

# First Steps : King's Indian Defence

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# About the Author

Andrew Martin is a FIDE Senior Trainer and International Master. He is the current Head of the newly-formed ECF Academy, which provides elite training for strong, young players. He teaches in twelve schools, is an experienced chess writer and has produced numerous chess DVDs.

**Also by the Author:**

*Starting Out: The Sicilian Dragon*

*First Steps; The Queen's Gambit*

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# Introduction

This is my third book on the King's Indian Defence. The first, *Winning with the King's Indian*, was written in 1989 and was more or less a repertoire for Black. The book did pretty well and in the pre-computer era a repertoire book could be just what the doctor ordered. Nowadays, such a book can be cut to ribbons by simply turning on an analysis engine, but it is interesting for me to see how many of my older suggestions are still playable.

*King's Indian Battle Plans*, written in 2004, was a sprawling, ambitious project, cooked up by myself and Bob Long – a work full of new ideas, designed to show just how creative the King's Indian could be. Once again the book sold well, but looking back I can see why it was regarded by some as haphazard. Nevertheless, I am not displeased with it.

Which brings us to the modern day and the work you have before you – *First Steps: The King's Indian*. This book will be different again and sets out to provide a good introduction to this wonderful opening. I cannot claim that it will cover everything, as to do so would require at least 1000 pages, but it will get you up and running and ready to play the KID with enthusiasm. How you take it from there will then be up to you.

Thanks are due to Jon Tait who did an excellent job editing this book.

Andrew Martin, Bramley, Surrey, June 2019.

16 ♖he1 ♜e8 17 ♙f1 ♙d8!

Black finds an excellent way to activate his bishop.

18 g3 a4 19 ♔c2 ♙a5 20 ♜e3 ♜ad8 21 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 22 ♙h3 f6 23 ♜e2 ♔e7 24 ♙g2 ♘d3 25 a3 ♘c5!

Taking note of the weakened b3-square.

26 h4 h5 27 ♜e3 g5! 28 hxg5 fxg5 29 ♜e2

If 29 ♘xg5 then 29...♙d2 is a crusher, with 29...♜d2 not far behind.

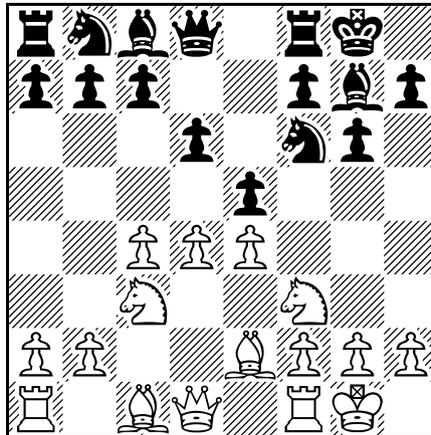
29...♘b3 30 ♔b1 ♙f6 31 ♔c2 g4 0-1

Black's knight will finally arrive on d4.

A sorry tale for White, a game almost without variations and all the better for it. King's Indian players really have nothing to fear by early exchanging in the centre.

## The Main Line

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♙e2 e5 7 0-0



We now enter the labyrinth of the main line. White castles and opens himself up to a potential kingside attack. There doesn't seem to be any sign of this at present, but I promise you it will come. As whole books have been written about this one variation, I cannot cover everything in depth, but I will try to give a good overall picture of what is going on. It must be noted that Black has several different ways of playing:

a) 7...♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 (Games 32-41) is the ultimate main line where White generally pushes forward on the queenside while Black moves his f6-knight, plays ...f7-f5, and tries to attack the white king. Since play is very sharp, an enormous amount of theory has built up in all the variations.

b) 7...♘bd7 (Games 47-49) is the old-fashioned, rather solid way of proceeding. Play is slow moving, and current thinking gives White an edge, although the line is very playable for Black, especially if you are patient.

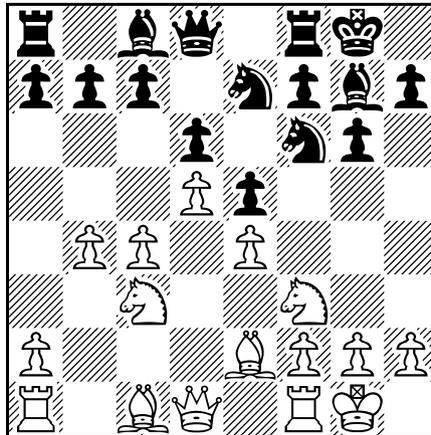
c) 7...♖a6 (Games 42-46) is the modern, flexible improvement on 7...♖bd7. Play is positional and the bishop on c8 is left unobstructed. Not a bad line at all.

