

WORLD
CHAMPION
OPENINGS

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Eric Schiller

CARDOZA PUBLISHING

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*To Hadas, Adam, Jessica, Abby, Emily, and Melissa,
who I hope will grow up to be fine chess players.*



Eric Schiller with World Champion Garry Kasparov

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	11
2. HISTORY OF THE CHAMPIONS	13
The Backgrounds	13
The Players	13
3. THE WORLD CHAMPIONS	17
Paul Morphy	17
Wilhelm Steinitz	17
Emanuel Lasker	18
Jose Raul Capablanca	19
Alexander Alekhine	19
Max Euwe	20
Mikhail Botvinnik	21
Vasily Smyslov	21
Mikhail Tal	22
Tigran Petrosian	22
Boris Spassky	23
Bobby Fischer	24
Anatoly Karpov	24
Gary Kasparov	25
4. SUMMARY OF OPENING TYPES	27
Open Games	27
Semi-Open Games	28
Closed Games	28
Indian Games	29
Flank Games	29
Unorthodox Games	30



WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

5. TRANSPOSITIONS	31
6. FINDING THE BEST FIRST MOVE	36
What's the Best First Move?	36
The Preferences of the Champions	38
What are the Best Defenses?	41
Dictating the Opening Position	44
7. OPEN GAMES	45
Introduction	45
Overview	46
Spanish Game	47
Closed Variation	49
Open Variation	54
Modern Steinitz Defense	56
Exchange Variation	59
Schliemann Variation	64
Italian Game	68
Classical Variation	69
Evans Gambit	72
Two Knights	74
Russian Game	80
King's Gambit	85
Less Common Lines	91
Philidor Defense	91
Latvian Gambit	92
Vienna Game	95
Bishop's Opening	99
8. SEMI-OPEN GAMES	103
Introduction	103
Overview	103
Sicilian Defense	107
Dragon Variation	111
Najdorf Variation	114
Scheveningen Variation	120
Classical Variation	128
Kan Variation	130
Lasker-Pelikan Variation	136
French Defense	140
Classical Variation	142
Winawer Variation	146
Tarrasch Variation	150
Advance Variation	153

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Caro-Kann Defense	155
Classical Variation	156
Karpov Variation	161
Advance Variation	163
Panov Attack	165
Pirc and Modern Defenses	173
Alekhine Defense	181
Scandinavian Defense	186
9. CLOSED GAMES	190
Introduction	190
Overview	191
Queen's Gambit Accepted	192
Queen's Gambit Declined	197
Semi-Slav	203
Slav	207
Tarrasch Defense	214
Dutch Defense	220
Torre Attack	229
10. INDIAN GAMES	236
Introduction	236
Overview	237
Queen's Indian	239
Nimzoindian Defense	245
Bogoindian	253
King's Indian Defense	258
Gruenfeld Defense	270
Benoni	277
Benko Gambit	280
Catalan	283
Old Indian	286
11. FLANK GAMES	290
Introduction	290
Overview	290
English Opening	293
King's English	294
Symmetrical English	296
Anglo-Indian and the Hedgehog	299
Reti Opening	303
King's Indian Attack	314

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

12. UNORTHODOX GAMES	317
Introduction	317
Unorthodox Attacks	318
Sicilian Grand Prix Attack	318
Bird's Opening	321
Nimzo-Larsen Attack	323
Queen Pawn Game	324
Hungarian Attack	326
Clemenz Opening	329
Unorthodox Defenses	330
Budapest Defense	331
Albin Countergambit	334
St. George Defense	337
Nimzowitsch Defense	340
Chigorin Defense	343
English Defense	345
Dory Indian	347
Owen Defense	349
Junk Defense	351
13. BECOMING A BETTER PLAYER	353
APPENDIX A: HOW TO READ CHESS NOTATION	354
Introduction	354
The Board	354
The Moves	355
The Symbols	360
INDEX OF GAMES	362
Listed in Order of Appearance	362
Listed Alphabetically by Champion and Opponent	365
INDEX OF CHAMPIONS	369
INDEX OF OPENINGS AND VARIATIONS	371

CHARTS OF THE CHAMPIONS

1.e4 vs. all other White First Moves	39
Defending against 1.e4	40
Defending against 1.d4	43
Spanish vs. other 1.e4 Openings	48
Champions playing Semi-Open Games	106
Champions playing Closed Games	192
Champions against the East Indians	238



1. INTRODUCTION

This book examines the repertoires of the greatest chessplayers and shows you how they have treated virtually all of the important chess openings. We reveal the opening strategies that Paul Morphy and the 14 official World Champions have used to earn the number one spot in the chess rankings. The basic concepts of each of these openings are described and illustrated with complete games played by the World Champions themselves, so that you can easily absorb their secrets and use them successfully in your own games.

There are hundreds of common chess openings strategies, with names ranging from Sicilian Dragon, Hedgehog, and Rat through the more esoteric Flohr-Mikenas Attack. Most top chessplayers only play a dozen or so at a time, and make major changes only a few times in their professional career. Their choices are generally conservative, leaving experimental approaches for an occasional outing when the mood fits. The range of openings chosen by each player may be small, but there is a great deal of variety when comparing the repertoires of various superstars.

Chess opening strategy still remains more of an art than a science, and fashion often dictates popularity, rather than any objective standard. Openings fade in and out. In the 1990s, for example, we have seen a revival of variations which were only common in the last century! We find current champions Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov adopting plans which have only rarely been seen since the heyday of Paul Morphy in the 1850s and 60s.

In the various chapters of this book you will see the opening play of Paul Morphy, Wilhelm Steinitz, Emanuel Lasker, Jose Capablanca, Alexander Alekhine, Max Euwe, Mikhail Botvinnik, Vasily Smyslov, Mikhail Tal, Tigran Petrosian, Boris Spassky, Bobby Fischer, Anatoly Karpov, Garry Kasparov and Vladimir Kramnik. These players have been the undisputed champions of the world from the period covering 1857 to the present day. We will examine all the major openings and see whether or not they liked to play them, and how they reacted when confronted with them from the other side of the board.



WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

In each section, you will learn a bit of the history and basic ideas of the opening, and how big a role it played in the individual careers of the champions. You'll be provided one or two complete games with commentary, so that you can see how a small advantage can turn into a masterful brilliancy with good technique, or how opportunities can be squandered by bad technique.

After reading this book, you can go on to incorporate openings that you find interesting into your own repertoire. There are thousands of books available on specific opening strategies. You can also deepen your understanding of the ideas behind the openings by examining collections of games by the champions who used them.

Once you learn to achieve good positions from the start, many of your opponents will start to crumble and you'll have all you need to bring home the point and be a winner!

2. HISTORY OF THE CHAMPIONS

THE BACKGROUND

There have been many claims to the title of World Champion, and with the exception of the period from 1948 to 1992, the process of selecting the champion has been controversial. In the early days of chess, there were few international competitions to determine the best player in the world. Official matches did not begin until 1886, and since 1993 there have been two rival organizations designating their own champions.

Most world championship matches were closely contested, usually being decided by two points or less. In world championship play, matches decided by four points or more in a 24 game match were considered one-sided and decisive. The scoring system in championship matches, as in regular tournaments, is to award one point for wins, one half point for draws.

THE PLAYERS

Paul Morphy was without question the best player of his day, and is generally considered to have held the unofficial championship title until his death in 1884. To determine his successor, a match was held between two worthy candidates, Wilhelm Steinitz and Emil Zukertort. That match was played in America. Steinitz won by a score of 12.5-7.5 in a match held in New York, St. Louis, and New Orleans.

With an undisputed champion at last, challengers arose to attempt to wrest the title from Steinitz. The first challenger was Mikhail Chigorin, the Russian star, who lost a match in Havana in 1889 by a score of 10.5-6.5. Then Steinitz dispatched Isidore Gunsburg in New York (10.5-8.5) in 1891, and then won a rematch against Chigorin (12.5-10.5) in Havana. But in 1894 he ran into Lasker.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Emanuel Lasker's more refined and balanced style proved decisively superior to Steinitz's more primitive play, and in 1894 Lasker won the title by a score of 12-7 in a match held in New York, Philadelphia and Montreal. A rematch in 1897 in Moscow was a complete mismatch, with Lasker winning by 12.5-4.5. Lasker went on to trounce American Frank Marshall 11.5-3.5 in a contest battled in New York, Philadelphia, Memphis, Chicago and Baltimore. In 1908 the great Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch tried his hand, only to go down to defeat 10.5-5.5 in Duesseldorf and Munich. Karl Schlechter was next in line, and he fared better, splitting the 1910 Vienna and Berlin match 5-5. That left the title with Lasker, however, and later in the same year he took care of David Janowski by a score of 9.5-1.5, in Berlin.

Lasker held the title for almost three decades, part of which was consumed by World War I, but eventually he had to yield to the rising Cuban star Jose Capablanca, who won in Havana in 1921 by 9-5. Capablanca lost his initial defense to Alexander Alekhine in Buenos Aires in 1927. It was a long match, won by Alekhine with 18.5 to Capablanca's 15.5.

Alekhine picked inferior opposition for his defenses, and easily took care of Efim Bogoljubow in a match in Germany and Holland, 1929, with a score of 15.5-9.5. A rematch in Germany in 1934 was also a blowout, 15.5-10.5. The next year, however, Alekhine traveled to Holland to battle against Dutchman Max Euwe, and left the title behind by a score of 15.5-14.5. A rematch two years later ended in favor of Alekhine, 15.5-9.5.

Then World War II intervened. When it was over, Alekhine died before another match could be held. The World Chess Federation (FIDE) took control of the championship and held a great tournament to determine the title. This was the first and last time a tournament format was used instead of match play. It was held in The Hague and Moscow.

Mikhail Botvinnik won the 5-player event with 14 out of 20 points, followed by Vasily Smyslov (11), Paul Keres and American Samuel Reshevsky (10.5). Max Euwe only managed four points. The title headed to the Soviet Union, where it would remain for many years.

FIDE put in a system of qualifying tournaments to choose the next challenger, and it seemed to work. Botvinnik managed only a 12-12 tie in his defense against the creative genius David Bronstein, a result which was strongly influenced by "off-the-board" maneuvers according to Bronstein. The 24-game match format would remain in effect for a long time. The three-year cycle, unique in competition, was established.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

The 1948 runner-up didn't quit, however, and in 1954 Smyslov again challenged for the title in Moscow, with a less controversial 12-12 tie keeping the championship in Botvinnik's hands. Three years later they met again, and this time Smyslov prevailed 12.5-9.5. Botvinnik was granted a rematch a year later, and again won the title, this time by 12.5-10.5. The title remained Soviet, and Moscow became the default venue for championship matches.

The winner of the next qualifying cycle was Mikhail Tal, from Riga, who returned from Moscow with the championship title after defeating Botvinnik in 1960 by the convincing margin of 12.5-8.5. Again Botvinnik was entitled to a rematch, and he won a year later by 13-8.

Next in line, in 1963, was Tigran Petrosian, and Botvinnik's unlucky streak of defenses continued as Petrosian won 12.5-9.5. This time the title was gone for good. Petrosian managed to retain the title in the 1966 match against Boris Spassky by 12.5-11.5, but in 1969 Spassky won 12.5-2.5. Still in Soviet hands, the title seemed inaccessible to the rest of the world.

Then came Fischer. Bobby Fischer obliterated all opposition in a searing path to the title match. He then turned the contest into a psychological and political thriller, even giving up one game by forfeit. Nevertheless, in a match the whole world watched, Fischer scored 12.5 points to only 8.5 by Spassky and became World Champion. In a dispute with FIDE he refused to defend the title and remained out of the professional chess scene for twenty years.

As the anointed challenger, Anatoly Karpov inherited the title by default in 1975. He proved his worth in a set of matches against Soviet defector Viktor Korchnoi, who had settled in Switzerland. Six victories were needed to earn the championship. In Baguio City, Philippines, Karpov won 16.5-15.5. He almost failed, as Korchnoi went from 5-2 down to 5-5 (draws did not count) before Karpov achieved his final victory. Three years later, in Merano, Karpov won more convincingly by a score of 11-7.

