



OFFICIAL RULEBOOK

Asymmetric fantasy strategy on modular dungeon boards

2-4

PLAYERS

30-120

MINUTES

12+

AGE

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WHAT IS DUNGEON CHESS?

Dungeon Chess is an asymmetric strategy game built on a chess engine. Four fantasy factions — each with unique abilities — battle on modular dungeon maps with terrain hazards. Players draft armies from a shared XP budget, then fight to capture the enemy King.

Core differences from standard chess:

- ◆ **Asymmetric armies** — each faction has unique unit abilities, not just reskinned pieces
- ◆ **XP drafting** — build your army from a budget, choosing quantity vs quality
- ◆ **King capture wins** — no checkmate; you must actually take the King
- ◆ **Terrain** — water blocks movement; voids create chokepoints; gaps affect diagonal slides
- ◆ **Cannon attacks** — some units attack at range using the XiangQi screen mechanic
- ◆ **Split move/attack** — some units move in one pattern but attack in another

THE FOUR FACTIONS

Each faction has 6 unit types corresponding to chess roles (Pawn, Castle, Knight, Bishop, Queen, King). Every faction plays differently.

HUMAN — BALANCED & RELIABLE

Heroes, knights and archers. No gimmicks, no weaknesses. Cheap Knight (12 XP), premium Archer that pierces through pieces, and a Wizard with asymmetric threat zones. The Princess is the most mobile King. You always know what you're getting.

UNDEAD — PHASE & SWARM

1 XP Skeletons let you field massive armies (up to 35 Pawns + King), but each dies to any adjacent touch. The Wraith phases through allies, the Reaper walks on water, the Tomb fires through friendly screens. Slippery, numerous, fragile.

REDSKIN — EXPLOSIVE FIREPOWER

Every unit hits hard but costs dearly. Cannon-equipped Pawns and Castles, a hit-and-run Salamander, and the Demonic — which explodes on death, taking adjacent enemies with it. Iron Golem is immune to enemy cannons. Fewer units, bigger impact per piece.

GREENSKIN — ATTRITION & DISRUPTION

Goblins and Orcs backed by disruptive abilities. The Ogre freezes adjacent enemy Pawns. The Troll survives its first death. The Shaman can immobilise a key target. The Orc has flexible movement. Designed to grind opponents down and control the tempo.

UNIT ROSTER

All units, organised by chess role. XP cost shown in brackets.

PAWNS

UNIT	FACTION	COST	MOVEMENT	ATTACK	SPECIAL
Hero	Human	2 XP	1 square, any direction (8-way)	Diagonal only (1 square)	—
Skeleton	Undead	1 XP	1 square, any direction (8-way)	Diagonal only (1 square)	Fragile: any adjacent enemy can capture it (auto-capture)
Kobold	Redskin	5 XP	1 square (8-way) + rook slide (to screen)	Diagonal (1 sq) + Cannon	—
Goblin	Greenskin	5 XP	1 square (8-way) + rook slide (to screen)	Diagonal (1 sq) + Cannon	—

All Pawns cannot step on water. Kobold and Goblin can also slide along rook lines up to the first piece they encounter (the screen), giving them extra mobility. Skeletons cost only 1 XP but are fragile — any enemy adjacent to a Skeleton can capture it regardless of that enemy's normal attack pattern.

CASTLES

UNIT	FACTION	COST	MOVEMENT	ATTACK	SPECIAL
Stronghold	Human	10 XP	1 square orthogonally	Adjacent + Rook slide	—
Tomb	Undead	12 XP	1 square orthogonally	Adjacent + Rook slide	Phase fire: rook-slide attacks pass through one friendly piece
Iron Golem	Redskin	18 XP	1 sq ortho + rook slide (to screen)	Adjacent + Cannon	Cannon-proof: cannot be targeted by cannon attacks
Ogre	Greenskin	14 XP	1 sq ortho + rook slide (to screen)	Adjacent + Cannon	Intimidate: adjacent enemy Pawns cannot attack

Stronghold is reliable baseline artillery. Tomb can use allies as screens for extended range. Iron Golem is a fortress immune to enemy cannons. Ogre paralyzes nearby enemy Pawns.

