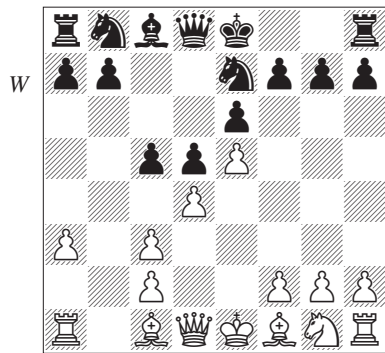




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14 Modern Main Lines: 7 f3, 7 a4 and 7 h4



1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 xc3+ 6 bxc3 e7 (D)



Of course, White doesn't have to embark on the sharp 7 g4, which we discussed in the two previous chapters. There are other, more positional, approaches. 7 f3 and 7 a4 have been on the map for a long time but during the last 10 years a third option has been added: 7 h4. Since there are transpositions between especially the first two and similar ideas that occur in all three lines, I will take a little time to discuss the main differences between these moves.

To take them in the order they are presented here, 7 f3 is perhaps the

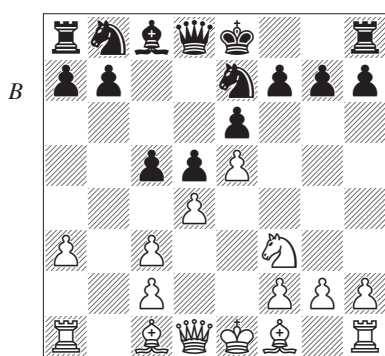
least flexible of them all but it is a natural and sensible developing move. White simply wants to get on with development and has no desire to look for a 'refutation' of the black set-up. There may be times, though, where White ventures g5 followed by h5, creating weaknesses on Black's kingside. However, I must admit that of the three it is the move that is easiest to equalize against. Therefore, I have better thoughts of 7 a4. There are two, perhaps three, main ideas with this move. The two most important are that it supports b5 in some lines and that it denies Black the option of a blockade on the a4-square. The latter is, in my opinion, of prime significance. Additionally, with 7 a4, White may sometimes benefit from the possibility of being able to advance the pawn even further.

With 7 h4, White shares ideas with 7 f3 and 7 a4 but wants to create weaknesses on the black kingside while at the same time staying very flexible. There are even possibilities of adopting a g4 set-up because the knight hasn't gone to f3 yet.

On to the specifics...

A:	7 Nf3	190
B:	7 a4	198
C:	7 h4	202

A)
7 Nf3 (D)



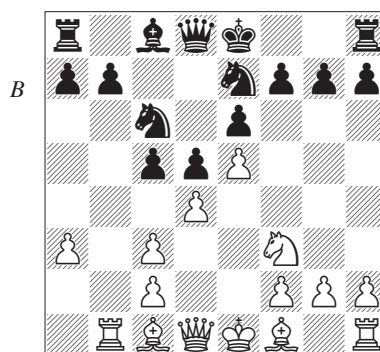
Now:

A1:	7... Nbc6	190
A2:	7... Wa5	191
A3:	7... Qd7	192
A4:	7... b6	194

7... Wc7 will just transpose to lines covered later, depending on whether White wants an a4 or an h4 set-up. If White continues 8 Qe2 or 8 Qd3 instead, I will just say that the ...b6 idea (as in Line A4) gains in strength. If 8 h4 we have Line C2.

A1)
7... Nbc6 8 $\text{Bb1!?$ (D)

This slightly unusual move intends to lure Black into positions he rather wouldn't play. Alternatively, moves such as 8 Qd3 , 8 Qe2 and 8 a4 would



transpose to other lines. Rather than guide you through every single transposition, I advise you to skim through the other lines to look for the sort of position which can arise.

