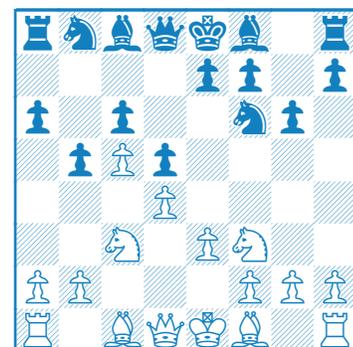


# Is the Chebanenko Slav still OK for Black?

By IM Merijn van Delft & IM Robert Ris



The “FIDE World” team beat Azerbaijan convincingly: 21.5-10.5. Of course rapid games do not contain the same weight as normal games, but for the world’s very best we make an exception. We also have a look at the US Championship, Sarajevo and the Mitropa Cup.

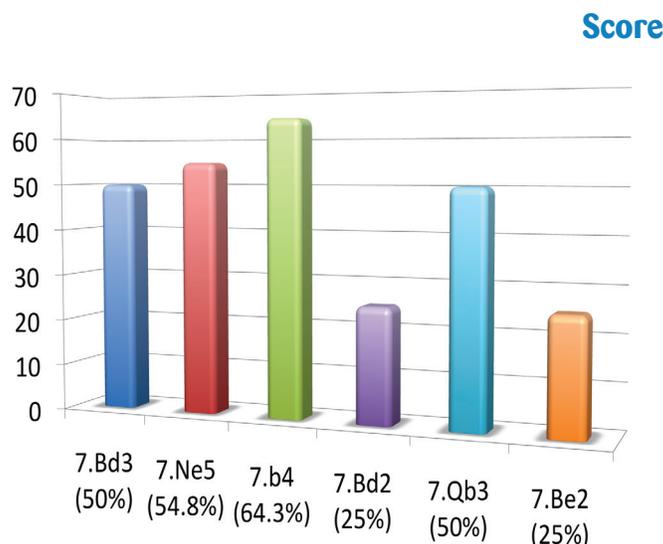


## WHAT'S HOT?

It was as if Kramnik wanted to save the reputation of the Petroff all by himself. He beat Gashimov and Guseinov; both were unsuccessful with 3.d4. Against Radjabov’s 5.♘c3 Kramnik decided to castle queenside (in the past he preferred kingside) in accordance with the current theoretical verdict that Black is fine there. Gashimov indeed returned to 8...♗f5 against Shirov as we suggested in CVO 17. Incidentally, a further three games with the Petroff at grandmaster level this week were all won by White.

Shirov came up with an uncommon idea against the Accelerated Dragon, which was skillfully picked up by Anand a few rounds later. Karjakin-Mamedyarov was a continuation of their theoretical discussion started in Nalchik (7.♗d3!?), but it is hard to believe White has something after the queen exchange. In the US Championship Kamsky beat Akobian in the French Rubinstein while Shulman was successful with 12...d4 in the Winawer and therefore he’s this week’s Opening Expert.

In the Semi-Slav Meran, German team mates Gustafsson and Baramidze simultaneously repaired a line that got into some trouble recently, by means of the interesting 13...♗b7. Furthermore, Gustafsson got an edge with White in the Semi-Slav Marshall Gambit. Mamedyarov finally won a game with his 3.f3 pet line against the Grünfeld.



Source: Megabase + TWIC, 2500+ only

In our *Game of the Week* Eljanov–Sokolov, played in Sarajevo, the Chebanenko Slav was crushed. Eljanov is Gelfand’s second and they seemed to have worked on this stuff together. Putting the games of these two heavyweights together provides an excellent repertoire for White against the Chebanenko, based on 5.e3 b5 6.c5. In the diagram position 7.♗e5! seems to be way to go for White.

## WHAT'S NOT?

# The Chebanenko crushed, first aid needed

Even though the Chebanenko Slav is a remarkable concept and a creative alternative to the traditional 4...dxc4 (in the early days Black could often be found playing ♖a7 to defend b7), Black's queenside play starts to look suspicious compared to the healthy Semi-Slav.

## GAME OF THE WEEK

**Eljanov, P (2693) - Sokolov, I (2669)**  
**39th Bosna Sarajevo, May 9, 2009**  
*D15, Chebanenko Slav, 5.e3 b5 6.c5*

### 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 a6 5.e3

In CVO 16 we covered the current situation of 5.c5 with the game Leko-Karjakin.

