

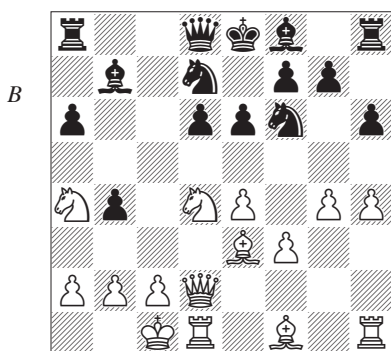
Contents

Symbols	4
Bibliography	5
Foreword	6
Introduction	7
A Small Attacking Guide	10
The English Attack against Other Sicilians	15
1 The New Move-Order 6 f3	17
2 6...g4 and Unusual 6th Moves for Black	33
3 The Najdorf Line 6...e5: Introduction and the Positional 7 f3	76
4 The Najdorf Line 6...e5 7 b3: Introduction and the Hypermodern 8...h5	90
5 The Najdorf Line 6...e5 with 8...e7: Early Deviations and the Dubious 10...h6?!	110
6 The Najdorf Line 6...e5 with Early Castling by Black	121
7 The Najdorf Line 6...e5 with 8...bd7: Introduction and the Modern 9 g4	142
8 The Najdorf Line 6...e5 with 8...bd7: The Old 9 d2	156
9 The Scheveningen Line 6...e6: Early Deviations	168
10 The Scheveningen Line 6...e6 with 8...fd7	184
11 The Scheveningen Line 6...e6 with 7...c6	202
12 The Scheveningen Line 6...e6: The Main Line 8...h6 without 12 a4	225
13 The Main Line: The Critical 12 a4	252
Index of Variations	270

13 The Main Line: The Critical

12 ♞a4

1 e4 c5 2 ♟f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♟xd4 ♟f6 5 ♟c3
a6 6 ♟e3 e6 7 f3 b5 8 g4 h6 9 ♟d2 ♟bd7 10
0-0-0 ♟b7 11 h4 b4 12 ♟a4 (D)



At the moment it seems that this is the only move to cause Black any problems. The knight is more exposed on a4, but also more active. The play now becomes extremely sharp.

A: 12...d5!? 252
B: 12...♟a5 253

A)

12...d5!?

This has been rather underestimated in my opinion. Especially Najer seems to have worked out some improvements for Black in this line and at the moment I see no advantage for White, but the variation is still very much uninvestigated.

13 ♟h3

This is once again the only reasonable reply to Black's ...d5.

13...dxe4

Other moves:

a) 13...g5?! doesn't work here as well as with the knight on b1 (Line B22 of the previous chapter). White has at least two ways to gain a serious advantage:

a1) 14 ♟g2!? ♟a5 (this is considered critical by Roberto Alvarez; 14...gxh4 15 ♟xh4 dxe4 16 g5 ♟d5 17 ♟xe4 gave Black big problems with his king in Kasparov-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2000; the game concluded 17...hxg5? 18 ♟xg5 ♟a5 19 f4 ♟h2 20 ♟xe6! fxe6 21 ♟xe6+ ♟f7 22 ♟d3! ♟g7 23 ♟f5+ ♟g8 24 ♟xd5 ♟xa4 25 ♟e7 1-0) 15 b3 ♟g7 16 hxg5 hxg5 17 e5 ♟xh1 18 ♟xh1 ♟xe5 19 ♟xe6! fxe6 20 ♟b6 ♟c4! 21 ♟xg5 ± Rosen-Pukshansky, corr. 1986-91.

a2) 14 hxg5 hxg5 15 e5! ♟xe5 16 ♟xg5 leaves Black a long way from castling queenside:

a21) 16...♟g8 17 ♟b6 ♟c4 (17...♟b8 has been recommended by Stohl, when I suggest studying the straightforward 18 ♟xf6!/? {if 18 ♟he1 then 18...♟d6 with the idea 19 f4? ♟xg5! – Stohl} 18...♟xf6 19 g5 ♟d8 20 ♟e3 and now on 20...♟d6 White has 21 ♟xe6! fxe6 22 ♟xe6) 18 ♟xc4 dxc4 19 ♟xf6 ♟xf6 20 ♟xe6! didn't leave Black much hope of survival in Kasparov-Wojtkiewicz, Kopavogur rpd 2000.

