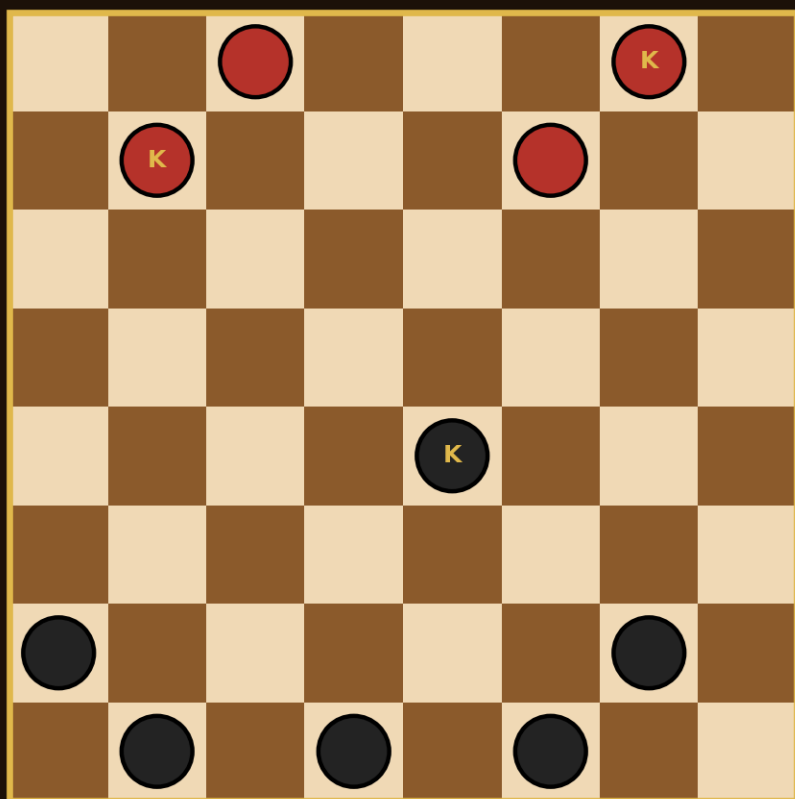


THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO  
**CROWNSPIRE**

STANDARD • FLYING • RUSSIAN • SURGE

*Draughts & Checkers — From First Moves to Master-Level Strategy*



A Complete Player's Handbook for Every Variant

# 1. Introduction to Crownspire

Crownspire brings together the whole family of draughts games — **Standard**, **Flying**, **Russian**, and the app's own **Surge** variant — in one place, playable against the computer, against a friend on the same device, or against other players online. This guide explains how every version of the game works, and then builds you up from your very first move to the kind of deep, forward-planning thought process used by expert players.

This book is the companion handbook to the Crownspire app itself, which you can play at <https://crownspire.tsomac.net/>.

## Why so many variants?

Draughts is not one game but a family of closely related games that grew up in different countries, each with its own house rules. The core idea is always the same — diagonal movement, forced jumps, and promotion to a king — but the details that follow from that idea (how far a king can move, whether men can capture backward, what happens when you're forced into a big multi-jump) change the character of the game completely. Crownspire lets you play all of them, and this guide treats each one seriously rather than assuming “draughts” means only one thing.

## A short history

Games involving diagonal capture on a checkered board go back centuries, with the modern rules for English draughts (also called checkers) standardising in Britain and the United States through the 1800s. International draughts, played on a larger 10×10 board with long-range “flying” kings, developed in France and the Netherlands and is today the version played in official world championships. Russian draughts, popular across Eastern Europe, kept the flying king but allowed men to capture in every direction, producing a faster, more tactical game. Surge is Crownspire's own addition to this family: it takes Russian draughts as its base and adds two new promotion rules — Valor Promotion and Kingslayer — that make kings both more powerful and more dangerous to own, explained in full in Chapter 4.

## How this guide is organised

- Chapters 2–3 cover the rules and ideas shared by every variant: the board, how pieces move and capture, and how kings are made.
- Chapter 4 explains each of the four variants in detail, including exactly what makes Surge different.
- Chapters 5–9 cover Crownspire's game modes: 4-player play, online play, the capture countdown rule, reading the on-screen interface, and the AI opponents.
- Chapters 10–14 are the strategy guide proper — beginner ideas, named tactics with diagrams, intermediate and advanced planning, and the thought process used by strong and expert players.
- Chapters 15–17 are reference material: practice puzzles, a glossary, further resources, and a one-page rules summary you can come back to at any time.

## 2. The Basics: Board, Pieces, and Movement

Everything in this chapter applies to all four Crownspire variants unless a note says otherwise. If you already know how to play, skim for the notation system introduced at the end, since the rest of the book uses it throughout.

### The board and starting position

Draughts is played on the dark squares of a checkered board only — the light squares are never used. In the Standard, Russian, and Surge variants the board is 8×8 with 12 pieces per side; Flying (International) uses a larger 10×10 board with 20 pieces per side. Each side's pieces fill the dark squares of the three rows closest to them, leaving the middle rows empty at the start.

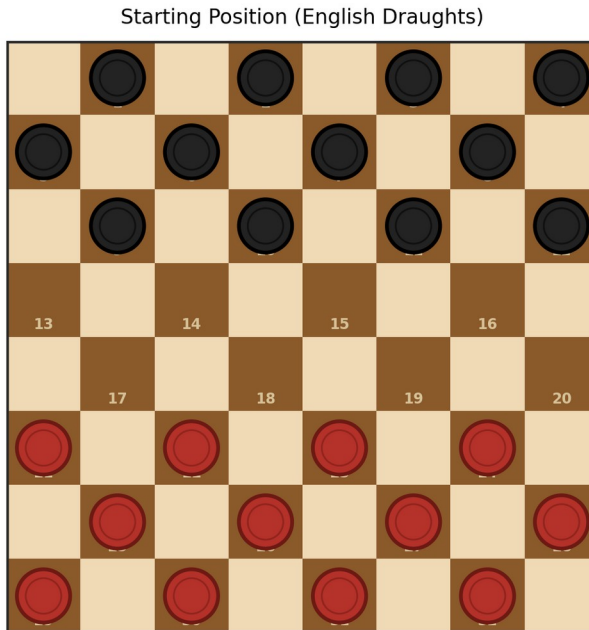


Figure 1. The 8×8 starting position, with the standard 1–32 square numbering used throughout this book.

