

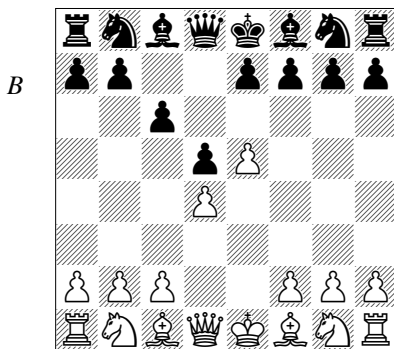
Contents

Symbols	4
Dedication	4
Acknowledgements	4
Bibliography	4
Introduction	6
1 Bishop's Opening	9
2 Two Knights Pianissimo	16
3 Giuoco Pianissimo	21
4 Philidor Defence	29
5 French Defence	37
6 Sicilian Defence: Unusual 2nd Moves	63
7 Sicilian Defence: 2...e6 3 c3	72
8 Sicilian Defence: Rossolimo Variation	93
9 Sicilian Defence: Moscow Variation	118
10 Caro-Kann Defence	128
11 Pirc Defence	141
12 Modern Defence	147
13 Alekhine Defence	150
14 Scandinavian Defence	159
15 Nimzowitsch Defence	168
16 Queen's Fianchetto Defences	171
Index of Variations	174

10 Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 (D)

This is the characteristic move of the Advance Variation. White claims a slight space advantage and avoids an early exchange of centre pawns by advancing in the centre. Top players have been increasingly attracted to this line over the past few years because there is more of an opportunity to outplay an opponent with creative middlegame play instead of proceeding down long, forcing variations in the main lines beginning with 3 dxc3.



Black must now choose between breaking up White's central pawn-chain with ...c5, or developing his light-squared bishop outside his own pawns.

A: 3...c5 128
B: 3...f5 133

Another idea is 3...c7!?, which was analysed in *Win with the Caro-Kann* (Johnsen and Hansen) as a secondary option (after their main choice, 3...c5). With 4 c4 White seeks to exploit the position of the black queen on c7. 4...f5 (4...dxc4? 5 fxc4 f5 6 e6! fxe6 7 fxe6 fxe6 8 f3 gives White excellent compensation for the pawn) 5 dxc3 e6 6 cxd5 cxd5 7 f3 e3 dxc6 8 c1 a6 and now:

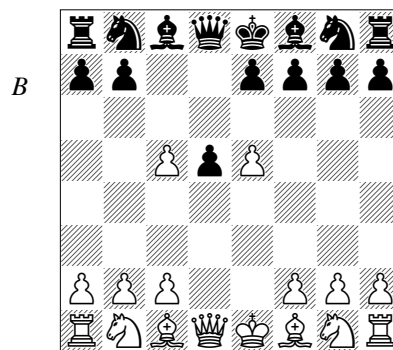
a) 9 f3 h6!? 10 e2 ge7 11 0-0 fh7 is a line given by Johnsen. Now White could consider the provocative 12 h4!? intending to play f4. Then 12...g5 13 f3 gives White an

advantage as the black king will not be safe on either side of the board.

b) 9 g4!? fg6 10 ge2 h5 11 f4 ge7 12 gxh5 ff5 13 a3 also looks attractive for White as he can generate pressure on both sides of the board.

A)

3...c5 4 dxc5 (D)



4...e6

Black can also attack White's e5-pawn by 4...c6 5 f4, and now:

a) 5...a5+? 6 c3 xc5 7 b4! b6 8 xd5 ff5 9 f3 with an extra pawn for White, Alonso Moyano-Gonzalez Aguirre, Mislata 2009.

b) 5...h6 6 f3 e6 7 fe3 (White develops a piece and protects the c5-pawn) and then:

b1) 7...e7 8 bd2 f6 9 fb5 0-0 10 xc6 bxc6 11 b3 leaves White a pawn up, Gross-Winter – David-Bordier, corr. 2017.

