



Sovereign Chess

Created by Mark Bates



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140 Pieces

Achromatic Colors:

White, Ash, Slate, Black

Chromatic Colors:

Pink, Red, Orange, Yellow,
Green, Cyan, Navy, Violet

1 King, 1 Queen, 1 Rook, 1 Bishop, 1 Knight, 4 Pawns each

In days of old, you could simply defeat the army ahead of you.
But today, the world is different—grand, diverse, and complex.

You must build your influence, wield your power, and know
if changing your allegiance will help defeat your enemy.

Then—and only then—will you become Sovereign.

The 15 Rules of Sovereign Chess

1. Unless otherwise stated, all rules of traditional chess apply.

2. Players always control the pieces which match the color of their king.
3. After the first player moves a White piece, the second player may choose to play as White—taking the move—or play as Black.
4. No piece may move more than eight squares in a single turn.
5. No piece may move onto a square of its own color.
6. Pawns move orthogonally (horizontally or vertically) and capture diagonally, as long as the movement is closer to at least one of the brown lines (designating the center of the board).
7. Pawns on the first or second ring of the board may move two squares away from the closest edge.
8. En passant capture is not allowed.
9. When a pawn moves into the middle 4x4 square, it must promote to a higher piece of the same color (which may be a king).
10. If a pawn promotes to a king, the original king is immediately removed from the board.
11. While a player's controlled piece is on a square of color, they control the pieces of that color, except for those which match the color of the opponent's king.
12. Players may only capture pieces controlled by the other player.
13. Only one square of each color may be occupied at a time.
14. A player may castle with pieces that are controlled by the player, by moving the king to any open square directly between itself and a rook, and moving the rook to the adjacent square on the other side.
15. A player may replace their king with a king of a different color they control, which constitutes their move—unless this leaves the king on a square of its own color, in which case it must then make a move.

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Setup: Arrange your pieces based on Figure 1 at right.

The reference letters and numbers around the edge of the board—commonly used to keep track of moves during the game—can also be used for quick and easy placement of pieces. The **color** of the character matches the **color** of the piece to be placed next to it, and the **shape** of the piece behind it denotes the **type** of piece to be placed there.

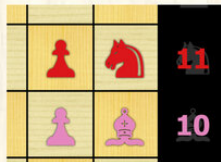


Figure 2:
Using Reference Values to Place Pieces

In Figure 2 at the right, the red 11 on the board has a knight behind it, telling the players to place a Red knight on the board next to that number. In similar fashion, a Pink bishop is placed next to the pink 10 with a bishop behind it.

Once the pieces are located around the edge of the board, pawns of matching colors are placed next to each piece **except** in the corners, where the ash and slate knights are set.

After completing the setup, you should have the following pieces remaining:

Ash and Slate Pawns: These will not be used for two-player Sovereign Chess. However, they will be needed for **Sovereign Chess Royale**, the four-player version found on page 4.

White and Black Queens: These should be kept handy for pawn promotion.

Extra Kings: The ten kings of the remaining colors may be needed in the case of a **regime change**, to be discussed later in the rules.

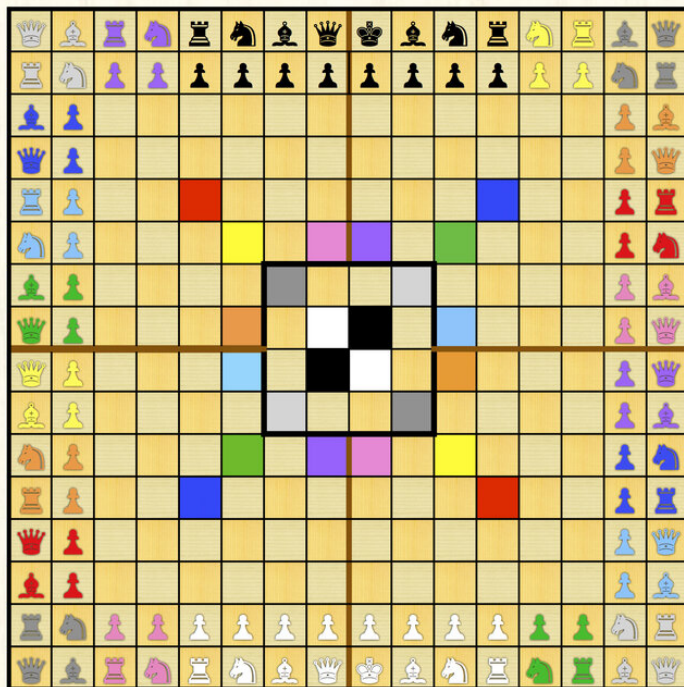


Figure 1: Sovereign Chess Setup

Movement of Pieces

Pieces in Sovereign Chess move and capture similarly to traditional chess, with minor variations.

