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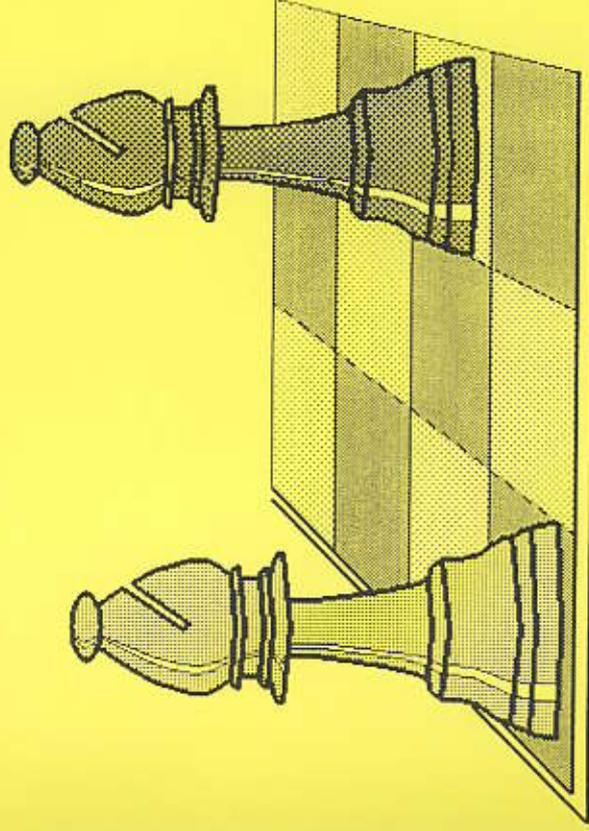
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Delayed Castling

British Master COLIN CROUCH

Series Editors: IM Byron Jacobs
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Why We Consider Delaying

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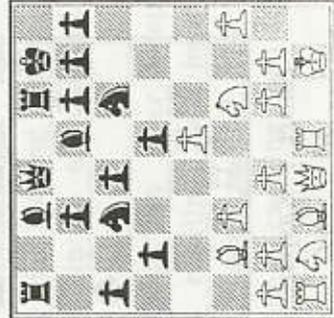
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WESTERN CHINA UNIVERSITY OF POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

CHAPTER ONE

Why We Consider Delaying Castling

"Castle early" is a sensible piece of advice we all remember from the elementary textbooks, along with such maxims as "develop your pieces", "contest the centre" and so on. Useful advice, but not always to be taken too literally, as the improving chess player soon learns with increasing sophistication. What matters is to have some clear strategic aim in the opening, and not merely the following rules of thumb. We try to develop quickly, because we want to mobilise our forces as quickly and efficiently as possible, and yet sometimes the most efficient method of mobilisation is to concentrate on securing the centre and one flank of the board, leaving the mobilisation of the other flank until after higher priorities have been sorted out. For example, in the main line of the Ruy Lopez (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)



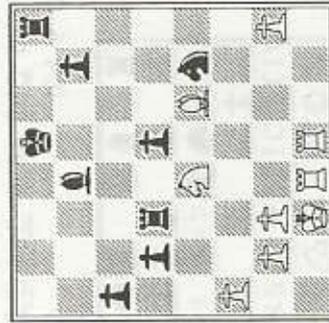
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A MASTER CLASS PUBLICATION

White's queenside development is conspicuously retarded, and yet his opening play has been the model of correctness. White has a good sound central structure, and a kingside which is both solid and a potential base for future aggressive actions. Mobilisation of the queenside will come in good time with such typical possibilities as d4, ♖bd2-f1 (maybe heading ultimately for d5 or f5) and a4.

Similarly, we are advised to castle quickly so as to bring the king into safety as early as possible, and yet sometimes the king is safer in the centre, or maybe early castling would possibly reduce our strategic options. If the king is safe in the centre, it is often best simply to leave it there and await developments; castling can wait. In a recent game (Belgrade 1989), World Champion Kasparov delayed castling until move 30 against Short:

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 f4 e6 7 ♗f3 ♘bd7 8 g4 h6 9 ♕e2 ♗b6 10 ♘b3 ♗c7 11 ♗g2 ♖b8 12 ♕e3 b5 13 g5 hxg5 14 fxg5 ♘h5 15 g6 ♘e5 16 gxf7+ ♗xf7 17 ♖f1 ♗g6 18 ♗xg6+ ♘xg6 19 ♘d4 ♘e5 20 a3 ♘d7 21 0-0-0 ♖c8 22 ♕g5 ♘f6 23 ♕f4 ♘c4 24 ♕xc4 ♖xc4 25 e5 dx5 26 ♕xe5 ♘g4 27 ♕f4 ♕c5 28 ♘e4 e5 29 ♘xc5 ♖xc5 30 ♖fe1



Short v Kasparov
30 ... 0-0

and later won the game; castling as late as this, although unusual, is far from unique.

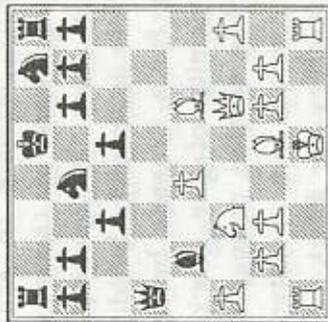
This booklet attempts to illustrate the various circumstances in which a player might willingly and rationally delay castling for a long time, maybe even beyond move 20 or so. The intention is most certainly not to turn the reader from an "early castling" player to a "late castling" player (indeed, early castling is on the whole desirable), but rather to indicate a new range of strategic possibilities of which the club player may not be fully aware. And in some openings, notably in the Sicilian Defence as Black, it is hardly possible to achieve any degrees of success without being aware of the strategy of deliberately delaying castling. In such an opening, and in the more aggressive lines, White is eagerly building up his forces on the kingside, hoping for a dynamic break which will explode somewhere in the vicinity of the Black king. Disaster may well arise if Black has castled prematurely on the kingside, where all White's pieces are pointed. Often the most effective defensive strategy for Black is to keep the king in the centre for as long as is bearable, to ensure that the queenside pieces are fully mobilised, and to spirit the king away to c8 by castling queenside when the moment is right. If all goes well, White might find himself completely wrong-footed. White is looking forward to chopping the king on e8 or g8, yet in no time at all the king reappears on c8 or b8!

