

# Coach Dave's Principles

## Middlegame Guidelines

1. PLAY TACTICALLY CORRECT moves. Blunders lose.
2. HAVE A PLAN based on a strategic positional feature. For example if both of your bishops are pointed toward your opponent's kingside, then a kingside attack is often your best plan. Change your plan going forward to overcome your opponent's resistance, or if the position no longer supports it.
3. If you are AHEAD IN MATERIAL, then TRADE as many pieces as practical, especially queens. Your extra material should make for an simple endgame win.
4. If you are BEHIND IN MATERIAL, then AVOID TRADES. Your opponent is more likely to blunder in a crowded complex board, allowing you to regain material.
5. AVOID serious pawn WEAKNESSES. For example, backward undefendable pawns, or over extended pawns. Remember pawns never move backward, and their position of strength or weakness will often determine the outcome of a game.
6. AVOID WEAKENING PAWNS in front of your KING.
7. DO NOT BREAK PAWN TENSION without good reason.
8. In CRAMPED POSITIONS free yourself by TRADING.
9. DON'T bring your KING out with your OPPONENT'S QUEEN on the board.
10. If your opponent has ONE or MORE pieces EXPOSED, look for a COMBINATION to win material.
11. In superior positions, OPEN LINES OF ATTACK (file or diagonal) especially against your opponent's king.
12. In even positions, FIGHT FOR THE CENTER.
13. In inferior positions (your opponent owns more space or has better piece coordination, etc.), the best DEFENSE is COUNTER-ATTACK (challenge the center or king), if possible.
14. If you are castled on opposite wings, then whoever pawn storms their opponent first usually wins.
15. If you are UNDER ATTACK, then try to TRADE ATTACKING PIECES, especially queens.
16. If your OPPONENT IS ATTACKING ON A WING, then OPEN THE CENTER.
17. Try to eliminate your opponent's most active piece.
18. When attacking, BRING EVERY AVAILABLE PIECE INTO THE FIGHT.
19. Open the game and create confrontation when leading in development. Your opponent is not ready for it.
20. Centralize your king in the ending.
21. PUSH YOUR PASSED PAWNS.
22. Try to keep your pair of bishops. They work better as a team.
23. Unless you have good reason pawns should capture towards the center.
24. You should violate these principles when necessary (see Principle 1).

**Unusual positions call for unusual tactics.**