

# **Beat the Najdorf and Taimanov Sicilians!**

**A Fighters Repertoire  
Against the Famous Sicilians**

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**Grandmaster  
S.P. Sethuraman**

**Thinkers Publishing 2020**



## Key to Symbols

!	a good move	±	White stands slightly better
?	a weak move	∓	Black stands slightly better
!!	an excellent move	±	White has a serious advantage
??	a blunder	∓	Black has a serious advantage
!?	an interesting move	+−	White has a decisive advantage
?!	a dubious move	−+	Black has a decisive advantage
□	only move	→	with an attack
N	novelty	↑	with initiative
⊙	lead in development	↔	with counterplay
⊙	zugzwang	Δ	with the idea of
=	equality	△	better is
∞	unclear position	≤	worse is
∞	with compensation for the sacrificed material	+	check
		#	mate

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## **Foreword**

I got to know Sethu more closely a few years back when we trained together a few times. I found him to be meticulous in his preparation and especially at home in complex positions. These qualities make him perfect for these two Sicilians and I am sure after reading this book, you (the reader) will be ready to confidently explore these two fascinating Sicilians.

Former World Champion Viswanathan Anand  
May 2020

## Preface

From the first moment (about a year ago) when Mr. Daniel Vanheirzeele from Thinkers Publishing contacted me about the possibility of writing an opening book, I was really excited about the prospect. Writing a chess book was a completely new direction for me, and anything new excites me and gives me a high. Then after some discussion we narrowed the topic down to 1.e4 (*'Best by test'*) and I found myself with a contract to cover two major variations within the Sicilian: the sharp Najdorf and the trendy Taimanov.

I actually already had a decent reputation as a dangerous theoretician on the white side of 1.e4, and in particular against these two openings. I had shown some interesting ideas in my games over the years which were the result of my real passion for opening knowledge, a trait which has stayed with me throughout my chess career.

From a very young age I had this incurable curiosity about intricacies in the opening. One memorable episode, of which I remain proud even today, occurred when I was 13 years old. I had been watching the game Karjakin – Anand at Wijk aan Zee 2006, in which Vishy unleashed a fascinating novelty with 24...♘c7. After watching that game I was unable to sleep and I began to analyze the crazy, razor-sharp English attack for hours and hours. I found some very interesting ideas and shortly afterwards I showed them to my coach GM R.B.Ramesh (a very famous, world-class trainer) in a training session. There were, in total, 20 pages of analysis based upon the game! He was stunned by the level of detail as it was not normal for a thirteen year old in those days to create such in-depth analysis (of course now it's a different story as people regularly become Grandmasters at the age of 13!).

From that time on I've been consistently cementing my reputation, especially among my fellow Indian Grandmasters, as an opening expert. I have real insights to impart from the many years of work and so it was a no-brainer for me to seize the opportunity to write a book and share my knowledge with the readers.

The only remaining hurdle was the time factor. Being an active and ambitious player, I had many tournaments lined up on my schedule and was not sure when I could find time to work on this project, since it was clear that it would be a sizeable



undertaking. Second thoughts crept into my mind at some point, but once I got started on the work, I built up a lot of momentum. In both the openings, I've worked tirelessly to find new paths and provide fresh perspective.

Thanks are due to Mr. Vanheirzeele, a passionate chess lover, for giving me that extra time cushion when I needed it and for having great belief in my work. I would also like to thank GM Romain Edouard, the editor, for suggesting improvements. They truly helped me do my best work and I think the end result that you are holding contains a really impressive array of new ideas.