We shall consider in later chapters some positive examples of delayed castling, but here we consider some negative examples, where one of the players lands into speedy trouble through castling too early, often on the

wrong side of the board. One of the most uncomfortable experiences in chess is to have castled and then find your king is stuck in the corner with few pieces appropriately placed to protect it. Often in such circumstances one is only too keen to escape back to the centre with the king.

First a famous miniature:

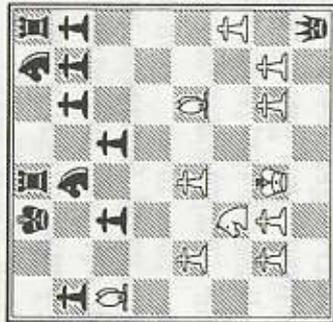
Game 1 E Canal v N N Budapest (Simultaneous Display) 1934
 1 e4 d5 2 ed5 ♙d5 3 ♗c3 ♜a5 4 d4 c6 5 ♗f3 ♚g4 6 ♚f4 e6 7
 h3 ♚f3 8 ♙f3 ♚b4 9 ♚e2 ♗d7 10 a3



Now Black should play 10 ... ♗g6 , probably castling on the kingside.

Instead:

10 ... 0-0-0?? 11 ab4!! ♜a1 12 ♚d2 ♜h1 13 ♙c6 !! bc6 14 ♚a6
 mate

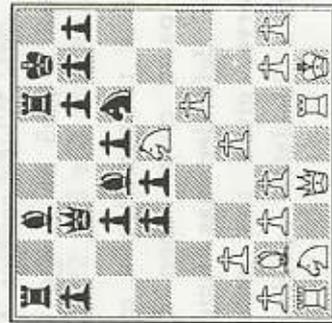


A beautiful finish. A trifle perhaps, but with lashings of sherry.

It is admittedly unusual for a player to castle directly into a mating combination. Normally what happens is that a player castles, then suddenly finds he has too few pieces protecting the king's fortress, while the attacker can quickly bring in the reserves. There may or may not be a sacrificial combination in the offing, but the defender's task is always hard. Another example, another queen sacrifice.

Game 2 J Plachetka v L Zinn Decin 1974

1 ♗f3 c5 2 b3 ♗c6 3 ♚b2 ♗f6 4 e3 d5 5 ♚b5 e6 6 ♗e5 ♙c7 7
 0-0 ♚d6 8 ♚c6 bc6 9 f4 0-0



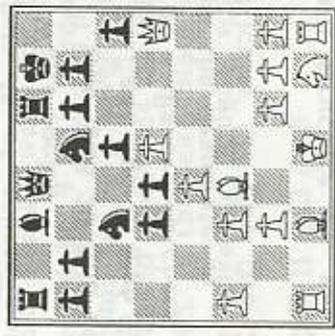
Game 3 L Oll v M Ulybin Tbilisi 1989

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♘b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♚c3 6 bc3 ♗e7 7 ♗g4 0-0

Recently this has become fashionable, if not quite believable. There are too many White pieces pointing towards Black's rather lonely king, too few Black pieces defending. Black's alternative is to enter massive complications with 7 ... ♗c7 8 ♗g7 ♖g8 8 ♗h7 cd4; we shall return to this in Chapter 3. Eventually Black castles queen-side.

8 ♚d3 ♖bc6

It is probably better to break the flow of White's attack by 8 ... f5, a common French motif.
9 ♗h5 h6

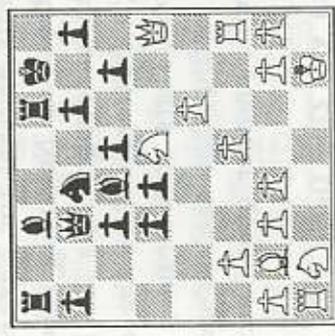


10 ♚h6! gh6 11 ♗h6 ♖f5 12 ♚f5 ef5 13 ♖h3 f6 14 ♗g6 ♗h8 15 ♗h6 ♗g8 16 ♗g6 ♗h8

Unsatisfactory, but how else can Black play? The whole idea of allowing a Nimzo-Indian Reversed looks a bit wooed. Still, it is surprising that the game should last only another three moves, especially given that Black was an IM.
10 ♖f3! ♖d7 11 ♖h3!

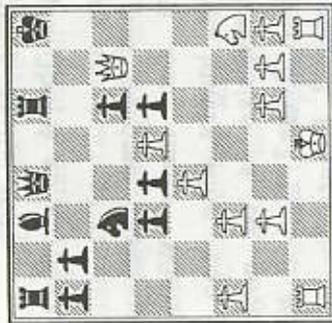
To meet 11 ... ♖e5 12 fe5 ♚e5 with 13 ♗h5 f5 14 ♗h7 with a strong attack. Best perhaps is 11 ... f5, although after 12 ♗h5 ♖f6 13 ♗h4, with the possible plan of d3, then ♖bd2-f3, White has a bind. Instead Black plays to prevent ♗h5.

11 ... g6?? 12 ♗h5!!



Anyway! Black resigned, as if 12 ... gh5 13 ♖g3 ♗h8 14 ♖f7 mate. If 12 ... ♖f6 White renews the sacrifice with 13 ♖g4! gh5 14 ♖f6 ♗h8 15 ♖h5 h6 16 ♖d5 and 17 ♖c7 with an easy technical win.

Another ploy is to sacrifice a minor piece to break the castled king's pawn cover, then quietly bring up the reserves before the defender has time to regroup. It is interesting to observe, given the primary theme of this booklet, that White's "decisive opening innovation" is to castle at move 17!



Abandoned as a draw in Oll v Dohojan, Klaipeda 1988, but not here!

17 0-0-0!!

