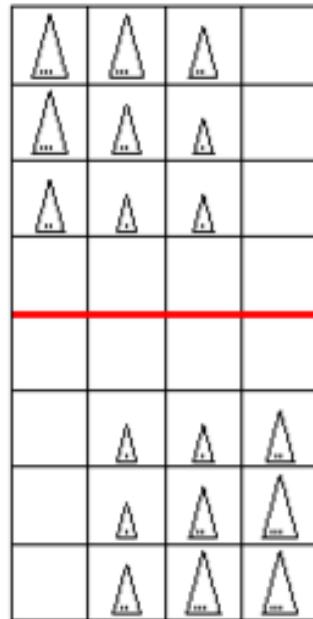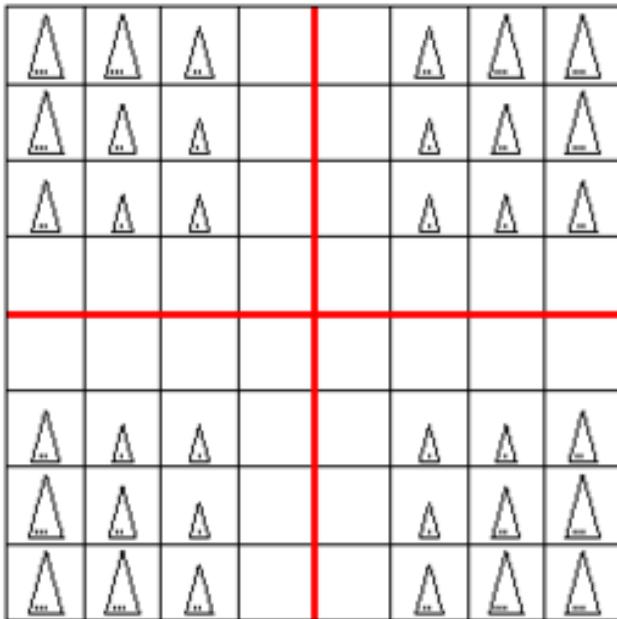# Martian Chess Rules

Four-player and two-player starting setups

Initial setup

Each player starts with nine [pieces](#): three small (*pawns*), three medium (*drones*), and three large (*queens*). The color of the pieces is irrelevant to the gameplay. A mix of colors is recommended.

Players initially place their pieces in the corners of the board as shown. In a two-player game, only a half-board is used. The players decide who moves first. Play turns alternate, and pass to the left after each move.

Movement and capturing

The red lines in the diagrams indicate notional *canals* which divide the board into *territories*, or quadrant. At any given time a player controls only those pieces that are in his or her territory.

The pieces move as follows:

- Pawns move one space diagonally in any direction. (Unlike [chess pawns](#), they may move backwards.)
- Workers move one or two spaces horizontally or vertically, without jumping. (Like chess [rooks](#), but with limited range.)
- Drones move one, two, or three spaces any direction horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, without jumping. But can also make one single turn during its move. (For example up 1 over two, back two over one.) Making Drones very powerful pieces.
- Queens move any distance horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, without jumping. (The same as chess [queens](#).)

As in chess, a square may contain no more than one piece, and a piece is captured when an enemy piece lands on the square it occupies. The capturing player removes the piece and puts it aside for later scoring. The hierarchy of the clan pieces size really doesn't matter, Queens can be captured by pawns. Hey its all out war, no safeties.

In the two-player game, a player may not immediately reverse an opponent's last move (i.e. may not move the piece across the canal back to its departure square, on the next turn).

End of game and scoring

The game ends when one player runs out of pieces (i.e., their territory becomes empty). Players then compute their scores by adding up the point values of the pieces they captured: queen = 4, drone = 3, worker = 2, pawn = 1. The player or team with the highest total wins the game.

In the four-player game, the players form two teams, with teammates in opposite corners. Teammates play for a combined score. Aside from strategic differences, play is unaffected; it is legal (and sometimes good strategy) to capture your teammate's pieces.

Strategy

Capturing with a queen often allows the opponent to immediately recapture, leading to a back-and-forth battle until one player runs out of pieces in the line(s) of capture. This is more common in two-player games, since other

players may interfere in the four-player version. The net point difference is usually minor with two players, but can give the players involved a significant lead over the others in a four-player game.

Moving a pawn or drone into enemy territory can be a good move for several reasons:

- it can prevent an opponent from capturing the piece from you
- it can ensure the availability of a piece to capture from an opponent
- it can block an attack from an enemy queen, drone, or worker.

Variation in Game play

When a playing piece is next to the queen it can't be captured.