

I'm not a robot



You don't play 3-checkon the Chess.com live server? That's a shame. I thought we could be friends. Why is the game great? All that opening theory that masters know more about? Yeah, it's all useless. Draws? Almost never. Oh, and did I mention that I can explain the rules in one sentence? The first person to get three checks, or a checkmate, wins.*

"Only you can help me increase the number of 3-check players on Chess.com." (Photo: Lennart Ootes.) Bughouse takes a few paragraphs. I would know. Back in the mid-1990s, my partner and I won the first-ever National Middle School Bughouse Championship. We had to crowd-source the rules with the other players before the tournament began.

Also, 3-check still reflects the spirit of chess -- getting to the king. Take that, giveaway chess. (Oh, but we should definitely add "giveaway" to the live server too.) I've played a decent amount of 3-check in my time. And while I may never be as good as MVL, I've learned a thing or two from the game. I've also taught the rules to a few 2600s, and in the first few games, they're big underdogs. Why? They don't know some of these opening traps. 1. The diagonal leading to f2/f7. This should be obvious, but some people think they can allow a bishop to aim at their f-pawn. By the way, in 3-check, a knight can be just as deadly sacrificing on f2. 2. The "...Nd4 trap." This one is pretty common but harder to see. White's normal development is invadedby this knight centralization. 3. The "Nd5 trap." OK, so chess and 3-check theory does align here somewhat. If you play the Open Sicilian, then you know that placing a knight on d5 with black pawn on e6 is definitely not taboo. Ditto for 3-checks. Here's a practical example of an early Nd5. While I didn't play perfectly afterward, the knight was a thorn in Black's position. Not pertaining to the opening, but the game also shows another 3-check theme: Going for two checks without a viable path to a third is a Pyrrhic victory. 4. The "poisoned e-pawn." That's right, regular chess has a poisoned b-pawn, but in 3-checks, taking the "free" center pawn can often expose your own king. Here's a practical example showing why taking the e-pawn can backfire: 5. The "two-knight tango." This is a catch-all for positions where two knights team up and the enemy king just can't get away. It happens in many forms, so we'll close by just presenting one case: Let's get more players competing in 3-check! You can even join this 3-check club to discuss more tips. Hopefully with these opening tips you'll be able to win some quick games against those that don't read the Chess.com articles. Believe it or not, there's almost no 3-checks theory on the internet, so this article is nearly all five ECO volumes in one. (OK, not really, but I'll expand as I learn more personally.) IM Danny Rensch has some more tips for you. If you want to see two masters play each other in 3-check, just check out our personal game history -- almost all 3-check! Oh, and MVL isn't the only top-10 player who enjoys 3-check. When I told one elite player last year that we added it to the site, he admitting to analyzing "1-check" chess in the middle of the last Candidates' Tournament. I'll keep his identity a secret, but if you can figure out how White has a forced win in "1-check" you can post how in the comments (there are likely multiple solutions; try to find the fastest). *Actually we did have a brief internal debate at Chess.com on whether a double-check should count as one or two checks. You're almost certainly going to win anyway, but in the end, we decided it would just count as one check. Share copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Sign inSign in Looking for a new, exciting chess variant? Maybe you watched my games vs GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave here and you're anxious to give it a try? Or perhapsyou've always just been good at following the age old chess rule "always check, because it might be mate!" Either way, 3-Check is likely right for you! Beforeasking in the comments "Why can't I see the option to play 3-Check in Live Chess?" please go to Chess.com/switch and make sure you're using our new site, where so many great new features live! Second, if you don't know the basic rules of how to play 3-Check, click here and learn! Below are a few tips I like to offer beginners to 3-Check, regardless of their chess level: Tip #1:Keep The Diagonals' To Your King Closed The fastest way to lose a game of 3-Check is early on the diagonals. There are many ways that opening up (or simply not closing them) the diagonals to your king can backfire, but the most dangerous diagonal, like classical chess, is the one guarded only by the king: Of course, the Sicilian itself is not a bad choice at all for Black! In fact, it's the preferred choice by both MVL and FM Mike Klein (who might as well be a chess variants GM), but Black must play 2...e6 after 2.Bc4 to prevent the combination you saw above. Tip #2:Open Files, Too, Are Very Dangerous Simply because it takes more effort to open files (requires pawn trades)than it does to open diagonals (just need bishops and queens to be developed)we do not rank open files as beingquite as dangerous as open diagonals in 3-Check; however, this should not give you a false sense of security. Open files are the quickest way for a winning position to become a lost one in 3-Check! In one of my earliest 3-Check battles I lost a game that I still haven't forgotten: despite having already gained two checks on my opponent, his/her rook grabbed an open file I had left unchallenged, and my opponent quickly lifted the rook to the third rank, delivering an unstoppable series of checks. Even though I was able to shield my king by the second check, the rook then just sacrificed for the shielding pawn and ended the game on the spot. Hopefully that text description is enough to scare even the more visual of learners. Watch out for open files! Tip #3:Never Allow Consecutive Checks It doesn't matter how much material you're gaining along the way, usually giving your opponent back-to-back checks against your king is the beginning of disaster. Now, that doesn't mean you should reason if you're ever down twochecks to none, in fact, the opposite is true. Keep fighting! Just because someone hasmorechecks doesn't mean it's over, especially if they've given up too much material or initiative to get those random checks. They may not have a logical follow-up. It's the consecutive nature of checks that's the problem. The diagram below shines a good light on this: In the variation where Black captures on h7, the game is over immediately because the second check comes instantly, and White has gained the initiative; however, the variation where Black plays 1...Kh8, despite White getting a 2nd check rather quickly, took something away from White's attack to take this random, desperado-knight hopping checking approach. And in the final position, Black's pieces are starting to coordinate while White doesn't have a clear knockout thircheck. Tip #4: A Queen Always Gets "Her Two" The first lady always gets hers! I'll paint a picture for you: If the enemy queen gives a check (on either file, rank or diagonal) unless you can capture her on the spot, the next checks guaranteed. How is that possible? Well, no matter where the king moves or who blocks the queen's threat, the queen can always sacrifice for the blocker or move herself close enough to the king to get her next check. So if that queen's first check was the opponent's secondcheck in the game, you can resign on the spot. Not true you say! Because you're smart, you thought about this in your head, and you LOVE a chance to prove Danny wrong? "What if the king moves and unleashes a piece behind him to check the ENEMY king! Haha! Now what, Danny!?" Actually, try to imagine it. You forgot one thing: checks can be blocked by checks too! Even ifthe king unleashes a discovery, why can't the queen then block the discovered check, givingher brilliant second check anyway? The only scenario possible that doesn't allow this is a pinned queen to the king under discovered check,but if that were the case, why wasn't the queen taken on the first move instead of moving the queen? #touchedanny #gameon Now will you watch my video? Let me know in the comments if you agree with these beginner tips or if you have any other advice for players just getting started on their 3-Checkadventure. Looking for regular partners to play 3-Checkwith? Join the official club!

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