

Delchev's Practical Opening Repertoire

**Volume 1 – Scandinavian,
Pirc & Modern Defenses**

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Delchev's Practical Opening Repertoire

Volume 1 – Scandinavian, Pirc & Modern Defenses

Aleksandar Delchev

Thinkers Publishing 2024



Key to Symbols

| | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------|
| ! | a good move |
| ? | a weak move |
| !! | an excellent move |
| ?? | a blunder |
| !? | an interesting move |
| ?! | a dubious move |
| □ | only move |
| N | novelty |
| ⊙ | lead in development |
| ⊙ | zugzwang |
| = | equality |
| ∞ | unclear position |
| ∞ | with compensation for the sacrificed material |
| ± | White stands slightly better |
| ∓ | Black stands slightly better |
| ± | White has a serious advantage |
| ∓ | Black has a serious advantage |
| +− | White has a decisive advantage |
| −+ | Black has a decisive advantage |
| → | with an attack |
| ↑ | with initiative |
| ↔ | with counterplay |
| Δ | with the idea of |
| ⊃ | better is |
| ≤ | worse is |
| + | check |
| # | mate |

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Introduction

Expert Opening Preparation

For over 15 years it has been known that computers play a crucial role in modern opening preparation. One need only think back to the matches Anand played in 2008 in Bonn against Kramnik, and in 2010 in Sofia against Topalov. Anand decided the match against Kramnik with two clean wins using the Meran Defense as Black in games 3 and 5. But against Topalov he suffered a crushing defeat. Clearly, Topalov's computer assisted preparation was superior to Anand's. This forced Anand to steer away from theoretical duels and, in so doing, he managed to neutralize Topalov in openings such as the Slav and the Orthodox Queen's Gambit. The games entered into dry positions without tactics where computer preparation plays a less important role and certainly cannot decide the game.

Fast forward to 2023, 13 years later, when the power of the engine is not so important as everyone has access to unlimited analytical resources and can use the most powerful engines out there to aid their opening preparation. Nevertheless, some players are still more successful and stand out above the rest having fresh opening ideas. I am sure that every one of you would like to learn how to win more games by home analysis and become an opening expert.

But what is the way to do this? What does it take to become an expert in opening preparation? How can we learn the secret methods which allow the top players to dominate everyone else in the opening? Books can hardly be useful in this regard because modern books on openings, regardless of the level of the author, are very standard and straightforward. The opening books are fairly equal - in the title of the book, the author is claiming some statement like "How to beat the Sicilian" and then back it up with proof in the form... You are then left to decide whether or not to include these ideas in your opening repertoire.

What is missing is some sort of guidance and advice relating to what sorts of tournaments and against what sorts of players this idea should be employed. Moreover, every one of you has likely noticed that even the best opening idea still has a relatively short life span and can hardly be used in more than a few games. So far I have published about 10 books on openings and for me it is not a problem to publish another 10 or even more. However, in the modern era I believe the lifespan of an

opening book is incredibly short as new games are constantly being played and new ideas are being found. I feel it would be much more useful to you if I uncover a new approach to opening preparation, which will be more long-lasting and will improve your play as well.

The method of opening preparation I have used throughout my entire chess-playing career (1997 – 2018) allowed me, with relatively little effort, to be unpredictable thereby winning the psychological battle of the opening. Luring my opponents into prepared opening tricks and traps was great fun!

In the method which I will introduce you to in this book, the first and most important aspect is adapting your approach to each individual opponent and perfect prediction of the opponent's opening choice, to the smallest details. Let us begin with the following classification of the types of opening preparation.

Preparation before the tournament versus specific preparation for an opponent during the tournament.

In the **preparation before the tournament**, we need to take into account the following 3 factors:

- Whether the tournament is a team tournament or an individual tournament, and whether it is a knockout tournament.
- The average strength of the expected opponents in the tournament in comparison to our own strength in terms of Elo rating.
- The aim which we set out to achieve: first place or a certain score or another more modest aim. If we are preparing for a team competition the correct approach is to build a solid repertoire in which we play to win or draw.

