

# Contents

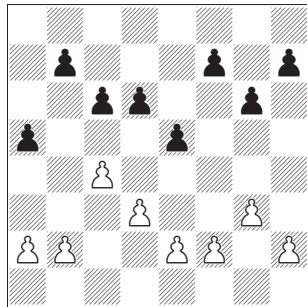
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## 4 The Fianchetto Variation (King's Indian Approach by Black)

The lines covered in this chapter are hugely popular among players who employ the King's Indian with the black pieces. Black often hopes that White will 'cooperate' by playing d4 and thereby enter the Fianchetto King's Indian. If this is not to White's taste, he can continue along the lines given below.

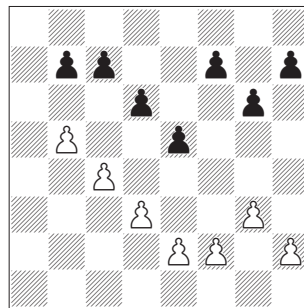
The lines are at times quite complicated, but with careful study from either side, both White and Black can play for the full point.

### Typical Pawn Structures



The black structure in this diagram is typical Fianchetto King's Indian. This structure is very flexible for Black, but it can also be quite vulnerable. Especially on the queenside it can

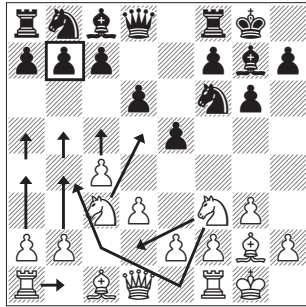
become problematic if White is able to get his b-pawn rolling, as the contact with Black's pawns is instantaneous.



Here, we have already had an initial confrontation, which resulted in the a-pawns leaving the board. White has a huge space advantage on the queenside, while Black initially does not have much on the kingside, but potentially he can gain a similar advantage by playing ...h6, ...g5, and ...f4.

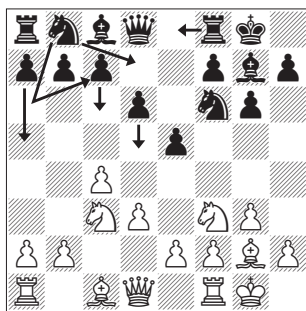
### Planning for White

White's plan in the following position is fairly straightforward: queenside attack. The build-up is traditional: rook to b1 and then send off the b-pawn. If Black stops the immediate expansion by playing ...a5, then White plays a3 followed by b4. The focal point of



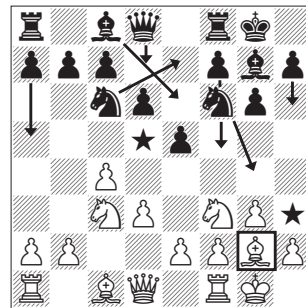
attack is Black's b- and c-pawns; here, the bishop on g2 is a key piece, but the bishop cannot decide the game by itself. The white knights need to take part as well: the c3-knight can go to d5 to put pressure on the black c-pawn. The other knight can choose between two routes. The first one is  $\text{N}d2$ , from where it can go to b3 and c5, if Black plays for ...d5. The other route is via e1 and c2 to b4, from where it prevents Black from playing ...c6 or ...d5.

**Planning for Black**



This diagram covers the plan for Lines A21-A23, in which Black does not develop his knight to c6. In general, Black wants to play ...d5, but it

has to be carefully prepared, and even so it does not always come easy. Two standard moves are ...c6 and ...a5, then of course ... $\text{Te}8$  to keep the e-pawn protected, and finally it is time to decide where the b8-knight shall go. It can go via a6 to c7 from where it supports ...d5, and similarly it can go to b6 via d7.



In the position above, White's star piece is the bishop on g2. Therefore, it is important for Black to neutralize it. That can be done in three ways: by exchanging it, by changing the configuration of the black pieces, so the bishop will point at nothing on the long diagonal, or finally by attacking the kingside, when it will be preoccupied with defensive tasks, so it cannot make its presence felt elsewhere.

