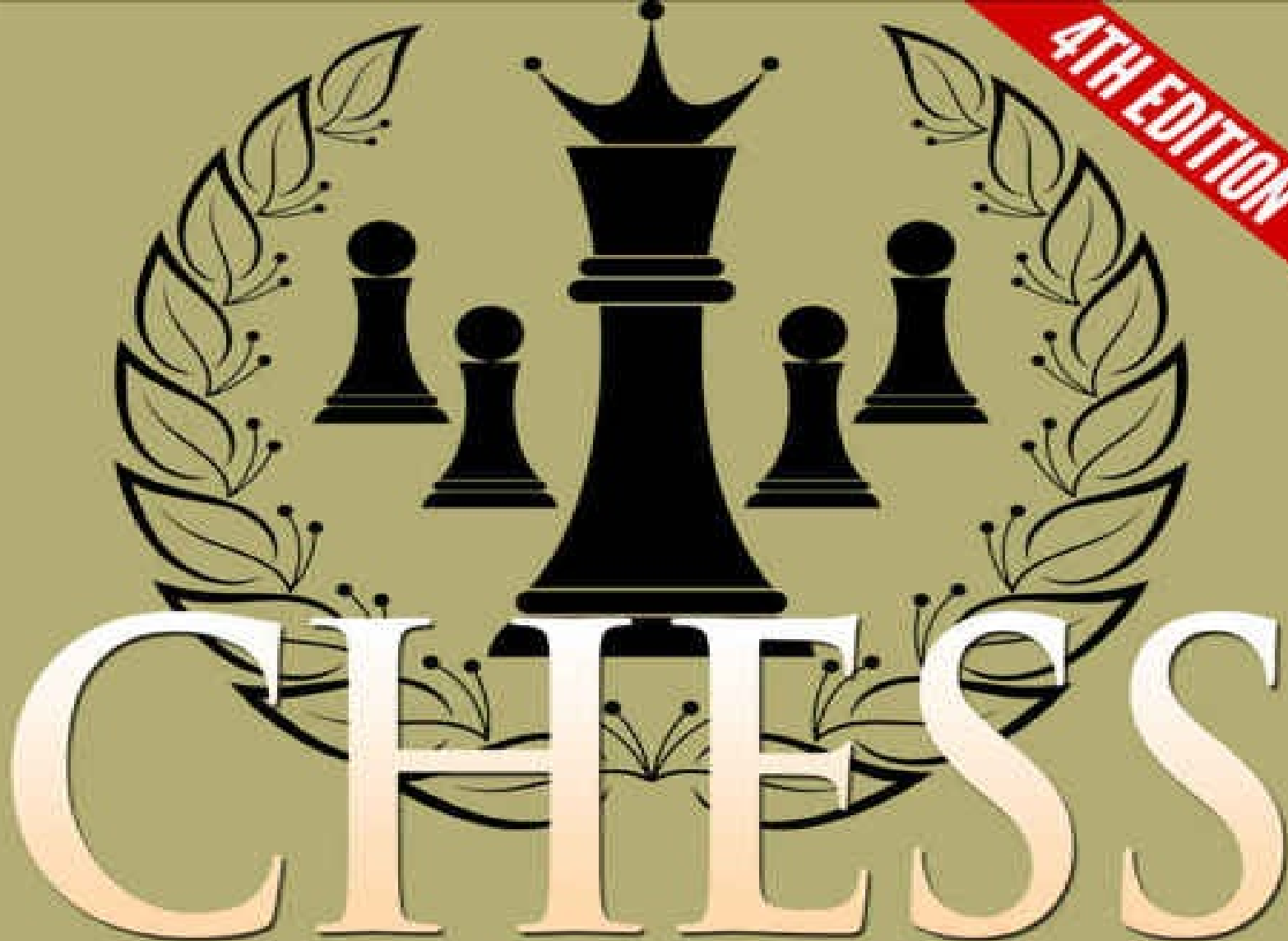


4TH EDITION



# CHESS

The Complete Guide To Chess - Master Chess  
Tactics, Chess Openings and Chess Strategies



LOGAN DONOVAN

# The Complete Guide to Chess

*Master: Chess Tactics, Chess Openings and Chess Strategies*

Logan Donovan

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# Introduction



Often we disregard chess as a game for nerds and introverts and never truly attempt to fathom what it is all about. We can never really appreciate anything until we understand what goes into it and this couldn't be any truer in the case of chess. The reason why many of us shy away from playing chess is because of our lack of knowledge about the game and because of this, we do not attribute much value to it. We instead regard sports such as football, basketball, and soccer with such tremendous respect because we are of the opinion that it not only involves physical activity but also mental involvement in the form of strategies and ploys. Would you be surprised to know that chess is a game that is filled with thousands of such strategies and tactics? Ploys that could help you sharpen your mind and analytical skills with practice?

It's true; chess is known as the quintessential game of strategy and planning. It is referenced in many movies and attributed to characters in those films that reflect traits of strategic thinking and cunning. Many people know or have heard that listening to the compositions of Mozart helps to increase one's brain function as a passive activity. In the same respect, playing chess can be considered the active version of listening to Mozart.

By gaining an understanding of the movements of the pieces and how to plan and adjust their positioning against an opponent in real time, one is simultaneously activating associations in the brain to identify predictable patterns and determine consequences before they happen. Setting up blocks against the opponent to create pathways elsewhere for one's advantage is much like the strategies we see used in pick-and-roll plays in basketball or slot options designed to break through a defense's barrier in American football.

This kind of analytical thinking and the development of it can be applied to a number of various areas in life like setting up a business, playing the stock market, project management, planning surprise parties, organizing team activities like scavenger hunts or geocaching, effective multitasking or pulling off a really great



practical joke!

Playing chess trains one's mind to understand how maneuvering individual pieces effectively work to achieve a desired goal in the grand scheme. In other words, a person develops the ability to see how the details make up the big picture and how a large, complex concept can be broken down into simple step-by-step processes. A person develops keen problem-solving skills through analyzing challenging situations from multiple angles and learning how to approach them in various ways. One learns how to foresee what approaches will run into problems down the line and how to counteract them or take alternative approaches that give them a higher success rate. Chess also trains a person's thinking to become adaptable, so that with foresight and strategy, if one cannot back out of a difficult situation they will have developed the know-how to see other options to turn their disadvantage into an advantage. This quality pays tribute to the ever-famous quote, 'Within every problem, there lies an opportunity.' Chess players understand the practical application of that meaning both in the game and in life.

As one begins to play chess more and engage in the game with various players, they will come to notice that each person has a particular style of playing that comes to represent their particular patterns of thinking. For example a person who plays more on the offensive side is more likely an aggressive person that has an overall assertive attitude toward life, whereas someone who plays more on the defensive is likely to be on the cautious side of life that waits to see how a situation will play out before making their definitive move. Learning to read a person's style of play is an important part of the game, the same as it is in playing poker or the game of life at large; it will help to predict the opponent's next probable move and in adjusting your style to counter theirs effectively.

If you are unaware of these facts about chess, you have perhaps done the right thing by purchasing this book. All that you need is the preliminary knowledge about chess and the interest to learn the openings and tactics suggested here, to make the best use of this book.

In the first chapter of this book, I have highlighted the most common and powerful openings in chess that can change the style of your game. In the second chapter, I have listed the key principles based on which chess strategies are built. An understanding of these principles will help us retort to our opponent's moves in an effective manner. In the continuing chapters, I have highlighted the commonly

employed chess tactics and strategies.

It is in my dear aspirations that this book in your possession helps you elevate not only your skillfulness in chess, but your intellectual grace as well.

Sincerely,

Logan Donovan

*P.S. Don't forget to grab your free bonus at the end of the book*

# History of Chess



Before we go over the various chess openings and tactics, it is important that we know about how this beloved game originated. The history of chess is fascinating enough and you would be impressed to see how this game has transformed over the years. The version that we know today is not how it started centuries ago. Let us rewind the clocks and look deep into the marveling history of this game.

## Chaturanga

Even though we cannot associate a certain starting timeline with this game, we will have to go by the time frame agreed upon by most historians. The game of Chaturanga was believed to have been invented in India around the sixth century.

It was during the rule of the Guptas that the game of Chaturanga was discovered. The game was then called Chaturanga, based on the four divisions of the military. At that point of time, the four divisions of the army were the elephants, infantry, horse cavalry and chariots, and the pieces in the game represented these four divisions. In the game of Chaturanga, the king was accompanied by his general or counselor and there was no Queen.

The rules of Chaturanga differ from the rules of modern chess in many aspects and though these two games had different rules, the game of Chaturanga can be played easily on the modern chessboard. In the game of Chaturanga, the soldier was allowed to move only one square as part of his initial move unlike the pawns of today, which are allowed to move two squares as part of their initial move. Another important difference between the two games lay in the way the pieces were arranged on the board. In the modern version of chess, the kings are placed facing each other. However, in the game of Chaturanga, the kings were placed in a diagonally opposite fashion.

A chief distinction in rules is that in Chaturanga, to win, the player must eliminate

all the pieces of the opponent, except their king; hence it is very clear that the concept of checkmate does not exist in the game of Chaturanga. Another key variance is that if a player manages to stalemate the opponent, the player who is stalemated wins the game. This contradicts with the rule in modern chess, namely, stalemates are considered as a draw.

## **Travel to Persia**

When Chaturanga moved to Persia, this game underwent several changes and the biggest revolution in the game of chess happened at this point of time. The game soon became a hit among the noble families of Persia and very rapidly became an integral part of formal education in Persia. When Chaturanga moved to Persia, it was known as “Shatranj”, and when you look at the rules of this version, you will realize that it is not so different from the modern version that we are now accustomed to; nevertheless, there were still differences between the two. It was during this stage when several modern day tactics emerged, in other words, many famous chess tactics employed today were actually derived from Shatranj.

The way the various pieces were arranged on the board is not different when you look at both the games. The significant difference between the two, like in Chaturanga, lays in the fact that the pawn was not allowed to move more than one step initially under Shatranj. Also, just like how it was in Chaturanga, if a player managed to eliminate the pieces of the opponent, except their king, he was considered as a winner in the game of Shatranj. On the other hand, if a player managed to stalemate the opponent, he was considered as a winner. This is the polar opposite of the stalemate rule under Chaturanga.

It was during this period when several prominent players emerged. These popular players wrote several books on the various strategies, openings, and tactics also spoke of their experiences. These literary accounts by the Shatranj players were the initial contributions made to chess literature. A few noteworthy Shatranj players during this period were Al-Razi, As-Suli and Rabrab.

## **Chess in Europe**

When the Islamic conquest of Persia happened in the seventh century, the game of Shatranj traveled to all the Muslim countries. By the end of 1000 A.D., this game

soon became popular in Russia and Europe. Eventually, the game even spread to Japan and China. The Japanese and Chinese improved the game of Shatranj and brought about a lot of variations and these versions of chess have major differences from the style of chess that is played all over the world.

From the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century till the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, this game underwent a lot of changes. Several rules of Shatranj were changed and newer tactics were discovered and employed. The rules that were framed during this period were soon accepted all over Europe. These rules are still in practice in all tournaments across the globe even today and it was during this time that the game of Shatranj started transforming slowly into chess.

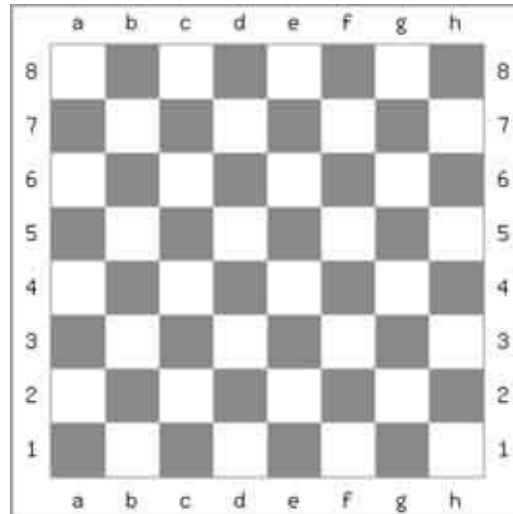
Eventually, more rules were created to ensure that the game did not take eons to finish. The pawns were allowed to move two squares as a part of their initial move precisely due to this reason. The move known as “en passant” also came into existence to speed up the game and in addition, it was during this time that the concept of castling was also introduced. With the advent of the fourteenth century, the powers of the Queen and the Bishop increased tremendously. The Queen gained a lot of power and there was a point in time when chess was referred to as “Mad Queen Chess” because of the powers bestowed upon the Queen. When the fifteenth century rolled in, the game started resembling what we are now familiar with today. Several famous chess strategies and tactics were also discovered during this era.

I hope you found the history of chess fascinating and intriguing. Who would have thought that the simple game of Chaturanga would evolve into one of the most popular games in the world today, chess!

## **Chessboard And Chess Pieces**

Before you start playing chess, it is imperative that you understand the board and what each piece on the board represents. All the pieces need to be arranged in a correct fashion and only then can the games begin. Let us look at the board and pieces in detail.

### **The Chessboard**



At first we arrive at the chessboard. As you can see, there are 8 by 8 square tiles for a total of 64; half the tiles are white and the other half are black.

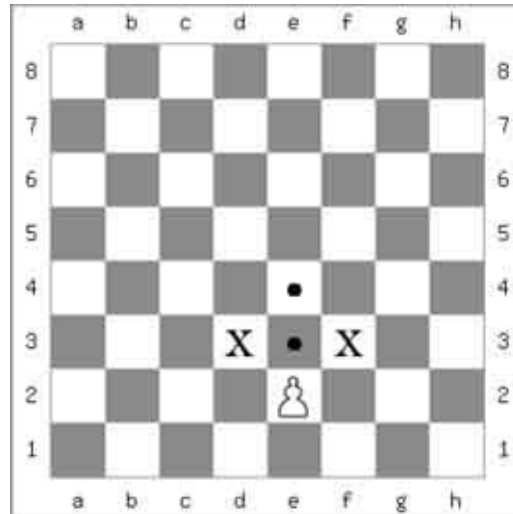
On the sides vertically, observe how there are numbers extending from 1-8; these are termed “Ranks”.

On the sides horizontally, observe how there are alphabets extending from A-H; these are termed “Files”.

These terminologies were coined to make it simpler to identify each square. Sometimes, people may call them rows and columns but if you want to start learning the language and game of chess, it will be simpler to continue referring to them as files and ranks.

### **Pawn** – *Value 1*

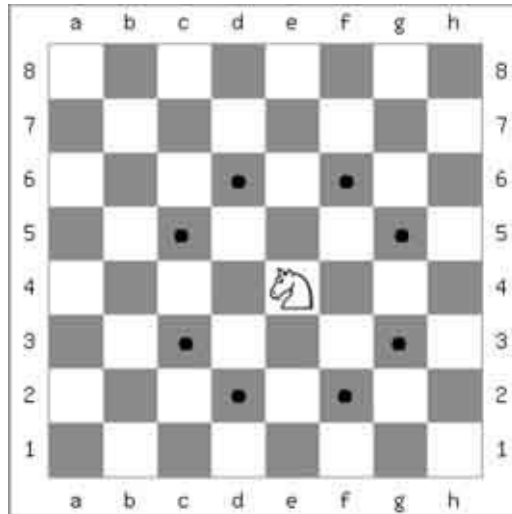
The pawn is the first line of defense that everybody has on the board. There are 8 pawns each side in all and they are also known as foot soldiers. They stand in front of the other pieces and protect them. Although they stand in the first row, their value is not too high. This makes people believe that pawns are not valuable but you must recognize that all your pieces are vital, especially towards the endgame. It is possible for you to checkmate your opponent’s king and obtain victory during the latter stages of the game with merely your pawns if the positions are fitting.





The first move of your pawn can either be one step or two steps depending on what strategy you have in mind. The pawn will always only capture another piece by moving diagonally except if you utilize the “en passant” move that will be explained in a later chapter. After the first move the pawn can only move one step forward per turn, so if there is another piece in front, then your pawn is potentially trapped. Your pawns cannot move backwards once it moves forward and so, you must move them carefully on the board.

### **Knight** – *Value 3*

The next piece is known as the knight. The knight is shaped like a horse and is also sometimes also referred to as the horse. Each player is dealt two knights at the beginning of each game.

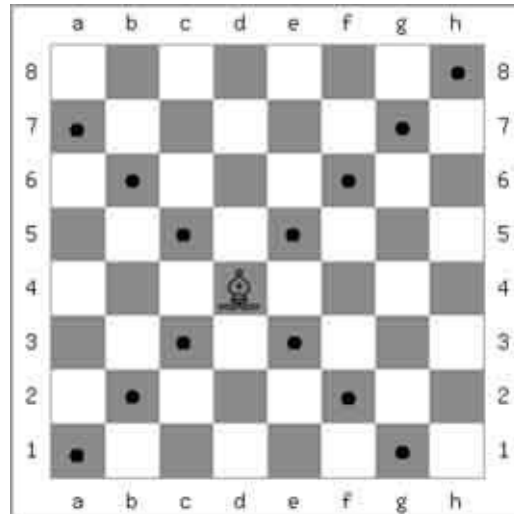


The knight starts by standing next to the rook on both sides and moves in an “L” shape fashion. This means that it takes two straight steps and then one to the right or the left. Similarly, it can also move one to the right or left and then 2 steps forwards or backwards. The knight is quite powerful, in that, your opponent might not notice that you have strategically placed your knight in a powerful position. With this movement pattern, it can jump over pieces, which if used with a well-calculated strategy, makes this a most dangerous piece. It can capture a piece only if the victim lies on the last square.

 **Bishop** – *Value 3* 

The bishop is a piece that stands next to the king on one side and the queen on the other. Owing to this placement, one bishop will always stand on its color and the other on the opposite color.

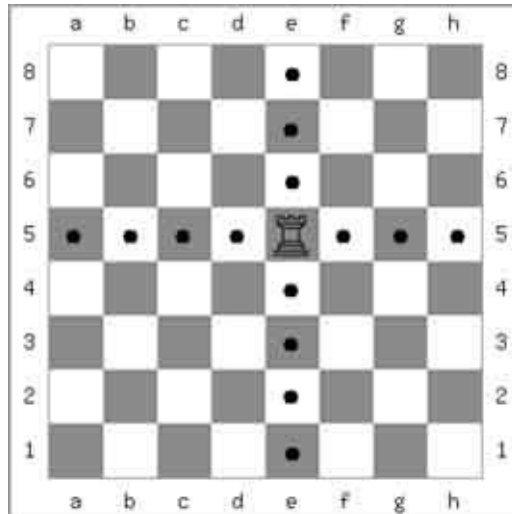




The bishop always moves diagonally and cannot move in any other way and even while attacking, it will only capture diagonally. It can move as many diagonal squares as it likes as long as the board permits. It is generally considered to be more powerful than the knight although their piece values are equal. Many believe that two bishops attacking are much more effective than two knights or a knight and a bishop together. You can pose a bigger threat to your opponent by using your two bishops and playing an attacking game, especially towards the endgame.

### **Rook** – *Value 5*

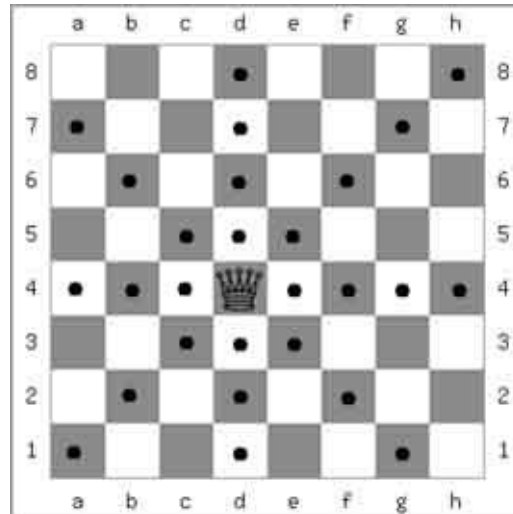
The next piece on the board that we will read on is the rook. Many consider this to be one of the most powerful pieces on the board and rightly so. The rook is also known as the elephant and starts off placed on the far ends of the board, one on each side.



The rook only moves in straight lines like the pawn and cannot attack diagonally. It can only kill whatever lies in its path and can move both vertically and horizontally. Another distinction is that it can move as many squares as it likes so it can move to the other end of the board in a single turn, provided there is nothing obstructing its way. The rook is also used to serve another important purpose. It can be used to exchange places with the king to safeguard him, which is known as “Castling”. All that must be is to clear out the spaces between the king and rook, and then their positions may be exchanged legally with some rule exceptions.

## **Queen** – *Value 9*

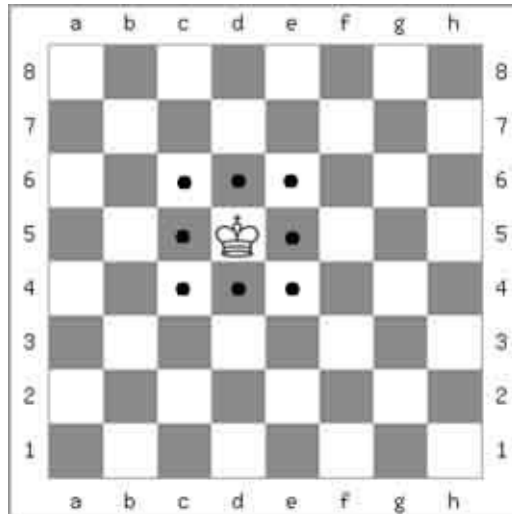
The most effective piece on the board is nonetheless, the queen. The position of the queen is next to the king; the white queen starts off standing on a white square and the black queen on a black square.



The queen is allowed to move in any direction and take as many moves as she likes. This makes her extremely powerful and fearful so it is extremely crucial that you safeguard your queen as much as possible and not allow any harm to come to her. She can win you the game in no time, provided you use her to her full potential. The queen is a hybrid and has the diagonal power of the bishop and the straight-line attack of the rook. She does not move like the knight, which is her only drawback.

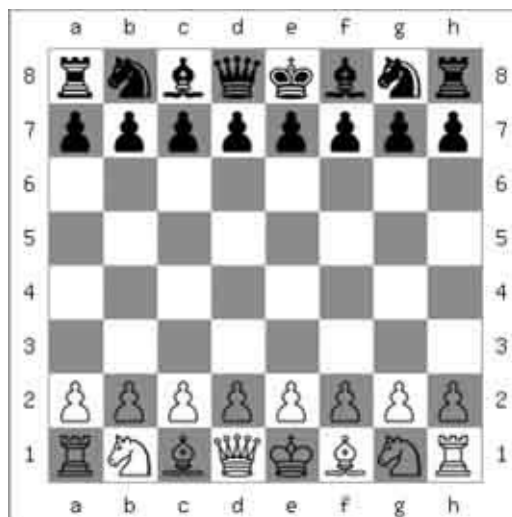


The king is the most important piece on the board and defending him is the main motive of a chess game. Even if you have all of your other pieces on the board, losing the king will mean the end of the game and your loss so right from the very beginning, you must safeguard your king.



