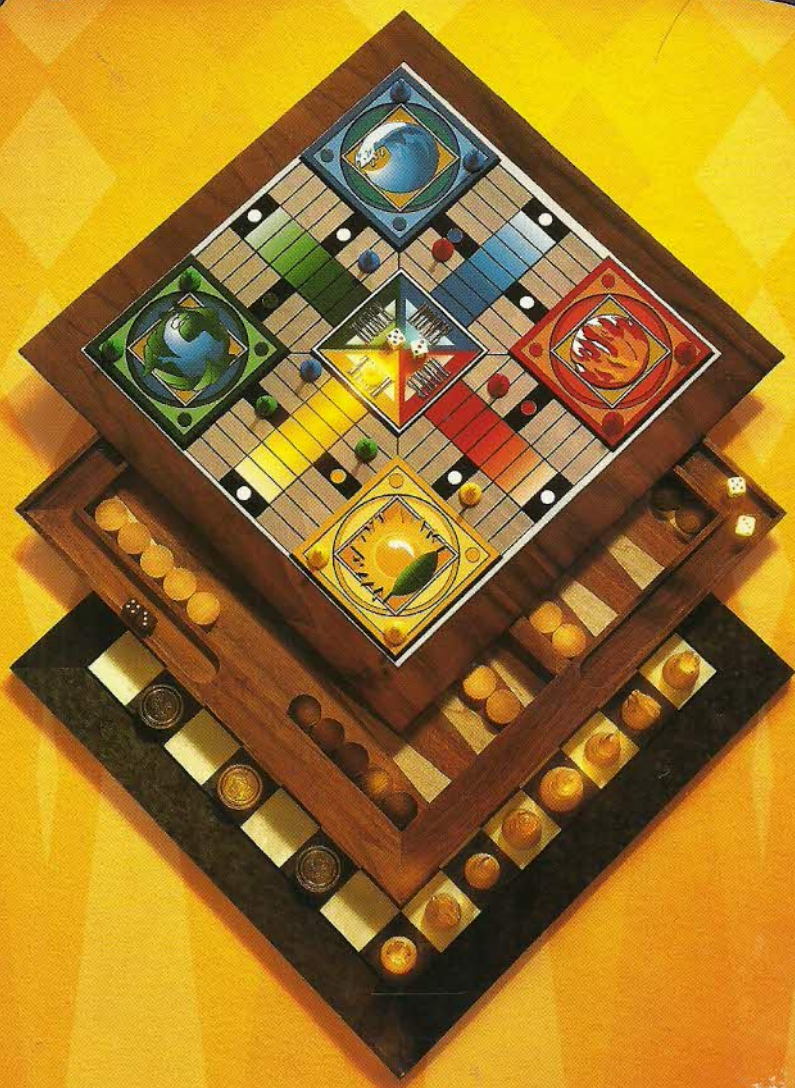


♠ HOYLE® ♠

BOARD GAMES



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **Hoyle Board Games**! We hope that on this CD you will find games that provide hours of entertainment and challenge for you and your family. We have endeavored to make your game-playing experiences unforgettable. When you see the thundering explosions of our simulated missiles in *Battling Ships*, listen to the rattling of dice in our "felt-lined" backgammon dice cups, or play against the many challenging and witty characters, we hope you will enjoy the attention to detail that went into creating this collection.

With **Hoyle Board Games**, you have your choice of playing against our colorful collection of computer opponents or against real people, either head-to-head at home or worldwide over the Internet. With the computer characters, you can adjust the level of play to match your skill level. In head-to-head play, you can compete with a friend or family member sitting beside you at the keyboard. If you have an Internet service provider, you can compete (and chat!) with opponents from around the country and around the world, made simple through Sierra's free World Opponent Network (WON.net).

When you start **Hoyle Board Games**, you sign in by typing your name and picking a character image to represent you. Multiple players can be signed in at the same time in order to play head to head, with the first player to sign in referred to as the "host." Each player can customize the game to match his or her preferences, including choices such as game speed, level of difficulty, background image and music, favorite characters, preferred game variations, and many others. The game keeps statistical information for each player, so you can track your gaming progress over time. You can also save games and continue them during a later session.

After signing in, you can choose any of the games from the main screen by clicking on its icon in the circle of game pieces. Alternatively, you can visit the cabin or the spaceship, and find the game you want to play on the table, bookshelf, or high-tech control panel.

When you enter a game, you are presented with a "Getting Started" screen that contains basic information about how to play the game and offers links to screens for changing the players or game settings. For reference, you can bring up the Getting Started information at any time during a game.

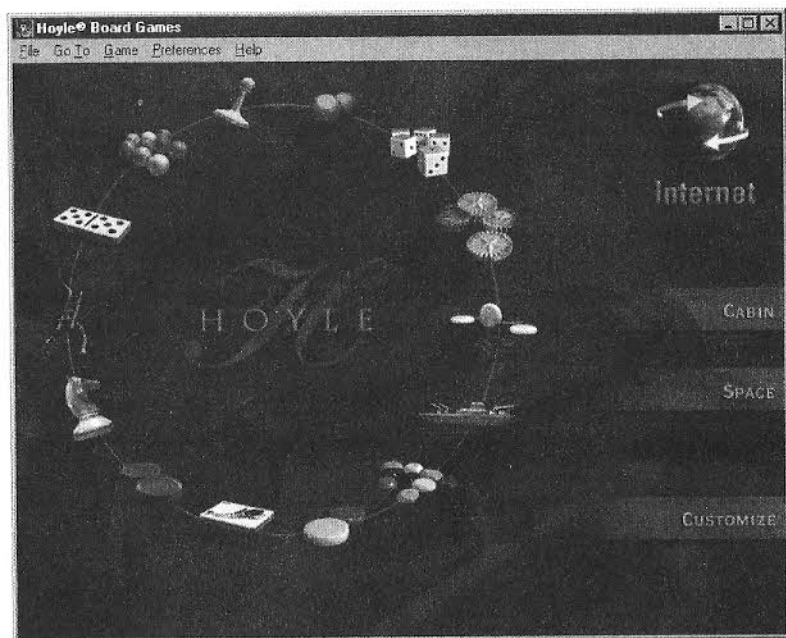
For more in-depth information about the games, refer to the on-line help and to this guide. The online help, which is accessed using the Help menu at the top of every screen, contains detailed information about the rules of each game, and which keys, buttons, menus, etc. are used when playing the games. This guide contains some notes on the history of each game, as well as strategy pointers that will help you learn to play each game with skill and finesse.

So pop in that CD, and get started playing some of the greatest board games of all time, according to Hoyle.

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FOREWORD



Thank you for buying **Hoyle Board Games**, and welcome to our guide to board-game history, rules, and playing strategies! In these pages you'll visit the Egypt of the Pharaohs, Rome of the Emperors, and Europe of the Crusaders as we take you on a tour of our lineup of classic board games. It's our goal to deepen your appreciation of the games you love to play and maybe surprise you with the odd twists and turns these games have taken through the centuries. **Hoyle Board Games** represents the cutting edge of computer technology with its beautiful graphics and involving gameplay, but the games themselves belong to history.

In addition to the rules for each game (which you may know already; these are, after all, the classics!) we have included in-depth strategy sections to help you sharpen your playing skills. The rules are also available on the CD itself in the "Getting Started" screens and, of course, in the online help.

The why of board games

Why bother with the history of board games? Because the story of our amusements mirrors the story of civilization. In the sharing of board games, we can see the spread of cultures and kingdoms over the 6,000 years of recorded human history. We can trace the birth of board games to the first cities, in the river valleys of the Nile (modern-day Egypt) and the Tigris and Euphrates (Iraq). As humans moved through the Middle East, they brought their games with them. These games ended up in Persia, India, China, Korea, and Japan to the east, Greece and North Africa to the west.

The ancient Greeks handed off this legacy to Imperial Rome. Rome's legions marched, and tribal cultures (in what are now Germany, France, and England) learned new ways to play. The Norse learned these games and carried them to their colonies in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and Iceland.

When Rome fell, Islam arose, and the Arab states kept learning alive in the Dark Ages. They advanced old games to new levels of sophistication and brought them along when they invaded the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) and Sicily. The medieval era gave way to the Renaissance, and people found newer and faster ways to communicate, trade, and exchange ideas. The Spanish led the Old World's invasion of the New World, where the Native Americans had for centuries been playing games of their own.

How did board games begin?

When you think of the typical board game, you think of markers, tokens, pieces, or men maneuvering for advantage on a flat surface inscribed with lines or circles. This seems perfectly natural to us, but who introduced this concept? Where did the inspiration come from? Were board games originally an exercise in magic, an attempt to foretell the future or influence the course of events? A British scholar named H.J.R. Murray offered an enticing guess in *A History of Board Games Other Than Chess* (1952). Murray was a one-man research tidal wave—he taught himself Arabic, so he could read the original sources, and in this way tracked down the origins of Chess and many other games.

Murray believed that games, activities with no object other than play, could only be developed by people who lived in a relatively friendly environment with dependable shelter and enough to eat and who had developed some degree of social integration (marriage, religion, cooperation in hunting and farming). Murray then paints the following picture:

“In the heat of the day when work in the open air is too arduous, or when the day’s work is over and the daily needs of his family are met, man’s innate urge to be doing something still impels him to action, if only to the handling of objects at hand, whether natural like pebbles, or some of his household goods of his own making—at first aimlessly, but as soon as his attention is held, to explore their capabilities for new uses. I suggest that it was in this way that the habit of using objects at hand as playthings, and so as materials for games, arose.”

As an example, Murray points to—string! Primitive cultures depended on string, particularly those peoples who had to fish for food or use boats. String, of course, is used in games of cat’s cradle, which is played all over the world. If you needed string to survive in the world, why would you waste precious survival time making knots to represent animals or tell stories? Because you had the time to waste—that is, you had the time to play. String games, Murray writes, are most likely “the result of handling and playing with string, and supports my view that other games originated in the same way.”

We’ll never know who put the first token on the first board and threw the dice for the first move. Nor will we know how the idea came to that person. But there’s much we do know about games, thanks to the efforts of researchers like Murray, and you’ll find an overview of that knowledge in the pages to come.

Further reading on board games

This book will give you a good grounding in the history of board games. If you’d like to learn more, here are some resources for you:

- Vernon Bartlett, *The Past of Pastimes* (1969)
- Nathan Divinsky (editor), *The Batsford Chess Encyclopedia* (1990)
- Frederic Grunfeld (editor), *Games of the World* (1975)

— David Hooper & Kenneth Whyld (editors), *The Oxford Companion to Chess* (1984)

— Merilyn Simonds Mohr, *The Games Treasury* (1993)

— H.J.R. Murray, *A History of Board Games Other than Chess* (1952)

— Prince Alexis Obolensky and Ted James, *Backgammon: The Action Game* (1969)

— Anthony Saidy & Norman Lessing, *The World of Chess* (1974)

One last word

If you’ve enjoyed these timeless pastimes, we hope you’ll also consider purchasing **Hoyle Card Games**, which includes fourteen all-time favorites: Bridge, Crazy Eights, Cribbage, Euchre, Gin Rummy, Hearts, Old Maid, Poker, Pyramid, Spades, War, Memory Match, Go Fish and 30 variations of Solitaire. (We’ve even thrown in two surprise board games!) You’ll find the same breathtaking graphics in **Hoyle Card Games**, as well as the same challenging gameplay and easy-to-use interface. Ask for it at your local software dealer, or call us directly at (800)757-7707 (Monday through Saturday, 7am to 11pm CST, Sunday, 8am to 9pm CST).

— Steven Bryan Bieler

BACKGAMMON



How the game evolved

All board games that are older than today's fad pass through certain stages of development. These stages are well known to games scholars, and they reappear in game after game. Backgammon has been through more of these stages than any other game, even Chess. Here are the Eight Stages of Board Game Evolution, as told through the history of Backgammon:

1. *Claim the Egyptians as parents.* Backgammon is not the oldest game in the world—dice probably holds that distinction, though some people might nominate politics—but, given the available evidence, it has a good claim on the second spot. “An authentic, documented history of the ancient game of Backgammon should probably begin either in the Garden of Eden or in the murky caves of the Neanderthal man,” Alexis Obolensky and Ted James declare in *Backgammon: The Action Game*, and they're only half-kidding. Though Obolensky and James grandly assume that every 6,000-year-old reference to

“dice” really means “backgammon,” the game has been traced to the beginnings of Egyptian and Sumerian civilization. You can't beat this kind of heritage.

