 is an unfortunate one for Black. For instance:



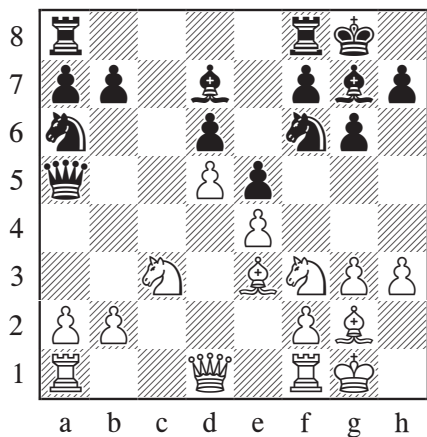
12...♖c7 (Black's main problem is that 12...♘c5? runs into 13.♘b3! ♘xb3 14.axb3 ♖c7 15.♘xa7! and White wins a pawn) 13.♖d2 ♘c5 14.♘f4 ♘h5 15.♘e3 ♘f6 16.♘f4 ♘h5 17.♘g5 a5 18.♖ad1±

White had a pleasant position in Mikhalchishin – Martinovic, Baku 1980

11.d5

In most games White has preferred 11.♖e2 but, despite his superb results with that move, I see no reason to refrain from gaining space while hitting the enemy bishop.

11...cxd5 12.cxd5 ♔d7



13.a3!

13.♘d2 ♜fc8 transposes to variation B41 above. However, when the present move order occurs, I like the text move even more. The idea is to prevent ...♘c5.

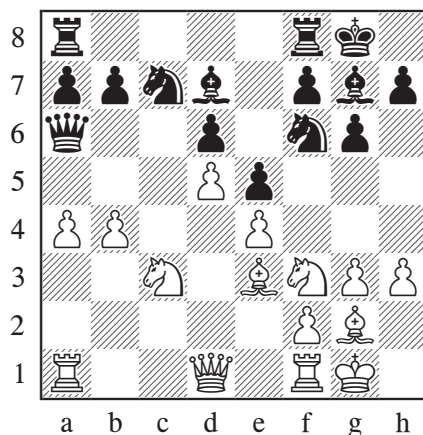
13...♘c7

Black tries to activate or exchange his misplaced knight via the b5-square.

Another game continued 13...♜fc8 14.b4 ♖d8 15.♖d3 ♘c7 16.♘d2 ♘h5 17.♘c4 ♘b5 18.♘e2± with a solid advantage for White, Zarkovic – Martinovic, Cetinje 1990.

14.b4 ♖a6 15.a4!

White prevents his opponent's plan. This ambitious move loosens the queenside slightly, but it is justified by the following specific details.



15...♖c4 16.♖c2 ♘a6

This is Black's only chance to create any play.

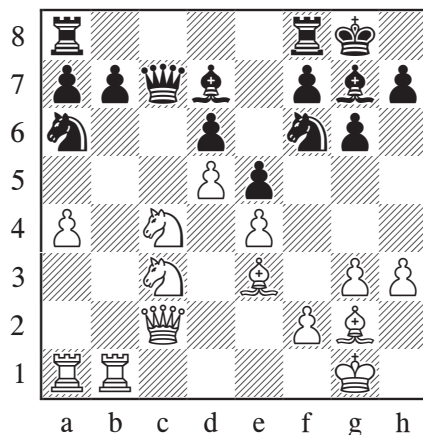
17.♘d2

17.b5!?N is also excellent, but one strong continuation is enough.

17...♖xb4?!

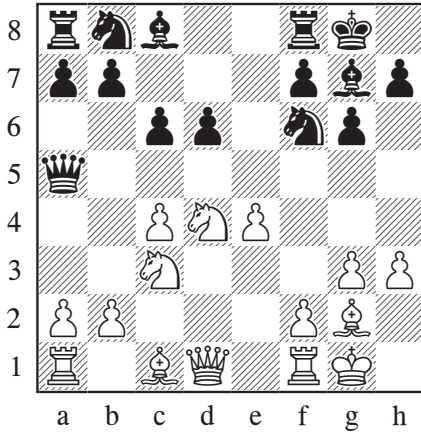
17...♖c8 is more resilient, though after 18.b5 ♘c5 19.♘c4 it is obvious that White retains the better chances.

18.♜fb1 ♖a5 19.♘c4 ♖c7



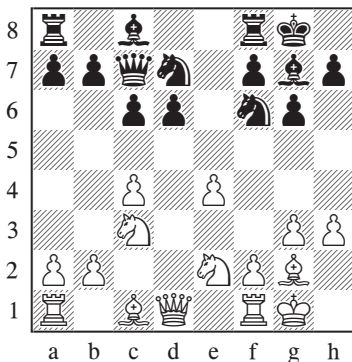
20.♘b5 ♔xb5 21.axb5 ♘c5 22.♘xd6!

White obtained a large strategic advantage in Maherramzade – Guliyev, Baku 2000.

B43) 9...exd4 10.♘xd4**10...♖c5**

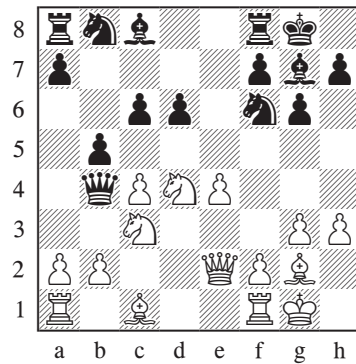
This has been by far the most popular choice. Whenever Black develops his queen to a5 in this structure (Chapter 14 being the most popular version), White always has to watch out for attacks on the c4-pawn from ...♖c5 or ...♗b4.

Of the many plausible alternatives, 10...♘bd7?! is perhaps the worst. 11.♘de2! attacks the d6-pawn, while preparing b2-b3 to support the c4-pawn. (White could have played 11.♗e1, transposing to variation C of Chapter 14, but the text move exploits Black's inaccurate move order) 11...♗c7 (11...♘e8 12.♘d2 ♘e5 13.b3± left Black passively placed in Gormally – Hillarp Persson, Guernsey 2001)



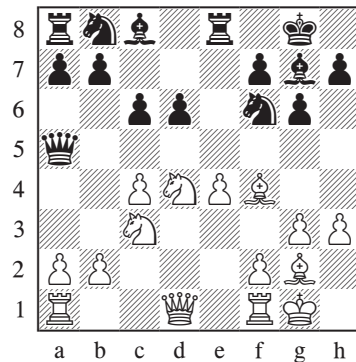
12.♘e3 ♗e8 13.♗c2 b6 14.♗ad1 ♘a6 15.b3 ♗ad8 16.♗d2 Black had no active counterplay, so White was pleasantly better in Stohl – Banikas, Istanbul (ol) 2000.

10...♗b4 is best met by: 11.♗e2! (this is more accurate than 11.♘c2, as I recommended in *GM 2*) 11...b5 This occurred in Makarov – Nouro, St Petersburg 1999, and I noted it as unclear in my first edition. However, after checking the position again I realized that White can play:



12.♘dx5!N cxb5 13.e5 With material gains.

10...♗e8 has only occurred a few times in practice, and I found a strong novelty for White: 11.♘f4!N (11.♗e1 ♘e6 12.♘xe6 ♗xe6 is not so clear) Play may continue:



11...♗b4 (11...♘f8 does not require serious attention, as it's a clear admission that Black's opening strategy has failed) 12.a3!

(more accurate than 12.♘c2, as I gave in *GM 2*) 12...♙xc4 13.♞c1 ♗a6 14.♙xd6 White is clearly better.

A final rare alternative is:

10...♞e8

Black seems to be playing a much weaker version of variation B2 of Chapter 15, in which the knight goes to e8 at a more appropriate moment. Here the knight retreat is too passive, and causes no problems for White at all.

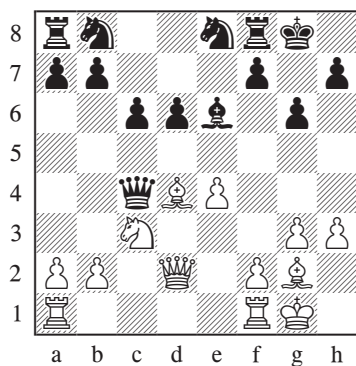
11.♙e3 ♗b4 12.♗e2 ♙xd4?!

This move enables Black to win the c4-pawn, but he pays too high a price in giving up his treasured bishop.

12...♙e6 13.♞xe6 fxe6 14.a3 ♗b3 occurred in Cvitan – Rukavina, Pula 2002, and now White's play can be improved with 15.♞fd1!N, intending to meet the natural 15...♞d7 with 16.c5! ♞xc5 17.e5±.

13.♙xd4 ♙e6 14.♗d2 ♗xc4

In Bagaturov – Mrdja, Porto San Giorgio 2001, White missed the most precise continuation:



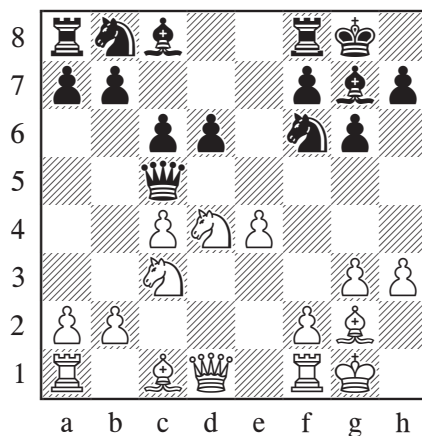
15.b3!N ♗a6

The point of White's last move is that 15...♗b4? is refuted by 16.♞d5!, so Black has no choice but to place his queen far away from the action.

16.f4 f6 17.e5

White has a huge initiative.

Let's return to our main line. We have an important tabiya, which the great Mikhail Tal played a few times with Black.



11.♞de2

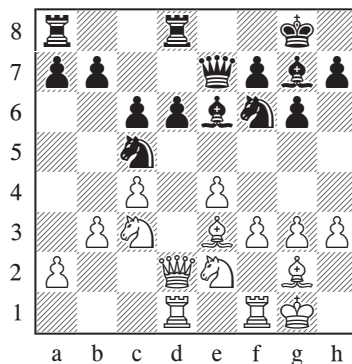
I still believe this to be White's most promising move.

11.♞b3 remains White's most popular choice in the database, but 11...♗b4! offers Black reasonable play.

11...♗xc4

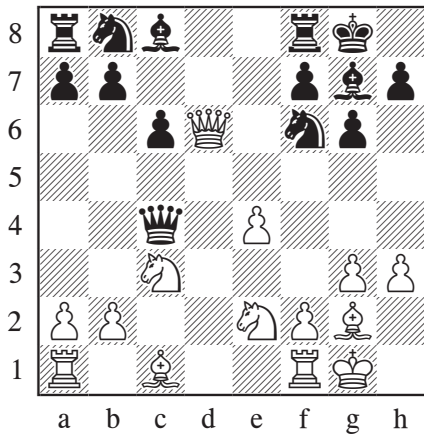
11...♞e8 is too passive; 12.b3 ♞d7 13.♙e3 ♗a5 occurred in J. Yu – Bykovtsev, Saint Louis 2016, when 14.♗d2N± would have left White in full control.

In the event of 11...♞d8 12.b3 White's space advantage promises him better chances, for instance: 12...♞a6 13.♙e3 (this seems slightly more accurate than 13.a3, which I gave in *GM 2*) 13...♗e5 14.♗d2 ♞c5 15.f3 ♗e7 16.♞ad1 ♙e6



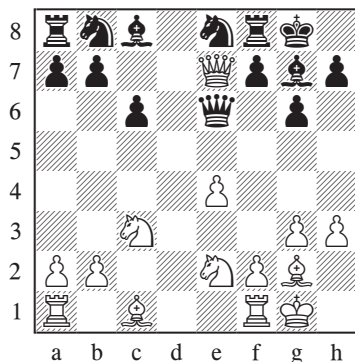
This occurred in Vidit – Akash, Aurangabad 2011, when 17.g4!?N± would have been strong; White continues to gain space, and it is not clear how Black is going to find any counterplay.

12.♗xd6



12...♖a6

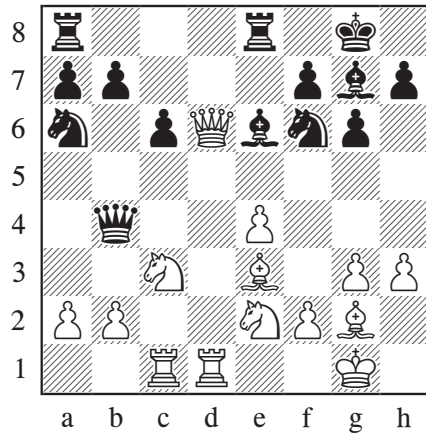
Black has also tried: 12...♖e8 13.♗e7! This improves on my previous analysis. (13.♗f4 was my recommendation in *GM 2*, but I failed to consider 13...♖a6!, when things are not so clear) 13...♗e6 Now in D. Berczes – Ehlvest, Dallas 2013, White's most precise continuation would have been:



14.♗h4!N ♖d7 15.♖d1 ♖f6 16.♖g5± With an excellent position.

13.♖e3 ♖e8 14.♖ac1 ♖e6 15.♖fd1 ♗b4

This position was reached in Cordara – Fierro Baquero, Cannes 2007. Up to now both sides have played quite logically, but here White missed the most promising continuation.



16.♖f4!N ♗xd6 17.♖xd6 ♖f8 18.♖d2 ♖c8 19.♖d3±

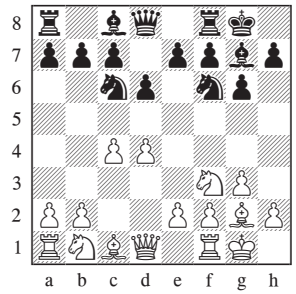
White has a stable advantage.

Conclusion

This chapter concluded our coverage of the 6...c6 complex by covering two important queen moves after 7.0–0. First was 7...♖b6, which looks slightly odd but is actually pretty challenging. After 8.b3, both 8...♖bd7 and 8...e5 forced me to improve my efforts from *GM 2*. We then moved on to the popular 7...♗a5 variation, which I recommend meeting with 8.e4, leading to a major branching point. 8...♖e6 and 8...♗h5 both have clear defects. 8...♖g4 9.h3 ♖xf3 10.♖xf3 is more interesting, but I have shown how White can obtain excellent play with his bishop pair and space advantage. Finally, 8...e5 9.h3 is a major variation, and in the final phase of the chapter I showed how White can get an excellent game against Black's minor options. I believe his best move to be 9...♖bd7, reaching the tabiya of Chapter 14 on page 261.

Chapter 8

King's Indian



6...Nc6 – Sidelines & 7...e5

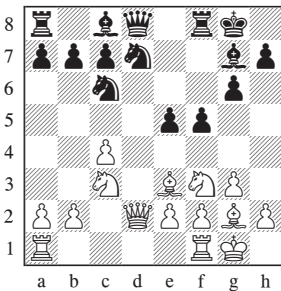
Variation Index

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6

7.0-0

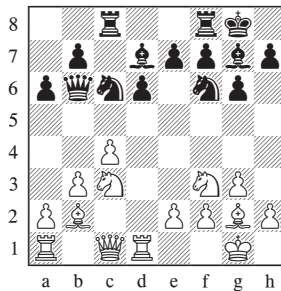
A) 7...Na5	155
B) 7...Nd7	156
C) 7...Bd7	157
D) 7...e5 8.dxe5	160
D1) 8...dxe5 9.Bg5	161
D11) 9...Qxd1	161
D12) 9...Be6	162
D2) 8...Nxe5 9.b3!	163
D21) 9...Re8	164
D22) 9...Nxf3† 10.Bxf3	165
D221) 10...Bh3	166
D222) 10...Ne4!?	166

B) note to 9...Nb6



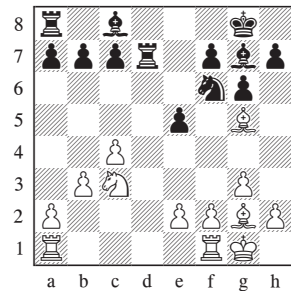
11.Ng5!N

C) note to 13...b5



14.Ne1!N

D21) after 12...Bd7



13.Na4!N

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0–0 5.♟c3 d6 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.0–0

The ...♟c6 set-up is one of Black's most popular choices against our Fianchetto System. It's an active, flexible choice which can lead to a variety of structures and positional themes.

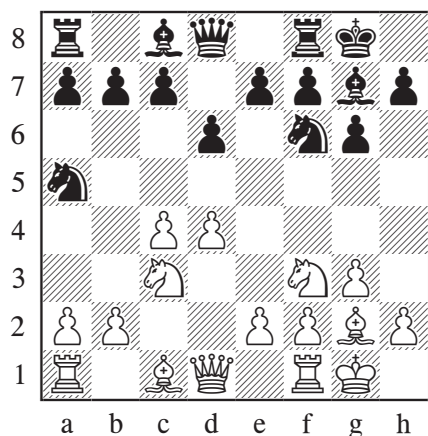
In this chapter we will look at four options. A) 7...♟a5, B) 7...♟d7 and C) 7...♙d7 are all sidelines which I neglected to consider in *GM 2*, but deserve to be mentioned. We will then move on to the main topic of the chapter, namely D) 7...e5, which has been played in thousands of games.

7...♙g4 has already been analysed in variation C of Chapter 5.

7...♙f5 is the topic of Chapter 9.

Black's most popular plan of all is to prepare ...b5 with either 7...a6 or 7...♞b8. These two moves will be analysed in Chapter 10.

A) 7...♟a5



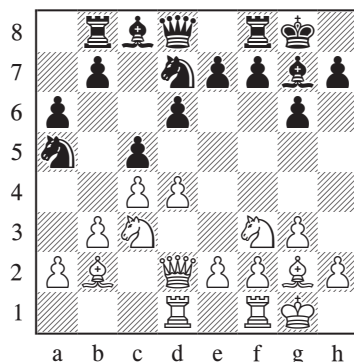
This looks a bit odd but has occasionally been tested by strong players. White gets a good position with mostly simple moves.

8.b3 c5

Otherwise it is hard to see the purpose behind Black's last move.

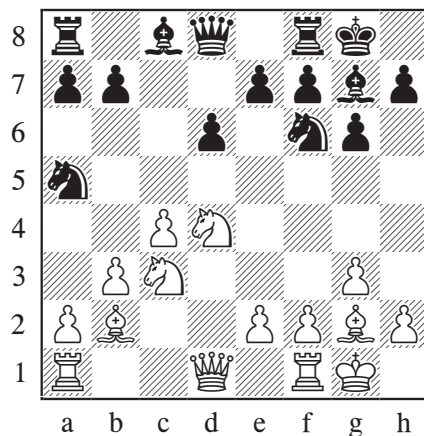
9.♙b2 cxd4

Delaying this capture does not help Black. For example: 9...♞b8 10.♞d2 a6 11.♞ad1 ♟d7



12.♟d5!? Provoking Black's next move makes a lot of sense. 12...e6 13.♟c3 Now the d6-square has been weakened, and 13...b5 14.cxb5 axb5 15.dxc5 dxc5 16.♟e4± left White clearly better in Hollis – Speed, Bristol 1968.

10.♟xd4

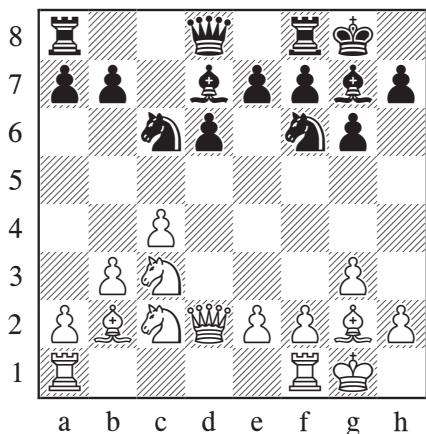


10...♙d7 11.♞d2 ♟c6

11...♞b8 has occurred in a couple of games. Both times White missed 12.♟d5!N, when the knight is extremely annoying for Black, while 12...♟xd5 13.cxd5± leaves him clearly worse due to the misplaced knight on a5.

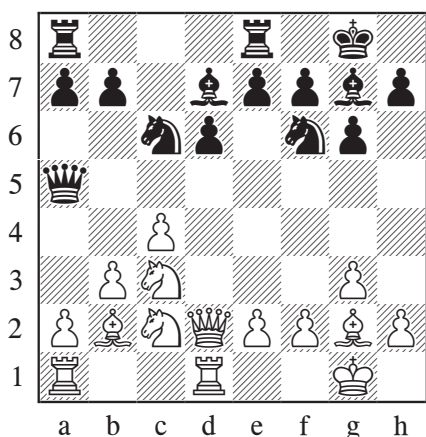
12. ♖c2!?

White has other good options, but it makes sense to avoid exchanges while preparing ideas such as ♖e3-d5.

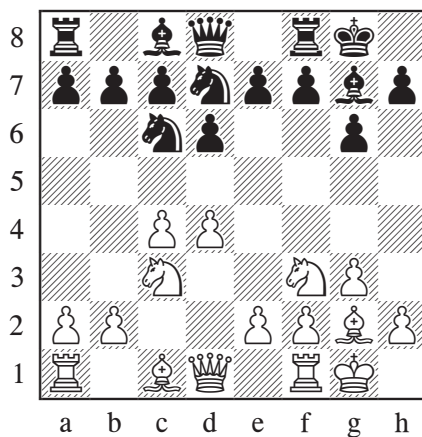
**12... ♔a5 13. ♖fd1 ♖fe8**

In one game Black didn't pay attention to White's idea and played the seemingly natural 13... ♖ab8?, after which 14. ♖xc6! bxc6 15. ♖d5± led to material losses for Black in Liebert – Hübner, Lugano 1968.

We have been following Salzmann – Kolanek, email 2013. Here I suggest:

**14. ♖ab1N ♖ac8 15. e4±**

White maintains a nice positional edge.

B) 7... ♖d7

The main idea of this move is to prepare ...e5. I like the following idea for White:

8. ♖e3 e5 9. ♖d2 ♖b6

I also checked:

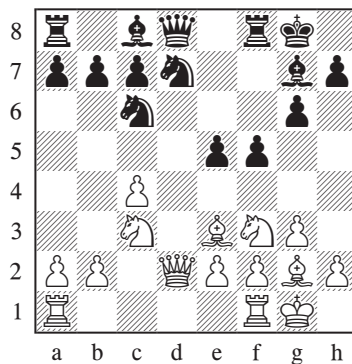
9...f5?!

Unfortunately for Black, this ambitious move does not work well.

10. dxe5 dxe5?!

A safer approach would be 10... ♖cxe5, as played in Andrade – Da Silva, Rio de Janeiro 2012. In that case, however, the simple 11. ♖fd1N would give White steady positional pressure, as is typical for this kind of pawn structure, while the ...f5 move only weakens Black.

This position arose via transposition in Grabarczyk – Kopczynski, Warsaw 2007. White should have continued:

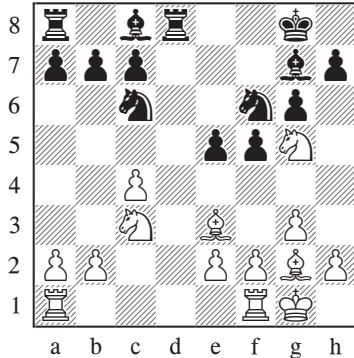


11.♗g5!N

Exploiting Black's poor coordination. Play continues:

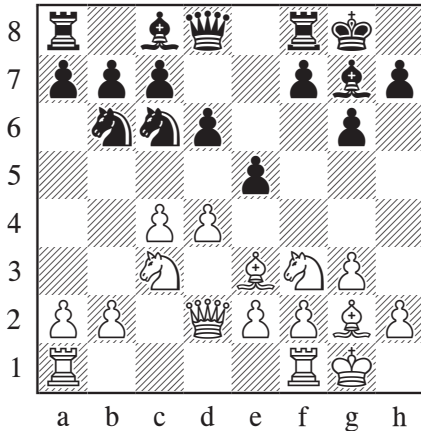
11...♗f6 12.♖xd8 ♖xd8

12...♗xd8 13.♕c5 ♖e8 14.♗b5±



13.♗b5! ♖d7 14.♗e6

White gains material.



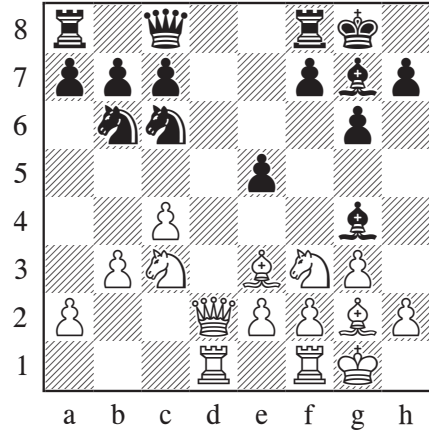
10.b3 ♕g4

I found five games which arrived at this position, but only once did White find the best continuation.

11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♖ad1 ♖c8

12...♖xd2 13.♗xd2 clearly favours White.

Now in Vakhidov – Shaymurov, Tashkent 2013, White missed a powerful positional idea:



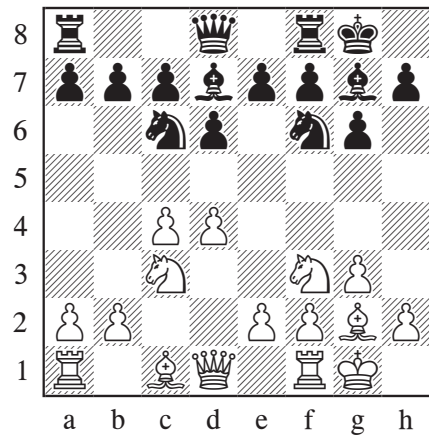
13.♗g5!N

Heading for e4.

13...h6 14.h3 ♕f5 15.♗ge4 ♖h7 16.g4±

With a clearly better game for White.

C) 7...♕d7



This is a bit more flexible than the sidelines considered above: the bishop may help to support queenside play with ...a6 and ...b5, but Black could also revert to a central strategy with ...e5.

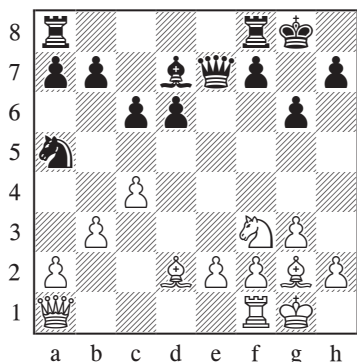
8.d5

I find this the most appealing out of several good options.

8...♖a5 9.b3 c5

9...c6 10.dxc6 is the same thing.

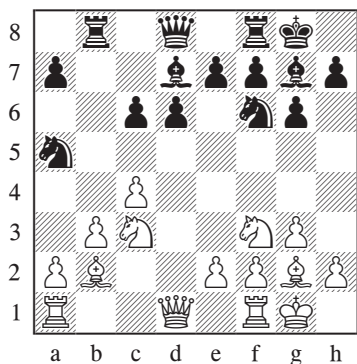
9...♖xd5?! runs into trouble after the following forced line: 10.♖xd5 ♕xa1 11.♕d2 c6 12.♖xe7 ♖xe7 13.♖xa1



13...b6 14.♕h6 f6 15.♕xf8 ♖xf8 16.♖d4± White regained the exchange and emerged with a clear positional advantage in Aupi Royo – Moreno Carretero, corr. 2009.

10.dxc6 ♖xc6

Black has only tried 10...bxc6 in one game. 11.♕b2 ♖b8 This was Moskalenko – Chadaev, Voronezh 2007, and now White should have played:

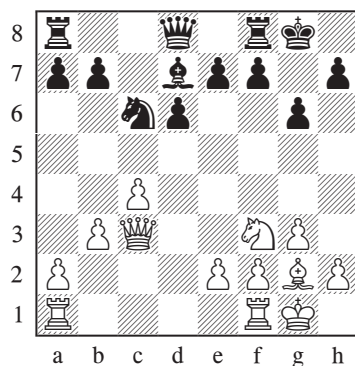


12.♖c2N c5 13.♖d5± With the better game.

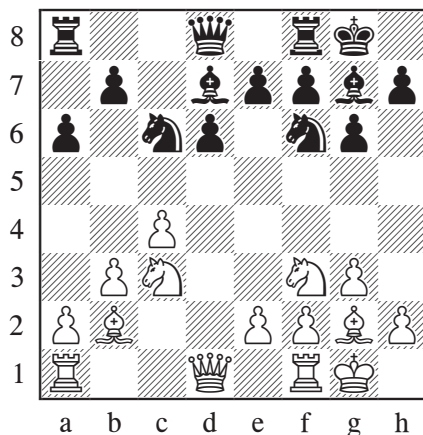
11.♕b2 a6

Black has also tried simplifying with 11...♖e4 but after 12.♖c1 ♖xc3 13.♕xc3 ♕xc3

14.♖xc3 White maintains some pull, for instance:



14...♖b6 15.♖fd1 ♕g4 16.♖ac1 a5 17.♖d4± Black remained under pressure in Dubov – Golubov, Sochi 2016.

**12.♖c1!**

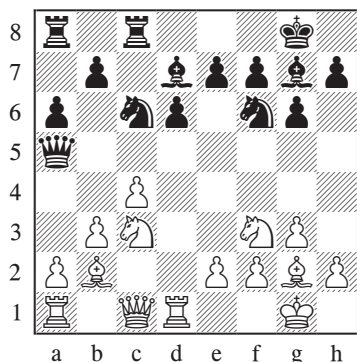
12.♖d2 ♖a5 seems satisfactory for Black, so I believe c1 to be a better square for the queen. The text move prepares ♖d5 and frees the d1-square for the rook.

12...♖c8

I considered two other options:

12...♖b8 is pretty pointless, since after 13.♖d1 Black still cannot play 13...b5? in view of 14.♖d5 ♖e8 15.♕xg7 ♖xg7 16.c5± as seen in Grandelius – Marjanovic, Plovdiv 2012.

12...♖a5 13.♞d1 ♞fc8 (13...♞ac8 transposes to 13...♖a5 in the notes to the main line below; 13...b5?! is clearly premature in view of 14.♜d5! ♜xd5 15.♙xg7 ♗xg7 16.cxd5 ♜a7 17.♞e3± and White was clearly better in Matamoros Franco – Jaramillo, Duran 2014)

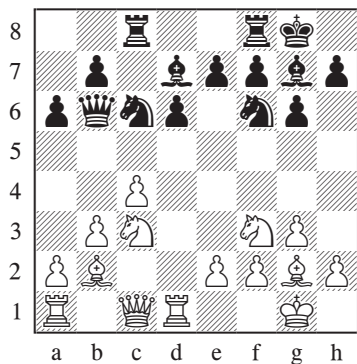


14.♜d5 ♜xd5 15.♙xg7 ♗xg7 16.♞xd5 ♖c7 This occurred in Ruck – Lanka, Austria 2008, when 17.♞e3± would have maintained a typical slight pull for White.

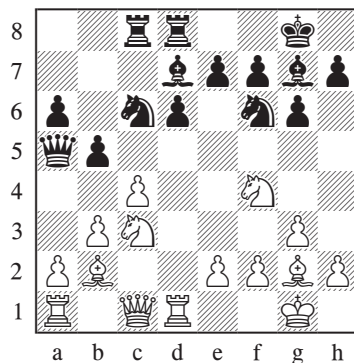
13.♞d1 b5

This is the move Black would like to play, but perhaps he should settle for one of the more modest alternatives:

13...♞b6 occurred in Ribli – Baklan, Austria 2009. I believe White should not be in a rush to put a knight on d5, and should instead strengthen his position with:

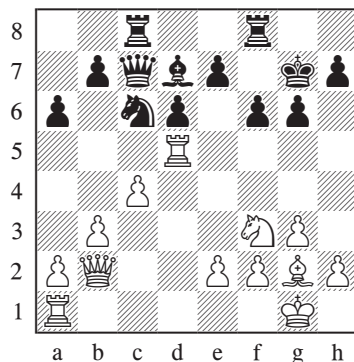


14.♜e1!N Here is an illustrative line: 14...♞fd8 15.♜d3 ♖a5 (in the event of 15...♜b4 White obviously should avoid the knight trade in favour of 16.♜f4 e6 17.♞d2 ♙e8 18.e3, with the better game) 16.♜f4 b5

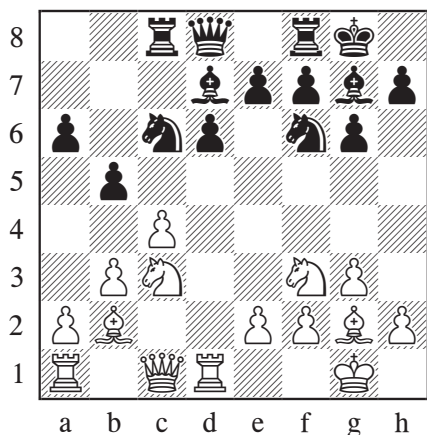


17.cxb5 axb5 18.♜cd5 ♜xd5 19.♜xd5 ♙xb2 20.♞xb2 White maintains the better chances, regardless of the fact that Black was able to carry out the thematic ...b5 advance.

13...♖a5 14.♜d5 ♜xd5 15.♞xd5 also gives White good prospects, for instance: 15...♖c7 (another game continued 15...♙xb2 16.♞xb2 ♖c7 17.♞c1 ♜b4?! 18.♞dd1 a5 19.h4 ♙g4 20.♜d4± and White had an obvious advantage in Bocharov – Stubberud, Novi Sad 2016) 16.♙xg7 ♗xg7 17.♞b2± f6



Black's position is pretty solid; nevertheless, after 18.♞ad1 ♜b4 19.♞5d2 a5 20.♜d4± White kept a long-term edge in Schreiner – Maurer, Austria 2012.

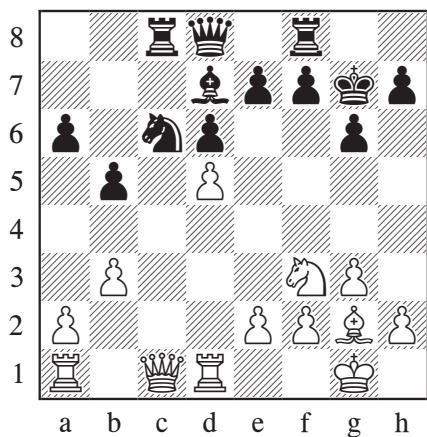


14. d5 15. dxd5

Black has nothing better.

14... e8 runs into an effective counter: 15. xg7 xg7 Now in Schreiner – Watzka, Austria 2013, the simple 16. c5!N would have secured White's advantage.

15. xg7 xg7 16. cxd5



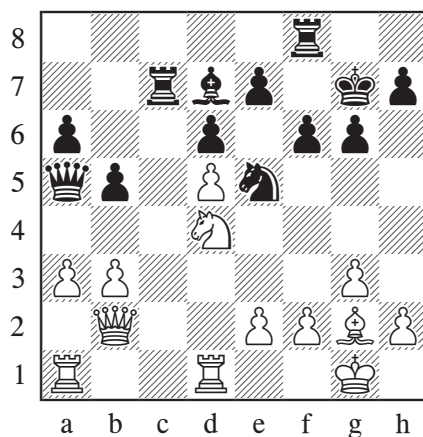
16... e5N

Black needs to improve over 16... a5? 17. b2+ g8 18. d2+ when White had a large advantage due to the poorly placed knight in Khadomalsharieh – Kostitsina, Maribor 2012.

The text move is clearly a better try. I developed the following line for White:

17. b2 f6 18. d4 a5 19. a3 c7

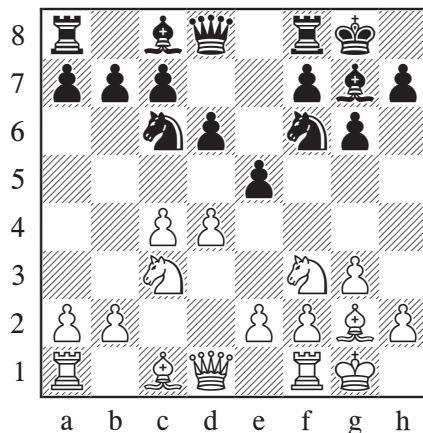
19... c3 achieves nothing due to 20. a2 c7 21. h3 fc8 22. h2 and f2-f4 is coming next.



20. h3 21. fc8 22. h2 b6 23. f4 f7 24. d3

White has a lasting advantage due to the passive knight on f7.

D) 7...e5



8. dxe5

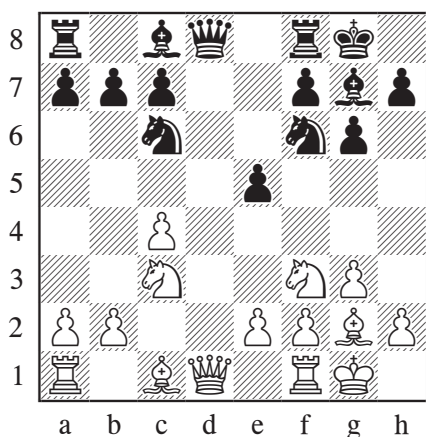
This is a significant change from my previous work. In GM 2, I recommended

8.d5 and showed some nice ideas for White after 8...♗e7 9.e4, but neglected to consider 8...♗b8!, which has led to good results for Black in recent years. I was unable to find any advantage for White against this line, which is why I now prefer to exchange on e5.

Before moving on, it is worth mentioning that 8.h3!? is an interesting alternative, but some of the ensuing variations look pretty double-edged to me.

After the text move, Black must obviously choose between **D1) 8...dxe5** and **D2) 8...♗xe5**.

D1) 8...dxe5



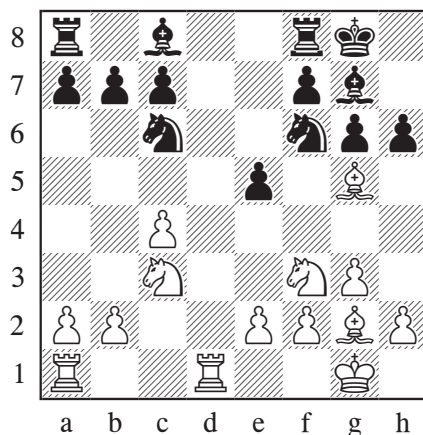
This recapture is the more desirable option for Black from a structural point of view. However, the open d-file and the constant possibility of a knight jump to d5 present Black with some difficulties.

9.♙g5

Black's main candidates are **D11) 9...♖xd1** and **D12) 9...♙e6**.

9...h6?! runs into 10.♖xd8 ♖xd8 11.♙xf6 ♙xf6 12.♗d5 ♗g7 13.♗xc7 ♖b8 14.e4! when Black has no compensation for the missing pawn.

D11) 9...♖xd1 10.♖fxd1 h6



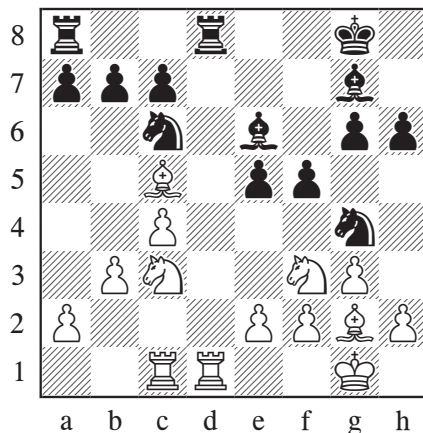
This gives White a pleasant endgame advantage after:

11.♙e3! ♙e6 12.b3 ♖fd8 13.♖ac1

Given the chance, White will improve his position with ♗e1-d3-c5.

13...♗g4 14.♙c5 f5

In Barbasco – Kostiuk, Balatonlelle 2000, White missed a nice way to increase his advantage:



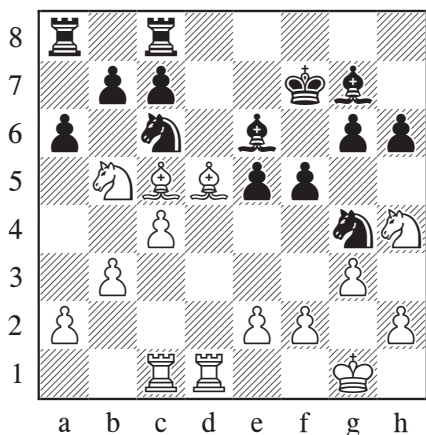
15.♗b5!N

The following line is more or less forced.

15...♖dc8 16.♘h4 ♔f7

16...g5? runs into the elegant tactical trick 17.♙d5! and Black is in trouble.

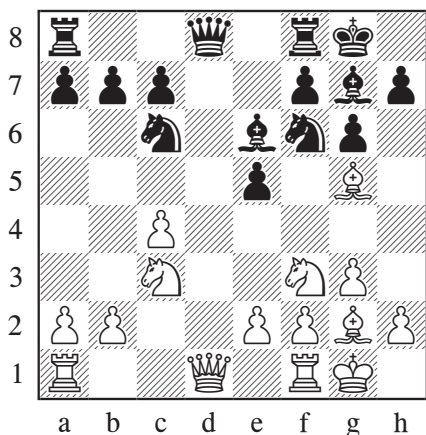
17.♙d5 a6



18.♙xc6 bxc6 19.♘a7!

White keeps an obvious advantage.

D12) 9...♙e6



This seems a better try, but I still like White's chances after:

10.♞c1!?

10.♞a4 has been the most popular move, while 10.♘d5 and 10.♘d2 have also occurred many more times than the text. However, as we

will soon see, the c4-pawn is poisoned. Other advantages of the text are that it prepares ♖d1 and, less obviously but equally importantly, prevents Black from playing ...h6 in the near future.

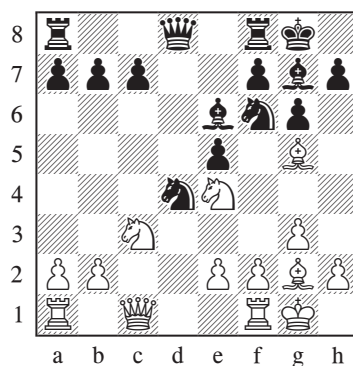
10...♞c8

This has been Black's usual reply.

10...♙xc4?!

Black gobbled the pawn in one game but it's hardly a good idea.

11.♘d2 ♙e6 12.♘de4 ♘d4



13.♘h1!?

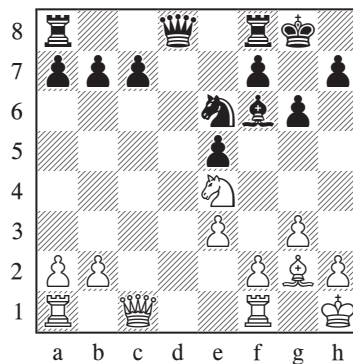
13.e3N ♘f5 14.♖d1 ♞e7 15.♘xf6† ♙xf6 16.♙xf6 ♞xf6 17.♙xb7 is a simple route to a clear positional advantage.

The text move is also promising, and in the game Black failed to solve his problems.

13...♙f5?! 14.e3 ♙xe4 15.♘xe4 ♘e6?

A tactical blunder, but Black's position was difficult in any case.

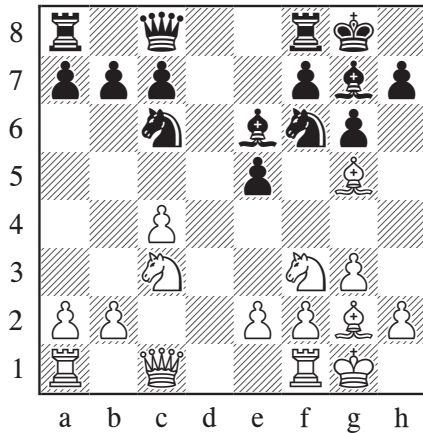
16.♙xf6 ♙xf6



Up to now White had played a nice game in Spreic – Nurkic, Tuzla 2003, but here he surprisingly missed a simple tactical solution:

17.♖d1N ♖e7 18.♖d7!

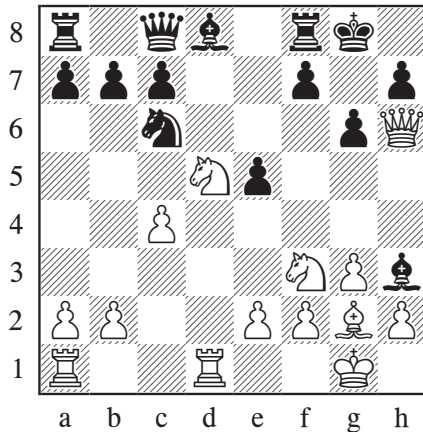
Winning on the spot.



11.♖d1 ♖h3

Black was under serious positional pressure after 11...♖d7 12.b3 f6 13.♖h6 ♖f7 14.♖xg7 ♖xg7 15.♖d2 ♖e7 16.♖de4± in Thybo – Britton, Hastings 2016.

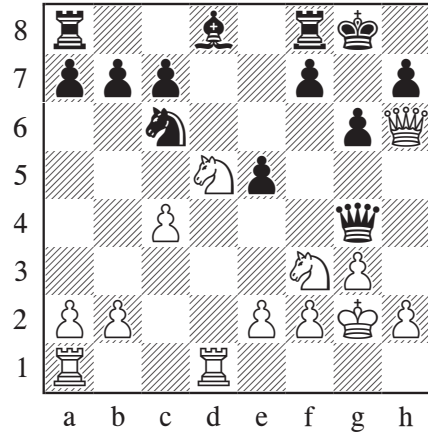
12.♖xf6 ♖xf6 13.♖d5 ♖d8 14.♖h6



14...♖xg2 15.♖xg2 ♖g4?

15...f6N would have been a better bet, although even here White can continue with 16.h4! ♖f7 17.♖e3, maintaining the pressure.

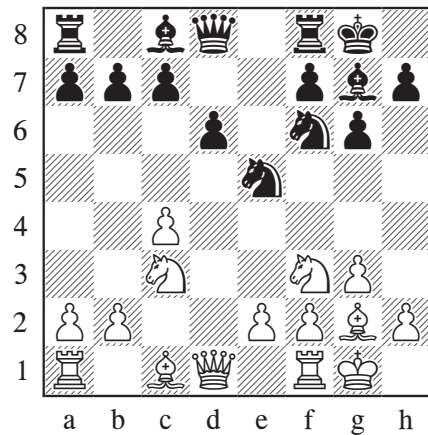
In Vallejo Pons – Pavlidis, Tallinn 2016, White's strongest continuation would have been:



16.♖e3!N ♖e4 17.♖d7±

With an obvious advantage.

D2) 8...♖xe5



9.b3!

9.♖xe5 dxe5 has been much more popular. White keeps an edge here too, and can definitely press for a while, but I believe Black should be able to hold the position.

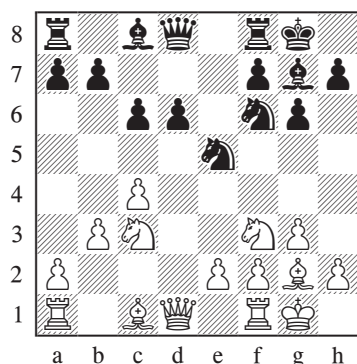
The text move is my first choice, as I really enjoy playing the white side of the resulting pawn structure. We will consider D21) 9...♖e8 and D22) 9...♖xf3±, after first checking a few minor alternatives:

9...a6?! would be a strange choice, and has never been played from this position; I only mention it because the resulting position has sometimes been reached via the 7...a6 move order; see 9...♖xe5 in the notes to variation A4 of Chapter 10 on page 189.

9...♖h5 occurred in Le Quang An – Hoang, Ho Chi Minh City 2017, when 10.♖xe5N ♖xe5 (or 10...dxe5 11.♖a3±) 11.♖b2 would have given White an easy advantage.

9...c6

I would like to suggest a new concept here:



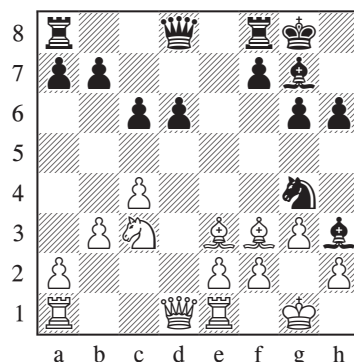
10.♖g5!N

White has mostly chosen either 10.♖xe5 (which is pretty harmless) or 10.♖b2, which places the bishop on a slightly suboptimal square.

I believe the bishop is most active on the c1-h6 diagonal. I was debating between the text move and the immediate 10.♖e3, but decided it would be best to provoke ...h6 in order to have the option of ♖d2 with gain of tempo. The position does not lend itself to a lot of concrete analysis, but I want to show one illustrative line:

10...h6 11.♖e3 ♖xf3† 12.♖xf3 ♖h3 13.♖e1 ♖g4

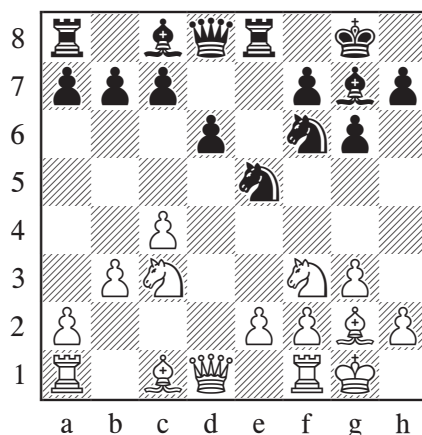
13...♖e8 allows White to arrange his pieces optimally: 14.♖d2 ♖h7 15.♖ad1 with solid pressure.



14.♖xg4! ♖xg4 15.♖d4 ♖e8 16.♖d2

I don't see a good way for Black to make up for his vulnerable pawn structure.

D21) 9...♖e8



10.♖xe5!

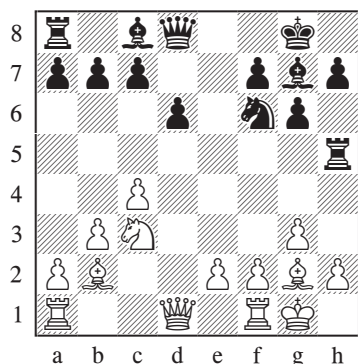
A normal move such as 10.♖b2 should offer White a slightly better game, but I like the text move even more. The point is that the extra b2-b3 move offers White a much better version of the ensuing queenless position.

10...dxe5

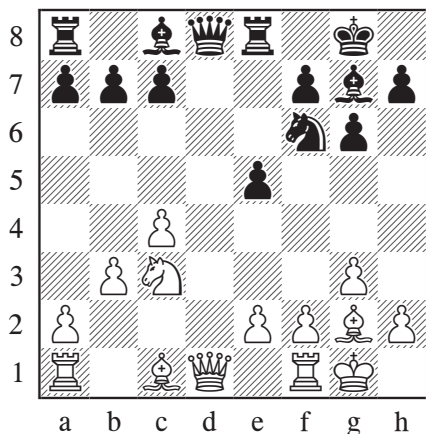
This is certainly the move that Black would like to play.

In the event of 10...♖xe5 11.♖b2, Black's rook is misplaced and the following attacking idea is unlikely to succeed: 11...♖h5 (11...♖e8

12.♞d2 ♜b8 13.♞ad1 led to a comfortable edge for White in Nina – Franco, Lima 2004)



12.e4 This is a logical, human reaction. (The computer suggestion of 12.♞d2!?N ♖g4 13.h3 ♗f6 14.h4 looks advantageous as well, as Black has no way forward on the kingside.) 12...♗h3 13.♗xh3 ♜xh3 14.♖g2 ♞d7 15.f3 ♜h5 16.g4!± White was clearly better in Mamedov – Bortnyk, Tallinn 2016.



11.♞xd8 ♜xd8 12.♗g5!

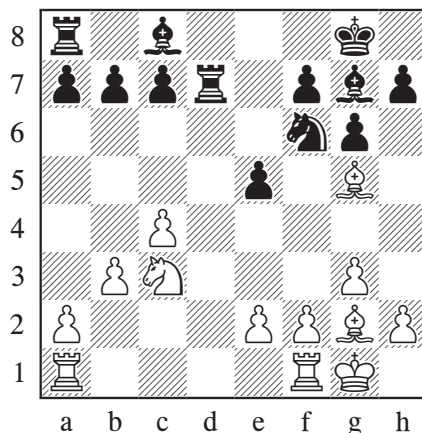
In the analogous position in the 9.♗xe5 dxe5 line, Black's best move is ...♞d4, gaining time by attacking the c4-pawn. The fact that he does not have that resource makes a huge difference here.

12...♞d7

12...♞e8? is much worse, and after 13.♗b5

♞e7 14.♞ad1 White was close to winning in Safronov – Sufiyarov, Ufa 1999.

This position was reached in Schunk – Hentze, Germany 2008, and now White should have played:



13.♗a4!N ♞e7 14.♗c5

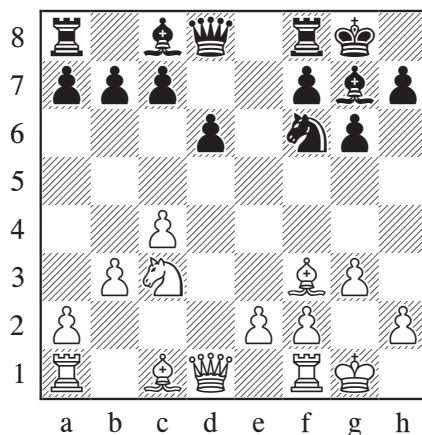
With strong pressure. It's important to mention the following line:

14...c6?

This natural defensive move does not work due to:

15.♗e4! ♞e6 16.♗xf6 ♗xf6 17.♗h3+–
Black loses material.

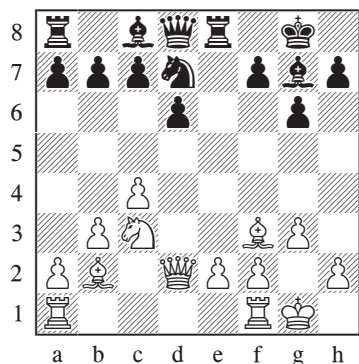
D22) 9...♗xf3† 10.♗xf3



This pawn structure should favour White; his light-squared bishop is strong, and his knight may occupy the d5-outpost in the future. If Black tries to solve those problems by means of ...c6, he will be left with a backward d-pawn.

Black's two main options are **D221) 10...♗h3** and **D222) 10...♞e4!?**.

In the event of 10...♞e8 I think the most accurate move is 11.♞d2!N. (The advantage of this over the obvious 11.♗b2 is to have the possibility of meeting ...♗h3 with ♞d1.) 11...♞d7 12.♗b2 We have transposed to a bunch of games. Here are a few brief examples:



12...a5 (after 12...♞c5 13.♞d5 ♗f5 14.♗xg7 ♗xg7 15.b4 ♞d7 16.♞e3 ♗e4 17.♗xe4 ♞xe4 18.♞d5 White was clearly better in Roghani – Tahbaz, Sowme'eh Sara 2015) 13.♞fd1 ♞c5 14.♞d5 White kept a pleasant positional edge in Andersson – Spitzer Isbert, Sanxenxo 2003.

D221) 10...♗h3

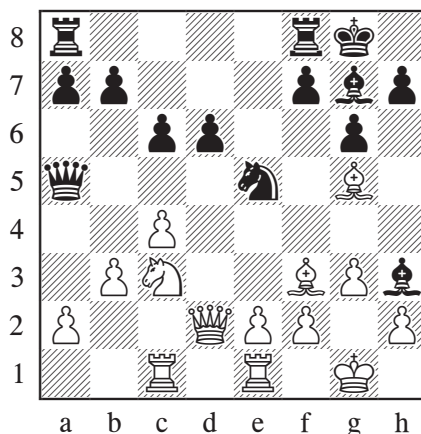
This way Black develops with tempo, but his positional problems remain.

11.♞e1 c6 12.♗g5!

12.♗b2 is playable but, when the knight is still on f6, I think White should take the opportunity to develop the bishop more actively. I only found one game from this position, which continued:

12...♞a5 13.♞d2 ♞d7 14.♞ac1 ♞e5

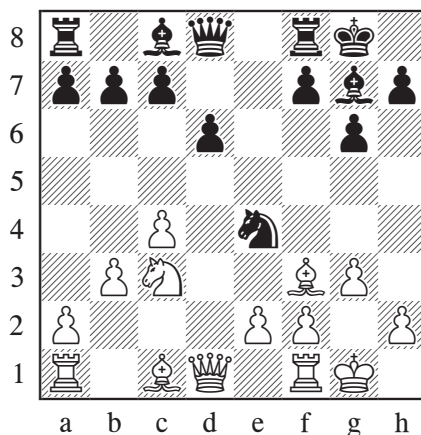
In Gaydukov – Makhnev, corr. 2003, White should have played:



15.♗h1N f6 16.♗h6

White maintains a pleasant edge.

D222) 10...♞e4!?



Black tries to solve his problems by utilizing the long diagonal to force simplifications. I faced this move in a recent game, which we will follow.

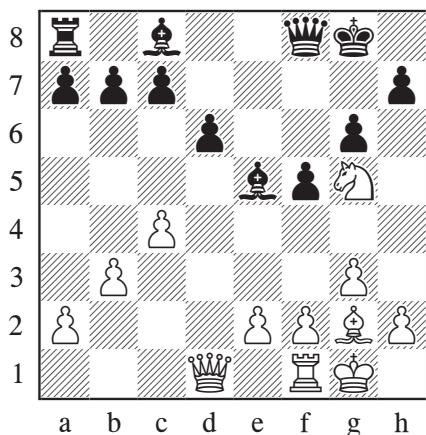
11.♞xe4!

11.♗xe4 ♗xc3 gives too little for White.

11...♞xa1 12.♗g5 f6 13.♗h6 ♗e5 14.♗xf8

♙xf8 15.♙g2 f5 16.♖g5

16.f4 ♖b2! was okay for Black in Jablonicky – Goban, Slovakia 2004. The text move is better; despite Black's bishop pair, he still faces some difficulties in developing his queenside pieces.



16...♙c7

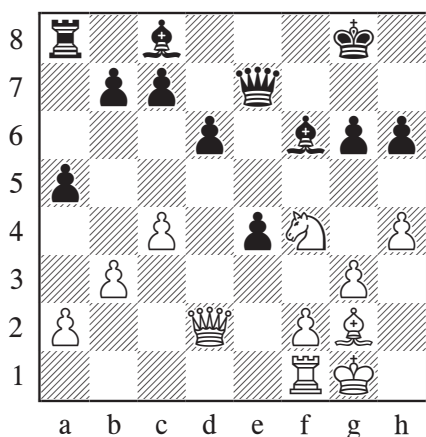
Black most probably should have preferred something like 16...c6N, although after 17.♙d3 I still like White.

17.♙d2 ♙f6 18.h4! a5 19.e4!

White's initiative almost plays itself.

19...h6 20.♖h3 fxe4 21.♖f4

Black's extra pawn will not survive for long, and he has several weak pawns to worry about.



21...♙f5 22.♖d5 ♙g7 23.♖xf6† ♙xf6
24.♙d5† ♙f7 25.♙xb7 ♙e8 26.♙e1

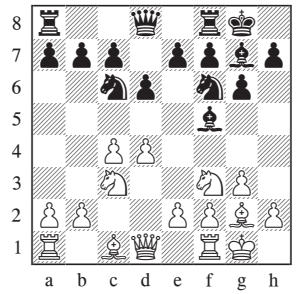
I was much better and eventually converted my advantage against one of the most talented youngsters in the US in Avrukh – Liang, Chicago 2017.

Conclusion

6...♖c6 is a flexible move which can be played with many possible follow-ups in mind. The sidelines 7...♖a5, 7...♖d7 and 7...♙d7 are not so bad, but White has good chances to get an advantage against them, as you would expect. 7...e5 is a more serious option, when 8.dxe5 is a major change from my work in *GM 2*. 8...dxe5 9.♙g5 puts Black under positional pressure, regardless of whether or not he exchanges queens. 8...♖xe5 seems like Black's best bet but 9.b3! is a good reply. Black has several possibilities, but the pawn structure almost always favours White, as long as he gets to develop his pieces on normal squares. 9...♖xf3† 10.♙xf3 ♖e4! seems like the only serious attempt to stop that from happening, but the continuation of Avrukh – Liang shows that Black faces problems here too.

Chapter 9

King's Indian



6...♘c6 & 7...♙f5

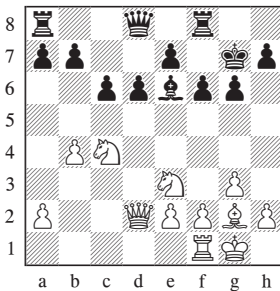
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 ♙f5

8.d5 ♘a5 9.♘d2

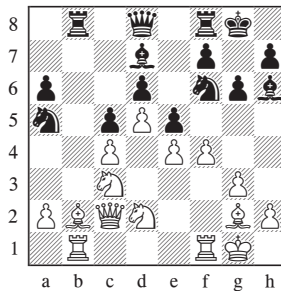
A) 9...c6!? 10.b4	169
A1) 10...♘xd5	169
A2) 10...♘xc4	170
B) 9...c5 10.e4	172
B1) 10...♙g4	173
B2) 10...♙d7 11.♙c2	174
B21) 11...e5	174
B22) 11...a6 12.b3 b5 13.♙b2 ♖b8 14.♖ab1	176
B221) 14...h5	176
B222) 14...bxc4	177
B223) 14...e5	179

A2) after 16...f6



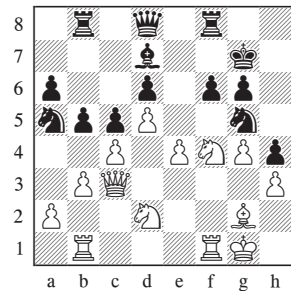
17.♘a5!N

B222) note to 15...♙c7



17.dxe6!N

B223) note to 17...♙c7



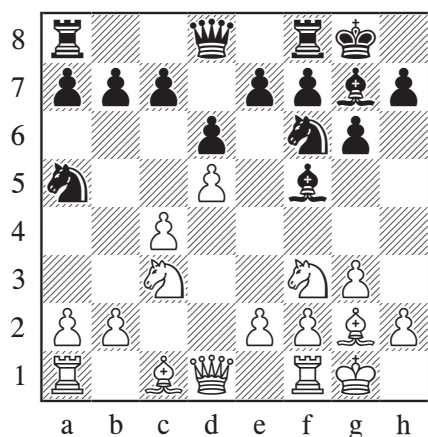
22.♘f3!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4...♙g4 0–0 5.♖c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♖c6 7.0–0 ♙f5

This is quite a significant sideline. It has some similarities with the 7...♙g4 line from Chapter 5, but overall I would evaluate the present variation as slightly more challenging. Once again, we should react by chasing the knight:

8.d5 ♖a5

No other knight move makes sense for Black.



9.♗d2

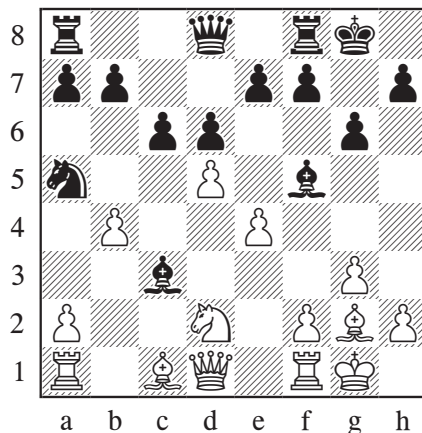
The alternative is 9.♖d4 ♗d7, leading to a complicated position from which Black has achieved decent results.

Black has two main options: **A) 9...c6!?** is a combative move which leads to material imbalances, while **B) 9...c5** leads to a more stable central structure, although the position remains pretty lively.

A) 9...c6 10.b4

The knight is trapped, but Black has some tactics on the long diagonal. It's important to consider both **A1) 10...♗xd5** and **A2) 10...♗xc4**.

A1) 10...♗xd5 11.cxd5 ♙xc3 12.e4



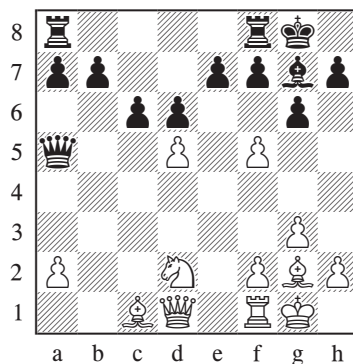
12...♙xe4!?

I did not mention this in *GM 2* but it seems to be Black's best option.

12...♙g4?! was a recent try, but not something which is likely to be repeated: 13.♙xg4 ♙xa1 14.bxa5 cxd5 15.♖b3 ♙f6 16.exd5 White was close to winning in Nedic – Trent, Hamburg 2015.

12...♗d7 was shown to be bad for Black half a century ago: 13.♖b1 ♗xd2 14.♗xd2 ♖c4 15.♗h6 b5 16.♙d4 f6 17.♗xf8 ♖xf8 18.a4!± Krogus – Shagalovich, Moscow 1967.

12...♙xa1 is also unsatisfactory for Black in view of: 13.exf5 ♙g7 14.bxa5 ♙xa5

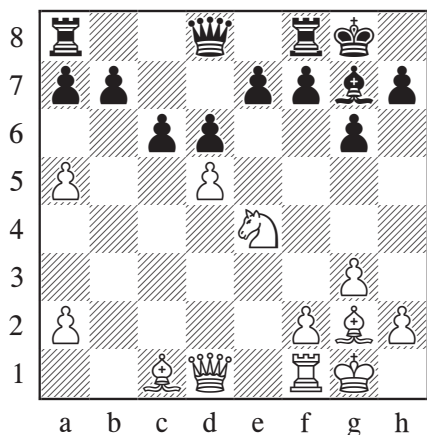


15.♞e1!N (15.fxg6 has been played in a couple of games but I see no reason to release the tension at this stage) 15...♞c7 16.♘f3 White's two minor pieces are clearly stronger than the enemy rook.

13.♘xc4 ♘xa1 14.bxa5 ♘g7

14...c5 15.♞a4 ♘g7 16.♞e1 ♞b8 17.♘f1 was clearly better for White in Bush – Saxena, corr. 2008.

After a sequence of mostly forced moves, White has a choice. Strongest is:



15.a6! c5

15...♞b8 16.axb7 c5 is another route to the same position.

16.axb7 ♞b8 17.♘d2!

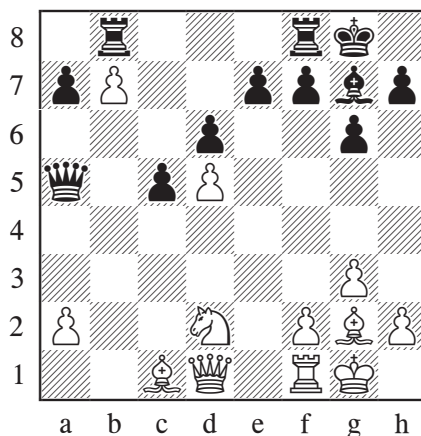
A most instructive regrouping: the knight is heading for c4, from where it will secure the queenside. The bishop will go to e4, and White will have good chances to seize the initiative on the kingside with h4-h5.

17...♞a5

Also after 17...♘h6 18.♘c4 ♘xc1 19.♞xc1 ♞c7 20.f4 White was clearly better in Witzschel – A. Volkov, corr. 2011.

Black has scored amazingly well from here (+3 =2 –0 at the time of publication) but this

in no way reflects the objective evaluation of the position. White's best continuation is:



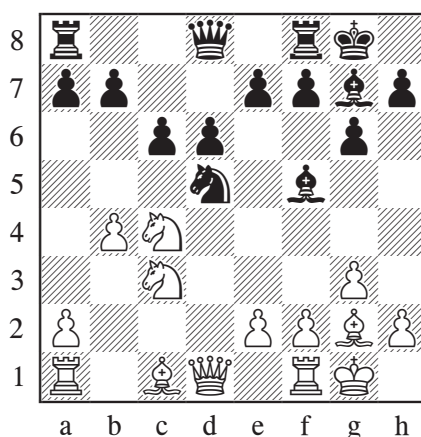
18.♞e2!

Controlling the c4- and e4-squares, where the knight and bishop will be ideally placed.

18...♞xb7 19.♘c4 ♞a6 20.♘e4 ♞bb8 21.h4 ♞fe8 22.h5

Despite his eventual defeat, White was clearly better at this point in Nuri – Kurayan, Kocaeli 2013.

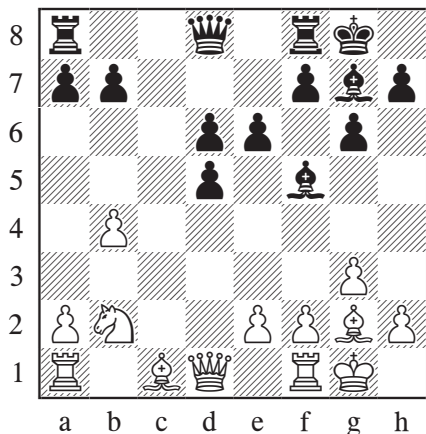
A2) 10...♘xc4 11.♘xc4 ♘xd5



12.♘d5 ♘xa1

12...cxd5?! is met by 13.♘b2! and White will slowly untangle. A game continued 13...e6?,

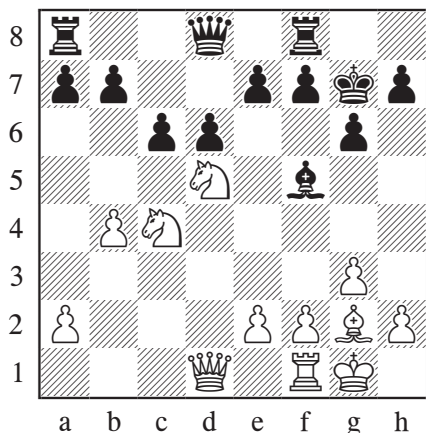
with both players missing a surprising tactical resource:



14.e4!N Winning even more material. (Even after the less accurate 14.a4 ♖c8 15.♙a3 ♗b6 16.b5 ♖c7 17.♘d3 ♖fc8 18.♙e3 White was still able to convert his material advantage in Krishna – Neverov, Chennai 2015.) 14...♙xe4 15.f3 ♙f5 16.g4+– The bishop is trapped.

13.♙h6 ♙g7 14.♙xg7 ♘xg7

I was surprised to see that this line has gained in popularity in the last few years. Up to now the play has mostly been forced, but now White has a few options.



15.♘de3

This was my previous recommendation and I still like it.

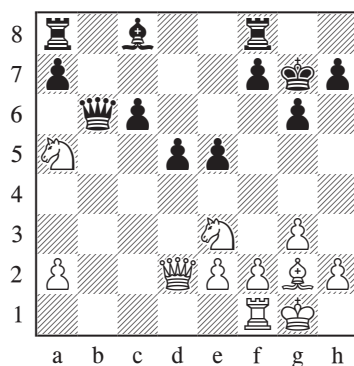
15...♙e6

15...♙c8

Black has tried this in a single game, which we will follow for a few more moves.

16.♗d2 d5 17.♘a5 e5 18.b5 ♗b6 19.bxc6 bxc6

Zubov – Karakas, corr. 2013. I like White's position and believe he should have continued as follows:



20.♖c1N ♙d7 21.♘ac4 ♗c7

21...♗d4 is no problem in view of 22.♗a5! and the knight is untouchable due to the ♖d1 skewer. 22...e4 23.♖d1 ♗f6 24.♘d2 Black is unable to prevent White's plan of ♘b3-d4 and ♗c5, blockading the pawns.

22.♘b2! ♗d8 23.♘d3±

White's knight is coming to c5, and his two minor pieces are better than Black's rook.

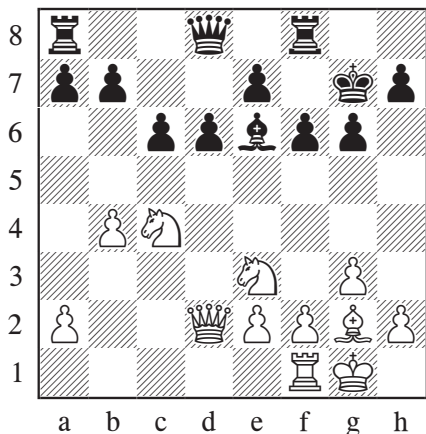
16.♗d2!?

16.a4 was my previous recommendation. However, when I came back and worked on this variation again I found 16...f6! to be quite unclear. Black's idea is to preserve the light-squared bishop on f7, followed by advancing his central pawns.

