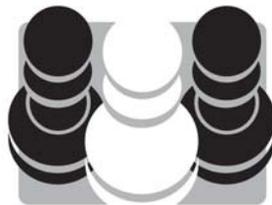


Beat the KID

Three Lines Against the King's Indian

By

Jan Markos



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Foreword

What can be found in this book

I am not an experienced chess author. However, I am a very passionate reader of chess books. When I was thirteen, I read Averbakh's entire course on endings, and I read it with pleasure (frankly, my parents were not especially happy about that.) And I am a reasonably strong practical player.

This book was written to serve both practical and 'unpractical' chessplayers. It was written to meet the expectations of those who seek useful advice, but it was also written for those who are looking for beauty and entertainment in chess. Therefore do not be surprised to find a diagram attached to some completely unimportant sub-line: I have never been able to resist the temptation to highlight a unique chess moment.

This is a book on a specific opening. From such a book two conflicting qualities are demanded. On the one hand, it should be crammed with exhaustive and reliable information, which is easy to find if needed. On the other hand, it should be structured and intelligible enough to be read from cover to cover like a novel. I was trying to find a compromise between these two demands, although I have to admit that I am a fan of elegant, easy-to-read chess books.

This book deals with the King's Indian opening from the viewpoint of White. You will become familiar with three different systems against this opening: the Krasenkow line (6.h3), the Bayonet Attack (9.b4), and the Classical Variation (9.♘e1). These three lines have much in common – they are modern, popular and dangerous weapons. However, their strategic character is rather different.

In the Krasenkow line, White's strategy is based on the concept of prophylaxis, whereas in the Bayonet Attack White has to play actively and courageously. In the Classical Variation, attacks on opposite flanks usually take place. White's main strategic problem in this line is to harmoniously combine attack and defence. It is not without reason that I have chosen three variations of such distinct characters. Studying these three lines will offer a complex view on the King's Indian opening.

Most of the material in this book consists of annotated parts of chess games. I always preferred examples from top grandmasters praxis. I am perfectly aware that no chessplayer is able to learn by heart an entire theoretical book. Moreover, theory is constantly changing. However, you should be aware of the typical plans and ideas in the line you are playing. This is what you *should* know by heart. In this book, every Introduction and Conclusion deals with this kind of material.

I am convinced that in the age of chess databases it makes no sense to write a compilation of others games, evaluations and analyses. While I was trying to get every piece of information available, I am not merely reproducing them.

This is a book with an opinion. You will find more than a dozen novelties in it. Sometimes I have decided not to follow the main line, suggesting a rare yet interesting continuation. On several occasions I have changed the traditional evaluation of a sub-line or a position. I have annotated anew several frequently commented games.

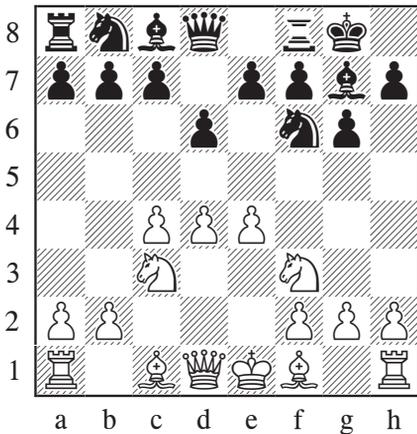
Some of my conclusions might prove to be subjective, or even faulty. Still, I believe that it is vital to try to communicate my personal chess understanding. I find an objective, politically correct chess book approximately as interesting as a directory.

I would like express my thanks to grandmasters Jacob Aagaard, Lubomir Ftacnik, Viktor Laznicka and Igor Stohl for their invaluable help.

Jan Markos
Bratislava
September 2008

Introduction

...to the King's Indian Defence



Many chessplayers don't like facing the King's Indian Defence. Perhaps they find it too tactical, too complicated, too difficult to handle. Perhaps they fear its (supposedly) aggressive, counterattacking character. After all, I know many players who switched to 1.d4 because they simply wanted to avoid all these sharp Sicilians.

