

Gungahlin Junior Chess Club

The Humble Pawn

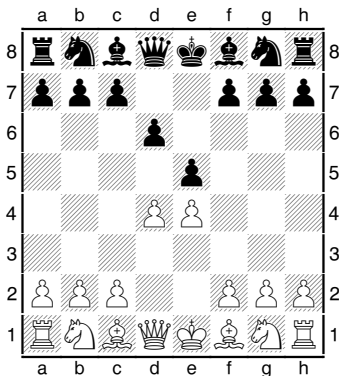
Now it is time to look at what each member of your army can do. Starting at the bottom we have the **pawn**.

The reason why the pawn is considered the weakest part of the army is that it can only move in small, straight steps. On its first move off the starting line it can move two squares, but after that it can only move one square. This means it takes a long time to go anywhere.

Also, the pawn is the only chess piece that captures in a different way to moving. While they move straight ahead, they capture one square diagonally (that is, by moving to the square to the left or right of the square in front).

And finally, the poor pawn cannot move backwards, so it finds it hard to run away from danger.

Here are a couple of examples of what pawns get up to.



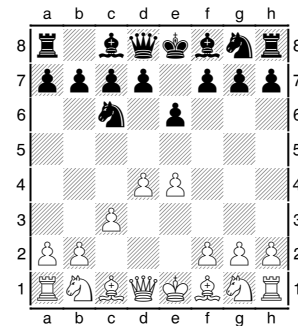
The White Pawn on e4 is currently stuck. It cannot move forward because the Black Pawn on e5 is in the way, and it cannot move to d5 or f5, because there is nothing to capture. The Black Pawn on e5 has one move, which is to capture the White Pawn on d4. The White Pawn on d4 has a choice of two moves. It can either capture the Black Pawn on e5, or it can continue moving forward to d5. Finally the Black Pawn on d6 can move up to d5. At the moment this pawn is also defending the pawn on e5, so if White captures with the pawn on d4, the the d6 pawn can capture back on e5.

All the other pawns, both black and white, are able to either move 1 square or 2 squares forward, as none of them have moved yet.

The Useful Pawn

But if pawns are so weak, what are they used for? The main answer to that question is that their weakness is also their strength.

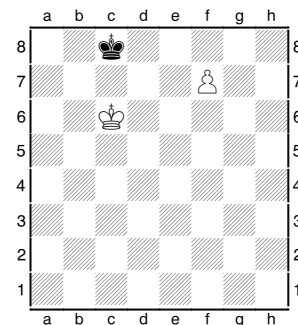
As pawns are the weakest part of you army, any piece that they capture is either an even trade (in the case of taking an enemy pawn) or a good trade (when you take a bigger piece). This means that pawns are good at guarding squares that your opponent might want to put pieces on.



In this position if the Black Knight moves to either e5 or b4 it will be captured by Whites pawn. The Black Bishop suffers a similar fate if it goes to c5 or b4. And if the Black Knight captures the pawn on d4, then the pawn on c3 can take straight back (as can the White queen).

The Mighty Pawn

While the pawn may start out weak, it can turn into the strongest piece in your army. When a pawn makes it to the other end of the board, it gets a promotion. You can replace it with a Queen or a Rook or a Bishop or a Knight. Usually you will choose a Queen though.



Here the pawn on f7 can move to f8 and promote to a Queen, giving checkmate at the same time!