

# **Unknown Weapons in the Grünfeld**

**Second Extended  
& Revised Edition**

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# **Unknown Weapons in the Grünfeld**

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**Milos Pavlovic**

**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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# Preface

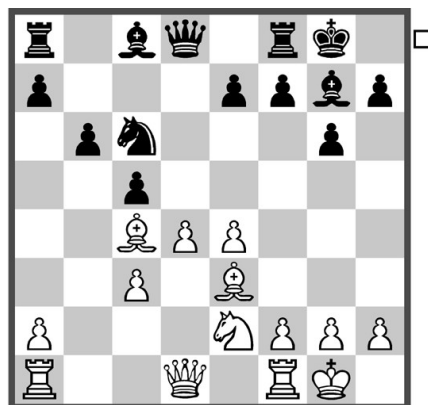
The reason for writing another book on the Grünfeld is not only because modern theory has evolved very quickly (to put it mildly) but also because now my approach to the Grünfeld is completely different.

In my first book I wanted to enlighten the reader on those various lines that were less explored, and those that have been almost forgotten but were nevertheless interesting. However this time the book is about cutting-edge lines, which is a very modern approach to this fascinating opening. Moreover it is important to say that when I was writing my first book a few years ago, surprisingly, some of these current lines simply didn't exist, or were only discussed in a very minor way.

It is true that the Grünfeld fits in very well with the engines' way of playing chess, and in that sense it's almost the perfect opening with which to implement and generate such ideas.

Let's have a look now at what I mean. Here I will present a few excerpts from the current book.

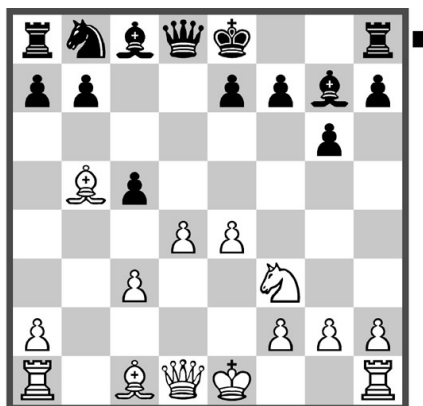
In Chapters 1 & 2 we deal with the following highly important and popular recent line. 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4 c5 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.♙e3 0-0 10.0-0 b6



In Chapter 5 we deal with the positions that have probably been the subject of the

most development and changes in the last couple of years.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♖g7 7.♘f3 c5 8.♖b5+



8.h3 The main line here.

8.♖e2 This is also a very modernized and popular system.

8...♘c6 9.0–0 Additionally 9.d5 and 9.♖b1 are analyzed.

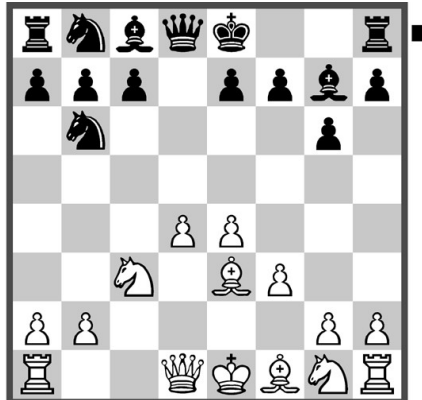
9...0–0 10.♖xc6 bxc6 11.♖c2 A very modern and popular line that is analyzed together with the usual positions arising from 11.♖a3 and 11.♖e3.

All of these positions have attracted huge unprecedented attention in tournament practice, compared to previous times.

In Chapter 14 I analyze a very important theoretical line played in the World Championship matches.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘b6 6.♘c3 ♖g7 7.♖e3

It is very important for Grünfeld players to be able to employ a Grünfeld-type of reaction whenever possible, and not to go for a King's Indian type of play. Of course this is not mandatory, but if there is a good Grünfeld-type reaction then it should be considered first, as in this case.



I have emphasized here a few of the important things that will be seen in this book, and provided a visual explanation of the points made in the Introduction.

The Grünfeld is a very active and excellent opening which offers a lot of possibilities with modern and less-explored ideas, and it definitely deserves constant attention.

