

FIG. 3

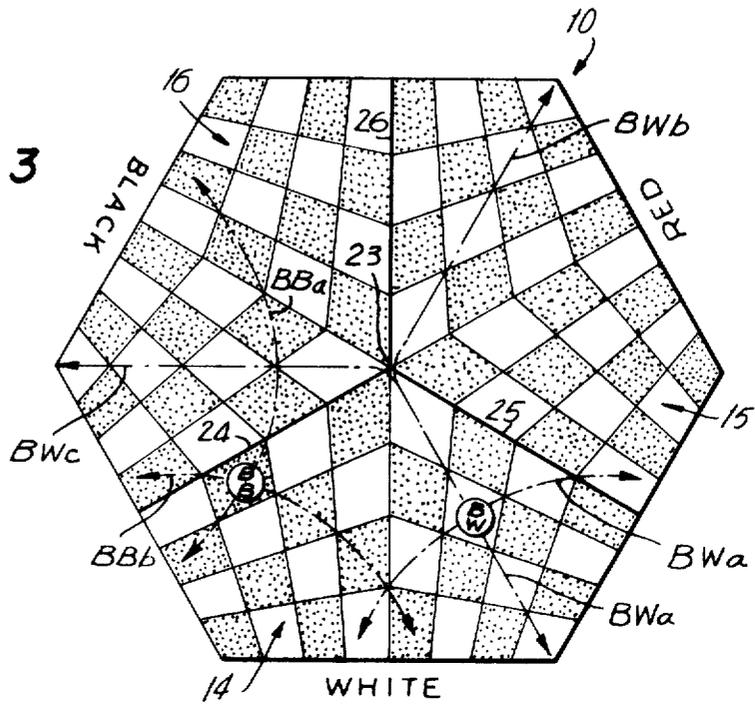
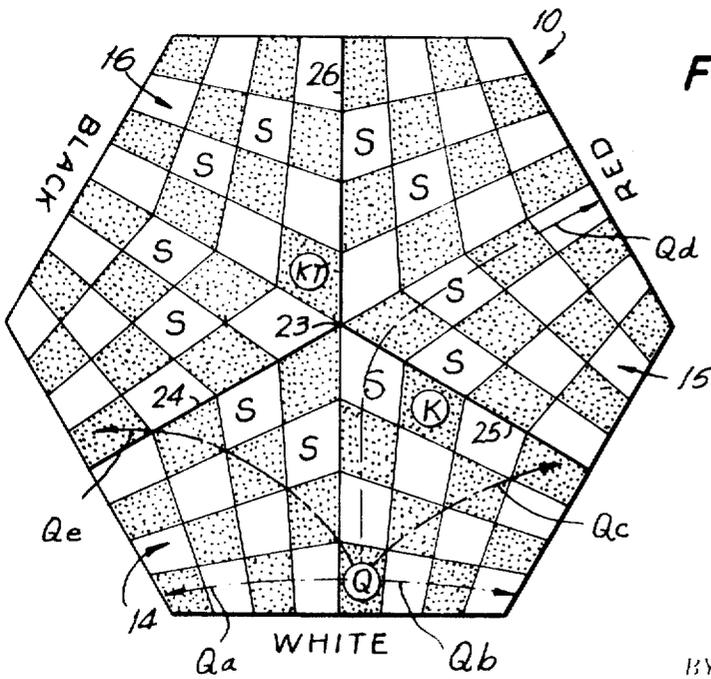


FIG. 4



INVENTOR
ROBERT ZUBRIN

BY *Mark Barreches*

ATTORNEY

THREE PLAYER CHESS BOARD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention is in the field of amusement devices.

THE PRIOR ART

The game of chess has for centuries been played by two participants on a chess board including 64 squares. The infinite possibilities with respect to the series of moves which may be undertaken by participants have, in no small measure, contributed to the continuing popularity of this intellectual undertaking.

Heretofore the game usually has been confined to play by two participants. Where participants of significantly disparate skills are pitted against each other, the superior player will win with monotonous regularity, unlike other games, such as card games, wherein the outcome is, in some degree, dependent upon the luck of the draw.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention may be summarized as relating to a chess board which will permit participation by three players. The board is so laid out that it is possible readily to trace and anticipate the complex moves of conventional chess pieces as they traverse the territory of one player and enter the territory of another. The board is hexagonal in plan, including three identical territories defining a total of 96 play spaces.

The principal advance of the invention relates to the design of the playboard whereby the play spaces which are closer to the boundary lines between territories are progressively distorted in such manner as to permit the players familiar with the moves of conventional chess pieces immediately to visualize the spaces which may be available for the movement of the various playing pieces so as properly to mount and defend against an attack.

