

# Preface

This is an ideal book for the active club player who wants to understand what's going on in the opening of a chess game. I believe *Chess Opening Essentials* is:

- *Comprehensive*: it covers all main variations likely to arise
- *Easy-to-use*: important moves and key positions are highlighted in colour
- *Long-lasting*: it doesn't outdate quickly because it is about the basics, not the latest fashions
- *Complete*: it explains the plans and counterplans for both White and Black
- *Down-to-earth*: simple, verbal introductions (no database-dump full of dead trees)
- *Convenient*: every opening is illustrated with a number of instructive games.

The authors quite lucidly explain the plans behind the various openings, as well as many subtle similarities and differences between them. This way, without giving endless variations, they manage to get across the essence of every opening. Also, the often colourful history of variations is elaborated upon in an entertaining way.

Although *Chess Opening Essentials* is about understanding the ideas behind the openings, and not about following the latest fashions in top-level chess, we could not do without a limited amount of updating. This volume of the originally Italian series *Capire le Aperture* (published in 2005) has been brought up to date with new developments and games until the beginning of 2009.

The colours in this book we believe to be a great help for the reader to navigate more quickly, and to distinguish between, for instance, main lines and others. **Coloured text** highlights important moves, and also key initial positions and positions arising after important sequences. **Bold type**, be it in black or in **colour**, indicates main lines, which are also classified and sub-classified. Lines given in *italics* are unsound lines that should be avoided.

But this is not all. There are also numerous graphic features highlighting moves, plans, and strong or weak points. We believe that all this makes for a highly pleasant and accessible presentation, and hope that you, our readers, will agree.

I am convinced that by studying this book, beginners, casual players as well as club players can improve their game and enjoy a deeper understanding of the game of chess in its entirety. For even stronger players it can be a tool to test and review their opening repertoire.

Peter Boel  
Editor

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## Grünfeld Indian Defence

1.d2-d4 ♘g8-f6 2.c2-c4

g7-g6 3.♘b1-c3 d7-d5



After 1.d2-d4 ♘g8-f6 2.c2-c4 Black can establish a fianchetto with 2...g7-g6 in order to play more ambitiously, and naturally riskier as well, than in games that usually arise after 2...e6.

Playing this way, Black does not oppose White's central expansion in the same way as in the **Nimzo-Indian**, and therefore after 3.♘b1-c3 he cannot prevent White gaining possession of the centre. By playing 3...♗g7, Black allows the immediate push e2-e4, which we will see in the **King's Indian**. Before looking at that defence, we will examine the **Grünfeld Indian Defence**, which begins with the move 3...d7-d5. This move temporarily prevents the e2-e4 advance, in the full knowledge that after an exchange on d5, the advance has been delayed for one move only.

This is exactly the idea of the defence – concede the centre and then attack it.

When the defence appeared in 1922 in the games of the Austrian **Ernst Grünfeld**, the **Orthodox Defence** to the Queen's Gambit reigned supreme. You can therefore imagine how bizarre the idea must have seemed, even if the **Alekhine Defence** (1.e4 ♗f6), which has the same strategic theme, appeared one year earlier.

However, within ten years of the Grünfeld's debut it had already become evident that the defence had great dynamic potential and was based on sound strategic principles. So much so, that great champions such as **Alekhine**, **Flohr**, **Botvinnik**, **Lilienthal** and **Spielmann** started to use it with a certain regularity. It has remained relatively popular ever since; in the 1950's and 60's the patronage of **Smyslov**, **Boleslavsky**, **Uhlmann**, **Gligoric** and **Filip** increased its appeal.

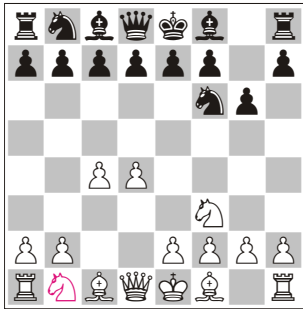
In more recent years, **Adorjan**, **Jansa**, **Ftacnik** and **Smejkal** have used it as their main weapon against 1.d4. When you add the names of **Kortchnoi**, **Leko**, **Svidler** and former World Champions **Fischer** and **Kasparov** to the list of players who have endorsed this defence, you can see that it has a lot to recommend it.

