Chapter 13

Larger and smaller boards

[In these games, the normal men are used but the size and perhaps the shape of the board are altered. The side-effects can sometimes be surprising. For example, the winning procedure with queen against rook in ordinary chess is somewhat unsystematic, and computer analysis by Marc Bourzutschky in 2004 showed that the defenders could hold out indefinitely on a 16x16 board; the same is presumably true of all larger boards though only one or two cases were explicitly verified. Conversely, the use of a very small board cramps the queen, and on 4x4 and 3x3 boards there are positions where the queen can win only if the rook has the move. It would therefore seem that this particular 'won ending' is in fact won only on boards from 5x5 to 15x15 inclusive (*Variant Chess* 44, also *British Endgame Study News*, June and September 2004). With boards of other than square shape, almost anything can happen, and one board that appears below was inspired by Troitsky's observation that king and two knights could force a win against a bare king if additional squares at d9/e9 were available.

Most modified-board games involve the use of additional pieces, and where one or more of these is unorthodox they normally appear in the chapters on new pieces. However, there are cases where this aspect is secondary (for example, the altered knight move in Betza's 'Narrow Chess' and the extended pawn move in Legan's 'Game of Fortresses'), and the game seems more naturally placed here. Only the baselines of the game arrays are normally given, and a full second row of pawns on each side is always to be assumed unless something else is explicitly stated.]

13.1   Larger square boards

For large-board variants of **Indian Chess** see chapter 29.

Decimal Chess is a term sometimes used to describe those chess variants played on a 10x10 board. Not to all tastes: for example, E. M. Vicars (*Chess Amateur*, January 1929):

> We don't want a chessboard of ten!
> Or mythical monsters for men:
> If Masters can't help being 'drawn' -
> Then limit front rows to one pawn!
> No need for a 'Champion's Two',
> Evolved in some mythical zoo -
> Two mongrel and meddlesome things
> Upsetting our Queens and our Kings.
> Leave classical octaves alone,
> We cling to the Kings we have known.
> Don't add to life's worry and stress
> By talking of decimal chess!

Ministers, also known as **Grandchess [Corinthios]** (proprietary game, Corinthian Games; Michael Corinthios, 1975). Board 9x9; black square a1. Each player has an additional queen and corresponding pawn. The queens, called Ministers, stand on either side of the king. All four bishops are on black squares ('White squares,' explains the inventor, 'are squares of peace and refuge'.) The king moves three squares in either direction when castling. When first marketed (1986) the *Montreal Gazette* reported that '... a historical flaw of structure (in orthochess) - which produced a weaker King, a weak Queen-side castle, an unbalance of powers, a truncated battlefield and an absence of symmetry - is at last corrected'. Awarded a Seal of Excellence (1990) by the Quebec Consumers Association. (Inventor's rules leaflet and envelope of cuttings)

Century Chess (Proprietary game, Martin & Co, 1915). Board 10x10; two extra knights plus pawns per side. Baseline (a1-j1/a10-j10) RNNBKQNNR. The two central pawns are royal and have extra powers. Advertised in the *Chess Amateur*. (*Variant Chess* 35)

Howell's Chess (C. S. Howell, 1951 or earlier). Board 10x10, a1 white. Usual set-up on eight central files, a- and j-files vacant (*Les Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes*). Pawns slow to engage but early play for rooks.

Buckzo's Game (H. A. Buckzo, 1984) Board 10x10, a1 black. Usual array with two extra knights (plus pawns) placed beside existing knights. Pawns move initially 1,2 or 3 squares; e.p. permissible. A pawn can promote on 8th rank to a knight, on 9th rank to a bishop, or on 10th to any piece. (Inventor's rules leaflet)

13.2 Smaller square boards

Microchess-49 (Tony Paletta, 1980). Board 7x7; baseline (a1-a7/g1-g7) RBNKBNR; the pawn has only its single-step move and may promote to 'any piece other than a K'; castling permitted; a stalemated player loses. (*Chess Spectrum Newsletter*).

