

BRANDUB PRINT-AND-PLAY



The Vikings started their raids on Ireland before A.D. 800. Over the following centuries there was fierce resistance from the Gaelic Irish, but the Norse raiders managed to become settlers in various parts of the country. The Norse game of hnefatafl took the fancy of the Irish, who adopted it and called it Brandub.

While in Scandinavia boards were typically nine rows of nine squares, or 13x13, the Irish preferred a smaller variant played on a 7x7 board. The rules of the Irish game were not left to us. But much of the game can be pieced together from poetry and from archaeological finds. A number of boards have been found, marked with lines or peg holes in a 7x7 pattern. An example is the magnificent ornate board from Ballinderry, found in 1932.

Poetry fills in some details, telling us of the number of forces and their disposition. One poem hints that in brandub, the marked corner squares are the objectives of the king; he is told that these and the central square belong to him, and the poem invites him to occupy them. The full rules are supplied in a booklet included in this file.

This print-and-play file is loosely based on Irish archaeological finds, and is designed to be printed by a colour printer on A4 sheets of card or paper. A black and white printer can be used, but some extra step will be needed to ensure the pieces can be distinguished from one another. The game can also be printed on U.S. Letter paper.

ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

Page 1, this page, is the introduction and instructions. You may print it or not as you please. *Page 2* contains three edges of the board. The light squares are the starting positions of the attackers, and the darkened corner squares are the king's objectives. *Page 3* contains the fourth edge of the board, and the centre section. The darkest square in the central section is the king's starting place, while the slightly paler squares adjacent are his defenders' starting positions. *Page 3* also contains all the pieces, a red king and his defenders, and the eight blue attackers. Finally on this page are a couple of reminder cards, one for each player, illustrating movement and capture. *Pages 4 and 5* contain the rules leaflet for brandub.

1. If printing the front page, paper is sufficient and a black and white printer will do.

2a. If you wish to laminate the board, print pages 2 and 3 on paper or card. Laminate the sheets with good quality laminating pouches: poor quality pouches may stick only at the edges. Then cut out the board parts and the reminder cards with scissors or a craft knife.

2b. If gluing the board to backing card, then print pages 2 and 3 on paper, glue the paper to thick card, and when dry, cut out the board sections and reminder cards with a craft knife.

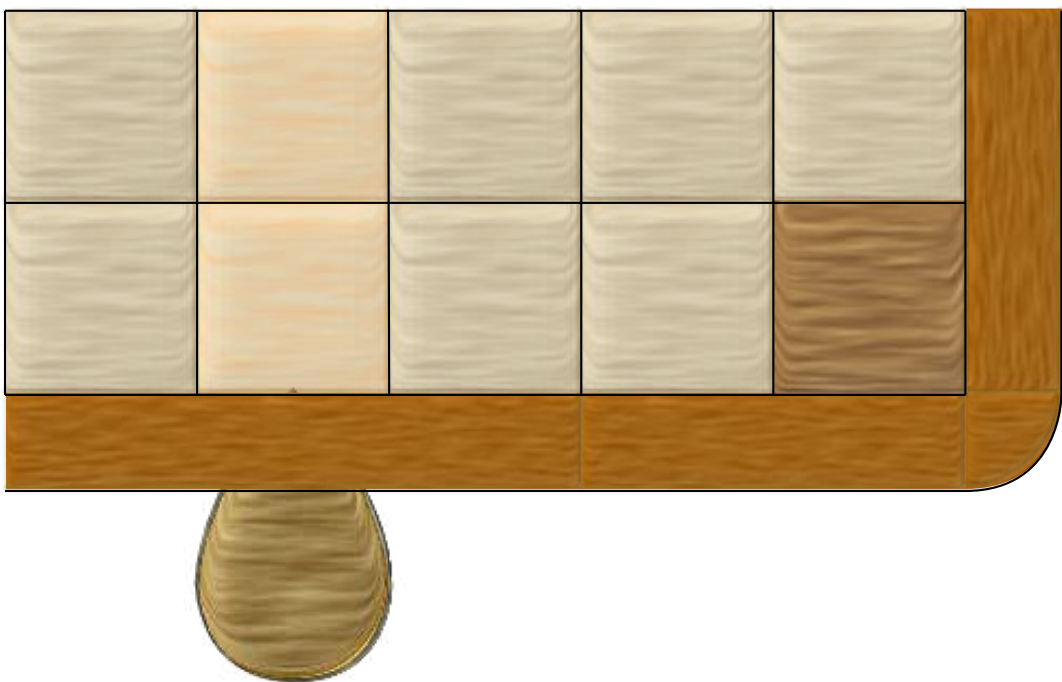
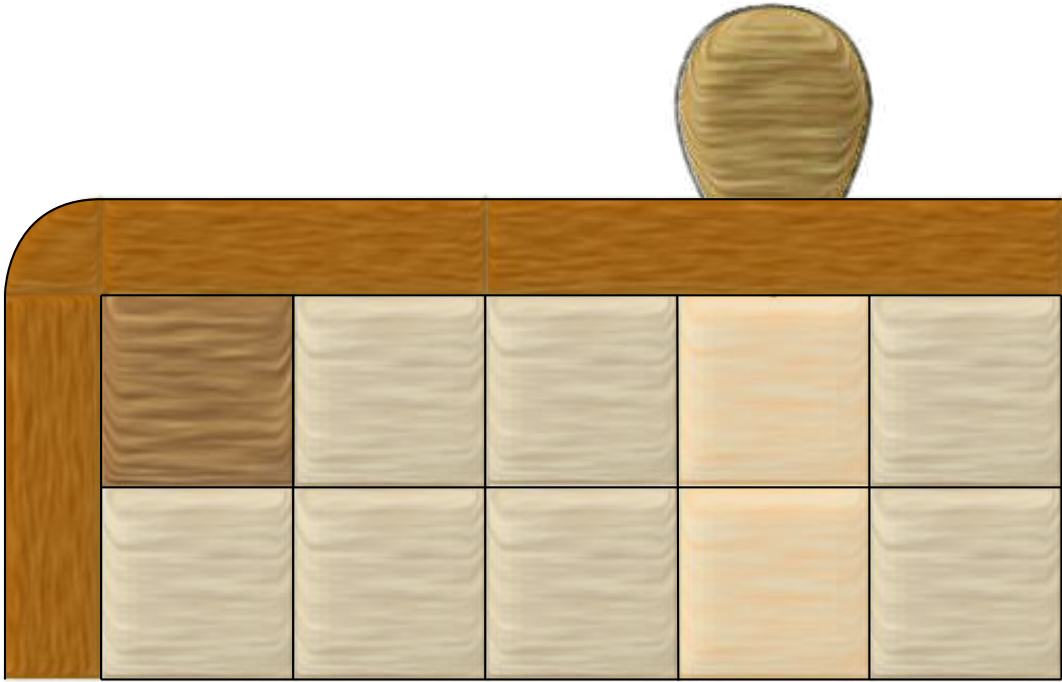
2c. Alternatively, you can print pages 2 and 3 on card as thick as your printer can handle, and cut out the board sections and reminder cards using a craft knife.

