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### 9.0–0–0

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Welcome to Volume 2! This book continues where the first left off, by providing a complete repertoire against all of White's alternatives to the Yugoslav Attack with 9.\(\text{c4}\) and 9.g4. Volume 1 contains both a preface and a detailed thematic introduction to the Dragon and, since the two books are complementary halves of a single work, I will not take up space duplicating them here.

I would, however, like to say a few things about the most important topic of the present volume, namely the position after the opening moves: 1.e4 c5 2.\(\text{\textasciitilde f3}\) d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\(\text{\textasciitilde}xd4\) \(\text{\textasciitilde}f6\) 5.\(\text{\textasciitilde}c3\) g6 6.\(\text{\textasciitilde}e3\) \(\text{\textasciitilde}g7\) 7.f3 0–0 8.\(\text{\textasciitilde}e2\) c6 9.0–0–0

Coverage of this critical variation spans the first seven chapters. In my own praxis I have faced 9.0–0–0 more often than any other system. I think this is due to practical considerations: the 9.\(\text{c4}\) lines are razor-sharp and White needs to remember a lot of theory, whereas here the play tends to be more positional.

9...d5

Typically in the Dragon, when we get the chance to execute the ...d5 break we should take it.

10.exd5

10.\(\text{\textasciitilde}b1\) received a flurry of interest some years ago, but in Chapter 5 I will show a good way to neutralize it.

10.\(\text{\textasciitilde}e1\) used to be popular but then fell out of fashion. However, it has recently attracted the attention of some strong players. The positions after 10...e5 11.\(\text{\textasciitilde}xc6\) bxc6 12.exd5 \(\text{\textasciitilde}xd5\) have definite similarities to the old main line; see Chapter 6 for further details.

10...\(\text{\textasciitilde}xd5\) 11.\(\text{\textasciitilde}xc6\) bxc6
12...\textit{\text{d4}}

12...\textit{\text{xd4}} cxd5 13.\textit{\text{xd4}} \textit{\text{c7}} is covered in Chapters 3 and 4. Taking the material, whether just the pawn or grabbing the black rooks for the white queen as well, is dangerous for White. The open lines on the queenside give Black easy counterplay against White's king.

The text move is White's main try and, in my view, the current main line of the entire Dragon.

12...\textit{\text{d4}}

12...\textit{\text{e5}} 13.\textit{\text{c5}} \textit{\text{c6}} used to be the main line but Black was suffering rather.

13.\textit{\text{xd4}} \textit{\text{b6}}

White will try to exploit his better structure and the outpost on c5, but Black has his own trumps.

14.\textit{\text{a4}}

White's other tries are covered in Chapter 1.

From this important position I have covered two options in detail. The slightly offbeat 14...\textit{\text{a5}} 15.b3 \textit{\text{e6?!}} is presented in Chapter 1 and the more popular 14...\textit{\text{c7}} can be found in Chapter 2.
9.0–0–0

Offbeat Alternatives

Variation Index

1.e4 c5 2.\( \text{\#f3} \) d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\( \text{\#xd4} \) \( \text{\#f6} \) 5.\( \text{\#c3} \) g6 6.\( \text{\#e3} \) \( \text{\#g7} \)

7.f3 0–0 8.\( \text{\#d2} \) \( \text{\#c6} \) 9.0–0–0

9...d5

A) 10.\( \text{\#e2} \) 129
B) 10.\( \text{\#h6} \) 130
C) 10.h4 130
D) 10.\( \text{\#xc6} \) bxc6 133
   D1) 11.h4 134
   D2) 11.\( \text{\#h6} \) 135

B) after 15.\( \text{\#c4} \)

15...\( \text{\#f6} \)N

D1) after 14.g4

14...\( \text{\#e4} \)N

D2) note to 13.e5

13...\( \text{\#a5} \)N
1.e4 c5 2.\f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\f6 d4 e6 5.c3 g6 6.e3 g7 7.f3 0–0 8.d2 c6
9.0–0–0 d5

In this final chapter on 9.0–0–0 d5, we will deal with the rare options: A) 10.e2, B) 10.h6, C) 10.h4 and D) 10.xc6.

10.xd5 xd5 11.xc6 bxc6 12.exd5 cxd5 would transpose to variation B of Chapter 3.