b2) 7...f5 8 f2 a5+ 9 d2 xc5 10 xa5 xf2+ 11 xf2 xa5 12 d3 e7 13 bd2 favours White thanks to his control over the d4-square and superior bishop, S.Grover-Gschnitzer, London 2019.

b3) The pawn advance 7...d4 is the most challenging continuation, but it awaits a practical trial. 8 xd4 xc5 9 c3 0-0 10 d2 b6 11 c2 xe3 12 xe3 d8 13 c4! c7 (13...xd2?? 14 xb6 costs Black material)

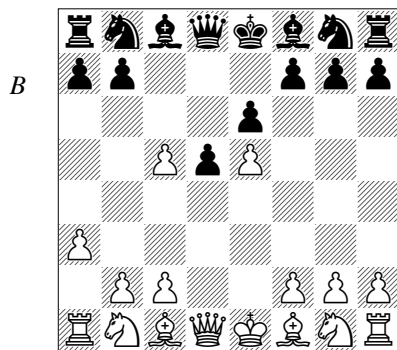
14 ♙d3 b5 15 ♜d6 f6 16 ♜xb5 ♞b6 (16... ♞b8 ?! 17 exf6 e5 18 0-0! with a development advantage for White) 17 ♜d6 fxe5 18 ♜c4 ♞c5 19 ♞e2 exf4 20 ♜bd2 gives White a favourable middlegame since his pieces can use the e4-square.

c) 5... e6 6 ♙e3 d4 (Black recovers his pawn at the cost of conceding the e4-square to White's pieces; 6... ♜h6 7 ♜f3 transposes to line 'b') 7 ♙f2 ♙xc5 8 ♜d2 and now:

c1) 8... ♜h6 9 a3! (White prepares ♜e4 without allowing ... ♙b4 + in response) 9...0-0 10 ♜e4 ♙e7 11 ♜f3 favours White thanks to the powerful centralized knight on e4, Sherwood-Markus, corr. 2019.

c2) 8... ♜ge7 9 a3! ♜d5 (9...0-0?! 10 ♙d3 ♜d5 11 ♞h5 ! g6 12 ♞h6 with kingside pressure, Samolins-Bolsakovs, Latvian Ch, Riga 2018) 10 ♞g4 0-0 11 ♙d3 f5 (11...f6?! 12 ♜gf3 fxe5 13 fxe5 ♜f4 14 0-0 favours White's superior development) 12 ♞g3 ♞a5 13 ♞b1 b5 14 ♜f3 (14 b4?! ♞xa3 15 bxc5 ♜c3 gives Black counterplay) 14... ♙b6 15 0-0 ♙d7 (Hohlbein-L.Andersen, corr. 2018) 16 ♞a1 ! is pleasant for White as Black's queen is misplaced.

5 a3 (D)



5... ♙xc5

Declining to recapture the c-pawn immediately entails some risk for Black:

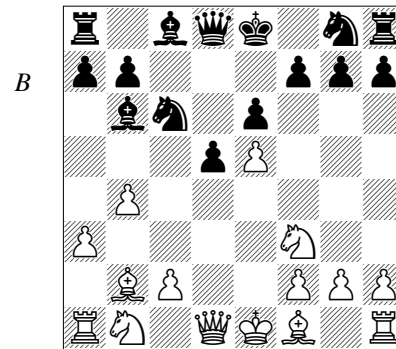
a) 5... ♜e7 6 ♜f3 ♜g6 (J.Lindholm-Järvenpää, Helsinki 2018) 7 h4! ♜c6 8 b4 ♜gxe5 9 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 10 ♙b2 ♜c6 11 h5 with kingside pressure for White.

b) 5...a5 prevents White from expanding on the queenside with b4 at the cost of weakening the b5-square. 6 ♜c3 ♙xc5 7 ♞g4 ♜f8 8 ♙d3 ♜c6 9 ♜f3 ♜ge7 10 0-0 ♜g6 11 ♞e1 gives White an obvious advantage as he has protected

his e5-pawn and Black has lost the right to castle.