Accordingly, it is an object of the invention to provide a chess board which is so configured and arranged as to permit the more or less conventional movements of three armies of chess pieces, thereby enabling the simultaneous participation of three players.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a board of the type described wherein the play spaces are distorted in such manner that the paths of movement available to the chess pieces, particularly as they move from one territory to another, may be readily traced by the participants.

A further object of the invention is to provide a chess game which may be played with conventional chess armies by three participants, the pieces comprising the armies retaining their normal patterns of movement.

Still a further object of the invention is the provision of a game of the type described which may be played by three participants and wherein the superiority of any given player may be counteracted to a degree by the concerted efforts of, or alliance between, the other two players, whereby a participant, by a negotiating skill, may offset the superior chess playing skill of an opponent.

To attain these objects and such further objects as may appear herein or be hereinafter pointed out, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, forming a part hereof, in which:

FIG. 1 is a plan view of a chess board in accordance with the invention;

FIGS. 2, 3 and 4 are views similar to FIG. 1 showing the paths of movement available to the various chess pieces.

Referring now to the drawings, there is shown in FIG. 1 a chess board 10 which, in accordance with the invention, is an equilateral hexagon in plan. Three of the sides, arbitrarily 11, 12 and 13, are referred to as base portions. Each of the base portions 11, 12, 13 forms the rearmost boundary of a 32 space area which will be hereafter referred to herein as a territory. Thus, there are three territories, namely, 14, for convenience called the white territory; 15, called the red territory; and 16, called the black territory, of which the bases 11, 12 and 13 form the rearmost boundaries.

The side borders of each territory are defined by one-half of each of the sides of the hexagon adjacent the ends of the base. Thus, the side borders of the white territory 14 are defined by the portions 17, 18; the side borders of the red territory 15 by the portions 19, 20; and the side borders of the black territory 16 by the portions 21, 22.

The frontier borders of each of the territories are defined by lines leading from the geometric center 23 of the board to the terminal ends of the side borders remote from the base. Thus, the line 24 forms a common frontier border between the black and white territories; the line 25, the common frontier between the red and white territories; and the line 26 the common frontier between the black and the red territories.

As seen in FIG. 1, a conventional chess army, in this case white in color to distinguish it from the red and black armies which will be arrayed in the red and black territories, respectively, is set up on the rearmost two rows of the territory in conventional position. The pieces in the play of the game move in the same manner as in the conventional two man play of the game. However, it will be understood that in the absence of the distorted and deformed nature of the squares or play spaces of the game board, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to trace the path of movement permitted to the pieces as the pieces traverse the boundary lines 24, 25, 26 in moving from one territory to the next.

As shown in FIG. 2, the movement of a pawn P from one territory to another is in the direction of the line Pa when the space to which the pawn moves is unoccupied, and in the directions Pb, Pc, Pd if a piece is to be captured in any of the three noted squares forming the terminal ends of the lines Pb, Pc, Pd.

As also shown in FIG. 2, the movements of the rook R in the space or position noted (namely King's fourth) is anywhere along the lines Ra, Rb, Rc and Rd. Thus it will be seen that the movements of the rook are essentially identical with the movements in a conventional game, notably, either transversely or longitudinally, restricted to the column or row occupied by the rook at the beginning of the move. It should be noted that the rook R is not free to move to either of the spaces marked X or to any of the spaces in the column containing a space X.

In FIG. 3, there are shown the movements of the bishop BB on a black space, and a bishop BW on a white space. It will be noted that the black bishop BB, as is conventional, must remain in a black space, the paths of movement available to it being along the continuous lines BBa and BBb. In like fashion, the paths of movement of the white bishop BW are traced by the lines BWa and BWb and BWc.

As will be observed from FIG. 3, a bishop entering a space bordering on the geometric center 23 is permitted to branch out in either of two directions into paths beginning with the spaces of the proper color whose corner portions terminate at the geometric center.

In FIG. 4 there are shown the moves available to a knight KT. The knight, which is permitted to move two spaces in one direction and then one space to the side, may be shifted into any of the spaces marked with the letter S.

The King K, also shown in FIG. 4, is free to move one space in any direction. Thus, as depicted in FIG. 4, the king K may be shifted into any of the eight spaces surrounding its illustrated position.

As also shown in FIG. 4, the queen Q is enabled to move in directions which comprise, in essence, a combination of the moves of the bishop and the rook. Thus, the queen Q is free to move in the directions Qa, Qb, Qc, Qd and Qe.

SUGGESTED RULES OF PLAY

From the foregoing description it will be evident that the play of the game may be effected with a minimum of modification of the conventional rules of the game of chess. The players move in sequence in a predetermined order — white; then red, then black. The player is the victor who is the one left after the other two have been eliminated. A player is

eliminated when his king is captured by an opposing piece. He is not eliminated when his king is in check. The king must actually be captured. A stalemate is possible only after one player has been eliminated.

