JEPPS RANDOM CHESS

World champion Bobby Fischer is famous for many things, not least his Chess mastery, but one of these wonderful things is his Chess Variant, *Fischer Random Chess.*

I have been inventing Chess Variants for most of my life and the reasons are many, but especially because I find the only rational opening Knight move of Kt-K/QB3 to be a never ending vicious circle of the same old opening scenarios and boring vulnerabilities.

I need more variation in my creative development and, as many grandmasters have stated, the game in general has become played out to the point that regardless of your ability, there are always lurking irritations.

Hence the game of *Fischer Random Chess* has become a standard Variant upon the world stage.

Jepps Random Chess

jeppsquare.me/jrc

An example starting position.
Piece positions are determined by two 6-sided dice.
A mediator roll determines Black's response:
Mirror, Reverse or Randomize.
Here the mediator roll determined Randomization.

Fischer Random Chess, also called *Chess960* due to the number of possible Opening setup scenarios, involves randomising the starting positions of all home rank pieces before play.

Initializing this randomization of setup infinitely increases the total possible number of different games playable on the 8x8 board.

So... why and where does *Jepps Random Chess* come into play?

The only problem with *Fischer's* game is that it requires an immense database of starting positions available on hand and an independent umpire to select the starting positions for the players.

The aim of *Jepps Random Chess* is to enable players to create a randomized starting position from their own hands, without the need for a database, nor an umpire and without disagreements as to the balance of advantage between the two coloured sides.

This aim is gracefully achieved by the simple implementation of two 6-sided dice and a couple of rules regarding Bishops, Castling and Contest.

How To Play

Two 6-sided dice are required for play.

Each value on the die represents a Chess piece, except for the value 6 which grants a free choice.

White will begin the randomization setup, thence a mediator roll will intervene, before Black finally sets up his/her pieces.

1. = King
2. = Knight
3. = Bishop
4. = Rook
5. = Queen
6. = Free piece

Whichever two values are shown, they present the player with a choice of two pieces. The player must choose which of these two pieces he/she will place on the board.

If a DOUBLE or there is NO available piece offered, the player may roll again until an available piece is offered.

We *begin* from the <u>a-file</u> and work *towards* the <u>h-file</u>, each new roll offering the choice of two pieces to be placed onto the next square.

Bishops must be placed on opposite coloured squares, as like in Classical Chess.

A maximum of 7 rolls are required, since the eighth square is obviously occupied by the last remaining piece, but sometimes only 6 rolls are required if a remaining piece is a Bishop and it obviously must occupy the only opposite coloured vacant square.

Mediator Roll

Once the White pieces have been entered to their squares a *"mediator roll"* takes place to determine one of three things.

1. Whether Black **Mirrors** White's position.
2. Whether Black **Reverses** White's position.
3. Whether Black **Randomizes** his own pieces.
4. Whether Black **Re-rolls** the Mediation.

If the dice show:

➢ **Both even** = Black **Mirrors** White's position.
➢ **Both odd** = Black **Reverses** White's position.
➢ **1 odd 1 even** = Black **Randomizes** his own pieces.
➢ **A double** = Black may **Re-roll** the Mediation.

Mirror = to directly reflect White's setup identical file by file.

Reverse = to abstractly reflect White's setup opposite file by file.

Randomize = to roll and take instruction from the dice square by square.

Re-roll = to roll again in hope of a different or preferred Mediation.

Following the mediator roll, Black thence sets up his pieces accordingly. If the dice have instructed Black to **Randomize** his/her pieces, the setup commences as like White's, *beginning* from the <u>a-file</u> and working *towards* the <u>h-file</u>, thus in Black's case, from *right to left*.

Free Play

The rules thus far are designed to ensure a balanced game. For example, the reason Black may only respond with one of three options dictated by the dice is to ensure Black does not arrange his pieces unfairly.

Allowing Black to pick and choose his setup square by square in direct response to White's fully completed array would grant Black an overwhelming advantage, even though he must nevertheless still choose between one of two pieces (or a lucky 6) dictated by the dice.

Thus the rules so far are designed partly to prevent this imbalance, but also to ensure as fast and rapid a setup for both sides as possible, by minimizing the number of dice rolls.

However, there is of course the alternative option of **Free Play** for those of you who would prefer a more "classical" hand-to-hand combative approach to the initial setup.

