



The Safest Scandinavian

A Black Repertoire with

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘c3 ♖d6

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The Safest Scandinavian

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Contents

Contents 3
Bibliography 4
Introduction 5

Chapter 1. 1.e4 d5 Rare Second Moves
Main Ideas 9 Step by Step 12 Annotated Games 20

Chapter 2. White's Third Move Alternatives
Main Ideas 27 Step by Step 29 Annotated Games 45

Chapter 3. 3.♘c3 ♖d6 without 4.d4
Main Ideas 69 Step by Step 72 Annotated Games 79

Chapter 4. 4.d4 ♗f6 without 5.♗f3
Main Ideas 87 Step by Step 91 Annotated Games 104

Chapter 5. 4.d4 ♗f6 5.♗f3 c6 Rare 6th Moves
Main Ideas 111 Step by Step 114 Annotated Games 123

Chapter 6. 4.d4 ♗f6 5.♗f3 c6 6.h3
Main Ideas 131 Step by Step 134 Annotated Games 140

Chapter 7. 6.♗e5 ♗bd7 7.♗f4 and the Shirov plan 7.f4
Main Ideas 149 Step by Step 153 Annotated Games 167

Chapter 8. The Main Line 7.♗c4
Main Ideas 177 Step by Step 182 Annotated Games 197

Variation Index 217
List of Annotated Games 219

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10 Days (www.Chessmix.com)

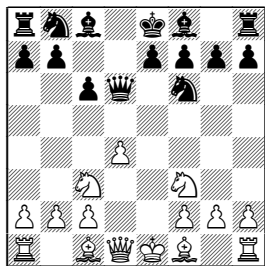
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Introduction

In the beginning of 2015 a good friend of mine, Mrs. Efi Georgopoulou, suggested to me to create an opening repertoire against 1.e4 that would be based on clear-cut plans while avoiding the tons of theory the Spanish and the Caro-Kann are associated with. Such a repertoire would be suitable for both professionals and amateurs only if it could combine asymmetric pawn structure (with the deriving from it complex play) with relative solidity. Thus I had basically no choice – my attention was immediately drawn to the 3...♖d6 Scandinavian:

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘c3 ♖d6
4.d4 ♘f6 5.♙f3 c6



Intense investigation and practical usage by GM Sergei Tiviakov have turned it into a respectable weapon known for its clear and strategically sound plans. I remember when

Sergei chose this system for the first time back in 2006. Of course, it had been played before, but not against super grandmasters as Anand and Grischuk! And Black obtained the upper hand in both games ever since the opening – that was a real shock in the chess world. Anatoly Karpov and Vassily Ivanchuk also employed it in fast time controls in the last three years.

I have played the Scandinavian myself in about 40 tournament games, half of them on the White side, including one against Tiviakov! I have spent so many hours trying to find an advantage for White that finally I have learned all Black's tricks and the finest nuances of his set-up.

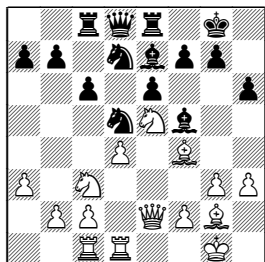
When I was young, I just could not believe that this opening could be any good. After all, Black gives the enemy free tempi and I have always valued time very much. However, from the experience I acquired afterwards, I realised that this time could not be easily exploited. The asymmetric pawn structure gives Black the important resource of turning the d5-square into a fortress. He would just need two further elements to achieve complete

equality: develop the light-squared bishop outside the pawn structure, and find a good place for his queen. To be honest, in the beginning I thought, like almost every GM in the world, that the black queen should go to a5 to pin the c3-knight. But chess is evolving, and in the past years the games of Sergei Tiviakov and other strong players showed that perhaps 3...♔d6 could be after all the best option. It is certainly the safest flavour of the Scandinavian. All Black's forces exert a restraining effect on the enemy's centre. The queen pressurizes d4 thus enhancing the impact of the bishop-op sortie to g4. As a result, White is unable to build a mobile pawn pair c4+d4 and play often takes the Classical Caro-Kann shape.

Here are two typical scenarios:

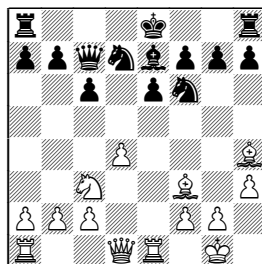
**M.Ali-Tiviakov
Jakarta 2015**

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♔xd5 3.♘c3 ♔d6 4.d4 c6 5.♗f3 ♕f5 6.g3 ♖f6 7.♕g2 e6 8.0-0 h6 9.a3 ♗e7 10.♗f4 ♔d8 11.♔e2 0-0 12.♞fd1 ♗bd7 13.♗e5 ♞c8 14.♞ac1 ♞e8 15.h3 ♘d5...



