

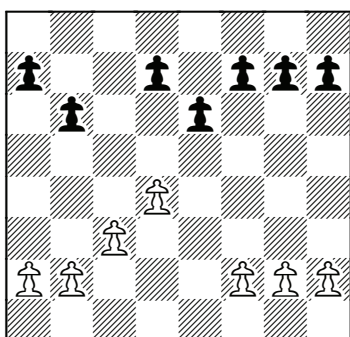
# Chapter Three

## London versus Queen's Indian

In this chapter we consider lines where Black adopts the Queen's Indian set-up with ...b6 and ...♗b7.

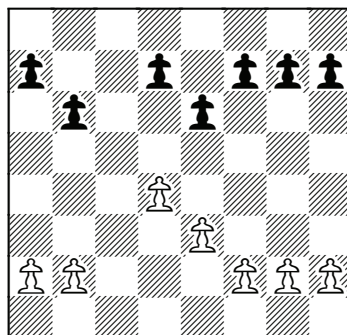
If Black plays ...c5 and ...cxd4, White has a choice of recaptures:

### 1. White recaptures with exd4



This asymmetrical recapture sharpens play. White usually builds an attack on the kingside by using the open e-file and gradually transferring pieces to that wing (see Games 25-26).

### 2. White recaptures towards the centre with cxd4



If Black later plays ...d5, the game transposes to an ...e6 version of the Exchange Slav. If Black holds back his d-pawn then White gains a useful space advantage with e3-e4. There are several demonstrations by Prié in this chapter of how to play the White pieces in the cxd4 lines (see Games 27-29).

White normally plays h2-h3 at some point to give the bishop an escape

square on h2, but not always. Blatny does not consider ...♘h5 to be a threat and ignores it, playing ♕e2!?, 0-0-0!? and h4 going for opposite-wing attacks. He reasons that if Black chooses ...♘h5xf4, Black is moving his knight three times to take a bishop which has moved only once and also strengthens White's grip over e5. It is an interesting idea which almost certainly will throw your opponents (see Games 32-33).

Miles-Gurevich (Game 34) and Meduna-Vavrak (Game 35) provide examples of 5 c4!?, which tends to take the game into more mainstream Queen's Indian waters. London purists tend to refrain from the move c4 and favour the more conservative 5 ♘bd2 and 6 c3 lines. My philosophy is to play both and mix it up. The more you expand your flexibility in the London, the more weapons there are in your arsenal.

**Game 25**  
**L.Christiansen-G.Peter**  
Bad Mergentheim 1988

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 b6 4 e3 ♗b7 5 ♗d3 ♗e7 6 h3**

A well timed h3. Black is ready to play ...♘h5 once the bishop is posted on e7.

**6...c5**

6...♗a6?! 7 c4! simply loses a tempo for Black, since he will almost certainly need to redevelop the bishop to b7 later.

**7 c3 0-0 8 0-0 ♘c6 9 ♘bd2 cxd4 10 exd4**

The asymmetrical recapture sharpens the game and increases White's winning (and losing!) chances.

**10...d6 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 ♘c4**

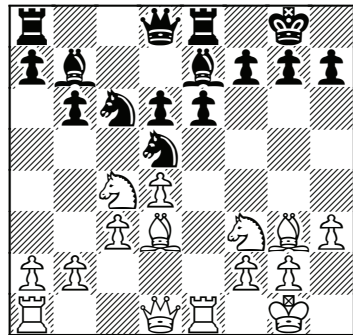
An improvement over 12 ♗g3 ♗d7 13 a4 ♗f8 14 ♗b5?! ♘d5 15 ♘b3 ♘c7 16 ♗d3 g6 17 a5?! b5 18 ♘g5 ♘e7! 19 ♘e4 ♘ed5 20 h4 f5! 21 ♘g5 ♗g7 22 f4? (halting ...e5 at much too high a price) 22...♘f6, B.Soos-R.Hübner, Bad Mergentheim 1979. All White has managed to do with his baroque manoeuvres is to weaken a multitude of light squares: h5, g4, e4, and d5.

