

EPAMINONDAS

A strategy board game for 2 players by Robert Abbott

INTRODUCTION

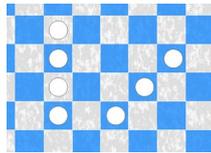
Epaminondas is named after the Theban general who made improvements to the phalanx, a formation he used to defeat the Spartans in 371 B.C. The term "phalanx" is used in the game to describe a certain arrangement of pieces that can move and capture as a single unit. The game was invented by Robert Abbott and published by him privately in 1975.

MATERIAL

Epaminondas is played on a 14 x 12 checkered board with 56 pieces in two colours.

PHALANXES

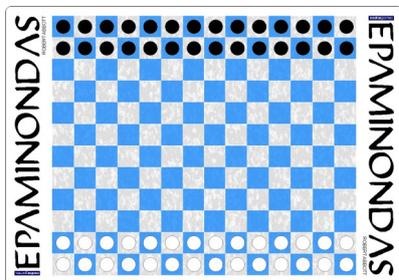
A **phalanx** is defined as a connected group of two or more pieces in a straight line, either orthogonally or diagonally. A piece may belong to several phalanxes in different directions. It is logically consistent (and probably helpful) to think of a single piece as a phalanx of one.



Phalanxes

GAME RULES

Arrange the pieces according to the following picture.



One player plays white and the other plays black. Starting with white, players take alternate turns during the game.

MOVEMENT

Each turn a player must either move a single piece one square in any direction to an empty square or move a phalanx. It is not permitted to pass.

When a phalanx moves, all the pieces in the phalanx move an equal number of squares in the same direction in a straight line. The direction of movement must be either forward or backward along the line of orientation of the phalanx. The number of squares moved by each piece must be equal to or less than the total number of pieces in the phalanx.

A phalanx can be split up to move. In this case, the number of squares it can move is equal to or less than the total number of pieces in the *moving* phalanx.

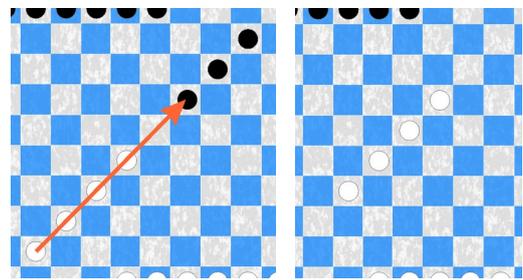
A phalanx cannot move off the board or onto or over a square occupied by a friendly piece. Under certain conditions, when capturing, the lead piece of a moving phalanx may move onto a square occupied by an enemy piece. At no other time may a phalanx move onto or over an opposing piece.

CAPTURE

Under certain conditions the lead piece of a moving phalanx can move onto a square occupied by an enemy piece. The phalanx's movement must then stop.

In order to move onto this square occupied by an enemy piece, the number of pieces in the phalanx to which this enemy piece belongs, extending back in the direction of movement of the moving phalanx, must be strictly *less* than the number of pieces in the moving phalanx.

In this case, the enemy piece is captured together with all pieces in the phalanx to which it belongs, extending back in the direction of movement of the moving phalanx. Captured pieces are removed from the board and take no further part in the game.



White phalanx captures an enemy phalanx

OBJECTIVE

The objective is to move your pieces across the board onto your opponent's back rank, the row closest to him. Precisely speaking, if at the *start* of your turn you have more pieces on your opponent's back rank than your opponent has on your back rank, then you have won.

As an example, consider the situation where neither player has any pieces on his opponent's back rank. As soon as you move a piece onto your opponent's back rank, he must immediately either (a) capture this piece, or (b) put one of his pieces onto your back rank, otherwise he loses.

As another example, consider the situation where both players have an equal number of pieces on their opponent's back rank. If you capture one of the opposing pieces from your back rank, then your opponent must immediately either (a) capture one of your pieces from his back rank, or (b) move another of his pieces onto your back rank.

There is one final complication: black could maintain a position of perfect symmetry and thereby force a draw. In order to overcome this an additional rule is necessary: a player may not move a piece onto the row furthest from him if that move would create a pattern of left-to-right symmetry.

VARIANT (BY NÉSTOR ROMERAL ANDRÉS)

Before the game starts, place 3 stones in any 3 spaces of the six middle rows of the board. Black places one, then White, then Black. Stones are unpassable objects that block the movement of the phalanxes.