A chess game is provided in which the game board is characterized by indicia on the playing spaces. Each indicium represents a conventional chess playing piece such as a queen, rook, bishop and knight. A new type of playing piece is employed and is adapted to be moved from one space bearing an indicium to another space on the game board. The direction of movement of this piece from the first space is in a direction equivalent to the direction of movement of the conventional chess piece marked on that space. A plurality of such pieces are included, preferably in place of the conventional queens, rooks, bishops and knights. The direction of movement of all of these pieces is controlled by the indicia on the spaces which they occupy at any given time during the course of the game. Further challenge is provided by including interchangeable indicia bearing members for selective placement on the playing spaces at the start of the game.

5 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures
CHESS GAME APPARATUS

This invention relates generally to games in which playing pieces move over a game board and more specifically, to an improved chess game.

Chess is one of relatively few games that has met with world-wide success and has continued to provide a challenge to millions of people over a span of many years. It is, perhaps, the most popular game of its kind. But there is one major disadvantage with the game that has not been rectified and still persists. The disadvantage derives primarily from the complexity and nature of the game. There are varying degrees of expertise that individuals may achieve through a combination of experience in and familiarity with playing the game as well as through basic intelligence and memory. Rarely, therefore, is it possible to match two players having the same skill except at the very expert level. Thus, it is only a matter of time before the superior player in an average game gains command of the game. Subsequent play by the inferior player is not expected to provide much of a challenge to the superior player and the very purpose of the game is defeated.

Despite this somewhat important disadvantage, the game of chess continues to flourish in its original form. Perhaps this is so because interested inferior players strive to improve their playing abilities, but nevertheless the game has resisted virtually every attempt at change since its invention. As a result, the game as it is played today still has the inherent limitation which prevents two players from knowing initially that they are to have an equal game which will be a challenge for both participants.

It is the primary object of the present invention to provide an improvement in the conventional chess game which enables the game to be played by any two players, whether experienced or inexperienced in conventional chess, and still provide an equal opportunity for either player to win. It is another object of this invention to provide an improved chess game which may be varied each time the game is played to an extent sufficient to minimize the effect of experience in playing chess thereby further equalizing the game for opposing players.

These objects and others are accomplished in the present invention by an improved chess game which comprises a game board having defined playing spaces, at least one of the playing spaces being characterized by an indicium representing one or another conventional chess playing piece.

The chess game also includes at least one primary playing piece which is a playing piece unlike the conventional playing pieces in that its direction of movement is not necessarily predetermined. Rather its direction of movement is controlled by its position on the game board and, more specifically, by the indicium on the playing space from which it is to be moved. It is moved in a direction equivalent to the direction of movement of the conventional chess piece represented by the indicium on the playing space. Thus, if a primary playing piece lands on a playing space representing a rook, the next move for that piece can only be in the direction a conventional rook would move. If after the next move the primary playing piece lands on a playing space marked by a knight, the next move for that piece can only be in the direction that a conventional knight would move. It may be stated therefore that the primary playing piece becomes the conventional chess piece marked on the playing space upon which it lands until it is moved to another playing space.

The primary playing pieces may be used in addition to or, preferably, in place of the conventional chess playing pieces. In the preferred embodiment of the game, all rook, queen, bishop, and knight playing pieces are eliminated and primary playing pieces are used instead. Accordingly, the game board has all or substantially all playing spaces marked with indicia of rook, queen, bishop and knight playing pieces. In a typical arrangement, each half of the game board will have its thirty two playing spaces marked with eight rooks, eight queens, eight bishops and eight knights at preselected positions. The primary playing pieces may then become anyone of these conventional playing pieces each time they are moved depending, of course, upon their position after a move. It is not impossible therefore for a player to have three or four rooks at one time and no bishops or knights. A few moves later he may have four knights and no rooks. According to the preferred rules of the game, however, at no time may a player have more than one queen with one exception hereinafter discussed more fully.

