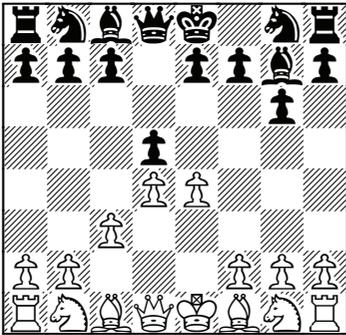


Chapter Three

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

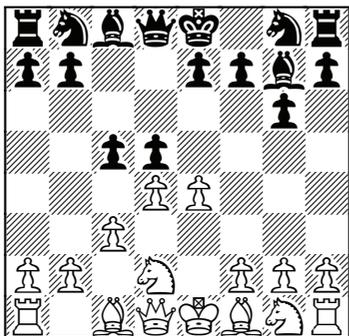
Tiviakov plays a Tarrasch-style line against the Sniper, but I had prepared an ambitious idea.

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

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long-term compensation.



5 dxc5 ♗f6! 6 exd5

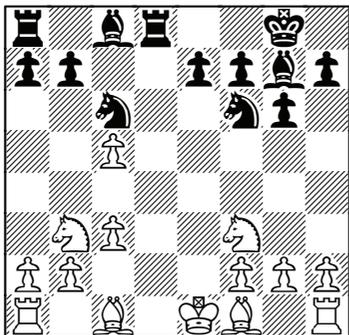
Alternatively, 6 ♖b5+ ♗d7 7 ♗xd7+ ♗bxd7 8 exd5 ♗xc5 and Black stands well.

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

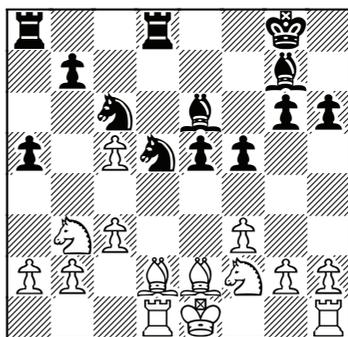
Further central costs for White, as the knight is forced to the rim.

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.

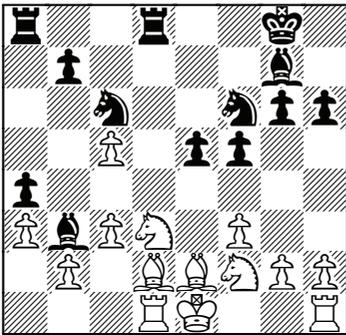


19 ♗c1 a4 20 a3 ♗f6

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?

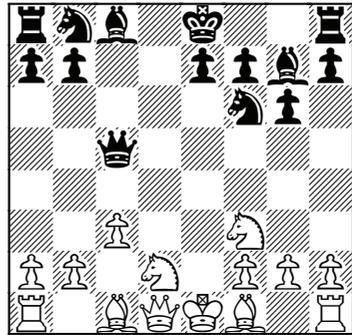
The remaining moves of the game are too painful for me to add – I just got outplayed.

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.

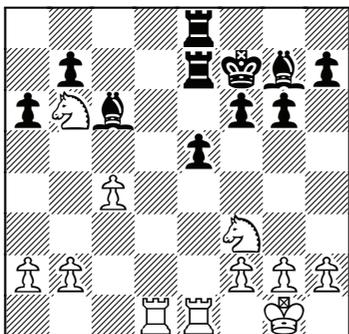
10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e1 e5 12 ♙g5 ♖e8 13 ♘bd2 a6 14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15 ♙xd7 ♙xd7

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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.

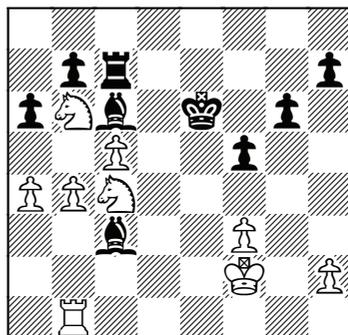
31...f5

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

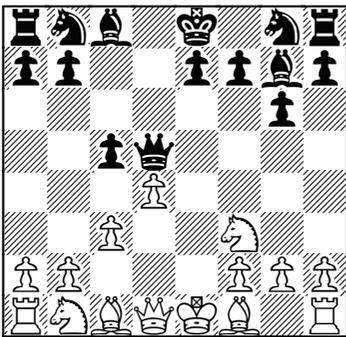
This game saw Black acquire the two bishops, although White's centralized pieces were equal to them. Black had some good opportunities to fight for the advantage – specifically 9...♗c6 can be recommended.

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

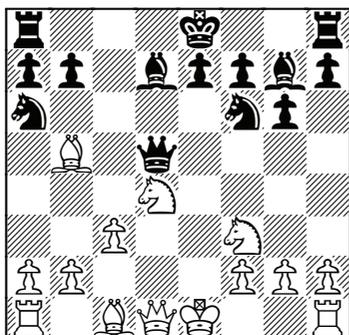
The Sniper

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

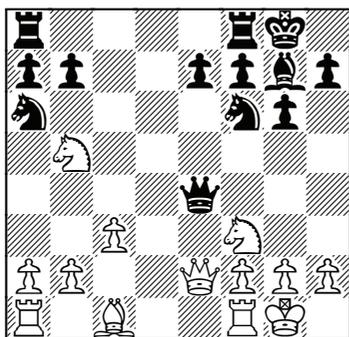


Black has a slight lead in development, ensuring an equal game.

10 ♗e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♘b5

11...♘c5!? is also a good try.

12 ♘b5 ♗e4



Black has no weaknesses and enjoys a level position.

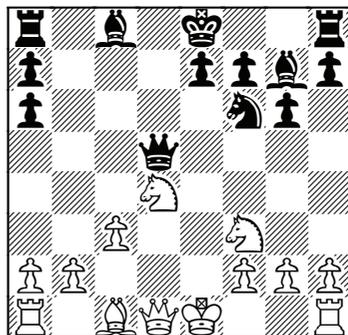
13 ♖e1 ♗xe2 14 ♖xe2 e6 15 ♘e3 b6 16 ♘d4 ♖fc8 17 ♘e5 ♘e8 18 f4 ♘ac7 19 ♘xc7 ♘xc7 20 c4 ♘e8 21 b3 ♖d8 22 ♖d1 f6 23 ♘f3 ♖f7 24 ♖de1 ½-½

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

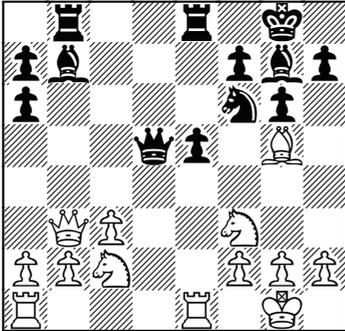
12...♗d6!? is better than 12...e5 as it prepares the initiative-gaining move ...♖b8 with great activity in the middle-

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

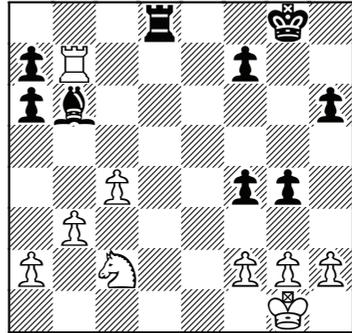
The two-bishop advantage is only an advantage when they are controlling many key squares. Here both are doing so, especially the Sniper's brother.

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.