## Grandmaster Repertoire

# King's Indian 1

By

# Gawain Jones



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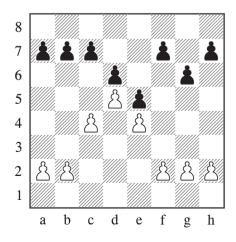
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## **Preface**

Growing up, learning theory didn't appeal to me – I just wanted to reach a position where I could attack my opponents. Against 1.d4 I played the Benko Gambit, which served me reasonably well if I was allowed to play it. However, I was on my own if my opponent spoiled the fun with 2. \$\tilde{\Omega}\$ f3 or, even worse, played the English.

I decided a change was needed. I still wanted something aggressive, and an opening that my opponent couldn't trick me out of. The King's Indian ticked the boxes and I purchased Joe Gallagher's *Play the King's Indian*. I won't pretend I became an immediate convert to theory memorization, as I was playing sidelines where possible. The sideline that's stuck with me is ... \(\tilde{D}\) bd7 in the Classical, which we'll examine in this book – but we'll also cover the main line Mar del Plata of course.

I really enjoyed the dynamics of the King's Indian, and the ability to always fight for the full point. It has stuck with me as my main opening for over fifteen years, and I can't see that changing any time soon. There's obviously a lot of theory accumulated on the King's Indian, but I still believe it's reasonably easy to pick up. We can play 1...\$\overline{\Delta}66, 2...\overline{\Delta}6 and 3...\overline{\Delta}7 against virtually any white set-up (except for 1.e4), before looking up to see what our opponent is doing.



With a closed centre, the battle lines are drawn. Our central pawns on d6 and e5 are pointing towards White's kingside, which is where we should attack. We'll move the knight away from f6 and play for a pawn storm directed at White's king, starting with ...f7-f5. White will seek counterplay on the queenside, leading to incredibly double-edged positions. White's attack is often the faster, but the stakes are higher on the kingside. White's breakthrough on the queenside might win a pawn or two – but if we crash through then it's mate! Most players really don't like their king coming under attack, and so dislike facing the King's Indian. It's hard to simply keep control and press. White needs to juggle attacking on the queenside and knowing when to retreat to attempt to ward off our attack.

Some variations are designed specifically against this kingside assault, the primary one in this book being the Sämisch with f2-f3. There White gives further support to the e4-pawn and remains flexible with the king. If we play the same way with a quick ...e7-e5, White may well castle queenside. Against these set-ups I recommend playing the ...c7-c5 break instead. This usually leads to Benoni-style structures, but where White has avoided the most critical lines. We'll aim to generate counterplay by opening the centre with ...e7-e6 and the queenside with ...b7-b5.

## Is the King's Indian sound?

I often come across people who grudgingly accept that they don't like facing the King's Indian, and have a terrible score against it, but maintain it's just a trickster's opening, and not fully sound. With the King's Indian we're not trying to suffer a bit to hold. If your idea of a correct opening choice is playing lots of theory to liquidate all the material and make a draw, you're looking in the wrong place. We play the King's Indian to win!

It's true that if you're playing a World Championship match where a draw is all you need to take the title, then the King's Indian would be an odd choice. Nonetheless, it's fully playable, as evidenced by the fact that Black is still playing the King's Indian at the highest level of correspondence chess, and scoring fine. Engines still haven't refuted our counterattacking opening.

#### Move orders

The possibility of White playing slightly different move orders and tricking you out of your intended line is a huge problem with many openings. When I tried learning the Grünfeld a few years ago this was a big challenge, especially if White starts with 1. Df3 or 1.c4. With the King's Indian in your arsenal, you don't need to worry about facing the Reti or English move orders at all – we can simply play our King's Indian as normal. The Anti-Grünfeld lines tend to simply transpose to normal King's Indians.

I hope you enjoy this book and the companion volume, and wish you all the best with your journey in the King's Indian. I look forward to seeing lots of attacking brilliancies. Remember: if in doubt, it's all about the initiative!

