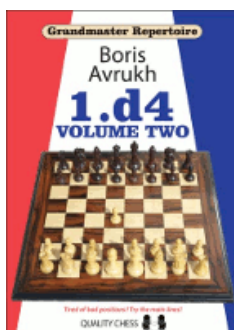




COLUMNISTS

The Openings Explained

Abby Marshall



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The Openings Explained

The King's Indian with 5.Nge2 [E70]

To be honest, the opening I'm presenting in this month's column - the King's Indian Defense - is one in which I have no experience playing. The positions that arise are often closed and positional and are not to my taste. However, the benefit of this is a totally fresh look at something that has been studied for ages. The King's Indian is also a very complex opening, so I, of course, will not try to tackle the entire opening in one column. I will instead focus on one particular variation that interests me, while also providing an outline of the major lines in this opening.

Theory

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4

2.Nf3 g6 Black can use the King's Indian setup even if White does not play the Queen's Gambit.

2...g6



[FEN "mbqkb1r/pppppp1p/5np1/8/2PP4/8/PP2PPPP/RNBQKBNR w KQkq - 0 3"]

This is the King's Indian Defense. It was developed in the 1920s, the hypermodern era, and became popular in the 1940s with the help of Bronstein, Boleslavsky, and Reshevsky. It is a hypermodern system in that Black is planning to challenge the center indirectly; play mostly occurs on the wings. The apex of its popularity was in the 1970s when Fischer used the KID with great success. The key pawn break in the KID is usually ...e5, though sometimes ...c5 is important. White generally replies with d5 with a closed center. Black's pawns point to the kingside and White's to the queenside, so Black will attack the king while White plays on the queenside.

3.Nc3

3.g3 is the Fianchetto System. 3...Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 Black has a fairly solid setup and will slowly try to pressure the white center.

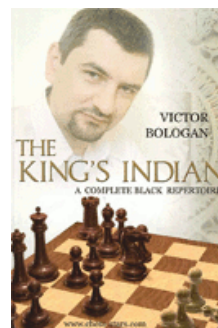
3...Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nge2

This is the variation I want to look at today. A problem with this is that it is a bit slow and the knight is awkwardly placed on g3. This is a minor line. Other variations include

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 accessible:



[Dangerous Weapons:
 The King's Indian \(Ebook\)](#)
 by Palliser, Flear, & Dembo



[The King's Indian](#)
 by Victor Bologan



[ABC of the King's Indian](#)
 by Andrew Martin

The Classical variation: 5.Nf3 0–0 6.Be2 e5 7.0–0 (7.d5 This is the Petrosian system, locking everything up.) 7...Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Ne1 Nd7.

The Samisch variation: 5.f3 The idea is to prevent Black from Ng4/Bg4 and possibly advance with g4. 5...0–0 6.Be3 Nc6 This is a prelude to a very complicated game.

The Four Pawns Attack: 5.f4 0–0 6.Nf3 Na6 7.Be2 e5 This is a line, but I'm not sure what's going on here.

The Averbakh variation 5.Be2 0–0 6.Bg5 Na6 7.Qd2 e5 8.d5 Qe8 9.Bd1 Nc5 10.Bc2 a5.

Also interesting is 5.Bd3 Nc6 6.Nge2 Nd7 7.Be3 e5 8.d5 Nd4.

5...Nbd7



[FEN "r1bqk2r/pppnppbp/3p1np1/8/2PPP3/2N5/PP2NPPP/R1BQKB1R w KQkq - 0 6"]

This is a useful developing move. It prepares ...e5 and the delay in castling is OK, because the next move is better if Black has not castled.

6.Ng3

This is the obvious choice and the move most commonly played.

6.f3 is similar to the Samisch set-up. The moves c6, a6, and b5 may be ideas.

6.g3 is similar to the fianchetto variation. 6...e5 7.Bg2 0–0 8.0–0 c6 is comfortable for Black.

