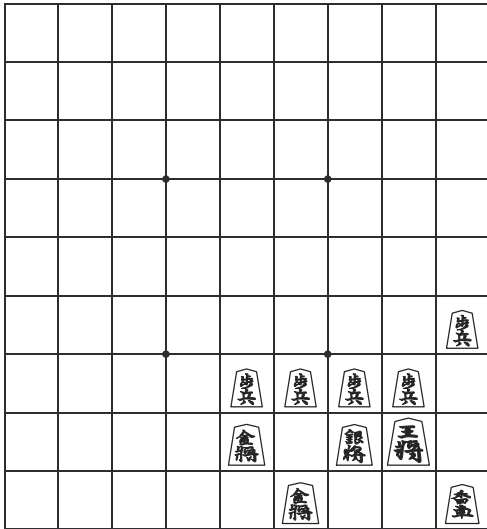




Common Castles



Mino



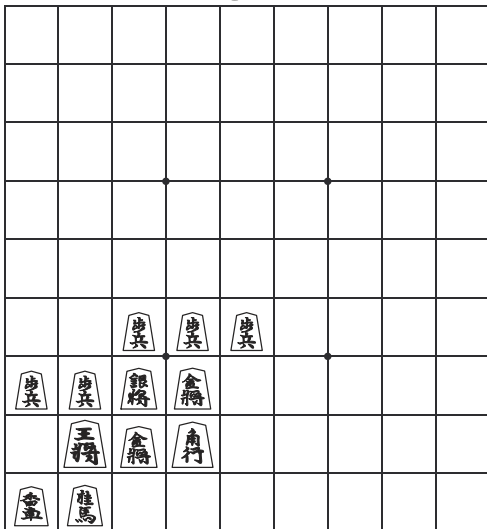
A great castle for beginning players, the **Mino** is fast to develop and is very malleable later in the game, allowing a player to adapt quickly to an opponent's attacks.

Requiring only 7 moves initially, the **Mino** is easy to memorize and allows for both offense and defense in the early game. As the match progresses, it is a good idea to build the **Mino** into one of its many variations to address some of its weaknesses according to the opponent's attacks.

As pictured, one possible weakness is the pawn in front of the silver general. A bishop may pin the pawn. Additional pressure, such as a knight drop on the square in front of the pawn or advancing pawns, could cause the castle to crumble.

The **Mino** castle is generally weak to frontal attacks.

Yagura

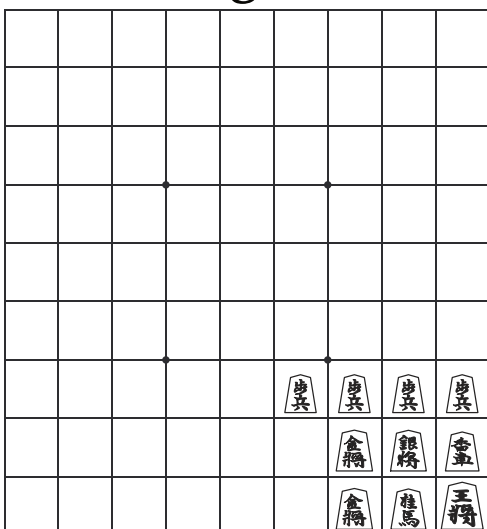


Widely revered as a very strong castle and one of the most popular, the **Yagura** excels in defense against frontal attacks, but is susceptible to attacks from the side, particularly when an opponent's rook is involved. The bishop is able to maintain significant movement while contributing to the defense of the castle.

One downside to using this castle is it takes 13 moves to build. An enterprising opponent may forego building a castle and instead attack the unprotected side; a fast assault can lead to some ugly situations if the **Yagura** player is solely focused on building his castle quickly.

Something else to watch out for is if the king sits on the same diagonal as an opponent's bishop. The silver general can be pinned and lead to trouble later in the game.

Anaguma



A highly compact castle, the **Anaguma** provides excellent defense for the king. Originally considered an amateur castle, it has gained popularity among professionals in response to strategies focused on advancing pawns against a **Mino** castle.

Perhaps the top concern when playing **Anaguma** is that, should the castle fall, the king has nowhere to flee. With **Yagura** and **Mino** castles, the king can secure an escape route if the castle is compromised. While very tough to break, the **Anaguma** is less reactive and less flexible than other options.

Another downside is that given the compact nature of the castle, an opponent will have more opportunities to drop pieces in the promotion zone.

However, one benefit may outweigh these tradeoffs – the king is very difficult to attack directly. It is difficult to pin pieces and knights are unable to fork the king and the supporting gold general.