

## Rules of Draughts (Checkers)



Draughts is a board game of skill played between two players who, following a fixed set of rules, attempt to win the game by either removing all of their opponent's playing pieces from the draughts board, or by rendering their opponent's pieces immobile.

Preface:

The following rules of draughts cannot cover every possible situation that may arise during the course of a game, nor can they regulate for all administrative questions. Where instances arise that are not precisely regulated for by the following rules of draughts, it should be possible for the tournament controller/ referee to reach a correct and fair decision by reflecting on analogous situations, and through the use of absolute objectivity. We believe that the rules should not be over prescriptive so as to deprive a tournament controller / referee of their freedom to make a judgement based on fairness, logic and unforeseen special factors.

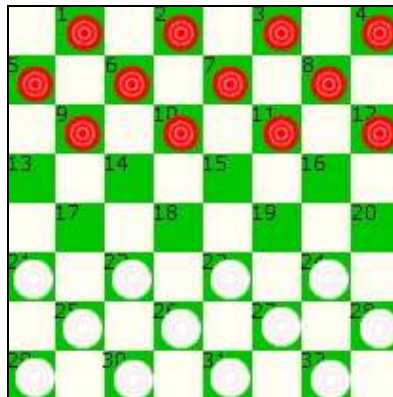
## **Section One: Equipment and Rules for Play.**

### THE DRAUGHTBOARD AND ITS ARRANGEMENT

- 1.1 The draughtboard is composed of 64 squares, alternately light and dark arranged in a square array of 8 rows and 8 columns and bounded by a neutral border.
- 1.2 The official draughtboard for use in all major events shall be of Green and White (or off white/cream) colours for the dark and light squares.
- 1.3 The size of squares of the draughts boards should be between 4.5 and 5 centimetres.
- 1.4 At the commencement of play the draughtboard is placed between the players in such a way that a green square is to be found on the player's near left side, and a white square to their right side. The playing squares to the near left side of the draughtboard is referred to as a player's "Single Corner", while the playing squares on the near right side is referred to as a player's "Double Corner" side.
- 1.5 The 32 green squares used for play on the draughtboard shall be assigned numbers 1-32 for descriptive purposes. These numbers are the official reference system for notations and recording games.
- 1.6 These numbers should not be printed on an official draughtboard.
- 1.7 The draughtboard should be made of materials that do not create a "glare" or reflect light under tournament conditions.

### DRAUGHT PIECES AND THEIR ARRANGEMENT

- 1.8 At the beginning of a game, one player has 12 dark-coloured discs (referred to as “pieces” or “men”), and the other player has 12 light-coloured discs.
- 1.9 The official draught pieces shall be of RED and WHITE colours for the dark and light pieces, respectively. These are sometimes referred to as “Black” and White” in the games’ literature. The pieces shall be a cylindrical shape of a uniform diameter, measuring not less than 3 centimetres nor more than 4 centimetres They shall be of a uniform design with a height / thickness of not less than 5mm (3/16 inches) nor more than 9mm (3/8 inches).
- 1.10 If other light and dark coloured pieces and board are used the colours of the men must make a distinct contrast with the colour of the squares of the board.
- 1.11 The Red pieces shall be set for beginning play on the first 12 squares of the player playing the Red pieces starting right to left, Nos. 1 thru 12. The White pieces will be on the last 12 squares, Nos. 21 thru 32, with No.32 being the nearest double corner square.



#### ORDER OF PLAY

- 1.12 To start the first game the players decide by random selection (i) which colour they will play. In subsequent games the players alternate colours.
- 1.13 The first move in each game is made by the player with the Red men; thereafter the moves are made by each player in turn (ii).

#### THE MOVES

- 1.14 There are fundamentally 4 types of move: the ordinary move of a man, the ordinary move of a king, the capturing move of a man and the capturing move of a king.

#### Ordinary Move Of A Man

1.15 An ordinary move of a man is its transfer diagonally forward left or right from one square to an immediately neighbouring vacant square. (Also see Rule 1.18)

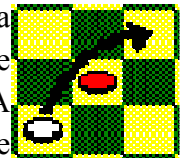
1.16 When a man reaches the farthest row forward (known as the “king-row” or “crown-head”) it becomes a king, and this completes the turn of play. The man can be crowned by either player (iii) by placing a man of the same colour on top of it before the next move is made. (It may be necessary to borrow from another set if no captured man is available for the purpose).

#### Ordinary Move Of A King

1.17 An ordinary move of a king (crowned man) is from one square diagonally forward or backward, left or right, to an immediately neighbouring vacant square.