6.Bg5 c6 7.Qd2 is a weird hybrid. Black should target the dark-squared bishop and just play chess. 7...h6 8.Bh4 0–0.

6...e5

This is a very common move in the KID. It gains space and challenges White's center.

7.d5

White cramps Black and keeps the center closed. White also has the option of keeping the tension in the center by leaving the pawn on d4. This results in very tactical play. White can also exchange on e5, which leads to relatively tame play.

7...h5

Besides messing with White's kingside, ...h5 allows the positional idea of ...Bh6. This is a good idea in a slow closed position, because the bishop is somewhat locked in. White is also going to be a little puzzled to find a plan because h4-h5 is ruled out, f4 creates weaknesses, and queenside play would require a change in plans; for instance, what is the knight doing on g3?

8.h4

8.Bg5 This move appears earlier than usual. 8...h4 9.Nge2 a5 It is interesting how important Black's flank pawns are to the position. 10.Ng1 Nc5 11.Qc2 Rh5 12.Bd2 Don't forget this idea: it is a useful way to take control of the dark-squares. 12...Bh6 13.Bxh6 Rxh6 14.Nf3 Bd7 15.Be2 Kf8 16.0-0 Kg7 I examine this position in the first illustrative game.

8.Be2 I would think many White players would just develop in this position. 8...h4 9.Nf1 Nc5 and now



[FEN "r1bqk2r/ppp2pb1/3p1np1/2npp3/2P1P2p/2N5/PP2BPPP/R1BQKN1R w KQkq - 0 10"]

a) 10.Bg5 Bh6 11.Bxh6 Rxh6 12.Nd2 a5 13.Qc2 (13.b3 White wants to prepare a3, b4, but can't play 13.a3 immediately because of 13...a4. 13...Nh5 14.Bxh5 Nd3+ 15.Kf1 Rxh5 This is probably equal with chances for both sides. I think Black is more aggressively placed.) 13...Bd7 14.b3 c6 15.h3 Kf8 This is also double-edged. Play on the dark squares gives Black decent chances.

b) 10.Qc2 White tries a third way to protect the e-pawn. 10...a5 Black employs the common technique of solidifying the knights position on c5. 11.Bg5 Qd7 Black gets out of the pin in an unusual way. Though the light-squared bishop is blocked, this is not as important as the knight on f6 being free to move. 12.Ne3 h3 13.g3 Notice how White has somewhat unwittingly allowed the dark-squared bishop to be locked in. 13...Nh7 Now follows a forced sequence. 14.Bg4 f5 15.exf5 Nxf5 16.f6 Qf7 17.fxg7 Qxg7 Material is even in a wild position. 18.0-0 e4



[FEN "r1b1k2r/1pp3q1/3p2p1/p1nP2n1/2P1p1B1/2N1N1Pp/PPQ2P1P/2KR3R w kq - 0 19"]

This move clamps on the sensitive squares in White's position. 19.Bxc8 Rxc8 20.Kb1 0-0 Black usually does not castle kingside with a pawn on h3, but Black has enough command of position not to worry about an attack. 21.Nb5 Nf3 22.Qe2 Nd3 Knights on the sixth rank are vicious. Black can consider attacking the white king or cashing out positionally in the weak white squares.

c) 10.f3 a5 11.Bg5 Qd7 These moves look familiar. 12.Nd2 Nh5 13.Be3 (13.Nb3 White touches the centralized c5-knight. 13...Nf4 14.Nxc5 dxc5 White changes the pawn structure, but this should not hurt Black. Black retains control on the dark squares and may even plan on ...Rh5.) 13...Nf4 14.0-0 Qe7 15.Kh1 Qg5 16.Rf2 Nfd3! 17.Bxc5 It hurts White to give up the dark-squared bishop, while Black retains the dark-squared bishop. 17...Nxc5



[FEN "r1b1k2r/1pp2pb1/3p2p1/p1nPp1q1/2P1P2p/2N2P2/PP1NBRPP/R2Q3K w kq - 0 18"]

White's dark squares are very weak.

