

Rampart

Official Rules

Jerod Michel, Gao Yucheng
July 1, 2026



1 Description

Rampart is a strategic hybrid of chess and cardplay, where two players compete to checkmate their opponents king using a combination of tactical piece movement and deck-based casting. Players control raiders, knights, rooks, and royalty each with chess-like movement while leveraging a deck consisting of cards of a common suit to summon reinforcements or strike enemy pieces by forming combinations of 21. The board is divided by a rampart barrier, restricting raider movement and creating a dynamic frontline. Victory hinges on infiltrating the opponents houses (Jack, Queen, and King) to unlock powerful abilities, culminating in a climactic restriction of the enemy kings movement.

2 Materials

- One standard deck of playing cards (jokers not needed)

- Chess pieces – each player (black & white) needs:
 - eight pawns ()
 - one rook ()
 - one knight ()
 - one queen ()
 - one king ()

3 Board Layout

Figure 1 gives the Rampart board layout. Notice that the lower half of the board consists of diamonds and the top half of hearts. There are ten columns and six rows which we count starting from the bottom left of Figure 1, with the rows labeled *a* - *f* and the columns *1* - *10*. Also notice the placement of the six face cards – with row *a* containing the Jack, Queen and King of diamonds, and row *f* containing the Jack, Queen and King of hearts. We will refer to these as *houses* or *house cards*. Note that these are the *only* squares of rows *a* or *f* that are considered part of the board in the sense that a piece would be allowed to occupy them. (We say *squares* to refer to the spaces on the board, as in chess, even though these spaces are actually rectangles.) For all other rows, i.e., rows *b* - *e*, both *card squares* and *non-card squares* are incorporated. Note that card squares remain stationary as part of the board’s permanent makeup throughout the game.

4 Initial Setup

From this section forward, for the sake of clarity, we will refer to the board as shown in Figure 2. Figure 2 shows the initial setup of the board, as well as the starting positions of each of the players’ pieces.

Each player begins with:

- three raiders ()
- one rook ()

