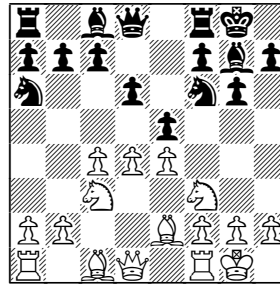


# Chapter Six



## 7...♞a6

**1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♞c3 ♟g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♞f3 0-0 6 ♟e2 e5 7 0-0 ♞a6 (D)**

This line, which can also occur via 6...♞a6 7 0-0 e5, appeared in the late 1980s. Apparently Black contravenes basic chess principles by developing his knight on the flank; however, things are not so simple. The knight can be usefully placed on c5 (after d4-d5, d4xe5 or ...e5xd4), or sometimes on c7 (after ...c7-c6); and compared with 7...♞bd7 in the next chapter, on a6 the knight does not obstruct the c8-bishop. Furthermore, Black avoids the main lines of 7...♞c6, which have been studied in great depth and require equivalent theoretical knowledge.

Of course 7...♞a6 has disadvantages too. By not increasing the pressure on the centre, Black allows his opponent more latitude in his set-up. Also, the knight blocks the a-pawn from advancing and, after b2-b4, may find itself left out of the game. Therefore White can

try for an advantage with the simple 8 ♞b1 (line A). More popular is 8 ♟e3 (line B) where White has freer play and can look to play a quick c4-c5, in particular after 8...♞g4 9 ♟g5 ♞e8 10 c5!? (line B21), which deserves serious attention. White can also hope for an edge in line C with 8 ♞e1 c6 9 ♞b1 or 9 ♟f1.

In spite of the popularity of 7...♞a6 we think that White has the better game here. The advantage is not so big that the variation could be said to be in crisis. Nevertheless we think Black has more chances in the complicated main lines with 7...♞c6.

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**A: 8 ♞b1 123**

**B: 8 ♟e3 125**

**C: 8 ♞e1 139**

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Others:

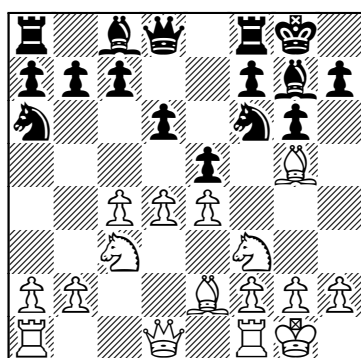
a) 8 d5 ♞c5 transposes to 7...♞bd7 8 d5 ♞c5 discussed in the next chapter.

b) 8 a3 can be answered by 8...exd4!, when Black obtains good counterplay as a2-a3 is not very useful; e.g. 9 ♖xd4 ♜e8 10 f3 c6 11 ♖h1 ♗c7 12 ♙g5 h6 13 ♙h4 ♜e7 14 ♙d3 g5 15 ♙f2 ♗h5 16 ♙c2 ♙e5 17 g3 ♗g7 ∞ G.Geissler-M.Muresan, Dresden 1990.

c) 8 ♜c2 gets the same reaction: 8...exd4 9 ♗xd4 ♜e8 10 ♜d1 ♗c5 11 f3 (Z.Kozul-D.Kljako, Slovenian Team Ch. 1993) and now 11...♗fd7 12 b4 ♗e6 =.

d) The simple move 8 dxe5 seems to give White chances of obtaining an advantage; e.g. 8...dxe5 9 ♜c2 (if 9 ♙g5 ♜e8 10 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 11 ♗d5 ♙d8 = M.Matas-I.Armanda, Solin 2007) 9...♙g4 (or if 9...♜e8 10 a3 c6 11 b4 ♜e7 12 ♜d1 ♗h5, A.Dreev-V.Chekhov, Moscow 1989, 13 c5 with the initiative) 10 ♙e3 (10 ♗xe5 ♗b4! =) 10...♙xf3 11 ♙xf3 c6 was A.Dreev-I.Glek, Frunze 1988, when it seems to us that White's chances are better after 12 ♜fd1 ♜e7 13 ♜d2, with the two bishops and control of the d-file due to the hanging a7-pawn.

e) 8 ♙g5 (D) also deserves more attention:



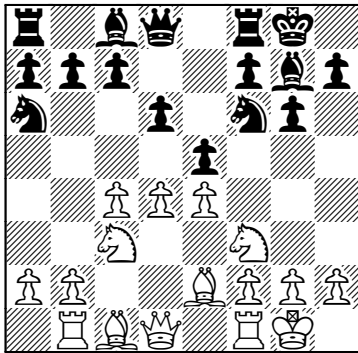
e1) 8...♜e8?! allows White to break up the black pawn structure: 9 c5 (also good is 9 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 10 c5 dxc5, A.Miles-J.Moreno Carnero, Mondariz 2000, 11 ♙xa6 bxa6 12 ♗d5! ♙d8 13 dxe5 c6 14 ♗e3 ♙c7 15 ♜c2 ♙xe5 16 ♗xe5 ♜xe5 17 ♗c4 +=, or 10...♗b4 11 cxd6 cxd6 12 ♙b5 ♜d8 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♜a4 ♗c6 15 ♙xc6 bxc6 16 ♜xc6 ♙e6 17 ♜fd1 ♜a5 18 ♗d5 += G.Kallai-G.Kerek, Hungarian Team Ch. 2003) 9...exd4 10 ♙xf6 dxc3 (or 10...♙xf6 11 ♗d5 ♙d8 12 ♙xa6 c6 13 ♜xd4 bxa6 14 ♗f6+ ♙xf6 15 ♜xf6 dxc5 16 ♗e5 ♜e6 17 ♜xe6 ♙xe6 += Y.Yakovich-M.Mrdja, Cappelle la Grande 1996) 11 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 12 ♙xa6 cxb2 13 ♜d4+ ♖g8 14 ♜xb2 bxa6 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 ♜fe1 += M.Roj-P.Neuman, Czech League 1995.

e2) 8...exd4 does not equalize either: 9 ♗xd4 ♜e8 (9...♗c5 10 f3 ♗e6 11 ♙e3 c6 12 ♜d2 ♜e7 13 ♜ad1 += N.Sadovski-I.Ljahovetsky, Alushta 2006) 10 f3 c6 11 ♜d2 ♗c5 12 ♖h1 a5 13 ♜ad1 a4 14 ♜fe1 ♜a5 15 ♙f4 ♙f8 16 ♗c2 += Y.Pelletier-Gil.Hernandez, Villarrobledo (rapid) 2000.

e3) 8...h6! gives Black equal play without any complications: 9 ♙h4 (other moves are no better; e.g. 9 ♙e3 ♗g4 10 ♙c1 c6 11 h3 exd4 12 ♗xd4 ♗f6 13 ♜e1 ♗c5 14 ♙f3 ♜e8 15 ♙f4! g5 16 ♙c1, V.Hort-K.Arakhamia, Copenhagen 1997, 16...a5 = Hort) 9...g5! (9...♜e8?! 10 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 11 c5!, V.Milov-J.Gallagher, Bad Ragaz 1994, is 8...♜e8 9 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 10 c5 with an extra ...h7-h6, which favours White if anything as he then has ♜d2 or ♜c1) 10 dxe5 (or if 10 ♙g3 g4 11 ♗h4 exd4 12 ♜xd4,

G.Kallai-J.Gallagher, French Team Ch. 2000, 12...♗c5 13 ♖e3 ♘h5 14 ♙ab1 ♗g5 with good counterplay for Black) 10...♗h5 (sharper was 10...g4! 11 exf6 ♗xf6, H.Knuth-W.Heinig, German League 2000, 12 h3 ♙e8 13 ♙c1 ♗c5, when Black's dark square control and bishop pair compensate for the weaknesses in his pawn structure) 11 ♘g3 ♗xg3 12 hxg3 dxe5 13 ♗h2 c6 14 ♗g4 ♗xd1 15 ♙fxd1 ♘xg4 16 ♘xg4 ♙fd8 17 ♙xd8+ ♙xd8 18 ♙d1 ♙xd1+ 19 ♗xd1 ♗c5 20 f3 a5 = J.Piket-L.Comas Fabrego, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

#### A: 8 ♙b1 (D)



The a1-rook leaves the vulnerable a1-h8 diagonal and prepares b2-b4, gaining space on the queenside and sidelining the a6-knight.

#### 8...exd4

A logical move; Black gives his knight the c5-square and tries to show that 8 ♙b1 is not the best idea in ...e5xd4 variations. He has also tried:

a) 8...c6 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 b4 ♖e7 11 b5 ♗c5 12 ♘a3 ♗fd7 13 ♗a4 +/- L.Renaze-J.Tihonov, Creon 2004.

b) 8...♗e8 9 dxe5! dxe5 10 b4 c6 11 ♘a3 ♖e7 12 ♗c1 ♗c7 (D.King-Z.Quader, Calcutta 1993) 13 b5 with the initiative.

c) 8...♙e8! is an interesting move order, threatening to follow up with 9...exd4.

c1) 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♗xd8 ♙xd8 11 b4 c6! (intending 12 c5 ♗c7) looks okay for Black; e.g. 12 ♘e3 ♗g4 13 ♘g5 f6 14 ♘h4 ♘e6 15 a3 ♗h6 16 ♙fd1 ♗f7 17 ♗d2 ♗c7 18 ♗b3 b6 = V.Korchnoi-B.Gelfand, Manila Interzonal 1990.

