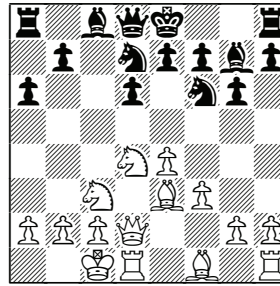


Chapter Two



The Main Line: Queenside Castling with g4 and h4

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6
5 Nc3 g6 6 Qe3 Qg7 7 f3 a6 8 Kd2
Bbd7 9 O-O-O

Originally I was going to make two separate chapters here: 'The Main Line with 9 O-O-O' and 'An early Pawn Storm with 9 g4 and 10 h4', but these lines often merge. So I have decided to cover these ideas in a single chapter. White's plan in this chapter is by far the most common way of countering the Dragadorf, so it is important for Black to study this chapter especially well.

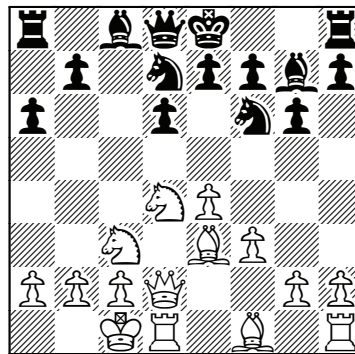
Personally I really enjoy playing against White's set-up here. I believe that Black has plenty of counterattacking chances, which ensure him a good game. One thing is guaranteed: the game will be interesting.

Black often relies on the ...d5-break in this variation, as in Game 11, Shirov-Williams. This way of playing would seem sufficient for Black, but there may be an even more promising method:

12...Ne5!? which is seen in Game 14. At the moment this variation is certainly not going to scare a Dragadorf player.

Game 11 A.Shirov-S.Williams British League 2004

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6
5 Nc3 g6 6 Qe3 Qg7 7 f3 a6 8 Kd2
Bbd7 9 O-O-O



Queenside castling is the most critical line against the Dragon, so it cannot be a bad idea here. This is what most white players will play against the Dragadorf, so it is well worth knowing what the best way to react against it is.

9...b5

This is the most obvious way to start a counterattack. Black can obviously consider other moves too, though:

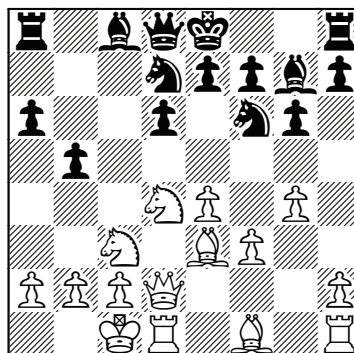
a) 9...h5?! looks a bit slow to me. Black is trying to defend against 10 ♗h6, but as we will see later in this chapter, Black shouldn't fear this move. Moreover, 9...h5?! does commit Black at a very early stage and one of the main assets of the Dragadorf is its flexibility. The game A.Motylev-A.Hernandez, Minneapolis 2005, continued 10 ♗g5!? (White switches to action in the centre, trying to show that with the pawn on h5 Black has seriously damaged his position) 10...♞c7 11 ♗d3 b5 12 ♞he1 ♗b7 13 ♘d5! ♗xd5 (or 13...♘xd5 14 exd5 ♗xd4? 15 ♞xe7+ ♙f8 16 ♞f4 and White has a sizeable edge) 14 exd5 with a big advantage for White.

b) There is no real need for 9...h6!? either, but it doesn't create as many weaknesses as 9...h5?!; at least the g5-square is covered. Personally, though, I would only consider ...h6 once White has developed his bishop to c4 as in Chapter One. Here 10 h4 is more critical than 10 ♗c4 with a transposition.

10 g4

This is the most obvious way for White to continue. Other critical moves

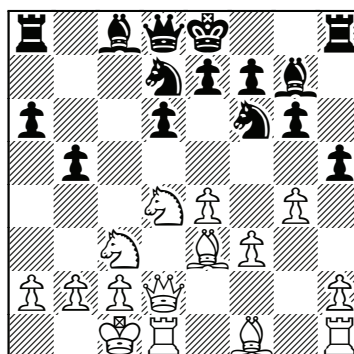
will be looked at further on in this chapter.



10...♗b7

The most logical way to proceed; Black develops his last piece and makes way for ...♞c8. This move will be the main focus of my efforts, but other options include:

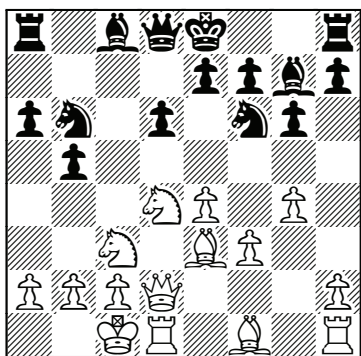
a) 10...h5?! is again misguided.