By 1984, Karpov was looking over his shoulder at Garry Kasparov, whose rise through the ranks was meteoric. This time the match dragged on forever, despite a 4-0 lead enjoyed by Karpov after just 9 games. Then Kasparov became a rock, drawing every game, and Karpov's lead was extended to 5-0 only in the 27th game. The drawing streak resumed, and Karpov started to fade. After 48 games, Florencio Campomanes, the FIDE President, made the most controversial decision in the history of the games. He simply stopped the match, with the score 5-3 after Kasparov had won two games in a row. Outrage was expressed by both players, the media and the public, but Campomanes would not budge. He ordered a rematch seven months later, in September of 1985.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Kasparov was ready, and won by a score of 13-11 in the old 24-game format. In 1986, the match was split between London and Leningrad, and Kasparov won 12-11. The 1987 defense against Karpov was even closer. Kasparov had to win the final game to keep his title, and he did so to earn the 12-12 tie and retain the championship despite all the pressure. In 1990, the match finally returned to America, with the first half of the Kasparov-Karpov battle held in New York and the remainder in Lyon, France. This time Kasparov squeaked by with a 12.5-11.5 score. That match was the last undisputed World Championship.

A feud between the professional players of the world and FIDE President Campomanes had been simmering for some time, since at least 1986. Kasparov had founded the Grandmasters Association to wrest control of the championship from FIDE, but was not able to achieve the goal due to internal divisions in the organization. He regrouped in 1993 by forming the Professional Chess Association. With money provided by the American company Intel, the PCA organized a championship and England's Nigel Short, who had defeated Karpov in the FIDE cycle, was the challenger. Short played some interesting chess but was unable to present a serious challenge to Kasparov, who won 12.5-7.5 in the famous Savoy Theater in London's Strand district.

FIDE refused to acknowledge any of this, and held its own match, with Karpov facing an overmatched Jan Timman in a contest held in various cities in Holland and Jakarta. Karpov won by 12.5-8.5.

The two champions survived challenges in 1995, when Kasparov defeated Indian superstar Viswanathan Anand in New York 10.5-7.5. The following year Karpov prevailed against a new American challenger, Gata Kamsky, 10.5-7.5. That match was held in the home town of the new FIDE President, Kirsten Iljumzhingov, who lives in Elista, the capital of the former Soviet Republic of Kyrgyzia. Iljumzhingov was not only the host, he was also the President of the country!

At the end of the 20th century, FIDE instituted an annual knockout tournament to choose their champion, using short matches and rapid-chess tie-breaks which greatly undermined the credibility of that title. In 2000, Kasparov invited his former protégé Vladimir Kramnik to a title match in London. The pupil defeated the master to become the 14th World Champion.

Having covered the history of the championship, let me present thumbnail sketches of the champions we have met. There are many books devoted to each of them, so rather than present biographical details, I'll just comment on their styles and the significance of their opening play.

3. THE WORLD CHAMPIONS

PAUL MORPHY

Paul Morphy, the American legend, was born on June 22, 1837 in New Orleans. 'The Pride and the Sorrow of Chess' was his nickname, and it fits. His active career was short, but impressive. He defeated Lowenthal, Harrwitz, and Anderssen in matches but couldn't get a match with Staunton. Staunton was seen as having ducked a match, and his reputation has always suffered as a result. There was no official World Championship at the time, and only a Staunton vs. Morphy match would have resolved the issue.

Morphy brought the spicy flavor of his New Orleans Creole heritage to the chessboard, sacrificing pieces whenever a reasonable opportunity arose. It didn't hurt that his opponents were so lacking in defensive skills that it did not make much difference whether the sacrifices are correct or not. Morphy developed pieces quickly, then provoked a weakness and tried to exploit it as quickly as possible.

While his play is an excellent model for beginners, and can be instructive in the art of attack, his opening play is not suited to modern tournament since the opposition tends to be much better prepared than in the 19th century.

Morphy did not make many contributions to opening theory. He basically just set up the pieces to attack the enemy king. Though he is credited with some opening variations, he did little to earn them. Morphy's opening play is virtually indistinguishable from many other players of his day.

WILHELM STEINITZ

Wilhelm Steinitz (1836-1900) was born in Prague, lived in Vienna, and then headed to the New World, emigrating to the United States. His travels exposed him to most of the leading chess ideas of the day, and he became a player who was at least as effective in defense as in the art of attack. This made

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

him very difficult to defeat, especially for opponents who were used to opponents simply folding in a bad position.

Steinitz's superiority on defense allowed him to play some openings which are considered suspect by modern standards, but his play as White is often worthy of emulation. He followed classical principles, but did enjoy a few more eccentric openings, and was almost reckless in his disregard for king safety.

Steinitz was a great innovator in the opening, and many of his inventions remain in the Grandmaster repertoire. The Steinitz Variation of the French Defense (1.e4 e6; 2.d4 d5; 3.Nc3 Nf6; 4.e5) is once again the most popular way of dealing with Black's formation.

On the Black side, Steinitz promoted the variations of the Spanish Game which involve an early ...d6 by Black. Steinitz's appreciation of structural weaknesses and defensive resources enabled him to greatly enrich the opening library, and his *Modern Chess Instructor* is considered a classic.

Steinitz was arguably the first great thinker in the game, and his writings greatly influenced the development of chess. After an early "mandatory" phase as a swashbuckling attacker, Steinitz became more and more of a strategical player, and eventually one with exaggerated respect for the dynamic potential of cramped, defensive positions. He is considered the first official world champion, thanks to his defeat of Zukertort in 1886. His play left an indelible mark on the game.

EMANUEL LASKER

Dr. Emanuel Lasker, (1868-1941) was born on Christmas eve in Berlinchen, Germany. He was World Champion for 27 years, a record not likely to be broken. He gained the title by beating Steinitz 12-7 in 1894. He beat Marshall, Tarrasch, and Janowski in matches and drew Schlechter. In 1921, he finally lost the title to Capablanca 5-9 in a match in Havana. Interestingly, Fischer didn't consider Lasker worthy of his top ten list, calling him a 'coffee-house' player.

The German style developed by Lasker, a distinguished mathematician, was a more scientific approach to the game and his mastery of the endgame led him to appreciate the importance of pawn structures in the opening. He was a very classical player, avoiding weaknesses as much as possible. This is contrasted with more modern players who are willing to accept weaknesses in return for counterplay.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Although this description seems to indicate a dry style, Lasker was one of the first great opening theoreticians. There are very few openings which have not been enriched by his games and extensive writings. His best known variation is the Lasker Variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined, which features an early invasion of the e4-square by a Black knight. Lasker also developed a safe method of accepting the Queen's Gambit too.

He adopted gambits from time to time, even as Black, taking great risks in such openings as the Albin Countergambit. Well ahead of his time, he appreciated Black's resources in the Lasker-Pelikan Variation of the Sicilian Defense, a strategy now employed by top World Championship contenders such as Vladimir Kramnik.

Any player would be well-advised to study the handling of the opening by Lasker. His plans are structurally sound and lead to solid positions. Following Lasker's example in the opening is as sound now as it was a century ago.

JOSE RAUL CAPABLANCA

Who could replace Lasker but an even stronger endgame player? Havana-born Jose Raul Capablanca (1888-1942) fit the bill. 'The Chess Machine' was his nickname, and he was probably the closest in style to that epithet. He gained the title against Lasker in a match without a loss in 1921. He also went nine years without a loss in tournament play! He finally lost his title in 1927 to Alekhine and was never to be given another chance at the title.

His opening repertoire was not unlike Lasker's, especially as Black. The classical approach prevailed, and only slight changes in fashion led to a shift to some of the newer, hypermodern openings.

As with Lasker, it is hard to go wrong with any of the openings Capablanca played regularly. Keep in mind that his endgame prowess allowed him to play for minimal advantages, counting on his formidable technique to deliver the point in the end.

ALEXANDER ALEKHINE

Alexander Alexandrovich Alekhine (1892-1946) was born on Halloween in Moscow and lived in several European countries. He had a very aggressive style which led to many games where even Grandmasters were surprised with his tactical vision.

He defeated Capablanca to win the title in 1927 but his relations with Capablanca were so bad that they were not even on speaking terms and he never gave Capablanca a chance to regain the title. He held on to the title by

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

defeating weaker opposition until Max Euwe took it from him in 1935, but then he regained the title from the Dutchman in 1937 and held it, without a title defense, until his death in 1946.

With Alekhine, the path was clear for the Hypermoderns, whose ideas we'll meet when we start discussing the openings, and other experimenters. While Alekhine did not adopt the kingside fianchetto plans espoused by the Hypermodern school, he did allow the creation of a strong enemy pawn center only to use it as a target for his middlegame operations. So he was certainly influenced by their radical ideas.

Living in an experimental age in general, Alekhine played a wide variety of openings, several of which were quite disrespectable at the time. He is best remembered as the inventor of the Alekhine Defense, although he didn't use it often, but was equally at home in many lines of the Queen's Gambit, both accepted and declined.

He often tried new gambit ideas, but had the good sense to abandon those experiments which proved to be unreliable. He liked to explore the byways of opening theory, and often found that a particular experiment should not be repeated. For this reason you should be careful not to take all of his opening moves as models to be followed.

Alekhine's creativity was seen throughout the opening inventory, with contributions to the Spanish Game, Vienna Game, French Defense, Dutch Defense, Queen's Gambit, Queen's Indian Defense, Semi-Slav and many other time-tested openings.

MAX EUWE

Machgielis (Max) Euwe (1901-1981) was World Champion from 1935-37, and was also the president of FIDE, the chess world's political body. He won his title from Alekhine, and then lost it to Alekhine. Both matches were imaginative fights.

Euwe is best known for his writings on chess, the body of which covered the entire range of opening, middlegame and endgame strategies. He made many major contributions to our understanding of the opening. Although hypermodern ideas were often seen in his games as White, Euwe returned to the Classical style of play as Black. His contributions to the opening were more of specific moves than general strategy, and he raised some openings, such as the Slav, to a more respectable level of play.

Euwe was an opening *theoretician*. (A theoretician studies the game scientifically, examining many specific items and evaluating them.) He was a widely

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

published author, and was responsible for many broad research projects on the opening. He really knew what he was doing, and his opening play is of generally high quality.

MIKHAIL BOTVINNIK

Mikhail Moisiyevich Botvinnik (1911-1994), born in Kuokkala, USSR, was the premier figure of chess from 1948 until 1963. His style was based on logic, and he was an engineer by training. He gained the title with a victory in what may have been the strongest tournament in history, split between The Hague and Moscow in 1948. He had a habit of losing the title only to reclaim it. He dropped the match to Smyslov in 1957, but won the rematch in 1958. Botvinnik then lost a match to Tal in 1960, only to win in 1961. Petrosian finally put him away for good in 1963.

Botvinnik was a dedicated student of the opening. He has variations named after him in most of the major openings, but his name is most closely associated with the French Defense, Dutch Defense, Semi-Slav and English Opening. In each he developed new ideas which remain in common use today.

The Classical style dominated Botvinnik's play, and he was dedicated in his pursuit to control the center of the board. He rarely experimented, and clung to a narrow opening repertoire for most of his career. He used the English Opening (1.c4) more effectively than any previous World Champion.

Even now, many players adopt Botvinnik's repertoire almost exclusively. It contains a pleasant variety of very sound openings. The only drawback for some players is that it is not always as confrontational as more modern approaches.

VASILY SMYSLOV

Vasily Vasiliyevich Smyslov was born March 24, 1921 in Moscow. Smyslov played three matches against Botvinnik for the title over the years 1954-58. While his overall score was 18 wins, 17 losses, and 34 draws, he won only the 1957 match, losing the other two. His amazing longevity was demonstrated when he made it to the Candidates' final against Kasparov in 1984.

Smyslov liked many of the same openings as Euwe, and fully understood the nuances of hypermodern play. At the same time, he is one of the greatest exponents of the Classical openings, in particular, the Spanish Game. His slow, patient maneuvering style has always been punctuated by outbursts of sacrificial brilliance. Still an active player, Smyslov now prefers to introduce new ideas in the middlegame rather than the openings.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Equally at home in flexible flank openings, classical defenses, and the labyrinth of the Sicilian Defenses, Smyslov was responsible not so much for new moves, but rather for new strategic approaches to the opening. Many of his innovations radically changed the nature of the middlegame structures, as in the case of his early kingside fianchetto in the Slav and Queen's Gambit Accepted. These openings had not previously seen that plan in action.

He is specifically credited with new approaches to the English Opening, Gruenfeld, Nimzoindian, Slav, Sicilian Defense and Spanish Game, for both Black and White.

The subtle nature of the positions preferred by Smyslov makes his opening repertoire far from ideal for the beginner or intermediate player, but as one approaches mastery, it is a wonderful model.

MIKHAIL TAL

The most beloved of champions, Mikhail Tal (1936-1992), was born in Riga, Latvia and quickly rose to international prominence. World champion for only one year, he beat Botvinnik in 1960 and lost in 1961 in matches for the title. His style was imaginative and attacking; understandably, he was a favorite of the fans. He battled ill health throughout his life and this had an effect on his results, but he was universally admired by the entire chess community.

