

September 16, 2009

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1. Columns a through h on the chess board are called “files”. Rows 1 through 8 on the chess board are called “ranks”.
2. The pieces on a chess board are set up properly when the white square of “a1” is in the lower left hand corner. The white pieces are placed on the 1 and 2 ranks. The black pieces are placed on the 7 and 8 ranks. The Queen is placed on her own color, across the board from each other on the d file.
3. Each piece has a point value: Pawns=1, Knights and Bishops=3, Rooks=5, and the Queen=9.
4. “Algebraic notation” keeps track of the pieces that move, the square pieces move to, and any action taken. You should be able to keep notation during your play. Practice taking notation often.
  - White’s move is recorded first, followed by black’s move.
  - The file is written first (lower case letter), followed by the rank (its number).
  - Except for the Pawn, a letter is used to identify the piece before the file and rank – K for King, Q for Queen, B for Bishop, N for Knight, and R for Rook.
  - A “?” is placed at the end of the notation to indicate a questionable move. A “??” is placed at the end to indicate a blunder.
  - A “!” is placed at the end of the notation to indicate a good move. A “!!” is placed at the end to indicate a brilliant move.
  - If a piece is captured, an “x” is used between the piece moved to make the capture, and the square moved to.
  - If more than one piece can move to a square or capture an opponent’s piece, indicate the file or rank of the piece’s location after the letter of the piece and before the new file location.
  - Castling on the King side is noted as O-O, and O-O-O on the Queen side.
  - A white Pawn that is promoted on the fourth file to a Queen is recorded with an equals sign, such as d8=Q.
  - A “+” is placed at the end of the notation to indicate the opponent’s King is in check. A “++” is placed at the end of the notation to indicate checkmate.
5. The term “touch move” means a piece must be moved if you touch it - be sure to think about your move before you touch and move your piece. The term “touch take” means a piece must be captured if you touch it - when more than one piece can be captured. The only exception to each is to say, “I adjust” before touching the piece.
6. The most effective opening principle is to develop chess pieces early in the game to control the center of the board. Move pieces where there are more squares for the pieces to move to:

- Move center Pawns first.
  - Move Knights towards the center of the board.
  - Move Bishops so that other pieces are both not trapped and also free to move later.
  - Castle early – move the King first (two spaces to the left or the right), then the Rook.
7. Use the following conditions to “castle”:
    - When spaces between the King and Rook are cleared of other pieces.
    - When neither the King nor the Rook have been previously moved.
    - The King must not be in check.
    - If the King or Rook have been moved, you may not castle.
  8. A Pawn can be “promoted” when it moves to the opposite side of the board. Once it reaches the last rank, it can be replaced by any piece you choose. Your choice should always be to promote for a Queen.
  9. “En passant” is an optional move for your opponent to capture your Pawn under the following conditions:
    - Your Pawn must have been moved for the first time, and moved two squares.
    - Your opponent must have a Pawn on an adjacent file in the same rank.
    - Your opponent may choose, but is not required, to capture your Pawn as if you moved one square.
    - Once the next move is made, en passant is no longer an option.
    - For example, assume white has a Pawn on c2, and black has a Pawn on d4. White moves the c2 Pawn for the first time to c4. Black may then immediately move the d4 Pawn to c3 and capture the white Pawn.
  10. Be aware of “scholar’s mate”, a sequence of moves by your opponent that can create a quick checkmate: 1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nc6 3. Qf3 (or Qh5) g6 4. Qf3 Bc5 5. Qxf7++.
  11. Be aware of your opponent’s Queen, Rook, and Bishop as any one of them can move across the board to capture a piece or participate in a check mate. Be especially of the back rank check mate.
  12. The most important tip there is, is to take your time! Before each move, ask yourself the following questions:
    - Of all my pieces on the board, which is being attacked?
    - Of all my opponent’s pieces on the board, which is in danger of being attacked?
    - What is my opponent threatening with the previous move?
    - What threats exist for my piece after I move?