The ability to continuously change the nature of the playing pieces during the course of play provides a fascinating new dimension to the game of chess. This one variation enables even an average player of a conventional chess game to successfully challenge an expert. To provide even further challenge and interest in the chess game of this invention, the game board is provided with means for interchangeably positioning the various indicia on the playing spaces. With this structure, a player may strategically position the indicia at the playing spaces before the game to obtain the best defense and offense. An attacking primary playing piece must venture into the opponent's half of the board at some point during the game and so its ability to move in that half of the board will depend upon the arrangement of indicia set by the opposing player and not by the player moving the attacking piece. Thus an important element of the game is the ingenuity employed in the initial placement of the indicia on the playing spaces.

In a suitable embodiment, the playing spaces on the game board define a receptacle and a plurality of members each bearing an indicium representing a conventional playing piece are adapted to be received in the receptacles. Interchangeability of the indicia is very easily accomplished by shifting the members from one receptacle to another. The members, which may be in the form of substantially flat discs, may be color coded to represent pieces such as rooks, queens, bishops and knights or may have a symbolic designation such as the letters R, Q, B and K imprinted thereon to represent these pieces. An additional challenge is added to the game when one or more of the discs are provided with indicia representing several conventional playing pieces so that when a primary playing piece lands on that space, it can move in any direction equivalent to the direction of movement of the conventional playing pieces represented on that disc. The discs may be provided with a central opening adapted to receive a projection portion of the playing pieces so that the playing pieces will be stabilized during play.

To the accomplishment of the above and to such other objects as may hereinafter appear, the present in-
The invention relates to a chess game as defined in the appended claims and as shown in the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of a game board typical of the invention illustrating one arrangement of the playing spaces having various indicia thereon;

FIGS. 2-4 are partial top plan views of the game board of FIG. 1 illustrating various positions of playing pieces during the course of play;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a portion of the game board of FIG. 1 illustrating a removable disc member and a king playing piece adapted to be received in the disc member;

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of a portion of the game board taken on the section line of FIG. 1 and

FIG. 7 is a front elevational view of game playing pieces which may be employed in the game of the invention.

Referring to FIG. 1, the chess game generally designated by the numeral 10 comprises a game board 12 and a plurality of paying pieces 14. In FIG. 1, the playing pieces 14 are illustrated in their normal starting positions. The playing pieces 14 are of three types in the embodiment shown. Each player has a conventional king playing piece 16 which is represented for illustrative purposes as a square in the plan view of FIG. 1. Each player also is provided with seven primary playing pieces 18 and eight pawn playing pieces 20. These pieces are all adapted to be moved over the game board 12 in the conventional directions of chess playing pieces. The primary playing pieces 18 may move in any number of directions, those directions being determined by their position on the game board 12 as will be more fully explained.

The game board 12 comprises a plurality of defined playing spaces 22 of which there are a total of 64 as in a conventional chess game. These spaces 22 define the areas to which a playing piece 14 may move. Each playing space 22 has an indicium representing a conventional chess playing piece. In the illustrated embodiment, the indicia are capital letters Q, R, B and K representing respectively a conventional queen, rook, bishop and knight playing piece. It will be noted that these indicia are arranged in a somewhat random manner with no specific order. The arrangement in the ranks 24 nearest the players simulates the initial positions of playing pieces in a conventional game but the indicia may be altered to any desired initial position. It will be understood that the indicia employed may be any symbolic designation of the conventional chess pieces such as a pictorial representation or the like. Another typical means of representation is by color coding. In FIG. 5, for example, the playing space 22 includes a color coded member 26 which is colored red to represent a queen. Other colors may be suitably employed to represent the other conventional chess pieces.

In the preferred embodiment of the invention, means are provided for interchangeably positioning the indicia Q, R, B and K on the playing spaces 22. As shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, the member 26 is adapted to be removable positioned on the playing space 22. For this purpose, the playing space defines a receptacle 28 which is adapted to receive the member 26. Typically, the member 26 is a substantially flat disc having a thickness dimension equal to that of the receptacle 28 so that when placed therein a substantially flat playing surface results, as best illustrated in FIG. 6. Since the discs 26 are removable from the receptacles 28, they may easily be shifted from one receptacle to another prior to the start of the game. As shown, the discs 26 bear the various indicia and thus the effect of shifting the discs is to shift the initial position of the indicia. As a result, a player may arrange his side of the board for best defensive and offensive playing positions.