King (♔): Moves and captures one square in any direction.

Queen (♚): Moves and captures **up to eight squares** in any direction.

Rook (♖): Moves and captures **up to eight squares** orthogonally (horizontally or vertically).

Bishop (♗): Moves and captures **up to eight squares** diagonally.

Knight (♞): Moves and captures in an "L" shape, one square horizontally or vertically, and then two squares at a 90 degree angle. Knights may jump over any other pieces.

Pawn (♟): Explained in further detail at right.

A piece **may not land** on a square of its own color. However, it may move over such a square.

Starting the Game

By random selection, one player makes a move with the White army.

The second player then chooses to:

- **Accept** the move made by the other player and **own** the White pieces, or
- **Reject** the move made by the other player and **own** the Black pieces.

After this choice, the player playing Black now makes a move. Moves then alternate between players as in traditional chess.

Movement of Pawns

Pawns **move** one square **horizontally** or **vertically** toward the center of the board. The brown lines on the board help guide pawns toward the center. For most pawns on the board, there will be **two** legal moves, assuming other pieces do not block movement.

A pawn on the **first or second ring** of the board may move either one or two squares away from the closest edge. The two square move may be used even if the pawn has been previously moved. In Figure 1 above, the major pieces are located on the first ring, while all pawns (and the Ash and Slate knights) are located on the second ring.

Pawns **capture diagonally** as long as they move toward at least one of the two brown lines (even if they move further away from another brown line). There is no en passant capture.

Pawns which move into the center 4x4 square (outlined in black) must be promoted to a higher piece of the same color. Normally, this would be a queen, rook, bishop, or knight, but this choice can also be a king, which constitutes a **regime change**, and is discussed in a later section.

In Figure 3 at the right, legal pawn **moves** are shown by the **white arrows** while legal pawn **captures** are denoted by the **black arrows**, assuming an enemy piece is located there. Arrows tipped in **red** mean that a piece must **promote** at the end of this move or capture.

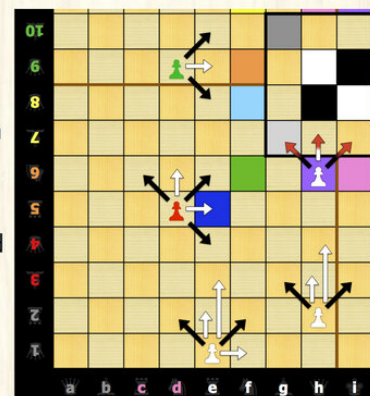


Figure 3: Pawn Movement, Capture and Promotion

Squares of Color

When a player moves a piece under their control onto a square of any color, three effects immediately occur:

- Those pieces become **controlled** pieces for that player, unless **owned** by the other player.
- Those pieces can be captured by the other player, again unless owned by the other player.
- The other square of the same color may not be occupied by either player.

It is possible to achieve control through a chain of pieces on squares of color.

An uncontrolled piece on a square of color still blocks the other square of the same color from being occupied. The occupying piece may not be moved or captured until controlled by either player.

Regime Change

The king, as the protected piece of chess, also represents the leader of a player's army. However, the leadership may change in one of three ways:

Coup d'Etat: When a player's **owned** pawn reaches promotion, they may choose to replace it with a **king**, instead of another type of piece. The initial king is then immediately removed from the board. The player's owned pieces remain the same.

Overthrow: When a player's **controlled** pawn reaches promotion, they may choose to replace it with a **king** of **that color**. The initial king is immediately removed from the board, and the pieces which match the color of the new king become **owned** by the player. The player's original pieces are no longer owned, and may subsequently be **controlled** by either player through a square of color.

Defection: Instead of moving a pawn or piece, a player may choose to voluntarily change the color of their king to any other color under their control. As with an Overthrow, this has the effect of making the pieces of that color **owned** pieces for the player, while ceding ownership of the original pieces.

A defection constitutes a player's move; the player may not move the king or any other pieces for that turn. An exception occurs if the player wants to defect to a color controlled by the king itself; the player may declare the defection, but then must immediately move the king off the matching square. If the king can not make a legal move off the square, then the defection may not occur.