The average Elo rating of the opponents in the tournament will give us an idea of whether we will play against stronger or weaker players than ourselves and we can then choose the most appropriate opening variations to prepare for this tournament. If it is a tournament where first place is all that matters, then we will probably be trying to opt for more aggressive openings with more risk rather than quiet openings which will guarantee equality.

When we are **preparing for a specific opponent**, we rely on concrete information about the opponent which we deduce from analyzing their previous games. I cannot stress how important it is when analyzing a specific opponent's games to determine precisely:

1. Their style of play. In order to determine this we can select 20 – 30 of their wins and see in what fashion they win.

There are several classifications for a player:

- Tactician - most of their wins come in sharp, dynamic games with combinations, attacks, and sacrifices.
- Positional player – likes slow positions with a lot of maneuvering and may like playing endgames and simple position where he can eventually out-play the opponent.
- Counter-attacking player – they choose slightly more passive opening systems/ variations and give the opponent control, waiting for their opponents to start pushing and they can then pounce with a counterattack. They tend to be good tacticians and aim for complications at all costs.
- Theoreticians – they have very strong opening preparation in games with white, where they pose specific problems and often manage to win long before the second phase of the attack. With Black they tend to be less ambitious and try to achieve quick equality and to dry out the game.

Information about a player's weak points can be used to choose an opening which leads to positions which are opposite to what the opponent is hoping for and how they often win their games.

2. The weak points in their play in previous games. The most effective method to determine these is to select 20 – 30 games which they lost and try to determine which of the following was the reason they lost the game.
 - Simple tactical mistakes (blunders). Weak positional play or basic technical errors, or lack of understanding of basic endgames.
 - Poor choice of opening lines, especially with the black pieces.
 - Overestimating their own winning chances with risky play in any position (over pressing advantages).
 - Poor or passive defense. We can use this information about the weak points of the opponent in order to try and steer the game towards positions in which they are more likely to make mistakes.
3. Preferred openings. Openings which they play very often in their previous games. In general, it is advisable to avoid entering into positions where the opponent has more experience unless we have a very specific idea in mind.

4. Weak points in the preparation. The opponent might have played a line a lot in the past with good results, but in reality the line is questionable. In this case we can improve the play and cause the opponent serious problems. His good results may give him a false sense of security thus he is more likely to repeat the line. Here your home analysis may give you a chance to win the game.

It is also possible that an opponent's weak point might be that he plays a variation where his position is good but he does not have very good results. This could be an uncomfortable variation for here where he simply has bad luck. Chess players are very superstitious which could affect them on a subconscious level and they can develop a bad feeling toward such a line and maybe avoid entering it. He may also have a variation in his repertoire where he has little practice or after a certain option for you, you would reach a position which he has not played before and does not know how to handle such a position. It is also possible to exploit move orders against players who are trying to avoid certain openings in order to get them into a position which is uncomfortable for them. There is always a reason for them trying to avoid this line. We just need to try and figure out what it is.

After we have done this preliminary analysis of the tournament or of the opponent and have all the required analysis, we must imagine one of the 4 following most-common scenarios and to consider which openings to choose in each case.

- We are playing White and we are in a must win situation in order to reach our goal or we are playing against a weaker opponent who is fine with a draw.
- We are playing White, and a draw is a fine result, but the opponent is in a must win situation.
- We are playing Black, and we are in a must win situation, whereas the opponent is satisfied with a draw.
- We are playing Black, and we just need to avoid losing.

It takes little thought to realize that it is unlikely that the same opening can be both solid and can be used for a win at all costs. Therefore it is necessary to have different opening variations prepared, which will be maximally effective in each of these four situations outlined above. In other words, it is necessary to have a completely different approach to analyzing openings. Chess books with linear variations where the weak moves for one side are omitted and the focus is on the best lines are insufficient. It is necessary to have an exhaustive and deep understanding of the

opening in order to find an appropriate solution for every possible situation. My approach consists of the following.

