Contents

Symbols 4
Bibliography 4
Preface 5
Foreword 6
Stonewall Invitation 8

Lesson 1 7 b3: Introduction 15
Lesson 2 The Critical 7 b3 \(\mathcal{W}e7\) 8 \(\mathcal{D}e5\)! 36
Lesson 3 7 \(\mathcal{W}c2\), 7 \(\mathcal{D}c3\) and Rare 7th Moves 54
Lesson 4 7 \(\mathcal{A}f4\) 67
Lesson 5 Lines with a Delayed \(\mathcal{A}f4\) 89
Lesson 6 Early Deviations 100
Lesson 7 4 c4 with \(\mathcal{D}h3\) 117
Lesson 8 2 c4: Non-Fianchetto Lines 145
Lesson 9 2 \(\mathcal{D}f3\): Non-Fianchetto Lines 156
Lesson 10 2 \(\mathcal{D}c3\) and 2 \(\mathcal{D}g5\) 169
Lesson 11 The Staunton Gambit and Rare 2nd Moves 183
Lesson 12 1 c4, 1 \(\mathcal{D}f3\) and 1 g3 195

Solutions to Exercises 211
Index of Variations 222
Index of Players 223
Lesson 4 7 f4

Those are my principles, and if you don’t like them... well, I have others.
GROUCHO MARX

The 7 f4 variation was the main reason why Botvinnik and his contemporaries preferred to develop their dark-squared bishop to e7 rather than d6. It leads to an immediate sharpening of the struggle but we shall try to demonstrate that Black should not fear this line if he doesn’t mind a sharp tactical battle.

Lesson Overview

(1 d4 f5 2 Íf3 Íf6 3 g3 e6 4 Íg2 d5 5 0-0 Íd6 6 c4 c6 7 Íf4)

After 7...Íxf4 8 gxf4 0-0 (D) we have an important juncture:

The main continuation is 9 e3 (9 Ìxe5 – Game 18; 9 Íb3 – Game 19) and now after 9...dxe5 10 Íxe5 (10 Íxe5 – Game 20) 10...dxe5 (10...c6 – Game 21) 11 b4 (Game 22), 11 Íxe4 (Game 23), 11 Íxe4 (Game 24) and 11 Íxe4 (7A). In 7B we deal with positions in which Black delays ...dxe5, thus excluding the (early) exchange of knights on e4 and leaving the central pawn-structure intact. In general, there will be a lot of pawns in the centre in this lesson!

First we shall take a look at 9 Ìxe5 and some pawn-structures that can arise after a knight exchange on e5.

Game 18
Adrian Mikhalchishin – Alexei Dreev
Pavlodar 1987

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 g3 g6 4 Íg2 e5 5 0-0 Íd6 6 c4 c6 7 f4!

If there is a drawback to Black’s bishop development to d6, this most probably is it.

7...Íxe5

Logically weakening White’s pawn-structure as compensation for the exchange of dark-squared bishops.

8 gxf4

This pawn-structure (but arising from slightly different move-orders) shall also be the subject of our next lesson. In certain respects it offers less room for improvisation than the more balanced main lines:

• There is no ...f4 lever (unless White’s f4-pawn continues its march to e5).
• The ...e5 advance is also more or less ruled out.
• It is even more likely than in the quieter lines that Black should seek his chances on the kingside and White on the queenside.

On the other hand it’s quite likely that both sides will have one of their knights exchanged on their central outposts (e5 for White, e4 for Black). This will most likely lead to further changes of the pawn-structure, and we shall see some unique central pawn-configurations. Some actually look more like the game Othello than chess!

8...0-0

“Indeed the standard strategy is to transfer the bishop to h5, the knights to e4 and d7, tuck the
king away to h8 and open the g-file. Obviously White has to oppose this plan” – Kramnik.

9...\( \text{c}e5 \)

This move and also 9 \( \text{c}bd2 \) (4A) will usually transpose elsewhere – normally to 9 e3 lines but occasionally to 9 \( \text{b}b3 \) lines. Lines with an early \( \text{b}b3 \) are relatively independent as White will frequently omit e3 so that the queen can be transferred along the 3rd rank, and will be discussed in the next game.

We consider 9 \( \text{c}c2 \) and 9 \( \text{c}c3 \) in Lesson 5, as they more frequently occur from 7 \( \text{c}c3/7 \ \text{c}c2 \) followed by 8 \( \text{f}f4 \).

