

The Official Tress Guidebook

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Introduction

Plot

Once upon a time, in a land far away, there was a castle perched atop a hill, a prosperous landmark that watched over a wonderous and legendary kingdom. But the truth is that time conquers all. After many years of abandonment, the castle's remains have been surrounded by streams and overgrown woodland and has yet to be trespassed by anyone...until now.

A knight from the Ivory Kingdom was patrolling the outskirts of his realm when he noticed the ruins in the distance. With curiosity but also caution, he approached the hill and climbed it. Drawing his sword, prepared for anything, he stepped inside of the dilapidated castle and explored, he found the structure to be mostly sound, most of the age was due to cobwebs and growth, with only some signs of collapse and water damage.

It was only when the knight entered the Fortress inside the castle that he understood where he was. Chests of treasure, overflowing with golden jewellery, silver coins, and gemstones filled the hall. The knight realized he had found the fabled lost castle. With this significant and historic discovery, the Ivory knight returned to his steed and hurried back to the King's palace to share his find.

The knight appeared before the King, and told him everything he had seen, including the extent of the treasures, and the location of the castle. The King furrowed his brow, knowing they would need to cross their borders into the land of the Ebony Kingdom to take the lost castle for themselves. But with the support of his Queen and his two advisors, the trusted Guardians, the King made his mind.

The Ivory Kingdom mobilized their forces, gathering it's six patriotic Knights, it's two elite Spearmen, the two loyal Guardians, accompanied by the King and the Queen. They travelled all the way to the site where the castle was found. It was only as they began their approach, that their fears had come true. The army of the Ebony Kingdom, with their six brutal Knights, their cunning pair of Spearmen, and their King and Queen, followed by two Guardians of their own appeared over the horizon.

Both armies refused to concede, loathing the idea of surrendering this awesome bounty, laid out for the taking. They wished to claim the Fortress for themselves, for it would be a perfect outpost to spy on their rival, a source of valuable treasure and prestige, and most importantly, it would be a great honour to the victor of the battle...

The Rules of Tress

Basic Rules

Players

Tress is a two-player game. In Tress, each player chooses a side, White or Black.

Turns

The game is played in turns. Every turn, White must play one move, and then Black must play one move. You may not pass your turn.

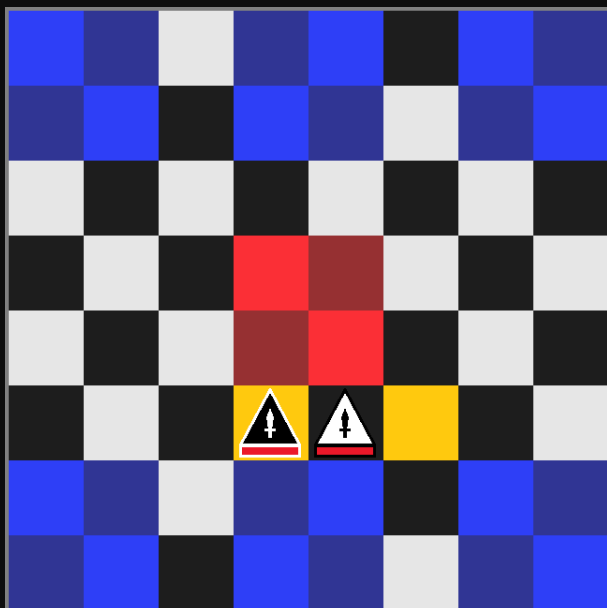
Board

Tress uses a 64 square checkerboard as the playing field, just like Chess and Checkers. To limit confusion however, the board should be clearly marked to show the location of the seven Zones (*see Zones for more*), though this is optional. The files on the board will be counted as A to H from left to right, and the ranks will be counted as 1 to 8 from the bottom to the top.

Moving and Capturing

To move in Tress, you must choose one of your pieces and move that piece to a square that it is able to reach. A piece can generally be moved to an empty square, or a square occupied by an opposing piece within its reach.

If the square your piece is moved to is occupied by an opponent's piece, the opponent's piece will be captured and placed outside of the board, and your piece will take its place on the now empty square.



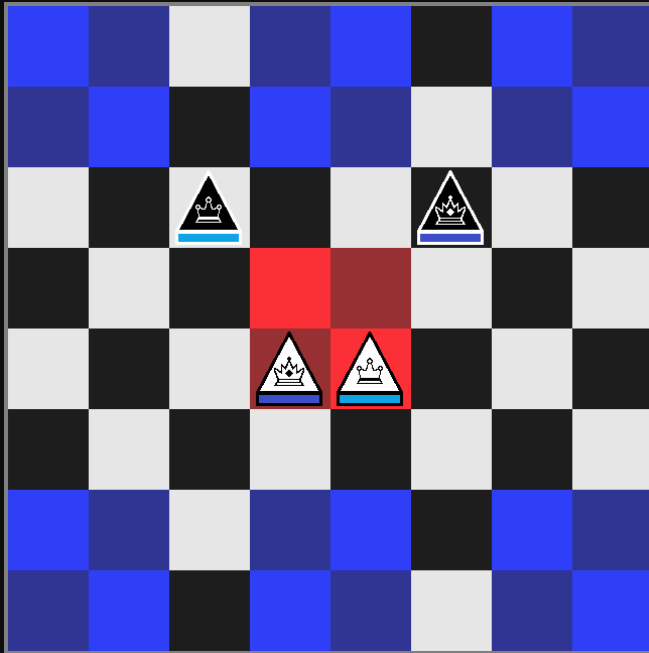
This White Knight placed on the e3 square can move to an empty square such as f3 to its right or capture the Black Knight on d3 to its left.

Winning and Drawing

A game of Tress can be decided by several possible outcomes, most of these result in one player claiming victory over the other, whereas some result in a draw.

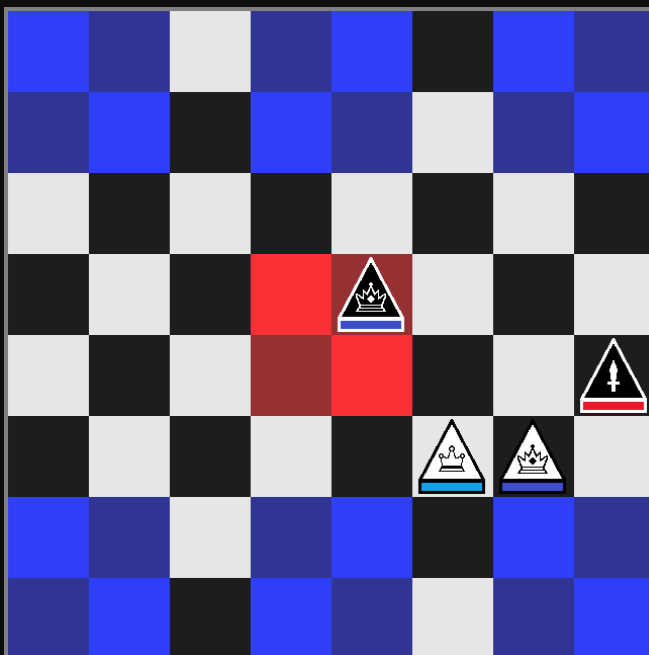
You can win a Tress game in the following ways:

Dual Escort – Both your King and Queen enter the Fortress while it is under your control.



