

Your Variations

Trends & Opinions

Forum

	Slav Defence Slow Slav 5...a6 Editorial staff	10
GAMBIT	King's Pawn Openings... Two Knights Defence 6.♘xf7 Lopez Senra	11
	King's Indian Defence . . . Gligoric Variation 6.♙e2, 7.♙e3 . . . Lalic	11
GAMBIT	French Defence Alekhine-Chatard Variation 6.h4.. Olthof	12
GAMBIT	King's Pawn Openings... Two Knights Defence 5...♘d4 Lopez Senra	13
	Alekhine Defence Four Pawns Variation 5.f4 Van der Tak	14
	Benoni Defence ♙d3/h3 Variation Vi.Zakharsov	15
	Catalan Opening Open Variation 6...dxc4 Vigorito	16
HOT!	Grünfeld Indian Defence. . Anti-Grünfeld 3.f3 d5 Schaub	16
	Bologan's Opening Bulletin	17
	NEW COLUMN! From Our Own Correspondent by Erwin l'Ami	25

Surveys

1.e4 openings

	Sicilian Defence Moscow Variation 3...♘d7 K.Szabo	34
	Sicilian Defence Dragon Variation 10.♙b3 Adorjan/Vegh	40
	Sicilian Defence Rossolimo Variation 3...g6 Stohl	50
	Sicilian Defence Sveshnikov Variation 8...♙e6 Ris	59
GAMBIT	Sicilian Defence Grand Prix Attack 7.d4 Tay	67
	King's Fianchetto ♙c4/♖e2 System Marin/Stoica	75
	French Defence Winawer Variation 6...♖a5 Pijpers	84
	Caro-Kann Defence Advance Variation 4.♘f3 Finkel	92
	Petroff Defence Nimzowitsch Attack 5.♘c3 Panczyk/Ilczuk	100
HOT!	Ruy Lopez Berlin Variation 4.d3 Vilela	110
	Ruy Lopez Neo-Steinitz Variation 4...d6 Ninov	119
HOT!	Ruy Lopez The 6.d3 Line Lukacs/Hazai	128
HOT!	Italian Game Giuoco Piano 5.d3 Hungaski	138
	King's Pawn Openings... Philidor Defence 5.♙c4 Antic/Maksimovic	145

1.d4 openings

	Queen's Gambit Declined. . Exchange Variation 5. ♖f4	Ikonnikov.	154
SOS	Queen's Gambit Declined. . Early Divergences 4...a6	De Dovitiis.	161
HOT!	Slav Defence. 4...a6 5.e3 Hybrid	Vigorito.	165
	Slav Defence. Moscow Variation 5...h6.	Ris	173
GAMBIT	Queen's Gambit Accepted. . Central Variation 3.e4.	Flear.	182
GAMBIT	Grünfeld Indian Defence. . 4. ♖f4 Line.	Karolyi.	192
	Grünfeld Indian Defence. . Exchange Variation 7. ♔a4+	Karolyi.	200
	Benoni Defence Fianchetto Variation 7.g3.	Rodi.	209
Others			
	English Opening Four Knights Variation 4...♖b4	Timman.	218
SOS	English Opening Symmetrical Variation 3...d5.	Cummings	223
	English Opening Anti-Grünfeld 2...d5	Fogarasi.	231

Views

Reviews by Flear

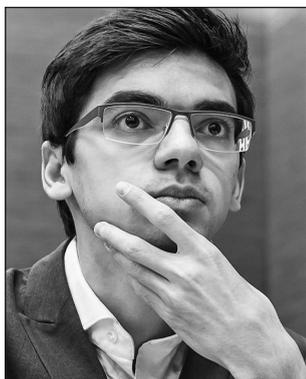
	Dismantling the Sicilian by Jesus de la Villa & Max Illingworth	238
	The Art of the Tarrasch Defence by Alexey Bezgodov	240
	Playing 1.d4 d5 – A Classical Repertoire by Nikolaos Ntirlis	242
	The Pirc Defence by Mihail Marin	244
	The Modern Sämisch by Eric Montany	246
	Solutions to exercises	248

HOT! = a trendy line or an important discovery

SOS = an early deviation

GAMBIT = a pawn sacrifice in the opening

Opening Highlights



TATA STEEL CHESS

Anish Giri

At the Tata Steel Masters the Dutch No. 1 managed to bend his immense opening knowledge into lines where each of his top-level opponents felt uncomfortable. And so Giri started winning instead of drawing, only conceding the final victory to Magnus Carlsen in a blitz playoff. Victor Bologan explains in his Bulletin on page 17 how **1.c4 pioneer Giri wrongfooted Kramnik and Mamedyarov in an Accelerated Nimzo and a Symmetrical English** respectively.

Alexander Grischuk

The Russian Candidate likes to stroll on the cutting edge of opening theory, even at faster time controls. In the chess.com speed challenge vs Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Grischuk struck gold with Grzegorz Gajewski's pawn sacrifice 7.d4 in the Sicilian Grand Prix (Survey by Junior Tay on page 67). And **in the Queen's Gambit Accepted with 3.e4 he advanced the theory 'with leaps and bounds'**, as Glenn Flear puts it in his Survey on page 182.



Peter Svidler

Svidler's eighth Russian title is a record that may never be broken. The opening play of the cricket lover from St Petersburg is highly sophisticated and often instructive. In his Survey on page 209 Luis Rodi investigates **Svidler's high-class treatment of the highly topical line with 10... ♗f5 in the Fianchetto Benoni** in his game vs Tomashevsky at Palma de Mallorca. What Svidler did with his bishops reminded Rodi of the Great Dane Bent Larsen.

