

Opening Principles



Chess Club

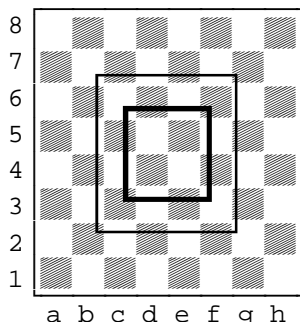
Mini-Lesson

Level: Novice

Consider chess as a battle between two mighty armies with the board as the battlefield. Since both sides start off as equals, your goal in the opening moves is to increase the effectiveness of your army thus making it more powerful and dangerous. Develop your pieces by taking control of key territories, building defenses, and positioning for attack.

1) Control the center

squares - The center squares are the four squares at d4, d5, e4, and e5, and, to a lesser degree, the squares that immediately surround those four. The center squares represent valued "high ground" from which attacks can originate. Therefore an important opening principle is to *control* the center squares.



Develop your pieces to occupy and/or attack the center.

2) Improve mobility -



At the beginning of the game, many of your pieces cannot move because other pieces are in the way. One of your opening objectives is to open up *lines of attack*. **Develop your pieces to improve their mobility.**

3) Extend and defend -

As pieces reach out to control territory, use them to defend each other. **Develop your pieces to create a wall of defense.**



4) Minor pieces first -



Minor pieces refer to the knights and bishops. Major pieces refer to the rooks and queen. Extended major pieces become prime targets. You can lose precious moves fleeing the attacks from minor pieces.

Therefore, **develop your minor pieces first**, leave the major ones for last.



5) Other points:

- ♠ Develop quickly; don't waste moves.
- ♠ Know your opponents plan. Ask yourself: Why did he/she move there?
- ♠ Castle early.
- ♠ Watch the pawn on the "f" rank! Only the king protects it. Be wary of Scholar's mate.



6) Common beginner mistakes:

- ♠ Opening with rook pawn
- ♠ Knight on edge square (lacks mobility)
- ♠ Bringing queen out too early
- ♠ Wasting moves on easily defended attacks



7) A basic opening strategy:

- ♠ Open with a pawn on center
- ♠ Let loose the horses
- ♠ Free the bishops
- ♠ Push defended battle lines
- ♠ Castle early.

Remember!

These are just guidelines for good chess openings. There will be exceptions. Think about each and every move you make.