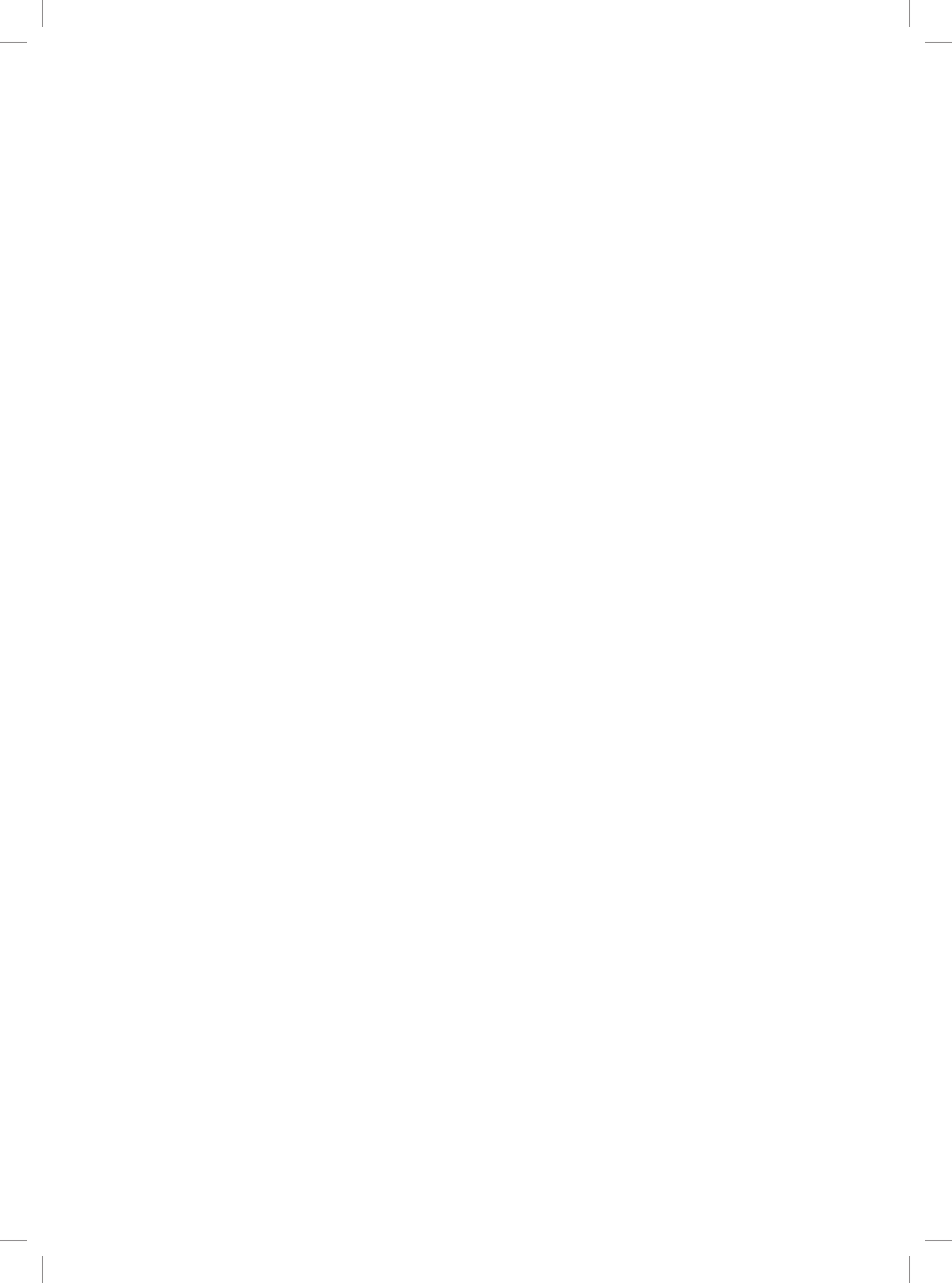
It gives me great pride to be writing these lines and signing my name at long last on this page. As they say, the first one is always special. I present to you my first opening book, which I really hope you enjoy!

S.P. Sethuraman  
Chennai, May 2020



# **Part I**

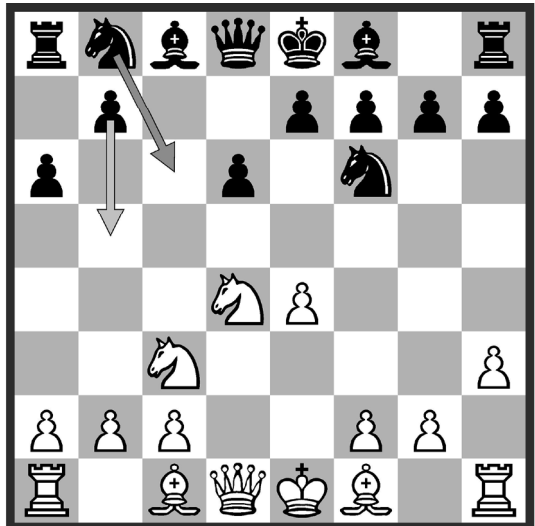
## **6.h3 Against the Najdorf**





## 6...♞c6 & 6...b5

1.e4 c5 2.♞f3 d6  
3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♞f6  
5.♞c3 a6 6.h3