Bird Chess [Freeling] (Christiaan Freeling, 1984). Board 7x7; baseline (a1-a7/g1-g7) RBBKNNR; pawns have only the single-step move and promote to array pieces only; castling normal. (Manuscript note presumably deriving from personal communication)

Diana, also known as **Ladies' Chess** (Hopwood, 1870). This game, published in the recreation supplement to *The Gentleman's Journal* (August 1870), is 'chess rendered easier, especially adapted for our fair friends and also for draughts (checkers) players who may not have time to cultivate the more ancient game ... a game which could be played in half an hour and which may, at the same time, be superior to draughts as regards difficulty and ingenuity'. Hopwood's contention was that the queen and the knights ('in the management of which ... Morphy stands pre-eminent') were too difficult to handle for ladies and draughts players. Board 6x6; baseline (a1-a6/f1-f6) RBNKBR; pawns move one square only, promote to any array piece; kings castle under usual restrictions by changing places with rooks.

In order to assist ladies and draughts players to remember the names of the pieces, Hopwood renamed them in alphabetical order (a1-f1) Admiral, Bishop, Captain, Don,

Charters's Game (W. J. Charters, 1940). Board 12x12; extra pieces are two knights and two bishops with corresponding pawns; baseline (a1-l1/a12-l12) RNNBBQKBBNNR. (*British Chess Magazine*, March 1940)

Hibernation (Bruce Trone, 1991). Board 12x12 with usual array on central 8x8. Pieces can move off and back to the central 8x8 board, but not to capture. Pieces on the outer board can capture each other. Boards 16x16 and 20x20 have also been tried. (Personal communication)

Esquire, Fortress. The game is so-called as Diana is Goddess of the Chase, a pun that clearly pleased the inventor who pointed out that the bitch-goddess Caissa surfaced a couple of millennia after the Greek pantheon had submerged.

[This particular *Gentleman's Journal* was a weekly paper for boys, which ran from 1869 to 1872 and carried a monthly 'recreation supplement' devoted to pastimes and puzzles. Much of its material was excellent, and the patronizing tone of the present example was fortunately atypical. No prizes are offered for guessing the delights that a magazine calling itself *The Gentleman's Journal Recreation Supplement* would be expected to offer today!]

Los Alamos Chess (J. Kister, P. Stein, S. Ulam, W. Walden, M. Wells, 1956). An abbreviated form of the game developed at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in connection with computer research. The computer (Maniac I) played three recorded games: the first against itself, the second against a strong player who conceded the odds of queen, and the third against a beginner with one week's experience who had been taught the game expressly for the purpose. The third was the first chess variant game (not chess, as is sometimes claimed) to be won by a computer against a human opponent; it was not to be the last. Board 6x6; baseline (a1-f1/a6-f6) RNQKNR (no bishops); no pawn-two or castling. (*Chess Review*, January 1957)

L'Hermitte's Game (Serge L'Hermitte, 1969). As Diana except that the Black K and

N are reversed (kings on d1/c6); knights are immobile for first three moves; king can move to knight's square (c1/d6) without losing castling rights. The inventor believed that chess games were too long for children and his idea was to whet their appetites for the game by starting them with this abbreviated version. (L'Hermitte, in his book *Jeux d'Echecs Non Orthodoxes*)

Simpler Chess [Wardley] (A. Wardley, 1977). The inventor proposes a game on a 6x6 board in which a pair of pieces, together with their pawns, are eliminated (*Games and Puzzles* 66). The pieces are arrayed in regular fashion; thus removing rooks prompts the line-up (a1-f1/a6-f6) NBQKBN. Removing the bishops results in Los Alamos Chess.