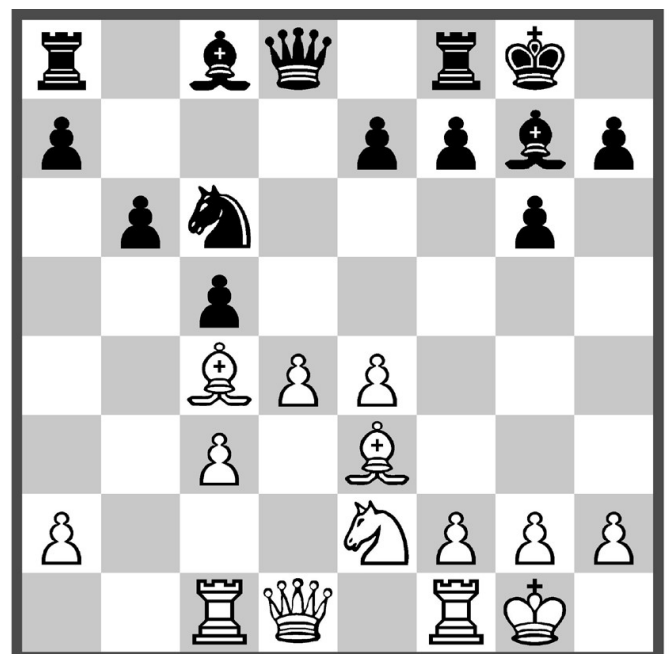
Milos Pavlovic, 2024





## 7. ♖c4 – with 11. ♖c1

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5  
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3  
6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4 c5 8.♘e2  
♘c6 9.♙e3 0-0 10.0-0 b6  
11.♖c1



# Chapter Guide

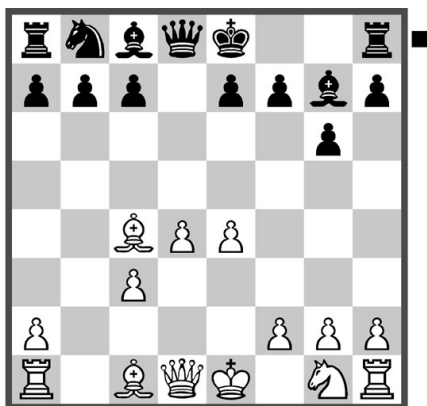
## Chapter 1 – 7. ♖c1 – with 11. ♖c1

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7. ♙c4 c5 8. ♘e2  
 ♘c6 9. ♙e3 0-0 10.0-0 b6 11. ♖c1 ♙b7

a) 12. ♙b5 ♖c2 13. ♙d2 -- .....	11
b) 12. ♙b5 ♖c2 13. ♙d2 e6 .....	17
c) 12.d5 .....	21
d) 12. ♙d2 ♖c8 13. ♖fd1 cxd4 .....	26
e) 12. ♙d2 ♖c8 13. ♖fd1 e6 14.-- .....	30
f) 12. ♙d2 ♖c8 13. ♖fd1 e6 14.f3.....	33
g) 12. ♙b3.....	35

**a) 12. ♗b5 ♖c2 13. ♕d2 --**

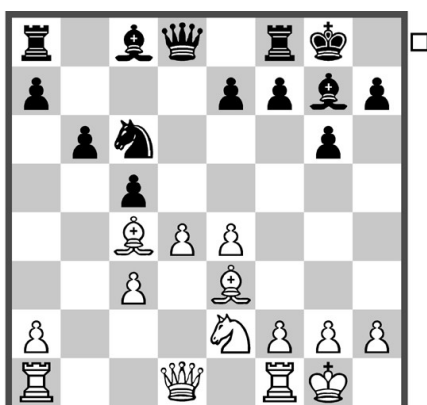
1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♘xd5 5. e4 ♘xc3 6. bxc3 ♗g7 7. ♗c4



Position after: 7. ♗c4

The Classical line is one of the best that White can try to gain an advantage, for instance with an attack. It has been around for decades but has never lost its popularity.

