

INTRODUCTION

COURTYARD™ was invented and developed in 1963 by Len Kalich out of a desire for a true alternative to Chess and Checkers. There are other games which claim to be that alternative, but upon further inspection of these games one finds that they do not possess the familiarity of Chess or Checkers in gameboard design, the simplicity of playing moves as in Checkers, nor a similarity to the strategic challenge of Chess.

COURTYARD possesses all of these and more. With the addition of a center Courtyard and a larger playing area, and without the mundanity of Checkers nor the lengthy time-of-play aspect of Chess, we feel that COURTYARD TU is placed directly in the middle between both games and becomes more than a true alternative; it stands in a class of its own.

ABOUT THE GAME

COURTYARD is a game set in an early medieval period. It represents a conflict between kings in a struggle for either land or country. The game is played with Kings, Guards, and Serfs: each having their own distinctive personality and power structure. The objective for each King is to be the first to reach the ultimate safety of the Courtyard, whereupon the victory is his.

The Serf represents the peasant farmer or villager, quite low in status with little power and no authority. The hooded garment symbolizes the simple attire of the period. In the game, the Serf is basically a set-up and sacrificial player, and although his moves are limited, he can be tricky. The Serf can capture any opposing player.

The King is symbolized by the Royal Crown. In the game he is quite passive and is really not one prepared for battle. He needs much assistance to reach the Courtyard. Although his moves are much more flexible than those of the Serf, they are also somewhat limited.

The Guard is the real power player in the game of COURTYARD. He is a very menacing character symbolized by his armored helmet, and a powerful game figure which is evident in the flexibility of his playing moves. Basically the King's personal bodyguard, the sole purpose of the Guard is to protect and maneuver the King into the Courtyard.

FOR TWO PLAYERS

RULES OF PLAY AND GAMEBOARD SETUP

The game board consists of 46 playing squares and a center courtyard.

All moves are to be made on the dark squares only.

Each player, or side, consists of 15 playing figureheads: 1 King, 4 Guards, 10 Serfs.

STARTING POSITION

The playing figures (Serfs, Guards, & Kings) are to be placed on the gameboard as shown in the following figure:

G		G		K		G		G	
	S		S		S		S		S
S		S		S		S		S	
					↓				
				C					
				↑					
	S		S		S		S		S
S		S		S		S		S	
	G		G		K		G		G

K = King
G = Guard
S = Serf

The Game begins when one player, chosen by chance, moves one of his/her Serfs one move in a Forward Right or Forward Left direction (diagonally). Alternating turns are then taken by each player. One move is considered one turn.

THE COURTYARD SETUP

The walls of the Courtyard are of equal size and are to be placed on the center game board Courtyard so that there are two openings where the arrows are in the figure above.

CAPTURING

Capturing is done by “jumping” an opposing player as in the game of checkers. When an opposing player is captured or jumped, it is removed from the game board by the capturing player. Jumping an opposing figure when the opportunity or necessity arises is a must. If player “A” fails to jump or capture player “B,” whether by neglect or by intent, player “B” can remove the offending player “A” game piece from the game board. At no time is a player allowed to jump any of his own playing pieces.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

The first player to move his or her King into the center Courtyard is declared the winner and the game is over.

In the event an opposing King is captured, the game continues until the surviving King moves into the Courtyard and is declared the winner.

If, however, both Kings are captured before either King enters the Courtyard, the game is considered a “draw.” (This will be discussed again in “King’s Moves”)

PLAYING MOVES OF INDIVIDUAL GAMEPIECES

SERF:

Each player has ten (10) Serfs. The Serf may move, in a forward right or forward left direction only. The Serfs are strategically the setup and sacrificial figures in the game. The Serf may capture any opposing Serf, Guard, or King by jumping in a forward right or forward left direction only. Since the Serf cannot move in a backward direction, if in the event a Serf succeeds in moving to the extreme opposite end of the game board without being captured, (which would be a station of an opposing Guard or King) it may either remain inactive on that square or may be “recycled” back into the game on an alternate move, by placing it back to any vacant “home” Guard or King station and resume original moves from thereon. Remember, if you wish to recycle the Serf, you must utilize one turn to do so.

GUARDS:

There are four (4) Guards to each side. The Guards are the most powerful and versatile figures on the game board. The Guard may move in any direction: forward right, forward left, backward right, backward left, and may move either one square per move or up to two (2) squares in one move at the option of the player. The Guard may capture any opposing Serf, Guard, or King by jumping in either direction. Although the Guard can move up to two squares in one move, he cannot for example, move one square and then make a jump or capture, all in one move. The purpose of the Guard is to protect and maneuver the King into the Courtyard.

KING:

The King is the main figurehead in the game. The King is able to move ONLY One square at a time in any direction: Forward Right, Forward Left, Back-ward Right, Backward Left. The King may capture any opposing Serf or Guard. However, the King may NOT capture the opposing King! The object of the game is to move the King into the center Courtyard. The first player to do so is declared the winner and the game is over. If a King is captured by an opposing Serf or Guard, the game continues until the opposing King enters the Courtyard and is declared the winner. If however, a King is captured by an opposing Serf or Guard, and the surviving King is then also captured before entering the Courtyard, the game is then considered a draw. A King may only enter the Courtyard by way of the entrance (designated by the arrow) on his opponent's side of the gameboard (i.e., the one furthest away from himself).

THE COURTYARD

The Courtyard is the center portion of the game board and is the receiving object of the game. The Courtyard has only two entrances designated by the arrows, both by way of the dark playing squares. Only the King is allowed to enter the Courtyard. Under NO circumstances is another figure such as a Serf or Guard allowed to enter the Courtyard for any reason at any time. (Such as "landing" in the Courtyard as a result of a jump. As a result, there are six squares on the outer walls of the Courtyard that become "safe" zones from certain angles of attack.)

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ARISING IN COURTYARD

Q. In capturing, if my opponent fails to make an available jump, is it mandatory I remove his/her piece from the gameboard?

A. Yes. At times, it will be advantageous to sacrifice a player as part of an on-going strategy, so the rule is mandatory to either jump an opposing Gamepiece or lose that Gamepiece to the opposition.

Q. Is there any time you are allowed to jump your own player?

A. No. Jumping your own man is prohibited at all times.

Q. If I move my Serf to the extreme opposite end of the gameboard without it being captured, is there any certain "Home" Guard or King square I must place it on?

A. No. As long as it is any "open" (unoccupied) home Guard or King position. You cannot place it on an unoccupied Serf position.

Q. Since a Guard can move up to two squares at a time, can he jump two squares at one time?

A. The Guard may jump as many times in succession as is available, forward or backward. The Guard however, is unable to jump a player that is two squares away. This means the Guard would have to move up one square and then make the jump, which would make the total to three squares moved in one turn. Remember: all capturing or jumping is done "in line," from a face-to-face or square-to-square position, and in the normal line of travel for each individual playing figure.

Q. Does the King have to travel on the side of the center Courtyard designated in Figure 7?

A. No. The King may travel any route you wish, but can only enter the center Courtyard by way of the entrance opposite his side of the board. The entrance that is facing you, is the entrance for your opponent's King.

Q. Can the King jump an opposing player into the Courtyard?

A. Yes. As long as it is at the proper side of entry. This eliminates an opposing player from totally blocking the entrance to the Courtyard.