

Introduction

The Sniper: The Ultimate Fighting Soldier – The Ultimate Fighting Repertoire

Welcome Soldier! – Your Sniper training programme will commence on completion of your absorption of this introduction – Do not read any part of this book until you have read this entire introduction. That’s an order Soldier!

Let us start with some key definitions to give us an important reference point in this approach to create a dynamic Black repertoire where you will fight for the full point:

The Sniper

Black plays ...g6, ...♗g7 and ...c5 against anything, including 1 e4, 1 d4, 1 c4, etc. It is played ideally in the first three moves, but some rare instances when it is played later on are also covered as a Sniper opening.

The Pure Sniper

Against any of White’s first three moves, Black plays 1...g6, 2...♗g7 and 3...c5. This book promotes this move order in nearly every variation.

The Sicilian Sniper

Against any of White’s first three moves, Black plays 1...c5, 2...g6 and 3...♗g7. Some of the games in this book come about from this move order but could just have easily arisen via the Pure Sniper move order.

The Anti-Sniper

White aims to stop the Pure Sniper deployment. For example, an Anti-Sniper that would obviously lead to a won position for White is 1 b3, 2 ♗b2 and 3 ♗xg7! This is one of the few instances where White can prevent a Pure Sniper.

Deferred Sniper

Used by Black when he can only realistically play his three flagship moves if they are delayed. For example, Chapter 3 heavily focuses on 1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♗g7 3 c3 d5 followed by 4...c5 – a rare instance of the ...g6, ...♗g7 and ...c5 not being played within three moves. This sequence could well have been classified as an Anti-Sniper, but as ...c5 arrives on move 4 it is better to call it a Deferred Sniper – the Sniper development structure of ...g6, ...♗g7 and ...c5 is quickly realized within the opening.

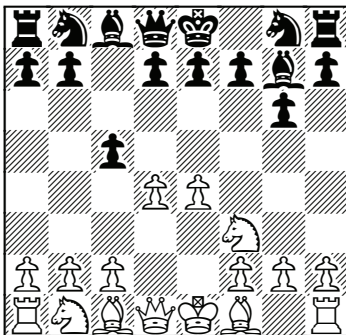
Extended Pure Sniper Transposition

A deferred Sniper that arrives deep into the opening. For example, a mainline Sicilian Dragon could transpose to a position that came from a Pure Sniper, but occurring at move 7 or beyond.

Sniper Move Order Transposition (SMOT)

This book is designed to promote the virtues of the Pure Sniper rather than the Sicilian Sniper. However, to reach some of the meaty variations and key discussion points I have had to draw upon many games where the Sicilian Sniper move order was played, when the same position could well have arisen from a Pure Sniper. I've inserted the acronym 'SMOT' in many games which did not come from a Pure Sniper, to show the reader that a simple transposition could have arisen.

The Sniper is a completely new approach to your Black repertoire. Yes, it is an opening system based around ...g6, ...♗g7 and ...c5, played as soon as possible. And, yes, it is a dynamic approach to developing an entire opening/middlegame/endgame system. It is quite simple to understand and to play. In essence, it's a universal system rather than an opening – a unique and intelligent organic approach to acquiring a superb Black opening repertoire.



In the above diagram we see a Pure Sniper position, as Black's first three moves were **1...g6**, **2...♗g7**, and **3...c5!**. The exclamation mark is given to show that Black has achieved an excellent structure in the opening. Had White played any other moves, that is of no consequence for the definition of a Pure Sniper – if Black's first three moves are 1...g6, 2...♗g7 and 3...c5! he has played a Pure Sniper, regardless of White's moves. This is important to remember.

A key feature of the system is that it is equally effective against 1 e4, 1 d4, 1 c4 and 1 f4 – this is quite remarkable and possibly unique for the deployment of the first three moves! These moves are pre-programmed and can be played (almost) regardless of anything White does – this is superb for blitz chess and for the increasingly popular bullet form of chess!

The Sniper can often transpose into a mainline Sicilian Dragon, a favourable Benko for Black, an Accelerated Dragon or even a King's Indian, and there are many others which you may add at your own creative discretion. These and a few of my own original ideas make up the seven chapters herein. It is hoped that this work will help crystallize the classification of all the key Sniper variations.

I gave the Sniper a critical test at the 2009 British Championship in Torquay, where I used it to achieve an outstanding result of 4/4. That gave me a Black (Sniper) rating performance of over 2600 – a fantastic achievement in the hands of a 2300 FIDE Master. I hope the little you have read so far will encourage you to come with me on a journey to make a thorough investigation of the Sniper and to persuade you to become a Sniper Trainee!