# Chapter Guide

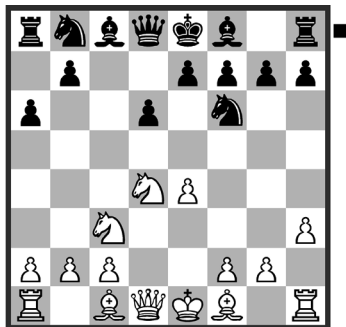
## Chapter 1 – 6...♘c6 & 6...b5

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.h3

a) 6...♘c6 7.g4 -- .....	15
b) 6...♘c6 7.g4 g6 .....	20
c) 6...♘c6 7.g4 ♔b6 .....	26
d) 6...b5 .....	31

## a) 6...♘c6 7.g4 --

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. h3



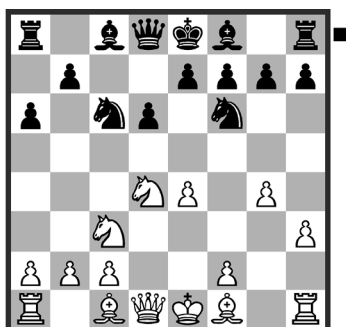
Position after: 6. h3

The Fischer system is one of the most reliable systems against the Najdorf. It is very flexible and can lead to either a positional or dynamic struggle.

6... ♘c6

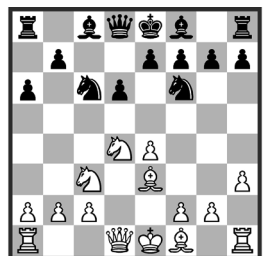
Playing a sort of Classical Sicilian with the moves h3 and ...a6 included.

7. g4



Position after: 7. g4

7. ♗e3!? With this move White isn't trying to punish Black for the move-order but just aims for a transposition to lines considered later.

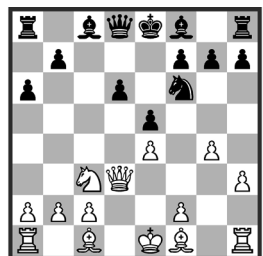


Position after: 7. ♗e3!?

Now: 7... e5 [7... g6 8. ♖d2 ♗g7 9. g4 is discussed under the 6.h3 g6 7.♗e3 ♗g7 8.g4 ♘c6 9.♖d2 lines in the next chapter] 8. ♘b3 ♗e6 9. ♖f3 and we've transposed to 6.h3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗e6 8.♗e3 ♘c6 9.♖f3.

7... h6

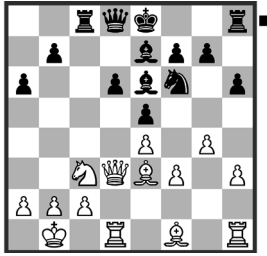
7... ♘xd4 8. ♖xd4 e5 9. ♖d3!



Position after: 9. ♖d3!

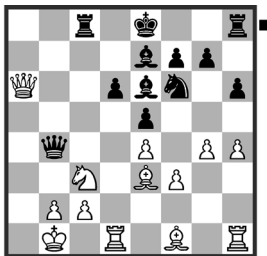
Making way for the dark squared bishop on c1.

**A)** 9... h6 10. ♖e3 ♖e6 11. 0-0-0  
 ♜c8 [11... ♖e7 12. ♚b1 ♜c8 13. f3  
 transposes to 11... ♜c8.] 12. ♚b1  
 ♖e7 13. f3!N



Position after: 13. f3!N

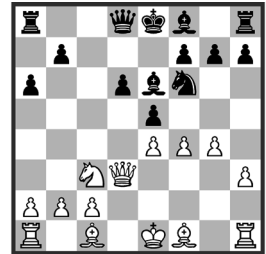
With the idea of h4. 13... ♚a5 [13...  
 ♘d7 14. ♘d5 ♖g5 15. h4 ♖xe3 16.  
 ♘xe3±] 14. a3 b5 15. h4! b4 [15...  
 ♜xc3 The typical exchange sacrifice  
 is not effective here because of 16.  
 ♚xc3 ♚xc3 17. bxc3 d5 Otherwise  
 a4 may be next. 18. g5±] 16. axb4  
 ♚xb4 17. ♚xa6



Position after: 17. ♚xa6

17... 0-0 [17... ♜b8 18. ♖b5+ ♖d7  
 19. ♖xd7+ ♘xd7 20. ♚c1! ♚xb2+  
 21. ♚d2±] 18. ♚b5± Forcing the ex-  
 change of queens and with one extra  
 pawn, White is winning.

