

Chapter 31

Card games

[While the use of dice in conjunction with chess is ancient, the earliest use of cards appears to date back little more than a hundred years. However, many such games have appeared in recent years, including a 25-game compendium 'Karten Schach' which is given a section to itself.]

31.1 Games using cards to represent chessmen

Card Chess [Ramsden] (Proprietary game, Sherratt and Hughes; Herbert Ramsden, 1899). Board 6x3. Each player has 12 cards representing the usual chess pieces plus four pawns. Array side-to-side rather than top-to-bottom: White Kb2, Na1/a3, Black Ke2, Nf1/f3, rest of cards in hand. Kings do not move, pawns move one square orthogonally in any direction and capture one square diagonally in any direction, moves of other pieces are orthodox. The aim is checkmate. A move consists of playing a card from hand or moving a man (card) on the board. A card may be played or moved on top of an existing card of either colour. If played from hand, the card must be of at least equal value to the piece covered. The scale of values is Q, R, N, B, P. A covered card has no powers. The king commands adjacent squares: if an undefended hostile man is placed next to the king it can be captured (king does not move). Fool's mate is given as 1 Nb3 N(either)d2 2 Nc1. Any card played to cover the attacking knight will be automatically subject to capture by the attacker's king. (Notes annotated 'BL: 7915.aaa.67', presumably a British Library shelfmark)

Card Ches (Proprietary game, Card Ches Inc, 1974). Described as a game of planned strategy. Each player has 11 cards, depicting King, Queen, Cardinal (B), 2 x Fort (R), 2 x Cavalier (N), 2 x Guard (moves one square orthogonally, captures one square diagonally), Scout (moves and captures one square diagonally), Jester (moves and captures one square orthogonally). The playing area is 5x4, made up of a 4x4 Arena and a 1x4 Domain, each accessible to both players, plus a one-square Safety Box for each side. The object is

to capture (checkmate) the K. To start the game, White plays his K card to any square in the arena, Black likewise to any square in the domain, and each player puts a card (not his cardinal) in his safety box. Thereafter a move consists of one of three actions: playing a card from hand into the safety box (if unoccupied), or moving from the box to the arena, or moving a card already in play. The full rules of this unusual game are fairly elaborate. (Photocopy of manufacturer's rule sheet)

Express Chess (Proprietary game, Black Box Inc; William Jemas, 1996). Games using 50-card packs for chessmen. Players draw hands, deal out chess positions on a notional board, and play them out with modifications of the normal chess rules. Cards carry pictures of wildlife, presumably for visual appeal. (*Variant Chess* 35) [Text editorial]

Cardmate (A. Derzhanski, 1999). Board 10x10; standard pack of 52 playing cards plus four 1s, each rank representing a piece with different powers of movement and capture (suits ignored); elaborate rules. (Chess Variant Pages, also *Variant Chess* 36) [Text editorial]

Xiangqi Cards. In *Korean Games*, Stewart Culin records a number of different packs of xiangqi playing cards all from S. or S.E. China. The cards were usually in four colours (allowing for up to four players), each depicting a piece. The pieces were duplicated and one or more jokers were sometimes included. It is not evident what games were played with these packs but it seems likely that they were used at times to introduce a chance element into xiangqi, probably for gambling purposes.

31.2 Games using cards to influence play

Schachett (Proprietary game, Germany, 1890). Handsome playing cards of two suits, black and white. Court cards are pieces, others pawns. Rules blend cards and chess. (Gizycki)

Card Chess [A.C.] ('A.C.', 1902). The player whose turn it is to move is dictated by the turn of a card. Shuffle standard pack of playing cards and place face down. Cards are turned over one by one. A red card requires a White move, a black card a Black move. A player giving check may continue to check. A checked player unable to escape on his first available move is checkmated. When the pack is exhausted it is reshuffled and used again. Tom Braunlich and Rollie Tosh have proposed two improvements: (1) A player whose king is in check may immediately move out of check (capture and interposing not allowed) before the next card is turned; (2) A black and red suit are removed from the pack. This heightens the calculation of odds. (*British Chess Magazine*, September 1903, also *Eteroscacco* 53 and *Nost-algia* 322/348)