Tal could play just about any opening well. All he needed was a chance to attack and the position would soon explode in fireworks. He traveled many paths in the openings, often taking risks that would never be chanced by a modern champion.

Treat Tal's repertoire with the same suspicion which applies to Alekhine's. Many of the openings he played have been refuted or relegated to the fringes of serious play.

TIGRAN PETROSIAN

Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian (1929-1984) was born in Tbilisi, Georgia. He won the title from Botvinnik in 1963 with a 12.5/9.5 score and successfully defended it against Spassky in 1966. He lost his title to Spassky in 1969. He was noted for a defensive and maneuvering style that was hard for amateurs to understand and was perhaps the least favorite champion in history, at least from a fan's point of view.

Petrosian had a distinctive style. It is easy to recognize Petrosian at the wheel early in the game. He often erected pawn barriers and hid behind them, waiting for the opponent to play with just a shade too much ambition. Petrosian's

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

ideas in the opening were quite original, but often led to positions only one with an obsessive love for constricted positions could tolerate. His cramped positions would have driven Morphy, Alekhine or Tal crazy, but this was home turf for the Georgian wizard.

Nevertheless, in the mainstream openings with 1.d4 he added a lot of firepower to the White side of the King's Indian, Queen's Indian, and Queen's Gambit.

As Black, he was fond of the French Defense but was willing to accept almost complete immobility of his forces in positions where his defensive counterattacking genius could exploit overambitious play on the part of his opponent.

Beginners should avoid playing the constricted positions Petrosian favored, but once the importance of the center and piece mobility are learned, these openings can prove very effective in practical play.

BORIS SPASSKY

Boris Vasiliyevich Spassky (1937-), from Leningrad, USSR, needed two matches against Petrosian to gain the title. In 1966, he lost 11.5/12.5, but, in 1969, he won 12.5/10.5. He lost his title to Fischer in 1972 and a rematch against Fischer 20 years later in 1992. Spassky now resides in France.

Spassky is known as a universal player, comfortable in many different types of positions. He has often sought out the byways of opening theories, and has preferred openings which are more idea-based than move-based. Intense opening preparation is not in Spassky's character, though he could rise to the occasion in match play, especially when competing for the World Championship.

Spassky's openings are by and large unambitious. He enjoys variations which involve comfortable development, such as his line in the Queen's Indian Defense (1.d4 Nf6; 2.c4 e6; 3.Nf3 b6; 4.e3, followed by Bd3 and kingside castling) and the Leningrad Variation of the Nimzoindian (1.d4 Nf6; 2.c4 e6; 3.Nc3 Bb4; 4.Bg5). It is no accident that these openings depart from the major continuations at the fourth move. Such an early deviation leaves less theory to be absorbed.

As Black, Spassky was responsible for the resurrection of the Tarrasch Defense, another opening with easy development and clear strategic goals.

His repertoire is ideal for the beginner or intermediate player who is more interested in learning how to play the opening than in memorizing variations.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

BOBBY FISCHER

Robert James “Bobby” Fischer, was born March 9, 1943 in Chicago. His accomplishments included: World Champion (defeating Boris Spassky in 1972); a perfect score in the US championship; and 20 straight wins against top opposition. He has been a controversial figure throughout his career with his forfeiture of the title in 1975 as one example, his 1992 match against Spassky in Yugoslavia in violation of UN sanctions and US government threats (Fischer boasts about not paying taxes) as another.

Fischer was a major theoretician. His refinements, sprung at the board against unsuspecting opponents, remain scattered throughout the treatises on the most important openings. He liked to engage the battle early, whipping up complicated, inscrutable positions which he had already studied at home.

As White, Fischer mostly followed the accepted main lines, primarily in openings starting with 1.e4. He was a master of the Spanish Game, both in the traditional forms and with an early exchange of bishop for knight at c6. In the Sicilians, he deployed a bishop at c4 against the Dragon, Scheveningen and Najdorf formations, and was devastatingly effective.

When seated on the Black side, he used the Najdorf Sicilian and in particular the Poisoned Pawn Variation with no fear of enemy opening preparation. The Indian Games served him just as well when the opponent ventured 1.d4. He flirted with “reversed” openings such as the King’s Indian Attack, where his understanding of the power of a fianchettoed bishop combined with a kingside attack felled many impressive opponents.

Fischer almost never played a bad opening. His repertoire is suitable for all level of players. It is not as topical now as it was 20 years ago, but that is not to say that it is not just as good.

ANATOLY KARPOV

Anatoly Yevgenyevich Karpov, was born May 23, 1951 in Zlatoust in the former Soviet Union. Karpov ranks amongst the greatest in the pantheon. Unfortunately, he has won the FIDE title twice by default, in 1975, when Fischer refused to defend, and 1993, when Kasparov bolted FIDE for his own organization. This is misleading in that his tournament results have been every bit fitting for a world champion. His victory in Linares 1994 was overwhelming and the field included almost all possible contenders for the title. His series of matches against Kasparov has set the record for most games by two opponents.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Karpov plays conservative openings, with long pedigrees and a history of success. He seeks a small but persistent advantage in the opening, confident that he will be able to maintain and exploit it. For this reason, Karpov's repertoire can be recommended only to advanced players whose technique will not let them down. Lesser players will watch in despair as their advantage slowly disappears, unsupported by Karpov's inexorable logic and understanding.

The opening preferences of Anatoly Karpov would not be unfairly described as boring. The most positional line of the Spanish and quietest lines of the Caro-Kann and Queen's Indian Defenses are just his cup of tea. He is a bit more aggressive as White, relying primarily on 1.e4 and choosing solid positional openings such as the Italian Game, and the Modern Variation against the Alekhine Defense, systems with the modest Be2 against the Sicilians, etc.

Although his trainer, Igor Zaitsev, is properly credited with developing what is now the main line of the Spanish Game (1.e4 e5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.Bb5 a6; 4.Ba4 Nf6; 5.0-0 Be7; 6.Re1 b5; 7.Bb3 d6; 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Re8; 10.d4 Bb7), it is Karpov who brought it to its lofty stature by his consistent mastery of the system in tournament and match competition.

GARRY KASPAROV

Garry Kimovich Kasparov was born on April 13, 1963, and 13 is his lucky number. Kasparov is of Armenian and Jewish heritage, and was born in the Azerbaijan capital of Baku.

Perhaps the greatest player in history, he has played many matches with Karpov, all successful save the first one, a marathon match in 1984 and 1985 that spanned 6 months and 48 games. Kasparov's first victory came later that year against Karpov, and he hasn't lost a title match since. He recently defeated Anand for the title in New York, having previously defended his title against Short in London 1993. A "reunification" match with Karpov is under discussion for 1997 or 1998.

Kasparov has had a profound effect on opening theory. He will often amaze spectators and his opponents by choosing ancient openings, or playing a sharp topical opening for the very first time. The youngest champion has a broader repertoire than any Champion since Alekhine, and already has contributed heavily to the theory of his favorite openings, including the Scheveningen and Najdorf Sicilians, Gruenfeld and King's Indian as Black, and just about every opening as White.

His most lasting contributions to date are in the Kasparov Variation of the Queen's Indian Defense and Saemisch Variation of the King's Indian Defense.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Kasparov brought the Tarrasch Defense up to a new level of interest and sophistication in the 1980s.

Recently he has trotted out old and discarded openings such as the Evans Gambit, and once again the world is paying attention!

If you play almost any normal opening, you will find excellent models in Kasparov's games. It should be remembered, however, that his choices are made with his particular skill set in mind. If you cannot store masses of specific opening lines in your head, you may want to avoid openings Kasparov plays.

VLADIMIR KRAMNIK

Vladimir Kramnik was born June 25th, 1975. His chess progress was meteoric, leading to World Cadet and World Junior titles. Kasparov spotted the enormous talent and took him under his wing, even getting Kramnik named to the Russian Olympiad team in 1992. Kramnik's performance on the world stage, earning 8.5 from a possible 9 points, turned the attention of the chess elite to this promising newcomer.

In 1993, his reputation was certified by his invitation to the famous Ciudad de Linares supertournament, where his 5th place finish with 7.5/11 was a most impressive debut. By 2000, Kramnik had clearly risen to top-3 status. Kasparov invited him to play a title match in London. The match saw a convincing win by Kramnik against a clearly out-of-form Kasparov.

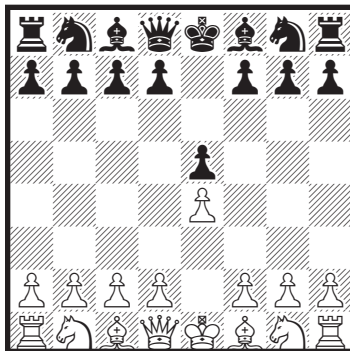
Kramnik's greatest contribution to opening theory was featured in that match. He proved that the dusty old Berlin Variation of the Spanish Game was fully playable, and that the theoretical advantage promised by the books was not enough to win. Indeed, Kramnik led the charge of Classical players, using conservative openings and downgrading the popular Sicilians and hypermodern lines. For the first time since Fischer's day, classical openings were restored to the glory of the Capablanca era. Indeed, his persistent use of 1.d4 plus Nf3 harkens back to Zukertort in the 19th century, though the move c4 was also part of the picture.

4. SUMMARY OF OPENING TYPES

Chess writers usually group openings according to a hierarchy based on the typical positions of each opening. This classification isn't perfect, but it helps to organize the discussion in a rational way. We speak of Open Games, Semi-Open Games, Closed Games, Indian Games, Flank Games, and Unorthodox Games.

Later in the book we will discuss the typical characteristics of each grouping, but here is a summary by way of introduction:

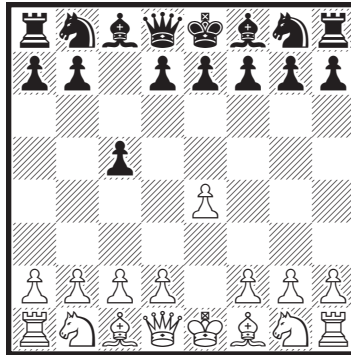
OPEN GAMES



White starts with 1.e4 and Black responds with 1...e5. White continues with rapid development, sometimes in the form of gambits where White gives up a pawn to increase the pace of attack. These are the most traditional openings and dominated chess until the period just after World War 1. Black risks very little in the Open Games, but is unlikely to win quickly.

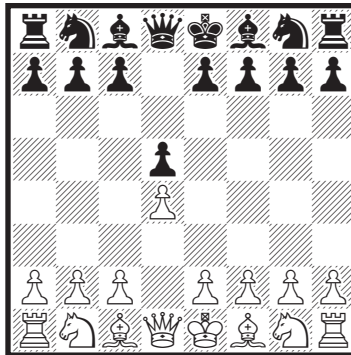
WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

SEMI-OPEN GAMES



These openings also start with 1.e4 by White, but Black chooses moves other than 1...e5. Technically, all replies other than 1...e5 belong to this category, but very strange and usually bad moves are relegated to the “Unorthodox” group. From Black’s perspective, Semi-Open games are in no way inferior to Open Games. While they are a little sharper and involve a bit more risk, they also offer greater rewards.

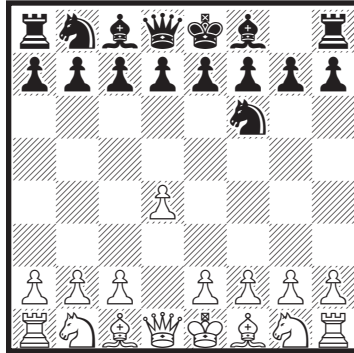
CLOSED GAMES



When White plays 1.d4 and Black answers with 1...d5, we have a Closed Game. The pace of these games is slower and less flashy than in the Open Games. It is hard for Black to achieve full equality, but the defenses are very solid.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

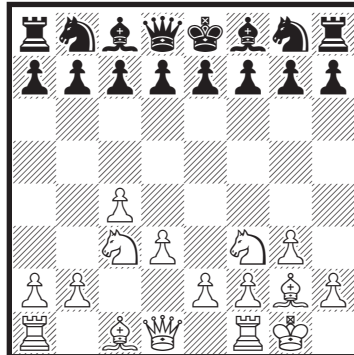
INDIAN GAMES



A more popular reply to 1.d4 is 1...Nf6, which has dominated the scene for the last 50 years or so. White then can prevent Black from taking early measures in the center of the board, but Black has sufficient resources to undermine White's control of the center.