- **STEP 1:** I choose a set of openings which correspond to one of the following 4 categories/ criteria. It is rich in tactical resources and has the possibility of deviations from the main line which offer interesting and potentially non-standard play, even if it has a slightly worse evaluation. It has a solid positional basis where it is difficult for the opponent to find tactical resources or to suddenly start an attack. It is a gambit in which the initiative is assumed from early on. It is relatively unknown in opening theory and is a deviation from the main lines leading to non-standard positions and has a reputation for being semi-correct (this is ideal as it almost guarantees that your opponent will enter into the line head-first, potentially in an attempt to challenge your approach/opening choice).
- **STEP 2:** I analyse all possible variations and I focus on choosing and deeply analyzing the variations which fall under one of the following 3 categories:
 - **WILD SURPRISING WEAPONS (WSW)** – Deviations which are far from the main theoretical recommendations. In variations of this kind, we mainly rely on the element of surprise and the knowledge that this will be maximally uncomfortable for the opponent to face. If you decide to adopt such a variation you need to be careful and make sure that your opponent does not have any previous experience in this line. Ideally it should be a line which your opponent would not even believe exists.
 - **STRATEGICALLY BASED SYSTEM (SBS)** – The most solid choice. Using such a system potentially gives us a draw in the pocket. This produces psychological pressure on the opponent if they are higher rated. They will try to take risks in a situation where this is not appropriate. This is exactly our idea, and we can then start playing for a win in a dynamic situation that is favorable for us.
 - **PRINCIPLED THEORETICAL LINE (PTL)**. This is the absolute main and most principled line in any given opening. Here we cannot rely on the element of surprise, although many times I have successfully employed this misleading approach, which increases the effect of its use.

For example, at the European Team championship in 2011 in Porto Carras in the first round I played against Joe Gallagher and in response to his Najdorf I chose the Moscow variation 3. ♘b5+ (a perfect choice for a team competition) after which I consciously chose a suboptimal line 3... ♘d7 4. ♘xd7+ ♙xd7 5. 0-0 ♗f6 6.e5!?. We reached an interesting position, but in the end Black managed to equalize and after a sharp battle in the middlegame a draw was eventually agreed. Afterwards, in the fifth round, we played the star-studded Russian team and I, on the third board, met the Najdorf of Alexander Morozevich again with 3. ♘b5+. But this time I chose a different variation which I had prepared as a PTL in preparation for this tournament. After 3... ♘d7 4. ♘xd7+ ♙xd7 5. 0-0 ♗f6 I played 6. ♙e2. After a think by Morozevich he concluded that my only aim in playing this move was to avoid his concrete preparation and decided to play the most principled 6... ♗c6 7. ♖d1 g5!?. This was precisely what I was hoping for as this was my main preparation and it became apparent that I had caught a golden fish since Morozevich was apparently unprepared. I soon managed to take over the initiative and won a nice game contributing to the final successful result of 3-1.

I think it is clear that you cannot rely on the analysis and recommendations of others in preparation for a tournament. Instead, you will need to put in quite a bit of work. Every opening variation which you select to analyze and use in future games should carry your own stamp of creation. By this I mean that you, on your own, should have delved deep into the details of the variation and found and developed various ideas and resources. After a period of trial and error, you will learn how to successfully employ the techniques described in this book and how to combine the selected openings and variations.

The openings presented in this book are the Scandinavian, Pirc and Modern. The French and the Caro – Kann will be analyzed in the next Volume! They are presented with the help of several games which I have selected which I believe best show the ideas and the tactical possibilities in the given opening.

I prefer to present the material in complete games rather than just publishing my own analysis for the following reasons. While you are studying the opening you will be able to familiarize yourself with the history of the variation, developed by the best players of every generation, and we see their contribution to modern chess theory – Fischer, Spassky, Tak, Botvinnik, Petrosian, Korchnoi and many other chess

legends. You will see in practice how to realise an opening advantage, rather than just see += or +- at the end of the variation and be left wondering why.

Every game shows typical methods of attack in the given opening: sacrifice of a pawn for the initiative, attack with opposite-side-castling, attacking plans in specific pawn structures which are frequently seen in this opening variation. Every game, apart from containing an opening idea, can be used by trainers for lectures on different topics.