Black has other options too, including 7...c6 (Game 50). We'll also consider a couple on the previous move: 6...♙g4 and 6...♖e8 (Games 51 and 52). Rare tries by comparison, but among these sidelines I think there may be some gems waiting to be found.

Time to wade in.

Game 32  
**S.Pogosyan-Ma.Carlsen**  
 World Rapid Championship, St. Petersburg 2018

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗f3 0-0 6 ♙e2 e5 7 0-0 ♖c6 8 d5 ♗e7 9 b4



This is the Bayonet Attack, where White begins his thematic queenside advance without delay and hopes to make decisive inroads while holding Black on the other flank. 9 b4 is logical and sharp, although White's position is temporarily loose and perhaps Black can exploit this looseness.

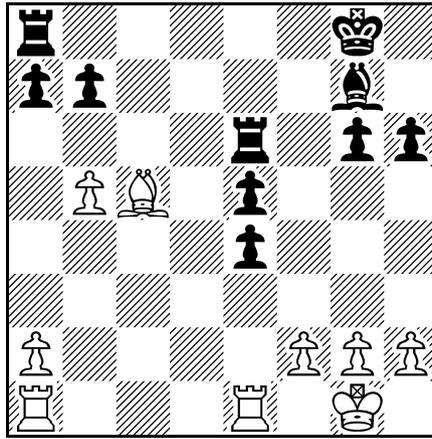
Note that White has numerous other options here which we will examine further on: 9 ♗e1 (Games 34-37), 9 ♗d2 (Games 38 and 39), 9 ♙d2 (Game 40) and 9 a4 (Game 41).

**9...a5!**

I am now convinced that this is Black's most reliable reply to 9 b4. In the next game we'll have a look at 9...♗e8!?

For decades, 9...♗h5 was the main line and is still okay. In Games 5 and 6 we saw White reply to this with 10 ♗d2, but Black also has to be prepared for the modern 10 ♗e1!, which is the start of an effective plan to quash his kingside ambitions. Importantly, White can now answer 10...♗f4 with 11 ♙f1, avoiding exchanges, and meanwhile keeps his knight on f3 so that he can answer ...f7-f5 with ♗g5!. For example, 10...f5 11 ♗g5 ♗f6 12 ♙f3 h6 13 ♗e6 ♙xe6 14 dxe6 c6 15

b5 fx4 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 ♙xe4 d5 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 ♙a3 dxe4 20 ♚xd8 ♜fxd8 21 ♙xe7 ♜e8 22 ♙c5 ♜xe6 (yes, 2019 theory extends to here; Black has just about equalized)



23 ♙e3 a6 24 a4 ♙f8 25 ♜ac1 axb5 26 axb5 h5 27 g3 ♙d6 28 ♜ed1 ♖f7 29 ♜c4 ♜a5 30 ♜d5 g5!? (White has some pressure for the pawn, so Black returns it to activate his pieces) 31 ♙xg5 ♜g6 32 ♙d8 ♜a1+ 33 ♖g2 ♖e6 34 ♜d2 ♜b1 35 b6 ♜g4?! 36 h3?! (36 ♙c7 was better) 36...e3! 37 ♜xd6+ ♖xd6 38 hxg4 e2 39 ♜e4 e1 ♚ 40 ♜xe1 ♜xe1 41 gxh5 ♖e6 42 g4 (the remaining play is not the most accurate, which I can only suppose is a result of time trouble) 42...♜b1 43 g5 ♜d1 44 ♙f6 ♖f5 45 h6 ♜d7 46 ♙g7 ♖g6 47 ♖f3 ♜d3+ 48 ♖e4 ♜d2 49 ♖e3 ♜d5 (49...♜b2 50 ♙xe5 ♜xb6 51 ♖e4 does not look comfortable for Black, even if the engine says equal) 50 f3 ♜d1?? 51 ♖e4?? (51 ♙xe5 wins) 51...♜d6 52 ♙xe5 ♜xb6 53 f4 ♜b1 54 ♖d5 ♜d1+?? 55 ♖e6 ♜f1 56 ♙f6?? (catastrophe; 56 h7! wins on the spot: 56...♖xh7 57 ♖f7 ♜g1 58 ♙f6 b5 59 f5 etc) 56...♜xf4 0-1 Y.Gozzoli-K.Movsziszian, Catalan Team Championship 2019. Similar Black experiences have turned heads in the direction of 9...a5.

