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9 The King's Indian Formation

In this chapter we shall look at kingside fianchetto lines where Black leaves his d-pawn at d6 (or even d7). Illustrative Games 17-19 are all typical examples of pressure against the c7/d6-pawns after Black has played ...e5. Game 20 is an example of play against a temporarily disorganized queenside, while Games 21 and 22 demonstrate play against queenside pawn weaknesses. Game 23 illustrates the extra queenside pressure provided by a semi-open a-file.

Chapter Outline

1	d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4	
9A:	2...g6 3 ♘f3)	129
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9F:	2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 b6	136
9G:	2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘fd7/♗c6	137
9H:	2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 h3 (7...♗e4)	138
9I:	2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 h3 (7...♖e8 8 c4 e5 9 ♗h2 ♗e4)	140
9J:	2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 h3 ♖e8 8 c4 e5 9 ♗h2 ♖e7	141

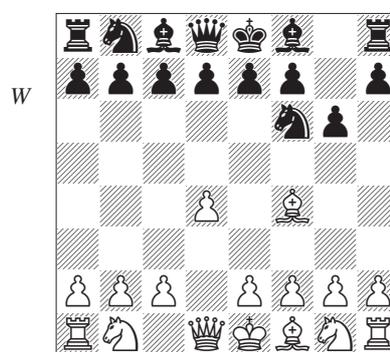
9A: 2...g6 Introduction

(1 d4 ♘f6)
2 ♗f4

As will soon become clear, there are certain advantages to this move against most of Black's opening systems, including the King's Indian. However, it isn't all glory. The main drawback is that by declaring his intention to play the

London so early, White allows Black to design his set-up solely to meet the typical London strategy.

2...g6 (D)



Most likely this is the move of a King's Indian player. And probably an optimistic one too – expecting sooner or later to gain a tempo on the exposed f4-bishop by playing ...e5. He of course realizes (and probably expects) that White can enter orthodox London lines with 3 ♘f3. We shall have a closer look at that position below, but we shall concentrate on 3 e3. Please note that 2...d6 followed by a quick ...g6 is an alternative and in some ways more precise path to the King's Indian.

3 ♘f3

In this section we shall only examine positions that couldn't normally occur after 3 e3 followed by 4 ♘f3.

3 ♘d2 may be imprecise as in some lines White should play c4 and ♘c3 rather than ♘bd2. It's sometimes played in the hope that Black will respond to the 'threat' of e4 by 3...d5, leading to a Grünfeld formation. We consider that an insufficient motivation – partly because the Grünfeld formation is one of the hardest to prove an advantage against, but primarily because the Pirc-like formation with pawns at e4 and d4, a knight at d2 and a bishop at f4 isn't attractive for White; compare with 3 ♘f3 ♗g7 4 ♘bd2 below.

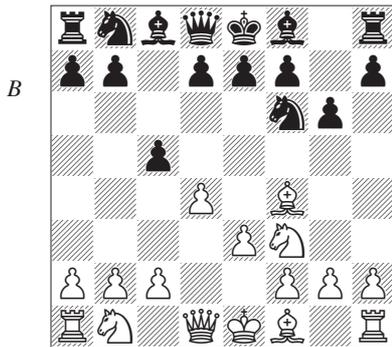
3...♗h5!?

This somewhat strange-looking move may be a reason to prefer 3 e3 over 3 ♖f3. The alternatives will mostly transpose:

a) 3...d6 4 e3 – 3 e3 d6 4 ♗f3.

b) 3...♗g7 4 ♗bd2?! (4 e3 – 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♗f3) 4...0-0 5 e4 d6 is rather similar to the Pirc, but the knight is passive at d2 and without the possibility to play ♗d2 and ♗h6, the bishop will probably be more vulnerable than menacing on f4. There is a little tactical trick worth noting: 6 ♗d3?! (the modest 6 c3 ♗c6 7 ♗e2 is better) 6...♗c6 7 0-0 (7 c3 e5 8 ♗e3 ♗g4 =) 7...♗xd4! 8 ♗xd4 e5 9 ♗e3 exd4 10 ♗xd4 ♗xe4 11 ♗xg7 ♗xd2 12 ♗xf8 ♗xf1 13 ♗h6 (13 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 14 ♗xf1 =) 13...♗h4 ♖.

c) 3...c5 may remain independent. After 4 e3 (D) we have:



c1) 4...♗g7 – 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♗f3 c5.