#### Capturing Move Of A Man

1.18 A capturing move of a man is its transfer from one square over a diagonally adjacent and forward square occupied by an opponent's piece (man or king) and on to a vacant square immediately beyond it. A capturing move is called a "jump". On completion of the jump the captured piece is removed from the board.



#### Capturing In General

1.19 If a jump creates an immediate further capturing opportunity, then the capturing move of the piece (man or king) is continued until all the jumps are completed. The only exception is that if a man reaches the king-row by means of a capturing move it then becomes a king but may not make any further jumps until their opponent has moved. At the end of the capturing sequence, all captured pieces are removed from the board.



1.20 All capturing moves are compulsory, whether offered actively or passively. If there are two or more ways to jump, a player may select any one that they wish, not necessarily that which gains the most pieces. Once started, a multiple jump must be carried through to completion. A man can only be jumped once during a multiple jumping sequence.

#### Capturing Move Of A King

1.21 A capturing move of a king is similar to that of a man, but may be in a forward or backward direction.

### Touching The Pieces

- 1.22 Either player, on intimating their intention to their opponent, is entitled to adjust their own or their opponent's pieces properly on their squares at any time during the course of the game.
- 1.23 If a player on their turn to move touches a piece they must play that piece, unless they have given an adjustment warning. If the piece is not legally playable, rule 1.25.2 applies.
- 1.24 If any part of a playable piece is played over a corner of the square on which it is stationed, the move must be completed in that direction.

### FALSE, IMPROPER OR ILLEGAL MOVES

- 1.25 A player making a false, improper or illegal move shall be cautioned for the first offence, and the move recalled. They shall forfeit the game for any subsequent false, improper or illegal move made in that game. This applies, for example, if a player:
- 1.25.1 Omits to capture or to complete a multiple capture.
  - 1.25.2 On their turn to play touches an unplayable piece.
  - 1.25.3 Moves a piece, either in an ordinary move or in a capturing move, on to a wrong square.
  - 1.25.4 Moves an uncrowned man backwards.
  - 1.25.5 When capturing, inadvertently removes one or more of their own or their opponent's pieces not in a position to be captured by that move.
  - 1.25.6 Adds one or more of their own pieces to the board.
  - 1.25.7 Continues a capturing move through the king-row with a man not already crowned.
  - 1.25.8 Moves a piece when it is not their turn to play.
- 1.26 An illegal move is condoned by the opponent moving a piece at their next turn.

- 1.27 If any of the pieces are accidentally displaced by the players or through any cause outside their control, the pieces are replaced without penalty and the game is continued.
- 1.28 A player who refuses to adhere to the rules shall immediately forfeit the game.

#### RESULT OF THE GAME

- 1.29 There are only two possible states to define: the win and the draw.

#### Definition of a Win

- 1.30 The game is won by the player who can make the last move; that is, no move is available to the opponent on their turn to play, either because all their pieces have been captured or their remaining pieces are all blocked.
- 1.31 A player also wins if their opponent:
- Resigns (iv) at any point.
  - Forfeits the game.
  - Fails to reach the time control when using clocks.

#### Definition of a Draw

- 1.32 The game is drawn if at any stage both players agree on such a result (v). A game shall also be declared drawn where:
- 1.32.1 At any stage of the game, a player can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the referee that with their next move they would create the same position for the third time during the game.
- 1.32.2 At any stage of the game, a player can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the referee that both the following conditions hold:
- a) Neither player has advanced an uncrowned man towards the king-row during their own previous 40 moves.
  - b) No pieces have been removed from the board during their own previous 40 moves.

Notes:

- <sup>i</sup> Traditionally there have been two methods used for random selection. The first method entails the “toss of a coin” where the person winning the toss may select the colour they wish to use in the 1<sup>st</sup> game. The second method entails one player taking a playing piece of each colour and placing them, one in each closed hand, behind their back. The player then brings these hands forwards and offers their opponent the choice of either hand. The hand selected will contain the colour of that player’s pieces in their first game.
- <sup>ii</sup> If an opening is balloted from a recognised set of ballot cards (e.g. 3 move ballot) then these moves shall form the opening sequence of moves in the game. The game is then continued by the player whose turn it is to move following the balloted sequence of moves.
- <sup>iii</sup> Traditionally the piece is crowned by the player whose king-row has been entered.
- <sup>iv</sup> Resigning is usually indicated by saying “I resign” and/or stopping the clock.
- <sup>v</sup> Offering an opponent a draw is usually done by saying “draw?” or “do you agree to a draw?”

