

Gungahlin Junior Chess Club

Tactics - Forks

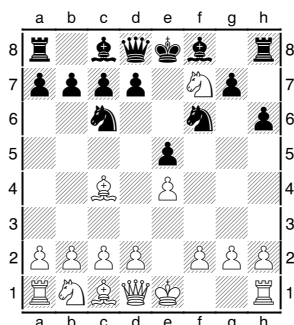
As you play more and more chess you begin to notice your old tricks stop working. Clever opponents soon spot your one move threats and take steps to avoid them. Simply threatening pieces no longer works, and you have to come up with smarter moves.

One clever move is the "Fork". The Fork is when you attack to pieces at once. Because your opponent is only allowed to make one move in reply, they can usually only save one piece. Then you simply grab the other piece.

The Knight Fork

The most common fork is the Knight Fork. This occurs when the Knight attacks two enemy pieces. Early in the game the Knight can often attack the Queen and Rook, as the following game shows.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 h6 5.Nxf7



Here the Knight on f7 attacks both the Black Queen and the Black Rook. As Black can only move one piece, she decides to save the most valuable piece by moving the Queen to e7. Now White is free to capture the Rook with **Nxh8**.

The Knight fork is most effective when the Knight attacks two pieces stronger than itself. These pieces are Kings, Queens and Rooks.

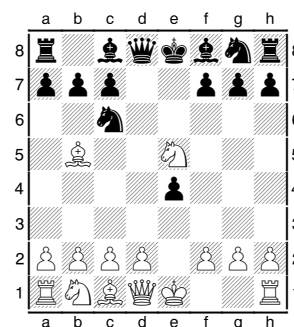
In the case of a Knight attacking the King and another piece, your opponent has to save the King, leaving you to take the other piece!

The Bishop Fork

The Knight isn't the only piece that can attack to pieces at once. The Bishop can sometimes do this as well, although it is not as common. Normally the Bishop fork occurs when the

Bishop captures an enemy pawn or piece. In this game the capture by the Bishop allows it to attack both the King and Rook.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 d5 4.Nxe5 dxe4



Blacks last move was a big mistake. Now White can set up a Bishop Fork by capturing the Knight on c6.

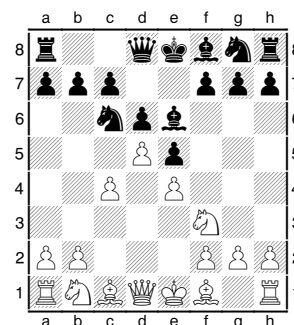
5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.Bxc6+ and after Black blocks the check (with Bd7) White captures to Rook on a8.

The Pawn Fork

After the Knight Fork, the most deadly fork is the Pawn Fork. This is because the pawn is such a weak piece and every time it captures a bigger piece, you gain an advantage.

If you opponent carelessly leaves two pieces one square apart on the same rank then you might be able to attack them with a single pawn.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Be6 5.d5



Due to Blacks poor 4th move, White can move the pawn to d5 and attack both the Bishop (on e6) and the Knight (on c6). Black can save one, but not both!