

ELEMENTARY COURSE OF ITALIAN DRAUGHTS

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Introduction

Draughts is a game which has ancient origins. The first traces of the game have been found in the Greco-Roman world, but the first true treatise on the game, which came to us, was written in 1537 by the Spaniard Torquemada. The rules of draughts are very simple and are traditional heritage of each of us. In fact, draughts is typically the first board game which is taught to children. But the game is actually complex: it has been calculated that more than 300 quintillion positions (10^{18}) are possible in draughts. It is really a huge number which is beyond any human memory capacity. The charm of the game is in the synthesis of these opposites: it is the simplest among the complex games.

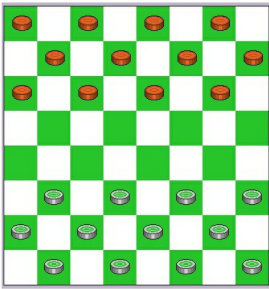
However, a clarification must be made. Draughts is currently spread throughout the world, especially in those parts of the world that have been influenced by European culture. But, unlike chess, draughts players have not come to an agreement about the international unification of the rules. So, there are still significant differences among several countries. In some countries, especially Russia and the Netherlands, people practise the so-called "international draughts ", which is played on a 100-square board with 20 pieces per player. That style of draughts is not easy at all: it is a game of great complexity that makes it comparable to chess. It is much more complicated than draughts on a 64-square board that is still the most popular in the world.

The game of draughts has found amateurs and scholars for centuries. There are lots of national federations and a world federation (FJD). In Italy there is the FID (Italian Draughts Federation) which is currently recognized by the CONI (Italian Olympic Committee). National and international tournaments are regularly organized. There are a lot of books and magazines. Each of them mainly deals with one style of draughts. But, as it often happens, because of its "simplicity ", people is completely unaware of the beauty of the game such as tactics, strategies and so on. This elementary course of Italian draughts aims at providing novices with tools to learn the basics of the game and gives you information about how to improve your skills.

The rules

Initial Position

1



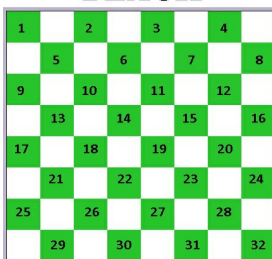
The game of Italian Draughts is a two-player board game that uses a draughtboard with 64 squares of alternating colour (light and dark or white and black).

The board is placed so that the dark single corner, also called long diagonal, is situated on the right hand side of each player. One player has 12 white men, the other has 12 black men.

Initially, each player places their own men on the dark squares of the board as in **Diagram 1**. (In order to get a good contrast, the "black" squares are yellow and the "black" pieces are red).

Notation

BLACK # 2



WHITE

The board is numbered in order to record the moves. Each dark square is assigned a number from 1 to 32 as in **Diagram 2**.

To record a move, first write down the number of the square on which a man stands, followed by a dash and the number of the square to which it moves.

If the move is a capture, write down the number of the square on which the piece stands, then the "X" and the number of square on which the piece has landed.

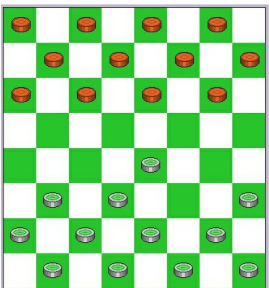
If a capture is not ambiguous, players usually write down one "X" on their scoresheets.

A recorded move may be followed by additional explanatory symbols:

"!" = good move, "!!" = very good move, "?" = bad move, "??" = very bad move, "!?" = suspicious move, "*" = forced move.

Move

3



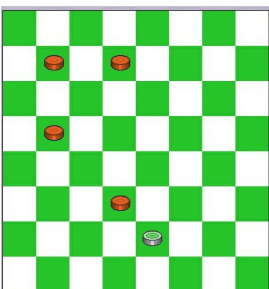
The white player always moves first, then the players must make a move in turn. The pieces can only occupy dark squares and only one piece may occupy any one square.

Pieces may be moved diagonally from one square to another. The move is only possible if the arrival square is empty (in **Diagram 3** white moves 23-19). A man can only move forwards, a king can also move backwards. When a man reaches the opponent's closest row (known as the opponent's base, the crownhead or king row), it becomes a king.

Another kind of move is the capture, also known as the jump.

Capture

4

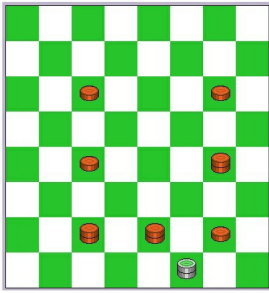


If the player who must move has a piece that is diagonally adjacent to an opponent's piece and an empty square is immediately beyond it in the same direction, he is compelled to take it. The capture of a piece is executed by jumping over your opponent's piece into the vacant single square behind it. If in this new position the player can make another capture, he must do it at once, without waiting for the next move, and so on. The captured pieces are then removed from the board. These consecutive captures constitute a single multiple capture. If a man reaches the opposite side of the board and becomes a king, it must stop, even though it may capture a piece backwards. After you make a capture your turn ends.

In **Diagram 4** the white man is compelled to make a multiple jump 27x18x9x2, then black has to move.

Men can only capture forwards. Kings can also capture backwards. Men cannot capture kings. Kings can capture both men and kings.

5



Priorities of captures

If a player has two or more different chances to make a capture, he is compelled to make the move that captures the greatest number of the opponent's pieces.

If a player may capture an equal number of pieces with either a man or a king, he must do it with the king.

If a player has more than one way to capture the greatest possible number of pieces with a king, he must capture the greatest number of kings.

If a player may choose between two or more multiple jumps which have the same number of pieces with the same value, he is compelled to choose the way in which the largest number of kings are captured first.

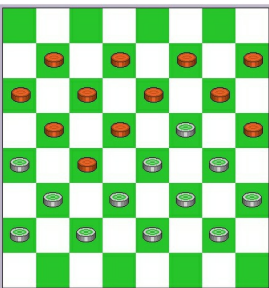
If none of these rules apply to the situation at hand, the player may choose according to his tactical requirements.

In **Diagram 5** the white king is compelled to make the jump 31x22x13x6.

Examples:

- If a man may capture a man and a king may capture a man, it is compulsory to take with the king.
- If a king may capture a king and a man may capture two men, it is compulsory to take with the man.
- If a king may capture two men and another king may capture a king and a man, it is compulsory to make the last capture.
- If a man may first capture in succession a man and a king, and another king may first capture in succession a king and a man. It is compulsory to make the last capture.

6



Win

A player wins a game if he captures all his opponent's pieces, or if his opponent cannot move because all of his pieces are blocked, or if his opponent resigns because he thinks his position is losing.

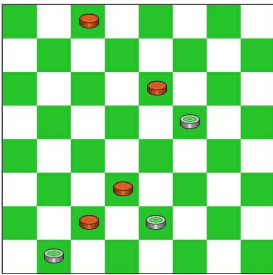
In **Diagram 6** the white moves and loses because it cannot move, although no captures have been made before.

Draw

A game is drawn if both players agree to a draw, because neither of them can force a win. If they will not reach an agreement, a player can demand to count 40 moves. The referee will count the player's moves who has demanded to count. The counting of moves starts again whenever a man is moved or a capture is done.

The rudiments of tactics

1

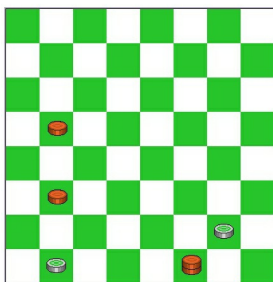


Exchange

The exchange is direct when you let a piece be captured so as to take the piece of your opponent which has made the capture (**at the top of the Diagram 1** the black man takes and is taken).

The exchange is indirect when you let a piece be captured so as to take a piece of your opponent's different from the one which has made the capture (**at the bottom of the Diagram 1** the black man captures the white man on square 22, but is not captured. The white takes the man on square 26). These types of exchanges affect the move (i.e. the opposition between pieces) in different ways, as it is explained in the appendix about known endgames.

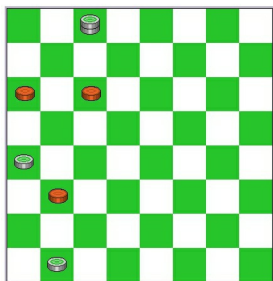
2



Attack

The attack is a threat to take a piece. It's a kind of move that needs attention, because you have to capture the piece and let your opponent make two moves freely. In **Diagram 2** the white moves. The black king has attacked the man on 28 carelessly, and the white gains a piece by moving 29-25.

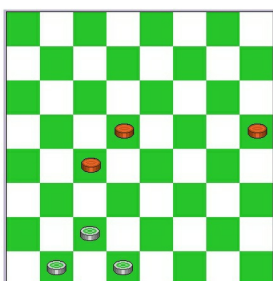
3



Forcing

It is an attack in which an opponent only has one good move to avoid losing a piece. There are cases, especially in endgames, where a multiple forcing leads to a win. **Diagram 3**. White moves: 1. 2-6 (the multiple forcing allows the white to gain tempos so as to put the king on the right square) 10-14 2. 6-10 14-19 3. 10-14 19-23 4. 29-25 21-26 5. 17-13 the white gain a man and wins.

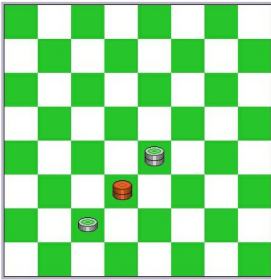
4



Waiting move

It is a safe move that doesn't change the strategy of play, but causes an opponent to "show his hand", or commit himself to some particular line of play. In **Diagram 4** white moves 25-29 and black loses because white makes a shot by moving 26-22.

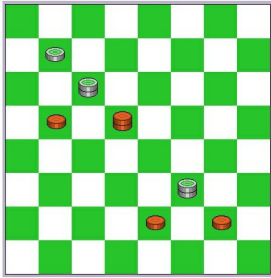
5



Breeches or Spectacles

It is a position in which a king, placed between two opposing pieces, will capture one. In **Diagram 5** white moves and loses a piece.

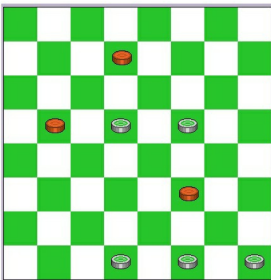
6



Fork

It is a position in which a king is behind two pieces, one of which cannot avoid being captured. (**Diagram 6**).

7

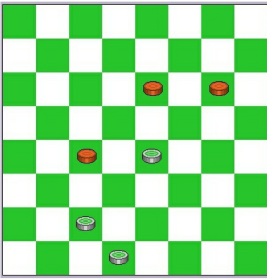


Barrier

It is a formation where three men on the same row block an opponent's man and capture it. At the bottom of the **Diagram 7** white captures the man on square 23 by moving either 31-27 or 31-28. One of the endpoints of the barrier may be an opponent's piece or a side square. At the top of the **Diagram 7** white captures the man on square 6 by moving 14-10.

tactical schemes

1



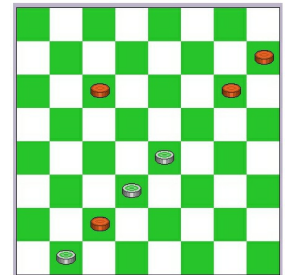
Shot

A shot is a sequence of moves in which your opponent has to take some pieces and you eventually take more pieces or get a king or get a superior position.