16...f6

I would like to mention also another line: 16...♗d7 17.f4! f6 18.f5 gxf5 19.♗c2

White regains the pawn on f5, with decent attacking chances.



17. ♖a5!N

This is my improvement over the only game here, which saw 17. ♖c1 ♖c8 18. ♖a5 ♔d7 19. ♗d4 c5!∞ with double-edged play, Gyimesi – Brenjo, Bihac 2010.

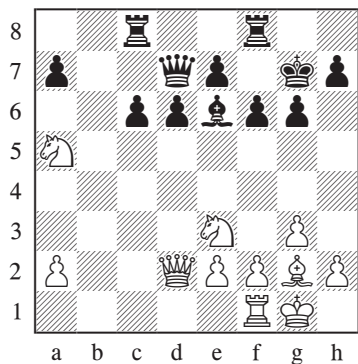
17... ♖b8

I also examined:

17... ♔d7 18. b5 ♖ac8

18... cxb5? 19. ♗xb7 ♖ab8 20. ♗c6± is hardly appealing for Black.

19. bxc6 bxc6

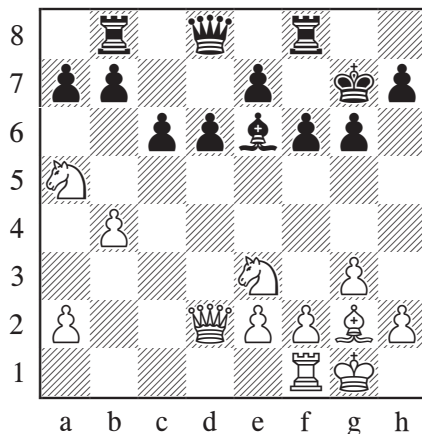


20. ♖c1 c5

20... d5 21. ♖b3 gives White exactly the kind of blockade that he wants.

21. ♖d5±

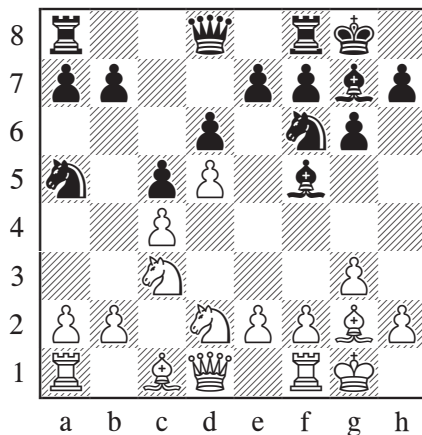
I like White's chances. (21. h4!? could be an interesting alternative to explore.)



18. b5 cxb5 19. ♖xb7 ♔d7 20. ♖a5 ♖fc8 21. h4

This whole variation requires further investigation but I feel optimistic about White's chances. The black pawns are temporarily neutralized, and White is ready to develop an initiative on the kingside.

B) 9... c5



This is the more popular move, leading to another variation on the Yugoslav structure.

10. e4

Unlike variation C22 of Chapter 5, the bishop on f5 prevents an immediate ♗c2, so

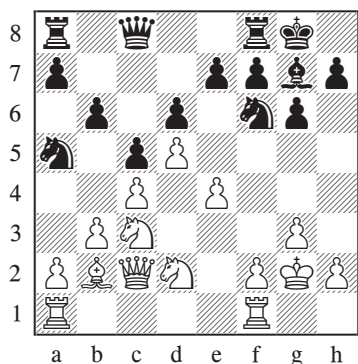
we drive the bishop away with gain of tempo. Black may respond with **B1) 10...♙g4** or **B2) 10...♙d7**.

B1) 10...♙g4 11.♖c2

We reached an almost identical position in variation C22 of Chapter 5, the only difference being that White has been given the extra move e2-e4 here. It would be too simplistic to claim that this represents a full extra tempo, as we generally did not hurry to play e2-e4 in the aforementioned variation. Moreover, in certain lines in Chapter 5, White was able to meet ...e7-e5 with dxe6 followed by ♖ce4, causing Black problems in the centre; with the pawn already on e4, this manoeuvre is no longer available. Nevertheless, we can still utilize the addition of e2-e4 by developing the queenside pieces and then then looking to expand in the centre and on the kingside.

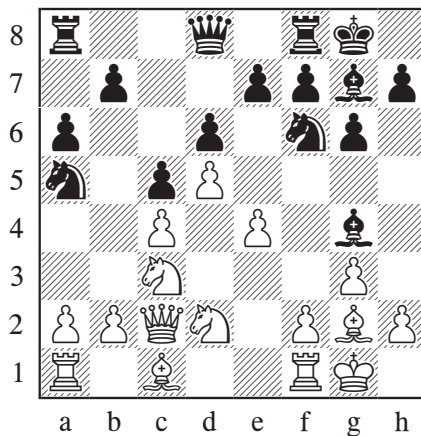
11...a6

The main alternative is 11...♖c8 (11...♖d7 is similar) but the exchange of light-squared bishops is of no concern to White, who can easily carry out his strategy. 12.b3 ♙h3 13.♙b2 ♙xg2 14.♖xg2 b6 Two games have reached this position, but for some reason neither White player continued with:



15.f4N e5 16.f5! (this is simpler and more direct than 16.♖ae1, which I gave in *GM 2*)

White has an obvious advantage in a one-sided position.



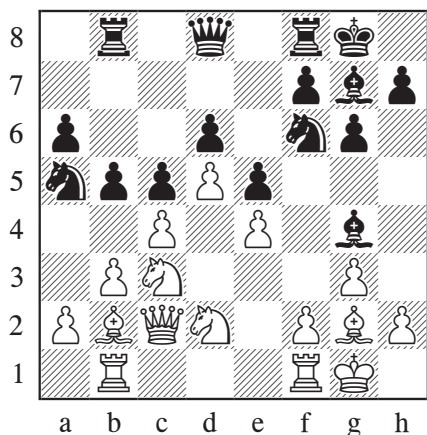
12.b3 b5 13.♙b2 ♖b8 14.♖ab1

This is the standard way of organizing the queenside pieces to keep Black's counterplay under control. It is well known from the Yugoslav Variation, and we used the same regrouping in the similar positions in Chapter 5.

14...e5

This is a relatively new invention which first appeared after *GM 2* was published. Several times in Chapter 5, I suggested meeting this move with dxe6 followed by ♖ce4, but the same plan is not possible here. Thus, Black's concept has a certain logic, even though White has scored 3/3 against it so far.

Previously I considered 14...♙d7, which looks too passive. A model game continued: 15.♗d1! We are already familiar with this thematic manoeuvre; the knight is heading to e3. 15...bxc4 16.bxc4 ♖b4 17.♙c3 ♙a4 18.♖c1 ♖b6!? (18...♖xb1 19.♖xb1 is clearly better for White) Black's last move is an interesting attempt to change the flow of the game, but White responds perfectly. 19.♙xb4 cxb4 20.♗b2! ♙d7 21.♗d3 The b4-pawn is falling. 21...♖d4 22.♗xb4+– Neckar – Lorenz, Leipzig 1971.

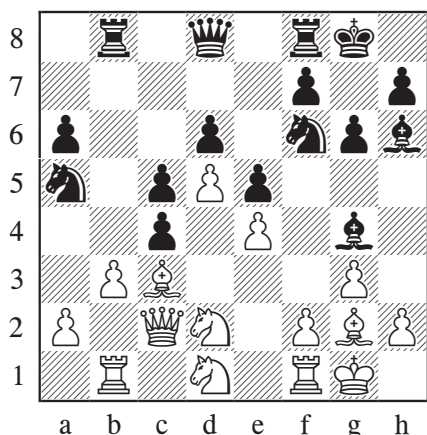


15. ♖d1 ♕h6 16. ♕c3

16.f4?! led to an eventual success for White in Hadet – Corbet, Avoine 2015, but 16...exf4N 17.gxf4 ♖h5! is an annoying reply to induce f4-f5, leading to an unclear game.

16...bxc4

This position occurred in Rawlings – Seris Granier Gonzales, corr. 2010. Here I would like to suggest a surprising new idea:



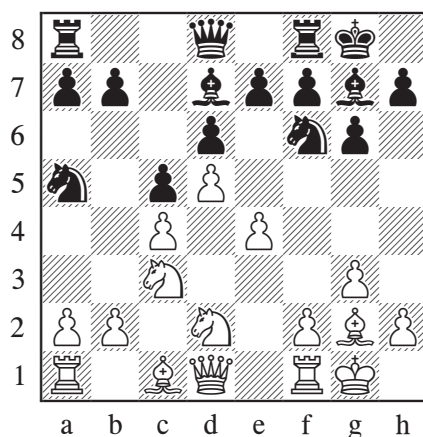
17. ♕xa5!?N ♖xa5 18. ♖xc4 ♖c7 19. ♖db2

The knight may move to d3 at some point in order to support the f2-f4 break. Another possible plan is shown after:

19... ♖h5 20. ♖c3!

Followed by ♖a5, with good chances to seize the initiative on the queenside. White has a safe position with a nice pull.

B2) 10... ♕d7

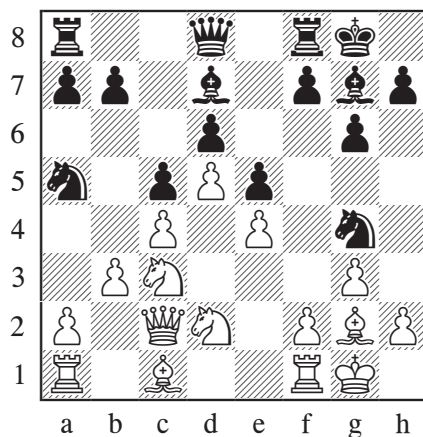


11. ♖c2

Once again, we start with this queen move in order to prepare b2-b3. The situation is similar to the previous variation, but Black's bishop is slightly better placed on d7 than g4, as it supports ...b5 and is less exposed.

We will start by considering the blocked central structure after B21) 11...e5, before moving on to the main line of B22) 11...a6, preparing ...b5.

B21) 11...e5 12.b3 ♖g4



This is the standard way of preparing ...f5; the knight is ready to regroup via h6 and later f7 if White chases it away. Instead we should develop normally, safe in the knowledge that our pieces will be better prepared for any conflict in the centre, mainly due to Black's misplaced knight on a5.

13.♙b2 f5

13...b6 14.♖ae1 f5 15.exf5 gxf5 was the move order of the Stohl – Molnar game referenced below.

14.exf5 gxf5 15.♖ae1!

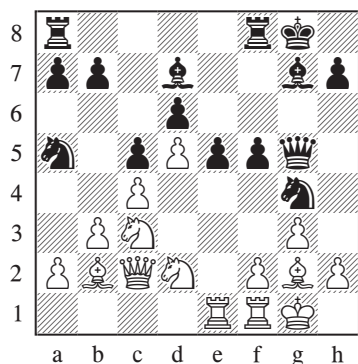
15.♗e2 was my suggestion in *GM 2* but it is more accurate to bring the rook into play, as there is no need to commit the knight so soon.

15...b6

This seems like a sensible attempt to bring knight back into the game via the b7-square.

15...♖g5

This move from Gutman – Kuligowski, Brussels 1986, could have run into:



16.♗f3N ♖h5 17.♗h4!

White has fine prospects on the kingside. Here are some illustrative lines.

17...♙f6 18.h3 ♗h6 19.f4 exf4

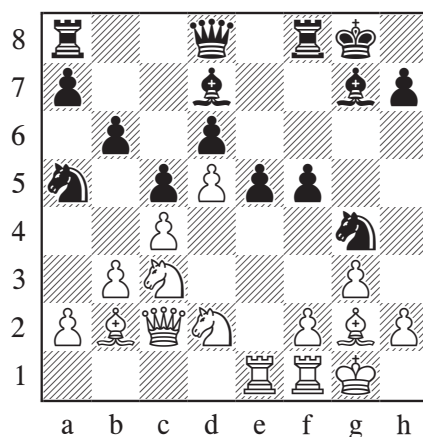
Black's problem is that 19...e4?! runs into: 20.♗xe4! ♙xb2 (20...fxe4 21.♙xf6 ♖xf6

22.♖c3 sees White regain the piece while keeping an extra pawn) 21.♗xd6 ♙d4† 22.♗h1 The threat of ♙f3 is extremely powerful, and if 22...♗f7 23.♗dxf5 ♙xf5 24.♗xf5 White is simply winning.

20.♖xf4 ♖ae8 21.♖ef1

White has an obvious advantage due to his much better coordinated pieces, while Black suffers from the poor position of his knight on a5.

This position was reached, following a transposition noted earlier, in Stohl – Molnar, Slovakia 2012. This would have been an appropriate moment for White to take action in the centre as follows:



16.h3N ♗f6 17.f4! ♗h5

17...e4 is strongly met by 18.g4!, opening the game in White's favour.

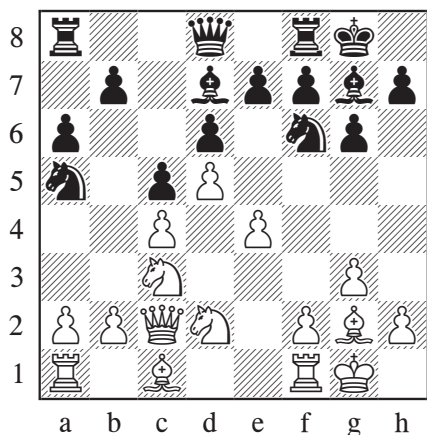
18.fxe5 dxe5 19.♗e2 ♗b7

Black is one tempo away from obtaining a great position with ...♗d6, but his dream is about to be shattered.

20.d6! ♗xd6 21.♙d5† ♗h8 22.♗f3+–

Black's whole position is collapsing.

B22) 11...a6

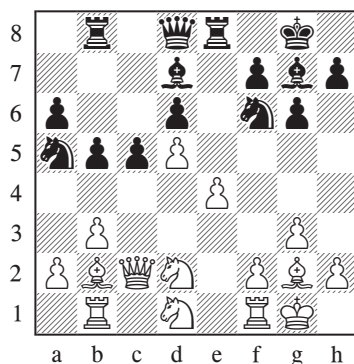


Preparing ...b5 is the most obvious plan for Black.

12.b3 b5 13.♙b2 ♖b8 14.♞ab1

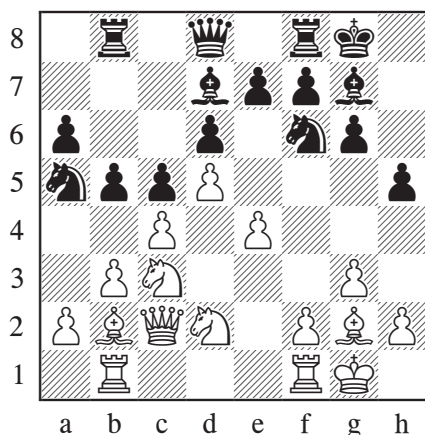
White's last few moves require no explanation, as we have seen the same plan in several previous lines. Now we come to a crossroads, with several moves having been tried. Many move orders and transpositions are possible, so it's hard to consider every possibility, but I believe that my analysis of **B221) 14...h5**, **B222) 14...bxc4** and **B223) 14...e5** should be enough to show how White's position should be handled.

14...e6 does not present too many problems: 15.♘d1 exd5 (15...e5 is the computer's top choice but White should obviously be happy with a free tempo for the thematic knight regrouping: 16.♘e3±) 16.cxd5 ♞e8 (16...♞c8 17.♘e3 ♞e8 18.h3 ♘h5 19.♙xg7 ♘xg7 20.♞c3 was also excellent for White in Barros Rivadeneira – Santiago Vilca, Guatape 2016)



17.♘e3 b4 18.f4 ♘g4 19.♘xg4 ♙xg4 20.♙xg7 ♘xg7 21.♞be1± White was in complete control in Hrubaru – Rusak, corr. 2013.

B221) 14...h5

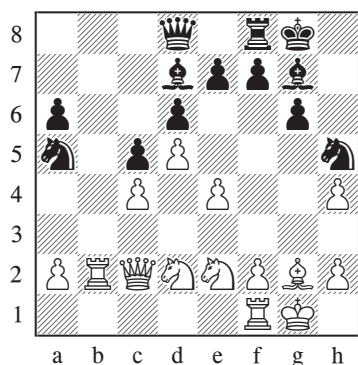


This is a thematic idea for this type of structure. It may appear strange to push the h-pawn immediately after having advanced on the queenside, but Black is not playing for a crazy attack. Instead, he would like to carry out ...h4 and ...hxg3 for prophylactic reasons. If White allows this plan and recaptures with the f-pawn, he will be deprived of f2-f4 and Black will obtain the e5-square for his pieces. If he recaptures with hxg3, he will find it harder to advance on the kingside, because f2-f4 will offer Black's knight an excellent outpost on g4.

Fortunately, White does not have to allow all this, and can obtain a good game as follows.

15. ♖e2 e5

Black is not ready for 15...h4? on account of 16.gxh4! when White is the only one who will benefit from the opening of the kingside. The only game here continued 16...bxc4 17.bxc4 ♖xb2 18.♖xb2 ♖h5 and now, in Matveeva – Kachiani-Gersinska, Bled (ol) 2002, the most convincing would have been:



19.♗f3! Nxb2 20.♖xb2 White's advantage is already close to decisive.

16. dxe6!?

16.h3 is a perfectly good alternative which will be examined in variation B223 below. The text move is an extra option which could be considered through the present move order. Whether or not you take this option is a matter of personal preference, but in any case it is worth looking at the following line to get a sense of how play may develop in the pawn structure arising after dxe6.

16...♗xe6 17. ♖f4 ♖e8

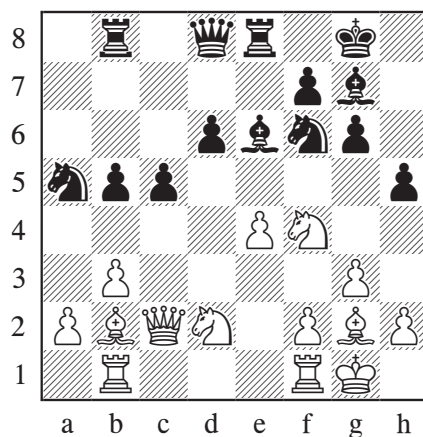
This is a new idea which has been played a couple of times since *GM 2* was published.

17...♗d7 gives White a pleasant choice. 18.cxb5 (I also like 18.♖fd1 N♖c6 19.♖f1 with positional pressure, as recommended in *GM 2*, but the game continuation is promising too)

18...axb5 19.♖bd1 ♖c6 20.♖f3 White kept a positional edge in Lemos – Orsini, La Plata 2008.

18.cxb5 axb5

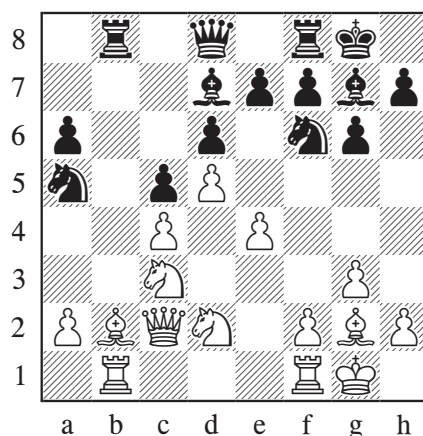
In Harutyunian – D. Petrosian, Yerevan 2014, White should have played:



19. ♖f3 Nxb2 20. ♖bd1

With the slightly better game.

B222) 14...bxc4 15.bxc4



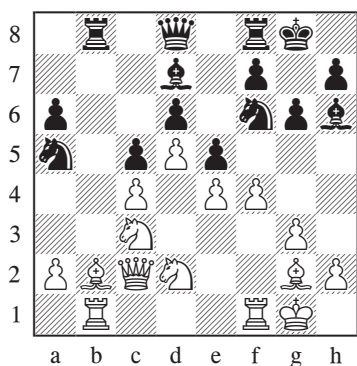
Black can make this exchange at almost any time he pleases, so all kinds of transpositions are possible. I won't attempt to list all of them, and will instead focus on some instructive examples showing the most important plans.

In general terms, White will look to regroup by moving the c3-knight to either e2 or d1-e3. Often the bishop will go to c3 (unless it is exchanged for the bishop on g7), and f2-f4 will usually be played at some point. There is no set rule as to whether the c3-knight should go via e2 or d1-e3. Both options can work well, so the choice depends on personal taste as well as any specific considerations regarding what Black is doing.

15...♞c7

I considered three other possibilities:

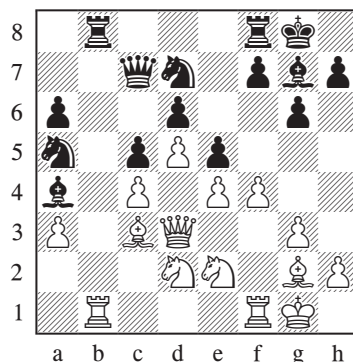
15...♞h6 16.f4 e5 Interestingly, GM Peter Heine Nielsen has reached this position twice. Both times he played 17.♞e2 and was successful, but I would prefer:



17.dxe6! N fxe6 (17...♞xe6? 18.♞d5!±) 18.♞d3 ♞c6 19.♞f3 White's pieces are much better placed.

15...♞g4 has been tried several times. I like White's play in the following example: 16.♞d1 (16.♞e2 is a good alternative) 16...♞xb2 (16...♞d4 17.♞xd4 cxd4 18.♞b2± Pranav – Ghanbarzadeh, Sari 2013) 17.♞xb2 e5 18.h3 ♞h6 19.♞d3 ♞c7 20.f4 f6 21.♞c3 White's natural play led to a pleasant edge in Vul – Coulon, Cappelle-la-Grande 2014. As usual, the knight on a5 is a problem for Black.

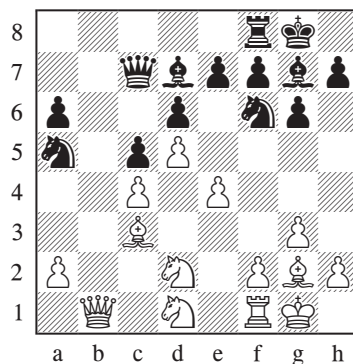
15...e5 has occurred in several games. I like the following example: 16.♞e2 (16.♞d1 is a good alternative) 16...♞b4 17.a3 ♞a4 Black is trying to get active but White keeps everything under control. 18.♞d3 ♞b8 19.♞c3 ♞c7 20.f4 ♞d7 This happened in Krishna – T. Petrosian, Visakhapatnam 2011, and here I found a nice way to improve White's position:



21.♞xb8N ♞xb8 22.♞c1! My idea is to regroup with ♞f3 and ♞d3, with a view to seizing the initiative on the kingside. Meanwhile Black has no points of entry along the b-file and his knight is still shaky on a5.

16.♞d1 e5

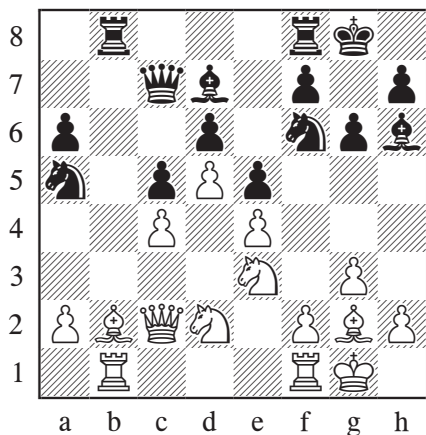
16...♞b4 can be met comfortably with 17.♞c3 ♞xb1 18.♞xb1. A model game continued:



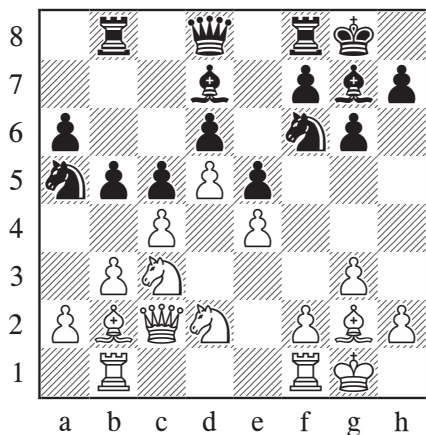
18...♞h5 19.♞d3 ♞b8 20.♞e3 ♞xc3 21.♞xc3 ♞g7 22.f4± White obtained an optimal position in Sargissian – B. Socko, Batumi 2002.

17.♘e3 ♗h6

This position was reached in Aronian – Blehm, Yerevan 1999. In *GM 2* I suggested following the game for several more moves, but now I would prefer not to allow Black to capture on e3 when White is forced to recapture with the f-pawn. Therefore I suggest the simple continuation:

**18.♖b1N ♘h5 19.♗c3**

White keeps a classical advantage for such positions: he remains safe on the queenside and has good chances to seize the initiative on the kingside, while Black faces the recurrent problem of what to do with the knight on a5.

B223) 14...e5

This has been by far the most popular choice.

15.♗e2 h5

I examined three other options:

15...♘h5 16.f4

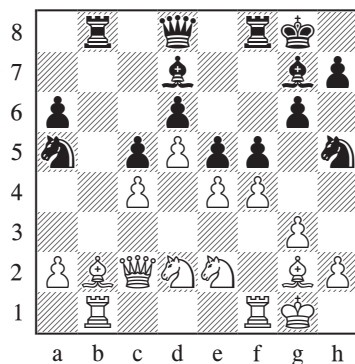
This looks promising for White. A post-*GM 2* example continued:

16...bxc4

In my previous work I mentioned 16...♗g4 17.♗f3 ♗xf3 18.♘xf3 bxc4 19.fxe5! and the complications turned out in White's favour in Rogozenko – Lanka, Hamburg 2008.

17.bxc4 f5

17...♖xb2 18.♖xb2 exf4 19.♘xf4 ♗xb2 20.♗xb2± is a line I gave in *GM 2*.

**18.fxe5 dxe5 19.♖b1**

19.♗c3 is another way to keep an edge.

19...♗a4!?

An interesting try, but White keeps control. 20.♗c3! ♘b7 21.♗a3±

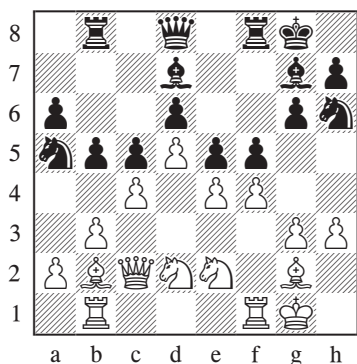
Laznicka – Antoniewski, Czech Republic 2010.

15...♗g4

This is another thematic move. The knight clears the path of the f-pawn, while being ready to retreat to h6 (and later f7) if provoked.

16.h3 ♘h6 17.f4 f5

Here White can improve on Koneru – Jobava, Wijk aan Zee 2006, by means of:



18.fxe5! N dxe5 19.♖c1!

I still favour this recommendation from GM 2. The knight is heading for the optimal d3-square.

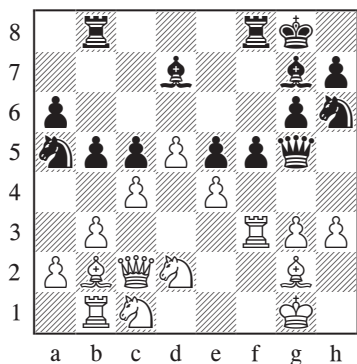
19...♗g5

19...fxe4 20.♖xf8† ♗xf8 21.♘xe4 ♘f5 22.♗c3! ♘b7 23.♘d3 gives White a nice positional plus.

I also checked 19...♘f7 20.♘d3 bxc4 21.bxc4 ♗c7 22.♙c3 and White is better as always.

20.♖f3

Defending g3, while preparing to double along the f-file. Play may continue:



20...♘f7 21.♘d3 ♘b7 22.♖bf1 ♖fe8 23.h4 ♗e7 24.♖3f2±

Black remains under pressure.

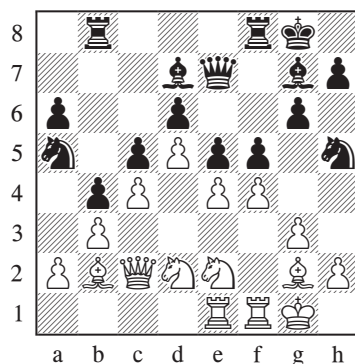
Before moving on with our main line, we will check one other continuation and the ensuing model game.

15...♗e7 16.♖be1 ♘h5 17.♙c3!?

Preventing a potential exchange sacrifice on b2.

17...b4 18.♙b2 f5 19.f4

The opening of the centre favours White, which is no big surprise, taking into account Black's offside knight.

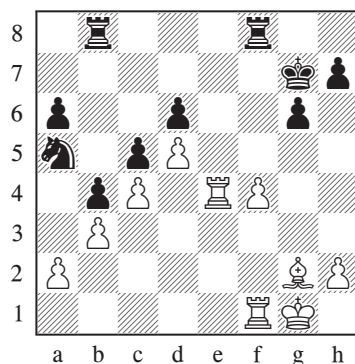


19...exf4

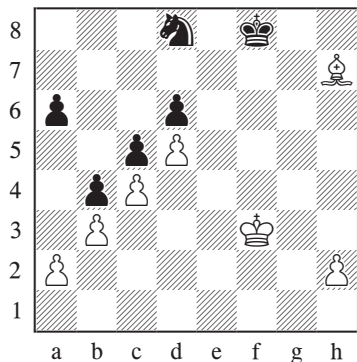
19...♖be8 20.♙h3 exf4 21.♘xf4 ♘xf4 22.gxf4 fxe4 23.♙xd7 ♗xd7 24.♘xe4 ♘b7 25.♙h1! (intending ♘g5-e6) favours White, as given by Huschenbeth in *ChessBase Magazine* 121.

20.♘xf4 ♘xf4 21.gxf4 fxe4 22.♘xe4 ♙f5 23.♗d2 ♙xb2 24.♗xb2 ♙xe4 25.♖xe4 ♗g7 26.♗xg7† ♙xg7

Black has kept his position together but he is still in trouble. With every piece exchange, the seriousness of the misplaced knight becomes more and more significant.



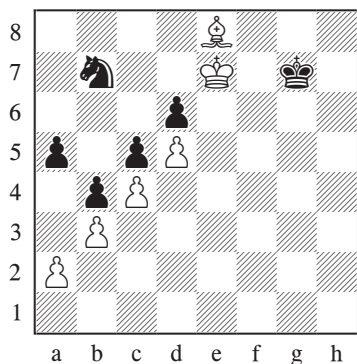
27.f5! gxf5 28.♖e7+ ♖f7 29.♖xf7+ ♔xf7
30.♙e4 ♔g7 31.♖xf5 ♖e8 32.♖f4 ♖e7 33.♖h4
♔h8 34.♔f2 ♖b7 35.♙d3 ♔g8 36.♖h6 ♖g7
37.♔f3 ♔f8 38.♖xh7 ♖xh7 39.♙xh7 ♖d8



40.♙g6!

Obviously White keeps the knight locked in its cage. The rest is torture for Black.

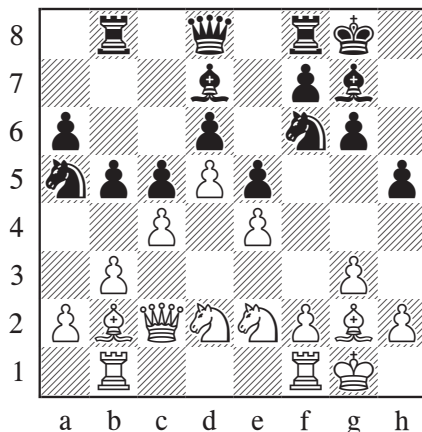
40...♔g7 41.♙e8 ♔f6 42.♔f4 ♔e7 43.♙h5
♔f6 44.h4 a5 45.♙e8 ♔e7 46.♙g6 ♔f6 47.h5
♖b7 48.♙e8 ♔e7 49.h6 ♔f6 50.h7 ♔g7
51.♔f5 ♔xh7 52.♔e6 ♔g7 53.♔e7



1–0 This was Sargissian – Huschenbeth, Kemer 2007: a perfect example of how White can play against the offside knight for the entire game.

Let's return to our main line. Black would like to carry out ...h4 and ...hxg3 for positional reasons, as explained earlier at the start of variation B221. So far, his last move has been the most popular choice in the position.

However, in view of the strength of White's reply, I imagine it could be abandoned by strong players in future.



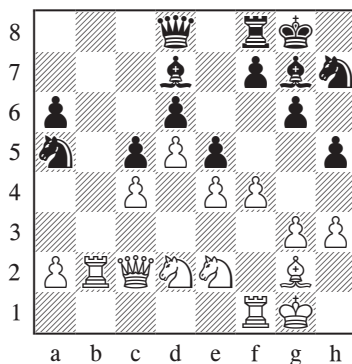
16.h3!

It is important to understand that 16.f4?! is premature in view of 16...exf4 17.gxf4 bxc4 18.bxc4 ♖xb2! 19.♖xb2 ♖g4 and Black has a surprisingly strong initiative, as I analysed in *GM 2*.

Previously I recommended 16.♖c1!? but now I prefer the text move – which, by the way, has yielded a huge score for White in recent years.

16...h4

16...♖h7 has been played in several games but 17.f4 gives White a great position, for example: 17...bxc4 18.bxc4 ♖xb2 19.♖xb2



19...exf4 20.gxf4 g5 (20...♙xb2 21.♚xb2± is obviously no fun for Black so he tries a desperate exchange sacrifice) 21.♞bb1 gxf4 22.♞xf4 Black failed to prove any compensation in Kunte – Rojicek, Pardubice 2010.

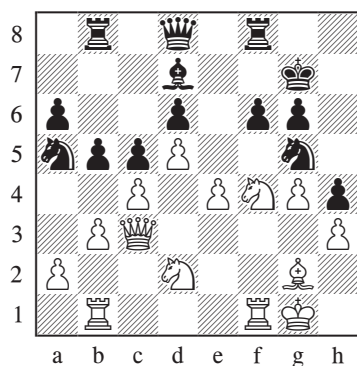
17.g4 ♖e7

17...♘h7

This looks like a natural alternative but White is just in time to seize the initiative with:

18.f4 exf4 19.♙xg7 ♙xg7 20.♚c3† f6 21.♘xf4 ♘g5

In Jianu – D. Popovic, Cappelle-la-Grande 2013, White should have played:



22.♘f3!N

Removing Black's best defensive piece. Once again, with every piece exchange, the poorly placed knight on a5 becomes more and more relevant.

22...♘xf3†

22...♙xe4 23.♚a1 and Black is unable to cover all his weaknesses, for instance: 23...bxc4 (23...♘g3 24.♘g5!+–) 24.♘h4 ♘d2 25.♘hxg6+–

23.♞xf3 b4

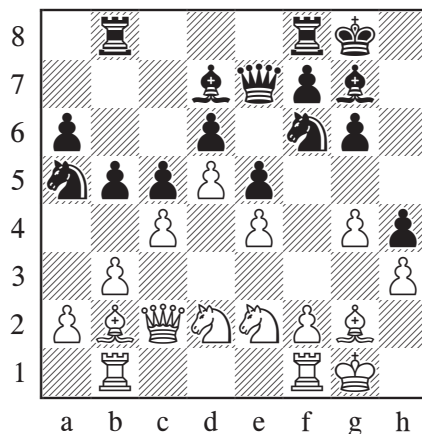
Neither 23...bxc4 24.g5! nor 23...♙h7 24.♞bf1 offers much hope for Black.

24.♚b2 ♖e7

24...♙h7 is met by 25.♞bf1 followed by ♘d3 and Black's position collapses.

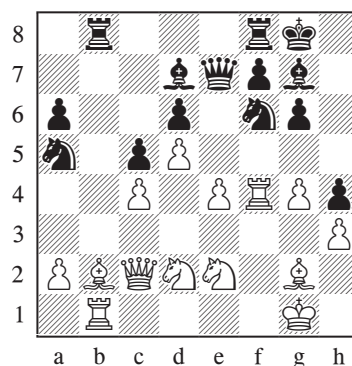
25.g5 ♖e5 26.gxf6† ♞xf6 27.♚xe5 dxe5 28.♘d3 ♞xf3 29.♙xf3+–

Black has survived the middlegame but material losses will soon follow.



18.f4 ♘h7

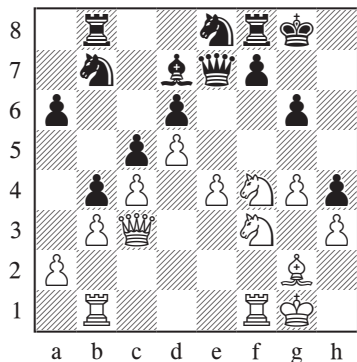
I also examined the logical 18...exf4 19.♞xf4 bxc4 20.bxc4 when, unfortunately for Black, the exchange sacrifice doesn't work:



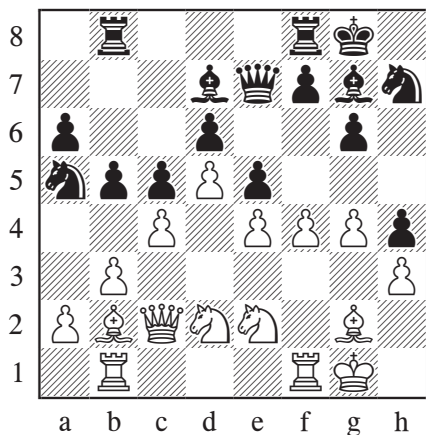
20...♙xb2 (20...♞b4 21.♙c3 ♘xc4 22.♙xf6 ♞xb1† 23.♘xb1 ♙xf6 24.♚xc4 leaves Black with a measure of compensation for the missing piece, but it can hardly be enough) 21.♙xb2 ♘h7 22.♞b6 White remains clearly better.

18...♙e8 19.♙c3 ♘b7 20.♘f3 exf4 21.♘xf4 ♙xc3 22.♚xc3 b4 (22...♚xe4 runs into 23.♚d2+– intending ♞be1) Black eventually

managed to save the game in Gonda – Kovalev, Budapest 2012, but he would have been in serious trouble after:

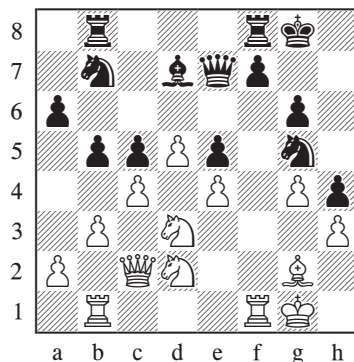


23.♙b2N Keeping control over the dark squares. (23.♙e3N is also good enough) 23...♙f6 24.♙d2+– White can continue creating threats with ♖be1 followed by advancing the e- or g-pawns. The h4-pawn is likely to drop in the near future, and that is only the beginning of Black's problems.



19.fxe5 ♙xe5 20.♙xe5 ♙xe5

In the event of 20...dx5 we should continue with the thematic regrouping: 21.♘c1! ♘g5 22.♘d3 ♘b7 Having improved the knight, the queen should be next:



23.♙d1! ♙g7 24.♙e1 ♙h8 25.♙e3 White keeps a clear positional advantage.

21.♘f3 ♙e7 22.♙d2 ♙d8 23.cxb5 axb5 24.e5↑

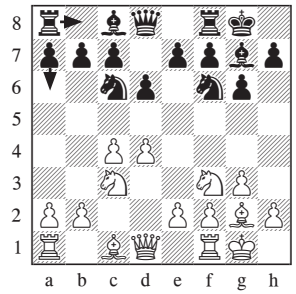
White obtained a strategically winning position in Baryshpolets – Mazur, Kazan 2013.

Conclusion

6...♘c6 followed by 7...♙f5 is an active and somewhat provocative choice; I suggest meeting it with the principled approach of 8.d5 ♘a5 9.♘d2, gaining space and intending to target Black's minor pieces. 9...c6!? 10.b4 is a tricky variation, when both 10...♘xd5 and 10...♘xc4 lead to positions with a material imbalance, often involving two minor pieces against a rook, where White keeps the upper hand with accurate play. The main line of 9...c5, on the other hand, leads to a Yugoslav structure where White first gains time with 10.e4, and then carries out the thematic plan of development with ♙c2, b2-b3, ♙b2 and ♖ab1, followed by rerouting the c3-knight via e2 or d1-e3. The ensuing positions are complicated but White has good chances to take the initiative on the kingside, and the offside knight on a5 is a recurring problem for Black.

Chapter 10

King's Indian



6...Nc6 & ...a6/...Bb8

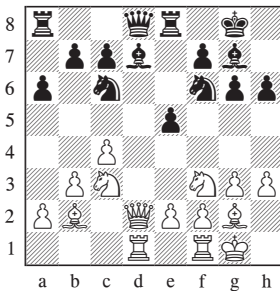
Variation Index

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6

7.0-0

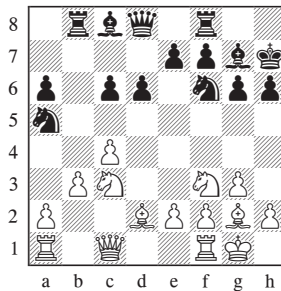
A) 7...a6 8.b3	185
A1) 8...Bd7	185
A2) 8...Bg4	186
A3) 8...Bf5	187
A4) 8...e5	189
B) 7...Bb8 8.b3	191
B1) 8...e5	191
B2) 8...a6 9.d5 Na5 10.Bg5!	193
B21) 10...h6	194
B22) 10...c5 11.dxc6!	196
B221) 11...bxc6	196
B222) 11...Nxc6 12.Bc1	197
B2221) 12...Bd7	198
B2222) 12...Be6	199
B2223) 12...Bf5	200

A2) note to 9...Bb8



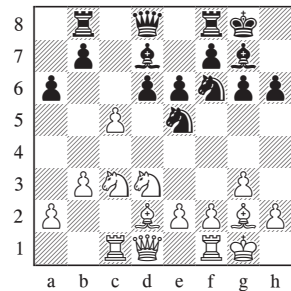
14.Ne1!N

B21) note to 12...Nxc6



14.c5!N

B21) after 16...Ne5



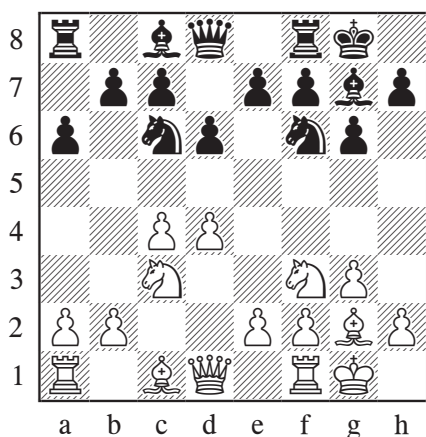
17.cxd6!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♘g7 4.♙g2 0–0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0–0

In this chapter we will deal with Black's extremely popular and challenging plan of preparing queenside counterplay with ...b5. He can go about this with either **A) 7...a6** or **B) 7...♖b8**. Often the two moves transpose, but there are some minor differences.

In this chapter, I will recommend meeting both moves with 8.b3, which has been perhaps the biggest new trend in this variation in the last few years. This move used to be connected with 9.♙b2 or 9.♘d5 and was considered relatively harmless, but lately White has developed a different concept, which greatly appeals to me.

A) 7...a6



This is the more popular of the two options, although it is arguably a bit less accurate. In any case, I am ready to propose a major change of direction from *GM 2*.

8.b3

Previously I recommended 8.♖d3, but since then Black has discovered adequate resources against it. Another practical drawback was that, due to some subtle differences between 7...a6 and 7...♖b8, I had to recommend a different line against the latter move. This

time, I am recommending what I now consider a more promising plan, which has the added advantage of being equally applicable against both of Black's move orders.

We will consider **A1) 8...♙d7**, **A2) 8...♙g4**, **A3) 8...♙f5** and **A4) 8...e5**.

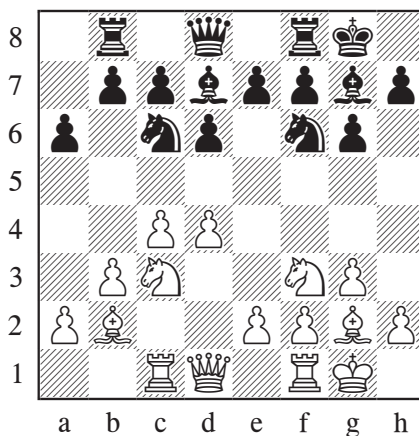
8...♖b8 will be covered under the 7...♖b8 8.b3 a6 move order; see variation B2 on page 193.

A1) 8...♙d7 9.♙b2 ♖b8

This looks like a natural set-up but White has a few good ideas against it.

10.♖c1

This is my favourite, preparing to nullify Black's queenside counterplay, as shown in the following line.



10...b5

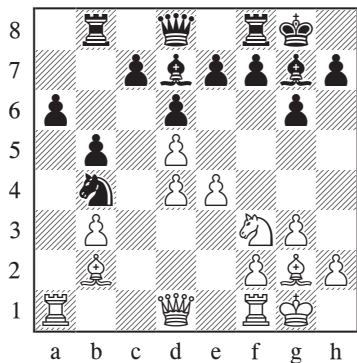
10...e5 was tried in Nyzhnyk – Kilicaslan, Konya 2011. Here I would suggest maintaining the tension with 11.♖d2N, practically forcing 11...exd4 12.♘xd4, when White keeps a positional advantage thanks to his favourable pawn structure.

11.♘d5!

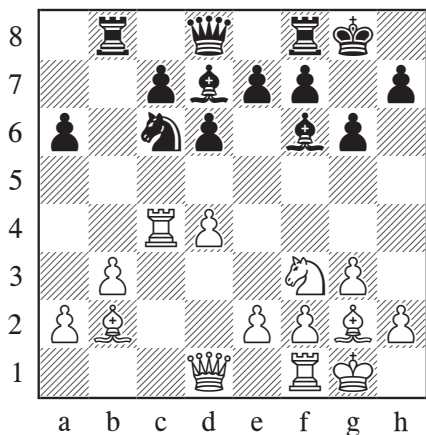
Making full use of the rook on c1.

11...bxc4

It is important to check 11...♘xd5 12.cxd5 ♘b4 13.e4, when the following sequence is virtually forced: 13...♘xa2 14.♞a1 ♘b4

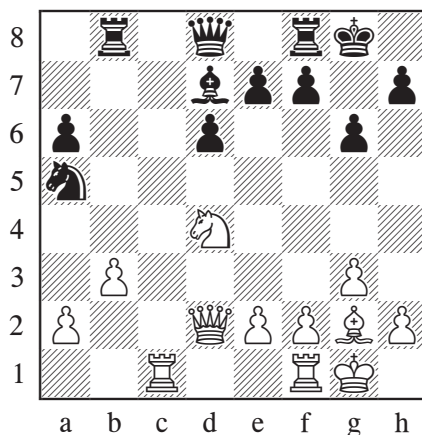


15.♞d2 c5 16.dxc6 ♘xc6 17.♞xa6 ♞c8 18.♞fa1± White emerged with strong positional pressure in Norman – Beckett, corr. 2011.

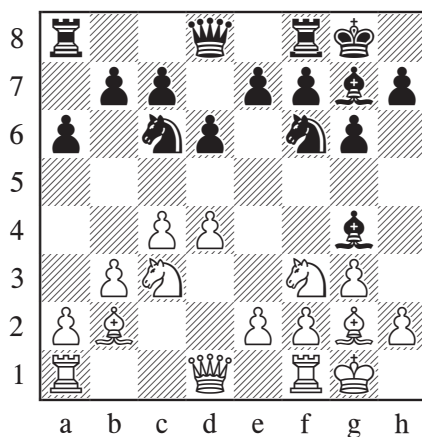
12.♘xf6† ♙xf6 13.♞xc4**13...♘a5 14.♞c2 ♙f5 15.♞c1**

Black's counterplay has stalled and White is clearly better, as the following game demonstrates.

15...c5 16.♞d2 cxd4 17.♙xd4 ♙xd4 18.♘xd4 ♙d7

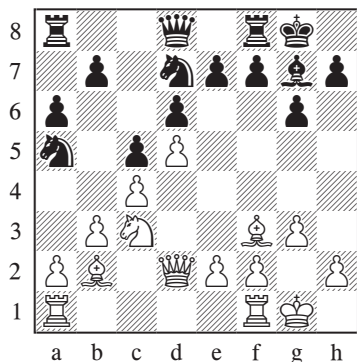
**19.♞h6! e5 20.♘f3 f6 21.♞fd1±**

Krejci – Kratochvil, Kouty nad Desnou 2012. White's pieces are much better mobilized and Black has numerous weaknesses in his position.

A2) 8...♙g4 9.♙b2**9...♞b8**

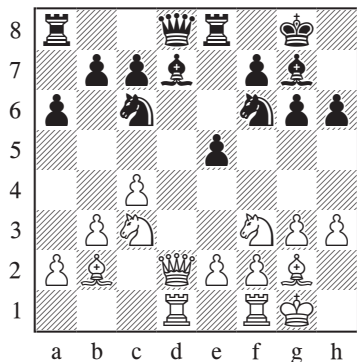
I checked a few other options:

9...♙xf3?! is hardly a good idea: 10.♙xf3 ♘d7 11.d5 ♘a5 12.♞d2 c5



13.e3! ♖N The most ambitious move, aiming to take full advantage of the premature exchange on f3. (13.dxc6 ♖xc6 14.♖d5± was enough to give White a pleasant edge in Atalik – Nakamura, Boston 2001) 13...♖b8 14.♖e2± Black has a poor version of the Yugoslav structure, with no counterplay and no obvious way to improve the bad knight on a5.

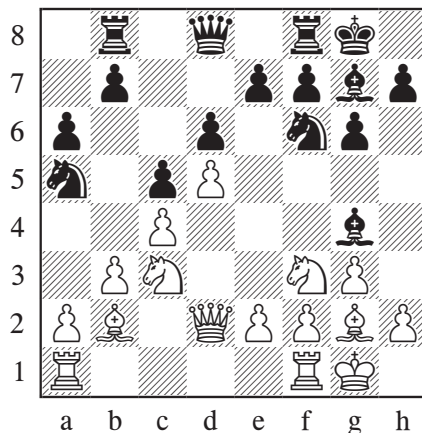
9...e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 gives White a nice version of the exchange structure. 11.h3 ♖d7 12.♖d2 ♖e8 13.♖ad1 h6 Now in Mosny – Sejkora, Tatranske Zruby 2008, White could have got a pleasant advantage with an instructive knight manoeuvre:



14.♖e1! ♖N ♖e7 15.♖c2 ♖e8 16.♖c1 White's pieces are much better coordinated.

10.d5 ♖a5 11.♖d2 c5

This position has occurred in a few games, but nobody chose the strongest move:



12.dxc6! ♖N

This will be a recurring theme in the chapter, as White tends to get a nice position after either recapture.

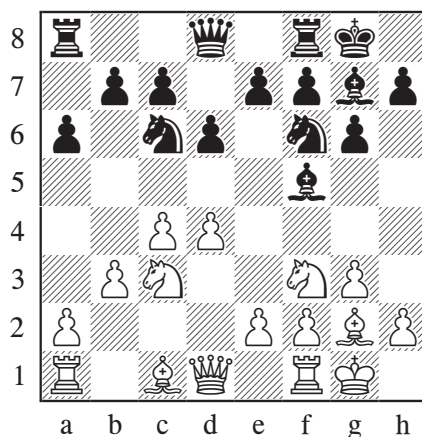
12...bxc6

12...♖xc6 13.♖d5! also leads to a pleasant advantage for White, just like in some later variations in the chapter.

13.♖e1 c5 14.♖d3±

White is significantly better.

A3) 8...♖f5



9.♖b2

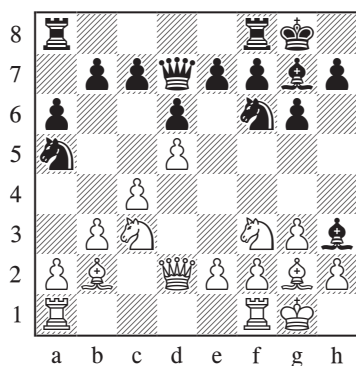
Again we proceed with a normal developing move, leaving Black with a few options.

9...♘e4

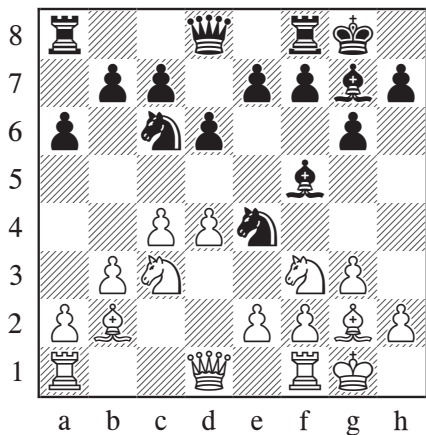
I also considered:

9...♞d7 10.d5 ♘a5

10...♘a7 11.♞e1 c6 occurred in Hoffmann – Hamdouchi, Plovdiv 2010, and now I like: 12.♞c1! N cxd5 (the main point behind White's previous move is shown after 12...♘e4 13.♘a4! when Black has a lot of problems) 13.♘xd5 ♘xd5 14.♙xg7 ♖xg7 15.cxd5± Black is clearly worse due to his miserable minor pieces.

11.♞d2 ♙h3**12.e4! ♙xg2 13.♖xg2 e5 14.c5!**

White obtained a clear edge due to Black's poorly placed knight on a5 in Cvitan – Runic, Bizovac 2002. By the way, I would like to add that Ognijen Cvitan is one of the heroes of White's fianchetto set-up, and I have picked up a lot of ideas from his games.

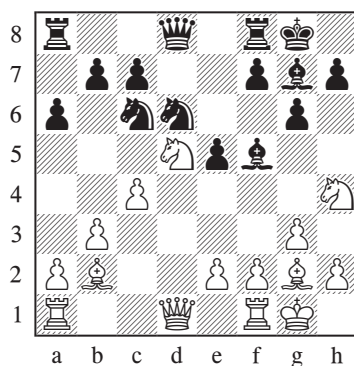
**10.♘d5!**

This thematic move is even stronger than usual here, as Black's bishop is misplaced on f5.

10...♙d7

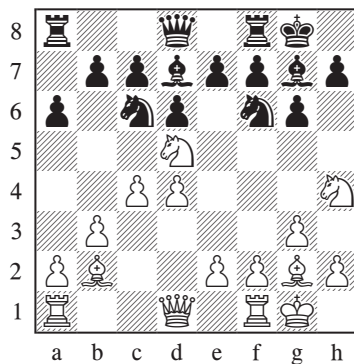
Losing time, but I doubt that Black has anything better.

10...e5? simply doesn't work in view of 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♘h4! ♘d6 and now, in Bok – J. Van Forest, Amstelveen (rapid) 2016, White's most accurate continuation would have been:



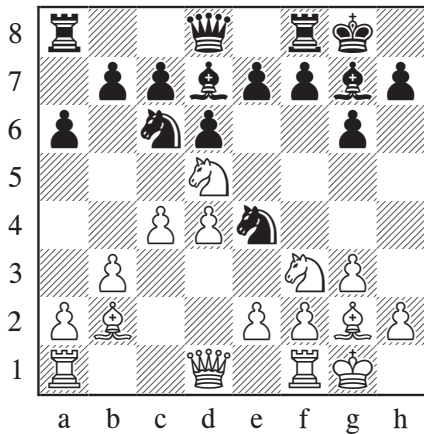
13.c5! N ♘e4 14.♘e3+— Black's problems are already insurmountable.

10...♘f6 11.♘h4 ♙d7 happened in a much older game, Sideif Sade – Riabchonok, Kuibyshev 1981. White is better after most sensible moves, but possibly the most interesting is:



12.♘xf6†N ♙xf6 13.f4!? White builds a useful space advantage, while the exchange on h4 is not something to worry about.

The text move was played in Poldauf – Tauber, Munich 1993, and a few subsequent games. White can secure a nice advantage with:



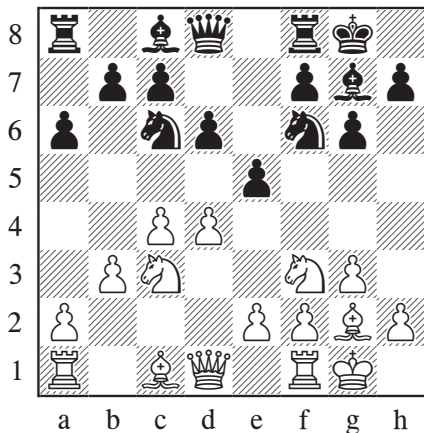
11.♘d2!N ♘f6

In the event of 11...♘d2 12.♖xd2 e6 13.♘e3 White's knight is well placed in the centre and he is ready for the d4-d5 advance.

12.♘xf6† ♙xf6 13.♘e4 ♙g7 14.♖d2

White has a pleasant pull.

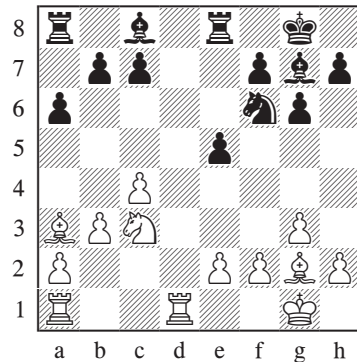
A4) 8...e5



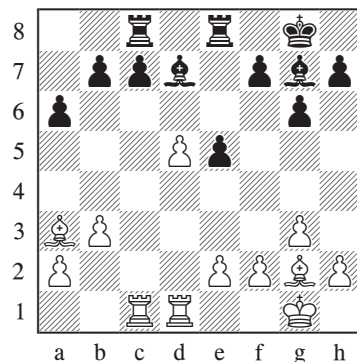
This resembles the 7...e5 variation from Chapter 8. White's b2-b3 move is likely to prove at least as useful as Black's ...a6, and White keeps a nice edge in the simplified position that follows.

9.dxe5 dxe5

9...♘xe5 does not help matters: 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♙a3 ♖e8 (11...♖xd1 12.♖fxd1 ♖e8 is the same thing) 12.♖xd8 ♖xd8 13.♖fd1 ♖e8



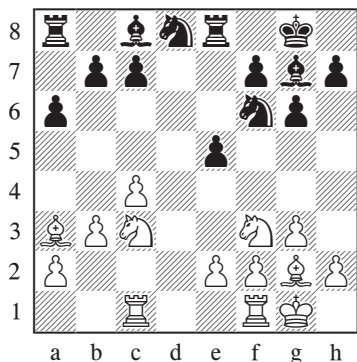
14.♘d5! Before Black has time for ...c6, White forces a favourable change in the pawn structure. 14...♘xd5 15.cxd5 Black's c-pawn is an obvious target now. 15...♙d7 16.♖ac1 ♖ac8



All this occurred in Lodhi – Wasim, Lahore 2016. White should have continued with 17.♖c4!N, maintaining definite pressure.

10.♙a3 ♖e8 11.♖xd8 ♖xd8

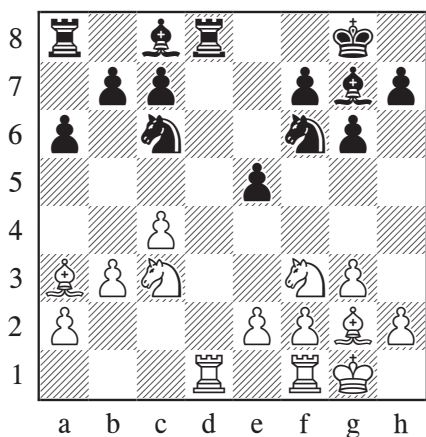
11...♖xd8 has occurred in three games so far. In all of them White opted for the natural 12.♞ad1, but I believe 12.♞ac1!N to be a slight improvement. A good illustrative line is:



12...e4 13.♘d4 b6 14.♞fd1 ♜b7 15.e3 White retains some annoying pressure.

12.♞ad1

Despite the simplifications, the arising position is by no means easy for Black.

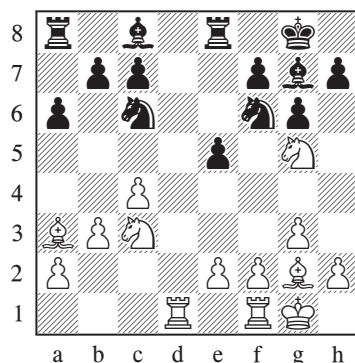


12...♞f5

Other options are even less attractive for Black:

12...♞e6 runs into 13.♘g5 ♞d7 and now 14.♞d2!N retains definite pressure, for instance: 14...h6 15.♘ge4 ♘xe4 16.♞xe4±

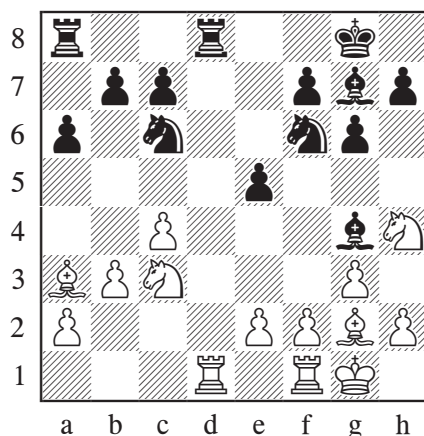
12...♞e8 13.♘g5! highlights one of White's thematic manoeuvres in this structure: the knight is heading for e4. (On the other hand, 13.♘d5 ♘xd5 14.cxd5 ♘a7! is reasonable for Black.) A game continued:



13...♘d4 14.e3 ♘f5 15.♞d2± Things were quickly becoming unpleasant for Black in Simon – Parado, Recklinghausen 2002.

13.♘h4 ♞g4

13...♞d7 occurred in Foldi – Olah, Gyongyos 1996, when the natural 14.♞d2N would have retained some pressure.



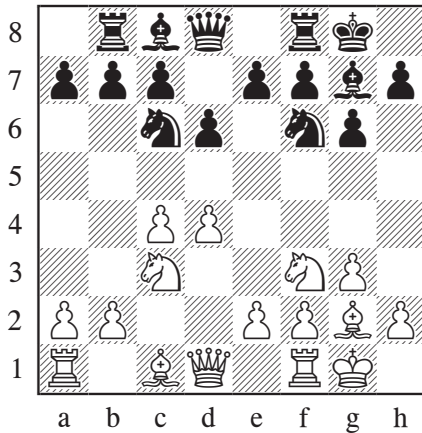
14.♞xc6! bxc6 15.♘g2

Black's damaged queenside structure could become a major problem for him in the long term.

15...♙f8 16.♙xf8 ♖xf8 17.♘e3±

White was clearly better in Bielicki – Castaneda, Buenos Aires 2003.

B) 7...♖b8

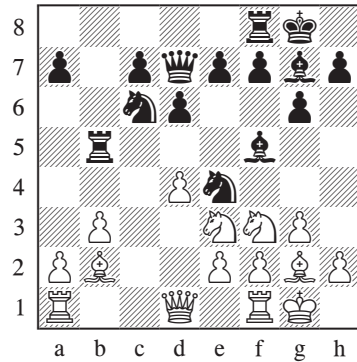


Despite being the less popular of the two move orders, this one has the advantage of basically eliminating 8.♙d3 as a serious try for White. (The precise details are not so relevant here, as I am no longer recommending that move against 7...a6, but the explanation can be found on page 415 of *GM 2*.) That is why I have recommended it to many of my students who have the King's Indian in their repertoires.

8.b3

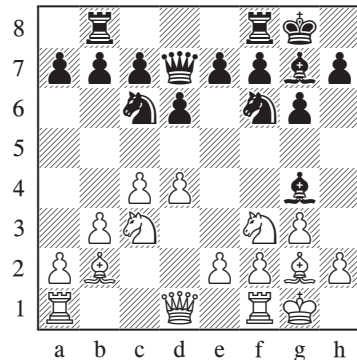
Once again, I favour this move. We will consider the sideline **B1) 8...e5** followed by the big main line of **B2) 8...a6**, which often occurs via the 7...a6 move order of course.

8...♙f5 9.♙b2 ♘e4 10.♘d5! favours White, just like the similar line covered earlier in variation A3. 10...b5 is a possible attempt to utilize the rook on b8, but Black soon got into trouble in the following game: 11.cxb5 ♖xb5 12.♘e3 ♙d7? A mistake in a worse position.



13.g4! ♘xf2 (13...♙xg4 14.♙d3 wins material but the text move is hardly an improvement) 14.♖xf2+— Granda Zuniga – Campero, Santa Cruz 2005.

In the event of 8...♙g4 9.♙b2 ♙d7, as seen in Meenakshi – Hebden, Gibraltar 2004, I would recommend the following idea for White:

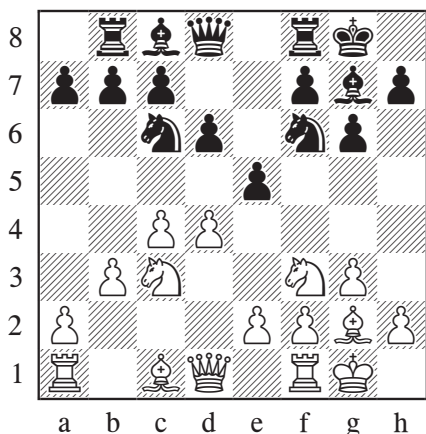


10.♖e1!N Anticipating any ...♙h3 ideas. 10...e5 11.dxe5 dxe5 (11...♘xe5 12.♙d2± gives White a pleasant edge in a typically favourable pawn structure) 12.♙xd7 White is better after both 12...♘xd7 13.♖ad1± and 12...♙xd7 13.♘d5!.

B1) 8...e5

This is a pretty reasonable move, and has been played many times by the English Grandmaster Mark Hebden. One of Black's ideas is that he has avoided the potentially weakening ...a6

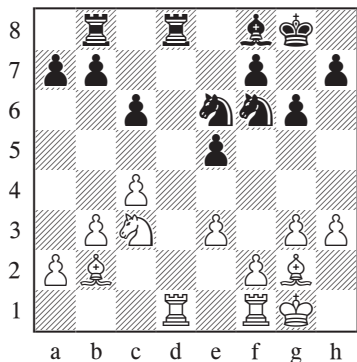
move, which should slightly improve his chances in the exchange structure, compared with variation A4 above.



9.♘b2!?

This is the most ambitious choice, avoiding simplifications.

Despite the above comment about the exchange structure, 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♘a3 still offers White a slight pull, notwithstanding the fact that Hebden has achieved good results with Black. The key line continues: 10...♖e8 11.♘xd8 ♖xd8 12.♖ad1 ♘g4 13.h3 ♘xf3 14.♘xf3 ♘d4 15.♘g2 ♘f8 16.♘b2! (improving over 16.♘xf8 ♘xf8 when White had no more than the tiniest edge in Houska – Hebden, London 2009) 16...c6 17.e3 ♘e6 We have been following Hawkins – Hebden, Amersham 2012. Here I like:

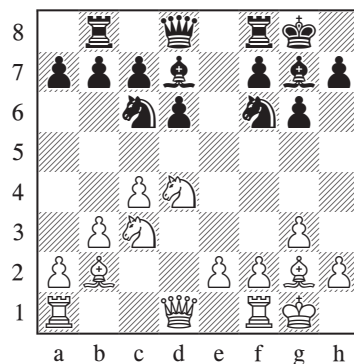


18.♘e2N ♘d7 19.h4! The last move gives White the useful option of activating his bishop via h3. White bishop pair should assure him of a long-term edge, and it will not be much fun for Black to defend the position.

9...e4

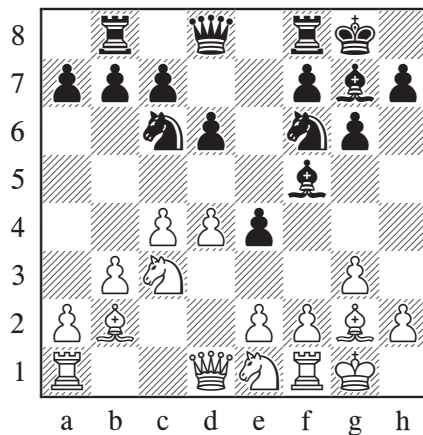
This space-gaining move is the most challenging option for us to consider.

9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘d7 occurred in Schmidt – Hillgaertner, Hessen 2000. I think it would have been good to develop simply with:



11.♘d2N Followed by ♖fd1 and so on. As I have mentioned before, this pawn structure almost always favours White, so he can count on a small but lasting edge.

10.♘e1 ♘f5

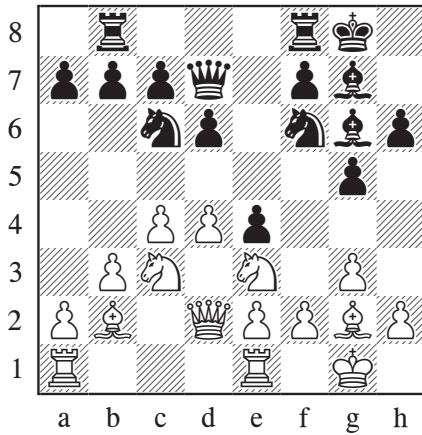


11.♗c2 ♜d7 12.♞e1!

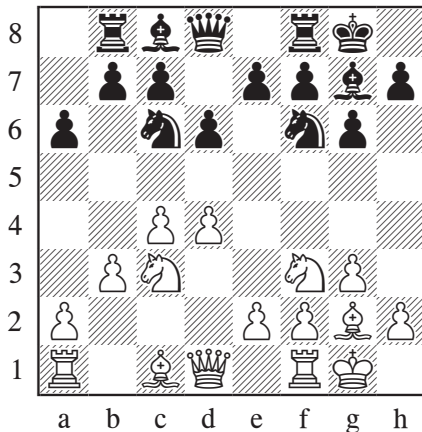
Preventing Black from exchanging the light-squared bishops. The only game from this position continued:

12...g5 13.♜d2 h6 14.♗e3 ♕g6

Sekulic – Vajdic, Sombor 2010. Now it is important to trade the e4-pawn by means of:

**15.f3!N exf3 16.exf3±**

With a pleasant game for White.

B2) 8...a6

This is by far the most important variation of the chapter, as it frequently arises via the 7...a6 move order as well. This position has arisen in around two thousand games, with 9.♗b2 and

9.♗d5 being by far the most popular moves. As I mentioned before, I have something completely different in mind.

9.d5

The beginning of a relatively new concept.

9...♗a5

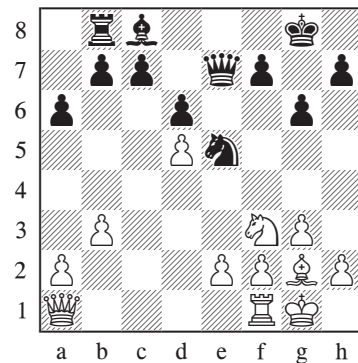
Black is unable to exploit White's hanging pieces on the a1-h8 diagonal. The relevant line continues:

9...♗xd5 10.cxd5 ♕xc3

The following sequence is pretty forced.

11.♕h6 ♗e5 12.♕xf8 ♕xa1 13.♕xe7! ♜xe7 14.♜xa1

We have reached a typically problematic pawn structure for Black, which virtually guarantees a long-term edge for White.

**14...♗xf3±**

14...♗d7 15.♞c1 ♞c8 16.♞c3 c5 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♜c1± was also nice for White in Maletin – Kurnosov, Miass 2007.

15.♕xf3 ♕f5 16.♜d4±

Bates – Coathup, Reading 2017.

10.♕g5!

10.♕d2 has been a more common choice but the text move greatly appeals to me. The bishop comes to a more active square while enabling the queen to go to d2; and if Black chases the bishop with ...h6, White will get an improved version of the normal position thanks to the slight weakening of Black's kingside.

By the way, White's last move was only mentioned in a brief note in *A Practical Black Repertoire with ♖f6, g6, d6*, and was not considered at all in *Bologan's King's Indian*.

We will analyse these options: **B21) 10...h6** and **B22) 10...c5**.

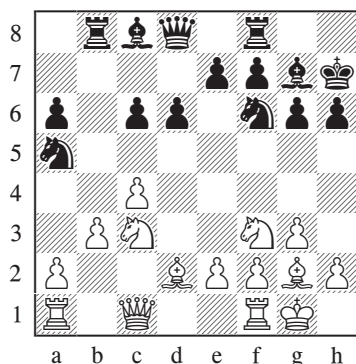
10...♘g4 doesn't seem like a serious move: 11.♖c1 c5 12.dxc6 ♖xc6 13.♘d5 h6 14.♙d2 b6 15.♙c3 and Black's opening strategy was a failure in Elwert – Hefka, corr. 2003.