With *Free Play*, we abolish the Mediator Roll and instead players assign their pieces square by square, turn by turn, as the very first moves of the actual game.

Free Play utilizes a reversed setup process, whereby White enters pieces from <u>a-file</u> to <u>h-file</u>, while Black enters pieces from <u>h-file</u> to <u>a-file</u>. This reversal process is designed to prevent Black responding directly to White in the first instances and thus ensuring the most fairly balanced setup possible.

Here each player rolls both dice as a first move entry, White rolling and entering to **a1**, then Black rolling and entering to **h8**, then White rolling and entering to **b1**, then Black rolling and entering to **g8**, etc, etc.

This presumably will prove a more evenly balanced way to guarantee randomization for both sides, however remember it also means at least twice as many dice rolls are required before the game properly starts!

Castling

Unlike *Fischer's* game, there is no Castling in *Jepps Random Chess*, since the requirement by *Fischer* to position the King in a specific way not only makes the practise a mouthful to digest, but reduces the possible number of starting positions.

Instead *Jepps Random Chess* features a manoeuvre to substitute Castling, in effect serving the same purpose, to protect or evade the King to safety.

❖ The King may relocate to any **like-colour-bound** vacant home rank square, once in the game, providing the King has not yet already moved.
  o A colour-bound move, the King <u>*may not*</u> relocate to a square of a <u>*different colour*</u> to that upon which it stands.
  o This manoeuvre is simply a task of taking the King from its origin square and placing it on the destination square. The path <u>*does not*</u> have to be clear of other pieces, the King <u>*meanders*</u>.

- However, just as like in Classical Chess, the King _may not_ relocate _into_, _through_ or _out of_ Check. Thus, if _any vacant square_ along the Home Rank (1/8), through which the King would meander enroute to its destination, is likewise under Check, the King _may not_ relocate.

A little more skill is required to utilize this method in the same way as classical Castling. Primarily this requires clearing space for the Rook to move somewhere more useful, before relocating the King nearby to it.

Notation

The setup position is recorded simply as part of standard game notation, only the pieces' entrances are isolated as a preliminary setup phase.

This is recorded as a string of moves, each separated by a comma.

Each time White enters a piece, it is recorded. For example if the first piece to enter is a Knight to **a1**, the first part of the setup string is written _Na1_.

If White then enters a Bishop to b1 and a King to c1, the string will be recorded as _Na1, Bb1, Kc1_… etc.

Black is usually simpler to record, since there are better odds of either a **Mirror** or **Reverse**, in which case the Black string will merely state _Mirror_ or _Reverse_, unto the next line beneath White.

If however the dice command Black to **Randomize** his pieces, a new string is recorded in the same way as White's, unto the next line beneath.

The game will thence commence as usual, with standard notation.

- ❖ If entering pieces via the **Free Play** method, each entry is simply recorded as a regular first move. For example, _1. Na1 Kh8 2. Bb1 Rg8 3. Qc1 Nf8._ Regular play would then commence from _move 9_, after all pieces have been entered onto the board.
  - Optionally these first eight setup moves can be labelled in Roman Numerals, **i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii**, distinguishing them from the game proper, whereby move **9** is labelled move **1**.

Summary

Jepps Random Chess improves on *Fischer's* game by granting players a hands on integrated medium to determine through a preliminary battle of divination, each their own starting positions, without the need for databases or umpires.

Furthermore, *Jepps Random Chess* increases the total number of starting positions possible by simplifying Castling with a more adaptable substitute, allowing the King to enter unto any square without restrictions.

This variant truly opens a whole new universe of board gaming. The nostalgic touch of two 6-sided dice brings a grandeur of depth long desired to a once rather mundane beginning to battle.

Thousands of years ago, somewhere in India, the game of Chess was being born... but here, in the ancient past, Chess was played with dice.

We all like dice and since the game of Chess was indeed originally played with dice, it only seems absolutely right to bring dice back into the game.

Of course, in the modern world we wouldn't dream of suggesting dice to determine the movement of pieces ~ that would defeat the whole objective of International Competition Chess.

Yet for sure, as *Jepps Random Chess* has proven, they do nevertheless harbour an ancient enchanting power to persuade us of their rightful place at the Chess board.

Thus it is with great honour that I publish *Jepps Random Chess* and reveal unto the world a fantastical method of bringing dice back into the game.

Thank you for reading.