

Contents

Symbols	6
Editor's Foreword.....	7
Co-Author's Foreword.....	8
Overview of the d6-repertoire	11
Chapter 1 The Endgame Variation.....	13
Chapter 2 The Antoshin Variation.....	31
Chapter 3 Side variations after 1.e4 d6	57
Chapter 4 The Old Indian	85
Chapter 5 Side variations after 1.d4 d6	147
Chapter 6 The English Opening.....	166
Chapter 7 Flank openings	184
Index of variations.....	197
Index of games	203
Bibliography	205

Editor's Foreword

With the advent of electronic tools such as databases and engines, the chess market has changed considerably. The initial phase of the game has undergone a re-evaluation, reflected in a very extensive book and video market, 90% of which consists of works on opening theory.

One quantity, however, has remained constant – the human being. We humans do not learn faster and better than before. Hence any learning material must remain well structured and manageable. *Play 1...d6 Against Everything* starts precisely here. Its intent is to save the reader time and set his mind at ease by taking him through the least decisive phase of the game.

Let's be honest: is the opening's share of our total performance really so great? Do we not in nearly every game get a second chance and, depending on the level of play, a third or a fourth?

Understanding fundamental themes in chess, such as dealing with structures, squares and the many other tactical and strategic elements of chess, has a far greater impact on overall performance than does opening theory.

But of course we cannot dispense with theory!

What do club players really need?

Because of the complex analytical material, the demands of a chess book are very great – grandmasters usually write for players at their own level. The needs of the broader market recede into the background. A volume for an opening system rapidly exceeds 1,000 pages – a comprehensiveness that, ultimately, overtaxes even grandmasters.

But the average reader belongs to the group of club players who have completely different needs and goals. Even if they exhibit very different levels of play, the preconditions are similar: advanced age, a challenging professional life with intensive social involvements, and many competing leisure interests. All told, there is little free time for organized chess training.

Effective time management is needed – opening theory should not constitute the main focus of a club player's efforts! *Play 1...d6 Against Everything* provides a good 200 pages of manageable opening knowledge for a chess player's everyday routine. Thanks to the side variations, theory

changes only slightly: the constant reworking and tracking of world-class theory is reduced to a minimum.

This book is based on opening systems that I have used for decades at grandmaster level. At club-player level, too, this work provides a solid foundation for chess progress.

Jörg Hickl
Co-author and editor

Co-Author's Foreword

A small, solid and uncommon repertoire

The advantages of a small and solid opening repertoire, which can be used without excessive study of theoretical variations on every occasion, should not be underestimated! Since only a few positions have to be analysed, and these occur quite frequently in practice, the typical structures, ideas and plans soon become familiar. Moreover, in the case of the quite rare systems in our d6-repertoire, the fact that these have not attracted a lot of attention on the part of our opponents, nor by opening theory, means that the repertoire lines are considerably undervalued. Looked at objectively, the Antoshin Variation and the Old Indian may be somewhat inferior in quality to the usual main openings, but this small disadvantage, after a certain learning phase, is more than compensated for by a better understanding of the positions that arise. In our choice of variations we have given special attention to recommending, where possible, these formations and typical maneuvers. This facilitates the initial learning as well as the later application of the variations in tournament games.

This book

I have often observed how my long-time teammate Jörg Hickl, with his restrained play in the opening, has made even the strongest opposition immediately stop and think, even when playing Black! After one of his typical victories I asked him whether he would be willing to publish his system in book form – I would be the first buyer. But Jörg didn't have the time and suggested I do it myself! Since then, a good four years of intensive analysis have passed during which I have updated and rounded out his repertoire. During this period I used the Antoshin Variation of the Philidor Defense (1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♖f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♖f3 exd4 5.♗xd4 ♕e7) almost exclusively against 1.e4, and often used the Old Indian Defense (1.d4 d6 2.♗f3 ♖f6 3.c4 ♗bd7 4.♗c3 e5 and ...♕e7) against 1.d4, as well as 1.c4 e5 followed by ...d6 – not because we were writing about these lines

but because I wanted to score points and had come to trust these openings! And so you see that strictly speaking the repertoire is not 1...d6 against everything, as our book title says – against flank openings we usually play our reply on move 2. But the combination with ...e7-e5 is maintained also here.

Active counterplay!

After 1...d6 Black at first builds up his game (apparently!) passively, especially the modest development of the king's bishop to e7, where for a time it cannot move and seems very defensive. But as you will quickly realize, Black, after completing his development, strives for counterplay with ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5. The opening of the center with ...exd4 and the subsequent attack on the flank with ...b5-b4 and ...c7-c5 is a central feature of our main variation.

Audience

This book was put together primarily for today's circumstances, a slim repertoire book for club players with an Elo rating between 1400 and 2200. But it should also offer some interesting suggestions to players at a higher level. We wanted, with only a few words, to outline the most important structures, ideas and plans, as well as our thinking at the board. For this reason I have preferred to make reference to my own games.

Working with the book

The first reading of the book should aim primarily at understanding the most important typical middlegame positions. When playing over the games for the first time you can skip over the departures from the main line; only on subsequent readings should you give attention to specific lines and move orders. Always work at a full-size board and, more and more, make the transition from the critical (!) reading of this book to your own, independent analysis – this usually results in the best progress. The numerous variations cited are not to be memorized, but used as orientation and stimulation for your own analysis. When you ask, 'What is the best play for both sides? I will check this for myself!' – then you have started on an auspicious path for increasing your understanding and your playing strength.

Computer – '±'

All variations were checked with the computer and its evaluations were almost always adopted. The fact that White often has a small advantage

is something to which we should not ascribe too much importance. This advantage often disappears if White does not find the optimal build-up or overlooks or underestimates the numerous possibilities for Black's counterplay. And this is the rule rather than the exception!

Opening theory, innovations

In publishing this book we are not looking so much to enrich opening theory as we are to giving club players a reliable repertoire. Nevertheless, I have often marked the first new move with the designation 'N'. So you can see where the game has left the beaten path; in most cases this happens quite early in the game, but in a few instances it occurs surprisingly late.

So as not to overload the text, we refrain from citing the work of other authors. A list of the sources used can be found in the bibliography in the back of the book.

Acknowledgements

This book would never have come into existence without the seminar notes and the decades-long preparation of Jörg Hickl: his patience, his constant encouragement and his grandmasterly tips and advice – to say nothing of his duties as editor, which he carried out in exemplary fashion.

Many thanks also to FM Stephan Buchal, who exhaustively reviewed and improved the book's content and expression and contributed valuable tips on phrasing. Any shortcomings that remain are mine alone.

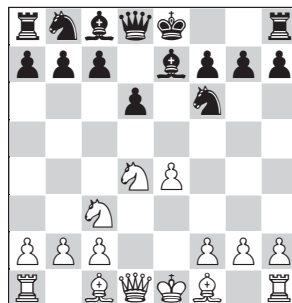
So enough of the foreword, it's time for the moves! I wish you a fruitful study of our d6-repertoire and much success in your games!

Erik Zude
Frankfurt, August 2017

Overview of the d6-repertoire

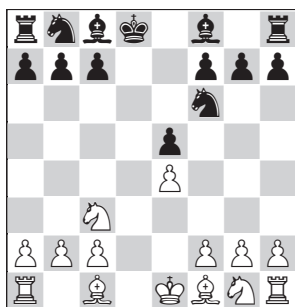
The central building blocks of our little d6-repertoire are described in this brief introduction.

Against 1.e4, we will use the Antoshin Variation of the Philidor Defense, while against 1.d4 our repertoire employs the Old Indian Defense.