Minichess [Gardner] was quoted by Martin Gardner in *The Unexpected Hanging* (1969, but largely repeating material which had already appeared in *Scientific American*) as the smallest chess game in which all legal moves were still possible (including pawn-two, e.p., castling). Board 5x5 (a1 white); baseline (a1-e1/a5-e5) KQBNR. The game was adopted by AISE in 1978 without pawn-two and castling and with a1 black; it was extensively played in Italy, and the openings analysed. A statistical analysis showed W win 40%; B win 28%; Draw 32%. Gardner later put forward **Baby Chess**, in which the white men are reversed (kings on e1/a5), and suggested that it might be open to resolution by computer. As at October 1989, it hadn't

been (*Scientific American*). In 1983, Paul Jacobs and Marco Meirovitz proposed yet another version, again with the kings on a long diagonal: (a1-e1/e5-a5) KQRNB (*Brain Muscle Builders*). They also advocate several games on a 5x5 board with pieces facing a line of pawns, the object of the piece player being to capture or block all the pawns and of the pawn player to get a pawn to the end rank. These include (1) two knights (b1,d1); (2) two bishops (b1,c1); (3) Qc1.

Minichess [Silverman] (quoted by David Silverman, 1981). Board 4x4; baseline (a1-d1/a4-d4) RQKR, plus the usual pawn rows. The first player has an easy win but Silverman poses this problem: To compensate for not having the move, the second player may stipulate which of the four pawns the first player must move (but not the direction of capture in the case of the b- and c-pawns) - how does the second player win? Trivial; but Silverman suggests inserting an empty row of squares between the forces (4x5), permitting a two-square pawn move if the file is clear, and asks: what is White's best strategy? (*Your Move*)

Knight Court Chess (originator not recorded). Board 3x3; each side has 1 x N,B,R (no pawns). Baseline (a1-c1/a3-c3) NBR. Aim: checkmate opponent's knight. Usual piece moves but a captured piece is returned to its original owner who may drop it on a vacant square on any subsequent turn. (*Variant Chess* 43, quoting *Chess*, February 2003)

13.3   Rectangular boards

[A board with F files and R ranks will be described here and later as 'Board FxR'. If F is odd and R even, a symmetric array will leave one side's bishops on white squares and the other's on black, hence the normal choice of an asymmetric array in these cases.]

Narrow Chess (R. Betza, 1996). Board 2x20(!); baseline (a1-b1/a20-b20) QK, RR on ranks 2/19, DD (see below) on ranks 3/18, PP on ranks 4/17 and 6/15, ranks 5/16 empty; Dragons D are combined N and P (1 or 2-square move); Ks may move, but not capture, like N if not in check. (Chess Variant Pages)

Microchess [Glimne] (Dan Glimne, 1997). Board 4x5; baseline (a1-d1/d5-a5) RBNK

(kings on d1/a5), pawns on d2/a4 only; castling permitted. (Manuscript note presumably deriving from personal communication)

Demi-Chess [Groeneman] (John Groeneman, 1960s). Board 4x8; array (a1-d1/a8-d8) RQKR, (a2-d2/a7-d7) NBBN, no pawns. The inventor comments 'If chess is wine then Demi-chess is brandy'. (Manuscript note

presumably deriving from personal communication)

Demi-Chess [Krystufek] (Peter Krystufek, 1986). Board 4x8; baseline (a1-d1/a8-d8) KBNR; pawns can promote to queen. Created as a starter game for beginners. (*100 mal Kniffel Schach*)

Petty Chess (B. Walker Watson, 1930). Board 5x6; baseline (a1-e1/a6-e6) QKBNR; no mention of any restrictions (pawn move/castling). The endings can be 'quite beautiful' according to the inventor. (*British Chess Magazine*, September 1930)

QuickChess (Proprietary game, Amerigames International; Joe Miccio, 1991). Board 5x6; baseline (a1-e1/a6-e6) RBQKN; no pawn-two or castling; promotion only to captured piece. Popular as learning game in U.S. schools; endorsed by *Chess Life*. (Publicity material)

Minichess [Sirotkin], also known as **Elena** (Sergei Sirotkin, 1999). Board 5x6; baseline (a1-e1/e6-a6) NQKBR (queens on b1/d6); no pawn-2 or castling. (Chess Variant Pages)