Incidentally, I've called this system 'The Sniper' because the f7-, g6- and h7-pawns look like the 'V' support for a Sniper gun as used by British and American militaries. Furthermore, the g7-bishop and its influence on the long diagonal represent the gun part, combining with the c5-pawn to attack the d4-point.

The Dilution Principle

Historically it was thought that by simply capturing Black's pawn when it reaches c5, White would stand better, and as a result this opening did not have the best reputation. Putting my professional computer science skills to the test, I analysed all the positions herein using *Rybka*, and made a surprising discovery. I term it 'The Dilution Principle' and it works as follows: Let's say *Rybka* assesses a position as a small advantage to White in, for example, a Benko Gambit following Black's sacrifice of a pawn. The ten 'best effort' moves are then played by *Rybka* for both sides and the assessment dramatically changes from a small advantage to White to a decisive advantage for Black. The advantages become diluted incrementally across a number of moves, and in no opening system have I found this phenome-

non to be so pronounced as it is with the Sniper. This is attributable to the latent dynamic possibilities in the Sniper.

If you are looking for a novel approach to a Black opening repertoire system that is wide enough to offer rich possibilities, but not so wide that you will have to spend hour upon hour keeping track of hundreds of the latest wrinkles, and further, possessing a repertoire system that is completely viable, then I think you have now found it!

In forming my views about the Sniper, I recognized that before computers became widely available, exhaustive analyses of Dilution Principle-style positions (many of which are gambits that provide compensation as far as 15 moves down the line) were not humanly possible to correctly assess. Many variations that require close analysis were neglected by opening theory in the pre-computer era. The Sniper bridges the gap between the power of the computer, the comfort zone of the individual and the capability of the human memory. I am happy to share with you the discoveries I have made as a result of thousands of hours spent refining this system with constant guidance from *Rybka* (and sometimes *Fritz*).

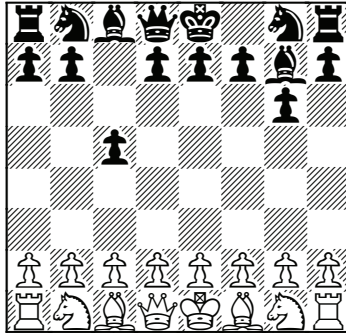
I have endeavoured to present my research in a manner that will be easy to digest for club players rated within the broad spectrum of 1400 up to 2200. There's a slant towards rich, new positions that are complicated but level, with the reasoning that this should be more favourable to Black players as this complexity nullifies White's opening advantage. Moreover, the more familiarity you have with the Sniper and the more frequently you play it, the more it equips you with better survival mechanisms even in to the late middlegame, which is where most of the games with complicated uncharted positions are decided. Because the Sniper has a very wide application, and because it provides familiar pawn structures against 1 e4, 1 d4 and 1 c4, it can bear much fruit in time-pressure situations when the late middlegame is so complex. Even the endgames provide familiarity in terms of pawn structure.

Move Orders

While learning the Sniper, I recommend you employ the Pure Sniper move order (1...g6, 2...♗g7, 3...c5!) whenever possible, rather than the Sicilian Sniper (1...c5, 2...g6, 3...♗g7). However, the reader should be aware that in most instances the moves are directly interchangeable. Where this happens I have inserted 'SMOT' and have expanded further to help understand the move order subtleties.

I recommend the Pure Sniper move order over the Sicilian Sniper because it:

- ♠ Avoids much recognized chess theory;
- ♠ Leads to thousands of uncharted positions;
- ♠ Employs many Dilution Principles in Black's favour;
- ♠ Camouflages Black's opening moves to some extent; and
- ♠ Optimizes the chance to play the three key moves: ...g6, ...♗g7 and ...c5.



The Pure Sniper

This book will deal chiefly with all major responses that have arisen from White after 1 e4 and 1 d4. To give a flavour of the Sniper I will briefly present two important games; the first one is a Pure Sniper, and the second one a Deferred Sniper. These two games will help acquaint the reader with the Sniper and also show how one of the world's leading theoreticians got into trouble against a much lower-ranked Sniper practitioner.

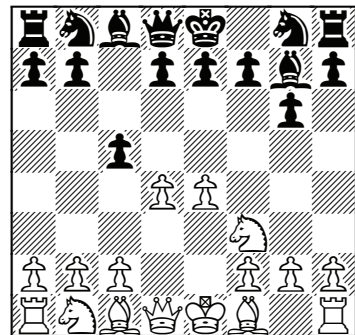
Game 1

M.Al Modiahki-B.Macieja
Turin Olympiad 2006

1 e4 g6 2 ♘f3 ♗g7 3 d4 c5

I should say that the actual game came from the Sicilian Sniper move order of 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 g6 3 d4 ♗g7, and I have changed it here just to show how Black can achieve the same position by playing a Pure Sniper move order,

which is the main focus of this book.



