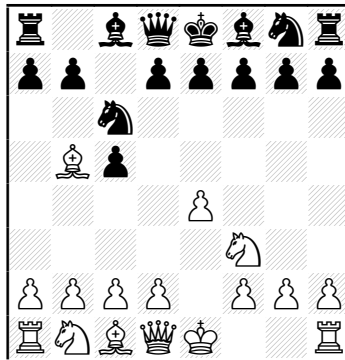


# Bb5 Systems [B23], [B30–1] & [B51–2]

*Written by IM Gary Lane*

*Last updated Monday, August 23, 2004*

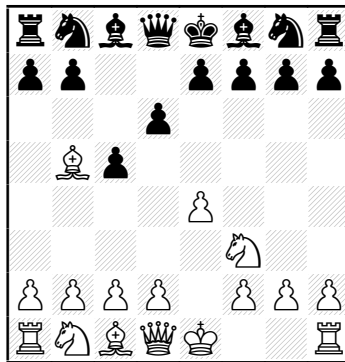
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5



One can usually guess that an opponent who plays 2...♘c6 is hoping to enter one of the main Open Sicilian systems such as the Taimanov, Sveshnikov, Accelerated Dragon or Classical Variation. A good way to curtail a lot of theory is to play 3 ♙b5 and enter the Rossolimo Variation. The opening is named after the grandmaster Nicolas Rossolimo (1910-75) who represented both France and the USA at Olympiads. Black can respond to 3 ♙b5 with various systems beginning with 3...c6, 3...g6 and 3...♘f6.

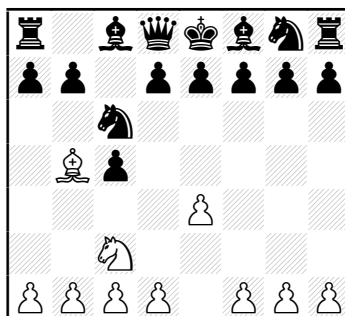
In an ideal world White wishes to create a strong pawn centre with c3 and d4. The opening has been played by World champions Kasparov and Fischer guaranteeing perpetual interest in this side line.

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♙b5+**



This line is currently in vogue amongst some of the world's leading players. The name refers to the place where it was often played in the 1930s and which consequently attracted a lot of interest. Black has often accused White of merely trying to bore him by swapping off pieces and heading for a draw. This is rather unfair as White can inject excitement with more risky sub-variations.

**The bamboozling 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5**





The player of the White pieces is always looking for new ideas against Black's reliable set-up. The popularity of the Rossolimo Variation (1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♕b5) has caught the eye, as it is a good system against those who prefer openings such as the Dragon and the Classical Variation. This has inspired a revival of one of Spassky's pet lines 1 e4 c5 2 ♜c3 ♜c6 3 ♕b5.

The idea for White is if given a free hand he will exchange the pieces on c6 and follow up with f4 transposing to a favourable line of the Grand Prix Attack.

For instance, after 1 e4 c5 2 ♜c3 ♜c6 3 ♕b5 the move 3...g6 is revealed to be poor because it allows White to transpose into a favourable line of the Grand Prix Attack by playing 4 ♕xc6.

All the games given in [blue](#) can be accessed via ChessPub.exe, simply head for their respective ECO code.

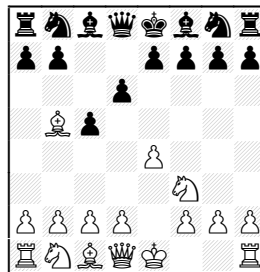
# Contents

## 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3

2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 ♖b5 ♘d4 (3...g6 **Rossolimo–2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 g6 [B23]**) 4 ♖c4 c6 5 ♘f3 (5 ♘ge2 **Rossolimo–2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nd4 [B23]**) 5...♘e7 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 [B23]

## 2...♘c6

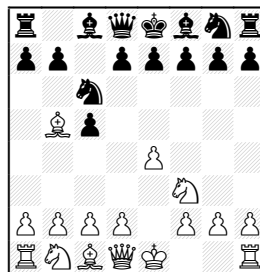
2...d6 3 ♖b5+



3...♙d7 (3...♘d7 **Moscow Variation 3...Nd7 [B51]**) 4 ♙xd7+ ♚xd7 (4...♘xd7 **Moscow 4...Nxd7 [B52]**) 5 c4 (5 0-0 **Moscow 4...Qxd7 5 0-0 [B52]**) 5 b4 **Moscow 4...Qxd7 5 various [B52]**) 5...♘c6 (5...♚g4 6 0-0 ♚xe4 **Moscow 4...Qxd7 5 c4 Qg4 [B52]**) 6 0-0 g6 7 d4 **Moscow 4...Qxd7 5 c4 Nc6/Nf6 [B52]**

3... ♘c6 transposes.

## 3 ♖b5



3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♖b5 ♘d4 5 e5 **Move–Order Tricks–2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bb5 [B30]**

### **3...e6**

3...♟d4 Rossolimo–3 Bb5 Various [B30]

3...g6 4 ♟xc6 Rossolimo Variation –3...g6 [B31]

3...♟a5 Rossolimo–3 Bb5 Na5 [B30]

3...d6 Transpositions– 2...d6 3Bb5+ Nc6/ 2...Nc6 [B51]

### **4 0-0**

4 ♟xc6 bxc6 5 0-0 Rossolimo–3 Bb5 e6 4 Bxc6 [B30]

### **4...♟ge7 5 c3**

Rossolimo Variation–3 Bb5 e6 4 0-0 [B30]

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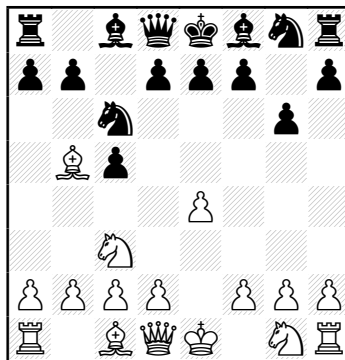
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# Rossolimo – 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 g6 [B23]

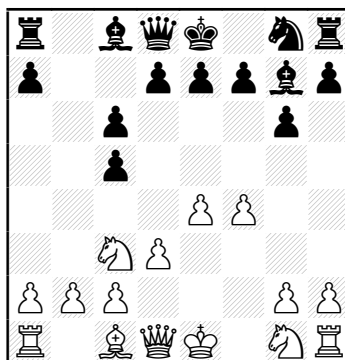
*Last updated: 19/02/02 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 g6**



A natural move after 2 Nf3 and 3 Bb5 but there is a significant difference here. White can now play a quick f2–f4 and transpose to a good line of the Grand Prix Attack.

**4 Bxc6 bxc6 5 d3 Bg7 6 f4**



This sort of position also occurs after 1 e4 c5 2 f4 Nc6 3 Nf3 g6 4 Bb5 Bg7 5 Bxc6 bxc6 6 d3.

**6...Qa5?!**

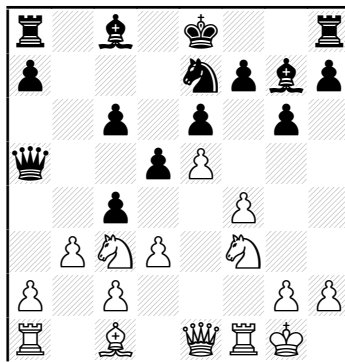
Also possible: 6...d6 7  $\text{♞f3}$   $\text{♟g4}$  8 0-0 e6 9  $\text{♞e1}$  A look at the previous notes will indicate that this queen move is standard in this line. It is now well placed to attack via h4 or it allows b2-b3 to be played to block the c5-pawn. 9... $\text{♟xf3}$  10  $\text{♞xf3}$   $\text{♞e7}$  11 f5! At the first opportunity White seeks to attack. [Prudnikova,S–Mladenovic,J/Herceg Novi YUG 2001](#)

6...e6?! 7 e5! The c5-pawn is already looking very weak. Now ...d7-d6 can be exchanged and the c5 pawn will remain a target, [Petraki,M–Stiris,P/Nikea 2000](#)

**7  $\text{♞f3}$  d6 8 0-0 e6 9  $\text{♞e1}$**

White follows the standard plan and puts the queen on e1 to help support e4-c5 or transfer to h4 for an attack.

**9... $\text{♞e7}$  10 e5 d5 11 b3 c4**

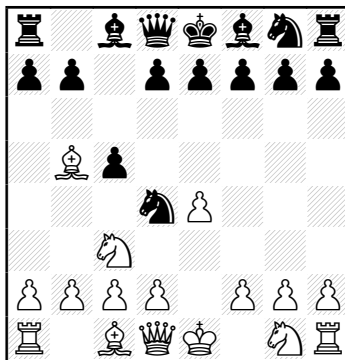


White tries to get rid of the doubled c-pawns but it merely allows White to go on the rampage with his pieces, [Rowson,J–Williams,S/British Team Ch \(4NCL\) 2001](#)

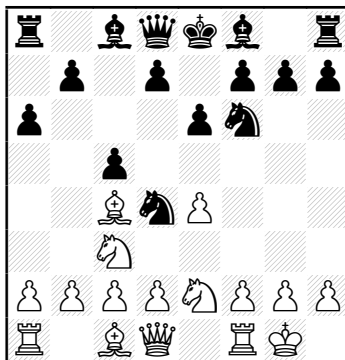
# Rossolimo – 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nd4 [B23]

*Last updated: 19/02/02 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nd4**

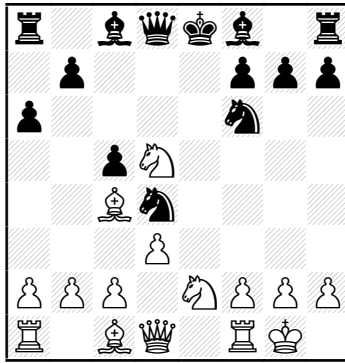


**4 Bc4 e6 5 Ngf2 Nf6 6 0-0 a6**



**7 d3 d5 8 exd5 exd5 9 Nxd5!**



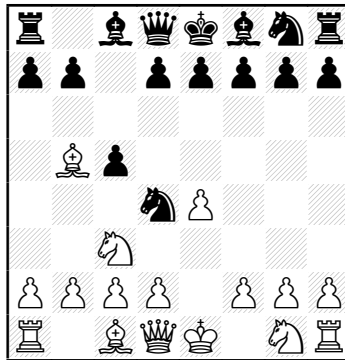


A great sacrifice that hands White a strong initiative. In his book 'Beating the Anti-Sicilians' the respected author Joe Gallagher fails to mention the knight sacrifice when the only difference in his illustrative game Rausis–Benjamin, is that White's king's knight is on f3. It is useful to know of such errors as many people playing the Sicilian will be using his book as a reference, [Radulski, J–Spasov, V/BUL–ch 1994](#)

