

OPENING IDEA 2: THE FORK TRICK

This idea isn't something that is likely to lead to a quick win, but it will very often give you a slightly better position. If you use it at the wrong time, though, you'll end up losing a piece.

Let's start with these moves:

1. e4 e5
2. Nc3 Nc6
3. Bc4

You've seen these moves before. Now there are two popular moves for Black here: Bc5, which you've just seen, and...

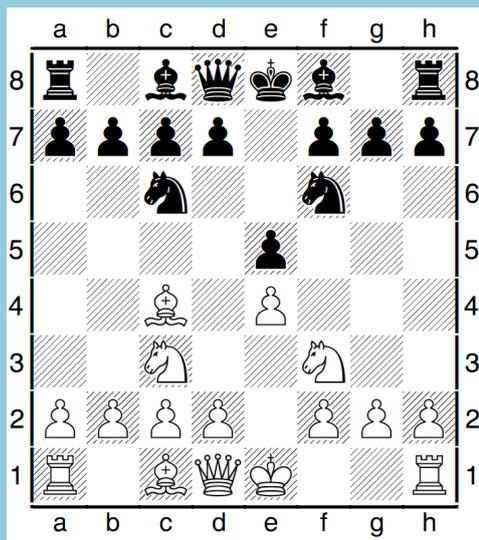
3... Nf6

If you want to go for the PIN ATTACK you might think it doesn't matter much whether you play Nc3 or d3 here, but it does. There's a reason why we play PAWN KNIGHT BISHOP PAWN KNIGHT BISHOP.

If we play instead:

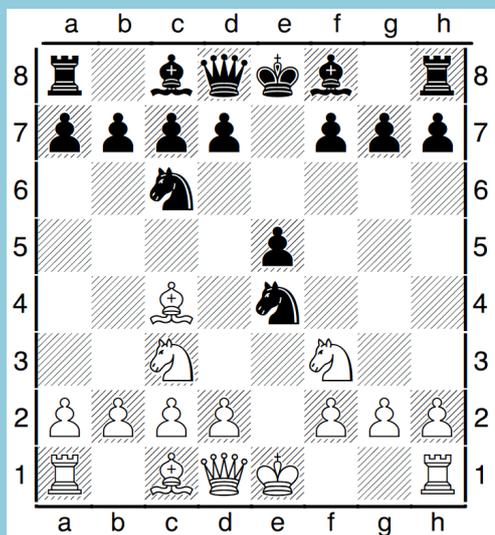
4. Nc3

We reach this position (which you'll often get if White plays Nc3 on move 3 and Bc4 on move 4).



Playing 4... Bc5 here is fine, but Black has an interesting and surprising alternative:

4... Nxe4



Another diagram:

A shocking move if you haven't seen it before. Black is DECOYING the white knight onto a square where it can be FORKED.

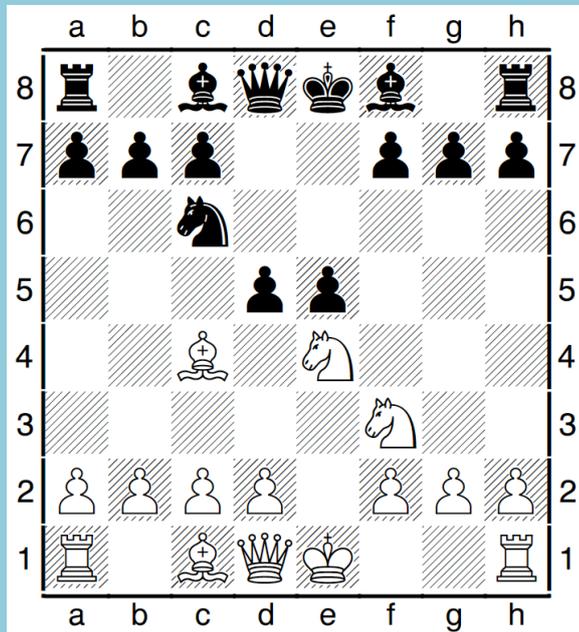
In this position Black scores a whopping 71% - although if White does the right thing here and on the next move the position is about equal. But if your opponent doesn't know what to do you'll end up with a good position.

The obvious (and probably best) move for White is:

5. Nxe4

And now you continue with your plan:

5... d5 (FORK!)



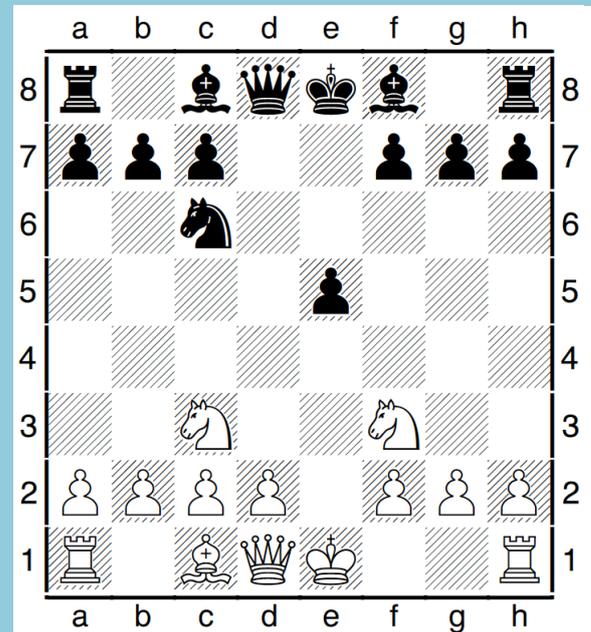
White has to decide which piece to save.

