

Summoner's Chess

1 Game Setup (Constructed)

1.1 Each player begins the game with a deck, one general in the left center of their first rank, and 20 morale.

1.1.1 A deck contains exactly 32 cards.

1.1.2 A deck cannot contain more than 8 copies of each minion.

1.1.3 A deck cannot contain more than 1 copy of each legend.

1.1.4 A deck cannot contain more than 2 copies of each other card.

1.2 The object of the game is to checkmate the opposing general or reduce the opponent's morale to 0 (or less).

1.3 Each player draws a 5 card hand, and may put any number of those cards on the bottom of their deck. If any cards are put back, that player draws back up to 5 cards.

1.4 Choose a player to go first at random. If this game is part of a match, the player who lost the previous game chooses who goes first.

2 Game Setup (Limited)

2.1 Each player begins the game with a deck, one general in the left center of their first rank, and 20 morale.

2.1.1 A deck contains exactly 32 cards.

2.1.2 A deck must consist of cards opened during the limited event, whether by drafting or from the player's sealed pool.

2.1.3 A deck cannot contain more than 1 copy of each legend.

3 Ending the Game

3.1 A player without a general loses the game.

3.1.1 Check and checkmate generally precede the capture of a general; however, a player is never required to concede.

3.2 A player with 0 or less morale loses the game.

3.2.1 Whenever a unit is captured, that unit's controller loses morale equal to its value.

3.2.2 Whenever a unit is sacrificed, that unit's controller loses morale equal to its value.

4 Turn Flow

4.1 Start Step

4.1.1 Ready all allied cards on the field.

4.1.1.a A card can be exerted once if it is not already exerted, and readied once if it is not already readied.

4.1.1.b Each card is always either readied or exerted.

4.1.1.c Cards enter the field exerted.

4.1.2 Any abilities that say “at the beginning of your turn” will be resolved in any order you please.

4.2 Main Phase

4.2.1 You may issue one command on each of your main phases. A command can be used to activate a unit, summon a unit, or perform an action.

4.2.2 You may play any number of non-unit, non-action cards, so long as you can pay their costs, as only units and actions cost your command.

4.3 End Step

4.3.1 If you didn’t play a card from hand, you draw a card. You may still draw after activating on-board abilities or commanding units.

4.3.2 Discard cards down to your hand limit.

4.3.2.a A players hand limit is 5 unless it is changed by another game effect.

4.4 You may end your turn at any time after you have completed one game action, either playing a card or commanding a unit.

4.4.1 If you cannot end your turn, the game is a draw.

4.5 Your turn is ended immediately if a command or effect you controlled puts the enemy general into check.

5 Card Types

5.1 Units

5.1.1 Minion

5.1.1.a Minions generate devotion. You may exert a minion for one devotion among factions listed in its type bar.

5.1.2 Champion and Legend

5.1.2.a The main difference is the number of copies you may have in your deck. Effects can refer to champions and legends separately.

5.1.3 To summon a unit (a minion, champion, or legend), reveal it from hand, use one command, pay its devotion cost, then put that unit on any file, and any rank up to the unit’s summoning range.

5.1.3.a Champions and legends have a summoning range of 1.

5.1.3.b Minions have a summoning range of 2.

5.1.3.c You cannot summon a unit such that it puts the enemy general in check, whether directly or by allowing another unit to do so.

5.1.3.d Units enter the field exerted.

5.2 General

5.2.1 Generals generate devotion. You may exert a general for one devotion among factions listed in its type bar.

5.2.2 Generals cannot perform actions and are generally unaffected by spell and action effects, as they are not units.

5.3 Structure

5.3.1 To play a structure, reveal it from your hand, pay its costs, and put it onto the field adjacent to one of the units that was exerted to pay its costs.

5.4 Action

5.4.1 To play an action, reveal it from your hand, use one command, choose an allied unit that will perform the action, pay its costs, exert the chosen unit, perform its effect, then discard it.

