

# ♞ Knights Chess – Baseline Rules (vo.2, 2025-12-17)



Black: King d5, Queens d8 & e8, Knights a8, b8, c8, f8, g8, h8, Pawns a7–h7  
White: King e4, Queens d1 & e1, Knights a1, b1, c1, f1, g1, h1, Pawns a2–h2

## Starting Configuration

The board is set up as in standard chess except:

- Each side replaces its two bishops and two rooks with knights.
- Each side has two queens.

Each player therefore begins with:

- 1 king
- 2 queens
- 6 knights
- 8 pawns

Due to this configuration, both kings begin the game in check.

This condition is intentional and legal under the Opening Instability Rule.

## Opening Instability Rule

At the start of the game, normal check and checkmate rules are suspended.

Players may elect to:

- Move into check
- Remain in check
- Ignore all check-related constraints

No captures are permitted on either player's first move.

Both kings begin adjacent to one another (e4 and d5), a configuration illegal under standard chess rules. From the moment the first capture is completed, all standard check and checkmate rules apply immediately and fully. (Castling is not permitted as there are no castles.)

The capturing move must itself be legal regardless of check status prior to capture.

## Objective

The game ends immediately when any one of the following three victory conditions is met:

1. Checkmate of the opposing king (standard chess rules).
2. Capture of both of the opponent's queens.
3. Capture of all six of the opponent's knights.

## Turn Order

Black moves first.

Normal alternating turns apply throughout the game.

## Pawn Promotion

Pawns may promote only to knights.

Promotion to queens, rooks, or bishops is not allowed, even if queens have been captured.

## Stalemate

If a player is stalemated:

The player with more remaining knights immediately wins.

If both players have the same number of knights:

The stalemated player passes.

Play resumes until a legal move becomes available or a victory condition is met<sup>1</sup>.

Each stalemated player may pass on consecutive turns if no legal move becomes available, in which case play may continue indefinitely — presumably the conversation is thus sufficient to sustain interest in maintaining the ongoing game.

## Draws and Insufficient Material

Standard draw rules for insufficient material do not apply.

The game continues until one of the three victory conditions is met.

## Piece Movement

Unless explicitly modified above, all gameplay follows the standard rules of chess as defined in the FIDE Laws of Chess (World Chess Federation).

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<sup>1</sup> Stalemate-as-draw is a gentleman's agreement masquerading as a rule: it exists because chess has no principled way to determine whether a frozen position will eventually unfreeze. This is a localized instance of the halting problem. Knights Chess takes the honest position—play continues, the stalemated player passes, and the game ends only when a victory condition is actually met. We do not pretend to solve what cannot be solved.