Chessmatch (Proprietary game, Wayne Eberhart, 1965, marketed 1986). Pack of 65 cards depicting individual chessmen: 6 x K, Q, R, B, N, 32 x P, 3 wild cards. Each player is dealt five cards initially and draws another before each move, choosing one of the six to play and moving the corresponding man on the board. There is no check or checkmate; capture the king to win. Castling with either K or R card. The choice of cards to play and hold calls for additional skill. (Notes apparently derived from a set in David's game collection)

Card Chess [Dunne] (Alex Dunne, 1974). Standard pack of playing cards. Cards are shuffled and each player draws one before moving, the type of man to be moved being determined by the card drawn: Ace = free choice, 2-8 = P, 9 = B, 10 = R, J = N, Q = Q, K = K. A player unable to move loses his turn. A player in check still draws a card; if he cannot get out of check by moving the man indicated, he makes any legal move. K or R permit castling. Stalemate only if player draws K and is in stalemate. **Card Chess [Nominated Pawns]** (origins unknown) is

similar but the cards have different meanings: A-8 = pawns a-h respectively, 9 = R, 10 = N, J = B. A player unable to move forfeits his turn. If in check, draw card normally; if unable to move, proceed in following order: (1) move the king; if not possible, (2) interpose; if not possible, (3) capture checking piece. The ending tends to be drawn out because of the nominated pawn moves. **Scottish Card Chess** (Peter Smith, 1970s) is the same except that a captured piece must immediately be reentered on any empty square chosen by the capturer. This can give rise to some interesting tactics. [Dunne's game by personal communication; information about the others two presumably also derived from personal communication, but no source material in David's Encyclopedia files]

Leveler Chess (Proprietary game, Christopher Cagan and Mark Schynert, 1975). Eighteen tiles (in effect, cards) marked 1-8 and N (two of each), and nine new pieces which belong to neither side and are moved as dictated by the tiles: 6 x Duck, 2 x Matter Transfer Unit, 1 x Leveler. Ducks are blocks which move in formation; they cannot be moved onto or through and they block a check. Only the leveler can capture a duck. Transfer units, which cannot be captured but can mutually destroy each other, can occupy a square with another man. They transfer any man (including duck and leveler) from one unit to the other. The leveler occupies four squares and destroys anything except a transfer unit on all squares it covers. The sequence of play within a turn is (1) make a normal move, (2) draw a tile for each extra piece in turn (one tile for all the ducks), in order leveler, transfer units, ducks, and move the piece one square in the direction indicated (1 = S round to 8 = SE as seen by White, N = no move). In the array, the leveler covers d4/d5/e4/e5, the transfer units are on a5 and h4, and the ducks on a4/b4/b5 and g4/g5/h5. There are a number of detailed rules to cover anomalous situations. (Proprietor's rules pamphlet)

Chance Chess (Proprietary game, Chance Chess Co; Tino Gimenez, 1983). A blend of chance and chess. The game consists of a large

pack of cards (101) composed of 10 x K, Q, R, B, N, 25 x P, Move any piece, 1 x Reshuffle. The cards are shuffled and placed face down. Before each move the player turns over the top card. If he cannot move the man indicated, he loses his turn. If he can, he may either move the man or elect not to move. The turn then passes to the opponent. If a king is checked, the checked player first plays a regular move (capture, interpose, move K) then draws a card and moves again accordingly. Castling permitted if a K card is drawn. Boldness pays, and Lady Luck can be an indulgent partner. Tournaments held include one in San Diego (\$2,000 prize money) won by a grandmaster. (*Nost-algia* 292/3)

Tempête Sur L'Echiquier (Proprietary game, Ludodelire; Pierre Clequin and Bruno Faidutti, 1986). Chance-card chess. Handsome 72-card pack, humorously illustrated, dictates events. Five cards are dealt face down to each player and the pack placed beside the board. Players then examine their cards. During the game, a card may be played from hand at any time subject to the instruction on it (e.g. immediately after opponent's move) and the command executed (e.g. move any of your pieces like a knight). Once played, a card is replaced from the pack so that each player always retains five cards. There is no obligation to play a card, and a normal chess move may be made instead. One fundamental rule: a card played that attacks the opponent's king (check, checkmate or capture) or hinders its escape from check is annulled. The game was subsequently marketed in Germany as **Tshcach** and in the U.S. as **Knighmare Chess**. (Notes presumably deriving from a set in David's game collection)