There is no limit on the number of regime changes that may take place during the game. A regime change may be used to take an initial king out of check, but may not put the new king into check.

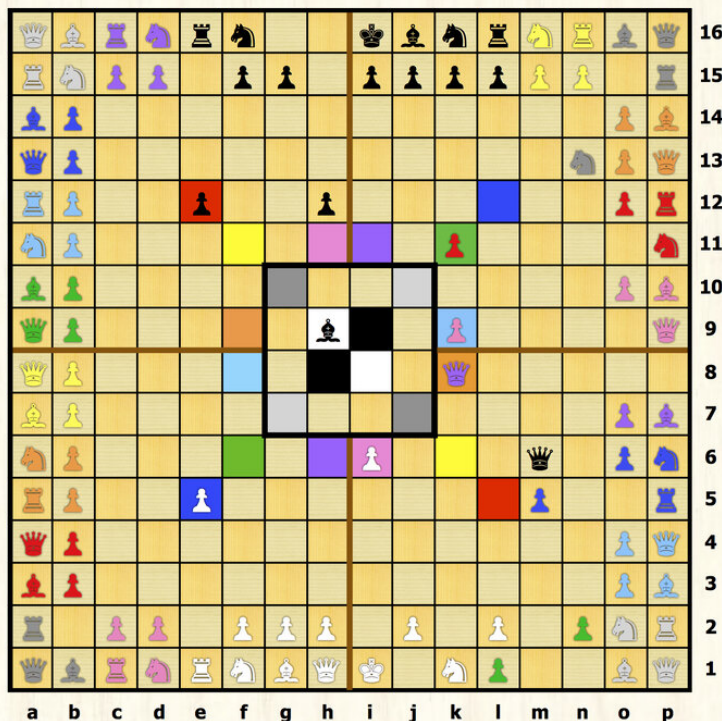


Figure 4: Sovereign Chess Board Position

In the above board position, the White player **owns** the white pieces, and also **controls** the navy pieces, through its pawn on e5; the pink pieces, through its pawn on i6; and the cyan pieces, through the pink pawn on k9.

The Black player **owns** the black pieces, and also **controls** the red pieces, through its pawn on e12, and the green pieces, through the red pawn on k11. Although Black has a bishop on a white square (h9), it does not control the white pieces, as the White player **owns** them.

The violet queen on k8 is **not controlled** by either player, so can not be captured. However, the player who eventually occupies a violet square (h6 or i11) will also control the orange pieces simultaneously.

The alternate squares of each color with by a piece (f6, f8, f9, h11, i8, l5, and l12) may not be occupied by either player until the original square is vacated.

Escaping Check

There are **seven** ways to escape check in Sovereign Chess:

1. Move out of the line of check.
2. Move out of the range of the checking piece (beyond eight squares).
3. Move to a square of the same color as the checking piece.
4. Block by moving of your pieces into the path of the check.
5. Capture the checking piece.
6. Control the checking piece by making a capture which leads to its control.
7. Perform a Coup d'Etat or Overthrow of your king, creating a new king and causing your old king to disappear.

Castling

A player may castle with their king and a rook that they either **own** or **control**, as long as neither piece has moved during the game. A king who has only defected is still otherwise eligible to castle.

Castling may occur if all squares between the king and rook are empty, and the king is not in check. The king may move to **any** open square between the two pieces, after which the rook is moved to the adjacent square on the opposite side. The king may not castle through check or into check.

Becoming Sovereign

To win the game, you must **checkmate** the opposing king.

A **stalemate** occurs when a player is not in check, but is unable to make any legal moves (including regime changes), or by mutual agreement.

Questions, Videos and FAQ:

SovereignChess.com

Sovereign Chess Royale

Players: Four, playing the White, Ash, Slate, and Black armies.

Setup: As shown in Figure 5 to the right.

Object: To own the last surviving king

Order of Play: Randomly assign each player as White, Ash, Slate, and Black.

White makes the first move, followed by Ash, Slate, and then Black. These turns continue through the players in order, even if the colors change (due to defections).

Game Play: Unless otherwise stated, all 2-player Sovereign Chess rules apply.