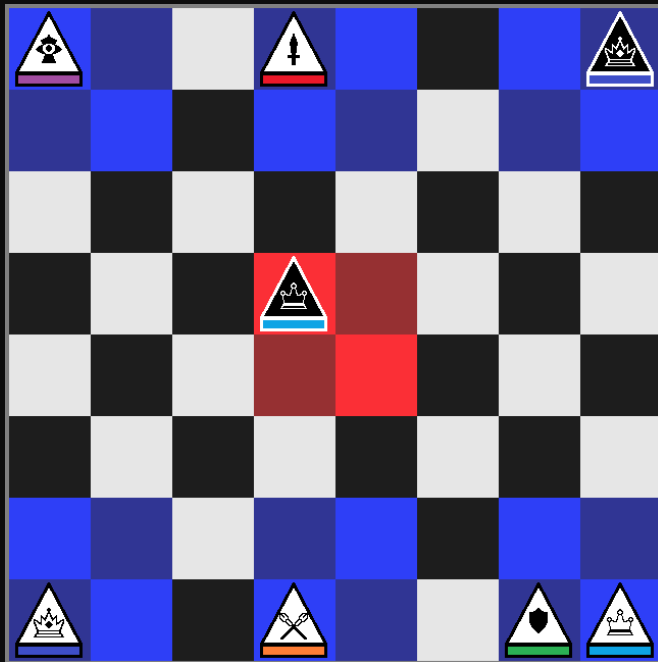
The White King and Queen are both inside the Fortress, Black can no longer prevent White from claiming victory by Dual Escort.

Lone Escort – Your King or Queen enters the Fortress while it is under your control and both players have lost either their King or Queen.



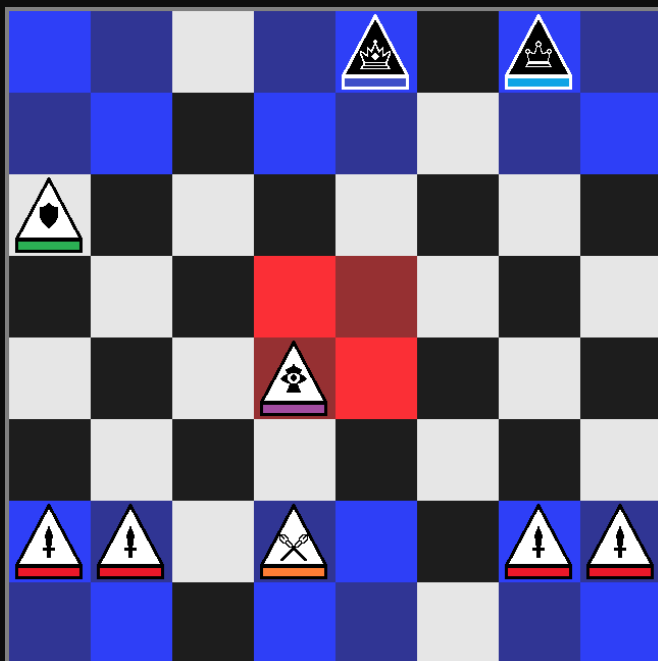
The Black King is inside the Fortress, but Black has not won yet because White still has both their Queen and King. However, when Black's Knight captures the White King on the next turn, Black will claim victory by Lone Escort.

Domination – You control five or more of the seven Zones on the board at once. It does not matter if the Fortress is among them.



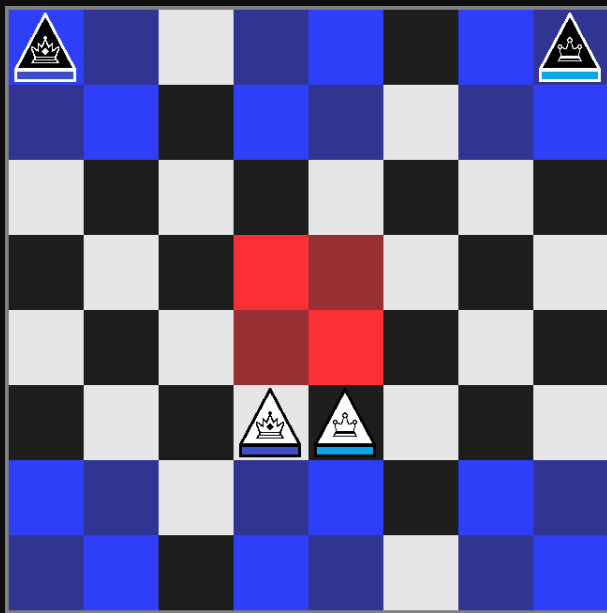
Even though the Black controls the Fortress and the Far King's Outpost, White controls the remaining five Outposts, resulting in a win by Domination for White.

Elimination – Both your opponent's King and Queen are captured.



Despite White dominating the board, on the verge of claiming victory, Black has somehow captured both White's King and Queen, and claims victory by Elimination.

Resignation – Your opponent surrenders and forfeits the game to you.



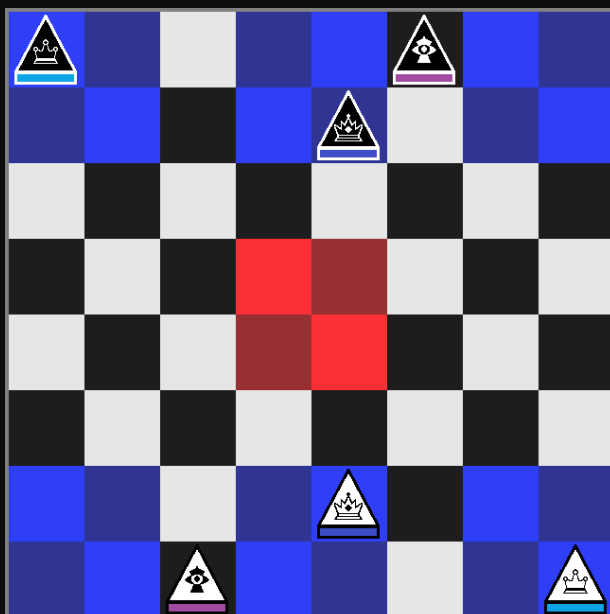
With White threatening to win the game in two moves by force, it would be a good show of sportsmanship for Black to resign in this situation.

Tress games can also be drawn in the following ways:

Mutual Elimination – Both players capture each other's King and Queen (see *Second Wind* for more).

Threefold Repetition – A position is repeated by either player three or more times throughout the game.

Agreement – If either player offers a draw and the other player accepts, the game is drawn.