**10 ♙a3**

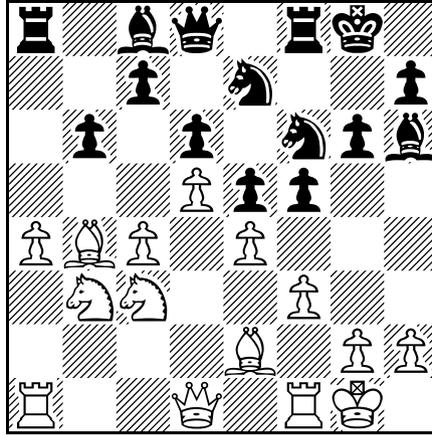
This is not necessarily a move White wants to play at this stage.

**10...b6 11 bxa5 ♜xa5 12 ♙b4 ♜a8 13 a4 ♘e8 14 ♘d2**

Here 14 a5 c5! is a nice point, enabling Black to repel boarders: 15 dxc6 (or 15 ♙a3 ♜xa5) 15...♘xc6 16 ♚d5 ♙b7 is equal.

**14...f5 15 ♘b3 ♘f6 16 f3 ♙h6!**

Instructive play by Carlsen, improving the activity of his King's Indian bishop. There is no need for Black to rush in with something like ...f5-f4, as his pieces are well placed and his position flexible.



17 ♖d3 ♗h5 18 g3 fxe4 19 fxe4

19 ♗xe4 ♗f5 20 a5 bxa5 21 ♖xa5 ♗e3+ 22 ♔h1 ♖b8 is fine for Black.

19... ♗f6 20 a5 ♗h3! 21 ♖f2 bxa5 22 ♗xa5 ♖d7 23 c5

Later, rather than sooner. White has to be a bit careful here as his king is rather open.

23... ♗g4 24 ♖xf8+?!

24 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 25 c6! ♖c8 26 ♖xf8+ was definitely a better way to handle the position. The finish of the game will show how dangerous Black's attack has become.

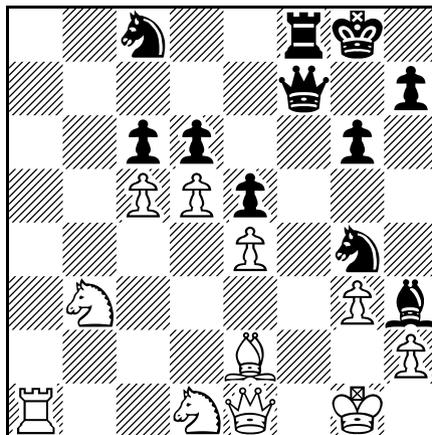
24... ♖xf8 25 ♗d1

Now 25 c6 is met by 25... ♗xc6!! 26 dxc6 ♖f7 and White is suddenly lost; e.g. 27 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 28 ♗xf1 ♗e3+ 29 ♔h1 ♗f2+ 30 ♔g1 ♗xd3+ 31 ♔h1 ♖xf1 mate.

25... ♗c8 26 ♗d2 ♗xd2 27 ♖xd2 ♖f7

Threatening ... ♖f1+.

28 ♖e1 c6



**29 ♖xg4??**

Forgetting the threat. 29 ♖d2! holds on; e.g. 29...cxd5 30 exd5 dxc5 31 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 32 ♜e3 ♖f5 (or 32...♖f3 33 ♜dc4 ♜f6 34 ♜a5!) 33 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 34 ♜e3! ♜c2 35 ♜f1 ♜xf1+ 36 ♜xf1 ♜d6 37 ♜xe5 ♜f7 38 ♜e8+ ♜g7 39 d6!.

**29...♜f1+ 0-1**

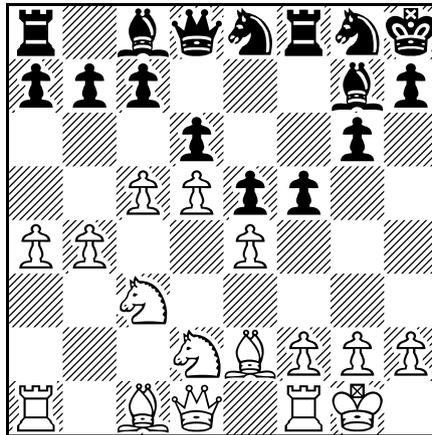
A typical Carlsen game. He looks for an interesting position in the opening and fears nobody in the resulting complications.

