

KrabceK

rules



www.krabcek.com
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KRABCEK®

Krabcek (pronounced 'Krab-check') is an intriguing board game requiring skill and luck to win.

- Krabcek is a game for two people.
- The board is a labyrinth made from sixteen tiles which are rearranged for every game (there are over 7 million variations).
- Each player has seven pieces: 4 Skinnyboys, 2 Middlemen and 1 Bigboy. Each piece may only move through those paths in the labyrinth that are wide enough for them.
- Once the basic principles have been mastered, an average game takes 20 to 30 minutes
- The object of the game is: to make 'Krabcek,' a three-piece tower (figure 1): Skinnyboy on Middleman on Bigboy, OR:
- To block your opponent so that he cannot move.

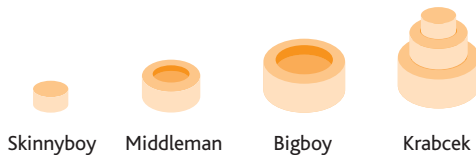


figure 1:
the pieces and
the goal

THE SET CONTAINS:

- 16 Krabcek tiles, 11 of one type and 5 of another
- 16 Gate markers (8 edged black, 8 edged white)
- 7 black pieces (1 Bigboy, 2 Middlemen, 4 Skinnyboys)
- 7 white pieces (1 Bigboy, 2 Middlemen, 4 Skinnyboys)
- 1 dice

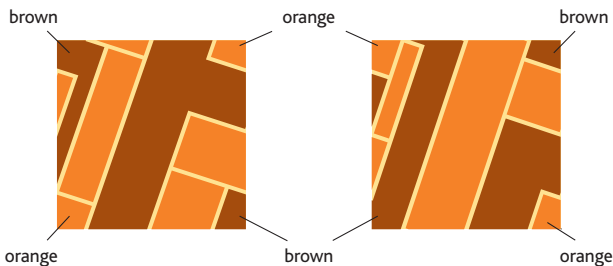


figure 2:
the two types
of tile

SETTING UP THE BOARD

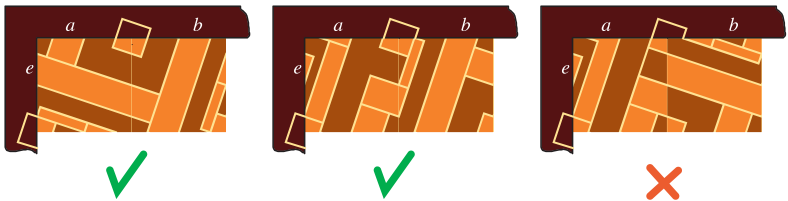
The two types of Krabcek tiles are shown in figure 2. Note that each has two orange corners and two brown. To set up the board, first shuffle all sixteen tiles and then take the top one from the pile and place it in the corner of the board.

One of the *brown* corners of the tile must be in the corner of the *board*.

Next place the remaining tiles alongside one by one, always making sure that the colours match up. Orange should touch orange and brown should touch brown.

If they don't, turn the tile one quarter turn in either direction, and then they will (figure 3).

figure 3:
in the third
example,
the right-hand
tile has been
placed wrongly



THE LABYRINTH

If you've set up the board correctly, you'll have made a labyrinth of orange pathways such as the one shown in figure 4. The brown part of the board plays no part in the game, and can be ignored.

- **Pieces may only move through boxes that are wide enough for them.**

Just as the pieces are of three different widths, so are the boxes that form the pathways. You have Alleys, Streets and Avenues (see figure 4).

Skinnyboys can move along any empty pathway, Middlemen are somewhat limited, and Bigboys even more so.

- **Play does not stop at the edge of the board.**

The two sides are connected, as are top and bottom. For example, if you leave the board at **b** at the bottom you come straight back on at **b** at the top. If you leave at **f** on the left you come back on at **f** on the right. In figure 4, if black was to throw a 6 he could walk his Middleman along the route shown by the numbers to land on his Bigboy (with a 3 he could land his Skinnyboy on his Middleman; route not shown).