B21) 10...h6 11.♙d2 c5 12.dxc6

In most of the lines in this chapter, I recommend making this exchange when we get the chance.

12...♖xc6

12...bxc6 13.♖c1 ♔h7 occurred in M. Ivanov – Selbes, Nis 2015, when White missed a chance to increase his advantage with:



14.c5!N We will see this thematic idea again in variation B221 below. The fact that White has played ♖c1 with gain of tempo only improves his chances here. A possible continuation is 14...d5 15.♙f4 ♖a8 16.♙e5± with an obvious positional advantage for White.

13.♖c1 ♙e6

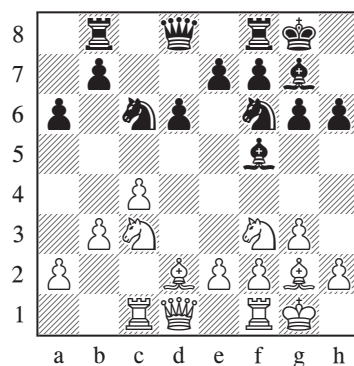
I also checked 13...♙d7, when the simple 14.♘d5 ♔h7 15.♙c3 gave White a pleasant edge in Loginov – Haselhorst, Oberwart 1997.

A more significant alternative is:

13...♙f5

This move is recommended by GM Kornev in *A Practical Black Repertoire with ♖f6, g6, d6*. Moreover, in two other books, *Attacking Chess: The King's Indian* and the much more recent *Bologan's King's Indian*, the authors (IM Vigorito and GM Bologan) recommend the same move for Black in the similar position with the pawn on h7, as can occur after 10.♙d2 (rather than 10.♙g5!, as recommended in these pages).

Here I found an important improvement for White:



14.♘d5!N

Kornev only mentions the continuation from Somogyi – Rabovszky, Budapest 1998, in which the harmless 14.♘h4 was played.

The text is not only a much stronger move, but also a perfect illustration of why provoking ...h6 is a significant achievement. In the similar position with the pawn on h7, Vigorito and Bologan both mention that ♘d5 can be met by ...♙e4, and if ♖xf6† then ...♙xf6 will be fine for Black. In our line, the loose pawn on h6 makes that impossible.

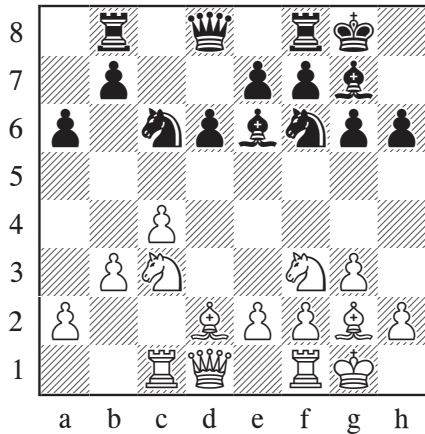
14...♘e4

14...♘d5?! 15.cxd5 leaves Black without a convenient square for his knight. If it goes to e5, Black will be forced to compromise his pawn structure, as the bishop must stay on g7 – another example of why provoking ...h6 benefits White.

The text move seems natural, but a convenient reply is:

15.♙e3±

White keeps a nice edge.

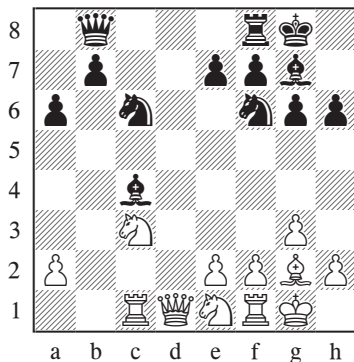


14.♘e1!

This knight manoeuvre is an important resource in these positions. It's heading first to d3, and then either to f4 or towards the queenside, depending on how the game develops.

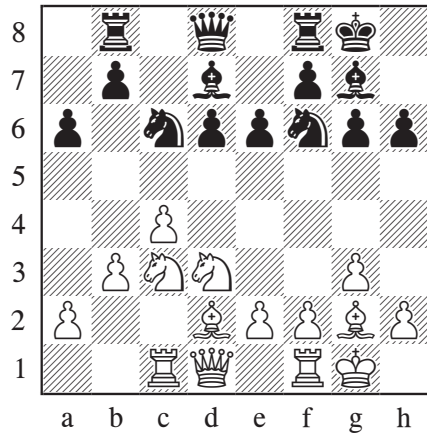
14...♙d7

Another game saw an unsuccessful attempt by Black to break in the centre: 14...d5?! 15.♙f4! dxc4 16.♙xb8 ♖xb8 17.bxc4 ♙xc4



18.♖a4 b5 19.♖xa6 ♘d4 20.♘c2 Black failed to demonstrate compensation for the exchange in Urban – Szegal, Poznan 2013.

15.♘d3 e6



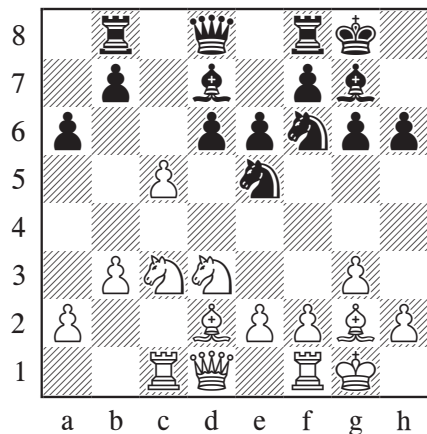
16.c5!?

An interesting idea, although there was nothing wrong with the natural 16.e4N, since 16...b5 17.c5! b4 18.♘a4 works in White's favour.

16...♘e5

It's understandable Black didn't like 16...d5 17.♙f4 ♖a8 18.♘a4, but maybe it was the lesser evil.

In Schandorff – Krnan, Baku (ol) 2016, White should have continued:



17.cxd6! Nxd3 18.exd3

Presumably White was afraid to end up with a weak d-pawn, but it is hard for Black to win back the pawn on d6 without seriously compromising his position.

18... ♖b6

Obviously Black can regain the pawn by means of 18... ♖e8 19. ♖e4 f5 20. ♖c5 ♖xd6, but after 21. d4!± his position is full of weaknesses.

19. ♖e1!

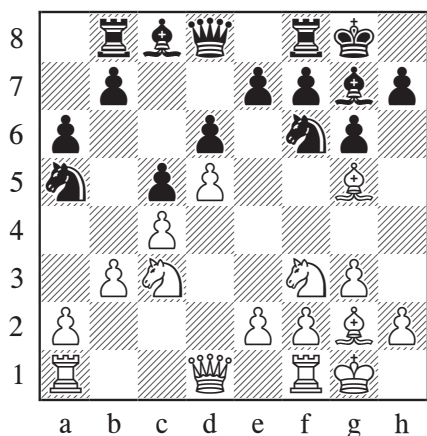
The most precise.

19... ♖fc8

19... ♖xd6 loses the exchange after 20. ♖f4, while 19... ♖bc8 obviously runs into 20. ♖e3 ♖xd6 21. ♖xb7±.

20. ♖e3 ♖d8 21. ♖a7!? ♖a8 22. ♖d4 ♖c6 23. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 24. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 25. ♖e4

White is much better.

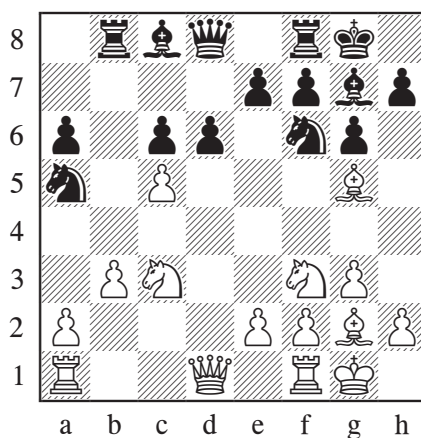
B22) 10...c5**11.dxc6!**

Once again, we should be happy to make this exchange. Black can recapture with either **B221) 11...bxc6** or **B222) 11... ♖xc6**.

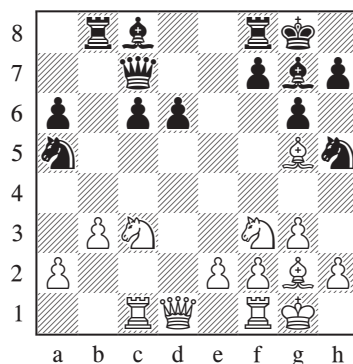
B221) 11...bxc6 12.c5!

I really like this idea. This position has only occurred in two games, both of which took place in 2017, which gives you some idea of how fresh the whole variation is.

That being said, 12. ♖d2 is also a sensible way to handle the position. 12...c5 has been played in a couple of games, and now 13. ♖h6N would have left White with the more promising position.

**12...dxc5**

In another recent game Black opted for the strange 12... ♖c7?! and soon found himself in a critical position: 13. ♖c1 ♖h5 14.cxd6 exd6



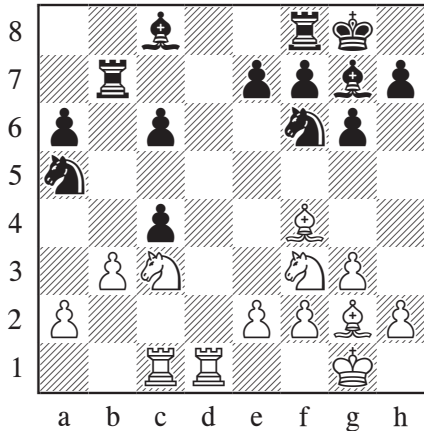
15. ♖d5 ♖d7 16. ♖e7† ♖h8 17. ♖d2 Black was already unable to avoid losing material in Lemos – Wu Yang, Graz 2017.

13.♙f4

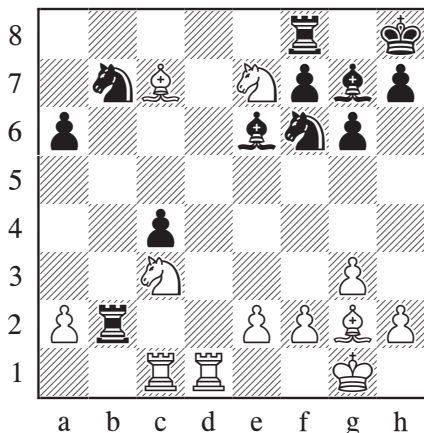
13.♖c1N is a natural alternative which also makes sense.

13...♖b7 14.♖c1 ♕xd1 15.♖fxd1 c4

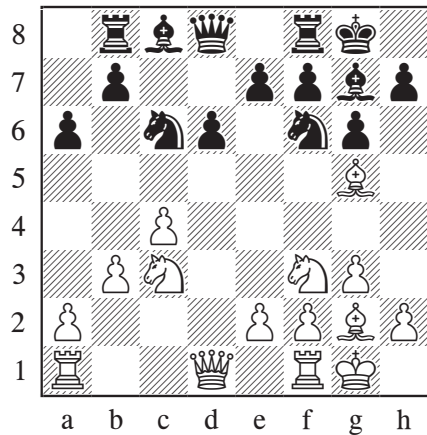
This is a logical move to swap off one of Black's weak queenside pawns, but White has an elegant way to deal with it.

**16.b4! ♖xb4 17.♙c7 ♘b7 18.♘e5 ♙e6 19.♘xc6 ♖b2 20.♘xe7† ♔h8**

So far White had played excellently in Arsovic – Giannoulakis, Thessaloniki 2017. Here I think he should have opted for:

**21.♖b1!N ♖xb1 22.♖xb1 ♘c5 23.♙d6**

With a solid positional advantage.

B222) 11...♘xc6

This has been the more popular choice so far, although the overall number of games is still pretty small. As the book nears publication, there are twelve games on the database from this position, the earliest coming from 2012 and five of them from 2017.

12.♖c1

With so few games, there is not really any established theory here, but it seems to me that Black's main options are **B2221) 12...♙d7**, **B2222) 12...♙e6** and **B2223) 12...♙f5**.

A less accurate alternative is:

12...h6?! 13.♙e3!

13.♙d2 is perfectly fine, and transposes to the earlier variation B21. However, it seems even better to put the bishop on a more active square when this particular move order presents itself.

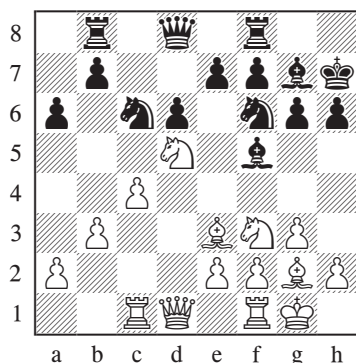
13...♙f5

This was played in a high-level game but Black is not even close to equalizing with it, although it is hard to suggest a satisfactory alternative.

13...♘g4 14.♙d2 ♙d7 15.♘d5 ♔h7 was seen in a more recent game, Hoefelsauer – Eggenstein, Vellmar 2017, and now 16.♙c3N would have been the natural way to maintain a pleasant advantage for White.

14.♘d5! ♔h7

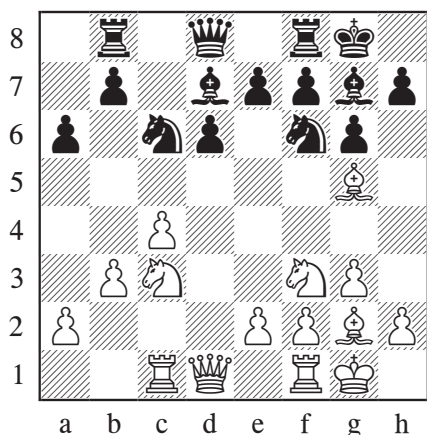
14...♘d5?! turns out badly for Black after 15.cxd5 ♘e5 16.♘xe5, when the loose h6-pawn forces him to compromise his pawn structure with 16...dxe5±.



15.♘h4 ♕e6 16.♖d2±

White was already clearly better in Bok – Jones, Baku (ol) 2016. This was actually the game which caused me to take notice of the opening plan chosen by White. I worked as the coach for the English team, and was amazed at how quickly White got a great game against an excellent player who, by the way, performed amazingly well at the Baku Olympiad.

B2221) 12...♕d7



Black safeguards his knight and supports the ...b5 push.

13.♖d2N

This hasn't been played yet, but I find it to be the most natural and promising choice.

13...b5

A natural alternative would be:

13...♖a5 14.♖fd1

White is also slightly better after: 14.♕xf6!?

♕xf6 15.♘d5 ♖xd2 16.♘xf6† ♔g7

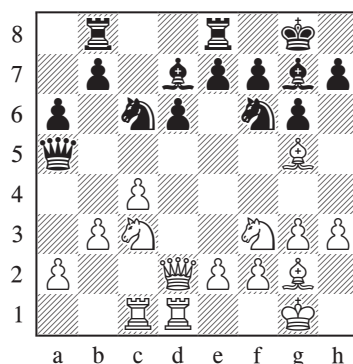
17.♘h5†! ♔h6! (after 17...gxh5 18.♘xd2±

Black's damaged pawn structure might tell

in the long term) 18.♘xd2 ♔xh5 19.♘e4

♔h6 20.♖fd1±

14...♖fe8 15.h3±



White is ready to improve his position with ♘e1-d3, while Black lacks any real counterplay. For instance:

15...b5? 16.c5

Black is in trouble, as taking on c5 would cost him a piece.

14.cxb5 axb5

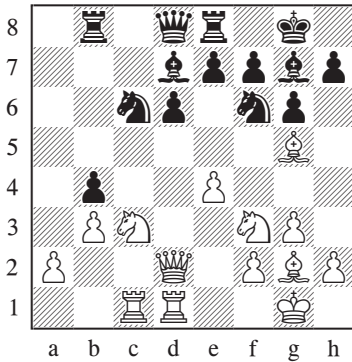
We have now transposed to an older game of Cvitan, who, as I mentioned earlier, is one of the heroes of the fianchetto set-up.

15.♖fd1

Despite carrying out the ...b5 break, Black is not close to equality.

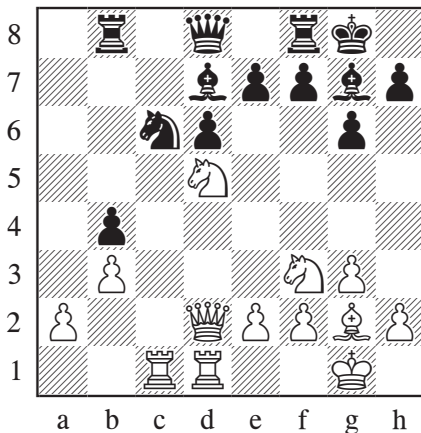
15...b4

I also checked: 15...♖e8 16.e4 b4



17.♙xf6! ♙xf6 (in the event of 17...exf6 18.♘d5 ♜xe4 19.♙f4! White's compensation is obvious and his position is better) 18.♘d5 ♙g7 19.♞c4 ♚a5 20.♞dc1 ♞bc8 21.♞4c2! Black's position is too passive.

16.♙xf6 ♙xf6 17.♘d5 ♙g7



18.♞c4 e6 19.♘xb4 ♘xb4 20.♞xb4±

White picked up a pawn in Cvitan – Istratescu, Marcigny 1993, although Black's bishop pair offered a degree of compensation.

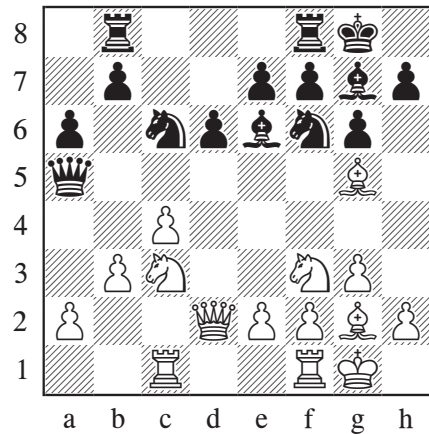
B2222) 12...♙e6

This has only been played in one game so far, but it's certainly a natural move to consider.

13.♞d2 ♚a5

In Matamoros Franco – Belezky, Seville 2013,

White went for an immediate 14.♙h6 to trade bishops. I think it would have been better to refrain from this in favour of strengthening his position in the centre by means of:



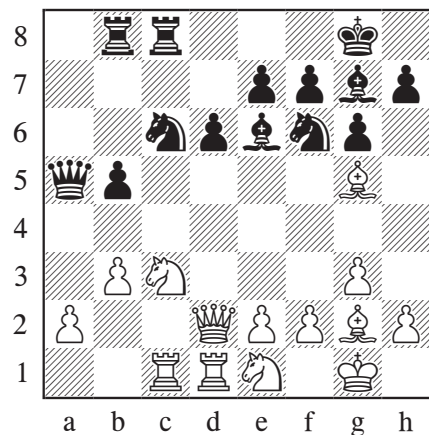
14.♞fd1N ♞fc8 15.♘e1!

Once again, this thematic knight manoeuvre works well. Here is an important line I checked:

15...b5?!

Black should play something else and accept the fact that he is slightly worse. However, he would obviously like to carry out the ...b5 break if at all possible, so it is important to see why it doesn't work.

16.cxb5 axb5



17. ♖xf6! ♕xf6 18. ♘e4 ♔xd2 19. ♘xf6† exf6

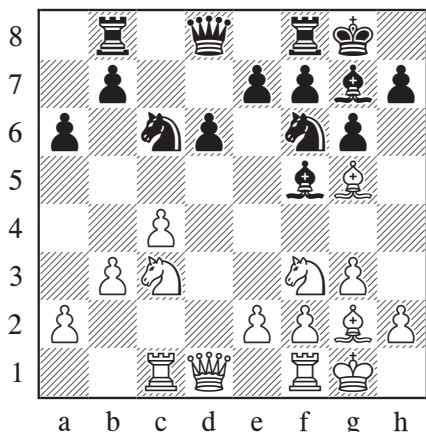
Sometimes in these situations Black can try to save his pawn structure with 19...♔g7?? 20. ♖xd2 ♕xf6, but here it's obviously not an option because the knight is hanging on c6.

20. ♖xd2

White has an obvious advantage.

B2223) 12...♕f5

This time Black develops the bishop on its most active square.



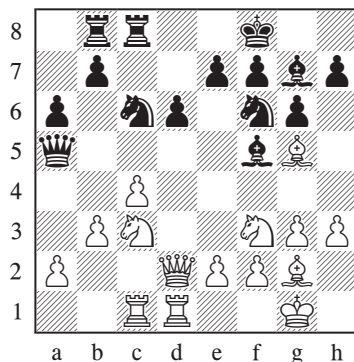
13. ♔d2 ♘e4

This seems like a sensible follow-up to Black's last move.

A logical alternative is:

13...♔a5 14. ♖fd1 ♖fc8 15. h3 ♔f8

15...b5? runs into the familiar 16. cxb5 axb5 17. ♖xf6! ♕xf6 18. ♘d5 and Black will have to allow the damaging of his pawn structure. The text move is a clever idea from Black to anticipate a possible ♘d5 jump. The king move defends the e7-pawn and also ensures that, in the event of ...♔xd2, White will not have an intermediate ♘xf6†. Here I found a useful improvement for White:

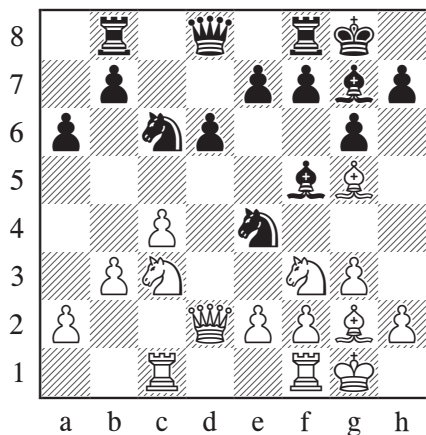


16. ♔e3!N

In Bok – Pichot, Doha (rapid) 2016, White opted for the seemingly attractive exchange of the dark-squared bishops with 16. ♕h6, but this allowed Black to free himself with 16...b5, with reasonable play.

The text move maintains all the pluses of White's position, while still preventing Black's counterplay due to the following line:

16...b5? 17. cxb5 axb5 18. ♖xf6 ♕xf6 19. ♘d5
Black's position will soon be ruined.



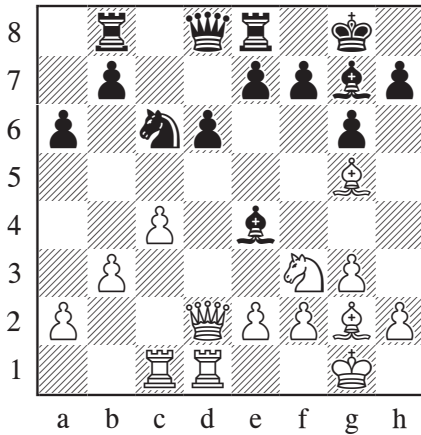
14. ♘xe4 ♕xe4 15. ♖fd1

Even after the knight trade, White retains positional pressure.

15...♖e8

This position was reached in yet another game of the Dutch GM, Bok – Nitin, Sharjah

2017. I believe this is the right moment to improve White's play by means of:



16.♙h3! N

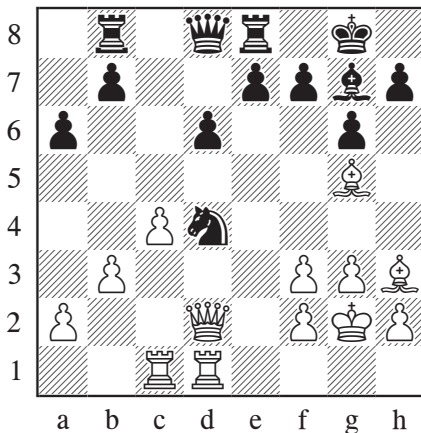
White's idea is to follow up with ♖e1, which would leave Black's bishop vulnerable on e4. The critical line is:

16...♙xf3 17.exf3 ♘d4

This looks fine for Black at first glance, but things are not so simple.

18.♙g2!

18.♙g2 is less accurate as it's important to control the f5-square.



18...♙c7 19.♙e3 e5

19...♖c6 20.f4± gives White an easy advantage thanks to the two great bishops on the open board.

20.♙xd4 exd4 21.f4±

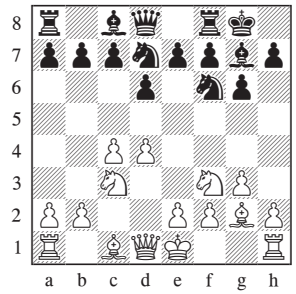
White will follow up by transferring his bishop to the perfect d5-square. Despite – or perhaps because of – the opposite-coloured bishops, Black is doomed to a long period of passive defence.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with one of Black's most popular plans against the Fianchetto System. 8.b3 is nothing new in itself but, in the position after 7...♖b8 8.b3 a6 (or 7...a6 8.b3 ♖b8), White's follow-up of 9.d5 ♖a5 10.♙g5! has only been played in a tiny fraction of games so far. White's concept is fairly simple: he tries to provoke a slight weakening of Black's kingside with ...h6, and whenever Black plays ...c5, White will capture en passant. In the event of ...bxc6, White may well reply with c4-c5, creating weaknesses in one way or another. In most games so far, Black has preferred the safer option of ...♖xc6, but in that case White has good chances to develop positional pressure with mostly natural developing moves. At this stage I like White's chances a lot, although I would recommend keeping an eye on new developments in the database, because this variation is certain to become a lot more popular in the months and years ahead.

Chapter 11

King's Indian



6...Nbd7 – Sidelines

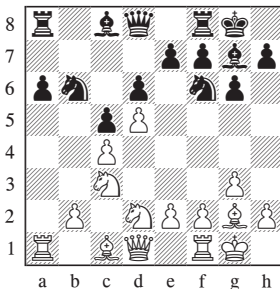
Variation Index

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nbd7

7.0-0

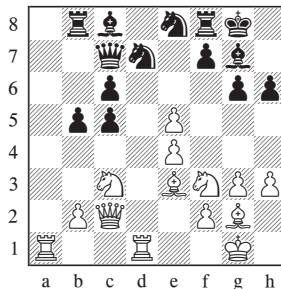
A) 7...a6	203
B) 7...c5	204
C) 7...e5 8.e4	206
C1) 8...h6	206
C2) 8...a6 9.Qc2!?	208
C21) 9...b5	208
C22) 9...c6	209
C23) 9...exd4 10.Nxd4	211
C231) 10...Ne5	211
C232) 10...Re8 11.Rd1	212
C2321) 11...Ne5	213
C2322) 11...Rb8	214

B) after 12...Nf6



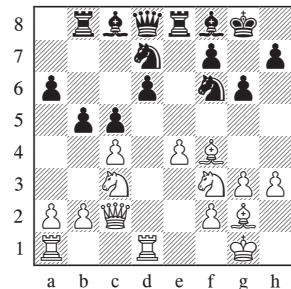
13.b3!N

C22) after 16...h6



17.Ne2!N

C2322) note to 14...b4



15.Rxd6!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3
d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7

This is Black's most popular choice against the Fianchetto System. Black's last move prepares ...e5, as is traditional for the King's Indian.

7.0-0

In this chapter we will look at the sidelines **A) 7...a6** and **B) 7...c5**, followed by a first look at the usual **C) 7...e5**, coverage of which will span several more chapters.

7...♙e8 8.e4 leaves Black nothing better than 8...e5, transposing to the 7...e5 complex.

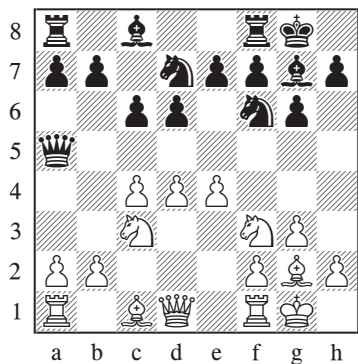
7...c6

This has been played in a lot of games, but normally just as an alternative move order to reach the main lines.

8.e4 ♔a5

Black should take control over the e5-square, otherwise e4-e5 would be strong. Obviously the most popular move by far is 8...e5, transposing to one of the main lines covered in Chapters 13-15.

8...♔c7 is another option, when 9.h3 e5 converts to a version of the 7...e5 set-up where the queen isn't so well placed on c7; see the relevant note at the start of Chapter 13 on page 241.



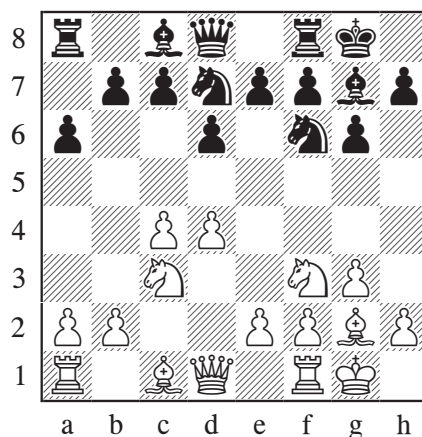
9.♖b1!

Taking advantage of the queen's early sortie. 9.♔e1 is a good alternative which practically forces 9...e5, after which 10.h3 transposes to the main tabiya of Chapter 14.

9...e5 10.d5 c5 11.a3

With b2-b4 on the way, it was obvious that Black's queen was misplaced in Roiz – Godes, Tel Aviv 1997.

A) 7...a6



This has been tried in a bunch of games since *GM 2* was published, but nothing much has happened to change my assessment.

8.e4 c5

8...e5 will be covered later in the chapter under variation C2.

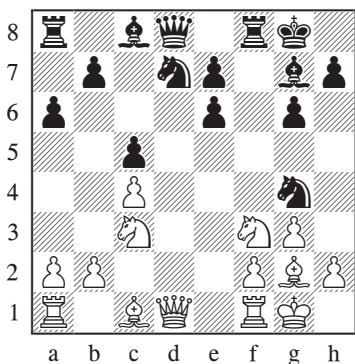
8... ♖b8?! allows 9.e5! ♜e8 10. ♕f4 when Black is already stuck in a passive position. 10...c5?! is a further inaccuracy, and after 11.dxc5 ♜xc5 12.exd6 ♜xd6 13. ♜d5! Black faced serious difficulties in Ionescu – Nanu, Bucharest 1998.

9.e5!

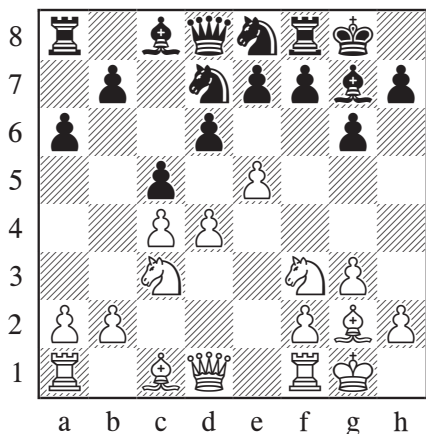
Definitely the most challenging continuation.

9...♘e8

A relatively recent game continued: 9...dxe5 10.dxe5 ♖g4 11.e6! A typical positional pawn sacrifice in such positions. 11...fxe6



12.♗a4! A great move, tying Black up on the queenside. The second player is in big trouble, as the game demonstrated: 12...♖a5 13.♗d2 ♖c7 14.♖e1 ♗de5 15.♗a5 ♗xf3† 16.♗xf3 ♗e5 17.♗g2± White had a clear positional advantage in Adams – Lind, Gibraltar 2013.



10.♗e3!

In *GM 2* I recommended this as a novelty, and it has been tested in one game since then.

10...cxd4 11.♗xd4 dxe5 12.♗xe5 ♗ef6

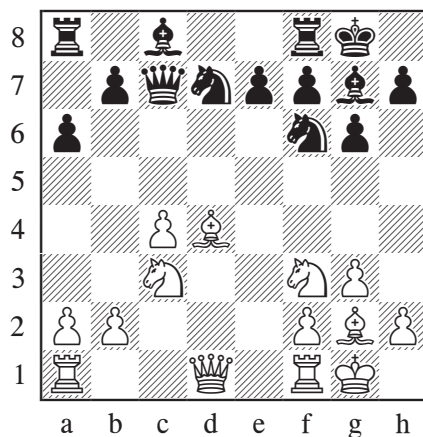
12...♗xe5 13.♗xe5 ♗ef6 14.♗d3± is another line from *GM 2*.

13.♗d4!?

Previously I gave 13.♗f4 but the text move is fine too.

13...♖c7

This occurred Zakarias – Dosztan, Hungary 2012. Here I suggest:



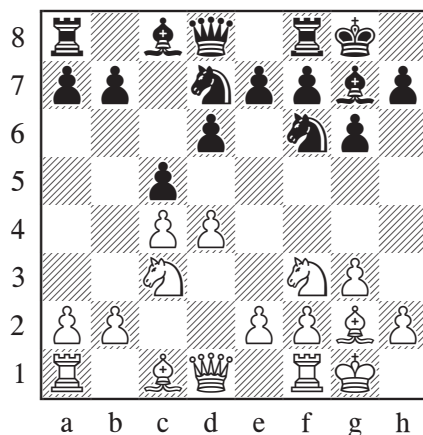
14.♗e1N e6 15.♗e5

White keeps a nice positional edge, while offering a small sacrifice:

15...♗xe5 16.♗xe5 ♖xc4 17.♖c1↑

With more than enough play for a pawn.

B) 7...c5

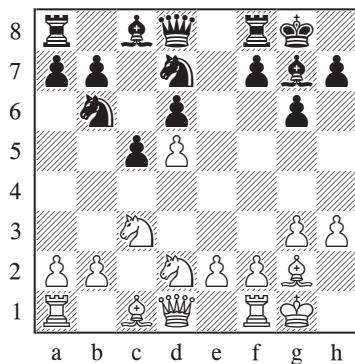


In *GM 2* I commented that the combination of ...♗bd7 and ...c5 is not something I rate

highly, and nothing has happened since then to change my mind.

8.d5 a6

Black has also tried: 8...♖b6 9.♖d2 e6 Black has to play this at some point, otherwise his set-up would be senseless. 10.h3 exd5 11.cxd5 We have reached a Benoni set-up where it is obvious that Black's knight does not belong on b6, and only obstructs Black's activity on the queenside. 11...♖fd7



12.f4! Preventing ...♖e5 followed by ...♖bc4. 12...f5 13.a4 As always in this structure, it is essential to get the c4-square for White's knight. 13...♖f6 14.a5 ♖bd7 15.♖c4 ♖e8 16.e4 fxe4 17.♖xe4 ♖df6 18.♖g5± White was much better in Timman – Mueller, Zürich 1988.

9.a4 ♖e8

Black has also tried:

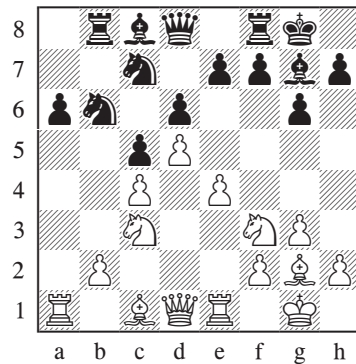
9...♖b8 10.e4 ♖e8

10...b5?! was tried in a relatively recent game; after 11.axb5 axb5 12.cxb5 Black did not have enough compensation in Tokarczyk – Kula, Police 2015. Even more convincing is 12.♖xb5!?N ♖xe4 13.♖a7!, with an obvious positional advantage.

11.♖e1 ♖c7 12.a5 b5 13.axb6 ♖xb6

Another nice example continued: 13...♖xb6 14.♖c2 ♖b4 15.b3 e6 16.♖g5 f6 17.♖d2 exd5 18.♖xd5 ♖xd5 19.exd5± White's

logical play yielded a clear advantage in Nestorovic – Bakic, Belgrade 1991.

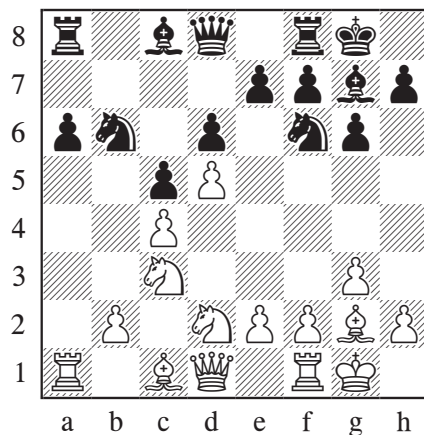


14.♖d3 e5 15.dxe6 ♖xe6 16.b3±

White had a nice positional edge in Kugler – Donnelly, corr. 2006.

10.a5 b6 11.axb6 ♖xb6 12.♖d2 ♖f6

We have been following Rustemov – Kramnik, Internet (blitz) 1999. Here White should have played:



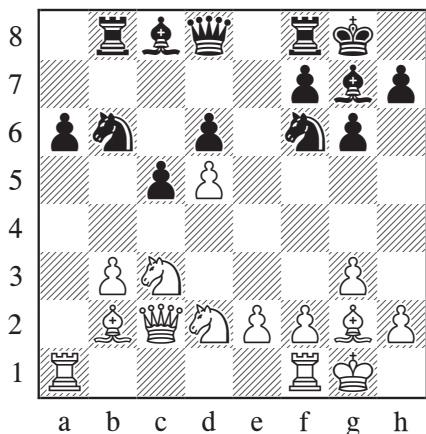
13.b3!N

It's understandable that White was reluctant to weaken the long diagonal, especially in a blitz game, but Black is unable to do anything about it because of the hanging rook on a8.

13...♖b8

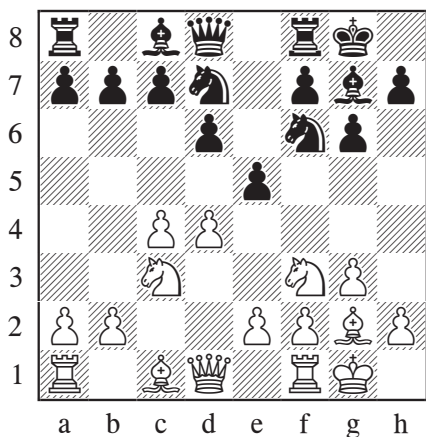
13...♖fd5? 14.♗xd5 ♕xa1 15.♗xb6 gives White a material advantage.

14.♕b2 e6 15.♖c2 exd5 16.cxd5



White has a favourable version of a Benoni structure.

C) 7...e5



This position is the gateway to the big main lines.

8.e4

This chapter will focus on C1) 8...h6 followed by the more significant option of C2) 8...a6.

8...exd4 will be covered in Chapter 12 and 8...c6 in Chapters 13-15.

8...♖e8 should be met by 9.h3, when both of Black's main options transpose to positions covered later: 9...exd4 10.♗xd4 is variation B of Chapter 12, and 9...c6 is variation B of Chapter 13.

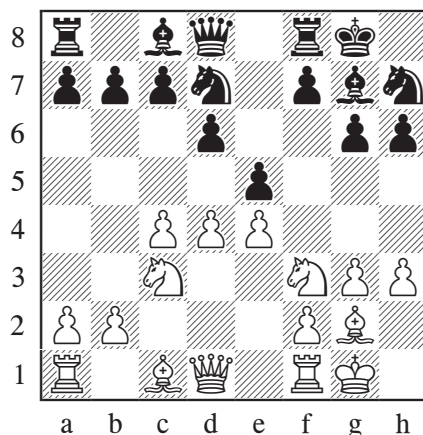
8...a5 also has no real independent value after 9.h3, as Black will surely exchange on d4 in the near future.

C1) 8...h6

This move became quite popular in the late 1980s. Black is preparing the knight manoeuvre ...♗h7-g5, with the idea to trade a pair of knights and perhaps put some pressure on White's centre and kingside. There are several ways to get a slight advantage but I suggest the following:

9.h3 ♗h7

Otherwise there is no point in Black's previous move.

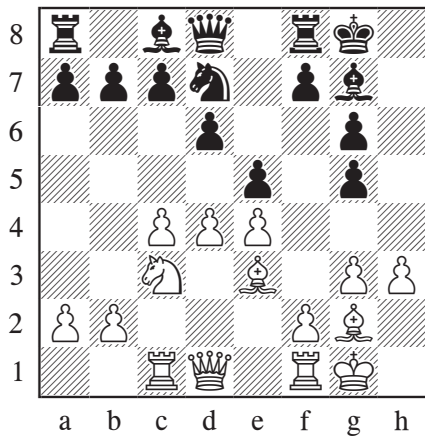


10.♕e3 ♗g5

10...f5?! has been tried in a few recent games but it is too committal. The simplest response is 11.♖d2 g5 12.exf5 ♖xf5 13.♖ad1 a clear advantage, Rivera – Aponte, Bogota 2012.

11. ♖xg5 hxg5 12. ♖c1

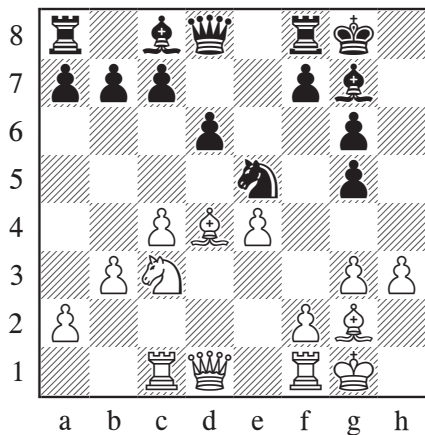
I like this positional approach.

**12...exd4**

Playing with a blocked centre after 12...c6 13.d5 c5 is hardly a good idea for Black: 14.♖b5! ♖e7 15.♖d2 f6 16.b4 b6 17.a3 and White had much better chances in Lingnau – Schoenberger, Muenster 1997.

13. ♖xd4 ♖e5 14.b3!

White should not rush with 14.c5, as the position after 14...g4 15.hxg4 ♖xg4 16.f3 ♖e6[∞] was rather unclear in Litinskaya – Botsari, Debrecen 1992.

**14...c5**

14...♖e6? is too passive, and 15.f4 gxf4

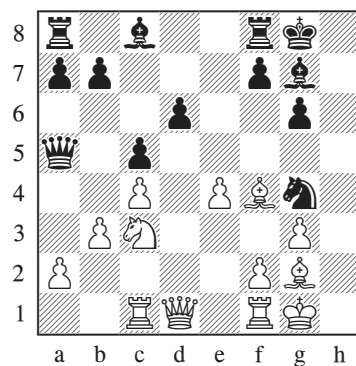
16.gxf4 ♖c6 17.♖xg7 ♖xg7 18.f5 saw White develop a dangerous initiative in McFarland – Greet, Hove 1997.

15. ♖e3 g4

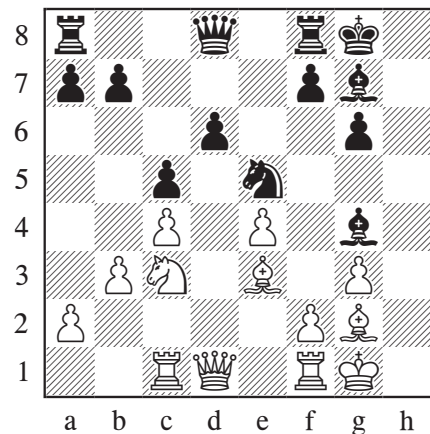
Sooner or later Black should play this.

16.hxg4 ♖xg4

Black tried 16...♖xg4 17.♖f4 ♖a5 in Santl – Bobzin, corr. 1998, and now White should have played:

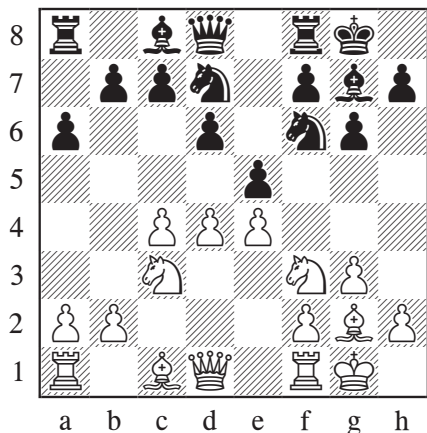


18.♖c2 ♖e5 19.♖b5! ♖d8 20.♖cd1 ♖b6 21.♖g5! f6 22.♖c1 With a serious positional advantage.

**17.f3 ♖e6 18.♖e2 ♖e7 19.♖d2**

In Borovikov – Matjushin, Kharkov 2000, White kept a slight positional edge due to Black's permanently weak d6-pawn.

C2) 8...a6



This is quite a popular continuation which demands close attention, as ...b5 can provide Black with interesting counterplay in many lines.

9. ♖c2!?

This is pretty much the only time I am recommending a set-up with a quick ♖d1. It works well here, especially taking into account that alternatives such as 9.h3 b5 and 9.♞e1 exd4 10.♜xd4 ♜g4 are rather double-edged.

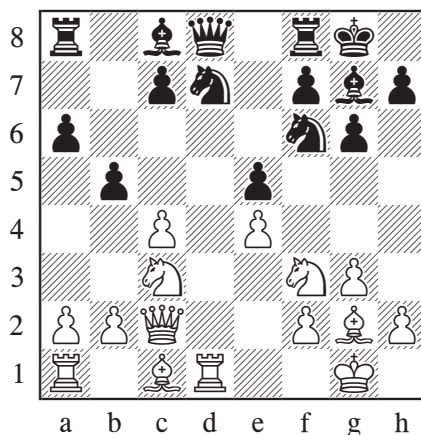
There are three main options for us to consider: C21) 9...b5, C22) 9...c6 and C23) 9...exd4.

C21) 9...b5

One of the most appealing aspects of White's last move is that he is ideally placed to meet this pawn break with:

10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♞d1!

The pawns on e5 and b5 are hanging, so Black's next move is virtually forced.



11...b4

This is an obvious positional concession, but the pin on the d-file means that Black has no time for 11...c6.

12.♜d5 ♞b8

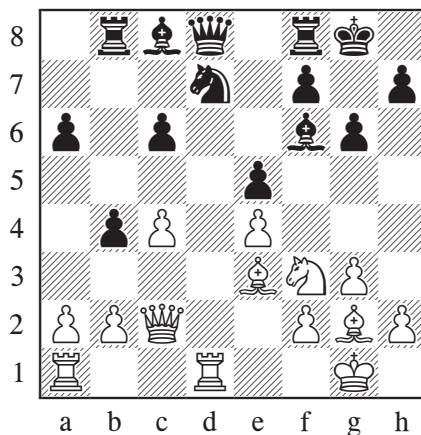
12...♜xd5? 13.cxd5 leaves Black with terrible queenside weaknesses.

13.♞e3

I presented this natural move as a novelty in *GM 2*, and it has since been tested in one game.

13...c6 14.♜xf6† ♞xf6

This was Bedouin – Sanchez, Saint Affrique 2011. I still like my previous recommendation:



15.♖d2N ♖c7 16.c5±

White is clearly better.

C22) 9...c6

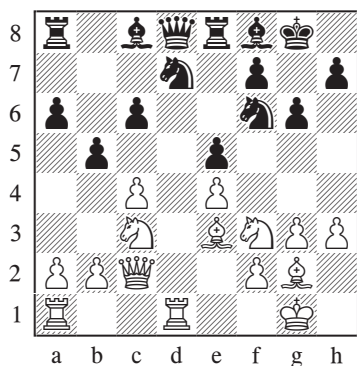
This makes it easier for the queen to escape from the d-file, but Black will hardly be able to carry out ...b5 under favourable circumstances.

10.♖d1

Threatening to capture on e5.

10...♖c7

Black has also tried 10...♖e8 but it looks strange to leave the queen opposite the white rook. 11.h3 ♗f8 (11...b5 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♗e3 ♖e7 is a surprising transposition to variation A2 of Chapter 13; see page 245, where my analysis continues 14.a3 with an edge for White) 12.♗e3 b5 13.dxe5 dxe5 In Goldin – Bronstein, Polanica Zdroj 1988, White could have improved his position with the following thematic plan:



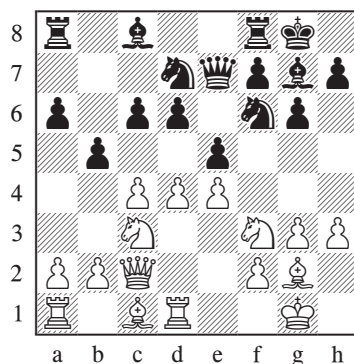
14.a3N ♗b7 15.♖ac1 Followed by b2-b4 and ♖d2-b3, with nice play on the queenside.

I also considered:

10...♖e7 11.h3 b5

It looks objectively better for Black to play more modestly with 11...h6 12.♗e3 exd4 13.♖xd4 ♖e8, but he is left with a more passive version of variation C232, as the

moves ...c6 and ...h6 don't really advance his counterplay. 14.♖e1!? White can afford to lose a tempo. 14...♖b8 This occurred in Ingbrandt – Hillarp Persson, Orebro 2000, and now 15.a4!N± would have been a good positional move, preventing Black's possible ideas involving ...c5 followed by ...b5.



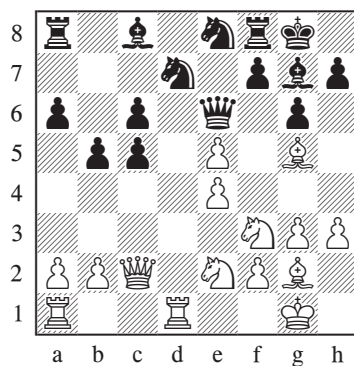
12.c5! dxc5 13.dxe5 ♖e8

13...♖xe5 14.♖xe5 ♖xe5 transposes to the note to Black's 13th move in the main line below.

14.♗g5 ♖e6 15.♖e2

My engine's first choice is the remarkable 15.♗d8!!N, introducing ♖g5 ideas, but it is hard for human players to process such moves.

The text move may not be the most accurate in an absolute sense, but it is worth seeing that White remains better after a simple, human move.



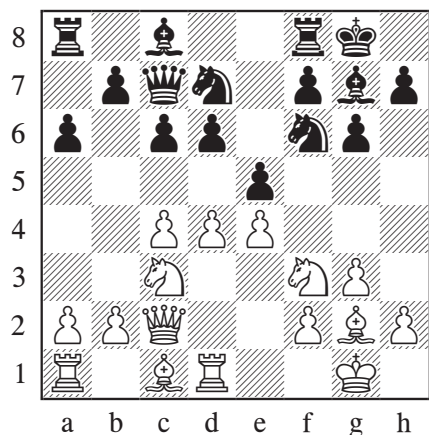
15...♖xe5 16.♔xc5 ♘xf3†

16...f6 prevents White from winning an exchange with ♕e7, but after 17.♕e3 the g7-bishop was blocked in, leaving White with an obvious positional advantage in Bromberger – Solonar, Nuremberg 2007.

The text move was tried in a recent game, which soon ended in a disaster for Black after:

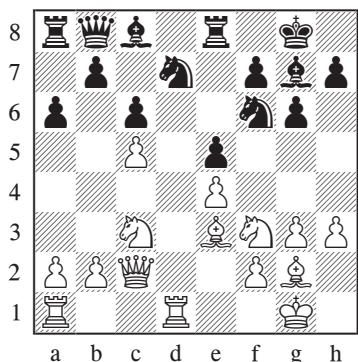
17.♕xf3 ♕xb2? 18.♕e7! ♕xa1 19.♖xa1 ♘c7
20.♘f4

Black resigned in Dimic – Fernandez Manrique, Lyon 2015.



11.h3 b5

11...♖e8 is rather passive. I like the following relatively recent game: 12.♕e3 ♗b8 13.dxe5! dxe5 14.c5 With a brutal queenside clamp.

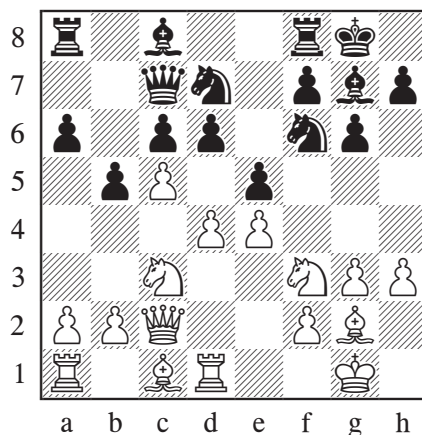


14...♘f8 15.♘a4 ♗c7 16.♘b6 ♗b8 17.♘c4

White had a huge positional advantage in Loetscher – Moor, Switzerland 2015.

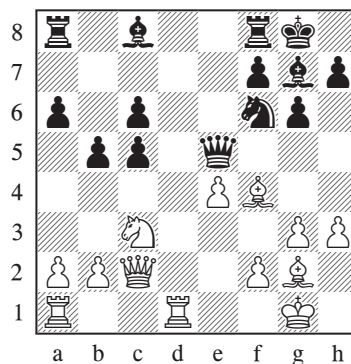
12.c5!

Again we see this thematic reaction to Black's ...b5 move.



12...dxc5 13.dxe5 ♘e8

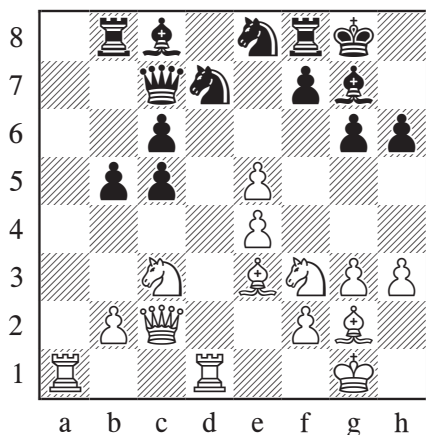
13...♘xe5?! is clearly inferior in view of:
14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 15.♕f4



15...♗e6 (15...♗e8 16.♕d6±) 16.♖d6 ♗e7
17.♖xc6 ♕d7 18.♕d6 ♗e6 19.♖b6 With e4-e5 coming next, White had a big advantage in Danet – Le Du, Besancon 1999.

14.a4 ♗b8 15.axb5 axb5 16.♕e3 h6

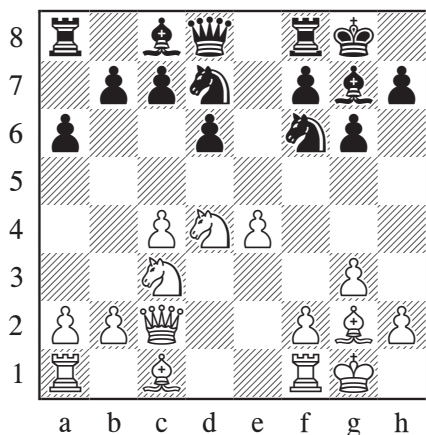
This position was reached in Montalban – Defez Gomez, Mislata 1995. As I pointed out in *GM 2*, White's play can be improved with:



17.♖e2! N c4 18.e6! fxe6 19.♖f4

With a decisive initiative.

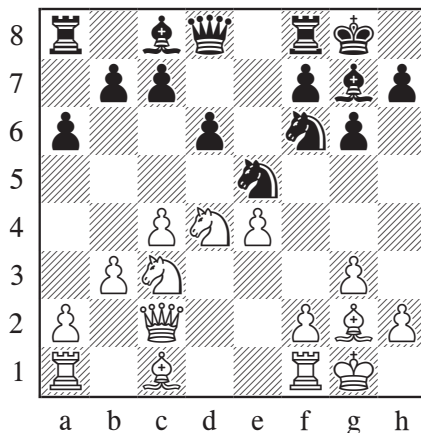
C23) 9...exd4 10.♖xd4



Exchanging on d4 is Black's most popular continuation and his best attempt to obtain counterplay. In the resulting structure, he will look to carry out a timely ...c5 followed by ...b5. We will consider **C231) 10...♖e5** and **C232) 10...♖e8**.

10...♖b8 should be met by 11.♖d1. I don't see anything better for Black than 11...♖e8 (which is how most games have continued), with an immediate transposition to variation C2322 below.

C231) 10...♖e5 11.b3



11...c5

There is also:

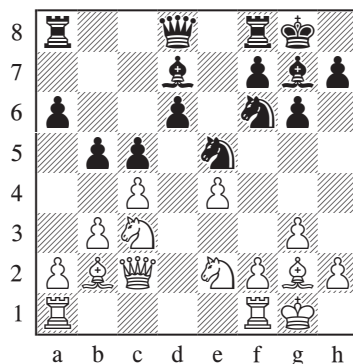
11...♗d7 12.♗b2! N

Strangely enough, this natural move has yet to be tested, despite being recommended in my previous work. I believe it to be a serious improvement on the existing games.

12...c5

I also considered 12...♖e8 13.♖ad1 ♖b8, when 14.f4 ♖c6 15.♖xc6 ♗xc6 16.♖d5± gives White a stable advantage.

13.♖de2 b5



14.f4!

White seizes the advantage with concrete play.

14...♖eg4

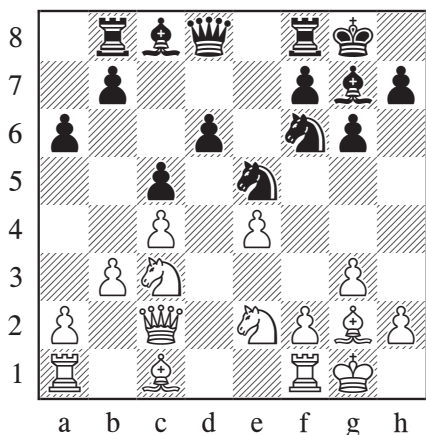
After 14...♖c6 15.♖ad1 Black has problems defending the d6-pawn.

15. ♖d1!

With h2-h3 coming next, White obviously stands much better. (In *GM 2* I gave 15. ♖d3, but the text move is more accurate as it keeps the b2-bishop securely defended.)

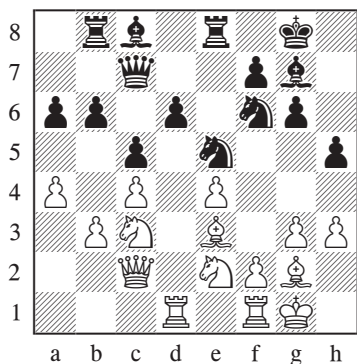
12. ♖de2 ♖b8

12...b5? is premature in view of 13.f4 and Black has problems on the long diagonal. After the text move, however, Black is threatening ...b5 with strong counterplay, so it is essential to prevent it.



13.a4! ♖g4

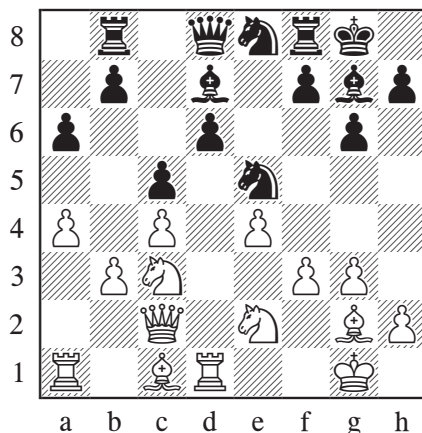
13...♖e8 14.h3 b6 15.♖g5 h6 16.♖e3 sees Black wind up in a passive position. 16...h5 17.♖ad1 ♖c7 occurred in Epishin – Polgar, Madrid 1995, and now White should have continued:



18.f4N ♖c6 19.♖d3 ♖a5 (or 19...♖f8 20.f5↑) 20.♖c1 ♖b7 21.f5! With good prospects for White on the kingside.

14.f3 ♖d7 15.♖d1 ♖e8

Here I offer the same improvement as in *GM 2*:



16.♖b2N

I prefer this over the hasty 16.f4, as played in Illescas Cordoba – Piket, Linares 1995.

16...b5

16...f5?! is risky in view of 17.f4 ♖g4 18.♖d3! with a lot of activity for White, while the d6-pawn remains weak.

16...♖c6 17.♖d5 secures a pleasant edge for White.

17.axb5 axb5 18.♖xb5 ♖xb5 19.cxb5 ♖xb5 20.f4

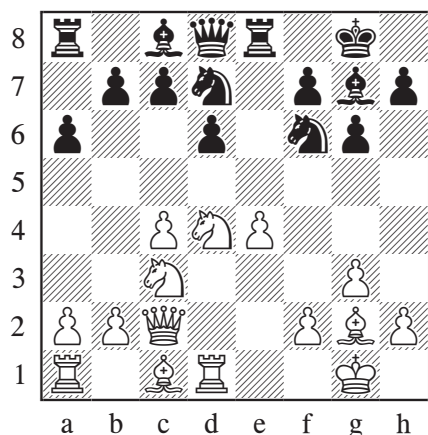
The game goes on, but White keeps some initiative.

C232) 10...♖e8

This is the main line. Black makes a useful move and waits for the right moment to launch his counterplay.

11.♖d1

This is the logical follow-up to the earlier 9.♖c2. It is worth briefly noting that 11.h3 would transpose to a line covered later in the book – see variation B2 of Chapter 12 on page 223. However, the whole point of the later line is to put the rook on d1, so it makes sense to do so immediately when we have the chance, as this reduces Black's options.



After the text move, Black can try for immediate activity with **C2321) 11...♗e5** or play more flexibly with **C2322) 11...♖b8**.

C2321) 11...♗e5

Here there is no need to defend the c4-pawn; White can instead take advantage of the rook's placement on the d-file with:

12.c5! ♕g4

The pawn is untouchable: 12...dxc5? 13.♗f5 ♖xd1† (13...♗d7 14.♗xg7 ♖xg7 15.♕g5 is also terrible for Black) 14.♗xd1 gxf5 15.exf5+– leaves Black without reasonable compensation.

12...♗d7 has been played a few times since *GM 2* was published. White has usually responded by exchanging on d6, but I suggest 13.f4 with a simple transposition to the main line below, but with one fewer move played.

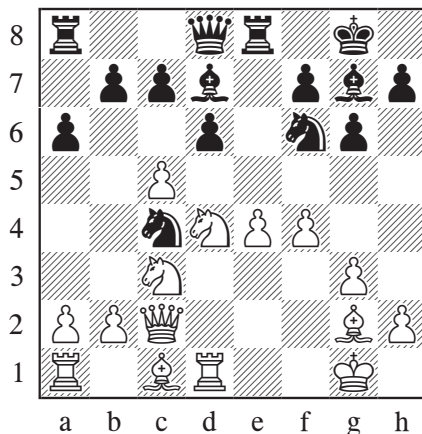
13.f3 ♗d7 14.f4!

This is much stronger than 14.♗b3, when 14...♖e7 led to double-edged play in Strikovic – Tissir, Lorca 2006.

14...♗c4

14...♗c6? 15.♗xc6 ♕xc6 16.e5! ♗g4 17.h3 gives White a big advantage.

14...♗eg4?! 15.h3 ♗h6 occurred in Martinez – Gerfault, email 2010. White scored a quick victory, but at this point 16.♗f3!N would have been the most accurate move. White is in full control, as 16...dxc5? 17.e5 would lose material for Black.

**15.b3!N**

15.c6 bxc6 16.e5 ♗g4 led to a highly complex game in Ullrich – Beckemeier, Germany 1985. No other games reached this position since then, and my recommendation from *GM 2* is just as valid today.

15...♗a5

15...dxc5 is met by 16.♗f3, after which e4-e5 will come with a great deal of force.

16.♗a3

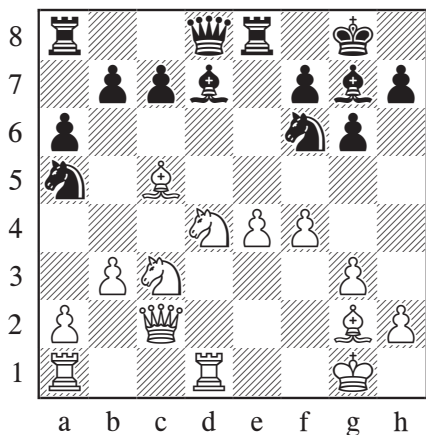
In *GM 2* I also gave a few lines after 16.♗b2!?. The engine slightly prefers this move so you could certainly analyse it, but the text is

more straightforward: White has an excellent position and there is no particular need to sacrifice a pawn.

16...dxc5

16...♘g4 17.♙c1 does not help Black.

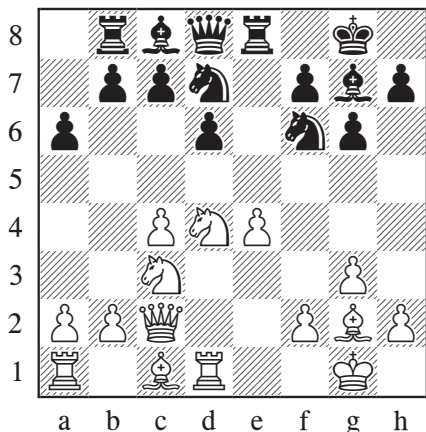
17.♙xc5



17...b6 18.♙a3 c5 19.♘f3

White's chances are clearly preferable.

C2322) 11...♖b8



This is the most popular option. Black continues preparing his queenside counterplay without committing his knight too soon.

12.h3

This is invariably a useful move in the Fianchetto System, preparing to develop the bishop to e3.

12...c5

Other moves are no better, for instance:

12...c6? is too passive, and after 13.♙f4 ♘e5 14.c5! Black was in serious trouble in Kovalenko – Maze, Berlin (blitz) 2015.

12...♘e5 has been played in a bunch of games but 13.c5! is a strong reply; White has an improved version of variation C321 above.

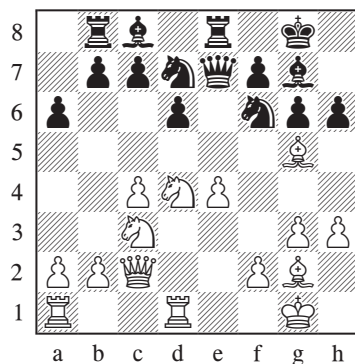
12...♙e7 13.♙g5

Here I have some updates to my previous analysis.

13...h6

13...♙f8 occurred in Ivanchuk – Narciso Dublan, Barcelona 2006. In my previous work I followed the game, which favoured White, but now I like 14.b4!?N even more. Here is an illustrative line: 14...♘e5 15.c5! dxc5 16.bxc5 ♘fd7 17.♖ac1 White has an excellent game, as 17...♘xc5 runs into 18.♘d5 ♘e6 19.♘f6† ♙xf6 20.♙xf6 and Black can hardly survive without his dark-squared bishop.

The text move is an obvious try which I neglected to mention in my first book. The following game is simply perfect from White's perspective:



14.♖d5 ♖d8 15.♙f4 ♖c5 16.♖c3!

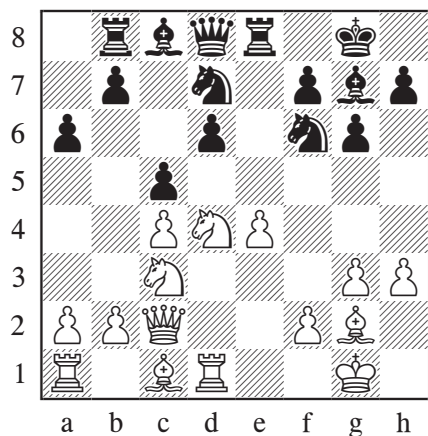
There is no reason to trade pieces when Black has such a cramped position.

16...♞e7 17.♞e1

White is clearly better, and things soon got worse for Black when he missed an elegant tactic.

17...♖e6? 18.♖f5! gxf5 19.exf5

Black had too many weaknesses and subsequently went down in Hera – Ziska, Riga 2013.



13.♖f3!

13.♖de2 ♖e5 14.b3 b5 15.f4 ♖ed7 is altogether less convincing.

13...b5

13...♞e7 is too slow, and Black got into an unpleasant position after 14.♙f4 ♖e5 15.♖xe5 dxe5 16.♙e3 b6 17.a3 ♙b7 18.♞ab1 in Studeny – Pachow, Germany 2003.

14.♙f4!

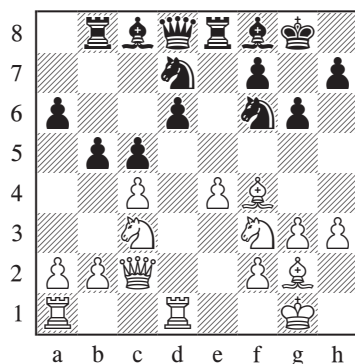
This is much stronger than 14.♞xd6 b4, which leads to unclear complications. By the way, Joe Gallagher did not consider this move in his 2004 book *Play the King's Indian*, which is understandable, as it did not receive a practical test until 2009 according to my database. However, the Swiss GM faced it in a 2011 game, which we will follow as our main line.

14...b4

Definitely the critical move. I analysed it as a novelty when working on *GM 2*, then faced it in a game not long before the book was finished. Since then, it has, at the time of writing, been tested in a further thirteen games!

14...♙f8

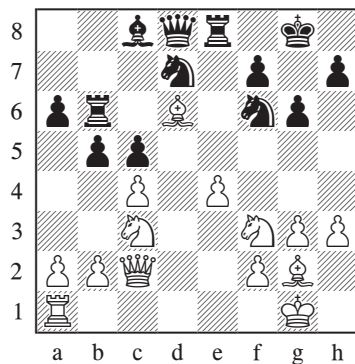
Here I decided to change my recommendation.



15.♞xd6!N

Previously I presented my main line as 15.e5 b4 16.♖a4 ♖h5 17.♙g5 f6 18.exf6 ♖hxf6 19.a3, while mentioning the text move as an interesting alternative in the notes. Having studied the position again, I believe the exchange sacrifice to be the clearly stronger option.

15...♙xd6 16.♙xd6 ♞b6

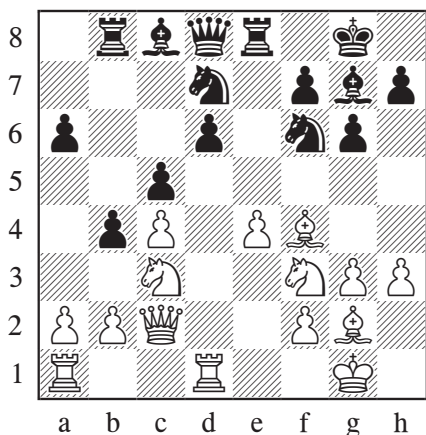


17.♙f4!

After the natural 17.e5 Black has a strong defensive idea at his disposal: 17...♙b7 18.♞d1 ♞a8! and Black by no means worse. 17...♙b7 18.♞d2

White intends to play ♞d5 at a suitable moment and to recapture with the c-pawn if Black exchanges. White has terrific compensation and his chances are clearly better.

Returning to the main line, the next few moves are more or less forced.



15.♙xd6 bxc3 16.♙xb8 ♞b6

16...cxb2 runs into 17.♞ab1 ♞a5 (in *GM 2* I mentioned 17...♞xe4 18.♙e5!± and the b2-pawn falls) 18.♞xb2 ♞xe4 19.♞b3 ♞xb8 20.♞xb8 and White successfully converted his material advantage in Limbert – Moore, corr. 2011.

17.♙f4

Now Black faces a difficult choice.

17...cxb2

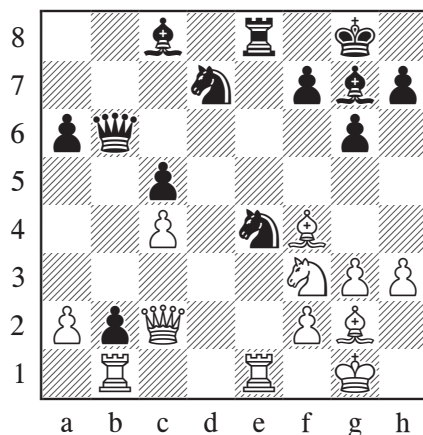
17...♞xb2 was played in the aforementioned game, Avrukh – H. Rudolf, Ohrid 2009. At this point I somehow forgot my analysis and an unclear position arose; nevertheless, I outplayed my opponent and was waiting for

his resignation after making my 40th move, when he suddenly pointed to my clock to claim a win on time! Sadly it was true, as it transpired that I had pressed the clock from the wrong side. It was an extremely painful loss.

Returning to the position on the board, 18.♞e1! is the best move, as I pointed out in *GM 2*. After the further 18...♞xc2 19.♞xc2 ♞xe4 20.♞e1 ♙b7 21.♞ad1 White was winning in Jayakumar – Agrest, Saint Louis 2012.

18.♞ab1 ♞xe4 19.♞e1

This position has arisen in seven games since *GM 2* was published, with Black achieving a combined score of precisely zero.



