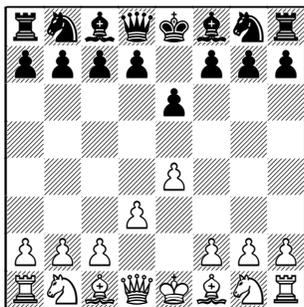


Chapter 2

1.e4 e6 Closed Systems

2.d3



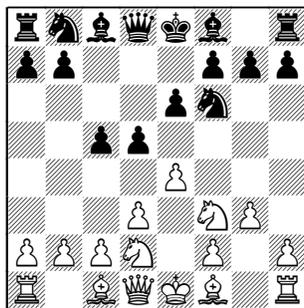
This move is definitely a bit slow and White usually wishes with it to concentrate on a fierce fight in the middle game. It is also possible that he was just a bit lazy to study the basic theoretical lines at home and tries to play safely and reliably early in the game.

2...d5

The wide erudition in the opening is one of the most important features of the strong chess player nowadays. For example, now it seems very reasonable for Black to transpose to the closed Sicilian defence with 2...c5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.g3 g6 5.♙g2 ♙g7 6.c3 ♗ge7 7.0-0 0-0 (It is maybe a bit more precise to choose 7...e5!?) 8.♞e1 (8.d4!?) 8...e5 9.♗a3 d6 10.♙e3

b6 11.♞d2 and here Topalov tried the interesting idea to exchange his light-squared bishop with 11...♙g4!? 12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♙xf3 ♞d7 14.♙g2 f5 15.exf5 gxf5 16.f4 ♞ad8 17.♞e2?! ♞e6! Black seized the initiative and won the game later. Bruzon Bautista – Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

3.♗d2 c5 4.♗gf3 ♗f6 5.g3



5...g6

This set-up is only seldom played and its idea is not only to surprise the opponent, but to enter a complicated position with counter chances for Black. The classical scheme in this situation looks to me a bit passive – 5...♗c6 6.♙g2 ♙e7 7.0-0 b6 8.♞e1 ♙b7. I have played many games in it, not without considerable success,

2.d3 d5 3.♟d2 c5 4.♞f3 ♞f6 5.g3 g6 6.♙g2 ♙g7

but I think White's play is easier, since he makes the important decisions.

6.♙g2 ♙g7 7.0-0

He can try to seize the initiative with 7.exd5, but Black can counter that with 7...♞xd5 (But not 7...exd5?! and he will have problems after 8.♞e2+ ♙e6 9.♞g5±; the endgame arising after 8...♞e7 9.♞xe7+ ♞xe7 10.♞b3↑ is not good for Black at all.) 8.♞b3! (White cannot harm his opponent with 8.♞e4 ♞c6 9.0-0 b6 10.♙g5 f6 11.♙d2 0-0 and the position is double-edged.) 8...♞c6 (It seems weaker for Black to choose 8...0-0 9.0-0 ♞d7 10.♞e1 and he will have problems with the development of his light-squared bishop. For example: 10...b6?! 11.♙g5 f6 12.♙c1; 11...♙f6 12.♙xf6 ♞xf6 12.♞fd2!?) 9.0-0 b6 and it would be difficult for White to draw benefits from this position. For instance, 10.d4 (10.c4 ♞de7 11.d4 ♙a6!) 10... ♙a6 11.♞e1 cxd4 (But not 11...c4?! 12.♞bd2 c3 13.♞e4 cxb2 14.♙xb2 0-0 15.♙a3 ♞ce7 16.♞e5↑) 12.♞bxd4 ♞xd4 13.♞xd4 0-0 14.♞c6 (He cannot obtain an advantage with 14.c3 ♞c8 15.♞a4 ♙c4 16.♞c6 b5 17.♞xc4 bxc4 18.♞xd8 ♞fxd8, Savchenko – Vitiugov, Serpukhov 2008.) 14...♞d7 15.♙xd5 exd5 16.♞e7+ ♞h8 17.♞xd5 ♞xd5 18.♙xd5 ♙b7 and Black has a full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

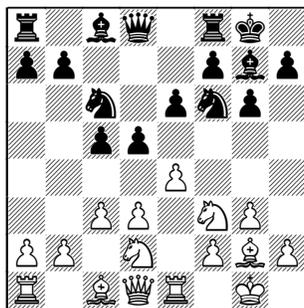
7...0-0

He can also choose 7...♞c6,

because he should not be afraid of 8.exd5 ♞xd5 9.♞b3 (After 9.♞e4 b6, it is far from clear how White can increase his pressure. 10.♙g5 (After 10.c4 ♞de7 11.♙g5 ♙b7 12.♞f6+ ♞f8, his pieces will have to retreat, coming under attack with tempi, while the weakness of the d4-square will be terminal.) 10...f6 11.♙d2 0-0 12.♞e1 e5 and White's set-up seems absolutely ridiculous for a King's Indian scheme.) 9...b6 10.c4 ♞de7 11.d4 ♙a6! Black has a good position.

8.♞e1 ♞c6 9.c3

White has completed his “programme”, concerning his King's Indian attack. We will try to go a bit deeper in the intricacies of this position.



9...♞e8

It has become clear that after Black has chosen his set-up, the most principled plan for White will be connected with e4-e5 and d3-d4. Black will have to undermine White's centre with f7-f6. He should be well-prepared to do that successfully, though...