

Efstratios Grivas

# GRIVAS OPENING LABORATORY

VOLUME 1



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All sales or enquiries should be directed to Chess Evolution  
2040 Budaors, Nyar utca 16, Magyarorszag

e-mail: [info@chess-evolution.com](mailto:info@chess-evolution.com)  
website: [www.chess-evolution.com](http://www.chess-evolution.com)

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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



# FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

The series starting with this book is aimed in offering a full white repertoire based on **1.d4**.

The idea of small opening repertoire books is not new, but here the purpose and the presentation is different.

The choice of the variations against each black replay will be mine and it will be based on my long experience, as I am playing the game for over 40 years, while I am a professional coach for approximately 20!

I do hope that each book of the series will come out every two months and one to three openings will be offered in each of them.

Maybe not all of the choices will appeal to you but you will have to understand that what is important is to learn them in depth and not really looking for something high — this is simply an illusion.

What I mean is that nowadays no opening gives really much; what you can expect is something in-between tiny better and slightly better, if you

have made your homework! Otherwise there is no point for the black player to follow it!

The recommendations are geared towards posing Black unconventional problems. Your opponents will not be able to churn out lengthy memorised variations but will need to solve problems at the board, in positions that are somewhat different in character from those normally reached in the openings under discussion.

I have also selected the systems within the repertoire in such a way that they form a seamless whole and are also reachable by transpositions.

I have tried to describe the suggested systems in detail, giving my assessments as clearly and responsibly as possible, and have generally aimed to provide useful guidelines and many new ideas and moves.

Many things in chess theory, as in life, are relative and a matter of taste. Actually there are no 'good' or 'bad' openings. There are openings that you know and understand, and openings that you do not know and do not understand.

Thus, I believe that my recommended systems will offer a lot of possibilities, new ideas and practical benefits, aspects that should not be underestimated in modern chess. Among other things, I have tried to make them 'understandable' to you.

This books series main purpose is to 'train' and educate the reader in territory that is 'unknown' to him. We must not forget that this is a theory books series, where concrete reaction to the opponent's moves is of primary importance.

General principles and plans do merit a place in this project but, in my opinion, move-by-move consideration is most significant.

Of course it is not necessary to memorise all the variations and moves mentioned in the books series — this will be probably impossible.

But then, you may ask, what is the reason for someone to deal with a theory book, one that he does not need to 'memorise' in full?

The theory of 'subconscious education' will help us answer this question. By playing through the moves and variations in the books series, our subconscious processes and stores similar motifs, repeated moves and plans, and also 'learns' to avoid traps and unwelcome positions.

Such proper 'subconscious memorisation' will, at the critical moment, enforce the correct choice upon us.

Many of the opening books I have read mainly focus on the general characteristics of the opening or the variation in question and much less so on move-by-move theory.

This can lead to unresolved questions in the reader's mind, and the danger that he will mix things up at moments when it is necessary to find one specific concrete move or sequence.

The recommended repertoire is that of a Grandmaster, without any omissions or hidden secrets. On the contrary, it contains a great number of new, deeply analysed suggestions' plans, novelties, new ideas, moves, etc!

Let us not forget that the basic characteristics of the openings do not frequently undergo radical changes. On the other hand, the development of move-by-move theory is explosive.

Every chess player stands on the shoulders of the chess player who came before him. Every generation of good chess players learns from and builds upon the experience and creativity of the previous generations.

The chess player of the year 2019 has encountered more types of positions than the chess-player of 1979 and

knows the proper ways to deal with these positions.

Therefore, a chess player today would have a great advantage over a chess player (even one of equal or greater talent) of 40 years ago, simply because he could play the opening with deeper understanding; this understanding is offered to him by the multitude of deeply analysed variations.

In no occasion do I underestimate the necessity and value of learning the general characteristics and plans of each opening or variation. However, I do strongly believe that move-by-move theory and its (at least) subconscious absorption are necessary in order to survive in the labyrinth of the chess openings.

One question often posed by my students is whether we must simultaneously prepare two or more different systems against an opening. My personal opinion is that only professional Grandmasters can afford this luxury.

All other chess players should focus on one specific system every time, so as to specialise in it and reap maximum benefit. Only if this choice eventually proves undesirable should one change his systems.

As Ernest Hemingway once wrote: 'I guess really good soldiers are really good at very little else'.

The massive development of theory in all openings has clarified that White cannot hope for anything more than a slight advantage, but in some cases even this is unattainable! My recommendations are purely based on a healthy approach.