Backgammon boards not so different from our own have been found in the royal tombs of the Nile Valley and in the buried suburbs of Ur. If Mesopotamia, the site of Ur, was also the site of the biblical Flood, then perhaps Noah and his family filled their spare hours aboard the Ark by playing Backgammon!

2. *Work in the Romans, too (or the Greeks, or both).* Even when their empire was at its height, the Romans always took the time for a round of Ludus Duodecim Scriptorum (literally, “a game with 12 lines”). The Romans usually shortened this name to Alea or Tabula (the latter meaning “table;” when Backgammon entered Europe, it was called Tables). This was Backgammon with three dice instead of two. Nero lost a fortune at the game. Caligula cheated at it. Antony played Tabula with Cleopatra; what stakes they played for is not known.
3. *Inspire a creation myth.* In the world of games, India has turned out the best creation myths. According to stories passed along by medieval Arab scholars, Backgammon was invented by an Indian philosopher who was trying to represent the concept of time physically, in a board game:

Backgammon objects

- 30 pieces
- 24 points
- 12 points of one half-board
- 12 points of the other half-board
- 7 spots on opposite sides of a die
- 2 dice

What they mean

- days in a month
- hours in a day
- months in a year
- zodiac signs
- days of the week*
- day and night

*Also, the planets known at the time.

4. *Achieve literary immortality.* The Old and New Testaments are not noted for their analyses of board games. You won't find Backgammon in the Bible, but it did come close. H.J.R. Murray, in *A History of Board Games Other Than Chess*, gives as the first reference to Backgammon in world literature—the Jewish Talmud! The Talmud, produced by 6th-century Jews living in Babylon, is a compilation of written commentaries on the

Oral Laws of the Jewish people. Apparently, the rabbinical authorities of that time felt the need to at least mention Backgammon. (They didn't offer strategy hints.)

The Babylonian Jews used the Persian words for the game: "nard" and "nardshir." "Nard" was the wood marker used in the game. "Shir" means "lion," referring to the two types of pieces then in use: plain wood markers and markers with carved lions' heads.

A century later, Backgammon (Nard, that is) is mentioned in a Persian fictional work about the invention of Chess.

Backgammon was supposed to have been invented as a riddle to pose to a king. (The Persians spun the same story about Chess as well.) So chalk up an Indian and a Persian creation myth for Backgammon.

5. *Ride along with the Arabs.* Typically in the history of games, the Arabs, after their conquest of Persia in the 7th century, learned all the games the Persians learned from the Indians, who may or may not have learned them from the Chinese. The Arabs raised the level of play in these games to unimaginable heights and wrote the first books about them. They then invaded Spain and Sicily, fought off the Crusaders, and traded with the Venetians, all of which led to an exchange of ideas—and games.

The Arabs adopted Backgammon immediately, but the Islamic religious authorities were troubled by the game and its gambling aspect (just as Chess had troubled them with its "graven images," which are forbidden by the Koran). Chess survived in the Islamic world because the players switched from the fanciful pieces used by the Persians to abstract pieces with no resemblance to people, animals, or anything else.

Backgammon couldn't do without its dice, and in the 8th century it was banned. This ban was not successful. Though the Islamic courts threatened players with various penalties, the game continued to flourish—a lesson the Catholic Church was fated to learn all over again a few centuries later.

The first book about Backgammon was written by an Arab of the 9th century.

6. *Conquer Europe.* The Persian/Muslim Nard and the Roman Tabula met in France in the 11th century. The third dice was

eliminated, but the Roman name was retained, as can be seen from the forms Tabula took as it marched across the continent: in Italy, Tavola; in Spain, Tablas; in Middle English, Tavel, then Tables; and so on. Backgammon (or Tables) began appearing in the literature of the period almost at once, by which we can track its progress even to distant Iceland (which it reached late in the 13th century).

The first European book to focus on Backgammon appeared in Spain in 1283. This book was primarily about Chess, and was compiled by scholars working under the direction of King Alfonso of Castile ("Alfonso the Wise"). A similar book by an unknown author appeared in England circa 1300.

As with most of the games that entered Europe in this era, Backgammon was taken up by the nobility and was soon competing with Chess for the position of most-popular game (both games were eventually dethroned by playing cards). As Backgammon filtered down to the masses, the Church tried to ban or at least contain it. These efforts failed. By the 1700s, Backgammon was the favorite pastime among vicars in the English countryside!

Innkeepers throughout Europe were soon providing Backgammon boards and sets to their customers, a tradition that goes back to the Roman empire. Obolensky and James report on a wall painting found in the excavation of Pompeii: "In one panel, a game is in process, and an argument has ensued over points. In the second, an innkeeper is throwing the two battling players out of his tavern."

7. *Catch Edmond Hoyle's attention.* Hoyle died in 1769, long before most of the games played today were invented. He wrote books on just five games in his lifetime, so the odds are against most games making this connection. Happily for Backgammon, Hoyle was not only a devotee of the game, he also had many ideas about how it should be played. Edmond Hoyle, in fact, turned out to be the Alexander Cartwright of Backgammon. Just as Cartwright in the 1840s codified the laws of baseball, Hoyle in 1746 did the same for Backgammon in his first book of games. Most of Hoyle's rules of play are still in force (as are most of Cartwright's). The modern game began with Hoyle, who had developed

considerable clout in the game world by 1746. When he put together the hodge-podge of rules governing the game and decreed, among other things, that doublets should be played twice and that the scoring should include such subdivisions as “backgammon,” “gammon,” and “hits,” people listened. And played.

8. *Pump up the volume with the Americans.* Americans couldn't figure out a way to improve on Chess, but in 1925 an American innovator whose name is apparently lost to us developed the concept of doubling. Doubling revived Backgammon and led to a worldwide Backgammon renaissance that continues today.

The word “Backgammon,” incidentally, comes from the Middle English “gamen,” meaning “game.” It's thought that the name derives from the pieces occasionally having to go and reenter the board. In Scotland, the game is called Gammon; in Spain, Tablas Reales (The Royal Tables); and in Italy, Tavole Reale (ditto). In France, the name is Trictrac and in Germany, Puff, though how these names strayed so far from the Roman Tabula is not clear.

How the game is played

Backgammon is played by two players on a special board with 15 pieces to a side. The pieces making up each side are called “stones.” Though they may be of any color, the darker-colored pieces are called “Black” while the lighter ones are called “White.”

The board is divided into two halves, or “tables,” by a partition running down the center. This is called the “bar.” The outer table is on your left, the inner table is on your right. In each table there are six “points” (long, thin triangles).

The pieces move according to your throw of the two dice. The players roll the dice to see who goes first, with the higher roll winning. (If the numbers are the same, you just roll again.) The player with the higher number uses that for his first turn. From then on turns alternate, and you always throw the dice to begin your turn.

The object of the game seems odd at first: You win by being the first player to transport all of your stones off the board! To do that you must first get all of your stones into your inner, or “home,” table. Once they're all safely home, you can proceed to move them off the board. Pieces move from point to point.

Like a rolling stone

After you've thrown the dice to begin your turn, you can apply both numbers to one stone or each number separately to two stones. If, for example, you throw a 5 and a 4, you can move one piece a distance of nine points, or you can move one piece five and a second piece four. If you throw doubles, say a 3 and a 3, you play that number four times rather than twice: you can move one piece 12 points, or one piece nine points and one piece three, or two pieces six points each, or four pieces three points each.

A stone cannot land on a point occupied by two or more of your opponent's stones. You are not allowed to make that move, even if you have only one piece left and there is no other move you can make. A point occupied by two more stones is an indestructible fortress; that point is said to be “closed” or “made.” However, though you can't share a point with enemy pieces, you can jump over them.

Any number of pieces of the same color can rest on one point. If necessary they are piled on top of each other. This keeps one side's pieces from encroaching on the other side's.

Moves are always compulsory, even when it's in your best interest to stand still. If you can only use one of the two numbers you rolled, then you must do so. You must always try to use the higher number.

A single stone resting on a point is a target. It's called a “blot,” and when you land directly on an enemy blot it's called a “hit.” The stone is then retired to the bar. The stone must be “entered” and become a stone again before you can move any of your other pieces. Plus, the lonely stone must enter the enemy's home table on an open point. For example, if you roll a 5-2, and if points 5 and 2 in your opponent's home table are open, you can choose either one and place your blot there. If you placed it on point 5, you can now move it two points.

If one of those points is occupied by a single stone of your opponent's, you can hit it and send it to the bar. If none of the points are

open, if your enemy's stones have crowded all available space, you are "shut out," and you don't even get to throw the dice. Your blot remains on the bar, and you can't move any other. Your turn is over.

When you've collected all of your stones in your home table, you can "bear off:" that is, remove all your stones from the game, in the order determined by the dice. If the number you rolled is higher than the number of points you have yet to travel, you simply bear off the piece that's farthest away.

If you're hit after you've started to bear off, your stone goes to the bar. You must enter it and bring it around to your home table before you can go back to bearing off.

The game ends when either player bears off his or her last stone. If the loser has borne off at least one stone, and if he or she has nothing left in the winner's inner table, then the loser has lost just one game. But if he or she has not borne off at least one stone, the loss counts double. This is called a "gammon." If the loser has a stone on the bar or a stone left in the winner's inner table, and has not borne off a stone, the loss counts triple. This is called a "backgammon."

Doubling

You can really ratchet up the stakes by using a tactic called "doubling." Either player may make the first double of the game. You simply declare your intention to double before rolling the dice. Thereafter, the right to double alternates. When one player chooses to double, the other must decide whether to play on for a double game, or resign right there and lose the current value of the game. You'll need a doubling cube for this; basically, it's a single die with some very high numbers on it. The double for gammon and triple for backgammon both apply to the final score; this is in addition to whatever voluntary doubles have been made.

Strategies

If you're new to Backgammon, endeavor to play a safe game. Here are a few rules of thumb:

1. Do your best to "make points" (block off points with two stones) and avoid blots.
2. Try not to put more than four stones on a single point.
3. Move your backmen (your last two stones) early in the game.

By making points, you will hamper your opponent's progress. For example, take a look at **Fig. 1**. If white rolls a 1, 3, 4, 6 (or any combination) black's closed points will have white's backmen blocked out of several possible moves. White may be forced into a poor move, leaving pieces vulnerable to attack.

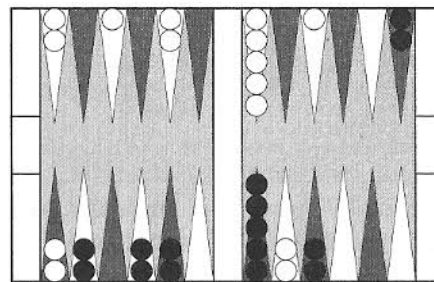


Fig. 1: Making points

Also, by making points you will avoid blots, thus reducing your opponent's opportunities to land on your stones and retire them to the bar.

Adding a third stone to a point is very useful, and can be used to make additional points on subsequent turns. However, you should avoid placing more than four stones on a single point because it reduces your options when moving.

Moving your backmen as soon as possible helps prevent them from being trapped by your opponent, who may attempt to bottle them up in their starting position by forming a "prime" (as discussed below).

Advanced Strategies

Fig. 2 shows how the points in backgammon are numbered.

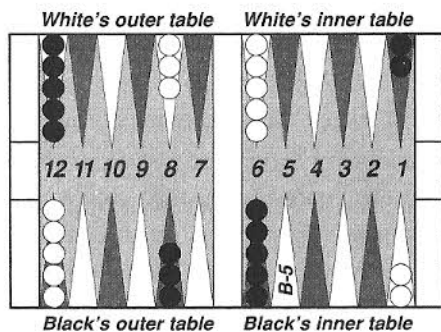


Fig. 2: Board notation

As an example, a white or black stone located on black's inner table, 5th position from the right, would be said to occupy position B-5, also called "black's 5-point." This numbering will help us to describe some of the strategic positions.