7... c5 8. ♘e2 ♘c6 9. ♗e3 0-0 10. 0-0 b6



Position after: 10... b6

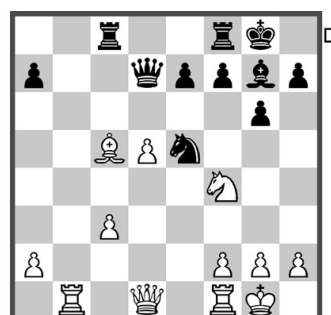
This is a key defense nowadays which is employed by leading Grünfeld players.

It is not a new line and has been known for decades, but in the last couple of years it has been reinvented and modernized. Black doesn't lose time on queen moves, but simply opts for development – however it's important to note that Black doesn't take early on d4.

**11. ♖c1**

We will see in other lines that there are some other ideas such as a quick 11. h4 or 11. ♕d2 followed by a plan of ♖ad1 and taking a pawn with 11. dxc5.

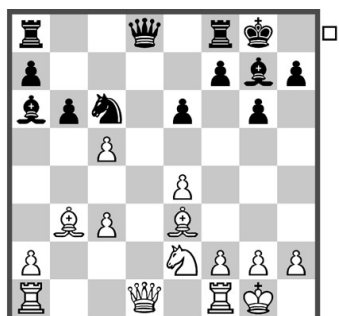
**A)** 11. ♖b1 Rarely played but possible. 11... ♗b7 12. dxc5 ♘e5 13. ♗d5 ♗xd5 14. exd5 bxc5 15. ♗xc5 ♕d7 16. ♘f4 ♖ac8



Position after: 16... ♖ac8

17. ♗d4 ♕f5 18. ♘e2 ♖fd8 19. ♘g3 ♕d3 20. ♕b3 ♕c4 21. ♖fd1 ♖xd5 The usual play when Black sacrifices a pawn on c5.

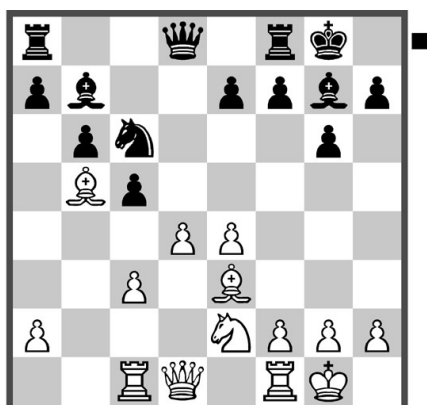
**B)** 11. ♗d5 ♗b7 12. dxc5 e6 13. ♗b3 ♗a6 Another straightforward idea.



Position after: 13... ♖a6

14. ♖e1 ♔c7 15. cxb6 axb6 16. ♔c2 ♘e5 17. ♖ad1 ♘g4 18. ♙f4 ♔c5 19. ♙g3 ♖fc8 Black is doing OK .

11... ♙b7 12. ♙b5



Position after: 12. ♙b5

12. ♔d2 is a popular idea where White intends to take on c6, followed by d5 and c4, to gain good central play, where Black's bishop pair will have little or no influence on the position. This move, as well as others, will be looked at in the next subchapters.

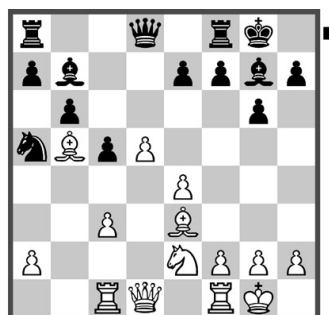
12... ♖c8

The main response but not the only one; only 12... e6 is worth considering, while the other moves are not so good.

A) 12... a6 13. ♙xc6 ♙xc6 14. d5 ♙b7 15. c4 This is White's plan – now with a4 next, Black is already facing problems as to how to keep the center. 15... e6 16. ♔d2 exd5 17. cxd5 ♖e8 18. f3 ♖c8 19. ♖fd1 ♔d6 20. ♙f4 ♙e5 21. ♙xe5 ♖xe5 22. ♘c3 White has a clear advantage, in Studer, N (2588) – Sorokin, A (2521) chess.com INT 2020.

B) 12... cxd4 13. cxd4 ♖c8 14. ♔a4 ♘a5 15. d5 f5 16. ♘f4 White is much better, in Studer, N (2580) – Antipov, M (2584) chess.com INT 2020.