The king can move only one step, diagonally or straight. This limits his powers a lot and makes it easy for your opponent to attack him. Although you would think the king is useless, you must understand that it is the most important piece and can help you win the game in late games scenarios. Accordingly, start thinking of its merits and how you could use it strategically to your advantage because after all, it's your most important piece. Most people do not move their king much at all during the early and middle stages of the game as once he is out of his fort, he is endangered. It is best that you castle early and put him in a safe zone, lest the enemies restrict your offensive by keeping you in "check".

## Starting position



On both sides of the board, there are 16 white pieces and 16 black pieces. Both

players have an identical number of each piece.

The white pawns all start off on the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank and the black pawns all start off on the 7<sup>th</sup> rank.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> ranks are the rest of the pieces. They are in the order from left to right respectively of: Rook, Knight, Bishop, Queen, King, Bishop, Knight, and Rook.

## Chess Notation

Have you ever been infuriated in attempting to learn chess through what appears to be algebraic math equations and with no luck deciphering the meanings?

If you have never learned this language of chess before, and somebody proposed to you a hefty amount of money to decrypt Bxd7+ Qxd7, you would be sweating and exhausting every speck of your intellectual power but undoubtedly to no avail.

The truth is, learning chess notation is extremely important to your ability to succeed as a chess player. It might seem a bit daunting at first but in actuality it is simpler than learning the multiplications table. The benefits of learning how to record games are enormous, and what's even bigger is being able to decipher games.

For a quick illustration, once your able to record and read chess notations, you will become able to:

- Examine excellent moves
- Scrutinize blunders
- Replay matches
- Analyze different playing styles
- Review the games of top players

What this all boils down to is becoming a better chess player. Don't limit your ability by not learning this amazing tool to put into your arsenal. Below is a table of the most commonly used Algebraic Notations; make an effort to memorize them. After you are confident that you have a good grasp of the definitions and notations, we will proceed to an excellent example that can help you in both learning the notation and seeing how a live match plays out between two chess players!

## ALGEBRAIC NOTATION

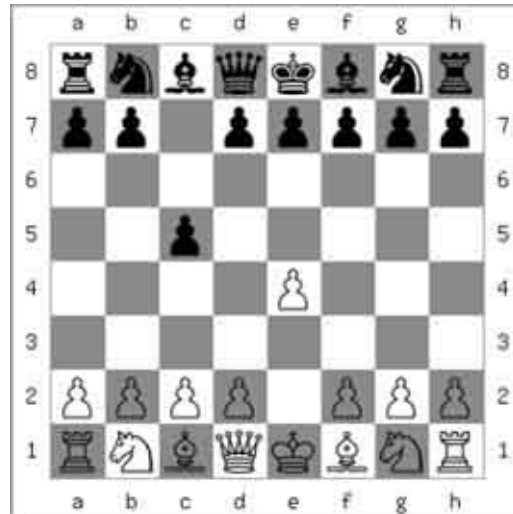
Definition	Notation	Definition	Notation
King	K	Queen	Q
Rook	R	Bishop	B
Knight	N	Pawn	(No Notation)
Castle King's Side	0-0	Castle Queen's Side	0-0-0
Capture	x	En Passant	e.p.
Check	+	Check Mate	#
Good Move	!	Excellent Move	!!
Poor Move	?	Horrible Move	??
Pawn Promotion	=	Draw	½ ½
White Win	1-0	Black Win	0-1

### Notation Practice

Now that we have the basic notation down, you must be itching to see how it works in reality so let us get straight to it.

The example selected here starts off with the popular opening discussed in the next chapter, "Ruy Lopez". Now, let's practice using algebraic notations and see how games are recorded. We've also included a small sample sheet of what score sheets are like!

1. e4 c5 (The white pawn moves to e4 and the black pawn moves to c5)



2. Nf3 Nc6 (The white knight moves to f3 and the black knight moves to c6)



3. Bb5 e6 (The white bishop moves to b5 and a black pawn moves to e6)

Ruy Lopez has been initiated.



4. Qe2 d6 (The white queen moves to e2 and a black pawn moves to d6)

Notice that as a result of the Ruy Lopez, the black knight on c6 is now pinned. In other words, the knight cannot move otherwise the king would be in danger.



5. Na3 Qf6 (A white knight moves to a3 and the black queen to f6)





6. e5! xe5 (The white pawn makes a good sacrifice by moving to e5 to get attacked by a black pawn)

This is a small trap set by white to open a file to attack black's king.



7. Nc4 Ne7 (A white knight advances to c4 and a black knight advances to e7)



8. Qd3 g5 (White's queen moves to d3 and black advances a pawn to g5)



9. Nd6+ Kd8 (White's knight advances to d6 and puts the black king in check. Black's king moves to safety at d8)



10. Ne4+ Ke8 (The white knight then moves to e4 which leaves the black king in check from the white queen. The king moves back to safety at e8)



11. Nxf6# **(1-0)** (White's knight makes the finishing blow, by attacking black's queen at f6. This move also puts black into checkmate, and the game is finished)



Sample Score Sheet					
Date: November, 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 1999			Event: WCA Chess Tournament		
White: John Davidson			Black: Bill Lewis		
	White	Black		White	Black
1	<i>e4</i>	<i>c5</i>	11	<i>Nxf6#</i>	
2	<i>Nf3</i>	<i>Nc6</i>	12	<b>1-0</b>	
3	<i>Bb5</i>	<i>e6</i>	13		
4	<i>Qe2</i>	<i>d6</i>	14		
5	<i>Na3</i>	<i>Qf6</i>	15		
6	<i>e5!</i>	<i>xe5</i>	16		
7	<i>Nc4</i>	<i>Ne7</i>	17		
8	<i>Qd3</i>	<i>g5</i>	18		
9	<i>Nd6+</i>	<i>Kd8</i>	19		
10	<i>Ne4+</i>	<i>Ke8</i>	20		

# CHAPTER 1



## Major Chess Openings

Having an effective opening can help you set the pace and tone for the game. Your opening can give away your style to your opponent and vice versa, thus, it gives you ample opportunity to play according to your opponent's style. You might wonder, "What good an opening can do"? Let me state here at this point that many games have been finished in a matter of minutes due to powerful openings. Sometimes all you need is a challenging opening to catch your opponent off guard and drive the game in your favor. Hence it is important that you are aware about the different openings in chess not only to use them against your opponent but also to know what to expect when your opponent plays a certain one.

Keeping this in mind, I have chosen some of the most important chess openings and explain them in this chapter. Use them wisely.

### Ruy Lopez

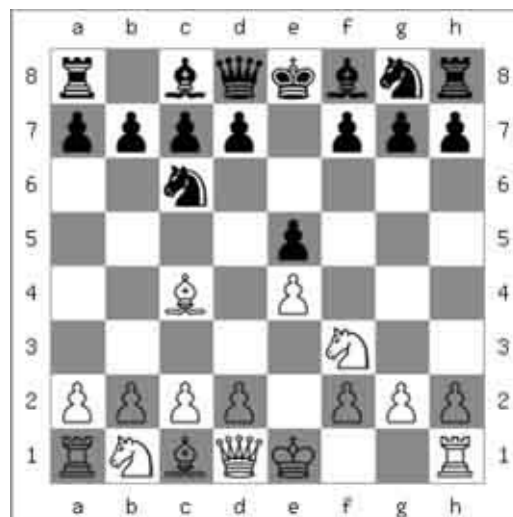
Moves: 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5



This opening is popularly known as the Spanish game and was named after a Spanish priest, Ruy Lopez, who discovered this opening in the year of 1561. This opening was however not appreciated or used much at that point of time. Only over the years, this has become a favorite among pros (grandmaster levels as well) and is regarded as one of the most powerful chess openings. It is used as White's best attempt in gaining an advantage after double king pawn formations. A major plus of this opening is that it gives the white player enough opportunity to develop a complex offensive strategy and also slows down Black's pawn formation.

## Italian Game

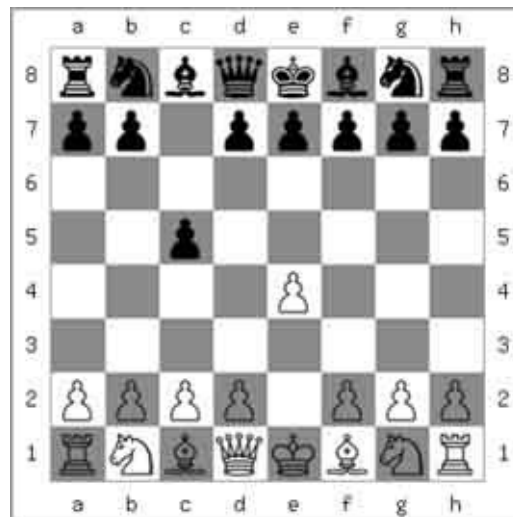
Moves: 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4



The Italian Game is another old chess opening like the Ruy Lopez and was discovered in the 1600s. This opening was fairly prominent at that point of time since people overlooked the Ruy Lopez opening. Nevertheless, with the Ruy Lopez opening hogging the limelight over the years, this opening has lost its charm. This is generally because of the conviction that the Bb5 move in the Ruy Lopez opening puts the Black at a better disadvantage than the Bc4 move in this opening. Nevertheless, this is a powerful opening by itself and should be considered if you want to start the game on an offensive note.

## Sicilian Defense

Moves: 1. e4 c5



This opening is a favorite among the Black players when White moves the king pawn to e4. The reason is because this opening gives the Black player an opportunity to retort very powerfully to White's opening. This method perhaps can neutralize any aggressive opening of the White player, which is precisely the reason behind its popularity today. The c5 is a much more effective response to e4 than any other move and can be used to black's advantage if the next moves are played right.

This defensive stance was considered as a terrible opening when it was discovered initially and was not used in many games originally. Nowadays, it is one of the most common chess openings being widely used across various levels of tournaments play.

# French Defense

Moves: 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5



The French Defense is an opening that favors the Black players. Even though this opening gives way for the White player to get hold of the center, it forces the white pawn in the e line and pressurizes the White player to play his next move wisely which is used to the advantage of the Black player.

# Caro-Kann Defense

Moves: 1. e4 c6



This is again another opening that is favored by the Black players because it offers a



strong retort to the White's e4 opening. Though it offers good defense to the Black player, it is not as popular as the French defense. This opening has undergone a lot of variations since its discovery. The opening was discovered by two chess players namely Horatio Caro, an English player and Marcus Kann, an Austrian player in the year 1886. Though this is not a dynamic opening unlike others, this can win huge favors for the Black player if backed by a well-defined pawn structure.

## Pirc Defense

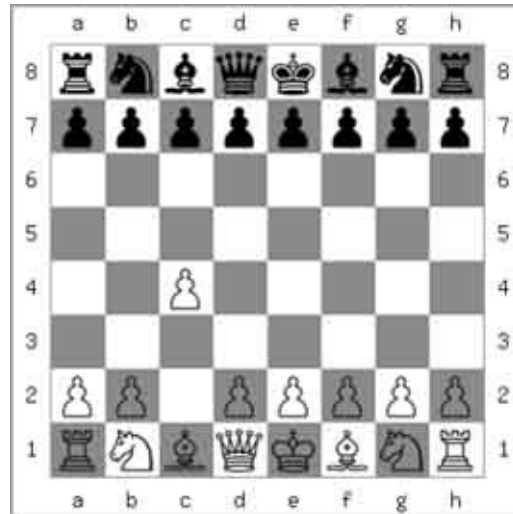
Moves: 1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3



This opening is again well suited for Black players. Just like the Sicilian defense, this opening was regarded as a terrible one at the time of its discovery. However, over the years, it has gained popularity and has become a favorite among Black players. This is an interesting as well as a clever opening because of the way it is capable of turning the tables. In the beginning, this opening gives room for the white to build in the center. However, this can be used to the advantage of Black to launch an aggressive attack against the White in the center and is one of those openings that give the Black player ample opportunity to take up an offensive strategy through opening up a lane for the black queen and bishop to gain an upper hand for the game.

## English Opening

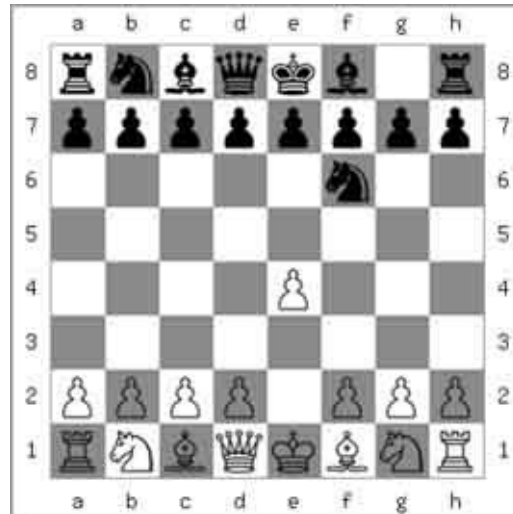
Moves: 1. c4



This is another opening that can work wonders for the White player, if played right. This opening has undergone a lot of experimentations over the years and there are numerous combinations of subsequent moves. If the white player plays it cautiously, he will be able to adopt an offensive strategy against the Black player by opening up a lane for the queen. For all practical purposes, this can be called as a reversed Sicilian defense for easy understanding. However, this opening is more dynamic than the Sicilian defense as there is lot of scope for improvement and innovation; for this element of unpredictability associated with it, this opening is considered as another one of the most powerful openings.

### **Alekhine's Defense**

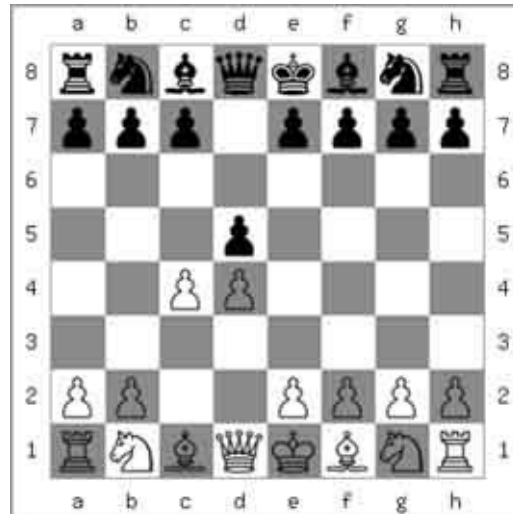
Moves: 1. e4 f6



As opposed to the other openings we have seen till now, Alekhine's defense was not discovered eons ago. It is in fact a modern opening and was only discovered in the year of 1921. This defense is also regarded as a hypermodern defense and is a very useful opening for Black players as it gives them an opportunity to launch an aggressive attack. Under this opening, the White player is prompted to move his pawns forward in order to create a broad pawn formation. This broad pawn formation can be easily used by the Black to its advantage and can become the basis for launching an aggressive attack. Another reason why the Black players favor this move is the fact that it is capable of nullifying all the pre-determined moves that form a part of White's opening. This style of play also removes all symmetry to the board, which is advantageous to aggressive players.

### **Queen's Gambit**

Moves: 1. d4 d5 2. c4



This is one of the oldest openings in Chess and is considered as an aggressive opening, well suited for the White players. Though it might look like favoring the Black player at the outset because of the loss of pawn for the White, this opening is proven to have given the White player enough ground to launch an offensive attack. However, a notable point about this opening is that it also gives opportunity for the Black player to respond to White's moves with an aggressive strategy. Hence it cannot be completely regarded as an opening that will benefit just the White player. Various games hold enough proof to the fact that this opening can benefit the Black player as well, if the subsequent moves are played right.

## Modern Defense

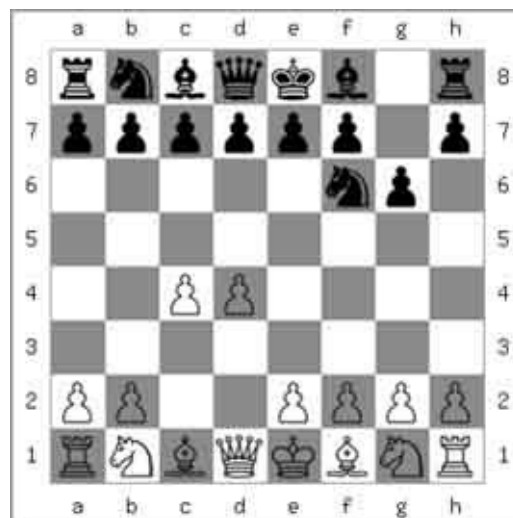
Moves: 1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7



This opening has been used to catch the opponent off guard in some games, though it is not used frequently. This opening sets out to support the Black player but ends up helping the White player gain an advantage over the Black player. As in the case of the Alekhine's defense, the white pawns are prompted to move forward to set up a solid pawn structure in the center. This paves way for the Black to attack around the center. Just like the Alekhine's defense, this opening negates any advantage and restores balance in the game. Since White will not be able to predict the next moves of Black, this opening can be used by Black to launch an aggressive attack. At the same time, this opening also helps White in adopting an offensive strategy because there is enough opportunity for White to build a strong center. With a strong center, it makes it easy and possible for White to launch an aggressive attack against the Black. Though it has many merits, this opening is least preferred by the players as it has a tendency to complicate the game and often players are left with no idea as to what would be the next move of their opponent. This lack of predictability and clarity associated with this opening is the main reason behind its lack of fame.

### King's Indian Defense

Moves: 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6

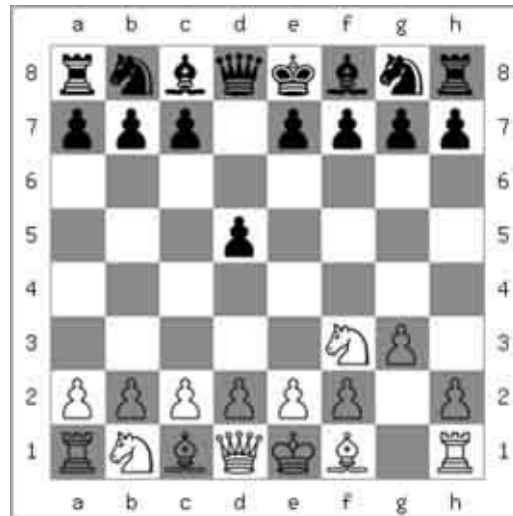


This is another commonly used chess opening and is another example of hypermodern game play. This opening makes it feasible for White to gain control over the center with his pawns. At the same time, the Black player is also given enough opportunity to challenge the center control exercised by White. It has been a constant favorite among professional players as it is a very dynamic opening and

has a lot of scope for improvement. Another added advantage of choosing this opening for Black is that you are given an opportunity to develop your bishop, knight and also castle your king in the beginning of the game itself. You will understand the importance of castling your king early into the game in a later chapter of this book.

### King's Indian Attack

Moves: 1. Nf3 d5 2. g3



The mirror opposite to Black's King's Indian Defense is the King's Indian Attack. As you might have guessed, this opening favors the White. Openings such as the French Defense, Sicilian defense are a favorite among the Black players, as these openings tend to break the symmetry in the openings of White. However, this opening is capable of retorting any defensive strategy adopted by Black and allows White to adopt an offensive strategy. This opening can result in aggressive middle games whereby both the players lose a lot of pieces.

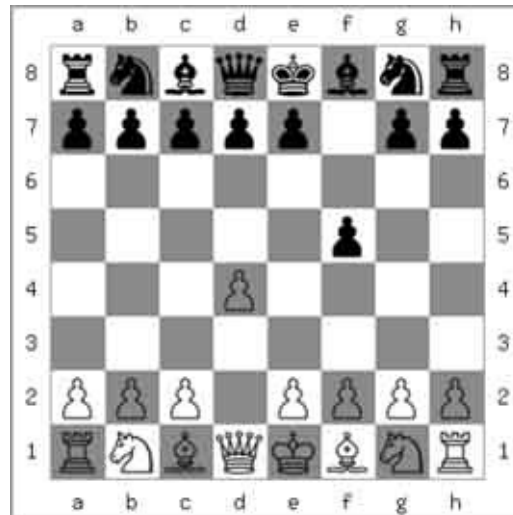
An interesting aspect of the King's Indian attack is that it need not be used just as an opening. It can be adopted as a strategy during the course of the game as well. Ideally, White can adopt this strategy to squelch any defensive moves of Black. The twin goals of this opening/strategy are as follows:

- To enable White to develop their pieces.
- To bring about an all-out against the black king

This requires exceptional tactics from the Black player to neutralize these aggressive moves from the White.

## The Dutch Defense

Moves: 1. d4 f5



The Dutch defense is considered as the most aggressive retort by Black to White's opening. This opening gives Black the opportunity to launch an attack on White's kingside during the course of the game. However, this attack results in the f7 square of the black becoming an easy target for the White. This drawback can be easily overcome by castling the king. This is one opening that promotes aggressive moves from both players and this makes the game all the more interesting and exciting. Despite its multiple benefits, this opening can also be a double-edged sword for black as you open yourself up against a quick checkmate if you're not careful and are playing against an experienced White.

These are some of the commonly used openings. I am sure that you were surprised as well as inspired after reading about these interesting openings. I am confident you are waiting to try them out in your next game. The importance of a good opening can never be stressed enough. A good opening can most certainly change the fate of the game; hence it is absolutely essential that you have some knowledge about these various openings.

**What's Next?**

We looked at the different major openings that you could employ in a game of chess. Now, let us take a quick discussion on what to do after those initial crucial moves.

The very first advice is to develop pieces fast. This concept includes memorizing your different opening strategies literally by heart and knowing which position is advantageous to each piece. You should be prepared with a game plan if you wish to have a good start to your game instead of going into it without a plan.

The next thing to do is, control the center of the board. As you know, it is important to balance the board at all times. At no point in the game should you remain confused about your pieces and their development. How you place your pieces in the center of the board is what will determine how your game will move forward. There are two types of situations that can arise when you wish to garner control over the center of your board. One is known as the open center and the other is a blocked center. The open center is one where you and your opponent both have an equal chance at controlling the center, so you have to quickly advance all of your important pieces to the epicenter; this will ensure that you have a good control over the board. The blocked center is one where the opponent has already placed all of his or her important pieces and it is difficult for you to move any of your pieces forward. This is a bad situation and it is important that you do your best to avoid it by creating puzzling circumstances for your opponent. You must create these situations for your opponent but if they don't come about, then you must quickly re-strategize. Try to look for an opening and strategize how you can take control of the center as soon as possible.

