

Virtual Chess 64 FAQ

by KeyBlade999

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction
 2. Basics of the Game
 1. Starting Up & Interfacing With The Game
 2. Debug Mode
 3. Gameplay Overview
 4. Chess Pieces Overview
 5. Strategy & Tips
3. Credits
 4. Version History
 5. Legalities & Contact

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Introduction

Hi, and welcome to another guide of mine! This one concerns the Nintendo 64 title Virtual Chess 64.

As is probably self-evident, this game is concerned with the age-old game of chess - the so-called sport of kings. This game is honestly nothing special though: it's just your basic chess simulator, nothing to worry about here.

I hope you enjoy!

Basics of the Game

Starting Up & Interfacing With The Game

At the game's loading screen, press the Start Button to move to the game board. There, you can do the following actions:

Move Pieces: Move the cursor to a piece using the D-Pad or the Analog Stick. Use A to pick up a piece and then move it to its destination and press A again to place it down. If you pick up a piece and then want to put it back down just press B.

Receive a Hint: The computer will suggest a move for you if you press B without holding a piece.

Switch Sides: Want to play as Black but you're White? Press the Z Trigger! This will make the computer move for you, and then you can play on the side they were on.

Rotate Board: Press C-Left to rotate the board along the horizontal axis (the one that would go left to right through the middle of the screen). This can give you alternate 3D perspectives or even a 2D perspective. (Or you can just look at the bottom of the board. =P) Press C-Right to rotate the board about its vertical axis through it's middle (so you could use this to view the board from the side, from the opponent's side, whatever).

Change Board Design: To change the overally design of the board, press C-Left or C-Right. This only works in the 2D and tutorial modes.

Remove Sidebar: Press C-Up to remove the bar at the side of the board that indicates which half/side of the board - and the corresponding player - is White or Black. Press it again to replace it.

Remove Timers: At the top are two timers, one for the total time White has taken to move (left) and the one for the total time Black has taken to move (right). You can press C-Down to remove them and again to replace them.

Pause Menu: Press Start to reveal a pause menu with several options. Use the D-Pad/Analog Stick to choose one and then A to confirm. Press A on the ".." option to go back up a menu level.

- **New Game:** Start a new game.
- **Languages:** Change the game language. You have English, French, and Spanish options.
- **Board:** Here, you can use the "2D/3D View" option to change the perspective of the board, "Rotate Board" to set the board to several presets (for focusing on White at the bottom or at the top), and "Restore Boards" to go back to the default settings.
- **Game:** Here, you can set up which side(s) are controlled by human or AI players, how many games determine a winner, how many controllers are being used (I think), whether beginner mode indicators are on or off (these show you the valid destinations for pieces), whether the AI can meditate (this means that they can think and process moves even during your turn), freely setup the board position, and load and save games.
- **Levels:** Set the AI difficulty level. There are two beginner levels and 12 regular levels, with the higher the level the more difficult the opponent (and the longer they'll take to think).
- **Preferences:** Adjust the music and sound effect volume, set the background music track, and affect the settings for fighting. I don't know what "Flash Think" affects.
- **Tutorial:** This will teach you a LOT on chess.

Debug Mode

Debug Mode: To enable the debug mode, press C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, then Up, Down, Left, Right on the D-Pad.

This will generate a sequence of numbers and letters at the top of the screen, first of all. This is the anticipated moveset of the AI that it thinks you'll use. To use the TCRF example, let's assume it's "3 C5XB4 D1-A4+ D8-D7 A4XD7+ C8XD7". This "3" says which moveset it chose, and raises as it generates newer movesets but it can reset. C5XB4 (C5 to B4, with a capture, thus "X") is the move it's going to use next. Likewise, it thinks you will then move from D1 to A4 without a capture (thus a "-"). The use of the "+" is currently unknown, but I believe it refers to checking. Note that this set can change without notice, even if you follow it exactly.

At the bottom you'll also see some numbers; an example (from TCRF) being "5026 -1 0.14". The first shows how long it took the AI to move in terms of frames (60 frames = 1 second). The second is a variable that refers to the moveset number referenced previously and will remain at -1 when nothing is being changed there. The third number is a representation of how much the game is leaning against the AI or for it; higher positive numbers indicate it's at an advantage, and lower ones that it's disadvantaged.

