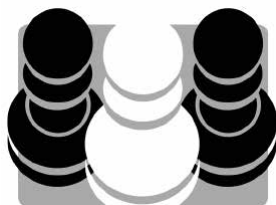


REIMAGINING 1.E4

By

Nikolaos Ntirlis



Quality Chess

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FOREWORD

by GM Anish Giri

They say that scrolling Twitter (now X) is not good for your chess. They are probably right, but scrolling is how I first came across what must have been the inspiration behind the book you are currently holding in your hands. Nikolaos (Nikos) Ntirlis has been consistently posting Twitter threads with interesting, often entirely new opening ideas. Some I liked more than others, but I soon realized that it was definitely worth keeping an eye out for his posts. Others have also recognized the value of Nikos's ideas, as some of them have leaked through and been used in games at the highest levels.

As for me, I didn't stop at merely peeking at the free opening ideas. When I looked at Nikos's recommendation against the Sveshnikov, I liked it so much that I was happy to steal it for my 1.e4 Chessable course! What can I do? The idea he found was fresh, interesting and tricky for Black to meet, while the alternative of covering 200 lines of the Rossolimo seemed a lot less appealing for author and readers alike. I credited Nikos for the idea, of course, but some guilt remained, and I am glad for the opportunity to write a short foreword to his excellent book.

The story comes full circle, as Nikos has rightfully taken back what was once his, and the anti-Sveshnikov idea is now just one of many potent weapons in the book you are holding, encompassing the entire spectrum of openings stemming from 1.e4. The style of the book is to-the-point and compact. The lines are poisonous, yet clean. An occasional “±” evaluation might ultimately prove to be overoptimistic, but such is the nature of the game, where Black should of course be okay at the end of the day.

As for you, dear reader, I can assure you that getting hold of this book was a good idea. Enjoy your reimaged 1.e4 repertoire!

Anish Giri
The Hague, October 2024

PREFACE

Most opening books are born from tournament practice and/or dedicated chess research. This one has a rather unusual origin story. A couple of years ago, at the company I work for, Databox, I was challenged by the CEO, Pete Caputa, to explore new ways of building a professional presence on social media. After coming up with a relevant plan for LinkedIn, I asked Pete if he wanted something similar on Twitter. He said, “Hey, it seems that you have people from chess that follow you there. Why not leverage your chess background on Twitter (now X) as a learning experiment?” This seed of an idea blossomed into something far greater than either of us could have anticipated.

The threads I posted started getting some attention. Once I figured out the correct structure, they really caught fire, amassing millions of views in total. Top grandmasters started using my ideas in their games. Nakamura, in one of his YouTube videos, mentioned that he played a certain anti-Catalan line because he saw it on Twitter. He tried to recall my name, but couldn’t remember it. I know, my name is difficult to pronounce. I forgive him.

Carlsen played plenty of my ideas, including one in a tense game against the rising Indian star Erigaisi. When I asked my followers on X how to name a new line I’d come up with, Aronian made a brilliant suggestion. I started to wonder if I was dreaming all this. Some elite players even contacted me privately, encouraging me to keep posting new ideas, or asking me if I had anything to share against an opening that bothered them. What started as a social media experiment had become a laboratory for fresh chess opening ideas and concepts.

These days, I am mainly a correspondence chess player. The relentless strengthening of chess engines has transformed the way correspondence chess is played. As recently as ten years ago, humans, using our strengths, were still guiding engines – but now the opposite happens. Correspondence chess is challenged by this. Still, the fact that I have advanced to the World Championship finals gives me enough motivation to keep analysing new ideas for my games up to a serious depth. If I ever become a correspondence champion, I assure you that it will be with the help of several of the ideas contained in this book.

I am also helping many ambitious over-the-board players to do well in tournament chess. Openings were always important, but these days their influence seems greater than ever. Not just because you hope to get an edge in the opening – but in some cases, it can be a challenge merely to survive this part of the game. How can you hope to do well if your opponent comes armed with 500 opening lines memorized inside out? Learn 600 lines yourself? It’s hardly a practical solution for most players.

All these experiences have shaped my approach to chess preparation, along with how I worked on this book. I do believe in memorizing opening variations, contrary to what some chess coaches will tell you. I just think that memorization needs to be performed in a smart and practical way. I believe you should focus on memorizing key positions and lines only. And ultimately, understanding the direction in which you should steer the game. That's exactly what this book offers.

For main lines, such as the Berlin, Marshall and Najdorf, you will see the most thorough analysis in the book. These are positions you'll encounter frequently. You'll remember them naturally through practice, as you will not only be playing them, but also preparing these lines for many opponents. Every tournament player is familiar with this experience: you prepare your Najdorf lines against a particular opponent, who surprises you with something completely different. Then a few rounds later, you face another opponent who surprises you with the Najdorf, so you play your prep from the earlier round which is still fresh enough in your memory. That's the nature of main lines. If you have good files on them, you tend to learn these lines through regularly revising and playing them.

