

Introduction

The following Laws of Chess were in the first instance compiled by Mr William Ward, a leading member of the City of London Chess Club, revised by the Executive Committee of the British Chess Federation and, after tentative publication in the 1911 Year Book of the Federation, amended by the Committee after consideration of many criticisms and suggestions. The object of the publication is to provide a more concise and less involved set of Chess Laws than have been available hitherto, and to render possible quicker and easier reference in any case of dispute.

Laws of Chess.

The Game of Chess

1. The game of chess is played upon a board by two persons having sixteen men each and moving alternately, but only one man in each turn except when Castling (Law 12). In these laws the person whose turn it is to move is termed "the player" and the other person "the opponent."

The Board

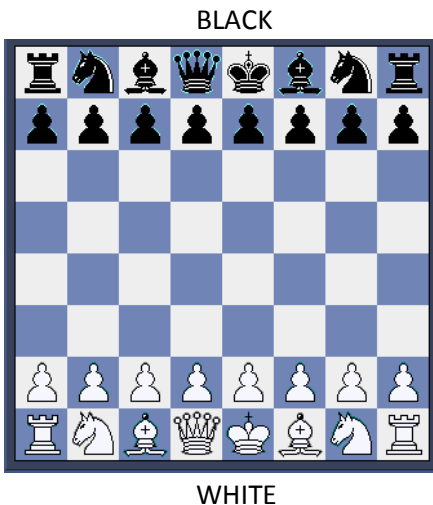
2. The board is a square, divided into sixty-four smaller squares of equal size, coloured alternately light and dark, and is placed between the player and the opponent so that the corner squares to their right hands are light coloured. The rows of squares parallel to the side of the board nearest the player are termed "Ranks." and those at 'right angles thereto are termed " Files."

3. If before four moves have been completed on each side it shall appear that the board has been improperly placed, it shall be adjusted and the game recommenced: otherwise the game shall be played out on the board as it stands.






The Men

4. The men consist of eight "Pieces"--a King, a Queen, two Rooks (sometimes called Castles), two Bishops, and two Knights – and eight "Pawns" for each player; one set being of a lighter colour and called "White" and the other set being of a dark colour and called "Black".

5. At the commencement of a game the men shall be placed upon the board in the positions shown on the following diagram:-



Upon such diagram the men are denoted by the following symbols :-

	WHITE	BLACK
KING		
QUEEN		
ROOK		
BISHOPS		
KNIGHTS		
PAWN		

6. The Rook, Bishop, and Knight, standing nearest the King at the commencement of a game are known throughout that game as the "King's Rook," " King's Bishop," and " King's Knight" respectively and those nearest the Queen as the "Queen's Rook," " Queen's Bishop " and " Queen's Knight" respectively. The Pawns are named after the Pieces upon whose files they stand for the time being; as "king's Pawn," "Queen's Pawn," etc.

7. If at any time in the course of a game it shall appear that at the commencement of such game the men were improperly placed, or (except in a game at odds) that any one of them was omitted, the game shall be annulled.

Movements of the Men.-

8. Subject to Laws 9 and 11, the men may be moved upon the "board as follows:

(A) The King may be moved in any direction, but only one square at a time. except in "Castling" (Law 12).

(B) The Queen may be moved to any square situate on the same rank, file or diagonal as the square on which she stands.

(C) The Rook may be moved to any square situate on the same rank or file as the square on which it stands.

(D) The Bishop may be moved to any square situated on the same diagonal as the square on which it stands.

(E) The Knight may be moved in any direction from the square on which it stands to the next square but one of a different colour, passing over the intermediate square, whether such square be occupied or not.

(F) A Pawn may be moved:—

(a) When not making a "Capture" (Law 10) in a forward direction only, along the file upon which it stands, one square at a time. except on its first move, when it may be moved either one or two squares.

(b) When making a capture, one square forward in a diagonal direction only.

9. No man may be moved to a square occupied by a man of its own colour: and no man (except a Knight) may be moved over a square occupied by a man of its own or the opposite colour.

Capturing.—

10. If a man be moved to a square occupied by a man of the opposite colour, the last named man is said to have been "captured," and must be removed from the board.

Check.—

11. The King may not be captured. He is said to be "in check" if he be in such a position that, but for this Law, he would be liable to capture, or would be so liable but for the fact that if the capture were made the adverse King would be left "in check." A player may neither place, nor leave, his King in check.

