

KONSTANTIN SAKAEV

COMPLETE SLAV I



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Key to symbols

=	Equality or equal chances
±	White has a slight advantage
∓	Black has a slight advantage
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+-	White has a decisive advantage
-+	Black has a decisive advantage
∞	unclear
∞̄	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
↑	with initiative
→	with an attack
Δ	with the idea
□	only move
N	novelty
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
+	check
#	mate

Preface

The Slav Defence is currently the most popular closed opening, appearing in the opening repertoire of the overwhelming majority of top class grandmasters. A competitive chess player playing 1.d4 faces the opening in almost every tournament, and for Black it can be used in just about every second game. Over a number of years I have played various different lines of the opening with both colours and analysed it both individually and in cooperation with many well-known grandmasters. Now I have decided to give the opportunity to anyone who feels like it to enter a grandmaster's laboratory and see my professional approach to various opening lines.

Measures have been taken lest the work should swell to enormous size. Textual annotations to variations and evaluations are not given throughout the book but only in cases where I thought it to be important and not too obvious. As for the rest, a conventional abridged evaluation system has been used. All noteworthy lines have been analysed in detail. Also many novelties have been introduced with enclosed analyses. At the same time many weak and inessential moves, although in some cases with a considerable praxis, have been evaluated briefly.

I will be glad if my work turns out to be a good aid in learning the Slav Defence — an exceptionally interesting opening, rich in both strategic and tactical ideas.

This book is rated for skilled chess players.

The theoretical material is given as of July 2012.

Konstantin Sakaev

PART 14

4. ♘c3 rare variations

■ GAME 24

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4. ♘c3
♔b6

This rare move is regularly defended at the top level by Gata Kamsky. Black prevents the development of White's black squared bishop and wants to place his bishop on g4. After the exchange of bishop for knight, Black plans to play e7-e6 building a very strong fortress. The next move deserves particular attention

The following is bad 4... ♕g4, since Black cannot continue with comfortable development. 5. ♘e5 ♕h5

a) 5... ♕f5 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.e4! ♘xe4 (7... dxe4 8. ♔b3+-) 8. ♘xe4 dxe4 9. ♕c4 e6 10. ♕b5+±/→;

b) 5...e6 6.cxd5±;

c) 5... ♕e6 6.cxd5 cxd5 7. ♕f4±;

6.f3! Problems have appeared for the white squared bishop. (Also leading to a better game is 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7. ♔b3 ♘b6 8.g4 ♕g6 9. ♕f4±)



6...e6 (6... ♘bd7 7.g4 ♕g6 8.h4±; 6... ♘fd7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8. ♔b3±) 7.g4 ♕g6 8.h4 h6 9. ♘xg6 fxg6 10. ♔d3 ♖f7 11.g5±;

Also not very good is 4... ♕f5, as the white queenside squares are unprotected. 5.cxd5 (5.e3 — 4.e3 ♕f5 5. ♘c3) 5...cxd5 6. ♔b3 ♔b6 (6... ♕c8 7. ♕f4±; 6...b6 7. ♘e5±) 7. ♘xd5 (7. ♔xb6 axb6 8. ♕f4 ♘c6 9.e3±) 7... ♘xd5 8. ♔xd5 e6 9. ♔b3 ♘c6 (9... ♕b4+ 10. ♕d2 ♘c6 11.e3± Gelfand — Adly, Dresden 2008) 10. ♕d2 (10.e3 ♘b4 11. ♔a4+ ♖e7 12. ♘e5 ♘c2+ 13. ♖d1 ♔c7∞) 10... ♔xb3 (10... ♘b4 11. ♔c1 ♘c2+ 12. ♖d1±; 10... ♕b4 — 9... ♕b4 10. ♕d2 ♘c6) 11.axb3 ♕c2 12. ♕c3 (12. ♔c1 ♕xb3 13.e4±) 12... ♔c8 (12...b5 13.e3+-; 12... ♕xb3 13.e4 a6 14. ♕d3±) 13. ♘d2!N (13. ♘e5 a6 14. ♘xc6 ♔xc6 15.b4 ♔b6 16. ♖d2 ♕e4= Atalik — Kekov, Voronezh 1998)



13...b5 14.e4 b4 15. ♖c4± White has sacrificed the bishop but only temporarily — the c2 bishop is trapped and will be lost.;

4...g6 5.cxd5

a) After 5. ♖f4 one must consider



5...dxc4!? (5... ♖g7 6.e3 0-0 7.h3±) 6.e3 (6.a4 ♖d5 7. ♖d2 ♖b4 8.e4 ♖e6∞) 6... ♖e6

