solid system, used by such players as Karpov, Leko, and of course Botvinnik to win the World Championship against Tal. Black gains a foothold in the centre, much as in the French Defence, whilst keeping the h3–c8 diagonal open for his light–squared bishop.

Black often plays steadily, hoping first to equalise before taking the initiative, but can also play dynamically as in the Larsen/Bronstein line.

All the game references highlighted in blue have been annotated and can be downloaded in PGN form using the PGN Games Archive on www.chesspublishing.com.
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XIIIIIIIIY

9rsnlwqkvlntr0
9zpp+-zppzpp0
9-+p+-+-+0
9+-+p+-+-0
9-+-zPP+-+0
9+-+-+-+-0
9PzPP+-zPPzP0
9tRNvLQmKLsNR0
xiiiiiiiiy

3 øe3

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Caro–Kann – Unusual lines [B10]

Last updated: 17/03/11 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.\(\text{\textgreek{d}e}2\)

Others:
2.\(\text{\textgreek{d}c}3\) d5 3.\(\text{\textgreek{d}f}3\) is covered in [B11].

2.c4! This is looking like a decent surprise weapon. 2...d5 is more like the Caro, (2...e5 3.\(\text{\textgreek{d}f}3\) (3.\(\text{\textgreek{d}c}3\) \(\text{\textgreek{d}f}6\) 4.d4 \(\text{\textgreek{d}b}4\) 5.\(\text{\textgreek{f}3}\) is Van der Elburg,F–Van Beek,A/Hoogeveen NED 2006) 3...\(\text{\textgreek{a}5}\) (3...\(\text{\textgreek{d}e}7\)!? 4.d4 \(\text{\textgreek{b}4}\)+ 5.\(\text{\textgreek{d}d}2\) \(\text{\textgreek{d}xd}2\)+ 6.\(\text{\textgreek{d}d}2\) d6 7.\(\text{\textgreek{g}5}\)!! strange, but not bad, Lopez Martinez,J–Fluvia Poyatos,J/Barcelona ESP 2008) 4.\(\text{\textgreek{d}c}3\) \(\text{\textgreek{d}b}4\) ?? (Black should probably abandon this move in favour of 4...\(\text{\textgreek{f}6}\), but even so I think his position is far from pleasant after 5.\(\text{\textgreek{e}2}\)!(or even 5.\(\text{\textgreek{a}3}\)) 5...\(\text{\textgreek{b}4}\) 6.\(\text{\textgreek{c}2}\) 0-0 7.0-0 d5 (7...\(\text{\textgreek{d}6}\) Postny,E–L’Ami,E/Hoogeveen NED 2006) 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.\(\text{\textgreek{d}xd}5\) \(\text{\textgreek{d}xd}5\) 10.exd5 \(\text{\textgreek{d}7}\) 11.\(\text{\textgreek{c}4}\) \(\text{\textgreek{c}7}\) 12.\(\text{\textgreek{d}3}\) \(\text{\textgreek{xc}2}\) 13.\(\text{\textgreek{xc}2}\)+ It is very difficult for Black to get his pawn back without allowing the White pieces to dominate. He plays for pressure but fails miserably, Pelletier,Y–Seger,R/Bundesliga 2002) 5.\(\text{\textgreek{a}4}\)! A new move. The idea of \(\text{\textgreek{a}3}\) followed by b4 sends Black’s queen and bishop running for cover. 5...\(\text{\textgreek{f}6}\) 6.a3 \(\text{\textgreek{e}7}\) 7.\(\text{\textgreek{b}4}\) \(\text{\textgreek{c}7}\) 8.d4 d6 9.\(\text{\textgreek{b}2}\) \(\text{\textgreek{bd}7}\) 10.\(\text{\textgreek{d}3}\) White soon converts his space advantage into a virulent initiative, Rahman,Z–Abdulla,A/Dhaka BAN 2001.) 3.exd5 cxd5 4.cxd5 (4.d4 transposes to the Panov.) 4...\(\text{\textgreek{f}6}\) 5.\(\text{\textgreek{c}3}\)
a) 5.\(\text{\textgreek{b}5}\)! \(\text{\textgreek{d}7}\) (5...\(\text{\textgreek{bd}7}\)) 6.\(\text{\textgreek{c}4}\) g6 7.\(\text{\textgreek{c}3}\) \(\text{\textgreek{g}7}\) 8.\(\text{\textgreek{f}3}\) 0-0 9.0-0 \(\text{\textgreek{a}6}\) 10.\(\text{\textgreek{d}3}\) \(\text{\textgreek{c}7}\) 11.a4 \(\text{\textgreek{c}8}\) 12.\(\text{\textgreek{b}3}\)+ White’s position is ideal, Black may yet regain his pawn but he will have to suffer pressure against e7 and f7, Kotsur,P–Mahjoob,M/Tehran IRI 2004.
b) 5.£a4+!? ¤bd7 (5...§d7 Serper,G–Hahn,A/San Diego 2004) 6.¤c3 g6 7.¤f3 (7.§e2 §g7 8.¤f3 0-0 9.¤d6! BladezI–Regnmanden/Free Internet Chess Server 2005) 7...§g7 8.¤c4 0-0 9.d3!? This is the main idea behind this system for White. As a result of the irregular move order, White can place the pawn on d3 instead of d4, which has the benefit of protecting the bishop on c4, 9...a6 10.£a3 b6! (10...¡b6 11.¥b3 §d4 12.¤e3 §f6! Leon Hoyos,M–Burmakin,V/Salou ESP 2008, 13.¤g5!, intending 13...h6 14.¤e4 f5 15.h3) 11.0-0 ¥b7 12.¤e5 ¥b6 13.¤f3 0-0 14.£a3 §f8! to exploit the position of the white queen on a3, (14...¢c8 see Fernandez Garcia,J–Gomez Esteban,J/Leon ESP 2006) 15.d6 e6 Taylor,P–Dearing,E/Coventry 2008.

5...¤xd5 (5...g6 6.¥c4 (6.¥b3) 6...§g7 7.¤f3 0-0 8.0-0 £bd7 9.d4 §b6 10.¤f3 §bd5 11.¤e1 b6 12.¤e5 ¥b7 13.¤f3=Damljanovic,B–Nadj Hedjesi,B/Kopaonik SCG 2005, a typical IQP position has arisen where White has the more active pieces and Black the long-term promise of a better ending. In practice, we must prefer White's chances but 13...¢c8 would have given Black a decent game.) 6.¤f3 §xc3 (6...¢c6 7.¤b5 e6 8.0-0 §e7 9.d4 0-0 10.0-0 §c6 11.©e1 ¥g4 12.¥e4 e5! An excellent improvement on either 12...¢c8 or 12...¥d7. Black liquidates the centre pawns, obtaining complete equality, Aronian,L–Carlsen,M/Tripoli 2004.

Several strong attacking players have consistently adopted a King's Indian Attack formation against the Caro: 2.d3 d5 3.¤d2 e5

a) 3...g6 4.¤gf3 §g7 5.g3 (5.§e2 e5 6.0-0 §e7 7.b4! 0-0 8.¥b3 §d7 9.¤e1 a5 10.a3 ¥c7 11.¢f1 with typical pressure against e5 in Ljubojevic,L–Pfleger,H/Manila 1975) 5...e5?! this gives White the centre pawns to attack, but it can't be too bad, (5...§f6 6.¤g2 dxe4 7.dxe4 0-0 8.0-0 §a6 9.e5 §d5 10.¤b3 §g4 11.¥f2 ¥e8 12.¢e1 left Black cramped in Stein,L–Portisch,L/Moscow 1967) 6.¥g2 §e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.¤f1 (8.¥b4!? a5 9.bxa5 §a5 10.¥b2 ¥f6 11.¥e1 d4 12.c3 dxc3 13.¥xc3 was better for White in Stein,L–Haag,E/Tallinn 1969,) 8...d4 (8...¥c7 9.a4 h6 Smirin,I–Stellwagen,D/Chalons en Champagne FRA 2004) 9.d4 c5 leads to a KID–type position, Strikovic,A–Gugunashvili,M/Benidorm ESP 2007

b) 3...dxe4 4.dxe4 ¥f6 5.¤gf3 §g4 6.h3 ¥h5 7.e5 ¥d5 8.e6 f6 9.g4 ¥g6 10.¤e4 ¥c7 11.c3 ¥d5 12.¥b3! Stein,L–Birbrager,I/Moscow 1966.

c) 3...¥c7!? is a unique idea, waiting for 4.¤gf3, 4.¤gf3 §g4 5.h3 ¥h5 6.g3 e6 7.b2 §d7 8.0-0 ¥g6 Black has equalised smoothly, Tiviakov,S–Mchdelishvili,M/Dresden GER 2007.

4.¤gf3 ¥d6 5.¡e2

a) 5...g6 6.¤g2 0-0 7.h3!? (7.0-0 8.¥d7 8.¥e1 ¥e8 Zygouris,H–Jones,G/Caleta ENG 2011) 7...¥e8 8.0-0 a5 9.¥e1 ¥a6 10.d4! gave White the initiative in Sax,G–Martin,A/Hastings 1983

b) 5.£e2 §f6 6.d4 dxe4 7.¤xe4 5.e5 ¥f5 8.h3 h5 9.g1 h4 10.g4 hgx3 11.¥xg3 produced a chaotic game in Ljubojevic,L–Karpov,A/Hastings 1992

5...£f6 (5...¥e1? 6.¥d4 exd4 7.¥xd4 0-0 8.¥f3 Damljanovic,B–Miladinovic,I/Rome ITA 2004 is pretty unattractive for White,) 6.¤d4 ¥xe4 7.dxe5 ¥xd2 8.¥xd2 ¥e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.c4 ¥g4 11.¥g5 led to equality in Ljubojevic,L–Dzindzishvili,R/Tilburg 1978.
2.\( \text{\text{d}f}3 \) d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.\( \text{\text{e}5}! \) is a new one on me. It looks like a 'cheapo' move but White's threats based on \( \text{b}5 \) cannot be discounted. 4...\( \text{d}7 \) (4...\( \text{c}6 \) 5.d4 \( \text{f}6 \) 6.b5 Sebag,M–Xu Yuanyuan/Cannes FRA 2004) 5.d4 g6! A new move, wasting no time, in contrast to White! 6.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 7.b5 \( \text{g}6 \) 8.\( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 9.f4 \( \text{xe}5 \) 10.dxe5 \( \text{e}4 \) 11.0-0-0 \( \text{xc}3 \) 12.\( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \)÷ Perhaps Black has the better attacking chances, Cernousek,L–Mista,A/Brno CZE 2004. We may deduce that White's tricky opening idea can only lead to equality at best.

2...d5 3.e5 c5

3...\( \text{f}5 \) The move that 2.\( \text{e}2 \) is designed against. White certainly seems to get something but it's not necessarily so bad. 4.\( \text{g}3 \) (White has also played 4.\( \text{d}4 \), but this looks as if it involves too much hopping around. Even the e5–e6 tricks associated with this idea look unconvincing and I think that Black can cold–bloodedly play 4...\( \text{g}6)! \) 4...\( \text{e}6 \) With White's knight on the more sensible g3 square it's probably wise to prevent these e5–e6 pawn sacs: 5.d4 g6 6.c3 The game now proceeds at a totally different pace, with solid positional manoeuvres being the order of the day. White has more space, but it's difficult to break through because of Black's control of f5. 6...h5 7.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 8.h4 Short,N–Sasikiran,K/Istanbul TUR 2000.

3...d4 is a critical try, 4.b4 f6?! 5.f4 \( \text{xe}5 \) 6.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 7.b2 c5 8.bxc5 \( \text{c}6 \) which soon favoured Black in Abergel,T–Edouard,R/Cappelle la Grande FRA 2010.

4.d4

The conventional move.

4.b4?! The idea is similar to a gambit line that I like against the French: 1.e4 e6 2.\( \text{f}3 \) d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4?! 4...\( \text{xb}4 \) 5.d4 White doesn't have to worry about the usual counterplay against his d4 pawn but can just get on with his play on the kingside. The cost is a pawn, but maybe it's not bad value. (5.\( \text{b}2 \) was tried in Sorensen – Hellstrom, Copenhagen 1998 but it doesn't make much sense to me. The bishop on b2 does nothing more than bite on it's own e5 pawn and Black was a pawn up for very little after 5...\( \text{c}6 \) 6.d4 e6) 5...\( \text{c}6 \) 6.a3 e6 7.axb4 \( \text{xb}4 \) 8.c3 \( \text{a}5 \) (8...\( \text{e}7 \) Richmond,P–
Lee, G/England 1999: 9...\(g3 \text{ } g7 \text{ } 10.\text{h}5 \text{ } 0-0 \text{ } 11.\text{g}5! \text{ } \text{c}7 \text{ } 12.\text{xa}5! \text{ followed by } \text{xg7 with a strong attack, Surtees, M–Houska, J/Liverpool ENG 2008.}

4...\(c6 \text{ } 5.c3 \text{ } cxd4

5...e6 Some of the books give this move, quoting an old Bronstein – Petrosian game that Black happened to win. 6.\(d2 \text{ } cxd4 (The aforementioned Bronstein – Petrosian game (USSR Ch., Leningrad 1960) went 6...\(g7 \text{ } 7.\text{f}3 \text{ } cxd4 \text{ } 8.\text{exd}4 (The start of a dubious plan. White should play 8.cxd4 after which 8...\(f5 transposes back into the game) 8...\(g6) \text{ } 7.cxd4 \text{ } h6 \text{ } 8.\text{f}3 \text{ } \text{f}5 \text{ } 9.a3 \text{ } \text{b}6 10.g4 \text{ } \text{e}7 \text{ } 11.\text{f}4 \text{ It's starting to look very good for White as the d4–pawn is not a problem and he has lots of space on the kingside. Black manages to generate some temporary piece activity but this doesn't amount to anything real.} 11...\(a5 \text{ } 12.\text{b}1 \text{ } \text{b}3 \text{ } 13.\text{e}3 \text{ Kasparov, G–Kaiumov, D/Tbilisi (Georgia) 1976.} \text{ }

5...\(f5 \text{ } 6.dxc5 \text{ This is the move that got Black to start taking on d4 before playing ...Bf5. (The old line was 6.\(g3 \text{ } \text{g}6) \text{ } 6...e6 \text{ } 7.b4 a5?! The fact that White can ignore this move, makes it look like a loss of time. (7...\(xe5 is probably better, even though Black's bishop is unable to come back to d7.) 8.d4 axb4 9.\(b5 \text{ } \text{c}7 \text{ } (And not 9...\(xb4 10.\text{b}5+) \text{ } 10.\text{xb}4 \text{ } \text{b}1 11.\text{xb}1 \text{ } \text{xe}5+ 12.\text{e}3 \text{ } \text{c}7 13.0-0 \text{ } \text{e}7 14.\text{xc}6+ \text{ } \text{bxc6} \text{ } 15.b5 \text{ It's now quite clear that Black's opening has backfired. The action is starting whilst Black's king is uncastled.} 15...\text{cb}5 \text{ } 16.\text{xb}5 \text{ Short, N–Gulko, B/Horgen (Switzerland) 1995.} \text{ }

An interesting alternative is 5...\(g4?! which argues that 6.f3 is a concession by White. In Barendregt – Botvinnik, Amsterdam 1966 Black went on to obtain an excellent game after 6...\(d7 \text{ } 7.e6 \text{ } \text{xe}6 \text{ } 8.dxc5 \text{ } \text{f}5 \text{ } 9.b4 \text{ } g6 10.\text{f}4 \text{ } \text{g}7 11.d4 \text{ } 0-0 \text{ } 12.\text{xc}6 \text{ } \text{bxc6} \text{ } 13.\text{e}5 \text{ } \text{h}6 14.\text{d}3 \text{ } \text{d}7 15.d4 \text{ } f6 16.0-0 \text{ } \text{f}7 17.a4 \text{ } e5 \text{ } 18.\text{f}2 \text{ f5 though surprisingly the former World Champion lost this game.} \text{ }

5...h5?! was played in Pedersen – Borbjerggaard, Aarhus 1996, but to me it looks far too extravagant. The game reeled on with the moves 6.a3 (and 6.\(d2) \text{ } 6...\(f5 \text{ } 7.dxc5 \text{ } e6 \text{ } 8.b4 \text{ } a5 9.d4 \text{ } axb4 \text{ } 10.\text{xc}6 \text{ } (10.\text{b}5?!?) \text{ } 10...\text{xc}6 \text{ } 11.\text{xb}4 \text{ } \text{e}7 12.\text{d}3 \text{ } \text{b}8 13.b2 \text{ and now Black's 13...g5?! was a desperate–looking move in what is probably a lost position.} \text{ }

6.cxd4 \(f5 \text{ } 7.\text{bc}3
I didn't know it at the time, but this is a new move.
The conventional treatment is with 7.\(\text{\textit{g3}}\) \(\text{\textit{g6}}\) 8.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\) \(\text{\textit{e6}}\) but this does not seem to be very effective.

7...\(\text{\textit{e6}}\) 8.\(\text{\textit{a3}}\) \(\text{\textit{a6}}\) 9.\(\text{\textit{e3}}\) \(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 10.\(\text{\textit{h3}}\) \(\text{\textit{h5}}\)

Speelman decides to stop \(g2-g4\) but in doing so has to accept permanent kingside weakness.
Taking the pawn with 10...\(\text{\textit{fxe5}}\) 11.\(\text{\textit{dxe5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe5}}\) looks downright bad after 12.\(\text{\textit{d4}}\) intending \(g2-g4\).

11.\(\text{\textit{exf6}}\) \(\text{\textit{xf6}}\) 12.\(\text{\textit{g3}}\)

Caro–Kann – Two Knights Variation

[B11]

Last updated: 17/03/11 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♗f3

The Two Knights Variation had its heyday in the 1950s and 60s but may well deserve reviving. This system is attractive for players who do not like to play deeply analysed variations. Although theoretically it does not promise too much for White, the positions that arise are complicated, and it's still not clear how Black can achieve equality without any trouble.

3.♘f3 e6 A number of strong players have tried this move, though it seems to me that White maintains excellent attacking chances. There is a quick tour of the alternatives in Arapovic–Campora. (3...dxe4 is the most solid and 'Caro–Kanny' move, 4.♗xe4 ♘d7 5.d4 ♘f6! Totsky,L–Burmakin,V/Moscow (Russia) 1995) 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♗g5!? This is really in the spirit of 3 ♘f3 and probably much stronger than the more popular 5 e5. 5...♗e7 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♗xe7 (7.h4!? is worth a thought, with similar play to the Alekhine–Chatard Attack against the French.) 7...♗xe7 8.♗g3 Arapovic,V–Campora,D/Mendrisio (Switzerland) 1988.

3.f4!? Most irregular and a recommendation of veteran Dutch Master Van Geet. White plans to grip e5 and commence an eventual Kingside attack. 3...dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘f6 (4...♗d7 is logical, 5.♗f3 ♘g6 6.♗f2 e6 Kokholm,D–Hansen,J/25th Politiken Cup, Copenhagen DEN 2003) 5.♗f2 e6 (5...♗c7 6.g3 ♖e6 Wall,G–Speelman,J/4NCL
3...\textit{$\text{g}4$}

Black has tried a lot of moves here but this Bishop sortie is the main line.

3...a6!? 4.h3 (4.d4 Now White is deprived of Fischer's idea of playing d2–d3 to maintain a pawn spearhead on e4. As a result his centre becomes inflexible, whether he exchanges on d5 or, as in the game, advances his pawn to e5. 4...$\text{g}4$ 5.h3 $\text{xf}3$ (3...h5 6.g4 $\text{g}6$ 7.e5 was dangerous for Black in Murey,J–Postny,E/Netherlands NED 2010) 6.$\text{xf}3$ e6 7.$\text{xf}4$ $\text{f}6$! 8.e5 $\text{fd}7$ 9.0-0-0 b5! Here we have a blocked centre of the kind that sometimes arises in the Modern Defence. Formally speaking Black is at least three tempi behind in development, but two of these developing moves—the bishop on f4 and the queen on f3—get in the way of White's natural plan of an f4–f5 breakthrough. 10.g4 $\text{b}6$ 11.h4 $\text{d}8$? with a double-edged position that seems to favour Black, Robson,R–Jobava,B/Khanty–Mansiysk RUS 2009) 4...e6 (Or 4...$\text{f}6$?! Black decides to maintain a small pawn centre with the result that he has too many minor pieces and not enough squares for them. 5.e5 $\text{e}4$ 6.$\text{b}1$! White is better after this unexpected retreat, see McShane,L–Shengelia,D/Novi Sad SRB 2009) 5.d4 $\text{d}7$ 6.$\text{d}3$ dxe4 7.$\text{xe}4$ $\text{gf}6$ 8.$\text{xf}6+$ $\text{xf}6$ 9.$\text{g}5+$ Vasiesiu,D–Vajda,A/ch–ROM, Satu Mare ROM 2003.

3...h6 has been played by Matthew Sadler, the idea is to take on e4 and play ...$\text{f}5$

3...dxe4 4.$\text{xe}4$ $\text{d}7$ 5.$\text{c}4$ e6 6.$\text{e}2$ h6 7.d4 $\text{gf}6$ 8.$\text{g}3$ $\text{d}6$ 9.$\text{d}2$ 0-0 10.0-0 $\text{c}7$ 11.$\text{fe}1$ b6 is a typical position where if White cannot sacrifice on e6 or f7, he will find it tough to break Black down, Tate,E–Vescovi,G/Philadelphia USA 2006

3...$\text{f}6$!? 4.e5 $\text{c}4$ 5.$\text{e}2$ $\text{b}6$ 6.d4 c5 7.$\text{xc}5$ $\text{xc}5$ 8.$\text{ed}4$ $\text{c}6$ 9.$\text{b}5$ with an edge to White according to Wells, see Svetushkin,D–Landa,K/Rijeka CRO 2010.

4.h3

4.d4!? dxe4 (4...$\text{f}6$ is the most sensible reaction, 5.e5 $\text{fd}7$ 6.h3 $\text{xf}3$ 7.$\text{xf}3$ e6 Jones,G–Long,P/Khanty–Mansiysk RUS 2010) 5.$\text{xe}4$ $\text{xf}3$ wins the d4 pawn but at the cost of a lot of time, 6.$\text{xf}3$ $\text{xd}4$ 7.$\text{e}3$! $\text{xb}2$ 8.$\text{c}4$ $\text{f}6$ 9.0-0 with dangerous possibilities, Satyapragyan,S–Khamrakulov,D/Kuala Lumpur MAS 2010.

4...$\text{xf}3$

The sharper 4...$\text{h}5$ is still fine, as the following snippet demonstrates: 5.exd5 cxd5 6.$\text{b}5+$ $\text{c}6$ 7.g4 $\text{g}6$ 8.$\text{e}5$ $\text{c}8$ 9.d4 e6 10.$\text{e}2$ $\text{d}6$ 11.$\text{xc}6+$ $\text{bxc}6$ 12.$\text{f}4$ $\text{e}7$ 13.0-0-0 f6 14.$\text{xg}6$ hxg6 Black has organised his counterplay well, Azarov,S–Akopian,V/Moscow RUS 2006.
5...\textit{xf}3 has had a poor reputation since Tal got a bad game with the move in his 1960 match against Botvinnik. But in his book on the match Tal commented that after 5...e6 6.d4 \textit{d}7 it would have been much better to play 7.\textit{e}3 followed by \textit{d}2 and 0-0-0 rather than his mistaken 7.\textit{f}4. In any case this deserves further tests as White has the bishop pair and a very strong centre.

5...e6

5...\textit{f}6 6.e2 dxe4 7.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 8.\textit{xe}4 Short,N–L’Ami,E/London ENG 2009.

6.d4

White tries another interesting and dynamic continuation involving a pawn sac. The Two Knights has been out of fashion for years but because of that has far more surprise value than the currently popular Advance Variation.

6.d3 \textit{f}6 would lead to one of the main lines. (6...\textit{d}7 7.a3 \textit{c}5 (7...g6 8.e2 \textit{e}7 9.g3 \textit{g}7 10.\textit{g}2 0-0 11.h4 \textit{h}5= Romanov,E–Pustov,P/Moscow RUS 2006) 8.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}6! with equality, McShane,L–Harikrishna,P/Toronto CAN 2010) 7.\textit{g}3 (7.\textit{d}2 is considered to be the main line here.) 7...\textit{a}6 (7...\textit{a}6 8.e2 dxe4 9.dxe4 \textit{c}5 10.\textit{f}3 g6 11.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}7 12.\textit{d}1 \textit{fd}7 (12...\textit{b}6? loses immediately due to 13.\textit{e}5 \textit{cd}7 14.\textit{xd}7!) 13.\textit{e}3 Black has problems, Tkachiev,V–Podgaets,M/Vienna 1996.)

6.g3?! \textit{f}6 7.\textit{g}2 \textit{b}4 8.0-0 \textit{xc}3 9.\textit{xc}3 dxe4 10.d3 exd3 11.\textit{ed}1 \textit{bd}7 12.\textit{xd}3 0-0 13.\textit{g}5 Dvoirys,S–Grischuk,A/56th ch–RUS, Krasnoyarsk RUS 2003.

6...\textit{f}6

6...\textit{b}6?! This continuation looks dubious. 7.\textit{d}3! The pawn cannot be defended by natural means so White just ignores the threat, especially as he is well ahead in development. 7...\textit{f}6 8.0-0 \textit{xd}4 9.\textit{xd}5?! This position was familiar to Balashov. In an earlier game vs. Lechtynsky, Trnava 1988 he preferred 9.\textit{e}3 \textit{b}4 10.\textit{xd}5)
9...\(\text{dxd5}\) 10.\(\text{d1}\) \(\text{g6}\) 11.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 12.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{cxd5}\) 13.\(\text{g5}\) White's initiative grows quickly, Balashov, Y—Smagin, S/Elista 1995.

6...\(\text{dxe4}\) 7.\(\text{xe4}\) is more common as the text involves a pawn sacrifice. Nevertheless it seems that White gets quite good compensation.

7.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{dxe4}\)

or 7...\(\text{e7}\)

8.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xd4}\)

Or 8...\(\text{bd7}\) with a very solid position.

9.\(\text{e3}\)!

Better than the passive 9.\(\text{c3?!}\) \(\text{d8}\) 10.0-0 \(\text{bd7}\) 11.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{xe4}\) (White wanted to keep his investment down to a single pawn but he might have regretted his decision after 11...\(\text{c5}\). as after 12.\(\text{ad1}\) \(\text{dxe4}\) 13.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{b6}\) White does not have f3 available as a retreat square for his bishop.) 12.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{b6}\) 13.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{f6}\) 14.\(\text{f3}\) A nice post for the bishop as it stops Black's knight coming to h5. 14...\(\text{e7}\) 15.\(\text{e3}\) Nevednichy, V—Iordachescu, V/Bucharest ROM 2001.

9...\(\text{d8}\)

9...\(\text{b4+}\) By throwing in the check Black hopes to gain time by developing his bishop and force White's king to remain in the centre. The negative side of this plan is that a White rook comes to the d-file more quickly. 10.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{d8}\) 11.\(\text{hd1!!}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 12.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 13.\(\text{f1}\) Boleslavsky, I—Makogonov, V/Moscow (Russia) 1940.

9...\(\text{xb2}\) is the book 'recommendation' which takes the view that White has inadequate compensation for the pawns. But after 10.0-0 I would not want to touch Black's position with a very long barge pole — White has a massive lead in development and plenty of open files.
10.0-0-0!

New moves aren't necessarily any better than the old ones. Boleslavsky's choice is certainly stronger than 10.\( \text{xf6} + \) which gave White very little for his pawn after 10...\( \text{xf6} \) 11.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 12.0-0 \text{e5} in Belkhodja – Ibragimov, Cappelle la Grande 2001.