In the text of each game there are tactical puzzles to be solved which check the concentration of the students during the lecture. Every chapter begins with the general ideas of the opening and concludes with a selection of 30 combinations for you to solve which are typical for the corresponding opening.

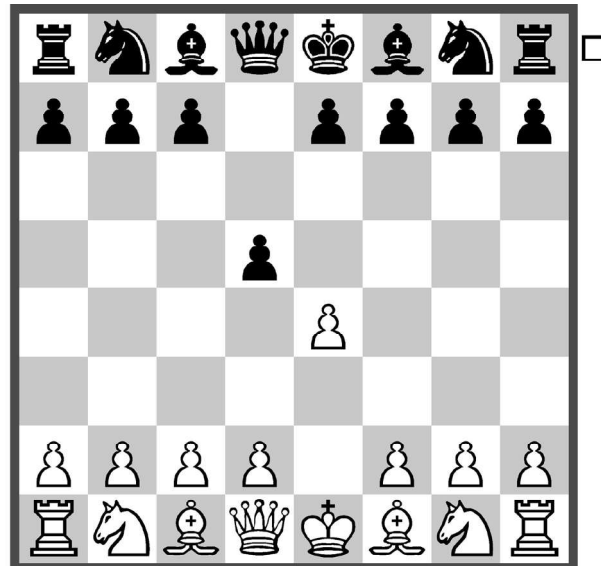
I believe this book is appropriate for players of any level. Anyone can extract the maximum practical use from this book and have fun at the same time. I am hoping the next books in this series will be even more successful, for which I rely on your comments and advice.

Aleksandar Delchev, 2024



The Scandinavian Defense

1.e4 d5



Chapter Guide

Chapter 1 – The Scandinavian Defense

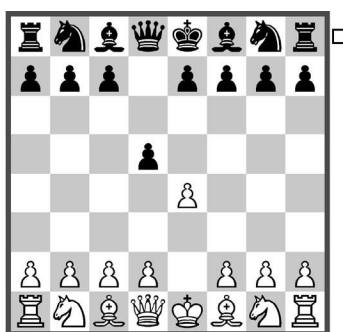
1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘f3

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Our first chapter is dedicated to the Scandinavian defense. This is a simple, flexible, and easy to learn opening which makes it the perfect surprise weapon.

1. e4 d5



Position after: 1... d5

It is based on a direct and rather simple strategical idea: by hitting the central pawn Black minimizes White's central influence. Black is happy to accept a slightly passive position without weaknesses and an unapproachable pawn structure e6, c6 vs d4.

But there is one significant drawback which makes the Scandinavian an adventurous opening choice. The black queen gets exposed in the center, which allows White to take a lead in development and establish firm control over the center.

But there is one frequently seen error as players by White players who may easily become overly excited by the freedom they have. Very often after reaching the height of piece activity White players have no clear idea about how and where to attack as it is difficult to find clear targets in Black's position.

To avoid such disappointment, it is useful to learn the model attacking plans so you may choose the most suitable option for each concrete situation. I believe that this knowledge is far more effective than to blindly copy the advice of the acknowledged theoreticians.

From my practice I can assure you that all middle games with opposite side castling are in White's favor. This is quite logical as in the arising middlegame the sharp conflict between two armies shows the benefit of White's maximally placed pieces and central control; you can see this in games 1-4.

After 1... d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 Black has a choice between three approximately equal retreats.

- a) ♕d6
- b) ♕d8
- c) ♕a5

It does not matter where the queen goes, the arising middlegame is characterized by the pawn structure e6, c6/d4. Theory still considers 3... ♕a5 as Black's main option and the critical opening position arises after the moves 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 c6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6. The most characteristic element of the Scandinavian defense is the activation of the light squared bishop to f5 or g4 before playing ...e7-e6.

Thus, White's most recurring attacking motif becomes hunting the exposed bishop with ♘e5, followed by g4 and h4 when the bishop is on f5, or h3, g4, ♘e5 with the bishop on g4. In the game 7 and 11 you can see the most efficient way of realizing the advance g2-g4.