---

**Section Two. Rules for the use of clocks.**

Equipment and terminology:

`Draughts Clock` means a clock with two time displays, connected to each other in such a way that only one of them can run at any one time. When a player presses the button above the clock on their own side it will start their opponent's clock on the opposite side. This action is known as "pressing their clock".

While these rules make reference to the use of manual clocks, they include the use of digital clocks.

`Clock` in the Rules of Draughts means one of the two time displays.

`Flag fall` means the expiration of the allotted time for a player.

**Using a clock:**

- 2.1 Before the start of the game the tournament controller decides where the draughts clock will be placed.
- 2.2 All clocks should be wound up prior to play commencing. Each clock face should register the same time.
- 2.3 At the start of each session the referee shall start each clock in turn, irrespective of whether one or both players are missing.
- 2.4 During the game each player, having made their move on the draughtsboard, shall press their own clock and thus start their opponent's clock. A player must always be allowed to press their own clock having made their move.
- 2.5 A player's move is not considered to have been completed until they have pressed their clock.
- 2.6 The time taken between making the move on the draughtsboard and pressing their clock and thus starting their opponent's clock is regarded as part of the time allotted to the player.
- 2.7 Each player shall be entirely responsible for pressing their own clock after their move and keeping a check on the number of moves made. Should they fail to do so, no warning, particularly by a third party, should be given.
- 2.8 A player may press their clock with either hand. However, it is forbidden for a player to keep their finger on the button or to `hover` over it.
- 2.9 The players must handle the draughts clock properly. It is forbidden to punch it forcibly, to pick it up or to knock it over. Where improper clock handling occurs, the



---

player shall be cautioned for the first offence, and shall forfeit the game for any subsequent offence.

- 2.10 Every indication given by the clocks is considered to be conclusive in the absence of any evident defect.
- 2.11 A draughts clock with an evident defect shall be replaced. The tournament director shall replace the clock and use their best judgement when determining the times to be shown on the replacement draughts clock.
- 2.12 If both flags have fallen and it is impossible to establish which flag fell first, then the game shall continue under normal conditions.
- 2.13 Players shall not be allowed to walk away from the board during the game, other than to go to the toilet or smoking break. In this instance the clocks shall be kept running.
- 2.14 Where a player is deemed to be unable to use the clock, an assistant, who is acceptable to the tournament controller, may be provided by the player to perform this operation on their behalf.

**Time Controls:**

- 2.15 When using a draughts clock, each player must make a minimum number of moves or all moves in an allotted period of time. A small "flag" on the clock face, which rises during the last few minutes of a game and falls "on the hour", denotes the time control. All time controls must be specified in advance. The following time controls are used for tournament play:
- a) First Time \_\_\_ Control: 30 moves per hour for the first hour.
  - b) Second Time Control: 15 moves per ½ hour for each succeeding ½ hour. (See Byelaws 5.7.2)
- 2.16 At the end of the first time control, the player playing the White pieces shall reset both clocks by 30 minutes. They shall repeat this action at each subsequent time control.
- 2.17 The time saved by a player during one period is added to their time available for the next period.
- 2.18 Each time display has a `flag`. Immediately after a flag falls, the requirements of Article 2.15 must be checked.
- 2.19 A flag is considered to have fallen when the Tournament Director observes the fact or when either player has made a valid claim to that effect.

- 
- 2.20 If a player does not complete the prescribed number of moves in the allotted time, the game is lost by that player regardless of the position on the board.

**Absent players:**

- 2.21 If a player is not present at the start of a session, their opponent, in consultation with the tournament controller shall start their clock in their absence.
- 2.22 The player whose turn it is to play shall have their clock started at the beginning of the game.
- 2.23 If a player arrives before an hour has elapsed, they may play the game, but with the reduced time available to them.
- 2.24 If a player arrives after their flag has fallen they shall forfeit that game. Where a player arrives after their flag has fallen for a second time (i.e. 2 hours late) they shall forfeit both games.
- 2.25 Where both players are absent then two clocks should be started, one for each player. Where both players remain absent for a game (1 hour) they shall both receive zero points for that game.

**Interrupting clocks.**

- 2.26 If a game needs to be interrupted, only the tournament controller shall have the power to stop the clocks (both clock faces).
- 2.27 A player must seek the tournament controller's assistance where a problem arises, e.g. when the draughtsboard and pieces have been disrupted or when a required piece is not available.
- 2.28 If the tournament controller stops the clocks to deal with an issue, then the tournament controller shall decide when the game is to be restarted again.

