

CHESS · VARIANT 22 OF 153

Blind Chess (Banqi)

4×8

BOARD

2

PLAYERS

8

7

6

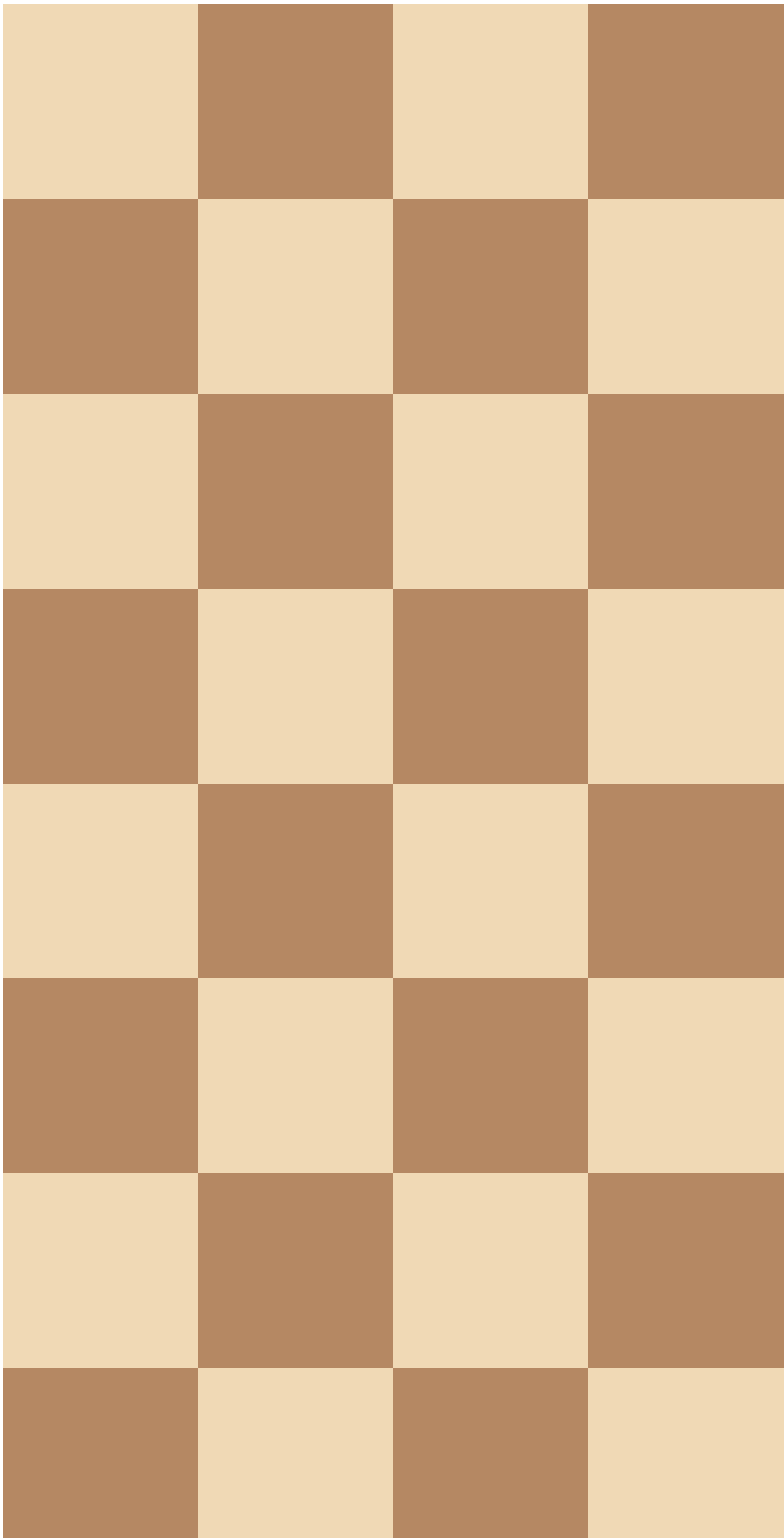
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1



Banqi (半棋, bànqí, “Half Chess”), also known as Dark Chess (暗棋) or Blind Chess, is a two-player Chinese board game played on a 4×8 grid — one half of the Xiangqi board. All 32 pieces are placed face-down at the start; players reveal pieces one at a time and the identity of unrevealed pieces is unknown. The rules documented here follow the Taiwanese version, which is widely played.

THE BOARD

4 files × 8 ranks = 32 squares. Pieces occupy the squares (not intersections). The board is played as half of a Xiangqi board, using only one side of the river.

SETUP

All 32 pieces are shuffled and placed face-down one per square in a random arrangement. Neither player knows what piece is on which square.

Piece set (16 Red + 16 Black = 32 total):

PIECE	COUNT PER SIDE
General (将 / 帅)	1
Advisor (士 / 仕)	2
Elephant (象 / 相)	2
Chariot (车 / 俥)	2
Horse (马 / 騊)	2
Cannon (炮 / 砲)	2
Soldier (兵 / 卒)	5
Total	16

The first player to flip a piece establishes their colour for the game (Red or Black, depending on the colour of the piece revealed).

TURNS

On each turn a player does exactly one of:

- 1 **Flip** a face-down piece, revealing it. The piece belongs to whichever colour it shows, regardless of who flipped it.
- 2 **Move** one of their own face-up pieces one square orthogonally (up, down, left, or right) to an empty adjacent square.
- 3 **Capture** an opponent’s face-up piece, subject to the capture rules below.

Face-down pieces cannot be captured.

MOVEMENT

All pieces move identically: one square up, down, left, or right. There is no piece-specific movement in Banqi – the General, Soldier, and every piece in between all move the same way. The Cannon's capture is the only exception.

CAPTURE HIERARCHY (TAIWANESE RULES)

Pieces are ranked. A piece may only capture an opponent's piece of **equal or lower rank**, with two exceptions:

Hierarchy (high to low): General → Advisor → Elephant → Chariot → Horse → Soldier

Exception 1 – Soldier captures General: Despite being the lowest rank, the Soldier can capture the General (and only the General with this rule). The General cannot capture Soldiers.

Exception 2 – Cannon: The Cannon is not part of the hierarchy. It captures any piece of any rank, but **must jump over exactly one intervening piece** (the "screen") to do so. The screen piece may be friendly, enemy, or face-down. A Cannon cannot capture an adjacent piece (it must jump). The Cannon is vulnerable to capture by any piece except the Soldier.

WIN CONDITION

The game ends when a player has no legal moves. This most commonly occurs because all of that player's pieces have been captured. The player with no legal moves **loses**.

STALEMATE

If one player repeatedly attacks an enemy piece it cannot capture, forcing an endless cycle (stalemate), rules vary by convention. Under Chinese Chess rules the instigating player must stop; under many casual rules, a stalemate results in a draw or the surrender of one piece to break it.

ATTRIBUTION

Banqi is a traditional Chinese game. Rules from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banqi.