

So far we are following Bareev-Leko, *Elista 2007*. Here Bareev continued with 15. e4, consistent with the general viewpoint that White should play for this thrust here. I would suggest that the reverse might be true. White can attack on both wings and do diddly squat in the center.

In fact, it appears to me that White has a ludicrous line here wherein he allows Black to do everything general theory dictates yet ends up with a bad position! This attack bears a striking resemblance to lines covered in Chapter 4, section 5.2.

15. g4! e5 16. Qg2 e4 17. Be2 h6

This restrains g5, at least for a while. 17... Nfd7 18. g5 should end up being pretty

similar.

18. h4 Nb6 19. a4!! Bxb4 20. g5 hxg5 21. hxg5 Nfd7 22. Nxe4 dxe4 23. Bxb4

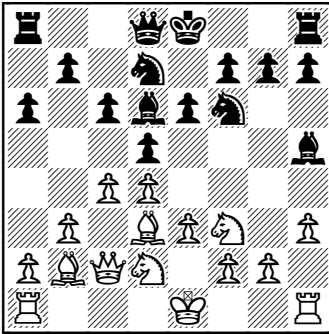
And we have a truly remarkable situation. White has ignored the center entirely, Black met a flank assault with a central pawn thrust, and he managed to maintain his good bishop, placing his central pawns on the opposite color. And yet, what does Black have to show for it?

9 The ...a6-Slav

After 1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. e3 c6 4. c4, Black might play 4... a6, attempting to transpose to an increasingly popular type of Slav.

This is particularly likely if you are playing someone stronger who does not want a draw, which he might fear likely after 4... Bf5 5. Bd3 (not that I suggest 5. Bd3 there, but it is known as a good drawing line.)

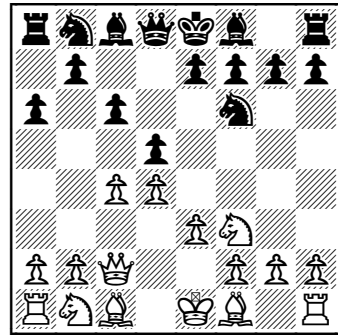
The position you will be steering toward is shown below [Black to Move]:



From here White has a stock way of maintaining an opening advantage by castling, pushing e4, and moving his Rooks to the appropriate central files. Flear suggests 10... Qc7 as perhaps Black's solution in this difficult (for him!) line, based on the line 11. 0-0 Bg6 12. Bxg6 hxg6 13. e4 dxe4 14. Nxe4 Nxe4 15. Qxe4 Nf6 16. Qc2 Qa5! 17. Rfe1 0-0 18. Ne5 Rad8 19. Rad1 Nd7 20. Nd3 Qh5!, but it seems this whole idea is busted since White can just play 20. Bc3! and the Queen is knocked off the important 5th rank.

With the above setup in mind, I think I've found a more accurate move order than what is normally played.

1. d4 Nf6
2. Nf3 d5
3. e3 c6
4. c4 a6
5. Qc2!



This move takes away the option of ...Bf5, and ...Bg4 now does not create a pin.

5... Bg4

Given the lack of light-squares available to Black, it makes sense for him to get this Bishop out to the K-side. 5... g7 6. Bd3 Bg7 7. 0-0 Bg4 8. Nbd2 0-0 9. h3 favors White.

6. Nbd2 e6 7. Bd3 Nbd7 8. h3!

This is my improvement over theory. Normally 8. b3 is played, but this looks inaccurate since after 8... Bxf6 9. Nxf6 Bb4+ 10. Bd2 Bxd2+ 11. Nxd2 there is no longer a Bishop to put in the b2-square. More importantly, White can find a much better use for the

b3 square that is now being occupied, as shown in the note to the next move.

8...Bh5

8...Bxf6! 9.Nxf6 Bb4+!?
 10. Bd2 Bxd2+ 11. Nxd2 0-0
 12. 0-0 e5 13. cxd5 cxd5 14.
 Nb3! with Qd2 (threatening
 Qb4) is favorable for White.
 Black's pieces get in each other's way and the Bishop on d3

defends or hits lots of important squares.

8...dxc4 9.Qxc4 should be fine for White since any Q-side pawn expansion scheme by Black should be well met by an appropriately timed a4!

9.b3 Bd6 10.Bb2

And we've arrived at the position we aimed for.