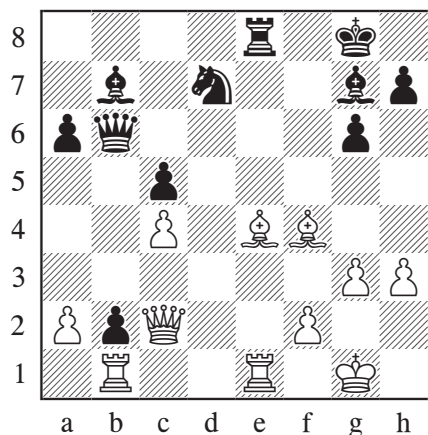
19...♙b7

19...f5 20.♞g5! was the end of my *GM 2* analysis; after 20...♙b7 we transpose to the main line below.

20.♞g5 f5 21.♞xe4

21.♞e3!? is objectively just as good, but the text move is the most human approach.

21...fxe4 22.♙xe4

**22...♞xe4**

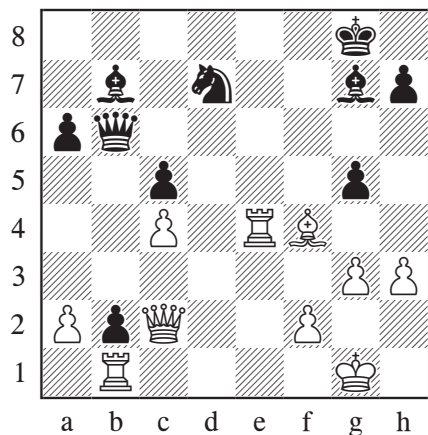
This does not work, but Black is seriously worse in any case.

The most recent game continued 22...♘e5 23.♙xe5 ♞xe5 24.♞xb2 ♞xe4 25.♞xe4! and Black soon resigned in Loetscher – Maeser, Switzerland 2016.

23.♞xe4 g5

Also after 23...♙xe4 24.♞xe4 White should win.

In D. Rombaldoni – Gallagher, Merlimont 2011, the most efficient win would have been:

**24.♞e7!N gxf4**

24...♞c6 runs into 25.♞xg7† ♔f8 26.♙d6† ♔xg7 27.♞xb2† and it's all over.

25.♞xd7+–

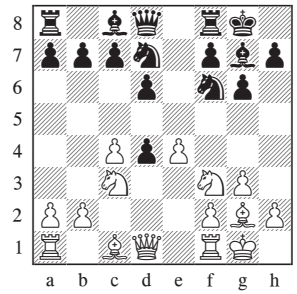
The possibility of ♞xg7† ensures an easy win for White.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the topic of 6...♘bd7, which remains Black's most frequent choice against our Fianchetto System. After the obvious 7.0–0, the sidelines 7...a6 and 7...c5 both have certain drawbacks, so it is understandable that the great majority of games continue with 7...e5, when 8.e4 is our choice. The main focus of the chapter was on 8...a6, a tricky move which opens up the possibility of ...b5 in many variations. I am happy to stick with my previous recommendation of 9.♞c2!? intending ♞d1, which seems like an excellent antidote to Black's plan. The analysis in this chapter has expanded upon my previous work, and recent games show that Black faces something of a crisis, as his main plan of counterplay with ...c5 and ...b5 clearly does not work as he would like it to.

Chapter 12

King's Indian



8...exd4

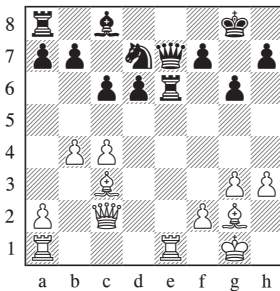
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 exd4

9.♘xd4

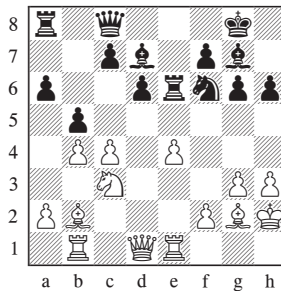
A) 9...♘e5	219
B) 9...♞e8 10.h3	220
B1) 10...♘e5	220
B2) 10...a6	223
B3) 10...♘c5 11.♞e1	225
B31) 11...h6	225
B32) 11...c6	228
B33) 11...a5	231
B34) 11...♙d7 12.♙h2	233
B341) 12...a6	234
B342) 12...h6 13.♞b1	235
B3421) 13...♞c8	235
B3422) 13...a6	236
B3423) 13...a5	237

B32) after 18...♘d7



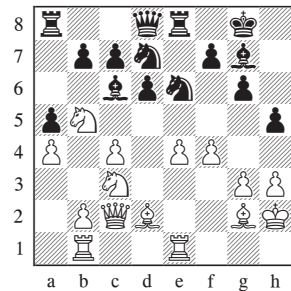
19.♞xe6!N

B3421) after 17...♞xe6



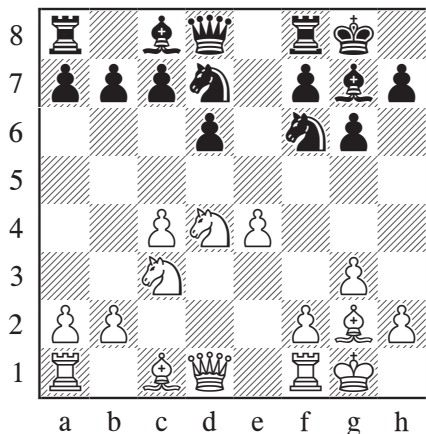
18.♞f3!N

B3422) after 18...♘e6



19.♙e3!N±

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0–0 5.♖c3
d6 6.♗f3 ♖bd7 7.0–0 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.♖xd4



This is another important option in the ...♖bd7/...e5 complex. After making the early pawn exchange, Black can follow up with **A) 9...♖e5** or **B) 9...♙e8**.

Other moves exist but they are almost certain to transpose to other lines, for example:

9...a6 10.♙c2 leads back to variation C23 of the previous chapter.

9...c6 10.h3 is discussed under the move order 8...c6 9.h3 exd4 10.♖xd4; see the relevant note at the start of Chapter 13, on page 241.

9...♖c5 should be met by 10.h3, when Black's main options both transpose to other paths:

a) 10...c6 11.♙e3 converts to the same note at the start of Chapter 13, and the obvious 11...♙e8 leads in turn to variation B22 of that chapter, which can be found on page 250.

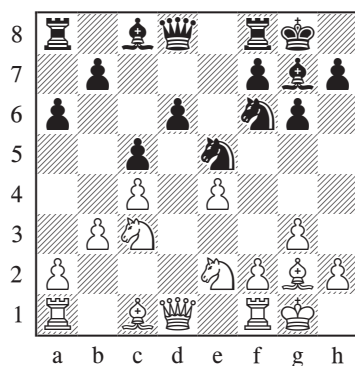
b) 10...♙e8 converts to variation B3 of the present chapter.

A) 9...♖e5 10.b3 ♙d7

Black does not really gain anything from provoking f2–f3 by means of 10...♙g4 11.f3 ♙d7.

White simply develops with 12.♙b2, when a good example continued 12...♙c8 13.f4 ♖c6 14.♖d5 ♖xd5 15.cxd5 with a nice positional advantage for White, Van Buuren – De Heer, Spijkenisse 2010.

10...c5 is hardly a good option, as Black is a long way from following up with ...b5 as he would like to do. 11.♖de2 a6 (in *GM 2* I mentioned 11...♖e8 12.♙e3 ♙e6 13.♙d2 ♙d7 14.♙ad1± as played in Ditt – Striebich, Menden 1974)



12.h3 (12.♙g5!? was a good alternative in Devolder – Decrop, Lommel 2012, but the straightforward text move works fine) 12...♙b8 13.f4 ♖c6 14.♙e3 White was clearly better in Tregubov – M. Popovic, Cetinje 1996.

11.♙b2

11.h3 ♙e8 12.♙e3 is also pleasant for White.

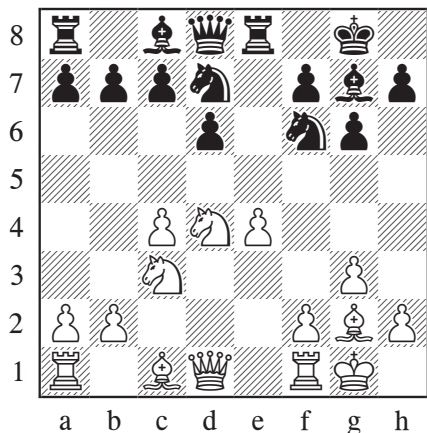
11...♙e8 12.♙e1

It is hard for Black to find any counterplay. Here is one example:

12...h6 13.f4 ♖c6 14.♖d5 ♖xd5 15.cxd5 ♙g4 16.♙d2 ♖xd4 17.♙xd4 ♙d7 18.♙ac1±

White had a clear positional advantage in Wassin – Vlach, Heraklio 2008.

B) 9...♖e8



10.h3

I find this to be the most useful way of improving White's position. We will analyse Black's three main options: B1) 10...♗e5, B2) 10...a6 and B3) 10...♗c5.

10...c6 is a popular move, but 11.♗e3 leads straight to variation B2 of the next chapter on page 247.

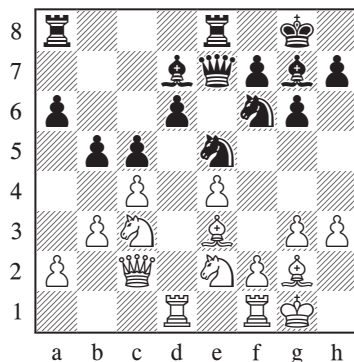
B1) 10...♗e5 11.b3

It is hard for Black to generate much counterplay after committing his knight so soon.

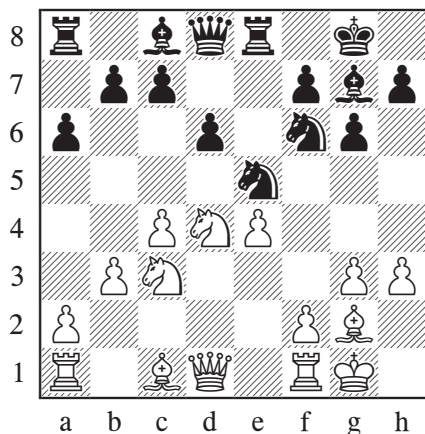
11...a6

11...♗c6 is too passive, and after 12.♗e3 ♗d7 13.♖c1 White is obviously better.

11...♗d7 12.♗e3 a6 allows White to arrange his pieces optimally. 13.♖c2 c5 14.♗de2 b5 15.♖ad1 Having failed to equalize, Black committed the inaccuracy 15...♖e7?! in Glaser – Ludwig, Leipzig 1995. This could have been punished by:



16.♗g5!N There is no comfortable defence against the threats of ♗d5 and f2-f4 followed by e4-e5. For instance: 16...♗c6 17.f4 ♗ed7 18.e5 ♗xg2 19.exf6±



12.♗e3 ♖b8

This is Black's most logical move, supporting ...b5 while also removing the rook from the long diagonal.

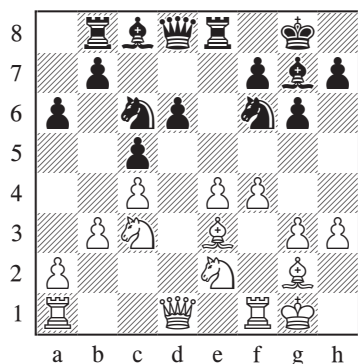
12...c5?!

This pawn move is premature and too committal.

13.♗de2 ♖b8 14.f4!?

14.a4 is a good alternative, preventing queenside counterplay and assuring White of a solid positional advantage. The text move is even more ambitious.

14...♗c6



15. ♖d2! ♙xh3?!

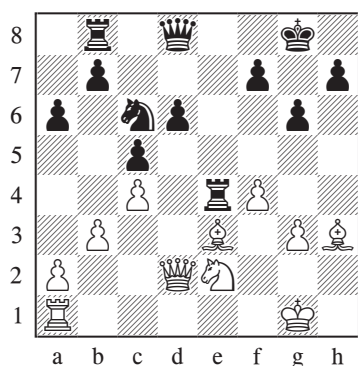
Having reached a strategically difficult position, Black tries unsuccessfully to complicate matters.

15...b5? doesn't work in view of 16.e5! and both of Black's knights are hanging.

15...♖e7 may be best, but 16.♙f2!± kept a significant advantage for White in Borovikov – Tukmakov, Nikolaev 1993. (But note that 16.♖ad1 would allow Black to complicate matters with 16...♙f5!, as in Pohl Kuemmel – F. Unzicker, Bavaria 2003.)

16. ♙xh3 ♖xe4 17. ♖xe4 ♙xa1 18. ♖xa1 ♖xe4

In Valiente – Cortes Moyano, Santiago de Chile 2008, the simplest continuation would have been:

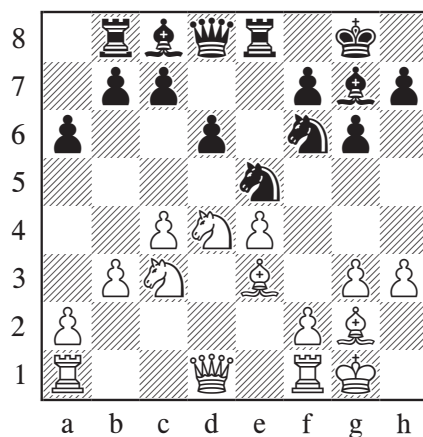


19. ♖c3N ♖e8 20. ♖d5

With a huge advantage.

The position after Black's last move has often occurred after the move order 10...a6 11.♙e3

♖b8 12.b3 ♖e5 (rather than the more common 12...c5). Indeed, I analysed it under that move order in *GM 2*, but here things are different, as I now prefer to meet 10...a6 with 11.♖c2, as explained in variation B2 below. Compared with my coverage in *GM 2*, a more important change than the move order is that I found an improvement over my previous analysis, which occurs at move 15 in the line that follows.



13.a4!

It is essential to shut down Black's counterplay connected with ...c5 and ...b5.

It is important to understand that 13.f4?! ♖ed7 leaves White unable to prevent both of Black's ideas: there is of course the typical plan of ...c5 followed by ...b5, but also the less obvious threat of ...♖c5 followed by capturing on e4, which is tactically justified by the vulnerable position of White's dark-squared bishop.

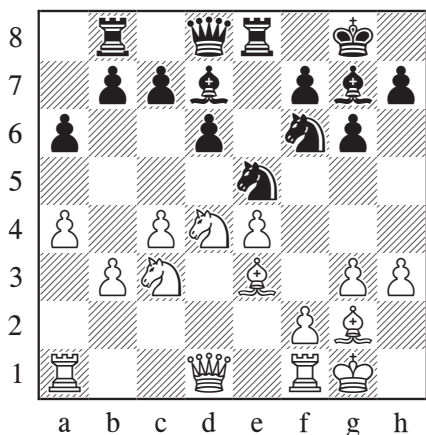
13...♙d7

13...c5 is met by 14.♖de2 and it is not clear how Black will justify the weaknesses created by his last move.

13...♖fd7 should be met by 14.♖a2!, just like in the main line below. A few games have continued 14...♖c5 15.♖d2 ♖c6, and now 16.f4!?N looks strong; apart from having a

generally cramped position, Black will have to worry about e4-e5 ideas at every turn.

We have reached an important moment. White has tried several moves but my favourite is:



14.♖a2!

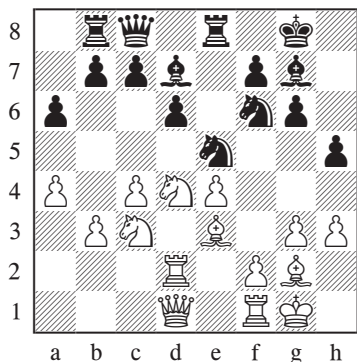
The rook is heading for d2, where it will be perfectly placed to restrain Black's possible counterplay.

14.♙c2 looks like a natural move but it has a clear drawback, as White removes all pressure against the d6-pawn. Black immediately exploited this with 14...♙c8 15.♖h2 c5! 16.♗de2 b5, obtaining good counterplay in Wilke – Bakhmatov, Templin 2004.

14...♙c8

I also checked:

14...h5 15.♗d2 ♙c8



16.f4!

Please note that this move would be impossible if White's king was already on h2, as Black would give a devastating check on g4.

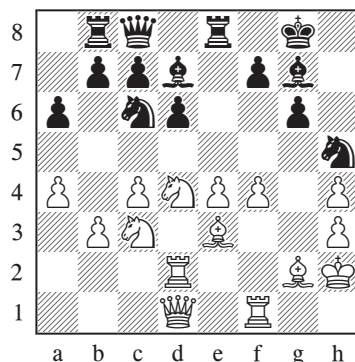
16...♗c6 17.♖h2

I would also seriously consider 17.f5!?N ♗e5 18.♗df2 with dangerous attacking chances, due to Black's ...h5 move, which has seriously weakened his kingside.

17...h4

This seems consistent, but White's forces are much better prepared for complications.

18.gxh4 ♗h5



19.♗f3!N

White's advantage is close to decisive. (Also after 19.♗d5 ♙d8 20.♗f5! White was much better in Stohl – Arizmendi Martinez, Leon 2001.)

After the text move, I propose the following improvement over my analysis from *GM 2*:

15.g4!

This has been tested in a couple of games since *GM 2* was published, and it seems like an excellent move.

15.f4 does not work as well here. After 15...♗c6 16.♖h2 Black was just in time to create counterplay with 16...♗b4 17.♗d2 c5 followed by ...♗c6 in Hawkins – Anderson, corr. 1993.

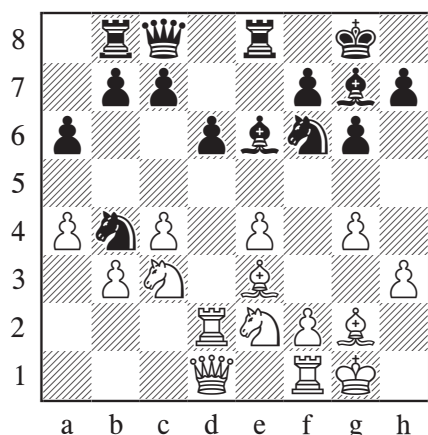
15.♔h2 was my previous recommendation. It is not a bad move in itself and gives chances for an advantage, but the lines are much more complicated, as White has to be ready for both 15...h5 and 15...c5 16.♘de2 b5.

15...♘c6

15...h5 16.g5 ♘h7 17.f4 ♘c6 occurred in the original game, Stockmann – Weber, Germany 2012, at which point 18.♔h2N± would have left Black in a cramped position with no counterplay.

16.♘de2 ♘b4 17.♞d2 ♙e6

In Werle – Kollars, Germany 2016, the most convincing continuation would have been:

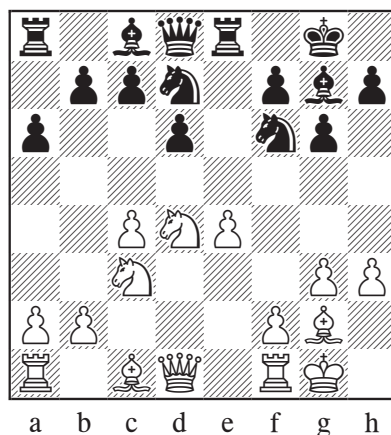


18.f4N±

White has a huge space advantage and is in full control.

B2) 10...a6

This is an important set-up, which has been tested at the top level but is also popular among club players, especially after being recommended by GM Gallagher, a specialist in this line. Here I decided on a significant change from *GM 2*.



11.♞c2!?

11.♙e3 was my previous recommendation. It's certainly a good option in itself, but I now regard it as unnecessarily complicated compared with the text move.

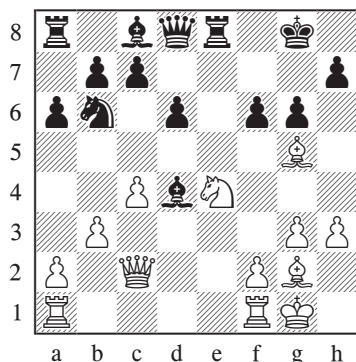
My new recommendation is closely related to variation C2 of Chapter 11, where I recommend meeting 8...a6 with 9.♞c2. From the present position, we will be happy to transpose to the relevant lines of Chapter 11 where Black follows up with ...exd4. To be more specific, you may find it useful to turn to page 213 and consider the position after White's 11th move in variation C232 of Chapter 11. The only difference is that here White has played h2-h3 instead of ♞d1. Our plan after the text move will be to play ♞d1 and convert to that variation, so it only remains to check any additional options available to Black via the current move order.

11...♘xe4!?

Targeting the undefended knight on d4 certainly seems like a natural attempt to exploit White's delay in putting the rook on d1.

11...♞b8 is a thematic move and the most popular choice so far, but 12.♞d1 gives us our desired transposition: see variation C2322 of Chapter 11 on page 214.

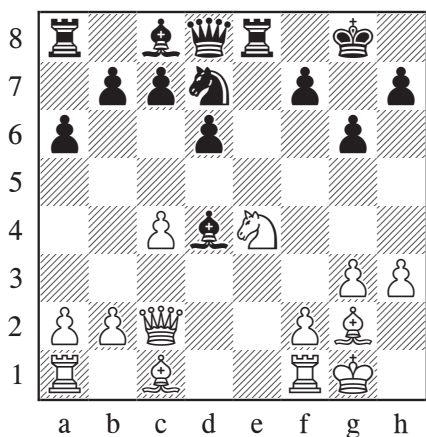
Black tried 11...♖b6 12.b3 ♖xe4 in one game, but White is well placed to meet it. (Also after 12...d5N 13.exd5 ♖fxd5 14.cxd5 ♙xd4 15.♙h6 ♜f6 16.♖e4 ♜xe4 17.♜xe4 ♙f5 18.♜e1! Black is a long way from equality.) 13.♖xe4 ♙xd4 14.♙g5 f6



15.♜ad1! fxg5 16.♜xd4 ♜e7 Black had to do something about the threat of c4-c5. 17.♜d2 ♙d7 18.♖xg5± White was clearly better in B. Nielsen – Laczay, corr. 2012.

12.♖xe4 ♙xd4

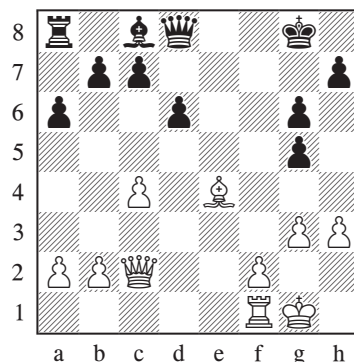
White can improve on the recent game Skiadaresi – Nikolaidou, Achaea 2017, with the following line, which I analysed well before the game took place:



13.♙g5N f6 14.♜ad1 ♙a7

14...fxg5 15.♜xd4 gives White a strong initiative for the pawn.

I also considered: 14...♖c5 15.♜xd4 ♖xe4 16.♜xe4 ♜xe4 (in the event of 16...fxg5 17.♜xe8† ♜xe8 18.♙d5† ♖g7 19.♜c3† ♜e5 20.♜a5! White develops a strong initiative) 17.♙xe4 fxg5



18.♙xg6! ♙xh3 19.♙xh7† ♖h8 20.♜e1 ♜f6 21.♜e3 Black's position is unpleasant.

15.♙f4

White has excellent compensation, mainly due to the fact that Black's bishop is missing from the defence. I will present a few illustrative lines.

15...♖c5

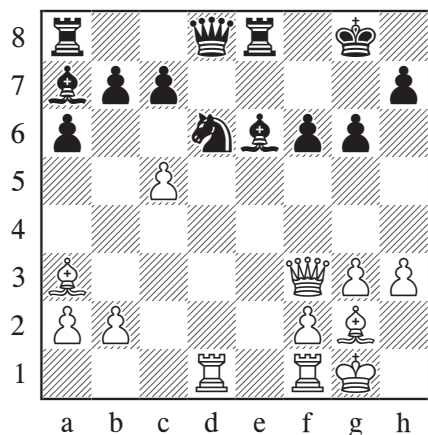
15...♜e7 16.♜c3 ♖e5 17.g4 also looks promising for White.

The text move looks like a natural attempt to simplify, but White has a surprising tactical resource.

16.♙xd6!

This works perfectly, for instance:

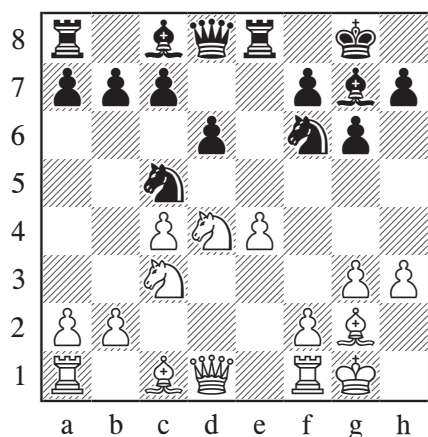
16...♖xe4 17.♙a3 ♖d6 18.c5 ♙f5 19.♜b3† ♙e6 20.♜f3



20...♙c4 21.cxd6 ♜xf1 22.♚xf1

White has superb compensation for the exchange.

B3) 10...♘c5



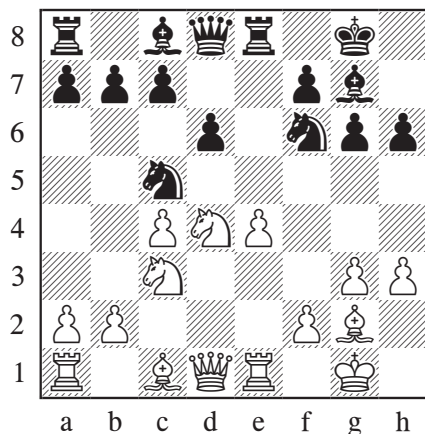
11.♞e1

11.♞c2? loses a pawn due to the simple tactic 11...♘xe4, so the text is the only sensible move. We have reached a major tabiya where I considered four main options for Black: B31) 11...h6, B32) 11...c6, B33) 11...a5 and B34) 11...♙d7.

11...a6 12.♞c2! looks great for White. 12...♘e6 13.♘b3 a5 occurred in Vaganian – Gallagher, Germany 1997, when 14.♙e3N a4 15.♘d2 a3 16.b4± would have left Black in a

cramped position with no real counterplay in sight.

B31) 11...h6



This resembles the later variation B342, where Black starts with 11...♙d7 and follows up with ...h6. White could angle for a transposition to that line, but there is actually a nice way to exploit Black's slightly inaccurate move order.

12.♘b3!

The point is that Black lacks the option of ...♘a4, which works well for him in the equivalent position after 11...♙d7.

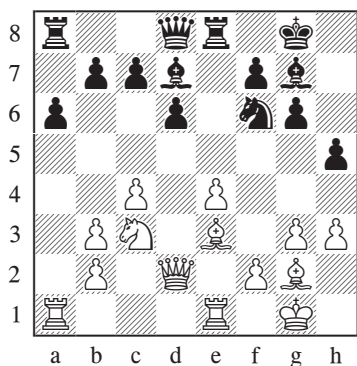
12...♘e6

Black also fails to obtain adequate play after other options:

12...♙fd7 13.♙e3 ♘xb3 14.axb3 a6 15.♞c2 gave White a pleasant edge in Bayer – Holzke, Germany 1996.

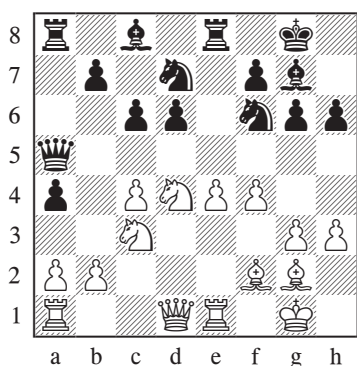
12...♘xb3 13.axb3 benefits White in a few different ways: he has strengthened his c4-pawn, opened the a-file for his rook and, most importantly of all, removed Black's pressure against the e4-pawn by eliminating the knight on c5. 13...a6 14.♙e3 ♙d7 15.♞d2

Having completed development, White can easily improve his position. 15...h5



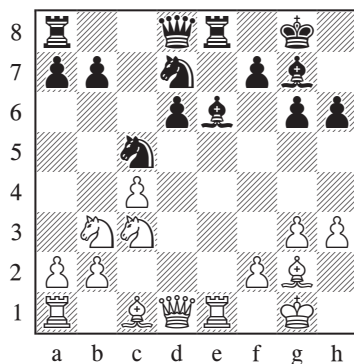
16.f4 ♘c6 17.♙f2 a5 18.♖ad1 ♜c8 19.♙d4 White was clearly better in Moskalenko – Illescas Cordoba, Barcelona 2005.

12...♞cd7 offers to repeat the position but White can obviously improve in other ways before returning with the knight to d4. 13.f4 a5 (13...♞b6 14.c5! dxc5 15.e5! ♞fd7 16.♙e3 c4 17.♞a5± was great for White in Cmilyte – Genova, Albena 2010) 14.♙e3 a4 15.♞d4 c6 16.♙f2 ♜a5 In Maletin – Pakhomov, Kazan 2013, White should have continued:

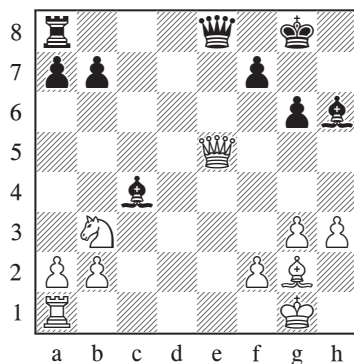


17.♜c2N ♞c5 18.♖ad1 White has obtained his optimal set-up. The position resembles variation B21 of the next chapter, but here Black has wasted time on ...h6.

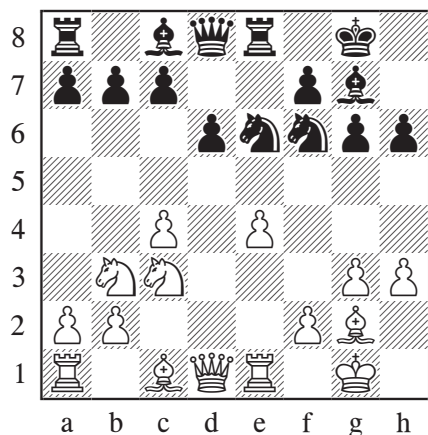
12...♙e6 allows White to obtain an extra pawn almost by force with: 13.e5! ♞fd7 14.exd6 cxd6



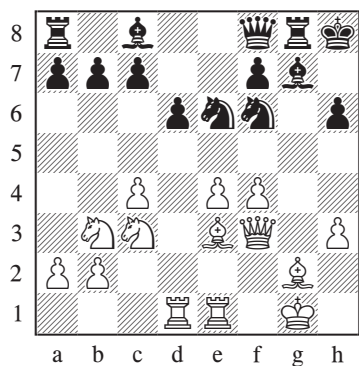
15.♞b5! (15.♜xd6 ♜b6 gave Black decent play in Zhang Ziji – Pavlovic, Moscow 2016) 15...♞e5 16.♞xd6 ♞cd3 17.♞xe8 ♞xe1 18.♜xe1 ♜xe8 19.♙xh6! Otherwise Black will have enough activity for the pawn. 19...♙xh6 20.♜xe5 ♙xc4



Black went on to draw in Burmakin – Yurtaev, Smolensk 1997, and one other game. The two bishops certainly offer him reasonable chances to hold, but if White plays accurately, he should be able to press for a long time with virtually no risk. Both 21.♜c3N± and 21.♜d4N± would preserve the better chances.

**13.f4 a5**

The aggressive 13...g5?! is a recent try, but opening the g-file is more dangerous for Black than for White. 14.♔e3 gxf4 15.gxf4 ♖h8 16.♟f3 ♜g8 17.♞ad1 ♟f8 occurred in Yuffa – Demchenko, Moscow 2016, when the most precise continuation would have been:



18.♔h1!N ♔d7 19.♟f2 White maintains a clear advantage.

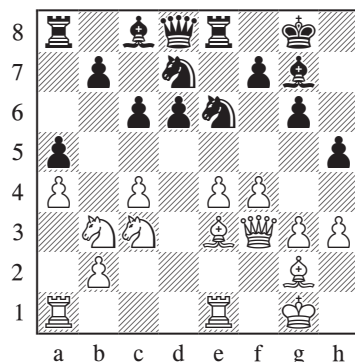
14.a4!

It is important to prevent Black's possible tricks along the dark-squared diagonal, as might occur after: 14.♔e3 a4 15.♞d4 ♞xd4!N (but not 15...a3, as in Barwinski – M. Grabarczyk, Warsaw 1994, when the simple 16.b4!N± would have given White much the better game) 16.♔xd4 c5 17.♔f2 a3 18.b3 ♞g4! Black is fine.

14...♞d7!?

This is Black's latest try, which appeared during the post-GM 2 era.

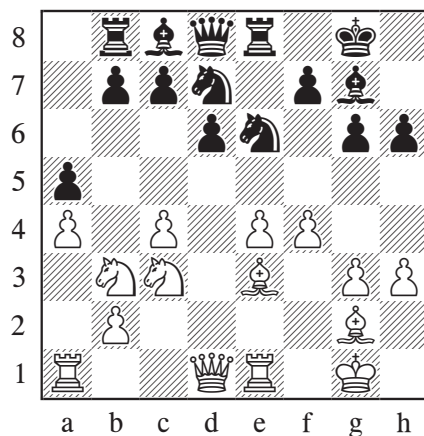
My line from GM 2 continued: 14...h5 15.♔e3 ♞d7 16.♟f3 c6



17.♞ad1 ♟c7 18.♟f2 b6 19.♞d4± White kept everything under control in Anastasian – Comas Fabrego, Istanbul (ol) 2000.

15.♔e3 ♟b8!?

An interesting and rather subtle idea. Here I found a useful improvement over a correspondence game.

**16.♔a7!N**

Black's idea was revealed after 16.♞xa5 ♞ec5! 17.♔xc5 ♞xc5 18.♞b3 b6, when he obtained interesting compensation and went

on to win in Heiermann – Zejewski, email 2013.

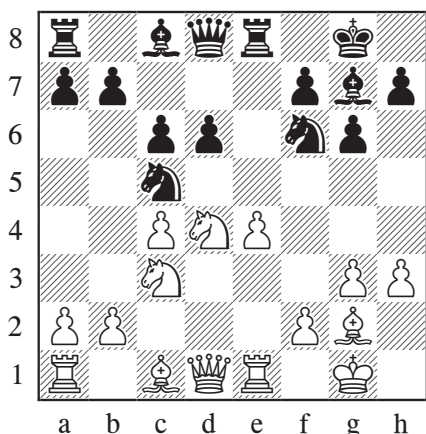
16...♖a8 17.♙f2

White has marginally improved his position and forced Black to come up with a different plan, as the concept from the above game no longer works:

17...♖b8? 18.♜xa5 ♜ec5 19.♞c1

Black has no real compensation, as the e4-pawn is securely defended.

B32) 11...c6



12.♞c2

This option seems most consistent with the rest of our repertoire. White intends ♙e3 next, with a likely transposition to one of the main lines in the next chapter.

12.♙f4!? is an interesting attempt to take advantage of Black's move order. The main line continues 12...♜e6 13.♙e3 ♜xd4 14.♙xd4 ♙e6 15.♞d3 ♞a5, reaching a complicated position where it seems to me that White's chances are preferable.

12...♜fxe4?

This pawn grab is an obvious attempt to exploit White's last move, but it's much too risky.

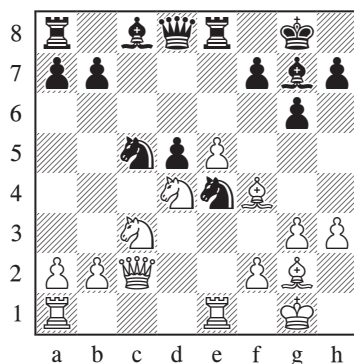
12...♞e7 is a rare move in this position but 13.♙e3 transposes to a main line; see variation B221 of the next chapter on page 251.

12...a5 has been the most common choice; White replies with 13.♙e3, which is almost the same as variation B222 of the next chapter, except that here White has played ♞fe1 instead of ♞ad1. I don't see any need for a separate analysis, as in most lines White will want to play both rook moves at some point. A simple example is 13...♞e7 14.♞ad1 and we find ourselves in variation B2223 of the next chapter.

12...d5

This has been played in several games but White is better after:

13.cxd5 cxd5 14.e5 ♜fe4 15.♙f4



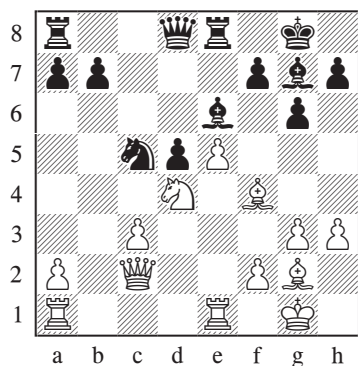
15...♜xc3

15...g5?! is too risky: 16.♙e3 ♙xe5 (no better is 16...♜xc3 17.bxc3 ♜e4 18.c4! ♙xe5 19.cxd5 ♜d6 20.♞ac1± and White was clearly better after regaining the pawn in Cucka – Jezek, Ostrava 1960) 17.♞ad1 ♜xc3 18.bxc3 ♙f6 Now in Medic – Mahini, Istanbul (ol) 2000, White should have played 19.♜b5!N ♞b6 20.c4! with an almost decisive advantage.

16.bxc3 ♙e6

This occurred in Mojzis – Mudrak, Stare Mesto 2016. Black's position looks

reasonable, but I found a way for White to pose significant problems.

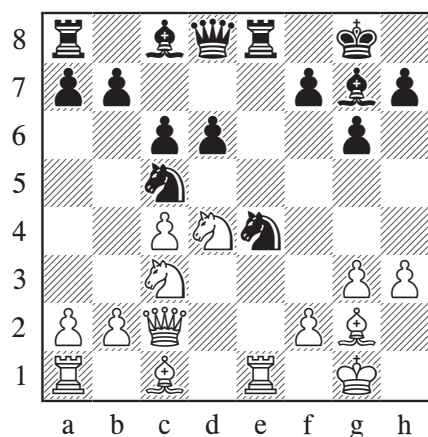


17.♘b5!N

With the following idea:

17...♙f5 18.♚d2 ♘d3 19.♘d6! ♘xe1 20.♞xe1
♙e6 21.♘e8 ♞xe8 22.♙d5 ♞d8 23.c4±

White has a useful extra pawn.



13.♘xe4 ♙xd4 14.♙g5!

Thanks to this move, White soon forces the exchange of his knight for Black's dark-squared bishop.

14...♞d7

The bad news for Black is that 14...f6?? is out of the question. In Carbone – Edwards, Athens 2012, White overlooked 15.♙xf6!N, in which case Black can already resign.

15.♙f6† ♙xf6 16.♙xf6

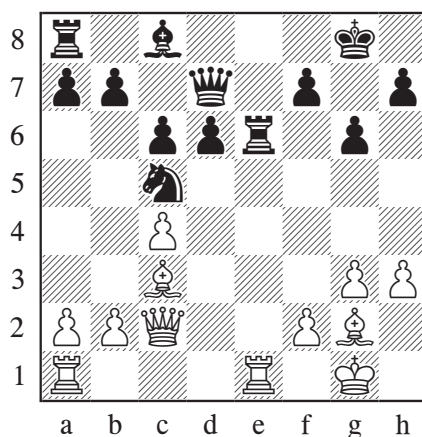
White obviously has a dangerous initiative thanks to the glaring weakness of the dark squares in Black's camp.

16...♞e6

So far, this defensive manoeuvre has been played in all of the games that reached this position.

17.♙c3!

White has won a couple of games with 17.♞c3 but the text move is even stronger.



17...♞e7

Other continuations are also unsatisfactory for Black, for instance:

17...♞e8 18.b4 ♘a6 19.♞d2 gave White a strategically winning position in Dornelles – Karoly, Porto Alegre 2013.

17...♞d8 18.b4 ♞xe1†

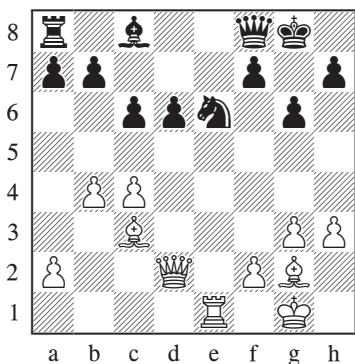
18...♘d7 occurred in Vasilev – Maitesian, Cannes 2000, when 19.♞xe6N fxe6 20.♞d1 d5 21.♞e2 would have given White a powerful attack.

19.♞xe1 ♘e6 20.♞d2

The vulnerability of the dark squares is not Black's only problem – he also has trouble developing his remaining bishop.

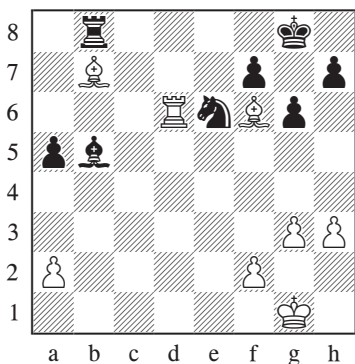
20...♖f8

In Lagowski – Chojnacki, Poznan 2006, White should have continued:



21.♞d1N

White simply regains the pawn and maintains a big advantage thanks to his superb bishops. The continuation might be: 21...♙d7 22.♞xd6 ♜xd6 23.♞xd6 ♙e8 24.♙f6 a5 25.b5 cxb5 26.cxb5 ♙xb5 27.♙xb7 ♞b8



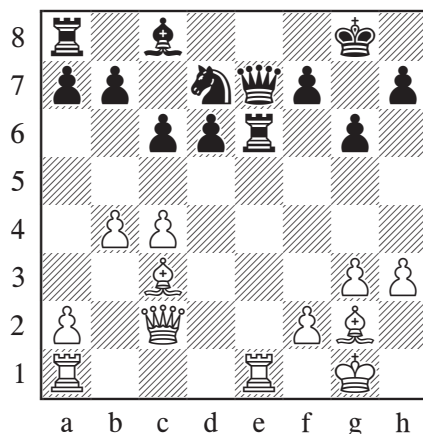
28.♙f3

White should win this endgame, as Black's pieces are severely handicapped by their defensive duties on the kingside.

18.b4 ♘d7

18...♞xe1† seems pointless. 19.♞xe1 ♘e6 occurred in Shumiakina – Semenova, Belgorod 2008, and now 20.♙b2N would have made Black's position extremely difficult.

This position has occurred in two games, neither of which featured especially convincing play by White. I propose:



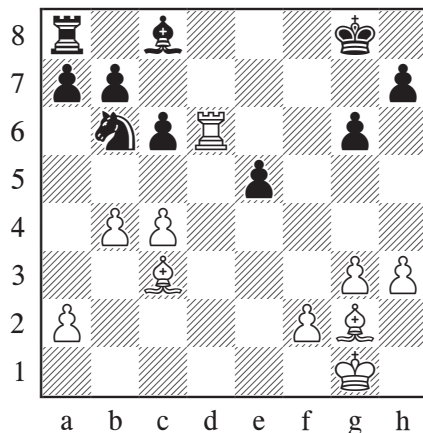
19.♞xe6!N

A simple yet strong improvement over the previously played 19.♞d2.

19...fxe6 20.♞d1 e5 21.♞d2

21.b5 cxb5 22.cxb5 ♘c5 23.♞d2 ♙f5 is less convincing.

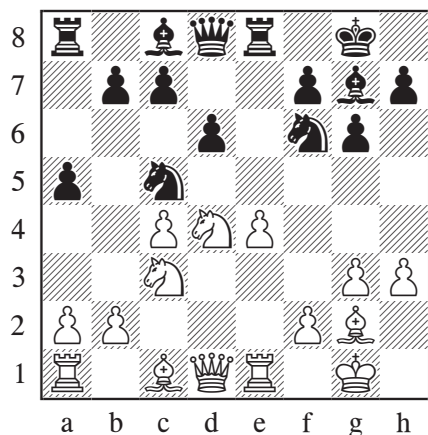
21...♘b6 22.♞xd6 ♜xd6 23.♞xd6



23...♙f5 24.c5 ♘c4 25.♞d1±

Black does not have much chance of survival.

B33) 11...a5



12. ♖c2

This is an important change from my previous recommendation.

12. ♘db5!?

This was my suggestion in *GM 2*. It's a challenging move which looked to be better for White in all lines, but I discovered one narrow pathway for Black which seems to offer him adequate play.

12... ♗fd7! 13. ♕g5!

An important tactical resource.

Practice has revealed 13. ♕e3 ♗e5 14. ♕xc5 dxc5 15. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 16. ♗xc7 ♖b8 to be perfectly playable for Black.

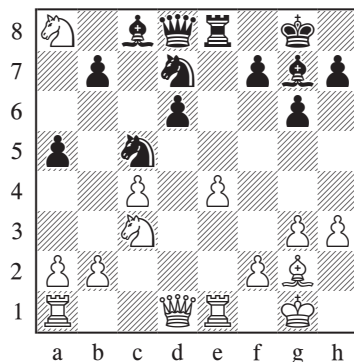
13... ♖xg5

Black has to accept the challenge.

13...f6 14. ♕e3± leaves Black in an ugly position with a blocked bishop.

13...♕f6 14. ♕xf6 ♗xf6 15.e5! dxe5 16. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 17. ♗xc7 ♖b8 18. ♖xe5± leaves White with a healthy extra pawn.

14. ♗xc7 ♖d8 15. ♗xa8



15... ♕xc3!

The best chance.

I was surprised to discover a fresh game in this line: 15... ♗e5?! 16. ♗b5 ♗ed3 (16... ♗xc4 17. ♗ac7 leaves Black with no compensation for the exchange, as I noted in *GM 2*) Now in Polansky – Stinka, Kouty nad Desnou 2017, 17. ♗ac7!N ♖e7 18. ♗d5 would have given White a decisive advantage.

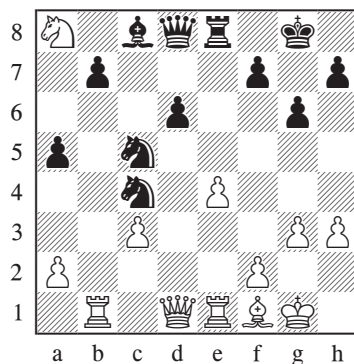
16.bxc3 ♗e5!N

This move, which was mentioned by Vul in *Chess Informant 86*, seems to me like Black's best chance.

16... ♖e6 17. ♖b1 was clearly better for White in Vul – Markosian, Moscow 2002, as I demonstrated in *GM 2*.

17. ♖b1 ♗xc4 18. ♕f1

Vul ended his analysis here, evaluating the position as clearly better for White, but Black has a crucial resource:



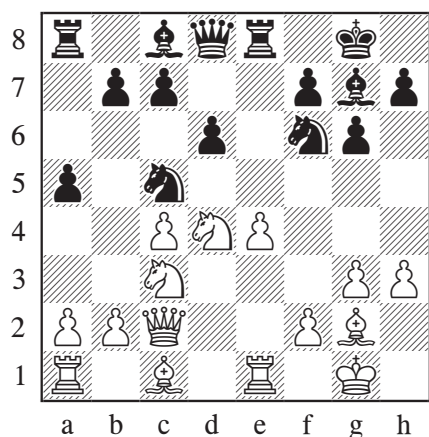
18...♖a3!

Improving over 18...♙e6, as featured in my illustrative line from *GM 2*. The following sequence looks virtually forced:

19.♖b6 ♙e6 20.♗xd6 ♖xa8 21.♗c1 ♘c4
22.♗xe6 ♗xe6 23.♙xc4 ♗xe4 24.♗xe4 ♘xe4

The endgame is certainly holdable for Black, although a good technical player could still try to squeeze a full point out of White's position, as the bishop is somewhat stronger than the knight.

The text move avoids the problem line above, and is very much in the spirit of several other lines in the repertoire. Rather like in variation B32 above, we need to be ready for Black's tactical ideas connected with the loose knight on d4.



12...♗g4

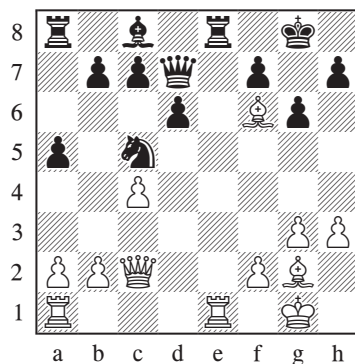
12...c6 13.♙e3 has already been considered under the move order 11...c6 11.♗c2 a5 13.♙e3. As I explained in the notes to variation B32 above, the resulting position is almost identical to variation B222 of the next chapter.

12...a4 is a logical move but it is likely to transpose to other variations. For instance: 13.♙e3 c6 14.♖ad1 ♘fd7 (14...♗a5 leads straight to variation B21 of the next chapter on

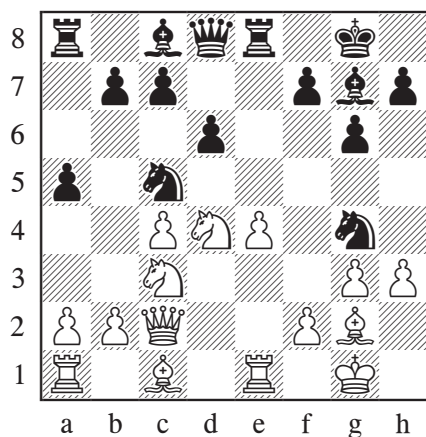
page 248) 15.f4 ♗a5 16.♙f2 ♗b4 17.a3 ♗a5 This transposes to the game Avrukh – Lopez Martinez, as discussed in a note in Chapter 15 on page 291.

12...♘fd7 13.♙e3 c6 14.♖ad1 a4 transposes to 12...a4 above.

12...♘fxe4? is similar to the pawn grab from variation B32 above, and the outcome is no better for Black here: 13.♘xe4 ♙xd4 14.♙g5 ♗d7 15.♘f6 ♙xf6 16.♙xf6 Black is in trouble, as demonstrated in the following game:



16...♙e4 17.♙c3 ♗e8 18.♙d5 ♗xe1† 19.♗xe1 ♗f8 20.♗d2 ♘a4 21.♙f6+– Mojzis – Vlach, Czech Republic 2013.

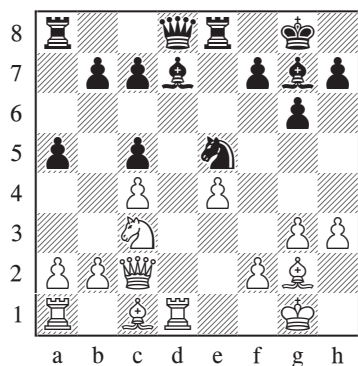


13.♘b3!

A good reply, moving the knight out of harm's way and offering the exchange on b3. We already know from previous variations that this trade tends to benefit White.

13...♞xb3

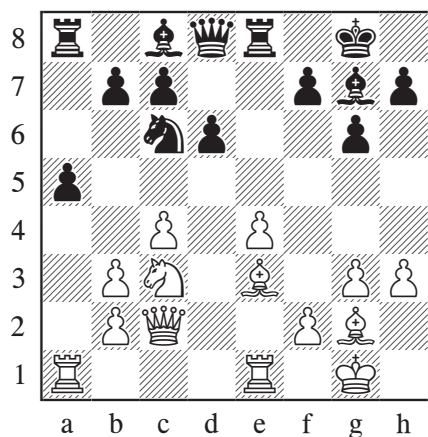
13...♞e5!? 14.♞xc5 dxc5 15.♞d1 ♠d7 has occurred in five games, with mixed results, but none of them featured the best continuation for White:



16.f4!N ♞c6 (16...♞xc4 17.e5 ♞c8 18.♞e4± is clearly better for White) 17.♠e3 ♞d4 18.♞f2±

14.axb3 ♞e5 15.♠e3 ♞c6

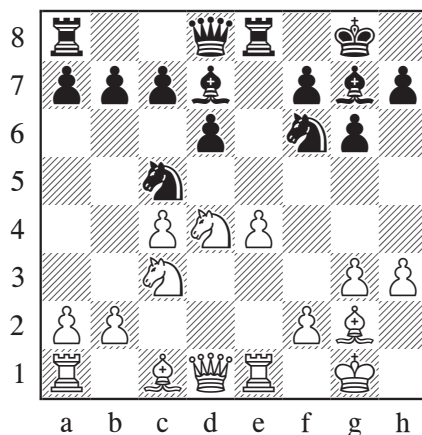
In Stahlberg – Reshevsky, Zürich 1953, White should have continued with:



16.♞d2N ♠e6 17.f4±

White preserves a positional advantage.

B34) 11...♠d7



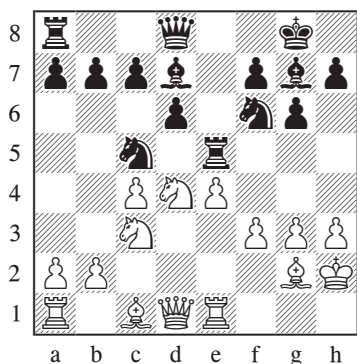
In *GM 2* I remarked that this tabiya had occurred in more than 400 games; today the number stands at more than 700. Black would like to launch an attack with ...♞c8, attacking the h3-pawn, intending to meet ♠h2 with ...♞e5-h5. White's two most popular options are 12.♞b1 and 12.♠f4, but I prefer a third idea.

12.♠h2

This prophylactic move takes the sting out of Black's threat before it occurs. White's general strategy will be to restrain any counterplay before gradually completing development and strengthening his position. Even though I recommended the same move in *GM 2*, the way we follow up will be different in several lines.

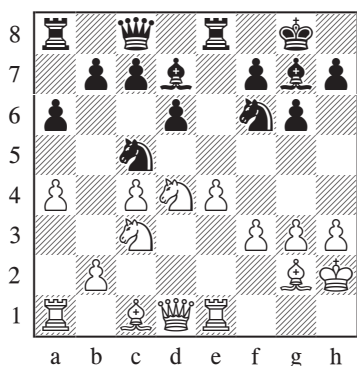
We will focus on two main options:
B341) 12...a6 and **B342) 12...h6**.

12...♞e5 was played in Shvedov – Chuprov, St Petersburg 1997. This time I prefer to keep things solid with: 13.f3!N (in *GM 2* I recommended 13.f4 ♞h5 14.f5, but Black has more resources in the ensuing complications than I realized back then)



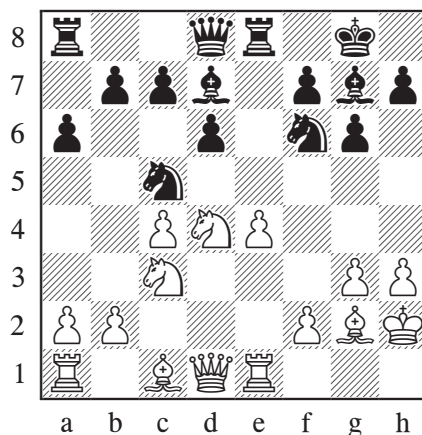
13...♖h5 This is consistent with Black's previous move, but it gets nowhere. 14.♙e3 ♗c8 15.h4 White is clearly better.

12...♗c8 can be met in the same way: 13.f3! (just as in the line above, I recommended 13.f4 in *GM 2*, but now I think it is better not to rush) A good example continued: 13...a6 14.a4!? (14.♙e3N is also good)



14...♘h5 15.♙e3 ♙e5? Black stubbornly tries to make something happen on the kingside. He should have accepted that his position was slightly worse and played more solidly. 16.f4 ♙g7 17.b4 ♘e6 18.♘d5 White obtained a considerable positional advantage in Zhou Weiqi – Pacis, Manila 2008.

B341) 12...a6



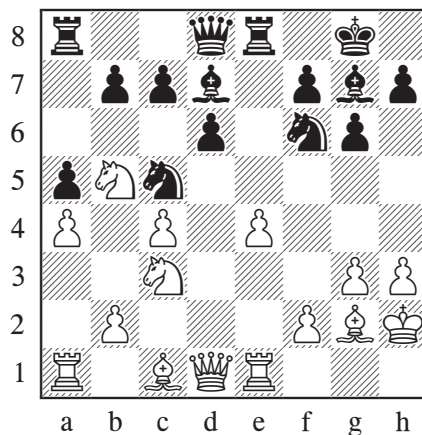
13.a4!?

I like this simple approach of shutting down Black's counterplay.

13.♖b1 was my previous recommendation but now I think it gives Black too many options. For example, the straightforward 13...b5 is not bad.

13...a5 14.♘db5!

It is vital to follow up in this way, otherwise ...c6 will enable Black to control a lot of important squares on the queenside. Without that move available, he will find it hard to create much activity. The following game demonstrates how much easier it is for White to handle the position.



14...♖c8 15.♙f4 ♘c6 16.♗c2 ♜e6 17.♙e3
♜d7 18.♞ad1 ♜dc5 19.♜d5

White was clearly better in Huzman – Dyachkov, Moscow 2009.

B342) 12...h6

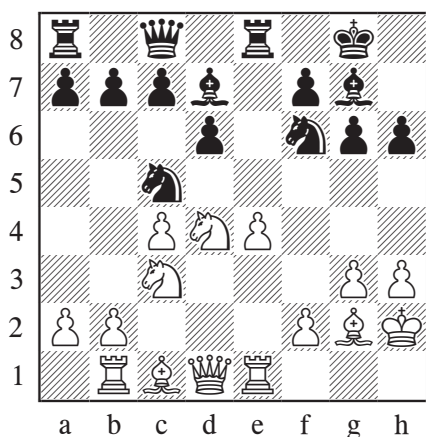
This has been Black's most popular choice. He may try to manoeuvre a knight to g5 to assist in his kingside play, or even venture the ...g5 advance if a suitable opportunity arises.

13.♞b1

This is a useful, noncommittal move which fits the strategy described earlier. Black's main options are B3421) 13...♖c8, B3422) 13...a6 and B3423) 13...a5.

Once again, 13...♞e5 doesn't work properly. 14.b4 (this is my first choice, although 14.f4!? ♞h5 15.f5 is also strong) 14...♜e6 Now in Wastney – M. Schlosser, Yerevan (ol) 1996, White missed a nice idea: 15.♜f3N ♞h5 16.♞g1! Black's rook is obviously misplaced on h5.

B3421) 13...♖c8



Here I would like to suggest a change from GM 2.

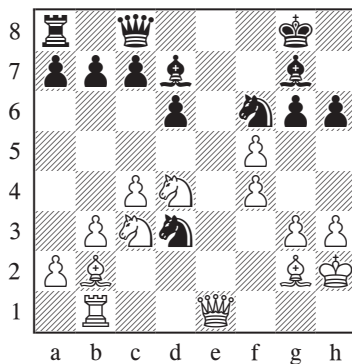
14.b3!?

My previous recommendation of 14.b4 ♜e6 15.♜xe6 ♙xe6 16.♜d5 is not bad in itself, but now I prefer a slower approach. Black's position is cramped and there is no need for White to instigate exchanges.

14...a6

14...♞e5?! occurred in Jakovljevic – Todorovic, Cetinje 2010, when 15.b4!N would have been a nice way to exploit Black's inaccuracy. 15...♜e6 (15...♜a6 16.♜d5± leaves Black's knight on a poor square) 16.♜f3! ♞h5 17.♞g1± Black has no real attack and his rook is in danger.

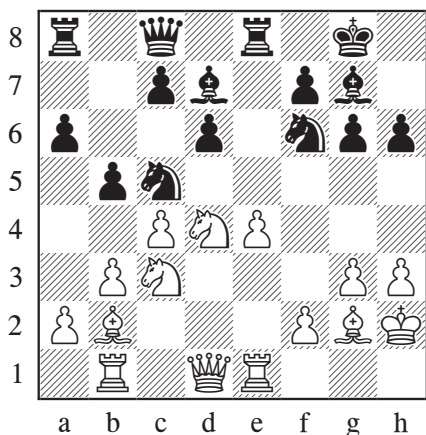
14...♜h7 has been tried in a few games but White's play is simple after: 15.f4 f5 16.♙b2 ♜f6 17.exf5 ♞xe1 18.♗xe1 ♜d3? (18...gxf5 is better, although 19.♗d1 gives White a clear positional advantage)



This position has arisen a few times, but for some reason White has never played 19.♗d2!N ♜xb2 20.fxg6, when Black's position is almost resignable.

15.♙b2 b5

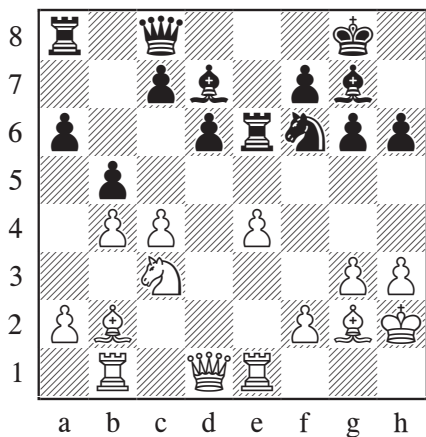
It may look as though Black is getting some counterplay, but White has a forcing route to an advantage.

**16.b4! ♖e6**

16...♗a4? 17.♗xa4 bxa4 18.c5± was obviously worse for Black in Jasnikowski – Poldauf, Germany 1992.

17.♗xe6 ♞xe6

Here I found a nice improvement over Abramovic – Spasov, Biel 1993.

**18.♞f3!N**

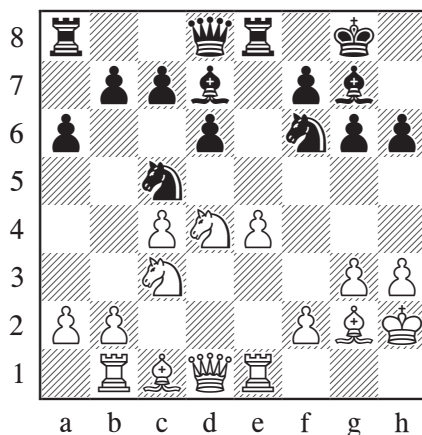
Threatening e4-e5, while also targeting the knight on f6 in preparation for White's next move below.

18...♞b8 19.♗d5! ♞d8

19...♗d5? 20.cxd5 would be positional suicide for Black.

20.♗f4 ♞e8 21.c5!

By keeping the b-file closed, White stops Black's counterplay and retains a positional advantage.

B3422) 13...a6

Black makes a useful waiting move, hinting at ...b5 and inviting White to start the action. I suggest the same approach as in variation B341 above.

14.a4!?

My previous recommendation of 14.b4 ♗e6 15.♗e3 is also okay, but the position is pretty complex and Black has several options available.

14...a5

This is the standard reaction to White's last move, but we are ready to counter it in the usual way.

15.♗db5!

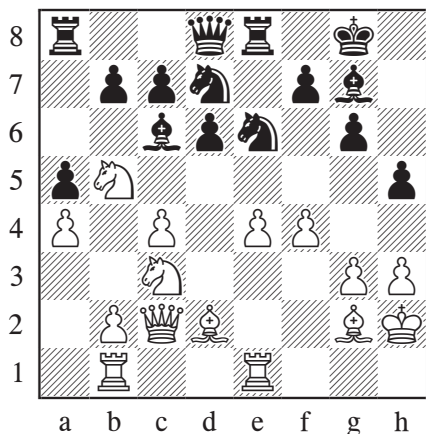
Freezing Black's queenside structure. It is hard for Black to find any counterplay from here, as the following game demonstrates.

15...♗c6 16.♞c2!

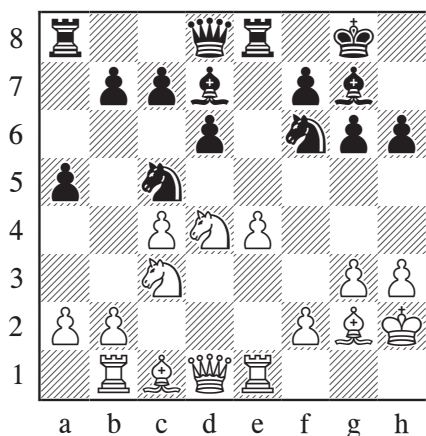
16.f3 was played in an older game but the text move keeps White's position more fluid.

16...h5 17.♔d2 ♖fd7 18.f4 ♗e6

We have been following Ki. Georgiev – Spasov, Plovdiv 2012. I suggest the following improvement:

**19.♕e3!N±**

Preventing Black from utilizing the d4-square. White has a significant space advantage and Black has no counterplay in sight.

B3423) 13...a5

This has been Black's most popular choice although, as we saw in the previous variations, we were not necessarily in a hurry to play b2-b4 anyway.

14.♗db5

Once again, I suggest this typical way of meeting Black's last move.

14.b3!? is a reasonable alternative.

14...h5

This is Black's latest attempt. I checked three other moves:

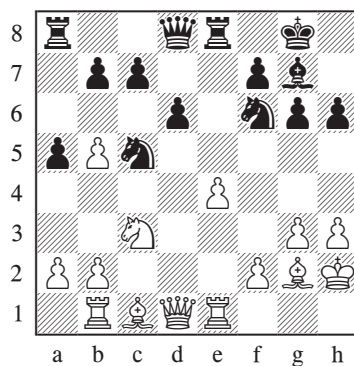
14...a4 15.f3!? This move looks weird but it works well here: White simply intends to develop the bishop comfortably to e3. 15...♗h5?! 16.♕e3 ♗e6 17.f4± White's opening strategy worked perfectly in Ovchinnikova – Kovalevskaya, Elista 1997.

14...♕xb5

Trading this bishop for a knight is a clear concession from Black's perspective.

15.cxb5

By recapturing with the pawn, White gains space and improves the scope of his light-squared bishop. The fact that the b-pawns are technically doubled is irrelevant.

**15...♗fd7 16.f4**

16.♕e3!? is a good alternative, for instance:

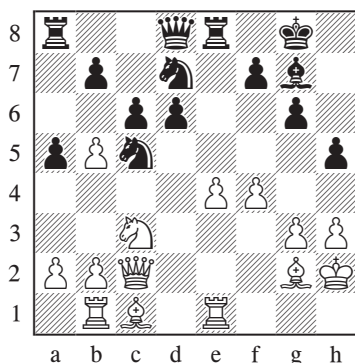
16...h5 17.♖c2 h4 18.g4 g5 19.♖g1±

16...h5

This is Black's latest try but it is of little help. 16...a4 17.♖c2 h5 occurred in Serafimov – Dochev, Bankia 1992, when 18.♕d2N

would have maintained a pleasant positional advantage. White is ready to meet 18...h4 with 19.g4, when Black's h-pawn may soon become a target.

17.♖c2 c6



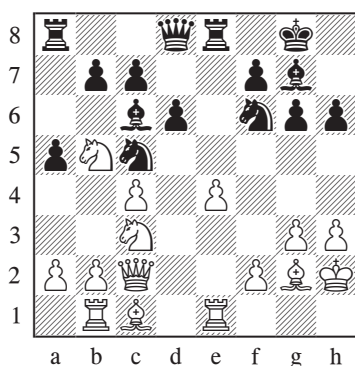
In Anwesh – Ganguly, Dubai 2011, White should have continued with the simple developing move:

18.♗e3N

With a clear positional edge.

14...♗c6 15.♖c2

15.f3 was played in Maric – Eidelson, New Delhi 2000, but the text move seems more natural to me.



15...♖d7N

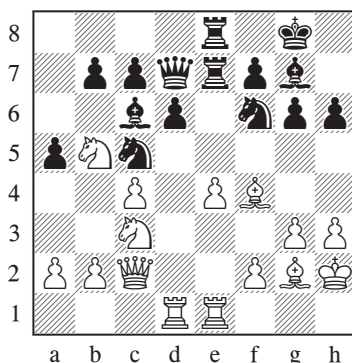
15...a4 16.♗d2 h5 17.♖bd1 ♗fd7 18.f4± was clearly better for White in Kunte – Chumfwa, Cape Town 2015.

16.♗f4

White has a pleasant game. As I pointed out in *GM 2*, it is important that Black has no time to double his rooks along the e-file:

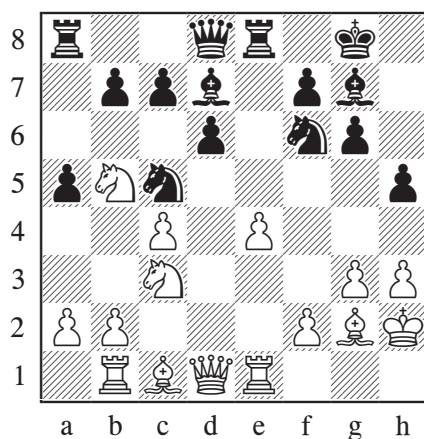
16...♖e7 17.♖bd1 ♖ae8?!

This allows a tactical strike.



18.♗xc7! ♖xc7 19.♗xd6 ♖b6 20.♗xe7 ♖xe7 21.e5 ♗fd7 22.f4

White's advantage is obvious.



15.♗g5!

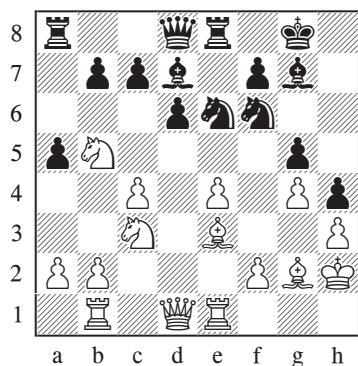
This seems to me like the most challenging move, taking into account that the 15...♗g4† trick does not work on account of 16.hxg4 ♖xg5 17.♗xc7.

The following recent game shows how one bad move may allow Black to seize the initiative using tactical resources: 15.♖c2? h4! 16.g4 c6! 17.♗a3 (the point of Black's play is that

17.♘xd6 ♔c7 18.♞d1 ♕f8 19.♕f4 g5 wins material) 17...d5!? (one of a few good options) Black had an excellent position in Galliamova – Naiditsch, Minsk 2017.

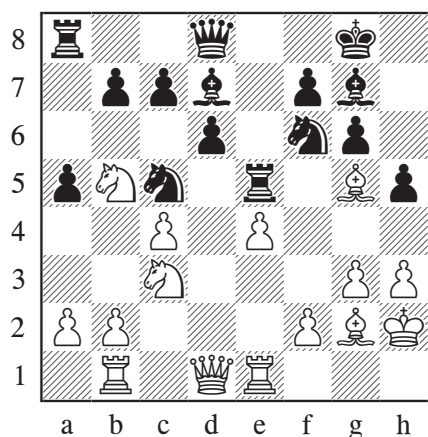
15...♞e5

15...♞e6N is a natural alternative which should be met by 16.♕e3. Then 16...h4 17.g4 g5!? looks like an attractive idea, but White is still better after:



18.e5! dxe5 19.♕xb7 ♞b8 20.♕g2±

After the text move, I found a simple improvement over Schild – Eschert, email 2012.



16.♕f4 ♞e8 17.♞d2±

White keeps a comfortable position.

Conclusion

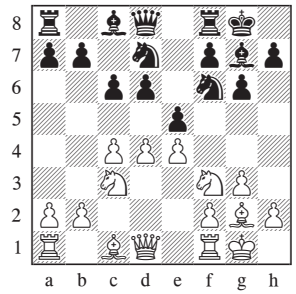
This chapter has focused on Black's attempts to obtain counterplay after 8...exd4 9.♘xd4 ♞e8 (we also checked the less challenging 9...♞e5) 10.h3, when he has a few important options.

10...♞e5 is somewhat premature, and Gallagher's favourite 10...a6 is conveniently met by 11.♞c2, when Black can either transpose to Chapter 11 or grab a pawn with 11...♞xe4, in which case White obtains superb compensation.

The biggest theoretical branch of the chapter occurs after 10...♞c5 11.♞e1, leading to positions of great complexity. White's main task is to nullify Black's counterplay, which is why I like to meet 11...♞d7 with 12.♕h2, overprotecting the h3-pawn before Black mounts a serious attack against it. Many of the variations feature prophylactic moves such as ♞b1, f2-f3, b2-b3, and sometimes a2-a4 if it becomes necessary to prevent ...b5. I found several improvements over my previous analysis and I think Black will have a hard time finding the kind of active counterplay he desires.

