

opening repertoire

the Fianchetto System

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About the Author

Damian Lemos is a Grandmaster from Argentina. He is a former Pan-American Junior Champion and was only 15 years old when he qualified for the International Master title. He became a Grandmaster at 18 years old. An active tournament player, GM Lemos also trains students at OnlineChessLessons.net.

Contents

About the Author	3
Bibliography	6
Preface	7
1 The Symmetrical English Transposition	9
2 The Grünfeld without ...c6	40
3 The Grünfeld with...c6	52
4 The King's Indian: ... Δ c6 and Panno Variation	78
5 The King's Indian: ...d6 and ...c6	103
6 The King's Indian: ... Δ bd7 and ...e5	122
Index of Variations	169
Index of Complete Games	175

Preface

Dealing with dynamic and aggressive defences like the Grünfeld or King's Indian is not an easy task for White players. Over the years, I've tried several variations against both openings, usually choosing lines which White establishes a strong centre although Black had lot of resources as well against those lines. When I was fourteen years old, I analysed Karpov-Polgar, Las Palmas 1994 (see Chapter 4, *Game 25*) and was impressed with the former World Champion's play with White. Then, I realized the Fianchetto System works well for White for the following reasons:

1) After playing g3 and ♗g2, White is able to put pressure on Black's queenside. What's more, White's kingside is fully protected by both pieces and pawns.

2) The Fianchetto System is playable against both King's Indian and Grünfeld defences.

3) As a King's Indian-Grünfeld player (from the Black side), I love the attacking possibilities that these defences offer. However, facing the Fianchetto System is always a problem to me, as the game goes into positional continuations where Black cannot generate much kingside activity whereas White has a solid spatial edge.

The purpose of this book is to offer the reader a solid system in order to face 1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6, not only focusing on theory but also long term plans for White. The subject of the first chapter is a transposition to the Symmetrical English 1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 c5 4 ♗f3. I recommend this so we can eliminate the Benoni and Benko Gambit lines.

In Chapters 2 and 3, we will look at neutralizing the Grünfeld defence, whereas the King's Indian defence is covered in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

It is my fervent hope that you'll find this book a useful weapon for White and also improve your positional understanding in the process!

Damian Lemos, Argentina
April 2014

Chapter Two

The Grünfeld without ...c6

The Grünfeld is one of the sharpest defences Black can play against 1 d4. What I really like about the g3-system is its flexibility. In the main line where Black plays a quick ...d5 (without first preparing the advance with ...c6), we push Black's knight back after e2-e4 and ♖e2, therefore building up a strong centre for White. The advantage of playing ♖e2 instead of ♖f3 is clear – White prevents the annoying ...♗g4 pin.

Game 10
V.Akopian-P.Svidler
Haifa 1995

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 d5

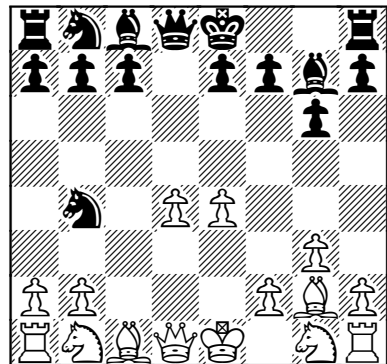
So here we have the dynamic Grünfeld Defence. As Yelena Dembo pointed out in her excellent *Play the Grünfeld*, the opening is all about piece activity and being the first to create threats. In

the following games, we'll study how to deal with Black's activity and get a good centre.

5 cxd5 ♗xd5 6 e4

The advantage of White's move order that he can choose to develop his knight via e2 instead of f3.

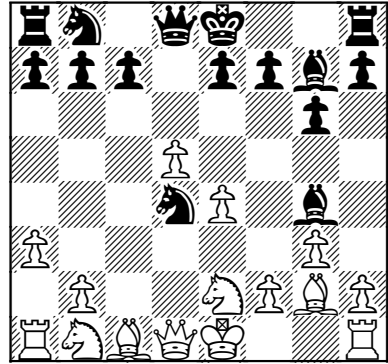
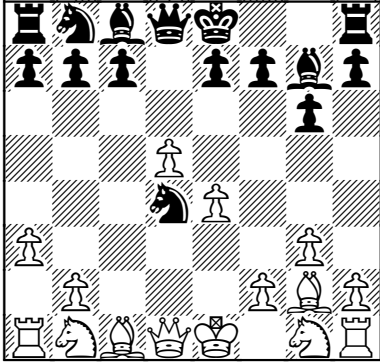
6...♗b4



In the next game, we discuss the main line 6...♗b6.

