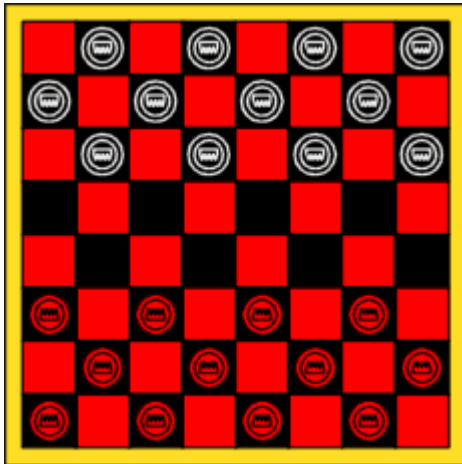


# RULES OF CHECKERS

The rules below form a general basis for your implementation of checkers.<sup>1</sup>

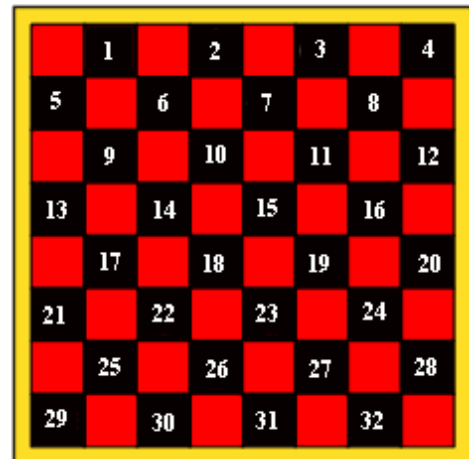
## Setup Your Checkerboard

Checkers is played on a board made up of squares. The squares are laid out in eight columns and eight rows.



Checkers is a game for two players. Each player receives twelve, flat disk-like pieces which are placed on the black squares in the manner indicated in the diagram at the left. Be sure that a light-coloured square appears in the lower right-hand corner of the board. The darker-coloured checkers are usually designated black, and the lighter colour is designated white. Black always moves first.

While playing, you may record your game by using checker notation. The black squares are numbered as indicated in the diagram on the right. To record a move, simply write down the square the move is from and then the number of the square where the piece was moved to. This is seldom done in friendly games but is essential in tournament play. It is also convenient for discussing games and strategies.

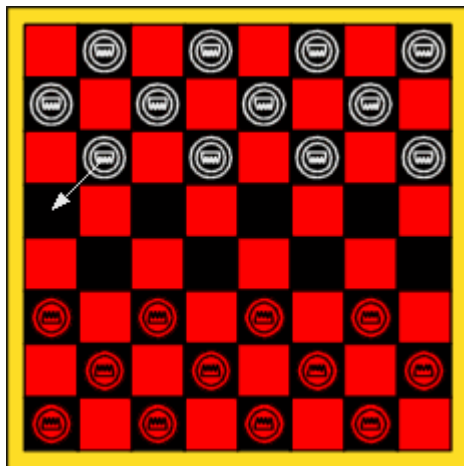


<sup>1</sup> These rules were adapted from <http://www.indepthinfo.com/checkers/setup.shtml>, a website that is now defunct and has been archived at <http://web.archive.org/web/20210425060349/http://www.indepthinfo.com/checkers/setup.shtml>

# General Rules for Checkers

Now that you have set up the board, you are ready to begin playing. First, determine who is to be "black" player. You can use any method you wish for this: flip a coin, alternate, etc. However, the most common method in amateur play is for one of the players to take one colour checker in each hand and hold out his hands before him. The other player chooses a hand; the colour checker in that hand determines the colour with which he plays.

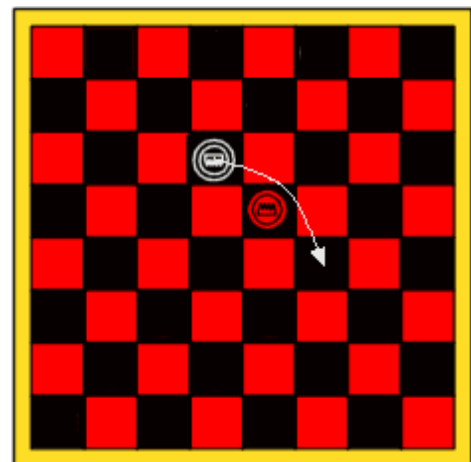
The objective is to eliminate all opposing checkers or to create a situation in which it is impossible for your opponent to make any move. Normally, the victory will be due to complete elimination.



Black moves first and play proceeds alternately. From their initial positions, checkers may only move forward. There are two types of moves that can be made, *capturing moves* and *non-capturing moves*. Non-capturing moves are simply a diagonal move forward from one square to an adjacent square. (Note that the white squares are never used.) Capturing moves occur when a player "jumps" an opposing piece. This is also done on the diagonal and can only happen when the square behind (on the same diagonal) is open. This means that you may not jump an opposing piece around a corner.

On a capturing move, a piece may make multiple jumps. If after a jump a player is in a position to make another jump then he may do so. This means that a player may make several jumps in succession, capturing several pieces on one turn.

**Forced Captures:** When a player is in a position to make a capturing move, the player **must** make a capturing move. When he has more than one capturing move to choose from, the player may take whichever move that suits him best.



## Crowning Kings in Checkers

If a checker reaches the opponent's edge of the board (called the "king's row"), then it is crowned with another checker. This means the checker is made a king. The king then gains the ability to **move backward**. The king may now jump in either direction or even in both directions in one turn (if making multiple jumps).

A similar idea in the game of chess occurs when a pawn reaches the opponent's end of the board: it becomes a queen. There is a practical reason for these piece promotions. Without it, a piece which can only move in one direction becomes worthless. Interestingly enough, it also has some social significance in that it signifies that royalty and power should not be simply endowed at birth, as it is usually the case. Nobility is something that can be, and should be, earned.

If the player gets an uncrowned checker on the king's row because of a capturing move, then he must stop to be crowned even if another capture seems to be available. He may then use his new king on his next move.

## Checkers Strategy

Checkers is a straight-forward game in many ways. Yet, play can unfold in intricate layers. Every move opens many possibilities and closes down many more. Thus, it is well to keep a few strategies in mind when playing, even when it is just for fun. First, always keep in mind the possibility of using the forced capture rule to manoeuvre your opponent into a position where he gives up two pieces for one of your own. A one-piece advantage can make all the difference in the end game. Second, always try to keep the lanes to your own king's row blocked to your opponent. Once either side gets a king, any uncrowned checker in the open is highly vulnerable. Third, move between your own pieces and your opponent in order to move adjacent to an opposing checker without loss. Of course, these are elementary ideas to the tournament player. To move beyond the beginner stage, a player will want to acquire a book on checkers and checker strategies. An excellent place to begin is Fred Reinfeld's book, "How to win at Checkers".