Chapter 13

King's Indian



8...c6

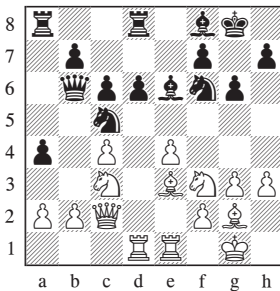
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6

9.h3

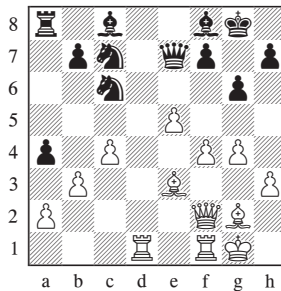
A) 9...a6 10.♙e3	242
A1) 10...b5?!	242
A2) 10...♙e8	244
B) 9...♙e8 10.♙e3	246
B1) 10...a5	246
B2) 10...exd4 11.♘xd4	247
B21) 11...a5!?	248
B22) 11...♘c5 12.♙c2	250
B221) 12...♙e7	251
B222) 12...a5 13.♙ad1	252
B2221) 13...♙c7?!	253
B2222) 13...♘fd7	254
B2223) 13...♙e7 14.♙fe1	255
B22231) 14...♘fd7	256
B22232) 14...a4	258

B21) after 18...♙e6



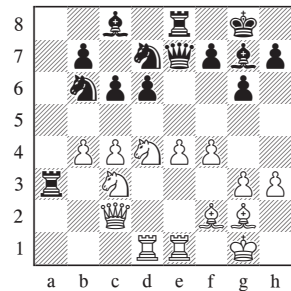
19.♘xa4!N

B2221) after 22...a4



23.f5!N

B22232) note to 18...♙d7

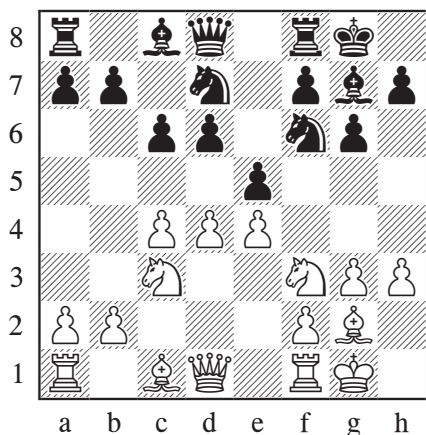


20.♘cb5!!N

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0–0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0–0 e5 8.e4 c6

This is Black's most popular and flexible choice. Apart from controlling the d5-square, Black prepares to develop his queen to an active post on a5 or b6, while keeping the ...exd4 exchange in reserve.

9.h3



This remains my preferred choice; controlling the g4-square is useful in all kinds of situations. In this chapter we will consider the sideline A) 9...a6 followed by the more serious option of B) 9...♙e8.

When checking the database, you can see that practically every legal move has been tried at some point, but there is little value in trying to analyse all of them. If you understand what's happening in this and the next two chapters, you will know more than enough to be able to adapt to any weird sidelines you may encounter. Apart from the two moves mentioned above, Black's other noteworthy options are as follows:

9...♙a5 is an important move, which will be analysed in the next chapter.

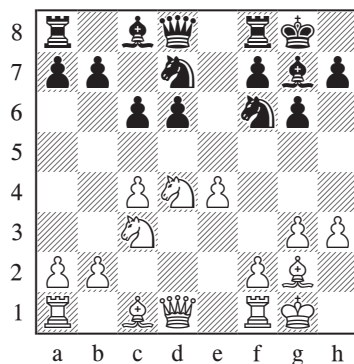
9...♙b6 is the big main line, which will be covered in Chapter 15.

9...♘e8 has been played in quite a few games; it looks odd, but Black's idea is to meet ♙e3 with a quick ...f5. 10.♙e1 is the simplest reply; it is hard to believe that Black has anything better than 10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♙b6, which immediately transposes to variation B2 of Chapter 15.

9...exd4

This has been played in a huge number of games, but it almost always transposes to lines considered elsewhere.

10.♘xd4



10...♙b6

10...♙e8 11.♙e3 leads straight to variation B2 of the present chapter.

10...♘c5 11.♙e3 and Black surely has nothing better than 11...♙e8, leading to variation B22.

10...♙a5 11.♙e1 is variation C of Chapter 14 on page 266, although 11.♘de2!? could be a way to exploit Black's unusual move order.

Finally, 10...♙c7 is an independent alternative, but after 11.♙e3 Black's queen is obviously misplaced; compare the next two chapters, where she is much more active on a5 and b6 respectively.

11.♙e1

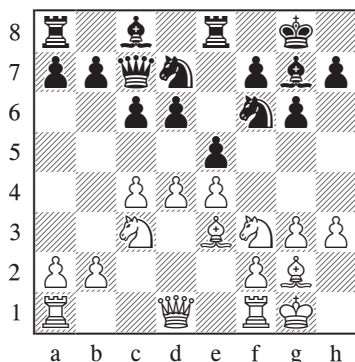
This will be covered under the 9...♙b6 move order – see variation B of Chapter 15 on page 285.

9...♞c7

This is a strange place for the queen.

10.♙e3 ♞e8

10...exd4 11.♘xd4 was mentioned above, under the move order 9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♞c7 11.♙e3.



11.d5

White is also better after other moves, but the text clearly underlines the poor placement of Black's queen. Several games have been played in this position since *GM 2* was published, but nothing has occurred to alter the evaluation.

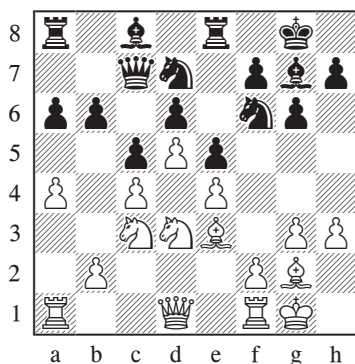
11...c5

In the event of 11...cxd5 12.cxd5 Black's queen will soon have to waste time moving again.

12.♘e1

12.a3 a6 13.♘d2 ♞f8 14.b4± was also fine in Correa – Iwakura, Porto Alegre 1994. Still, I like the knight on d3 in these positions.

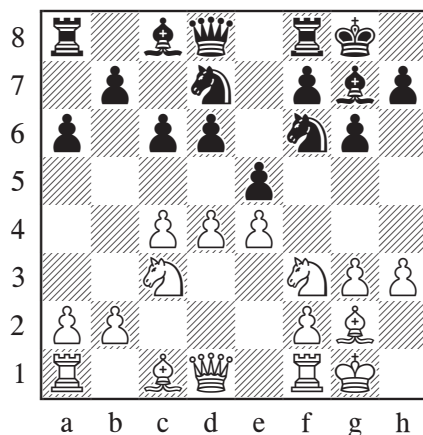
12...a6 13.a4 b6 14.♘d3



14...♞b8 15.♞d2 ♘h5 16.♙f3 ♘hf6 17.g4 ♘h8 18.♙g2 ♘f8 19.b4

White was clearly better in Kasparov – Capittelli, Asiag (simul) 1991.

A) 9...a6

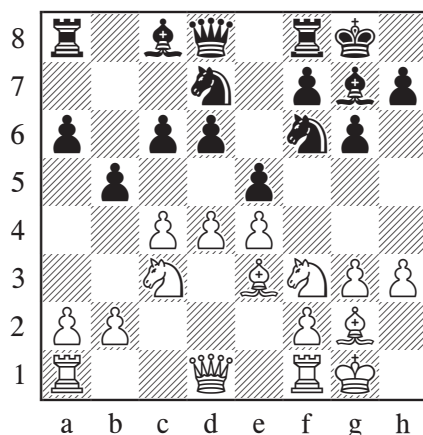


10.♙e3

White should simply carry on developing, safe in the knowledge that ...b5 can always be met by c4-c5, opening the centre to exploit White's superior development.

It is worth considering A1) 10...b5?! and A2) 10...♞e8.

A1) 10...b5?!



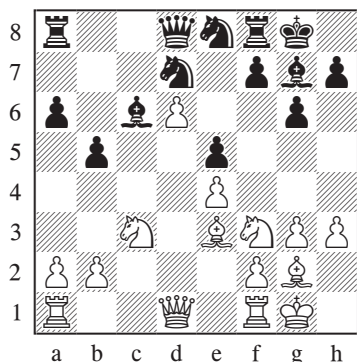
If nothing else, this is consistent, which probably explains why it has been Black's most popular choice in the position. Unfortunately for Black, his centre falls apart after the thematic counter:

11.c5! b4

This seems like the best of a bad bunch.

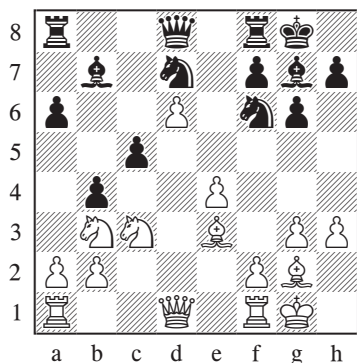
11...dxc5? occurred in Dautov – Sutovsky, Bad Homburg 1997, when the obvious 12.dxe5N ♖e8 13.♙xc5+– would have been disastrous for Black.

11...♖e8 was tried in one of the more recent games, which continued: 12.d5 ♙b7 13.dxc6 ♙xc6 14.cxd6



14...♙b8 15.♖d5 ♙xd6 16.♖c1± White was obviously better in Banikas – Naoum, Anogia 2016.

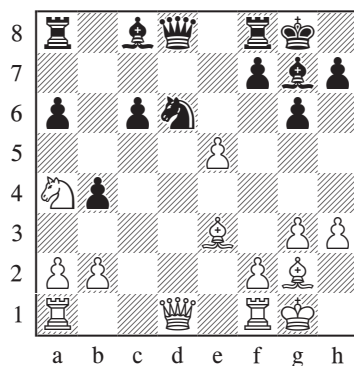
11...exd4 12.♖xd4 ♙b7 is another try, but Black is struggling here too after: 13.cxd6 c5 14.♖b3 b4 (14...c4 15.♖c5 ♖xc5 16.♙xc5±)



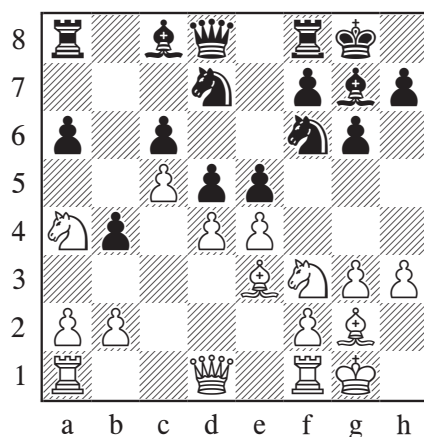
15.♖a4 (15.♖d5!?N ♖xd5 16.exd5± is another good option) 15...♖xe4 In Vollak – Franzen, Radebeul 2016, the simple 16.♙xe4N ♙xe4 17.♖axc5 would have left Black without much compensation for the pawn, as he is in no position to exploit White's light-square weaknesses.

12.♖a4 d5

12...♖xe4 is also not much of a solution: 13.cxd6 ♖xd6 14.♖xe5 ♖xe5 15.dxe5



15...♖c4 (15...♙xe5 16.♙c5! led to a loss of material for Black in Pawlus – Kaczynski, corr. 1991) 16.♙c5 ♖e8 17.f4± White had an obvious positional plus in Jirka – Schauer, Plzen 2000.

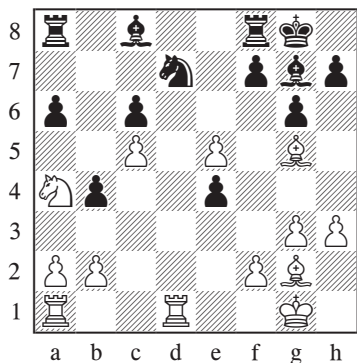


13.♙g5!

This powerful move secures a clear advantage for White.

13...♖c7

A recent game continued 13...dxe4 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♖xd1 16.♞fxd1 ♘d7 and now in Kalaiyalahan – Elwin, Bournemouth 2016, White missed a strong idea:



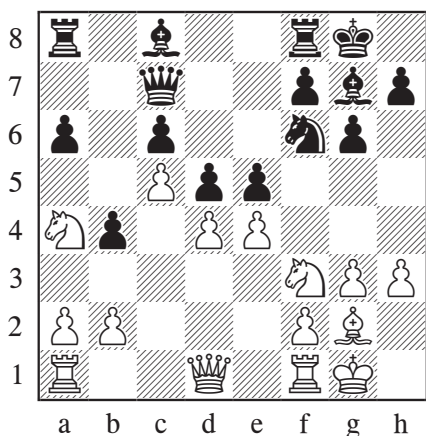
17.e6! N fxe6 18.♙xe4± With a large positional advantage.

14.♙xf6

A strong and concrete approach.

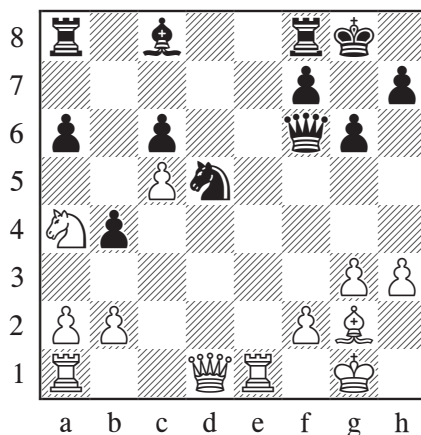
14...♘xf6

14...♙xf6 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♘b6 ♞b8 17.exd5 wins a pawn.



15.exd5 ♘xd5 16.♘xe5 ♙xe5 17.dxe5 ♖xe5 18.♞e1 ♖f6

Black did not have much choice over the last few moves. Now White continues to force the play with:

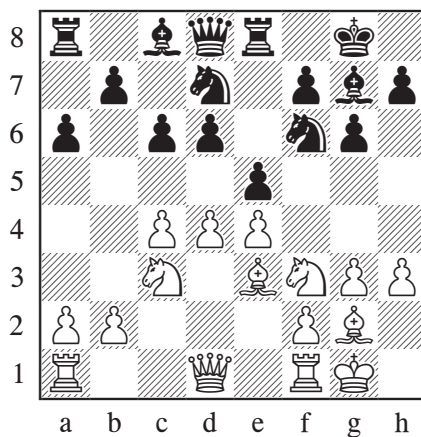


19.♙xd5! cxd5 20.♘b6 ♞b8 21.♘xd5 ♖xb2 22.c6

White's passer should easily decide the issue. Our model game continued:

22...♙xh3 23.♞b1 ♖g7 24.c7+–

Gagunashvili – Bayramov, Urumia 2008.

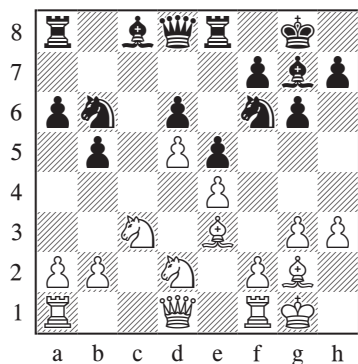
A2) 10...♞e8

This way Black stabilizes his centre before starting his counterplay.

11.♖c2

The idea behind this move is to meet ...b5 by exchanging on e5, aiming for a lasting positional edge.

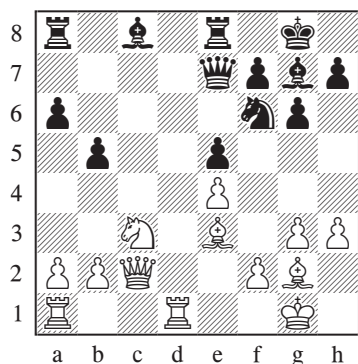
11.d5 cxd5 12.cxd5 b5 13.♘d2 is also promising for White. A nice example continued: 13...♗b6



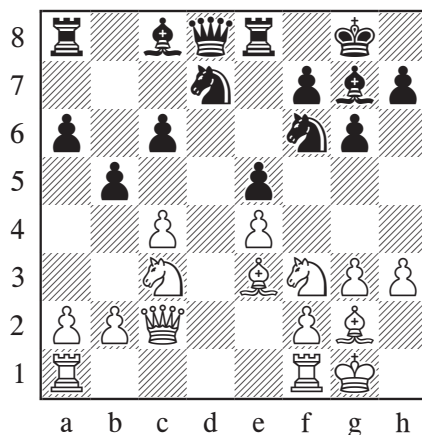
14.a4! bxa4 15.♘xa4 ♘xa4 16.♙xa4 ♕d7 17.♙a3 ♕b5 18.♖fc1 ♙d7 19.♘c4 ♕xc4 20.♖xc4± White was clearly better in Gabuzyan – Tate, Cappelle-la-Grande 2013.

11...b5 12.dxe5 dxe5

12...♗xe5 13.♗xe5 dxe5 has also been tried, but 14.♖fd1 ♙e7 15.cxb5! offers White the better chances, for instance: 15...cxb5 (15...axb5 16.a4± hardly helps Black) This was Milos – Fedorowicz, Argentina 1991, and here I suggest:



16.♗d5!N ♗xd5 17.exd5 ♕f5 18.♙d2 ♖ac8 19.♖ac1 White has a favourable version of this structure, since Black is unable to set up a blockade on d6.

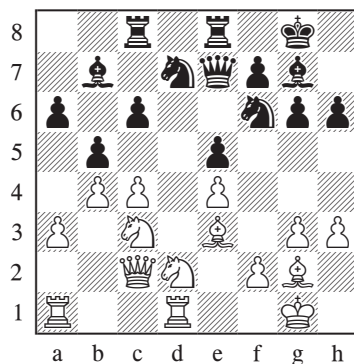


13.♖fd1 ♙e7

13...♕b7 has been played a few times, but nobody played 14.♗d2!?N, which I believe to be best. An illustrative line is 14...♙c7 15.a3 ♗f8 16.♖ac1 ♗e6 17.cxb5 cxb5 18.♙b1 ♙b8 19.♗b3 with a nice advantage for White.

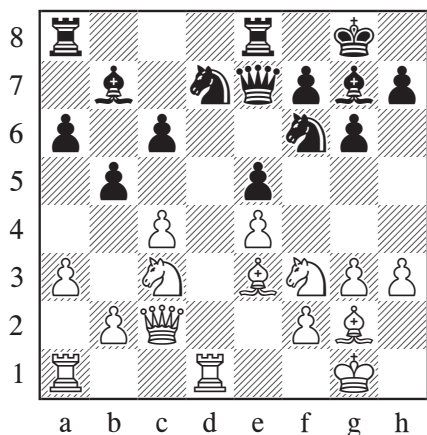
14.a3 ♕b7

14...h6 15.b4 ♕b7 16.♗d2 ♖ac8 gives White a stable edge, due to the passivity of Black's light-squared bishop. In Lelievre – Viaud, corr. 1989, White should have continued:



17.♗b3N ♖ed8 18.♖ac1 ♕a8 19.♗e2± White maintains a space advantage and better harmony among his pieces. Just look at Black's light-squared bishop...

This position was reached in Kniest – Hendriks, Germany 2012. I still like my recommendation from *GM 2*:

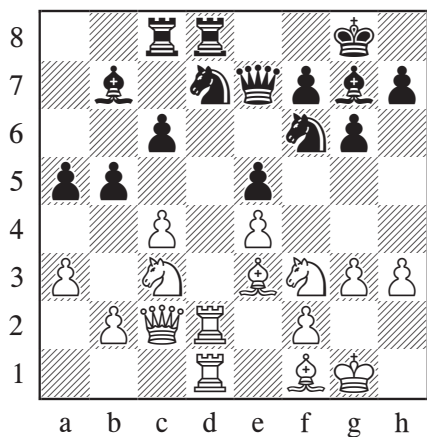


15.♞d2! N ♞ed8 16.♞ad1

White has a pleasant edge. Here are a few illustrative lines which I also gave in my previous work.

16...a5 17.♞f1 ♞ac8

After 17...b4 18.♞a4 bxa3 19.bxa3 White is doing well, especially as 19...c5? 20.♞xc5 ♞xc5 21.♞xd8† ♞xd8 22.♞xc5± wins a pawn.



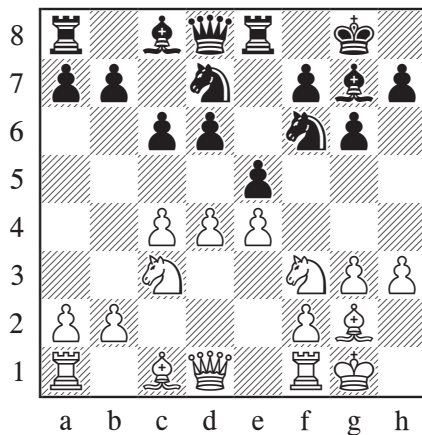
18.b4! axb4 19.axb4±

White keeps the upper hand, as the b4-pawn is immune:

19...♞xb4? 20.♞b6

Winning the exchange.

B) 9...♞e8



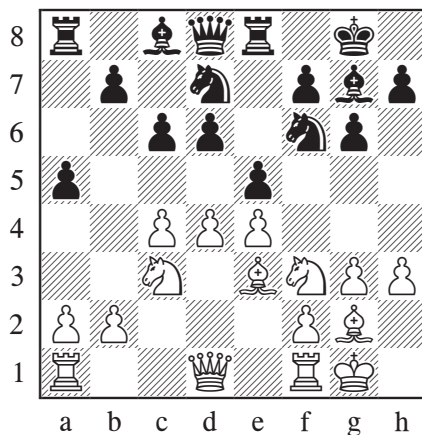
10.♞e3

Black has tried virtually every possible move, but in my opinion only **B1) 10...a5** deserves to be mentioned as a serious alternative. The main line, of course, is **B2) 10...exd4**.

10...♞c7 is Black's second-most-popular move on the database, but the queen is rather passive on c7. This position was covered in the note on 9...♞c7 on page 242.

Let us also briefly note that 10...a6 leads back to variation A2.

B1) 10...a5



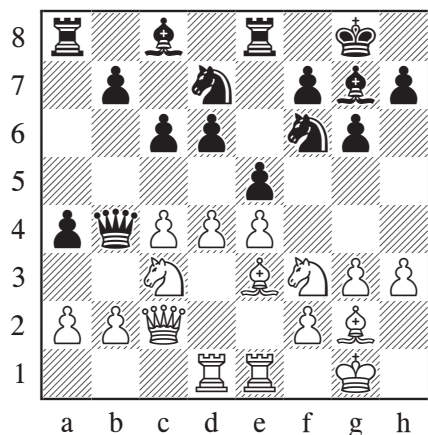
This makes a reasonable amount of sense, as advancing the a-pawn is a typical plan in the ...exd4 structure, and it may also prove useful in the event that White blocks the centre with d4-d5. I suggest maintaining the tension and improving the pieces with:

11. ♖c2 a4

This is the logical follow up. The other popular option is 11...exd4, but after 12. ♘xd4 we transpose to variation B21 below.

12. ♖ad1 ♖a5 13. ♖fe1 ♜b4?!

This move pushes Black's luck too far. At this stage he really should prefer 13...exd4 14. ♘xd4, reaching a position which will be examined in variation B21.

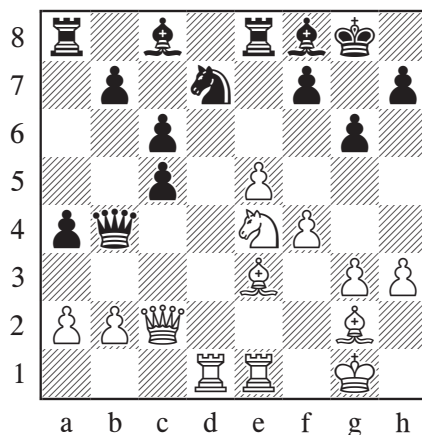


14.c5!

Several players, including the great Geller, have missed this shot and played 14. ♔f1. The text move is much stronger; we will follow the one game in which it was played.

14...dxc5 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16. ♘xe5 ♖xe5 17.f4 ♖e8 18.e5 ♘d7 19. ♘e4 ♔f8

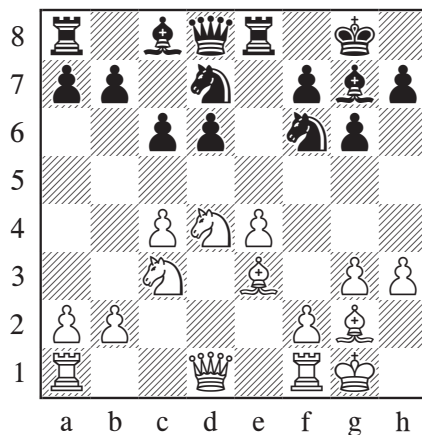
In Paci – Pelle, Paris 2000, the most accurate way of exploiting White's advantage would have been:



20. ♔d2! N ♖b6 21. ♔c3+-

The main threat is ♖xd7; but even a slower build-up, with moves like ♘d6, g3-g4 and f4-f5, will be devastatingly powerful.

B2) 10...exd4 11. ♘xd4

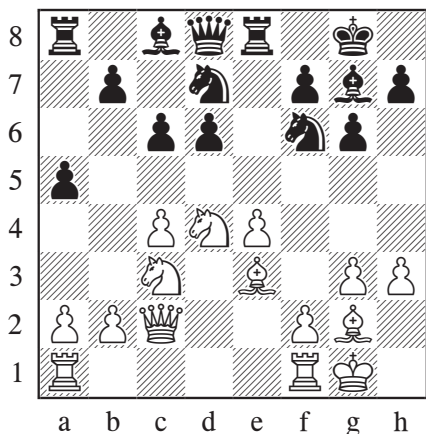


Once again, **B21) 11...a5!?** is a noteworthy alternative, but the main line is **B22) 11...♘c5**.

11...♖a5 is worth mentioning in passing. The simplest reply for our purposes is 12. ♖e1, which immediately transposes to variation C1 of Chapter 14 on page 267. However, White might try to take advantage of his opponent's move order by means of 12. ♖c2!?, which has the advantage of enabling b2-b3 in reply to

...♖b6 or ...♗e5. I will leave it for readers to investigate this further if they wish.

B21) 11...a5!? 12.♖c2



12...a4!?

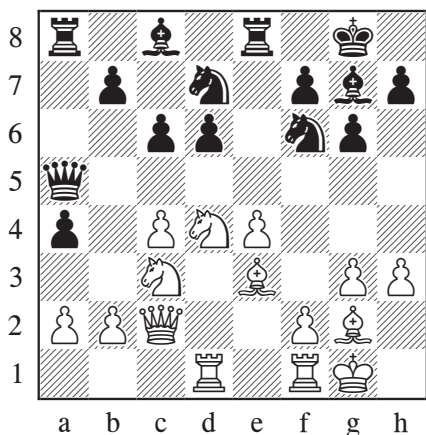
Black uses some tactical motifs in order to obtain the a5-square for his queen.

12...♗c5 leads to variation B222.

13.♖ad1

I see no reason to enter the complications that arise after 13.♗xa4 ♗xe4! 14.♗xc4 ♖xa4 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♖xa4 ♗e5, when Black has interesting compensation for the exchange.

13...♖a5



14.♖fe1

White continues to strengthen his position.

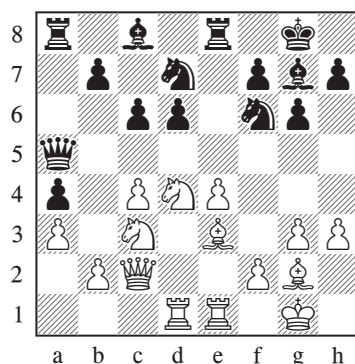
14...♗c5

Black has also tried provoking a queenside weakness with:

14...♖b4 15.a3

This is a small positional concession, but it is justified by the gaining of time against Black's queen. One can also consider 15.♗b1!?, as played in Tomaszewski – Barczay, Polanica Zdroj 1980, with the idea of meeting 15...♗b6 or 16...♗e5 with 16.♗a3.

15...♖a5



16.f4

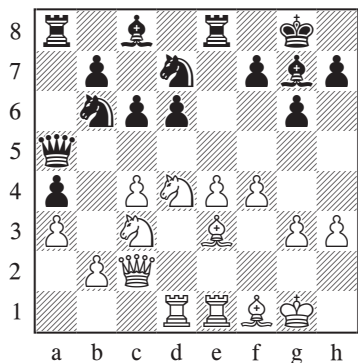
Obviously 16.b4? is unnecessary, and after 16...axb3 17.♗xb3 ♖c7 Black was assured of lasting counterplay against White's weak pawns on the queenside in Bunzmann – Enders, Germany 1998.

16...♗b6?!

16...♗c5 is a more popular and better try. The resulting position can actually be reached via several move orders; you can find it analysed in variation B23 of Chapter 15, where it arises with two extra moves played. (The exact moment arises after 18.♖ad1 ♖e8 on page 290.)

17.♗f1 ♗fd7

This method of arranging Black's knights looks slightly inaccurate. In Buss – Pavlovic, Ohrid 2009, White should have played:



18. ♖f2!N

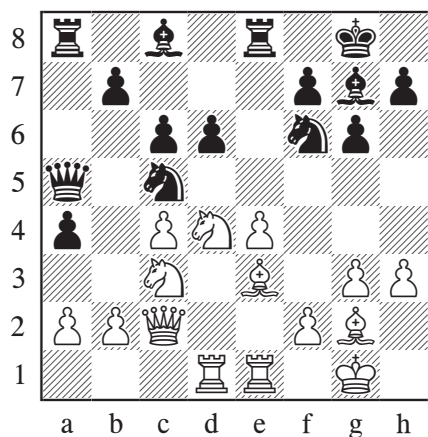
This secures White's advantage, thanks to the following point.

18... ♘c5?

This is clearly the move Black wants to play, but it runs into a tactical trick.

19. e5! dxe5 20. ♘f5 ♕xf5 21. ♕xc5 ♘c8 22. g4 ♕e6 23. fxe5

With an overwhelming advantage.



15. ♕f4!

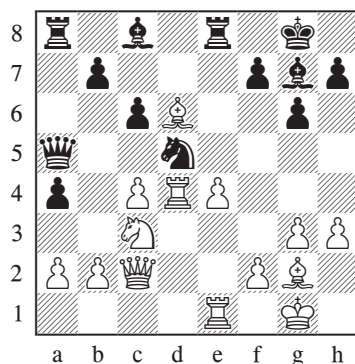
One of the key ideas in this variation is to attack the d6-pawn, and here the timing is perfect.

15.f4 ♖b4 16.a3 ♖a5 was the actual move order of my 2009 game against Lopez Martinez, which I will discuss later under a different move order (the details can be found in variation B23 of Chapter 15, which begins

on page 288). However, against the specific move order which occurred in the game, the computer offers 15... ♕e6!?N 16. ♘xe6 ♖xe6 as a possible improvement.

15... ♕f8

Sacrificing the d6-pawn does not work: 15... ♘e6?! 16. ♕xd6 ♘xd4 17. ♖xd4 ♘d5 and now White can quash all counterplay with:

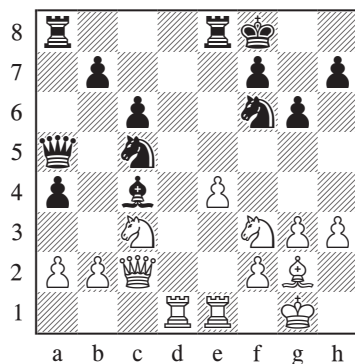


18. e5! ♕f5 19. ♖d2 ♘xc3 20. ♖xc3 ♖xc3 21. bxc3 White kept a healthy extra pawn in Manakova – Segal, Duisburg 1992, and a few other games.

16. ♘f3 ♖d8

No better is:

16... ♕e6 17. ♕xd6 ♕xc4 18. ♕xf8 ♖xf8



19. e5!

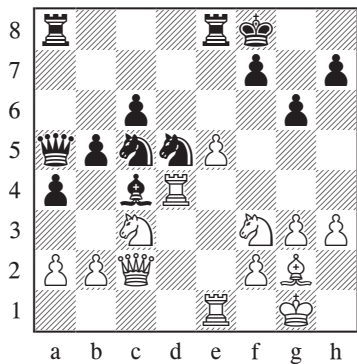
Previously I gave the following 'improvement': 19. ♖d4!?N ♕e6 20. ♖d2

threatening e4-e5, followed by ♖h6 and ♕g5. 20...♔g7 21.♞d1 White has clearly better chances, thanks to his control over the d-file and potentially mobile kingside majority.

There is nothing wrong with the above line but, when I re-analysed it, I realized that the original game continuation was even stronger.

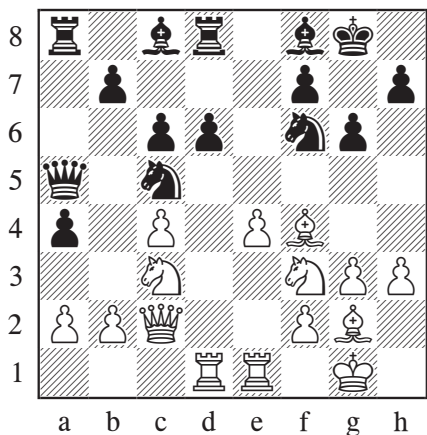
19...♘d5 20.♞d4 b5

20...♘b6 21.♞d2 ♔g7 22.♞h4 h5 23.g4+— gave White a crushing initiative in Martin – Kraschl, Duisburg 1992.



21.♞d2 ♔g8 22.♞h6

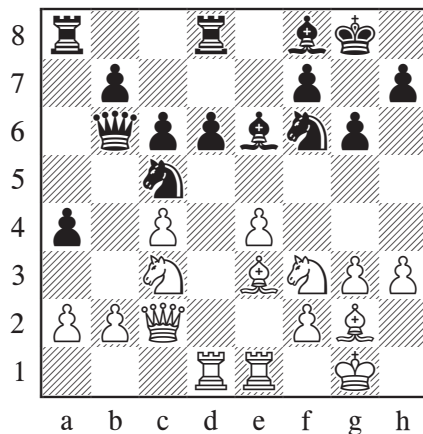
White obtained a winning advantage in Reshevsky – Najdorf, Salvador 1952.



17.♙d2 ♖b6 18.♙e3 ♙e6

We have been following Lekander – Hakki,

Eksjo 1982. In *GM 2* I suggested 19.♙d4N, but now I would like to offer an improvement over my earlier improvement!



19.♙xa4!N

The next few moves are almost forced.

19...♞xa4 20.♙xc5 ♖a6 21.♙f1

Defending the c4-pawn.

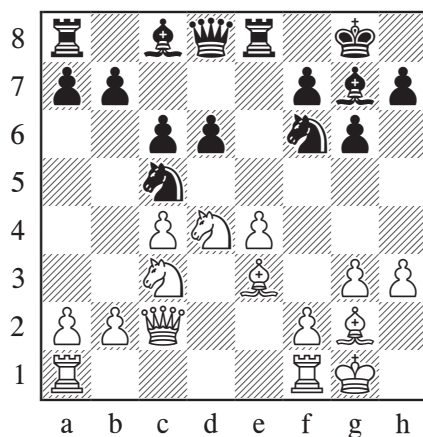
21...♞xa2

And now the crucial detail is:

22.e5! ♘d7 23.♙xd6

Winning a pawn.

B22) 11...♘c5 12.♞c2



Obviously White defends the e4-pawn in the natural way. Black has tried all kinds of moves here, but there are only two really important options to consider: **B221) 12...♖e7** and **B222) 12...a5**.

B221) 12...♖e7 13.♜fe1!

Generally we should try to avoid playing f2-f3 in these lines, especially after already having played h2-h3. Fortunately, this indirect defence of the e4-pawn works perfectly.

13...♙d7

13...a5 14.♞ad1 transposes to variation B2223.

13...♜fxe4?

This pawn grab is a bad idea, but we must still consider it of course.

14.♙xe4!

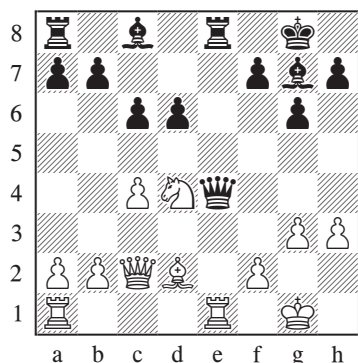
This is the most precise.

14.♜xe4 has been more common, but 14...♜xe4 15.♙xe4 c5! (rather than transposing to our line with 15...♖xe4) gives Black more chances to resist.

14...♜xe4 15.♜xe4 ♖xe4

Now 15...c5? is useless in view of 16.♙g5.

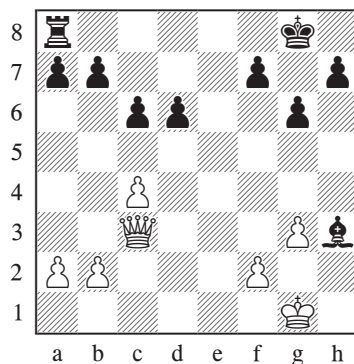
16.♙d2



16...♖xe1† 17.♜xe1 ♜xe1† 18.♙xe1 ♙xd4 19.♙c3

19.g4!? is an interesting alternative, but one good option is enough.

19...♙xc3 20.♖xc3 ♙xh3

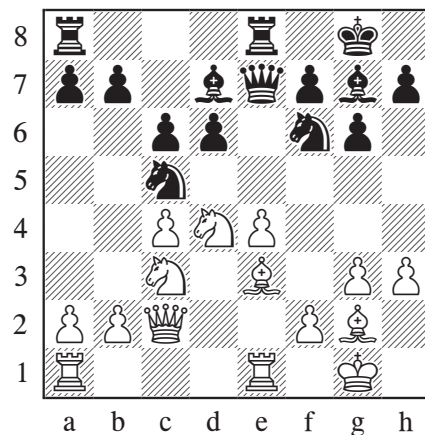


21.♖b4!

An important detail, without which Black would be fine. It would be possible to spend lots of time trying to solve this endgame, but there is no need for us to do so, as it's obvious that Black is struggling to survive. Here are a few more moves from the original game:

21...b6 22.♖xd6 c5 23.♖e7!±

White queen is too active and Black was unable to survive in Shamkovich – Baljon, Amsterdam 1979.



14.♜b3!

This is an important resource to remove the pressure against the e4-pawn.

14...♙e6

White is also better after:

14...♖xb3 15.axb3

The a7-pawn is under fire, and defending it will require Black to spend a tempo and weaken his position.

15...a6

This seems like the lesser evil.

15...c5 16.♖d2 ♖c6 17.♖ad1± gave White an obvious positional advantage in A. Petrosian – Akopian, Yerevan 1988.

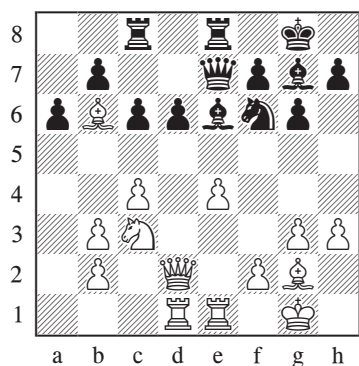
16.♖ad1 ♖e6 17.♖d2!

The weakness of the b6-square proves significant in the following line.

17...♖ad8 18.♖b6 ♖c8

18...♖d7 is well met by 19.f4± with the unpleasant threat of f4-f5.

In Burmakin – Iskusnyh, Novgorod 1995, White's most precise continuation would have been:



19.f4!N

In *GM 2* I recommended taking the pawn with 19.♖xd6N ♖xd6 20.♖xd6 ♖d7 21.♖e3, but I overlooked that Black can obtain counterplay with 21...♖f8 22.♖dd1 ♖c5 23.b4 ♖b3 24.c5 a5, which leads to unnecessary complications.

19...♖d7 20.♖f2

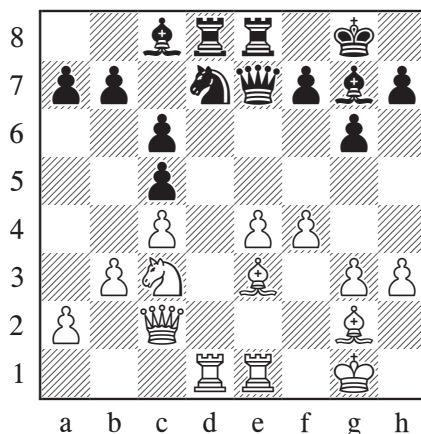
White keeps a clear advantage.

15.♖xc5 dxc5 16.b3

Having damaged his opponent's structure, White will play strategically to exploit his extra pawn on the kingside.

16...♖ad8 17.♖ad1 ♖c8 18.f4 ♖d7

In Raicevic – F. Portisch, Odzaci 1978, White missed a strong idea.



19.e5!N

Intending ♖e4. The critical continuation is:

19...f6 20.♖e4! fxg5 21.♖d6 ♖f8 22.f5±

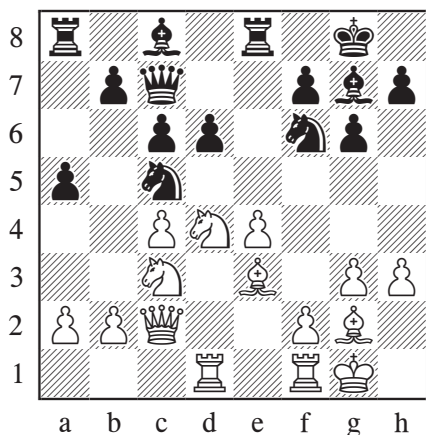
Black has a difficult position.

B222) 12...a5 13.♖ad1

In *GM 2* I remarked that there were more than two hundred games played from this position. Today the number stands at more than four hundred, but the evaluation remains essentially the same: White has obtained the optimal arrangement for his pieces and his chances are preferable.

Black's three most popular tries at this point are **B2221) 13...♖c7?!**, **B2222) 13...♖fd7** and **B2223) 13...♖e7**.

13...a4?? is a blunder, allowing 14.♖xc6 bxc6 15.♖xc5+ and Black's position collapses.

B2221) 13...♔c7?!

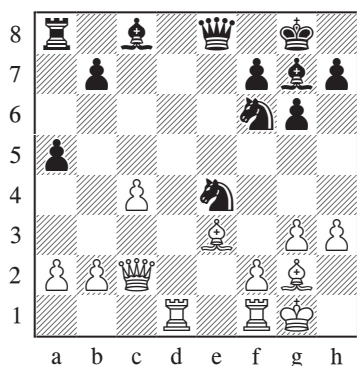
This is a serious inaccuracy, as it allows White to strike with an elegant idea.

14.♘db5!

14.♖fe1 leads to a typical advantage for White and has also scored heavily. Still, when given an opportunity to seize a big advantage by force, it makes sense to take it.

14...cxb5 15.♘xb5 ♕e7 16.♘xd6 ♘a6

In *GM 2 I* neglected to mention 16...♘cxe4. Here is the refutation: 17.♘xe8 ♖xe8

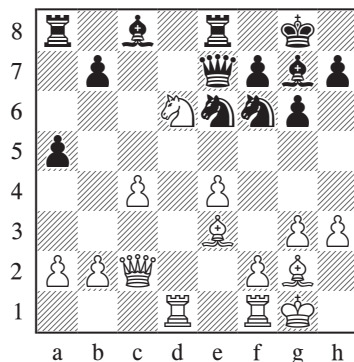


18.♖fe1! This simple move leaves Black unable to avoid material losses. For instance, 18...♙d7 19.♙d4 ♙c6 20.♙xf6 ♙xf6 21.♙xe4 and White won easily in Dumitrache – Grimault, Avoine 2015.

In a couple of games, Black has tried:

16...♘e6

And now, rather than taking on e8 immediately, it is more accurate for White to play:

**17.e5!N ♘h5**

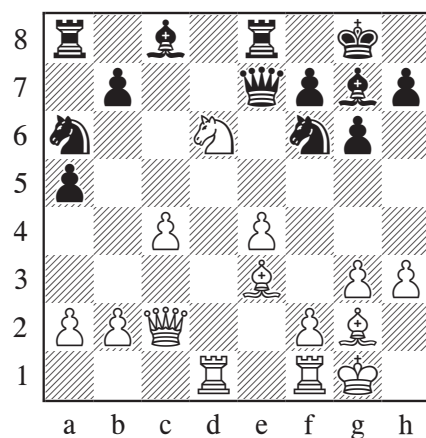
17...♘d7 18.♘xe8 ♖xe8 19.f4± reaches a position with a material imbalance which is clearly in White's favour, as it will be hard for Black to develop his queenside.

18.♘xe8 ♖xe8 19.♖e4!

Threatening g3-g4.

19...f5 20.exf6 ♘xf6 21.♖c2

Followed by ♖fe1, and White is clearly better.

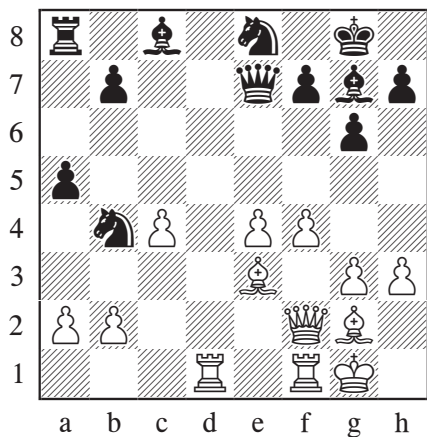
**17.♘xe8 ♖xe8 18.f4**

White has a rook and two pawns against two knights, which can be regarded as a small

material advantage. However, his biggest concern should be improving his position before Black has time to coordinate his minor pieces effectively. The main priority should be advancing the e-pawn.

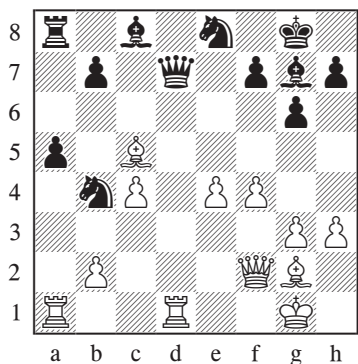
18...♖b4 19.♗f2!

White should not bother defending the a2-pawn; it is more important to maintain optimal coordination.



19...♙f8

19...♖xa2 has not been played, and indeed Black will be made to suffer after: 20.♖a1 ♖b4 (20...♙e6 21.♖xa2 ♙xc4 22.♖aa1 ♙xf1 23.♖xf1± leaves White with a clear edge thanks to his bishop pair, especially with e4-e5 coming next) 21.♙c5 ♗d7 22.♖fd1

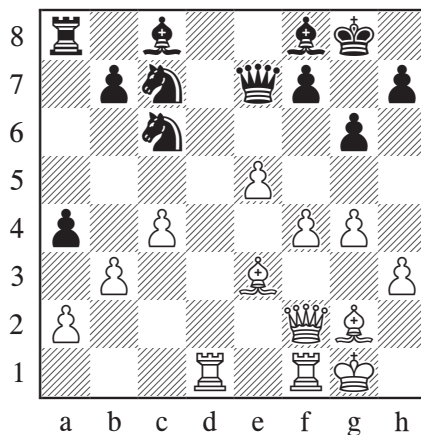


22...♖d3 23.♗e3 ♖xc5 24.♖xd7 ♖xd7 25.e5

We are left with a different kind of material imbalance, but White is still clearly better.

20.b3 ♖c7 21.g4 ♖c6 22.e5 a4

In Sagar – Janev, Albena 2013, White could have decided the game by means of:



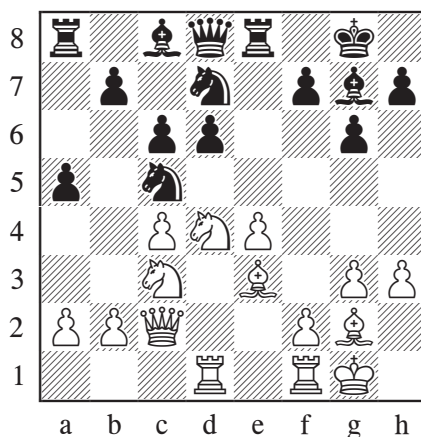
23.f5!N

The attack is too strong. A likely continuation is:

23...axb3 24.axb3 ♖xe5 25.♗g3 ♙g7 26.♙d4

With a winning advantage.

B2222) 13...♖fd7



14.b3

14.♘b3!? is a decent alternative but I like the idea of defending the c4-pawn in advance. I will present a few nice lines showing that White is firmly in control.

14...♖b6

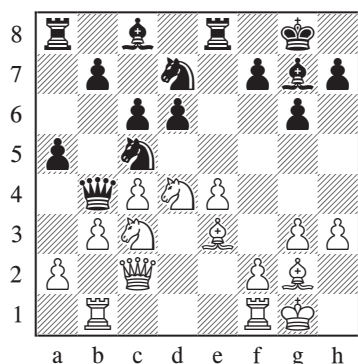
14...♖e7 15.♗fe1 transposes to variation B22231 below.

15.♗b1

A good precaution, preparing to meet ...a4 with b3-b4.

15...♖c7

The otherwise desirable 15...♖b4? is refuted by:



16.♘cb5! (the most precise, although 16.♘db5 also works similarly) Black has a depressing choice between 16...♙xd4 17.a3, 16...a4 17.♙d2, or 16...cxb5 17.♘xb5 a4 18.♙d2, each of which leads to the loss of his queen.

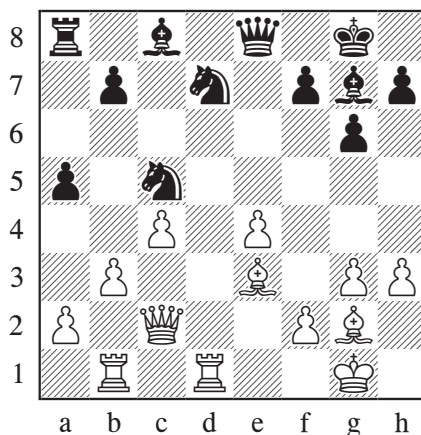
16.♗fd1 ♘b6

In Makarov – Askarov, Tomsk 2006, White missed a chance to strike with a familiar idea:

17.♘db5! cxb5 18.♘xb5

The following line looks logical.

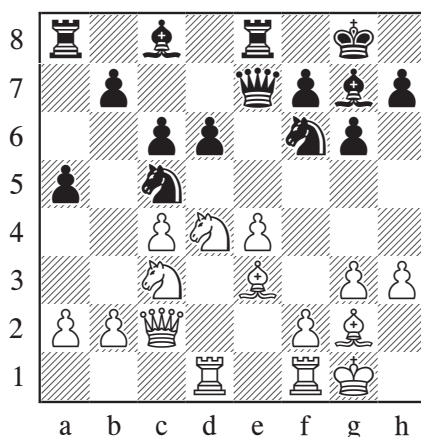
18...♖e7 19.♘xd6 ♘bd7 20.♘xe8 ♖xe8



21.f4! b6 22.e5

Having blocked the g7-bishop out of play, White is clearly better.

B2223) 13...♖e7

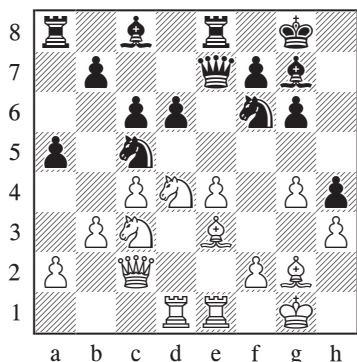


This is the most popular move of all, with more than two hundred games on my database. Funnily enough, the number almost doubles after White's next move, as many games arrived there via different move orders.

14.♗fe1

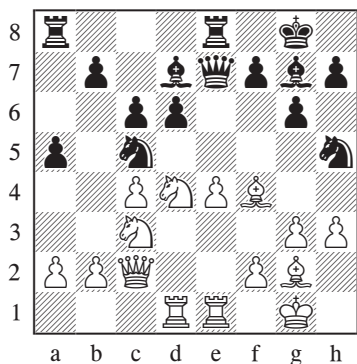
As usual, from the variety of moves to have been played, I will focus on the most popular and logical options, namely B22231) 14...♘fd7 and B22232) 14...a4.

I also noticed that the rare 14...h5!? has yielded decent results for Black. I like 15.b3!N, effectively ruling out ...a4 on account of b3-b4. By the way, the novelty transposes to a few existing games. The only really critical line we need to check is: 15...h4 16.g4



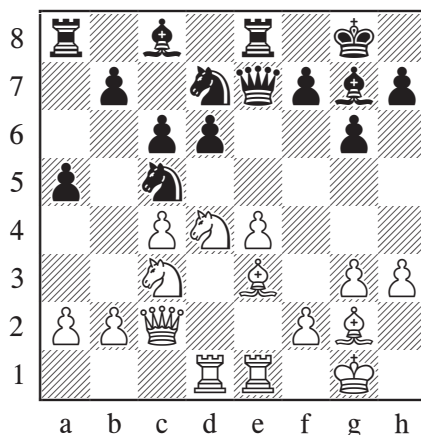
16...g4N (16...f7 17.f4 was played in one game, with a transposition to variation B22231 below) 17.hxg4 f7g4 18.Ke2 f7xe3 19.Ke3 I don't see sufficient compensation for Black.

14...f7 looks pretty passive, but this is not the biggest problem for Black, since after 15.f4! it is hard for him to deal with the threat of fxc6 followed by fxd6. For example: 15...f5 (or 15...f8d8 16.f5b3! and White wins a pawn)



16.fxc6! fxc6 17.fxd6 Ke6 18.fxc5 Kxc4 19.fxd6± Black had no compensation for the pawn in Malaniuk – Mohr, Nova Gorica 2003.

B22231) 14...f7



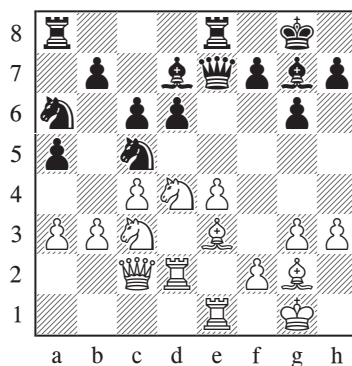
This is slightly the less accurate of the two main moves, as it allows White to strengthen his position with:

15.b3!

Securing the c4-pawn without giving Black an open file for his rook. I will just present a few lines showing how to deal with Black's most interesting attempts.

15...h5

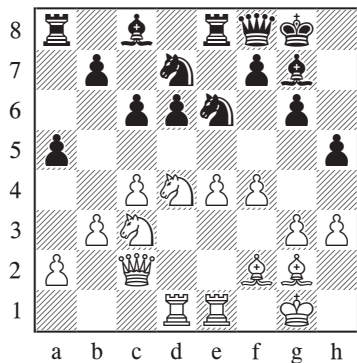
15...h5 looks strange, but the idea is to make room for the second knight to come to c5, thus allowing the bishop to go to d7. 16.f2d2 fdc5 17.a3 f7 was the logical continuation of Sadorra – Margvelashvili, Brownsville 2010, and here White should have played:



18.f2d1N Maintaining a clear positional edge.

16.f4 h4

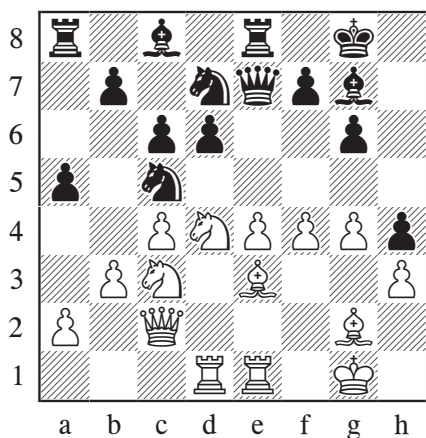
16...♖f8 17.♕f2 ♘e6 occurred in Bocharov – Apicella, Internet 2002, when White's strongest continuation would have been:



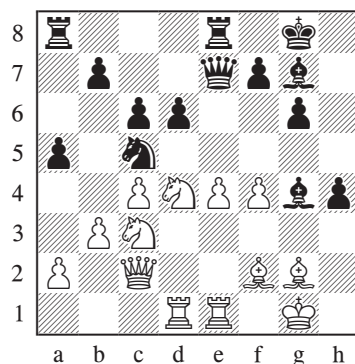
18.♘xe6N ♝xe6 19.♘a4! Black has a difficult position, with various weaknesses, little space and no counterplay.

17.g4

If Black plays slowly then White will be in complete control of the game, so we only really need to check the sacrifices on g4 to be sure of White's advantage.

**17...♘f6 18.♕f2 ♕xg4**

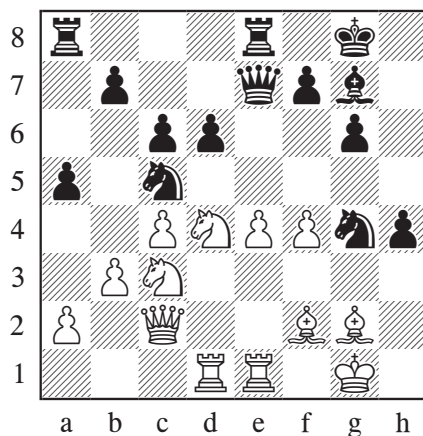
The alternative is 18...♘g4 19.hxg4 ♕xg4, as in Goczó – Stupavski, Budapest 2005, and now the simplest option would have been:



20.♕f3!N Black obviously does not have enough compensation.

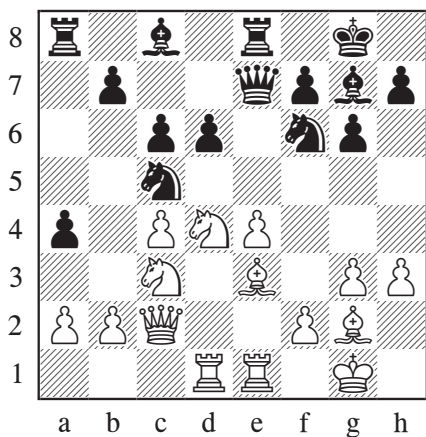
19.hxg4 ♘xg4

This occurred in a more recent game, Pechenkin – Robichaud, Montreal 2012, when White should have played:

**20.♕h3!N ♘xf2 21.♖xf2**

Black does not have anything close to sufficient compensation.

B22232) 14...a4



This is Black's best continuation, although it still does not equalize.

15.f4!

15.♙f4 is not so effective here due to 15...♘fd7, as in Guimard – A. Olivera, Buenos Aires 1964.

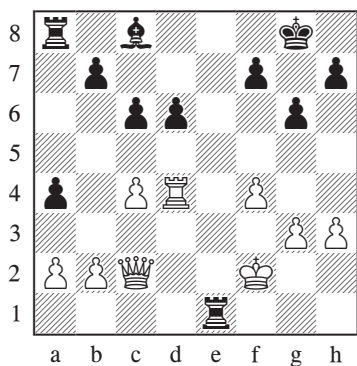
15...♘fd7

Another important line is:

15...♗fxe4

As usual, grabbing this pawn is risky to say the least, but we still need to check it.

16.♗xe4 ♗xe4 17.♙xe4 ♙xe4 18.♙f2 ♙xe1† 19.♙xe1 ♙xd4† 20.♙xd4 ♙xe1† 21.♙f2



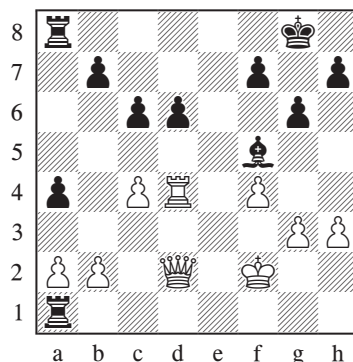
21...♙f5

This zwischenzug keeps Black alive, but I

still do not believe he has enough resources to make up for White's queen.

22.♙d2 ♙a1

Another game continued 22...♙h1 23.♙g2 c5 24.♙xh1 cxd4 25.♙xd4 ♙xh3 26.♙xd6 ♙e6 27.♙d4± and White went on to convert his material advantage in Dautov – Akopian, Tbilisi 1989.



23.g4!N

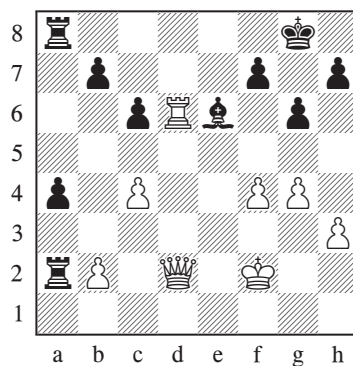
A serious improvement over White's play in Moncelli – Bilic, Bratto 1988. I gave the same idea in *GM 2* but it remains untested, as nobody has dared to play 15...♗fxe4 in recent years.

23...♙xa2 24.♙xd6!

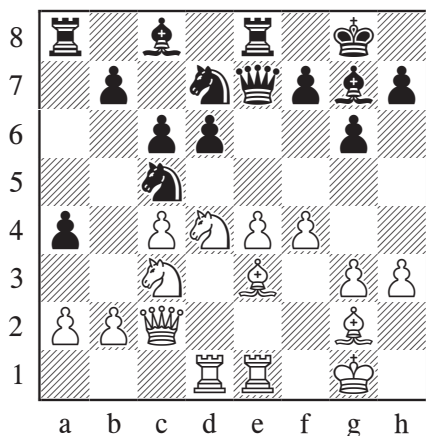
After 24.gxf5? a3 White runs the risk of allowing the opposite result.

24...♙e6

24...a3 25.♙d8† ♙xd8 26.♙xd8† ♙g7 27.gxf5 axb2 does not work here, as White has a forced mate: 28.f6† ♙h6 29.♙f8† ♙h5 30.♙c5† ♙h4 31.♙g5† ♙xh3 32.♙g3#



25.f5! gxf5 26.♖g5† ♔f8 27.gxf5
White has a decisive attack.



16.b4

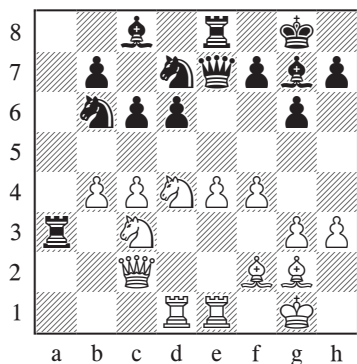
16.♙f2 ♖b6 17.b3 is just another move order.

16...axb3 17.axb3 ♖b6

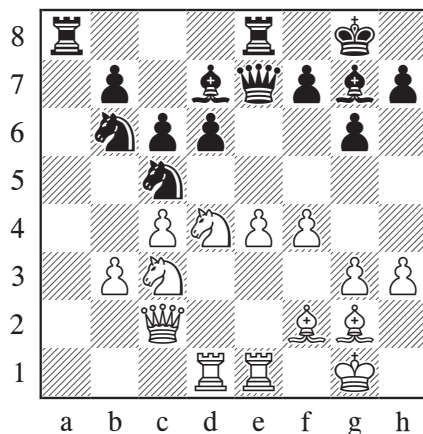
Black has succeeded in opening the a-file for his rook, but White's spatial superiority remains the defining feature of the position.

18.♙f2 ♙d7

18...♖a3 is another idea. In *GM 2* I suggested swapping off the active rook by means of ♖a1, but later I realized that White could get an even bigger advantage with the help of a familiar tactical device. 19.b4 ♖cd7 Now in Kopylov – Seifert, Internet 2004, White could have played:



20.♖cb5!!N Even without the enemy queen on c7, this idea still works beautifully. 20...cxb5 21.♖xb5 ♖a6 22.♖xd6 ♖f8 23.e5 White has an overwhelming advantage.



19.♖f3!

White has achieved a model arrangement of his pieces. Black has to worry about several ideas, including ♙xc5, b3-b4 and e4-e5.

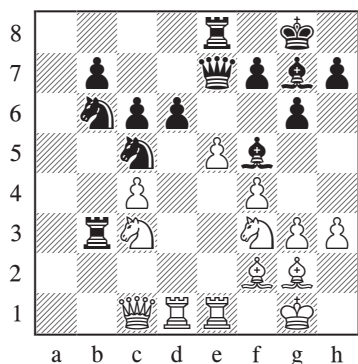
19...♖a3

19...♙e6 gives White a pleasant choice: 20.♙xc5 dxc5 21.e5 offers a positional advantage, but 20.g4!± is stronger still.

20.♖b1!

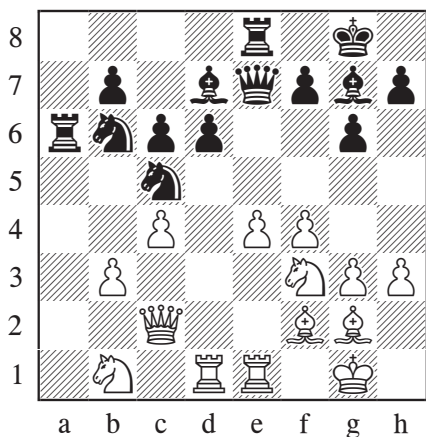
This seems like the cleanest and most accurate move.

Previously I evaluated 20.e5!? as clearly better for White. This is essentially true, but there are some tricky tactical details. The critical line continues: 20...♙f5 (20...dxe5? 21.♖xe5 ♙f5 22.♖c1+– was awful for Black in Greenfeld – Koneru, Lippstadt 2004) 21.♖c1 ♖xb3



22.exd6 (22.♖xd6 allows 22...♘d3!) 22...♗d8
 23.♙xe8† ♔xe8 24.♘d4 ♙xd4 25.♙xd4 ♘d3
 26.♗a1 c5 27.♙f6 This line was given by Stohl
 in his annotations to the aforementioned
 game, and it was subsequently tested, with
 White going on to win in Liedtke – Solf, email
 2007.

20...♖a6



21.g4!

Black suffers from a total lack of counterplay.

21...♙c8 22.e5!

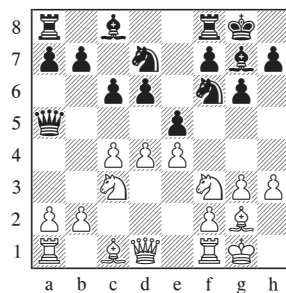
White had an obvious advantage and went
 on to win convincingly in Sanner – A. Volkov,
 email 2012.

Conclusion

8...c6 is a massively important move which
 can lead to various position types after our
 chosen 9.h3. The sideline 9...a6 is not so
 bad, as long as Black follows up solidly with
 ...♖e8, rather than the hasty ...b5, which
 allows White to destroy his central structure
 with c4-c5. The main subject of the chapter
 was 9...♖e8 10.♙e3, when 10...exd4 11.♘xd4
 reaches the thematic pawn structure for this
 line. We looked at several lines, each with its
 own nuances, but the general picture is clear:
 if White gets a chance to develop his pieces on
 the ideal squares with ♗c2, ♖ad1 and ♖fe1,
 he will invariably stand better, especially after
 following up with f2-f4, ♙f2 (ensuring full
 support for the e4-pawn) and perhaps ♘f3
 and/or g3-g4. The onus is on Black to find
 some way of disrupting White's plan, and my
 analysis indicates that he will struggle to do so.

Chapter 14

King's Indian



9...♔a5

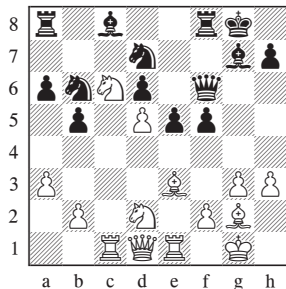
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6
6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♔a5

10.♞e1

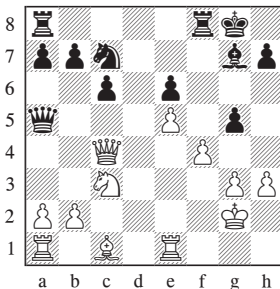
A) 10...♞b4	262
B) 10...♞e8	263
C) 10...exd4 11.♘xd4	266
C1) 11...♞e8	267
C2) 11...♘e5 12.♙f1	268
C21) 12...♞b6	268
C22) 12...♙e6	269
C23) 12...♞e8 13.♙e3	270
C231) 13...c5!?	271
C232) 13...♙e6 14.♘xe6 ♞xe6 15.♔g2!	274
C2321) 15...a6	274
C2322) 15...♘ed7	275
C2323) 15...♞ae8	276

B) after 20...gxf5



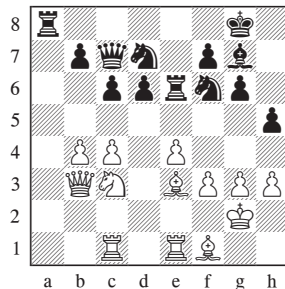
21.g4!N

C22) after 19...g5



20.fxg5!N

C2323) note to 18...♞d8



23.h4!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♖a5

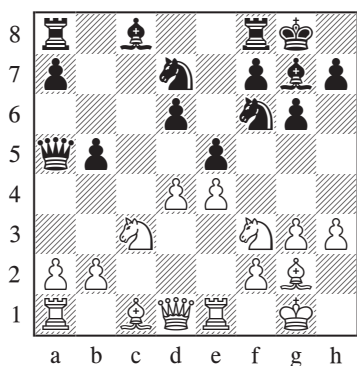
In *GM 2* I analysed this as a variation under 6...c6 and 7...♖a5, with Black following up with 8...e5 and 9...♘bd7. However, the position has more frequently appeared via the 6...♘bd7/7...e5 move order. Since my previous work was published, this variation has been debated in quite a lot of games, so now it gets its own chapter.

Why should Black develop his queen to a5 here? One possible reason is to prepare ...b5 although, as we will soon see, that plan is unlikely to bring much joy for Black. A more important factor is that the queen eyes the knight on c3. This will matter in lines where the c4-pawn comes under attack from a knight on e5 and/or a queen on b4, as White will not have b2-b3 available.

10.♙e1

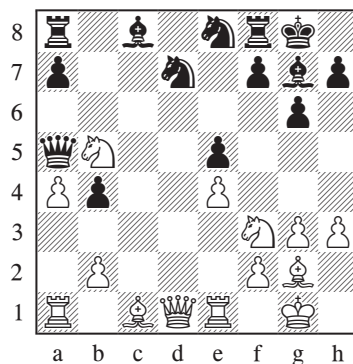
Apart from being a generally useful move, the text has the specific purpose of vacating the f1-square for the bishop. Black's three main tries are A) 10...♖b4, B) 10...♙e8 and C) 10...exd4.

10...b5?! should be met by: 11.cxb5 cxb5



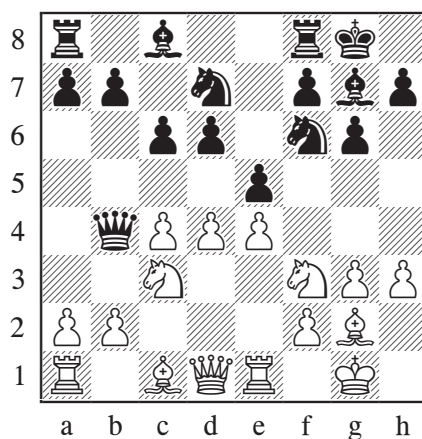
12.a4! Now it becomes clear that Black has only succeeded in weakening herself on the queenside. 12...b4 13.♘b5 ♘e8 14.dxe5 dxe5?!

(14...♘xe5N is a better try but 15.♘xe5 dxe5 16.♙e3 ♙e6 17.♖e2 ♘f6 18.♘d6! still leaves White with a pleasant advantage)



15.♙e3 a6 16.♘a7! Black already faced unsolvable problems in Dizdar – Klinova, New York 1997.

A) 10...♖b4



This is a pretty rare guest in tournament practice, but it's important to know how to deal with it.

11.♙f1

This is an important way of defending the c4-pawn, which we will encounter again later in the chapter.

11...exd4 12.♘xd4

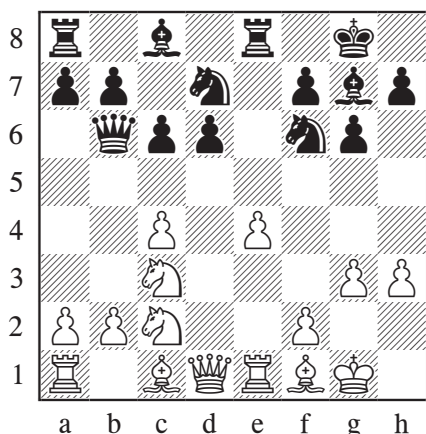
Black's queen has gone to b4 too soon, and will soon lose time retreating.

12...♞e8

12...♞e8 is too passive, and 13.a3 ♖c5 14.♙e3± was great for White in Vijayalakshmi – Son, Kuala Lumpur 2005.

After 12...♞e5 13.♞c2 ♖b6 14.♙e3 ♖c7 Black's strategy had obviously failed, and 15.f4 ♞ed7 16.♗d2 left him clearly worse in Cori Tello – Almeida Quintana, Malaga 2008.

13.♞c2 ♖b6



14.♗xd6!N

I don't understand why White refrained from capturing the pawn in the two games that reached this position. Here is my brief analysis:

14...♞c5

In the event of 14...♞h5 15.♞e3! ♞c5 16.♗d1! Black's compensation is questionable.

