

Valery Bronznik

The Chigorin Defence



Schachverlag Kania

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Introduction

Dear chess friend!

As every chess player, of course you have worried about which kind of openings to apply in order to be as successful as possible. With Black it is particularly difficult to make the right choice - right from the start we are in a situation in which the opponent tries to force his will upon us.

What can we do to get rid of this pressure?

There are different ways of dealing with this problem.

Many players strive for a maybe somewhat passive, but solid position with Black, intending to equalize the chances sooner or later by accurate play and precise defence. And if the opponent over-extends his position, in this way they even may achieve a whole point.

This restricted method is, by all means, possible, but there are a lot of drawbacks, e.g.:

- There are relatively few possibilities for the opponent to blunder in the opening or in the early middlegame because when we play like this, he does not have any threats to which he must respond. For him it is (at least in these stages of the game) only a matter of making his initiative tell or not.
- On the other hand, the probability of making a mistake is much greater for us - it is much more difficult to defend precisely than to play actively.

- Against a weaker opponent we normally want to win. But if our opponent has got the initiative from the very beginning, it often happens that our attempts to neutralize only lead to equality.

- Nor is it recommendable to get into a passive position against a stronger opponent. He will certainly be pleased with this and try to initiate some plan of attack. Because of the different playing strengths, it can often happen that we recognise his ideas too late. And in a passive position a single inaccuracy can cost us the whole point.

- The probability of the opponent getting into time trouble when we play in such a way is relatively small. But we ourselves are in much greater danger of suffering time trouble, because defending a passive position normally needs more time than the attack.

- If our opponent has an active position he will feel good psychologically as well.

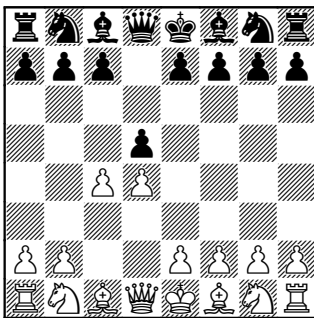
For that reasons many players dispense with quiet openings when playing Black, but go to the other extreme - they play risky systems, which are over-active and demand exact play of the opponent from the very beginning, too, but objectively speaking they are anti-positional and therefore bad. Now and then this can lead to success, but if the opponent prepares for the game or by some chance knows the variation we play, we are virtually lost.

But there is a third approach - to play openings, which are active and positionally sound at the same time. The best examples are the King's Indian or the Sicilian Defence. But here we face the other problem: they are mostly very popular, and we can hardly expect that our opponent doesn't know them.

It would be ideal if our opening were not only active and sound, but also not too popular and therefore not that well-known to our potential opponents. Then we have much more chances of embarrassing our opponent from the very beginning. Of course in doing so we have to know ourselves the most important variations and the typical positions and have to understand the strategic features.

This is then the right time to acquaint ourselves with the **Chigorin Defence**. It is about the positions, which arise after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6!? and 1.d4 d5 2.♗f3 ♘c6!?

1.d4 d5 2.c4



Let's have a closer look at this position. With his last move White began to take action against Black's centre, specifically against the d5-pawn. The second player has basically three possibilities:

a) Giving up the centre immediately with **2...dxc4**, but therefore, for the moment, getting an extra pawn - the *Queen's Gambit Accepted*. This opening is considered as relatively safe, but somewhat passive. As a rule, White soon regains the pawn, gets a space advantage and has several possibilities to fight for the initiative. There are also many variations in which he can avoid virtually any risks and yet have a slightly more active position.

b) Strengthening the d5-pawn, e.g.:

b1) **2...e6 - Queen's Gambit Declined**
Black doesn't give up the centre, but protects his central pawn. This classical treatment of the Queen's Gambit is also safe, but passive. The drawback of ...e7-e6, however, is obvious - the c8-bishop is locked up. Normally a positional game with a slight advantage for White lies ahead, whereas for a long time Black can only fight for equality.

b2) **2...c6 - Slav Defence**

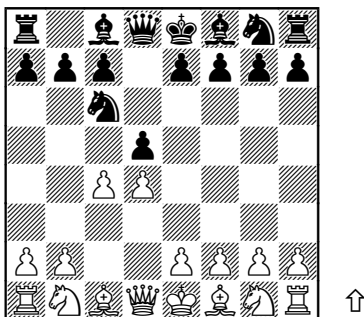
The c8-bishop stays free, but now the c6-square is denied to the knight. Positionally speaking, the Slav Defence is very healthy, and many top players prefer it. But White has a very wide range of both quiet and sharp variations, and, as a rule, he dictates the play.

c) Instead of giving up the centre or passively strengthening it, Black launches a counter attack against White's central pawns.

c1) **2...e5?! - Albin's Counter-Gambit**

He sacrifices a pawn, hoping to get a space advantage in the centre after 3.dxe5 d4. According to theory, this is considered to be not quite correct, although White needs good opening knowledge.

c2) 2...♞c6!?