Castling—

12. "Castling" is a combined move of King and Rook, and may be made subject to the conditions that:—

(a) Neither the King nor the Rook have been moved previously.

(b) The squares between the King and the Rook be unoccupied.

(c) The King be not in check, and do not pass over, nor on to a square, upon which he would be in check:.

In Castling the King is first moved along the rank to the next square but one to his own square, and then the Rook from the corner square towards which the King has been moved, is placed upon the square over which the King has passed.

Taking in Passing.-

13. If a Pawn be moved two squares on its first move, it may be captured on the next move only, by an adverse Pawn which would have been able to capture it, if it had been moved only one square: if it be so captured, the capture shall be deemed to have been made on the square passed over. This is termed "taking in passing."

14. If the player have no legal move other than taking a Pawn in passing, he must make that move.

Pawn Promotion

15. If a Pawn be moved to the eighth rank it must forthwith be nominated as, or exchanged for a Queen, Rook, Bishop, or Knight, of the same colour. Such Pawn is then said to have been "promoted."

Choice of Colour

16. One person shall take the white men, and the other person the black men, the right in choice of colour, in the absence of arrangement, being determined by lot.

17. In a series of games between the same persons, they shall take the white and black men alternately. A game which has been annulled shall not count as one of the series.

First Move

18. The first move in any game shall be made by the person taking the white men.

19. If a person make the first move in a game when it is not his turn to do so the game must be annulled if either the player or the opponent so require before the fourth move on each side has been completed. otherwise the game must be played out.

Completion of Move.-

20. A move is "complete"—

(a) In Castling :—When the hand of the player has quitted the Rook.

(b) In promoting a Pawn:--When the piece to be substituted for the Pawn has been nominated, or placed on the board.

(c) In capturing:--When the captured man has been removed from the board, and the hand of the player has quitted his own moved man.

(d) In transferring a man from one square to another:—When the hand of the player has quitted the man so transferred.

(e) In sealing a move (Law 33):- When the envelope containing the record, in writing, of such move has been sealed up by the player.

Adjustment

21. The player may adjust the position of any of his own or the opponent's men upon the board on giving previous notice to the opponent of his intention to do so.

The opponent may not adjust the position of any man without having previously obtained the consent of the player

Touching Men.--

22. If the player touch-

(a) One of his own men; he must move it, or if he cannot legally do so the opponent may require him to move his King

(h) One of the opponent's men; he must capture it, or, if he cannot legally do so, the opponent may require him to move his King

(i) One of his own, and one of the opponent's men; he must capture the opponent's man with his own, if he cannot legally do so. the opponent may require that the player move his own man or that he capture the opponent's man, or, if he cannot legally do either, that he move his King.

(j) More than one of his own men (or more than two men when castling the opponent may select which one of the men so touched the player shall move, or, if none can be legally moved. require him to move his King.

(k) More than one of the opponent's men; the opponent may select which one of the men so touched the player shall capture, or, if none can be legally captured, require him to move his King.

23. If the opponent touch or move any man or men, without having previously obtained the consent, of the player, any man or men so touched or moved must be at once replaced, and when the opponent shall next become the player, he shall be deemed to have touched it or them, and be subject to such of the provisions of Law 22 as may be applicable.

(Note:—Touching accidentally, or for the purpose of adjustment, under Law 21, shall not constitute a breach of Laws 22 and 23.)

Illegal Moves.—

24. If the player make an illegal move, and the opponent call attention to it before making a reply, such illegal move must be retracted, and-

(a) If no capture has been made, the player must make a legal move with the man illegally moved, or move his King, as the opponent may require.

(b) If a capture has been made, the player must either make the capture by means of a legal move, or make a legal move with the man by which the illegal capture has been made, or move his King, as the opponent may require.

25. If, during the progress of a game, it be found that an illegal move has been made in the game and not retracted under Law 24, the position which existed at the time such illegal move was made must be restored, and the game proceeded with from that point. If this position cannot be ascertained, the game must be annulled.

Penalties.-

26.—When the opponent is entitled to exact a penalty, he must do so before touching a man.

27. When a move is made in discharge of a penalty, this move must not be Castling.

28. If a move which the opponent requires to be made by way of penalty be illegal, the requirement must be disregarded, and the opponent forfeits his right to exact a penalty for the original offence.