Rauf Mamedov

The chief contributor to Azerbaijan's European Team title was Rauf Mamedov, the modest 4th board who jumped out of the shadow of teammates like Mamedyarov and Radjabov with a humongous 8/9 score. His most beautiful game was the one against Daniil Dubov: a refinement of a **mind-boggling queen sac in the Rossolimo Sicilian** from a Timman-Kramnik encounter in 1995! See Igor Stohl's Survey, including Anish Giri's analysis of this amazing game, on page 50.





Erwin l'Ami

This Yearbook features an exciting new column: **'From our own correspondent' by Erwin l'Ami**. The Dutch GM, a former second of World Champion Veselin Topalov and a super-theoretician, will treat us to a choice of five theoretical novelties from the relatively underexposed world of correspondence chess in every issue. Here you will find **novelties before they are played OTB**, and trends that may 'rise to the surface' at any moment. We start on page 25!

Aryan Tari

The second Norwegian to conquer a world chess title used a modern concept to win a crucial game in the World Junior Championship. Against the Russian leader, Kirill Alekseenko, **Tari played the positional set-up with 4.a4 vs the Moscow Sicilian and went on to win** to take the lead and eventually the title. His 'colleague' Magnus Carlsen also likes the line with white, sometimes even pushing that pawn as far as a6. See Krisztian Szabo's Survey on page 34.



Teimour Radjabov

English GM Anthony Miles introduced 6.dxc3, inviting an early queen trade, in 1977. Recently Teimour Radjabov surprised and outplayed Peter Svidler with this **paradoxical, Ulf Anderssonesque idea in the Symmetrical English**. An epic loss by Magnus Carlsen to Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in the same line followed promptly. David Cummings' Survey on page 223 contains extensive analyses by both Radjabov and MVL.



Ian Nepomniachtchi

Find your opponent's weak point and strike hard! At the European Teams, **'Nepo' caught Czech GM Viktor Laznicka in his pet Advance Caro-Kann with 5...c5**. The Russian team seconds found a vicious new idea in this line that Laznicka had played about a dozen times, creating attacking possibilities, and Nepo finished off with some impressive powerplay. See Alex Finkel's Survey (with analysis by Erwin l'Ami) on page 92.

A treasure trove for opening aficionados

by Erwin I'Ami



In this column, Dutch grandmaster and top chess coach Erwin I'Ami scours the thousands of new correspondence games that are played every month for important novelties that may start new waves in OTB chess also. Every three months it's your chance to check out the best discoveries from this rich chess source that tends to be underexposed.

As a regular reader of our Yearbooks you are undoubtedly very familiar with household names like Anand, Ivanchuk, Kramnik, or Nakamura. However, do the names Langeveld, Kribben, Perevertkin or Chitylek also ring a bell? I'm hoping they do, but for those of you who are unfamiliar with them; they are a few of the very best correspondence players in the world.

The enormous quality of play in correspondence games always intrigued me. These are the best games. Google's AlphaZero may have destroyed StockFish, but it wouldn't stand a chance against the best correspondence players out there. Every month the International Correspondence Chess Federation (ICCF) publishes a database with around 5,000 correspondence games that have been finished. Not only are these games of an exceptionally high level, more or less every single one is relevant for opening theory, too. A treasure trove for opening aficionados! In each instalment of this column I'll be picking out some of the highlights of the previous three months. The first game we will have a look at is a Bayonet King's Indian. Thomas Schwetlick replies in the sharpest possible way with 9...♗e8 and the ensuing struggle teaches us a lot about the current state of affairs in this fascinating opening.

Elio Vassia

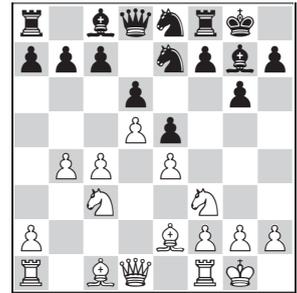
Thomas Schwetlick

WC29/final ICCF 2015

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♗g7

4.e4 d6 5.♗f3 0-0 6.♗e2 e5

7.0-0 ♗c6 8.d5 ♗e7 9.b4 ♗e8!?



The sharpest way of combating the Bayonet Variation. It has always appealed to me for its aggressive nature as well as the fact that it's an antidote against both 9.b4 and 9.♗d2. **10.c5 f5 11.♗d2 ♗f6 12.a4 f4 13.♗a3 g5 14.♗c4 14.b5 ♗g6 15.b6!?** is a very critical continuation here, breaking open the queenside. The only correspondence game that took this path continued 15...axb6 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.♗c4 g4 18.♗xd6 f3 19.gxf3 gxf3 20.♗xf3 ♗h3 21.♖e1 ♗h4 22.♗h1 h5 followed by ...♗g4, giving Black enough compensation to hold the draw in Ponomarev-Anderskewitz, ICCF 2016. Some questions remain though, as 22.♗f5 is an interesting possibility for White. Perhaps 15...cxb6!? 16.cxd6 a6 is worth exploring. Now 17.d7 ♗xd7 18.♗xf8 ♗xf8 gives Black excellent

dark-square compensation for the exchange, while if White refrains from 17.d7, typical counterplay on the kingside will be prepared with ...g5-g4. I trust both players had a thorough look at the b5-b6 plan and believe Black has enough resources. **14...♟g6 15.cxd6 cxd6 16.b5 ♟e8**



