



Royal Palette™

“Palette pressure. Royal payoff.”

A color-locked chess: land on a color to steer your opponent’s choices.

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Meet Royal Palette

Palette pressure. Royal payoff. Every landing square locks a color — and steers what your rival can move next. Shape tempo, script blunders, and spring wins that feel inevitable.

Why you'll love it

- **Learn-in-minutes:** Classic chess moves, zero new movement patterns.
- **Control the tempo:** Land on colors that *curate* your opponent's choices.
- **Clutch moments:** *Ready pawns* and *revival* promotions create cinematic finishes.
- **Replay value:** The lock turns every opening into a new mind game.
- **Play anywhere:** Click royalpalette.com for tutorial, puzzles, and AI play.
- **Why a New Chess Variant?** see the 'Appendix F' for interesting read on the subject.

Color isn't cosmetic — it's command. In Royal Palette Chess, the square you land on sets a *color lock* that directs your opponent's next move options. You're not just trading pieces; you're painting positions and steering plans—while preserving the elegance of classic chess. This rulebook now includes a one-page Quick Start, a DIY build guide, accessibility tips, and a tournament appendix.

Quick Start (1 minute)

- 1) Roll a d8. On 1–6 you must respect the current lock color C. On 7 you may ignore C this turn. On 8 you may ignore C this turn and your opponent will not roll next turn.
- 2) Make a legal move. Your *destination color* becomes your opponent's lock (even if you had relief).
- 3) If you had no legal move only because of C and rolled 1–6, use Relief (make any legal move ignoring C). If in check, you can always play a legal escape.

Tip: Land on colors where *you* explode with options while they're starved—even if they roll a 7 or 8.

Quick Reference

- 0) Start-of-turn forced conversion (if any eligible captured type exists) — does not change the lock.
- 1) Roll a d8: 1–6 = play under current lock C; 7 = relief this turn; 8 = relief this turn *and* your opponent skips their next roll.
- 2) If in check → make any legal escape (ignore lock).
- 3) Otherwise, color lock C = last move's destination color.
- 4) If no relief active: you may move (a) a piece on a C-colored square, or (b) a piece whose palette includes C.
- 5) If relief active (7 or 8): you may move any legal piece (ignore C).
- 6) After you move, your destination color becomes the new C (even when relief was active).
- 7) If you rolled 1–6 and have no move solely due to C → you may make any legal move this turn (Section 6).

Play online: royalpalette.com

1) Components & Board

Components

Royal Palette Board: Standard 8×8 with a fixed, repeating 8-color pattern. Row 1 (a1→h1): red, green, blue, purple, yellow, pink, brown, orange.

Pieces: A classic chess set with printed *palettes* (color bands shown on each piece).

- *Pawns:* 1 color each (all eight different).
- *Rooks, Knights, Bishops:* each individual piece has a fixed pair of colors (the two of the same type use different pairs).
- *Queen:* 3-color palette.
- *King:* 6-color palette.

d8 die: Rolled at the start of *every turn* for lock variance (Section 5.3) and during setup for the pawn shuffle (Section 4.2).

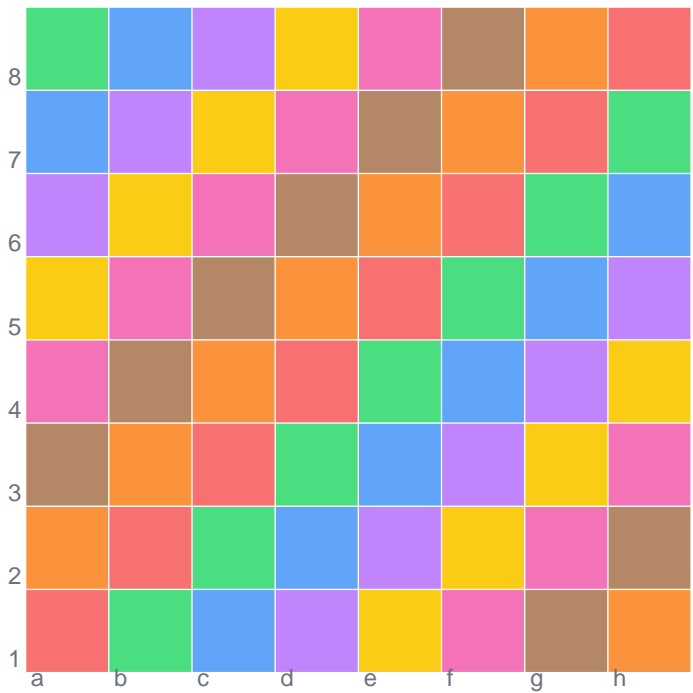
Lock indicator (recommended for OTB): a small disc/card showing the current lock color to reduce disputes.