Gawain Jones Sheffield, December 2021



## Other Set-Ups



## 5. ②ge2 & 5. 臭g5

## **Variation Index**

## 1.d4 🗹 f6 2.c4 g6 3.🗘 c3 🙎 g7 4.e4

## 4...d6

A) 5.♠ge2 0–0	538
A1) 6.\(\delta\)g5!?	538
A2) 6.夕g3 h5!? 7.횙e2 h4 8.夕f1 b5!? 9.cxb5 a6	540
A21) 10.e5	543
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B) 5.\(\delta\)g5 h6	548
B1) 6.\(\delta\)d2	548
B2) 6.奠f4!? ②c6	550
B21) 7.�f3	550
B22) 7.d5	552
B3) 6.\(\delta\)h4 c5	555
B31) 7.dxc5	555
B32) 7.d5	557

### B21) after 8. ₩d2



#### B22) after 11. 2 xd4



B31) after 8. ₩d2



8...dxc5!N

## 1.d4 \$\alpha\$f6 2.c4 g6 3.\$\alpha\$c3 \$\dot{\$\mathre{\mathre{a}}\$g7 4.e4 d6

In this chapter we will consider two slightly rare but interesting options: A) 5. 2ge2 and B) 5. 2g5.

## A) 5.2 ge2

I've seen this called the Hungarian Attack. White's strategy involves putting the knight on g3 in order to over-protect the e4-pawn and try to dissuade our typical ...f7-f5 break. It's worth comparing with the Seirawan Variation, where White deploys the knight on e2 after first putting the bishop on d3. White's main problem there was the bishop blocking the defence of the d4-pawn. Here there are a few downsides. Firstly White is losing time with the knight, which must move for a second time just to let the bishop out. Secondly, the knight will not be completely secure on g3, and we may gain further time by advancing our h-pawn. Finally, the d4-pawn will still be somewhat insecure. However, for the moment White is very flexible, and could transpose to various other lines on the next move.

#### 5...0-0

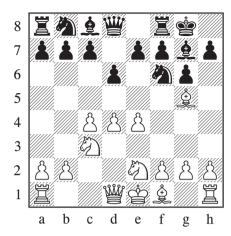
We will analyse **A1**) **6.\$\delta\$g5!?** followed by the main line of **A2**) **6.\$\delta\$g3**.

6.f3 would be a direct transposition to the 6.Dge2 Sämisch, as covered in variation B of Chapter 25.

6.h3 transposes to variation A of Chapter 19.

6.g3 c5 will be covered in the second volume.

### A1) 6.\(\delta\)g5!?



By developing the bishop here, White prevents ...e7-e5 for the time being and tries to provoke a weakening ...h7-h6.

#### 6...a6!?

I decided to borrow an idea from the 6. 2ge2 Sämisch, as covered later in Chapter 25. Despite having hardly ever been played, it works well here, as the bishop on g5 is rather misplaced. White's e4-pawn is vulnerable and needs defending, otherwise ... b7-b5 will be strong. White's best option will be to transpose to Sämisch waters with f2-f3 in the near future.

#### 7.₩d2

If White wants to play a set-up with 2g3, it's advisable to start with this.

7.f3 would immediately transpose to the Sämisch – see variation B1 of Chapter 25 on page 656.

7. 23N strikes me as the most thematic, but the knight and bishop don't coordinate well on their respective g3- and g5-squares. 7...h6 8. 2c1 White simply doesn't have a good square for the bishop. (8. 2c3 2g4 is annoying. White would then have to go all the way back,

but 9.\(\frac{1}{2}c1\) c5 is extremely comfortable for us.) 8...h5 We have transposed to variation A2 but with an extra ...a7-a6: obviously a favourable version for us.

#### 7.a4N

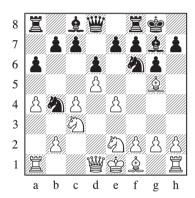
White prevents ...b7-b5 but at the big cost of weakening the b4-square.