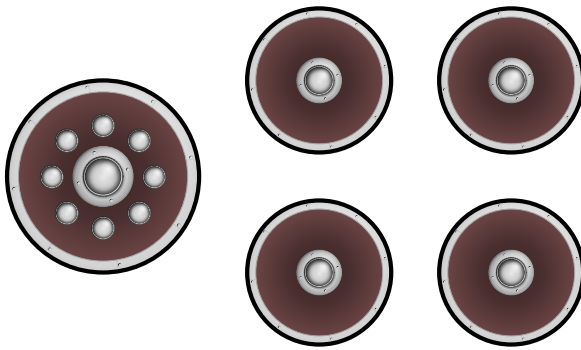
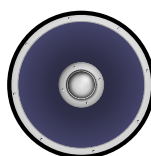
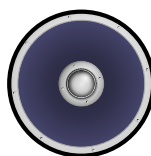
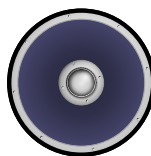
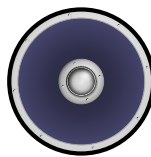
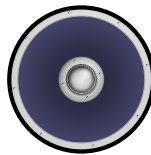
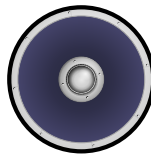
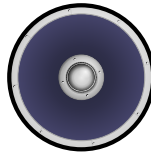
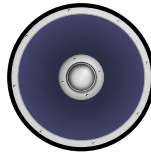
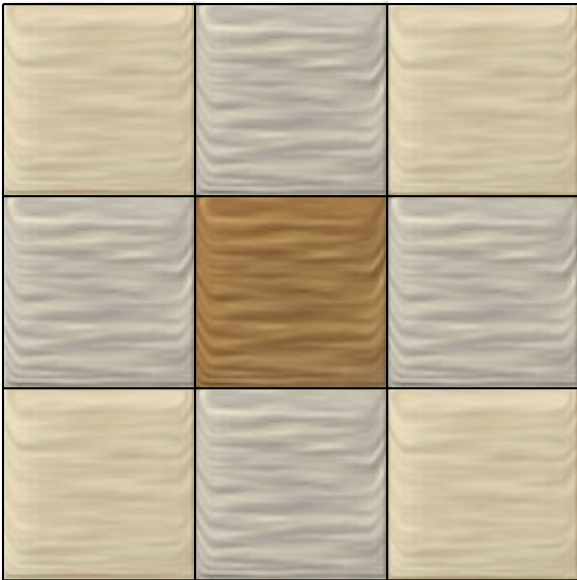
3. It is easiest if the pieces are made in the same way as the board, because you've already printed them in step 2. If you want to make the pieces with a different method, you'll have to print out page 3 again, and discard the unused components.

4. Print pages 4 and 5 onto the two sides of a single sheet of A4 paper. Fold this in half to create a 4-page A5 rules leaflet. Be careful when printing the second side; ensure the inside of the booklet isn't upside down after printing!