With, it seems, a decisive attack, for example 17 ... ♖e7 18 ♗h6 ♖g8 19 ♖d3 ♖f7 20 ♖f4! ♗e8 21 ♖d5. The purpose of castling here is of course not defensive, but rather to mobilise the White rooks.

17 ... ♜e5 18 ♗h6 ♖g8 19 ♗g6 ♖h8 20 ♖d3 ♜f4 21 ♗h6 ♖g8 22 ♗g6 ♖h8 23 ♗h6 ♖g8 24 ♖g3!! ♜g3 25 ♗g6 ♖h8 26 ♜g3

And the threat of a discovered check down the h-file is decisive. Black played the desperate 26 ... ♗h4, but White soon won without difficulty (27 ♜h4 ♖f5 28 ♗h6 ♖g8 29 ♖g5, etc.).

The central pawn structure d4, e5: d5, e6 is often perilous for the second player if he should decide to castle kingside, for two main reasons. Firstly, the pawn on e5 is a big cramp on the Black position, breaking communications between queenside and kingside, and depriving the Black minor pieces of the use of the square f6. Secondly, White has the wonderful diagonal b1-h7 for the unchallenged use of his bishop, and opportunities for a ♖xh7+ sacrifice are abundant. Often it is easy to calculate such sacrifices as

winning for White, and Black can avoid them by not castling. But if he is unable to castle, then what else is to be done? Do you leave the king in the centre, with all the attendant risks? Or do you try laboriously to set up castling on the queenside, when maybe half your queenside is still undeveloped? Or do you reluctantly insert an undesirable move such as ... h6, simply so that castling kingside is not met by an immediate ♖xh7+? A tactical nuance can in this way lead to long term strategic problems.

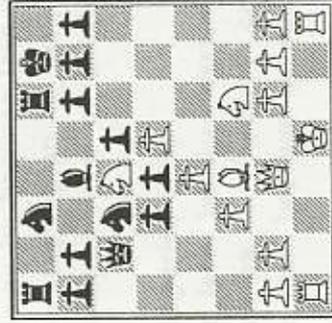
To conclude this chapter, an example of the ♖xh7+ sacrifice in one of its myriad forms. In its day this game was theoretically quite important.

Game 4 **Giusti v Cipriani** Correspondence 1954/55

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♖b4 4 e5 c5 5 ♖d2 ♖e7 6 ♖b5 ♖d2 7 ♗d2 0-0 8 c3 ♖bc6 9 ♖d6

Nowadays White usually waits for Black to play ... a6 before advancing the knight. ♖f4 is normal but probably not dangerous; Black seems to have several routes to equality, for example 9 ... a6 10 ♖d6 cd4 11 cd4 ♖f5, Timman v Vaganian, Linares 1985. In the text, Black errs through trying to get rid of the invading knight without making any concessions.

9 ... ♗b6?! 10 ♖f3 ♖d7 11 ♖d3 ♖c8



White Delays Castling

The reader will doubtless have noticed that in the first chapter, all the illustrative games finished with quick wins for White. This is not accidental, and neither is it the result of any bias on the author's part, but rather it is characteristic of the very structure of chess itself. White starts off with the advantage of the move, the chance to force the pace, and Black has to accommodate himself to this. If White makes a modest slip in the opening he can generally survive, but if Black makes such a slip and his opponent is alert, then really serious problems may soon arise.

White therefore is the attacking player; he generally has far less to fear than Black from an all-out attack on the king. If White castles early it is usually not so much to avert a direct attack, more to get the king out of the centre to facilitate the complete mobilisation of pieces and pawns, in the centre particularly. If White castles late, it may sometimes be because things have been happening so fast that he hasn't really had time to castle (as in the Oll v Ulybin game), or it may be because late castling itself forms part of a broader strategic plan to maintain and extend the initiative. It is the second form of delayed castling which is of concern here.

Two main categories arise:

- (1) White castles late, because castling would reduce his possibilities of attack on the "natural" castling side;
- (2) White castles late, because he envisages fierce battles

"Equal" according to the theory of the time, but observe how bare the area around Black's king is, as a result of his concentration on queenside play. There followed the decisive opening innovation.

12 ♖h7!! ♖h7 13 ♘g5 ♖g6

Or 13 ... ♖g8 14 ♖d3 f5 15 ♖h3 etc.

14 ♖d3 ♖g5 15 f4 Black resigned

If 15 ... ♖h6 16 ♖h3 ♖g6 17 g4 and mate follows.

The castled king is not always safe!

on both flanks and doesn't want to tie himself down by committing his king to one flank or the other.

In either case, late castling is usually only really a serious option when the centre is closed. If the centre is open and you are planning a kingside pawn storm, as so often happens in the Sicilian, then it is generally advisable to castle queenside pretty smartly.

We now consider some illustrative examples. Firstly a famous sacrificial victory by Steinitz, but notice how methodically he prepares the ground beforehand.

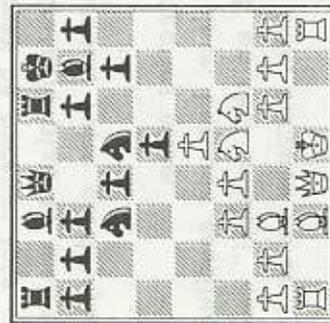
Game 5 W Steinitz v M Chigorin Havana 1892

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 ♗f6 4 d3

A favourite Steinitz plan. White maintains a tight centre, and delays castling, keeping the f1 square vacant to allow the plan ♗d2-f1-e3 without loss of tempi.
4 ... d6 5 c3 g6?!

Already an inaccuracy, precisely because White has not yet castled. This move is an open invitation for White to prise open the h-file at a later date. 5 ... a6 6 ♗a4 ♗e7 avoids creating a kingside weakness.

6 ♗bd2 ♗g7 7 ♗f1 0-0 8 ♗a4 ♗d7 9 ♗e3 ♗c5 10 ♗c2 ♗e6?!



