

Game for 2 Players

CHECKERS

Introduction

“Checkers” is the American and Canadian version of an ancient game generally known as “draughts.” Although played on the same board as chess, checkers is not nearly as old (only about 700 years) and far less complex. In fact, computers have been able to determine that any perfectly played game will end in a draw. This fact in no way diminishes the pleasure that one human can derive from playing a game of checkers with another human.

The Playing Area

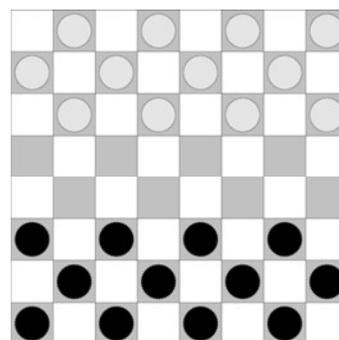
Checkers is played on a flat board popularly known as a chess board or checker board. This board is generally about 12 to 16 inches square. Every checker board is divided into 64 squares forming a grid of eight by eight squares that are colored alternately light and dark so that each square is a different color than its neighbors in that row and column.

At the beginning of the game, the board is between the players aligned so that the corners with light squares are to each player’s right side.

The Game Pieces

Each player has 12 identical pieces in the shape of disks small enough to fit within the board squares and large enough for easy manipulation. These “checkers” are generally grooved or serrated in some manner to allow one to fit atop another in a stable stack. In the U.S., these are usually red for one player and either black or white for the other, but they can be made of various materials and can be in any colors, so long as there is a clearly discernable contrast between the two sides.

At the start, each player’s pieces are disposed on the twelve black (darker) squares immediately in front of him or her.



Moving

The player with the darker pieces moves first, then players alternate moves.

Pieces are confined to the dark squares and may, therefore, only be moved diagonally. In their normal state, pieces may only move forward, that is, toward the opposing side.

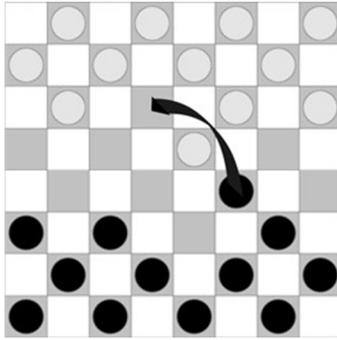
If and when a piece reaches the farthest row (the one closest to its opponent’s side of the board) it is promoted to the status of king. This is signified by the player requesting that his opponent “king me” or “crown me” and the opponent responding by placing a captured piece on top of the piece, thus making a stack of two disks. When a player’s piece is crowned, his turn is completed.

A king may move one square in any direction, forward or backward along the dark diagonals.

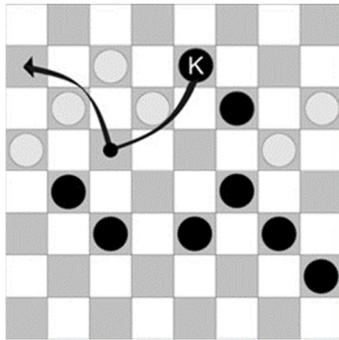
Capturing

When a piece is sitting next to an opponent’s piece (along the diagonal) and the space on the opposite side is unoccupied, then the opponent’s piece is captured by jumping over it to the empty square. The captured piece is then removed from the board.

Non-promoted pieces can only jump (*i.e.*, capture) in a forward direction.



Kings (promoted pieces) can capture in any direction. A player cannot jump his own pieces.



Only one piece may be captured in a single jump, but the same piece can make multiple jumps in one turn if the path to do so is open.

A rather unusual feature of the game of checkers is that players must capture an opposing piece whenever the opportunity presents itself. If a player can capture two different pieces during the same turn, he may choose which piece to jump. In social games, where there is no referee, if a player does not take an opportunity to capture a piece, his opponent may draw his attention to it. Refusal to capture a piece forfeits the game.

Winning

The game is won by the player who first leaves his opponent with no legal moves. This would include, of course, leaving one's opponent with no pieces remaining on the board. If neither side can force a win, the game is a draw. ■

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