**Quickplay Finish**

A `quickplay finish` is the phase of a game, when all the (remaining) moves must be made in a limited time.

- 2.29 If nearing the end of a game (with time remaining) a player feels that the position in their game is even, and has offered a drawn result to their opponent and the offer is refused, the player has the power to ask the tournament controller to intervene. If the tournament controller feels that the position is even, with little

winning chances to either player with reasonable care, the tournament controller has the power to declare the game drawn. However, if the tournament controller feels that there is an advantage to the requesting player's opponent, then the tournament controller shall allow the game to be continued to a conclusion.

**Section Three: Recording of games:**

- 3.1 A “score-sheet” is a sheet of paper that is prescribed for the recording of a game of draughts in a competition, and is the property of the organiser of the event.
- 3.2 Each player shall be furnished with a score sheet for every scheduled game.
- 3.3 All players are obliged to record each game played.
- 3.4 In the course of play each player is required to record their own moves and those of their opponent, in the correct manner, move for move, as clearly and legibly as possible on the score sheet prescribed for the competition.
- 3.5 A player may reply to their opponent’s move before recording it, but they must record their own previous move before making another.
- 3.6 The score-sheet shall be placed on the table in such a way that it is visible to the referee throughout the game.
- 3.7 If a player wishes to verify their record of a game by comparing it with that of their opponent, they must inform the tournament controller and if allowed, do it in their own playing time.
- 3.8 Both players must record the offer of a draw on the score-sheet. (See also 4.7)
- 3.9 At the conclusion of each round each player shall hand the referee a signed copy of each game played that indicates the result of the game. Each score sheet must be signed by both players.
- 3.10 Any player who fails to hand in a complete signed copy of their games at the conclusion of a round shall receive zero points for that round.
- 3.11 If a player is unable to keep score by reason of a medical condition, an assistant, who is acceptable to the referee, may be provided by that player to write down their moves. Their clock shall be adjusted by the referee in an equitable way.

Time Shortage:

- 3.12 A player is said to be in time shortage when they have 5 minutes or less before their flag falls.
- 3.13 Any player in time shortage is not obliged to continue recording every move made in the game during this phase, but instead must place a tick on their score-sheet after every move is made until one flag has fallen. Immediately after one flag has fallen the player must update their score-sheet completely using standard notation before moving another piece.
- 3.14 If both players are in time shortage the tournament referee or an assistant should try to be present and keep a record of the moves made. In this case, immediately after one flag has fallen, the tournament controller shall stop the clocks. Then both players shall update their score-sheets, using the referees or the opponent's score-sheet.

## **Section Four: The Conduct of Players**

- 4.1 The players shall take no action that will bring the game into disrepute.
- 4.2 Players must be seated at their designated playing table prior to the starting time for that round.
- 4.3 In the spirit of friendship players shall shake the hand of their opponent prior to the commencement of a round.
- 4.4 A player has the right to call on the tournament controller to rule upon a point of law (rules of the game), procedure, or conduct. The tournament controller must first establish the facts without disturbing other games. An extended discussion between the players and tournament controller is inappropriate in the playing area and another area may be used for this purpose. (See 2.27-2.29)
- 4.5 A player is forbidden to leave their board when it is their turn to move, without the permission of the tournament controller.(Also see 2.13)
- 4.6 Players are not permitted to walk / stand around the playing area to view other games that are in progress. Players who have finished their games shall be considered to be spectators.
- 4.7 A player wishing to offer a draw shall do so after having made their own move. No conditions can be attached to the offer. The offer once made cannot be withdrawn and remains valid until their opponent accepts it, rejects it orally, or rejects it by moving one of their own pieces, thus continuing the game. The offer of a draw shall be noted by each player on their score-sheet by a symbol. If the first offer is declined it is improper to offer another draw unless your opponent has since offered a draw or the position has changed substantially. (Also see 4.9)
- 4.8 Players are forbidden to make use of any notes, sources of information, advice, or analyse on another board.