c2) 4...cxd4 5 exd4 ♗g7 6 c3 0-0 7 h3 d6 8 ♗d3 ♗e6 9 0-0 ♗b6 10 ♗e2 ♗c6 11 ♗a3 ♗ac8 12 ♗c4 ♗c7 13 ♗e3 = Pacuszka-Wojtkiewicz, Bydgoszcz 2001.

c3) 4...♗b6?! 5 ♗c3 and then:

c31) 5...d6 6 ♗b5+ ♗d7 7 a4 a6 8 a5 ♗c7 9 ♗e2 ♗g7 10 0-0-0 11 d5 ± Vera-Popović, Lucerne Wcht 1989 (see Illustrative Game 20).

c32) 5...♗xb2? 6 ♗b5 and now:

c321) 6...♗a6 7 a3! ♗e4 8 ♗b1 ♗a2 9 ♗e5 ♗e6 10 f3 ♗f6 (10...d6 11 ♗c4 d5 12 fxe4 dxc4 13 d5 ♗f6 14 0-0 +-) 11 dxc5 ♗d5 12 ♗c4 ♗xd1+ 13 ♗xd1 e6 14 ♗d6+ ♗xd6 15 cxd6 and although material is even, White is obviously winning – mainly because of Black's dark-square weaknesses and missing development.

c322) 6...♗d5 7 ♗d2! also seems a close to forced win for White: 7...a6 (7...d6 8 ♗b1 ♗xa2

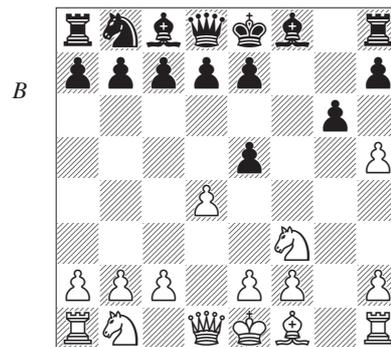
9 ♗c4 ♗a5 10 ♗xd5 ±) 8 ♗b1 ♗xa2 9 ♗c4 ♗a5 10 ♗a1 ♗b6 11 ♗e5 f6 12 dxc5 ♗xc5 13 ♗d4 ♗c6 14 ♗xd5 ♗xb5 15 c4 ♗b4 16 ♗a4 ♗d6 17 ♗e4 ♗c7 18 ♗xf6+! +-.

4 ♗e5!?

4 ♗c1 is no answer, unless White intends to answer 4...♗f6 with 5 ♗f4 and a draw offer (or leave London territory altogether). And in the pseudo-Dutch after 4 ♗d2 f5 the knight may be better placed at h5 than the bishop at d2. That leaves us with 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗h4 g5 6 ♗g3 ♗g7 as the most promising alternative. The position is unbalanced; Black has kingside weaknesses but can work up pressure on the dark squares with ...♗g7, ...c5 and ...♗b6. Most likely, play will transpose to Line 9C. White may try to play for e4 with extra central activity, but that is likely to make Black's dark-squared bishop more influential.

4...f6 5 g4!?

This is Soltis's suggestion. Gallagher adorns it with an '!', claiming that Black is in trouble without giving any variations. After 5 ♗g3 ♗xg3 6 hxg3 ♗g7, White has activity but Black's dark-squared bishop will be a long-term power source. 7 e4!? will be quite double-edged as White will become more active, but it will be easier for Black to activate his bishop-pair.

5...fxe5 6 gxh5 (D)

This messy position never seems to have been tested in tournament play. A possible continuation is 6...e4 7 ♗e5 d6 8 ♗c4 ♗g7, when our impression is that Black's dark-square play may be the dominant positional feature. However, in a practical game his insecure king position will give White excellent chances.

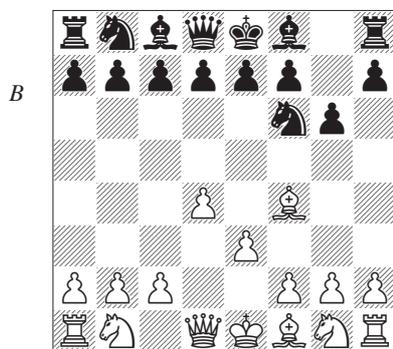
Conclusion:

There are certain problems with the immediate f3 move-order, but nothing that should worry White too much. Correspondingly it seems 2 f3 g6 3 e4 is a fully valid move-order.