C) 12... ♘a5 13. d5



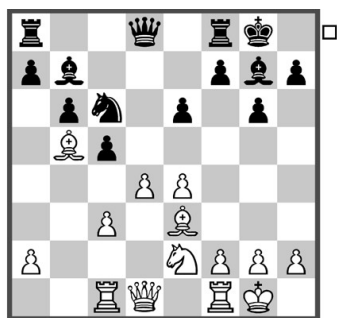
Position after: 13. d5

C1) 13... c4? A very poor reaction. Black can't really relinquish control of the d4-square before securing some kind of central play either with e6 or e5. 14. ♘d4! a6 15. ♙a4 b5 16. ♙c2 ♔d7 17. h4 e6 18. dxe6 fxe6 19. ♔g4 ♖ae8 20. e5! White has a winning attack, in Studer, N (2580) – Anton Guijarro, D (2703) Biel SUI 2020.

C2) 13... ♔c7 14. c4 ♖ad8 15. ♙f4 ♔c8 16. ♔d2 e5 17. ♙h6 ♙a6 18. ♙xg7 ♔xg7 19. ♙xa6 ♔xa6 20. ♔c3

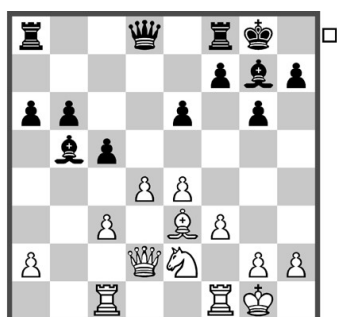
f6 21. f4 Here White has a winning position, in Studer, N (2588) – Zubov, A (2598) chess.com INT 2020. It is clear that Black is far from the center, and such play simply cannot be endorsed in the Grünfeld.

**D)** 12... e6 Probably best among the options, and perhaps even the best move order in this line. Black prevents taking on c6 followed by the plan of d5.



Position after: 12... e6

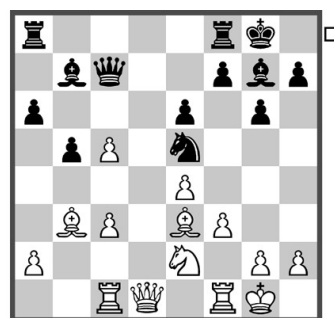
**D1)** Should White transpose to the main line, Black has an interesting idea, as follows. 13. ♖d2 a6!? Now White no longer has d5. [13... ♖c8 14. ♖fd1 This transposes to the main line.] 14. ♗xc6 ♗xc6 15. f3 ♗b5!



Position after: 15... ♗b5!

16. ♖fd1 ♖c8 This seems okay for Black.

**D2)** 13. dxc5 White is using his momentum to gain a pawn. 13... ♞e5 14. f3 [14. ♚xd8 ♜fxd8 15. cxb6 axb6 16. ♗xb6 ♜dc8 17. a4 ♗xe4 18. a5 ♗d5 19. h3 ♞c4 20. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 21. ♜fe1 h5 Again we can see here that Black is holding in a manner typical of the Grünfeld, with the bishop pair and constant pressure on the c3-pawn.] 14... a6 [The alternative may be even stronger as follows. 14... ♚c7 15. cxb6 axb6 16. ♚b3 ♗c6 17. c4 ♜fd8 18. ♜fd1 ♜xd1+ 19. ♜xd1 ♗f8 Despite being a pawn down Black has fine play.] 15. ♗a4 b5 16. ♗b3 ♚c7



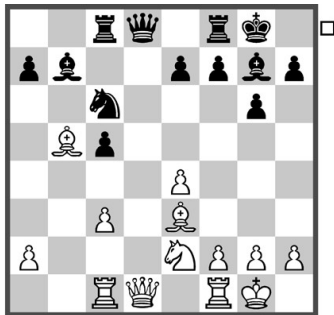
Position after: 16... ♚c7

Black is ready to take back the pawn (on c5) but first he develops his pieces. 17. ♞d4 ♜fd8 18. ♚e2 ♗f8 19. f4 ♞c4 20. ♗xc4 bxc4 21. c6 ♗xc6 22. ♚xc4 ♜ac8 23. ♚xc6 ♚xc6 24. ♞xc6 ♜xc6 25. ♚f2 ♗c5 26. ♗xc5 ♜xc5 27. ♚e3 ♜dc8 28. ♚d3 ♜d8+ 29. ♚e3 ♜dc8 30. ♚d3 ♜d8+ 31. ♚c2 ♜a5 Although a pawn down Black has no problems with having sufficient counterplay in the rook endgame, in Korobov, A (2685) – Svidler, P (2701) Struga MKD 2021.