## 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 [B23]

*Last updated: 16/10/02 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nd4**



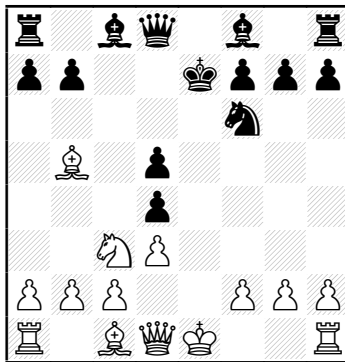
**4 Bc4 e6**

4...Nf6!? An unusual move but totally in keeping with Englishman Simon Williams maverick style of chess. He often likes to spring a surprise at the earliest possible moment. 5 e5 d5 6 Bc2 A meek retreat but White has little choice. For example: (Or 6 exf6 dxc4 7 fxg7 Bxg7 8 Nge2 Bf5! 9 d3 cxd3 10 cxd3 Nxe2 11 Bxe2 Bxd3 and Black is a pawn up.) 6...Nd7 7 f4 e6 8 Nf3 g6 (8...Bc7 is also possible.) 9 a4 Bc7 10 0-0 0-0 11 d3 f6 Black also plays the French Defence so is well versed in the idea of breaking up an advanced pawn chain, [Purton,B-Williams,S/Port Erin IOM 2002](#).

**5 Nf3 Ne7**

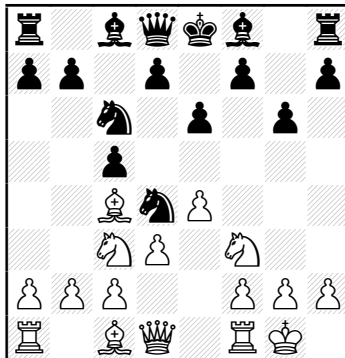
Kasparov adopts a straightforward approach to the position. He intends to play ...Nc6 and then fianchetto on the kingside. A reliable system and Gary K certainly knows his openings!

5...Nf6 6 d3 (6 0-0 The big difference with the text compared to 6 d3 is that White will now have the option of bringing the rook to the e-file. 6...d5? Black fails to recognise the change in circumstances and proceeds in standard fashion. 7 exd5 exd5 8 Nxd5! a surprising sacrifice which gives White a lightening attack, [Meyer,C-Colford,P/Brussels 1999](#)) 6...d5 7 exd5 exd5 8 Nxd4 cxd4 9 Bb5+ White appears to be fine BUT ....!! 9...Be7!



A star move. If and when you get the chance to boldly stroll your king forward it a good idea to savour the moment. Gather your family and friends around the board to watch your hapless opponent squirm. However, I warn against using your mobile phone to inform friends whilst actually sitting at the board! [Rehn,R–Veingold,A/Tammisaari 1996](#)

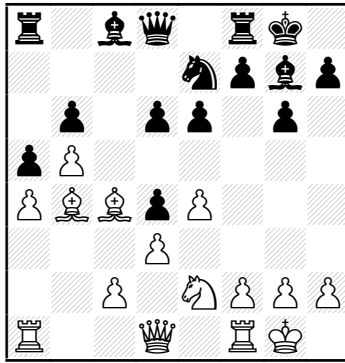
**6 0-0 ♖ec6 7 d3 g6**



**8 ♖xd4 cxd4 9 ♖e2 ♗g7 10 ♗d2 0-0 11 b4**

An energetic idea by Spassky.

**11...b6 12 b5 ♖e7 13 ♗b4 d6 14 a4 a5**

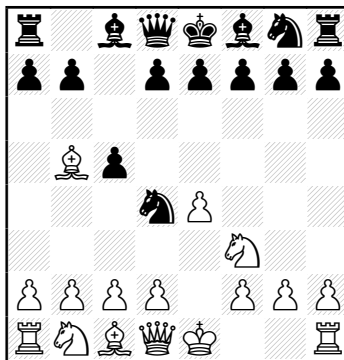


Black has no desire to be swamped on the queenside and takes positive action to stop a4–a5 being played by White, [Spassky,B–Kasparov,G/Reykjavik W.Cup 1988](#).

# Rossolimo – 3 Bb5 Various [B30]

*Last updated: 18/05/04 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♙c6 3 ♗b5 ♘d4**



This looks like the reaction of someone who wants to play something different – Black is in no mood to allow his c-pawns to be doubled after the bishop takes the knight. It is also possible a casual player will do the same so it is worth noting how White creates a strong attack.

Alternatives:

3...b6 The queenside fianchetto is occasionally played at a high level but the games tend to be short and in favour of White. 4 0-0 ♗b7 5 ♖e1 e6 6 c3 a6 7 ♗f1 g5?! When a grandmaster plays such an outlandish move one has to take notice! Black is hoping to unsettle White although the purists would argue that in the long run the kingside pawn structure will remain weak. [Gavrikov,V–Gurgenidze,B/Tbilisi 1983](#).

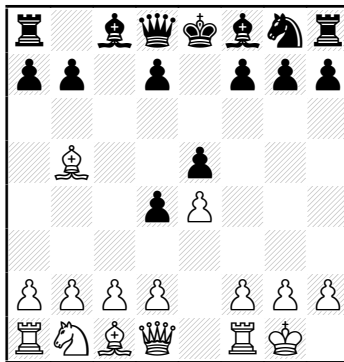
3...♙b6 A relatively rare guest at tournament level. The obvious idea is that if White exchanges on c6 then Black can take back with the queen avoiding having to disrupt his pawn structure. 4 ♘c3 e6

a) 5 ♗xc6 ♙xc6 6 d4 as White has conceded the bishop pair his advantage lies in accelerating his development, 6...cxd4 7 ♘xd4 ♙c7 8 0-0 a6 9 ♖e1 d6 10 ♗g5!? ♘f6 11 f4 with the idea e5. 11...h6 (11...♗e7 12 e5! ♘g8 13 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 14 exd6 ♙xd6 15 ♘xe6! wins) 12 ♗xf6! gxf6 13 f5, [Perez,R–Gonzalez,R/Ajeduni 1996](#).

b) 5 0-0 5...♘ge7 6 ♖e1 A reliable move which brings another piece into the action and also in some circumstances allows the option of the bishop retreating out of the way to the f1 square.

- b1) 6...♞d4 7 a4 ♞xb5?! (7...♞ec6 is a better idea with roughly equal chances) 8 axb5! White seizes on the opportunity to take back with the pawn. This is not usually done but the special circumstance is that the knight on e7 can no longer emerge on its favoured c6 square. (8 ♞xb5 a6 9 ♞c3 ♞c6 offers equal chances.) 8...d6 9 d4 White is happy to open lines to allow his pieces to improve their position, [Galdunts,S-Katz,F/Calvi 2004](#).
- b2) The point of the rook of the rook being on e1 is revealed after 6...d5? when the pin on the e-file is apparent upon 7 exd5 exd5 8 ♞xd5! ♞xb5? 9 ♞c7+ winning.
- b3) 6...a6 7 ♟f1 The grandmaster wishes to preserve his bishop in preparation for a middlegame battle. 7...♞g6 This is a fairly obvious move but has been neglected to a certain extent in the past. Also possible: 8 b3 ♟e7 9 ♟b2 0-0 10 ♞e2 Zhang Zhong reveals the power of his queen's bishop and prepares to play d4. 10...d5 11 e5 (Or 11 exd5 exd5 12 d4 c4 13 ♞d2 ♟g4 14 ♞e5 offers equal chances.) 11...d4 The teenage grandmaster has achieved his primary aim of thwarting White from playing d2-d4. 12 ♞g3 ♞c7 Once again Black is doing the right thing by frustrating White. This is because the pressure on the e5 pawn stops White from creating his own plan and makes him respond meekly to Black, [Zhang Zhong-Bu Xiangzhi/Tianjing 2003](#).
- 3...a6?! A standard mistake. 4 ♟xc6
- a) 4...bxc6 this is slightly unusual in that Black normally takes back the d-pawn. In this case Black would aim to create a pawn centre with ...d7-d5 and put a rook on the semi-open b-file. 5 0-0 d6 (5...d5 6 d3 A safe response because if Black takes on e4 and exchange queens then the ending is bleak due to the weak doubled c-pawns. Also possible: 6...♟g4 7 ♞bd2 Erwich bides his time by bringing out another knight before deciding on how to cope with the ...d5 advance. 7...e6 8 c4 ♟d6 9 ♞a4! Erwich escapes the pin and steps up the pressure on the Black centre, [Erwich,F-Den Heeten,D/Hengelo 2001](#).) 6 c3 White wishes to create a pawn centre. 6...e5 7 d4 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♟g4 9 dxe5 ♟xf3 (9...dxe5? 10 ♞xd8+ ♞xd8 11 ♞xe5 is simply good for White.) 10 ♞xf3 dxe5 11 b3 ♟c5 12 ♞a3 ♟d4 13 ♞b1 ♞f6 14 ♞e2 if White exchanges queens the position is equal so he avoids the option, [Svetushkin,D-Chahine,A/Ikaros 2003](#).
- b) 4...dxc6 5 d3 ♟g4
- b1) 6 h3 ♟xf3 7 ♞xf3 ♞c7 8 ♟e3 e5 9 ♞d2 ♞f6 10 0-0 ♟e7 11 ♞e2 (11 a4 is also possible.) 11...g6 12 f4 ♞h5 13 fxe5 (13 ♞f3 walks into 13...exf4 14 ♟xf4?! ♞xf4 15 ♞xf4 ♞xf4 16 ♞xf4 ♟g5 17 ♞f2 ♟e3 wins.) 13...♞g3 14 ♞f2 ♞xf1 15 ♞xf1 White might have lost the exchange but he does have a pawn for it and when you add the instant attack then the sacrifice is certainly worth it, [Handke,F-Becking,S/Saarbruecken 2002](#).
- b2) 6 ♟e3 6...e6 7 ♞bd2 ♞f6 8 h3 ♟h5 9 a4 a5 Fucs is understandably keen not to allow 10 a5 when White has a bind on the queenside pawns 10 g4 ♟g6 11 ♞e5 ♞d7 12 ♞xd7 ♞xd7 13 f4 The advance of the kingside pawns looks ominous for Black but perhaps more importantly White can build-up his pieces behind the shelter of the pawns, [Dumont,S-Fucs,P/Rio de Janeiro 2004](#).