1. There is no checkmate. The goal is to defeat all other armies by capturing their kings.
2. If a player's king is put into check by one opponent, it may be captured by a following opponent (through discovered check, for example) before the player can address the check.
3. It is legal for a player to move such that their king is in check. Players are allowed to castle to take their king out of or through check. If a player's king is in check on their turn, they do not need to address the check.
4. While moving out of check is not required, all checks of kings must be announced by the player at the end of his move. If a player moves his king into check or fails to address a check (per Rule 3), the check should be noted to confirm the player's final move. Thus, there should be no "surprise" captures of kings due to unannounced threats or accidental moves.
5. When a player's king is captured, their army is considered to be in **Interregnum**, and still belongs to that player. A player whose army is in Interregnum still moves normally, and may continue to control other neutral armies through squares of color, but can not win the game.
6. If a player whose army is in Interregnum generates a new king through pawn promotion, then they are no longer in Interregnum. ("Long live the king!")
7. If a player's army has a king which is not in check, but they can not make any move (including regime changes) which does not put the king in check, then the king has "escaped" the battle, and the player is temporarily **stalemated**. The king is immediately removed from the board, and the army is in Interregnum. If the army does not generate a new king before the end of the battle, then the player is considered to have tied the game. If a player generates a new king on a future turn, then they may again win or lose the game.

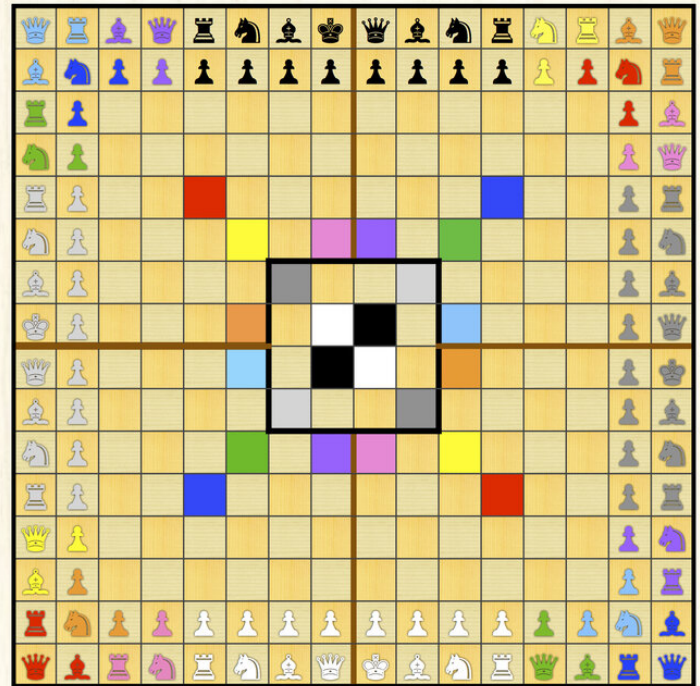


Figure 5: Sovereign Chess Royale Setup

8. The game ends when only one king remains. Even when two kings are left in the battle, and one is seemingly checkmated, play should continue, as intervening players may address the check or generate new kings in the interim.

History

Many years ago, I thought about what a chess game would look like with pieces of many different colors. The only chess games that had more than two colors also required more than two players, which is not what I wanted. So, as I created ten other colors around the board, I asked myself, "How would players move these pieces?", and came up with the ideas of squares of color; a player could move pieces of a certain color as long as they had a piece on the matching color square.

By 2005, I had developed most of the rules of the game—called "Color Chess"—but had never actually played it. My "board" was a Word file on my computer, and I began to play with my friend, Nate Conklin, by moving a piece on the "board" and emailing our moves back and forth. (When I was on vacation one summer, I printed the board on a piece of paper, and moved the paper "pieces" that were stuck to the board with chewing gum!)

Much has happened in the past 12+ years, but you have the first iteration of the finished product. As you can imagine, many people have helped and encouraged me through this journey. If you are one of those people and don't see your name here, it's only due to lack of space, not appreciation.

Credits

Gameplay Development: Nate Conklin, David Vander Laan, and Jeff Schwartz

Website Support: Nate Conklin

Amazing Photography: Brad Elliott (bradelliott.smugmug.com)

Demo Preparation: Olivia Bates

Game Production: Simon Cheng & Accord International

Soul Mate and Moral Support: Colleen Hurley-Bates

A special thanks to Shane Sauby and the team at Strategicon, the best game convention on the West Coast! Also, thank you to the myriad of playtesters, friends, and the 108 Kickstarter supporters who kept pushing me to make this game a reality.

Psalms 8:1