On the way to the Antoshin Variation White often exchanges pawns early in the center. This is discussed in Chapter 1 – **The Endgame Variation**.

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.Kxd8+ Kxd8



In this queenless middlegame Black has good chances for equality – in practice this means that the better player wins!

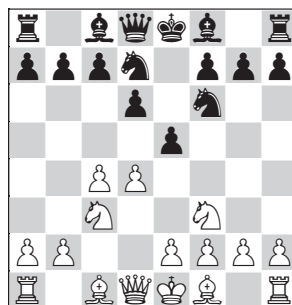
We analyze the Antoshin Variation and its sidelines in Chapters 2 and 3:

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nf3 exd4 5.Nxd4 Qe7

Against most systems by White we strive for a setup with ...0-0, ...c7-c6, ...Re8, and ...Nbd7-e5 (-c5). Black plans ...b7-b5, with a flank attack on White's center, a motif that occurs repeatedly in our repertoire.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the Old Indian Defense and its sidelines:

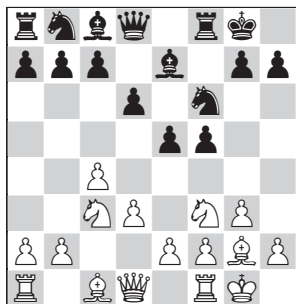
1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 Nbd7 4.Nc3 e5



With this development of the bishop to e7 we arrive at the Old Indian Defense. Here, too, our goal is the typical counterplay with ...c7-c6, ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5, followed by ...exd4 and ...b5-b4.

Our build-up against the English Opening, which we analyze in Chapter 6, is similar to the one we use against the Old Indian:

**1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 d6 3.g3 f5 4.♙g2 ♘f6
5.d3 ♙e7 6.♘f3 0-0 7.0-0**



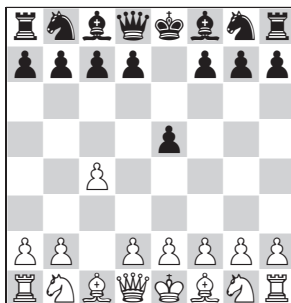
Here, too, Black's setup seems rather passive at first, but the second player often gets a dangerous attack on the kingside with ...♙d8-e8-h5 and a subsequent ...f5-f4.

In the seventh and final chapter we briefly discuss the less-frequent **flank openings**, against which we mostly recommend the setups that are familiar to us from the earlier chapters.

CHAPTER 6

The English Opening

1.c4 e5



2.♘c3 d6

3.♘f3 ♙e7

4.e3 ♘f6 5.d4 ♘bd7 (transposition to Old Indian, 5.e3)

4.g3 f5 5.d3 ♘f6 6.♙g2 0-0 7.0-0 ♖e8 (main line 3.g3)

3.g3 ♙e7 4.♙g2 f5

5.d3 ♘f6 6.♘f3 0-0 7.0-0 ♖e8171

5.d3 ♘f6 6.e4 c6 7.♘ge2 0-0 8.0-0 ♘a6174

5.d3 ♘f6 6.e3 c6 7.♘ge2 0-0 8.0-0177

5.♘d5 ♘f6 6.♘xe7 ♖xe7 7.d3 0-0 8.♘f3 c5180

5.d4 ♘f6 6.♘f3 e4180

5.e3 c6 6.♘ge2 ♘f6 7.d4 0-0 8.0-0 ♘a6180

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 d6 3.g3 ♕e7 4.♙g2 f5



In this chapter we analyze 1.c4, the English Opening. After 1...e5 and the inevitable ...d7-d6 followed by ...♕e7, we reach a pawn formation that we are very familiar with – with the difference that at first White exerts no pressure in the center and so we don't need ...♘bd7 and the ...e7-e5 push. The first player usually develops slowly with g2-g3 and ♙g2, so that with the early ...f7-f5 we can gain space on the kingside. An important element of our build-up against the English Opening is the fact that we reserve the development of our queen's knight; before ...♘bd7 we often play ...c7-c6 and ...♕e6, with a very harmonious development. This enables Black to control the central d5-square, and is sometimes followed by ...d6-d5 if we can maintain the large center. Even if the differences from the Old Indian are of course significant, we will have our most-familiar build-up ...e7-e5, ...♕e7, ...c7-c6 and ...♘bd7 – here augmented with...f7-f5 and ...♕e6, when some recurring

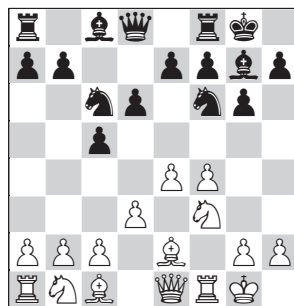
themes make it very easy for us to find good plans in the middlegame. Should White attack the e5-pawn early with d2-d4, we go over to the Old Indian Defense with ...♘bd7, even if in some positions the push ...e5-e4 promises Black good play. Of course, after 1.c4 the principled 1...d7-d6 – doing justice to the title of this book – is very playable. (only on the next move will Black respond with ...e7-e5) This gives White the chance to go into the Old Indian with 2.d4. The choice between these options is a matter of taste.

In the English Opening White usually fianchettoes his king's bishop. Then he has four fundamentally different setups available to him:

- 1) ♘f3, d2-d3, 0-0 followed by queenside play – the main variation;
- 2) d2-d3, e2-e4 and ♘ge2;
- 3) d2-d3, e2-e3 and ♘ge2;
- 4) e2-e3 and d2-d4

Against the main variation we build up on the kingside with 7...♖e8, with the option ...♗h5, looking to attack. The threatened attack with ...f5-f4 and ...♕c8-h3 is hanging like the Sword of Damocles over the white kingside and in a practical game offers good chances. But in this main variation, as well as especially in the other three, it is very helpful to pay attention to the possibilities for play on the queen's wing and in the center. In

the closed King's Indian formation, which we looked at in Section 4, 'White plays an early d4-d5' in Chapter 4, activity was initiated on two sides of the board, queenside and kingside. Here, where the middle of the board was not yet fixed, we play on three sections of the board – queenside, kingside and center!



Section 1: White build-up with ♖f3, d2-d3

In order to better understand the attacking possibilities on the kingside, we analyze first a game in which the main variation occurs with colors reversed. It is of course somewhat easier to play with the extra tempo of the first move, but here we are concerned first with gaining familiarity with some fundamental ideas regarding the attack against the opposing fianchetto position.

Game 41

Luke McShane 2615

Ivan Cheparinov 2667

Novi Sad 2009

1.e4 c5 2.d3 ♘c6 3.f4 g6 4.♗f3 ♕g7 5.♖e2 d6 6.0-0 ♗f6 7.♚e1 0-0

This is our main variation in the English Opening with colors reversed. Top grandmaster Luke McShane uses the extra move to work up immediate threats against the black king.

8. ♚h4 c4

This pawn lever is logical. Of course, White does not care to give up his e-pawn after 9.dxc4 ♗xe4, and the opening of the b6-g1 diagonal as well as the fifth rank increases the mobility of the black queen. On the other hand, Black's game loses flexibility on the left side of the board. For example, he no longer has at his disposal the maneuver ...♗c6-d4 followed by ♗xd4, ...cxd4!, when the c-file would be opened against the backward c2-pawn. Moreover, after the exchange ...cxd3, cxd3 the path of the white king's bishop to b3 (via d1) is opened, and from this square it can effectively support the attack. 8...♖b8, 8...b5 and 8...♗d4 were probably better. In view of the still fairly closed position, however, this is not easy to judge, and the engines are of only very limited help here.

