

Introduction to En passant

What is En Passant?

- En Passant is a special pawn capture move
- En passant is the French for “in passing”
- It prevents a pawn from using the two-square advance to “pass” an adjacent enemy pawn without the risk of being captured.
- Such a move is the only occasion in chess in which a piece captures but does not move to the square of the captured piece.

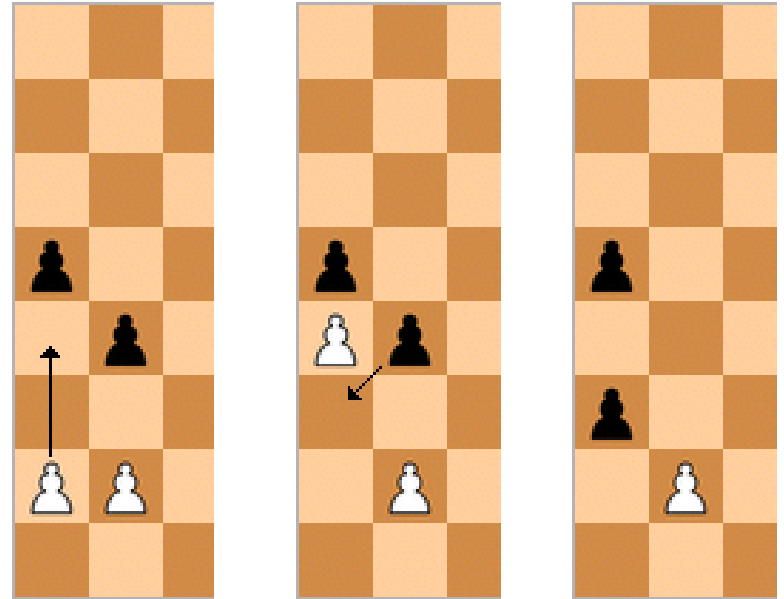


Fig. 1: Three figures showing how the en passant rule works

Rules for En passant

A pawn on the fifth row may capture an enemy pawn on an adjacent file that has moved two squares in a single move, *as if the pawn had moved only one square*. The conditions are:

- The capturing pawn must be on its fifth row
- The captured pawn must be on an adjacent file and move two squares in a single move
- The capture is optional, but if opted for must be done immediately (cannot be done on a later turn)

En passant Explained

Black to Move

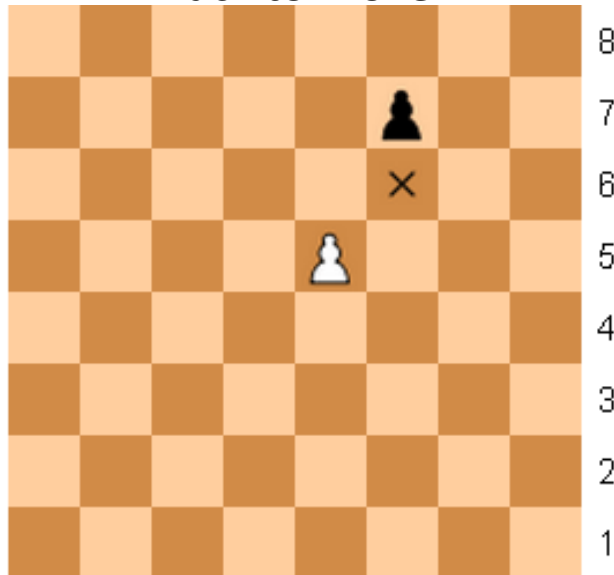


Fig 2: The black pawn is in its initial square. If it moves to the square marked by x, the white pawn could capture it.

White to Move

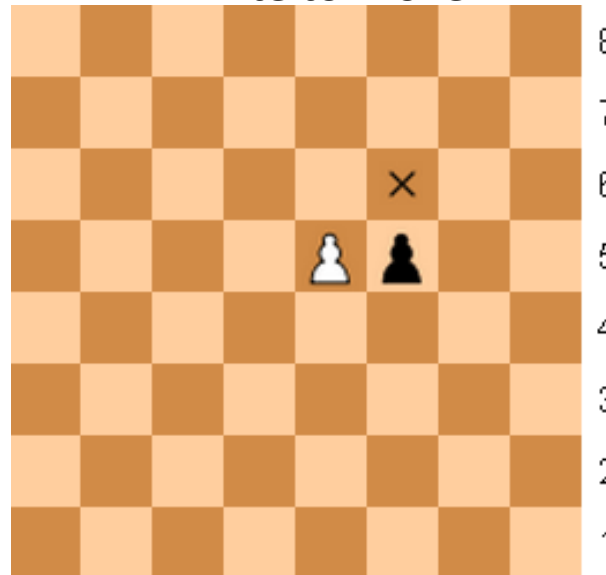


Fig 3: Black moves his pawn forward two squares in a single move to the row marked as 5, passing the square marked by x.

Black to Move

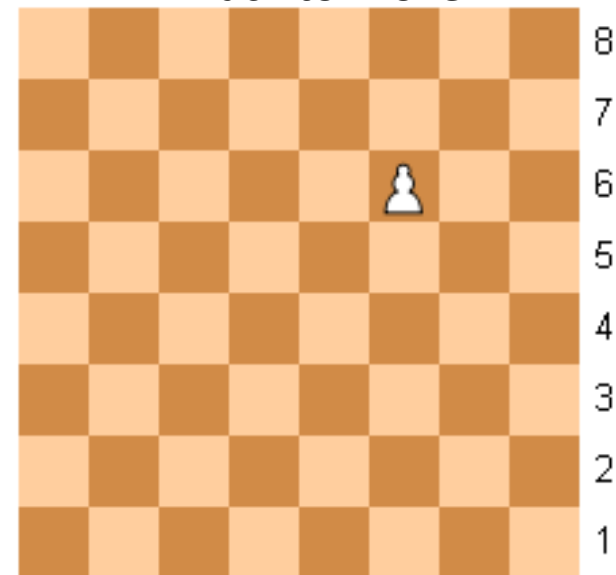


Fig 4: White captures *en passant* in response, capturing the pawn as if it had moved only one square to the one that was marked by x.