Eric (Eric Richardson, 1999). Board 5x8; baseline (a1-e1/e8-a8) KRBBN (kings on a1/e8). In addition, each player has Q,R,N in hand. A piece in hand may be dropped on an empty square of the player's first rank instead of moving. (Chess Variant Pages)

Courtyard (Bryan Lambert, 1999). Board 5x8; array (a1-e1/a8-e8) RNKNR, (a2-e2/a7-e7) PBQBP, (a3-e3/a6-e6) -PPP-. Wing pawns only have two-square move option. Move K one square left or right to castle, bringing R to central square. Both sides stronger on the squares of opposite colour. (Chess Variant Pages)

Simplified Chess [Fielder] (Lavington Fielder, 1931). Board 6x8; baseline (a1-f1/a8-f8) RBQKBR. Absence of knights ensured neglect. (*Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes*)

Microchess-48 (Tony Paletta, 1980). Board 6x8; baseline (a1-f1/a8-f8) RNQKNR, bishops on b2/e2 and b7/e7, 6xP on ranks 3 and 6. (*Chess Spectrum Newsletter*)

Chi Chi's Chess (Chi Chi Hackenberg, 1968). The exposure this variant received in *Eye* (November 1968) had much to do with the charming inventor (photo by John Ford, dress by Eloise Curtis) and little to do with the charmless game. Board 8x4; normal baseline, pawns on a/c/d/e/h files only, pawns can move (straight) and capture (diagonally) backwards, and White cannot move a pawn on the first turn. Even so, he has a forced win.

Haigh's Game (H. Haigh, 1980s). Board 8x12; array (a1-h1/a12-h12 and inwards) RNBQKBNR, RNBQPBNR, 8xP. Pawns move 1, 2, or 3 squares on their first move. (*Chess*, April 1992)

Ultra Chess (reported and perhaps originated by D. Trouillon, early 1970s). Board 9x8 (a1 black); baseline (a1-i1/a8-i8) RNBQKQBNR. The array places both white bishops on black squares, both BBs on white squares. Trouillon's favoured solution was was that a player, once in a game, could transpose adjacent B and N ('mini-castling') provided neither had been moved; an alternative, preferred by John Gollon, was to change the baseline to RBNQKQBNR. (Correspondence between John Gollon and Philip Cohen)

Active Chess (G. Kuzmichov, 1989). Board 9x8; baseline (a1-i1/a8-i8) RNBQKBNRQ. This is effectively the orthochess array with an extra queen and pawn on the i-file; an alternative places the extra Q at g1/g8. The idea for the game came to the inventor on reading *The Ninth File* by A. Karpov and A. Roshal. Kuzmichov was the editor of the Riga magazine *Sahs* and an official youth trainer. His pupils rigorously play-tested the game to establish the optimum array. (Manuscript note presumably derived from personal communication)

Double Chess [Short] (David Short, 1996). Board 16x8; baseline (a1-p1/a8-p8) RNBQRNBQKBNRQBNR; kings may castle under usual rule with any of the four rooks. (Chess Variant Pages)

13.4 Other square lattice boards

Hourglass Chess (Bryan Lambert, 1999). 40-square board obtained by removing d1 and d6 from a 7x6 rectangular board. Array (a1-c1~e1-g1/a6-c6~e6-g6) RNQ~KBR, (a2-g2/a5-g5) 7xP; no pawn-2 or castling. (Chess Variant Pages)

Ladder Chess (Sergey Sirotkin, 2000). 40-square board obtained by taking a 5x8 board and stepping each file up one square from the left (thus a1-a8, b2-b9, and so on to e5-e12). Array (a1-e5/e12-a8) KQBNR (kings on a1/e12), (a2-e6/e11-a7) 5xP; no castling. (Chess Variant Pages)

Chess Too (Proprietary game, c.1987). 52-square board obtained by removing the six corner squares from the SW and NE corners of a normal 8x8 board; array in NW and SE corners. Advertised in *Chess Life*, December 1987. (*World Game Review* 10)