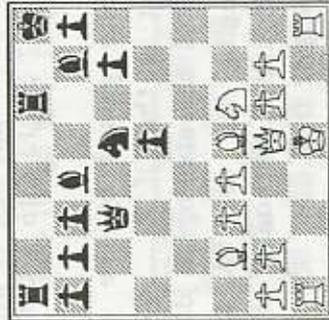
Black obsesses himself with preventing d4, but fails to deal with the alternative plan. 10 ... f5 is the obvious move to modern eyes, but White must still be better after 11 e5 g5 12 d4; Black's centre comes under pressure. 11 h4!

This is no do-or-die romanticism; Steinitz is merely following his own precept that you must attack your opponent's position where it is weakest. 11 0-0? would be the truly anti-positional move here.

11 ... ♗e7 12 h5 d5 13 hg6 fg6?

Leaving dreadful weaknesses on the a2-g8 diagonal. 13 ... hg6 was unpleasant but compulsory.

14 ed5 ♗d5 15 ♗d5 ♗d5 16 ♗b3 ♗c6 17 ♗e2 ♗d7 18 ♗e3 ♗h8



19 0-0-0

White has made massive early gains on the kingside, but in the last few moves has sensibly concentrated on queenside development (♗e2; ♗e3; 0-0-0). Now he is ready to resume the direct attack. White wants to set Black up for ♗h7 followed by a check on h1.

19 ... ♗ae8 20 ♗f1! a5 21 d4!

Another fruit of castling.

21 ... e4 22 ♖d4 ♗d4 23 ♗d4 ♖h7 25 ♗h1 ♖g7
26 ♗h6 ♖f6 27 ♗h4 ♖e5 28 ♗d4 ♖f5 29 ♗f4 mate.

A remorseless exploitation of the open h-file, made possible by delayed castling. As the next game shows, however, this plan is not always conceived with a direct mating attack in mind.

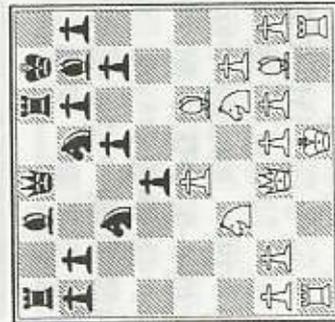
Game 6 A Miles v U Andersson Las Palmas 1980

1 g3 c5 2 ♗g2 ♖c6 3 ♖f3 g6 4 c3 ♗g7 5 d4 cd4 6 cd4 d5 7 ♖c3

A familiar enough opening formation, but White has cunningly steered his opponent into a version in which Black's king's knight is late in developing, and White has not yet castled. Compare, for example, the natural move order 1 g3 g6 2 ♗g2 ♗g7 3 ♖f3 ♖f6 4 0-0 5 d4 d5 6 c4 c6 7 cd5 cd5.

What has White gained by the move order in the text? The first point is that if 7 ... ♖f6 then 8 ♖e5! is uncomfortable; White is threatening to damage Black's pawn structure by exchanging on c6. To avoid this problem Andersson chooses a quieter method of development ...

7 ... e6 8 ♗f4 ♖ge7 9 ♗d2 0-0



10 ♗h6

... but now there are problems on the dark squares. We begin to see also why Miles was so careful not to castle earlier; he envisages adding to the pressure with h4-h5.

10 ... ♗h6 11 ♗h6 ♖f5 12 ♗d2 b6 13 ♗d1

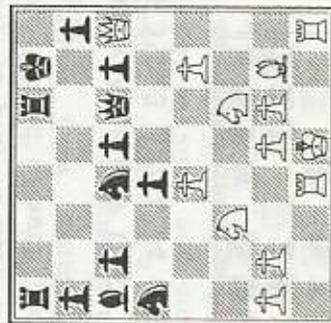
An important decision, indicating firstly that White is serious in wanting to play h4-h5, and secondly that he feels his king is actually safer in the centre than on the queen-side. The open c-file and the ease in which Black can swing a knight to c4 certainly makes 13 0-0 unattractive, while 13 0-0 is unimaginative and leaves Black at least equal. 13 ... ♗a6 14 h4 ♖a5?

Too slow; maybe 14 ... h5!?

15 g4 ♖d6 16 h5 ♗f6 17 hg6 fg6

If 17 ... hg6, then 18 g5 ♗e7 19 ♗f4! is overpowering.

18 ♗h6



White gestures as if to attack the Black king, but his real intention is to take complete control of the dark squares, an ambition he fulfils admirably. Just watch the rest of the game! And consider also the role that White's

flank attack has had in creating weaknesses to attack.

18 ... ♖f7 19 g5! ♜g7 20 ♜e5 ♜h6 21 ♜h6 ♖ff8 22 ♜d7 ♖f7
23 ♜f6 ♜h8 24 ♜h3 ♜c8 25 ♜d2 ♖g7 26 f4 ♜b8 27 ♜dh1
♜ac4 28 ♜d3 ♜bb7 29 b3 ♜a3 30 e4! de4 31 ♜ce4 ♜e4 32
♜e4 ♜b5 33 ♜e5

Really rubbing it in.

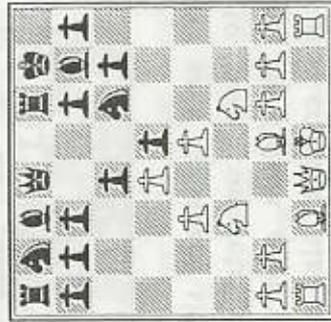
33 ... ♜be7 34 ♜f1 Black resigns

There is no defence to ♜d3 and ♜g6.

Now we consider a somewhat different version of the theme of late castling, in which the centre is completely closed and all the main play takes place on the flanks. Should the king be committed at an early stage to one flank or the other, it becomes far more difficult to organise active play on that flank because of the risk of opening up lines against your own king. Therefore the king stays in the centre until the situation has been clarified.

It is not easy to play in such a manner, but the late Tigran Petrosian specialised in such positions and won many an outstanding victory.

