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Ckess

A Checkers Variant By Simon E Jepps

Also known as Jeppsian Knights

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Oh ye grande firmament of sixty-four squares, thou have teased the caverns of my mind for so long a time, thine good pawns and knights and queens, a royal castling of philosophy with love, yet... a circle of untruths, of forever pains and crimes... thou tortures me with hopelessness for a nirvana that doth not exist!

Is it a game to promise life and yet reward only with death? Aye, for Chess is like a selfish king whom seeks to find greatness only in himself, a promise of a living happiness which in truth art merely an endless death. Behold now thence I shall capture not thine rooks or knights, but capture I will thine grande firmament and reshape it anew with stronger, forever loving hands.

Ckess is a new Checkers Variant featuring elements of Chess and Indian Chaturanga. I developed this game whence realising, after a life long pursuit to evolve the more popular game 'Chess', that what actually resonates most and harbours much more intellectual novelty, is a completely new game altogether.

You see, I have always loved the minimalism of Checkers, yet at the same time have always felt it quite a boring game on the whole, lacking in deep strategical curiosities.

Likewise I have always loved the strategic labyrinthism of Chess, yet at the same time have always felt it quite a torturous game on the whole, lacking in minimalist freedom of grace.

Hence the new game of **Ckess** is a perfect balancing between Chess and Checkers, whilst also featuring an eastern sprinkling of Indian Chaturanga.

Unto the game...

Each player begins with 12 Checkers.

At the start of the game, the players' Checkers, 'counters' or "men", are positioned about the edges of a sixty-four square board, as shown. White places SIX counters on a1-f1 and SIX counters on h1-h6, whilst Black places SIX counters on h8-c8 and SIX counters on a8-a3.

The objective of the game is to capture all your Opponent's counters or prompt your Opponent to resign. If your out-captured Opponent does not resign and yet it is agreed neither player is likely to capture any further, then the player with the most captures wins the game; or if equal captures have been made similarly with no further progress, then the game is to be declared a draw.

Either player can start the game, decided by a hand with a concealed counter. If notating moves and Black starts first, notation begins as usual simply omitting the White field at record number 1. Thus a standard Chess score book can be adopted for Ckess.

Open images in a new tab, pinch zoom or download, to view full size.



Soldiers

- CKESS **Soldiers**: Counters, or "Men", MOVE and CAPTURE like regular Checkers, one square diagonally without capture and jumping the enemy counter diagonally to capture it from the board.
 - Like regular Checkers, counters may JUMP continuously for as long as a diagonal jumping path exists, removing each enemy counter jumped from the board.
 - Counters MAY NOT diagonally jump friendly counters. Counters MAY however move or capture via their allowed ability in any direction, thus also backwards.

Here then the game of CKESS appears to be very similar to International Checkers, however this is not at all to be the case. For the game of CKESS has been developed with additional features which I am about to explain and of which revolutionizes your standard Checkers into an ultimately intensely strategic game of counter-warfare.

Knights

- CKESS **Knights**: Counters MAY ALSO move without capturing like a Chess KNIGHT, in a 2-1 'L' pattern, BUT ONLY FROM or UNTO one of the four CORNER or CENTER squares of the board. These squares are *a1, a8, h1, h8* and *d4, e4, d5, e5*.
 - Providing the 'Knight' move ARRIVES to or BEGINS from one of these corner or center squares, then the move is legal and playable. For example, a counter sitting on b3 can move like a Knight onto a1 or d4, but it MAY NOT move like a Knight to ANY OTHER square, since a1/d4 are the only corner/center and thus legal squares available. Likewise however, a counter sitting on either a1/d4 can also move like a Knight.

CKESS

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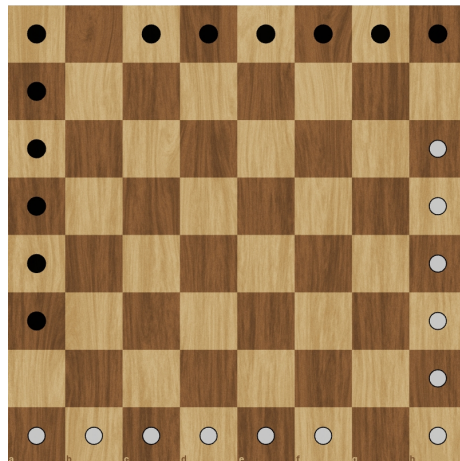


Diagram 1

Initial Starting Position

Either player can start the game. Counters move & capture diagonally like a standard Checker, however counters may also move without capturing like a Chess Knight whence moving from or unto one of the four corner or central squares. A special op called 'infiltration' grants extra capturing powers.

I have always loved the Chess Knight move and its pattern has always been the continuum of foundation throughout the development of CKESS. Yet the reason Checkers do not usually move like Knights, not even in existing variants, is because a Knight has EIGHT maximum possible moves compared to a Checker which only has FOUR, meaning, when you try to give a Checker the power of a Knight its evasive capability imbalances against its traditional offensive capability.

Here then, I believe I have developed a sound and beautiful medium through which the power of a Knight can be given to the Checker and intelligently integrated into the game. Furthermore, this fantastic new mechanism of gameplay works seamlessly in tandem with my other new tactical feature of 'Infiltration' and so behold here, for this now is where the unique strategies of CKESS truly begin to be discovered.