5.4.2 The unit chosen performs the action on your behalf. Text in the action's effect that refers to "this unit" refers to that chosen unit, and the action's pattern, if any, is centered on that unit.

5.4.3 Note that if a minion takes an action, it may still help generate the devotion to pay for that action. The instruction to "exert the chosen unit" will have no effect if the chosen unit was already exerted during the devotion payment step.

5.5 Spell

5.5.1 To play a spell, reveal it from your hand, pay its costs, perform its effect, then discard it.

5.5.2 If a spell has a pattern, it must be centered on an allied unit.

5.6 Trap

5.6.1 Traps cannot be played. They must be set.

5.6.2 If a trap is set, and the triggering game action has been performed, you may pay the trap's devotion cost, turn it face up, perform its effects, then put it in your discard.

6 Playing Cards

6.1 Each card has a devotion cost to the left of the art box. A card's cost is an integer from 0 to 8 equal to the number of pips in the slots of that panel.

6.2 To pay a devotion cost, exert a number of generals and minions equal to that card's cost. The faction of exerted cards must match the required faction as indicated by the devotion cost; white star pips can be paid by any faction.

6.3 Additional costs to play a card are performed during the payments step, before the checkpoint occurs, and therefore cannot be responded to.

7 Face-down and Set cards

7.1 You may set a card face-down anywhere you may summon a minion by paying three devotion of any kind.

7.2 Face down cards are units with no types, no patterns, and no abilities.

7.3 If a face down card's front side is a unit, it may be turned face up for its devotion cost.

7.4 If a face down card's front side is a trap, it may be activated for its devotion cost when the condition for that trap is met.

7.5 When a card is turned face up, it is exerted as if it just entered.

8 Activating Units

8.1 If a unit is activated because a command was issued to it, the unit becomes exerted.

8.1.1 Other effects that activate a unit won't cause the unit to exert unless specified by that effect.

8.2 Most units have a pattern. This pattern indicates how a unit moves when it is activated. A unit that doesn't have a pattern can't be activated.

8.2.1 Blue footsteps are "move" tiles. Red swords are "capture" tiles. Purple slashes are "charge" tiles. Cyan wings are "jump" tiles. Yellow starbursts are "tackle" tiles. Green arrow+starbursts are "pounce tiles". Orange guns are "shoot" tiles. Grey exclamation marks are "special" tiles.

8.2.2 Move, capture, and charge tiles give the "ground" designation to the tile. A unit can't move to those tiles if there is an obstacle in the way.

8.2.2.a For the purposes of determining obstacles, first attempt to move the unit along some path using the smallest number of king moves landing only on tiles in its pattern. If that is not possible, perhaps because the pattern is discontinuous, determine obstacles by making some number of orthogonal moves, making a 45 degree turn, and then making some number of diagonal moves.

8.2.3 Jump, tackle, and pounce tiles give the "jump" designation to the tile. Jump commands don't care about obstacles.

8.2.4 Move, charge, jump, and pounce tiles give the "move" designation to a tile. A unit can move to those tiles if they are unoccupied.

8.2.5 Capture, charge, tackle, and pounce tiles give the "capture" designation to a tile. A unit can move to those tiles if they are occupied by an enemy piece.

8.2.6 Shoot tiles give the "shoot" designation to a tile. A unit may capture to that tile without moving.

8.3 If a command is canceled, the commanded unit will return to the most recent square it was at. In most cases, that causes the unit to remain where it was before it was commanded.

8.3.1 If a command is canceled to prevent multiple units from occupying the same tile, it will return to the tile it is most recently touched. Units with riding and flying should “go back” one step. All other units will return to the tile they were commanded from.

9 Promotion

9.1 To promote a unit, send it to the discard, then search your hand and deck for a champion or legend that shares a type with that unit, then place the new unit at the tile where the minion just promoted.