Game 7 T Petrosian v A Lutikov USSR Championship 1959
1 ♜f3 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♜c3 ♜g7 4 e4 0-0 5 d4 d6 6 ♜e2 e5 7
d5



Petrosian's own system. Normally White plays 0-0 ♜c6 and only then 8 d5, met by 8 ... ♜e7. This then usually leads to a race in which White throws everything at the Black queenside, hoping to gain a decisive advantage there before Black mates him on the kingside, Black trying to roll his pawns with ... f5-f4, ... g5, etc. For example, one popular line continues 9 ♜e1 ♜d7 10 ♜e3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 ♜f2 g5 13 b4, etc.; not a system for those who want a quiet life.

Visually, Petrosian's System looks similar, but strategically it is a world apart. White reasons that if he can take the sting out of f5, his advantage in space in the centre and queenside will be a major strategic asset. Therefore he must take active measures on the kingside himself to slow Black down; ♜g5, (pinning the knight on f6), ♜d2 and g4 are standard moves in this plan, a plan which early kingside castling does not fit at all well. On the queenside, White hopes gradually to be able to open up lines, although Black's knight is better placed for defence in this sector when on b8 than when on e7. Both sides are jostling for position on both flanks, with White's claim for an edge resting on two main counts:

(1) that White's advantage in space makes it easier to transfer pieces from one flank to the other;

(2) that Black has committed his king to the kingside, while White is able to wait and see which flank is ultimately safer.

Space and flexibility; not a bad combination.

7 ... ♜a6 8 ♜g5 h6 9 ♜h4 c5 10 ♜d2! ♜d7 11 ♜b5 ♜e8 12 a3 ♜d7

A bit awkward. 12 ... ♜c7 was to be preferred.

13 g4!

Play on both wings. Now it will be difficult for Black to force ... f5 without allowing White too many open lines.
 13 ... ♖c7 14 ♘c3 a6 15 a4 ♗c8 16 h3 ♖b8 17 ♗c2 ♕d7 18 b3 b6 19 ♘d1 b5

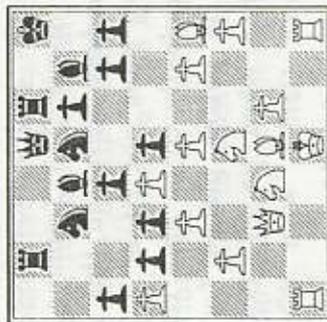
Another typical "freeing move" in the King's Indian, but White is ready for this as well.

20 a5! ♖h8

If 20 ... bc4 21 bc4 the open b-file will be of more use to White than Black.

21 ♖g3 ♘g8 22 ♘e3 ♘e7 23 ♕h4 ♗e8?

Better 23 ... ♘g8. Now White has a queenside break.



24 b4!

With ideas of a pawn fork on d6 (24 ... cb4 25 c5 etc.).

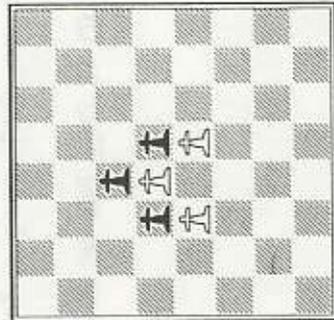
24 ... ♘c8 25 bc5 dc5 26 cb5 ♘b5 27 ♕b5! ♖b5

CHAPTER THREE

Black Delays Castling

In this chapter, we concentrate attention on positions and games in which Black has positive reason to delay castling deliberately, rather than on those dreary positions in which Black finds that castling is impossible for tactical reasons (e.g. Qxh7+), and has to muddle along the best he can with his king still in the centre. In addition, there is the common enough situation, though again not considered in detail here, in which Black waits for White to castle first, so as to castle on the same side of the board as White to avoid being caught in an uneven race with both players attacking kings on opposite flanks. For a more detailed consideration of this type of theme, see the companion booklet on opposite side castling by *Peter Clarke*.

Generally, late castling by Black is not a viable option if the centre is open, or if there is the imminent possibility of central pawns being exchanged in order to open central lines. Neither, though, is late castling a common option for Black in completely closed positions (e.g. White pawns on c4, d5, e4 versus Black pawns on c5 (or c7), d6, e5),



since in such positions it is important for the player with less space to be able to coordinate his activities on either flank, and this becomes much more difficult with an uncastled king keeping the rooks apart.

So what type of central pawn formation is most likely to be consistent with delayed castling for Black? There seem to be two main categories:

(1) Black has the tight "Scheveningen" pawn centre with pawns on e6 and d6, which make it difficult for White to open up lines to get at the opposing king.

(2) Black delays castling in order to break up the White centre, leading typically to a position where Black has the better central pawn structure, but White has powerful compensation in terms either of development or of the destruction of Black's kingside.

The first type of position comes most typically from the Sicilian Defence; the second type either from the sharper lines of the Queen's Gambit (Black plays ... d4 and tries to hold on to the pawn) or from the French Defence (White plays Bg4xg7 ; Black plays ... cd4).

Of course, there is not the space in the course of this brief monograph to write a detailed assessment of Black's king placement strategies in the Sicilian, although anyone wishing to play this extremely complicated opening would be well advised to pay particularly close attention to this facet when studying grandmaster games. We can however look at an example when everything goes right for Black.

Game 8 J Timman v M Tal Hilversum (4th match game) 1988
1 e4 c5 2 f3 d6 4 d4 cd4 4 d4 f6 5 c3 e6 6 f4 a6 7

♞f3 ♞b6 8 ♠b3 ♞c7 9 g4 b5 10 g5 b4!?

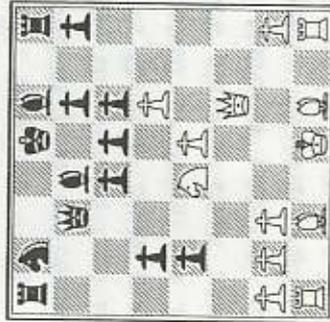
Immediate counterattack, although 10 ... ♠fd7 has also been played. There is no joy for White in 11 g6 bc3, or in 11 ♠d5 ♠d5 12 ed5 ♞b7, or in 11 ♠e2 ♠e4! 12 ♞e4 ♞b7, so White tries ...

