

Yearbook

NEW  IN CHESS 132

Contributing Authors

Burg • Carlsen • Doknjas • Flear • Fogarasi • Giddins • Giri • Hazai • Hess • Hungaski
Ikonnikov • Ilczuk • Karolyi • Kuljasevic • l'Ami • Logozar • Lopez Senra • Lukacs
Maris • Mchedlishvili • Moskalenko • Nielsen • Ogiewka • Olthof • Panczyk
Pijpers • Ponomariov • Ris • Rodi • Saric • Stella • Stohl • K.Szabo • Timman
Vachier-Lagrave • Van der Tak • Van der Wiel • Vidit • Vigorito • Vilela • Welling • Zakhartsov

CHESS OPENING NEWS

Edited by Jan Timman

From the editor



The inexplicable explained

We have Ruslan Ponomarev on the cover of this issue. The former FIDE World Champion takes a closer look at Magnus Carlsen's recent treatment of the Rossolimo Variation in the Sicilian. Very instructive material. Additionally, Igor Stohl and Viacheslav Ikonnikov write about the Sveshnikov and the Anti-Sveshnikov respectively, both focusing on Carlsen's exemplary games in these lines.

Congratulations go to Alexandra Goryachkina, who won the Women's Candidates Tournament. In my Survey on a topical line in the Queen's Indian I focus on her crucial win against Valentina Gunina.

Sometimes you see inexplicable things happening on the board when you follow chess online. I had this experience when I saw the French league game Ragger-Van Foreest unfold. They must have been preparing with the computer for a long time. Luckily for me, all this is explained by Ivan Saric in an excellent Survey.

18-year-old Jeffery Xiong is the highest rated under-20 player in the world, just above 16-year-old Alireza Firouzja. Xiong has an attractive, sharp playing style. This also reflects in his opening ideas. Against Samuel Shankland he chose the sharp 4... ♖f6 in the Scotch. I feel that 5. ♘b5 should be the crucial move now. Shankland, an excellent theoretician, opted for 5. ♘b3 and was later outplayed in a most impressive way.

Enjoy this issue!

Jan Timman

Opening Highlights

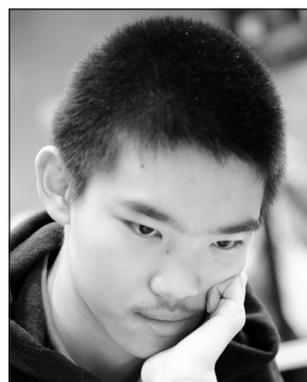


Ruslan Ponomarev

Magnus' style has become much more dynamic this year. In this Yearbook we present three Surveys on **Carlsen's hyper-ambitious treatment of the Sicilian anno 2019**: the 7.♘d5 Sveshnikov by Igor Stohl (page 76), the Anti-Sveshnikov by Ikonnikov (page 70), and the Rossolimo Sicilian by Ruslan Ponomarev. Our former FIDE World Champion collaborator Ponomarev was impressed, and explains from page 58 how even he is still learning from Magnus' stunning strategies.

Jeffery Xiong

The young American super-talent has developed into a valiant fighter at the chessboard. We were also charmed by the very sporting way Jeffery annotated his U.S. Championship loss against Hikaru Nakamura in *American Chess Magazine*. In this Yearbook, on page 129, Robert Ris takes a look at a dazzling game where Xiong played **the rare and controversial 4...♗f6 in the Scotch** and held the draw after big complications against the then title holder Sam Shankland.



Pavel Eljanov

In the Nimzo-Indian with 4.♙c2, the move 5...d6 used to take a back seat due to its apparent modesty. But a new discovery by Pavel Eljanov may change that. The Ukrainian's choice of exchanging on c3 results in an isolani for Black, but as long as you have active pieces, why worry about such 'trifles'? Against Miguel Santos Ruiz, Eljanov convincingly proved that Black is fine in **this line that may reform the theory of the Classical Nimzo**. See José Vilela's Survey on page 180.

Viktor Moskalenko

His new book *An Attacking Repertoire for White with 1.d4* is vintage Viktor, as Glenn Flear concludes in his Reviews (page 241). Moska's approach to the openings remains highly inspiring. On page 221 of this Yearbook, the Hispano-Ukrainian GM scrutinizes a white **weapon to deal with Black's flexible 3...d6 in the Dutch** from his own experience on both sides. As always with Moska, you may expect many surprising tricks and turns and ferocious attacks.





Aleksandra Goryachkina

The fantastically dedicated 20-year-old Russian top talent won the Women's Candidates by a landslide and is the new challenger of World Champion Ju Wenjun. As Jan Timman shows in his Survey on page 186, **Goryachkina managed to steer the sharp pawn sac 7.d5 in the Nimzo QI into a favourable endgame** against Valentina Gunina. Black's problems are not huge, but Goryachkina needs just a smidgeon to win – a quality we have also come to appreciate in a certain World Champion.

Santosh Gujrathi Vidit

The Nimzo with 5.♘c3 is a Petroff line that has become 'extremely concrete' according to Vidit. So the question is whether Black can allow himself an extra tempo to move his queen's knight to f6. This line has become all the rage on top level, but in the Prague super-tournament Vidit took Boris Gelfand's position apart with some iron logic. See the Indian super GM's own analysis of this important game in Tibor Karolyi's Survey on page 103.



Andrea Stella

The young Italian GM approached us with a piece of amazing analysis! **The English Defence with 4...♗b4** can be tricky for White due to Black's option of a quick ...f7-f5. In one of the main lines though, Stella found a **novelty which looks impossible but leads to dazzling complications which appear to give White excellent winning chances**. You may check for yourself with the help of Stella's Survey on page 143 whether this line is indeed dead for Black.

Ivo Maris

The Sokolsky can be an annoying weapon because – well, are you ever prepared for it? You should if you get paired against Dutch FM Ivo Maris with black. After winning a thematic tournament in his home town Groningen, Maris felt ready to write about this underrated opening. His debut Survey (page 151) is quite systematically structured, examining all Black's replies – and it also shows how unprepared black players can go down in an array of fireworks!



Your Variations

Trends & Opinions

Forum

GAMBIT	Sicilian Defence..... Najdorf Poisoned Pawn 10.f5	Olthof	12	
	Queen's Gambit Declined.. Alatortsev Variation 3...♙e7.....	Doknjas	14	
	Scandinavian Defence ... Main Line 3...♖a5	Editorial team	15	
HOT!	Sicilian Defence..... Sveshnikov Variation 9.♘d5	Ogiewka	16	
SOS	Sicilian Defence..... Classical Variation 6.♘d5.....	Boel	17	
	Slav Defence..... Krause Variation 6.♘e5	Zakharov	19	
	Grünfeld Indian Defence.. 4.♙f4 Line.....	Van der Tak	20	
	Nimzo-Indian Defence .. Kmoch Variation 4.f3	Rodi/Olthof.....	22	
	King's Indian Defence ... Makogonov Variation 5.h3	Kuljasevic.....	23	
	Alekhine Defence	Exchange Variation 5.exd6	Van der Tak	24
GAMBIT	Sicilian Defence..... Morra Gambit 2.d4	Logozar	26	
GAMBIT	Nimzo-Indian Defence .. Classical Variation 6...b5.....	Ogiewka	28	
	Errata.....	Editorial team	28	
	From Our Own Correspondent by Erwin l'Ami		29	

Surveys

1.e4 openings

HOT!	Sicilian Defence..... Moscow Variation 3...♘d7	Pijpers	42	
	Sicilian Defence..... Dragon Yugoslav Attack 9.♙c4....	Olthof	49	
HOT!	Sicilian Defence..... Rossolimo Variation 3...g6.....	Ponomarev	58	
	Sicilian Defence..... 4...♖b6 Lines.....	Szabo	65	
	Sicilian Defence..... Anti-Sveshnikov 3.♘c3	Ikonnikov.....	70	
HOT!	Sicilian Defence..... Sveshnikov Variation 7.♘d5	Stohl	76	
	French Defence	Closed Variation 2.d3	Giddins/Welling.....	85
SOS	French Defence	3.♘c3 Other Lines.....	Fogarasi.....	90
	Scandinavian Defence ... Main Line 3...♖a5	Olthof	96	
HOT!	Petroff Defence	Nimzowitsch Variation 5.♘c3....	Karolyi.....	103
	Ruy Lopez.....	Berlin Defence 4.d3.....	Van der Wiel	113
HOT!	Italian Game.....	Giuoco Piano 4.c3, 5.d3	Saric.....	121
SOS	Scotch Opening	4...♖f6 Line	Ris	129
	Two Knights Defence....	Early Divergences 5...♘xd5	Lopez Senra	135

	Various Openings English Defence 3.e4. Stella	143
SOS	Various Openings Sokolsky Opening 1.b4. Maris	151

1.d4 openings

	Queen's Gambit Declined. . Early Divergences 4. ♖g5 Rodi	157
HOT!	Slav Defence. Krause Variation 6. ♗e5 Vigorito.	165
	Catalan Opening Open Variation 6. ♗c3 dxc4. Lukacs/Hazai	171
	Nimzo-Indian Defence . . Classical Variation 4. ♖c2. Vilela	180
GAMBIT	Queen's Indian Defence. . Nimzowitsch Variation 4. ♖a6 Timman.	186
	Grünfeld Indian Defence . . Exchange Variation 7. ♗f3 Mchedlishvili	192
	King's Indian Defence . . Makogonov Variation 5.h3 Kuljasevic	201
SOS	Queen's Pawn Openings. . Malinoise Defence 1...c6. Panczyk/Ilczuk	211
	Dutch Defence. Early sidelines 4. ♖g5 Moskalenko	221

Others

	English Opening Four Knights Variation 4.e3 Hungaski	227
--	--	-----

Views

Reviews by Glenn Flear

	Grandmaster Repertoire 2B: 1.d4 Dynamic Systems by Boris Avrukh	236
	1.d4 with 2.c4 by Cyrus Lakdawala	238
	Play the Dutch! Part 1 and Part 2 by Tibor Karolyi	240
	An Attacking Repertoire for White with 1.d4 by Viktor Moskalenko	242
	The Hippopotamus Defence by Alessio De Santis	243
	Solutions to exercises	246

HOT! = a trendy line or an important discovery

SOS = an early deviation

GAMBIT = a pawn sacrifice in the opening

Little improvements and larger ones

The FORUM is a platform for discussion of developments in chess opening theory in general and particularly in variations discussed in previous Yearbook issues.

