

FOUR HANDED CHESS

HISTORY

In September 22 1881, Captain George Hope Verney wrote in the Times on Four Handed Chess. Verney's game quickly gained popularity leading to the formation of the Four-handed Chess Club of London in 1883/4. The club started with 80 members and existed for more than half a century until the end of the second World War.

SETUP

The board consists of an 8 by 8 board, with at all four sides an extension of size 8 by 3 added making 160 squares in total. Each of the four players has a normal set of pieces, in four different colours. The pieces are placed the same as normal chess except the queen is to the left of the king for all players.

GAME PLAY

Players sitting opposite of each other are partners and their goal is to checkmate the other two players that form the other team. Players in the same team work together.

The youngest player starts, and players then make moves in clockwise order.

PAWNS

Pawns promote only on the last ranks of the opponents, and only to queen. When a pawn reaches the last rank of his partners row, it reverses direction, and moves further in the opposite direction. When it again would reach the last rank, it again reverses direction, etc.

When a pawn's move is obstructed by a pawn of its partner, it can leap over it, provided the square it moves to is vacant. This is possible, even when both pawns move in the same direction.

CHECKMATING ONE OF THE PLAYERS

When a player is checkmated, he may not move, and he must pass his turns. His pieces remain on the board, and may not be captured. These pieces do not give check and are like statues.

A mated player can be released from mate, either by his opponents, or (more commonly) by his partner. When a player releases an opponent from mate, he may not do this by capturing one of the pieces of the mated player.

The team that checkmates both opponents wins the game. All other outcomes (except of course when a team resigns) are a draw.

ODDITIES

Because players opposite each other are part of the same team, they cannot put each other into check. In fact, their kings can be right next to each other!