The Game Of Fortresses (L. Legan, 1913). 64-square I-shaped board made by taking an 8x10 board and removing two 2x4 pieces from the sides, thus a1-h3, c4-f7, a8-h10; normal pieces on ranks 2/9, 4xP centred on ranks 1/3 and 8/10 :
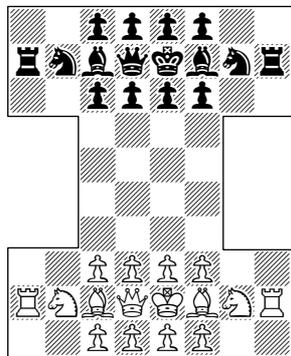
All play is normal with the exception of the pawn move. In addition to its usual powers, the pawn may leap a man of either colour blocking its movement to the square immediately beyond, provided this is vacant. For example, after a pawn on the third rank moves in the initial position, the corresponding first rank pawn may take its place next move. Given the shape of the board, this is a necessary adjustment to prevent paralysis of the central files. Played regularly in Paris over a number of years. (*Chess Amateur*, January 1922)

Romanchenko's Chess (V. Romanchenko, date unknown). 64-square board made by taking a normal 8x8 board and displacing the four files e-h forward two squares, thus a1-d8 and e3-h10 :
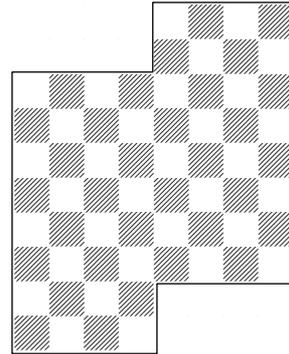
Used by the inventor, a Soviet youth trainer, to encourage his pupils to think rather than imitate. Because of (or perhaps in spite of) this, his pupils have consistently triumphed in inter-regional orthochess events.

   [The diagram in the first edition has the displacement in the other direction, but that in the source, a letter preserved in David's files, has the files and ranks explicitly lettered a-h and 1-10.]

Cross Chess [Miller] (Proprietary game, Cross Chess International Pty; Leigh Miller, 1985). 64-square board in the shape of a cross, 4x4 central area d4-g7 (d4 white) plus four 4x3 extensions; array (j4-j7/a7-a4) KBNR (kings on j4/a7), (i4-i7/b7-b4) 4xP, (g1-d1/d10-g10) QBNR (queens on g1/d10), (g2-d2/d9-g9) 4xP; usual men but pawns on K-side are bigger than those on Q-side to aid recognition. K-side pawns move to left and right, Q-side pawns up and down, with promotion on end rank facing; pawns that capture away from centre can reach a dead end. Castling allowed K-side. Note that all

bishops are on black squares. Chess on two fronts, on average a much shorter game than orthochess. Popular in schools in Australia but sold world-wide. (Publicity material)

Hyperchess [CRH] (Proprietary game, CRH Enterprises, 1992). 64-square board on eight levels, 1, 4, 11, 16, 16, 11, 4, 1. Men as in orthochess. (*Nost-algia* 331)

Troitsky Chess (Paul Byway, 1997). 68-square board obtained by adding two squares abutting each side of a normal 8x8 board and removing the four corner squares, thus a5-6, b3-8, c2-d9, e1-f10, g2-h9, i3-8, j5-6. Array (e1-f1/e10-f10) RR, (c2-h2/c9-h9) NBQKBN, (b3-i3/b8-i8) 8xP :
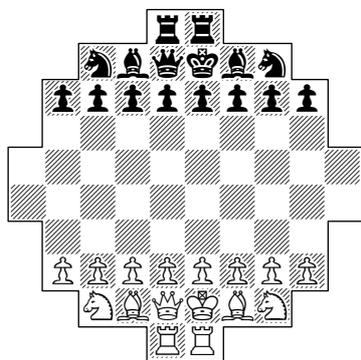
Pawns promote on end square of file they stand on. K castles by changing places with a R. (*Variant Chess* 25)