Before we examine the Grünfeld in the strict sense of the term, we will examine the alternatives in which White delays the development of his knight to c3. In this case, Black needs to be careful. After the ...d7-d5 advance, White can exchange pawns and then push e2-e4, and now with no white knight on c3, Black's d5 knight must retreat, which is a problem for Black.

1. d2-d4      ♖g8-f6
2. c2-c4      ♗g7-g6

Now, for example, White can try:

**A) 3. ♖g1-f3!?**



If Black continues unthinkingly with 3...d5?!, after 4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖b6 6.h3 White has a firm grip on the centre and Black has insufficient counterplay. For this reason, if Black wishes to play the Grünfeld, he should continue with

3. ...      ♖f8-g7!

and only after

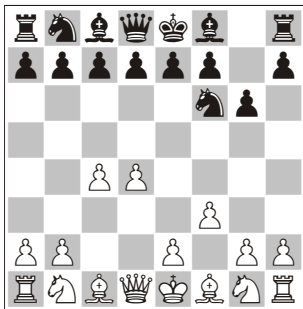
4. ♖b1-c3

play the thematic

4. ...      d7-d5

The idea of delaying the development of the knight to c3 is the explanation for the insidious

**B) 3. f2-f3!?**



This was played more than a few times in the 1930's by **Alekhine**, and this only partially explored line is still quite popular.

If Black continues with 3...♖g7, after 4.e4 d6 5.♖c3, you have a transposition to the **Sämisch Variation** of the **King's Indian**, which is not going to make a Grünfeld player very happy.

Adorjan's 3...e5!? is a sharp attempt to exploit the weakness of the dark squares. It threatens 4...♖h4+, but after 4.dxe5 ♖h5 5.♖h3 ♖c6 6.♖g5 ♖e7 7.♖xe7 ♖xe7 8.♖c3 White is a little better.

3. ...      d7-d5
4. c4xd5    ♖f6xd5
5. e2-e4    ♖d5-b6
6. ♖b1-c3   ♖f8-g7
7. ♖c1-e3   0-0

White has a nice centre, but the f1 bishop does not have a natural square to develop to: e2 is for the g1 knight, ♖d3 would leave the d4 pawn undefended and ♖c4 is not possible. White therefore makes preparations to castle queenside or otherwise advances his pawn to f4.

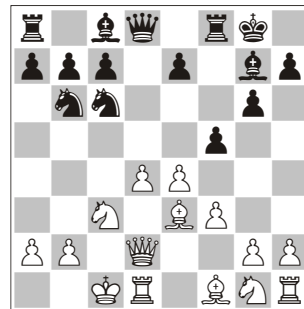
8. ♖d1-d2

8.f4 ♖c6 9.♖f3 ♖g4 10.d5 ♖a5 11.♖d4 e5! gives Black sufficient counterplay.

8. ...      ♖b8-c6

More natural and stronger than 8...e5, which is nonetheless played.

9. 0-0-0    f7-f5!



A good but risky move. White ignores the threat and goes for the 'big prize':

**10. h2-h4 f5xe4**

**11. h4-h5!**

If 11.fxe4, then 11...♗xd4! reveals Black's idea: tactics. After the series of exchanges on d4, the f1 bishop is hanging!

**11. ... g6xh5!?**

Also 11...e5 12.d5 ♘d4 13.hxg6 hxg6 14.fxe4 ♙g4 seems to hold.

**12. d4-d5!?** ♘c6-e5

**13. ♙e3-h6 ♘e5-c4!**

With an unclear position.