### 5...b5 6.c5

White invited Black to play 5...b5, but with 6.c5 he will try to demonstrate that this pawn advance is only helping him to open a second front with a4 (if necessary supported by b4) sooner or later.

### 6...g6

After 6...♗bd7 there are two options:

**a) 7.♗d3** e5 8.♗xe5 ♗xe5 9.dxe5 ♗d7!? 10.e6 ♗xc5 11.exf7+ ♗xf7 12.♗c2 g6 13.0-0 ♗g7 14.♗e2 ♖e8 15.♗d4 ♗d6 16.b4 ♗e6 and Black already had a slight edge in Aronian-Movsesian, Nanjing 2008.

**b) 7.a3!** (because of this move 6...♗bd7 is currently a bit under pressure) 7...a5 8.♗c2!? (a fresh new idea - previously 8.♗d3 had been played, but Karjakin's innovation closed this chapter: 8...e5 9.dxe5 ♗g4 10.e6 fxe6 11.♗d4 ♗xc5 12.♗e2 ♗xf2! Eljanov-Karjakin, Foros 2007) 8...♗c7 9.e4 ♗xe4 10.♗xe4 dxe4 11.♗xe4 ♗f6 12.♗e5 ♗xe5+ 13.♗xe5 ♗b7 14.a4! b4 15.♗f4 ♗d7 16.♗c4 ♗a6 17.♗b6 ♖a7 18.♗xa6 ♖xa6 19.♗c4± and White had the more pleasant position in Gelfand-Karjakin, Nalchik 2009.

### 7.♗e5!?

This is the critical approach against the 6...g6 line. In previous games it became clear that other moves are less promising: 7.♗d3 ♗g7 8.e4 dxe4 9.♗xe4 0-0 10.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 11.♗e3 ♗g4 12.♗e4 ♗c8 13.h3 ♗f5 14.♗c2 ♗xe4 15.♗xe4 ♖d8= Aronian-Svidler, Heraklio 2007; 7.b4 a5 8.bxa5 ♗xa5 9.♗d2 b4 10.♗b1 ♗e4 11.a3 ♗xd2 12.♗fxd2 ♗g7= Miton-Rublevsky, Sochi 2006.

### 7...♗g7 8.♗e2 ♗fd7

Safer would be 8...0-0 and after 9.f4 ♗fd7 there is:

**a) 10.0-0** ♗xe5 11.fxe5 and now:

**a1) 11...a5** 12.e4 dxe4 13.♗xe4 ♗a6 14.a4

b4 15.♗c4 ♗c7 16.♗g5 was seen in Gelfand-Ragger, Graz 2009 and here 16...♗d5 should have been played with approximately equal chances.

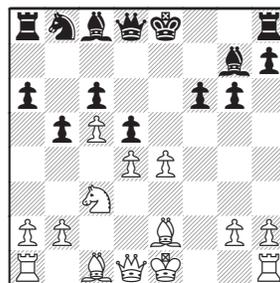
**a2) 11...f6!?** 12.exf6 exf6 13.e4 b4 14.♗a4 (14.♗xd5!? cxd5 15.exd5 is a typical piece sacrifice and not easy to handle for Black) 14...dxe4 15.♗b6 ♖a7 16.♗b3+ ♗h8 17.♗xc8 ♗xc8 18.♗f4 f5 with counterplay for Black in S.Savchenko-Wirig, Metz 2007. The position has many similarities compared with our main game, but now that the ♗ has found a safe residence, Black's task to develop his pieces has become easier.

**b) 10.♗d3** a5 (10...f5 11.a4) and now White opened up a new front with 11.h4! h5 12.g4 hxg4 13.♗xg4 ♗f6 14.♗f3 ♗f5 15.h5 b4 16.♗e2 ♗e4 17.♗f2 ♗xf2 18.♗xf2 ♗d7 19.♗g1 e6 20.♗h2 and Black had to suffer for a long time in Gelfand-Levin, Ansfelden 2009.

### 9.f4 ♗xe5

9...0-0 was still an option of course.

### 10.fxe5 f6 11.exf6 exf6 12.e4!



### 12...b4?!N

A novelty, but we shouldn't expect to see many followers in the future. Since other moves also don't seem to equalize, it means that Black has to look for improvements earlier on. 12...f5 13.exd5 (13.e5±) 13...♗h4+ 14.g3 ♗xd4 15.♗xd4 ♗xd4 16.♗f4± was Cmilyte-Houska, Dresden 2008; probably best was 12...0-0

13.exd5 cxd5 14.♗f3 but here White's protected passed pawn gives him a solid edge.

