

CHESS TIPS FOR JUNIORS

**A series of leaflets for
young chess players**

THE TOUCH-MOVE RULE

5 The 'touch-move' rule

Why is this rule always enforced?

Along with the 'touch-take' rule, this is a fundamental part of chess. If there was no touch-move or touch-take rules, it would be like playing a game of football where fouls are allowed.

Every game played, even friendly games, should follow the rules of chess and that includes both touch-move and touch-take. It's not necessary to say before you start, "are we playing touch-move today?"

Honesty is important in chess. **You** know if you intentionally touched a piece - and if you did, own up and admit it, even if it means losing your Queen.

What do the rules actually say?

1. Touch-move

If a player touches a piece and that piece has a legal move, the player must move the piece. So in the starting position, if White touches the Knight (which has a legal move), then the Knight must be moved. But if the Bishop, Rook, King or Queen were touched, none of these pieces has a legal move, so you are given another chance.

If White's King is in check and White doesn't notice, touching a piece that cannot block the check or capture the attacker, then the touch is ignored and White must make a legal move to get out of check.

Touch-move also means that once a player has released a piece and that piece is on a legal square, then it must stay there.

Playing 'touch-move' improves your ability to visualise what the position will look like after a move is made.

2. Touch-take

If you touch an opponent's piece that you can legally capture, then you must do so. This includes touching an opponent's piece with the piece you are holding. So, for example, if you pick up your Queen and nudge your opponent's bishop, then you must take it, even if it means losing your Queen.

If you picked up your bishop and tried to take a piece that was on a different diagonal, that would be an illegal move, so you don't have to take that piece. But as you touched your own bishop, you must still move it.

Unintentional touch

This is important as it often crops up in junior chess tournaments. One player (often a small person!) leans across the table to pick up his Rook, which is perhaps on his opponent's first rank, and in doing so, knocks over his own King. No, he hasn't resigned! The touch-move rule is for **intentional** moves, not accidental touches.

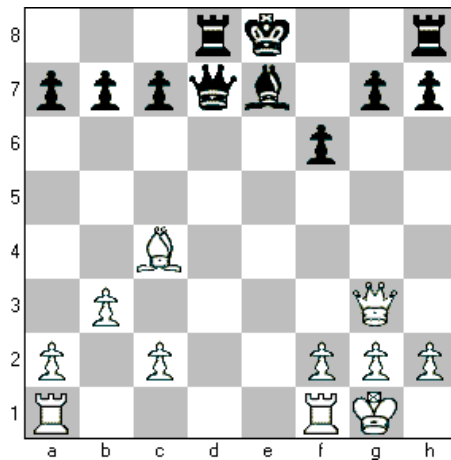
This could also apply in the touch-take situation. White picks up his Queen, intending to move it across the board to a safe square, and accidentally flicks a pawn with it. He doesn't have to take the pawn.

Adjusting the pieces

Quite often, pieces get moved slightly off the centre of the square that they are supposed to be on. If you want to move a piece in order to reposition it, either do it when it's not your move, or, if it is your turn, say "adjust", or "j'adoube". These mean the same thing, but "j'adoube" is French and it is the term you are supposed to use. But "adjust" is OK too.

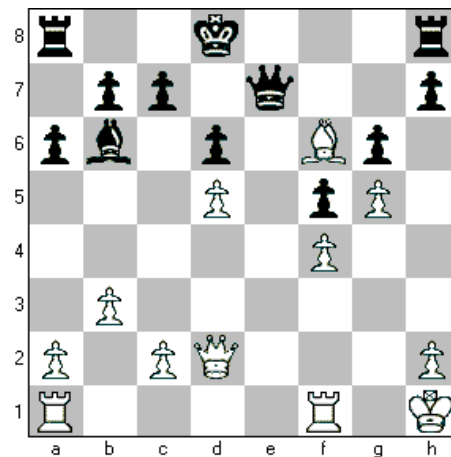
EXERCISES (see answers below)

1



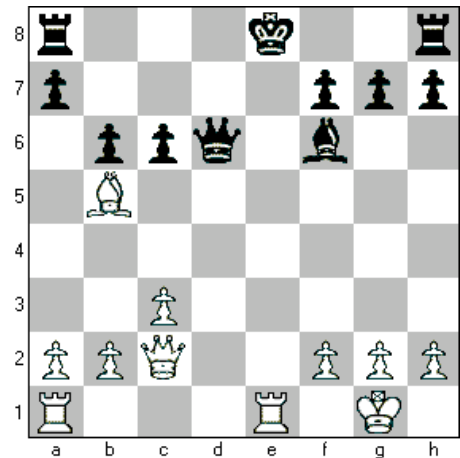
Black attempts to castle, then realises that he would be castling into check. What move must he make instead?

2



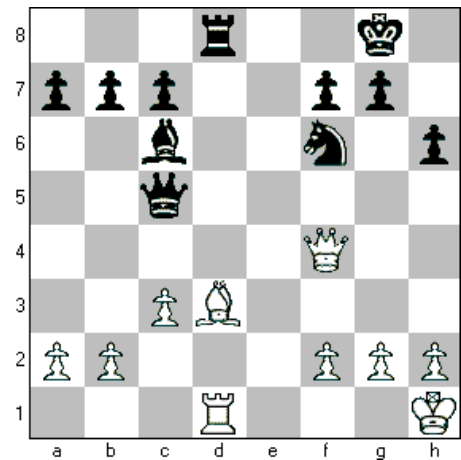
Black tries to move his queen to d7, but White points out that it would then be check. So what move must Black now make?

3



In this position, Black attempts to play cxb5, but White reminds him that he is in check. Must he still move his c-pawn?

4



White picks up his queen and touches the c7 pawn with it. He then realises that he would lose his queen after Bxg2+ and Qxc7. What should happen?

ANSWERS:

- 1 Kf8 2 Qxf6 3 No. He must prevent the check, perhaps by playing Be7.
 4 He must still play Qxc7 as he touched a piece that can legally be taken.