

Chess Miniatures

MINIATURES IN THE SICILIAN NAJDORF



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Russell Enterprises

From Chapter 1

Minor Lines: 6 h3, 6 a4 & 6 g3

Game 3

Robert Fischer – Miguel Najdorf

Varna ol 1962

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.h3

A Fischer specialty.

6...b5!?

In two other Fischer games, Black tested a couple of other options:

- (a) 6...g6 7.g4 Bg7 8.g5 (nowadays White typically gives preference to 8.Bg2, e.g., 8...0-0 9.Be3 Nc6 10.Qd2 Bd7 11.0-0-0 Rc8 12.f4 Na5 13.b3 Qc7 14.Nde2 b5 15.Nd5 Nxd5 16.exd5 Rfe8 17.Rhf1 e6 with a razor-sharp position that soon went completely wild: 18.Rf2 Nc4 19.bxc4 bxc4 20.Bd4 c3 21.Qxc3 Qxc3 22.Nxc3 Bxd4 23.Rxd4 Rxc3 24.dxe6 Rxe6, and when the smoke cleared, the chances were equal, Topalov-Mamedyarov, Khanty-Mansiysk Candidates 2014) 8...Nh5 9.Be2 e5 10.Nb3 Nf4 11.Nd5 Nxd5 12.Qxd5 Nc6 13.Bg4 Bxg4 14.hxg4 Qc8 15.Qd1 Nd4 16.c3 Nxb3 17.axb3 Qe6 18.Ra5 f6 19.Qd5 Qxd5 20.Rxd5 Kd7 21.gxf6 Bxf6 22.g5 with a comfortable edge for White which eventually was converted, Fischer-Reshevsky, New York 1962.
- (b) 6...Nc6 7.g4 Nxd4 8.Qxd4 e5 9.Qd3 Be7 (in a relatively recent super GM encounter, Black instead tried 9...Be6 10.f4 Rc8 11.g5 Nd7 12.f5 Bc4 13.Qg3 b5 14.Bg2 b4 15.Nd1 d5 16.exd5 Bc5 17.Be3 Bd4 18.h4 Qa5 with a messy position where Black certainly cannot be worse, Movsesian-Fedorchuk, Sibenik 2012) 10.g5 Nd7 11.Be3 Nc5 12.Qd2 Be6 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.f3 Rc8 15.Kb1, and White's position is somewhat preferable, Fischer-Bolbochan, Stockholm Interzonal 1962.
- (c) 6...e5 or 6...e6 are currently the most frequently played moves.

7.Nd5!? Bb7

7...Nbd7?? 8.Nc6 or 7...Nfd7 8.Bg5! h6? 9.Ne6!, both winning for White.

8.Nxf6+ gxf6 9.c4

White blasts forward. The normal 9.Bd3 Nd7 may be a little better for White, but offers Black an almost normal Najdorf position once he has played ...e7-e6.

9...bxc4

9...b4 10.f3 followed by Be3 looks quite pleasant for White, whereas 9...Bxe4!? 10.cxb5 leads to a messy position, e.g., 10...e5 (10...Bg7 11.Qg4 Bg6 12.Nf5 0-0 13.Nxg7 Kxg7 14.a4 is possibly better for White, even if he is a bit behind in development) 11.Ne2 Bb7 12.Nc3 d5 13.Qf3, and I'm not entirely sure whose position I prefer.

10.Bxc4 Bxe4!?

If Black plays 10...Qa5+?! 11.Bd2 Qe5, then White should opt for 12.Qb3! Qxe4+ 13.Kd1 with a pretty scary initiative for White.

11.0-0 d5 12.Re1?!

I know it is almost sacrilegious to pick at a classic Fischer win, but the text move is definitely not the best move.

White should have opted for the retreat 12.Bb3! which is very uncomfortable for Black to face, e.g., 12...e6 13.Re1 Bc5 14.Be3 Bxd4 15.Ba4+ Nd7 16.Bxd4 with an unpleasant position for Black.

12...e5?



