

CAMELOT

by [Michael Nolan](#)

Camelot was originally issued by George S. Parker under the name of Chivalry in 1887. After some minor rules changes, it was reintroduced in 1930 under the name of Camelot by Parker Brothers. It was discontinued in 1968, reissued in 1984 under the name of Inside Moves, and discontinued again in 1985.

In the 1930s, Camelot was very popular. Jose Raoul Capablanca (World Chess Champion) and Frank Marshall (U.S. Chess Champion) played Camelot, as well as Sidney Lenz and Milton Work, two world-famous bridge players.

There were a couple of rules changes in 1931, but none after that until the World Camelot Federation added a couple of rules in 1999. There have been over 25 different editions of Camelot Sets issued over the years, at least 15 of those distinctly different from each other. I personally own 13 different sets.

There was a gold-stamped leather edition. There was a mahogany cabinet edition. There were tournament editions, regular editions, and low-cost editions. There was a Point Camelot variation of the regular game rules, there were three-handed and four-handed variations played on a regular two-player board. There were even Camelotta and Grand Camelot variations, for four players, played on a special Grand Camelot board, and Cam, a miniature two-player version, played on a special miniature board.

Camelot is sort of a mixture of Halma (Chinese Checkers) and (regular) Checkers. I've played tournament Chess, tournament Checkers, and just about every other board game for many years, so I believe I can say from experience that Camelot is one of the best games ever invented. It is an extremely tactical game, sometimes reaching very difficult positions after only three or four moves, so it is not only perfectly suited for quick but challenging contests between two players, but also for computer adaptation.

Several of the members of the WCF are currently involved in the creation of a computer program that features both a Play-By-Email option for playing the game between two human players and an Artificial Intelligence option for playing the game between a human player and the computer. The testing, rules, strategies, and tactics are being handled by WCF members in Canada and the U.S. The game playing program is being written by a member in England.

Here are the Official WCF Rules:

The Rules Of Camelot™ As Formulated By The World Camelot Federation™ ©
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A. PLAYERS

- 1.The two players are called White and Black.
- 2.The players choose for White or Black.
- 3.White moves first.

B. PLAYING SURFACE AND PIECES

- 1.Camelot is played on a board that contains 160 squares.
- 2.Ranks are rows of squares running from the left edge to the right edge of the board.
- 3.Files are rows of squares running from one player to the other.

				A ★	B ★						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66
67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78
79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102
103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114
115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126
127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138
	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	
		149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156		
				Y ★	Z ★						

- 4.The squares of the board, with their actual Camelot designation used for game notation, from the top rank to the bottom rank, from the left-most file to the right-

most file, are:

- a.1st rank (2 squares, centered): A, B
- b.2nd rank (8 squares, centered): 1-8
- c.3rd rank (10 squares, centered): 9-18
- d.4th rank (12 squares): 19-30
- e.5th rank (12 squares): 31-42
- f.6th rank (12 squares): 43-54
- g.7th rank (12 squares): 55-66
- h.8th rank (12 squares): 67-78
- i.9th rank (12 squares): 79-90
- j.10th rank (12 squares): 91-102
- k.11th rank (12 squares): 103-114
- l.12th rank (12 squares): 115-126
- m.13th rank (12 squares): 127-138
- n.14th rank (10 squares, centered): 139-148
- o.15th rank (8 squares, centered): 149-156
- p.16th rank (2 squares, centered): Y, Z.

5.The pieces are called Knights and Men.

6.Each player starts the game with 14 pieces: 4 Knights and 10 Men.

7.White places his Knights on 94, 99, 105, and 112, and his Men on 95, 96, 97, 98, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, and 111, to start the game.

8.Black places his Knights on 45, 52, 58, and 63, and his Men on 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 59, 60, 61, and 62, to start the game.

C. MOVES

1.The Plain Move

- a.A piece (either Knight or Man) may move one square in any direction (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) to any adjoining unoccupied square.

2.The Canter

- a.A piece (either Knight or Man) may leap in any direction (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) over a friendly piece (either Knight or Man) that occupies an adjoining square, provided there is an unoccupied square immediately beyond it in a direct line onto which the Canter may be made.
- b.Pieces cantered over are not removed from the board.
- c.A player may canter over more than one piece during the same move, but may not make a "Circular Canter," i.e., a Canter that ends on the same square from which it began.
- d.When cantering over more than one piece in a move, the direction of the Canter may be varied after each leap.
- e.A player is never compelled to canter, nor when cantering is he compelled to canter as far as possible.
- f.If the Canter of a Knight brings it next to an enemy piece which can be jumped, it must do so by means of a Knight's Charge, unless by a different route later in that same move it captures one or more enemy pieces elsewhere.
- g.If a player's Knight reaches a position through cantering in which it can jump over an opponent's piece by means of a Knight's Charge, but instead ends its move, or continues its cantering without making a capture later in that same move, the opponent may force the player to make the Knight's Charge, or he may allow the move as ended to stand, at his choice.

