

Zodiac Chess Official Rulebook v.1.0

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Preface

Due to the complexity of the game of Zodiac Chess, not all possible scenarios can be covered in this rulebook. Where cases are not precisely regulated, it should be possible to reach a correct outcome by studying analogous scenarios in this rule book using your own or an arbiter's judgment based on an impartial application of logic.

Object of the Game

The game of Zodiac Chess is played by two opponents who move their pieces alternately on a rectangle board called a "Zodiac Board"

The object of the game is to capture the opponent's "king" piece or move your king piece to the opposite side

If the position is such that a player cannot make a legal move, the game is drawn

Setup

Zodiac chess is played on a rectangle board consisting of 40 squares. 5 squares wide and 8 squares long, alternating in darker and lighter colors

The 5 vertical columns of squares are called 'files' and the eight horizontal rows of squares are called 'ranks'

'Up', 'down', 'left' and 'right' are irrespective of the player's viewpoint. For example: 'Up' is always a higher number rank and 'left' is always a lower number file

'Forward' and 'backward' are respective of the players view point, for example: Forward for the light player is a higher number rank, while forward for the dark player is a lower number rank, the 'opposing' side of the board is the most 'forward' rank of that player

'Friendly' refers to the piece being of the same team or side as the piece in question, while 'enemy' is the opposing team

A "game" is defined as reaching a single win/loss or draw condition being executed, a "match" is a series of games

The pieces as of version 1 are usually indicated by the following:

	light bear		dark bear
	light crane		dark crane
	light frog		dark frog
	light fungi		dark fungi
	light goat		dark goat
	light monkey		dark monkey
	light octopus		dark octopus
	light penguin		dark penguin
	light rhino		dark rhino
	light snake		dark snake
	light tree		dark tree
	light wolf		dark wolf
	light virus		dark virus

Alongside the board and game pieces as of version 1, there are 24 piece totems used to denote a king selection, a “cup” for each player to hide their king under, special effect tokens for:

‘Poison’, ‘entanglement’, ‘meadow’, ‘3 shadows’ and ‘zombification’

The tails side of a snake is used to denote that it has used its shed ability

The tails side of a goat is used to denote that it has fainted

The tails side of the frog is used to denote that it has used its ‘lily pad’

The pieces are also categorized into the following categories:

Predators: Bear and Wolf

Large: Bear, Rhino, Tree

Animal: Bear, Crane, Frog, Goat, Monkey, Octopus, Penguin, Rhino, Snake and Wolf

Climbing pieces: Bear, Crane, Frog, Fungi, Goat, Monkey, Octopus, Snake

Tiny: Virus

Rules

1 - Pregame

1.1 Timers and betting

1.1a Prior to a game, match or tournament, players may agree on; the use of a timer for the length of time each player gets for each game in total and/or a bet relating to the outcome of the game, match or tournament

1.1b If the match is held under an organized tournament with predefined timers and/or bet sizes, the players must adopt these under the rules of the current tournament

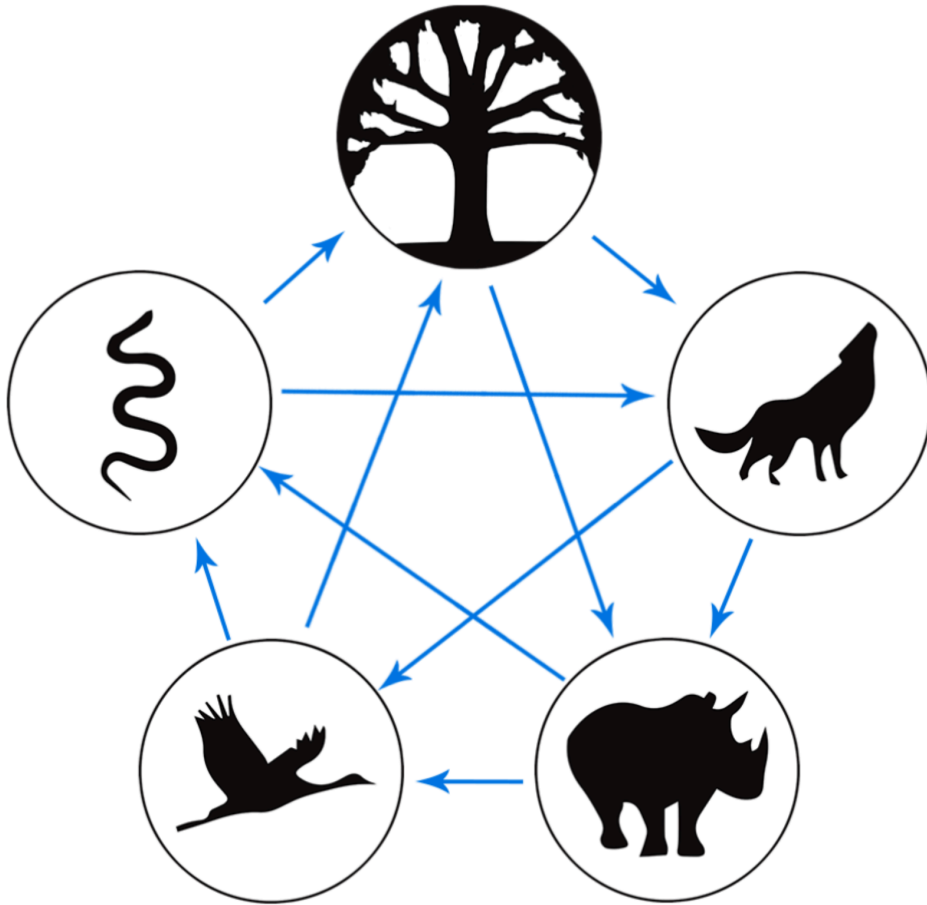
1.1c If no timer and/or bet is stipulated and agreed upon by both parties or predefined by a tournament under its rules, it can be assumed that no timer and/or bet is in play respectively

1.1d Neither player may change the timer length or bet sizing if any, after the game has begun, this is once the first dice is rolled

1.2 Minigame to start

1.2a At the beginning of the first game, a player picks from Tree, Crane, Wolf, Rhino and Snake. The game works like Rock, Paper Scissors

1.2b



Tree beats Wolf and Rhino
 Wolf beats Rhino and Crane
 Rhino beats Crane and Snake
 Crane beats Snake and Tree
 Snake beats Tree and Wolf

1.2c The player that wins the decision decides which side to play from either: “light” or “dark”, the side they do not choose is assigned to their opponent

1.2d If both players pick the same piece, they both redraw

1.2e If on a timer, if a player runs out of time, they default to picking Tree

1.2f For consecutive games within a match, the side is swapped at the end of each game without a need to replay

1.3 King selection

1.3a When sides are assigned, both players simultaneously select one piece to be their king. If the game is being played on a physical board, this is done by picking one of the totems each representing one of the game pieces and placing it hidden underneath each players cup

1.3b On a physical board, players must leave their cup alongside the board within reach of their opponent once a king is picked

1.3c A player is disqualified if they do any of the following after King selection is over:

