

Rules of Chinese Checkers

Objective

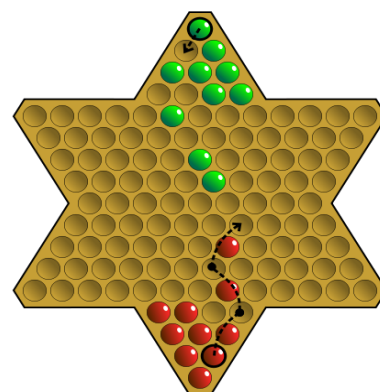
The objective is to be first to race all of one's pieces across the hexagram-shaped board into "home"—the corner of the star opposite one's starting corner—using single-step moves or moves that jump over other pieces. The remaining players continue the game to establish second-, third-, fourth-, fifth-, and last-place finishers. Great for all ages.

Rules

A single move can consist of multiple hops; each piece hopped must be directly adjacent, and hops can be in any direction.

The aim is to race all one's pieces into the star corner on the opposite side of the board before opponents do the same. The destination corner is called home. Each player has 10 pieces, except in games between two players when 15 are used.

In "hop across", the most popular variation, each player starts with their colored pieces on one of the six points or corners of the star and attempts to race them all home into the opposite corner. A toss of a coin decides who starts. Players take turns moving a single piece, either by moving one step in any direction to an adjacent empty space, or by jumping in one or any number of available consecutive hops over other single pieces. A player may not combine hopping with a single-step move – a move consists of one or the other. There is no capturing in Chinese Checkers, so hopped pieces remain active and in play. Turns proceed clockwise around the board.



In the diagram, Green might move the topmost piece one space diagonally forward as shown. A hop consists of jumping over a single adjacent piece, either one's own or an opponent's, to the empty space directly beyond it in the same line of direction. Red might advance the indicated piece by a chain of three hops in a single move. It is not mandatory to make the most number of hops possible. (In some instances a player may choose to stop the jumping sequence part way in order to impede the opponent's progress, or to align pieces for planned future moves.) The first player to move all ten pegs across the board and into the triangle opposite holes is the winner.

Strategy

A basic strategy is to create or find the longest hopping path that leads closest to home, or immediately into it. (Multiple-jump moves are obviously faster to advance pieces than step-by-step moves.) Since either player can make use of any hopping 'ladder' or 'chain' created, a more advanced strategy involves hindering an opposing player in addition to helping oneself make jumps across the board. Of equal importance are the players' strategies for emptying and filling their starting and home corners. Games between top players are rarely decided by more than a couple of moves.

Differing numbers of players result in different starting layouts, in turn imposing different best-game strategies. For example, if a player's home destination corner starts empty (i.e. is not an opponent's starting corner), the player can freely build a 'ladder' or 'bridge' with their pieces between the two opposite ends. But if a player's opponent occupies the home corner, the player may need to wait for opponent pieces to clear before filling the home vacancies.



WARNING:

CHOKING HAZARD - Small balls. Not for children under 3 yrs