



CLOWN CHESS

A Chess Variant By Simon Edward Jepps
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Introduction

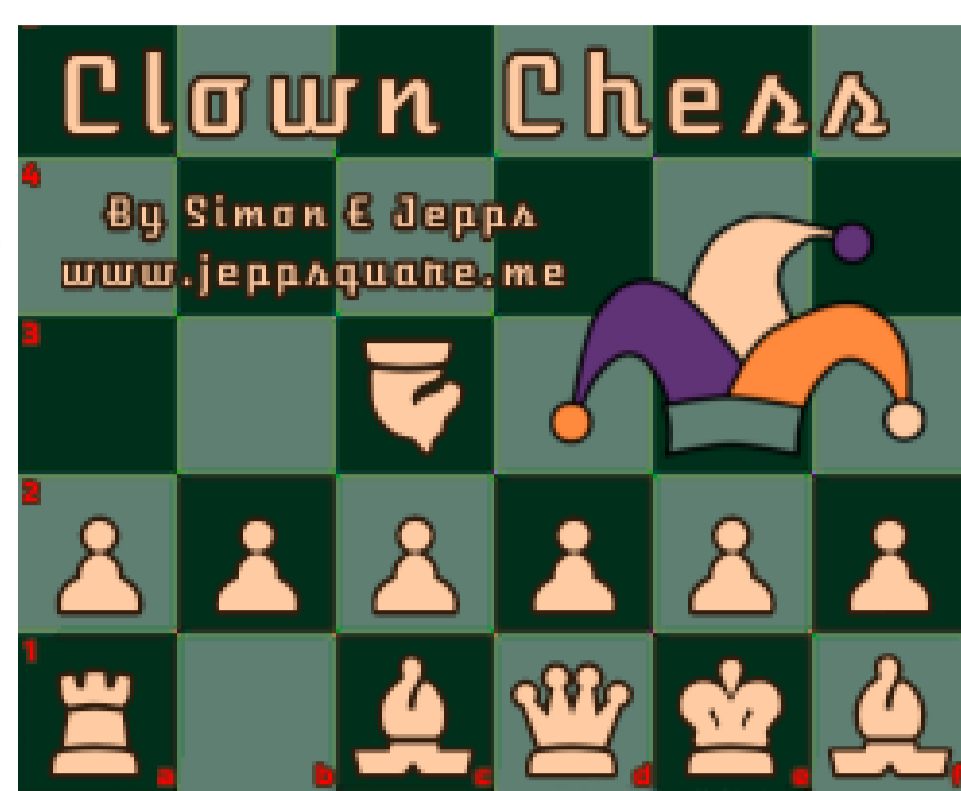
Clown Chess is an 8x8 variant employing a standard Classical Chess set, yet which is designed to simulate the experience of a much grander game at hand.

The title suggests something "silly" but in reality the *Clown* is simply the name given to a new *Jepssquare* version of the 'Queerlike' or 'Zelig' piece, which moves primarily according to its piece-file designation.

Whilst unlike the *Joker* or *Jester* piece, which also sport clown-like names yet move through *imitation* instead, I felt the name *Clown* more appropriately described this piece; and my reasons are twofold.

Firstly it behaves as a "comedic performer" - effectively larking around as a 'dressed-up' Knight and likewise with no *move-identity* of its own. Yet secondly the *Clown* does actually *imitate*, in that of course it copies the movement of the piece upon who's file it resides.

Yet as will be explained, the *Jepssquare* *Clown* piece is a true marvel of Chess evolution, since what truly sets it apart from its predecessors is how the *Clown* actually comes into being.



Arise Ye Clown

In effect each player has ONE opportunity to **reincarnate** either ONE captured Knight or ONE Bishop - however, the Knight may actually **re-enter** the game as a *Clown* instead IF the player has not already 'declared' one of his/her Knights a *Clown*.

Whence a player's Knight or Bishop is first captured, it is handed back to the Player. The Player may then on any FOLLOWING turn of his/her choice (not immediately) re-enter the piece by moving 'only as a non-capturing piece' to ANY vacant square within the TWO edge-rows/files of the Player's OWN side of the board.

NOTE; a piece may ONLY reincarnate providing the last piece moved was NOT a *Clown*.