Perhaps they even feel it slightly unjust that in this opening White, despite being a tempo up, has to defend carefully in some lines. "Defence is difficult" is the opinion of many players. "It is much easier to attack, or enjoy a small advantage in a relatively calm position."

However, in my opinion, there are very few reasons to feel unhappy when your opponent chooses the King's Indian Defence. And there are several good reasons to be happy.

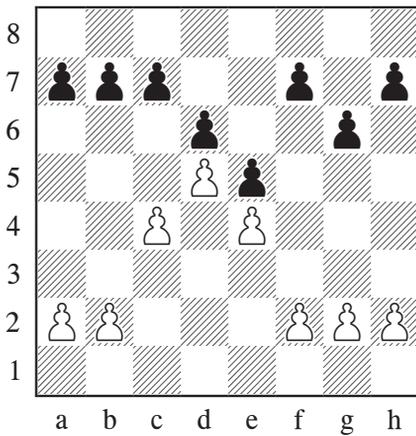
Why do I think so? Well, some of the fearsome rumours about the King's Indian are based on prejudices or exaggerations. In addition, I am convinced that by choosing this opening Black undertakes quite a significant strategic risk.

Let's have a detailed look.

The Central Pawn Chain

Pawns are the least mobile troops in chess. As their placement can't be changed quickly, it is one of the most reliable factors you have to take into account when evaluating the situation on the chessboard.

Most of the middlegame positions arising from the King's Indian are of a closed character. Usually, a pawn chain originates in the centre, with the white pawns on e4 and d5 and the black pawns on d6 and e5.



The d5-outpost gives White a significant spatial advantage in the centre and on the queenside. Moreover, as this outpost is very well defended by both pawns and pieces, White's spatial advantage is usually permanent. While in the French Defence Black often succeeds in undermining the e5-outpost, here he is almost never capable of capturing or exchanging the d5-pawn.

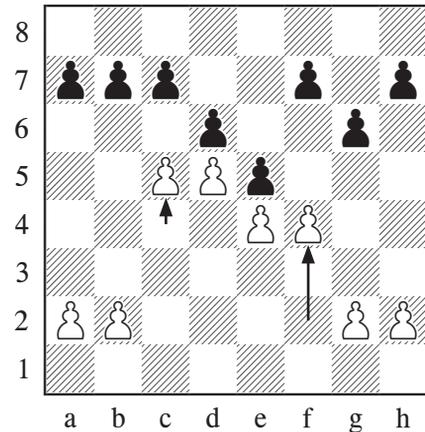
Having more space for his troops, White can manoeuvre freely. He can get his pieces to the best squares, maximizing their influence. This is why the spatial advantage is an important strategic plus. In the King's Indian, Black gives up space without a fight. What does he get for it?

Well, I can offer you only a rather vague answer. As Black's central pawn chain is closer to Black's base, the potential battlefield is also closer to his army. **He therefore enjoys a kind of dynamic advantage: at the moment his pieces are closer to the location of the future clashes.** Therefore he is momentarily better prepared for these fights.

To sum up, thanks to the shape of the central pawn chain White enjoys a strategic, long-term advantage, while Black's positional plusses are of a short-term, dynamic character.

Pawns are the least valuable troops on the chessboard. Once a pawn is defended by

another pawn, you can't successfully attack it with a piece. After all, exchanging a minor piece for two pawns is usually quite bad business. That's why a pawn chain can usually be effectively attacked only with the help of pawn advances. In White's case, two advances come into consideration: f2-f4 and c4-c5.



From a purely strategic point of view, the c4-c5 advance is sounder. After cxd6 ...cxd6 a weakness is created on d6: this pawn can be successfully attacked by pieces. In addition, there is no reason to be afraid of the d6xc5 capture – White usually gets strong pressure along the c-file, terrorizing the c7-pawn. On the contrary, after f2(f3)-f4 the e4-pawn loses its pawn support. Furthermore, after e5xf4 the freed e5-square may become an excellent outpost for Black's pieces.