(6...b5 A dubious move 7.a4 ♖b6 (7...b4 8. ♖b1 ♖d5 9. ♖e5 f6 10. ♖g3 c3 11.bxc3 bxc3 12. ♖e2±; 7...♖d5 8.axb5 ♖xc3 9.bxc3 cxb5 10. ♖e5↑) 8. ♖e2 It's important for White to castle quickly, so that after b2-b3 the knight on c3 will not be pinned by ♖b4. (8. ♖e5 ♖h5∞; 8.axb5 cxb5 9.b3 e6∞) 8...♖d5 9. ♖xd5 (9. ♖e5 f6 10. ♖g3↑) 9...cxd5 10.b3 ♖a5+ 11. ♖f1 b4 12.bxc4↑)

7. ♖g5 ♖d5

(A double-edged fight follows 7... ♖d7!? 8. ♖e2 (8. ♖xe6 ♖xe6 9. ♖a4 b5 10. ♖a5 ♖d5 11. ♖e5 f6 12. ♖g3 ♖d7 13.e4 ♖xc3 14.bxc3∞) 8... ♖d5 (8... ♖g7 9. ♖xe6 ♖xe6 10. ♖a4 b5 11. ♖a5±) 9.0-0 ♖g7∞)

8.e4 h6 9.exd5 hxg5 10.dxc6 ♖xc6 11. ♖xg5 ♖xd4 12. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 13.0-0-0 ♖d8 14. ♖xc4 ♖h6=;

b) 5.e3 — 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4.e3 g6 5. ♖c3;

c) The following is a good choice providing a small but stable advantage 5. ♖b3± — 4. ♖b3 g6 5. ♖c3;

d) After 5. ♖g5 also possible is



5...dxc4!?

(5... ♖g7 After this White's position is just a little better 6.e3 0-0 7. ♖d3 ♖g4 (7... ♖e6 8. ♖e2 ♖bd7 9.0-0 h6 10. ♖h4 ♖g4 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.h3 ♖xf3 13. ♖xf3 e6 14. ♖fc1± Kasparov — Smyslov, Vilnius (match 01) 1984) 8.h3 ♖xf3 9. ♖xf3 dxc4

(9...e6 10.o-o ♖bd7 11.cxd5 cxd5
(11...exd5 12.b4±) 12.♞fc1 ♞c8
13.♞d1±)

10. ♖xc4 ♞a5 11. ♖h4 ♖bd7 12.o-o
e5±)

6.a4 ♖g7 7.e4 ♖e6 — While White
wins back the c4 pawn, Black can
create counter play;

5...cxd5



6. ♖f4 ♖g7 7.e3 (7. ♖xb8?! 7...♞xb8
8.♞a4+ ♖d7 9.♞xa7 o-o) 7...o-o
8. ♖d3 ♖c6 (8... ♖g4 9.h3 ♖xf3
10.♞xf3±) 9.h3 9... ♖e6 (9... ♖f5
10. ♖xf5 gxf5 11.g4!→; 9...♞b6 10.a3±)
10.o-o ♞c8 11. ♞c1 ♖a5 12.♞e2± —
The black bishops are ineffectual as
they are restricted by pawns there-
fore White has a small but stable
advantage, Taimanov — Lilienthal,
Baku 1951.

5.h3!?

Depriving the black bishop of the g4
square.

5.g3 dxc4 6. ♖g2 g6 7.♖e5 ♖g7 (7...
♞a6!?) 8.♖xc4 ♞a6 9.♖e5 o-o 10.o-o
♖bd7 11.♖d3± Sakaev — Kamsky,
Khanty Mansyisk 2005;

The following is a quiet and solid
way to achieve a slight advantage.
5.e3



5...♖g4

(5... ♖f5 6.♖e5! (6.♖h4 ♖g4 7.f3
♖e6=; 6. ♖d3 ♖xd3 7.♞xd3 e6
8.o-o±) 6...♖bd7

(If 6...e6, White can start to chase
the bishop: 7.g4 ♖g6 8.h4 dxc4
9. ♖xc4

(9.♖xc4 ♞c7 10.h5 ♖e4 11. ♞h4
g5 (11...h6 12.g5 hxg5 13.♞xe4±)
12.hxg6 ♖xg6 13.g5 ♖d5 14.e4
♖xc3 15.bxc3 ♖d7 16. ♖f4 ♞d8
17. ♖g2±)

9... ♖e4 10.f3 ♖d5 11. ♖e2 c5 12.g5
cxd4 13.♞xd4 ♞xd4 14.exd4
♖fd7 15.♖xd5 exd5 16. ♖e3±)



7.cxd5! (7.♖xd7 ♕xd7 8.♕d3 e6 9.o-o I.Sokolov — Nakamura, Stepanakert 2005 9...dxc4 10.♕xc4 c5=)



7...♖xd5 (7...cxd5 8.♕b5±) 8.♖f3! ♕e6 (8...♖xe5 9.♖xf5±) 9.♖c4 ♖d8 10.e4 ♖xc3 11.♖xc3± — White's dominance in the centre is very real.)