4 ♞xd4 cxd4 5 0-0 e5



Black supports the d–pawn.

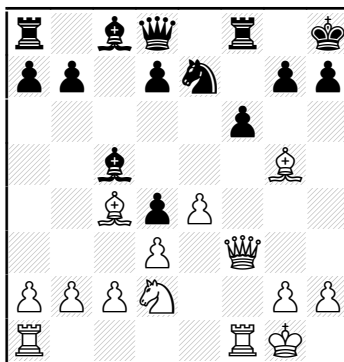
There are a variety of alternatives:

5...a6 6 Bc4 g6 7 c3 White wishes to fight for a pawn centre and also it allows the queen to emerge on b3. 7...dxc3 8 bxc3 Bg7 9 Qb3 e6 10 Ba3 when the a3–f8 diagonal is important for the future of Black's development so White is right to try and use it, [Mullon,J–Terrieux,K/Guingamp 2004](#).

## 6 d3 Bc5 7 f4

I like this idea of opening the f–file for White's rook. It reminds of a similar idea that occurs after the Bird's Opening in the Ruy Lopez! It sounds daft but after 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nd4 4 Nxd4 exd5 5 0-0 c6 6 Ba4 d6 7 0-0 intending f2–f4 the position has a familiar look to it.

7...exf4 8 Bxf4 Ne7 9 Qf3 0-0 10 Bg5 f6 11 Bc4+ Kh8 12 Nd2



The pin on the f–file allows White to get the rest of the pieces into the action, [Neporozhniy,K–Nasikan,N/Kurass Memorial 2000](#).

# Move-Order Tricks – 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 Nf6

## 4 Bb5 [B30]

*Last updated: 16/06/03 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3**

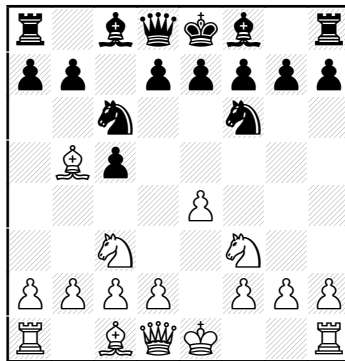
The move-order is commonly used to avoid the Najdorf or Pelican. It often occurs after 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Nf3.

**3...♘f6**

Black signals that he wants to play the Sveshnikov.

If Black wants to play a Pelican then he should try 3...e6 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♘f6 6 ♘db5 d6 7 ♕f4 e5 8 ♖g5 and play has transposed to the favoured opening. The big snag is that White can avoid this with moves such as 6 Nxc6 or 6 Be2.

**4 ♖b5**



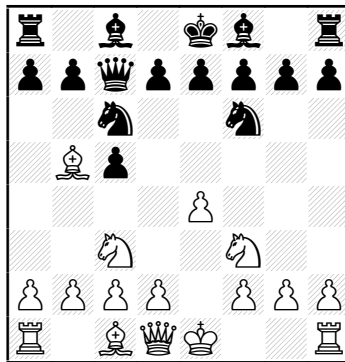
The latest trend.

4 e5 ♘g4 5 ♖e2 g6 This is relatively unusual but looks to be a solid response. Black has various alternatives: 6 h3± ♘h6 7 ♘e4 ♖g7 8 ♘f6+?! An inspired sacrifice but not 100% correct, [Vavra,P–Markos,J/CZE 2002](#).

**4...♘d4**



4...♔c7

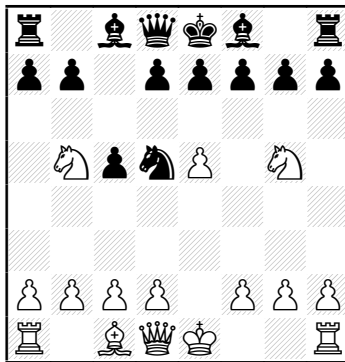


A careful response which is becoming more popular having been played by Kramnik. 5 0-0  
a) 5...e6 6 ♖e1 ♗g4?! Van Wely is trying to be clever by avoiding standard lines probably because he thinks Shirov doesn't normally play this line. (6...d6 7 ♕xc6+!? ♖xc6 8 d4 ♕e7! 9 e5 dxe5 10 dxe5 ♗d5 11 ♗e4 h6 12 c4!? when White has a slight lead in development, [Hansen,S-Andersson,U/Helsingor 1999](#).) 7 ♕xc6 bxc6 8 e5 f6 9 d4 cxd4 10 ♖xd4 ♗xe5 11 ♗xe5 fxe5 12 ♖xe5 ♕e7 At first glance it seems that Black's problems are solved after ...Bf6 chasing away the queen and rook, [Shirov,A-Van Wely,L/Cologne 2003](#).

b) 5...♗d4 6 ♗xd4 cxd4 7 ♗d5 ♗xd5 8 exd5 ♖c5 9 c4! dxc3 10 ♖b3 a6 11 ♕e2 c2 12 d4! a clever pawn sacrifice which if taken allows White to rapidly develop, [Anand,V-Leko,P/Linares 2003](#).

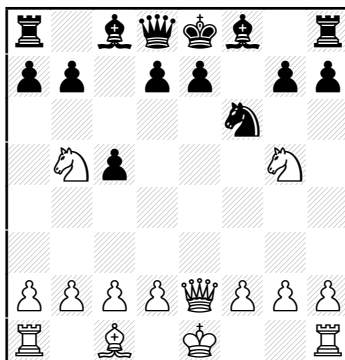
4...a6?! This is the obvious move that I would certainly want to know what to do against. Black is prepared to accept doubled pawns in return for depriving White of the bishop pair. However, White might take on c6 anyway so really there is no need to waste a move encouraging him. 5 ♕xc6 dxc6 6 d3 ♕g4 7 h3 ♕xf3 8 ♖xf3 e6 9 ♕f4 ♕e7 10 0-0-0 White is able to smoothly develop his pieces while Black is rather passive, [Golubev,M-Guilbert,J/Bethune 2002](#).

**5 e5! ♗xb5 6 ♗xb5 ♗d5 7 ♗g5!**



This noteworthy powerful move has claimed many victims in rapid fashion.

**7...f6 8 exf6 Nxf6 9 Qe2**



I've seen players miss threats like 10 Nd6 mate many times!

**9...d5? 10 Qe5!**

With the simple yet deadly threat of 11 Nc7+, [Raud,R–Karner,H/ Estonia Club Cup Estonia 2000](#).

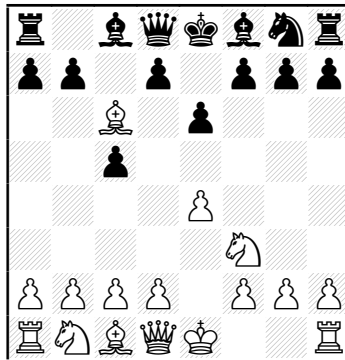
# Rossolimo – 3 Bb5 e6 intro [B30]

*Last updated: 07/01/03 by Gary Lane*

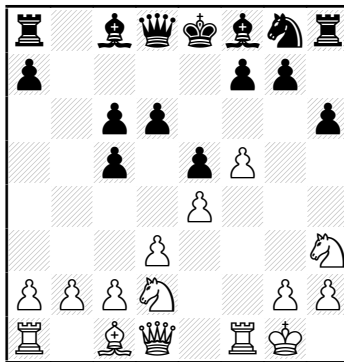
**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 e6 4 ♘c3**

Otherwise:

4 ♙xc6



If White wants to make sure Black has doubled c-pawns then he needs to exchange pieces on c6 before ...Nge7. 4...bxc6 A number of people have taken back with (4...dxc6 but this is hardly logical because the addition of 3...e6 means the light-squared bishop is entombed.) 5 0-0 ♘e7 (5...♙c7 Thanks largely to this game the queen move has gone out of fashion. 6 d3 d6 7 ♘c3 ♘f6 8 ♙e2 White makes it clear that he intends 9 e5 to break up the pawns. [Vasiukov,E–Velimirovic,D/Tbilisi 1973](#)) 6 d3 White has a simple but effective plan of Ng5 intending Qh5 and f2–f4. 6...♘g6 (6...f6 7 ♘h4 is good for White because 7...♘g6? 8 ♙h5 wins) 7 ♘g5 (7 ♘bd2 d6 8 ♘c4 ♙e7 9 ♙d2 0-0 10 a3 The idea is to play b4 to persuade Black to exchange pawns thus opening up the a-file for white's queen's rook. [Huebner,R–Abramovic,B/Biel 1993](#)) 7...e5 (7...h6 I think this is the sort of move most club players would quickly play. 8 ♘h3 This is the point of White's play because it is now possible to increase the pressure with f2–f4. 8...d6 9 f4 e5?! 10 f5 ♘e7 11 ♘d2 ♘g8

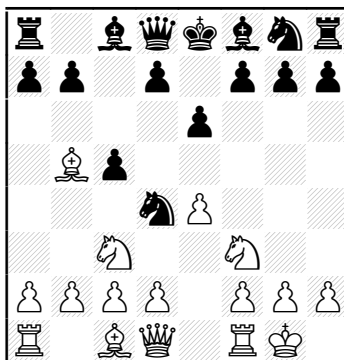


This position deserves a diagram because it is not often that a top player emerges from the opening without any pieces developed! 12 ♖c4 White is much better, [Rechlis, G–Botvinnik, I/Israel Team Ch 1998](#)) 8 ♙h5 White declares his aggressive intentions. 8...♙c7 9 c4 d6 10 ♘c3 ♙xg5 11 ♙xg5 f6 12 ♙e3 0-0 13 f4 Turov carries on with the standard middlegame plan of opening up the f–file for the benefit of the king's rook, [Turov, M–Botsari, A/Chania 2000](#).

