

Reloaded Weapons in the Benoni

Second Revised Edition

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Milos Pavlovic

Thinkers Publishing 2024



Key to Symbols

!	a good move
?	a weak move
!!	an excellent move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
□	only move
N	novelty
☉	lead in development
⊙	zugzwang
=	equality
∞	unclear position
≈	with compensation for the sacrificed material
±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White has a serious advantage
∓	Black has a serious advantage
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
→	with an attack
↑	with initiative
↔	with counterplay
Δ	with the idea of
△	better is
≤	worse is
+	check
#	mate

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Preface

Although some years ago I wrote a book on the Benoni this time I decided to make it a neater, more reader-friendly type of book, with updated and new material wherever needed and sometimes keeping the good stuff from the past. I decided to cut lots of analysis, making it easy for readers to jump into the essence of the Modern Benoni, but still with cutting edge theory.

I hope this type of balanced work will be seen as a positive attempt, because I firmly believe that books should be easy to read and understand, and to become a tool that will help chess readers to comprehend a lot of material in a good way before going to tournaments.

As a well-known proverb states, 'too much of information is equal to none' so finding balance in that is important.

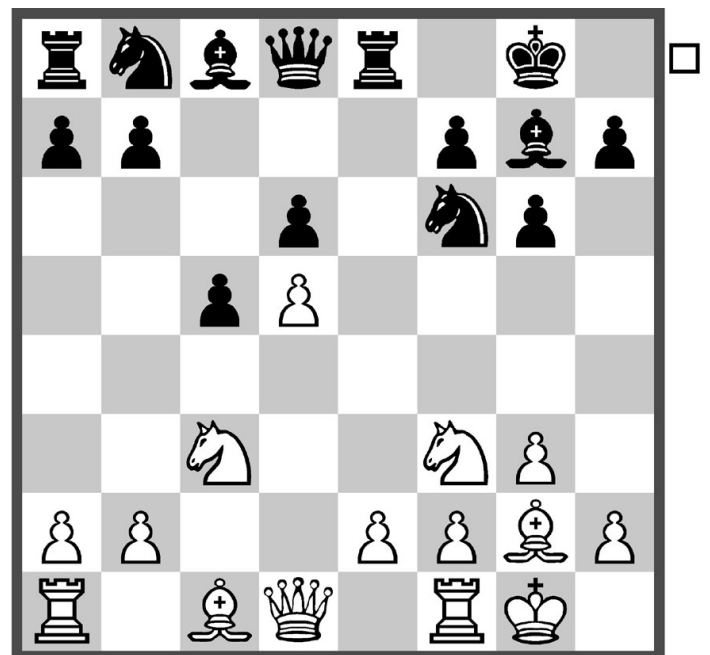
The Modern Benoni has, in the last few years, started to become a serious tool for all players who want to play for a win, but the key is to know the theory well – hope this book will help.

Milos Pavlovic, June 2024









The Fianchetto Variation








1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6
4.♞c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.g3 g6
7.♙g2 ♙g7 8.♞f3 0-0 9.0-0
♜e8



Chapter Guide

Chapter 1 – The Fianchetto Variation

1.d4 f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.g3 g6 7.g2 g7 8.f3 0-0
9.0-0 e8

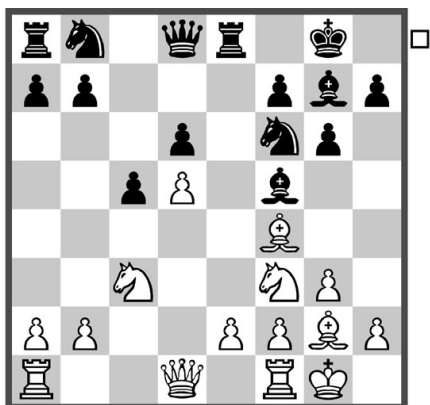
a) 10.  f4.....	9
b) 10.  e1.....	14
c) 10.  d2  bd7 11.a4 b6 12.h3 a6 13.  c4.....	17
d) 10.  d2  bd7 11.a4 b6 12.h3 a6 13.f4.....	21

a) 10. ♖f4

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. ♘c3 exd5
5. cxd5 d6 6. g3 g6 7. ♙g2 ♙g7 8. ♘f3
0-0 9. 0-0 ♖e8 10. ♙f4

This is the main approach now and completely sidesteps the old main line 10. ♘d2. White simply came up with lots of ideas, but so has Black. The main idea is central play combined with pressure on the d6-pawn.