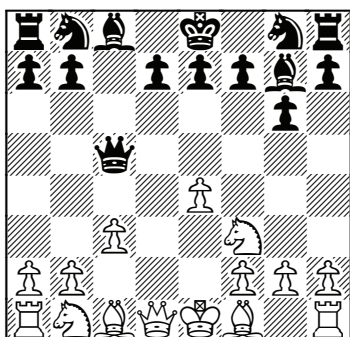
The Sniper

In fact there will be many instances of the actual game coming from a Sicilian Sniper, and for clarity I have sometimes taken the liberty of amending the moves and replacing them with the Pure Sniper.

4 dxc5

A common theme in the Sniper is to sacrifice this c5-pawn, either permanently or temporarily, in return for good dynamic compensation. Here, though, Black just regains it immediately.

4... ♖a5+ 5 c3 ♜xc5

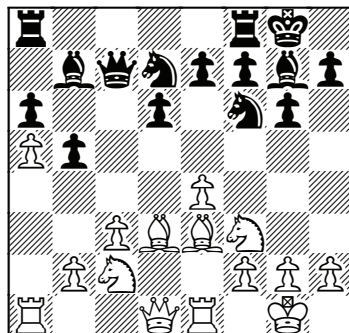


It looks as though the queen is not well placed, but Black has managed to trade a wing pawn for a central pawn and will argue that he can defend against White's initiative and use that central advantage later in the middle-game or even the endgame.

6 ♘a3 ♞f6 7 ♞b5 0-0 8 ♙e3 ♜c6 9 ♙d3 b6

A very useful move that provides a permanent haven for the queen and ensures Black has the better pawn structure.

10 0-0 ♙b7 11 ♜e1 d6 12 a4 a6 13 ♞bd4 ♜c7 14 a5 b5 15 ♞c2 ♞bd7



I have found a new rating system for pawns which I use as their base values. I call it the 'Storey Pawn Scale', and I have found that it is an extremely good rule of thumb both in my own games and in coaching.

Of course we normally assign a value of one unit for one pawn, but the following is a much more pertinent rating system:

- Rook pawns = $\frac{1}{4}$
- Knight pawns = $\frac{1}{2}$
- Bishop pawns = 1
- Central pawns = $1\frac{1}{2}$

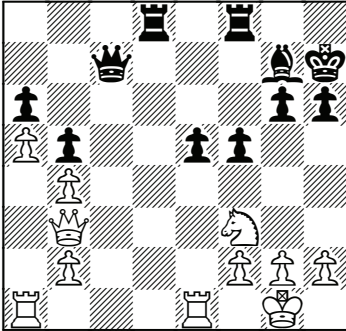
The Storey Pawn Scale clearly shows that a trade of a bishop pawn for a central pawn is quite beneficial for Black, and this is the true compensation that Black seeks in the Sniper. The Sniper is all about the battle for the centre, be it in the opening phase, middlegame or endgame. The Storey Pawn Scale is an excellent simple guide to pawn values

and their effect on the central battle.

16 ♖f4 e5 17 ♖g5 h6 18 ♖xf6 ♘xf6 19 ♘b4 ♖ad8 20 ♗b3 d5!

Black is always on the lookout to seize the centre.

21 exd5 ♘xd5 22 ♖e4 ♘xb4 23 cxb4 ♖xe4 24 ♖xe4 ♖h7 25 ♖ee1 f5



Black has won the centre and will convert this to a won game. This is the primary strategy of the Sniper.

26 ♖ac1 ♗d6 27 ♖cd1 ♗e7 28 ♘d4 ♖d6 29 ♘c2 ♖fd8 30 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 31 ♘e3 e4 32 ♗c2 ♖d8 33 h4 ♗xh4 34 ♗c6 f4 35 ♗xe4 ♖d4 0-1

See Game 28 for a more detailed discussion of this game and variations.

Game 2

S.Tiviakov-C.Storey

European Union

Championship, Liverpool 2008

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♖g7 3 c3 d5

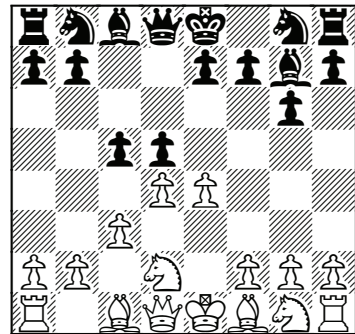
This is the only major variation following 1 e4 against which 3...c5 is not appropriate, and after playing through

the game I hope you will appreciate why that is so – I certainly did.