A rule worth bearing in mind is: Black only needs to play ...h5 once White has pushed *both* his g- and h-pawns to the fourth rank. That way White creates the threat of h5 which seriously cramps Black on the kingside, but otherwise Black should save a

tempo and play a more useful move. Here after 11 g5 ♖h7 12 f4 White reached a good position in J.Windelband-U.Mehlhorn, German League 2002. Instead 12 ♘c6?! is a tactic worth keeping an eye out for, but it doesn't work here: 12...♚c7 13 ♘xe7? ♙xc3! and Black has a big advantage.

b) Black should always beware when moving the knight with 10...♘b6?! as White often has some tactical resources available:



b1) 11 ♘c6!? ♚c7 12 ♘xe7 ♙xe7 13 ♙xb6 ♚xb6 14 g5 is one tempting possibility.

b2) 11 ♙h6 was played in R.Duarte Barahona-J Rojas Alarcon, Mexico City 2007, and White quickly obtained a good position after 11...♙xh6 12 ♚xh6 ♙b7 13 e5! b4 14 exf6 bxc3 15 fxe7 cxb2+ 16 ♙b1 ♚xe7 17 ♙b5+! ♙d8. Now White got carried away with 18 ♘f5?, whereas 18 ♚he1 would have left him with a very good position.

c) 10...♘e5?! sees Black want to leave the d7-square open for his other knight on f6. The problem is that White can strike immediately in the centre as

he did in the game F.Anderson-J.Enevoldsen, Munich Olympiad 1958, which continued 11 g5! ♘fd7 12 f4! (straightforward play!) 12...♘c4 (12...♘g4 13 ♙g1 leaves Black's knight on g4 stranded) 13 ♙xc4 bxc4 14 ♘c6! ♚c7 15 ♘xe7! with a winning advantage.

Returning to 10...♙b7:

11 g5

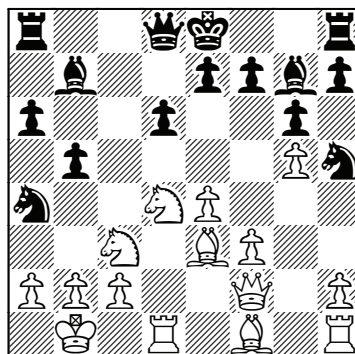
11 h4 h5 will be looked at in Game 16.

11...♘h5 12 ♘ce2

White plans to open up the h-file after a subsequent exchange on g3, but this move also loses control of the centre, especially the d5-square. White's other options include:

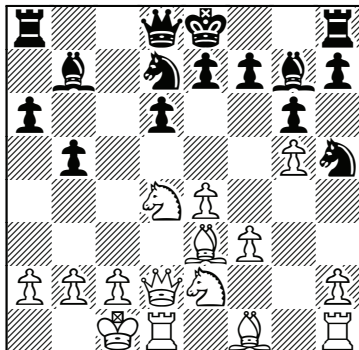
a) 12 ♙e2 is the subject of Game 15.

b) 12 ♙b1? was chosen in T.Hirneise-E.Agrest, Copenhagen 2007, in which Black employed a novel concept: 12...♘b6 13 ♚f2 ♘a4!?.

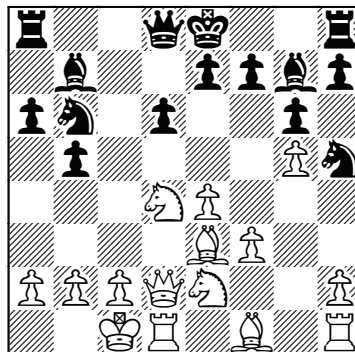


A surprising idea! Agrest opens the b-file for his rook to attack down and after 14 ♘xa4 bxa4 15 ♙c4 ♚c7 16 ♙d5 ♚b8 (pressuring b2) 17 c4 0-0 (White has a long way to go before he can get

to the black king) 18 ♖xb7 ♜xb7 19 ♝c1 ♜b4 20 ♜d2 ♜fb8 Black had the advantage.



the black knight to d7) 13...0-0 14 ♖g4 ♜e5!? 15 ♖xc8 ♜xc8 White should have played 16 b3 when it is hard to see much compensation for Black.



12...♗b6

Black has some other possibilities:

a) 12...d5 may be slightly premature; it is probably better for Black to determine the position of his knight on d7 before playing this move. The game D.Sokolov-G.Panko, Sochi 2007, continued 13 exd5 ♖xd5? (13...♗b6 may be a better way to continue: for example, 14 ♜c3 b4 15 ♜e4 ♜xd5 with an unclear position) 14 ♜f5! ♖xf3 15 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 16 ♖h3 and White had a vicious attack. If you ever have a son and want him to become a good chess player, then calling him Sokolov is probably a good idea!

b) If I reached this position again, 12...♜e5!? would be my choice – see Game 14.

c) 12...♝c8?! was Black's choice in the stem game S.Haslinger-C.Ward, British Championship, Scarborough 2004; the game which convinced me to play the Dragadorf against Shirov! However, after 13 ♖h3! (tying down

13 ♜g3 ♜xg3 14 hxg3 d5! 15 exd5?!