A key backgammon concept is the "direct hit," which refers to any blot that can be reached by your opponent in six points or less. Statistically, a stone is more likely to be hit at six points distance than at any other specific distance. (All blots from one to five points distance also have a high probability of being hit. The odds decrease sharply at distances over six.) The obvious point here is that you want to avoid making your stones into direct hits and, thus, easy prey for your opponent!

The high probability of stones moving six points or fewer also helps define good board position. In the beginning of the game, the "golden point" (B-5 is black's golden point, W-5 is white's) is a key position (Fig. 3); so is the "bar point" (B-7 for black, W-7 for white). Why are these points of strategic interest? Again, this has to do with dice probabilities: Holding the golden point and/or bar points makes it difficult for the backmen (and retired pieces) to leave the inner table.

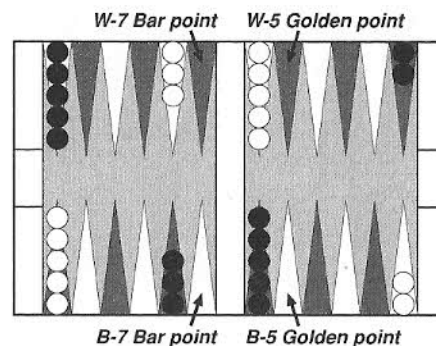


Fig. 3: The golden point and bar point

You can contain your opponent's backmen (and stones that are retired to the bar) by forming a prime. A prime consists of a row of six consecutive blocked points as shown in Fig. 4. A prime is impassable. If you can block enemy stones behind it, you can advance your stones while your opponent (who is likely to be very frustrated!) gets bogged down, perhaps even immobilized.

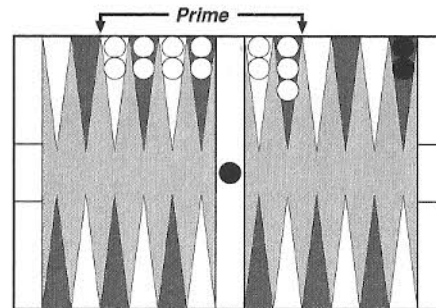


Fig. 4: A prime

If you're unable get six in a row, don't despair. Getting four or five blocked points in a row (informally known as a "four-prime" and a

“five-prime”) may slow down your opponent’s progress significantly, even though it’s not impassable.

A stone you bring up behind your other points is termed a “builder.” This piece is often instrumental in making a new point. **Fig. 5** shows a builder in position B11. This builder can probably be used to make a point for black. Although you need builders, consider the enemy threat before making one. Check to see if your builder is also a direct hit.

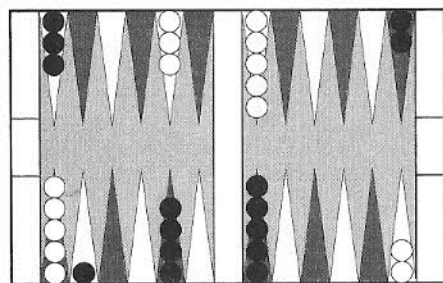


Fig. 5: A builder

Another common ploy used by experienced backgammon players is to establish an “anchor.” An anchor is a point made in your opponent’s inner table (**Fig. 6**). Although this flies in the face of the usual strategy of moving your backmen, creating an anchor makes it harder for your opponent to expand a four-prime and five-prime. If you’re able to make multiple points (especially on both the 1-point and 2-point), it will be difficult for your opponent to bear off. If you’ve had a few pieces retired to the bar, consider using them to create anchors.

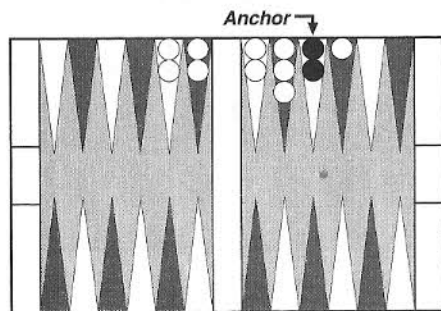


Fig. 6: An anchor

BATTLING SHIPS



How the game evolved

Battling Ships is also known under its trademarked name, Battleship™. (In the British Isles, it’s called Battleships or Salvo.) How Battling Ships came to be is yet another mystery for games scholars. But the way the game is played, and the names involved, allow us to make a good guess as to *when* it came to be.

First, consider the British name of Battleships. One would expect that a naval-warfare simulation would include aircraft carriers. The British launched the first one, in 1918, though the true potential of these ships wasn’t realized until the Second World War. Given the emphasis in the name, we can conclude that this game was developed while battleships still ruled the waves—before 1939.

Second, consider the other British name, Salvo. In Battling Ships, you fire up to six shots from your fleet’s guns at targets you can’t see (perhaps because they’re supposed to be at extreme long range). In the days of sail, warships had to get quite close to their opponents for their short-range volleys of cannonballs to have any effect. These volleys were

called “broad­sides,” not salvos. Given the emphasis in this name, we can conclude that Battling Ships was developed after sail and wood had been replaced by steam and iron. The American Civil War saw the first use of steam-powered iron vessels, called ironclads, so the decade of the 1860s must be the earliest date this game could’ve been developed.

The word “battleship,” though it was first recorded in 1794, was not applied to the big hulking monsters of the world’s navies until well after the ironclad era. In fact, nobody used “battleship” much at all in the 1800s. Even when, in 1869, the British launched the first oceangoing, iron-hulled warship—the first true battleship—it was referred to as an “armored frigate.”

But, in 1906, the British sent the HMS *Dreadnought* to sea. They weren’t fooling around this time. The *Dreadnought* carried the biggest guns of its era and didn’t bother with any of the small stuff. The launch of the *Dreadnought* touched off a race among the world powers for naval supremacy and brought the battleship into the public’s imagination and everyday speech. Therefore, since no one has been able to determine an exact birthdate for Battling Ships, **Hoyle Board Games** takes the bold step of declaring that date to be 1906 (or, at the earliest, the decade of the 1890s).

How the game is played

Battling Ships is a game for two people played on two 10x10 grids. They are the oceans on which your fleets will fight their battles.

Each side has a fleet consisting of an aircraft carrier (five squares long), a battleship (four squares), a destroyer and a submarine (three squares each), and a PT boat (two squares). You place these on your grid, out of sight of your opponent.

Each player can fire a salvo of up to six shots per turn. You choose the squares your missiles will strike. Hits and misses will be reported to you so you can plan your firing patterns.

A ship is sunk when every one of its squares has been hit. Play continues then in one of two ways: You can choose to have your barrage reduced by one shot for every ship you lose, or choose to play with the same number of shots you started with. The first player to sink all of the enemy’s ships is the winner.

Strategies

The winner in Battling Ships is usually determined by well-aimed missile fire and a bit of luck. Playing good defense (which you can only do before the game starts, during the placement phase) is also a factor, although it’s not as important. The main point in defense is that you should avoid placing ships on adjacent grid squares, as is shown in **Fig. 1**. Why? When a ship is hit, your opponent will try to sink it. Under this barrage of enemy fire, any other adjacent ships are likely to be hit as well.

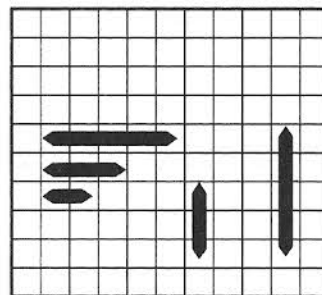


Fig. 1: Poor placement of ships

When searching for ships, it is better to spread out your attack. Closely-packed missile fire will not cover the board as quickly as a wider spread.

Once you have found a ship, your next best strategy depends upon what you have chosen in the game setup options. If you’re playing the default setup, where the number of shots a player has in each round is based on the number of his or her remaining ships, you should try to sink the opponent’s ship immediately, since it will reduce enemy salvos by one shot each turn (two for the aircraft carrier!).

If you’re playing with a live opponent, in either head-to-head or Internet play, don’t dismiss the psychological factor. Your opponent may have consciously or unconsciously formed some pattern while placing ships. If such a pattern exists, finding a few ships may help you to guess the whereabouts of others.

Advanced Strategies

Highly efficient search patterns can be devised based on the size of the ship you're aiming for. The PT boat is the hardest to find. **Fig. 2** shows a traditional zig-zag pattern of missile fire that is designed to efficiently locate every ship in a given area (including the PT boat).

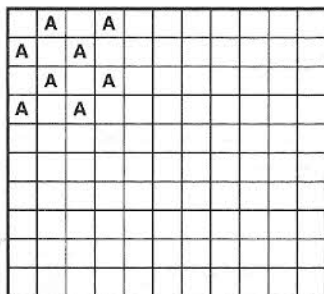


Fig. 2: Traditional zig-zag attack

The idea here is to eliminate as many “hiding places” for ships as possible, without having to fire a missile into every square. (Each “A” in Fig. 2 represents aimed fire.)

However, this pattern is not necessarily the best. It doesn't cover the board very quickly. If you're playing the standard game variation (where you lose shots when you lose ships), you'll want to find ships as quickly as possible. In this situation, you might consider alternative methods of finding ships. You might also consider which ship(s) you want to find first: the cruiser and the sub (the three-square boats)? The aircraft carrier (five-squares)?

After an initial hit, how should you go about dispatching the metal hulk to Davey Jones' Locker? One way is the “fast and ugly” method. Suppose you've just scored a single hit on your opponent and you have four shots in your salvo. The quickest means of determining the exact location of the ship is to direct all four shots around the initial hit (**Fig. 3**). This will produce a hit/miss ratio of 1:1 (two hits, two misses) or 1:3 (one hit, three misses). Considering that you've already found the ship, the prospect of wasting three shots is unappealing, if not downright ugly. (The H in Fig. 3 represents a hit.)

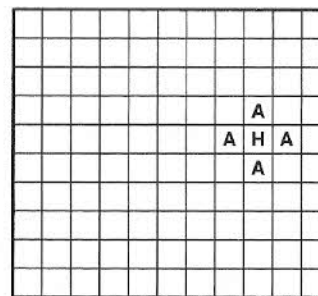


Fig. 3: Sinking a ship

To improve your accuracy, you may want to divide up your attack over several turns; for example, instead of directing four shots around the initial hit, direct one, two, or three shots (**Fig. 4**). On average, this will result in fewer wasted missiles. (But, pause to weigh your options; balance the need to use your shots wisely against the need to sink the ship as quickly as possible.)

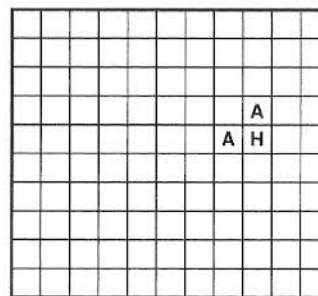
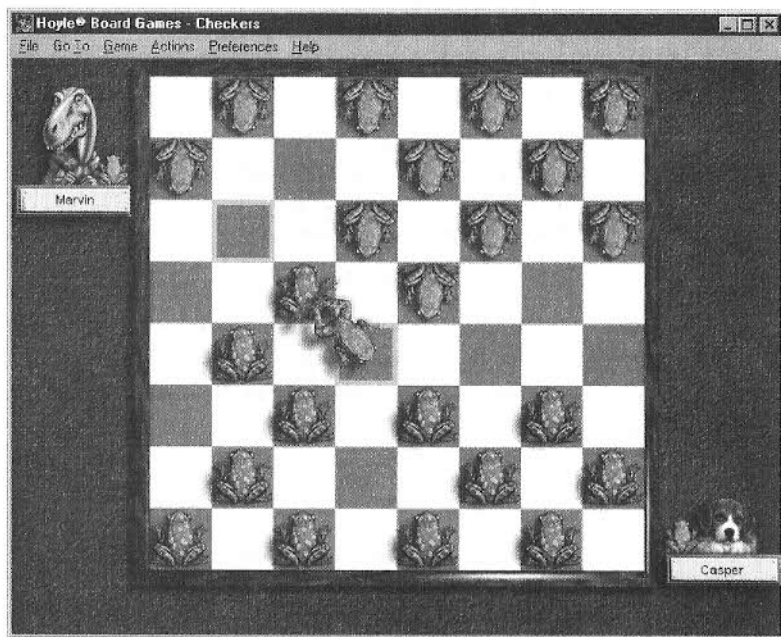


Fig. 4: Sinking a ship efficiently

CHECKERS



How the game evolved

Checkers has always suffered from a bit of an image problem. It's a medieval offspring of Chess, and it had to grow up in the shadow of its parent, which was at the time wildly popular. And it took several centuries to find the right balance in the rules. Many people look upon Checkers as that game you play until you're ready to learn Chess, but this attitude is mistaken. Checkers is a game with its own depths and complexities. A supercomputer brought down the human champion in Chess (IBM's Deep Blue, 1997); it took a supercomputer just to earn a tie with the human champion in Checkers (the University of Alberta's Chinook, 1994).

