

Draughts for 4 - Rules of play

Object of the game

The object of the game is to eliminate all the counters of your opponent(s).

Draughts board & counters

Draughts for 4 has a square board with 169 squares and 15 counters each of red, yellow, green and blue. The game is played on the 85 numbered dark squares. The dark squares with coloured edges mark the opening positions of counters in the same colour. The coloured lines at the edge of the board are the "crown lines", where counters in the same colour as the line can be crowned King.

Number of players & playing methods

Below are six different games, with the opening layouts and directions of play explained.

4 players: individual game

Red, green, blue and yellow play against each other; each of the four players starting with 15 counters.

4 players: joint game

Red and yellow play together, against blue and green; each of the four players starting with 15 counters. Three players can also form a team and work together to defeat the fourth player.

3 players: individual game

Red, green and blue play against each other; each of the three players starting with 15 counters. As red will meet resistance from both sides, his crown line is the red dotted line, which is closer. The 9 squares behind this line are out of bounds for all players.

3 players: joint game

Red and green play together against blue; each of the three players starting with 15 counters.

2 players: normal game

Green and blue play against each other, each starting with 14 counters (one less than usual). The yellow and red starting squares are out of bounds for both players.

2 players: diagonal game

Player 1 (yellow & blue) plays against player 2 (green & red); each starting with 30 counters (15 of each colour). Please note: since the board is turned, you can now move in three directions: left, right and straight ahead.

The game begins

Each player places the correct number of counters in their colours on the board. The youngest player makes the first move, followed by the others in clockwise direction.

Moves

For each move, players are allowed to move one counter forward to the first dark square diagonally ahead to the left or right.

Strikes

When your counter lands next to an opponent's counter and the square behind it is empty, you are obliged to strike. This means your counter jumps over that of your opponent, which is then removed from the board. Strikes can be made diagonally in all four directions. Counters of the same colour, and belonging to the same team in a "joint game", or to the same player in a "diagonal game", cannot strike each other.

Multiple strike

If the counter ends up in a square from which you can make another strike, you have to make that strike during the same move! This is called a "multiple strike". In a multiple strike, you are allowed to change direction; if several different moves are possible, you must always choose the path that allows you to perform the most strikes. In a game of 3 or 4 individual players, you are allowed to strike counters of different opponents as part of the same multiple strike. In a "joint game" you cannot strike the counters of your team partner, but you must jump over them in a strike, or multiple strike, of counters belonging to your opponent(s). After this type of strike, the counters of your team mate remain on the board.

Crowning

When your counter reaches the far edge, arriving at your "crown line" (the five dark squares along the line in your colour), your counter is crowned King and one of your eliminated counters should be placed on top of it. The two counters together are called a "King". Please note that if you reach the crown line during a multiple strike without ending up on it (because you have to capture more pieces), your counter cannot be "crowned"!

Moving and capturing with a King

A King moves differently from an ordinary counter:

- It can go backwards as well as forwards.
- It can be moved across more than one square in a straight diagonal line.
- It can also capture counters by moving across more than one square. It means that a King can capture any opponent's counter in a diagonal line, as long as it has a free square behind it. If the opponent's counter has more than one free square behind it, you can choose where you put down the King. If this enables you to do a multiple strike, you must do so.

End of the game

Any player has lost when he or she has no counters left, or is unable to move because all of his or her counters are blocked by an opponent. The last remaining player is the winner. In draughts, it is also possible to end on a draw. In a draw, each of the players is left with just one counter or King. A draw is also called when a player with only one counter or King manages to remain in the game for more than five moves against players with more counters or Kings.

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