This cheat is useless in 2-player mode for the sole reason that no AI is involved there.

Gameplay Overview

Chess is a game that takes place on an 8x8 chessboard. The two rows nearest each player is filled with pieces, per the below diagram.

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
8	R	Kn	B	Q	K	B	Kn	R
7	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
6								
5								
4								
3								
2	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
1	R	Kn	B	Q	K	B	Kn	R

P	=	Pawn
R	=	Rook
Kn	=	Knight
B	=	Bishop
Q	=	Queen
K	=	King

Each of these pieces is discussed further in the section entitled **Chess Pieces Overview**.

Each player will control one color - either white or black. When gameplay begins, white moves first, moving a single piece, and the two alternate moves.

The goal of chess is to be victorious. This occurs when you place a king in checkmate (to be discussed in the section about the **King**). Alternatively, a draw can be reached by threefold repetition (the same board position occurs three times) or by either side for whatever reason being unable to move. There are also conditions in which a side cannot successfully checkmate the opponent (for example, imagine a king-versus-king matchup, if you're familiar with the kings) and in those cases draws are also declared.

Chess Pieces Overview

- **Piece Values**

- **Piece Quick Links:**

- **Pawn**
- **Bishop**
- **Knight**
- **Rook**
- **Queen**
- **King**

Piece Values

Each of the six types of pieces is attributed a certain point value. This has two functions. The first is a sort of scoring system: this is especially used when games end early or through draw, to help determine who did better overall.

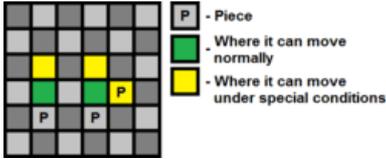
The second is the more important one: it helps to determine the value and worth of trade-offs. For example, you might bait your opponent with a pawn, in the vein of thought of "If their bishop takes that pawn, I can take that bishop!" Pieces that are more limited have higher point values, as do those that are more effective overall. In that vein, the piece's point value is a good rule of thumb for you to use if you're not sure whether a piece is worth taking or risking.

Of course, the king is obviously with an indefinite value - after all, if you were to lose that, you'd lose the game!

Piece	Point Value	Pieces Per Player	Total Point Value
Pawn	1	8	8

Bishop	3	2	6
Knight	3	2	6
Rook	5	2	10
Queen	9	1	9
King	N/A	1	N/A
CUMULATIVE POINT VALUE:			39

Pawn



Pawn movement

Value: 1 point

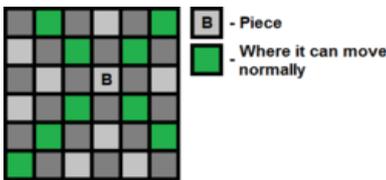
Number Per Side: 8

Movement: For the most part, the pawn can only move one way: forward. It will almost always move just up along the column it's in, one space at a time, never stopping. There are only two conditions under which that changes: capturing and on its first move. On the first move it ever makes, a pawn can, if you want, move two spaces forward, not one. Additionally, if a pawn encounters a piece that is one space in front of it and one space to the left or right, instead of moving just forward, it can move onto that foe piece's space and capture it, completing diagonal movement at the same time.

En Passant Capture: There is **very** special and situational method of capture that pawns have in addition to those described above known as "en passant" (French for "in passing"). If a pawn goes unused since the start of the game, and an enemy pawn eventually threatens it, instead of moving diagonally to capture it, the pawn can move one space forward (instead of the two most people want to do) and the enemy pawn will be captured immediately without walking onto that space.

Transformation (Promotion): When a pawn gets to the row furthest from you, it can change into a piece of your choosing: it can become a rook, bishop, knight, or queen. For the most part, the queen is the most advantageous choice: it has the movement of a rook and bishop combined after all. However, under some circumstances you might find it more advantageous to transform the pawn into a knight.