10... ♙f5



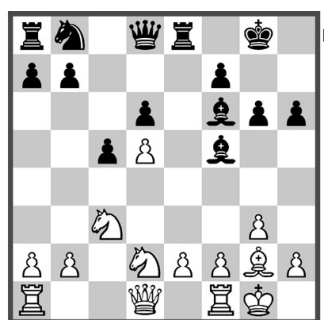
Position after: 10... ♙f5

A recently re-designed idea and for that reason (and also because I didn't analyse it in my previous book) I decided to have it here. The idea is to place a knight on e4 and retake it with the bishop rather than the rook. That's a known motif from many openings but in the Benoni it's not, so it is important to see if it works.

11. ♘h4

The main continuation and the most-tested one but there are some other plans as well:

A) 11. ♙g5 h6 12. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 13. ♘d2



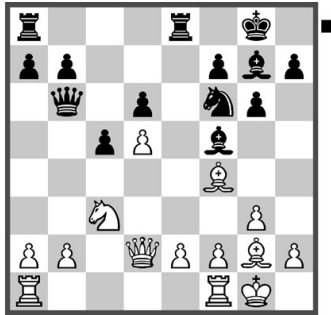
Position after: 13. ♘d2

Creating problems for Black's hopes of achieving harmonious development. 13... ♙c8 14. ♘c4 ♙xc3 15. bxc3 b5 16. ♘d2 ♘d7 17. ♖e1 a5 18. ♙c2 b4 19. a3 with a very complicated position, although it doesn't appear that way due to some exchanges. ½ – ½ (29) Tomashevsky, E (2702) – Svidler, P (2763) Palma de Mallorca ESP 2017.

B) 11. ♙b3 ♘a6 12. ♖fe1 [12. ♘g5 ♘h5 13. ♙d2 h6 14. ♘f3 ♘f6 is also good for Black.] 12... ♘c7!? 13. a4 ♙e4 14. ♘xe4 ♖xe4 15. ♙d2 ♖e8 This is OK for Black.

C) 11. ♘d2 ♘h5

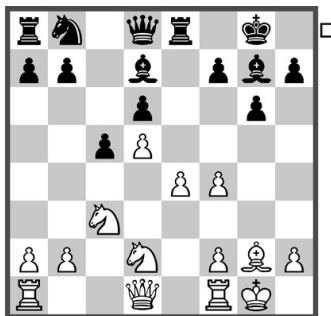
C1) 12. ♙e3 ♘d7 Now rook takes on e3 is a strong motif. 13. ♘c4 ♘b6 14. ♘xb6 ♙xb6 15. ♙d2 ♘f6 16. ♙f4



Position after: 16. ♖f4

16... ♘g4! [16... h5?! 17. f3! White has an edge. ½-½ (39) Durak, C (2350) – Kulaots, K (2525) Bassano del Grappa ITA 2023] 17. ♖fc1 ♘d7 18. a4 ♘e5 19. a5 ♙d8 20. ♘e4 ♙f5 21. ♙g5 f6 22. ♙f4 ♙xe4 23. ♙xe4 f5 24. ♙g2 b5 with equal chances is just one sample line.

C2) 12. e4 ♘xf4 13. gxf4 ♙d7



Position after: 13... ♙d7

14. ♘c4 [14. a4 ♙h4 15. ♙f3 ♙h6 16. ♙g3 ♙f6 17. e5 ♙xf4 18. ♘de4 ♖xe5 19. ♘xd6 ♙xg3 20. fxf3 f5 Black is OK. 21. ♘c4 ♖e8 22. ♘d6 with a possible repetition of moves.] 14... ♙xc3 15. bxc3 ♙b5 16. ♙b3 ♙xc4 17. ♙xc4 ♘d7 18. ♙d3 c4!? This is playing for a win... [18... ♘f6 19. ♙f3 ♘d7 Black has a draw minimum. 0-1 (43) Grave, J (2211) –

Abdrlauf, E (2527) Kragero NOR 2023] 19. ♙g3 ♘c5 20. ♖ae1 ♘d3 21. ♖e3 ♙f6 22. f5 ♙h8 23. fxf6 ♖g8 24. ♖f3 ♙xc3 25. ♙xd6 ♖xg6 26. ♙e7 ♖ag8 27. ♖g3 ♙d4 Black is better.