17.b6

This is new, but we are, and have been for a while, on very fresh territory. The 'automatic' 17.♟g4 loses material to 17...♟xg4 18.♟xg4 ♟c8, but preparing the exchange with 17.♟c1 gives Black just enough time to create play against the white king: 17...♟h4 18.♟g4 f3! 19.♟xf3 ♟xf3!? 20.gxf3 ♟h3 21.♟e1 ♟d7 with great compensation. One reason why I chose this game is that I think the exchange operation on g4 is generally overrated. More on that later! **17...a6 18.♟b1 ♟f7 19.♟bd2 19.♟g4 ♟xg4 20.♟xg4 ♟f6 21.♟e2 (21.♟xg5 ♟xe4 22.♟xd8+ ♟xd8 23.f3 ♟f6 is alright as well, since 24.♟xd6 is well met with 24...♟fd7) 21...♟f8 results in one of those positions where White has happily exchanged the bishops, but following ...g5-g4 and a possible ...f4-f3 Black does not need the light-squared bishop in order to start an initiative.**

19...♟f8 20.♟g4 ♟g7

With e4 firmly protected, and threats on the c-file, White can now simply take on g5 after 20...♟xg4 21.♟xg4 ♟f6. Does that mean Black is strategically in trouble? Not at all!

21.♟c1 ♟xg4 22.♟xg4 h5

23.♟e2

Old wisdom tells us that this position should be good for White. As a boy I was taught that without a light-squared bishop it's impossible for Black to give mate in the King's Indian. I think this should be taken with a grain of salt. Sure, the bishop trade is generally a desirable aim for White, but as this game shows it need not be the end of the world for Black.

23...♟h4

I am reluctant to criticize the players as they have spent much more time on the position than I have, but here it seems to me that 23...g4 24.f3 ♟d7 was an interesting and perhaps preferable route (not 24...g3 25.h3 when the standard sacrificial manoeuvre ...♟g7-e8-f6-h7-g5xh3 comes too late as White regroups with a4-a5, ♟b2, ♟c2, ♟fc1, and wins along the c-file). Black needs to push his g-pawn anyway, while it is not at all clear whether ...♟h4 needs to be played. For instance:



25.a5 ♟e8 26.♟c2 ♟c8 27.♟fc1, and now the prophylactic 27...♟h7 (avoiding 27...♟g7 28.♟xe5! dxe5 29.♟xc8 ♟xa3 30.♟1c7 ♟a4 31.♟c4 ♟d1+ 32.♟f1 gxf3 33.♟xe8+ ♟h7 34.d6, winning). Now 28.♟xe5 dxe5 29.♟xc8 ♟xa3 doesn't work as the e8-knight is not pinned. If White doesn't play 28.♟xe5, Black will continue ...♟g7 and have nagging pressure against the white king.

In the game Vassia finds an excellent regrouping that puts serious pressure on Black.

24.♟h1 g4 25.f3 g3 26.a5!

Here 26.h3 ♟e8 27.♟c3 ♟f6 28.♟fc1 is OK for Black in multiple ways – ♟h7-g5 being the standard one, but I like the brutal 28...♟g7 29.a5 ♟g4 even better. Who wouldn't like to be Black here?

26...♟e8 27.♟b2 ♟g7 28.♟d3 This is what I was referring to. a4-a5 followed by ♟b2-d3 has greatly improved White's position.

28...gxh2

Black would prefer to retain the status quo with 28...♟f6 but White probably gets a better version of the game following 29.hxg3!? (29.♟c7 ♟xc7 30.bxc7 ♟xc7 31.♟c1 ♟xa5 32.♟c4 looks attractive for White, but a definite assessment depends on 32...♟d8 33.hxg3 fxg3 34.♟e1 ♟g6 35.♟xg3 ♟h7 where I think Black can create enough counterplay on the kingside) 29...♟xg3 (29...fxg3 30.♟g1! followed by f3-f4 is overwhelming) 30.♟f2 followed by the regrouping ♟d1, ♟f1, ♟fc2.

29.♟f2 ♟c8 30.♟xc8 ♟xc8

31.♟f1 ♟f6 32.♟xh2 ♟e8

33.♟b4 ♟e7 34.♟e1 ♟d7

35.♟c4 ♟e8 36.♟c2 ♟h7

We can now appreciate the progress White has made.



I imagine that in a non-correspondence game many black players would eventually succumb from this position. Black has no attack left and White is ready to get his queenside play going. Even here though, where things clearly haven't gone Black's way, his position remains salvageable, as Schwetlick manages to prove.

37. ♖c8 ♜a4 38. ♔d2 ♙f6
39. ♜b2 ♞e7 40. ♗f1 ♘g6
41. ♞b4 ♜xa5 42. ♜c4 ♜c5
43. ♜xc5 dxc5 44. ♞c4 ♗f8
45. ♞xc5 ♗d7 46. ♞c1 ♗xb6
47. ♙a5 ♗a4 48. ♗d3 b6
49. ♙e1 ♞c7 50. ♞xc7+ ♗xc7
51. ♗d2 b5 52. ♗b3 ♗g7
53. ♗g1 ♗a8 54. ♗b4 ♗8b6

And draw agreed on move 59. A very interesting game on the topic of exchanging the light-squared bishops in the King's Indian which is also very important for the theory of the Bayonet Variation.

In our next game, Evgeny Pivinsky managed to get in a huge new idea, changing the evaluation of an entire sub-line of the English attack in the Najdorf!