What about less common defences such as the Scandinavian, Alekhine, Pirc or Modern? You don't meet them as often, so you only sporadically prepare against and play against them. This makes them dangerous. Against these openings, I give you weapons. Not hundreds of variations, but practical ideas that have a high chance of sticking in your memory. Ideas that you can use even months after you last studied them. Your opponents won't expect to face fresh and challenging concepts in their pet sidelines. That's how you punish them – with a dose of their own medicine.

When Andrew Greet, now the Chief Editor at Quality Chess, saw the first draft of this book, he immediately saw what makes this repertoire different. *Reimagining 1.e4* is exactly what we're doing here. Taking main lines into new territory, presented in a fresh way. Finding surprising paths in side variations, which contain enough venom to hurt our opponents. *Clear, Cunning & Concise* is the style. Andrew and the rest of the Quality Chess team deserve credit for the title of this book. I had in mind something much more boring! With the help of my editors, Andrew and Kostis, I managed to present a 1.e4 repertoire in 304 pages. As should be obvious from the size of the book, I have focused on the most popular and important options that will be relevant in most of your games, offering maximum bang for your buck, rather than trying to cover every variation in detail.

Although top grandmasters have used my ideas, this book will also serve club players who want to do well in openings without memorizing excessive lines. I claim that 1.e4 isn't difficult to learn, if it's done smartly. In every section of this book, you will be presented with clear ideas and plans to give you control of the game. That's what playing White is all about: controlling where the game goes. Whether you're navigating a complex anti-Berlin or springing a surprise against the Scandinavian, you'll know exactly what you're doing.

My thanks go to Pete Caputa for pushing me into chess content creation, and to Quality Chess for believing in this project. Special thanks to the chess community on social media – your feedback helped to shape and refine many of the ideas in this book.

Nikos Ntirlis
Maribor, October 2024

Chapter 11

LOWENTHAL, KALASHNIKOV & SVESHNIKOV

Why  b5?

Lowenthal

Kalashnikov

Sveshnikov — on the way to the main line

Sveshnikov main line

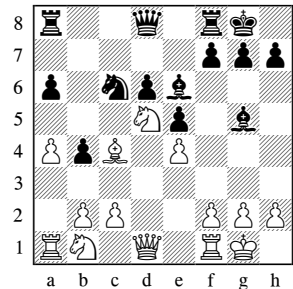
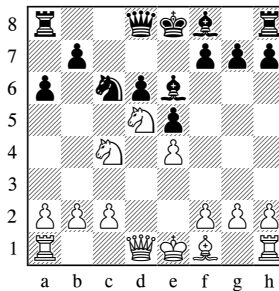
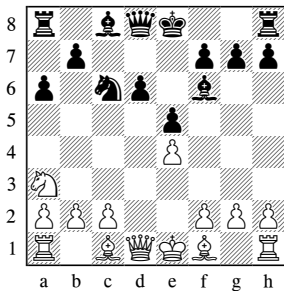
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Introduction

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4

In this chapter, we will focus on Sicilians that are defined by two distinct characteristics. The first one is the knight on c6, and the second one is Black putting the pawn on e5, not caring about the creation of a huge hole on d5. That pawn often goes to e5 in the Najdorf as well, but those positions are vastly different in character. In the Najdorf, Black tries to fight for the control of the d5-square, defending it multiple times. In the Sicilians examined here, d5 is simply abandoned, with Black hoping to gain enough dynamic counterplay to counterbalance that weakness. The three Sicilians that see Black employing such an approach are:

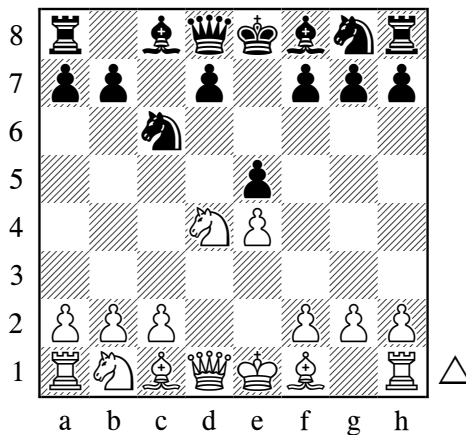
♙ The Lowenthal, reached after 4...e5 5.♗b5 a6?!

♙ The Kalashnikov, which also starts with 4...e5 5.♗b5 but now sees Black playing 5...d6.

♙ And then the most professional of them all, one of the toughest Sicilians to crack, and the choice of Magnus Carlsen for his match against Fabiano Caruana: the Sveshnikov, reached after 4...♗f6 5.♗c3 e5.

Why ♗b5?

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 e5



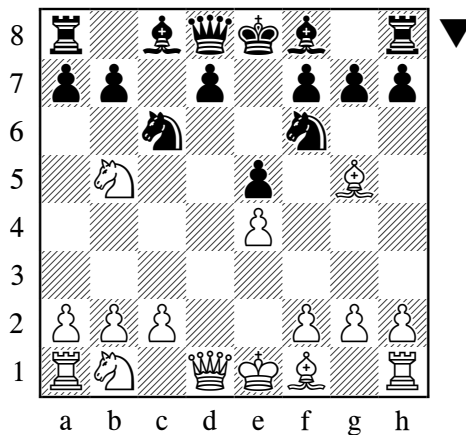
5.♗b5!