Here White and Black both have a defended Sentinel blocking the path of the Queens from entering the Fortress, it is likely this position will lead to a draw, as there are no good moves for either player to break this standoff.

Pieces

The Pieces

In Tress, each side has sixteen pieces, for a total of thirty-two.

There are seven different kinds of piece. Knights, Pikemen, Guardians, Lancers, Sentinels, Kings, and Queens.

Each piece has different characteristics, such as movement, promotion, and value.

Knights

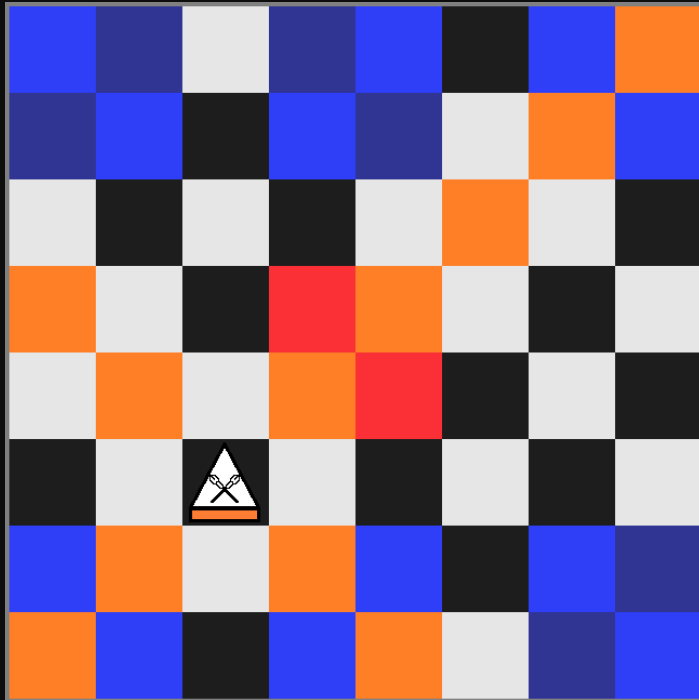
Knights (also known as Swords, or Pawns) are the most common piece, with each side having six of them. Knights may move one square in any direction. Knights work best in the center of the board, as they protect each other and overwhelm the enemy with their numbers. The Knights are associated with the color red.



The Knight can move one square in any direction.

Pikemen

Pikemen (also known as Pikes, Spears, or Spearmen) are next most powerful piece after the Knight. Each player has two Pikemen. A Pikeman can move to any square on a diagonal from its current location. Pikemen work well as early and midgame pieces, because they can control many squares and deter enemy movements, as well as support Knights and defend from behind. The Pikemen are associated with the color orange.

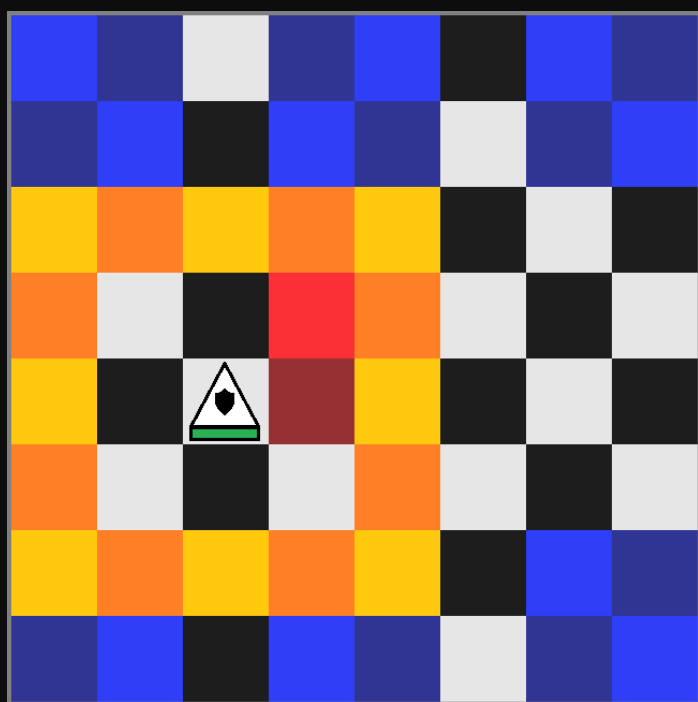


The Pikeman can move any number of squares, but only on diagonals.

When a Pikeman enters the Fortress while uncontested, it promotes to a Lancer. (See *Promotion* for more).

Guardians

Guardians (also known as Viziers, or Shields) are the most peculiar pieces in Tress, with each player having two of them. A Guardian can jump two squares in any direction. Although Guardians can have restricted potential in some positions (*see Guardians and Zones for more*), and can become a target if advanced too far inside enemy territory, they can be used for imaginative attacking and defensive maneuvers because of their long reach. Guardians are associated with the color green.



The Guardian can move two squares in any direction, notice that it cannot travel only one square.

When a Guardian enters the Fortress while uncontested, it promotes to a Sentinel. (*See Promotion for more*).

Lancers

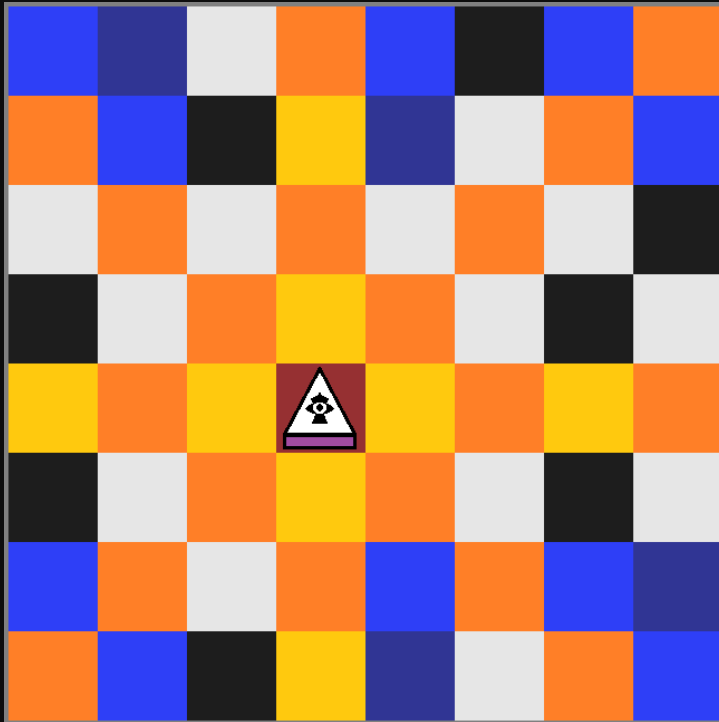
Lancers (also known as Lances) are the upgraded form of the Pikemen. A Lancer can move horizontally or vertically any number of squares but cannot move diagonally. This makes the Lancer the second most powerful piece in the game of Tress, which is especially noticeable in the endgame, though their diagonal shortcomings must be accounted for. Lancers are associated with the color yellow or gold.