In order to accommodate these plans, Black has a good standard setup: ...h6, ... $\text{Le}6$ , ... $\text{Qd}7$ , and ... $\text{Ne}7$ . That is step 1. From there, Black can move on to decide which of the above-mentioned plans he will embark on. If White has played his king's knight to d2 or e1, it can often be an idea to take the initiative in the centre and play ...d5. Otherwise, ... $\text{Lh}3$  may be a good

idea. White will often have moved the f1-rook to e1 or c1, to enable him to play ♖h1 in answer to ...♗h3, which means it will be difficult to get completely rid of the light-squared bishop. However, then Black can get ready to start his kingside attack. After the initial ...♗h3, he can follow up with ...♘g4 and ...f5-f4, which can become very dangerous for White, taking into consideration the fact that the kingside rook on f1 has been moved away from protecting the f2-pawn.

**Quick Summary**

Let it be said straight away that all of the main lines covered in this chapter are either equal or very close to being so.

A21-23 are solid lines, in which it is difficult for White to prove any advantage.

In A24 it is a bit different, as the lines are more complicated, and it seems like White has good chances of playing for a win. In the main line White should try 14 ♖e1!?, but earlier on – at move 9 – Black has a number of alternatives. Of these 9...♖e8 and 9...♗f5 seem the best.

Line B does not cover so much ground, but, generally speaking, the chances are fairly balanced, perhaps with a tiny plus for White.

**The Theory of the Fianchetto Variation**

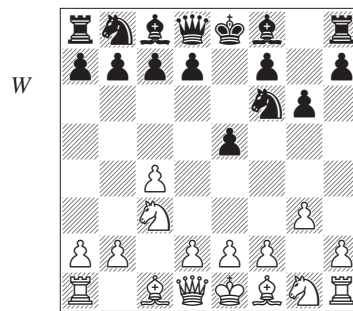
**A: 1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♗f6 3 g3 g6 (4 ♗g2 ♗g7)** 60

**B: 1 c4 ♗f6 2 ♘c3 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 (4...0-0 5 ♗f3 d6)** 74

Line B is the King’s Indian Defence vs the English Opening; naturally our focus here is on lines where Black shortly plays ...e5.

**A)**

1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♗f6 3 g3 g6 (D)



**4 ♗g2**

An old idea of Larsen’s, 4 d4!?, is also worth considering: 4...exd4 5 ♖xd4 ♘c6 6 ♖e3+ ♖e7 (6...♗e7?! is met with 7 ♘d5 ♗xd5 8 cxd5 ♗b8 9 d6 cxd6 10 ♗h3 ± Larsen-Gheorghiu, Monte Carlo 1968) 7 ♗g2 d6 8 ♘d5 ♗xd5 9 cxd5 ♖xe3 10 ♗xe3 ♗b4 11 ♖c1 ♗g7 12 a3 ♗a6 13 b4 with a better endgame for White, Hodgson-Akopian, Groningen PCA qual 1993.

**4...♗g7**

Now:

**A1: 5 e4** 61

**A2: 5 ♗f3** 62

A third possibility is the more modest 5 e3. Black seems to be doing OK after 5...0-0 6 ♗ge2 d6 7 0-0 (7 ♖b1 c6 8 b4 d5 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 d4 e4 11 ♖b3 ♗h6 12 b5 ♗e6 13 ♗a3 ♖e8 14 0-0 ♗bd7 = Moskalenko-Akopian, Rostov 1993) and here:

a) 7...c6 8 d3 ♖e8 9 e4 a6! 10 a4 a5 = Fischer.