10...\( \text{bd7} \) 11.\( \text{c4} \)

11.\( \text{b1} \) also gives a very promising position: 11...\( \text{xe4} \) 12.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{c7} \) 13.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c8} \) 14.\( \text{ge2} \) 15.\text{g5} e5 16.\( \text{f5} !+ \) exf4 17.\( \text{xd7} + \) \text{xd7} 18.\( \text{xd7} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 19.\( \text{xf4} + \)\( ^{\_} \) Parligras, M–Svetushkin, D/Bucharest 2003 In view of this type of continuation it seems better for Black to decline White's kind offer with 8...\( \text{bd7} ! \).

11...\( \text{a5} \) 12.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{b6} \) 13.\( \text{he1} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 14.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 15.\( \text{xe6} ! \) with White going on to win brilliantly, Boleslavsky, I–Flohr, S/Moscow (Russia) 1950.
Caro-Kann – Fantasy Variation – 3 f3

[B12]

Last updated: 17/03/11 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5

2...¢a6

The knight heads for the newly vacated c7 square. Obviously this plan is not intended to rip White limb from limb, but it has the benefit of avoiding theory whilst being both solid and provocative. This eccentric defensive system, pioneered by the Belgian player De Bruycker, keeps the position closed and puts the emphasis on heavy middlegames in which White has more space. Besides Miles, Bent Larsen and Julian Hodgson have given it a try and a few other good players seem to have adopted it to the exclusion of everything else. At any rate it should be a good line to play against computers – no theory and stodgy positional manoeuvres. 3.¢c3 White chooses to block his c-pawn but keep the option of a later f-pawn advance. (Tony Miles also faced 3.¢f3 a couple of times, which keeps the option of advancing White’s c-pawn:

3...¢c7 4.c4 d6 5.¢c3 g6 6.h3 ¥g7 7.¢e3 f5 8.¢xe4 ¥e7 9.¢c2 fxe4 10.¢g3 0-0 11.¢e2 b5 12.b3 bxc4 13.bxc4 ¥d7 1/2-1/2, Andersson U. (2623) – Miles A. (2588), Biel 1996 It, 3.c4

This is the kind of move Botvinnik would have recommended. White sets up a broad pawn chain and will have space however Black plays it. 3...d6 4.¢c3 g6 5.¢e3 ¥g7 6.¢d2 e5 7.¢e2 ¥e7 8.0-0 0-0 f5 I can't help thinking that this might be asking a bit much of the position. But Miles probably reasoned that he didn't mind taking a few risks against the ex-Soviet veteran. 9.exf5 gxf5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.f4 Suetin,A–Miles,A/Cappelle
la Grande (France) 1997. Black profits from the fact that 3.\(\text{xa}\text{a6}?!\) doesn't damage the black pawn structure—Black replies 3...\(\text{a}\text{a5}+\), and 4...\(\text{xa}\text{a6}\).) 3...\(\text{c}7\) 4.\(\text{f}3\) In such uncharted territory it's difficult to say what the best line is. White has tried several other moves in this position. (4.\(\text{d}3\) d5 (4...g6, 4...d6) 5.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{g}4\) 6.h3 \(\text{x}f3\) 7.\(\text{xf}3\) dxe4 8.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 9.\(\text{xf}6\)± Manik,M–Herbold,M/Litomysl CZE 2004 seems a very simple way to get the advantage.) 4...g6 5.\(\text{e}2\) I'm not quite sure if this is now becoming a Pirc. 5...\(\text{g}7\) 6.0-0 d6 7.h3 \(\text{e}\text{5}?!\) I'm slightly suspicious of this move. Because of the need to protect his e-pawn, Black either put his king's knight on the passive e7 square or first give up the centre with ...\(\text{ex}d4\). (7...\(\text{f}6\) is quite possible and would transpose into a Pirc) 8.\(\text{e}3\) Hracek,Z–Markovic,M/Herceg Novi YUG 2001.

3.f3

The Fantasy Variation has been rarely played but nowadays it is becoming more and more popular, primarily due to the efforts of Michael Adams who is the main adherent of this line at the top level. It often leads to very sharp positions especially if Black chooses 3...dxe4 4 fxe4 e5.

3...dxe4!? The sharpest, but there are solid alternatives:

3...e6 This is Black's most common reply and was recommended by Pete Wells in his Caro–Kann book. 4.\(\text{c}3\) (4.\(\text{e}3?!\) This line has a dubious reputation. 4...\(\text{b}6\)! Now White is practically forced to sacrifice his b2–pawn. 5.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xb}2\) 6.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{a}3\) This position has occurred in 2 games and in both White failed to prove he has enough for the pawn, Mitkov,N–Dreev,A/European Club Cup 2000.) 4...\(\text{b}4\) Continuing play in vein of the French Winawer variation. (Interesting is 4...\(\text{b}4\)? By avoiding any early pressure on c3, Black is cajoling White into the ambitious plan of castling queenside. 5.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 6.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 7.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{a}6\) 8.0-0-0?! \(\text{xf}1\) 9.\(\text{xf}1\) b5! with active play on the queenside, Gorovykh,E–Akelesen,R/Stockholm SWE 2010.) 5.\(\text{f}4\)

a) 5.\(\text{d}2\) b6 6.\(\text{d}3\) (6.\(\text{c}e2?!\) Zvjaginsev,V–Grigorians,S/Rijeka CRO 2010) 6...\(\text{e}7\) 7.\(\text{ge}2\) 0-0 8.0-0 c5 was Hector – Danielsen, Reykjavik ISL 2001.
b) 5.a3!? novel, 5...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xc3}}+!} 6.bxc3 dxe4 7.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}3 xf3} 8.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xf}}3 f6} 9.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}3}}! The star concept—bishop goes to d3, queen to g5, and Black struggles to hold his dark squares, Zvjaginsev, V–Kharitonov, A/Solin CRO 2006

5...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xf6}}} (5...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}7}} 6.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}3} b6} 7.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}2}} a6 8.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}3}} 0-0 9.0-0-0 c5 10.a3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xc3}}}! 11.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xc3}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xe}2}}! 12.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xe}2} c4!} 13.h4 b5= Morozevitch, A–Bologan, V/Moscow RUS 2004, the blocked pawn position suits the knights but obviously Black will have to be very careful to contain White's bishops and his kingside chances.) 6.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}3} b6} 7.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ge}2}} a6 8.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}3}} 0-0 9.0-0-0 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}7}} (9...b5?! immediately is worthy of consideration, but sooner or later the Bishop will have to retreat from the b4 square anyway.) 10.g4! b5! An interesting race is brewing on opposite sides of the board. (It's very dangerous to grab the pawn: 10...dxe4 11.fxe4 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}4}} 12.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}3}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}6}} 13.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}1}} and White's attack grows rapidly., but 10...e5 is also feasible, McShane, L–Dreev, A/18th North Sea Cup, Esbjerg DEN 2003) 11.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}3}} Wall, T–Hodgson, J/Great Britain (ch) 1990.

3...g6 4.c3 (4.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}3}} (this is classified as B15 as it can also arise from 3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}3} g6} 4 f3) 4...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}7}} A natural and good move. 5.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}3}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}6}}! The best move in this position as practice has proved. The alternatives are clearly inferior. 6.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}2}} This temporary pawn sacrifice is the mainline.

a) 6.a3!? dxe4 (6...e5 is met by 7.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}2}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xb}2}} 8.dxe5 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xe}5}} 9.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}2}} threatening 10.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}2}}) 7.fxe4 e5 8.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}3}} exd4 9.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd}4}} Nabaty, T–Khairullin, J/Rijeka CRO 2010.

b) 6.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}1}} e5

c) 6.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}4}} is also hardly promising: 6...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}5}}+ 7.c3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}7}} and White's pieces are uncoordinated.

6...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xb}2}} 7.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}1}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}3}} 8.exd5 (8.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd}3}}? e6 9.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}2}} sacrifices the pawn, Bauer, C–Alonso Rosell, A/Cannes FRA 2011) 8...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}6}}! Returning his extra pawn Black completes his development. (8...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}5}}? 9.dxc6 Speelman, J–Houska, J/London ENG 2004 when 9...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xc}6}}! would have been acceptable for Black.) 9.dxc6 bxc6! The correct decision. In recapturing with the pawn Black gets additional control over the centre and intends ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}8–a6}.} 10.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}3}} Adams, M–Leko, P/Tilburg 1996.) 4...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}7}} 5.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}3}} White has also tried other moves, but they are weaker: (5.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}4}} was rather popular, but after the game Mitkov–Hebert, Cannes 1995 it is completely out of fashion: 5...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}7}}! (intending 6.e7–e5) 6.e5 (6.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}3} e5}) 6...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}6}}! Undermining the pawn chain and White can't strengthen the centre by his f–pawn in view of the bad position of his dark–square bishop. 7.exf6 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{gxf}6}}! 8.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}3} 0-0} 9.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}2 e5}}! Seizing the initiative.) 5...e5?! A new and very interesting continuation. (5...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}6}}? is weak as the French–like position after 6.e5 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{fd}7}} 7.f4 e6 8.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}3}} clearly favors White (Black's dark–squared bishop is misplaced on g7), and 5...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}6}} which was good in Adams–Leko is now senseless in view of 6.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}2}) 6.dxe5 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xe}5}} 7.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}2} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}7}} 8.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}2}} White prepares Q–side castling. 8...0-0! A brave and correct decision. Now a very sharp position with opposite sides castling arises where Black's chances are by no means worse. 9.0-0-0 Adams, M–Seirawan, Y/Bermuda 1999. In spite of his loss in this game Black had many good possibilities and we can conclude that 3...g6 is a very solid and promising line for Black.

3...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}6}}? Black's idea is to play ...e5 and ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}5},} 4.a4 (4.a3?! e5 5.exd5 Ivanchuk, V–Jobava, B/Khanty–Mansiysk RUS 2010, when 5...exd5 looks sensible.) 4...e5 (4...e6?! 5.c3 e5 worked well for Black in Nepomniachtchi, I–Ivanchuk, V/Havana CUB 2010)
5.\text{dxe5} \text{dxe4} 6.a5 \text{\text{	extcopyright}c7} 7.f4! White already has the better chances, Nepomniachtchi,I–Jobava,B/Rijeka CRO 2010.

\textbf{4.fxe4 e5}

This is the idea behind Black's previous move, otherwise White has an overwhelming advantage in the centre. This line has quite a dubious reputation since Black has suffered many quick losses. Nevertheless in my opinion it's perfectly playable for Black (provided he knows the theory, of course!).

\textbf{5.\text{\textcopyright}f3}

Not 5.dxe5?? \text{\text{	extcopyright}h4+}

\textbf{5...\text{\textcopyright}g4!}

In my opinion this line is the best.

The pressure on Black's f7-pawn could have been shielded by the theoretical recommendation of 5...\text{\textcopyright}e6 intending 6.\text{\textcopyright}xe5? (or 6.dxe5 \text{\textcopyright}xd1+ 7.\text{\textcopyright}xd1 \text{\textcopyright}d7 with good play, but White should prefer, 6.c3 \text{\textcopyright}f6 7.\text{\textcopyright}d3) 6...\text{\textcopyright}h4+

5...exd4?! This is an instructive mistake after which White's initiative grows rapidly. This move has been considered insufficient since the end of the 19th century, nevertheless in my database I have found hundreds of recent games where Black committed this mistake! Black has two superior possibilities. 6.\text{\textcopyright}c4 Developing pieces and creating concrete threats. The development advantage and open f-file secures White a decisive attack. The f7-square is the main target. 6...\text{\textcopyright}e7

a) 6...\text{\textcopyright}b4+? Another mistake which loses on the spot, but Black's defence was very hard anyway: 7.c3! dxc3 8.\text{\textcopyright}xf7+! A typical blow. 8...\text{\textcopyright}xf7?? (8...\text{\textcopyright}e7 is more stubborn although after 9.\text{\textcopyright}b3! cxb2+ 10.\text{\textcopyright}xb4+ \text{\textcopyright}xf7 11.\text{\textcopyright}xb2 at the cost of only one pawn White has crushing attack.) 9.\text{\textcopyright}xd8 cxb2+ 10.\text{\textcopyright}e2 \text{\textcopyright}e7 (10...\text{\textcopyright}xa1 11.\text{\textcopyright}g5+ \text{\textcopyright}g6 12.\text{\textcopyright}e8+ and in V.Ivanov–Bataev, St Petersburg 1999 Black resigned in view of quick mate after 12...\text{\textcopyright}h6 13.\text{\textcopyright}e6+) 11.\text{\textcopyright}e5+ \text{\textcopyright}f6 12.\text{\textcopyright}f1+ Maiorov,O–Gutov,A/Yalta 1995.

b) 6...\text{\textcopyright}e6 is also insufficient: 7.\text{\textcopyright}xe6 fx6 8.0-0 \text{\textcopyright}c5 (8...\text{\textcopyright}e7 was played in an old game Tartakover–Psepurka,1929, where White obtained a decisive advantage after 9.\text{\textcopyright}xd4 \text{\textcopyright}d7 10.\text{\textcopyright}h5+ \text{\textcopyright}h8 11.\text{\textcopyright}e3 c5 12.\text{\textcopyright}d1 cxd4 13.\text{\textcopyright}xd4 \text{\textcopyright}d6 14.e5) 9.\text{\textcopyright}xg5! d3+ (9...\text{\textcopyright}e7 10.\text{\textcopyright}f7 \text{\textcopyright}xf7 11.\text{\textcopyright}xf7 \text{\textcopyright}xf7+ 12.\text{\textcopyright}h5+, 9...\text{\textcopyright}f6 10.e5 \text{\textcopyright}d5 11.\text{\textcopyright}xe6 \text{\textcopyright}e7 12.g4 \text{\textcopyright}d7 13.\text{\textcopyright}xg7+ \text{\textcopyright}xg7 14.e6) 10.\text{\textcopyright}h1 dxc2 11.\text{\textcopyright}xc2 and White wins, Skripchenko–Tsiganova, Elista 1998

7.0-0 (Not 7.\text{\textcopyright}e5?? \text{\textcopyright}a5+) 7...\text{\textcopyright}f6 8.\text{\textcopyright}g5 0-0 9.e5 Although this is recommended in many books in my opinion is not as strong as (9.\text{\textcopyright}xf7? \text{\textcopyright}xf7 10.\text{\textcopyright}xf7+ \text{\textcopyright}xf7 11.e5 winning an exchange.) 9...\text{\textcopyright}d5 10.\text{\textcopyright}h5 \text{\textcopyright}xg5 11.\text{\textcopyright}xg5 Lindberg,B–Celander,J/Stockholm, Sweden 2000.

\textbf{6.\text{\textcopyright}c4}
6...♖d7 7.0-0 ♗gf6

Forced as 9 ♗xf7+ was threatened.

8.c3

8.♗g5 ♘xf3 9.♕xf3 ♘b6 10.♗d2 with sharp play, Pruess,D–Fridman,D/Mesa USA 2010.

8...♗d6 9.♗b3

Before this game this line was considered as insufficient for Black since "Black can't protect both the b7 and f7 pawns" (as I've read in a certain opening book). After this game this evaluation should be reconsidered.

Volzhin played this line with Black, and in Trygstad–Volzhin, Bergen 2000, White preferred the quiet 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♗bd2 but Black obtained a very good game after 10...b5 11.♗d3 ♘c7 12.♗e1 ♘h5! Transferring the Bishop to the g6-square where it occupies an ideal position: here it defends the king and creates pressure against the e4-pawn.

9...0-0! 10.♕xb7

Otherwise White's previous move is senseless.

10...exd4 11.cxd4 ♗b6

The critical position for the assessment of Black's idea.

12.♗b3

12.♗d3 is strongly met by the unexpected 12...♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♗f4! and Black wins the pawn back obtaining the better chances: 14.♕xf4 (or 14.♗c3 ♖xd4+ 15.♗h1 ♖xc1 16.♕xc1 ♗g4 and Black is better.) 14...♖xd4+ 15.♗h1 ♖xd3 and White's position is horrible.
12...\( \Delta xe4 \)

Caro–Kann Advance – 3...c5 & 3...Na6

[B12]

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1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5

This line is not as well investigated as the main lines arising after 3...¥f5 and it's good way to avoid such mountains of theory. This is actually a gambit line.

The move 3...¤a6 is something that I wouldn't recommend for Black unless he can see his opponent foaming at the mouth. The best that Black can hope for is to create a blocked position in which he's got less space, not the most attractive of prospects unless your opponent then impales himself on the ramparts. 4.c3 Nunn's favourite move, which certainly seems to give Black some problems. White wants to do some clever tricks with his knights. (Kotronias suggested 4.¤d2, presumably trying to save the tempo expended on 4 c3, but then 4...¤f5 threatens 5...¤b4. (he wanted to meet 4...¤c7 with 5.¥d3, and 4...g6 could be answered by 5.¤e2) 4...¤c7 (4...¤f5 5.¤e2 e6 6.¤f4! The advantage of putting the knight on this square is that once Black's bishop is on g6 he will find it difficult to move his h–pawn. And with Black's pieces so passively placed he cannot distract White from his coming g2–g4 plan with any kind of counterattack. 6...¤e7 7.¤d2 ¤c7 8.g4! ¥g6 9.h4 f6 An unfortunate necessity. 10.¤xg6 hxg6 11.¤f3 Nunn,J–Nikolac,J/Germany 1984,, For 4...g6 see Nunn – Arkell) 5.¤e2 Patent John Nunn. (5.¤d3 has been more popular, but there is no evidence that it is any more effective,) 5...g6 6.¤g3 ¥h6 7.¤d2 ¥g4 8.f3 ¥d7 9.f4 ¤e6 (Black is finding it difficult to stem the flow of White pawns – 9...¤f5 is met by 10.¤xf5 ¥xf5)
11.g4) 10.\textsf{f}3 \textsf{g}7 11.h3 \textsf{hf}5 12.\textsf{x}f5 \textsf{xf}5 13.g4 Nunn,J–Arkell,K/London (England) 1990.

4.\textsf{d}xc5

4.c3 is harmless, for example: 4...\textsf{c}6 5.\textsf{e}3 cxd4 6.cxd4 \textsf{f}5 7.\textsf{c}3 e6 and the position is similar to the French but Black has an active light-squared Bishop.

4.c4!? trying to pressure the centre and exploit the fact that Black has taken two moves to play ...c5, 4...e6

a) 4...\textsf{c}6 5.cxd5? (5.\textsf{f}3! see 4 \textsf{f}3 below) 5...\textsf{x}d5 6.\textsf{c}3 \textsf{x}d4 7.\textsf{e}3 \textsf{b}4 8.a3 \textsf{a}5 9.\textsf{b}5 e6 10.\textsf{xc}6+ \textsf{b}xc6 11.\textsf{a}4 \textsf{b}6 12.\textsf{b}4 \textsf{a}6 13.\textsf{x}a6 \textsf{xa}6∞ Topalovic,Z–Mikhalevich,A/GM, Varazdin CRO 2003.

b) 4...cxd4 5.\textsf{f}3?! (5.\textsf{x}d4! is given by Wells and needs serious analysis.) 5...\textsf{g}4! an enterprising move that appears to equalise, 6.cxd5 \textsf{x}d5 7.\textsf{c}3 \textsf{xf}3 8.\textsf{xd}5 \textsf{xd}1 9.\textsf{c}7+ (9.e6? \textsf{g}4! Trent,L–Houska,J/Torquay ENG 2009) 9...\textsf{d}7 probably an improvement over (9...\textsf{d}8 10.\textsf{xa}8 \textsf{a}2! Hector,J–Khenkin,I/Tegernsee GER 2008) 10.\textsf{xa}8 \textsf{a}2 Robson,R–Khairullin,I/Moscow RUS 2009.

I think that 5.cxd5! is correct: (5.\textsf{d}xc5?! \textsf{c}6 6.\textsf{f}3 \textsf{xc}5 this is beginning to resemble a French Defence, Laznicka,V–Akopian,V/Moscow RUS 2007.) 5...\textsf{x}d5 6.\textsf{c}3 \textsf{c}6 7.\textsf{b}5 \textsf{a}6 (7...\textsf{c}4 8.\textsf{x}d4 \textsf{e}6 9.\textsf{f}3 Wells,P–Marusenko,P/Trefforst WLS 2008) 8.\textsf{xc}6+ \textsf{b}xc6 9.\textsf{ge}2 Haslinger,S–Marusenko,P/Hastings ENG 2008

Or 4.\textsf{f}3 a modern favourite, 4...\textsf{c}6 (4...\textsf{xd}4 5.\textsf{d}3 \textsf{c}6 6.\textsf{c}4 (6.\textsf{d}3 \textsf{c}6 7.\textsf{xc}6 \textsf{bxc}6 8.0-0 looks very much like a Sicilian Taimanov with the early freeing move, Karjakin,S–Short,N/Kiev UKR 2008) 6...\textsf{c}5?! (6...\textsf{c}6 transposes to 4...\textsf{c}6) 7.\textsf{c}3 \textsf{e}7 8.\textsf{e}3 \textsf{xd}4?! Karjakin,S–Short,N/Kiev UKR 2008.) 5.c4?! \textsf{xd}4 (5...\textsf{g}4?! 6.\textsf{xc}5! 6.\textsf{xd}5 \textsf{xd}5 7.\textsf{c}3 \textsf{xf}3 8.\textsf{xd}5 (8.gxf3? Vysochin,S–Rozum,I/St Petersburg RUS 2009) 8...\textsf{xd}1 9.\textsf{c}7+ \textsf{d}7 10.\textsf{xa}8 \textsf{h}5 11.\textsf{d}5! Wells) 6...e6 7.\textsf{c}xd5 \textsf{xc}5! a good response to White's unusual system, placing the emphasis on quick development. 9.\textsf{xd}5 \textsf{xd}5 10.\textsf{xc}5 0-0-0 11.\textsf{c}3 \textsf{b}4\perp Carlsen,M–Doetling,F/ICC INT 2006.) 6.\textsf{xd}4 \textsf{e}6 (6...\textsf{xc}4?! 7.\textsf{xc}6 \textsf{xd}1+ 8.\textsf{xd}1 \textsf{bxc}6 9.\textsf{xc}4 leaves White with good development and the better structure, Muzychuk,A–Ushenina,A/Ljubljana SLO 2007.) 7.\textsf{xc}6 (7.\textsf{c}3 is more critical) 7...\textsf{xc}6 8.\textsf{d}3?! a doubtful pawn sacrifice, Jones,G–Speelman,J/Wokefield Park ENG 2008.
4...\( \text{c6} \)

4...e6 The latest development. In my previous updates I told you that Black can begin with either 4...\( \text{c6} \) or 4...e6 since both moves lead to the same positions. But recently Black has been trying to omit an early 4...\( \text{c6} \) completely. The main adherent of this line at GM level is the German Rustem Dautov.

a) 5.\( g4 \) The idea behind this move is to prevent normal development of Black's K-side. 5...h5! A natural move but the weakening of the K-side is an obvious drawback. 6.\( \text{b5}+ \) (White has also tried 6.\( f4 \) \( \text{xc5} \) 7.\( d3 \) \( \text{b6} \) 8.\( c3 \)) g5 9.\( \text{d2} \) This involves White in some interesting gambit play, but there was a greedy alternative. (Simply 9.\( \text{g5} \) looks interesting after 9...\( \text{xf2}+ \) 10.\( \text{f1} \).) I don't see a follow-up for Black and White is threatening \( \text{Qg7} \).) 9...\( \text{c6} \) 10.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{h6} \) 11.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{f6} \). GM Dautov pointed out he could have obtained a good position by playing 9...\( a5+!? \) for example: 10.\( c3 \) \( a6 \)! 11.\( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{bxa6} \) 12.\( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{e7} \) 13.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{b6} \) and it's not clear how White can hold the e5-pawn. 14.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 15.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{c7} \) 10.0-0 \( \text{e7} \) 11.c3 a6 12.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 13.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{g6} \) 14.\( \text{bd2} \) 0-0 \( \text{Kindermann,S--Dautov,R/Bad Homburg 1997} \). Both sides have completed development and in my opinion the position is equal. Of course the pawn on h5 looks ugly but I can't see how White can exploit this.

b) 5.a3 is interesting, 5...\( a5 \) (5...\( \text{xc5} \) 6.\( g4 \) \( \text{e7} \) is definitely critical) 6.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{h6} \) 7.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{Kryvoruchko,Y--Battaglini,G/Cappelle la Grande FRA 2010} \), when 8.\( g5 \)! strikes me as strongest.

5...h6!? 6.\( \text{f3} \)!! This move seems to be superior to (6.\( c3 \) \( \text{f5} \) (6...\( d7 \) 7.\( b5 \) \( \text{f5} \) 8.\( d4 \) a6 9.\( \text{xd7}+ \) \( \text{xd7} \) 10.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 11.\( \text{cxd4} \) b6 12.\( \text{c6} \)) a logical positional move, \( \text{Van der Weide,K--Bitalzad},A/Haaksbergen NED 2009 \) 7.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d7} \)!. An important novelty. (Previously Black had played 7...\( \text{xd4} \) ) 8.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 9.\( \text{d2} \)! (9.\( \text{d3} \) is not good in view of the typical 9...\( \text{xd4} \) 10.\( \text{cxd4} \) b6!) 9...f6! (White is well prepared for the typical pawn sacrifice ...b6: 9...\( \text{xd4} \) 10.\( \text{cxd4} \) b6 11.\( \text{b4} \), or 9...\( \text{cxd4} \) 10.\( \text{cxd4} \) b6 11.\( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 12.\( \text{c3} \) and in both cases Black hardly has enough for the pawn,) 10.\( \text{exf6} \) \( \text{gxf6} \) 11.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 12.0-0?! After this inaccuracy Black obtains a clear edge, \( \text{Smirnov,P--Prizant,J/Russia 2000} \). (12.\( \text{b4} \) should be played, and after 12...0-0-0 13.0-0 \( \text{g8} \) a very complicated position arises where both sides have chances, but personally I would prefer to play Black.) 6...\( \text{d7} \) Dautov's improvement. (Previously he had tried 6...\( \text{f5} \) but failed to equalise, e.g. 7.\( g5 \)! \( \text{a5}+! \) (7...\( \text{f6} \) 8.\( \text{exf6} \) \( \text{gxf6} \) 9.\( \text{e5} \)! is close to a refutation, \( \text{Luther,T--Dittmar,P/Triesen LIE 2007} \) 8.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 9.\( \text{d3} \) h6 10.\( \text{c1} \) 7.\( \text{h6} \)! An important novelty. 7...\( \text{g6} \) 8.\( \text{c4} \) ! Now this break is much more to the point. 8...\( \text{xc4} \) 9.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 10.\( \text{e2} \)! (After a Queen swap Black has no problems at all: 10.\( \text{xd8}+ \) \( \text{xd8} \) 11.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{g7} \) 12.0-0-0+ \( \text{e7} \) with comfortable equality.) 10...\( \text{b7} \) 11.\( \text{b4} ! \) This move seems to be too ambitious. (The natural 11.0-0 is worth considering, for example: 11...\( \text{b5} \) 12.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{c7} \) 13.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 14.\( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 15.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{g7} \)
16. \( \text{Q}e4 \) and White retains some pressure.) 11...\( \text{d}7 \) 12.a3 a5! Immediately exploiting the weakening of White's Q-side. 13.\( \text{c}3 \)! A brave and correct decision. White fights for the initiative at any cost, Sutovsky,E–Dautov,R/Essem 2000. (After the primitive 13.b5 Black has a comfortable blockade on the dark squares.)

4...\( \text{h}6 \)? deserves consideration.

\section{5.\( \text{b}5 \)}

Practice proves this move is the only way to fight for opening advantage. The alternatives are:

5.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{g}4 \)! (5...e6 6.\( \text{d}3 \) (6.a3!? \( \text{xc}5 \) 7.b4 \( \text{b}6 \) 8.b5 \( \text{a}5 \) (8...\( \text{xe}5 \)? 9.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 10.\( f4 \) wins for White) 9.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 10.0-0 \( \text{d}7 \) (10...0-0? allows the "Greek gift" sacrifice 11.\( \text{xh}7+! \) intending 11...\( \text{xe}7 \) 12.\( \text{g}5+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 13.\( \text{h}5 \) with a winning attack for White) 11.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 12.\( \text{bd}2 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 13.a4 \( \text{g}6 \) 14.g3 \( \text{c}4 \)? 15.\( \text{xc}4 \) dxc4 16.\( \text{a}3 \) Preventing Black from legally castling, and leaving him with no proper answer to White's threats of \( \text{d}6 \) or \( \text{e}4-d6+ \), in a rapid encounter Motwani–Bourne) 6...\( \text{xc}5 \) 7.0-0 a commonsense approach. White plays a French Defence variation a tempo up (because of ...c6–c5), Perunovic,N–Jovanovic,S/Kragujevac SRB 2009) 6.c3 has caused some problems, 6...e6 7.b4 a6 8.\( \text{bd}2 \) Berkes,F–Zelcic,R/Zadar CRO 2010.