Similarly, Black also has two ways to attack his opponent's central pawns: c7-c6 and f7-f5. The f7-f5 advance is strategically sounder, as the c7-c6 advance weakens the d6-pawn.

Black's Dark-Squared Bishop

Of course, the pawn structure is not the only influence on the character of the fight in the opening. Also vital is the placement of the pieces.

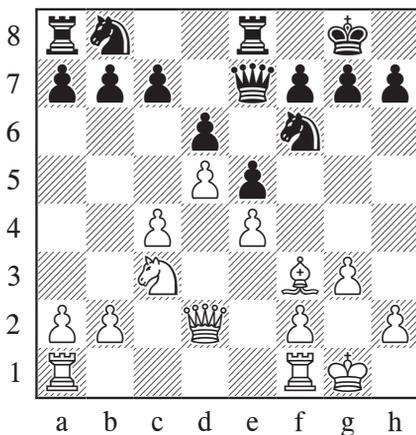
In our pawn structure the fate of Black's dark-squared bishop is especially important. The d6- and e5-pawns are fixed on dark squares, limiting the mobility of this bishop. And obviously, the less mobile a piece is, the more its actual position influences the evaluation of the entire position.

The following position originated from the Bogo-Indian Defence:

Karpov - Nikolic

Skelleftea 1989

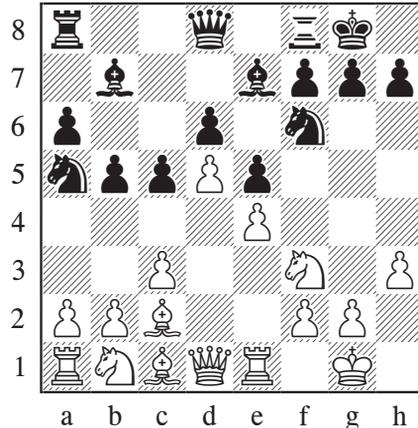
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♘b4† 4.♘d2 ♔e7
5.g3 0-0 6.♘g2 ♘xd2† 7.♗xd2 d6 8.♘c3 e5
9.0-0 ♞e8 10.e4 ♘g4 11.d5 ♘xf3 12.♘xf3



Two pairs of minor pieces have been exchanged. This fact reduces the importance of White's spatial advantage, as Black's remaining pieces have enough space to be harmoniously placed. Moreover, Black has got rid of the 'bad' dark-squared bishop. Therefore he does not have to fear the endgame. The following fight will be of a very calm, positional character; White is minimally better.

The position in the next diagram arises from one of the main lines of the Spanish Opening:

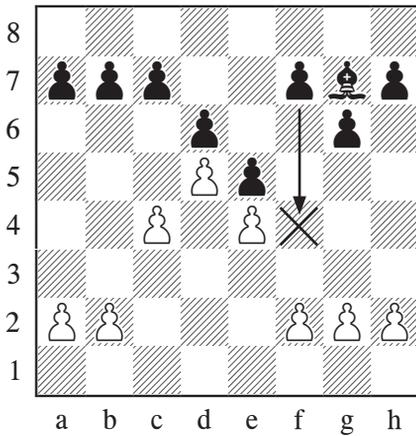
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘b5 a6 4.♘a4 ♘f6
5.0-0 ♘e7 6.♞e1 b5 7.♘b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3
♘a5 10.♘c2 c5 11.d4 ♘b7 12.d5



The central pawn structure in this line is identical to the King's Indian structure, however, the pieces of both sides are placed very differently. As a result, Black is usually active on the queenside (playing c5-c4, ♘f6-d7-c5, or even ♘e7-d8-b6), while White often tries to develop an initiative on the kingside. I have to confess that I am no expert on the nuances of the Spanish (for a detailed analysis of this opening you should have a look somewhere else, e.g. the excellent book *A Spanish Repertoire for Black*, written by Mihail Marin).