The discs 26 may be provided with a central opening 30 which may be used to easily lift the discs from the receptacles 28 or to receive the playing pieces 14. For this latter purpose, the playing pieces 14 are provided with means for removably positioning the pieces in the openings 30 such as projecting part 32 shown best on the king playing piece 16 in FIG. 5. The projecting part 32 is adapted to fit snugly in opening 30 so that the playing piece 16 is maintained in an upright position. With this structure, it is virtually impossible to accidentally move the playing pieces 14 during the course of the game.

The playing pieces 14 may be of any suitable configuration. The important consideration in this regard is that the primary playing pieces 18 be differentiated in some way from the conventional playing pieces such as the kings 16 and pawns 20. This differentiation may be of any type, such as the various configurations shown in FIG. 1. As another example, FIG. 7 illustrates three chess pieces 34, 36 and 38 which represent respectively a pawn, a primary playing piece, and a king. The king 38 is largest in both diameter and height, while the primary piece 36 is larger in these parameters than the pawn 34 but smaller than the king 38. Each of these pieces is provided with projecting parts 32 so that they may be received in the opening 30 in the center of discs 26 as above explained. The top surface 40 of the pieces 34, 36, 38 as well as piece 16 in FIG. 5 may be color coded as shown to distinguish one player's pieces from the opponent's pieces.

The game is played in the same manner as conventional chess with certain exceptions. The manner of playing the game is best explained with reference to FIGS. 1-4. As shown in FIG. 1, the playing pieces 14 are initially arranged in the same positions as in a conventional game of chess. In the preferred embodiment, there is one king piece 16 for each player, eight pawn pieces 20 for each player, and seven primary pieces 18 for each player. The king and pawn pieces (depicted by a square and hexagon respectively in FIGS. 1-4) may move in the conventional directions for those pieces and they never change their identity during the course of play. The primary playing pieces 18 (depicted by a triangle in FIGS. 1-4) are adapted to be moved in a direction equivalent to the direction of movement of the conventional chess piece represented by the various indicia Q, R, B and K. Thus a primary piece 18 may move either as a queen, rook, bishop or knight depending upon which space it is on at the time it is to be moved. In effect, then, the primary pieces 18 change their identity during the course of the game.

FIG. 2 illustrates a typical move of a primary playing piece. In this case playing piece 42 was initially on playing space 44 but has been moved to playing space 46. Playing space 44 has an indicium K which means a conventional knight is represented at that space. Accordingly, piece 42 could only move from space 44 in a direction which a conventional knight would move. In FIG. 2, the move shown is two spaces forward and one
space to the left to space 46 as shown by the arrow. But space 46 is marked with an R which means that the next move of piece 42 can only be in a direction that a conventional rook would move from space 46. In effect, then, playing piece 42 has changed from a knight to a rook in one move.

In FIG. 3 still more moves typical of the game of this invention are illustrated. For example pawn 48 moves as a conventional pawn from space 50 to space 52. Even though space 50 is marked with a K, pawn 48 does not move as a knight but remains a pawn. The indicia on the playing spaces are only applicable to the primary playing pieces 18 in the preferred form of the game. Now that space 50 is vacant, primary piece 54 is moved from space 56 to space 58 in a direction (arrow) typical of the movement of a conventional bishop since space 56 is marked with a B. Piece 54 will be moved in the next move as a bishop since space 58 is also marked with a B. Thus there is no effective change in the identity of piece 54 during this move.

