

Overview

Chesscalation is a game based off of chess with a few changes that make the game faster and more interesting. It adds a mechanic called the “rules of escalation” whereby pieces can be upgraded and enter the board throughout the game. It mostly uses chess pieces that should be familiar, but also adds several new ones, including ranged units.

The theme is that units are always getting stronger. You start off with the weakest units available, and gradually build up your forces. Eventually conflict is inevitable. In other words, things keep escalating.

As a game based on Chess, this game presumes a working knowledge of how to play Chess.

Contents

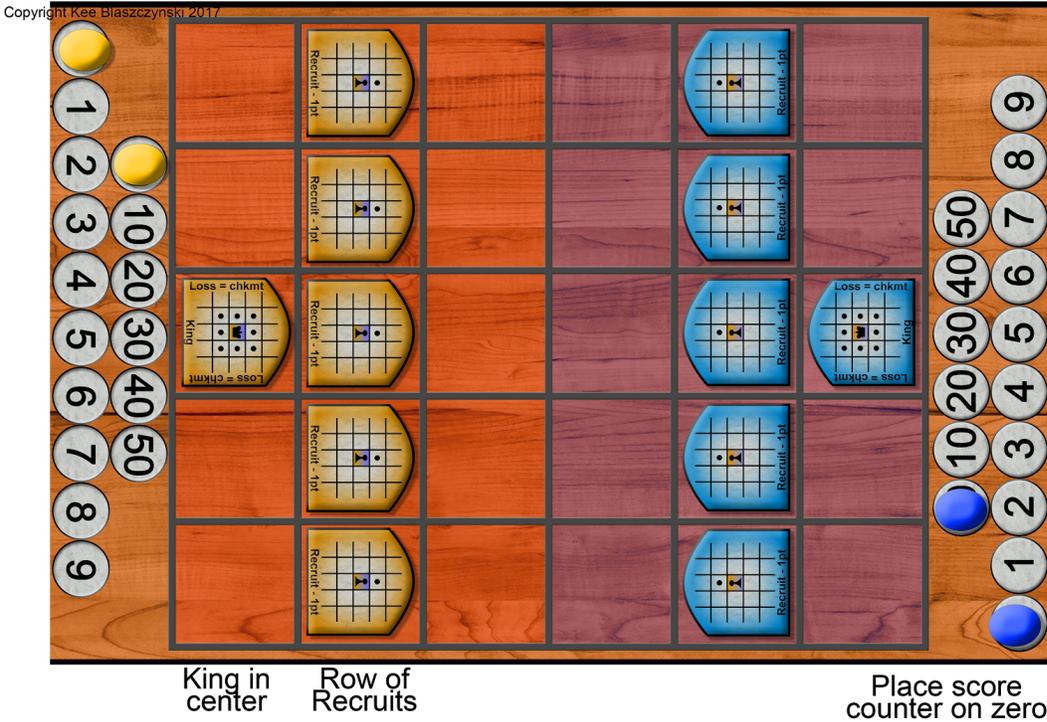
1 board	2 Bishops
4 score counter beads	2 Catapults
10 Recruits	2 Rooks
2 Pikes	2 Cannons
2 Archers	2 Generals
2 Knights	2 Castles
2 Lancers	2 Queens
2 Spies	2 Kings

The Goal of the Game

There are two ways to win in Chesscalation. The first is to checkmate the opponent’s King, just like in traditional Chess. The second is to collect a total of 50 points. Points are gained every time you take out an opponent’s piece. Therefore you can win either by defeating the king (checkmate) or through raw attrition.

Setup

Assign each player a color and separate the pieces accordingly. Each player will start with 5 Recruits and 1 King placed like so:



All the remaining pieces should be kept nearby. These pieces shall be referred to as your “pool.” If you are still learning the game, you should try sorting the pieces by point value. All the pieces on the board should always be laid flat and have the curved side aligned to the opponent. Both players should be able to see clearly all the information on top of each piece.

Set your score counters to the “0” and “00” positions. Always remember to keep track of your score. Be sure to add points whenever you take out an opponent’s piece.

How to Play

Randomly decide which player will go first. When teaching the game, allow the player with the most experience to go first.

On your turn you have the option to either move a piece, upgrade a piece, or place a piece. You may only perform one of these actions per turn. Whenever one of your pieces is removed from play it is returned to your pool.

Moving a piece

Pieces can move just as they do in Chess. A Rook moves like a Rook, a Knight moves like a Knight, and so forth. However, there are several new pieces, including ranged units. Each piece includes a diagram for how it may be moved with a 5x5 grid representing the surrounding spaces. There are four different types of moves indicated by the symbols surrounding each piece.

	Move/Jump: The piece may move directly to the square indicated. Usually these squares are adjacent to the piece but not always (such as with the Knight). You may take out any enemy pieces that this piece lands on.
	Line: This piece may move in a straight line, crossing any number of empty squares. If there is an enemy piece along the path, it may be taken out and replaced by the moving piece. For example, this is how a Rook or Bishop normally moves in chess.
	Ranged: With this piece you may take out an enemy piece at the indicated space WITHOUT moving. This is to represent ranged combat. This action uses up your turn as though it were a move. Therefore this cannot be done on the same turn that the piece is placed, moved, or upgraded.
	Peaceful Move: (only appears on ranged pieces) This piece may move directly to the indicated square ONLY if it is unoccupied, it may NOT take out enemy pieces.

Upgrading

You may spend your turn to upgrade any piece to any other piece in your pool so long as it is of a GREATER value than the current piece, and does not threaten the opponent's King.

Remember that players may only perform one action per turn, you may not move or place a piece on the same turn as you've upgraded a piece.

There are a few pieces that have the same point value as each other. You may NOT upgrade from one piece to another of the same value. Pieces may only be upgraded up into pieces of a GREATER value.

Placing a Piece

The third option for your turn is to place a new piece on the board. You may only place a piece on an empty square on your side of the board. The new piece must be of GREATER VALUE than any other individual piece that you control. Finally, the new piece may not threaten the opponent's King.

It is important to note this this rule does not conflict with the previous rule. For example, a player may upgrade a 1 point Recruit into a 4 point Lancer even while they control a 6 point Bishop. The top valued piece only has to be taken into consideration when placing new pieces.

The Rule of Escalation

Between the upgrade and placement mechanics, the mean value of your pieces can only go up. The higher valued pieces you control the fewer options you have for new pieces. This can lead to interesting situations such as wanting to lose your own queen to free up new pieces. Because of that, pacing is very important. You do not want to rush your most valuable pieces tying you up.

At the same time, the game is much more forgiving than regular Chess. The worse you are doing the more options you have. Plus, since pieces you lose go back into your pool, you never really lose access to them. On top of that, you can always place new pieces on your side of the board, which gives your King an extra layer of defense. All these things combine to favor the defender, but inexorably push both players into confrontation.

F.A.Q.

Q: How should I start?

A: The center column is very strong strategically, you should start by placing or upgrading a piece that enforces your position towards the center of the board. For example placing a Lancer in the center or an Archer would be a good move. To keep your options open, try to always use the cheapest piece you think you can get away with.

Q: Do I use the points for anything?

A: No, they are just for keeping score.

Q: Can I place a piece between my King and an opponent's piece to get out of a check?

A: Yes, So long as it follows the rules for placing new pieces. A lot of the time it's a good strategy.

Q: Can I get out of check by taking out an opponent's piece and getting over 50 points?

A: No, just like with regular Chess, during a check the only legal moves are ones that remove your King from danger.

Q: Does anything happen if I get a Recruit all the way to the other side of the board?

A: No. In fact the Recruit is now stuck.

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