KNIGHTS

UNIT	FACTION	COST	MOVEMENT	ATTACK	SPECIAL
Knight	Human	12 XP	L-shaped jump (2+1)	Same as movement	—
Reaper	Undead	15 XP	L-shaped jump (2+1)	Same as movement	Water-walk: can land on water squares
Salamander	Redskin	18 XP	L-shaped jump (2+1)	Same as movement	Hit-and-run: after capturing, may move 1 additional square in any direction
Orc	Greenskin	14 XP	L-shaped jump (2+1) OR 2 squares orthogonally	Same as movement	Flexible: can also move 2 squares straight (orthogonal)

All Knights leap over pieces and terrain. Human Knight is cheap and reliable. Reaper ignores the primary terrain hazard. Salamander can reposition after striking. Orc has two movement modes for unpredictable positioning.

BISHOPS

UNIT	FACTION	COST	MOVEMENT	ATTACK	SPECIAL
Archer	Human	18 XP	Diagonal slide	Diagonal slide (through 1 piece)	Piercing: can attack through one intervening piece
Wraith	Undead	15 XP	Diagonal slide	Diagonal slide	Phase: slides pass through friendly pieces (stops only at enemies/voids)
Fire Elem.	Redskin	12 XP	Diagonal slide	Diagonal slide	Water weakness: water blocks slide entirely
Troll	Greenskin	16 XP	Diagonal slide	Diagonal slide	Thick-skinned: first capture is absorbed (pushed 1 sq backward); second capture kills

Archer is premium — piercing attacks make it a diagonal cannon. Wraith phases through allies for surprise angles. Fire Elem. is cheap but crippled on water maps. Troll survives one hit, making it a durable diagonal presence.

QUEENS

UNIT	FACTION	COST	MOVEMENT	ATTACK	SPECIAL
Wizard	Human	20 XP	Rook lines (orthogonal slide)	Diagonal + Rook lines	Split: moves as Rook, attacks in all directions
Vampire	Undead	20 XP	Bishop lines (diagonal slide)	Rook + Diagonal lines	Split: moves as Bishop, attacks in all directions
Demonics	Redskin	22 XP	Full queen (all 8 directions)	Full queen	Volatile: on death, explodes — destroys all adjacent enemy pieces
Shaman	Greenskin	20 XP	Full queen (all 8 directions)	Full queen	Hex: once per game, spend a turn to immobilise one visible enemy for 2 turns

Wizard and Vampire have asymmetric threat zones. Demonics is expensive but its death explosion can swing the game. Shaman's one-time hex can neutralise a key enemy at a critical moment. Both Demonics and Shaman are water-blocked.

KINGS

UNIT	FACTION	COST	MOVEMENT	ATTACK	BONUS
Princess	Human	15 XP	King step (1 sq, 8-way) + Bishop slide	King step only	Mobile: slides diagonally for repositioning (no capture via slide)
Warlock	Undead	20 XP	King step (1 sq, 8-way)	King step + Bishop slide attack	Ranged: attacks at distance via diagonal slide
Red Dragon	Redskin	20 XP	King step (1 sq, 8-way)	King step + Knight jump attack	Strikes via L-shaped leap
Warlord	Greenskin	15 XP	King step (1 sq, 8-way)	King step + Knight jump attack	Strikes via L-shaped leap

Every King has a unique bonus ability. Princess has extra mobility; Warlock and Red Dragon have ranged attacks. Kings are royal — lose yours and you lose the game.

CANNON

THE CANNON MECHANIC

Kobolds, Goblins, Iron Golems, and Ogres have cannon attacks — a ranged capture mechanic borrowed from XiangQi (Chinese Chess).

How it works:

- ♦ The cannon attacks along rook lines (straight orthogonal).
- ♦ It must pass over exactly ONE piece (the “screen”) between itself and the target.
- ♦ The screen can be friendly or enemy — it just needs to exist.
- ♦ Without a screen piece in the line, the cannon cannot capture.
- ♦ Water squares are skipped (not treated as blockers for cannon lines).
- ♦ The cannon jumps over the screen and lands on the target’s square (same as XiangQi).

Example: A Kobold on a1 wants to capture an enemy on a5. There must be exactly one piece on a2, a3, or a4 (the screen). If the line is empty or has two pieces between them, the cannon cannot fire.