7 a3

7 d5 is also possible but I like the text move because Black's options have been curtailed and White seizes a lot of space.
 7...♖4c6 8 d5 ♗d4



9 ♗e2

The natural move 9 ♗f3 allows Black to ease his position by trading pieces 9...♗xf3+ (Black also has 9...♗g4! with better equalizing chances thanks to even more trades) 10 ♖xf3 0-0 11 0-0 e6 12 ♖b3 exd5 13 exd5 ♗d7 Black will follow up with ...♗e5 as played in D.Sekulic-L.Dzhandzhava, Belgrade 1988. In my opinion, White is slightly better.

9...♗g4

The most challenging move, Black can also try defending the ♗d4.

9...c5 10 0-0 0-0

a) 11 ♖bc3 ♗d7 12 ♗e3

Getting rid of ♗d4.

12...e5 13 dxe6 ♗xe6 14 f4 14 b4

White's space advantage gives him the better prospects.

b) 11 ♗xd4 cxd4 12 ♗d2 ♗a6 is unclear; A.Shirov-V.Gavrikov, Klaipeda 1988.

10 ♗bc3 ♗f3+

White loses the right to castle. However, Black loses a big amount of development tempi with ♗f3-♗g4. Moreover, White can castle 'by hand' after h3-♗g1-♗h2.

11 ♗f1 ♗d4

11...0-0? loses a piece after 12 h3 ♗h5 13 g4.

12 h3 ♗xe2 13 ♗xe2 ♗c8

Black keeps the bishop pair After 13...♗xe2+ 14 ♖xe2 0-0 15 ♗e3, White is going to play ♗g1-♗h2-♖hd1 and ♖ac1. His bishop pair and strong development should be enough for an advantage.

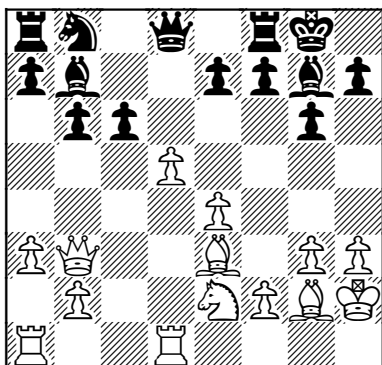
14 ♖b3 c6 15 ♗e3 0-0 16 ♗g1

Slow, but good enough to connect the rooks and place the King in a safe place.

16...b6

16...cxd5 17 exd5 does not ease Black's position. White's d5-pawn, although isolated, is well protected by ♖b3-♗g2, and possibly ♗c3 and ♖d1, guaranteeing White's space advantage.

17 ♖h2 ♙b7 18 ♗hd1



18...♗e8

The alternative 18...cxd5?! is dubious as after 19 exd5 ♖d7 20 ♖d4, the Knight hops onto the juicy c6 hole.

19 ♗ac1 ♖a6 20 ♖d4!

The knight is well placed on d4 and should be able to control events in the centre. Black faces a big decision now, to play 20...cxd5 21 cxd5 and allow White access to c6, or to close the position with 20...c5.

20...cxd5

Closing up the lines with 20...c5 allow gives White the edge after 21 ♖c6 ♙xc6 22 dxc6 e5 (not 22...♗xc6? as 23 e5 wins the exchange) 23 ♙f1 followed by ♗d7 and White has a clear advantage due to his light square domination and passed pawn on c6.

21 exd5 ♖c5 22 ♗c2 e5

Black tries to free his position. Playing 22...e6 would leave Black with a weak pawn structure after 23 b4 ♖a6 24 dxe6 ♙xg2 25 ♙xg2 fxe6 26 ♗e4.

23 ♖c6 ♖d7 24 ♖e7+

White trades his knight for Black's bishop and in the process, fashions a strong passed pawn on d6.

24...♗xe7

Black cannot ignore the check as if he plays 24...♙h8, White should be able to win material after the simple 25 ♗c7 followed by d5-d6.

25 d6 ♗f6 26 ♙xb7 ♗ad8 27 b4!

Black has managed to bring his queen's rook into the game but after 27 b4, White curtails the future of Black's ♖d7.

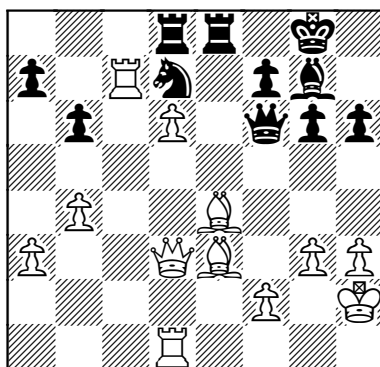
27...h6 28 ♗d3 ♗fe8 29 ♗c7

This natural move prepares ♙c6.

29...e4

Logically, Black tries to create counterplay. Otherwise, he is going to lose without a fight.