Game 1: Fischer-Robatsch, Varna 1962 –

3... ♕d8

In the following game, played at Varna Olympiad in 1962, the 19-year-old American champion comes up with a simple and straightforward attacking plan which refutes Black's entire opening concept. Meeting the kingside fianchetto with ♙f4, ♕d2 and 0-0-0, followed by ♙h6 and h4-h5 nowadays looks fairly standard but in 1962 it looked like a flash of inspiration. The early 1960s were characterized by the domination of Mikhail Tal - the greatest attacking genius of all time. Naturally Fischer is enchanted by his attacking performances and is throwing him the gauntlet by conducting the game in exemplary fashion.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♕d8

By returning the queen to d8 Black offers White a whole tempo for development and the freedom to choose the setup he wants. Karl Robatsch represented Austria at eleven Chess Olympiads. At the previous 1960 Olympiad in Leipzig, he astonished the chess world by winning the gold medal on board 1 scoring 13.5/16 or 84.4% against the world's best players. He was known as a passionate adherent of the opening 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♙g7, which throughout the 1960s, 70s and even into the 1980s was known as the Pirc – Robatsch Defense. The Scandinavian defense with

3... ♖d8 was Robatsch's secondary weapon and Fischer probably predicted his opening choice, coming up with a new and very effective attacking idea.

4. d4 g6 5. ♙f4!

Fischer is well aware of his opponent's preferences and introduces an idea from his opening laboratory.

5... ♙g7 6. ♖d2!

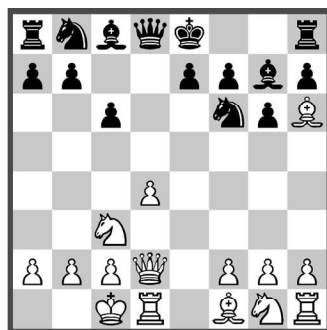
White shows his aggressive intentions leaving the d4 pawn "en prise". If you want to become acknowledged opening expert you must first learn the legacy of your predecessors. You will see the same idea employed in the next game, but I would also like to show you the following very instructive game: Morozevich – Rakhmanov St. Petersburg 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘f3 g6?! 4.d4! ♙g7 5.c4 ♖d8 6.♘c3 ♘h6 7.♙f4! ♘f5 8.♖d2! ♘xd4 [otherwise after 8... 0-0 9. 0-0-0 ♘c6 10.d5! ♘cd4 11.♘xd4 ♘xd4 12.♙h6! e5 13.♙xg7 ♘xg7 14.f4! White would have a dangerous initiative. 9.♘xd4 ♖xd4 10.♖xd4 ♙xd4 11.♘b5! ♙b6 [11... ♙xb2?? 12. ♖b1] 12.♘xc7+ ♙xc7 13.♙xc7 ♘c6 14. 0-0-0 and Morozevich confidently converted his bishop pair advantage.

6... ♘f6

A) 6... ♙xd4? 7. 0-0-0 ♘c6 8. ♙b5 ♙d7 9. ♘f3+–

B) 6... ♖xd4 7. ♖xd4 ♙xd4 8. ♘d5 ♙b6 9. ♙xc7± would avoid the main danger but against an endgame expert of Fischer's class Black will be doomed to a boring and colorless defense.

7. 0-0-0 c6 8. ♙h6!



Position after: 8. ♙h6!

White already has a firm grip on the initiative after only 8 moves and he has a very concrete aim – a mating attack against the black king. The most amazing thing is that Fischer will need only 12 more moves to completely crush his opponent!

8... 0-0

It looks safer to avoid castling under the guns but in case of 8... ♙xh6 9. ♖xh6 ♙e6 10. ♘f3 ♖a5 11. a3 ♘bd7 12. ♘g5± White's advantage is beyond doubt.