What do you need?

- 1 Royal Palette board (8×8 rotating color pattern)
- 32 chess pieces with palette printing (16 per side)
- 1 d8 die
- Lock indicator token (recommended)
- Quick-start rulebook

Board Pattern — Royal Palette

The diagram below renders the Royal Palette pattern (a1 bottom-left for White). Each higher rank rotates the base row one step to the right.



2) Piece Palettes

Official Palette Map

Use a symmetric, mirrored mapping for both sides. Bands are printed top→bottom in the order shown.

Piece	Palette
King (6-band)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Queen (3-band)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Rook a (2-band)	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Rook h (2-band)	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Knight b (2-band)	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Knight g (2-band)	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Bishop c (2-band)	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
Bishop f (2-band)	<div><div></div><div></div></div>

3) Objective

Deliver checkmate. Standard draw rules apply — now with color-lock tension that rewards foresight and tempo.

4) Setup

4.1 Back-rank pieces

Place pieces on their standard starting squares. Use a *symmetric palette map* so mirrored pieces share palettes (e.g., White a-rook \equiv Black a-rook). Any consistent mirrored mapping is acceptable.

4.2 Pawns (d8 Shuffle)

Pawn shuffle (per side):

- 1) Read your pawn rank's color order S from your perspective (White: a2→h2; Black: a7→h7).
- 2) Place each pawn on a square matching *its printed color* (red on red, ...).
- 3) Roll a d8 $\rightarrow r \in \{1..8\}$.
- 4) Cyclically *shift the pawn lineup right by r squares (mod 8)*.

Result: each pawn starts on the color that is r steps to the right within S . If $r=8$, positions are unchanged.

Formal mapping: with S indexed 0..7 and initial pawn colors $P[i]=S[i]$, after the roll r , the pawn with color $P[i]$ moves to file $(i+r) \bmod 8$. Example below.

Example (White Pawn Setup):

Let S (a2→h2) = [orange, red, green, blue, purple, yellow, pink, brown].

Roll $r=5 \Rightarrow$ each pawn shifts 5 files to the right (mod 8).

Orange pawn moves to a purple square on row 2; Red \Rightarrow yellow; Green \Rightarrow pink; Blue \Rightarrow brown; Purple \Rightarrow orange; Yellow \Rightarrow red; Pink \Rightarrow green; Brown \Rightarrow blue.

5) Turn Structure & the Color Lock

5.1 Lock source

Lock source: The destination square's color of the last move sets the *lock color* C for the opponent's turn. White's first move sets the very first lock.

5.2 Who may move? (the color lock)

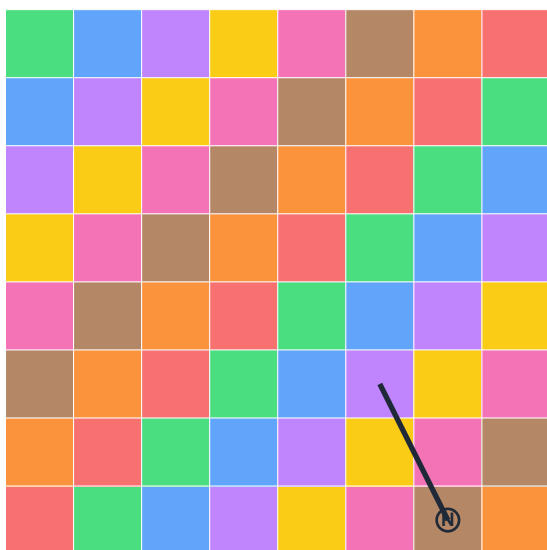
Who may move? On your turn, you may only move (a) a piece standing on a square of color C , or (b) a piece whose printed palette includes C . After you move, your destination color becomes the next lock.