There's only one good move. White might try:

6. Bxd5 Qxd5

And then maybe

7. Nc3 Qd8



Black is a bit better in this position. Why? Black has MORE SPACE IN THE CENTRE. Black also has BISHOP AGAINST KNIGHT. OPEN POSITIONS like this where there have been pawn exchanges in the centre bishops are usually better than knights. Black scores 72% from this position in my database.

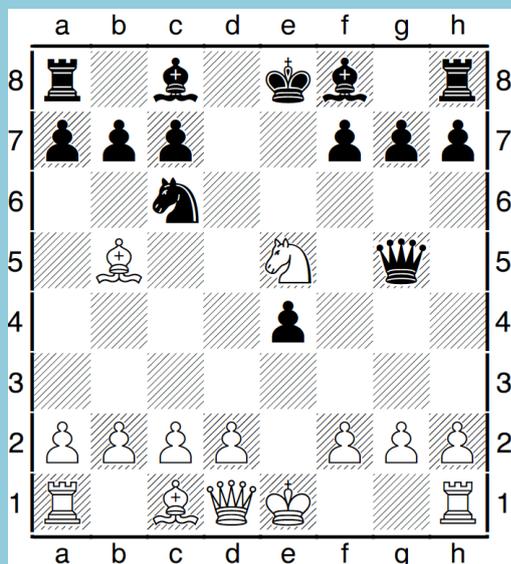
White might also try:

6. Bb5 dxe4

7. Nxe5

USING A PIN to make a capture, but in reply Black has a QUEEN FORK:

7... Qg5 (Qd5 is also quite good)

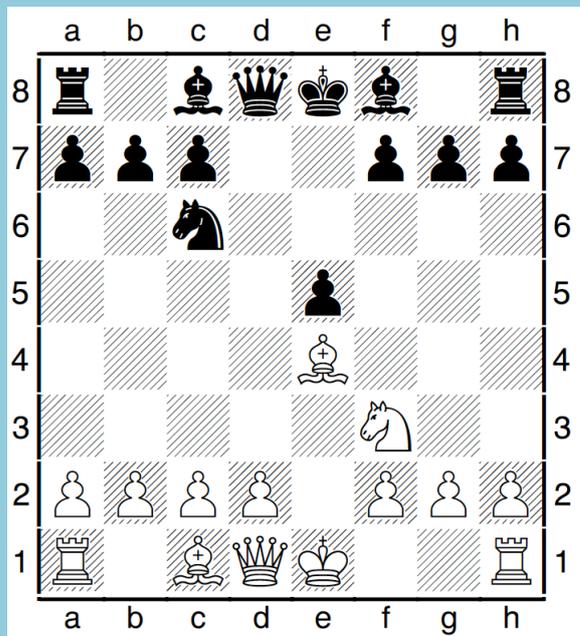


The queen FORKS the knight on e5 and the pawn on g2. If White tries 8. Nxc6 Black will play 8...Qxb5 9. Nd4 Qg5, hitting g2 again.

Black has a big advantage – and an 82% score – in this position, but you'll have to stop and think to find the best moves.

So White's best move, going back to move 6, is...