30 ♙xe4



30...♖e5 31 ♗c2 ♗xd6 32 ♗xd6 ♗xd6

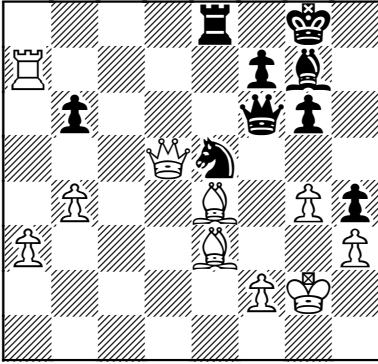
33 ♗xa7

The extra pawn plus the bishop pair should be enough for a win.

33...♗e6 34 ♗d1! h5

34...♖g4+ is just helping White, who

will gladly trade pieces off after 35 ♖xg4 ♜xe4 36 ♜xe4 ♝xe4 37 ♙xb6. 35 ♜d5 ♜f6 36 ♙g2 h4 37 g4!



Excellent defence by White, denying counterplay and the trade of queens will follow soon. After that, the game is over.

37...♙h7 38 g5 ♜e6 39 ♜xe6 ♝xe6 40 ♙d5 1-0

A very good example of how to play with the bishop pair!

Game 11
P.Tregubov-R.Kempinski
Koszalin 1999

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 ♙g2 ♘b6 6 e4 ♙g7 7 ♘e2 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e5

From the e5-square, the black knight controls both sides of the board.

8...♘a5

This is not very popular as it does not put enough pressure on White's centre.

9 0-0 c6 10 ♘bc3 cxd5 11 exd5 0-0 12

♝e1!? e6

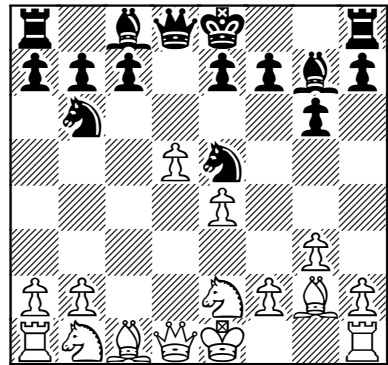
The knight sally 12...♘ac4 does not accomplish much. After 13 b3 ♘d6 14 ♙f4 White is much better already and can follow up with ♝c1. What's more, White can try grabbing more space with a4-a5. I would also try to play ♘d4-♙e5 to get rid of the strong, active black bishop on g7.

13 ♘f4 e5 14 ♘d3 ♘ac4 15 b3 e4 16 ♘xe4! ♙xa1 17 bxc4 ♙g7 18 ♜b3

White is the exchange down but he has a powerful c4-d5 pawn wedge as well as a huge development advantage.

18...♙f5 19 ♙g5 f6 20 ♙f4 g5 21 ♙d2 ♙h8 22 ♙b4 ♝e8 23 ♘d6 ♝xe1+ 24 ♘xe1 ♜d7 25 c5 a5 26 ♙c3 ♘a4 27 ♙d4 ♜e7 28 ♘xf5 ♜xe1+ 29 ♙f1 ♜b4 30 ♜e3

Black was unable to create any counterplay in V.Akopian-L.Shmuter, St Petersburg 1993.



9 0-0 e6 10 ♘bc3

The natural move in this position. However, I believe White can also take the lead after 10 f4:

Opening Repertoire: The Fianchetto System

10...♖ec4 11 e5

This line isn't easy to find without the help of an engine. Analysing the position deeply, I realized White has strong compensation here.

11...exd5

Not 11...♖xd5? as 12 ♗a4+ wins a piece.

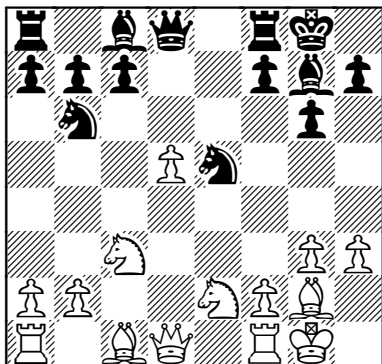
12 ♖bc3 c6 13 b3 ♖a5 14 ♕a3 14 ♗e1

Eyeing the errant ♖a5.

14...♕f8 15 ♕xf8

White has full control on the dark-squares whereas the black knights are out of play.