“Every school boy knows that 5.♗b5 should be played” – Kasparov. Let’s take a second to appreciate this, as it is crucial to understand the reasoning behind it. If White were to choose any other square for the knight, then Black would almost certainly manage to go ...♗f6 followed by ...d7-d5, striking in the centre and solving all opening problems immediately.

For example, after 5.♗f3?! ♗f6 Black is threatening the e4-pawn and ...d7-d5. 6.♗c3 makes matters worse after 6...♗b4, renewing the threats, and 6.♗g5 can be nicely met with 6...♙a5†!

But this method doesn’t work against 5.♗b5!:

5...♘f6! 6.♙g5!



Black is in some trouble.

In contrast with the line above, when the knight was on f3, 6...♖a5†? can be met with 7.♙d2!, and the threat of a fork on c7 prohibits Black from capturing the e4-pawn.

And the alternative 6...d6 is a worse version of a Sveshnikov, as the b1-knight didn't have to go to c3, so our knights aren't stepping on each other's toes. 7.♙xf6! gxf6 8.♘d2 leaves White with a large positional advantage.

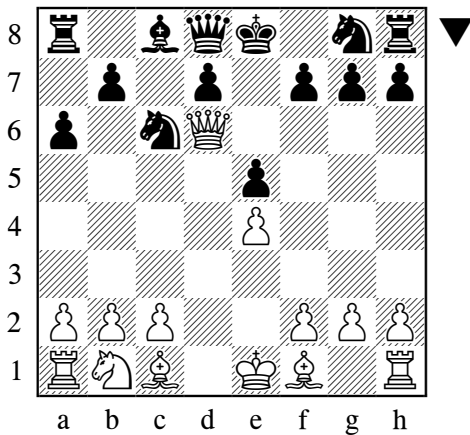
Lowenthal

Now let's move on to studying the easiest of the three Sicilians at hand:

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 e5!? 5.♗b5! a6?!

This line became popular in the 1950s and could be tricky to face, especially at faster time controls.

6.♗d6† ♕xd6 7.♖xd6



Our queen is really annoying on d6, stopping Black from castling as well as from playing ...d7-d6 and developing the c8-bishop. It needs to be kicked away immediately.

7...♖f6

That's the main way to do it.

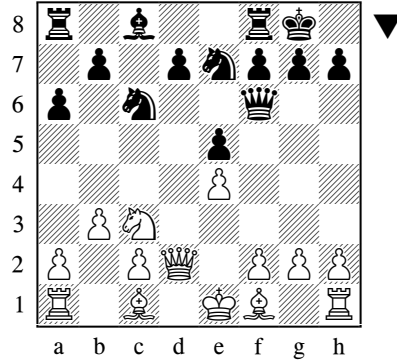
If 7...♖e7, then we can play in the same fashion: 8.♖d2! ♗f6 9.♗c3 d6 10.b3± Followed by ♖b2 and 0-0-0, or even ♖a3 as in Aldokhin – Postny, Internet (blitz) 2023.

8.♖d2!

I like this simple idea which takes away all of Black's counterplay. We want to play ♗c3, b2-b3 and castle long.

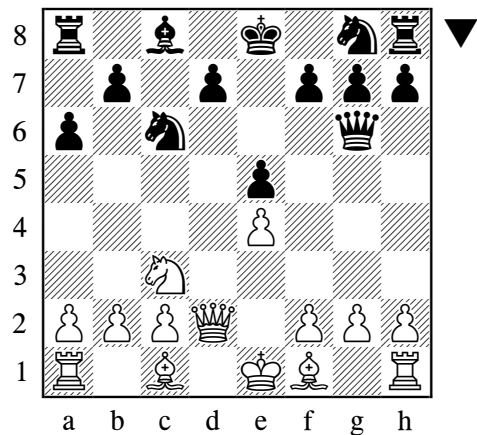
8...♗g6

8...♗ge7 is possibly a better move, but letting us complete development undisturbed is a dangerous business. 9.♗c3 0-0 10.b3



10...d5!? A typical idea for Black. Slow play would have simply led to a position where White has the two bishops, some extra space and the safer king. At least this complicates matters a bit. But it's still unimpressive: 11.♗xd5 ♗xd5 12.exd5 ♗d4 13.♖b2 ♖f5 14.♖d3 e4 15.♖xe4! ♖xe4 16.0-0-0! White was dominating in AllieStein – Stoofvlees, engine game 2019.