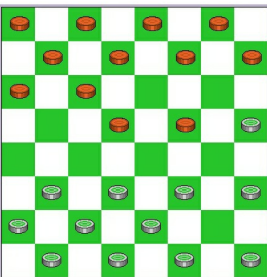
In **Diagram 1** white moves and wins in two moves: 19-15 (first move), 11x20 (or 12x19); 26-22 (second move), 18x27; 30x7 (last capture).

In **Diagram 2** there is another shot in which white moves and wins in two moves again. This one is well-known as "ribattino": 19-14, 10x19, 22x15, 12x19, 29x15. The move of the "Ribattino" begins with an exchange, taking a piece, which opens up the way to make a final double capture.

2



3

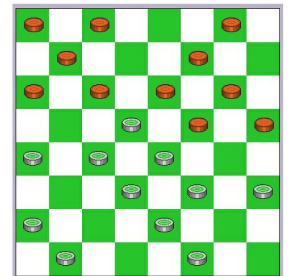


Opening shots

Diagram 3. Black moves and wins: 15-19; 22x15, 7-12; 16x7, 3x28; 32x23, 14-18; 21x14, 10x28. It is the famous "Canalejas Shot", published by the Spanish author in his draughts book in 1650.

Diagram 4. Black moves and wins: 10-13; 17x10, 16-20; 23x16, 9-13; 18x9, 11x18; 22x13, 5x30. It is the famous shot known as "Tiro della Vigevanese", published by Lanci in his book in 1837. The same shot occurs in checkers, too. It is known as "the big shot in Old fourteenth" published by J. Sturger in his book in 1800.

4



5

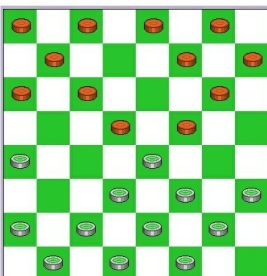


Diagram 5. Black moves and wins: 15-20; 24x15, 14-18; 22x6, 2x20; 23x16, 9-13; 17x10, 5x32. It is known as "Tiro del Bolognese", also published by Lanci in his book in 1837. .

Diagram 6. Black moves and wins: 17-21; 26x10, 9-13; 18x9, 15-20; 23x7, 4x18; 22x13, 5x32. The black has a man a down, but the position is an easy win thanks to the power of its king.

6

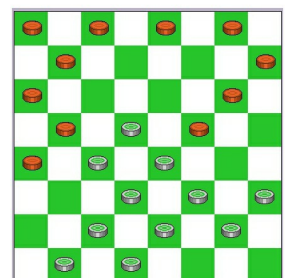
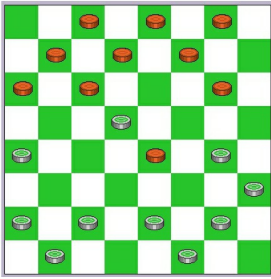


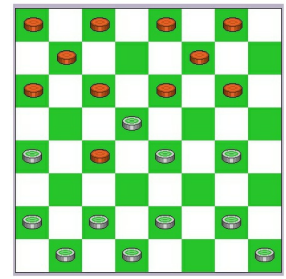
Diagram 7. Black moves and wins: 10-13; 17x1, 6-10; 14x5, 19-23; 28x19, 12-15; 20x11 7x30. Black has two men down and a king that can move everywhere on the board. White also has a king, but it is blocked in the single corner and cannot make any move. Black can win easily thanks to the power of its king.

Diagram 8. Black moves and wins: 18-21; 25x18, 10-13; 17x10, 3-6; 10x3, 12-15; 3x12, 15x31; 14x7, 31x8 white must move 7-3 e black wins easily after 4-7.

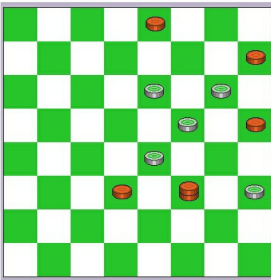
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8



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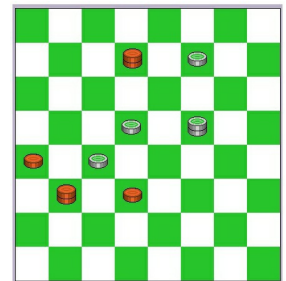


shots in the endgames

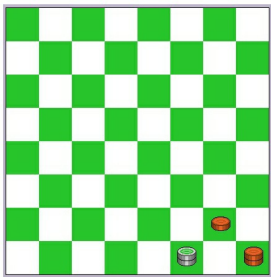
Diagram 9. White moves and wins: 11-7, 23x14; 24-20, 16x23; 15-11, 8x15; 7-4, 14x7; 4x18.

Diagram 10. White moves and wins: 15-11, 6x15; 14-11, 21x14 (or 15x6); 7-3, 15x6 (or 14x7); 3x26.

10



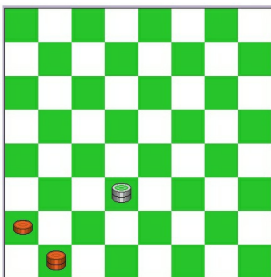
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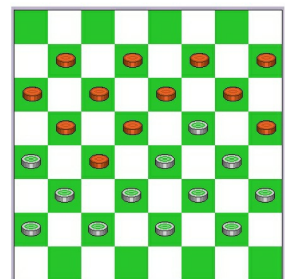
Block

In the diagrams 11,12 and 13 black has to make a move. White wins all games because black is completely blocked and has no legal move.

12

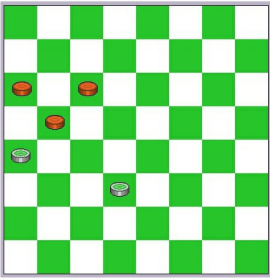


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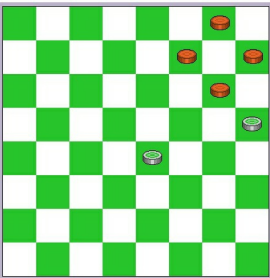
Lock

14

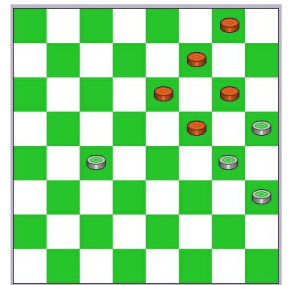


If a group of pieces can't play we call it a lock. You can find some elementary locks below. In all diagrams black has to move.

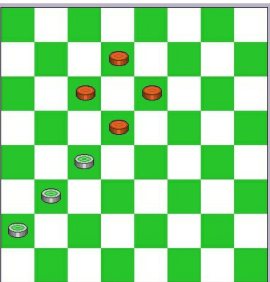
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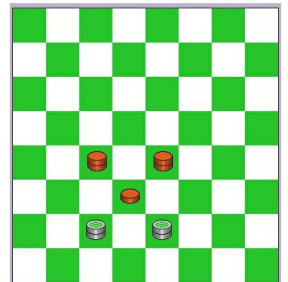
16



17



18



It is not rare that a lock occurs in games played in tournaments. In the openings and midgames amazing locks that involve all pieces on the board may occur. However, you need to be meticulous. If you make a mistake, your position may be locked!

19

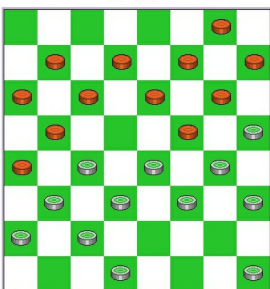
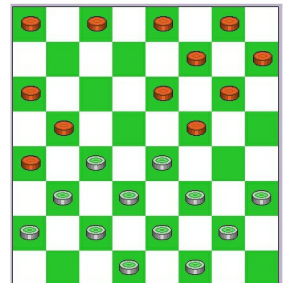


Diagram 19. Black moves and is locked.

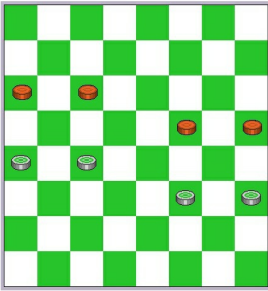
Diagram 20. White moves and is locked.

20



Sacrifice

21

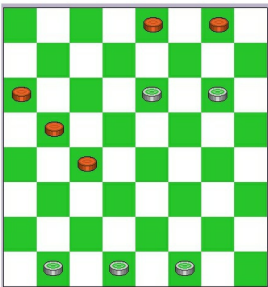


A sacrifice is a move in which a player voluntarily gives away a piece so as to gain an advantage. It is a brilliant manoeuvre that most of the time surprises an opponent. If a sacrifice is wrong, the game may be losing.

When the jpgt is obligatory, it is called a forced sacrifice. Pieces given in an even exchange are not sacrificed.

One makes a sacrifice to make a shot, a block or a lock. **Diagram 21.** White moves: 24-20 (forced sacrifice to get free from the lock), X, 23-19, 24-28, 18-14 white takes back the man and draws the game.

22

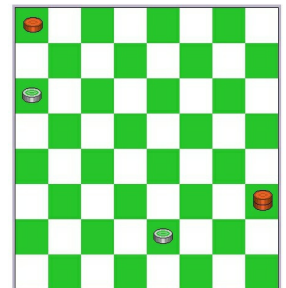


One makes a sacrifice to crown a man. **Diagram 22.** White sacrifices a man and moves 12-7! to crown a man on square 11. As black can't crown a man without losing more than one piece, white wins the game easily.

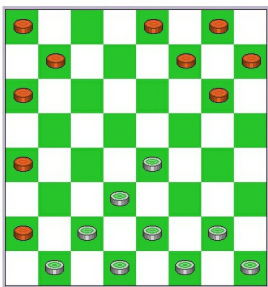
In endgames it is quite often make a sacrifice to get a draw with a man down. **Diagram 23.** White moves: 27-23! (the purpose of this move is to let the black king capture the man on 23 in order to crown a man on 9 and to force a draw, because the white king has the opposition over the black one) 24-20, 9-5, X, 5-2 White blocks the black man and draws.

If 27-22?? instead of 27-23, 24-20, 22-19, 20-15, 9-5 etc. white loses because the black king has the opposition over the white one.

23



24



A sacrifice normally is made in midgame or in endgame, as the limited number of pieces on the board makes the analysis of position easier. In opening is not safe make a sacrifice, unless it is a well-known analyzed play. By way of example, you can find a popular line below, called "Fife".

1.23-19 11-15 2.21-18 10-13 3.25-21 13-17 4.18-14 15-20 5.24x15 6-11 6.15x6 2x25 (**Diagram 24**) White has a solid position and has control of the centre of the board. Although black has a man up, its position is quite difficult because of its separate pieces on the sides.

7.19-14 5-10 8.14x5 1x10 9.22-18 10-14 10.18x11 7x14 11.28-23 4-7 12.32-28 7-11 13.28-24 12-16 14.27-22 3-6 15.22-19 6-10 16.24-20 8-12 17.31-28 9-13 18.28-24 (Black has to give back the piece) 17-21 19.26x17 etc. draw.

The elements of strategy

Single corner e Double corner

The two sides of the board are not the same. The side of the single corner (square 32 for white, 1 for black) is more easily defensible, while the side of the double corner (squares 25 and 29 for white, 4 and 8 for black) is more vulnerable. Look at the following positions:

1

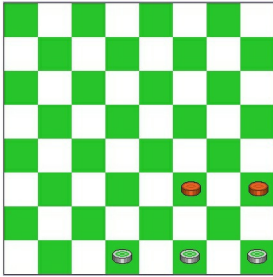
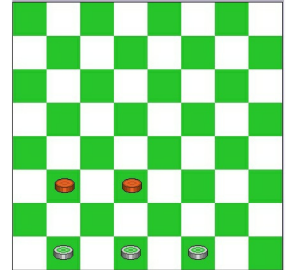


Diagram 1. Black doesn't have any chances to attack the single corner and to crown a man.