**4...♘d4**

4...♘ge7 is also possible here.

**5 0-0**



5 ♘xd4? This move is barely mentioned in the books yet it is a natural looking move. However, it is Black who should be delighted to see it on the board. 5...cxd4 6 ♘e2 ♙g5 7 ♙c4 ♙xg2 The truth is revealed because the black queen attacks the bishop on b5 and the pawn on g2, [Radziejewicz, I–Nyback, T/Budapest 2002](#).

**5...a6 6 ♙d3 ♘e7 7 ♘xd4 cxd4 8 ♘e2 d5**

8...♘c6 9 c3 d5 10 cxd4 dxe4 11 ♙xe4 ♙e7 12 ♙xc6+ bxc6 13 d3 0-0 14 ♙e3 White is content to hang on to the extra pawn and this is important because the d4 pawn covers some important central squares, [Degraeve,J-Charbonneau,P/Montreal CAN 2002](#).

**9 exd5 ♙xd5 10 c3 dxc3 11 dxc3 ♘c6 12 ♘f4 ♙d8 13 ♙e2**

White has a space advantage and is content to rapidly develop his pieces, [Motwani,P-Gattea,A/Bled SLO 2002](#).

# Rossolimo Variation – 3 Bb5 e6 4 0-0

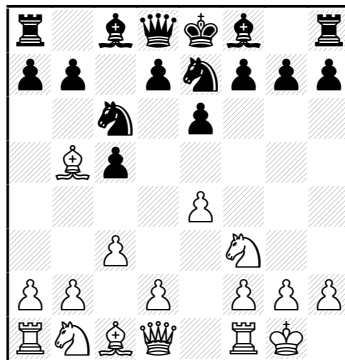
[B30]

*Last updated: 19/02/02 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♗c6 3 ♖b5**

The Rossolimo Variation is becoming more popular especially due to Adam's handling of the opening. 'A Ruy Lopez against the Sicilian!'

**3...e6 4 0-0 ♗ge7 5 c3**



White prepares to create a pawn centre with d2–d4.

5 ♖e1 a6 6 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 This capture keeps the pawn structure intact, but the "down side" of Black's position is the lag in development. So, GM Igor Glek now rapidly opens up the game in order to make his own superior development count ... 7 d4 cxd4 8 ♗xd4 ♗c7 9 ♗xc6 bxc6 10 e5 [Glek,I–Arkhipov,S/Tomsk RUS 2001](#)

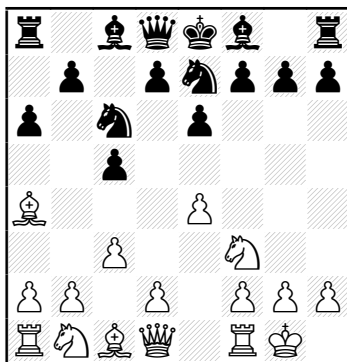
**5...a6**

Black wants White to make a decision on where to put the bishop.

5...d5 6 exd5 ♗xd5 7 ♖e1 ♗d7 8 ♗a3 ♗g6 (8...♖c8 9 d4 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♗b4 11 ♖e5 White manages to activate the rook by chasing the black queen. [Cherniaev,A–Bernard,J/Geneva 2001](#)) 9 ♗f1 (9 ♗c4 ♗h5 10 d4 cxd4 11 ♗b5 ♖c8 12 ♗e2 ♗d5?! 13 ♗fxd4 a6?! A natural move to get rid of the queen's knight but it allows White to go on the

offensive, [Rublevsky,S–Shabalov,A/Elista 1998](#)) 9...♙e7 10 d4 gave White the slightly better chances in [Morozevich,A–Fominyh,A/Elista 1995](#)

**6 ♖a4**



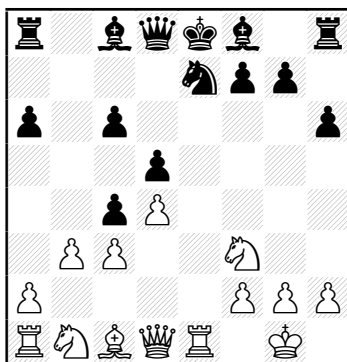
**6...d5**

6...c4 7 d4 cxd3 8 ♖xd3 b5 9 ♙c2 ♘g6 10 a4 b4 11 c4 hite should need no encouragement to play this move which helps to restrict ...d7–d5 giving him a slight edge, [Soderberg,P–Krnic,Z/Amsterdam 2000](#)

**7 exd5 exd5 8 d4 c4?!**

An unusual approach in an attempt to lock out the light-squared bishop from the game and if Bxc6+ then ...Nxc6 is fine for Black.

**9 ♖e1 h6 10 ♙xc6+ bxc6 11 b3**



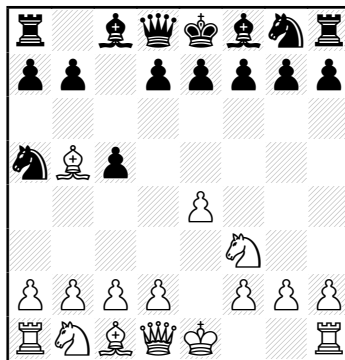
White endeavours to break up the black pawn structure to his advantage,. In this case Adams will be able to open the a-file for the benefit of his queen's rook, [Adams,M–Hennigen,M/British Team Ch \(4NCL\) 2001](#)



# Rossolimo – 3 Bb5 Na5 [B30]

*Last updated: 19/02/02 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♗c6 3 ♖b5 ♘a5**



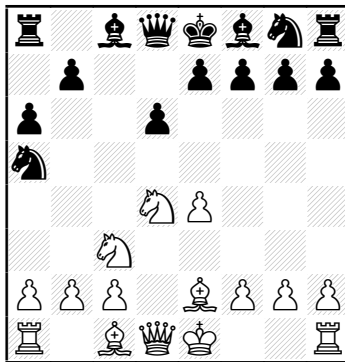
It looks mad but there is no clear cut refutation. England's Tony Miles had used the opening to good effect so it demands some respect. It is not so bad and it is bound to gain time on the clock. Just think what White must now be thinking because the main idea is to take on c6 and the shock value must be great. Indeed, I mentioned it in my Batsford book full of opening surprises called 'Victory in the Opening' and it is good to see it played at the prestigious Russian championship.

**4 ♗c3**

There is some debate how White should continue:

4 ♖e2 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 d6 6 d4 cxd4 7 ♗xd4 ♖d7 8 ♖g5 ♗c6 9 ♗d3 This now looks more a Classical Sicilian but probably Black was up on the clock. 9...h6 10 ♖h4 ♗a5 11 0-0?! An understandable mistake because in similar lines of the open Sicilian the queen is on d2, [Chebotarev,O–Lugovoi,A/Elista RUS 2001](#)

**4...a6 5 ♖e2 d6 6 d4 cxd4 7 ♗xd4**

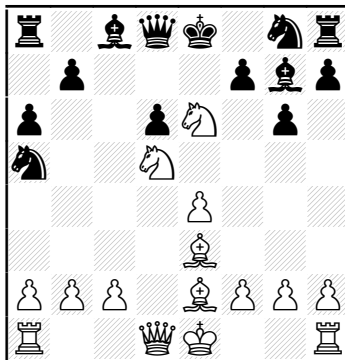


White has a fairly standard set-up in the open Sicilian. The question now is whether Black can find a way to bring the queen's knight to c4 in order to justify move 3.

**7...g6 8 Qe3 Qg7 9 Nd5 e6?**

Black plays a normal move in the Sicilian forgetting that with a knight on a5 things are different!

**10 Nxe6!**

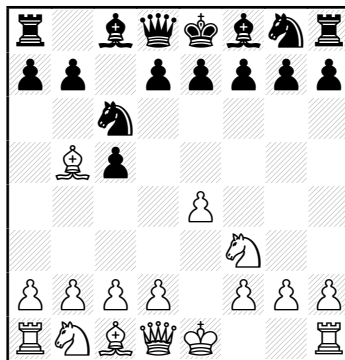


with a winning advantage, [Geresov,E-Bonin,J/St John's University 2001](#)

# Rossolimo Variation 3...g6 [B31]

*Last updated: 23/08/04 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♞c6 3 ♙b5**



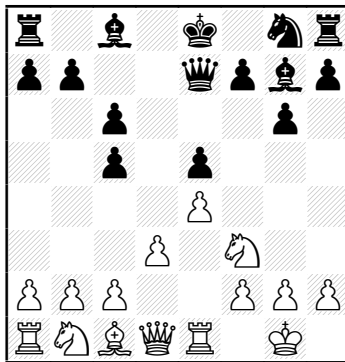
The Rossolimo Variation is named after the Ukrainian grandmaster Nicolas Rossilmo (1910-75) who was born in Kiev.

**3...g6 4 ♙xc6**

The exchange of the knight signals that White wants to give up the bishop pair in return for weakening Black's pawn structure.

4 0-0 ♙g7

a) 5 ♖e1 e5 Black takes steps to stop the possibility d2–d4. 6 ♙xc6 dxc6 7 d3 ♕e7 The queen adds support to the e–pawn and keeps an eye on the advance b2–b4.