## 13. ♔d2

The main idea, but we can see some other ideas as follows.

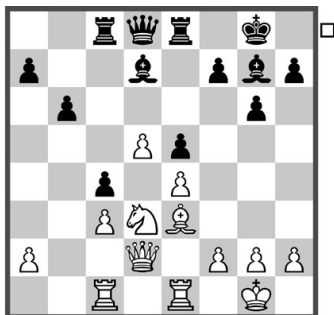
## A) 13. dxc5 bxc5!



Position after: 13... bxc5!

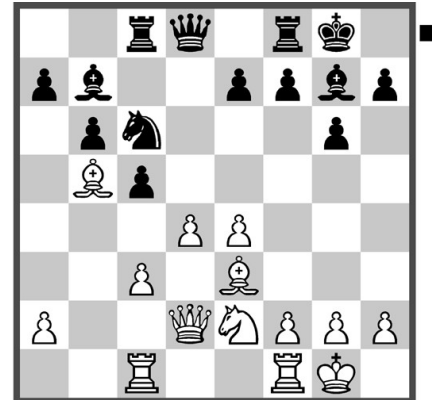
14. ♖xc5 ♔c7 15. ♖d4 ♜fd8 16. ♚b3 e6 17. ♜fd1 ♞e5 Black is doing okay.

B) 13. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 14. d5 ♖d7 15. ♔d2 e6 16. ♞f4 ♜e8 17. ♜fe1 e5 18. ♞d3 c4!



Position after: 18... c4!

Now of course we can see when c4 is good. 19. ♞b4 a5 20. ♞c2 b5 The position is balanced, in Fedoseev, V (2686) – Erdos, V (2586) Biel SUI 2022.



Position after: 13. ♔d2

## 13... cxd4

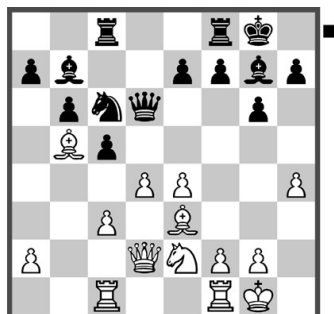
A) 13... ♞a5 14. d5 e6 15. c4 a6 16. ♖a4 exd5 17. exd5 ♞xc4 18. ♜xc4 b5 19. ♖xb5 axb5 20. ♜xc5 Black is not inferior here in any way, in Giri, A (2779) – Vachier-Lagrave, M (2778) Saint Louis USA 2019.

## B) 13... ♔d6

B1) 14. ♜fd1 cxd4 15. cxd4 This transposes to the note in the line with: 13... cxd4 14. cxd4 ♔d6.

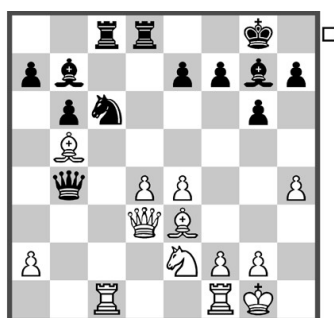
B2) 14. d5 ♞e5 15. f4 A critical point. [15. c4 a6 16. ♖a4 e6 17. ♞f4 ♞xc4 18. ♜xc4 b5 This version is fine for Black.] 15... ♞g4 16. c4 a6 17. ♖a4 b5 18. ♖b3 ♔b6 Black must be ready to confront in the center with e6; the position is unbalanced.

B3) 14. h4 Here White can also opt directly for play in the center as follows.