**12...♘d5**

I would have tried for activity on the queen's wing with 12...b5 13 ♘e3 a6.

**13 ♗g3!**

Displaying real depth of understanding. By playing to g3 rather than h2, White prepares h4! planting the seeds of his kingside attack.



**13...g6?!**

Black may be forced to play this move eventually, but he should at least make White work to force it.

**14 a4 a6 15 h4!**

Serving a double purpose:

1. White may chip away at Black's kingside cover with a future h5; and
2. The h4-pawn may provide a launching pad for a knight heading to g5.

**15...♘a5!?**

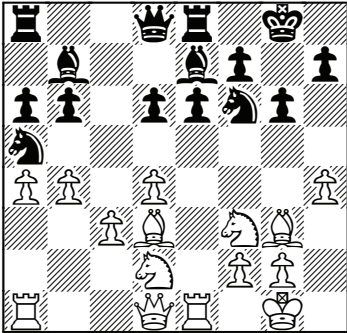
An idea borrowed from the Sicilian.

**16 ♖cd2**

White prefers to keep all the pieces on the board for his kingside attack.

16 ♖xa5 bxa5 creates long-term pawn weaknesses on the queenside, but this would be offset by the pressure Black gains down the b-file.

**16...♗f6 17 b4!**



Playing a similar plan to the one seen in Larsen-Garcia Padron (Game 5). White agrees to take on a single queenside weakness at c3, reasoning that his kingside attack could be more potent than Black's queenside play.

**17...♗c6 18 ♖g5!**

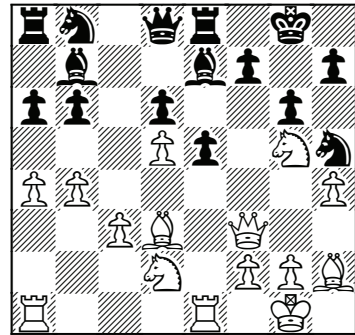
Eyeing future sacs on h7, f7 and e6. Of course, White would love it if Black played the weakening ...h6.

**18...♗h5 19 ♕h2 e5!**

Meeting White's wing attack with a central counter.

Black pays for it if he takes the pawn: 19...♕xg5?! 20 hxg5 ♖xg5? 21 ♗e4 ♖e7 (21...♗d8?? loses to 22 ♗xd6 ♗e7 23 ♕e4! ♗d7 24 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 25 b5) 22 ♗xd6 ♗ed8 23 ♗c4! wins a pawn and Black's king position also looks vulnerable on the dark squares.

**20 d5 ♖b8 21 ♖f3!**



**21...♗f8!**

Black finds the only move to keep him in the game. For example:

a) 21...♕xg5? 22 hxg5 ♖xg5 23 ♗c4! hits d6 and b6, the weakest links in Black's pawn chain. If 23...♗d8, then 24 ♖e3! regains the pawn with a clear advantage.

b) 21...♗f6?! 22 c4 b5? 23 cxb5! ♕xd5 24 ♗de4 ♗fd7! 25 ♗ad1 f5? 26 ♗xd6!! ♕xf3 27 ♕c4+ and White regains the queen with interest.

**22 ♗xh7! ♖xh7 23 ♖xh5+ ♖g7 24 ♖f3 ♕xh4 25 ♗c4!**

Threatening 26 ♗xd6.

**25...♕e7 26 a5 ♗d7 27 axb6 ♗xb6 28**

## Play the London System

♖xb6 ♗xb6 29 c4! ♖xb4?

He can't get away with this.