The Lancer can move any number of squares horizontally or vertically but not diagonally.

Sentinels

Sentinels (also known as Watchtowers, or Eyes) are the upgraded form of the Guardian, and the most powerful piece in Tress. Sentinels can move horizontally, vertically, and diagonally any number of squares. Sentinels are fearsome pieces that can wrest control of the board for those who are lucky enough to promote their Guardians, but they are no use if sacrificed wastefully. Sentinels are associated with the color violet.



The Sentinel can move any number of squares in eight directions, making it the most powerful piece in Tress.

The King and Queen

The King (or Crown) and Queen (or Coronet) are the two Monarch pieces, the most valuable in Tress. The King and Queen can both move one square in any direction, though they are far from being the same piece as a Knight, as their safety can decide the outcome of the game. The King is associated with the color indigo or dark blue, whereas the Queen is associated with aqua or a light blue.

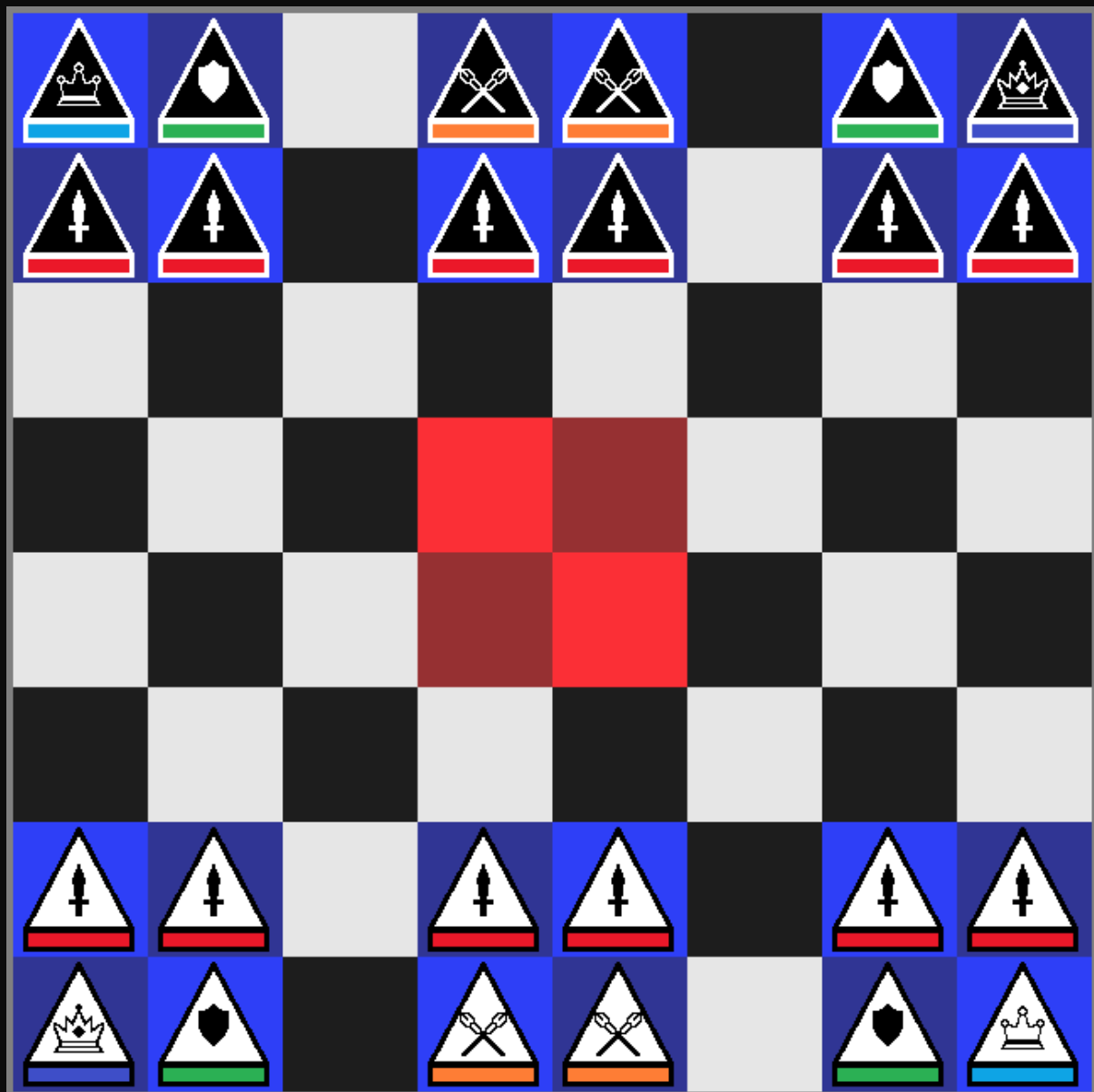


The King and the Queen may move one square in any direction, just like the Knight.

Starting Position

A Tress game starts with six Knights, two Pikemen, two Guardians, and a King and Queen on each side of the board, placed in the three blue Outposts on either side. The Kings and the Queens should be placed in the corner squares, the Knights should be placed across the second and seventh ranks, the Guardians beside the Kings and Queens, and the Pikemen behind the two central Knights. The Lancers and Sentinels are to be placed offboard.

Below is a visual guide for setting up the starting position.