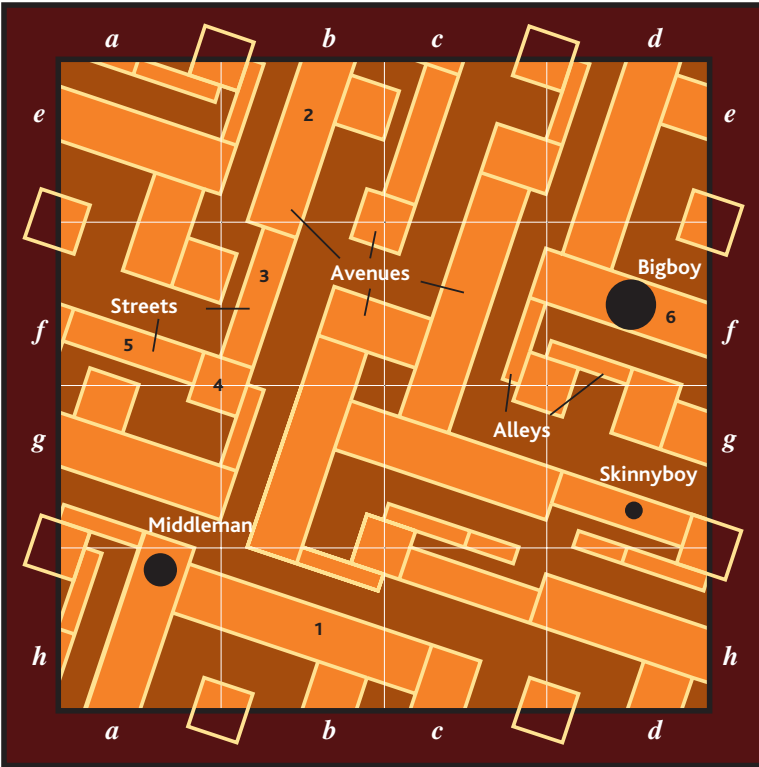


figure 4:
a sample board

CHOOSING BLACK AND WHITE

To decide who will play with the black pieces and who with the white, one player holds the two Bigboys hidden in his two fists and the other player chooses.

THE GATES

At the start of the game the board is empty. Players bring their pieces on through special boxes called gates. These are the square Avenues formed by the orange corners of the tiles. There are eight of them altogether, always in the same position on the board, no matter how the tiles are arranged. Notice how four of the gates (5-8 in figure 5) straddle the edge of the board.

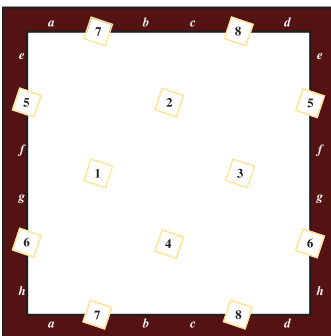


figure 5:
the eight gates

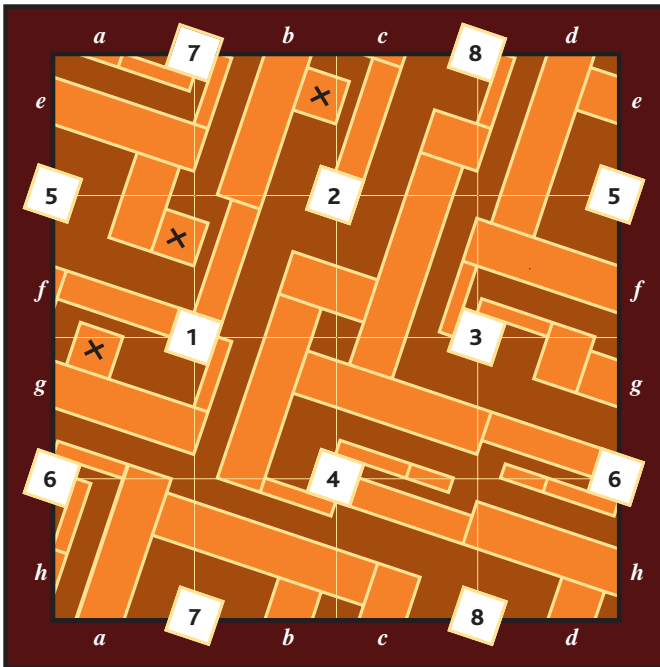
Before starting the game, each player chooses four gates and places his gate markers on them. Players may only bring on pieces through their own gates. At other times, gates are like the other boxes and may be walked through or landed on by pieces of either colour.