Black develops his knight and attacks the d4-pawn at the same time. Moreover, the c6-knight supports the action in the centre with ...e7-e5. The queen's bishop stays free, and in the case of ♞g1-f3, it is ready to go to g4 in order to increase the pressure on d4. And now, after only two opening moves, Black has an advantage in development!

In terms of the second possibility 1.d4 d5 2.♞f3 ♞c6!? Black can begin an active fight for the centre with 3...♙g4 at the next move.

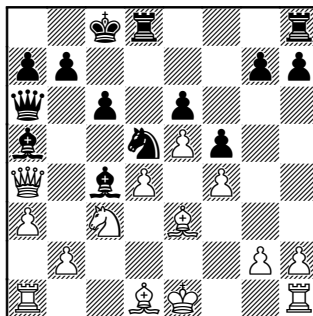
The black system is so aggressive that, to tell the truth, I don't understand why this opening is called 'Defence', and therefore I would suggest it be regarded as a *counter attack*.

The Russian chess player Mihail Chigorin who was a world-class player in the Steinitz era and discovered 2...♞c6!?, was considered as a particularly dangerous opponent because of his aggressive style and his original ideas. Let me now take the liberty of demonstrating one of his games, which I like best:

Pillsbury – Chigorin St. Petersburg 1895

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♞c6 3.♞f3 ♙g4 4.cxd5
♙xf3 5.dxc6 ♙xc6 6.♞c3 e6 7.e4 ♙b4

8.f3 f5 9.e5 ♞e7 10.a3 ♙a5 11.♙c4
♙d5 12.♞a4+ c6 13.♙d3 ♞b6 14.♙c2
♞a6 15.♙d1 ♙c4 16.f4 0-0-0 17.♙e3
♞d5



Harry Nelson Pillsbury - one of the strongest players of his time - is totally outplayed after 17 moves. And this happened without tactical tricks, purely positionally! There followed 18.♙d2 ♞b6 19.♞c2 ♞xd4 20.♞c1 ♙d3 21.♞b3 ♞c4, and he could already have resigned with a clear conscience.

Nowadays the opening has a curious and hardly comprehensible status. On the one hand it still occurs relatively seldom, on the other hand it is frequently employed by some strong players, and that with good results.

Alexander Morozevich, for a couple of years one of the world's top players, employs the Chigorin Defence even against players like Kramnik, Anand or Ivanchuk. The strong grandmaster Igor Miladinovic is an absolute Chigorin fan and confirms with his numerous wins the high quality of the great Russian player's discovery.

GM Robert Bagiega, who convincingly won the strong German championship in 2000, certainly appreciates M.Chigorin - he twice played against the Queen's Gambit in this tournament, and he twice scored the full point with 2...♞c6. Christoph

Wisniewski, the tournament's surprise who started with the worst Elo rating of all the participants, scored 2½ out of 3 with our silver bullet - that means 4½ out of 5 for the Chigorin Defence at the most important national event of the year.

Especially remarkable was Rabięga's fight against super grandmaster Alexander Nenashev (now he's called Graf) who had 150 Elo points more than he did. This encounter, in which the favourite gets into a horrible position already after 14 moves, you can find as *Game 109* in our book.

As a rule, the positions arising from the Chigorin Defence are rich in ideas, whether the play is quiet or sharp. Regularly there crop up positional problems such as doubled pawns, development advantage, knight (pair) against bishop (pair), material sacrifices for the initiative etc.

Therefore I hope that this book will not only assist you with this specific opening, but also that it will be useful for your general understanding of the game.

The author wishes you much success!

Valery Bronznik
Stuttgart, August 2001

Acknowledgements

Sincerely I would like to thank especially IM John Watson, CC-IM Jonathan Tait and CC-IM Bernd Rädiker who unselfishly made available to me their private game and analysis material. However, most of all I would like to thank IM and CC-GM Dieter Mohrlok who invested an incredible amount of time in looking through and correcting the whole manuscript. Without him this book - my first one - would probably never have appeared.

About this revised English language edition

In the beginning of 2002 this book was released only in German, nevertheless it soon became internationally acclaimed. Shortly after the idea for an English language version developed, but before that the contents of the book had to be updated first.

This revision has been done for the current edition and in the process of examining the new games, I was pleased to see that many of my analyses and suggestions from the original edition have been tested successfully in many amateur and master games. A further contribution to the discussion was brought by the independently released CD by the aforementioned C. Wisniewski, who constantly puts the Chigorin Defence to the test on the Internet, as well as in his tournament games, against many well-prepared opponents.

The additional 24 pages by no means reflect the amount of work that was put into this edition - many variations and analyses were revised, corrected or made more precise; some of them were entirely rewritten. Six new main games were added, one game from the first edition was omitted.

I would like to express my gratitude for the many enthusiastic reactions to the first edition, and at the same time hope that the ideas from the current edition will be likewise appreciated and tested in tournament games.

Valery Bronznik
Stuttgart, May 2005

Chapter 5

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♙g4 4.cxd5 ♙xf3 5.gxf3

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘f3

One of the most popular continuations in this opening. White develops the knight, protects the d4-pawn and takes the e5-square under additional control.