9.2 Whenever a minion lands on the eighth rank, it promotes immediately!

9.3 Promoting a unit does not cause you to lose morale.

9.4 A unit that enters the field via promotion still enters exerted.

10 Check and Mate

10.1 A general is in check if an enemy unit’s pattern has capture designated tiles at the general’s location.

10.2 You cannot move your general into check, even if you can get out of check before passing the turn.

10.3 A general cannot move through check, even if the destination tile is not in check.

10.3.1 A general can jump over checked tiles.

10.4 A general with riding must end the repeated command before a step would land it in check.

10.4.1 A general with flying only cares about the ultimate destination tile when considering checks.

10.5 You cannot play cards from hand while in check. Move your general, block the check, or capture the offending piece before summoning a unit.

11 Checkpoints and Quick Effects

11.1 Whenever a player plays a card, activates an ability, or commands a unit, a checkpoint is performed. During a checkpoint, each player may play cards which have “Quick” prefixed to their card type. Each checkpoint occurs immediately before the effects are performed, after payments are made.

11.1.1 If all of the targets of a card become illegal, that spell is illegal and moves to the discard with no effects.

11.1.2 If certain parts of the spell become impossible to perform, skip those parts; the spell will perform as many of its effects as it is able to.

11.1.3 Capture commands won't be canceled if there is no defending piece at the destination square during resolution (this can happen if the defending unit moves by an effect). The attacking piece will still move as normal.

11.1.3.a Abilities that trigger "when this unit captures" might not trigger even if the unit was moved according to a capture command, as those are triggered by a capture actually happening, not by the capture command being issued.

11.1.4 Non-capture commands will be canceled if there is a piece blocking the destination square at resolution time.

11.1.4.a A move command will only be canceled if it isn't also a capture command. Otherwise, the commanded piece will simply capture its unfortunate new victim.

12 Definitions

12.1 Divine

12.1.1 A player divines by looking at a number of cards from the top of their deck, then putting those cards on the top or bottom of their deck in any order.

12.2 Scour

12.2.1 A player scours by moving a number of cards from their deck to their discard.

12.3 Offside Units

12.3.1 A unit is offside if it is further ahead than the most advanced allied minion.

12.3.1.a Minions cannot be offside, as only units further ahead than that most advanced minion are considered offsides.

13 Keyword abilities

13.1 Riding

13.1.1 When a unit with riding follows a command, it may repeat that command any number of times up until it encounters a card on one of the destination squares along the path. The final destination square must still obey the command's designations.

13.1.1.a Riding commands designated as moves can repeat the command any number of times up to but not including the first unit along the path.

13.1.1.b Riding commands designated as captures can repeat the command up to exactly enough times to capture the first enemy unit along the path.

13.1.1.c Riding commands cannot continue beyond a unit along the path, even if the individual steps of the command are designated as jumps. For example, a dababba-rider jumps two tiles orthogonally. If it is on a black tile when it starts this move, it may jump over any number of cards on white tiles (as each step of the riding move is a 2 tile jump that happens to jump over white tiles); however, the first unit it encounters on a black tile will prevent any further movement.

13.1.1.d Riding has no effect on shoot commands.

13.1.2 If the riding keyword is followed by a number, such as “riding 4”, that number is the maximum number of times the step can be repeated in one command.

13.1.3 Riding can be modified with keywords such as “advance riding”. These keywords limit the types of commands that are included.

13.1.3.a If a tile name is listed (move, capture, charge, jump, tackle, pounce, shoot, special), then only the listed kinds of commands are included.

13.1.3.b If a direction is listed (advance, retreat, flanking, diagonal), then only the listed directions are included.

13.2 Flying

13.2.1 When a unit with flying follows a command, it may repeat that command any number of times. The final destination square must still obey the command’s designations.

13.2.1.a Flying has no effect on shoot commands.

13.2.2 If the flying keyword is followed by a number, such as “flying 4”, that number is the maximum number of vaults the unit is allowed to make in that command.

13.2.3 Flying can be modified with keywords such as “advance flying”. These keywords limit the types of commands that are included.

13.2.3.a If a tile name is listed (move, capture, charge, jump, tackle, pounce, shoot, special), then only the listed kinds of commands are included.