#### 7...\$\(\frac{1}{2}\)c6!?

We immediately exploit White's last move. If White doesn't attack our knight immediately, we'll fight back in the centre with ...h7-h6 and ...e7-e5.

#### 8.d5 🖄 b4

This idea is seen a fair bit in the Pirc. The knight cannot be swatted away and so really annoys White.



#### 9.句g3 h6 10.臭e3?

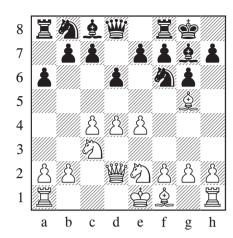
This natural retreat is actually extremely bad. 10.\(\delta\)c1 is better, although after 10...\(\hbeta\)5 White still struggles to coordinate.

#### 10... ②g4! 11. 臭d2?

White actually has to allow the bishop to be exchanged, as sad as that is.

#### 

White cannot defend f2, and so is completely lost.



#### 7...b5N

7...\(\Delta\) bd7 was played in Chernin – Lautier, Paris 1989, but I see no reason to delay taking action on the queenside.

7...c5N is also playable, but the text move is more thematic.

## 8.42g3

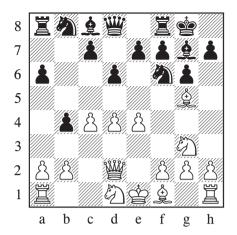
8.f3 again transposes to variation B1 of Chapter 25.

#### 8...b4

We force White to make a decision.

#### 9. 2 d1

9. 2d5 c5! leaves the b8-knight just two jumps away from the fantastic d4-outpost. White has to act in the centre as we threaten ... 2xd5 and ... 2xd4. 10. 2xf6† looks natural, when both recaptures are fine, but 10...exf6 would be my preference, keeping our bishop on the board. Later we can look to liberate our position with a timely ... f6-f5.



#### 9...a5

It might not look like it, but White will actually have significant problems keeping the d4-square defended.

#### 10.鼻e2 包fd7

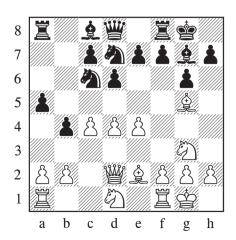
We can carry out our thematic plan from the previous chapter.

#### 11.0-0?!

White should play against our plan with 11.d5, but after 11... \$\omega\$c5 we're still doing well, with such a good outpost for the knight.

#### 11...ᡚc6

Our knight is destined for the d4-square, for instance:



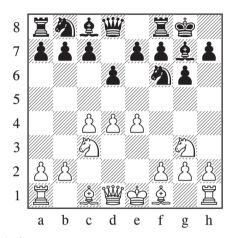
#### 12.d5

12. 奠e3 e5 13.d5 约d4 is the same thing, except that White doesn't have the dxe6 option.

#### 12...Ød4 13.\(\mathbb{2}\)e3 e5

White may or may not capture en passant, but we have an excellent position either way.

## A2) 6.42g3



#### 6...h5!?

Reminding White that the knight isn't entirely secure on g3. I think we should keep the centre flexible for now. In some lines we will obtain counterplay against the d4-pawn.

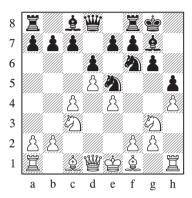
6...e5 7.d5 a5 is the main line and perfectly playable, but White is also able to develop sensibly. 8.\(\frac{1}{2}\)e2 \(\frac{1}{2}\)a6 9.h4 h5 It would be risky to allow that pawn any further. 10.\(\frac{1}{2}\)g5 White has a kingside bind of sorts. While the line is playable, Radjabov even defeating Carlsen with Black, I think it's quite tricky to find counterplay.