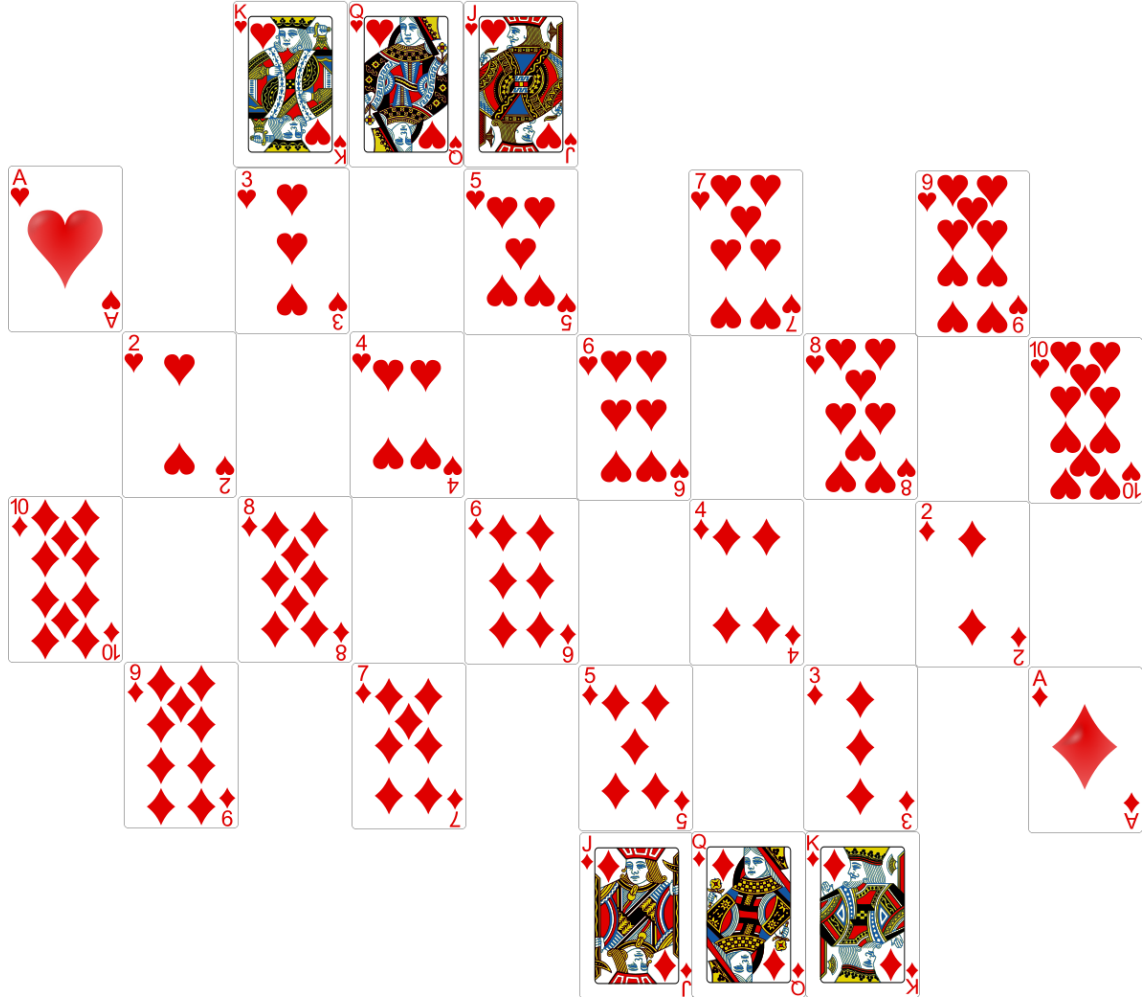


Figure 1: Board Layout

- one knight (♞)
- one king (♔)

as well as a *deck* which, for black, consists of all cards of the club suit, and for white, all cards of the spade suit. Each player also begins with a *graveyard* consisting of five raiders and one queen. These pieces have the potential to eventually be *raised*, or, placed onto the board. The graveyard is also where any raider or queen that is captured during game play must be placed. Notice also from Figure 2 that the starting positions of white's raiders are on squares 8c, 9c and 10c,

and those of black are on squares $1d$, $2d$, and $3d$. The starting positions of white's rook, knight and king are on squares $8b$, $9b$ and $10b$ respectively, and those of black are on squares $3e$, $2e$ and $1e$.

