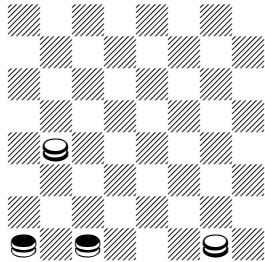


The American Position

At the heart of American Position is the constricting nature of the single corner. The single corner squares, 4 and 29, allow limited manouverability, and pieces can find themselves trapped on those squares.

The confinement is deadly as that even in a 2 v 2 game, the attacking side can win against two kings continuously playing their best moves! The position to the right is by A Brooks. Note that to win, white must have the move, if black has the move it's an easy draw.



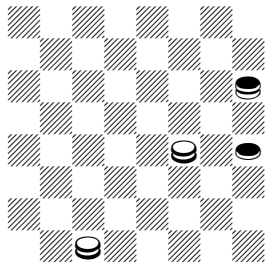
White to play.

cont.

1-6*	8-4	10-15	White
4-8-a-b	16-12-c	8-4	wins
6-10	4-8	15-11	

- a. if 3-7 then 16-12, 7-3 (7-2, 6-10 WW) (7-11 6-10 WW), 6-10, 4-8, 10-15, 8-4, 15-11, White win.
- b. if 3-8 then 16-12', 8-3 (8-11 6-10) 6-10, 4-8, 10-15, 8-4, 15-11 White win.
- c. Note this position, it's one of the typical American Position settings you're aiming for!

From this we know that 2 kings can beat 2 opposing kings by exploiting their limited movement in the single corner. This means that in a situation where we have an opposing king in the single corner area and an uncrowned man that we can drive into the single corner, we can end up in a setting where a win can be forced as above. The position to the right is by Dr TJ Brown from an 1874 study, **white to play and win.**



Belgian draughts enthusiast Hans L'Hoest demonstrates how to win, spot and avoid the classic endgame theme of American Position ...

cont.

3-7	25-21-c-d
13-17	10-14-e
7-10	22-25
17-22	23-26
14-18-a	25-29
21-25-f	26-30-g
18-23-b	

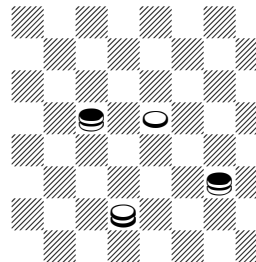
- a. Necessary as the move forces black to play either 22-25 or 21-25, 10-15 only draws!
- b. Due to its constriction, Black is not able to move the advancing piece on 22 allowing White time to get his king on 10 into position.
- c. If 25-30 then 10-14, 22-26 (22-25 14-17 25-29 17-21 WW), 14-17, 26-31, 17-22 White win.
- d. If 25-29 then 10-14, 22-25 (29-25, 14-17 WW), 14-17, 25-30, 17-21 White win.
- e. Pins the king to 21 limiting black's options.
- f. 22-25, 18-22, 25-29, 22-26, 21-25, 26-30, 25-21, 10-14 White win.
- g. Same as the first example at c. White win.

Probably the most important thing is to remember you can win (or lose) a 2 v 2 situation in the single corner. To summarise here are the American Position characteristics:

- 2 v 2; but extra pieces may hide the theme.
- Takes place in the single corner; however pieces may need to be herded into it.
- Winning side needs the move.

Here's another example of a position that demonstrates a win by American Position. **Black to play and win.**

This time the uncrowned piece on 18 should not be allowed to escape to the double corner.



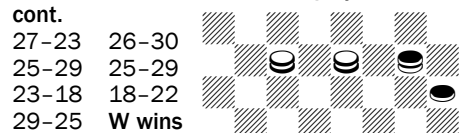
cont.

9-6*	18-15	19-16	8-4
7-3-a	23-19	11-8-b	6-10
19-23	15-11	16-12	Black wins

- a. if 7-2 then 6-10, 18-15, 10-7, 2-11 19-10 BW; if 7-11 (or 18-14) then 19-15

- (or 6-10), an idea known as Breeches BW.
- b. if 11-7 then 6-2, this is again another common idea: 'Captive Cossacks', 3-8 BW.

William Payne's single corner win from 1756 is based on this theme. **White to play and win.**

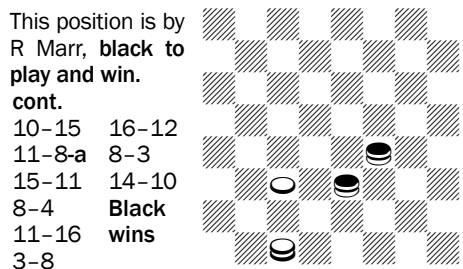


Consider the following two points:

1. The white king on 27 can be replaced by a single man with the same result! All white has to do is keep the king on 26 posted while the other white piece crowns and moves in for the kill to square 18. Black is limited to moving back and forth between 25 and 29.

2. The win is forced for white regardless of who has the move! In the above position, with black to move: 25-29, 27-23, 29-25, 23-18, 25-29, 18-22 White win.

Here's a nice one; White: 26, K13, K30, Black 21, K18, K29. White to move, can you see it?



- a. If 3-8 then 15-19, 11-7 (8-3, 14-10), 14-10, 7-3, 19-16 Black win.

A king and a man can beat 2 kings!
Black to move.



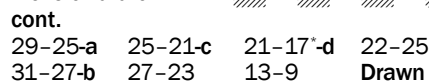
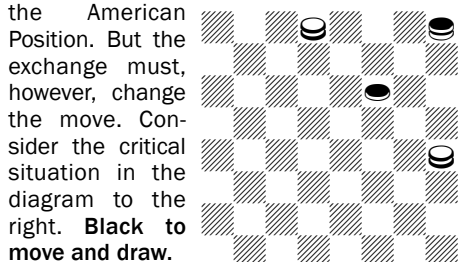
- a. If 10-6 then 7-11, 6-10, 11-16 and black can't go 10-15 because then 16-11 will actually win for white. White escapes and draw.

The Avoiding Idea

One obvious point can already be deduced from the above if you want to avoid ending up on the losing side of the American Position: *try to king in the double corner.*

If you were forced to king in the single corner you could strive to get your kings on squares 4 and 8 or 25 and 29. Consider for example the following set up: White: K4, K8, Black K10, K19. In this case black can't force his way into the single corner, e.g. 10-7 is followed by 8-3, and white draws.

By the threatening of or forcing of an exchange, you may also avoid arriving at the American



- a. 22-25 loses by American Position: 31-27, 25-30, 13-17, 29-25, 27-23 White wins.
- b. 13-9 25-30 (25-21 and 25-29 both lose by AP) 9-14, 30-26*, 31-27 22-25 Drawn.
- c. 22-26 also draws
- d. By threatening an exchange black saves the game.

More... !

More examples of this ending can be found in *Familiar Themes* by B. Boland, *Key Endings* by R. Pask, *Standard Positions 2* by J. Duffy and *The Silent Teacher* by C. Huston.

Would you like to see all this analysis and all of these moves played for you? Try Hans's Checker Animations website at:

www.h4ns.net/checkers/