9. ♖h1

A useful waiting move, after which Black can no longer win a tempo with ...♚b6.

9...cxd3

9...♗b4 is possible, but after 10.♗e1∞ the Bulgarian GM would no longer

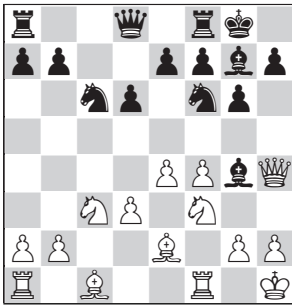
have ...♙g4, which he clearly intended to play.

10.cxd3 ♙g4

With the exchange of the white king's knight, Ivan Cheparinov, formerly the second to Veselin Topalov, would like to reduce White's attacking potential on the kingside.

10...♖b6 11.♘c3 ♙g4 would transpose.

11.♘c3



11...♙xf3?!

In this game it is not only the mechanisms of the attack against the fianchetto position that are instructive. It is also the uncertainty with which the openings expert reacts to the extremely non-theoretical white build-up. This is very revealing, and illustrates how difficult it is to meet this attack in a practical game! After only 11 moves Cheparinov comes up with an inaccuracy that will be difficult to correct. The text move does remove from the attack the knight that was intended for it, but now the squares f3 and h3 become available to White's rook.

A) 11...♖b6 was playable. Now, with 12.♖b1!?, White can slip in a useful preparatory move. But 12.♘g5!, instead, forces Black to take drastic measures – he must already give up his queen! 12...♙xe2 13.♘d5! h6 14.♘xb6 ♖axb6 15.♗e1 ♙xd3 16.♖h3! ♙c2 17.e5 dxe5 18.fxe5 hxg5 19.exf6 ♙xf6 20.♖e3±;

B) 11...♗c8 was the better move. Here are a few sample variations that show that the first player has good attacking chances: 12.♖b1 (12.♙d2 e6 13.f5!?∞) 12...♖b6 (12...e6!? 13.f5↑ with the idea ♙g5) 13.♙d2 (13.♘g5? ♙xe2 14.♘d5? h6 15.♘xb6 axb6—+) 13...♗fe8 Black takes the mate at h7 out of the position. Now it is not so easy to push the white attack forward. The bishop at g4 bothers White, but it should not be chased off with h2-h3, since then the maneuver ♗f1-f3-h3 would no longer be possible. But with, say, the programmatic 14.f5 (14.♙d1!?, 14.a3!?) White can create problems for his opponent. The defense 14...gxf5 is often Black's best option, even if at first glance the opening of his kingside seems risky. After the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, the monarch is placed relatively safely at h8, when Black can make use of the open g-file: 15.♙h6 ♙xh6 16.♖xh6 ♙xf3 17.♙xf3 (17.♗xf3 ♘e5 18.♗g3+ ♘g6 19.exf5 ♗xc3 20.fxg6 fxg6 ♖ and White gives perpetual check; e.g. 21.♗f1 ♖xb2 22.♗xf6 exf6

23. ♖xg6+) 17... ♗e5 18. exf5 ♘xd3
 19. ♖h4 ♖b4 20. ♖g3+ ♘h8 21. ♙xb7
 ♖xb7 22. ♖xd3 d5, when, over the
 long term, the central pawn mass
 promises Black some chances,
 although in the process he must
 look to the safety of his king.

12. ♙xf3 ♖b6 13. ♙d1

The bishop changes its side of the
 board and clears the f3-square for
 the rook.

13. f5 and 13. g4 ♗d7 14. f5 also offer
 good prospects.

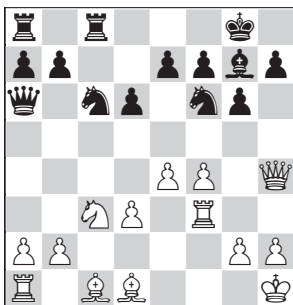
13... ♖a6

After only 13 moves and only one
 substantial inaccuracy it is already
 very difficult to prevent White's
 plan of ♖f3-h3(g3) followed by ♙b3.
 13... ♗d4? 14. ♖f2!± with the threat
 ♙e3.

14. ♖f3 ♖fc8?

The rook clears f8 as an emergency
 exit for the king, but at the same
 time this weakens f7.

14...h5 offered better chances to
 defend; e.g. 15. f5 ♗e5 16. ♖g3 ♘xd3
 17. ♙e3 ♗e5 18. ♙b3→ when White's
 attack is very strong (though he still
 has to find a way to break through).



15. ♖h3?!

This move is quite natural, but it
 lets Black escape. It is interesting
 to note how Luke McShane has
 not made any major commitments
 to this point. He has prepared an
 attack but has neither sacrificed
 material for it (e.g. after f4-f5) nor
 given his opponent important
 squares. He does not want to do any
 of this until he is fairly certain the
 attack will bear fruit.

15. f5! was more precise: 15... ♗e5
 16. ♖h3±, with the threat 17. ♗d5 and
 a very strong attack.

15...h5?!

Cheparinov misses his last chance.
 After 15...h6 Black can defend
 his position; e.g. 16. g4!? (16. f5 g5
 17. ♙xg5 hxg5 18. ♖xg5 is promising,
 but unclear: 18... ♖b6 19. ♖g3 ♗e8
 20. ♙b3 ♖f2! 21. ♖b1 ♖d4 22. ♖h5
 ♗d8 23. ♖f1∞) 16...d5 17. e5 ♗e8
 18. g5 hxg5 (18...h5 19. f5! ♙xe5
 20. fxg6 fxg6 21. ♘xd5±) 19. ♖xg5 e6
 20. ♖h4±

16. f5!± ♗e5 17. ♙g5 ♘f8 18. fxg6?!

18. ♙b3! followed by ♖f1 would
 have immediately involved all his
 pieces in the attack. There would
 be no defense against the numerous
 possible impacts on the g6-, f7-, and
 f6-squares.

18...fxg6?!

18... ♘xg6! offers more resistance:
 19. ♖f2 (19. ♖g3 ♖xc3! 20. bxc3 ♗xe4
 21. ♖e3 ♙xc3±) 19... ♖a5 20. ♙xf6
 ♙xf6 21. ♖xh5 ♖b6 22. ♖d2 ♖b4
 23. ♙g4 ♖xc3 24. ♖d1+–

19. ♙b3! ♘xd3 20. ♖f3

Black resigned.

Conclusion

The rather clumsy, but effective, attack with ♖e1-h4, with the idea f4-f5 and ♕h6, is difficult to parry in a practical game, as *inter alia* these short games involving top grandmasters demonstrate. This is also true when the colors are reversed and without the advantage of the first move.

In our analysis of the following game we combine this attacking plan with flexible play on the queenside and in the center.

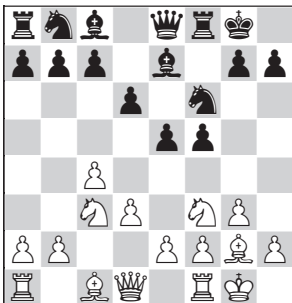
Game 42

Marcin Tazbir 2531**Erik Zude** 2390

Frankfurt 2015

**1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 d6 3.g3 f5 4.♕g2 ♖f6
5.d3 ♕e7 6.♞b1**

A great advantage of the English Opening is that it offers players an abundance of possible transpositions, so that very often the theoretical variations are left behind early in the game. It is just this that Marcin Tazbir is clearly playing for. 6.♘f3 0-0 7.0-0 ♖e8



analysis diagram

This is the main variation in the English Opening with 2...d6, which we saw in the previous game with colors reversed and with the advantage of the first move. White controls the center and plans a pawn storm on the left-hand side of the board with b2-b4. For Black it is sensible to combine the attacking plan ...♖h5 with flexible play in the center. Striking out too early on the kingside involves the danger that the attack will not get through. Then, too, White's advance on the queenside often leaves weaknesses in its train that can be exploited.