11 ♠b5 ab5 12 gf6 13 ♠d4?!

With ideas of dynamiting the Black pawn centre with f5, although the simpler 13 ♞b5 ♞d7 14 ♞d3, as in Thipsay v Parameswaran, Indian Championship 1986, gives White more chance of keeping an edge.

13 ... ♞d7 14 f5?!

Tal quickly proves this to have been an empty demonstration, although White's edge has already disappeared.



14 ... ♠c6!

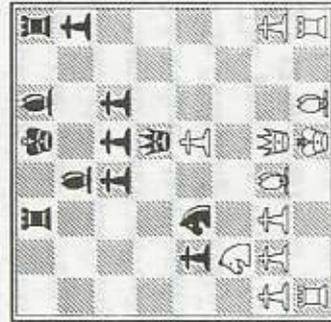
Black prepares to meet 15 fe6 with an exchange sacrifice: 15 ... ♠d4 16 ♞f6 (16 ed7 ♞e7! wins for Black - Tal) 16 ... ♠e6! 17 ♞h8 ♞c2 and it is Black who has the winning attack! Therefore the Black centre holds, and if the centre holds, the king remains safe in the centre. It follows that for Black in the Sicilian the priority is not so much to get the king into safety, but rather to secure the centre, so

that even if the Black king is stuck in the centre it is safe. 15 ♠b5 ♞a5 16 fe6 fe6 17 ♞d2

White could, and probably should, play 17 ♞f6, but after 17 ... ♠g8 18 ♞d2 ♠e5 19 ♠d4 ♞g7 Black's active pieces on open lines provide ample compensation for the lost pawn. 15 ... ♠e5 16 ♞e2

As now 18 ♞f6 is met with 18 ... ♞b5! 19 ♞h8 ♠f3 20 ♠d1 0-0-0!; late castling with a winning attack! All through, it is the White king that feels unsafe in the centre, and no wonder; it has no pawn cover.

18 ... ♠c8 19 ♠d4 ♠c4 20 ♠b3 ♞e5



A picture position for Black - his tight pawn centre remains rock solid, providing a safe haven for the king, while White's pawn centre has disintegrated almost totally, leaving Black with all the important central outposts. Black's pieces are active and poised to increase their activity, while White's are scattered and uncoordinated. The game does not last much longer.

21 ♞b4 ♠b2 22 c3 ♠a4 23 c4 ♠b8 24 a3 ♞c6! 25 ♠g1 ♠c5 26 ♠b1 ♞e4 27 ♠d2 ♞b1 28 ♞e5 de5 29 ♠b1 ♠a6 White resigns.

Of course, in the above game it is a purely formal distinction, without relevance to the earlier play, whether Black in the end castles very late or doesn't castle at all; the critical point is that the king remains safe in the centre. Sometimes though the Black king must do a midnight flit when things get rough in the centre ...

Game 9 F Gheorghiu v L Ljubojevic Amsterdam 1975

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cd4 4 ♘d4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗g5 e6 7 f4 b5 8 e5 de5 9 fe5 ♘c7

The hyper-sharp Polugayevsky Variation. Black immediately heads for some important positional advantages — destruction of the opening pawn centre, acquisition of the bishop pair — but at the cost of much time. In contrast with the previous game, the Black king is not particularly happy in the centre, but to make an escape will take a long time, given Black's backward development. If however Black eventually succeeds in castling safely, all the positional trumps will be his. The game is very finely poised.

10 ef6 ♘e5 11 ♗e2 ♘g5 12 ♘d3 ♘f6 13 ♖f1 ♘e5 14 0-0-0 ♖a7

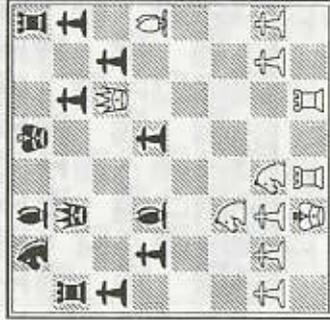
An important developing move, necessary for the survival of the Black king in the centre. Black provides extra cover for f7, and is prepared to challenge on the d-file if necessary, e.g. 15 ♘e6? ♖d7! 15 ♘f3 ♘f4 16 ♘d2 ♘c7!

Ljubojevic's innovation. Black can consolidate his extra pawn.

17 ♗h5 g6 18 ♘d4

After 18 ♘de4 ♗e7 Black can soon castle into safety.

18 ... e5 19 ♘f2 ♗c5! 20 ♘f6



20 ... 0-0! 21 ♘d5 ♗e7!!

The only move to justify Ljubojevic's plan; after 21 ... ♘d6?! 22 ♘e4! White would have forced a favourable end-game. Now, however, we have a familiar Sicilian theme, the recoil of White's attack. Black may have taken a long time to castle, but once his king has reached home it is safe.

22 ♘f3 ♗b7 23 ♘e7 ♘e7 24 ♘f2 ♗d5 25 ♗f3 ♗a2 26 ♘e4 ♖c7 27 ♘b6 ♖fc8 28 ♘f6?

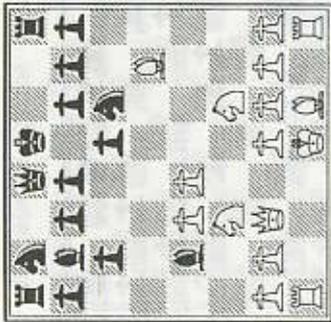
A blunder in a lost position.

28 ... ♘f6! White resigns

Late castling is a typical feature of the Sicilian, and the reader will easily be able to find other examples elsewhere. The d6, e6 pawn formation can also imply late castling in other openings. Here is an example.