8...a5

This gains control of the b4-square, so the black knight can go there safely without worrying about White playing b4.

9.Bg5



[FEN "r1bqk2r/1ppn1pb1/3p1np1/p2Pp1Bp/2P1P2P/2N3N1/PP3PP1/R2QKB1R b KQkq - 0 9"]

This sort of position is important to this variation. Here, it is important to know how to play with a closed center with knights on f6 and d7, and control of the dark squares. If you know the basic ideas and concepts of a position, it saves you time at the board and also gives you time to think about other factors of the position. The idea here is to get control of the dark squares and free up the knights, which are very important in closed positions. Without knowing the ideas, the next move might have been hard to find, but now it is easy.

9.Be2 Nc5 10.Bg5 Bh6 Black continues in the same vein of a dark-square strategy.

9...Bh6 10.Bxh6 Rxh6

This bishop exchange is a common motif in this variation. It rids Black of the dark-squared bishop, which was locked in by the d6-e5 pawn chain, and gets rid of White's dark-squared bishop, so Black has more control over the dark squares.

11.Be2 Nc5 12.b3

12.Qd2 White does not try to pursue Black's c5-knight right away and focuses on development instead. 12...Rh8 13.f3 (13.0-0-0 Qe7 14.Kb1 Bd7 15.f3 0-0 16.Nf1 Ng8 17.Nb5 b6 The plan of castling queenside is an alternative to the Kf8-g7 maneuver.) 13...Bd7 14.Nf1 Qe7 15.Nb5 White coerces Black to exchange minor pieces. 15...Bxb5 16.cxb5 b6 Black plans to castle queenside. 17.g3 Ng8 18.0-0-0 f5 19.exf5 gxf5 20.Qc2 Qf6 I examine this position in the second illustrative game.

12...Rh8 13.a3 Bd7

Black doesn't try to immediately thwart White's plans and continues simple development.

14.b4 axb4 15.axb4 Rxa1 16.Qxa1 Nb3!



[FEN "3qk2r/1ppb1p2/3p1np1/3Pp2p/1PP1P2P/1nN3N1/4BPP1/Q3K2R w K - 0 17"]

This nice little maneuver gives Black a good position.

17.Qa7 b6

17...Qc8 I'm a little suspect of this passive move. 18.0-0 Ng4 (18...Kf8 tries to get the king to safety and is a good idea in general, but here it does not look so good to me. 19.f4 Qd8 20.fxe5 dxe5 21.Qf2 Kg7 22.d6 cxd6? 23.Nd5) 19. f3 Nh6 20.f4 Nd4 White has the initiative.

18.Bd1

18.0-0 Ng4.

18...Nd4 19.Nce2

White wants to dislodge the intruding knight.

19...c5!?

This is a bit radical, but it looks interesting.

20.dxc6 Nxc6 21.Qa3 Kf8

This looks like a dynamic position with chances for both sides.

Dive, Russell John (2295) – Sarfati, Jonathan D (2325)

NZL--ch Dunedin (11), 1992

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.Nge2 Nbd7 6.Ng3 e5 7.d5 h5 8.Bg5 h4 9.Nge2 a5 10.Ng1 Nc5 11.Qc2 Rh5 12.Bd2 Bh6 13.Bxh6 Rxh6 14.Nf3 Bd7 15.Be2 Kf8 16.0-0-0 Kg7

This is where the theoretical section left off. The players in this game are both strong masters, which is OK since they will make moves more typical of non-elite players.

17.g3

White wants to open the black kingside to get at the king.

17...Ng4!

I like this aggressive move.

18.Rhf1 hxd3

18...h3 would keep the kingside closed, but it would also close off Black's rook; therefore, Black's chosen move is interesting.