10.b3?! puts absolutely no pressure on Black. After 10...dxe4 11.xd8 xd8 12.xd8† xd8 13.xe4 14.fxe4 b6† the endgame favours Black, as he will be able to put pressure on the e4-pawn.

10.f2? e5 11.xc6 bxc6 gives White a much worse version of the 10.e1 line, as 12.exd5 can now be met by 12...cxd5† when 13.xg5 no longer comes with a discovered attack on the e5-pawn. The following game is a good illustration of how bad White’s position has already become:

10...\xe4 11.fxe4 xd4 12.xd4 a5 13.fxe4 xd4 14.xd4 wa5 15.xa4 c7†

12.xd5 d6† Black will gain time against White’s queen and has good attacking prospects.

11.dxe4 12.xe4

12.xf6? xd2† 13.xd2 exf6† White loses material due to the threat of ...h6. 12.fxe4 e6† also favours Black due to White’s loose e4-pawn and the potentially strong outpost on e5.

13...d4 14.h4 b6 15.xe4 xe4 16.fxe4 xe6 17.xb1 xc8 18.d3 ab8 19.xc1 c3! 20.xd2 xa2† 21.xa2 a3† 22.xb1 a5 0–1 Sanchez Piquero – Gonzalez Valdes, Asturias 1987.

10.b5?!

This move encourages Black to trade knights but the ensuing structure favours Black.

10.xc6!

This is White’s only way to maintain the balance.

11.g5 seems consistent with White’s last, but 11...d5† is just good for Black.
11.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{f}2$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}4$}} 12.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}4$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{a}5$}}}} left White a pawn down in Soltes – Baranek, Slovakia 1998.

11...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}2$}}† 12.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}2$}}?

12.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}2$}}N would have stopped the knight from going to d5 with tempo. 12...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{bxc}6$}}
13.g5 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{d}5$}} 14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xe}4$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{a}5$}}=}

12...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{bxc}6$}} 13.g5

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In Strater – Toel, Duisburg 2005, there was no reason not to take the pawn:
15...exf3N

With a clear advantage to Black.

\textbf{A) 10.\texttt{$\text{e}2$}}

13.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{d}5$}}! 14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}5$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{cxd}5$}}} 15.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}5$}}

In Strater – Toel, Duisburg 2005, there was no reason not to take the pawn:
15...exf3N

With a clear advantage to Black.

10...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}4$}} 11.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}4$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{dxe}4$}}} 12.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{fxe}4$}}

12.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{g}5$}} was played in Munksgaard – Carlstedt, Odense 2012. White’s last didn’t actually threaten anything, so I would simply develop with 12...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xe}6$}}N.

12.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xe}4$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xe}4$}}} 13.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{fxe}4$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}4$}}} 14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}4$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{a}5$}}} was already more pleasant for Black in Bertusi – Havas, Novi Vinodolski 2009.

12...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{a}5$}} 13.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{b}1$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{e}6$}}} 14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{d}5$}}

14.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xf}6$}} is probably White’s best, but it’s clear that he is already angling for a draw. 14...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xf}6$}}

(14...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xf}6$}}? is also interesting) 15.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{d}5$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{a}4$}}}

(15...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}2$}}N 16.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xf}6$}}† \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{exf}6$}} 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}2$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{fd}8$}}=})

16.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{ce}3$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{fd}8$}}= \texttt{jin38} – \texttt{cordo, Internet} 2013.

14...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}2$}} 15.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xf}6$}}†

After 15.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xe}7$}}†?! \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}8$}} 16.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}2$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xe}4$}}}

17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{gx}7$}}† \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{hxg}7$}} 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{d}4$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{f}6$}}} White’s knight is extremely offside.

15...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xf}6$}} 16.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}2$}}

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16...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{ad}8$}}!

This accurate move gave Black the better chances in Prestage – Vaassen, email 2003. The reason for preferring the queen’s rook is revealed after:

17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{c}3$}}N \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}4$}} 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{cxd}4$} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{$\text{f}5$}$\textcolor{red}{\times}$}}

Black has the more pleasant ending.
White immediately decides to trade bishops but he loses control of the centre.