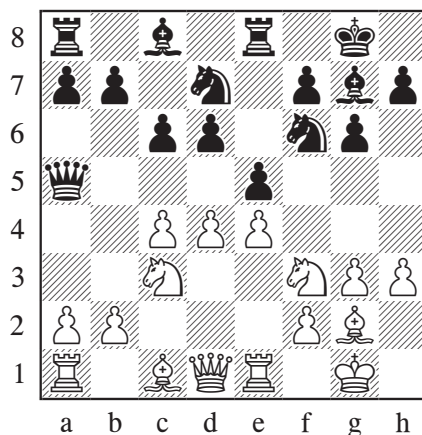
15.♗f4 a5 16.♞b1 ♞h5 17.♗f3 ♙xc3

Otherwise Black will remain a pawn down.

18.♗xc3 ♞xe4 19.♗e3

With or without queens, White will have an obvious advantage due to his bishop pair and Black's weak dark squares.

B) 10...♞e8



With this move, Black maintains the tension and hopes to lend extra power to a subsequent ...exd4.

11.d5!

11.♙e3 would work fine after 11...exd4 12.♞xd4, which transposes to variation C1 below. However, 11...♗b4! is a better reply, and after 12.♗b3 a5 Black has a good game.

Blocking the centre is the best choice. Not only does it prevent the idea mentioned above, but it also makes Black's ...♗a5 and ...♞e8 moves look pretty useless.

11...cxd5

It's hardly a good idea for Black to close the position with:

11...c5 12.a3

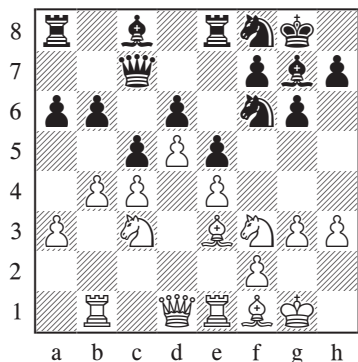
White prepares b2-b4, with an automatic initiative on the queenside. Black certainly has a solid position but he lacks any real counterplay.

12...a6 13.♞b1 ♗c7 14.♙f1!

Once again, this is a convenient way to defend the c4-pawn.

14...♞f8 15.♙e3 b6 16.b4

White's play flows easily, while it is not clear what Black can do apart from defend and hope for the best.



16...♘d7 17.♘d2

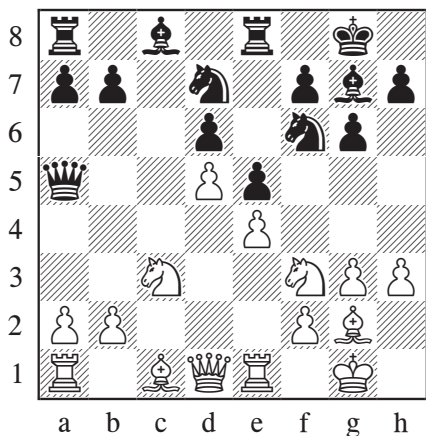
Another good example continued: 17.a4 ♖b8 18.♘d2 ♗c8 19.♙h2 ♘e8 20.♗c2 ♙f6 21.♖b3 a5 22.bxc5 bxc5 23.♘b5± Kelecevic – Baljon, Eerbeek 1978. This was the game I quoted in *GM 2*.

The exact moves don't matter too much, but it just so happens that another fine game took place more recently.

17...♙h8 18.a4 a5 19.bxc5 dxc5 20.♗f3±

White went on to win an excellent game in Grigorov – Kr. Georgiev, Achaea 2016.

12.cxd5



12...b5

12...a6?! is inferior: 13.♙e3 ♘c5 (13...b5 14.♘d2! gives White an improved version of the main line below, as he has saved a tempo

by omitting a2-a3) 14.♘d2 ♗c7 15.♙f1 b6 16.♖c1 ♗b8 17.b4 ♘cd7 18.♘c4± Portisch – Freyre, Thessaloniki (ol) 1984.

13.a3

It is essential to take measures against ...b4.

13...a6

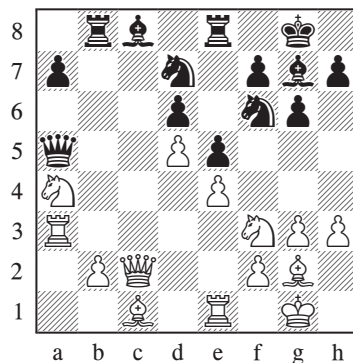
13...b4?!

This move only weakens Black's queenside, as becomes clear after:

14.♘a4! bxa3 15.♖xa3 ♖b8 16.♗c2

This was my improvement in *GM 2*, which has since been successfully tested.

I should mention that the text move, while strong, is by no means the only way to prove White's superiority. 16.♙f1!? ♘c5 17.♙d2 ♗c7 occurred in Michiels – Hausrath, Belgium 2012, and now the most convincing continuation would have been 18.♘xc5N ♗xc5 19.♙e3 ♗b4 20.♘d2!± with an obvious advantage.



16...♙a6?

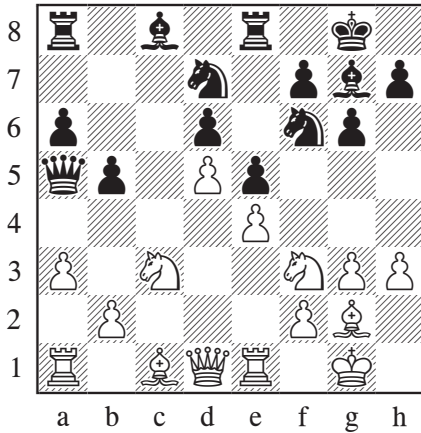
In *GM 2* I gave 16...♘b6N 17.♘c3 ♗c5 18.♙e3 ♗c7 19.♙f1 ♘d7 20.♖c1 and White keeps serious pressure on the queenside. The move played in the game quickly led to a lost position for Black after:

17.♘c3 ♗b6 18.♙e3 ♗b7

18...♘c5 allows 19.♘a4.

19.♖ea1 ♙b5 20.♖xa7+–

M. Andersen – Czebe, Budapest 2013.



14.♙e3 ♜d8 15.♘d2

Black has managed to grab some space on the queenside; on the other hand, White has several possible ways to exploit the newly created weaknesses there. This might be achieved by means of a timely a3-a4 advance, or by manoeuvring a knight towards the c6-square with ♘b3-a5 or ♘a2-b4.

15...♙b6

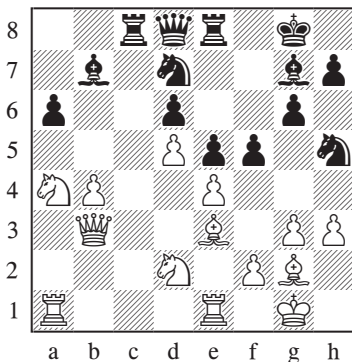
White's task is easier after:

15...♙b7?!

It is already a bad sign for Black if he feels compelled to develop this bishop to such an unfortunate place.

16.b4 ♜c8 17.♗b3 ♘h5 18.a4 bxa4 19.♘xa4 f5?!

In M. Grabarczyk – Bastian, Germany 2006, White overlooked an attractive tactical solution:

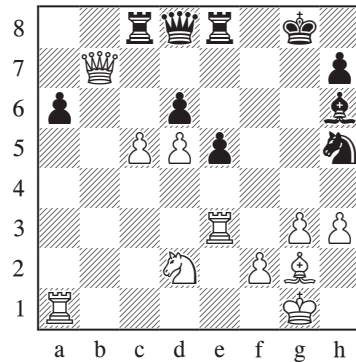


20.exf5N gxf5 21.♙c5! ♘xc5

21...dxc5? 22.d6† c4 23.♙xc4 ♙xg2 24.♙xe5† wins easily.

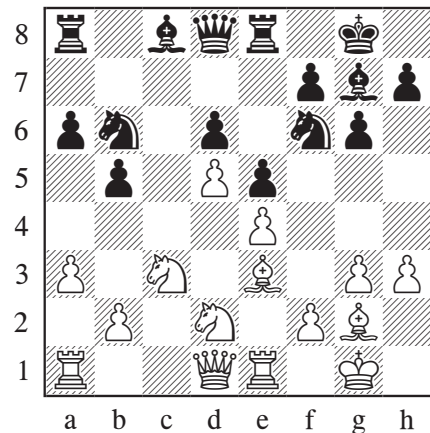
22.bxc5 f4 23.♗xb7 fxe3 24.♙xe3 ♙h6

24...♙xc5 25.♙e4 ♙b5 26.♗xa6 leaves White with a healthy extra pawn and a winning position.



25.♙e4! ♙xc5 26.fxe3 dxc5 27.♗f1 ♙f8 28.d6+–

Despite being the exchange down with limited material on the board, White is completely winning as his pieces dominate their black counterparts.

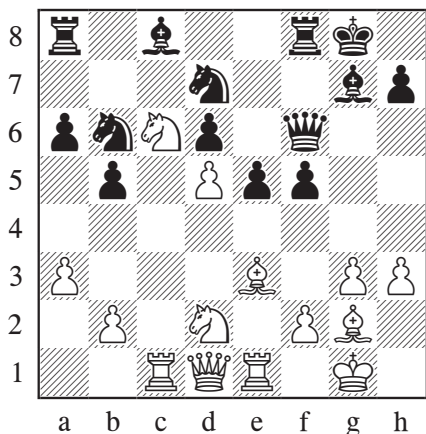


16.♙c1 ♙f8 17.♙a2!

In this position the plan of invading on c6 works well.

17...♙fd7 18.♙b4 f5 19.♙c6 ♗f6 20.exf5 gxf5

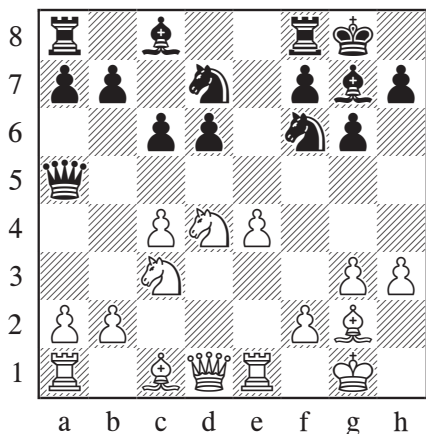
In Ivkov – Minic, Vinkovci 1968, Black was able to carry out the thematic ...f5, but this is not enough to solve his problems after the following improvement:



21.g4!N

This resolute move leaves White's advantage in no doubt. He will soon conquer the crucial e4-square, leaving Black with a lot of problems to solve.

C) 10...exd4 11.♘xd4



This central exchange takes us to another branching point, C1) 11...♞e8 and C2) 11...♞e5 being the main options. Alternatives are inferior, although of course we will check them all the same:

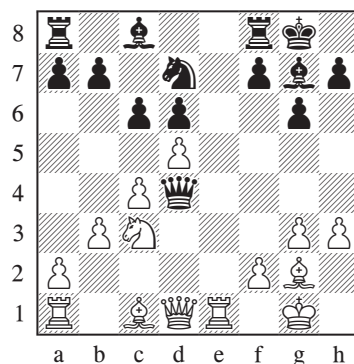
11...♞b4 gives White a choice: 12.♞c2!? ♞xc4 13.♞xd6 should lead to an edge, but the simplest option for our purposes is 12.♞f1, which takes us back to variation A.

11...♞c5 has seldom been played, so it's not surprising that no one found the strongest reply: 12.♞f4!N ♞d8 13.♞b3! ♞xb3 14.axb3 ♞c7 15.♞d3 White enjoys a pleasant space advantage.

11...♞c5 12.b3 ♞d5?

In my mind, it's absolutely clear that such an idea cannot work well for Black when he is behind in development.

13.exd5 ♞xd4



14.♞d2!N

It is not a great pleasure for Black to defend the endgame which arises after 14.♞b2 ♞xd1 15.♞axd1 c5, as in Jasnikowski – Foygel, Moscow 1991, but the text move is even stronger.

14...cxd5

In the event of 14...♞e5 15.♞c1! it is not easy to find a reasonable move for Black, for instance: 15...♞f5 16.g4 ♞d7 17.♞e2 ♞b6 18.♞e3 ♞c7 19.f4±

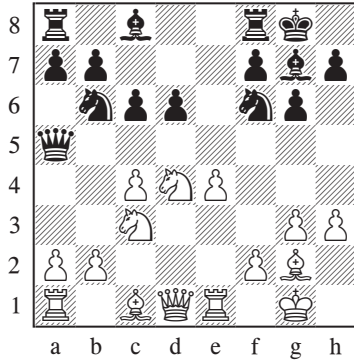
15.♞xd5±

Previously I awarded 15.♞xd5 a '!!' mark but, while it's true that White has more than enough compensation after 15...♞xa1 16.♞xa1 ♞xa1 17.♞xa1, there is no need to give up material. The text move is both simpler

and objectively stronger; White has a large advantage and we can move on.

11...♘b6

This is conveniently met by:



12.♙f1 ♜e8

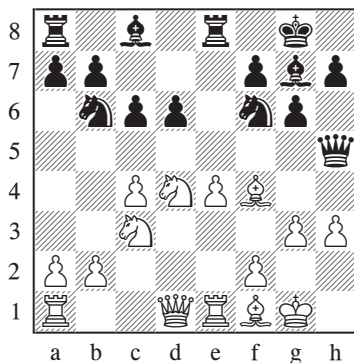
12...♗h5 may be the lesser evil, but 13.♙e3!N ♗xd1 14.♙axd1± obviously gives White a pleasant game.

13.♙f4

13.♖b1!? is a reasonable alternative but the text move is more ambitious.

13...♗h5

Against 13...♙e6 I have a small improvement over my *GM 2* analysis: 14.♘xe6N ♜xe6 15.♖b1! The position resembles the later variation C232, where Black also gives up his light-squared bishop. Here White has a significantly improved version, as Black has no serious counterplay or tactical resources. The text move was played in Theulings – Reinderman, Enschede 1990. Here I have another amendment over my previous work:



14.♘b3!?N

Previously I suggested 14.g4!?N and remarked that 14...♘xg4 would not give Black enough compensation. This may be technically accurate, but a lot of practical challenges would remain.

The text move seems like a simpler solution. Here is an illustrative line:

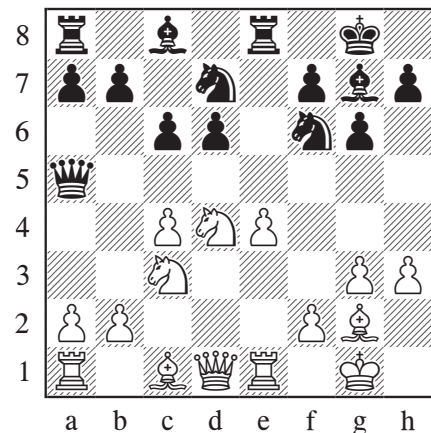
14...♙xh3

The critical try, but White is well placed to deal with it.

15.♗xh5 ♘xh5 16.♙xh3 ♘xf4 17.gxf4 ♘xc4 18.♙f1 ♘xb2 19.♙ac1

White's extra piece is more valuable than Black's three pawns.

C1) 11...♜e8



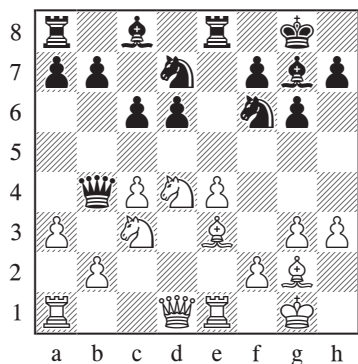
This has been played in a lot of games but it usually just transposes to the big main line covered later in the chapter.

12.♙e3 ♘b6?!

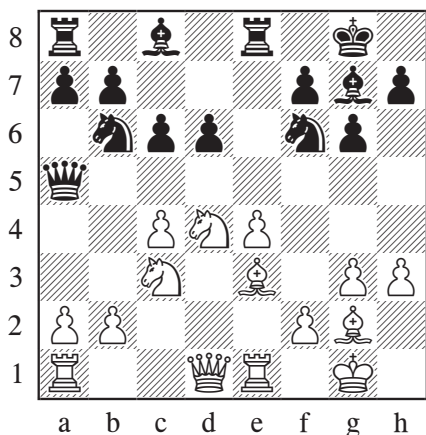
12...♘e5 is by far the most common move, but 13.♙f1 immediately transposes to variation C23.

12...♘c5?! is essentially refuted by: 13.♘b3! ♘xb3 (13...♗a6 14.♗xd6 also wins a pawn for nothing) 14.axb3 ♗c7 15.♙xa7! White won a pawn in Zueger – Perez Nivar, Malta (ol) 1980, and a few subsequent games.

12...♖b4?! is also a mistake in view of: 13.a3!



Black has no choice but to retreat with 13...♗a5, since both pawns are untouchable. (Both 13...♗xb2 14.♘a4+- and 13...♗xc4 14.♙f1+- see Black lose his queen.) 14.b4 ♗c7 15.♙c1 White was much better in Vladimirov – Savon, Baku 1961.



13.c5!

This cute trick leads to a clear advantage.

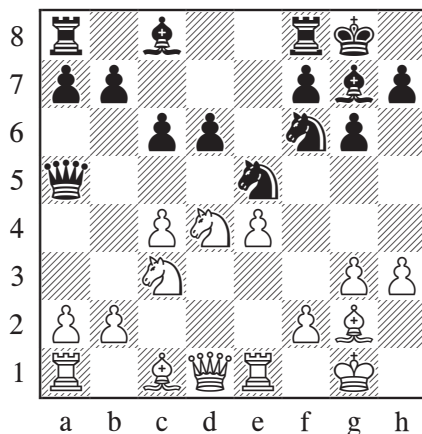
13...♘c4

13...dxc5 allows White to gain several tempos attacking Black's queen: 14.♘b3 ♗a6 15.♘xc5 ♗a5 16.♗c2 ♘c4 17.♙d4+

14.♘b3 ♗d8 15.cxd6 ♘xd6 16.♙d4 ♘c4 17.♗c2 ♙e6 18.♙ad1 ♗e7 19.f4 ♘b6 20.♘c5

White was clearly better in Polugaevsky – Uhlmann, Amsterdam 1972.

C2) 11...♘e5



12.♙f1

White defends the c4-pawn in the usual way for the present chapter. We will analyse C21) 12...♗b6, C22) 12...♙e6 and C23) 12...♙e8.

C21) 12...♗b6

This has been a rare choice but it has some tricky points.

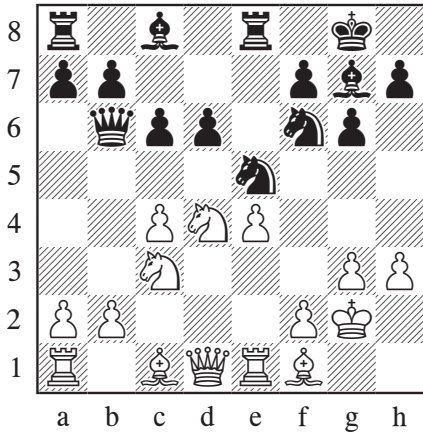
13.♙g2!

This improves on my previous recommendation.

In *GM 2* I gave 13.♙e3 c5 14.♘c2 but overlooked that Black can get away with the risky-looking 14...♗xb2. The key line continues 15.♘a4 ♘f3+ 16.♙h1 ♗e5 17.♗xf3 ♗xe4 18.♗xe4 ♘xe4 when Black can follow up with ...♙d7, regaining the piece. All this happened in M. Santos – Prakash, corr. 2017, which was subsequently drawn.

13...♙e8

Black chose this move in both of the existing games. Here I found a natural improvement:



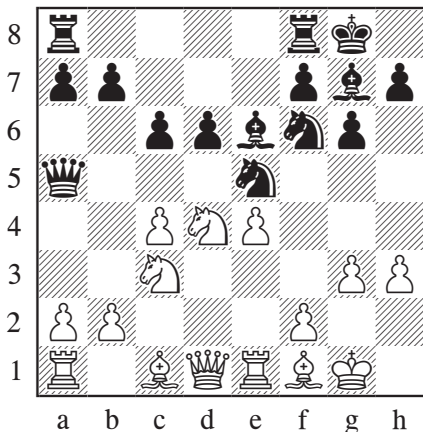
14.♙e3!N ♖c7

This time the pawn really is poisoned: 14...♖xb2? 15.♘a4 ♖b4 16.♙d2 ♗a3 17.♞e3 and the queen is caught.

15.f4 ♘ed7 16.♙f2

White has clearly got the better of the opening, as he has consolidated his space advantage and successfully driven Black's pieces back.

C22) 12...♙e6



This is quite a popular alternative to the main line. Once again, I decided on a change of direction for White.

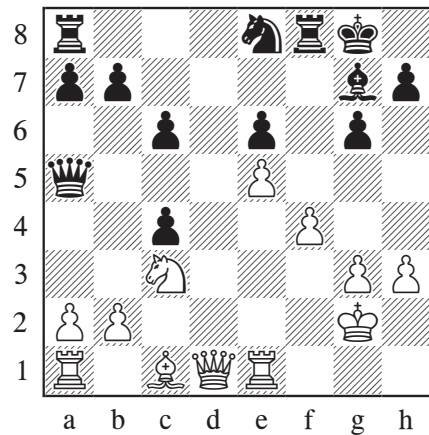
13.f4!?

Previously I recommended 13.♘e6 fxe6 14.♙e3 ♞ad8 15.f4 ♘f7 and, although White can fight for an edge here, I like the text move even more.

13...♘xc4 14.♘e6 fxe6 15.♔g2

Avoiding a check on c5. White's pawn sacrifice is only temporary, and the next few moves are virtually forced.

15...d5 16.e5 ♘e8 17.♙xc4 dxc4



18.♖e2!

This is an important nuance in the move order.

18.♗d4 has been the most common choice but 18...b5! (rather than the older 18...♘c7), is a good reply, which was first seen in Esen – Grigore, Ankara 2010.

18...♘c7N

Improving the knight is a natural move so I will take it as my main line.

18...b5? is no good here due to 19.♘e4 ♘c7 20.♙d2 ♗b6 21.♙b4 ♞f7 22.♙c5 and White is much better.

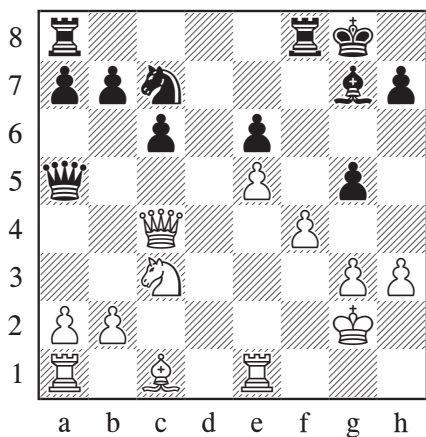
18...♗b4?! occurred in Golubovic – Saric, Kastav 2001, when 19.♙e3N b6 20.♞ad1± would have led to White's clear advantage.

19. ♖xc4

This position has arisen in three games via the 18. ♖d4 move order, when Black responded with 18... ♖c7 rather than the stronger 18... b5!.

19... g5

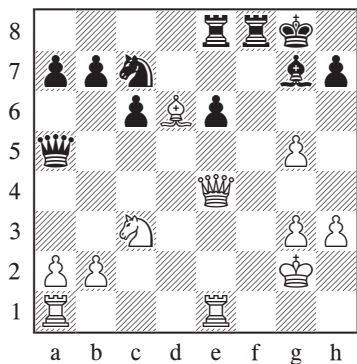
19... ♖d5 occurred in Ruck – Ivanisevic, Topola 2004, when 20. ♖d2! N ♖b4 21. ♖xb4 ♖xb4 22. ♖e2± would have reached a pleasant endgame for White.

**20. fxg5! N**

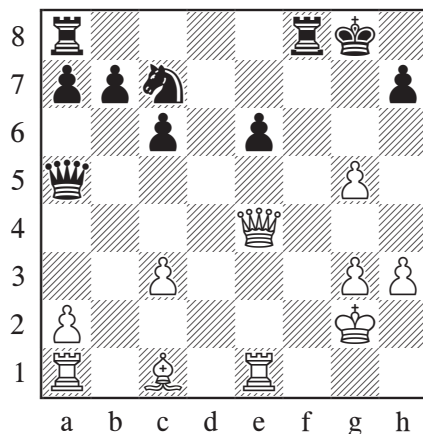
This is an important improvement over 20. b4 ♖a6 21. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 22. b5 ♖b4 23. ♖a3, as played in Ki. Georgiev – Ivanisevic, Topola 2004, when 23... c5! N would have been highly unclear.

20... ♖xe5 21. ♖e4 ♖xc3

21... ♖g7 22. ♖f4 ♖ae8 23. ♖d6 is also promising for White, for instance:



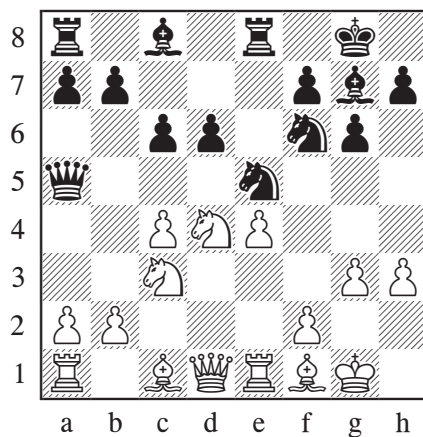
23... ♖f7 24. g6 hxg6 25. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 26. ♖xg6 With a clear positional advantage.

22. bxc3**22... ♖f5**

22... ♖xc3?! is worse in view of 23. ♖b1 b6 24. g6 ♖g7 25. ♖xc6 hxg6 26. ♖b2± and Black is under considerable pressure. The text move threatens a check on f2 but White can safely ignore it while consolidating his kingside with:

23. h4! ♖ad8 24. ♖b1±

White's bishop is stronger than the enemy knight, and he has better chances than Black to exploit the enemy pawn weaknesses.

C23) 12... ♖e8

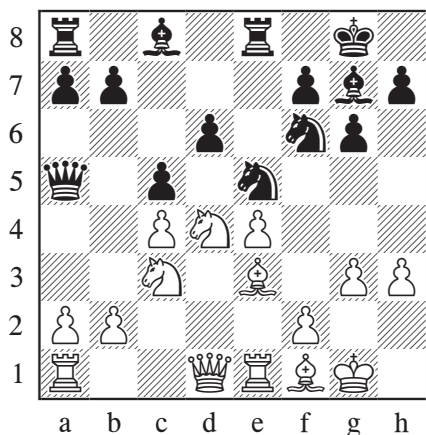
13.♙e3

13.♖b1 is a serious alternative but I will stick with my previous recommendation, which has remained White's most popular choice.

We will analyse the following options:
C231) 13...c5!? and **C232) 13...♙e6.**

13...♗xe4?? 14.♗xe4 ♗xc4 15.♙f4 ♗e5 16.♗xd6+ – was a disaster for Black in Xiong – Morovic Fernandez, Varadero 2016.

13...a6 has been tried in a few games, but 14.f4 ♗ed7 15.♙f2 ♖c7 16.♙g2 left White in control in Kojima – Bhakti, Bangkok 2014.

C231) 13...c5!?

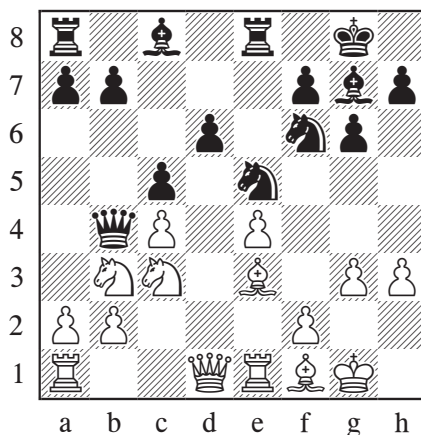
This move is positionally risky, but Black hopes to generate enough dynamic counterplay to justify the newly created weaknesses. It has been tested by some strong players, and was recommended by GM Bojkov in *Modernized: The King's Indian Defense*.

14.♗b3

The main idea of Black's previous move is that White cannot play 14.♗db5? due to the nice tactical blow 14...♗xe4! 15.♗xe4 ♖xe1.

14...♖b4

The passive 14...♖d8?! would be a clear concession; after the further 15.f4 ♗c6 16.♙f2 a6 17.♖d2 ♙e6 18.♖ad1 ♙f8 19.♗h2± White was clearly better in Fressinet – Piscopo, Grosseto Prugna 2015.

**15.a3!**

15.♖xd6 ♗f3† 16.♗h1 ♗xe1 17.♙xc5 ♖xc3! 18.bxc3 ♗xe4 reaches a crazy position where Black seems to be fine.

I suggested the text move as a novelty in *GM 2*. Since then, it has been tested in more than forty games!

15...♖b6

I also analysed:

15...♗f3† 16.♖xf3 ♖xb3 17.♖ad1 ♙e6

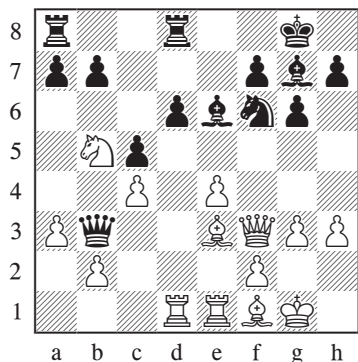
I did not consider this move in *GM 2*, but it was tried in a subsequent game.

17...♖xb2? is clearly inferior in view of 18.♗b5!.

17...♙e6N can be met by 18.♙f4 ♗e8 19.♖d2 with an obvious positional edge for White.

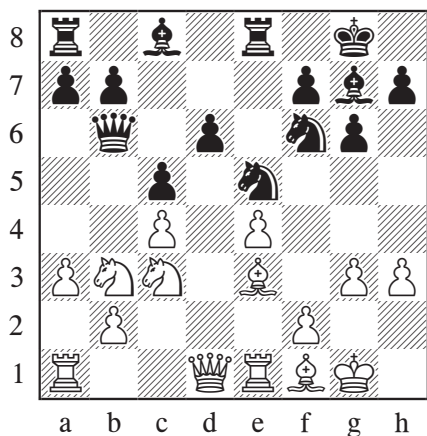
18.♗b5 ♖ed8

In Vidit – Wan Yunguo, Ho Chi Minh City 2012, White should have played:



19.♖c7N ♜ac8 20.♗xe6 fxe6 21.♞e2 ♞a4 22.h4+

Followed by ♗h3, with an excellent position.

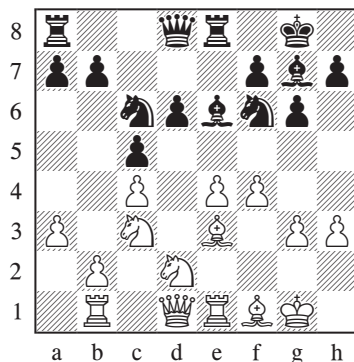


16.♗d2 ♗c6

I did not consider this move in *GM 2*, but it seems to have emerged as Black's most important try. Black abandons the attack on the c4-pawn in order to focus on the central dark squares.

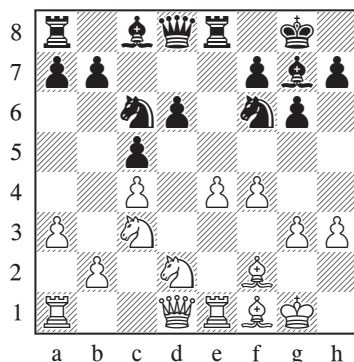
Black lost his queen after 16...♞xb2? 17.♗a4+— in Amanov – Denny, Bridgetown 2014.

16...♗e6 17.♞b1 also leads to a clear edge for White. 17...♞d8 18.f4 ♗c6 occurred in Diermair – Grandelius, Aix les Bains 2011, when White should have played:



19.g4!N ♗d4 20.♗f3 ♗xf3+ 21.♞xf3 With a positional advantage.

16...♞d8 is another move which I did not consider in *GM 2*, but has been tested in several games since. 17.f4 ♗c6 18.♗f2! looks natural and strong for White. I found a couple of games, which continued:

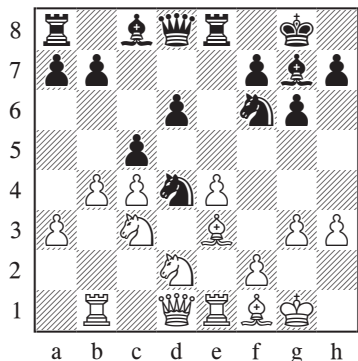


18...b6 (18...h5 19.♗f3 a6 20.♞c2 ♗e6 21.♞ad1± was clearly better for White in Jakovljevic – Marjanovic, Sarajevo 2013) 19.♗g2 ♗b7 Now in Stefansson – Plischki, Teplice 2014, the simple 20.♗f3N would have secured a clear positional advantage for White.

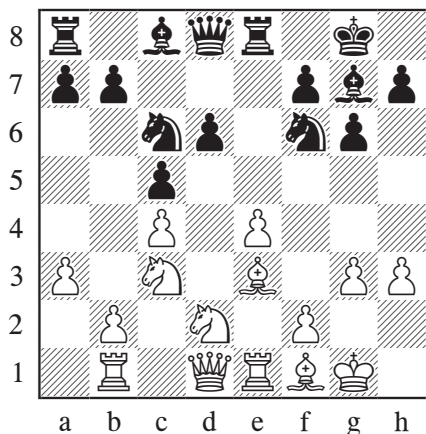
17.♞b1 ♞d8

This is the usual move. The queen has no further business on the queenside, and was nothing more than a target on b6.

17...♘d4?! is premature. 18.b4 ♗d8 occurred in Ramirez – Bojkov, Richardson 2011, and here Bojkov points out the following improvement in his book:



19.♙g2!N± White has the simple plan of ♘b3 to exchange Black's strong knight, followed by attacking the d6-pawn. Moreover, it is hard for Black to develop his light-squared bishop, so his position is quite unpleasant.



18.f4!

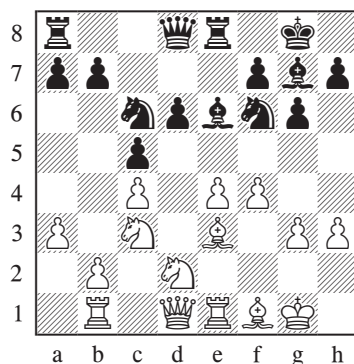
18.♙g2 has been the most popular choice so far. Bojkov focuses on this move, and I must confess it was also the first option I investigated. However, 18...♙e6 19.f4 h5! gave Black reasonable play in Brunello – Skoberne, Porto Carras 2011.

The text move is an important nuance, and is not mentioned by Bojkov. Eventually I realized

that it is more accurate to leave the bishop on f1, as it still has some purpose in defending the c4-pawn. The importance of this can be seen in the lines that follow.

18...♘d4

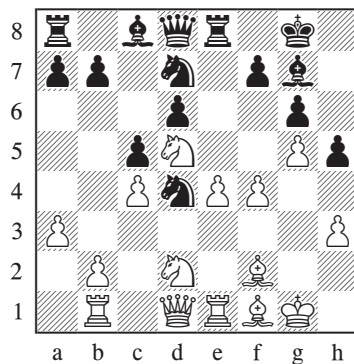
18...♙e6N is a natural move which transposes to a game, Diermaier – Grandelius, Aix les Bains 2011. White should have reacted with:



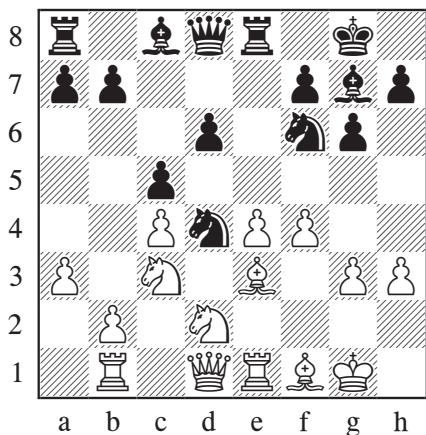
19.♙f2! White has a strong position and is ready to meet 19...h5 with 20.♘f3, utilizing the fact that the bishop on f1 defends the c4-pawn.

18...h5N should also be met by 19.♙f2 intending ♘f3, with a similar type of position.

18...♘h5?! 19.g4 ♘f6 was tried in one game, but losing two tempos to provoke g3-g4 is hardly a good idea for Black. 20.♙f2 h5 21.g5 ♘d7 22.♘d5 ♘d4 occurred in Pohjosmaki – L.H. Hansen, corr. 2012, when White have continued:



23. ♖f3! Nxf3† 24. ♖xf3 With a pleasant edge.



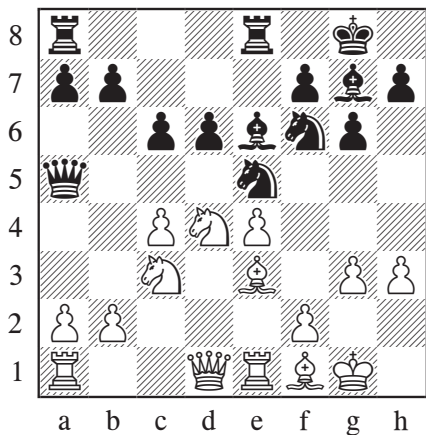
19. ♕f2!

Again we see this move, preparing ♖f3.

19...a6 20. ♖f3 ♖xf3† 21. ♖xf3±

White was clearly better in M. Andersen – Hagen, Denmark 2013.

C232) 13... ♕e6



This remains Black's most popular move by some margin.

14. ♖xe6 ♖xe6 15. ♖g2!

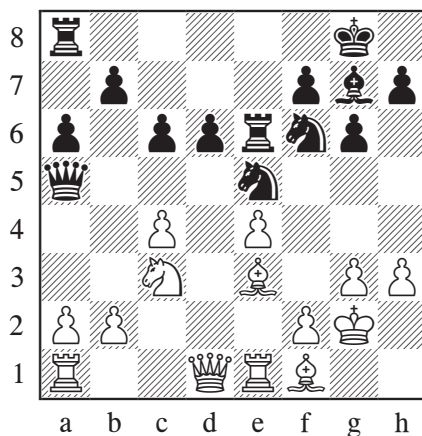
White has to take control over the f3-square, in order to defend against the tactical threat of

15... ♖xe4! 16. ♖xe4 ♖xe1! based on the fork on f3.

We have reached a final branching point where C2321) 15...a6, C2322) 15... ♖ed7 and C2323) 15... ♖ae8 all require attention.

C2321) 15...a6

I recommend meeting this move with the following thematic sacrifice.



16.c5!?

White gives up a pawn in order to mobilize his f- and e-pawns. If he can get them to f4 and e5, he will gain the excellent e4-square for his knight.

16...dxc5

After 16... ♖d8 White gets a pleasant position by simple means: 17.cxd6 ♖xd6 De Jager – Bosboom, Haarlem 2016. Now 18. ♖a4!±N would be my choice, although 18. ♖c2N also offers White a nice edge.

17.f4 ♖d8

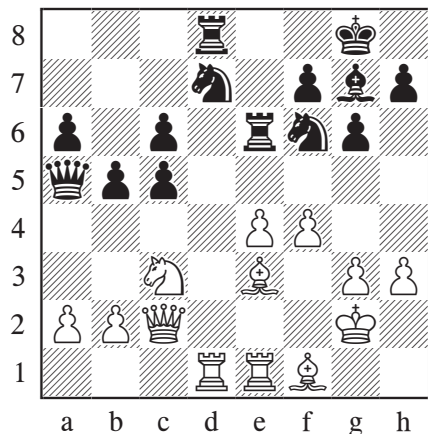
17... ♖b4? is a strange and unnecessary sacrifice. 18.fxe5N (18. ♕f2 yielded some advantage in Marin – Grigore, Galati 2006, but I see no reason to refrain from capturing the piece capture) 18... ♖xb2† 19. ♖e2 ♖xc3

20.exf6 ♖xf6 21.♖c1 Despite the approximate material balance, White's position is close to winning.

18.♖c2 ♜ed7 19.♞ad1 b5

19...♞de8 occurred in a recent game, when 20.♙f2!N would have been the right way to prepare ♙c4 and/or e4-e5. (Instead 20.♙c4 ♞6e7 21.e5 was played in Elguezabal Varela – Moreno Ruiz, Madrid 2016, when 21...b5!N would have been rather unclear.)

19...♞ee8N is another idea, but 20.♙f2 is still a good move which offers White the better chances.



20.♙f2!N

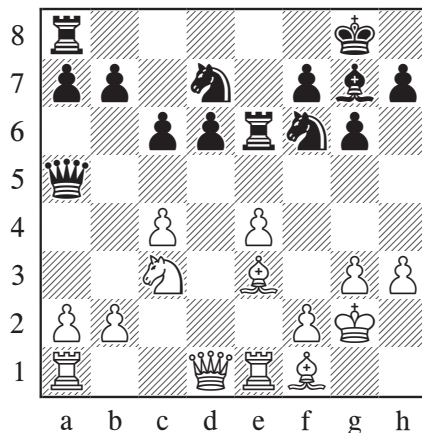
White should make this final preparatory move before carrying out the e4-e5 advance.

20.e5 ♜d5 21.♜xd5 cxd5 22.♞xd5?? ♖xe1 was the unfortunate continuation of Schachinger – Albadri, Vienna 2010, which shows exactly why the text move is needed.

20...♜e8 21.e5♞

White has great compensation for the pawn.

C2322) 15...♜ed7



16.f3

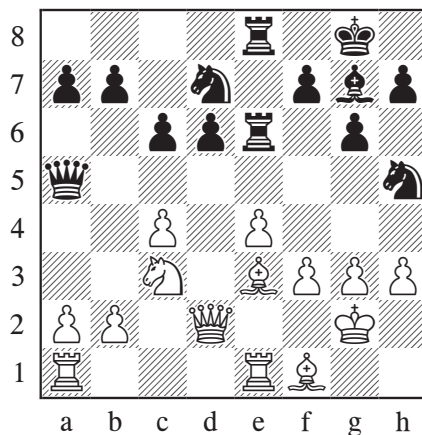
White is obliged to protect his central pawn, since 16.♞b1 ♜xe4 17.♜xe4 ♞xe4 18.♖xd6 ♜f8 is fine for Black.

16...♜h5

16...♞ae8 17.♞b1 would transpose to variation C2323 below.

17.♖d2 ♞ae8

17...♙e5 was met strongly by 18.g4! ♜hf6 19.♞ed1 ♜c5 20.♜e2 ♖c7 21.♞ab1 a5 22.b3 and White controlled everything in Greiner – Guevara Pijoan, corr. 2012.



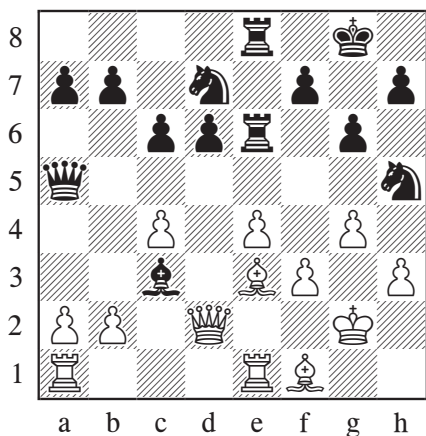
18.g4!

I see no reason to refrain from this space-gaining move.

18...♟xc3?

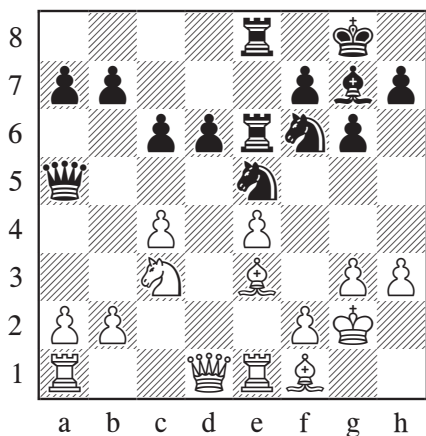
Black should prefer the modest 18...♞hf6N, after which 19.♞ab1 ♞c7 20.b4± leaves White with slightly better chances.

In Borisenko – Petersons, Kiev 1964, White missed the following simple idea.



19.♞xc3!N ♞xc3 20.bxc3 ♞hf6 21.♟xa7!

White wins a pawn.

C2323) 15...♞ae8**16.♞b1!?**

I commented in *GM 2* that this move was the fourth choice according to theory. Today it is by far the most popular move in the position.

16...♞ed7

Unblocking the e-file has been Black's usual reply.

The other main idea is:

16...a6 17.b4 ♞c7 18.♞c1

White is not yet ready for 18.c5 due to 18...d5! and Black was okay in Vaganian – Smejkal, Germany 1997, the main point of the last move being that White cannot win a pawn by taking twice on d5 due to the ...♞c6 pin.

18...♞b8

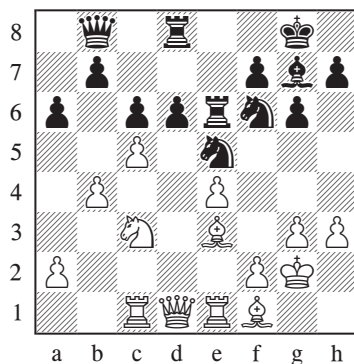
18...♞ed7 19.f3 transposes to 18...♞c7 19.♞c1 in the note to Black's 18th move in the main line below.

19.c5!

Now ...d5 is not a viable reply because Black lacks the vital ...♞c6 trick.

19...♞d8

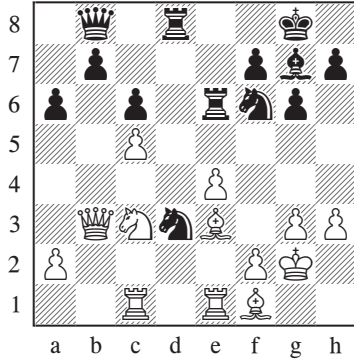
This was Ivanchuk – Radjabov, Nice (blindfold) 2009, and here I found a small improvement for White:



20.♞b3!N dxc5

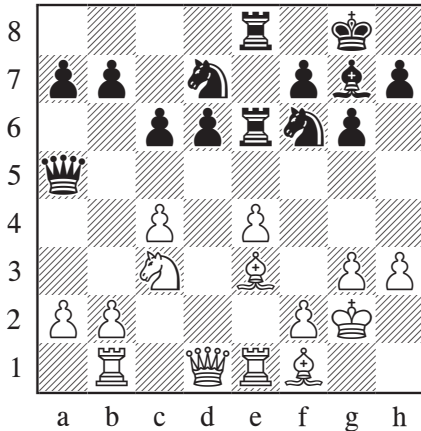
I also checked 20...d5 21.exd5 ♞xd5 22.♞xd5 cxd5 (Black's problem is that

22...♖xd5 runs into 23.f4! followed by 24.♙c4) 23.♖cd1± and White remains on top.
21.bxc5 ♖d3



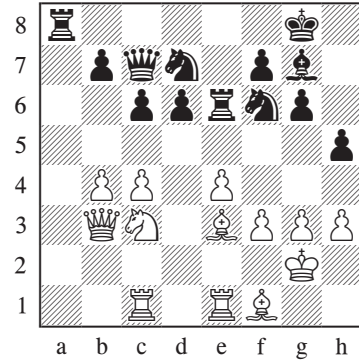
22.♙xd3 ♖xd3 23.♖cd1 ♖d7 24.f3±

White's pawn majority is obviously more potent than Black's.

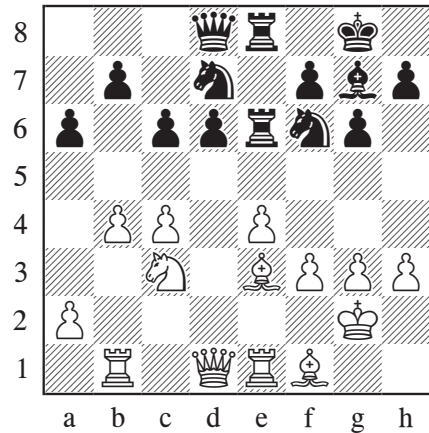


17.f3 a6 18.b4 ♖d8

18...♖c7 is also possible. I like 19.♖c1, immediately placing the rook opposite the enemy queen. The only game from this position continued: 19...a5 20.a3 axb4 21.axb4 ♖a8 22.♖b3 h5 Now in Vidit – Thipsay, Aurangabad 2011, White should have continued:

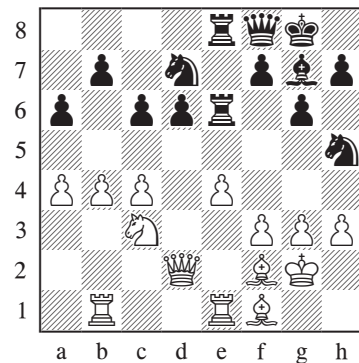


23.h4!N ♖e5 24.♙e2± With a positional edge.



19.♖d2 h5

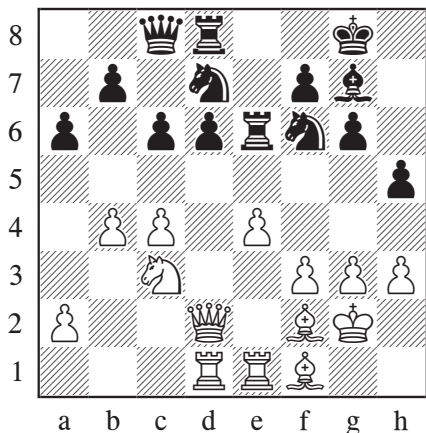
Another nice example continued: 19...♖e7 20.♙f2 ♖f8 21.a4 ♖h5



22.♖e2! f5 23.exf5 gxf5 24.♖d4 ♖xe1 25.♖xe1 ♖xe1 26.♖xe1± White kept a solid advantage in Izoria – D. Popovic, Chalkidiki 2001.

20.♖bd1!

I believe this move is stronger than the immediate 20.c5, which I recommended in *GM 2*. White can afford not to rush.

20...♜c8 21.♘f2 ♜d8**22.c5!**

Now White is much better prepared for this thematic break.

22...dxc5 23.bxc5 ♜ee8 24.♜e3±

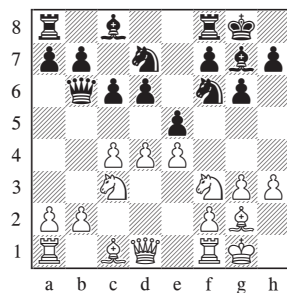
White maintained a clear positional advantage in Mercadal Benejam – Rubio Doblas, corr. 2011.

Conclusion

9...♜a5 is a tricky move which can give rise to a number of tactical motifs, many of which are not found in other parts of our repertoire. 10.♞e1 is a good move, the importance of which becomes clear after the main line of 10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♘e5, when 12.♘f1 is the best way to defend the c4-pawn. It is important for White to be vigilant, especially in light of Black's tactical possibilities involving the pseudo-queen-sac ...♜xe1! followed by ...♘f3†. Several of the untested or rare moves which I recommended in *GM 2* have since been taken over as the main lines, so I have been able to update and improve my analysis significantly. The general conclusion is the same: if White navigates the opening correctly, he will have excellent prospects.

Chapter 15

King's Indian



9...♔b6

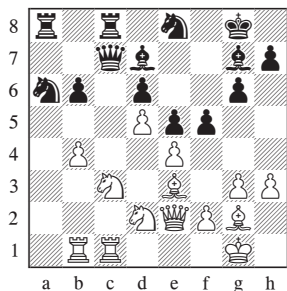
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♔g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6
6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♖b6

10.♖e1

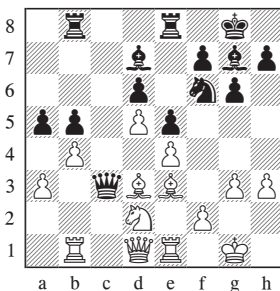
A) 10...♖e8 11.d5 ♘c5 12.♖b1	280
A1) 12...cxd5?!	280
A2) 12...a5	282
B) 10...exd4 11.♘xd4	285
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A1) note to 15...♖ec8



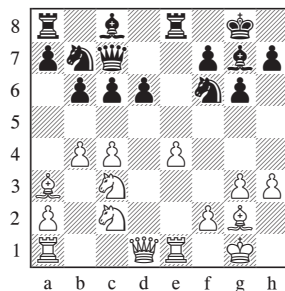
22.exf5!N

A2) after 19...♖xc3



20.♘b3!N

B33) note to 13...♘h5!



16.b5!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3
d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♖b6

This is the most popular and challenging move, and the one I have always been most cautious about facing.

10.♞e1

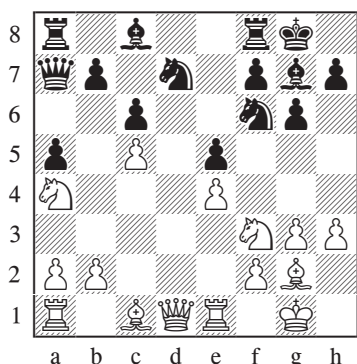
This was my recommendation in *GM 2* and I still believe it to be White's most promising continuation.

10.c5!? is the most interesting alternative, with the main line continuing 10...dxc5 11.dxe5 ♘e8 12.e6 fxe6, but I failed to discover any advantage for White.

We will analyse A) 10...♞e8 followed by the main line of B) 10...cxd4.

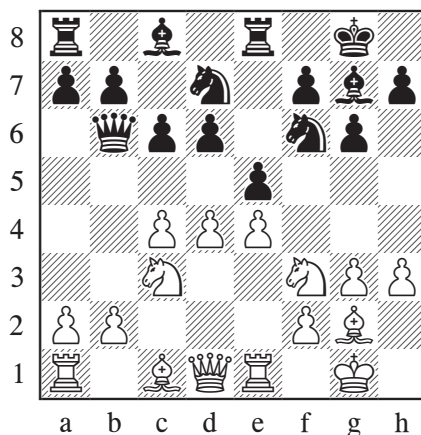
10...♖b4 transposes to variation A of the previous chapter.

The waiting move 10...a5?! is not really a serious option, as White has a strong idea at his disposal: 11.c5! dxc5 12.♘a4 ♖a7 (12...♖c7 13.dxc5± reached a structure which surely caused Black to regret his 10th move in Novikov – Timoshin, St Petersburg 2001) 13.dxc5



13...♘xc5 Black tries to complicate matters, but it doesn't bring him any relief. 14.♙e3 ♘fd7 15.♘xc5 ♘xc5 16.♖d6 b6 17.♘xe5± White had a substantial advantage in Bell – Littlewood, England 1997.

A) 10...♞e8



11.d5

This advance is well timed, since neither the queen on b6 nor the rook on e8 is well placed in the ensuing pawn structure.

11...♘c5

11...cxd5?! 12.cxd5 hardly leaves Black with anything better than 12...♘c5, when 13.♖b1 leads to variation A1 below.

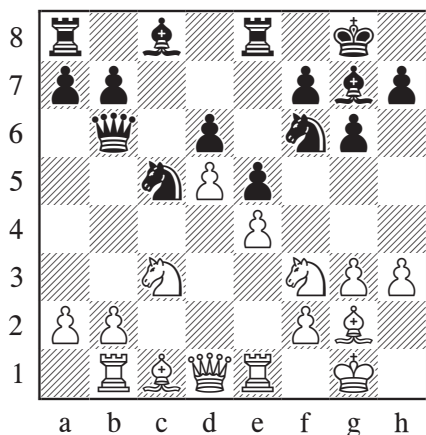
11...c5 leads to a blocked position where Black's pieces are even more misplaced, allowing White to get a pleasant edge: 12.a3 ♖f8 13.♙e3 ♖d8 14.♘d2 b6 15.♖b1 a6 16.b4± Timman – Day, Haifa (ol) 1976.

12.♖b1

It is worth considering A1) 12...cxd5?! and A2) 12...a5.

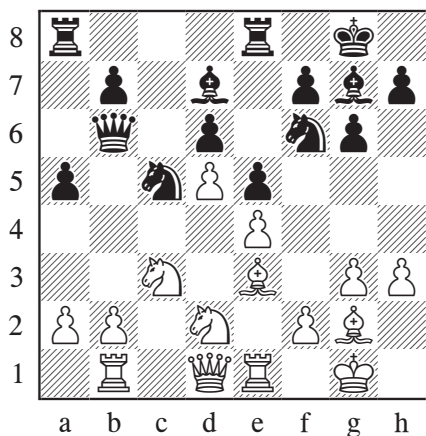
A1) 12...cxd5?! 13.cxd5

This position has been reached in numerous games, but Black should avoid exchanging on d5 so soon. Now White will benefit from the use of the c4-square for his knight in many lines.



13...a5 14.♙e3 ♗d7 15.♘d2

With the last two moves, White succeeded in deploying his pieces on their optimal squares. The light-squared bishop might prove useful on f1 as well. Compared to *GM 2*, I have slightly expanded the analysis of this line, but the general assessment is the same: the early exchange on d5 has given White an easier version of variation A2 below.



15...♞ec8

This seems like the most natural idea for Black.

In *GM 2* I presented the following model game:

15...♞c7 16.♞e2

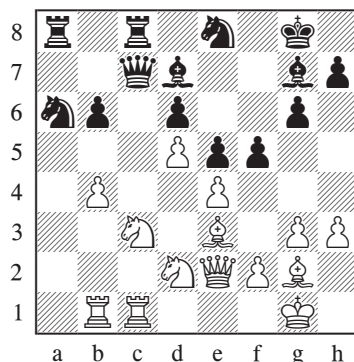
16.♙f1 is a worthy alternative which has also scored heavily.

16...♞ec8 17.♞e1 ♘e8 18.b3

White prepares to drive the knight away from c5.

18...b6 19.a3 f5 20.b4 axb4 21.axb4 ♘a6

Here I improved upon Fridman – Lykinov, Marijampole 1996, with:



22.exf5! N gxf5 23.♘f3! ♞d8

White was threatening ♘a4.

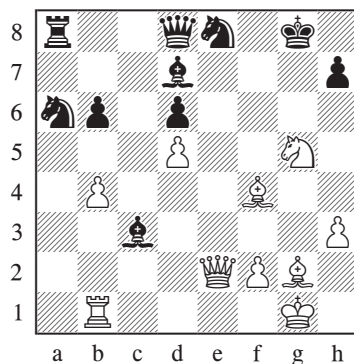
24.♘g5

The knight is heading for e6. The critical reply is:

24...f4

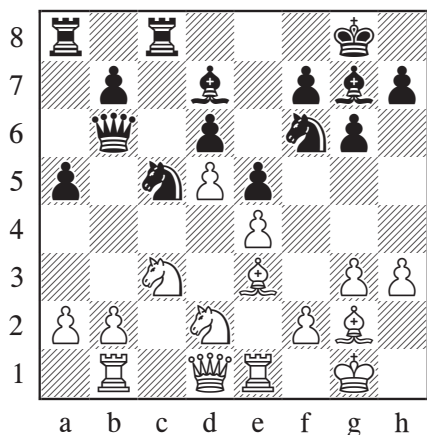
It is important that this tactical resource fails in view of:

25.gxf4 exf4 26.♙xf4 ♞xc3 27.♞xc3 ♙xc3



28.♞d3 ♙g7 29.♞xh7+ ♔f8 30.♞g6! ♞e7 31.♞b3+-

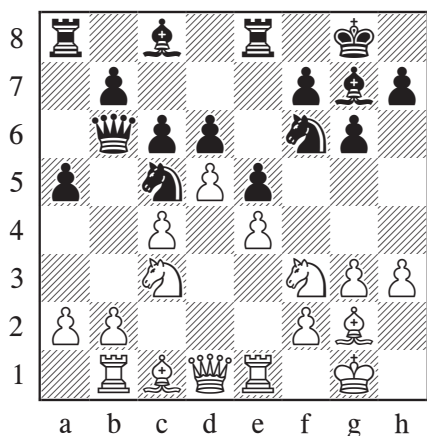
With a crushing attack.

**16. ♕f1!**

This is often a useful move, especially after the cxd5 exchange. Here is another model game:

16... ♖d8 17. a4 ♘e8 18. ♘c4 f5 19. b4 axb4 20. ♗xb4 f4 21. ♕d2 ♖a6 22. a5!

White's simple yet powerful play yielded a pleasant queenside initiative in Bukal – Kotz, Austria 2007.

A2) 12...a5

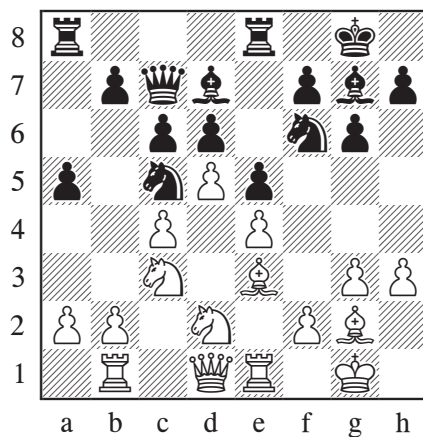
Postponing the central exchange is the better option. With the pawn on c4, White will not find it as easy to activate his pieces with moves like ♘d2-c4 or ♕f1.

13. ♕e3 ♖c7 14. ♘d2

14. ♕xc5 has been known to be premature since half a century ago, when 14...dxc5 15.dxc6 bxc6 16. ♘a4 ♕f8 gave Black a perfectly playable position in Portisch – Fischer, Sousse 1967.

14... ♕d7

There is still no point in 14...cxd5?! 15.cxd5, for instance: 15... ♘d3 (15... ♕d7 transposes to 15... ♖c7 in the notes to variation A1 above) 16. ♖f1 and now 16... ♘xb2? is impossible in view of 17. ♖b3+— and the knight is caught.

**15. ♕f1**

This bishop move is an important resource in these positions. It prevents any knight invasion on d3, and the bishop may become active in the event of a future exchange of the c-pawns.

15... ♖ab8

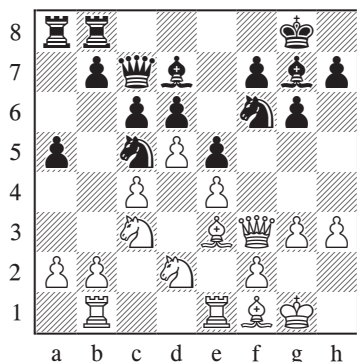
Black can arrange his rooks in a few other ways:

After 15... ♖ec8 I propose the modest 16.b3N, with the idea to prepare a2-a3 and b3-b4. I don't see how Black can profit from his last move, as 16...cxd5 17.cxd5 is still very much in White's favour.

15...♖eb8 16.♗f3

I am happy to keep my recommendation from *GM 2*.

16.dxc6 ♙xc6! gives Black plenty of counterplay; the further 17.♙g2 b6 18.b3 ♖b7 19.♖c2 ♙c8 20.a3 ♗e6 led to balanced chances in Ivkov – Liberzon, Amsterdam 1969.



16...♗e8

16...cxd5 17.cxd5 b5 18.♖ec1 ♗d8 19.b3± also leaves Black under some pressure. He is tied to the defence of the b5-pawn, and advancing with ...b4 would present the c4-square to White's knight.

17.dxc6

This exchange can be one of White's key positional ideas, but it is important to time it correctly. Generally, White should only make the exchange when Black is obliged to recapture with the bishop.

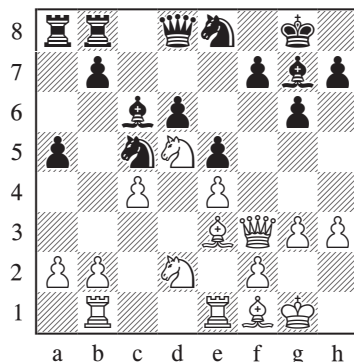
Also worthy of consideration is 17.b3, with the standard plan of a2-a3 and b3-b4.

17...♙xc6

17...bxc6 is the move Black would like to play, as it covers the d5-square and opens the b-file, but there is a concrete problem: 18.♙xc5! dxc5 19.♗a4 and Black loses the c5-pawn, as White can step up the attack with ♗b3 and ♖e3.

18.♗d5 ♗d8

18...♙xd5 19.cxd5 gives White the advantage of the bishop pair.

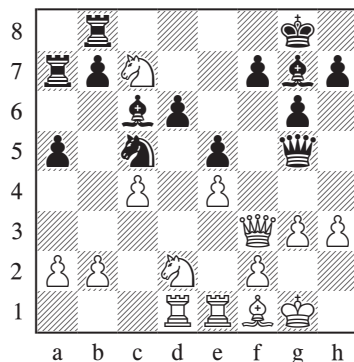


19.♖bd1!N

This is much stronger than 19.♖ed1 ♗c7 20.♗b3 ♗7e6 and Black was alright in Panno – Stein, Caracas 1970.

The text move prepares ♗b1-c3 and maintains the better chances for White. It is important to mention the following line:

19...♗c7 20.♙g5! ♖xg5 21.♗xc7 ♖a7



22.♗b5! ♙xb5 23.cxb5 ♗e6 24.♙c4 ♖e7 25.♙xe6 ♖xe6 26.♖c1

White keeps a positional advantage.

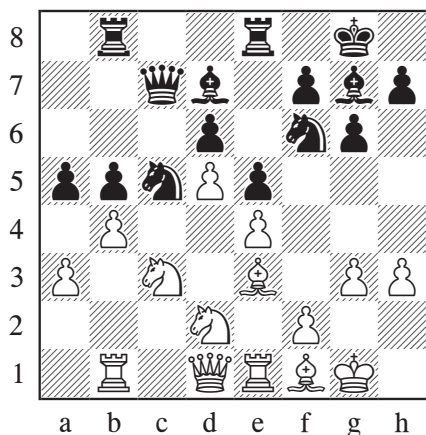
16.a3!

White immediately exploits the fact that Black has removed his rook from a8, which means that the standard reaction of ...a4 does not work.

16...cxd5 17.cxd5 b5

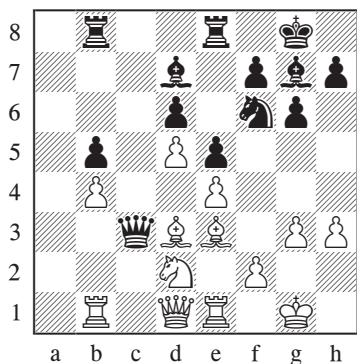
This was the idea behind Black's 15th move.

18.b4

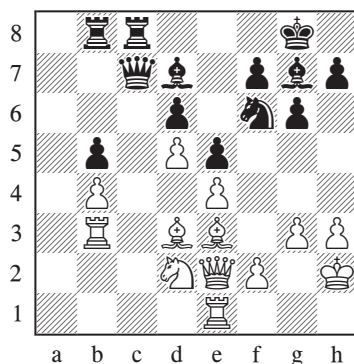


18...♘d3

It is important for Black to refrain from 18...axb4?!, as after 19.axb4 ♘d3 20.♙xd3 ♜xc3 White is not obliged to defend his a3-pawn and can seize the initiative on the queenside by means of:



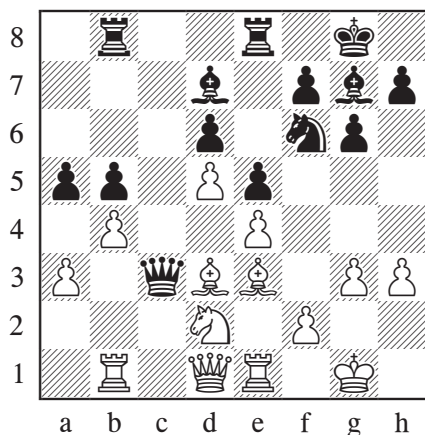
21.♞e2! ♞ec8 (even worse for Black is 21...♙xh3? 22.♞ec1 ♞a3 23.♙xb5 followed by ♘c4) 22.♞b3 ♞c7 23.♙h2 This kind of position is clearly favourable for White, as he can steadily increase his pressure on the queenside, while Black is far from getting something real on the kingside. Here are a few more moves of the game:



23...♞b7 24.♞a3 ♞a8 25.♞e1 Black was under annoying pressure in Marovic – Tatai, Malaga 1968.

19.♙xd3 ♜xc3

Here I will repeat the strong novelty I gave in *GM 2*:



20.♘b3!N

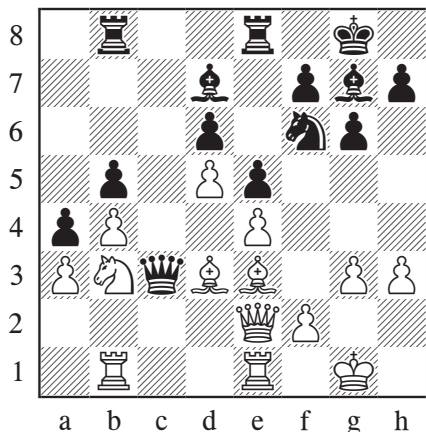
After 20.♞b3 ♞c7 21.bxa5 ♞xa5 22.♙h2 ♞ec8 23.♞e2 ♞b7 24.♞eb1 ♞cb8 the players agreed a draw in Najdorf – Tal, Beograd 1970. Indeed, Black's position should be easily holdable.

20...a4

The tactical justification of White's last move is that both 20...axb4? 21.♞c1 ♞b2 22.♞e2 ♞xa3 23.♞a1+ and 20...♙xh3? 21.♞c1 ♞b2 22.♞e2 ♞xa3 23.♞a1 ♞xb4 24.♙d2+ lead to the trapping of Black's queen.

21.♖e2!

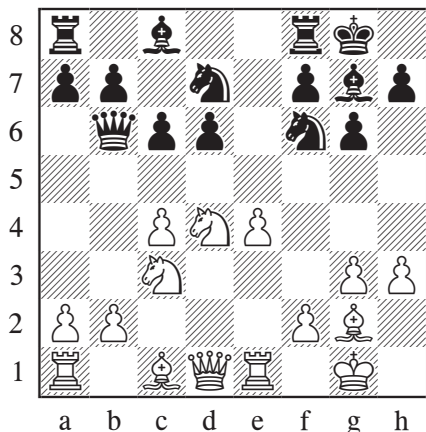
The key move. The threat of ♖ec1 means that White's knight is untouchable.

**21...♖c8 22.♖ec1 ♖a6 23.♘a5 ♖ec8 24.♔g2**

White's advantage is obvious, as the b5-pawn is a long-term weakness and the c6-square could make a great outpost for White's pieces.

B) 10...exd4

This is Black's main reply.

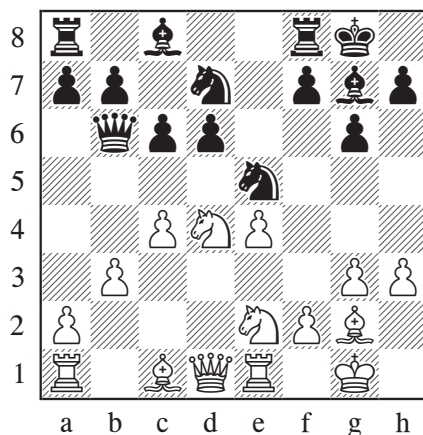
11.♘xd4

We have reached an important branching point. **B1) 11...♘g4** is one option, but **B2) 11...♘e8** and **B3) 11...♖e8** are the two most important tries.

11...♘c5 allows White to develop his pieces optimally with 12.♖b1 a5 13.♔e3, with a clearly more comfortable position, resembling the lines covered in Chapter 13.

B1) 11...♘g4

This knight jump has been played in a lot of games, but White is ready for it and can keep everything under control.

12.♘ce2 ♘ge5 13.b3**13...♘c5 14.♔e3 a5**

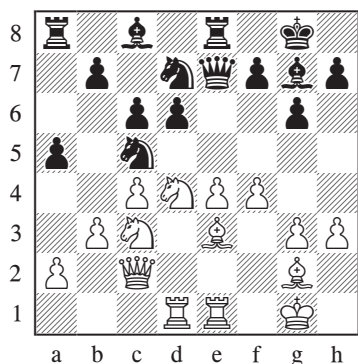
14...♖e8 15.♖b1 a5 is just another move order.

15.♖b1 ♖e8 16.♖f1!

This is a great prophylactic move, which was first played by Botvinnik in 1961. Now Black fails to get any concrete counterplay and White manages to kick Black's pieces away from the centre. Here are a few examples:

16...♖c7

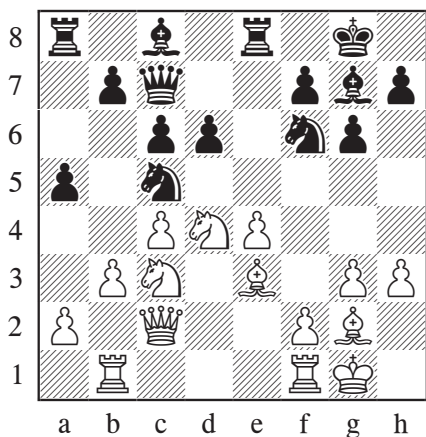
16...♖d8 17.♖c2 ♖e7 transposes to an even older game, which continued: 18.♘c3 ♘ed7 19.♖fe1 ♘f6 20.♖bd1 ♘fd7 21.f4 White slowly improves his position, while Black tries in vain to find counterplay.