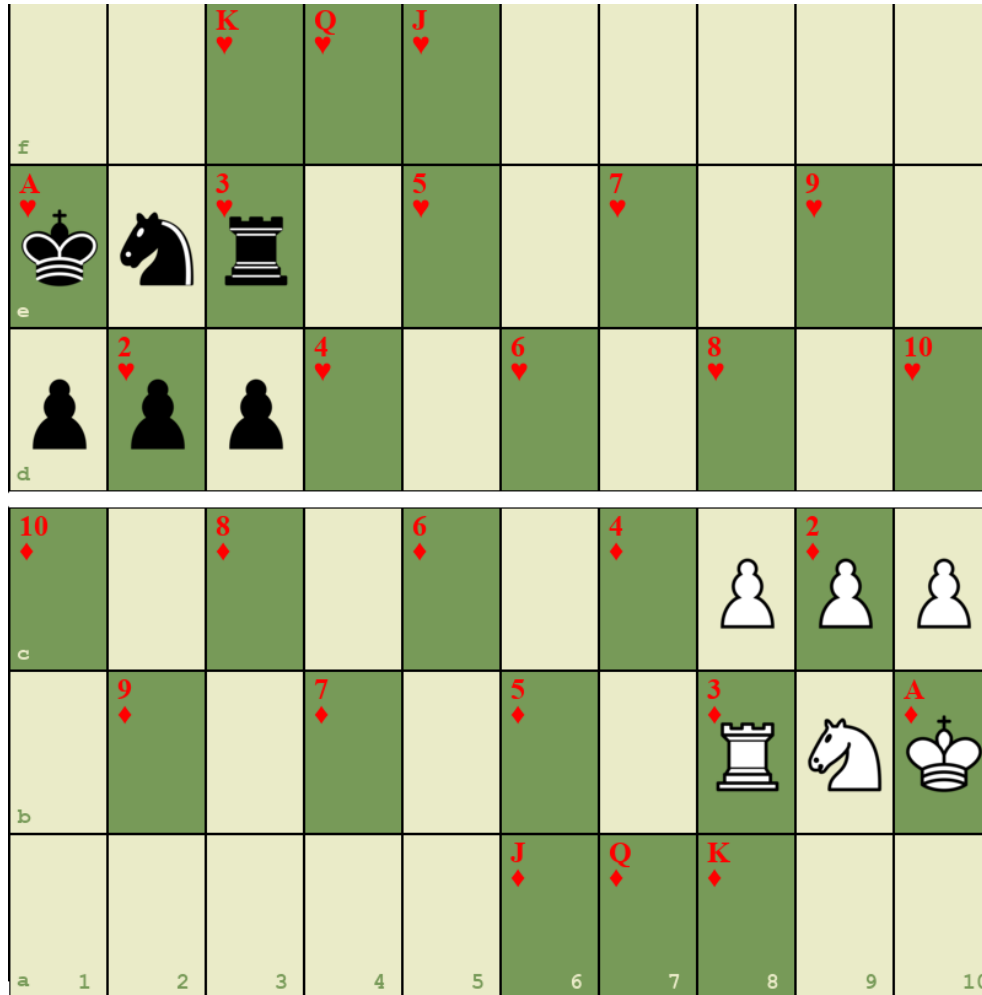


Figure 2: Initial Setup

5 How the Pieces Move

This section discusses not only the legal movements of the pieces, but the relationship between the cards and the board. Note here that no square may be

occupied by more than one piece at any given time, and that a piece captures by displacement. Also note that the raider is the only piece that moves differently from its counterpart in chess – the knight, rook, queen and king all move and capture the same as in chess.

Raiders

Raiders may move one space in any direction and capture diagonally in any adjacent square, with the exception that, once a raider has crossed the diamond-heart barrier (i.e. from row *c* to row *d* or vice versa), it may not return. This diamond-heart barrier is called the *rampart*, and is depicted as the mid-board gap in Figure 2. Raiders are the only pieces allowed to occupy houses, and *only* those of the opponent. Once a raider has moved into a house, it must remain there indefinitely; it may not move, nor can it be captured.

Knights

Knights move in an L-shape, i.e., vertically one square and horizontally two squares, or visa versa.

Rooks

Rooks may move horizontally or vertically as many squares as a player wishes so long as no other pieces are occupying any of the squares comprising its path.

Queens

Queens may move as many squares as a player wishes in any direction (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) so long as no other pieces occupy any of the squares comprising its path.

Kings

The king may move one square in any direction.

6 Rules and Objective

White, whose pieces are initialized on the diamond side of Figure 2, and who holds the spades deck, moves first. Black, whose pieces are initialized on the the heart side of Figure 2, and who holds the clubs deck, moves second. Players take turns making moves – one move (or one cast move) per turn, trying to *checkmate* their opponent, i.e., to put their opponent’s king in check while leaving them no legal move. Note that, just as in chess, a player is not allowed to make a move (or cast move) that puts their own king being in check (i.e. under direct threat of another piece). The player that successfully checkmates their opponent is the winner. Also just as in chess, if a player is not in check but has no legal move available to them, the game is a draw, or, a *stalemate*. A stalemate can also be claimed by either player if a board position is repeated three times (which need not be consecutive).