I must clarify that I took the liberty of changing the original move-order of many games. In this way it was possible to provide clearer coverage and guidance.

Of course, the way you reach a certain position is important, but equally important is to examine how you want to proceed upon reaching it. True value comes from knowing what to keep and what to throw away.

Finally, I would to thank my (ex) trainees (among others) GM Antoaneta Stefanova, GM Ioan Cristian Chirila, GM Emre Can, GM Mustafa Yilmaz and GM Alex Ipatov, who adopted my repertory and contributed to the evolution of the theory.

Efstratios Grivas  
Sharjah, October 2019



# PREFACE

In the first book of the series we are dealing on how to face the ‘Gruenfeld Defence’, a modern system that is quite popular nowadays.

The proposed system is based on the ♖g5 variation (Stockholm Variation), a system that served me well for approximately 30 years, scoring a good 70% in a quite high number of games.

Well, this doesn’t sound logical, as the generally scoring of the variation is on 52.8%, a bit better than the average expected of 51.5% to 52%, which is the natural average number of white ‘superiority’.

My quite high score is purely based in study and understanding of the system, so many equal positions were turned into full points!

Then we move to study on how to face the ‘Slav Defence’, a modern system that is quite popular nowadays.

The proposed system is based on the 4.♘bd2 variation, a system that scores a good 61.6% in a high number of games.

Well, this doesn’t sound logical, as the expected of 51.5% to 52%, is the natural average number of white ‘superiority’.

White’s quite high score is quite interesting and simply proves the validity of the system and the difficulties that the black players are facing.

Finally, we will see to face the ‘Blumenfeld Gambit’, a modern system that is quite popular nowadays.

Black is seeking active play by sacrificing a queenside pawn and attacking white centre at once, simultaneously.

The proposed system is based on the ♖g5 variation, a system that scores a good 57.5% in a high number of games.

Well, this doesn’t sound logical, as the expected of 51.5% to 52%, is the natural average number of white ‘superiority’.

White’s quite high score is purely based in the fact that not many strong players have adopted the ‘Blumenfeld Gambit’ in their black opening repertory, so the white players are generally stronger.

In the book you will find not only a concrete and well structured move-by-move presentation, but also chapters on middlegame, endgame and tactics, which are typical for this variation and will help you to understand it better.

The only two things you have to do are to buy the book (!) and study it!

Note that the research on the played games is up to the middle October 2019.

Efstratios Grivas  
Sharjah, October 2019

# PART 1.

## THE GRUENFELD DEFENCE (D91)

The system involving  $\text{♕g5}$  against the 'Gruenfeld Defence' (The Stockholm Variation) is more or less little explored. It has always stood somewhat in the shadow of the 'main' systems against the 'Gruenfeld Defence', such as  $4.\text{cxd5}$ ,  $4.\text{♕f4}$ ,  $4.\text{♖f3}$   $\text{♕g7}$   $5.\text{♔b3}$  etc.

Yet, this system is more dangerous than most chess players think. It is not aimed at boring positions with a 'less than slight advantage' (although not always possible!), as has been mentioned in some sources.

It is aimed at deep strategical themes and plans; it is aimed at keeping the initiative and, finally and more importantly, it is aimed at gaining a clear path straight out of the opening.

Most of the books that have been written on the 'Gruenfeld Defence' take a look at this system only from Black's point of view, mostly proposing wrong or at least irrelevant continuations for White.

The system with  $\text{♕g5}$  is immediately directed against the black d5-pawn. White wishes to force Black to either support it passively with  $\dots\text{c6}$ , or to

surrender the centre with  $\dots\text{dxc4}$ , or finally to reinforce White's centre after the standard  $\dots\text{♗e4-xc3}$  manoeuvre.

In the later case White's centre becomes a potentially significant factor and Black's darksquared bishop's power is restrained due to the strongly protected d4-pawn.

Fundamentally, White's chances lie mainly in positions with the queens exchanged, as the central pawn majority is for preference and Black finds it difficult to organise concrete activity.

On the other hand, Black may achieve play against White's queenside pawn(s), a typical feature of such 'Gruenfeld' positions.

The first time that I deal with this system was back in 2006, when I wrote a book for 'Gambit Publications' named 'Beating the Fianchetto Defences'. It was an interesting opening book, in which I tried to present the existing theory, but of course many new games were played in the last 13 years!