Black has a number of alternatives that need to be examined:

- (a) 12...Rg8 13.Rxe4! dxe4 (or 13...dxc4 14.Be3 Qc8 15.Qf3 Nd7 16.Nc6 with a nasty attack) 14.Qh5 Rg6 (or 14...Rg7 15.Nf5) 15.Qxh7 Rg7 16.Qxe4 Ra7 17.Nf5, and White is winning.
- (b) 12...e6 13.Qh5! Bg6 14.Qxd5 Qxd5 15.Bxd5 Ra7 16.Nc6 with a large advantage for White.
- (c) 12...h5 13.Rxe4! dxe4 14.Qb3! e6 (14...Qxd4? 15.Be3) 15.Bxe6 fxe6 16.Nxe6 Qc8 17.Bf4 Ra7 18.Rc1 with a strong attack for White.
- (d) 12...Nd7 13.Rxe4 dxc4 14.Nc6 Qc7 15.Qf3 is very good for White.
- (e) 12...dxc4 has been given as Black's best option but after 13.Rxe4 f5 (13...Qd5 is worse: 14.Qf3 e6 15.Bf4 Nc6 16.Nxc6 Qxc6 17.Rxe6+, and White is winning) 14.Qa4+ Qd7 15.Qxd7+ Nxd7 16.Nxf5 with a clearly better endgame for White.
- (f) 12...Bxg2! is Black's only chance: 13.Kxg2 dxc4 14.Qf3 Nd7 15.Nf5 Rg8+ (15...e6 loses to 16.Rxe6+!, e.g., 16...fxe6 17.Qh5#) 16.Kh1 e5 (16...e6 17.Qc6, intending Rxe6+, 17...e5, and Black may well survive) 17.Be3 Rb8 18.Rac1 Qc7, and Black is still very much in the game.

13.Qa4+! Nd7

13...Qd7 is met by 14.Bb5! axb5 15.Qxa8 Bd6 16.Rxe4! dxe4 17.Qxe4 with a large advantage and an on-going initiative for White.

14.Rxe4!

Time for the fireworks to begin.

14...dxe4

14...dxc4 15.Nf5.

15.Nf5!

Strongest, but the simple 15.Qb3 Qb6 16.Bxf7+ is also very good for White, e.g., 16...Kd8 17.Qd5 Rc8 18.Bd2 with a terrifying attack.

15...Bc5 16.Ng7+! Ke7 17.Nf5+

White is not repeating moves, but rather taking away Black's right to castle.

17...Ke8



Nominally Black is a pawn and an exchange up, but with two doubled pawns, the king stuck in the center and a total lack of piece coordination, his position is in disarray. So how does White take advantage of Black's many issues?

Tal suggested 18.Bh6 which is also strong, but weakening Black's defense of the dark squares is far more problematic for Black to deal with.

18.Be3! Bxe3 19.fxe3

White intends to play Rd1 to tie Black up further; it is remarkable that Black is completely without a defense.

19...Qb6 20.Rd1

While 20.Bxf7+ is possible, then 20...Kd8! 21.Rd1 Ra7 is probably winning for White, but the game continuation is more effective.

20...Ra7



How should White continue his attack?

21.Rd6!

21.Bxf7+ Kd8 is the same as above, whereas 21.Nd6+ Kf8 gives Black a chance to survive.

21...Qd8

On 21...Qc7 White plays the decisive 22.Rc6 Qd8 23.Qb4, and it is curtains.

While 21...Qxb2 is met by 22.Bxf7+!, and now:

(a) 22...Kd8 23.Qa5+ Rc7 (23...Kc8 actually leads to a forced mate according to my computer after 24.Ne7+ Kb8 25.Nc6+ Ka8 26.Nxa7, and the mate is around the corner) 24.Be6 Qb5 25.Rxd7+, and it is over.

(b) 22...Kxf7 23.Rxd7+ Rxd7 24.Qxd7+ Kg6 25.Qg7+ Kxf5 26.Qg4#.

22.Qb3 Qc7

Or 22...Rf8 23.Ng7+ Ke7 24.Qa3, and the discovered check decides.

23.Bxf7+ Kd8

Or 23...Kf8 24.Bh5 and Black is getting mated.

24.Be6

And Black resigned because he cannot avoid losing material, e.g., 24.Be6 Rb7 25.Qd5 Qc8 26.Qa5+ Ke8 27.Rxa6, threatening both Ra8 and Nd6+.