3... ♙g4

Consistently played - Black immediately attacks the knight and starts the battle for the d4- and e5-squares.

The alternative **3...e5** will be analysed in *Chapter 10*.

4.cxd5

The most important continuation. The first player exchanges Black's central pawn and thus wants to dominate in the centre. If Black takes back the pawn immediately (4...♙xd5?), White would play 5.♘c3± winning a tempo.

4.♘c3 is analysed in *Chapter 7*, **4.e3** ⇨ *Chapter 8*, and Alekhine's idea **4.♙a4** ⇨ *Chapter 9*.

4.♘e5 is mentioned in the annotations to *Game 40* (p.120).

4... ♙xf3 5.gxf3

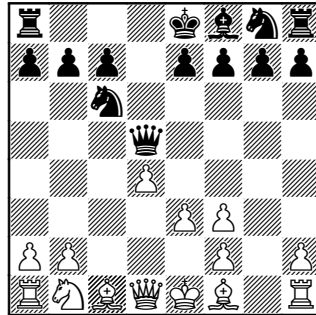
This move leads to a complicated and interesting battle.

5.exf3 is harmless, see *Game 40*.

However, also possible is **5.dxc6** ♙xc6 ⇨ *Chapter 6*.

5... ♙xd5 6.e3

White protects d4, clears the way for the f1-bishop and plans to develop his knight to c3 with tempo.



6...e5 or 6...e6?

In his revolutionary book *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy* (p.178ff.) John Watson takes this position as a starting point for some general considerations on the principles of playing with two bishops against two knights:

According to the traditional view, the side with the bishop pair should strive to open the position, while his opponent should try to keep it closed. However, the acquisition of the bishop pair is usually accompanied by a loss of time resulting in a delay in development. And in general, the knights can be brought into action faster than the bishops, for the latter have to be located on effective diagonals first.

And therefore the player with the knights should try to *speed up the tempo of the game* (often with a radical opening of the position), while his opponent can first act conservatively - a seemingly closed position with an unsettled (*not* blocked) pawn structure,

16...b5!

The counterplay begins.

17. ♘e2

On **17. ♘b5?** follows 17...♗b8 18.♘xe5 ♘xe5 19.♖c4 (19.a4 a6 20.♖c4 axb5 21.♖xc6 ♗b6 22.♗d7 ♖b4 23.♗d2 bxa4—) 19...♘xc3 20.♖xc6 ♘xb2 21.♘xb2 ♗b6! 22.♗d7 ♖b4+ 23.♘a1 ♖c3+ 24.♘b1 c6 (24...a6 25.♗c1!) 25. a4 (25.♖xe6+ ♘h8—) 25...cxb5, and White can hardly survive. After **17. ♘b5** the situation is even simpler: 17...♘xc4 18.♖xc4 ♘b5 19.♖xb5 ♗b8 20.♗d7 ♗xb5 21.♗xe7 ♗xb2+ 22.♘c1 ♗xg2 23. ♗xe6 ♗xa2—.

17...♗b8

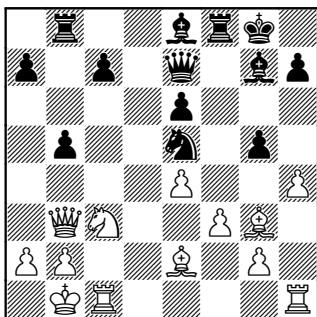
17...b4?! 18.♗b5 Δ ♗d4.

18. ♗c1 ♘e8

The bishop clears the way for the c-pawn and at the same time challenges the white rook for the h5-square.

19.h4

At last White accomplishes the long planned advance, but Black is ready with his counterplay.

**19...c5! 20. ♗d1!**

Δ ♖e3, ♗f2.

20...c4 21. ♖e3 h6 22.hxg5 hxg5 23. ♗f2 ♗d8!

The centre must be considered at all times!

24. ♘xe5

White exchanges the active knight in the hope of facilitating his attack on the kingside. But now the second player gets the bishop pair, and the e5-bishop becomes particularly strong in the absence of its counterpart.

24.♗h3 can be met by 24...♘c6, e.g. 25.♖xg5 ♖xg5 26.♗xg5 ♗d2 27. ♗c2 ♗xc2 28.♘xc2 ♗d4+ 29.♘d1 ♗xe2 30. ♘xe2 ♘xb2 31.♗xe6 ♗f6 with a complicated endgame. In addition, 24...♗f7 or 24...♗d3 25.♘d3 ♖b4 26.♗c2 cxd3 27.♗d2 g4 are also possible.

24...♘xe5 25. ♗g4 ♘d4**26. ♗d2 ♘g6 27. ♖a5 ♖c5****28.a4 ♗b8 29.b4**

Black's activity gradually becomes unpleasant and White now wants to exchange the queens.