Apart from these two, there is another situation known as the dynamic center. The dynamic center is one where the two players are unsure of who really holds the center of the board. In this situation, it is important to see who has the quicker route to gain control of the center and that you can do by seeing whose key pieces have more of a positional advantage.

The next thing to do is quickly move your king to safety. As you know, your king is your most important piece in the game. At no point should it be exposed or vulnerable. For this, you must immediately move him to a safe place. However, remember that the move should be meaningful. Don't simply move him in such a way that it endangers his position. If he is safe wherever he is, then let him remain there. It pays to castle early in the game as you can usually place your king in a



protected position. For this, you must purposely move all the pieces that lie between the king and the rook and then exchange their positions, which is another reason why the “Ruy Lopez” opening is so popular. Another important concept is literally to send an entourage with your king. This means that you move a few safety pieces with your king if you wish to transport him from the usual spot. So if you move the king forward, your next move is to place something in front of him. That way, you safeguard your king and have the chance to help him remain safe. Even if your opponent kills the defense, your king can easily kill the other person’s piece. However, make sure you know what you are doing as it might be a trap. The opponent might purposely kill your defense to provoke you to make a mistake so think it through when you place a defensive piece in front of your king.

Another advantage of an early castle is developing your pieces. What this will do is, help you move them around instead of having them stagnate in their place. Many new players fear moving their big pieces such as bishop and knight thinking they will endanger these but if they are not moved, then you will endanger your king and slow your offensive attack. In saying this, remember it is best that you move them on the board as soon as you can; this is also known as developing them.

The next important thing is to concentrate on piece quality. This means that you focus on the value of the piece before moving it on the board. Each piece has different values, as you know, and you must place them on the board in such a way that the values are spread out on the board instead of being lumped all together.

Don’t fall into the pawn-moving trap early on. This is where most beginners go wrong. They start moving the pawn around and don’t realize that it is important to move the other pieces as well. Remember that a piece that is not active on the board is as good as not having the piece at all. You must steer clear of this mistake and start moving your other pieces early on. As was mentioned before, you need to move your pawns to the center of the board.

Next off, lets take a more in-depth look at some general strategies.

## CHAPTER 2



### General Guidelines for Strategy

Oh, the love of the game. There are countless different methods to play chess, which is perhaps why it draws such a fertile assortment of various thinkers from all around the world, keeps evolving even after hundreds of years of engaged play and even proves that no one particular style of play is significantly superior over another.

Did you know that the FIDE – the Fédération Internationale des Échecs or World Chess Federation – is the third largest sporting organization in the world? It only follows up behind the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale Football Association (FIFA) for soccer! The FIDE represents over one hundred and sixty nations, making it a single, unifying testament to a longstanding history, rich in many cultures.

It is no wonder the game is so dynamic; cultivating this much diversity of ethnic backgrounds situated across the world to finally facing each other over one table. It is as much a people-game as it is an intellectual one, because players inevitably (and thankfully) bring their outstanding backgrounds of humanity and personality into it, keeping chess all the more interesting.

Chess parallels the same interests in life. Many players thrive on observing and participating in games where there's exciting action; they allow themselves to become excited and emotional over great upsets. Fast and loose players who are used to board domination receive quite a disturbing reality-check when thrown together with more thoughtful positional players with highly developed strategies.

And that is why I'm so pleased you're taking the time to read this book, because you are giving yourself the opportunity to understand all these points of view and the valuable nuances that lay beneath them. So let's lay out some further general

rules to get you peppered up to becoming a seasoned player, shall we?

To understand exactly what you'll be getting into, perhaps some brief clarification is in order – strategy and tactics are as different as homemade and store-bought apple pie. You'll know all the specific ingredients it takes to make each one but it is up to you to take the time to figure out why store-bought tactics are a temporary fix and a calculated move while homemade strategies are long-term investments that you ideally should continue to improve upon and that keeps you coming back for more.

Tactics teach you temporary tricks and when to recognize their usefulness. Strategy lends a critical-thinking frame of mind for you to cultivate a chess advantage by carefully setting up small advantages over a long time, all driven towards a particular goal.

The purpose of strategy can be refined to creating one or more of these advantages:

- More material (force; strength in piece values)
- Superior piece development
- Superior pawn structure
- More territory (space)
- Safe King position (usually when castled)

We'll get into these and other specific strategies in the next few chapters. For now, let's stick to general concepts. As I briefly stated a moment ago though, it will be up to you to recognize a possible advantage in gameplay and use these provided dynamics to develop a plan that allows you to hone an edge over your opponent from that window of opportunity.

You must be able to weigh your options when making this judgment and compare with your opponent's position while determining what advantages a strategic move will bring you. For example you may be willing to capture an enemy bishop with one of your pawns, which will gain you a material advantage, but the resulting movement of that pawn can weaken your king's defenses. Is that truly going to serve as an advantage for you? Probably not. In all likelihood, considering the skill

of your opponent, a move like that could cost you the game, as it plays out further.

It is these small details in battle between players who are constantly changing up their existing advantages for new ones in an attempt to solidify a secure victory that ultimately epitomizes benchmarks of great play.

## **Target Development**

Do you know how most millionaires earn their prestigious status? It is usually not by making a few fell swoops of effort like winning the lottery, getting lucky in the stock market, or having an idea or skill that happens to be so popular it catches like wild fire and propels them into riches. Those cases are the rare ones. They usually occur once or a few times but have no consistency that the average person can mimic and achieve comparable results.

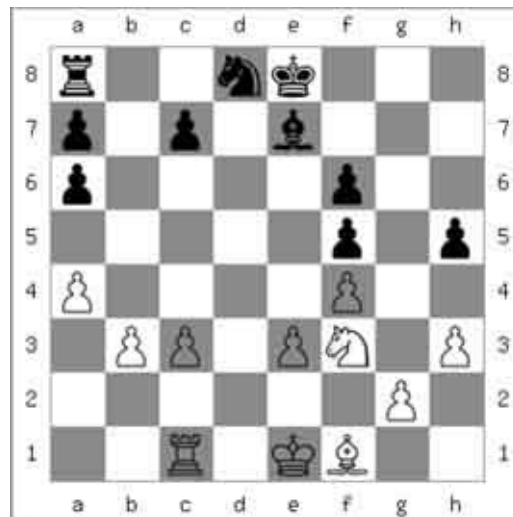
Most millionaires develop an earning for their keep by pinching pennies and saving small amounts of money every chance they get. Over time and with some skill and success, they manage to raise themselves into positions of distinction through the correct utilization of their resources. While keeping their overall goal in mind the whole time, they realize the most reliable strategy to make it happen comes in making the most of those small steps when they present themselves.

To develop a masterful consistency in Chess and earn some favor in being able to contend with unfamiliar styles of play, you must adopt this same strategy. Of course the ultimate goal is to arrive at checkmate to the demise of your enemy's king but you cannot expect to get there quickly every time. And so to improve that outcome consistently it becomes a matter of first building up a series of small advantages, step by step, in a manner of well-planned positioning that will come to reveal weaknesses in your opponent's home territory. The eventual acquisition of weak squares or weak pawns will strengthen your overall strategy and army, rendering a victory for you.

One of the most vital approaches you can develop to support your game is being able to identify targets, or weak points, within your opponent's formation. This should become a mindset where you are constantly looking to profit from your enemy's weaknesses. It should be an attitude that feeds into your hunger for creating these targets and finding ways to land them, keeping ravenous in your

efforts until you have maximized upon every potential advantage. There are two essential ways to do this: the first is through weak pawns, and the next is weak squares.

## Weak Pawns

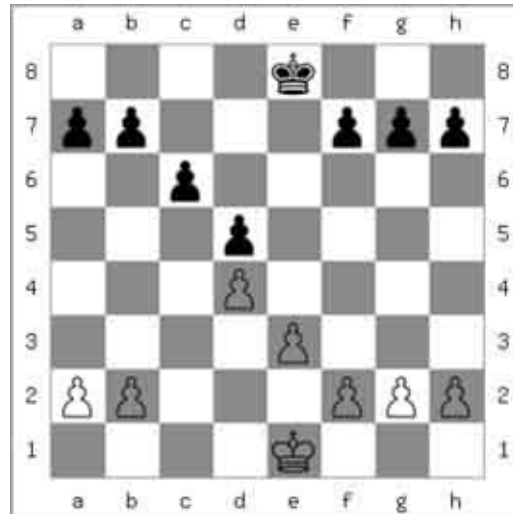


(Weak Pawn Representation: All the black pawns are either isolated or doubled!)

Weak pawns are simply those that are open for attack. They are unprotected either by being lonesome or at the base of a vulnerable pawn chain. These types of vulnerabilities may sometimes appear because of an opponent's own mistake, but you should not count on them to give opportunities to you. You have to create these weaknesses for yourself, and that is the method for this type of strategy.

- Create a target by identifying weak pawns among your enemy's camp.
- Go tour-de-force to attack it.

Simple right? A well-known and extremely useful method for doing this is a strategy known as a 'minority attack.' The minority attack follows as:



- Employ pawns (2) to attack a pawn majority (3), with the goal of leaving your enemy with weak squares and opening up lines.

Another good rule of thumb is:

- Always try to dominate the square directly in front of an isolated enemy pawn. This supersedes any type of control your opponent may try exert with the said pawn or other pieces to make use of its protection, and allows you to lay a virtual cloak of occupied critical square territory over your opponent and into their defenses.

## Weak Squares

These jewels of strategy are not as obvious to identify as weak pawns are and can play with the heads of some players as to their true nature but there is no need to be alarmed; it simply boils down to understanding what it means to claim a square and recognizing how a particular one can be used to the good of your campaign.



(f7 is the weak square, can you comprehend why?)

Weak squares are strategic points of interest toward the middle of the board and into the enemy's territory that do one or a number of things. You can identify weak squares as:

- The squares that are safe from attack of enemy pawns.



(a6, c6, and d6 are all safe from enemy pawns)

- An opportunistic point of play for your pieces to occupy whether physically or by way of their attack moves.



(d5 is a weak square because it's untouchable by all black pieces minus the king)

- Squares that serve as support points for any one of your other pieces, especially knights that are dependent on them for their own strength.
- Squares that are nailed down by several of your other pieces to prevent enemy pieces from moving onto them, limiting their movement, or to provide advancement for your other pieces that will implement a persuasion of pressure on the enemy when in place.

The underlying principle to be aware of in pursuit of such superior regions is that they are called weak squares because they expose weaknesses in your *opponent's* territory and their strategy while they provide *you* with a significant advantage, increasing the power of your pieces, making them quite valuable to control.

That being said, just as you are looking like a bloodhound for these gems in your opponent's domain, they will assuredly be doing the same in yours, so stay alert to any exposed weak squares, quite aptly dubbed as 'holes', and make sure you have them covered in your own territory and on the front line at the center.

The domineering attitude that comes with the pursuit of these squares is described as such because they can give you a fairly competitive edge however, control of a square alone will not necessarily lead to triumph, you will need to combine it with other advantages to bring your opponent down. Remember that you have *all* of these eager pieces at your disposal. One high and mighty piece cannot do the work



alone or they will run into trouble in their overconfident attempts. So when you gear up to claim these holes for yourself, do not just go in with one or two pieces - use everything you have. Bring as many pieces as you can to bear down on it.

Since you are choosing to invest in such a square with your strategy, it will become part of a pivotal point well throughout the midgame. Indeed, sometimes a square can be the center of a big fight. One side may want to control a focalized weak square for attacking purposes while the other might look to block it for defense. In very involved schemes like this, and also as an important cohesive rule, you must train yourself to learn how to wield your army as one massive, scrupulous entity.



We can see here that the white player's c4 pawn has kept the d5 square warm and open as a support piece for his knight to supplant itself nicely in the fifth rank, where it now imposes control over critical squares at b6, c7, and e7 for future advancement of other pieces; it is essentially impeding development of the dark squared black bishop. Black's light squared bishop could not have had much effect on rebuttal over the control of d5 because of white's c4 support pawn, which also blocks black's c5 pawn, making white's c4 pawn a very lucrative central piece.

## Territorial Domination

After the opening game and target development begins, your next line of focus should fall front and center – that juicy hunk of open territory in the middle of the board is just waiting for some exquisite gameplay to enhance its attraction. So, wouldn't you want to do the honors of making yourself available to it before your

enemy can infiltrate? Of course you would! Generally speaking, the more space you command with your pieces, the greater superiority you have over the direction of the game, which is exactly how you should want to lead into a favorably working midgame strategy.

In accordance with your openers, pushing pawns forward is the leading way to take advantage of territorial space. Don't get too excited just yet though. If you focus too much on gaining space without adequately keeping your front lines protected and back lines defended well, you just end up opening yourself to an enemy onslaught. Another point to take into consideration is that while you are advancing and hugging up all that comfy space, you must exert control over it to prevent its turnover into enemy hands. Thus it becomes a goal and a responsibility to maintain the central position.

Some tips to remember:

- Extra space gives you long-range advantage. It allows a wider variety of options for your pieces to move and puts pressure on your enemy's forces, confining their own movements.
- There is no need to rush territorial acquisition. Unlike the attitude we discussed in targeting and controlling weak squares, the strategy for special advancement allows for slower formations.
- Once you have a good reach into the middle of the board, make moves to keep your borders defended. Put a stranglehold on your enemy that they cannot break free from and continue to strappingly eke forward over the ranks.
- Open lines when you want to attack and close them when you are trying to defend.
- Avoid trading pieces if you want to ensure that the space you are claiming for yourself stays that way. The idea here is to cramp your opponent's pieces so they end up fumbling and tripping over themselves or getting locked without a place to go. From there you'll be able to pick them off as the opportunity presents itself. Your opponent will attempt to trade pieces. Counter this with a well-defended offense.

- Center of the board = honeypot. Plain and simple, whenever you get a chance to play here, do so. However if you find the center locked up in pawn squabbles, you'll want to exercise your agility and go for the wings. Essentially and effectively, neither you nor your opponent has a choice. So if the center is blocked, play the wings. Bishops and queens usually make great authorities here.
- Conversely to the advice above, when you find yourself defending against an attack on the wing, you should always, always counterattack in the center. This will be your best bet hands down. With this piece of advice you may notice the reciprocal relationship between offensive strategies and counterattacks with their location on the board. Spend time playing with this concept so that you may develop a better understanding of overall territorial movement and play. It will make a great foundational understanding of chess strategy on which you can build.

Remember how the constant changing of advantages for new ones throughout the game was discussed early on in this chapter? A great example of that lies in the case when a keen opponent manages to derail your spatial advantage. With the loss of a spatial advantage comes the exertion of a newer one if you have set yourself up well. Some of your central pawns may have been wiped off the board, but if you have a few remaining in the c or f files for example, you can use these as support points for a muscular knight to quickly grapple critical squares and keep the squeeze on your opponent.

Likewise, the loss of pawns can be turned to your advantage by realizing there are now open files which can be held in sturdy command by centralized and winged rooks in the back rank. If you foresee the loss of your spatial advantage at its gradual beginning, have your rooks waiting in place to either beam their prowess up through the file as your pawn is threatened or even sacrifice that pawn for a superior mobility advantage into the endgame.

Later in Chapter 4 under Pawn Structure, we'll take a look at the use of pawns to dominate the center and in turn how to defend against a pawn center.

## **Making Your Advantages Relevant**

Does a fox make a good hunter in the water? I'm not quite sure, actually. The point is, in order to make strategic advantages work for you, it is vital to know when they become relevant and how they relate to the basic principles bulleted at the beginning of the chapter; all in context with your opponent's advantages. This can be a common folly that amateurs make; any leverage you build is only good if you are able to follow through with positioning that allows that leverage to be applied. Apply your cunning in a way that suits the environment. If you create the opportunity for a particular advantage like a strong pawn formation for example, follow through with it as far as you can effectively make it work for you.

Giving up territorial space to the enemy in result of your efforts for a supreme structure however should make you reconsider whose strategy is more useful. It becomes a matter of weighing out your plans and possessions over your opponent's, determining whose may be superior, and confidently knowing why yours may gain a greater advantage if you are to follow through with that particular plan. Make a note as well that this process occurs consistently throughout the game, attributing to its vast dynamism: players' strategies will change according to the shift of the advantage it brings them, with respect to their opponent's changes in formation as well.

That goes to say though that better players are ones who play thoughtfully enough to set themselves up for an alternative strategy that can arise out of the ashes of a failed one. Only when resulting exchanges with your opponent weaken your strategy should you begin employing alternatives. You'll want avoid changing tactics in mid-strategy, prematurely abandoning the build up of a working one, for another that may appear more tempting because it breaks down the effectiveness of your overall formation.

## **Helpful Strategic Guidelines**

### **Never bring out the queen too early**

When you are a beginner, you will be tempted to bring out your Queen and play in an aggressive fashion. However, understand that this might make your Queen a vulnerable piece and can actually result in you losing your Queen. As we all know the Queen is the most important piece on the board after the king. Losing it early into the game can be a very big advantage for your opponent. Hence ensure that

you bring out your Queen only when there are enough pieces to back it up.

## **Try to seize open files**

Whenever you come across an opportunity to seize an open file, make sure to seize it. This can increase your advantage in the game. A seized file can help you a great deal in delivering a checkmate.

Bear this tip in mind while you play because it can certainly increase your chances of winning.

## **Bring the bishop and knight out quickly**

Before you think of moving your other pieces such as, your queen, rooks or king, shift your bishops and knights to the middle of the chessboard. To attack, you need to get these pieces out from behind the pawns. Because your knights can jump over the pawns, you don't have to remove the pawns in front of your knights to be able to move your knights. Coming to the bishops, you can move them forward by simply moving the pawns that are diagonal to them. Thinking of just moving the pawns as a way to protect your other pieces, like many amateurs do, will only lead to you losing your game! Never be afraid to attack! The only way you can win is by attacking your opponents' pieces.

Play openings such as the "Ruy Lopez" or "Italian Game" to get the feel of bringing these pieces out quickly.

## **Keep an eye on your back**

Never hesitate to try to think like your opponent during your turn. "What was the point of my opponent's last move? What does he have in mind?" These are some of the questions you should ask yourself continuously throughout the game. Is he laying traps to capture your pieces? Once you think you have an idea of what your opponent is up to, it is your time to decide your plan. Always look at all the possibilities that you have. The priority should be to catch as many of your opponents' pieces or to capture the king first. So look for moves that help you reach these goals. But always remember to double-check or even triple-check your moves before you make them. Be sure that your move doesn't expose one of your pieces or leave it unprotected. You need a solid defense as well as a good attack. You should also be willing to sacrifice some of your pieces for the greater good, in

this case, to capture your opponent's king. But such decisions should never be made in haste. Always think it through and look at both the pros and cons.

### **Don't waste time**

Try to finish your game in as few moves as you can. Don't focus on trying to capture all your opponents' pawns or try to move all your pawns. This is major hurdle for most beginners. If your opponent happens to be wasting his or her time moving their pawns, then this is your golden opportunity to develop your high value pieces. This is when you start attacking them and make sure you take out as many pieces as you can. This will cause your opponent to get tensed and they will tend to make mistakes. Chess is a game of the mind, so make sure that you can predict what your opponents plan to do and foil their plans. Always keep in mind how much move and time a particular offensive strategy takes and remember, don't waste time.

### **Protect your king and castle early**

Castling is a move that allows you to protect your king and use your rook. Once all the squares between your rook and the king are free you can move the king two square toward the square where the rook is while the rook moves to the square on the king's other side. Look for an opportunity when your opponent disregards to castle, this is when you can launch an attack on the opponents king. This move is the only way where more than a single piece can be moved in a single move/turn. Keep in mind that castling is not always a favorable in a game. Most people use it to counter an oncoming offensive attack, but with practice and presence of mind it can be made into a game changer. Castling too late is not a good strategy either because as the board becomes more spaced, the lesser defense "castling" gives you

### **Attack after the opening**

Your "opening" ends once you manage to move all your bishops and knights into the game. After this starts your middle game. The middle game is when you should be on the lookout for how you can capture your opponent's pieces, so focus hard on any piece that your opponent doesn't protect. But keep an eye on what will happen to your pieces if you take your opponent's — will it lead to some piece of yours being unprotected? Always look for ways that allow you to position your men in such a way that you can attack and capture your opponent's king.

## Owning Your Last Stand

Higher levels of chess play require you to be on your game. Even so, the psychological factor still plays into the game, making for interesting turnarounds at the last moment. Lower-ranking players in tournaments feel the pressure when they know they are up against higher-ranking ones, but it does not mean that they are doomed to defeat. Basically it comes down to novices playing a near-perfectly-designed game (which is why the all-hailed Blue computer poses such a challenge to the best of players). People, even the masters, still feel emotions and those distracting ones such as pride, frustration, anger, worry and fear which can influence the best of contenders. You can use this to your advantage by making attacks to get your opponent's attention. Many times he will leave his own plans to the wayside and turn completely to the defense where you may make an apparent loss transform into a nail-biting victory.

Sometimes things will not be going your way, especially toward the transition from the midgame to the endgame. You might be down by a few pieces or blown out defensively from a weak pawn structure or open files that your opponent plans to expose with a rook barreling into your home base. Nevertheless, you still have options. Do you choose within fair reason to make a pounce on your enemy's king? Do you have more space for movement with your remaining pieces?

You may find in certain situations that by allowing your opponent to stay busy ruthlessly capturing pieces, you can sneak some stealthy pieces of your own behind enemy lines for a win in a few carefully planned moves. You can also draw out your opponent's aggression with the option to force some trades for a nimble endgame. If you are able to find some advantage, any advantage within your remaining formation, you still hold out hope for a chance to win or at least to draw, so go for the glory and go on the offensive.

The type of last-chance attack I'm referring to plays on your opponent's psyche and may force them to make a fatal error. There is an old chess expression that can very well emulate real life circumstances, and the saying that goes, "A poor plan is better than no plan at all." Your last attempts just shy of desperation may end up failing anyways, but you can feel sated knowing you gave it your all. Know that you will be dotting upon a few realities that the tireless pursuit of game strategy perfection seldom acknowledges:

- Errors of some kind are seen in virtually every game
- All chess victories are a result of the loser's mistakes and the winner's ability to take advantage of them (weak pawns, failure to occupy space, forfeit of critical squares, etc.)
- Another saying in chess to the tune of, "The winner is the player who makes the next-to-last mistake."

There's no telling where your opponent will move on the side of error, but when you attack out of necessity, you still stand to chance that your opponent will have certain advantages in one area while you hold some in another. The key is to keep a calm frame of mind over your opponent and play where your strategic advantages reside.



