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BENONI



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KEY TO SYMBOLS

±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
=	equality
∞	unclear
∞	with compensation
→	with an attack
↑	with initiative
↔	with counterplay
⊙	zugzwang
♯	mate
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
△	with the idea
□	only move
⤴	better is
⊕	time
N	a novelty
(ch)	championship

PREFACE

Allow me to share with you the chess philosophy that has defined my style and that I strive to convey through the pages of this book. For me, playing for victory in chess is essential, regardless of whether I am playing with white or black pieces. I believe that chess is a game that requires courage, creativity, and determination. I have always been drawn to the idea of taking the initiative, setting challenges for my opponent, and pursuing active plans. I consider this to be the only way to achieve real success on the board.

When I wrote the book on the Delayed Benoni a few years ago, it naturally led to the idea of doing one on the Open Benoni as well. The main difference between these two openings is that in the Delayed Benoni, Black waits with ...exd5, which means that when White castles, Black can close the center with ...e5 and launch an attack on the white king, or if the timing is favorable, capture on d5. However, in contrast to the Open Benoni, here White can respond with exd5, which has proven to be the most dangerous weapon.

There are variations in which a transition from the Delayed Benoni to the Open Benoni is possible, such as the Fianchetto Variation or the Sämisch Variation. Therefore, while working on the previous book, I had already encountered the Open Benoni in many variations. In practice, I leaned more towards the Delayed Benoni, even though I was a fan of the Open Benoni, but there were some variations I did not dare to venture into because I did not have enough knowledge and considered them dangerous, one of those variations being the Taimanov Variation with the early ♗b5+.

In this book, I strive to provide you with a comprehensive guide to the Benoni, with detailed analysis of games and thematic positions. I will share with you my best strategies, ideas, and tactics that I have used throughout the years of playing the Benoni. This book is the result of my personal research and experience, as well as a deep insight into the games of other top chess players who have chosen the Benoni as their weapon, a great example being Grandmaster Gashimov, who was not afraid of preparation or strong opponents and played the Benoni the way it should be played—in a courageous and principled manner!

Until now, I have worked on opening books purely from a theoretical standpoint, but this book takes a slightly different approach. In each variation, I have found a suitable game that I comment on from start to finish, providing a theoretical overview of the variation. In addition to the games, the book is full of new ideas and comments, so I wouldn't single out a specific group that can benefit from it—I believe it caters to players of all levels.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who have decided to purchase this book. Your support gives me the motivation to continue sharing my love for chess and my knowl-

edge with you. I hope that the Benoni will bring you much inspiration and help you achieve numerous victories. Learning the Benoni can be challenging, but at the same time, it is extremely rewarding. I believe that this book will provide you with a strong foundation and useful guidelines on your journey to chess success.

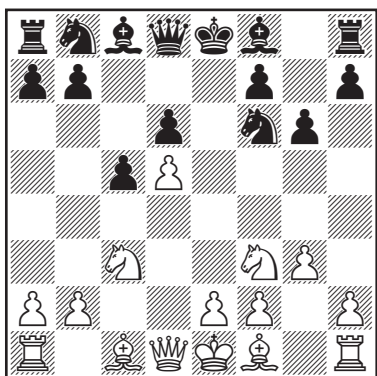
Ivan Ivanisević

Belgrade, 2023.

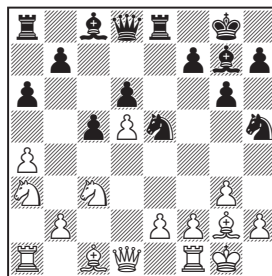
CHAPTER FOUR

Fianchetto Variation

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. ♗c3 exd5 5. cxd5 d6 6. ♗f3 g6 7. g3



10. ♗d2 a6 11. a4 ♗bd7 12. ♗c4 ♗e5 13. ♗a3 ♗h5



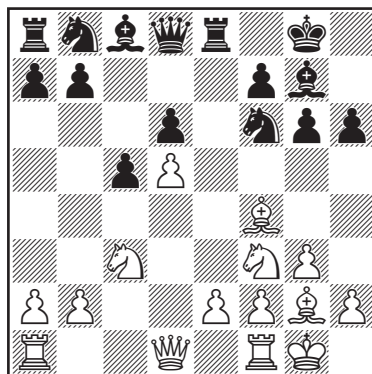
Check out the game *L. Aronian – A. Grischuk*.

The Fianchetto Variation of Benoni leads to positions that require a positional style of play.