c) 5... ♜d7 leaves White's c-pawn alone and hunts down his e-pawn. 6 b4 ♜xe5 7 ♙b2 ♜c6 8 ♜f3 ♜f6 9 c4 a5 (V.Novikov-Arkell, World Senior Team Ch, Vilnius 2014) 10 b5! ♜b8 11 ♙d4 ! ♜bd7 (11... ♜e4 12 ♜c3 ♜xc3 13 ♙xc3 ♜d7 14 c6! bxc6 15 bxc6 ♜f6 16 ♙e2 ♙d6 17 0-0 0-0 18 a4 with an advantage for White) 12 c6! ♜c5 13 ♜c3 gives White some pressure.

d) 5... ♜c6 6 ♜f3 ♙xc5 7 b4 ♙b6 (after 7... ♙e7 8 b5 ♜a5 9 ♙d3 ♙d7 10 0-0 ♜c4 ?! 11 ♙xc4 dxc4 12 ♜c3 White has superior development and a space advantage, Sveshnikov-J.Petrov, Nova Gorica 1999) 8 ♙b2 (D).



Now Black can either continue to develop his pieces or challenge White's centre:

d1) 8... ♜ge7 9 ♜bd2 and then:

d11) 9...0-0 10 ♙d3 ♜g6 11 b5 ♜a5 12 g3 f6 (after 12... ♙c5 , as in Morozov-Macchiagodena, corr. 2018, 13 h4 gives White a kingside initiative) 13 0-0 ♙d7 14 a4 ♞c8 15 ♞e2 with an obvious plus for White as his pieces have more scope.

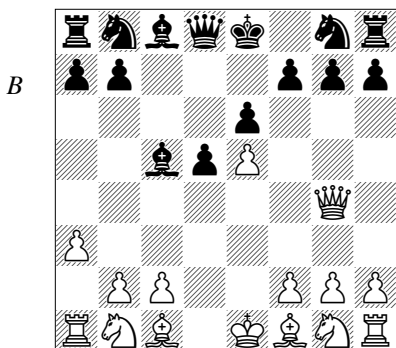
d12) 9... ♜g6 10 h4! h5 11 g3 ♙c7 12 ♞e2 f6 13 exf6 gxf6 14 ♙g2 favours White because of the looseness of Black's pawn-structure, Melia-Gvantseladze, European Women's Ch, Stry Smokovec 2018.

d2) 8...f6 9 ♜bd2 fxe5 10 ♜xe5 ♜f6 11 ♙d3 0-0 12 ♜df3 ♜h5 13 0-0 ♜f4 (Begliy-Rüfenacht, corr. 2016) 14 ♜h1 with just an edge for White thanks to his control over the e5-square.

6 ♞g4 ?! (D)

The queen foray is White's third most popular choice behind 6 ♜f3 and 6 b4, but it has

been played by So, Kariakin, Topalov and Morozevich.



Note that we have reached a position from the Advance French (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 dxc5 ♗xc5 5 ♖g4) with the extra move a3 for White, which makes the line more appealing.

6...♞e7!

The knight development is clearly Black's strongest reply although it has been chosen in only half the games that have reached this position. Other moves:

a) 6...g6?! preserves the right to castle, but now Black's kingside dark squares are vulnerable. 7 ♠f3 ♘c6 8 ♘c3 (Schmidt-Schäffer – T.Pähtz, Vienna 1996) 8...f6 9 ♗b5 fxe5 10 ♘xe5 ♘e7 11 ♗h6 gives White an advantage as Black's position is full of weaknesses.

b) 6...♗f8?! avoids weaknesses at the cost of forfeiting castling rights. 7 ♠f3 ♘c6 8 b4 ♗b6 (Black leaves the e7-square free for his knight) 9 b5 (Beveridge-Louro, corr. 2018) 9...f5 10 ♖f4 ♘ce7 11 a4 with an obvious advantage for White as he has a spatial plus and Black has difficulty completing his development.

c) 6...♗f8 avoids the drawbacks of lines 'a' and 'b', but the bishop retreat is very slow. 7 ♠f3 ♘c6 8 ♗d3 h5 9 ♖g3 h4 10 ♖f4 gives White a development advantage, Morozevich-I.Popov, Moscow Ch rapid 2014.