Most of the Indian Games are hypermodern in style. This means that one of these players does not start by occupying a central square with pawns, but instead places the knights and bishops on squares which control parts of the center.

FLANK GAMES

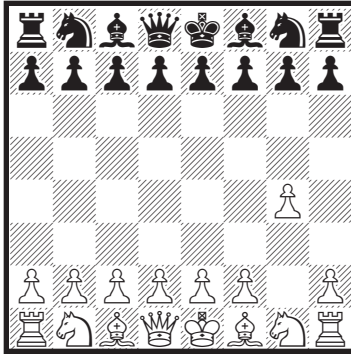


A typical flank formation for White

Flank games are a hypermodern development. The fianchetto is the most popular device, stationing a bishop in the corner of the board along one of the long diagonals.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

UNORTHODOX GAMES

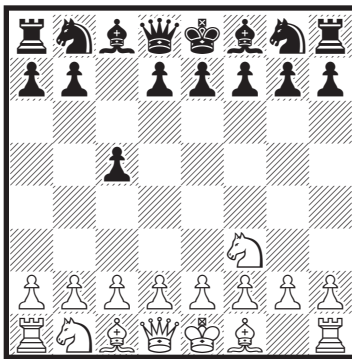


Depending on who you ask, Unorthodox Games are either the ones that just don't fit in the categories above, really bad moves that no one should play, or uncharted areas for exploration by creative minds. World Champions rarely employ these openings, and are usually effective when playing against them.

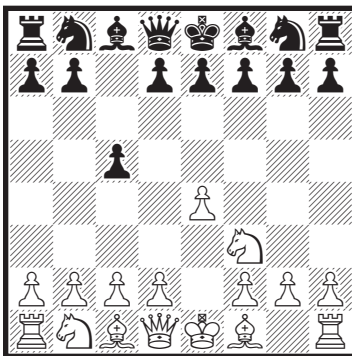
5. TRANSPOSITIONS

We have to consider the positions typical of an opening, not just the first moves played in a game when we're examining an opening or a variation. Often a game begins in one opening but shifts into another by reaching a position that is more typical of the latter. This is called a **transposition**. It's the *destination position* that's important, not necessarily the route taken to get there.

For example, suppose White plays 1.Nf3 and Black responds 1...c5.



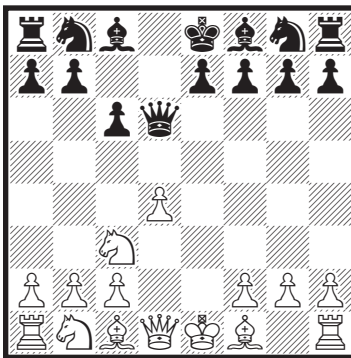
We would consider both of these moves typical of a flank game. But if White now plays 2.e4, then we have the Sicilian Defense, usually reached by 1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3.



WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Of course it does not matter at this point which move order was used, but it is sometimes the case that these transpositions are seen even late in the opening, perhaps at move 10 or 12. In addition, it is possible to reach the same position by a different number of moves!

For example 1.e4 d5; 2.exd5 Qxd5; 3.Nc3 Qd6; 4.d4 c6 is a variation of the Scandinavian Defense which I have frequently played, though it isn't quite "respectable." It can also arise from the Alekhine Defense after 1.e4 Nf6; 2.e5 Ng8; 3.d4 d6; 4.exd6 Qxd6; 5.Nc3 c6. Same position, two move orders. Here is another I have used: 1.e4 c6; 2.d4 d5; 3.exd5 Qxd5; 4.Nc3 Qd6. Many paths, all leading to my pet defense – covered in my forthcoming book, *Unorthodox Chess Openings*.



Because there are so many possible transpositions, it is not easy to determine which opening characterizes a particular game. When we talk about the King's Indian Defense, for example, we are not concerned with whether the game begins 1.d4 Nf6; 2.c4 g6; 3.Nc3 Bg7. If Black plays an early ...d5, we will be in Gruenfeld territory, while an early ...c5 may shift us to a Modern Benoni.

It is only after Black has completed development, including ...d6 and ...0-0 (in most cases) that we can be fairly certain of remaining in the realm of the King's Indian.

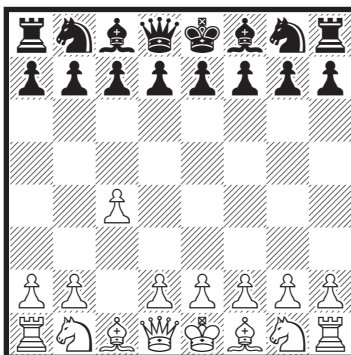
Here is a practical example from Kasparov, who uses a very roundabout method to reach the Tarrasch Defense:

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

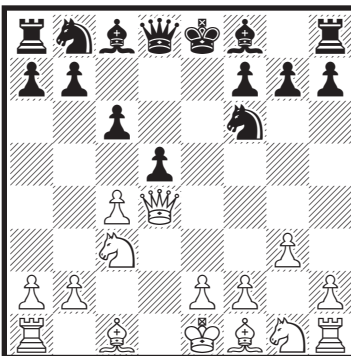
(1) CHABANON - KASPAROV

French Team Championship, 1993

1.c4. This game undergoes some remarkable transformations in the opening. We start out as an English Opening.

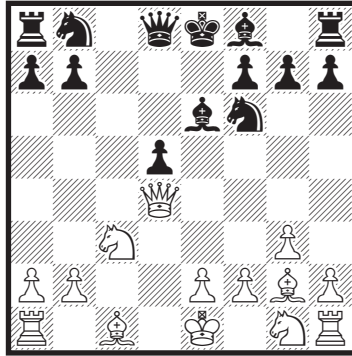


1...Nf6; 2.Nc3 e5. The reversed Sicilian appeals to Kasparov. 3.g3 c6; 4.d4 exd4; 5.Qxd4 d5.

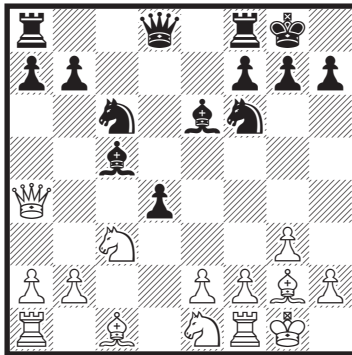


WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Now the pawn structure is that of a reversed Alapin Sicilian, where the fianchetto plan is not among the best. **6.Bg2 Be6; 7.cxd5 cxd5.**

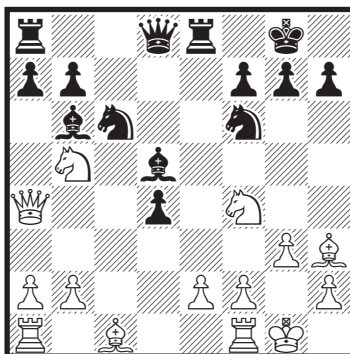


Now we have a Tarrasch, which usually begins **1.d4 d5; 2.c4 e6; 3.Nc3 c5.** Notice that none of Black's pawns followed the same path in this game. Kasparov used to play the Tarrasch, so this was nothing new to him. **8.Nf3 Nc6; 9.Qa4.** On **9.Qd1** White is a full tempo down on the normal Tarrasch. **9...Bc5; 10.0-0 0-0; 11.Ne1 d4!**

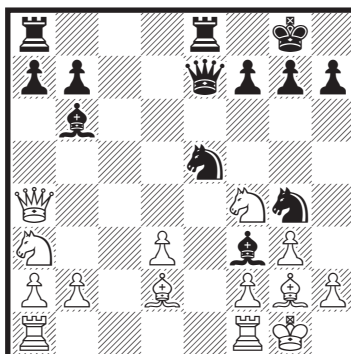


Black's play is normal Tarrasch strategy, and White's minor pieces, already badly placed, don't wind up on much better squares even after quite a bit of maneuvering. **12.Nd3 Bb6; 13.Nb5 Bd5; 14.Bh3 Re8; 15.Nf4.**

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS



15...Be4! White's pieces are still ineffective. Watch how Kasparov quickly exploits the position. **16.Rd1 Qe7; 17.Na3 d3!; 18.exd3 Bf3.** Black is setting up threats on the back rank, but f2 is also weak. Kasparov smells blood and swims quickly toward the enemy king. **19.Rf1 Ng4!; 20.Bd2.** Perhaps White should have just traded the light-squared bishop for the knight at g4. **20...Nce5!; 21.Bg2.**



Now Kasparov just chops a lot of wood and opens up a path to the enemy king, taking advantage of the position of the knight at f4 to win time later with ...g5. **21...Nxf2!; 22.Rxf2 Bxg2; 23.Kxg2 Bxf2; 24.Kxf2 g5!** If the knight moves, then the pawn at d3 falls with check and nasty consequences. **25.Qe4 gxf4; 26.gxf4 Qh4+** and White resigned.

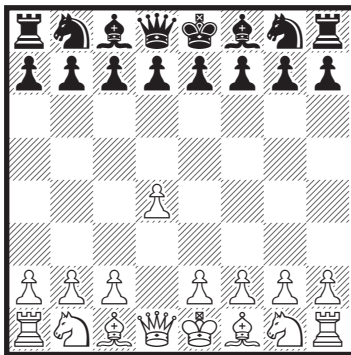
So keep in mind that the boundaries between different openings are quite fuzzy and that the general remarks we read will not apply to all positions arising from the opening under discussion.

6. FINDING THE BEST FIRST MOVE

WHAT'S THE BEST FIRST MOVE?

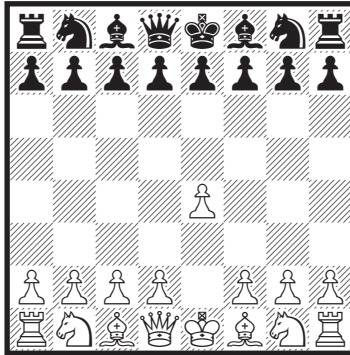
Almost five centuries of play with modern rules has so far failed to reach any sort of consensus on the best move to start the game. This is testimony to the lasting power of chess as a game. Although many arguments have been advanced for the several obvious candidates, and leading authorities have sometimes proclaimed the clear superiority of one opening over another, in fact the question remains open.

The first pair of obvious candidates are 1.e4 and 1.d4. Each occupies and controls important central territory and allows a bishop to get into the game. The pawn at d4 is protected by the queen, and this is sometimes used to argue for 1.d4.



But this is not an important factor because the goal of either opening is to establish pawns at both squares. Here is the picture after 1.e4.

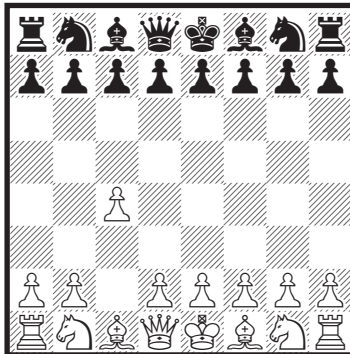
WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS



Since e4 is slightly more difficult to control, it could be argued that White should seize this square first. Black can try to prevent the White pawn from safely occupying e4 by playing ...d5 as soon as possible. Of White's first moves, only 1.e4 and 1.c4 discourage this reply, while 1.d4 allows it.

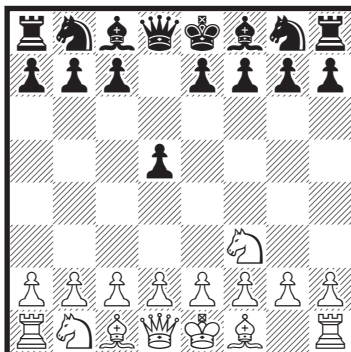
1.c4. gets an honorable mention because it does hinder 1...d5, since 2.cd5 Qxd5; 3.Nc3, gives White a clear initiative. On the other side of the board, 1.f4 is not as useful, because Black can reply 1...d5 and control the e4 square. Controlling e5 is not as important, and in fact when White does play 1.f4, 1...e5! is a very strong reply, known as the From Gambit. After 2.fxe5 d6; 3.exd6 Bxd6; White already has to worry about weaknesses on the kingside.

1.c4, on the other hand, does not endanger the king.



1.Nf3 is often seen, but again 1...d5 is a good reply and White has no real chance of establishing and maintaining the ideal pawn center. It is often used as a transpositional device to be followed by an early advance of White's pawn to d4.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS



THE PREFERENCES OF THE CHAMPIONS

Let's look at the preferences of our World Champions. Most have had a strong preference for either 1.e4 or 1.d4, though a few have a more balanced view. Some like to use a flank strategy but vary the initial move between 1.d4, 1.c4, and 1.Nf3, often reaching similar positions as play develops.

