THE GAME OF LUDUS LATRUNCULORUM

Ludus Latrunculorum

Image reproduced from Getty Image Library
Licenced for or Educational Purposes

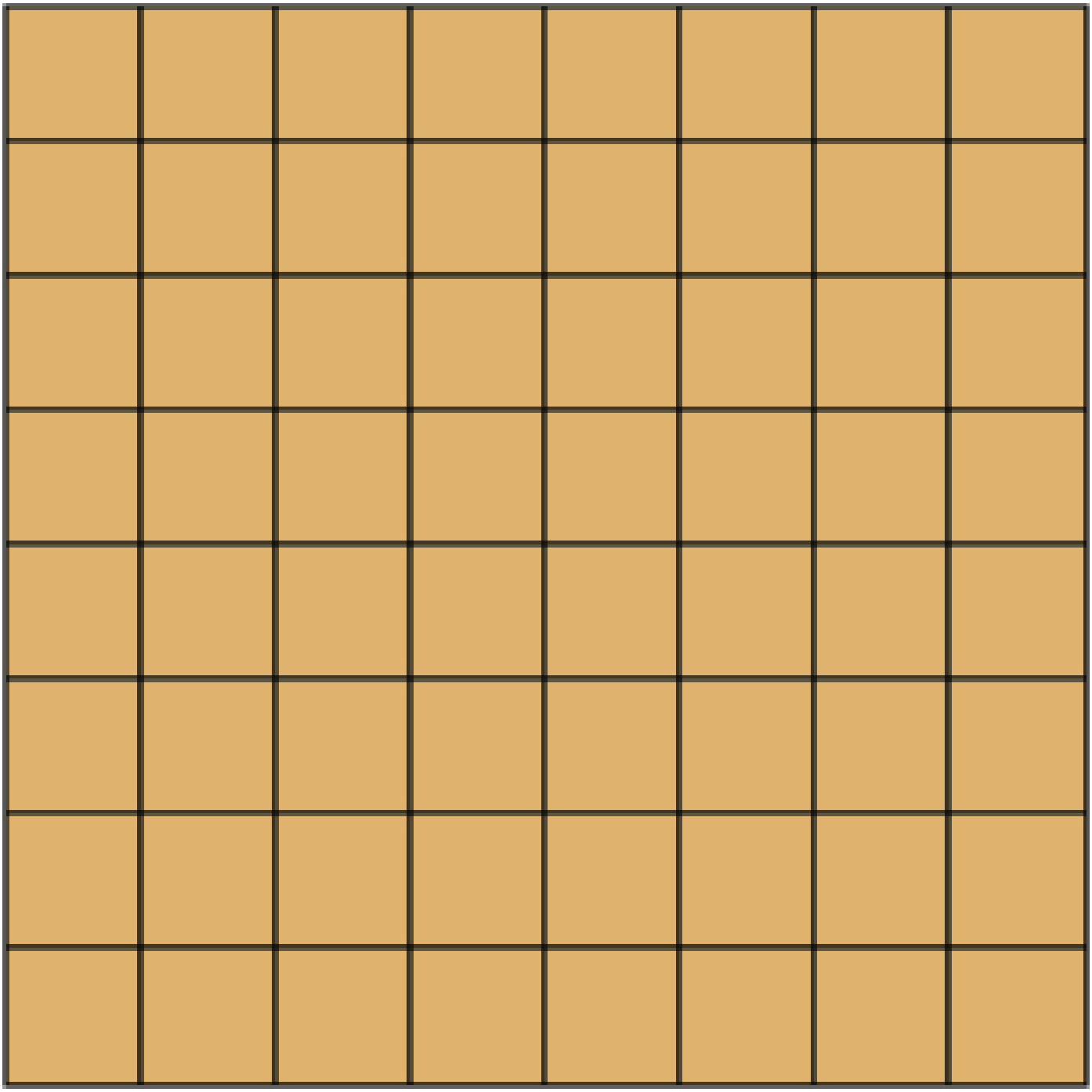
Historical Background

- Ludus Latrunculorum (or Latrunculi) is a war game between two armies of soldiers - the winner is the player who captures the most enemy pieces.