A bad decision. White does better here with both 15 ♜b3!? and 15 ♜f2, as we will see in the next two games.

15...♜xd5

Both this and 15...♜xd5 look fine for Black, but having a queen on d5 does put immediate pressure on White's queenside.

16 b3

After 16 ♖b1 ♜d8 17 ♜a5 ♜d6 18 ♖e2 ♜c4 19 ♖xc4 ♜xc4 Black's two bishops are superior to White's minor pieces, but the position is about equal.

16...♜e5!

Black now has an edge.

17 f4

Shirov, of course, avoids 17 ♖b1? ♖xf3.

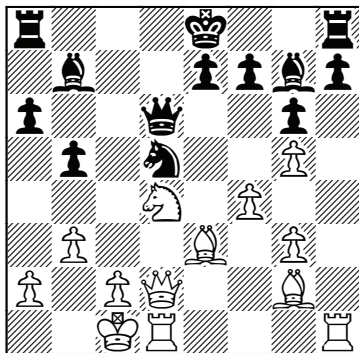
17...♜d6

Preparing a possible check on a3 with the queen.

18 ♖g2 ♜d5?!

A small mistake. I should have gone

on the offensive with 18...♗xg2! 19 ♖xg2 ♜d5 20 ♜xb5 (White is forced to accept the pawn sacrifice, as otherwise he will just be worse) 20...axb5 21 ♜xd5 (21 ♖xd5? ♖a3+ 22 ♙d2 ♜d8) 21...♖a3+ 22 ♙d2 ♜c8 with a dangerous attack. Moreover, this is just the kind of thing you want against one of the best attackers in the world!



19 ♗xd5 ♗xd5

The two bishops give an edge.

20 ♜he1 ♖a3+?

Patzer sees a check! Two other moves sprang to mind:

a) 20...0-0! makes a lot more sense.

Black is in no danger on the kingside, so why not bring the h8 rook into play?

b) 20...♗f3 was my first intention, but I went off the idea after 21 ♖a5 ♗xd1 22 ♜xb5 ♖c6 23 ♜c7+ ♙f8 24 ♜xd1 ♜c8 25 ♖c5! when White is better.

21 ♙b1 0-0 22 ♖d3

After 22 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 23 ♗xc1 Black has a small advantage.

22...♜fd8 23 ♗c1 ♖c5 24 ♗b2 ♗b7 25 ♖e3 ♜d7 26 ♜d3 ♜ad8 27 ♜ed1 e5?

A premature push, giving away any advantage that Black had. Better op-

tions were 27...a5! and maybe 27...b4.

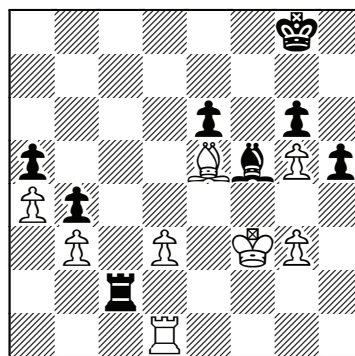
28 fxe5 ♖xe5 29 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 30 ♜e6!

The game should really end in a draw now with correct play.

30...♜xd3 31 cxd3 fxe6 32 ♗xe5 ♗e4 33 ♙c2 ♗f5 34 ♙c3 a5 35 a4 ♜c8+ 36 ♙d4 b4 37 ♙e3 ♜c2 38 ♙f3 h5??

But not this! The panic button was pushed in time trouble, but I could have kept my cool with 38...♗h3 with the idea of rerouting the light-squared bishop around to d5 via g2. White should take the draw here with 39 ♙e3 ♗f5 40 ♙f3.

38...♜c5 is another way to draw.



39 gxf6 g5 40 g4 ♗g6

The extra h6-pawn comes in handy.

White is now close to winning.

41 ♙e3 ♜c5 42 ♗g7 ♜c8 43 ♙d2! e5 44 ♗xe5 ♗f7 45 ♜f1 ♗xb3 46 ♜f5 ♗xa4 47 ♜xg5+

Game, set and match!

47...♙h7 48 ♗f4 ♜g8 49 ♜xa5 ♗e8 50 ♜a7+ ♙g6 51 ♜e7 ♜f8 52 ♜g7+ ♙f6 53 ♗g5+ ♙e5 54 h7 1-0

A pity as it would have been nice to have beaten a 2700+ player in my first Dragadorf outing!