9.♗c3



Our plan is simple, and it would lead to a positional catastrophe for Black if we're left alone to execute it. Black has three ways to try and annoy us, the most creative of which is:

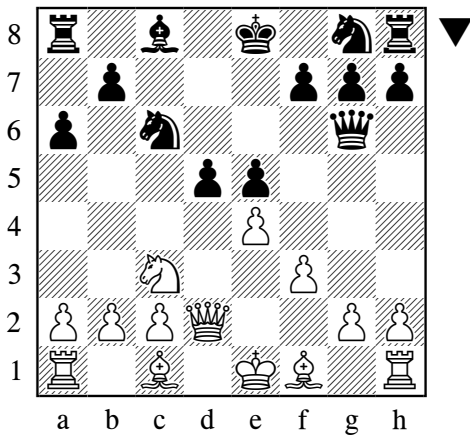
9...d5!?

9...♞f6 can be met with simply protecting the pawn on e4 with 10.f3; but even better is 10.♞d6!±, returning to the scene of the crime. Black needs to move the knight from f6 to oust our queen from her outpost, but then we would take on g6, with a huge advantage in the ensuing endgame. One might wonder: why we didn't take on f6 immediately then, on move 8? Well, this operation of going back and forth will win us an important tempo if you count them carefully.

9...♞ge7 prepares ...d7-d5, which is now sort of a positional threat. One way to contain Black's counterplay is: 10.h4!± h5 11.♞g5!± Black's dynamic counter-chances are diminished if the queens leave the board.

10.f3!

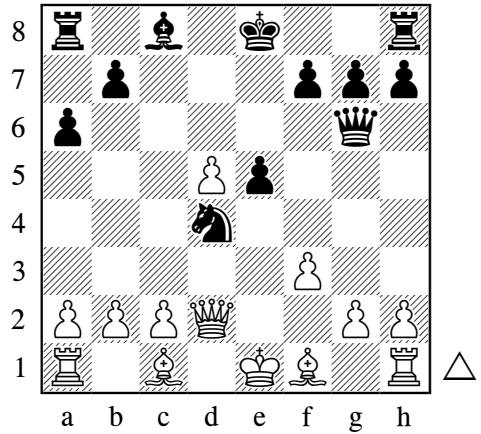
But this determines Black's attempts as unfruitful. It would be nice to remember this move, as it wouldn't be anyone's most intuitive option, since it comes as a surprise. What can Black do now? Pushing the pawn to d4 would stabilize the situation and invite the knight to d5. Taking on e4 would invite the knight to e4, from where it's threatening ♞d6†. So, the only option is to keep the tension:



10...♞ge7

10...♞f6 would transpose to the same thing after 11.♞xd5.

11.♞xd5 ♞xd5 12.exd5 ♞d4



13.♞d1!

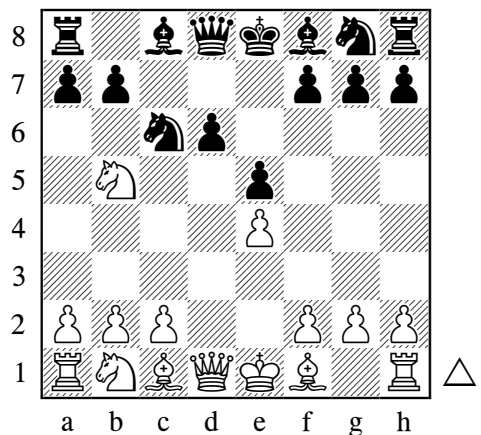
The final important detail. One relevant tactical point is:

13...♞f5? 14.c3 ♞c2 15.g4!±

Black loses material. That's more than enough about this line. Let's move on to a far more serious Sicilian.

Kalashnikov

1.e4 c5 2.♞f3 ♞c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 e5 5.♞b5 d6!



This system started becoming popular in the 1980s. It is a close relative of the Sveshnikov, but it has always been plagued by a somewhat shady reputation. It might not be World Championship material, but it is playable, as proven by the numerous grandmasters that have dabbled in it. We shall meet both this and the Sveshnikov with a solid and relatively rare idea which gained some popularity after, well... a thread of mine on Twitter.

6. ♖1c3

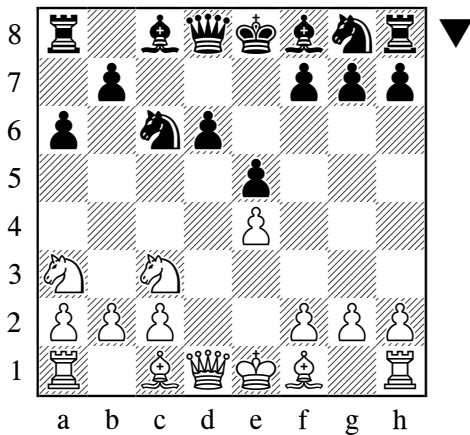
6.c4 is another good approach.

6...a6

We were threatening ♖d5, so the b5-knight had to be pushed back immediately.

The only alternative is 6...♗f6, but that's a transposition straight into the Sveshnikov.

7. ♖a3



7...♗e7!?

This is Black's best idea if the goal is to stay away from the Sveshnikov.

If not, then 7...♗f6 8.♗g5 is another transposition.

