

Arimaa Fast Rules

A typical Arimaa game takes about 45 minutes to an hour to finish. Sometimes you want the game to finish in about 15 minutes. Here are some rules to make the game go faster. Be sure to read the basic Arimaa rules before trying these variations.

Cat and Rabbits

Use just four rabbits and two cats per side. In the setup move the pieces must be placed on the first row in any arrangement. Gold sets up first followed by Silver and the game proceeds as normal. Even with such few pieces you will encounter some interesting positions. This is a good way to introduce the game to a new player since all the Arimaa rules will be covered and the game will be simple and fast. Another favorite combination is five rabbits, two cats and one dog per side. You can try other combinations based on how much time you have to finish the game.

Animal Crackers

Use just three rabbits and one of each of the stronger pieces per side. In the setup move the pieces must be placed on the first row in any arrangement. Gold sets up first followed by Silver and the game proceeds as normal. This leads to very intense and tactical game. Remember you can also win by eliminating all of your opponents rabbits.

Unequal Armies

Ever wonder if an elephant and four rabbits would make a stronger army than two horses and two rabbits. We sometimes play Arimaa with unequal armies. We use a point system where: rabbit=1 point, cat=2, dog=3, horse=4, camel=5 and elephant=6 points. At the beginning of the game each player has 10 points to spend on building their army. For example an elephant and four rabbits would add up to 10 points. The players take turn selecting one piece at a time until the points have been spent. In the setup move the pieces may be placed in any arrangement with the second row being used only if the first row is filled. Gold sets up first followed by Silver. So far we have found that it is better to spend the point on rabbits than on stronger pieces. So maybe rabbits should start at 2 points. We haven't tried that yet. You can also increase the points available for building the army to get longer games.

Dicey Moves

Sometimes it's fun to add a little luck to Arimaa. We sometimes play with a dice to add a little excitement. At the start of a turn the player rolls a dice to determine how many steps can be taken. For example if a three is rolled then the player can only take a maximum of three steps instead of the usual four. If a number greater than four is rolled the player is still limited to four steps. This can be combined with smaller armies or unequal armies for some really wild games.

Handicap Games

When one player is more experienced or older than another the games can become one sided. To make the game more balanced the stronger player can play with a handicap by using one less rabbit or other piece. The stronger the piece you remove the more the handicap. In some cases the stronger player may need to take out more than one piece.