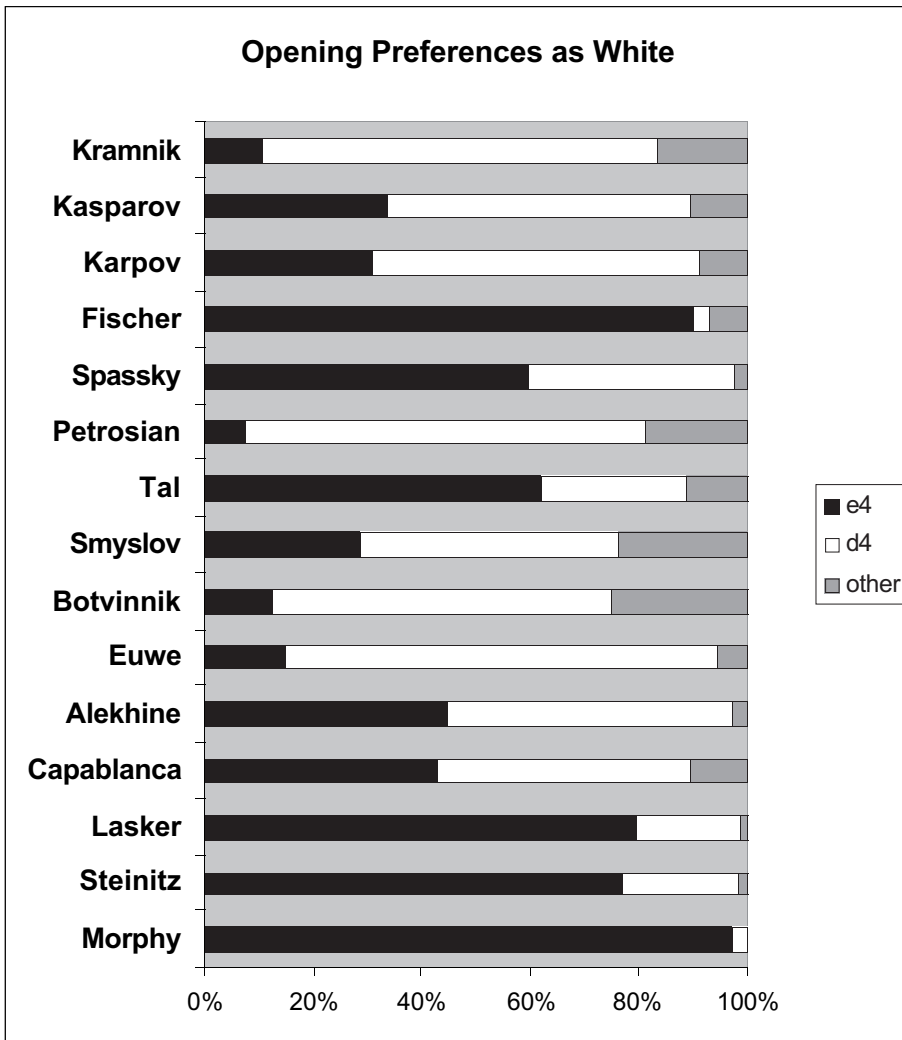
Even in these cases, however, no champion has used moves other than 1.e4 and 1.d4 for more than about a quarter of their games.

We can see 1.d4 has grown in popularity, but that 1.e4 remains a popular choice. Alekhine, Karpov, and Spassky have the most balanced repertoires, while Morphy, Botvinnik, Petrosian and Fischer are the most extreme. Yet even the extremists are divided on the subject! Kramnik clearly continues the tradition of Euwe, Botvinnik and Petrosian in overwhelmingly preferring a closed game. Clearly it is possible to become World Champion relying on either a e4 (open) repertoire or d4 (closed) or by using a mixed approach.

Looking from the other side of the board, we can ask what opening moves are most frequently played against the World Champions. We'll use three categories: 1.e4, 1.d4, and the rest. This time we break out the alternatives to the main choices into a separate group, because many of these openings do not transpose into 1.d4 games. Sometimes players try to trick World Champions with unusual opening strategies, though these rarely succeed.

Perhaps we could resort to statistics to solve the question by asking which move provides the better results. That seems a reasonable approach, but you will find no deluge of numbers in this book. Statistics on chess openings, for several reasons, are simply meaningless. The result of a chess game is not directly tied to the result of the opening. Many twists, turns, blunders and brilliancies lie on the road between the opening and the endgame, and sometimes a game is lost by overstepping the time control in a winning position. Also keep in mind that the players may have been mismatched from the start.

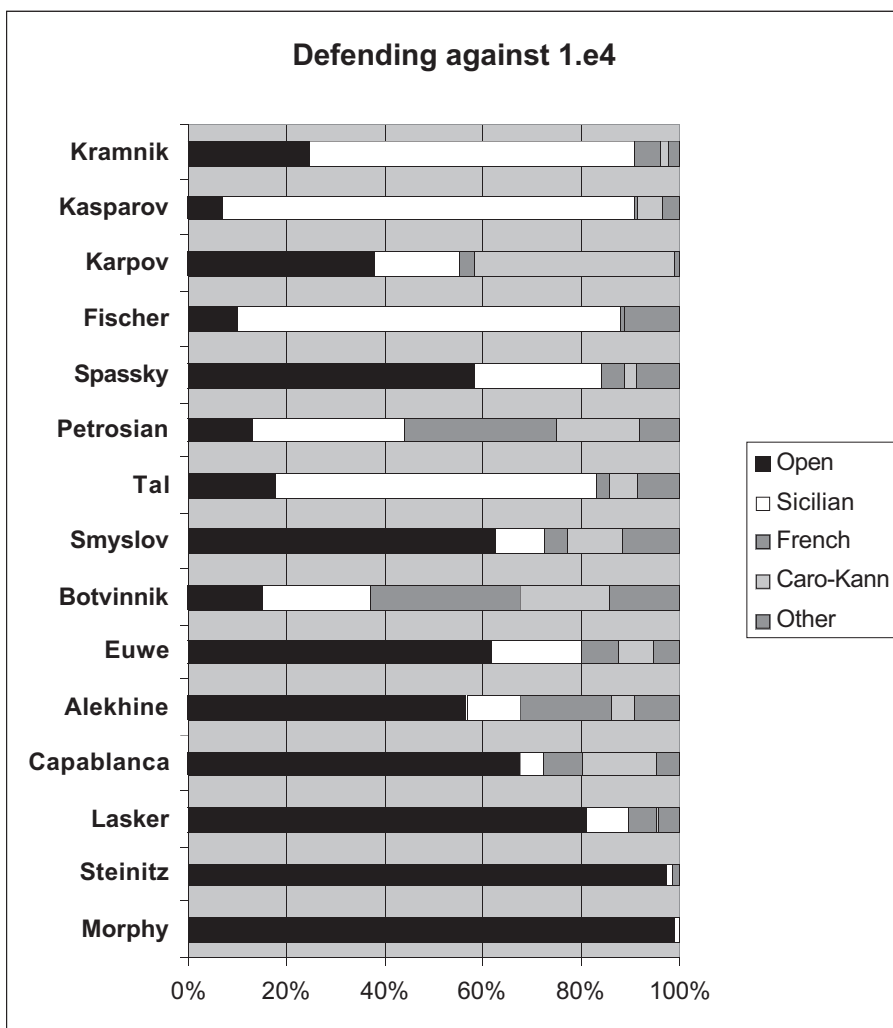
WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS



Kramnik clearly continues the tradition of Euwe, Botvinnik and Petrosian in overwhelmingly preferring a closed game. Clearly it is possible to become World Champion relying on either a e4 (open) repertoire or d4 (closed) or by using a mixed approach.

Next, consider that an opening may win game after game until a refutation is found, and then disappear quickly. The *DejaVu Chess Library* database will simply show that one side won, say, 95% of the games with this opening. Yet once the refutation is established, no serious player will use the opening in competitive play.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS



Kramnik's defensive repertoire is somewhat reminiscent of Boris Spassky, a combination of Open Games and Sicilian Defenses. The French Defense, though popular with many top players, remains in limbo, not having had a champion since Petrosian and Botvinnik. It seems that many players are following Kramnik and other stars in a return to 1...e5 as a primary defense.

In this book, statistics and charts will only be used to illustrate points of preference for certain openings, not to make objective claims about the merits of each variation. Still, when we see that World Champions all avoid some lines to the point of excluding them entirely from their repertoires, it is safe to

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

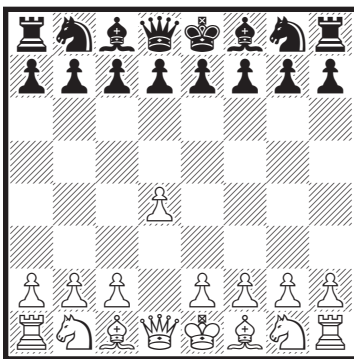
infer that there is at least a perceived problem with the opening.

WHAT ARE THE BEST DEFENSES?

Among World Champions there is no consensus on the best response to 1.e4 and 1.d4. Historically, the Open Games prevailed, but over time the Sicilian Defense has risen to prominence, and both the French and Caro-Kann defenses have their advocates among the champions. The chart on the previous page summarizes these preferences.

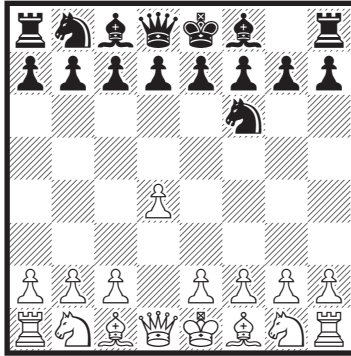
Working our way up from the (historical) bottom, we see that 1...e5 is the overwhelming favorite against 1.e4 from Paul Morphy through Max Euwe. With Euwe, this “classicism” is joined by the excitement of the Sicilian Defense. After the Second World War we see both the Open Games and the Sicilians controlling much of the action, though the French was a trusty weapon for Botvinnik and Petrosian, who also used the Caro-Kann. It is Anatoly Karpov, however, who has been the most enthusiastic supporter of 1...c6.

The top row shows the overall picture at a glance: Open Games and Sicilians dominate, and the French and Caro Kann are the only “acceptable” alternatives. True, the World Champions sometimes experiment with other plans. Alexander Alekhine brought 1...Nf6 to serious competition, but it appeared in a mere two percent of his outings as Black. Most of the champions played it at least once, but none, save Alekhine, thought it worthy of a dozen uses before being discarded.



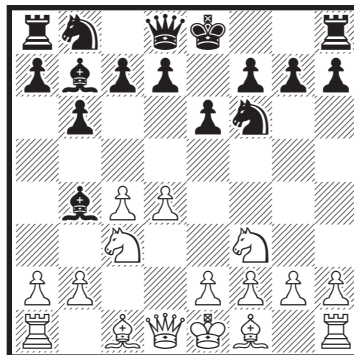
Meeting 1.d4 leads to quite a different picture. Here the World Champions concentrate on three groups of openings. The first group is the Closed Games, typically starting 1.d4 d5, including the Queen’s Gambits, Slav and Stonewall Dutch. The remaining two groups belong to the Indian family, characterized by the reply 1...Nf6.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS



Among the Indians there is a clear split between those which involve fianchettoing a bishop at g7, including the King's Indian, Benoni, Gruenfeld, and a second group where Black plays ...e6 and deploys the bishop at b4 or e7. We might call these groups the "King's Indians" and "Queen's Indians" but in fact those names are reserved for specific defenses.

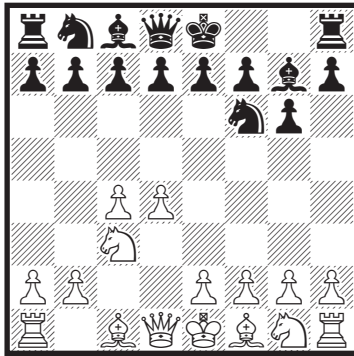
If we view the board from Black's perspective as the "south" looking "north" at White, we can talk about the first group as West Indians (the bishop at g7 being Black's "West") and the second group as East Indians. This makes sense to me, since it is Black who determines whether a West Indian or East Indian is reached. (These could cause confusion if you translate them into French, where they are reversed.) Here is a typical East Indian formation.