7...♗e6 can be nicely met with 8.♗c4!, getting the knight away from its horrible place on a3

and towards the centre. If Black tries to win another tempo against this knight with 8...b5, then after 9.♗e3 the knight is just thankful to be urged towards squares it wanted to go to anyway.

7...b5 can be met with 8.♗ab1! with the idea of ♗d5 and bringing the b1-knight to c3. Black's best move is 8...♗f6, but after 9.♗g5 we transpose to our coverage of the Sveshnikov.

8. ♗d5!

8.♗c4 is the main line, but I like the simplicity of the text move.

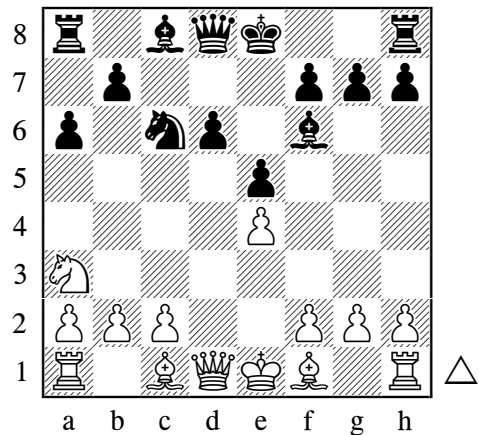
8...♗f6

We were threatening ♗e3, so our knight on d5 had to be challenged.

9. ♗xf6†!

Trading off one protector of the d5-square.

9...♗xf6



10. ♗c4!±

We will play 0-0, ♗e3, c2-c3, develop our queen and bring the rooks to the centre. When Black puts the bishop on e6, we have the option to take on e6 or put our bishop on d5. White has a safe, small edge and the easier moves. For example:

10...0-0 11.0-0 ♖e6 12.♗e3 b5

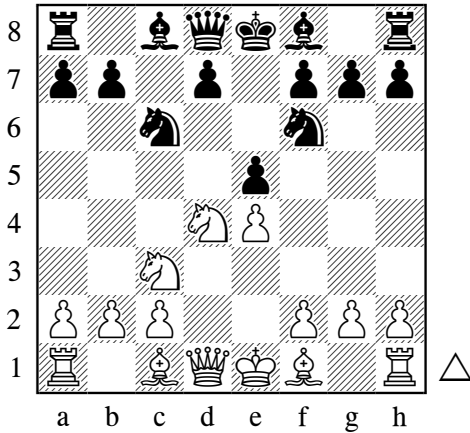
This was Erdogan – Cuenca Jimenez, Internet (blitz) 2023. White put the bishop on d5 which wasn't bad, but another good option is:

13.♗xe6 Nfxe6 14.c4!±

Opening the game would expose the weaknesses in the black structure. It's not much, but White's moves remain easier and there is indeed a tiny edge to work with as well.

Sveshnikov – on the way to the main line

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♟xd4 ♟f6 5.♟c3 e5



Black's system is so sound that the mere existence of the Sveshnikov has forced some White players to turn their attention to the Rossolimo with 3.♗b5 instead of the Open Sicilian with 3.d4. However, I believe that our approach shown below gives White playable positions with some chances of an advantage, which is obviously the maximum one could expect from the Rossolimo as well. Anyway, as noted already multiple times in this book, this concept of something being bulletproof doesn't really apply to levels outside the elite. It's one thing to face Magnus Carlsen's Sveshnikov in a World Championship match – indeed, there might not be a solution against that. It's an

entirely different thing facing anyone else in a normal tournament game. After all, Black's position will be full of weaknesses, and not everyone is able to feel comfortable justifying that.

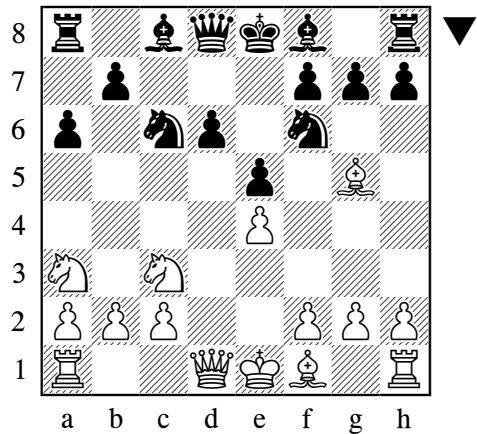
6.♟db5

We already explained at the start of this chapter why our knight needs to choose b5. When we gave that explanation the c3- and f6-knights were still on their starting squares, but the rationale is exactly the same here.