#### 7. Le2

White vacates the f1-square for the knight. Several other moves are possible:

7.h4 has been played in a lot of games but it's a bit too early. White is presumably hoping to transpose to the usual paths after ...e7-e5

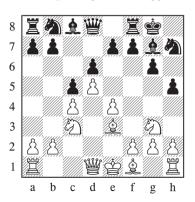
and d4-d5, but we can target White's centre in a different way. 7...\(\Delta\)c6! 8.d5 \(\Delta\)e5 Had the h-pawns remained on their original squares, f2-f4 would have been extremely annoying to meet. As it is, the same move would gift us a fantastic outpost for the knight on g4.



9.\(\mathbb{L}\)e2 c6 We'll create strong counterplay on the queenside with ...\(\mathbb{L}\)d7 and ...\(\mathbb{Z}\)c8. It's not easy for White to play around our knight.

7. 2d3 Another rare move. White goes back to attempting to play the Seirawan Variation. 7...h4N Against either knight retreat we'll play ...h4-h3. We reach a Seirawan Variation where White just has additional weaknesses.

7. \$\delta 5\$ White wants to develop the bishop to e3 without being hit by ... \$\delta 54\$, so tries to provoke our knight into dropping back to h7. 7... c5 Let's force White to commit in the centre. 8.d5 \$\delta h7 9.\$\delta e3\$ This position has arisen in a couple of games. I suggest:

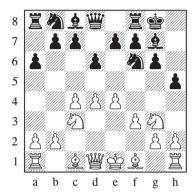


9...e6N Leading to a very respectable Benoni. Next we'll capture on d5 and jump our knight into e5, with a good version of the Sämisch lines covered later.

#### 7.f3

This is hardly ever played and it seems a tad illogical, as White could have switched to the Sämisch on the previous move. Black has a few good options but I like:

#### 7...a6!?



It's actually not so easy for White to develop. 8.25N

This seems most logical to me.

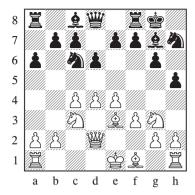
8.호e2?! h4 9.호f1 b5! gives us an accelerated version of the main line below.

8. 2e3 h4 9. 2ge2 occurred in Even – Ensenbach, corr. 2017. The simplest continuation is: 9... b5N We will reach the same position in the 6. 2ge2 Sämisch, except that here our pawn is on h4 rather than h7. It's hard to believe this can be a worse version. See variation B2 of Chapter 25 on page 658.

#### 8...②h7 9.彙e3 ②c6!?

A slight change of tack. Let's put pressure on the d4-pawn.

10.\dd2

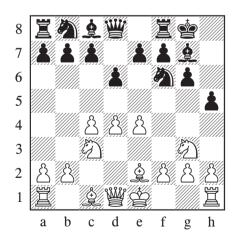


#### 

10...e5?! is too early in view of 11.d5 ₺d4 12.₺ge2! when White is in time to challenge our strong knight and force the exchange. Instead I suggest another waiting move. At some point ...b7-b5 will probably come, but mainly we're asking how White plans to complete development. An illustrative line is:

#### 11.鼻e2?! e5 12.d5 勾d4

The bishop on e2 makes all the difference: now we have a wonderful uncontested knight, which will be supported by ...c7-c5 next.



#### 7...h4

Black has a range of options but I'm a fan of the forcing approach which follows.

7...a5!? is recommended by Plichta and also works well. The point of this flexible approach

is revealed after: 8.\(\hat{L}\)e3 e5 (8...\(\D)\)g4!? can also be investigated.) 9.d5 \(\Delta\)a6 Comparing this position to the earlier note on 6...e5, White has now played \(\hat{L}\)e3 instead of h2-h4. The bishop belongs on g5, and in fact the most common continuation is to lose a tempo to put it there. 10.\(\hat{L}\)g5 It's the Carlsen — Radjabov game referred to earlier, except that here the pawn is back on h2; so if White follows up with h2-h4, we'll be a full tempo up. 10...\(\hat{L}\)e8 Assuming White avoids h2-h4, our plan will involve ...\(\D)\(h7\) and ...\(h5\)-h4 followed by ...\(f7\)-f5.