Infiltration

- **CKESS Infiltration:** Counters MAY ALSO CAPTURE via a combined ability called 'Infiltration'. Whence a player has TWO counters positioned, each ONE at either END of a FILE/RANK, each unto the opposite EDGES of the board, they become 'File/Rank Commanders'. Here then ANY friendly counter (including the Commanders) residing on that file/rank MAY CAPTURE like an ORTHOGONAL Checker. Thus jumping the orthogonal adjacent square along the infiltrated file/rank to remove the enemy piece. *Remember:* orthogonal movement is ONLY granted whence to CAPTURE.
 - Infiltrator counters MUST make their FIRST capture ALONG the infiltrated file/rank, before any altering of direction.
 - Infiltrator counters thus MAY make MULTIPLE orthogonal jumping captures as like a regular Checker.
 - Infiltration can also be COMBINED with regular diagonal capture, and vice versa in continuum, so watch out!
 - *NOTE however;* ONCE a piece has CHANGED capturing STYLE from orthogonal/diagonal it MAY ONLY capture ORTHOGONALLY again from whence a NEW Infiltration is made/found.

So here now we can see why **Ckess** is a much more interesting game than Checkers and truly balances itself on par with its labyrinthine cousin, Chess.

Furthermore and aside from the increased positional puzzles, Infiltration was designed to make edge sitting counters more capturable. Whilst sometimes carrying out an Infiltration center board is awkward, edge sitting counters are a far easier prey, rebalancing the ratio between evasive and offensive capabilities.

Thus, the new "conditional" moving ability of a Knight amidst an elusive checkered arena, thence paired with a new "infiltrative" and covert attacking strategy, immensely increases the tactical richness of positional situations, augments player creativity about these new challenges and fundamentally provides an even greater player satisfaction reward from the classical game.

Notation

As mentioned earlier, a standard Chess scoring book may be used for recording the notation of games. **Ckess** game notation is sometimes open to interpretation, since it is designed to be as simplistic and shorthand as possible, however for the vast majority of games all the recorded moves will be easily identifiable.

Fundamentally, moves are simply recorded as "square to square", thus coordinate to coordinate. Only capturing moves are a little more detailed.

For example, a Checker moving like a Knight from h1 to g3 would simply be recorded as **h1g3**. Likewise diagonally, a Checker moving from d4 to e5 would be recorded as **d4e5**.

Whence performing a CAPTURE we merely write the starting square and ending square, followed by a forward slash /, then the number of pieces captured, ending with either a straight line —, zigzag line ~, or a caret triangle ^.

— = The capturing move was continuously straight.

~ = The capturing move changed direction.

^ = The capturing move was an Infiltration.

Whilst it may be obvious that a Checker MUST have changed direction to arrive at a given square, due to human error or indeed handwriting legibility, we include these symbols to clarify the notation and event.

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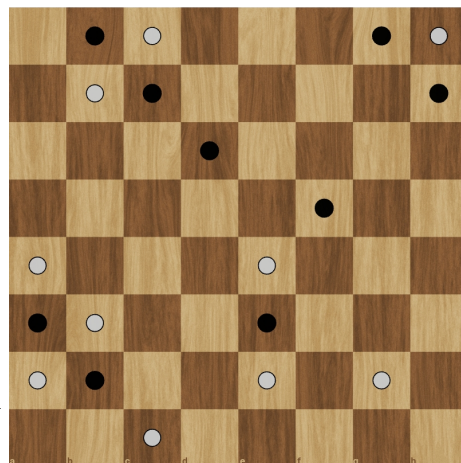


Diagram 2

Examples Of Capturing

Here Black is Infiltrated on c7 by the two White file commanders at c1 & c8. White can thus next play c8c6 > c6e6 > e6g4, capturing c7 & d6 & > f5! Yet Black now makes a multijump diagonal capture from f5, winning e4 > e2 & > g2, arriving to h3! Black will thence also have two rank commanders.

For example, a capture from h8, via f6 and landing to d8 would be recorded as **h8d8/2~**. Sometimes more than one closing symbol will be required if the capturing move was a combination of two kinds.

For example a capture which changes direction and includes an Infiltration, such as from e1 to c1 (Infiltration), then to c3, then to c5 and finally to e7 (4 Jumping Captures). This capturing move would be recorded as **e1e7/4^~**.

It is correct practise to put the closing symbols in order of their making, as shown in the just given example. This is because whilst multi capture combos are actually identifiable purely from their rarity of footprint, it nevertheless can sometimes be difficult to interpret the correct event of movements.

However regardless of any move's complexity, providing the respective **Ckess** symbols are recorded in the notation, it is usually most likely that only one interpretation could be made. Therefore, I would say that for 99% of games, or ok 98% ... it's worth recording them for keepsake!

Your move...

Do you like CKES? Do you think it is a game you would play? If so please share this page with your friends and within boardgame circles so we can make it more popular!

In the end, whilst Chess is a game I have much adored playing my entire life, I have always felt it to be a "stuffy" game only enjoyed by those of the mathematical throne. If it truly was a game for all, then a rule would be made allowing the Knight more opening options, because in truth it really only has one square in its reach.

So in the end my friend, I made the choice. Does one slave away to a stuffy oligarchy and the neverending braindrain of "*Knight to Bishop three*" on practically EVERY game, and sacrifice my innocence of creative passion, or... invent a new game, a more forgiving and graceful game... ***A game of Jeppsian Knights?***

Thank you for reading.