

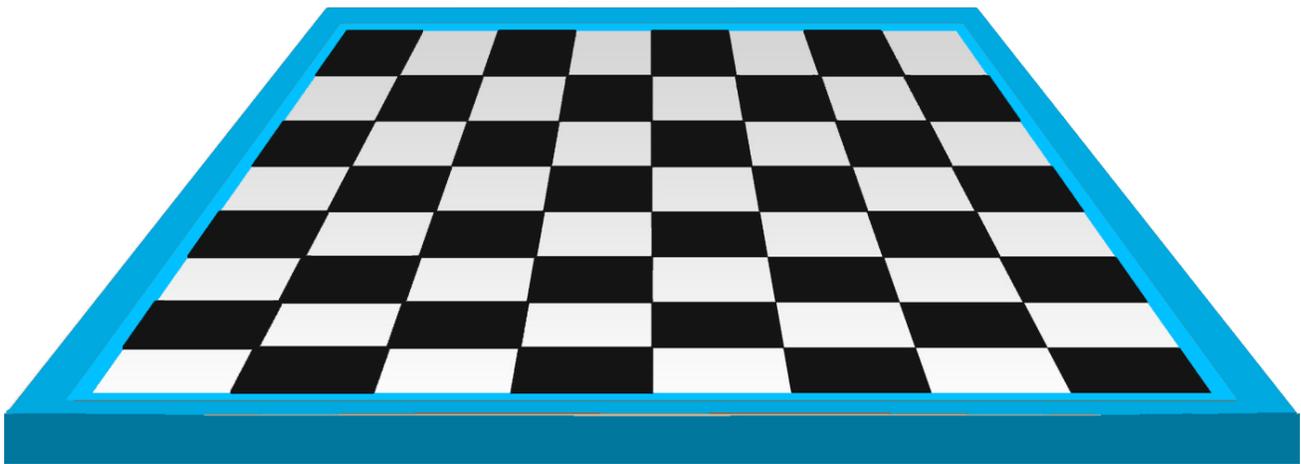
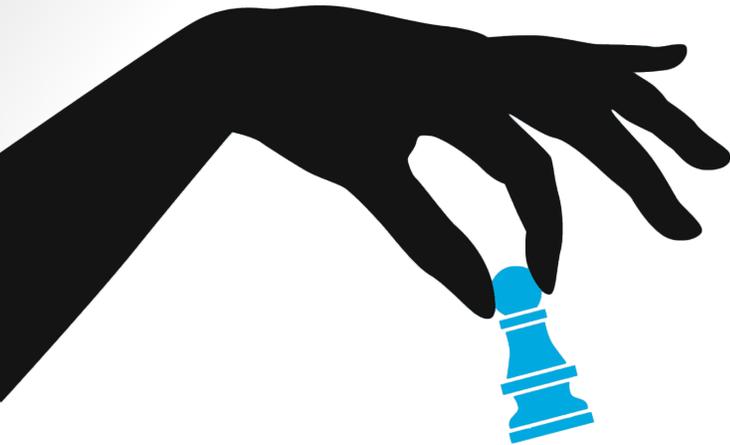


Modern Chess

Issue 18
Magazine

Defense in Practical Games

Typical Anti-Sicilian
Structures



Brilliant Missed Opportunities

Missed Stalemates

Benoni Strategy :

Piece Play

Endgame Series 18

Opposite-colored bishops

Part 1

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Typical Anti-Sicilian Structures

