

CHESS · VARIANT 21 OF 153

Bird's Chess

10×8

BOARD

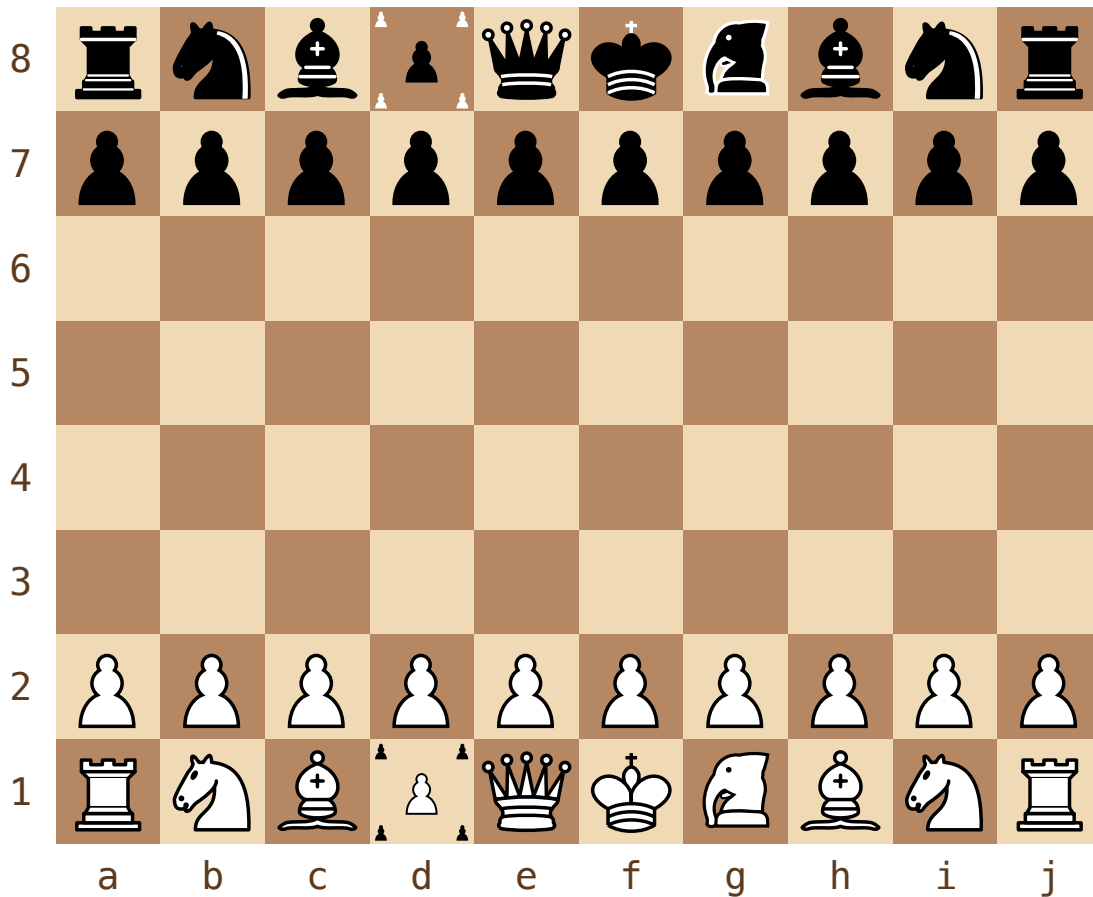
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PLAYERS

Bird's Chess

Invented by Henry Bird, 1874. Published in the City of London Chess Magazine. A predecessor to Capablanca's Chess.

OVERVIEW



Bird's Chess – starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=chess&variant=birds-chess>

Bird's Chess extends standard chess to a 10×8 board by adding two compound pieces per side: the Guard (Rook + Knight) and the Equerry (Bishop + Knight). Capablanca likely drew inspiration from this game when designing Capablanca's Chess.

SETUP

10-file board (files a-j), 8 ranks.

FEN: rnbqgkebnr/pppppppppp/10/10/10/10/PPPPPPPPP/RNBGQKEBNR w - - 0 1
(G/g = Guard, E/e = Equerry)

White (rank 1, a-j): Rook(a1), Knight(b1), Bishop(c1), Guard(d1), Queen(e1), King(f1), Equerry(g1), Bishop(h1), Knight(i1), Rook(j1) **White Pawns (rank 2):** a2-j2

Black (rank 8, a-j): Rook(a8), Knight(b8), Bishop(c8), Guard(d8), Queen(e8), King(f8), Equerry(g8), Bishop(h8), Knight(i8), Rook(j8) **Black Pawns (rank 7):** a7-j7

Alternative: Black's back rank may mirror White's (with Black's Queen on the same file as White's Queen). Either setup is playable.

PIECES

All standard FIDE pieces move as usual. Two additional pieces:

GUARD

Moves as a **Rook** (slides orthogonally any distance) **or** a **Knight** (L-shape leap). Equivalent to the Chancellor.

EQUERRY

Moves as a **Bishop** (slides diagonally any distance) **or** a **Knight** (L-shape leap). Equivalent to the Archbishop. Not colour-bound.

RULES

All standard FIDE rules apply with the following modifications:

CASTLING

Castling uses a modified rule. The King moves **three squares** toward the Rook; the Rook then jumps over the King to land on the square immediately adjacent to the King on the side toward center:

- ♦ **Queenside castling** (toward a1): King moves f1→c1 (three squares left); Rook moves a1→d1.
- ♦ **Kingside castling** (toward j1): King moves f1→i1 (three squares right); Rook moves j1→h1.

The same applies symmetrically for Black. Standard castling conditions apply: neither King nor Rook may have moved previously; no pieces between them; King not in check; King does not pass through check.

PAWN PROMOTION

Pawns reaching the far rank may promote to: Queen, Guard, Equerry, Bishop, Rook, or Knight.

ALL OTHER RULES

En passant, stalemate (draw), and all other FIDE rules apply normally.

Source: chessvariants.com/large.dir/bird.html; based on Gollon manuscript sent to Greenwood, 1976