29. ♖a6? loses in view of 29...♘b2!, e.g. 30.♖xe6+ (30.♘xb2 ♖b4+ 31.♘c2 ♘xe4+! 32.fxg4 ♖b3+ 33.♘d2 ♗bd8+ 34.♘e1 ♖b4+—) 30...♗g7 31.♗cd1 (31.♘xb2 ♖b4+ 32.♘c2 ♖b3+—) 31...bxa4 32.♗d7+ ♗f7 33.♘xc4 ♗xd7 34.♖xd7+ ♗f8 35.♖e6 ♘d4+ 36.♘c2 ♗b2+ 37.♘c1 (37.♘d3 ♖a3+ 38.♘xd4 ♗d2+ 39.♘e5 ♖c3#) 37...♗a2 38.♖g8+ ♘e7 39.♖e6+ ♘d8 40.♖g8+ ♘e8—.

However, interesting was **29. ♗c2**, in order to protect b2 immediately. Black could reply with 29...♗g7∞.

29...bxa4 30. ♖xc5 ♘xc5**31. ♗xc4 ♘xb4 32. ♘a2**

Black has the bishop pair and an extra pawn, but the g6-bishop is passive and his pawn structure is ruined. The chances seem to be approximately equal.

32...♗b7

Against 33.♖c7.

33.♖c6 ♖d8 34.♖hc1 ♗f8

This bishop should operate on the long diagonal. 34...♖d2+ 35.♖1c2 ♖xc2+ 36.♖xc2 would not have brought anything.

35.♖1c2 ♗g7 36.♗c4 ♖d1
37.♗xe6+ ♖h7?!

Not the best square for the king. Stronger was 37...♖f8 38.♖c8+ ♖e7 (38...♗e8!? 39.e5 ♖e7 40.♖2c6∞) 39.♖8c7+ ♖f8 40.e5 (40.♖c8+ ♖e7 41.♖8c7+=) 40...♖bb1 41.♖c8+ ♖e7 42.♖8c7+ ♖f8, and the battle would have ended with a perpetual check.

38.♖c1 ♖b2+ 39.♖a3 ♖bd2
40.♖xd1 ♖xd1 41.♖c8

White could have tried to play for a win with 41.♖c7!?

41...♖a1+ 42.♖b4 ♗d4

In this complicated position White decided to force a draw.

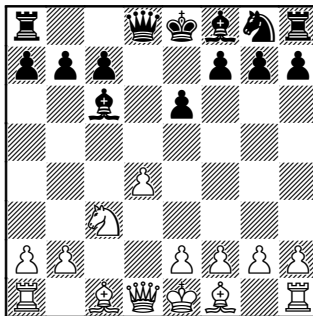
43.♖c7+ ♖h8 44.♖c8+ ♖h7
45.♖c7+ ♖h8

½:½

Game 48
Tyrtania – Breutigam
Berlin 1996

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♗c6 3.♗f3
♗g4 4.cxd5 ♗xf3 5.dxc6
♗xc6 6.♗c3 e6

In contrast to the 6...♗f6 variation here Black allows 7.e4, and prepares to attack White's centre immediately after.



↑

7.e4

The most natural and frequent continuation. Some other alternatives:

a) 7.a3

White deprives Black's bishop of the b4-square. Here **7...f5!?** seems the best reply to me, e.g. **8.e4 ♗f6** (8... fxe4?! 9.♖h5+ g6 10.♖e5 ♗f6 11.♗b5! with initiative for White) **9.♗g5 h6** (9...fxe4 10.♗c4♞) 10.♗xf6 ♖xf6∞, Vazquez Tey-Formanek, Foment 1995.

b) 7.f3

(White wants first to prepare e2-e4 fully)

7...♗d6!?

Threatening 8...♖h4+.

Good is also 7...♖h4+, e.g. **8.g3 ♖f6** (8...♖h5!? 9.♗g2 0-0-0 10...♗c5, as was played in the game Ivkov-Skembris, Yugoslavia 1982, seemed equally good) **9.♗e3** (9.e4? 0-0-0 10.♗e3 ♗c5Δ 11.♗b5 ♗xb5 12.e5 ♖e7 13.♗xb5 ♗xd4 14.♗xd4 ♖b4+ winning, 9.♗g2 0-0-0 10.e3 h5 with counterplay, Sukharisingh-Morlo, Germany 1991) **9...♗h6** 10.♗g2 ♗f5 11.♗f2 0-0-0 12.e3 h5 with initiative, Wisniacki-Soppe, Mar del Plata 1999.

8.g3 (Black achieves a comfortable position in the case of 8.♗e3 f5 followed by ...♗g8-f6) **8...h5!?** with active play on the kingside, Köpcke-Lapshun, Parsippany 2001.

c) 7.♘f4

c1) 7...♗e7 8.e3 ♗g6 9.♘g3 a6

9...♘d6!? Watson.

10.♖b3 ♘e7?! 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.d5 exd5 13.♗xd5 with initiative, Teichmann-Chigorin, Berlin 1897. However, much stronger was Watson's recommendation 10...h5! (Δ 11.h4 ♘d6 12.♘xd6 ♖xd6), after which Black would have had good counter chances.

c2) 7...♗f6 8.e3

8.a3 ♘d6 9.♘g3 ♖e7Δ...0-0-0 Watson.

