

Figure 3: The white pieces may be captured by any of the moves shown. The three white pieces at the bottom right can be captured at once, as per rule 6.

10. Either player will lose the game if unable to move on his or her own turn.
11. Perpetual repetition is ille-

gal. If the board position is repeated three times, the player in control of the situation must find another move.

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## YORK HNEFATAFL

### INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

Hnefatafl is a game invented by the Norse, often referred to as the Vikings. A king at the centre of the board, with his band of faithful defenders, faces a horde of attackers twice their number, who are lined up at the edges ready to attack from all sides. The king must escape from the board, while the attackers must capture him.

It was first played in the first millennium; boards and pieces from that era have been found in all parts of Scandinavia. As the Norse raiders, adventurers and settlers spread further afield, the game was introduced to other cultures: the Sami in the north, and the English, Scots, Welsh and Irish in the west. Norse traders took the game east with them to Russia and Ukraine.

From the east, however, hnefatafl would have come face to face with another game, one that would eclipse it and drive it from fashionable tables in all the lands it had invaded. By the twelfth century, chess had replaced hnefatafl in Scandinavia itself. Only in remote lands did the game survive, in Wales till the sixteenth century, and in Lapland till the eighteenth century.

This version of hnefatafl is for the popular 11x11 board. It was designed by David Brown for a game marketed by the York Archaeological Trust. York hnefatafl features a king who is difficult to capture but who cannot take part in captures himself; he must reach the edge of the board to win the game.

## HOW TO PLAY

- The game is played by two players on a board of  $11 \times 11$  squares, one player taking control of the king and twelve defenders, the other taking control of twenty-four attackers.
- The pieces are set out as shown in figure 1. The attackers take the first move.
- In his turn a player can move a single piece any number of spaces along a row or column; this piece may not jump over nor land on another of either colour. Some examples are shown in figure 2.
- The marked square in the centre of the board is his *castle*, and only the king may land on it. Other pieces may pass over it to land on squares beyond.
- A defender is captured when it is surrounded on two opposite sides along a row or column by attackers. An attacker is captured when it is likewise surrounded by defenders.
- The king cannot take part in capturing attackers.
- It is sometimes possible to capture two or three enemies separately (i.e. not two or three enemies in a row) against other pieces of your own in a single move; in this case all captured pieces are removed at once.
- The king is captured by surrounding him on all four sides by attackers, or by surrounding him on three sides, if the fourth side is the castle.
- A special situation occurs if the king is in the castle and surrounded by three attackers and one defender. The defender may be captured by sandwiching it between an attacker and the beleaguered king.
- The king wins the game if he reaches the edge of the board. The attackers win if they capture the king.

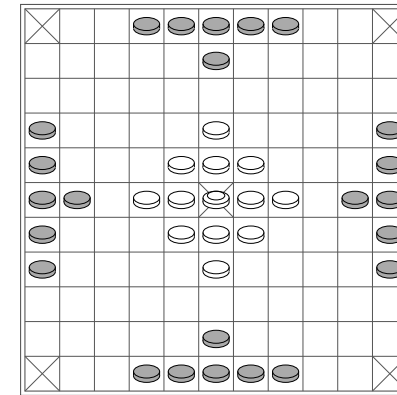


Figure 1: The initial layout of the pieces.

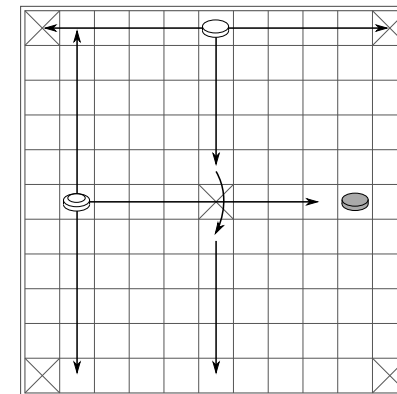


Figure 2: Examples of movement for the king and defenders.