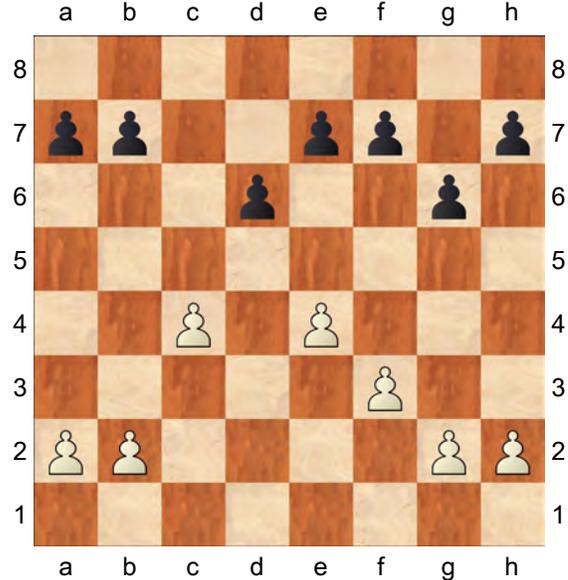


Dear Readers,
In this article, I am going to provide you with an overview of the structures arising from the so-called Moscow Variation in Sicilian Defence (1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+). In the database Moscow Variation against the Sicilian - Complete Repertoire against 2...d6 I examined the theoretical subtleties of this line.

Within the framework of the present article, I cover 6 structures which are typical for this variation. When dealing with a given structure I follow a simple logic:

Explanation of typical plans and ideas
Extensively annotated model game

Position 1

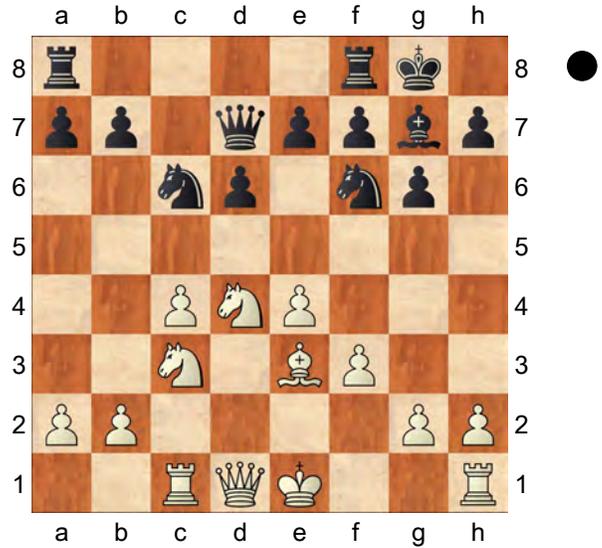


This is a classical pawn structure from the so-called Maroczy Bind setup where Black has developed his bishop to g7. Of course, it very much depends what actual pieces are present on the board but still, we can draw some guidelines to follow. First, let's take a look what Black wants. Usually Black has two potential breakthroughs with the pawns: 1) either with or without the help of the a-pawn prepare the b7-b5 push. The idea is to eliminate the annoying bind White has put on Black and free some space, most often giving two open or semi-open files for Black rooks on b-file and c-file. If the b-pawn push is successfully executed, it will also make Black easier to prepare the d6-d5. To meet it, White has a few options. He can play a2-a4 not only with intentions to double take on b5, but also organize a passed pawn by playing cxb5, followed by a4-a5, which can be supported by b2-b4. At some occasions, White can freely allow the b7-b5 to be executed as after the exchange the pawn on b5 or a6 might

become a weakness. If Black has positioned his rooks on a-file and b-file, White can meet b7-b5 with c4-c5 by trading the c-pawn for Black's d-pawn. This would undermine Black's strategy placing both rooks so far in the corner solely hoping to open some lines. 2) A very common idea for Black here is also aiming for a f7-f5 breakthrough. The idea is either to secure an outpost on e5 for a piece after the fxe4 and fxe4 or perhaps even f5-f4 or force White to play exf5 which can be met with gxf5, followed by e7-e5 and very typical for endgames → Kg8-f7-e6, giving Black a little center. This idea most often works in the endgame phase, less in the middlegame. If White has both rooks still at the board, it makes sense to go for the exf5 plan and position both rooks at the e-file and d-file, potentially also bringing a knight to d5 and targeting the weak e7 pawn. White's typical plans vary on what pieces he has on the board, but I would always recommend keeping as many pieces as you can, especially the queen who can contribute to a successful kingside attack. The most common pawn push for White here is to prepare f3-f4 and either f4-f5 for a direct assault against the Black king, or the positional e4-e5, which allows White to organize a potential passed pawn at the queenside.