### 13.♗a4 dxe4

Consistently played, otherwise 12...b4?! would make no sense at all. Again it would have been better to castle: 13...0-0 14.♗b6 ♖a7 15.exd5 cxd5 16.0-0 but obviously Black would rather have his pawn on b5.

### 14.♗b6 ♖a7 15.♗b3!

It is this simple move that makes clear how problematic Black's position is.

### 15...♖e7

With the idea of 16...♗e6. 15...f5 16.♗f4 ♗d7 17.♗e6+-.

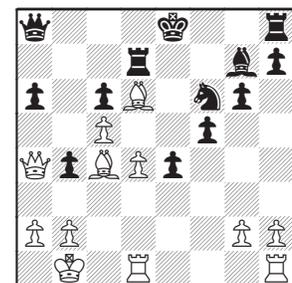
### 16.♗xc8 ♗xc8 17.♗f4 f5 18.0-0-0

There was no need to hurry with 18.♗d6?! allowing 18...♗xd4 19.♗xe7 ♗xe7 which is still better for White, but unnecessarily complicates matters.

### 18...♗d7 19.♗d6 ♗f6

19...♖f7? 20.♗e6+

### 20.♗c4! ♖d7 21.♗b1 ♗b7 22.♗a4 ♗a8



### 23.g4!

The decisive breakthrough!

### 23...♗d5

23...♗xg4 24.d5 ♗e5 25.♗b3+- and Black collapses, while 23...fxg4 is beautifully refuted by 24.♖hf1 ♗d5 25.♗xd5 cxd5 26.♖f7!+-

### 24.gxf5 gxf5 25.♗xd5 cxd5 26.♖hf1 ♗d8

### 27.♖xf5 ♖e8 28.♗xb4 ♖e6 29.♖df1 ♗c8

### 29...♗b7 30.♗a5+ followed by 31.♖f8.

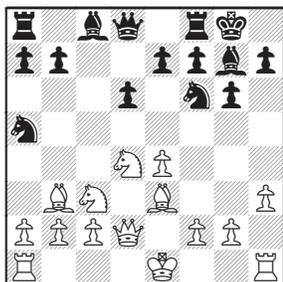
### 30.♖f8+ ♗xf8 31.♖xf8+ ♖d8 32.♗b6 1-0

A very fine performance by Eljanov, punishing Sokolov for neglecting his king's safety!

## ELJANOV - SOKOLOV

# THIS WEEK'S HARVEST

## Accelerated Dragon



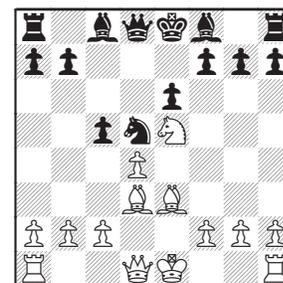
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♗f6 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♖b3 d6 9.h3 ♗a5 10.♗d2

A basic problem with the Accelerated Dragon is that White can play the Maroczy Bind with 5.c4 and enjoy a solid space advantage for a long time to come. That 5.♗c3 hasn't lost its sting either was confirmed by two top level rapid games this week. 9.h3 is the alternative to the more common 9.f3 and has something very deceptive to it: as Shirov showed it's not forbidden to continue with h4–h5 later on anyway! On move nine Black has many alternatives and to us 9...♗d7 looks like the most solid one. White then castles kingside, which means that most aggressive scenarios are ruled out. 10.♗d2! is a sudden change of pace. In the first game Shirov–Guseinov Black couldn't deal with it at all and was basically checkmated along the h–file without a fight. In the second game Anand–Mamedov Black was better prepared, but got into trouble anyway. 18...♗d7, to double rooks, may have been better. Anand's dynamic use of his ♗ was very impressive.