The French mix and match

Checkers is almost certainly a French invention of about the 12th century. It's a mixture of an old Moorish game, Alquerque (pronounced like the city of Albuquerque, minus the third and fourth let-

ters), and Chess. Alquerque is the Spanish corruption of the Arabic "el-quirkat." The game was first mentioned in print in a Moorish book published in the 10th century, but its history goes much farther back. One of the ancient temples of Egypt has an Alquerque board engraved in its roof. (Since we know the ancient Egyptians didn't float in midair, we can assume that this board was meant as a decoration. The Egyptians must have loved their games to have used them in this fashion.)

Alquerque gave Checkers the 12-man army and the capture-by-jumping concept. Alquerque is played on a latticed board, but the pieces occupy the intersections of the lines rather than the insides of the squares formed by the lines.

Chess provided the concept of the checkered board (a European innovation). When the French combined Chess and Alquerque, the Alquerque men moved off the intersections and occupied the Chess squares. Now all the new game needed was a name. Surprisingly, that too came from Chess.

When Chess came to Europe, it had no Queen; instead, a piece called the "Fers" (a Persian word meaning "Counselor") stood beside the King. Because the pieces in Checkers moved like the Fers in Chess, the game was called Ferses, and the pieces, rather than the 12 flat disks we're familiar with, were 12 Ferses pilfered from Chess sets.

By the year 1500, the Europeans had replaced the Fers in Chess with the Queen—in French, the "dame." The Queen also knocked the Fers off the checkerboard. (So now the French were using 12 Queens per army—and when a Queen reached the last rank, it underwent a sex change and became a King. Interesting.) For the next 200 years the French referred to Checkers as Dames, a name that followed the game as it spread across the continent, from Turkey (*Dama*) to Scotland (where it is still referred to as *Dams*). In England, however, the game was called Draughts (pronounced "Drafts"), a Middle English word referring to a move made by the Queen in Chess. Draughts is the name the English have continued to use; the pieces are the draughtsmen and the board is the draughtsboard.

The word "Checkers" enters the language

The name "Draughts" never caught on in several rural, out-of-the-

way pockets of England. People there referred to the game as Checkers, after the checkered board on which the game was played. Many of the Pilgrims who set up shop in Massachusetts in the 1600s came from those areas where Draughts was known as Checkers. They not only brought the game with them when they came over on the Mayflower, they brought the name, too. Checkers spread outward from Massachusetts (many New England Indian tribes adopted the game), and wherever English was spoken, Checkers was the name.

Checkers catches on (slowly)

The indefatigable H.J.R. Murray dug deep into medieval European literature to document the spread of Checkers. In his *History of Board Games Other Than Chess*, he reports finding only five mentions of the game in the years 1200 to 1500. Four are French; one is English. (The English reference is from a poem by Chaucer, who cleverly plays up the confusion that might result in conversation if one person is talking about Chess and the other Checkers and neither knows it.)

In this period too the Church was busy banning every new game that popped up in Christendom, including Chess and almost all card and dice games. But Murray could find no such injunction leveled against Checkers. "It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the game cannot have been very widely known before 1500," he writes—certainly not outside of France, England, and perhaps Spain.

Something happened to Checkers in those years leading up to the 16th century, something that made the game much more attractive. Up until then, there were two ways to play Checkers: a) you could choose not to capture an enemy piece when the opportunity came, or b) you were compelled to capture. Compulsory captures is what makes Checkers so interesting, and by the opening of the 16th century this form of play was dominant. (Odd rules from various corners of Europe, such as checkermen not being allowed to capture Kings, had also been ditched.) Checkers then spread eastward, first into Italy (where we have a report dated 1527) and elsewhere in Europe after 1550.

The Scots take center-stage

The first work in English to focus on Checkers in a serious manner appeared in 1756 (William Payne's *Introduction to the Game of*

Draughts). From here the Scots took over the game, and, in the following hundred years, greatly expanded our knowledge of its possibilities. The Scottish influence is still seen in the names of some of the more popular opening systems, which bear the names of Scottish towns (Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow) and more fanciful notions (the Will-o-the-Wisp, the Laird & Lady, and the Ayrshire Lassie).

Given the stormy relations between England and Scotland in the years leading up to their unification, it's believed that the Scots learned the game of Checkers not from the hated English but from the Dutch (in whose armies many Scots fought in the 17th century). The Scottish "Dam" is certainly closer to the Dutch "Damen" and the French "Dames" than the English "Draughts."

Checkers in the modern era

Those of us who don't play in Checkers tournaments usually begin a game by just beginning. Whatever we like to play, we play. This style is called "Go As You Please," and on the professional level it results in numerous draws, due to the great knowledge these players bring to the game. The first world championship, held in 1847 (between two Scotsmen, of course), was a Go-As-You-Please affair. In the 1890s, the Two-Move Restriction was introduced, in which the first two moves of a game were chosen by lot from certain pre-approved combinations.

The Two-Move Restriction eliminated many draws, though not enough. The Three-Move Restriction was introduced at the 1934 world championship (between two Americans). The participants chose moves by lot from a list of officially sanctioned "three-move openings." This system is still used today (though there's also a separate tournament track for Go-As-You-Please games). A third system, in which one man from each army is removed by lot before the first move, is less popular. (Hoyle's Checkers is solely Go As You Please.)

An odd sociological footnote

We all know the stereotype of Chess masters: they eventually go insane. Checkers masters keep their marbles, so to speak, but they seem to die tragically. Some examples:

The first American world champion, Robert Yates, took the crown from the Scots in 1874. He died not long after in an accident at sea. He was 24.

The 1902 world champion, Scotland's Richard Jordan, was killed in a train accident.

In 1927, the United States walloped Great Britain in the Second International Checkers Match (Great Britain had done the same to the US in the first match, played in 1905). Sam Gonotsky, top scorer for the US team, died a few years later. He was in his twenties.

In 1949, Willie Ryan tied defending champ Walter Hellman (both Americans). Ryan wasn't particularly young at the time, but he died not long after, just weeks before he was scheduled to play Hellman in a rematch.

In 1951, Hellman defeated Maurice Chamblee (American) in a title match. Chamblee soon died, of course. He was in his twenties.

How the game is played

Checkers is played by two people on the same checkered board that is used for Chess, but there all similarities end. The pieces that make up your army are also called "checkers" (or simply "men"), and each army has 12 of them. The checkers of each army are the same color. Whichever colors are used, the side with the darker pieces is called "Black," and the side with the lighter pieces is called "White" (they're usually red).

The board is placed so that each player has a light-colored square in the corner on the right. The pieces move only on the dark-colored squares.

To begin a game, set your pieces up on the 12 dark squares of the first 3 rows of the board. Your opponent does the same.

By tradition, Black moves first. Moves alternate after that. You lose the game if your turn comes and you can't make any moves. This usually occurs because all of your pieces have been captured, but sometimes it's because the ones you have left have been immobilized by your opponent. If neither you nor your opponent has enough of an advantage to win, you can agree to a draw.

The pieces move one square at a time, always forward and always diagonally to an adjacent dark square. The exception to the one-square-at-a-time rule is when you are capturing, or "jumping," an enemy piece. You can jump if your piece occupies a square adjacent to the enemy, and if there is an empty square on the other side of the enemy. That empty square is the one your piece will jump to. The enemy piece is then removed from the board.

Capturing is compulsory. (It is possible to change this setting so that capturing is optional.) If the opportunity to capture comes up, you must take it. If you have the option of capturing a piece in either of two directions, you can choose which one to grab.

If, after capturing an opponent's piece, you find yourself next to another and the square beyond that one is empty, you can capture that second piece, too. And so on. You can change direction in these multiple captures, so long as you keep moving forward.

King me

The row of squares farthest from each player is that player's "King row." On reaching the King row, your piece is crowned and becomes a King. Now it can move backward as well as forward. (If by jumping over one or more of your opponent's pieces you land on the King row, your new King can't continue jumping in the same turn even if the opportunity is right there. The act of being crowned requires that the new King end its turn on the King row.)

Strategies

In Checkers, the overall goal is to keep the balance of power in your favor, which means having more pieces than your opponent. Of course, having six badly positioned men while your opponent has four well-placed kings is not an advantageous situation. But on the whole if you can keep your piece count up, you will tend to win.

To get ahead in piece count, you will need to balance offense with defense. If you have a chance to get a king early in the game while keeping your opponent from doing the same, you will be in a good position to mop up several of his or her pieces. But charging out to try to obtain a king early is likely to result in failure, since a piece out

front all by itself is likely to be captured.

A more reliable strategy for the beginner is to concentrate on defense, trying to avoid positions where you are forced to lose pieces. For the most part, this means keeping your pieces backed up.

Backing up your pieces means guarding their rear flanks. Look at **Fig. 1** to see how the front line of white pieces is protected by the pieces behind them. At the moment, the front pieces are invulnerable to the enemy.

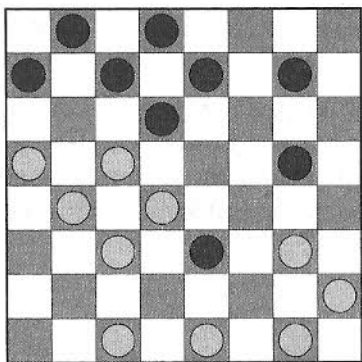


Fig. 1: Backing up your pieces

To keep your pieces backed up you often have to move the “back-up” piece into place first, and then move the front line piece into position in front of it (since if you did it the other way around the front-line piece would be vulnerable for one turn).

Fig. 1 also shows that white has moved only one piece from the back wall (the very back row of checkers). Keeping pieces on the back wall until you have a good reason to move them is a good defensive strategy since those pieces cannot be jumped where they stand.

By keeping your pieces safe, you can try to force your opponent into making a bad move; a move that results in you making a capture with your opponent unable to reciprocate.

If you can wear your opponent down in this way, you will be the first to get a king, and then you can go on an offensive attack.

Advanced Strategies

Compulsory capture is of the utmost importance in Checkers. It can be used to improve position, obtain double jumps, and sack kings. The computer will use it to your detriment whenever possible (especially to capture a king by sacrificing a regular piece). It can be very difficult to predict when you're being set up for a disastrous forced jump, because it requires you to look ahead a couple of moves.

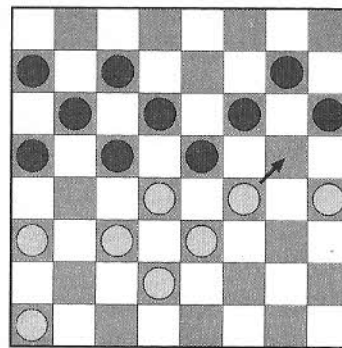


Fig. 2: A forced jump

Fig. 2 depicts a situation in which black may be feeling pretty comfortable. However, if black isn't careful, red will advance his piece on the right (shown by the arrow) and force a jump (**Fig. 3**). Red will then execute a double-jump.

Experiment with compulsory capture to see how you can make it work to your advantage.

