

Check, Mate & Stalemate

Chess

The three states, and the one that turns a win into a draw.

The distinction decides an enormous number of club games.

State	Means	Result
Check	King attacked; a legal reply exists	Play continues
Checkmate	King attacked; no legal reply	Attacker wins
Stalemate	Not in check; no legal move	Draw
Threefold repetition	Same position three times	Draw, on claim
Fifty-move rule	50 moves, no capture or pawn move	Draw, on claim
Insufficient material	Neither side can mate	Draw

Three ways out of check: move the king, block the line, or capture the attacker. A double check allows only the first.