Contributions to these pages should be sent to: editors@newinchess.com

A new tabiya position

by René Olthof

SI 8.7 (B97)

YB 53, 92, 101

The history of the Poisoned Pawn Variation of the Najdorf Sicilian is ideal territory to illustrate the volatility of opening theory. Ever since its inception in 1954 a variety of lines have been hyped up, be it due to their adoption by or against Bobby Fischer or for some other reason. In random order, Keres's move 10.e5 (still the most common in the Online Database), Nezhmetdinov's 9.♘b3, or recently the insertion of 7...h6 8.♙h4 and only now 8...♖b6 (MVL's favourite ever since 2009) have been in the centre of attention. Since the early 1960's, 10.f5 has also been in the limelight, but recently we noticed a brand new trend in that line.

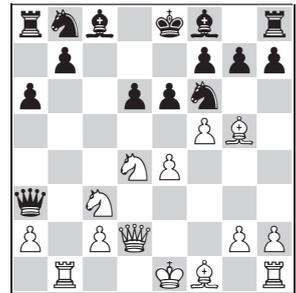


Fabiano Caruana

Fabiano Caruana Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

Stavanger 2019 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♙g5 e6
7.f4 ♖b6 8.♗d2 ♗xb2 9.♞b1
♗a3 10.f5



10...♙e7

In his first ever game in this sub-line, MVL follows the latest trend. In each of four previous games against Caruana he had achieved a draw with 7...h6, the first of which can be found in Yearbook 101. The developing text move was already tested in the 1960's but was largely forgotten due to adverse results. Well, it's back!

11.fxe6 ♙xe6!

The cause of the return of 10...♙e7. In the notes to the game Sulskis-Areschenko, Gibraltar 2008, in Yearbook 92 (page 42) I already pointed towards the similar possibility of 11...♙xe6 in the main line 10...♗c6 11.fxe6. 11...fxe6?! 12.♙c4!± is what originally gave the line 10...♙e7 its bad reputation. Contrary to the line 10...♗c6

on page 76 of Yearbook 131, Marian Petrov pointed out an intermediate check that ruined his beautiful sacrificial idea against the Scandinavian with 5...♘c6.



Bartłomiej Maciejaja

It turns out this magnificent move had already been played. Grandmaster Maciejaja confirmed this to us: 'The first game was played during the Polish Youth League in Zagan in 1993. It was published with my analysis in Chess Informant 59 (122). I didn't have 8.a4 prepared. I calculated it during the game, but I missed the refutation. Prior to that game I had already played 8.c4! in a rapid game against a different opponent (and won), but somehow I thought White didn't have that much of an advantage.'

Bartłomiej Maciejaja Marcin Myc

Zagan tt-jr 1993

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘c3 ♖a5 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.♗d2 ♗g4 7.♘b5 ♖b6 8.a4?! ♗xf3 9.♖xf3 a6 10.a5 axb5 11.axb6 ♞xa1+ 12.♗e2

Introduced by Petrov in 1990. Prior to that, 12.♗c1 ♞xc1+ 13.♗d2 ♞xc2+ 14.♗d1 was common (Maroczy-Van den Bosch, Rotterdam m-1 1930 – YB/131-75), but this line is

refuted by the yet unplayed novelty 14...e6!.

12...♘xd4+ 13.♗e3 ♘xf3

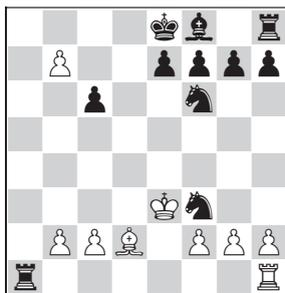
13...♞a3+ (Petrov-Arkhangelsky, Sumen 1990) is a prelude to the text game.

14.♗xb5+ c6!

14...♗d8?! 15.♞xa1 ♘d5+

16.♗xf3 ♘xb6 (Borge-L. Kristensen, Denmark tt 1992/93) 17.c4!±.

15.♗xc6+ bxc6 16.b7



16...♞a3+!!

16...♘d7? 17.♞xa1+–

M.Petrov-E.Maslov, Sofia 21.11.1990 – YB/131-76.

17.bxa3 ♘d7 18.♗xf3 e5

19.♞b1

19.a4 ♗d6 20.a5 ♘c5 21.♞a1

♘a6 22.♞b1 ♗c7+–. The defence fits like a Swiss clockwork.

19...♘b8 20.a4 ♘d7 21.♗e3

♗d6 22.♗b6 c5 23.a5 ♗c7

24.♗e4 ♞e8 25.♗d5 ♞e6 26.c4

♗xb6 27.axb6 ♞c6 28.♞b5

♞d6+ 29.♗xe5 ♗c6 30.♗f5

♞d2 31.f4 ♞xg2 32.♞b3 ♞xh2

33.♞e3 ♞h6 34.♞e7 ♞f6+

35.♗e4 ♞e6+ 0-1

'My second game against Myc in this line was played during the Polish Individual Championship in Sopot in 1997. Before that game I had already prepared well, so I knew 8.c4! was strong.'

Bartłomiej Maciejaja Marcin Myc

Sopot ch-POL 1997 (2)

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘c3

♖a5 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 ♘c6

6.♗d2 ♗g4 7.♘b5 ♖b6 8.c4!

♗xf3 9.♖xf3 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4

♖xd4 11.♖xb7 ♖e4+ 12.♖xe4

♘e4 13.♗e3±



13...e6

13...e5.

14.g3 f5

14...0-0-0.

15.♗g2 0-0-0 16.♗xe4 ♗b4+

17.♗e2 fxe4 18.♞hd1 a6 19.c5

c6 20.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 21.♞c1

♗a5 22.♞c4 ♗c7 23.♞xe4

e5 24.♞h4 ♞h8 25.♞g4 ♞g8

26.♞h4 ♞h8 27.♗d3 ♗d7

28.♞b4 a5 29.♞b3 ♞f8 30.♗c4

g6 31.a3 ♞a8 32.♗h6 ♗e6

33.♞f3 ♞d8 34.b4 a4 35.♗g5

♞d4+ 36.♗c3 ♗d8 37.♗xd8

♞xd8 38.♞d3 ♞f8 39.♞d6+

♗e7 40.f4 exf4 41.gxf4 ♗xf4

42.♞c6 ♞f3+ 43.♗c4 ♞xa3

44.♞c7+ ♗e6 45.♞a7 ♞a1

46.♗b5 a3 47.♗c6 h5 48.b5

Black resigned.

Philidor's motto

a letter by Rafal Ogiewka

SI 37.12 (B33)

YB 52

Here is some Sveshnikov analysis with Philidor's motto: 'Pawns are the soul of chess'.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4

4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5

d6 7.♗g5 a6 8.♘a3 b5 9.♘d5

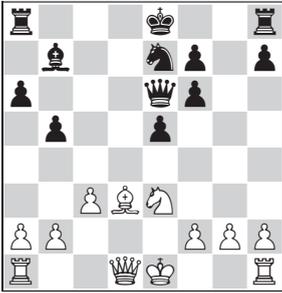
♗e7 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.c3 ♘e7

I have always had a fondness for this move...

12.♘xf6+ gxf6 13.♘c2 ♗b7

14.♗d3 d5 15.exd5 ♖d5

16.♗e3 ♖e6



Now 17.a4 and 17. ♖h5 are the 'Big Two', however...

17. ♖c2!? e4 18. ♗e2 f5 19.g3 0-0!

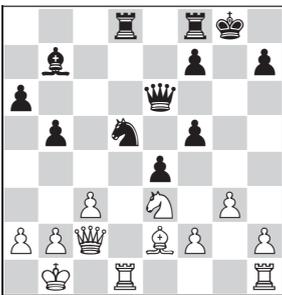
19... ♗g6 20.0-0-0! is dangerous for Black.

20.0-0-0 ♗d5!N

20... ♖xa2 21. ♖d7 ♗c6! 22. ♖b1! (V.V.Popov-Thierry, cr 2005)

22... ♖xb1+!? 23. ♗xb1 – with a nice endgame for White.

21. ♗b1 ♖ad8!!



An absolutely amazing position with many wonderful lines! One of them is:

22. ♗g2!?

22. ♖c1 f4!! – and Black is OK!,

22...e3!! 23.f3 ♖e5 24. ♗a1

24. ♖he1 ♖fe8 25. ♗d3 ♖d6!! – and Black is OK!

24...a5!! 25. ♗xb5 ♗xc3

26. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 27. ♖xc3



27...e2!! 28. ♗a4! ♖d4!
29. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 30. ♖e1 ♖xa4
31.b3 ♖d4 32. ♖xe2 ♗xf3
33. ♖f2 ♗xg2 34. ♖xg2 ♗g7=

Rafal Ogiewka
Nysa, Poland

A good run

by Peter Boel

SI 25.1 (B56)

When new Dutch champion Lucas van Foreest (18, he beat his elder brother Jorden van Foreest in a playoff) no longer had a chance to win the Open Dutch title in Dieren, he decided to try something else against German FM and dangerous tactician Reiner Odendahl.

Lucas van Foreest
Reiner Odendahl

Dieren 2019 (9)

1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4

4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 ♗c6



6. ♗d5!?

This 'mouse slip' has been played among others by Thomas Beerdsen, who was also in Dieren. Robin Swinkels recently replied 6... a6!? against Beerdsen. Things got interesting after 7. ♗xf6+ gxf6 but Beerdsen won. 6. ♗d5 is in fact a gambit which can be accepted in two ways.

The first, 6... ♗xe4, cannot be recommended. Okay, after

7. ♗b5 ♗e6 8. ♗dc7+ Black may get some compensation for the exchange.

More serious is 6... ♗xd5

7.exd5 ♖a5+ 8. ♗d2 ♖xd5.