14. ♖c7 ♕c6 15. ♗xc6 bxc6 16. ♖xc6  
 ♘e8 17. ♖fc1 ♘xc7 18. ♖xc7 ♖xc7  
 19. ♖xc7 ♖c8 20. ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 21. ♘e5  
 ♙b7 22. f4 e6 23. ♖f2 ♖f8 24. ♘d7  
 ♙b4 25. ♖e2 ♖c6 26. ♘c5 ♖f8 27. a3  
 ♖a5 28. b4 ♖b6 29. ♖d2 ♖e7 30. ♖c3  
 ♖d8 31. ♖b3 ♖c8 32. b5 ♖e8 33. ♖b4  
 ♖d8 34. e4 ♖f6 35. e5 ♖d8 36. a4 ♖b8  
 37. a5 ♖c8 38. ♖c2 h6 39. ♖a4 h5  
 40. b6 ♖xa4 41. ♘xa4 axb6 42. axb6  
 g5 43. g3 h4 44. ♖b5 gxf4 45. gxf4 h3  
 46. ♖c6

1-0

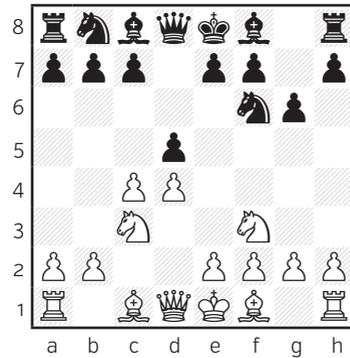
Of course, neither game was a masterpiece and they are only given here on the grounds of historical information.

In the late 60's the Russian GM and World Championship Challenger **Mark Taimanov** (7 February 1926 — 28 November 2016) played the system regularly. His ideas were clarified and improved on many occasions. So, the system with ♖g5 could be named after him, to honour his efforts and great legacy in the chess world.

## Starting Out

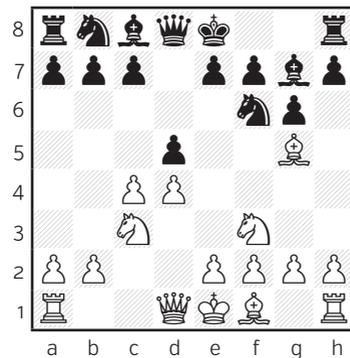
The system proposed against the 'Gruenfeld Defence' commences with the moves

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4. ♘f3



It is preferable to enter the ♖g5 system via the early 4. ♘f3 move order. White can avoid some extremely lengthy and complicated lines and, most importantly, Black can answer 4. ♖g5, with GM Peter Svidlers's idea 4... ♖g7, when it would be better to opt for 5. ♘f3.

4... ♖g7 5. ♖g5



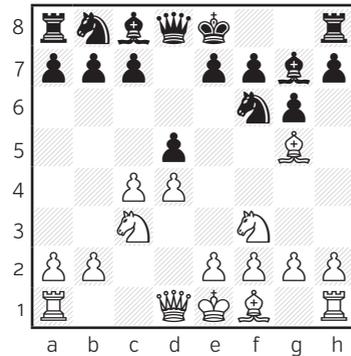
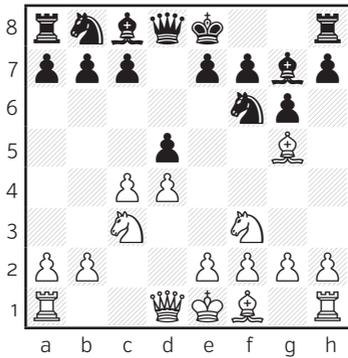
And here is where our examination finally starts!



# CHAPTER 1.

## BLACK'S 5<sup>th</sup>-MOVE DEVIAT – VARIOUS LINES

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗f3  
♙g7 5.♙g5



Baring the natural 5...♗e4, here Black has tried some other moves, with mains to be 5...c6, 5...o-o, 5...c5 and 5...dxc4, which will be examined in the next chapter.