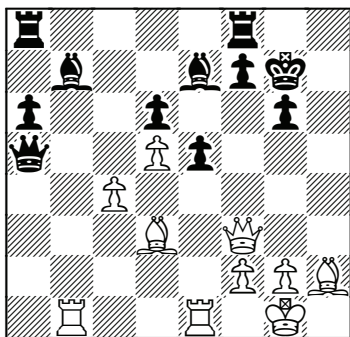
Black should turn his attention to the h-file with 29...♖h8! 30 ♖ab1 ♖h7 31 c5 ♗c7 32 g4 ♖ah8 33 ♕g3 ♕c8 with a tense and difficult-to-assess situation. White exerts strong pressure in the centre and on the queenside while Black's play on the h-file also looks menacing. The game looks dynamically balanced.

30 ♖ab1

30 ♖eb1? ♗c3! allows Black to get away with his pawn grab.

30...♗a5

Black relied on this trick to save his bishop on b7. But he missed White's next move:



31 ♖xe5!!

This powerful shot demolishes Black's defensive barrier.

31...dxe5

If Black declines the gift, hoping to get counterplay with the passed a-pawn, White wins material. For example, 31...♗c7 32 ♖e2 ♖fe8 33 ♗e3! ♕c8 34 ♗b6 ♗xb6 35 ♖xb6 a5 36 c5! dxc5

37 ♕b5 ♕d8 38 ♖xe8 ♕xb6 39 ♕c6! winning a piece.

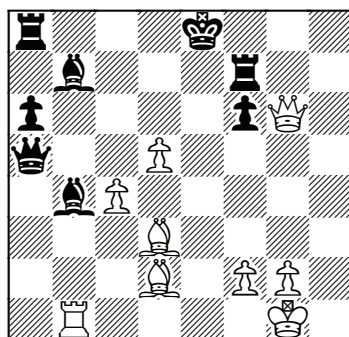
32 ♕xe5+ f6

32...♗g8? 33 ♗h3 f6 34 ♕xg6 ♖f7 35 ♕xf7+ ♗xf7 36 ♗h7+ ♗f8 37 ♗h6+! ♗f7 38 ♕xf6! puts Black away.

33 ♗g4! ♖f7 34 ♗xg6+ ♗f8 35 ♕f4 ♕b4

Or 35...♕c8 36 ♕h6+ ♗e8 37 ♗g8+ ♖f8 38 ♕xf8 ♕xf8 39 ♕g6+ and White mates.

36 ♕h6+ ♗e8 37 ♕d2!



Another computer shot. IM Jack Peters once advised me that if you are paired against GM Christiansen, never ever allow him an open position where he has the initiative, even if he offers material for it. This game proves his point!

37...♕xd2 38 ♖xb7 ♗a1+ 39 ♕f1 1-0

## Summary

If Black has weakened his kingside with ...g6, remember the trick ♕g3! (instead of ♕h2) to force h4!. This manoeuvre will allow you either to further erode Black's kingside with h5 or to post a

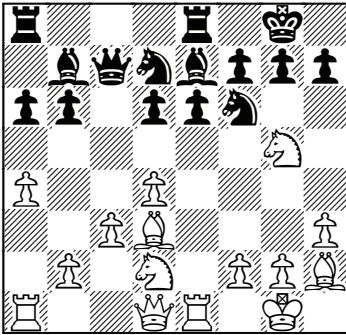
knight on g5, strengthening your attack.

**Game 26**  
**D.Kosic-M.Drasko**  
 Belgrade 1994

**1 d4 e6 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♙f4 b6 4 e3 ♙b7 5 ♘bd2 ♙e7 6 h3 c5 7 c3 0-0 8 ♙d3 cxd4 9 exd4**

If you prefer to lead the game towards a more strategic path, then 9 cxd4 is White's best shot at a low-risk try for the advantage (see the next game).

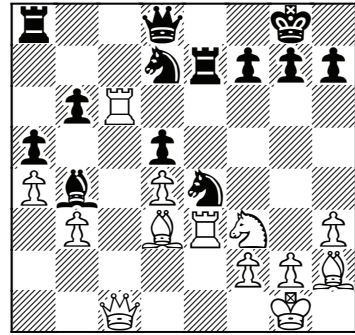
**9...d6 10 0-0 ♘bd7 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 ♙h2 a6 13 a4 ♚c7 14 ♘g5!?**



Not a bad idea, to provoke ...h6.