13.2.3.b If a direction is listed (advance, retreat, flanking, diagonal) then the indicated, then only the listed directions are included.

13.3 Swarm

13.3.1 When you play a card with swarm, you may play another card with the same card type without paying any of its costs, as long as it has a lower cost. This is allowed to cause a chain of swarm effects.

13.4 Extended

13.4.1 Extended is a pattern-changing effect, and only exists due to the limited pattern grid size on the cards. It cannot be removed by ability removing effects.

13.4.2 A card with extended has the outer border of its pattern repeated infinitely. The corners extend diagonally, and the non-corner edged extend orthogonally.

13.4.3 If the extended keyword is followed by a number, such as “extended 4”, that number is the number of times the pattern is repeated around the edges of the grid.

13.4.4 Extended can be modified with keywords, such as “extended advance”. These keywords limit the types of tiles that are repeated.

13.4.4.a If a tile name is listed (move, capture, charge, jump, tackle, pounce, shoot, special), then only the listed kinds of tiles are included in the extension.

13.4.4.b If a direction is listed (advance, retreat, flanking, diagonal) then the indicated, then only the listed directions are included in the extension.

13.5 Inspire

13.5.1 A unit with inspire that captures another unit causes its controller to gain morale equal to the value of the captured unit.

13.6 Fear

13.6.1 A unit with fear causes the defending army to lose twice as much morale when it captures.

13.7 Iron

13.7.1 A unit with iron can't be captured.

13.7.2 A unit with "iron X" enters with that many iron counters instead.

13.7.3 A unit with "iron from X" can't be captured or destroyed by anything with that quality. This can include its faction, which tile it is on, or the type of capture, among other things.

13.7.4 Effects that move things from the field to the discard that don't capture, such as destroying or sacrificing, may still cause the unit to die.

13.8 Shield

13.8.1 A unit with shield can't be destroyed.

13.8.2 A unit with "shield X" enters with that many shield counters instead.

13.8.3 A unit with "shield from X" can't be destroyed by anything with that quality. This can include its faction, or which tile it is on, among other things.

13.8.4 Effects that move things from the field to the discard that don't destroy, such as capturing or sacrificing, may still cause the unit to die.

13.9 Hopper

13.9.1 A unit with hopper can't move or capture unless the destination square is precisely one step behind a encountered on its path.

13.9.2 A unit with hopper has flying 1, unless another version of flying is listed as part of its rules text.

13.10 Cannon

13.10.1 A unit with cannon can't move or capture unless the destination square is one or more steps behind a unit encountered on its path.

13.10.2 A unit with cannon has flying 1, unless another version of flying is listed as part of its rules text.

13.11 Locust

13.11.1 A unit with locust captures all the enemy units that were vaulted during that command, instead of the enemy unit at the destination tile.

13.11.2 Assuming there are no other keywords that modify the units vaulting type, move commands will land one space further than a unit without vaulting and jump commands will proceed for one additional step than a unit without vaulting.

13.11.2.a A knight with vaulting would land one knight move further in the same direction.

13.11.2.b A rook with vaulting would land one space further than normal.

13.11.2.c The extra step is always in the same direction as the most recent step.

14 Counters

14.1 Units may have counters on them. Counters stay with the unit until that unit leaves the field.

14.1.1 Promotion causes a unit to lose all its counters.

14.2 Consumable Counters

14.2.1 If a unit with an ice counter would be commanded, instead remove one ice counter from it.

14.2.2 If a unit with a stun counter would be readied, instead remove one ice counter from it.

14.2.3 If a unit with an iron counter would be captured, instead remove one iron counter from it.

14.2.4 If a unit with an shield counter would be destroyed, instead remove one shield counter from it.

14.3 Tracking Counters

14.3.1 At the beginning of each player's turn, put a poison counter on each allied unit with a poison counter. Then sacrifice all units with five or more poison counters.

14.3.2 Counters added by abilities can have any name, and abilities can refer to counters by name or in general. These counters are tracking counters.