

Polis Rules

Setup Overview. The game of *Polis* is played on an 8x8 square grid. Each player has fifteen *dog* pieces and one *chariot*, arranged on the back two rows of the board such that the *chariots* are in opposing corners.

	BC		BD													
	BD															
	RD															
	RD		RC													

Winning the Game. When a player's *chariot* reaches the final rank of the board closest to their opponent, they win the game.

Playing a Turn. The game consists of the two players taking turns back and forth. On a turn, a player moves one piece. Players must move a piece and cannot choose to skip their turn. Pieces move one in any direction: up, down, left, right, diagonal up left, diagonal up right, diagonal down left, or diagonal down right. After moving a piece, the pieces around that piece "hop".

Hopping a Piece. After a piece moves, pieces around it hop to the other side (with some exceptions). Consider the following board with the blue player and red player's *dogs* arrayed.

	BD		BD		
	BD				
			RD		

If the top left blue dog is moved to the center square, then the blue dog on top center would jump to bottom center, the blue dog middle left would jump to middle right, and the red dog bottom right would jump top left. You would end up with:

	RD			
		BD		BD
		BD		

There are a few exceptions to when a piece will hop. One exception is that the opposite square the piece is hopping to must be open. So if a red dog would hop to the square that a blue dog is on, the pieces stay still instead of swapping. Likewise, if a piece would hop off the edge of the board it stays still instead.

The second exception is if an enemy piece is *defended*. Your own dogs will hop over your pieces as well as enemy pieces, unless the enemy piece is held in place by another enemy piece in the same direction. Consider the following board where the blue dog has just moved to the rightmost square:

| RD | RD | BD ← | |

Here, the red dog in the middle is adjacent to a piece that just moved and would normally hop. However, since it is hopping away from another red dog, it instead is held in place and stays still. Pieces only defend each other along the axis they are on. In the example below, the red dog is adjacent to another red dog, but since it is not on the same axis as the blue dog being moved it is not anchored in place. This time the red dog would get hopped to the right.

| RD | | | |
| | RD | BD ← | |

The final exception is stunned chariots do not hop. More on that later.

Capturing a Piece. After a piece is moved and hops are resolved, any piece that is surrounded on opposing sides by enemy pieces gets captured and removed from the board. Note that a piece must be surrounded along the same axis to be captured.

RD	BD	
	RD	

In the above, the blue dog is safe and does *not* get captured.

RD		
	BD	
		RD

In the above, the blue dog is surrounded on opposing sides by red dogs. It is captured and removed from the board.

Note that hops happen before capturing, so a piece may hop out of danger or into danger. Also note that capturing happens simultaneously. In the following example, both the central blue dog and the central red dog get captured:

| RD | BD | RD | BD |

Chariots. Chariots behave largely as dogs do, with two key differences. The first is that if a chariot reaches the far rank, the game immediately ends and that chariot's player wins.

The second difference is that, unlike *dogs*, *chariots* cannot be captured. If a chariot ends up surrounded by enemy pieces along the same axis, it is considered *stunned*. A stunned chariot does not hop. A stunned chariot cannot be moved by its owner on their turn. Finally, a stunned chariot *does not count toward captures*. In the following example, the central red dog is safe as the blue chariot is stunned and thus does not count as surrounding the red dog:

| RD | BC | RD | BD |

Illegal Moves. A player cannot choose to move a piece into a spot that would be immediately captured/stunned. A player cannot make this sacrifice even if they want to cause hops at the expense of their piece. A player *can* choose to move a piece onto a safe square even if it hops an allied piece into danger.

Strategy. Look for moves that capture enemy pieces - if you can get ahead in piece density, your odds of winning increase. Of course, the ultimate goal is to get the chariot across the board. If you have more dogs but they are far from a chariot about to reach the last rank, they will not be able to save you.

Pieces work well in packs. A lone dog will easily get captured, whereas a group poses a significant threat.

Look for your pieces that are in a row. These pieces can attack and capture enemy dogs along the same axis. In the below, moving the central red dog one to the right would cause the blue dog to hop in between the two red dogs and be captured.

| RD | RD → | | BD |

Look for your pieces that are spaced one apart. These pieces form a “death square” that you can use to hop enemy pieces into. Don’t forget diagonals!

RD		
		
		RD

When trying to advance groups of pieces up the board, move the most forward piece backward in order to hop other pieces forward. This is counterintuitive, but will advance you the most overall and keep your pieces together.

Chariots can move up the board quickly but are in danger of being hopped backward by enemy pieces. Allied pieces forming a front not far behind the chariot make it difficult to send it backward, and can provide backup if the chariot gets stunned.