Example: Basic Lock

White plays Nf3 landing on a purple square $\Rightarrow C = \text{purple}$.

Black must move a piece on a purple square or any piece whose palette includes purple.

Nf3 lands on Purple → Lock = Purple



5.3 d8 Roll — Lock Variance

Every turn, roll a d8 at the start of your turn:

- **1–6:** No change — you must play under the current lock color *C*. *Standard relief and in-check overrides still apply.*
- **7:** *Relief by dice* — for this turn you may ignore *C* and make any legal chess move. Your destination color still becomes the next lock.
- **8:** *Super relief* — same as on 7, and your opponent **does not roll** at the start of *their* next turn (they cannot gain relief by dice on that turn).

Why? Rolls of 7 or 8 occur 25% of the time, injecting uncertainty so plans cannot rely on the lock *always* constraining the reply.

d8 Roll — Order & Interactions

Order of operations: Start-of-turn *forced conversions* (ready-pawn → piece) happen first and do not change the lock; then roll the d8; then move.

In check: If your king is in check, you may *always* play any legal escape, regardless of the d8 result.

No-Move Relief: If you rolled 1–6 and are color-jammed (legal chess moves exist but none match *C*), apply Relief in Section 6 (make any legal move ignoring *C*). A 7 or 8 grants relief even if you were not jammed.

Lock setting: Even when moving under dice relief, your landing square's color sets the next *C*.

Note: The d8 rule prevents predicting the next player's action purely from the lock in roughly 25% of cases.

6) No-Move Relief

If you have *no legal move solely because of the color lock* (i.e., standard chess legal moves exist, but all are forbidden by color), you may make **any legal move** this turn, ignoring C.

Note: If you have no legal move for normal chess reasons, that is stalemate (draw). Relief applies only when the lock alone forbids all moves.

How to test for relief

- A) List all legal chess moves for your side ignoring the lock.
- B) Filter to moves that either originate on C or whose piece palette includes C.
- C) If the filtered list is empty but A) was non-empty → you may make any legal move this turn (ignore C).

Example: Relief in Action

C = green. None of your pieces stand on green; none include green in their palette.

Because the lock alone forbids your otherwise-legal moves, you may make any legal move this turn, ignoring C.

7) Check & Checkmate

If your king is in check, you may play any legal checking-escape move (capture, block, or king move), ignoring the color lock.

Checkmate, stalemate, threefold repetition, and the 50-move rule follow standard chess, with the lock overrides above.

Example: Escaping Check

You are in check; C = pink. Your only escape is Kf2 to a yellow square.

Legal—lock is ignored to escape check.

8) Special Moves & Promotion

8.1 Castling

Castling: Allowed as in chess. The king's *landing square color* sets the next lock.

8.2 En passant

En passant: Allowed as in chess. The capturing pawn's *landing square color* sets the next lock.

8.3 Promotion: Revival or Delay

- *Primary rule:* A pawn may promote only to a type you have previously lost (Q/R/B/N). When promoting, replace the pawn with your captured piece of that type.

- *Delay rule:* If no eligible type exists when reaching the last rank, the pawn advances onto the last rank and becomes a **ready pawn**: occupies its square; cannot move or capture; can be captured; cannot claim color-lock relief.
- *Forced conversion:* At the start of any of your turns when at least one eligible captured type exists, you **must** convert one ready pawn (replace with the piece of that type). This does not consume your move and does not change the lock color.
- *Lock interaction:* Moving onto the last rank still sets the next lock by destination color; the later forced conversion does not set a new lock.

Example: Promotion with Delay

A pawn reaches e8 (pink). You have not lost any R/B/N/Q yet → it becomes a ready pawn on e8.

Later your bishop is captured; at the start of your next turn, you must convert a ready pawn to that bishop (placing your bishop on its ready square).

Conversion does not consume your move and does not change the lock.

9) Captures & Bookkeeping

On any move (including captures), the *destination square's color* sets the next lock (not the captured piece's palette nor the origin square).

Illegal-color attempts are illegal moves: retract and play a legal one; the previous *legal* destination color remains the lock.

10) Notation

Algebraic notation plus the destination color in braces. Example: Bb5{Orange}.

If you used *any* relief (No-Move Relief or *relief by dice*), add an asterisk: Nf3{Purple}*.