6.h3 ♕xf3 7.♖xf3 e6 8.♕d3 ♖bd7 9.o-o ♕e7 10.b3 o-o 11.♖e2 a5 12.♖d1± Gelfand — Kamsky, Jermuk 2009;

A small advantage can also be achieved after 5.♖b3± — 4.♖b3 ♖b6 5.♖c3;

5.♖c2



5...♖a6

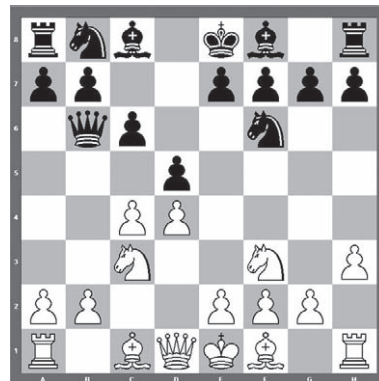
a) 5...dxc4 6.e4 ♕g4 7.♕xc4 ♕xf3 8.gxf3 g6 (8...♖xd4? 9.♖b3+-) 9.♕e3± Navara — Jirovsky, Czech 2011;

b) 5...♕g4 6.c5 ♖c7 7.g3 (7.♖e5 ♖bd7 8.♖xg4 ♖xg4 9.e3 e5 10.♕e2 ♖gf6 11.b4 g6 12.b5 ♕g7 13.o-o o-o 14.♖b1± Shipov — Vysochin, Yalta 1996) 7...♕xf3 8.exf3 g6 (8...e5 9.♖e2 ♕e7 10.dxe5 ♖fd7 11.f4↑) 9.b4 (9.♕f4 ♖c8 10.o-o-o±) 9...♕g7 10.f4± Van Wely — Zaura, Munich 1992;

6.a3 g6 7.e3 ♕f5 8.♖a4

(8.♕d3 ♕xd3 9.♖xd3 ♕g7 10.o-o o-o 11.b4 (11.c5 ♖d8 12.b4 ♖c7=) 11...dxc4 12.♖xc4 ♖c7 13.♕d2±)

8...dxc4 9.♕xc4 ♕g7 10.♖e5 o-o 11.♖xc6 bxc6 12.♖xa6 ♖c7 13.o-o ♖ab8± — Black has some compensation for a pawn though it's not completely sufficient, Mamedyarov — Kamsky, Baku (rapid) 2010.



5...♕f5

5...dxc4 6.e4 ♖a6 7.♕e2↑;

5...♙e6 6.e3 (Also promising is 6.cxd5!? cxd5 7.e3 ♘c6 8.♙d2± — Although the bishop has not moved to f4, White has good chances of developing an initiative along the c-file.)
 6...dxc4 7.♙e2 (7.♘g5 ♙d5 8.e4 h6 9.exd5 hxg5 10.♙xc4∞) 7...g6 8.o-o ♙h6 (8...♙g7 9.e4↑) 9.♘d2 o-o 10.♘xc4±



6.g4! ♙e4

6...♙e6 7.c5 (7.♘a4!? ♙c7 8.♘c5 ♙c8 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♙d2±; 7.♙c2!?)
 7...♙c7 8.♙g2± Structurally Black stands quite well but he is considerably behind in development. White is better prepared if the game opens up.

7.g5 ♘fd7 8.e3

8.c5 ♙c7 9.♘xe4 dxe4

8...♙xf3

8...e5 9.♘xe4 dxe4 10.c5 ♙d8 11.♘d2± Zhao Xue — Munguntuul, Ho Chi Minh 2012.

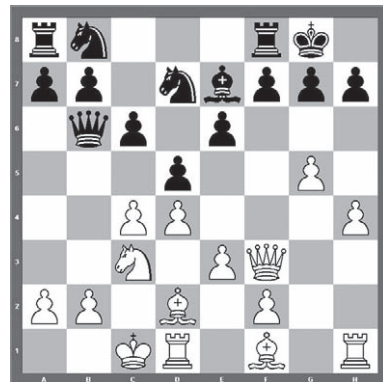
9.♙xf3 e6



10.♙d2!

10.c5 ♙d8 11.h4 (11.e4 e5) 11...b6 12.cxb6 ♘xb6 (12...axb6 13.e4↑) 13.♙d2±;
 10.h4 dxc4 11.♙xc4 c5 12.♙e4 cxd4 13.exd4±/↑

10...♙e7 11.h4 o-o 12.o-o-o±/↑



— White is better prepared for sharp play on both flanks. Conclusion: If he rejects the main lines on move four, Black cannot count on a fully satisfactory game. At best he gains a solid but passive position.