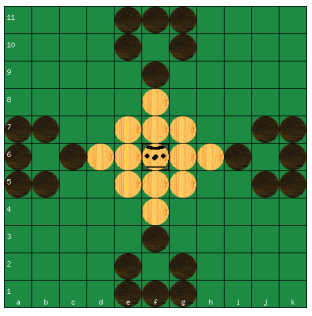
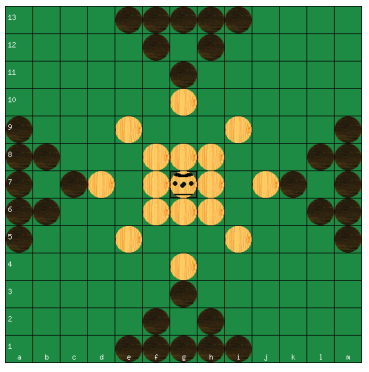
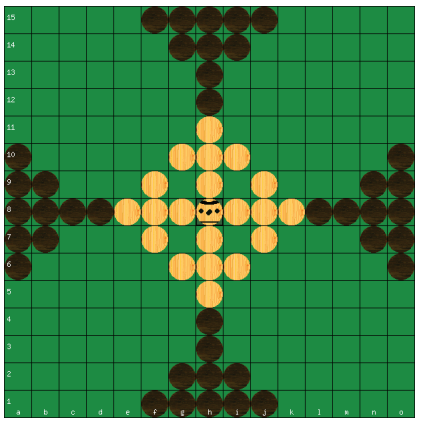
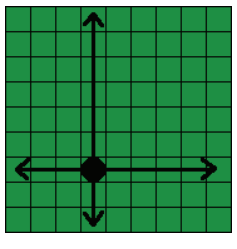
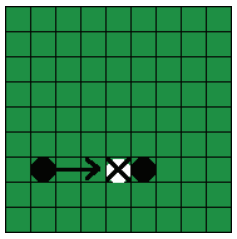
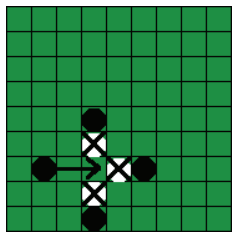





Historical Hnefatafl - Rules

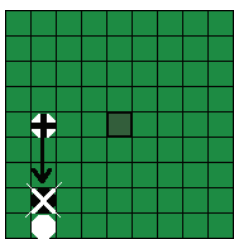
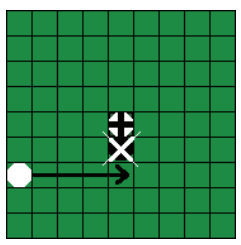
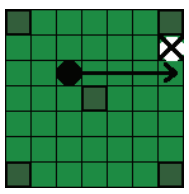
Board size and set up varies, 7x7, 9x9, 11x11, 13x13 or 15x15 squares.

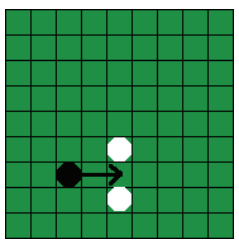
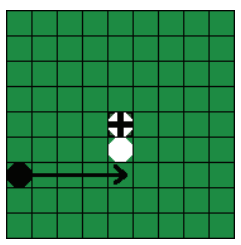


Moving a piece.

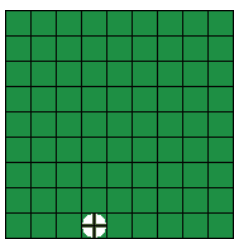



Capture of pieces.

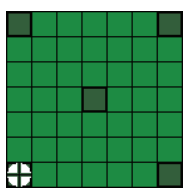




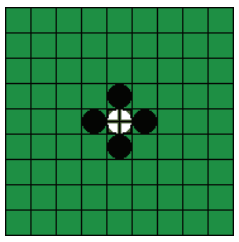
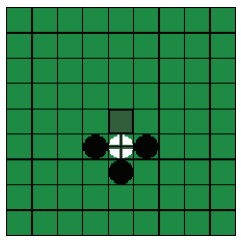
The piece is not captured.



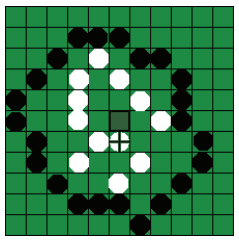
The king's side wins.



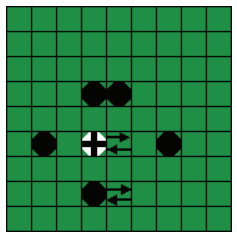
The king's side wins Brandubh 7x7.

The king is captured.



The attackers win by encircling all defenders.



Perpetual repetition - the king must find another move. If he can't or won't, he loses.

Objective

The dark pieces lay seige, their goal, to capture the king. The light pieces must break the seige and get their king to safety.

1. Two players, the king's side vs attackers. There are twice as many attackers as defenders.

2. The attackers' side moves first, the players then take turns.

3. All pieces move any number of vacant squares along a row or a column, just like a rook in chess.

4. Capture

All pieces except the king are captured if sandwiched between two enemy pieces, or between an enemy piece and a restricted square. The two enemy pieces should be on the square above and below or on the squares left and right of the attacked piece, i.e. not diagonally.

A piece is only captured if the trap is closed by the agressor's move, it is therefore permitted to move in between two enemy pieces.

5a. Restricted squares

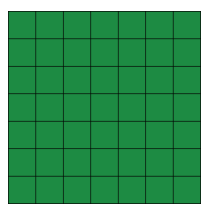
Restricted squares may only be occupied by the king. The central restricted square is called the throne. It is allowed for the king to re-enter the throne, and all pieces may pass through the throne when it is empty.

Restricted squares are hostile, which means they can replace one of the two pieces taking part in a capture. The throne is always hostile to the attackers, but only hostile to the defenders when it is empty. The board edge is NOT hostile.

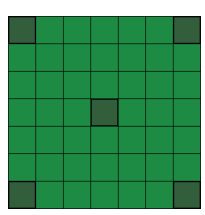
5b. On the 7x7 board:

Ard Ri: No throne square, i.e. there are no restricted squares on the board.

Brandubh: The four corner squares are also restricted and hostile, just like the throne.



Ard Ri



Brandubh

6a. King's side win:

If the king reaches the edge the king has escaped and his side wins.

6b. Brandubh - King's side win:
If the king reaches any corner square, the king has escaped and his side wins.

7a. Attackers win:

The attackers win if they can capture the king.

The king is captured like all other pieces, except when he is on or next to the throne.

On the throne, the attackers must surround him on all four cardinal points.

If on a square next to the throne, the attackers must occupy the three remaining squares around him.

7b. If the attackers surround the king and ALL remaining defenders, then they win, as they have prevented the king from escaping.

8. **Perpetual repetitions** are forbidden. A player who agressively maintains a board repetition must find another move to break the repetition, or lose the game.

e.g. A player attacks by continually side stepping with a piece in order to find an open path to break through. The opponent continually brings his piece in line with the aggressive piece to block the open path. The "aggressive player" is the one who has some choice in whether to repeat the pattern or not.

If a board position is repeated for the third time, "the aggressive player" loses the game.

9. If a player cannot move, he loses the game.

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