Promotion (immediate revival): e8=R{...} (record revived type; lock color from promotion square).

Ready pawn (delay): e8(ready){...}; later forced conversion noted as e8→Q (no color tag—conversion isn't a move).

Checks and mates use + / # as usual.

How it feels to play

Three moments you'll be talking about

Color steer: Park a bishop on Orange to funnel a clumsy reply — or bait a loosening pawn push.

Castle timing: Your king's landing color sets the next lock. Flip a quiet castle into a power unlock.

Ready-pawn drama: Reach the last rank and wait. Lose a rook later? Boom—instant revival, no move spent.

Appendix A — DIY Build Guide

Applying the Stickers

Two stickers per piece: Apply **two identical stickers** to every piece — one on each side — so the palette is visible from any angle. Total stickers: 64.

Placement: Wrap the sticker on the *torso/neck* of the piece. **Do not** place on the base; the base must remain flat.

Sizes: Full-size set: **20×12 mm**; Travel set: **12×8 mm**.

Surface prep: Dry microfiber wipe to remove dust/oils. Let plastics reach room temperature.

Application: Align the rectangle parallel to the ring of the piece. For curved pieces (e.g., knights), press from center outward to avoid bubbles.

Adhesive: Removable, matte-laminated vinyl is recommended (peels cleanly, lowers glare).

Band order: Printed *top*→*bottom* as listed in the palette table.

Building / Printing a Board

Board pattern spec: Base row (a1→h1) = Red, Green, Blue, Purple, Yellow, Pink, Brown, Orange. Each rank above rotates the base row one step to the right.

Orientation: Place a1 at bottom-left from White's perspective.

Print tips: Use thicker paper (≥200 gsm) or mount on chipboard. Laminate matte to reduce glare.

Color reference (HEX): match your set to these values if possible.

Color	HEX	Swatch
Red	#F87171	
Green	#4ADE80	
Blue	#60A5FA	
Purple	#C084FC	
Yellow	#FACC15	
Pink	#F472B6	
Brown	#B48866	
Orange	#FB923C	

Accessibility Tips

Color-blind support: When printing stickers, consider adding subtle icons (dots, stripes) or numerals on bands.

Contrast: Prefer matte finishes and avoid neon hues. Ensure text over Yellow/Pink/Orange uses dark ink.

Lock indicator: Use a physical color token or a card to display the current lock color on the side to move.

Make a physical copy in 3 steps

- 1) Add color stickers (two per piece) following the palette table.
- 2) Get a d8 for the pawn shuffle, and a small token to display the current lock color.
- 3) Print or mark a board using the pattern on the previous page.

Appendix B — Tournament Director's Guide

Equipment: Use the official palette mapping and board pattern in this rulebook. Each piece shows its palette on two opposite faces. Place a d8 on each board.

Per-turn d8 roll: At the start of each turn, the player rolls a d8 — 1–6: lock applies; 7: relief this turn; 8: relief this turn and the opponent *does not roll* at the start of their next turn (no dice relief that turn).

Lock indicator: Organizer provides a lock token or card; place it near the player to move and set to the current color.

Illegal-color attempts: Treat as an illegal move under FIDE-style rules: retract and play a legal move; restore the previous legal lock color.

In-check override: Checking-escape moves are always legal regardless of the lock.

Relief procedure: Director verifies that legal chess moves exist; if the lock alone forbids all moves, apply Relief: allow any legal move ignoring C.

Notation: Algebraic + {Color}; add * if any relief (dice or no-move) used (e.g., Nf3{Purple}*).

Time controls: Use any standard control. Recommended: 5+3 blitz / 10+5 rapid / 90+30 classical.

Start protocol: Each side performs its own pawn d8 shuffle before clocks start; keep the d8 at the board for per-turn rolls.

Disputes about color: If the board's printing is unclear, compute the square color by file/rank using the base row definition (see algorithm below).

Square-Color Algorithm (for disputes)

```
def square_color(file_char, rank_num):
    files = 'abcdefgh'
    idx = files.index(file_char.lower())
    base = ['red', 'green', 'blue', 'purple', 'yellow', 'pink', 'brown', 'orange']
    row = base[-((rank_num-1)%8):] + base[:-( (rank_num-1)%8 )]
    return row[idx]
```

Appendix C — Glossary

Palette: The fixed set of color bands printed on a piece. If the lock color is in a piece's palette, that piece may move.