## How pieces move

An ordinary piece is called a man. In every variant, a man always moves diagonally, one square at a time, onto an empty square. In the Standard and Flying variants a man may only move forward, toward the opponent's edge of the board; in Russian and Surge, a man may also capture backward (see Captures, below), although its non-capturing move is still forward only.

A Man Moves Diagonally Forward, One Square at a Time

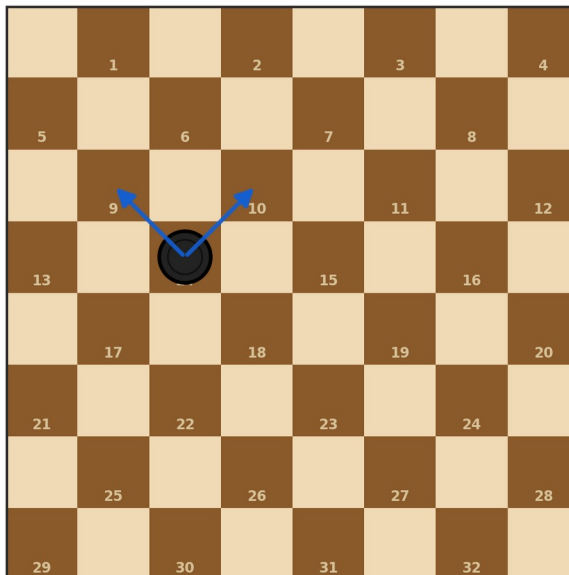


Figure 2. A man may step diagonally forward into either open square ahead of it.

## Capturing

If an enemy piece sits diagonally next to one of yours, with an empty square directly beyond it on the same line, you may jump over it into that empty square — removing the enemy piece from the board. If your piece can jump again from its new square, it must keep jumping in the same turn, chaining together a multi-jump that can clear several enemy pieces in one move.

sturing: Jump Over an Adjacent Enemy Man Into an Empty Squ

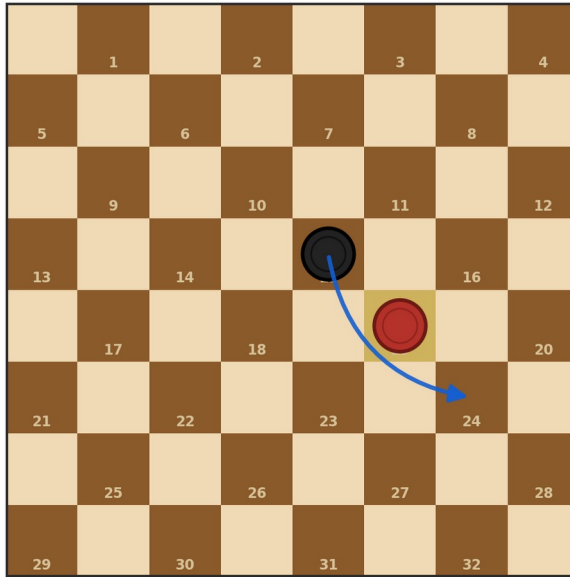


Figure 3. Jumping diagonally over an adjacent enemy man into the empty square beyond captures it.

*Captures are forced. In every Crownspire variant, if a legal jump is available to you, you must take it — you cannot choose to make a quieter move instead. In Flying rules specifically, if more than one jump is available, you must choose the sequence that captures the most pieces.*

## Kings

A man that reaches the far back row — the row where the opponent's pieces started — is crowned and becomes a king. In Standard rules a king still moves only one square at a time, but can now do so in any of the four diagonal directions instead of forward only.

A King Moves Diagonally in Any of the Four Directions

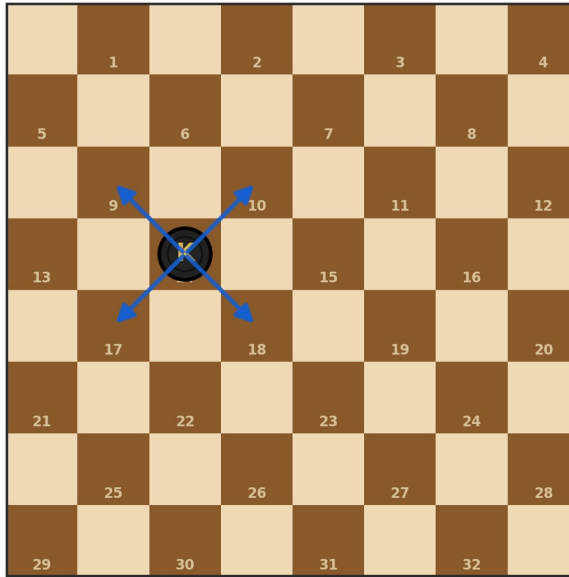


Figure 4. A king moves one square diagonally in any of the four directions (Standard rules).

In **Flying, Russian, and Surge** rules, kings are not limited to one square: a king may slide any distance along an open diagonal, and when capturing, may land on any empty square beyond the piece it jumps — not just the very next one. This single difference changes the whole character of the endgame, since a flying king can control an entire diagonal from a distance.

Flying King: Slides Any Distance Along an Open Diagonal

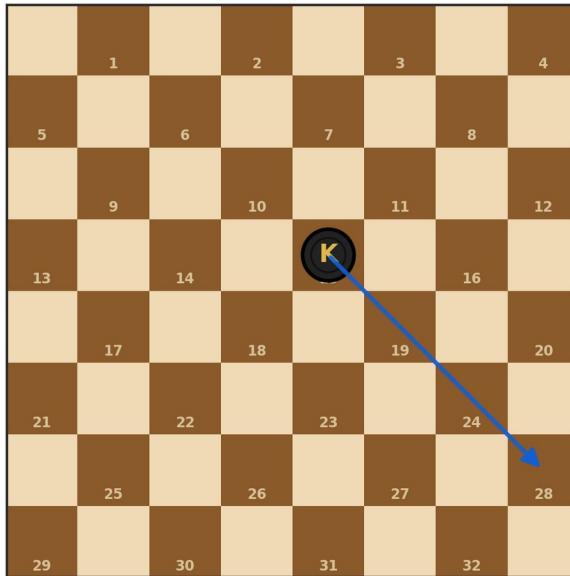


Figure 5. A flying king may slide the full length of an open diagonal in one move.