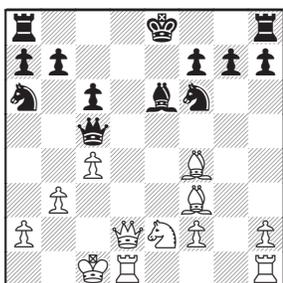
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♗d7 5.♗f3 ♗gf6 6.♗d3 c5 7.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 8.♗e3 ♗d5 9.♗e5

In previous issues we have already written about the difficult task to crack the rock solid French Rubinstein. In the US Championship Kamsky played a real model game against expert Akobian which will give White players new hope. 9.♗e5 is a strong novelty, immediately grabbing the initiative, but it must be said that 8...♗d5 is a pet variation of the Armenian–born GM, whereas 8...♗c7 is still the critical continuation. In the game, Akobian's king was stuck in the centre and hence Black couldn't create his usual counterplay along the c– and d–file. White's moves 16.♖he1, 20.♗xd6! and 21.♗xf7! show that White really needs to play very concretely to prove the drawback of Black's play. After this slaughter we can be almost certain that we won't see 8...♗d5 much anymore. Black's idea to get rid of White's bishop pair has vanished into thin air (after...♗xe3 fxe3 White obtains excellent attacking chances) and so we can only conclude that Black should still rely on 8...♗c7.

## French, Rubinstein



## Semi-Slav, Marshall Gambit



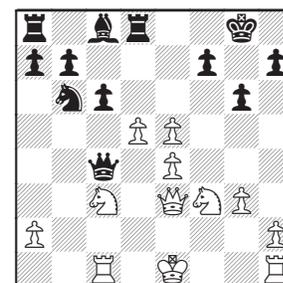
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c6 4.e4 dxe4 5.♗xe4 ♖b4+ 6.♗d2 ♗xd4 7.♗xb4 ♗xe4+ 8.♗e2 ♗a6 9.♗d6 ♗xg2 10.♗d2 ♗f6 11.♗f3 ♗g6 12.0-0-0 e5 13.♗xe5 ♗e6 14.♗e2 ♗f5 15.♗f4 ♗c5 16.b3

The German grandmaster and theoretician Jan Gustafsson chose 9.♗d6, whereas 9.♗a5 was examined in CVO 6. Black continued with the principled 9...♗xg2, since the alternatives allow White to smoothly continue his development with ♗f3 and 0–0. On the next move 10...♗xh1? is refuted by the pretty 11.0–0–0 ♗e4 12.♗e7!!.. Gusti may have something nasty prepared against the greedy 15...♗xc4 as well. After the game's 15...♗c5 White played a novelty with 16.b3. In the next few moves the exchange of queens seems more or less inevitable and it is quite possible that Pavasovic, a true expert on the black side of this gambit, has judged these positions to be fine for Black in his home preparation. Maybe Black should have exchanged bishops with 21...♗g4, since as the game continued the white advantage based on his two bishops increased steadily. Just when it was about to become very real, for instance with 39.♗h6 or 43.♗c3 h6 44.♗d3, Black escaped with a draw.

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 d5 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.e4 ♗b6 6.♗c3 ♗g7 7.♗e3 0-0 8.f4 ♗c6 9.d5 ♗a5 10.♗d4 e5 11.♗xe5 ♗xe5 12.fxe5 ♗h4+ 13.g3 ♗e7 14.♗d4 ♗d8 15.b4 ♗ac4 16.♗xc4 ♗xb4 17.♗f3 ♗xc4 18.♗e3 c6 19.♗c1

Of course it was just a rapid game, but Mamedyarov showed once more his confidence in the sharp 3.f3 Grünfeld. This time it was the Azeri himself who deviated from his well-known game against Kurnosov and in a long theoretical line he introduced the new 19.♗c1. Shirov had to spend a lot of time to overcome his opponent's home analysis. Shirov's 21...cxd5? is a serious mistake, vacating the e4 square for the ♗ and so Black had to give the exchange. In the game Shirov fought hard, but couldn't turn the events and after a long struggle he lost anyway. 21...♗c8! is our suggestion, being ready to take on d5 at any moment, while after 22.d6 ♗d7! it's not clear to us how White should launch a kingside attack, since Black controls the centre. Most likely Shakh drew the same conclusion that White should take the perpetual (see analysis) and that explains why he didn't save this novelty for a rated game.