THE WEB SITE

Much information about the game of hnefatafl is available on our web site, *Hnefatafl: the Game of the Vikings*. The site is arranged in sections about the game's history, its rules, and strategic hints and tips. You can also play the game on-line, and there is The Hnefatafl Shop, from which you can buy games and other merchandise. The address of the site is <http://tafl.cynningstan.com/>.





●

Reminder Card

See the rules booklet for full details.

Movement: the attackers move first. All pieces move the same way. No piece may land on nor jump over another.

Capture: defenders and attackers are captured by surrounding on opposite sides. The king captures and is captured like other pieces.

Only the king is allowed to stop on the centre or corner squares. Other pieces may pass over the central square if it is empty.

The corner spaces are "hostile" to all pieces. You can capture enemies against them, as if you had a piece there yourself.

●

Reminder Card

See the rules booklet for full details.

Movement: the attackers move first. All pieces move the same way. No piece may land on nor jump over another.

Capture: defenders and attackers are captured by surrounding on opposite sides. The king captures and is captured like other pieces.

Only the king is allowed to stop on the centre or corner squares. Other pieces may pass over the central square if it is empty.

The corner spaces are "hostile" to all pieces. You can capture enemies against them, as if you had a piece there yourself.

BRANDUB

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

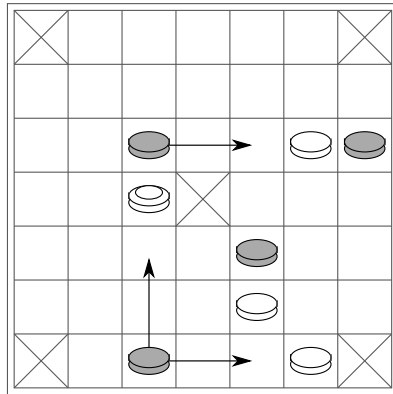


Figure 3: The white pieces may be captured by any of the moves shown. The two white pieces at the bottom right can be captured at once, as per rule 8.

Hnefatafl is a game invented by the Norse, often referred to as the Vikings. A king at the centre of the board, with his band of faithful defenders, faces a horde of attackers twice their number, who are lined up at the edges ready to attack from all sides. The king must escape from the board, while the attackers must capture him.

It was first played in the first millennium; boards and pieces from that era have been found in all parts of Scandinavia. As the Norse raiders, adventurers and settlers spread further afield, the game was introduced to other cultures: the Sami in the north, and the English, Scots, Welsh and Irish in the west. Norse traders took the game east with them to Russia and Ukraine.

From the east, however, hnefatafl would have come face to face with another game, one that would eclipse it and drive it from fashionable tables in all the lands it had invaded. By the twelfth century, chess had replaced hnefatafl in Scandinavia itself. Only in remote lands did the game survive, in Wales till the sixteenth century, and in Lapland till the eighteenth century.

Brandub was the game played in Ireland, from the time of the Viking invasions, till at least the 13th century. The rules were lost, but there are many passages in stories and poetry that give clues about the game. From these, and more certain rules from other variants of hnefatafl, brandub has been reconstructed.

HOW TO PLAY

1. The game is played with a king and four defenders against eight attackers. They start the game laid out as shown in Figure 1.
2. The attacking player takes the first turn.
3. In each turn, a player may move a piece as far as desired along a row or column, as shown in Figure 2.
4. No piece may jump over nor land on another in the course of its move.
5. Only the king is allowed to land on the marked central and corner squares. Other pieces may pass over the central square when it is empty.
6. A piece is captured by surrounding it on two opposite sides along a row or column by two enemies.
7. A piece may also be captured by surrounding it between an enemy and one of the marked corner squares. These methods of capture are shown in Figure 3.
8. It is possible to capture two or three enemy pieces at once, if all become surrounded against separate enemies in the same move.
9. The defenders win the game when the king reaches one of the four corner squares.
10. The attackers win the game when they capture the king.

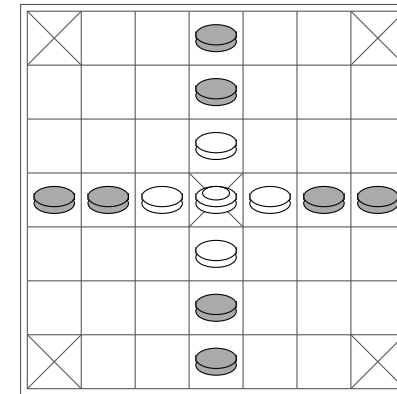


Figure 1: The initial layout for brandub.

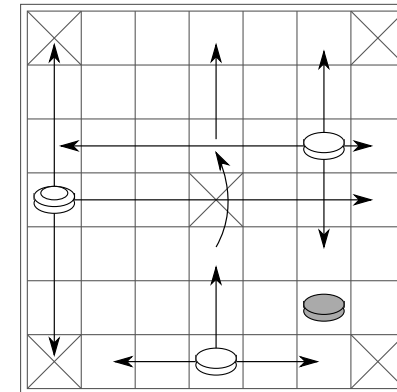


Figure 2: Examples of movement for the king and defenders.