11... ♙g4

Black continues with his plan.

Black can also go back: 11... ♙c8 12. ♙d2 a6 13. a4 ♙e7 14. h3 ♘bd7



Position after: 14... ♘bd7

15. ♘f3!? This position has not been tested much: [15. e4 ♖b8 16. ♘f3 b5 17. axb5 axb5 18. ♖fe1 b4 Unclear. ½-½ (47) Inarkiev, E (2727) – Harikrishna, P (2750) Moscow RUS 2017] 15... ♙f8 16. ♙c2

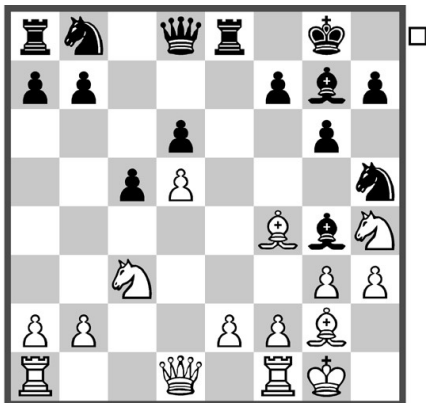


Position after: 16. ♙c2

Now I analysed two possible paths: 16...

♖b8 [16... ♘h5 17. ♕d2 ♘e5 18. ♘xe5 ♕xe5 19. a5 ♕d7 20. ♘a4 ♕b5 21. ♖fe1 f5 22. e3 ♖ac8 23. ♘b6 ♖c7 24. ♕c3 White has some edge here.]
 17. ♖ab1 b5 18. axb5 axb5 19. b4 ♕a6 20. ♖fc1 ♖bc8 21. bxc5 ♘xc5 22. ♖a2 ♘h5 23. ♕g5 h6 24. ♕d2 b4 25. ♖xb4 ♕xe2 26. ♘xe2 ♖xe2 27. ♖c2 ♖ee8 28. ♖c4 ♘f6 29. ♘d4 ♘fd7 30. ♘c6
 With no pawn activity the position is balanced.

12. h3 ♘h5



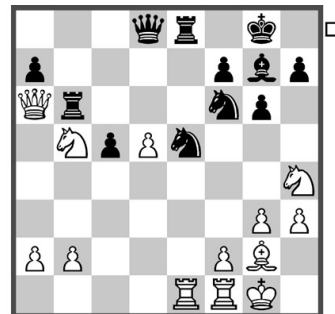
Position after: 12... ♘h5

This is the main point behind Black's idea.

13. ♕d2

White actually has a plethora of choices here:

A) 13. ♕xd6 ♕xe2 14. ♘xe2 ♖xd6 15. ♘c3 ♘f6 16. ♖b3 ♘bd7 17. ♖xb7 ♘e5 18. ♘b5 ♖d8 19. ♖a6 ♖b8 20. ♖ae1 ♖b6

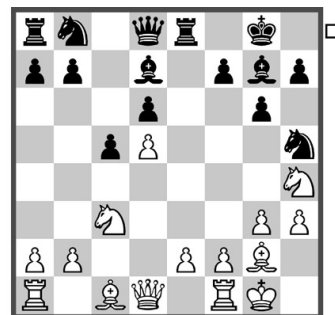


Position after: 20... ♖b6

21. ♖a5 ♘c4 22. ♖c3 ♖xb5 23. ♖xc4 ♖xb2 24. ♘f3 ♖xe1 25. ♘xe1 ♘e8! 26. ♘d3 ♘d6 Black is fine.

B) 13. ♘xg6 ♕xh3 14. ♕xh3 hxg6 15. ♕d2 ♘d7 Black is OK here.

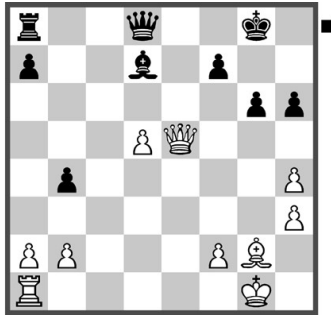
C) 13. ♕c1 ♕d7



Position after: 13... ♕d7

14. e4!? [In the game White played: 14. a4 ♘a6 15. ♘f3 c4!? 16. ♖h2 ♖c8 17. e4 ♘f6 18. ♘d4 ♘c5 Black is better.]
 14... ♘f6 [14... b5 15. ♘f5! The point!]
 15. ♖e1 b5 16. e5!? ♖xe5 17. ♖xe5 dxe5 18. ♕g5 h6 19. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 20. ♖e2 ♕xh4 21. gxh4 b4 22. ♘e4 ♕f5 23. ♘xc5 ♘d7 24. ♘xd7 ♕xd7 25. ♖xe5