Diagram 2. Black can crown a man with the sacrifice 22-26.

For this reason the strategies are different. When you attack, you should do it towards the double corner. When you defend, you should move the men of your single corner.

2



Centre

Moving the pieces to the centre of the board is generally preferable because it gives you more freedom of movement. If you take control of the centre, you generally have a good chance to attack and prevent attacks. However, it is not always correct. Your strategies never depend on you alone.

3

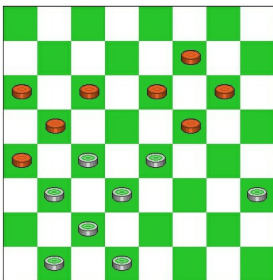
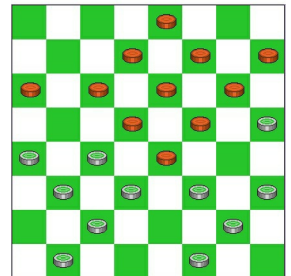


Diagram 3. White has a very good position: it occupies the centre of the board with the men on 18, 19 and 22. Its formation is solid thanks to the men on 26, 29 and 30. Black moves and loses.

Diagram 4. Black occupies the centre, but its position is very weak because it is connected to its base by the only man on 3. White has frozen out its opponent. Black moves: 15-20 (if 10-13, X, 24-20 white wins), 22x15, 12x19, 24x15, 11x27, 31x15, 14-19, 18-14 etc. White has a man up. It can crown and win easily.

4



Opening and midgame

The opening is the first stage of the game, when almost all 24 pieces are on the board and the position is quite complicated. After a few exchanges, the game reaches the next stage called midgame. Unlike chess where in the opening a player has to build up the pieces and place them in strategic positions, in draughts there is not much difference between these two stages of the game. All moves are important and may affect the outcome of the game.

After learning the basics of the game, if you want to get better and better, you need to go over the strategy of openings. I recommend reading "**La Dama**" by Grand Master Marcello Gasparetti.

Endgame

The endgame begins when very few pieces for each player are on the board and at least one player has already crowned one man or is about to do it.

The main purpose in the endgame is to crown more men than the opponent so as to gain a clear advantage which increases by exchanging pieces. The player who has two kings more than his opponent generally wins the game, even though the two players have the same number of pieces.

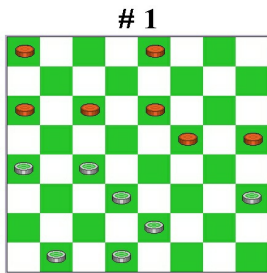
If you want to reduce your mistakes in endgames is useful to learn how to win the known endgames, especially the elementary ones. In appendix you can find some of them.

On the internet you can find the book "Finali Teorici" in word format for free.

The game

Players who succeed in having more pieces on the board, even a single piece, normally win the game. There are some positions in which the weak side manages to get a draw with one or even two men down, but they are exceptions. The gain of a piece is either the result of a good attack or of a better position. A careful player doesn't normally try to get wins by making traps or tricks. He does it when the position is still safe.

I am giving you an annotated game by the way of example.



1.23-19 (the best move to start a game) 11-14 (the opening is called "Controdiagonale", or Cross in English draughts) 2.28-23 7-11 3.32-28 (waiting move: it breaks the base of the white from the single corner and let the double corner and the base be safe. 22-18 is also playable, 11-15 etc.) 11-15 (12-15 makes the double corner weak) 4.22-18 (good simplification) 15x22 5.18x11 6x15 6.27x18 (26x19 takes off both men on 26 and 27 that are important for the centre. After the double exchange we are in the midgame) 2-6 7.26-22 (white tries to take control of the centre) 12-16 8.23-19 6-11 9.19x12 8x15 10.28-23 10-14 11.21-17 14x21 12.25x18 5-10 13.23-19 4-8 14.19x12 8x15 15.31-27 (**Diagram 1**) (Black has its double corner without pieces and white tries to take advantage) 16-20! (if 10-14?, 27-23, X, 23-19 white will crown a man and wins because of the careless attack of the black) 16.27-23 20x27 17.30x23 10-14 18.29-25 14x21 19.25x18 1-5 20.23-19 5-10 21.19x12 10-14 22.12-8 14x21 23.22-19 3-7 24.8-4 7-12 25.24-20 (if 4-7, 11-15 draw) 12-16 26.19-15 etc. Draw

KNOWN ENDGAMES

[The calculation of the move](#)

[Elementary endgames\(2/1, 1+1/1, 2/1+1\)](#)

[Three kings against two kings](#)

[Two kings and a man against two kings](#)

[Three kings against two kings and a man](#)

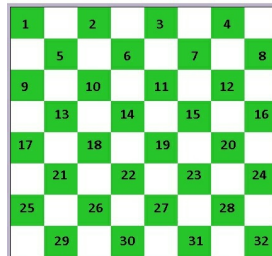
[Four kings against three kings](#)

[Three kings and a man against three kings](#)

[Famous positions](#)

[To figure out the endgame](#)

BLACK

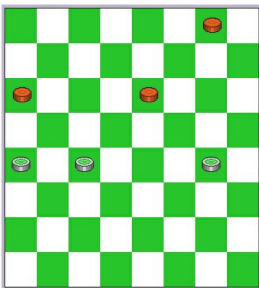


WHITE

In this section you can find some basic endgames that occur on the board quite often.

If you want to reduce your mistakes in the endgame, if you want to avoid missing wins or losing drawn positions, then it is a good start to learn the endgames of this section very well.

1



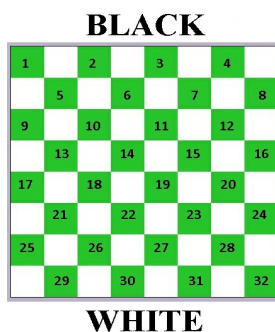
An example is the **Diagram 1**. Black moves.

If black moves 4-8, it loses. White moves 20-16 and blocks the black man on 8. After that white has the move and wins easily by First Position.

If black moves 4-7 instead of 4-8, it gets a draw, because it can get two kings by crowning the men on 7 and on 11.

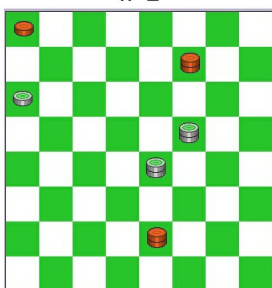
In all endgames of this section the white colour is in better position.

THE CALCULATION OF THE MOVE



If all our pieces can be placed in such a way that the opponent's pieces are forced to move backwards, we can say that we have the opposition or the move. In the endgames, especially the ones with a few pieces on the board, to have the move is important in order to keep the initiative of play, to force a win or to manage to draw with one or even two men down.

1



In **Diagram 1** the player whose move it is does not have the move. He is forced to move away from the opponent's king.

In the position of the **Diagram 2**, if white moves, it can play 10-14. Afterwards black has to move backwards. If black moves, it can move 22-18. Afterwards white has to move backwards. So, who moves has the move.

2



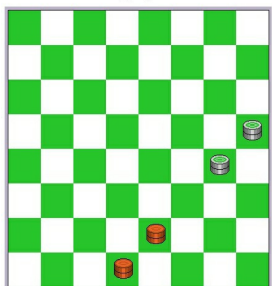
Obviously, the concept is valid if the two colours have the same number of pieces. It doesn't make much sense to calculate the move if a colour has one piece more than the other that is free to move.

To calculate the move in more complicated positions, you can divide the pieces into pairs, without distinguishing the colour. Each pair is called ""even"" if the minimum number of the empty squares between them is even, otherwise it is called ""odd"". If there are on the board an odd number of even pairs, who moves has the move. Odd pairs are irrelevant for the calculation of the move. As the way of dividing the pieces into pairs is arbitrary, the more odd pairs you make, the simpler the calculation.

In the position of the **Diagram 1**, you can form the pairs (1-9), (7-15) and (19-27). They are all odd pairs, because the two pieces of each pair are separated by a single square. As there are no even pairs, who moves doesn't have the move.

Obviously, you can make different pairs. For instance, three other pairs are (1-9), (7-27) and (15-19). The pair (1-9) is odd. The pair (7-27) is even, because the two pieces are separated by four squares. The pair (15-19) is even, because the two pieces are adjacent, that is there are no empty squares between them. As we have two even couple, we can say again who moves doesn't have the move.

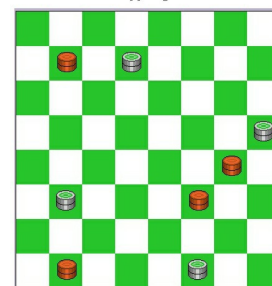
3



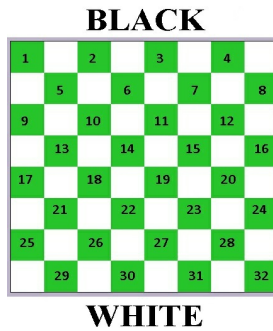
The move changes by making a direct exchange. In **Diagram 3** white doesn't have the move. It can get it and win the game by making the exchange 20-23.

Not always an indirect exchange changes the move. In **Diagram 4** white moves and has the move. The move doesn't change by making the indirect exchange 31-27 (or 31-28), but it changes by making the indirect exchange 6-2, 29-25. As you notice, black has the move after the last indirect exchange.

4



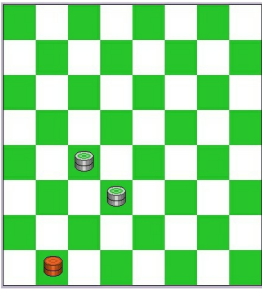
ELEMENTARY ENDGAMES



This article is about basic endgames of three or four pieces. These endgames, along with the endgames of three kings against two, should be the minimum knowledge level for a player.

Two kings vs. one king

1

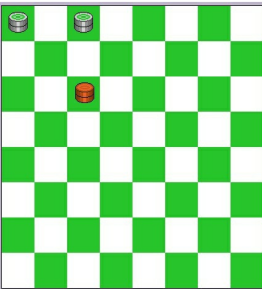


If the black king does not reach a double corner, it will be blocked on a side. If it manages to reach a double corner, the white will win the game by following a simple manoeuvre.

Diagram 1. White moves: 1.18-21 29-25 2.22-18 25-29 3.21-25 29-26 4.25-29 26-30 5.18-14 30-27 6.14-19 27-30 7.19-23 White wins.

If black moves first, the manoeuvre to win the game is the same.

2

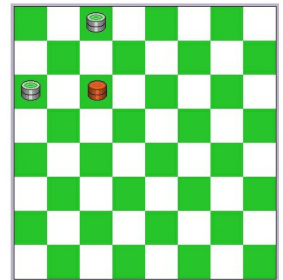


There are, however, two even positions.

Diagram 2. White moves and draws.

Diagram 3. White moves and draws.

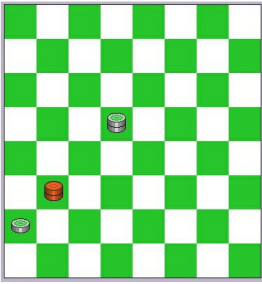
3



One king against one man and one king

When in an endgame, in addition to the kings, there is also a man, the case studies become quite complicated and the outcome of each depends on the initial position of the pieces. I only want to deal with the positions that often occur during a game. In the selected endgames, white has a king which can move freely on the board, and a man on a side, blocked by a black king. White will win the game if it manages to crown the man or to sacrifice the man in order to block the black king.

