Ordo

An abstract board game for 2 players
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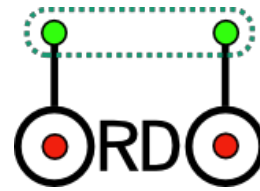
Ordo is played on a 10 x 8 board with 2 x 20 pieces in two colors.

Terminology

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Group

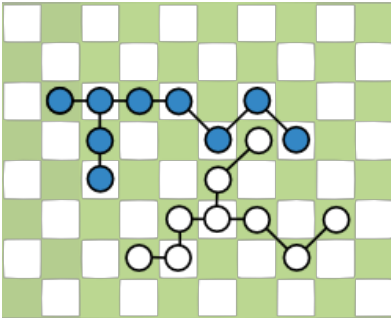Orthogonally or diagonally connected group of all pieces of a player.

Fig. 1: Pieces of the same color are connected.

Home row

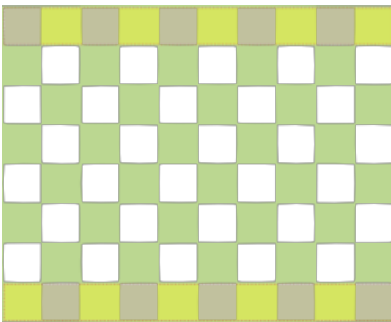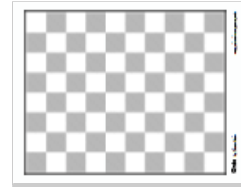Nearest row on the board seen from a player's perspective.

Fig. 2: Home rows.
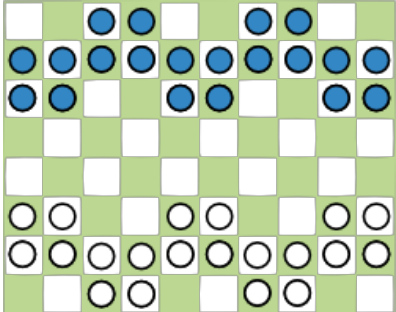
Setup

Pieces are setup as shown in figure 3.

Fig. 3: Initial setup.

Objective

Players move their pieces trying to reach the opponent's home row.

Game Play

Players choose their colors and take a seat on their side of the board.

White starts, then players take turns making a move. They may not pass.

Connection

Throughout the game, after a player's move, all pieces of *that* player must be connected in one sole group.

Moves and Captures

There are two possible ways to move the pieces: **single piece moves** and **ordo moves**.

Single Piece Move

A *single* piece can move forward or sideways, orthogonally or diagonally in a straight line any number of empty squares. It may end the move in an empty square or a square occupied by an opponent's piece, which is then captured and removed from the board.

Fig. 4: A single piece moves forward or sideways. Additionally, backward moves are allowed in reconnection moves (see below).
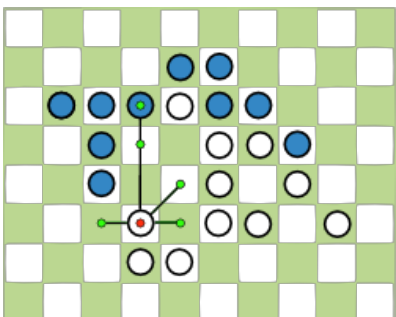

Fig. 5: The marked piece has 5 possible moves. Moving one space ahead and further moves to the left are not allowed as they would split the group.