Lock color (C): The color of the *destination square* of the previous legal move.

Relief by dice: A temporary permission to ignore C for one turn, obtained by rolling 7 or 8 on the per-turn d8 (8 also suppresses the opponent's next d8 roll).

Ready pawn: A pawn on the back rank awaiting revival; it occupies its square, cannot move/capture, and can be captured.

Relief (No-Move): When the lock alone forbids all otherwise-legal moves, you may make *any legal move* this turn, ignoring C.

Appendix D — FAQ

Q: Does capturing a piece change the lock by the captured piece's colors?

A: No. Only the *destination square* sets the next lock.

Q: Does forced conversion (revival) change the lock?

A: No. It happens at start of turn and is not a move.

Q: Can I castle if the lock color doesn't match the king/rook?

A: Yes. Castling is a legal chess move; the king's landing square sets the next lock.

Q: When do I apply no-move relief vs. dice relief?

A: You roll the d8 at the start of each turn. On 1–6, if you're color-jammed use no-move relief (make any legal move ignoring C). On 7 or 8, you may ignore the lock even if you weren't jammed.

Q: What if I roll 7 or 8 while in check?

A: You already may ignore the lock to escape check; the roll is effectively redundant. On an 8, your opponent still skips their next d8 roll.

Q: Does rolling an 8 remove the lock entirely?

A: No. It lets you ignore the lock for *your* move and prevents your opponent from getting dice relief on *their* next turn; your landing color still sets the next lock.

Play online, tutorials, and puzzles: <https://www.royalpalette.com>

Appendix F — Why a New Chess Variant?

A Colorful Twist on the Classic Game

Chess is a timeless game, but even its greatest champions have foreseen potential stagnation. Nearly a century ago, José Raúl Capablanca warned that traditional chess could become “played out” leading to a dreary “**draw death**” at the top levels. Decades later, Bobby Fischer introduced Chess960 to abolish the dominance of opening memorization, aiming to replace rote learning with creativity and talent. These legendary players understood that fresh variations can keep the game alive and fun. A new chess variant introduces novel challenges and unpredictability, preventing experts from simply relying on memory and giving newcomers a more level playing field. In short, it injects **fresh life** into the game we love, ensuring chess remains engaging for *all* players.

What Makes Royal Palette Unique

Royal Palette Chess takes innovation to a new level by making the color of each board square an active part of the game. Every move you make doesn’t just change the piece positions – it *locks* a color and “**steers what your rival can move next**”. In this variant, landing on a square of a given color means your opponent’s next turn is limited to pieces on that color or pieces associated with that color. This clever **color-lock rule** lets you shape the tempo of the game, almost like painting your opponent into a corner. Notably, **no new piece movements are introduced** – knights, rooks, bishops, etc. all move exactly as in classical chess. By preserving the elegance of classic chess moves, Royal Palette remains easy to learn, yet its color-lock mechanic adds a layer of strategy that makes each turn feel fresh and impactful. You’re not just trading pieces; you’re “*painting positions and steering plans*” while still playing real chess. This unique twist transforms chess into a battle of wits where controlling **colors** becomes as critical as controlling pieces.

The Royal Palette Chess board features a vibrant eight-color pattern (repeating across ranks and files). Landing on a square’s color isn’t just cosmetic – it determines which pieces your opponent can move next. Each piece is marked with a “palette” of colors, indicating which color-locks it can respond to, preserving strategic balance.

Royal Palette also shakes up the **start of the game** to ensure no two games unfold the same way. Instead of the usual fixed pawn lineup, each side’s eight pawns are randomly “shuffled” across the second rank before play begins. This shuffle uses an eight-sided die (d8) roll to rotate the pawn positions, so your pawns still start on their home row but in an order determined by chance. The result is similar in spirit to Fischer Random Chess – opening theory is thrown out the window, and **every match begins with a unique setup**. Neither player can fall back on memorized opening sequences, making creativity and adaptability the keys from move one.