Carlsen, Magnus **2834**
 Vachier Lagrave, Maxime **2773**
 Model Game (2.1) 13.12.2015

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7
4.Bxd7+ Qxd7 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 g6
7.d4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 Bg7 9.f3 0-0
10.Be3 Nc6 11.Rc1!?



a tricky order of the moves with the idea to prevent Black from immediately targeting the c4 pawn, in that case simply playing b3 and the knight at c3 is protected. There's nothing wrong with playing 11.0-0 immediately **Nxd4** a straightforward approach to solving the opening problems which make White's choices a lot easier

[11...a6 12.Na4! Qc7 13.Nxc6 Qxc6 (13...bxc6 14.0-0 c5 15.b3 and White is pushing) 14.0-0 b5 15.cxb5 Qxb5 16.b3 and Black should be close to equal, but the position feels more pleasant for White due to the passed pawn possibilities at the queenside.]

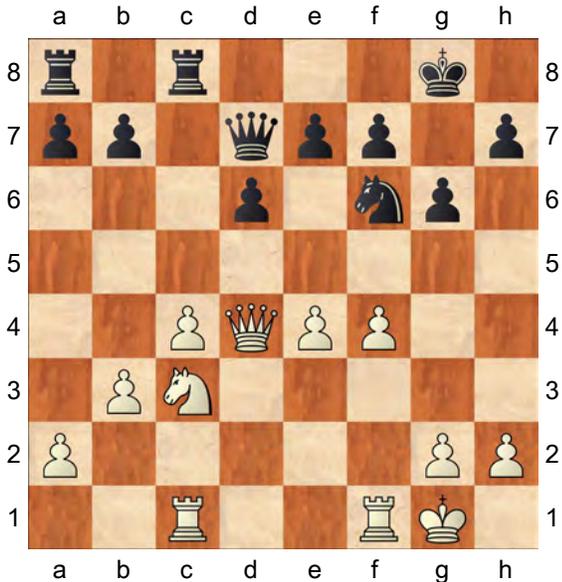
[11...Rac8 12.b3 a6 13.Nxc6! bxc6 14.0-0]

12.Bxd4 Rfc8

[12...a6 13.Na4 Qc6 14.Nb6 Rad8 15.b3 e6 16.0-0 Nd7 17.Bxg7 Kxg7 18.Na4! with a small edge for White]

13.b3 Nh5?! this can't be good as it gives White free hands to start an assault at the kingside **14.0-0 Bxd4+ 15.Qxd4 Nf6 16.Rfe1** White had at his disposal an alternative plan to attack the king instead of fighting for a better endgame

[16.f4!



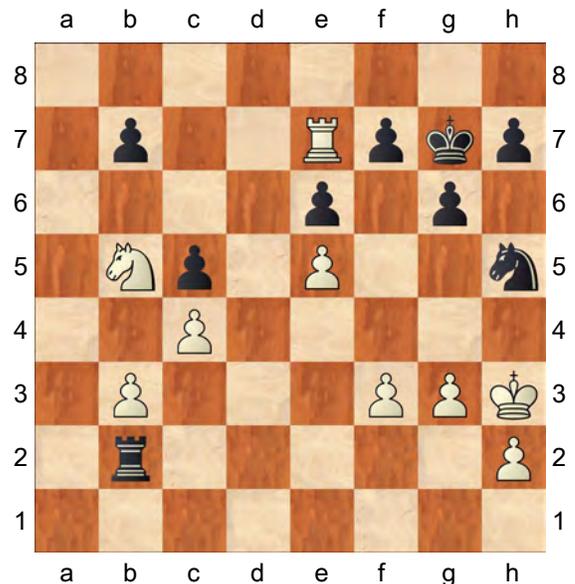
it's very difficult for Black to understand where to position his pieces. Even if the a7–a6 move becomes possible because of the b7–b5 threat, White can calmly repel it with a2–a4. White probably wants to keep queens on the board for a successful kingside assault. b6 (16...a6 17.Na4) 17.Rce1 Rc5 18.h3 a6 19.Qe3±]

16...Rc7 17.Rcd1 centralizing the heavy pieces and preparing f3–f4 and e4–e5 at the right moment **Qc6** Black badly wants to trade the queens **18.Nb5 Rd7 19.Nxa7!** a sudden change of character of the position – instead of a positional squeeze Carlsen goes for a better endgame **Qc5 20.Qxc5 dxc5 21.Nb5 Rxa2 22.e5 Rxd1 23.Rxd1 Nh5 24.g3!** because of the misplaced black knight on h5 Black has some real practical problems **Rb2 25.Rd8+ Kg7 26.Re8 Rb1+ 27.Kg2 Rb2+ 28.Kg1 Rb1+ 29.Kg2 Rb2+ 30.Kh3 e6**