8...♗b4 9.♖b3 ♗d5 10.♘g3 ♖d7

10...0-0 11.♘d3?! ♖g5! 12.♖c2 (12.0-0? ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♗xe3♠) 12...f5! 13.♘e5 ♗f7 14.0-0-0?! ♘xc3! 15.bxc3 b5! 16.♗hg1 ♖e7 with initiative for Black, Teichmann-Chigorin, Cambridge Springs 1904; better was, however, 11.♘e2 (Soltis).

11.♘e2 (11.a4?! a5 12.♘e2? ♗xc3! 13.bxc3 ♖d5! 14.♘c4 ♖xg2♠, Siegele-P.Horn, Germany 1993, 12.♖c2 ♗b6 13.♘b5 ♘xb5 14.axb5 ♖xb5 15.♘c7 ♗c8 16.♘xb6 ♖xb6 17.0-0 0-0♠, 12.♘c4 ♗b6 with initiative for Black), and here Black can force a draw: 11...♘a4 12.♖c4 a6 13.e4 ♘b5 14.♖b3 ♘a4 15.♖c4 ♘b5=.

Now back to 7.e4:

7...♘b4 8.f3

8.♖d3? is not recommendable in view of 8...♖h4! 9.e5 (9.d5 exd5 10.exd5 0-0-0♠, "rsg 64"-Wisniewski, ICC 5/0 2003) 9...0-0-0 10.♘e3 ♗e7 with a strong initiative for Black, Joppien-Wisniewski, Kiel 2003.

8...♖h4+

A very important move with which Black forces the distortion of White's kingside pawns. Another interesting continuation is 8...f5!?, in order to attack the e4-pawn immediately ⇒ *Game 50*.

9.g3 ♖f6

Black's plan is to play against d4. An alternative is 9...♖h5!? ⇒ *Game 49*.

10.♘e3

10.♘g2 0-0-0 11.♘e3 transposes to 10.♘e3 0-0-0 11.♘g2.

Interesting is also 10.♘f4!? 0-0-0 11.♘e5 ♖h6 12.♘c4:

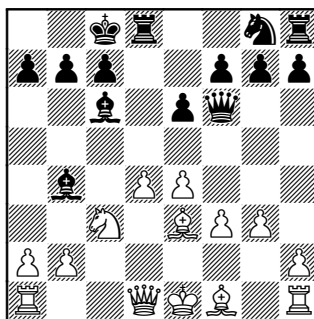
a) 12...f5?! 13.♘f4 ♖g6 (13...♖f6 14.♖b3±) 14.♖b3 ♘xc3+ 15.bxc3 (15.♖xc3!? Δ 15...fxe4 16.♖a5) 15...♗e8 16.exf5 ♖xf5 (16...exf5+ 17.♗f2±) 17.0-0±, Ellers-Baumhus, Bundesliga 2001.

b) 12...♖e3+?! 13.♗f1Δ 13...♘xc3 14.bxc3 f6 15.♘e6+ ♗b8 16.♘f4 ♖xc3 17.d5±.

c) 12...♗e7!? 13.♖c1 (13.0-0?! ♗g6, 13.♖b3 ♘d6 14.♘xd6 cxd6!?!∞ Δ ...d5) 13...♖h3! 14.a3 (14.♘xg7 ♗hg8 15.♘e5 ♖g2 16.♗f1 ♖xh2∞) 14...♖g2 15.♗f1 ♘d6 16.♗f2 ♖h1+ 17.♗e2 ♖xc1 18.♗xc1 ♘xe5 19.dxe5 g5!?! (after 19...♗g6?! 20.f4, the e5-pawn is securely protected and due to his space advantage White has the better prospects, Kovacevic-Orenda, Pula 1996) 20.♗e3 ♗g6 21.f4 h5!?! with a complicated and double-edged position.

10...0-0-0

Now White must bear in mind...♘b4-c5.



11.♖e2!?

White sidesteps the vis-à-vis with the d8-rook and prepares to castle queen-side. The queen can go later to f2 to support the d4-pawn.

He could try instead to develop the light-squared bishop, the latter having plenty of options. However, practice shows that Black has good counter chances in all lines, e.g.:

a) **11.♔h3 ♕c5!** 12.e5 ♖g6 with comfortable play.

b) **11.♔g2 ♕c5!** with the following variations:

b1) After **12.♗e2, 12...e5?** is not recommendable - 13.♚c1! (Δ ♔g5) 13...♙b4+ 14.♗f2 exd4 15.♔g5±, Dietze-Reyer, Petermännchen 1997.

