

Basics and object of the game

Draughts (British English) or checkers (American English) is really a whole group of strategy board games for two players which involve diagonal moves of uniform game pieces and mandatory captures by jumping over opponent pieces. Draughts developed from the Spanish alquerque, in turn derived from the Arabic al-qirq.

The most popular forms are English draughts or American checkers, played on an 8×8 checkerboard, but countless other versions and variants exist.

Rules

Draughts is played by two opponents, on opposite sides of the gameboard. One player has the dark pieces; the other has the light pieces. Players alternate turns. A player may not move an opponent's piece. A move consists of moving a piece diagonally to an adjacent unoccupied square. If the adjacent square contains an opponent's piece, and the square immediately beyond it is vacant, the piece may be captured (and removed from the game) by jumping over it.

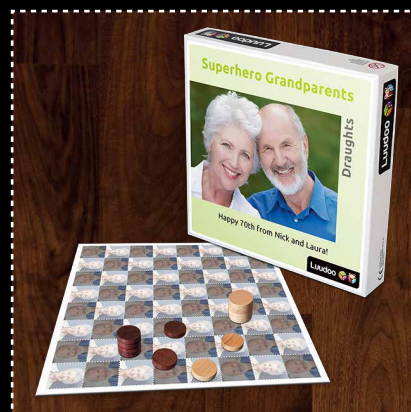
Only the dark squares of the checkered board are used. A piece may move only diagonally into an unoccupied square. When presented, capturing is mandatory in most official rules, although some rule variations make capturing optional. In almost all variants, the player without pieces remaining, or who cannot move due to being blocked, loses the game.

Men

Uncrowned pieces (men) move one step diagonally forwards, and capture an opponent's piece by moving two consecutive steps in the same line, jumping over the piece on the first step. Multiple enemy pieces can be captured in a single turn provided this is done by successive jumps made by a single piece; the jumps do not need to be in the same line and may „zigzag“ (change diagonal direction). In English draughts men can jump only forwards; in international draughts and Russian draughts men can jump both forwards and backwards.

Kings

When a man reaches the kings row (also called crownhead, the farthest row forward), it becomes a king, and is marked by placing an additional piece on top of the first man (crowned), and acquires additional powers including the ability to move backwards and (in variants where they cannot already do so) capture backwards. Like men, a king can make successive



jumps in a single turn provided that each jump captures an enemy man or king.

In international draughts, kings (also called flying kings) move any distance along unblocked diagonals, and may capture an opposing man any distance away by jumping to any of the unoccupied squares immediately beyond it. Because jumped pieces remain on the board until the turn is complete, it is possible to reach a position in a multi-jump move where the flying king is blocked from capturing further by a piece already jumped.

Flying kings are not used in English draughts; a king's only advantage over a man is the ability to move and capture backwards as well as forwards.