3.The Jump

- a.A piece (either Knight or Man) may jump in any direction (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) over an opposing piece (either Knight or Man) that occupies an adjoining square, provided there is an unoccupied square immediately beyond it in a direct line onto which the jump may be made.
- b.Each enemy piece jumped over is captured and immediately removed from the board.
- c.A player may jump over more than one opposing piece during the same move.
- d.When jumping over more than one piece in a move, the direction of the move may be varied after each jump.
- e.A player is obliged to jump if any one of his pieces is next to an exposed enemy piece.
- f.If there is more than one way in which an opposing piece can be

captured, the player may take his choice.

g.If there is more than one opposing piece that can be captured, the player may take his choice.

h.However, having jumped over one enemy piece, the jumping must continue as a part of that same move if the player's piece reaches a square next to an exposed enemy piece.

i.When compelled to jump, a player may, if he can, capture by a Knight's Charge instead.

j.If a player is in position to jump over an opponent's piece, but instead makes a move that does not capture a piece, the opponent may elect to force the player to make a capture, or he may elect to allow the move to stand, at his choice.

k.If the player reaches a position through jumping in which he can continue to jump over an opponent's piece, but instead ends his move, the opponent may force the player to continue his jumping, or he may allow the move as ended to stand, at his choice.

4.The Knight's Charge

a.A Knight (only) may combine a Canter and a Jump in a single move.

b.The Knight's Charge begins with a Knight cantering one at a time in any direction (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) over one or more friendly pieces (either Knight or Man), varying the direction of the canter after each leap if he wishes, to reach a square next to an exposed enemy piece (either Knight or Man) which he jumps over, and removes from the board, as a part of the same move.

c.Having jumped over one enemy piece, the jumping must continue as a part of that same move if the player's piece reaches a square next to an exposed enemy piece.

d.When jumping over more than one piece in a move, the direction of the move may be varied after each leap.

e.A Knight's Charge must follow the order of first the canter(s) and last the jump(s).

f.A Knight is not obliged to make a Knight's Charge, but when the canter of a Knight brings it next to an enemy piece that it can jump, it must do so, unless by a different route later in that same move it captures one or more enemy pieces elsewhere.

g.If a player reaches a position through the canter portion of a Knight's Charge in which he can jump over an opponent's piece, but instead either ends the move or makes additional canters that do not capture one or more pieces later in the move, the opponent may elect to force the player to make a capture, or he may elect to allow the move to

stand, at his choice.

h.If a player reaches a position through the jumping portion of a Knight's Charge in which he can continue to jump over an opponent's piece, but instead ends his move, the opponent may force the player to continue his jumping, or he may allow the move as ended to stand, at his choice.

D. NOTATION

- 1.The Plain Move is indicated by the notation "-" placed between the starting square and the ending square, e.g., 26-27.
- 2.The Canter is indicated by the notation "C" placed between the starting square, intermediate squares (if any), and the ending square, e.g., 26C28C30.
- 3.The Jump is indicated by the notation "J" placed between the starting square, intermediate squares (if any), and the ending square, e.g., 26J28J30.
- 4.The Knight's Charge is indicated by the notation "KC" preceding the starting square, e.g., KC26C28J30.
- 5.A parenthetical indication of the number of Men and/or Knights captured is made at the end of the move notation for any Jump or Knight's Charge, e.g., KC19C21J23J25J27J29J53 (3M, 2K).

E. OBJECT

1. The game is won by the player who first gets any two of his pieces (Knights and/or Men) onto his opponent's two castle squares located at the opponent's end of the board (designated "A" and "B" or "Y" and "Z").

F. DRAWN GAME

- 1.The game is drawn if:
 - a.Both players so agree.
 - b.Either player is unable to make a legal move.
 - c.Both players have no more than one piece left.
 - d.The draw is claimed by either player with the same position having just appeared for at least the third time, the same player being on move each time.
 - e.The draw is claimed by either player with the last 50 consecutive moves having been made by each side without any capture or movement of a piece onto an opponent's castle square.

G. CASTLE SQUARES

1. A player may not ordinarily move one of his own pieces (Knight or Man) onto one of his own castle squares, but if an enemy piece reaches a square adjacent to one of his own castle squares, a player may jump, or make the jumping portion of a Knight's Charge, over an opponent's piece onto one of his own castle squares. His move ends there even if there is an opportunity to continue the jumping. The piece so jumping must be moved out on its next turn, with no exception. If there exists an opportunity to jump out or make a Knight's Charge out, instead of plain-moving or cantering out, it must do so.

2. When a piece has entered his opponent's castle, it cannot come out, but is allowed to move from one starred square to the other (designated a "castle move") no more than twice per game.

Rules D5, F1a, F1b, F1c, F1d, and F1e are new, restated, or corrected rules from the WCF (1999). F1c is the really important one, and was butchered by the original Parker Brothers texts.