b) 7...♗bd7 8 d3 c6 (or 8...♗h5 9 ♖b1 f5 10 f4 ♗df6 11 ♕d2 a5 12 ♗c2 c6 13 a3 ♖e8 with fairly level chances, Kupka-Liberzon, Luhačovice 1971) 9 b3 ♖e8 10 e4 ♗c5 11 h3 ♗h5 12 ♕e3 f5, Bilek-Panno, Palma de Mallorca 1972; this position is evaluated as unclear in *ECO*, but I feel White is better after 13 exf5 gxf5 14 d4.

c) 7...♖e8 8 d3 c6 and now:

c1) 9 b3 a5 (9...♗bd7 is a direct transposition to 'b') 10 ♕b2 ♗a6 11 ♗d2 ♗c7 12 ♖ad1 ♕d7 13 h3 ♖ad8 14 d4 ♕c8 and, instead of 15 d5 ♗c5 16 e4 ♗h5 17 g4 ♗f6 18 ♗g3 cxd5 19 cxd5 b6 20 ♖fe1, with a balanced position, Ree-Hartoch, Amsterdam 1994, White should play 15 e4, entering a King's Indian position, in which White will find it easier to find a useful plan than Black.

c2) 9 e4 ♗a6 10 h3 ♗c7 (preparing ...d5) 11 f4 exf4 12 ♗xf4 ♗e6 13 ♗f3 ♖f8 14 ♕e3 ♗d7 15 ♗e2 ♗xf4 16 ♖xf4 ♗c5 17 ♖af1 ♗e6 and Black is at least equal, Sveshnikov-Pähtz, Lvov 1983.

## A1)

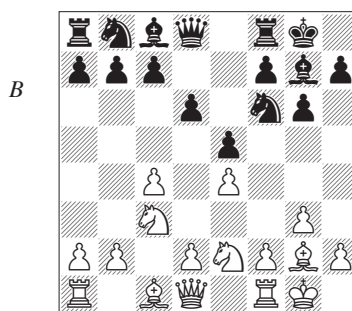
### 5 e4

This is the Botvinnik Variation-like approach. Although it looks rather harmless, it is surprisingly difficult to meet.

5...d6 6 ♗ge2 0-0 7 0-0 (D)

7...c5!?

Sealing the centre like this appears to be Black's chance to equalize. The black knight on f6 is not really placed on the ideal square (which would be e7). However, since the play will take



time to develop, it is not of vital importance.

Other, more common, moves have proved better for White:

a) 7...♗c6 8 d3 is covered under B31 in Chapter 3.

b) 7...♗bd7 8 d3 c6 9 h3 (9 ♖b1 a5 10 a3 h5 11 ♕g5 ♗c5 12 b4 axb4 13 axb4 ♗e6 14 ♕d2 h4 = Ye Rongguang-Striković, Novi Sad OL 1990) 9...♗h5 10 ♗h2 ♗c5 11 ♕e3 ♗e6 12 d4 c5 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 ♗d5 ♗d4 15 f4 ♕e6 16 f5 ♕xd5, Bilek-Gligorić, Teesside 1972, and here 17 cxd5 is best, with a small edge for White.

c) 7...c6 and here:

c1) 8 h3 ♕e6 9 d3 ♗d7 10 ♗h2 d5?! (10...♗a6 leads 'c2') 11 exd5 cxd5 12 d4!, Taimanov-Kochiev, Leningrad 1977; Taimanov now gives 12...exd4 13 ♗xd4 dxc4 14 ♗xe6 fxe6 15 ♗e2! with a positional plus for White.

c2) 8 d3 and then:

c21) 8...a5 9 h3 ♗a6 10 ♕e3 ♖b8 11 ♕a7 ♖a8 12 ♕e3 ♖b8 13 d4! ♕e6 14 b3 ± Chernin-Zapata, Tunis IZ 1985.

c22) 8...♗a6 9 h3 ♕e6 10 f4 ♗d7 11 ♗h2 ♖ac8 and now, rather than 12 a4?! ♗b4 13 ♕e3 a5 14 ♗d2 exf4 15