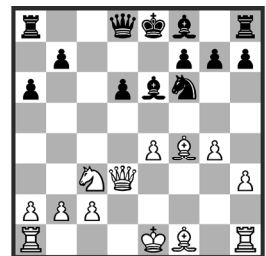
**B)** 9... ♖e6 10. f4!



Position after: 10. f4!

**B1)** 10... ♜c8 11. g5 ♘d7 12. f5  
 ♖c4 13. ♚f3 ♘b6 14. ♖xc4 ♘xc4  
 15. f6! [15. b3 ♘b6 16. ♖d2±  
 White was better in Korobov, A  
 (2702) – Negi, P (2641) New Delhi  
 2012.] 15... gxf6 16. ♜f1 ♘b6 17.  
 ♖d2±

**B2)** 10... exf4 11. ♖xf4



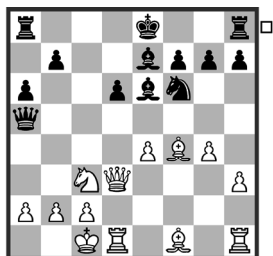
Position after: 11. ♖xf4

**B2.1)** 11... d5 12. 0-0-0 dxe4 13.  
 ♘xe4 ♚xd3 14. ♖xd3 [14.  
 ♘xf6+ gxf6 15. ♜xd3 ♜d8 16.  
 ♜xd8+ ♚xd8 17. ♖e2± Also  
 gives White a good advantage in  
 the endgame.] 14... 0-0-0 15.  
 ♘g5 ♖d6 16. ♘xe6 fxe6 17.  
 ♜hf1 ♖xf4+ 18. ♜xf4±

**B2.2)** 11... ♚a5 12. 0-0-0 ♖e7  
 [12... ♖xa2 13. g5 ♘d7 14. b3



♙a3+ 15. ♔d2± and the black bishop is trapped on a2.]



Position after: 12... ♙e7

13. ♙b1! [13. ♙xd6 0-0-0 14. e5 ♘e8↔] 13... 0-0 14. ♘d5± White gets his dream position; he has total control over the centre.

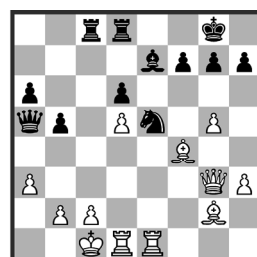
**B2.3)** 11... ♙e7 12. 0-0-0 0-0 13. ♙g2



Position after: 13. ♙g2

Black is too slow to carry out his idea with ...♘d7-e5 as the d6-pawn is hanging. 13... ♙a5 14. a3 ♗fd8 [14... ♗ac8 15. ♙xd6 ♙xd6 16. ♙xd6 Now if 16... ♗fd8 White can play 17. ♙f4± with an extra pawn.] 15. ♘d5! ♙xd5 [15... ♘xd5 16. exd5 ♙d7 17. ♙e4±] 16. exd5 ♘d7 17. g5! Restricting Black's pieces. 17...

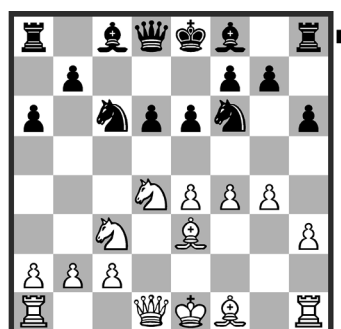
♘e5 18. ♙g3 ♗ac8 19. ♗he1 b5



Position after: 19... b5

20. ♙e4! Bringing the other bishop into play. [20. ♙b1 b4 21. axb4 ♙xb4 22. ♙d2 ♙c5↔] 20... g6 [20... b4 21. ♙d2±] 21. ♙d2! Rerouting the bishop to a better square. 21... ♙c7 22. ♙c3 a5 23. ♙xe5 dxe5 24. ♙b1 ♙d6 25. h4 b4 26. a4 ♙d7 27. h5+– and White's attack triumphs.

**8.** ♙e3 e6 9. f4!



Position after: 9. f4!

**9...** ♙c7

9... d5 10. ♙g2 ♙b4 [10... dxe4 11. ♘xc6 bxc6 12. ♙xd8+ ♙xd8 13. ♘xe4 ♘d5 14. ♙d2± and White has a great