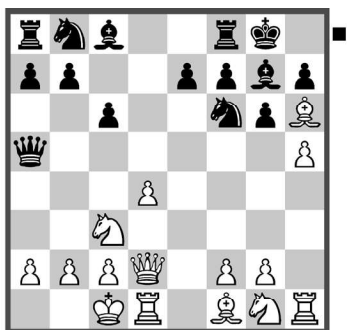
9. h4! ♖a5

Black's only chance to stay in the

game is to initiate a counterattack on the opposite wing.

In case of 9... ♘h6 10. ♙xh6 ♘g4 11. ♙d2 Black's position is not sunshine and roses.

10. h5!



Position after: 10. h5!

White's plan looks as simple as A-B-C: push the h-pawn and deliver mate. By today's standards it is obvious that repulsing White's attack is "mission impossible".

10... gxh5

Desperation. But what else can he do?

A) 10... ♘xh6 11. ♙xh6 ♘g4 12. ♙d2±

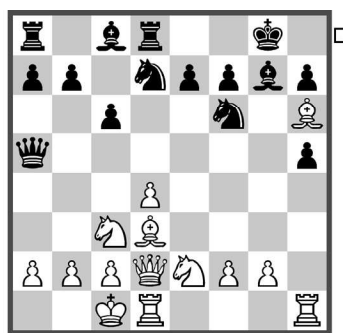
B) 10... ♘f5 11. ♘xg7 ♙xg7 12. f3!± Δ g4

C) 10... ♘xh5 11. ♘xg7 ♙xg7 12. ♘e2±

11. ♘d3 ♘bd7 12. ♘ge2!

In this position with opposite side castling White possess a huge advantage in time and it is a matter of taste for Fischer how and when to finish off his opponent.

12... ♖d8



Position after: 12... ♖d8

12... ♔h8 13. ♘xg7+ ♙xg7 14. g4+–

13. g4!

Black position was already rather dangerous, but this move deserves applause. By playing in such an elegant way Fischer is throwing the gauntlet to his mighty rival Misha Tal!

13... ♘f8

A) 13... ♘xg4 14. ♖dg1+–

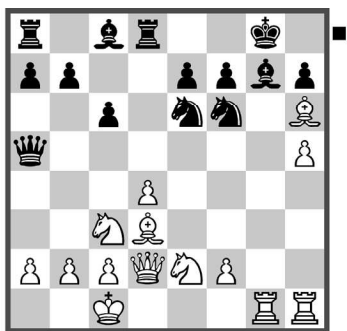
B) 13... hxg4 14. ♘xg7 ♙xg7 15. ♙h6+–

14. gxh5

With the g-file open Black takes his last few breaths.

14... ♖e6

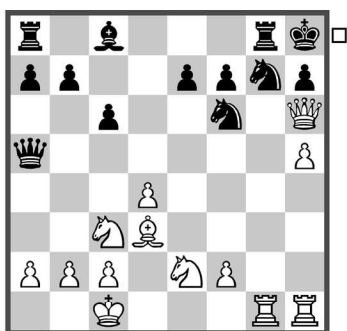
14... ♙xh6 15. ♚xh6 ♘g4 16. ♖dg1+–

15. ♖dg1

Position after: 15. ♖dg1

15... ♔h8

15... ♙f8 16. ♖xg7! ♘xg7 17. ♖g1+–

16. ♙xg7+ ♘xg7 17. ♚h6 ♖g8

Position after: 17... ♖g8

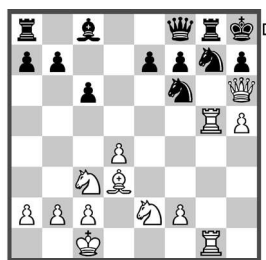
18. ♖g5!

Gently encouraging the black queen to go back home.

18... ♚d8 19. ♖hg1 ♘f5?

Black panics and gives up the piece for nothing. The only way to resist a few more more was 19... ♚f8.

Question 1



Position after: 19... ♚f8

Find the decisive continuation for White.