Balbo's Game (M. G. Balbo, 1974). 70-square board, 3-square rank at either end, increasing two squares at a time to central (5th/6th) ranks = 11 squares, thus e1-g1, d2-h2, c3-i3, b4-j4, a5-k5, a6-k6, b7-j7, and so on to e10-g10. Array (e1-g1/e10-g10) KBQ, (d2-h2/d9-h9) RNBNR, c3-i3/c8-i8 7xP; no castling. Usual pawn promotion on 10th rank or last square of d/h files; promotion to minor piece last square c/i files. Bishops are as powerful as rooks. Against stupid play either player has Nxf3/8 mate on the third move. (*Le Courrier des Echecs*, September 1974)

Scacchetto (Proprietary game, S. C., Paris, c.1860). 71-square board in hourglass shape, 11-square rank at either end, reducing two

squares at a time to centre (6th) rank = 1 square, thus a1-k1, b2-j2, c3-i3, d4-h4, e5-g5, f6, e7-g7, and so on to a11-k11. Each side has 11 men: 1 K; 2 x R; 4 x B,N (no pawns); array (a1-k1/a11-k11) RNBNBKBNBNR. White starts; orthochess but no castling. A curious game with a single pivot square (f6) giving access to the opponent's half of board, and all 8 bishops on the same colour. (Photocopy of board and rules leaflet)

Mouterde's Games (Anatole Mouterde, 1951). 72-square and 76-square boards obtained by adding a half-file of four squares to each side of the normal 8x8 board (giving a3-a6, b1-i8, j3-j6, ten files), and perhaps a further two squares on each side again (giving a4-a5, b3-b6, c1-j8, k3-k6, l4-l5, twelve files in all). Usual array in the central 8x8 area. (*Les Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes*)

Morley's Chess (F. V. Morley, 1947). A 76-square chessboard espoused in *My One Contribution to Chess*. A corridor six squares long is added to each side of the normal 8x8 board, giving a2-a7, b1-i8, j2-j7; usual array in the central 8x8 area. A novelty whose fame owes most to the author's standing. Sniping at the ants (i.e., the 'workers' who cling to the books) he quotes Montaigne: 'What appearance there be soever in novelty, I do not easily change, for feare I should lose by the bargaine...' The wing pawns are, according to Morley, unfairly treated in that they can only capture in one direction. He has, he says, 'a fine rage at this mistreatment'. Morley lines up with the demi-gods who have proposed changes in the game ('By an opposite route I arrive at the same restlessness'). The book is a civilised wander through the garden of chess and other things. At the end, Morley comes up with a proposal for an 88-square double-corridor board, adding a further six squares above and below (thus a3-a8, b2-b9, c1-j10, k2-k9, l3-l8), commenting that 'The weakness of presenting alternative proposals is that it looks as if the fellow who presents them hasn't made up his mind'. The new game attracted the attention of Lasker's friend Harold M. Philips who wrote to Morley (then embarking on the *Queen Mary*) '..You had better let me know every day where you are in Europe so that I can telephone you long

distance if a new thought occurs to me – not about business or even politics or matters of international policy or even a possible discovery of a manuscript in the handwriting of Shakespeare, but about the corridor'.

Racetrack Chess (David Moeser, 1970). 100-square board in the form of an 8x8 central area with three 6-square files on each side, thus a2-c7, d1-k8, l2-n7. Usual array plus extra pawns on c2/l2 and c7/l7. Pawns that reach end of shortened files can move laterally until on main board; capture e.g. c7xd8 (promotes) admissible. The extra files make racetracks combining the a/n files with the 2nd/7th ranks (a2-a7-n7-n2-a2), similarly the b/m files and the 3rd/6th ranks (b3-b6-m6-m3-b3) and the c/l files and the 4th/5th ranks (c4-c5-l5-l4-c4). The racetracks can only be used by rooks and queens. (*Neue Chess* 8).

13.5 Unbounded boards

Arthur Bliss's Chess (1937). Bliss's ballet Checkmate was arguably a chess variant as the board was of indefinite size and the cast lacked bishops and a black king. [David's files give no source, but Gizycki has photographs of a 1947 production.]