## CHAPTER 3



### Endgame Strategies

Playing for the lucky win, though infrequently discovered, definitely has a reputation in the chess community. The situation is referred to as ‘playing for a cheap shot,’ or ‘cheapo’ for short. I’m sure a place awaits the titan underdog player who can learn to master even a technique such as this to be nicknamed as such, but I digress.

To ensure consistency for a winning endgame there are a few quintessential principles to live by:

- When you are ahead by material force (number of pieces), you must trade like the hawker at a Chinese flea market.
- Avoid making last-minute blunders by taming your ego and playing it safe.
- If you have a secure advantage, take your time to stop any of your opponent’s potential counter play.

Trading pieces makes for a particularly useful idea if you can be sure to find yourself in the endgame with a material advantage of a pawn or more. Really? Just a pawn you say? If you have managed to strip your opponent of all his pieces, save the king and a couple pawns or one mobile piece, remind yourself that you probably have passed pawns (ones that have crossed into enemy territory) that may come in handy for a promotion to a queen or lesser piece. Then with no defense, your opponent will shudder knowing they are in for it.

Just keep in mind while you are going after all the finger-snapping trades that material advantage, while being the most obvious lead in to an overall victory, does not own sole-proprietorship in chess strategy. If you fail to keep developing the

sweeping force of your army, you may be caught off-guard by your opponent's superior pawn structure or their level of mobilization. You should try to find a good balance between defense and a pressing impediment that advances your own plans.

Remember not to neglect your positional development, enforce your material advantage if you already have one, and finally nip any last hope of your opponent's chances in the bud by eliminating his remaining threats before he finds a way to make you sorry you didn't.

Here you can understand the basic endgame strategies in chess. A common problem with chess players is that they can create effective strategies for the opening and the middle of the game but cannot do the same for the end.

In saying this, we thought we'd compile a list of general tips to help you especially towards the latter stages of the game.

## **14 Tips For The End Game**

### **1. Bringing Out The king**

If the pieces on the board have dwindled down to all pawns and maybe one or two other pieces, your king may be the best piece to attack your opponent's pawns and defend your own. To win a game in latter stages of the game, you should have an active and centralized king.

However, if you still have a large number of pieces on the board that can be used to mount a defense, moving your king might not be the best idea. Near the end of the game, if you have enough pieces to ward off any attacks from your opponent then you don't have to utilize your king and in this case, let your king remain in his position and focus on attacking your opponent using your other pieces.

### **2. Work out your next move**

Most players, both amateurs and professionals alike, believe that tactics and calculation play a role only in the middle game. But particularly with the insignificant pieces, you need to accurately analyze your moves. This can be a mere

simple calculation, such as counting a passed pawn race in a king and pawn endgame, which is a frequent situation. This can also be some of the more complex variations, which need more complicated calculations. When the pieces on the board dwindle down bit, it is imperative to develop a knack to calculate at least 5 steps ahead of the current positioning, learn to cultivate this skill as you play more games. Never underestimate the importance of any of your pieces, each one is just as important as the other, especially in endgame scenarios. If your opponent captures one of your important pieces earlier on then you will be in trouble. Don't think you can move your pawns without calculating the repercussions; every move matters. What if you move away all the pawns in front of the king and have none to defend the king? Remember, skillfully calculate each and every move before making it.

### **3. Trade Off - Bishop or Knight?**

In an open position (less board pieces), the bishop serves as the stronger piece while in closed positions (more board pieces) the knight serves as the better choice. A bishop can move with ease if there are open diagonals and the knights can jump over a trap of locked pawns so it depends on what stage the match be at when determining to trade these two pieces.

## **4. The pawns stay together**

Always remember to avoid isolating your pawns because it is hard to protect them from your opponent; you don't want to waste precious time reaching out to protect your pawns but you also don't want to lose them. Doubled pawns are also problematic as it may restrict mobility. To avoid these late game pawn issues, well calculated openings and midgame's are required.

### **5. Right Time to Exchange Pieces**

It is one of the best endgame tactics to exchange your pieces if you can gain a material advantage from the process or if you have the current material advantage on the board. However, be cautious of exchanging pawns if they are crucial to your end game strategy.

### **6. Take Care While Moving Your Pawns**

Devise your moves to the eighth rank properly if it is crucial to promote into a queen. Use your king and let it be the front-runner. Move the piece to the farthest point possible on the board. Meanwhile do not forget to advance the pawns as well. Pawns are game-changers; do not lose them without any purpose. However, if their sacrifice serves the greater good (allowing another pawn to develop into a queen), sacrifice as many pawns as possible.

## **7. Pawns and Momentum**

Chess is full of strategy and you often might need an extra move to gain the advantage; this extra move might not appear to be so beneficial but when it boils to the end of a game, it could mean everything. An example of this would be when two king pieces come face to face. In such a case, whichever piece moves first loses territory and can be squeezed into a corner. Keeping a pawn nearby in such cases will come handy as you can play ‘dead’ moves with them.

## **8. Two Pronged Strikes – Pawn Promotion**

When you approach the endgame, often your opponent is left with limited pieces. These pieces may prove to be insufficient in defending the board on both ends so if the situation favors this strategy, utilize pawns on both the ends of the board so that you can promote at least one of them. Do a quick careful analysis first to see if at least one of your pawns theoretically can be promoted, as you do not want to send them on a suicide mission.

## **9. Centralization of the King and the Pieces**

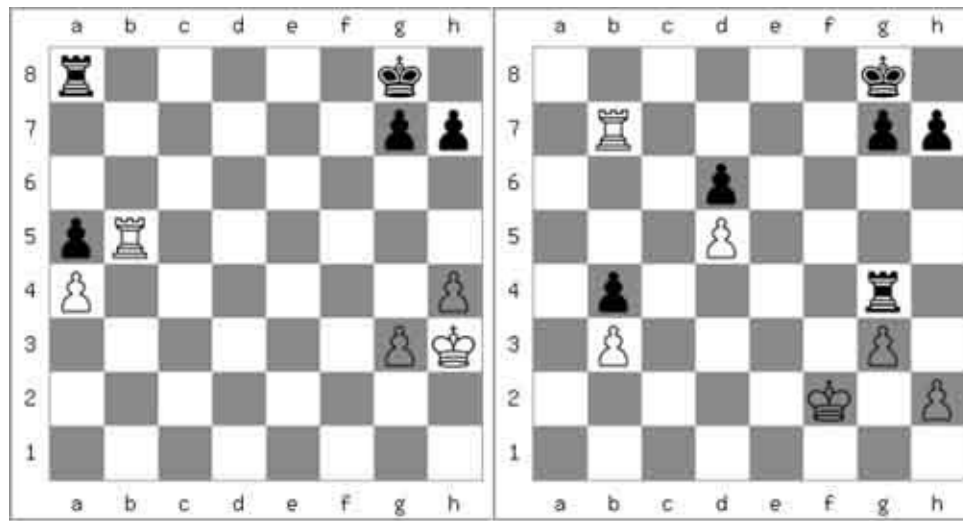
A king achieves a significant role when you reach the endgame, as it becomes an offensive piece. Moving your king to the center of the board becomes advantageous as it can then support your other pieces in a quicker fashion.

Play whatever moves you can to get your king in the center position, and then compete to maintain the position. When the king is put in the center, it can move to the queenside or its one side according to the situation. Centralization of the king also reduces the movement of the opposing king so do not let the opponent king get the center position. Other pieces too will become weighty if you centralize them and hence moving most of your pieces in the center will give you upper hand in the

game especially in end game scenarios.

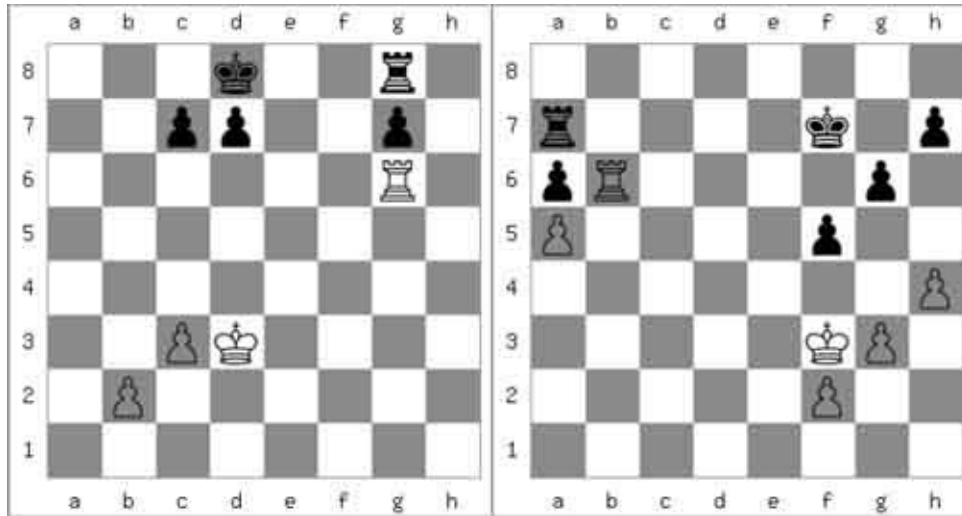
## 10. Aggressive Rook Placements

Remember that in exception to the king and queen, the rook is the subsequent most valued piece on the board. Advance your rook into an attack pose. A well-placed rook can change the direction of the game and can help you to win the game as well. By placing your rooks in an aggressive manner, you can restrict the movements of your opponents. If you have misplaced a rook, lose any pawn so that your rook gains an active position. However, this should be done only when your rook will get a good aggressive stance, do not waste your pawns for some trivial position.



1) Ineffective black rook placement

2) Effective white rook placement



3) Passive black rook placement

4) White has an active rook

## 11. Synchronization Of All Pieces

At the commencement of every game, you are given a variety of pieces for a reason. Don't just single-mindedly focus on developing a few pieces; you must develop all of them for them gain the most advantage possible. In the late game, don't leave any pieces lingering doing zilch, you must organize all your pieces and have them complement each other. This goes with the popular saying that, "It's not what cards you have, it's how you use them."

## 12. Keep the Militia banded

Your pieces are like an army formation and they must move like one together. Do not separate them. Plan your strategy in such a way that the opponent will have a difficult time attacking you. You should devise a way to move your entire group without sacrificing any of the pieces; make a mental note of this and practice moving your pieces together while holding a strong defensive formation. Do not leave a few pieces stranded and have your opponent slowly pick them off; you will lose the game soon if you do this.

## 13. Rook Files and Ranks

Do your best to attain a material advantage on the rook files and the ranks where your active rook is currently placed. Exchange your pawns to weaken your

opponent's pawn strategy. This will force the enemy to adopt a defensive and passive stance that will benefit you immensely. In order to do this however, develop the instinct to effectively and aggressively position rooks in the late stages of the game; analyze your games and see if a superior position may have been open.

#### **14. Think Defensively If You Are Winning**

It is easier to manage your pieces towards endgame situations because there are a lot fewer. In saying that, if your material outnumber your opponents, take a defensive approach and don't make reckless moves because let's face it, you're already winning and there's no risk to gamble with strategies where the outcome is unclear. Take calculated routes in these periods of time to ensure your win.

We're now confident that with these tips and your experience through practice, you'll have developed a much more thorough understanding of how to play a sound endgame. Don't discontinue your education here however, there's more to learn on the subsequent chapter.

# CHAPTER 4



## Key Principles Behind Chess Strategies

If you are lucky enough, all you would need is a strong opening and an opponent who doesn't see through your opening to be done with the game in a jiffy. For the rest of the unlucky people, they will have to play till the end of the game. If you aspire to finish the game on a victorious note, then you need a proper strategy to back your motive. In this chapter, I have identified the key principles based on which various chess strategies are devised. Since it is not feasible for all the players to follow each strategy completely, it makes it redundant to go over them. However, if you identify the key principles behind the main strategies, you will be able to not only prepare a well-structured offensive but identify your opponent's tactics as well.

There are four key principles based on which all chess strategies are developed. Other strategies for each piece will be detailed in the following text as well, however the four to focus on for now are:

- (i) Piecequality and development
- (ii) Center control
- (iii) King safety
- (iv) Pawn formation

Let us look at each of these principles in detail now:

### Piece quality and development

As you may be aware, there are different kinds of pieces in the game of chess and each piece has its own value. The various pieces along with their values are as below:



- Queen – 9
- Rook – 5
- Bishop – 3
- Knight – 3
- Pawn – 1

However, these values are not to be taken as static because the truth is, every piece's true value continuously changes as the game develops.

Piece development refers to the ability of the piece to move effectively and complement the other pieces on the board, which can increase the true value of itself.

The attributes that determine the flexibility of a piece are as follows:

(i) **Flexibility:**

Flexibility is the ability of a piece to change its role. In other words, it is their ability to change their role from being a passive piece to an active piece. Usually pieces situated near the center of the board are more flexible when compared to the ones present at the corner of the board.

(ii) **Stability:**

A piece is valuable as long as it is on the board. A queen is of no value if it is already off the board. Hence ensure that you have all the strong pieces well defended. Never put them in vulnerable positions or leave them unprotected.

(iii) **Mobility:**

No piece can do its bit if it is not given enough space to move, not even the queen. Hence ensure that there is always enough space for your pieces to move.

(iv) **Suitability:**

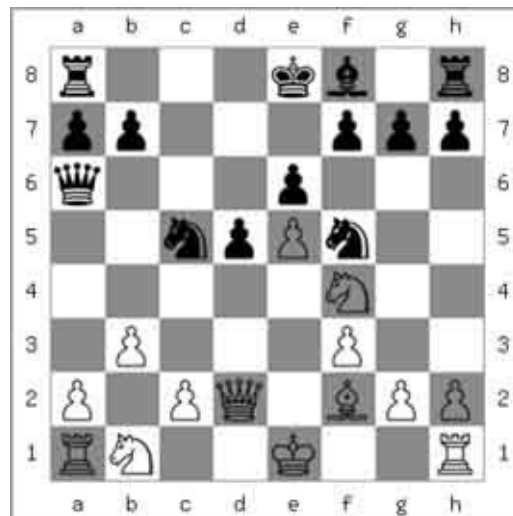
Understand the capacity of every piece. Some pieces are well suited for

aggressive attacks while some pieces are the best when it comes to defensive strategies. Understand the suitability of each piece before you employ them as a part of your strategy.

Some pointers to improve piece development are as follows:

- Do not let go of space advantage. Space advantage (a.k.a. territorial advantage) is nothing but controlling majority of the squares on the board. Basically as you move your pawns forward, you create territory for yourself. All the squares behind your line of pawns are safe territory for the most part during the early stages of the game as your other pieces are positioned behind them ready for movement and advancement. When you have more space advantage, you will be able to move your pieces accordingly to realize their fullest potential.
- Do not refrain from giving threats. When you stop giving threats, you are indirectly giving your opponent some time to think and retort, which should not be the case. So then this goes to say that by attacking, you will help direct your opponent's attention and make him worry. Oftentimes this will cause him to forget going after his own plans and turn completely to defense. This gives credit to the adage, "The best defense is a good offense."
- Do not allow yourself to be distracted or dissuaded from enemy threats. If you begin to give in to the pressure your opponent is trying to impose and you react, you are more likely to make a fatal error yourself and your defeat will never be too far off.
- Do not let any piece remain inactive. Advance these pieces and use them effectively. Oftentimes, beginners will leave half their major pieces in passive positions, memorize the various openings and understand how they can be used to not only advance the pawns, but the army behind them as well.
- Sometimes, there can be more than one good move. It is important that we analyze every move in detail before we proceed. This type of analysis will help us use our pieces in the most effective manner. Remember to record your games so you can return back to see if an alternative move may have yielded more fruitful results.

- Try to move your pieces as much as you can and try to get on to the other half of the board. At the same time, never let the opponent's piece enter your half of the board.
- Never give your opponent the opportunity to place his pieces on good squares. The process of denying your opponent to position his pieces on good squares is called *prophylaxis*, meaning 'suffocation' in medical terminology. Aaron Nimzovich of Russia originated this technique in the early 1900s. So revolutionary was this concept during his time that many of his fellow players initially mocked him for it. Unfortunately for them, Nimzovich soon changed their tune, winning game after game and earning the title of one of the world's top five players. Nowadays all top players of chess use this idea.



In the above example, the White player here has made great use of prophylaxis positioning, which most effectively draws a frustrated emotional response from the black player. We can see white's superior pawn and knight formation, along with his f2 and d2, immobilizes black's knight advancement at b3, d3, d4, e3, e4, g3 and h4. Black's queen is also restricted from white territory all along the open lane of diagonal light-colored squares it so hopes to capitalize upon.

Through setting up a "suffocating" defense to prevent your opponent from taking any of critical squares, you not only defend yourself but you allow your opponent to waste valuable turns as well.

These are more strategies that form the basis of any chess strategy.

# Center control



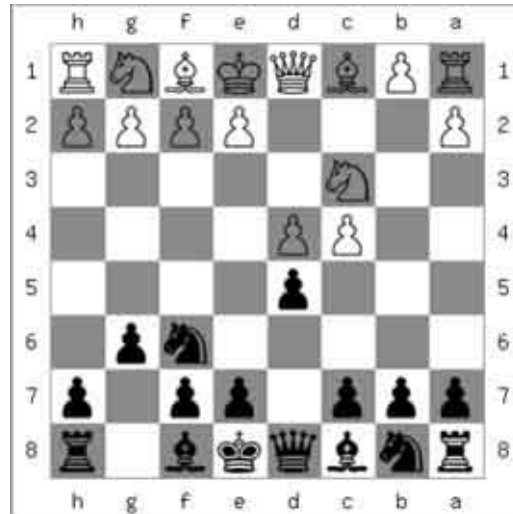
(White Center Control)

It is highly important that you have control over the center. Having a command over the center is required for many reasons; king safety and piece development are the most prominent. Hence it is evident that this principle is linked with two other principles behind chess strategies, and that by playing one good strategy, you are efficaciously laying the foundation for the other strategies as well. Before you gain control over the center, it is important that you understand the current status of your center. This will give you enough opportunity to plan your next moves. Ideally your center can fall under one of the categories:

## **Blocked center:**

A blocked center is a situation where it is impossible to open the center. The idea behind instigating a blocked center is to take away any chance of opponent dominance over it and deprive them of central squares. Back in the 1800s it was believed that this was an indestructible idea and the best way to counter if your opponent is trying to get a command of the center.

Since then, a modernist view has earned strength in belief that central pawns can be treated as weaknesses. We can see this proven true with Black's position in the Grünfeld Defense, which allows the White player to take control of the center first, only then to have Black bypass it effectively.

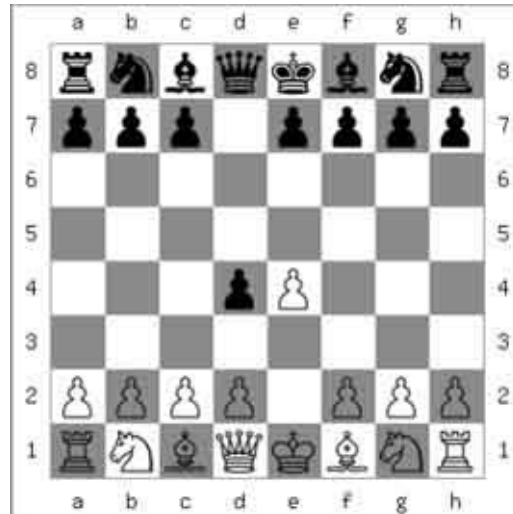


(Grünfeld Defense – Black bypassing blocked center)

A few tips to deal with blocked centers are as follows:

- Learn to organize your pieces properly. Using pawns to take control of the center gains you space in your territory.
- If you intend to create one, aim to provide yourself with control over critical squares by way of those advanced pawns so they provide a nice home for other pieces to advance upon.
- If your opponent has stuck you with one, concentrate your pawns and pieces to chip away at it.
- Once you organize your pieces, proceed to build them along the flanks of the board.
- Be ready to position your pieces in any file that might open up during the course of the game.

**Open center:**



An open center is the opposite of the blocked center. It gives both the players an equal opportunity to build around the center. Hence it is important that you make best use of the open center situation. A few tips to deal with open center are as follows:

- Forward all your active pieces to the center. Placing your active pieces in the center will not only assist in taking control over it but will also help in launching an aggressive attack against your opponent.
- When your focus is on building a strong center, do not waste any time over trivial things such as an isolated pawn. Sometimes, it is fine to lose a pawn to gain control over the center.

### **Dynamic center:**

A dynamic center is a situation where both the players are not sure about who holds the center. This confusion can make the game take unprecedented and undesired turns. To avoid this confusion, the following pointers have to be followed:

- Clarify first. Understand who holds more of an advantage in the center. This knowledge will help you plan your next moves accordingly. For instance, if you know that your opponent holds the upper hand, you will have to be careful and play more on the defensive side. On the other hand, if you realize that you hold the center, look to launch an aggressive attack.

- Look to point counts, piece mobility, material advantage, and superior pawn structure to help determine who has a greater control. When it becomes confusing you must consider the subtler advantages that each player has. For example if you have a superior pawn structure and your opponent has a gain in piece mobility (take into account those mobile pieces in their back territory) and material advantage, even by one piece, it is your opponent who has control. Their ample mobility of pieces means they can strike at any time, while it still may take you a few turns to get your pieces into a strategic position.
- Never make an aggressive move without clarifying. If it is indeed your opponent who holds the center, then an aggressive move will result in a high chance of you losing a valuable piece. Hence refrain from doing so.
- When your opponent has a firm grasp on the center of the board and continues advancement there, sweep your pieces out to the wings to counter.

## **King safety**

Every chess player purports to protect his king and win the game. Compromising on the safety of the king can ensure your failure in the game and hence, the safety of the king is definitely our prerogative at any point of time. A few pointers to keep in mind to ensure the safety of your king is listed below for your reference:

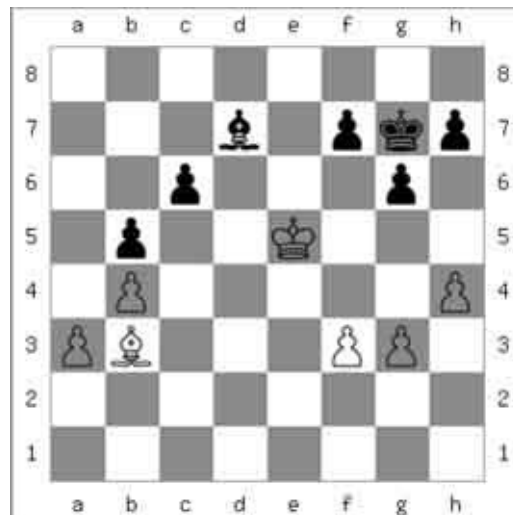
- Always ensure that there is a shield of pawns in front of your king. Lack of pawns or a weak pawn shield will definitely make your king an easy target.
- Arrange enough pieces near your king to defend any aggressive attacks by the opponent.
- Make sure that you hold the center. A strong hold over the center is important not only to ensure the safety of your king but also to launch an aggressive attack against your opponent's king.
- Learn to castle your king at the beginning of the game itself. Castling is an effective way to ensure the safety of your king. This again comes to memorizing the various openings that will allow you to strategically move your

pieces while permitting your king to castle with a rook.