1. Fail to put a totem under their cup
2. Place more than one totem under their cup
3. Swaps the totem under their cup

1.3d The "Virus" piece cannot be selected as king

1.3e King selection ends when your opponent places their first piece on to the board

1.3f If a player intentionally looks at their opponent's king totem under their cup, unless a disqualification occurs due to rule 4.3c, the player is disqualified

1.3g It is against the rules to tell your opponent that you are disqualified based off of rule 4.3c in an effort to get them to break rule 4.3f, doing so results in disqualification

1.4 Piece selection

1.4a Once both players have selected a king totem, each player in succession, one piece at a time, places a piece on the board, starting with light player

Or in other words, this order: L - D - L - D - L - D - L - D - L - D

1.4b The light player may only place light pieces, the dark player may only place dark pieces

1.4c The light player must place all 5 of their pieces on rank 1, the dark player must place all 5 of their pieces on rank 8. No pieces can be placed on top of each other or any empty square on their respective ranks be left empty

1.4d No piece duplicates of the same side can be played ie. 2 light bears cannot be in the same game.

1.4e Once a piece is placed on the board and the player has let go, it is final, the player cannot remove or replace the placed piece, if a player moves a piece after having let go of it, the opponent can force it to be moved back or allow the new change of position

1.4f If a player places all 5 pieces and none of them are their selected king piece, they are disqualified

1.4g If a timer is being used in a physical game, the dark player may start the light players timer once they have picked their 5th and final piece

1.4h If a penguin is chosen, it must start facing 'down' otherwise known as 'hibernating'

1.4i If a snake piece is chosen, it is placed on the board with the colorless side up, this denotes that the piece has not 'shed' its skin yet

1.4j If a rhino piece is chosen, it is placed on the board face up to show it still has a 'mega' charge

1.4k If a goat piece is chosen, it must be placed 'awake' and not 'fainted'

2 Game rules

2.1 Turns

2.1a Any movement made by one of your pieces, unless specifically mentioned, ends your turn

2.1b A player may not touch the board or its pieces while it is not their turn and may not touch or move the opponents pieces on their own turn unless by capturing them

2.1c If a player moves a piece and releases it in a legal position, they cannot take the move back, it is final, any attempt to undo a move may be shut down and forced to be reverted to the original move

2.1d A player may not make illegal moves based on the movement of each piece

2.2 Win and loss conditions

2.2a If a players timer expires the player has lost the match to 'timed out'

2.2b If a players king piece reaches the 'opposing' side of the board, that player wins

2.2c If a players king is captured that player loses, with exceptions

2.2d if both players kings are captured in the same turn, the player who captured both pieces wins

2.2e if a player audibly expresses surrender, that player loses the match

2.2f if a player is caught cheating or faces a disqualification, that player loses that match

2.3 Draw conditions

2.3a Repetition: if any exact board state is repeated 3 times, both players draw

2.3b Stalemate: if a player can make no legal move, both players draw

2.3c Agreed draw: If a player offers a draw and it is accepted, both players draw

3 Piece rules

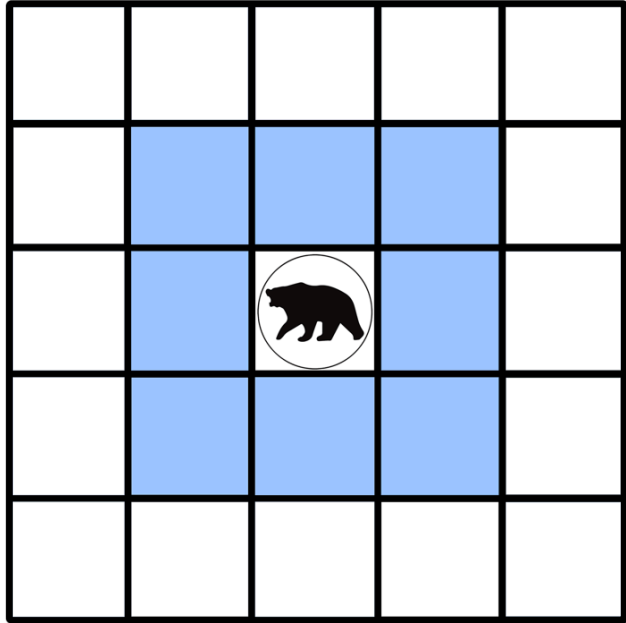
3.1 General

3.1a Unless otherwise specified all pieces:

- Can travel “through” or “past” other pieces
- Can only make one move or use one ability per turn
- Can capture any other enemy piece with any of its regular movement
- Can only capture one piece in a turn
- Can be housed in a tree
- Cannot end their turn on top of another piece
- Cannot capture pieces of their own team
- Cannot move out of the boardspace
- ‘Large’ pieces refer to the bear, rhino, tree and wolf
- ‘Predators’ refer to the bear and wolf
- ‘Animals’ refer to every piece except the fungi, tree and virus

3.2 Bear

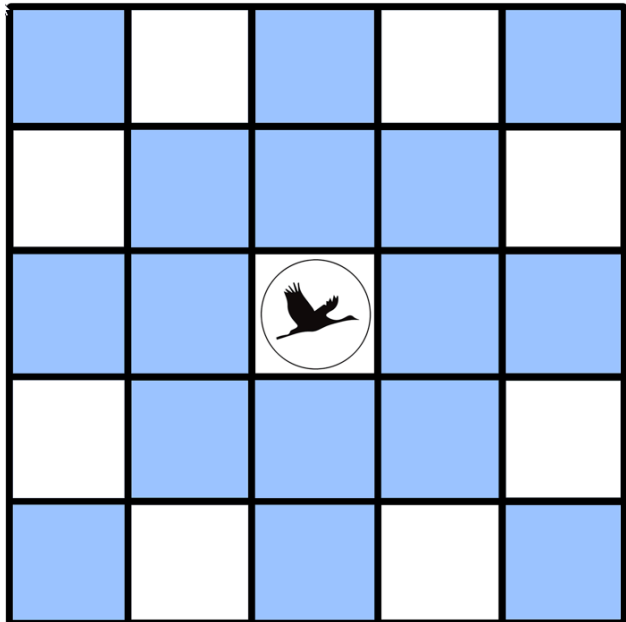
3.2a Regular movement: 1 square in any direction



3.2b Special ability - 'Savage' overrides any defensive ability of other pieces preventing them from capture ("Rhino's defence")