Manchester (Proprietary game, Rostherne Games; David Watts, 1991). Board 6x6; each player has 10 cones (pieces) which are set up on the first two ranks, the end squares on the second rank being left empty. There are 36 cards, each depicting a chessman (six of each). The pack is shuffled and placed face down, and the top card is turned over. A cone not on a card moves forward or back one square; it cannot capture. The player then takes the top card, puts it in the square just vacated, and turns over the next card. A cone on a square

with a card on it moves and captures as the chessman depicted (no pawn-two); it may cross squares with cards on but not squares with cones. A player moving a cone as a chessman puts the next card on any vacant square. There is but one restriction: there may not be more than three queens in either half of the board. Object is to capture all the enemy cones, or to have the greater number of cones left when all the cards have been placed. (Proprietor's rule sheet)

Chess Mess (Proprietary game, Chess Mess Games, 1993). Novel board in form of eight-spoke wheel, each spoke eight squares long; usual chessmen. Alternative arrays; game played with or without spinner and cards. (Manufacturer's publicity material)

Chessmen-At-Arms (Proprietary game, MGM Information Services, 1996). Board 8x8 but the 81 intersections are used for movement. Usual chessmen but K, Q, Ns are cavalry, the rest (Rs, Bs, Ps) are infantry. Initial array on the 16 intersections (3x3 squares) in opposite corners of the board. Each side has a castle (g2/b7). Elaborate rules using playing cards, described as a simulation of medieval warfare. Capture the K to win. (Proprietor's rules pamphlet)

Zany Chess (Joli Kansil, 1997). Required are a chess set and a pack of playing cards (2 jokers). The cards correspond to the chessmen as follows: K=king; Q/J=queen; 10/9=rook; 8/7=bishop; 6/5=knight; 4/3/2=pawn. Aces and jokers have special meanings. Usual set-up. On your turn you draw top two cards of pack. If cards are of different suits and indicate different pieces, player chooses which piece to move. If the cards are of the same suit, player has option of moving both pieces in either order or the same piece twice (if so indicated). If cards of same rank, player may choose a legal chess move or may move each piece once or one piece twice. An ace is *jeopardy*: move any threatened man (but you cannot capture); If *double jeopardy* (pair of aces), move two threatened men or make one orthodox chess move. A joker is *switch*: you can change positions of a pawn and any piece (including the king). Double switch allows you to switch two pawns with two pieces or

play a single orthodox move. If *nullo*, (cannot play either piece indicated) move a pawn; if not possible, move the king. On a check, attacked player does not draw cards but makes any legal move. Game named after inventor's son, Zane. (Inventor's rules pamphlet)

31.3 Combination games

Pinochle Chess (David Moeser, 1970). Unlikely wedlock of chess and pinochle. Deal as for two-handed game with cards representing chessmen: Ace = R, 10 = N, King = K, Queen = Q, Jack = B, 9 = P. When a card is played, player may move corresponding chessman on board. First player to put down a jack or 9 has White. Both games must be played to legal rules. Castling permitted on play of either ace or king. Exchanging 9 for trump indicator does not qualify for a pawn move. Winner is first to checkmate or score 1000 points. (*Nost-algia* 282, *Neue Chess* 8)

31.4 Karten Schach

Karten Schach (Proprietary games, Berliner Spielkarten GmbH; Reiner Knizia, 2000). A book of 25 original chess variants packaged with a chess set, black and white counters, 28 cards and a 78-page rule book. Cards depict 4 x K, Q, R, B, N (two of each colour), 8 x P (four of each colour) plus four jokers (two of each colour). In all games you capture (not mate) opponent's K to win. K may not attack K. White starts. When cards are exhausted they are reshuffled and a new stack formed.