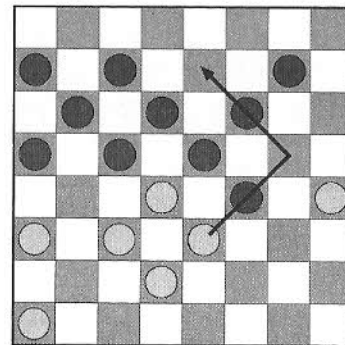


Fig. 3: Result of the forced jump

Another important option in Checkers is trading pieces. This means that you and your opponent lose an equal number of pieces (one or more). Some reasons to consider trading pieces are:

1. To prevent a piece from being kinged.
2. To simplify the game. This is especially effective if your opponent is more experienced at Checkers. A simpler board setup will be easier for you to read.
3. To strengthen your advantage (if you're ahead). A one piece advantage is more significant if there are only a few pieces left on the board.

A fourth reason to trade pieces may come up after a stall. Sometimes in Checkers both players end up stalling (taking inconsequential moves to avoid losing a piece). If this happens, count the turns that are left before one of you is forced into making a bad move. If you find that the count favors your opponent, try to change up the board position by trading pieces instead.

Take a look at the board in **Fig. 4**. Often near the end of the game, one or several chases will occur. Here, white is chasing black. Because play occurs only on the dark squares of the board, two of the four corner squares cannot be entered. These corners make better refuge than the others, because it's harder for a piece to get pinned down. Black is heading in the safest direction.

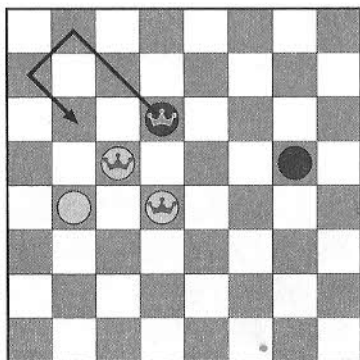
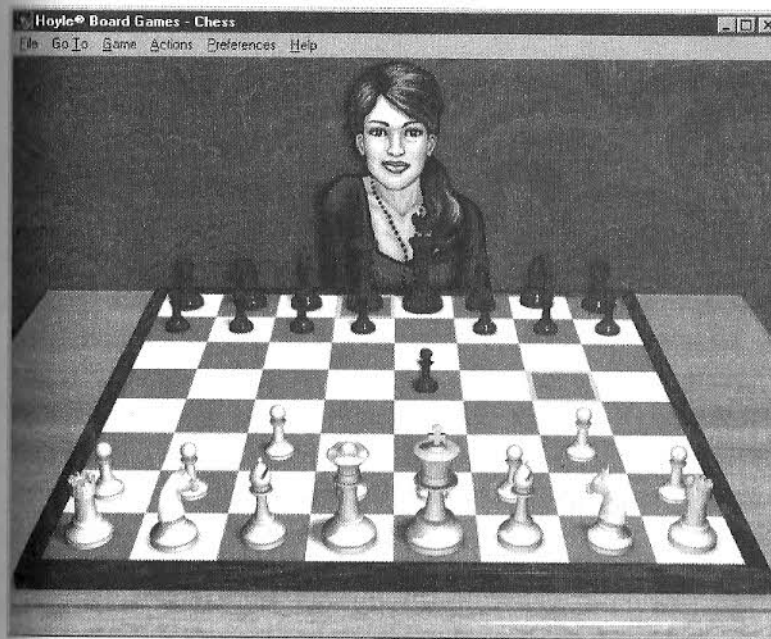


Fig. 4: Flight to corners

CHESS



How the game evolved

“The game of Chess is a lake, in which a mosquito can bathe and an elephant can drown.”—Indian proverb

Archaeologists have more than once dug up game pieces that could be chessmen. Some of these items have been judged to be thousands of years old. Did Roman senators, Greek philosophers, or even Egyptian pharaohs play some primitive form of Chess? Was Chess played by the waters of Babylon and in the courtyards of Ur? Given the available evidence (or rather, the lack of almost any evidence), it seems doubtful. Nathan Divinsky, writing in his admirable *The Hantsford Chess Encyclopedia*, sums up the prevailing view: “It seems unlikely that Chess existed long before the year 600 without any references in articulate Greece or in businesslike Rome.”

The oldest Chess pieces that everyone agrees are Chess pieces date from about the year 600. That's also the approximate date of the earliest reference to Chess in world literature. The writer is Persian, and in his text he mentions a game similar to ours that has been

obtained through trade with India: "Chaturanga." If you allow a few decades for a new pastime to soak so far into a culture that people begin to write about it, and for that pastime to travel to Persia, we can guess that Chess was invented in India in the 6th century AD.

War by other means

Chaturanga is a Sanskrit word meaning "quadripartite," or divided into four parts. The Indian army of that time was also called Chaturanga, and had four divisions: elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry. This suggests two theories to explain how Chess came to be:

1. Chess was a substitute for war, or a bloodless training ground for war.
2. Chess was a way to recreate real life in miniature, as we do today when we play board games that let us buy and sell "property" with fake money, for example.

The moves in Chaturanga were determined by rolling dice. This suggests one more creation theory: that this ancient form of Chess was a way of foretelling the future, or of obtaining messages from gods. David Hooper and Kenneth Whyld, in their *Oxford Companion to Chess*, offer this scenario:

"By controlling the fall of objects on to a divination board the gods could communicate with men. At a later stage dice were added to determine the moves of the pieces and further reveal the celestial mind. Then someone was sacrilegious enough to convert this process to a game, perhaps eliminating the dice. The person who secularized the religious process has, perhaps, the best claim to be the 'inventor' of Chess."

Chess, the slow-motion game

Chaturanga was a four-player game. Each player had eight pieces: four pawns, a boat or chariot (our Rook), a horse (our Knight), an elephant (our Bishop), and a King. The moves were determined by rolling red, green, yellow, and black dice. (We don't really know how a set of dice determined moves on a chessboard, as no how-to guides survive from that era.) The elephant could move only two squares on a diagonal, though it could jump over any piece in its path. The pawn didn't have the option of moving two squares on its initial move and,

on reaching the eighth rank, couldn't be promoted to anything of importance. Castling didn't exist. There were no Queens, with their explosive power to change the course of a game in a single move. The Rook, Knight, and King moved as they do today. Try conducting a game with these rules. Be sure to set aside lots of time!

You'll have to make your own chessboard, too. The ancients used a 64-square board, but none of the squares were colored. (That was a European invention.)

Chess hits the road

The four-player version disappeared almost as soon as Chess left India. The Persians played only the two-person variety. Each player now had a 16-man army, as we do today, but the pieces were just as limited as described above, even the new "counselor" piece, which stood beside the King. (It's possible that the Kings from the two discarded armies of the Indian game became counselors in the Persian.) The counselor could only move one square diagonally, making it hardly more powerful than a pawn. Two-player Chess was every bit as slow as four-player.

The Persian game could be played with or without dice. The use of dice didn't stop for at least another half a dozen centuries. The last mention of dice appears in a European literary work of the 13th century, in which a gentleman asks the object of his affections, "Lady, which game will you play? Will you have it with moves or with dice?"

The westward dispersal of Chess accelerated in the 7th century when the rapidly expanding Arab empire overran Persia. In the next four centuries, the Arabs produced the best players in the world. The names of some of these champions, and even much of their writings and many of the endgame problems they composed, are still known to us today.

Chess also ventured eastward, and as it traveled through Asia it evolved in far different directions from the game Westerners know. In Chinese Chess, for example, pieces are placed not within squares but on the intersections of the lines. A river divides the 9-square by 10-square board; each player has a fortress to shelter in; some pieces can't leave the fortress, some can't cross the river; some of the pieces resemble ours, but

there are no Queens. Checkmate is still the aim.

Japanese Chess, commonly called "Shogi" in English-speaking countries, came to Japan from China by way of Korea. Shogi is played on a 9x9 board. The pieces are set up on three rows instead of our two. As in Chinese Chess, there are no Queens. The more recognizable units (to Westerners) are the Kings—but each player has three of them. Even with three Kings, the object of the game is still checkmate. Most notable divergence from the Western game: captured pieces change sides!

'The Royal Game' earns its nickname

Chess took several paths into Europe. The Arabs invaded the Iberian Peninsula (where the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal would one day rise) and the island of Sicily in the 8th century and naturally brought Chess along with them. The rising Italian city-states, the nucleus for what would one day become Italy, were building economic empires in the Mediterranean; traders from Venice and Genoa soon discovered Chess. No doubt at least a few Crusaders learned Chess while hacking their way through the Holy Land. Chess entered Central Europe through the Balkans and invaded Russia through Central Asian trade routes. Even the Vikings learned Chess and helped to spread it through the more northern lands. By the year 1000, Chess was well-known throughout Europe (though there was no common set of rules).

In the Islamic countries, people of all social classes played Chess. In the European countries, at least in the Middle Ages, Chess was a game of the nobility (hence "The Royal Game"). Aspiring knights were instructed in Chess as well as in how to joust, slay dragons, and court ladies. In Europe as in Arabia, women were encouraged to play, and in fact Chess was often referred to as a "game for lovers." In the Camelot stories, Lancelot and Guinevere played Chess.

Though the Church occasionally tried to ban Chess (the dice aspect was particularly troubling), the game attracted many followers within religious orders, where it was often seen as a parable of good and evil. "The man who surrenders to sinful thoughts will always be held in check by the Devil and will lose his soul to mate if he does not know how to protect himself," wrote one theologian in 1300.

The European makeover

The period 1400-1600, the ebbing of the medieval era and the flowering of the Renaissance, was the incubator of modern Chess.

The Europeans gave the King a Queen, complete with all the powers she enjoys today. They also gave the Bishop its diagonal strength and the pawn the choice of opening with a one- or two-move step. The Europeans invented castling and the concept of "promoting" a pawn to a Queen to "reward" it for successfully completing its journey across the battlefield. Suddenly Chess was considerably faster, and the pieces packed more of a punch!

We would be right at home on a chessboard in this time period. For one thing, we could play on a checkered board. Dice and Chess had at last parted company, so we could be sure that any game we played would be a true contest of skill. We could expect everyone to be playing by the same rules.

We could even consult a Chess book for advice. The earliest known typeset Chess book appeared within 50 years of the invention of the printing press (late 1500s). The author devoted a number of pages to the old style of play, with its less-powerful and decidedly slower pieces, but this was the last work to do so. The history of the game we call Chess now centers around developments in Europe and the Americas.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Chess

In the Western world, the 1700s were the years of the common people, in Chess as well as in politics. Among the upper classes, gambling replaced Chess as the amusement of choice, but Chess had already filtered down to the everyday man (though women still played, Chess was beginning to be considered a "man's" game).

The 18th century gave us revolutions, the first stirrings of the Industrial Revolution, and the concept of the Chess club: a gathering place, whether in a coffeehouse, a tavern, or a room with no other purpose but Chess. In the great cities of Europe, entrepreneurs established Chess places (often called "resorts" or "divans") whose reputations still endure. The first Chess professionals appeared. Rather than relying on one wealthy patron for their daily bread, these hardy souls played Chess for money at the new coffeehouses, gave lessons, and

wrote books. (It was in this century that the flood of Chess books began, which today form the largest body of writings on any game ever invented.)

Benjamin Franklin, who seems to be responsible for so many firsts in American history, can also be credited with the first American writing on Chess: the essay "The Morals of Chess" (1786). Chess, Franklin wrote, teaches "foresight, by having to plan ahead; vigilance, by having to keep watch over the whole chessboard; caution, by having to restrain ourselves from making hasty moves; and finally, we learn from Chess the greatest maxim in life, that even when everything seems to be going badly for us we should not lose heart but, always hoping for a change for the better, steadfastly continue searching for the solutions to our problems."

Going global

In the 1800s, the clubs of the previous century reached out to each other through the new postal services. One of the earliest and most famous correspondence matches was the four-year battle between the Edinburgh and London clubs (1824-28). The distance the letters traveled was about 400 miles, and each letter took three days to arrive. Edinburgh won the match but Chess won a much larger victory, as the newspapers covered the games and exposed a wide readership to some very exciting play. In the 1830s, clubs in different countries began to correspond.