6.1 Houses, Casting and Using the Deck

Any move that involves cards from a player’s deck we will refer to as a *cast move*, and say that the player is *casting* cards from their deck. Carrying out cast moves requires using both deck cards *and* card squares to make sums of 21. There are two types of cast moves, namely, raising and striking, both of which we will discuss further in this section. Note that any cast move requires exactly three cards to carry out, and that the number of card squares that these three cards comprise depends on the type of cast move. Also note that cast moves, like regular moves, require a full turn to complete, and no other move (or cast move) can be made during that turn.

Each player has the Jack, Queen and King cards as part of the board, i.e., each player has a *Jack’s house*, *Queen’s house* and *King’s house* – white’s houses are diamonds and black’s are hearts (see Section 3). Once a player has moved a raider into their opponent’s Jack’s house, they are allowed to beign spawning raiders by using their deck (spades or clubs according as the player is white or black, see Section 4) in the following turn. A player can, conceivably, have up to eight raiders on the board if they are able to spawn them.

Again, card squares remain stationary as part of the board’s permanent makeup throughout the game (see Section 3), while deck cards are cast into the graveyard once used. A player may choose *any* card(s) from there deck when trying to make make a sum of 21 – these need not be drawn at random. Number cards are worth face value, with aces worth either 1 or 11 at the players’ discretion, and face cards

are each worth 10 (as in Black Jack).

Note: *Raiders are the only pieces allowed to move into houses (face cards) – and only those of their opponent (see Section 5), i.e., white raiders may move into face cards of the heart suit only, and black raiders may move into those with the diamond suit only.*

6.1.1 Raising a Raider

To spawn a raider, the player must have (at least) one raider on a card square that is not a house. The player may use this card square together with exactly two cards from their deck – the player may choose any – to make a sum of 21. If the player has more than one raider occupying card squares, they may choose up to two of these card squares to use together with exactly one deck card to make a sum of 21. The card (or cards) from the deck must then be removed from the deck and cast into the graveyard, not to be used again, and the player may then take a raider from their graveyard and place it onto any empty square in their own territory except for a house square. For white, this would mean any empty square within rows *b* and *c*, and for black, any empty square within rows *d* and *e*. This type of cast move, where a raider is spawned, is called a *raise*.

6.1.2 Capturing Material by using the Deck

Capturing material by using the deck is called *striking*. Once a player has a raider occupying their opponent's Jack's house, they are also allowed to capture enemy raiders (and only enemy raiders) by casting cards from their deck. To capture an enemy raider by casting, two of the cards used to make the sum of 21 must be card squares containing raiders of the player's color, and exactly one of the cards used must be from the player's deck. The deck card must then be removed from the deck and cast into the graveyard, not to be used again. A player may not strike in their own territory nor in enemy houses. I.e., white may only strike in rows *d* and *e*, and black in rows *b* and *c*.

6.1.3 Raising a Queen

Once a player has a raider occupying their opponent's Jack's house, they are eligible to move a raider into the opponent's Queen's house which, in the same turn, allows them to place the queen anywhere within their own territory except for the house squares. Note that we refer the player's queen as *the* queen since, unlike in chess, a player can never have more than one queen on the board. Note also that

this is not a cast move since the queen is spawned in the same turn as when the raider is moved into the opponent's Queen's house. If, however, a player's queen is captured it may be respawned, or *raised*, from the graveyard. To raise a queen, two of the cards used to make the sum of 21 must be card squares from the board containing raiders of the player's color, and exactly one of the cards used must be from the player's deck. A queen cannot be raised by a player that has not yet moved a raider into their opponent's queen's house.

6.1.4 Preparing for Checkmate

Once a player has a raider occupying their opponent's Queen's house, they are eligible to move a raider into the opponent's King's house. Once this is done, the non-card squares become off-limits to the opponent's king, i.e, the opponent's king's movements are limited to card squares only. Also, if the opponent's king happens to occupy a non-card square when a player moves a raider into their king's house, this is considered a *mate by capture* of the opponent's king. Notice the deviation from chess here as, in chess, a king cannot be captured, but only checkmated. This is, however, the only instance where there is a mate by capture; notwithstanding this one deviation, checkmates work in the same way as in chess.