a22) 16...♟c4 17 ♟e2 ♟g8 18 ♟h4 ♟h6+ 19 ♟b1 ♟e7 (Topalov-Van Wely, Monte Carlo blindfold rpd 2000) and here Van Wely suggests 20 ♟c5!/? ♟xc5 21 ♟xf6 ♟b6 22 ♟f5 ♟f4 23 ♟e7 ♟b5 24 ♟d3 ±.

b) 13...♟a5 14 b3 and here:

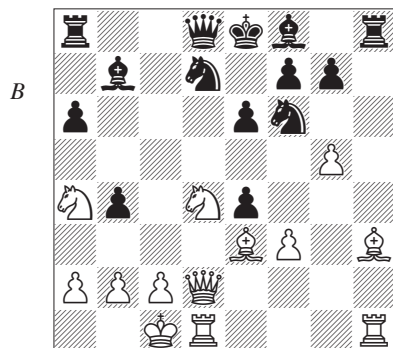
b1) Bad is 14...♟c5? 15 g5! ♟xa4 (15...♟fd7 16 g6 e5 17 gxf7+ ♟xf7 18 exd5! exd4 19 ♟xd4 gives White a decisive attack; for example, 19...♟d6 20 ♟hg1 ♟ag8 21 ♟e6+ ♟e8 22 ♟g6 ♟c7 23 ♟xg8 ♟xg8 24 ♟xd6 ♟xd6 25 ♟e3+ ♟d8 26 ♟xc5 and White won in Nede-Palac, Erevan OL 1996) 16 bxa4 and White's g6 next move proves to be too strong; for example, 16...hxg5 (or 16...♟d7 17 g6 ♟c5 18 gxf7+ ♟xf7 19 ♟b3! {Gunawan-Paschall, New York 1994} 19...♟xb3+ 20 axb3 and, having secured his own king, White is ready to launch a vicious

attack on Black's king) 17 hgx5 ♖xh3 18 ♖xh3 ♗d7 19 g6 ♗xa4 20 gxf7+ ♗xf7 21 ♖b1 and White is much better, Tiviakov-Rashkovsky, Linares 1999.

b2) After 14...g5?! one convincing line for White seems to be 15 hgx5 hgx5 16 e5! ♗xe5 17 ♗xg5 ♗e7 18 ♗de1 ♗ed7 (18...♗xf3 19 ♗xf3 ♗e4 20 ♗d4 ♗xg5 21 ♗xh8+ ♗d7 22 ♗e5+ 1-0 Becerra Rivero-Muñoz Sanches, Guayaquil 2001) 19 ♗e3! ♗c5 20 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 21 ♖b1 and White, intending g5-g6, is clearly better according to Becerra and Moreno.

b3) 14...dxe4! 15 g5 hgx5 16 hgx5 exf3! (this is similar to the main line; 16...♗d5? 17 g6 ♖xh3 18 gxf7+ ♗xf7 19 ♖xh3 ♗7f6 20 fxe4 ♗c3 21 ♖f1 ♗xe4 22 ♗g5 kept the initiative with White in Petrović-Lazan, corr. 2000) 17 gxf6 ♗xf6 18 ♗xe6 (18 ♗g2 ♖xh1 19 ♗xh1 transposes to the note to White's 16th move) 18...fxe6 19 ♗f5! ♗xf5 20 ♖xh8 ♗f7 21 ♗b6 ♖e8 22 ♗c4 ♗d5 23 ♖xf8+! ♗xf8 24 ♗xb4+ ♗g8 25 ♗d6 ♗e5 and White needed very accurate play to save the game in Asquith-Micklethwaite, corr. 2001.

14 g5 hgx5 15 hgx5 (D)



15...exf3!

This may turn out to be an important idea. 15...♗d5? 16 g6 was bad for Black in May-Jørgensen, corr. 1996.

16 g6!?