Still, one thing is obvious even to me: the f7-f5 break, so typical for the King's Indian Defence, is almost never played here. Why? Because of the specific position of two bishops: White's c2-bishop indirectly controls the f5-square, while Black's dark-squared bishop is so modestly placed on e7 that after f7-f5 it wouldn't be able to support Black's activity on the kingside.

In the King's Indian Defence, Black's dark-squared bishop is developed to g7. Although it seems to be quite passively placed here, it plays a very important role in Black's attack.



Without the e5-pawn, the dark-squared bishop would be a very active piece, controlling the entire long diagonal. Therefore it is only logical that White wants the e5-pawn to stay where it is. And because White wants the e5-pawn to remain where it is, he does not want to put any piece or pawn on f4. He usually refrains from playing f2-f4, and often allows f7-f5-f4, or even ♖f6-h5-f4 without protesting.

The dark-squared bishop on g7 helps Black to build up an attack on the kingside, as it indirectly fights for the f4-square. The position of the dark-squared bishop thus increases Black's dynamic potential.

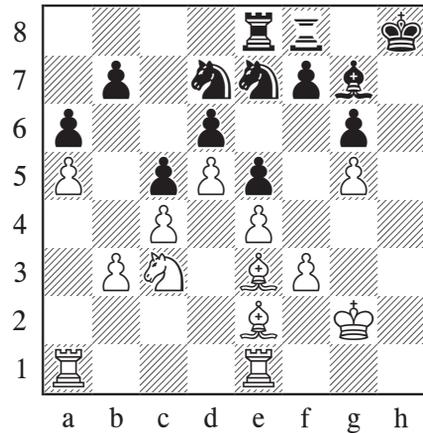
On the other hand, it decreases Black's strategic potential, as it nevertheless stands quite passively on g7. As a result, almost every endgame with the dark-squared bishop on the board is very difficult for Black.

The following example is from the Karpov – Spassky Candidates match in 1974. White enjoys a decisive advantage, because in addition to the space advantage and the sorry position of Black's dark-squared bishop he also has the advantage of a bishop pair.

Karpov – Spassky

Leningrad (3) 1974

(position after 27.a5)



“The game is effectively over. Spassky's desperate resistance can no longer change anything.” (Kasparov)

I have said that I like playing against the King's Indian Defence. Now you probably understand why: in this opening, White enjoys a permanent positional plus – a spatial advantage. Moreover, practically every endgame is better for him. In the King's Indian, Black is the one who has to be creative, the one who has to show activity.

White Has a Wide Choice

Another good thing about fighting against the King's Indian Defence is that White may choose between an extraordinarily broad variety of interesting systems. This gives a subjective advantage – you have the freedom to choose the sub-system which suits you most, or the sub-system which you expect to be the most unpleasant for your opponent.

If your wish is to achieve a draw, there are some variations which may help you to fulfil this aim, the most popular of them being the

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♗f3
 0-0 6.♗e2 e5 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.♖xd8 ♖xd8
 9.♗g5 line. There are variations for attacking
 players (e.g. the Bayonet Attack), for positional
 players (e.g. the Petrosian Variation, or the
 Krasenkow Variation), lines for those who
 love danger (e.g. the Classical Variation with
 9.♗e1), but also for those who love safety (e.g.
 the Classical Variation with 9.♗e1 and an
 early g2-g4).

It is only a myth that in every King's Indian
 game White has to face a strong attack. In fact,
 in the majority of systems you can avoid it,
 choosing exactly the kind of game you like.

This book does not cover all the major systems
 against the King's Indian Defence. It covers
 only three of them: the Krasenkow Variation
 (Part 1), the Bayonet Attack (Part 2) and the
 Classical Variation (Part 3).

However, it is written to offer you the
 maximum freedom of choice. When two lines
 are available, a positional one and a tactical
 one, I always analyse both. This is because I
 believe that the subjective factors in chess are
 no less important than the objective ones.