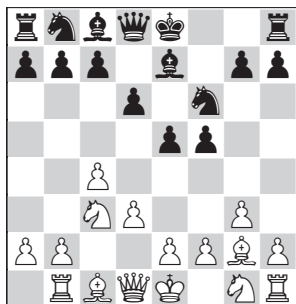
A) 8.c5 ♖h8 (8...♘c6!?) 9.cxd6 cxd6 10.a3 ♘c6 11.b4 a6 12.b5?! (12.♕b2 f4!?, 12.e3 ♕e6=) 12...axb5 13.♘xb5 ♖d8 (Black has a bit of a space advantage and the better chances in the center, while the weak b7-pawn is well protected and no longer attracts attention. But the position is nevertheless level) 14.a4 ♕e6 15.♕a3 d5 16.d4 e4 17.♘e5 ♘g4 18.♘xg4 fxg4 19.f3 gxf3 20.exf3 exf3 21.♞xf3 ♞xf3 22.♕xe7 ♖xe7 23.♕xf3= 0-1 (67) Spiridonov-Gofshtein, Paris 1998;

B) 8.♕g5 h6 9.♕xf6 ♕xf6 10.♘d2 c6N (10...a5?! 11.c5↑ 0-1 (61) Pantsulaia-Gasanov, New Delhi 2014) 11.b4 ♘a6 (11...e4 12.♞c1 e3 13.fxe3 ♖xe3+ 14.♖h1 ♞e8∞) 12.b5 ♘c7 13.♖c2 ♘e6 14.e3 ♕d7↑, when Black can just as well play on the kingside (...f5-f4) as on the queenside (...♕f6-d8-b6/a5);

C) 8.♘d5 ♕d8! 9.♗xf6+ ♕xf6
10.♖b1 a5 11.b3 c6 12.a3 ♗a6! 0-1
(50) Stoll-Milov, Bern 1994;

D) 8.♖b1 ♗h8 temporizes, clears the b3-g8 diagonal and makes room on g8 for the queen's bishop, which after ...c7-c6, ...♕e6, and ♗g5 can support the advance ...d6-d5 (attacking at once is too weak: 8...♖h5 9.b4 f4?! 10.gxf4 ♕h3 11.♗h1N±): 9.b4 a6!?N (9...♖h5 10.e3 g5 11.♗d2 ♖g6 12.f4!±, when Black's attack never materialized; White shifted play to the kingside and won with a fine attack on the black king: 1-0 (43) Hick-Gofshtein, Vienna 1996) 10.a4 c6 11.b5 (11.a5 ♕e6 12.♗a4 ♗bd7=) 11...axb5 12.axb5 ♕e6 13.♕e3 h6 (preventing ♗g5) 14.♖a1 ♗bd7=;

E) 8.b4 ♗h8 (8...♖h5 9.♖b1 transposes to 8.♖b1 ♖h5 9.b4) 9.♖b1, transposing to our variation 8.♖b1 ♗h8 9.b4.
Back to the game.



6...0-0 7.b4

The Polish grandmaster prefers play on the queen's wing to developing his kingside. After this move we

were both on our own, without a concrete knowledge of variations. With 7.♗f3 Marcin could have offered to transpose into the main variation, but this was not the intention behind 6.♖b1.

7...a6

This move is useful, since White's queenside play cannot make progress without a2-a4. Now, after b4-b5, the open file beckons to Black. But careful! Even if Black is first to take control of the a-file, it is not seldom the case that White takes back the file after the ensuing ♕c1-d2(b2) followed by ♖b1-a1.

8.a4

White sees to it that he will soon get a pawn to b5. But this means that the c5-square will no longer be covered by the b4-pawn; Black could simply dislodge this pawn with ...a7-a5. Before, White could react with a2-a3, so that the c5-square would still be overprotected by a pawn.

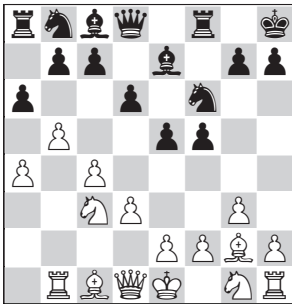
8...♗h8

It was clear that Marcin intended b4-b5, so I preferred the generally useful king move to a further weakening of the queenside with ...a6-a5.

After 8...a5?! 9.b5 ♗bd7± the knight will look good on c5 for a while, but the queenside will be under pressure and it is difficult to develop. The continuation with opening the a-file (in favor of Black) is better.

9.b5

But now this is hasty. White would have done better to complete his development first: 9.♘f3 c6 10.0-0 ♕e6 (in the case of ♘g5, the bishop could withdraw to g8 thanks to the king move) 11.b5 axb5 12.axb5 ♖c7 Black has now consolidated his queenside and despite White's space advantage does not stand worse. He can fight for the a- and b-files after ...♘bd7 and at the same time threaten possible advances in the center, ...e5-e4 or ...d6-d5 (12...♗e8, with threats against the kingside, is also quite playable, just not 12...♘bd7? 13.bxc6 bxc6 14.♘g5±, or 12...h6 13.♗b3 ♘bd7? 14.♘h4±).

**9...♘bd7**

The c5-square beckons. We open the a-file when it is clear that it will benefit Black at least as much as it does White.

10.♘f3

A) 10.bxa6?! illustrates the fact that the attack will lack sufficient penetrating force if White has not completed his development: 10...♖xa6 11.♕xb7?? ♕xb7 12.♖xb7 ♗a8-+;

B) The build-up with e2-e3 and ♘ge2 does not suit the early queenside advance. After 10.e3? axb5 11.axb5 e4! Black opens the position and covers the numerous weaknesses created by the tempi-devouring pawn storm on the queenside; e.g. 12.dxe4 fxe4 13.♘ge2 (13.♘xe4?! ♘xe4 14.♕xe4 ♘c5 15.♕c2 – the bishop has to guard the f5-b1 diagonal, but now the weak light squares on the kingside are neglected: 15...♕f6!±) 13...♘c5±.

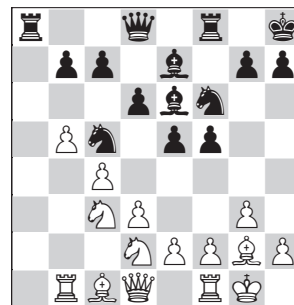
10...♘c5

The knight stabilizes the queenside and supports the ...e5-e4 advance.

11.♘d2

Now the opening of the center with ...d6-d5 is on offer, after which the c5-square will be a permanent outpost. Generally speaking, White should not neglect the control of the center when attacking on the flank.

11.0-0 was better, since the 11...e4 advance is not dangerous because of 12.♘d4!, when the white knight is well placed in the center.

11...axb5 12.axb5 ♕e6 13.0-0**13...d5**

Black could also keep the game closed. After ...d6-d5, however, Black's position is the more enjoyable to play in view of the active knight on c5.

13...♖d7 14.♗d5 ♗xd5 15.cxd5 ♕f7

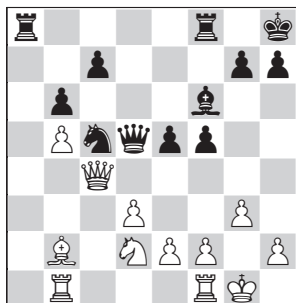
16.♗c4 b6= is also perfectly good, the outpost on c5 making the backward b7-pawn unassailable.