Bishop



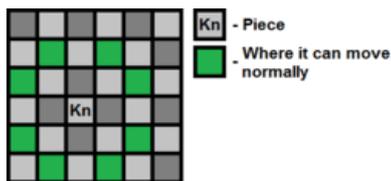
Bishop movement

Value: 3 points

Number Per Side: 2

Movement: Bishops can move any distance on a diagonal that they can: they will be able to move in this straight line until a piece blocks them. Once a piece blocks them, provided it's an enemy piece, they can stop their movement on their square and thus capture the enemy piece. An interesting factor of note is that the bishop, by nature of the structure of the board and its diagonal movement, will never be on a differently-colored square than the one it starts on.

Knight



Knight movement

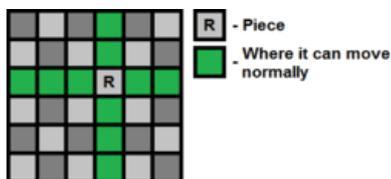
Value: 3 points

Number Per Side: 2

Movement: Knights have the most awkward movement of all the pieces in the game, but yet also one of the most beneficial. Knights essentially move in L shapes, as the diagram shows: they move two tiles non-diagonally, then one space perpendicular to that. Or another way of saying it is that they move two squares then one square over. Regardless of how you feel like analogizing it to make it comprehensible, something important to note is that **the knight's movement cannot be blocked by pieces** (provided they aren't actually on the tile it stops on, which it would capture anyhow if it was a foe's piece). In other words, your knight could be surrounded all eight squares by other pieces, and it could still move to any of the eight tiles it normally does - the knight effectively will jump over the other pieces to reach its destination.

A final interesting factor of note is that by moving, owing to the board structure, the knight will always move to a space opposite the color he starts on.

Rook



Rook movement

Value: 5 points

Number Per Side: 2

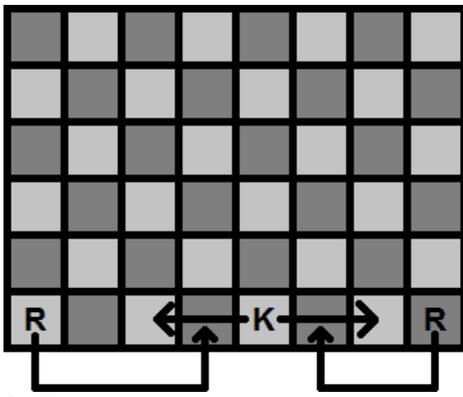
Movement: The rook is a valuable piece: it can move as far as you want vertically or horizontally, though not at the same time and not along diagonals. In other words, it basically can move in straight lines. The exception to this is if a piece blocks it: in such a case, it can capture the piece by going onto that square, but that's it.

Castling: Castling is a movement that is the **only** exception to the rule declaring that only one piece can be moved per turn. A diagram below summarizes the movement. To begin with, you can only castle under the following conditions:

- There is nothing between your king and one of your rooks
- Neither the king nor the rook have at all been moved (in that vein, that also means you can only castle once per game)
- The king cannot be in check, nor can either of the two tiles he moves to put him in check

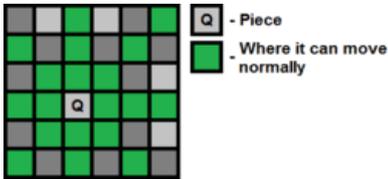
Under these conditions, castling is allowed. There are two variants, kingside and queenside: kingside involves the rook on your right, and queenside involves the rook on your left. In kingside castling, the king moves two spaces to the right while the rook moves two spaces to the left. In queenside castling, the king moves two spaces to the left while the rook moves to the right three spaces.

Thus, castling is a very useful maneuver because it allows you to move pieces quickly and also can open up avenues of attack for your rooks, effectively freeing them from your back row.



Castling

Queen



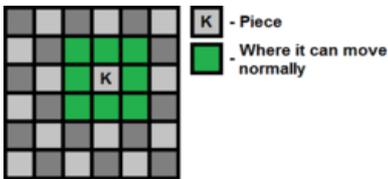
Queen movement

Value: 9 points

Number Per Side: 2

Movement: The queen is effectively a hybrid of the rook and bishop pieces. It can move as far as it wants up/down, left/right, or diagonally, provided it's in a straight line. It will be stopped by other pieces and, provided they're the foe's, can capture them by stopping on their tile. Because of this, your queen is one of your most valuable pieces strategically and the most effective offensively: it is hard to win a game when you're down a queen when your opponent has one.