The players may deliberately move their kings into a state of check or leave them en-prise if they wish. Such a move may be tactically advantageous as a means of assuring that an ally performs in a promised manner.

When a player is eliminated, his pieces remain on the board but are not moved at any time. They may, however, be captured should it prove advantageous to a remaining competitor to occupy a space theretofore occupied by a piece of an eliminated player. When a player is eliminated, his turn is skipped.

An interesting aspect of three sided chess lies in the ability of the players to form alliances. The players may make contractual agreements to ally against a third player, although a player is not obligated to keep his word. Allies may not confer in secret.

STRATEGY

In the play of three sided chess, it has been found advisable to act with caution during the initial stages, it being more important to have an ally than to have a strong position or extra pieces. As the game progresses, position and strength assume increasing importance. If a player sees that he can destroy an opponent and still retain sufficient material and satisfactory playing position, he should of course strike immediately. It should be remembered, however, that it is useless to launch an attack with the intention of eliminating a player if thereafter the attacker is faced with a hopeless position against the mighty neutral. This may not be the case, however, if the neutral is considered by the attacker to be a sufficiently weak player who may be defeated by the attacker despite some numerical disadvantage on the part of the attacker.

Generally speaking, the two weaker players, in order to have any hope of winning, should ally against the strongest in an effort to preserve the balance of power. It has been found that one who is in the position of defending against an alliance is best advised not to defend against both opponents equally. Instead, it is advantageous strongly to attack one of the allies. Such attack, if effectively pursued, will put the attacked ally in a position where he can no longer continue the alliance since, if the defender is eliminated, the attacked ally will find himself in a greatly weakened position vis-a-vis his erstwhile partner.

The defender, by attacking one ally strongly, will in essence require the attacked ally to abandon the original alliance and form a new alliance with the defender against his former partner.

THREE SIDED VARIANT

In accordance with a variant, the previously expounded rules are followed with the exception that when a player captures an opposing king, he gains control of the remaining pieces belonging to the eliminated player. After the elimination of the third player, the two remaining players move alternately, although the capturing player is free to move any of the pieces which he controls.

STRATEGY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VARIANT

When the game is played under the rules of the noted variant, two players generally form an alliance against the third. The game becomes a race as to which of the allies will be the

one to capture the king of the defender and thus inherit his forces.

It is a proper strategy for a party to such an alliance who realizes that he will not be the heir to the remaining pieces of the defender, to abandon the alliance at the earliest possible time.

The defender, under the variant, has as his best hope the previously described tactic of diverting his entire defense against one of the two allies so as to make it apparent that the attacked ally will not become the heir to the defender's forces. A defender in an untenable position may threaten one of the allies, normally the weaker player, with permitting the defender's king to be captured by the stronger ally unless the weaker ally abandons the alliance.

From the foregoing brief description it will be evident that the three sided chess game incorporates all of the infinite variety and complexities of a conventional chess game, but with the added complicating psychological factors which inhere in the formation of alliances and the expedient breaching of such alliances.

Obviously, the two suggested methods of play are illustrative only and further modifications may be devised, without departing from the spirit of the present invention.

In actual practice, and through the play of a large number of games by players of disparate abilities at conventional chess, it has been determined that the instance of winning by the superior player will be somewhat greater than one in three times, the expected statistical percentage. The percentage of wins by the superior player, however, does not remotely approach that which would be expected in conventional chess games.

It has been found that the three sided chess game of the present invention provides a challenge for all players. The weaker player equalizes his lack of talent by availing himself of judicious de facto temporary alliances. The stronger player, of course, must match wits with two opponents who may ally themselves against him but who cannot necessarily afford to persevere in the alliance for fear of being themselves defeated.

Having thus described the invention and illustrated its use, what is claimed as new and is desired to be secured by Letters Patent is:

1. A game board having the peripheral configuration shown in FIG. 1 of the drawing and having on its surface the checkerred game pattern shown in said FIG. 1.

2. An unobstructed game board for the play of chess by three participants comprising an equilateral hexagonal board member having its surface divided into three identical territories, each territory including 32 play spaces, each said territory including a base defined by a side of said hexagon, side borders defined by half of each of the sides of the hexagon adjacent the ends of the base, and frontier borders defined by lines leading from the terminal ends of the sides remote from the base to the geometric center of the hexagon, each said territory being divided into 32 play spaces by longitudinal lines extending from the base to the frontier borders and transverse lines extending from the sides to an apex line running from the center of the base to the intersection of the frontier borders, said transverse lines being three in number extending to each side of said apex line and running from points spaced one-quarter, one-half and three-quarters the length of said apex line from said base respectively to points on said sides spaced one-quarter, one-half and three-quarters the length of said sides taken from said base, said longitudinal lines in each symmetrical half of said territories dividing said transverse lines of said half into four equal increments.

* * * * *