Game 33  
**S.Arun Prasad-O.Perez Mitjans**  
 Badalona 2012

**1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♜c3 ♖g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♜f3 0-0 6 ♖e2 e5 7 0-0 ♜c6 8 d5 ♜e7 9 b4 ♜e8!?**

Black is not limited in the Bayonet Attack and may try lots of different ideas, including 9...♜e8, where he prepares ...f7-f5 without delay and protects d6 against later threats. This will appeal to those players who like the idea of a kingside pawn avalanche, though in my view ideas other than 9...a5 and 9...♜h5 are not 100% reliable.

**10 ♜d2 f5 11 c5 ♜h8 12 a4 ♜g8**



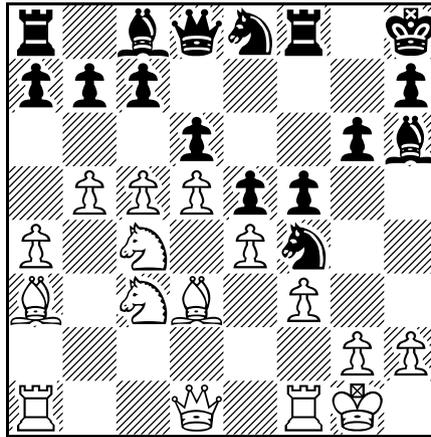
This is a system which has been played many times by the English grandmaster Mark Hebden, who has scored reasonably well with it. Moves like 11...♜h8 and 12...♜g8 look slow, but Black will argue that he is organizing his kingside attack as best he can under the circumstances.

**13 ♖a3**

13 ♜c4! is also critical, as can be seen in the following Hebden game: 13...♜h6!? (13...fxe4 14 ♜xe4 ♜g6 is a safer way to proceed and if 15 ♖g5 then 15...h6!) 14 ♖d2 f4 15 ♜c1 g5 16 g4! (a mechanism which is common in Classical main lines; White puts the brakes on Black's

attack) 16...♖f6 (16...fxg3 17 hxg3 merely exposes the black king) 17 f3 ♘f7 18 ♙e1 h5 19 h3 ♗h6 20 ♙f2 ♜f6 21 ♚g2! (the hatches have been battened down and White can now turn his attention to the queenside) 21...♙f8 22 ♘b5 a6 23 ♘xc7! ♘xc7 24 ♘b6 ♖b8 25 c6! hxg4 26 hxg4 ♜d8 27 ♜c2 ♗h7 28 cxb7 ♖xb7 29 ♘xc8 ♜xc8 30 ♙xa6 (Black is in a terrible tangle) 30...♘h6 31 ♜c6 ♘g4 32 ♗h1 ♘e3+ 33 ♙xe3 g4 34 ♖xh7+ ♚xh7 35 ♗h1+ 1-0 Y.Pelletier-M.Hebden, Neuchatel 2002. Games like this one dampen my enthusiasm for the entire variation.

**13...♘gf6 14 b5 ♙h6 15 ♙d3 ♘h5 16 ♘c4 ♘f4 17 f3**



**17...♘d3?!**

This is the point at which Black gets it wrong. It is not yet time to surrender his well-placed knight. A holding operation could have been commenced with 17...b6! and I think Black is okay; e.g. 18 cxd6 cxd6 19 g3 ♘d3 20 ♜xd3 ♜c7 21 ♙c1 ♙xc1 22 ♖axc1 ♘f6 23 ♘d2 ♘d7!, heading for c5 with equality.

**18 ♜xd3 f4 19 a5 g5 20 h3 ♗g8 21 b6**

This is exactly the type of position White aims for with the rival flank attacks of the Classical main line. White is all over the queenside, whereas Black's kingside counterplay is yet to start. The speed of the bayonet attack is felt at this moment.

**21...cxb6 22 axb6 axb6 23 cxd6! ♙g7 24 ♘b5**

White piles in. Black can only defend.

**24...♙d7 25 ♘c7 ♖a4**

25...♘xc7 26 dxc7 ♜xc7 27 ♙d6! ♜d8 28 ♖xa8 ♜xa8 29 ♙xe5 introduces a situation where *White* may win with a kingside attack and, even if he doesn't, there are two massive passed pawns in the centre which will see him through.

**26 ♘xb6 ♖d4 27 ♜c3 g4 28 hxg4 h5**

Far too late.