King



King movement

Value: Indefinite - you lose the game if you lose the king! That said, the value for the king is often evaluated at 4 points at least for its utility beyond this fact, especially in the endgame.

Number Per Side: 1 (and you cannot have a pawn transform into a king, obviously)

Movement: Kings are more of a figurehead than an offensive piece: kings can move onto any space around them, but only one space, bar castling. Note that the king cannot ever put itself into check. Of course, this also makes it hard for a piece next to the king to force check without another piece backing it up.

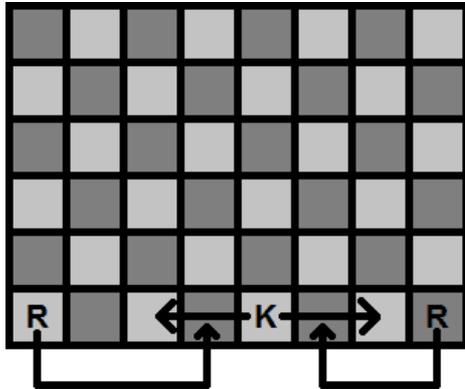
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Under these conditions, castling is allowed. There are two variants, kingside and queenside: kingside involves the rook on your right, and queenside involves the rook on your left. In kingside castling, the king moves two spaces to the right while the rook moves two spaces to the left. In queenside castling, the king moves two spaces to the left while the rook moves to the right three spaces.

Thus, castling is a very useful maneuver because it allows you to move pieces quickly and also can open up avenues of attack for your rooks, effectively freeing them from your back row.



Check & Checkmate: The king is not like the other pieces in the game: it is not truly captured. This relates to the states of check and checkmate and the fact that your goal in the game is subdue the king through checkmate (because checkmating them means that capturing them is inevitable so that in itself means the game is won).

The state of check is incurred when the king is threatened: that is to say, there is a piece that can capture it on that player's next turn. When you're in check, getting out of check - in other words, moving to assure that the king is no longer in a threatened state - is compulsory. There are several predominate means of moving out of check:

- **Moving the King:** Moving the king is the most basic method of escaping check because it is so simple and instinctive. "The king is being threatened but only on a couple of tiles. Let's just move out of the way!" It is not, however, the means that should always be pursued, especially because moving the king negates your ability to castle. This won't always be possible however, especially in a crowded spot of the board where a lot of pieces are blocking off your movement.
- **Blocking the Offending Piece:** Another means of evading check is to block the piece that's causing you to be in check. Is a rook or queen causing it? Then place a piece between them! However, this has the problem of making the defending piece threatened as well: this can sometimes be advantageous for the opponent. Imagine, for example, being placed in a situation where your only way out is to block with your queen: no doubt most players would then capture that queen outright.
- **Capturing the Offending Piece:** The final means to escape check is to literally get rid of the problem: when you're put in check one option you have is to capture the piece causing you problems. Of course, this is risky in itself: it is not common for you to find someone putting you in check knowing very well that they can be captured to get out of it. Thinking ahead of why they would risk that is important: maybe they're trying to move some of your pieces away from a spot for some reason, or maybe it's baiting you to capture that piece so that they can capture back.

The state of checkmate is achieved when the king cannot escape check at all. In that instance, the player controlling that king will be the loser.

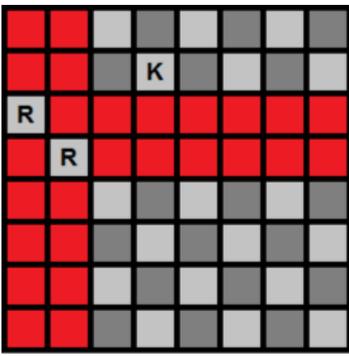


Strategy & Tips

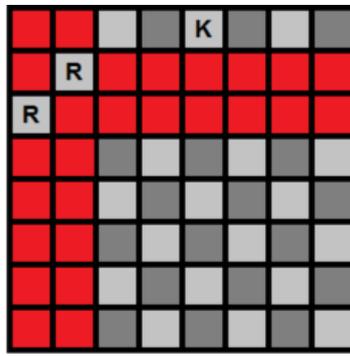
Note that this section will not go into deep strategy or tactics (yes, there's a distinction between the two, owing to the lines from Lelouch in *Code Geass*). Such things are better researched and developed on your own and are far, far beyond the scope of this guide. Rather, this is just an overview for some useful tips and information for your own gameplay. (I'll also note that some of these details can be found in the game's Tutorials, and also expanded upon greatly. These are more just general notes.)

