

Weak Squares & Outposts

Chess

Squares no pawn can defend, and what to put on them.

A weak square is one that can no longer be defended by a pawn. If it is in enemy territory and you can protect it with a pawn, it becomes an outpost.

BEST PIECE
knight

BEST RANKS
5th–6th

PERMANENT
yes

- Pawns cannot move backwards, so a square once weakened stays weak.
- Knights benefit most: they cannot be driven off by pawns.
- The best outposts are on the fifth and sixth ranks.
- Colour complexes: losing a bishop weakens all squares of that colour.
- Every pawn move creates weaknesses somewhere.
- Fixing an enemy pawn can create a permanent hole in front of it.

LOOK FOR IT

A knight on d5, supported by a pawn on e4, in a Sicilian, often decides the game by itself.

Before pushing a pawn, ask which squares it permanently stops defending. That question prevents most structural damage.