c2) 9 d5 ♗c5 is similar to 8 d5 ♗c5 (line A in the next chapter) with the black rook worse placed on e8. On the other hand, the rook on b1 prevents White from replying with 10 ♖c2 (as in line A2), because of 10...♗fxe4! 11 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♖xe4 ♘f5 with a skewer. Instead, he has to play the inferior 10 ♗d2 (as in line A1); e.g. 10...a5 11 b3 ♘h6 12 ♖c2 ♘g4 13 ♘xg4 ♗xg4 14 a3 ♖d7 15 h3 ♗f6 16 ♗f3 ♘xc1 17 ♙fxc1 ♗h5 18 b4 axb4 19 axb4 ♗a4 20 ♗e2 c6 21 dxc6 ♖xc6 with counterplay, C.Lutz-I.Rogers, Biel 1990,

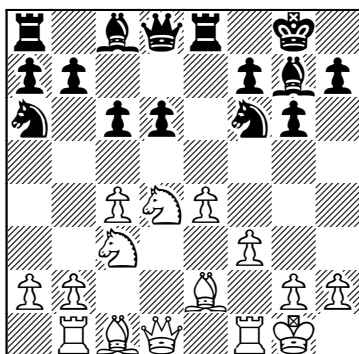
#### 9 ♗xd4 ♙e8

The most natural and flexible move, as the a6-knight can go also to c7 (i.e. following ...c7-c6).

Black has no counterplay after 9...♗c5 10 f3 a5 11 ♘e3 ♙e8 12 ♖d2 c6 13 ♗c2 ♖e7 14 ♙fd1 ♘f8 (O.Touzane-D.Poldauf, Podolsk 1991) 15 ♘f4 +/-; or if 10...♗h5! 11 g4 ♗f6 12 ♘e3 h5 (E.Kobylykin-E.Mochalov, Yalta 1995) 13 g5 with similar ideas to Chapter Five (line C1 with 10...♗f6).

#### 10 f3 c6 (D)

If 10...♖h5 11 ♙e3 f5 (or 11...♗c5 12 g4 ♗f6 13 b4 ♗e6 14 ♖d2 ♗xd4 15 ♙xd4 ♙e6 16 g5 ♗d7 17 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 18 f4 f6, T.Bosboom Lanchava-A.Areshchenko, Port Erin 2005, 19 ♖d4 +/-) 12 b4 ♗f6 13 ♖d2 fxe4 14 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 15 fxe4 c5 (not 15...♙xe4? 16 ♙f3 ♙e8 17 ♙d5+ ♗h8 18 ♙f7 c6 19 ♙xg7! +- Mikhalchishin; relatively best is 15...♙e7 +=) 16 ♗b5 ♙e5 (D.Polajzer-M.Tratar, Ptuj 1998) 17 a3 +/-.



### 11 ♙g5

Other moves lead to unclear positions:

a) 11 ♙e1 transposes to 8 ♙e1 c6 9 ♙b1 exd4 10 ♗xd4 ♙e8 11 f3 in the notes to line C21.

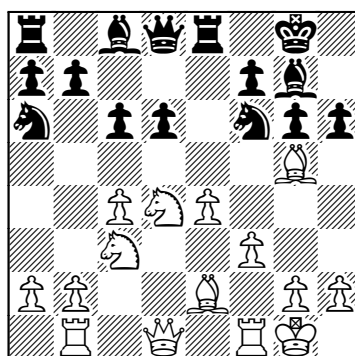
b) 11 ♙e3 d5! is fine for Black (compare 9 ♗xd4 in line B, Chapter Five); e.g. 12 cxd5 ♗xd5! 13 ♗xd5 cxd5 14 ♖b3 ♗c5 15 ♖a3 (if 15 ♖b4 ♗xe4! 16 fxe4 ♙xe4 16 ♖d2 ♖e7 +=) 15...♗e6 16 ♙bd1 ♗xd4 17 ♙xd4 ♙xd4+ 18 ♙xd4 ♖b6 =.

c) 11 b4 ♗xb4!? 12 ♙xb4 c5 13 ♙b3 cxd4 14 ♗b5 a6 15 ♗xd4 ♗d7 16 ♙b1 ♗c5 ∞ P.Pinho-A.Strikovic, Portuguese Team Ch. 1998.

d) 11 ♗h1 ♗h5 12 g4 ♗f6 13 ♙f4 (or 13 ♙g5!? Karpov) 13...h5 14 g5 ♗d7 15 ♖d2 ♗e5 16 ♙bd1 ♖e7 17 ♙g1 ♙h3 18 ♙g3 ♙d7 19 ♙e3 ♙ad8 ∞ V.Epishin-V.Neverov, USSR Ch., Tbilisi 1989.