19.hxg3 Qf6



[FEN "r7/1ppb1pk1/3p1qpr/p1nPp3/2P1P1n1//
2N2NP1/PPQ1BP2/2KR1R2 w - - 0 20"]

20.Rd2

I don't think this is the best. 20.Rde1 may be useful, so the bishop can drop back to d1 and the rook can protect e4. 20...Rah8 21.Kb1 To be fair, White is a little stumped for a plan. 21...a4.

20...Nh2

This is okay, but I would prefer to build up first with 20...Rah8 21.Kb1 a4. In the meantime, what is White doing?

21.Nxh2 Rxxh2

Black penetrates a little deeper into White's position.

22.Bd1 Rh3?!

22...Rg2! 23.Rh1 Rxf2 24.Rxf2 Qxf2 25.Qxf2 Nd3+ 26.Kd2 Nxf2.

23.Re1 Rah8 24.b3 Qg5

Black is drifting. Luckily his position is strong enough that it doesn't matter, but it takes longer than it needs to for him to obtain control.

25.Bf3 Rh2 26.Kb2 R8h3



[FEN "8/1ppb1pk1/3p2p1/p1nPp1q1//
2P1P3/1PN2BPr/PKQR1P1r/4R3 w - - 0 27"]

I'm guessing that Black wants to prevent g4.

26...f5!? 27.exf5 gxf5 28.Rf1 e4 29.Be2 Rg2=/+.

27.Rg1 f5

This is a strong move. White is in a vulnerable position, so Black rips it open.

28.Qd1

White chooses to not cede the center and tries to remain solid.

28...Qf6 29.Qe2 Rh8 30.exf5?!

30.Bg2 shuts out the rook on h2. 30...f4 31.Qf3 g5 I think that White will be overrun regardless.

30...Bxf5 31.g4 Bd7



[FEN "7r/1ppb2k1/3p1qp1/p1nPp3/2P3P1/1PN2B2/PK1RQP1r/6R1 w - - 0 32"]

White has gained some space, but there are now new targets. White's center in particular is quite weak.

32.Ne4?

Unfortunately for White, he has long-term structural disadvantages that will be accentuated when the pieces start coming off.

32...Nxe4 33.Bxe4 Qf4

Now there is one less piece defending the dark squares.

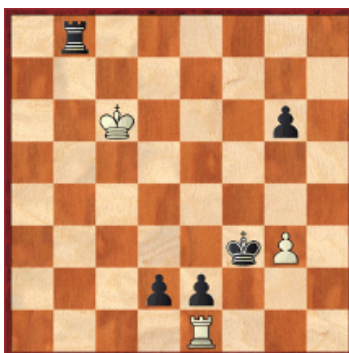
34.Rg3?

This is just a blunder is an already nearly lost position.

34...Qxg3 35.fxg3 Rxe2 36.Rxe2 Bxg4

Black wins a pawn and with it the game.

37.Rf2 Rh3 38.Rg2 Bf5 39.Bc2 Kf6 40.Kc3 c6 41.a3 cxd5 42.cxd5 Bxc2 43.Kxc2 e4 44.Kc3 Ke5 45.Kc4 Rh1 46.b4 axb4 47.axb4 Rd1 48.Kb5 Rxd5+ 49.Kb6 e3 50.Rb2 Rd2 51.Rb1 e2 52.Re1 Rb2 53.b5 d5 54.Kc7 d4 55.b6 d3 56.Kxb7 Ke4 57.Kc6 Kf3 58.b7 d2 59.b8Q Rxb8 0-1



[FEN "1r6/8/2K3p1/8/8/5kP1/3pp3/4R3 w - - 0 60"]

This is a picturesque end.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nge2 e5 6.d5 Nbd7 7.Ng3 h5 8.h4 a5
9.Bg5 Bh6 10.Bxh6 Rxh6 11.Be2 Nc5 12.Qd2 Rh8 13.f3 Bd7 14.Nf1 Qe7
15.Nb5 Bxb5 16.cxb5 b6 17.g3 Ng8 18.0-0-0 f5 19.exf5 gxf5 20.Qc2 Qf6

This is where I left off in the theory portion of this column. In this game, Black has a very different plan than in the first game.

