

MATE

Mate is derived from a game found by Sid Sackson, and appears in his classic book, *A Gamut of Games*. According to Sackson, the game first appeared in Hanover, Germany in 1915, when G. Capellen published the rules to “two new wargames,” one of which was **Mate**.

The original game used twenty cards from a standard deck of cards, with different cards representing various chess pieces. For example, the Ace represented the Queen, and was worth ten points, whereas the Queen represented a Rook, and was worth three. This version of **Mate** redesigns the deck to avoid the obvious confusion caused by this method of substitution.

The objective in **Mate** is to “checkmate” your opponent by playing your hand of cards so that you force your opponent into not being able to make a legal play.

Mate is a game of perfect information, involving no luck. Equality is assured by switching hands after a round and replaying the hand.

THE DECK

Each card displays one of five chess pieces in one of four colors.

The five types of pieces are ranked (from highest to lowest): King, Queen, Rook, Bishop, Knight.

The four colors are ranked, from highest to lowest: **Blue**, **Green**, **Yellow**, **Red**.



Mate card distribution, for Single Mate deck

SETUP

Mate can be played with a Single Mate deck, or a Double Mate deck, each of which is comprised of twenty cards.

Prepare the deck in either the Single or Double Mate format, as players prefer.

Shuffle the deck and randomly select a starting player to deal. Deal ten cards to each player.



Mate card distribution, for Double Mate deck

COURSE OF PLAY

The dealer begins by leading any card. The other player must follow color. If he cannot follow color, he must follow rank.

The player who played the highest rank (within a color), or the highest color (when rank has been matched) takes the lead for the next trick, retaining it until the round ends or he loses the lead.

Cards are played face up to the table, in front of each player, rather than into a common pile.



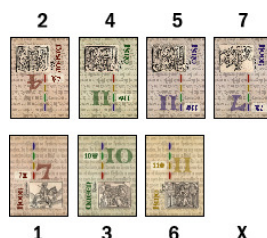
Play begins when the near player leads the red Rook. The far player follows color, playing the red bishop. After losing the green Queen to the green King, the lead is lost. The near player is void in blue.

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MATING

If the second player cannot legally play, he has been mated, and loses the round.

The winning player receives points equal to the value of the card he played on the final trick, multiplied by the trick on which it was played.



The far player plays the blue rook, and the near player has no response. He has been mated on the 4th card. The far player thus scores 4 x the Rook's value of 7, or 28 points.

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COMPLETING A GAME

After the first round ends and is scored, players exchange their hands, and play another game. The player who did not deal for the first game starts with the lead.

Two such rounds constitute a game. The player with the highest score is the winner. The difference between the two players' scores may be used as a relative measure of victory.

Typically, players play three games. The player with the highest cumulative score wins.

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ADVANCED PLAY

KING'S PRIVILEGE

On playing a King card, the moving player may demand that the opposing player must play a King. If a King cannot be played, follow with a card of the same color.

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ADVANCED PLAY

SACRIFICING

After dealing, but before play, each player may remove a card from his hand and place it face up in front of him. This sacrificed card cannot be used in play.

A mate scored by a player with a card sacrificed is an “overmate,” and scores double.

If both players sacrifice, the value of the mate is increased by one move (that is, a mate occurring on the 5th move is scored as if it occurred on the 6th).

If only one player sacrifices, the 9th card also counts as the 10th.



In the example above, the far player sacrificed a yellow Bishop at the start of the round. His 4th turn mate will yield 56 points. Had the near player also sacrificed, the far player would score 5 x 7, or 35, points.

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ABOUT THE CARDS

This design uses graphical elements taken from William Caxton's *Game and Playe of the Chesse*, the third book printed in English with mechanical type, and the first published in England. It was also the first printed book in English to make extensive use of woodcuts for pictures. Like many other books on chess written in the period, Caxton uses the pieces as the basis of social allegory. The book is a translation of a thirteenth-century political treatise by Jacobus de Cessoli, *The Book of the Morals of Men and the Duties of Nobles and Commons*, on the *Game of Chess*. As had other authors, de Cessoli used chess to describe the proper roles of monarchs, nobles, the clergy, and a range of middling sorts, stressing the various moral studies god had assigned them in the well-ordered society. Even the moves of the pieces reflected the proper qualities and mutual inter-dependencies of the social orders represented by the pieces themselves. While not much of a handbook on success at play, the work offers fascinating insight into the role of chess in the medieval European world. For more on **Mate**, visit Boardgamegeek.com, and Chessvariants.org.

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