4



Man on 9, 16, 17, 24, 25, 31 or 32

If the white king has the opposition over the black king, when the white man is blocked on a side, white wins. If the black king has the move, the endgame is drawn. Since these endgames are similar and have the same idea, by way of example, below you find the case of man on 25.

Diagram 4. Black moves (the white king has the move): 1.21-17 2.14-18 17-21 3.18-22 21-17 4.22-26 17-13 5.25-21 13-18 6.21-17 18-13 7.26-22 13-9 8.22-18 9-5 9.17-13 5-2 (if 5-10, 18-22 ww) 10.13-10 2-6 11.10-5 6-11 12.5-2 white wins.

White moves (the black king has the move): 1.14-19 21-18 2.19-23 18-21 3.23-27 21-18 4.27-30 18-21 5.30-27 the white king cannot approach the white man. Draw.

5

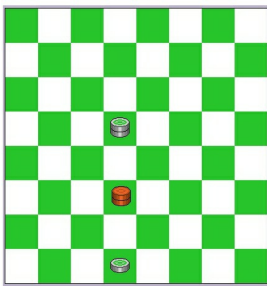


Man on 29

In this case the idea is the exact opposite of the cases mentioned above. If the black king has the move, White wins. If the white king has the move, the ending is drawn. The former is easy, because white gains the move and wins the game by moving its man on 25. The latter is drawn, because if white moves its man, it will lose the move and draw the game. If white moves its king towards its man, the black king will defend the squares 21, 26 and 30. White will not be able to move its man on 26 without being captured by the black king.

Diagram 5. Black moves (the white king has the move): 1.26-30 2.19-22 30-26 3.22-18 26-30 4.18-21 30-27 5.21-26 (if 29-25, 27-22 draw) 27-30 6.26-22 white cannot move its man on 26. Draw.

6



Man on 30

White wins in both cases. If the white king has the move, white will be able to crown its man. If it doesn't have the move, then white will sacrifice its man to gain the move and to block the black king on a side.

Diagram 6. White moves (the black king has the move): 1.14-10 22-26 (if 22-27 the man can move towards the left side in order to change the opposition between kings. ww) 2.30-27 26-22 3.27-23 22-19 4.10-6 (the right moment to let black capture the man) 19x28 5.6-11 28-23 6.11-15 white wins.

Two kings against one king and one man (*First Position*)

This endgame is the simplest of the ones that have the same pieces, but unbalanced quality (a white king against a black man). It is the point of reference for more complex endgames that have unbalanced quality of pieces. I am dealing with the most common positions in which black has the man on the left side, blocked by white kings. If black cannot put its king in a corner, it loses, except the case in Diagram 10. If the black king reaches the opponent's double corner, the endgame is drawn (except the case in Diagram 9).

If the black king is in the lower double corner:

- If the man is on 1, 2, 6 or 17, there are two cases:
 - if white has the move, it wins. This position is called "First Position";
 - if black has the move, the endgame is drawn. This position is sometimes called "Fake First Position".
- If the man is on 3 or on the right side, the endgame is drawn, because white cannot attack the black king without letting the black man free to move.

7



Man on 1, 2, or 9

Diagram 7. Black moves (white has the move): 1.25-29 2.10-14 29-26 3.14-19 26-29 4.19-22 29-25 5.22-26 25-29 6.18-22 2-5 (if the man were on 3 or on the right side, it could move forward to the kingrow) (A) 7.26-21 29-25 8.22-18 25-29 9.18-13 29-25 10.21-18 5-9 11.18-21 25x18 12.13x22 9-13 13.22-18 white wins.

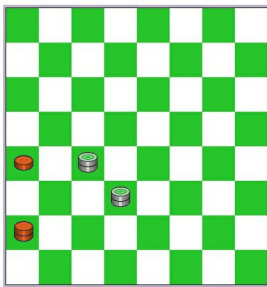
(A) 6. - 29-25 7.26-29 25-21 8.29-25 21-17 9.22-19 2-5 10.19-14 17-13 (A1) 11.25-29 13-10 12.14-11 5-9 13.29-26 9-13 14.26-21 13-17 15.21-26 10-13 16.11-14 13-9 17.14-18 9-5 18.26-22 5-2 19.22-19 2-5 20.19-14 5-9 21.14-10 white wins.

(A1) - 10.5-9 11.14-10.9-13 12.25-29 13-18 13.10-14 18-21.14.29-25 (if 14-18?, 21-25 draw) 21-26 15.25-29 26-30 16.14-18 30-27.17.18-21 white wins.

White moves (black has the move): 1.10-14 25-29 2.18-21 29-25 3.14-18 2-5 4.21-17 5-9 5.17-13 (if 17-21, 9-13 black wins) 25-29 6.18-22 29-25 7.13-18 25-29 8.18-21 29-25 9.21-17 white cannot turn the black king out of the double corner. Draw.

If the man is on 1 or 9, the lines are similar.

8

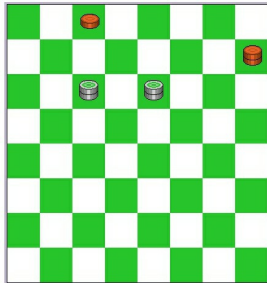


Man on 17

Diagram 8. White moves (it has the move): 1.22-26 25-29 2.18-22 29-25 3.26-29 25-21 4.29-25 white wins.

Black moves (it has the move): 1.25-29 2.18-21 29-25 3.22-18 25-29 4.18-22 (if 21-25, 17-21 black crowns its man and draws) 29-25 white cannot turn the black king out of the double corner. Draw.

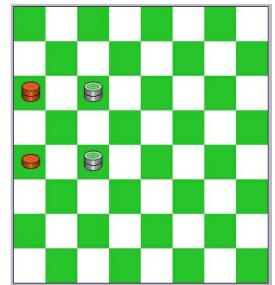
9



The only case in which Black loses with a king in its double corner is the one in **Diagram 9**. White moves (it has the move): 1.11-7 8-4 2.10-6 WW. If black has the move, white cannot force the exchange and draws the game.

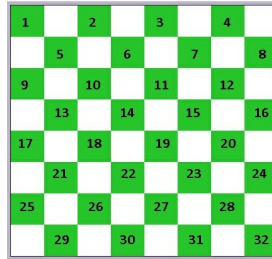
The only case in which black draws with its king out of double corners is the one in **Diagram 10**. White moves and draws because it doesn't have the move and cannot block contemporaneously both the king and the man on the left side.

10



THREE KINGS AGAINST TWO KINGS

BLACK

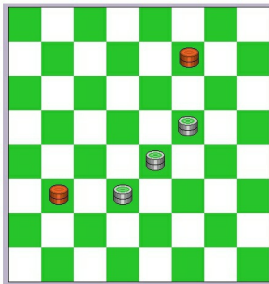


WHITE

The endgame of three kings against two kings is normally won by white, with the exception of some positions, of which I'm giving you two examples below. Black can resist more when places its kings either in a double corner or in a single corner. If the two black kings are separate, the only case that deserves to be studied is when the kings are in the opposite double corners.

Black kings in opposite double corners

1



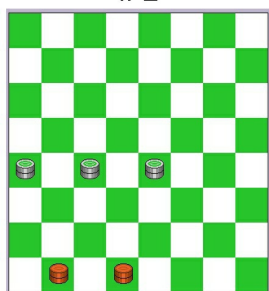
White has to make a line along one of the two parallels, occupying the squares 11-14-18 or 15-19-22. It needs to pick the parallel that let the two black kings have the move over the two white kings at the ends of the line (on 11 and 18 or on 15 and 22).

Diagram 1. White moves: the line is on the right parallel, the two black kings have the move over the white kings at the ends of the line. 1.19-14 7-4 2.15-12 21-25 * 3.22-18 4-8 * 4.12-7 8-4 (if 25-29,18-21 forced exchange and ww) 5.7-11 forced exchange. White wins.

Black moves: the line is on the wrong parallel, the two white kings at the ends of the line have the move over the two black kings. White needs to make the line on the other parallel in order to change the move: 1.7-4 2.19-14 4-8 3.15-11 8-12 4.22-18 (the line is on the right parallel) 21-26 5.14-19 26-29 6.18-21 12-8 7.11-15 29-25 8.21-26 25-29 9.26-22 white wins.

Black kings in the double corner

2



White needs to reach the same position as the **Diagram 2**.

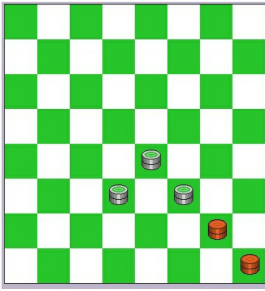
White moves: 1.18-22 30-26 2.17-13 26-30 (if 26-21, 19-14, 29-25, 13-17 ww) 3.13-10 29-25 4.10-14 25-29 5.22-27 white wins.

Black moves: 1.30-27 (if 29-25, 19-22 same manoeuvre) 2.18-21 27-30 (if 29-25, 19-22 ww) 3.19-22 29-25 4.21-26 white wins.

Notice how different the lines are. To figure out which of the two positions occurs, you can calculate the move, omitting from the calculation the king on 17. If black has the move we are in the first case, otherwise we are in the second case.

Black kings in the single corner

3



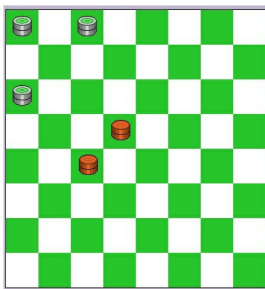
White needs to reach the same position as the **Diagramma 3**.

White moves: 1.22-26 28-24 2.19-22 24-28 3.26-29 white wins.

Black moves: 1.28-31 2.22-26 31-28 3.19-22 white wins.

Even positions

4

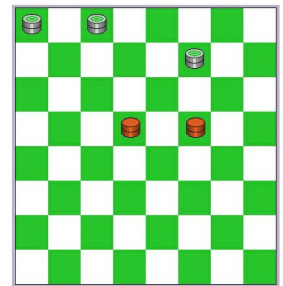


Here are two examples of draw in which white cannot free its kings from the side:

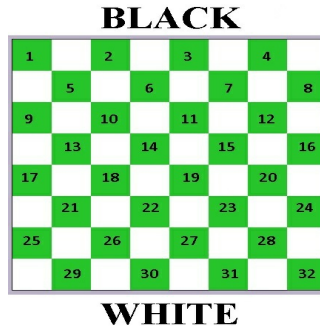
Diagram 4. Black moves: 1.14-10 2.2-5 18-14 etc. Draw.

Diagram 5. Black moves: 1.15-11 2.7-3 14-10 3.2-5 11-14 4.3-7 10-6 5.5-9 6-10 6.9-5 10-6 etc. Draw.

5



TWO KINGS AND A MAN AGAINST TWO KINGS

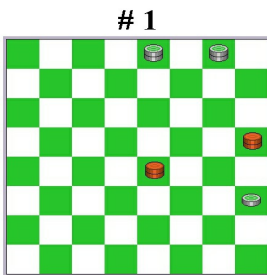


The endgames of two kings and a man against two kings are very important, because they are the starting point to figure out how to play complicated endgames with men down. In all diagrams white has a man up. The only things that white can do in order to try winning is to crown its man or sacrifice it to block the two black kings on a side. Black instead has to block white man and has to keep its kings close to each other. There are lots of endgames and the outcome of each of them depends strongly on the position of the pieces on the board.

Black kings have the move

The endgame is drawn. In general, the black kings can push the white kings away and keep the man blocked on the side. To draw the game, black must avoid the exchange that causes the change of move.

