Time Travelling Chess

Time-travelling Chess follows all the normal rules of chess with the addition of two extra directions of movement: forwards and backwards in time. Moving a piece through time takes a move, just as moving in any other direction would. There is also an additional way to lose the game: paradox checkmate.

The rules of the game are presented in normal text. *Text in italics explains the time travel paradigm in more detail.*

Pieces

Present Pieces - Normal chess pieces

Future Pieces - Pieces which have travelled backwards in time from the future, represented by orange-bordered standees.

Time Vortex - The Time Vortex mat is the blue-edged mat to the side of the board. Pieces removed from the board because they are moving forward through time are stored here. It is to differentiate them from pieces which have been taken.

Reversible Portal Counters - Each piece capable of time travel has a corresponding portal counter. Most are blue on one side and orange on the other. Pawn portal counters are blue on both sides.

Paradox Marker - These red discs are placed under pieces which are currently vulnerable to paradox checkmate. This makes vulnerabilities easier to track.

Moving Forwards In Time

Pieces can disappear from the present and reappear in the future. The piece vanishes from the present and reappears in the same location at a later point. In the meantime, they are placed in the Time Vortex.

When a piece moves forward in time, it is removed from the board and placed on the Time Vortex card. A blue portal counter is placed on the square it left, marking which piece moved forward in time from this square.

A piece in the Time Vortex may move back onto the board onto the square it left. The blue portal counter is then removed. If an opponent's piece was on that square, it is captured.

A piece cannot move forward in time while it is vulnerable to checkmate. This is always true of the king and may be true of other pieces under certain conditions.

Moving Backwards In Time

Pieces from the future may appear in the present. This results in two versions of a piece existing at the same time - a present piece and a future version of that piece. In order to produce a stable timeline, the present piece must at some point become the future piece and close the time loop. It does this by moving to the position where the future piece initially appeared and 'travelling back in time' (being removed from the game). This creates a stable time-loop.

A future piece can only appear if its present counterpart is still in play and on the board.

Only one future version of a piece can be in play at one time. If there is no orange counter available to place, no future version can appear.

A piece from the future set may be moved onto any unoccupied valid square for that piece, **unless appearing on that square would place another piece in check**. An orange portal counter is also placed on that square, marking which piece arrived from the future there.

When a present piece moves onto a matching orange portal counter, it is immediately removed from the game, along with the counter. This represents the present piece travelling back to become the future piece added earlier in the game and closing the time-loop. If the future piece is still in play, it should be swapped with the present piece. This shows that its time-loop is complete and a new time-loop could begin.

Pieces may move over their orange portal counters - they are only removed if they stop in that square.

Future pieces cannot travel forward through time.

Paradox

If the present piece is taken before it can close its time-loop, then the future piece's existence has become a paradox, because the present piece could never have travelled back in time to become that future piece. A player in such a paradox is clearly an affront to causality and so has lost the game.

Each orange portal requires a matching present piece to remove it, so a player who does not have the correct pieces to remove all their orange portals at any given point is in a paradoxical state.

If losing a present piece would cause such a paradox, then that piece is vulnerable to check and checkmate, just like the King. This is called **paradox checkmate**. A player loses if one of their pieces is in paradox checkmate.

A present piece is vulnerable to paradox checkmate if there are as many orange portal counters as there are corresponding present pieces on the board.

Special rules for specific pieces

The King
The king cannot travel through time.

Knights and Rooks
A future piece is not linked to a specific present piece - either present piece can move onto the orange portal counter to close the time-loop.

If a rook has moved forwards through time, it may still castle when it returns.

Pawns

Just as in space, pawns may only move forward in time.

If a pawn moves forward in time while still on its starting square, when it returns, it can still move two squares forward when it moves off that square.

Promoting a pawn can affect whether other pieces are vulnerable to paradox checkmate, as it may increase the number of a given piece to more than the number of orange portals in play. It is worth checking whether this is the case whenever a pawn is promoted.

Time travel does not interact with En Passant.

Portal Counters

Portal counters exist only to mark where pieces can appear or disappear. For all purposes, squares with portal counters are normal squares. The presence of portal counters does not affect whether a square is considered empty. A square can contain more than one portal counter.

An orange portal marks where a certain piece can disappear. Pieces go into orange portals.
A blue portal marks where a certain piece can appear. Pieces come out of blue portals.
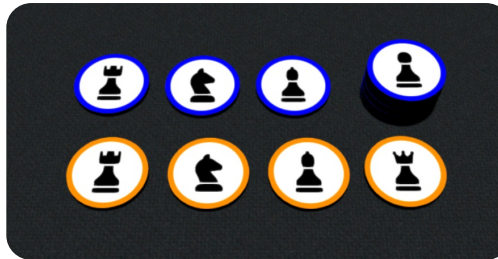
Portal counters are blue on one side and orange on the other. This is because it is impossible to require both the blue and orange portal counters for a given piece at the same time. The exception is the pawn portal counters - these are blue on both sides, because pawns can only go forward in time.

Paradox Markers

It can be difficult to keep track of which pieces are currently vulnerable to paradox checkmate. To make this clearer, a red paradox marker can be placed underneath a piece while it is vulnerable.

Image Credits

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Game Credits

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