The greatest players of each era had traveled to other countries and tested themselves against the competition there, and fledgling organizations had put together an occasional tournament of champions. But in the 19th century these activities became systematized and commonplace. In 1834, the Frenchman Louis Bourdonnais burnished the honor of France by defeating the British champion, Alexander McDonnell; the British exacted revenge in 1843 when Howard Staunton trounced the French champion, Pierre Saint-Amant. The first international tournament soon followed (London, 1851). In 1872, the German master Wilhelm Steinitz, having defeated everyone in sight, declared himself the world champion; the process of selecting a world champion has continued to this day.

By the end of the 1800s, the laws of Chess had been standardized, as had the shapes of the pieces used in tournament and match

play (the Staunton design, named for the design's principal booster). There were Chess organizations on the city, state, and national levels, and a system for awarding the coveted title of "master" to the best players. Chess clocks were being used for all serious games, which prevented players from trying to win by "outsitting" their opponents!

The Information Revolution

The 20th century has seen four far-reaching developments in Chess. These are going to make the 21st century an interesting one for Chess players! In no particular order, these are:

1. *The computer.* The first "Chess-playing machine" appeared in 1769 (there was a little man hidden inside). Two centuries later, computers can play as well as the human champion of the world (as we saw in February 1996, when Garry Kasparov had to overcome a first-round defeat to take his match with Deep Blue, and in the April 1997 return match, when Deeper Blue psyched out the exasperated Russian). Computers now act as study aids, research tools, and sparring partners for professional players, as instant and always available opponents for the rest of us, and have contributed enormously to our knowledge of the endgame.
2. *Women players entering the top levels of play.* Until fairly recently, Chess was an all-boys club, and it was felt that women just couldn't cut it at the top level of competition. The Polgar sisters of Hungary (among others) have smashed that perception—all three compete at the highest levels of competition, and one (Judit) ranks among the top 20 players, period.
3. *Chess in the schools.* The former Soviet Union began the practice of teaching Chess as part of its standard curriculum—a practice that has contributed enormously to the iron grip the Russians have held on world Chess since the end of World War II. Now many Western nations are at last following suit.
4. *A global Chess organization.* The Federation Internationale Des Echecs, or FIDE (pronounced FEE-day), has had its troubles, but since 1924 has been a force for unification and world standards. FIDE maintains a numerical rating system for master players, awards titles, organizes the world championship, and runs a biennial "olympiad" that brings together teams from dozens of countries.

How the game is played

When you set up the board to play Chess, there should always be a dark square in the left corner nearest you and a light square in the right corner. Remember: "Light on the right."

The armies are always referred to as "White" and "Black," though Chess pieces are available in many colors. The person commanding the White, or lighter, pieces always moves first. (A player can never refuse to move, no matter how disastrous his options may be!)

Each army has 16 pieces: one King, one Queen, two Bishops, two Knights, two Rooks, and eight pawns.

The King

If the King is trapped with no escape possible, the game is lost. Therefore the King is by far the most valuable piece on the board. However, as a fighting unit, His Highness is simple and slow. The monarch can move in any direction (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally), but only one square at a time.

(There is one exception to the King's one-square-per-move plodding. See below for an explanation of **castling**.)

The King can capture an enemy soldier only if that soldier is occupying a square adjacent to the King. ("Capture" describes the removal of a piece during a game. Captures are always optional in Chess, except where the survival of the King is concerned—see the sections on **check** and **checkmate**.) The soldier is removed from the board, and the King steps onto the square the soldier had guarded.

All of the pieces (except, in one special case, the pawn) capture by removing the enemy piece from the board and then occupying the enemy's square. Once a piece is gone, by the way, it's gone: if you lose your Queen, you won't have the use of a Queen for the remainder of the game. (Unless you are able to promote a pawn! See the section on pawns below.)

Unlike Checkers, it's illegal in Chess to capture more than one piece at a time.

The Queen

The White Queen, at the beginning of the game, stands on a light square in the center of the back rank; the Black Queen stands on a dark one. Two handy mnemonics for remembering where to start the Queen are "Queen on her own color" and "The Queen's dress matches her shoes." The King takes his station on the center square closest to the Queen.

The Queen, as a soldier in your army, is as swift as the King is slow. The Queen can move in any direction and can charge from one end of the board to the other in the same turn.

There are two things the Queen cannot do. First, the Queen can't jump over another piece, whether friend or foe. (This is true of all the pieces, except the Knight.) The sovereign must either stop before running into the obstruction or, in the case of an enemy soldier, capture it.

Second, the Queen cannot change directions while moving. If the Queen sets out on a diagonal course, for example, that diagonal must be kept to. (Again, this is true of all the pieces, except the Knight.)

The Rook

Each army has a pair of Rooks. Each Rook occupies a corner of the board when beginning a game. The Rook has half the firepower of a Queen, as it moves vertically and horizontally but not diagonally.

The Bishop

You have two Bishops in your arsenal. Centuries ago, the Bishop was called the "Counselor," and you can understand why when you look at the Bishops' initial positions: one on the Queen's left and one on the King's right, as if one of the royals might ask them for advice. The Bishops move diagonally only. A Bishop can never leave its assigned color.

The Knight

Two Knights make up your cavalry. They are stabled one on each flank, between the Rook and the Bishop.

The Knight is the oddest soldier in your army, and the one that gives new field marshals the most trouble. That's because the Knight can do two things that no other Chess piece can:

1. The Knight leaps over any piece that lies in its path, friend or foe.
2. The Knight changes direction as it leaps. When the Knight is positioned in or near the center of the board, it can leap to any of eight possible squares (shown by black squares in Fig. 1).

Though the Knight jumps as if it were a piece in Checkers, it can't capture that way. The Knight can only capture an enemy piece if that piece occupies one of the Knight's landing zones.

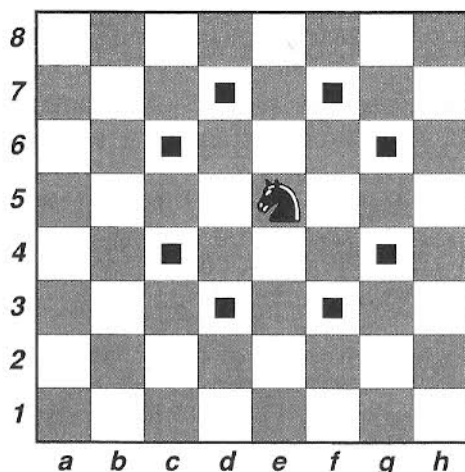


Fig. 1: The Knight

The Pawn

The stubborn, one-step-at-a-time pawn has a poor reputation. We call people pawns when they appear to be powerless. And yet the pawn is the heart of Chess. Never take your infantry for granted!

The pawn has three distinguishing characteristics:

1. It's the only piece that moves in only one direction: forward.
2. It's the only piece that captures in a different manner than the way in which it moves. The King, Queen, Rook, and Bishop capture whatever lies in their path; the Knight captures whatever occupies the square it lands on; the pawn moves in a straight line, but captures diagonally. (The enemy must be on an adjacent square. The pawn occupies the square that held the target piece.)
3. It's the only piece that can transform itself into a unit of vastly greater power.

On its first move the pawn has the option of moving one square or two. After that, the pawn may only move one square at a time.

When a pawn fights its way through to the last rank on the opposite side of the board, it may be exchanged for any other piece (except a King or another pawn). The new piece begins its career on the square the pawn had occupied. Every time one of your pawns reaches that last rank, you may trade it in for something else.

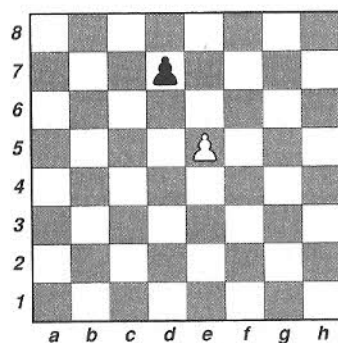


Fig. 2: The Pawn

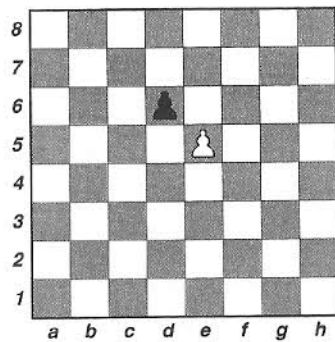


Fig. 3: The Pawn (2)

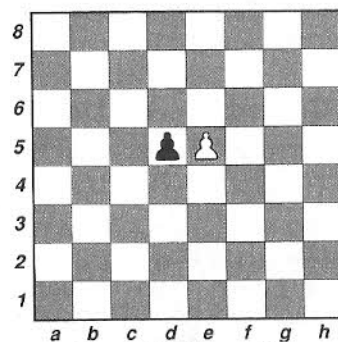


Fig. 4: The Pawn (3)

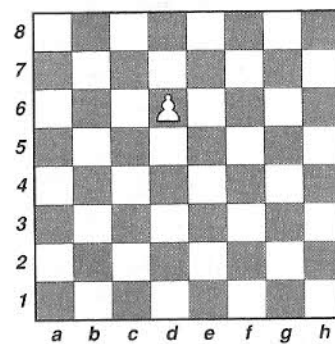


Fig. 5: Capturing "en passant"

The pawn has one other trick to play, and this may be the most confusing move of all. Say that a White pawn has penetrated Black's camp (Fig. 2). Black could advance his pawn one square, stopping to attack the invader (Fig. 3). If, instead, Black sends his pawn ahead two squares, he bypasses the White pawn, and seems to give White no say in the matter (Fig. 4). In fact, the bypassed pawn has the right to capture the pawn that had rushed by as if it had stopped after just one square (Fig. 5). This is called capturing "en passant," a French term for "in passing."

The en passant capture works for Black as well as for White, of course. It's also entirely optional.

Relative values of the chessmen

It is vital that you have a clear and reliable notion of the value of each unit under your command. Just as the Pentagon must know

what it costs to field an army, you must know, too. If not, you may never get your money's worth when you and your opponent begin capturing each other's pieces. The following table (Fig. 6) is based on five centuries of practical play. It takes the pawn as the basic unit and calculates each piece's value in those units.

	= 1 point
	= 3 points
	= 3 points
	= 5 points
	= 9 points
	= Priceless

Fig. 6: Value of pieces

What does this table tell us? Suppose you can capture a Bishop while letting your opponent capture your Knight. No harm done: Bishops and Knights are the same value. (An even capture is called an "exchange.")

However, if you capture a bishop and your opponent captures one of your rooks, you've made a poor bargain. Chess players say you have "lost the exchange" (your opponent has "won the exchange").

By knowing the relative values of the pieces, we can tell which captures would be profitable, which would be costly, and which would be even. Weigh captures and exchanges carefully. When a player obtains an edge in material, he is much more likely to win the game. *Superior force usually wins!*

Check and checkmate

Your objective on this battlefield is to attack the enemy King in such a way that it cannot escape. An attack on the King is called a **check**. If the King cannot escape the check, then the check is actually **checkmate**, and the attacking force has won the game.

When your King is checked you must drop everything and rush to his defense. There are three ways to fend off a check:

1. Move out of the path of the attacking piece.
2. Block the path of the attacking piece with one of your own pieces.
3. Capture the attacker.

If your King is in check and you can't move, block, or capture, then you've been checkmated. (Note that in Chess the King is never actually captured. If the monarch is in check and unable to do anything about it, the game is over.)

Minimum requirements for checkmate

In certain situations, with certain combinations of pieces, it's impossible to checkmate even a lone King. Bishop, Knight, and King are the minimum requirements (and even the professionals have trouble with this one!).

A King and one Bishop can't enforce checkmate against a lone King. (Since the Bishop travels on only one color, the hostile King is safe whenever he occupies a square of the other color.)

Nor can a King and a single Knight enforce checkmate. In any given position there are just too many squares not controlled by the Knight. In fact, a King and two Knights can't force a checkmate either.