21.f4

Both sides have backward development, but Black's king is also still in the center, so White tries to open the position and take advantage of this factor.

21...0-0-0

Black castles queenside instead of running to the kingside.

22.Nd2 Ne7 23.Nf3 exf4

I don't know about this. There is no need for Black to resolve the tension. I like 23...Ng6 24.fxe5 dxe5 25.Ng5 Ne7 26.Bc4 Rd6, because Black has the center and a target on d5.

24.gxf4 Ng6



[FEN "2kr3r/2p5/1p1p1qn1/pPnP1p1p//5P1P/5N2/PPQ1B3/2KR3R w - - 0 25"]

However in this position, Black does have two targets.

25.Bd3 Rhf8 26.Nd4

26.Qc4 Ne4!? 27.Ng5 Nxf4 28.Bxe4 fxe4 29.Nxe4 looks about equal.

26...Kb7

26...Nxf4 27.Bxf5+ Kb7 28.Rhf1 Qxh4 I'm a little nervous, but Black is up a pawn, has a passed pawn, and the weak light squares don't look like too much of an issue.

27.Bxf5 Nxh4?

27...Nxf4 transposes to the previous variation.

28.Bh3 Qxf4+ 29.Kb1+/-

This reaches a similar position with the knight on h4 way out of play.

29...Nf3 30.Ne6 Nxe6 31.dxe6 Rde8 32.Rhf1 d5?

32...Kb8 is still losing, but not right away: 33.Qd3 Qg3 34.Bf5 Rxf5 35.Qxf5 Ne5 36.Qxh5.

33.Bg2

White wins at least a piece.

33...Qe4 34.Rxf3 Rxf3 35.Bxf3 Qxf3 36.Qc6+



[FEN "4r3/1kp5/1pQ1P3/pP1p3p/8//
5q2/PP6/1K1R4 b - - 0 36"]

36...Ka7 37.Qxc7+ Ka8 38.Qc6+ Ka7 39.Qd7+ 1-0

This shows that you have to be careful in unbalanced, dynamic positions. 27... Nxf4 rather than Nxh4 would have kept the game interesting.

Lessons Learned

1. Control of the dark squares is important. Key moves include ...Bh6 to trade off White's dark-squared bishop, ...Qd7 to unpin the knight and play ...Nh5, and ...a5 to secure the c5-square for the knight.
2. Notice how Black's pawns point to the kingside (d6, e5) and White's pawns point to the queenside (e4, d5). Although it is not too much of a factor in the 5. Nge2 variation, this often determines future play: Black on the kingside, White on the queenside.
3. Common pawn breaks are ...e5 and ...c5. This is a hypermodern system, so Black challenges the center indirectly or in unconventional ways.

A friend of mine described this section of my column as similar to Cliffs Notes. So if you don't feel like reading everything (or anything), feel free to skip to here.

Further Reading

[Dangerous Weapons: The King's Indian](#) by Richard Palliser, Glenn Flear, and Yelena Dembo. The theory is presented in an attractive, user-friendly manner. They show some interesting and often overlooked ideas.

Practitioners

1. David Bronstein. He was a Soviet grandmaster active in the middle of the twentieth century. He was also a very good writer. In 1951, he narrowly avoided becoming world champion against reigning champion Mikhail Botvinnik.
2. Isaac Boleslavsky. He was a contemporary of Bronstein and responsible for many interesting ideas in the Sicilian Defense and the King's Indian Defense.
3. Samuel Reshevsky. He was considered a child prodigy and became a famous American grandmaster. Reshevsky and Fischer had a bitter rivalry. He also played eleven of the first twelve world champions.
4. Bobby Fischer. Everyone knows about Fischer.
5. John Nunn. Nunn is a brilliant English grandmaster, chess problem solver, writer, and mathematician.

6. Garry Kasparov. Kasparov is a genius. This is a highly regarded opening, so many strong players have had it in their repertoire.

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