To signify that a Knight is now a *Clown*, upon its first move as Knight or when re-entering as *Clown*, the Player turns his/her Knight on its square to face directly AWAY from the Opponent and directly TOWARDS him/herself, the Player. This Knight-come-*Clown* will remain in this orientation for the remainder of the game.

Each player may ALWAYS be entitled to ONE Knight reincarnation (if not the Bishop) - yet how you employ this dynamic determines the powers available to you.

For example, if you have *not already declared* a Knight a *Clown* then you may employ your REINCARNATED Knight to become a *Clown* - OR if you simply DON'T want a *Clown* in your army then you may merely reincarnate ONE Knight as just another Knight, or ONE Bishop instead.

How The Clown Moves & Captures

The *Clown* Moves AND Captures according to its present *piece-file* designation.

In other words, the *Clown* imitates the abilities of the piece who's start-file it is occupying.

Before algebraic notation, we used to label files according to the piece which traditionally resides there.

So for example, in the diagram the White *Clown* resides on the Bishop-file and so may move AND capture like a Bishop.

The Black *Clown* resides on the Knight-file and so may move AND capture like a Knight.

Note however: A *Clown* empowered as **Queen** (designation d-file) may ONLY move/capture a MAX of FOUR squares in any direction!

- A player may only have ONE *Clown* for the entire game regardless of reincarnation.
- Only ONE piece, either a Knight or Bishop, may reincarnate ONCE in the game.
- A Knight may reincarnate as a *Clown* if one not already 'declared' so.

Careful, don't end up yourself the *Clown*!

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General Rules Of Play [\[reincarnation\]](#)

Each player has ONE opportunity to reincarnate either ONE captured Knight or ONE Bishop - however, the Knight may actually re-enter the game as a *Clown* instead IF the player has not already 'declared' one of his/her Knights a *Clown*.

Whence a player's Knight or Bishop is first captured, it is handed back to the Player. The Player may then on any FOLLOWING turn of his/her choice (not immediately) re-enter the piece as Knight, *Clown* or Bishop, providing the last piece moved was NOT a *Clown*.

To signify that a Knight is now a *Clown*, upon its first move as Knight or when re-entering as *Clown*, the Player turns his/her Knight on its square to face directly AWAY from the opponent and directly towards him/herself, the Player. This Knight-come-*Clown* will remain in this orientation for the remainder of the game.

A player may only have ONE *Clown* for the entire game regardless of reincarnation. Only ONE piece, either a Knight or Bishop, may reincarnate ONCE in the game. A Knight may reincarnate as a *Clown* if one not already 'declared' so.

Entering Play Following Declaration

As mentioned, a player may choose to 'declare' an already on-board Knight as a *Clown*, however in which case should any of his/her Knights be reincarnated, it can ONLY reincarnate as a pure Knight again. Yet each player may ALWAYS be entitled to ONE Knight reincarnation (if not the Bishop), regardless of its 'declared' *Clown* status.

A player MUST 'declare' his/her Knight a *Clown* on its FIRST move ONLY. To do this, DURING its first move as KNIGHT, the Player turns the Knight on its destination square to face directly AWAY from the opponent and directly towards him/herself, the Player.

Entering Play Following Reincarnation

The *Clown*, Bishop or Knight re-enters play by moving 'only as a NON-capturing piece' to ANY vacant square within the TWO edge-rows/files of the Player's OWN side of board.

A captured piece may NOT reincarnate into the game if the most recently moved piece was a *Clown*. Declaring a *Clown* & moving a *Clown* are two different things. A Knight is NOT YET a *Clown* until AFTER it is 'declared' so FOLLOWING its 1st move or entrance.

NOTE; it is possible to have TWO Bishops of the same coloured square! [\[Clown 2 2022\]](#)

As mentioned, a player may choose to **declare** an already on-board Knight as a *Clown*, however in which case should any of his/her Knights be reincarnated, one of them can ONLY reincarnate as a pure Knight again thereafter.

Yet each player may ALWAYS be entitled to ONE Knight reincarnation (if not the Bishop), regardless of its **declared** *Clown* status. For example, a CAPTURED *Clown* is still a Knight off-board and so, providing reincarnation has not already taken place, the **declared** *Clown* may reincarnate as a pure Knight once again.