Aristocratic Chess. Six cards, one of each piece type, are laid face up between the players. Six counters are placed nearby. On turn, a player may move one or more (up to six) pieces indicated by the cards. A counter is placed on each man moved to avoid duplication. At the end of a turn, the counters are removed and are used again.

Feudal Chess [Karten Schach]. Each player has a set of seven cards (one of each piece, two pawns) and seven counters. These are laid openly. The player with the move has two possibilities: (1) Play one of the men indicated on a free card (no counter) and place a counter on it; or (2) Sacrifice a turn and remove all counters from his cards.

Chaos Chess (Proprietary game, Hammerdog; Danny O'Neill, 2001). Pack of 80 chance cards for use with orthochess. Examples: (1) Remove two of your opponent's and one of your own pawns; (2) Convert one of your pawns to a knight. (*Variant Chess* 20)

Gambler Chess [Lawless] (Kevin Lawless, 1994). Five-check chess (the first to give five checks wins), with the added twist that a player draws a card for each check and so gradually builds up a poker hand. Games are played in pairs, each player having each colour once, and if each player wins one game the better poker hand wins; if the same player wins both chess games, he may choose the better of his two poker hands. The holder of the winning hand is paid according to an agreed scale. (*Variant Chess* 16) [Text editorial]

Proletarian Chess. Omit the pawns and joker cards from the pack. Turn player takes top card and places it face up on the discard pile. Now the player must (1) Move a piece corresponding to the exposed card, or (2) Move a pawn, or (3) Pass.

Prophet Chess. White and Black each hold 12 cards (two of each type) and in addition White has a joker. White starts and places a card face up in front of him. Black does likewise. This procedure continues until each player has a line of seven cards. White's last two cards may not be of the same type. White adds the joker as his eighth card. White now makes the first move, the players always moving a man corresponding to the next card in their line. Finally, White plays the joker and moves any man. The cards are now taken back in hand and a new line of seven is laid out, this time Black having the joker as his eighth card and starting. The process is repeated as many times as is necessary.

Psycho Chess. 24 cards (2 white, 2 black of each piece type) but colour irrelevant. Five cards are dealt to each player, the remainder forming a stockpile. At each turn, the players simultaneously disclose a card. Highest-ranking card wins (normal order KQRNBP,

but P beats K). Winner either moves a piece of the rank he played, or a pawn, or he can pass. If ranks are the same, neither player moves. The cards used are discarded and the players draw replacements to maintain a hand of five cards.

In the next group of games all 28 cards are used (no jokers). Colours are irrelevant. Cards are shuffled and placed in a stack face down.

Cassandra Chess [Karten Schach]. The white and black cards are shuffled separately and then laid out alternately round the board, seven cards a side. A counter is placed outside the board at the bottom right corner as a marker. White starts with any move and Black likewise. White may now move the man indicated by the white card next to the marker or pass. The marker is then moved onto this card when Black acts accordingly.

Cockayne Chess. Three cards are turned up in front of each player. The player with the move has two choices. (1) Move a man indicated by one of his cards. Then remove the card and place it face up on a discard pile. Finally, draw a replacement card from stock. (2) Without moving, discard one or more cards and replace them from stock. If both players use up all their counters they are replaced.

Ducat Chess. The players have eight counters each exposed in front of them. Turn player exposes the top card. He has three choices: (1) Play a man of the rank shown, (2) Pass, or (3) Surrender a counter and make any legal move. Exposed cards are discarded

Eunuch Chess. Four cards are laid face up in front of each player. Black starts by selecting one of his four cards placing it on a face-up pile in the middle and replacing it from stock. White now either moves or passes. He may not play a piece of the type chosen by Black. Then White selects a card and Black moves, and so on.

Gambler Chess [Knizia]. The player takes the top card from the stack and moves the indicated piece. He can continue to draw cards and move accordingly but can stop at any time. If he draws a second card of the same rank he loses his turn. If he stops before that he may use any or all of the revealed cards to move the corresponding pieces. Exposed cards are removed from play.