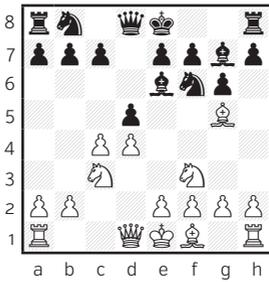
### 1.1 – 5...Various

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗f3  
♙g7 5.♙g5

The rare Black lines are:

a) 5...e6 6.e3 (6.e4!? dxe4 [6...h6 7.♙xf6 ♙xf6 8.cxd5± Yilmaz,M- Stefanova,A Almaty 2016] 7.♗xe4 ♗bd7 8.♙d3 h6 9.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 10.♙f4 b6 11.♙a4+ ♙d7 12.♙a3± Salvador,R- Wang,C Ho Chi Minh City 2011) 6...o-o 7.♙c1 (7.♙b3 c6 8.♙e2 ♗bd7 9.o-o ♙a5 10.♙f4 ♗e8 11.h3± Kiss,P- Emodi,G Hajduboszormeny 1995) 7... c6 8.♙d3 (8.♙e2 ♗bd7 9.cxd5 exd5 10.b4 a6 11.o-o ♙e7 12.♙b3 b5 13.a4 ♗b6 14.♗e5 ♙d7 15.e4± Suba,M- Matnadze,A Sort 2006) 8...♙a5 9.o-o ♗bd7 10.♙f4 dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♗d5 12.♙d6 ♗e8 13.♗e4± Gheorghiu,F- Nyffenegger,P St Jean 2002.

b) 5...♙e6?!

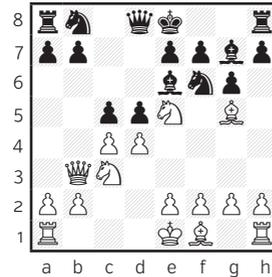


6. ♖b3 (6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.e4 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 c5 9.♙b5+ ♙d7 10.♙xd7+ ♘xd7 11.o-o± Levchakova,A-Alameda Gadea,A Oropesa del Mar 2000) 6...b6 7.♙xf6 ♙xf6 (7...dxc4 8.♖a4+ ♙d7 9.♙xg7 [9.♖xc4? ♙xf6 10.♘d5 ♙c6 11.♘xf6+ exf6 12.e3± Ong,Y-Manav,C Chiangmai 2013] 9... ♙xa4 10.♙xh8+-) 8.cxd5 ♙c8 9.e4± Dor,R-Buland,C Hyeres 2002.

c) 5...♘bd7?! 6.cxd5 h6 (6...♘b6 7.e4 c6 8.dxc6 bxc6 9.h3+- Oubeid,B-Elhaj,M Nouakchott 2012) 7.♙h4 ♘b6 (7...g5 8.♙g3 ♘h5 9.e4 ♘xg3 10.hxg3 c6 11.♖c1 ♖a5 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.e5 e6 14.♘d2 c5 15.♘c4 ♖b4 16.♘d6+ ♙e7 17.♖f3 1-o Koloditsova,R-Bartsits,S Maribor 2012) 8.e4 ♙g4 9.♙b5+ ♘fd7 10.e5+- Vaisman,V-Brixhe,A Meribel 1998.

d) 5...♘c6?! 6.♙xf6 ♙xf6 7.cxd5! ♘b8 (7...♘b4? 8.♖a4+- Fernandez Coalla,J-Villanueva Garcia,P Spain 1995) 8.e4 o-o 9.h3± Kaposzta,M-Nemeth,B Gyonyos 2003.

e) 5...♙g4 6.♘e5 (6.e3 o-o 7.h3± Kovacs,P-Banszegi,B Hungary 2016) 6... ♙e6 7.♖b3 c5 (7...dxc4? 8.♖xb7± Nguyen,X-Pham,V Dong Thap 2000)



8.e3 cxd4 9.exd4 ♘bd7 (9...♖b6 10.♖xb6 axb6 11.♙xf6 exf6 12.cxd5 fxe5 13.dxe6 exd4 14.♘b5 ♘a6 15.exf7+ ♙xf7 16.♙c4+ ♙e7 17.o-o±) 10.♖xb7 ♖b8 11.♖xa7 dxc4 12.♙xf6 ♙xf6 13.♙xc4 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♙xe5 15.♙xe6 fxe6 16.♖d1± .

f) 5...♙f5 6.♙xf6 (6.e3 dxc4 7.♙xc4 o-o 8.♖b3 ♖c8 9.o-o ♘bd7 10.♘e5 e6 11.♘d7 ♘xd7 12.e4 ♙xe4 13.♘xe4 ♙xd4 14.♖fe1 ♙g7 15.♙xe6 1-o Karst,E-Falahat,S Loerzweiler 1995) 6... ♙xf6 7.cxd5 ♘d7 8.h3 ♘b6 9.e4± Miethsam,G-Hecht,V Cattolica 1993.

So, the black players should avoid such passive and strange lines and instead go for the logical and natural ones.