Some background to this game will be of interest. Liverpool 2008 was my first venture into the European Union Championship and I was particularly keen to prepare well for each opponent. I quickly realized that Tiviakov is an excellent opening theoretician and rarely does any player of the Black pieces get complete equality against him, let alone any advantage.

Using the Sniper, however, you will see that I managed to outplay him in the opening phase of the game, with a variation that I consider to be my most important contribution to opening theory:

4 ♘d2 c5



The Deferred Sniper

The move order of 1...g6, 2...♖g7 and 3...c5 has not been played, but we still see the main character of the Sniper. This game's move order is therefore defined as 'The Deferred Sniper' simply for reference purposes

The Sniper

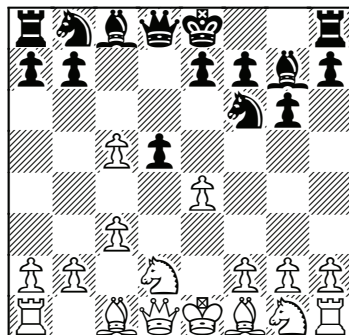
and for future classification of Sniper games.

As I have resurrected this 4...c5 gambit in modern times and brought some new enhancements, and as a struggling FM who would like to leave my stamp on the chess kingdom, I have called it the 'Storey Gambit', which is simply useful for reference purposes. Many years ago Grandmasters Gulko and Razuvaev played 4...c5, but it has fallen into disuse and my recent contributions should make it very appealing.

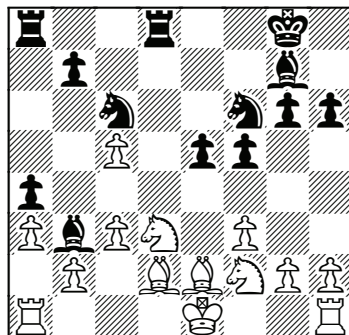
In short, Black sacrifices the c5-pawn and as a consequence prevents White from using that square for his knight. Keep an eye on that square as you play through the game. Black progressively improves his pieces better than White, and as a result he is the one who obtains central control. White may hang on to the pawn on c5 for some time, but just as in the Benko, Black's superior development ensures that the weak pawn will eventually fall, after which Black's pieces can take further advantage of the better squares they occupy to win another pawn or to initiate an attack on White's king.

5 dxc5 ♖f6!

Black is in no immediate hurry to capture the weak pawn on c5. He can still keep a very good position by continuing with development, gaining advantages in the centre and then capturing on c5 at an opportune moment, possibly as late as the endgame.



6 exd5 ♜xd5 7 ♞b3 ♜xd1+ 8 ♚xd1 0-0
9 ♞f3 ♜d8+ 10 ♚e1 ♞c6 11 ♙e2 e5 12
♙e3 ♙e6 13 ♞g5 ♙d5 14 f3 h6 15 ♞h3
♙e6 16 ♜d1 ♞d5 17 ♙d2 f5 18 ♞f2 a5
19 ♞c1 a4 20 a3 ♞f6 21 ♞cd3 ♙b3 22
♜a1

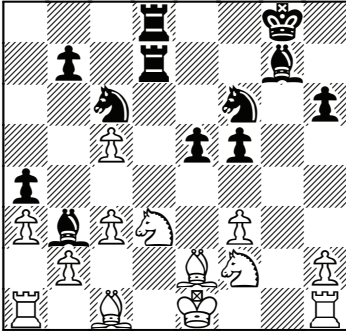


Having outplayed a 2600-Grandmaster up until here, I became too excited. That is the only explanation I can give for playing the poor move 22...♙a5?. Unfortunately, this allowed Tiviakov to find good counterplay, and he went on to get the better of the position in my time pressure.

Instead **22...♜d7!** is the simple and logical move. Let us see how the game

could have proceeded had I found the correct continuation rather than 22...♖a5.

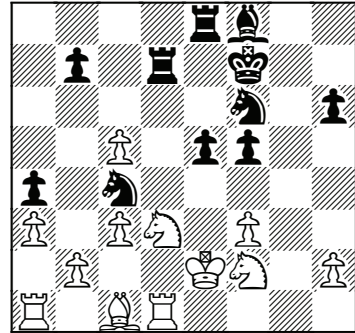
23 g4 ♖ad8 24 gxf5 gxf5 25 ♙c1



White's position is inferior as his pieces are passive, his king position is poor, and his pawn structure is weak. This can be contrasted with Black's well placed minor pieces, superb rooks and central control that all together spell danger for White.