Now Black has to lose some tempi to organize his defence:

9. ♗b5 ♖e6+ 10. ♗e3. A recent game Egorov-Serikbay, Sochi 2019, continued 10... ♖d7 11.c4

e6 12. ♖a4 d5? 13.0-0-0! a6

14.cxd5 exd5 15. ♖xd5! axb5

16. ♖xa8 ♖xd5 17. ♖xc8+

♗d8 18. ♗e2 ♗e7 19. ♖d1 ♖c6+

20. ♖xc6+ with a favourable ending for White, which for some reason he lost – after the last move given in the database he is still better)

10... ♖d7

OTB grandmasters take up the gauntlet

by Erwin l'Ami



In this column, Dutch grandmaster and top chess coach Erwin l'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.

Not many grandmasters find their way to the world of correspondence chess. True, Ulf Andersson had a great streak in the nineties and there obviously have been other outings, but I'm always happy to see new players emerging. In recent years Indian GM Krishnan Sasikiran, a former 2700 player, has taken up the gauntlet. He has already played over a hundred games and with a current rating of 2546 he is number 83 in the world. In this column we will have a look at one of his recent wins.

Krishnan Sasikiran Matjaz Pirs

ICCF 2017

These are tough times for the Dutch Defence! In YB 131 we had a look at the game Van 't Hof-Pirs, which featured 2.♟g5. Sasikiran chooses the more conventional route, and also strikes.

1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 g6
4.♚f3 ♙g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6
7.♚c3



7...c6

Black has toyed with other moves in this position but

the game continuation has always been the main line. The sharp 7...♚c6 8.d5 ♗e5 9.♚xe5 dxe5 has a dubious reputation and while Nakamura was successful with 8...♚a5, 9.b3! with the idea 9...♗e4 10.♚xe4 ♙xa1 11.♗eg5 gives White overwhelming compensation for the exchange.

7...♖e8 is more serious, but here I think my game with Puijssers is very relevant: 8.♙e1 ♖f7 9.d5 ♗e4 10.♚g5 ♚xc3 11.bxc3 ♖f6 12.e4 h6 (12... ♖xc3 13.♙b1 ♖xc4 14.♙b2 ♙xb2 15.♙xb2 ♖c3 16.♙be2 is just over) 13.♚f3 fxe4 14.♙xe4 ♗a6 15.♙e3 ♙f5 and now instead of 16.♙d4, as played in l'Ami-Puijssers, Dieren 2016, 16.♚h4! ♙xe4 17.♙xe4 g5 18.♙d4 ♖f7 19.♙g6! would have been a great way to crown things. I tried improving this line with 11...♖e8, but 12.♖c2 ♗a6 13.♙e3! keeps the pressure on. One sample line is 13...b6 14.a4 ♚c5 15.a5 ♙d7 16.♙xc5 bxc5 17.♚e6



Krishnan Sasikiran

The Ultimate Main Line?

by Glenn Flear

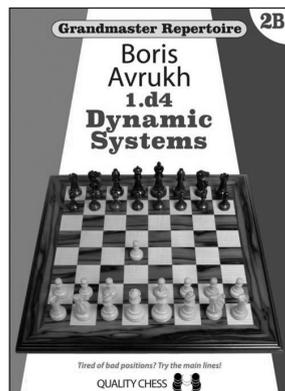


Englishman Glenn Flear lives in the south of France. For every Yearbook he reviews a selection of new chess opening books. A grandmaster and a prolific chess author himself, Flear's judgment is severe but sincere, and always constructive.

Statistics can be used to spin all sorts of tales and justify the most colourful of opinions. So I should perhaps be careful what I state. However, from my experience it seems that a white set-up involving an early d2-d4 and c2-c4 is the most common way (at least, for certain strength players) to begin the game. So I'm daring to label it White's ultimate main line? Sure, 1.e4 followed by 2.♘f3 must be a close second but, hair-splitting aside, the latest batch of review books will definitely appeal to a wide section of the chess public. In the last decade, there have been some enlightening repertoires involving 1.d4 and 2.c4, but perhaps not as many as one would expect. So when three arrive in the letterbox in the same month, it feels like a number of people in the chess world have woken up to the fact that there is a lot more to be written on this subject.

Boris Avrukh
Grandmaster Repertoire 2B
1.d4 Dynamic Systems
 Quality Chess 2019

Nine years after GM *repertoire 1.d4 Volume Two* came out, we have the present book at our disposal. The nomenclature chosen by Quality Chess could perhaps have been better thought out, but at least part of the title – *Dynamic Systems* – gives this



one a bit more punch in marketing terms. Boris Avrukh has almost completely re-written the former edition, and against certain options is recommending a radically different approach by White. The major changes are outlined straight away in the Preface, so that's a good place for anyone to start. It soon becomes clear that the KID and Grünfeld are absent, so for his thoughts on how to play with g2-g3 against these important defences you would have to get hold of the 2A sister volume (which came out about 18 months ago). So the present work is dealing with all those 'other' openings. You know the ones that are not considered by many to be 'fully correct' (the Dutch, the Benko and the like) but are dangerous weapons when played by opponents who really know what they are doing. Here is an example of Avrukh's thinking (and how it

Learning from Magnus

by Ruslan Ponomariov

- | | | |
|----|-------------|--------------|
| 1. | e4 | c5 |
| 2. | ♘f3 | ♘c6 |
| 3. | ♙b5 | g6 |
| 4. | ♙xc6 | dxxc6 |
| 5. | d3 | |



Magnus Carlsen

When the first game of the latest World Championship match started with the Sicilian, I think it was a nice surprise for everyone. Finally not a Berlin Wall, and something fresh. During the whole match Carlsen intended to play the dynamic Sveshnikov Variation. It's just a matter of time before other players will follow such a trend, trying to repeat Carlsen's success.

Actually it's difficult to say why the Sveshnikov Variation has become popular once again only now. I always considered it to be a good, correct opening, although you need to have a good memory to remember some concrete forced variations. My friend Alexander Moiseenko has played it his entire life. In 2012 Gelfand used it versus Anand in their World Championship match. Even Carlsen at his young age from 2003 till 2009 played it regularly, but then stopped for some reason.

Definitely his work with Daniil Dubov, who plays the Sveshnikov himself, had a good influence on Carlsen and helped him improve his chess and find some new opening ideas in particular. Being a white player with a regular 1.e4 repertoire, this also brings me some new problems. What should I play myself? This year in May I had a tournament in China where I struggled to achieve any advantage versus Gelfand and Le Quang Liem, and I guess this will only continue. In my Survey I decided to focus more deeply on the games from the super-tournament in Norway, which finished in June. Also the book *Rossolimo and Friends* by Alexei Kornev, published in 2015, helped me to understand some ideas better. I think in the end I found some interesting ways of playing with white, which I am happy to share with the Yearbook reader. Learning certain strategic ideas will benefit you in other openings as well. My feeling is that White needs to play very precisely, and that move orders are very important.

Being a good practical player, Magnus tricked his opponents in this way.

Conclusion

Having recipes books and all the modern tools will not immediately turn you into a great cook with a Michelin star. There is still some magic needed. But you can

always choose: do you want to follow fashionable trends, or maybe you have your own ideas that you would like to share?

When I had almost finished my article, Magnus played something slightly new: 3...e6 instead of 3...g6, and beat Anish Giri in only 23 moves! But I guess this might be a topic for another Survey...

**5...♟g7 6.h3 ♘f6 7.♞c3 ♘d7
8.♟e3 e5 9.♞d2 h6 10.0-0 b6**

Wang Hao

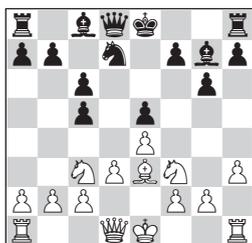
Magnus Carlsen

St Petersburg Wch Blitz 2018 (14)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♟b5 g6

4.♟xc6 dxc6 5.d3 ♟g7 6.h3 ♘f6

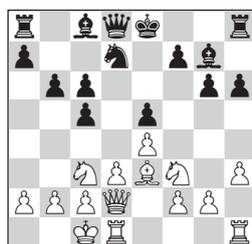
7.♞c3 ♘d7 8.♟e3 e5



9.♞d2 This was always considered to be the main move. White is keeping the choice of castling either kingside or queenside, depending on what Black will do. Now, for example, White wants to play 10.♟h6, so Black should decide if he wants to keep the pair of bishops or finish his development quickly. Other rare moves are 9.a3 or 9.a4, which can lead to some transpositions, and including the moves 9.a4 a5 can sometimes favour White. But at the same time White no longer has the option to castle queenside since any pawn move will weaken the queen's flank. In the first match game, Caruana played 9.0-0, which I like less: 9...b6 (Carlsen could even play 9...0-0 since with both kings castled kingside Black's position is pretty solid) 10.♘h2 ♘f8 11.f4 exf4 12.♞xf4 ♟e6! (a really interesting idea. I am sure

most players, including me, would play ...♘f8-e6-d4 here) 13.♞f2 h6 14.♞d2 g5 15.♞af1 ♞d6 16.♘g4 0-0-0 17.♘f6 ♘d7 18.♘h5 ♟e5 and Carlsen obtained an excellent position. Many people annotated this game already during the match, but so far no one has wanted to repeat this line with white. **9...h6** This is an ambitious way to play. Now Black will need to spend more time to finish his development. There is probably nothing wrong with 9...♞e7, trying to slowly neutralize White's initiative: 10.♟h6 f6 11.♟xg7 ♞xg7 12.♘h2 ♘f8 13.f4 exf4 14.♞xf4 ♘e6 15.♞f2 0-0 16.♘f3 ♟d7 17.0-0-0 ♞ad8 and White's advantage is not so big. But at the same time, strategically the first player doesn't risk anything: there is no need to worry about Black's bishops and the pawn structure is nice for White in the long term. **10.0-0** I consider this to be the main line.

A) When Black has two bishops, it's not such a good idea to castle queenside: 10.0-0-0 b6.