6...d6 7.♗g5

We're threatening ♟d5, possibly precluded by taking on f6. Hence, Black's next move is forced:

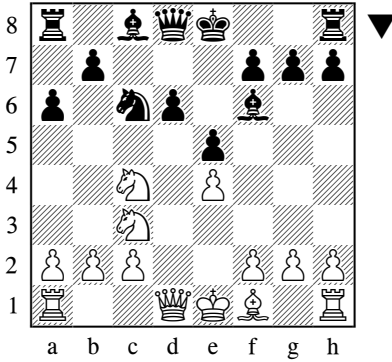
7...a6 8.♟a3



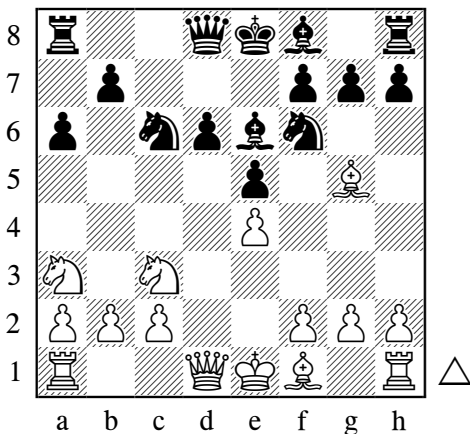
Now the absolute main line is for Black to go 8...b5. But that wasn't the case in the early days of these systems. The occasional sideline still pops up once in a while, the more popular being:

8...♗e6?!

8...♗e7?! is another sensible-looking move. We can play: 9.♗xf6! The fate of this bishop is to sacrifice itself for a bigger cause: controlling the d5-square. 9...♗xf6 10.♟c4



White has managed to bring the usually misplaced a3-knight closer to the centre and the d5-square, and is even ready to stabilize the situation on the queenside with a2-a4. Not only that, but the d6-pawn is also under threat. Black's best practical bet would be to just abandon that pawn with 10...♙e6!, but after 11.♚xd6 ♙e7 12.♜xd8† ♜xd8 13.a3! White has an extra pawn and Black's counterplay is abstract to say the least. White scores more than 70% in my database, and many of the games there are from correspondence chess. In general in the Sveshnikov, "sensible" doesn't cut it for Black, who needs to be active, accurate and concrete. That's why for Black this opening is better suited to experienced players.

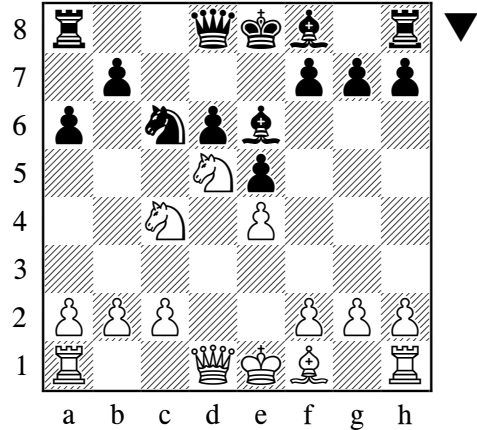


9.♙xf6!

Typical. Once again, the bishop gives itself up for the greater good.

Much more popular is 9.♘c4, which is also good, but the text move is simpler.

9...♚xf6 10.♘d5 ♚d8 11.♘c4



This is just great for White. It's the same type of position that we'll be going for in the main line, but a massively improved version.

11...b5

Trying to develop the f8-bishop actively on h6 with 11...g6?! is logical, since in the Sveshnikov it often goes there by following the path e7-g5-h6, but it also doesn't work well for Black concretely after 12.♘cb6 ♜b8 13.♚d2!±, stopping ...♙h6 and threatening to castle long, as in Lagno – Dzagnidze, Internet (blitz) 2021.

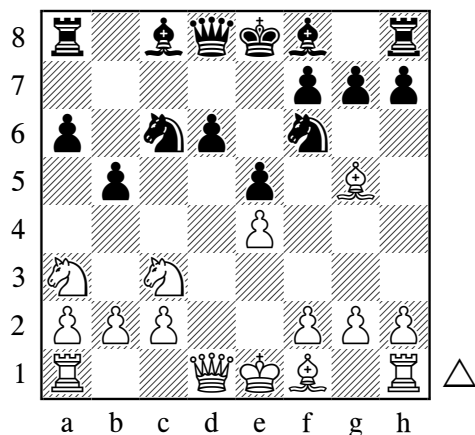
12.♘ce3 ♙e7 13.a4!±

White scores 90% from here in my database.

Sveshnikov main line

Now let's move on to the actual thing people are worried about.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 d6 7.♙g5 a6 8.♘a3 b5



Black's last move prevents our a3-knight from jumping towards the centre and threatens a fork with ...b5-b4. Here I came up with a fresh idea, one which Anish Giri has already mentioned in his kind foreword. It's not a novelty, but it was severely underestimated, and most Black players wouldn't even have considered it as part of their preparation in the past.

9. ♖ab1!?

The idea is simple: we want to play a2-a4 next and then try to take advantage of Black's weaknesses on the queenside.

The two huge main lines are the more positional 9. ♘d5 and the razor-sharp 9. ♙xf6.

9... ♙e7

This is by far the most natural, unpinning the f6-knight.

9... ♙e6 can lead to the same thing: 10.a4 (10. ♙xf6!? is an interesting extra option made possible by Black's slightly inaccurate move order.) 10...b4 11. ♘d5 ♙e7 (11... ♙xd5? runs into 12. ♙xf6!± followed by ♖xd5.) 12. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 13. ♙c4 0-0 We have transposed to the main line examined below.