- 4.9 Players are forbidden to distract or annoy their opponent in any manner, such as making any sounds or signs, pointing or hovering over the board. This includes unreasonable claims or repeated offers of a draw.
- 4.10 During the course of a game a player is forbidden from addressing any other person, with the exception of the tournament controller.
- 4.11 The score-sheet shall be used only for recording the moves, the times of the clocks, the offers of a draw, and other relevant data.
- 4.12 Players are not allowed to leave the `playing venue` without permission from the tournament controller. The playing venue is defined as the playing area, rest rooms, refreshment area, area set aside for smoking and other places as designated by the tournament controller.
- 4.13 Collusion to fix or throw games, whether before or during the game, in order to manipulate prize money, title norms, ratings, or any other purpose is illegal and may result in severe sanctions, including being banned from participation in future events.
- 4.14 A player who has lost a game must stop their clock immediately. It is rude and unsportsmanlike to abandon a lost position without resigning.
- 4.15 Players are forbidden to analyse a finished game in the playing area.
- 4.16 It is strictly forbidden to bring mobile phones or other electronic means of communication, not authorised by the tournament controller, into the playing venue. If a player's mobile phone rings in the playing venue during play, that player shall lose the game in progress.
- 4.17 Persistent refusal by a player to comply with the rules shall be penalised by loss of the game.

## **Section Five: The Conduct of Spectators**

- 5.1 Spectators have no special privileges and must adhere to the instructions of the tournament controller at all times.
- 5.2 Spectators may be confined to a certain area of the playing venue (spectators' area) on the instructions of the tournament controller.
- 5.3 Spectators must maintain a complete silence while there is any play ongoing.
- 5.4 Spectators shall not interfere with play or in any way annoy or distract the players. This includes pointing out that it is a certain player's turn to move, time management issues, flag falls, etc.
- 5.5 Spectators may point out irregularities to the tournament controller in a manner neither heard or noticed by the players, but have no right to make claims of any kind on behalf of players.
- 5.6 Spectators shall not engage in conversation with the players in the interval between the first and second games of a round.
- 5.7 Spectators shall not analyse ongoing games by using draughts boards, or electronic devices, without the permission of the referee.
- 5.8 It is strictly forbidden to bring mobile phones or any other electronic devices means of communication, not authorised by the tournament controller, into the playing venue.
- 5.9 Persistent refusal by a spectator to comply with a direction given by the tournament controller shall result in their expulsion from the playing venue.



**Section Six: The Role of the Tournament Controller:**

- 6.1 The tournament controller shall see that the rules are strictly observed, and is bound by the official Rules of Draughts, procedures and policies.
- 6.2 The tournament controller shall act in the best interest of the competition. They should ensure that the equipment being used is of a sufficient quality, that a good playing environment is maintained, and that the players are not disturbed.
- 6.3 The tournament controller has the power to appoint assistants as required to help in the performance of his or her duties, to accept and list entries, to familiarise players with the playing facility and tournament conditions, to prepare pairings, display wall charts, rule on disputes and enforce such rulings, to collect scores, report and forward tournament results and fees to the sponsoring organisation.
- 6.4 The tournament controller shall decide the seating arrangements for the players, allocating seats, tables, etc. (See 2.1)
- 6.5 The tournament controller shall oversee the ballot of openings (if used) and ensure that all clocks are started at the time specified for the commencement of that round. (See 2.3)
- 6.6 The tournament controller shall supervise the progress of the competition.
- 6.7 The tournament controller shall observe the games, especially when the players are short of time, enforce decisions made and impose penalties on players where appropriate. (See 2.19)
- 6.8 The tournament controller must not intervene in a game except in cases described by the Rules of Draughts. The tournament controller shall refrain from informing a player that their opponent has completed a move or that the player has not pressed their clock. (See 2.7 & 2.19)
- 6.9 Where a breach of the rules takes place by a player or spectator the tournament controller shall apply one of the following penalties (a) warning, (b) declaring the game to be lost, (c) disqualification from the competition, (d) expulsion from the event. The tournament controller may use their discretion where they believe the violation was unintentional.

---

## Section Seven: Miscellaneous

### 7.1 Appeals Committee:

Where a player expresses the wish to appeal the decision of a tournament controller, the tournament controller shall appoint an appeals committee to hear the appeal. The appeals committee should consist of at least three persons who have tournament controller experience of major events. To ensure impartiality they should not be related to, or involved with, any of the players concerned. Such an appeal should be heard in private, and witnesses may be called, but only to answer questions from the parties involved. The committee must give pre-eminent weight to the tournament controller's testimony as to anything said or done in his or her presence. The decision of the appeals committee shall be communicated to the parties involved as soon as possible. The function of an appeals committee is not to substitute its judgement for that of the tournament controller, but rather to overrule the tournament controller only if it is clear that the latter's ruling is incorrect.

### 7.2 Rules Committee:

The WCDF shall maintain a rules committee to review questions pertaining to the rules of play. In doubt as to the application or interpretation of these rules, the WCDF Rules Committee will examine the case in point and render an official decision.