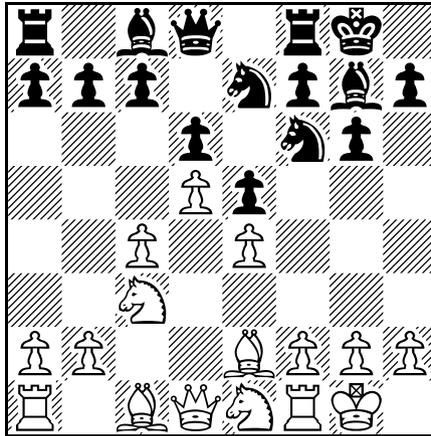
**29 ♙c5 hxg4 30 fxg4! ♙xg4 31 ♘xe8 ♜xe8 32 ♚f2! ♖f8 33 d7 ♙xd7 34 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 35 ♖a8 ♜h5 36 ♘d7 ♖xe4 37 ♜h3 1-0**

It is impossible to cover all the highways and byways of 9 b4 in this book, but you will get a

good feel for the line simply by studying the few games on offer. While 9 b4 remains an important and popular way for White to play in the Classical, I think that 9...a5! (Game 32) is an adequate counter.

Game 34  
**S.Lenderman-H.Nakamura**  
US Championship, St. Louis 2018

1 ♖f3 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 d4 0-0 6 ♚e2 e5 7 0-0 ♝c6 8 d5 ♞e7 9 ♞e1



With 9 ♞e1 White tries to find the best way of deploying his minor pieces in readiness for the middlegame. The knight almost always goes to d3, where it has many functions:

1. The advance c4-c5 is supported.
2. In some cases the knight drops back to f2 to defend the white king.
3. White occasionally plays f2-f4, in which case the knight puts pressure on e5.

The amount of theory on the Mar del Plata Variation is colossal and whole books have been written on this one subject. In a *First Steps* volume we have to limit our ambition. Describing the usual plan for both sides is easy: White seeks to make inroads on the queenside, while Black attacks on the other flank. There are ways to depart from this overall scheme, but they are much less critical.

**9...♞d7**

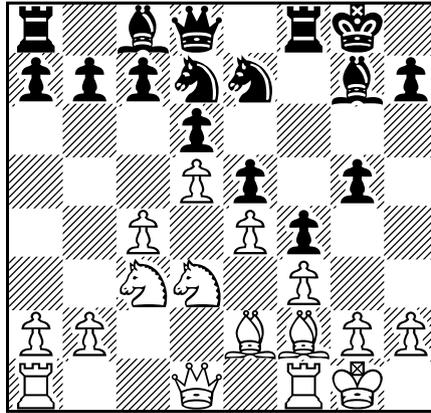
9...♞e8 is another main line (see Game 36). 9...♞d7 is designed to take the sting out of an early f2-f4 by White, as the black knight covers e5. We'll also look at 9...a5 (Game 37).

**10 ♚e3**

This move introduces perhaps the most frequently played modern line in the entire King's Indian Defence. 10 ♚d2 is another common option, but 10 ♚e3 is much more active. Of course White takes a risk, as Black will hit the bishop with ...f5-f4 in a short while and gain time.

White can also leave the c1-bishop at home for the time being: 10 f3 f5 11 g4 is seen in the next game, while 10 ♘d3 f5 11 f3 f4 featured back in Game 2.

**10...f5 11 f3 f4 12 ♙f2 g5 13 ♘d3**



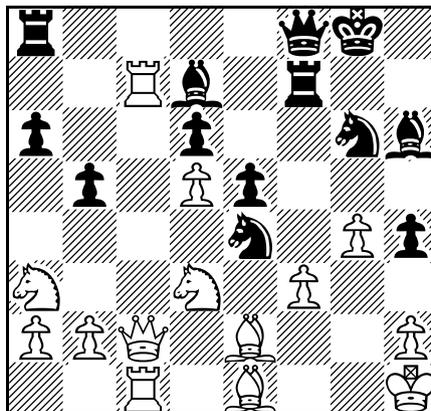
Supporting his planned c4-c5, which can be backed up further by ♖c1. In Game 9 White in fact played 13 ♖c1 first.

**13...♘f6 14 c5 ♘g6 15 ♖c1 ♗f7**

Both sides have been following the script, but with 15...♗f7 Black shows respect for White's queenside chances, as the rook covers the c7-square. Later on, Black hopes the rook will go to g7 to aid the attack.

