Contents

Symbols 4
Bibliography 5
Introduction 6

1 Introducing the IQP 8
2 1 e4 e5 22
3 c3 Sicilian 56
4 Caro-Kann 108
5 French 115
6 Pirc/Modern 134
7 Scandinavian 141
8 Alekhine 150

Index of Variations 158
1 e4 e6

White has a range of options against the French, but many of the positions reached are quite unique (especially those from the Winawer, 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Ïc3 Ïb4). French players often have more experience in these structures than their opponents do. Accordingly, it is particularly attractive to lure them into structures with which they are unfamiliar, which White can try to do with 2 d4 d5 3 Ïd2 (D) followed by Ïgf3, Ïd3 and c3, aiming to keep the pawn on e4 and meet ...cxd4 with cxd4.

This option frequently gives rise to an IQP where Black has gained time over standard lines. This gain of time means that Black generally should be able to achieve a fully satisfactory game, but needs to be able to handle a new structure.

My coverage in this chapter has been firstly to cover the standard IQP lines, such as those reached after the following move-orders: 3...Íf6 4 Ïd3 c5 5 c3 Ïc6 6 Ïgf3 cxd4 7 cxd4 dxe4 8 Ïxe4; 3...c5 4 c3 Ïc6 5 Ïgf3 cxd4 6 cxd4 dxe4 7 Ïxe4; 3...e7 4 Ïgf3 c5 5 c3 Ïf6 6 Ïd3 Ïc6 7 0-0 cxd4 8 cxd4 dxe4 9 Ïxe4. In these lines, there isn’t much theory and, as mentioned above, Black should, objectively, be fine. Accordingly, I have relied on the general knowledge gained about IQP positions in this and other chapters to equip you better than your opponents for the resulting middlegames.

I have devoted particular attention to attempts at early simplification which have been recommended in recent popular repertoire works. White actually needs to know some theory here to avoid being worse right out of the opening, but the simplified positions retain scope for the better player to win.

More specifically, the chapter is organized as follows: Games 30-32 examine the 'IQP' lines (following 3...e7, 3...Íf6 and 3...c5), while 3...dxe4 is the subject of Game 33, and we examine all other moves (most notably 3...Íc6) in Game 34. It is worth
noting that against the variety of semi-
waiting moves such as 3...a6 and 3...h6
that have become quite topical in re-
cent years, the IQP system works
rather well, as these little pawn moves
do little to disrupt our development
plan.

Game 30
Collins – Teeuwen
Kilkenny 2013

To start things off, let’s look at a
nice (if rather lightweight) game of
mine. This was played in the legend-
ary weekend tournament at Kilkenny.
Over the years this event has attracted
dozens of strong GMs including Mi-
chael Adams, Luke McShane, Ivan
Cheparinov and Gawain Jones, who
relish the chance to play entertaining
chess in a highly informal setting.

This game was played in round 4,
during a tournament which wasn’t go-
ing especially well for me. Round 4 is
played on Saturday night, the third
round of that day, and I had White
against a less experienced opponent.
Rather than going for lines where he
might be well prepared, I decided that
the IQP system would be the perfect
choice.

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Ìd2 Ìe7

It can hardly be claimed that the
IQP system leads to an advantage after
this move, but the system becomes
more attractive in my view since
Black’s options of early simplification
with ...Ìb4+ (such as we examine in
Game 32) are ruled out. The lines after
3...Ìf6 4 Ìd3 c5 5 c3 and 3...c5 4 c3
Ìf6 5 Ìd3 are covered in the next two
games.

4 Ìgf3 Ìf6 5 Ìd3 c5 6 c3

White has set up his pieces in the
standard fashion, refusing to release
the tension on either the e4-pawn (with
e5) or the d4-pawn (with dxc5).

6...Ìc6 7 0-0 (D)

7...cxd4

Black finally decides to clarify the
position in the centre. Continuing to
wait would have resulted in some risk
of confusing himself and ending up in
a line for which he wasn’t prepared.

After 7...0-0, while White can stub-
bornly insist on maintaining the ten-
sion with something like 8 Îe1 (or
even 8 a3?!), he can also choose 8 e5,
when after 8...Ìd7 we have trans-
posed into a variation of the Korchnoi
Gambit, which begins with 1 e4 e6 2
d4 d5 3 Ìd2 Ìf6 4 e5 Òfd7 5 Ìd3 c5
6 c3 Òc6 7 Ògf3 (instead of the stan-
dard 7 Òe2). Black has several sys-
tems against this gambit (including
accepting it with 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 Ìb6
9 0-0 Ìxd4), but the line with 7...Ìe7
8 0-0 0-0 isn’t one of the most popular systems (although it has been tried by French experts like Lputian and Shirov). If this isn’t your opponent’s preferred response to the Korchnoi Gambit, he is unlikely to want to allow it via this move-order either.