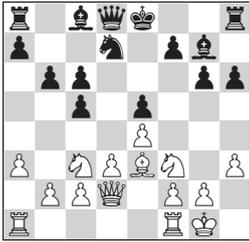


Now if White goes for f2-f4, he will also open up the diagonal for the bishop on g7: 11.h4 ♘f8 12.h5 g5 13.♘e2 ♘e6 14.♘g3 (now White should probably be more careful

and play something like 14.♘h2) 14...♘f4 15.♘e1 ♟e6 16.♟b1 ♞d7 17.♘f1 0-0-0 18.g3 f5 19.f3 fxe4 20.dxe4? (20.fxe4 ♞f7 21.gxf4 exf4 22.♟f2 ♟xa2+ 23.♟a1 ♟e6f1) 20...♞f7 21.♞c1 ♘e2 0-1, Bosiocic-Carlsen, St Petersburg Blitz 2018. Surprisingly, a very quick victory with black for Carlsen versus a grandmaster!;

B) This year, Caruana took up the line and sacrificed the pawn on c5: 10.a3 b6 (10...♞e7) 11.b4 ♘f8 12.bxc5 ♘e6 13.cxb6 (13.0-0 transposes to our main game) 13...axb6 14.♞c1 f5 15.a4 f4 16.♟d2 0-0 17.♞b2 ♘d4 18.♘e2 ♘xf3+ 19.gxf3 ♟e6 0-1 (51) Meier-Caruana, Karlsruhe/Baden-Baden 2019. **10...b6!** Well, this rare move could be expected from Carlsen since in the first game of his match versus Caruana he had played in a similar way. Before, people automatically played 10...♞e7 to protect the c5-pawn with the queen and prepare ...♘d7-f8-e6-d4. Also Black may prepare queenside castling, or slow down White's play with a2-a3/b2-b4 somewhat. However, with this game Carlsen shows that Black should not worry so much about White's play on the queenside. **11.a3** I believe White should play 11.♘h2 anyway, as he would do against 10...♞e7. I will analyse this move separately in the next game. It's kind of doubtful if including the moves 11.a4 a5 favours White (but Black could also play 11...♘f8 12.a5 ♞b8 13.axb6 axb6 14.♞a7 ♘e6 15.♞fa1 ♘d4 and I don't think that White has achieved much by taking control of the a-file – Black's position

doesn't have any weaknesses):
 12. ♖h2 ♖f8 13. f4 exf4 14. ♙xf4 ♕e6
 (14... ♕e6!? is an interesting way
 to play in Carlsen style, but now
 Black's queenside may be weaker)
 15. ♙f2 ♕d4 16. ♙af1 ♙a7∞ Liang-
 Cordova, St Louis 2018; Black may
 also benefit from the move ...a7-a5.



11... ♖f8! A really nice move.
 Carlsen's play has recently become
 more dynamic. Probably this
 was due to some influence by
 Daniil Dubov when they worked
 together. This game is a good
 example. Before Black played 11...
 a5, which in fact stops b2-b4 only
 for a while. After 12. ♖a4 f5 13. exf5
 gxf5 14. ♙f1 White has an initiative
 on all sides of the board. **12. b4**
♕e6 13. bxc5 f5 Now White is not
 so happy with his queen on d2.
14. exf5 gxf5 15. ♖e1 Later White
 tried to improve with 15. ♙ae1 f4
 16. ♕xe5 fxe3 17. ♖xe3:

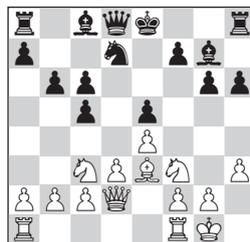
A) In Tsydypov-Chernobay,
 Russia tt 2019, Black was caught
 by surprise and in this tactical
 position collapsed very quickly:
 17... 0-0 18. ♕xc6 ♖h4? (even here,
 after 18... ♖g5, trying to exchange
 the queens, the position looks fine
 for Black) 19. ♕d5 ♕xc5 20. d4 ♕a6
 21. dxc5 ♕h7 22. f4 ♕xf1 23. ♖e4+
 ♕h8 24. ♕ce7 ♙fe8 25. ♕xf1 ♖h5
 26. ♕g6+ ♕h7 27. ♕de7 1-0;

B) But in fact Black would be
 okay after 17... ♖d4!? 18. ♖xd4
 (18. ♖f3 ♕xe5 19. ♖xc6+ ♕f7
 20. ♕b5 (20. ♖xa8 ♖xc3) 20... ♕d7
 21. ♕d6+ ♕e7 22. ♕f5+ ♕f6 looks
 a bit dangerous for Black, but I
 couldn't find anything for White,
 e.g. 23. ♕xd4 ♕xc6 24. ♕xc6 ♕c3)
 18... ♕xd4 19. ♕g6+ ♕d8 20. ♕xh8
 ♕xh8 and the two bishops are
 stronger than the rook.

.15...0-0 16. ♖b1 e4?! It was a blitz
 game, so some mistakes are easy
 to understand. Simpler was 16...
 bxc5 17. ♕d2 ♖d6 and Black has a
 nice dynamic position thanks to
 his flexible pawn structure and
 pair of bishops. **17. dxe4 f4 18. ♙d1**
 Probably both players missed
 the small tactical shot 18. cxb6!
 fxe3 19. b7 when White wins more
 material. But even here, for a blitz
 game the play is not so simple:
 19... ♕xb7 20. ♙xb7 ♙xf3 21. gxf3
 ♖g5+ 22. ♕h1 ♖h4 23. ♙xg7+! ♕xg7
 24. ♙g1+ ♕f7 25. ♙g3 ♙g8 26. ♕h2
 (the computer fearlessly suggests
 26. ♕e2!? ♙xg3 27. ♕xg3 ♖xh3+
 28. ♕g1 ♕f4 29. ♖f1 exf2+ 30. ♖xf2±)
 26... exf2 27. ♖xf2 ♙xg3 28. ♙xg3
 ♖d8 and with two extra pawns
 White still needs to show good
 technique. **18... ♖e7 19. ♕d4 ♕xd4**
20. ♕xd4 ♕a6 21. ♕xc6? ≥ 21. ♕f5.
21... ♖xc5 22. ♕d5 ♙ae8— After
 some mutual mistakes eventually
 it's Black who wins more material.
23. ♕cb4 ♕xf1 24. ♕xf1 ♖c4+
25. ♖e2 ♙xe4 26. ♖xc4 ♙xc4
27. ♕e2 a5 28. ♕d3 ♙xc2+ 29. ♕f3
♙a2 30. ♕xb6 ♙xa3 31. ♕c4 ♙c3
32. ♕xa5 ♙d8 33. ♕e2 ♙d5 34. ♕b7
♕f8 35. ♙d2 ♙b3 36. ♕bc5 ♕xc5 0-1

**Shardul Gagare
 Alireza Firouzja**

Makati Ach 2018 (7)
1. e4 c5 2. ♕f3 ♕c6 3. ♕b5 g6
4. ♕xc6 dxc6 5. d3 ♕g7 6. h3 ♕f6
7. ♕c3 ♕d7 8. ♕e3 e5 9. ♖d2 h6
10. 0-0 b6

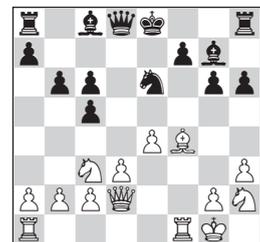


11. ♕h2 If White wants to fight for
 an advantage, he should play like
 this. Trying to open the position
 while Black's king is still in the
 centre is not such a bad idea.
11... ♕f8

A) In case of 11... ♖e7 White
 should probably wait a bit with
 12. a3 and only after 12... ♕f8 play
 13. f4, otherwise Black's knight
 would quickly go to e5; 13... exf4
 14. ♕xf4 ♕e6 15. ♕g3 and basically
 the position is the same as after
 10... ♖e7 11. ♕h2 and so on. Only
 the moves a2-a3 and ...b7-b6 are
 included;

B) I don't think it's such a great
 idea to stop f2-f4 at any cost: 11... g5
 12. ♕e2 ♕f8 13. ♕g3 ♕g6 14. a3 0-0
 15. b4 cxb4 16. axb4. Now Black's
 play on the kingside is also very
 limited: 16... ♕h4 17. f3 (something
 like 17. ♕h5 f5 18. ♖c3 △ 18... f4
 19. ♖xc6 or 17. ♕g4 f5 18. exf5 ♕xf5
 19. ♕h5 could pose problems to
 Black) 17... f5 18. exf5 ♕xf5 19. ♕xf5
 ♕xf5 20. ♙a6 ♖e7 21. ♕g4 e4!?

22. dxe4 ♙fd8∞ Caruana-Nakamura,
 St Louis basque 2015.
12. f4 exf4 13. ♕xf4! White
 wants to prepare e4-e5 and then
 ♕c3-e4 and ♕h2-g4 with a strong
 initiative. Caruana played very
 naturally 13. ♙xf4, trying to double
 rooks on the f-file. But as we
 already know this didn't bring him
 anything: 13... ♕e6!? 14. ♙f2 g5 and
 so on, Caruana-Carlsen, London
 (m/1) 2018. **13... ♕e6 13... g5 14. ♕g3**
♕g6 15. e5!; 13... ♕e6 14. e5 g5 15. ♕g3
♕g6 16. ♙ae1 0-0 17. ♕f3 ♕d5 18. ♕e4
♕xe4 19. ♙xe4 f5 20. exf6 ♖xf6
 21. b3 looks unpleasant for Black.



14. ♕g3 White has an alternative in
 14. ♕e3 since Black now can't take
 control of the e5-square as Carlsen
 did after 13. ♙xf4: 14... ♕d4 15. ♙ae1
 ♕e6 16. e5 (16. ♕d1 ♖d7 17. c3 ♕b5
 18. ♕f3 0-0-0 19. ♕f2 ♕c7∞) 16... ♕f5
 (16... ♖c7 17. ♕e4) 17. ♕f2 ♖c7
 18. ♕f3 0-0-0 19. ♕e4 ♕d5 when
 the position looks very complex

and some deep analysis and more practical testing are required.

