Lazy King

Jacob M. Peck, paperparachute games (http://games.suspended-chord.info/)

version 20110830

Description

An abstract strategy game with perfect information, designed to be playable with extremely common components. Allows for quick play and various strategic maneuvers. A sketch of a notation system is included to allow for correspondence play and recordkeeping. Theoretically compatible with the ELO rating system for tournament or ladder play.

Equipment

The following equipment is required for play:

- 1 – 8x8 checkerboard (color does not matter, checkered or not, feel free to use the board attached)

- 10 – Red unmarked checkers (pawns)

- 1 – Red checker with a line around the perimeter (the King)

- 10 – Black umarked checkers (pawns)

- 1 – Black checker with a line around the perimeter (the King)

- 20 – Walls–pieces one board square long, narrow enough to fit between squares (feel free to use the walls attached)

The colors of the above checkers are immaterial, so long as they are 2 distinct colors, and they are stackable. The walls can be easily made from cardboard or some other material, color is unimportant.

Terminology

The following is a list of terms used in the rules.

Pawn: An unmarked checker. The basic piece for the game.

King: A marked checker. The piece you must deliver to a goal space.

Singleton: A single, unstacked pawn. Counts as both a pawn and a unit. Unit strength 1.

Singleton King: The king alone, not as a part of a unit. Counts as the King, and a Singleton. Unit strength 2.

Wall: A narrow stick-like object. Prevents movement between the two squares it is placed adjacent to.

Unit: A complex game piece. Consists of one or more pawns and possibly the king. Represented on the board by stacking pieces on top of each other.

Unit strength: A number representing how powerful a unit is. Unit strength is equal to the number of pawns in the unit, with a +2 bonus if the unit contains the King.

Goal space: One of the four corner squares (A1, A8, H1, H8). To win the game, your singleton King must reach one of the two goal squares on your opponent's side of the board.

Trap space: One of four squares (B3, B6, G3, G6). Any unit entering one of these squares loses the bottom piece of its stack to the pile, excepting the King, which is redeployed immediately in the owning player's deployment zone.

Fortification space: One of the four center squares (D4, D5, E4, E5). A singleton in one of these spaces counts as having unit strength +2 when being pushed. These squares are purely defensive, and as such the bonus is only applied when a singleton in a fortification space is being pushed. Any other action taken by the singleton is treated as normal.

Deployment Zone: The area on the board consisting of the rank closest to the player, excluding the corner squares.

Pile: The currently unused pieces at the side of the board. The pile may never contain more than 10 pawns, and may never contain the King.

Red and Black: Generic names for the players. Any color pieces may be used, provided that they are distinguishable from the pieces of your opponent. Agree before the setup begins who is Red and who is Black.

Description of the Board

Files are labeled A through H and ranks are labeled 1 through 8, starting at the Red player's lower left. The first rank for each side is the deployment zone for that player. Goal spaces are located at A1 and H1 for Black and at A8 and H8 for Red. Trap spaces are located at B3, B6, G3, and G6. Fortification spaces are located at D4, D5, E4, and E5. See the image below for more information.
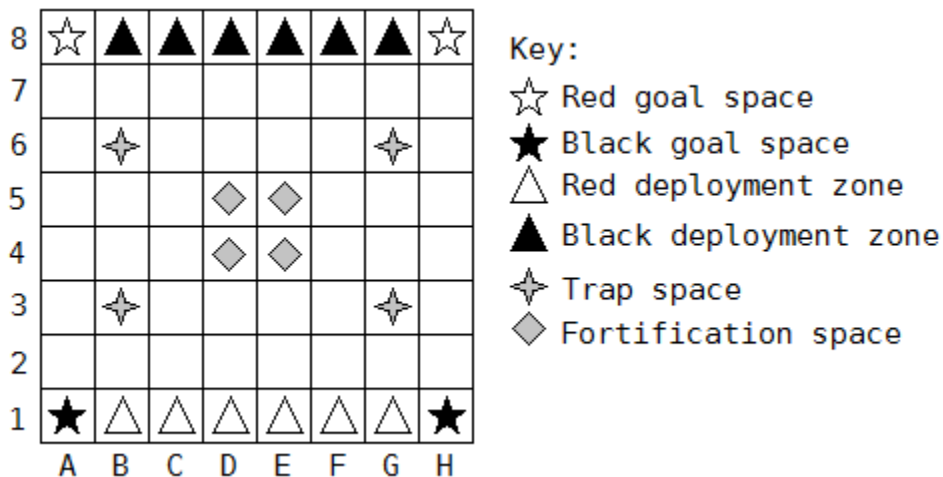
The Goal

Move your King to one of the goal spaces on your opponent's side of the board, while preventing your opponent from doing the same. If you do so, you win the game.