10...exd5 11 exd5 0-0 12 h3



This move is essential for White (especially when you have fianchettoed) because it protects our kingside from the likes of ...♖g4 or ...♕g4. This also prepares the f2-f4 advance if needed. White also can consider the following:

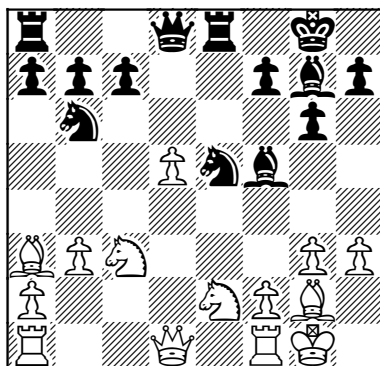
a) 12 ♕f4 ♖bc4 13 b3 ♖d6 14 ♗d2 ♖e8 15 ♖ac1 ♕h3 16 ♖fe1 ♕xg2 17 ♖xg2 ♗d7 18 ♖d4 a6 19 ♖e6 fxe6 20 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 21 ♖xe5

White has a huge advantage; S.Begun-Ivanov, Roslavl 1989.

b) 12 b3 ♕g4 13 f4 ♖ec4 14 bxc4 ♕xc3

The position is unclear; R.Bator-P.Schiller, Sweden 1993.

12...♕f5 13 b3 ♖e8 14 ♕a3



I would like to share GM Ftacnik's words here: "Both players have active light pieces, but Black's freedom is restrained by the strong d5-pawn".

14...♕d3 15 ♖c1

The key is to get out of the ♕g7's way.

Premature is 15 f4 ♖ec4! 16 ♗xd3 (after 16 bxc4 ♕xe2 17 ♖xe2 ♕xa1, White has insufficient compensation) 16...♖e3 and Black gets a strong initiative.

15...♕a6 16 ♖c2 ♗f6

The aggressive looking 16...♕d3 just makes White's life easier after 17 ♖d2 ♕f5 18 ♖d4 with a clear space advantage.

17 f4 ♖ed7

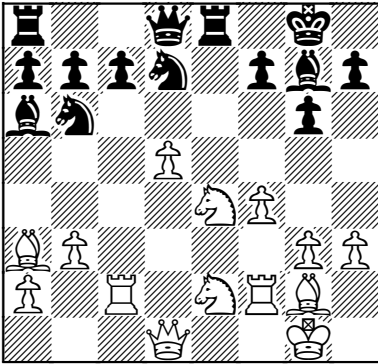
This retreat happens to be the only

move for Black. 17...♘d3? loses after 18 ♖f3! trapping the knight in the middle of the board!

18 ♗e4 ♗d8

Black's queen can get also trapped after 18...♗f5? 19 g4 ♗xd5 20 ♘f6+.

19 ♖f2



White improves his position little by little. This time he places the rook on a better square, away from the glare of Black's ♗a6.

19...♗f6

The seemingly active 19...f5 allows White to take advantage of the hole on e6 for the knight with 20 ♘g5.

20 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 21 ♘c3 ♖e3?

Too optimistic. Trading pieces off when you are under pressure is a good idea so 21...♗e7 is probably better.

22 ♗e4 ♗g7 23 ♗c5 ♗d3 24 ♖fd2 ♖xd2

Not 24...♖xd5? as 25 ♗xb6 ♖xd2 26 ♖xd2 wins a piece for White.

25 ♖xd2 ♗c8 26 d6

White develops a strong attack even before Black can complete his development.

26...♗xd6

After 26...cxd6, White has:

a) 27 ♗f2

This sets up ♗c5.

27...♗e7 28 a4

White is clearly dominating here as Black cannot finish his development on the queenside.

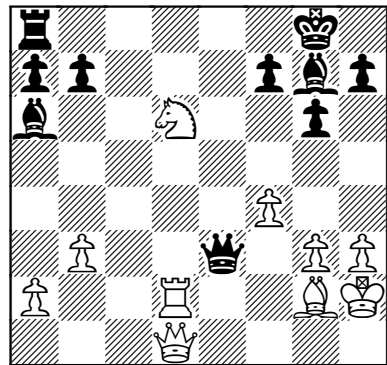
b) 27 ♘xd6 ♗xd6 28 ♖xd6 ♗c7 29 b4 ♗b5

Black brings the bishop back into the game and he gets equalizing chances.

27 ♗h2 ♗e8

The careless 27...♖c8 allows 28 ♗xa7 winning a healthy pawn.

28 ♗xd6 cxd6 29 ♗xd6 ♗e3



Here, 29...♗e7 appears to be a solid move for Black. However, White can easily destroy Black defences with 30 ♗xf7! ♗xf7 (30...♗xf7 31 ♖d7 wins the queen too) 31 ♗d5.

30 ♗xf7! ♖f8

Black cannot touch the ♗f7 as 30...♗xf7 31 ♖d7+ ♗g8 32 ♗d5+ ♗h8 33 ♖d8+ is winning for White.

31 ♗g5 ♗h8 32 ♖d7 ♗e8 33 ♗d5 1-0