If the capture of the king didn't mean a loss of the game, the dynamic of this piece's tactical movements would appraise it in a whole new light. This may sound irrelevant and even silly at first, so allow me to explain. Since the adaptation of the game as we know it today, the king has always been allowed to move one square in any direction. It essentially enacts a force field around itself to protect against impeding opposition so the gallant and even unruly bishops, queens and rooks may not invade his personal space without having backup to protect themselves.

During the late courses of the game however, a centralized position, the king's hidden power can take advantage of this fact to constrain your opponent's strategy and turn what may appear to be a weak disposition to your own advantage.

It's called taking the king for a walk, and like all other pieces on the chessboard, the king must be put to use if you intend to develop a well-refined and effective strategy to the game. The endgame, that is, is where the king's quality truly shines, so get him ready to don his walking shoes and go for a stroll.



In the picture above we can see the white king has made his way up the center of the board and is moving into position to threaten black's bishop. Black's bishop is virtually useless while the white king remains on the dark-colored squares. White's pawn majority makes a great contention against the black player's remaining forces and if played correctly, will have the chance for promotion on the queenside. White's bishop is also still very effective and will be able to pick off black's



remaining pawns.

At the endgame when the threat of many forcible pieces has dissipated, the climate becomes favorable to move the king to a more centralized location. For the most part when both sides only have a few pieces left, advancing the king to the center allows him to dodge around the protection of individual pawns working for him while providing the opportunity for him to capture the enemy's pawns that still pose a threat, especially if they are making their way into his domain for a promotion. This also saves your remaining mobile pieces the exhaustion of trying to play defense and offense simultaneously.

In a more centralized location, the king's force field allows him to occupy a larger area of critical squares that will make it more difficult for the opponent's pieces to attack up close and personal.

## **Duality of the Queen**

Amateur players quickly become enamored with the queen's power in all her tempting ploys. She is by far the most commanding piece on the board, which is why her piece value is ranked at 9. The queen can move in files, ranks, and diagonally at any length she pleases as long as her path is not blocked. In fact, the only trick she has not been gifted is that funky swoop the knight is able to pull off. Interestingly enough however, until 1475 the queen was only valued one-up before the pawns, limited to a one-step movement to any diagonally adjacent square.

Her newfound powers after which she was granted transformed her into a demolition expert that makes quite an intimidating distraction on the board. This is why amateurs develop such an attachment to her, which can cost them the game. They become so infatuated with her positioning and protection, investing the strength of their strategy in this one piece that they often forget about their other pieces, upon which a more experienced player will be sure to capitalize. Having lost what they consider their most valuable piece, an amateur will immediately lose confidence and their gameplay will suffer for it. Studying other chess books and players will show that professional players don't mind trading this piece up to play a more docile game.

So then, the queen's reigning fortitude also becomes her weakness. Rushing her out

too early in the game can seal her fate and cramp the true strength of one's strategy. Consider as a general rule to first of all avoid placing your queen in a vulnerable position through reckless unplanned actions, and more to the point, make her one of the last pieces that you bring out.

The safest way to effectively use the queen's prominence is to position your minor pieces first and keep the queen deep inside your own territory on an advantageous square for support. When you finally do choose to move her into a position she goes guts and glory for, make sure she is well protected by your other minor pieces. With your queen as the strong arm of a leading attack, you'll want to have the rest of your pieces ready to play a part in the action. This is how you can maximize the full extent of the queen's ferocity.

### **Rook - The Enforcer**

This is a fitting title for the second most powerful piece that is so often forgotten about because of the power of the queen and because of its beginning placement. Many times a rook will not be brought out until the endgame, or at all, or luckily find itself in action after a clamorous pawn before it is swept away. It is important to understand the value this piece plays and that by commanding an open file, the long arm of the rook acts as a mighty support system for the rest of its crew.

Before the queen was promoted to royal status in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the rook was the most powerful piece in the game. We can see this in its point value of 5, next in line behind the queen. In fact, this is an ideal physical place for the rook on the board. Whenever it is possible, get your rooks into open files, especially during mid and endgame situations where it can easily reach the back of the opponent's base.

This means that you must lead with your minor pieces after opening to clear some moving room for the rooks behind the lines. Visualize placements where one of your pawns may effectively sacrifice itself or capture an opponent's piece to open up that file and have your rook ready and waiting behind it. Performing a castle move will help find a rook a nice action spot in the center of play as well as protect your king. If you do this, move your queen to a strategic square so that the rooks become connected and that they reinforce each other.



When you place a rook in an open file, you can double or even triple on that file by placing the queen or other minor pieces onto it to take full advantage over your opponent with a battering ram force. In the later stages of the midgame and toward the endgame, plowing through enemy lines to home ranks with the rook in an open file spells certain disaster for your opponent. The rooks' reach, especially sitting together in adjacent ranks or files, acts as an electrified fence to corral the opposing king's movements and zap any presumptuous piece standing in the way. As with any cognitive strategy, assure the enduring force of your rook by keeping it protected with another piece whenever possible.

## The Wily Knight

Love them or hate them, this tricky stickler usually gathers some kind of pronounced emotion from professional players to amateurs, even if it is blatant confusion for not knowing what to do with the thing. Knights have the most unique moving ability of all the chess pieces, both in pattern and the ability to jump over other pieces, which attributes to their centuries-old lure and the difficulty that comes in harnessing their full strategic potential.

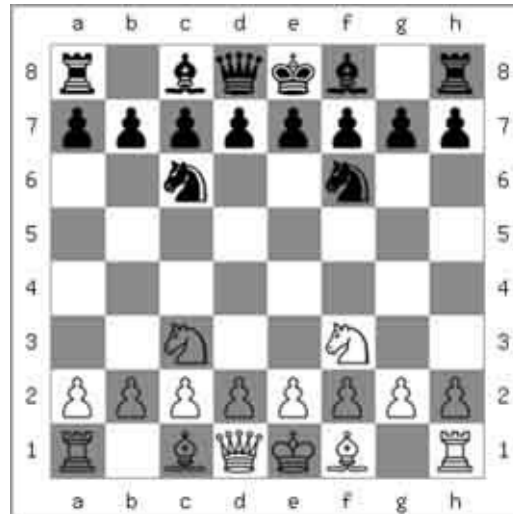
First you must decide within your overall strategy which pieces you will advance to attack and which you will keep behind to maintain a strong defense. Through practicing, within the opening moves and toward the midgame, you should soon be proficient in identifying which squares present themselves as critical for both sides. You will remember from the section on piece quality that weak or critical squares are very important to the context of the entire game, so important in fact that in

future games you'll want to spend a majority of the time you have in determining which squares present themselves this way early on. Then play into them well throughout the midgame. On top of that, you will need to figure out how to either occupy those squares yourself for pivotal advancement or exert prophylaxis, blocking them to prevent your opponent from taking them over.

Now that you have equipped your midgame strategy and determined which squares are critical, you may decide to drive your knight into the thick of battle or keep it reared to protect your king. You must train yourself to see every possible square that a knight may move to, whether it is occupied or not. Practice this on both sides of play in every move of every game you play and observe. This will help you greatly to understand the nature of the knight better and prevent undesired plays from taking you by surprise. Many players at the beginner and even intermediate levels do not take this into consideration, which is why they mistrust and have so diminutive a faith in this guy.

When you can see the potential movements of the knights, you will notice where they cannot move (game border restrictions, squares occupied by your pieces), where they typically should not move unless to some tactical advantage (blocked squares or enemy-occupied squares that are also protected), and where they can move (squares occupied by an unprotected enemy piece and all other open squares). In a centralized position, in at least the third rank, knights have a maximum potential of eight squares that they can cover. Most of the time however, a few or more of these potential squares are blocked by one of the instances described above.

A knight positioned in the first and second ranks is limited in potential squares; it doesn't allow for the pull potential but which makes this positioning feebly effective and purely defensive. So then, keep this in mind if you are going to reserve your knight for a defensive strategy to block your opponent from moving to any critical squares covered by the knight. This strategy can be useful however it still limits their potential.



(The Wily Knight can be used to it's full potential when positioned between the 3<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> ranks and between C & F as shown in the diagram)

When you decide to charge with a knight into attacking position, you must realize that knights need advanced support points to be effective. They are joggers, not runners, so it will take them some time to advance. If you muster them up the field by their lonesome selves you leave them vulnerable and prone to an easy capture. The squares you will be looking for can only be considered a support point if they cannot be attacked by your opponent's pawn or if attacking with a pawn would leave you open.

By moving a knight up to the third rank and beyond, you are now entering the battlefield and preparing yourself to set up a tasty scheme while still providing your back lines some defense. A knight in the fifth and sixth ranks is entering deep into enemy territory, and by this time with the proper support, it acts like a chokehold on your enemy and truly starts to cramp their style.

The fifth and sixth ranked positions allow the knight to begin locking on your opponents pawns, effectively weakening their pawn structure a.k.a. the first line of defense, as well as provide a lead-in for your other pieces to control the center and propel an advanced attack, tightening play into endgame material. Note too that these positions (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> ranks) allow the knight to claim critical squares over the enemy. It is for this reason that knights are known for being excellent blockers. Keep this in mind when encountering locked pawns, known as closed positions, whereby such a jam might inhibit other pieces' movements. It becomes a breeze for

the rowdy knight to simply jump over them.

## **Color-blind Bishops**

Though nearly every chess piece only ever has an option between landing on light and dark squares, bishops are limited in this case to remaining on their own color from the beginning of the game. Each player has a light-squared bishop and a dark-squared bishop, which makes a considerable difference at many points in gameplay. This does not necessarily define a weakness for the bishop piece.

To the contrary, they can supply excellent long-range blocks, attacks, and support for other mobile pieces in a diagonal position – difficult to see through pillars of pawns and other pieces – while still remaining hidden in their own territory. This provides them the stealth of the queen and rooks that cause them to appear as superior pieces; however the combination of their qualities in total still puts their piece value at a 3.

The bottom line is to understand that to have an effective command over the role of the bishops you must be able to determine them in three different types of classifications – good, bad, and active.

## **Good Bishops**

Considering the nature of the bishops' qualities, one is determined to be good when its path is unobstructed from central pawns. It means that all of your central pawns are on squares of opposite color to that of your bishop's path. If you have a pawn, or if an enemy has a pawn chain on your bishop's color, its long-range capabilities are neutralized.

## **Bad Bishops**

A bishop is bad if the previously mentioned condition exists where central pawns are on its color to block any effect it might have. Between the midgame and endgame, this situation can get messy for a bishop, especially if only one of its kind remains on your team. Closed positions in the form of locked pawns, especially in clusters, can be as frustrating as long-winding detours in heavy traffic. When few pieces are left in the endgame and one bishop remains with you, or vice versa, the opposing player can easily move their king to a square of opposite color than that

of the contending bishop, leaving it powerless.

## Active Bishops



In the diagram above, Black's bishops are both active but bad, and while black could advance his b7 pawn to b6 pawn to clear c8's path and move to either b7 or a6, it would still be confined by the nice lane white's pawns and bishop has created. The same goes for black's g7 bishop moving to h6 because of white's effective use of the c1 bishop. Note the dynamic central control by both players. Still, white can be considered to have control over the center because of his well-developed positioning of good active bishops. White is working with an effective strategy based on superior piece mobility.

An active bishop can be good or bad, what brands them as active is if they are in a position with many different agile options; the opposite holds true, an inactive bishop is one where its mobility choices are very limited or 0, similar to how they begin the game. While a bad bishop has virtually no options beyond their limited movement, an active bishop has many options that can flip the momentum to give its team an advantage. Active bishops that are considered good may be good by definition (all their central pawns rest on opposite-colored squares), although their movement may still be limited by the opposing player's pieces and there may be little they can do about that. Active bishops that are considered bad will have pieces resting on the same colored squares as that particular bishop, although the active bad bishop will most probable be on the side of attack in the enemy's territory rather than stuck behind their own lines. Furthermore, making a few calculated

changes in their obstructive pawn formation by either advancing or trading pieces may liberate this bishop's movement.

The important thing to remember in any case is that bad bishops can make strong pieces if you are able to move them to an active position. Possible strategies to achieve this are as follows:

- You may attempt to free the bishop's diagonals by moving your pawns to another color.
- You can try to get the bishop outside of the pawn chain – do everything you can to get it back into the game if it has been inactive for a period of time.
- If neither of the above works, you may try giving up your bishop for another piece of equal or greater value.

## **Bishop versus Knight Dynamics**

Let's take a brief moment to step away from individual piece strategies to observe an ongoing scrutiny among the masters that pits favor of one over another in the relationship of bishop versus knight dynamics. Both pieces are valued at a 3, although some would and do consider the bishop to hold a brighter candle to the knight in value of 3 ½. This seriousness is taken into such consideration that the difference is even documented in some chess instruction manuscripts, although in tournament and match play they are still valued equally.

So then, if you are to choose one over the other in procuring dominance on the board and in battle when they meet eye to eye (or staff to muzzle), you have to know how to formulate such conditions that favor your preference. Knights are more favored in earlier stages of the game while bishops are more favored in latter stages.

If you own a knight, you will want to set up a closed position. That is, create a favorable pawn block in the center of the board that your knight can rally behind and drive your opponent in such forcible ways that it claims control over multiple critical squares in central play. The pawns will also do their job by congesting the bishops' precious channels. If you fall under the charms of your bishop's wit, you



must clear the lanes for him to extend a pervasive reach into enemy territories.

### **Business in Bishops: Midgame**

Having come this far, you should now be aware of each piece's strengths and weakness. So let's put that knowledge to practical use in seizing the ground out from under the other. Knights, for example, require support pieces and critical squares to gain a tactical lead in attacking. What does your holy wisdom recommend bishop bearers? If you suggest to block all possible advancement squares that the knight might attempt, then you have gained favor in the eyes of the chess lords.

Your opponent's knights will have tossed their riders in a screeching halt without having any place to go. Don't let that be the end of it though! If your opponent rears their knight to attempt another advance from a different position, counter them again. This is how the robed warriors exact their superiority. Are any of your pawns blocking this tactical strategy from taking place? You must remove them and allow the bishop to go about his business. Stifling a knight's attempts at infiltrating your defenses will keep your territory clear for the comfortable movement of other pieces and assure protection for a grateful king.



Above we can observe a few noteworthy strategies that the white player is impressively employing. First of all he has all-supreme dominance of the center, choking black's pieces with unnerving restlessness from the queenside and locking black's queen in the backdrop with the help of the white queen at a6. White's superior, hard-working pawn formation is cutting out most of the work for his

bishops in stifling any effective advancement from black's knights. And although we can consider that b3 is a bad bishop because of the light-colored square pawn chain in central play, it is reinforcing d5 and strengthening center control.

### **Business in Bishops: Endgame**

Endgames are usually equivalent to few pieces left on the board, and for a resilient bishop this means good news: there are plenty of open spaces on the board to make use of his wide-sweeping skills. If you find yourself in a particular endgame where the remaining survivors are comprised of a handful of pawns on each side of the board while your bishop faces off with your opponent's knight, rest easy. The bishop will have the advantage to quickly sweep up your opponent's passed pawns (those last foot soldiers that are wishfully eking their way to a promotion) and evade any remaining threat. On the other hand, in order to do the same, your opponent's knight will have to exhaustively gallop toward your hopeful pawns and whinny when it finds it has come up short, watching hopelessly while you've just promoted your way to a new queen and a sure win.

Things to remember in such a scenario:

- Open positions most often support bishops and puts them at an advantage versus knights
- Endgame pawn majorities usually have many passed pawns (a passed pawn is where there is no obstructing enemy pawns that prevent it from reaching the 8<sup>th</sup> rank), and scenarios with passed pawns on both sides almost always benefit the side of the bishop over the knight.
- An opponent's passed pawns, should they have any hope of continued gameplay must advance toward potential promotion. In doing so, they will inevitably land on colored squares, favoring the bishop's opportunity to seize them.

### **A Knight's Strike: Midgame**

In order to effectively set a knight up for an imposing position over the enemy's bishop, there are few things to take into account, drawing upon the previously laid out points of knight-piece strategy:

- Close out a critical position at the center of the board with locked-in pawns. This will block the bishop's speedy diagonal line attacks. Knights will be able to jump around these blockades.
- Set your knight up on an advanced support point.
- Secure your knight's position at an attack-oriented rank, such as the fifth or sixth rank. This will optimize the knight's attack power with multiple squares covered, including critical ones.
- Aim to deprive your opponent of maintaining two bishops on the board. This will leave only one square-colored bishop (slightly) operable.

Remember that when you can work your knight up to a secure, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> ranked square, it becomes an extremely powerful piece covering multiple critical squares. The knight's advantage over an opposing bishop in this sense is that it can attack critical areas even when the opponent has a closed formation whereas the bishop can only slam against the defensive walls.

The necessary appointment of closed positions (again, locked pawns) double as further confinement for the bishops and support points for the knight. Again, if your aim is to master knight combat with the enemy, don't allow them to own two bishops because they'll control both colored squares. Knights can go on any color and therefore control a wider variety of spaces, essentially making them more versatile. Use them to corrupt your enemy's pieces by converting their bishops into bad ones!



Here we have another beautiful pawn formation strategy working for the white player, whose pieces have just exploded from the queen's side in territorial domination. Take note of all the closed positions at a6:a7, c6:c7, d5:d6 and f4:f5. They work to keep a constraint on black's forces, and at the moment white's superior pawn structure, territorial domination, and superior piece mobility strategies are at his advantage. There are however certainly some holes he has left open, such as the entire b file as well as a weak square on f6.

Let's take a look though at his knight's advantage over black's bishop. Essentially in this formation, f6 is the only workable position because of the effective pawn chain covering the rest of black's king side sweep. The crucial square that white has maximized upon is d5. Not only has he employed his pawn here to a righteous enemy-territory pawn lock, preventing any bishop movement in the queenside direction, it acts as a support position and protectorate of his heavyweight knight. The knight's j-hooks have the black king pinched in the corner, and his physical position along with the locked in pawns on the f file blocks up any immediate and hopeful advancement from black's queen.

## Pawn structure

In 1749, a fellow named André Philidor claimed that pawns were the "soul of chess." This comment went largely unappreciated until about 1909 when the famous chess player Emanuel Lasker explained this further so that now every master of chess takes it into consideration with great sincerity.

It should be understood that the strategic placement of pawns helps to determine the rest of your moves and your plan's entirety at large. They are indeed the first pieces to be moved (aside from an occasionally willy-nilly filly that is the piece-hopping knight), so take great care in the purposeful placement of each of your pawns throughout the game, for they are only to be underestimated at one's own expense.

A few of the pawn's strengths in quality are its blocking and restrictive powers. Although they move quite slowly, one step at a time, they are ultimately the concealed directors of the game. Pawns create roadblocks, stopping short in front of an opponent's pawn so that the opponent must push their efforts and schemes to another area of the board.

They also prevent an opponent's more mobile pieces from claiming crucial squares in the center of the board. Furthermore, the careful extension of one's line of pawns governs the amount of territory a player may claim over the board, which is an important part of midgame strategy.

It is important that you have a strong pawn structure. A strong pawn structure will help a great deal in playing out your strategies. Some pointers to strengthen your pawn structure are as follows:

- Do not let your pawns become isolated. Isolated pawns are easy targets and are too much of an effort to save.
- Make sure that you have a dynamic pawn structure. It is essential to have a dynamic pawn structure if you want to give your opponent a run for his money.
- Remember that your pawns should complement the movement of the other pieces and aid them in their roles. Never let your pawn block an active piece, as it can be quite detrimental to your strategy. This goes especially for the lanes of your bishops.
- A good rule of thumb to go by is to use your pawns to fix your opponent's pawns wherever possible. This forces the lanes of the more mobile pieces into concentrated avenues that you may take advantage of by having the right pieces in place.

- Avoid pawn islands. When you have a lone pawn or an isolated group of pawns toward the middle of the board, you create weaknesses in your defense. Pawn chains on the other hand (a diagonal line of connected pawns) are only weak at their base – the only place not protected by a pawn. The more pawn islands you have, the more points of attack your opponent has. So while you want to avoid pawn islands that invite gaps in your defenses, you'll also want to keep in mind to always attack your opponent's pawn chain at its base.
- Advancing pawns have their allure and their drawbacks. If you have a pawn that is blocking the mobility of several other of your pieces, it might be a good idea to move it forward, even if it means sacrificing it for the advancement of your heavier-hitting pieces. Advancing pawns also means opening up files and diagonals for previously inactive pieces to take charge. By the endgame, if you have a pawn that is in the sweet reach of your opponent's home rank, by all means you will want to push it to promotion so that it may become a Queen or lesser piece and change the dynamic of the game drastically.
- One tip to remember is that in midgame play, pawns also prevent an opponent's pieces from moving into critical squares. Pay keen attention to the squares that are not occupied, because some of these hold immense strategic power for the player that is able to take advantage of them. Every time you move a pawn forward, make sure that you are not giving up one of these great footholds.
- If you find that by the endgame you and your opponent have only a few remaining mobile pieces (like in the diagram below) while there are considerable number of pawns left on the board, consider making trades to simplify the position so that with a few of the bigger players out of the picture, you may advance the majority of your pawns forward to put a squeeze on your opponent's defenses then move in for the kill with your remaining pieces.

Can you identify which pawn trades would be advantageous to both sides in the diagram below?