Man on 9, 16, 17, 24, 25, 29, 31 or 32

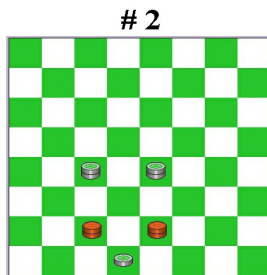


Black must simply repel the white kings and prevent them getting closer to the man. If White has the man on 24, 17 or 31 and put its kings in the double corner, it will have more chance to make an exchange, but if Black plays carefully without making any mistakes, it can get a draw. If the man is on 29, White can also move 29-25 and gain the move. However, the final is drawn, as shown further on in this section.

Below you can find the case in which the man is on 24, but the concepts are similar to the other positions.

Diagram 1. Black moves: 1.16-20 (if 19-15? white can force the exchange by 4-7 and wins. The same trap occurs if the man is on 17 or 31 and the white kings are in lower double corner) 2.4-7 19-23 3.7-12 20-16 4.3-7 16-20 5.12-16 20-15 6.7-4 15-20 (if 15-11?, 24-20, 11-15, 16-12 ww) 7.4-8 20-15 8.16-12 15-20 white cannot move forward the man.

Man on 30



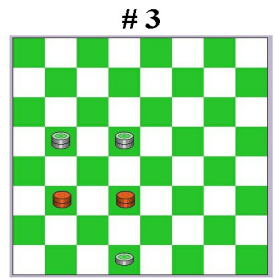
White can get free the man by manoeuvring its kings in the lower double corner. However, that's not enough to win. If Black plays carefully and doesn't make any mistakes, it will push the white man on the left side and will get a draw.

Diagram 2. White moves: 1.19-14 26-22 2.18-13 22-26 3.14-18 27-23 4.13-17 23-27 5.18-21 27-23 (if 26-29? ww the same line as the variation A) 6.21-25 26-22! (black leaves the double corner and lets white go in) (A) 7.25-29 23-19 8.17-21 19-14 9.21-26 (if 21-25, 14-18 etc. black gets a draw, because white is forced to move its man to the left side) 22-27 (if 14-19?, 30-27, X, 26-22 white wins because sacrifices the man and blocks the black king. If 22-18?, 30-27 the white kings gain the move over the black kings. They can push them away and crown the man) 10.29-25 14-19 11.26-29 27-22 12.30-26 (if 25-21 19-14 the same previous position) 22-18 13.26-21 19-22 14.21-17 white draws with a man up.

(A) - 6.26-29? (it's a natural move to prevent the white kings getting closer to the man, but it loses!) 7.17-21 29-26 8.21-18 23-27 9.25-29 26-22 10.18-13 (if 18-14? 27-23, 30-26, 23-27 white cannot move 26-21 for 22-18 and draws) 22-19 11.30-26 19-14 (if 27-22, 13-18, X, 26-22 ww) 12.26-21 27-22 13.21-17 22-19 (if 14-18, 29-26 ww) 14.29-25 (if 29-26? white loses useful tempos, 19-15, 26-29, 15-11, 29-25, 11-6 now the exchange 13-18 is drawn. White cannot move forwards the man and draws) 19-22 (if 19-15, 13-18 ww. If 14-11, 13-18, 11-6, 17-13, 19-15, 18-14, 15-12, 25-21, 12-7, 21-17 etc. white gets a king and wins) 15.25-21 22-19 16.13-18 14-11 17.17-13 11-6 18.21-17 19-15 19.18-14 6-2 20.13-10 ecc. white gets a king a wins.

If the white kings are more backward and the black kings occupy the square 21 and 22, then black can draw the endgame easier. It has to prevent the white kings approaching the lower double corner.

Diagram 3. White moves: 13-17, 22-26 the white kings cannot go in the lower double corner. Draw.

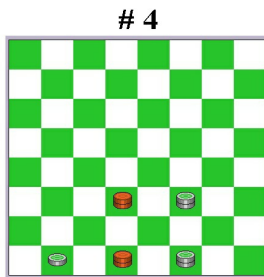


The white kings have the move

• **Man on the base**

White wins the endgame, because it manages to crown the man or to force an winning exchange.

Man on 29

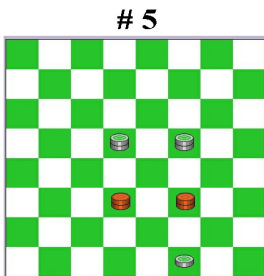


If white has the move, it can win the endgame by crowning the man. The manoeuvre isn't easy at all.

Diagram 4. Black moves: 1.30-26 (A) 2.23-27 22-18 3.27-30 26-22 4.30-26 (the two white kings are next to the man. Now it starts the manoeuvre to crown the man.) 22-19 5.31-27 18-13 6.27-30 19-14 7.26-22 13-10 (if 14-18, 29-25 ww) 8.29-26 10-6 9.22-27 6-11 10.26-22 11-15 11.30-26 15-11 12.27-30 14-10 13.26-21 10-14 14.21-17 14-10 (if 14-18, 30-27 black is forced to accept the exchange with the man) 15.30-27 11-15 16.27-23 15-11 17.23-20 10-6 (if 11-7, 20-15, 10-6, 17-13, 7-3, 13-9, 3-7 [if 6-2, 15-11, 3-6, 11-14 etc. white can get a king through the single corner], 9-5, 7-3, 5-2, 6-10, 15-11 white gets a king and wins) 18.22-19 11-7 19.20-16 7-4 (if 6-10 the man reaches the square 8 and white wins for Sturges's position) 20.17-13 4-7 21.19-14 6-2 22.13-9 white gets a king and wins.

(A) - 1.22-18 (Black tries to keep the white kings away from the man, but it will be forced to accept an exchange or to separate its kings) 2.31-27 18-21 3.27-22 30-26 4.23-19 21-25 (if 26-30, 29-25, 21-17, 25-21 ww. Se 21-17, 22-18, 26-30, 19-14, 30-26, 18-21 etc. black separates its kings and loses the endgame) 5.22-18 26-21 6.19-14 21-26 7.18-13 26-22 8.13-17 22-26 9.14-18 26-30 10.17-21 30-27 11.18-22 exchange and white wins.

Man on 31



If white has the move, the endgame is winning, but it isn't easy at all.

Diagram 5. Black moves: 1.22-27 (if 23-28, 14-19, 22-27, 15-20 etc. black separates its kings and loses) 2.15-19 23-28 3.14-18 27-30 4.19-22 30-27 (if 28-23, 31-28, X, 18-14 etc. white blocks the black kings and wins) 5.22-26 27-30 6.18-21 30-27 (if 28-24, 21-17, now white needs to move its man towards the left side. The white king gains the move over the black one and ww. If 28-23, 31-27, 23-19, 21-17 the white kings has the move over the the black one and ww) 7.26-30 27-23 (if 27-22, 30-27 black loses a king) 8.31-27 23-19 9.21-26 28-23 10.27-22 19-15 11.26-21 15-11 12.21-17 (white wins by the same manoeuvre shown for the man on 29) 23-20 13.30-27 20-15 14.27-23 11-6 15.23-19 15-11 16.17-13 6-2 17.22-18 11-6 18.19-14 2-5 19.13-9 5-1 (if 6-10, X, 18-13 white gets a king and wins) 20.14-19 (if 18-13?, 6-10 bw) 6-11 21.18-13 white gets a king and wins.

Man on 30

If white has the move, it can win by an exchange or by crowning the man.

• **Man on a side**

The endgame is drawn. As the white kings have the move, they can push away the black kings. However, black saves the game by threatening an exchange that changes the move and leads to an easy draw.

Man on 9, 16, 17 or 25

6



Black prevents the white kings protecting the advance of the man by the threat of the exchange that changes the move

Below you can find the most difficult case in which the man is on 25. The same concepts are also useful for the others.

Diagram 6. Black moves: 1.18-22 2.9-13 17-21 3.10-14 (if white king occupies the square 17 by moving 13-17, in order to protect the advance of the man, then black moves 22-26 and makes white leave the square by the threat of the exchange 26-30) 22-26 (if 22-27?, 13-18, 21-17, 14-19 etc. black separates its kings and loses) 4.13-18 21-17 5.14-19.26-21 6.18-22 17-13 7.19-23 (white has to put a king on 26 in order to protect the advance of the man) 13-9 8.22-27 (if 23-27, 21-18 black draws by the exchange) 21-18 9.27-30 18-21 (if 18-22, 25-21, 22-18 draw) 10.23-27 9-13 11.27-22 13-9 12.22-26 21-17 13.30-27 17-13 (if 9-13?, 27-22, 13-10, 22-18, 10-5, 25-21 the exchange between king and man is forced) 14.26-21 13-17 15.21-18 17-21 16.18-14 white

cannot advance the man. Draw.

Man on 24

7



This endgame is an exception to the previous endgames. If white takes control of the double corner with the two kings and black cannot put one of the two kings on 12, white wins. If black plays correctly, the endgame is drawn.

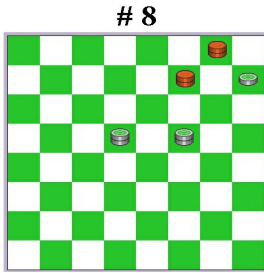
Diagram 7. Black moves: 1.15-11? (if 15-12!, 3-6 [if 4-8, 16-20 drawn], 12-8 black draws, because it gains the move by an exchange.) 2.4-8 11-15 3.3-7 16-20 (if 15-19, 8-12, 16-20, 12-16, 20-23, 7-12, 19-14, 12-15, 14-18 15-11 white gets a king and wins) 4.7-12 15-19 5.12-16 20-15 (if 20-23, 8-12 etc. white gets a king and wins) 6.16-20 15-11 7.8-12 19-14 8.20-16 11-6 9.24-20 14-18 10.12-7 18-14 11.20-15 white gets a king and wins.

Man on 32

The manoeuvre is quite simple. Black has two ways of drawing the endgame.
 First way: black puts its kings in the single corner, close to each other, to prevent the white man moving forward and, at the same time, to prevent the white kings getting closer to the man.
 Second way: black puts one king in one of two double corners, and puts the other one on 28 to defend the single corner. To do this it needs to move the king to 24 or 31 to prevent the white kings occupying these squares.

Sturges's Position

Sturges's position can occur when the white man is on 8 and a black king is on 4.



If the black kings have the move over the white ones and take control of the square 16, then black draws the endgame. All black needs to do is to move the king between the squares 16 and 12. White cannot do anything against this defence.

Diagram 8. Black moves: 1.7-12 2.14-19 12-16 3.19-23 16-12 4.15-20 12-16 5.20-15 16-12 6.23-19 12-16 7.15-11 16-12 8.11-6 12-16 9.6-3 16-12 10.19-14 12-16 11.14-11 16-12 White cannot send away the black kings. Draw.

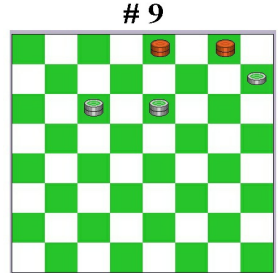
If white gains the square 16, it wins by playing a brilliant line. It can pitch the man and win the endgame.

Diagram 9. White moves: 1.11-15 3-7 2.15-20 7-12 3.20-16 12-7 4.10-13 7-3 5.13-18 3-7 6.18-22 7-11 (A) 7.16-12 11-14 8.22-27 14-11 (if 14-19, 27-30, 19-14, 12-15 black separates its kings, white blocks the black king which is out of the double corner and crowns the man. White wins.) 9.27-23 11-6 10.23-20 6-11 11.20-16 11-6 12.12-15 6-3 13.16-12 4-7 (if 3-6, 15-11 ww) 14. 8-4 7x16 15.15-12 white wins.