5.\( \text{f}4 \)! has a certain popularity, but recently Black found the correct way: 5...e6 6.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{ge}7 \)! (6...\( \text{xc}5 \) is inferior since after 7.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 8.\( \text{g}4 \)! White seizes the initiative.) 7.\( \text{gf}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 8.\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 9.\( \text{b}3 \) (9.\( h4 \) attempts to disrupt the Black plan, but after the next, accurate counter Black is fine, 9...\( \text{f}6 \)! 10.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 11.\( \text{bd}5 \) 0-0 12.\( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \?! \) Black has very active counterplay, Gubajdullin,A–Kornev,A/Vladimir RUS 2004) 9...\( \text{b}6 \) 10.\( \text{bd}3 \) 0-0 Black has successfully completed his development and in this French–like position his chances are by no means bad.

\section{5...e6}

This is nowadays the main line.

5...\( \text{a}5 \)! This old move was convincingly refuted in this game: 6.\( \text{c}3 \) e6 7.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{ge}7 \) 8.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 9.a3! I think this move is the refutation of this line. At least I can't say where Black could improve his play. 9...\( \text{xe}3 \) 10.\( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 11.e4! Shabalov,A–Arkell,K/London 1991.

\section{6.\( \text{e}3 \)}

This natural move is one of White's main weapons.

6.\( \text{g}4 \)! is also interesting

6...\( \text{ge}7 \) 7.\( \text{c}3 \)
The only attempt to fight for an opening advantage.

7.\(\text{d}f3\) is harmless: 7...\(\text{f}5\)! (7...\(\text{d}7\) is also good: 8.0-0 \(\text{x}e5\) 9.\(\text{x}e5\) \(\text{x}b5\) 10.\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{g}6\) 11.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{x}c4\) 12.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{d}xc4\) 13.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{d}5\)! Black is on top, Tagnon,N−Pert,R/12th Monarch Assurance, Port Erin IOM 2003) 8.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{fxd}4\) 9.\(\text{x}d4\) Blatny−Hansen, Baguio City 1987, and now the simple 9...\(\text{a}5\)+! (instead of 9...\(\text{a}5\) 10.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 11.0-0 0-0 12.\(\text{x}c6\) \(\text{bxc}6\) 13.\(\text{b}4\) with a healthy extra pawn for White,) 10.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{xb}5\)! 11.\(\text{x}b5\) \(\text{x}d4\) 12.\(\text{x}d4\) (12.\(\text{b}xd4\) \(\text{c}5\) secured Black good chances,) 12...\(\text{xc}5\) 13.\(\text{c}7\)+? \(\text{d}7\) 14.\(\text{d}8\) \(\text{a}8\) \(\text{x}d4\) is bad for White as the Knight on \(a8\) is trapped.

7...\(\text{d}7\)

Threatening 8...\(\text{xe}5\).

8.\(\text{xc}6\)

In Xie Jun–Lalic, Erevan 1996 White ignored the above mentioned threat and played 8.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xe}5\) 9.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{xb}5\) 10.\(\text{a}3\) but after 10...\(\text{d}7\) 11.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{c}6\)! 12.\(\text{xd}7\) \(\text{xd}7\) Black had everything in order. The game continued: 13.0-0-0?! A very dubious decision. (13.0-0 was more safe,) 13...\(\text{e}7\) 14.\(\text{h}4\) 0-0 15.\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{b}6\) 16.\(\text{h}6\) \(\text{g}6\) 17.\(\text{cxb}6\) \(\text{axb}6\) 18.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{c}5\) 19.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{d}4\) 20.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{e}5\)! and Black was clearly better.

8...\(\text{xc}6\)

8...\(\text{xc}6\) 9.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{f}5\) 10.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{a}5\) 11.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 12.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{e}7\) 13.0-0 0-0 14.\(\text{bd}2\) \(\text{c}7\) 15.\(\text{fe}1\) \(\text{d}7\) 16.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{c}8\) 17.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{ab}8\) 18.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{h}6\) 19.\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{d}8\) 20.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{b}6\)! Black comes to the thematic break, justifying his entire set-up. The white knights are clumsy (a common feature of this line) and \(b2\) is weak, Mastrovasilis,D−Conquest,S/Asnieres sur Seine FRA 2006.

9.\(\text{f}4\)?
9.\(\Box f3\) \(\Box c7\) 10.\(\Box d4\) White has firmly protected his extra pawn and that's why for decades this position was thought to be insufficient for Black. But matters are not so clear as this game proves. 10...\(\Box xd4\) 11.cxd4 \(b6\)! 12.cxb6 \(\Box xb6\) 13.\(\Box b3\) \(\Box a6\)! The critical position: Kaminski,M–Timoshchenko,G/Yerevan (ol) 1996. Obviously Black has tremendous compensation for the sacrificed pawn: he has a strong pair of bishops, open files on the Q-side and a considerable development advantage as White needs many tempi to evacuate his king from the centre of the board.

The immediate 9.\(\Box d4?!\) is weaker since after 9...\(\Box xd4\) 10.cxd4 \(b6\) 11.cxb6 \(f1)\) 11.b4? \(a5\) is just bad for White. 11...\(\Box xb6\) in comparison with the game Kaminski–Timoshchenko Black just has an extra tempo. Now Black's initiative progresses without hindrance.

9...\(g5!\)

The only way to obtain counterplay.

10.\(\Box f3\)

White completes his development hoping to exploit Black's weaknesses on the K-side. This move was thought to be a refutation of the whole line, but the novelty introduced by GM Igor Khenkin, the leading expert in this line, made White forget this move once and for all.

After this game White switched to 10.fxg5!? \(h6?!\) deserves certain attention. In Schroeder–Arkell, Hastings 1999 Black obtained good prospects after (10...\(\Box xe5\) 11.\(\Box f3\) \(\Box xf3+\) 12.\(\Box xf3\) \(g7\) 13.\(\Box d2\) \(b5\) The critical position for the evaluation of this line. For the sacrificed pawn Black obtained a strong pawn centre and bishop pair. The question is whether this is worth a pawn.\) after 11.gxh6 (11.\(\Box f3\) hxg5 (11...\(\Box e7?!\) 12.\(\Box xg5\) \(e7\) 13.\(\Box e3\) \(h4+\) 14.\(\Box d2\) \(c7\) 15.\(\Box e2\) \(\Box xe5\) 16.\(\Box xe5\) \(\Box xe5\) 17.\(\Box a3\) \(g5\) 18.\(\Box xg5\) \(xg5+\) 19.\(\Box c2\) \(g6+\) 20.\(\Box d2\) \(c8\) This line needs further practical tests.) 11...\(\Box xh6\) In return for two sacrificed pawns, Black now has a very dangerous lead in development and open lines for attacking on the kingside. 12.\(\Box e2\) \(h4+!\) 13.\(\Box f1\) (13.\(\Box g3?\) \(e4\) or, 13.\(\Box f2?\) \(xex3\) wins material for Black, and, 13.\(\Box f2\) \(g5\) is also highly unpleasant for White.\) 13...\(\Box xe3\) 14.\(\Box xe3\) \(\Box xe5!!\) Greet,A–Arkell,K/British Championship, Somerset 2000.
10...gxf4 11...xf4 exf4 12...bd2

12...wb6 13...b3 f2+ 14...e2

Black has to win the pawn back but White is threatening to seize the initiative on the K−side (f1, g5 etc) so Black should try to create threats against White's King first.

14...da5!

Caro–Kann Advance – 3...Bf5 various 4th

[\text{[B12]}]

Last updated: 19/07/11 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4...e3

This has suddenly become trendy, and was played a lot in the Russia–ROW match

Alternatives:

4...d2!? Trying to dissuade ...c5, 4...e6 5...b3!? (5.g4 will likely transpose elsewhere)

5...d7

a) 5...e7 is not bad, but g7 is a target and the g8–knight still has to get out, Bezgodov,A–Galkin,A/Sochi RUS 2007

b) 5...c5!? giving up the bishop pair to develop freely, 6.dxc5 xc5 7.xc5 a5+ 8.c3 xc5 9.a4+ (9.e3 c7 10.f4 Kurnosov,I–Galkin,A/Ulan Ude RUS 2009) 9...d7 10.b5 won quickly in Vachier Lagrave,M–Mchedlishvili,M/Muelheim GER 2010.

6...f3 (6.e2!? Kamsky,G–Ragger,M/Moscow RUS 2011) 6...g6 (6...c7 7.d3 Rublevsky,S–Morozevich,A/Sochi RUS 2007, when 7.xd3 8.xd3 e7 9.0-0 g6 is best, White has a simple space advantage, but Black stands solidly., After 6...e7 7.e2 e8 my impression is that Black stands safely enough, with plenty of play for both sides, Olszewski,M–Macieja,B/Warsaw POL 2008) 7.e2 e7 8.0-0 f5 So Black studiously refrains from...c5. 9.c3 (9.e1!? preparing to advance his kingside pawns, Alekseev,E–Berkes,F/Budapest HUN 2008) 9...e7 (9.e8 10.f4 Polgar,J–Iordachescu,V/Aix–les–Bains FRA 2011) 10.g4 h4 11.xh4 xh4 12.f4 f5
13.exf6 xf6 14.d3 xd3 15.xd3 g6 16.d2 e7 17.eae1 0-0

Delchev, A–Schlosser, P/National I, Besancon FRA 2003 White seems to be a little better but it is not at all easy to open up the position without his own King becoming weak.

4.g4 is not trendy at all, a throwback to the heyday of Mikhail Tal. Morozevich demonstrates that the idea is still playable, 4...d7 (4...e4! If the evidence of the following snippet is to be believed, this is superior. 5.f3 g6 6.h4 h5 7.e2 e6 8.f4 hxg4 9.xg6 fxg6 10.d3 d7! 11.xg6 gxf3 12.e3 xh3+ 13.f1 xh3+ 14.xh3 xh3→ Black can play without these heroics but the Queen sacrifice put a lot of pressure on White and he caved in after 27 moves, Hulshof, P–L’Ami, E/Hoogeveen 2003) 5.c4 e6 (5...h5!? 6.gxh5 f5 7.e3 e6 8.f3 g4 9.b3 b6=) 6.c3 c5! (6...h5 7.g5 e7 8.f3 dxc4 9.xc4 g6 10.d3 e7 11.xg6 fxg6 12.h4!± Morozevich, A–Zontakh, A/Tallinn 2003.) 7.cxd5 exd5 8.dxc5 Black soon won in Shirov, A–Anand, V/Leon ESP 2011.

4.h4!? h6 it is worth noting that Leko and Ivanchuk have both recently showed a preference for this

a) 4...h5 is generally considered the most solid move, 5.c4 (5.g5!? is a very unusual and interesting new try, 5...b6 6.e2 c5 Shirov, A–Anand, V/Leon ESP 2011.) 5...e6 6.d3 d7 (6...d7 White can now create a small but definite edge, 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.d3 9.a3± Gelashvili, T–Saleh, N/Dubai UAE 2005) 8.xd3 9.xd3 c5 10.f3 c6 (10...b8 11.g5 Alekseev, E–Iturrizaga, E/Khanty–Mansiysk RUS 2010) 11.0-0 d7 12.g5 Although Black looks quite solid, I think White is clearly better here, due his extra space and the fact that Black can’t easily castle, Short, N–Johannessen, L/Turin ITA 2006. 7.ge2 g4?! an idea of Karpoqv’s, (7...g4!?) Alekseev, E–Khairullin, L/Taganrog RUS 2011.) 8.g5 (8.f3 d5 9.g5 9.e4 Nepomniachtchi, I–Nakamura, H/Wijk aan Zee NED 2011) 8...b6 9.d2 d7 10.g3 Alekseev, E–Shimanov, A/Taganrog RUS 2011.

b) 4...b6!? it’s not certain that the queen is well placed on b6, 5.e2 h6 6.c4!? Jones, G–Stokke, K/Caleta ENG 2011.

5.g4 d7

a) 5...h7!? 6.e6 Thought to be good for White. 6...d6 Black ignores the displacement of his King, relying on ...e7–e5 for counterplay. 7.exf7+ xf7 8.c3 e5 9.xf3+ f6 10.g5 hxg5? He had to keep the Kingside closed and seek central counterplay. (White’s position is tenable after both 10.e4 and, 10.exd4! 11.hxg5 e4 12.xe4 dxe4 13.b3+ d5 14.h8+ Sveshnikov, E–Gagunashvili, M/Dubai 2003.

b) 5...e4 looks critical, 6.f3 (6.h3?! strikes me as interesting.) 6...h7 7.d3 (7.e6?) 7...xd3 8.xd3 e6 Nepomniachtchi, I–Wells, P/Aix–les–Bains FRA 2011.

6.d2 (6.h5 White grabs further space on the kingside, 6...e6 7.c3 c5 8.f4 c6 9.e3 b6 10.h2 Navara, D–Shimanov, A/Vilnius LTU 2010) 6...c5 7.dxc5 e6!? (Why not 7...xc6?) 8.b3 xc5 8...c7 9.xc5 a5+ 10.c3 xxc5 11.f3 e7 12.d3 b6 13.e3 a5 14.d2 g6 15.d4 xd4 16.exd4 xd2+ 17.xd2± Kramnik, V–Leko, P/Brissago SUI 2004 The sort of edge which will not go away.

4.c4 This is an old variation that was never thought to achieve much until similar variations involving c4 began to work for White. Now the move is receiving more attention at
the top levels. 4...e6 5.\( \square \)c3 \( \square \)e7 6.\( \square \)ge2 \( \square \)d7 7.\( \square \)f4 dxc4 8.\( \square \)xc4 Efimenko,Z–Gyimesi,Z/Eppingen GER 2009.

4.\( \square \)d3 is nothing special, 4...\( \square \)xd3 5.\( \square \)xd3 e6 6.\( \square \)c3 \( \square \)b6 7.\( \square \)ge2 c5 /Black can also delay this, for example 7...\( \square \)a6 8.\( \square \)h3 \( \square \)d7 9.0-0 Sax,G–Arlandi,E/Mitropa Cup, Baden 1999, or 7...\( \square \)e7 (!) 8.0-0 \( \square \)d7 9.\( \square \)f4 e5 Shabalov,A–Kacheishvili,G/Stratton Mountain, Vermont US 1999) 8.dxc5 \( \square \)xc5 9.0-0 \( \square \)e7 10.\( \square \)a4 \( \square \)c6 11.\( \square \)xc5 \( \square \)xc5 12.\( \square \)e3 \( \square \)c7 13.f4 \( \square \)f5 14.c3 \( \square \)ce6 15.\( \square \)ad1 Nimzowitsch,A–Capablanca,J/New York 1927.

4.f4!? e6 5.\( \square \)f3 c5 6.\( \square \)e3 (6.c3 \( \square \)c6 7.\( \square \)e3 \( \square \)b6 8.\( \square \)c1 is pleasant for Black, Zvjaginsev,V–Khairullin,I/Moscow RUS 2010) 6...cxd4 7.\( \square \)xd4 \( \square \)e7 8.\( \square \)b5+ \( \square \)d7 9.0-0 a6 10.\( \square \)e2 \( \square \)g5!÷ If White were allowed a few moves to quietly consolidate he might well get a grip on the position 'a la Kramnik'. Ivanchuk makes sure that Morozevitch will have a full-blooded battle on his hands, Morozevich,A–Ivanchuk,V/Calvia de Mallorca ESP 2004.

4...e6

4...\( \square \)b6!?! 5.\( \square \)e1 e6 (5...\( \square \)h6!?! is surprisingly popular with high-level players. Black intends either ...\( \square \)g4 or ...\( \square \)f5 at some point. I am very doubtful whether Black can even think about equalization. 6.\( \square \)f3 (6.h3 e6 7.\( \square \)f3 Smirin,I–Bariev,E/Moscow RUS 2002) 6...e6 7.c4 (7.\( \square \)bd2 c5 8.\( \square \)b3 \( \square \)d7 9.dxc5 \( \square \)xc5 10.\( \square \)d4 is Svidler,P–Shirov,A/EuTCh, Plovdiv BUL 2003, where White play strictly central, emphasizing the poor position of the knight on h6. It cost Black time to get this piece into the game.) 7...dxc4 8.\( \square \)bd2 \( \square \)d3 9.\( \square \)xd3 cxd3 10.\( \square \)xh6 gxh6 11.0-0 \( \square \)d7 12.\( \square \)d1 \( \square \)a6 13.\( \square \)e4 \( \square \)g8 14.\( \square \)e1 0-0-0 15.\( \square \)xh3 It's up to White to prove that his small advantages of pawn structure and good centralised Knights vs dodgy Bishop mean something, Anand,V–Khenkin,I/Bundesliga 2002.) 6.c4 (6.\( \square \)d2 c5 7.\( \square \)b3!?! trying to release the pressure on the queenside, but it loses important tempi, (7.\( \square \)gf3 is the natural and normal course, shoring up the centre) 7...c4 8.\( \square \)d2 f6! played before White can consolidate, Efimenko,Z–Riazantsev,A/Moscow RUS 2007.) Meanwhile 6...dxc4! (6...\( \square \)e7?! 7.c5! and Black was crushed in Kasparov,G–Shirov,A/Moscow RUS 2002, 6...\( \square \)xb1! 7.\( \square \)xb1 \( \square \)b4+ 8.\( \square \)d2 \( \square \)xd2+ 9.\( \square \)xd2 with a little extra space to White, Gelfand,B–Dreev,A/Moscow RUS 2002.) 7.\( \square \)xc4 (7.\( \square \)d2!? \( \square \)a5!(to stop \( \square \)xc4) 8.\( \square \)xc4 \( \square \)e7 9.\( \square \)e2 \( \square \)d7 10.0-0 \( \square \)d5 11.\( \square \)g3 \( \square \)g6 12.h4 the prelude to a very complicated struggle, Grischuk,A–Anand,V/Mainz GER 2005) 7...\( \square \)e7 8.\( \square \)e2 \( \square \)d8 9.0-0 \( \square \)d7 10.\( \square \)g3 \( \square \)g6 11.\( \square \)c3 \( \square \)f5 12.\( \square \)g5 \( \square \)b6 13.\( \square \)xf5 \( \square \)xf5 14.\( \square \)d1 h6= Shirov,A–Anand,V/Bar SCG 2005, seems very reasonable for Black

5.\( \square \)d2
5...$\text{d}7$

5...$\text{e}7$ 6.$\text{b}3$ $\text{d}7$ 7.$\text{e}2$ $\text{h}6$ 8.$\text{f}3$ $\text{g}5$?! Either of $8...\text{e}4$, or $8...\text{h}7$ planning $...\text{f}5$, are quite satisfactory.) 9.$\text{h}4$ $\text{g}4$ 10.$\text{h}2$ $\text{h}5$ 11.$\text{f}3$ Gormally, D–Watson, P/Blackpool 2005 led to a superb attacking position for White.

5...c5 6.$\text{dxc}5$ Sulskis, S–Dimitrov, R/Gibraltar ENG 2008, 6...d4! 7.$\text{f}4$ $\text{c}6$

6.$\text{f}2$

This reserves options with the c–pawn.

6.$\text{g}f3$ $\text{e}7$ 7.$\text{e}2$ (7.$\text{h}4$ c5! 8.$\text{c}3$ Degraeve, J–Lalic, B/Cannes (open) 2004 when 8...$\text{b}6$ is certainly Black's best) 7...$\text{g}6$ intending $...\text{f}5$, 8.$\text{h}4$ the critical test, 8...c5 9.$\text{c}3$ $\text{c}6$ 10.$\text{xg}6$ hxg6 11.$\text{f}3$ this position has been reached a few times with great results for White, see Carlsen, M–Wang Hao/Wijk aan Zee NED 2011.

6.$\text{c}3$ $\text{e}7$ (6...f6 Smirin, I–Dreev, A/Moscow RUS 2002, 6...$\text{b}6$ 7.$\text{b}4$! a noteworthy approach, 7...f6 8.$\text{b}3$ $\text{e}7$ 9.$\text{e}2$ Vachier Lagrave, M–Bologan, V/Wijk aan Zee NED 2007) 7.$\text{f}4$ $\text{h}5$ 8.$\text{e}2$ $\text{h}4$ 9.$\text{g}f3$ $\text{g}4$ Grischuk, A–Karpov, A/Odessa UKR 2008.

6...$\text{b}6$

6...f6 7.$\text{g}f3$ $\text{c}7$ 8.$\text{f}4$ fxe5 9.$\text{dxe}5$ typical provocation from Shirov, inviting Black to win the e5 pawn at the cost of some time, 9...$\text{e}7$ 10.$\text{h}4$ $\text{g}6$ 11.$\text{h}2$ 0-0-0 12.$\text{g}5$ $\text{dxe}5$ 13.$\text{g}4$ $\text{h}6$ the position is very unclear, Shirov, A–Bologan, V/Foros UKR 2006.

6...$\text{c}7$ Sulskis, S–Postny, E/Dresden GER 2008

7.$\text{b}3$ f6 8.$\text{f}3$ $\text{e}7$ 9.0-0 $\text{g}6$ 10.$\text{c}4$!

This is White's intention.

10...a5 11.$\text{e}5$ $\text{xc}5$ 12.$\text{dxc}5$ $\text{xb}2$ 13.$\text{d}4$

Shirov, A–Erenburg, S/Caleta ENG 2005 when
13...\texttt{\textdagger}f7

but not 13...fxe5 14.\texttt{\textdagger}xe6 \texttt{\textdagger}c8 15.\texttt{\textdagger}g4\texttt{\textdagger}

14.\texttt{\textdagger}g4 f5

would have been OK for Black.
Caro–Kann Advance – Short Variation

[B12]

Last updated: 19/07/11 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 \(\mathcal{f}5\) 4.\(\mathcal{f}3\)

The positional line, with \(\mathcal{e}2\) and 0-0 to follow. This line is a favourite of Nigel Short and brought him many excellent victories (even in the candidates match against Karpov!).

4...e6 5.\(\mathcal{e}2\)

5.a3!? Not totally new but certainly totally surprising for Salem! 5...c5 6.c4 this is the idea, Rausis, I–Salem, A/Open, Sharjah UAE 2003. It is remarkable how many new ideas are coming forward in the Advance Caro these days.

5...\(\mathcal{d}7\)

The most popular, but there are plenty of alternatives:

5...c5 6.\(\mathcal{e}3\) (6.c3 \(\mathcal{e}6\) 7.0-0 cxd4 8.\(\mathcal{xd}4\) Sjugirov, S–Cheparinov, I/Budva MNE 2009, 6.0-0 \(\mathcal{c}6\) 7.\(\mathcal{e}3\) is generally considered harmless, Naiditsch, A–Anand, V/Mainz GER 2009) 6...\(\mathcal{b}6\)!!? This has recently become all the rage at the top level and indeed must be the critical response.
a) 6...d7 7.0-0 (7.0-0 d4!? worked well in Svidler,P–Topalov,V/Nanjing CHN 2008) 7...e7 8.c4 dxc4 9.a3 Shirov,A–Eljanov,P/Moscow RUS 2010.

b) 6...cxd4 7.exd4 e7 8.c4

b1) 8.c3 is not very testing, 8...bxc6 9.f4 g5!? Caruana,F–Motylev,A/Moscow RUS 2008

b2) 8.d2! c6 9.f3 e4 (9...g4 Volokitin,A–Ruck,R/Budva MNE 2009) 10.0-0 g6 Black develops and puts pressure on the e5–pawn, 11.exd6 White is happy to sacrifice a pawn to open up the centre and try to exploit his lead in development, 7...a5! 8.a5+ see Svidler,P–Anand,V/Moscow RUS 2002.) 10...dxc4 11.0-0-0 a5 12.xa5 xc5 13.xf5 xf5 14.b6 c6 15.f4 c8 16.f3 (16.g4 h4 17.xc4 Caruana,F–Arutinian,D/Rijeka CRO 2010) 16...e7 17.d2 g5 18.g3 fxg3 19.fxe5 h4! (19...b4 Leko,P–Cheparinov,I/Elista RUS 2008) 20.e4 c6 21.e5 Leko,P–Anand,V/Miskolc HUN 2009.

7.c3 (7.c4 White is happy to sacrifice a pawn to open up the centre and try to exploit his lead in development, 7...xb2 8.0-0 (8.0-0 d4 is likely to transpose, 8...e7 (The rook is poisoned: 8...xa1 9.b3 d7 10.c3) 9.db2 c6 10.db3 dxc4 11.dxc4 ed8! this appears very strong. The idea is to simply put the knight on d5 and complete development, see Kosteniuk,A–Kacheishvili,G/Las Vegas USA 2010) 7...xb2!? (7...c6 8.0-0!? xb2 9.e1 (9.b5 Ni Hu–Ivanov,S/Dagomys RUS 2010) 9...cxd4 (9...c4 might be better, as 10.b1 xc2 11.b7 b4 12.exb4! xb4 13.a1 xa2 14.xa2 xa4! was fine for Black in Motylev,A–Alsin Leal,D/Moscow RUS 2011.) 10.exd4 cxd4 11.d4 b4 12.b1 (12.db5? Karjakin,S–Tukhaev,A/Wroclaw POL 2010.) 12...xc3 13.b2 xc1 14.xc1 b6 15.db5+ gave Black problems in Gashimov,V–Ivanuch,V/Reggio Emilia ITA 2010.) 8.xb1! xb1+ (8...xc2? Christiansen,L–Seirawan,Y/Saint Louis USA 2011) 9.bxb1 c4 10.xb7 c6 11.d5 (11.d2 b4 Inarkiev,E–Eljanov,P/Astrakhan RUS 2010.) 11...d8 12.e7 d8 13.d6+ xd6 14.exd6 b1+ 15.db1 xc2 16.db2 xd1 17.exd1 this position is difficult for Black, see Karjakin,S–Eljanov,P/Khanty–Mansiysk RUS 2010.

5...e7 6.0-0 (6.db2 c5 7.dxc5 c6 8.db3 xc5! an unimpressive novelty. Black should prefer (8...d7) 9.exd5 c6a5+ 10.c3 dxc5 11.b3 e7 12.g5 c7 13.d4! xd4 14.cxd4+ White can massage Black at length with the two Bishops and did! Svidler,P–Azmaiparashvili,Z/Beersheva ISR 2005) 6...c5 6...g6 7.db2 d3 8.g4! Shirov,A–Mchedlishvili,M/Emsdetten GER 2010) 7.c4 (7.a3! c6c6 8.c4 Inarkiev,E–Riazantsev,A/Olginka RUS 2011) 7...bc6 8.dxc5 grabbing the pawn, 8...d4 9.d3 xd3 10.xd3 xg6 11.e4 xc5 12.db2 Motylev,A–Maletin,P/Olginka RUS 2011.

5...b4+!? the idea is to bring the bishop round to c7 to put pressure on White's centre, but it loses a lot of time, 6.db2 d7 7.0-0 a5 8.db3 White went on to cause a major upset in Sjugirov,S–CarlSEN,M/Khanty–Mansiysk RUS 2010.