3.3 Crane

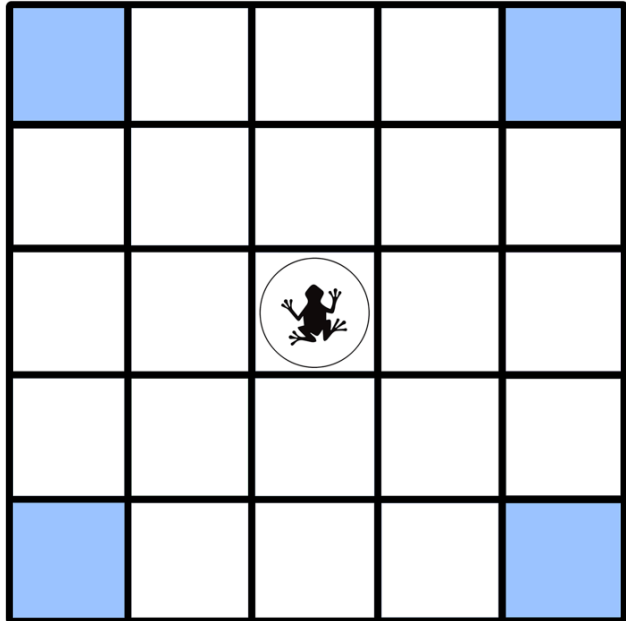
3.3a Regular movement: 1 or 2 squares in a straight line



3.3b Cannot capture any large creatures - bear, rhino, tree or wolf piece

3.4 Frog

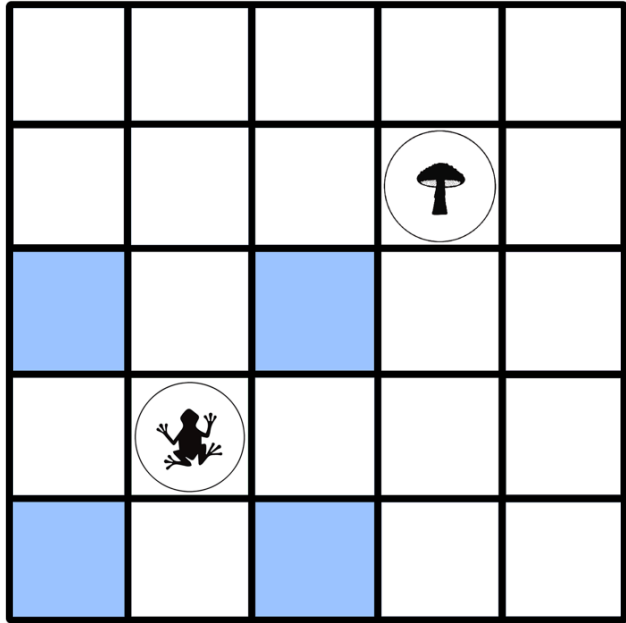
3.4a Regular movement: 2 squares, only diagonally in a straight line



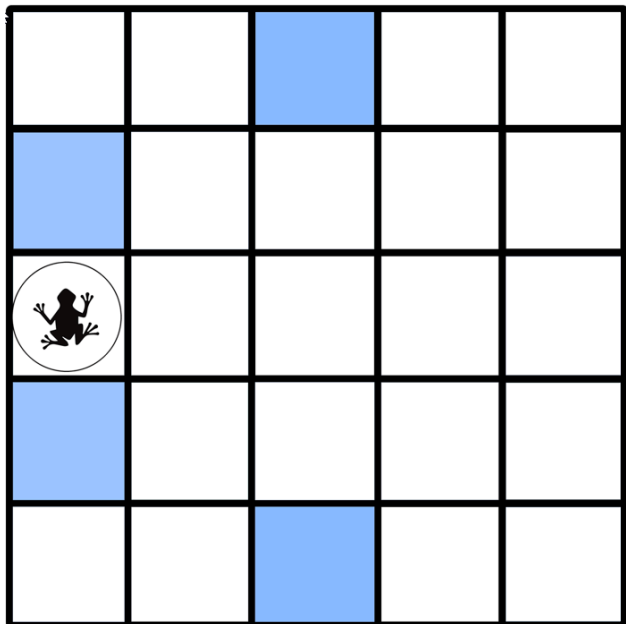
3.4b Regular movement can be impeded by:

- The edge of the board
- A friendly piece is occupying that square

In either of those cases the frog may move 1 square diagonally instead unless it is also occupied by a friendly piece



3.4c Extra movement If a frog is in contact with a side wall (file 1 or 5) it may move 1 rank up or down



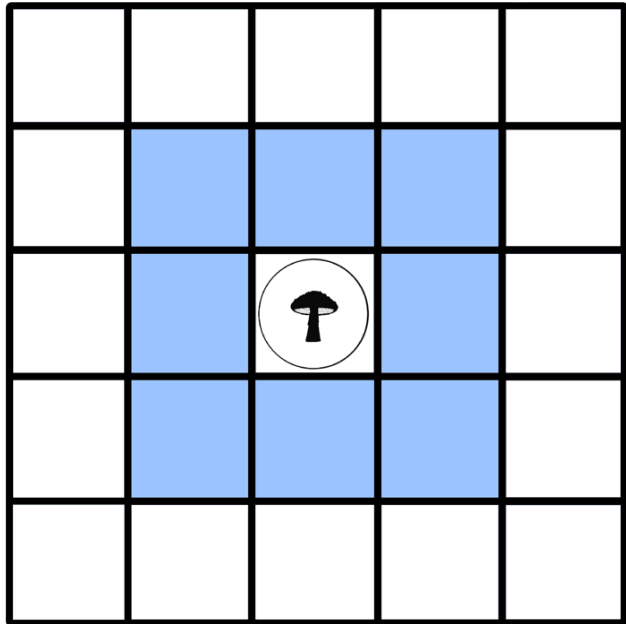
3.4d Special ability: “Lilypad” If the frog has not moved yet in the game, it may move to any square in the first 3 ranks from your side of the board (rank 1,2 or 3 for light player and rank 8,7 or 6 for dark player) including capturing any piece it could regularly capture, lilypad cannot

- Capture a rhino from “the front” or in other words, at any rank other than its own
- Capture a tree unless it is a regular movement, in other words it begins riding the tree if it is not a legal regular movement

3.4e Special ability: “Poison” The frog once captured can poison any animal pieces. Poisoning a piece makes it unable to move on the players next turn. On a physical board an effect token is placed on top of the poisoned piece until the opponent completes their next turn

3.5 Fungi

3.5a Regular movement: 1 square in any direction



3.5b Special ability: “Meadow” Prevents an enemy tree from moving to within 1 square of the fungi plus an enemy tree within 1 square range of an fungi may not move, otherwise known as ‘meadowed’

3.5c Special ability “Zombify” An ‘animal’ piece that captures the fungi becomes ‘zombified’ for 1 turn. The zombified piece can be used as if it were the player's regular piece; after the turn ends, the piece returns to its normal state regardless of whether it was used

3.5d Any piece ‘zombified’ by a fungi, is effectively swapped teams, this means:

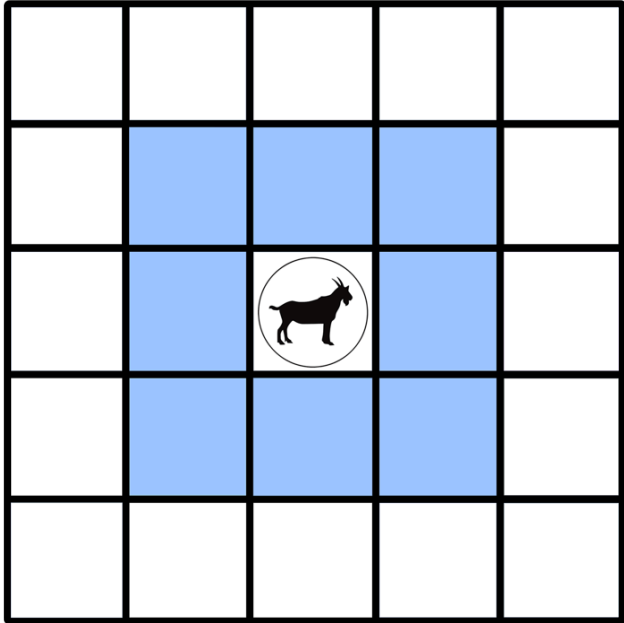
- A zombified snake can strike in the opposite direction
- A zombified rhino can charge in the opposite direction and can use its ‘megacharge’ if it has not been used
- A zombified penguin reverses its turn order, rotating first and moving second

3.5e The ‘zombified’ piece counts as the fungi for the turn it is zombified for, so if it crosses the board and the fungi was your king piece, it counts as a king race victory

3.5f The fungi upon capturing a piece that is infected by a virus, also captures the virus piece and removes it from the board

3.6 Goat

3.6a Regular movement: Moves 1 in any direction

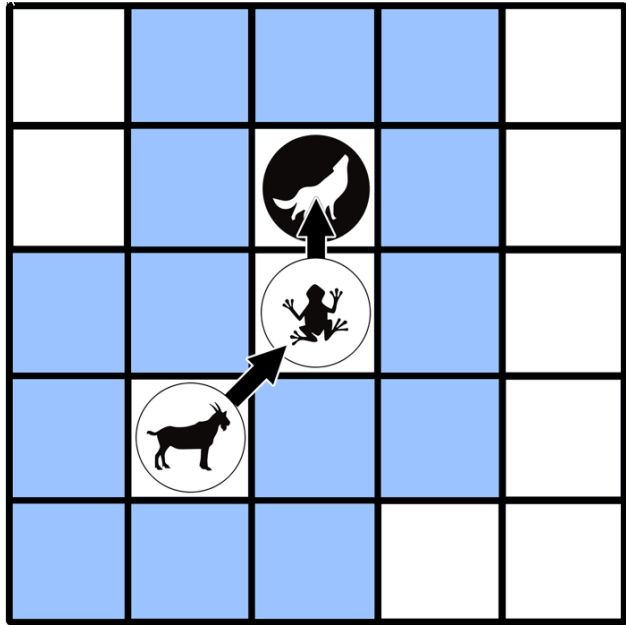


3.6b Extra movement “Traverse”, if a goat is next to another piece it may:

- ‘Traverse’ to any adjoining square of any adjoining piece to itself
- Or to any piece adjoining any other adjoining piece in the chain

So long as:

- A tiny piece, faded goat or octopus shadow is not included in the traverse
- No pieces are captured
- The goat finishes the traverse in an empty square, faded goat or in any tree and not in a faded position



3.6b Special ability: “Faint” the goat piece token flips over to ‘fainted’ position so long as the goat is not in a tree. Upon doing so it removes any status effects including poison, entanglement and infection. If it flips while infected, the virus token sits atop of ‘fainted’ goat and is no longer ‘infecting’ the goat

3.6c A Goat the leaves a Tree (friendly or enemy) lands out of the tree in the Fainted position, allowing a movement and a strategically beneficial state in the same turn

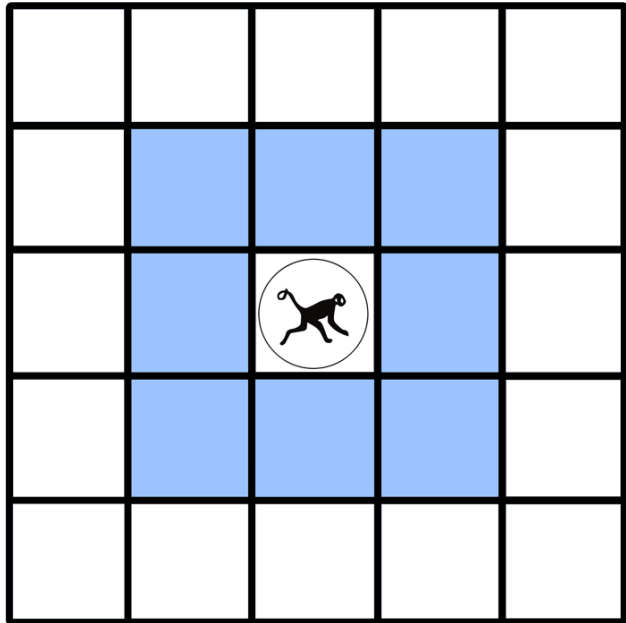
3.6d The ‘fainted’ position for the goat acts as if the square is empty and other pieces may occupy it without capturing it unless a tree or rhino steps on to the ‘fainted’ goat with ‘trample’ capturing it

3.6e a ‘fainted’ goat can un-flip from its fainted position and make a regular or traverse movement on the same turn but it may not ‘un-flip’ if a piece is on top of it, including a virus

3.6f A goat can not capture any ‘predators’: bear or wolf

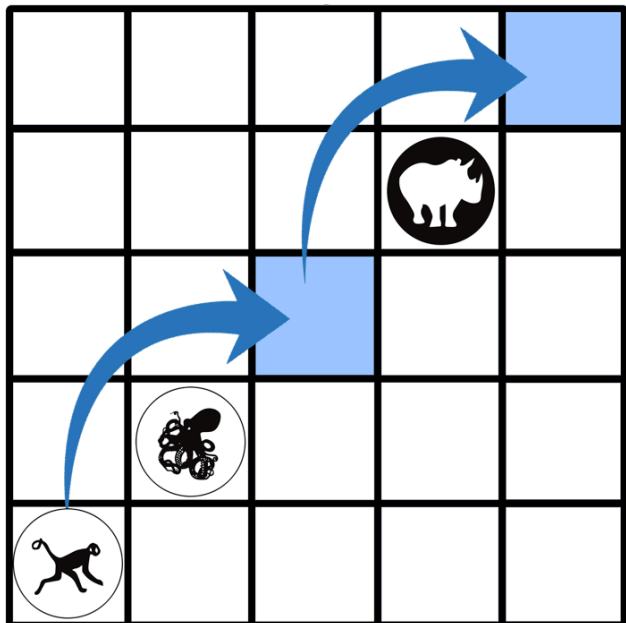
3.7 Monkey

3.7a Regular movement: 1 square in any direction



3.7b Extra movement “Leap” May jump over any adjoining piece or pieces like a checker, in a straight line only. 2, 4 or 6 squares away so long as:

- None of the leaped pieces are a virus or fainted goat
- There is an empty space between each piece or the final position is a tree, in which case the Monkey finishes their turn in that tree (Friendly or Enemy)



3.7c If using the ‘leap’ movement, every enemy piece leaped over becomes one danger point (up to 3) the monkey must make a dice roll higher than the amount of danger points of the roll