### 11...h6 (D)

11...♖a5!? is an interesting alternative; e.g. 12 ♖d2?! ♗xe4 13 fxe4 ♙xd4+ 14 ♖xd4 ♖xg5 15 ♖xd6 ♖c5+ 16 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 17 ♙f3 ♙e6 18 b3 ♙ad8 =+ V.Vales-J.Mudrak, Litomysl 2003, or 12 ♙h4 ♗h5 13 ♗b3 (D.Shapiro-M.Traldi, Philadelphia 1998) 13...♖e5!? with counterplay. Probably White should prefer 12 ♙e3!? or 12 ♙f4!?



### 12 ♙h4

If 12 ♙e3 d5! with counterplay.

### 12...♗c5

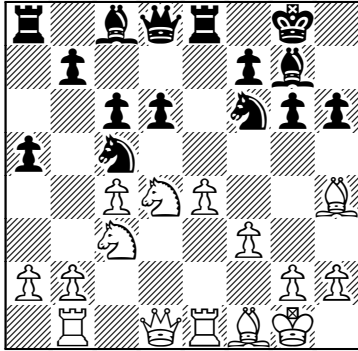
Not 12...g5 13 ♙f2 d5? (I.Hogye-M.Toth, Nyiregyhaza 1994) 14 cxd5 cxd5 15 ♙xa6 bxa6 16 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 17 ♗c6 ♖c7 18 exd5 +-, or if 13...♗h5 (L.Johannessen-K.Trygstad, Copenhagen 2004) 14 g3 +=.

### 13 ♙e1

Not 13 ♖d2?? ♗fxe4! 0-1 R.Stone-F.Nijboer, Den Bosch 1999; or if 13 ♙f2 ♗h5 14 ♖d2 f5 15 exf5 gxf5 16 b4 ♖g5

17 ♖xg5 hxg5 18 ♜fd1 ♘e6 with counterplay, T.Likavsky-P.Czarnota, Turin Olympiad 2006.

13...a5 14 ♙f1 (D)



White seems a little better here. V.Ivanchuk-J.Moreno Carnero, European Team Ch., Leon 2001, continued:

14...a4 15 ♖d2 ♖b6

15...♗fxe4?! is now met by 16 ♗xe4 ♖xh4 17 ♗f6+! ♖xf6 18 ♜xe8+ ♙h7 19 ♜d1 +/-; but the immediate 15...♖c7 +/- looks more accurate.

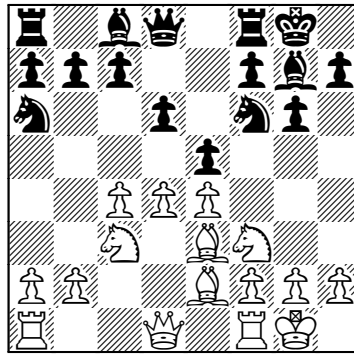
16 ♙f2 ♗fd7 17 ♗c2 ♖c7 18 ♜ed1 h5!? 19 ♙h1

White can take the d-pawn, but perhaps Ivanchuk didn't want to allow any counterplay; e.g. 19 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 20 ♜xd6 a3! 21 b4 ♙xc3 22 bxc5 ♜a5 23 ♜d3 ♙b2 24 ♙e1 ♜a8 25 ♙b4 f5.

19...♙e5 20 b4 axb3 21 axb3 ♖d8 22 ♙d4 ♖f6 23 ♙xe5 dxe5 24 b4 ♗e6 25 c5 h4 26 ♖f2 ♖g5 27 ♗e3 ♗f6 28 ♗c4 ½-½

According to the database the players agreed a draw here – though this would be an odd decision by White, still with the better position against a lower-rated opponent.

B: 8 ♙e3 (D)



This has been White's most popular move. In reply Black has a wide range of continuations:

B1: 8...c6 126

B2: 8...♗g4 129

Also:

a) 8...exd4 must be considered, as ♙e3 is often not the best move in 7...exd4 lines. Here, however, Black is not ready with ...d6-d5, so White can play 9 ♗xd4 (rather than 9 ♙xd4 ♜e8 10 ♙d3 ♗c5 11 ♜e1 ♗e6 12 ♙e3 ♗g4 13 ♙d2 c6 ∞ Z.Adamek-A.Jedlicka, Czech League 1999) 9...♜e8 (or 9...♗c5 10 f3 a5 11 ♖d2 ♜e8 12 ♜ad1 += G.Tunik-V.Terentiev, Ekaterinburg 1997) 10 f3 when 10...c6 11 ♙h1 or 11 ♗c2 reaches variations discussed in Chapter Five (line C2), while 11 ♜e1 transposes to 8 ♜e1 c6 9 ♙e3 exd4 in the notes to line C2 in this chapter.

b) 8...♖e8 (this popular move does not give equality) 9 ♜e1 (stronger than 9 dxe5 ♗g4 10 exd6 ♗xe3 11 fxe3 cxd6