21...♖d8 22.♙f2 ♗b6 23.♖b1 ♗c7 24.♞e2
♞b6 25.♞d1 White maintained all his pluses
in Furman – Nezhmetdinov, Tbilisi 1959.

17.♗c2 ♞ed7 18.♞c3 ♞f6

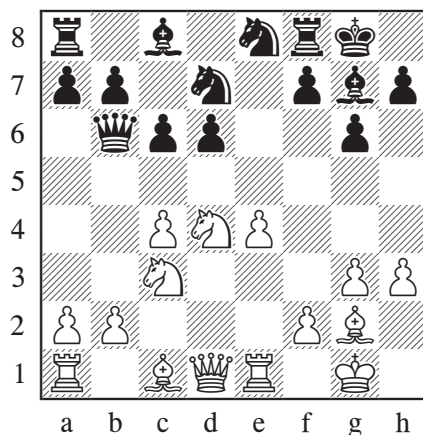
18...♞f8?! is too passive, and after 19.♞bd1
♞fe6 20.♞de2 ♙f8 21.♗d2 ♞d7 22.♙h6 ♞g7
23.♞fe1± White was clearly better in Botvinnik
– Pachman, Oberhausen 1961.



19.♞fe1 ♙d7 20.♞ed1

White kept a pleasant space advantage and
had developed his pieces to their ideal squares
in Sergeev – Lundberg, Ceske Budejovice
1993.

B2) 11...♞e8

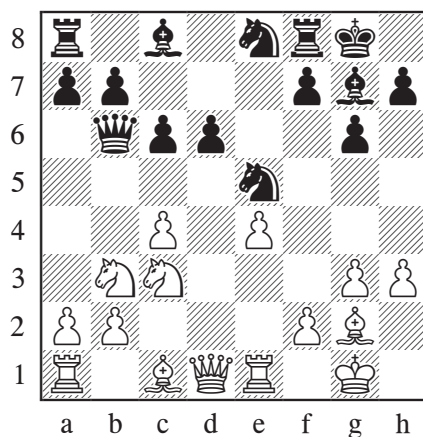


Retreating the knight may look strange but
it's a serious option, as each of White's possible
knight moves has some kind of drawback.
I recommend the same path as in *GM 2*.

12.♞b3

Obviously this is not a great square for the
knight, but the point of the text move is to
prepare ♙e3 and then return with the knight to
d4 at a convenient moment. We will consider
the inferior options of B21) 12...♞e5?! and
B22) 12...♗b4?!, followed by the normal
B23) 12...a5.

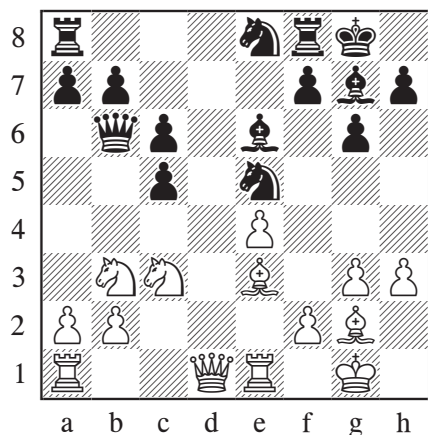
B21) 12...♞e5?!



This would have been a good response if White had played 12.♘f3 on the last turn, but with the knight on b3 it runs into a strong counter.

13.c5! dxc5 14.♙e3 ♙e6

Surprisingly, Black hasn't lost a single game from five encounters on the database. Nevertheless, White's position is excellent.



15.♘xc5!

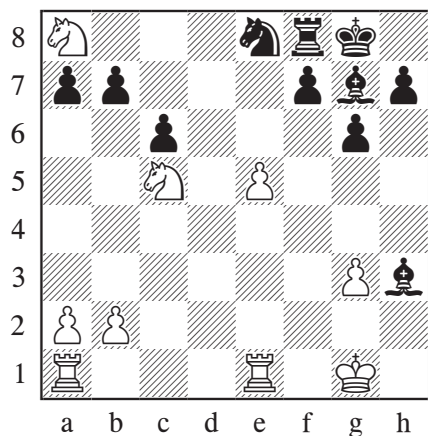
This is much simpler than 15.♘a4, as I gave in my previous work.

15...♘c4 16.♘3a4 ♘xc3

16...♖c7 17.♙f4± obviously favours White.

17.♘xb6 ♘xd1 18.♘xa8 ♘xf2 19.e5 ♘xh3† 20.♙xh3 ♙xh3

In Theulings – Visser, Enschede 1990, White should have continued with:



21.♙ad1! N±

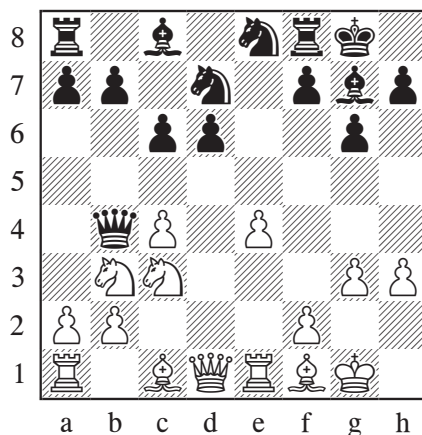
For the time being Black has two pawns for the exchange, but White's pieces are much more active and he will soon gain material.

B22) 12...♖b4?!

This move may appear annoying at first, but White has a good answer.

13.♙f1!

Now it becomes clear that Black's queen is misplaced.



13...♘c5

13...♙xc3?! 14.bxc3 ♖xc3 is too risky. For some reason, after the further 15.♙h6 ♘g7 a draw was agreed in Kozak – Bednar, Czech Republic 2011, but White is clearly better after 16.♖xd6N.

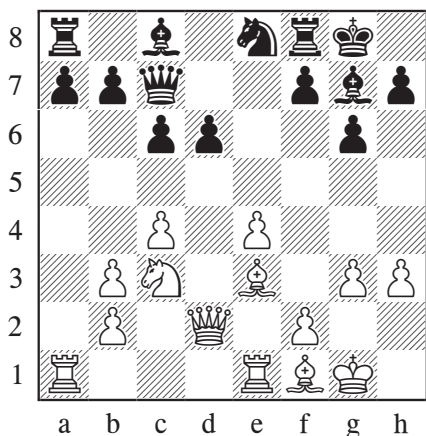
14.♙d2

This simple move offers White a pleasant game. The following game remains an excellent example:

14...♘xb3 15.axb3 ♖b6 16.♙e3 ♖c7 17.♖d2

White slowly improves his position, while Black remains passive. The last move also threatens to win a pawn with ♙xa7, since ...b6

can now be met by ♙xb6 , as the reply $\dots\text{♖xa1}$ will no longer hit the queen.



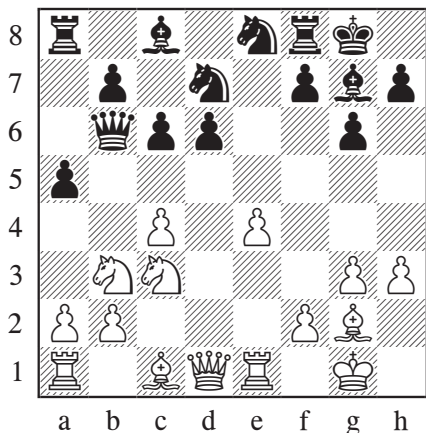
17...b6 18.b4! ♕b7 19.♞ed1

White intends to continue with either c4-c5 or b4-b5.

19...c5 20.bxc5 bxc5 21.♙g2

White's positional advantage was beyond any doubt in Matamoros Franco – Paramos Dominguez, Santa Clara 1999.

B23) 12...a5



13.♙e3 ♖b4 14.♘d4!

This is the best way to resolve the situation on the queenside.

14...a4

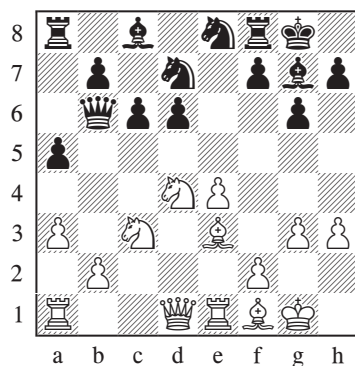
This has been the usual continuation. It is important to see what happens if Black captures either of the loose pawns:

14...♞xc4

This leads to a forced sequence:

15.♙f1 ♖b4 16.a3 ♞b6

$16...\text{♞xb2?}$ runs into $17.\text{♘a4+}$ and the queen is trapped.

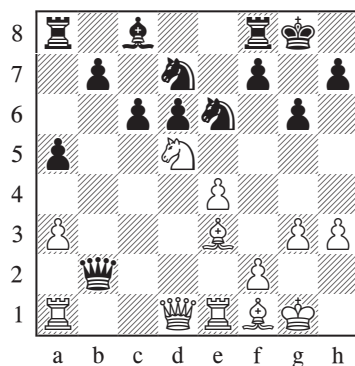


17.♘e6 ♞xb2 18.♘g7 ♘g7 19.♘d5!

Threatening ♙d4 , which would trap Black's queen.

19...♘e6

This position was reached in Mamedjarova – Umanskaya, Warsaw 2001, and now Dautov's recommendation from *ChessBase Magazine* 91 looks strong:

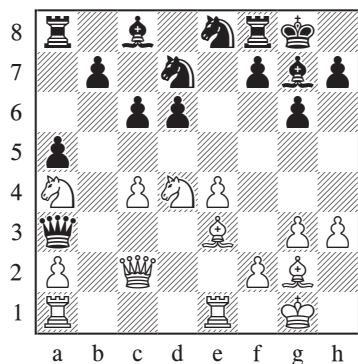


20.♘c7! ♘xc7 21.♙d4 ♖xa1 22.♙xa1 ♘e8 23.f4!

White has a clear advantage due to her attacking chances.

14...♖xb2 15.♘a4 ♖a3 16.♖c2!

In *GM 2* I presented this as a novelty, and GM Naumann became the first player to benefit from it in 2015.



16...♘c5

16...♘e5 doesn't help Black after 17.♖ed1 ♖b4 18.♙f1±, threatening a2-a3.

17.♘b6 ♖b8 18.♖ab1

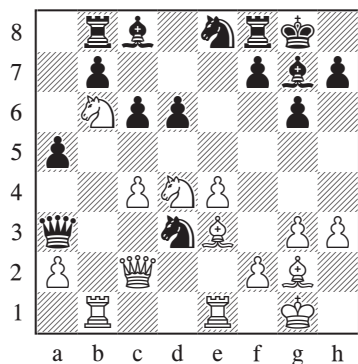
18.♖ed1 is less convincing after 18...♘a6!.

18...♘d3N

After 18...♘f6 19.♖ed1 Black loses material in view of the ♙c1 threat.

The game continued 18...♘c7?! 19.♖ed1 ♘7e6 20.♙c1 ♘d4 21.♖xd4 ♖xc1† 22.♖xc1 ♙xd4 23.♖d2 and White easily converted his material advantage in Naumann – Casper, Germany 2015.

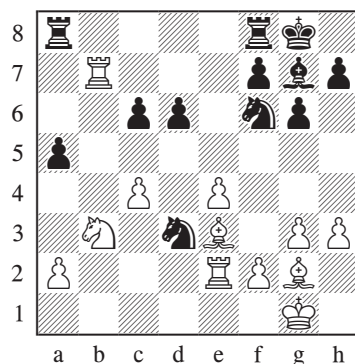
I analysed the text move as my main line in *GM 2*. It seems like Black's best try, but White remains on top after:



19.♖e2 ♘b4 20.♖d2 ♖d3 21.♖xd3 ♘xd3 22.♘xc8 ♖xc8 23.♖xb7

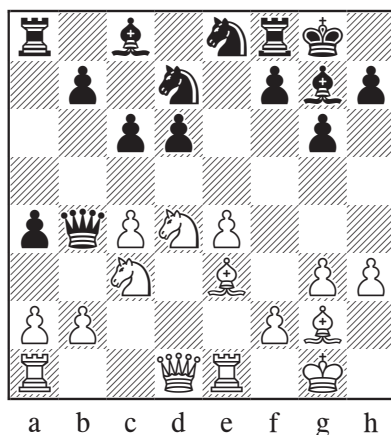
White has regained the pawn while keeping a strong initiative. For instance:

23...♘f6 24.♘b3 ♖a8



25.♙a7! a4 26.♘a5±

With a big advantage.



15.a3!

Another accurate move.

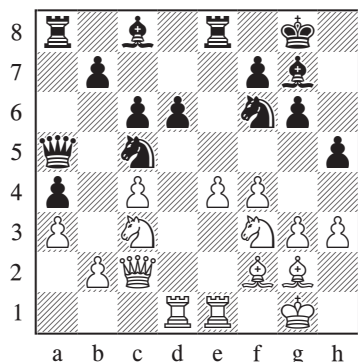
15...♖a5

15...♖xb2N remains untested but it requires some attention. 16.♘xa4 ♖xa4 17.♖xa4 ♘b6! Black has chances to obtain decent compensation for the exchange, but White keeps the upper hand with precise play:

19...h5 20.♘f3!?

Another novelty from *GM 2*, which has since been tested.

There is no point in rushing with 20.f5, in view of 20...♘fd7 21.fxg6 fxg6 22.♘f3 ♘e5 23.♞xd6 ♙e6 and Black had reasonable compensation in Vladimirov – Novopashin, Gorky 1954.



20...♙e6 21.♞xd6 ♙xc4 22.e5 ♘fd7

As usual, White's central pawn wedge is more important than Black's queenside majority.

23.♘d2 ♙e6 24.♘ce4 ♘xe4 25.♘xe4

This is where I ended my analysis in *GM 2*. Black eventually held a draw in Flitsch – Hechl, corr. 2011, but he was clearly under some pressure at this point.

20.♘a2!

This is stronger than 20.♘f3 ♘b6 21.♙f1 ♙e6 22.♞xd6 ♙xc4, which leads to unclear play.

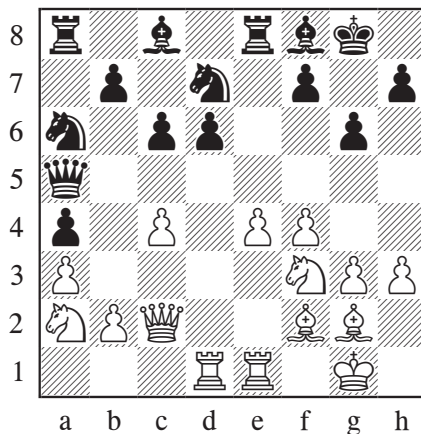
20...♘a6

20...♖c7 occurred in Ruiz Jarabo Pelayo – Noriega de la Sierra, corr. 2010. I still like my previous recommendation: 21.♘b4N and White is obviously better due to his space advantage.

21.♘f3 ♙f8

This position was reached in Avrukh – Lopez Martinez, Novi Sad 2009. Despite winning

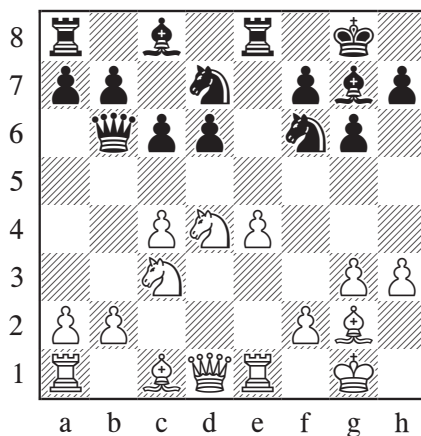
a nice game, my play was not altogether convincing, and I suggest the following improvement:



22.g4!N

Gaining more space, while it is not clear how Black is going to obtain counterplay.

B3) 11...♞e8

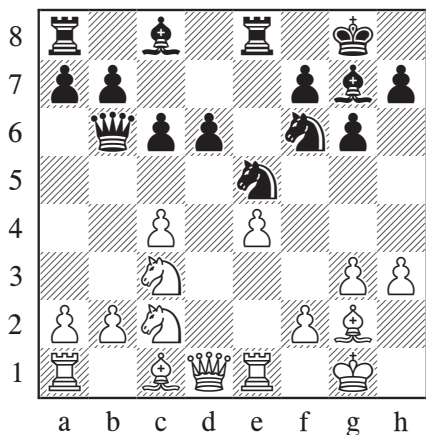


This has been played in slightly fewer games than 11...♘e8, but it is arguably the most challenging move, as well as the recommendation in the first volume of *Kotronias on the King's Indian*. After analysing the different options in considerable detail, I am ready to propose a significant change of direction from *GM 2*.

12. ♖c2??

12. ♖e2 is still a decent move but Kotronias came up with some interesting ideas against it. One important line is 12... ♖b4 13. ♖c2 ♖c5 14. ♖d2 ♖b6 15. ♖e3 ♖c7 16. f3 a5 and now 17. b3 is a slight refinement on my analysis from *GM 2*, but 17... ♖fd7 18. ♖f2 h5!N is an interesting recommendation of the Greek GM, which offers Black reasonable counterplay.

I now regard the text move as more promising. White retreats the knight from the centre, thus avoiding some of Black's tactical counterplay, while uncovering an attack against the d6-pawn. I analysed four options: **B31) 12... ♖e5?!** and **B32) 12... ♖c5** are the historically most popular moves, but **B33) 12... ♖c7** and **B34) 12... ♖a5** are the more theoretically challenging options.

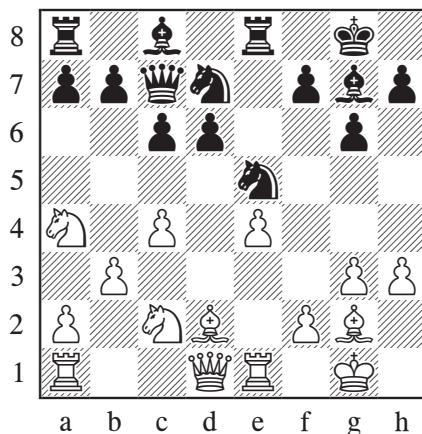
B31) 12... ♖e5?!

This has been played many times but its popularity had faded recently, which is understandable, since Black fails to create counterplay.

13. b3 ♖fd7

13... ♖e6 allows 14. ♖d4! ♖ad8 (14... ♖xh3?? 15. ♖a4+-) 15. ♖e3 ♖a5 16. ♖c2± when White reaches his optimal set-up and is obviously

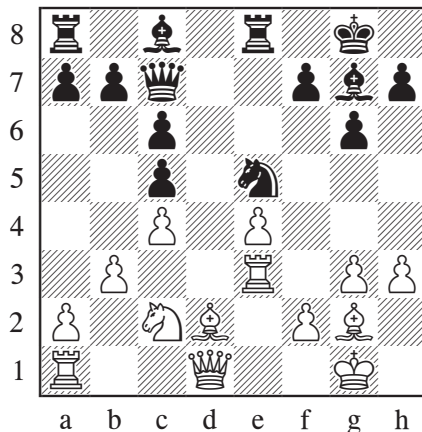
much better, Sykora – Martinez Cabanas Espanol, corr. 2007.

14. ♖a4 ♖a5 15. ♖d2 ♖c7**16. ♖e3!**

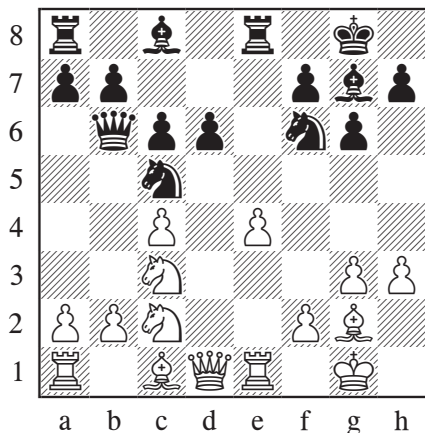
Covering the d3-square. Now f2-f4 is a big threat, which explains Black's next move.

16... ♖c5 17. ♖xc5 dxc5

All this occurred in Damljanovic – Lechtynsky, Vrnjacka Banja 1984, and one other game. Simple and strong would have been:

**18. ♖c3N**

White is clearly better; his plan involves f2-f4, followed by exchanging the dark-squared bishops and exploiting his superior structure.

B32) 12...♘c5

Kotronias condemns this move, on the basis that Black gives away too much space. In general I agree with him, although I think Black has a trickier way of playing than the line Kotronias mentions.

13.b4! ♘cd7!?

This rare move is Black's best chance.

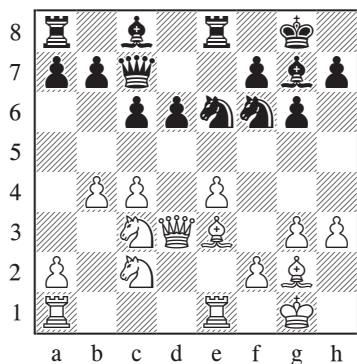
13...♘e6

This has been the more common choice but it gives White an easy advantage.

14.♙e3 ♖c7 15.♖d3

Prophylactically protecting the c4-pawn.

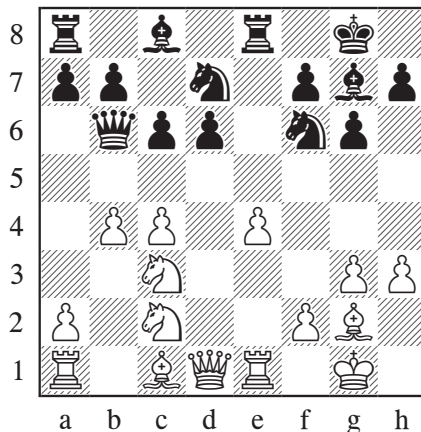
15.♖d2 ♘d7 16.f4 ♘b6 17.♘a3! N a5 18.b5 also favours White.



15...a5 16.a3 ♘d7 17.f4

White's space advantage is considerable.
17...♘b6 18.♖ad1±

Black was suffering in Portisch – Stein, Sousse 1967.

**14.♗xd6!**

White should accept the challenge.

In the beginning I thought White could avoid complications with the simple 14.♙e3N. However after 14...♖d8 (14...♖c7? is clearly worse for Black after 15.♘d4±) 15.♖c1 ♘e5 16.♖e2 ♙e6 17.♘a3 ♘h5! 18.♖ed1 ♖e7∞ the game remains complex.

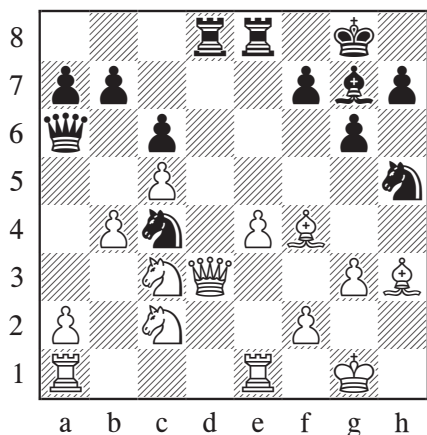
14...♘e5

Other moves could be analysed but the text seems best, and was the choice of Richard Rapport. We will follow his game against Viktor Laznicka, who played extremely well over the next few moves.

15.c5 ♖a6 16.♙f4 ♘h5 17.♙f1! ♘c4 18.♖d3 ♙xh3!

This is Black's best chance, although White remains on top after accurate play.

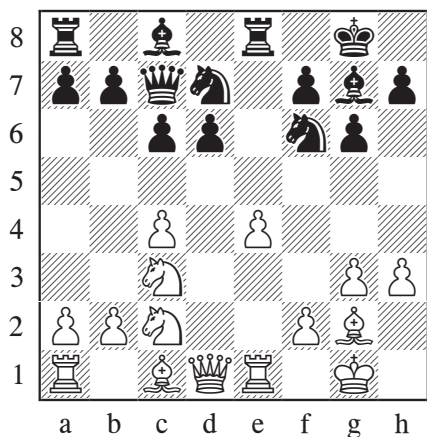
19.♙xh3 ♖ad8

**20. ♖d5!**

This brilliant move should secure White's advantage.

20... ♗xf4 21. gxf4 ♕xa1 22. ♖xa1 cxd5 23. exd5

White subsequently blundered and lost, but at this point he was clearly better in Laznicka – Rapport, Novy Bor 2014.

B33) 12... ♖c7

This is one of the two options which Kotronias offers for Black. It's certainly a reasonable move, but I think White has good chances to fight for an edge.

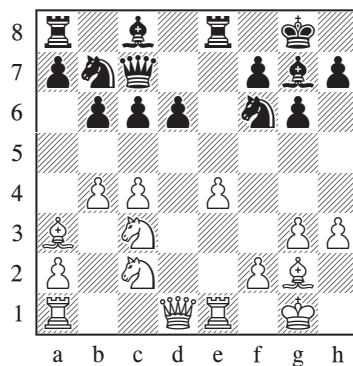
13.b3

I like this move, which was introduced to tournament practice by the legendary Hungarian player Zoltan Ribli.

13... ♖h5!

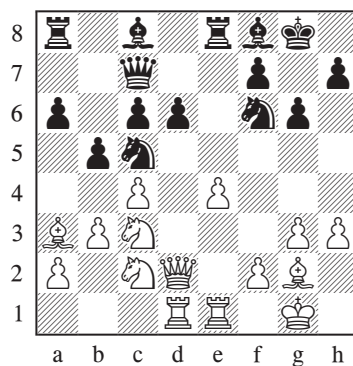
Kotronias recommends this move, and it certainly seems better than Black's other tries:

13...b6?! is too passive. 14. ♕a3 ♖c5 15.b4 ♗b7 (15... ♗fd7?! is refuted by 16.e5! ♗xe5N [16... ♖xe5? 17.bxc5 was already winning for White in Ribli – Groszpeter, Austria 1997] 17.bxc5 dxc5 18. ♗e3 ♕e6 19. ♖c2! ♕xc4 20. ♖ad1±) Now in Wohlfahrt – Copie, corr. 1999, White should have played:

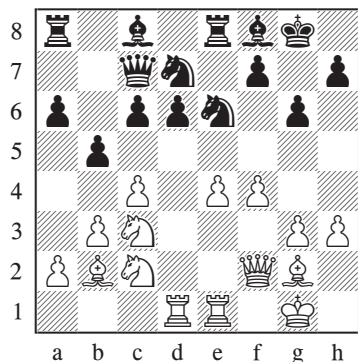


16.b5!N Kotronias points out this natural novelty. 16...c5 (16... ♗d7 17.bxc6 ♕xc6 18. ♗b4↑) 17. ♗e3± White is clearly better.

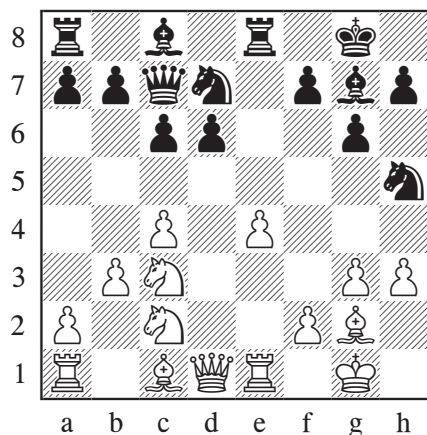
13...a6 was met by powerful play in the following game: 14. ♕a3! ♕f8 15. ♖d2 b5 16. ♖ad1 ♖c5



17.♙d4! ♘fd7 18.♘b2 ♘e5 (18...f6 19.♘e2 ♙b8 20.cxb5 axb5 21.♙h2± is another line mentioned by Kotronias) 19.f4 ♘e6 20.♙f2 ♘d7



This occurred in Bu Xiangzhi – Li Shilong, China 2013, and now the simple 21.♘e3N± would have secured White's advantage.

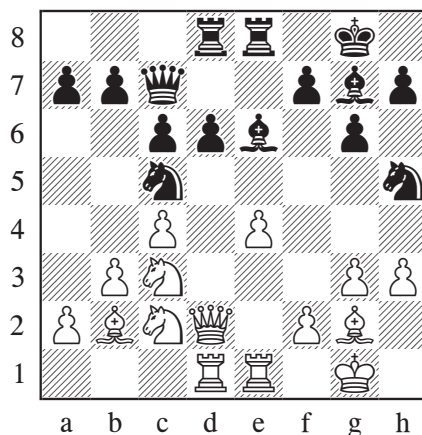


14.♙d2

This is the most flexible move, as ♘a3 could be a useful option in some lines.

14...♘c5 15.♘b2 ♘e6 16.♙ad1 ♙ad8

This position was reached in Sage – Krapivtsev, e-mail 2006. White's space advantage is obvious and I don't see any clear signs of Black counterplay. I think the most convincing continuation is:



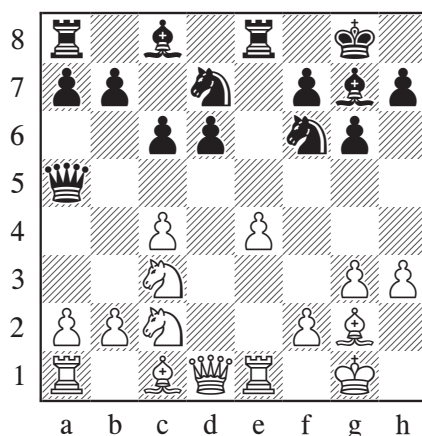
17.♘e3!N

Kotronias mentions both the game continuation of 17.♘d4 and the novelty 17.♙e3, but does not consider the text move. Play may continue:

17...a5 18.♙h2 ♘f6 19.f4

White increases his space advantage and maintains slightly better chances.

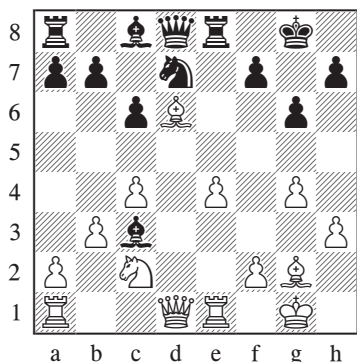
B34) 12...♙a5



Kotronias also covers this rare move. By luring the bishop to d2, Black rules out the queenside fianchetto used by White in the line above.

13.♔d2 ♖c7 14.b3 a6

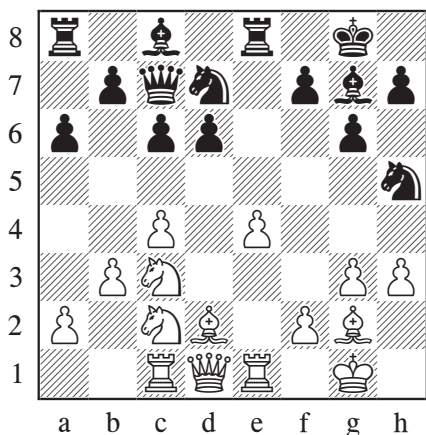
14...♗h5 is not such a serious move. 15.g4! (there is nothing wrong with the positional 15.♗e3) 15...♗f4 16.♔xf4 ♔xc3 17.♔xd6 ♖d8 In Houdek – Slavik, corr. 2004, White could have played:



18.f4!N ♔xe1 19.♖xe1 White has superb compensation for the exchange and his chances are clearly higher.

15.♞c1 ♗h5!?

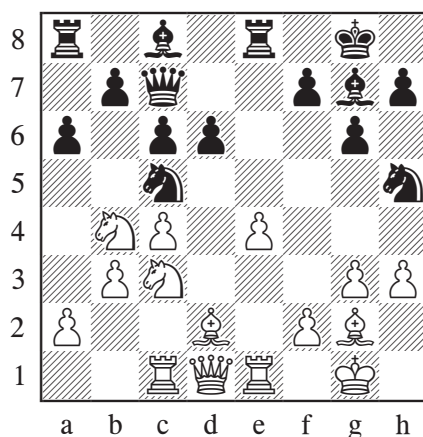
Kotronias recommends this move. It is understandable that Black is trying to generate some activity, or provoke a weakening of White's kingside structure. Here I would like to suggest a new direction for White, which Kotronias does not mention:

**16.♗b4!N**

16.♗e3 b5 17.cxb5 axb5 18.♗f5 ♖b8 19.♗xg7 ♗xg7 20.♔h6 b4 21.♗a4 c5 worked out well for Black in Hera – Biolek, Ruzomberok 2014.

A more recent game continued: 16.♞e2 ♗e5 17.♔e1 Kotronias analyses some other moves but shows that Black has counterplay in all lines. 17...♗d7 18.♖d2 ♗c5 19.♞d1 a5 Here too, Black was doing fine in Pavlikov – Halliwell, corr. 2016.

The text move has the idea to regroup the knight to d3, as well as to safeguard the c3-knight, thereby freeing up the dark-squared bishop. The following line looks natural to me:

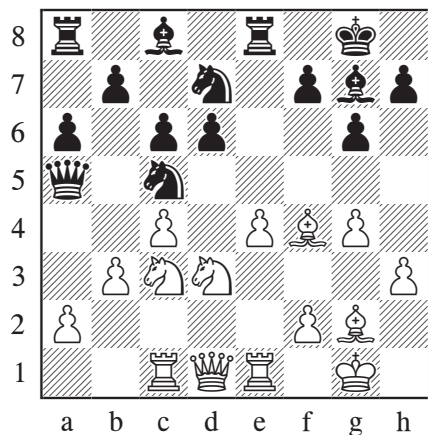
16...♗c5**17.g4 ♗f6 18.♔f4 ♖a5**

Otherwise Black's position will become too passive.

19.♗d3 ♗fd7

I also checked 19...♗xd3 20.♖xd3 ♔e6 21.♖d2± when White maintains the better chances thanks to his space advantage and Black's lack of counterplay.

The text move is an attempt to play more flexibly, but it gives White two tempting options:



Conclusion

We have concluded our King's Indian coverage by analysing the most critical main lines after 9...♖b6 10.♖e1. Then 10...♖e8 is a move we should be happy to see, as 11.d5 ♖c5 12.♖b1 offers White a typical slight edge without much enemy counterplay.

10...exd4 11.♖xd4 is the more serious option, when 11...♖g4 allows White to consolidate with accurate play, while 11...♖e8 12.♖b3 also offers good chances for an edge, although White needs to be quite precise over the next five moves or so. 11...♖e8 is the most challenging move of all, when my new recommendation of 12.♖c2!? offers White good chances, although the ensuing complex positions demand high levels of both opening preparation and middlegame play.

20.♖xc5

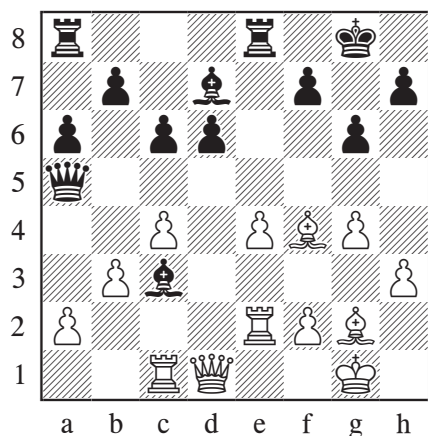
20.b4 ♖a3 21.bxc5! also deserves serious attention: 21...♖xc3 22.♖xc3 ♖xc3 23.cxd6 and White has excellent compensation.

20...♖xc3

20...♖xc5 21.♖d2 ♖d8 22.♖ed1± also favours White.

21.♖xd7 ♖xd7 22.♖e2

White has the upper hand here too, thanks to the following point:

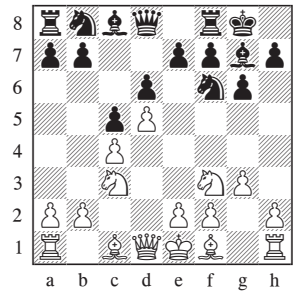


22...♖e5 23.♖xe5 ♖xe5 24.c5!

Black has some problems.

Chapter 16

Other Lines



Reluctant Benoni

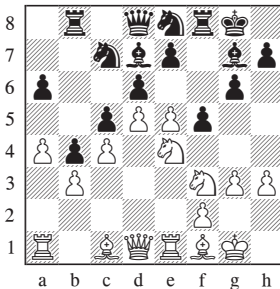
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 g6 5.♘f3 ♕g7 6.g3 0-0

7.♕g2

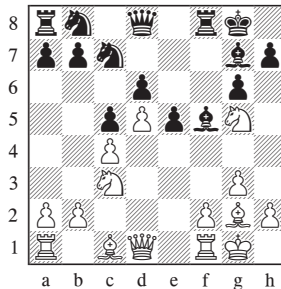
A) 7...♘a6 8.0-0 ♘c7 9.e4!	300
A1) 9...e6	300
A2) 9...♕g4	301
A3) 9...a6 10.a4	304
A31) 10...♖b8	304
A32) 10...b6	305
B) 7...e5 8.0-0	308
B1) 8...♘a6	308
B2) 8...♘g4	310
B3) 8...♘h5	311
B4) 8...♘e8 9.e4	313
B41) 9...a6	314
B42) 9...h6	315
B43) 9...f5	316
B5) 8...♘bd7 9.e4	318
B51) 9...♘e8	318
B52) 9...a6	319

A32) after 16...f5



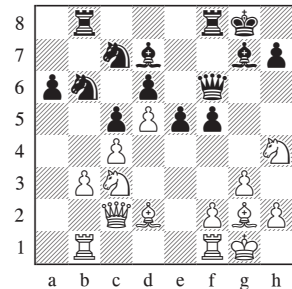
17.♘eg5!!N

B43) note to 10...gxf5



12.g4!!N

B52) after 18...♕d7



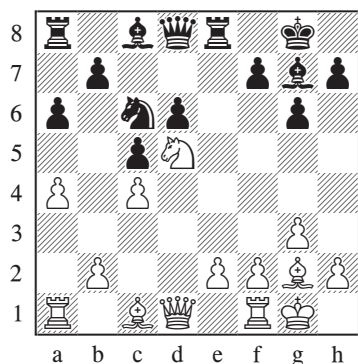
19.♘e4!!N

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♗c3 g6

I call this set-up the “Reluctant Benoni” because Black seems to be on his way towards a Modern Benoni, but his e-pawn is not totally convinced yet. Despite being a rare guest at a high level, Black’s set-up seems fairly solid and reliable. Play often transposes to a Modern Benoni, but the closed set-up also has its own theory. Generally it leads to a manoeuvring game with a lot of positional nuances, which I will explain as we go along.

5.♗f3

I would also like to mention 5.g3 ♖g7 6.♖g2 0–0 7.♗h3!? as an interesting option which was used successfully in the following top-level game: 7...a6 8.a4 e6 9.♗f4 exd5 10.♗fxd5 ♗xd5 11.♗xd5 ♗c6 12.0–0 ♖e8

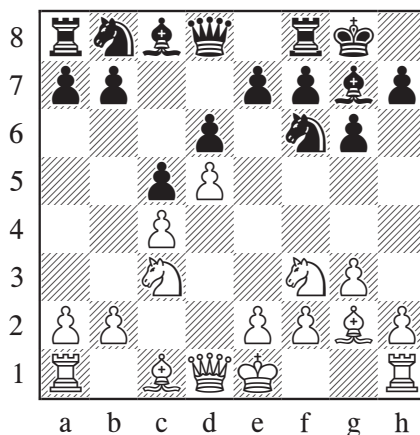


13.♖a2! ♖b8 14.b3 White had an excellent position in Ding Liren – Svidler, Saint Louis 2016. However, I decided to stick with my repertoire choice from *GM 2*, taking into account that the ♗h3 set-up is not compatible with all possible move orders. For instance, Black may opt for a King’s Indian move order with 6...c5, when 7.d5 transposes to the present chapter, as was noted at the start of Chapter 5.

5...♖g7 6.g3

Obviously we will stick with the Fianchetto System in order to remain compatible with the rest of our repertoire.

6...0–0 7.♖g2



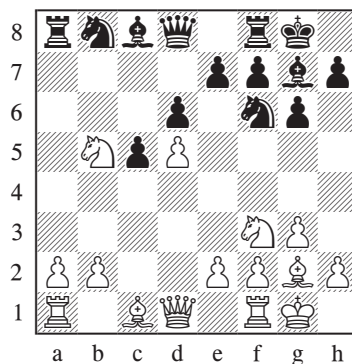
This is our main tabiya, which can also arise via the King’s Indian, as noted earlier. Black has two main ways to develop his play: **A)** 7...♗a6 and **B)** 7...e5.

7...e6 8.0–0 exd5 9.cxd5 leads to the Modern Benoni, which was covered in *Volume 1A*.

7...♗bd7 8.0–0 transposes to variation B of Chapter 11 on page 204.

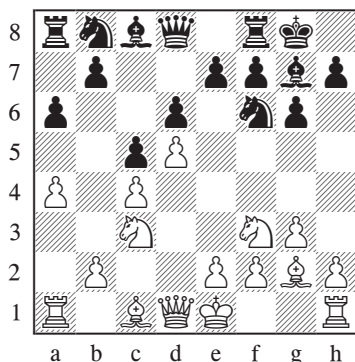
7...a6 should not be a problem, but I would like to highlight one potential pitfall:

a) It is important to prevent Black from sacrificing a pawn in Benko style. The key position occurs after: 8.0–0?! b5 9.cxb5 axb5 10.♗xb5



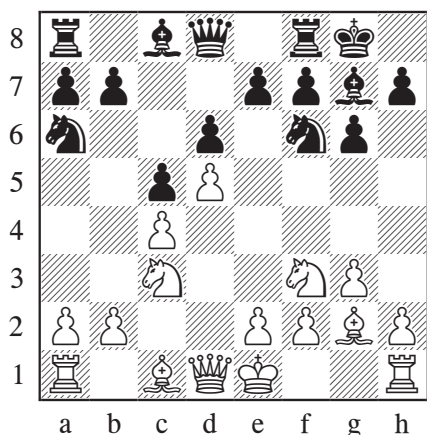
Apart from the natural 10...♘a6 11.♘c3, which transposes to our main line against the Benko Gambit (which will be analysed in detail in *Volume 2B*), Black has additional interesting options such as 10...♘a6!? and 10...♘bd7!?. Therefore a better solution for White is:

b) 8.a4!



From here, Black's main options all transpose to other parts of our repertoire. 8...e6 9.0-0 exd5 10.cxd5 leads to the Modern Benoni; 8...♘bd7 9.0-0 transposes to variation B of Chapter 11; and 8...e5 9.0-0 will be covered later in variation B.

A) 7...♘a6



Black's most flexible choice. He prepares to put the knight on c7, where it will support the

...b5 break. At the same time, he retains the option of changing the pawn structure in the centre by means of ...e6 or ...e5.

8.0-0 ♘c7

Here I have a small improvement on my previous work.

9.e4!

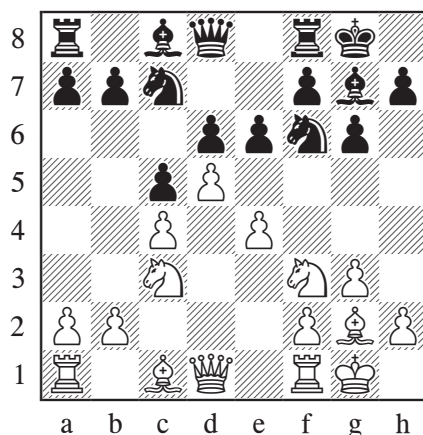
In *GM 2* I noted this as a possible alternative, and mentioned that it could easily transpose to the analysis which followed. However, I later realized it was the more accurate move.

9.a4 was my previous recommendation but I started to become dissatisfied with the position after 9...♘a6 10.h3 ♘b4. For example, after 11.e4 e6 12.♖e1 Black gets a decent position with 12...e5, as in Cuenca Hernandez – Damjanovic, Aviles 1992, which I failed to consider in *GM 2*.

We will analyse A1) 9...e6, A2) 9...♗g4 and A3) 9...a6.

9...♖b8 is a popular choice, but 10.a4 a6 is just another route to variation A31. (Note that the 10...♘a6 manoeuvre is of little concern here, as Black is virtually a tempo down on the line above, as the rook has no purpose on b8 in the resulting position.)

A1) 9...e6



10.♖e1!

It is still too early to commit to a rigid queenside structure with a2-a4.

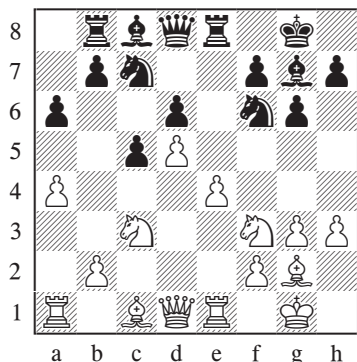
In *GM 2* I went for a dxe6 structure, which would have been fine in conjunction with 9.a4, but does not combine so well with the early e2-e4.

10...exd5 11.cxd5

A similar position has been covered in our Modern Benoni repertoire. Specifically, on page 387 of *GM 1A*, after White's 11th move in variation B, the position is the same except that here White has played ♖e1 instead of ♖f4. Transpositions are possible, and I have pointed out one example in the note to White's next move.

11...♖e8

Another possible direction is: 11...♖g4 12.♖f4 ♖h5 13.♖e3 ♖e8 14.h3 ♖xf3 15.♖xf3 ♖f6



16.♖f4! b5 17.e5 dxe5 18.♖xe5 Having successfully carried out the e4-e4 break, White was much better in Khismatullin – Smirin, St Petersburg 2014.

12.h3!?

12.♖f4 transposes to one of the lines in our Modern Benoni repertoire; see variation E3 of Chapter 25 in *GM 1A* (page 411). I think

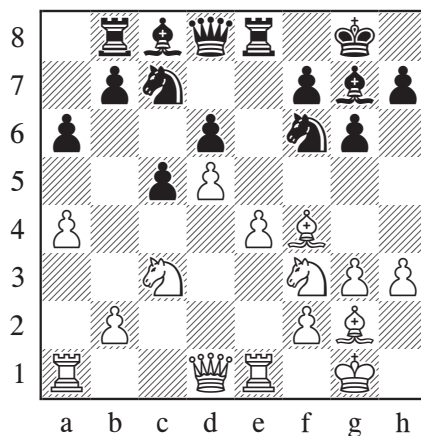
the text move is even more accurate though, as Black has fewer options without the g4-square available.

12...♖b8

12...b5 still doesn't work due to 13.e5!, with a powerful initiative.

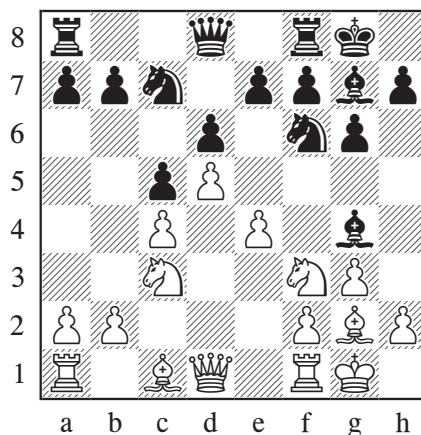
13.a4 a6 14.♖f4!

Once again, the prospect of e4-e5 becomes a major concern for Black.



14...♖h5 15.♖g5 ♖f6 16.♖xf6 ♖xf6 17.e5! dxe5 18.♖xe5

White had a massive advantage in Bologan – Bartel, Wroclaw (rapid) 2014.

A2) 9...♖g4

This is an important alternative which requires an accurate response.

10.a4!

An interesting nuance. The point of this extremely rare move order is to be ready to recapture on f3 with the bishop after provoking an exchange with h2-h3.

The great majority of games have continued 10.h3 ♙xf3 11. ♚xf3 (the problem with 11. ♙xf3 is that Black can play 11... ♚d7! , followed by ...b5 after White defends the h3-pawn) 11...a6 and Black is not doing badly at all.

10... ♖b8

I also considered:

10... ♚d7

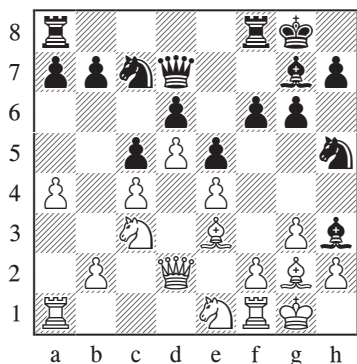
Preventing h2-h3 is a natural alternative.

11. ♙g5! ?

I like this move; White would be happy to provoke ...h6 in order to follow up with ♚d2 , gaining a tempo.

11...e5 12. ♚d2 ♜h5 13. ♞e1 f6 14. ♙e3 ♙h3

All this happened in Marin – Iturrizaga Bonelli, Sabadell 2011. The best continuation would have been:



15. ♚e2!N

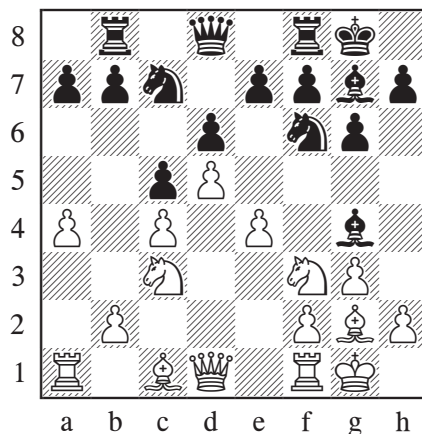
Preventing ...f5 while preparing to target the knight on h5.

15...b6

After 15... ♙xg2 16. ♞xg2 White already threatens g3-g4.

16. ♞d3 ♞ae8 17.a5!

White is clearly better.



11.h3 ♙xf3 12. ♙xf3 !

It is important to recapture with the bishop in order to have the option of ♙e2 , preventing Black's thematic plan of ...b6, ...a6 and ...b5.

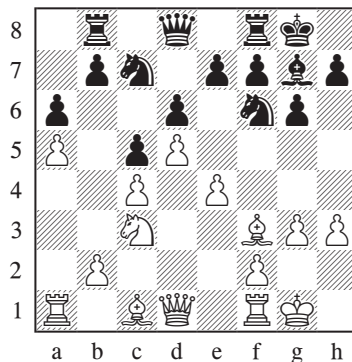
12...b6

I considered two other ideas:

12...e6 13. ♙f4 exd5 14.exd5 a6 15.a5! transposes to the line immediately below.

12...a6 13.a5

13. ♙e2 is playable but I generally like to meet ...a6 with a4-a5 when the pawn is still on b7.



13...e6

13...b5 14.axb6 ♖xb6 15.♖c2 (15.♖a3!?N deserves serious attention, with similar ideas as in variation A31 below) 15...e6 Now in Hulak – Rezan, Pula 2000, White should have continued 16.♗d2N exd5 17.exd5, with a nice positional edge.

13...♗d7 14.♖c2 is my novelty from *GM 2*, following an earlier transposition. The one practical outing continued: 14...e6 (14...b5 15.axb6 ♗xb6 16.b3 was the line I gave, with a positional edge to White) 15.♗g2 ♖e8 16.♗d2 exd5 17.exd5 f5 18.♖ae1 ♖f6 19.♗a4 White had a pleasant positional pull in Cernousek – Kislinsky, Olomouc 2014.

14.♗f4

Another thematic idea; the pressure against the d6-pawn forces Black to clarify the pawn structure in the centre.

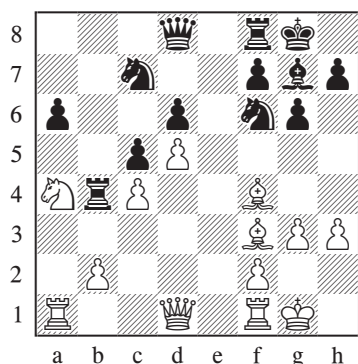
14...exd5

14...e5 15.♗d2 also favours White.

15.exd5 b5

15...♗ce8 was played in Cosma – Gdanski, Budapest 1993, when White should have continued 16.♖c2N ♗d7 17.♗g2± with a pleasant edge.

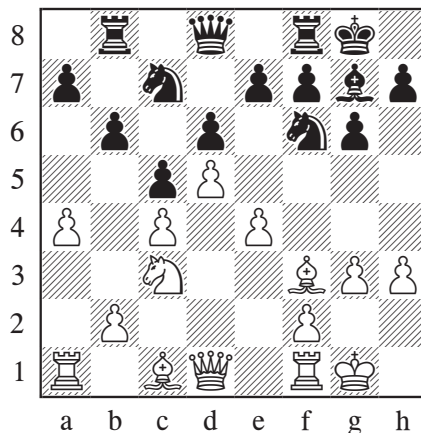
16.axb6 ♖xb6 17.♗a4 ♖b4



In Korchnoi – Byrne, Wijk aan Zee 1980, White should have continued calmly with:

18.♖c2N±

White has a slight edge, thanks to his space advantage and bishop pair.



13.♗g5

Once again, I like the idea of trying to provoke ...h6.

13...a6 14.♗e2

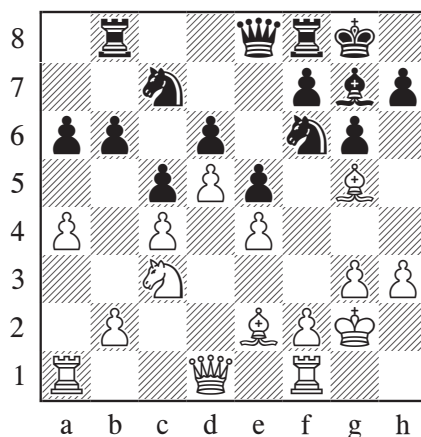
Obviously we continue this way to prevent ...b5.

14...e5

14...e6 15.♖d2 exd5 16.exd5± is favourable for White as well.

15.♗g2 ♖e8

I also checked the following attempt to improve Black's play: 15...h6N 16.♗e3 ♗d7 17.♖d2 ♗h7 18.f4 exf4 19.gxf4 f5 20.exf5 gxf5 21.♗d3 White has good chances to generate a kingside attack, like in the game.



16.♖c2 ♘h8 17.♙d2

17.f4 ♘g8 18.f5 f6 19.♙e3 ♙h6 20.♙f2!± is also excellent for White.

17...♘g8 18.f4 exf4 19.gxf4 f5 20.♞ae1

Mobilizing the last piece.

20...♞d7 21.exf5

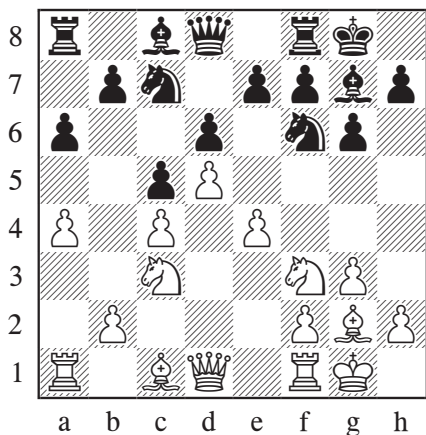
Now is the right moment to clarify the pawn structure.

21...gxf5

White is better due to his spatial superiority and bishop pair, which could pay dividends in the long term.

22.♙h2 ♞f6 23.♙d3

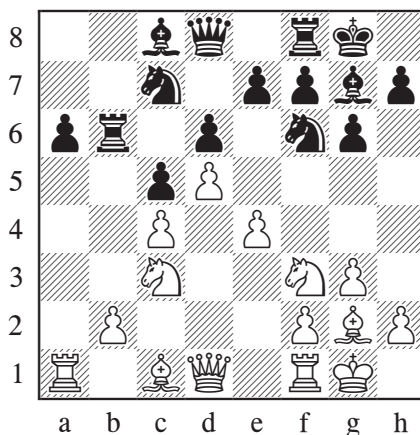
White steadily increased his advantage in Ftacnik – Gdanski, Budapest 1993.

A3) 9...a6 10.a4

After White's knee-jerk reaction to Black's last move, we have a further split. Black can invest his hopes in the b-file with **A31) 10...♞b8**, or keep his queenside structure intact with the more patient **A32) 10...b6**.

A31) 10...♞b8 11.a5 b5 12.axb6 ♞xb6

Black has carried out his plan but there is no reason to fear his counterplay along the b-file. Moreover, the knight on c7 is likely to remain passive for some time.

**13.♞a3**

The main idea of this move is to take the rook off the long diagonal and thus prepare b2-b3 at a suitable moment, in order to neutralize Black's pressure along the b-file. Another option could be to move the rook to b3 to swap off Black's active rook on b6, as in the note to White's next move.

Although I like the text move, it is not the only good option: 13.♞e1 is definitely a worthy alternative.

13...e6

This seems like Black's best attempt to get some activity. Other options include:

13...♙g4?! 14.h3 ♙xf3 15.♙xf3 ♘d7 16.♞c2 ♘e5 17.♙e2± gave White a dream position in Ujj – Tomosvary, Hungary 2014.

13...♘d7 is rather passive, and 14.♘a4 ♞b8 15.♙f4 gave White a pleasant advantage in Drasko – Bakic, Vrnjacka Banja 1998.

13...e5 gives us a choice: 14.dxe6 is a simple transposition to the main line, but White could also consider playing with a blocked centre, in the same manner as we will see later in the chapter.

14.dxe6

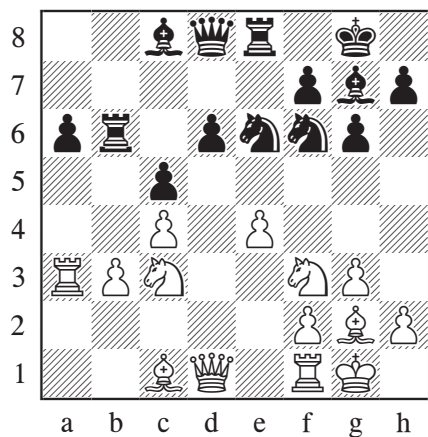
14.♖b3!N is a new idea of mine which also deserves attention. 14...♖xb3 (14...♖b4? is clearly worse in view of 15.e5! ♜fe8 16.♙g5 f6 17.exf6 ♜xf6 18.♖xb4 cxb4 19.♜e4±) 15.♙xb3 exd5 16.exd5 ♖e8 17.h3± White has the easier game due to his spatial superiority, but it's no more than a slight advantage.

14...♜xe6

This is the most principled way to recapture.

14...♙xe6 has been tried, but 15.♙d3 ♜g4 16.♜a4 ♖b4 17.b3 left White with a pleasant edge in Korchnoi – Visier Segovia, Palma de Mallorca 1968.

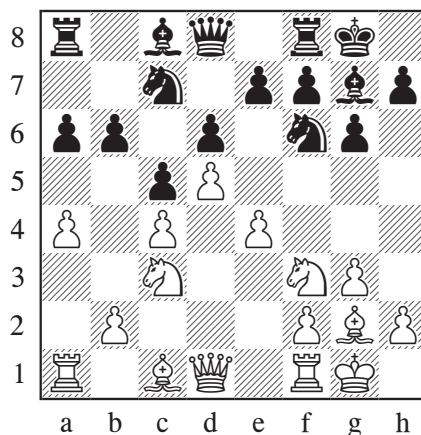
15.b3 ♖e8



16.♖e1 ♖b8 17.♙d2±

White was undoubtedly slightly better in Kl. Mueller – Braakhuis, corr. 2002.

A32) 10...b6



It seems natural to keep the queenside structure intact, but Black's play is rather slow.

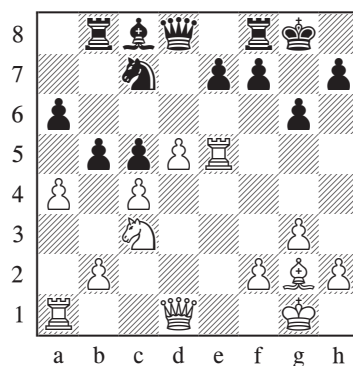
11.♖e1

A multi-purpose move: White not only prepares the e4-e5 advance, but also frees the f1-square for his bishop.

11...♖b8

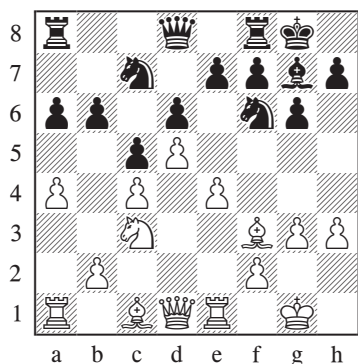
This is the consistent move. Others options are easy to handle:

11...♜d7 12.♙f4 ♖b8 13.e5 gives White an excellent game. 13...dxe5 14.♜xe5 ♜xe5 15.♙xe5 ♙xe5 16.♖xe5 b5 occurred in Drozd – Doda, Zielona Gora 1974, and here White missed a nice idea:

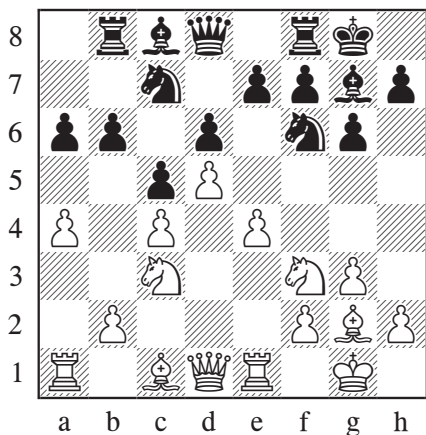


17.cxb5!? N axb5 18.a5!± With an obvious advantage.

11...♙g4 12.h3 ♙xf3 I found three games in which White recaptured with queen, but I find 13.♙xf3!N a more natural choice. Play may continue:



13...♙d7 14.♙g5 ♖b8 15.♙e2! We saw the same idea in variation A2. White prevents ...b5 and should enjoy a lasting positional advantage, thanks to his bishop pair and extra space.

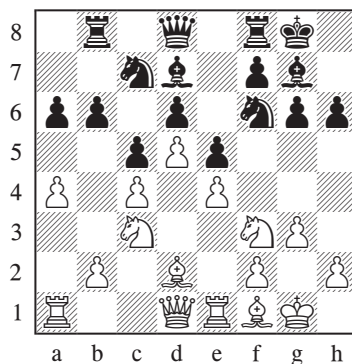


12.♙f1!

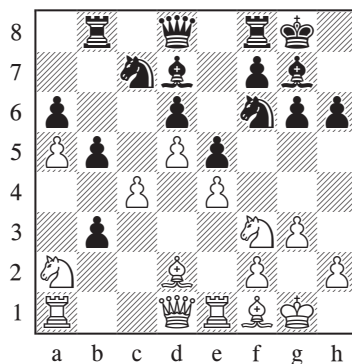
White should not rush with 12.e5, as 12...♙g4! 13.♙f4 b5 offers Black good counterplay.

12...♙d7

12...e5 is another idea, preventing e4-e5. White found an excellent plan in the following game: 13.♙g5 h6 14.♙d2 ♙d7



15.a5! b5 16.b4! The opening of the queenside clearly favours White. 16...cxb4 17.♙a2 b3 Now in Gonda – Rezan, Bol 2013, White missed the strongest continuation:



18.♙b4!N bxc4 19.♙xc4 b2 20.♖b1 and White is clearly better.

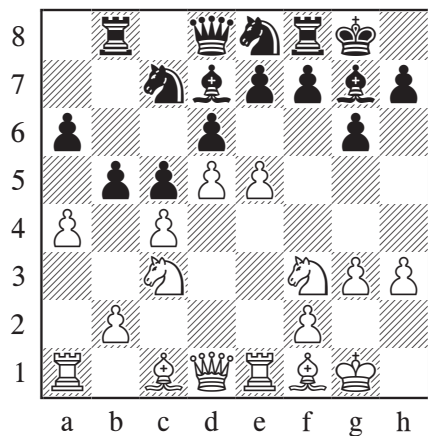
13.e5 ♙fe8

13...♙g4 has only occurred in one game. 14.exd6 (14.♙f4N is a good alternative: 14...dxe5 15.♙xe5 ♙xe5 16.♙xe5 ♙xe5 17.♖xe5±) 14...exd6 15.♙f4 ♙e8 16.h3 ♙gf6 17.♙d2± White had a typical edge thanks to his extra space and Black's lack of counterplay in Nikolic – Ondersteijn, Netherlands 2010.

14.h3

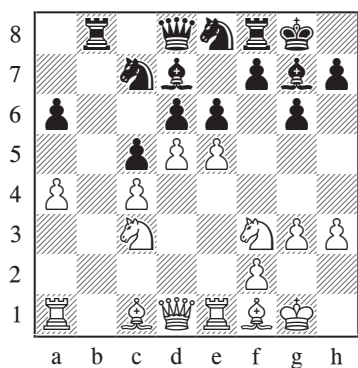
White should calmly maintain the tension in the centre.

14...b5



15.b3! b4

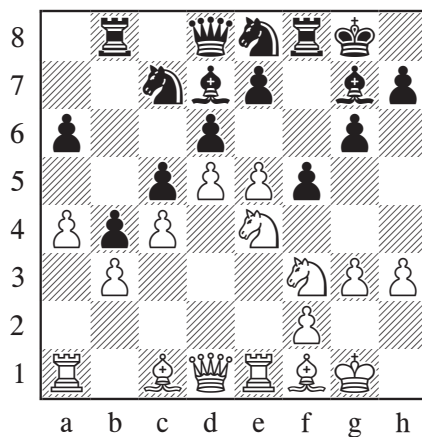
Another nice example continued: 15...bxc4 16.bxc4 e6 Black is trying to free himself, but it didn't work well after:



17.♙e3 ♖c8 18.♞c1 exd5 19.cxd5 ♙xh3 20.exd6 ♜xd6 21.♙xc5± The play opened up in White's favour in Cernousek – Docekal, Czech Republic 2011.

16.♞e4 f5

Black was trying to free himself in Donner – Iskov, Amsterdam 1982. Here I found a remarkable way to improve White's play:

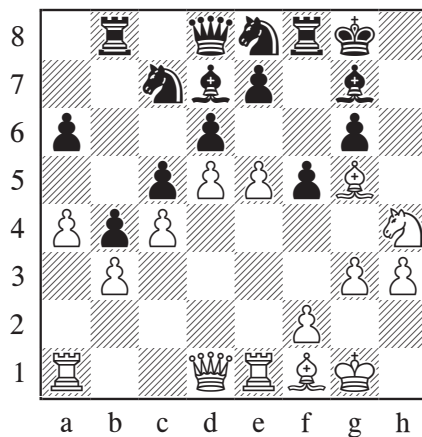


17.♞eg5! N h6 18.♞h4!!

This piece sacrifice is the point behind the previous move.

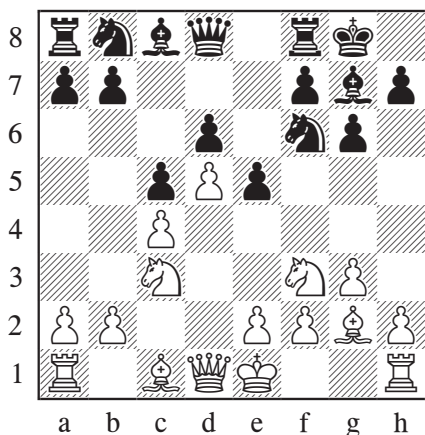
18...hxcg5 19.♙xg5

White has powerful compensation due to his space advantage and the passivity of Black's pieces. Play may continue:



19...dxe5 20.♞xg6 ♞f7 21.♞xe5 ♙xe5 22.♞xe5

White has a serious initiative and his chances are much better.

B) 7...e5

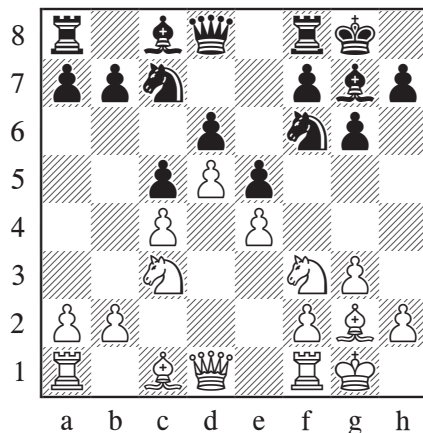
My first reaction to this move was a feeling of surprise that someone would deliberately block the dark-squared bishop. However, Black's move order makes a lot more sense when you think of it as transposing to a version of the Czech Benoni where White has been 'tricked' into a different set-up from what I will be recommending in *Volume 2B*. Fortunately, White still has good prospects as long as he handles the position correctly.

8.0-0

8.dxe6?! ♟xe6 9.♟g5 is well met by 9...♟xc4! 10.♟xb7 ♟bd7 11.♟xa8 ♞xa8 12.0-0 d5☞ when Black has excellent play for the exchange, as demonstrated in many games.

We will analyse **B1) 8...♟a6**, with ideas to play on the queenside, followed by **B2) 8...♟g4**, **B3) 8...♟h5**, and **B4) 8...♟e8**, each of which prepares kingside play with ...f5, and finally the most flexible **B5) 8...♟bd7**.

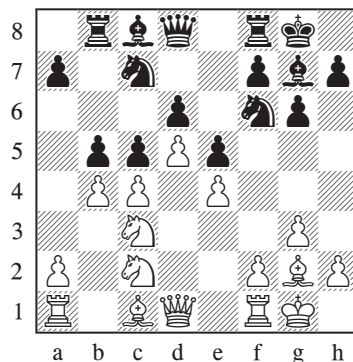
8...a6 9.a4 does not really change anything, and will most probably transpose to one of the later variations where the same pawn moves take place.

B1) 8...♟a6 9.e4 ♟c7**10.♟e1!**

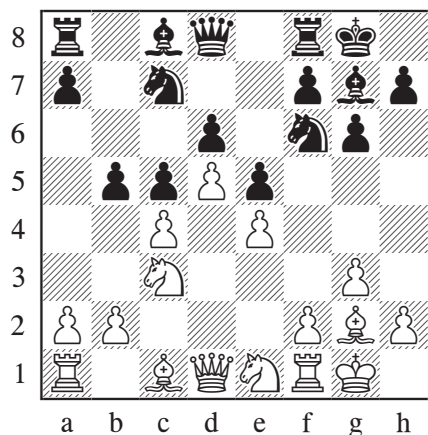
There is no need to prevent ...b5 by means of a2-a4, as the following line shows.

10...b5

10...♞b8 should be met by 11.♟c2!N (this is stronger than 11.♟d3 b5 when White has no time for b2-b4) 11...b5 12.b4! and White has excellent prospects, for instance:



12...♟d7!? (in *GM 2 I* gave 12...bxc4 13.bxc5 dxc5 14.♟e3 ♟fe8 15.♟a3 when Black is under serious positional pressure) The text move is a better try, but after 13.bxc5 ♟xc5 14.♞b1 ♟d7 15.♟e3 White keeps a pleasant advantage.

**11.cxb5 ♖b8**

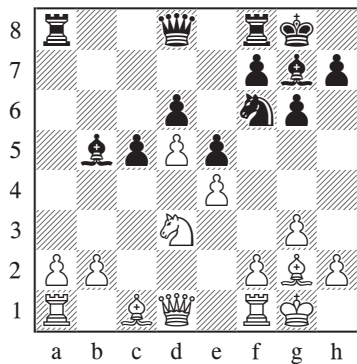
Another option is:

11...a6 12.bxa6 ♕xa6 13.♗d3

I am sceptical about Black's plan of aiming for Benko-style compensation when his dark-squared bishop is blocked by his own e5-pawn.

13...♗b5 14.♗xb5 ♕xb5

This position was reached in Schreiner – Schwierskott, Bavaria 2004, and now I worked out the following line for White:



15.a4!N ♕a6

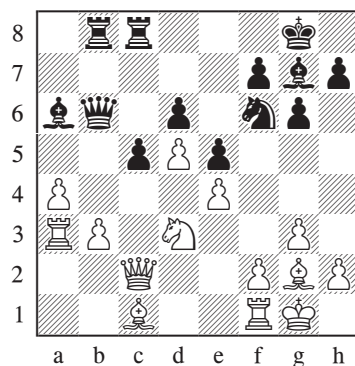
15...c4 16.♗b4 ♖a5 17.♗c6 ♕xc6 18.dxc6 ♖c5 19.♕d2 ♖xc6 20.♖c2 also favours White, due to his dangerous a-pawn and bishop pair.