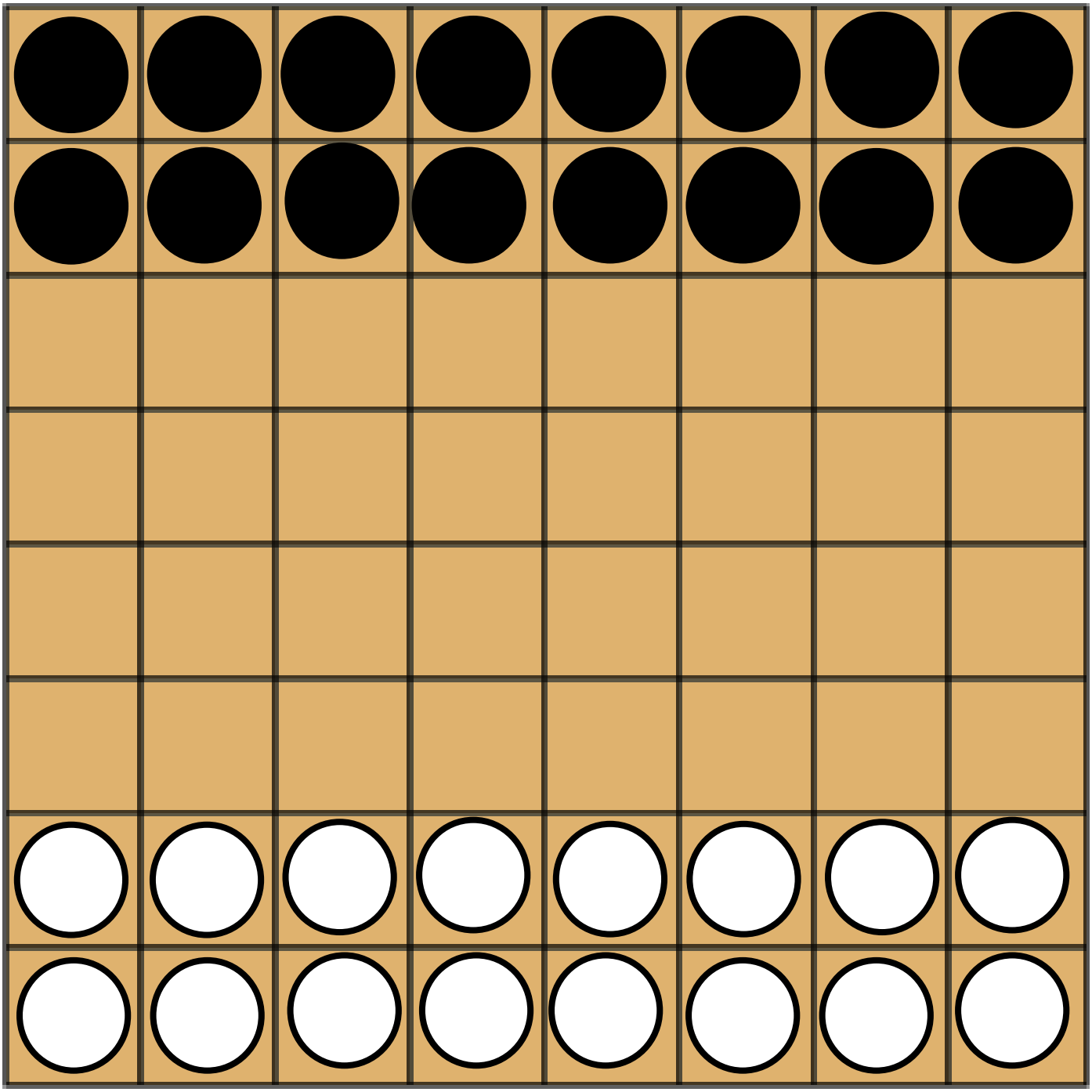
- Many gaming pieces and boards have been found from around the Roman Empire.

- The size of the board is variable, this version is played on an 8X8 board – So if you wish you can play the game on a standard chess board (printable version at the end of this document) or you can print out the following page and use that as your board.