Ordo Moves

The *ordo* move: 2 or more pieces, which are connected in a straight horizontal or vertical line, can move side by side any number of empty squares. They may only move orthogonally (not diagonally) forward (if they are horizontally aligned) or sideways (if they are vertically aligned), the same number of squares. They may *not* capture.
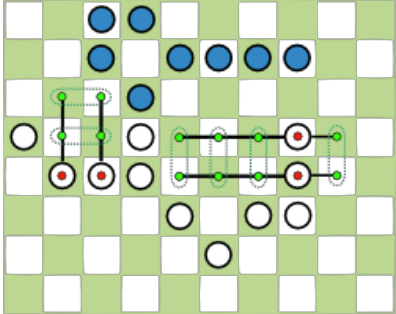
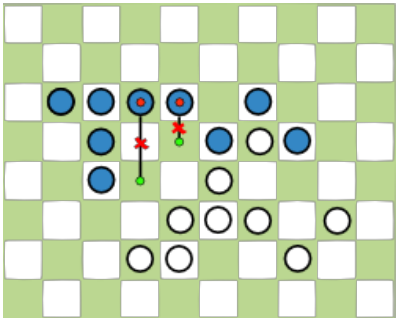Fig. 6: All possible ordo moves for White in this position.

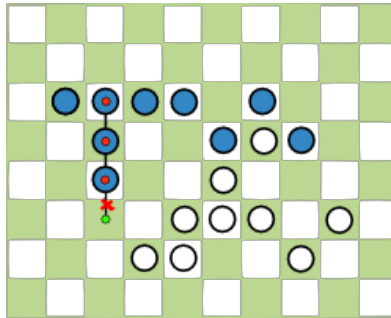Fig. 7: Illegal: Both pieces must move the same number of squares.

Fig. 8: Illegal: Pieces may not go in single file.

Disconnection

If a player's group is disconnected because of a capture move by the opponent, that player must move such that the group is connected again. If no such move is possible, the game is lost immediately.

Normally, pieces move forward or sideways. In case of a split group (and only then), pieces may also move backwards. This is also true for ordo moves.
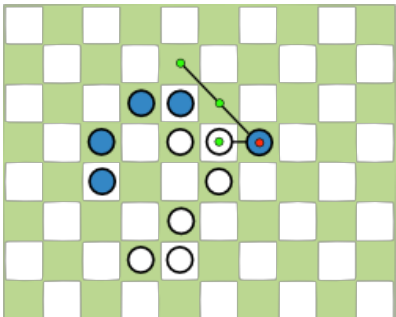
Fig. 9: Backward directions are only allowed for reconnection moves.

End of the Game

The main goal of the game is to place a piece on the opponent's home row.
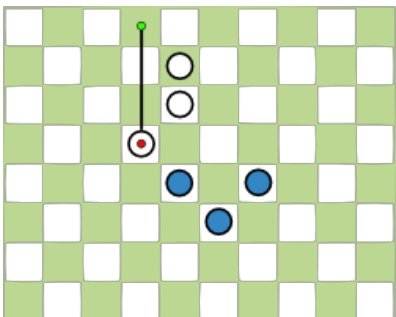
Fig. 10: White wins the game.

Also, players lose a game

- if they cannot reconnect their group, after a split capture by the opponent
- if they have no pieces left on the board

Remarks

If a player has only one piece left, said piece is still considered a group!

Tactical Hints

- Reaching the opponent's home row seems easier than it actually is. Develop your pieces to get a more compact group, which 1) often gives you more move options, and 2) is harder to split.
- Always look for capture moves that split your opponent's group.
- Smaller groups are better: flexible, safer and more powerful, therefore it can be beneficial to sacrifice pieces.
- Especially in the endgame, better block your opponent's pieces, instead of capture them.

Ordo Notation →

Variants

Ordo can be played with other board sizes as well. To try out the game on a regular 8x8 chess board, take away the leftmost and rightmost columns of the board and use 16 pieces for each player.
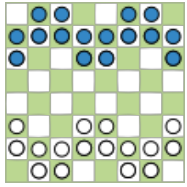

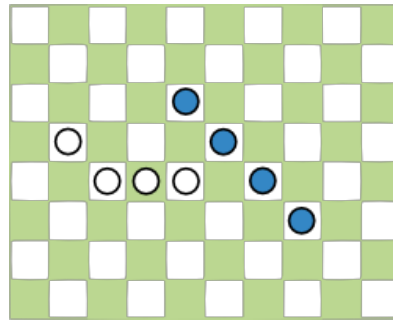*Fig. 11: Ordo on a chess board.*

Problem

Fig. 12: White to move and win. Solution →