

Gungahlin Junior Chess Club

Nifty Knights

The Knight is a pretty special piece in chess. It does two things that no other chess piece does. Firstly it is the only piece that can jump over other pieces. That means that it is no good trying to block an attack from a Knight, as it cannot be done. Secondly, the Knight is the only piece that doesn't move in a straight line.

The most common way to describe a Knights move is that it moves in an "L" shape. Either 2 squares straight and one square left or right, or 1 square straight and then 2 squares left or right.

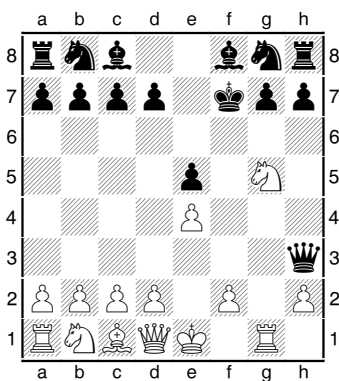
There is another clever way to work out which squares a Knight can move to. A Knight can move to the closest square that isn't on a straight or diagonal line from the starting square.

Good Knight, Bad Knight

The two good things about the Knight is that they can jump over other pieces, and that the way they move is different from other pieces.

It is the fact that they can attack other pieces without being attacked in return that gives them their deadliest weapon. This weapon is called the Knight Fork. Here is an example

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Qg5 3.Nf3 Qxg2 4.Rg1 Qh3 5.Bxf7+ Kxf7 6.Ng5+



And the Knight now attacks both the Black King and the Black Queen, without either of them being able to capture the Knight. Worse for Black is that he must get his King out of check, leaving the Knight free to capture the Black Queen.

While the Knight can do lots of good things, it also has some limits. Firstly, it is a short moving piece. It takes a lot of time to get up the board.

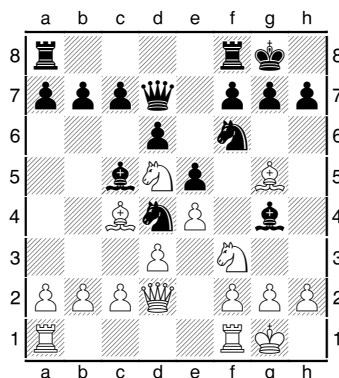
While a Bishop on c1 can get to g5 in 1 move, it takes a Knight 2 moves to get there from f1. Secondly, if a Knight is forced to move, it can no longer protect the squares it used to. This is because every time a Knight moves it lands on the opposite colour square to which it started on. For these reasons the Knight is considered to be the same value as the Bishop (3 pawns).

Using your Knights

In the opening your Knight is very important. Usually it is the first piece you move after you have moved a pawn or two. Knights on f3 and c3 control all the important centre squares of d4,e4,d5 and e5. In the case of games that start **1.e4 e5** moving the Knight to f3 puts the Black pawn under attack. Usually Knights and Bishops work together to put the enemy under pressure.

In the middle game the Knight becomes stronger the further up the board it gets. As with the Bishop the Knight is always on the lookout for targets to attack. In the following game the Knights and Bishops from both sides look for things to attack.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bc4 Bc5 5.0-0 6.d3 d6 7.Bg5 Bg4 8.Nd5 Nd4 9.Qd2 Qd7



10.Bxf6 Bxf3 11.Ne7+ Kh8 12.Bxg7+ Kxg7 13.Qg5+ Kh8 14.Qf6#

The one thing Knights really hate are enemy pawns. Pawns often protect squares that Knights would like to rest on, and even the smallest pawn move can drive the Knight back down the board. So the best squares for Knights are usually squares that are protected by your own pawns, and cannot be attacked by enemy pawns.