

*Grandmaster Repertoire 5*

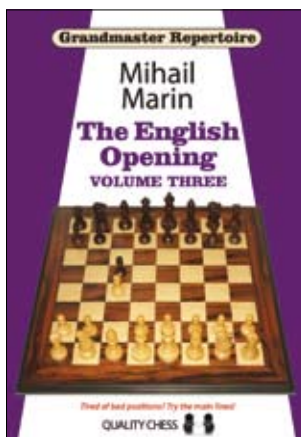
# The English Opening

Volume Three

By

**Mihail Marin**

with invaluable help from Valentin Stoica



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## Grandmaster Repertoire 5 - The English volume 3

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


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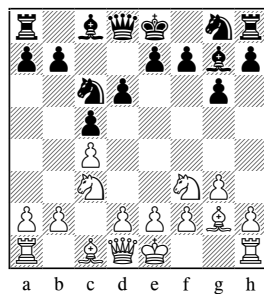
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# Chapter 3

## The Closed System



### 5...d6

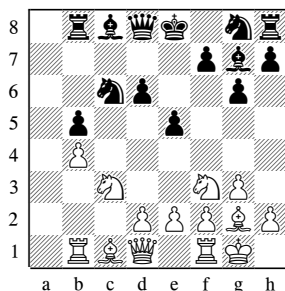
### Variation Index

1.c4 c5 2.g3 ♘c6 3.♙g2 g6 4.♞c3 ♙g7 5.♞f3 d6

6.0-0

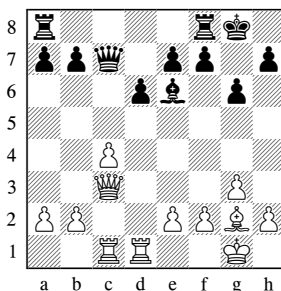
A) 6...a6 7.a3! ♜b8 8.♜b1 b5 9.cxb5 axb5 10.b4 cxb4 11.axb4	28
A1) 11...♞f6	29
A2) 11...e5	30
B) 6...♞d7!?	31
C) 6...♞h6 7.d4! cxd4 8.♙xh6 ♙xh6 9.♞xd4	34
C1) 9...♞xd4	34
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D) 6...♞f6 7.a3 0-0 8.♜b1 a5 9.d3 ♙d7 10.♙d2 ♞e8 11.♞e1 ♞c7 12.♞c2 ♜b8	
13.b4 axb4 14.axb4 ♞xb4 15.♞xb4 cxb4 16.♜xb4 b5 17.cxb5 ♞xb5 18.♞xb5	
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D2) 20...♞d7 21.♜c1	47
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A2) after 11...e5



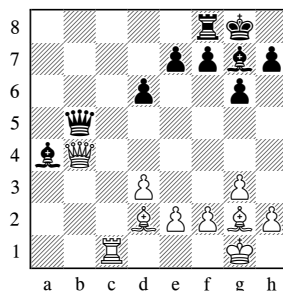
12.d4!N

C1) after 14...♙e6



15.♞e3!N

D22) after 22...♞b5



23.♜c4!N

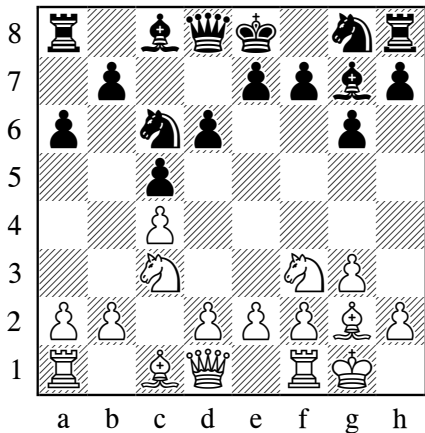
1.c4 c5 2.g3 ♖c6 3.♗g2 g6 4.♘c3 ♗g7 5.♘f3 d6

This is a flexible move. Black keeps the d4-square under firm control while retaining the possibility of continuing the development of either wing. The drawback is that in certain lines, the early commitment of the d-pawn will restrict Black's possibilities in the fight for the centre, as the typical idea of meeting d2-d4 with ...d6-d5 would mean a loss of a tempo.