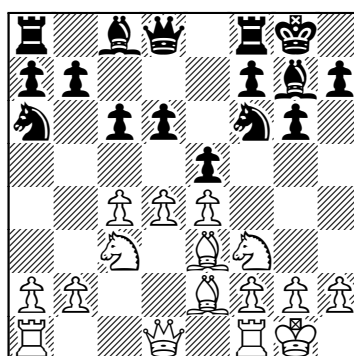
12 ♖xd6 ♙xc3 13 bxc3 ♗xe4 14 ♗d4 ♜e8 ∞ C.Lutz-M.Wahls, Berlin 1989; or 9 h3 ♘d7!? ∞ A.Fishbein-Ma.Tseitlin, Beersheba 1991) 9...♘g4 (if 9...c6 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 c5! ♘g4 12 ♙xa6 ♘xe3 13 ♜xe3 bxa6 14 ♗a4 ♜b8 15 b3 +/- due to Black's weakened pawn structure, V.Tukmakov-T.Markowski, Geneva 1997) 10 ♙c1 f5 11 exf5 gxf5 (L.Van Wely-B.Gelfand, European Junior Ch. 1988) 12 c5! e4 (if 12...♗d7 13 cxd6 exd4 14 ♘b5 +/-, or 12...dxc5 13 ♙xa6 bxa6 14 dxe5 ♙e6 15 h3 +/-) 13 cxd6 ♗h5 (13...cxd6 is met by 14 ♘g5, e.g. 14...♙h8 15 ♙xg4 ffg4 16 ♜xe4 +/-) 14 h3 ♘xf2 (or 14...exf3 15 ♙xf3 ♗h4 16 hxg4 ffg4 17 ♙d5+ ♙h8 18 ♙f4 cxd6 19 ♙g3 ♗f6 20 ♘b5 +/-) 15 ♙xf2 exf3 16 ♙xf3 ♗h4+ 17 g3 ♗xd4+ 18 ♗xd4 ♙xd4+ 19 ♙g2 cxd6 20 ♙h6 ♙g7 21 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 22 ♜ad1 with a clear advantage in the ending. In all variations the important factor was the badly placed a6-knight.

c) 8...♗e7!? 9 ♙g5 (if instead 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♘d5 ♗d8 11 ♗c2 ♘g4 12 ♙g5 f6 13 ♙d2!? c6 14 ♘e3 ♗e7 15 ♜ad1, M.Gurevich-T.Markowski, Polanica Zdroj 1999, 15...♘xe3 16 ♙xe3 f5!? with counterplay, Huzman; or just 16...c5 = intending ...♘b4-c6-d4 or ...♘c7-e6-d4; or 9 ♗c2 ♘b4!? 10 ♗b1 exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘g4 12 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 13 ♘d5 ♘xd5 14 cxd5 ♜fc8 15 ♜c1 ♙d7 = Khalifman) 9...exd4 (if 9...c6?! 10 c5! +/-; or 9...♗e8?! 10 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 11 c5 +=) 10 ♘d5 (if 10 ♘xd4 ♗e5!? 11 ♘f3 ♗e8 12 ♙d3 ♘c5 13 ♜e1 h6 14 ♙h4 g5 15 ♙g3 ♘h5 with counterplay, R.Kempinski-T.Markowski, Pula 1998) 10...♗d8 11 ♘xd4 c6 12

♘xf6+ ♙xf6 13 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♗d2 ♘c5 15 f3 a5 16 ♜ad1 ♜d8 17 ♜fe1 ♙d7 18 ♙f1 with a minimal edge, B.Gelfand-B.Damljanovic, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

d) 8...h6 (intending ...♘g4) 9 dxe5 (9 h3 is not dangerous either: 9...exd4 10 ♙xd4 ♜e8 11 ♙d3 c6 12 ♜e1 ♘c5 13 ♗d2 ♘xd3 14 ♗xd3 ½-½ B.Predojevic-A.Areshchenko, Moscow 2007) 9...♘g4 10 ♙d2 (if 10 exd6 ♘xe3 11 fx3 ♙xc3 12 bxc3 cxd6 with obvious compensation) 10...♘xe5 (less good is 10...dxe5 11 ♗c1 ♙h7 12 ♜d1 ♗e8 13 h3 ♘f6 14 ♙e3 +/- B.Gelfand-I.Smirin, World Blitz Ch., Rishon LeZion 2006) 11 ♘xe5 dxe5 12 ♗c1 ♙h7 13 ♜d1 ♗h4 = Zhao Xue-Z.Efimenko, Dubai 2005.

