

CHESS · VARIANT 96 OF 153

Minichess

5×5

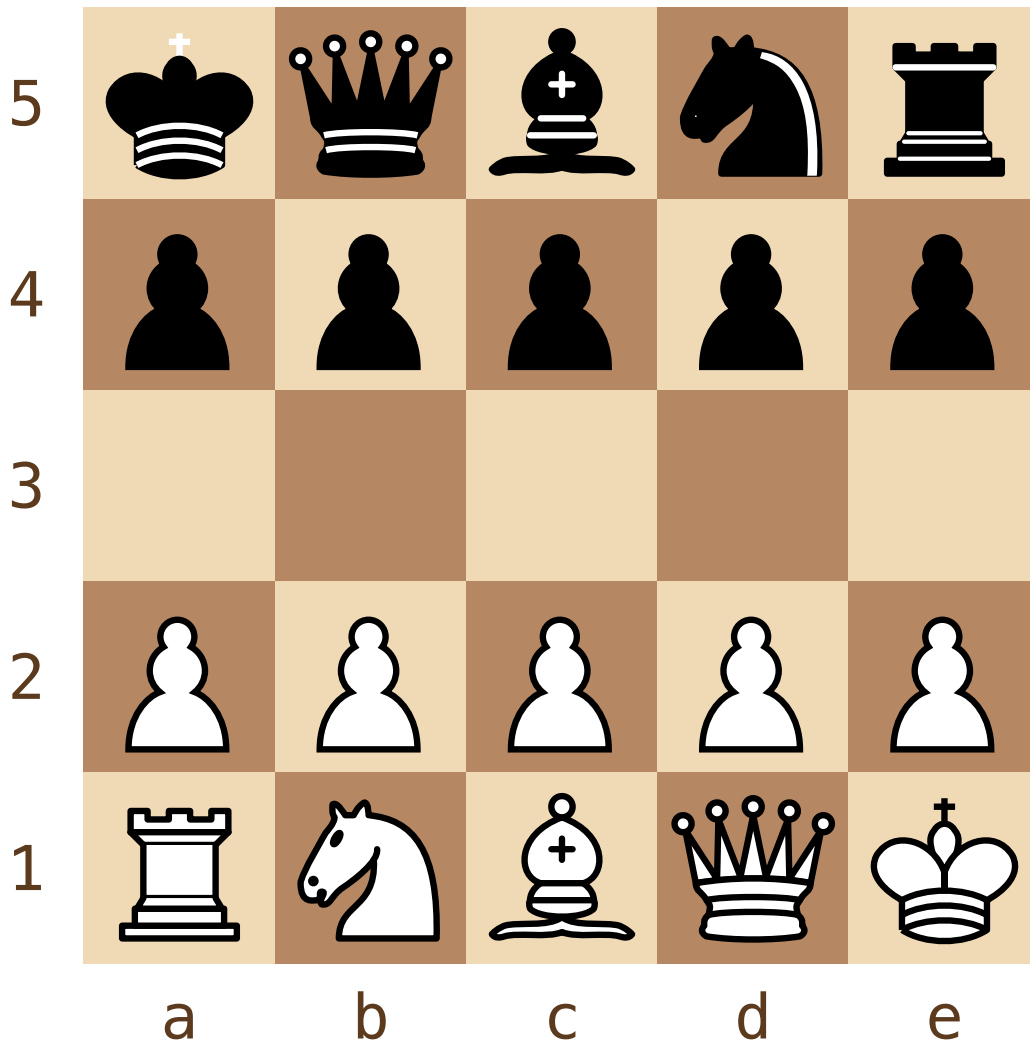
BOARD

2

PLAYERS

MINICHESS

Gardner's 5×5 chess. All standard piece types on a tiny board. Fast, tactical, and surprisingly deep for its size.



Minichess – starting position (5×5)

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

SETUP

Board: 5×5 (five files, five ranks).

Setup (FEN): kqbnr/ppppp/5/PPPPP/RNBQK

Black (rank 5): King, Queen, Bishop, Knight, Rook (+ 5 pawns on rank 4). White (rank 1): Rook, Knight, Bishop, Queen, King (+ 5 pawns on rank 2).

RULES

- ♦ Standard chess movement for all pieces.
- ♦ Pawns move one square forward only (no double-step).
- ♦ No en passant.
- ♦ No castling (King and Rook are adjacent — no room to castle).
- ♦ Pawns promote on the far rank to Queen, Rook, Bishop, or Knight.

WIN CONDITION

Checkmate, same as standard chess.

STRATEGY

The tiny board means pieces are immediately in contact. Rooks are less powerful (short files) while Knights are relatively stronger (they can reach most of the board in 1-2 moves). Games are decided quickly — material advantages of even a single pawn are usually decisive. The King is very exposed with so few squares to hide. Queen trades simplify the position enormously.

ATTRIBUTION

Martin Gardner, 1969 (Scientific American). Public domain.