1-0

From Chapter 2

6 Be3 -The Byrne Variation

Game # 12

Curt Hansen (2595) – Bent Larsen (2515)

DEN-ch Taastrup 1998

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nbd7 6 Be3 a6 7 g4 Nc5



This peculiar set-up was a specialty of Larsen's for a little while, but his results with this time-consuming plan were not all that encouraging.

8 f3

This leaves us with a position where White is aggressively pursuing an English Attack set-up and Black tries not to be too committal. That can prove to be a dangerous proposition for Black.

8...h6

Larsen decides to takes a bit of the sting out of g4-g5.

Other tries in this position have included:

- (a) 8...e5 9 Nb3 Be6 10 g5 Nh5 11 Qd2 Be7 12 0-0-0 0-0 13 Kb1 b5 14 Rg1 Qc7 15 Nd5?! (15 h4!?) 15...Bxd5 16 exd5 Nxb3 17 cxb3 Qd7 18 Bd3 Rfc8, and Black had more or less equalized, Chandler-Larsen, Hastings 1988.

(b) 8...g6 9 h4 h5 10 g5 Nfd7 11 b4 (White insists on demonstrating the flaws with Black's set-up, but this is possibly not the strongest move as it weakens White's pawn structure too) 11...Ne6 12 Nxe6 fxe6 13 Bd4 Rh7 14 Bc4 Bg7 15 Bxg7 Rxg7 16 Bxe6 Ne5 17 Bb3 was seen in Varga-Csom, Hungary 1993, and now Black should have continued with 17...a5 18 Qe2 axb4 19 Nd5, leaving White with no more than a small advantage.

9 Qd2 e5

9...e6 is a reasonable alternative, but still does not change the fact that the knight really does not belong on c5 this early on in the English Attack.

10 Nb3 Be6 11 0-0-0 Qc7

In a later game, Larsen tried to improve with 11...b5?! 12 Nxc5 dxc5 13 Nd5 (or 13 Qxd8+ Rxd8 14 Rxd8+ Kxd8 15 a4 b4 16 Nb1 a5 17 Nd2 is definitely pleasant for White) 13...Bxd5 14 exd5 Bd6 15 h4 Nd7 16 g5 hxg5 17 Bxg5 Qc7 was Rosito-Larsen, Buenos Aires 2002, and White has several good moves available such 18 Qg2 or 18 h5, all involving putting Black's kingside under pressure.

12 Kb1 Be7 13 h4 0-0-0

A tough decision. Black's king is hardly safe on the queenside, but it would be even worse on the kingside.

14 Nd5! Bxd5 15 exd5 Kb8 16 Be2 Nfd7 17 c4

White intends to continue to roll the pawns forward with Na5, Rc1, b4 followed by c5 when the timing is right.

17...Nf8

If Black plays 17...Nxb3 18 axb3 a5, then White will soon have the queenside opened with 19 b4 axb4 20 Qxb4, and things are looking quite dangerous for Black.

Atlas, who annotated the game in ChessBase Magazine, further analyzed the following options:

(a) 17...e4 18 f4 g5? (18...Rc8!?) 19 Nxc5 Nxc5 20 hxg5 hxg5 21 fxg5, and Black is in an even deeper hole.

(b) The solid 17...b6 is best met with 18 Nxc5 (18 f4 is less convincing, e.g., 18...exf4 19 Bxf4 Bf6, and Black's pieces are beginning to wake up) 18...Nxc5 19 Rc1 followed by Bd1 and b4 with a strong initiative for White.

18 Na5!

White is getting on with his plan on the queenside. This is a typical plan for this type of pawn structure.

18...Ng6 19 b4 Na4 20 Rc1!



White is undeterred with his plan on the queenside. The question is: can Black take the pawn on h4 with his knight?

20...Nxb4?? 21 Bd1 Nb6

Or 21...Qd7 which can be simply met with 22 Qf2 Ng6 23 Qc2, and Black loses material.