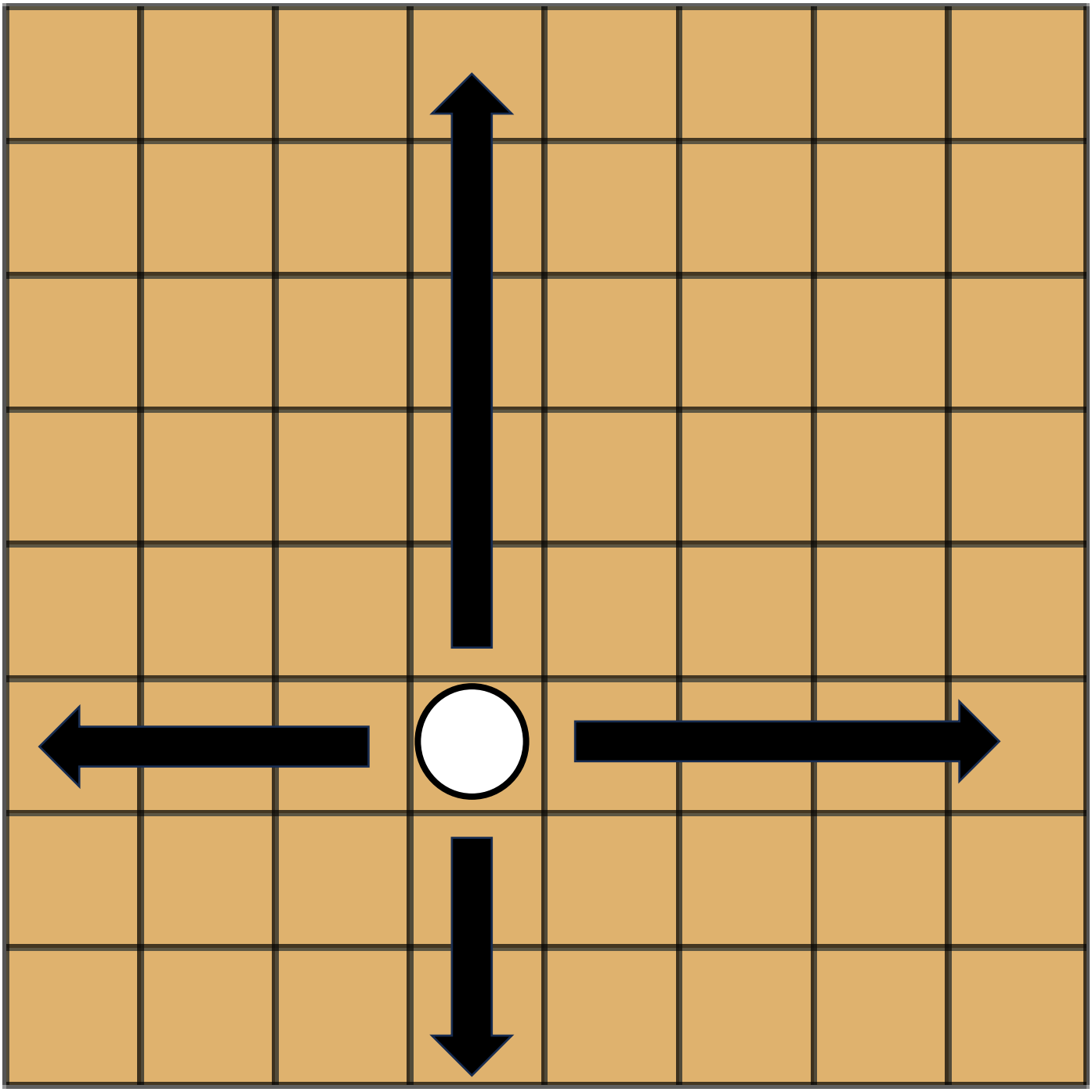
- The 'Rules' of the ancient game have never been discovered by archaeologists – So there are a number of different versions of the game which are all based on ""best available evidence" as to how the game might have be played by the Romans.