9B: 3 e3

(1 $d4 \text{ f6 2 e4 g6}$)

3 $e3$ (D)



There may not be much to be gained by holding back f3 for long in the King's Indian, but occasionally it stops $\dots \text{h5}$ followed by $\dots \text{h6}$ and $\dots \text{g5}$.

3...d6(!)

This is a difficult move to counter. Black doesn't seem to achieve anything with the immediate $3 \dots \text{h5 4 e4 g5 h6 5 e4}$ as the h5-knight will soon have to retreat ($5 \dots \text{f5 6 e2 f6}$ { $6 \dots \text{g7!?$ } } $7 \text{ e4 f6!?$ exf6 8 f3 seems clearly better for White).

4 f3

White cannot really avoid this position as Black can force it with the Old Indian move-order $2 \dots \text{d6 3 f3}$, when after $3 \dots \text{g6!}$ White has nothing better than 4 e3 . However, it's possible that the clever $4 \text{ e2!?$ is better. In all available games Black has transposed back to standard waters with $4 \dots \text{e7 - 3 \dots e7 4 e2 d6}$. More testing is $4 \dots \text{bd7!?$, when it's hard to suggest a good alternative to 5 f3 , when Black can again try $5 \dots \text{h5!?$ ($5 \dots \text{e7 - 3 \dots e7 4 f3 0-0 5 e2 d6}$) $6 \text{ e4 h6 7 e4 g5 8 e4 g3 f6}$ ($8 \dots \text{xc3 9 hxc3 e4 10 c3 e6}$ = Bartha-J.Tiller, Bavaria 2002) $9 \text{ c4 e5 10 c3 e4 11 d2 xc3 12 hxc3 c5}$ with unbalanced play; e.g., $13 \text{ dxc5 dxc5 14 e4 e7 15 e5 d7}$

16 f4 f8 ($16 \dots \text{b6 17 b3 d7 18 0-0-0 \pm}$) and in Burmakin-Kupreichik, Tula 2002, White could have secured a clear advantage with $17 \text{ a4! d7 18 xd7+ xd7 19 e5 f8 20 d5 e6 21 0-0 \pm}$; e.g., $21 \dots \text{d3 22 f5! e4 23 e4 d8}$.

4...h5!? 5 e4 h6

Kupreichik has repeatedly preferred the less direct $5 \dots \text{g7!?$, when White has to be careful so the exchange at $g3$ doesn't take place under unfavourable circumstances. After 6 e2 h6 7 e4 f5 White should probably play 8 h3 ($8 \text{ g4!?$) $8 \dots \text{c5 9 c3 b6 10 a3 e6 11 d2 f6 12 dc4 d8 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 xd8+ xd8 15 g3 \pm}$ M.Berg-Kupreichik, Stockholm 1992.

6 e4 g5

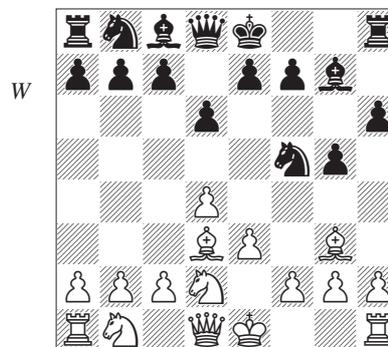
Or $6 \dots \text{d7 7 e4 d6 8 bd2 g5 9 e4 g3 e7 10 c3 a6 11 e4 b5 12 b3 xc3 13 hxc3 e6 14 e2 b7 15 e5 d7 16 d5 exd5 17 exd6+ f8 18 dxc7 xc7 19 0-0 e8}$ and Black's piece-play and bishop-pair compensated for his pawn weaknesses in S.Ledger-Bronstein, Hastings 1995/6.

7 f2! g7

After $7 \dots \text{f6!?$ (or $7 \dots \text{f4!?$ $8 e4 g3 \pm$) Black has weakened his kingside for very little in return: $8 \text{ e4 g3 e7 9 c3 d7 10 e3 c5 11 e2 b6 12 d5 f8 13 h4 b7 14 e4 a6 15 a4 g6 16 hxc5 hxc5 17 0-0-0 \pm}$ Koziak-Kazmin, Voronezh 1999.

8 e4 f5 9 e3 g7 (D)

Chances were balanced after $9 \dots \text{xc3 10 hxc3 e7 11 c3 d7 12 f3 f6 13 bd2 c6 14 c2 c7 15 e5}$ (15 e4 planning f1-e3 is better) $15 \dots \text{xf5 16 e5 17 c2}$ in Franklin-Gligorić, Hastings 1971/2.

**10 b3**