This is how the gates are chosen:

- First Black chooses **one** gate.
- Then White chooses **two** gates.
- Then Black chooses **two** gates.
- Then White chooses **two** gates.
- The **last** gate goes to Black.

To find out what makes a good choice of gate, see under **TIPS**.

figure 6:
choosing
the gates



In the sample board (figure 6):

- Black chooses Gate 6.
- Then White chooses Gates 1 and 4.
- Then Black chooses Gates 7 and 2.
- Then White chooses Gates 3 and 8.
- The last Gate (5) is left for Black.

- **Note that gates on the edge of the board each need two gate markers, one for each side.** Gate 6, for example, is one gate, not two, but needs a gate marker on the left as well as one on the right. When a piece occupies one of these edge gates in play, the empty marker should be turned over, black-side up, to remind both players that the gate is occupied. If the piece later leaves the gate the second marker is turned the right way up again.
- **Note that the boxes marked with a cross are not gates,** even though they are the same size and shape. Gates are always at the points where the orange corners of the tiles meet.
- In the sample board in figure 6 gate 5 is an island, unconnected to the rest of the board. It will still have a small role in the game. See **TIPS**.

PLAY

- For the first move, both players throw the dice, and the one with the lower number starts with that number.
- Counting the gate itself as '1' he moves a piece onto the board through a gate and from box to box according to the number thrown.
- He may only move his pieces through boxes that are big enough (this will mean that there are few places that he can bring his Middleman on, and he can only bring on his Bigboy on by throwing a 1 and landing it on a gate).
- The other player then throws again and moves one of his pieces onto the board.
- The play continues with each player throwing alternately. On each move, the players may choose whether to move a piece that is already on the board or whether to bring on a new one.
- A box occupied by a piece of either colour is blocked for both players. Other pieces may not jump over, nor may a second piece occupy the box. The only exception is when one piece lands on another to form a new piece (see under **COMBINING**).

NB. If you land on a box that straddles the edge of the board, place your piece on the larger half.

Let's say, for example, that at the beginning of the game shown in figure 6 White throws a 4 and Black throws a 2. Black then starts with the 2. He may bring on one of his Skinnyboys to any of the seven boxes adjacent to gates 2, 6, or 7 (his other gate is an island and there are no boxes next to it). Alternatively, he may choose to bring a Middleman on, either to the Street next to gate 6 or to the one next to gate 2. White then throws again and moves accordingly.

SWITCH-6 AND FLY-5

Switch-6: if you throw a 6 you may switch round two of your pieces.

- Both pieces must already be on the board.
- The boxes must be big enough for their new pieces (e.g. in figure 4 Black may not switch his Skinnyboy with his Bigboy).
- You may not switch pieces of the same type, e.g., you may not switch two Skinnyboys, or two Middlemen.

Fly-5: if you throw a '5' you may fly one of your pieces from a black gate to a white or vice versa.

- Your piece must already be on a gate.
- The gate you're flying to must, of course, be empty.