14.cxd5 ♗xd5 15.♖b2= ♕f6

15...♗b6 was better. Black has more space and can comfortably avoid the exchange of pieces.

16.♖c1 b6 17.♗xd5 ♕xd5 18.♕xd5

♖xd5 19.♖c4



The chances for both sides are about even. In the ensuing play, after the advance ...e5-e4, two noticeable weaknesses appear in the white position: the pawns at d3 and b5. Black was able to break through to a win after errors on both sides:

19...♖ad8?! 19...♖fd8 20.♖a1 ♖e6=

21.♖a3? e4 20.♖fc1?! 20.♖a3!±

20...e4 21.♖xf6 21.♖a3!∞ 21...♖xf6

22.♗b3?! 22.♖xd5 ♖xd5 23.d4!

♖xd4 24.♗b3 ♖d5 25.♗xc5 bxc5

26.♖a1 h6 27.♖a7 ♖b6 28.♖xc7

♖xb5= 22...exd3 23.exd3 23.♗xc5?

d2 23...♗e6!∞ 24.♖c3 f4 25.♖xd5

♖xd5 26.♗d2 fvg3 27.hxg3 h6

28.♗e4? 28.♖g2 ♖f7 29.♗f3=

28...♖f7∞ 29.♖a3 ♖h7 30.♖g2 ♖fd7

31.♖e1 ♗d4 32.♗c3 ♗xb5 32...♖c5

33.♖b1 ♗c2 34.♖ab3 ♖xd3 35.♗e4

♖xb3 36.♖xb3 ♖c4 33.♗xd5 ♗xa3

34.♖e5 b5 35.♖f3 ♗c2 35...c5!

36.♖e4? 36.♖e2∞ 36...c6 36...b4!-+

37.♗f4? ♖g8? 37...♖d4+ 38.♖f5

b4-+ 38.♖c5 ♖e7+ 39.♖e5 ♖d7

39...♖xe5+ 40.♖xe5 b4 41.d4 b3

42.♗d3 h5-+ 40.♖e8+? 40.♖c5

♖e7+ 41.♖e5 ♖xe5+ 40...♖f7 41.♖b8

b4 42.g4 b3 43.♖f5 g5 0-1

Conclusion

In this game, flexibly postponing the development of the queen's knight led, after the early pawn storm with b4-b5, to Black's exploitation of the weak light squares on the queenside.

Section 2: White's build-up d3, e4, ♗ge2

Game 43

Ram Soffer 2479

Anton Demchenko 2595

St Petersburg 2015

1.g3 e5 2.c4 d6

The Russian grandmaster Anton Demchenko, against 1.g3, chooses our repertoire line, about which there is more in Chapter 7, 'Flank openings.' After 2.c4 we are in the English Opening.

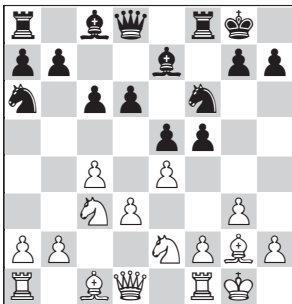
3.♗c3 ♖e7 4.♖g2 f5 5.d3 ♗f6 6.e4

c6

Black blocks the long diagonal so that the queen's bishop no longer has to protect the b7-pawn.

Those players fond of experimenting can also sacrifice the pawn. After 6...0-0!? White, with 7.♘ge2 c6 can go into the game continuation, or with 7.exf5 ♕xf5 8.♕xb7 bring about unclear complications; e.g. 8...♖bd7 9.♕xa8 ♜xa8 10.♞f3 ♞xf3 11.♗xf3 ♕xd3∞. In view of the central pawn mass, the king held in the center of the board, and the bleak prospects of the white rook, White's position is in practice very difficult to play.

7.♘ge2 0-0 8.0-0 ♘a6



This is the standard build-up against the system with e2-e4 and ♘ge2. Black can develop all his pieces comfortably and prepare himself well for his opponent's only active plan, h2-h3 followed by exf5, g3-g4 and then d3-d4 or ♖e2-g3.

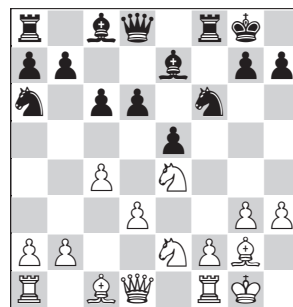
9.h3 fxh4

9...h6!?N 10.exf5 ♕xf5∞ is also possible; e.g. 11.f4 (11.g4 ♕h7=) 11...exf4 12.♗xf4 ♞d7 13.g4 ♕h7 14.♕e3 g5 15.♗fe2 ♖c5∞.

10.♗xe4

Inasmuch as the e2-knight, in view of the e5-pawn, does not have a good square, the grandmaster from Israel trades off a knight.

After 10.dxe4 White needs the move g3-g4 to activate all his pieces. 10...♖c5 The pawn formation on the left-hand side of the board reminds us a bit of the Boleslavsky Wall, which we are familiar with from the Old Indian Defense. And in fact here too pressure can be built up against the white queenside, beginning with ...♕e6 and – after b2-b3 – ...a7-a5, ...♞b6 and ...a5-a4. In view of the closed long diagonal g2-a8 Black can, however look to expand with ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5; e.g. 11.♕e3 ♕e6N 12.b3 ♞c8 13.g4. This devalues the f2-f4 lever, which would now burden White with an isolani on e4 (13.♖h2 ♞e8 ...♞h5): 13...♞c7∞ with the idea ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5. White's b3-b4 is nothing to fear by reason of the vulnerability of the c4-pawn.



10...♕e6

Black threatens 11...♗xe4, winning a pawn.

10...♖h8!?N is an interesting waiting move, creating a refuge for

the queen's bishop on g8. But how can we be sure that White will not make good use of the extra tempo?

11. ♖g5 ♕d7 12. ♗c3

Now we come to the planned knight exchange and further simplification. But it is not easy to attack Black's solid formation.

After 12.f4 Black could complete his development with 12...♖b6+ 13.♖h1 ♜ad8⇌.

12...h6 13. ♗ge4 ♗xe4 14.dxe4

Soffer does not care to allow his opponent a mobile pawn center:

14. ♗xe4 ♕e6 15. ♗c3 ♖d7 16. ♖h2 d5↑

14...♕e6 15.b3 ♖d7 16.♖h2



The black position is very solid and all pieces have good squares. An advance of the white majority on the kingside is not altogether without risk. The position offers approximately even chances.

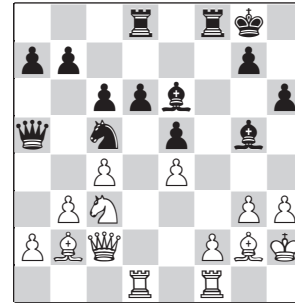
16...♕g5 17. ♕a3

The first player prefers not to trade off his bishop.

A) Even if 17.f4 seems premature, in view of the delayed development of White's queenside it is still quite playable; e.g. 17...exf4 18.gxf4 ♕f6 19.♖d2↑ g5!?

B) Then again, after 17.♕xg5 hxg5 White cannot exploit the weaknesses of the black structure on the kingside: 18.♖d2 ♖e7 19.♗d1 ♜ad8 20.♗e3 g6= with the idea of maneuvering the knight to d4.