**Kramnik, Vladimir**

**Leko, Peter**

Tilburg 1998 (6)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 e5 4.dxe5 ♘h5  
5.♘h3 ♘c6 6.♙g5 ♙e7 7.♙xe7 ♗xe7  
8.♘c3 ♗xe5 9.g4 ♘g7 10.f4 ♗e7  
11.♘d5 ♗d8 12.♗d3 0-0 13.♗c3  
♘e8 14.g5 ♘e7 15.♘f6+ ♘xf6  
16.gxf6 ♘f5 17.e4 ♗e8 18.♘g5 c5  
19.0-0-0 ♘d4 20.e5 d6 21.♘f3 ♙g4  
22.♘xd4 ♙xd1 23.♘b5 dxe5 24.fxe5  
♙a4 25.♘d6 ♗e6 26.♙g2 ♗xd6  
27.exd6 ♗xd6 28.♙xb7 ♗e8 29.b3  
♗f4+ 30.♘b2 ♗e3 31.♗d1 h5  
32.♗a5 ♗e2+ 33.♘a3 ♗f2 34.♗d8+  
♙e8 35.♗d2 ♗xd2 36.♗xe8+ ♘h7  
37.♗xf7+ ♘h6 38.♘a4 ♗xa2+  
39.♘b5 ♗e3 40.♙d5 ♗xb3+ 41.♘c6  
♗a6+ 42.♘d7 ♗h3+ 43.♙e6 ♗d3+  
44.♘e8 ♗d6 45.♗e7 ♗xe6 0-1

**Khalifman, Alexander**

**Leko, Peter**

Budapest match 2000 (5)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 d5 4.cxd5  
♘xd5 5.e4 ♘b6 6.♘c3 ♙g7 7.♙e3  
e5 8.d5 c6 9.♗d2 cxd5 10.♙b5+  
♙d7 11.♙xb6 ♗xb6 12.♙xd7+

♘xd7 13.♘xd5 ♗d6 14.♘e2 h5  
15.♗b4 ♗xb4+ 16.♘xb4 ♙h6  
17.♘d5 0-0 18.♘ec3 ♘c5 19.♗d1  
♙g7 20.h4 ♘e6 21.♙f2 ♗fd8 22.g4  
f6 23.gxh5 gxh5 24.♘e7 ♙f7  
25.♘f5 ♙f8 26.♘d5 ♗ac8 27.♗c1  
♙c5+ 28.♘e2 ♘d4+ 29.♘xd4 ♙xd4  
30.♘d3 ♗g8 31.♗xc8 ♗xc8 32.f4  
♗g8 33.f5 ♗g3+ 34.♘e2 ♗g2+  
35.♙f3 ♗f2+ 36.♙g3 ♗xb2 37.♗c1  
♙f2+ 38.♘h3 ♙b6 39.♗c8 ♗e2  
40.♗b8 ♗xe4 41.♗xb7+ ♙f8  
42.♘xf6 ♗e3+ 43.♙g2 ½-½

**Kramnik, Vladimir**

**Shirov, Alexey**

Cazorla match 1998 (9)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 d5 4.cxd5  
♘xd5 5.e4 ♘b6 6.♘c3 ♙g7 7.♙e3  
0-0 8.♗d2 e5 9.d5 c6 10.h4 h5  
11.♙e2 cxd5 12.exd5 ♘8d7 13.d6  
♘f6 14.♙g5 ♗e8 15.♗d1 ♙e6  
16.♘h3 ♘c4 17.♗xc4 ♙xc4 18.b3  
♙a6 19.♘d5 e4 20.♘xf6+ ♙xf6  
21.d7 ♗b6 22.dxe8♗+♗+ ♗xe8  
23.♗e3 ♙xg5 24.♗xb6 ♙xh4+  
25.♘d2 axb6 26.fxe4 ♗xe4 27.♘c2  
♗g4 28.♗d2 ♙e7 29.♗g1 ♙g7  
30.♘f2 ♗f4 31.♘d3 ♗e4 32.♗gd1  
♙b5 33.a4 ♙c6 34.♗e1 ♗xe1  
35.♘xe1 ♙b4 36.♗e2 ♙xe1 37.♗xe1  
♙xg2 38.♘d2 h4 39.♘e3 ♙d5 40.b4  
h3 41.♗e2 f5 42.♗d2 ♙e4 43.♙f4  
♙g2 44.♗d7+ ♙f6 45.♗h7 g5+  
46.♙g3 f4+ 47.♙g4 ♙e5 48.b5 0-1