**B1: 8...c6 (D)**



**9 dxe5**

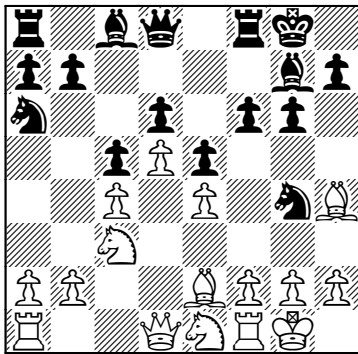
White plays for a slightly favourable endgame. Instead:

a) 9 ♗d2 exd4 10 ♘xd4 ♘g4 11 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 12 f3 ♙c8 13 ♜ad1 ♜e8 14 ♗f2 += J.Vehre-S.Calleri, corr. 1999.

b) 9 ♗c2 ♘g4 10 ♙g5 f6 11 ♙h4 g5 (11...♗e7!?) 12 ♙g3 f5 13 exf5 += L.Van

Wely-J.Piket, FIDE World Ch., Groningen 1997.

c) 9 d5 (the most principled move, closing the centre) 9...♗g4 10 ♕g5 f6 11 ♕h4! (restricting Black's action on the kingside; after other continuations Black has no problems: 11 ♕d2 c5 12 h3 ♗h6 13 ♖c1 ♗f7 14 ♗e1 f5 15 exf5 gxf5 16 f4 ♕d7 ∞ L.Ftacnik-R.Kasimdzhanov, German League 2006; or 11 ♕c1 c5!? 12 ♗e1 ♗h6 13 ♗d3 ♕d7 14 a3 ♗f7 15 b4 b6 16 ♖b1 ♖c8 17 ♕d2 f5 18 f3 ♕f6 19 ♖h1 ♖h8 20 ♖b2 f4 21 b5 ♗c7 ½-½ E.Gleizerov-V.Isupov, Russian Team Ch. 1997) 11...c5 (otherwise White has the option of c4-c5; e.g. 11...♗h6 12 c5! ♗xc5 13 b4 ♗d7 14 dxc6 ♗b6 15 a4 +/- J.Lautier-K.Le Quang, Antwerp 1998; or 11...h5 12 h3 ♗h6 13 c5 g5!?, V.Chuchelov-R.Polzin, Hamburg 1997, 14 cxd6 ♖xd6 15 ♕g3 +=) 12 ♗e1 (D) (also good is 12 ♗d2!? ♗h6 13 a3 ♗f7 14 ♖b1 ♕h6 15 b4 ♕g5 16 ♕xg5 ♗xg5 17 ♖c2 +/- V.Ruban-C.Lingnau, Berlin 1991) and then:



c1) 12...♗h6 13 f3!? (if 13 ♗d3 g5! 14 ♕g3 f5 15 exf5 ♕xf5 16 f3 ♕g6 17 ♕f2 ♗f5 with counterplay, Peng Zhaoqin-

A.Fishbein, Philadelphia 2002) 13...♗f7 (or 13...♕d7 14 ♗d3 g5 15 ♕f2 f5, A.Shabalov-A.Fishbein, US Ch. 2003, 16 a3 += Shabalov) 14 ♗d3 ♕h6 15 ♕f2 f5 (O.Jovanic-Z.Kozul, Croatian Ch. 2005) 16 a3 intending b4 +/-.

c2) 12...h5 13 h3 (if 13 a3 ♖e7 14 ♖b1 b6 15 b4 ♕d7 16 ♗d3 g5 17 ♕g3 f5 18 h3 ♗f6 19 bxc5 ♗xc5 20 ♗xc5 bxc5 21 ♕xh5 ♗xh5 22 ♖xh5, B.Gelfand-V.Topalov, Dortmund 1997, 22...f4 23 ♕h2 ♖f6!? 24 ♖xg5 ♖e8! 25 ♖h1 ♖h6 ∞) 13...♗h6 14 a3 ♗c7!? (if 14...♗f7 15 ♗d3 ♕h6 16 b4 ♖g7 17 ♖c2 ♖e7 18 ♖b2 ♕f4 19 ♕g3 ♕xg3 20 fxg3 ♖b8 21 bxc5 ♗xc5 22 ♗xc5 dxc5, V.Topalov-Kir.Georgiev, FIDE World Ch., New Delhi/Tehran 2000, 23 a4 b6 24 a5 += Tsesarsky; or 14...♕d7 15 ♗d3 g5 16 ♕g3 +=; e.g. 16...g4?! 17 hxg4 ♗xg4 18 ♕h4 with the initiative, D.Antic-Z.Arsovic, Jagodina 1998) 15 ♗d3 ♗e8 16 f4! g5 (not 16...exf4?! 17 ♗xf4 g5 18 ♗e6! ♕xe6 19 dxe6 gxh4? 20 ♗d5 intending 21 e7 +-) 17 fxg5 fxg5 18 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 19 ♕e1 g4 20 h4 g3 21 ♕xg3 ♗g4 22 ♕xg4 ♕xg4 23 ♖d2 +/- Y.Kruppa-I.Lutsko, Kiev 2005.