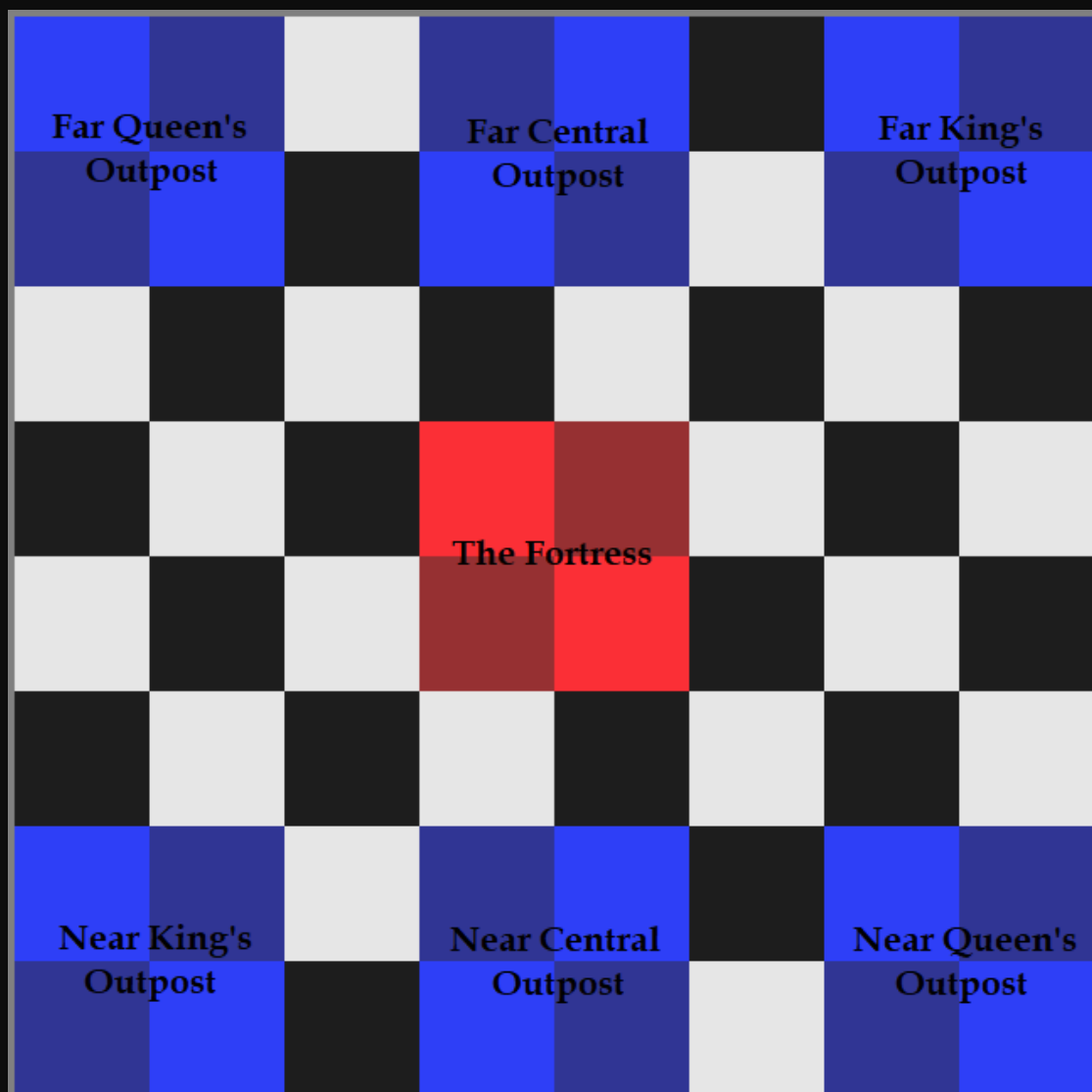
Zones

The Zones

One of the things that differentiates Tress from similar strategy board games is the seven Zones placed across the board. The most important of these is the eponymous Fortress, the red zone in the middle of the board. But there are six others, these are the blue Outposts which the pieces start inside at the beginning of a game.

There are only two notable differences between the Fortress and the six Outposts. Firstly, the Fortress is the only Zone that can be used to claim victories by Escort (*see Winning and Drawing for more*). Secondly, the Fortress is the only Zone that can be used to promote Pikemen or Guardians.

We will cover the rules that govern Zones in detail shortly, but first, here is a labelled map of the board with the names used for each Zone as a visual reference.



Zone States

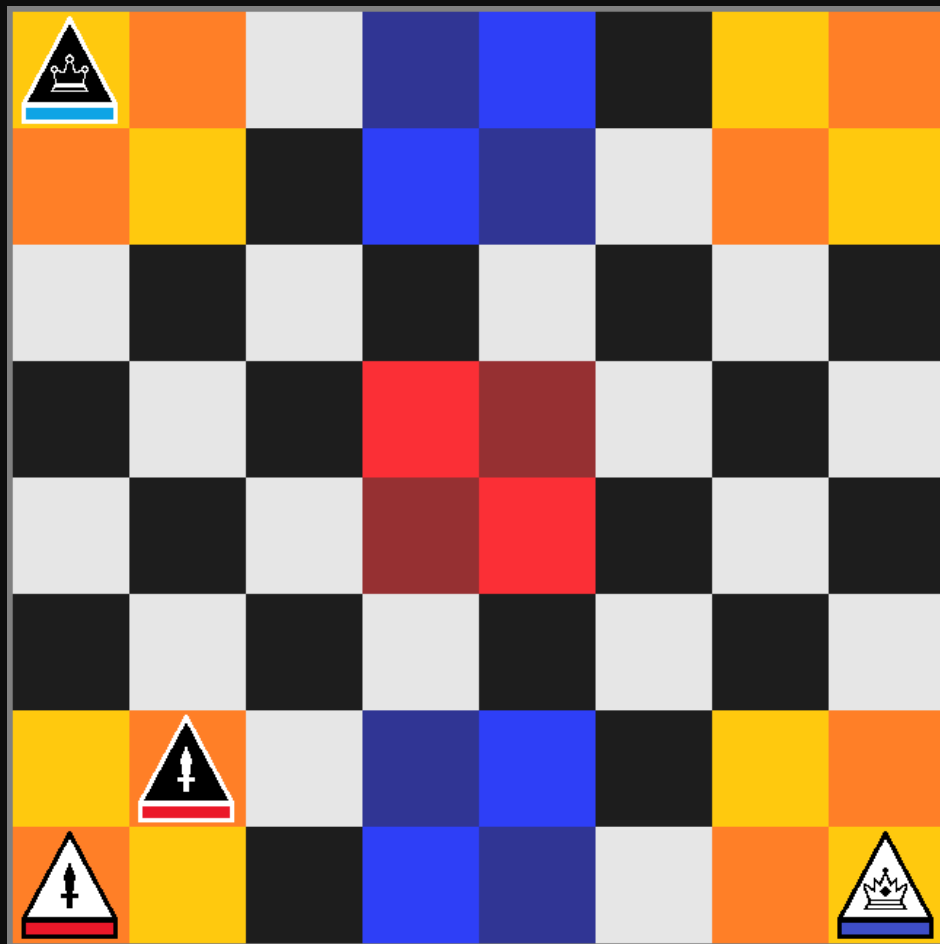
The first thing to understand about Zones is that they represent the territory a player has influence over. Each Zone on the board will be in one of four states.

Neutral – All four squares in the Zone are unoccupied by pieces from either side.

Contested – The Zone contains at least one piece from each side.

Controlled by Black – The Zone contains one or more Black pieces but no White pieces.

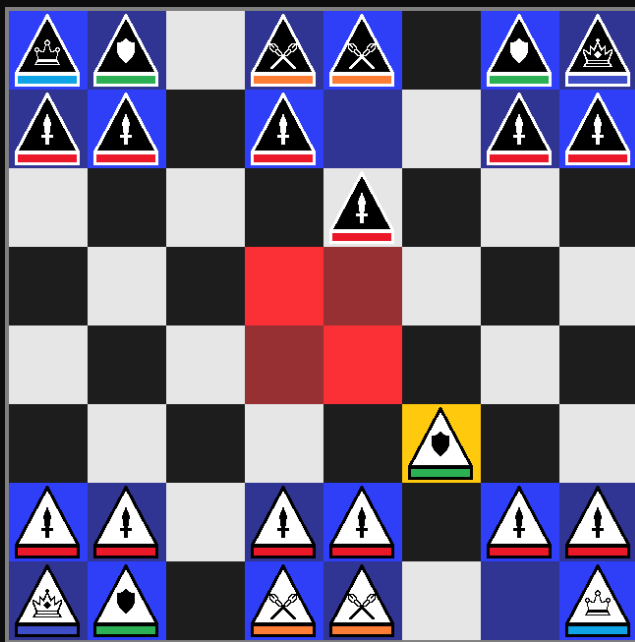
Controlled by White – The Zone contains one or more White pieces but no Black pieces.



