

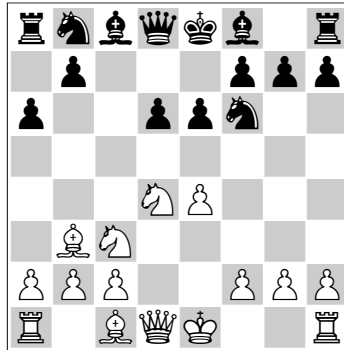
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Chapter 4

White Retreats the Bishop to b3

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙c4 e6 7.♙b3



In this chapter, we will examine the variation involving the transfer of the bishop to b3, which is the way Fischer preferred to play this line from 1959 onwards. White moves the bishop away from the twin threats of ...d6-d5 and ...♘xe4. At the same time, he prepares the march of the f-pawn and for the moment, does not spend a tempo on kingside castling and retains the possibility of castling queenside. But Black understands the dangers he faces, and decides immediately to neutralise the bishop by bringing his knight to d7 and c5; after the exchange of the bishop, Black will have no problem with the defence of e6, or along the a2-g8 diagonal.

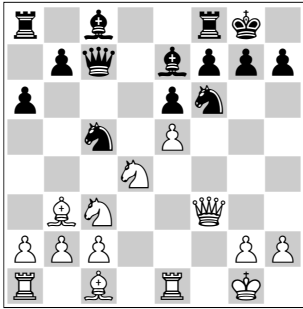
**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙c4 e6
7.♙b3 ♘bd7 8.♙g5**

A) This move is one of the most principled and dangerous for Black, who in several lines obtains a position similar to those arising after 6.♙g5. The danger of the line consists in the fact that White places his pieces aggressively, whilst retaining the option of castling on either side, which retains a degree of flexibility and danger for Black. **8.0-0 ♘c5** and now:



Robert Fischer

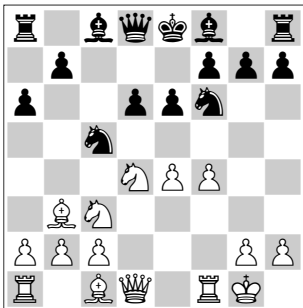
A1) 9.♖e1 ♘e7 10.f4 10.♖f3 0-0
 11.♖g3 transposes to line D: 8.♖f3.
 10...0-0 11.e5 11.♖f3 ♖c7 12.e5 dxe5
 13.fxe5



13...♗xb3N In this position, the most dangerous white piece is the bishop on b3, which points at the black king and is prepared to sacrifice itself on e6, as well as controlling the a2-g8 diagonal. With 13...♗xb3, Black eliminates this bishop, making his life much easier. 14.♗xb3 ♗d5 15.♗xd5 exd5 16.c3 ♘e6 17.♗d4 ♖ae8=. 11...dxe5 12.fxe5 ♗xb3 13.axb3 ♗d5 14.♗e4 f5 15.exf6 ♗xf6 The position will assume an open character, where Black has the two bishops and the white king is weak;

A2) 9.♖f3 ♘e7 again transposes to line D: 8.♖f3;

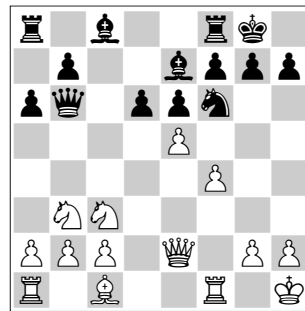
A3) 9.f4 transposes to line F: 8.f4;



A4) 9.♖e2 ♘e7 10.f4 0-0 11.♗h1 and now:

A41) 11...♖d7 12.♘e3 After 12.e5 ♗xb3 13.♗xb3 ♗d5 14.♖f3 ♗xc3 15.♖xc3 b5 Black has an excellent position, although White also has his trumps, with the active rook on the third rank and attacking prospects. 12...♗fxe4 13.♗xe4 ♗xe4 14.f5 d5 15.fxe6 15.c4? e5!♞, for example 16.♗c2 ♗d6 17.♗b4 dxc4 18.♘c2 f6 19.♗d5 ♘d8 20.♘b6 a5 21.b3 ♖a6 22.♘xd8 ♖xd8 23.bxc4 ♖c6 24.♖ad1 b6 25.♖f3 ♘a6 26.♖h3 Black is winning. TomczakNegi, Cappelle la Grande 2012. 15...fxe6 16.c4 White has compensation for the pawn, sufficient for equality;