25...♙f7 26 ♖g1 ♙f8 27 ♙f1 ♙c4 28 ♘b4 ♙xe2+ 29 ♙xe2 ♘a5 30 ♘bd3 ♖e8

31 ♖d1 ♘c4



Black's advantage is clear: he has control of the centre, better squares piece for piece, and the more active – yet safer – king. All that adds up to a significant plus, even though White has an extra pawn. I hope this position convinces you there is something worthwhile to the Sniper. The important thing for the Sniper practitioner is that the opening was a tremendous success. If you get the opportunity to play this variation – do so.

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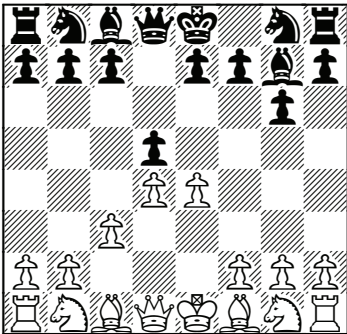
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Chapter Three

White Plays 3 c3 – The Deferred Sniper

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♗g7 3 c3 d5 (with ...c5 to come)



The Storey Gambit

Let's start this chapter by taking a closer look at my game against Tiviakov. Facing him was a great honour for me, and I wanted to make an impact on opening theory against one of the best opening theoreticians of recent

times – time will tell if I achieved my objective!

Game 33
S.Tiviakov-C.Storey
European Union Ch'ship,
Liverpool 2008

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♗g7 3 c3 d5

Not quite a Sniper – yet!

4 ♞d2

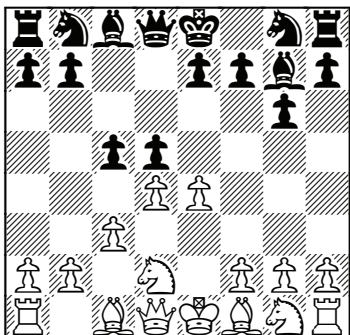
Tiviakov plays a Tarrasch-style line against the Sniper, but I had prepared an ambitious idea.

4...c5!

Behold – the Deferred Sniper. The knight is not exactly well placed on d2 and this pawn sacrifice is highly instructive. Does Black have enough for the sacrificed pawn? Yes, but it is very

The Sniper

long-term compensation.



5 dxc5 ♗f6! 6 exd5

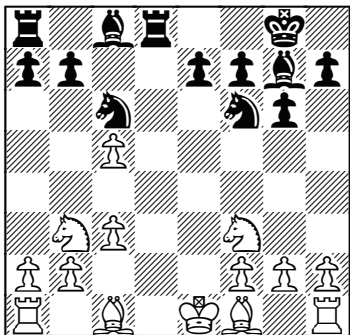
Alternatively, 6 ♖b5+ ♙d7 7 ♙xd7+ ♗bxd7 8 exd5 ♗xc5 and Black stands well.

6...♗xd5 7 ♗b3

For 7 ♗gf3, see the next game.

7...♗xd1+ 8 ♙xd1 0-0 9 ♗f3 ♖d8+ 10 ♙e1 ♗c6

Black's lead in development together with White's inability to castle or to move a knight to c5 (the extra pawn occupies that square) ensures that Black has a small advantage. This highly original position demands further tests.



11 ♙e2 e5

Black's advantage may not be obvious, even to a Grandmaster, but he is better in the centre and can create further weaknesses in the White camp.

12 ♙e3 ♙e6 13 ♗g5 ♙d5 14 f3 h6 15 ♗h3

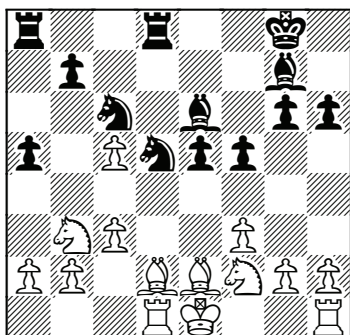
Further central costs for White, as the knight is forced to the rim.

15...♙e6 16 ♖d1 ♗d5 17 ♙d2 f5

Black has the centre and better piece positioning, and added up this is worth more than the pawn.

18 ♗f2 a5!

Another piece will be pushed away from the centre.

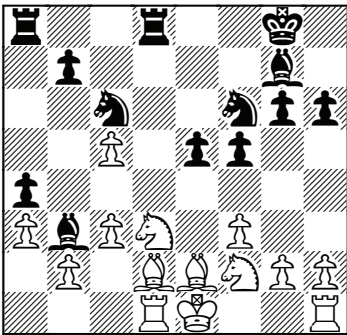


19 ♗c1 a4 20 a3 ♗f6

Black is still better but there is a strange pressure that comes over a player when he faces opponents much higher-rated than himself. I am not blaming this pressure for one of the moves I soon play, but just noting my general inability to swim with the grandmaster dolphins who can calculate considerably better than me.