# CHAPTER 5

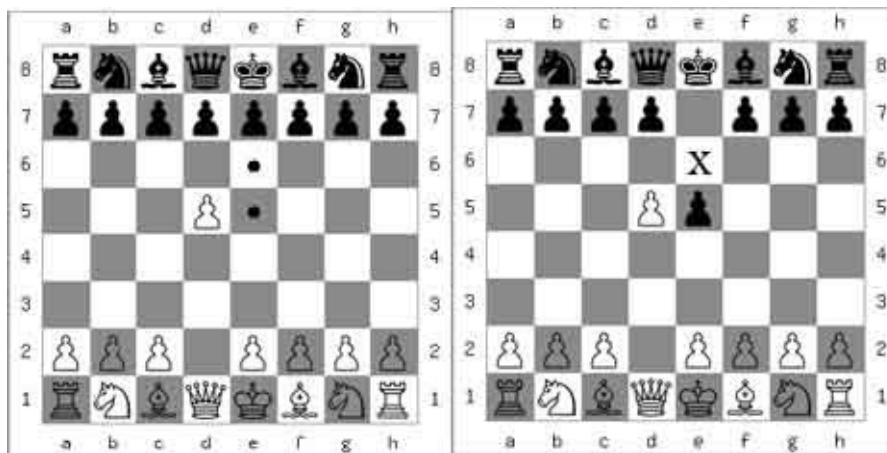


## Chess Tactics

In this chapter, I bring to you certain exciting chess tactics that can help you turn the tables. Chess tactics are nothing but short-term measures to change the fate of your game. Let us look at them one by one.

### En Passant

This is an obscure move that not many novice players are aware of. Generally, pawns can only attack another piece if it's diagonally in front of them to the left or right. In an En Passant however, a pawn on the 5<sup>th</sup> rank by attack even if the opposing pawn does a double step.

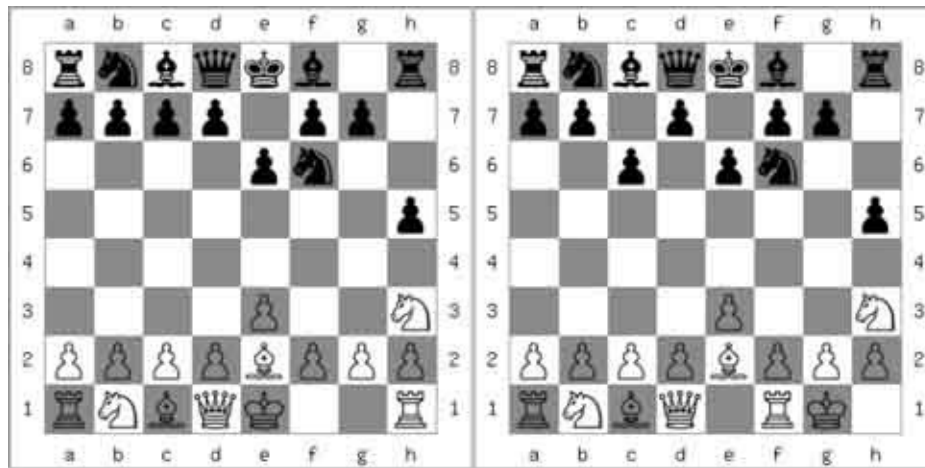


(When the white pawn is in the 5<sup>th</sup> rank, the black pawn double stepped to e5. In this situation, the White player may use En Passant and attack the black pawn as shown in the above diagrams)

### Castling

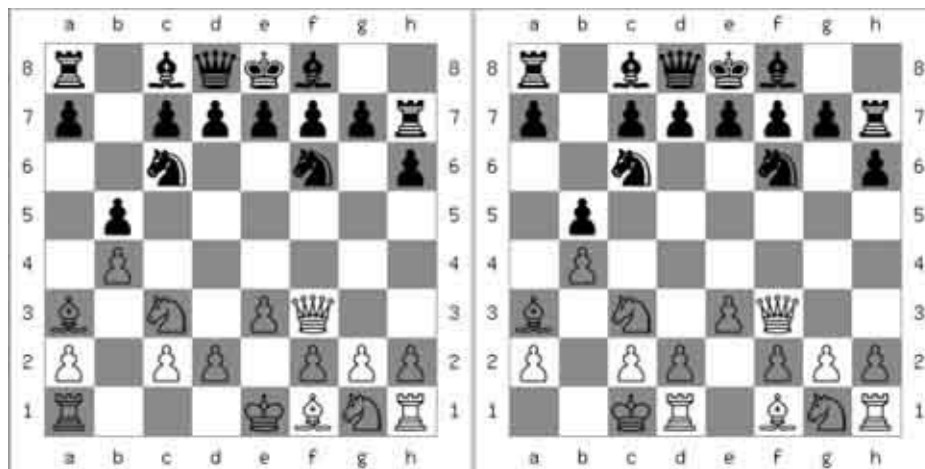


This is the only move in the game where you can move more than one piece at a time and is generally used to protect the king by exchanging sides with the rook.



Left Diagram: Pre-castle

Right Diagram: Post-castle



Left Diagram: Pre-castle

Right Diagram: Post-castle

This move however does have a few restrictions:

- (1) There are no pieces in-between the king and rook.
- (2) Both the king and the castling rook have not yet moved.
- (3) The king is not currently in “check”.

## Knight Fork



A knight fork is nothing but a tactic that involves threatening two different pieces of the opponent with your knight. This tactic is powerful because the knight does not move in a straight fashion like the other pieces. Another advantage of employing this tactic is that you can get a more valuable piece like a rook or queen by using the knight. However, ensure that one of the targets in the fork is not the opponent's knight, as it will result in you losing your knight. Learn to look for these situations all throughout a game – this could be the one move that shifts the momentum of the game over to your favor.

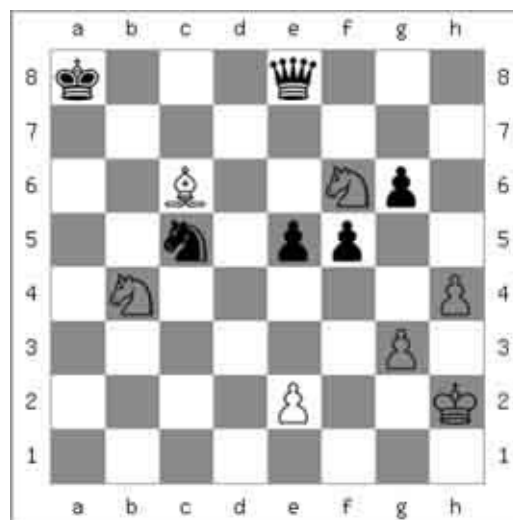
## Queen fork



A queen fork is nothing but threatening two different pieces of the opponent with your queen. The queen is the most valuable piece on the board after the King.

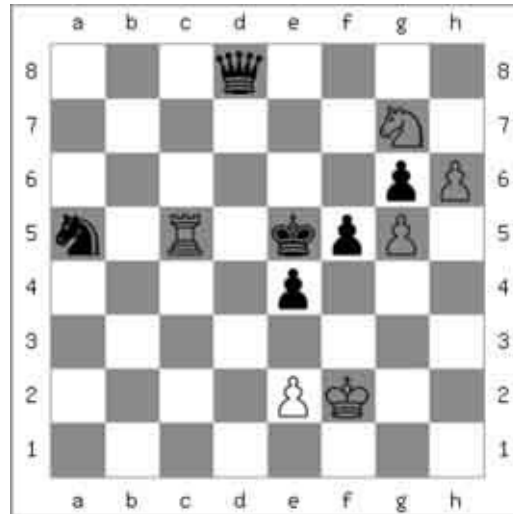
Hence it is important that you employ the Queen fork with care, as it is not prudent to lose a valuable piece such as the Queen over a lesser valuable piece such as the bishop or knight. The ideal targets should either be two unprotected pieces or a king and an unprotected piece. Targeting a protected piece will bring about the death of your queen, which can be quite advantageous to your opponent. If employed with care, the queen fork is capable of bringing about a checkmate soon after the exchange.

## Bishop fork



A bishop fork, as the name suggests, is threatening two different pieces of the opponent using your bishop. This is yet another powerful that can help you gain a piece of the opponent easily. However, ensure that one of the targets is not the opponent's bishop or queen as it can result in you losing your bishop. Hence employ this tactic with care to yield better results.

## Rook fork



The rook fork is using the rook to threaten two different pieces of the opponent. Ideally, the rook fork should be used to target two unprotected pieces or the king and an unprotected piece. The rook fork is an effective tactic as the rook is exposed to the entire line. However, ensure that one of the targets in the rook fork is not the opponent's rook or queen as this can be detrimental to the survival of your rook. Hence employ this tactic with care, as the rook is also a piece of higher value.

## Arranging a pin

Ideally when an opponent's piece is threatened, he is met with two options:

- To move the threatened piece (or)
- To bring another piece in between the threatened piece and your piece.

Bringing another piece in between your piece and the threatened piece is referred to as pinning. Though pinning might neutralize the effect of the threat, it comes with a huge disadvantage. The player will not be able to move the pinned piece as long as the threat remains. In other words, the player is rendering a certain piece of his, inactive by the process called pinning.

There are two kinds of pins, namely:

- Absolute pin

- Relative pin

Let us look at these types in detail:

## Absolute pin

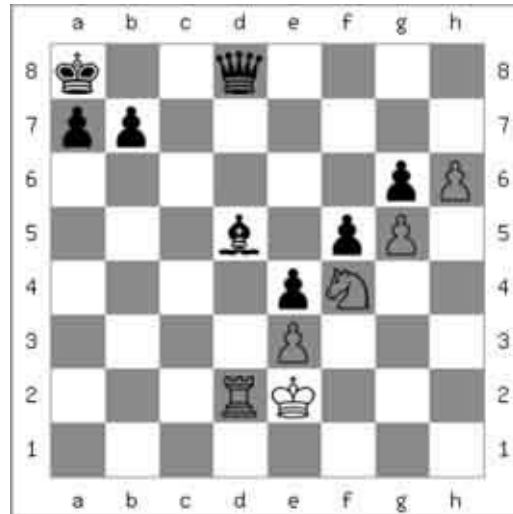


An absolute pin is the scenario arising out of the following steps:

- You threaten the opponent's king with a certain piece of yours.
- The opponent positions a certain piece between your piece and his king.

By doing so, the opponent will be forced to keep the pinned piece in place as it will result in an open check. When the threatened piece is the opponent's king, it is referred to as the absolute pin. Note the example in the above diagram. The black player's bishop on f8 must act as an absolute pin in the eighth rank to prevent his king from check by white's queen. For a better understanding how effective an absolute pin can be, think of what would happen if the white knight on c6 were to position itself onto e7?

## Relative pin



A relative pin is similar to the absolute pin in terms of function. However, in the case of a relative pin, the threatened piece is not the opponent's king. This situation arises out of the following steps:

- You threaten the opponent's piece of high value such as a queen or rook with a certain piece of yours. (See above example)
- The opponent positions a certain piece between your piece and his valuable piece.

The consequences of a relative pin are similar to that of an absolute pin. Your opponent will be unable to move the pinned piece. However, the magnitude of seriousness is relatively less when compared to the absolute pin as the opponent might decide to sacrifice the threatened piece and move the pinned piece aside.

These are some of the commonly used chess tactics. I am sure that using these tactics wisely will most certainly help you tilt the odds of the game in your favor.

## CHAPTER 6



### Quick Checkmate Strategies

I'm sure there have been several instances when you have been defeated within a matter of minutes and wondered, "What the heck just happened here?" Well, your opponent fooled you!

They may have used a technique known as the "fool's mate", which allows the opponent to trap your king within 2 moves! So it is important that you not fall for these little traps. The best way to do so is by understanding the different quick game strategies that are popularly employed to ensnare novices.

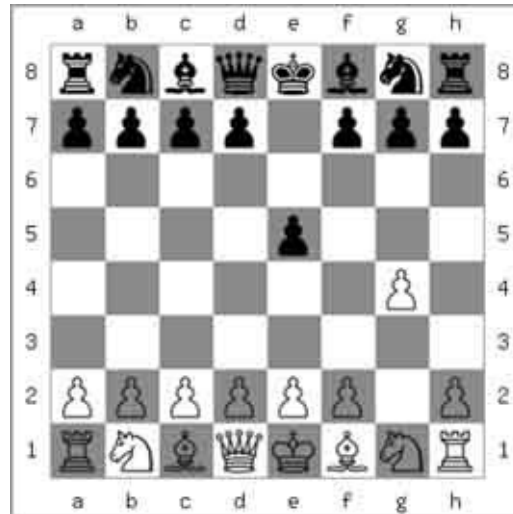
Here are 5 that are quite common and you can make use of them to finish the game fast or counteract your opponent's scheme.

#### **Fool's mate**

This is the oldest and most popular quick game strategy that is employed regularly. The fool's mate allows you to finish the game within 2 moves! Even before your opponent realizes it, you would have finished the game!

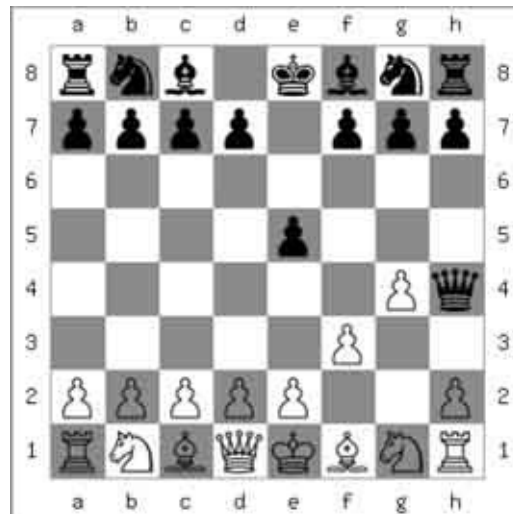
1. g4 e5

The game starts with the white pawn (Opponent) moving his pawn from g2 to g4. When this happens, you must over your own pawn from e7 to e5. This will allow you to capture one of the center squares and will make your first move.



## 2. f3 Qh4# 0-1

Next, your opponent will move his pawn from f2 to f3. This will open up the diagonal that leads to the king. Your next move is to move the queen to h4 and the game is over. You will successfully trap your opponent that way.



Here, you must understand that your opponent must be foolish enough to fall for your trick. If you are caught then this trick will not work. The basic idea is to trap your opponent by capitalizing on their strategy of not leaving space for the king to escape.

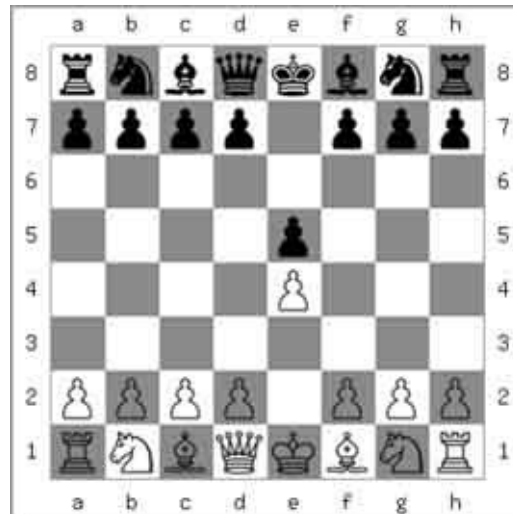
## Smothered mate (king's pawn)

This is a trick where the opponent's king is taken down in 4 moves. This also capitalizes on the opponent's king's inability to escape.



1. e4 e5

The game starts with white (opponent) moving her pawn from e2 to e4. Black then advances her own pawn from e7 to e5.



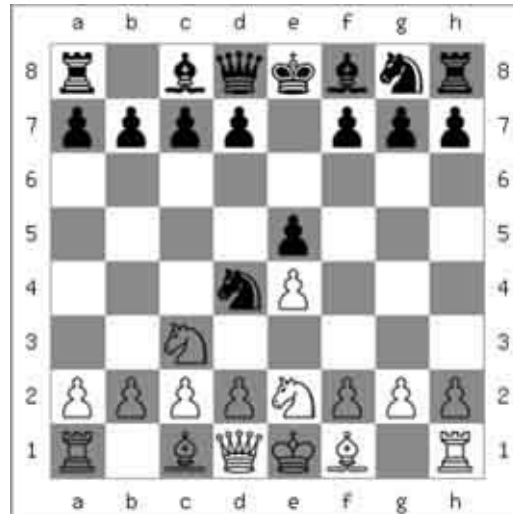
2. Ne2 Nc6

In the next move, white moves her king's side knight from g1 to e2. In response to this, black moves her queen's side knight from b8 to c6.



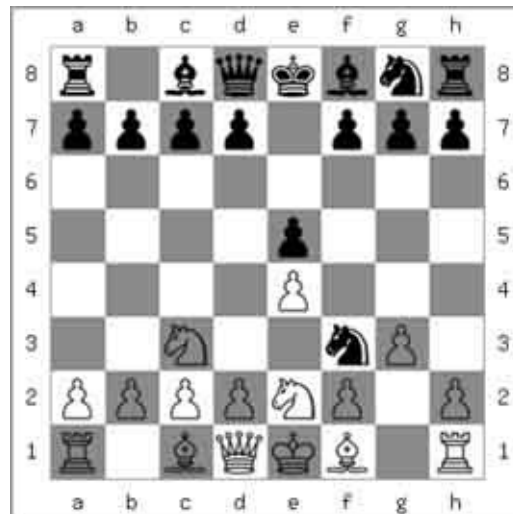
3. Nc3 Nd4

In the third move, white moves the queen's side knight from b1 to c3. Now, black traps the king by moving the active knight from c6 to d4.



#### 4. g3 Nf3# 0-1

As a last move, the opponent will choose to move the g2 pawn to g3 as a simple game development. This will mean the end of the game as you can move your knight from d4 to f3 and it will capture the king for you.



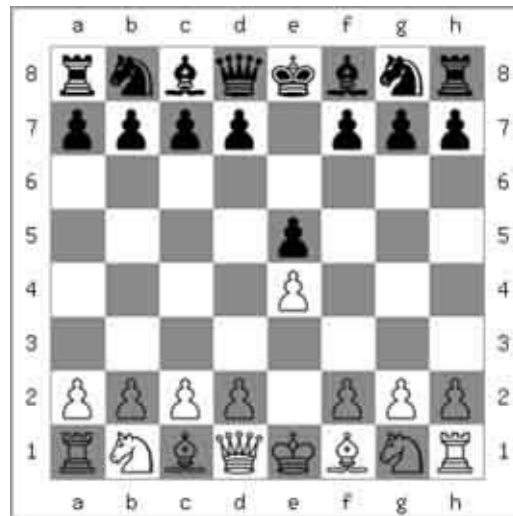
## Scholars mate

The next game is known as the scholar's mate. This move also makes use of just 4 moves to defeat the opponent.

1. e4 e5

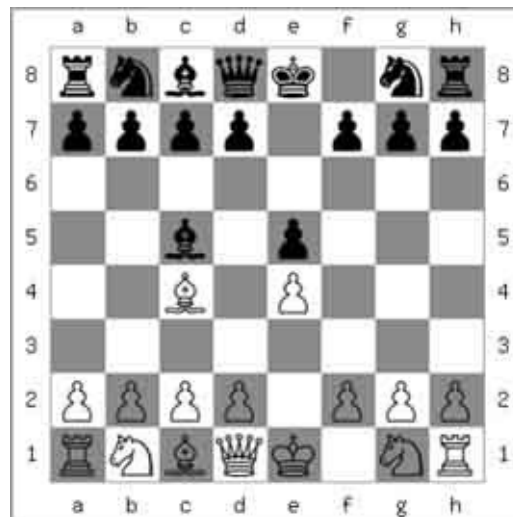
The first move should be the white king's pawn moving from e2 to e4. Black will

do the same and move the king's pawn from e7 to e5.



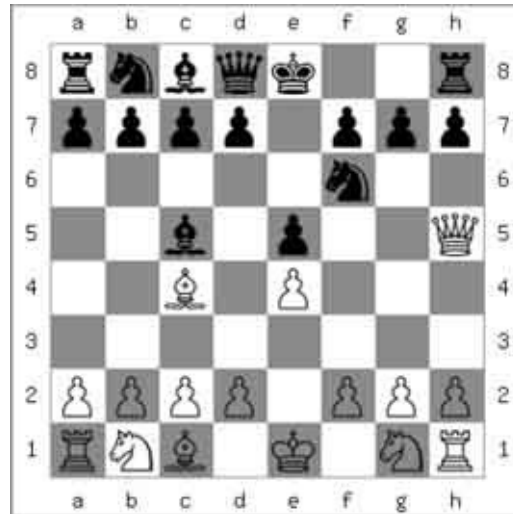
2. Bc4 Bc5

In the next move, white's king side bishop moves from f1 to c4 and black's kingside bishop moves f8 to c5.



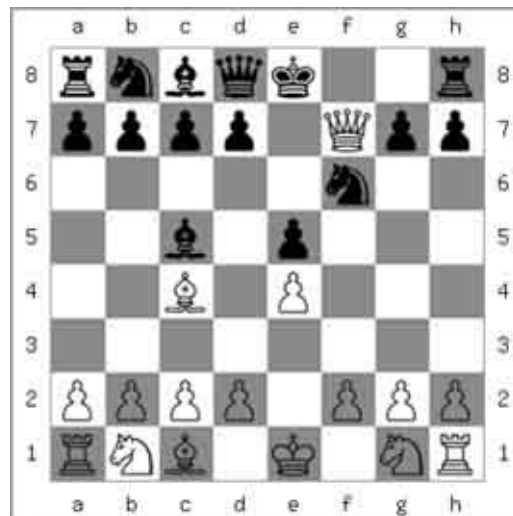
3. Qh5 Nf6

As a third move, white's queen moves from d1 to h5. Black then moves the king's knight to from g8 to f6.



4. Qxf7# 1-0

This proves to be a great lure laid out by white as black tries to attack the queen and pawn. White's queen then captures black's f7 pawn and it is now checkmate.

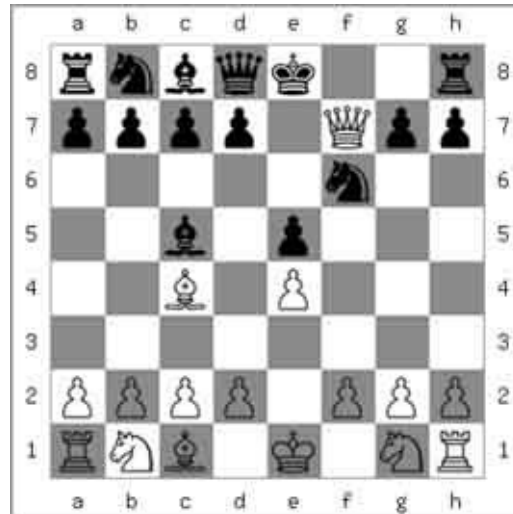


## Hippopotamus mate

The hippopotamus mate is one where you can end the game in 6 moves.