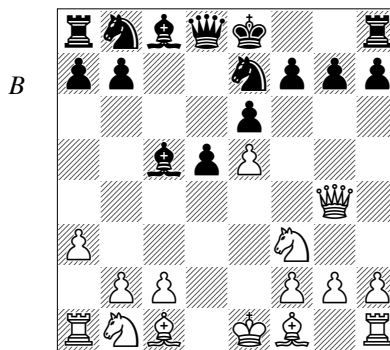
7 ♠f3 (D)

White should avoid the greedy 7 ♖xg7? ♗g8 8 ♖xh7 ♘bc6 with a huge lead in development for Black, Tadić-Predojević, Serbian Team Ch 2020.

Now there are four main lines:

A1: 7...♖b6 130

A2: 7...♞g6 131



A3: 7...♞bc6 132

A4: 7...0-0 132

Minor options:

a) 7...♖c7 8 b4 (gaining a tempo for ♗b2 by attacking Black's bishop) 8...♗b6 9 ♗d3 ♞g6 10 ♗b2 0-0 11 ♞bd2 ♘c6 12 ♖g3 f6!? (Black sacrifices a pawn to free his position as 12...♗d7?! 13 h4! is very strong for White; e.g., 13...f5 14 h5 ♞h8 15 c4 a6 16 ♖c1 with a large space advantage and superior development) 13 ♗xg6 hxg6 14 ♖xg6 ♖f7 15 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 16 0-0 ♗c7 17 exf6 gxf6 18 c4 gives Black insufficient compensation for the pawn.

b) 7...♞f5 8 ♗d3 h5 9 ♖f4 ♘c6 (Bartel-Vaibhav, Biel 2018) 10 ♘c3 is pleasant for White as Black has not interfered with the smooth development of White's pieces.

A1)

7...♖b6

Black takes advantage of White's momentary lag in development to attack the f2-pawn. This is Black's most challenging plan.

8 ♗d3! ♗xf2+

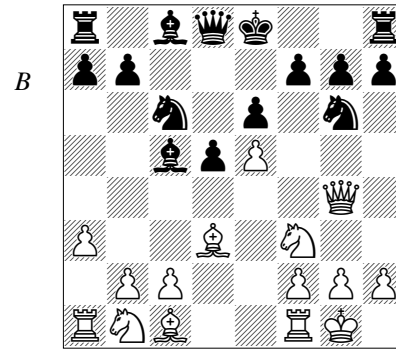
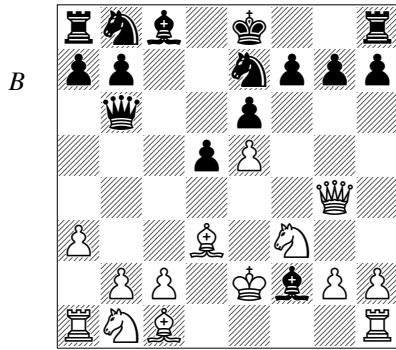
Black might as well grab the pawn since 8...♘bc6?! 9 0-0 ♞g6 10 ♘c3 ♖c7 (Topalov-Navara, Shamkir 2019) 11 ♘b5! ♖b8 12 b4 ♗e7 13 ♖e1 leaves White obviously better.

9 ♗e2 (D)

9...a5!

Restricting White from expanding on the queenside with b4. This is better than 9...♘bc6?! 10 ♖f1:

a) 10...♞d4+ 11 ♞xd4 ♗xd4 (11...♖xd4? 12 ♖f3 is winning for White) 12 ♖xg7 ♗g8 13 ♖xf7+ ♗d8 14 ♘c3 with a clear advantage for White.



b) 10...d4 11 c3 Nxe5 (Black is forced to sacrifice a piece for two pawns) 12 Nxd4 Qxd3 13 Qxd3 Qd7 14 a4 leaves Black with insufficient compensation for the piece.

c) 10...d4 11 b4 d4 12 c3 Nxe5 13 Nxd4 Qxd3 14 Qxd3 Qd7 15 Qe3 Qc7 16 Qf2 e5 17 Qd2 and White will consolidate his extra piece.