Liar Chess [Knizia]. Turn player takes top card of pack, looks at it, places it face down on the discard pile, and moves. Opponent may challenge or pass. In the event of a challenge, the card is revealed. If the challenge is correct, the move is retracted and the man moved is removed from play. If the challenge fails, the challenger loses his turn and the opponent plays again.

Pea-Counting Chess. Each player has six counters of own colour. Turn player draws a card, exposes it, and may play the appropriate man or pass. Alternatively, the player pays a counter to the opponent, draws another card, plays the man indicated or passes. The player may continue to buy cards until satisfied as long as he has counters to pay for them. Passing is always an option.

Pirate Chess. Turn player takes top card, looks at it, places it face down on the discard pile and either moves any man or passes. The opponent now decides whether or not to challenge the move. If he does the card is exposed. If the challenge succeeds, the move is retracted and the challenger has a free move (no card drawn), if it fails, the move stands, the challenger loses his turn and the turn player has a free move.

Purist Chess. Draw a card and move the indicated piece (colour irrelevant) or opt to pass. If you cannot move the piece indicated, move any man or pass. Used cards form a discard pile.

Skateboard Chess. The top card of the stack is exposed. The turn player now has two options: (1) Move a man of the type indicated or (2) Turn over a new card and either move the piece indicated or pass. Players may use the same card consecutively more than once.

Speculator Chess. The turn player draws a card and exposes it. He can elect to move a piece of the type indicated or draw a second card with the same option. This can be repeated a third time but he must then move or pass. Exposed cards form a discard pile.

In the following three games each player begins with 12 counters. The winner of an auction pays the amount of the bid to the opponent.

Capitalist Chess. The turn player takes the top card and exposes it. He now has two options: he can pass, when the opponent

receives the card gratis, or he can make a bid (zero bid permissible). If the opponent now passes, the turn player takes the card. If the opponent bids there is an auction. Bidding continues until one player passes. The winner now pays the loser the number of counters corresponding to the final bid and moves the relevant piece or passes. The player who passed in the auction exposes the next card.

Machiavelli Chess. Four cards are dealt face up in front of each player. The player with the move chooses one of his four cards and places it near the stack, replacing it from stock. There is an auction for the chosen card (bids from nought upwards). The player with the higher bid takes the card and pays the appropriate number of counters (if any) to the opponent. The winner now plays a piece appropriate to the card or he can elect to pass. The player who passed in the auction chooses the next card.

Socialist Chess. The turn player takes the top two cards and exposes them. The auction is as in Capitalist Chess. Whoever wins the auction pays the opponent the number of counters bid and picks one of the two cards. The player now moves the appropriate piece or passes. The loser may use the remaining card or pass. The loser turns up the next two cards.

In the following games the players start with a set of six different cards (KQRBNP) of the appropriate colour face up in front of them unless stated otherwise. A card played is reversed. When all six cards have been reversed by both players, they are again exposed and available.

Clairvoyant Chess. Players take their cards in hand. Both players select a card and place it

face down in front of them. White exposes his card and either plays a man of corresponding rank or he passes then retrieves his card and places any new card from his hand face down in front of him, for his next turn. Black then does likewise.

Döppelgänger Chess. On turn, a player may either make a normal move or select a card and make an additional move with the piece depicted. The card is then turned over. Example: 1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 when White threatens to select his B card and play Bxf7,xe8 winning. However, Black can now choose his P card and play d5,dxc4. Capture the K to win.

Generation Chess. Nine cards are dealt face up between the players. The turn player chooses any card (colour irrelevant), moves a corresponding man or passes, and turns the card face down. When the nine cards are exhausted, a further nine are dealt and play proceeds as before.

High-Flyer Chess. On turn, a player makes a normal move or declares a card and moves the piece indicated to any unoccupied square (no pawn to the end rank). The card is then reversed. A card is also reversed if the player has no men remaining of the rank indicated. When the cards of both players are exhausted, they are replaced.

Impostor Chess. On turn, a player makes a normal move or selects one of his cards and moves any man in the manner of the piece chosen.

Proxy Chess. On turn, a player makes a normal move or exchanges the positions of two of his own men. The card reversed is the higher-ranking of the two men moved (order KQRBNP). A pawn card allows the player to swap a pawn with any man other than the king.