6. Bd3 dxe4
7. Bxe4



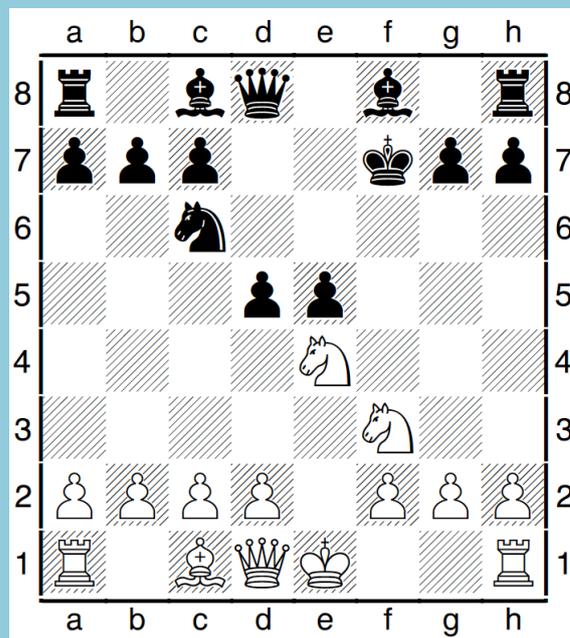
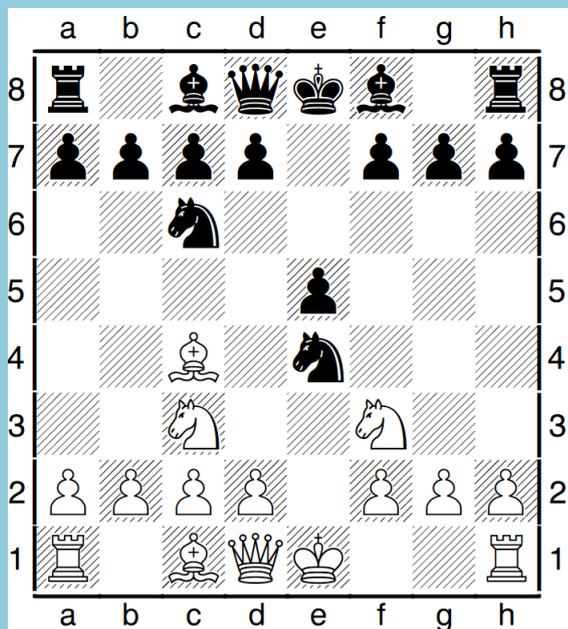
White is threatening to capture on c6 and then on e5 so Black usually plays Bd6 here. This is about equal, but Black scores 62% on my database, mainly because this position tends to be reached by stronger players playing Black against weaker players.

White might be tempted to try:

5. Bxf7+ Kxf7
6. Nxe5

... because it seems like a good idea to stop Black castling.

Going back to this position:

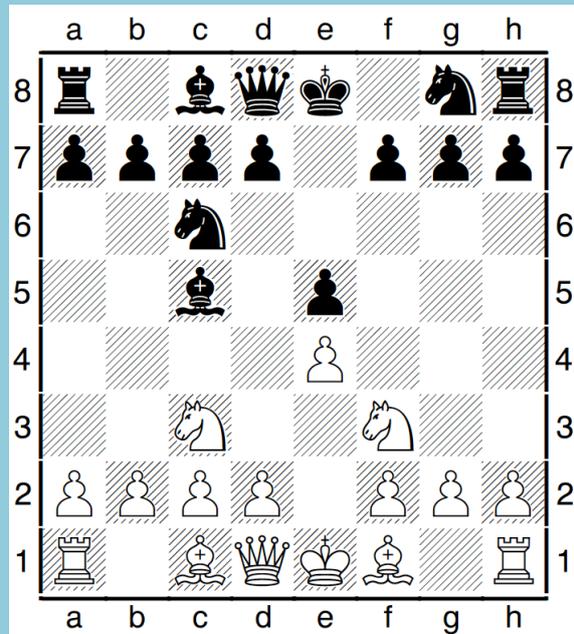


But it's not. Black is a lot better here. Firstly, Black has two pawns in the centre of the board. Secondly, Black has bishop for knight in an open position. Thirdly, Black can develop quickly and has time to make the king safe by playing Kg8, h6 and Kh7 if necessary. In my database, Black scores 70% so if you choose this for White you're backing a loser!

If White now tries Neg5+ you can play Kg8 followed by h6 and the white knights will be in a terrible tangle!

White can also use the same idea.

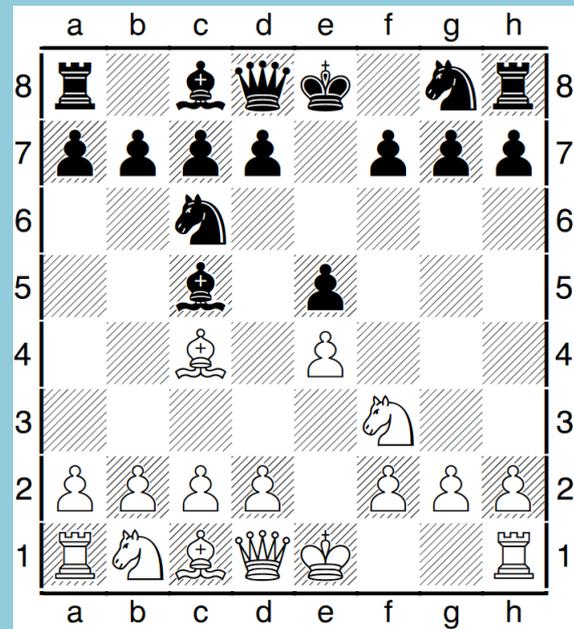
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Nc3 Bc5 (it's better to play Nf6 here)



In this position White can play Nxe5 with the same ideas as in the previous variations.

You have to be careful, though. You always have to be careful when you're playing chess.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Bc5



You **SHOULDN'T** play Nxe5 (although a lot of people do!). The reason is that you have a bishop on c4.

So after:

4. Nxe5 Nxe5
5. d4

Black can play 5... Nxc4 and you'll end up behind by a knight for a pawn.