All,  
The Chigorin has been around for many years, and an opening that is trotted out occasionally by one’s opponents. Do we fully understand though how to avoid its complications? Here is a neat demonstration how to play calmly against it.   
However, it is move 12 by white, which is the most instructive in this game. A move that you should take a long time to contemplate. I had to smile quietly to myself when playing this, for it is a move that could seem foolish if it is positionally flawed. Having faith in one’s positional judgement is a key feature though in being successful.  
Enjoy.

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[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Gill, Oliver"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "D02"]

[WhiteElo "2247"]

[BlackElo "2230"]

[Annotator "Chris Ross"]

[PlyCount "77"]

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{D07: Chigorin Defence}  
1. d4 Nc6   
{The introduction to the Chigorin Defence. The Chigorin Defence violates several classical principles. In the main, black does not maintain the centre pawn at d5, the C-pawn is blocked, and Black must be willing to trade the light-squared bishop for a knight. It is stated that the Russian, Mikhael Chigorin, valued the bishop pair less than most chess Masters in his time. Some say he even preferred knights to bishops in all positions. Although this is a viable positional aspect to aim for, the structures one gets from the opening do not guarantee black a “good knight vs. bad bishop” setup.}

2. Nf3   
{2. C4 allows e5 and a transposition into other systems).  
2... d5   
3. Bf4   
{Avoiding the Alban Counter Gambit with 3... e5, which is a tricky gambit to cope with. Although I do not find the gambit sound, it gives white difficulties with development. The sensible refutation is to prevent e7-e5 and to continue with simple piece play. The knight can be left poorly-placed on c6 if black is not careful.}  
3... Bg4

4. e3 e6

5. c4  
{Now black has willingly blocked in his light-squared bishop on the king-side with e7-e6, white targets the vulnerable squares on the queen-side. B7 is a point of attention and d5 is not easily supported. Now the d4 pawn is supported, white can expand with c2-c4.}  
5...  Bb4+   
6. Nc3   
{Once again, simple piece development is essential. D5 is a point of focus and hence why d2 is not the right square for the queen’s knight. Black is likely to take on f3 with his light-squared bishop, so exchanging on c3 and giving up both bishops would be a very drastic reaction.}  
6... Nge7   
{It is difficult to criticise this move, but to me, the knight is slightly missed placed. Black’s intension is to switch this to the king-side for a king-side attack. In particular, if an exchange on f3 occurs, the knight may wish to wander to h4. The f4 dark-squared bishop is a target and black is contemplating f7-f5 to break things open. However, f6 has to be its natural square.}  
7. Qb3   
{The first move away from the known theory. Here, white intends to pressurise the b7 square, overload the knight on c6 with a possible Ne5 and also to target the d5 pawn. Once again, this allows a shattering of the pawn chain on f3, but this is unimportant with the pawn structure being solid there, white obtaining the bishop pair and having an alternative flight plan for the king. See below for opening references.}  
7... Ng6   
 8. Bg3 O-O

9. cxd5 exd5

10. Be2 Bxc3+   
{A surprise, but there is little choice for black here. Black is wanting to force a semi-decision out of white. Some pressure has to be released somewhere, and by this exchange, black gets a temporary reprieve.}  
11. Qxc3   
{11. Bxc3 allows 11... Na5 and black obtains the c4 outpost. This knight could be dislodged, but black would also achieve c7-c5. The time-gaining idea is not in white’s best interest. The half-open C-file is equally as good as the half-open B-file. D5 and b7 are still targets, but now white has the thrust b2-b4 at his disposal. C7 is also becoming rather sensitive.}  
11... f5

{The draw-back to the re-capture on c3 with the white queen, since the pressure on the d5 pawn is released.  
OK, a pause now. Some worthy positional considerations now need to be taken into account. The first question is to where the white pieces belong. The white knight would like to find an outpost, but the natural looking e5 post is heavily guarded by black. Exchanges on that square is not quite feasible. White also have pawn levers with b4-b5 and h4-h5. The white king needs a safe square to run to, as black is threatening to open up the centre with f5-f4. Tactically speaking, f5-f4 is a threat that white needs to deal with, since the dark-squared bishop on g3 is lacking squares. If white is forced to take on f4 with the e3 pawn, d4 becomes an isolated pawn. For black though, the black minor pieces sit rather awkwardly, especially so the bishop on g4, which has no flight squares.  
Returning to the first positional consideration of the outpost. If e5 is not possible, then we need to find another. Hence, why f4 itself becomes white’s focus-point. From f4, the white knight could stop the tactics by black, but also stand on a very dominating square, from where it can not be dislodged, in the true meaning of an outpost. IF white has played h4-h5 to dislodge the knight on g6, then g7-g5 is no longer playable and the white knight can stand on f4 unchallenged. On f4 too, the knight would target that weak pawn on d5.  
Realising all of this, the final thing to solve was the knight’s route to f4. If it helps, the Brayer variation of the Ruy Lopez can provide inspiration here.}   
 12. Ng1!