(7...f6 Black chooses to lock in his dark-squared bishop so White in the long-term should aim to play d3–d4. 8 ♖e3 b6 9 ♜bd2 ♜h6 10 ♜f1 0-0 11 ♜g3 ♙e6 12 b3 ♜d7 13 ♜c1 ♜f7 14 ♜d2 f5! Black is right to play aggressively because White's pieces are passively placed, [Karlsen,A–McShane,L/Roskilde open 1998](#)) 8 a3 White decides to prepare the break on the queenside (8 ♜bd2 ♜f6 9 ♜c4 ♜d7 10 ♙d2 with roughly level chances, [Cuijpers,F–Reinderman,D/Germany 2000](#)) 8...♜f6 9 b4 ♙g4 10 ♜bd2 0-0 with double-edged play, [Sedlak,N–Velimirovic,D/Yugoslavia 2002](#).

b) 5 c3 5...♜f6 (5...e5 6 d4 At first sight Black will think White has made a mistake. After all, the d4 square is heavily defended but White gambles on compensation in the form of weak dark squares. 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♜xd4 8 ♜xd4 exd4 9 f4 a6 10 ♙a4 b5 11 ♙b3 ♙b7 12 f5 led to sharp play in [Glek,I–Turner,M/St. Ingbert 1991](#))

b1) 6 ♜a4 A slightly unusual set-up with White defending the e-pawn and preparing the d2–d4 advance. 'An interesting idea which defends the e4 pawn and is well placed to restrict Black's queenside. White still hopes to create a pawn centre with d2–d4.' 6...0-0 7 d4 White provides the main idea of his previous move. He sacrifices the e4 pawn, but hopes to get a very strong initiative. 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 d6!? Black grabs the pawn but against a top class grandmaster it is a risky business. (8...a6!? The advance of the a-pawn is the obvious move so White needs to know what to do. Naturally, the bishop is temporarily immune because if the bishop is captured then the queen's rook will be taken. 9 d5 ♜a5 The knight moves to the edge of the board and White now has to be aware that the bishop can be taken. Of course, Black has to be careful that knight is not marooned on the a5 square. 10 ♙d3 b5 11 ♜b4 d6 12 ♜d4 ♜d7 13 ♙d1 ♜c5 14 ♙c2 ♙d7 15 ♜e1 The obvious threat is b2–b4 but the Scottish international is too wise for that, [Czebe,A–Muir,A/Budapest 2004](#). 8...♜xe4?! Black grabs the pawn but against a top class grandmaster it is a risky business. 9 d5 Kovalev attacks both knights but Black can wriggle out of the situation without losing material. 9...♜c5 10 ♜a3 This is the best square for the queen to keep pressure on the c5 knight. 10...♜b6 11 ♜c3 ♜d4 12 ♜xd4 ♙xd4 13 ♙h6 This has all been played before but is fairly obvious to contest the dark squares. 13...♙g7 14 ♙xg7 ♜xg7 15 b4 White manages to engineer an exchange of one of black's active pieces. The point is that Black has an extra pawn but his queenside pieces are dormant, [Kovalev,A–Kuznetsov,V/Alushta 2004](#).) 9 ♙xc6 White chooses the most principal continuation. 9...bxc6 10 ♜xc6 ♙g4 11

♖bd2 ♜c8 Svidler,P–Gelfand,B/Rethymnon 2003. The offer to exchange queens is designed to bring Black's rooks into the game.

b2) 6 ♖e1 6...0-0 7 e5 An important main line for players of White or Black. 7...♗d5 8 d4 cxd4 9 cxd4 d6 10 ♗c3 ♗xc3 11 bxc3 a6 12 ♕xc6 bxc6 13 exd6 exd6 14 ♕g5 ♜c7 15 ♜d2 ♕e6 16 ♕h6 ♜fe8 17 ♕xg7 ♖xg7 18 ♗g5 ♕d5 This position is roughly equal but Black's ambition can be traced to his well placed bishop, see Shaw,J–McShane,L/West Bromwich ENG 2004.

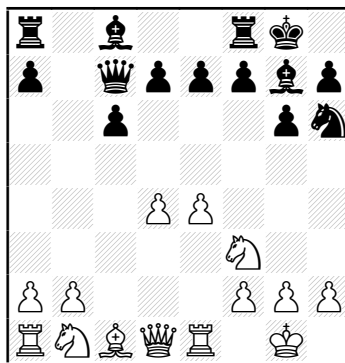
4 c3 ♕g7 5 d4 cxd4 6 cxd4 ♜b6 7 ♗c3! Lightning speed piece–development. 7...a6 8 ♕a4! ♗xd4? Black will soon discover that he's just grabbed a hot pawn! 9 ♗d5 1-0 Djurhuus,R–Porper,E/Bergen, Norway 2001.

## 4...dxc6

Black takes with the d–pawn which has the benefit of opening lines for the white–squared bishop and also the queen can cover the d4 square.

4...bxc6 5 0-0 In some lines White delays the text intending to castle queenside which is a risky business with a semi–open b–file. 5...♕g7 6 ♖e1

a) 6...♗h6 7 c3 As usual White prepares a pawn centre. 7...0-0 8 d4 cxd4 (8...♜b6!? Black is renowned for thinking up new ideas in the opening and once again he doesn't disappoint. Instead of doing the usual pawn exchange on d4 he prefers to maintain the tension and wait for his moment to attack the pawns 9 d5 White gains space 9...d6 Black eyes up the e5 square to stop White advancing the e–pawn. 10 ♗a3 ♕b7 11 ♗c4 ♜a6 12 ♗e3 ♜ae8 lack was happy with this position because his pieces are all poised to enter the fray, Volkmann,F–Granda Zuniga,J/Bled SLO 2002.) 9 cxd4 ♜c7?!



a waiting move by Ballo but not a very good one. The idea is to keep guard on the e5 square and he advances his d–pawn or f–pawn but the queen is misplaced. (9...f6 a little positional idea to thwart the effectiveness of the advance e4–e5. 10 ♗c3 ♗f7 11 e5 fxe5 12 dxe5 d6 13 exd6 exd6 14 ♗d4 ♜b6 gave Black the better chances, Maximov,D–Baklan,V/Alushta 2001.

9...d5 10 e5 f6 A standard idea in this line to undermine White's pawn chain. 11 h3 Cancelling out the possibility of ...♕g4. 11...fxe5 12 ♗xe5 ♜b6 13 b3 White has emerged from the opening with a solid position but he needs to catch up on development. 13...♗f7 14 f4 ♗xe5 15 fxe5 ♜f5 Black is threatening to take on e5 because the d–pawn is currently

pinned to the king, [Gallagher,J–Devereaux,M/Torquay ENG 2002.](#)) 10 ♖c3 ♗b7 11 ♗d2 f6 Black makes an effort to ward off e4–e5 and gives his knight an escape square on f7. 12 ♜c1 d6 13 ♜b3+! a clever move designed to bolster tactical opportunities when the white knight jumps to the d5 square, [Shaw,J–Ballo,E/Groningen 1999.](#)

- b) 6...♗f6 This is a calculated gamble. The knight will be dislodged from f6 but the hope is that the advanced e–pawn will be a weakness not a strength. 7 e5 ♗d5 8 c4 ♗c7 9 d4 cxd4 10 ♜xd4 In general this position is considered slightly better for White thanks to his space advantage. The queen can swing across to the kingside with Qh4 intending Bh6 which is a basic attacking idea to exchange Black's important defensive bishop on g7, [Kasparov,G–Salov,V/Dortmund 1992.](#)

### 5 d3 ♗g7 6 h3

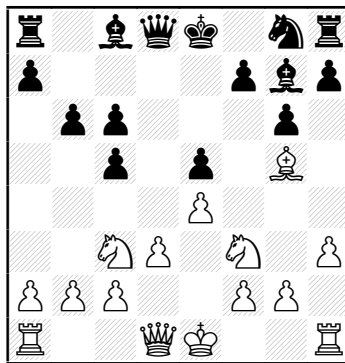
White tends to play this to stop ....Bg4 and the prospect of ...Ng4 if White wishes to continue with an early Be3.

- 6 ♗c3 ♗f6 7 ♗e3 ♗g4!? is an unusual move because just about everybody in the past has defended the c–pawn, [Gallagher,J–Smirnov,P/Panormo GRE 2002.](#)

### 6...♗f6

- 6...e5 The pawn on e5 stops the possibility of d3–d4 and is useful when White eventually tries the standard idea of organising f2–f4. 7 ♗e3 ♜c7 8 0-0 ♗f6 9 ♜c1!? White wants to cover all possibilities by preparing to trade bishops with Bh6 and retain the option of developing the queen's knight to d2. [Manik,M–Sprenger,J/Leipzig GER 2002.](#)

- 6...b6 7 ♗c3 e5 8 ♗g5?!

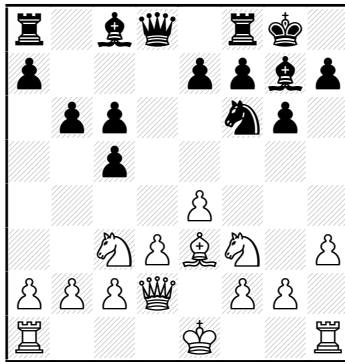


An interesting but flawed idea. White wants to oblige Black to compromise his position with ...f7–f6 or ...Nge7 but as both moves are standard it is merely helping Black to gain time. (8 0-0 ♗e7 9 a3 a5 10 ♗e3 f5?! An ambitious approach to seize the initiative but has the drawback that Black has not yet completed development, [Sandipan,C–Bu Xiangzhi/Qingdao 2002.](#)) 8...f6 9 ♗c3 ♗h6 10 ♜d2 ♗f7 This is the big difference compared to normal lines because Black has the option of retreating the knight to f7

where it is ready to spring back into the action. [Royset,P–Kotronias,V/Gausdal 2002](#).

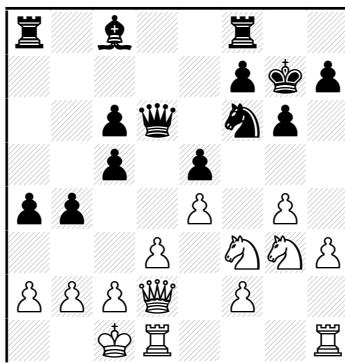
7 ♖c3 e5

7...0-0 8 ♕c3 b6 Black simply defends the pawn. 9 ♔d2



This is a very fashionable line that has caught the attention of the world's top players. Unlike other lines of the open Sicilian Black's counter-attack chances are limited given White a slight plus. 9...e5 10 ♕h6 (10 0-0 ♔d6 11 ♕h6 ♖h5 12 ♖h2 ♕e6 13 ♖e2 f6 14 ♖g4 ♕xg4 15 ♕xg7 ♖xg7 16 hxg4 ♖e6 17 ♖ad1 ♖g7 18 g3 ♖h8?! The Scottish international loses patience and tries to initiate some kingside [play,Howell,D–Shaw,J/Edinburgh SCO 2003](#).)