A vacancy at space 50 also enables primary piece 60 to be moved from space 62 to space 64 in a direction that a conventional queen would move since space 62 is marked with a Q. From space 64, marked with a B, piece 60 can only move as a bishop. As a result, the player moving these pieces has no queen piece, that is, no space marked with a Q is occupied by a primary playing piece. The player therefore moves piece 66 from space 68 to space 70 and effectively converts this piece 66 from a knight to a queen. According to the preferred rules of the game, this move is permissible only because there is no other queen space occupied, there being allowed only one queen for each player at any time. If a player captures an opponent's piece and thereby lands on a queen space with a primary playing piece, and another queen space is occupied by that player's other primary piece, the player must move one queen in the next move. If the player's king piece is put into check by the opponent before a queen can be moved, and moving either of the queens cannot eliminate the check, a checkmate results and the game is ended. Thus capturing an opponent's piece which lies on a queen space should be avoided in certain circumstances.

To illustrate how the game of this invention requires judgement and careful consideration prior to moving a piece, reference is made to FIG. 4. There, king piece 16 has been moved from 72 to space 68 while piece 74 has been moved from space 76 to space 56. This manipulation of both pieces made in a single move is called a castle move in a conventional game of chess. But what may surprise the player who is not alert is that the piece 74 effectively changes from a rook on space 76 to a bishop on space 56 due to the indicia on such spaces. The king piece 16 of course does not change. The chess game may be further modified, if desired, by providing one or more playing spaces with markings representing more than one conventional chess piece thereby allowing a primary piece 18 to move in any direction that those conventional pieces could move from that space. For example, in FIG. 2, space 78, and more specifically disc 26, is colored blue to represent a queen, rook, bishop or knight, and gives the player a choice of any moves that these conventional pieces can make from that space. The possible directions of movement from the space give the opposing player cause for serious reflection before making his own next move.

There are many variations possible in the chess game of the invention. One or more primary playing pieces may be used in place of or in addition to the conventional chess playing pieces. Pawn pieces may also be eliminated in favor of primary playing pieces. Furthermore, any space may have several or no representations of conventional chess pieces. More or fewer playing spaces may be used, and more or fewer playing pieces may be employed. Moreover, the indicia need not be shifted prior to each game.

From the foregoing, it will be appreciated that the chess game of the invention provides a new and refreshing challenge to a chess player. Because of the nature of the game, it is difficult to anticipate subsequent moves of the opponent since it is not known what moves he will be able to make at a future point. This added dimension is effective to improve the game substantially, equalize the game for players of widely divergent skills, and attract even the most ardent of chess players to the new challenge offered.

What is claimed is:

1. A game of chess consisting of
   a. a game board having sixty-four defined playing spaces arranged in eight adjacent rows, each of said rows having eight spaces therein;
   b. four different indicia on said playing spaces, each of said playing spaces having at least one of said indicia, said indicia being randomly distributed among said playing spaces;
   c. means for interchangeably positioning said indicia on said playing spaces; and
   d. two sets of playing pieces movable over said playing spaces each of said sets containing only sixteen playing pieces consisting essentially of eight pawns, one king and seven primary playing pieces, said primary pieces of each set being substantially identical to each other and having no identifiable indicia relating said pieces to the Bishop, Knight, Queen and Rook conventional chess playing pieces for which they are substituted in said chess game.

2. The chess game of claim 1 in which there are an equal number of each of said indicia distributed randomly on said playing spaces.

3. The chess game of claim 1 in which said sixteen playing pieces of each set are substantially identical to each other in form and structure but differ in size, said eight pawns being of a first size, said seven primary pieces being of a second size which is larger than said first size, and said king being of a third size which is larger than said first and second size.

4. The chess game of claim 1 in which said indicia comprise a B, R, K and Q and in which said B, R and K indicia are placed on each of at least two playing spaces in the outermost of said rows, no two of said indicia being adjacent to each other, and said Q indicium is placed on at least one space in said outermost rows, thereby to define starting positions for said playing pieces in said chess game.

5. The chess game of claim 1 in which said means for interchangeably positioning said indicia comprises a plurality of substantially flat discs, each having one of said indicia thereon, a receptacle defined by each of said playing spaces for receiving said discs, an opening in each of said discs adapted to receive a means for removing said disc from said receptacle, and in which said playing pieces are provided with a projecting member depending therefrom and adapted to also be received in said openings in said discs thereby to removably position said playing pieces in said discs.

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