10...\texttt{hxh6}  
10...dxe4 is a straightforward alternative which comfortably equalizes: 11.\texttt{gxg7} xg7 12.\texttt{exe6} (12.fxe4 \texttt{xd4} 13.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 14.\texttt{xd4} e5 15.\texttt{c4} \texttt{d7} = Holmsten – Gamback, Stockholm 1999) 12...\texttt{xd2}† 13.\texttt{xd2} (13.\texttt{xd2} bxc6 14.fxe4 \texttt{e6} =) 13...bxc6 14.\texttt{exe4} \texttt{xe4}† 15.fxe4 \texttt{d8}† 16.\texttt{d3} \texttt{g4} = Sulskis – Gomez, Calvia 2006.

11.\texttt{hxh6} \texttt{xd4} 12.\texttt{xd4}  
12.e5?? is a typical intermezzo in these structures, but here it just loses to 12...\texttt{f5}! as in Simovic – Pletanek, Decin 1997.

12...\texttt{e5}  
White’s best chance is to sacrifice the exchange.

13.\texttt{xd5}!  
Instead 13.\texttt{d1} is much more common but 13...d4† is comfortable for Black.

13...\texttt{xd5} 14.\texttt{exd5}  
White has compensation for the exchange but no more.

14...\texttt{f5} 15.\texttt{c4}  
In Schulz Streeck – Soujon, Germany 1997, Black should have played:

15...\texttt{xf6}N  
Controlling several important squares. Black has a solid position with good chances to build on his material advantage.

C) 10.\texttt{h4}  
White immediately goes for the kingside attack, but it is not at all dangerous as Black’s central play is already underway.

10...dxe4 11.\texttt{h5}  
After 11.fxe4?! \texttt{g4} White’s kingside has too many holes.
11.\( \text{\textit{c}} \text{xe4}\) has been played a few times but 11...\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{xe4}\) 12.fxe4 \( \text{\textit{x}} \text{xd4!N}\) 13.\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{xd4}\) \( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g4!}\) wins material.

11.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{xe4}\) \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{xd2†}\) 12.\( \text{\textit{e}} \text{xd2}\)
12.\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{xe2?!}\) bxc6 13.fxe4 \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{g4}\)
12...bxc6 13.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{xe4}\) favoured Black in Roux – Goulenok, Montigny le Bretonneux 1999.

12...e5!
This is the simplest way to defuse White’s initiative.

13.\( \text{\textit{h}} \text{h6}\)
13.\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{xe4}\) \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{xd2†}\) 14.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{xd2}\) favours Black after: 14...e3! 15.\( \text{\textit{x}} \) 16...\( \text{\textit{x}} \) 17.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g4}\) \( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g3+}\) Britton – W. Watson, London 1982) 15...\( \text{\textit{f}} \) 16.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g7}\) \( \text{\textit{x}} \text{g7}\) 17.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g3+}\) Britton – W. Watson, London 1982) 15...\( \text{\textit{f}} \) 16.\( \text{\textit{x}} \) 17.\( \text{\textit{e}} \text{xe3}\) \( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g3}\) 18.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g1}\) This was Donchev – Semkov, Varna 1982, and now Belov’s suggestion of 18...\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{e6N}\) gives Black slightly better chances in the ending.
13...\texttt{c5} has only been tested in correspondence play but it seems to be White's best. The position liquidates into an equal ending:

13...

\texttt{xd2}\texttt{†} 14.\texttt{xd2} \texttt{h6}! 15.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{xf8}

White has sacrificed everything for a speculative attack. However 18...\texttt{e1}†-+ must have come as a cold shower in Llaneza Vega – Moranda, Herceg Novi 2005. (In fact 18...\texttt{h5}!N is also winning: 19.\texttt{xh5} \texttt{e1}† 20.\texttt{d2} \texttt{d1}† 21.\texttt{xd1} \texttt{g4}† 22.\texttt{e2} \texttt{xh5}–+)

16.\texttt{hxg6} \texttt{xd2}\texttt{†} 17.\texttt{xd2} \texttt{hxg6} (17...\texttt{fxg6}? 18.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xe4}† 19.\texttt{fxe4} \texttt{h5} was also level in Bujan Mosteiro – Diani, email 2009) 18.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{e7} 19.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 20.\texttt{h8} \texttt{b6} 21.\texttt{c4} \texttt{b7}= Jenull – Thannheiser, email 2007.

13...\texttt{exd4}! 14.\texttt{hxg7} \texttt{e8}!