I will also mention briefly that 7... \$\Delta h?! has only been played once but is far from ridiculous. Black remains flexible and is ready to attack the d4-pawn with any of ... \$\Delta c6\$, ... e7-e5 or ... c7-c5.

## 8.包f1 b5!?

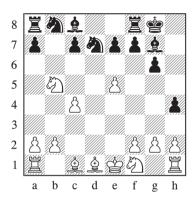


Wow, where did that come from? This has only been played twice, and I think will catch your opponent off-guard. We exploit White's temporary lack of coordination. The e-pawn is rather vulnerable and it will take a while for White to get the king to safety.

#### 9.cxb5

It's worth checking White's immediate forcing option in the centre: 9.e5N dxe5

10.dxe5 ∰xd1† 11.Ձxd1 ᡚfd7 12.ᡚxb5?! (12.f4 is better, when after 12...bxc4 we have a complex position that is around level.)



12...a6! We want to take on e5 with the knight without our rook being trapped. 13. 2xc7 2a7 14. 2d5 2xe5 We have an extremely promising position. One knight is already on a strong central spot and the other is ready to jump into play via c6. We'll get strong play down the b-file and can throw in ...h4-h3 to annoy White whenever we choose.

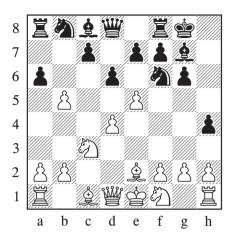
#### 9...a6

We will now analyse **A21**) **10.e5** and **A22**) **10.②e3N**.

10. 全分 20 h7! 11.e5 transposes to variation A21 and is a more accurate move order, but we'll be happy to head for this position either way.

10..h3! White doesn't have a good way to react to our pawn push. 11.gxh3 We can play in a similar vein against White's other options. 11... 2xa6 12.h4 c5 13.d5 e6 White may be two pawns up, but the extra h-pawn isn't so relevant. The key issue in the position is White's king, which will never feel secure. We're ready to open up the e-file when all our pieces will be involved in the attack.

#### A21) 10.e5



White goes for the most forcing option.

#### 10...5h7

10...dxe5N 11.dxe5 \(\mathbb{W}\)xd1\(\dagger\) is a perfectly playable alternative, which is why 10.\(\hat{L}\)f3 is a more accurate move order for White – but let's avoid simplifying and play more ambitiously.

#### 11.**鼻f3** 罩a7

This messy position has only arisen in one correspondence and one 'OTB' game so far. White is currently a pawn up but there's a lot going on. We're ready to take on b5 and open up our queenside pieces. We shouldn't rush taking on e5, as our rook on a7 is currently short on squares and so \$\mathref{L}\$e3 might prove embarrassing. White is still two moves away from getting the king to safety.

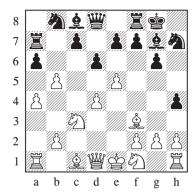
#### 12.\%a4

The choice in both games. White doesn't allow the capture on b5 and so makes it harder for us to free our queenside pieces.

It's also worth considering:

#### 12.a4N

A thematic approach which is typical in Benko-style positions. White maintains the tension and supports the extra pawn.



#### 12...axb5

Here too, 12...dxe5 is playable but I prefer the more dynamic choice.

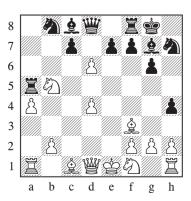
#### 13.约xb5 罩a5!

We now threaten ...c7-c6 and ...dxe5 when our rook joins the attack. It's surprisingly tough to prevent.

#### 14.exd6

14. 2d2 is met by 14...c6! anyway! This position is all about momentum. 15. 2xa5 2xa5 16. 2c3 dxe5 17. dxe5 2d7! We'll capture on e5 with the knight, creating a nasty threat of ...h4-h3. We'll have a strong attack on White's king, no matter if it remains in the centre or tries to take refuge on the kingside.