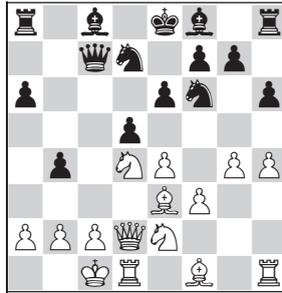
Evgeny Pivinsky
Renal Kazantsev

RUS/C9/Final ICCF 2015

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.f3 e6
7.♙e3 b5 8.♜d2 ♗bd7 9.g4
b4 10.♗ce2 h6 11.0-0-0 ♜c7
12.h4 d5



Thomas Schwetlick

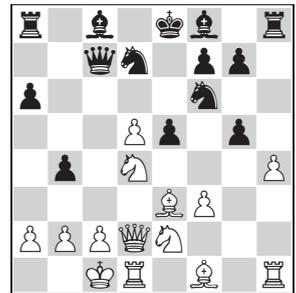


13.g5

A very fashionable line that has been seen in many high-level encounters. Previously 13. ♙f4 was thought to be the critical direction, for instance: 13... e5 14. ♙h2 dxe4 15. g5 hxg5 16. hxg5 ♞xh2 17. ♞xh2 exd4 and now both 18. ♞h4 ♗g4 19. ♞xg4 ♗c5 20. ♞h4 d3 21. ♗d4 ♙b7 22. ♞h8 0-0-0 23. g6 fxg6 24. fxe4 ♙xe4 25. ♗b3 ♗xb3+ 26. axb3 ♙e7 27. ♙xd3 ♞xh8 28. ♙xe4 ♞d8 29. ♜e3 ♞xd1+ 30. ♗xd1 ♜c5 31. ♜xc5+ ♙xc5 ½-½ (Leko-Giri, Baku 2015) and 18. ♞h8 ♗d5 19. ♜xd4 ♙b7 20. fxe4 ♗5b6 21. ♜xb4 0-0-0 22. ♜b3 ♙xe4 23. ♗c3 ♜f4+ 24. ♗b1 ♗c7 25. ♙xa6 ♗c5 26. ♗b5+ ♗c6 27. ♗a7+ ♗c7 28. ♗b5+ ♗c6 29. ♗a7+ ♗c7 ½-½ (Karjakin-Grischuk, Beijing 2013) saw Black experiencing no difficulties. The game continuation was introduced by Teimour Radjabov in 2014.

13...hxg5 14.exd5 e5

14... ♗xd5 was the stem game. After 15. ♙xg5 ♗f6 16. ♗f4 ♙d6 17. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 18. ♗b1 ♙b7 19. ♜e1 ♙e7 20. ♙h3 ♙xg5 21. hxg5 ♗f4 22. g6 0-0-0 23. gxf7 ♜xf7 24. ♜xb4 ♗xh3 25. ♜c5+ ♗b8 26. ♞xh3! White was winning in Radjabov-Sasikiran, Bilbao 2014, as 26... ♞xh3 27. ♗c6+ ♙xc6 28. ♜b6 is mate next move. 14...e5 was an attempt to improve upon this line, and it held its own in quite a few correspondence games. However, after this game I believe attention will be shifting back to 14... ♗xd5, where 15...e5 could be a possible improvement. Warning: do not play this line without thorough preparation!



15. ♗b3!N

New and very strong! Previous correspondence practice continued 15. ♗c6 ♞xh4 16. ♞xh4 (or 16. ♞g1 ♙b7 17. ♙xg5 ♞h2 18. ♙xf6 ♗xf6 19. ♞g5 ♙xc6 20. dxc6 g6 21. ♜e3 e4 22. ♗b1 ♙h6 23. f4 ♙xg5 24. fxg5 ♞d8 25. ♙xd8+ ♜xd8 26. a4 Müller-Pezzica, ICCF 2010) 16...gxh4 17. ♙g5 ♙b7 18. ♙h3 ♗c5 19. ♗f4, which looks very sharp but in reality is just a draw after 19... ♙xc6 20. dxc6 exf4 (20... ♜xc6 21. ♜e3 ♙e7 22. ♜xe5 ♗f8 23. ♙xh4 ♞e8) 21. ♙xf6 gxf6 22. ♙d7+ ♗d8 and White has nothing better than to repeat moves.

Too easy for Black

by Jan Timman

- | | | |
|----|------------|------------|
| 1. | c4 | e5 |
| 2. | ♘c3 | ♗f6 |
| 3. | ♗f3 | ♘c6 |
| 4. | e3 | ♙b4 |
| 5. | ♚c2 | d6 |



In the English Four Knights, White has a principled choice at move 4: should he aim for a kingside fianchetto or opt for 4.e3? The fianchetto has been the most popular choice in grandmaster practice. In a way it is the most positional approach. In the late 1970s, Black suffered a setback in the 4.e3 line because of an incredible move that Ray Keene played against me in Bad Lauterberg 1977: 1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗f6



Bharathakoti Harsha

3.♗f3 ♘c6 4.e3 ♙b4 5.♚c2 0-0 6.♘d5 ♜e8 7.♞f5!. Although I won the game, Keene's novelty soon became the centre of attention, and strong players like Kortchnoi started playing it. It is still not clear how Black should equalize. Recently White has faced difficulties getting an edge in the fianchetto line. The main problem is the development of Black's king's bishop to c5, which is why 4.e3 has gained in popularity. The most popular defence against it nowadays is 4...♙b4 5.♚c2 d6. By delaying castling, Black prevents the queen sortie to f5. In addition, he can develop his queen's bishop to g4 (or to f5 after d2-d3) and push his e-pawn after an exchange on c3. 5...d6 was first played by the American Junior World Champion Mark Diesen back in 1973. I used it three times in the 1970s. It is surprisingly difficult for White to get even a glimpse of an advantage. He has four moves at his disposal:

- 1) White plays 6.d3 to keep Black restricted. This was Kortchnoi's choice against me in 1977. White plays a Reversed Rossolimo. At the time, I didn't cope very well with the opening problems (see Game 1 in the Game Section). Recently, Vidit showed the right way to handle this position with black (Game 2 in the Game Section);
- 2) White continues his kingside development by 6.♙e2. This modest approach may well be White's best option. Granda managed to get a slight edge with it against Mareco, although he later lost (Game 3). In Sipila-Kanep

White fared better, although not as a direct result of the opening (Game 4);

3) White challenges the bishop with 6.a3. This has been played quite often, but cannot be recommended. After 6...♙xc3 7. ♖xc3 e4 8. ♗d4 ♘e5 Black is at least equal. In Agdestein-Fyllingen Black soon got a winning position (Game 5);

4) The standard manoeuvre 6. ♗d5, to which Black has two main replies: 6...♙c5 (or 6...a5, which after 7.a3 comes down to the same thing) and 6...♙a5. The retreat to c5 gives White chances for an advantage, as was seen in Harsha-Akopian (Game 6). The retreat to a5 was Carlsen's choice in a rapid game against Ding Liren (Game 7). Hammer has also played this way against Turov (Game 8).