21 ♗cd3 ♙b3!

The white rook is forced back to an inactive square. I think I just needed a bit more belief here, but instead I got carried away and played what even a beginner would call an error! In fact any beginner could see the best move here – simply double on the d-file. That's the strange pressure I mentioned earlier that a higher-rated player can inflict on an opponent.



22 ♖a1 ♖a5?

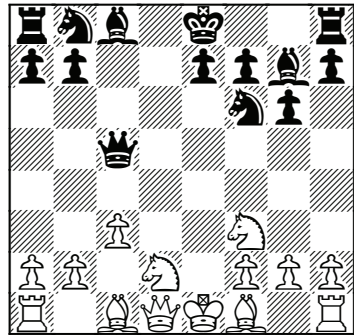
The remaining moves of the game are too painful for me to add – I just got outplayed.

Of course it's easy to win in analysis, but had I played the 'beginner's' 22...♖d7!, the simple and logical move, I could have gained a clear advantage as I previously showed in the introduction: 23 g4 ♖ad8 24 gxf5 gxf5 25 ♙c1 ♗f7 26 ♖g1 ♙f8 27 ♗f1 ♙c4 28 ♘b4 ♙xe2+ 29 ♗xe2 ♘a5 30 ♘bd3 ♖e8 31 ♖d1 ♘c4, etc.

In the next game White deviates from Tiviakov's play and Black quickly acquires a small advantage.

Game 34
J.Heissler-L.Thiede
German League 2002

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♙g7 3 c3 d5 4 ♘d2 c5 5 dxc5 ♗f6 6 exd5 ♗xd5 7 ♘gf3
Instead of Tiviakov's 7 ♘b3.
7...♗xc5



Black regains the pawn and enjoys a temporary development advantage.

8 ♘b3

The knight has moved twice but hardly occupies a great square. Black does not have to worry too much about a quick opening attack.

8...♗c7 9 ♙b5+ ♘bd7?!

After this move White is fully equal again.

9...♘c6! is better than the text as it leaves the bishop a little loose and there is no way White is going to gain from a c6 capture: 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e1 ♙g4 12 h3 ♖ad8 with better prospects for Black.

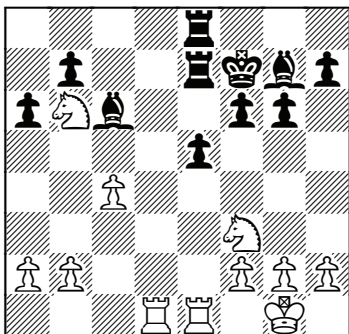
10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e1 e5 12 ♙g5 ♖e8 13 ♘bd2 a6 14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15 ♙xd7 ♙xd7

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16 ♖e4 ♙g7 17 ♖d6 ♖d8

Not the most inspiring of moves. After 17...♖ac8! Black has great winning chances in the ending.

18 ♖ad1 ♙c6 19 ♖c5 ♖e7 20 ♖xe7
♖xe7 21 ♖d6 ♙f8 22 ♖c4 f6 23 ♖b6
♖ae8 24 c4 ♙f7



Even in this ending Black has the better winning prospects on account of ...f5 at an opportune moment.

25 b4 ♖c7?!

Black is doing his best not to win this one. 25...f5! would have been the clearer way to keep the advantage.

26 c5 ♙f8 27 ♖d2

Now the two knights start to increase their grip over important central squares, including the rook access square at d7.

27...♖d8 28 ♖dc4 ♖xd1 29 ♖xd1 ♙e7

White has secured the d-file and placed the knights on solid squares. Black was probably now wishing he had played 25...f5! to gain some activity.

30 a4 ♙e6 31 f3

31 ♖a5! pressures the bishop and

helps to keep the advantage.

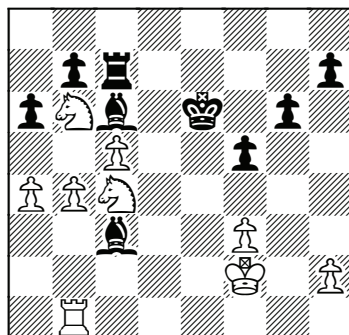
31...f5

Black begins to get some counter-play. 31...♙xa4! 32 ♖xa4 b5 is a somewhat surprising tactic, difficult for a human to see but simple for a computer engine.

32 ♖e1 e4 33 ♙f2 ♙f6

Now the bishops are active and suddenly Black has the winning chances.

34 ♖d1 ♙c3 35 ♖b1 exf3 36 gxf3



36...♙d4+

36...g5! mobilizing the majority gives Black an advantage.

