

The French Defence

Chess

1...e6, the solid choice, and the problem it creates for Black.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 — Black challenges the centre immediately, accepting a cramped position and a hemmed-in light bishop in exchange for solidity.

MOVE
1...e6

WEAKNESS
light bishop

PLAN
...c5

- The light-squared bishop is blocked by its own e6 and d5 pawns.
- Black's standard plan is ...c5, attacking the base of White's chain.
- Main lines: Advance (3.e5), Exchange (3.exd5), Tarrasch (3.Nd2), Classical (3.Nc3).
- White often attacks on the kingside; Black on the queenside.
- It is very solid and structurally clear.
- Freeing the bad bishop is Black's recurring problem.

LOOK FOR IT

Against the Advance Variation, ...c5, ...Nc6 and ...Qb6 pressures d4 directly.

The pawn structures repeat constantly. Learning the plans transfers between variations more than in most openings.