In a more recent game in this position, Kamsky focused on the other wing and seized space with 14 c4. G.Kamsky-S.Tiviakov, Montreal 2007, continued 14...a5?! (Tiviakov didn't want White to continue gaining space on the queenside, but this move creates a hole on b5, which Kamsky immediately

pounces on) 15 ♖b1! (despite the loss of time, Kamsky optimizes the knight's position, heading for b5) 15...♚d8 16 ♘c3 d5 17 b3 ♙b4 18 ♖c1 ♖c8 (White gets a pawn for the exchange and a good position after 18...♘e4!? 19 ♘xe4! dxe4 20 ♙xe4 ♙xe1 21 ♙xb7 ♖a7) 19 ♖e3 ♘f8!? (exchanging on c4 would only help White) 20 ♘b5 ♘e4 21 ♖c2! (Kamsky comes up with a deep plan to get the bishop pair and to take control of the c-file) 21...♖e7 22 ♚c1! ♘d7 23 ♘a7! ♖a8 24 cxd5! exd5 (24...♖xa7? 25 ♙xe4 exd5 26 ♙xd5! clips a pawn due to the pin trick on c8) 25 ♘c6 ♙xc6 26 ♖xc6.



White has huge strategic advantages in this position:

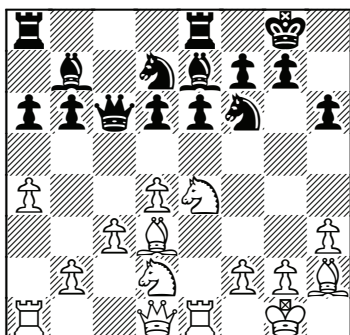
1. Total control of the c-file;
2. The bishop pair in a semi-open position; and
3. A grip on the queenside light squares b5 and c6.

Tiviakov was unable to shake off the positional pressure for the remainder of the game.

**14...h6 15 ♘ge4 ♚c6?!**

## Play the London System

The position looks dead even, yet Black must still play carefully to fully equalize. Trading down would be logical, starting with 15...♖xe4! 16 ♖xe4 ♗f6 17 ♖xf6+ ♙xf6 18 ♔g4 ♜ad8 19 ♙f4 ♚f8 with a solid game.



**16 ♔f3! ♖xe4**

16...♙f8? drops a pawn after 17 ♙xd6! ♙xd6 18 ♖xd6 ♔xd6 19 ♔xb7.

**17 ♙xe4!**

Forcing Black's next move.

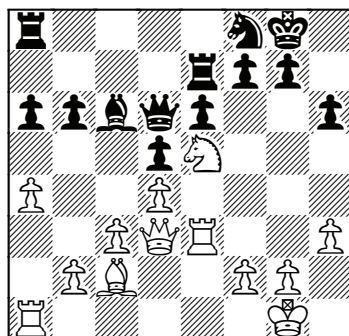
**17...d5 18 ♙c2 ♙d6?!**

Black allows himself to be saddled with a rotten remaining bishop in order to relieve some of the pressure on his kingside. The problem with this plan is that it really doesn't make Black's king all that much safer.

Black should try and create some counterplay by setting his minority attack in motion with 18...b5 19 ♔d3 ♗f8 20 ♖f3 b4 21 ♖e5 ♔c8 22 ♜e3! bxc3 23 bxc3. White's attacking chances outweigh any trouble he may later have defending his only weakness on c3. Still, this looks better for Black than the passive continuation he

picked in the game.

**19 ♙xd6 ♔xd6 20 ♔d3 ♗f8 21 ♖f3 ♙c6 22 ♖e5 ♜e7 23 ♜e3!**



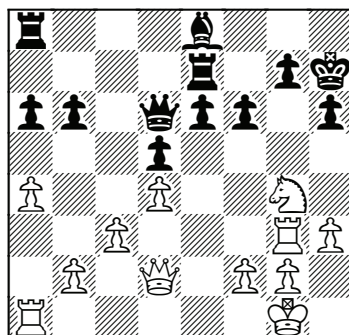
This is the ideal attacking setup for White.

