

*Grandmaster Repertoire 8*

# **The Grünfeld Defence Volume One**

By

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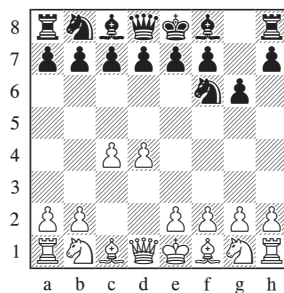
**Russian System 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗f3 ♕g7 5.♖b3 dxc4  
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# Chapter 1

## Early Deviations



### Rare Third Moves

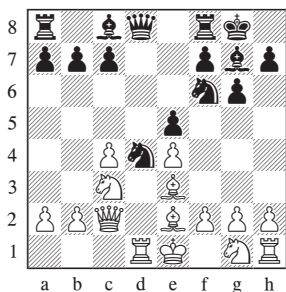
#### Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4

2...g6

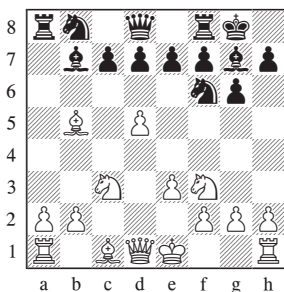
A) 3. ♖c2	8
B) 3.d5	9
C) 3. ♙g5 ♘e4 4. ♙f4 c5	10
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A) after 9... ♗d4



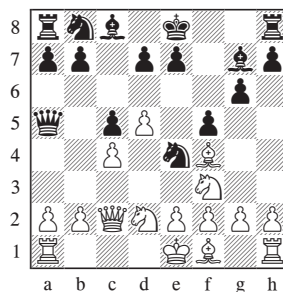
White has lost control of the d4-square

B) note to 5.bxa6



9... ♗xd5!

C) note to 7.f3



8... ♗a6!N

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6**

The starting point of our journey into the Grünfeld Defence. Why not start earlier? Sometimes you cannot cover everything; I am sure you will find this book heavy enough as it is. Besides, there should also be room for another book later on...

In this chapter we shall look at **A) 3.♖c2**, **B) 3.d5** and **C) 3.♙g5**. Obviously there are many more possible moves, but some of them do not have any point and are not worth studying. And the rest we shall consider in the following chapters.

**3.h4!?**

This outlandish move has been championed by Simon Williams, who recently wrote an SOS article on the subject.

**3...c5!**

Black steers the game towards a position where the move h2-h4 is of limited value.

**4.d5 b5**

4...e6!?!N also deserves attention, angling for an improved version of a Modern Benoni.

**5.e4?!**

A bit too creative. Williams suggests the improvement 5.h5!?!N ♖hx5 6.cxb5 a6 7.e4 d6, reaching an unusual kind of Benko position which should be roughly equal.

**5...♗xe4 6.h5 ♖a5† 7.♗d2 ♙g7 8.♖f3 ♗d6**

8...f5!?!N is also good.

**9.cxb5 ♙b7 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♞xh8† ♙xh8****12.a4 a6 13.♞a3**

This was Vinoth Kumar – Shivananda, New Delhi 2009. White's play has been enterprising but ultimately unsound, and in this position both 13...c4N and 13...♖b4N give Black some advantage.

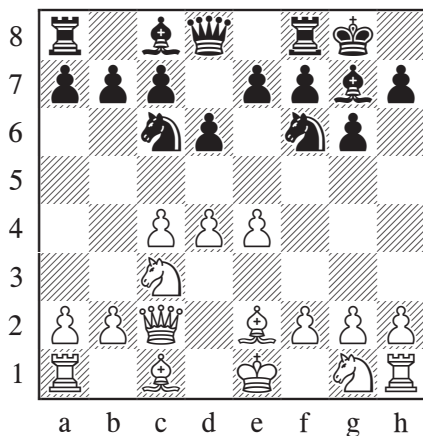
**A) 3.♖c2**

Maybe not such a bad idea against the Grünfeld, but the problem is that White gets

a poor version of the King's Indian Defence, where he can have trouble fighting for the vital d4-square. Here is one illustrative example:

**3...♙g7**

Certainly 3...d5 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.e4 ♗b6 6.♗f3 is not such a bad version of the Anti-Grünfeld for White.

**4.e4 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♙e2 ♗c6****7.♙e3**

After 7.♗f3 Black has a pleasant choice between 7...♙g4 8.♙e3 ♗d7 and 7...e5, in both cases winning the battle for the d4-square.

**7...e5 8.dxe5**

Obviously 8.d5 ♗d4 couldn't satisfy White either.

**8...dxe5 9.♞d1 ♗d4**

White has lost the battle for the d4-square, and very soon finds herself in a clearly inferior position.