Conclusion

The little move 5...d6 is an excellent choice in this line. It is not necessary to know a lot of theory to play it: just a basic understanding of strategic principles is required. White has a hard time proving an advantage. The straightforward methods 6. ♗d5 and 6.a3 cannot really be recommended (especially the latter one). White has to go for modest moves like 6.d3 and 6.♙e2, both of which lead to a kind of Reversed Sicilian in which an extra tempo is of little importance.

All in all, I think we are likely to see more games with 1.c4 e5 2.g3 in practice. In this way, White avoids the easy lines for Black in the English Four Knights.

Variation 1 6.d3

Viktor Kortchnoi
Jan Timman

Leeuwarden ch-NED 1977 (10)

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6
4.e3 ♗b4 5.♖c2 d6 6.d3 ♙g4
7.♙e2 ♙xc3+ 8.♖xc3



8...♙d7 A hesitant move. Black is playing with the idea of castling queenside. Interesting was 8...e4 9.dxe4 0-0. **9.h3 ♙h5 10.g4 ♙g6 11.e4** Preventing Black's push of the e-pawn once and for all. On 11.g5 Black should retreat by 11...♗g8 and redevelop the knight to e7. **11...a5 12.♙e3 b6** An interesting situation: Black wants to postpone castling until White has decided where to put his king.

1

Instead of the text, 12...♖e7 was more accurate, however. Black vacates the d7-square for the knight. **13.♗h4** Probably better was 13.♗d2 in order to aim for the push f2-f4. **13...♖e7!** The best reaction. **14.g5 ♗h5** A risky move. After 14...♗d7 the position is approximately even. Black doesn't have to worry about 15.f4 exf4 16.♙xf4 0-0 17.♗xg6 fxg6! with enough counterplay. **15.♙h5** White gives up the bishop pair to force the black queen into a passive position. More promising was 15.♙g1, however, to keep all options open. **15...♙h5 16.♗f5 ♖f8 17.f4 0-0-0** More accurate was 17...f6 in order to take back on e5 with the pawn. **18.♗g3** Underestimating Black's answer. White could get a slight edge by 18.fxe5 ♗xe5 (not 18...dxe5 19.c5! b5 20.a4! ♗b4 21.0-0 ♙xd3 22.♖c1 and White gets a crushing attack) 19.♗g3, forcing the bishop to g6. **18...h6!** A sharp and strong rejoinder. **19.gxh6 ♙xh6 20.fxe5 ♙h7 21.d4** White has won a pawn, but his king is not safe. Black has enough compensation. **21...♙f3?**

A bad mistake. After 21...dxe5 22.d5 ♗d4 23.♙xd4 exd4 24.♖xd4 ♖b4+ Black would have been fine. **22.0-0!** I had simply missed this move. Now White is on top. **22...♙xe4** Relatively best was 22...♙h5, although 23.c5 (less clear is 23.e6 ♖e7) 23...dxc5 24.d5 is very powerful. **23.♗xe4 dxe5 24.d5 ♙xh3 25.♙g2 ...** 1-0 (37)

Bharathakoti Harsha
Santosh Gujrathi Vidit

2

Douglas 2017 (6)

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6
4.e3 ♗b4 5.♖c2 d6 6.d3 0-0
Simplest and best. **7.♙e2** On 7.♙d2 ♙f5 or 7...♙e8 is possible.

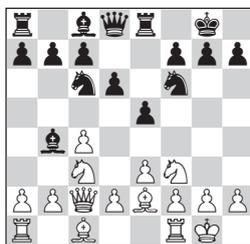


7...e4 An interesting pawn sacrifice. In Rodgaard-E.l'Ami Black chose a different set-up:

7...♗e7 8.0-0 ♖g6 9.♙d2 c6 10.♞a1 a6 and now White could have gotten an edge by 11.d4 instead of 11.♗e4. **8.dxe4 ♙xc3+ 9.bxc3** White has to weaken his structure, since 9.♞xc3 ♗xe4 10.♞c2 ♞e8 11.0-0 ♙f5 is excellent for Black. **9...♙g4 10.♗d4** An awkward way to give back the pawn.