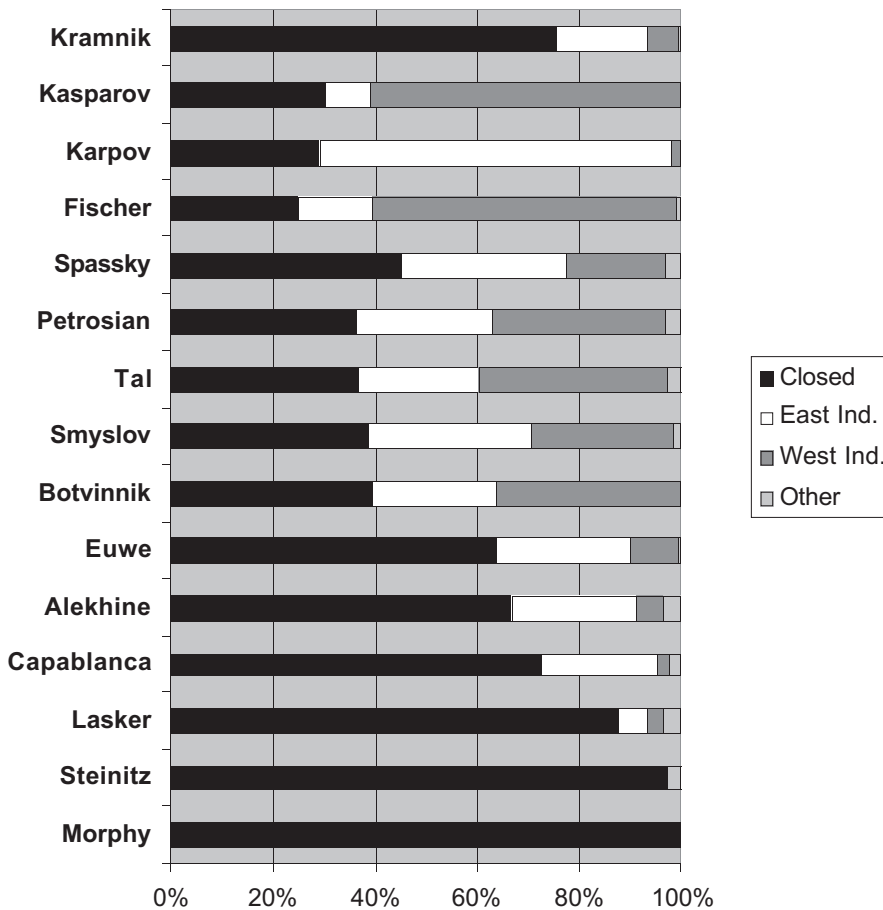
Notice that Black is battling for the e4-square with knight and bishop, while the other bishop pins the White knight, which would otherwise be able to influence the battle for e4.

In the West Indians, Black concedes the battle for e4, but concentrates on the d4-square and the entire h8-a1 diagonal. For example:

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS



Defending against 1.d4



WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Vladimir Kramnik's preference for Classical openings runs contrary to the choices of Fischer, Kasparov, and to a lesser extent Karpov. Indeed, not since Capablanca has 1...d5 been so popular. This is not really a result of Kramnik's influence. The exciting Semi-Slav, especially the Botvinnik Variation, continues to fascinate top players, especially Shirov. The theory of the Queen's Gambit Declined has grown tremendously, and Black has found many new playable lines. The East Indians, especially the Nimzo-Indian, have also enjoyed a revival. As for the King's Indian, which played an important role in the second half of the 20th century, it may be that it has been explored so deeply that there is not so much fertile territory to be explored, though it does remain enormously popular outside the championship arena.

In any case, we see from the chart on the previous page that in the overall experience of the World Champions, the three groups of openings hold a roughly level place, though the Closed games have been in decline ever since Morphy's day. Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov are the leading exponents of the King's Indian and Gruenfeld Defenses of the West Indians, while Anatoly Karpov, Boris Spassky and Vasily Smyslov prefer the Queen's Indian and Nimzoindians of the East. Mikhail Tal and Tigran Petrosian, rather surprisingly, had the most balanced repertoires.

DICTATING THE OPENING POSITION

We've seen that World Champions play both 1.e4 and 1.d4, as well as flank openings. At this level of classification, the choice switches over to Black. That is, if White plays 1.e4, then Black will choose whether the game is an Open Game or Semi-Open Game. If 1.d4, Black will choose a Closed Game, Indian Game, or other reply. If 1.c4 or 1.Nf3, Black can choose to play with symmetry, fight for the center, or adopt a fixed formation.

By understanding the different types of formations, and seeing how the best minds in the history of chess have played them, you'll be able to control the flow of the opening and achieve positions that you like to play. You'll enjoy the game a lot more, and of course, become a much stronger player.

Now let's move on to the openings themselves.

13. KRAMNIK SUPPLEMENT TO THE 2ND EDITION

Vladimir Kramnik's ascent to the world title did not involve radical new approaches to the openings. Instead, Kramnik represents a return to the classical style of Capablanca, introducing small refinements rather than radical new ideas. He has, however, developed a new approach to openings in match play. We look at three significant contributions.

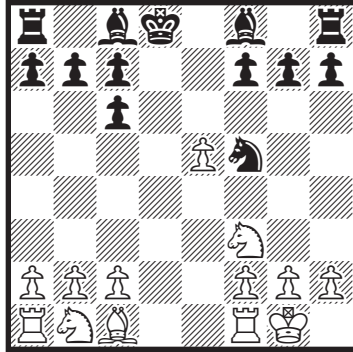
His faith in the **Rio de Janeiro Variation** in the Spanish Game, his main weapon in his title match against Kasparov, turned out to be justified. Although the line had a reputation for being a bit dubious, hard work in the chess laboratory determined that it is playable. White certainly *seems* to stand better, but Kramnik showed that it is very, very hard to defeat.

The classical Queen Gambit lines find Kramnik very much at home. He has found a number of subtle move order tricks that have caused problems for his opponents. We take a look at one example in the **Queen's Gambit Accepted**.

Finally, we see Kramnik taking the classical approach when faced by the hypermodern King's Indian Defense. After solid development, he launches the sharp **Bayonet Attack** on the queenside, having complete confidence in his ability to withstand the inevitable kingside attack characteristic of Black's opening.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

SPANISH GAME: RIO DE JANEIRO VARIATION



- | | |
|---------|------|
| 1.e4 | e5 |
| 2.Nf3 | Nc6 |
| 3.Bb5 | Nf6 |
| 4.O-O | Nxe4 |
| 5.d4 | Nd6 |
| 6.Bxc6 | dx6 |
| 7.dxe5 | Nf5 |
| 8.Qxd8+ | Kxd8 |

This is the main line of the Rio de Janeiro Variation. It seems the position is very good for White since the kingside pawn majority, king safety and development all favor White. Black's bishop pair is of some use, but the king seems a bit vulnerable in the center. The king can move to the queenside, or even back to e8. It is by no means clear which of these is the superior strategy.

Hundreds of games have been played from this position, but we'll just look at the critical lines seen in the Kasparov-Kramnik games. I've chosen the third game of the match to represent the Kramnik Variation. This game showed the typical game flow, with Black suffering an uncomfortable position but with resolute and accurate defense bringing about a draw.

(103) KASPAROV - KRAMNIK

World Championship Match, London 2000

1.e4 e5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.Bb5 Nf6; 4.O-O Nxe4; 5.d4 Nd6; 6.Bxc6 dxc6; 7.dxe5 Nf5; 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8; 9.Nc3.

9.Bg5+ develops the bishop with check, but it doesn't really accomplish much. 9...Ke8; 10.Nc3 (10.Nbd2 h6; 11.Bf4 Be6; 12.Rfe1 Rd8; 13.Rad1 Nd4; 14.Nxd4 Rxd4 gave Black a good game in the blitz game Bonnet-Kramnik, Lyon 2000.) 10...h6; 11.Bd2 Be7; 12.Ne2 Be6; 13.b3 Rd8; 14.Rad1 Bd5; 15.Ne1 c5; 16.c4 Bc6; 17.Nc2 Be4; 18.Ne3 Nd4 showed another good use for the d4-square in von Schallopp & Allies-Lasker, Germany 1890. Alternatively, 11.Bf4 Be6; 12.Rad1 Rd8; 13.Ne4 c5; 14.Rxd8+ Kxd8; 15.Rd1+ Kc8 brought Black equality in Harmonist-Tarrasch, Germany 1889. Black has, in effect, castled queenside and the king is safe. The bishop pair offsets White's advantage in space and kingside pawn majority.

9.Rd1+ Ke8; 10.Nc3.h6; 11.h3 Be7 gave Black a solid position in Lasker-Herz & Lewitt & Keidanski, Berlin 1896. Or 10.b3 h6; 11.Bb2 a5; 12.Nbd2 Be6; 13.Ne4 Bd5; 14.Nfd2 a4;

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

15.Ng3 Nxc3; 16.hxc3 Bb4 gave Black a strong initiative in Morgan-Pillsbury, 1904.

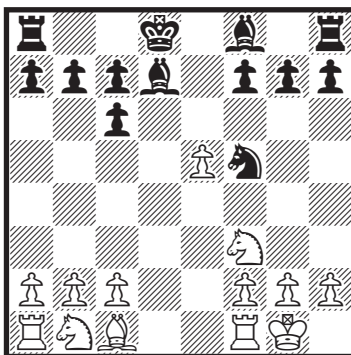
9...Bd7. Black has explored over a dozen plans in this position, and many are transpositional. We'll just concentrate Kramnik's choices. In any case, White's plans will usually include a queenside fianchetto, centralizing the rooks, and using e2 or e4 for a knight. Black will often walk the king over to b7, allowing the rook to enter the game. Most importantly, White's kingside ambitions will be thwarted by a timely ...h5. Kramnik invented many new defensive plans for Black, and White has been struggling to find some sort of tangible advantage.

9...h6 is becoming popular. Kramnik used this move quite effectively against Kasparov. It is too soon to tell whether it deserves to be elevated to the status of a main line, or whether it is merely a move order finesse. 10.b3 Be6; 11.Bb2 Be7; 12.Rad1+ Kc8; 13.Rfe1 g5; 14.Ne4 b6; 15.Nd4 Nxd4; 16.Rxd4 Kb7 was an early version of Kramnik's plan, seen in Porges-Tarrasch, 1892. 10.h3 Ke8; 11.Ne4 c5; 12.c3 b6; 13.Re1 Be6; 14.g4 was agreed drawn in the 13th game of the Kasparov-Kramnik match.

10.Rd1+ Ke8; 11.h3 is a modern approach. 11...a5; 12.Bf4 Be6; 13.g4 Ne7; 14.Nd4 Nd5; 15.Nce2 Bc5; 16.Nxe6 fxe6; 17.c4 Nb6; 18.b3 a4 gave Black good counterplay in the 9th game of the Kasparov-Kramnik match.

9...Ke8 10.h3. This is the move that used to give Black fits, but Kramnik used it even though his 9...h6 move had been holding up well. White is generally considered to have a slight advantage after this move. Black has tried 10...a5, 10...Bb4, and the strange-looking 10...Ne7, among others, but Kramnik chose another plan. 10...Be7 (10...h6 can transpose back to the 9...h6 lines.) 11.Bg5 Bxc5; 12.Nxc5 h6; 13.Nge4 b6; 14.Rfd1 Ne7; 15.f4 Ng6. Black was only a little worse in Kasparov-Kramnik, Corus 2001. This game was played a few months after the World Championship match and both sides had plenty of time to prepare. This game did not, however, affect the main theory of the line as Kramnik deviated from his London plans.

9...Ne7 can lead to independent and very interesting play. 10.Nd4 Ng6; 11.f4!? Bc5; 12.Be3 Bb6!; 13.Rae1!? Nh4!? 14.e6!? as in Shirov-Almasi, Tilburg 1996, where Black should have tried 14...c5!? Instead, Black got blown up after 14...fxe6?; 15.Nxe6+! Bxe6; 16.Bxb6 axb6; 17.Rxe6 Kd7 and wound up in a decidedly inferior endgame after 18.Rfe1 Rae8; 19.Rxe8 Rxe8; 20.Rxe8 Kxe8; 21.Kf2.



WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

10.b3. The immediate fianchetto is a sensible plan, but often each side advances the h-pawn first.

10.h3 h6; 11.b3 doesn't seem to change things much, but it was Kasparov's choice when he finally broke down Kramnik's defense at Astana 2001: 11...Ke8; 12.Bb2 Rd8; 13.Rad1 Ne7; 14.Rfe1 Ng6; 15.Ne4 Nf4; 16.e6 Nxe6; 17.Nd4 c5; 18.Nf5 with a very active position for White.