**10.♙xd4**

10.♖d2 ♙e6†

**10...exd4 11.c5 ♖e7 12.♞xd4 ♖xc5†**

Koneru – L'Ami, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

**B) 3.d5**

When this chapter was almost ready, I was playing in a rapid tournament and my opponent managed to surprise me with this rare move. But after the game I did some work and came to the conclusion that the most promising response for Black is:

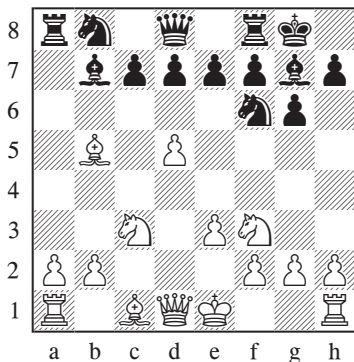
**3...b5!?**

Playing in the spirit of the Benko Gambit is logical, since the dark-squared bishop can find a lot of activity on the long diagonal after White has advanced his d-pawn. That said, I believe there is nothing wrong with more classical play, for example: 3...c6 4.♖c3 cxd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 ♗g7 7.♗f3 0-0 8.♙e2 ♖bd7 9.♙e3 ♗c5 10.♗d2 e6 With equal chances.

**4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6**

During the aforementioned game I was concerned about 5.b6N. However, Black is not forced to take this pawn and can try 5...c6 6.♖b3 ♙b7 with interesting play.

5.e3 ♗g7 6.♗c3 0-0 7.♗f3 ♙b7 8.♙e2 axb5 9.♙xb5



9...♗xd5! 10.♗xd5 ♙xd5 11.♖xd5 c6 12.♙xc6 ♗xc6 13.0-0 ♖c7 14.♗d1 Spassov – Ribli, Camaguey 1974. As pointed out by Ribli in *Chess Informant* 17, 14...♗fb8 would have secured excellent compensation for Black.

**5...c6 6.dxc6**

If 6.♗c3 then Black develops with tempo: 6...cxd5 7.♗xd5 ♖a5† 8.♗c3 ♗g7 9.♙d2 Peev – Radev, Bulgaria 1975. Here simply 9...♙xa6N 10.♗f3 0-0 11.g3 ♗c6 12.♙g2 ♗fb8 13.♖b1 ♗d5! offers Black tremendous compensation.

**6...♗xc6 7.e3**

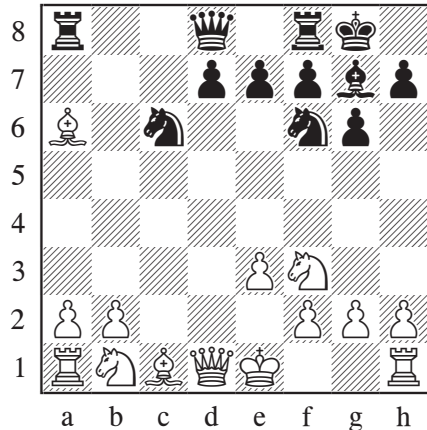
Or 7.♗c3 ♙xa6 8.g3 ♗g7 9.♙g2 0-0 10.♗h3 Varga – Feher, Hungary 1998, and now the natural 10...e6N 11.0-0 d5 12.♗f4 ♗g4! would give Black ample compensation for the pawn.

**7...♙g7 8.♗f3**

8.♗c3 0-0 9.♗f3 occurred in Alber – Banas, Germany 2000. Black now hurried with 9...♙xa6, but instead the more accurate 9...♖a5N 10.♙d2 ♙xa6 would have given him an excellent version of the Benko.

**8...0-0 9.♙e2 ♙xa6 10.♙xa6?!**

Better is 10.0-0 but after, for example, 10...♗e4 Black still has great compensation.



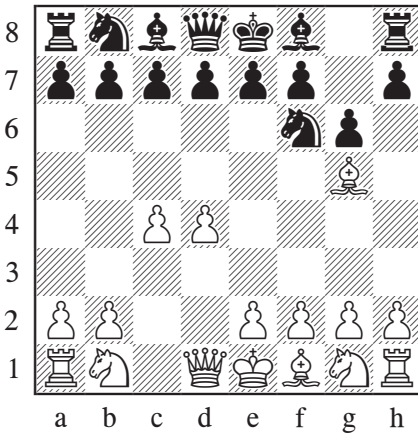
**10...♖a5†!**

An important nuance.

**11.♗c3 ♗e4! 12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♙xa6**

Dzindzichashvili – Adorjan, Amsterdam 1978.

## C) 3.♘g5



Quite a tricky move, especially taking into account that it's a rarely seen continuation.