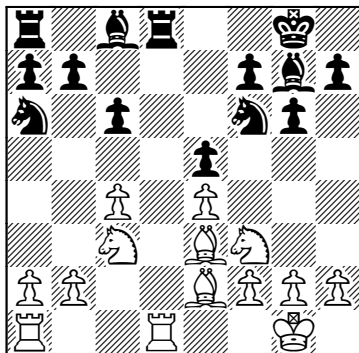
#### 9...dxe5 10 ♖xd8

Black has no problems after other moves; e.g. 10 h3 ♖e7 11 ♖c2 ♗h5 12 ♖fe1 ♗c7 13 ♖ad1 ♗e6 14 c5 ♗hf4 15 b4 ♗xe2+ 16 ♗xe2 ♗c7 17 ♗c3 a5 18 a3 axb4 19 axb4 f6 = E.Lobron-G.Kasparov, clock simul, Baden Baden 1992.

#### 10...♖xd8 11 ♖fd1 (D)

The ending is a little better for White, who has more space and the more active pieces, and controls the d-

file. Nothing else is particularly testing for Black:



a) 11 ♖xe5 ♗xe4 12 ♗xe4 ♙xe5 = O.Lehner-J.Candela Perez, Internet blitz 2004.

b) 11 ♖ad1 ♗e8 12 a3 (12 h3!?) 12...♗g4 13 ♙c1 ♗c5 14 b4 ♗b3 15 ♙e3 a5 (or 15...♗xe3!? 16 fxe3 a5 ∞ Wells, e.g. 17 ♖f2 f6 18 ♖d3 axb4 19 axb4 ♗a1 20 ♖c1 ♙e6 with the initiative) 16 ♙b6 axb4 17 axb4 ♗f6 (A.Beliavsky-Z.Kozul, European Team Ch., Gothenburg 2005) 18 h3 ♖a3 19 ♖d3 ♗d7 20 ♗b1 ♖a4 21 ♖xb3 ♗xb6 22 ♗c3 = Wells.

c) 11 h3!? ♗e8 12 a3 ♗h5! 13 ♖fd1 ♗f4 14 ♙f1 ♗e6 15 b4 f5 16 c5 f4 17 ♙c1 ♗d4 18 ♗d2 ♙e6 with good counterplay, D.Sahovic-V.Kotronias, Novi Sad 1999.

### 11...♙e8!

Worse is 11...♖xd1+ (11...♙g4?! drops the a-pawn) 12 ♖xd1 ♙g4 13 a3 ♙xf3 14 gxf3 ♗c7 15 f4 exf4 16 ♙xf4 ♗e6 17 ♙e3 +/- G.Giorgadze-M.Kaminski, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

### 12 h3

A good move, preventing ...♗g4 and ...♙g4 forever.

### 12...♙f8

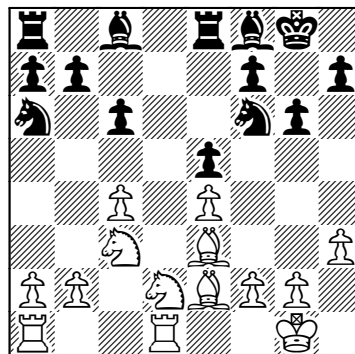
Preparing to bring the a6-knight into the game via c5 and e6. Other moves do not promise Black equality:

a) 12...♗h5 13 c5 ♗f4 14 ♙f1 ♙e6 15 ♗g5 h6 16 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 17 ♙xa6 bxa6 18 ♖ac1 +/- R.Cifuentes Parada-N.McDonald, Andorra 1991.

b) 12...♗d7 13 a3 ♗f8 14 b4 ♗e6 15 c5 ♗ac7 16 ♖ab1 f5 17 ♙c4 ♖h8 18 ♖d6 f4 19 ♙d2 ♗d4 20 ♗xd4 exd4 21 ♗e2 ♖xe4 22 ♖d8+ ♗e8 23 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 24 ♗xf4 +/- R.Libeau-S.Reschke, German League 1995.

### 13 ♗d2 (D)

13 a3!? prevents 13...♙b4 in the next note (should White think that worth doing), but otherwise is likely to transpose; e.g. 13...♗c5 14 ♗d2 (if 14 ♙xc5 ♙xc5 15 b4 ♙f8 16 c5 b6 = D.Ballesteros Gonzalez-J.Moreno Ruiz, Madrid 2002) 14...♗e6 (or 14...a5 15 b4 ♗e6 16 c5 ♗d4 17 ♙d3) 15 b4 (15 ♗f3 ♗c5 repeats) 15...♗d4 (15...b6!? is the 13..b6 line below) 16 ♙d3 a5 17 c5 is the main line.