Flying Capture: The King May Land on Any Empty Square Beyond

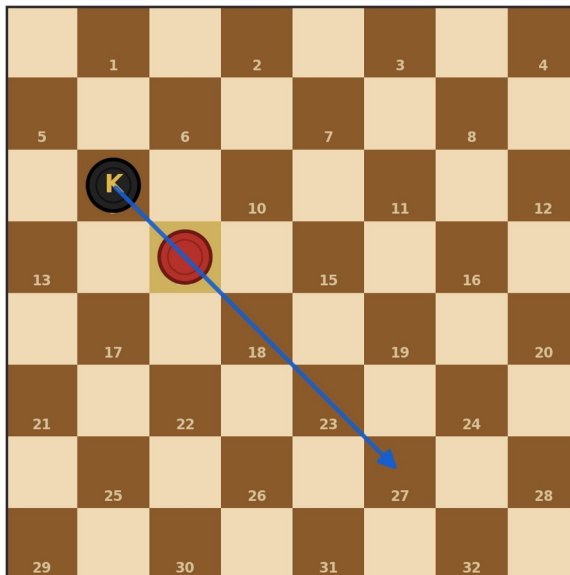


Figure 6. When a flying king captures, it may land on any empty square beyond the captured piece, not only the nearest one.

## Winning — and drawing

You win by capturing every one of your opponent's pieces, or by leaving them with no legal move on their turn (the same result in practice, since a player with no pieces also has no legal move). As in most strategy games of this depth, skilled players can also reach positions where neither side can force a win — a draw — particularly in king endings, covered in Chapter 12.

## Reading and writing moves: the numbering system

This book uses the standard convention of numbering the 32 (or in Flying, 50) dark squares, reading left to right along each row starting from one back corner, as shown in Figure 1. A move is written as a starting square and ending square separated by a hyphen (for example, 11-15), and a capture is often written with an  $\times$  (for example, 23 $\times$ 14 to mean “the piece on 23 jumps to 14, capturing whatever stood between them”). Learning to read a short line of notation like 11-15 22-18 15 $\times$ 22 25 $\times$ 18 lets you follow published games and puzzles without needing a diagram for every single move.

## 3. The Four Variants of Crownspire

Crownspire's single-rule-set variants share the basic ideas from Chapter 2 but differ in board size, how far kings can travel, whether men can capture backward, and — in the case of Surge — how a piece becomes a king in the first place. This chapter walks through each one, then Surge's two new rules in full detail, since that's the variant unique to this app.

### 3.1 Standard

Standard is classic English draughts: an 8×8 board, 12 men per side, men that move and capture forward only, and kings that move just one square at a time in any of the four diagonal directions. It is the slowest-paced and most rigorously studied of the four variants — its opening theory has been worked out for well over a century, and the game itself has been mathematically solved to be a draw with perfect play from both sides (see Chapter 14). If you are new to draughts, Standard is the best place to build your fundamentals, since the strategy chapters later in this book (10–14) are written primarily around it before showing how each idea shifts in the other variants.

### 3.2 Flying (International Draughts)

Flying is Crownspire's implementation of International draughts, played on a 10×10 board with 20 men per side. Two rules change the game significantly compared to Standard:

- **Backward captures.** A man may capture an enemy piece diagonally behind it, not just in front — though its ordinary, non-capturing move is still forward only. This means no man is ever completely safe simply because it's “behind the action.”
- **Maximum capture is mandatory.** If you have a choice between a jump that captures one piece and a longer chain that captures three, you must play the longer chain. Scanning the board for the biggest available capture, not just any capture, is essential in this variant.

Combined with flying kings (Chapter 2), Flying produces a more open, tactical game with a bigger board to maneuver on — long diagonal pins and distant king intrusions are common even in the early middlegame.

### 3.3 Russian

Russian draughts is played on the familiar 8×8, 12-men-per-side board, but combines flying kings with backward captures for men, just like Flying. Russian rules add one more distinctive twist:

- **Promotion mid-jump.** If a man reaches the back row in the middle of a multi-jump — not just at the end of its move — it is immediately crowned and continues capturing as a flying king for the rest of that same turn. A modest-looking man can therefore turn into a rampaging king partway through a single move, sweeping up pieces a plain man could never have reached.

This rule rewards a different kind of calculation than Standard: you're not just asking “can I capture something,” but “if I capture in this order, do I cross the back row partway through and keep going as a king?”

### 3.4 Surge — Crownspire's Own Variant

Surge takes Russian draughts as its foundation — flying kings, backward captures, mid-jump promotion — and adds two further rules that don't exist in traditional draughts anywhere else. These are what make Surge *Crownspire's* game.

#### ***Valor Promotion***

If a man captures two or more pieces in a single turn, it is promoted to a king on the spot, wherever its multi-jump happens to end — even if that square is nowhere near the back row. The new king immediately continues jumping as a flying king if any further captures are available in the same chain.

Surge - Valor Promotion: Before the Double Jump

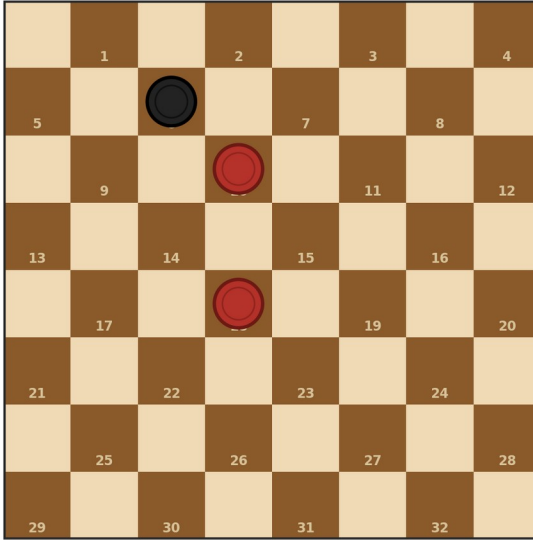


Figure 7a. Before: a black man is one move from a double capture.