3.7d If the monkey uses a leap ending over a tree, it is given an extra turn, so long as no other zodiac is in that tree

3.7e The monkey may not swing over the same tree in the same direction twice in one set of 'swings' and must reroll each new turn if a swing incurs any 'danger'

3.7f The monkey may swing after a double or triple leap and may capture in the same move as the swing, opening up the ability to capture multiple enemies in the same effective turn

3.7g Special ability 'consume' The monkey may 'consume' any fungi and have an extra turn

3.7h a friendly fungi exists as the monkey piece until the end of that series of extra turns, so if it were the players king piece, it could still win if it either; captured the enemy king piece in that same turn or completed a race victory as the fungi king inside the monkey piece

3.7i an enemy fungi exists as the monkey piece until the end of the 'zombification' round, so if it were to complete a race victory, in the monkeys series of extra turns OR in the fungi's round controlling the zombified monkey, it captured the enemies king or completed a race victory it would win

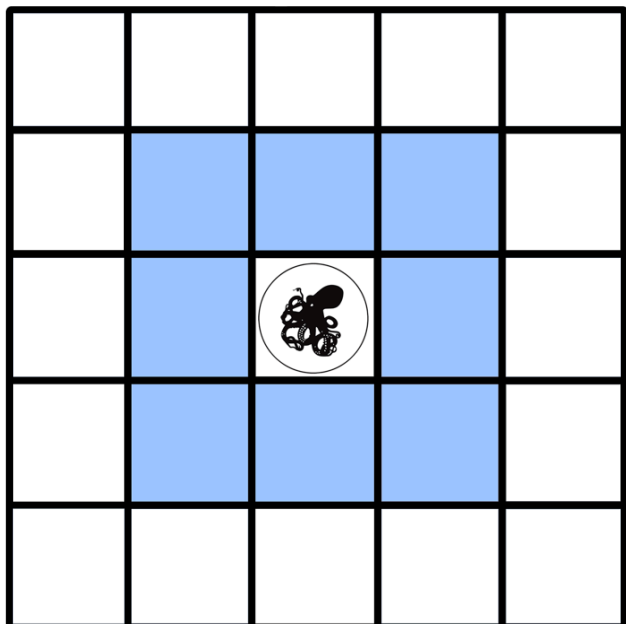
3.7j If a monkey receives an extra turn through a 'swing' or 'consume' the timer, if any, is not stopped but the player may release the token before making their extra movement

3.7k If a monkey player consumes two fungi within one set of extra turns, it may move to any vacant or enemy square on the board, this is known as 'transcendence'

3.7l The monkey can try to capture the bear piece, but only if it rolls a 5 or 6 on a 6 sided dice before trying to capture, if the roll fails, the monkey is captured and removed from the board

3.8 Octopus

3.8a Regular movement: 1 square in any direction

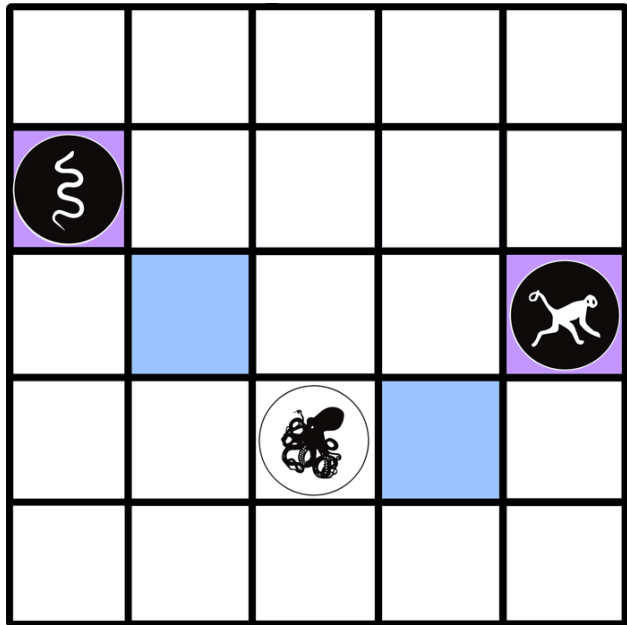


3.8b Capture, the octopus may only capture orthogonally, up, down left or right from its position

3.8c Special ability: 'Entangle'

The octopus can entangle any 'animal' that is not 'tiny' on any diagonal square, before OR after regular movement. On a physical board, place an effect token on the entangled piece until either:

- The octopus moves
- The octopus is captured



Once a piece is 'entangled' it cannot complete any move

3.8d An octopus in a tree may entangle from the tree, in this circumstance, if the octopus moves OR the octopus is captured, the entanglement is broken, if the tree moves, the entangled piece remains in its relative position unless there is a wall or piece blocking its path, in which case, the entanglement is broken and the entangled piece is left at the last available square in the movement

3.8e Octopus entangles remain active even if the octopus was a zombie at the time and returns to normal or if the octopus is entangled by an enemy octopus while entangling, the only break from the entanglement (besides tree drag) is movement or capture of the entangling octopus

3.8f Special ability: 'Ink'

The octopus can secretly move up, left, right or down and place fakes known as 'shadows' in each of the other squares. The player flips the octopus token over to reveal the ink move and places effect tokens in each vacant orthogonal square.

The player must place the 'real' effect token, which is marked with an octopus symbol on its underside

The shadow pieces are revealed and removed from the board once the opponent's turn ends, whether or not an opponent attacks the 'shadows' and the 'real' effect token is replaced with the octopus. If the player captures the 'real' effect token, the octopus is captured and removed from the board

3.8g Shadow pieces are treated as real pieces while it is the opponent's turn meaning that special effects that target pieces can be affected when used against a shadow, for example:

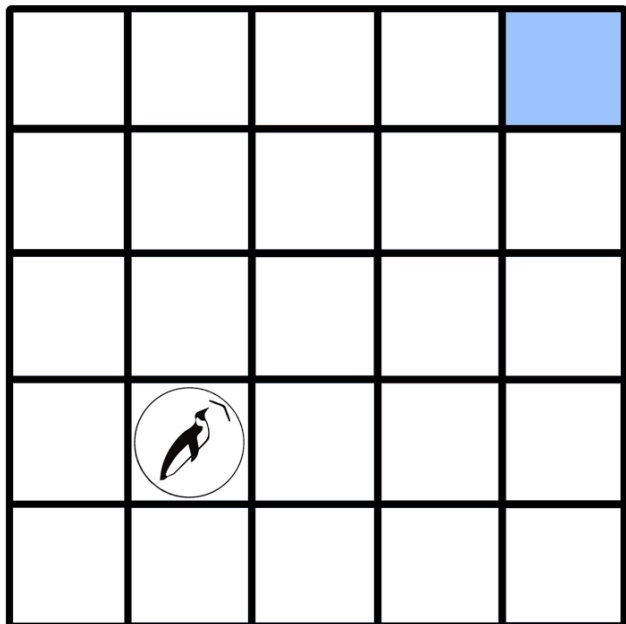
- A goat that tries to use 'traverse' on a path with a shadow as part of the chain, will fall into the shadow space instead of their intended location, in the case that a goat tries to traverse with multiple paths, with a potential to hit a shadow in one of their paths, must dictate their exact path before completing the move.
- A monkey that tries to do a single, double or triple leap with one of the pieces in the chain being a shadow, will end up falling in to the square of the shadow
- A penguin that slides toward a shadow will continue directly through it until it hits the next obstacle
- A snake that tries to 'snake strike' a shadow will move to the square of the shadow
- A tree will is not able to move through a shadow piece
- A virus that tries to infect a shadow, leaves its host and moves to the square of the shadow 'dormant'