Better is **12...♙b4+**, and White must either retreat the bishop, **13.♔d2**, after which Black develops counterplay with 13...♙xd2+ 14.♚xd2 ♙b5, or repeat the position with **13.♗c3**. **13.♗f2?** is, of course, a mistake in view of 13...♙xe4.

b2) **12.♚c1 ♙b6**, and now:

b21) **13.♔g5?** ♚xd4 14.♙xd8 ♚f2+ 15.♙d1 ♚xg2-+.

b22) **13.d5?!** exd5 14.♔h3+ ♙b8 15.♔g5 ♚xf3 16.♚f1 ♚h5 17.♙xd8 ♚xh3 18.♚g5 (18.exd5 ♗f6! 19.♙xc7+ ♙xc7 20.dxc6 ♚e8+ 21.♙d2 ♚xh2+ 22.♙d3 ♚xg3+ 23.♙c2 ♚g2+ 24.♚d2 ♚xc6♣) 18...♗h6 19.0-0 (19.♗xd5 f6!♣) 19...d4 20.♗d5 ♙xd5 21.♚xd5 f6 22.♔e7 ♗g4 23.♚e6 ♚h6+ 24.♚d2 ♗e5 25.♔f8 a6! (25...♚xf8? 26.♚xe5!) 26.♙xg7 ♚xg7-+, Gould-Grayland, corr. 1995.

b23) **13.♗e2 ♙a5+** 14.♗c3 (14.♔d2 ♙xd2+ 15.♚xd2 ♙b5∞) 14...♙b6 (14...h6!?) 15.♗e2 with repetition.

b3) **12.e5 ♚g6** (or 12...♚e7!? 13.0-0 f6 14.f4 ♙xg2 15.♙xg2 ♙b6 16.♚f2 ♗h6 with active play, Moiseenko-Kobalia, St. Petersburg 1995) **13.♗a4** (13.♗e4 ♙b4+ 14.♗f2 f5! with initiative for

Black), and now, in the game Harrison-Tait, Notts 1998, Black could have seized the initiative with **13...♙b4+** 14.♗f2 ♗h6.

c) **11.♔d3 ♙a5**

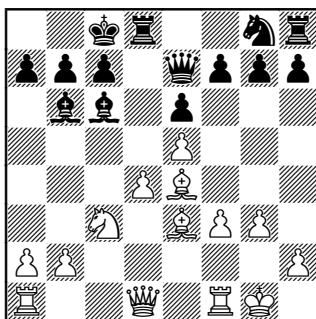
Watson's idea - the bishop heads for b6 in order to increase the pressure on the d4-pawn. The entire variation was evaluated as clearly better for White prior to the discovery of this move.

12.0-0 ♙b6 13.e5

Interesting is 13.♗e2!? e5 14.♚c1!? (14.♚d2 ♗e7 15.d5 ♚h6 16.f4 ♔d7 17.♗c3 exf4 18.gxf4 ♔h3 19.♚f3 f5!, and Black had the upper hand, Babula-Miladinovic, Calicut 1993) 14...♗e7 15.d5, but here after 15...♔d7 the second player also has enough counter chances, e.g. 16.♙g2 ♙b8 17.a4 ♙xe3 18.♚xe3 c6∞, J.Gustafsson-Reefschläger, Wichern 1995 or 16.f4 exf4, and now both 17.♗xf4 ♚e5 and 17.♚xf4 ♚g6 Δ 18...f5! lead to a sharp struggle.

Watson also analyses 13...♚g6!? (with the idea 14...e5) and provides the following variations: 14.♗f4 ♚h6 15.♚c1 (15.♗d5 ♙xd4) 15...e5!? 16.dxe5 g5 17.♗xd5 ♙xd5 18.exd5 ♚xd5 or 14.e5 ♚h5 15.♗f4 ♚h6 16.♔e4 g5 17.♗e2 ♙xe4 18.fxe4 ♚g6 19.♚c2 f6, with counterplay for Black in either case.

13...♚e7 14.♔e4



14...♔xe4

Another idea is 14...♗b4!, e.g. 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.♗b3 ♗xb3 17.axb3 ♗e7 18.♗e2 ♗d5 19.♗f2 ♗xe3 20.♗xe3 ♗d5!, and due to the threats 21...♗xe5 and 21...c5 Black achieved a clear advantage, Alonso-Lopez Perez, corr. 1989. Or 14...♗d7!? 15.♘xc6 ♗xc6 16.a4 ♗e7 17.a5 ♗f5 18.axb6 ♗xe3 19.♗d3 ♗xf1 20.bxa7 ♗d7 21.♗xf1 ♗e7, and it is difficult for White to prove that he has sufficient compensation for the exchange, Roos-V.Steinberg, Budapest 1993.

15.fxe4

Or 15.♗xe4 f6 (15...f5!? 16.exf6?! ♗xf6, and Black's chances are preferable, Chetverik-Pinkas, Gyöngyös 1995) 16.f4 (16.exf6 ⇨ 15...f5 16.exf6) 16.f4 ♗h6 17.♖c1 ♗b8 18.♖c4 ♗f5 with strong pressure on d4, Chetverik-Veltkamp, Budapest 1996.

15...f6

15...♘xd4? 16.♘xd4 c5 17.♗b5 cxd4 18.♗d6+–, Groot-Leeuwen, corr. 1983.

16.♗e2

After 16.exf6 ♗xf6 17.e5 ♗d5 18.♘f2 h5! 19.♗d2 g5! 20.♗a4 h4! Black achieved a strong initiative, Besemerde Jong, corr. 1991.

16...fxe5!?