Surge - Valor Promotion: Two Captures = Instant King

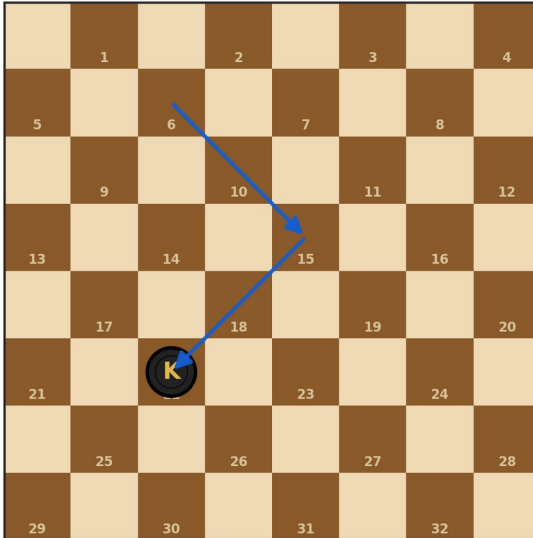


Figure 7b. After: having captured two pieces in one turn, the man is promoted to a king immediately — Valor Promotion.

## Kingslayer

If a man captures an enemy king — even as its only capture that turn, with no chain involved — it is promoted to a king instantly, and then continues capturing as a flying king if further jumps are available.

Surge - Kingslayer: Before the Capture

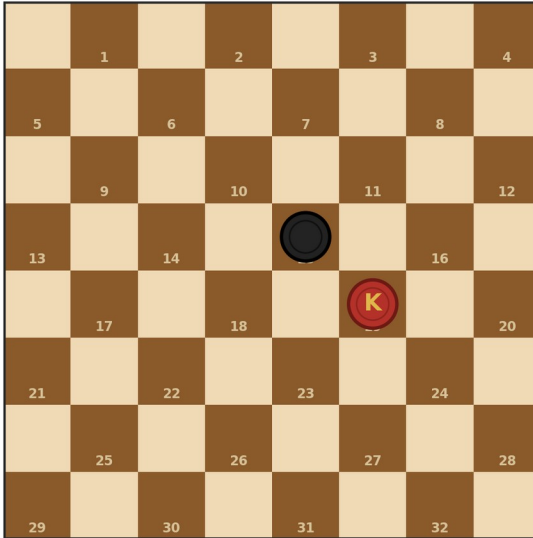


Figure 8a. Before: a black man threatens to capture a red king.

Surge - Kingslayer: Capturing a King Promotes You Instantly

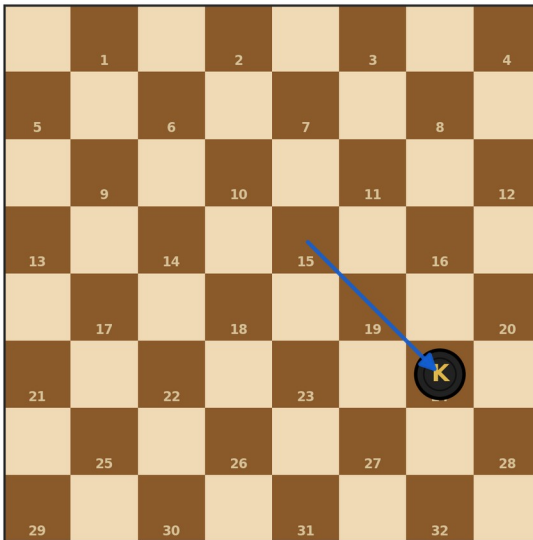


Figure 8b. After: capturing an enemy king promotes the capturing man immediately — Kingslayer.

Surge's central strategic tension: kings are more valuable than ever, since they still fly across the board — but every enemy man within striking distance is a potential Kingslayer, and every position where you could be forced into a double jump is a potential Valor Promotion for your opponent. Protecting a king in Surge means denying the enemy any capture route to it, not just outnumbering them locally.

### Variant comparison at a glance

Variant	Board	Kings	Men Capture	Special Rule
<b>Standard</b>	8×8, 12/side	One square	Forward only	Classic English draughts
<b>Flying</b>	10×10, 20/side	Fly any distance	Forward & backward	Must capture the maximum available
<b>Russian</b>	8×8, 12/side	Fly any distance	Forward & backward	Man promotes mid-jump and keeps flying
<b>Surge</b>	8×8, 12/side	Fly any distance	Forward & backward	Valor Promotion + Kingslayer (see Ch. 4.4)

## 4. 4-Player Crownspire

Crownspire also supports a four-player free-for-all, played on a larger board with four starting zones: Red (bottom), Dark (top), Blue (left), and Gold (right). You king your pieces by reaching the starting zone directly opposite your own, and the last colour remaining on the board wins.

### Board sizes

Size	Board	Pieces per side	Character
Small	12×12	9	Quick games with compact, rectangular starting arms
Medium	20×20	42	Longer, more strategic battles with room to maneuver
Large	28×28	85–86	Epic, marathon matches for players who want the full experience

### Rule options

- **Standard.** Classic rules — men move forward only, kings move one square at a time.
- **Flying.** Kings slide any distance diagonally, as in Chapter 3's Flying and Russian variants.
- **Surge.** Flying kings, backward captures for men, plus Valor Promotion and Kingslayer, exactly as in the two-player Surge variant.