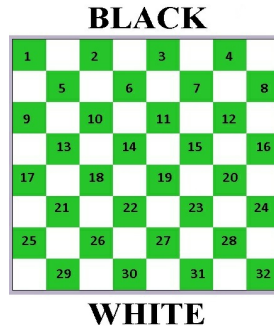
(A) - 6.7-3 7.16-12 4-7 8.22-19 7x16 9.19-15 16-12 10.15-11 12-16 11. 8-4 16-20 12. 4-8 20-23 13.11-7 white wins.

If the white kings have the move over the black ones, white takes control of the square 16 and wins by a brilliant manoeuvre.

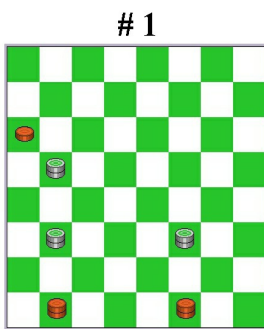
Diagram 9. Black moves: 1.3-7 2.10-14 7-12 3.14-19 12-16 4.11-15 16-12 5.15-20 12-16 6.19-23 16-12 7.20-16 12-7 (if 12-15, 16-12, 15-11, 23-19 etc. black separates its kings or gets blocked) 8.23-20 7-3 9.16-12 4-7 10.20-15 7x16 11.8-4 white wins.



THREE KINGS AGAINST TWO KINGS AND A MAN



There are lots of endgames of three kings against two kings and a man. In this article I only want to deal with the most common ones that occur on a board. In all endgames black has its kings near the base of the white, while white has its kings in upper squares and prevent the black man moving forwards.



If the black kings are not closer to each other, and one it is blocked on a side, white wins easily. An example is the position of the **Diagram 1**.

- If the man is on 1, 2 or 9 there are two cases:
 - First case: white has the move. It wins by First Position if keep blocking the black king on a side.
 - Second case: black has the move. White has to force an exchange with the black king that is blocked on the side. So it can gain the move and win by First Position. If the man is on 9 as in **Diagram 1**, white wins more quickly. Black moves: 29-25, 23-19, X etc. White blocks the black king and the black man and wins.
- If the man is on 3, 4, 8 or 16, white wins by blocking the black king that is in the double corner.

If black has its kings close to each other, it can draw:

- If the man is on 1, 2 or 9 there are two cases:
 - if black has the move, it doesn't have to put its kings in the lower double corner, because it risks to lose by Johnson's position. To draw black has to put its kings in the single corner and, at the same time, has to take control of the square 23;
 - if white has the move, black draws by putting its kings in the lower double corner, because white loses the move if it makes an exchange.
- If the man is on 3, 4, 8 or 16, black draws easily by putting its kings in the lower double corner.

Below you can only find the cases in which the man is on 1 or 9. If the man is on 2, the endgame is very similar to the case that has the man on 1. The others are omitted, because they are easy. At the end you can find Johnson's position.

Man on 1, 2 or 9, Black has the move, black kings in the lower single corner

To win white has to push the black kings towards its base, and has to try to block them or has to try to force an exchange. The manoeuvre of white is limited by strategies of black. In general, black has to try to crown its man or to put one of its kings in the upper double corner. If it has success in doing this, it draws easily. The position of the **Diagram 5** is drawn, but black needs to move carefully in order to avoid the traps, shown in diagrams 2, 3 and 4.

2



In my opinion, to figure out this complicated endgame, it can be useful first to introduce the winning positions for white.

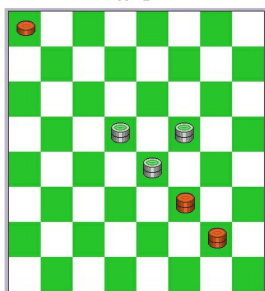
Diagram 2. Black moves: 1.31-28 (A) 2.15-19 23-27 (if 1-5, 14-10 ww. Black has to move its kings backwards and to lose control of the square 23) 3.16-20 28-24 (if 1-5, 20-24, 27-31, 14-10, 5-9, 10-13 ww) 4.19-15 24-28 (B) 5.20-24 28-31 (if 27-31, 15-19 etc. ww) 6.15-19 27-30 7.14-18 30-26 8.18-22 (19-23?, 26-22 draw) 26-30 9.19-23 1-5 10.24-20 5-9 11.20-16 9-13 12.22-18 13-17 13.18-21 31-27 14.21-25 27x20 15.16x23 30-26 16.23-19 (23-27?, 17-21, X, 26-22 draw) 26-29 17.19-22 white wins.

(A) - 1.1-5 2.15-19 23-28 (if 31-28, 14-10 ww. Black has to move its kings backwards and to lose control of the square 23) 3.14-10 (if 16-20?, 5-10, X, 28-23 bw) 5-9 4.10-13 28-32 5.16-20 31-28 6.20-23 28-31 7.13-10 31-28 8.19-14 white wins.

(B) - 4.1-5 5.14-10 5-9 6.10-13 24-28 7.15-19 28-24 8.20-16 27-30 9.19-22 etc. white wins.

It is important to notice that the same winning manoeuvre would be possible even though the black king on square 31 was on 24, but not, if it was on 22.

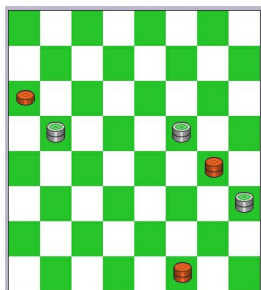
3



If black loses control of the square 23, it risks to loses.

Diagram 3. Black moves: 1.23-27 (if 1-5, 14-10 ww, so black has to move its king backwards and has to lose control of the square 23) 2.15-20 white wins by the same previous winning line.

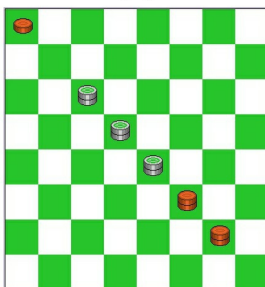
4



If white moves around the black kings and manages to put a king on 24, to draw black has to prevent the two white kings getting closer to each other.

Diagram 4. White moves: 1.15-11 20-23 (if 20-16, 11-7, 31-27, 24-28 black separates its kings and loses) 2.11-14 (the two white kings force the win) 31-27 3.13-18 27-31 4.18-22 23-27 (if 9-13, 22-19 ectc. ww) 5.22-19 27-30 6.14-18 white wins

5

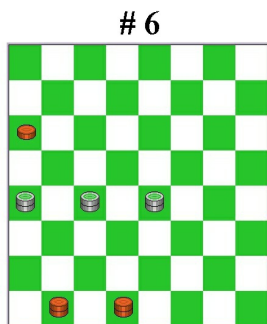


You can find the correct lines of play below.

Diagram 5. White moves: 1.19-15 (white attacks by keeping its kings close to each other) 28-31 (if 23-27?, 14-19, 27-23, 10-14 black is in a loss) 2.10-5 31-27 3.15-19 23-28 4.14-11 27-23 5.19-15 28-31 6.11-7 31-27 7.7-12 27-22 8.12-16 22-27 9.5-10 27-22 (if 27-31?, 10-14 black is in a loss) 10.10-14 1-5 (if 22-27?, 15-19, 23-28, 16-20 black is in a loss) 11.14-10 5-9 12.10-14 22-27 13.15-19 (A) 23-28 14.16-20 28-24 (if 9-13?, 20-24, 27-31 the black kings are frozen out and white wins. If 28-31?, 24-20, 27-30, 14-18 black is in a loss) 15.20-15 (if 19-15, 9-13 black moves the man forward) 24-28 (if 9-13?, 15-11, 27-30, 19-22, 24-28, 14-18, 13-17, 11-14, 28-31, 22-26 ww) 16.14-18 27-23 17.19-14 28-31 18.14-11 31-28 19.11-7 28-31 20.7-12 31-27 21.12-16 27-31 22.15-20 31-27 23.20-24 (white moves around the black kings) 27-31 24.16-12 (if 18-14, 9-13) 23-19 (prevents the white kings getting closer) 25.18-13 31-27 26.24-28 27-31 27.28-32 31-27 28.13-10 27-31 white cannot approach its king without let the black king escape or let a black king to reach the upper double corner. And it cannot make black kings move backwards either. Draw.

(A) - 13.14-18 23-28 (also good 27-31, 18-22, 9-13, etc.) 14.16-20 28-23 (if 28-24? [or 27-31?], 18-13, 24-28 [or 31-27], 15-19 black is in a loss) 15.20-24 27-31 (if 23-20?, 15-19, 20-16, 19-23 ww) 16.18-13 31-27 (if 23-20? black in a loss) 17.13-18 27-31 18.18-14 23-20 (if 9-13?, 15-19 ww. If 23-27?, 15-19, 27-30, 14-18 black is in a loss) 19.15-19 (if 15-11, 20-23, 14-18, 23-19 prevents the white kings getting closer) 20-16 20.19-15 (prevents a black king reaching the upper double corner) 16-20 21.15-12 20-23 white cannot make the black kings move backwards. Draw.

Johnson's position



Johnson's position occurs when the black has the move, the man is on the square 1 or 2 or 9, and the two kings are in the lower double corner. It is like an extension of the First Position. If white makes an exchange, it gains the move and wins by First Position. If black has its man on 1 or 2, white will be able to make man black move forward to square 9, or it will be able to force an exchange.

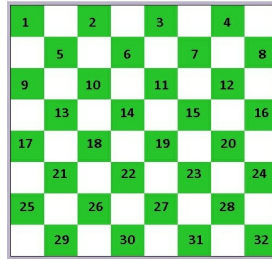
To win the game white has to prevent a black king getting to the square 17, and prevent both black kings getting to the single corner (squares 23 and 28).

Diagram 6. White moves: 1.17-13 30-26 (if 29-26, 18-22, 26-29, 19-14 the same position as the move number 9) 2.19-14 29-25 (if 26-30, 18-22 the same position as the move number 9) 3.13-17 25-29 (if 26-30, 18-22, 25-29, 17-13 the same position as the move number 9) 4.18-21 26-30 5.17-13 29-26 (if 30-27, 14-18, 27-30, 18-22 the same position as the move number 11) 6.21-18 30-27 (if 29-26, 18-22 the same position as the move number 9) 7.14-19 27-30 (if 27-31, 19-23 ww) 8.18-22 26-29 9.19-14 (the key position) 29-25 (if 30-26, 13-10 white wins by First Position)

10.14-18 25-29 11.18-21 29-25 12.22-19 25x18 13.13x22 9-13 14.19-14 13-17 15.14-18 white wins.

FOUR KINGS AGAINST THREE KINGS

BLACK



WHITE

The endgame of four kings against three kings is normally won by white, with the exception of some positions, of which I'm giving you two examples below. If the black kings are separate, white will win more easily. It blocks the isolated black king and forces an exchange. If the black kings are close to each other, the manoeuvre to win is a little bit more complicated. At first white has to push back the black kings towards a side, then it has to force an exchange.