29. Before a penalty is discharged, the position which existed prior to the commission of the offence must be restored.

Checkmate

30. If the player's King be in check, and the player can make no legal move, his King is "checkmated." and the game is won by the opponent.

Stalemate.—

31. If the player's King be not in check, and the player can make no legal move, his King is "stalemated."

Drawn Games.--

32. A game is treated as drawn:—

(a) By Stalemate (Law 31).

(b) By perpetual check. If the player prove that he can subject the opponent's King to an endless series of checks.

(c) By recurrence of position. If the player prove that the then existing position has occurred at the commencement of his turn to play on not less than two previous occasions. (For the purposes of this clause there is no distinction between the King's and Queen's Rook and Knights, nor between original pieces and pieces of the same denomination and colour being promoted pawns.)

(d) By the 50 more limit. If the player prove that not less than fifty moves have been made on each side, without any man having been captured, or Pawn moved.

(e) By mutual agreement. If the players so agree at any stage of the game.

Adjourned Games.-

33. If a game be adjourned, the player must make a record in writing of his next move, and seal up the same in an envelope, so that during the period of adjournment it shall not be accessible either to himself or to the opponent.

34. It shall be the duty of the player and the opponent to see that a correct record of the position at the time of adjournment, and also (in the case of a game played under a time limit) of the times then recorded by their respective clocks, is preserved with the sealed move.

35. On the resumption of an adjourned game, the envelope shall be opened by the opponent, the position set up by him, and the sealed move made upon the board. If the position be wrongly set up, all subsequent moves shall be void, and the

position must if possible, be correctly replaced. If this cannot be done, or (in the case of a game played under a time limit) if the time recorded by the respective clocks at the time of adjournment cannot be ascertained, the game must be annulled.

Time Limit.

36. In the absence of agreement to the contrary either player on providing suitable clocks may require a game to be played under a time limit. In each case the following regulations shall apply :—

(a) Each player shall make not less than twenty moves in one hour, not less than forty moves in two hours, and so on; unless some other number of moves to be made within a limited time, be fixed by agreement, or by the regulations governing the competition in which the game is being played.

(b) The time of each player shall be separately reckoned.

(c) Time shall run against the player, except that when the opponent is considering what penalty he shall exact, his time shall run, and not that of the player.

(d) It shall be the duty of each player to insure the recording of his opponent's time, and no allowance shall be made for error caused by a player's neglect of this duty.

(e) If it be proved that, otherwise than by the neglect mentioned in Clause (d), time has been incorrectly recorded for one or both of the players, such error shall be equitably rectified.

(f) Any move or moves retracted under Law 25 shall be treated as having been made for the purpose of this Law.

Game of Chess at Odds

37. At the odds of Pawn and more, and Pawn and two moves, the Pawn to be given shall be the King's Bishop's Pawn. A

player receiving the odds of two moves must make them together as his first move in the game, but they shall count as two moves for the purpose of the time limit.

38. At the odds of Knight and Rook, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, the Knight to be given shall be the Queen's Knight and the Rook the Queen's Rook. The player giving these odds shall be entitled to the first move.

39. At the odds of a Rook, the giver of such odds may move the King as in Castling on the side from which the Rook has been omitted subject to Law 12 and to the further condition that the square from which the Rook has been omitted has previously been unoccupied.

Prohibition of Extraneous Assistance.--

40. Neither the player nor the opponent shall, during the course of a game, refer to any extraneous written or printed matter which bears upon such game, nor request the advice of any other person as to the conduct of such game.

41. Spectators are not permitted to call attention to any breach of these laws they may observe committed or to interfere in any way with the conduct of a game, except to determine any disputed question of fact under Law 43.

Games Forfeited.--

42. The player or the opponent forfeits the game:-

- (a) If he willfully upset the board or disarrange the men.
- (b) If he ceases play and refuses to resume it within a reasonable time.
- (c) If he exceeds the time limit.
- (d) If he refuses to comply with a legal requirement of his opponent.
- (e) If he refuses to observe these Laws.

A game forfeited by the player or the opponent is treated as won by the other person playing the game.

Disputes.—

43. If any dispute arise on a question of fact, it may be referred by agreement to an independent spectator, whose decision, in such case, shall be final.

44. If any dispute arise as to the interpretation of these Laws, or as to any matter affecting the conduct of a game not provided for therein, it may be referred by agreement to the Executive Committee of the British Chess Federation, whose decision, in such case, shall be final.