In the case of 16...♘xd4 17.♘xd4 ♗xd4 18.♗b5 ♗d7 19.♖ac1! a6 20.♗d6+ ♗b8 21.♗xb7! ♗xb7 22.♖c6! White has good attacking chances for the sacrificed piece, Bass-Chow, Chicago 1983.

17.dxe5 ♗g5 18.♘xb6 axb6 19.♗b5 ♗e7, and White has problems with the e5-pawn.

d) 11.♘e2 ♘a5!

Watson's idea ...♘b4-a5-b6 here also works well.

After 11...♘c5 12.e5?! ♗e7 13.♗d2 f6 14.exf6 ♗xf6 15.0-0-0 e5 Black had a clear advantage, Riedel-Baumhus, Bundesliga 1996. However, much stronger was 12.♗c1! ♘b6 (12...♘d4

13.0-0±) 13.♘g5 ♗xd4 14.♘xd8 ♗xd8 15.♗d2, after which the second player has yet to prove that he has sufficient compensation.

12.♗d2

12.0-0 ♘b6 13.e5 ♗e7 14.♗d2 f6 with initiative for Black.

12...h6

12...♗g6!? 13.0-0 f5∞.

13.0-0 ♗e7 14.a3 ♘b6 15.♖fd1

15.b4 a6 16.b5 axb5 17.♗xb5 f5∞.

15...f5∞, Frieser-U.Böhm, Bavaria 1994.

e) 11.♘c4 ♘c5 12.e5 ♗e7

Interesting is also 12...♗f5!? 13.0-0 ♘b6, P.Ferreira-Parcerias, Portugal 1998, or 12...♗g6!? 13.0-0 ♗h5 14.♗e4 ♘b6, with unclear positions in both cases.

13.♗d2 f6!?

13...♘xf3 14.0-0 ♘h5 15.♗f2 ♘b6 16.♗a4♞.

14.♗f2 ♘b6 15.0-0-0, and instead of 15...fxe5 16.dxe5 ♖f8 17.♘b6 axb6 18.♗d3 ♗h6 19.♖hd1 with a positional advantage for White, Graf-Skembris, Aegina 1997, 15...♗f7!? 16.♖he1 ♗e7 Δ ...♗d5 with good counter chances, would have been much stronger.

Now let us go back to the main game.

11...♗g6!?

A recommendation by Watson. Black focuses his attention on e4 - he is now ready to play ...f7-f5.

11...♘a5

was also played in some games (with the already familiar idea ...♘a5-b6)

12.0-0-0 ♗e7 13.♘g2 ♗g6,

but in this case it seems that White is able to support his central pawns in time and thus achieve an advantage.

For instance, 14.♗c4 f5, and now after 15.♗c5! ♘xc3 16.bxc3 ♖he8 17.♘f4! (17.♗xa7 fxe4∞) 17...♗b8 18.♖he1 White could have achieved a promising

position due to his strong centre and space advantage, Southam-Day, Toronto 1995.

Another move which is not bad is **14.♖d2** f5 15.♙f4 ♗d7 16.♗hd1 ♗hd8 17.g4!? fxg4 18.fxg4 h6 (18... ♙b6? 19.d5+-) 19.♙g3 ♙b8 20.a3 ♙xc3 21.bxc3, again with better chances for White, Heinig-Skembris, Arco 1999.

We see that in this game Black did not manage to play ...♙a5-b6, meaning that the idea of 11...♙a5 failed.

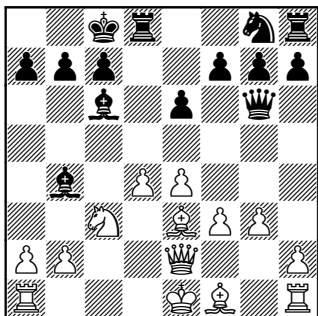
In the game Sinkovics-Ruck, Hungary 1995, followed

11...h5!? 12.0-0 ♗e7

13.h4 ♗g6 14.♙h3 ♙b8 15.♗c4 ♙xc3 16.♗xc3 with a clear advantage for White.

Instead of 12...♗e7 J.Watson recommends

12...h4! and gives the line 13.g4 g5! 14.h3 ♗e7 15.♗d2 ♗hg8=. White can also try 13.♙h3!? (Δ d5), but then also after 13...♙b8 the position remains unclear.



12.♙g2

Black has also sufficient counterplay in other lines, e.g.:

a) **12.0-0-0** ♙xc3! (12...f5?! 13.♗b5 ♙b8 14.♗xa7 ♙a4 15.♗c4 ♙xa7 16.♗d3 fxe4 17.d5+ ♙b8 18.fxe4 ♙b5

19.♗xb5 ♗xe4 20.♗g1 ♗f6 21.♙g2 ♗xd5 22.♗xd5!±) 13.bxc3 f5!.