6.0-0
6...h6

6...g6!? Grooten's patent, a common finesse, clearing f5 for a knight and waiting for White to commit. Sometimes Black may play ...f6, and then if attacked the bishop can slip back to f7. 7.c3 (7.bd2 h6 8.c4 (8.b3 g4?! Firman,N–Eljanov,P/Katernberg GER 2010) 8.e4 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.b3 0-0 11.e2 f6∞ Helstroffer,A–Grooten,H/Bad Zwesten GER 2006) 7.a6 a semi–waiting move, (7...h6 8.f4 (8.xh6!? this simple approach didn't work well in Bologan,V–Dreev,A/Poikovsky RUS 2006) 8.e7 9.d2 f5 10.b4! Adams,M–Monroy,C/Caleta ENG 2011.) 8.d2 h6 9.b3 f5 10.g3?! Ni Hua–Minasian,A/Moscow RUS 2007
6...e7 Black is not concerned about h4, 7.bd2 (7.b3!! c5 8.c3 c6 9.e3 c8 10.a3!? very much as in the French Defence, White expands on the side of the board on which his opponent is theoretically strongest, see Socko,B–Wojtaszek,R/Opole POL 2007.) 7...c5!? 8.c4! Vachier Lagrave,M–Dittmar,P/Caleta ENG 2009.

7.bd2 e7 8.b3

Trying to clamp Black's position.

8...c8

8.c8 looks a bit odd, 9.a4!? grabbing space on the queenside, 9.e7 10.a5 0-0 (10...a6 Motylev,A–Rodshtein,M/Moscow RUS 2008) 11.e3 a6!? Vallejo Pons,F–Anand,V/Leon ESP 2008.
8.g5!? Black grabs space but he has to be careful that it's not too weakening, 9.h4 g6! Volokitin,A–Rodshtein,M/Moscow RUS 2010.

9.h3
9.c3 doesn't lead to much, Zhigalko,S–Mchedlishvili,M/Dresden GER 2007.
9.\texttt{\textdagger}d2 \texttt{\textdagger}g6 10.c4 This is the key break. 10...dxc4 11.\texttt{\textdagger}a5!? (Simply 11.\texttt{\textdagger}xc4! when White's space advantage may give him a small edge.) 11...\texttt{b}b8 12.\texttt{\textdagger}xc4 \texttt{b}b6 (12...\texttt{\textdagger}h4 Lastin,A–Timman,J/Baku AZE 2008) 13.\texttt{\textdagger}a5 Mamedov,N–Jobava,B/Baku AZE 2008, (but 13.\texttt{\textdagger}xb6 axb6 14.\texttt{\textdagger}b3 retains some edge.)

9...a6 10.c3

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

10...\texttt{c}c8 11.a4 c5 12.\texttt{\textdagger}xc5 \texttt{\textdagger}xc5 13.dxc5 \texttt{\textdagger}xc5 14.\texttt{\textdagger}e3 \texttt{c}c8 15.a5 \texttt{\textdagger}c6 16.\texttt{\textdagger}b6 \texttt{d}d7 17.b4 \texttt{\textdagger}b8 18.\texttt{\textdagger}d2 \texttt{e}e7 19.\texttt{\textdagger}d1!±

Zhigalko,S–Andreikin,D/Kirishi RUS 2005 Whereas Black's bishop on h7 is out of play, White can bring his own light–squared bishop into play with strong effect.
Caro–Kann Advance – 3...Bf5 4.Nc3

[B12]

Last updated: 24/12/10 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ¥f5 4.¤c3

In the Advance Variation with 3...¥f5 White has a wide choice on the 4th move. But currently only two lines are really popular. The first is the very sharp approach of the text.

4...e6

4...a6 Karpov decides to avoid the dangers of 4...e6 5 g4, instead adopting a much quieter treatment. He was probably hoping to outplay his young opponent in a quiet middlegame rather than indulge in any kind of theoretical battle. 5.¤f3 (Black snatched the pawn with 5.¥d3 ¥xd4 6.¤f3 ¥g4 in Holmsten,A–Minasian,A/Ubeda Open 2000) 5...e6 6.¥e2 ¥e7 (6...¥d7 7.0-0 ¥e7 8.b3 ¥g6 9.¤a4 ¥d8 10.c4! ¥f5 11.g4!? Space is the name of the game in this line! Shirov,A–Andreikin,D/Dagomys RUS 2008) 7.0-0 ¥g4 8.¤a4 ¥c7 9.b3 b5!? 10.¤b2 ¥d7 11.c4 bxc4 12.bxc4 dxc4 13.¤g5!? Enterprising, but not necessarily the best. (Simply 13.¤xc4 ¥d5 14.¤d2 would maintain a nice edge for White.) 13...¥xe2 14.¥xe2 Grischuk,A–Karpov,A/Linares ESP 2001.

4...æ6
The ultimate deterrent? This is something like a high class waiting move with which Black keeps open the option of retreating his bishop to c8 and removes one of the potential dangers of a later ...c6−c5 by protecting the b5 square. 5.♗ce2 With Black playing so slowly White also feels he can indulge in long−term strategic manoeuvres.
a) 5.♗d3 ♘xd3 6.♕xd3 e6 7.♕ge2 c5 8.dxc5 ♘c6 9.♕g3 ♘e7 10.♕g5 ♗f5 11.♕xd8 ♘xg3 12.hxg3 ♘xd8 13.f4 ♘xc5 Black is very comfortable here. If this game had been played under normal tournament conditions I suspect that Karpov would have won, Llobel Cortell,E−Karpov,A/Manises ESP 2001.
b) 5.♗e3 c5 Playing this straight away looks very interesting.
b1) 5...h5!?N 6.♗f3 e6 7.♗d3 ♘e7 8.♕d2 ♘e7 9.♕f3 ♘f5 10.♕xf5 ♘xg3 11.hxg3 ♘e7 12.♗g4 ♘xd3 13.cxd3 e5 14.♕b3 d4 15.♕d2 ♘d5 16.f4 A very murky position has arisen where Black needs to demonstrate light−squared superiority. 16...f6?! (To that end 16...e4! is correct: 17.dxe4 ♘xe4 18.fxe4 h4 19.h3 ♘f5+ Vlassov,N−Bologan,V/Edda Rapid, Reykjavic ISL 2003)
b2) 5...e6 6.g4 Caro−Kann Advance Variation−Question from Reader/2008
6.dxc5 e6 7.♗f3 ♘d7 8.b4 Hanging on to his ill−gotten gains, but now Black develops powerful counterplay against the weakened queenside. 8...♗g4 9.♕d4 ♘xf3 10.gxf3 ♘e7 11.f4 b6!? Wiersma,E−Grooten,H/Leeuwarder NED 2001.
5...e6 6.♗g3 ♘g6 7.h4 h6 8.♖e1 ♘e7 9.♗f4 c5 10.♗xg6 ♘xg6 11.♕d3 cxd4 12.♕xg6 fxg6 13.♗g4 ♘d7 14.♖xg6 ♘f7 15.♖f7+ ♘xf7 This endgame is better for Black, he has the better bishop and White has yet to recover the pawn on d4, Shirov,A−Anand,V/ Leon ESP 2001.
4...a5!? a new move, utterly different to 4...a6, which completely floors Sebag. Black stakes out a claim on queenside space and denies White an attacking target (i.e. the bishop on f5) 5.♗e3 a4 6.a3 ♖b6 7.♗b1 ♘a5 8.g4 ♗d7 9.♖g2 e6 10.♗ge2 c5! 11.0−0 ♗c6 12.f4 h5 13.h3 hxg4 14.hxg4 cxd4 15.♗xd4 ♗xd4 16.♗xd4 ♘c5 Sebag,M−Chiburdanidze,M/Elista RUS 2004, fascinating play.

5.g4

This line has never been more popular and hundreds of games were played at the top level during the last two years. White’s play may seem somewhat anti−positional but it fits well into one of the main principles of modern chess: White should fight for the
initiative at any cost. Another explanation of the popularity of this variation is the fact Black is currently doing well in the Caro main lines with 3...c3 (let's say, in Smyslov's 4...d7 and the Classical 4...f5). The main experts in this line are A. Shirov, E. Sutovsky, I. Nataf (to name only a few) and among adherents of Black's position are GMs E. Bareev, A. Dreev, I. Khenkin and yours truly!

5...g6 6.åge2

The "tabia" of the line. Now it's Black turn to choose a defensive system. After the text 7.h4 is a real threat as 7...h5 will be strongly met by 8...f4.

The premature 6.h4 leads White nowhere after 6...h5

6...åe7

We took a look at this line last year when this defence was at the height of its popularity. Since then many interesting games have been played, and the line has proved its viability.

6...f6!? This old move is out of fashion nowadays but it's by no means bad. It fits in with the well known principle that a flank attack should be countered by action in the centre of the board. 7.h4! In my opinion, the best move. (7...f4 fxe5!?) Looks risky but is by no means bad. (7...åf7 8.åe2 åd7 9.exf6 åxf6 10.g5 åxd4 11.åxe6 åxe6 12.åxe6+ åe7 13.åe3 åe5 14.åg4 åc5 15.0-0-0 åxe3+ 16.fxe3 åe7? Galdunts, S–Schulz, J/7th BayEM, Bad Wiessee GER 2003 Taking on e3 would have been both courageous and correct. (16...åxe3+ 17.åb1 0-0=) 8...åxg6 (8...åxe6 leads to a wild position, one which is acceptable to Black, 8...åe7 9.åxf8 exd4+ 10.åe2 dxc3 11.åxg6 hxg6 12.åd3 åf6 13.åxc3 (13...åxg6+ åf8 14.bxc3 Wegerle, J–Yevseev, D/Cappelle la Grande FRA 2004) 13...åbd7! 14.åe3 åe4! Macieja, B–Postny, E/Maalot–Tarshiha ISR 2008) 8...hxg6 9.dxe5 åd7 10.åf4 The critical position for the evaluation of White's plan. Although Black's pawn structure on the K-side is exposed, in my opinion Black's chances are by no means worse. First of all, Black's Knights are not at all inferior to White's Bishop's pair since both Bishops are restricted by pawn chains. Also White can't really exploit the weakness of g6–pawn since Black can firmly protect it by playing ...åe7 and after completing his development (...åc7, ... 0-0-0 to follow) Black can hope to obtain a comfortable blockade position. 10...åb4 11.åd3 åc7 12.0-0 åc7 13.åe2 Sacrificing a pawn White tries to seize the initiative, Antonsen, M–Kortchnoj, V/Copenhagen 1996.) 7...fxe5 8.h5 åf7 (8...exd4? is a gross blunder in view of 9.hxg6 dxc3 10.åxh7! and White wins.) 9.dxe5 åd7 10.f4 White has managed to obtain a flexible pawn phalanx in the centre of the board and a considerable space advantage. However the position is not at all clear, since White lags behind in development after his many pawn moves. 10...åb6 11.åd4! The only way to fight for an opening advantage, (11.åd3?! Szoen, D–Dziuba, M/Lublin POL 2008) 11...åc5 (11...åc5?! Sax, G–Lauber, A/Gyula 1997) 12.åf3 åe7 Mekhitarian, K–Molina, R/Rio de Janeiro BRA 2007.

6...c5 This has been Black's main reply throughout the decades (6...Ne7 which is very popular now, was discovered only a few years ago). The appreciation of this move has changed many times – brilliant wins and severe losses have alternated with each
other. But the line is alive, and only last year was enriched with many interesting ideas. 7.h4! This straightforward move is the best in this position. Now Black has to decide how to save the Bishop. (7.¢e3 is the alternative to the text but Black's task is not so difficult, 7...cxd4 8.¤xd4 ¢b4 9.¥d2 ¢d7 10.a3 ¥a5 11.¢b1!? ¥xc3 12.bxc3 a6 13.¢xb7 ¥xb3 Kotrionas, V–Kidambi, S/British Championship 2003.) 7...h5 The main line.
a) 7...cxd4 This line, which leads to wild complications, was popular in the Eighties, but I believe after this game it will struggle to find new adherents. 8.¢xd4 h5 Now 9.Nf4 is impossible. 9.f4! (9.¢b5+ ¢d7 10.f4! transposes.) 9...hxg4 (Black has also tried 9...¥d7 but has failed to equalize: 10.f5 exf5 11.gxf5 ¥xf5 12.¢xf5 ¥xg4 13.¢c6 14.¢b5! ±¥e7 15.¢e4 ¥e6 (Or 15...¥xe4+ 16.¥xe4 ¢f3 17.¢b5 ¥c7 18.¥e5 ±¥b6! and Black still has difficulties to solve) 16.¢g5 0-0-0 17.¢xe6 bxc6 18.¢e5? and White is better, Grasso–Behl, 1995.) 10.¢b5+ ¢d7 11.f5! The most consistent and dangerous continuation. (The humble 11.¢xf4 ¥h6 12.¢g2 ¥b6!? is OK for Black.) 11...¢xh4! (11...¥xf5 as was played in Sax–Vadasz, Hungary 1985 is weak: 12.¢xf5 exf5 13.¢xd5 ¥c7 14.¢f4 ¥e7 and now White should play 15.¥d2 0-0-0 16.e6! and Black is in trouble.) 12.¢f1! Officially theory considers this position as unclear, but I believe White is better here. It is of note that major Caro–Kann experts (including Karpov and Anand) always avoid this position with Black. 12...exf5 13.e6! The most precise move again. (After 13.¢f4 a6! Black is OK) 13...fxe6 14.¢xe6 ¥e7 15.¢e2 The critical position of this line. White sacrifices 3 (!) pawns but obtains a dangerous initiative. First of all Black needs to parry the threats of 16.¢c7 and 16.¢d5, see Nagel–Cuno for the analysis.
b) 7...h6 8.f4! True to his style, Shirov chooses the most aggressive continuation. (8.¢e3 is the old (but not bad!) main line.) 8...¥e7! (After 8...¥e7 9.¢c6 9.¢c6! intending 10.f5 is strong, and it's very dangerous for Black to grab a pawn: 9...cxd4 (9...¥e7 or 10.0-0 cxd4 11.¢xd4 ¥c5 12.¢e3 ¥cxd4 13.¢xh5 ¥c6 14.¢e2! ±¥d6+ 15.¢xd6 ¥xh4 16.¢b5! and Black's position can hardly be defended) 10.¢xd4 ¥xd4 11.¢xd4 ¥xc2 12.f5! and White's attack is very strong) 9.¢g2! The pawn sacrifice is a logical follow-up. (9.h5? ¥h4+ 10.¢d2 ¥h7 is clearly in Black's favor.) 9...¢xh4+ 10.¢f1 For a sacrificed pawn, White has obtained a huge development advantage (especially taking into consideration the fact Black will need one more move to return the Bishop). Black has to solve some extremely difficult tasks. 10...¥e7 11.¢f5! Shirov, A–Nisipeanu, L/FIDE WCh Las Vegas 1999, an exciting game!
8.¢f4 ¥c6?! Black allows White to destroy his pawn structure on the K–side, but in return creates pressure on White's centre. (8...¥h7!? Black keeps his strong Bishop and sacrifices a pawn, hoping to obtain a development advantage and exploit the weakness of White's centre. This is a very interesting idea and the previous perception of this position was that White held the advantage .... 9.¢xh5 ¥c6! 9...cxd4 10.¢b5! Only by playing this move can White hope for an opening advantage. 10...¢c6 11.¢xd4 ¥xd4?!
a) 11...¢xe5 deserves attention and although after 12.¢f4 ¥c6 13.¢b5 ¥b8 14.¢e2 White has a development advantage and good attacking chances, the position is not clear at all.
b) 11...¥e7! A very recent, sensible improvement by Dreev. Black holds fire with his Queen, preferring to develop, 12.¢g5 (12.c3 ¥xe5 13.¢g5 Vallejo Pons, F–
Karpov, A/Donostia ESP 2009) 12...\texttt{a5+} 13.c3 €xd4 14.\texttt{xd4} €c6 Fedorov, A −
Dreev, A/Moscow 2003

12.\texttt{xd4} €e7 13.\texttt{a4+} €c6 14.\texttt{g5} \texttt{a5+}?! The Queen exchange here is equal to
resignation, Shirov, A −Yermolinsky, A/Wijk aan Zee 1999. (14.\texttt{b6} was relatively
better although after 15.0−0−0 \texttt{xf2} 16.\texttt{h3!} \texttt{c8} 17.\texttt{e3!} White is doing well) 10.dxc5
\texttt{xc5} is a more accurate order of moves, if White takes on g7 he cedes a strong
initiative to Black and if he doesn't take his pawn structure is fragmented, 11.\texttt{g2}
(11.\texttt{b5} d4? Nakamura, H − Bareev, E/Bastia FRA 2007) 11...\texttt{g6} 12.\texttt{g5} Fedorov, A −
Gyimesi, Z/Rabac CRO 2004) 9.\texttt{xc6} fxg6 10.\texttt{e2}! Other moves are also
insufficient, for example: 10.\texttt{gxh5}? cd4 11.\texttt{b5} \texttt{h5}, or 10.\texttt{e3}? cd4 11.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{h6}!
12.\texttt{gxf3} \texttt{f5} with a huge edge for Black.) 10...\texttt{cxd4} This move has a bad reputation,
but Black has something in mind...
a) 10...\texttt{b6}?! An idea of German GM Igor Khehkin. Black steps up the pressure on
White's centre. 11.\texttt{f4}! Consistently played: White attacks Black’s weaknesses
without delay. 11...\texttt{cxd4} 12.\texttt{xc6}! True to his style Morozevich grabs the first
opportunity to mix things up. Now vast complications arise. 12...\texttt{b4}+ 13.\texttt{e2}
The critical position for evaluating Morozevich's idea, Morozevich, A −Bareev, E/Sarajevo
2000.
b) 10...hxg4 11.\texttt{f4} is very dangerous for Black
c) and 10...\texttt{g7} is also not too hot 11.\texttt{f4} \texttt{cxd4} 12.\texttt{h3}! (12.\texttt{xe6}?! \texttt{d7} 13.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{xf8}
is OK for Black.)

11.\texttt{xd4} Now the e6−pawn is hanging but Black finds a very unusual way to protect it!
11...\texttt{d7}?! An attempted improve over (11...\texttt{xd4} 12.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{d7} 13.\texttt{d3} \texttt{e7} 14.\texttt{g5}
\texttt{h5} 15.0−0−0 \texttt{f5} 16.\texttt{gxf4} with a huge edge for White, Mannion−Campbell, Largs
1998.) 12.\texttt{h3} \texttt{b6} 13.\texttt{c3}? After this humble move, Black's opening idea is justified.
(The position of Black’s King is very unsafe, therefore the Knight sacrifice −
13.\texttt{xe6}! suggests itself. I analyzed this line quite a while and I can't see a good way
for Black to defend.) 13...\texttt{xd4} 14.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{h5} 15.\texttt{g4} \texttt{e7} 16.0−0 \texttt{f5} Black has a
comfortable blockade, and he is ready to exploit White's weaknesses on the K−side,

6...\texttt{e7} GM Tony Miles was the main adherent of this line at the top level. This move looks
strange because the Knight on g8 now has no good square, but Black has something
in mind. He plans to play 7...\texttt{d7} and then to undermine White's pawn chain by playing...
h7−h5. After...h7−h5 White's usual reply is \texttt{f4} destroying Black's pawn
structure on the K−side, but then it's not so dangerous for Black since he can protect
his g6−pawn by playing...\texttt{f8}. But in my opinion, this plan looks pretentious and
White can obtain better chances (of course, that is, if he plays accurately!) 7.\texttt{e3}
The most logical continuation. White prepares to castle on the Q−side, and then take
action on the K−side (f2−f4−f5). (7.\texttt{f4} \texttt{g5}? Della Morte, G − Lafuente, P/Argentina
ARG 2007) 7...\texttt{d7} 8.\texttt{d2} h5 9.\texttt{f4} \texttt{hxg4} 10.\texttt{gxf6} \texttt{gxf6} The critical position of the
line. 11.\texttt{e2}! \texttt{f8} 12.0−0−0 Natalf, I −Andersson, F/Stockholm 2000.

6...\texttt{h5}?! is very rare indeed and Black soon has what seems to be a disgusting position.
However, appearances are deceptive! 7.\texttt{f4} \texttt{h4} 8.\texttt{gxf6} \texttt{gxf6} 9.\texttt{d3} \texttt{e7} Thought−
6.\texttt{b4} has been played only rarely and prepares...\texttt{e7},...c6−c5 with the Bishop 'outside'
the chain. Wild positions can be reached with White going for the Achilles Heel at
7.\(\text{\textipa{d}f}4\)
improving Shirov – Karpov, Monaco 2000. (In that game White had played 13.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xd5 but had nothing special after 13...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xe5 14.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)g5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)ge7 and in complications Black managed to maintain the balance.) 13...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e7 14.gxh5 Kasparov,G–Karpov,A/Linares ESP 2001. And White won very convincingly over his long time arch–rival.

8...cxd4 9.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)b5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)ec6 10.h5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e4 11.f3

The Bishop is trapped but Black takes all White's central pawns in return.

11...a6!?

Discussion of the merits of 11 ...a6!? continues. White still has not found anything special after Anand's 13 ...g5!?.

11...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xf3 12.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xf3 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xe5 13.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)g3 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)f2!? \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)xg4 14.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)e2 led to a quick White crush in Agdestein,S–Ostenstad,B/ch–NOR, Roros NOR 2002) 13...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)bc6 The knight on b5 is in trouble now so White has to do something. 14.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d3 f6 15.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)f4 This Knight manoeuvre slightly loosens Black's position. 15...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)f7 16.c3 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)g5!? deserved attention, according to Alexey Fedorov.) 16...dxc3 17.bxc3 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)c8 An attempt to improve on Black's previous play. \(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d4 Fedorov,A–Asrian,K/Sankt Peterburg 1997.) 18.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)h3 Preparing g4–g5. (The immediate 18.g5!? deserves attention as well.) 18...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)a5 Now Black's idea is clear: to protect the weak e6–square with a Knight on d8, and then try to exploit White's weaknesses on the queenside. White needs to play very energetically to refute this plan. 19.g5! Sutovsky,E–Podgaets,M/Koszalin (Poland) 1998.

12.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\)d6+

12.fxe4 Although White won this game, this novelty doesn't look very promising. By the way, I would like to say the following thing. Many players during their opening preparation study only games with a positive result, (for example, if somebody plays the Caro–Kann with Black, he studies only Black's wins). In my opinion, this is a serious mistake. Sometimes lost games contain very interesting opening ideas, and the outcome of the game may depend on a later mistake. So my advice to you is:
NEVER ignore lost games. 12...axb5 13.exd5 exd5 Of course, Black's pawns look ugly, but other factors are more important. White's pawns are weak as well, and his King can't feel safe on the kingside (Pawns can't move backwards!) or on the queenside due to the open a−fīle. Besides one of Black's "ugly" pawns is an extra pawn, and White needs some tempi to win it back. 14...g2

a) One of the main experts in this line, French GM Igor Nataf, introduced a very interesting idea − 14.h6!? Nataf−Volzhin, Stockholm 2000. I suffered a terrible defeat after 14...g6?! 15...g2 b4+ 16.d2! xdx2+ 17.xdx2 0-0 18...xd5 d7 19.0-0 dxe5 20.g5! Black's position is very difficult in view of the poor position of his King.

b) Of course if 14...xb5?? a5+

c) 14...e2 does not look very promising: 14...b4+ 15...f2 0-0 16...xb5 e8 (16...a5 17...e2 d7 18.e6 dxe5) 17...xd5 xxe5 with unclear play, according to Emil Sutovsky.

14...b4+ 15...f1 (15.c3? dxc3 16.0-0 was bad for White, for example: 16...c5+ 17.h2 0-0 18.bxc3 h4+ 19...h3 xxe5 winning) 15...xex5 16...xd5 d6?! (It was better to develop the Knight with 16...bc6 protecting both the Bishop and the pawn on d4 (by the way, the Knight doesn't move till the very end of the game!). I definitely prefer Black here, as he has very strong Knights in the centre and White's King is exposed. It's important that White's attempt to win a piece by 17...e2 0-0 18...xb4 could be strongly met by 18...f6+! 19...g1 xb4 with a big advantage.) 17.h6 g6 18...xd4 0-0 Still well−known theory! 19...b6?! White's attempt to reach an endgame is very logical not only because he has a pair of Bishops, but also because his King is too exposed but this was probably not the best decision at this precise moment. (19.g5?! A novelty but of rather dubious merits. 19...bd7! Salmensuu, O−Volzhin, A/Gausdal 2000. (19...bc6 20...b6 c8 21.f6+ h8 22...f2 and Black's development advantage does not look too important, since he has to take care of his King, for example: 22...h4 23...e4 c4+ 24...g2 g4 25...f3 e5 26...f1 with a clear advantage.) 19...xb6 20...xb6 a6 21...e3 xg4 22...g1 Currently one can draw the following conclusion: Black is doing well in this line. But when I asked GM Emil Sutovsky if this line is dead for White, he just smiled and said: "We shall see...". So there is no doubt that great battles in this line still lie ahead... Sutovsky, E−Christiansen, L/Essen 1999.)

12...xd6 13.exd6 g5

This is Anand's improvement. In a previous game all Black's problems were based on the fact that the White pieces could be comfortably and strongly placed on very good central squares like e4 or f5. Now Black tries to retain and fortify his pawn mass in a different way.

Black shouldn't spend time taking the pawn on d6: 13...xd6?! as after 14...g2?! f5 15.0-0 0-0 16.fxe4 dxe4 17.c3! White has excellent chances to demolish Black's strong pawn centre: 17...d3 18...b3 d2 19...xd2 xdx2 20...e6?! (20...xe6+ followed by f2 and gx5 is also good enough.) 20...a5 21.d1 with a huge advantage.

13...e5 14.fxe4! (After 14...h3?! f5! 15.fxe4 fxe4 Black's central pawn mass looks very attractive and solid − the position is far from clear.) 14...dxe4 Taking the pawn, not
the Knight! \(14... \text{exf4}?!\) seems to be in White's favour: \(15.\text{exd5} \text{a5}+ 16.\text{f2} \text{xd5} 17.\text{g2} \text{xd6} 18.\text{e1}+ \text{f8} 19.\text{f3}\) followed by Bf4 and Black is in trouble: the pair of Bishops are very strong plus the Black King has not castled so the Rook on h8 cannot be developed.) 15.\text{e2} \text{Nataf, I–Atalik, S/Capelle la Grande 1999.}

14.\text{h3}

Of course not 14.hxg6? \text{gx6} and the Bishop is alive.

14...\text{h6} 15.fxe4 dxe4

16.\text{g2} f5 17.0-0 0-0

Probably the critical position for an assessment of Black's idea. It looks like White has only one way to destroy Black's pawn centre – by giving a piece back. The question is whether White will be able to find the appropriate place and time.

18.gxf5!?

18.c3? Logical: White is trying to undermine Black's pawn centre, and he also gets the possibility of a Queen sortie to b3, but it was not easy to foresee that this greatly helps Black's development. 18...\text{xd6} 19.gxf5 (In case of 19.\text{e3} \text{d7} 20.\text{xd4} \text{xd4} 21.\text{xd4} \text{xd4+} 22.\text{cxd4} \text{d6} it is White who has problems in this endgame due to his very bad minor pieces but nevertheless this was probably the best option.) 19...\text{exf5} 20.\text{b3+ Topalov, V–Anand, V/Linares 1999–} A brilliant victory by Vishy Anand. (20.\text{e3} \text{d7} 21.\text{cxd4} \text{b6} 22.\text{b3+} \text{d5} was fine for Black.)

18...\text{exf5}
19.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{}}}}}xe4!?

A new try which does not bring any advantage.

The attempt to change the move order does not work: 19.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{}}}}}xg5?! hxg5 20.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{}}}}}xe4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{}}}}}xd6!


keeping a material advantage, according to Evgeny Solozhenkin.

19...fxe4 20.\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textit{\textbf{\textit{}}}}}xg5

Larsen has tried delaying this move, evidently unconcerned that theory says he must prevent ...c8–f5:

4 c3 c6 (4...f5 5 b3!? seizes the initiative.) 5 f4!?! f5 6 d3 (6 b3 d7 7 f3 e6 8 bd2 ge7 Black's deployment of his King's Knight implies that he is considering ...f7–f6.