14.b4 prevents our plan, but weakens the long diagonal. 14... a6 15.exd6 c6! We'll see this theme again shortly. White's knight is forced to retreat, after which we have the option of capturing on d6 with the queen. 16. 27? is a mistake because 16... a7 leaves the knight trapped.

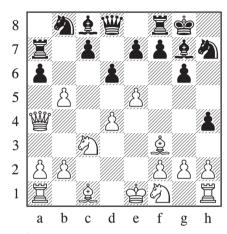


#### 14...c6!

Repelling the knight.

#### 15.42c3 exd6

With the pawn still on b2 instead of b4, I think this is the better recapture. Once again White's king won't feel secure either in the centre or on the kingside.



#### 12... **包d7** 13.e6!?

White attempts to seize the initiative.

#### 13.\\ e3

This logical try was played in the only practical encounter so far.

#### 13...**2**b6

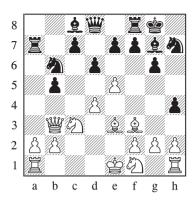
Blocking the diagonal.

#### 14.₩b3

Van Ketel - Pijpers, Leiden 2020.

#### 14...axb5N

We have lots of tempting options but this is the one I'd go with. Now that White's queen has been pushed off the a-file, we immediately activate that rook.



#### 15.\@xb5

Taking the pawn is the most natural, but it costs time.

15. 2d2 is more circumspect but after 15...h3 16.0–0 ≜d7 I'd still choose Black.

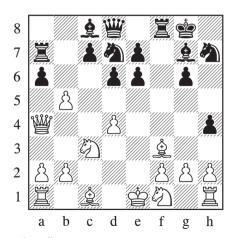
### 15...≌a5 16.a4

16.exd6? is bad in view of 16...exd6 when our knight on h7 is ready to jump into g5. 16...dxe5 17.dxe5 &e6

We have a powerful initiative, with …. ∅c4 coming next.

#### 13...fxe6

The position remains very concrete. We have ideas of ...e6-e5, ...h4-h3 and even a French-style sacrifice with ...\( \mathbb{Z}\)xf3!?.



#### 14. ge3 包b6

We block the potential attack on our rook and drive the enemy queen off the a-file.

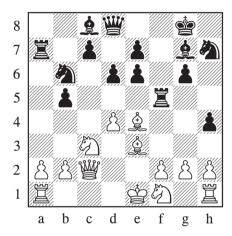
#### 15.\c2

White is counting on obtaining counterplay against our kingside but we have a strong retort.

#### 15....買f5!

White can attack this rook but we don't mind.

#### 16. \(\hat{2}\)e4 axb5



#### 17.g4

Instead of taking the exchange, White tries to force us to move.

The alternative is: 17. 2xf5 exf5 Our structure has been ironed out. 18. 2xb5 \( \text{Eb7} \) In return for the exchange we have a good structure and control of the light squares. The d5-square will be an especially strong outpost for a knight. We will also continue our kingside assault. 19...f4 is already a big threat; and if White captures, then ... 2d5 will attack both bishop and knight.

### 17...hxg3

We'll stay on f5 thanks.

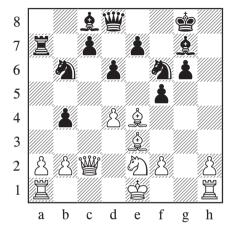
### 18.\(\Dar{2}\)xg3

A draw was agreed at this point in Emelyanov – Le Page, corr. 2017; a sure sign that the high-rated White player was worried. I would continue with:

#### 18...b4 19. 2 ce2 2 f6

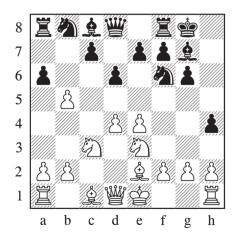
Encouraging White to take the rook.

#### 20. 2 xf5 exf5



We have very similar compensation to that seen after 17.2xf5. Here White has kept the light-squared bishop but we have a pawn for the exchange. We're ready to improve our bishop with ...2e6-f7, when our pieces will coordinate wonderfully.