16.♖c2 ♖b8 17.b3

With the following nice idea:

17...♖b6 18.♖a3 ♖fc8

Black is all set to play ...c4 with a fine position, but White can prevent it with:

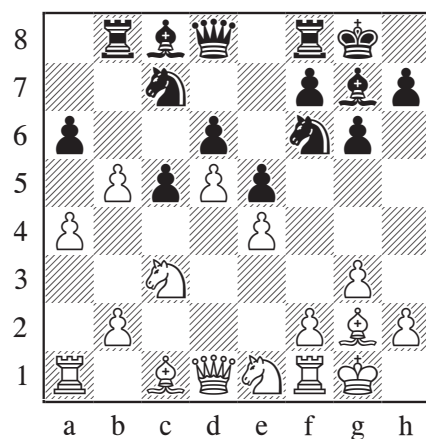


19.♗b2! ♕xf1 20.♕xf1

White has superb compensation for the exchange and his chances are much higher.

12.a4 a6

Here I found a useful improvement.

**13.♗d3!N**

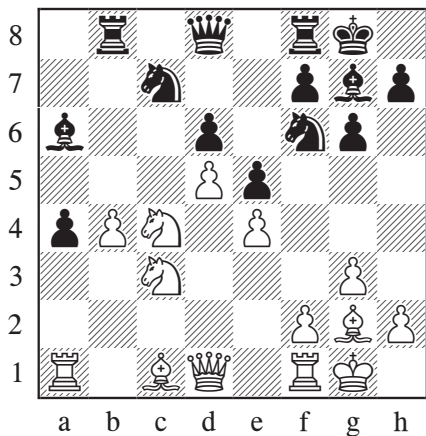
13.♗c2 axb5 14.b4 gave White some advantage in Pflieger – Shirazi, Lone Pine 1981, but the text move is stronger and more thematic.

13...axb5 14.b4 c4 15.♗b2 bxa4

15...♕d7 16.♕d2 is clearly better for White.

16.♗xc4 ♕a6

16...♙xb4 17.♞xa4 ♞xa4 18.♞xa4 ♞a6
19.♞e3 gives White serious positional pressure.

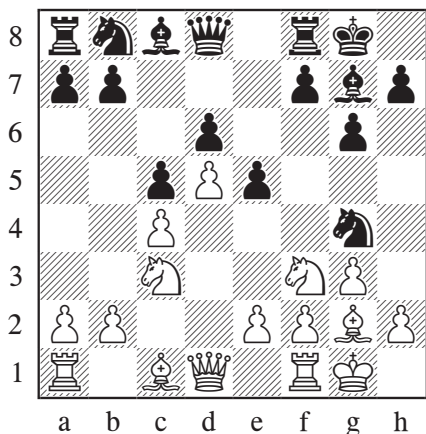


17.♞a5! ♞xf1 18.♞xf1

Once again, White's main strategic idea is a positional exchange sacrifice, which leaves him clearly on top.

B2) 8...♞g4

This method of preparing ...f5 is rather slow, as we will see.



9.e4 ♞h6

It would be risky for Black to play:
9...f5?!

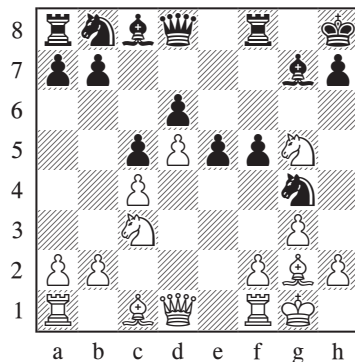
The general rule for this structure is that

Black should not allow White's knight to penetrate to g5 and e6.

10.♞g5 ♞h8

This occurred in Grachev – A. Zhigalko, Budva 2003. When I re-analysed this line, I realized White has a nice idea which I overlooked in *GM 2*:

11.exf5N gxf5



12.♞h3!

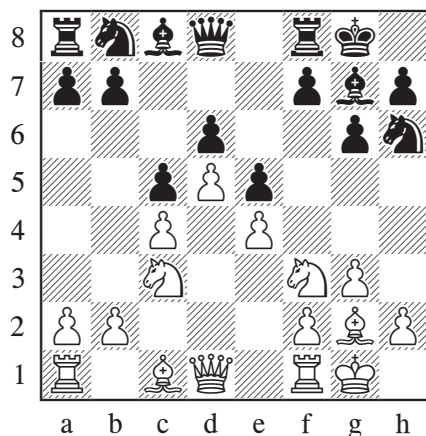
This engine suggestion turns out to be surprisingly powerful.

12...♞h6

12...♞a6 13.♞xg4! fxg4 14.f3 gives White excellent attacking chances.

13.♞h5

White's advantage is beyond any doubt; he just needs to choose the right moment to play ♞e6.

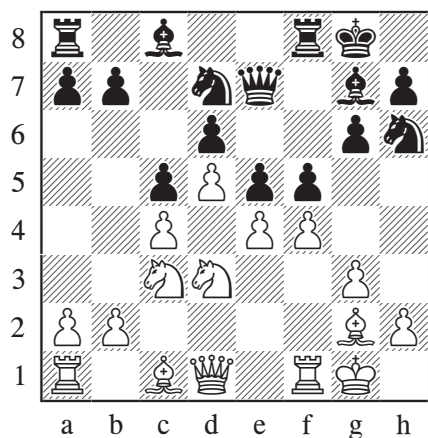


10.♘e1

I think White's most promising plan is to place this knight on d3 and follow up with f2-f4.

10...f5 11.♘d3 ♘d7 12.f4 ♖e7

12...♘f7 was an attempt to improve Black's play in Sebenik – Brigljevic, Zagreb 2010, but it looks dubious after 13.exf5!N gxf5 14.fxe5 ♘dx5 15.♘f4 ♖e7 16.♗e2, with a clear positional plus for White.

**13.♞e1N**

This is a natural improvement over the slow 13.♘h1, as was played in Abramovic – Grigore, Obrenovac 2004. My analysis continues:

13...fxe4 14.♘xe4 ♘f7

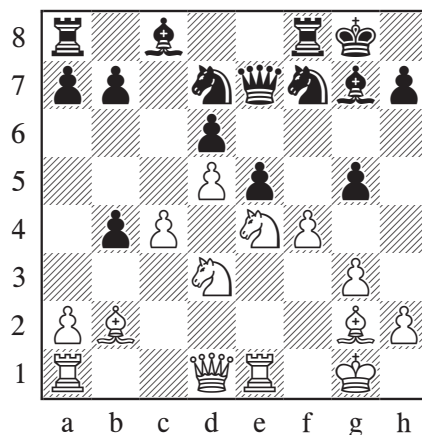
14...♘f5 15.♘d2 ♘d4 gives Black a semblance of activity, but 16.♘c3 leaves White clearly better.

15.b4!

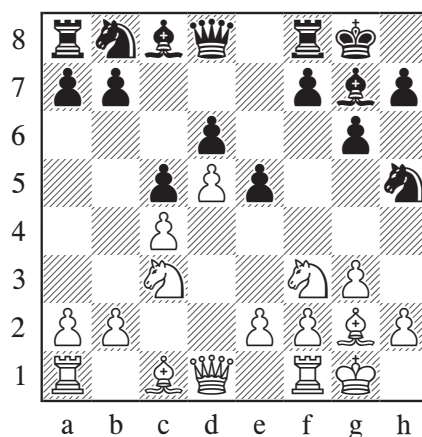
15.♘d2 was my suggestion in *GM 2*, and it's certainly enough for a small edge. The text move is more ambitious and objectively stronger.

15...cxb4

This seems more critical than 15...exf5 16.♘xf4 or 15...b6 16.♘b2, each of which gives White a clear advantage.

16.♘b2 g5**17.c5! gxf4 18.gxf4 dxc5 19.♞c1!**

The complications work out in White's favour.

B3) 8...♘h5

The trouble with this move is that Black finds it harder to carry out ...f5, as his knight is tactically vulnerable on h5.

9.e4 h6

Black had better cover the g5-square before playing ...f5, as is almost always the case when the knight stands on f3 in these lines. I checked two other possibilities.

9...f5?!

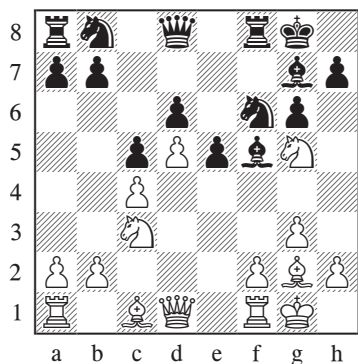
As usual, this is too risky.

10.exf5 ♟xf5

10...gxf5?! is even worse after 11.♘xe5!? (11.♘g5 ♘f6 transposes to 11...♘f6 in the notes to variation B43 below, but the text may be even better) 11...♘xg3 12.fxg3! (this is stronger than 12.hxg3, which I gave in GM 2) 12...dxe5 (12...♙xe5 13.♚h5 is also unpleasant for Black) 13.♙e3 ♘a6 14.d6 with a huge advantage.

11.♘g5 ♘f6

In Ustinov – Sanditov, St Petersburg 1998, the simplest continuation would have been:



12.♘e6!N ♙xe6 13.dxe6 ♘c6 14.♙g5 h6
15.♙xf6 ♙xf6 16.♘d5

With a clear advantage for White.

9...a6 10.a4 ♚e8?!

Black reinforces the h5-knight in preparation for ...f5 but the whole plan falls short, as we will soon see.

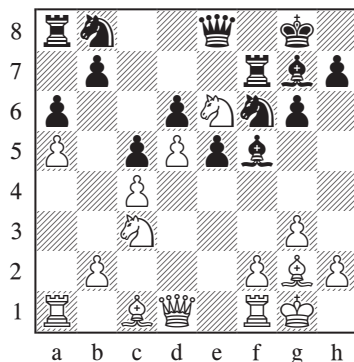
11.a5! f5 12.exf5 ♟xf5

Black has to recapture with bishop after all, as 12...gxf5? 13.♘g5 ♘f6 14.♘a4! looks horrible for him.

13.♘g5 ♘f6 14.♘e6 ♟f7?!

14...♙xe6 15.dxe6 ♚xe6 16.♙xb7 ♟a7 17.♙g2 ♘bd7 18.b3 gives White a clear advantage, but was still the lesser evil.

In Mikanovic – Pestov, Ottawa 2007, White should have played:

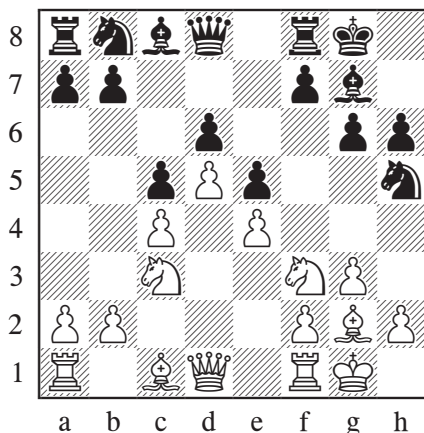


15.♘xg7N ♘xg7

15...♟xg7 does not really change anything.

16.h3+–

White has a strategically winning position. All he has to do is advance on the kingside and activate his dark-squared bishop, and Black's position will collapse.

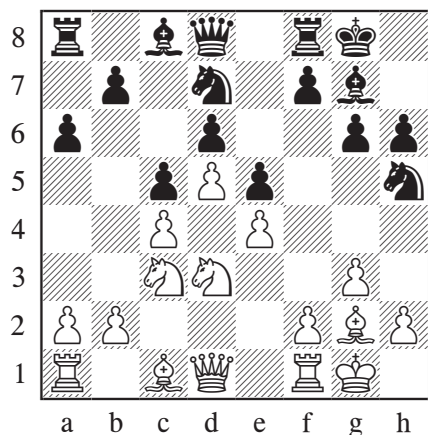


10.♘e1

White's knight is heading for d3, where it will support both the f2-f4 and b2-b4 breaks. Meanwhile Black is still in no position to carry out the ...f5 advance.

10...♘d7 11.♘d3 a6

In Grebionkin – Klimenko, Internet 2004, White continued with 12.a4 and enjoyed some advantage. However, I think it would have been slightly more accurate to play:



12.♙e3!?!N

There is no need to prevent Black's queenside play, as the following line demonstrates.

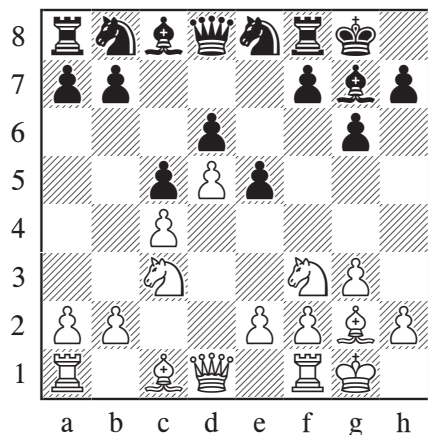
12...b5 13.cxb5 axb5 14.b4

We saw something similar in variation B1. Play may continue:

14...c4 15.♘b2

White is clearly better, as he can break open the queenside with a2-a4 in the near future.

B4) 8...♘e8



This time Black prepares ...f5 while putting his knight on a less exposed square than in the previous two variations.

9.e4

Here I considered three main options for Black: B41) 9...a6, B42) 9...h6 and B43) 9...f5.

9...♘d7 is probably Black's best bet; this position will be covered in variation B51 on page 318.

9...♙g4

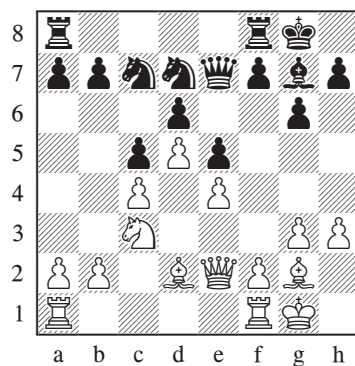
Trading the light-squared bishop for a knight can hardly be a good idea.

10.h3 ♙xf3 11.♙xf3 ♘d7

11...f5 12.exf5 gxf5 occurred in Panelo Munoz – Munoz Pantoja, Montcada 2010, and now 13.g4!N is a powerful positional tool (well known in the King's Indian) to secure the e4-square for White's pieces. Play may continue 13...♙f6 14.gxf5 ♙xf5 15.♙xf5 ♙xf5 16.♘e4 ♘d7 17.h4! with a thematic positional advantage.

12.♙e2 ♘c7 13.♙d2 ♙e7

Here too, Black avoids 13...f5 due to 14.exf5 gxf5 15.g4!± when he will inevitably lose the battle for the e4-square.



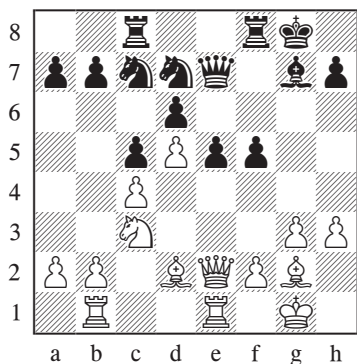
14.♙ab1 ♙ac8 15.♙fe1

15.a3 also comes into consideration.

15...f5

Black finally decides to act, but perhaps he should have remained in a defensive shell.

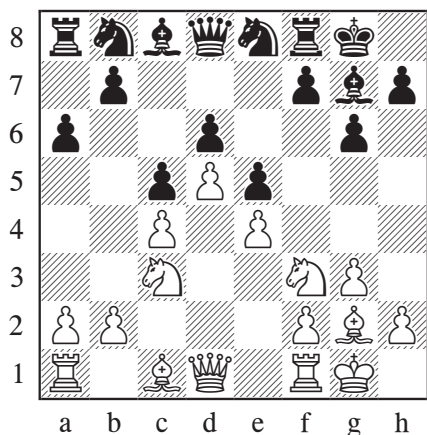
16.exf5 gxf5



17.g4! ♖h8 18.gxf5 ♜xf5 19.♗e4

White was firmly in control in Semenyuk – Kogan, USSR 1975.

B41) 9...a6



This is a rare choice in this exact position, but after White's next move the number of games jumps considerably, as the moves ...a6 and a2-a4 could easily have occurred earlier in the game.

10.a4 b6

10...♗d7 is covered on page 320 – see 10...♗e8 in the notes to variation B52.

11.♕e3!

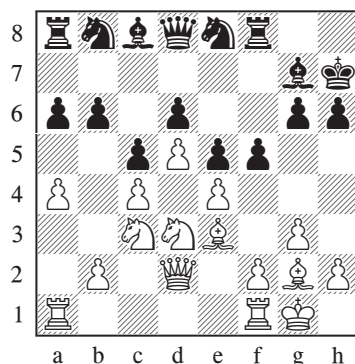
This is the most accurate move. By keeping the option of ♗g5, White effectively rules out ...f5 for a little longer.

11.♗e1 has been much more common, but 11...f5 12.♗d3 ♗f6 leads to decent play for Black.

11...♗d7

11...f5 leads to an inferior position for Black after 12.exf5 gxf5 13.♗g5!, just as in several other lines with this pawn structure.

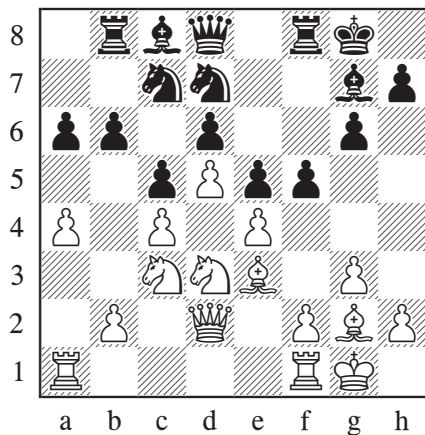
I also considered: 11...h6 12.♖d2 ♔h7 13.♗e1 f5 14.♗d3



14...a5 Against other moves, White can seize the initiative on the queenside by means of b2-b4 and/or a4-a5. 15.f4! White has an obvious advantage, just like in the main illustrative game below.

12.♖d2 ♜b8 13.♗e1 ♗c7 14.♗d3 f5

White is just in time to meet 14...b5 with 15.cxb5 axb5 16.b4!, a thematic idea which we have already seen in variations B1 and B3.



15.f3!

We are following a game of Viktor Korchnoi from all the way back in 1956, when he was in his mid-twenties. Although he had not yet become an elite player, his deep understanding of the game is evident at this instructive moment of the game. It was too soon for 15.b4 because 15...f4! works well for Black, so White prepares to retreat his bishop to f2 in that scenario.

15...a5

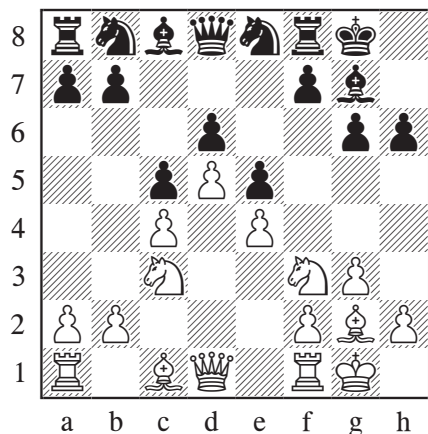
Otherwise White plays b2-b4, with an easy initiative on the queenside.

16.f4!

White could have played this on move 15 but it is much stronger here, as Black will constantly have to be on guard against a knight arriving on the b5-outpost.

16...exf4 17.♗xf4

White was clearly better in Korchnoi – Kotkov, Molotov 1956.

B42) 9...h6

Black intends to carry out ...f5 without allowing ♖g5, but the idea costs time and weakens g6.

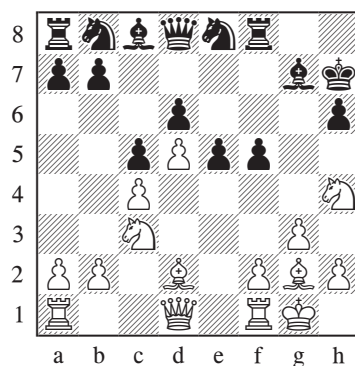
10.♗h4 ♖h7

Black insists on preparing ...f5 but his king may prove vulnerable on h7.

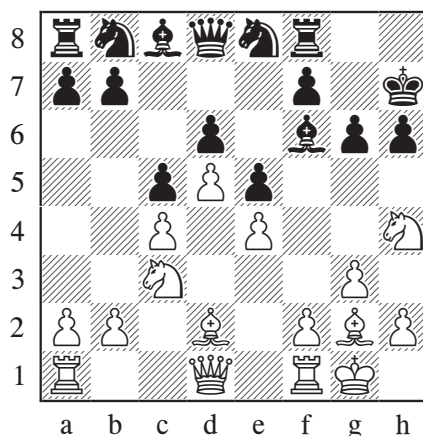
White can meet 10...a6 with the calm 11.♞b1, and if 11...b5 12.b4 cxb4 13.♞xb4± the opening of the queenside works in White's favour.

11.♗d2 ♗f6

Black refrains from 11...f5, which is understandable in view of: 12.exf5 gxf5



13.♞h5! ♞f6 14.g4! Black is in trouble.

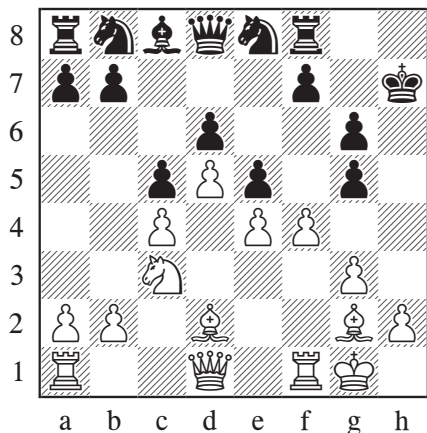
**12.♗f3 ♗g5?**

12...♗g7 would have been better, although 13.♗e1 f5 14.♗d3 followed by f2-f4 leads to complications which favour White.

The text move is too artificial, and the absence of Black's dark-squared bishop proved a decisive factor in the following game of mine.

13. ♖xg5† hxg5 14. f4!

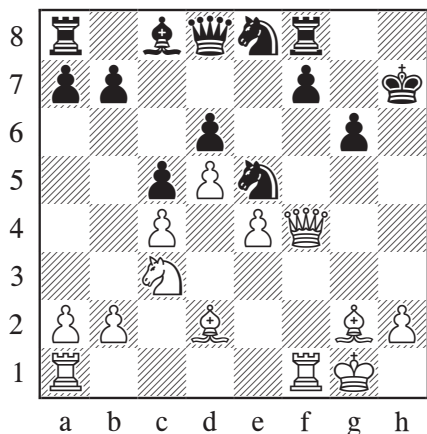
Opening the kingside is obvious and strong.



14... gxf4 15. gxf4 exf4 16. ♖f3!

White quickly develops a dangerous initiative.

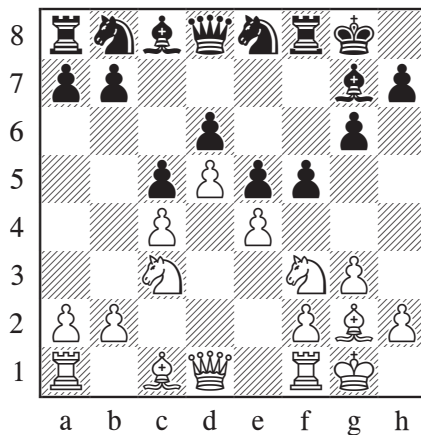
16... ♖d7 17. ♖xf4 ♖e5



18. ♖h6† ♖g8 19. ♖g5 f6 20. ♖f4±

Avrukh – Weisbuch, Biel 2008.

B43) 9...f5

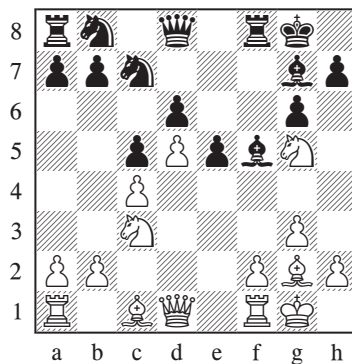


This has been Black's most popular choice but it seems a bit premature, since White has a clear way to seize the initiative.

10. exf5 gxf5

Clearly this is the way Black would like to recapture.

10... ♖xf5 has only been tried in one game. 11. ♖g5 ♖c7 This occurred in Truta – Nanevski, Yugoslavia 1977, and now my preference would be:

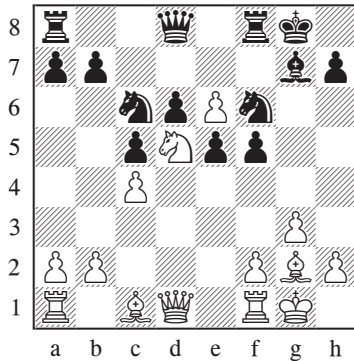


12. g4!N ♖c8 13. ♖ge4 With positional domination.

11. ♖g5! ♖c7

This seems to me like Black's most stubborn defence.

After 11...♘f6 12.♖e6 ♘xe6 13.dxe6 ♖c6 14.♗d5 White's advantage is obvious, for example:



14...♞b8 15.♙g5 ♞e8 16.♗xf6† ♙xf6 17.♙xf6 ♞xf6 18.♞xd6± Martin – Ebert, Ruhrgebiet 1998.

11...e4

When I checked the database, I was amazed to see that Munoz Pantoja, a Spanish GM, has played this move seven times, achieving a decent plus score with it. Despite his faith in it and good results so far, White is almost winning!

12.f3

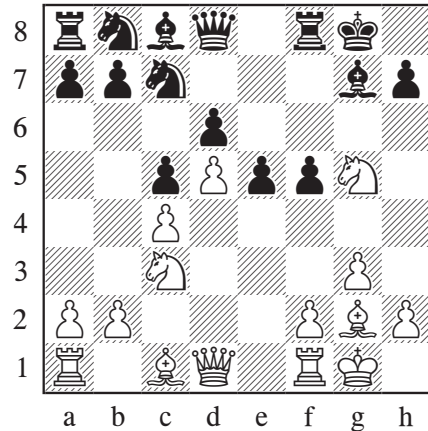
12.♞h5!? should be equally effective. 12...♗f6 13.♞h4 ♗a6 14.f3 exf3 This has occurred in four games and each time White has recaptured with the bishop. Even though this offers him a clear advantage, 15.♗xf3!N is even stronger, for instance 15...♙d7 16.♙h6 ♗g4 17.♙xg7 ♖xg7 18.♞ae1 and Black is in serious trouble.

12...♙d4† 13.♗h1 e3 14.f4 ♞e7 15.♗e2 h6 16.♗f3 ♙g7 17.♗h4 ♞f7

Now in Narciso Dublan – Munoz Pantoja, Badalona 2010, White should have continued:

18.♞b3N

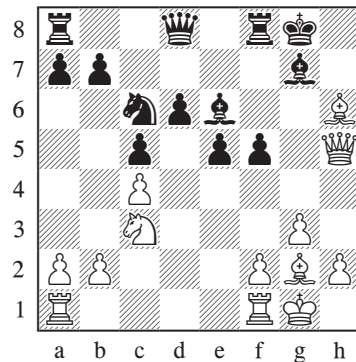
Winning the e3-pawn, with a huge advantage.



12.♗b5?

Removing a defender of the e6-square makes a lot of sense.

A good alternative is 12.♞h5 h6 13.♗e6 ♗xe6 14.dxe6 ♖c6 15.♙xh6 ♙xe6 as played in Horvath – Szell, Solymar 1996, when White should have continued:

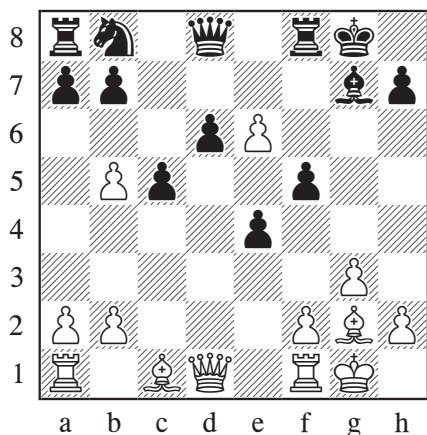


16.♞ad1N White keeps some advantage, bearing in mind that the c4-pawn is untouchable: 16...♙xc4? 17.b3 ♙e6 18.♗d5 gives White a crushing initiative.

12...♗xb5 13.cxb5 e4!?N

Black needs to improve on 13...♞e8 14.♗e6, when he was already close to losing in Cobb – Morris, Cardiff 2008.

14.♗e6 ♙xe6 15.dxe6



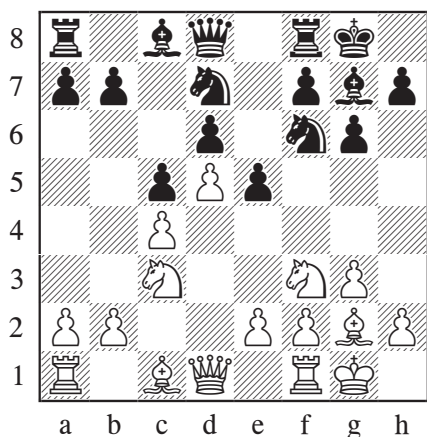
15...♔e7

15...d5? is pointless in view of 16.e7.

16.♔d5 ♖e8 17.♙h3±

Black has significant problems on the light squares.

B5) 8...♘bd7



This seems like the most logical and flexible move.

9.e4

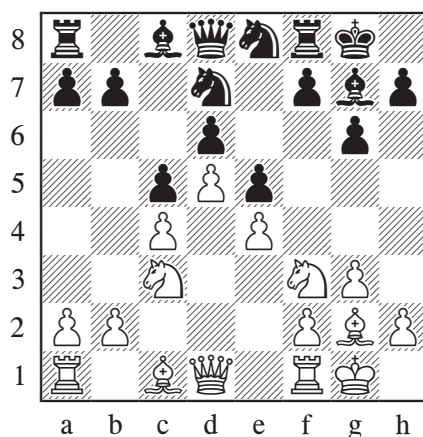
On page 131 of *GM 2*, in the chapter covering the Czech Benoni, I mentioned that I wished to avoid this specific position, but I overlooked the fact that Black could reach it via the move order given in this chapter, as

well as via the King's Indian. Fortunately, a deeper inspection reveals that White still has fine prospects.

We will analyse B51) 9...♘e8 and B52) 9...a6.

B51) 9...♘e8

Black prepares to advance his f-pawn when the time is right – which usually means when White's knight moves out of range of g5.



10.a3!

I realized when working on this volume that this is the right plan for White. It is best to keep the knight on f3 for the time being, as the possibility of ♘g5 acts as a strong deterrent to the ...f5 plan. This means White has to find a constructive plan without moving the knight for at least another move or two, and preparing b2-b4 is the most useful idea available.

10.♘e1 allows 10...f5, when 11.♘d3 ♘b6 looks reasonable for Black.

10.♙e3 keeps the knight on f3 but 10...♘c7 defends the e6-square in advance, thus taking the sting out of the ♘g5 plan. Play may continue 11.♘e1 f5 12.♘d3 ♘f6 and Black is okay, as I pointed out in *GM 2*.

10...a6

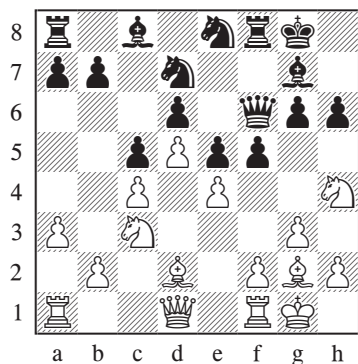
I hardly need state that 10...f5?! is premature in view of 11.♘g5.

10...h6?!

Once again, this preparatory move weakens the light squares.

11.♙d2 f5

Black should probably try something else, but refraining from ...f5 would be an admission that his previous move failed to serve its purpose.

12.♘h4 ♖f6**13.f4!N**

White was better after 13.exf5 in Kapengut – Smejkal, Oerebro 1966, but the text move is even more powerful. Black has nothing better than:

13...exf4 14.exf5 gxf5 15.♖xf4 ♘e5 16.♙c2±

White's positional advantage is beyond any doubts.

11.b4 b6

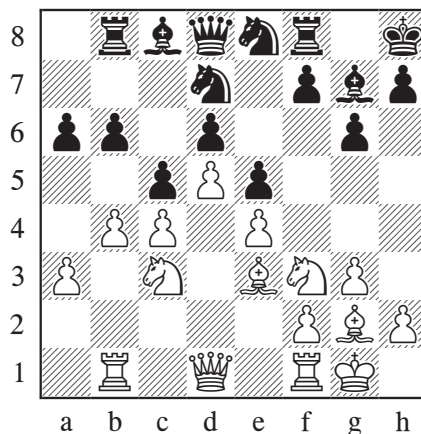
Black is playing sensibly, fortifying his queenside while delaying the ...f5 break until the knight has moved from f3. Nevertheless, White keeps the more comfortable game thanks to his significant space advantage.

12.♙e3 ♘h8 13.♖b1

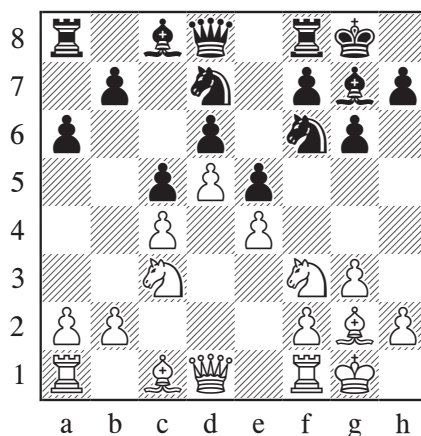
White continues to improve his position while keeping the knight on f3.

13...♖b8

All this happened in Jenkinson – Davidson, corr. 2008. Here I like the follow arrangement for White:

**14.♙e2!N h6 15.♖b3**

White intends to increase the queenside pressure with ♖fb1, while 15...f5? still doesn't work in view of 16.♘h4! and White wins material.

B52) 9...a6**10.a4**

We have already seen that the moves ...a6 and a2-a4 can occur at many different moments, so it is no surprise that this position has arisen in a lot of games.

10...♖b8

Black has tried all kinds of moves but we have already covered a variety of plans in the previous variations, so I will focus on Black's most popular continuations and show the most important ideas for White.

10...♘e8 11.a5

If Black plays ...a6 without ...b6, then I generally favour the a4-a5 plan. If Black does nothing on the queenside, White will eventually prepare b2-b4 with a strong initiative there, so playing for ...b6 looks normal.

11...♖b8 12.♙d2!

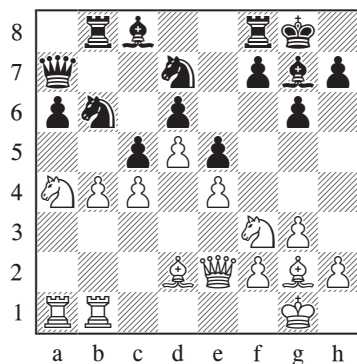
This is the most flexible square for the bishop.

12...b5 13.axb6 ♖xb6

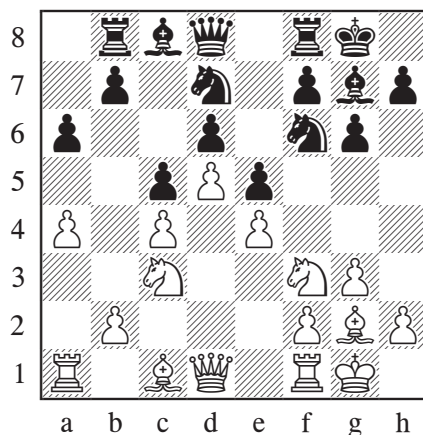
13.♘xb6 occurred in Lalic – Wu, London 2007. I think 14.b3N is White's best move, and it immediately transposes to our main line.

14.♖e2 ♘c7 15.♙a4 ♖a7 16.♖fb1 ♙a8 17.b4 ♘ab6

This occurred in S. Ivanov – Laveryd, Sweden 2001, when White should have continued:

**18.♘c3!N**

With an excellent position, since 18...cxb4? runs into 19.♙b5 ♖b7 20.♙xd6 with a decisive advantage.

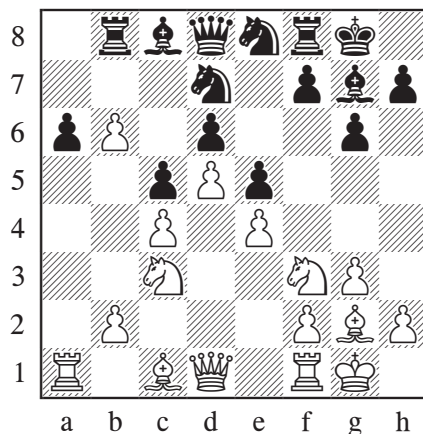
**11.a5!**

Once again, I recommend this way of playing on the queenside.

11.♙e1 has been much more popular, but the position after 11...♙e8 12.♙d3 f5 13.f4 ♖e7 is not clear at all.

11...b6 12.axb6 ♘e8

12...♖xb6 13.♖d3!? ♙h8 14.♙d2± also gave White the better chances in Pascual Perez – Narkun, email 2009.

**13.b3N**

13.♖d3 occurred in another email game between Pascual Perez and Narkun, but the text move would be my choice.

13...♖xb6

13...♖xb6 leads nowhere for Black after 14.♞a3. After the text move the knight appears misplaced, but at least the c8-bishop is happier.

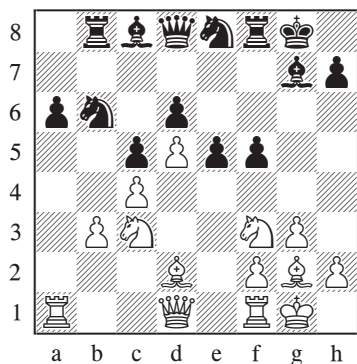
14.♙d2

14.♖c2 is similar and could transpose.

14...♖c7

I also checked:

14...f5 15.exf5 gxf5

**16.♗g5! ♖c7**

Otherwise ♖e6 will be too powerful.

17.♞e1!?

17.♞h5 is a fine alternative: 17...h6 18.♗f3 ♞e8 19.♞xe8 ♞xe8 20.♗h4! and White has a significant advantage due to Black's lack of space.

17...♞f6

17...h6 18.♗f3 only helps White, as the knight is heading to h4 with strong effect.

18.♞a2 ♙d7 19.♗e2

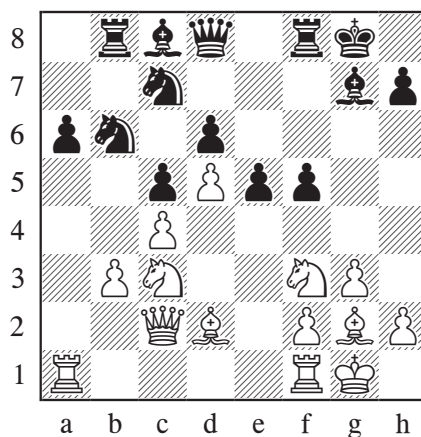
The position remains complex but White has clearly better chances, for a few reasons. Black's passive minor pieces are restricted by White's strong pawn chain, and White has some attacking chances on the kingside.

15.♞c2

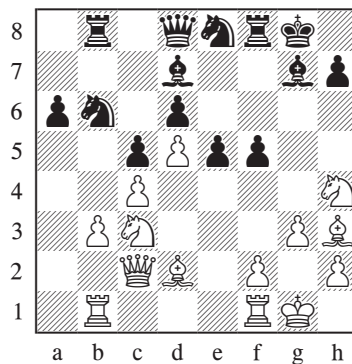
White has arranged his pieces ideally on the queenside. Despite the earlier novelty by White, a couple of games have reached this position via different move orders.

15...f5

This seems like a logical choice, as Black has overprotected the e6-square in anticipation of White's typical ♗g5 move. However, the knight has another trick up its sleeve.

16.exf5 gxf5**17.♗h4! ♞f6**

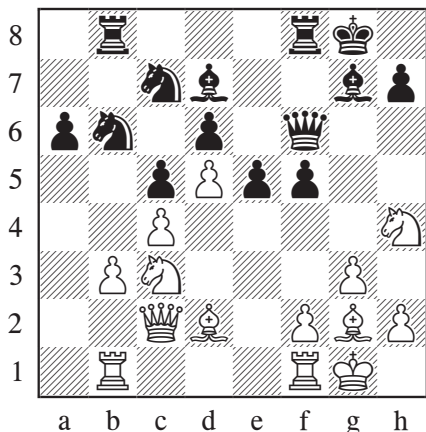
Another game saw: 17...♙d7 18.♞ab1 ♗e8 19.♙h3



19...f4?! (this is a positional mistake, but even after the superior 19...♞f6N 20.f3 White has a solid positional edge) 20.♙xd7 ♗xd7 21.f3 Black was left with a strategically tough position in Gulko – Rashkovsky, Moscow 1984.

18.♞ab1 ♙d7

This occurred in Hulak – Ljubicic, Sibenik 2007. To my great surprise, I discovered a remarkable tactical resource for White:



19. ♖e4!!N

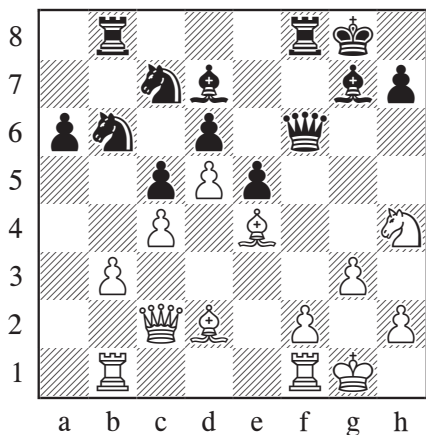
The positional 19. ♖d1N ♖c8 20. ♖e3 ♖e7 21. ♗h3 would maintain a solid advantage, but the text is even stronger.

19...fxe4

Black has to accept the sacrifice, since after 19... ♖e7 20. ♗g5 he loses material.

20. ♗xe4

Black's minor pieces are so poor that White has more than enough compensation. For instance:



20... ♗h6 21. ♗xh7† ♖g7 22. f4!

White has a powerful initiative.

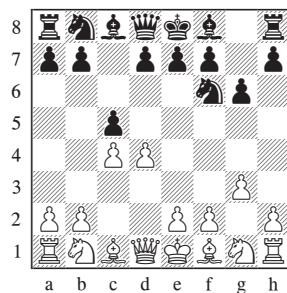
Conclusion

This version of the Benoni may be "Reluctant", but it still presents plenty of challenges. In the event of 7... ♖a6 8.0-0 ♖c7, I now find 9.e4! to be White's most accurate move order. Generally White's space advantage should ensure him of good prospects, although it helps to be aware of some details, such as making sure that the light-squared bishop gets to e2 (or sometimes f1) in time to prevent the ...b5 break.

7...e5 is a tricky move as it leads to a Czech Benoni structure, with White having committed to a formation which would not necessarily be his first choice against the pure Czech Benoni move order (see the forthcoming *Volume 2B* for more about that topic). Nevertheless, I like White's prospects after 8.0-0 followed by e2-e4. Black has many possible plans and move orders, but here is a recap of the main guidelines. White generally does well to leave the knight on f3 in order to deter an early ...f5, as the reply ♖g5 will invariably lead to problems for Black. If Black plays ...h6 followed by ...f5, then ♖h4 may prove unpleasant for him. If Black does not do anything committal, then moves like ♗d2, a2-a3, b2-b4 and ♖b1 are always useful. On the other hand, if Black goes for an early ...a6, then a2-a4-a5 is a good way to improve White's prospects on the queenside.

Chapter 17

Other Lines



Benko Attempt

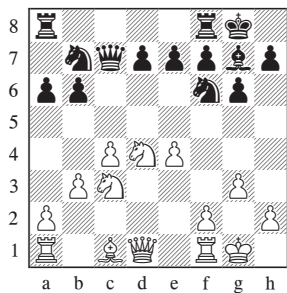
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c5

4.dxc5!

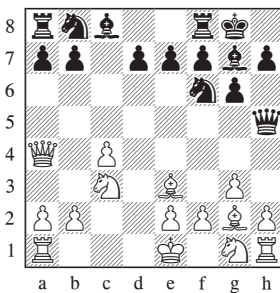
A) 4... ♖a6 5. ♘g2 ♗xc5 6. ♗c3 ♙g7 7. ♗f3 0-0 8.0-0	324
A1) 8...b6	325
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A1) after 12...a6



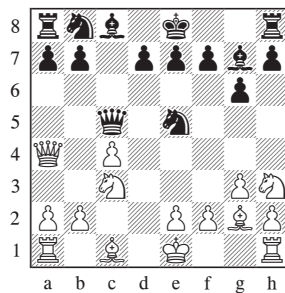
13. ♙e1!N

B1) note to 8... ♔c7



9.h3!N

B2) after 8... ♗e5



9. ♗d5!N

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c5

This is an interesting and quite challenging move order, which I did not consider in *GM 2*. Black is trying to get an improved version of a Benko Gambit. The early ...c5 plan is the subject of a chapter in *Dangerous Weapons: The King's Indian*, where some interesting ideas are presented for Black.

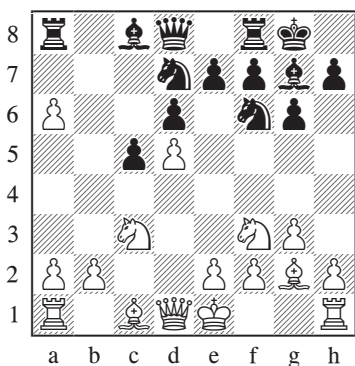
3...♗g7 4.♗g2 c5 5.dxc5 transposes to 4...♗g7 5.♗g2 in the notes below.

4.dxc5!

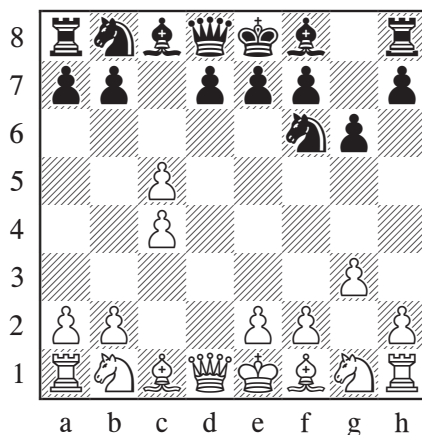
This unusual move seems like a fine solution, and it goes unmentioned in the *Dangerous Weapons* chapter. That book mostly focuses on the position where the moves ♘f3 and ...♗g7 have already been played, after which the dxc5 move does not work so well.

4.♘f3 cxd4 5.♘xd4 leads to a well-known variation of the Symmetrical English.

4.d5 b5 5.cxb5 a6 leads to a problematic version of the Benko for us: 6.bxa6 d6! Black delays the recapture of the a6-pawn. 7.♘c3 ♗g7 8.♗g2 0-0 9.♘f3 ♘bd7!



10.0-0 (As I explained in *GM 2*, it's important for White to meet the ...♘bd7-b6 manoeuvre with 10.♖b1 ♘b6 11.b3, but here it runs into 11...♗f5!; this is why Black delayed recapturing on a6.) 10...♘b6! This position has occurred in a lot of games, with good results for Black.

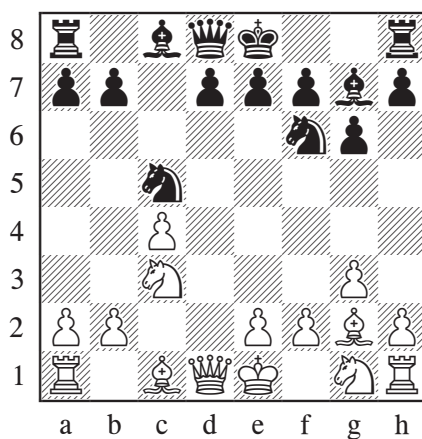


The text move has been a rare choice so far, but quite a few strong GMs have started using it. Black has two sensible ways to recapture the c5-pawn: A) 4...♘a6 and B) 4...♖a5†.

4...♗g7 5.♗g2 does not change anything, as Black will have to transpose to one of the main lines with ...♘a6 or ...♖a5(†) within the next move or two.

A) 4...♘a6 5.♗g2 ♘xc5 6.♘c3 ♗g7

Both sides continue with their natural developing moves.



7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0

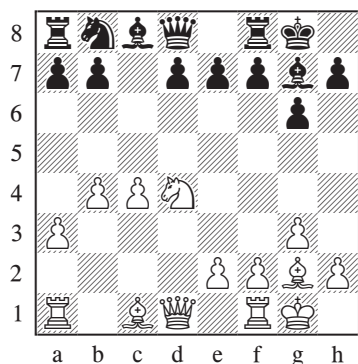
Black can prepare to develop his light-squared bishop with A1) 8...b6 or A2) 8...d6.

I also checked:

8...♖fe4 9.♗xe4 ♗xe4 10.♗d4 ♖c5

10...♗f6N places the knight on a better square but 11.♔d3!? is a good answer, intending 11...d5 (11...d6 12.b3 gives White a pleasant version of the Symmetrical English) 12.cxd5 ♗xd5 13.♖d1 and Black is under pressure.

11.b4 ♗a6 12.a3 ♗b8

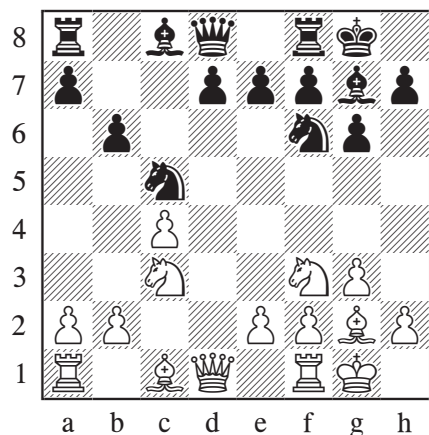


This occurred in Bok – Reinderman, Amstelveen (rapid) 2016. There is no doubt that White should be better here, but somehow Black was able to achieve a relatively quick draw in the game. I would suggest:

13.♗b2N d6 14.e3

With a lasting positional plus.

A1) 8...b6



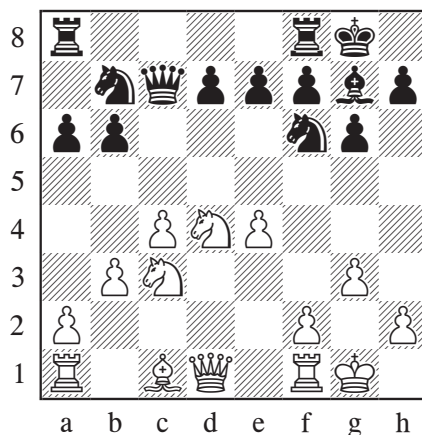
Black would be fine if his bishop was already on b7, but it's White to move.

9.♗d4! ♗b7 10.♗xb7 ♗xb7 11.e4

The Maroczy structure should offer White a stable edge, especially taking into account the misplaced knight on b7. A recent example continued:

11...♔c7 12.b3 a6

Bok – Paravyan, St Petersburg 2016. Here I believe White should have played:



13.♖e1!N d6

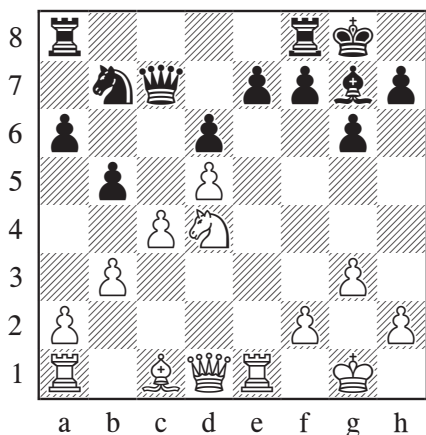
If Black covers the d5-square with 13...e6, White can play 14.e5 ♗e8 15.♗f4 d6 16.♗f3 with the better game.

14.♗d5 ♗xd5 15.exd5

Reaching a favourable pawn structure. A sample line is:

15...b5

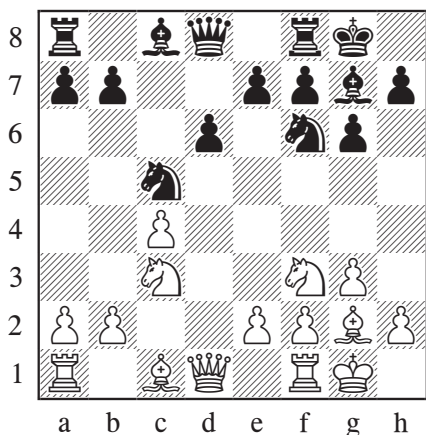
This isn't Black's best move, but it's the only really critical option that White must consider. Fortunately we have time to get organized with:



16. g5! f8 17. c1

With clearly better chances.

A2) 8...d6



This is definitely the main continuation.

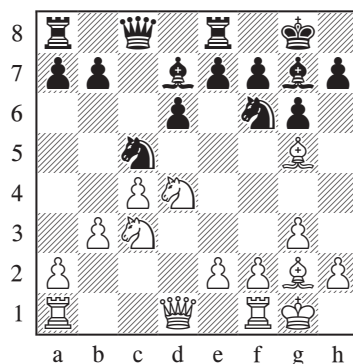
9. d4 b8

This has been the most popular move so I will take it as the main line. Here are a few other examples:

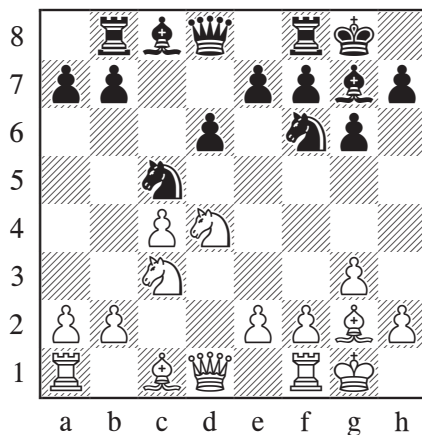
9...a6 10.h3 leads to similar play and may well transpose, as Black usually puts the rook on b8 at some point to prepare ...b5.

9...d7 10.b3 c8 takes too much time. The following game is quite instructive: 11. g5

(There is nothing especially wrong with 11. e1 h3 12. h1, but exchanging the light-squared bishops is not such an impressive plan for Black, so I would rather not spend time preventing it.) 11...e8 Defending against the positional threat of xf6 followed by d5.



12. c1 h3 13. xh3 xh3 14. xf6! xf6 15. d5 xd4 16. xd4 White obtained a pleasant positional advantage in Liebergesell – Backwinkel, Germany 2006.

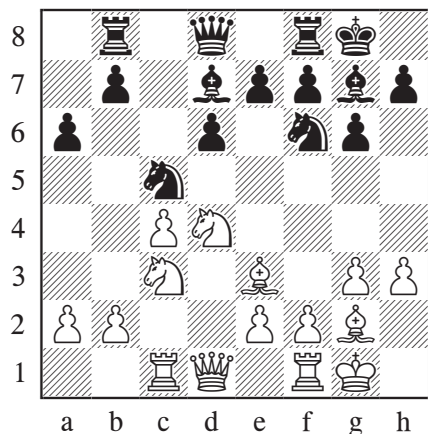


10.h3 a6

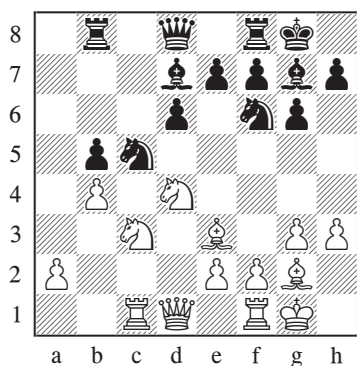
Black has also tried simplifying with 10...e6. A good example continued 11. e3 dxd4 12. xd4 e6 13.b3 d7 14. h2 a6 15.a4 b6 16. d2 and Black came under serious positional pressure in Golovenchits – Levanovsky, St Petersburg 2005.

11.♙e3 ♜d7 12.♞c1

White is well prepared to deal with his opponent's counterplay. I will show a couple of illustrative examples.

**12...♞e6**

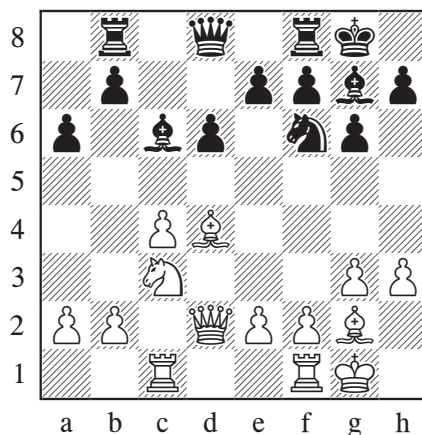
12...b5 was played in Kholmov – Taimanov, Moscow 1972, when 13.cxb5!N axb5 14.b4 would have been problematic for Black, for instance:



14...♞e6 (14...♞a6 15.a3± is also no fun for Black) 15.♞c6 ♙xc6 16.♙xc6± with an obvious advantage.

13.♞d2 ♞xd4 14.♙xd4 ♙c6

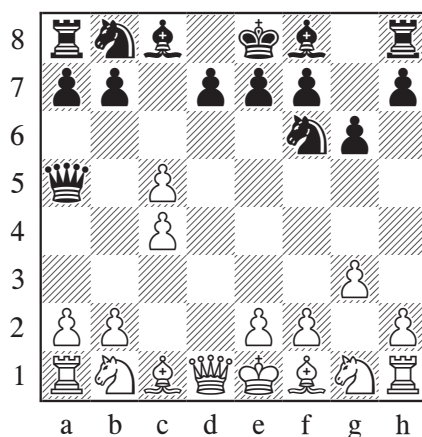
White has a few ways to handle the position but I like the following one.

**15.e4 ♞d7 16.♙xg7 ♜xg7**

Smyslov – Gipslis, Moscow 1959. Here my choice would be:

17.♞d5N

With a pleasant edge.

B) 4...♞a5†

This is Black's most popular continuation.

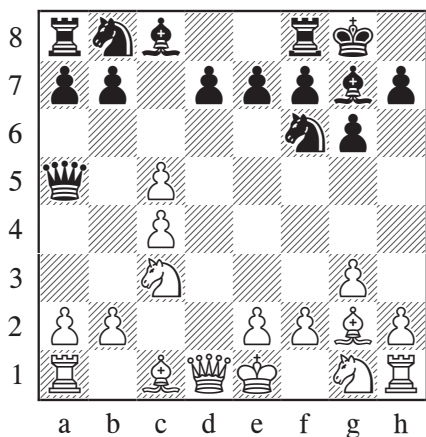
5.♞c3 ♙g7

Nobody has played 5...♞xc5 here; I guess the reason is that White has the additional option of 6.e4! d6 7.♙e3 ♞a5 8.♙g2 ♙g7 9.♞ge2, reaching an especially comfortable set-up.

6.♙g2

It is important for Black to get his move order right. We will consider the slightly inaccurate **B1) 6...0-0?! followed by the correct B2) 6...♖xc5.**

B1) 6...0-0?!



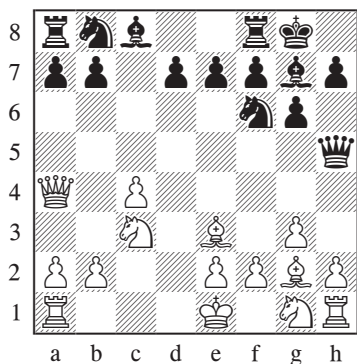
This is less precise due to:

7.♖a4! ♖xc5 8.♔e3!

Gaining valuable time.

8...♞c7

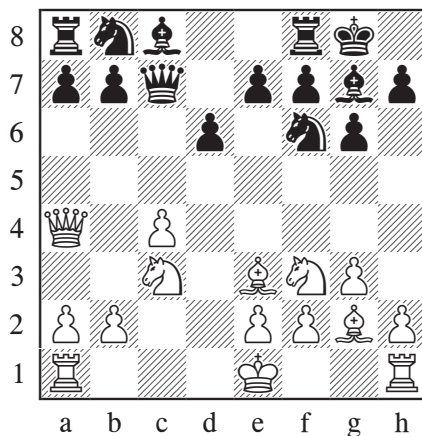
8...♞h5?! is hardly a good idea. In Clarac – Bry, France 2006, White should have responded with:



9.h3!N This simple move leaves Black's queen clearly misplaced. Play may continue 9...d6 (or 9...♘c6 10.c5!) 10.g4! ♖e5 11.♘f3 with a clear advantage for White.

9.♘f3 d6

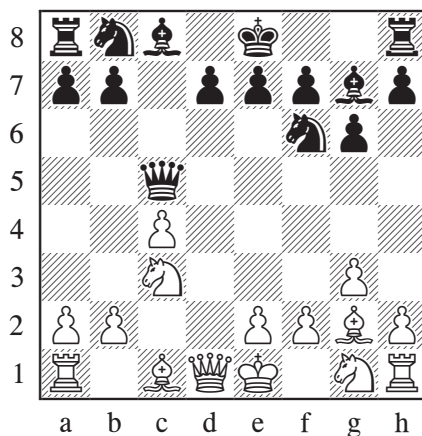
This occurred in Cheparinov – Gabuzyan, Doha 2014, when White should have continued:



10.0-0N ♔d7 11.♞b3 ♘a6 12.♞ac1±

With an obvious positional edge.

B2) 6...♖xc5



7.♖a4!

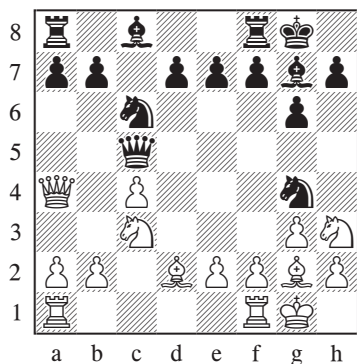
I believe this is White's only way to fight for the advantage.

7...♘g4!

7...0-0?! transposes to variation B1 above, where we saw that 8.♔e3! leads to an easy edge for White.

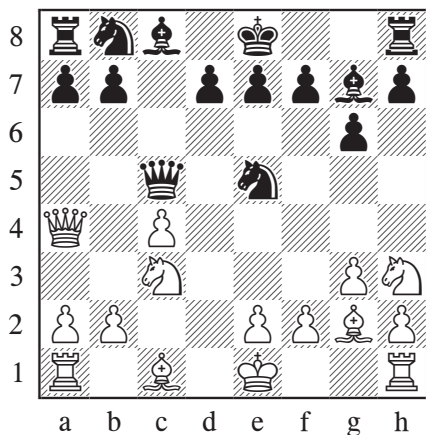
8. ♖h3 ♗e5

Black cannot afford the time for the slow 8...♗c6 in view of: 9. ♔d2! 0–0 10. 0–0



10...d6 (10...♗ge5 fails to accomplish anything due to 11.b3!) 11. ♖f4 and the black queen is misplaced on c5.

Interestingly enough, this position has occurred in two games between the same opponents. In my opinion the most promising idea to improve White's play is:



9. ♗d5!N

In the first game White erred with 9. ♗d5?! ♗bc6 10. ♔e3 ♗b4 11. ♗b5? a6 12. ♗b6 e6+ and Black was clearly better in Mamedyarov – Grischuk, Sochi (blitz) 2014.

The second game saw:

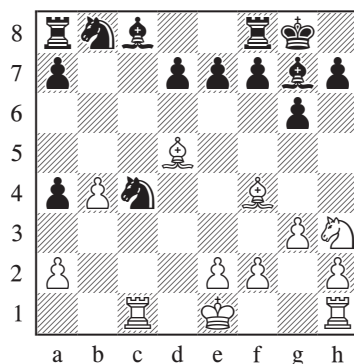
9. ♗f4 ♗xc4 10. ♖c1

10. ♗b5!?N is a possible improvement: 10...0–0 (10...♗b6? runs into 11. ♗b3 0–0 12. ♖c1 followed by ♗c7) 11. ♖c1 I spent a lot of time analysing this, but eventually concluded that Black is doing fine after 11...a6 12. ♗c7 b5.

10...0–0 11. ♗d5

11.b4 ♗xc3† 12. ♖xc3 ♗d4 13. ♗b3 d5 14. 0–0 ♗xh3 15. ♗xh3 ♗c6 16. ♖d1 ♗g7 17. ♖xd5 ♗b6 turns out okay for Black.

11...b5 12.b4 ♗xd5 13. ♗xd5 bxa4



14. ♖xc4?!

14. ♗xa8 ♗a6 promises Black nice compensation; nevertheless, White should have gone for this.

Now in Mamedyarov – Grischuk, Beijing 2014, Black missed a strong idea:

14...♗a6!N 15. ♖c5 ♗c6 16.b5 ♗d4! 17. ♗xc6 dxc6 18. ♖c4 ♗c8!

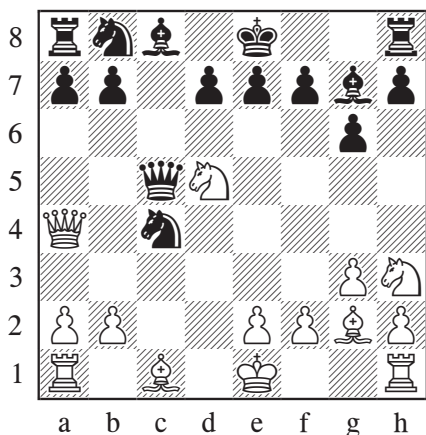
White will have to fight for a draw.

9... ♗xc4

Black cannot delay the capture of this pawn, as the following lines demonstrate.

9...0–0? 10. ♗e3! is bad for Black.

White also gets a great position after: 9...♗a6? 10. ♗g5! ♗xc4 11. ♗a3 d6 12. ♖c1 ♗b5 13. ♗xa6! ♗xa6 14. ♗c7† ♗f8 15. ♗xa6 ♗xh3 16. ♗xh3 bxa6 17. ♖c7 White has a serious advantage.



10. ♖hf4

White has a promising initiative for the pawn, mostly due to the unfortunate position of Black's queen. There is an immediate threat of 11. ♖d3, so Black's options are limited.

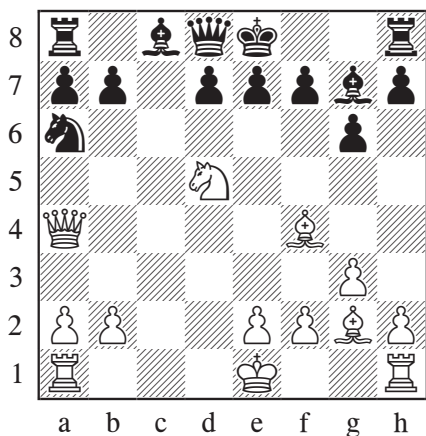
10... ♖b6

10... ♖a6 is the other reasonable try, but 11. 0-0 ♖b6 12. ♖xb6 ♖xb6 13. ♖d5 ♖d8 14. ♖g5 f6 15. ♖e3 leaves White with powerful compensation. Black will find it especially hard to activate his light-squared bishop.

11. ♖xb6!

11. ♖b3 ♖xd5 12. ♖xd5 0-0 13. ♖d2 ♖c6 14. 0-0 gives White nice compensation, but objectively Black has a decent position.

11... ♖xb6 12. ♖d5 ♖d8 13. ♖f4 ♖a6



14. ♖a3!

The key move. The main point of White's idea is shown in the following line.

14... d6

14... e5?! is a clear positional concession and 15. ♖e3 leaves Black under serious pressure.

15. ♖xe7! ♖xe7

15... ♖xe7 16. ♖d1! is even worse for Black.

16. ♖xd6 ♖d7 17. ♖d1!

White's rook enters the game, at the same time guarding the powerful bishop on d6.

17... ♖b5

This is Black's only decent move. The final important detail is:

18. ♖f3!

Preparing to meet ... ♖e6 with ♖xb7. White has a powerful initiative and I prefer his chances in the upcoming battle.

Conclusion

3...c5 is a tricky move order which needs to be taken seriously. 4.dxc5!? seems like a surprising choice but it is justified by Black's early ...g6 move: since ...e6 and ...♖xc5 does not really make sense, Black will have to spend time using either his knight or his queen to recapture on c5, and neither piece will be especially well placed upon arrival there. 4... ♖a6 5. ♖g2 ♖xc5 leads to generally quiet positions, where White tends to obtain a small but lasting edge. The most critical line of the chapter is 4... ♖a5† 5. ♖c3 ♖g7 6. ♖g2 ♖xc5, with Black's move order being of great importance, as playing ... ♖xc5 either too early or too late will lead to problems for him. Even when he gets it right and follows up with Grischuk's ... ♖g4-e5 manoeuvre, my 9. ♖d5!N idea is a significant improvement which offers White excellent play for the sacrificed pawn.

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A4) 8...e5	189
B) 7...♖b8 8.b3	191
B1) 8...e5	191
B2) 8...a6 9.d5 ♘a5 10.♙g5!	193
B21) 10...h6	194
B22) 10...c5 11.dxc6!	196
B221) 11...bxc6	196
B222) 11...♘xc6 12.♖c1	197
B2221) 12...♙d7	198
B2222) 12...♙e6	199
B2223) 12...♙f5	200

Chapter 11

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0	
A) 7...a6	203
B) 7...c5	204
C) 7...e5 8.e4	206
C1) 8...h6	206
C2) 8...a6 9.♖c2!?	208
C21) 9...b5	208
C22) 9...c6	209
C23) 9...exd4 10.♘xd4	211
C231) 10...♘e5	211
C232) 10...♖e8 11.♖d1	212
C2321) 11...♘e5	213
C2322) 11...♖b8	214

Chapter 12

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.♘xd4	
A) 9...♘e5	219
B) 9...♖e8 10.h3	220

B1) 10...♗e5	220
B2) 10...a6	223
B3) 10...♗c5 11.♖e1	225
B31) 11...h6	225
B32) 11...c6	228
B33) 11...a5	231
B34) 11...♙d7 12.♕h2	233
B341) 12...a6	234
B342) 12...h6 13.♖b1	235
B3421) 13...♖c8	235
B3422) 13...a6	236
B3423) 13...a5	237

Chapter 13

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0–0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♘bd7 7.0–0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3

A) 9...a6 10.♙e3	242
A1) 10...b5?!	242
A2) 10...♖e8	244
B) 9...♖e8 10.♙e3	246
B1) 10...a5	246
B2) 10...exd4 11.♗xd4	247
B21) 11...a5?!	248
B22) 11...♗c5 12.♖c2	250
B221) 12...♖e7	251
B222) 12...a5 13.♖ad1	252
B2221) 13...♖c7?!	253
B2222) 13...♗fd7	254
B2223) 13...♖e7 14.♖fe1	255
B22231) 14...♗fd7	256
B22232) 14...a4	258

Chapter 14

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0–0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♘bd7 7.0–0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♖a5 10.♖e1

A) 10...♖b4	262
B) 10...♖e8	263
C) 10...exd4 11.♗xd4	266
C1) 11...♖e8	267
C2) 11...♗e5 12.♙f1	268
C21) 12...♖b6	268
C22) 12...♙e6	269
C23) 12...♖e8 13.♙e3	270
C231) 13...c5!?	271
C232) 13...♙e6 14.♗xe6 ♖xe6 15.♕g2!	274
C2321) 15...a6	274
C2322) 15...♗ed7	275
C2323) 15...♖ae8	276

Chapter 15

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♖b6 10.♙e1

A) 10...♙e8 11.d5 ♘c5 12.♙b1	280
A1) 12...cxd5?!	280
A2) 12...a5	282
B) 10...exd4 11.♘xd4	285
B1) 11...♘g4	285
B2) 11...♘e8 12.♘b3	286
B21) 12...♘e5?!	286
B22) 12...♖b4?!	287
B23) 12...a5	288
B3) 11...♙e8 12.♘c2!?	291
B31) 12...♘e5?!	292
B32) 12...♘c5	293
B33) 12...♖c7	294
B34) 12...♖a5	295

Chapter 16

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 g6 5.♘f3 ♙g7 6.g3 0-0 7.♙g2

A) 7...♘a6 8.0-0 ♘c7 9.e4!	300
A1) 9...e6	300
A2) 9...♙g4	301
A3) 9...a6 10.a4	304
A31) 10...♙b8	304
A32) 10...b6	305
B) 7...e5 8.0-0	308
B1) 8...♘a6	308
B2) 8...♘g4	310
B3) 8...♘h5	311
B4) 8...♘e8 9.e4	313
B41) 9...a6	314
B42) 9...h6	315
B43) 9...f5	316
B5) 8...♘bd7 9.e4	318
B51) 9...♘e8	318
B52) 9...a6	319

Chapter 17

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c5 4.dxc5!

A) 4...♘a6 5.♙g2 ♘xc5 6.♘c3 ♙g7 7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0	324
A1) 8...b6	325
A2) 8...d6	326
B) 4...♖a5† 5.♘c3 ♙g7 6.♙g2	327
B1) 6...0-0?!	328
B2) 6...♖xc5	328