If you look at figure 6 you'll see that although the gates themselves are Avenues, none of the boxes next to them are. This is always the case, no matter how the board is laid out. Consequently the only way to get your Bigboy onto the board is by throwing a 1 and landing on a gate.

And only with Switch-6 or Fly-5 will your Bigboy be able to move further.

Neither Fly-5 or Switch-6 is compulsory. You may always choose instead to walk a piece that number of paces.

COMBINING

There are two ways to form a Krabcek tower.

Either: Land a Skinnyboy on a Middleman (Little Stack), and later land this new piece on your Bigboy.

Or: Land a Middleman on your Bigboy making Big Stack, and later land a Skinnyboy on top (figure 7).

- You must always land the smaller piece on the bigger.
- You may not combine on a gate.
- Once you've made Little Stack or Big Stack they may not be split up again into smaller pieces.

The Big Stack route is better, see **TIPS**.

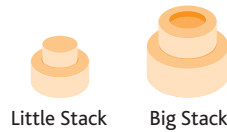


figure 7

LOOPS

A piece may not occupy the same box twice in one move.

In figure 8, for example, if Black throws a 3 he may move his Middleman three spaces round the loop. If he throws a 4, on the other hand, he will come back to the box he started from, and this is not allowed.

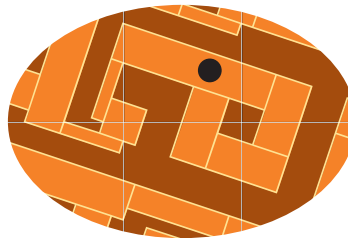


figure 8:
a loop

WINNING AND LOSING

- The first player to make a Krabcek tower **WINS**. This is called a Krabcek win. But...
- If a player has no legal move with his throw of the dice, he **LOSES**. This is called a Block win for his opponent.

TIPS

1. Choosing gates.

- Choose gates that have one or more Streets next to them (there are always five Streets in total).
- Choose gates that have several exits.
- Watch out for cul-de-sacs, even if they begin with Streets. They are not very useful, nor are islands (such as gate 5 in figure 6).

2. Bringing on Bigboy.

If you throw a 1 in the early stage of a game, bring your Bigboy onto your worst gate. Until he can move it with Fly-5 or Switch-6, the gate is blocked. In the sample board in figure 6, for example, this would be gate 5 for Black. If instead he were to land on, gate 6, say, and were White to be lucky enough to occupy gate 7, that only leaves the cul-de-sac gate 2 and the island gate 5 for Black to bring on his other pieces, and White may be heading for an early Block win.

3. Defend and Attack

There'll often be a short route from your best gate to your opponent's. A good first move is to bring a Skinnyboy along this path, attacking your opponent's gate and blocking his route to yours at the same time.

4. Don't make Little Stack! Make Big Stack first!

Although it's very easy to make Little Stack, it's usually a big mistake. There are two reasons:

- It's much easier for your opponent to concentrate on keeping two pieces apart (your Little Stack and your Bigboy) than to prevent any of your four Skinnyboys getting on to your Big Stack
- You'll only be left with three of your manoeuvrable Skinnyboys. Your opponent will find it much easier to achieve a Block win, and you'll find it much harder to block him.

5. Be flexible

You have four objectives:

- Making Krabcek.
- Preventing your opponent from making Krabcek.
- Winning by Blocking your opponent (so that he has no legal move).
- Preventing him from Blocking you.

Whatever number you throw, you should be able to do something towards one of these. If you haven't got your Bigboy on yet, concentrate on blocking your opponent.

6. A typical situation in the final stages of a game (figure 9).

It is White's move. He has already made his Big Stack.