TERRAIN

Dungeon maps use three terrain types:

FLOOR (NORMAL)

Standard passable squares. No restrictions.

WATER

- ◆ Most units CANNOT step onto water squares.
- ◆ Knights cannot land on water (but can leap over it).
- ◆ Water blocks diagonal slides for Fire Elemental, Troll, Demonics, and Shaman.
- ◆ Cannon lines skip over water (water is transparent to ranged attacks).
- ◆ Placed as 4×4 blocks in the centre of maps.

VOID

- ◆ Off-board squares. Cannot be entered by any unit.
- ◆ Creates the dungeon's corridors and chokepoints.
- ◆ All sliding pieces stop at void boundaries — voids block slides for every unit equally.

ARMY DRAFTING

Before each battle, players build their army from an XP budget.

Budget: 75 XP

Constraints:

- ◆ Must include exactly 1 King
- ◆ Must include at least 1 Pawn
- ◆ No maximum team size — as many units as budget allows
- ◆ Duplicates are allowed (e.g. 3 Knights is legal)

Strategy notes:

- ◆ Skeleton (1 XP) swarm: Warlock (20) + 55 Skeletons = 75 XP — fragile but overwhelming
- ◆ Human balanced: Princess (15) + Wizard (20) + Archer (18) + Knight (12) + 5 Heroes (10) = 75 XP
- ◆ Redskin elite: Red Dragon (20) + Demonics (22) + Iron Golem (18) + 3 Kobolds (15) = 75 XP
- ◆ Greenskin midrange: Warlord (15) + Shaman (20) + Troll (16) + Orc (14) + 2 Goblins (10) = 75 XP

BATTLE RULES

SETUP

1. Choose your faction
2. Draft your army (75 XP)
3. Choose turn order: You First, AI First, or Random
4. Deploy units in your spawn zone (bottom rows of the map)

TURN ORDER

- ♦ 2-player: alternating turns
- ♦ 4-player: cyclic (Player → AI 1 → AI 2 → AI 3)
- ♦ Each turn: move one unit OR attack with one unit

CHECK

- ♦ A King is in check if an enemy unit could capture it on the next move.
- ♦ You CANNOT make a move that leaves your own King in check.
- ♦ You MUST resolve check on your turn (move King, block, or capture the attacker).
- ♦ There is no checkmate — the game only ends on actual King capture.

WIN CONDITION

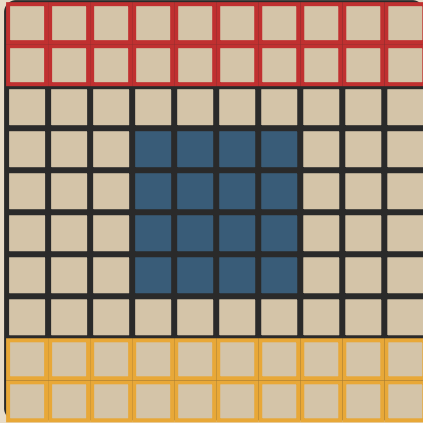
Capture the enemy King. The game ends immediately when a King is taken. In 4-player games, eliminated players' remaining pieces are removed; the last King standing wins.

UNDO

Players may undo their last move (reverting both their move and the AI's response).

MAPS

MAP 1: COMPACT SKIRMISH (2-PLAYER)

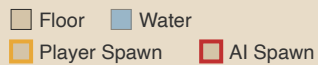
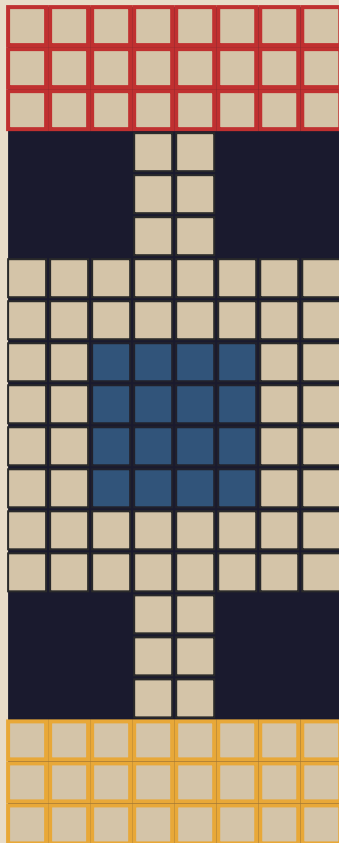


□ Floor □ Water □ Player Spawn □ AI Spa

Compact Skirmish — 10×10 arena

A 10×10 open arena with a 4×4 water block in the centre (rows 3–6, columns 3–6). Spawn zones are the top 2 rows (AI) and bottom 2 rows (Player). Fast, tactical games with water forcing units around the middle.

