

CHESS · VARIANT 108 OF 153

Pawns Only

8×8

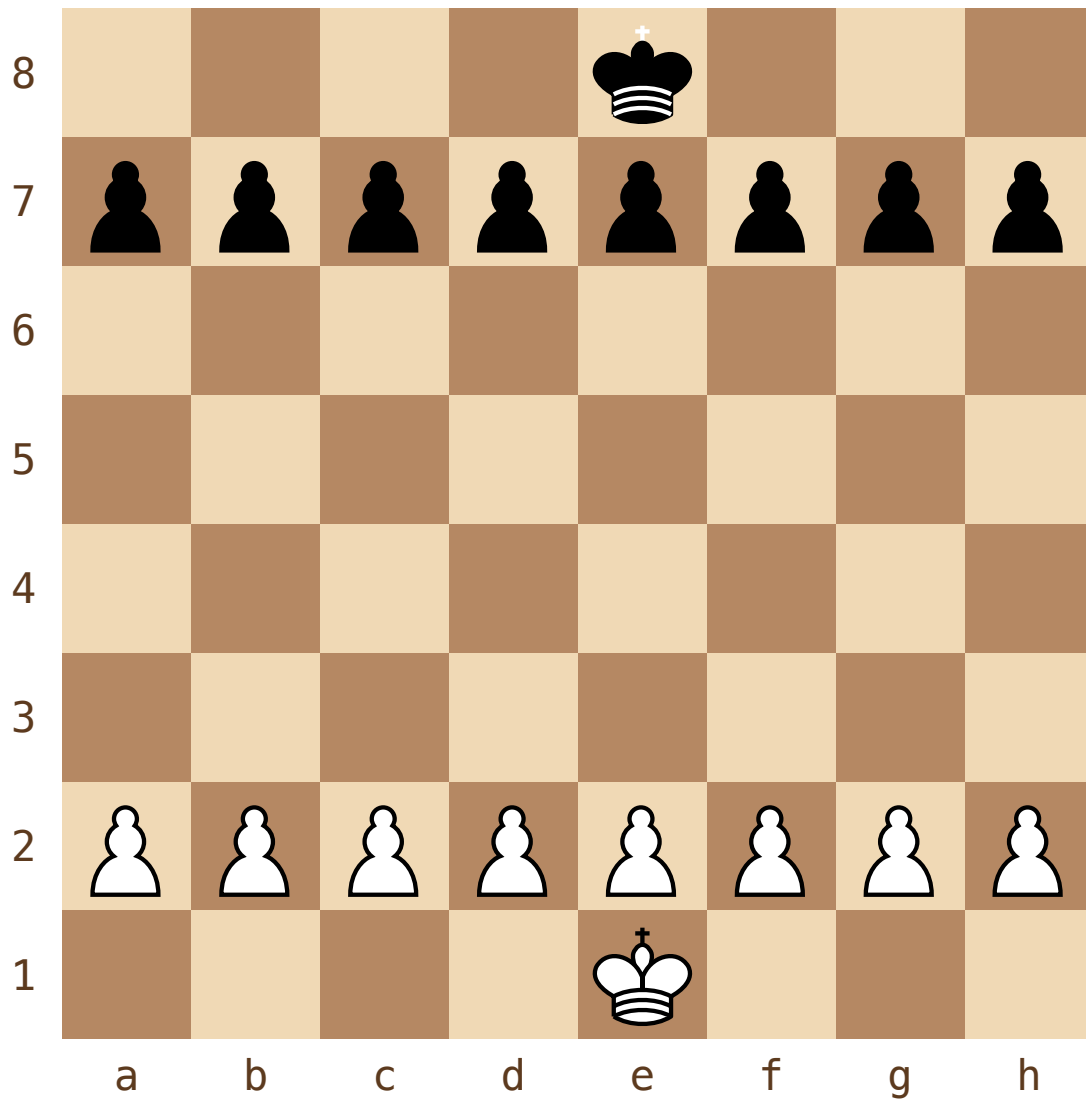
BOARD

2

PLAYERS

PAWNS ONLY

Only pawns and Kings. First to promote wins. A deceptively deep race that tests pure pawn endgame technique.



Pawns Only – starting position

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

SETUP

Board: Standard 8×8.

Setup (FEN): 4k3/pppppppp/8/8/8/8/PPPPPPPP/4K3

Each side: King (on e-file) + 8 pawns on second/seventh rank. Identical to Endgame Chess setup.

RULES

All standard chess rules apply, including:

- ♦ Pawns can double-step from starting rank.
- ♦ En passant is available.
- ♦ Pawns promote normally.
- ♦ No castling (no Rooks exist).

WIN CONDITION

First player to promote a pawn wins immediately. If checkmate occurs before any promotion, the checkmating player wins.

DIFFERENCE FROM ENDGAME CHESS IN ENDGAME CHESS, THE WIN CONDITION IS CHECKMATE (SO YOU PROMOTE AND THEN USE THE PROMOTED PIECE TO DELIVER MATE). IN PAWNS ONLY, PROMOTION ITSELF IS THE WIN – THE GAME ENDS THE INSTANT A PAWN REACHES THE BACK

rank.

STRATEGY

The race to promote is everything. Creating passed pawns, using the King to clear a path, and timing pawn breaks to outrun the opponent are the core skills. Blocking the opponent's most advanced pawn while pushing your own is the central tension. Sacrificing pawns to create a distraction on one wing while promoting on the other is a common winning technique.

ATTRIBUTION

Traditional variant. Public domain.