20. ♙xf5

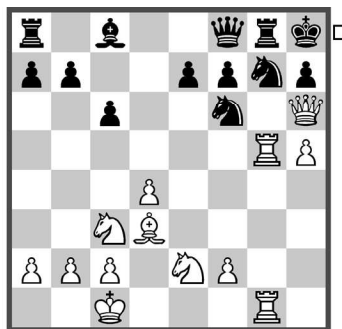
1-0

Black will lose significant material, so he resigned. An elegant and effortless miniature of the eleventh World Champion – Robert Fischer. He was famous with the saying "Against all fianchetto systems it is enough to castle long, then launch the h-pawn and deliver mate."

The game needs no special remarks or any explanations, White's attack was just playing itself.

Conclusion: In the Scandinavian defense Black is far behind in the development, therefore giving the opponent a straightforward attacking plan is not a good idea. The feeling when you go over the game is that the line with 3...♔d8 and 4...g6 is dubious. The plan with ♗f4, ♕d2 and long castle is definitely White's most principled way to meet all types of The Scandinavian with a fianchetto. Nevertheless, those systems have recently begun to come back into fashion. By fianchettoing the bishop to g7 Black cleverly postpones the development of his ♗c8, thus avoiding the dangerous attacking plans with ♘e5 and g4. You have just learned how to administer a survival test to your opponent and show him that the medicine can be even more dangerous than the disease.

Answer to Question 1



20. d5!

The simplest attacking idea is to get rid of the f6 knight.

20... cxd5

20... ♗d7 21. d6!+- cutting away the support of the f6 knight.

21. ♘xd5+-

Game 2: Saric-Jovanovic, Stari Mikanovci 2010

- 3...♔d6

It is time to reveal the first recipe from the kitchen of the opening experts. In the following game Ivan Saric has the white pieces. Saric was my former student and the most successful Croatian chess player – European and World Junior champion and European Individual Mens' champion for 2018. Ivan is acknowledged for his powerful

attacking style and high-level opening preparation. He is famous for his positive score in classical games against Magnus Carlsen +1 = 1 -0. His opponent in the following game is Zoran Jovanovic – a strong grandmaster and a big adherent of the Rauzer variation (as are all other Croatian chess players). With his surprising opening choice Zoran is

aiming to avoid Ivan's home preparation. Let me explain the technique Ivan applied to turn the effect of the surprise in his favor. When facing a surprise our priority is to take the sting out of the opponent's preparation. We should suppress our curiosity to check whether our opponent has an important opening novelty in mind or if he is just bluffing simply to win the psychological battle. Unless you are the top expert on this line the best reaction is to deviate from the main line as soon as possible. We must look for an original solution which most probably your opponent has missed or underestimated in his preparation. This way you will force him to think independently instead of demonstrating his preparation. This technique requires both a strong mindset and deep knowledge of the openings we play. As I emphasized in the introduction it is better to develop your own lines rather than to blindly follow theoretical recommendations.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♕d6 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 g6



Position after: 5... g6

6. ♘e5!?

This move was introduced at the GM level in the game Ragger, M – Almasi, Z – Heraklion European ChT 2007. In this game after 6... ♘g7 Ragger continued with the inconsistent 7. ♘e2 and the game soon ended in a draw. But Ivan has a great feeling for the initiative and his aim is to follow up with ♘f4 and continue in Fischer's footsteps by ♕d2 and 0-0-0. Ivan Saric is an advanced opening expert who is well aware of the legacy of his renowned predecessors. Now you will see the adverse effect of this opening surprise.

Theory suggest that after 6. ♘c4 ♘g7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. h3 a6 9. a4 ♘c6 10. b3 White preserves his opening advantage. Of course, I agree with this evaluation, but looking at it from a different angle this was exactly the development of events most probably planned by Zoran. It remains unknown whether he had some improvement in mind or was just happy to meet such a strictly positional way of conducting the opening.

6... ♘g7

6... ♘c6? would be a decisive error due to 7. ♘b5 ♕d8 8. ♘f4 ♘d5 9. ♘c4+–.

7. ♘f4!

Strangely enough this move is a novelty.

7... ♕d8?!