8 cxd4 dxe4
8...0-0 leads to similar considerations as outlined in the note to Black’s 7th move. White can continue with 9 Ìe1 or 9 a3 (maybe more logical here than on the last move, since the b4-square is undefended and Black can’t respond with ...c4), but the move that would probably put Black off castling is 9 e5.

9 Ìxe4 0-0 10 Ìc3 (D)

So we have a standard IQP position, but which lines can it be compared to?

White is actually a full tempo down compared to some well-established main lines (including ones from the Nimzo-Indian and the Semi-Tarrasch). For example, Sadler-Ortiz, Tromsø Olympiad 2014 went 1 d4 Ìf6 2 c4 e6 3 Ìc3 Ìb4 4 e3 0-0 5 Ìd3 d5 6 Ìf3 c5 7 0-0 dxc4 8 Ìxc4 Ìc6 9 Ìd3 cxd4 10 exd4 Ìe7, where we have reached the game position with White to move. Another example is Babulilla, Istanbul Olympiad 2012: 1 d4 Ìf6 2 c4 e6 3 Ìf3 d5 4 Ìc3 c5 5 cxd5 Ìxd5 6 e3 Ìc6 7 Ìd3 Ìe7 8 0-0 0-0 9 Ìe1 Ìf6! 10 a3 cxd4 11 exd4, and we have the text position with the extra a3 for White (which, as will appear, is a very useful move).

10...b6 (D)

It should be noted that White sometimes obtains this position (with an ‘extra’ a3) from our chosen system, in particular where Black plays an early ...Ìb4+ and later retreats to e7. As we have seen above, this manoeuvre is known from some lines of the Nimzo-Indian (and the Panov-Botvinnik Attack against the Caro-Kann), but it is hardly the most accurate here.

For instance: Sermek-Bukal, Croatian Team Ch, Pula 2001 went 1 e4 c5 2 Ìf3 e6 3 c3 Ìc6 4 d4 exd4 5 cxd4 Ìd5 6 Ìc3 dxe4 7 Ìxe4 Ìb4+ 8 Ìc3 Ìf6 9 Ìd3 0-0 10 0-0 Ìe7; A.Kornev-Gleizerov, Kaluga 2003 went 1 e4
All of the black players in the three games given above were rated over 2400 (Gleizerov is a strong GM and a French specialist) and, frankly, I find the game from 2012 particularly surprising, since this line has been known for a while. However, it does demonstrate that it is possible for players to become confused when facing this system, especially since it gives rise to a structure that is highly unusual for the French.

Incidentally, the three quoted games gave rise to interesting and thematic attacking play, which we shall now examine. 11 a3 b6 12 .Rad1 (D) and then:

a) 13...c8 14  Rd3 and here:

a1) The naïve 14...e8? runs into the absolutely standard 15 d5!. This motif (with the black rook on c8 or a8) has been known for decades – the earliest and most famous example I know of is Petrosian-Balashov, USSR 1974. However, this doesn’t stop experienced players from regularly falling for this idea (either in this exact position, or in similar ones); for instance, Karpov has fallen for it more than once.

a2) 14...g6 15  f4 h6 16  h3 c4 17  e5 d6?! 18  d3 f5 19  d1 (White has put all his pieces on good squares while Black has achieved nothing – in particular, he hasn’t exchanged any minor pieces) 18...d5 19  xd5  xd5 (after 19...xd5? 20  f5 White wins a piece, since 21...xf5 22 f6 g6 23  xg6 is mate in a few moves) 20  xh6! 18

b) 13...a5 14  g5 h6 15  f4 c4 16  c5 d6?! 17  d3 f5 18  d1 (White has put all his pieces on good squares while Black has achieved nothing – in particular, he hasn’t exchanged any minor pieces) 18...d5 19  xd5  xd5 (after 19...xd5? 20  g4  g5 21  xf5 White wins a piece, since 21...xf5 22 f6 g6 23  xg6 is mate in a few moves) 20  h3!  xd5?

(Black should try to change the character of the game with 20...d8 21  e4  e4 22  xe4  xe4, although his compensation for the queen doesn’t appear to be fully sufficient) 21  xh6! 22
(a thematic shot, which works perfectly in this position) 21...\textit{f}d8 (after 21...\textit{gxh}6 22 \textit{g}g4+ followed by 23 \textit{x}d4 White wins material) 22 \textit{x}d4! \textit{x}d4 and now 23 \textit{g}5 was enough for a large advantage in Kornev-Gleizerov, Kaluga 2003, but 23 \textit{h}5!! wins on the spot; for instance, 23...\textit{f}8 24 \textit{h}7+ \textit{h}8 25 \textit{e}4 \textit{xe}4 26 \textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 27 \textit{g}5+ \textit{g}8 28 \textit{xe}7 and White wins.