9...\( \text{bd}7 \) 10 e3 (D)

Alternatives include:

a) 10 \( \text{c}c3 \) – see Lesson 5.

b) After 10 c5 \( \text{c}c7 \) 11 e3 \( \text{h}h8 \) 12 \( \text{c}c3 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 13 fxe5 \( \text{d}d4 \) 14 \( \text{c}c2 \) \( \text{d}d7 \) 15 \( \text{e}e1 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 16 \( \text{f}f1 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 17 \( \text{f}4 \), as in Mensch-Doettling, Leopoldsburg 2000, Black can probably equalize with 17...b6 18 b4 \( \text{c}c8 \)!

c) 10 \( \text{c}c2 \) \( \text{c}c7 \) 11 \( \text{d}d2 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 12 e3 transposes to Game 24 – as we shall see, Black can achieve a comfortable game by exchanging all the knights.

d) 10 \( \text{d}d2 \) \( \text{xe}5 \)! (10...\( \text{xe}4 \) 11 \( \text{d}f3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) is also playable) 11 dxe5 \( \text{d}e4 \) is equal according to Aagaard.

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram.png}
\caption{This position could just as well have arisen from the more common move-order 9 e3 \( \text{c}bd7 \) 10 \( \text{c}e5 \).

10...\( \text{d}d4 \)!}

Inferior options:

a) 10...\( \text{c}c7 \) 11 \( \text{d}d2 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 12 fxe5 \( \text{d}e4 \) 13 f4 b6 14 \( \text{e}e1 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 15 \( \text{c}c4 \) dxe4 16 c5 b7 \( \text{e}e1 \) h6 18 h4 \( \text{f}7 \) 19 h5 \( \text{d}d7 \) 20 \( \text{e}e1 \) h6, as in Mensch-Doettling, Leopoldsburg 2000.

b) 10...\( \text{xe}5 \)! 11 dxe5! is instructive:

b1) After 11...\( \text{d}e4 \)?! 12 b4! Black must worry about his knight’s retreat options.

b2) 11...\( \text{d}g4 \) is playable, but not really an attractive option.

b3) 11...\( \text{d}d7 \) lost instructively in Beliavsky-Van der Wiel, Amsterdam 1990: 12 \( \text{d}d2 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 13 \( \text{e}e1 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 14 \( \text{c}c2 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 15 \( \text{h}b3 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 16 cxd5 exd5 17 \( \text{d}d4 \)!. White won by combining an attack on f5 with a minority attack on the queenside: 17...\( \text{h}4 \) 18 \( \text{h}h3 \) g5? 19 \( \text{h}h1 \) g4 20 \( \text{g}1 \) h5 21 \( \text{f}f1 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 22 f3 \( \text{f}7 \) 23 \( \text{f}f2 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 24 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 25 b4! and Black resigned 10 moves later. The lesson is that you don’t want a white knight on d4, and the safest way to avoid that is to exchange all the knights. Thus Black started inserting ...\( \text{d}e4 \) before taking on e5.

11...\( \text{d}d2 \)

To avoid the exchange of all the knights, White may try to chase away the intruder with either 11 f3 or 11 \( \text{c}c2 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 12 f3. These options will be discussed in 4B. For now we just mention in passing the line 11 f3 \( \text{d}d6 \) 12 c5 \( \text{d}x e5 \) 13 fxe5 \( \text{c}c4 \)?? 14 \( \text{c}c1 \) f4! 15 exf4 b6, when Black has counterplay.

11...\( \text{d}e5 \)! (D)

12 dxe5

12 fxe5?! is met by the thematic 12...\( \text{d}x d2 \)!
13 \( \text{x}d2 \) f4! 14 exf4 \( \text{h}4 \). Now if Black gets to take on f4 with the rook, it will exert pressure along the 4th rank as well as the f-file, so Zamora-Morales, Las Villas 2002 continued 15 f5 \( \text{x}f5 \) 16 f4 \( \text{d}d7 \) 17 cxd5 exd5 18 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{af}8 \) 1\( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \), but Black clearly should have played on.

Q: Are there any guidelines for how to recapture after a knight exchange on e4 or e5?

After a knight exchange on e4, Black usually responds ...\( \text{fxe}4 \) vacating f5. The common follow-up from White is to play f3 and exchange...
this pawn for Black’s e4-pawn. In this case f5 is the ideal square for Black’s bishop.

A knight exchange on e5 can result in two different pawn-structures:

a) If White recaptures with the f-pawn, Black often gets the opportunity to push ...f4 immediately – sometimes temporarily sacrificing a pawn.

b) Recapturing with the d-pawn ‘Belavsky-style’ is usually better. This vacates the d4-square for White’s remaining knight.

12...d7

The redeployment of the light-squared bishop to h5 was one of Black’s original ways of completing his development in the Stonewall and in the 7 f4 lines it’s still Black’s most common route for his bishop. 12...e7 is a serious alternative; e.g., 13 c2 cxd2 14 xd2 d7 15 fd1 e8 16 f3 d8 17 ac1 h8 18 h1 g8 19 cxd5 cxd5 20 g1 c6 ÷ Mancini-Moskalenko, Val Thorens 1990.