16 gxf6 ♗xf6 17 ♗g2 (17 ♗e1 ♗a5 18 ♗b6 ♗d8 19 ♗b3 ♖xd1+ 20 ♗xd1 ♗e5 left Black better as White seems unable to create dangerous threats against the black king, while the massive pawn phalanx on the kingside is ready to advance, Nakamura-Najer, New York rpd 2002) 17...♖xh1 18 ♗xh1 ♗a5 19 b3 ♗d8 20 ♗e1 (20 ♗f2 ♗g4 21 ♗g1 ♗e5 {MegaCorr3}

wins for Black) 20...♗h5 21 ♗f1 ♗g4 22 ♗f4 ♗d6 23 ♗xd6 (Vorobiov-Gaisin, St Petersburg 2002) and here 23...♖xd6 24 ♗xf3 ♗h6+ 25 ♖b1 ♗e3 26 ♗e1 ♗xf3 27 ♗d3 ♗d1! seems to favour Black.

16...♖xh3 17 ♖xh3 ♗a5 18 b3 ♗e5 19 gxf7+ ♗xf7 20 ♗e1 ♖c8 21 ♖b1

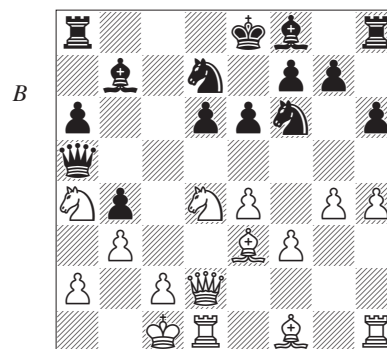
Kriventsov-Najer, Philadelphia 2002. I think Black's pawns should be preferred to White's exchange, although the position is still quite sensitive to mistakes.

B)

12...♗a5

Instead of playing in the centre, Black wants to exploit the sidelined white knight.

13 b3 (D)



Black has:

B1: 13...♖c8?! 254
 B2: 13...♗e7 255
 B3: 13...♗c5 256

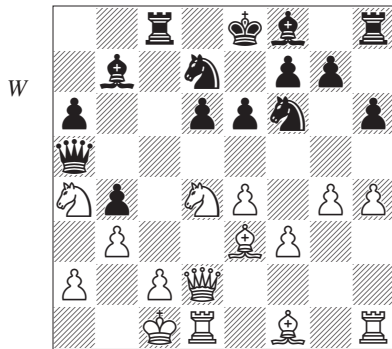
Bad are:

a) 13...d5?! is thematically met by 14 e5! ♗xe5 15 ♗xe6! threatening ♗b6. On 15...d4 (Lung-Dumitrescu, Romanian Cht 1993), best is 16 ♗xd4 ♗fxg4 17 ♗f4 with a powerful attack.

b) 13...g6?! looks very odd and should be rather dubious: 14 ♖b1 (14 a3!?) 14...d5 (Jens-Bindrich, Deizisau 2003; 14...e5 15 ♗e2 d5 16 ♗h3 g5!? 17 ♗f1! looks good for White since Black is not able to hold on to his g5-pawn; 14...♗d8 15 ♗h3 d5 16 g5 hgx5 17 hgx5 ♗h5 18 ♗xe6! also leaves Black in dire straits) and here the standard trick 15 e5! ♗xe5 16 ♗xe6 works fine.

B1)

13...♖c8?! (D)



With this move Black wishes to avoid a3 in the reply to ...♗c5. However, the rook will be somewhat misplaced on c8 after an exchange on c5, so Black's idea seems to work slightly better after 13...♗e7 (Line B2).

14 ♖b1

This prophylactic move looks like the clearest way to gain a safe advantage. Other moves:

a) 14 a3 d5!? (14...♗c5 transposes to Line B31) 15 e5 (15 ♗h3 dxe4!? 16 g5 hxg5 17 hxg5 exf3 18 gxf6 ♗xf6 is similar to Line A and quite playable for Black) 15...♗xe5 16 ♗xe6 fxe6! 17 ♗b6 ♖xa4! 18 bxa4 b3 (Black has good compensation for the queen) 19 ♗d3 ♗xa3+ 20 ♖b1 ♗xd3 21 cxd3 (a risky winning try; the alternative is 21 cxb3!? ♗b4 22 ♗d4 {22 ♖e3 – Madan} 22...0-0 23 g5 as in Ungureanu-Madan, Iasi 2003 and here Madan thinks Black had a good chance in 23...e5 24 ♗xe5 ♖c2 25 ♖e3 ♗c8!) 21...♖c2 22 ♖e3 ♖b2+ 23 ♖a1 ♖a2+ (Madan) leads to a perpetual check.