The Setup

Each player takes their pawns, King, and ten walls. Each player arranges 5 pawns and the King as they see fit in their deployment zone, without stacking any pieces at this point (all pieces must be singletons). This is done simultaneously and in plain view of both players. The remaining pawns are placed in the pile.

Then, the players take turns placing their walls, one at a time alternating, starting with Red (ex. Red places 1st wall, Black places 1st wall, Red places 2nd wall, etc...). Walls may be placed between squares, and so that they are only lying between two squares horizontally or vertically (i.e., the edges line up with the edges of the squares). No wall may be placed such that any goal spaces are closed (unreachable), nor shall any wall be placed within your opponent's deployment zone vertically (horizontally in front of the deployment zone is fine). The net effect of these two rules is that a wall may be placed only horizontally in front of a goal space, if it is to be touching one. These walls are permanant, and cannot move nor be destroyed during play.

After this is done, play starts with Black.

The Play

On your turn, you must perform one of the following actions:

1. Move a unit

2. Push an enemy unit

3. Stack pieces to form a unit

4. Unstack pieces from a unit

5. Purchase pieces through sacrifice

After you have performed your action, your turn ends and play goes to your opponent. If you are unable to perform one of these actions, your opponent wins the game. Following is a description of the various options available.

Moving a unit: A unit may be moved horizontally or vertically up to a number of spaces according to the table below.

Unit Strength	Spaces
1	3
2	2
3+	1

A unit may only move if there are no obstructions (walls, other units) in the way of their move, and may not move onto other pieces. A unit does not have to move the full value of their move.

The only exception to these rules is that the first turn for both sides, a piece may only move a maximum of 2 spaces. **(EXPERIMENTAL: unsure whether or not to use this rule)**

Any unit moving into a trap ends its move immediately and loses the bottom piece from its unit. Lost pieces are returned to the pile, excepting the King which is immediately redeployed in the owner's deployment zone.

Any unit which doesn't contain a King (either player's) moving into a goal space ends its move immediately. If this unit fails to move off of the goal space in the next turn, the entire unit is

destroyed and placed into the pile. A unit containing a King may safely rest on any goal space (including your opponent's), however as soon as the king is removed from the unit, the unit is destroyed and placed into the pile.

If the singleton King reaches one of your goal spaces, you win. The singleton King cannot move on its own, but rather it must be a part of a unit.

Pushing an enemy unit: An enemy unit may be pushed back a number of spaces according to the table below.

Difference in Unit Strengths	Spaces
11	8
10	7
9	6
8	5
7	4
6	3
5	2
4 or less	1

You may push an enemy unit if and only if:

1. You have a unit of greater strength directly next to one of your opponent's units, and

2. There is free space equal to or greater than the calculated distance directly behind the enemy unit, from the perspective of your unit (i.e. directly to the left of the enemy unit, if your unit is on the right) - *or* - there is a trap square in the path.

A unit being pushed moves exactly the number of spaces calculated directly away from the pushing unit, except if there is a trap space in the path. The pushing unit follows the unit it pushed by one square, occupying the square the pushed unit just vacated.

Any unit pushed into a trap stops on the trap and loses the bottom piece from its unit. Lost pieces are returned to the pile, excepting the King which is immediately redeployed by the owning player into their deployment zone.

Any singleton (singleton King included) in a fortification space counts as having a unit strength 2 higher than it normally would in terms of defending a push. Any other action by a singleton in a fortification space is done at its base unit strength. Note, this only applies to singletons.

A singleton King pushed into one of its goal spaces wins the game for the King's owner.

E.g. You have a unit of 6 pawns at `E6`*, and your opponent has a singleton at* `D6`*. 6-1=5, 5-3 = 2. Your opponent's pawn is pushed to* `B6`*, into a trap! This pawn is removed from play and placed into the pile. Your unit is then moved forward to* `D6`*.*

Any unit that fails to move off of a trap in the next turn loses another piece from its bottom in a similar fashion for each turn it remains on the trap space.