7... ♗g7 8. ♗g2 0–0 9. 0–0 ♖e8 Black develops pieces in this way to prevent White from taking the center. There are two ways for White to continue. 10. ♗f4 – The idea is to develop all the pieces and advance the e-pawn afterward. 10. ♗d2 – A natural move with the idea to transfer the knight to the c4 square.

10. ♗f4

10... h6!?



Black prepares to advance his g-pawn in order to chase away the unpleasant

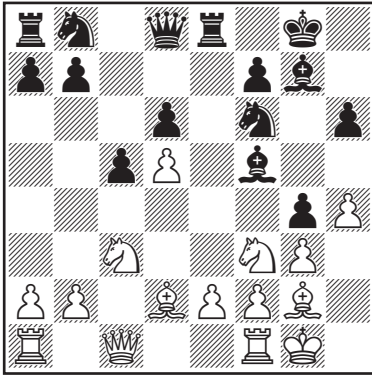
f4 bishop. To add to this, he will enable his light-squared bishop to come to f5 in order to control the b1-h7 diagonal.

11. ♖c1 g5 12. ♗d2

12. ♗e3!? White can keep the option of returning the knight to d2.

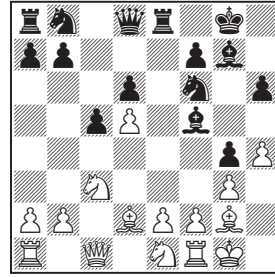
12... ♗f5 13. h4 White's idea is to weaken Black's queenside and take control over the c1-h6 diagonal.

13... g4



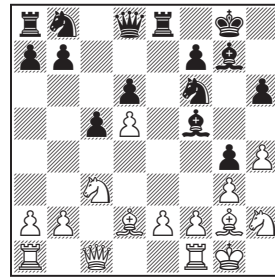
White's knight has two retreat squares.

14. ♞e1



Check out the game *E. Gleizerov – D. Navara*.

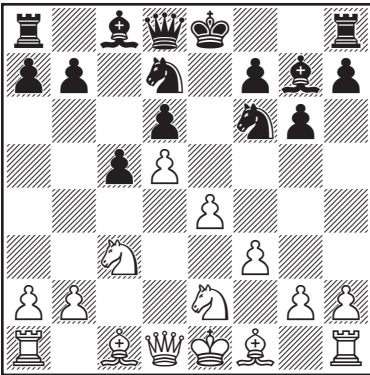
14. ♞h2



Check out the game *Lei Tingjie – E. L. Ami*.

**A. Rawlings –
D. Morozov**
corr. 2020

1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. ♘c3 exd5 5. cxd5 d6 6. e4 g6 7. f3 ♕g7 8. ♞ge2 ♜bd7 Black's decision to delay castling allows him to react appropriately to White's knight transfer to the kingside. If Black were to castle too early, White could establish the desired piece formation with the knight on g3 and the bishop on g5. By postponing castling, Black retains flexibility in his position and can adapt to White's strategic choices.



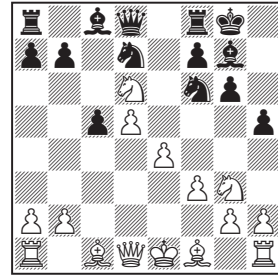
9. ♞g3 Transferring the knight to the kingside is more effective after Black castled.

9... h5 Black is able to pressure White's g3 knight.

10. ♕e2

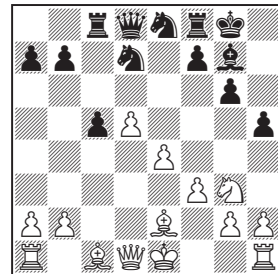
White can initiate the attack on the d6 pawn 10. ♘b5!? It is interesting that this move has not been tried in the practice.

A) Black can choose to sacrifice the pawn with 10... 0–0 This leads to interesting positions where Black is able to quickly activate his pieces. 11. ♞xd6



11... ♞e8! Black exchanges White's only active piece and opens up the diagonal. White will face difficulties while trying to castle. For example:

A1) 12. ♞xc8 ♖xc8 13. ♕e2



13... c4!↑ Black has already established a strong initiative. It is important to consider the motif of trapping the knight on g3 if White hastily castles. 14. 0–0? ♜b6+ 15. ♔h1 (15. ♖f2 ♕d4) 15... h4–+

A2) Retreating the knight would only slow down White's development and Black is able to create a positional advantage with logical moves. 12. ♘b5 a6 13. ♘c3 h4 14. ♞ge2 ♜d6↑ White is passive and it is unclear how he will move away his king from the center.