Drawn games

So far it may seem as if all Chess games end in victory for White or Black, just as all baseball games end in a win or a loss. Actually, a game of Chess may end in a "draw" (a tie). There are several ways in which a game may be "drawn":

1. *Draw by Agreement.* The players can agree to a draw. This may happen for various reasons: because neither player thinks the game can be won, because there isn't enough time to finish the game, or even because the position in the game is a crashing bore!
2. *Draw by Perpetual Check.* This refers to a position in which one player can keep checking the other player's King, move

after move after move, with no possibility of the defending player being able to stop the checks. The assumption here is that the player doing the checking is at a disadvantage in some way and is deliberately forcing a draw rather than suffering a loss.

3. *Draw by Insufficient Material.* See **Minimum requirements for checkmate** above.
4. *Draw by Stalemate.* This is a situation in which the player whose turn it is to move is not in check but has no legal moves.
5. *Draw by Repetition of Moves.* For this one you'll need to keep a record of the moves in the game using Chess notation (see page 32) if playing another human; against a computer opponent, the computer will do it for you. If the same position occurs three consecutive times, the game is drawn.
6. *Draw by 50-Move Rule.* You'll need to record the moves for this one, too (unless you're playing a computer). If a player can demonstrate that the last 50 moves have been made without the capture of a piece or a move by a pawn, that player may claim a draw. (This rule is most often used when one side has only a King.)

Defending the King: castling

If you want to ensure a long life for your King, you'd better castle. Castling is the only maneuver in Chess that involves the simultaneous movement of two pieces: the King and one of the Rooks. Castling is carried out with the goal of transferring the King to a safer refuge at the side of the board.

There are two types of castling: Kingside, which involves the King and the King Rook (the one in the corner closest to the King), and Queenside, which involves the King and the Queen Rook (the one in the corner farthest from the King).

Fig. 7 shows the board with the Kings and Rooks prior to castling.

In Kingside castling (Fig. 8), White moves his King two squares to the right. The King Rook hops over the King to the square on the King's immediate left. For Black, Kingside castling means just the reverse: the King moves two squares to the left, and the King Rook hops over to the square on the King's immediate right.

In Queenside castling (Fig. 9), White moves his King two squares to the left. The Queen Rook hops over the King to the square on the King's immediate right. For Black, the King moves two squares to the right, and the Queen Rook hops over to the square on the King's immediate left. Note that in Queenside castling, there are three squares between the King and the

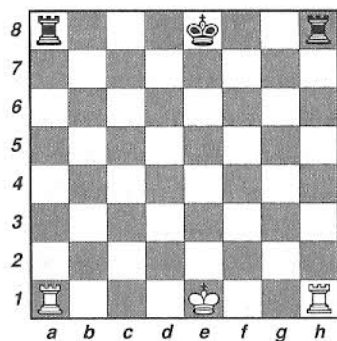


Fig. 7: Castling

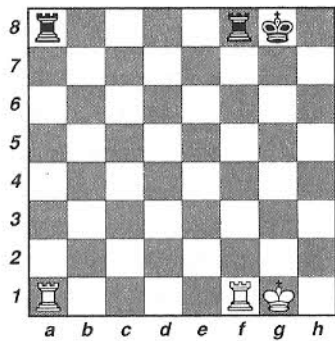


Fig. 8: Castling (2)

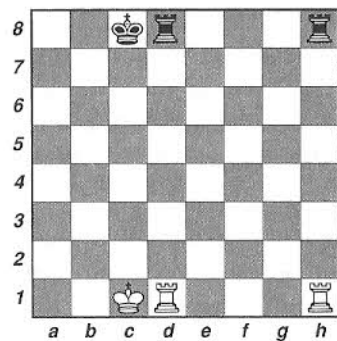


Fig. 9: Castling (3)

Rook at the start of the maneuver. The King doesn't end up as deep in a corner as in Kingside castling, but the Rook is brought a step closer to the action in the center.

Which kind of castling is better depends on the particular circumstances of a given game. With time and experience will come an understanding of when to castle and on which side of the board.

When castling isn't possible

There are seven restrictions on castling. Four are temporary (castling might be possible later in the game), and three are permanent (castling will not be possible, period).

Here's the list of temporary restrictions:

1. If your King is in check, you can't escape by castling out of it.
2. If a King must travel across a square controlled by an enemy piece, you can't castle. (You can't castle out of check, and you can't castle through it, either.) There's no problem if the Rook rather than the King must pass across a contested square.
3. If the King would end up on a square controlled by an enemy piece, you can't castle. (You can't castle out of check, you can't castle through it, and you can't castle into it.)
4. If a square between your King and the Rook you want to castle with is occupied, whether by one of your own pieces or one of your opponent's, you can't castle.

These are the permanent restrictions:

1. If a player has moved his King before he's had a chance to castle, he can't castle.
2. If a player has moved his King Rook before he's had a chance to castle Kingside, he no longer has the option of castling Kingside.
3. If a player has moved his Queen Rook before he's had a chance to castle Queenside, he no longer has the option of castling Queenside.

Even when castling is possible, you can only do it once per game.

There's much to remember about castling. It may seem like too much to remember. But it's the single most important action you can take to protect your King. Castling defends and attacks at the same time: simultaneously entrenching the King behind a stockade of pawns on the flank and bringing the long-range firepower of the Rook to bear on the center.

Chess Notation

To help us describe the action in a game, we call a horizontal line of squares a **rank** and a vertical line a **file**. Each rank has a number and each file has a letter (Fig. 10).

Chess notation uses abbreviations for the pieces:

King = K

Queen = Q

Bishop = B

Knight = N

Rook = R

(There is no abbreviation for the pawn.)

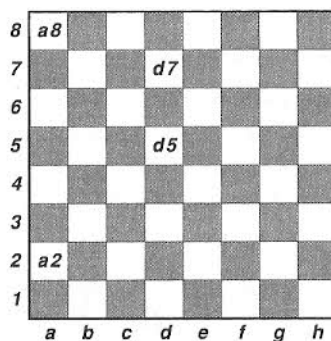


Fig. 10: Rank and file

A move is described by listing the piece, the departure square, and the arrival square. For example, a Rook moving from a2 to a8 is recorded as Ra2-a8 (or, if you want to save space, as Ra8). A pawn moving from d7 to d5 is recorded as d7-d5 (or simply as d5). A capture is described in the same way; you simply list the capturing piece followed by an "x" (takes) and the destination square (e.g., Rxa8).

Castling is recorded by a special notation: 0-0 for kingside castling, and 0-00 for queenside castling.

Check is noted by adding a plus sign at the end of a move. Checkmate is two plusses.

Capturing en passant is noted by adding the abbreviation "e.p." at the end of a move.

Pawn promotion is indicated by parentheses: e7-e8(Q) or a7-a8(R), for example. The letter inside the parentheses shows what piece the pawn was promoted to.

Strategies

Three of the main elements of chess theory sound like something out of Star Wars: space, time, and force. Space describes the chessboard as a battlefield, so to speak, with the "high ground" (key positions) located in middle of the board. Time refers to the important task of moving pieces quickly into attack positions (kill or be killed!). Finally, force is about power—the power of your pieces.

Control of space in the opening game is best established by pawns, knights, and (sometimes) bishops. The four central squares (e4, d4, e5, d5) are of highest importance, and control of the center allows you to attack your opponent effectively from either your queen or king side of the board. Fig. 11 shows a typical effort to control these squares, after four moves.

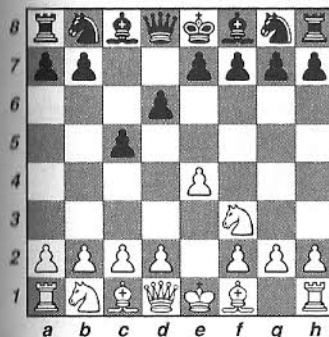


Fig. 11: Control of space

It is not necessary to occupy a space in order to control it. Fig. 12 shows how the white knight is exerting control over two central squares (marked by black squares) without occupying them. The knight threatens to capture any black piece that tries to advance into the middle. At least as important, any white pawns moving into the center will be protected from capture.

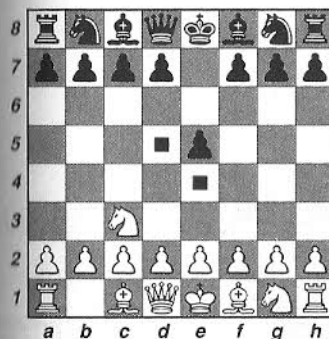


Fig. 12: Control of space (2)

Another important chess concept is time. Time refers to rapid deployment of pieces. Experienced chess players typically do not move any piece twice until they have developed a strong board position. Tactically, this is important because a player who gains the offensive advantage early will often win the game.

It is generally agreed that the development of knights and bishops as attack pieces takes precedence in the opening game. Initially, the queen is better off sheltered behind the front lines; if she moves out,

she will be attacked by opposing pieces and forced to retreat. **Fig. 13** shows an example of a strong board position that can be achieved quickly. Here, white's knights and bishops have great flexibility in movement.

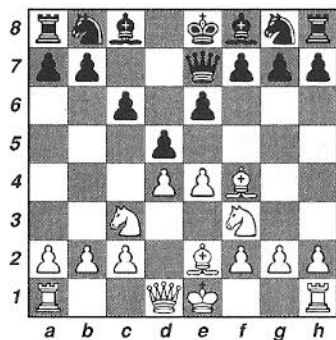


Fig. 13: Rapid development of pieces

To complete the development of your pieces, castle your king (**Fig. 14**). If you neglect to do this, it will be easier for your opponent to pressure your king.

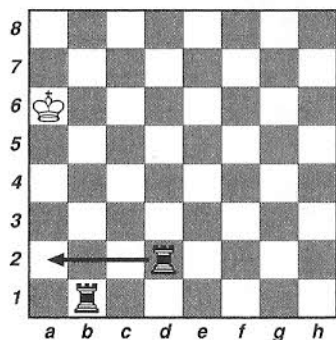


Fig. 14: After castling

After the game has developed, the third basic chess concept, force, becomes relevant. The force a piece has is based on its mobility. The power of a chess piece determines its point value (e.g., rook = 5 points). Generally, you do not want to make exchanges (trade pieces) if you are going to lose a more valuable piece than your opponent.

Note, however, that these values are not absolute, but are approximations. For example, if the queen is blocked up behind a lot of her own pieces, she is ineffective. In terms of real value, she may not be worth her usual 9 points (but wait until she moves!). What this means is that sometimes a player may sacrifice a valuable piece in order to achieve a more important goal, such as a checkmate.

Checkmating your opponent, even when you have a big advantage, is not always easy for a novice chess player. Pieces that can move horizontally (queens and rooks) have the easiest time bagging the king. A queen or rook can form an impassable wall across the board, which a king cannot cross (**Fig. 15**). You can use these pieces to isolate the king, forcing him into a side or corner. Moving the rook as shown (Rd2-a2++) will result in checkmate.

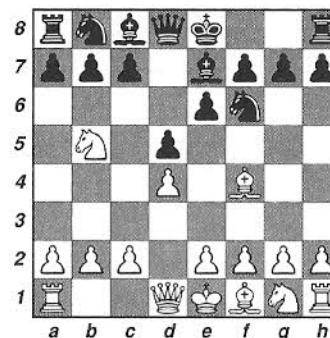


Fig. 15: Mate in one turn

Advanced Strategies

While a lengthy discussion of chess is beyond the scope of this book, learning a few important strategies can help tremendously in improving your game. This section describes the fork (or double-attack), pin, and skewer. The opportunity to employ one of these methods doesn't usually appear unplanned (although you can get lucky). It often requires foresight. You may need to look ahead a couple of turns so you can set something up.

A fork describes a situation in which a piece is threatening to capture two enemy pieces at the same time. **Fig. 16** shows a simple fork maneuver that can be developed in just a few moves. (To attempt a fork this quickly, you must take a risk by violating the previously mentioned principles of time and space. But, hey, life is short. If your opponent is relatively inexperienced, you can make up for lost ground later.)