Or 10 ♖xe5 ♖xe4 11 ♖xe4 ♕xe5 offers equal chances.) 10...♔d6 11 0-0-0 a5! Leko wishes to quickly pursue his own attack before White can get going on the kingside. 12 ♕xg7 ♖xg7 13 g4 a4 14 ♖e2 b5 15 ♖g3 b4



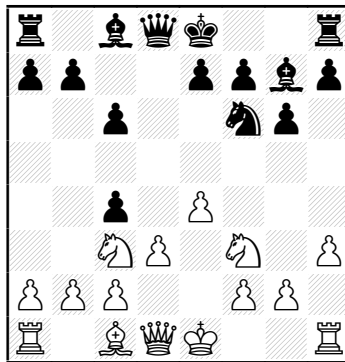
with the idea of a3 and has the merit of speeding up the attack. 16 ♔g5 The queen looks impressive near the black king but Leko claims that he is perfectly safe. [Shirov,A–Leko,P/Dortmund GER 2002](#).

7...♘d7 8 ♙e3 0-0 9 ♚d2 ♜e8!? An interesting idea to prepare ...e7–e5 or have the option of avoiding the exchange of dark-squared bishops because after Bh6 the bishop can retreat to h8. 10 0-0

a) 10...e5 11 ♘h2 h5?! There is no need to voluntarily weaken the kingside. (11...♚e7 is a more solid option intending to meet 12 ♙h6 with 12...♙h8 offering equal chances.) 12 ♖h1 ♚e7 13 f4 exf4 14 ♙xf4 ♘e5 15 ♘f3 ♘xf3 16 ♚xf3 f5?! a bold attempt by Krush to kickstart the game by fighting for the initiative. On the other hand it does make her kingside pawns look poorly placed, [Perelshteyn,E–Krush,I/Seattle 2003](#).

b) 10...e5 with roughly equal chances, [Nunn,J–Ivanov,V/Baden–Baden GER 2002](#).

7...c4!?



A logical idea to get rid of the doubled c-pawn at the first opportunity. 8 d4 White is content to take over the centre while Black is hoping to undermine the central pawns. 8...b5 9 a3 Well, Black is threatening to advance the b-pawn to shift the queen's knight so it makes sense to stop it, [Bologan,V–Komarov,D/France 2003](#).

**8 ♙e3 ♚e7 9 ♚d2 ♘d7**

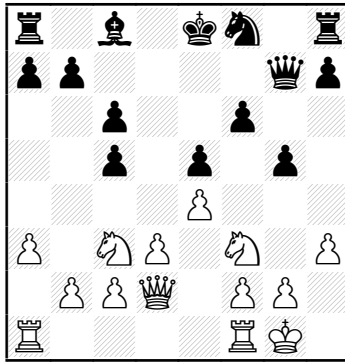
9...h6 10 0-0-0 b6 11 ♖b1 (11 ♘h2 heading for g4 to put pressure on the h6 pawn 11...g5 12 ♘f1 ♘h5 13 g3 ♙e6 14 ♚e2 ♘f6 15 f4 gxf4 16 gxf4 exf4 17 ♙xf4 with equal chances, [Jansa,V–Sutovsky,E/Gausdal 1995](#).) 11...♙d7 12 ♘g1 an elaborate procedure to prepare f2–f4 to open the position 12...0-0-0 13 ♘ge2 ♘e8 14 f4 exf4 15 ♙xf4 g5 16 ♙h2 ♘d6 when the players agreed to have a rest, ½-½ [Boudre,J–Sprenger,J/Metz FRA 2002](#).

**10 ♙h6 f6**

A typical response which protects the dark squares by allowing the queen to defend the bishop.

**11 ♙xg7 ♚xg7 12 0-0!? ♘f8 13 a3 g5!**





With the centre closed Hendriks can push his pawns on the kingside without fear of a decent counterattack, [Reinderman,D–Hendriks,W/Wijk aan Zee 2000](#).

## Moscow Variation 3...Nd7 [B51]

*Last updated: 19/02/02 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♙b5+ ♘d7 4 d4 ♘gf6 5 ♘c3**

5 0-0 ♗xe4?! This is often played in tournaments much to the delight of people who have the White pieces! It's popularity can be traced to the book 'Beating the anti-Sicilians' where it was enthusiastically endorsed by the author. However, the test of time has not been kind. For the sake of a pawn White gets a lead in development and an attack. 6 ♖e2 (6 ♖e1 ♗ef6 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 ♙c4 White calmly directs the bishop against the weak point on f7 and incredibly Black is already struggling. 8...e6 9 ♗g5! Baklan is treating his fellow grandmaster with disdain by going all out for an attack. The only problem for Black is that it works! 9...♙e7 10 ♙xe6 0-0 11 ♖e2 ♗b6 12 ♙xc8 ♗xc8 13 ♘c3 with promising play for White, [Baklan,V–Degraeve,J/BEL 1996/](#)) 6...♗ef6 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 ♖d1 It makes sense to bring a rook on to the open d-file to put pressure on the pinned knight. 8...a6 9 ♙c4 e6 10 ♗g5! This is a classic attacking idea that often crops up in this line. 10...♖b6 11 ♙xe6 fxe6 12 ♗xe6 ♙e7 13 ♖e1 ♗g8 What else? 14 ♙f4 I think it is safe to say that White has compensation for his sacrificed material!! 14...♖a7 15 ♗c7+ ♗f8 16 ♗d5 ♖d8 17 ♗xc7 ♗df6 gave White a winning advantage in [Velicka,P–Johann,C/Passau 2000/](#)

### 5...cxd4

In his book 'Beating the Anti-Sicilians' Gallagher recommended 5...a6 but does not play it himself. One of the reasons is that in time opening books do date and this is the case here. 5...a6

**6 ♖xd4 e5 7 ♖d3 h6**

Black takes time to stop Bg5, which would help White to exert control over the important d5 square.

**8 ♙e3 ♙e7 9 ♙c4**

Some moves are a matter of taste. In this case, Chandler does not want Black to easily expand his queenside pawns with ...a7-. a6 and ...b7-b5 so makes an effort to stop the possibility.

9 0-0 a6 Rowson plays both sides of this opening so it is worth noting his choice. 10 ♙a4!? This is unusual although after ...b7-b5 the game will usually transpose to normal lines. 10...0-0 11 ♖ad1 With a bishop on c4 White might play Nc3-d5 but here it

will be captured and then it is not so clear when Bxd5 is not an option. 11...b5 12 ♖b3 ♖b7 13 a3!? A cautious approach, which indicates that White is not sure what to do. 13...♗c7 14 ♜h4?! ♜c5 15 ♙xc5 dxc5 16 ♜f5 This is consistent but the mating threats are not dangerous for Black, [Walker,M–Rowson,J/Scarborough 2001/](#)

## 9...a6 10 a4

It now becomes clear why the light-squared bishop was retreated because now it is easier to restrain Black's queenside pawns.

**10...♗c7 11 0-0 ♜c5 12 ♙xc5 ♗xc5 13 ♖ab1!? ♙e6 14 ♜d2 ♖c8 15 ♙xe6 fxe6 16 ♗h3 ♜f7**

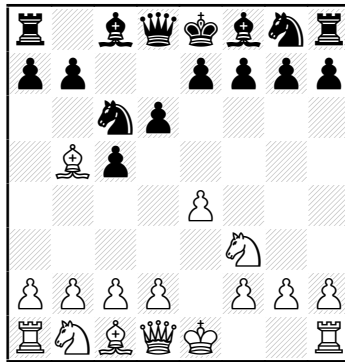
A special move that allows the king to protect e6. White's task now is to open lines in order to take advantage of the vulnerable monarch. [Chandler–Gallagher, /British Championship 2001.](#)

# Transpositions – 2...d6 3 Bb5+ Nc6/

## 2...Nc6 [B51]

*Last updated: 17/07/04 by GaryLane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 d6**



**4 0-0 ♙d7**

This is renowned as the solid response.

4...♙g4 The pin on the knight drifts in and out of fashion. 5 c3 White declares his intention to create a pawn centre. 5...e5 6 d4 cxd4 7 cxd4 exd4 8 ♖a4! A clever way to exert immediate pressure on Black in the opening. 8...♙d7 (8...♙xf3 9 ♙xc6+ bxc6 10 ♖xc6+ ♙e7 11 gxf3 when the black king looks embarrassed) 9 ♘xd4 ♖a5?! Bryn is eager to exchange queens with the Finnish grandmaster in order to reduce the attacking options 10 ♙xc6 ♖xa4 11 ♙xa4 ♙xa4 12 ♘c3 ♙d7 13 ♘db5! the key to maintaining the pressure is to create a fresh set of problems. In this case the weakness of the d6 pawn is highlighted and of course the big ban threat of Nc7+. [Westerinen,H–Bryn,A/Gausdal 2003](#).

**5 ♖e1 ♘f6 6 c3 a6 7 ♙a4**

A safe and steady response.

7 ♖xc6!? An interesting idea to facilitate a quick d2–d4 which involves a controversial pawn sacrifice. 7...♗xc6 8 d4 is a risky gambit for White if he needs to play energetically. 8...♗xe4 (It is still debateable whether Black should exchange pawns on d4 before grabbing the sacrifice on e4. 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 ♗xe4 10 ♖g5 with some compensation.) 9 ♖g5 ♗d5 The bishop retreats out of harms way. 10 ♜bd2 e6 A relatively restrained response but as Black has an extra pawn it is not up to him to attack! 11 c4 ♗xf3 12 ♖xf3 cxd4 13 ♗xf6 gxf6 14 ♖xb7 This is a critical position with players still trying to work out who is better. I suspect White has the edge. 14...♗g7 15 ♖c6+ ♜e7 16 ♜f3!? This is hardly adventurous but a reliable move. 16...f5 17 ♞ad1 ♖c8 This position is known to be equal so Black has no worries. 18 ♜xd4?! when White is going astray, [Pomerleau,D–Vigorito,D/Philadelphia 2004](#).