22 Qf2

Black loses material and decided enough is enough. **1-0**

From Chapter 3

6 Be2 - The Classical Variation

Game # 25

Sergei Azarov (2601) – Radoslaw Wojtaszek (2726)
Czech Team ch 2010

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2 e5 7 Nb3 Be7 8
0-0 0-0 9 Kh1 Nc6 10 f3

10 f4 is the most frequently played move in this position.

10...b5

This combination of ...Nc6 and ...b5 is not particularly common and a bit of a specialty of the Cuban grandmaster Lenier Dominguez Perez.

11 Be3

Two other options are:

- (a) 11 Qd2 Qb6 12 Rd1 Re8 13 Qe3 Qc7 14 Bd2 Be6 15 Be1 Bf8 16
Rac1 Ne7 17 Bh4 b4 18 Na4 Nd7, and Black has successfully
solved his opening problems, Ivanchuk-Dominguez Perez, Foros
2007.
- (b) 11 Nd5 Nxd5 12 exd5 Na5 13 Bd2 Nc4 14 Bxc4 bxc4 15 Na5 Bd7
16 Nxc4?! Bb5 17 b3 Bxc4 18 bxc4 Qc7 19 f4 Bf6 20 Bc3 Qxc4,
and Black has a very solid advantage, Jakovenko-Dominguez
Perez, Moscow 2009.

11...Na5 12 Nxa5 Qxa5 13 Qd2 Kh8?!



What is White's best move?

This move was an attempted improvement on another game by Dominguez Perez, but unfortunately for Black it is a very unconvincing one. Previously tried by the Cuban specialist is 13...Qc7 14 a4 b4 15 Nd5 Nxd5 16 exd5 Qa5 (or 16...Bf5 17 Rfc1 Qa5 18 c4 bxc3 19 Rxc3 Rab8 20 Bc4 Bf6 21 b3 e4 22 Bd4 Bxd4 23 Qxd4 exf3 24 Rxf3 Bg6, and White is slightly better, Morozevich-Kasimdzhanov, San Luis 2005) 17 b3 Bd8 18 f4 Bf6 19 f5 e4 20 Rad1 (20 Bd4!?) 20...Bc3 21 Qc1 Re8 22 f6 Bxf6 23 Rxf6 gxf6 24 Bh6?! (24 Bc4!? Re5 25 Bd4 Bf5 26 Rf1 Bg6 27 Rxf6 Rxd5 28 Qh6 Rxd4 29 Rxg6+ hxg6 30 Qxg6+ Kh8 is a draw) 24...Re5 25 Qf4 Qd8 26 Rf1 Bf5 27 Qg3+ Bg6, and Black has everything under control and went on to win the game, Timofeev-Dominguez Perez, Sarajevo 2008.

14 b4! Qa3?

This just looks too provocative to be healthy. That being said it takes quite a while for my computer to come to that conclusion. The better choice for Black is 14...Qxb4!, and now 15 a4 d5 16 exd5 Bd7 17 Rfb1 Rfc8 18 Rxb4 Bxb4 19 Rd1 Bxc3 20 Qc1 leaves White with only a small advantage.

15 Rfb1 Be6 16 Qe1 Rfc8 17 Bd2 Bd8 18 Bd3



How should White continue after respectively 18...Rc6 and 18...Bb6?

18...Rc6?

Black's best option is 18...Bb6, although after 19 Nd1! (19 Rb3 is less convincing in this line: 19...Bxb3 20 axb3 Qxb4 21 Nxb5 Qc5 22 Bb4 Qf2 23 Qxf2 Bxf2 24 Nxd6 Rc7 25 Bc4, and White has ample compensation for the exchange) 19...Ba7 20 c3 a5 21 Bc1 Qa4 22 Nb2 Qa3 23 Nc4 Qa4 24 Nxd6 Rcb8 25 a3, and White should be winning.

19 Rb3! Bxb3 20 axb3 Qxb4 21 Nxb5

And Black resigned because the queen falls. **1-0**

From Chapter 5

6 Bg5 - Minor Lines

Game # 45

Alexander Motylev (2683) – Wang Hao (2733)

Chinese Team Ch (Beijing) 2012

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bg5 Nbd7 7 Qe2

It is interesting to note that this move is not even mentioned in the fourth edition of ECO B. Only 7 Bc4 is covered. But the text move has seen its fair share of tests in grandmaster games.