- **Ideal Positions for Pieces:** Each piece for the most part (ignoring the boring ol' pawns and king) work best in certain conditions.
 - **Knights:** Knights tend to work well away from enemy pawns, and by virtue of their leaping abilities in closed spaces. They prefer more open areas away from the edges of the board to have more flexibility.

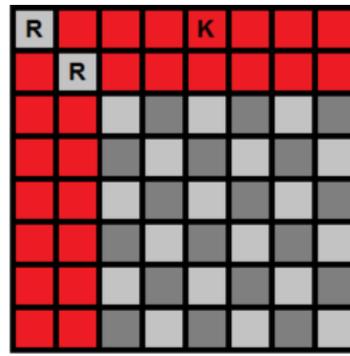
- **Rooks:** Rooks tend to prefer open areas so they can travel cross-board, thus threatening as many pieces as they can. They hate corners. Some people prefer to keep one rook stationary for the sake of castling or until the ability to castle is nullified.
 - **Bishops:** Bishops tend to prefer open areas as well, and moreso towards the center: the edges don't give the bishop a ton of power.
 - **Queen:** Like the previous two, queens **greatly** prefer open areas. Their viability is strongly reduced by even near an edge or corner.
-
- **Contending with Threatened Pieces:** Your opponent has moved to threaten a piece of yours, so what do you do? There are several avenues which you can pursue, some of which we went over when discussing how to evade check in the **King** section - though luckily not all pieces are held back by the compulsory evasion of this.
 - You can evade the threat by moving the threatened piece elsewhere.
 - You can capture the piece that is threatening you, thus eliminating the threat.
 - You can interpose a piece between the threatened piece and your own in such a way that if this third piece is captured, the originally-threatened piece can capture the threatening piece.
 - You can place another piece such that if your piece is taken the piece doing the taken is in turn threatened by you and thus will be captured. This could make their attempt to capture unprofitable.
 - In rare circumstances, you can position another piece such that if the threatening piece moves it will place the opponent king in check, meaning capturing the originally-threatened piece is illegal.
 - In some circumstances, you might want to just give up on that piece entirely. Furthering that, you can continue to advance your ongoing strategy or otherwise as if you ignored it. Which can lead to this:
 - You can employ a tactic dubbed a *zwischenzug* - you generate a counter-threat. In other words, they threatened your piece? Threaten one of theirs. Either they give up on this secondary piece or they take your original piece. Ideally, you'll want to threaten a high-value piece such as the queen, or check the king. Checking the king is arguably more effective.
-
- **Checkmate Minimums:** The absolute minimum to checkmate an opposing king would be your own king and a rook. A bishop, a knight, and a pawn can be escaped from, and a queen is just an upgraded rook in this sense.
-
- **The Center of the Board:** The center of the board (D4, D5, E4, E5 - that 2x2 area) is considered central for gameplay. Controlling the center can be very helpful since most of the actual capturing and piece advancement, particularly in the early game, will happen in that area. It is nice to have pieces that can attack that area, either from a short distance or within it, or from afar.
-
- **Initiative:** The initiative in the game - that is to say, the player who's gaining momentum and basically the "lead player" in everything, leaving the other to respond - is given to the player who makes plays that the other cannot ignore. Checking the king is the most noteworthy since it is compulsory to evade check, though other such situations can arise. Another good example is threatening the queen in such a way that the queen cannot retaliate nor can the threat be removed by any means but escape since few will want to lose their queen. In other words, having the initiative places you in an advantageous position: instead of your opponent making the moves they want to make, they have to make the moves they need to avoid huge losses. By keeping up initiative you can gear the game towards you if you play properly.
-
- **Knights and Outposts:** Particularly in the early game where pawns are more prevalent, it is not hard for a pawn to chase away a knight's advance. A single pawn can cover two squares that a knight can enter if positioned properly and that in turn means they can cut off the knight. Alternatively, they can move forward as the knight advances and threaten it that way and in the early game that tends to drive them back as well. However, knights can make use of "outposts": open positions, particularly ones safe from pawns, in the enemy defenses.
-
- **The King:** The king is not the useless piece people think it is. Especially for the endgame, the king can be useful in capturing pieces, and advancing to the center is a good idea to give the king an actual presence in the game and avoid quick checkmates since the reduced material permits you more flexibility and less of an offensive presence from your foe.
-
- **Forking:** Owing to the fact that typically only one piece can be moved per turn, forking is a tactic that threatens multiple pieces at once. If you threaten two or more pieces together, your opponent cannot guarantee coverage for all of them before the next turn, in which you might take the more poorly covered piece in order to gain a material advantage. Knights are particularly useful for this, though rooks and queens also work well. If one of the targets of your fork is a king, and the other is an unprotected piece, that's especially useful -- in most cases, the opponent will have to evade check with other pieces, and thus that unprotected piece is lost altogether!
-
- **Skewering:** A skewer involves a piece that can move in a line of sight manner (so pretty much all but the pawn, knight, and king). The idea of a skewer is to get two pieces in the same line of sight: for example, a rook might look to attack a bishop, but if that bishop moved or otherwise not there a knight or something else behind it could be hit. It is also ideal that neither of the two (or more) pieces targeted can retaliate and attack your attacking piece and that your own piece won't be risked. In a skewer, your opponent is left with some choices once threatened. They can make the first piece evade, but lose the back piece, or ignore the situation and let the first piece be lost, provided they cannot pursue an alternative tactic. This tactic helps to assure material loss since it's not easily countered.
-
- **Castle Climbing:** One particular tactic you can use to your advantage is that of castle climbing. This utilizes the ability of the rook and/or the queen to block off large chunks of rows or columns. The idea is illustrated below with two rooks. This is done to corner the king: they cannot enter the threatened spaces. You move the rooks alternatingly, creating a wall with these threatened tiles, slowly pushing the king back until he has nowhere to run.
-