37 ♙g2 ♙f6 38 ♖a5 ♖e7?

The lure of gaining activity allows White to seize some of his own. 38...♙g5! still fights for the win.

39 ♖xc6?!

After 39 ♖d1 ♖e2+ 40 ♙f1 ♖f2+ 41 ♙e1 suddenly a black piece will be lost.

39...bxc6 40 ♖d1

After a complicated 'Not Quite Endgame' and a plethora of errors therein, White emerges with a small advantage and soon goes on to increase it:

40...♙c3 41 b5 axb5 42 axb5 ♖e6 43 bxc6 ♜xc6 44 ♗d5+ ♘g5 45 ♗xc3 ♜xc5 46 ♗d5 ♜c4 47 ♘g3 ♘h6 48 ♗f4 ♜c6 49 h4 ♜a6 50 ♜d7 ♜a8 51 ♗h3 ♜h8 52 ♗g5 ♘h5 53 ♗xh7 f4+ 54 ♘h3 1-0

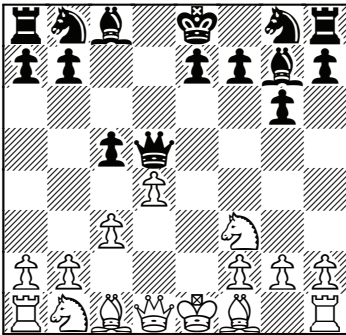
This game saw Black acquire the two bishops, although White's centralized pieces were equal to them. Black had some good opportunities to fight for the advantage – specifically 9...♗c6 can be recommended.

The Main Line: White Plays 4 exd5

The following two games will show a good way of playing against the c3-Sicilian, which could feature in the Sniper if White plays in this manner.

Game 35
D.Gjuran-I.Khmelniker
Pardubice 2008

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 ♜xd5 4 d4 g6 5 ♗f3 ♙g7



SMOT: But this time it is a Deferred

Sniper! The Sniper could reach this position with 1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♙g7 3 c3 d5 4 exd5 ♜xd5 5 ♗f3 c5.

6 ♗a3

The best way to meet 6 ♙e2 is with 6...cxd4. For example, 7 cxd4 ♗f6 8 ♗c3 ♜d6 (the best square for the queen) 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♜b3 ♗c6 11 ♜d1 ♜b4 (Black is well placed to have slightly the better of the ending) 12 d5 ♜xb3 13 axb3 ♗b4 14 ♙f4 ♗e8 15 ♙e3 ♗a6 16 ♗d4 ♗ac7 17 ♗db5 ♗xb5 18 ♗xb5 a6 19 ♗c3 ½-½, Zhang Pengxiang-Ni Hua, Budapest 2000. When we consider that Pengxiang was rated nearly 200 points higher than his opponent, this has to be viewed as a very successful opening for Black.

6...cxd4 7 ♗b5

7 ♙c4 is the other main try for White:

a) After some analysis I've concluded that I cannot recommend the popular 7...♜e4+?!, because of 8 ♙e3 ♗h6 9 cxd4 0-0 10 ♗b5 ♗c6 11 ♗c7 ♗f5 12 ♗xa8 ♗fxd4 13 ♜c1 ♙g4 14 ♗c7 ♙xf3 leading to complications which are favourable for White.

b) Instead Black should play 7...♜d8!, which is the best square for the queen. After 8 ♜b3 e6 9 ♙f4 ♗f6 10 ♗b5 0-0 11 ♗bxd4 (when White moves backwards from b5 with this knight, it is a sign that his early opening aggression has not worked) 11...♗c6 12 ♗xc6 bxc6 13 0-0 ♗d5 14 ♙g3 ♜b6 Black is by no means worse.

7...♗a6 8 ♗bxd4

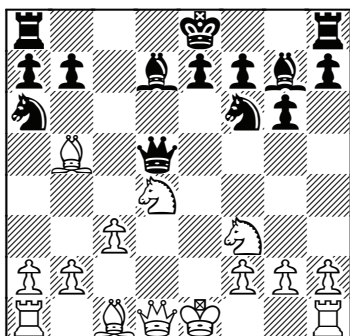
The Sniper

A simple development count is in Black's favour and shows that he has done something right in the opening, even though White gets good centralized knights.

8...♖f6 9 ♘b5+

In the next game we will consider 9 ♘xa6.

9...♙d7

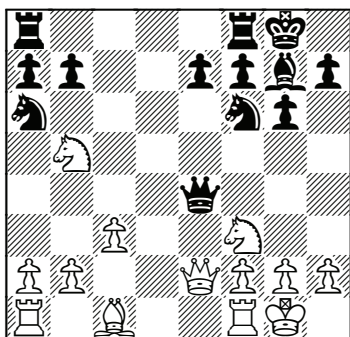


Black has a slight lead in development, ensuring an equal game.