9 e2 f6 10 0-0 g5 Lalic tries to seize the initiative! 11 e3 g7 12 ac1 0-0 13 c4 g6 14 a4 fd8∞ An interesting struggle lies ahead, Seul,G–Lalic,B/Klub Koelner SF – SF Lohmar (tt ) 2004) 6...g6 7 f3 e6 8 0-0 d6 9 xd6 xd6 10 xg6 hxg6 11 bd2 led to a tough struggle in Larsen,B–Seirawan,Y/Las Palmas (Spain) 1981.

4 f3 c6 5 f4!? at first sight looks a little dry, but White delays c3 in order to play 5...b6 6 c3!, when the threat of b5 is awkward. 5...g4 6 c3 xf3 7 xf3 e6 8 d2 d6 9 g3 ge7 10 d3 0-0 11 0-0-0 b5∞ Sveshnikov,E–Dreev,A/Tallinn EST 2004.

4...c6

4...g6 5 c3 g7 6 f4 In my opinion this move is inferior to Morozevich's 6.Nf3 (see later) since it's premature to determine the position of White's dark-square Bishop. 6...c6 7 e2?! This move is the source of White's further troubles. (The natural 7 f3 should be undoubtedly preferred.) 7...f6 8 g3 I don't like White's set-up as the Knight has no prospects at all here. 8...0-0 9 0-0 d7! Black finds a very good plan (c7–e5). 10 d2 (10 d2 e5! 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 b3 d4 and in the open position
Black's pieces are more active, for example: 13 \( \text{cxd4}\) \( \text{cxd4}\) 14 \( \text{xd4}\) \( \text{xd4}\) and Black wins the b2−pawn.) 10...e5 11 \( \text{h6}\) e4! 12 \( \text{gxg7}\) \( \text{xg7}\) 13 \( \text{xc2}\) f5 Black can be perfectly satisfied with the results of the opening fight: he has a clear edge due to his space advantage and the possibility of a K−side attack, Uritzky,M−Alterman,B/Israel 1999.

5 c3

This is the initial position of the Exchange Variation. The pawn structure arising in this line dictates the plans for both sides. White prepares to occupy the outpost on e5 followed by a K−side attack, and Black, for his part, prepares a minority attack on the Q−side. By the way, a similar pawn structure (with reversed colors) and similar plans often occurs in the Exchange Variation of the QGD.

5 \( \text{c3}\) is an 'accidental gambit', see Eric Grubbs Variation/Analysis 2008.

5...\( \text{f6}\)

5...\( \text{c7}\)!! An interesting attempt to prevent \( \text{f4}\). This move is played rather seldom but certainly it deserves more attention. 6 \( \text{g5}\)

a) Another idea is to insist on developing the dark−squared bishop to the f4−square: 6 \( \text{e2}\) but the obvious drawback of this move is that the Knight is misplaced here and doesn't control the important e5−square. In my opinion the following method is good for Black: 6...\( \text{g4}\) 7 \( \text{f3}\) \( \text{d7}\) 8 \( \text{f4}\) e5!? 9 \( \text{dxe5}\) \( \text{xe5}\)

b) 6 h3!? \( \text{f6}\) (6...g6 7 \( \text{e2}\) \( \text{h6}\)!! didn't work out very well in Conquest,S−Houska,J/Canterbury ENG 2010) 7 \( \text{f3}\) 8 \( \text{e2}\) e5! 8 \( \text{dxe5}\) \( \text{xe5}\) with an excellent isolated queen pawn position, Krivoborodov,E−Jobava,B/Moscow RUS 2008.)

7...g6 8 0−0 \( \text{g7}\) 9 \( \text{e1}\) 0−0 10 \( \text{g5}\) \( \text{e8}\) Ehlvest,J−Popov,I/Moscow RUS 2009.

6...\( \text{f6}\) 7 \( \text{d2}\) \( \text{g4}\) 8 \( \text{g3}\) e6 9 \( \text{h4}\) \( \text{d6}\) 10 \( \text{g3}\) \( \text{h5}\)! We have already seen this manoeuvre before, here it's sound as well. 11 \( \text{xd6}\) \( \text{xd6}\) Illescas Cordoba,M−Anand,V/Linares 1994.

5...g6 This line leads to more complicated play. As we already know, the most likely White plan is K−side activity, but after the flank development of Black's Bishop White's chances for a K−side attack are minimal. Moreover, sometimes Black tries to seize the initiative here by exchanging light−squared bishops on the f5−square hoping to obtain pressure on the g−file. The drawback of this plan is that Black's bishop is restricted by White's pawn chain (d4−c3−b2) and cannot support his minority attack on the Q−side. 6 \( \text{f3}\) 6 \( \text{f4}\) \( \text{g7}\) 7 \( \text{f3}\) \( \text{f6}\) 8 \( \text{bd2}\) 0−0 9 0−0 \( \text{h5}\) 10 \( \text{g5}\)?! Planless play by White but typical of weaker players who have no real plan. With a quick ...\( \text{f7−f6}\), Black soon exploits the unfortunate position of this bishop: 10...\( \text{e7}\) 11 \( \text{e1}\) \( \text{h8}\) 12 \( \text{e2}\) \( \text{f6}\) 13 \( \text{e3}\) e5! Mahboobi,S−Rajadharshini,M/Tehran IRI 2004, Black's overall plan is working perfectly., 6 h3 \( \text{h6}\) 7 \( \text{f3}\) \( \text{f5}\) 8 0−0 \( \text{xd3}\) 9 \( \text{xd3}\) \( \text{f5}\) 10 \( \text{xf4}\) \( \text{g7}\) 11 \( \text{bd2}\) 0−0 12 \( \text{e1}\) \( \text{a5}\) 13 \( \text{e5}\) \( \text{e8}\) 14 \( \text{e2}\) a6 15 \( \text{e1}\) Easy chess by White who has almost sauntered her pieces to good squares. 15...\( \text{e8}\) 16 g4 \( \text{d6}\) 17 \( \text{g3}\) b5 18 \( \text{g6}\)! BANG — here's the sting! Dolzhikova,K−Gutsko,A/ALushta UKR 2004) 6...\( \text{g7}\) 7 h3 (I played this line once with Black, Neverov−Volzhin, Cairo 1999. The game continued: 7 0−0 \( \text{f6}\) 8 \( \text{e1}\) 0−0 9 \( \text{f4}\) \( \text{f5}\) 10 \( \text{xf5}\) gxf5 11 \( \text{e5}\) e6 (11...\( \text{e4}\) is
senseless in view of 12 f3) 12 g5! The correct plan: in this pawn structure the Knights are better than the Bishop. 12...c7 13 fx6 fx6 14 d3 ab8 and here draw was agreed although White is slightly better after 15 d2) 7...h6 8 0-0 0-0 9 e1 f5 10 f6 f6 11 bd2 e8 12 b3 e5! Black can't delay this move, otherwise 13.c3−c4 is unpleasant, Morozevich,A−Adianto,U/Amsterdam 1996. (12...h8 13 c4 with a clear edge.)

6 f4

The main line.
Recently White has begun to deviate from this main line by playing 6 g5!? e4!? is a very interesting alternative to the text. White can win a pawn: (6...g4 7 b3 d7! 8 d2 e6 9 gf3 Rausis,I−Berg,K/Gausdal (Norway) 1993, 6...e6 7 f3 e7 8 0-0 c7 9 bd2 Rausis,I−Bruneel,I/Lyons 1993, 6...g6 7 xf6 xf6 8 f3 xe6 9 e2 brought pressure to bear on d5 in Bhend,E−Ciric,D/Zurich 1990) 7 h4 (7 xe4 dxe4 8 d5 e5 9 a4+, as in Weenink,H−Gudju,I/The Hague 1931, is a dangerous pawn snatch) 6 h3 is the old move. It prevents Bishop's sortie to g4 but allows 6...e5 and after 7 dxe5 xe5 Black has good play: development advantage and active position of his minor pieces are ample compensation for the weakness of the isolated d5−pawn.

6...g4 7 b3 d7

7 a5 was played in the famous game Fischer−Petrosian, Belgrade 1970. This game is a model one for White: 8 a4+ d7 9 c2 e6 10 f3 b6 11 a4! A very strong move which prevents 11...b5 exchanging the bad d7−Bishop for its strong counterpart. 7...c8!? Another good possibility for Black. In comparison with 7...d7 this move has it's merits and drawbacks. Now Black can't exchange dark−squared Bishops by playing ...d6, on the other hand now Black is not forced to exchange his light−squared Bishop with White's Knight on f3 (e5 is no longer threatened). 8 d2 e6 9 gf3 e7 (9...h5 10 0-0 g6 Pilaj,H−Lendwai,R/AUT 2004, was a very direct and brief reminder that Black cannot underestimate the White attacking plan.) 10 0-0 h5! This manoeuvre (g4−h5−g6) is typical for this line, Black's Bishop has no better
role than to exchange off its counterpart. 11 \( \text{c}e5 \text{c}xe5 \) 12 \( \text{d}xe5 \) 0-0 The critical position of this line, Upton,T–Hracek,Z/Pula 1997.

8 \( \text{d}d2 \text{e}6 \) 9 \( \text{g}f3 \text{xf3}! \) 10 \( \text{xf3} \text{d}6 \) 11 \( \text{g}3!? \)

This humble move is indeed a very interesting move which poses serious problems for Black.

11 \( \text{xd6} \text{xd6} \) is the usual continuation but in numerous games Black successfully solved his opening problems. 12 \( \text{xb7} \text{b8} \) 13 \( \text{a6} \) 0-0 has long been thought to give Black sufficient compensation for the pawn, and practice has more than confirmed that suspicion.

11...0-0

Best.

11...\( \text{x}g3 \) I don't like this move since the opening of the \( h \)-file gives White additional possibilities. 12 h\( x \)g3 a\( 6 \) 13 \( \text{f}f1! \) The correct approach: White needn't castle since his Rook on h1 is already developed! 13...\( \text{c}7 \) 14 \( \text{e}1 \) Short,N–Ehlvest,J/Tallinn/Paernu 1998.

12 \( \text{e}2! \)

12...\( \text{ac}8 \)

12...g6 doesn't appear necessary, 13 0-0 \( \text{h}5 \) 14 \( \text{xd6} \text{xd6} \) 15 \( \text{fe1} \) \( \text{ac}8 \) Mista,A–Dziuba,M/Chotowa POL 2009.

12...h6 seems better.

13 \( \text{e}2 \)

Intending 14 Ne5, White has a small but steady advantage.
Caro–Kann – Panov Attack– 5...Nc6

[B13]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4

The Panov–Botvinnik Attack is one of White's most threatening systems against Black's Caro–Kann Defence.

4...f6 5.c3

In the so–called Gundaram Variation with 5.c5, Black's most challenging line is 5...b6 (both 5...e6 6.b4 e7 7.c3 f3 0–0 8.d3 b6 9.b2 (Korman, U–Svensson, C/Swedish Corr. Team Ch., 1976), and 5...g6 6.e3 g7 7.b5+ c6 8.ge2 (Mariotti, S–Meduna, E/Biel 1982) seem to leave White with pressure) 6.b4 a5 7.b5 bxc5 8.dxc5 e6!? (8...e5) 9.c6 e4 Frey, W–Habermann, A/corr FRG–ch 1981.

5...c6

In recent years this has been adopted by two players who hardly ever lose, namely Kramnik and Leko. So you are in good company if you want a solid, albeit slightly worse, position.

5...e6 Will transpose to code B14, or a Semi–Tarrasch after 6.f3 e7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.d3

6.g5
This is more direct than 6  f3, White isn't interested in trying to grind out a win in the endgame that usually occurs here. The bold text move usually leads to a hard fought middlegame.

6. f3  g4  7. exd5  xd5  8.  xf3  (8...  xc3  9. xc3  c7! different, Glodeanu, I–Fuhrmann, M/Miercurea Ciuc ROM 2004) 9. gxf3  e6! (9...  b6?! Black avoids the difficulties of the endgame, but this just seems good for White. 10.d5 (10.e3 An equally good alternative. 10...e6 11.0-0-0 e7 12.d5! This forces open lines in the centre which favours White's two bishops. 12...exd5 13.  xd5  xd5 14.  xd5  Payen, A–Koskinen, V/Jyvaskyla FIN 2000.) 10...d4 11.  b5+!  d7 12.  a4  xb5 the safest path, (12... xf3+ 13.  f1! This keeps the e2 square for the knight and is so best. 13...a6 14.  e2  fe5 15.f4! Rudolf, H–Fuhrmann, D/Porz GER 1998.) 13.  xb5  g6 14.0-0  g7 15.  e1 0-0 16.  g5  Potkin, V–Wang Hao/Ningbo CHN 2010) 10.  b7  xd4 11.  b5+  xb5 12.  c6+! (More accurate than the immediate 12.  b5+  d7 13.  xd7+  xd7 as White wants to force an endgame in which the black king is on the worse square e7, 12...e7 13.  xb5  d7 14.  xd5+  xd5 (14...exd5!? might not be as bad as its reputation, see Short, N–Ni Hua/Liverpool ENG 2007) 15.  xd5 (The zwischenzug 15.  g5+!? is analysed in Bologan, V–Velicka, P/Bern SUI 1999. A good idea or not? Although in some scenarios leaving the black pawn on f7 can make it a useful target for a white rook on the seventh rank, probably the answer is yes, as in the future the fact that the e6 square is available for a rook check can prove important. As you will see from the analysis of the Bologan game it was also Karpov's choice against Kramnik. 15...f6 16.  xd5  exd5 17.  e3  e6 18.0-0-0  b4 19.  b1 (White can also try for direct pressure on d5 with 19.  d3 which was Karpov’s choice in his epic 99 (!) move battle against Kramnik at Linares in 1993.) 19...  d8 20.  d3  d7 21.  c1 a5! This fine move prevents Black being tied down to the a pawn after White’s projected  e6 and  a6.) 15...exd5 16.  e3 controlling d4 and attacking a7.

a) Another interesting example is 16.  f4!?  f6 (16...  d7 Black decides his king will be best placed on c6, though it is eventually driven back over to e6. 17.0-0-0  c6 18.  d3  d6!) 17.0-0-0 see Onischuk, A–Dreev, A/Moscow RUS 2002.

b) 16.0-0 is also popular, 16...  d8 preparing to push the d–pawn, (16...  e6 17.  e1+  f5 18.  d1 Adams, M–Dreev, A/Wijk aan Zee NED 2002.) 17.  d1 d4! Guliev, L–Wang Yue/Nakhchivan AZE 2011.
16...\textit{\$}e6 With his 16th move Black defends d5 and clears the way for his bishop to enter the game. It is evident that in the long term the pawn on d5 is going to come under attack. Therefore it is imperative for Black that he finds a way to maintain its defence without putting one or more of his pieces in a dangerously passive situation. In fact a good player of Black will always be looking for the best moment to jettison the pawn in return for activity with his other pawns and pieces. This activity will usually consist of an attack on White's weakened kingside. Thus the black king will rarely finish the game on e6. Often he goes to the kingside to generate counterplay with ...\textit{\$}f5 etc, usually in combination with an advance of the kingside pawns, or sometimes he goes to c6 via d7 to defend the d5 pawn in a different way if the situation requires it— which normally means the white rooks have driven him away from the e-file. Meanwhile, White's usual strategy is to attack the pawns on d5 and a7 and, if he can't win them, then at least tie down Black's pieces to their defence.

17.0-0-0 \textit{\$}b4 18.\textit{\$}b1 \textit{\$}hc8 Here, Black succeeds in holding the endgame with a precise mixture of patient defence and threatened counterplay, David,P–Velicka,P/CZE 1998. However, in my opinion defending this endgame is a thankless task for Black, his general record is an awful lot of draws, the occasional loss and very rarely a win. Kramnik succeeded in getting an excellent position as Black against Karpov but if you enjoy your chess I would recommend you choose a different variation.

6.c5 isn't good here, 6...e5! 7.dxe5 \textit{\$}g4! Barle,J–Fridman,D/Rijeka CRO 2010.

6...\textit{\$}e6

The most popular response, but other ideas deserve to be mentioned:

6...\textit{\$}a5 7.\textit{\$}d2 (7.\textit{\$}xf6 the most common move but I don't think this promises White any advantage, 7...\textit{\$}xf6 8.exd5 \textit{\$}b4! when 9.dxc6 just leads to a forced draw, Kovacevic,A–Ivanisevic,I/Vrsac SRB 2010) 7...dxc4 8.\textit{\$}xc4 \textit{\$}xd4? (Curiously, the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings only gives 8...e6 without even mentioning this obvious capture, but that (and the fact that White has deliberately left it to be taken) should have 'told' Black "Don't dare devour the d4–pawn!"). 9.\textit{\$}b5 \textit{\$}b6 10.\textit{\$}xd4 \textit{\$}xd4 11.\textit{\$}a4+ 1-0 Le Blancq,S–Eales,R/Folkestone 1984.

6...dxc4 7.\textit{\$}xc4!? the gambit continuation, (7.d5 \textit{\$}e5 (7...\textit{\$}a5 8.\textit{\$}xc4 \textit{\$}xc4 9.\textit{\$}a4+ \textit{\$}d7 10.\textit{\$}xc4 the white d5–pawn has a cramping effect on Black's development, but 10...e6 seems an adequate reply.) 8.\textit{\$}d4 h6 9.\textit{\$}f4 Vajda,L–Ringoir,T/Szombathely HUN 2010.) 7...h6! this move has been scoring well for Black, (7...\textit{\$}xd4 8.\textit{\$}xd4 \textit{\$}xd4 9.0-0-0 e5! is unclear, 7...e6 8.\textit{\$}f3 \textit{\$}e7 9.0-0 with transposition into a Queen's Gambit Accepted, Grischuk,A–Dreev,A/Moscow RUS 2007) 8.\textit{\$}h4 (8.\textit{\$}xf6 exf6 9.\textit{\$}f3 \textit{\$}d6 10.0-0 0-0 with the bishop pair) 8...e6 9.\textit{\$}f3 \textit{\$}e7 10.0-0 0-0 with a fairly typical IQP position in Naiditsch,A–Eljanov,P/Sibenik CRO 2010.

6...e6 often transposes to [B14], 7.\textit{\$}f3 \textit{\$}e7 8.c5 0-0 9.\textit{\$}b5 \textit{\$}e4 equalised in Klundt,K–Dautov,R/Bad Weisssee 2001.

7.a3!?
This is one of the main weapons against the system with 5 ...\( \text{c6} \) and 6 \( \text{e6} \), but why? Basically there are scenarios in which Black plays \( \text{a5} \) (+) and it's useful to have the response \( \text{b2} - \text{b4} \) handy. Also, in the future White may well close the centre with \( \text{c4} - \text{c5} \), and then want to begin an attack with \( \text{b2} - \text{b4} \), and 7.a3 will prove to have been a useful preparatory move. Thirdly, in some cases to have prevented \( \text{c6} - \text{b4} \) will have been useful.

7.\( \text{e2} \)! This is a quiet move but as the game shows it can be dangerous against inaccurate play. 7...\( \text{a5} \) The most active reply. 8.\( \text{f3} \) (8.\( \text{c5} \) is slightly unusual, White hopes to play \( \text{a3} \) and \( \text{b4} \) with gain of tempo, which forces Black's hand, 8...\( \text{e4} \) 9.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d8} \) a slight nuance, (9...\( \text{c7} \) see Morozevich,A—Anand,V/Moscow RUS 2002) 10.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 11.\( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{g6} \) 12.\( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{h5} \) 13.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{h6} \) the pin indirectly defends the d5—pawn and allows Black to develop normally, Robson,R—Berkes,F/Paks HUN 2010) 8...\( \text{d8} \) 9.0-0 \( \text{dxc4} \) 10.\( \text{e1} \)! Ignoring any threat to capture on d4. 10...\( \text{h6} \)? (10...\( \text{b5} \) 11.\( \text{e1} \)?) 11.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 12.\( \text{f1} \)! \( \text{g7} \) 13.\( \text{xe6} \)! This exchange sacrifice decides the game, Kalod,R—Palkovi,J/CZE 1998.

Worthy of attention is 7.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{e4} \) 8.\( \text{e2} \)! \( \text{xc3} \) 9.\( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{dxc4} \) 10.\( \text{b1} \) and White has compensation for the pawn, McDonald,N—Lee,G/Hinckley Island ENG 2009.

7...\( \text{d7} \)

7...\( \text{g6} \)? It is rather annoying for players of White if Black can get away with making this natural move, despite all the pressure on the d5 and f6 squares. 8.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 9.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{g7} \) 10.\( \text{b5} \) 0-0 11.\( \text{ge2} \) \( \text{f5} \) 12.\( \text{d3} \) (12.0-0 \( \text{f6} \) 13.\( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{bxc6} \) 14.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e8} \)! ) 12...\( \text{f4} \) and Black is very dynamic, Friedel,J—Wang Hao/Khanty—Mansiysk RUS 2009.

8.\( \text{xf6} \)

The direct approach.

8.\( \text{b4} \) \( \text{d8} \) 9.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{exf6} \) 10.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{g6} \) 11.\( \text{b5} \)! Of course the aim of this move is not to pin the Black Knight. Firstly, it is the only square the Bishop could be developed on to let the Knight on g1 go to e2 and secondly, as will be clear later the Bishop is not going to stay there, it will move to b3, creating pressure on the d5 pawn (together with \( \text{a2} \)}
and maybe $f4$) and at the same time free the way for a queenside pawn advance. 11...$h6$ 12.$ge2$ 0-0 13.0-0 $f5$ 14.$a4$! Lanka,Z–Bauer,C/Cappelle 1994.

8...$gxf6$!

Typical for this line.

9.$c5$!

White stabilises the centre in order to develop his kingside. After that he has good attacking possibilities on the queenside with $b4$–$b5$ and so on.

9.$e2$!? A clever move to rule out 9...$g4$. 9...0-0-0 10.$c5$ $f5$? (Much more active was 10...$g8$! which by attacking g2 immediately would prevent White from carrying out the strategy he employs in the game.) 11.$f3$ $e5$ 12.$b4$ $g8$ 13.0-0-0!! This prepares an excellent exchange sacrifice, Hansen,C–Hector,J/Sigeman, Malmoe SWE 1998.

9.$g3$?! 0-0-0! 10.$g2$ The d5 square is creaking but Black does not care. 10...$g4$ Forcing White to close the long diagonal. 11.$f3$ $e6$ 12.$c5$ $f5$ Now it is not necessary to retreat to e6, Topalov,V–Leko,P/Vienna 1996.

9...$g4$ 10.$f3$ $f5$ 11.$b5$ $e5$

According to Zigurds Lanka, better was 11...$h6$ with the idea of putting the Bishop on e3 and castling kingside.

12.$ge2$ 0-0-0 13.0-0 $e6$ 14.$h1$ $h6$ 15.$xc6$? $xc6$ 16.$e1$ $e3$ 17.$a4$

Having a pair of Knights, White successfully keeps Black's bishop pair unemployed thanks to his initiative on the queenside, Lanka,Z–Leko,P/Budapest 1996.
Caro−Kann – Panov– 5...g6, 5...e6 [B14]

The position now resembles the Grünfeld but without pawns on c7 and e2. At first glance you might think this difference favoured Black—after all, in the Grünfeld White is able to build a big centre with e2–e4. Perhaps in the long term there is some truth in this, but in the Panov set-up the fact that White's king's bishop isn't blocked in by a pawn on e2 gives him the chance to act quickly to gain a lasting initiative.

5...e6 is a solid alternative, that often leads to IQP positions: 6 ∅f3 (This may be a good moment to play 6 c5!? like a delayed Gundaram 6...∅e7 7 ∅f3 (7 bc2!? 0-0 8 ∅f3 b6 9 b4 ∅c5 10 bxc5+ Skorchenko,D−Tarlev,K/Voronezh RUS 2005) 7...0-0 8 b4!? b6 Black must neutralise the white pawns ASAP, Morozevich,A−Bareev,E/Dortmund GER 2002) 6...b4 (6...∅e7 7 cxd5 exd5 (7...∅xd5 8 ∅d3 transposes to the Semi−Tarrasch.) 8 ∅d3 0-0 9 h3 ∅c6 10 0-0 h6 11 ∅f4 ∅e6 12 ∅e1 ∅e8 13 a3 is a way to handle the Panov which cannot be recommended to Black. White has a small, secure edge with the more active Bishops, Milov,V−Kobalia,M/Ajaccio FRA 2004) 7 cxd5 ∅xd5 (7...exd5 It is surely a question of taste, but I find this move passive. 8 ∅d3 0-0 (8...∅e7+ is perhaps the most solid, although utterly colourless: 9 ∅e5 ∅c6 10 0-0 0-0 Potkin,V−Meister,Y/Sochi RUS 2004, a full game which typifies the dreary play in this line.) 9 0-0 ∅c6 10 ∅g5 ∅e6 11 ∅e1 with an edge, Korneev,A−Dolmatov,S/56th ch−RUS, Krasnoyarsk RUS 2003) 8 ∅c2 (8 ∅d2 ∅c6 9 ∅d3 is also a good choice, 9...∅e7 10 0-0 0-0 (10...b4 Bareev,E−Ljubojevic,L/Monaco MNC 2002) 11 ∅xd5!?)
a) 11 a3  ¤f6 12  ¤e3 b6 13  ¤e2  ¦b7 14  ¦ad1  ¦c7 15  ¦fe1  ¦ad8= Black finds an effective way to develop, Greet,A–Houska,J/Port Erin IOM 2004
b) 11  ¦e1  ¤f6 (11... ¦f6 12  ¦e4  ¦xd4?! risky, but possibly playable, 13  ¦eg5 h6?! (Although here 13... ¦xb2 has to be played) 14  ¦xd4  ¦xd4 15  ¦h7  ¦e8 16  ¦hxh6 e5 17  ¦h5  gxh6 18  ¦xe5  ¦xe5 19  ¦xe5  ¦c6 20  ¦xd2  ¦xe8 16 a3  ¦bd5 17  ¦xd5 exd5 18  ¦hxh6?! A sharp sacrifice which Black must decline. The whole game is of interest as Black chooses a rational defensive approach, Kryvoruchko,Y–Riazantsev,A/Cappelle la Grande FRA 2006

11...exd5 12  ¦b3  ¦f6 13  ¥c3 a5 14 a3  ¦g4!= Lputian,S–Bologan,V/4th Karpov It, Poikovsky RUS 2003 Although Black got overambitious and went on to lose.) 8... ¦c6 (8... ¦c7!? Potkin,V–Asrian,K/Moscow RUS 2002) 9 ¥e2

a) avoiding the sharp pawn sac line: 9 ¥d3  ¦a5 (9...h6 Generally I don't like this move in an IQP position because of batteries along the b1-h7 diagonal. Nevertheless, Black seems to be able to render such threats meaningless, so perhaps the whole idea is playable, 10 0-0 0-0 11  ¦h7+ (11 a3  ¦d6 12  ¦h7+  ¦h8 13  ¦e4 is similar, Adams,M–Akopian,V/Yerevan ARM 2008) 11... ¦h8 12  ¦e4  ¦ce7 13  ¦b3 Adams,M–David,A/Liverpool ENG 2008.) 10 a3  ¦xc3 11 bxc3  ¦d4 12  ¦xd4  ¦xd4 13  ¦b5+ ¦d7 14 0-0 see Nepomniachtchi,I–Rodshtein,M/Moscow RUS 2008.

b) or 9 a3?!  ¦e7 (9... ¦a5 10  ¦d2) 10  ¥d3 h6 (10... ¦f6 11 0-0  ¦xc3 12 bxc3 h6 13  ¦e2  ¦d5 14  ¦b1 a6 15 c4—Black's opening hasn't been successful. His king is vulnerable in the centre and his queen is a target. 15... ¦h5 16  ¦e4± Fedorowicz,J–Enhbat,T/Seattle 2003.) 11 0-0 0-0 12  ¦e2  ¦d6 13  ¦c2  ¦d7 14  ¦d3 once ...h6 has been played, Black's kingside is much more vulnerable as ...g6 is impossible, see Naiditsch,A–Nisipeanu,L/Wijk aan Zee NED 2010.