1. Rooks are set up to wall.



2. Right Rook moves forward, checking the king. King has no option but to retreat out of the check.



3. King has nowhere to go. Checkmate.

-
- **Other Rook Checkmates:** Many other possible tactics involving a rook can be found simply by virtue of their ability to control entire rows. For example, you could corner the enemy king with your own and a rook into the edge or a corner, block it with your king so that it cannot advance forward, and have the rook check it, assuring there's no place for it to move. Another example is common in the middlegame where a king is often cornered, protected by his own pieces: a rook can potentially find its way in there and check uncountered from afar while the king is blocked by his own pieces.



Credits

In no particular order...

-
- GameFAQs, Neoseeker, and Supercheats:
 - For being the most amazing FAQ-hosting sites we know.

 - CJayC, SBAllen, and Devin Morgan:
 - General sucking up to the GameFAQs admins. =P

 - TCRF (The Cutting Room Floor):
 - The debug menu cheat.

 - You, the reader:
 - For hopefully enjoying this FAQ.



Version History

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- **v1.00:**
 - Completed.
 - Time: 11:25 PM 2/10/2017.



Legalities & Contact

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Allowed sites for this FAQ	Forever-Banned Sites
GameFAQs (www.gamefaqs.com)	CheatCC (www.cheatcc.com)
Neoseeker (www.neoseeker.com)	Cheat Database (www.cheat-database.com)
SuperCheats (www.supercheats.com)	Cheat Index (www.cheatindex.com)
	Cheat Search (www.cheatsearch.com)
	Cheatstop (www.panstudio.com/cheatstop)
	Game Express (www.gameexpress.com)
	Mega Games
	Cheats Guru (www.cheatsguru.com)

This is the end of KeyBlade999's Virtual Chess 64 (N64) FAQ.

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