The position might look scary with a pawn on \texttt{g7} but White cannot exploit it.

15.\texttt{xe4}

In another game White went all in for mate: 
15.\texttt{h6} \texttt{exf3} 16.\texttt{c4}? (16.\texttt{gxf3} \texttt{g5}†) 16...\texttt{fxg2} 17.\texttt{d5} \texttt{gxh1} 18.\texttt{h1}

With the queen coming to the aid of the king, Black has nothing to fear.

17.\texttt{d3}

17.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{f4}† 18.\texttt{b1} \texttt{g4} 19.\texttt{e1} \texttt{ad8} 20.\texttt{xa7} \texttt{xe4}† Hernaez Fernandez – Montella, corr. 2003.

17...\texttt{g4} 18.\texttt{d1} \texttt{xg7} 19.\texttt{g5} \texttt{h5}

Black is safe on the kingside and is still a pawn up, but White has just enough activity to hold on to equality.
The knight exchange strengthens Black’s centre and opens the b-file. In return, White hopes to gain time for his kingside attack. He may proceed with D1) 11.h4 and D2) 11.h6.

11.g4 $\text{c}7! \text{N} 12.g5 $\text{h}5 13.exd5 $\text{d}8\text{=} is promising for Black.

11.exd5 may transpose to the main lines if Black recaptures with the knight, but 11...cxd5 seems like a logical way to limit White’s options; there is nothing better than 12.$\text{c}xd5 $\text{c}xd5 13.$\text{e}xd5, transposing to variation B of Chapter 3.

11.e5 $\text{e}8 would be good for White if he could keep the bishop hemmed in, but Black can fight back immediately. 12.f4 (12.$f4 was tried in Niewold – Decallonne, corr. 1989, but 12...$\text{c}7! \text{N followed by ...$\text{c}6 looks strong)
12...e6?!N (I find 12...d4 a bit too committal, even though it worked extremely well in its only practical encounter: 13...xf8?! £xf8 14...b1?? a6 0–1 Pereira – Teixeira, Vila Real 2005) 13...xf8 £xf8 Black has great play for the exchange; just look at his central dominance and easy play down the b-file.

D1) 11.h4 £a5!

Black’s quick play along the b-file means his attack is faster.

12.exd5

12...b1 has been tried, but after 12...b8 the pressure against b2 forced White to play 13.b3 in Stratil – Dobias, Bratislava 1992. Here I like 13...b4?!N, putting pressure on the e4-pawn. 14.e5 (14.exd5 £d8?) 14...h5 White has to sacrifice the pawn as 15.f4? g3 16.g1 f6! would be terrible for him.

12.h5 was played in M. Filippov – Ponomarev, St Petersburg 2009, when Black should have taken the offering: 12...xb5!!N 13.h6 (13.g4 g3+) 13...xc3! 14.xc3 xc3 15.bxc3 £d8?

12.e5 h5 13.e1?!N (13.h6 d4! 14.b1 £xd2† 15.xd2 occurred in Al Haysamy – Chaudry, Singapore 1987. After the correct

15...g3!N 16.g1 xe5† White is in trouble.) The text move is White’s only way to defend, but Black can maintain the pressure with:

12...b8 13.d4

After 13.c4 d5! 14.exd5?! exd5 White was in deep trouble and did not last much longer: 15.a3 f5 16.g4

16...xb2! 17.xb2 £b8† 18.a2 xe3 19.c1 d4 0–1 Zelic – Nikolin, Pula 1984.

13...cxd5 14.g4

Here I found a powerful improvement over Parfenov – Kornev, Kurgan 2001.
A surprising but effective piece sacrifice.

15.fxe4
15...\textit{\$}\textit{xe4} \textit{\$}\textit{xa2}†

15...e5! 16.\textit{\$}f2 d4†
White cannot afford to lose the a2-pawn, so Black will regain the piece with an excellent position.

D2) 11.\textit{\$}h6

14...\textit{\$}e4!N
A surprising but effective piece sacrifice.

15.fxe4
15...\textit{\$}\textit{xe4} \textit{\$}\textit{xa2}†

11...\textit{\$}xh6 12.\textit{\$}xh6 \textit{\$}b8
This position is double-edged, with both sides playing for mate.

13.e5
This is White’s main try.