8... Wc7

The point of a ...b6 set-up has disappeared at this stage as Black does not have the option of exchanging bishops. Other moves:

a) 8... Wa5 9 $\text{Bb5!?$ (9 Wd2 c4 10 h4 also looked quite promising for White in Socko-Bartel, Warsaw 2001, while 9 Qd2 c4 10 Wc1 , Borriess-Enders, Bundesliga 1999/00, is another idea) 9... Wxc3+ 10 Qd2 Wxa3 11 Bb3 Wa2 12 dxc5 gives White good compensation according to Bologan.

b) 8...a6 9 Qe2 Wa5 was Lanka-Kindermann, Bundesliga 1995/6. Now Lanka sacrificed the pawn on c3 for a lead in development with 10 0-0, and obtained a degree of compensation after 10... Wxc3 11 Bb3 Wa5 12 dxc5 Ng6 13 Be1 Wxc5 14 Qd3 b5 15 Qd2 but whether this is really enough is hard to say. Alternatively, both 10 Qd2 and 10

Qd2 are sensible moves, after which ...a6 doesn't fit in too well with Black's plans.

9 h4! h6 10 h5 Qd7 11 Qd3

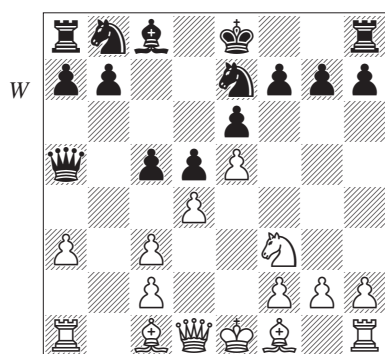
11 Qe2 0-0-0 12 0-0 f6 13 Qf4 also gave White an advantage in Bologan-Nadero, Manila OL 1992.

11...0-0-0 12 g3 f5 13 Qf1 c4 14 Qe2 Qa5 15 Qe1

± A.Sokolov-Blauert, Berne 1992.

A2)

7... Qa5 (D)



8 Qd2

A seemingly innocuous line is 8 Qd2 b6 9 c4 (9 dxc5 bxc5 10 c4 Qc7 ! 11 cxd5 exd5 12 Qc3 leads to equality – Bareev) 9... Qxd2 + 10 Qxd2 Qa6 11 cxd5 Qxf1 12 Qxf1 exd5 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 0-0-0 (14 Qb1 !? Qd7 15 Qb7 0-0-0! 16 Qxa7 Qc6 17 Qa8 + Qb7 18 Qxd8 Qxd8 gives Black compensation – Nogueiras) 14... Qbc6 15 Qfe1 0-0 16 e6 d4! = Short-Nogueiras, Wijk aan Zee 1987.

8... Qbc6

Or:

a) 8... Qd7 9 a4 Qbc6 – 7 a4 Qa5 8 Qd2 Qbc6 9 Qf3 Qd7 .

b) 8... Qc7 has also been played. Black's point is that a4 set-ups are not very dangerous since the bishop cannot go to a3. In fact, the bishop would often rather be on c1 to have this possibility. In comparison with Line A1, Black also has the option of a ...b6 idea. Fedorov-J.Sørensen, Saint Vincent Ech 2000 continued 9 h4 h6 10 h5 b6 11 Qb5 + Qd7 12 Qd3 Qa4 13 0-0 Qbc6 14 Qe1 c4 15 Qf1 0-0-0 16 g3 Qd7 17 Qh3 Qe8 18 Qh4 Qg8 19 Qg2 Qb7 20 Qe3 and White was only very slightly better.

9 Qe2

Otherwise:

a) Since Black often voluntarily closes the position with ...c4, there seems little reason to invite this with 9 Qd3 , which actually just transposes to another line; viz. 9...c4 10 Qf1 (10 Qe2 is just the main line a tempo down for White) – 7... Qd7 8 Qd3 c4 9 Qf1 Qa5 10 Qd2 =.

b) Another idea for White is 9 h4, which of course closely resembles 7 h4. Then we have:

b1) 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa4 11 h5 – 7 h4 Qbc6 8 h5 Qa5 9 Qd2 cxd4 10 cxd4 Qa4 11 Qf3 ±/=.

b2) 9... Qd7 10 h5 0-0-0 11 h6 gxh6 – 7 h4 Qbc6 8 h5 Qa5 9 Qd2 Qd7 10 h6 gxh6 11 Qf3 0-0-0 =/±.

b3) 9...f6!? 10 exf6 (10 c4 Qa4 11 cxd5 exd5 12 exf6 gxf6 ♣ Shirov) 10...gxf6 11 Qh2 Qa4 12 Qb1 c4 13