10 Nc3

White continues to develop and keeps f1 in reserve as Black's queen is tied to the defence of his bishop.

10...d7

Seeking to control the a4-square. 10...Nbc6?! runs into 11 f1 d4 (11...c5 12 a4 a7 13 Nxc5 Qxc5 14 b4! with a strong initiative for White) 12 a4 a7 13 c3 b6 14 b4 Ng6 15 b5 Qce7 16 Qh5! with an attack – Rambaldi.

11 Qxg7 Qg8 12 Qf6! Nbc6 13 a4 a7 14 g3 0-0-0 15 f1 b6 16 Nc3

Now:

a) 16...c7 17 Nb5 Qb6 18 Qf4 with some advantage for White – Rambaldi.

b) 16...f5 17 Nb5 Qcd4+ 18 Nfxd4 Qxd4+ 19 Qxd4 Qxd4 20 Qb1 (White prepares to expand on the queenside) 20...h5 21 b4 axb4 22 Qxb4 c5 23 Qh4 Qb8 (Black improves his king position and seeks counterplay along the c-file) 24 Qxh5 Qc8 25 Qh7 Qe8 with roughly level chances.

A2)

7...Ng6

Black immediately puts pressure on the e5-pawn.

8 d3 Nc6 9 0-0 (D)

9...0-0

Another reasonable option is 9...Qc7 10 Qe1. Then:

a) The e5-pawn is immune from capture as 10...Ngxe5?? 11 Nxe5 Nxe5 12 Qxg7 costs Black a piece.

b) 10...Nce7? 11 b4 b6 (Darini-Zahedifar, Tehran 2019) 12 h4! h5 13 Qg5 Qd7 14 a4 gives White a strong initiative.

c) 10...0-0 11 Qh5 Qd7 12 Nbd2 b6 13 Nb3 Qe8 14 Qh3 h6 (threatening to take on e5, and more effective than 14...f6?!, which is a typical method to obtain counterplay like in the French, but here 15 exf6 Qxf6 16 Qg5 e5 17 Qxf6 gxf6 18 Qxg6 hxg6 19 c4! dxc4 20 Nbd2 gives Black insufficient compensation for the exchange) 15 Qg3 (15 Qxg6 f6 16 Qxe6+ Qf7 17 Qg4 g5 followed by ...Qg6 offers Black very reasonable counterplay) 15...f5 16 Qd2 Qf7 (16...d4!?) 17 h4 Qh8 18 h5 Qge7 19 Qh4 leaves White with a space advantage.

10 Qh5 Qc7 11 b4!?

Now:

a) 11...d4! is a relatively safe option. 12 Qxd4 Qxd4 13 Qd2 Qf5 (13...Qxc2?? loses to 14 Qc1, and 13...Qxe5?? to 14 Qxg6) 14 f4 with a complex middlegame.

b) 11...Qe7 12 Qb2 Qd7 13 Qe1 (13 Nc3!?) and then:

b1) 13...Qe8?! 14 Nc3 Qd7 15 Qh3 f6 (Black sacrifices a pawn to seek counterplay) 16 exf6 Qxf6 17 Qxe6 Qce7?! (So-Carlsen, Internet rapid 2020) 18 Qae1! Qf7 19 Qxf6! Qxh3 20 Qxg6! and White's rampaging rook is unstoppable; e.g., 20...Qxf3 21 Qxg7+! Qxg7 (21...Qh8 22 Qxh7+ Qg8 23 Qh8+ Qxh8 24 Qxd5+ mates) 22 Qxd5+ Qh6 23 Qxe7 (the black queen has no safe squares) 23...Qf4 24 g3 Qf3 25 Qf5+ Qg5 26 h4+ Qg4 27 Qe3+ Qh5 28 Qe2 Qxe2 29 Qxe2 and White's knight and three pawns are superior to Black's rook.