7...b5 8 Nd5!?



This is one of the ideas behind White previous move.

Two other moves are frequently seen here as well:

- (a) 8 0-0-0 Bb7 9 Bxf6 gxf6 10 Qh5 Rc8 11 Nd5 Nc5 12 Be2 Nxe4 13 Rhe1 Rc5 14 Nb3 Rxd5 15 Rxd5 e5?! (15...e6!? 16 Bxb5+ axb5 17 Rxe4 Be7 18 Rdd4 Bxe4 19 Qxb5+ Kf8 20 Rxe4 Qa8 21 f3 is somewhat better for White) 16 Rd3 Nxf2 was played in Kokarev-Wang Hao, Sochi 2012, and now White should have opted for 17 Rd4! Be7 18 Bf3! and Black is in a world of trouble.
- (b) 8 f4 e5 9 Nf5 Bb7 10 0-0-0 Qb6 11 fxе5 dxe5 12 g3?! (12 g4! g6 13 Ne3 is somewhat better for White) 12...b4 13 Nd5 Nxd5 14

exd5 Qg6 15 h4 Qxf5 16 Bh3 Qg6 17 Rhf1 f6, and White does not have full compensation for the sacrificed material, Naiditsch-Izoria, Kusadasi 2006.

8...Bb7 9 Bxf6 Nxf6 10 Nxf6+ exf6

Black has also tried the other recapture: 10...gxf6 11 0-0-0 Qc7 12 Kb1 0-0-0 13 g3 Kb8 14 Bg2 e6 15 Bf3 Rg8 16 h4 Rc8 17 Rd3 Qb6 with at best a tiny advantage for White, Alsina Leal-Alonso Rosell, Sabadell 2011.

11 a4 bxa4

Black has another perfectly playable option in 11...Qa5+ 12 Qd2 (or 12 c3 b4 13 Qe3 g6!, and Black is absolutely fine) 12...Qxd2+ 13 Kxd2 b4, and Black should not have any particular issues.

12 Qc4

This move is relatively harmless. The alternative tests Black a bit more: 12 Rxa4 Be7 13 Qg4 g6 14 Bc4 d5 15 exd5 Bxd5 16 0-0 0-0 17 Rd1 Bxc4 18 Nc6 Qc7 19 Rxc4 Bd6 20 g3 Rfe8 21 b3 f5 22 Qf3 Bf8, and White has a tiny, but enduring plus that he eventually managed to convert to a full point, Volokitin-Al Sayed, Istanbul 2012.

12...a3

Or 12...Qa5+ 13 c3 Bxe4 14 Nb5 Qxb5 15 Qxe4+ Qe5 16 Rxa4 f5! 17 Bb5+ Ke7 18 Qxe5+ dxe5 19 Rxa6 Rxa6 20 Bxa6 e4, and Black is absolutely fine in the endgame.

13 Rxa3 d5 14 Qa4+

14 Qb3 is met by 14...Bxa3 15 Qxb7 Qa5+, and Black is much better.

14...Qd7 15 Qxd7+ Kxd7 16 Rb3 Kc7

Black can also try 16...Ra7!? 17.Be2 (or 17.exd5 Bxd5 18.Rd3 Kc7 19.Nf3 Be4 20.Rc3+ Kb8 21.Rb3+ Rb7 22.Bxa6 Rxb3 23.cxb3 Bb4+ 24.Ke2 Re8, and Black is fine) 17...dxe4 18.0-0 Bd5 19.c4 Bb7 20.Rd1 Kc7, and Black survives without any problems.

17 Rc3+ Kb6 18 Rb3+



What happens if Black now decides to avoid the repetition of moves with 18...Ka7?

18...Ka7?? 19 Bxa6!

Ouch! Black resigned because he can neither take the bishop nor avoid it, for example, 19 Bxa6 Kxa6 (or 19...Bxa6 20 Nc6# and 19...Rb8 20 Kd2 Bb4+ 21 Rxb4 Bxa6 22 Nc6+ is hardly any better) 20 0-0 Ka7 21 Nc6+ Bxc6 22 Ra1+ with mate. **1-0**