



Position after: 10. h4!±

I don't see the point of Black's queen-side development (f.i. he can't really play ...c5 anymore as it would create a rather weak isolated pawn on d5) and White's chances look preferable.

5. 0-0

A) 5. d4!? dxc4 transposes again into a Catalan.

B) 5. b3?! is not so great, after 5... d4 I will explain in chapter 3 that 'b3' sometimes doesn't really fit well against a Benoni set-up. This is the case here, where this pawn should try to reach the 4th rank.

5... dxc4



Position after: 5... dxc4

A) 5... d4 This is simply a transposition into chapter 3 when Black plays with 5... c6.

B) 5... e7 has no real value because after 6. d4 What is the knight doing on c6? Black needs to explain that... 6... dxc4 7. a4 0-0 8. xc4± And we have reached an easy Catalan set-up, where Black clearly lacks counterplay.

6. a4

White's real threat is 7. e5. What happens if Black tries to keep his extra-pawn?

6... d5

6... d7 7. xc4 a5 8. c3!



Position after: 8. c3!

This is my recommendation, even if 'c3' is an unusual spot for the queen. The fact that it's also the computer's move might have something to do about it. The queen keeps an eye on the a5-knight, as well as on the g7 pawn. (≤ 8. c2 c5 9. e5 d6 10. xd7 xd7 Even if we gained the bishop pair, this position looks rather equal and a bit

dry.) 8... c5 9. ♘e5 ♙b5N (9... ♙d6? 10. ♘xd7+ This is the difference with 8. ♙c2: Black has no good way to take back; 9... ♙c8 10. ♘xd7 ♘xd7 11. d4±) 10. ♘a3!



Position after: 10. ♘a3!

A strong sacrifice. 10... ♙xe2 11. ♖e1 ♙a6 (11... ♙h5 12. ♘ac4! ♘xc4 13. ♙xc4 ♙d6 14. ♙xb7 0-0 15. ♙xa8 ♙xa8 16. b3±) 12. d4! The files need to be opened. 12... cxd4 13. ♙c2± This position is pretty sharp, but Black really suffers on the light squares, and he won't have time to castle because of ♙a4!

7. ♘c3 ♙c5 8. b3!



Position after: 8. b3!

This enables us to develop our pieces super swiftly!

8... cxb3

And here, I recommend to leave the interesting game Lushenkov, M (2387) – Ivanov, A (2425) Sochi 2007 (1-0) by playing the strong...

9. ♘b5!N ♘d5

Black can't solve the problems that easily playing 9... ♙d6?! as White would answer 10. ♙a3 (the hidden threat behind 9. ♘b5) 10... ♙b6 11. ♘xd6+ cxd6 12. ♙xd6±

10. e4 ♘b6

10... a6? 11. exd5 ♙xb5 12. ♙xb5 axb5 13. dxc6+–

11. ♙xb3

Black still needs to defend the c7-pawn.

11. ♘xc7+? ♙d8⚡

11... ♘a5

11... ♙d6? 12. ♙a3!+–

12. d4!

(see diagram next page)



Position after: 12. d4!

This is the point!

12... ♔c6

12... ♖xb3? is of course bad: 13. dxc5 ♖xa1 14. ♖xc7+ ♔d7 15. cxb6+ with too many threats to deal with for Black.

13. d5! ♔c5

13... ♖xb3 14. dxc6 ♖xa1 15. ♖xc7+ ♔d8 16. ♕f4!±

14. ♕d3±

Black's huge lack of development will prove to be much more important than his extra pawn.

b) 3... ♖f6 4. ♕g2 ♖bd7

1. ♖f3 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3 ♖f6 4. ♕g2



Position after: 4. ♕g2

4... ♖bd7

It might feel weird to you, but I actually think that this move is a commitment. Black decides to early where his knight should go, whereas it might be better

placed on c6 in some lines. Also, as '...d4' is no longer a threat, White can simply proceed with...

5. b3 ♕d6

A least, the bishop finds a slightly more active square.

A) 5... ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♕b2 is covered in the fifth chapter.

B) 5... b6 Even when Black tries to be creative, it has no real independent value, as it will eventually transpose into one of the other lines: 6. 0-0 ♕b7 7. ♕b2 ♕e7 8. ♖c3 0-0 9. e3 and we finally transpose into the 6...b6 line of the chapter 5.

6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖b2 b6

A) 7... c6 We can't really say that this is an important theoretical position. But it can be reached through several different move orders, and you can find the theory in chapter 8, the Semi-Slav.

B) 7... ♖e8 8. ♘c3 c6 Black is unable to dispense with this move, and it also transposes into chapter 8, the Semi-Slav.

8. cxd5 exd5 9. ♘d4!

Position after: 9. ♘d4!