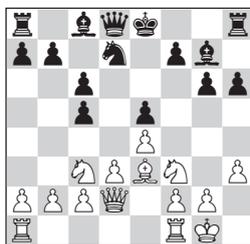
14...c4 I think the critical test is 14...♖g5! when Black has basically gained the extra move ...b7-b6 compared to 10...♖e7: 15.♖e1 ♖d4 16.♖f2 (now some tactical play starts; if 16.♖f3 ♖xc2 17.♖g5 ♖xe1 18.♖xf7 0-0 19.♖xh6+ ♖xh6 20.♖fxe1 ♖d8 21.♖ad1 ♖a6 probably Black has enough counterplay for the pawn) 16...0-0 (16...♖e6?! 17.♖h4 ♖h5 18.♖g4 g5 19.♖f6+ ♖xf6 20.♖xf6±) 17.♖d6 (17.♖ae1 f5⇒) 17...♖xh3! 18.♖f4 ♖xg2+ 19.♖xg2 ♖xg2 20.♖xg2 g5 21.♖d2 ♖xc2 22.♖ad1 ♖ad8 23.♖c1∞; probably this endgame is balanced. Black has 3 pawns for the knight, but two of them are doubled. **15.e5 cxd3 16.cxd3 ♖a6 17.♖e4** I think now White should play 17.♖ad1 ♖d4+ (17...0-0 18.♖g4f1) 18.♖f2 ♖d8 19.♖f3 ♖xd3 20.♖e1 ♖c4 21.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 22.♖e4 0-0 23.♖f6+ ♖xf6 (23...♖h8 24.b3 ♖e6 25.♖h4 looks super-dangerous for Black: 25...c5 26.♖g5! hxg5 27.♖xg5 ♖c6 28.♖e4 and White is winning) 24.exf6 ♖e6 25.♖e5 ♖xa2 26.♖h2! with really nice compensation for the two sacrificed pawns. I have a feeling that AlphaZero would really like to play this. **17...0-0** First 17...♖d4+ 18.♖h1 0-0 may have been better. **18.♖ad1** 18.♖d6! was an extra option because Black didn't play ...♖d4 earlier. **18...♖d4+ 19.♖h1 ♖ad8 20.♖f3 h5 21.♖h4 ♖xe5! 22.♖xd8 ♖xd8** In the end White didn't manage to create any attack on the kingside and, as often happens: in the ensuing complex play the better and higher-rated player eventually won ... **0-1 (48)**

5...♖g7 6.h3 ♖f6 7.♖c3 ♖d7 8.♖e3 e5 9.♖d2 h6 10.0-0 ♖e7

Bassem Amin Le Quang Liem

St Petersburg Wch Rapid 2018 (14)
This game may be another good example to illustrate White's plans. **1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 ♖c6 3.♖b5**

g6 4.♖xc6 dxc6 5.d3 ♖g7 6.h3 ♖f6 7.♖c3 ♖d7 8.♖e3 e5 9.♖d2 h6 10.0-0



10...♖e7 I am still thinking that 10...b6 may be more precise, but it doesn't change much. White still can follow a similar plan. **11.♖h2 ♖f8 12.f4 exf4 13.♖xf4!?** Preparing e4-e5. **13...♖e6?!** I think 13...♖e6 is the main move here: now 14.♖g3 ♖d4 (≥ 14...♖g5) 15.♖ae1 0-0 16.e5 is another good example of White's play. Black somehow collapsed very quickly: 16...♖f5 17.♖f2 h5 18.♖f3 b6 19.♖e4 (simple, but at the same time very strong) 19...♖e6 20.♖f4 ♖xa2 21.g4 ♖h6 22.♖h4 1-0 Zhao Jun-Cheparinov, China tt 2018. **14.♖ae1 g5 15.♖g3 ♖g6 16.♖d5 cxd5 17.exd5 0-0 18.♖f3 ♖ad8 19.dxe6 f5 20.c3 ♖f6 21.♖c2 ♖xe6 22.♖b3 ♖f8 23.♖xe6 ♖xe6 24.♖xb7 ♖xd3 25.♖xa7 g4**



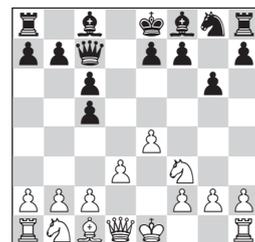
26.♖e1? White actually played really well up to this point, for a rapid game. Now after 26.♖h4! he could have claimed a big advantage since obviously Black can't play 26...♖xg3 27.♖xf5 ♖e5 28.♖xg3 ♖xg3 29.♖f7+ ♖h8 30.♖f4 as this looks technically winning for White. **26...♖d5 27.♖e5 ♖xe5 28.♖xe5 ♖d1+ 29.♖f2 ♖d3 30.hxg4 fxg4 31.♖e1 g3+ 32.♖g1 ♖d2 0-1**

5...♖c7

Levon Aronian Magnus Carlsen

Stavanger 2019 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 ♖c6 3.♖b5 g6 4.♖xc6 dxc6 5.d3 ♖c7



This is an interesting moment. Despite having good results with 5...♖g7 6.h3 ♖f6 etc., Carlsen in 2019 switched to another system. Well, the pawn structure is still very similar, and with his last move Black prepares ...e7-e5. Another question is if it's really so good to play the queen this early in the opening. **6.0-0** This game went well for Aronian. But I still like 6.h3 for White here, keeping more options, which makes his play more flexible. I guess many times there may occur transpositions to the line 5...♖g7 6.h3 e5 which we will discuss later: 6...♖g7 (if 6...e5 we can play 7.♖e3 f6 8.♖d2, preventing ...♖g8-h6 and also planning to attack the c5-pawn with ♖d2-c3) 7.♖c3 e5 8.♖e3 b6 9.a3. Now White wants to play quickly on the queenside. I don't really understand how Black can make the move ...♖c7 useful:

- A) 9...f5 10.b4 cxb4 11.axb4;
- B) 9...a5 doesn't really stop White, as we already know: 10.♖a4 ♖f6 11.b4 axb4 12.axb4 cxb4 13.♖xb6 ♖b8 14.♖xc8 ♖xc8 15.♖c5 ♖f8 16.♖a7 ♖b8 17.♖xf8 ♖xf8 (17...♖xa7 18.♖g7 ♖e7 19.♖xh8 ♖xh8 20.♖xe5, winning a pawn) 18.♖a1 looks really bad for Black;
- C) 9...♖f6 10.b4 ♖d7. I think this position can be a good version of the game Wang Hao-Carlsen we checked before. Maybe White can

play 11. ♖c1 to prepare 12. ♕h6, or even simply 11.0-0.

6...e5 7. ♕e3 ♘f6 8. ♖e1!? Levon doesn't want to play h2-h3 at all. Probably he had bad memories from his loss versus Kramnik at the Candidates Tournament and didn't want to weaken his king without much reason. Despite this being technically a novelty, the arising structure reminds me very much of the Exchange Variation of the Ruy Lopez. **8...♗g4** It could make sense to play **8...♗g4!**? **9. ♗d2** (probably White doesn't want to give up his last bishop; **9. ♖c3 ♗xe3 10.fxe3 f6** looks fine for Black) **9...f6** but now is White going to play h2-h3 or not? How then will he prepare active play on the queenside? **9. ♗bd2 ♗h5 10.a3 ♕e7** Probably it was more careful to play **10...f6** with the idea to meet **11. ♖b1** with **11...a5** to stop **b2-b4**. **11. ♖b1 ♗f4** Now after **11...a5** White has the strong idea **12.b4!** **13.axb4 a4** (after **13...axb4 14. ♖xb4!** **15. ♖xa8+ ♕c8 16. ♖b6** the pawn on e5 is not protected, and Black loses some material) **14. ♖b2 f6 15.d4** (Black has some problems in the centre) and now **15...0-0** just loses a pawn: **16. ♖xa4! ♖xa4 17. ♖b3+ ♗g7 18. ♖xa4. 12.b4 ♗e2+ 13. ♗h1 ♗d4**



14. ♗g1! Suddenly Black's pawns are not very stable. The opening phase has finished in Aronian's favour. Carlsen starts to gamble, but only with his opponent's help he was able to escape with a draw. **14...g5 15.bxc5 ♗xc5 16. ♗xg5 ♖g8 17. ♗h4 ♗e7 18. ♗g3 0-0-0 19. ♗c4 f6 20.a4 ♗e6 21.f3 ♗h5 22. ♗f2** Black doesn't have any compensation for the pawn. **22...♗c5 23. ♗xc5 ♗xc5**

24. ♗e2 ♗f7 25. ♗e3 ♖a5 26. ♖e1 ♖xe1 27. ♖fxe1 a5 28. ♗g1 h5 29.h4 ♗c7 30. ♗f2 ♗e6 31. ♖g1 ♖h8 32. ♖h1 ♗d7 33. ♖hd1 ♗f7 34.d4 exd4 35. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 36. ♗xd4 ♗d8 37. ♗e2 ♗d2 38. ♗e1 ♗d8 39. ♗f5 ♖a8 40. ♗c3 ♗e6 41. ♗e3 ♗d6 42. ♗d1+ ♗e7 43. ♗d4 ♖a6 44. ♗d2 ♖b6 45. ♗f5+ 45. ♗d5! was a nice way to win the game. **45...♗xf5 46.exf5 ♖b2 47. ♖c4 ♗d6 48. ♗e4+ ♗xe4+ 49. ♖xe4 ♖a2 50.g4 hxg4 51.fxg4 ♗d5 52. ♗d3 ♖a3+ 53.c3 b5 54.h5 54.g5** was still winning. **54...b4 55. ♗d4+ ♗e5 56. ♖c4 ♖xa4 57.h6 ♖a1 58.cxb4 axb4 59. ♖xc6 ♖a3+ 60. ♗c4 ♖c3+ 61. ♗b5 ♖h3 62. ♗xb4 ♖xh6 63. ♗c5 ♖h1 64. ♖e6+ ♗f4 65. ♖xf6 ♗xg4 66. ♗d6 ♗g5 67. ♗e7 ♖a1 68. ♖f8 ♖a7+ 1/2-1/2**

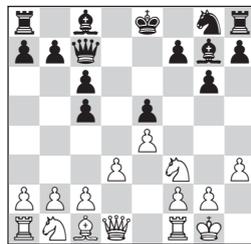
Postponing ... ♖c7
5...♗g7 6.h3 e5 7.0-0 ♖c7

Fabiano Caruana
Magnus Carlsen

Stavanger 2019 (9)

1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♕b5 g6

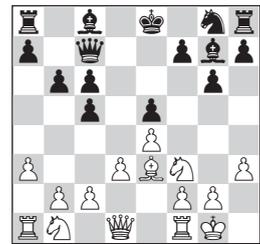
4. ♗xc6 dxc6 5.d3 5.d3 Later in the tournament Carlsen started to play first **5...♗g7 6.h3 e5 7.0-0** and only now **7...♖c7**.