## 3...♘e4

The most challenging reply. Certainly Black can continue with 3...♘g7, but then he must be ready to play the King's Indian, which is not in our plans, even though White's set-up after 4.♘c3 is generally considered quite harmless.

## 4.♘f4 c5

The text is logically connected with Black's previous move and resembles Black's play in a line of the Trompowsky (1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘g5 ♘e4 3.♘f4 c5 etc.). Obviously after 4...♘g7 5.f3 ♘f6 6.e4 we would get a strange version of the Sämisch King's Indian, with White's ♘f4 being an extra move.

We have reached the main crossroads in this line. At this point the most logical moves are **C1) 5.d5** and **C2) 5.♞c2**, but we shall take a quick look at a couple of other moves that White has tried:

If 5.♘d2 then the response 5...♘xd2 6.♞xd2 ♘g7 is too compliant. After 7.d5 White has a reasonable game, with chances for an

advantage. Instead Black should play 5...♞a5! 6.♞c2, transposing into line C2 below.

5.f3 ♞a5† 6.♘d2 ♘xd2

This looks more natural than retreating, as after 6...♘f6 7.d5 d6 8.e4 Black's queen is somewhat misplaced on a5.

7.♘xd2 ♞b6 8.♘c3 ♘g7 9.e3

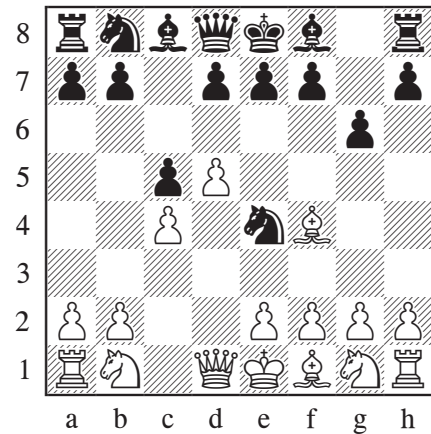
In the event of 9.d5 ♘xc3† 10.bxc3 ♞f6 (also threatening the c4-pawn, by means of 11...♞h4†) 11.♞b3 d6, Black has an excellent position.

This position arose in Koops –Testic, e-mail 2005, and now simplest for Black is:

9...♘c6N 10.♘e2 0–0

Obviously there is no advantage for White.

## C1) 5.d5



5...♘g7 6.♘d2 ♘f6

Also not bad is 6...♞a5 7.♞c2 f5.

## 7.e4 d6

Finally the game has transposed to a King's Indian type of position, but with White's knight misplaced on d2.

## 8.♞c2

As a consequence of the knight being on d2, White has to take time to defend the b2-pawn, because the natural 8.♘gf3 would just lose this pawn to 8...♘h5 followed by 9...♘xb2.

**8...0-0 9.♘gf3 e6 10.♙d3**

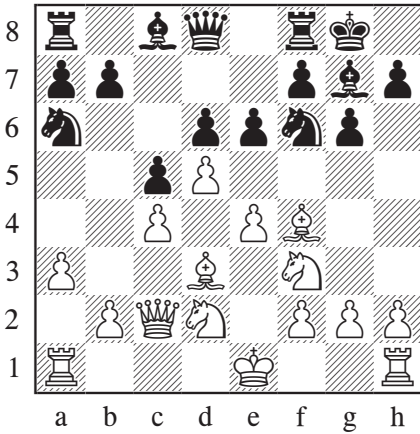
If 10.♙e2 then Black can obtain good play with 10...♘h5! 11.♙g5 f6 12.♙e3 f5.

**10...♘a6**

A useful move to insert before returning attention to the kingside; the threat of ...♘b4 causes White to lose more time.

**11.a3**

In Straeter – Gross, Germany 1999, Black should now have played:

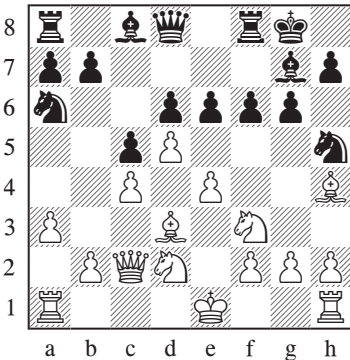


**11...♘h5N**

An already familiar idea.