17...♜ad8 18. ♖e2 ♖c7 19. ♜ad1 ♖a5 20. ♕b2 ♗c5 21. ♖c2



The configuration on the left-hand side of the board again resembles the Boleslavsky Wall. Black can choose between the advance ...a7-a5-a4 and the attack on the well-fortified c4-pawn with ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5. Then White is almost forced to play c4xb5, when Black gets the half-open a-file and a mobile pawn mass in the center. In the game Demchenko decided on ...a7-a5, but in hindsight, the alternative ...a7-a6 followed by ...b7-b5 looks more promising.

21...♖b6 21...a6! 22. ♕a1 b5 23.cxb5 axb5 24. ♗e2 ♕e7 25.f4 ♜a8↑ (25...♖c7=) 22. ♗e2 a5 The Boleslavsky Wall. **23.f4! ♕f6 24.f5 ♕f7 25. ♕a3 a4 26.b4 ♗a6 27. ♜b1↑ ♗c7?! 27...♖c7 28.b5± cxb5 29.cxb5 ♜c8 30. ♖b2?! 30. ♗c3!± 30...♗a8?!**

30...♖fd8=, with ...d6-d5 next.
 31.♖fd1± ♖fd8 32.♗c3 ♖a5 33.♗b4
 ♖a7 34.♗xd6 ♗b6 35.♗b4 ♖d4
 36.♗e2?! 36.♗d5± 36...♗c4=
 37.♖c3 ♖xd1 38.♖xd1 ♖b6 39.a3
 ♖xb5 40.♗g1 ♖e8 41.♗f3 b5
 42.♗f1 ♖c6 43.♖e1 ♖b6 44.♖d3
 ♖b7 45.♗d2?! 45.♖c3 45...♗h7
 45...♗e7! 46.♗xc4?! 46.♗f3!
 46...♗xc4 46...bxc4! 47.♖c3 ♗e7±
 47.♖c3 ♗xf1 47...♗e7! 48.♖xc8
 ♖xc8 49.♖xf1= ♖c2+ 50.♖g2
 ♖d3 51.h4 ♗h8 52.♗h3 ♗h7
 53.♗h2 ♖d1 54.♖a2 ♖d7 55.♖e6
 ♖c7 56.♖e8 ♖c2+ 57.♗h3 ♖xe4
 58.♖g6+ ♗g8 59.♖e8+
 1/2-1/2

Conclusion

Against the system e2-e4 and ♗ge2 Black gets good development with ...c7-c6 followed by ...♗e6 and ...♗a6. The expansion with ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 promises Black good chances on the queenside.

Section 3: White build-up with d3, e3, ♗ge2

Game 44

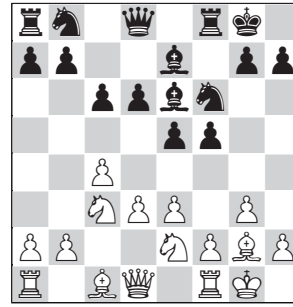
Vitaly Sivuk 2566
Deepan Chakkravarthy 2478

Chennai 2016

1.c4 e5 2.g3 f5

2...d6 3.♗g2 f5 4.d3 ♗e7 5.♗c3 ♗f6
 is our repertoire line.

3.♗g2 ♗f6 4.d3 ♗e7 5.♗c3 d6 6.e3
 0-0 7.♗ge2 c6 8.0-0 ♗e6



The white setup with e2-e3 and ♗ge2 looks harmonious and is very flexible. Depending on the course of events, the first player can become active on the kingside (f2-f4), in the center (with e3-e4 or d3-d4) or on the queenside (with b2-b4-b5). Moreover, a black try for an attack with ...f5-f4 is just about ruled out – the push simply loses a pawn. On the other hand, White is not exerting any pressure, so Black can comfortably complete his development with ...♗bd7 and, for example after ...♖c8, prepare ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 on the queenside or ...d6-d5 in the center.

9.b3

White supports the c4-pawn, which is indispensable for a later d3-d4.

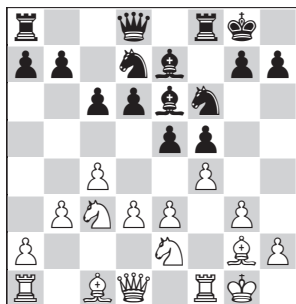
A) 9.f4 is very popular in this position, but it does leave behind a pawn weakness on e3 that from now on has to be protected by pieces. The opening of the f- and d-files with fxe5 is also not to be feared: 9...♗bd7 and now:

A1) 10.b3 ♖c8!? 11.h3 ♖e8N
 followed by ...♗f8, ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5, perhaps also ...g7-g6 and ...♗f7;

A2) 10.b4 a6 11.♖b1 ♗e8N 12.a4 (12.b5?! axb5 13.cxb5 – granting the second player a central pawn majority and the half-open a-file – 13...♗c7) 12...♙f8 Black is very flexibly placed and it is not clear how White can proceed. If the pawn storm does not show positive results, the weaknesses may work out negatively for White. Black plans, for instance, ...♙e6-f7-h5; e.g. 13.♗c2 ♙f7!? (13...♗c8) 14.fxe5 ♘xe5 15.b5 (15.♗xf5?! ♙g6) 15...axb5 16.axb5 d5 17.bxc6 bxc6 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.♗xf5 ♗c8= (19...♗eg4!?)=;

A3) 10.♙d2 ♗c8N=

B) The first player can also prepare the b2-b4-b5 advance with 9.♖b1. After 9...♘bd7 10.b4 a6 11.a4 ♙h8, however, Black is well set up and would profit from a file opening on the queenside hardly less than would White: 12.a5 (12.b5 axb5 13.axb5 ♗c7) 12...♗c8= **9...♘bd7 10.f4**



10...♘g4?!

The purpose of this knight excursion is not altogether clear. The move h2-h3 provoked by it suits White's build-up, and the

tempi lost through it would have been better invested elsewhere. Black can exploit the knight development to e2 in thematic fashion with the lever ...h7-h5-h4, although in most cases White simply takes the pawn and occupies the g-file. In this case, too, h2-h3 helps more than it hurts. Of course, 10...♗c8 comes into consideration, transposing to the variation 9.f4 ♘bd7 10.b3.

11.h3 ♘gf6 12.fxe5

The young grandmaster from Ukraine clarifies the pawn structure.

But even after the stronger 12.d4 ♗c7 the second player is relatively safe (12...e4?! 13.d5!±). To be sure, White can force Black to close the center with 13.♙a3! e4! (13...♗ae8?? 14.fxe5 dxe5 15.♙xe7 ♗xe7 16.d5!+–) After 14.d5 ♙f7 15.♘d4 g6 White has a good lever with g3-g4, which secures for him an unpleasant initiative. Black can still hold the game, but it was not a good idea for him to give away two tempi! Here is a sample variation: 16.g4 ♗a5! 17.♙b2 cxd5 18.g5 ♘h5 19.♘xd5 ♙xd5 20.cxd5 ♗xd5 21.♗d2 ♗fc8 22.♗fc1 ♙f8 23.♗xc8 ♗xc8 24.♙f1 ♘b6 25.♙h2 (25.a4 ♘g3) 25...a6 26.a4 ♗f7 27.a5 ♘d7 28.b4↑

12...♘xe5

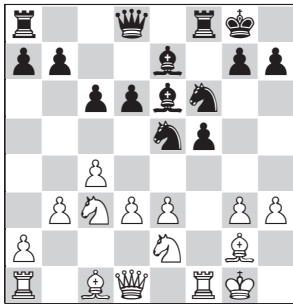
After 12...dxe5, 13.d4 is the natural lever in the position. Black can, however, choose whether or not to force the play. We see an important motif here: in the case of an

opening of the position after dxe5 or d4-d5, the weaknesses in the vicinity of e3 come to light; e.g.