1

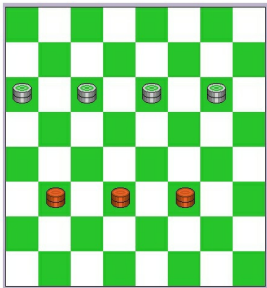


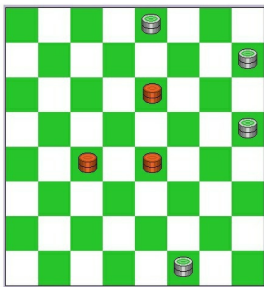
Diagram 1. White moves: 1.12-16 23-27 2.10-14 27-23 3.11-15 23-27 4.14-19 22-26 5.9-13 27-22 6.16-20 21-17 (if 21-18, 15-11 double exchange) (A) 7.13-10 17-21 8.10-14 21-25 9.20-24 22-27 10.15-20 27-31 (if 27-30, 20-23 then the exchange is forced) 11.20-23 25-29 12.24-20 29-25 13.14-18 25-29 14.19-14 29-25 15.18-13 25-21 16.13-17 21-25 17.14-18 26-30 18.17-21 25-29 19.21-25 30-26 20.18-13 26-30 (if 26-22, 25-21, 29-25*, 21-18, 22-26, 23-27 exchange) 21.13-17 30-26 (if 29-26, 25-29, 26-22, 17-21, 31-27, 20-16 exchange) 22.23-27 31x22 23.25-21 26-30 24.21-26 white wins.

(A) - 6.22-27 7.20-24 27-30 (if 27-31, 15-20, follows 20-23, then the same line as the trunk) 8.15-11 26-29 9.11-14 21-25 (if 21-26, 13-18, 29-25, 18-22, 26-21, 22-27 exchange) 10.24-28 30-26 11.28-23 forced exchange. White wins.

Black moves: 1.22-19 (if 23-19, 11-14, 19-23, 10-13, 22-26, 14-19 then spectacles. If 21-18, 10-14, 18-21, 12-7 forced exchange) 2.12-16 19-22 3.10-14 23-27 4.11-15 27-23 5.9-13 23-27 6.14-19 22-26 7.16-20 27-22 8.13-10 21-25 9.10-14 25-29 10.20-24 22-27 11.15-20 27-31 (if 27-30, 20-23 forced exchange) 12.20-23 29-25 13.14-18 25-29 14.19-14 29-25 15.18-13 25-21 16.13-17 21-25 17.14-18 26-30 18.17-21 25-29 19.21-25 30-26 20.18-13 26-30 21.13-17 30-26 22.23-27 31x22 23.25-21 26-30 24.21-26 white wins.

Even positions

2

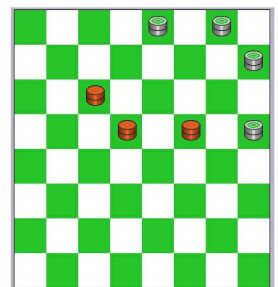


There are two examples of even positions below because white cannot get free its kings from the side.

Diagram 2. Black moves: 1.19-23 2.8-4 18-14 3.3-7 11-15 4.4-8 15-11 5.8-4 11-6 6.7-3 6-11 7.16-12 14-19 8.12-7 19-14 etc. Draw.

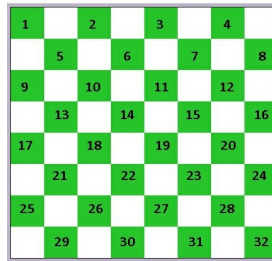
Diagram 3. Black moves: 1.14-11 2.16-12 15-19 3.12-7 11-15 4.7-12 15-11 5.3-7 11-15 6.12-16 19-14 7.7-12 14-19 8.4-7 10-14 etc. Draw.

3



THREE KINGS AND A MAN AGAINST THREE KINGS

BLACK



WHITE

There are a lot of endgames of three kings and man against three kings. The colour that has three kings to draw the game needs:

- to block the opponent's man with its kings;
- to keep its kings close to each other;
- to prevent unwanted exchanges.

If it has success in doing this, it can draw the endgame after the count of the forty moves.

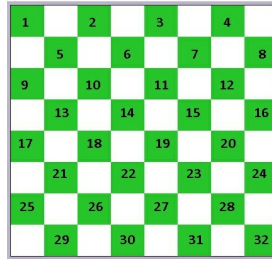
As example, see **Diagram 1**.

1



FAMOUS POSITIONS

BLACK

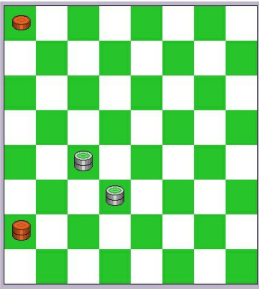


WHITE

This article is about the "famous positions" and the block of two kings against two kings in the single corner. It is important to learn them, because they occur quite often.

First position

1



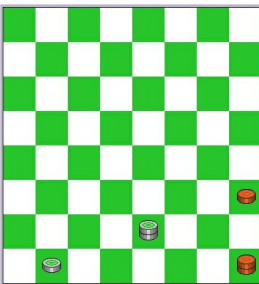
The first position is an endgame with four pieces on the board, see **Diagram 1**. White has the move and wins easily. The black man can be indifferently on 1, 2, 9 or 17, white wins in any case.

If white doesn't have the move the endgame is drawn

The winning lines are in the chapter "Two kings against one king and man".

Second position

2

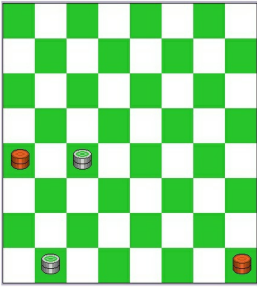


The second position is an endgame with four pieces on the board in which the white king prevent the black man and the black king escaping from the single corner, see **Diagram 2**.

Black can only move its king between the squares 32 and 28, until white crowns its man and put the second king on square 19. If white has the move: 32-28, 27-31, 28-32, 19-23 ww. If it doesn't have the move: 19-23, 24-28, 27-31 ww.

Third position

3

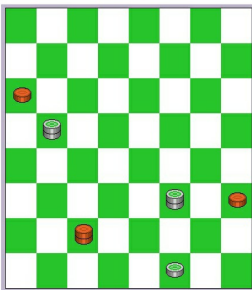


The third position is an endgame with four kings on the board, see **Diagram 3**.

White wins in any case, blocking the black king in the single corner. If doesn't have the move, it needs to change it by making the exchange 18-21.

Fourth position

4



Basically, if white has two kings more than black, wins easily.

A position which occurs frequently is the "Fourth Position". In **Diagram 4** there is an example. To win the endgame, white needs to crown its man on square 31.

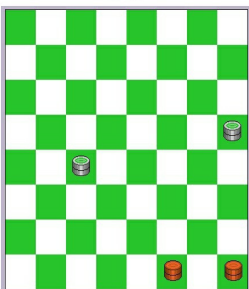
Diagram 4. White moves (black has the move): 1.13-17 26-29 2.17-21 29-25 3.21-26 9-13 4.23-27 13-17 5.26-29 25-21 6.29-25 21-18 (if 21-26, 25-21, 26-30, 27-23 ww) 7.27-30 18-22 8.25-21 22-19 (se 22-26, 30-27 Bv) 9.30-27 19-14 10.27-23 14-11 11.31-27 11-14 12.27-22 14-11 13.22-18 (if 22-19?, 11-15 white loses the man) 11-6 14.18-14 6-11 15.14-10 11-7 16.10-6 7-4 17. 6-3 4-8 18. 3-7 8-4 19. 7-12 4-8 20.23-20 8x15 21.20x11 24-28 22.11-15 28-31 23.15-19 31-27 24.21-25 27-30 25.19-22 white wins.

Black moves (White has the move): 1. 26-22 2.23-27 22-19 (if white has the move, black has to put its king towards the upper double corner, otherwise it loses because of First Position) (A) 3.13-10 19-15 4.27-23 15-11 5.31-27 11-15 6.27-22 15-11 7.22-18 (if 22-19?, 11-15, 19-14, 15-19, 23-28, 9-13 draw) 11-15 8. 10-13 15-12 9. 18-14 etc. White crowns its man and wins.

(A) - 2.22-26 3.13-17 26-29 4.27-22 29-25 5.22-18 25-29 6.17-21 29-25 7.18-13 White wins (First Position).

Two kings vs. two kings with a block in the single corner

5



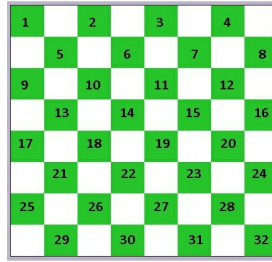
The only interesting case in which two kings beat two kings is shown in **Diagram 5**

Diagram 5. White moves: 1.16-20 (A) 32-28 (se 31-28, 20-24, 28-31 [if 28-23, 18-22 ww], 18-22 see trunk. If 31-27, 20-24, 27-31, 18-22 see trunk) 2.18-22 28-32 3.20-24 (the square 24 is the key of this win)) 32-28 4.22-19 28-32 5.19-23 white wins.

(A) - 1.18-22? (loses an important tempo) 31-28 2.16-20 28-24 Black occupies the square 24 and draws.

TO FIGURE OUT THE ENDGAME

BLACK



WHITE

The main purpose of an endgame is to crown more men than your opponent. The manoeuvre could be quite complicated and sometimes the loss of one tempo could be disastrous.

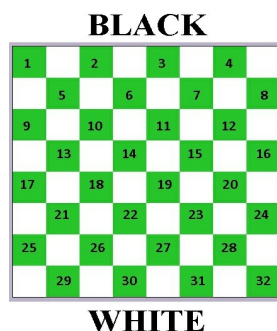
To have success in endgames, you need to take advantage of everything, as follows:

- Crown men before your opponent, so that you are the first to use the power of kings.
 - Keep your kings close to each other, so that they can help each other.
 - If your kings don't have the move over your opponent's kings, then make good exchanges in order to gain it.
 - Keep your base protected, even partially, in order to hinder your opponent's men to reach your kingrow.
 - Force your opponent's men to go towards the same side, in order to block them by using one king.
 - Try blocking the greatest number of your opponent's men on the sides.
-

BALLOT OPENINGS

[Openings of three-move restriction](#)

[Openings of two-move restriction](#)



White has 7 moves to start a game. It has been shown by experience that 23-19 is the best, followed in order by 21-18, 23-20 22-19, 22-18, 24-20, and finally 21-17. Obviously, in official contests almost all players start a game by moving 23-19, and very few play one of other moves. For each of these moves, in turn, there are two or three good moves, while the others are considered to be weak. Obviously, the situation is repeated, the best moves are preferred. It follows that, without any restriction, only very few variations would be played, and consequently good players could produce a boring interminable series of draws.

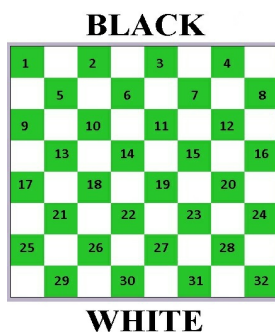
This situation actually occurred at the end of the 19th century in England. The English and Scottish Draughts Associations introduced the so-called "two-move restriction", that is a method, used among experts, to determine what openings shall be played in a contest. This restriction was introduced in order to obviate repetition in opening games, so that players might be compelled to adopt original lines of play, and thus rely more on their skill than on memory in playing. The system of deciding what openings shall be played is as follows: In commencing to play there are seven possible moves for Black to make and seven possible replies for White; thus forty-nine openings could be formed by these combinations. It was, however, considered that six of these openings so formed were untenable, thus leaving forty-three as the recognized standard openings. The rejected ones are:

21-18, 9-13;
22-18, 9-13;
21-18, 11-14;
22-18, 11-14;
23-20, 11-15;
24-20, 11-15.

In the United States the game of draughts had a great development in the early 20th century. Since a few Grand Masters had known all the openings of the two-move restriction deeply well, after a few decades American players decided to change again. In 1934 they introduced the so called "3-move restriction", that is still the present-day method. This new method has 174 openings. At first people used to play only 144 openings, because the others were considered to be too weak or even losing. Subsequently the ACF voted to extend the old 144-opening three-move deck to 156 openings in August 2003. The new deck includes twelve additional openings that are believed to be drawable after years of analysis and mail play.