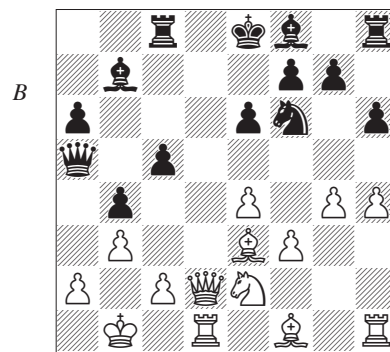
b) 14 ♖g1 is another sharp try. Now 14...♗c5 15 g5 ♗xa4 16 bxa4 hxg5 17 hxg5 ♗d7 18 g6 ♖xa4 19 gxf7+ ♖xf7 20 ♖b1 leads to a critical position where both kings are exposed, the black king slightly more so, but White is a pawn down. Play may continue 20...♗e7 21 ♖g2 ♗f6 22 ♖g6+ ♖f8 (22...♖e7? 23 ♗g5 ♖cg8 24 ♗xe6! was very strong in Vorobiov-Korobov, St Petersburg 2002) 23 ♖g2 ♗e5 (23...♗c5!? – Yagupov) 24 ♖g3 ♖e7 25 f4 ♗f7 26 ♖g4, when White had sufficient compensation for the pawn (but probably no more than that) in Yagupov-Miroshnichenko, St Petersburg 2002.

c) 14 ♗h3!? is also logical and very dangerous for Black. White intends the standard undermining operation g5-g6: 14...♗e5 (14...♗c5 15 g5! ♗xa4 16 bxa4 hxg5 17 hxg5 ♖xh3 {otherwise 18 g6} 18 ♖xh3 ♗d7 19 g6 ♖xa4 20 gxf7+ ♖xf7 21 ♖b1 d5 22 ♖g2 ± Butunoi-Dumitrescu, Romanian Cht (Tusnad) 2000) 15 g5 ♗fd7 (in Fodor-C.Varga, Budapest 2001 Black chose 15...♗xf3!? 16 ♗xf3 ♗xe4 17 ♖d3 ♗c3, but even here White seems to get a strong attack after 18 g6! ♗xa4 19 gxf7+ ♖d7 20 ♖he1!?) 16 ♖b1 ♗c4 (16...♗xf3 17 ♗xf3 ♗xe4 18 ♗d4 ♗xh1 19 ♖xh1 hxg5 was seen in Delavekouras-Maia, corr. 2000 and here Bangiev thinks White is clearly better after 20 hxg5 ♗e5 21 ♖g2) 17 bxc4! ♖xa4 18 g6 and the e6-pawn proved a much more serious weakness than White's queenside in V.Sergeev-Pavlov, St Petersburg 2000.

14...♗c5 15 ♗xc5

Certainly not 15 ♗b2?? ♗fxe4! 0-1 Mull-Maxion, Dortmund 1987.

15...dxc5 16 ♗e2 (D)



Note that in Line B2 a similar position is reached with the difference of Black having played the more sensible ...♗e7 instead of the useless ...♖c8.

16...♗c6

Or:

a) 16...♗e7 17 ♗h3 c4 (Van Bommel-Oates, corr. 2002) can be met with 18 g5 ♖d8 19 ♖c1 and White's advantage is in no doubt.

b) 16...c4 17 ♗g3 cxb3 18 cxb3 ♖c7 (Ftačnik) can be met with 19 ♗f4! e5 20 ♗e3, when White has a very comfortable advantage after a subsequent ♗c4.

17 ♗g3 ♗d7 18 f4 ♗e7

If 18...♗f6 then 19 g5! – Ftačnik.