



Free Game # 37 from Invisible City Productions, Inc.

An ever-changing checkers game for two players and an Icehouse set by Jonathan A. Leistiko

Object:

To end the game with the most magic hats in your Hat Rack.

Gain magic hats by capturing your opponent's pieces. You can put hats on your pieces to grant them special powers.

You Need:

- A checker board (pieces optional)
- An Icehouse set with red, yellow, green, blue, purple, and clear pieces. If you're not playing with checkers, you'll need two more sets (like opaque white and black) to act as checkers. These rules assume you're using checkers.

Setting Up:

- Set up the checker board the way you would for a normal game of checkers.
- Sort out all of the tiny Icehouse pyramids and put them in an opaque container, like a bag. This is the Bag of Hats. The medium and large pieces are not used; set them aside.

Play:

Play is just like a normal game of checkers with the following exceptions:

If you see a capture, you must take the capture. If you have a choice between captures, you must choose one of them to take.

When your opponent loses a piece from the board, immediately draw one hat from the Bag of Hats and place it in your Hat Rack.

When you lose a piece from the board, you may immediately place one hat from your Hat Rack on any one of your pieces in play that is not currently wearing a hat. This is not mandatory, but optional. Hats confer special powers on the pieces that wear them. The powers are:

Red -Hat of Zotting :

This piece may not capture pieces by jumping them. Instead, this piece can use its turn to capture one enemy piece in an adjacent square. Do not move this piece; just remove the captured piece. Remove this hat from the game when its power is exercised.

Yellow -Hat of Nimbleness :

This piece may jump friendly pieces when moving. It does not capture friendly pieces that it jumps. Remember that you must take any captures that are available to you, even if it means jumping a piece out of your home row, over two of your own pieces, and then over an opponent's piece.

Green -Hat of Venom :

When this piece is captured, the piece that captured it is poisoned. The poisoned piece is captured at the end of its turn. Remove this hat from the game when its power is exercised.

Blue -Hat of Warding :

When the piece that wears this hat is about to be captured, remove this hat from the game instead. This piece can not be captured for the rest of the turn. The capturing piece completes its movement.

Clear -Hat of Strength :

This piece can not capture other pieces by jumping them. Instead, this piece captures another piece by moving into its square. This piece may only make one capture per turn.

Purple -Hat of Valor :

This piece can not jump in a straight line to capture. Instead, it must bend 90 degrees to the left or right and land in an empty square. If the piece is not yet kinged, then it must still move toward the opponent's home row. The move looks like this:



Hats worn by captured pieces are removed from the game.

Remember:

- You get a hat at the instant your opponent loses a piece, and...
- You have the option of capping one of your pieces at the instant that one of your pieces is captured.

This means that if you have hats in your Hat Rack and your opponent has just captured the first piece in a double- or triple-jump, then you can put a defensive hat (like Venom or Warding) on the next piece that your opponent is likely to capture.

Winning:

The game ends when one player has lost all of his or her pieces or if there are no moves left to make.

If you have the most pieces left in your Hat Rack, you win. Ties go to the player with the most kings on the board. Further ties go to the player with the most pieces left on the board.

Variants:

Mixed Hat Draft

At the beginning of the game, take turns selecting a cap from the pile of available caps. Stop when each player has selected 12 caps. Put these caps in the Bag of Hats and play as you normally would.

Select Hat Draft

Draft just like Mixed Hat Draft, but instead of putting all caps in the Bag of Hats, just give them to your opponent for safe keeping. Each time you capture one of your opponent's pieces, you get to select a cap from that pool.

Contrary Select Hat Draft

Just like Select Hat Draft, but instead of selecting the cap you get when you capture one of your opponent's pieces, your opponent gets to select a cap from that pool and give it to you.

Wearing Many Hats

You may place an extra hat on a piece when all of your pieces have the same number of hats.

Second-Hand Hats

When you capture a piece that's wearing a hat, the hat goes to your Hat Rack instead of being removed from the game. Poison hats captured in this fashion are still removed from the game.

Playing for Blood

The only thing that matters at the end of the game is how many pieces you have left. If both players have the same number of pieces, then the player with the most hats in his or her Hat Rack wins. Further ties go to the player with the most kings.

Triple Hat Combo Bonus

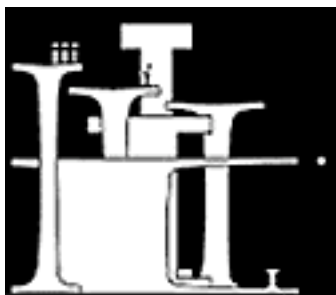
Instead of your turn, you may remove three hats of different colors in your Hat Rack from the game to put two of your previously captured checkers back in play. Place them in vacant spaces in your home row. You must have the available spaces in your home row to make this play. You may remove three hats of the same color in your Hat Rack from the game to take two hats of your choice from your opponent's Hat Rack.

Origin and Credits:

So I have a history of making up checkers variants (Lilypad ,Kiki & Bun Bun ,Schlock Attack). Virtually everyone has a checkers set, so I know that a checkers variant has a good chance of being played by the average reader.

All of my previous checkers variants involved static powers—you had one special power for the entire game. I wanted to make a game with many special powers. This is it. I had the idea kicking around my head for a few months, but it all really came together while lying on a hammock on clear and crisp New Year's Day morning.

Thanks to Brandon, Mike, and Dave from the Synapthein Gaming Group for playtesting. Thanks to Sharon for editing.



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