

TRENDY SYSTEM AGAINST THE KI

Igor Stohl examines the modern **5.h3 0-0 6.Be3**

King's Indian E71: **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.h3 0-0 6.Be3**



While recently we have not seen the King's Indian at the Candidates, let alone at World Championship match level, it remains very much alive among rank and file grandmasters, as well as at intermediate level. Therefore having a weapon against this dynamic opening is a necessity even for elite players. One such system has been attracting quite a lot of attention in the past few years from the 2700+ club. Although it has been played sporadically since the 1950s, it became increasingly popular only more recently. Firstly there were quite a few games (mainly in rapid chess) by Anatoly Karpov, which prompted Kotronias in part 4 of his King's Indian monography (2016) to name it after the 12th World Champion. Recently, even Fabiano Caruana added it to his repertoire, thus it certainly warrants closer attention. I'm talking about the **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.h3 0-0 6.Be3** line, which will be the topic of our survey. The position after White's 6th move is our starting point.

White's seemingly modest 5.h3 denies Black's forces access to the g4-square and with 6.Nf3 he might opt for the Makogonov system (E90), which is more connected with the Classical King's Indian. This has already been played

rather extensively in the past and can be considered a mainstream choice for quite a while. Mikhail Krasenkow covered his favourite line in a series of articles in CBM 132-34 and some 12 years ago my friend Jan Markos wrote "Beat the KID", with one of the topics of this book being the Makogonov/Krasenkow (time flies!). Our variation is a bit different and possibly more flexible. Contrary to the Sämisch, White still retains the option of developing his knight to f3, maybe at some point even transposing to an advantageous version of the Makogonov. However, especially in the lines with 6...e5 7.d5, the knight more often than not takes the Sämisch route via e2. All in all a challenging positional setup, which has the further advantage of still being relatively fresh, uncharted and not overanalysed yet. We will gradually examine Black's main responses from the aspect of how and when he attacks White's pawn centre.

A) Rather untypically we will start with the statistically most often played reaction, namely the standard King's Indian thrust **6...e5 7.d5**. However, although the position remains complex, White's good results indicate maybe this straightforward solution is not ideal. Aiming directly for the typical f5 advance with 7...Ne8 8.g4 f5 9.gxf5 gxf5 10.exf5 Bxf5 11.Nge2 is dubious. Also, one of the quite effective methods of getting counterplay against the Makogonov 7...Nh5 is well met here with 8.g3, followed by Be2, hitting the Nh5. Therefore Black usually postpones kingside action and aims to first develop his forces and possibly initiate queenside or (and) central counterplay.

A1) In practice, the most usual follow-up is **7...a5**. After **8.g4** (White's main move, but Karpov has tried 8.c5!?) as well. This is also interesting, the downside of Black's previous move is it creates some queenside weaknesses) **8...Na6 9.Nge2**, the motif **9...h5 10.f3 Nh7** is known from the Sämisch.

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