Position after: 14. h4

14... cxd4 15. cxd4 ♖b4 16. ♖d3  
♖fd8



Position after: 16... ♖fd8

Now the best for White is as follows.  
17. a3! [17. ♖fd1? A mistake, as in the  
game Studer, N (2588) – Antipov, M  
(2611) chess.com INT 2020; and now  
best is the following simple strong tac-  
tical idea. 17... ♞xd4 18. ♞xd4 ♖xc1  
19. ♖xc1 ♞xd4 Black is better.] 17...  
♖d6 18. ♖fd1 ♖b8 19. ♞f4 e5 20.  
♞g5 f6 21. ♖b3+ ♔h8 22. ♞xc6  
♞xc6 23. d5 ♞d7 24. ♞e3 White has  
an edge here; h5 is a threat and the  
passer on d5 is strong.

#### 14. cxd4 ♖d6

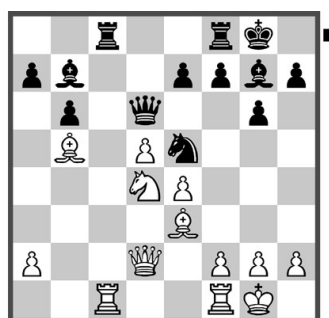
This is similar to the previous case, but  
here Black has taken on d4 at once.

#### 15. ♖fd1

White has the following alternatives.

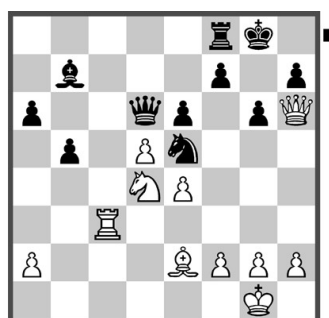
A) 15. e5 ♖b4 16. ♖d3 e6 17. a4 ♖e7  
This seems okay for Black.

B) 15. d5!? This is in fact good. 15...  
♞e5 16. ♞d4



Position after: 16. ♞d4

Black has a few choices here but the so-  
lutions are not easy. 16... e6 [16... a6 17.  
♞e2 b5 18. ♞h6 ♞xh6 19. ♖xh6 ♖xc1  
20. ♖xc1 e6 21. ♖c3!

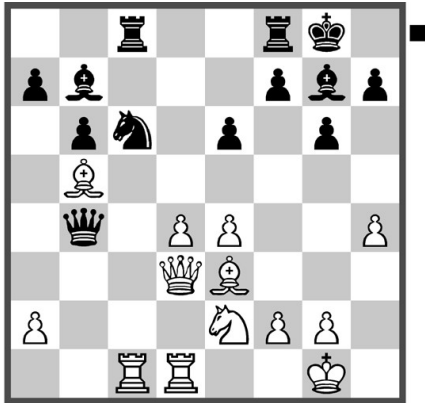


Position after: 21. ♖c3!

21... ♖d8 22. ♖h3 exd5 23. ♖xh7+  
♔f8 This can become dangerous for  
Black. Although the engines are giving  
0.0, I am not convinced.] 17. dxe6 fxe6  
18. f3 ♖xc1 19. ♖xc1 ♖d8 20. ♞b3  
♖f8 21. ♖e2 ♖e7 There may be some

advantage for White here because the bishop on b7 seems a little passive and the structure doesn't work well for it.

15... ♔b4 16. ♔d3 e6 17. h4

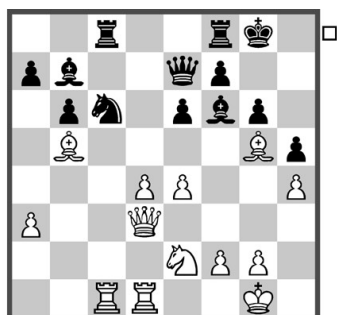


Position after: 17. h4

17... ♖fd8

Black has prevented any White attempts at d5 and thus increases pressure on d4.