**16 ♙h1 ♙f8**

Nakamura has a lot of experience playing the Black side of this line, and one of his most famous victories runs as follows: 16...h5 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 ♘b5 a6 19 ♘a3 b5! (preventing ♘c4-b6) 20 ♖c6 g4 21 ♗c2 ♗f8 22 ♖c1 ♙d7 23 ♖c7 ♙h6 24 ♙e1 h4! 25 fxg4? (he should play 25 ♙b4 h3 26 gxh3 and try to ride out the storm) 25...f3 26 gxf3 ♘xe4!



GM Krisztian Szabo annotated this game for *ChessBase Magazine*, giving the following variations:

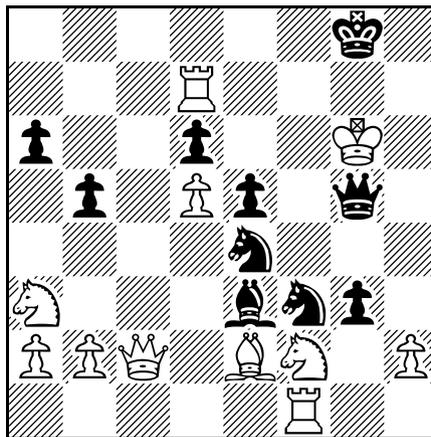
a) 27 fxe4 ♖f1+! 28 ♖g2 ♗e3! 29 ♗xf1 h3+! with forced mate.

b) 27 ♖xd7 ♖xf3! 28 ♗xf3 ♜xf3+ 29 ♜g2 ♜xd3 30 ♖d1 ♗d2!! (the key move) 31 ♗xd2 ♗f4! and Black wins.

c) 27 ♗c5 dxc5 28 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 29 ♜xe4 ♗xc1 30 ♜xg6+ ♖g7 wins again.

d) 27 ♗f2 ♗xf2+ 28 ♗xf2 ♗xc1 29 ♜xg6+ ♖g7 and Black emerges the exchange up.

The game actually continued 27 ♖d1 ♖xf3! 28 ♖xd7 (28 ♗xf3 ♜xf3+ 29 ♜g2 ♗xg4 wins) 28...♖f1+! 29 ♖g2 ♗e3! (another fantastic move, and 29...h3+! was even stronger: 30 ♗xh3 ♖f2! 31 ♗xf2 ♜xf2!! 32 ♗xf2 ♗f4+ 33 ♗h4 ♗g5 mate) 30 ♗g3 hxg3 31 ♖xf1 ♗h4+ 32 ♗h3 ♜h6! 33 g5 ♗xg5+ 34 ♖g4 ♗hf3 35 ♗f2 ♜h4+ 36 ♖f5 ♖f8+ 37 ♖g6 ♖f6+! 38 ♖xf6 ♗e4+ 39 ♖g6 ♜g5 mate.



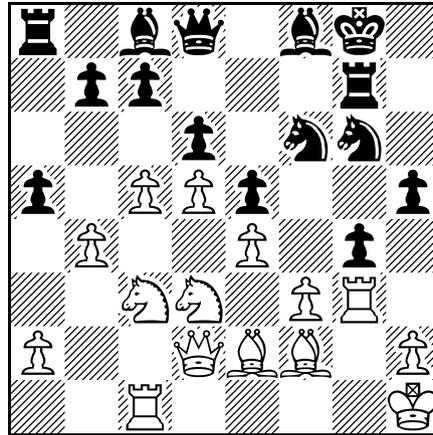
W.So-H.Nakamura, Sinquefield Cup, St. Louis 2015. An astonishing final position.

**17 ♖g1 ♖g7 18 b4 h5 19 ♜d2 g4 20 g3!**

I guess the main thing to understand is that this type of play is nothing new. You would be mad to play into this line with either colour without a comprehensive knowledge of modern theory. I am sure that both of these grandmasters were still following pre-game preparation.

**20...fxg3 21 ♖xg3 a5!**

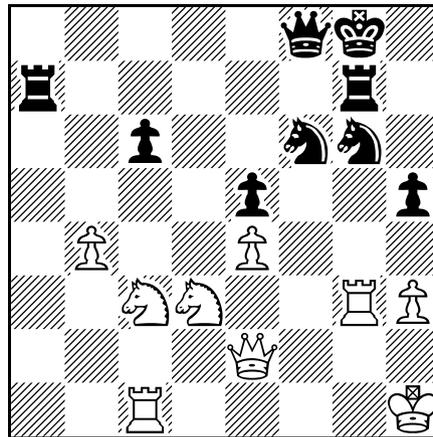
I think this is a sensible recognition that Black is not going to deliver mate, and so he adjusts his overall strategy, softening White's queenside grip. For me this is one of the best moves of the game.



