

CHESS · VARIANT 74 OF 153

Horde Chess

8×8

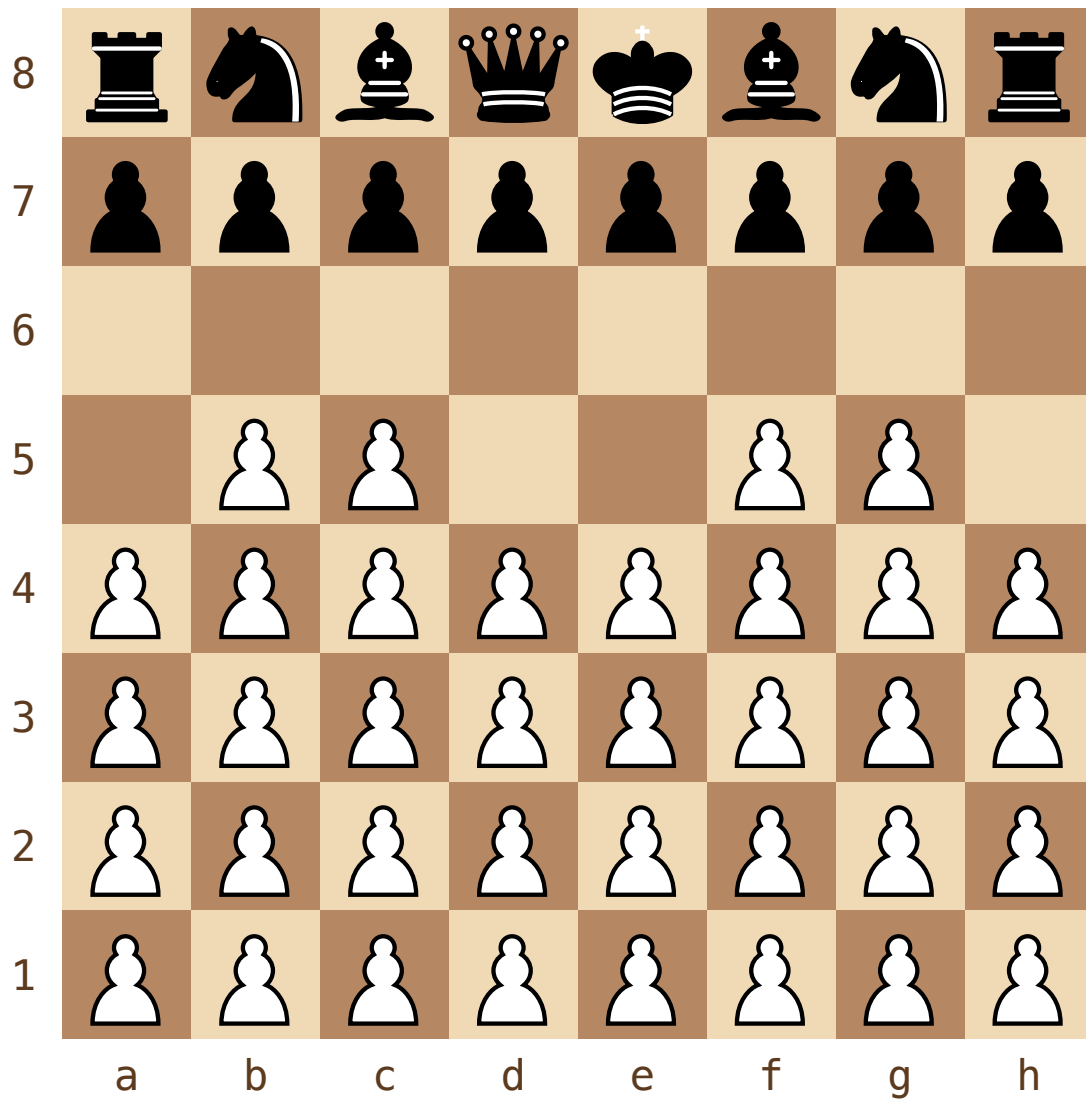
BOARD

2

PLAYERS

HORDE CHESS

36 pawns versus a normal army. A radically asymmetric battle of overwhelming numbers against organised forces.



Horde Chess – starting position

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

SETUP

Board: Standard 8×8.

Setup:

FEN: rnbqkbnr/pppppppp/8/1PP2PP1/PPPPPPPP/PPPPPPPP/PPPPPPPP/PPPPPPPP w kq - 0 1

- ♦ **Black:** Standard chess setup (full army on ranks 7–8).
- ♦ **White (Horde):** 36 pawns filling ranks 1–4 completely, plus 4 additional pawns on b5, c5, f5, g5. No King, no officers.

RULES

- ♦ Standard chess rules apply to both sides with these exceptions:
- ♦ The Horde has no King – it cannot be checkmated.
- ♦ Horde pawns on rank 1 may double-step (as if on rank 2).
- ♦ Horde pawns promote normally on rank 8.
- ♦ Black wins by capturing ALL Horde pieces.
- ♦ The Horde wins by checkmating Black's King.

WIN CONDITION

- ♦ **Horde wins:** Checkmate Black's King (promoted pieces are usually required).
- ♦ **Black wins:** Capture every single Horde piece.

STRATEGY

Black must efficiently destroy pawns without allowing promotion. The Horde must protect key pawns and push toward promotion. Bishops and Knights are most effective for Black (cutting through pawn masses), while the Horde tries to create unstoppable pawn chains.

ATTRIBUTION

Popularised on Lichess. Public domain.