Perhaps Black should consider preventing any h5 attempts while there is still time. 17... h5!? 18. a3 ♔e7 19. ♗g5 ♗f6



Position after: 19... ♗f6

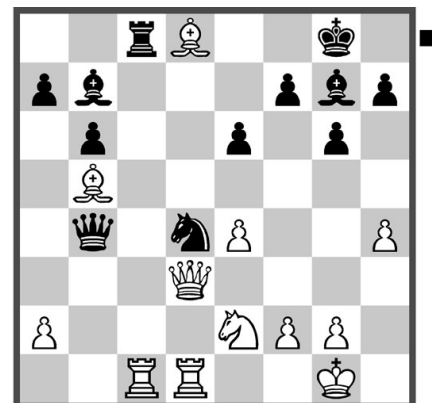
20. ♔g3 [20. f4 ♗xg5 21. hxg5 ♘a5 22. ♔f2 ♖xc1 23. ♖xc1 ♖a8 24. ♔e3 a6 25. ♗c4 ♘xc4+ 26. ♖xc4 ♖c8 27. ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 28. ♔c3 ♔d7 The position is balanced.] 20... ♗xg5 21. hxg5 ♖fd8 22. d5 exd5 23. exd5 ♘e5 24. ♖xc8 ♗xc8 25. ♘c3 a6 26. ♗e2 ♗g4

18. ♗g5

A critical response.

18. a3 ♔e7 19. ♗g5 ♗f6 20. ♔e3 h6 21. ♗xh6 ♘xd4 22. ♖xc8 ♘xe2+ 23. ♗xe2 ♗xc8 24. h5 ♖xd1+ 25. ♗xd1 ♔d8 26. ♗c2 ♔c7 Black is fine here, in Giri, A (2764) – Nepomniachtchi, I (2784) chess24.com INT 2020.

18... ♘xd4 19. ♗xd8



Position after: 19. ♗xd8

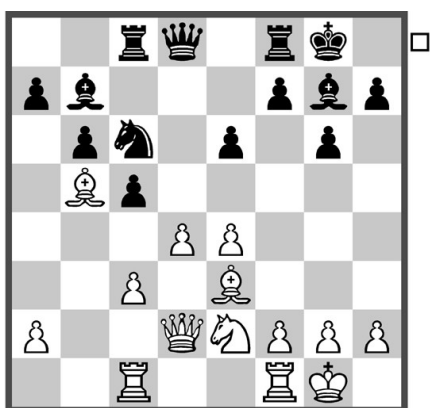
19... ♖xd8

This game has been extensively analyzed and it seems that White has better chances overall, in Ding Liren (2806) – Rapport, R (2764) Madrid ESP 2022.



**b) 12. ♖b5 ♖c2 13. ♔d2 e6**

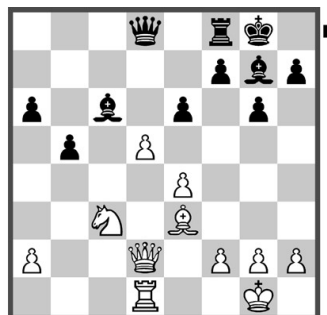
1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♘xd5 5. e4 ♘xc3 6. bxc3 ♖g7 7. ♖c4 c5 8. ♘e2 ♘c6 9. ♖e3 0-0 10. 0-0 b6 11. ♖c1 ♖b7 12. ♖b5 ♖c8 13. ♔d2 e6



Position after: 13... e6

This is one of the possible ideas – Black is ready to play along the c-file and also at the same time attack the pawn on e4.

A) 15... a6 The critical line is as follows. 16. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 17. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 18. ♘c3 b5 19. d5

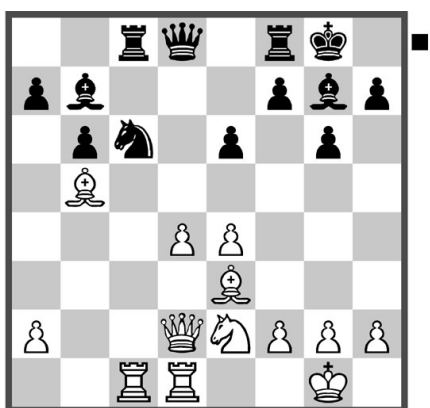


Position after: 19. d5

As part of the plan, Black stops any d5 ideas for now and prepares to develop play along the c-file.

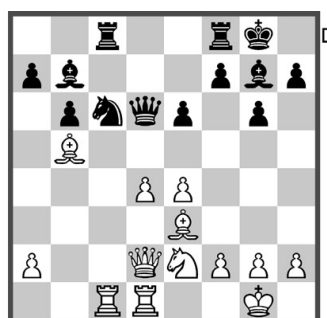
19... ♖b7 20. ♖d4 White has easier play.