7 ♗f1 White retreats the bishop and if given the chance will play d2–d4. 7...♖g4 8 d3 e6 9 ♜bd2 ♗e7 10 h3 ♗h5 11 g4 ♖g6 12 ♜h4 ♜d7 13 ♜g2 0-0 Black is not concerned with White's potential for attack. This is because with accurate defence it can be repelled because Black has plenty of pieces on defensive duty. However, at club level I think White would have a high success level because not everyone defends like a grandmaster, [Vescovi,G–Movsesian,S/Bermuda 2004](#).

### 7...b5 8 ♗c2 ♞c8!?

Kasimdzhanov decides to play something a little bit different. It is probably designed to spook Adams because with just 25 minutes on the clock for each player there is little time to ponder about new moves.

### 9 a4 g6 10 axb5 axb5 11 d4 cxd4 12 cxd4 ♖g4!?

Black is mixing up his systems here so he really should just get on with developing his kingside:

### 13 ♜c3 b4 14 ♜e2!

A glimpse of Adams's world class style of play because he knows in a closed position this sort of move is possible, [Adams–Kasimdzhanov, FIDE World Championship Final, Tripoli 2004](#).

## Moscow 4...Qxd7 5 0-0 [B52]

*Last updated: 19/02/02 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♙b5+**

The Moscow Variation is a good way of avoiding Garry's famed Najdorf preparation. The opening grew in popularity during the 1990's as a way of avoiding the Open Sicilian.

**3...♙d7 4 ♙xd7+ ♚xd7 5 0-0 ♘f6**

5...♘c6 6 c3 White wishes to create a strong pawn centre with d4. 6...♘f6 7 d4 ♘xe4 Black accepts the gambit. 8 d5 ♘b8 A recommendation by the Soviet analyst Zak but Black needs to be a great defender to justify the move. 9 ♖e1 ♘f6 10 ♙g5 The critical position for the variation featuring 8...Nb8 and it was tested in the game [Kalegin,E-Yuferov,S/Moscow 1990](#).

**6 ♖e1 ♘c6 7 b3**

A little twist in the main line which allows the dark-squared bishop to be developed on b2 depending how Black responds.

**7...g6**

7...c6 is met by 8 ♙b2 The potential power of the dark-squared bishop is revealed to great effect later in the game. 8...♙e7 9 d4 White opens up the position. 9...cxd4 10 ♘xd4 0-0 11 c4 The middlegame plan for White is to make every effort to stop Black from playing the freeing move ...d6-d5. The pawn on c4 is part of this strategy and in the long-term the intention is to target the d6 pawn, [Skripchenko,A-Te,R/Paris 1999](#). (Another twist in the same line is 11 c4 a6 12 ♘c3 ♚c7 13 ♘c2 A nice manoeuvre to add further force behind restricting the advance of the black d-pawn, [Skripchenko,A-Khegai,A/Istanbul 2000](#)).

**8 c3**

An interesting idea promoted by Yudasin. It seems strange not just to move the bishop to b2 but this high-class idea is to occupy the centre, while Black spends time activating the kingside.

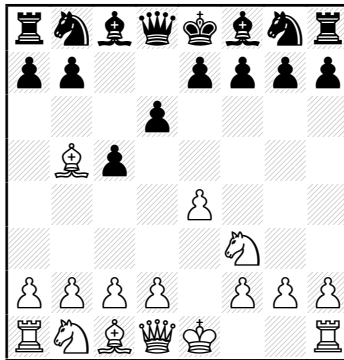
**8...♙g7 9 d4 cxd4 10 cxd4 d5 11 e5 ♘e4 12 ♘bd2**

White challenges the centralised knight on e4 in an effort to trade pieces, [Leko,P–Kasparov,G/Dortmund 2000](#).

## Moscow 4...Qxd7 5 c4 Nc6/Nf6 [B52]

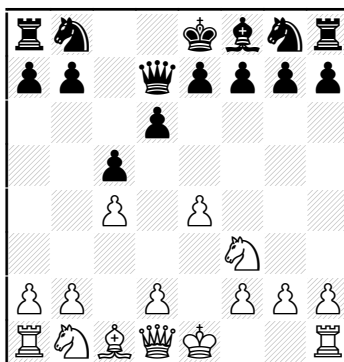
*Last updated: 27/03/04 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 Bb5+**



The Moscow Variation which was developed in the 1930s.

**3...Qd7 4 Bxd7+ Qxd7 5 c4**



The pawn structure resembles a Maroczy Bind which normally occurs after 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6 5 c4.

**5...Nc6**



5...♠f6 6 ♠c3 The knight protects the e–pawn allowing White to find the right moment to advance the d–pawn. 6...g6 This idea of a kingside fianchetto is gaining in popularity due to Ivanchuk's use of the move. 7 0-0 ♙g7

a) 8 e5!? White is keen to put pressure on Black at the earliest opportunity. The idea is to break up the pawns and at least upset Black's desire to develop steadily. 8...dxe5 9 ♠xe5 ♖c8 (9...♗f5 10 ♖e1 0-0 11 d4 cxd4 12 ♗xd4 ♠bd7 is equal) 10 ♗a4+ ♠bd7 11 ♖e1 0-0

a1) 12 ♠xd7 ♠xd7 13 ♖xe7 ♖e8 14 ♗xd7?? (14 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 15 ♗d1 ♖d8 intending ...Ne5 gives Black decent play.) 14...♗xd7 15 ♖xd7 ♖e1#

a2) 12 ♠f3 12...e6 13 d3 ♗c7 14 ♙g5 ♠g4 15 ♙h4 ♠ge5 the English grandmaster has had no problems from the opening and is now intent on striving for the initiative. Of course, White must now keep an eye on the d3 pawn, [Rabiega,R–Kosten,A/Velden 2004](#). The English grandmaster has had no problems from the opening and is now intent on striving for the initiative. Of course, White must now keep an eye on the d3 pawn.

b) 8 d4 cxd4 9 ♠xd4 0-0 10 f3 ♖c8 11 b3 d5! this is the star move that allows Black to equalise with ease, although I am not sure if the idea of drawing with the very highly rated Ivanchuk would of remotely concerned White. Still, if it gives some else the opportunity to draw easily with the black pieces then it might be worth considering,

b1) 12 e5!? A new move, 12...♠e8 13 ♠xd5 (13 f4 is an interesting idea that needs to be tested at tournament level 13...dxc4 14 ♙e3 cxb3 15 ♗xb3 with equal chances.) 13...e6 14 ♠c3 ♙xe5 Wittmann has easily equalised and has a slight initiative. This represents good news for those who play Black, [Kuba,G–Wittmann,W/Velden 2004](#).

b2) 12 exd5 ♠xd5! the point, 13 ♠xd5 e6 regaining the piece with equality, [Delchev,A–Ivanchuk,V/Istanbul 2003](#).

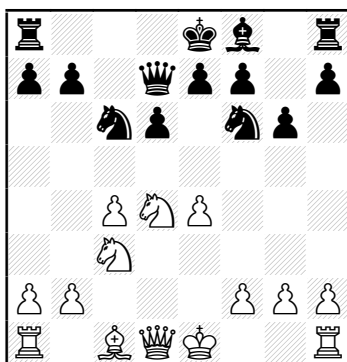
## 6 ♠c3

6 0-0 g6 7 d4 cxd4 8 ♠xd4 ♙g7 9 ♙e3 ♠f6 10 f3 A precaution to stop ...Ng4. 10...0-0 11 ♠c3 White's advantage is based on his space advantage. However, like a Maroczy Bind it is tough to find a breakthrough and if given the chance Black will try to conjure up queenside play with ...a6 and ...b5, [Finkel,A–Lipes,Y/Israeli League 2000](#).

## 6...♠f6

6...♠e5 Barbero acts to diffuse White's ambitions by offering to exchange knights. 7 ♠xe5 dxe5 8 ♗h5 The start of a little manoeuvre to gain a tempo which is an improvement on the immediate 8 Qe2. 8...♗d4 9 ♗e2 e6 10 d3 ♗d7 11 f4! White keeps true to his aggressive intentions by opening the f–file, [Oral,T–Barbero,G/Basel 1999](#).

## 7 d4 cxd4 8 ♠xd4 g6



8...Qg4 Black is looking for a peaceful game by offering to exchange queens. 9 Qxg4 Qxg4 10 Nxc6 bxc6 11 f4 Bb8 a reasonable move but it is not even mentioned in some of the books on the Bb5 Sicilian, [Mohr, G–Sutovsky, E/Pula 2000](#).

### **9 f3 g7 10 Nde2 0-0 11 0-0 Bfc8**

11...a6 12 a4 e6 13 g5 Bfd8 14 f4 of Vokarev, S–Naiditsch, A Istanbul TUR 2003, is given in the note to the Mohr game, just above.

11...e6 12 g5 a6 13 b3 Bb8 14 Qd2 Oratovsky prepares to put pressure on the d6 pawn. 14...Bfd8 15 Bb1 with an edge, [Oratovsky, M–Pallardo Lozoya, J/Valencia 2002](#).

11...Bb8 12 b3 Bfd8 13 g5 h6 14 Nh4 g5 15 f2 with roughly equal play, [Voltolini, G–Barletta, A/Lido Estensi ITA 2003](#).

### **12 b3 a6 13 a4 Qd8 14 Ne3 Nd7 15 Bb1 Qa5**

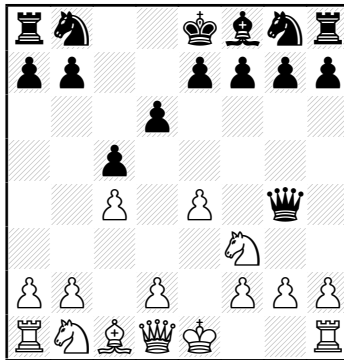
This is a natural looking move, [Zhang Zhong–Naiditsch, A/Wijk aan Zee 2003](#).

15...Nc5 tends to transpose.