A42) 11...♖b6 12.e5 ♗xb3 13.♗xb3

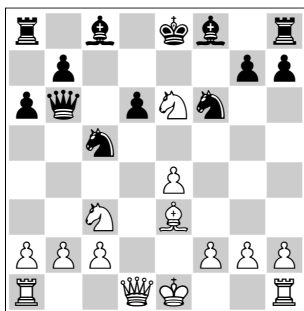


A421) Black has eliminated the ♘b3, but he has concrete problems, associated with his development, so he needs to play some accurate moves. It seems to me that Maxim did not manage to solve all the problems he faced in the opening. 13...♗e8 14.a4 ♘d7 15.♘e3 ♖c7 16.a5 ♖c8 17.♖ad1 d5 18.♘b6 ♖c4 19.♖e3 f6 20.♗g1 fxe5 21.fxe5 ♗c7 22.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 23.♖d3 ♖xd3 24.cxd3 ♖c8 25.♗c5 – Black's opening troubles are now behind him, thanks to his accurate play in the middlegame, The position is absolutely equal, Kuzubov-Vachier-Lagrave, Spain tt 2011;

A422) 13...dxe5!N Thanks to the fact that White has the initiative, due to his

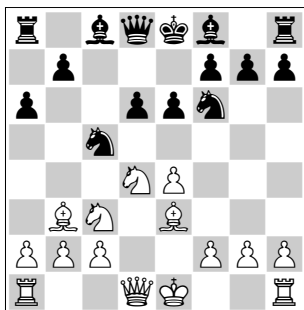
superior development, Black needs to exchange a pair of pieces and simplify. The text, followed by ...♘d5, successfully solves his problems. **14.fxe5 ♘d5** **15.♘e4 a5** **16.♖d3** **16.♙g5 ♙xg5** **17.♘xg5 ♖e3** **18.♗h5 h6** **19.♗xf7 hxg5** **20.♗xf8+ ♙xf8** **21.♗f1+ ♔g8** **22.♖e8+ ♔h7** **23.♖h5+=**. **16...f5** **17.exf6 ♘xf6** **18.♙e3 ♖d8** **19.♙d4 ♘xe4** **20.♖xe4 ♖d5** **21.♖xd5 exd5=**.

B) The bishop sacrifice 8.♙xe6? is premature, because all the white pieces are still on their initial squares, and with such pieces, White is not ready for active operations. 8...fxe6 9.♘xe6 ♖b6 10.♙e3 ♘c5



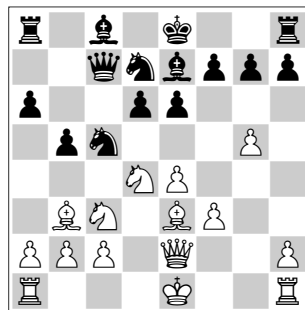
11.♘xf8 ♗xf8 12.0-0 ♙e6♞. Despite the fact that he has an extra piece, Black's position is not yet winning, because White has a very strong pawn structure, Black cannot castle kingside and he has a weak pawn on d6.

C) **8.♙e3 ♘c5**



C1) **9.♖f3 b5** This position has arisen six times, with Black winning all six. Even without the computer, it is clear that Black is better, as the white queen is bad on f3, and Black intends ...♙b7, when it will not be clear how to defend the pawn e4: **10.♙g5 ♙b7** **11.♙xf6 ♖xf6** **12.♖xf6 gxf6** **13.f3 h5** **14.♗d1 ♙h6** **15.a4 b4** **16.♘a2 a5** **17.♘b5 ♔e7** **18.♔f2** (White's position is strategically lost, and Black only has to conduct the game accurately to a conclusion. White cannot take on d6, because Black plays ♙a6 and ♗hd8) **18...♗hd8** and Black is winning Edvardsen-l'Ami, Reykjavik 2012;

C2) **9.f3** As I have said several times already, the combination of the move f2-f3 with the transfer of the bishop to b3 is not very good; White needs either to play ♙b3 and f4-f5, or else play f2-f3 and leave the bishop on f1. **9...♙e7** **10.♖d2** **10.♖e2 ♖c7** **11.g4 b5** **12.g5 ♘fd7** and now:



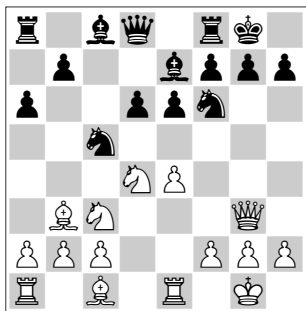
It's wise for White to prevent the ...b5-b4 push here: **13.a3** (13.h4 b4!N **14.♘a4 ♘xb3** **15.axb3 ♘c5♞**) **13...♘xb3** **14.cxb3** 0-0 and Black is slightly better. **10...0-0**

C21) **11.0-0** This move is not even worth examining in detail, as it is so toothless. After castling, Black is simply better and plays **11...♖c7** with the idea of ...b5 and ...♙b7.