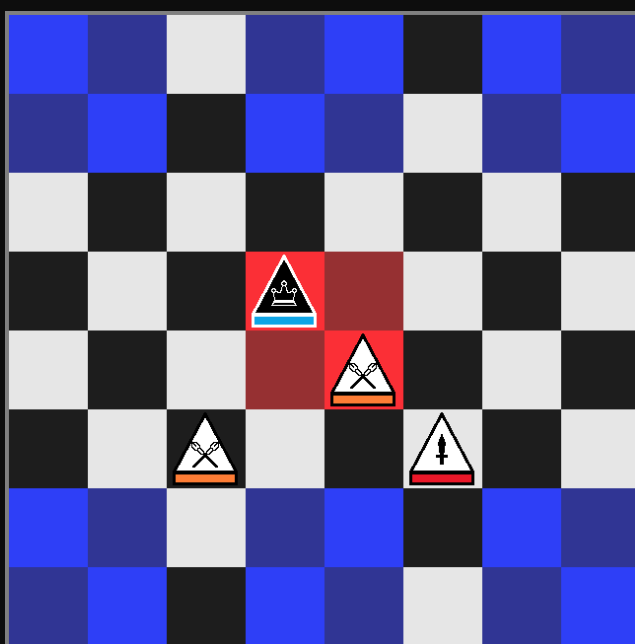
In this example position, we can see that the Far Queen's Outpost is controlled by the Black Queen, the Far King's Outpost is neutral, the Near Queen's Outpost is controlled by the White King, and the Near King's Outpost is contested by a White and Black Knight. White and Black control one Zone each as a result.

Promotion

If the Fortress Zone is neutral, or controlled by your side already, moving your Pikeman and Guardian pieces into the Fortress will lead to them being promoted into their respective counterparts. A Guardian may only become a Sentinel, and a Pikeman may only become a Lancer. A Sentinel can never return to being a Guardian, nor can a Lancer return to being Pikeman once promoted. Promotion will not occur if the zone is contested but will happen immediately if the Fortress is vacated by opposing pieces.



In this position, White can promote their Guardian to d4, d5, or e5, and promote their Guardian to a powerful Sentinel on only move 2!

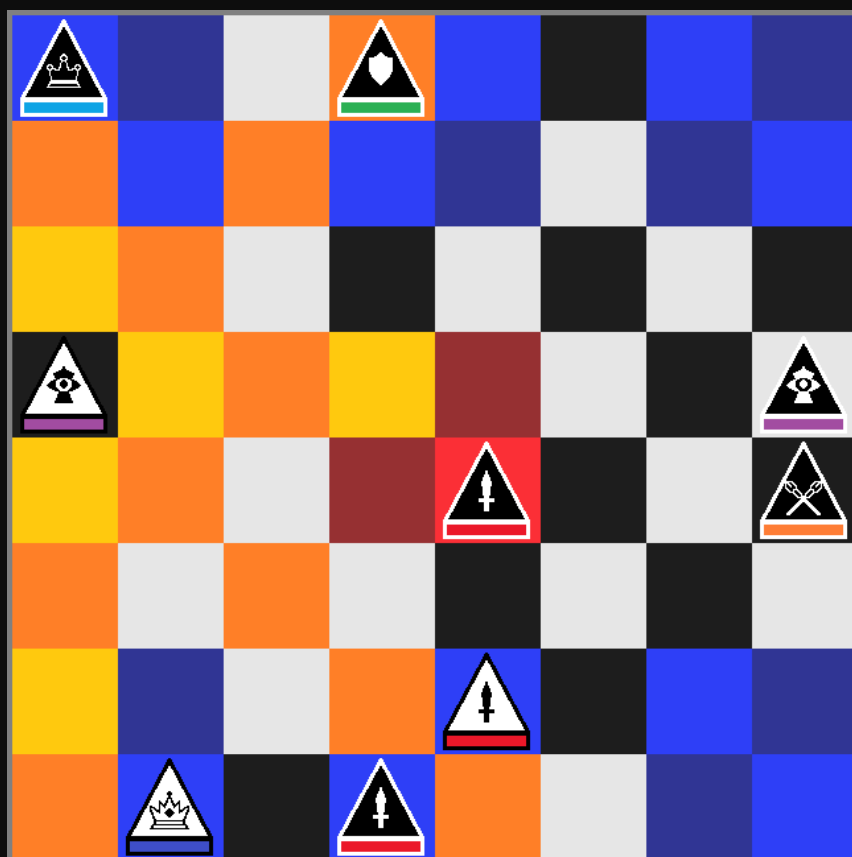


When Black moves their Queen out of danger, White's Pikeman on e4 will immediately promote to a Lancer, even though it is Black's move. On White's move, the Pikeman on c3 could be soon to follow...

Intrusion

When a Zone, whether it is an Outpost or The Fortress, is controlled by a player, their opponent's movement through that Zone becomes limited. Sentinels, Pikes, and Lancers must stop at the outermost squares of a zone controlled by an opponent to contest them, and cannot pass through freely, even if they are aiming for a normal square on the other side of the Zone. Placing the piece on the outermost square of the Zone is known as an Intrusion.

Once the Zone returns to being neutral, or becomes contested, movement through that Zone returns to normal.



