



HOW TO PLAN YOUR NEXT MOVE

FOR SOME, CHESS MAY BE VIEWED AS A COMPLICATED GAME, HOWEVER, UNDERSTANDING THE WAY PIECES MOVE, HOW TO ATTACK AND HOW TO WIN ARE THE FIRST STEPS TO BEING ON YOUR WAY TO CALLING THAT CHECKMATE.

PIECES: One King, One Queen, 2 Rooks, 2 Bishops, 2 Knights, and 8 Pawns

KING

The king is the most important piece, but is one of the weakest. The king can only move one square in any direction - up, down, to the sides, and diagonally. The king may never move himself into check (where he could be captured).

QUEEN

Some men find out the hard way, but we all know the queen is the most powerful piece. She can move in any one straight direction - forward, backward, sideways, or diagonally - as far as possible as long as she does not move through any of her own pieces. And, like with all pieces, if the queen captures an opponent's piece her move is over.

ROOK

The rook may move as far as it wants, but only forward, backward, and to the sides. The rooks are particularly powerful pieces when they are protecting each other and working together!

BISHOP

The bishop may move as far as it wants, but only diagonally. Each bishop starts on one color (light or dark) and must always stay on that color. Bishops work well together because they cover up each other's weaknesses...if only we had "bishops" in real life.

KNIGHTS

Knights move in a very different way from the other pieces - going two squares in one direction, and then one more move at a 90 degree angle, just like the shape of an "L". Knights are also the only pieces that can move over other pieces.

PAWNS

Pawns are unusual because they move and capture in different ways: they move forward, but capture diagonally. Pawns can only move forward one square at a time, except for their very first move where they can move forward two squares. Pawns can only capture one square diagonally in front of them. They can never move or capture backwards. If there is another piece directly in front of a pawn he cannot move past or capture that piece. Pawns have another special ability and that is that if a pawn reaches the other side of the board it can become any other chess piece (called promotion). A pawn may be promoted to any piece. (NOTE: A common misconception is that pawns may only be exchanged for a piece that has been captured. That is NOT true.) A pawn is usually promoted to a queen. Only pawns may be promoted. The last rule about pawns is called "en passant," which is French for "in passing". If a pawn moves out two squares on its first move, and by doing so lands to the side of an opponent's pawn (effectively jumping past the other pawn's ability to capture it), that other pawn has the option of capturing the first pawn as it passes by. This special move must be done immediately after the first pawn has moved past, otherwise the option to capture it is no longer available.

TIME TO PLAY

NO.1: Protect your king

Get your king to the corner of the board where he is usually safer. Don't put off castling. You should usually castle as quickly as possible. Remember, it doesn't matter how close you are to checkmating your opponent if your own king is checkmated first!

NO.2: Don't give pieces away

Don't carelessly lose your pieces! Each piece is valuable and you can't win a game without pieces to checkmate. There is an easy system that most players use to keep track of the relative value of each chess piece:

A pawn is worth 1
A knight is worth 3
A bishop is worth 3
A rook is worth 5
A queen is worth 9
The king is infinitely valuable

At the end of the game these points don't mean anything - it is simply a system you can use to make decisions while playing, helping you know when to capture, exchange, or make other moves.

NO.3: Control the center

You should try and control the center of the board with your pieces and pawns. If you control the center, you will have more room to move your pieces and will make it harder for your opponent to find good squares for his pieces. In the example above, white makes good moves to control the center while black plays bad moves

NO.4: Use all of your pieces

Your pieces don't do any good when they are sitting back on the first row. Try and develop all of your pieces so that you have more to use when you attack the king. Using one or two pieces to attack will not work against any decent opponent.

Learn the pieces and how they move. There are eight pawns that form the front row of pieces on each side of the board. Pawns only move forward. On its first move, the pawn can move one or two spaces, as long as the spaces are unoccupied. A pawn can capture an opposing piece by moving forward one space to its right or left diagonal, where the other piece is. If a pawn makes it to the back row of the other side, it can be upgraded to any other piece except a king.

Move the knight in an "L" pattern, one or two spaces in one direction and one or two spaces in another, for a total of three spaces. It is the only piece that can jump another piece.

Move the rook any number of spaces in a straight line, but not diagonally. It must stop if another piece blocks its way. If the piece is an opposing piece, it can capture it and take the space; if it is not, it must stop before the space.

Move the bishop any number of spaces diagonally. It, too, must stop if blocked by another piece, and may capture or land before the other piece. Move the queen any number of spaces in any direction. It follows the same rules as the bishop and rook as far as being forced to either capture or stop if another piece is in its way.

Move the king one space in any direction. It, too, must stop or capture if blocked, but cannot land in a space that would put it in check.

Turn the board so that a white space is at each player's right hand corner. Place a rook in that space. To the left from the rook and in this order, place a knight, a bishop, the king, the queen, a bishop, a knight, a rook. Place each of the pawns in the spaces directly in front of each of these pieces.

Let white play first. On its first move, white may move any of its pawns, either one square or two, or one of its knights. These are the only options because only the knights may jump the pawns, which currently block all other pieces.

Let black go next. Black has the same options as white.

Continue in this pattern, alternating turns and opening spaces for other pieces to move by moving out pawns.

Take pieces in the manner described in the first section. Your goal is to put the king in check or checkmate. Checkmate wins the game. Check means that one of your pieces is directly attacking the king, but that your opponent has a way to either move the king to safety or block the attacking piece. Checkmate means the king cannot get out of check.

So time to sit with your favorite cigar, a glass of scotch and plan your move.