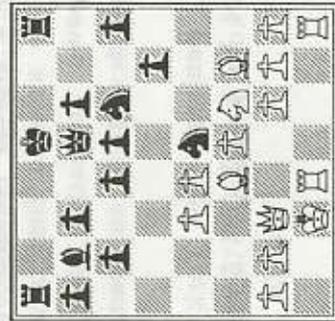
Game 10 B Gelfand v J Benjamin New York 1989

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 c4 b6 4 ♘c3 ♗b4 5 ♘c2 ♗b7 6 ♗g5



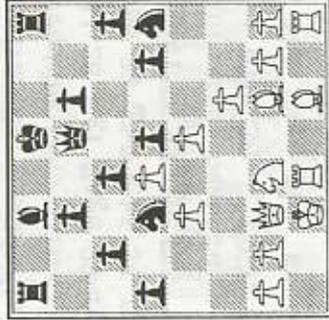
In this type of position, it is generally unwise for Black to castle early. The pin on the knight on f6 is highly annoying, and if Black tries to castle and simply ignore the pin, White can set up a standard kingside attack with e3, Qd3, and maybe 0-0-0 followed by a kingside pawn rush. Black would have difficulties, but equally it is evident that he would also have difficulties if he combined early kingside castling with the attempt to drive the White bishop away with ... h6 and ... g5. Black therefore does better to break the pin first, and then prepare queenside castling.

6 ... h6 7 Qh4 Qc3 8 Bc3 g5 9 Qg3 Qe4 10 Bc2 d6 11 e3 Qd7
12 Qd3 Qdf6 13 0-0-0 Bg7



Now the Black king can go either way, but is not yet obliged to commit himself yet. Active play could flare up on either flank, but the centre is secure so Black can wait a bit longer.

14 d5 Qc5! 15 e4 e5 16 Qd2 Qh5 17 Qf1 a5 18 f3 Qc8 19 Qf2



19 ... 0-0!

In the last few moves the position has become even more closed, indeed like a King's Indian where Black has succeeded in exchanging off his bad bishop. Black quite naturally now plays the position like a King's Indian, castling kingside, where it is difficult for White to gain active play, and preparing ... f5. White can hardly allow this pawn break, and so is forced to concede Black another dark square outpost, on f4. True, White will have a later h4 break, but this will hardly lead to a major attack.
20 g4 Qf4 21 h4 Bg7 22 Qb1! Qd7 23 Qc3 Bf6 24 Qe2 Bb8
25 Qg3?!

Better to close the position up with 25 h5 and agree a draw. Now Black has an interesting break.
25 ... h5!

Castle early? Don't open up lines in front of your

king? Yes, but Black is the player with the natural initiative on the kingside, as determined by the pawn structure (Black's pawn on e5 is more firmly anchored than White's on e4), and this overrides the question of the king's geography. Black plans to meet 26 g5 with 26 ... g4! and 26 hg5 ♖g5 27 gh5 with 27 ... ♟f3! 28 ♖b1 ♟f2 29 ♖f2 ♖ag8 followed by ... ♜f8 with pressure. Be flexible in your thinking. Do not follow rules too rigidly.

26 ♟f5 ♟f5 27 gf5 g4! 28 ♖g1 ♖ag8 29 fg4 hg4 30 ♖g4 ♜f8 31 ♖g8 ♖g8 32 b3 ♖h6 33 ♜b2 ♖h5 34 ♖e1 ♖f3 35 ♖e3 ♖h1 36 ♖e1 ♖h2! 37 ♜b1 ♖g4! 38 a3 ♟df3?

Black has infiltrated beautifully so far, but now misses the simple win with 38 ... ♟b3! Benjamin has noted some inaccuracies in the later play as well, but the game eventually reaches its logical result.

39 ♟d3 ♟d3 40 ♖d3 ♖f2 41 ♖e2! ♖h4 42 ♜a2 ♖g3 43 ♖c2 ♖h3 44 ♖e2 ♖c3 45 ♖b2 a4 46 ba4 ♖d3 White resigns.

The previous examples have all shown Black defending with his king tucked up behind a very tight pawn centre. Another possibility involving late castling, and extremely sharp play, is implied in the sequence

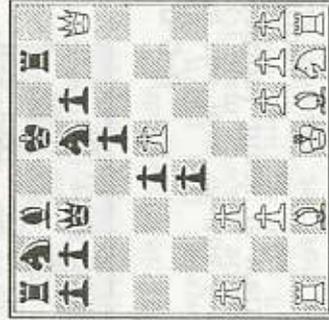
- (1) White builds pawn centre
- (2) Black attacks the White pawn centre
- (3) White surrenders the centre in exchange for the destruction of Black's kingside
- (4) Very sharp play, with Black castling queenside

To play in such a way with either colour, you need to have a taste for unusually fast-moving play.

Game 11 B Stein v I Farago Lugano 1985

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟c3 ♟b4 4 e5 ♟e7 5 a3 ♟c3 6 bc3 c5 7 ♖g4 ♖c7

Oll v Ulybin (game 3) continued instead 7 ... 0-0, when Black's king proved to be nicely set up as a target. Further, it has long been recognised that 7 ... ♟f5 8 ♟d3 gives White an enduring positional edge, so maybe the sharpest move is actually objectively the best.
8 ♖g7 ♖g8 9 ♖h7 cd4

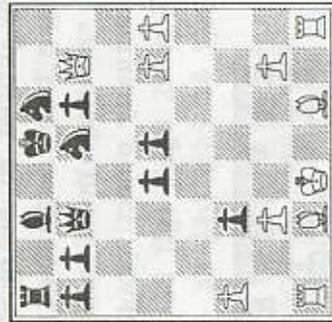


Now, since 11 cd4?? loses to 10 ... ♖c3, the White pawn centre has quite definitely been broken, but what does Black do with his king? And what does he do about the advance of White's h-pawn? Attack! That is the only option.
10 ♜d1

10 ♟e2 is the alternative.
10 ... ♟bc6 11 ♟f3 dc3 12 ♟g5 ♟e5 13 f4 ♖g5! 14 fg5 ♟g6 15 h4 e5!

Standard play in the more violent lines in the French; now that the White centre no longer exists, Black can advance in the centre himself, and in so doing free the "bad" bishop and prepare queenside castling. Apart from his

extra exchange, which is irrelevant at the moment, White has only one trump left ...
 16 h5 ♖f8 17 ♗g7



17 ... ♗g4 18 ♖e1 0-0-0

And, despite the loss of the f-pawn (a normal hazard in this type of position) Black is well ahead in the race for complete mobilisation.
 19 ♗f7 ♗f5!