- If he throws 3 he can win with a Krabcek, by bringing on his last Skinnyboy through his one unoccupied gate.
- He can also win with 2 or 4 by moving the Skinnyboy to the right of the Big Stack either the short or the long way round the loop.
- But if he throws 6, he loses his good position. He hasn't enough space to walk any piece along six boxes, so he must do a Switch-6. He can't switch two pieces of the same sort, so he must switch his Big Stack with a Skinnyboy. One of these is on a Street, which is too small for a Big Stack. The other two are on Avenues, so can be switched, but are cut off from other Skinnyboys (and furthermore, one is on a gate, and pieces may not combine on a gate).
- It's even worse if he throws 5. None of the pieces on the board has enough space to walk that far, nor can a new piece coming on through his last gate do that. He has one Skinnyboy on a white gate, which in theory could Fly-5 to a black gate. Unfortunately all four black gates are occupied. He has no legal move and loses the game.

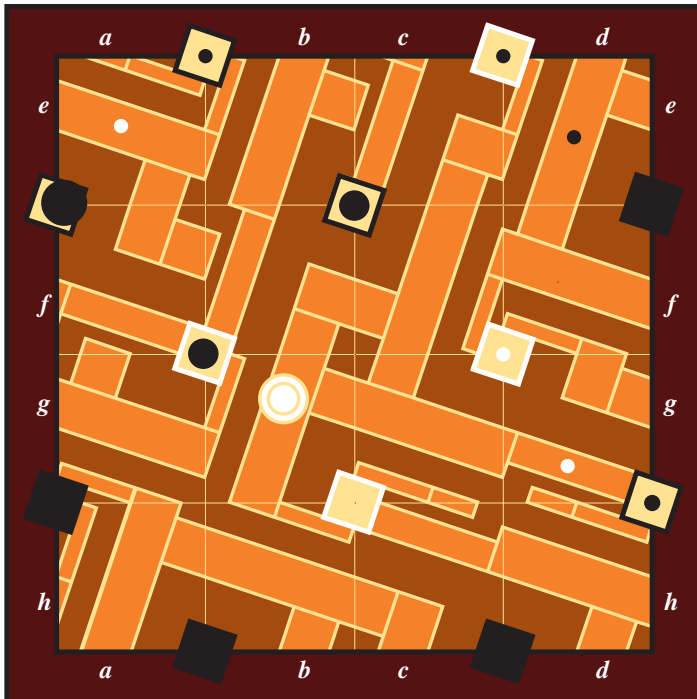
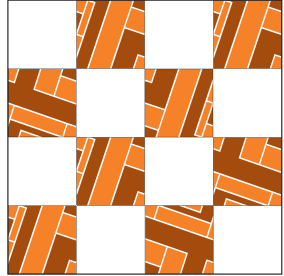


figure 9:
a typical
end situation

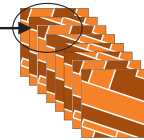
7. A quick way to set up the board.

Stage 1

After a game, remove 8 tiles from the positions shown and place in a pile. If you do it without turning the tiles, you'll get 8 brown corners underneath one another

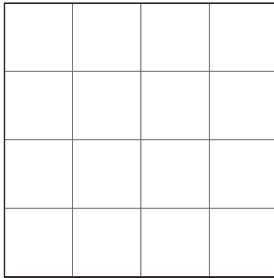


8 brown corners

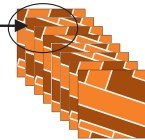


Stage 2

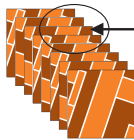
Remove remaining tiles to form second pile



8 brown corners

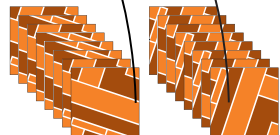
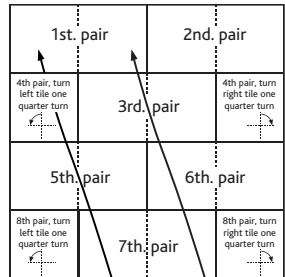


8 brown corners



Stage 3

Replace tiles in pairs as shown



SPEED SET-UP

The best way to develop your Krabcek skills is to play fast. This Speed Set-up takes a minute or two to learn, but it's worth it!

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