Open Plane Chess (George Jelliss, 1997). Normal initial array but no board edges, and play proceeds subject to the rule that no group of *n* men may have more than root-*n* squares between it and the nearest other man, the square root being taken to the nearest whole number. A move which would produce a position violating this rule is illegal. A pawn promotes by reaching a cell from which further forward movement is prohibited. (*Variant Chess* 25) [Text editorial]

13.6 Creating or modifying the board during play

Stranders's Game (Proprietary game, H. Stranders, 1891). Stranders's patent 7840 of 1891 had players starting with squares as well as pieces, the board being formed as play proceeded, a player having the option of placing a square next to a square already played together with a man, or putting a man on a square already played. The idea anticipated several proprietary games of more recent vintage.

Shrink Chess (J. Boyer, 1954). An edge file or rank disappears if unoccupied. This has the effect of reducing the size of the board as a game progresses. (*Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes*)

Stochastic Chess (origins unknown). Played in university circles, California, 1970. Each player has the usual pieces and 32 separate squares, 16 white and 16 black. White begins and places a square on the table. Thereafter a turn consists of (1) Putting down a square, or (2) Putting down a piece on a square already placed, or (3) Moving a piece within the existing board, or (4) Moving an empty square to another position. However, a player must not put out all 16 men before playing out his last square, and an empty square cannot be moved until he has done this. In cases (1) and (4), a square must be placed contiguous along one side to at least one other square of the opposite colour so as to form a chequered pattern. It is permissible to leave gaps and to increase ranks or files beyond eight in number. The king must be played not later than the player's 25th turn. A piece may be placed so as to give check but not checkmate (i.e., checkmate can only arise from a move on the board). No double pawn move, no promotion, no castling, only knights can leap gaps. The forerunner of several games with similar themes. (Photocopy of rules leaflet)

Chess Cards (Proprietary game, David Smith Associates; David Smith, 1978). Pack of 32 square cards, each card depicting one of the chessmen in a normal set. There is no board as such. Each player takes 16 cards (white men or black), shuffles them well and lays them face down in front of him. White lays the top card face up in the centre of the table. Black does likewise but must attach his card to White's, either along one side or diagonally adjacent. All cards are placed so that symbols point towards the opponent. Hereon a player

on turn may either disclose a new card and place it adjacent to at least one card already laid, or move one of his own men on the table. There is one simple rule that is the crux of the game: a man may not be moved if in so doing it isolates one or more pieces. At all times all pieces in play must form one continuous linkage. This rule introduces a new dimension into the standard game since any threat, including an attack on the king, can be met by effectively 'pinning' the attacking piece - playing so as to make the execution of the threat illegal. During play the board is 'imagined'. It can never exceed the normal dimensions (8x8) so a move which creates, for example, a 9th file is illegal. A pawn reaching the 8th rank is promoted to any piece already lost. If there are none, the pawn remains convertible until such time as a piece becomes available. Chess Cards has been widely acclaimed. The game was later revamped as **Chex [Smith]** (same owners and originator, 1994) with two rule changes: no limitations on board dimensions, and no pawn promotion. (Information presumably taken from sets in David's games collection; no source material in his Encyclopedia files)

Schach Plus, formerly **Divis** (Proprietary game, Hexagames; Roland Siegers, 1984). The idea came to Siegers when he was playing chess in a Belgian club late one night after an exhausting day. A pawn down in an ending which he was desperately trying to save, the board 'broke up' before his eyes.

Standard set and 64 separate squares. Each side takes a set of men and 32 squares, 16 of each colour. The game is in two stages: (a) assembly of chessboard and position, (b) play with usual object of mating opponent's king.

White starts and places a square on the table. He may place one of his men on it if he wishes. Thereafter the players in turn put down a square such that it abuts at least one square already on the table, or touches one diagonally at a corner, maintaining the usual chequering. There are certain restrictions:

(1) No piece may be put down until all pawns have been placed.