13.h4
This is obviously a critical plan, but Black has a strong novelty.
13...\textit{\$}a5!N
Instead 13...\textit{\$}e6 14.e5 \textit{\$}h5 15.g4 \textit{\$}g3
16.\textit{\$}d3 \textit{\$}xh1 17.\textit{\$}xh1 was dangerous for Black in Doci – Misovic, Slovakia 2002.

13...\textit{\$}e6
14.e5
14...\textit{\$}a5† 15.\textit{\$}e1 \textit{\$}xc3
15.h5 \textit{\$}xb2! 15...\textit{\$}xb2 \textit{\$}e6† 16.\textit{\$}c1 \textit{\$}xc3
17.hxg6 fxg6 18.e5!
18.exd5 \textit{\$}f5 19.\textit{\$}d3 (19.\textit{\$}d3 \textit{\$}a3† 20.\textit{\$}d2
\textit{\$}xd3 21.cxd3 \textit{\$}xa2† 22.\textit{\$}e1 \textit{\$}xg2 23.\textit{\$}h3
\textit{\$}xh3 24.\textit{\$}xh3 \textit{\$}xd5†) 19...\textit{\$}xd3 20.\textit{\$}xd3
\textit{\$}f7 21.dxc6 \textit{\$}e8† Black's king is safe on f7 and his attack remains extremely strong.

Compared to the earlier variation B, the bishop exchange makes more sense when Black cannot simply capture on e4. On the other hand, the open b-file gives Black attacking chances of his own.
My engine thinks White is holding a draw here but Black has many different tries. One possibility is:

18...\textcolor{red}{f5} 19.\textcolor{blue}{d3} \textcolor{blue}{xd3} 20.\textcolor{red}{exd3} \textcolor{blue}{x}xe5

Perhaps White can hold, but the position feels much easier for Black to play.

13...\textcolor{red}{d7} 14.h4

14.\textcolor{red}{d4}?N is another interesting try. 14...\textcolor{blue}{e8} 15.e6! (15.\textcolor{red}{h}h4 \textcolor{blue}{f8}?? doesn’t get White anywhere) 15...\textcolor{red}{f6} 16.\textcolor{red}{xf7}\textcolor{blue}{f7} The position is complicated but I like the potential of Black’s central pawns.

14...\textcolor{red}{xe5} 15.h5 \textcolor{blue}{f5} 16.g4 f6!

This is the crucial idea that holds Black’s position together. The bishop is inedible.

17.\textcolor{red}{f4}?

After 17.gxf5? g5! White’s queen is trapped and he will have to give at least a rook to extricate it.

17...\textcolor{red}{e3}?N looks like the best square for White’s queen. 17...\textcolor{red}{d7} 18.hxg6

18...\textcolor{red}{b6}! Forcing the exchange of queens. (18...\textcolor{red}{hxg6} 19.f4! is dangerous) 19.gxh7† (19.\textcolor{red}{h}h6? loses to 19...\textcolor{blue}{xb}xb2† 20.\textcolor{red}{d}d2 \textcolor{red}{xf3}† 21.\textcolor{red}{d}d3 \textcolor{red}{g}g5!→) 19...\textcolor{red}{h}h8 20.\textcolor{red}{xb}xb6 axb6 White is temporarily a pawn up but the h7-pawn is dropping. I like Black’s compact structure, but White should be able to retain equality.

17.\textcolor{red}{d}d2N is less accurate than the above line, as f3-f4 is no longer such a big threat. 17...\textcolor{red}{e6} 18.hxg6 hxg6 19.\textcolor{red}{d}d3 \textcolor{red}{f}f7 Black’s king can find sanctuary in the centre.

17...\textcolor{red}{d}d6!

The threat of a discovered check forces White to lose time with his queen, giving Black vital extra time for his counterattack.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node at (0,0) {0–1}
;\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

0–1 Gonell Aparici – Marin, Manresa 1995. Twenty years later, this energetic display from the Romanian GM remains a model demonstration of Black’s chances.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Most of White’s alternatives on move ten are not dangerous as Black can simply take the pawn on e4. 10.\textcolor{red}{xc}xc6 bxc6 is more interesting as the pin on the d-file prevents ...dxe4, but Black obtains strong counterplay along the b-file, making this a risky way for White to play. Pay particular attention to 11.\textcolor{red}{h}h6, as it is the sharpest line considered in this chapter.