



# Siceirawan

*A tribute to many masters*

*by Simon Jepps*

## Introduction

I have great respect for the chess masters Yasser Seirawan and Bruce Harper, who collaboratively designed the Seirawan chess variant, of which is gaining more and more followers every day.

I have been studying chess variants for many, many years and have designed numerous variants of my own, numerous elaborate pieces and many magical augmentations to the classical theme.

Therefore I understand how enormously challenging is the task of “changing” chess, to evolve and to bring a new era of civilized intellectual recreation into being.

To be blunt, it’s nearly impossible. One only has to research how many hundreds upon hundreds of variants and pieces have been invented, only to gather dust and resign to the archives, in order to grasp a complete understanding of the challenge before them.

This is why I respect Seirawan Chess and its inventors, because it has at least, made it onto the world chess table.

However, there is one thing which has bothered me about the traditional Seirawan game ever since I first started playing and it is the same bothersome thing I have found time and time again in many, many other chess variants.

Yasser Seirawan and Bruce Harper have certainly hit the nail on the head with their two new pieces, the Elephant and the Hawk, which are most beautifully designed. They have also unequivocally struck gold with their new adaptive rules for these two pieces, which greatly reignite the game.

I am not going to deny they have a good game, they really do. But once again we see something taking place which brings a tear to my eye. Yes a tear, because I have seen this so many times before that I find it so hard to believe it has happened again... let alone from a grandmaster.

I am of course, if you have any inclination, talking about balance. However, I am not talking about a balance of pieces... I mean a balance of presence.

The pieces, as I have said, are perfect. Their grand entrance is even more perfect. Their aesthetic design is beauty immortal. But their presence... let’s just say it.

They are like two gods beating their chests amongst a claustrophobic arena of weakened men. They are as if fighting their own war while another takes place at their feet.

## How To Play

*Siceirawan* is a variant of Seirawan Chess which is played in very much the same way, however it includes an augmentation of the rules, designed to bring more light and freedom to the game.

The name “Siceirawan” is both a reflection of my own contribution to a hopefully successful evolution of Seirawan Chess, the “Si” representing my first name, but it is also a tribute to chess master Bruce Harper, who unfortunately was not *featured* in the original game’s naming. Hence the alteration of “-seirawan” to become “-ceirawan”, representing the last two letters of “Bruce”.

Seirawan pieces sit as pictured on imaginary squares at the corners of the board.

Only one Seirawan piece per player is permitted presence on the board at any time.

The first Seirawan piece per player to enter the game must do so in the traditional Seirawan way.

Thereafter a player may choose and reassign Seirawan pieces as he or she sees fit, by removing the present piece in play, returning it to its own imaginary square and then reoccupying the positional square with the other Seirawan piece.

Reassignment counts as one turn, however, optionally and in addition to reassignment, a player may in the same turn, move a Pawn.

Seirawan pieces do not have to enter the game at any particular time at all, unless you wish to retain your traditional right to do so, but do beware that Seirawan pieces residing on imaginary squares can be captured, at which moment the capturing piece is also removed from the game.

Once a Seirawan piece’s counterpart has been captured, the other may enter the game by assuming the vacated square of any same coloured piece which moves.

This resolves “first entrance” anomalies.

The remaining Seirawan piece may indeed assume the King’s vacated square, but not a Pawn’s.

## Designation & Notation

Initially the Hawk sits to the player’s right hand and the Elephant to the player’s left.

However, each player has one opportunity to change the designated imaginary square for each piece and this is administered when a player Castles the King.

Entrances are notated in brackets after the regular move. For example, **Bc4 (Ef1)**.

Reassignment is notated by the letter of the piece being removed, followed by a slash and then by the letter of the other Seirawan piece now in play. For example, **H\E**.

If the player chooses to make a Pawn move in the same turn, the Pawn’s move would simply be notated on the same line, following a comma. For example, **E\H, exf6**.

Redesignation is notated after castling with the infinity symbol. For example, **O-O-O, ∞**.

## Traditional Seirawan

When a player first moves a piece from its original square, that player has the option of placing the Hawk or Elephant on the vacated square, as part of the player's move. Thus if a player played **Ng1-f3**, he or she could place the Hawk or Elephant on **g1**. The move would be recorded as **1.Nf3(Hg1)**.

Since each side has eight pieces (K, Q, R, R, B, B, N, N), a player has eight opportunities to bring the Hawk and Elephant into play. If a player fails to do so, the unplaced piece remains out of play.

When a player castles, the Hawk or Elephant may be placed on either **e1(8)** or **h1(8)/a1(8)**, but not on both. Two moves are required to bring both the Hawk and Elephant into play.

One cannot use the entrance of an Elephant or Hawk to assume the vacated square of a piece which would have been blocking Check, since unblocking Check however momentarily, could be argued an illegal move. In short, a Seirawan piece may not enter the game if the Seirawan entrance itself blocks Check.

A player may promote a pawn to either a Hawk or an Elephant.

### Elephant & Hawk

The **Hawk** moves as a Knight or Bishop, but not both simultaneously ~ it is a combination of the two pieces. The **Elephant** moves as a Knight or Rook, but not both simultaneously ~ it is a combination of the two pieces.

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