3.9 Penguin

3.9a Regular movement 1 - 'rotate'

The penguin can redirect itself to face any of the following: up, up-right, right, down-right, down, down-left, left, up-left. Noted by the direction of the arrow on the penguin piece

3.9b Regular movement 2 - 'slide'



So long as there is at least one free square in front of the penguin in the direction it is facing, the penguin moves to the farthest possible square in that direction. Once there it may also complete a 'rotate' move within the same turn

3.9c Capture: a penguin may capture 1 square in any direction and 'rotate' after capture

3.9c The penguins slide is only stopped by another piece or the edge of the board with two exceptions:

- If a penguin slides towards a 'fainted' goat, they slide right through them as if they were not there
- If a penguin slides over a 'dormant' virus, they slide right through them as if they were not there
- If a penguin ends their slide on a 'dormant' virus piece, it is captured and removed from the board

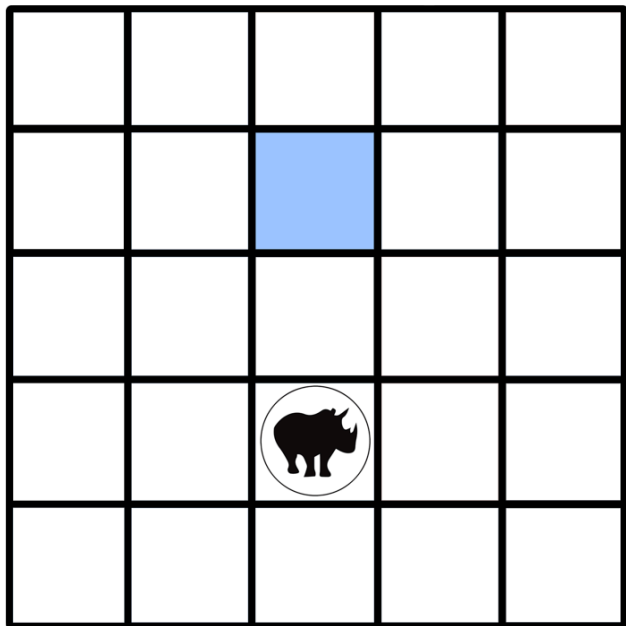
3.9d A penguin piece cannot 'climb' a tree

3.9e A penguin piece cannot capture any 'large' piece: bear, rhino, tree, wolf

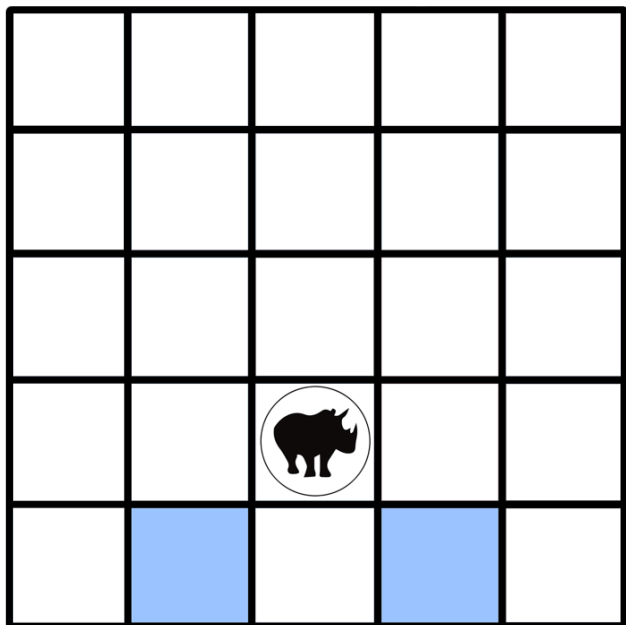
3.9f A penguin pieces rotation must be unambiguous, a player may ask the opponent for the current rotation of the penguin

3.10 Rhino

3.10a Regular movement 1 - moves two squares 'forward'

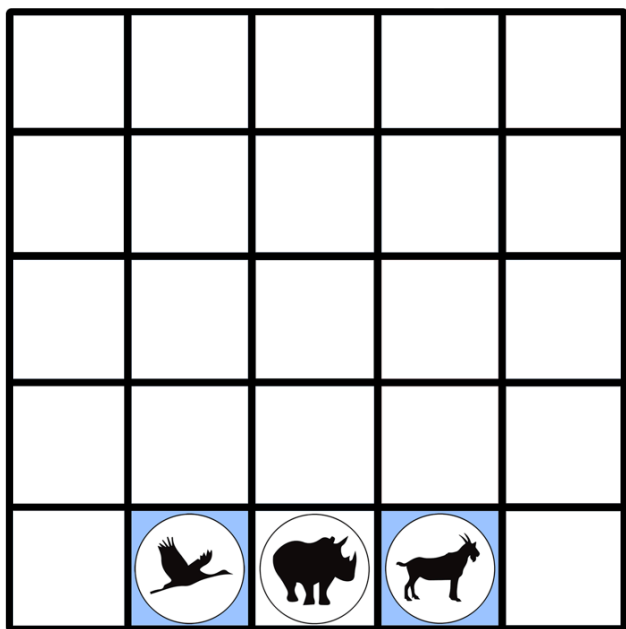


3.10b Regular movement 2 - moves 1 square 'backward'-left or one square 'backward'-right



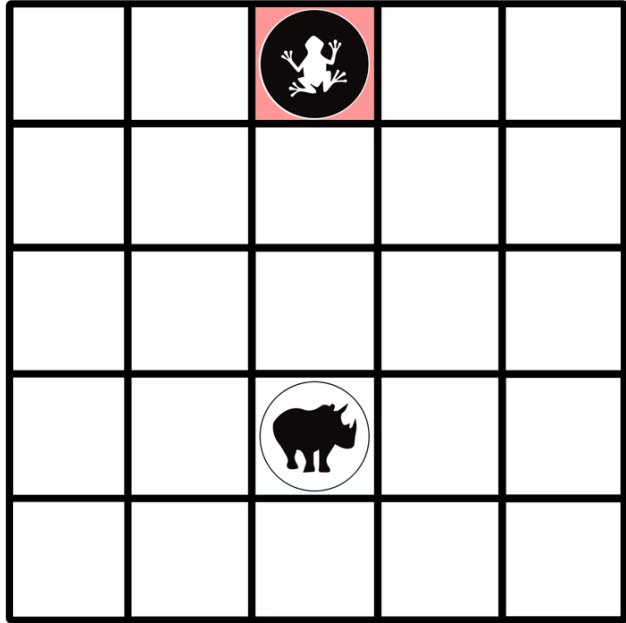
3.10c Special move 'Lane'