Black's reaction shows that the application of the counter surprise was successful. The critical moment of the game passed unnoticed by Black who had to search for a concrete way to generate counterplay, instead of retreating the queen back to the base. By choosing the Scandinavian Zoran Jovanovic was hoping to neutralize his aggressive opponent by building a solid position. He did not notice that after 6 ♖e5 and 7 ♗f4 the situation has drastically changed. In the coming middlegame, with opposite side castling, Black is behind in development as he spent 3 moves hopping around with his queen.

A) 7... ♗h5 would win a pawn but falls under pressure after 8. ♗e3! ♗xe5 9. dxe5 ♗xe5 10. ♗d5!↑.

B) 7... ♗b6?! is also not very successful because of the simple 8. ♗d2! and the b2 pawn is immune 8... ♗xb2? 9. ♖b1 ♗a3 10. ♗c4+–.

C) The only way to stay in the game was 7... ♗d5! which is a rather typical exchange operation in the Scandinavian defense. After 8. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 9. f3!



Position after: 9. f3!

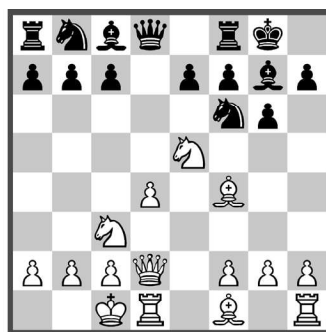
the critical line is 9... ♗c6! 10. ♗c4 ♗a5+ 11. ♗d2 ♗b6 12. ♗xf7+ ♔f8♞. The arising position is extremely complicated. Zoran Jovanovic had insufficient experience with the Scandinavian defense and failed to find this strong counterattacking idea over the board.

8. ♗d2 0-0

Castling against h4-h5 is suicidal for Black.

But even after the best 8... ♗bd7 9. 0-0 c6 10. ♗h6! 0-0 11. ♗xd7! ♗xd7 12. h4→ Black would remain in survival mode.

9. 0-0-0



Position after: 9. 0-0-0

White's attacking agenda is quite clear: ♗h6 followed by h4-h5. Black should create meaningful counterplay, otherwise it will soon be over.

9... ♗c6!

Reducing White's attacking potential.

A) 9... ♖e6?! 10. d5!±

B) 9... ♗bd7 10. h4 c6 11. f3→

10. ♖c4!

Anticipating black's counterplay with ♖e6 and ♗d5.

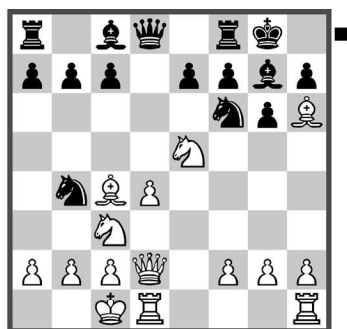
The immediate 10. h4 is less precise. 10... ♖e6! 11. ♖e2 h5 12. f3 ♗xe5 13. ♖xe5 c6 14. g4 ♕a5↔

10... ♗b4

Black's priority is to create fast counterplay, but the result of the whole operation is simply a waste of time. The following line was definitely the best option but even then his position would remain dangerous.

10... ♗xe5 11. ♖xe5 c6 12. h4 b5 13. ♖b3 a5 14. a4! h5 15. f3 ♕b6 16. g4!→

11. ♖h6!



Position after: 11. ♖h6!

White has completed all of the necessary steps and is now ready to launch the missiles on black king. It is always more precise to play ♖h6 first and only then h4-h5 to prevent the defensive idea h7-h5.

11... ♖f5 12. ♖b3

In our time the players attitudes have changed to being more practical. The main goal of every professional chess player is to win the game without taking unnecessary risks. I am sure that Tal or Fischer would not hesitate, even for a single second, to unleash 12. h4! And ignore the queenside. 12... ♖xc2 13. h5 ♖xd1 14. hxg6! ♖h5

Question 1



Position after: 14... ♖h5

Find the most radical way to conclude White's attack!

12... a5 13. a3

After 12 ♖b3 instead of the energetic 12 h4, White is now obliged to make another defensive move.