He really likes to put his queen on c7! He did the same in the 3rd game of the match with Caruana. But Fabiano had played the rook to e1 instead of h2-h3, which may be slightly better for Black. **8.a3?!** I think this move is a slight inaccuracy, which is a bit surprising because this position had already occurred in the Armageddon game Aronian-Carlsen, and Fabiano could have prepared better. Levon went for **8. ♗e3 b6** and now:

A) 9. ♗bd2 was a bit too slow, e.g. **9...♗e7 10.a3 0-0 11.b4 cxb4 12.axb4 f5** and now White also needs to do something with the e3-bishop because ...f5-f4 is a concrete threat: **13. ♗c4 ♗e6 14. ♗g5 ♗d7 15. ♖e2 h6 16. ♗f3 f4 17. ♗d2 g5 18. ♗c3 ♗g6** and Black obtained a really nice King's Indian type position. His play on the kingside looks much more dangerous. Since it was an Armageddon game, for Carlsen a draw with black was good enough, but he managed even to win it; **0-1 (43)** Aronian-Carlsen, Stavanger 2019;

B) I think he should have gone for immediate queenside aggression with 9.a3.



B1) Black can't really stop White's play on the queenside: 9...a5 10. ♗bd2 ♗f6 (10...f5 11.exf5 gxf5 12. ♖e1; 10...a4 11.b4 axb4 12.cxb3) 11.b4!

B2) Let's see if Black will follow the same plan as Carlsen did versus Aronian: 9...♗e7 10.b4 cxb4 (10...f5 11.bxc5 f4 12. ♗d2 h6 13. ♗c3 g5 14.cxb6 axb6 15. ♗bd2 ♗g6 16. ♖b1 and Black's counterplay on the kingside doesn't develop so fast as he would want) 11.axb4:

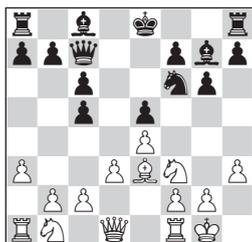
B21) After 11...0-0 I like 12. ♖d2 with the idea **12...f5 13. ♗h6 fxe4 14.dxe4** and the tactics do not really work for Black: **14...♗xh3 (or 14...♖xf3 15.gxf3 ♗xh3 16. ♗xg7 ♗xg7 17. ♖d1) 15. ♗xg7 ♗xg7 16. ♖c3** with a clear advantage for White;

B22) 11...f5. Now ...f5-f4 does not come with the threat to win the bishop and here I still like to play **12. ♖c1!?:**
B221) 12...0-0 13. ♖a3!? (with the queen on c1, **13. ♗h6** is not so clear: **13...fxe4 14. ♗xg7 ♗xg7 15.dxe4 ♗xh3 16. ♗bd2 ♗e6 17. ♖b2 ♗f6!**

18. ♖a3 g5) 13...f4 14. ♕d2 h6 15. ♖b2 g5 16. ♕c3 ♗g6 17. ♗bd2. I think White's play develops faster here. He wants to play ♖f1-a1 and d3-d4. Black has too many weaknesses to defend;

B222) 12...h6 13.d4! (13. ♖a3 g5⇒) 13...f4 (13...fxe4 14. ♗xe5) 14. ♕d2 g5 15.dxe5 h5 16. ♕c3 g4 17. ♗h4 0-0 (17...gxb3 18. ♖xf4) 18. ♖d1 gxb3 19. ♖d6; Black is always one move late to create counterplay on the kingside.

8...♗f6 9. ♕e3



9...c4! That's the problem with this move order. Now Black just exchanges his doubled pawns. There is no need to play 9...b6 anymore in view of 10. ♗bd2 0-0 11.b4 cxb4 12.axb4±. 10. ♗c3 cxd3 11. ♖xd3 0-0 I think this position is more or less equal. It looks similar to a Pirc Defence where White has voluntarily exchanged pawns in the centre with d4xe5 d6xe5. 12. ♖fd1 ♖e8 13. ♕c5 ♗f8 14. ♗xf8 ♗xf8 15. ♖d2 ♕e6 16. ♖ad1 ♖ad8 Carlsen could probably also have played 16...♗g7 and I don't think that with only his control of the d-file White has much. 17. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 18. ♖xd8+ ♗g7 19. ♖8d3 h6 20.b4 a5 21. ♖e3 ♗d7 22. ♗a4 b5 23. ♗b2 c5 24.c3 c4 25. ♖d2 axb4 26.axb4 ♗f6 27. ♗d1 Black is totally fine here because White's rooks are very passive. Already the winner of the tournament, Carlsen started to play very optimistically here and almost lost the game: 27...♕d7 27...♕c8!? 28. ♗h2 ♗h5. 28. ♗h2 ♖a7 29.h4 ♕c6 30.f3 ♕d7 31. ♗f1 ♕e6 32. ♗h2 ♗h5 33.g3 g5 34.hxg5 hxg5 35. ♗f2 g4 36. ♗xg4 ♗xg4 37.fxg4 ♗f6 38. ♗g2 ♗xg4 39. ♖f3 ♖a8 40. ♖e2 ♗g6 41. ♖f5 f6

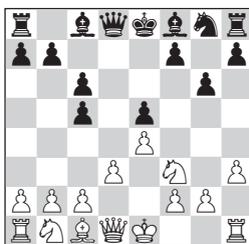
42. ♗h2 ♗h6 43. ♖f1 ♗g7 44. ♖d1 ♖a3 45. ♖d7+ ♗g6 46. ♗f3 ♖xc3 47. ♗h4+ ♗h5 48. ♖h7 ♖d3 49. ♖e1 c3? 50. ♗f3 Actually winning for White was 50. ♗f5! ♖d3+ 51. ♗f3 with the idea 51... ♖xe1 (51... ♖d3+ 52. ♗f2 ♖d2+ 53. ♖e2) 52.g4+ ♗g6 53. ♖g7#. 50... ♖c2+ 51. ♗h3 ♗g6 52. ♖c7 ♗f7 53. ♗h4+ ♗g7 54. ♗f5+ ♗g6 55. ♗h4+ ♗g7 56. ♗f5+ ½-½

Reversed Rossolimo 1.c4

Levon Aronian
Fabiano Caruana

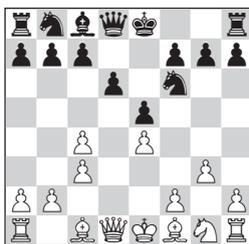
Stavanger 2019 (8)

1.c4 Wait a second. Why are we seeing this move here? Shouldn't we check more Rossolimo lines? E.g. 1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♖b5 g6 4. ♖xc6 dxc6 5.h3 e5 6.d3 etc. was seen in a game from the same tournament:



½-½ (43) Vachier-Lagrave-Grischuk, Stavanger 2019.

1...e5 2.g3 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 ♖b4 4.e4 ♖xc3 5.dxc3 d6

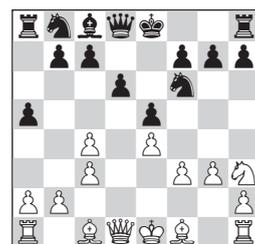


But look at this position. Doesn't it look similar? The difference is only that Vachier had a pawn on h3, but here Black's pawn is on h7. Top grandmasters try to use the same strategic ideas with reversed colours. RR: See also Cummings'

Survey in YB 131. 6. ♖c2 Again Levon decides to put the queen on c2, like Magnus kept playing ... ♖c7 with black. Personally I like 6.f3 more, to transfer the knight via h3 to f2, where it protects the e4-pawn and supports active play with f3-f4:

A) 6...0-0 7. ♗h3 (normally in the Rossolimo Black doesn't have so much freedom to play ... ♗g8-h6-f7. Here it's another story) 7...a6 8.a4 (probably ...b7-b5 was not even a threat now. But Magnus knows something) 8...♗bd7 9. ♗f2 a5 10. ♕e2 ♗c5 11.0-0 ♕d7 12. ♕e3 b6 13. ♗h1. White has achieved a really nice position. Black doesn't have any clear active plan, which for a human player is psychologically unpleasant. Another question: does White have enough resources to break Black's defence? f3-f4 is not possible now because Black is prepared to attack the pawn on e4 with all his pieces. So White should look for something else: 13... ♗h8 14.b3 ♗g8 15.g4 ♗e7 16. ♖b1 ♗g6 17. ♖d2 ♗e6 18. ♗d3 ♗c5 19. ♖g1 ♗xd3 20. ♖xd3 ♖c6 21. ♖g3 ♖e7 22. ♖bg1 ♗g8 23. ♖c2 ♗h8 24. ♗g2 ♗g8 (during the last moves Black has just waited passively. But I am wondering what could have happened after 24... ♗h4+ 25. ♗f2 f6 26. ♗e2 g5!? 27. ♗f2 ♗g7 28. ♖h1 ♖h8 29. ♖gg1 ♗g6 30.h4 h6 31. ♗d1 ♖h7 32. ♗c1 ♖ah8; I have doubts that White will be able to break Black's fortress) 25. ♗f2 f6 (Black starts to lose patience) 26. ♗e1 ♗f7 27.g5 ♗e8 28. ♗d1 ♕d7 29.gxf6 ♖xf6 30. ♕g5 ♖e6 31.h4 ♖f7 32.h5 ♗f8 33. ♗c1 g6 34.f4 exf4 35. ♖xf4 ♖c6 36.e5 dxe5 37. ♖xe5 and White's strategy has succeeded! 1-0 (68) Carlsen-Karjakin, Abidjan blitz 2019;