**22 a3 axb4 23 axb4 c6!**

Very good! The idea of g2-g3 and then ♖xg3 took away some coordination from the white forces, so Black is able to continue his quest for counterplay by opening the centre, which is unusual but White is unable to take advantage.

**24 dxc6 bxc6 25 cxd6 ♖xd6 26 ♗c5 ♗d8 27 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 28 fxg4 ♗xg4 29 h3 ♗xe2 30 ♖xe2 ♖aa7**



**31 ♖f1**

Here 31 ♖cg1 ♗f4 32 ♗xf4 exf4 33 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 34 ♖c4+ ♗h8 35 ♖xc6 was a possible winning try, but Black has counterplay thanks to his passed f-pawn after 35...♖xg1+ 36 ♗xg1 ♖g7+ 37 ♗f1 f3.

**31...♗f4**

A general liquidation now takes place.

**32 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 33 ♗xf4 exf4 34 ♖c4+ ♖f7 35 ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 36 ♖xf4 ♖g3 37 ♗h2**

**♖xc3 38 e5 ♕e6 39 exf6 ♔f7 40 h4 c5 41 bxc5 ½-½**

This game is pretty much state of the art in 2019.

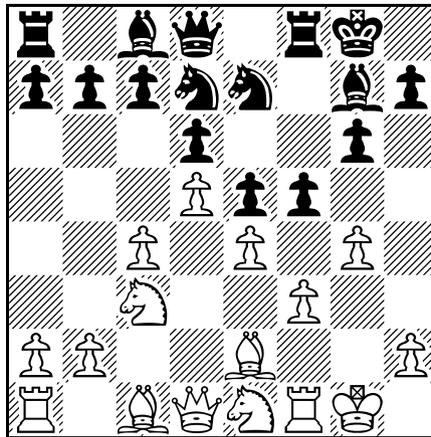
On the face of it, with the white pieces and a 400 point rating difference, the following game might at the outset have been considered a straightforward win for me. The fact is that no game is easy these days. Nobody can be underestimated. There is an opening surprise waiting for you around every corner. Thus I decided to play my favourite Classical variation and see what transpired. I've had a lot of experience with King's Indian positions over the years and was confident that the surprises could be kept to a minimum.

Game 35  
**A.D.Martin-S.Meek**  
British League 2015

**1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 d4 g6 3 c4 ♗g7 4 ♘c3 0-0 5 e4 d6 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7**

Here I became seized with indecision. My opponent was rattling out the moves and seemed confident. I normally play 9 b4 but decided on this one occasion to give 9 ♘e1 a try.

**9 ♘e1 ♘d7 10 f3 f5 11 g4**



The Benko Attack, my own surprise for him. I knew the plan: to stabilize the kingside before turning to the queenside advance. Less theory to know and, hopefully, unfamiliar problems for the person sitting opposite to solve. It sounds great, but in practice 11 g4 is not as good as the main lines after 11 ♗e3 or 11 ♗d2, which preface rapid action on the queenside, rather than manoeuvring first.

**11... ♘f6 12 ♘g2 ♔h8**

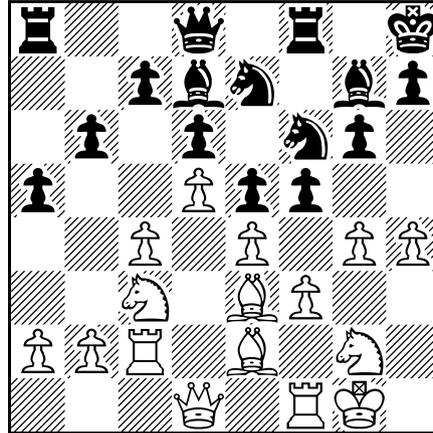
A reasonable idea, keeping all options open. However, 12...c6! is a good answer to the Benko Attack, after which Black develops fluid counterplay: 13 ♗d2 (or 13 ♖b1 cxd5 14 cxd5 ♗d7 15

♙e3 f4 16 ♙f2 g5) 13...cxd5 14 cxd5 ♖b6+ 15 ♚h1 fxg4 16 fxg4 ♙d7 with equality. I'm not sure what I would have done against 12...c6. Probably 13 ♖b1 and take the medicine.

