



Free Game # 42 from Invisible City Productions, Inc.

## **A checkers variant for two to four players. by Sharon Cichelli and Jonathan Leistiko**

### **Object:**

There are two goals:

- 1) To get as many of your checkers to the other side of the board and back as possible.
- 2) To capture as many of your opponent's pieces as possible.

### **You Need:**

- A Poker deck.
- The checkers from a checkers set.

### **Setting Up:**

- Card Values: Aces are low, Kings are high.
- Separate the Poker deck into suits. Shuffle one red and one black suit together and give that half-deck to your opponent. Do the same with the remaining half-deck and keep it for yourself.
- Without looking at your cards, lay them out face down to create the "live squares" of one half of a checker board. Your opponent should do likewise to create the other half. In the end the board should look like this:  
(picture)
- You may look at your remaining cards. This is your *stockpile*.
- Place the checkers on the board like you normally would for a game of checkers. It should look like this:  
(picture)
- Choose a player to go first.

## Play:

Play is identical to a normal game of checkers with the following exceptions:

- When you see a capture, you must take that capture. If you have a choice between two captures, you may choose the one you want to make.
- When a piece you control lands on a face-down card, turn it face-up. If the card is black, you must discard a card from your stockpile. You may choose any card you wish to. If the card you landed on is greater than the stockpile card you discarded, then your piece has been blown up. Put it with the other surplus checkers and end your turn.
- When a piece you control lands on a face-up card, turn it face down.
- Place all pieces you capture in your “captured” area.
- If a piece you control is in your opponent’s home row, king it with a surplus piece. Never use pieces from the rescued or captured pile of either player to king a piece. When a king you control lands in your home row (the row closest to you) may move it off the board next turn. Place it in your “rescued” area when you do.

## Winning:

The game ends when:

- There are no pieces on the board,
- All pieces on the board are one color, or
- No moves remain for one or both players.

If you have the most checkers in your “rescued” area, then you win a “survival” victory. If you have the most checkers in your “captured” area, then you win a “tactical” victory. If you have a survival and tactical victory, then you’ve accomplished a total victory.

## Variants:

### Assassins:

If your checker captures a checker sitting on a face-up black queen or red jack, then your checker is captured by your opponent.

### Kings:

If you turn a King face-up, immediately king the piece that landed on it. It behaves in all ways as a normal King in checkers.

**Queens:**

If you turn a Queen face-up, immediately queen the piece that landed on it. A queen may capture backwards or forwards like a king, but may only move forward.

**Footmen:**

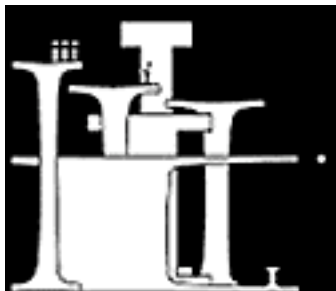
If you turn a Jack face-up, the piece that landed on it becomes a footman. A footman may capture an adjacent enemy piece without moving from its square. When it does, it ceases to be a footman, reverting to a normal piece.

**Origin and Credits:**

Many, many months ago, Sharon suggested this checkers variant. Fortunately, I wrote it down in my book of game ideas or it would have been forgotten. This is the kind of game that seems so simple and elegant that I'm surprised that I've never seen it, or at least a variant thereof, before. If you're aware of a checkers variant that uses a poker deck as a board, please let me know.

Thanks to Sharon for thinking of the game, naming it, and playtesting it with me.

*Unedited as of June 30, 2003.*



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