**Movsesian-Tiviakov
Wijk aan Zee 2013**

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♔xd5 3.♘c3 ♔d6 4.d4 ♗f6 5.♗f3 ♕g4 (5...c6!) 6.♗e2 c6 7.0-0 ♗bd7 8.h3 ♕h5 9.♕g5 e6 10.♕h4 ♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♔c7 12.♞e1 ♗e7



After the main move 4.d4, it is beyond doubt that White controls more space in the centre, but at the same time the pawn provides us with a target.

A look at the diagrams can lead to a few useful tips and conclusions about the type of play.

- This is surely a light-squared opening, so much will depend upon the effective development of the ♗c8.
- White controls more space, so Black should seek exchanges to ensure more breathing space.
- The fight will mainly revolve around the two important squares d5 and e5.
- The d4 pawn could become a target to attack – directly, or with the breakthrough ...c6-c5 or ...e6-e5.
- The ♔d6 cannot be effectively

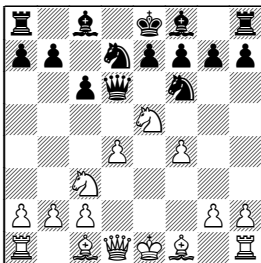
Introduction

attacked as it has many squares to flee to: c7, d7, d8, b4 or even e6. An important rule of thumb is that every exchange of a minor piece makes its position in the centre safer.

- White has a slight lead in development, which allows him to dictate the course of events and choose which side to castle. Black should try to hinder his plans by guerrilla tactics: a) offering a queen trade or exchanges in general and b) attacking certain weak points, which could be d4, c2, g2, to name a few.
- A bishop on c4 would almost certainly end up biting on granite after ...e7-e6, so this development is usually good news for Black.
- Endings are rarely better for White if nothing really catastrophic had happened to our pawn formation.

Several lines are very sharp and, in my opinion, critical.

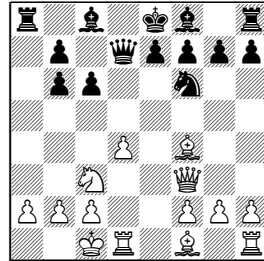
5.♭f3 c6 6.♭e5 ♭bd7 7.f4!?



The Shirov plan is underestimated and its coverage by theoreticians and annotators is overall wrong. I

devoted the better part of Chapter 7 to it where I present a new method of defence.

5.♭f3 c6 6.♭e5 ♭bd7 7.♭c4 ♖c7 8.♗f3 ♭b6 9.♗f4 ♗d7 10.♭xb6 axb6 11.0-0-0, Kotronias-Tiviakov, 2011.



I got an edge in this game and that only confirmed my opinion that Black was struggling in this particular line. Until I discovered the right way to strike back! You'll find my novel analysis in Chapter 8. It goes well beyond move 30 and is really vital for Black.

Today I believe that the 3...♗d6 Scandinavian is a safe and sound opening for all levels. I have spent so many hours trying to refute it, bashing my head against its solid walls, only to end up respecting it myself. The fruits of my work and analyses are presented below. I included games played before 20.1.2016.

I would like to thank my editor Semko Semkov for accepting my idea to create a repertoire based on this system, and then helping me with the analysis of some positions.

*Vassilios Kotronias
Athens, January 2016*

Variation Index

Chapter 1. 1.e4 d5 Rare Second Moves 9

- 1.e4 d5 2.d4 12
 - 2.e5 15
 - 2.♖c3 17

Chapter 2. White's Third Move Alternatives 27

- 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5
 - 3.c4 31
 - 3.♗f3 ♗g4 4.♗c3 32
 - 4.♙e2 ♗c6 5.0-0 32
 - 5.♗c3 32
 - 5.h3 33
 - 3.d4 ♗c6 4.♗f3 ♗g4 5.c4 36
 - 5.♗c3 43
 - 5.♙e2 0-0-0 6.c4 40
 - 6.c3 37
 - 6.♙e3 38
 - 6.♗c3 42

Chapter 3. 3.♗c3 ♖d6 without 4.d4 69

- 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♗c3 ♖d6
 - 4.g3 72
 - 4.♙c4 ♗f6 5.♗ge2 74
 - 5.♗f3 77

