

## Chapter 1

# BAD DEVELOPMENT

*“Help your pieces so that they can help you.” – Paul Morphy*

A good chess game, like a good yarn, has an opening, middle and end. The opening is a fight for time, territory and material. The first dozen moves or so are a prelude to the battle that lies ahead. Your main task is to emerge from the opening alive, especially when playing Black.

He who mobilizes all his reserves and gets to the scene of action “fustest with the mostest” is likely to secure an advantage in time and space. Often this is decisive if it can be transformed into material gain or a mating attack.

In chess as in life there are general guidelines but no eternal rules. Bearing in mind that each position must be evaluated on its own merits, the following tips gleaned from over a century of tournament experience should prove helpful.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Play to dominate the middle of the board. Occupy, attack or watch the center; the sides and corners are lifeless.
2. The opening is a race for rapid and continuous development. Develop all your men fast, not just one or two. Aim to connect rooks on the back rank so they can occupy central files.
3. Seize open lines!
4. Don't lose time by moving the same piece twice.

**5. Avoid early queen sorties.**

**6. Develop knights before bishops.** The course of the game usually suggests the best posts for bishops whereas knights generally belong on f3 and c3 (or c6 and f6 for Black).

**7. Just move enough center pawns to free your forces on the back row.** Bring out your bishops before hemming them in with pawns.

**8. Castle early.** This brings the king to safety and activates a rook towards the center.

**9. Avoid useless checks.**

**10. Avoid cramped positions — they bear the germs of defeat.** When cramped, try and swap pieces to get some elbow room.