9...0-0 (9... ¦ce7!? 10 0-0  ¦d7 11 a3  ¦d6 12  ¦e4  ¦c6 13  ¦xd6+  ¦xd6 14  ¦e5 0-0 15  ¦d3  ¦f6 was quite equal in Nisipeanu,L–Jobava,B/Skanderborg DEN 2005) 10 0-0  ¦e7 (an interesting alternative is 10... ¦e8!? to make way for the bishop, 11  ¦d1  ¦d7 Kharlov,A–Izoria,Z/Batumi GEO 2002, 10... ¦f6 11  ¦d1 b6? runs into a strong response: 12 d5! see Ehlvest,J–Potter,J/Virginia Beach USA 2004) 11  ¦d1  ¦f6 a) 11... ¦f6 is also common.

b) 11... ¦b6 is an unusual move, 12 ¦e4!? (Much more direct than 12 ¦d3 ) 12... ¦f6 13 ¦d3 g6 14 ¦c4  ¦ce7!? (Black's position becomes very passive after this. 14... ¦xc3 15 ¦xc3  ¦a5 looks better.) 15 ¦e5 Kharlov,A–Prakash,G/Calcutta IND 2001.

12 ¦e4 (12 a3  ¦xc3 13 bxc3 b6 14 ¦d3 g6 15  ¦h6  ¦g7 16  ¦xg7  ¦xg7 17  ¦c4  ¦f6 is equal, Polgar,J–Karpov,A/Zurich SUI 2006) 12... ¦ce7 13 h4 Sveshnikov uses the h–pawn as a battering ram against g6 but Malakhov defends comfortably and patiently. 13... ¦d7 14 ¦d3 g6 15 h5 ¦c8 16 hxg6 hxg6 17  ¦h6  ¦xc3 18 bxc3  ¦c6 19  ¦f4  ¦d5 20  ¦g4  ¦g7 21  ¦xg7  ¦xg7 22 ¦e5  ¦f6!= Sveshnikov,E–Malakhov,V/Aeroflot Open, Moscow RUS 2003

5... ¦c6 6 ¦g5! This move was introduced by Mikhail Botvinnik in the early thirties and remains White's main weapon nowadays. (6 ¦f3 is the main alternative, but it usually leads to an approximately equal endgame—see B13.) 6...e6 (other moves are also considered in B13) 7  ¦c3  ¦c7 (7... ¦xc4 8 ¦xc4 ¦e7 9 0-0 0-0 is a way to get a reliable position with slightly better chances for White.) 8 c5 h6 (8...0-0-0 ¦b5  ¦d7 10 0-0 b6 11  ¦xc6  ¦xc6 12  b4  ¦c4 13  ¦xe7  ¦xe7 14  ¦c1  ¦f8 15 a4 Martin,A–Coates,K/Borders
League 2006 Black has an uncomfortable game) 9 \textcolor{red}{\text{f4 \text{e4} 10 \text{b5}!?} (It is hard to say whether 10 \text{c1}!? was better.) 10...\text{xc3} 11 \text{bxc3 \text{d7} 12 0-0 0-0} The position looks good for Black, he is going to undermine the queenside with ...b7–b6. Kasparov finds a strange—looking way to prevent this key idea. 13 \text{c1}! Other moves allow Black to go b7–b6 obtaining comfortable play— Kasparov,G—Anand,V/Amsterdam 1996.

6 \textcolor{red}{\text{b3}}

Theory has focussed on this move, but the immediate 6 cxd5 also has quite a few followers. 6...\text{xd5} (After 6...\text{g7} White could if he wished transpose to the 6 \text{b3} line, but he has other options, e.g. 7 \text{b5}+!? \text{bd7} 8 \text{d6}! \text{exd6} (/The gambit 8...0-0!? has been used with success by David Bronstein and others.) 9 \text{e2}+ \text{e7} 10 \text{f4 \text{xe2}+ 11 \text{xe2 \text{e7} 12 \text{f3} ) 7 \text{c4 \text{b6} 8 \text{b3 \text{g7} 9 \text{f3 \text{c6}} Less effective is 10 \text{e3} (10 \text{d5 \text{a5} 11 0-0 0-0 12 \text{e1 \text{xb3} (More dynamic was 12...\text{g4}! ) 13 \text{axb3! By opening the a—file White rules out the manoeuvre ...\text{c8}–c5 as it would leave a7 hanging, Glek,I–Szabolcsi,J/ Paris FRA 2000.) 10...0-0 11 \text{d5 \text{a5} 12 0-0 \text{g4} 13 \text{h3 \text{xf3} 14 \text{xf3 \text{bc4} 15 \text{c1 \text{xb3} 16 \text{axb3 \text{d6 when Black had a secure fortress in Pavasovic—Brendel, Vienna 1996. White is bound to play d4–d5 at some point so it seems worth reserving the option of \text{c1-g5 or \text{f4 rather than committing the bishop straightaway to e3.}}

6...\text{g7} 7 \text{cxd5 0-0}

Now White has to make a critical decision— should he try to defend d5 with the straightforward fianchetto g2–g3 and \text{g2} (after \text{ge2}) or should he play the slightly more subtle— or 'artificial' depending on your point of view!— plan of \text{e2 and \text{f3.}}

8 \textcolor{red}{\text{e2}!}

Aiming for 9 \text{f3} may be the superior way to develop the bishop, Instead, 8 \text{ge2 \text{a6} (8...\text{bd7 is the alternative, 9 \text{g3 \text{b6} 10 \text{g2 \text{f5} 11 \text{f4 g5?!}} (Black has many effective moves now perhaps the best of which is 11...\text{d7}! planning ...g6—}
g5!, ...h7–h6 and ...h3.) 12 \(\text{Q}f2\) \(\text{Q}d3?\) (12...h6) 13 \(\text{Q}xg5\pm\) Postny,E–Lagowski,P/Olomouc CZE 2004) 9 g3 b5!? or he could play in quiet style with (9...b6 intending to aim as many pieces as possible at the target on d5. However it doesn't seem to give equality, or. The well established move is 9...b6 with a critical position being reached after 10 \(\text{Q}xb6\) axb6 11 \(\text{Q}g2\) \(\text{Q}b4\) 12 0-0 \(\text{Q}d8\) 13 d6!) 12 \(\text{Q}xb5\)

![Chess Diagram]

This is critical, but the tame (10 a3 leads to an instructive position after 10...\(\text{Q}b8\) 11 \(\text{Q}f4\) \(\text{Q}b6\) 12 \(\text{Q}g2\) b4 13 \(\text{Q}a4\) \(\text{Q}b7\) Black's rook is buffeted around, but White isn't able to exploit it., Meanwhile 10 \(\text{Q}xb5\) \(\text{Q}b8\) 11 \(\text{Q}a4\) \(\text{Q}b4\) intending \(\text{Q}d3+\) and \(\text{Q}f5\) is too dangerous for White.) 10...\(\text{Q}xd5\) 11 \(\text{Q}g2\) \(\text{Q}e6\) 12 \(\text{Q}d1\) \(\text{Q}a5+\) 13 \(\text{Q}bc3\) \(\text{Q}xc3\) 14 bxc3 Adams,M–Granda Zuniga,J/It, Madrid ESP 1998.

8...\(\text{Q}bd7\)

Aiming for b6 to attack d5.

8...\(\text{Q}a6!?\) goes via c7, 9 \(\text{Q}f4!\) (9 \(\text{Q}f3\) \(\text{Q}b6\) seemed OK for Black in Gelfand,B–Morozevich,A/Wijk aan Zee NED 2002) 9...\(\text{Q}c7?!\) 10 \(\text{Q}f3\) \(\text{Q}fe8\) 11 \(\text{Q}e5!\) An important move, securing dark–squared central control as well as weakening the black king, 11...\(\text{Q}d6\) 12 \(\text{Q}xg7\) \(\text{Q}xg7\) 13 \(\text{Q}ge2\) b6 14 0-0 \(\text{Q}a6\) 15 \(\text{Q}f5\) \(\text{Q}c4\) 16 \(\text{Q}d1\) \(\text{Q}d7\) 17 b3 \(\text{Q}a6\) 18 \(\text{Q}d2\) \(\text{Q}b7\) 19 \(\text{Q}f4\) \(\text{Q}ae8\) 20 \(\text{Q}e5!\pm\) Lyell,M–Arkell,K/Coventry 2004, White is in full control and a Kingside attack with h2–h4 isn't far away.

8...a5 9 \(\text{Q}f3\) \(\text{Q}a6\) 10 a3 b5!? with sharp play, Naiditsch,A–Vuckovic,B/Rijeka CRO 2010.

9 \(\text{Q}f3\) \(\text{Q}b6\)
10 \textit{\textgreek{g}5}

Perhaps stronger was 10 \textit{\textgreek{g}e2} e.g. 10...\textit{\textgreek{g}4} 11 \textit{\textgreek{x}g4} \textit{\textdxc}4 12 \textit{\textdxc}4 \textit{\textd}d7 13 a4 \textit{\textgad}8 14 d6! exd6 15 a5 \textit{\textc}8 16 0-0 as in Stoica–Suciu, Romania 1994. Black has relinquished control of the d5 square and is content to have a rather passive but solid looking position.

10...\textit{\textg4}

Black decides to force clarity in the centre when it becomes a question of whether he can regain his pawn without making any serious positional concession. More dynamic was 10...a5!? which greatly complicates matters.

11 \textit{\textdxc}6 \textit{\textdxc}3 12 \textit{\textdxc}3 \textit{\textg}xf6

13 0-0 \textit{\textd}d6 14 \textit{\texte}5!?

This is the best chance to prove an advantage, Hebden,M–Hansen,T/Hastings ENG 1999.
SUMMARY:
Maybe at the level of club chess 5...g6 might be effective, but studying the line has left me with serious doubts about its validity in international chess.
Caro–Kann: 3 Nc3 – Intro & Korchnoi's

5...exf6 [B15]

Last updated: 15/04/11 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4

3...g6 is a hybrid of the Caro–Kann and Modern, quite rare, which can lead to some very murky play. 4.e5 has been played often enough, but is inflexible.

a) 4.Qf3 Qg7 5.h3 generally considered best, 5...h6


a2) 5...Qf6 6.e5 Qe4 7.d3 Qxc3 8.bxc3 c5 9.0-0 c4 10.Qe2 f6? Poor, Black opens the position before castling, see Wells,–Speelman,J/London/Crowthorne ENG 2006 (Instead 10...Qa5 gives him a reliable position.)

6.Qf4 (6.Qd3! with the idea of Qe2 and a quick c2–c4 is most testing. 6...f6 7.0-0 0-0 8.Qe2 Neubauer,M–Liiva,R/Beijing CHN 2008) 6...f6 7.Qd3 (7.exd5! exd5 8.Qh5 Qa6 9.c4 is more to the point) 7...Qf7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Qg3 c6 10.Qe1 Qd7 11.Qd2 a5 12.h4 a4 Nijboer,F–Bosboom,M/Leeuwarden NED 2004 and now I recommend 13.exd5 exd5 14.Qe2=±

b) 4.Qe2 Qg7 5.f3!? is interesting, 5...dxe4 (5...b6?! is passive, 6.Qd2 Qa6 7.Qa6 Qxa6 8.Qge2 e6 9.0-0-0 Ganguy–Rahman/India 2005) 6.fxe4 e5 (6...Qf6??) 7.dxe5 Qxd1+ 8.Qxd1 Qg4 9.Qf3 with a plus, Miladinovic,I–Bellini,F/46th It, Reggio Emilia ITA 2003.

c) 4.Qf3!? dxe4 5.Qxe4 Qg7 (5...Qxd4 6.Qd2 Qd5 7.Qc3??) 6.Qc4 Qf6 7.Qe2 Qbd7 8.h4∞ Jones,G–Mendelson,A/Bunratty IRL 2006 – if you like playing in this outright attacking style, then 4.Qf3 is for you!

d) 4.f3 is considered in the Fantasy section.

4...h5 (4...Qg7 5.f4 h5 leads to the Gurgenidze system proper, more common from a Modern Defence move order, (5...Qh6! is a plausible alternative, 6.Qf3 f6 (6...Qg4 7.h3 Qxf3 8.Qxf3 f6 9.g4! with advantage, Kraemer,M–Vitiugov,N/Emsdetten GER 2011) 7.Qd3 Qg4 8.h3 Qxf3 9.Qxf3 0-0 10.e6 f5 11.Qe3 c5 12.Qf3 c4 13.Qe2 Qc6 14.Qe3 Qxd4 15.Qxd5 Klenburg,M–Kantsler,B/1st Israel Int Op, Ashdod ISR 2003 when 15...Qxb2 should have been played, with a very messy position.) 6.Qf3 Qg4 7.Qe3 Qh6 8.h3 Qf5 9.Qf2 Qxf3 10.Qxf3 h4 11.Qd3 e6 12.Qe2 (12.0-0 Qf8 13.b3 a5 14.Qe2 is similar, Vocaturo,D–Abbasov,F/Sautron FRA 2008) 12...Qd7 13.0-0 Qf8
14.b3 White had a useful space advantage in Yudasin,L–McCarthy,B/New York (USA) 1991.) 5.h3  
a) 5...e3 ♘h6 6.♘d2 ♘f5 7.♗f4 b5 8.f3 a5 is typically unclear, Hnydiuk,A–Jasnikowski,Z/Polanica Zdroj 2004  
b) whilst 5.f4 ♘h6 6.♗e3 b5 7.♘d2 ♘d7 (Black should have preferred 7...♘f5 8.♗f2 a5=) 8.e6! fxe6 9.♗d3 ♘f5 10.♗f3 ♗g7 Swan,I–Martin,A/Edinburgh 1988 and now best would have been 11.0-0! 0-0 12.♗ae1 when Black has problems shaking off the White bind.  
5...a5!? 6.♗f3 ♘a6!? Furdzik,R–Blatny,P/New York 2003, Blatny's style is very hard to fathom for the average crusty punter. He completely bamboozles Furdzik here.

4.♕xe4  

4.♗c4?! A very rare gambit line which has never occurred in the games on top level according to my database. The ideas of this line are similar to Blackmar–Diemer Gambit (1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 ♗c3 ♗f6). By playing f2–f3 on the next move White opens the f-file and tries to obtain an early attack (the f7–square is usually the main target). However Black has very solid defensive resources and I believe this line is dubious for White. 4...♗f6 5.f3 b5!? (Accepting the sacrifice is possible as well although Black must defend carefully. 5...exf3 6.♗xf3 ♗f5! Transferring the Bishop to the g6–square where it is very well placed for defending the King. (6...e6? is less precise and White obtains good attacking chances,) 7.♗e5 e6 8.0-0 ♗g6! Now the f7–square is firmly protected, and it's not easy for White to continue the attack.) 6.♗b3 e6 7.fxe4 b4 8.♗e2 ♗xe4 9.♗f3 ♗a6 10.0-0 Short,N–Bareev,E/Sarajevo 2000.

4...♗f6 5.♗xf6+  

5.♗g5! looks poor but the idea is to dominate e5: 5...h6 6.♗f3 ♗f5 7.♗c4 e6 8.♗e5 ♗d6 (8...♗bd7 and a quick exchange on e5 is a good response,) 9.♗e2 ♗c7 10.f4 ♗bd7 11.♗gf3 the plan in action, Mrdja,M–Danieli,E/IV Open, Lido Estensi ITA 2003.

5...exf6
Unlike 5...gxf6 which aims at achieving active counterplay, Black has rather more modest plans here. He has no problems with development or bad pieces, so he hopes to equalize by accurate defence. However this line is completely out of fashion now. Of course it's by no means bad, but in modern chess Black prefers systems where he can hope for active counterplay. The following game is one of a very small number which have been played in this line at the top level in the last decade.

6.c3

Tournament practice has shown that this is the most unpleasant plan for Black to have to face. White defends the d4—pawn and prepares a harmonious set-up of his pieces: \( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde\textit{d}3}, \text{\textit{e}2 and kingside castling.}} \)

6.\( \text{\textit{\textit{\textasciitilde{\textit{f}3}}} \) is also possible, 6...\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{d6}} \) 7.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{e}2} 0-0 \) 8.0-0 \( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{g}4}} \) 9.h3 \( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{h}5}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{h}4}}! \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{Kuba,G–Schoeppl,E/TCh–AUT 2003.}}} \)

6.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{c}4} likewise, 6...\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{d6}} \) 7.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{e}2} 0-0 \) 8.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{e}3 \textit{\textasciitilde{e}8}} \) 9.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{d}2 \textit{\textasciitilde{d}7}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{f}4 \textit{\textasciitilde{b}6}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{d}3 \textit{\textasciitilde{g}4}} \) 12.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{x}d6 \textit{\textasciitilde{d}6}} \) 13.0-0 \( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{e}8}} \) 14.c3 c5!= \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{Himdan,M–Magerramov,E/Abu Dhabi UAE 2006.}}} \)

Against spineless play like this from White, the system with 5...exf6 can be very effective.

6...\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{d}6} \) 7.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{d}3} 0-0} \)

Black has also tried 7...\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{e}6}} \) but without success. The game Volzhin – Zangiev, Russia 1996 continued: 8.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{e}2 \textit{\textasciitilde{d}7}} \) 9.0-0 \( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{c}7}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{g}3! h5}} \) 11.f4! g6 This move makes kingside castling impossible, because White will obtain a winning attack after f4–f5. So Black should castle queenside, but his King will hardly feel safe there. But it's difficult to find a better move than the text anyway. 12.c4 0-0-0 13.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{e}3}} \) Now d4–d5 opening files near Black's King, is a dangerous threat.

8.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{e}2}} \)

8.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{f}3 \textit{\textasciitilde{d}7}} \) 9.\( \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{e}2 \textit{\textasciitilde{e}8}} \) 10.0-0 g6! aggressive and the way to proceed, Black intends ...f5, \text{\textit{\textasciitilde{Danes,J–Lechtynsky,J/Teplice CZE 2008.}} \)
8...\(\text{e}8\)

8...\(\text{c}7\) 9.\(\text{c}2\) h6!? is an idea favoured by Filipino GM Antonio, but if the following game is anything to go by, Black is sadly lacking counterplay: 10.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{e}8\) (10...\(\text{d}7\) 11.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{e}8\) 12.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{f}8\)! is an improvement on Nimzowitsch, see Teterev, V−Lomako, P/Minsk BLR 2008) 11.0-0-0 c5 12.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{g}4\) 13.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{x}e2\) 14.\(\text{x}e2\) cxd4 15.cxd4 \(\text{xc}2\)+ 16.\(\text{xc}2\) \(\text{c}6\) 17.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{ac}8\) 18.\(\text{b}1\) b6 19.\(\text{he}1\)± Black has nothing with which to offset the two bishops and central passed pawn, De Firmian, N−La Rota, F/Minneapolis USA 2005.

9.0-0!

Simple and good.

9.\(\text{c}2\) g6 (9...\(\text{h}8\)! with the idea that 10.\(\text{x}h7\)?! \(\text{g}6\) 11.\(\text{x}g6\) \(\text{fxg6}\) 12.\(\text{xc}6\) only leads to a draw)

10.h4 is another possibility, but it leads to double−edged positions after 10...\(\text{d}7\) 11.h5 f5

9...\(\text{c}7\)

There are two alternatives to the text: 9...\(\text{g}4\) 10.\(\text{c}2\)
9...\(\text{d}7\) 10.\(\text{f}4\) both lead to a small but lasting advantage for White. Black's problem here is that he has no counterplay and has to fight for a draw.

10.\(\text{g}3\)

10.h3 \(\text{d}7\) 11.c4 b6 12.\(\text{e}3\) g6 13.\(\text{d}2\) f5 14.\(\text{g}5\)± White plays as simply as can be and keeps a small edge due to his better pawns, Turner, M−Vulevic, V/Davos SUI 2004.

10...\(\text{e}6\)

Other possibilities are hardly better: 10...c5 11.\(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 12.\(\text{e}4\)
10...\(\text{g}6\) 11.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{e}7\) 12.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{d}8\) 13.\(\text{f}4\) with a clear edge for White in both cases.
11.f4! c5 12.d5! ¤d7

The pawn is taboo: 12...¤xd5? 13.¤h5! e6 14.¤xh7+ ¤f8 15.¤h5! with a winning attack

13.c4!

This line was introduced by Aron Nimzowitch at the beginning of the 20th century. It always leads to a very sharp and complicated game. By voluntarily damaging his pawn structure Black hopes to obtain active counterplay by exploiting the open g-file. Although nowadays this line has a rather dubious reputation and is rarely played at the top level, it remains a useful weapon for the club player.

6.c3

6.\(\text{\&}e2\) \(\text{\&}f5\)

a) The less precise 6...\(\text{\&}g4\) was played in R. Maric – Krziznik, Vukovar, 1966. White managed to obtain a clear edge.

b) 6...h5!? 7.h4 (7.\(\text{\&}f4\) This somewhat sophisticated move was tried in Baturinsky – Simagin, Moscow 1946. Soviet GM Vladimir Simagin contributed much to the theory of this line and played a lot of excellent games with it. Black now outplays his opponent very convincingly: 7...\(\text{\&}f5\) 8.\(\text{\&}g3\) \(\text{\&}g6\) 9.h4 \(\text{\&}d7\) 10.\(\text{\&}e2\) e5? Exploiting the drawbacks of White's set-up.) 7...\(\text{\&}g4\) 8.\(\text{\&}d3\) e5!? 9.\(\text{\&}e3\) \(\text{\&}a6\) 10.a3 This careless move allows Black to seize the initiative. (10.c3 was obligatory, with mutual chances.) 10...\(\text{\&}a5+!\) 11.\(\text{\&}d2\) \(\text{\&}b6\) 12.dxe5 \(\text{\&}c5\) 13.\(\text{\&}e3\) 0-0-0! Now it's obvious that
Black has outplayed his opponent. All his forces are actively developed, while all White's pieces are miserably placed, Mikhalchishin, A–Speelman, J/Frunze 1979.

7.¤g3 ¥g6 8.h4 h5 9.¤e2 §d7 10.c3 ¥a5 11.a4! An important improvement. White simply prepares a pawn advance on the Queenside, because sooner or later Black will probably cast there. (It's not so good to win a pawn immediately: 11.b4 ¥c7 12.¤xh5 ¥xh5 13.¤xh5 a5! and Black has sufficient counterplay, as the game Boskovic – Rohde, USA 1979 showed.) 11...0-0-0! Immediate counterplay in the centre without castling looks premature: 11...e5 12.b4 ¥d5 13.0-0! exd4 14.cxd4 White is threatening b4–b5 and grabbing the pawn is risky in view of 14...¥xb4 15.¥f3 with a growing initiative.) 12.b4 ¥c7 13.a5 e5 14.a6 b6 15.0–0 e4!? A very important novelty. This move was recommended by A.Rodriguez in his notes in Informant 44, but hadn’t been tested in practice before now! Both of these games show that after the opening of the c–file Black’s position is indefensible. The text keeps it closed. (15...¥d6 was played in Rodriguez, A–Pieterse, G/Dieren 1987, and White got the upper hand after 16.¤d3!) 16.b5 ¥e5 Espindola, C–Blasberg, G/corr. 1996.

6.¤f3 is straightforward, 6...¥g4 7.¤e2 ¥c7 8.h3 ¥h5 9.¤h4! recognising that exchanges improve White’s chances, 9...¥xe2 10.¥xe2 e6 11.0–0 0–0 12.c4 0–0–0 13.¥e3 c5 14.¥ac1 ¥g8 15.¤f3 ¥c6 16.d5 exd5 17.cxd5 ¥xd5 18.¥fd1 ¥c6? (18...¥e6 is less clear) 19.b4! with advantage, Grigoriants, S–Rogers, I/Essent Open, Hoogeveen NED 2003.

6.¥e2 is rare and will probably transpose back into main lines involving 0–0: 6...¥f5 7.¥e5 e6 (7...¥c7 8.0–0 e6 9.c4 0–0 10.d5 0–0–0 11.¥e3 c5 12.b4 ¥g8 13.bxc5 ¥xc5 14.¥d4 ¥e8 Spassky, B–Larsen, B/Buenos Aires 1979, and the game is starting to warm up!) 8.0–0 ¥d6 9.c4 0–0 10.d5! cxd5 11.cxd5 e5 12.¥h6! ¥g6 13.¥b3 White has a strong initiative, Kosteniuk, A–Chua, A/Fort Lauderdale USA 2004.

6...¥f5

6...h5!? 7.¥e3 h4 Alekseev, E–Short, N/Havana CUB 2010.

7.¤f3

7.¤e2 h5!?
A typical move for this line. 8.\( \square \)f4 h4 9.\( \square \)f3 (Either 9.\( \square \)c4 aiming at f7 and threatening Qb3, or 9.\( \square \)d3 exchanging Black's only active piece should be preferred.) 9...\( \square \)d7 10.g4 hxg3 11.fxg3 (White rejected the natural 11.hxg3 in view of 11...\( \square \)g4 12.\( \square \)g2 \( \square \)e5!, but it's not too bad after 13.\( \square \)e2 (even 13.\( \square \)xh8!? is not bad: 13...\( \square \)f3+! 14.\( \square \)xf3 \( \square \)xf3 15.\( \square \)e6! fxe6 16.\( \square \)h6 and White wins all his material back!) 13...\( \square \)xh1+ 14.\( \square \)xh1 \( \square \)xe2 15.\( \square \)xe2 with approximately equal chances.) 11...\( \square \)e5!? 12.g4 (12.\( \square \)e2 \( \square \)e6 and Black is OK.) 12...\( \square \)h7 13.\( \square \)e2 exd4!? 14.exd4 (14.\( \square \)xd4 \( \square \)e5 and Black’s Knight will permanently occupy this excellent central square, while White's Knight can be driven away by c6–c5 at the right moment.) 14...\( \square \)b4+ 15.\( \square \)f2 \( \square \)e7 16.\( \square \)g2 Bilek,I–Bronstein,D/Hungary – USSR 1955.

A quarter of a century after this game Bronstein had another interesting encounter in this line. The game Ivunic–Bronstein, Tallinn, 1979 continued: 7.\( \square \)c4 e6 8.\( \square \)f3 \( \square \)d7 9.\( \square \)e2 h5 10.\( \square \)f4 h4 11.\( \square \)e3 \( \square \)c7 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.g4?! hxg3 14.hxg3 \( \square \)xh1 15.\( \square \)xh1 (Probably White had missed that the natural looking 15.\( \square \)xh1 fails to 15...\( \square \)c5! and Black takes the upper hand as 16.dxc5 is bad: 16...\( \square \)e5 17.\( \square \)e2 \( \square \)c6 18.\( \square \)h8 \( \square \)e4 and Black wins.) 15...\( \square \)a5! 16.\( \square \)d3 (16.\( \square \)f3 allows a brilliant mate: 16...\( \square \)e5!! 17.\( \square \)xe5 \( \square \)xc3+!! 18.bxc3 \( \square \)a3#) 16...\( \square \)b6 17.\( \square \)b3 \( \square \)d5 18.\( \square \)e1 \( \square \)g4 19.\( \square \)d2 \( \square \)d6 20.\( \square \)b1 \( \square \)h8 21.\( \square \)d1 \( \square \)f5 22.\( \square \)e2? A blunder, but Black's position is already far superior. 22...\( \square \)xg3 Black wins a pawn for nothing and he soon won the game.

7...\( \square \)d7

7...e6 8.g3 h5?! 9.\( \square \)g2 This natural move looks more to the point than (9.\( \square \)e2 The idea behind this is to prevent the emergence of Black's Bishop on the e4–square. 9...\( \square \)g4! 10.h3 Forced, as (10.\( \square \)g2?! h4 is very good for Black.) 10...\( \square \)xf3 11.\( \square \)xf3 \( \square \)d5! After the queen swap Black has little to worry about. So we can conclude that in this game Black solved his opening problems very easily—Valverde,A–Blasberg,G/corr. 1997.) 9.\( \square \)e4 10.0-0 \( \square \)e7 11.\( \square \)e1 f5 12.\( \square \)f1 (12.h4?! \( \square \)d7 13.\( \square \)f1?! \( \square \)xf3 Black is forced to give up the Bishop. 14.\( \square \)xf3 \( \square \)f6 15.\( \square \)g5 \( \square \)d5 16.\( \square \)e2 Bennett,G–Blasberg,G/corr. 1996.) 12...\( \square \)c5! 13.\( \square \)e3 \( \square \)c6 14.\( \square \)b5 h4 15.\( \square \)d2 hxg3 16.fxg3 Riemersma,L–Pieterse,G/Netherlands 1987.