C22) **11.g4** This move is also not dangerous for Black, but it is stronger than 11.0-0, since it is obvious that White should castle queenside and attack on the kingside, even though Black is faster. **11...♗fd7! 12.g5 ♖c7 13.0-0-0 b5** Black has an excellent position; he wants to play ...♗b7, with the idea of ...b5-b4 and ...d6-d5 and, depending on circumstances, either take the bishop on b3 or trap it by ...a6-a5. **14.♖b1 ♗b6 15.a3 ♜b8 16.h4 ♗ca4 17.♗xa4 bxa4 18.♗a2 d5 19.exd5 ♗xd5 20.♗xd5 exd5 21.♗f4 ♗d6 22.♗xd6 ♖xd6 23.♖a1 ♗d7 24.h5 ♜b6 25.h6** and Black won in Akylbekov-Amanov, Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010.

D) **8.♖f3?! ♗c5 9.0-0 9.♗e3?** b5 10.0-0 (10.e5? ♗b7♣; 10.0-0-0? ♗b7♣ as Black will take on e4, Gdanski-Jasnikowski, Warsaw 1990) 10...♗b7 11.♖e2 ♗e7!♣. If Black plays ...♗fxe4 White takes with the knight on e4 and in case of ♗xe4, he has the small tactic ♗b5, after which a dynamically equal position arises, but after the simple developing move ♗e7 Black has the advantage. **9...♗e7** and now:

D1) **10.♞e1** is not dangerous for Black, because it is very slow and Black manages to complete his development favourably. He has many ways to obtain good play, and can even fight for the advantage: **10...0-0 11.♖g3** and now:



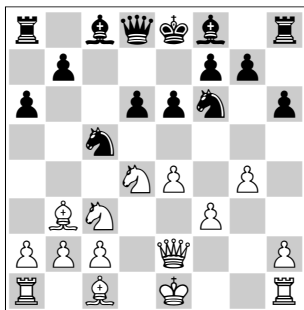
D11) **11...♗d7 12.♗f3N 12.a3?! ♗xb3 13.cxb3 ♜c8 14.♗h6 ♗e8 15.♞ad1 ♗h4 16.♖g4 f5 17.exf5 exf5 18.♖f3 gxh6** and White didn't have enough for the piece: 19.♗e6 ♗xe6 20.♞xe6 ♖d7 21.♞xh6 ♗d8 22.♗d5 ♖g7 23.♞h3 ♖h8 24.♗f4 ♖g4 0-1 Tissir-Anastasian, Abu Dhabi 2010. **12...e5 13.♗g5 ♗c6 14.♗d5 ♗e6** with balanced play;

D12) **11...♖h8!?** 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗d2 ♗d7 14.♞ad1 b5 15.a3 ♖b6 16.♗f3 ♗xb3 17.cxb3 e5 18.♖h4 ♗e6 19.b4 ♖g8 20.h3 ♖b7 21.♗h2 ♞ac8 22.♖g3 Black is slightly better and after the correct exchange sacrifice 22...♞xc3 23.♗xc3 ♗xe4, he retains a small but stable plus, thanks to his strong light-squared bishop and mobile pawn centre. De Firmian-Ivanchuk, Lucerne Wch-tt 1989;

D2) **10.♖g3 0-0 11.♗h6 ♗e8 12.♗e3 12.♞ad1? ♗xb3 13.axb3 ♗h4 14.♖g4 f5** Again this trick. This hidden trap is not so obvious, at a brief glance at the position. It turns out that the white queen has no squares on the g-file and if she leaves the g-file, then the bishop on h6 is lost. 15.exf5 exf5 16.♖h5 gxh6♣. **12...♗h4! 13.♖g4 ♗f6!** I had looked at all of this before the game. The bishop on f6 is very important, as I can force the queen away from the dangerous square g3 and play b5 in peace. **14.♖e2 b5 15.♞ad1** In case of 15.a3 ♗b7 16.f3 ♗xb3 17.♗xb3 ♖c7 Black is slightly better. **15...♖c7 16.a3 ♗b7 17.f3 ♗xb3 18.cxb3 ♗e7 19.♞c1 ♖d7 20.♞fd1 ♗f6 21.b4 ♞fd8 22.♗b3 ♖e8 23.♗a5 ♞d7 24.♞d2 ♞c8 25.♞cd1 ♗a8 26.♖f2 26.a4 d5 27.e5 ♗xb4. 26...h6 27.♗b3 e5** A dynamically equal position, in which both sides have their chances.