This strong manoeuvre allows White to fight for an advantage.

9... ♖b7

9... ♘c5?! 10. b4 ♘cd7 (10... ♘ce4 11. d3 ♘g5 12. ♘c6!±) 11. ♖b3±

10. ♘f5! ♖e8?!

10... ♖c5 11. d4 ♖e7 12. ♘c3±

11. ♘xd6 cxd6 12. d3±

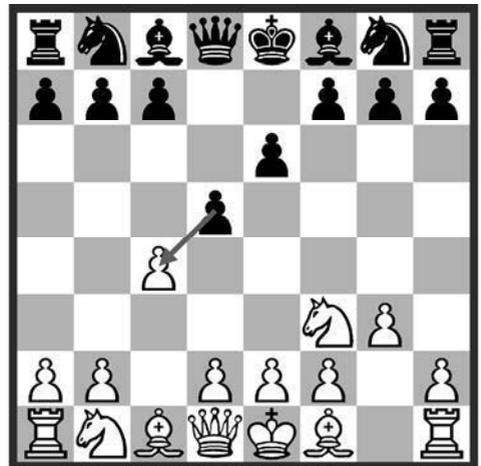
White may already be technically winning as in 1-0 (41) Martinovic, S (2445) – Paunovic, D (2320) Vrnjacka Banja 1983.

This was really a short chapter, but don't get used to it, it was only our warm-up!



Systems with ...dxc4

1.  f3 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3



Position after: 3. g3

Chapter's guide

Chapter 2 – Systems with ...dxc4

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a) 3...dxc4 4.--, 4. ♔a4+ --

1. ♘f3 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3



Position after: 3. g3

In the first chapter, we didn't discuss the most obvious question. The one everyone must have asked himself. It's one thing to sacrifice a pawn, BUT, what is happening if Black simply decides to take it? How to deal with that? Are we trying to recover it at once, or do we stick to a quick development and keeping our initiative?

Actually, both approaches are possible, and it merely depends on your personal temperament. Positional players will prefer to restore the material balance as soon as possible, whereas more active and bold players will prefer the more dangerous paths. What was my preferred choice? Hmm, it was a tough one, but I went for the positional path (even if I have only tried the bold option myself).

In this chapter, generally speaking, White is going to expose his queen near

the center. In exchange, he obtains the better pawn structure, because he has more pawns on the central files, and his g2-bishop is more active. Black must try to take advantage of the exposed queen by quickly developing his queenside and he could possibly take over the initiative.

3... dxc4!?



Position after: 3... dxc4!?

First of all, we need to know what happens if Black takes as early as on the 3rd move. Why aren't we actually considering 2...dxc4 first? Simply because it's absolutely not the same kind of position than in this present chapter. But don't worry, this is covered in chapter 9, the more 'Queen's Gambit Accepted types' of position. The main difference is that after 2...dxc4, White will most probably take back with his bishop from f1. Whereas here, White is already committed with g3, so the bishop will hardly leave his beloved fianchetto position.

To take on the 3rd move is a rather concrete and interesting option for Black. White needs to have an adequate response. I will call it "The Sveshnikov variation", as Evgeny and Vladimir Sveshnikov played it almost 20 times according to the databases, which is impressive for being a rare sideline. I do apologize in advance, in case this variation already would have another name.

4. ♔a4+

As in the main line 4...dxc4, my advice is to take the pawn back straight away. Does White have additional ideas? We will try to find out.

A) 4. ♘a3?!



Position after: 4. ♘a3?!

In this position (and contrarily to the main line), this move is not really permitted. Even if I played it once (it transposed to the normal position after 3...♘f6 4.♙g2, quite a weird move-order), Black has strong options to meet this move.

4... ♙xa3! The strongest, I believe, is to give the bishop pair in order to damage

White's pawn structure. 5. ♔a4+ A logical move if White is not happy about having two doubled a-pawns, but Black is resourceful. (The is-sue with 5. bxa3 is that Black can keep a healthy extra pawn 5... b5! 6. ♙g2 ♙b7! Black has already covered the long diagonal, and White's compensation is dubious: 7. ♙b2 ♘f6 8. 0-0 0-0 9. a4 a6) 5... b5!



Position after: 5... b5!

Easy to miss! Black takes over the initiative. 6. ♔xa3 (6. ♔xb5+?? c6→) 6... ♙b7 7. ♙g2 ♘d7 8. b3 cxb3 9. ♔xb3 ♖b8! White's play lacks bite, and I prefer Black's side here.

B) 4. ♙g2 may be an option, but among Black's possibilities, one of them really annoyed me, 4... a6!



Position after: 4... a6!