8.g3!
This is one of the best plans in this line, and I believe it is the system which more than any other is discouraging Black players from 5...gxf6. After developing his Bishop to g2 White can easily castle kingside, as now Black has no pressure on the g−file. Of course the fianchetto should be combined with developing the Knight to f3 as in this game, and not to e2 as Black will then play h5−h4 with good chances.

8...b6

Black is planning quite an aggressive set−up (...d7 with Queenside castling to follow). However, the quiet 8...e4!? intending Kingside castling, deserves serious attention: 9.g2 e6 10.0−0 e7 11.e1 f5 and White’s advantage is minimal.

8...a5!? 9.g2 (9.e2 is critical) 9...b5 stopping White from castling, 10.h4 g6 11.xg6 hxg6 12.b3 a6 Gopal,G−Short,N/Caleta ENG 2011.

9.g2 d7 10.0−0 h5

10...h3 was the alternative to the text. 11.xh3 xh3 12.a4! d7 13.a5 c8 with the better prospects for White.

11.a4! h3?!

11...a5 was forced, although it's much easier to recommend such a move than to make it in a game. Now Queenside castling is hardly possible as White can easily open files near Black's King. But in the game things are even worse for Black.

12.h3 xh3

Black has very little initiative on the Kingside and after a few, crisp moves faces an almost decisive queenside onslaught.

13.a5 c8

13...d5 14.b3 0−0−0 15.a6 was also good for White in Sherzer,A−Filipovich,D/34th NCC, Philadelphia USA 2003.
14.a6 b6 15.d5!

White exploits the advantages of his position very energetically, Campora, D–Morozevich, A/Moscow 1994.
Caro–Kann – Smyslov– 4...Nd7 [B17]

Last updated: 08/01/11 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.\$c3 dxe4 4.\$xe4 \$d7

Some important games have been played in the Smyslov Variation. This whole line looks rock solid – and that despite the best efforts of the World's elite to refute it.

5.\$g5

This move remains White's main weapon.
5.\$c4 is the old main line. 5...\$gf6 6.\$g5 e6 7.\$e2 This move develops the Queen and contains the unpleasant threat of \$xf7 with a mating attack. Black's reply is forced. (7.\$f3) 7...\$b6 8.\$d3 (8.\$b3 is quite a different story. 8...h6 9.\$f3 c5 (Two years later Karpov came up with a very important improvement. His game versus Kasparov in Linares 1994 continued: 9...a5! 10.c3 (10.a4 c5 Karpov proved in later games that the interpolation of the moves a5 and a4 favours Black as it becomes dangerous for White to castle Queenside.) 10...c5! 11.a3 \$c7!) 10.\$f4 \$d6 There are two main alternatives to the text. 11.\$g3! \$e7 12.dxc5 \$xc5 13.\$e5 \$d7 14.\$gf3 \$h5 It looks natural to swap this Bishop off before castling queenside. 15.0-0-0 \$xg3 16.hxg3 Kasparov,G–Karpov,A/Linares 1992.) 8...h6 \$The pawn is poisoned: 8...\$xd4? 9.\$f3 Intending \$e5 after the queen's retreat, winning the f7– pawn, and if 9...\$b4+ then 10.c3! \$xc3+ 11.\$fl! and White wins a piece.) 9.\$f3 c5 10.\$e3! I think that this is the most challenging move, preparing 0-0-0 in some lines and trying to maintain some central superiority. It's invariably the choice of Sergey Rublevsky against the Caro–Kann. (10.dxc5 is considered to be the main line.)
10...âxc5 11.âe5 (11.âd2 0-0 12.0-0-0 0-0! This is a novelty. This lunge looks dubious, but concrete analysis proves it to be strong. Intending ...âb6 Black begins immediate action on the queenside. Previously other moves had been played but all of them are much weaker. 13.âb5 âd7 14.âxd7 âxd7 15.âh3 âac8 16.âb1 âc6 17.âc1 âd5 Black's initiative grows quickly. The situation is already quite unpleasant for White, in particular he has to spend another tempo parrying the threat of ...âc3−Georgiev,K−Adams,M/Groningen 1993.) 11...âbd7 12.âgf3 âc7 (12...âxe5 13.âxe5 0-0 is another possibility. However after the text move Black's practical results are better.) 13.âf4 (13.0-0 âxe5 14.âxe5 0-0 15.âe1 âd6 16.h3 b6 17.âd2 âb7 18.âg4= A variation to play if one is happy with a draw or, in this case where you know the opponent is breaking his back to win and might overpress. Eventually White won, Webb,R−Wells,P/Portsmouth ENG 2004.) 13...âb4+!? Trying to disorganize White's forces a little. 14.âf1 âd6 15.âd1? Other continuations do not pose serious problems for Black, Morovic Fernandez,I−Karpov,A/Las Palmas 1994.) 10...âc7 (10...âbd5 11.âe5 a6 12.âgf3 âc7 13.0-0 cxd4?! This novelty is of rather doubtful value. 14.âxd4 âc5 15.âb5++; An unpleasant check which forces the black King to forget about castling, and instead castle by hand, Rublevsky,S−Karpov,A/Polanica Zdroj 1998.) 11.âe5 âd6 12.âgf3 âbd5 13.âb5+ âe7 14.0-0 (14.âc4 is also promising.) 14...âd8 Al Modiahki,M−Sundararajan,K/Dubai UAE 2007 (14...a6?! is Karpov's move, but I still don't see it working, 15.âd3 b5 16.c4 Mista,A−Akesson,R/Warsaw POL 2007), and now 15.âc4! is more pointed.

5.âe2!? âdf6 6.c3 âxe4 7.âxe4 âf6 8.âc2 e6 (8...âg4!) 9.âf3 âc7 10.g3 b6 11.âg2 âb7 12.0-0 âd6 13.âe1± Rather surprisingly, White has a nagging edge, Melia,S−Gilbert,J/WYg16, Heraklio GRE 2002.

5.âf3 âgf6 6.âxf6+
   a) 6.âeg5 h6 7.âh3 (7.âe6 fxe6 8.âd3 is the only way if White wants any success in this line.) 7...âg5 8.âhg1 âg7 9.âd3 c5 10.dxc5 âxc5!± Zwanzger,J−Conquest,S/Bundesliga 2002
   b) 6.âg3 g6?! dubious when the Bishop on c1 hasn't moved: 7.c4 e6 8.âe2 c5 9.0-0 cxd4 10.âxd4 a6 11.b3 âc7 12.âf3 âg7 13.âa3!± Susilodinata,A−Karolyi,T/Queenstown NZL 2006

6...âxf6 7.âe5 (7.h3 is quiet, preventing ...âg4, 7...âf5 8.âd3 âxd3 9.âxd3 e6 10.0-0 âc7 11.c4 0-0 12.b3 c5 13.âb2 cxd4 14.âfd1 âa5 15.âxd4 âfd8 16.âe2 âf5 17.âd3 âe4?! Far too meek, Spassky,B−Karpov,A/Porto Vecchio FRA 2006 (17...âh5± was indicated and Black's chances are not worse.) ) 7...âf5 (7...âe6 8.âe2 g6 9.0-0 âg7 Kundin,A−Bykhovsky,A/Last Autumn GM, Tel Aviv ISR 2002.) 8.c3 e6 9.g4 âg6 10.h4 âd6 11.âe2 c5 12.âg2 cxd4 13.h5 d3! Haba,P−Burmakin,V/Pardubice 2003, this was a remarkable tactical display throughout by Burmakin. One could see the entire game as opening theory!

5.âg6 6.âxf6+ âxf6 7.âc4 g6 8.âf3 âg7 9.0-0 0-0 10.âe1 Korneev,O−Bologan,V/Barcelona ESP 2006.

5...âgf6

5...âa5+!? 6.âd2 âd5 seems under−rated, see Varga,C−Kallai,G/Budapest HUN 2009.
6.\textd3

\begin{center}
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6.\textc4 \texte6 (6...\textd5?! 7.\textf3 h6 8.\texte4 \text7b6 9.\textb3 \textf5 10.\textg3 \textg6? (10...\texth7 is a clear improvement and has been played many times by Grandmaster Eduard Meduna.) 11.\texte5 \textd6 12.c4 \textb4 13.c5+– Dumitru, V–Anuta, L/CUPA TC IND, Ploiesti ROM 2002.) 7.\texte2 \textb6 8.\textd3 (8.\textb3 White's Bishop gives insurance on the Queenside. 8...h6 9.\text5f3 c5 10.c3 \texte7 11.\textd2 a6 12.\texte5 \textd7 13.\textgf3 cxd4 14.\textxd4 \textd6 15.\textxd7 \textbxd7 16.\textf5 Doubts about the Black King position are raised after this move 16...\textf4? Nielsen falters. (Black has to try 16...\textf8 17.\textxe6 (17.0-0-0 0-0-0-0) 17...\textxe6 18.\textxe6+ \textd8 19.0-0-0 \textc6 20.\texthe1 \textxe6 21.\textxe6 \texte8) 17.\textxf4 \textxf4 18.\textxg7+ \textf8 19.\texth5 \textxh5 20.\textxh5+ Anand, V–Nielsen, P/SIS–MH Masters, Middelfart DEN 2003 White negotiated the immediate complications and went on to win a fine game.) 8...h6 9.\text5f3 c5 10.dxc5 \textbd7! my favourite move here, 11.\textf4 (Black envisages an interesting initiative after 11.b4 a5 12.c3 \texte7 to be followed by ...0-0, ...\textxb4 and ...\textb7–b6!) 11...\textd5 12.\textd2 \textxc5 Montes de Oca, A–Ezat, M/Olympiad, Bled SLO 2002.

6...\texte6

6...\textg6!? Not a bad move to play against a timid soul, or a theory junkie, but probably not wise against a skillful attacker. 7.\textf1f3 \textg7 8.\texte2 (8.0-0 0-0 9.\texte5 \textxe5 10.dxe5 \textd5 Adams, M–Short, N/London ENG 2010.) 8...0-0 9.\texth4! h6 10.\texth5! originally played by William Watson against Maduna, Prague 1992, 10...\textxh5 Mkrtchian, L–Dizdarevic, E/Solin CRO 2006, when 11.\textxh3 is dangerous.

7.\textf1f3 \textd6

7...h6?! What??? The World Champion makes a move which was refuted by force ten years before this game! I can't believe that Kasparov didn't know this, probably he did not expect that a computer would sacrifice a piece for a pawn without a clear way to win back some material over the next couple of moves. 8.\textxe6!
8...e7?! Not the best reaction again. (8...fxe6 looks more to the point although after 9.g6+ e7 10.0-0 c7 11.e1 d8 12.c4 Black's position is rather difficult to play.) 9.0-0 fxe6 10.g6+ d8 11.f4 White has only one pawn for the sacrificed piece and has no direct threats, but the lack of coordination of Black's forces and the bad position of Black's King give White huge compensation. Deep Blue–Kasparov,G/New York 1997.

8.e2 h6 9.e4 exe4 10.xe4

Karpov defended this position three times in Linares 2001, and could easily have amassed two and a half points.

10.e7

The modern "tabia" of the Smyslov Variation. Here White has 2 main possibilities: 10.f6 11.e2 This continuation is more popular than (11.h4 e7! A very unexpected idea which was first introduced in this game. Black is threatening ...g7–g5! 12.e5 White is practically forced to give up a pawn. 12.xe5 13.dxe5 a5+ 14.c3 xe5+ 15.e3 The critical position for the whole line. White's compensation looks good enough. Black's King is not safe and the Bishop on c8 is not very good, but the black
pawn shield is rather solid. The position is probably unclear and is playable for both sides. 15...b6 16.0-0-0 g5 Now White comes up with a clear improvement. 17.\textit{h3}! (17.\textit{a4} c5 Removing the weakness on the dark squares, as well as improving his own light–squared Bishop, Kamsky,G–Karpov,A/Dortmund 1993.) 17...c5 18.\textit{he1} \textit{b7} 19.\textit{c4}! Looking closely at the square e6, Morozevich,A–Iordachescu,V/Kishinev (Moldova) 1998.) 11...\textit{c7} (11...b6 12.\textit{d2} \textit{b7} Until this moment both sides have played natural developing moves. Now White has to choose a plan. 13.\textit{e5}! Choosing a good moment to occupy an important central square. 13...\textit{c7} 14.\textit{f4}! Simple and powerful: now the Knight is very threatening for Black, Tiviakov,S–Adams,M/Wijk aan Zee 1996.) 12.\textit{d2} b6 13.0-0-0 \textit{b7} 14.\textit{b1} Theory doesn't consider this quiet positional line as dangerous for Black, but Dolmatov has something in mind. (14.\textit{e5} 0-0-0 15.\textit{f4} \textit{h5}! A new move and a good idea. Often in this line, Black has problems controlling White's activities on the kingside, and as a result it often looks like a steam train rolling down. 15...\textit{h5}?! is aimed at preventing White from getting something started. Macieja,B–Meduna,E/Budapest HUN 2000.) 14...0-0-0 15.\textit{c4} \textit{c5} 16.\textit{c3} Dolmatov,S–Svetushkin,D/Linares Open 2000. Karpov's move 10...c5 is also possible: 11.0-0 \textit{f6} 12.\textit{h4} \textit{cxd4} 13.\textit{e1} \textit{d7} 14.\textit{xd4} (14.\textit{xd4}! would appear to be more difficult for Black to meet.) 14...\textit{c6} 15.\textit{e5} \textit{xe5} 16.\textit{xe5} \textit{d5} 17.\textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 18.\textit{d2} a5! 19.\textit{c4} \textit{b4}= Svidler,P–Bologan,V/Poikovsky RUS 2005.

11.\textit{g4}

![Diagram](image)

11.0-0! The critical move of the moment. 11...b6 (11...c5 12.\textit{e1} \textit{f6} 13.\textit{h4} White's simple play was effective in Kveinys,A–Speelman,J/Olympiad, Bled SLO 2002) 12.\textit{g4} \textit{f8} the standard move,

a) 12...g5?! A typical idea introduced by Karpov in his game vs. Sion (1993), but now it looks doubtful. 13.\textit{h3} The only move. 13...\textit{g8} 14.\textit{e1}! a very good move, I think, (14.\textit{d2} \textit{b7} 15.a4?! An interesting novelty. Obviously Black intends Q–side castling, so White opens the a–file without delay. 15...0-0-0 16.a5 Ponomariov,R–Galkin,A/Lausanne 2000.) 14...\textit{b7}?! this should lose,
a1) the obvious 14...g4 is met by 15.\[h6\] gxf3 16.\[xe6+\] fxe6 17.\[xe6+\] fxe7 (17...\[f8\] 18.\[h6+\] fxe7 19.\[g6+\] wins) 18.\[xg8+\] fxe8 19.\[g6+\] with a strong attack and 3 pawns for the piece
a2) 14...\[f8\]!? 15.\[f5\] g7 16.h4 also looked good for White in Anand,V–Bologan,V, Dortmund 2003
b) Intriguing is 12...\[b7\]!? Shades of the Poison Pawn Variation in the French Winawer. Black is willing to sacrifice his kingside pawns to open up lines of attack for his rooks. If this is an OK attempt by Black then why hasn't it been played before at top level? Perhaps the answer is that players who like crazy attacking games don't usually play the Caro–Kann! Of course, another factor that discourages research is that a computer program will tell you that Black is utterly lost here! 13.\[xg7\] \[f8\]! 14.\[e1\] 0-0-0 with attacking chances for Black, but is it enough? Negi,P–Harikrishna,P/Wijk aan Zee NED 2010.

13.b3 logically placing the bishop on the long diagonal, aiming at Black's king, (13.\[h4\] White keeps the option of \[e4\] alive, and achieves c4 in one jump, 13...\[b7\] 14.\[e1\] Leko,P–Bariev,E/Elista RUS 2007) 13...\[b7\]
a) 13...c5!? is a good solution: 14.dxc5 \[xc5\] 15.\[b2\] e5 16.\[f5\] h5 17.\[h3\] \[xe6\] 18.\[xe6\] \[xe6\] 19.\[g3\] f6 20.\[h4\] \[xc2?! (20...\[g8\] is better and Black has at least equality,) 21.\[ad1\] \[c5\] 22.\[xe5\] \[f4\] 23.\[d1\] Vescovi,G–Miton,K/Moscow RUS 2004
b) 13...g5!? A crazy move in a well known theoretical line. Not many players would rip open their kingside, especially as White has just played 13. b3 to clear the way for \[b2\]. 14.\[h3\] \[g7\] 15.\[b2\] \[f6\] with a tense position but objectively Black is in deep trouble, Durarbeyli,V–Shreyansh,D/Antalya TUR 2009.

14.\[b2\] \[f6\] 15.\[h4\] (15.\[h3\] \[d5\] 16.\[g3\] c5 17.dxc5 aiming for a technical edge, Leko,P–Ivanchuk,V/Wijk aan Zee NED 2008) 15...\[d5\]! the idea is \[f4\], but also ...\[g8\] and ...g5, when White's queen finds itself in danger of being trapped, or at least being attacked under uncomfortable circumstances. (15...c5 16.dxc5 \[xc5\] 17.\[d4!\] a5 18.\[xf6\] gxf6 19.\[e4\] Ganguly,S–Speelman,J/Gibraltar 2004) 16.\[e5\] (Alternatively 16.\[g3\]!? is the start of a sharp tactical sequence if Black takes the bait. At the time of writing more examples are needed to come to a definite assessment of the forthcoming sacrifice. 16...\[h4\] 17.\[e2\] \[xc2\] 18.d5? with a dangerous-looking attack for White in Bobras,P–Wojtaszek,R/Warsaw POL 2010.) 16...g5 17.\[g3!! (17.\[g4\] might be stronger, 17...\[f4\] 18.\[e1\] \[g8\] 19.\[f3\] So,W–Harikrishna,P/Chengdu CHN 2010) 17...\[f4\] 18.\[e1\] (18.\[e3\] Bobras,P–Wojtaszek,R/Opole POL 2007) 18.\[d8\] Amonatov,F–Morozevich,A/Moscow RUS 2007.

11...\[f8\]

Currently this variation is very popular—Black is doing well in this line.

11...g5 After this disastrous game Black players have switched away from this move.
12.\[h3\] \[g8\] Black is playing as Karpov did against Sion, but there is a small but very important difference here. 13.\[d2\]! Here the moves \[d2\] and ...b6 have been omitted, and this makes this very strong knight manoeuvre possible—Kasparov,G–Kamsky,G/Linares 1994.
12.0-0 c5

13.\(\text{\textit{h4}}\)

Others:

13.c3 b6 14.\(\text{\textit{h4}}\) \(\text{\textit{b7}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{e4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 17.dxc5 bxc5! (The natural looking 17...\(\text{\textit{dxc5}}\) is not so good because the Knight is now too far away from the K-side (the best place for it is f6) and after 18.\(\text{\textit{c2}}\)! it's not easy for Black to complete his development and evacuate his King (with ...\(\text{\textit{hd8}}\) and ...\(\text{\textit{f8}}\)) as White's Queen is ready to penetrate to h7 at the right moment.) 18.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\) \(\text{\textit{f6}}\) Leko,P–Anand,V/Linares Super GM 2000.

13.b3!? Leko's preparation, 13...e5 (13...cxd4?! wins a pawn, but White has compensation, 14.\(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) \(\text{\textit{e5?!}}\) Leko,P–Karpov,A/Linares ESP 2001.) 14.c3 b6 15.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\) cxd4! 16.cxd4 \(\text{\textit{c5}}\) with near equality, Shirov,A–Karpov,A/Moscow RUS 2002.

13.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\)!? The favorite move of young Armenian GM Karen Asrian. 13...b6 14.c3 (14.\(\text{\textit{e5}}\)?! cxd4! The only move. It looks extremely risky, but concrete variations show that Black has made the right choice. 15.\(\text{\textit{g6}}\)+ \(\text{\textit{fxg6}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{f3}}\)+ \(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{xa8}}\) \(\text{\textit{hxh2}}\)+) Forster,R–Khalifman,A/Bad Woerishofen 1996., 14.dxc5?! \(\text{\textit{dxc5}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\)! This is the idea behind White's previous move. By giving up his strong Bishop White hopes for a development advantage and to exploit the open c-file. Besides Bc3 is quite an unpleasant threat, aiming for the \(g7\)-square. 15...\(\text{\textit{h5}}\)! Speelman finds the only way to equality. The idea is to drive White's Queen away from her active position, and thereby relieve the pressure on the \(g7\)-square: Ponomariov,R–Speelman,J/Hastings 1998.) 14...\(\text{\textit{b7}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{h3}}\) this odd—looking move prepares \(\text{\textit{e4}}\) (15.\(\text{\textit{h4}}\)!? A very clever idea. White wants to play h4–h5, blocking Black's kingside, after this it will be difficult for Black to develop his Rook on h8. 15...\(\text{\textit{e8}}\) 16.h5 \(\text{\textit{d5}}\) Topalov,V–Anand,V/Linares (Spain) 1998.) 15...c4 (15...\(\text{\textit{d8}}\)!? 16.\(\text{\textit{e4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\) \(\text{\textit{ad8}}\) is a tough nut to crack) 16.\(\text{\textit{e4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{exe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{c6}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\) \(\text{\textit{e8}}\) 19.b3! The correct idea. White should try to open the game and exploit Black's lagging development, Asrian,K–Sasikiran,K/World Junior Championship, Erevan 2000.
13...b6 14.\textit{\textit{$\text{\textit{e4 \textit{\textit{\textit{b6!}}}}}}$}}

This move is now one of Black's main weapons. Lots of games have already been played and this plan has confirmed its viability.

15.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d1}}}}}}

15.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b3!}}}} The latest development. 15.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f6?!}}}} 16.\textit{\textit{\textit{dxc5 bxc5 17.\textit{\textit{b2!}}}} The point. White's Bishop is very strong now and the pressure on the g7−square is very annoying. 17.\textit{\textit{\textit{xex4 18.\textit{\textit{xex4 Timman,J–Karpov,A/Sanur 2000.}}}}}

15...c4 16.\textit{\textit{\textit{e5}}}

16...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f6!}}}}}} 17.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f3}}}} \textit{\textit{\textit{b7 18.\textit{\textit{xexb7 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{xexb7}}}}}}}}}}}

Now it's clear that Black has successfully solved his opening problems, achieving a comfortable blockade position and firm control over the d5−square. It's not easy to find a good plan for White—Sadvakasov,D–Karpov,A/Hoogeveen 1999.
Caro–Kann – Classical 4...Bf5 intro [B18]

Last updated: 08/01/11 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3..gc3 dxe4 4.xxe4 xf5

4...h6!? Deviatkin's speciality (and to a lesser extent also Burmakin's, although Bellon Lopez was the first GM to try it) and a move which seems effective at blitz chess. Black's plan is to play a 4...f5 Caro–Kann but be able to play his bishop back to h7 immediately rather than having to stop off on g6. 5.gc3 f5 6.g3 h7 7.xd3 xd3 8.xd3 d7 Perez Ponsa,F–Deviatkin,A/ICC INT 2010.

5.gc3

Russian GM Rublevsky has won many games in another rare line 5.gc5!? But in a recent game against GM Alexey Dreev, one of the leading experts in this line, he got no advantage after 5...d7! (5...b6 6.xb3 e6 7.gc3 d6 8.g3 e7 9.g2 h6 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4 d7 12.e2 c7 13.e3 c5= Becerra Rivero,J–Riazantsev,A/ICC INT 2004 is comfortable for Black, but no more. 5...b6 is therefore safe, reliable and ... a little unambitious., 5...e5!? is Schandorff's recommendation) 6.xd3 (6.xb7 c7! 7.e5 xc5 Here a draw was agreed as the position after 8.dxe5 c6 doesn't promise White anything,) 6...xd3 7.xd3 e6 8.e2 gf6 9.f3 e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4 with more space, Savchenko,B–Svetushkin,D/St Petersburg RUS 2010.

5...ge6 6.gc4
In the Main line Black is solving his problems quite successfully. So White has been looking for an advantage in old and rare continuations. Of these this line is definitely the most popular.

6.h4 h6 7.f4!? Not very popular, but rather a dangerous continuation. By playing this way, White secures a considerable space advantage and firm control over the e5−square. On the other hand, White's dark−squared Bishop is now somewhat restricted.

a) 7.Øf3 is regarded as the main continuation, see B19.
b) 7.Øh3 Not especially effective. 7...e6 8.Øf4 Øh7 9.Øc4 Øf6 10.Øe2 Ød6 11.c3 Øbd7 12.Øgh5 If White cannot sacrifice on e6 at this point the whole variation is ineffectual: (12.Øxe6 fxe6 13.Øxe6 Øe7 14.Øxg7+ Øf7 15.Øxe7+ Øxe7 16.Øf3 Ùxf5 17.Øxf5 Ùae8=, 12.Øxe6? fxe6 13.Øxe6 Øe7=) 12...0−0= Crouan,S−Rausis,I/National I, Sautron FRA 2003

7...e6 8.Øf3 Ød7 9.h5 Øh7 10.Ød3 Øxd3 11.Øxd3 Øgf6! The move order is very important in this position. 12.Ød2 Øc7 13.Øe2 c5! I believe that this is the best. The move is aimed against Øe5. 14.0−0−0 Loskutov,O−Asrian,K/ St.Petersburg 1999.

6.Øf3 Øf6 (6...Ød7 7.Ød3 is very quiet, Farago,S−Groszpeter,A/Hungary HUN 2005) 7.h4 h6 8.Øe5 The possibility of this move worried Black players so much that 6...Øf6 was out of fashion for decades. But due to the efforts of the Spanish GM Magem it has become clear that Black has sufficient resources here. It's difficult to say whether this move is better than 8.h5, but White preferred it in the elite tournaments in Linares and Dos Hermanas this year. 8...Øh7 9.Øc4 e6 10.Øe2 Developing and creating the threat of Øxf7. 10...Ød5 Absolutely the only move. (10...Øxd4? 11.Øxf7 with a quick mate.) 11.Øxd5?! Too optimistic. White wins a pawn, but Black obtains fantastic compensation. Other moves should be preferred: 11...Øxd5! But I definitely prefer the text as it gives Black excellent compensation for the pawn. Why should Black grab a pawn when it's possible to sacrifice one! (It's not easy to refute the stupid−looking 11...Øxd5 12.Øh5 Øg8, for example 13.0−0 Ød7 14.c4 Øxd4 15.Øxd7 Øxd7 16.Ød1 Øc7 and it's not easy to develop White's attack, although his compensation is obvious.) 12.Øb5+ Ød7 13.Øxb7 Øxe5 14.dxe5 Øb8 The critical position for an assessment of White's plan. It doesn't look very promising for White, Miralles,G−Speelman,J/Escaldes (Andorra) 1998.

6.Øe2 Øf6 7.Øf4 (7.h4 is more challenging) 7...e5 equalised for Black in Ferrari,N−Lalic,B/Italy 2001

6.Øh3!? White's plan is to stick his knight on f4 and then h4−h5 will become a big threat as ...h6 isn't really feasible if White can exchange on g6. 6...e6 7.Øf4 Ød6 8.h4 Øxf4 9.Øxh4 with an edge, Radjabov,T−Eljanov,P/Moscow RUS 2010.

