

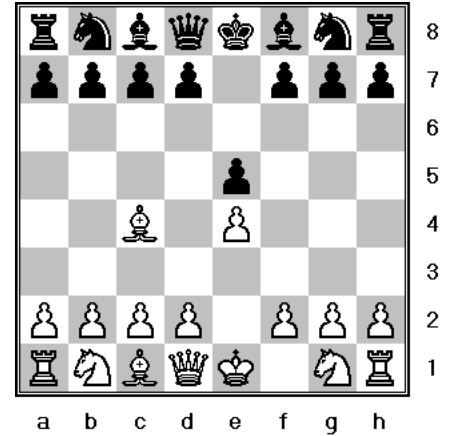
The Scholar's Mate

The Scholar's Mate, also known as the four move checkmate, is a common checkmate used among young chess players.

The Scholar's Mate starts out with both the White and Black king pawns moved two squares.

Now when White brings their bishop out to c4 on their second move, Black must beware. White may be trying the Scholar's Mate on them.

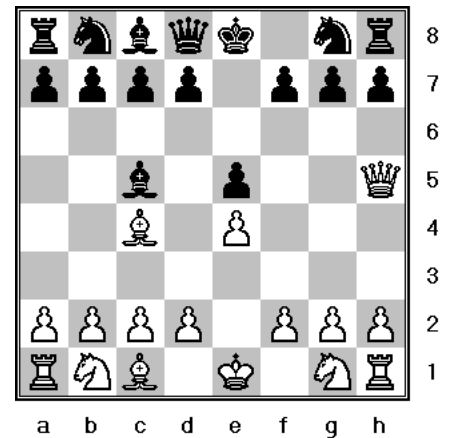
This move puts pressure on Black's weak f7 pawn. Why is this pawn weak? Because only Black's King is defending it.



Let's say that Black copycats White by bringing their bishop to c5. Now White moves their queen to h5 creating a double attack on Black's weak f7 pawn.

If Black responds by attacking the queen with their knight to f6, Black's queen will capture the f7 pawn and checkmate Black's king!

Sometimes Black will move their h7 pawn to h6 to threaten the queen instead, but the result is disastrous! After Black's move White will capture the Black pawn on e5 putting the Black king in check. Then after Black has moved White will move up the dark diagonal to snatch the Black rook!

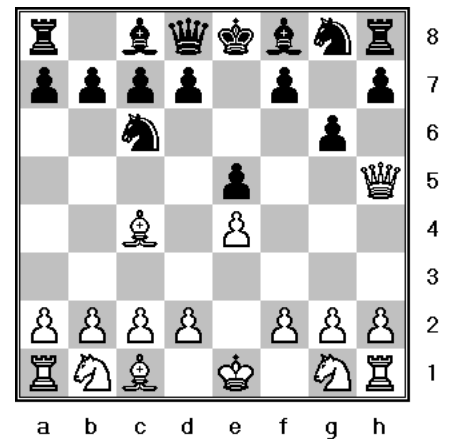


Sometimes White will move their queen to the f3 square instead of the h5 square to double attack Black's weak f7 pawn. All that Black needs to do in this case is move the knight to f6 to block White's queen from capturing the f7 pawn.

The best way to defend against the Scholar's Mate is for Black to move their knight on b8 to c6 on their second move. This protects their e5 pawn.

If White moved their queen to h5, on Black's third move they can safely attack the queen by pushing their pawn to h6. The queen cannot capture the e5 pawn this time because the knight on c6 is protecting it.

If White moved their queen to f3, Black only needs to move their knight to f6 to block the queen from capturing the f7 pawn.



Another way to defend is by Black moving their queen to e7 on the third move. This isn't the best move because it blocks the development of Black's bishop, but it is better than being checkmated.