(2) No two pawns of the same colour may be placed on the same file.

(3) Bishops must be placed on opposite-coloured squares.

(4) A king may not be put in check.

(5) All men must be on the board when the last square is placed.

(6) No man may be moved in this stage of the game, nor may a man be placed on a vacant square already played.

The board may be of any configuration but will be at least eight files wide because of the restriction on placing pawns. It may contain holes (blank areas surrounded by squares) and the perimeter is likely to be irregular. Play now begins. The usual rules of chess apply but there is no double pawn move, e.p. or castling. Pieces may only move across squares, never over holes. A pawn reaching an end rank is promoted to any captured piece. A pawn on an end rank in the initial position is 'dead' until it can be replaced by a captured piece. There is one important additional rule: instead of moving, a player has the option of taking any empty square from the board perimeter and placing it elsewhere on the board perimeter provided it maintains the chequer pattern and does not result in any part of the board becoming isolated.

Kings are normally entered late in the assembly stage when a secure area been formed. (Information presumably taken from a set in David's games collection; no source material in his Encyclopedia files)

Choiss (Proprietary game, Choiss Game Corporation; Peter A. Victor, 1985). Living at the time in a well-secured house in Kenya where a steel door sealed off the bedrooms, Victor dreamt he was playing chess on a board on which extra squares provided a safe haven for the kings. Awake, he translated this into a game in which the construction of the board formed part of the game itself. The board consists of 64 individual squares which slot together. In basic Choiss, four squares are connected 2 x 2 (alternating colours) to form a starting grid. Each player in turn adds a square (one player links the light ones, the other the dark) to the existing grid maintaining alternation of colours until all squares are connected. The completed board is likely to be of irregular shape with gaps. A barrier is placed across the centre of the board and each player enters their pawns, then their pieces, one at a time and in turn, on their own half of the board. Play is then normal (only knights

can cross gaps) except pawns move only one square and there is no castling; promotion possible. Since the essence of the game is the square linkage, Choiss lends itself well to variants of which a dozen are suggested including a four-handed version. Described by a reviewer as 'one of the best commercial chess variants I've seen in years' (*Games*, June/July 1989). (Copies of reviews and publicity material)

Section Chess (Proprietary game, Janos Tury, 1995). Usual set-up except that board has a rank of blank squares across the middle (so 8x9 board). No man except a N may cross a blank square. A man wishing to cross a blank square moves to the square immediately behind it. Next time it moves it advances into the blank square with the square it stands on, leaving a blank square behind, and it may now move off as part of its move. (*Variant Chess* 22)

Amoeba (Jim Aikin, 1997). Board of 38 movable squares within a 7x7 area. Initially squares a12, a67, g12, g67, and cde4 do not exist. Ten men a side, array (b1-f1/b7-f7 and inwards) RNKNR, 5xP. No pawn-2. After moving, a player may slide a single unoccupied square to an adjacent orthogonal void location. Variations: a player may slide an occupied square; a pawn may promote to bishop; a square may be slid outside the original 7x7 area, though not in such a way as to divide the board into two or more isolated sections (such division is permitted in the original formulation). (Chess Variant Pages)

Voidrider Chess (Fergus Duniho, 2002). Board of 43 movable squares within a 7x9 area, initially consisting of the inner 5x7 region b2-f8 and extensions at a2/b1 etc. 14 men a side, 1 x K, 2 x R, B, N, Voidrider, 5xP; array (b1~f1) V~V, (a2-g2) RNBKBNR, (b3-f3) 5xP, Black similarly. K, R, B, N, P essentially as normal and each has the additional power of moving its square and itself to an orthogonally adjacent off-board location, but the square must have at least one orthogonal neighbour in its new position (so movement outside the original 7x9 area is never possible) and pawns may not move backwards. The V moves like a rook and can cross voids, but it must either land on a square on the far side or take its own square with it. Castling allowed provided that the squares between the king and rook actually exist. (Chess Variant Pages) [Text largely editorial]