B) 6...a5 7. ♗h3

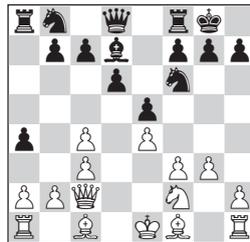


Sicilian Defence – Rossolimo Variation

B1) 7...a4 8.♟f2 ♞e6 9.♟d3!? (a tricky plan. I guess from here the bishop protects the pawns on e4 and c4, prevents a possible ...f7-f5, and doesn't forget about f3-f4) 9...♟bd7 10.♞e2 c6?! (≥ 10...♟c5 11.♟c2 ♟fd7 Δ 12.f4 ♟b6) 11.f4! (suddenly Black is already in trouble) 11...♟b6 12.♟e3 c5 13.0-0-0 ♞e7 14.f5 ♟d7 15.g4 h6 16.h4 0-0-0 17.g5 and compared with the game versus Karjakin, White has achieved much more progress on the kingside, ½-½ (63) Carlsen-Anand, Karlsruhe/Baden-Baden 2019;

B2) 7...♟a6!? 8.♟f2 ♟c5 (well, now at least White can't play ♟d3) 9.♟e2 ♞e7 10.♞c2 0-0 11.♟d1! (the position is semi-closed, but I don't like the idea of playing so many moves with the same piece. It's still questionable how good White's position is after the more natural 11.♟e3 – instead of analysing it with a computer I would prefer to play lots of training blitz games to obtain a better understanding!) 11...♟e6 12.♟e3 c6! (White's pieces are not developed yet. So it makes

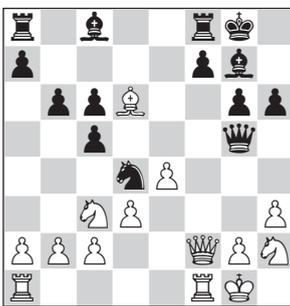
sense to open the position) 13.0-0 d5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.exd5 ♟xd5 16.♟xd5 ♟xd5 17.♟e3 e4 (White needs to be careful here. Probably he was happy to take a quick draw) 18.♟d4 ♟e6 19.♟e3 ♟c5 20.♟d4 ♟e6 21.♟e3 ½-½ Svidler-Tomashevsky, Germany Bundesliga 2018/19.
6...0-0 7.♟f3 ♟e6 8.♟g5 8.b3 a5 9.a4 ♟a6 10.♟h4 ♟c5 11.f3 c6 12.♟e3 b6 and Black is ready to open the position with ...d6-d5: 13.♟d1 ♞e7. **8...♟d7 9.f3 a5 10.♟h3 a4 11.♟f2**



Finally, after losing some tempi, White's knight comes to f2 anyway. **11...♟c6 12.♟e2 ♟a5 13.b4** 13.0-0 ♟e6 14.b3 b5! (typical for the Rossolimo) 15.cxb5 axb3 16.axb3 ♟xb3 17.♞b2 ♟e6

18.f4 ♟c4 19.♞xa8 ♞xa8 20.♞c2 ♟a3 21.♞b2 ♟c4 and I think Black should be fine here. **13... axb3 14.axb3 ♟c6 15.♞b1 ♟e6 16.♟d1** Such slow play usually doesn't work, as we already know. However probably Aronian didn't like 16.0-0 ♟d7 17.♟e3 f5 and Black takes the initiative. **16...♟e7 17.0-0 c6 18.♟g5 ♟d7 19.♞d2 h6 20.♟e3 ♟f6 21.♟f2 d5!** White has the pair of bishops, but his pieces are still not so well coordinated. So Black should not be afraid to open the position. **22.♞fd1 ♞c7 23.♟c5 b6 24.♟xe7 ♞xe7 25.cxd5 cxd5 26.exd5 ♟xd5 27.c4 ♟c6 28.♞e3 28.♞d6 ♞b7. 28...♞a2 29.♞a1 ♞xa1 30.♞a1 ♟d7** The engine says that the position is about equal. But it's probably slightly easier to play with black because his king is better placed. Somehow Levon now allows Black to develop an attack very quickly: **31.♟d3 f5 32.♟c2 e4 33.fxe4 ♟e5 34.♟d1!** ≥ 34.♞f1 ♞f6 35.♟d1 Δ 35...fxe4 36.♟g4. **34...fxe4 35.♟e2 ♟f3+ 36.♟xf3 ♞xf3 37.♞xb6 ♞f6 38.♟d1 e3 39.♟g4 ♞e6 40.♞b8+ ♟h7 41.♟e5 ♞h3 0-1**

Exercise 1



position after 17.♟g3-d6

Black's rook is under attack and can't retreat because the f7-pawn needs to be protected. What to play? Evaluate the possible moves 17...♟f5, 17...♟b3 and 17...♟xh3.

(solutions on page 246)

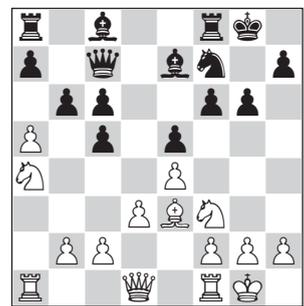
Exercise 2



position after 24...♞c4-e6

White is a pawn down, so he should play energetically. Try to continue the attack.

Exercise 3



position after 12...b7-b6

Black's position looks very solid. Try to find active play for White.

Mating in the Giuoco Piano!?

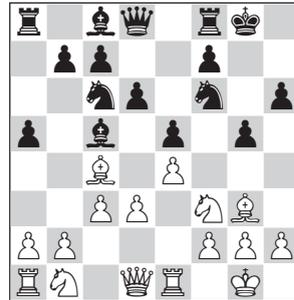
by Ivan Saric (special contribution by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave)

- | | | |
|----|------------|------------|
| 1. | e4 | e5 |
| 2. | ♘f3 | ♘c6 |
| 3. | ♙c4 | ♙c5 |
| 4. | c3 | ♗f6 |
| 5. | d3 | d6 |
| 6. | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| 7. | ♖e1 | a5 |



In the vast territory of the strategic and ‘dull’ lines of the Giuoco Piano, you can’t really expect that one of the sides gets mating chances before move 30. Hopefully though, there is an exception. More surprising is that both sides have these chances in this case. The position arising after 7.♖e1 has been played thousands of times. Lately, 7...a5 is becoming a popular response for Black, instead of the old, classical 7...a6. The idea is to neutralize White’s spatial advantage on the queenside after White plays the modern a2-a4, followed by b2-b4. Also, the positions arising after 7...a5 are more complicated and give Black counterplay, unlike other passive set-ups Black has at his disposal. Since there is nothing for White on the queenside, he must create something on the kingside. Here, 8.♙g5 fits perfectly, because after

the common unpinning sequence 8...h6 9.♙h4 g5 10.♙g3,



White’s main idea is to play d3-d4 and create pressure on the e5-pawn. This can be improved by playing ♙b5 (which is not possible when Black has a pawn on a6) with the idea of eliminating the knight on c6, the guardian of the e5-pawn. Another small drawback of the pawn push to a5 is that the black bishop on a7 can be attacked from the b5-square too.

Comparisons

There is a similarity with the Anti-Berlin Variation 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♗f6 4.d3 ♙c5 5.c3 d6 6.0-0 0-0 7.♙g5 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♙g3. In the mentioned line Black should be fine, but the positions are often complicated. Compared to our line of interest, the difference is that the moves ♖e1 and ...a7-a5 have been included, which should favour White, and that the white bishop is on c4, not on b5, which should favour Black. Also there is an even closer similarity to the Giuoco Piano line covered by Hungaski in Yearbook 124. Instead of

7.♖e1 that line goes 7.a4 a6 8.♘g5 h6
 9.♙h4 g5 10.♘g3 ♘a7 etc. I just want to
 add that Black can't copy Ding's idea
 10...♘h7 in the same way because White's
 rook is on f1! If we play exactly in the
 same vein 11.d4 ♘b6 12.dxe5 h5 13.h4
 ♘g4 14.exd6! gxh4 15.♙h2 cxd6 16.♗xd6
 ♘xf3 17.gxf3 ♗g5+ 18.♖h1 and the
 f2-pawn is defended.



Ding Liren

Ding Liren shows the way

Ding Liren showed in his last few games
 with 10...♘h7 how Black can equalize, but
 this requires some memorization.

The recent game Vachier-Lagrave-Ding
 Liren, Zagreb 2019, is crucial for the
 whole line. Objectively there is nothing
 wrong for Black, but he should always
 be ready for possible novelties on each
 move, the 20th for example.

The most popular move

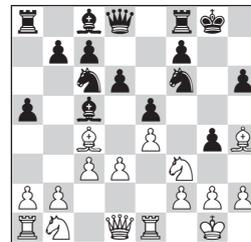
Black has an alternative: 10...♘a7 is the
 most popular move in this position.
 Instead of 10...♘h7 and 10...♘a7 other
 moves have been played, but they make
 less sense and give White the initiative.
 Probably black players gave up on 10...♘a7
 because after 11.♘a3 there were two model
 victories for White at top level: Vachier-
 Lagrave-Ding Liren, Shenzhen 2018, and
 Giri-Eljanov, Stavanger 2016.



Still, there is room for improvement
 there and one of the options could be

11...a4!?, a move which seems impossible.
 Besides gaining space on the queenside,
 it gives Black the option of playing
 ...♘a5. White can't take the pawn without
 allowing dangerous counterplay on the
 kingside.

Engines often suggest on move 10 and
 even later ...g5-g4, ♘h4 ♘h5, gaining the
 bishop pair, where Black is indeed fine
 (Bok-l'Ami), but ...g5-g4 should always be
 answered with ♘h4!.



This piece sacrifice gives White great
 attacking chances.

Conclusion

Many of the lines in this Giuoco Piano
 variation with 7...a5 are not 'Piano' at all.
 There is plenty of room for attacking
 ideas on both sides here. On the whole
 Black should be theoretically OK.
 Objectively Ding's 10...♘h7 is best for
 Black, but if you don't want to memorize
 a bunch of lines, then 10...♘a7 11.♘a3 a4!
 is an equally good alternative.