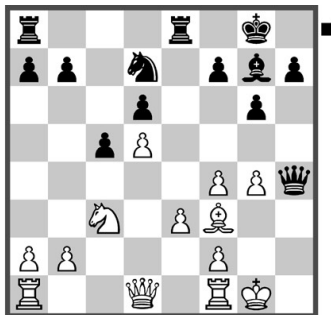
(see analysis diagram next page)



Position after: 25. ♖xe5

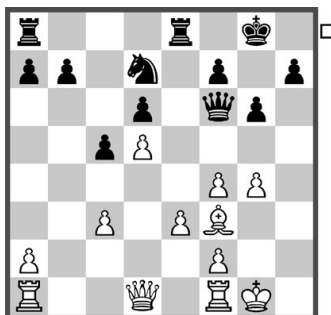
25... ♖xh4 26. ♖c7 ♗f5 27. d6 ♖c8 28. ♖xa7 ♖f4! Black has equal chances.

D) 13. hxg4 ♗xf4 14. gxh4 ♖xh4 15. e3 ♗d7 16. ♗f3



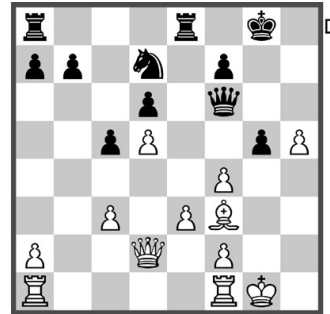
Position after: 16. ♗f3

With the obvious idea of bringing the king to g2 and the rook to h1. [16. ♖f3 ♗xc3 17. bxc3 h6! 18. c4 ♗f6 19. ♖h3 ♖xh3 20. ♗xh3 g5! Black is fine; the knight is stronger than the bishop.] 16... ♗xc3! 17. bxc3 ♖f6!



Position after: 17... ♖f6!

This is an important improvement here.
18. ♖d2 [18. c4 g5! 19. ♖d2 h5! 20. gxh5 ♗e5 21. fxe5 ♖xf3 22. ♖d1 ♖xd1 23. ♖axd1 ♖xe5 Black is fine.]
18... h5!? 19. g5 [19. gxh5 g5!



Position after: 19... g5!

20. ♗g4 ♗b6 21. f5 ♖e4 22. f3 ♖a4
The knight is coming to c4 with great effect.] 19... ♖f5 20. ♖g2 c4 21. e4 ♖xe4 22. ♗xe4 ♖xe4+ 23. f3 ♖f5 24. ♖ae1 ♗c5 25. ♖d4 ♗d3 26. ♖e4 ♗c5 27. ♖e7 ♗d3 No progress can be made by either side.

13... ♗xc3!?

Consequent, but not the only attempt:

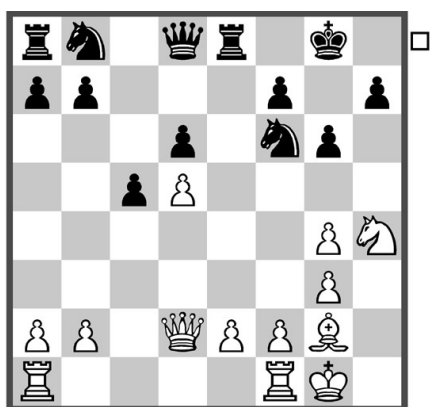
13... ♗d7 14. ♖b3 ♗a6!?



Position after: 14... ♗a6!?

Best in my opinion and deserving of more attention. 15. a4 [15. ♖f3 b5! This is good for Black; 15. ♔xb7 Taking the pawn is wrong: 15... ♘b4 16. a3 ♖b8 17. ♔xa7 ♘c2 18. ♖ab1 ♘d4 19. ♘f3 ♖a8 20. ♔b7 ♙f5 21. e4 ♖e7 Black is better.] 15... ♘f6 16. ♙f4 ♔c7 17. ♘f3 c4 18. ♔a3 ♘c5 19. ♘d2 ♘h5! and the complications favor Black.