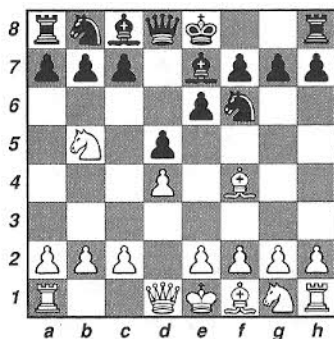


Fig. 16: Setting up a fork

The white knight's next move is Nb5xc7+ (shown in **Fig. 17**). This puts the king in check, while threatening the black rook. Notice the key role played by white's bishop. The bishop is protecting the knight from black's queen, preventing her from dissolving the fork by capturing the knight. The result is that black is forced to move the king out of check, allowing white to capture the rook.

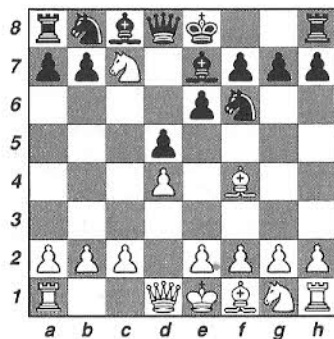


Fig. 17: Executing a fork

Conversely, if you're playing an experienced chess player, be on guard and try to foresee where your opponent may be attempting to ambush you with a fork.

Fig. 18 shows an example of a devastating attack using a pin. A pinned piece is one that cannot move without exposing a comrade behind it to attack. In this case, the black queen is being pinned by the white bishop. The queen can't move because the king would be in check. Her best option will cut her life tragically short; she can capture the bishop before going down at the hands of the white rook.

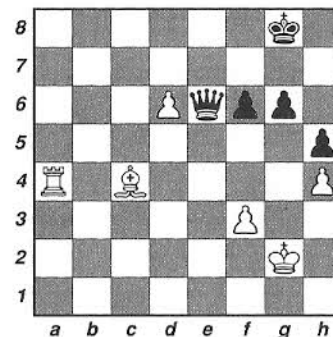


Fig. 18: Pin

A skewer is like a pin in reverse. With a skewer, the more valuable piece is out front and forced to move, allowing easy capture of the less valuable piece behind it. In this slightly revised board setup (**Fig. 19**), the bishop forces the queen to move aside. The bishop will capture the rook before being captured himself, winning the exchange (5 points versus 3).

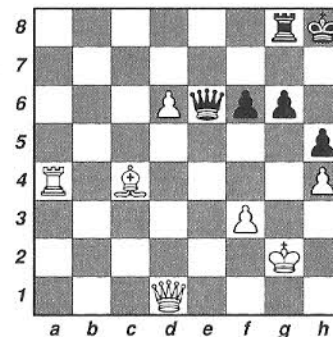
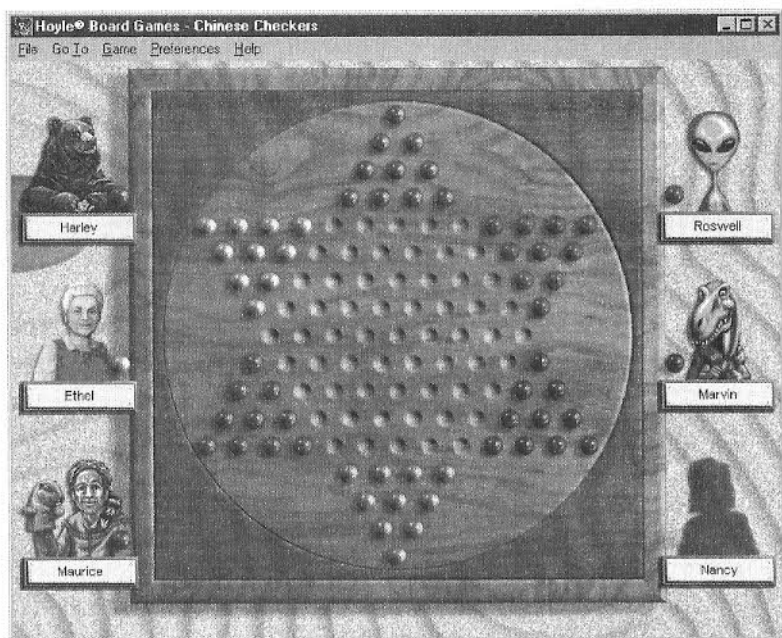


Fig. 19: Skewer

CHINESE CHECKERS



How the game evolved

Chinese Checkers owns the oddest name in the **Hoyle Board Games** package: It wasn't invented in China, and it has nothing to do with Checkers!

Everyone agrees that this game first appeared in the late 1800s and that it first became popular in Sweden. This inventor simply took the Greek game of Halma (meaning "jump" or "leap") and changed its look. Halma is played on a square board, Chinese Checkers is played on a board shaped like a six-pointed star. Halma uses flat pieces moving from square to square, Chinese Checkers uses marbles moving from hole to hole. In both games, the object is to be the first to occupy an enemy camp with your own pieces.

Although the marbles in Chinese Checkers move by jumping or leaping another marble, as in Checkers, this doesn't mean the two games are related. In Checkers, the jump is part of the business of capturing; Checkers is a war game, and the piece jumped is removed from play. In Chinese Checkers, the jump is just one way of getting

around the board; Chinese Checkers is a racing game, and the piece jumped stays where it is.

By the way: Chinese Checkers is indeed played in China. (Perhaps the Chinese learned the game from a Swede.) In China, they use 10 marbles per player, as opposed to the 15 sometimes used in Europe. **Hoyle Board Games** uses the Chinese variation, which is the form also used in the United States.

How the game is played

The goal in Chinese Checkers is to be the first to move all of your marbles into the point opposite your home base. Two, three, four, or six people can play, but never five (because one player wouldn't have an opponent opposite him or her). Two people set up exactly opposite each other. Three people alternate every other point. (With three people, you aim not for the point directly opposite but for the home base of the opponent on your right.) Four people set up opposite again.

Each player starts with a set of 10 marbles set up in the 10 holes or indentations of his home base. Play passes clockwise around the board. You can move one marble on your turn. You can move to any adjacent hole, forward, backward, diagonally, or sideways. If the square next to your marble is occupied by your enemy or by one of your own pieces, but the square on the other side is vacant, you can jump to that vacant square. A marble can make multiple jumps in the same turn.

Strategies

Where can you seek the best methodology for playing Chinese Checkers? The Code of Hammurabi? The Bhagavad-Gita? Your best bet is the nearest playground; leapfrog has much to teach the would-be victor of this racing game. While bounding over several of your opponents' pieces looks impressive, it can leave a marble out in no-man's land, with nowhere to go next. It is better to construct your own marble chains, taking turns leapfrogging over your own pieces.

One way to do this is by using zig-zag patterns as you cross the board. For an example of this, see **Fig. 1**. The player with the darker marbles is moving with a zig-zag up through the middle. The piece at the back of the zig-zag can advance two jumps in this example. The only drawback of the zig-zag is that it is easily halted by your opponent

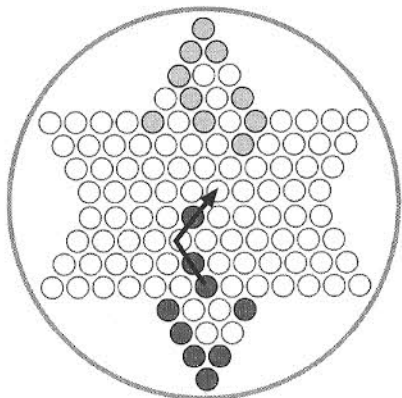


Fig. 1: Zig-zag chain

Other patterns work equally well or even better. **Fig. 2** shows the player on the bottom using a diamond-shaped pattern. **Fig. 2** also shows the player on the top moving down in a triangular pattern.

The construction of marble chains is key in games with two to three players. Different circumstances may call for different types of chains. If your opponent is leaving you alone, construct chains that will allow you to make longer leaps.

In the six-player game, the board gets jammed up, and soon you will be forced to abandon subtlety in favor of a more obvious strategy: look for opportunities to jump your opponents. Remember to look backwards. Sometimes, a long forward jump can be achieved in a roundabout way.

Defense in Chinese Checkers is optional. One defensive strategy is to place your marble in another player's home base. You can maintain this block longer if you place your marble in a home base adjacent to your destination base. If you're behind, this may help you to catch up. Conversely, if others have played this nasty trick on you, make sure their marbles can leave by giving them a way to jump out. (They can't resist a double jump!)

Another way to stop your opponent from advancing is to create a diamond-shaped block composed of four marbles. When the block ends, use the diamond to advance your marbles.

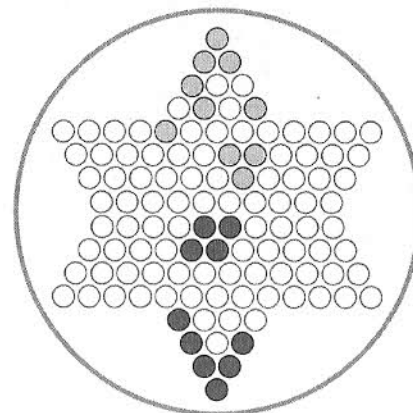
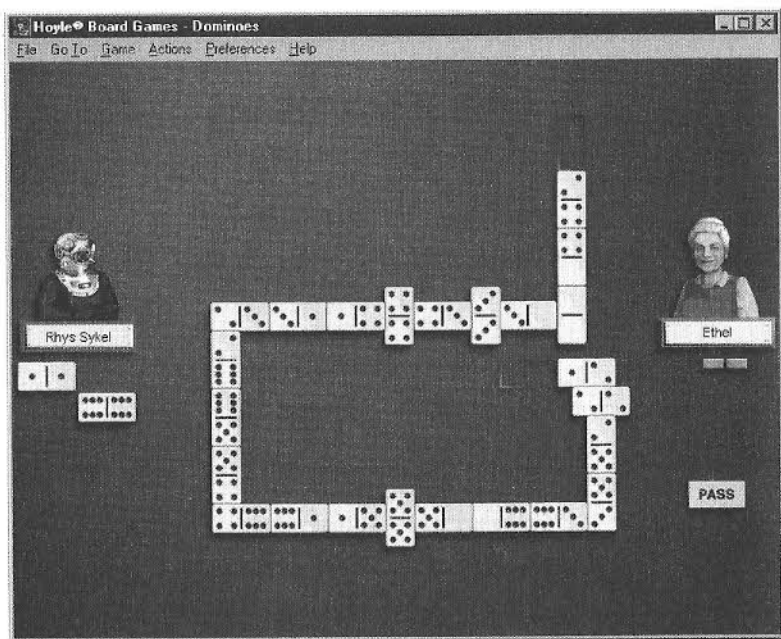


Fig. 2: Diamond and triangular chains

DOMINOES



How the game evolved

The typical board game is played on a specially arranged surface using pieces with specific powers. The board doesn't have to be a portable surface of wood, metal, fabric, or plastic; it can be drawn or inscribed in the ground, or, as in the case of Dominoes, the "board" can be built as the pieces are laid out. Dominoes would appear to be a typical board game—and yet, if you want to learn this game's history, you'll have to start with playing cards.

Let's start with the principles behind all card games. There are really only three: the higher cards takes the lower card (Spades and Bridge, for example), similar cards make combinations (Poker and Gin Rummy), and some combination of the two (Pinochle).

The Chinese have it both ways

The principle of combining cards by suit or rank is probably the oldest of the three. The evidence? The Chinese version of Dominoes.

"Dice is one of the oldest games of chance, and Dominoes are only a different arrangement of the dice markings," writes Catherine Perry Hargrave in *The Fireside Book of Cards*. In the 1920s, Hargrave researched not only the history of playing cards but also how cards fit into and reflected their societies. "Both games very probably originated in China, and the Chinese seem to have been playing the domino game, either with tablets made of ivory or bone or with slips made of parchment or early paper, at the time when paper money was also being used to play a card game."

The Chinese invented printing and paper money in the years 600 to 900. People began playing with the money almost immediately (as well as spending it!). Playing cards most likely evolved from this money, and one kind of playing card became the equivalent of our Dominoes.

Chinese Domino cards included a set of 21 cards with markings of red and black dots (corresponding to the pips on our Dominoes "bones"). There were also as many as four extra suits with fanciful decorations instead of dots. These decorations included chrysanthemum blossoms, bamboo, butterflies, bats, crabs, coins, scrolls, mythical figures—you get the idea.

"There is a theory," