

Chess Draws: Stalemate, Threefold Repetition, and 50-Move Rule

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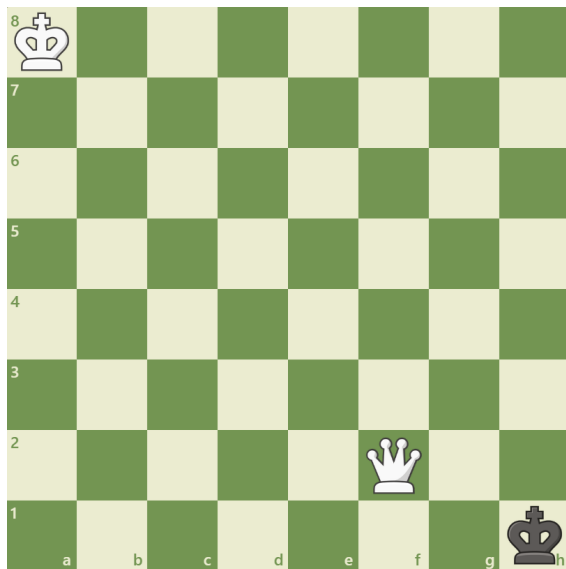
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1 Introduction

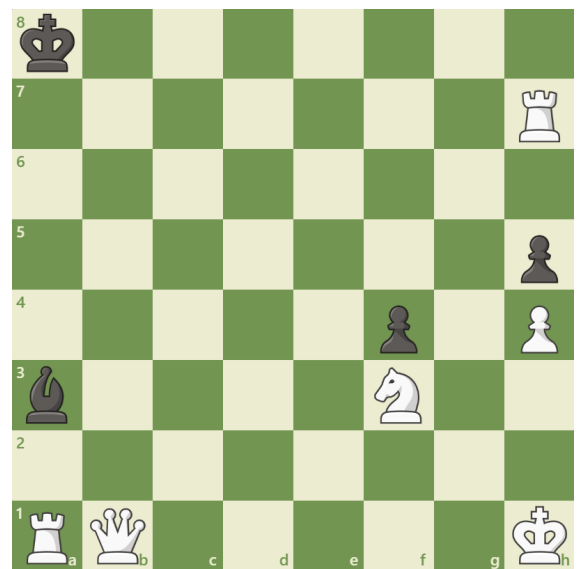
In chess, a draw can occur under several conditions. Common scenarios include **stalemate**, **threefold repetition**, and the **50-move rule**. This document illustrates each.

2 Stalemate

A stalemate occurs when a player has no legal moves and their king is not in check. When this happens, the game is declared a draw.



(a) A simple stalemate. Black has no legal moves.



(b) A more complex stalemate with additional pieces.

Figure 1: Examples of stalemate in chess.

Explanation

In the first example, it is Black's turn. The Black king cannot move without entering check, and there are no other legal moves. Therefore, the game ends in stalemate. In the second example, Black has multiple pieces, but none can move legally due to pins and threats from White's pieces.

3 Threefold Repetition

A draw by threefold repetition can be claimed when the same position occurs at least three times during a game. For the repetition to count:

- All pieces of the same type and color must occupy the same squares.
- All possible moves for both players must be identical.
- Special moves such as *en passant* must also be identical in availability.

The game does not automatically end; the player whose turn it is must claim the draw. Threefold repetition often occurs when a player is losing and forces a *perpetual check* to save the game.

Example: Move Progression Leading to Threefold Repetition

The following sequence shows a game from Move 0 to Move 9 that could illustrate a threefold repetition scenario:

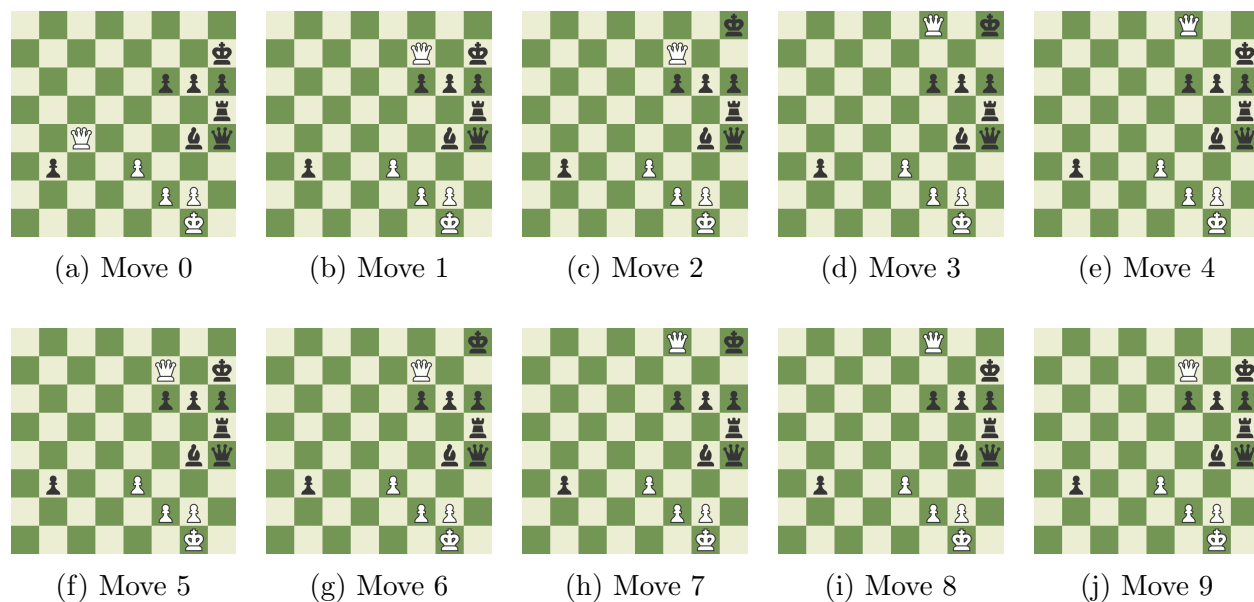


Figure 2: Progression of a chess game from Move 0 to Move 9 illustrating potential threefold repetition.

4 50-Move Rule

If both players make 50 consecutive moves without capturing any pieces or moving any pawns, any player can ask for a draw if it is their turn to play. This rule prevents games from prolonging when neither player is making progress.

To make good use of this kind of draw, it is important to learn basic checkmating patterns. It is frustrating to have sufficient material to checkmate your opponent but be unable to do so.