14. hxg4 ♙xd2 15. ♔xd2 ♘f6



Position after: 15... ♘f6

I think here White must find a better way, so...

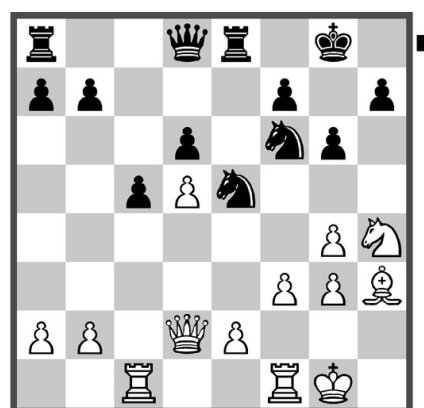
16. f3!?

A) 16. ♙f3?! This is not a critical approach. 16... ♘bd7 17. ♘g2 ♘e4 18. ♔f4 ♘df6 19. ♖ad1 ♖e5 20. ♔c1 b5 This is fine for Black. ½-½ (55) Rorrer, G (2361) – Yoo, C (2606) Chesterfield MO USA 2023.

B) 16. ♔f4!? ♖xe2 17. ♖ae1 ♖xe1 18. ♖xe1 ♘a6 19. g5 ♘h5 20. ♔g4 ♘g7 21. ♘f3 ♘f5 22. ♔f4 White has

compensation due to the obvious activity of his pieces.

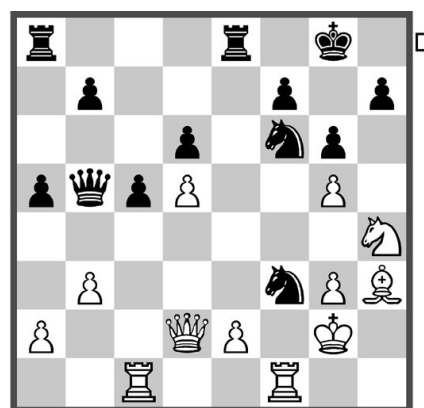
16... ♘bd7 17. ♙h3 ♘e5 18. ♖ac1



Position after: 18. ♖ac1

This is yet another razor sharp position that seems important for the evaluation of the line.

18... ♔d7 19. b3 a5 20. ♙g2 ♔b5 21. g5 ♘xf3!!



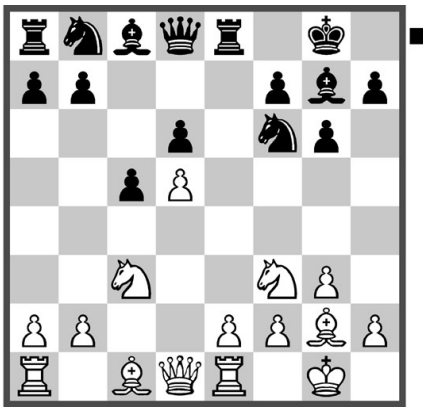
Position after: 21... ♘xf3!!

22. ♔xf3 ♘e4 23. ♔f4 ♘g5+ 24. ♙g2 ♔xe2+ 25. ♖f2 ♔e4+ 26. ♔xe4 ♘xe4 27. ♖e2 ♘f6 28. ♖f2 ♘e4

With a possible repetition of moves.
Overall, it seems OK for Black.

b) 10. ♖e1

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. ♘c3 exd5
5. cxd5 d6 6. ♘f3 g6 7. g3 ♙g7 8. ♙g2
0-0 9. 0-0 ♖e8 10. ♖e1

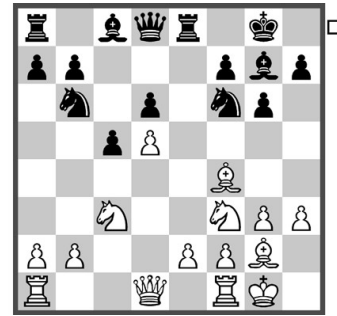


Position after: 10. ♖e1

This is yet another important modern approach. The last couple of years has seen a serious boost in this line and although I covered it in my previous book, I have to update things.

Another elastic idea in which White still doesn't decide which plan to opt for – either bishop on f4 or knight on d2 – is: 10. h3 ♘bd7 11. ♙f4 [11. a4 ♘e4! 12. ♘xe4 ♖xe4 13. ♘d2 ♖e8 14. ♘c4 ♘e5 15. ♘xe5 ♙xe5 16. ♙c2 ♙f5 17. e4 ♙d7 18. ♙d2 f5 and Black has counterplay.] 11... ♘b6!?