14. ♖fd1 cxd4 15. cxd4



Position after: 15. cxd4

B) 15... ♔d6

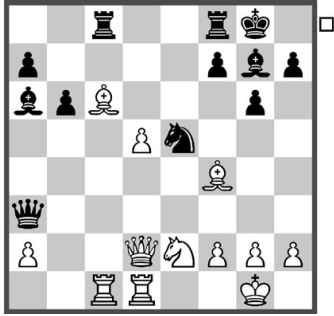


Position after: 15... ♔d6

B1) 16. ♖f4 ♔a3 17. d5 exd5 18. exd5 ♘e5 19. ♖c6 This position was tested in a recent game, Ivic – Sindarov, Wijk An Zee 2023. Black did not

♘a5

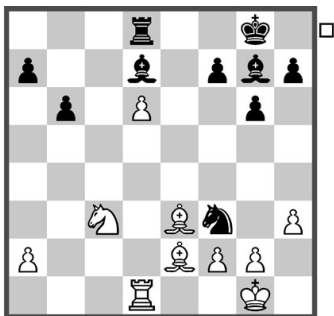
react as I suggested here and ended up quickly in a bad position. 19... ♖a6



Position after: 19... ♖a6

20. ♘d4 [20. ♙xe5 ♙xe5 21. ♘c3 ♙d6 22. g3 ♙xc3 23. ♙xc3 ♖c7 Play is equal.] 20... ♘c4 21. ♙e1 ♘b2 The game is complicated, for example as follows. 22. ♘c2 ♙c3 23. ♘b4 ♙a3 24. ♘xa6 ♘xd1 25. ♙xd1 ♙xa6 26. a4 ♖fd8 Black is not worse here.

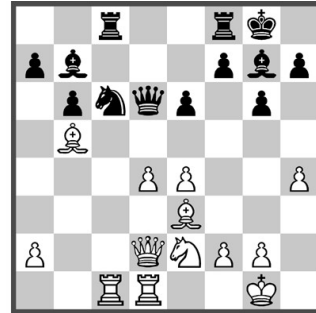
**B2)** 16. d5 exd5 17. ♙xd5 ♙xd5 18. exd5 ♘e5 19. d6 ♖xc1 20. ♖xc1 ♖c8 21. ♖d1 ♖d8 22. h3 ♙c6 23. ♘c3 ♙d7 24. ♙e2 ♘f3+



Position after: 24... ♘f3+

25. ♙xf3 ♙xc3 26. ♙f4 ♙b4 The game is equal. Black has managed to stop the d-pawn and there are no entry points for White.

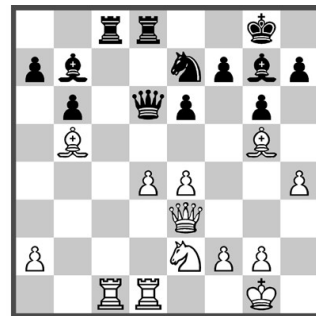
**B3)** 16. h4 This alternative is possible.



Position after: 16. h4

**B3.1)** 16... ♙b4 17. ♙d3 ♖fd8 18. ♙g5 This transposes to the game Ding – Rapport given above.

**B3.2)** 16... ♖fd8 Centralizing first. 17. ♙g5 ♘e7 18. ♙e3



Position after: 18. ♙e3

18... h6 [18... ♖xc1 19. ♖xc1 ♖c8 20. ♖xc8+ ♘xc8 21. h5 ♙b4 22. ♙d3 White preserves some initiative.] 19. ♙xh6 [19. ♙f4 ♖xc1 20. ♖xc1 ♙b4 21. a4 ♖c8 22. ♖d1 h5 The game is unbalanced.] 19... ♙xh6 20. ♙xh6 ♙xe4 21. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 22. ♘g3 ♙d5 23. ♙a6 ♖c2 24. ♘xe4 ♙xe4 25. ♙d3 ♙c6 26. d5 ♘xd5 27. ♙xc2 ♙xc2 28. ♖c1 Giri, A (2764) – Preotu, R (2487) chess.com INT 2020