Beginner-Friendly by Design

One of the biggest appeals of Royal Palette Chess is how **accessible** it is for beginners. There are *no complicated new piece moves to learn* – the movement of every piece is exactly as in standard chess. You can grasp the basics in minutes since the only new concept is the color-lock rule. In practice, that rule actually **simplifies decision-making**: because only certain pieces can move each turn (those on the locked color or matching it), you’ll often have a much smaller set of legal moves to consider. This limited move selection can be a relief for newer players, who might otherwise feel overwhelmed by the dozens of possibilities in a normal chess position. By curating options, the game guides novices to

focus on strategy and tactics rather than getting lost in analysis paralysis. In the creator's words, **"classic chess moves, zero new movement patterns"** means you spend time playing and enjoying the game, not struggling to learn it. And since the starting pawn arrangement is randomized, beginners don't have to memorize popular openings – **every game is a fresh adventure** where you can try your own ideas from the get-go.

Fresh Challenges for Experienced Players

For seasoned chess lovers, Royal Palette offers **depth and novelty** that breathe new excitement into the game. The color-lock mechanic introduces rich strategic and tactical considerations. You're constantly planning not just your next move, but also how the color of your landing square will constrain your opponent. This rule **"rewards foresight and tempo"**, giving an edge to players who can think a move ahead in color terms. Unlike standard chess where top players often rely on extensive opening prep, here you must invent strategy on the fly – exactly what Fischer envisioned when he sought to eliminate the dominance of pre-set sequences. Every turn is a puzzle: can you land on a color that leaves your rival with only bad or few choices? Skilled players will savor these **"palette pressure"** battles, using the lock to script opponents' mistakes and engineer winning combinations. Yet there's always a twist: at the start of each turn, an eight-sided die is rolled to determine if the lock must be obeyed or can be broken. On average about **25% of turns** a lucky roll (7 or 8 on the die) lets you ignore the color-lock and play any move, injecting a healthy dose of uncertainty and surprise. This light **randomness** means even the best-laid plans aren't guaranteed – you'll need creativity and adaptability, not just memorization, to succeed. The interplay of strategic locking and occasional free moves keeps experienced players on their toes and ensures **no game ever plays out in quite the same way**.

Royal Palette's changes also bring a fresh balance to endgames and big tactical swings. **Promotion** works differently in this variant, adding drama and fairness. Instead of instantly trading a pawn for a powerful new queen on the final rank, a pawn may only promote to a piece type that you've **already lost**. In other words, promotions serve as a **revival** of captured pieces rather than introduction of extra material. If you haven't lost any major piece by the time a pawn reaches the last rank, you can't promote it immediately – the pawn waits there as a *"ready pawn"* until one of your rooks, bishops, knights or queen gets captured. As soon as a piece becomes available, the pawn automatically converts into that piece, **bringing your lost unit back into action** without costing you a move. This ingenious rule means no more steamrolling opponents with multiple extra queens; instead, it creates climactic comeback moments. For instance, you might deliberately sacrifice a piece knowing a pawn is ready to *revive* it next turn, catching your opponent off guard. Advanced players will appreciate how this promotion system preserves balance (you can't gain material advantage beyond the original set of pieces) while producing **"clutch moments"** in the late game. It's a thrill when a seemingly doomed position is saved because your fallen queen returns to the board at just the right time!

Why You Will Enjoy It

Royal Palette Chess is a rare blend of **familiarity and innovation**. If you love classic chess, you'll feel right at home with the moves – yet from the very first move, you'll also feel the *buzz* of something genuinely new. This variant empowers you to control the flow of the game like never before: every move becomes a chance to set a trap or force your opponent's hand through the color-lock. That moment when you land on a square and realize you've cleverly **"curated your opponent's choices"** for their turn is deeply satisfying. At the same time, the game never loses its dynamic ebb and flow – a

surprise die roll or an unexpected piece revival can turn the tables, leading to dramatic reversals and **“cinematic finishes”** that will have you on the edge of your seat. Whether you’re a casual player or a hardened chess veteran, Royal Palette offers something to enjoy: a quick-to-learn ruleset that still delivers **endless variety and strategic depth**. It’s chess, reimagined in full color, and it just might rekindle your passion for the royal game. So dive in and experience the *“palette pressure”* and *“royal payoff”* for yourself – once you do, you’ll understand why this innovative variant is capturing the imagination of chess lovers everywhere.