### Strategy notes for four players

Free-for-all draughts changes the maths of every decision, since a capture you make can leave you exposed to one of the two players you

didn't just fight. A few adjustments to the two-player thinking in Chapters 10–13 are worth keeping in mind:

- Avoid taking a trade that leaves your piece exposed to a third player's man on the very next turn — in two-player draughts this risk doesn't exist, but in four-player it's often the deciding factor.
- Kings are even more valuable in Surge 4-player, since a promoted king can be threatened by capture from any of three opponents, not one — spreading your pieces too thin invites a Kingslayer from a side you weren't watching.
- Watch for two opponents trading blows while you develop safely; letting other players weaken each other before you commit your own pieces is a legitimate and often winning strategy.
- On the Medium and Large boards, local material superiority in one corner of the board matters more than overall piece count — you cannot defend every edge against three opponents at once, so choose which side of the board to contest early.

## 5. Playing Online

Signing in gives you access to Crownspire's online lobby, where you can create or join both 2-player and 4-player games against other people rather than the AI.

### Starting a game

- Create or join a lobby for a 2-player or 4-player game.
- Once every seat is filled and all players are marked ready, the host presses Start Game.

### The turn timer

Online games run on a **60-second** turn timer, shown as a countdown next to the turn indicator whenever it's your move. If the timer runs out before you move, your **weakest piece is removed as a penalty** and the turn passes automatically to the next player — so it pays to have at least a provisional plan ready before the clock starts, especially in tactical Surge positions where missing a forced capture can be costly.

### After the game

- Rematch — available in 2-player games, immediately starting a new game against the same opponent.
- Like — you can like your opponents after a game.
- Return to the lobby to find a new game.
- Watch — you can spectate live games at any time, which is one of the best ways to study stronger players' thought process in real time.

## 6. The Capture Countdown Rule

Every player in Crownspire has 30 moves in which to make at least one capture. As that limit approaches, a countdown number appears inside that player's name label on the board frame — turning amber under 20 moves remaining, and red under 10. If a player reaches zero without having captured a piece, their weakest piece is removed as a penalty and the countdown resets.

This rule exists to prevent games from stalling into an unresolvable standoff, and it has a real strategic consequence: purely defensive, no-contact play is not a safe long-term plan in Crownspire the way it can sometimes be in traditional over-the-board draughts. If you are comfortably ahead, you still need to keep at least the threat of a capture alive every so often, or the clock will force a concession on your behalf as easily as your opponent's.

## 7. Reading the Board: In-Game Interface

Crownspire's board screen is designed to tell you everything you need at a glance. Here's what each part of the screen means:

- **Header, centre** — shows whose turn it is, and in online games, the turn timer (🕒 X) when it's your move.
- **Header, right** — a running piece count for each player, shown as coloured dots.
- **Board frame** — the player's name, or the AI's difficulty label, next to their side of the board.
- **Green glow** — marks the pieces you're allowed to move this turn.
- **Orange glow** — marks a piece that must capture — a reminder that a forced jump is available and, per the rules in Chapter 2, mandatory.
- **Footer** — hint text and commentary about the current position.

Learning to read the orange glow instantly is worth the effort: in Flying, Russian, and Surge especially, missing a forced multi-jump is one of the most common ways new players lose material they didn't need to.

## 8. AI Difficulty Levels

Crownsfire offers four AI opponents, suited to different stages of learning:

Level	How it plays	Best for
<b>Casual</b>	Mostly random moves, with a loose preference for captures when available	Absolute beginners learning the rules
<b>Normal</b>	Plans 4 moves ahead	Players comfortable with the basics who want a fair fight
<b>Hard</b>	Plans 7 moves ahead with full alpha-beta pruning	Intermediate and advanced players
<b>The Learner</b>	Starts at Hard and grows stronger every game, biasing future moves toward lines it has won from before — progress is saved across sessions	Players who want a long-term rival that adapts to them

A practical way to use the ladder: play Normal until you can beat it comfortably and consistently, move to Hard once you're actively calculating two or three moves ahead yourself (Chapter 12), and treat the Learner as a long-term project — since it remembers its past losses to you, beating it convincingly once is not the same as beating it for good.

## 9. Beginner Strategy

The ideas in this chapter apply to every variant, though the balance between them shifts once kings can fly (Chapter 11 covers those adjustments). They are written with Standard rules in mind as the clearest baseline.

### **Control the centre**

Pieces in the centre of the board influence more squares and have more ways to advance than pieces stuck on the edge files, which can only ever move in one diagonal direction. Early moves that develop your central men are almost always more useful than edge moves.

### **Keep your back row as long as you can**

Your own back row is what stops enemy men from being promoted to kings. Every piece you move off your back row early makes it easier for an enemy man to slip through and become a king later. Strong beginners resist the temptation to develop back-row pieces until they're actually needed.

### **Advance together, not alone**

A lone man pushed forward with no support nearby is an easy target — it can be attacked from a direction it has no piece to trade with. Advancing in a connected block, where every man is defended by another diagonally behind it, is far harder for your opponent to break through.

A Connected Phalanx vs. Scattered, Isolated Men

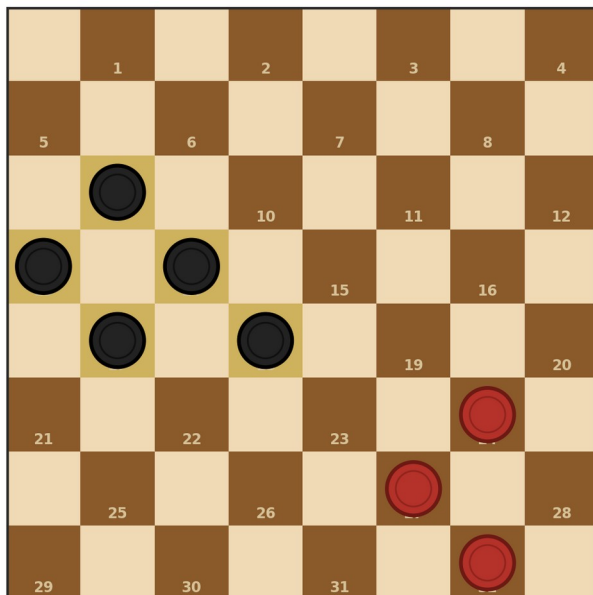


Figure 9. A connected block of men (left) defends itself; isolated men (right) are easy targets.