13 e2 cxd2! 14 xd2 e8 (D)

15 cxd5?!?

It’s hard to see what White achieves with this capture. Placing a rook on the c-file seems more flexible. 15 b4 led to a quick draw in Blodig-Kordts, Miercurea Ciuc 1999: 15...b6 16 xb6 axb6 17 cxd5 exd5 18 f3 ½-½.

15...cxd5

15...cxd5 also looks very playable but then White would have a protected passed e-pawn and there is little reason to open the way for Black’s bishop when it has already arrived on e8.

16 fc1 c6!

Flexibility of mind is the key! Black blocks the c-file and covers b7. The long diagonal may well become useful in the attack if Black succeeds in creating pressure down the g-file.

This is a very natural move if you are able to forget that the bishop was on its way to h5!

17 c5?!

Hindsight suggests that this natural move may be inaccurate. Aagaard proposes 17 h1, planning g1, but then 16 fc1 was hardly White’s most useful move.

17...h8 18 b4 a6 19 a4 g8 (D)

Play is fairly slow, and Black has all the time he needs to prepare play on the g-file.

20 h1

The king is starting to feel uncomfortable on the semi-open g-file. But as we shall see, there is also danger on the long diagonal.

20...b4 21 a2

Now the rook is protected and b5 is becoming an option. But White’s first rank is also weakened.

21...g5 (D)

Black’s kingside play flows naturally and is strengthened by the fact that White’s heavy artillery is occupied on the queenside.

22 fxg5

22 b5 loses to 22...gx4!! intending 23 bx6 xg2! 24 xg2 f3+ and mate in two. Black
also wins after 23 exf4 axb5 24 axb5 ëxa2 25 ëxa2 ëxf4! 26 f3 ëxf4! 27 bxc6 ëe3 as White cannot defend against the threats of ëe1+ and ëxc5.

22...ëxg5 23 f4?
This loses by force but it’s hard to find a satisfactory alternative. After 23 ëd4 ëg4 Black wins at least a pawn as 24 f4 is forbidden because of the check on e1.

23...ëxg2!
There is no need to calculate long variations in order to play this, but White has two ways of recapturing:

24 ëxg2
After 24 ëxg2 ëg8+, both 25 ëh1 and 25 ëf1 are met by 25...ëg4, winning quickly and prosaically.

24...ëe1+ 25 ëg1 ëxb4 0-1
The pins and discovered attacks on the long diagonal decide the game immediately.

In the next game, White delays e3, hoping to benefit from the open third rank.

Game 19
Marc Narciso Dublan – Viktor Moskalenko
Badalona 2001

1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5 3 g3 ëf6 4 ëg2 c6 5 ëf3 d5 6 0-0 ëd6 7 ëf4 ëxf4 8 gxf4 0-0
Given White’s weakened kingside, Black may also toy with delaying castling. See 4A for some examples.

9 ëb3?! (D)

White makes the development of Black’s light-squared bishop harder and may delay e3 in order to leave the third rank open for the queen.

9...ëe4
This is not, strictly speaking, a developing move but it is very flexible as Black should almost certainly play it at some stage. The main line 9...ëbd7 10 ëbd2 ëe4 11 ëad1 is covered in 4A.

9...ëb6 has been played twice by Iliushin, but the queen is somewhat misplaced on b6 when White withdraws his queen to c2. Black will lose a tempo if he transfers the queen to c7 – which is usually its best square. However, the position is rather slow so probably one tempo isn’t too important.

10 ëa3?!
White fights for the dark squares but we doubt that this decentralization can be his best try.

a) 10 ëbd2 – 9 ëbd2 ëe4 10 ëb3 (4A),

b) After 10 e3, the 10...b6 of Kiseleva-Bosch, Amsterdam 2000 may not have been best but after 11 ëe5 ëb7 12 ëxe4 fxe4 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 f3 ëd7 15 ëxe4 ëxe5 16 dxe5 d4 17 ëd2 Black would have had reasonable compensation for his pawn after 17...dxe3 18 ëxe3 ëc8.

c) 10 ëc3 ëd7 11 ëfd1 h6? was A.Rychagov-Moskalenko, Moscow 1994. After 12 ëac1 ëe7 13 ëa4 ëh7 14 ëe5 g5 15 ëxd7 ëxd7 16 ëxg5 ëxg5 17 ëc5 ëg7 18 ëh1 f4 19 ëd3+ ëh8 20 ëg1 ëc6 21 e4 b6 22 e5 ëf7 23 ëb3 f3 24 ëf1 Black could have played 24...ëe4! 25 ëc2 ëf4, which looks very dangerous.

10...b5?! (D)

Moskalenko points out that this idea is typical for the Chebanenko Variation of the Slav Defence: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ëf3 ëf6 4 ëc3 a6. 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ëe5 ëb6 13 ëc3.