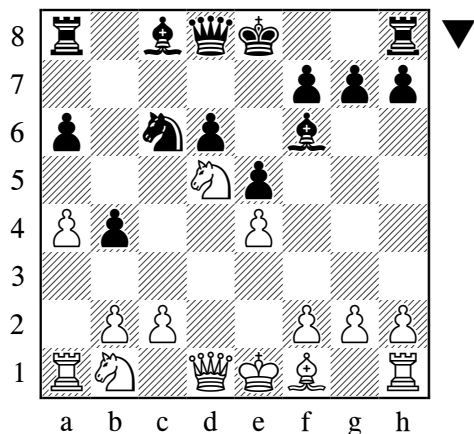
9... ♘e7! is a recent trend. Best is: 10. ♘d2! ♙b7 (Better is 10...d5, but it can still be met

with 11.exd5 ♘exd5 12. ♘de4!N and White retains a small but pleasant advantage. Black's position is loose, and thus not easy to handle.) 11. ♙d3!± Black was left struggling to find counterplay in De Boer – Caruana, Internet (blitz) 2024. Despite the short time control and the rating disparity, White even managed to win against his star opponent.

10. ♙xf6! ♙xf6 11.a4 b4

11... ♘d4 is a rare trick, hoping for 12.axb5 ♙g4; so it is better just to go 12. ♙d3±.

12. ♘d5



By luring the pawn to b4, White has accomplished two things:

1) We have gained the c4-square for our bishop and generally weakened Black's control over the queenside light squares.

2) The pawn on b4 can be attacked with c2-c3.

And that's what we'll do for the next few moves. We'll put our bishop on c4 and go c2-c3.

12...0-0 13. ♙c4 ♙e6

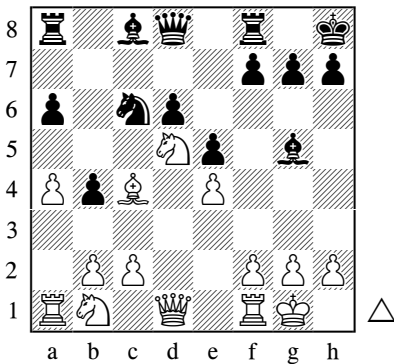
Starting with 13... ♙g5 is also sensible, but it doesn't have any independent value.

13...a5 is recommended by GM Pavlovic in *Playing the Sveshnikov*. After the further 14.0-0 ♗g5 15.c3 ♘e6 the Serbian grandmaster evaluates the position as balanced, but 16.♞d3 transposes to our main line below, where I'll explain why I think White stands better.

One line that wouldn't include developing the bishop to e6 is:

13...♞h8 14.0-0 ♗g5

Black is planning ...f7-f5 next.



15.c3!

We remain undeterred, and continue playing according to the plan. We're threatening to take on b4.

15...a5

15...bxc3 16.♗bxc3! ♞b8 (16...♘d4? allows 17.f4!) 17.♞b1 a5 18.♗b5± left White with beautiful pieces and an enduring edge in Ponkratov – Samusenko, Ufa 2024.

16.♘b5!±

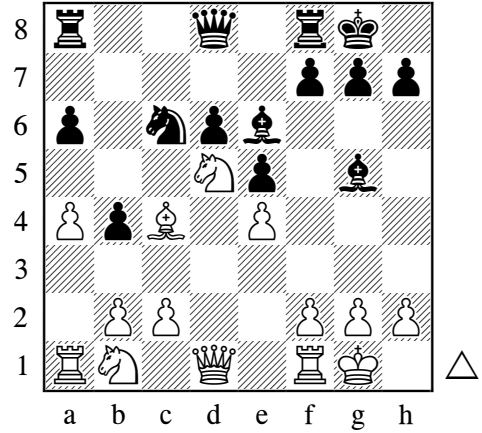
Black was under severe positional and tactical pressure in Karsay – Halkias, Maia 2023.

14.0-0 ♗g5

What else?

14...a5 can be met with 15.c3±.

14...♘a5 puts the knight on the rim without gaining anything after 15.♘a2±.



15.♞d3!

15.c3 is possible, but the text move is a bit more accurate. The big idea for Black here is 15...♘a5!N forcing our bishop to leave the a2-g8 diagonal, as after 16.♘a2? Black has 16...b3! 17.♘xb3 ♞b8±.

15...a5

I think most people wouldn't want to leave their a-pawn en prise. Nevertheless, we should also study Black's dynamic approach:

15...♞h8!?

This was played in a recent game between two of the world's best players.

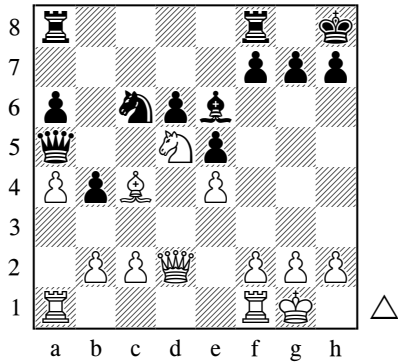
16.♘d2!

