6 The Bishop

Each player has two bishops.

The bishop moves diagonally. It can move backwards, but not from here, because it is at one end of the board. It cannot move vertically (neither up nor down) or sideways.

The bishop cannot move to a square occupied by a team member, nor can it jump over any chessman.

Each player has two bishops.

Here, the black bishop stands on c8.

The bishop moves diagonally. It can move backwards, but not from here, because it is at one end of the board. It cannot move vertically (neither up nor down) or sideways.

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The bishop is one of the pieces most restricted in movement when on an edge.
Other things being equal, the bishop on c8 has a choice of just 7 squares to move to. It can move to any one of the squares marked with an ‘x’.

Under the Laws of Chess, it will never, ever (legally) find its way onto a dark square. Of course, that does not mean that you will never see it happen - it is not at all rare in the games of young children. GM Chris Ward calls it the “banana” move (displacing a light-square bishop onto a dark square, or vice-versa).

The white dark-squared bishop on d4 is more central and, on an open board, has a choice of 13 squares - almost twice as many as the Bc8 above.
Here they are, two white, two black, where they start the game.

They start opposite one another.

They start on the c-file and the f-file. White’s on the first rank, Black’s on the 8th rank.

One light-squared bishop and an “opposite coloured” dark-squared bishop.

Bishops are able to attack (and capture) enemy units.
Here the Bb5 attacks (CHECKS) the black king.

Black here has two ways of getting out of check (taking the Bb5 is not possible) – he can BLOCK with Bc8-d7 or MOVE his king - to d8, e7 or f7, but not f8 (occupied by his own man) or d7 (the Bb5 is attacking all the squares on the a4-e8 diagonal).

Bishops, like rooks, have the power to x-ray squares that they cannot move to.

What is attacking what?

If it is White’s move, can White take anything?

If it is Black’s move, can Black take anything?

Which squares are being x-rayed?

(answers)

If it is White to move, can he take anything?

Now?

Ever?

If it is Black to move, can he take anything?

Now?

Ever?

(answers)

If it is White to move, can he take anything?

Now?

Ever?

If it is Black to move, can he take anything?

Now?

Ever?

(answers)

A simple maze.

How many moves to pick up all the coins?

(answer)
Another maze.

(answer)

Is this check?

Is this checkmate?

(answers)

Is this check?

Is this checkmate?

(answers)
ANSWERS

- 5th diagram:
The Bishops on d4 and g1 are attacking one another.

White, to move, could play 1 Bd4xg1

Black, to move, could play 1...Bg1xd4

Which squares are being x-rayed? (c5, b6, a7)

- 6th diagram:
No!

No!

No!

No!

One bishop is on a light square, the other on a dark square and ever more shall be so!

- 7th diagram:
No!

Yes!

No!

Yes!

Since both are 'light-square' bishops, it is possible that either one, if careless, could move to a square where it could be captured by the other.
- 8th diagram:

7

Possible ways:
a6-f1-h3-d7-f5-g6-h7
g6-h7-f5-d7-h3-f1-a6

any others?

- 9th diagram:

This time it’s 8 with a single solution:

h4-f6-c3-a5-c7-d6-f4-h2

- 10th diagram:

Yes!

Yes!

- 11th diagram:

Yes!

Yes!