6.0-0

Since Black has not defined his intentions yet, White plays a useful developing move, delaying the moment of choosing a concrete plan. From this position we will examine A) 6...a6, B) 6...♖d7!?, C) 6...♘h6 and D) 6...♘f6. Each of these moves leads to a distinct type of position. Grouping them under the same chapter is justified by the fact that they are sub-branches of 5...d6 and the volume of theoretical material does not warrant separate chapters.

A) 6...a6



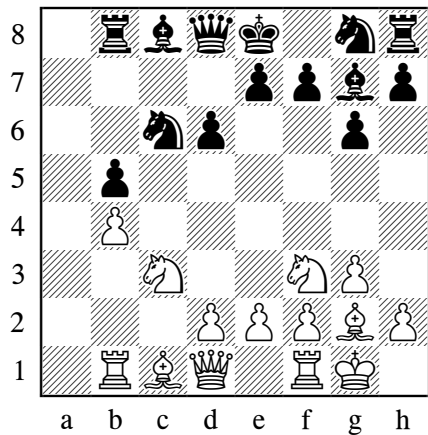
This early queenside action has similar drawbacks as in line B from Chapter 2. With his king two tempos away from castling, Black should not display strategic ambitions.

7.a3!

This is one of the rare cases in which White agrees to embark on symmetric play. In doing so, he relies on the fact that 5...d6 has cost Black an important tempo.

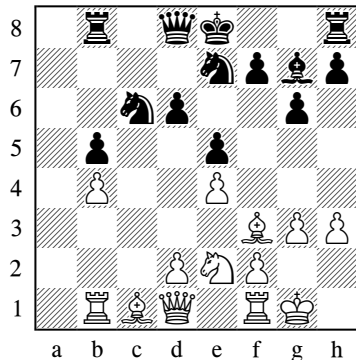
7...♖b8 8.♖b1 b5 9.cxb5 axb5 10.b4 cxb4 11.axb4

The queenside position has been stabilized and Black should think about developing his other wing.



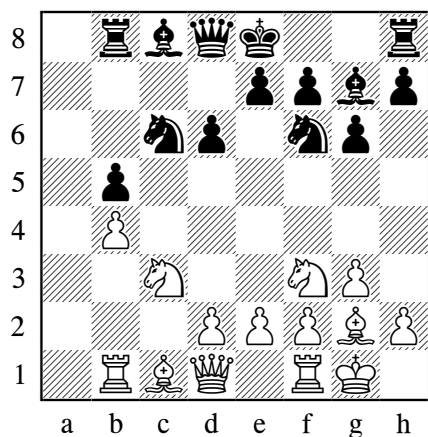
We examine A1) 11...♘f6 and A2) 11...e5.

11...♗f5 avoids immediate troubles, but does not provide a solution to White's lead in development. 12.e4 ♗g4 13.♘e2 e5 14.h3 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♘ge7 So far, we have followed Urban – Schmidt, Poznan 1997.



16. ♖b3!N Before embarking on an active plan, White should prevent the freeing move ...d5. 16...0–0 17.d3 ♖a8 18. ♕d2± Despite the near-symmetrical character of the position, White retains a stable advantage because of his strong bishop pair. The e7-knight is passive and the b5-pawn is likely to become vulnerable.

### A1) 11... ♖f6



As a consequence of the unfortunate combination of ...d6 and ...a6, the natural text move fails to offer Black a viable game.

### 12.d4!

This is it! White has not touched his d-pawn yet and can start the fight for space in the centre without any loss of time. The threat is d5 followed by ♖d4, with a crushing positional advantage.

### 12... ♕f5

As will be revealed immediately, this counterattacking move, aiming to take advantage of the weakening of the b1-h7 diagonal, does not cross White's plans in any way.

Blocking the d4-pawn physically would involve the loss of an important tempo: 12...d5 13. ♕f4 ♖b6 14. ♖b3 0–0 15. ♖fc1±

White is a tempo up over a theoretical position that is considered to be almost equal. One consequence of this circumstance is that the black rook has been forced to b6, while the corresponding b3-square has been occupied by the white queen. With the b4-pawn overprotected, the b1-rook is free to return to the a-file.

### 13.d5!

White bravely carries out his plan. The sacrificed exchange will be more than balanced by the strong passed c-pawn and the tempos lost by the enemy bishop.