Stacking pieces to form a unit: Units may be stacked to form new units if they are touching orthagonally. The new unit is formed on the square occupied by the old unit of greatest strength. If all new units have the same strength, the new square is the player's choice, but only of the squares occupied by the units involved.
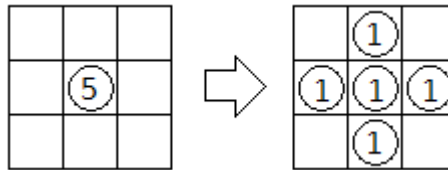
E.g.
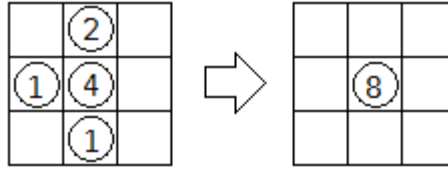
It is important to maintain order in these stacks if the King is involved. Otherwise, a pawn is a pawn, so order does not matter. It should also be noted that you cannot stack through walls.
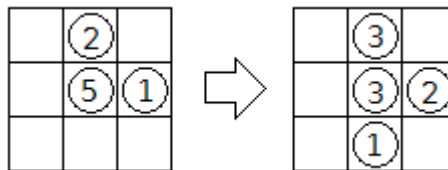
Unstacking pieces from a unit: If there are empty spaces orthogonally adjacent to a unit, each one of them may be replaced by one piece from the top of the unit.

E.g.

You may also unstack from a unit onto another adjacent friendly unit, weakening one and strengthening another. You do not have to unstack as many as you can, only as many as desired.

E.g.

The order of unstacking the pieces from the unit is left up to the player. Unstacking the King from a unit is the only time the King may move on its own. It should be noted that you cannot unstack through walls.

Purchase new units through sacrifice: If you have a unit which does not contain the King, you are allowed to sacrifice it to purchase new units up to its unit strength + 1, provided that you do not exceed 10 pawns on the board at one time.

Sacrificed units are removed wholesale from the board, and used to provide pieces for the new purchased pieces, along with one new piece from the pile.

E.g. You sacrifice a unit of 3 to purchase 4 more pawns.

These new pawns must be placed as singletons somewhere in the deployment zone. If there is no space in your deployment zone for these pieces to go, then any excess pieces are simply wasted, and placed back in the pile.

Other Notes

FAQ's and Rule Anomolies

What happens if the King must be redeployed, yet my entire deployment zone is filled? In this
case, remove any piece from your deployment zone and place it into the pile. This includes enemy
units, and even the enemy King. Place your King on the newly open spot. Should the enemy King
be removed, your opponent now has to redeploy it in their deployment zone, but as a singleton.
Any pawns taken with the enemy king are left in the pile. Should removing the opponent's King
force them into this same situation, they follow this same procedure.
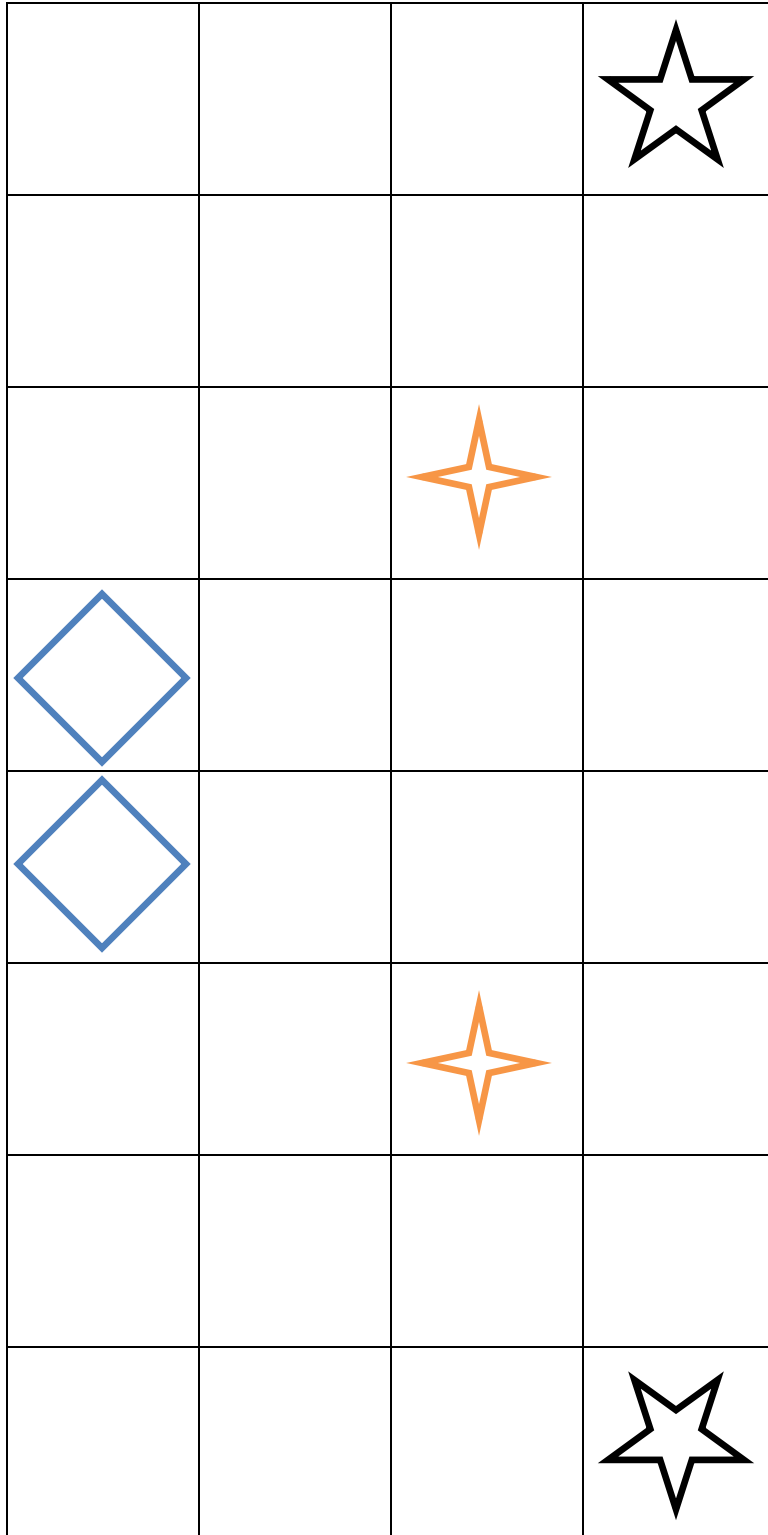
Potential Variations

