

When to Castle

Chess

Which side to castle, and when not to castle at all.

Factors in the decision.

Situation	Consider
Open centre	Castle early, either side
Closed centre	Castling can wait
Opponent attacking kingside	Castle queenside, or delay
Opposite-side castling	A pawn race; whoever is faster wins
Damaged pawn shield	Consider the other side
Endgame approaching	The king may be better in the centre

Opposite-side castling means both sides can push pawns at the enemy king without exposing their own. Those games are decided by one