A) Better was 10.♞b1 b6 11.h3. Black has a difficult choice now: 11...♙h5 (11...♙xf3 12.gxf3 ♞e8 or 12...♞e7 and Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn) 12.g4 ♙g6 13.♗d2 ♞e8 14.f3 h5. Also here Black has compensation;

B) Or the immediate 10.h3. **10...♙xe2 11.♗xe2 ♗e5** Now White can't protect the pawn on c4. **12.0-0 ♗xc4 13.♞d1 ♞e8 14.♗g3 ♞d7** Black has a strategic edge. His knight on c4 is far superior to White's undeveloped bishop. **15.f3 ♞ad8 16.♞f2** Apparently White dreams of a kingside attack, but this will never take off. He had to take defensive measures. The right move was 16.a4 in order to undermine the strong knight on c4. **16...♞e6** Possibly 16...♞a4 was even stronger, e.g. 17.♞f1 d5 with a big advantage. **17.♗e2** Too optimistic was 17.♗f5 because of 17...d5 18.♞g3 g6 and Black wins. **17...d5 18.exd5** Overlooking Black's reply. He had to settle for 18.♗f4. After 18...♞e5 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.exd5 ♞xd5 21.♞xd5 ♞xd5 22.e4 ♞d1+ 23.♞f1 White has chances of survival. **18...♗xe3!** A nice tactical stroke that will net Black a pawn. **19.♙xe3 ♞xe3 20.♞xe3 ♞xe3 21.♗f2 ♞de8 22.♞d2 ♗xd5** The rest is easy technique ... 0-1 (42)



8.d3 After 8.d4 ♙xc3 9.♞xc3 ♗xe4 10.♞b3 a5 the chances are approximately even. **8...a5** Also here 8...♙xc3 came into consideration: 9.bxc3 (9.♞xc3 ♙g4 or 9...e4 and Black has equalized) 9...e4 10.dxe4 ♗xe4 11.♗d4 ♗c5 and White can't claim any advantage. **9.b3** Granda decides to fianchetto his queen's bishop. An interesting try was 9.♗b5 but Black equalizes by 9...♙f5. **9...♙f5 10.♙b2 ♗e7** Black is going to bring the knight to g6, hoping for a kingside attack. The alternative was 10...e4. After 11.♗xe4 ♗xe4 12.a3! ♗c5 13.♞fd1 ♙g6 14.axb4 ♗xb4! 15.♞c3 Black has the resource 15...♞f6! with sufficient counterplay. **11.♗a4** The best plan. White is going to get the bishop pair. **11...♗g6 12.♞fd1 ♙c5** And this is Black's plan. He gives up the bishop pair and accepts a doubled pawn to get a strong grip on the centre. **13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.♗e1** A bit passive. Good was 14.♙c3. **14...♞e7 15.♙f1** On 15.♙f3 Black had 15...♙g4 with a good game. Into consideration came 15.h3. **15...h5!** Aiming for an attack. **16.f3 ♞ad8 17.♞f2 b6 18.♗c2 h4 19.a3 ♞d7 20.♞d2 ♗h5 21.♞e1 ♞d8** More accurate was 21...♞ed8. After 22.♞ed1 (premature is 22.d4 exd4 23.exd4 ♞g5 and Black has an edge) 22...♙e6 Black's position is easier to play. **22.g4** Action on the wrong side. Stronger was 22.b4 when White can get a slight edge. **22...hgx3 23.hgx3 e4** A strong push, but also 23...♞g5 would lead to an advantage. **24.g4?** Far too optimistic. White had to settle for 24.fxe4 although Black has excellent compensation for the

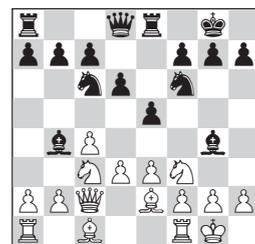
pawn after 24...♙g4. The plan is to bring the knight to e5. **24...♗h4!** The refutation. Black is just winning. **25.fxe4 25.gxh5 ♗xf3+** is hopeless. **25...♙g4 26.♙g2 ♗xg2 27.♞xg2 ♞h4 28.♞h2 ♞g5 29.♞g2 ♞xd3** White's position falls apart. **30.♞f1 ♞xe4 31.♞xc7 ♞g6 32.♗e1 ♞xb3 ... 0-1 (40)**

Vilka Sipilä
Meelis Kanep

4

Finland tt 2017/18 (4)

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.e3 ♙b4 5.♞c2 d6 6.♙e2 0-0 7.0-0 ♞e8 8.d3 ♙g4 This may not be the best option. Alternatives were 8...♙xc3 and 8...♙f5.



9.h3 Probably 9.♗d5 was White's best chance for an opening advantage. **9...♙h5** Black had an interesting way to exchange both his bishops: 9...♙xf3 10.♙xf3 ♙xc3 11.♞xc3 e4 12.dxe4 ♗xe4 13.♞c2 ♞h4 with a lot of activity to compensate for the white bishop pair. **10.♗e4** A curious way to handle the position. Best was probably 10.♗a4. After 10...d5 11.cxd5 ♞xd5 12.a3 White has an excellent Reversed Sicilian. **10...♗xe4 11.dxe4 a5** A good move. Black safeguards the position of his king's bishop. **12.a3 ♙c5 13.b3 f5 14.♞e1** The alternative was 14.exf5 e4 and now 15.♗e5 ♙xe2 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♞xe2 ♞f6 with roughly equal chances. **14...♙xf3** The intention of White's last move would become clear after 14...fxe4 15.♗d2. White is slightly better here. **15.♙xf3 f4! 16.exf4 exf4** The wrong follow-up. Better was 16...♞h4! 17.f5 ♗d4 18.♞d1 ♗xb3! and Black is doing well. **17.♙xf4** Now White has just won a pawn.

