Knights of the tabletop

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A game of strategy, combat and honour

Contents

[Objective 2](#_Toc97239791)

[Setup 2](#_Toc97239792)

[Board Layout 2](#_Toc97239793)

[Building your nation 2](#_Toc97239794)

[Setting traps 3](#_Toc97239795)

[It’s Go Time! 3](#_Toc97239796)

[Manoeuvres 3](#_Toc97239797)

[ATTACK! 3](#_Toc97239798)

[Maimed pieces 4](#_Toc97239799)

[Homeland Advantage 4](#_Toc97239800)

[2 on 1 4](#_Toc97239801)

[Retreating 4](#_Toc97239802)

[Storming the Castle 4](#_Toc97239803)

[Extending Play 5](#_Toc97239804)

# Objective

Defeat your opponent by storming their castle, capturing their King and Queen, and moving your own monarchs into their new residency safely.

It’s up to you how you build your army and the strategy you employ, but your early choices could have serious consequences! Do you have what it takes to command an army in the name of your Sovereign? It’s time to find out…

# Setup

Here’s a rundown of the Game Pieces:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chart, histogram  Description automatically generated | This is your castle. Your King and Queen live in it and your job is to protect them as well as capturing your opponent’s. |
| Shape, circle  Description automatically generatedIcon  Description automatically generated | These are your King (left) and Queen (right). They spend the game locked in their bedrooms at opposite ends of the castle. It’s your job to keep them safe. |
|  | These are your soldiers and their optional shields. Command them to attack your opponent’s Subjects when necessary. Your soldiers will also be responsible for capturing your opponent’s Monarchy. |
|  | These are your Archers. They can move sideways but must not leave Bowman’s Fell. They can mount a long-range attack by firing into no Man’s Land. |
|  | This is your Medic. It can travel around the board and heal any injured Subjects. Your Medic cannot be attacked. This would be a war crime. |
|  | This is what a maimed Soldier looks like. When a Soldier loses a fight, the counter is flipped over which reveals this symbol and makes it clear that the Soldier is maimed. |

## Board Layout

The Game Board is split into three distinct areas. The six rows closest to you on the main grid are your Homeland, and the six rows at the opposite end are your opponent’s. The six rows in the middle, separating the two, are No Man’s Land.

The final row, separated from the main grid and closest to you overall, is Bowman’s Fell. This row is used exclusively by your Archers, should you choose to employ them.

## Building your nation

The first step is to build your army and fortify your Monarchy inside the boundaries of your Homeland.

Place your castle on the back row of your Homeland. You can place it anywhere along the back row as long as all sections are on the board. The drawbridge should face your opponent. Your King and Queen are then hidden safely in their bedrooms at opposite ends of the castle (the two circular cut-outs in the Castle piece).

Place your Medic anywhere on the board, either within your Homeland or within No Man’s Land.

Now your “set” pieces are done, you can build your Army. You can have any combination of Soldiers and Archers you wish, as long as they don’t exceed 10 in total. Place your Archers anywhere on Bowman’s Fell and place your Soldiers anywhere on the back row of the main grid.

If you wish, you can equip your Soldiers with shields. This adds an extra level of protection during battle but also slows down that piece’s movements. If a Soldier has a shield, then it can only move a total of half of the Movement Budget that is assigned to it.

So, to move a Soldier with Shield 4 places will cost 8 moves from your budget. If you don’t have enough left in the movement budget to do this, then that soldier cannot move.

You should now have one castle and a total of 13 playable pieces on the board.

## Setting traps

If you choose to include traps, then you should set these next. The traps don’t have physical pieces as they should be placed in secret and noted down so your opponent cannot see it. Your three traps are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bear Trap | If an enemy lands on this, they must miss 1 turn. |
| Spring Trap | If an enemy lands on this, they must move backwards 5 spaces in the opposite direction to their last move. |
| Net Snare | If an enemy lands on this, they are immobilized until freed by an allied Soldier. To free someone caught in a Net Snare, the player must occupy the space next to the trapped Soldier and roll a 5 or 6. |

You can place a total of one of each trap. They must be placed in your own Homeland and must have at least 1 square clearance on all sides at the start of the game. No objects will be placed on the board to show where the traps are located, so it is up to you to write down the traps’ locations during setup on the Trap Card and remember to enforce their use when an enemy steps on it. Writing it down ensures you can prove the pre-determined location.

Once placed, traps cannot be moved, and all traps are single use only. If your opponent lands on a trap square, you must call it out within that same turn. Once your opponent ends their turn, the chance to use the trap has expired.

# It’s Go Time!

Now you’re set up, it’s time to play. You take turns to roll the dice and move your pieces into position on the board. Your turn ends when you:

1. Use up your total Movement Budget, or
2. Make all the moves you want to make and then verbally end your turn, or
3. Perform an action (or Act of War)

## Manoeuvres

Your movement budget can be split across multiple pieces if you want to, or all used on one piece for a long-distance move. It is not necessary to use up every move in the budget if you don’t want to.

Moves can be made as follows:

Soldiers can move in any direction except diagonally. They cannot pass through occupied spaces. If a Soldier has a shield, then it can only move a total of half of the Movement Budget that is assigned to it. So, to move a Soldier with Shield 4 places will cost 8 moves from your budget.

The Medic can move in any direction except diagonally. They can move through an occupied space but cannot stop on it. This means there must be enough left in the movement budget to take that extra step onto the next space. The medic can heal as many soldiers as they can reach once movements their manoeuvres are finished.

Archers can only move horizontally. They cannot move through an occupied space.

Any playable piece can “step over” a maimed piece (see Maimed Pieces section for more info) but it will cost one extra move from the budget to do this. You step over them by swapping places with the maimed piece. You now occupy the square they were dying on, and they’re now dying on the square you were previously standing on.

# ATTACK!

At any point, you can initiate battle by announcing “Attack!”

Any piece, not including the Medic or the Monarchy, which is standing directly next to an enemy piece, will engage in combat. Any Archers in play will also loose their arrows at the same time.

To determine the outcome of the battle, each player rolls 2 dice. If archers are in play, then each player must announce BEFORE rolling whether the archers are aiming high or low.

The person being attacked can roll to retreat instead of fighting if the wish. This must be announced BEFORE they roll the dice.

Where Soldiers are fighting, the larger number wins. The loser is maimed, unless the losing Soldier is carrying a Shield. In this case, the Soldier is unharmed but loses its shield. The soldier can get a new shield by visiting the Smithy. This is done by returning to their own castle. They must reach a point within one square’s distance from their castle. Only one soldier can be equipped with a shield per turn.

The Archers fire into No Man’s Land. They can only fire directly in front of where they’re standing, and the numbers rolled determines how far the arrow reaches (No Man’s Land is 6 rows deep… You get the idea). You must announce BEFORE rolling both dice whether your archers will be aiming high or low. After rolling the dice, if you aimed high, then you take the highest number rolled. If aiming low, then take the lowest number. If an Archer’s arrow hits a Soldier, then that Soldier is maimed, unless it is carrying a shield. In this case, the Soldier is unharmed but loses its shield (it is possible for an Archer to hit and maim one of their own side).

## Maimed pieces

An active soldier without a shield can be maimed in battle. This includes soldiers who lost their shield in a previous battle. A maimed piece is represented by turning the playing piece upside down until it is healed. Healing is achieved by moving your Medic to the adjacent square to the maimed piece and rolling an even number on 1 x D6 die.

If the Medic ends up next to more than one of their own Soldiers, then they can heal each Soldier in turn. Roll the die once for each adjacent Soldier to determine the outcome of each.

If another battle occurs and a Soldier is still maimed, that Soldier dies and must be removed from the board.

It's possible for any player to “step over” a maimed piece but it costs one extra move from the budget to do this. You step over maimed pieces by placing your moving piece onto the maimed piece’s square, and at the same time the maimed piece is moved onto your previous square.

You can use this feature to your advantage if you have it in you, by maiming multiple opponent pieces on adjacent squares and making a “pile of bodies”, which your opponent will have to use up their movement budget by wading through them to get to their target.

## Homeland Advantage

A Soldier engaging in battle on their own side of the board (their Homeland) gains a Homeland Advantage. For these Soldiers, add 5 to the Battle Roll.

## 2 on 1

If you can get your soldiers into position, then you can double up your attack by fighting 2 on 1. You do this by putting two soldiers on squares next to the soldier you wish to attack. If both soldiers are then attacking the same opponent, your dice roll doubles. (If you’re in your Homeland, then Homeland Advantage is added AFTER doubling). You cannot multiply any more than two. 3 or more on 1 would be a war crime.

## Retreating

As the attacking player’s turn ends after the fight, the attacked player can now choose to either fight back, or retreat. The decision must be announced BEFORE rolling.

If fighting back, then the same rules apply, and the fight continues. If retreating, then you only roll one die. You move your Soldiers directly away from the attacking Soldiers, in a straight line. Each Soldiers moves the same amount of squares and the amount is determined by your retreat roll. Maimed players cannot move from the spot they are on, instead your opponent will move those Soldiers back the same amount of squares as determined by the retreat roll.

# Storming the Castle

You must enter the opposing castle to capture the King and Queen. Entry happens at the square directly in front of the castle, and in the centre, indicated by the Draw Bridge. You must enter from the front edge of the drawbridge.

The King and Queen are hidden in locked rooms at opposite ends of the castle with a single guard at the door (this guard is assumed and is not one of the 13 active player pieces). The King or Queen is captured by defeating their Guard using the same Combat play as any other, specified above (both players roll for highest number). If the attacker wins, that Monarch is captured, and the attacker claims the piece. This must be repeated with both Monarchs.

The defending player may fortify their castle if they wish, by moving guards and/or soldiers both inside and outside their own castle.

Guards inside the castle may attempt to throw an opponent over the wall by following the same rules as Standard Combat. Both players roll for highest number and if the Guard wins, the Enemy Soldier is moved to the nearest empty square directly outside the Castle Wall. This is the only scenario (and location) where a Guard can “attack”.

Once both Monarchs are captured, the game is over, and the Captor has won.

# Extending Play

For an extended version of the game, you could continue following capture of the King and Queen by then moving your own King and Queen to the newly captured castle. Once both are in the castle, the game would end but the defending player may try to use any remaining Soldiers or Archers to attack and kill one or both Monarchs. If they succeed, then their own Monarchs are returned to their Castle, and they win the game. If not, then the attacking Monarchs win the game once both are safely in the Castle, locked in their rooms at opposite ends of the Castle.