

# Brandubh

*a viking chess game*



## Brandubh

### Introduction

Brandubh is the smallest member of the Tafl family of games. Its name means Black Raven in Gaelic (Irish), and it is known to have been played in Ireland at least a thousand years ago. Despite its small size, it is a tricky and interesting game, though short, and is quick to learn but difficult to master. It is played on a 7 x 7 board, with the corners and centre square marked these are special squares.

## The Aim of the Game

The two players have different aims in the game:

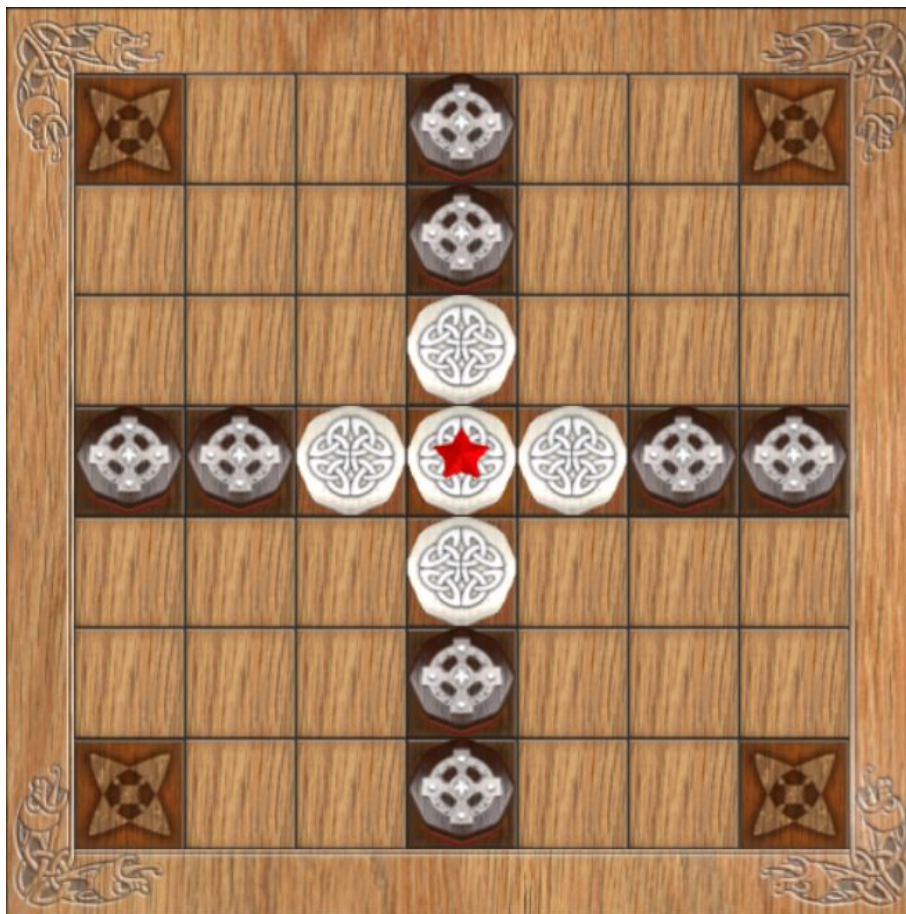
- The white player wins by moving the king piece to any corner square.
- The black player wins by capturing the white king.

## The Pieces

The two players have different forces to work with:

- White has a king and 4 warriors.
- Black has no king, but 8 warriors

Starting Position:



## Movement of the pieces

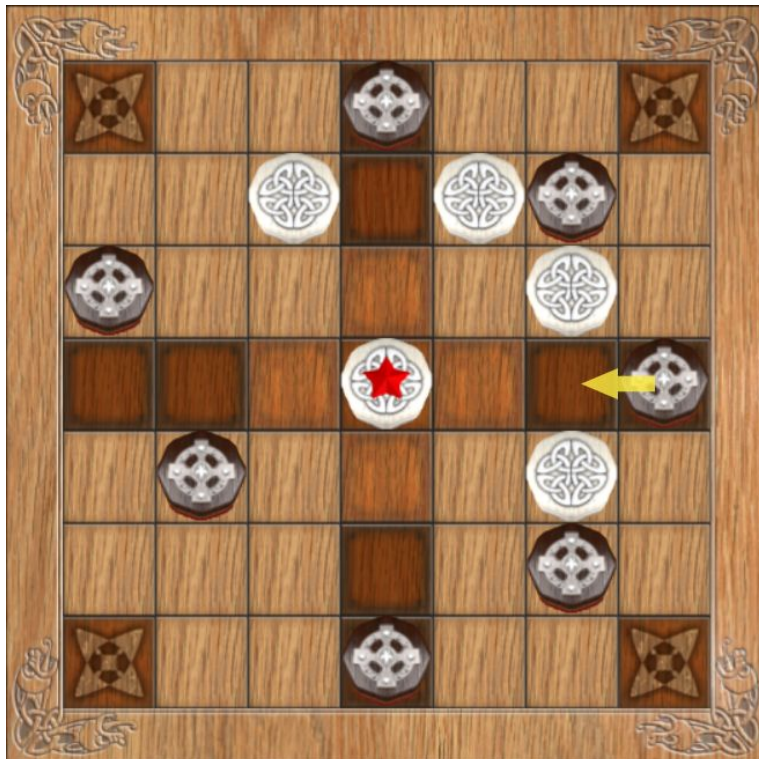
All the pieces including the king move the same way in straight lines forward, backwards, left or right, any number of squares. It's like the way rooks (or castles) move in chess. No piece may move diagonally or jump over another piece, and no more than one piece may occupy a square

## Capturing Pieces



You can capture an enemy warrior by surrounding it on both sides with two of your own warriors. They must be standing on opposite sides, either in front and behind, or to the left and right, not diagonally.

A piece that becomes trapped like this by an enemy move is captured and removed from the board. However, it is safe to move into a gap between two enemies without being captured. The King may participate in capturing, just like any other piece, and he may also be captured just like any other piece. It is possible to capture more than one piece at a time, but not if they are standing together in a row.



As shown in the picture, black would capture two white pieces at once when he moves to the left.

## Special Squares



The central square (known as the throne square because the king sits there at the start of the game) and the four corner squares are restricted. Only the king may occupy any of these five squares, though any warrior may pass through the throne square when it is empty, without stopping on it. The king may return to the throne square after he has left it, if required. The king can be captured while on the throne, just the same as on any other square, by being surrounded on two opposite sides.



In addition, the four corner squares (but not the throne square) are hostile squares. This means that they can play the part of an enemy warrior of either colour for the purposes of capturing.



Any piece, including the king, that is occupying a square next to the corner square, can be captured if an enemy piece moves in behind it, trapping it against the hostile corner square.

In this example, white has captured the black piece in his move because the black piece is trapped between a corner square and the white piece. This rule applies to either colour.