A) 13...♖c7 14.d5 ♕f7 15.♗xf5 ♕g6 16.♗f1 ♘c5∞;

B) 13...♗d6!? 14.d5 cxd5 15.cxd5 ♕f7 16.♗xf5 ♕g6 17.♗f1 ♗c8∞;

C) 13...♗b6 14.dxe5 (14.d5 cxd5 15.cxd5 ♕f7 16.♗xf5 ♕g6 17.♗f1 ♗ac8∞) 14...♘xe5 15.♘d4 ♕c8 16.♘xf5 ♕xf5 17.♗xf5 ♗ad8 18.♖c2 ♘d3∞



The Indian grandmaster abstains from opening the d-file. Black's structure is sound and can in principle tolerate even the exchange of the light-squared bishop for a knight. It is true that the first player remains with an active knight outpost that guarantees him the advantage.

13.d4

The advance of this pawn to d5 is powerful, but White should have traded off Black's queen's bishop first.

Better is 13.♘d4! ♖c8 14.♘xe6 ♖xe6 15.♘e2!±. After the exchange of the light-squared bishop the vulnerable f5-pawn must be

supported with ...g7-g6, so that the knight on f4 is actively placed and in practice cannot be driven away.

White has the advantage; e.g. 15...g6 16.♘f4 ♖d7 17.♗b2 ♗ae8 18.d4 ♘f7 19.d5! ♕d8 20.♘e6 ♗xe6 21.dxe6 ♖xe6 22.♖h2±.

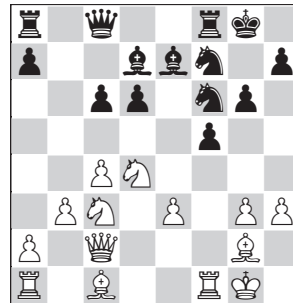
13...♘f7 14.d5 ♕d7 15.♘d4 ♖c8

Black can protect everything, but he must be careful with the structurally significant ...c6-c5, since his opponent could get clear light-square dominance with the typical pawn-sacrifice ♘e6!.

16.dxc6

After 16.♖c2 Black's position also seems to hold, even if after 16...g6 17.e4 ♘h5! 18.♖h2 ♕f6 19.dxc6 bxc6 20.exf5!? he has to withstand a dangerous attack; e.g. 20...♕xd4 21.fxg6 ♘e5 22.♕h6 ♕f5 23.♖d2 ♕xc3 24.♖xc3 ♗f6∞.

16...bxc6 17.♖c2 g6



The position is approximately level. After some exciting play Black was able to score the win:

18.e4?! 18.♗b2 ♘h5 (18...♖c7 19.e4) 19.♖f2 ♘e5 20.♗ad1 ♘f6= 18.♖h2 ♘h5 19.♘de2 ♕f6 20.♘f4= 18...♘h5! 19.♘de2 19.♖h2 ♕f6

20. exf5 transposes to the variation 16. ♖c2 **19... ♗f6** **20. ♗b2 ♗e5** **21. ♖h2?! ≥ 21. exf5 ♗xf5** 22. ♖xf5 gxf5 23. ♖f1 **21... ♖d8?! 21... ♗xg3!** 22. ♗xg3 f4 23. ♗ce2 fxg3+ 24. ♗xg3 ♖e8 **22. ♗a4?! 22. exf5! gxf5** 23. ♖d2!± ♖h4 24. ♗e4! **22... ♗xg3** **23. ♗xg3 f4 24. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 25. ♗f5 gxf5** 25... ♖g5!? **26. ♖xf4 ♗g6 27. ♖ff1 f4** **28. c5 ♖g5 29. ♖c3 ♗e5?! 29... f3!** 30. ♖xf3 ♖xf3 31. ♗xf3 ♖f4+ 32. ♖h1 ♗xh3-+ **30. ♖g1 ♖h8** **31. cxd6 ♖f6 32. ♗f1 ♖h5 33. ♗c5 ♖xd6** **34. ♗xd7 ♖xd7 35. ♗c4?** 35. ♖g2! **35... ♖ad8-+ 35... ♖d2-+ 36. ♖g2 ♖d3!** **37. ♗xd3 ♖xd3** **38. ♖xd3 ♗xd3 39. ♖ag1 ♖e8 0-1**

Conclusion

The build-up with e2-e3 and ♗ge2 does not pose any problems for Black. He completes his development with ...c7-c6, ...♗e6 and ...♗bd7 and can, among other ideas, fight for the initiative on the queenside with ...♖c8, ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5.

Section 4: White's build-up with e3, d4, ♗ge2

Game 45

Oskar von Bahr 2384
Tiger Hillarp Persson 2539

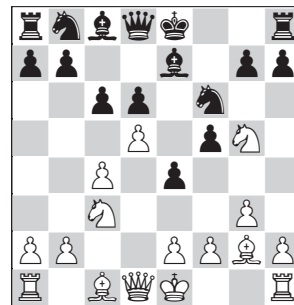
Sweden tt 2015/16

1. c4 d6 2. g3 e5 3. ♗g2 f5 4. ♗c3 ♗f6
 4... ♗e7 first is also possible. 5. d4 ♗f6 then leads by transposition

to the game. If White instead secures the bishop pair with 5. ♗d5 he will hardly benefit from it: 5... ♗f6 6. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 7. d3 0-0 The second player has won two tempi through the exchange and can now safely place his pawns on the dark squares. A possible build-up would be 8. ♗f3 c5 9. 0-0 ♗d7 10. b3 (10. ♗h4 ♗c6 11. ♗g5 ♖f7 12. a3 h6 13. ♗d2 ♖ae8⇒) 10... ♗c6 11. ♗b2 ♗a6= followed by ...♗c7-e6-d4. Black is very solidly placed and can fight for the initiative in all three sectors of the board. In view of the closed position, as well as the possibility of an exchange on the light squares, the bishop pair offers the first player no advantage.

5.d4 ♗e7 6.e3

With 6. ♗f3 the first player can increase his pressure on e5 and force Black into a reaction. After 6...e4! 7. ♗g5 c6 8. d5 (8. ♗h3 ♗a6 with the idea ...♗c7 and ...d6-d5 9. ♗g5 ♗e6 10. d5 ♗f7 11. f3 exf3 12. ♗xf3 0-0⇒)



analysis diagram

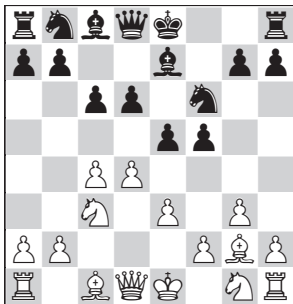
he has cut off the black king's pawn, which has forged ahead, away from

protection by ...d6-d5, and looks to open the position with f2-f3. But Black can assert himself well enough:

A) 8...♞xd5 is the tactical solution: 9.♟gxe4 ♞b6 10.♞d2 ♟e6 (10...♟f6; 10...0-0=) 11.b3 d5 (11...♟f6 12.♟b2 0-0) 12.cxd5 ♞xd5 13.♟b2 ♟f6 14.♞c2 ♞xc3 (14...♞a6=) 15.♟xc3 0-0 16.0-0 ♞d7 17.♞ad1 1-0 (55) Bocharov-Zvjagintsev, Kaliningrad 2015;

B) 8...0-0 9.0-0 ♟g4 exploits the first player's positional concessions (9...♞a6!? and; 9...h6 10.♞h3 ♞bd7 also comes into question): 10.♞h3 (10.♞e6?! ♟xe6 11.dxe6 ♞a6) 10...♞e8 (10...♟f6?! 11.dxc6N bxc6 12.♞d5!±) 11.f3 (11.dxc6 bxc6 12.♞d5 ♟f8) 11...exf3 12.exf3 ♞e5=

6...c6



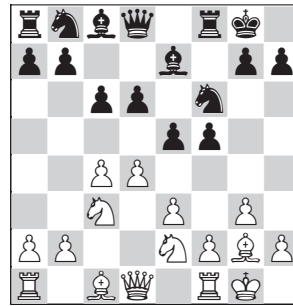
7.♞g2

With this setup, too, White refrains from putting pressure on the black center, with the result that the second player can develop his game comfortably.

