

Coach Dave's Principles

Opening Guidelines

Develop, develop, develop, develop your position...

1. **Develop** your position by getting all of your pieces off your back row as fast as possible. Using your entire army is an absolute must when playing a strong player. Your development is not complete until your Rooks are connected.
2. **Develop** your minor pieces first. The minor pieces are your Knights and Bishops. The major pieces are your Rooks and Queen. You should not move your major pieces until your minor pieces are in the game.
3. **Develop** with purpose. The center of the board is the "high ground" of battle. If you control the center, then you can attack in any direction on the board, and dominate your opponent. Develop your pieces and pawns to occupy or control the center.
4. **Develop** with threats, or in defense of threats. Tactically threaten to capture material or checkmate your opponent. Your threats will limit your opponent's ability to develop and threaten you.
5. Avoid moving the same piece more than once in the opening. There is no time to waste shuffling pieces around aimlessly.
6. Castle to safety before it is too late. If you castle earlier than necessary, then you give your opponent a fixed target for attack, and lose the option to castle to the opposite wing. If you castle too late, then you are at the mercy of your opponent as the battle for the center rages.
7. If you are ahead in development, then open up lines for your better pieces.
8. If you are behind in development, keep the position closed until you have caught up. This is especially true if you have not castled!

If you are rated under 1000, then ...

- **Study these principles; not opening theory.**
- **Avoid making more than two pawn moves until your Rooks are connected.**
- **Your best first move is a two-square center pawn move.**