

CHESS · VARIANT 72 OF 153

Hole Chess

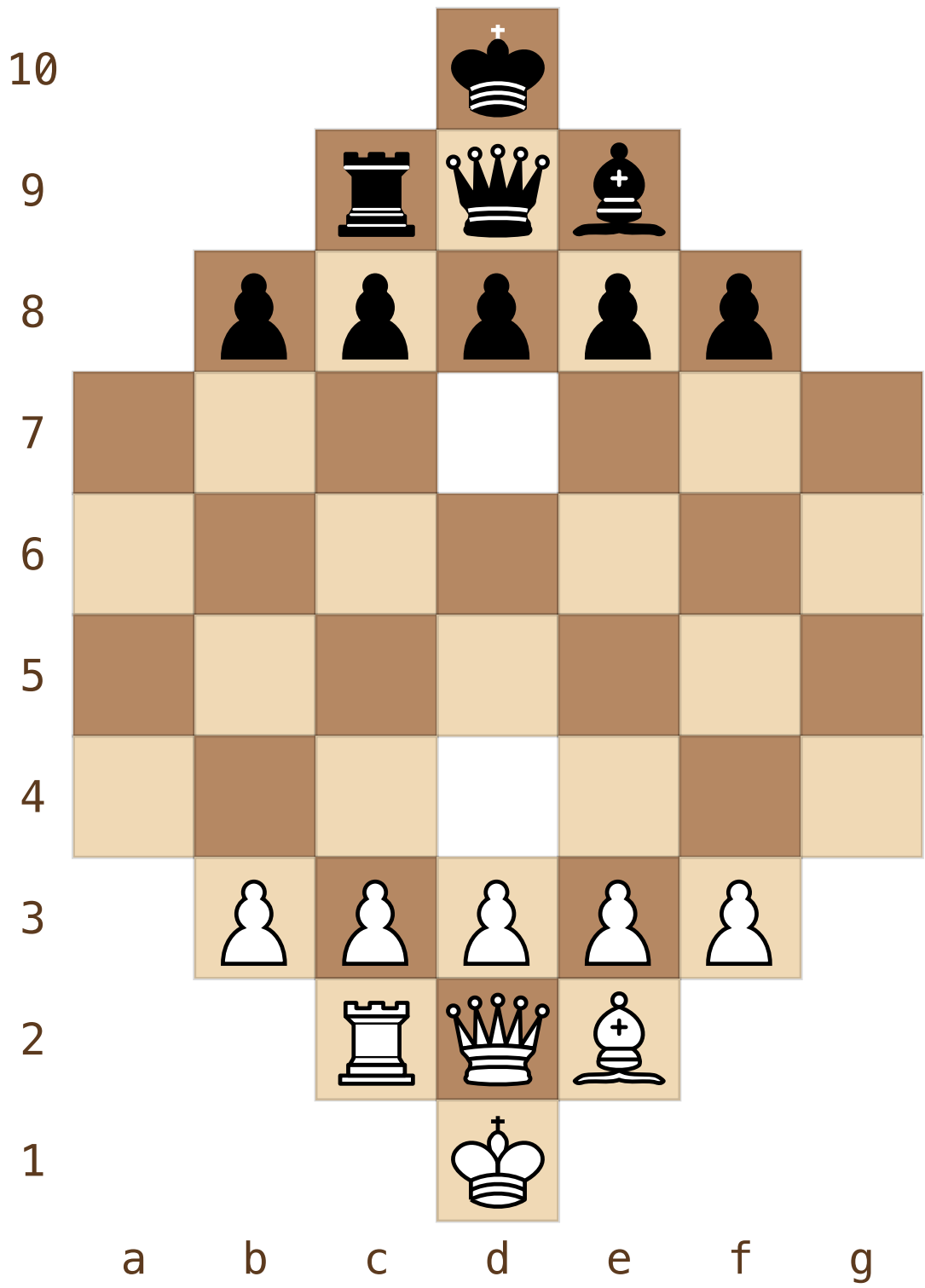
44 squares (custom board with 2 holes)

BOARD

2

PLAYERS

HOLE CHESS



Hole Chess – starting position

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

Hole Chess is a chess variant created by Gary K. Gifford in December 2003 for the Chess Variants 44-Square Contest. The game is played on a custom 44-square board that includes two permanent holes – squares that pieces cannot occupy, but through which pieces can be captured by being pulled in. The defining mechanic is the Two-Action Rule: three piece types (Queen, Rook, and PS-Bishop) may both move and pull an enemy piece into a hole on the same turn.

THE BOARD

A custom 44-square board with two holes. The two holes are located centrally – the central pawn on each side is blocked by a hole directly in front of it. A physical board can be made by cutting holes in an actual board and placing it over an open box, so pieces sucked into holes fall through.

PIECES

Each player begins with:

- ♦ 1 **King**
- ♦ 1 **Queen**
- ♦ 1 **Rook**
- ♦ 1 **PS-Bishop** (Promoted Shogi Bishop = Dragon Horse: moves as a King or a Bishop)
- ♦ 5 **Pawns**

STARTING POSITION

Yellow (light):

- ♦ King: d1
- ♦ Queen: d2
- ♦ Rook: c2
- ♦ PS-Bishop: e2
- ♦ Pawns: b3, c3, d3, e3, f3

Red (dark):

- ♦ King: d10
- ♦ Queen: d9
- ♦ Rook: e9
- ♦ PS-Bishop: c9
- ♦ Pawns: b8, c8, d8, e8, f8

Holes are located at d4 and d7. The central pawns (d3 and d8) cannot advance because a hole is directly in front of them; they can only move by capturing diagonally.

THE TWO-ACTION RULE

The **Queen, Rook, and PS-Bishop** each have two actions available on a turn when they are the moved piece. Either or both actions may be used; but at least one must be used.

Action 1 (movement): The piece moves and possibly captures as in standard chess (PS-Bishop moves as King or Bishop).

Action 2 (hole pull): The piece targets an enemy piece in its direct line of fire. If exactly one hole exists between the attacker and the target piece (along a straight line), the target is pulled toward the attacker along that line until it falls through the hole — eliminating it. Action 2 cannot be used if two or more holes exist between attacker and target, or if no hole is in line.

Result: A piece using Action 2 after Action 1 can eliminate two pieces in one turn — one by standard capture, one by pulling into a hole.

A piece may also remain stationary and use only Action 2 (no movement on that turn).

PAWNS

Pawns move and capture as in standard chess. On their first move they may advance two squares — except the central pawns (d3/d8) which cannot advance at all (holes block them). En passant applies.

Promotion: if a Pawn reaches the opponent's third rank (the furthest reachable rank), it must promote to a Queen, Rook, or PS-Bishop.

KINGS

Kings move as in standard chess. Unlike standard chess, **Kings can be captured** (not just checkmated). If a King would have to move into or be exposed to the enemy line of fire (a potential stalemate), it must do so — there is no stalemate. A King may move adjacent to the enemy King, but the enemy King then captures it, ending the game.

HOLES

Holes are permanent features of the board. Pieces cannot move onto holes voluntarily. A piece that is pulled into a hole via Action 2 is eliminated. It is **illegal** to move onto a hole under normal movement; a piece can only enter a hole by being pulled.

WIN CONDITION

Capture the opponent's King, checkmate the opponent's King, or force resignation.

ATTRIBUTION

Hole Chess was created by Gary K. Gifford, December 2003. Entry in the Chess Variants 44-Square Contest. Source: chessvariants.com/44.dir/hole-chess.html