10.Rd1 Kc8; 11.Ng5 Be8; 12.b3 b6; 13.Bb2 Be7; 14.Nge4 Kb7; 15.Rd3 Rd8; 16.Rad1 Rxd3; 17.Rxd3 h5; 18.Bc1!? turned out well for White in Leko-Kramnik, Budapest 2001.

Instead of the fianchetto, White can play 12.Nge4, which is usually countered by 12...b6, for example 13.h3 Kb7; 14.g4 Ne7; 15.Bf4 h5; 16.f3 c5; 17.Kf2 Nc6; 18.Nd5 Nd4; 19.c3 Ne6; 20.Bg3 Bc6; 21.Rd2 hxg4; 22.hxg4 c4; 23.Kg2 Rd8; 24.Rad1 Ba4; 25.Re1 Bc6; 26.Red1 Ba4; 27.Re1 Bc6 was agreed drawn in Kasparov-Kramnik, Zurich 2001. An alternative is 13.b3 c5; 14.Bb2 Nd4; 15.Rd2 Kb7, when 16.Nd5 Rd8; 17.c4 Bc6; 18.Bxd4 cxd4; 19.Rxd4 looks promising for White, though Black eventually won in Leko-Kramnik, Budapest 2001.

10...h6. 10...Kc8; 11.Bb2 Be7; 12.Rad1 a5; 13.h3 h5; 14.g3 Ra6; 15.Bc1 Re8; 16.Bg5 Bb4 allowed Black to take the initiative in Shirov-Kramnik, 2001. 12.Rfe1 is a sensible alternative. 12...a5 13.h3 h5; 14.Ne4 a4; 15.Neg5 Be6; 16.Nxe6 fxe6 was only marginally better for White in Leko-Kramnik, 2001. 11.Bb2 Kc8; 12.Rad1. The most promising move.

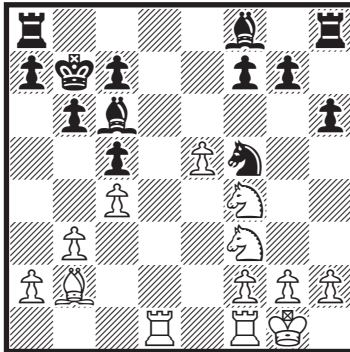
12.h3 b6; 13.Rad1 Ne7 has seen a lot of action.

14.Rd2 c5; 15.Rfd1 Be6; 16.Ne2 g5 provided Black with a good game: 17.h4 g4; 18.Nh2 h5; 19.Rd8+ Kb7; 20.Rxa8 Kxa8; 21.Rd8+ Kb7; 22.Nf4 Ng6; 23.g3 c4!; 24.bxc4 Nxf4; 25.gxf4 g3; 26.Nf1 gxf2+; 27.Kh2 Bxc4 White resigned, Anand-Kramnik, Mainz 2001.

14.Nd4 Ng6; 15.f4 a5; 16.a4 h5; 17.Ne4 Be7; 18.Ng5 c5; 19.Nxf7 led to a White win in Shirov-Rizouk, Moscow 2001.

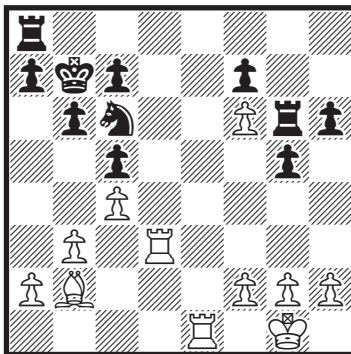
14.Ne2 is interesting. After 14...Ng6 White has two plans: 15.Ng3 Nf4; 16.Nd4 a5 17.a4 b5; 18.Kh2 bxa4; 19.bxa4 Black's messy queenside held together with the help of the bishop pair in Shirov-Kramnik, Astana 2001. The alternative 15.Ne1 intends to pivot the knight to d3. 15...h5; 16.Nd3 c5; 17.c4 a5; 18.a4 h4; 19.Nc3 Be6; 20.Nd5 Kb7; 21.Ne3 Rh5; 22.Bc3 Re8; 23.Rd2 Kc8; 24.f4 Ne7; 25.Nf2 Nf5 was agreed drawn in the first game of Kasparov-Kramnik, 2000.

12...b6; 13.Ne2 c5; 14.c4 Bc6; 15.Nf4 Kb7.



WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

Black has managed to get the king to safety but it has taken a lot of time. White owns the d-file and the important d5-square. 16.Nd5! Ne7. 16...Bxd5; 17.cxd5 would be very bad for Black, as the central pawns can march forward, supported by the rooks. 17.Rfe1 Rg8. Black prepares for active play on the kingside. A chessplayer can only sit still so long before restlessness sets in!; 18.Nf4 g5; 19.Nh5. The knight was much better placed on d5, but as it will wind up on f6 in any case, that doesn't matter. 19...Rg6; 20.Nf6 Bg7; 21.Rd3 The pressure is building, with White about to double rooks on the d-file. Black reacts by trading both bishops for the White knights. 21...Bxf3; 22.Rxf3 Bxf6; 23.exf6 Nc6; 24.Rd3.



There can be no doubt that White has the advantage here. A strong pawn at f6, control of both open files and a good bishop add up to a serious plus. On the other hand, Black's two structural weaknesses at h6 and f7 can be defended, even if it is a bit awkward.

24...Rf8; 25.Re4 Kc8; 26.f4. White needs to open up the game, or else Black can just sit on the position. 26...gxf4; 27.Rxf4 Re8; 28.Bc3 Re2. Real counterplay at last! Black's pieces, which lay humbled just a few moves ago, suddenly have all gained roles in the game. 29.Rf2 Re4; 30.Rh3 a5! As White turns his attention to the h-file, Kramnik reacts on the opposite flank. 31.Rh5. To prevent ...Ne5.

31...a4; 32.bxa4 Rxc4; 33.Bd2 Rxa4; 34.Rxh6 Rg8; 35.Rh7 Rxa2; 36.Rxf7. All the weak pawns have been removed. White still has a theoretical advantage, since the f-pawn is advanced and White has three connected passed pawns. 36...Ne5; 37.Rg7 Rf8; 38.h3. Moving the pawn to h4 would have been a better try. 38...c4; 39.Re7 Nd3; 40.f7 Nxf2; 41.Re8+ Kd7; 42.Rxf8 Ke7; 43.Rc8 Kxf7; 44.Rxc7+ Ke6; 45.Be3 Nd1; 46.Bxb6. 46.Rxc4? Rxc4+!! (46...Nxe3?; 47.Re4+); 47.Kxg2 Nxe3+; 48.Kf3 Nxc4 and Black would win!

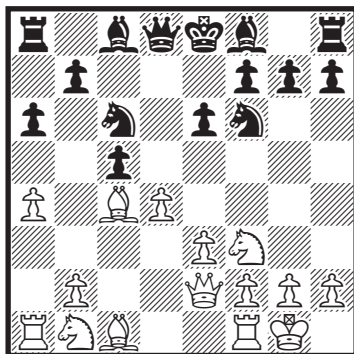
46...c3 47.h4. 47.Kh2 was perhaps better, but the endgame is likely to be drawn in any case. 47...Ra6; 48.Bd4 Ra4!; 49.Bxc3 Nxc3; 50.Rxc3 Rxh4.

At the World Championship level, White has no chances to win this endgame, even though the Black king can be cut off on the f-file. If the king were on the d-file, it would be a different story.

51.Rf3 Rh5; 52.Kf2 Rg5; 53.Rf8 Ke5. Agreed drawn.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED: MAIN LINE WITH 7.A4



- | | |
|--------|------|
| 1.d4 | d5 |
| 2.c4 | dxc4 |
| 3.Nf3 | Nf6 |
| 4.e3 | e6 |
| 5.Bxc4 | c5 |
| 6.O-O | a6 |
| 7.a4 | Nc6 |
| 8.Qe2 | |

(104) KRAMNIK - SADVAKASOV [D27]

International Tournament Astana, Kazakhstan, 2001

1.d4 d5; 2.c4 dxc4; 3.Nf3 Nf6; 4.e3 e6; 5.Bxc4 c5; 6.O-O a6; 7.a4 Nc6; 8.Qe2. This position can also be reached via the Slav: 1.d4 d5; 2.c4 c6; 3.Nf3 Nf6; 4.e3 e6; 5.Bd3 dxc4; 6.Bxc4 c5; 7.O-O a6; 8.a4 Nc6; 9.Qe2 Qc7 reaches the same position by transposition, with one move additional for each player! This was seen in Karpov-Timman, Linares 1989.

Kramnik follows the current preference, placing the pawn at a4 to discourage any queenside advance by Black. The downside is that there is a big hole at b4. 8...Qc7; 9.Rd1.

9.Nc3 is more popular. 9...Bd6; 10.Rd1 O-O; 11.h3 b6; 12.d5 Ne5; 13.Nxe5 Bxe5; 14.dxe6 Bxe6; 15.Bxe6 fxe6 was seen in Karpov-Timman, Linares 1989. Black has a weak pawn at e6 but White has some difficulty completing development, so chances are about equal. 10.Bd2 O-O and now:

11.Rac1 Bd7; 12.dxc5 Bxc5; 13.Bd3 Qd6 was agreed drawn in Tal-Korchnoi, Skelleftea World Cup 1989. Chances are even, and there is no reason why this position can't be played further. The sacrifice at h7 is premature, but bringing a knight to g5 should provide White with some advantage.)

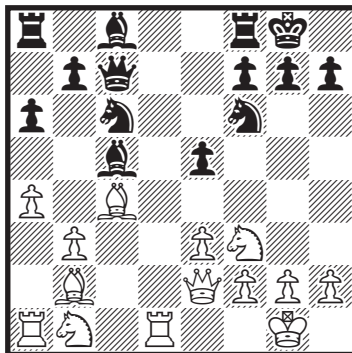
11.d5 exd5; 12.Nxd5 Nxd5; 13.Bxd5 Rd8; 14.h3 Bh2+!; 15.Nxh2 Rxd5 gave Black a promising game in Kramnik-Anand, Monte Carlo 1999.

9...Bd6; 10.dxc5. White delays this capture until Black's dark square bishop has moved, in order to pick up a tempo. 10...Bxc5; 11.b3. A logical plan, intending to use the dark square bishop on the long diagonal and free c1 for a rook. 11...O-O. 11...b6; 12.Bb2 Bb7; 13.Nbd2 O-O; 14.Rac1 Rfd8 was about even in Neverov-Vladimirov, Frunze 1988.

11...Na5; 12.Bb2 Nxc4; 13.Qxc4 may not look like much, but White has a very serious advantage in space and owns the d-file. The advantage can lead to rapid victory, for example. 13...Bd6; 14.Nbd2 Qe7; 15.Bxf6! gxf6; 16.Ne4. The control of d6 is terminal. 16...Ba3 (16...Bb4; 17.Rac1 O-O was Black's best but 18.Nxf6+ Qxf6; 19.Qxb4 leaves Black in a hopeless position, in the long run.) 17.Rxa3! Qxa3; 18.Nd6+. Black resigned, Lutz-Schulz, Bundesliga 1990.

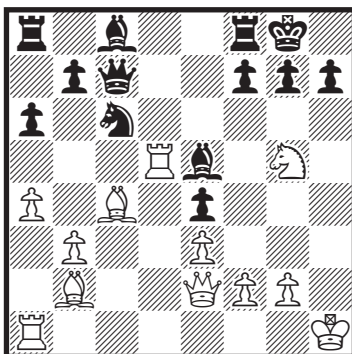
WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

12.Bb2 e5! Having castled, Black's next task is to determine a spot for the bishop at c8. A queenside fianchetto is possible, but the c8-h3 diagonal is a more aggressive choice.



13.Nc3. 13.h3 keeps the bishop off g4. **13...e4; 14.Ng5 h6; 15.Bxf6 hxg5; 16.Bb2** allowed White's bishops to dominate the board in a battle of two top female stars, Zhukova-Skripchenko Lautier, Belgrade 2000. **13...e4. 13...Bg4; 14.h3 Bh5; 15.g4** gives White a strong initiative. **14.Ng5 Bd6.** Black takes aim at the undefended pawn at h2. White, surprisingly, lets it go. Black must lose important time extracting the position from White's home.

15.Nd5! **15.h3** was good enough, but Kramnik goes for the kill. It is hard to blame Sadvakasov. The Grandmaster surely felt that the critical f7 square, though under attack, had sufficient defense. **15...Nxd5; 16.Rxd5 Bxh2+.** **16...h6; 17.Qh5 hxg5??** falls into an impressive checkmating combination. **18.Bxg7!! Bxh2+; 19.Kh1 Kxg7; 20.Qxg5+ Kh7; 21.Qh4+ Kg6; 22.Rg5+ Kf6; 23.Rg3+ Ke5; 24.Qf4#.** **17.Kh1 Be5.** Black had to retreat to this square immediately.