Chapter 4. 4.d4 ♗f6 without 5.♗f3 87

- 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♗c3 ♖d6 4.d4 ♗f6
 - 5.♗b5 91
 - 5.♙c4 93
 - 5.♙d3 95
 - 5.♙e2 96
 - 5.♙g5 99
 - 5.h3 100
 - 5.♗ge2 102

Chapter 5. 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♗f3 c6 Rare 6th Moves 111

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♜xd5 3.♗c3 ♜d6 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♗f3 c6
6.g3 114
6.♗d3 117
6.♗g5 120

Chapter 6. 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♗f3 c6 6.h3 131

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♜xd5 3.♗c3 ♜d6 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♗f3 c6
6.h3 ♗f5 7.♗e3 134, 7.g4 134
7.♗d3 134
7.♗c4 136
7.♗e5 137

Chapter 7. 6.♗e5 ♖bd7 7.♗f4 and the Shirov plan 7.f4 149

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♜xd5 3.♗c3 ♜d6 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♗f3 c6
6.♗e5 ♖bd7 7.♗f4 153
7.f4 ♖b6 8.g4 ♖bd5 155
8...♗e6 154
8...g6 159
7...e6 8.g4 ♖d5 9.♗e4 161
9.♗g2 163
7...g6 164

Chapter 8. The Main Line 7.♗c4 177

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♜xd5 3.♗c3 ♜d6 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♗f3 c6 6.♗e5 ♖bd7
7.♗c4 ♜c7 8.a4 182, 8.g3 183, 8.d5 183
8.♜f3 ♖b6 9.♗e5 183
9.♗f4 ♜d7 10.0-0-0 184
10.♗e5 186
10.♖xb6 188
10.♗e5 192
10.h3 194

List of Annotated Games

1. Kurylo – Stankevicius, Lithuania email ch, 2000	20
2. Punt – Landa, Vlissingen 01.08.2015	22
3. Agdestein – Wang, Amsterdam 27.08.2008	24
4. Valdas – Swahnberg, W-ch WS/M/068 email ICCF 2006	47
5. Panchanathan – S. Kasparov, Ranshofen 09.08.2012	48
6. Vachier Lagrave – Tiviakov, Hoogeveen 29.10.2010	51
7. Pesonen – Voveris, FIN-LTU ICCF email, 2007	54
8. Predojevic – Sermek, Portoroz 15.07.2005	55
9. Mamonova – Bedia, Poltavskaya 2010	58
10. Englmaier – Remek, corr. freechess.de, 21.06.2012	59
11. Brandenburg – Tiviakov, Hilversum 06.04.2008	62
12. D'Amore – Prié, Arvier, 2007	64
13. Mamedov – Kurajica, Sarajevo 2010	79
14. Lewis – Nicholls, ICCF 2009	80
15. Aravindh – Rakhmanov, Doha 29.11.2014	83
16. Massoni – Tiviakov, Bastia/Ajaccio 26.10.2008	85
17. Cornejo – M.Zapata, Mar del Plata 21.06.2009	104
18. E.Paetz – Tiviakov, Douglas 06.10.2014	105
19. Kislinsky – Babula, Kouty nad Desnou 16.05.2012	107
20. Savic – N. Ostojic, Vrnjacka Banja 11.11.2009	108
21. Muhammad Ali – Tiviakov, Jakarta 16.04.2015	123
22. Mannion – Tiviakov, Douglas 04.10.2014	125
23. Areshchenko – Karpov, Kiev 07.06.2013	127
24. Al.Kovacevic – Radibratovic, Herceg Novi 2001	129
25. Slobodjan – Muse, Bundesliga 09.12.2006	140
26. Wiczorek – Kulicov, Marianske Lazne 21.01.2008	141
27. NN – Kotronias, Internet, 2015	142
28. N.Ole Hansen – Peshke, WS/GMN/033 ICCF, 10.02.2012	145
29. Anand – Tiviakov, Wijk aan Zee 2006	167
30. Ivanchuk – Tiviakov, Wijk aan Zee 2010	169
31. Wan,Yunguo – Tiviakov, Moscow, 2011	170
32. Barrientos – Tiviakov, Bogota 05.12.2010	173
33. Kotronias – Zatonskih, Port Erin 27.09.2003	197
34. Kotronias – Tiviakov, Vrachati 22.08.2011	200
35. Pommrich – Gudichsen, WS/M/380 ICCF 2012	205
36. Dzhumaev – Tiviakov, Mashhad 2011	210
37. Yildiz – Kosteniuk, Astana 05.03.2013	213
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