White's advantage is that he controls the square d5 and does not allow Black active counterplay. Black has the plus that he has the better pawn structure and a strong light-squared bishop, Tomic-Andriasyan, Plovdiv Ech 2012;

E) **8.g4?** is not a very logical move, as with the bishop on b3, White should be advancing the f-pawn, so as to create a weakness on e6. **8...♗c5 9.♖e2 h6 10.f3**



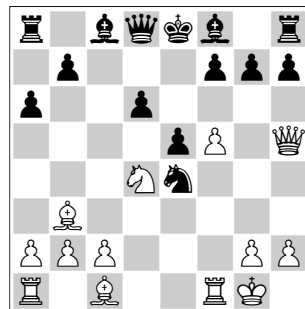
10...♗d7N Because there have not been many games in this line, I have analysed the position further myself. I believe the text move is the strongest here, with the idea of ...♖c8 and the advance of the b-pawn, and this plan can be carried out quite rapidly. **11.♗e3 ♖c8** Black is better, as the ♗b3 does nothing. Black will soon play ...b7-b5 and ...b5-b4, whilst White will have to play ♖d2, to free the e2-square for the king;

F) **8.f4 ♗c5** This move is the strongest and most principled to my mind, and it is no surprise that this is the move preferred by all the players from the top echelons. At first sight, it looks extremely dangerous, but when one looks at the games of the best players and analyses the resulting positions, it becomes clear that Black will have no problems, if he knows what he is doing:

F1) **9.♖f3 ♗e7 9...e5?! 10.fxe5 dxe5 11.♗f5 ♗xb3 12.axb3 ♗xf5 13.♖xf5±. 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗e3 ♖c7 12.g4 b5 13.g5 ♗fd7 14.♗d5 ♗b7 (14...♖b8) 15.♗xb7 ♗xb7 16.♖h5 b4**

We have reached a position very similar to those typical of the Scheveningen, with the sole difference that the light-squared bishops have left the board. In my opinion, this position is one of dynamic equality.

F2) **9.0-0 ♗fxe4 9...♖c7 10.♖e2 ♗e7 11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5 ♗fd7 13.♗f4; 13.♖xf7 ♗xf7-+. Of course, White was not obliged to sacrifice the rook, and could have played ♗f4, after which he has a strong initiative. 10.♗xe4 ♗xe4 11.f5 e5 12.♖h5**

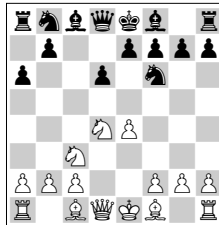


This is probably one of the sharpest positions which can arise in this variation.

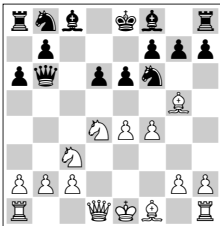
12...d5 This move looks perfectly correct, mainly because it closes the diagonal of the bishop on b3, and opens that of the black bishop on f8, which will develop with tempo. After **12...♖e7 13.♖f3 ♗c5 14.♗c6** a big fight is beginning. White's task is to open the centre at all costs, since he has already lost his central pawn, and has nothing to lose, so he seeks a way to keep on sacrificing. **14...♖c7 15.♗d5 a5 16.♗g5 ♖a6 17.♗d8 f6 18.♗f7 ♖g8 19.♗e3 g6 20.♗g5 ♖g7 21.fxg6 ♖xg6**

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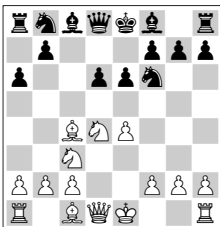


6.♙g5 e6 7.f4 ♔b6..... 13



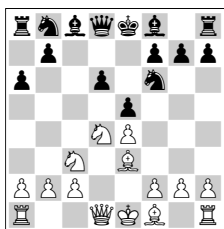
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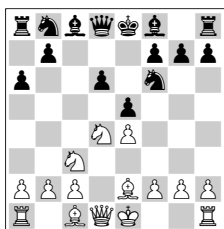
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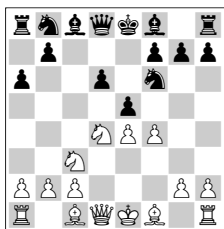
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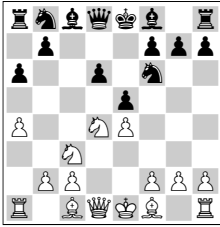
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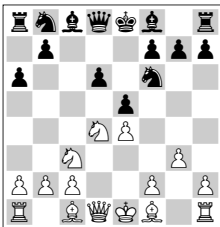
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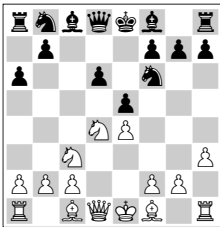
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