[30...Rxb3 31.Rxe7 Kf8 32.Rxb7 Rxf3 33.Nd6 Ng7 34.Kg2 Rc3 35.Rxf7+ Kg8 36.g4 also doesn't look fun for Black, but perhaps here he has more chances to save the game because of the activated pieces]

31.Re7

[31.Nd6! Rxb3 32.Kg4 f6 (32...f5+ probably because of this check White discarded this variation as a possibility, however... 33.Kh4 Rxf3 34.Re7+ Kg8 35.Kg5! I assume this is what M. Carlsen missed in his calculations – that his king becomes a key piece to checkmate his colleague!) 33.Re7+ Kg8 34.f4± and White's pieces are dominating the board with excellent winning chances. Notice how the White king is ready to join the action!]



Still very good but White could have played stronger here **31...Rxb3 32.Kg4 Kf8 33.Rxb7?!**

[33.Rc7!±]

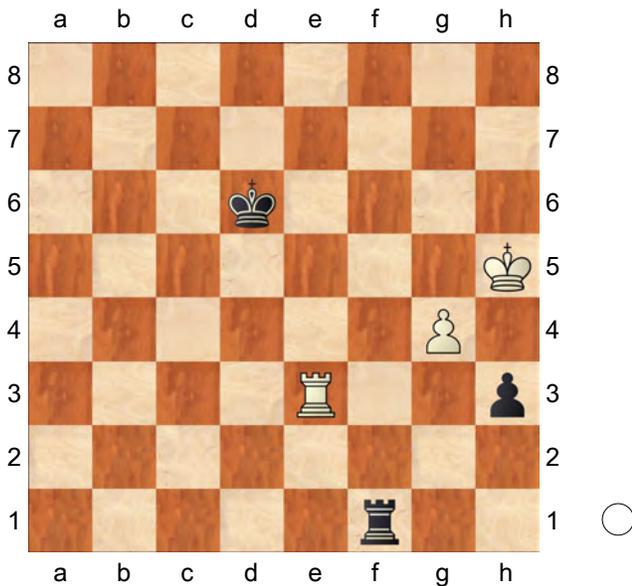
33...h6 34.Rc7 f5+! 35.exf6 Nxf6+

36.Kf4 g5+ 37.Ke5 Ne8 38.Rxc5 Re3+ 39.Kd4 Rxf3 Because of White's inaccuracies after a tough defense Black has almost managed to save the game. However, the World champion is notorious for fighting until the end!
40.Re5 Rf2 41.Rxe6 Rxh2 42.c5 h5 43.Nd6 Nxd6 44.cxd6 Kf7 45.Re3 h4 46.g4 h3?! this innocent-looking move is the first mistake in a drawn endgame, although it's not losing yet – only Black has to be extremely accurate now

[46...Kf6! 47.Kd5 h3 48.Kc6 Rc2+ 49.Kd7 h2=]

47.Ke5! body check! **Rh1 48.d7! Ke7 49.Kf5+ Kxd7 50.Kxg5 Kd6 51.Kh5 Rf1??**

[51...Ra1 now Black has to find a series of only moves 52.Rxh3 Ra8 53.Rd3+ Ke7 54.Kh6 Kf8 55.Kh7 Ra7+ 56.Kh8 Kf7 57.Rd6 Ra4=]



[52...Rf8 53.Rd3+ Ke7 54.g5 and because of the unfortunate placement of the rook, Black loses Kf7 55.Rf3+ Kg8 56.Rxf8+ Kxf8 57.Kg6+-]

53.Kg6 Rf6+ 54.Kg7 Rf7+ 55.Kg6 Rf6+ 56.Kg5 Ra6 57.Rf3 the rest is an easy technique
1-0

a very unfortunate retreat – pretty much the only losing move! **52.Rxh3** and just like that, White is winning **Ke7**