### 13... ♕xb1

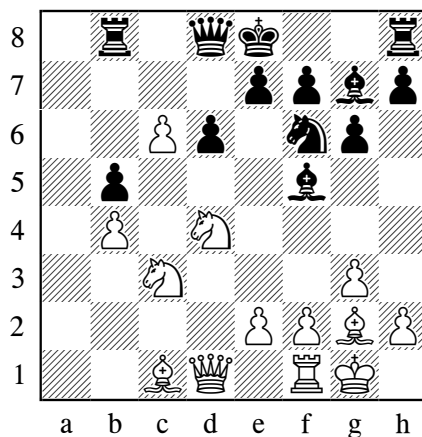
Practically forced, since 13... ♖a7 14. ♖a1 followed by ♖d4 is awful for Black.

### 14.dxc6 ♕f5

The best chance, but it is still insufficient.

14... ♕e4?! loses material: 15. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 16. ♖c2 With the dual threats of c7 and ♖xe4. 16... ♖c3 17. ♕b2 White has a winning position, Frias – Frois, Caceres 1996.

### 15. ♖d4

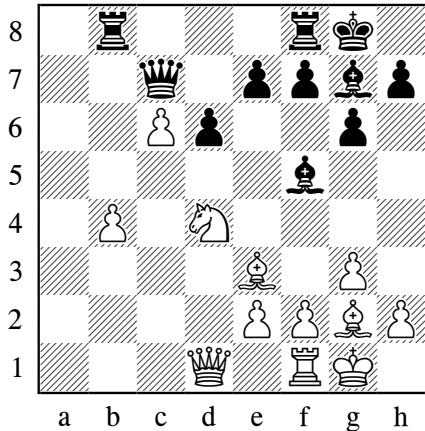


The b5-pawn cannot be saved, which will leave White with two dangerous passers on

the queenside. Besides, after a later  $\text{♔e3}$ , his bishops will be ideally placed for supporting the pawns' advance.

15...0-0 16.♖cxb5 ♘e8 17.♙e3 ♘c7  
18.♘xc7 ♜xc7

So far we have been following the game O. Ivanov – Orev, Gyongyos 1995.



19.♗xf5!N

The start of the most effective sequence, allowing White to capitalize on his advantage.

19...gxf5 20.♞a4

Threatening b5.

20...♞a8 21.♞c2 ♜fb8

Black has no time to defend f5 – his number one priority must be to slow down the b-pawn.

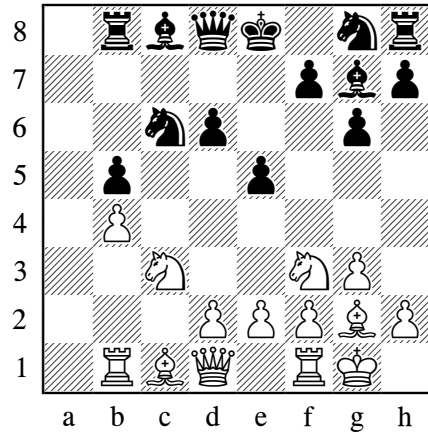
22.♞xf5 e6

Worse is 22...♞xb4 23.♙e4!.

23.♞f4

White remains in control. He has restored full material equality and can prepare the further advance of his queenside pawns.

A2) 11...e5



This move, aiming to prevent White's expansion in the centre, worked out well in Najdorf – Sanguinetti, Sao Paulo 1957, but only as a consequence of White's insufficiently energetic play.

12.d4!N

We became acquainted with this type of central break in the note to Black's 10th move in line B2 of the previous chapter. White prepares the rapid development of his queen's bishop and spoils the flexibility of Black's central structure.

12...exd4

The alternative is equally unappealing: 12...♗xd4 13.♗xd4 exd4 14.♗d5 ♙e6 Black should exchange the powerful knight as soon as possible, in order to keep his extra pawn, thus retaining some material compensation for his general problems. 15.♙b2 ♙xd5 16.♙xd5 ♞b6 17.♞b3 ♗h6 18.♞fc1 0-0 19.♞c6 ♞d8 20.♞bc1± White's pieces dominate the board and the extra pawn is not relevant at all.

13.♗d5

Threatening ♙b2 followed by ♗xd4.

13...♙e6 14.♗f4

Threatening to weaken the light squares in