And none of the following tries seems

attractive to me: 5. ♖c3 (5. 0-0 ♗f6 6. ♗a3 b5 7. ♗e5 ♜a7 8. d3 cxd3 9. ♙e3 c5) And I prefer Black's pawn rather than White's pseudo initiative with 10. b4; 5. ♗e5 against this move, Black can always respond with 5... ♜d4! 6. f4 ♗d7 7. e3 ♜c5 8. d4 cxd3 9. ♗xd3 ♜a7; 5. a4?! ♗c6 6. ♗a3 ♗a5 7. ♜c2 ♜d5∞) 5... ♗f6 6. ♗e5 ♜d4!†

4... ♙d7!?



Position after: 4... ♙d7!?

This one is actually a smart try. Black tries to get a better version than in the main line. How?

4... c6 is possible as well, but it has no independent value. 5. ♜xc4 b5 6. ♜c2 ♙b7 7. ♙g2 ♗d7 8. 0-0 Finally, Black doesn't have really other options than transposing into the main line with 6... c6 by playing 8... ♗gf6.

5. ♜xc4 c5

The classical manoeuvre 5... ♙c6 which reminds us of some Catalan lines for instance, is not particularly strong here.

The following correspondence game shows the main difference: as White has not yet played d4, it will be easier to play with e4, and fight against the bishop c6. 6. ♙g2 ♗f6 7. 0-0 ♗bd7 8. ♗c3 ♙e7 9. e4!



Position after: 9. e4!

9... 0-0 10. ♜d1 a6 11. ♜e2 b5 12. ♗d4 (12. d4!? was simple and strong enough to obtain a simple advantage: 12... b4?! 13. d5!±) 12... ♙b7 13. e5! ♙xg2 14. ♙xg2 ♗d5 15. ♗xd5 exd5 16. ♗c6 ♜e8 17. d4± 1-0 (66) Karacsony, E (2340) – Puoli, H (2350) corr Argentina – Romania 2008.

6. ♙g2



Position after: 6. ♙g2

6. ♖e5 doesn't work as well as in the variation with 4... dxc4 and 6... ♖d7 of that current chapter. 6... ♖c6 7. ♖xd7 ♙xd7 8. ♗g2 ♖f6=. What happened? We are a full tempo down compared to the classical line. Why? Black didn't spend a tempo playing ...♙c8. Thus, I think Black is fine.

6... ♖c6

The Sveshnikov's approach. Here I would like to advice you to use a novelty for White (even if it transposes into a few new games).

6... ♖c6 This looks to me like the most natural continuation, otherwise the bishop on d7 doesn't make much sense. However, White gets a pleasant position: 7. 0-0 ♖f6



Position after: 7... ♖f6

8. b3! I believe that White can keep an edge with this move. At least he has a simple plan. 8... ♖e7 9. ♖b2 0-0 10. d3 ♖bd7 And here, I want to improve on the game Movsesian, S (2705) – Grachev, B (2672) Sibenik 2012. 11. ♙c2!?N b5 12. e4 a6 13. ♗c1 ♙b6 14. ♙e2! The queen can prove to be better here,

that's why I prefer to delay ♖bd2. 14... ♗fd8 15. ♖bd2 ♖b7 16. a4↑

7. d4!?



Position after: 7. d4!?

White tries to be smart. OK, but what happens if Black reacts as usual?

The line 7. 0-0 ♖f6 8. d4 b5 9. ♙d3 transposes into a Catalan variation. Sure, you can check. But I don't like it!

7... b5

That seems to be the logical follow-up.

7... cxd4 8. ♖xd4 ♖xd4?! (8... ♗c8 9. 0-0 ♖f6 10. ♖c3 ♖e7 11. ♗d1±) 9. ♙xd4 ♖c6 10. ♖xc6+ bxc6 11. ♖e3±

8. ♙xb5!N

We are trying to make a difference.

8... ♖xd4

8... cxd4 may look as the safe option, but things are not so simple: 9. ♖e5!

♞xe5 10. ♔xe5 ♖c8 11. 0-0 ♗b6 12. e3!



Position after: 12. e3!

Black has a difficult choice: giving up a pawn or conceding his activity? 12... ♞f6! (12... dxe3?! 13. ♙xe3 ♗a6 14. ♞d2± Black is too far from castling to be fine) 13. ♗xd4 ♙c5 14. ♗h4 0-0 15. ♞c3± Black has some compensation, but he is definitely the one playing for a draw here, and he will need to be very accurate.

9. ♗d3



Position after: 9. ♗d3

9... ♙b5

9... ♙c6 10. ♞bd2 ♞e7 (10... ♞xf3+?! 11. ♙xf3!±) 11. ♞f1!!



Position after: 11. ♞f1!!

