

= En passant =

En passant ( from French : in passing ) is a move in chess . It is a special pawn capture , that can only occur immediately after a pawn moves two ranks forward from its starting position and an enemy pawn could have captured it had the pawn moved only one square forward . Note that the capturing pawn must be on its fifth rank prior to executing this maneuver . The opponent captures the just @-@ moved pawn " as it passes " through the first square . The resulting position is the same as if the pawn had moved only one square forward and the enemy pawn had captured it normally .

The en passant capture must be made at the very next turn or the right to do so is lost . It is the only occasion in chess in which a piece is captured but is not replaced on its square by the capturing piece . Like any other move , if an en passant capture is the only legal move available , it must be made . En passant capture is a common theme in chess compositions .

The en passant capture rule was added in the 15th century when the rule that gave pawns an initial double @-@ step move was introduced . It prevents a pawn from using the two @-@ square advance to pass an adjacent enemy pawn without the risk of being captured .

A pawn on its fifth rank may capture an enemy pawn on an adjacent file that has moved two squares in a single move , as if the pawn had moved only one square . The conditions are :

the capturing pawn must be on its fifth rank ;

the captured pawn must be on an adjacent file and must have just moved two squares in a single move ( i.e. a double @-@ step move ) ;

the capture can only be made on the move immediately after the opposing pawn makes the double @-@ step move ; otherwise the right to capture it en passant is lost .

En passant is a unique privilege of pawns : pieces cannot capture en passant . It is the only occasion in chess in which the capturing piece does not replace the captured piece on its square .

= = Examples = =

= = = In the opening = = =

There are some examples of en passant in chess openings . In this line from Petrov 's Defence , White can capture the pawn on d5 en passant on his sixth move .

1 @.@ e4 e5

2 . Nf3 Nf6

3 @.@ d4 exd4

4 @.@ e5 Ne4

5 . Qxd4 d5 ( diagram )

6 @.@ exd6e.p.

Another example occurs in the French Defense after 1.e4 e6 2.e5 , a move once advocated by Wilhelm Steinitz . If Black responds with 2 ... d5 , White can capture the pawn en passant with 3.exd6. Likewise , White can answer 2 ... f5 with 3.exf6e.p.

An example is from this game by Steinitz and Bernhard Fleissig .

1 @.@ e4 e6

2 @.@ e5 d5

3 @.@ exd6e.p.

= = = Unusual examples = = =

Black has just moved his pawn from f7 to f5 in this game between Gunnar Gundersen and Albert H. Faul . White could capture the f @-@ pawn en passant with his e @-@ pawn , but instead played :

13 @.@ h5 + Kh6

14 . Nxe6 +

Note that the bishop on c1 effects the check , via a discovered check . 14 ... Kh7 results in 15.Qxg7 # .

14 ... g5

15 @.@ hxg6e.p. #

The en passant capture and discovered checks place Black in checkmate ( from White 's rook on h1 , even without help from White 's bishop ; an en passant capture is the only way a double check can be delivered without one of the checking pieces moving , as in this position ) .

The largest known number of en passant captures in one game is three , shared by three games ; in none of them were all three captures by the same player . The earliest known example is a 1980 game between Alexandru Sorin Segal and Karl Heinz Podzielný .

= = = In chess compositions = = =

En passant captures have often been used as a theme in chess compositions , as they " produce striking effects in the opening and closing of lines " . In the 1938 composition by Kenneth S. Howard , the key move 1 @.@ d4 introduces the threat of 2.d5 + cxd5 3.Bxd5 # . Black may capture the d4 @-@ pawn en passant in either of two ways :

The capture 1 ... exd3e.p. shifts the e4 @-@ pawn from the e- to the d @-@ file , preventing an en passant capture after White plays 2 @.@ f4 . To stop the threatened mate ( 3.f5 # ) , Black may advance 2 ... f5 , but this allows White to play 3 @.@ exf6e.p. # with checkmate due to the decisive opening of the e @-@ file .

If Black plays 1 ... cxd3e.p. , White exploits the newly opened a2 ? g8 diagonal with 2 . Qa2 + d5 3 @.@ cxd6e.p. #

An example showing the effect en passant captures have on pins is this 1902 composition by Sommerfeldt :

The key move 1 @.@ d4 ! threatens 2 . Qf2 # . The black e @-@ pawn is now simultaneously pinned and unpinned , as 1 ... exd3e.p. + is illegal , but 1 ... e3 + is not . This however removes the black king 's access to e3 , allowing 2 @.@ d5 # .

= = Historical context = =

Allowing the en passant capture , together with the introduction of the two @-@ square first move for pawns , was one of the last major rule changes in European chess , and occurred between 1200 and 1600 . Other relatively recent rule changes were castling , the unlimited range for queens and bishops ( Spanish master Ruy López de Segura gives the rule in his 1561 book Libro de la invencion liberal y arte del juego del axedrez . , ) and a change to the rules on pawn promotion . In most places the en passant rule was adopted at the same time as allowing the pawn to move two squares on its first move , but it was not universally accepted until the Italian rules were changed in 1880 .

The motivation for en passant was to prevent the newly added two @-@ square first move for pawns from allowing a pawn to evade capture by an enemy pawn . Asian chess variants , because of their separation from European chess prior to that period , do not feature any of these moves .

= = Notation = =

In either algebraic or descriptive chess notation , en passant captures are sometimes denoted by " e.p. " or similar , but such notation is not required . In algebraic notation , the capturing move is written as if the captured pawn advanced only one square , for example , bxa3 ( or bxa3e.p. ) in this example .

= = Threefold repetition and stalemate = =

The possibility of an en passant capture is relevant to claims of a draw by threefold repetition . Two

positions whose pieces are all on the same squares , with the same player to move , are for this purpose considered different if there was an opportunity to make an en passant capture in the first position , and of course that opportunity no longer exists the second time the same configuration of pieces occurs .

In his book on chess organization and rules , International Arbiter Kenneth Harkness wrote that it is frequently asked if an en passant capture must be made if it is the only legal move . This point was debated in the 19th century , with some arguing that the right to make an en passant capture is a " privilege " that one cannot be compelled to exercise . In his 1860 book Chess Praxis , Howard Staunton wrote that the en passant capture is mandatory in that instance . The rules of chess were amended to make this clear . Today , it is settled that the player must make that move ( or resign ) . The same is true if an en passant capture is the only move to get out of check .