MAP 2: TWO PLAYER DUNGEON (2-PLAYER)



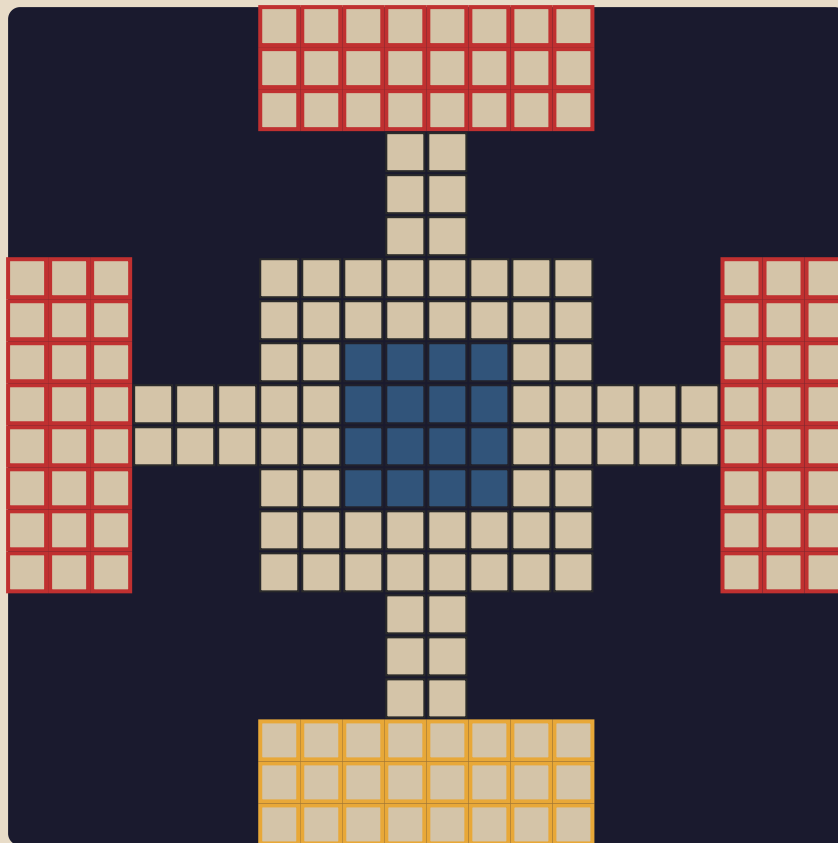
Two Player Dungeon — 20×8 cross

A 20×8 cross-shaped dungeon. Three chambers connected by narrow 2-wide corridors:

- ◆ **Top chamber:** 8×3 (AI spawn)
- ◆ **Centre chamber:** 8×8 with 4×4 water in the middle
- ◆ **Bottom chamber:** 8×3 (Player spawn)
- ◆ **Corridors:** 2 squares wide, connecting chambers vertically

Chokepoints force careful army composition. Knights and units that leap are valuable for crossing constraints.

MAP 3: FOUR PLAYER DUNGEON (4-PLAYER)



■ Floor ■ Water ■ Player Spawn ■ AI Spawn

Four Player Dungeon — 20×20 symmetric cross

A 20×20 symmetric cross. Four spawn chambers at the cardinal edges, connected by narrow corridors to a central 8×8 arena with 4×4 water. Each arm has its own connector passage.

- ◆ **Centre:** rows 6–13, cols 6–13 (with water at rows 8–11, cols 8–11)
- ◆ **Spawn zones:** 3-row sections at the end of each arm

The largest and most complex map. Multi-front warfare, temporary alliances, and last-player-standing dynamics.