The rhino can switch places with another piece on its starting rank so long as neither piece has moved yet in the game



3.10d Special move 'charge'

The rhino can move 3 squares 'forward' once per game if any 'animal' is in one of the 3 squares 'forward' of the rhino



3.10e Special ability 'defence'

The rhino can not be captured by another piece attacking from any position forward from itself, only from the same rank except:

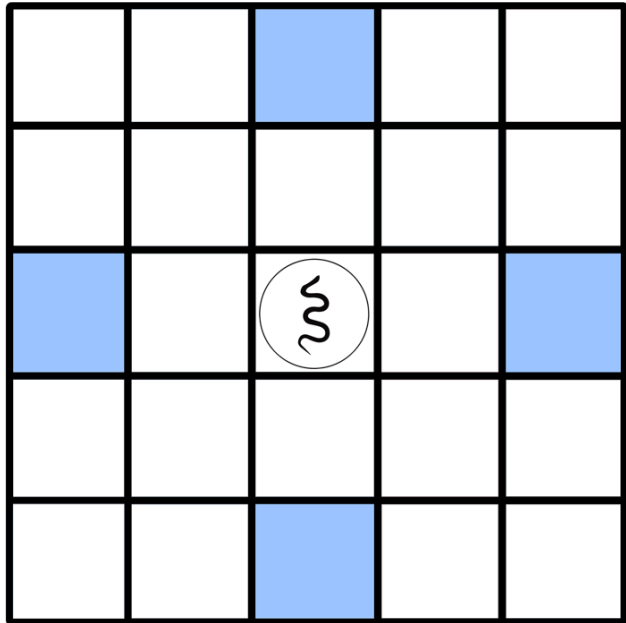
- A bear who can specifically counter this 'defence' or
- A wolf by using its L shaped attack to attack the rhino from the side

3.10f Special ability 'trample'

Every square the rhino travels through including the final square, are 'trampled' that means that every piece, including 'friendly' pieces are captured, this means the rhino can capture multiple pieces

3.11 Snake

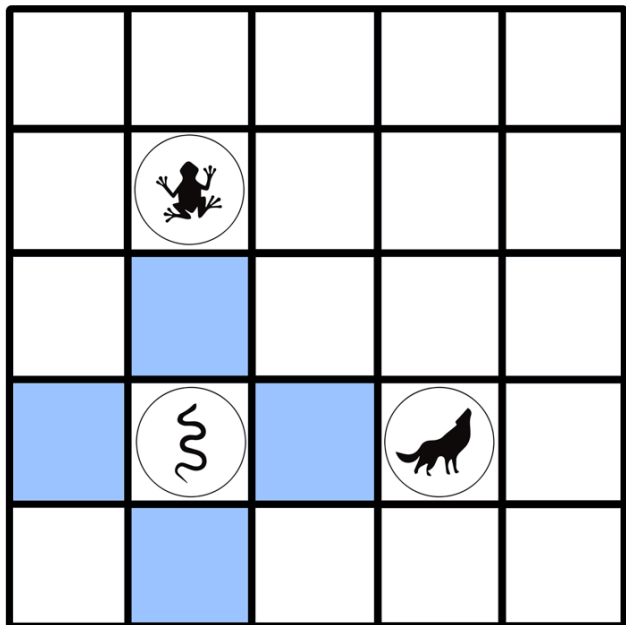
3.11a Regular movement: 2 squares, only orthogonally, in a straight line



3.11b Regular movement exceptions:

- If the edge of the board would prevent regular movement
- A friendly piece is occupying the regular movement square

In either of those cases the snake may move 1 square instead unless the square is also occupied by a friendly piece



3.11c Special movement 'snake strike' 3 squares, only forward, only if occupied by an enemy 'animal' piece with no pieces between the snake and the enemy piece unless it is a:

- 'Fainted' goat
- 'Dormant' virus

3.11d Special ability: 'Shed'

If a snake piece is captured, it can be flipped over to the 'shed' snake and place back on to the rank at the far 'back' of the board so long as:

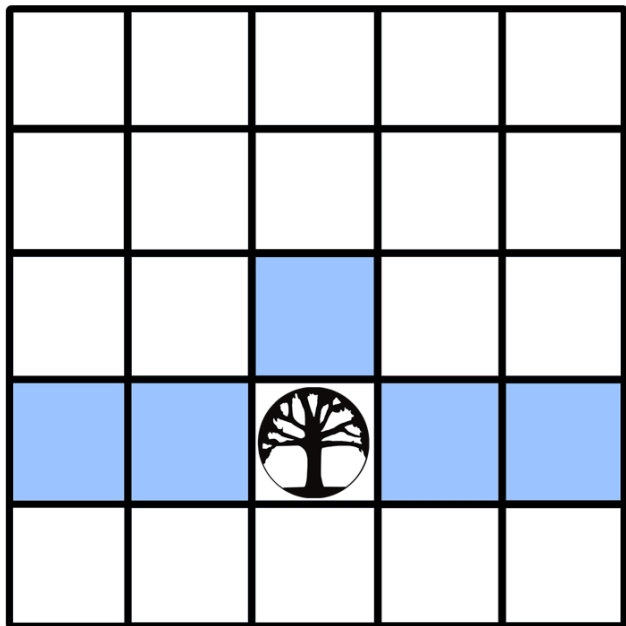
- It is placed in the same file
- The rank at the far 'back' of the board is either vacant or has a tree piece with no 'housed' piece inside it

The 'shed' ability is effectively a second life, with exceptions.

3.12 Tree

3.12a Regular movement 1: One square 'forward'

3.12b Regular movement 2: Left or right as far as the player chooses, until impeded by a piece or the edge of the board, it may capture the first enemy piece it reaches



3.12c Special ability: Crush, when the tree moves on to a 'fainted' goat, it captures it

3.12d Special ability 'house' any friendly piece that can 'climb' a tree can be housed in that tree by moving on to the tree

3.12e An enemy moving to your tree captures it unless:

- Another piece is housed in the tree in which case, they capture only the housed piece and become housed themselves, if they can both climb trees and capture the housed piece regularly
- It is a piece that cannot capture a tree, like a crane
- It is a goat using traverse in to an enemy tree that is not housing a piece