## The double corner

The corner of the board where a defender has two ways to retreat (rather than one) is traditionally the stronger corner to build your defence around, since a piece trapped there has an escape route a single-corner piece lacks. Beginners are often taught to favour keeping strength on this side of the board.

## Look before every capture

Since captures are forced, always check the board for a forced jump before you play any other move — not just once at the start of your turn, but again after your opponent moves, since their move may have just created one. Missing a mandatory jump is the single most common way beginners lose material.

# 10. Tactics and Combinations

A tactic in draughts is a short forcing sequence — usually built around the mandatory-capture rule — that wins material or a winning position by force, regardless of how the opponent responds. Recognising the patterns below by sight is what separates a player who calculates every single move from scratch from one who spots the shape and knows what's coming.

## The Shot (a forcing sacrifice)

A “shot” is a move that looks like it gives away a piece for nothing, but is actually forced and wins more material back than it costs. The most common version is the two-for-one shot: you deliberately move a man into a position where the opponent's only legal move is to capture it, and that capture opens a multi-jump for you that nets two of their pieces in return.

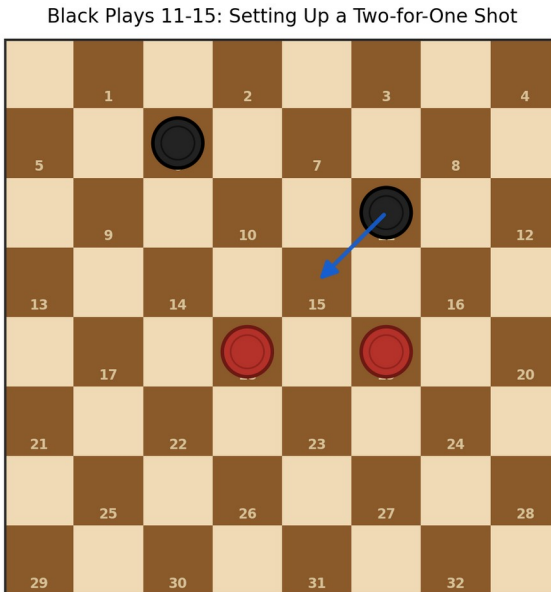


Figure 10a. Black plays 11-15, apparently just walking into a capture between two red men.

Black Jumps Twice: Two Red Men Captured for One

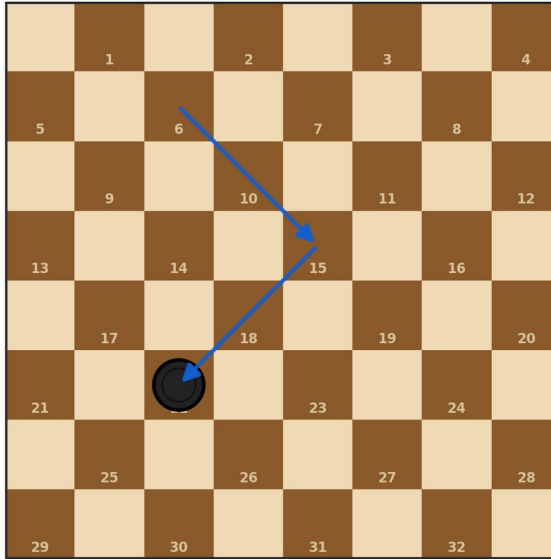


Figure 10b. Red is forced to capture; black then jumps twice, netting two red men for the one sacrificed — a two-for-one shot.

The pattern generalises: any time you can force a capture that opens up a multi-jump for you, it's worth counting up the material both sides gain and lose before dismissing the sacrifice as “just losing a piece.”

### The Bridge (an endgame formation)

In king endings, two defending kings placed on the same row, two squares apart, guard both diagonals leading into the corner behind them — a single attacking king cannot break through this formation no matter which diagonal it tries, making it one of the most reliable drawing resources in the whole game.

The Bridge: Two Kings Guard Both Diagonals Into the Corner

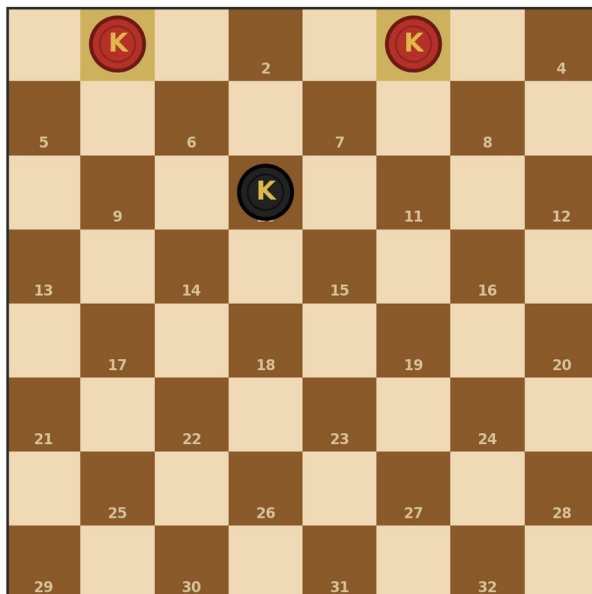


Figure 11. The Bridge: two kings two squares apart cover both approaches into the corner.

## Single-corner endings

A lone king, correctly placed in the corner where it has the fewest squares to be chased out of, can hold a draw against a king plus an extra man, provided it keeps oscillating between the small set of squares that cover every threat. Learning to recognise when a position is this kind of theoretical draw — rather than playing on hoping for a mistake — saves a great deal of unnecessary defending, and just as importantly tells you when an ending is not a safe draw and needs real care.