{A remarkable conception, which is positionally justified in every respect. tactically, there is an additional bonus that the bishop on g4 is weak. F5-f4 cannot be played by black without leaving this bishop en prise. White can now sneak f3 and potentially trap the bishop if black is not careful. The “undevelopment” of the white knight can only be good if it achieves the f4 outpost.}  
12... Qe7

{Renewing the threats down the E-file, since there are potential pins. This forces white to run away and find safety for the monarch.}

13. O-O-O Nb4

{Once again, black is seeking tactics. It is true positional quality that can prevent the tactics. 14. Kb1 here would lose and exchange to 14... Bxe2 15. Nxe2 Qe4+ which would be a tragedy. Black now feels obliged to exchange bishops and secure up his centre.}  
14. Qb3 Bxe2   
15. Nxe2 c6   
16. a3 Na6   
17. h4 h5   
{A very drastic decision, but now the game is truly lost for black. Black was concerned that if the black knight was forced away, giving the f4 outpost to the white knight, dominating the king-side, white could then play h5-h6, forcing g7g6, or leave h5-h6 and drive through g2-g4 opening up the king-side. This rash pawn push on the king-side by black only gives white the g5 outpost though. G6 has become weak and the final white piece can be “air-lifted” into the attack.}  
18. Bf4   
{Freeing up the 3rd rank. The bishop is destined for g5, but the main reason was to open up the g3 square for the final white piece.}  
18... Nxf4   
19. Nxf4 Qf7   
20. Rh3   
{With the rook’s introduction into the attack, there is no more resistance to deal with. The rest is simple technique and the tactics will find themselves. Black has too many weaknesses on h5, f5, g6, e6 and the white knight is too dominant.}  
20... Rac8   
21. Kb1 Rc7   
22. Rg3 Nb8

{There was an irony here that the black knight returns to knight-1, in an attempt to re-route itself back to the king-side for the defence. It is though, far too late for that.}  
23. Rg5 Qe8

24. Qd3 Qe4

{Losing the exchange. There was nothing else though. H5 was dropping off and the f5 pawn was far too difficult to defend. Black could have happily resigned here.}  
25. Qxe4 fxe4

26. Ne6 Rcf7

27. Nxf8 Rxf8

28. Rf1   
{There is no rush. White can simply defend, since the h5 pawn cannot be defended. Black is an exchange down for no good reason with other pawns falling.}  
28... Nd7

29. Rxh5 Rf6

30. f4 a5

31. Rg5 Nb6

{Black attempts to target the backward E-pawn. White wipes out that final hope immediately.}  
32. Rc1 Nc4

33. Rxc4 dxc4

34. Rxa5 b5

35. g4 Rd6

36. Ra8+ Kf7

37. Rc8

{There was no need for contemplation here. White can play quickly and confidently, since black is far too much material down. Black was simply wishing to reach the time-control, when he could resign with dignity.}  
37... Rh6

38. h5 Rh7

39. Rxc6 1-0

Opening references   
  
A.  
7. h3 Bh5 8. Rc1 O-O 9. a3 Bxc3+ 10. Rxc3 dxc4 11. Rxc4 Ng6 12. Bh2 Bxf3 13. Qxf3 e5 14. d5 Na5 15. Rc3 c6 16. dxc6 Nxc6 17. Bc4 Nh4 18. Qg4 Kh8 19. Rd3 Qe7 20. Rd7 f5 21. Rxe7 fxg4  
Akesson,R (2460)-Morozevich,A (2575)/London 1994/EXT 2000/0-1 (51)  
  
B.  
7... Bxf3 8. gxf3 dxc4 9. Bxc4 Bd6 10. Bxd6 Qxd6 11.

O-O-O Qb4 12. d5 Qxb3 13. Bxb3 exd5 14. Nxd5 Nxd5 15. Bxd5 Ke7 16. Rhg1 g6 17. Rg4 f5 18. Rc4 Rhd8 19. Bxc6 Rxd1+ 20. Kxd1 bxc6 21. Rxc6 Kd7 22. Rf6 Ke7 23. Ra6

Rausis,I (2470)-Den Hollander,G (1905)/Haarlem 1997/EXT 2001/1-0 (48)  
  
C.  
7... Bxf3 8. gxf3 O-O 9. Bg3 dxc4 10. Bxc4 Nd5 11. Bxd5 exd5 12. O-O-O Bxc3 13. Qxc3 Qf6 14. Bf4 Ne7 15. Kb1 Rfc8 16. Rc1 Ng6 17. Bxc7 Qxf3 18. Rhf1 h5 19. Ka1 Qh3 20. Qc5 Nf8 21. Qb5

Qd7 22. Qxd7

Nyback,T (2448)-Maki Uuro,M (2325)/Helsinki 2002/EXT 2004/0-1 (50)

D.  
7... O-O 8. Ne5 Bxc3+ 9. bxc3 Nxe5 10. Bxe5 Nc6 11. Bg3 Na5 12. Qb4 b6 13. c5 Qd7 14. h3 Bf5 15. Be2 Rfe8 16. Bb5 c6 17. Be2 Qd8 18. O-O b5 19. a4 a6 20. Ra2 Nc4 21. Rfa1 Rc8 22. axb5

Lorincz,I (2360)-Ruck,T (2265)/Hungary 1995/EXT 1997/0-1 (42)