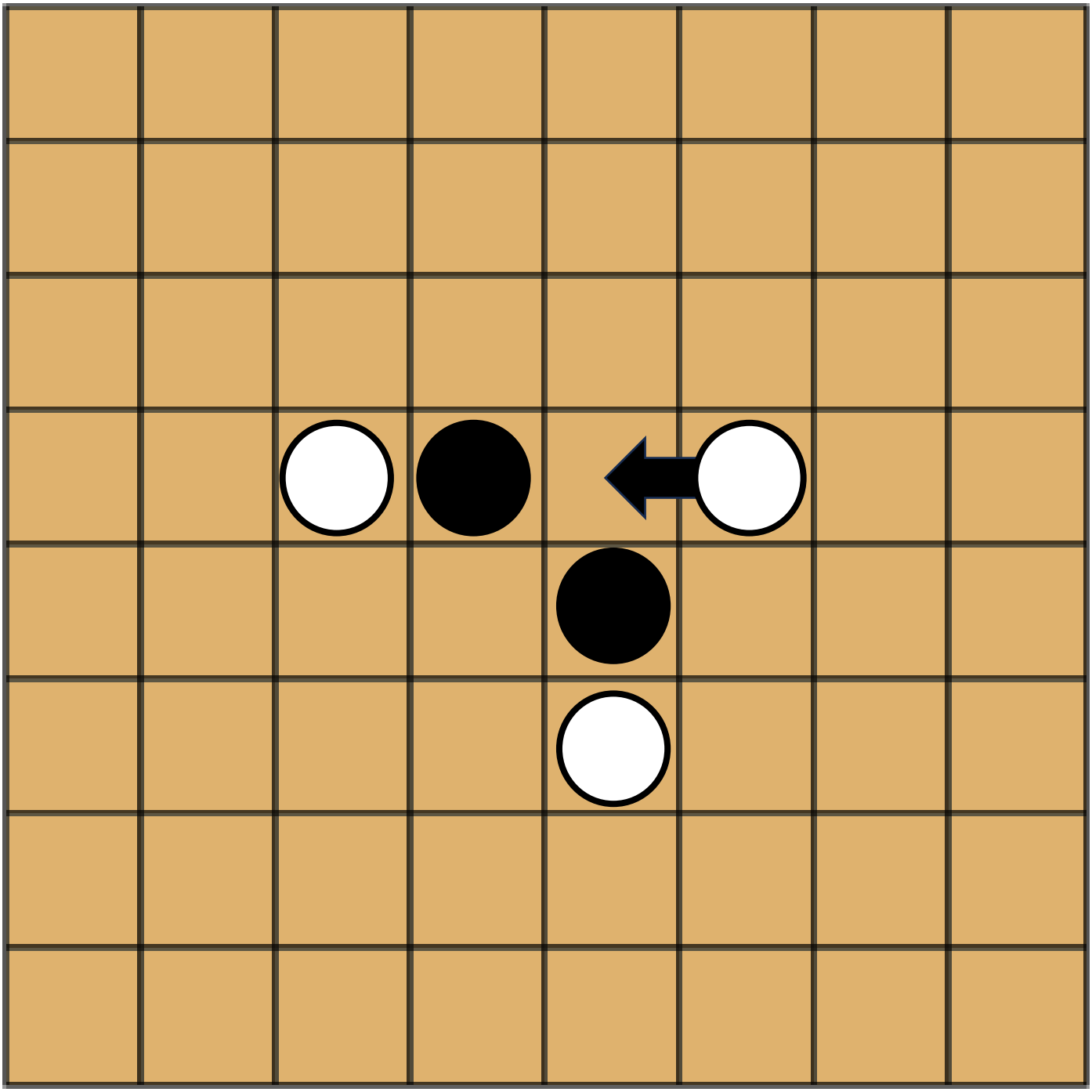
The pieces are placed on the first two rows in front of each player. Toss a coin to decide who will be the white player - White moves first.



All pieces move like the castle (rook) in chess – in a straight line for as many empty squares as the player chooses.
Pieces cannot hop over other pieces.
Pieces cannot move diagonally.