Variation 2
6.♙e2

Julio Granda Zuniga 3
Sandro Mareco
Buenos Aires 2017 (4)
1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.e3 ♙b4 5.♞c2 d6 6.♙e2 0-0 7.0-0 ♞e8

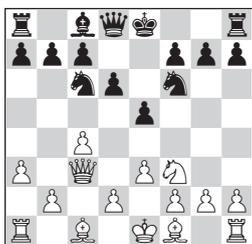
Black has some compensation, however. **17...d4 18.♖d3 ♜f8 19.♙g3 ♝xf3+ 20.gxf3 ♜f6 21.f4 d4 22.♖ad1 c5 23.♙g2 ♖ae8 24.♗e2 g6 25.♙h2 ♜f7 26.♜g3 ♜g7 27.♜g5 ♜f5 28.♜g4 ♜f7 29.h4 h5 30.♜h3 ♝h7 31.♝h1 ♜f6 32.♗g1 ♜fe6?** Black had to play 32...♜f7, keeping the position as it is. **33.♜f3** The immediate 33.f5 was even stronger. **33...♜f7 34.f5 gxf5 35.♗g5!** White has a crushing attack now. **35...♜xe4 36.♜xf5 ♜e6 37.♜xh5+ ♝g8 38.♙e5! ♜xe5 39.♗g5+ ... 1-0 (46)**

Variation 3 6.a3

Simen Agdestein 5
Roy Harald Fyllingen

Namses 1995

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♗c3 e5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.e3 ♙b4 5.♜c2 d6 6.a3 ♙xc3 7.♜xc3



7...e4 Black has three alternatives: 7...0-0, 7...a5 and 7...♙g4, all leading to approximate equality. The text, however, is very principled, and makes it hard for White to reach equality. **8.♘d4 ♘e5 9.♙e2** Too passive. Better is 9.b4 to gain space on the queenside. Derikum-Hertneck, Germany Bundesliga 1988/89, continued 9...b6 (9...0-0 10.♙b2 ♜e8 is also good for Black) 10.c5 bxc5 11.bxc5 0-0 12.♙e2 ♙g4 and Black was fine. **9...c5** Of course. The knight is driven back to an awkward square. **10.♘b3 b6** Good, but 10...♘fg4 was even stronger. After 11.h3 ♜h4 12.♖f1 (12.0-0 ♘f3+ loses immediately) 12...0-0! 13.hxg4 ♙xg4 14.d4 ♙xe2 15.♝xe2 ♜g4+ 16.♘d2 ♜xg2 Black is on top. **11.f4** This

push could have cost White the game. The lesser evil was 11.d4, although Black is better after 11...exd3 12.♙xd3 ♘xd3+ 13.♜xd3 0-0. **11...♘g6** Again Black opts for a solid positional move. Crushing was 11...♘d3+!. After 12.♙xd3 exd3 13.♜xd3 a5 14.a4 d5 15.cxd5 0-0 Black is completely winning. The white knight is placed too badly. **12.d4 ♘h4** In the style of Nimzowitsch. Black wants to block the white kingside. 12...exd3 was also good. **13.0-0 h5 14.♙d2 ♙g4 15.♜f2 ♜h6** But here simply 15...0-0 was preferable. **16.♙f1 ♗g6 17.♝h1 ♜c8 18.♙e1 ♘f5 19.♖d2 h4 20.h3 ♙h5 21.dxc5 bxc5** More in keeping with the position was 21...dxc5. **22.♝h2 ♘f8 23.♘c1** Stronger was 23.♘a5 to get space on the queenside. **23...♝g8 24.♙e2 ♜e6 25.♙xh5 ♘xh5 26.♘e2 ♘f6 27.♙f2 ♘d7** Black is slowly losing the thread. After 27...a5 28.b3 ♘h5 he would have had a good position. **28.♜c2 ♘b6 29.b3 ♜e8 30.♖ad1 a5 31.a4 ♘d7 32.♘c3 ♘b8 33.♘d5 ♜d7 34.♘c3 ♜e6** Consistent was 34...♘c6. **35.♘b5** Now White is better. **35...♜e7?** And this is already losing. 35...♖d8 was necessary. **36.♖d5** Breaking down what was left of Black's blockade... 1-0 (48)

Variation 4 6.d5

Bharathakoti Harsha 6
Varuzhan Akobian

Douglas 2017 (2)

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♘c6 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♙b4 5.♜c2 d6 6.d5 ♙c5 7.a3 a5 8.♙e2 ♙e6 9.♘c3

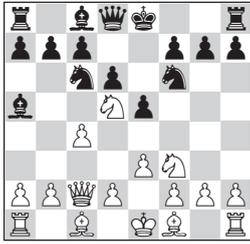


Black can't exchange on c3 anymore, so White keeps control over the centre. **9...h6 10.0-0 ♜d7 11.d3** Interesting was 11.♖d1 in order to push the d-pawn to d4. Black's best option is probably 11...♙f5 12.d3 0-0, which eventually leads to the game. **11...0-0 12.♙d2 ♜fe8 13.♖fd1 ♙f5 14.♘d5** Now Black must be on his guard. **14...♘xd5** A positional concession. Black had to play 14...♜d8, after which it is not easy for White to prove an advantage. **15.cxd5 ♘b8 16.♙c3** Better seems 16.♜c4 with the idea 16...c6 17.d4. The game is sharp, but White retains a small edge after 17...b5 18.♜c3 exd4 19.♘xd4 b4 20.axb4 axb4 21.♜c4. **16...♙b6** Also good was 16...c6. **17.♘d2 a4 18.♘c4 ♘a6** Here Black goes astray. He shouldn't have given up the king's bishop. The right move was 18...♙c5 with a difficult struggle. **19.e4 ♙g6 20.♘xb6 cxb6 21.b4** Probably a good idea. Also possible was 21.♖f1 to organize play on the kingside. After 21...f5 22.♖ae1 ♘c5 23.f3 White can bring his king's bishop to c2 and break with d3-d4. Black has no counterplay. **21...♘c7** The lesser evil was 21...axb3 22.♜xb3 ♘c5 23.♜b4 although White is undoubtedly better here. **22.♜ac1 ♘b5 23.♙b2 ♙f5 24.f3!** The young Indian plays very well. By the text he keeps Black's bishop out of play. **24...♜ac8 25.♜d2 ♝h7 26.♜e3 ♜xc1 27.♜xc1 ♜c8 28.♜xc8 ♜xc8 29.♙d1** Now. Black can't protect his a-pawn. **29...fxe4 30.dxe4 ♜c4 31.♙xa4 ♘d4 32.♙xd4 exd4 33.♙b3!** Again, accurate. **33...♜a6 34.♜xd4 ♜xa3 35.♙d1** White has an overwhelming majority on the kingside, guaranteeing an easy win ... 1-0 (48)