**23...♙e8 24 ♜g3 ♗f6 25 ♖g4 ♚h8 26 ♔d2!**

The deadly threat to sac on h6 or f6 forces Black to create a giant structural weakness in order to protect his king.

**26...f5**

An unfortunate necessity, since 26...♖h7? loses to the pretty combination 27 ♙xh7! ♚xh7



**28 ♔xh6+! ♗xh6 29 ♖xf6+ ♚h8 30 ♜g8 mate.**

27 ♖e5 ♜c8 28 ♞e1 ♞ec7

Better late than never. Black hopes he can stir up some counterplay with ...b5 and ...b4.

29 ♟f3!

The g7-pawn is no longer the target. White gets ready to rip open the kingside with g4.

29...♗g6

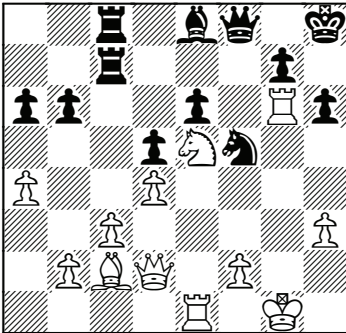
Eliminating an attacker.

If Black pursues his own agenda on the queenside, White arrives first: 29...b5 30 axb5 axb5 31 g4 fxg4 32 hxg4 b4 33 g5 and now:

a) 33...h5 34 g6! ♜e7 35 ♞h3 h4 36 ♟f4 bxc3 37 ♞xh4+ ♔g8 38 ♞e3!. If you have the guns, engage them. Swinging the rook over to h3 is decisive.

b) 33...bxc3 34 ♟f4! ♔g8 35 gxh6 cxb2 36 ♟xf8+! ♟xf8 37 h7+ ♔h8 38 ♞xf8 mate.

30 g4 ♗h4 31 ♞g3 ♟f8 32 gxf5 ♘xf5 33 ♞g6!



Using a fork tactic to add heat to e6, the base of Black's pawn structure.

33...♞e7 34 ♟f4 ♔g8?!

Black puts up a better fight with

34...b5 but should still lose in a line like 35 axb5 axb5 36 ♞a1! b4 37 ♞a6 ♟g8 38 ♘xf5 exf5 39 ♟xf5, hitting the rook on c8 and hanging on to the pawn.

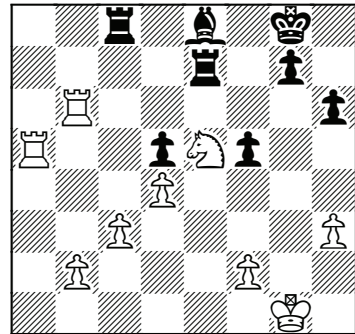
35 ♘xf5 ♟xf5 36 ♟xf5 exf5 37 ♞xb6 ♘xa4 38 ♞xa6

The rest is easy, with White having an extra pawn and the stronger minor piece in the form of the knight.

38...♘c2 39 ♞c1! ♘b3 40 ♞b6 ♘a4

After 40...♘c4? White runs the bishop out of squares on the open board with 41 ♞a1! intending f3, ♔f2 and b3.

41 ♞a1 ♘e8 42 ♞a5



The difference between White's monster on e5 and Black's sorry-looking bishop is quite clear here.

42...♞d8 43 ♔g2 ♔h7 44 ♔g3 ♞c7

Black is helpless to keep White's king out: 44...g5? 45 f4 ♔g7 46 ♞aa6 leads to even more pain.

45 ♔f4 ♘h5 46 f3 ♞cc8

46...g5+ would just be a bluff after 47 ♔xf5! ♞f8+ 48 ♞f6!, halting the would-be counterattack.

47 h4 ♞a8 48 ♞xa8 ♞xa8 49 ♞b5 1-0