OK, two exclamation marks may seem too much. It's not like White is crushing his opponent. But it makes his life rather difficult, with this mind-blowing move! (11. 0-0 ♞xf3+ Check, sir! 12. ♞xf3 ♗xd3 13. exd3 ♖d8= was too simple for Black) 11... ♖c8 This semi-waiting move seems to be the most accurate answer. (11... ♞xf3?! 12. ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 13. ♙xf3 ♞d5 14. b3 ♙e7 15. ♙b2± and White keeps the advantage of a better structure. He will try to grab the b-pawn and win the endgame.)

A) 12. e3 ♙b5 13. ♞c4 ♞dc6!↑ (13... ♞xf3 14. ♞d6+ ♗xd6 15. ♗xb5+ ♗xc6 16. ♗xc6+ ♞xc6 17. ♙xf3±)

B) 12. ♞xd4! ♗xd4 13. ♗xd4 cxd4 14. ♞b3 e5 15. f4 Even if it's most probably equal, White has some ideas to play on achieving some advantage.

10. ♗d2 ♞xe2

10... ♖c8 11. ♞c3 ♙c6 12. 0-0 ♞f6 13. ♖d1 ♞xf3+ 14. ♙xf3 ♙xf3 15. exf3± Black will suffer because of his isolated c-pawn.

11. ♖f1!



Position after: 11. ♖f1!

Suddenly, we understand why we did not insert '0-0' and '...♘f6' in our line.

11... ♘d4

11... ♙xd2+ 12. ♘bx2 ♘d4 13. ♘xd4 ♖xf1 14. ♘xe6 fxe6 15. ♙xf1±

12. ♘xd4 ♖xf1 13. ♘xe6 fxe6 14. ♙xd8+ ♗xd8 15. ♙xf1!±

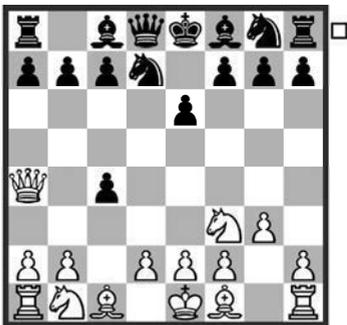


Position after: 15. ♙xf1!±

With clearly the best structure for White and the more pleasant endgame.

b) 3...dxc4 4. ♙a4+ ♘bd7 5.--, 5. ♖g2 c5

1. ♘f3 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3 dxc4!? 4. ♙a4+ ♘bd7 5. ♖g2!



Position after: 4... ♘bd7

For some reason, I prefer to delay ♙xc4, as Black has no way to prevent it. Let's see a few additional ideas for Black after 5. ♙xc4:

A) 5... c5 6. ♖g2 b6!? is also a variation we avoid with our move-order. It seems wrong because it weakens the long diagonal, but White doesn't have a good way to take advantage 7. ♘d4 ♘e5! 8. ♘c6 ♘xc4 9. ♘xd8 ♗b8 10. ♘c6!



Position after: 10. Nc6!

10... Qb7! (10... Ra8? 11. Ne5+; 10... Bb7?! 11. Nc3 f6 12. b3 Nd6 13. d4!±) 11. 0-0! Ra8 12. b3!N Nd6 13. d4± We finally probably keep the upper-hand, even if Black still wants to play this position.

B) 5... Ngf6 6. Qg2 transposes into the main line.

C) 5... b6!? is actually pretty interesting here, whereas it is obviously impossible in our main line 6. Qg2 Qb7 7. 0-0 Ngf6 Black easily brought his bishop into play, and the game seems roughly balanced: ½-½ (45) Ibarra Chami, L (2477) – Gonzalez Garcia, J (2497) Merida 2012.

5... c5

5... Ngf6 6. Qxc4 transposes into the main line.

6. Qxc4!

6. 0-0 a6 7. Qxc4 b5 8. Qf4!?N

(see analysis diagram next column)



Position after: 8. Qf4!?N

This is an interesting try, threatening both Ne5 or Ng5, with a mating threat and attacking the a8-rook. But the simple 8... Bb8! solves the problems: 9. d4 Ngf6 10. Qd1 Qb7 11. dxc5 Qxc5=



Position after: 6. Qxc4!

6... a6

6... b6?! Black puts himself in the tiger's cage, expecting to get beaten. But it's actually not so easy to punish him: 7. Nd4!? Ne5! The point, making Black not being lost at once. 8. Nc6! (8. Nxe6!? is not so bad either, but Black will get some compensation after 8... Qxe6 9. Qe4 Qc8 10. Qxe5 Nf6 11. d3 Qd6 12. Qc3 0-0) 8... Nxc4 9. Nxd8 Bb8 10. Nc6 Qb7 (10... Bb7?! 11. Nc3 Ne7 12. d3 Nd6 13. Qf4