## Grünfeld, 3.f3





## OPENING EXPERT

**Who:** Yuri Shulman  
**Born:** April 29, 1975  
**Nationality:** American  
**Rating:** 2632  
**Expertise:** White: sharp 1.d4 lines, for example 8.♖b1 against the Grünfeld. Black: French  
**Why:** Shulman has a small repertoire, but within his own openings he varies a lot. His main speciality is the French Winawer, where he feels very comfortable in massive complications, while not forgetting about the hidden subtleties this opening contains. We can notice some similarities in play with Boris Gelfand (also from Belarussian origin), who in fact used to train Shulman years ago. In CVO 15 we had a closer look at the game Shulman–Friedel, in which White outplayed his opponent from a healthy positional base. Actually this is typical for Shulman's games, where he starts from a positional base, gradually improves his position and finally launches a devastating blow. A serious candidate to win the US championships for the second time in row!  
**Key game:** Khachiyan – Shulman, US Championship (St. Louis), May 9, 2009

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 ♗b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖e7 7.♗g4

7.♖f3 b6 8.a4 ♗a6 9.♗xa6 ♖xa6 10.0-0 h6 11.♗e2 ♗c8 12.♗b5+ ♖c6 13.a5 bxa5 14.♗xa5 ♖ab8 15.♗a3 0-0 16.♗a4 ♖d7 17.♗xc5 ♗b8 18.♗e2 ♖xc5 19.dxc5 ♖e7 and Black started to collect all weak c-pawns, Sadvakasov–Shulman, Ledyard 2009.

7...cxd4 8.♗xg7

8.♗d3 ♗a5 9.♖e2 0-0 10.♗g5 ♖g6 11.f4 ♖d7 12.♗xg6 fxg6 13.♗xe6+ ♗f7 14.0-0 dxc3 15.♗d6 ♖c5 16.♗xd5 ♗e6 17.♗d4 ♗c8 18.♗fe1 ♗f5 19.♗xc3 ♗xc3 20.♖xc3 ♖e6 21.♖d5 ♗xc2+ Friedel–Shulman, Saint Louis 2009.

8...♗g8 9.♗xh7 ♗c7 10.♖e2 ♖bc6 11.f4 dxc3 12.♗d3 d4 13.♖g3 ♗d7 14.♗e2 ♗b6 15.0-0 0-0 16.♖e4 ♖d5

Up to this moment the players followed the recent game from Nalchik between Karjakin and Kamsky.

17.♗b5

In the aforementioned game, Karjakin played 17.♖d6+ ♖b8 18.♖xf7 ♗df8 19.♖d6 ♖ce7 20.♗f3 ♗c6 and even went on to win after surviving some precarious moments. For more detailed analysis check CVO 17!

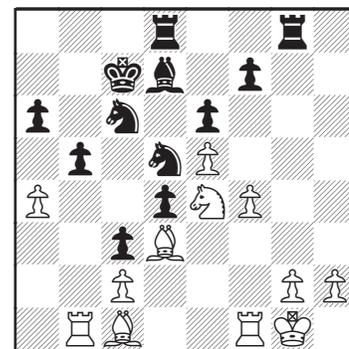
17...♗xb5 18.♗xb5 ♖c7 19.♗b1 a6 20.♗d3 b5 Although White has managed to exchange queens, it's absolutely not easy for him to convert his extra pawn. The bishop on c1 is restricted in his activity and with his next move White tries to solve this matter.

21.a4?

(diagram)

Now Black can create a very dominating passed pawn on c3. 21.♖c5 ♖b6 22.♖a4+ ♖a5 23.♖c5 ♖b6 repeats the moves.

21...♖cb4! 22.♗a3 ♖xd3 23.♗d6+ ♖c8 24.cxd3 ♖e3 25.♗f2 ♗c6 26.axb5 axb5 27.♗a2? ♗xe4 28.dxe4 c2 29.♗ba1 ♗xg2+ 30.♖h1 ♗d2



30...♗xd6! 31.♗a8+ ♖d7 32.♗1a7+ ♖c6-+.

31.♗a8+ ♖d7 32.♗8a7+ ♖e8 33.♗g1 ♗g2!

34.♗e7+ ♖f8 35.♗c7+ ♖g7

35...♗xd6! 36.exd6 ♗xg1+ 37.♖xg1 ♖c4.

36.♗xg2+ ♖xg2 37.♗xc2 ♖e3 38.♗d2 ♗c8

39.♖g1 ♗c4 40.♖f2 b4 41.♗d3 ♗c2+ 42.♖f3

♗c3 43.♖e2 b3 44.♗xd4 ♖c4 45.♗e7 b2 46.♗d8

♗e3+ 47.♖f2 ♗xe4 48.♖g3 ♗e3+ 49.♖g4 b1♗

50.♗f6+ ♖h6 0-1

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