

CHESS · VARIANT 81 OF 153

Knightmate

8×8

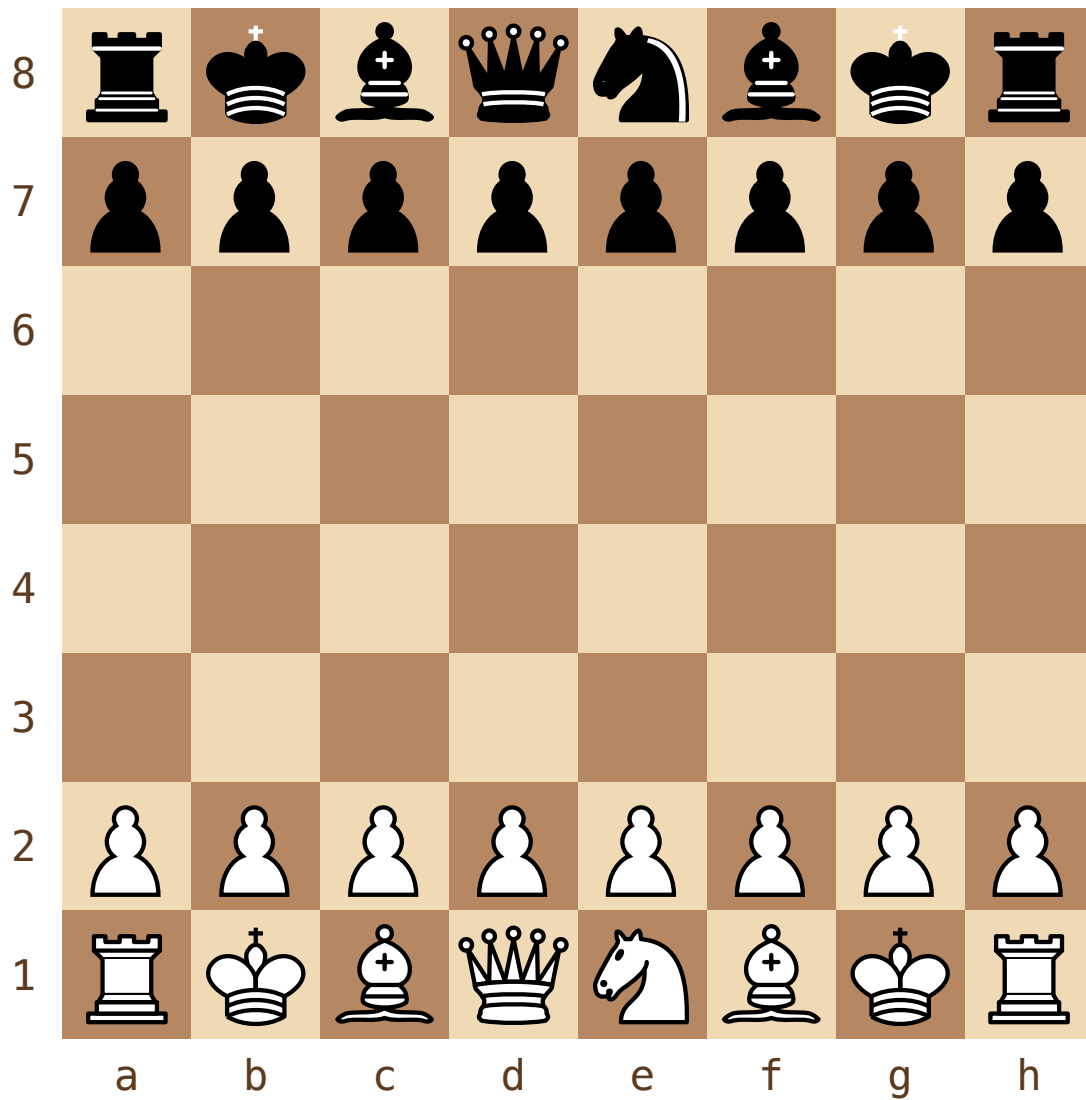
BOARD

2

PLAYERS

KNIGHTMATE

The Knight becomes the royal piece. The King becomes a commoner that moves like a knight. A complete role reversal that transforms strategy.



Knightmate – starting position

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

SETUP

Board: Standard 8×8.

Setup (FEN): rkbqnbkr/pppppppp/8/8/8/8/PPPPPPPP/RKBQNBKR

PIECES

Pieces: Standard chess pieces, but with swapped roles:

- ♦ **Knight** — the royal piece. Must be protected from checkmate. Sits on e1/e8 (where the King normally starts).
- ♦ **King** — moves like a knight (L-shape). Not royal — can be captured freely. Starts on b1/g1 and b8/g8.

RULES

All standard chess rules apply, except:

- ♦ The Knight is subject to check and checkmate (it is royal).
- ♦ The King is an ordinary piece that moves in knight-jumps.
- ♦ Castling works with the royal Knight and the Rooks.
- ♦ Pawns may promote to King (the non-royal piece) but not to Knight (the royal piece).

WIN CONDITION

Checkmate the opponent's royal Knight.

STRATEGY

The royal Knight is far more mobile than a standard King, which makes it harder to trap but also means it can overextend. Kings (moving as knights) are powerful attacking pieces. Queen + King combinations create devastating fork threats.

ATTRIBUTION

Bruce Zimov, 1972. Public domain.