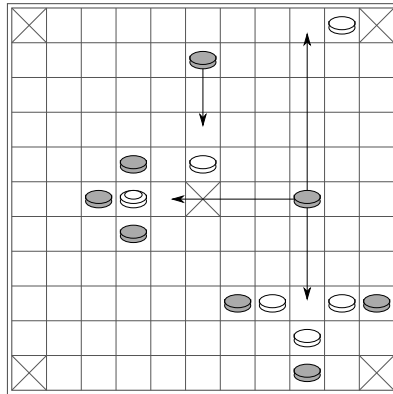


## FETLAR HNEFATAFL

### INTRODUCTION & HISTORY



*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 7.*

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.

The Fetlar hnefatafl variant was created by the Fetlar Hnefatafl Panel in 2008, as a balanced version of the game for their annual tournament. Since then, the rules have been adopted for other tournaments around the world, and for some commercial versions of the game.

## HOW TO PLAY

1. The game is played with a king and twelve defenders against 24 attackers. They start the game laid out as shown in Figure 1.
2. The attackers move first.
3. All pieces move along a row or column any number of spaces, as shown in Figure 2.
4. A moving piece cannot land on another, nor may pieces jump.
5. No piece but the king can occupy the corner squares or the central square.
6. A piece is captured by surrounding it on two opposite sides along a row or column with two pieces of your own. The enemy is immediately removed from the board.
7. 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.
8. It is also possible to capture a piece against the corner squares, or the central square if it is empty, as if one of your pieces were sitting on it.
9. The king can only be captured by surrounding him on all four sides.
10. To win, the defenders must get the king to one of the four marked corner squares.
11. The attackers win if they capture the king before he escapes.

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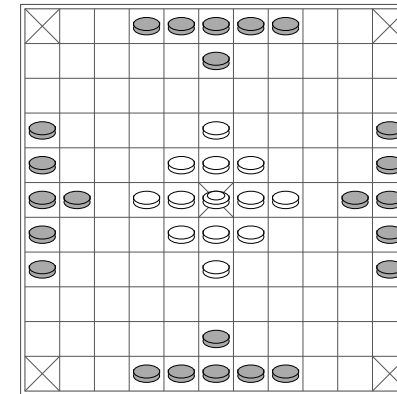


Figure 1: The initial layout of the pieces.

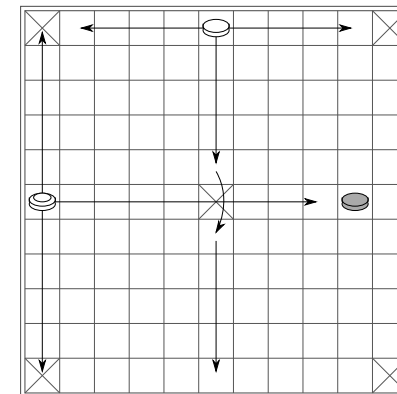


Figure 2: Examples of movement for the king and defenders.