To meet 20 g6 with 20 ... ♖e6 21 g7 ♖d4. White's kingside play is thus slowed down.
 20 ♖h4 ♖e6 21 g4 e4!

White is more than happy to sell his queen on 21 ... ♖f8? 22 ♗f8 ♖f8 23 gf5.
 22 ♖f2 ♖f8

Better timing! Remember too that that castling is as much about activating rooks as about protecting kings.
 23 ♗f8 ♖f8 24 gf5 ♖f5 25 ♖f4

Forced, as 25 ♗h3 can be met by 25 ... ♗g3, the original point behind Black's opening of the diagonal.
 25 ... ♗e5 26 ♗h3 e3 27 ♖f3 ♖e6! 28 ♖f5 ♖d4 29 ♖f2 ♖f5

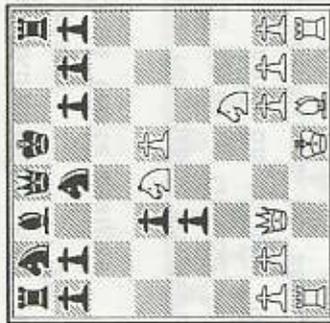
The tactical skirmishing has gone in favour of the better centralised player.

30 ♗f5 ♗f5 31 ♗e3 d4 White resigns

Opportunities for Black to demolish the White pawn centre also exist in Queen's Gambit lines where Black takes on c4 and tries to hold on to the pawn. The "sacrifice of the kingside" can sometimes be seen, for example in the Botvinnik Variation: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 ♖f6 4 ♖c3 c6 5 ♗g5 dc4!? 6 e4 b5 7 e5 h6 8 ♗h4 g5 9 ♖g5 hg5 10 ♗g5 ♖bd7 11 ef6 and now Black's standard plan is to aim for ... ♗b7, ... ♗b6, ... 0-0-0 and ... c5, opening up lines and placing White's centre under pressure. Another counter-attacking line; more unclear positions.

Sometimes however this pawn snatch merely leaves Black with a queenside pawn majority, with the centre remaining fairly open. As a rule, the pawn snatch takes place when Black has not yet castled, since White is hardly likely to allow it if the Black king is already safe. Consequently, Black remains a pawn up, but with the difficult task of bringing his king into safety; White for his part tries to keep the Black king in the centre. In our final game, which is of current theoretical interest, attack and defence are held in balance.

Game 12 A Yusupov v Y Seirawan Rotterdam World Cup 1989
 1 d4 d5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 c4 dc4 4 ♖c3 c5 5 d5 e6 6 e4 ed5 7 e5 ♖fd7 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 ♗e7 ♗e7 10 ♖d5 ♗d8 11 ♗c2



Previously, this line has had a good reputation for White, who is all set to castle queenside and attack in the centre. Seirawan has a radical solution to Black's problems.

11 ... b5!

Securing the extra pawn, but now White can, indeed is obliged to, make mischief around the Black king.

12 0-0-0

Seirawan gives the alternative 12 ♖e4 ♘b7 13 e6 0-0! 14 ed7 ♗a5 with unclear play. One suspects there is more to be said about this line.

12 ... ♘b7 13 h4!

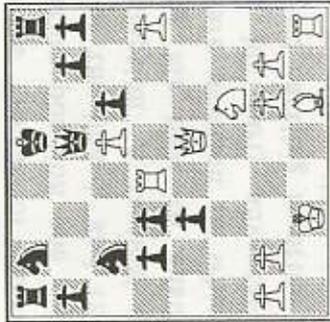
To keep the king in the centre; if 13 ... 0-0? 14 ♗g5 g6 15 ♗f6 with a winning attack. Thou shalt not castle into checkmate.

13 ... ♘d5 14 ♗d5 ♗e7 15 ♗e4 ♗b6 16 e6!!

Again, White must take radical measures to prevent, or at least delay, Black's castling.

16 ... f6 17 h5

17 ♗h5 is a drawing line: 17 ... g6 18 ♗g6 hg6 19 ♗h8 (Yusupov).



17 ... 0-0

Black castles into a dangerous attack, but it is not clear that he has any real alternative. certainly 17 ... ♗c6? 18 ♗d7 is an immediate loss, while 17 ... ♗a6? 18 ♗d7 ♗d7 19 ♗a8 ♗db8 20 g3! followed by ♗h3, ♗e1, etc., looks untenable.

18 ♗h4 ♗d5

Not 18 ... ♗b7? 19 e7 ♗d5 20 e8♗.

19 ♗f5 ♗c7!

Active defence. Black threatens a saving check on f4. The obvious 19 ... ♗b7? loses to 20 e7 ♗e8 21 ♗e6 ♗h8 22 ♗f7.

20 ♗d5 ♗c6! 21 ♗c6 ♗f4

Black must not fall for the knight fork. But now it is White's king that appears to be in danger.

22 ♗e3 ♗f2 23 ♗d5!

White wisely settles for a draw. Seirawan notes that 23 ♗f3 is far too risky: 23 ... ♗e1 24 ♗c2 ♗ad8 25 ♗e2 ♗e2 26 ♗e2 ♗fe8 and Black's extra queenside pawns, for which he took many risks earlier on, should eventually prevail.

23 ... ♗e1 24 ♗c2 ♗e4 25 ♗c1 ♗e1 26 ♗c2 ♗e4 27 ♗c1 Draw

In many ways typical of those countless games in which in an immature position one side stakes his claim on a particular part of the board, and the other side seeks to refute such presumption. A tactical struggle follows, with the attacker doing his best to ensure that the defender never reaches a safe position in which he has secured his king, consolidated his early advantage, and completed his development. Delayed castling is often an integral component of the game when such guerilla raids are mounted, but the precise timing of the decision to castle is determined by tactical considerations, not by underlying long term strategic subtleties other than the basic injunction, "Get your king into safety!"