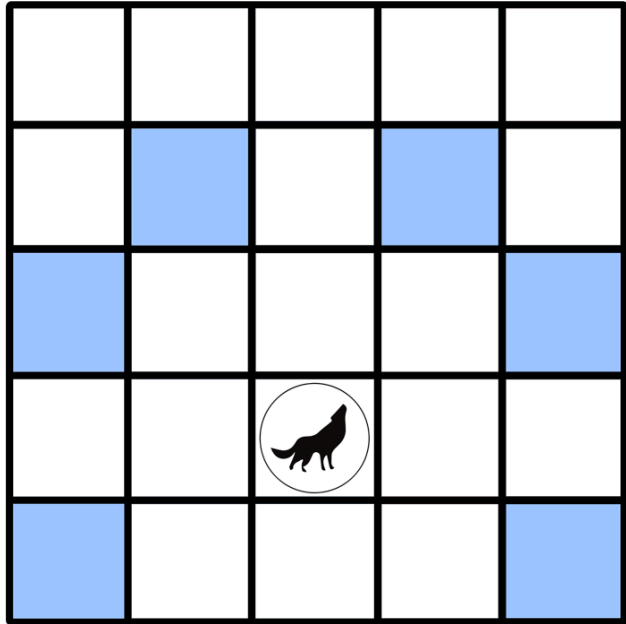
3.12f A tree cannot 'climb' another tree

3.12g A tree cannot capture an enemy tree that is 'housing' another piece

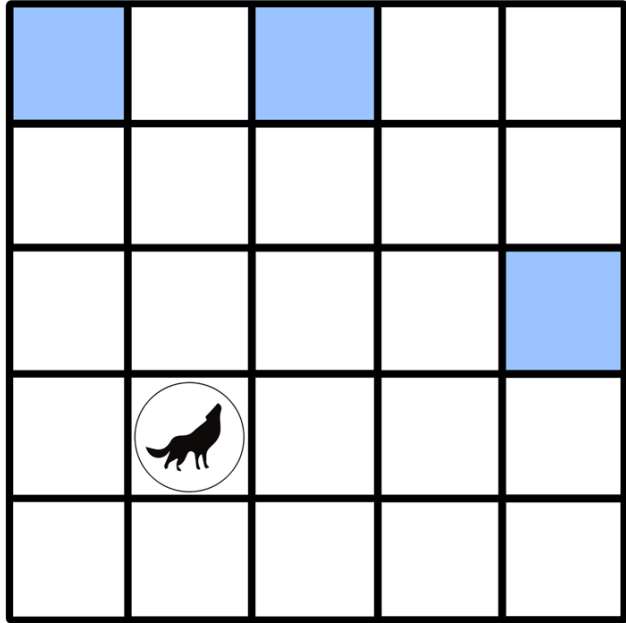
3.12h A tree cannot be captured while it is 'housing' another piece, unless by a rhino's attack

3.13 Wolf

3.13a Regular movement: In an 'I' shape, two squares in a orthogonal straight line followed by one square perpendicular or one orthogonal square followed by two squares perpendicular (Like a knight in chess)



3.13b Special ability: 'Lone' if a wolf is the last 'perceived' piece on the board, it moves in an extended L either three squares in a orthogonal straight line followed by one square perpendicular or one orthogonal square followed by three squares perpendicular. This ability is not optional and occurs when the the wolf is your only piece, not including any virus or 'fainted' goat

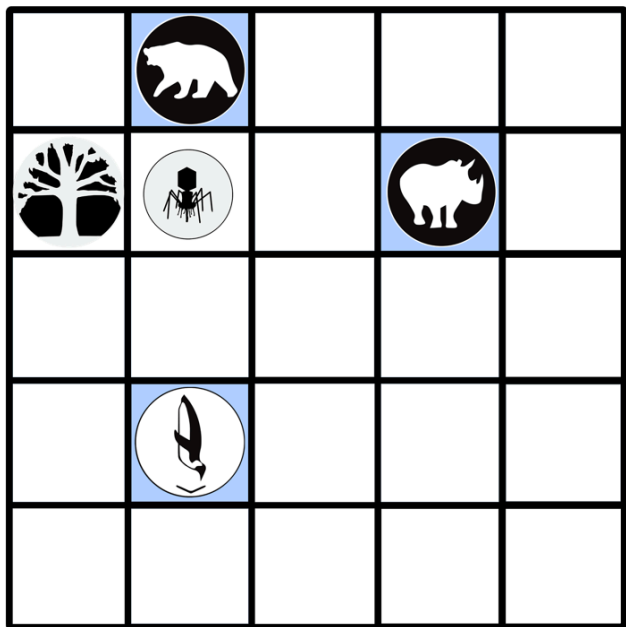


3.13c The wolf cannot 'climb' trees

3.14 Virus

3.14a Regular movement: Two squares only in a straight line, diagonally or orthogonally, unless impeded by the edge of the board, in which case it can move one in that direction

3.14b The virus can only use its regular movement to an animal piece friendly or enemy, it may not move to a vacant square (only in the case of it attacking a shadow octopus)



3.14c 'dormant' is the status if the virus is on the board and not 'infecting' an animal host

- 3.14c 'active' is the status if the virus is 'infecting' another piece, known as a 'host'
- 3.14d a 'dormant' virus when captured does not infect the attacking piece
- 3.14e If a 'dormant' virus moves to an animal piece, it is placed on top of that piece and does not capture it, it has 'infected' it
- 3.14f a virus captures a 'host' piece when it leaves the host piece
- 3.14g the virus may make as many regular movements in one turn as is possible without ending its turn
- 3.14h The virus attacking a piece that is already infected by an enemy virus, captures the 'defending' enemy virus. In complex scenarios for example, a rhino tramples a light infected piece, then a dark infected piece in its path, the first virus is considered the aggressor and captures the second virus, leaving the rhino infected by the light virus in this circumstance

4 Player conduct

4.1 Game conduct

- 4.1a Players shall take no action to bring Zodiac Chess in to disrepute
- 4.1b Players shall not make movements, gestures or generate noises to distract their opponent in anyway
- 4.1c Players shall not use devices or leave to private unsupervised areas during a game
- 4.1d Players shall not intimidate, bribe, blackmail, extort or abuse anyone in or involved with the game
- 4.1e Players shall not source any tactical knowledge about their opponents hidden game information through any means
- 4.1f failing to follow any rule can be judged by a arbiter of the game, if no arbiter is present, unless otherwise agreed by your opponent, it can be assumed that the game is lost for the person breaking a rule

5 The Arbiter

5.1 The Arbiters role

- 5.1a The arbiter must, to the best of their ability to see the rules observed and followed
- 5.1b The arbiter shall act to improve the game environment through creating an undisturbed and fair setting
- 5.1c The arbiter may decide to impose penalties to players who infringe on the rules, this must be inline with the scale of the infringement and the perceived intention

5.2 Penalties

- Warning
- Increase remaining time of the opponent
- Reduce the remaining time of the offending player
- Declare the game to be lost
- Expulsion from the event

5.3 External factors

5.3a In the event of a disturbance, the arbiter may award players extra time

5.3b The arbiter may remove spectators who are communicating game information to a player/players through any means

Etiquette

Good:

To shake hands before and after a match

To generally stay quiet to allow your opponent ample opportunity to think freely

Be respectful of the other players

Bad:

To purposely show your opponent your king

To offer multiple draws

To be distracting

Fine:

To lie / bluff about which king or octopus shadow you have chosen, so long as it does not distract / interfere or interrupt their ability to make a clear and free decision and is not done in repetition