**13 ♙e3 b6**

Again, 13...c6 is definitely playable. I think I was planning something like 14 ♖c1 f4 15 ♙f2 c5 16 a3, but of course White's play on the queenside is progressing very slowly.

**14 h4 a5 15 ♖c1 ♙d7 16 ♖c2**



The best I could come up with. Black's plan of shutting down the queenside seemed effective to me and I was wondering how I was going to break in. I guess this is the issue about using the Benko Attack – it gives Black time to organize his defence, whereas a rapid advance on the queenside is more challenging.

**16...♖c8 17 exf5 gxf5 18 g5 ♘h5 19 f4**

I wasn't over the moon about surrendering my light-squared bishop, but White doesn't really have any choice other than to play f3-f4, or Black will play ...f5-f4 himself.

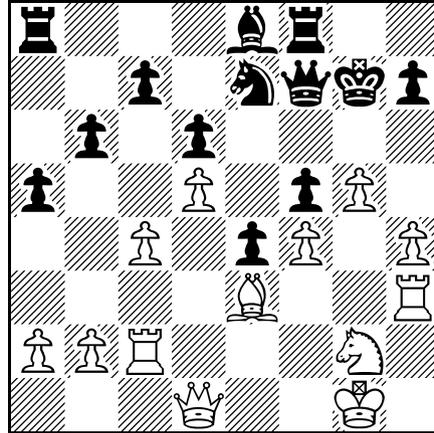
**19...♗g3 20 ♖f3 ♗xe2+ 21 ♗xe2 e4**

At the risk of repetition, 21...c6!? is again interesting, trying to open up prospects for the d7-bishop. I was a bit worried about that at the board, though my analysis engine assures me it is survivable for White, and who am I to doubt it? Nonetheless, this is the type of position where things could go wrong rather quickly.

**22 ♖h3 ♖e8 23 ♗g3**

Now I was getting more confident. I have a useful majority on the kingside and can put my knight on h5. Black will have to do something fast to avoid a major disadvantage.

**23...♖f7 24 ♗h5 ♙e8 25 ♗xg7 ♚xg7**



## 26 h5

26  $\text{♙d4+}$   $\text{♚g8}$  27  $\text{♙c3}$  was stronger, with terrible dark square pressure, or indeed 27 h5 now that the black king can't run. When I look at my recent games I see a lack of assurance borne out of not playing as much as I should. Twenty years ago I would not have taken long to play 26  $\text{♙d4+}$ . Then again, 26 h5 is not bad either.

**26...♗g8 27 ♙d4+ ♚f8 28 ♘e3 ♙d7 29 ♗g2 ♚e8 30 ♖hg3 ♚d8 31 b3?!**

Why not just push the g-pawn? After 31 g6! hxg6 32 hxg6 ♘xg6 (or 32...♗xg6 33 ♗xg6 ♘xg6 34 ♖h5 ♙e8 35 ♘xf5) 33 ♖h5 ♙e8 34 ♘xf5 ♗f8 35 ♘xd6! cxd6 36 ♗xg6 ♖xf4 37 ♖g4!, White has a big advantage. With a lack of practice comes a lack of incisiveness.

**31...♙e8 32 ♖h3 ♚c8 33 ♙c3 ♚b7 34 ♖d4 ♙d7 35 a3**

Here 35 ♖f6! ♗af8 36 ♖xf7 ♗xf7 37 ♖hg3 leaves White clearly better but still with a game to play.

**35...♗a7?**

Time pressure as I recall. He is trying to anticipate b3-b4 which I wasn't intending at this point. A more stubborn defence could have been created after 35...♗af8! 36 ♖f6 a4 (or 36...♖e8 37 ♖h6 ♖f7 38 ♖hg3 ♙e8) 37 ♖xf7 ♗xf7 38 bxa4 ♙xa4 39 ♖hg3 ♙d7. I guess Black is waiting for g5-g6, but he can fight.

**36 ♖f6 ♙e8 37 ♖xf7 ♙xf7 38 g6**

Very strong, now that the rook on a7 is out of play.

**38...hxg6 39 ♙f6 gxh5 40 ♙xe7 ♗aa8 41 ♘xf5 ♗g4 42 ♗xg4 hxg4 43 ♗g3 1-0**

**TIP:** Learn from modern champions like Carlsen. Instead of obsessing about theory, he tries to get an interesting position out of the opening and outplay his opponent thereafter. A player with a rigid repertoire is, in 2019, a sitting duck.