A22) 10.2 e3N



This sensible regrouping hasn't yet been played, but it looks to me like White's most logical try.

#### 10...axb5 11.\(\preceq\)xb5 h3

Let's force White to make a decision. Whatever White does, the kingside will be weakened in one way or another.

#### 12.0-0!

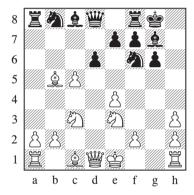
I don't think castling into the weakened kingside would be most people's first choice, but wherever the king goes it will be vulnerable, and White needs to complete development. There are two other natural ideas:

#### 12.gxh3 c5!

Fighting back in the centre.

#### 13.dxc5

13.d5 allows the same trick.



#### 13...5)xe4!

Borrowing a typical Benoni motif to destroy White's structure.

#### 14. ©xe4 \(\mathbb{\text{\mathbb{M}}}\)a5† 15. \(\mathbb{\mathbb{\mathbb{M}}}\)c3

White should at least force us to relinquish our dark-squared bishop.

#### 

Right now White is three pawns up, but they're all weak. White has lost all control of the light squares, along with any real hope of finding a safe spot for the king. We'll develop our pieces and see what opportunities arise. A knight landing on f3 would be extremely painful for White.

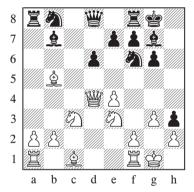
#### 12.g3?!

It might look more natural to keep the kingside structure intact, but White now has big problems with the weak f3-square.

12...c5!

White is unable to keep the centre intact. 13.0–0

13.dxc5 fails to the same trick as in the 12.gxh3 line above, namely: 13...②xe4! This is an even better version for us, with the h-pawn remaining on the board.



With White's queen in the firing line, … ②xe4 is a big threat.

#### 15.₩d3 ②c6

The knight is ready to jump into the f3-square via e5.

#### 16.f4?

This makes matters worse.

#### 16...₩b6

White's king is extremely vulnerable. An immediate threat is ... \( \Delta \) b4 followed by ... \( \Delta \) xe4, overworking White's c3-knight.

## 12...hxg2 13.**②**xg2

White may as well remove the pawn.

13.\(\mathbb{Z}\)e1 should be met by 13...\(\mathbb{Z}\)d7 when our play remains similar.

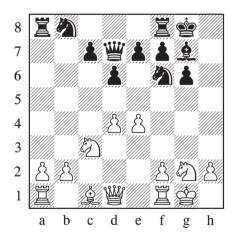
#### 13...臭d7

I spent quite a long time deciding how best to continue from here. We want to attack the d4-pawn, and so we'd prefer to develop our knight to c6. Therefore we first want to get rid of the bishop on b5, and the text move seems the best way to go about it. We're not going to win the pawn back anytime soon. Instead we're happy to put pressure on White's central pawns and post our rooks on the two semi-open queenside files. As in the Benko, it will be difficult for White to do much with the extra pawn. The big difference here is that the white king will always be weak, giving White even more to worry about as the game goes on.

#### 14.\(\partia\)xd7

14. 2e2 doesn't slow our counterplay. 14... 2c6 We're ready to break with ...e7-e5. The g2-knight is singularly useless in the fight for the d4-square. 15.d5 2b4 Next we'll generate counterplay with ...c7-c6.

#### 14...\<sup>®</sup>xd7



Taking with the b8-knight is possible too, but I'd prefer to develop that piece more actively on c6. Our plan is to complete development with ...e7-e6, .... c6 and .... b8, when our pieces coordinate well. We then have a few different ways of making progress. We can play ... b5 to attack the d4-pawn, perhaps coupled with ... b4. We can also try ... 627 and ...d6-d5 to get an outpost on f5.

# **Abridged Variation Index**

The Variation Index in the book is 10 pages long. Below is an abridged version giving just the main variations, not the sub-variations.

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