### A Single-Corner Ending: the Lone King Holds the Draw

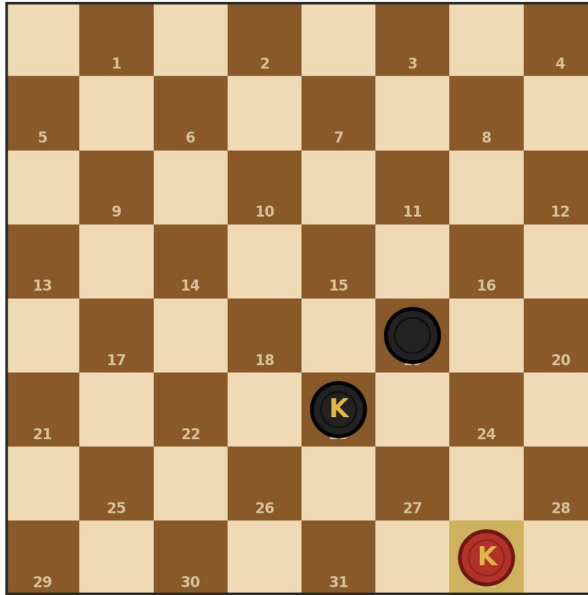


Figure 12. A typical single-corner ending; the defending king relies on the corner's geometry to survive.

## Opposition

In a king-and-pawn-style ending with few pieces left, whoever is forced to move first into a bad square often loses the position — the parity of whose turn it is (“the move”) can matter as much as the pieces themselves. Counting moves ahead to work out who will run out of safe squares first is a core late-game skill, covered further in Chapter 12.

Opposition: Kings Face Off Along the Same Diagonal

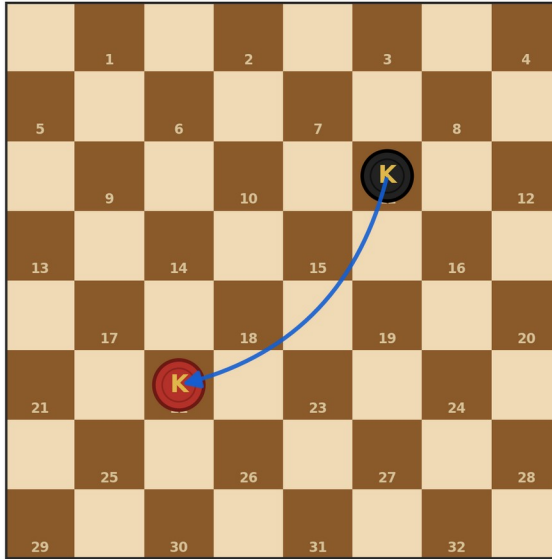


Figure 13. Two kings in opposition along a diagonal — whoever must move first may be forced to give ground.

## Flying-king tactics (Flying, Russian, Surge)

Once kings can fly the length of a diagonal, a single king can pin down an entire line from far away, and a piece that looks safely tucked behind a wall of men can still be attacked from a completely different angle than a Standard player would expect. Always check every open diagonal a flying king sits on, not just the squares immediately next to it.

## Surge tactics: baiting and bracing

Because Valor Promotion instantly rewards a double capture, and Kingslayer instantly rewards capturing a king, Surge adds a layer of tactics on top of everything above: deliberately offering a piece to *bait* an opponent into a multi-jump you've calculated leads into a Valor Promotion for **you** on your very next move, or leaving a king one square away from an enemy man as bait for a Kingslayer counter-trap once you recapture. In Surge, always ask not just “what can I capture,” but “what does capturing turn my piece into, and what does it let my opponent's next piece turn into?”

# 11. Intermediate and Advanced Strategy

## Tempo and “the move”

Beyond material, draughts players think in terms of tempo — whether a particular exchange leaves you with a useful move available, or forces you to make a move you'd rather not. In endings especially, strong players count the parity of remaining moves (“who runs out of good squares first”) well before the position simplifies down to where it matters.

## Deciding whether to trade

Not every available trade should be taken. A good trade simplifies the position in your favour — for example, trading off an opponent's advanced, well-supported man for one of your own less useful pieces, or trading down when you're ahead in material, since fewer pieces on the board make an existing advantage easier to convert. A bad trade hands the opponent exactly the simplification they wanted.

## King safety and piece value

A king is worth substantially more than a man in every variant, and dramatically more in Flying, Russian, and Surge, where it also commands entire diagonals rather than a single square. In Surge specifically, king safety is not just about local defence — because Kingslayer rewards capturing a king even as a single, unsupported jump, a king can be lost to a man that a Standard player would never have considered a threat at all.

## Calculating forced sequences

Since captures are mandatory, many draughts positions contain long forced sequences that can be calculated out to a definite result, rather than merely estimated. Practice reading a position two, then three, then four half-moves ahead by asking at each step: is a capture forced here, and if there's a choice of captures, which one actually helps me?

## **Variant-specific opening adjustments**

Because men can capture backward in Flying, Russian, and Surge, no piece is ever fully protected simply by being “behind the front line” the way it can be in Standard — early development needs to account for enemy pieces attacking from unexpected angles. In Russian and Surge, also watch for chances to walk a man into the back row in the middle of a jump sequence rather than at the end of one, since mid-jump promotion (Chapter 3.3) can turn an ordinary-looking capture into a king appearing deep in your opponent's territory.

## **12. The Expert-Level Thought Process**

At the highest levels, draughts is played less like a series of individual clever moves and more like the exploration of a tree of forced variations, most of which can be discarded quickly because they lead to a clearly worse position, leaving only a handful of candidate moves worth calculating in real depth.

### **Standard draughts is a solved game**

In 2007, a research team led by Jonathan Schaeffer, using the computer program Chinook, proved that Standard (English) draughts is a draw with perfect play by both sides — the first game of that complexity to be fully solved. This doesn't make human play pointless; it means that at the very highest level, the practical goal shifts from “find the objectively best move” (a computer will always find it faster) to “find the move most likely to cause your specific opponent the most practical difficulty,” which is a psychological and preparation-based skill as much as a calculating one.

### **Restricted openings**

Because the opening theory of Standard draughts has been studied so exhaustively, competitive events often use a “three-move restriction,” where the first three moves of the game are chosen randomly from a fixed list before play begins normally. This prevents strong players from simply repeating a memorised winning line and forces genuine over-the-board skill from the very first move.