What follows is a list of potential variations to the rules to be considered:

- Larger board (10x10, 12x12, etc.)

- Deployment zone–first two ranks

- King's move (may move, but only 1? may never move, even to unstack?)

- Different movement values

- Variable push values

- Cap on unit strength

- Different trap spaces

- More/less walls (more than 3 though, that's proven to be terribly boring)

- More/less starting pawns

- Different cap on maximum pawns allowed

- King always on the bottom of the stack

- Goal squares immediately fatal to non-king units

- Walls take up entire spaces rather than lie between them

- Multiple runs to the goal. King starts at US1 and increases by 1 every time. First to get all the
  runs in wins.

- Goal spaces act as a trap to everything but singleton King

- No fortifications.

- Fortifications/goals/traps not set in stone, but may be placed by both players in aggreement before
  pieces are deployed.

- Fortifications/goals/traps may move (roll a die?)

- Pushing might not be necessarily exact

Notation System (incomplete sketch)

What follows is an incomplete working out of an "official" notation system for Lazy King.

- Notate starting position - square label:1 for pawns, i.e. `B2:1`, square label:K for King, i.e. `D1:K`; walls–square 1|square 2, i.e. wall between `D6` and `E6` would be `D6|E6`

- Walls (unchanging, only used in setup): `D4|D5` - wall between `D4` and `D5`

- Pieces:
  `B4:1` - singleton on B4
  `B4:4` - 4 piece unit on B4
  `B4:K` - King on B4
  `B4:3K1` - Unit consisting of top to bottom: 3 pawns, King, 1 pawn; on B4

- Moves:

  - Moving - `A2-A4` - move from A2 to A4
  - Pushing - `A3\#A6` - piece at A3 pushed to A6 (pushing unit at A2 assumed)
  - Stacking - `H4=>G4,H5,H4:2K2` - new unit formed (2K2) at H4 by stacking H5 onto H4, and then G4 onto H4
  - Unstacking - `H4<=G4,H5:K2` - new units at G4 and H5 formed by taking the top of H4, placing at H5, and then the new top of H4, placing at G4. Unit at H4 now is K2.
  - Sacrificing - `E3\$A1,B2,G2,H2` - Unit at E3 (assumed to be strength 3 or more) sacrificed, new pieces at A1, B2, G2, and H2.

- Other notation:
  ! - good move
  !! - excellent move
  ? - questionable move
  ?? - what are you doing?
  +R - game over, Red wins
  +B - game over, Black wins

Lazy King board and walls–v20110830
Jacob Peck–paperparachute games (http://games.suspended-chord.info/)

Lazy King Board: print 2 copies, tape together so an 8x8 grid is formed.

Lazy King Walls: print and cut. You're printing 2 copies of the board half anyway, so here are only 10 of the 20 walls you'll need.