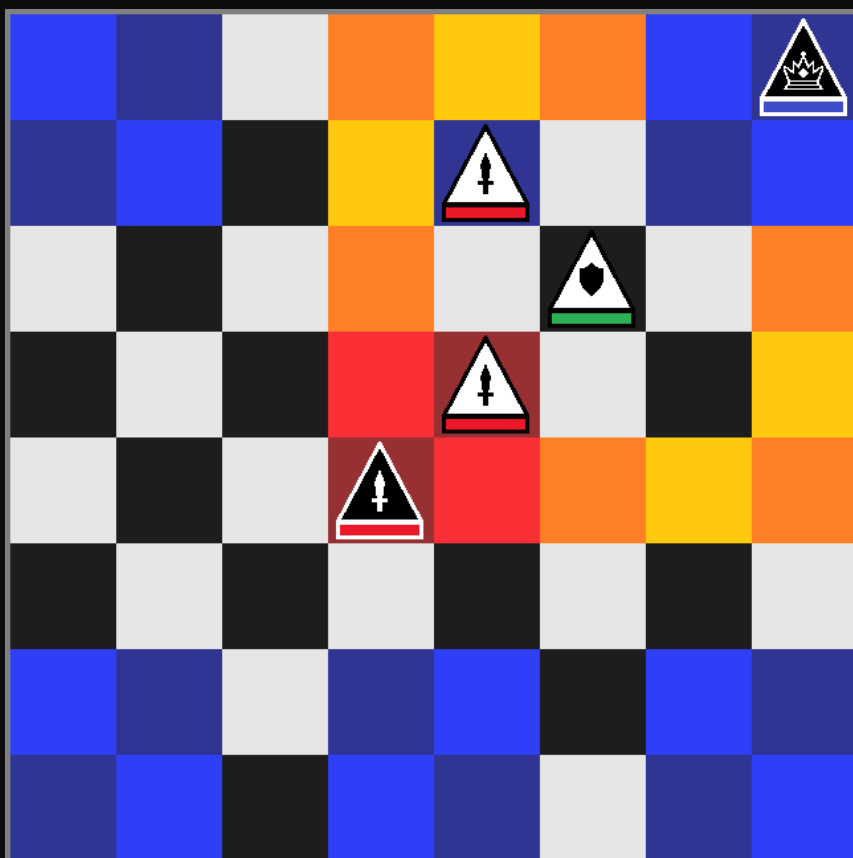
The White Sentinel here is in trouble. Although it is on the same rank as the Black Sentinel, it cannot attack because of the Black Knight controlling the Fortress, which it must intrude first, but that would lead to capture. The Sentinel also cannot attack the Black Queen because it would have to intrude her Outpost and would be captured. The Sentinel can freely move through the contested Near Central Zone, but it would again be in danger of being captured.

The only good moves available are to retreat into the Near King's Outpost, which is controlled by the White King, or to capture the Black Guardian in the Far Central Outpost. It appears to be defended by the Black Pikeman, but the Pikeman will be unable to recapture as the White Sentinel will gain control of the Zone, forcing the Pikeman to intrude and be captured if it approaches.

Guardians and Zones

Although six of the seven pieces in the game can contest and intrude enemy territory, the Guardians are an exception. A Guardian cannot enter any Zone controlled by opposing pieces, or even contested Zones. Guardians can only enter Zones controlled by pieces of the same color, or Zones that are neutral.

However, if a Guardian is in a Zone which becomes contested after it has entered, it will not be forced to leave.



The White Guardian on f6 is limited by the states of the surrounding Zones. Because the Fortress is contested, and the Far King's Outpost is controlled by the Black King, the White Guardian's options are limited to the normal squares, or to the Far Central Outpost, which is controlled by a White Knight.

Advanced Rules

Second Wind

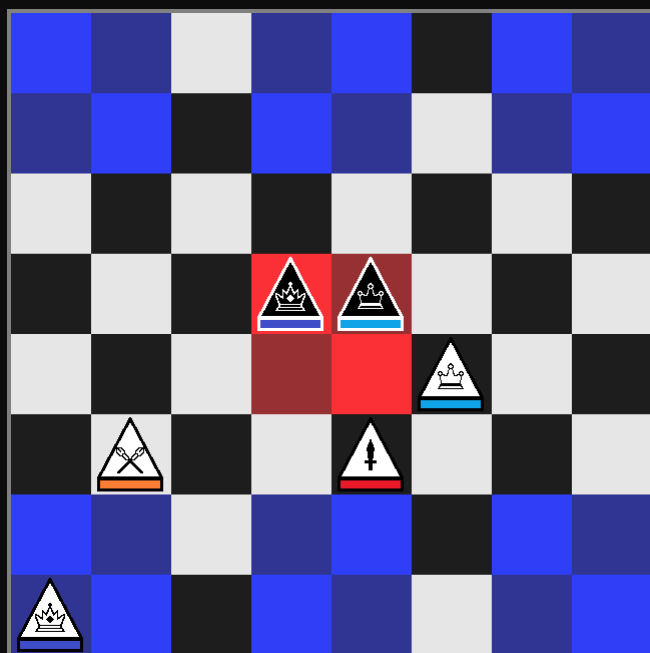
If one player attempts to claim victory in a Tress game, it may be possible to refute their win condition if you only had one more move, which could allow you to win yourself or force a draw instead.

A Second Wind can occur in certain situations where a win condition occurs on the board, but the losing player has a legal move that can “undo” this win condition within one move.

A Second Wind can result in a win for the player who claims it, can merely delay an inevitable loss, force a draw, or merely prolong the game with the final outcome decided later on. Each player can claim an unlimited amount of Second Winds as long as the conditions above are met each time.

Dual and Sole Escort

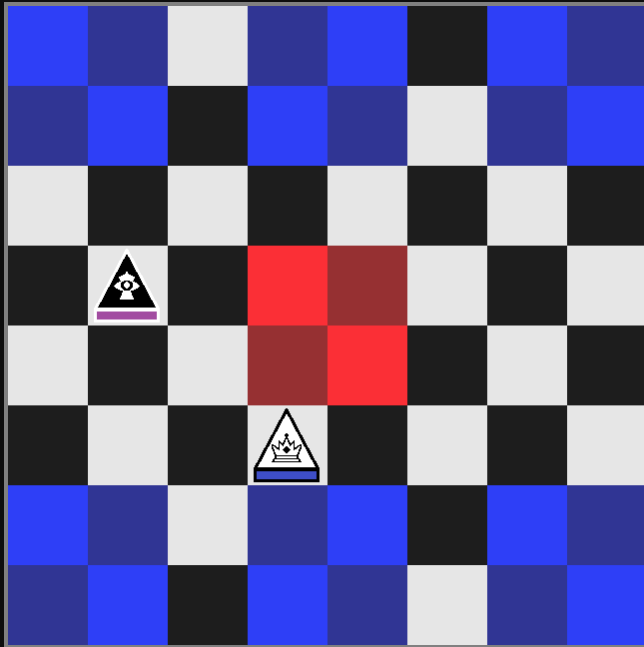
For a victory by Dual Escort or Sole Escort, the losing player can claim and play a Second Wind if they have a piece that is not their King or Queen that can capture an opponent’s Monarch piece or contest the Fortress.



In this position, Black is threatening to claim a Dual Escort victory. Although White cannot play Qxe5, White can claim a Second Wind by playing Pxd5, capturing Black's King and allowing White to prolong and win the game.