### **Studying stronger play**

Marion Tinsley, widely regarded as the strongest human player in the game's history, lost only a handful of games across his entire competitive career, including his matches against Chinook. Studying annotated games from historically strong players — and in Crownspire, spectating live games between strong online opponents (Chapter 5) — remains one of the best ways to absorb pattern recognition that's hard to get from theory alone.

## **Applying deep calculation to Surge**

Surge adds real complexity to expert-level calculation, because a line that looks like a straightforward material trade in Standard can quietly hand over a Valor Promotion or a Kingslayer several moves down the line. Expert Surge players extend their calculation trees specifically to check: does any forced capture sequence in this line let a man cross into two-or-more-capture territory, or come within reach of an enemy king? Treat those two questions as seriously as material count when evaluating a deep line.

## 13. Practice Positions

Try to solve each position yourself — covering the solution text below it — before checking your answer. These are written for Standard rules unless noted.

### ***Puzzle 1: Spot the forced capture***

It's red's move. Black has just played a man onto a square where it is flanked by two red men, exactly as in Figure 10a. What is red's only legal move, and what should red expect to happen next?

*Solution: Red must capture (captures are mandatory) — but whichever of the two red men takes the black piece, black has a supporting man ready to jump twice in reply, exactly as in Figure 10b. Red loses two men for the one it captured: the shot succeeds regardless of which capture red chooses.*

### ***Puzzle 2: Trade or hold?***

You are one man ahead with an otherwise balanced position. Your opponent offers a trade of one of your advanced men for one of theirs. Should you generally take it?

*Solution: Generally yes. When you're ahead in material, trading pieces (without giving up your advantage) simplifies the position and makes your extra man count for relatively more as fewer pieces remain on the board — the same logic used in many other strategy games.*

### ***Puzzle 3: Surge — spot the trap***

In a Surge game, your king sits one diagonal step away from a lone enemy man, with no other pieces defending the approach. Is your king safe?

*Solution: No — that man can capture your king outright under the Kingslayer rule and be promoted instantly for doing so, even though it's only a single, unsupported piece. In Surge, a king needs its approach squares actively denied to enemy men, not just a favourable piece count nearby.*

## 14. Glossary

**Bridge, the.** A drawing formation of two kings placed two squares apart on the back row, covering both diagonals into the corner.

**Capture countdown.** Crownspeare's 30-move rule: a player who makes no capture within 30 moves loses their weakest piece as a penalty.

**Double corner.** The corner of the board where a piece has two ways to retreat rather than one, traditionally considered the stronger side to defend.

**Flying king.** A king that may move or capture across any distance along an open diagonal, used in Flying, Russian, and Surge rules.

**Forced capture.** The universal rule that if a legal jump is available, it must be played.

**Kingslayer.** A Surge-only rule: capturing an enemy king promotes the capturing man to a king instantly, even from a single, unsupported jump.

**Man.** An ordinary, uncrowned piece, as opposed to a king.

**Multi-jump.** A single turn in which one piece captures more than one enemy piece by chaining consecutive jumps.

**Opposition.** A king-ending concept where the parity of whose turn it is to move can decide the result of the position.

**Shot.** A forcing sacrifice that appears to give away material but wins back more through a subsequent forced multi-jump.

**Tempo.** The value of having (or being forced to give up) a useful move available in a given position.

**Valor Promotion.** A Surge-only rule: a man that captures two or more pieces in one turn is promoted to a king immediately, wherever it lands.

## 15. Further Resources

Once you've worked through this guide, these are good next steps for continued study:

### Where to play

Crownsfire itself is available at <https://crownsfire.tsomac.net/> — play any of the four variants covered in this book, in 2-player or 4-player mode, against the AI or online.

### Organisations and federations

- The World Draughts Federation (FMJD) — governs International (Flying-style) draughts and publishes official rules and world championship results.
- The American Checker Federation (ACF) — the governing body for English (Standard) draughts in the United States, with tournament rules and historical game archives.

### Books

- Basic Checkers by Tom Wiswell — a widely recommended starting point for Standard draughts fundamentals.
- Any annotated collection of Marion Tinsley's games — essential study material for advanced Standard players.

### Computers and solved-game research

- The published research of Jonathan Schaeffer's team on the Chinook program, which proved Standard draughts is a draw with perfect play — a landmark case study in how far exhaustive calculation can be pushed in a classical board game.

### In Crownsfire itself

- Spectating live online games (Chapter 5) is one of the fastest ways to see strong players' decision-making in real time, across any of the four variants.

- Playing up through the AI ladder in Chapter 8, especially against the Learner over many repeated games, gives you a long-term opponent that adapts specifically to your habits.



*Scan to open [crownspire.tsomac.net](http://crownspire.tsomac.net) on your phone.*

# 16. Quick-Reference Rules Summary

A one-page reminder of the essentials — come back to this page any time you need a refresher before a game.

Variant	Board	Kings	Men Capture	Special Rule
Standard	8×8, 12/side	One square	Forward only	Classic English draughts
Flying	10×10, 20/side	Fly any distance	Forward & backward	Must capture the maximum available
Russian	8×8, 12/side	Fly any distance	Forward & backward	Man promotes mid-jump and keeps flying
Surge	8×8, 12/side	Fly any distance	Forward & backward	Valor Promotion + Kingslayer (see Ch. 4.4)

## Always true, in every variant

- Pieces move and capture diagonally on dark squares only.
- Captures are mandatory whenever available.
- Reaching the far back row promotes a man to a king.
- You win by capturing all enemy pieces or leaving your opponent with no legal move.

## Surge-only rules

- Valor Promotion: capture 2+ pieces in one turn → instant king, wherever you land.
- Kingslayer: capture an enemy king, even alone → instant king.

## Crownspire app rules

- Online turn timer: 60 seconds, or your weakest piece is removed as a penalty.

- Capture countdown: 30 moves without a capture, or your weakest piece is removed as a penalty.