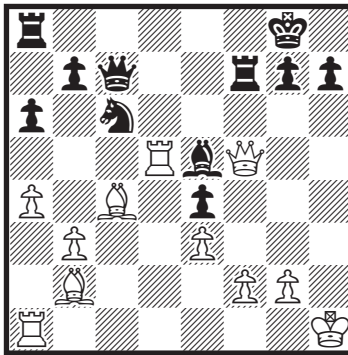
The bishop is defended by both knight and queen, sufficient to hold off the White rook and bishop. Kramnik's next move not only threatens immediate checkmate, but also puts the queen in a position to take aim at e5.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

18.Qh5! Bf5? Black defends h7 and is ready to chase out the invaders with ...Bg6 and...h6. However, it would have been better to play ...h6, not so much to attack the knight as to protect the h7-square.

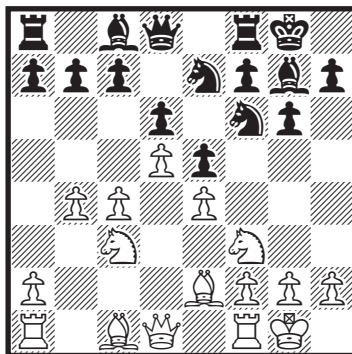
18...h6 also allows the knight sacrifice, but it isn't as devastating as in the game. 19.Nxf7! Rxf7; 20.Rxe5! Nxe5; 21.Bxe5 Qe7 allows White to transition to a great endgame by removing a few pieces. 22.Bxf7+ Qxf7; 23.Qxf7+ Kxf7; 24.Rc1. The bishops of opposite colors are not drawish with rooks on the board. Black will find it hard to develop without losing the b-pawn. Add the weak pawn at e4 into the mix, and it is clear that White has excellent winning chances.

19.Nxf7!! Rxf7; 20.Qxf5!!



The queen cannot be captured because of discovered checkmate by Rd8. This would have been an elegant conclusion to the game. Black however, chose a more prosaic finish. 20...g6; 21.Bxe5. Black resigned.

KING'S INDIAN: BAYONET ATTACK



- | | |
|-------|-----|
| 1.d4 | Nf6 |
| 2.c4 | g6 |
| 3.Nc3 | Bg7 |
| 4.e4 | d6 |
| 5.Nf3 | O-O |
| 6.Be2 | e5 |
| 7.O-O | Nc6 |
| 8.d5 | Ne7 |
| 9.b4 | |

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS

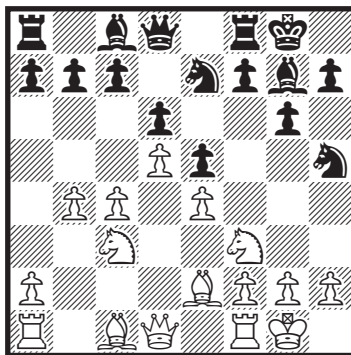
The Bayonet Attack is one of the most popular, and logical, strategies for White in the Classical King's Indian Defense. White tries to get things going on the queenside as quickly as possible, before Black has a chance to launch the kingside attack. Black will move the knight from f6, and then play ...f4, followed by a kingside pawn storm in many cases. This clash between Kramnik, who prefers a solid and principled approach to the opening, and Kasparov, for whom the wild King's Indian has been a long time favorite, illustrates the key ideas of this variation.

(105) KRAMNIK - KASPAROV [E97]

Novgorod Russia, 1997

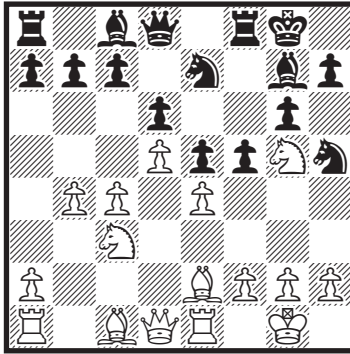
1.Nf3 Nf6; 2.c4 g6; 3.Nc3 Bg7; 4.e4 d6; 5.d4 O-O; 6.Be2 e5; 7.O-O Nc6; 8.d5 Ne7; 9.b4 Nh5.

9...a5 confronts White's strategy immediately. There is a strong reply available in 10.Ba3! (10.bxa5 Rxa5; 11.Nd2 c5; 12.a4 Ra6; 13.Ra3 Nd7; 14.Nb5 f5; 15.exf5 gxf5 is no worse for Black, Bareyev-Smirin, Moscow 2002.) 10...axb4 (10...b6 can be inserted. 11.bxa5 Nh5; 12.Re1 f5; 13.Bb4 bxa5; 14.Ba3 gives White a free hand on the queenside, Kramnik-Smirin, Belgrade 1999.) 11.Bxb4 Nd7; 12.a4 f5; 13.Ng5 Nc5; 14.Bxc5 dxc5 led to a lively game in Kramnik-Kasparov, Moscow 1998. White eventually won.



10.Re1. White needs to play this so that the bishop can retreat to f1 after Black plants a knight at f4. 10...Nf4. This obvious move is not necessarily best. Black does a little better by launching the kingside attack by advancing the f-pawn. An interesting alternative is 10...f5; 11.Ng5. Kramnik has had plenty of experience in that arena.

WORLD CHAMPION OPENINGS



Black can try to sink the knight at f4. 11...Nf4; 12.Bxf4 exf4; 13.Rc1 Bf6; 14.Ne6 Bxe6; 15.dxe6 Bxc3; 16.Rxc3 fxe4 has seen Kramnik sitting on the White side twice. (17.Bg4 Nc6; 18.Rxe4 is Kramnik-Shirov, Monte Carlo 1998.) 17.Bf1 was met by 17...e3; 18.fxe3 fxe3 ;19.Rcx3 with a clearly better game for White in Kramnik-Shirov, Tilburg 1997.

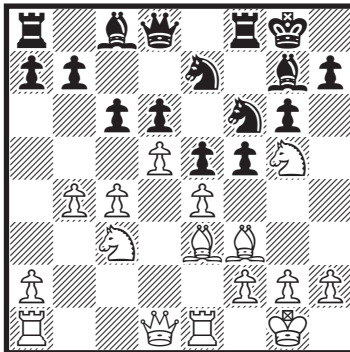
The more common 11...Nf6 lets White choose between a bishop and pawn to support e4 from f3: 12.f3 led to a fine Kramnik victory. Black chose to hide in the corner with 12...Kh8. (Better is 12...h6, encouraging the knight to go to e6, where it will be captured and White will have a weak pawn at e6.) 13.Be3 Ne8; 14.Rc1 c6; 15.c5 Ng8; 16.exf5 gxf5; 17.f4 Ne7; 18.cxd6 Nxd6; 19.dxc6 Nxc6; 20.Bc5 exf4; 21.Bxd6 Qxg5; 22.Bxf8 Bxf8; 23.Bf3. Black resigned, Kramnik-Ivanchuk, Monaco 2000.

12.Bf3 had previously been his favorite.

12...Kh8; 13.Bb2 a5; 14.b5 Rb8; 15.Ne6 Bxe6; 16.dxe6 Ne8; 17.Qb3! set up a possible defense for the pawn at e6, and brought White the advantage in Kramnik-Polgar, Vienna 1996.

12...fxe4; 13.Ngxe4 Nf5; 14.Bg5 gave White a slight pull in Kramnik-Gelfand, Vienna 1996.

12...c6; 13.Be3 is an important position.



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Black can play on either wing, or capture in the center.

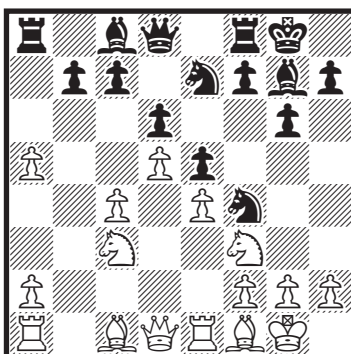
13...f4; 14.Bc1 h6; 15.Ne6 Bxe6; 16.dxe6 Nc8; 17.b5! White keeps the initiative, not worrying about the pawn at e6. 17...Qe8; 18.bxc6 bxc6; 19.c5 Qxe6; 20.Ba3. White has plenty of compensation, since Black's pawns are weak, Kramnik-Gelfand, Belgrade 1997.

13...h6; 14.Ne6 Bxe6; 15.dxe6 g5; 16.exf5 Nxf5; 17.Qd3 Nxe3; 18.Rxe3 is very strong for White, for example 18...Qe7; 19.Rd1 Rad8; 20.Ne4 g4; 21.Nxf6+ Qxf6; 22.Bxg4 Qxf2+; 23.Kh1 Rf4; 24.Rf3 Qh4; 25.Rxf4 exf4; 26.Bf3 Qe7; 27.Re1 Be5; 28.Qg6+ Qg7; 29.e7! Black resigned, Kramnik-Nijboer, Wijk aan Zee 1998.

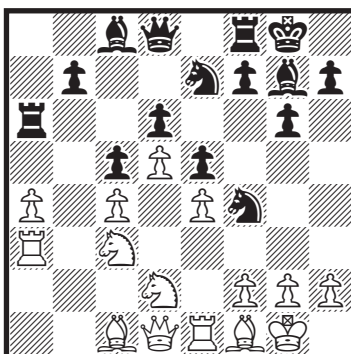
13...a5; 14.bxa5 Qxa5; 15.Qb3 cxd5; 16.cxd5 with a big space advantage for White, Kramnik-Piket, Monte Carlo 1998.)

13... cxd5; 14.cxd5 h6; 15.Ne6 Bxe6; 16.dxe6 fxe4; 17.Nxe4 Nxe4; 18.Bxe4 d5; 19.Bc2 Black's pawns are weak, and White's bishops are strong, Kramnik-Polgar, Linares, 1997.

11.Bf1 a5; 12.bxa5.



12...Rxa5. Black doesn't have to recapture the pawn right away, though there is no reason to delay. 12...c5; 13.a4 h6; 14.Nb5 Rxa5 (14...g5; 15.g3! Nfg6; 16.Nd2 Kh8; 17.Ra3! brought White the edge in Ivanov-Loginov, Russia 1998.) 15.Ra3 g5; 16.Nd2 Ra6; 17.g3 Nfg6; 18.Be2 f5; 19.exf5 Nxf5; 20.Bh5 Nge7; 21.Bg4. Black's only target is at f2; that is easy to defend, Sherbakov-Sapunov, Russia Championship 1998. 13.Nd2 c5; 14.a4 Ra6; 15.Ra3.

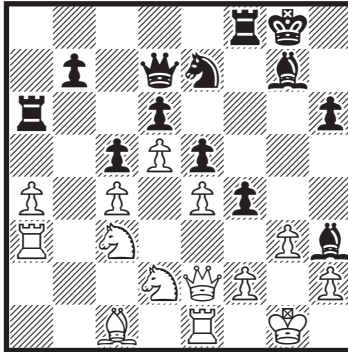


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The rook lift is a typical strategy in the Bayonet Attack. The rook can easily slide over to the kingside. 15...g5. Black tries to get the kingside attack going. But it would be better to establish some light square control first. 15...Bd7!?: 16.Nb5 Qc8; 17.Bb2 g5 comes into consideration, though after 18.a5!? White looks a bit better.

16.g3!? Kramnik chooses to boot the knight. 16.Nb5 has also been explored. 16...Nh3+. Retreat is hardly part of Black's strategy! 17.Bxh3 Bxh3; 18.Qh5! White wins a pawn. 18...Qd7. 18...g4 would have cut off the bishop forever.

19.Qxg5 h6; 20.Qe3 f5; 21.Qe2 f4.



White can be happy with the position, but will have to exercise caution, as the kingside doesn't have much defense.

22.Nb5. 22.a5 comes into consideration. 22...Kh7; 23.gxf4. Again, White could have advanced the a-pawn.

23...exf4 24.Kh1 Bg4; 25.Nf3 Ng6; 26.Rg1. The pin on the knight is only a minor annoyance. White's kingside is now completely safe. Notice that the rook at a3 protects the knight, so that ...Nh4 is no big deal. 26...Bxf3+; 27.Qxf3 Ne5. Black has a good square for the knight, but that is all. 28.Qh5 Qf7; 29.Qh3 Nxc4. Black has the pawn back, but now the Black kingside is weak.

30.Rf3 Be5; 31.Nc7! Rxa4 32.Bxf4. Black resigned, because there is no way to avoid catastrophe on the kingside, aided by a superknight at e6.