We now return to the position after 10...b6 (D):

11 a3 \textit{b}7 12 \textit{c}2 \textit{d}7

Teeuwen’s lack of experience in IQP structures begins to show. d7 is an unusual square for the black queen, as it is potentially exposed to \textit{e}5 (perhaps in combination with \textit{b}5) and, importantly, finds it difficult to vacate the central files. d6 would be a better square, when the queen can drop back to b8 once the a8-rook has been developed to c8 or d8.

13 \textit{d}3

Setting up the standard line-up on the b1-h7 diagonal.

13...\textit{ad}8

13...a5! would be a more efficient version of the ...\textit{a}6 idea that was used in the game. After 14 \textit{d}1 \textit{a}6 15 \textit{e}3 the game is balanced.

Interestingly, going back to move 12, 12...\textit{a}6 13 \textit{e}1 has been used with success by some strong GMs as Black.

14 \textit{d}1 \textit{e}8

Already I was becoming optimistic.

15 \textit{g}5 \textit{a}6 16 \textit{e}3 (D)

16...\textit{d}5

16...h6 is critical, but Black is no longer able to equalize. After 17 \textit{xf}6! (the standard offer 17 \textit{xb}6??, which would lead to a winning attack after 17...\textit{gxh}6?? 18 \textit{wh}6, here fails to the simple 17...\textit{g}4+) 17...\textit{xf}6 18 \textit{ac}1 it might seem as though Black has the bishop-pair and no weaknesses, but White’s space advantage and more active pieces are more important here. White has strong pressure; for instance, 18...\textit{b}7 19 \textit{e}4 \textit{e}7 20 b4 \textit{d}7 21 \textit{b}1 \textit{e}8 22 \textit{g}3 \textit{d}6 23 \textit{d}3 f5 (23...g6 24 \textit{ae}4 is also promising for White) 24 \textit{e}1 and the pawn on e6 is weaker than the pawn on d4.
A neutral move such as 16...\(\text{Ke8}\) should be met simply with 17 \(\text{Ac1}\), developing the last piece and retaining all the advantages of the white position.

17 \(\text{Bxd5} \text{Bxd5}\)?

The symmetrical structure arising after 17...exd5 \((D)\) favours the side with better-placed pieces, which tends to be White. Then:

\[
\text{W} \\
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{a)} & 18 \text{Ac1} & f6 & (18...\text{Bxg5} 19 \text{Bxg5} g6 20 \text{Ba4} \text{ and Black is struggling to hold his weaknesses together}) 19 \text{f4} \text{Ke8} 20 \text{Bh4} \text{Bd6} (20...g5? loses to 21 \text{Bf5!}, based on the beautiful point 21...gxf4 22 \text{Bxf4} \text{Bb7} 23 \text{Bxc6!!} \text{Bxc6} 24 \text{Bh6 followed by mate}) 21 \text{Bf5} \text{Bc7} 22 \text{Bxd6} \text{Bxd6} 23 \text{Bc3} \text{ and Black should equalize with precise play.} \\
\text{b)} & 18 \text{Bxe7} \text{Ke8} 19 \text{Bxd8} \text{Bxe3} 20 \text{fxe3} \text{Bxd8} 21 \text{Bd3} \text{ gives White good chances – the rooks will be able to penetrate on the c-file and it is hard for Black to generate an attack since his minor pieces are so far from the kingside.} \\
18 \text{Be4!} \pm
\end{array}
\]

Black’s scattered pieces are targets for White’s attack, and White’s initiative is already decisive.

18...\(\text{Bd6}\)

18...\text{Bxg5} 19 \text{Bxg5} forks d5 and h7, and so wins material.

19 \(\text{Ac1} \text{Bxg5}\) \((D)\)

This move walks into a nice version of the Greek Gift sacrifice, but there were no good options; for instance, after 19...f6 20 \text{Bf4} e5 21 dxe5 White wins a pawn while retaining much more active pieces.

\[
\text{W} \\
20 \text{Bxh7+!} \\
\text{Not especially difficult, but I'll permit myself an exclamation mark since it was the third game of the day! Instead, 20 \text{Bxg5?} h6 gives White nothing special.} \\
20...\text{Bxh7} 21 \text{Bxg5+} \text{g8} \\
21...\text{g6} 22 \text{Bxg3} \text{h6} 23 \text{Bxd6}, taking a rook and winning the knight on c6, is one of the tactical points.
22 \text{Bh3} \text{Bd8} 23 \text{Bh7+} \text{f8} 24 \text{Bh8+} \text{e7} 25 \text{Bxg7} \text{f8} \\
\text{There is more than one winning continuation here, but the line I chose is quite thematic.}
\]