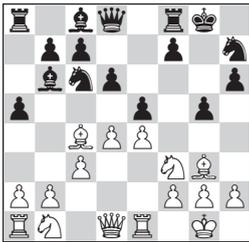
Ding Liren shows the way 10...♟h7

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

Ding Liren

Zagreb 2019 (3)

1.e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♘c6 3.♟c4 ♟c5
4.0-0 ♟f6 5.d3 d6 6.c3 0-0 7.♞e1
a5 8.♟g5 h6 9.♟h4 g5 10.♟g3
♟h7 11.d4 ♟b6



12.dxe5 12.♟d5!? is a slightly tricky move where Black needs to know some ideas: 12...h5 (12...g4 13.♟fd2 exd4 14.♟c4 dxc3 15.♟xc3♙ is promising for White) 13.h4 exd4 (13...♟g4 14.♟bd2 exd4 15.♟c2 (this is the point of White's play, but the position remains unclear) 15...dxc3 (15...♟e7 16.hxg5 ♟xd5 17.exd5 ♟xg5 18.♟xd4♙) 16.♟xc3♙) 14.hxg5 (14.♟xc6 bxc6 15.♟d2 ♟g4 16.♟xg5 ♟xg5 17.hxg5 d3!♙) 14...♟xg5 15.♟h4 (15.♟xd4 h4 16.♟f4 ♟f6 17.♟h5 ♟xf4 18.♟g6+ ♟h8 19.♟h6+ ♟g8=) 15...♟f6 16.♟xh5? (> 16.♟xc6 bxc6 17.♟xh5♙) 16...♟g7 17.♟xc6 ♟h8! (17...bxc6 18.e5±) 18.e5 (18.♟d1 ♟xh4! 19.♟xh4 ♟h3+ 20.gxh3 ♟xh4+ 21.cxd4 ♟xh3 22.♞e3 ♟g4 23.♟f1 ♟xd4) 18...♟xf2+! 19.♟xf2 ♟xh5♙. Both the bishop on c6 and the knight on h4 are hanging, because after ♟xh4 ♟xh4 dxc3+ Black will take the rook on a1. **12...h5 13.h4** 13.h3 g4 14.hxg4 hxg4 15.♟d4 ♟xe5♙. **13...♟g4 14.hxg5** 14.♟bd2 ♟xe5 15.♟e2 ♟xf3+ 16.♟xf3 ♞e8! (16...♟xf3 17.♟xf3 gxh4 18.♟h2 h3 19.♟xh5! (19.e5 ♟h4 20.♟d2 dxe5 21.♞e5 ♞ad8 22.♟e2 ♟xg5 23.♟xb7 f6♙ J.van Foreest-Ding Liren, Wijk aan Zee 2019) 19...♟g5 20.♟g4 f5 21.♟xg5+ ♟xg5 22.e5

♟e4 23.♞e2 dxe5 24.♟xe5 ♞ad8 – Black is close to equality, but the bishop pair can make him feel uncomfortable) 17.♟d2 ♟xf3 18.♟xf3 gxh4 19.♟f4 ♟f6 20.♟xh3 ♟g7 21.♟h6 ♟f6 22.♟f4 ♟g7 23.♟h6 ♟f6 24.♟f4 ♟g7 and a draw was agreed in Karjakin-Ding Liren, Shamkir 2019; 14.exd6 gxh4 15.♟h2 (15.♟xh4 ♟xf3 16.♟xd8 ♟xd1 17.♟e7 ♟g4 18.♟xf8 ♟xf8 19.dxc7 ♟e5♙) 15...cxd6 16.♟xd6 ♟xf3 17.gxf3 ♟g5+ 18.♟h1 ♟xf2 19.♞f1=, **14...♟xg5 15.exd6 h4** **16.♟h2 ♟f6** 16...h3?! 17.♟d3! hxg2 18.♟bd2 ♟h3+ 19.♟xg2 ♟xf2 20.♟d5!±. **17.♟bd2 cxd6** 17...♟g7 18.dxc7! (apparently Black has no serious threat; 18.♟f1 h3 19.gxh3 ♟xh3 20.♟g3 ♟h6 21.♟e2 ♟xf2 22.♟xf2 ♟f4+ 23.♟e3 ♟h3+ 24.♟e2 ♟f4+ 25.♟e3 ♟h3+ ½-½ Ragger-J.van Foreest, France tt 2019) 18...♞ac8 (18...h3 19.♟e2+; 18...♟xf3+ 19.♟xf3 h3 20.♟e2+– ♟e6 21.♟f1 hxg2 22.♟xg2 ♟h3 23.♟h4; 18...♟h3+ 19.♟f1+– ♟xf2 20.♟b3 ♟a7 21.♟xb7) 19.♟e2!? (19.♟h1 is probably the best move, e.g. 19...♟xf2 20.♟f4 ♟e6 21.♟d6±, but I just wanted to show the amazing idea White has at his disposal after 19.♟e2) 19...♟h3+ 20.♟f1 ♟xf2 21.♟b3 ♟a7 22.♟xb7 h3 23.♟xa7!! ♟xa7 24.♟xf2±. White has too many pawns, one being pretty strong on c7. Soon the g-file will be opened, and it's no fun playing this position with black; 17...♞ad8 18.e5 ♟g7 19.♟h1 ♟xf2 20.♞e2 ♟g3. **18.♟e2 ♟xf3 19.♟xf3 ♟e5 20.♞f1 h3** 20...♟exf3+ 21.♟xf3 ♟xe4 22.♟d5 ♞ae8 23.♞ae1 ♟xf2 24.♞e8 ♟g4+ 25.♟d4 ♟xd4+ 26.cxd4 ♞xe8 27.♞xf6 ♞e1+ 28.♞f1 ♞xf1+ 29.♟xf1 ♟e3+ 30.♟e2 ♟xd5 31.♟xd6=, but 21.gxf3! is bothering Black: 21...♟g6 22.♟h1 ♟h3 23.♟e2 d5 24.f4! dxe4 25.♟xe4 ♞ae8 26.♞g1 ♟xf2+ 27.♟xf2 ♟xf2 28.♟xf2±. **21.♟g4 d5** Up to this moment both players were blitzing out their moves. Here they slowed down a bit, but not for too long. It's a safe bet that probably both

of them knew the moves till the end. **22.♟xh3 ♞ae8 23.♟h1** 23.exd5 ♟g7 24.♟xe5 ♞xe5♙ looks scary for White. **23...dxe4 24.♟xe5 ♞xe5 25.♟g4 ♟xf2!** **26.♟c4 e3 27.♟xe3 ♞xe3 28.♞f2 ♟xf2 29.♟xg5+ ♟h8 30.♟h6+ ♟g8 31.♟g5+ ♟h8 32.♟h6+ ♟g8 33.♟g5+ ½-½**

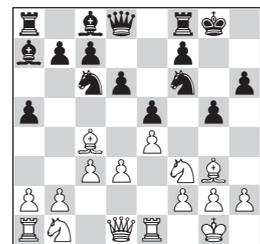
The most popular move 10...♟a7

Anish Giri

Pavel Eljanov

Stavanger 2016 (1)

1.e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♘c6 3.♟c4 ♟c5
4.0-0 ♟f6 5.d3 d6 6.c3 0-0 7.♞e1
a5! 8.♟g5 h6 9.♟h4 g5 10.♟g3
♟a7



11.♟a3!? Since the black bishop is already on a7, the move 11.♟a3 seems logical because later White can gain a tempo with ♟b5.

11...♟g4 In 1.e4 e5 systems, the ♟g4 pin is rarely a good option for Black. After ...g7-g5 it makes some sense since the bishop can't be attacked from the g3-square, but it leaves the f5-square vulnerable and takes away the h5-square from the knight.

A) 11...♟h7 Vachier-Lagrave-Ding Liren, Shenzhen 2018;

B) 11...♟g7 (I don't believe that Black's king is particularly safer on g7 than on g8. You don't need much imagination to see the bishop from g3 coming to e5 one day) 12.♟b5!? (12.d4 was played in Longson-Veinberg, Porto Carras 2018, but here 11...♟g7 fits perfectly after 12...♟xe4! 13.♞xe4 f5 14.♞e2 f4 15.dxe5 ffg3 16.hxg3 g4 17.♟h4 ♟xe5=; 12.♟c2!?) 12...♟e7

A modern Anti-Dutch attack

by Viktor Moskalenko

- | | | |
|----|-----|------|
| 1. | d4 | f5 |
| 2. | c4 | ♘f6 |
| 3. | ♞c3 | d6 |
| 4. | ♙g5 | ♞bd7 |
| 5. | ♚c2 | g6 |



With time, I've come to realize that this kind of position is harder to defend with black than I thought. I have played this line myself on both sides. Accuracy is required, so as not to immediately get into hot water.

Last year (2018), in Linares, during the Spanish Clubs Championship, I got the chance to play the Dutch with white against a Leningrad expert, Moreno Tejera. I decided to use this quite new system as a surprise weapon (see Game 1). But although I was successful with it, I wanted to explore its details more deeply. Here are my findings.

The concept

The flexible move 3...d6!? helps Black to avoid the unpredictable complications (which may lead to a forced draw) after the well-known 3...g6 4.h4!?. On the other side, White's 4.♙g5!? constitutes an active way of avoiding the mainstream

Leningrad (which would normally follow after 4.g3 g6 etc). White still retains the attacking option h2-h4!.

From the diagram position White has tried a wide variety of moves (around 231 games).

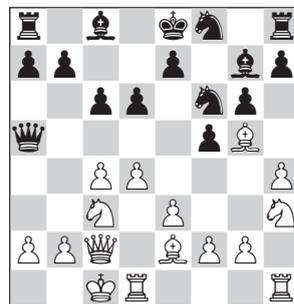
The direct 6.e4?! is premature (71 games, see the comment in Game 1).

The standard set-up works better for White, starting with: 6.h4 (52 games), 6.0-0-0 (44) or even 6.♞h3 (13 games).

Because there are several quite typical moves here, some lines can transpose one to the other. However, as you will see in the Game Section, each move order may also involve a change in the main plans and ideas for both sides.

Game 1

6.h4!? ♙g7 7.e3 c6 8.♞h3 ♚a5 9.0-0-0!
♞f8 10.♙e2!?.



This common type of position (and the whole set-up: see also Black's other options on moves 6-9) attracted my attention before my game with Moreno. So, I concentrated on modeling the possible play here. Previously, 10...h6!? had occurred in E.Pähtz-Nakamura