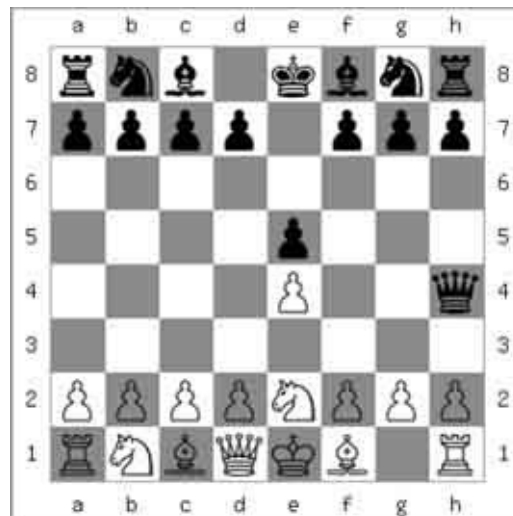
1.e4 e5

The game starts with white moving the king's pawn from e2 to e4 and black moving his king's pawn to e5.



2. Ne2 Qh4

Then, white moves her king's side knight to e2 and black brings his queen to h4.



3. Nc3 Nc6

Next, white decides to bring her queen's side knight to c3. Black does the same and brings his knight from b8 to c6.



4. g3 Qg5

Next, white moves the g2 pawn to g3 and black moves the queen from h4 to g5. As you can see, nobody has taken out any pieces as yet.



5. d4

Now, white moves her pawn from d2 to d4.



5. ...Nxd4

Black then uses his knight to capture the pawn, attacking from c6 to d4. This is a great sacrificial trap laid by black as it makes white believe that a great opportunity lies ahead.



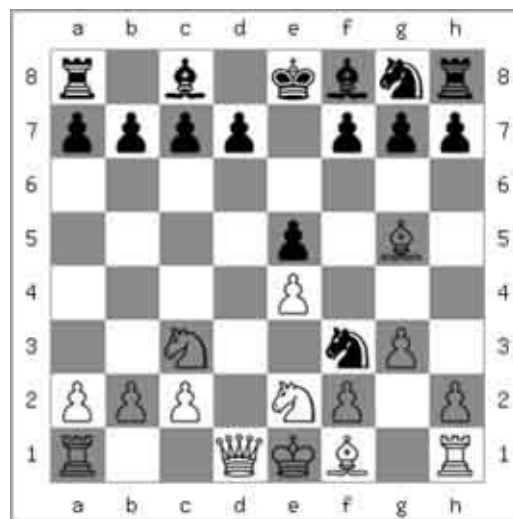
6. Bxg5

White now then goes for the bait and attacks with her bishop to capture the black queen on g5.



6. ... Nf3# 0-1

This helps black move the knight to f3. Now the white king cannot escape and it is a checkmate.



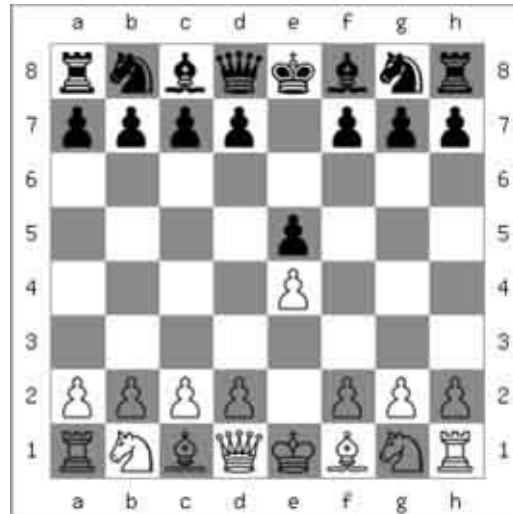
### Legal's mate

The legal's mate is one where you can finish the game in 7 moves.

1. e4 e5

The game starts by white moving king's pawn to e4. Black moves his e7 pawn to e5.





2. Bc4 d6

In the next move, white's king side bishop moves to c4. Black then moves his pawn to d6.



3. Nf3 Bg4

Next, white moves his king's side knight to f3. Black moves his bishop from c8 to g4.



4. Nc3 g6

White then moves his queen's side knight to c3. Black moves his pawn from g7 to g6.



5. Nxe5 Bxd1

Now, white quickly moves king's knight to e5 (This is the big trap set by white). Black then uses his bishop to capture white's queen.



6. Bxf7+

Now, white moves his bishop to f7 and puts the black king in check.



6. ...Ke7

This forces black to move his king to e7



7. Nd5# 1-0

Now white moves the knight on c3 to d5 and it's checkmate!



These are some of the top strategies that you can employ to finish a chess game fast but remember that your opponent needs to play just as you wish them to. If they have identified the trick you are trying to play on them, it may be disadvantageous to you so be prepared to have a plan B!

Understand these trickeries so you may appear to be a chess master in the eyes of novices, and also so that you do not fall into traps laid out by superior competitors. As you observed in the last two instances, ingenious traps were laid out by sacrificing the queen, so if you ever see a queen lying around for free, think twice prior to making your move, for it may be your last.

# CHAPTER 7



## Draws In Chess

Just like how it is important for you to be aware of the various chess strategies and tactics, it is important that you are aware about the various ways by which you can end the match in a draw. It is vital that you know about these draw situations especially if you want to avoid them. Otherwise, you would not even realize that your opponent is trying to push the game towards a draw when you had all the potential to win. Let us look at the typical draw situations.

### Draw by agreement

This is one of the simplest ways to end the game in a draw. By this method, both players choose to draw the game by mutual consent. This situation arises when the probability of winning is slim for both parties. Ideally when the players realize that they have very small chances of winning, they agree to end the game in a draw especially when there is a cash prize. These are situations where the possibility of winning is highly dependent on a player making a bad move. As we all know that the chances of a professional player making a silly mistake at a crucial point in the game is very slim, so the wise option would be to end the game in a draw. This way both the players get a point each.

There have been several instances where the players have agreed to end the game in a draw because of a tidy cash prize involved. There are certain tournaments that offer both the players a cash prize, even if the game ends in a draw, hence you can see lots of games in such tournaments that end in this manner, as it's mutually beneficial. One note however being, it is not allowed for both the players to call it a draw even without beginning the game.

### Stalemate

Most of us would certainly be aware of what a stalemate is. Under a stalemate, the opponent's king is not under threat but has no other legal moves to make. It is mostly the beginners who resort to stalemate to end the game in a draw. Most professional players steer away from this because they seldom make silly mistakes that would end up in a stalemate situation. However, there are several notable games involving grandmasters that even ended in stalemate so don't be frustrated if your opponent always puts the game in stalemate even when you had the advantage.

## **Threefold repetition**

This is another scenario that ends the game in a draw. Though the name is self-explanatory, I will run you through the steps that culminate in this situation. When a player repeats the same move thrice, the other player has the option to claim a draw. The procedure to claim this draw differs from one rule set to another to some extent. However, the underlying principle across all the rule sets when it comes to this draw is the same.

Though let me state that this rule cannot be applied in case of a perpetual check. You cannot make a claim to draw the game because your opponent gives you a check three times at a stretch using different pieces but if the opponent keeps giving a check in the same fashion three times in a row, then you can use this rule to make a claim for ending the game in a draw.

## **The fifty move rule**

Not many players really understand how this rule of claiming a draw works. Going by this rule, if a certain game shows no signs of "Progress" for both the players even at the end of fifty moves each, then either of the players can make the claim to end the game in a draw. "Progress", in this case is signified by the movement of a pawn or the loss of a piece for the opponent. If the game goes on without any signs of such a progress, the game can be ended in a draw. However, this situation of draw rarely arises, as no professional player would make fifty empty moves. Undoubtedly, this situation may arise more frequently in a game with beginners.

## **Insufficient mating material**

This situation of ending the game in a draw arises when both players are left with very few pieces that are not capable of delivering a checkmate. In other words, the absence of sufficient mating material warrants for a draw. Although this rule may look simple at the outset, this is not permissible under certain rule sets. Under such sets, this rule can be invoked only if it is not possible to checkmate the opponent at all, even after a bunch of legal moves; this is because the definition of insufficient mating material is very subjective as it is extremely difficult to prove that both players have insufficient mating material.

These are the various common scenarios that end up in a draw.

### **Etiquettes for drawing:**

Now that we have seen the different scenarios that may result in a draw, let us look at some basic tips associated with these draws. These tips will help you make a claim to end the game in a draw without offending the sentiments of your opponent. At the end of the day, it is up to you to accept or reject the offer to end the game in a draw. You might as well do it with some grace and tact without offending your opponent. These pointers will most certainly help you achieve that.

### **Only on your move:**

Remember that you should make a claim to end the game in a draw only when it is your turn. There are two reasons as to why you should not make the offer to end the game in a draw when it is not your turn. They are as follows:

- (i) When you make an offer to draw the game when it is your opponent's turn, it will be considered as a rude gesture. A theory behind this is because when you offer to end the game in a draw, your opponent will be distracted by this sudden turn of events. He might think that you made the offer with a view to take advantage of this momentary distraction. Since most professional games are clocked, every second is vital for both players. Any time spent on distractions by one player can be the much-needed advantage for the other player.
- (ii) When you make the offer to draw the game when your opponent is trying to make a move, he will start analyzing the reason behind your offer. He will start looking for your weak spots with a view to take advantage. This will definitely worsen your situation in the game should your opponent make it a point to launch an aggressive attack.

### **See the move first:**

Not many people understand how these offers to draw the game come about and forget to stop the timer. This is precisely why most beginners lose the game even before their opponent could accept or reject the draw. The optimal way to go about a draw is to make the offer first followed by clicking the clock and giving the opponent a chance to accept or reject the offer. When you do this, the opponent is forced to make a decision in his time and not when yours is running. When your opponent makes a move after you made an offer to draw the game, without saying anything, it is considered as an implied rejection of your offer.

### **Never offer a draw to a strong opponent:**

Remember that it is considered as a very impolite gesture to make a claim to draw the game when your opponent is a much stronger player than you are. Your offer might actually offend your opponent. You may wonder as to who is considered a strong player. A look at their ratings will tell you if you can regard them as a strong enough player where draws may be impolite (When your opponent is rated more than you by at least four hundred to five hundred points, this is a good indication). Though the primary reason to not offer a draw to a strong player is to avoid offending them, there are several other reasons as well. They are as follows:

- Since your opponent is a strong player, he will most certainly understand that this offer to draw the game will benefit you the most. As he loses the opportunity to win the game, he will not accept your offer. He will start looking for your weaknesses, as mentioned before, and make a move with a view to attack you.
- When you propose to end a game in a draw, especially when your opponent is a professional player, you lose the opportunity to learn so many things from your opponent. Winning the game is one aspect. Your personal growth as a player is equally important. You will not grow as a player if you do not learn from other strong players.

### **Don't offer draws repeatedly:**

Never offer to end the game in a draw repeatedly. Make an offer to end the game in



a draw once and if your opponent does not accept it, refrain from making repeated offers. What happens when you make repeated offers to end the game in a draw, is that your opponent may feel threatened or harassed. Since time is of the essence, your constant offers to draw the game can result in your opponent losing a lot of time. When you harass your opponent mentally, it will be regarded as a serious issue in most tournaments. You stand even the chance of getting barred from the game. Hence make it a point to not make draws repeatedly.

**Reject draw offers politely:**

When your opponent makes an offer to draw the game and if you have no intentions of accepting it, learn to reject it in a polite fashion. Never create a fuss about your opponent's offer to draw the game. He may not have made the offer to distract you in the first place. Hence ensure that you do not react in a negative fashion to your opponent's offer to draw the game. If you feel that your opponent is constantly threatening you with offers to draw the game, get in touch with the tournament director to resolve this issue instead of responding in a negative manner.

These tips will most certainly help you deal with draws in a very diplomatic fashion. Hence ensure that you follow them whether you wish to make or accept an offer to draw. These small etiquettes send out the message that you don't let your personal emotions cloud your judgment and setting this tone is very important, especially in international tournaments.

## CHAPTER 8



### **Tournament Rules**

What is the point of knowing about the various deployment strategies in chess if you are not aware about the rules of the tournament? The chances of you losing the game are very probable if you are left in the dark regarding tournament rules. This is precisely why I have listed the important tournament rules in this chapter for your understanding. Allow us gaze at them one at a time and by the time we're finished, I am sure you would be all set for a real game of chess.

#### **When in doubt, ask**

There is nothing wrong in clarifying your doubts with the tournament director. If you are not really sure about a certain tournament rule, ensure that you get your doubts clarified by the tournament director before the game begins. This way, you can save the time that may get wasted if you decide to ask these questions in the middle of a game.

Similarly, when the game is in progress, if you and your opponent disagree about something or some rule, the wise thing to do would be to stop the clock and call for the tournament director to clarify it for the two of you. This way, you and your opponent will not waste time by indulging in pointless conversations.

#### **You have to move the piece you touch**

This is otherwise known as the touch move rule. Going by this rule, you will have to move the piece you actually touch. This is a rule to look out for, especially if you are a beginner. You cannot keep fiddling with your pieces and moves in a tournament. Hence, there is no undoing a careless move so be careful which piece you touch.

However, if you touch a piece by mistake while reaching out for another piece, your opponent cannot instigate this rule. You are not required to move that piece for

touching it accidentally. If you think that you need to adjust a certain piece because it is not placed correctly on the board, you may do so by saying, “I adjust” before touching the piece. This way, your opponent cannot invoke this rule and make you move the piece you just touched. When you say this, you are making it clear that it is not your intention to touch the piece to move it.

## **Recording the moves**

This is another common rule across most of tournaments and very few tournaments do not have this regulation. Players are expected to write down their moves in most competitions and the purpose of this is that it will serve as a written record of what happened during the course of the game. This can be referred back to in case of the necessity to solve any dispute that may arise later. Hence, recording your moves should be done with utmost concentration. Learn how to write them down. If you do a bad job of recording your moves, you will not be able to use it to your advantage when a dispute arises during the course of the game.

### **Do not interfere with a game**

Players who do not have a match scheduled are usually permitted to walk around and observe how the other games are going. Remember that your role is restricted to that of an observer. In other words, you cannot interfere in the game at any point of time, no matter what the reason is. For instance, if you find a certain player making an illegal move, it is not your responsibility to report it. Let the players play the game their way and do not meddle with it.

Similarly, you are not supposed to offer suggestions or hints or tips to any player. You cannot help any player when the game is going on. You may even get disqualified from the tournament for doing so. Henceforth never interfere with an ongoing game for any reason.

### **Remember to turn off your cell phone**

Nothing can be so annoyingly distracting like a cell phone that is ringing loudly in the middle of a game. As we all know, most of these games are clocked. Hence, these loud phones can easily distract players and waste their precious time. This is why tournament rules have been amended to prohibit the usage of cellular phones when the games are going on. According to this rule, if your phone rings in the middle of a game, you will be charged with a penalty. And if you thought that was

the worst case, then you are wrong. Usage of cell phones may even result in your game getting forfeited. Consequently ensure that you turn off your phone before the tournament begins.

### **Learn to use the chess clock**

As I said before, these tournaments are bound by time limits and you are required to finish these games within a stipulated time limit. It might be a challenge to use these clocks when you are a beginner but with enough practice and time, you will find it easier to play the game with the help of the clock. You will realize that your brain will start working in line with the timer. Hit the clock as soon as you have made your move as this is to ensure that you do not waste your limited time over nothing. Remember that you have to hit the clock with the same hand you use to move the pieces. Hence ensure that you make it a point to practice this hand coordination a few times before the tournament.

### **Record your result**

As soon as the game is over, make sure you record the result of the game. It is the duty of both the players to record the results of the game. If you are not sure about the correct way to record your results, then get in touch with your tournament director to assist you with it.

These are some of the important rules in most of the tournaments. Some tournaments have additional rules as well so ensure that you familiar with the different rules of the tournament before it begins. If you fail to do this, you will find yourself at a great disadvantage and in a confused state by the multiple rules announced before your game commences.

## CHAPTER 9



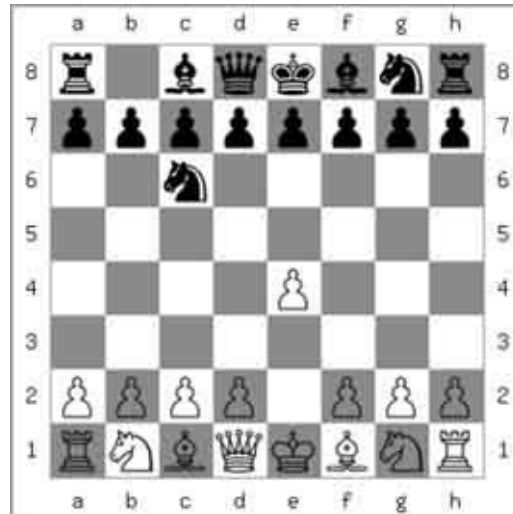
### Lets Play Chess

There will come a time when you will have to put everything you have learned into an actual game. Just like any sport, you can have a game plan and know every trick in the game, but when you are in an actual match, you will have to focus and do your best to win the game utilizing everything you have studied and practiced. Let us guide you through a game that employs many of the aspects taught in the preceding chapters. When you are following along, ask yourself what each player is trying to aim for and try to pinpoint if there could be a superior move.

**MATCH: Expert versus Intermediate** The following match is between an advanced player and an intermediate player; understand that with enough practice and study, you too can become an expert at chess and amaze your family and friends. There is nothing holding you back, enjoy the match!

1. e4 Nc6

The game starts off with white moving his pawn up to e4 position. Black, instead of trying to improve pawn formation, decides to develop his knight first, moving it to the c6 position.



2. Nf3 d5

From here, white advances his knight up to f3 and black jumps his pawn two steps up to d5.



3. Bd3 Nf6

White then moves his bishop up to d3 to reinforce his pawn while black starts developing his second knight moving it to f6. Notice how white could have instead moved his bishop to b5 (Ruy Lopez Opening), which could have essentially pinned down the black knight? Regardless, white did a fantastic job moving his knight and bishop out which also sets him up for an early opportunity to castle.



4. xe5 Qxe5

White could not resist and decides to attack the black pawn on e5. This leads to one crucial mistake as it allows the black queen an open lane to develop into the game. Here is a lesson; an effective method of jumping your queen into action is by sacrificing your queen's pawn.



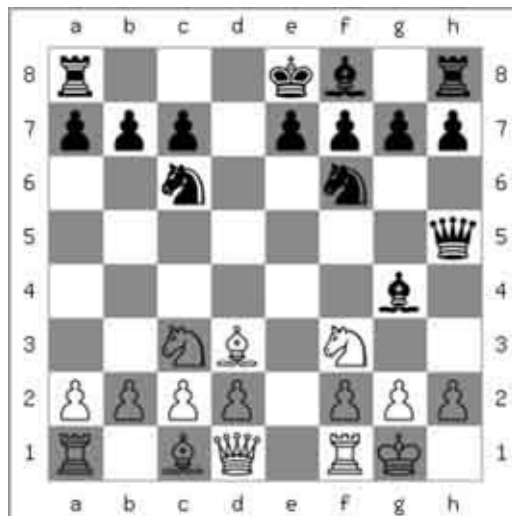
5. Nc3 Qh5

White then moves his queen's side knight to c3, attacking the black queen who just shifts all the way to the side at h5.



6. 0-0 Bg4

White in this case feels an attack coming and castles with the king's side rook. Black then moves his bishop down and puts a "relative pin" on the white queen.



7. h3 Ne5

White counters the bishop by moving his pawn to h3. Black retorts by positioning of his knights to e5.





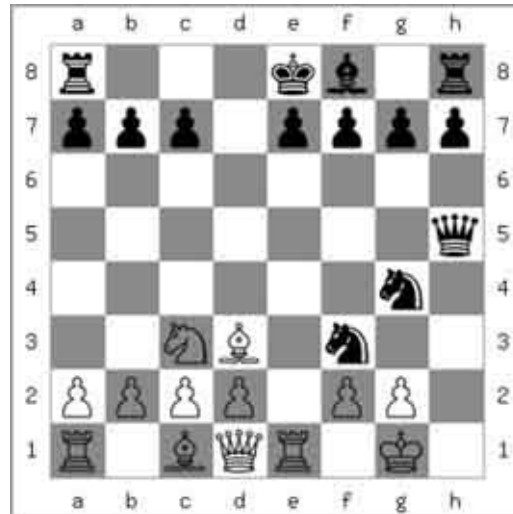
8. xg4 Nxf4

White goes for the bait and eats the bishop on g4, only to get attacked by black's knight.



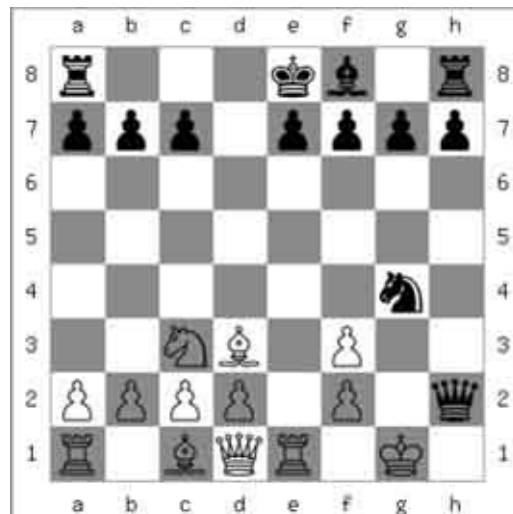
9. Re1 Nxf3

White here moves his rook to e1. Black then attacks the white horse on f3.



10. xe3 Qh2+

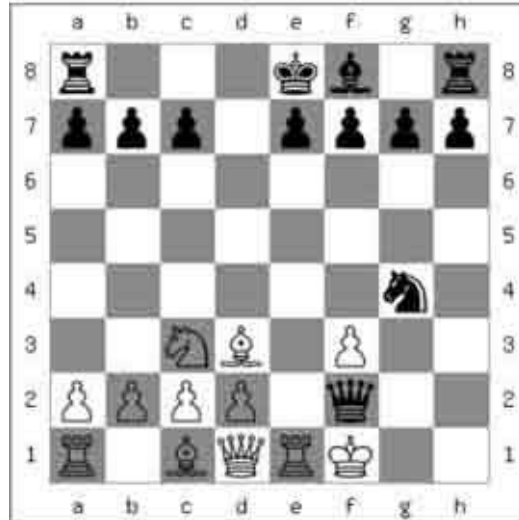
White sees another free piece and attacks the horse on f3. This is his ultimate mistake as black's queen comes to check the white king by moving to h2.



11. Kf1 Qxf2#

The white king tries to escape the grasp of the black queen, moving to f1, but the black queen closes on the win by positioning itself onto f2.

**0-1**



Were you able to identify the strategic moves of black or the blunders of white?

Were you able to appreciate the importance of developing pieces to make them more advantageous rather than having them sit on the bleachers?

At this point you should now be well familiarized with the different chess openings you can start the match off with. As the game progresses, move strategically and use the different tactics when applicable. When the game advances to latter stages, use the end game tips presented earlier.