White doesn't grab the poisoned pawn on a6 and acknowledges the strength of Black's potential counterplay on the kingside. From d2, the knight is ready to come to f3 and aid the efforts of creating a solid kingside construction.

16...♘xd2

After 16...f5 17.♞ad1!N White's position is nice and solid.

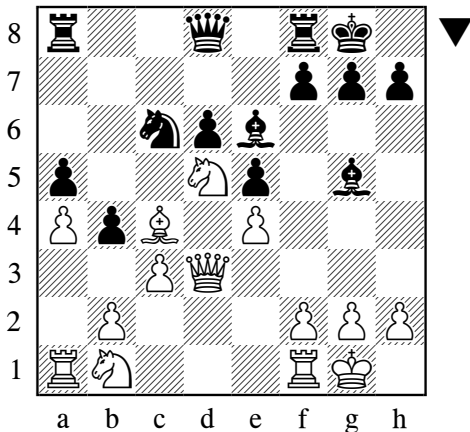
17.♞xd2 ♞a5



This was Giri – Nepomniachtchi, Bucharest 2023. The main idea behind Black’s previous move is to bring the queen to c5, consolidating Black’s centre. Giri played our typical main idea of 18.c3! which isn’t bad, but the engines claim that even better was: 18.♞d3!N±

Reintroducing the pressure on the a6-pawn. Up next is either c2-c3 or even another preparatory move with the f1-rook and only then c2-c3. Black isn’t in serious trouble just yet, but White is clearly the one asking questions.

16.c3±



We can stop our analysis here and confidently claim that White is a bit better, as Black is lacking any source of serious counterplay. Our next move could be ♕b5, but developing

the f1-rook would also make sense. Before we leave this line, let us briefly see how a high-level game continued.

16...♞c8 17.♞d1

With the c6-knight already protected, 17.♕b5 loses a large chunk of its meaning.

17...♔h8

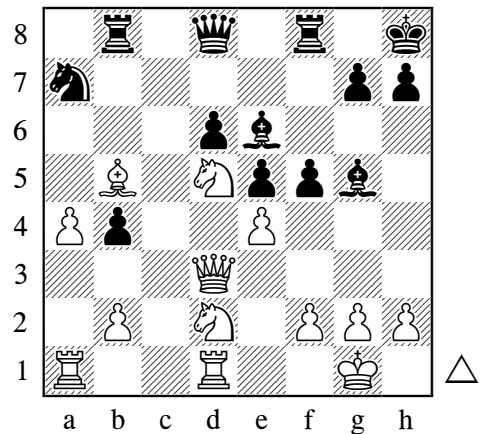
Playing for ...f7-f5 is embedded deep inside the DNA of all Sveshnikov players.

The more computerish 17...bxc3 18.♗bxc3 ♗b4 19.♞e2 was tried in Galiano Martinez – Rosch, corr. 2023. The engine claims this is equal, but it would be clearly more pleasant for humans to play White, due to the multiple easy improving moves available.

18.♕a6! ♞b8 19.♕b5!

Nicely done. By including 18.♕a6! White made sure that the c6-knight would be hanging.

19...♗a7 20.cxb4 axb4 21.♗d2! f5



In Boyer – Vidit, Internet (blitz) 2023, White took on b4 and the game became a huge mess. But a more controlled approach by White would have been better:

22. ♖c4!N

White is ready to push the a-pawn and has a clear edge.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we examined the three Sicilians that start with 1.e4 c5 2.♭f3 ♖c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♭xd4 and see the black e-pawn going to e5:

First, we briefly examined the Lowenthal, which is characterized by 4...e5 5.♭b5 a6?!, inviting the knight to give the check on d6. This line comes up every now and then in club-level circles, but our simple approach with 6.♭d6† ♖xd6 7.♗xd6, followed by retreating the queen to d2 and developing the queenside with ♖c3, b2-b3 and ♖b2, gives us a good game without the need to remember much theory.

Then we moved on to the Kalashnikov, where instead of allowing us to give the check on d6 Black opts for 5...d6. Our approach is simple yet annoying to face. We start with 6.♭1c3, and after 6...a6 7.♭a3 ♖e7 8.♭d5 ♖f6 9.♭xf6† ♖xf6 10.♖c4 we get an easy-to-handle, tiny but pleasant edge.

Against the Sveshnikov after 4...♭f6 5.♭c3 e5 6.♭db5 d6 7.♖g5 a6 8.♭a3 b5, we go for one of the boldest sidelines in this book, the quirky 9.♭ab1!?, trying to reorganize our knights to better control d5. After 9...♖e7 10.♖xf6 ♖xf6 11.a4 b4 12.♭d5 our plan is to continue with ♖c4, castle, and attack the b4-pawn with c2-c3. Some finesse wouldn't hurt, but it isn't essential either. We get a fighting game with easy moves for White, which is what even the absolute main lines hope to accomplish against the Sveshnikov.

Abridged Variation Index

The variation index in the book spans four pages. This is a shortened version, showing a maximum of one sub-variation per line.

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