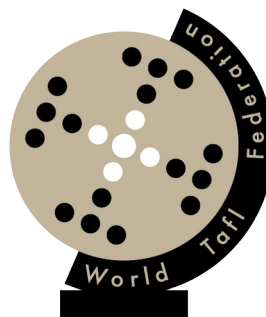

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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aagenielsen.dk/index_nef2.html (Host of current online tournament)

Hnefatafl - WTF

Witness the renaissance of Viking Europe's strategic boardgame 'Hnefatafl', as we enter the final round of the first official Hnefatafl World Championship, featuring the best players from all corners of the world competing online.

This year saw the official instatement of the World Tafl Federation as a non-profit organisation with the mission of re-popularising the ancient board game of 'Hnefatafl'.

The strategic boardgame of the Vikings, it has been called Viking chess. Like chess, hneftafl is a model of strategic battle. While chess depicts something like a symmetrical field battle, hnefatafl depicts an asymmetrical siege, with a king and his men surrounded on all four sides by an attacking force outnumbering them 2 to 1. It was played on a variety of board sizes, from the 7x7 'Brandub', through to the 19x19 'Alea Evangelii'.

Hnefatafl was an essential part of life for the Vikings with remains found in every part of Europe with a Viking presence. It was played by their gods in the Sagas, and buried alongside the most powerful of chieftains, with the pieces actually set up on the board in the graves. But Viking culture shifted in the middleages with new ideas like church and state taking hold. Chess arrived at the same time and soon replaced hnefatafl as the game of choice for the highborn.

Once a game of kings and captains, hnefatafl fell from favour, becoming a game of the poor, of blacksmiths and cobblers where we find the youngest remains of the game. The last recorded bastion of the 'tafl' game family was northern Scandinavia, where the botanist Linnaeus observed a 9x9 version 'Tablut' being played by the nomadic reindeer herding Saami people in 1732. For all its original status, ubiquity and cultural importance, the game lost its cultural relevance, and did not survive into modern times.

Hnefatafl's asymmetric form, board variety and patchy historical evidence has made reconstructing the game fiendishly difficult, resulting in a surplus of local variations as archaeologists, historians and games manufacturers have attempted to fill in the blanks over the years. This lack of any agreed rule set has rendered it unsuitable for tournament, until now.

Historians and experienced players have worked together online over the last five years rigorously play testing and adjusting the many suggested variants of the game. The result is 'Copenhagen Hnefatafl', named in recognition of the research website's physical home. These rules have proved robust enough for modern tournament situations and are therefore now endorsed and promoted by the World Tafl Federation for Hnefatafl on an 11x11 board.

Whether the game is precisely the same as that played by the Vikings is debatable. However, it is certain they would recognise it, and it is a beautiful, functioning strategic board game.

The ongoing tournament can be viewed live and its games replayed online at aagenielsen.dk. At the site one can also try out the game, either against the computer, or by challenging a human opponent to a game of correspondence hnefatafl. The site is free to use, and new players are always welcome.

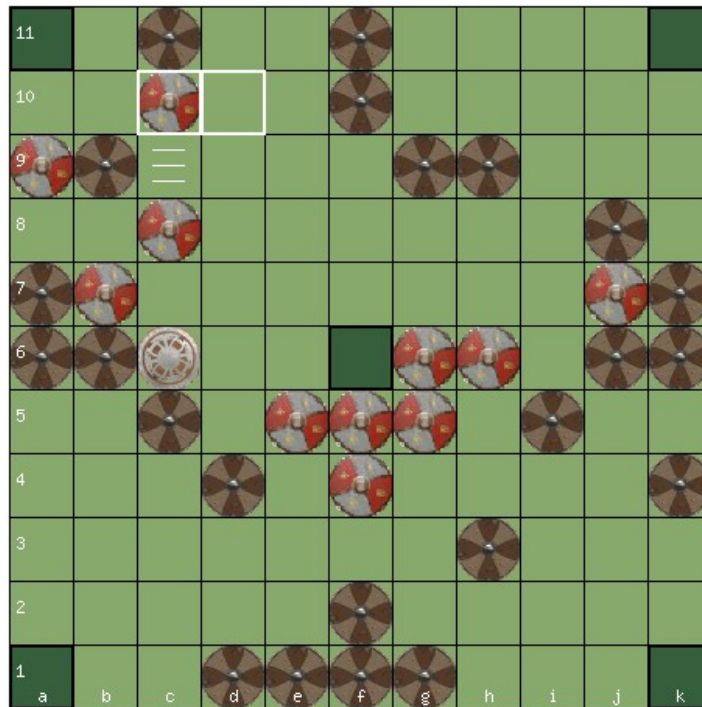
For more detail on the history of the game and its reconstruction we recommend a visit to historian Damian Walkers excellent website:

<http://tafl.cyningstan.com/page/3/the-history-of-hnefatafl>

And here is his account of our research and testing for the simpler 9x9 tafl game 'Tablut', which is almost certainly historically accurate and now also functions as a modern tournament boardgame.

<http://tafl.cyningstan.com/news/866/new-support-for-tablut-consensus>

Tim Millar - Chairman
Adam Bartley - Vice Chairman



Copenhagen Hnefatafl 11x11.

Crust / Adam
Move 24 / 49 d10-c10-c9
Captured 1 / 1
Replay.