6...e6 7.Øe2 Ød6

7...Øf6 not fearing Øf4, seems possible too: 8.0−0 Ød6 (8...Øbd7 9.f4 Øb6 Nataf,I−Hansen,T/33rd Rilton Cup, Stockholm SWE 2003) 9.f4
This old line introduced by Paul Keres in the 1950s is now in fashion again. Black has to avoid some tricks here. 9...¥f5!? A very interesting move. Black voluntarily spoils his pawn structure, but as compensation he obtains firm control over the important e4 square. Besides White's dark-squared Bishop is restricted by the f4–pawn and now has few prospects.

a) 9...£c7?! 10.f5! The idea behind Black's previous move was to prevent this breakthrough but nevertheless it still works! 10...exf5 11.¤xf5 ¥xh2+?! Another careless move after which Black's position is hardly defensible. 12.¢h1 0-0 13.£e1! Belotti,B–Solozhenkin,E/Montecatini Terme 1999. (13.g3! is not bad either. This move was played in Keres – Golombek, Moscow, 1956.)

b) 9...£d7!? is also an interesting possibility. Unfortunately there are no recent games here and the theory of this line is based on an old game Eolian – Kasparov, Riga 1977 (by the way, the future World Champion was only 14 years old at the time!).

10.¤xf5 exf5 11.¤g3 g6 12.£e1+ ¢f8 13.£f3 The critical position of this line. It had been played several times previously, but now Black came up with a clear improvement. 13...¤bd7! This move was thought to be a blunder in view of 14. Qb3 attacking both the b7 and f7 pawns. 14.£b3 ¥c7! 15.¥xf7 ¢g7! After this cool move it is White who has to think about equality, Khalifman,A–Rustemov,A/Germany 2000.

8.£f4

8.0-0 is similar, if a little quieter: 8...£c7 (8...d7 9.£f4 ¢b6 10.£b3 §d5 11.£xd6 ¥xd6 12.£d2 £gf6 13.c4 Fontaine,R–Beikert,G/Belfort FRA 2004, which is perhaps a shade better for White.) 9.f4!? The most aggressive interpretation of this position. 9...£e7 10.£d3 £d7 11.c4 0-0-0!? A very interesting and unusual attempt. Black tries to complicate the position as much as possible. Now one can expect a very sharp encounter which is usual when Kings are castled on opposite sides of the board. (However I would prefer simple moves like 11...c5, or 11...£d8 in order to prepare kingside castling, with good play for Black. The text is much more ambitious.) 12.¢h1 (12.c5?? doesn't win a piece but blunders two pawns after 12...£xc5 13.dxc5 £xc5+) 12...£f5 13.£xf5 £xf5 14.£e3 Movsesian,S–Zelicic,R/Porec (Croatia) 1998.
8.h4! Playing h4 before \( \text{h} \times \text{f} \) has merits, as the following game shows, 8...h6 9.\( \text{g} \times \text{f} \) \( \text{h} \times \text{f} \) 10.\( \text{g} \times \text{h} \) 11.\( \text{h} \times \text{f} \) (11.\( \text{g} \times \text{d} \) 12.\( \text{e} \times \text{d} \) 13.0-0-0 14.\( \text{d} \times \text{d} \) 15.\( \text{x} \times \text{d} \) 16.\( \text{x} \times \text{f} \) 17.\( \text{f} \times \text{f} \) Sadvakasov,D–Korchnoi,V/Match, Astana KAZ 2003, Black has a problem with his King. Korchnoi bites the bullet and castles short, but Sadvakasov hits hard, low and fast.) 11...\( \text{h} \times \text{h} \) 12.0-0 \( \text{b} \times \text{d} \) 13.\( \text{b} \times \text{b} \) Black has to give up the two bishops but his position remains very difficult to crack, Short,N–Svidler,P/Los Inmortales IV, Santo Domingo DOM 2002.

8...\( \text{f} \times \text{f} \)

8...\( \text{h} \times \text{h} \)? 9.\( \text{g} \times \text{h} \) \( \text{x} \times \text{h} \) 10.\( \text{c} \times \text{h} \) \( \text{e} \times \text{c} \) 11.\( \text{f} \times \text{f} \) 12.\( \text{d} \times \text{d} \) \( \text{b} \times \text{d} \) 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.\( \text{e} \times \text{e} \) Svidler,P–Erenburg,S/playchess.com INT 2004, with equal chances. These positions have been well understood since the days of Botvinnik and Tal. White's two Bishops are successfully counterbalanced by the strong Knight on d5.

9.\( \text{b} \times \text{b} \)

9.h4?! After Black's reply it becomes clear that this aggressive move in reality is a waste of time and merely weakens White's position. There were lots of better moves. 9...\( \text{c} \times \text{c} \)! 10.\( \text{x} \times \text{g} \) (After 10.\( \text{f} \times \text{f} \) Black can just grab the pawn without compensation 10...\( \text{x} \times \text{c} \) But by playing the text White admits the drawbacks of his previous move,) 10...\( \text{x} \times \text{g} \) 11.\( \text{f} \times \text{f} \) \( \text{b} \times \text{d} \) 12.\( \text{g} \times \text{g} \)? After this natural move Black allows White no escape. It's difficult to believe as White's position looks very solid, but it's true! (The less ambitious 12.\( \text{b} \times \text{b} \) should be preferred.) 12...c5! Surprisingly enough, after this move (which is a novelty according to my database) it's not easy to find a reasonable defence for White—Tiviakov,S–Dreev,A/Ubeda 1999. (White hoped for 12...0-0-0 13.0-0-0 which has been played before, with reasonable chances.)

9...a5 10.a4 \( \text{d} \times \text{d} \) 11.\( \text{x} \times \text{g} \) h\( \times \text{g} \)

Black has a very solid centralised position, and White's Bishop pair is of no importance here.
12.\text{\textit{e}4} \text{\textit{e}7} 13.0-0 \text{\textit{d}7} 14.\text{f3} \text{\textit{f}6} 15.\text{g5} \text{c7} 16.\text{g3}

Caro–Kann – Classical 4...Bf5 mainline

[B19]

Last updated: 17/03/11 by Gawain Jones

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.\(\square\)c3 dxe4 4.\(\square\)xe4 \(\square\)f5

Since the Tal – Botvinnik World Title matches in the early 60s, the Classical line with 4...\(\square\)f5 has not been very popular. It had a reputation of being a solid but quite passive opening, where Black had to fight for equality without gaining real winning chances (see Geller – Hort). This would hardly suit Black players on the modern chess scene. But as time passed, Black's strategy became enriched with new ideas: he began to castle on the kingside, and boldly tried to obtain counterplay in the centre and on the queenside to compensate for White's kingside attack. Practice has shown that this strategy is perfectly viable.

5.\(\square\)g3 \(\square\)g6 6.h4 h6 7.\(\square\)f3

7...\(\square\)f6

Black sometimes chooses this move order rather than 7...\(\square\)d7 (which prevents White from playing 8 \(\square\)e5). The reason is that in order to play for an edge, White more or less has to play 8 \(\square\)e5, which gives Black a target to play against. Nowadays Black generally prefers the old 7...\(\square\)d7 8.h5 \(\square\)h7 9.\(\square\)d3 \(\square\)xd3 10.\(\text{\textdialedin}}\)xd3 \(\square\)gf6
a) 10...c7 11.d2 g6f6 12.0-0-0 e6 13.e4 0-0-0 14.g3 Even nowadays this line, which was introduced by Geller, is considered to be one of the most unpleasant for Black. 14...xe4 15.xe4 Geller,E−Hort,V/Skopje 1968.

b) the move 10...e6 allows White to take the h2−b8 diagonal with 11.d2 c7 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.e2 (13.db1 g6f6 14.xxf6+ xxf6 15.c3 c5 d8 Vallejo Pons,F−Granda Zuniga,J/Donostia ESP 2009) 13...d6 14.e4 f4 15.g3 xd2+ 16.exd2! Chuprov,D−Burmakin,V/Voronezh RUS 2004) 11...g6f6

b1) 11...b4+ 12.c3 e7 13.0-0-0 (13.e4 g6f6 14.xxf6+ xxf6 15.e5 a5 and White went on to win with powerful endgame play in Topalov,V−Vallejo Pons,F/Leon ESP 2006) 13...g6f6 14.b1 0-0 (14...a5 15.e5 d8 16.e4 d5 (16...xe4 17.xxe4 c6 18.e2 0-0 is much more logical) 17.f3 b5 18.g4 a6 19.e2 c8 20.b4 b6 21.g5!→ Hermansson,D−Burmakin,V/Voronezh RUS 2004) 11...a5+ is a third move which has worked well for Black recently; 12.d2 (12.d2!? is an unusual new move which cannot be that great, presumably played only for surprise effect: 12...g6f6 13.e4 c7 14.e2 0-0 15.0-0 f6e8 16.f1 b5≈ Hector,J−Iordachescu,V/Copenhagen/Malmoe DEN 2005) 12...b4+!

b21) But not here: 12...c7 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.e4 g6f6 15.g3 xe4 16.xxe4 d6 17.c4 c5 18.d5 f6 19.xe2 0-0 20.cxd5 d7 21.c3 c8 22.xf6 gxf6 23.b1 Black must focus on d5 and central control if he wants to hold this ugly−looking position, Shaw,J−Johannesessen,L/Nottingham ENG 2005

b22) 12...a4!? is Seirawan's speciality, 13.0−0! (13.a3 Van den Doel,E−Seirawan,Y/Netherlands NED 2007) 13...g6f6 14.e1 c7 15.a3 0-0 16.e5! White is close to winning, Bok,B−Seirawan,Y/Amsterdam NED 2010

13.c3 (13.e4!? g6f6 14.d6+ It seems that Black can allow this check. 14...e7 15.e4 (15.e2 16.f2 b4 is fine for Black, Chevelevitch,E−Fridman,D/Bad Woerishofen GER 2008) 15...xd2+ 16.fx2 c7 17.0-0-0 d8!= Jakovenko,D−Khenkin,I/Open Spain 2005) 13...c7 Jovanka Houska's mainline in her book 'Play the Caro−Kann'. 14.e4 c7 15.0-0-0 (15.d5 cxd5! A well−analysed novelty which appears to be good for Black. 16.exd5 d6! The point! 17.c3 (17.b3 g6f6 18.dxe6 cxe6+ 19.xe6 fxe6 20.d4!? Spence,D−Houska,J/Hastings ENG 2009) 17...g6f6 18.0-0-0 0-0 White can do no better than to exchange a central pawn for a wing pawn − a trade in Black's favour, see Rodriguez Guerrero,E−Khenkin,I/Open Spain 2005) 15...g6f6 16.d1!!

b21) 16.e4 b5! forcing his way onto the light squares (16...0-0 17.exf6+ (17.g4!? Bacrot,E−Leko,P/Elista RUS 2008) 17...xf6 18.g4 xg4 19.hg1 f5 20.de1 d7 21.e2 f6 22.b1 c8 17.d8= Pavlovic,M−Gyimesi,Z/Gibraltar 2006 was an unsuccessful attempt from White.) 17.xf6+ (17.c5 0-0-0 a risky and unusual decision, Zapata,A−Andretta,C/Miami USA 2007, I prefer 17...d8 ) 17...xg6 18.e5 bxc4 19.xc4 0-0 20.g4 Rasmussen,A−Khenkin,I/Copenhagen DEN 2007, and now 20...e4! both stops ...g5 and threatens ...xf2.

b22) 16.b1 0-0 (16...d8= is risky: 17.f1 0-0 18.e5! Amonatov,F−Akesson,R/Vlissingen NED 2008) 17.d1 with the idea of f5, (17.d1 is slower, Vescovi,G−Karpov,A/Guarulhos BRA 2006, 17.e5 the point is to discourage ...c5 because of d5, as well as to stop ...b5 for the moment, and thus gain time to prepare
a kingside attack. 17...£f8 18.£h4 Berg,E–Lopez Martinez,J/Salou ESP 2009)
17...£fe8 (17...£a5 18.£c1 looks rather passive, 18...£fd8 19.£c2?! planless, Leko,P–
 Ivanchuk,V/Morelia/Linares MEX/ESP 2008) 18.£e5 £d6 19.f4 £ad8 20.£c3? b5!
17...£fd8 18.£h4 Berg,E–Lopez Martinez,J/Salou ESP 2009)
18...£fe8 (17...£a5 18.£c1 looks rather passive, 18...£fd8 19.£c2?! planless, Leko,P–
 Ivanchuk,V/Morelia/Linares MEX/ESP 2008) 18.£e5 £d6 19.f4 £ad8 20.£c3? b5!
17...£fd8 18.£c2?! planless, Leko,P–Ivanchuk,V/Morelia/Linares MEX/ESP 2008)
17.£e5 (17.£b1 Cheparinov,I–Iordachescu,V/Dresden GER 2007, when
Houska's 17...£xc4 18.£xc4 £c8 is best., 17...£xb5! Akopian,V– Solok,D/Dresden GER
2008) 17...0-0 18.£b1 £fd8 fairly equal, Amonatov,F–Bareev,E/Krasnoyarsk RUS
2007.
16...b5 17.c5! 0-0 18.£e2 £fe8 (18...£g4!?) 19.g4! with an automatic attack, Anand,V–
Macieja,B/Baden Baden GER 2006.
12.0-0-0 £e7 13.£b1 0-0 14.c4 (14.£c4 White made his space advantage count in
Shirov,A–Kramnik,V/Moscow RUS 2002.) 14...£a5 15.£e5 £ad8 16.£e2 £fe8=
State of the art! Black is very comfortable when his King doesn't come under fire,
11.£f4 makes Black choose whether to play the position with kingside castling, where the
Bishop on f4 is much better placed than on d2 after 11...£e6 (or to switch to the old
main line with queenside castling after 11...£a5+ 12.£d2 £c7 13.0-0-0 £e6 14.£e4 £xe4
15.£xe4 £xf6 16.£e2 0-0-0 17.g3 £d6 18.c4 £c5 19.£c3 £he8= which seems an effective
equalizer, Karpov–Villares de Freitas/Sao Paulo Simul 2003) 12.0-0-0 £e7 (12...£d5
13.£d2 £b4!? is an interesting deviation attempting to distract White from his normal
attacking scheme, Hracek,Z–Rasmussen,K/Portz GER 2004. However, afterwards
White eked out an edge although he had to play jolly well to do it) 13.£b1 (13.£c4
£xe4 (13...£a5!? 14.£xf6+ £xf6 15.£b1 £g4 16.£e2 0-0 17.£h4!? £xh5 18.f3 £f6 19.g4
with a tremendous initiative for White as in Pritchett,C–Grant,J/Oban 2005)
14.£xe4 £xf6 15.£d3 £d5 (15...£a5!? seems more combative, 16.£b1 £g4!
Karjakin,S–Azmaiparashvili,Z/Dos Hermanas ESP 2005 – state of the art!) 16.£c4
£e4 17.£xe4 £xe4 18.£e3 It will take superlative technique to make something out
of almost nothing in this position. Kramnik is up to the task, Kramnik,V–
Bareev,E/GMA, Wijk aan Zee NED 2003.) 13.£b1 (13.£c4 £xe4 (13...£a5!? 14.£xf6+ £xf6 15.£b1 £g4 16.£e2 0-0 17.£h4!? £xh5 18.f3 £f6 19.g4
with a tremendous initiative for White as in Pritchett,C–Grant,J/Oban 2005)
14.£xe4 £xf6 15.£d3 £d5 (15...£a5!? seems more combative, 16.£b1 £g4!
Karjakin,S–Azmaiparashvili,Z/Dos Hermanas ESP 2005 – state of the art!) 16.£c4
£e4 17.£xe4 £xe4 18.£e3 It will take superlative technique to make something out
of almost nothing in this position. Kramnik is up to the task, Kramnik,V–
Bareev,E/GMA, Wijk aan Zee NED 2003.) 13.£b1 (13.£c4 £xe4 (13...£a5!? 14.£xf6+ £xf6 15.£b1 £g4 16.£e2 0-0 17.£h4!? £xh5 18.f3 £f6 19.g4
with a tremendous initiative for White as in Pritchett,C–Grant,J/Oban 2005)
14.£xe4 £xf6 15.£d3 £d5 (15...£a5!? seems more combative, 16.£b1 £g4!
Karjakin,S–Azmaiparashvili,Z/Dos Hermanas ESP 2005 – state of the art!) 16.£c4
£e4 17.£xe4 £xe4 18.£e3 It will take superlative technique to make something out
of almost nothing in this position. Kramnik is up to the task, Kramnik,V–
Bareev,E/GMA, Wijk aan Zee NED 2003.) 13.£b1 (13.£c4 £xe4 (13...£a5!? 14.£xf6+ £xf6 15.£b1 £g4 16.£e2 0-0 17.£h4!? £xh5 18.f3 £f6 19.g4
with a tremendous initiative for White as in Pritchett,C–Grant,J/Oban 2005)
14.£xe4 £xf6 15.£d3 £d5 (15...£a5!? seems more combative, 16.£b1 £g4!
Karjakin,S–Azmaiparashvili,Z/Dos Hermanas ESP 2005 – state of the art!) 16.£c4
£e4 17.£xe4 £xe4 18.£e3 It will take superlative technique to make something out
of almost nothing in this position. Kramnik is up to the task, Kramnik,V–
Bareev,E/GMA, Wijk aan Zee NED 2003.) 13.£b1 (13.£c4 £xe4 (13...£a5!? 14.£xf6+ £xf6 15.£b1 (£d8 16.£d1 £f6 17.£e4 £e4 18.£e4 £e4 19.£h1 £f6 20.g4 (£½–½
Gaponenko,I–Chiburdanidze,M/Ohrid MKD 2009!)) 20...£fd8 21.£e3 £d6 22.£f3
£ac8 23.c4 a5?! Now Black will get ground down. It was imperative to drum up
counterplay on the light squares: (23...b5 24.b3 £xc4 25.bxc4 £d7 26.£d3 £h8+ 27.£c2
£g3£) 24.a4!± Kasparov,G–Anand,V/Linares 2003.) 15.£xf6+ £xf6 16.£e5 £ad8 solid
as a rock, 17.£g3 £h8 18.c4 (18.£d3! Direct and causes some confusion.
18...£d5 19.£d2 Apicella,M–Bauer,C/ch–FRA, Aix les Bains FRA 2003.) 18...£d7
(18...c5 De Firmian,N–Dreev,A/Tch–SWE 2003) 19.£d3 £f6 20.£a3 £b6 Bareev
combines defence and counterattack superbly in the subsequent course of this game:

8.£e5
Currently this line is White's main weapon.

8.h5 $\text{h}7 9.d3 $\text{xd}3 10.$\text{xd}3 is the older line, 10...e6 11.d2 $(11.f4 b4+ 12.c3 $\text{d}6$ is Kaidanov,G–Ivanov,A/Stillwater United States 2007) 11...$\text{bd}7$ (11...e7 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.$\text{e}2$ $(13.b1)$ Of course by playing such prophylactic moves White can hardly fight for an opening advantage. 13...c5! Epishin's idea (c5 prior to developing the Knight) works here as well. 14.$\text{e}3$ $\text{bd}7$ 15.$\text{e}4$ $\text{c}7$ Now it's clear that White hasn't managed to create any opening problems for Black. Moreover, White should play very carefully in order to avoid problems himself, Luther,T–Rausis,I/Germany 1998.) 13...c5!? A new and very interesting idea. (Instead of the automatic 13...$\text{bd}7$ Black immediately opens the c-file, keeping different possibilities for developing his knight.) 14.dxc5 $\text{c}7$! 15.$\text{e}5$ $\text{d}8$! 16.$\text{c}3$ $\text{c}6$! The correct strategy: Black doesn't hurry to regain his pawn, but instead completes his development. I believe that after the text move Black has successfully solved most of his opening problems, Hracek,Z–Epishin,V/Germany 1998.) 12.0-0-0 $\text{e}7$ The critical position in this line. (12...$\text{d}6$ 13.$\text{e}4$ $\text{xe}4$ 14.$\text{xe}4$ $\text{f}6$ 15.$\text{e}2$ $\text{e}7$!? A novel placement for the black queen, making the kingside more secure and permitting ...$\text{d}6$–$\text{c}7$ if needed, Ye Jiangchuan–Azmaiparashvili,Z/Xiapu CHN 2005, ultra–solid by Black.) 13.$\text{e}2$

a) 13.$\text{b}1$!? is a small move with large consequences, Gwaze,R–Woodward,T/Edinburgh 2003

b) 13.$\text{e}4$ $\text{xe}4$ seems most promising for Black, as $(13...0-0 14.$$\text{b}1$ c5 15.$\text{xe}5$ $\text{c}7$ 16.$\text{g}4$! looks like an incisive move–order, see the brilliant Carpentier,J–Janosi,E/ICCF Email 2002, 13...c5!? Chkhaidze,N–Houska,J/Hastings ENG 2009) 14.$\text{xe}4$ $\text{f}6$ 15.$\text{e}2$ $\text{d}5$ 16.$\text{b}1$ $(16.$$\text{c}4$ $\text{e}4$ Corrales Jimenez,F–Stellwagen,D/Khanty–Mansiysk RUS 2010) 16...$\text{h}5$ 17.$\text{e}5$ $\text{f}6$ 18.$\text{f}3$ b5 19.$\text{g}4$ $\text{d}7$ 20.$\text{f}4$ $\text{xe}5$ 21.$\text{dxe}5$ $\text{c}4$! = Oleksienko,M–Kovalev,D/Alushta UKR 2006. As long as Black keeps completely focused on the light squares, he will be OK in this line.

13...0-0 (13...c5 Black leaves his king in the centre so that the kingside attack lacks force, 14.$\text{he}1$ 0-0 15.$\text{f}5$ this is dangerous for Black, 15...$\text{cxd}4$ $(15...\text{e}8$ is Schandorff’s suggestion) 16.$\text{xe}7+$ $(16.$$\text{xd}4$ see Shyam,N–Ovetchkin,R/Mumbai IND 2010) 16...$\text{xe}7$ 17.$\text{xd}4$ Wang Hao–Ponomariov,R/Wijk aan Zee NED 2011.) 14.$\text{f}1$!? this move seems very dangerous for Black,
a) 14.\(\square\)e5 c5! Opening an extra file near White's king. Now the game is somewhat similar to a Sicilian! 15.dxc5 Xie,J−Brunner,L/Bern 1995.
b) 14.\(\triangle\)b1 c5 15.d5! is a new and dangerous pawn sacrifice 15...\(\square\)xd5 (15...exd5 16.\(\frak{Q}\)xh6 gxh6 17.\(\frak{f}\)f5 Jobova) 16.\(\frak{E}\)e4 c4 17.g4 \(\frak{B}\)b6 18.g5 hxg5 19.h6→ Nijboer,F−Gugunashvili,M/Groningen NED 2004. Certainly White has a strong attack, but with 19...f6! Black can man an effective barricade.

14...c5 (14...\(\frak{H}\)h8 15.\(\frak{E}\)g1 c5 16.g4 cxd4 17.g5 Gopal,GN−Kharitonov,A/Cappelle la Grande FRA 2010,) 15.g4! this is extremely promising, 15...cxd4 16.\(\frak{f}\)f5! (16...hxg5 is exactly what White is aiming for, Robson,R−Malakhatko,V/Tromso NOR 2009) 17.gxh6 \(\frak{B}\)b6 Black has a strong counterattack on the queenside, Balogh,C−Rodshtein,M/Wroclaw POL 2010.

8...\(\frak{H}\)h7 9.\(\frak{d}\)d3

This move, introduced by Ivanchuk, has become very popular. It looks more promising than 9.\(\frak{c}\)c4 e6 10.\(\frak{e}\)e2 \(\frak{d}\)d5 11.\(\frak{d}\)d2 White has a dozen or so alternatives to this move, but recently this move has received a lot of attention. 11...\(\frak{d}\)d7 (11...\(\frak{a}\)c2!? is the critical move, but so far most people have shied away from it.) 12.\(\frak{d}\)d3 \(\frak{x}\)xd3 13.\(\frak{w}\)xd3 \(\frak{f}\)f6 14.f4 c5 15.0-0-0 Smirin,I−Epishin,V/Saint Vincent ITA 2000.

9.f4!? e6 10.f5!? \(\frak{b}\)bd7 11.\(\frak{x}\)xf7!? with a dangerous attack, Lu Yijie−Nguyen Van Huy/Ho Chi Minh City VIE 2011.

9...\(\frak{d}\)xd3

The normal way for Black to play this line.

9...\(\frak{d}\)bd7!? 10.\(\frak{d}\)xh7 \(\frak{d}\)xe5 11.dxe5 \(\frak{a}\)a5+ 12.\(\frak{f}\)f1 \(\frak{x}\)h7 13.\(\frak{e}\)e2 0-0-0 14.e6 \(\frak{d}\)d5 (14...f6 would lock the bishop down on f8, but, 14...f5!? intending ...g6, ...Bg7, ...h5 and ...Nf6 is worth consideration,) 15.exf7 \(\frak{x}\)xf7 16.\(\frak{e}\)e3 a6?! This is a very ugly move, completely giving up control over the dark squares, Leko,P−Bareev,E/Dortmund GER 2000.

9...\(\frak{w}\)xd4? is met by 10.\(\frak{x}\)xf7!
10.\$xd3 e6 11.\$d2

11.\$f4 \$bd7 12.0-0-0 \$e7 13.\$b1 0-0 14.c4 c5?! This move is brilliantly refuted. Black's play was improved upon just a month later. 15.d5 \$xe5 16.\$xe5 \$g4 The logical follow-up to 14...c5. However an unpleasant surprise awaits him! Ponomariov,R–Tukmakov,V/Donetsk (Ukraine) 1998.

11.0-0? this is simply poor with the pawn on h4 sticking out like a sore thumb, 11...\$d6 12.\$f4 0-0 13.\$b3 \$d5 with a clear advantage, Iotov,V–Genov,P/Sofia 2003.

11...\$e7!?

This move has become popular due to the efforts of GM Vladimir Epishin, who is a leading expert in the Caro–Kann. Black delays the development of his Queen's Knight, retaining the possibility of putting it either on d7 or c6 (after ... c6–c5).

11...\$bd7 is the old main line. 12.f4 White gains space and also makes ultra–secure the position of his proud centralised e5–knight. 12...\$e7 13.0-0-0 0-0 (13...c5?! 14.\$he1 (14.\$c3!? 0-0 15.dxc5 \$xe5 16.fxe5 \$d5 17.\$d2 \$c7 18.c4 \$xc5 19.\$e4 \$c6 20.\$b1 \$b6 21.b3 \$ad8 22.\$f3 \$d4 Kasparov,G–Bareev,E/Moscow RUS 2004 is unimpressive for White. Black's Rook steps into the hole the White pawns left behind. Nevertheless, the game is still complex. 14.d5! is critical) 14...0-0 15.\$xd7 \$xd7 16.\$f5 McDonald,N–Hermannsson,E/Budapest 2003 Subsequently Black negotiated the complications.) 14.\$f3 (14.\$e2 I doubt if this move is best here. 14...c5 15.dxc5 \$xc5! This recapture is preferable. 16.\$c3 \$c7! This is best because White cannot now play 17 \$g4 as the f4–pawn is hanging, Adams,M–Leko,P/Linares 1999,) 14...\$c7 15.\$c4! White further increases his spatial advantage, and prepares to play \$c3 without allowing ...\$d5 by Black. 15...c5 16.d5! \$ae8 17.\$he1 Movsesian,S–Iordachescu,V/F.I.D.E. KO World Ch., New Del 2000.

12.0-0-0 0-0 13.\$f4
13.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e2}}}!? Quite an interesting idea. To exploit the omission of ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{bd7}}} White intends a \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}–pawn thrust, launching a direct \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{K}}–side attack. By the way, the position of the \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}–pawn (on \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h4}} as opposed to \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h5}}) favours White, as it makes the \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}–pawn advance more powerful.}}}}}}\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{13 bd7 14 xd7 xd7 15 g4}}}! The correct approach. At the cost of only one pawn, White obtains a tremendous attack on the Black King, \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Luther,T–Doettling,F/Schwerin 1999.}}}\\

\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{13 c5 14 dxc5 c7}}}\\

This position was tested in two of Mittelman's recent games, and in both he managed to solve his opening problems.\\

\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{15 he1}}}\\

\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{15 c3}} could well be more testing – Solozhenkin gets blown away! 15...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d5}}} 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h5}}}! see Khalifman,A–Solozhenkin,E/ECC, Rethymnon GRE 2003.}}\\

\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{15 c6 16 xc6 xc6}}}\\

\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{David,A–Mittelman,G/Antwerp 1999.}}}}