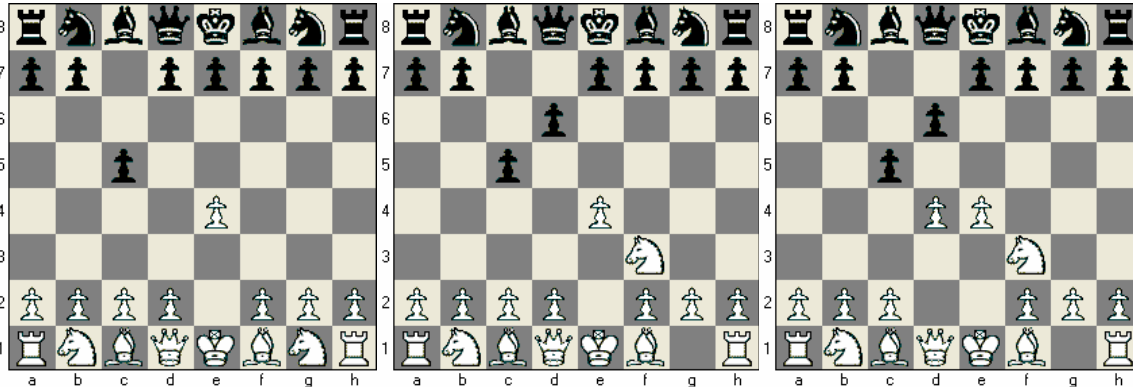


Name _____

Striking Back: The Sicilian Defense

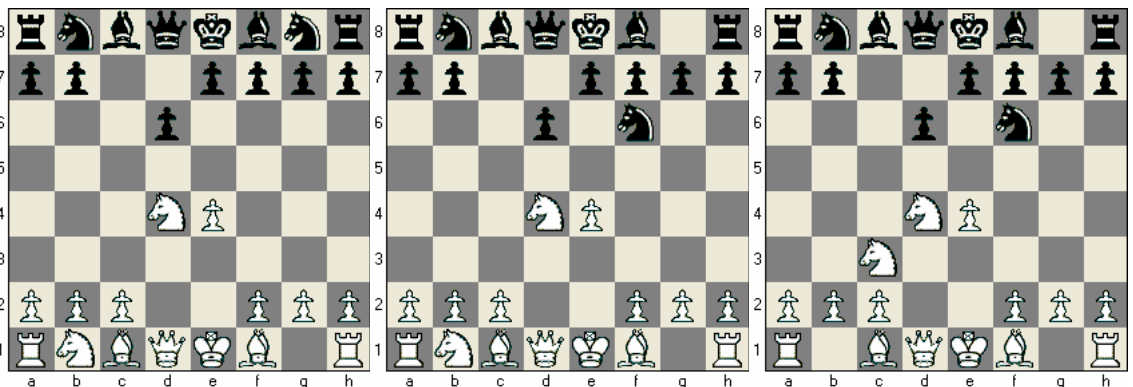
If you enjoy a fighting game with chances for both sides, the Sicilian is a perfect defense for you. Black challenges White's control of the center from the very first move and generally remains with two center Pawns to White's one. White gets attacking chances thanks to speedy development but must play creatively to break through Black's strong formation. **This defense is recommended for both sides.**



White opens with **1. e4** and Black replies with **1. ...c5**. Black's move prevents White from building up a Pawn mass in the center with **d4**. White would like to play that move right away, but if she did her Queen would get attacked.

Therefore, she prepares to play **d4** by first developing her Knight: **2. Nf3**. Black responds with **2. ...d6**, opening up the c8-Bishop and stopping White from playing **e5** anytime soon. The battle for the center has begun.

Now that White's Knight is ready for action, she plays **3. d4**, opening all lines of development for her forces. If Black doesn't do something about this right now, his position will be hopeless.



The only good move for Black is **3. ...cxd4!** Black has removed the crucial d4-Pawn and has traded one of his _____ (center or side) Pawns for one of White's _____ (center or side) Pawns. White now plays **4. Nxd4** which centralizes his Knight.

Once again, Black must find the right move to keep the pressure. He plays **4. ...Nf6!** in order to attack White's undefended Pawn on e4 and force White to defend it. Note that White cannot play **5. e5** thanks to Black's 2nd move.

White defends the Pawn with **5. Nc3**. This develops a piece, but it blocks the _____ (c or h)-file, which is half-open. Black will often pile up on this file with his _____ (Rooks or Queen) and two _____, (Rooks or Queen) giving him good Counter play throughout the game.