**12.♙g5 f6 13.♙e3**

After 13.♙h4



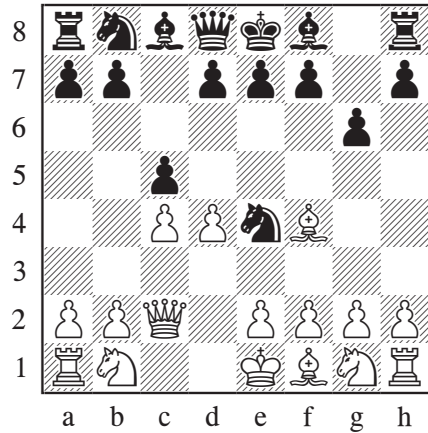
Black gets a good version of the King's Indian with: 13...e5! (less clear is 13...exd5 14.cxd5

♘f4 15.0-0 g5 16.♙g3 ♘xd3 17.♙xd3 f5 18.exf5 ♙xf5 19.♙b3∞) 14.0-0 ♙e8 Black cannot be prevented from carrying out his main idea, the ...f5-advance, which will give him excellent play. However, 14...♘f4! is also worthy of consideration.

**13...e5**

Again I don't see how White can stop the ... f5 advance; Black has great play.

**C2) 5.♙c2**



White's best choice, according to theory.

**5...♙a5† 6.♘d2 f5**

The justification for the previous move; White will have to spend some time if he wants to chase Black's knight away from the centre. After 6...♘f6 7.d5 d6 8.e4 ♙g7 9.♘e2 followed by 10.♘c3, White is fighting for an opening advantage.

**7.f3**

The most natural reply. Another game saw:

**7.♘gf3**

Black should continue:

**7...♙g7**

In Speelman – Ehlvest, Reykjavik 1991, Black immediately went wrong with 7...cxd4?! and after 8.♘xd4 ♙g7 9.♘4b3!



White was better.

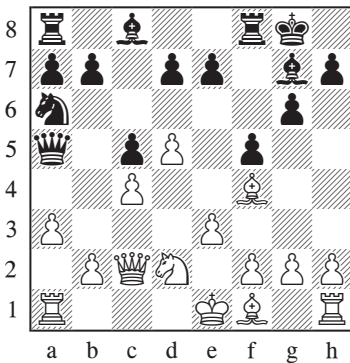
8.d5

This position has occurred once in tournament practice, via a different move order, in the game Serafimov – Ignatenko, Russia 1996. I found the following natural improvement:

8...♠a6! 9.a3

White can hardly allow 9.e3 ♖b4 10.♗b3 (10.♗c1 is clearly inferior: 10...♗a4! 11.♖b3 d6 12.♙e2 ♖xa2! 13.♗c2 ♖b4 14.♗d1 ♗d7 ♞ Black remains with a healthy extra pawn.) 10...e5! 11.dxe6 dxe6 Black has a comfortable game, with excellent chances to take over the initiative.

9...0-0 10.e3 ♖xd2 11.♖xd2



11...e5!

Black is probably better already, e.g.

12.dxe6 dxe6 13.0-0 e5 14.♙g3 ♙d7

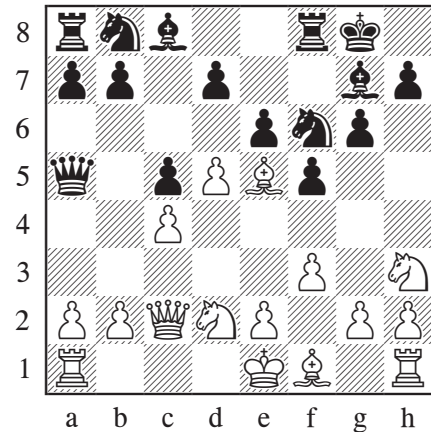
The idea of ...♙a4 is unpleasant for White.

7...♖f6 8.d5 ♙g7 9.♙e5

A natural idea, White's dark-squared bishop is transferred to c3, neutralizing the annoying pin along the e1-a5 diagonal. This position occurred in Barsov – Vareille, Val Thorens 1995. I found the following improvement:

9...0-0 10.♖h3 e6

Black strikes in the centre, aiming to use his lead in development.



11.♙c3 ♗d8 12.e4

Certainly 12.dxe6 dxe6 would allow Black to comfortably develop his queen's knight to c6.

12...fxe4 13.fxe4 b5!

Black not only creates unpleasant tension in the centre, but also has the major threat of playing 14...b4, which would force White to give up his dark-squared bishop. In my opinion Black has good chances to take over the initiative.

## Conclusion

White may be attracted to these rare third-move options because they make it problematic (or even impossible) for Black to continue in traditional Grünfeld style. However, by adopting a flexible approach, I believe that Black can obtain good chances. Against 3.♗c2 it is promising for Black to head into a King's Indian in which White's d4-pawn can quickly be targeted. I recommend meeting 3.d5 with the aggressive 3...b5! when Black can expect to obtain compensation typical of the Benko Gambit. Finally 3.♙g5 can be met by an idea from the Trompowsky, 3...♖e4 followed by 4...c5, which assures Black of good play.