In the next chapter, some tips on getting started will be presented; then it will be time for you to test and develop your own chess talents.

# CHAPTER 10



## Chess Puzzles

In training for Chess, besides from practicing games and testing out the different strategies, another effective approach to advance your proficiencies is by practicing chess puzzles.

What is a chess puzzle? It can be one of two things, a case study taken from an actual game or an artificially set up arrangement. In either case, the objective is identical, which is to mature your capability to perceive opportunities and what can be done. Some are quite easy and some are a bit more challenging but nonetheless, they are all a learning opportunity and a fun brainteaser.

We have provided here a few cases that are pleasurable and dynamic. The answers will be provided at the end of this chapter.

Before we start here, there is a little story that must be shared.

Once upon a time in a classroom, there were two students and a teacher. One student was exceptionally remarkable and the other wasn't entirely bright. One day a teacher handed out a quiz with 100 questions, and to her great surprise, both students got 99 questions correct.

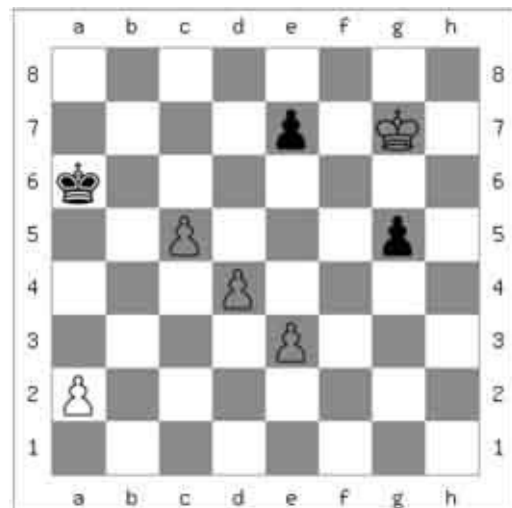
"Something", must be wrong here she thought. Sure enough, the answer to this conundrum was in the 100<sup>th</sup> question. On the gifted student's sheet, the answer to the 100<sup>th</sup> question was, "I don't know the answer". And on the not so gifted student's sheet, the answer was, "I don't know the answer either". The moral to this little fable I guess is, don't cheat.

Do your best and have fun at the puzzles first before looking at the answers. It would be much more beneficial for you to work the problems out firsthand.

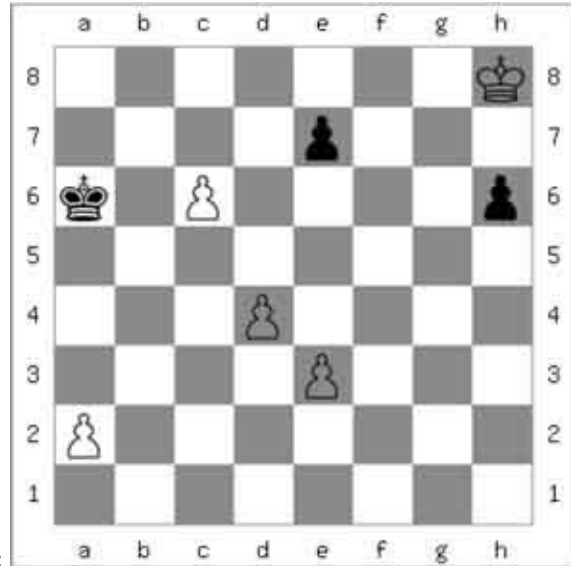
# PROBLEMS



1. If white were to move, what moves would he use to win the game in 2 moves?  
If black were to move, what's the quickest way to win the game?



- 2a. Who has the advantage? White to move



2b. Who has the advantage? White to move

3. How would white take the black queen in 3 moves? White to move



4. If white were to move, how would he win in 1 move?  
 If black were to move, what's the quickest way to win?



5. How many moves does it take to white to win if black defends perfectly? White



to move

6. White to move: checkmate in how many moves?  
 Black to move: checkmate in how many moves?





# ANSWERS



1. If white moves: 1. Qb5+ Ke6 2. Bb3+ Nc4 3. Bxc4#  
If black moves: 1. ... Qh2#
- 2a. Advantage white – If the white king moves in and attacks the black pawn on e7 then defends his c5 pawn, he'll end up being able to promote his pawn to a queen right when black promotes his pawn to a queen. The difference is, there are more white pawns left on the board.
- 2b. Advantage black – Black can prevent the c5 pawn from promoting into a queen and also promote his own pawn to a queen.
3. 1. Ra3+ Kd4 2. Kd2 Qxd7 3. Rd3+ Kc5 4. Rxd7
4. If white moves: 1. Qe2#  
If black moves: 1. ... Kxf2+ 2. Qe1+ Qxe1+ 3. Nd1 Qxd1#
5. 1. Ke7! Ne4 2. Rxa5+ Bb5 3. Rxb5+ Nc5 4. Rxc5#
6. If white moves: 1. G5+ Qf4 2. Rxf4 Kh5 3. Qg4#  
If black moves: 1. ... Nf3+ 2. Ng1 Rxc1#

I hope you found these puzzles interesting and fun. Artificial chess puzzles may appear impractical, but they do train your mental faculty to see patterns and in the mix of a heated chess match, some of these patterns may come up and your knack to see them quickly could be the key between winning or losing.

It is understandable that you may want to try your hands out at more problems, so what we have been able to do is give out a [FREE BONUS](#) at the end of the book. If you don't want to wait, you can [click HERE](#) and receive a booklet with literally hundreds of problems and solutions. Try solving them all, it may be impossible in one go but solving a few each day will make you a better chess player. Have fun!

# CHAPTER 11



## Tips To Get Started

Now that you are all geared up for the tournament, I have highlighted certain tips that may help you win the game and become a stronger chess player in this chapter. Let us go over them in detail.

### Memorize openings

In the earlier stages of this book, we went over numerous different openings that are used in chess and spoke about some of the advantages and disadvantages to each. Did you know that most tournament players use these openings? In knowing this, it is an excellent idea that these openings are memorized by heart so you'll have an understanding of how your opponent will choose to structure his or her offensive and this will give you ample strategies as well on how you'll choose to play defensively or offensively.

#### Assess your opponent's move

When your opponent makes a move, do not make your move immediately. Assess and understand the rationale behind your opponent making the move in the first place. When you assess his move, you will have a clear idea about his strategy and you will be able to plan your next moves accordingly. This tip makes more sense especially when the game has just begun. You will be able to judge your opponent's style by just assessing his opening. This will also help you identify the potential threats that your opponent might have in store for you so you can deal with them suitably.

### Make the best move

Sometimes, there can be more than one good move. Understand which move is the

best option for you. Weigh the pros and cons of each option that is available for you and choose the best one. To identify the best move, you might have to ask yourself the following questions:

- Can you think of any other move that will help you in moving your piece to a better square?
- Is there a possibility of your position improving if you choose a different piece to move?
- Will you be able to retort in an effective fashion to your opponent's threat with this move?
- Will the piece you choose to move be in a safe square with this move?

The move that yields satisfactory answers to the aforesaid questions is the best option that is available to you. Hence identify that move and make it.

## **Have a plan in place**

Winning a game of chess is not about making random moves and counting on luck to work in your favor. You need to have a proper plan for all the moves that you make. There should be some relevance between all your moves. You may come up with a plan based on the principles behind the various chess openings.

Another important point to be noted is to ensure that you do not switch too much among several plans in a single game. When you keep changing your mind, you will lose clarity and this can be a very big advantage for your opponent. Hence come up with a plan and stick to it.

## **Know your pieces' worth**

As I mentioned already in a previous chapter about piece quality, it is important that you understand the value of your pieces during the different stages of the game. Do not trade pieces of high value for pieces of lower value. Keep the value of the piece in mind before making any move and understand the implications of losing a piece before moving it.

## Develop soon and well

With the timer ticking, it is important that you develop your pieces early into the game. If you don't bank on the opportunity, your opponent will most certainly do so and launch an aggressive attack against you.

A mistake that most of us commit when we are still a beginner is focusing on developing our pawns. While pawn development and formation is important, when we focus only on moving the pawns forward, we tend to focus less on the other pieces. The other important pieces determine your position in the game more than a bunch of pawns stuck in the center of the board. Hence ensure that you develop all your important pieces as soon as possible.

Another point to be borne in mind is to never develop any piece without any reason. When you develop a piece without a solid reason, understand that it is not going to benefit you in any way. Always have a purpose for developing any piece on the board.

## Know when to trade

The secret behind winning a game is not about avoiding the loss of any piece on the board. It is about knowing the right time to lose any piece on the board. Make sure that you trade your pieces only at the right time so that the loss of the piece will actually result in you gaining an important piece of the opponent's. Keep these pointers in mind before you trade:

- Do not make an exchange unless it is going to increase your advantage in the game. This is highly important when both the players have only few pieces left.
- Do not make an exchange when your opponent's squares are cramped with little mobility for piece development. The exchange will not benefit you in any way.
- If you know that your opponent has more pieces than you, then never make an exchange, as it will put you in a much worse situation than before.

## **Stay alert at all times**

Never rest just because you made one good move (this occurs especially if you have just captured your opponent's queen during the early stages of the game). You have the luxury of letting down your guard only when the game is over. Till then it is important that you stay alert, watch out for your opponent's threats and act accordingly. One bad move from you can be enough to give your opponent a very big advantage. Hence stay alert at all times.

## **Never take unnecessary risks**

Being an aggressive player can actually benefit you but being a blind aggressive player can reduce your chances of winning the game. Never take unnecessary risks that might cost you your victory. Take only calculated risks.

## **Refrain from giving unnecessary checks**

While giving a check will threaten your opponent, ensure that there is some purpose behind each check. Giving out meaningless checks is a mere waste of not just your time but also your opponent's. You could use that time in a better fashion if you choose your moves wisely. Never give a check without any purpose.

## **Check and checkmate**

It is important that beginners understand the difference between these two terms. It is obvious that "check" and "check mate" are not the same thing. These are two different terms and are not to be confused with each other. It is safe to say that the check precedes the checkmate.

A check is when the opponent's king is in danger. You have challenged the king and there is a chance for the king to move to another space. You have to warn the opponent by saying check. This is the sign that the king needs to be moved to a safe spot. Initially, beginners will not make this call and decide to take down the opponent's king. This is wrong, as your opponent needs to be warned about the impending danger. The opponent must then move his or her king to safety.

On the other hand, a checkmate is one where the game is over. No matter where the king is moved, he is always in danger. This signifies the end of the game. You are supposed to say, “checkmate” and signify that the game is over.

### **Don't stink at chess by going stale!**

Chess is a riveting but a complicated game. With lots of practice, one can learn some very interesting and effective strategies like the Ruy Lopez and the Sicilian defense, but it also has a steep learning curve for beginners so it is important to prepare for failure and figure out ways to put the game into a drawn state when ones sees the possibility of losing. There are six ways in which a game of chess can end up in a draw, which are Perpetual check, insufficient mating material, Repetition of moves, fifty move rule, draw by agreement (discussed earlier) and last but not least, and the one we will focus on in this article, the stalemate!

Stalemate is a situation in chess where in, the king is **not in check** and the chess player cannot make a legal move. A stalemate ends the chess game and the result is a draw. This happens frequently in the endgame, when there are not many pieces on the board/ Stalemate is a draw in normal chess, however, there are different chess variants, historical as well as modern, in which stalemate is not considered as a draw.

Ancient versions of chess like as Shatranj announce the player who leads to a stalemate as the winner. Even in this age, many people have called out to return to this same rule.

Remember that there is a very small chance for the player having a losing position to avoid a loss this way and draw a game. Stalemate succeeds only if the opponent is not very attentive to your next moves.

### **Reasons for getting into a stalemate**

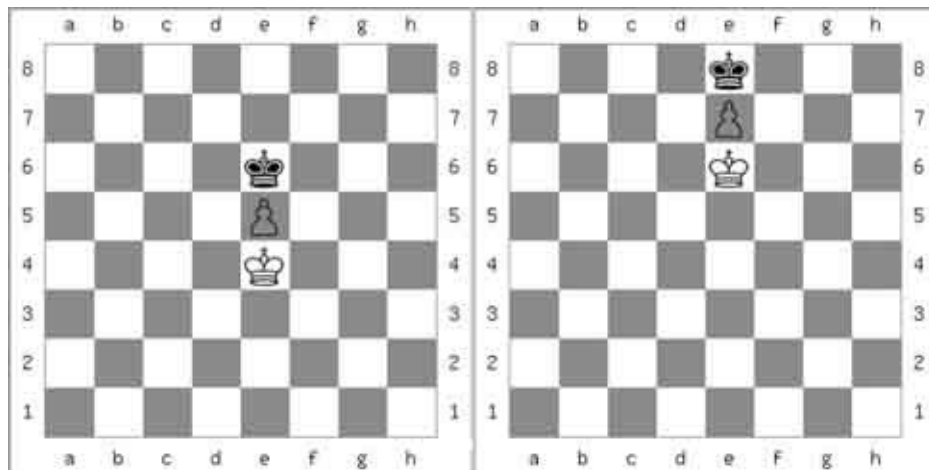
The answer is quite artless. When your opponent has the lead and you sense strongly that you cannot win, then it would be in your greatest interest to do your best to end the game in a stalemate.

A few ways to get the game into a stalemate are

Move your king into a place where it cannot move. Then sacrifice all your other pieces in a manner where they must be taken. Then, BOOM! You've stalemated

and game ends in a draw.

In addition, if the game truly dwindles down to virtually no pieces being left less the two kings and one pawn, then you can choose to end game by a simple technique illustrated below. Practice the below scenario and find the trick to always end the game in a stalemate if you were the black player.



(The above diagrams show a classic stalemate strategy for the Black player. If you find yourself in similar situation to the diagram on the left, use it to your advantage and have the match conclude in a draw rather than a defeat.)

Now, if you are on the other side of the table, your intention must be to avoid getting a stalemate by your opponent. And there is just one strategy to do this, simply look to see whether your opponent's king or one of his/her chess pieces can still move AFTER you have made your next move.

# The dos and don'ts of chess



When it comes to chess, there are some dos and don'ts that you need to take care of. In this chapter, we will look at some of these.

## Dos

The very first thing to do is keep asking yourself questions. These questions should be along the lines of...

What is my opponent up to?

What are his motives behind his moves?

Why is he moving the pieces that he is?

Can I do something to capitalize on my opponent's mistakes?

By asking yourself all these questions and more, you can make headway in the game.

During the middle game, it is important that you look for targets in your opponent's play. The middle game is one where you need to attack your opponent as best as you can. Keep an eye on their key pieces like queen and bishops. Try to capture these as soon in the game as possible. At the same time, keep an eye on your key pieces as well because you don't want to end up losing them during this stage. Once you identify your opponent's weaknesses, you must strategize and try to capitalize as soon as possible.

It is important that you not lose your queen when you are trying to attack the



opponent's king. Trading your queen will turn into a big disadvantage for you. Try to hold on to your queen and take out your opponent's queen using your knight or bishop. It is fine to lose these pieces but not the queen, however, if you are in a good position to take out your opponent's king by sacrificing your queen (like in Legal's mate) then do so.

The best strategy with your pawns is to push one during the end game and force your opponent to sacrifice a key piece to prevent the pawn from developing into a queen. The further in ranks a pawn goes, the more value it develops in the game. It is best to push connected pass pawns together.

Don't get over confident during a game. If you think you have everything going for you and end up making a mistake, then you will probably lose all your confidence. Don't over estimate your strategy; this is especially important if you are playing with a bona fide opponent. The opponent might know what you are up to and counter all your moves. There is no point in going about a game using one of the check mate strategies that we already saw with someone who has been playing chess for a long time. You might end up in a position where you cannot use any other strategy and have given away the game.

Do practice well before you attend a competition. Practice by yourself and also practice with an opponent. Memorizing some of the common situations will help you play well and fast. Make use of all the tactics that you know and use them throughout the game.

### **Don'ts**

One important don't of chess is to not place two or more pawns in the same file. This is better known as doubling. It is important that you keep all of your pawns connected and at no time should your pawns be too scattered about. Although it is vital that you claim the center of the board as soon as possible, it is important that you not do so using just your pawns. Capture it using some of your other pieces as well like your knights and bishops.

One important don't of the game is to not move your king too early. Moving your king early will in most cases endanger him. You will not realize that you have put him in a vulnerable position. As was mentioned before, it is best that you castle early and place 2-3 pawns in front of the king. The rook that you place beside the king should act as a guard. It should not be moved unless absolutely necessary. In

case the opponent is posing a threat to the rook, you must place something in the way to prevent the rook being taken down. If you think the opponent will take down the rook and you can take their piece with the king, then you might be falling into a trap that your opponent is pulling on you.

One important don't is to not go into a competition without consuming enough nutrition. Eat foods that are rich in brain nourishing nutrients such as nut oils. You can also consume fresh fruits and vegetables, which will help you, think well. Carry an energy bar with you as well as it will help you remain energetic all through your game.

## Key take aways



As we know, Chess is not a recent game; it is quite an old game and has existed for thousands of years. It is said to have originated in India and then made its way to the rest of the world. It was originally used to plan military tactics that would help army men plan their moves. Through the years, several changes were introduced, all of which made the game quite popular.

It is best that you buy yourself a small board to practice with. Although chess is best played with an opponent, it is also possible to play the game by yourself. All you have to do is play as your opponent or play online. This will help you understand the game and also understand the different strategies that exist in the game.

The basic idea is to practice the game as much as possible before you take on an opponent. You will then know how to counter your opponents' moves as you become familiarized with the openings and various patterns associated with each one.

The very first thing to understand in chess is the basic motive behind playing it. That motive is to take down your opponent's king. The king is the main player in a game of chess and he needs to be guarded till the end. The player whose king is captured first is the loser of the game and for this, you have to strategize and plan your game in a way that forces your opponent to make a mistake and expose his or her king to you.

Before this can happen however, you need to plan out your game and devise a strategy that will help you take down their king. The very first thing to do is look at opening strategies. These opening strategies are those that you use to start the game. There are several of them and you need to memorize them in order to have a good advantage and to play the game like professionals. As soon as the game starts, you can put these strategies into play and begin the game the "right way."

Once the game has started and a little headway has been made, you must take control of the center of the board. The center of the board is extremely important and you must try and conquer it as soon as possible. If you dominate the center, then you can advance in the game quite well. On the other hand, if your opponent is controlling the center, then it is best that you take control of the wings and look for openings to make your moves.

Next off, it is imperative that you understand how to develop and bring your high value pieces out, practice this! Most novices habitually leave half their army lingering inactively, which is akin to only using one hand in a boxing match. That is ridiculous!

It is important that you understand the values of each piece on the board and how these change through piece development. These pieces need to be placed on the board in such a way that they are equally spread out on the board. If you concentrate your key pieces in just one place then you might end up losing to your opponent easily. During the middle game, you must plan the end game. There are several end game strategies, much like your opening strategies, that you must understand and use to finish your game.

There are many basic chess tactics that you must understand if you wish to win the game. These include understanding how to control the center, using the queen's real powers, protecting the king at all times, knowing how and when to castle *etc.* Once you understand all of these and put them to play, you will realize how effortlessly you can win against novices or stand your ground against experienced players, but care must be taken to understand when each of these tactics are applicable and come into play. You cannot simply implement them as you like, it depends on the context of the situation. It is recommended that you look at the different examples provided in this book to understand these strategies better and brush upon them often.

As you know, there can be a draw in any game. There are several types of draws in chess as well and these mainly happen when both parties are guarding their king wisely. In such situations, there will be no one clear winner but it can be a good thing to arrive at a draw, especially if you have been checked a few times in the game. It will ensure that you do not lose the game and you force it into a draw where your opponent also does not win.

You must try to force the game into a stale mate if you are on the verge of losing the game. That will ensure that your opponent does not win either!

It will be extremely interesting if you can make use of the quick game strategies. Your opponent will keep wondering what you did and how you were able to end the game so soon. As you know, for the strategies to work for you, you need to capitalize on your opponent's mistakes. The biggest mistake that they will make is not allowing any space for their king to escape. You can easily capture their king and checkmate them. Practice them before a tournament and you might be able to breeze past the first few rounds.

Once you start playing the game and develop winning skills, it is best that you start attending tournaments and competitions. Tournaments are held all over the world and you can participate in them. Don't worry if you lose the first few times, it is not possible to perfect the game easily; you typically need to lose a few games before you can win. There will be experts there and you might have to play with someone who has played the game for a long time.

There are certain tournament specific rules and strategies that you need to get acquainted with; make sure you are familiar with them far before your game begins.

## FREE BONUS



As a thank you for purchasing this book, I'd like to offer you this free bonus. Inside are 700 chess problems for you to solve, similar to the puzzles in an earlier chapter. Have fun with them, and remember that the more you practice, both in games and puzzles, the greater your skills will become.

[Click Here To Download Your Free Guide](#)

## Conclusion



I hope that you are excited to practice the different openings and tactics mentioned in this book. As you can clearly see, Chess involves more planning than cleverness to play and you should be quick enough to read your opponent's moves and play your move accordingly before the time runs out.

In addition, your newfound skills will be sure to attract a larger volume of players to sit across from you. Believe it or not, the game of chess entices excitement and worth in people from all different backgrounds. Who wouldn't enjoy pitting their creative thinking against another in a friendly, competitive game? There is a reason that chess has been around for *centuries*, and it doesn't just have to do with smarts either; it opens the doors to social bonding as well.

Don't start playing by thinking that it is a very difficult game. It is undeniably a hit amongst scholars but is simple enough for anybody to take up, including school children!

If you've ever been to a relaxed café, peppered with interesting people, that has a shelf full of board games, you will be sure to find a chess board among the lot (possibly with some missing pieces). Even though the game itself encourages a sense of mutual dignity and respect amongst its players, in a comfortable setting it is rife with playful banter not short of smiles or laughs.

Chances are if you've been reading this book you already have access to a chessboard. I highly recommend taking it and a friend with you on a nice day to a public space such as a park, lounge or commons area and begin playing. You might draw attention from passersby who you could invite to jump in on the next game and get acquainted. If you have chosen a prime place, you probably won't be the only people playing either.

It is not possible to become a pro at chess overnight. However with enough practice, nothing is impossible. I pray this book acts as a catalyst in realizing your

dream of becoming a master at this game some day.

Please, if you have enjoyed this book, leave brief comments on what you liked. If you found this book lacking in certain areas, please also let us know so we may improve upon the next edition.

It is in my dearest prayers that this book has sparked enthusiasm in your adoration for our beloved game, Chess.

Sincerely,

Logan Donovan