## Moscow 4...Qxd7 5 c4 Qg4 [B52]

*Last updated: 19/02/02 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♙b5+ ♙d7 4 ♙xd7+ ♚xd7 5 c4 ♚g4?!**

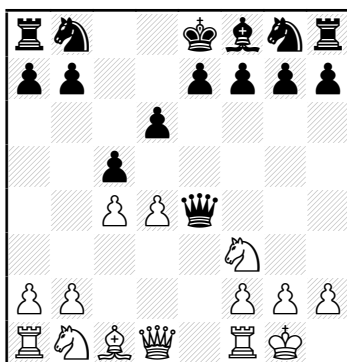


The queen wins a pawn but the story does not end there. A surprising number of good players have tried this idea of grabbing a pawn and then attempt to survive in the face of superior development. A strong possibility at club level and if White is clueless then the extra pawn will be crucial.

**6 0-0 ♚xe4**

For the sake of a pawn Black allows White to have a lead in development. The question is whether this can be exploited before Black can construct a reasonable defence.

**7 d4!**



### 7...cxd4

7...♞c6 8 ♞c3 ♞g4 9 ♞b5 ♞d7 10 dxc5 dxc5 11 ♙f4 0-0-0 12 ♞a4 Of course, White should ignore the prospect of an ending and go on the offensive. The black king is already under pressure especially because Black has minimum counterplay to deter the White offensive, [Karaklajic,N–Nikolic,S/Pristina 1973](#).

7...♞c6 An interesting line because the black queen anticipates the usual attacks with 8 Nc3 or 8 Re1 and chooses to get out of the way. The question is how should White respond? 8 dxc5 ♞xc5 9 ♞a3 ♞f6 10 ♞e1 e6 11 ♙e3 As usual White gains time by attacking the black queen, [Fuller,M–Bachtiar,A/Hong Kong 1972](#).

### 8 ♞xd4 ♞f6 9 ♞e1

White can time by attacking the queen.

### 9...♞g4 10 ♞a4+

A pawn down there is no way White would meekly enter the ending.

### 10...♞d7 11 ♞b5

The big threat is 12 Nc7+ when the knight is immune because the queen on d7 is pinned.

### 11...♞c6

Not 11...a6? which is crunched by 12 ♞c7+

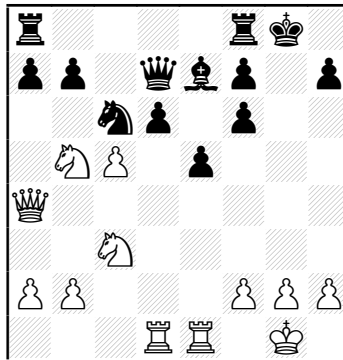
### 12 ♞1c3

12 ♙f4 is also good 12...e5 13 c5 a6 A harmless gesture for White because the a–pawn is pinned. 14 cxd6 0-0-0 when at first glance this looks good for Black because Andrienko has two pieces under attack but the vulnerability of the black king is the decisive factor, [Andrienko,A–Kotsur,P/Russian Junior Championship 1991](#).

**12...e5 13 ♖g5 ♗e7 14 ♜ad1 0-0 15 ♗xf6 gxf6?!**

Black is determined to keep the extra pawn even if it means weakening his defensive barrier.

**16 c5!**

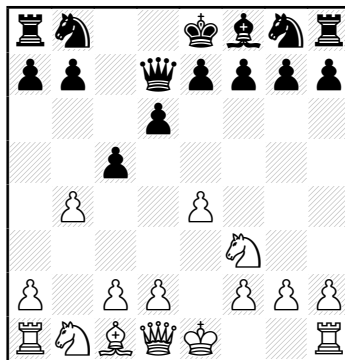


The pin of the d-file is fatal for Black, [Aagaard,J-Josephsen,N/Danish Team Championship 1995](#).

## Moscow 4...Qxd7 5 various [B52]

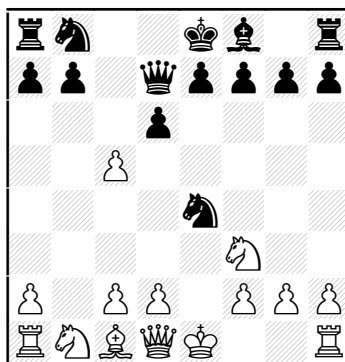
*Last updated: 19/02/02 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♙b5+ ♙d7 4 ♙xd7+ ♚xd7 5 b4?!**



An inventive move which proposes to sacrifice a pawn in return for a strong centre.

**5...♘f6 6 bxc5 ♘xe4**

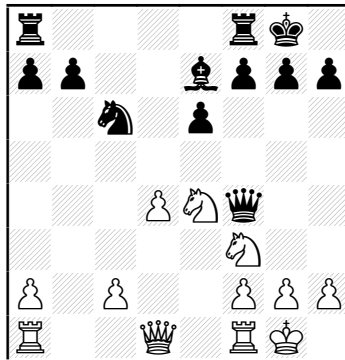


Black has managed a favourable exchange because the central pawn has more influence.

**7 cxd6 ♘xd6 8 0-0 ♘c6**

Shipov gets on with the job of developing his pieces.

9 d4 e6 10 ♖a3 ♗e7 11 ♘c3 0-0 12 ♗xd6 ♙xd6 13 ♘e4 ♚f4

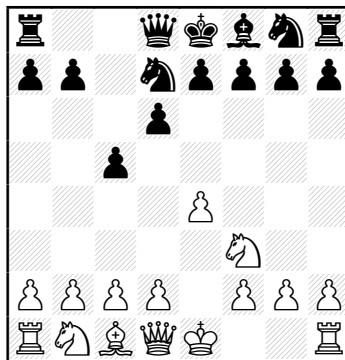


The game has settled down after the initial flurry of activity. I prefer Black's position because the bishop is a good defender and attempts can be made to undermine White's d4-pawn, [Zaitsev, I–Shipov, S/ Minsk 1997](#).

# Moscow 4...Nxd7 [B52]

*Last updated: 21/11/03 by Gary Lane*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♙b5+ ♙d7 4 ♙xd7+ ♘xd7**



The knight capture is a popular reply.

## 5 0-0

Alternatively:

5 c4 White adopts a sort of Maroczy bind pawn formation where the pawn on c4 helps to prevent Black from breaking out with a timely ...d6–d5. 5...♘gf6 6 ♘c3 e6 (6...a6 7 ♙e2 e6 8 0-0 ♙e7 9 ♙d1 0-0 10 d4 cxd4 11 ♘xd4 ♙c8 12 ♙d2 ♙b6 13 ♙e1 White has a rather individual style but the beauty of White's position is that it is difficult for Black to strike quickly, [Sarbock,T–De Firmian,N/Gausdal NOR 2003](#).) 7 0-0 ♙e7 8 d4 cxd4 9 ♘xd4 (9 ♙xd4 0-0 10 ♙g5 a6 11 ♙fd1 ♙a5 12 ♙d2 ♙h8 Black is playing a waiting game in an effort to encourage White to overextend himself. On the other hand, Black has a solid position and no worries, [Barglowski,F–Miton,K/Lubniewice 2003](#).) 9...a6 10 b3 0-0 11 ♙e3 Even though White has played b2–b3 White often develops his bishop on the c1–h6 diagonal. Basically, the b–pawn advance was designed to reinforce the c4 pawn not just to allow a queenside fianchetto. 11...♙e8 12 f4 ♙f8 13 ♙f3 ♙a5 14 ♙ac1 g6 15 ♙h1 the white king edges into the corner to avoid any exposure when the kingside pawns are advanced, [Khachiyan,M–Novikov,I/Denver 2003](#).

## 5...♘gf6



5...e6 6 ♖e1 ♗gf6 7 c3 ♙e7 8 d4 cxd4 9 cxd4 0-0 10 ♘c3 As you have probably guessed this has all been played before. 10...a6 11 ♙g5 ♞c8 12 e5 ♗e8 13 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 14 d5!? There is no need to relieve the tension by exchanging the pawns in the centre like this, [Munnell,J–Thompson,J/MyTown 2003](#).

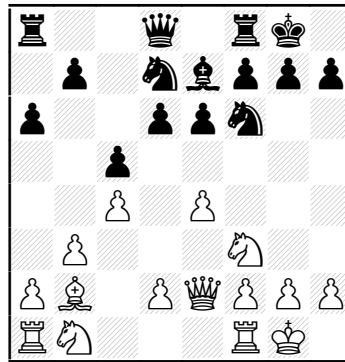
**6 ♞e2 e6 7 b3 ♙e7**

Black steadily develops. It seems to be a passive approach but experience shows that is usually tough for White to make a decisive breakthrough.

**8 ♙b2 0-0 9 c4**

9 d4 cxd4 10 ♗xd4 ♗e5 is considered equal.

**9...a6**



There is some debate about when to play this move. I think it makes little difference at this stage of the game.

**10 d4 cxd4 11 ♗xd4 ♞e8**

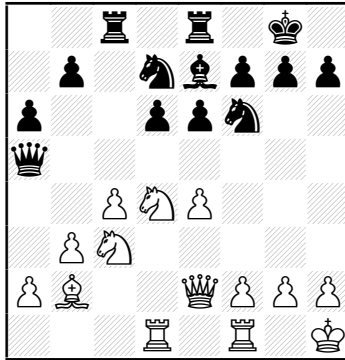
11...♞b6 A nice idea to stop White developing with Nc3. 12 ♔h1 ♞c5 13 f4 with equal chances, [Ricardi,P–Wolff,P/Buenos Aires 1997](#).

**12 ♗c3 ♞a5**

In this system Black is happy to soak up the pressure and seek to steadily improve the position of his pieces. White often goes on an outright attack but has to be careful not to overload his forces.

12...♙f8 13 ♞ad1 ♞c7 14 f4 ♞ab8 15 ♔h1 h6 Unless there is a good reason Black should refrain from volunteering to move his kingside pawn barrier. 16 ♞d3 d5?! When Black breaks out in the centre the timing is essential. Here White is able to start a fierce attack with ease, [Psakhis,L–Maki Uuro,M/Isle of Man 1999](#).

13 ♖ad1 ♜ac8 14 ♔h1



with equal chances, [Bhat,V–Browne,W/Frisco Masters 2000](#).