

CHESS · VARIANT 150 OF 153

Vierschach

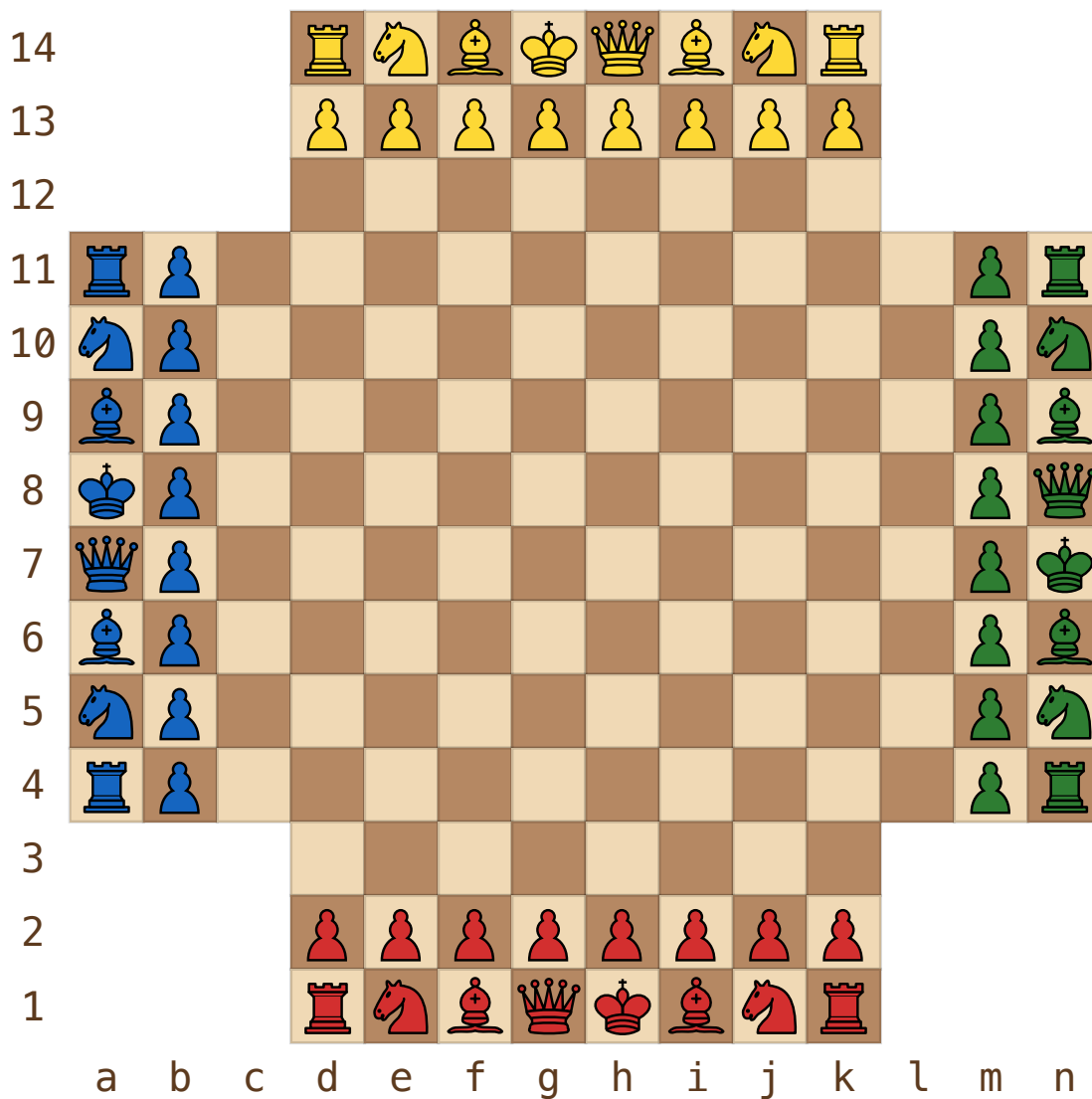
**cross-shaped, 160 squares (8×8 centre +
four 3×8 extensions)**

BOARD

4

PLAYERS

VIERSCHACH



Vierschach – starting position

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

Vierschach (German: "Four Chess", also Viererschach) is a traditional German 4-player chess variant invented by Dr. G. Arthur Lutze (1813–1870) and documented by Theodor Müller-Alfeld. It was widely played in the 19th century and is one of the most historically established 4-player chess forms.

THE BOARD

A standard 8×8 chessboard is extended on each side by a 3×8 strip, creating a cross-shaped (+) board with **160 playable squares**. The overall bounding box is 14×14, with the four 3×3 corner sections off the board.

PLAYERS AND TEAMS

Four players:

- ♦ **South – White A** (back rank at bottom)
- ♦ **West – White B** (back rank at left)
- ♦ **North – Black A** (back rank at top)
- ♦ **East – Black B** (back rank at right)

Teams: White A + White B vs Black A + Black B. Crucially, allied armies are placed **side by side** (adjacent sides of the board), not opposite each other.

Turn order: White A → Black A → White B → Black B (alternating teams).

STARTING POSITION

Each player commands a complete FIDE chess army (King, Queen, 2 Rooks, 2 Bishops, 2 Knights, 8 Pawns).

South (White A) – back rank left to right: Rook · Knight · Bishop · King · Queen · Bishop · Knight · Rook, then Pawns on rank above.

North (Black A) – back rank left to right: rook · knight · bishop · king · queen · bishop · knight · rook, then Pawns on rank below.

West (White B) – back rank top to bottom (leftmost column): Rook · Knight · Bishop · Queen · King · Bishop · Knight · Rook, then Pawns in the next column.

East (Black B) – mirror of West in the right extension.

Queens start on their own color (black queens on black squares, white queens on white squares).

RULES

All standard FIDE piece movement applies.

En passant from the side: En passant captures work in all directions. Example: if White A has a Pawn on l2 and Black B has a Pawn on m4, after 1. l2–l4 Black B may play m4×l3 e.p.

Castling: Allowed in both directions. Players generally prefer to castle toward their allied side.

Pawn promotion (White A): Pawns promote when they reach squares a11, b11, c11, m11, n11, o11 (the side-wing ranks of North's territory) or d14–h14 (North's back rank).

Elimination: If one King of a team is captured (which can happen normally, like any piece), the surviving forces of the captured King's team continue playing to support their remaining allied King.

WIN CONDITION

Checkmate the last surviving enemy King. The first enemy King may be captured at any point like a normal piece. The second (surviving) enemy King must be **checkmated** — not just captured — to win the game.

ATTRIBUTION

Invented by Dr. G. Arthur Lutze (1813–1870). Documented by Theodor Müller-Alfeld and Heinz Machatscheck. Rules documented from chessvariants.com/multiplayer.dir/vierschach.html (Jörg Knappen, 2002).