**Motylev, Alexander**

**Svidler, Peter**

Wijk aan Zee 2007 (8)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 d5 4.cxd5  
♘xd5 5.e4 ♘b6 6.♘c3 ♙g7 7.♙e3  
0-0 8.♗d2 ♘c6 9.0-0-0 f5 10.e5

♘b4 11.♘h3 ♕e6 12.♖b1 ♔d7  
 13.♘f4 ♕f7 14.a3 a5 15.d5 ♕xe5  
 16.axb4 axb4 17.♘b5 ♖a5 18.♕xb6  
 cxb6 19.♗xb4 ♖fa8 20.♖d4 ♕xd4  
 21.♗xd4 ♖a1+ 22.♖c2 ♖xf1  
 23.♖xf1 ♗xb5 24.♖c1 ♖d8 25.♗e5  
 ♕xd5 26.♘xd5 ♖xd5 27.♗e6+ ♖f8  
 28.♗c8+ ♖f7 0-1

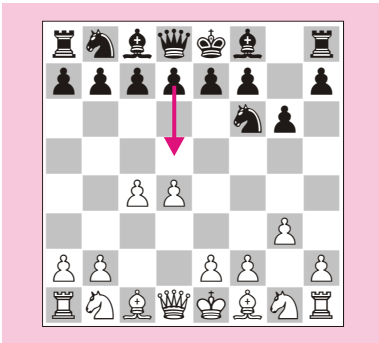
**Stellwagen, Daniel**  
**De Jong, Jan-Willem**

Amersfoort tt 2008 (2)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 d5 4.cxd5  
 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘b6 6.♘c3 ♕g7 7.♕e3  
 0-0 8.♗d2 ♘c6 9.0-0 f5 10.h4  
 fxe4 11.h5 gxh5 12.g4 e5 13.d5  
 ♘d4 14.♖xh5 ♖f7 15.♘xe4 ♗xd5  
 16.♕xd4 ♗xa2 17.♖xe5 1-0

### Fianchetto Variation with g3

1. d2-d4 ♘g8-f6
2. c2-c4 g7-g6
3. g2-g3



If White wishes to develop his bishop by means of a fianchetto, it is better to do so immediately, postponing the development of the b1 knight, and reserving the e2-square for the other knight. This is a positional approach, which may not be the strongest objectively,

but which will probably irritate Black, who, in choosing the Grünfeld, has indicated a fondness for asymmetrical positions.

#### A) 3. ... c7-c6 (!)

So that after a ...d7-d5 push Black can recapture with the c-pawn. Any opening expert would agree that this is technically the best move. Indeed, 3...c6 is Black's best performing move and it is very difficult for White to obtain any concrete advantage when playing against it.

So why is it so little played? The answer is: because of the very high draw rate, and also because Black will find it very arduous indeed to win with such an arid position.

4. ♕f1-g2 d7-d5
5. ♘g1-f3 ♕f8-g7
6. 0-0 0-0

Now Black is ready to take on c4, with an active game.

#### 7. c4xd5

The most played. Alternatives by White, such as 7.♗b3 7.b3 or 7.♘bd2, have not gained more than equality.

7. ... c6xd5
8. ♘f3-e5

After 8.♘c3, the move 8...♘e4! is considered to be good: 9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.♘e5 ♗d5!. This is the only way Black can equalise.

#### 8. ... e7-e6!

The move that achieves equality: overprotecting d5 so as to drive off the e5 knight with ...♘fd7.

After 8...♘c6 9.♘xc6 bxc6, the weak c6 pawn may not be such a serious problem, but it does give White something to play against.