Elimination

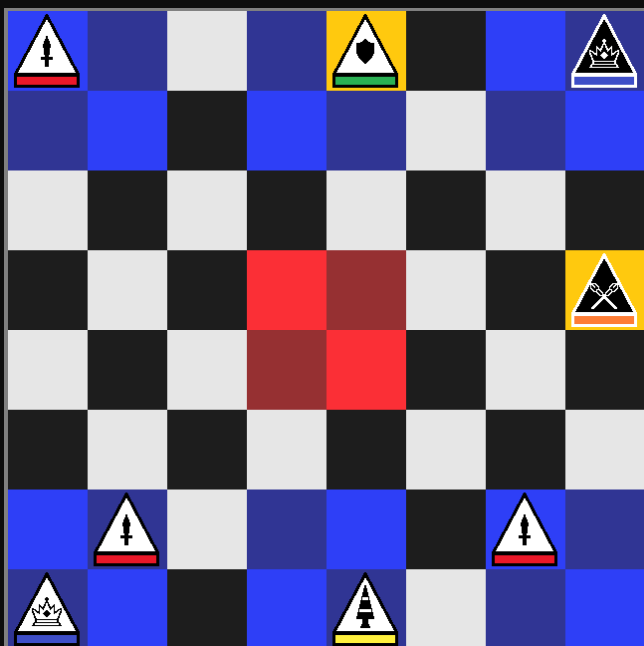
For a victory by Elimination, the losing player can claim and play a Second Wind if any of their pieces can capture the opponent's remaining King or Queen, if the opponent has both, it is impossible to invoke a Second Wind. A Second Wind claimed in this instance will always result in a draw by Mutual Destruction.



White has just captured Black's King and Queen, this would normally be a win for White, but Black's Sentinel can claim a Second Wind with Sxd3, resulting in a draw.

Domination

For a victory by Domination, the losing player can claim and play a Second Wind if any of their pieces can contest or take control of one of the Zones currently under their opponent's control.



White is threatening to win by Domination here, but thanks to the Pikeman on h5, Black can capture the Guardian on e8 just in time. With so many extra pieces, Black will struggle to win against White, but the game is not over yet.

Tress Notation

When recording or describing Tress moves, a standard form of notation is used which allows for easy recognition of moves using simple shorthand. Here we will cover how to write both long form and short form Tress notation using examples as well as the rules.

Long Form Notation

Long Form Notation is best used for speaking moves aloud. In Long Form, we say the piece being moved, whether or not it's a capture, the square it lands on, if any pieces were promoted and whether or not the Fortress' state changed.

If there are duplicates of the piece being moved, we should differentiate it by saying either the rank or file that the moving piece is moving from, it may be necessary to mention both in the case of Knights. If the piece is a Pike, we can be sure which Pike moved by the color of the landing square, and so we don't need to know which Pikeman is being moved.

Mentioning the Fortress state is optional, but good practice, though it's only ideal if there is a change in state.

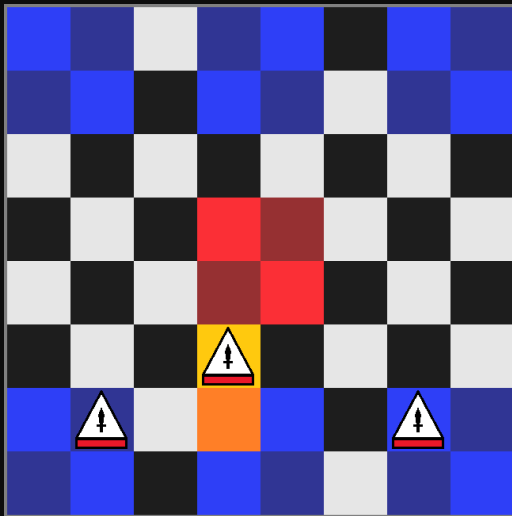
If the move ends with the side to move controlling the Fortress, we say "Controls", if the move ends with the side to move contesting the Fortress, we say "Contests", if the move ends with the side to move conceding the Fortress, we say "Concedes".

Short Form Notation

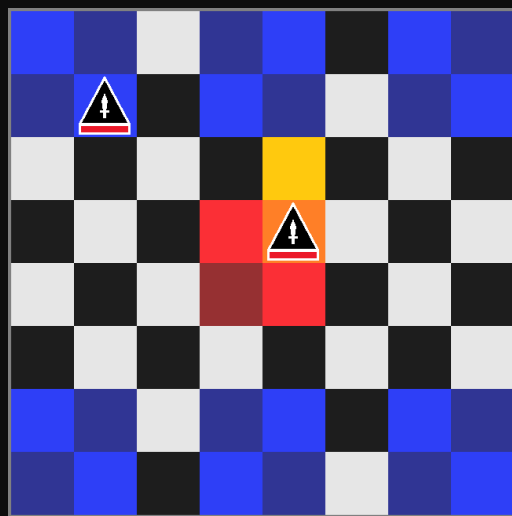
Short Form Notation is better for reading and writing moves, as it saves time and space. In Short Form we use single letters in place of full words. The file names should always be in lower case, and the piece names always in upper case, to avoid confusion.

Knights are replaced with "N", Pikemen with "P", Guardians with "G", Lancer with "L", Sentinel with "S", Queen with "Q", and King with "K". Captures is replaced with a lower case "x". Promotes is symbolized with an equal sign and the piece or pieces promoted. Controls is replaced with capital "F", Contests with capital "X", Concedes with capital "C".

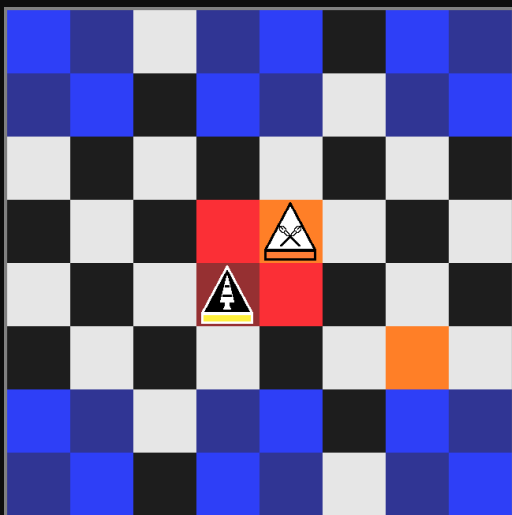
Examples



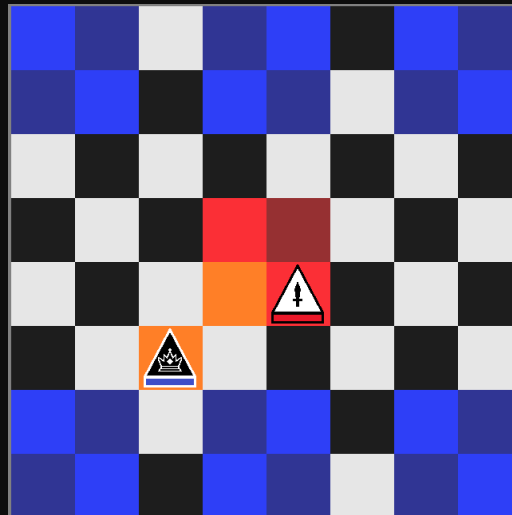
D Knight to D3. dNd3



E Knight to E5, controls. eNe5F



Pike to E5, contests. Pe5X



King captures C3, concedes. Kxc3C



F Guardian to D5, promotes to Sentinel, controls. fGd5=SF