

Opening Principles

Chess

Five rules that replace memorising lines for your first thousand games.

The opening has one job: reach a middlegame where all your pieces are doing something.

1

Control the centre

e4, d4, e5, d5. A piece in the centre reaches more squares than one at the edge.

2

Develop knights before bishops

A knight has fewer good squares, so its best one is easier to know early.

3

Castle early

Usually within the first ten moves. It safeguards the king and connects the rooks.

4

Do not move a piece twice

Not before every piece has moved once, unless there is a concrete reason.

5

Do not bring the queen out early

It gets chased, and every attack on it develops your opponent for free.

A SOUND START FOR EITHER COLOUR

1. e4 e5 – 2. Nf3 Nc6 – 3. Bc4 Bc5 – 4. O-O

Centre staked, both knights out, king safe.

Knights on the rim are dim. From a corner a knight reaches two squares; from the centre, eight.