In Italy the three-move restriction has been used for ages. Presently in official contests only 126 openings are used, because the other openings are considered to be very weak. In addition to this, in most of tournaments each round consists of one game, that is the two contenders don't play the second game with reversed colours. The main reason for this choice is to reduce the duration of tournaments to one or two days, except championships which last almost a week. Nowadays, by the advent with draughts programs the analysis of openings have a high degree of accuracy. The best program in the world is KingsRow Italian. According to it 8 openings are likely losing. You can find the list at <http://edgilbert.org/ItalianCheckers/ItalianBook.htm>. The method of deciding which opening shall be played is by ballot. All the openings are printed on small plastic discs and are put in a cloth bag. Before a round starts, in presence of the referee, one of the players of the tournament draws the opening, taking out one of the disks from the bag.

OPENINGS OF THREE-MOVE RESTRICTION



General tables of the openings

The tables which are used in official contests are:

General table of openings. It is composed of 174 openings. According to the current Bylaws, they can only use in the case of two-game matches, tournaments in pairs or teams.

Table A. It is composed of 48 openings, whose evaluation is either NNN or BBB. According to the current Bylaws, they can only use in the case of two-game matches, tournaments in pairs or teams.

Table B. It is composed of 126 openings. According to the current Bylaws, it is the table which is normally used in tournaments and championships. It includes all openings except the ones of table A.

Table C. It is composed of 83 openings. It excludes the openings of Table A and the ones whose evaluation is either NN or BB.

Opening number	1st white move	1st black move	2nd white move	Evaluation of the opening	Opening number in Table B
1	21-17	9-13	25-21	B	1
2	21-17	9-13	26-21	B	2
3	21-17	9-13	22-18	NNN	
4	21-17	10-13	17-10	=	3
5	21-17	10-14	26-21	NNN	
6	21-17	10-14	17-13	NNN	
7	21-17	10-14	22-18	NNN	
8	21-17	10-14	22-19	NN	4
9	21-17	10-14	23-19	NNN	
10	21-17	10-14	23-20	NNN	
11	21-17	10-14	24-20	NN	5
12	21-17	11-14	25-21	N	6
13	21-17	11-14	26-21	NN	7
14	21-17	11-14	22-18	NNN	
15	21-17	11-14	22-19	N	8
16	21-17	11-14	23-19	NN	9
17	21-17	11-14	23-20	NNN	
18	21-17	11-14	24-20	N	10
19	21-17	11-15	25-21	N	11
20	21-17	11-15	26-21	N	12
21	21-17	11-15	22-18	N	13
22	21-17	11-15	22-19	NNN	
23	21-17	11-15	23-20	N	14
24	21-17	12-15	25-21	NNN	
25	21-17	12-15	26-21	N	15
26	21-17	12-15	22-18	NNN	
27	21-17	12-15	22-19	NNN	
28	21-17	12-15	23-19	=	16
29	21-17	12-15	23-20	NN	17
30	21-17	12-16	25-21	NN	18
31	21-17	12-16	26-21	NN	19

32	21-17	12-16	22-18	NN	20
33	21-17	12-16	22-19	NN	21
34	21-17	12-16	23-19	=	22
35	21-17	12-16	23-20	NNN	
36	21-17	12-16	24-20	NNN	
37	21-18	10-13	25-21	NN	23
38	21-18	10-13	26-21	NN	24
39	21-18	10-13	22-19	NNN	
40	21-18	10-13	23-19	=	25
41	21-18	10-13	23-20	=	26
42	21-18	10-14	25-21	=	27
43	21-18	10-14	22-19	NN	28
44	21-18	10-14	23-19	NN	29
45	21-18	10-14	23-20	N	30
46	21-18	11-14	18-11	BBB	
47	21-18	11-15	25-21	B	31
48	21-18	11-15	26-21	NN	32
49	21-18	11-15	23-20	=	33
50	21-18	11-15	18-14	NN	34
51	21-18	11-15	22-19	NNN	
52	21-18	12-15	25-21	=	35
53	21-18	12-15	23-19	B	36
54	21-18	12-15	23-20	N	37
55	21-18	12-15	22-19	NNN	
56	21-18	12-16	25-21	=	38
57	21-18	12-16	22-19	N	39
58	21-18	12-16	23-19	N	40
59	21-18	12-16	23-20	N	41
60	22-18	10-13	27-22	N	42
61	22-18	10-13	18-14	NNN	
62	22-18	10-13	21-17	NNN	
63	22-18	10-13	23-19	NNN	
64	22-18	10-13	23-20	NNN	
65	22-18	10-14	26-22	NN	43
66	22-18	10-14	27-22	NNN	
67	22-18	10-14	23-19	N	44
68	22-18	10-14	23-20	NN	45
69	22-18	10-14	24-20	NNN	
70	22-18	11-14	18-11	BBB	
71	22-18	11-15	23-19	NNN	
72	22-18	11-15	23-20	N	46
73	22-18	11-15	18-14	N	47
74	22-18	11-15	27-22	NN	48
75	22-18	12-15	26-22	NN	49
76	22-18	12-15	27-22	NN	50
77	22-18	12-15	23-19	NNN	
78	22-18	12-15	23-20	NN	51
79	22-18	12-15	18-14	NN	52
80	22-18	12-16	26-22	=	53
81	22-18	12-16	27-22	NNN	
82	22-18	12-16	23-19	=	54
83	22-18	12-16	23-20	N	55
84	22-18	12-16	18-14	NN	56
85	22-19	9-13	26-22	NN	57
86	22-19	9-13	27-22	NNN	
87	22-19	9-13	21-17	NNN	
88	22-19	9-13	21-18	NNN	
89	22-19	9-13	23-20	N	58
90	22-19	9-13	19-14	NN	59
91	22-19	10-13	26-22	NN	60
92	22-19	10-13	27-22	NN	61
93	22-19	10-13	21-17	NN	62
94	22-19	10-13	23-20	=	63
95	22-19	10-13	19-15	NNN	

96	22-19	10-14	19-10	N	64
97	22-19	11-14	26-22	NN	65
98	22-19	11-14	27-22	N	66
99	22-19	11-14	21-18	N	67
100	22-19	11-14	23-20	NN	68
101	22-19	11-14	24-20	=	69
102	22-19	11-15	26-22	N	70
103	22-19	11-15	27-22	=	71
104	22-19	11-15	23-20	NNN	
105	22-19	12-15	19-12	B	72
106	22-19	12-16	26-22	=	73
107	22-19	12-16	27-22	=	74
108	22-19	12-16	19-15	B	75
109	22-19	12-16	23-20	NNN	
110	22-19	12-16	24-20	NNN	
111	23-19	9-13	28-23	=	76
112	23-19	9-13	21-17	BB	77
113	23-19	9-13	21-18	=	78
114	23-19	9-13	22-18	NNN	
115	23-19	9-13	19-15	NN	79
116	23-19	10-13	28-23	=	80
117	23-19	10-13	21-17	=	81
118	23-19	10-13	19-14	N	82
119	23-19	10-13	19-15	B	83
120	23-19	10-14	19-10	B	84
121	23-19	11-14	28-23	B	85
122	23-19	11-14	21-18	=	86
123	23-19	11-14	22-18	N	87
124	23-19	11-14	24-20	NNN	
125	23-19	11-14	19-15	N	88
126	23-19	11-15	28-23	B	89
127	23-19	11-15	21-17	=	90
128	23-19	11-15	21-18	B	91
129	23-19	12-15	19-12	BB	92
130	23-19	12-16	28-23	B	93
131	23-19	12-16	24-20	NNN	
132	23-19	12-16	19-14	N	94
133	23-20	9-13	27-23	NNN	
134	23-20	9-13	28-23	NN	95
135	23-20	9-13	21-17	=	96
136	23-20	9-13	21-18	=	97
137	23-20	9-13	22-18	NNN	
138	23-20	9-13	20-16	N	98
139	23-20	10-13	21-17	NNN	
140	23-20	10-13	27-23	NN	99
141	23-20	10-13	28-23	N	100
142	23-20	10-13	20-16	NN	101
143	23-20	10-14	27-23	NNN	
144	23-20	10-14	28-23	N	102
145	23-20	10-14	20-15	N	103
146	23-20	10-14	20-16	NN	104
147	23-20	10-14	22-19	NNN	
148	23-20	11-14	27-23	N	105
149	23-20	11-14	28-23	N	106
150	23-20	11-14	21-18	N	107
151	23-20	11-14	22-18	NN	108
152	23-20	11-14	20-16	NN	109
153	23-20	11-15	20-11	BBB	
154	23-20	12-15	27-23	NN	110
155	23-20	12-15	28-23	N	111
156	23-20	12-15	20-16	NN	112
157	23-20	12-15	22-19	NNN	
158	23-20	12-16	20-15	B	113
159	23-20	12-16	27-23	NN	114
160	24-20	9-13	21-17	=	115

161	24-20	9-13	21-18	=	116
162	24-20	9-13	20-15	N	117
163	24-20	9-13	20-16	N	118
164	24-20	10-13	20-15	N	119
165	24-20	10-13	20-16	N	120
166	24-20	10-14	20-15	N	121
167	24-20	10-14	20-16	N	122
168	24-20	10-14	21-18	NNN	
169	24-20	11-14	20-15	N	123
170	24-20	11-14	20-16	N	124
171	24-20	11-14	21-18	NNN	
172	24-20	11-15	20-11	BBB	
173	24-20	12-15	20-16	N	125
174	24-20	12-16	28-24	NN	126

LEGEND:

N = black.

B = white.

= an even position.

B o **N** = the colour has a slight advantage. Most of the times that means that it has more choice of lines to play.

BB o **NN** = the colour is absolutely better and the opponent plays on the defensive.

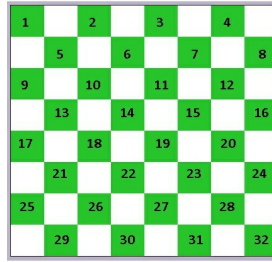
BBB o **NNN** = The colour is much better and the opponent is very weak.

Summary of Evaluation

Evaluation	Total of openings
=	26
B	13
BB	2
BBB	4
N	44
NN	41
NNN	44

OPENINGS OF TWO-MOVE RESTRICTION

BLACK



WHITE

Allowed		
Opening number	1st white move	1st black move
1	21-17	9-13
2	21-17	10-13
3	21-17	10-14
4	21-17	11-14
5	21-17	11-15
6	21-17	12-15
7	21-17	12-16
8	21-18	10-13
9	21-18	10-14
10	21-18	11-14
11	21-18	11-15
12	21-18	12-15
13	21-18	12-16
14	22-18	10-13
15	22-18	10-14
16	22-18	11-14
17	22-18	11-15
18	22-18	12-15
19	22-18	12-16
20	22-19	9-13
21	22-19	10-13
22	22-19	10-14
23	22-19	11-14
24	22-19	11-15
25	22-19	12-15
26	22-19	12-16
27	23-19	9-13
28	23-19	10-13
29	23-19	10-14
30	23-19	11-14
31	23-19	11-15
32	23-19	12-15
33	23-19	12-16
34	23-20	9-13
35	23-20	10-13
36	23-20	10-14
37	23-20	11-14
38	23-20	11-15
39	23-20	12-15
40	23-20	12-16
41	24-20	9-13
42	24-20	10-13
43	24-20	10-14
44	24-20	11-14
45	24-20	11-15
46	24-20	12-15

47	24-20	12-16
Rejected		
	21-18	9-13
	22-18	9-13