b) **12.♙h3 ♙b8** (12...♗h5 13.d5!) **13.♗c4** (on 13.0-0 interesting is 13...h5!?, e.g. 14.♗c4 ♙xc3 15.bxc3 h4 16.♗ab1 ♗e7 17.g4 f5∞) **13...♙xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♗e7** (14...f5?! 15.♗b1 ♗e7 16.♗c5 ♗he8 17.d5! with attack) **15.♗c5 ♗he8 16.♗g5** (16.d5? b6 17.♗b4 exd5±, 16.♗b1 b6∞, 16.0-0 f5 17.♗ab1 b6∞) **16...♗xg5 17.♙xg5**, E.Bayer-Baumhus, Germany 1989, 17...h6!? 18.♙d2 f5 19.♙g2 ♗c8, and in view of the idea ...♗c8-d6 Black has sufficient counter chances, e.g. 20.0-0 ♗d6 21.♗fe1 ♗c4 22.♙c1 fxe4 23.fxe4 e5 24.d5 ♙d7 (24...♙b5!?) 25.♙f1 ♗d6 26.c4 c5!.

c) **12.a3** (White wants to clarify the intentions of the b4-bishop, but that costs time) 12...♙xc3+! 13.bxc3 f5! 14.exf5 exf5 15.♙g2 ♗e8 16.0-0 f4! 17.gxf4 ♗e7 with more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

12...f5 13.e5

White cannot endure the pressure on e4 any longer. But probably 13.0-0 is preferable, e.g. 13... fxe4 14.♗xe4 ♗e7 or 14...♗f6!? with a complicated and approximately equal position.

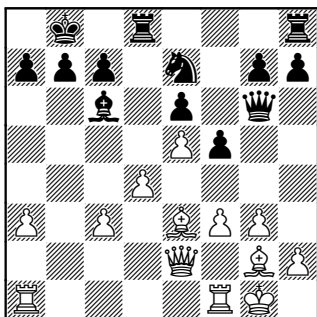
13...♗e7

Interesting is 13...h5!?, e.g. 14.0-0-0 (14.0-0 h4 with initiative) 14...♗e7 15.a3 (15.♗b5 ♙xb5 16.♗xb5 ♗d5 17.f4 c6 18.♗d3 h4) 15...♙xc3 16.bxc3 ♗d5 17.♙d2 17...h4 or 17...f4!? with an unclear position.

14.0-0 ♙b8

Interesting was also 14...h5!? 15.♗b5 ♙xb5 (15...♙b8?! 16.♗xa7!) 16.♗xb5 ♗d5 17.♙f2 h4.

15.a3 ♙xc3 16.bxc3

**16...h5?!**

Now this move is not as good as it was before, as soon becomes clear. Better was 16...♗d5!?, e.g. 17.♗d2 (17.c4 ♗xe3 18.♖xe3 h5 with initiative for Black) 17...f4 18.c4 (18.g4 h5 19.c4 ♗b6) 18...♗b6 19.♗xf4 ♖xd4 with an active position.

17.♖d2!

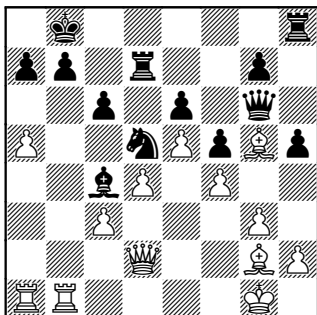
Suddenly it turns out that 17...h4?! is dubious in view of 18.♗g5, with the double threat on e7 and h4.

17...♗d5

17...h4 18.♗g5 h3 19.♗xe7 ♖de8 20.♖g5 again does not seem very convincing for Black.

18.♗g5 ♖d7 19.f4

19.c4!?.

19...♗b5 20.♖fb1 ♗c4 21.a4 c6 22.a5

The situation has changed - suddenly White has obtained the initiative on the queenside, while the second player has nothing on the kingside yet.

22...a6 23.♗f3?!

Probably Tyrantia overlooked his opponent's reply. After 23.♖a4! ♗b5 24.♖a2 Δ ♖ab2, ♗f1, c4 White's initiative would have been very dangerous.

23...h4! 24.gxh4?

Why does White ruin his own position? 24.♖a4 ♗b5 25.♖a2 or 24.♗g2 is definitely much better.

24...♖xh4 25.♖h1 ♖h3 26.**♗g2 ♖h7 27.♖c1**

Losing immediately, but the position was bad anyway.

27...♗e3

0:1

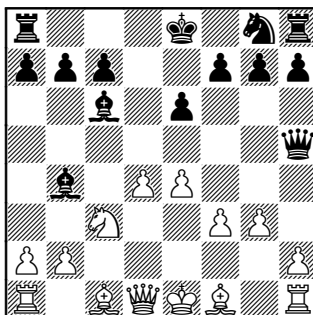
Game 49

Verdier-Gather

IECC e-mail 1998

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♗f3
♗g4 4.cxd5 ♗xf3 5.dxc6
♗xc6 6.♗c3 e6 7.e4 ♗b4
8.f3 ♖h4+!? 9.g3 ♖h5!?**

We have already seen 9...♖f6, which is definitely not bad, but ...♖h5 is likewise interesting. Black wants to accomplish ...f7-f5 as fast as possible.



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Bold print indicates a key move,
deviating from previous lines

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