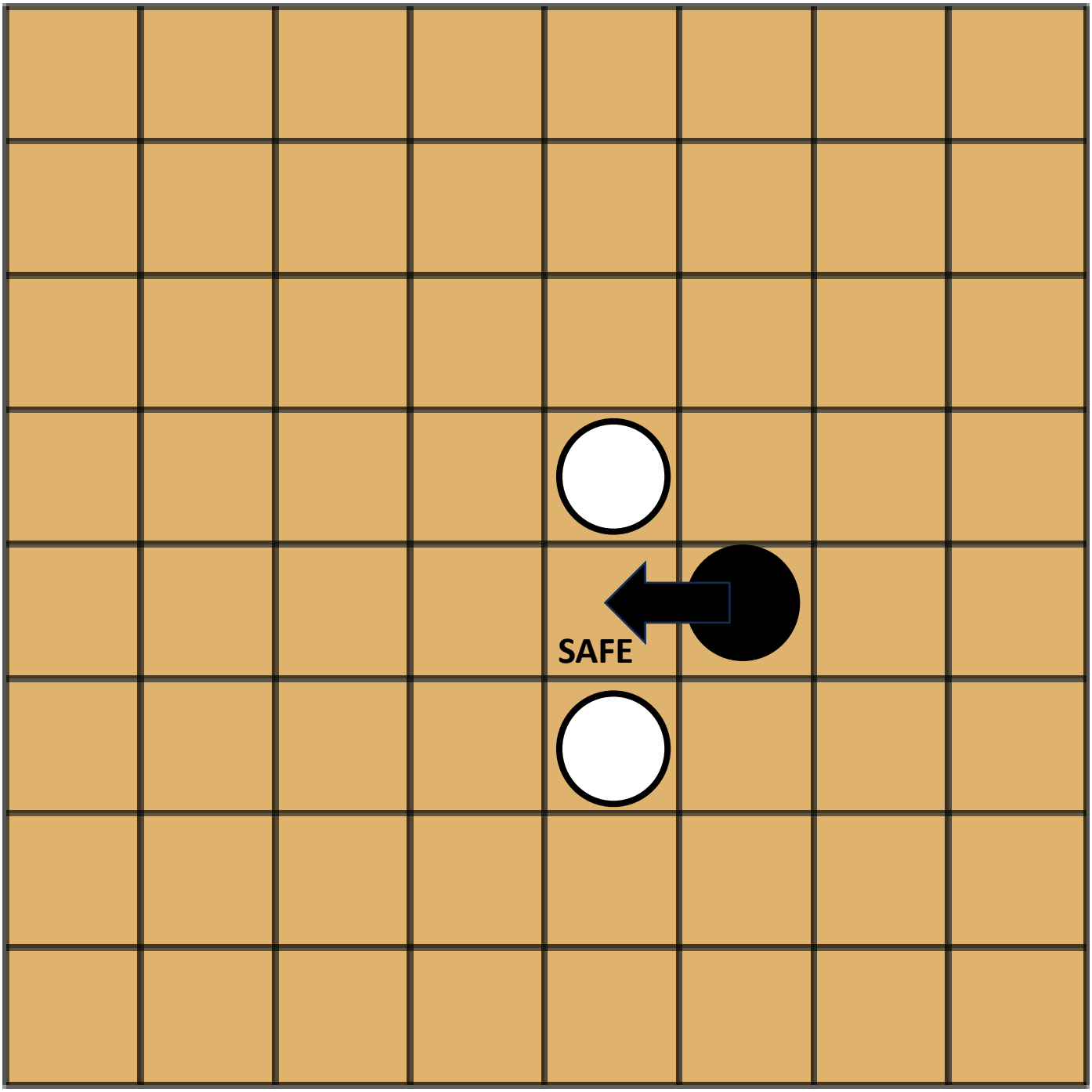
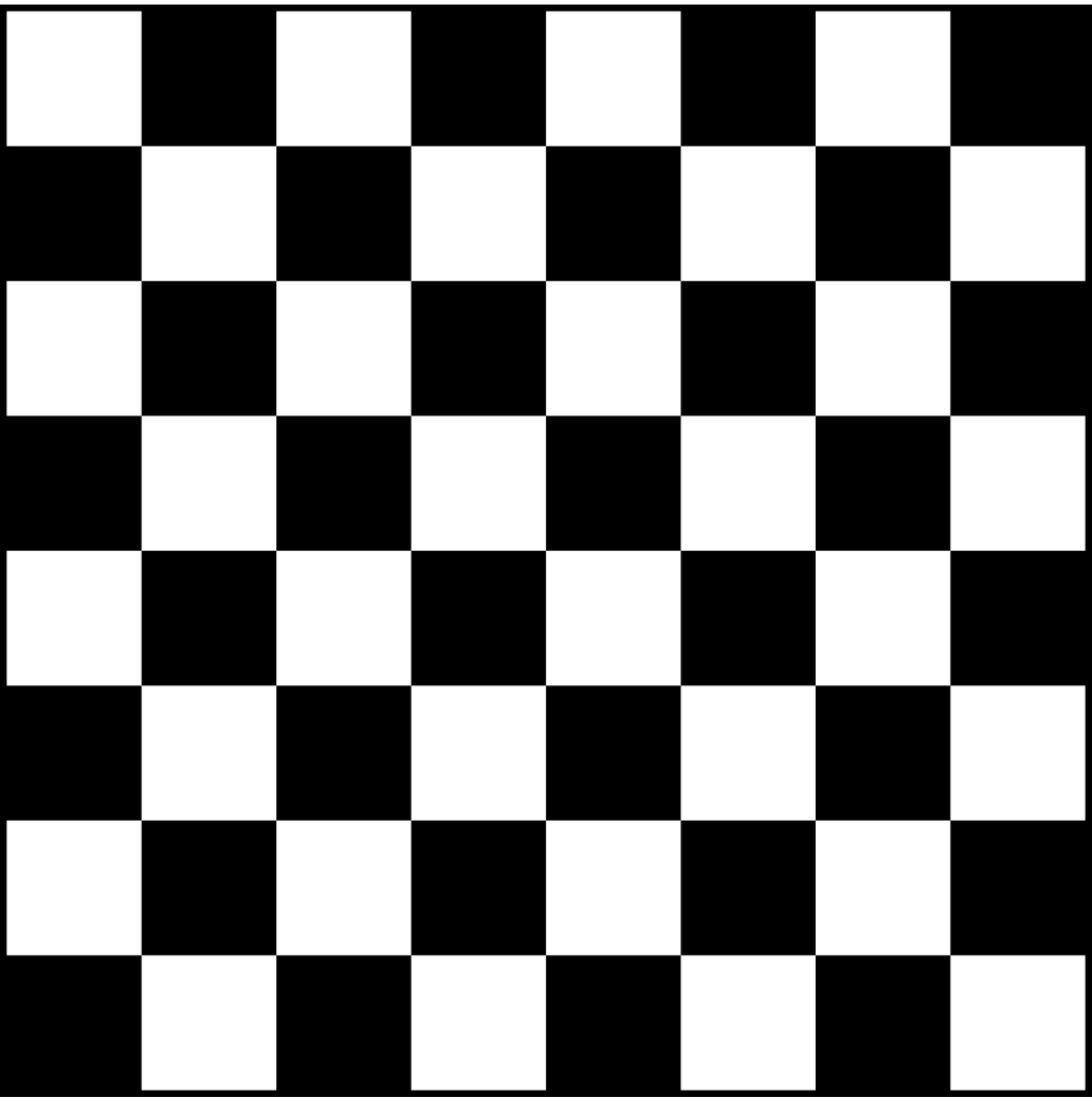
Capturing only happens when a piece is moved so that a single opposing piece ends up trapped between two of the attacking players pieces.
A captured piece is immediately removed from the board and remains off the board for remainder of the game.



It is possible to capture more than one piece at once (as shown above).

Whenever a piece makes a capture, it earns another move.

A piece can safely move to a square between two of the opponent's pieces without being captured



The game is over when a player loses all pieces or when it’s clear (and both players agree) that the losing side will not be able to force any more captures