Ding Liren 7
Magnus Carlsen

St Louis m rapid 2017 (4)

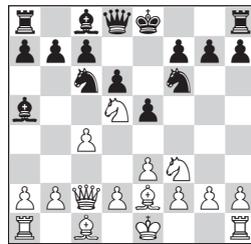
1.c4 ♘f6 2.♗c3 e5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.e3 ♙b4 5.♜c2 d6 6.d5 ♙a5 This retreat was first played in 2001 by the German player Christoph Scheerer.



Black wants to trade on d5 and play the other knight to e7. **7.a3** This basically loses time. **7...e2** see the next game. **7...e2** **8.cxd5** **e7** **9.b4** Harsha-J.van Foreest, Tarvisio 2017, varied with **9.c4** **0-0** **10.0-0** **g4** **11.b4** **b6** **12.b2** and now Black could have gotten an easy game by **12...xf3** instead of **12...d7**. The bishop pair has no significance in this position. **9...b6** **10.c4** **0-0** **11.b2** **f5** This looks like the most natural development of the bishop. **12.d3** **g6** Black has an easy game now. **13.h4** An aggressive move that will backfire. On **13.0-0** Black had **13...h4** with a comfortable game. Still, this was the lesser evil and Ding Liren would probably have played it in a game with a classical time control. **13...h6** **14.h5** **e7** Now it is difficult for White to castle. **15.d2** **c8** **16.e4** Weakening the position even more. Indicated was **16.f3** **c6** **17.dxc6** **xc6** **18.g4** **e6** with a slight edge for Black. **16...g4**

17.d4 A temporary pawn sacrifice that doesn't work. White had to defend with **17...b3** **c6** **18.dxc6** **xc6** **19.f3** **d2** **f.** **17...exd4** **18.f3** **d7** **19.f3** **d3** **c6** **20.dxc6** **xc6** Also **20...xc6** **21.f4** **e7** was very strong. **21.b5** On **21.0-0** the push **21...d5** was equally strong. **21...d7** **22.0-0** **d5** A crushing push. White can't keep his position together. **23.exd5** **f5** **24.e4** **xd5** **25.xd5** **xd5** **26.ad1** **fd8** **27.f1** **c3!** **0-1**

Maxim Turov **8**
Jon Ludvig Hammer
Norway tt 2015/16 (8)
1.c4 **e5** **2.c3** **f6** **3.f3** **c6** **4.e3** **b4** **5.c2** **d6** **6.d5** **a5** **7.e2**



This quiet developing move is probably White's best option. **7...e2** More accurate seems **7...0-0**. After **8.0-0** (8...xf6+ **xf6** **9.0-0** **f5** doesn't promise anything either) **8...e2** **9.cxd5** **e7** **10.g5** **f5** **11.d3** **xd3** **12.f3** **g6** Black is solid. **8.cxd5** **e7** **9.a4** **c6** White has saved

himself the move **a2-a3** and can hope to get the initiative. **10.b4** **b6** **11.dxc6** **bx6** **12.b2** **0-0** **13.d4** After **13.0-0** **d7** **14.ac1** **b8** White has very little. **13...exd4** **13...e4** was better. After **14.d2** **d5** **15.b3** **d7** **16.c5** **xc5** **17.bxc5** **g6** the white bishop pair has little significance. **14.dxd4** **c5** **15.b3** It was also possible to swap pawns by **15.bxc5**. Probably Turov didn't like his king remaining in the middle after **15...a5+**. White can, however, play **16.f1** **dx6** **17.b3** **b6** **18.c1**, pressurizing the c-pawn, with a slight edge. **15...d7** **16.b5** **xb5** **17.f3** **xb5** **c8** More accurate was **17...b8**, e.g.: **18.bxc5** **xc5** **19.f3** **b4** **20.c3** **xc3** **21.f3** **c8** with only a minimal edge for White. **18.bxc5** **dx6** **19.d1** **c7** **20.c4** **a5** **21.f3** **xa5** **xa5** **22.c3** This guarantees White a very promising endgame. **22...xc3** **+** On **22...b4**, **23.f3** was strong. **23.cxc3** **fd8** **24.fxd8** **xd8** **25.e2** **d5** **26.c1** **h6** A loss of time. Black had to try **26...b6**. **27.d2** **c8** **28.e4** **b6** **29.e3** White has optimal pressure against Black's queenside. **29...f8** **29...c4** **30.f3** **30.f3** **c4** **31.xb6** **axb6** **32.fxc4** **fa8** **33.a4** **fa5** **34.f4!** Prevents the exchange of the queenside pawns. The ending was a technical win ... **1-0** (51)

Exercise 1



position after 9...b7-b6

How can Black refute 10.f4 ?
(solution on page 255)

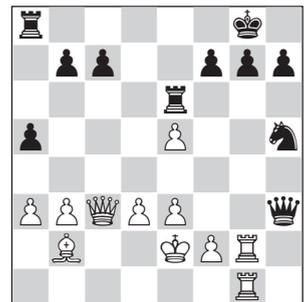
Exercise 2



position after 15.f1-e1

What is Black's best option?
(solution on page 255)

Exercise 3



position after 21...f8-e8

Is taking on c7 good?
(solution on page 255)