A player MUST **declare** his/her Knight a *Clown* on its FIRST move ONLY. To do this, DURING its first move as KNIGHT, the Player turns the Knight on its destination square to face directly AWAY from the Opponent and directly TOWARDS him/herself, the Player.

NOTE; Declaring a *Clown* & moving a *Clown* are two different things. A Knight is NOT YET a *Clown* until *after* it is 'declared' so FOLLOWING its 1st move or entrance.

This **declared** *Clown* will remain in this orientation for the remainder of the game.

Entering Play Following Reincarnation

The *Clown*, Bishop or Knight **re-enters** play by moving **only as a NON-capturing piece** to ANY vacant square within the TWO edge-rows/files of the Player's OWN side of the board.

A captured piece may NOT **reincarnate** into the game IF the last piece moved was a *Clown*.

Upon **reincarnation** and DURING its entrance move as KNIGHT, the Player turns the Knight on its destination square to face directly AWAY from the Opponent and directly TOWARDS him/herself, the Player.

NOTE; Declaring a *Clown* & moving a *Clown* are two different things. A Knight is NOT YET a *Clown* until *after* it is 'declared' so FOLLOWING its 1st move or entrance. Sure, this note only *really* matters whence **on-board declaration**, but is included here for completeness.

This **reincarnated** Knight-come-*Clown* will remain in this orientation for the remainder of the game.

Notation

The *Clown* is notated with a 'C'.

A *Clown* being **declared** following a Knight's first move is notated as per usual but with a "IC" in brackets postfixed to the move proper; for example, 1. Nc3 (IC).

A *Clown* making its first **re-entry** move following reincarnation is notated as per usual but with an exclamation prefixed to the move proper; for example, #. IC65.

A reincarnated Knight making its first **re-entry** move is notated as per usual but likewise with an exclamation prefixed to the move proper; for example, #. INB4.

Similarly, a reincarnated Bishop making its first **re-entry** move is notated as per usual but likewise with an exclamation prefixed to the move proper; for example, #. IBd2.

Yes, it is possible to have TWO Bishops of the same coloured square!

Summary

I especially designed this game to make a very playable variant which feels like it has more pieces, yet which actually utilizes a simple 64 square Classical Chess set. This is also especially useful for magnetic figurine 'travel' sets where making an extra 'fairy' piece would be impractical.

I was undecided at first whether to allow on-board Knights to be declared *Clowns* and this is because firstly I felt it might confuse the rules of play; however hopefully I have made it suitably easy to understand.

Yet secondly declaring an on-board Knight a *Clown* would be catastrophic to the position if there were not additional rules here and so I made it compulsory that any on-board *Clown* declaration MUST be made on the Knight's FIRST move.

Studying the diagram, we can see how White thought it "cunning" to exchange off his Bishop with the Knight in order to lure out the Black Queen. Then with his *Clown* quietly declared on f3, a simple advance of the d-Pawn would theoretically have Black retreating his Queen and losing much momentum.

Yet no. In fact Black identified this threat and played 4... d5. Yet that's not all! We see then following 5. Nf3 Black reincarnates his own Knight as *Clown* with 5... !Cb5 where it not only begins the pressure build on d4 but ATTACKS the White *Clown*! In turn offering the White *Clown* very little in ways of productive evasion.

Would Black exchange off *Clowns* so early in the game? A question I leave to you...

Sure in time and following wider cultural practise of this variant, I expect players will eventually choose to more often enter their *Clowns* later in the game and instead continue to play the Opening out more Classically.

Yet nevertheless, the positional wonders of an *early-Clown* revolutionize the Opening game with practically infinite possibilities. Imagine for example a declared *Clown* with #. Nd2 (IC). Whilst the *Clown* may ONLY move/capture a MAXIMUM of FOUR squares whence empowered as **Queen**, this newfound position poses very interesting conundrums, should Black fall asleep at the wheel!

Indeed an important factor in this game's design was the balancing of **Queen**-like pieces with tempo-of-material-count, else an undeclared nor yet reincarnated player would be heavily out-gunned should I allow TWO full-strength **Queens** in the Opening. Hence the **4-square** rule.

Hitherto, *Clown Chess* is truly a game for all Chess Variant *Clowns* and indeed for all the Chess Circuses of all the world, wherever and whenever they may roam!

Thank you for reading.