10 ♖e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♘xb5

11...♗c5!? is also a good try.

12 ♗xb5 ♖e4



Black has no weaknesses and enjoys a level position.

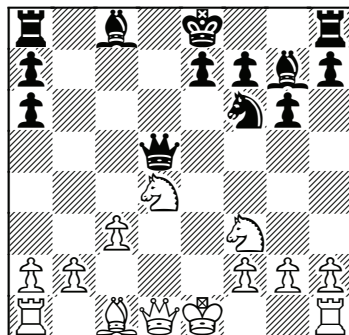
13 ♖e1 ♗xe2 14 ♖xe2 e6 15 ♙e3 b6 16 ♙d4 ♖fc8 17 ♗e5 ♗e8 18 f4 ♗ac7 19 ♗xc7 ♗xc7 20 c4 ♗e8 21 b3 ♖d8 22 ♖d1 f6 23 ♗f3 ♙f7 24 ♖de1 ½-½

The next c3-Sicilian Sniper game sees the Sniper's brother take charge of the long a8-h1 diagonal.

Game 36

A.Karpatchev-A.Galliamova
St Petersburg 1998

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 ♗xd5 4 d4 g6 5 ♗f3 ♙g7 6 ♗a3 cxd4 7 ♗b5 ♗a6 8 ♗bxd4 ♗f6 9 ♙xa6 bxa6



White attempts to justify his development lag by damaging Black's pawn structure, but now Black's light-squared bishop has no challenger and Black can look forward to play on the long a8-h1 diagonal.

10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 ♗b3 e5

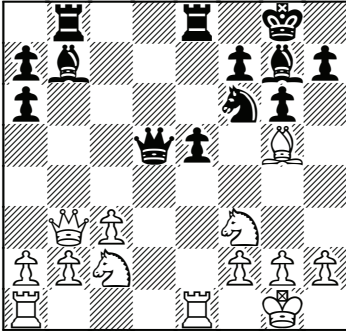
12...♗d6!? is better than 12...e5 as it prepares the initiative-gaining move ...♖b8 with great activity in the middle-

game.

13 ♖c2 ♗b7

This bishop takes over the role of the dominant piece and will generate threats for a long time along its diagonal.

14 ♗g5 ♖ab8



Black's activity already ensures the better middlegame prospects.

15 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 16 ♖ad1 h6 17 ♗c1 g5 18 c4 ♖f4

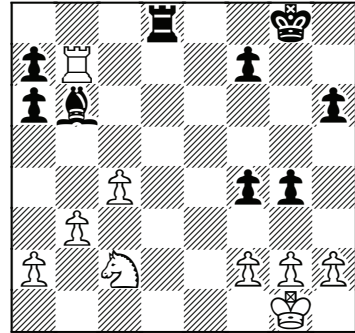
The two-bishop advantage is only an advantage when they are controlling many key squares. Here both are doing so, especially the Sniper's brother.

19 ♗xf4 exf4 20 b3 g4

Always look to gain advantages in the centre, be it occupying, controlling, or reducing the opponent's control of it.

Black gains an edge here by forcing the knight to occupy a good central square. This prevents the d1-rook from utilizing its control of an open file and thus negates its ability to arrive on the seventh rank.

21 ♖fd4 ♖xe1+ 22 ♖xe1 ♖d8 23 ♖e7 ♗xd4 24 ♖xb7 ♗b6



Black has a won game as the threat of mate on the back row cannot easily be dealt with. For example, 25 h3 ♖d1+ 26 ♗h2 g3+ 27 fxg3 ♗g1+ 28 ♗h1 ♗f2+ 29 ♗h2 fxg3 is checkmate!

25 ♖e7 ♖d2 26 ♖e1 g3

White has no defence but plays on for a few more moves.

27 hxg3 fxg3 28 ♖f3 gxf2+ 29 ♖f1 ♖d1+ 30 ♖e1 fxe1 ♖+ 31 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 32 ♖xe1 a5 33 ♖d2 ♖g7 34 ♖d3 ♖f6 35 ♖e4 ♖e6 36 g4 ♗c5 0-1

This game showed that the presence of two active bishops can force other positional advantages. In particular, Black's domination of the d-file and penetration of the seventh rank came about due to White's desire to capture the useful bishop on b7 which was performing an excellent active role for Black.

In conclusion, these two games gave Black no real problems, and ...g6 is a good way of playing against the c3-Sicilian via a Deferred Sniper.