7.♞f3?! at this point, however, makes no sense. After 7...e4 8.♞d2 White is in fact playing a French

Defense with colors reversed and with the fianchetto of his king's bishop. Black can maintain his pawn chain c6-d5-e4 and secure for himself a long-term space advantage. After 8...d5↑ the queen's knight comes into the game via ...♞a6-c7-e6. Should White castle kingside, then an attack on the king with ...h7-h5-h4 is possible.

7...0-0 8.0-0

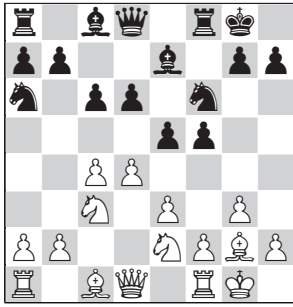


8...♞a6

The knight prevents b2-b4 and is to be developed at c7.

Kasparov played 8...a5!? here, forestalling a later b2-b4. The move is quite playable, but it defines the role of the a-pawn prematurely: 9.c5?! (9.b3 ♞a6 10.♟b2 e4= 11.d5?! ♞c5) 9...e4 10.cxd6 ♟xd6 11.b3 ♞a6 0-1 (35) KEB-Kasparov, ICC INT 1998.

Our repertoire move is 8...♟e6. The a-pawn, after ...a7-a6, could help attack the white c-pawn later with ...b7-b5. 9.b3 ♟f7 (not 9...♞bd7?!, since Black is forced to exchange on d5 after 10.d5!±, but 9...♞a6!? is quite possible) 10.♟b2 ♞bd7, with a flexible game over the whole board; e.g. 11.e4 fxe4 12.♞xe4 ♞xe4 13.♟xe4 d5 14.♟f5 e4 15.♞f4 ♞f6=.



9.b3

White dispenses with b2-b4-b5, which likewise does not secure him a clear initiative.

After 9.♖b1 ♕e6 10.d5 ♕d7 the first player gets in b2-b4. But Black's pieces are very harmoniously positioned despite the lack of space and are ready, potentially, to occupy the holes in the white formation; e.g. 11.b4 (11.dxc6N bxc6 12.b4 ♖b8 13.♗a4 ♖b6⇒) 11...♗c7N 12.dxc6 ♕xc6 13.e4 ♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♕xe4 15.♕xe4 fxe4 16.♗c3 ♗d7 17.♗xe4 b5 18.cxb5 ♗xb5⇒.

9...e4

The clever thing is to wait to play this move only after the white queen's bishop goes to b2, as then the e3-pawn would be unprotected after the lever f2-f3.

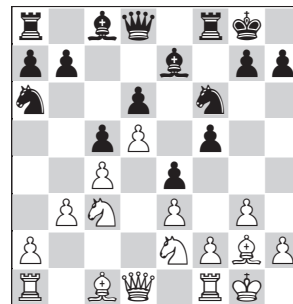
9...♕d7 promises Black full-fledged play; e.g. 10.♕b2 (10.♕a3N ♗e8⇒, with ideas like ...♖d8 and ...b7-b5) 10...e4 11.f3N (11.d5?!N ♗c5↑) 11...d5 12.fxe4 dxe4!⇒. This recapture is an important option in the French formation. White now has a sound majority on the queenside, true, but the weaknesses at e3 and d3, the lack of space on the kingside, and

the limited mobility of the white king's bishop weigh heavily against him. Black has very good prospects on the right-hand side of the board.

10.d5 c5?!

In principle the Swedish grandmaster has now reached a very sound structure. Black has the lever ...b7-b5, the b4- and e5-squares for his knights, and the long diagonal for his king's bishop after ...♕f6. Unfortunately, this formation is destroyed by White's next move!

10...♗c5 11.♗d2 (11.b4?! ♗d3 12.♗f4 ♗e5⇄) 11...a5⇒, 10...♗g4!?, 10...♕d7 and 10...♗c7, cutting off the d5-pawn from support by e3-e4, were good alternatives, in each case with about even chances.



11.f3!

The FIDE Master Oskar von Bahr, also from Sweden, jumps at the opportunity and opens the position on the kingside.

11...exf3 12.♕xf3 ♗c7 13.♗f4↑

White now threatens e3-e4, when all his kingside pieces are becoming active. On the other hand, Black's counterplay with ...b7-b5 fails to the

resource ♖e6, opening the position to White's advantage.

13...♗g4

Hillarp Persson accepts the doubled pawn to take the strength out of e3-e4.

13...♙d7 14.♙b2 b5?! 15.♗e6±

14.♙xg4

14.e4? ♙f6≠

14...fxg4

White can bear the loss of the king's bishop, since a queen-bishop battery on the a8-h1 diagonal is not expected. With both knights and the dark-squared bishop, however, pushing e3-e4-e5 is becoming a real option. This would destroy the black structure.

15.♙b2 ♙f6 16.♖d2 ♖e8 17.♞ae1±



White has the better structure and enough opportunities to improve his position, for example through the exchange of the dark-squared bishops and the subsequent transfer of the queen's knight to f2. Black's counterplay with ...b7-b5, in contrast, does not work well, but what else can he undertake?

17...♞b8

The grandmaster makes a preparatory move but fails to get any effective counterplay.

Nor does the immediate 17...b5 improve Black's situation; e.g.

18.♗xb5 ♗xb5 19.♙xf6 ♞xf6 20.cxb5 ♖e4! (20...♖xb5 21.e4 ♙a6 22.♞f2 c4 23.♖d4 ♖b6 24.♖xb6 axb6±) 21.a4! (21.♖g2?! ♙f5=; 21.♖a5?! ♙f5 22.b6 ♞f7=; 21.♖c3?! ♙f5=) 21...♙f5 22.b4!, when White's superiority on the queenside puts Black in a critical situation.

18.e4

Von Bahr keeps his position under control and in the ensuing play wins a well-deserved point.

18...b5 19.♗xb5 ♗xb5 20.cxb5 ♞xb5 21.♙xf6 gxf6± 22.♗d3 ♞b6 23.♞f4 ♞a6 24.♞ef1 ♖e7 25.♞1f2 ♔g7 26.♖c3 h5 27.b4 c4 27...cxb4 28.♗xb4 ♞b6 29.♗c6+- 28.♖xc4 ♞a3 29.b5 ♖d8?! 29...♙d7 30.♗b4 ♞a4 31.a3 ♞f7± 30.e5!+- 30.♗b4+- 30...dxe5 31.♗xe5 ♞e3 32.♗c6 ♖b6 33.♖d4 ♞e1+ 34.♔g2 ♖xd4 35.♞xd4 a6 36.b6 ♞f7 37.♞b2 f5 38.♗d8 ♞d7 39.b7 ♙xb7 40.♞xb7 1-0

Conclusion

Against the build-up with d2-d4, e2-e3 and ♗ge2, too, Black gets a good game with the flexible formation ...c7-c6, ...♙e6 and ...♗bd7 or ...♗a6.