(see analysis diagram next column)



Position after: 11... ♘b6!?

A) 12. ♘d2 ♘h5 Black will get a dangerous bishop.

B) 12. ♖e1 ♘e4 13. ♖c1 ♙f5 Black is active here as well.

C) 12. ♖c1 ♙f5 13. ♙g5 ♙d7 14. g4 ♙e4 15. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 16. ♘xe4 ♖xe4 17. b3 ♖ee8 18. e3 ♙e7 19. ♘d2 ♘d7 20. ♙h1 b5 Black is doing OK. ½-½ (70) Kozul, Z (2619) – Barseghyan, A (2348) Berlin GER 2022.

D) 12. a4 ♘e4 13. ♘xe4 ♖xe4 14. a5 ♘c4 Black is OK. I don't see anything wrong with this plan so I am simply repeating it in this book as well, and as we can see, without ...a6, a4 implemented, Black has some additional resources.

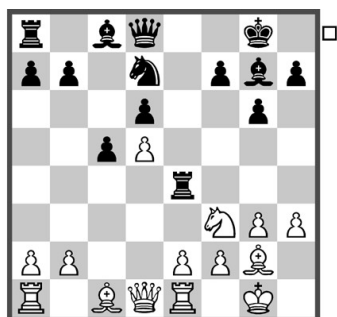
10... ♘bd7

In my opinion it seems best to omit ...a6. We will see from the examples why this type of structure is more flexible.

11. ♖f4

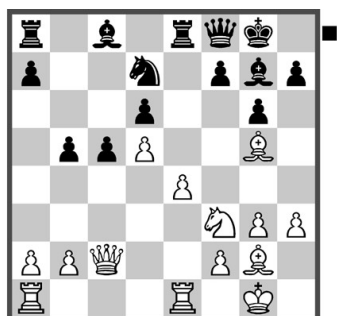
The main idea here.

11. h3 ♘e4 12. ♘xe4 ♗xe4



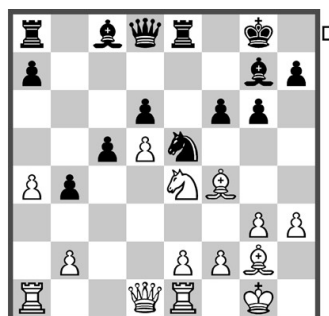
Position after: 12... ♗xe4

13. ♘d2 [13. ♘g5 ♗f8 14. ♗c2 ♗e8 15. e4 b5!



Position after: 15... b5!

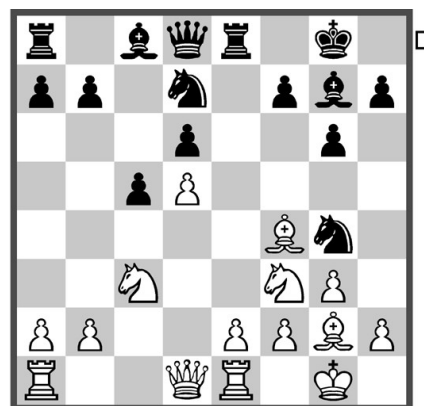
16. ♘d2 b4 17. a3 b3 18. ♗c1 ♘a6 19. ♘c3 ♘d3! Black has the initiative. We can see the advantage of not playing an early ...a6 in this particular line.] 13... ♗e8 14. ♘e4 ♘e5 15. ♘g5 f6 16. ♘f4 b5 17. a4 b4



Position after: 17... b4

The knight will go to f7 after which ...f5 will come with strong effect. 18. ♘xe5 ♗xe5 19. ♘d2 f5 20. ♘c4 ♗e8 21. ♗c1 ♘a6 and Black is better. 0-1 (27) Ulibin, M (2469) – Kokarev, D (2611) Chelyabinsk RUS 2020.

11... ♘g4



Position after: 11... ♘g4

In my opinion it is best to fight for the e5-square.

12. ♘g5

A) 12. ♗d2 ♘de5 13. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 14. b3 a6 15. h3 b5 16. ♗ac1 b4 17. ♘a4 a5 18. ♘h6 ♘h8 19. f4 ♘d7 20. e4 ♘b6 21. e5 ♘xa4 22. bxa4 dxe5 23. ♗xc5 ♘d7 White hasn't achieved