### 13...♗c5

Alternatively:

a) 13...♙b4 14 ♖ac1 ♗c5 15 f3 ♗e6

16 ♖b3 ♗d7!? (if 16...♗f4 17 ♕f1 ♖6h5 18 ♕f2 ♕e7 19 c5 +/- G.Giorgadze-A.Zapata, Linares 1997) 17 ♗d2 b6 18 ♗cd1 ♗dc5 19 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 20 ♕xc5 ♗xc5 21 ♗d6 ♕b7 22 b4 ♗e6 = S.Halkias-V.Kotronias, Moscow 2007.

b) 13...b6!? 14 a3 ♗c5 15 b4 ♗e6 16 ♗f3! (Black has no problems after 16 ♖b3 ♕a6 17 f3 ♗h5 18 ♕f2 ♗ed8 19 ♕f1 ♗hf4 20 g3 ♗h5 21 ♖g2 f5 22 ♗ab1 ♗ac8 23 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 24 ♗d1 ♗xd1 25 ♗xd1 fxe4 = A.Karpov-G.Kasparov, 5th matchgame, New York 1990), when Black can count on good play after 16...♗d7!? (intending ...f7-f5) 17 ♗c1 a5 or 17 b5 ∞ Wahls. Other moves give White better chances; e.g. 16...♗h5 17 ♗ac1 f6 18 ♗b1 ♖f7 19 ♕f1 ♗b8 20 a4 ♗b7 21 b5 c5 22 ♗d5 ♗hf4 23 a5 += R.Cifuentes Parada-Y.Visser, Groningen 1990: or 16...c5 17 ♗d5! ♗xd5 18 cxd5 ♗d4 19 ♕d3 ♗xf3+ 20 gxf3 ♕xh3 (S.Halkias-H.Banikas, Greek Ch. 2004) 21 ♕b5! ♗ed8 22 ♕g5 +/-.

#### 14 b4 ♗e6 15 c5 ♗d4 16 ♕d3 a5

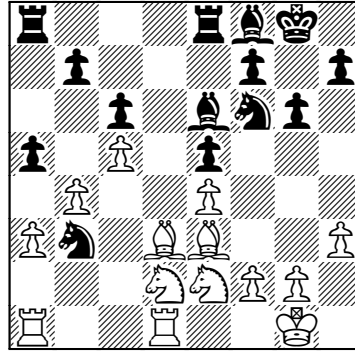
Not 16...b6?! 17 ♖b3! ♗xb3 18 axb3 ♕e6 19 ♕c4 ♕xc4 20 bxc4 bxc5 21 b5 cxb5 22 cxb5 ♗eb8 23 ♗a6 += R.Cifuentes Parada-M.Sion Castro, Ampuriabrava 1997.

But the immediate 16...♕e6 is possible; e.g. 17 ♗e2 ♗xe2+ 18 ♕xe2 a5 (or 18...♗ad8 19 ♗dc1 ♗h5 20 ♗c4 ♗f4 21 ♕f1, B.Gelfand-Z.Kozul, Portoroz 2001, 21...♗d3!? 22 ♕xd3 ♗xd3 23 ♗xe5 ♗a3 24 ♗c4 ♗a4 25 ♗d6 ♗b8 with counterplay, Gelfand) 19 a3 ♗ed8 20 f3 ♗h5 21 ♖h2 ♗f4 22 ♕f1 ♗d3 += V.Shtyrenkov-M.Annaberdiyev, Alushta 2007.

#### 17 a3 ♕e6 18 ♗e2

Cifuentes suggests 18 ♗ab1 axb4 19 axb4 ♗a3 20 ♗dc1 and if 20...♗b3?! 21 ♗xb3 ♗xb3 (not 21...♕xb3? 22 ♗b5! cxb5 23 ♗c3 +/-) 22 ♗xb3 ♕xb3 23 ♗a1 ♗d8 24 ♕e2 +/-.

#### 18...♗b3!? (D)



Taking advantage of the inclusion of a2-a3. Otherwise 18...♗xe2+ 19 ♕xe2 returns to 16...♕e6 above. Black seems to have good counterplay in either case.

Two examples after the text:

a) 19 ♗xb3 ♕xb3 20 ♗db1 a4 21 ♗e1 ♗h5 22 g4 ♗g7 23 ♗c1 ♕e6 24 ♕c2 h5 25 f3 ♕c4 26 ♗e2 ♗e6 27 ♗ad1 ♕e7 28 ♗d2 ♗ed8 29 ♗ed1 ∞ M.Shukurova-K.Kachiani, European Women's Ch., Kusadasi 2006.

b) 19 ♗ab1 ♗xd2 20 ♕xd2 axb4 21 axb4 ♗a2 22 ♖f1 ♗d7 23 ♗a1 ♗ea8 24 ♗xa2 ♗xa2 25 ♖e1 f6 26 ♗c1 ♖f7 27 f3 ½-½ P.Kiriakov-V.Isupov, Russian Team Ch. 1999.

#### B2: 8...♗g4 (D)

As usual this is logical and natural when White's bishop is on e3. Black frees his ...f7-pawn with tempo.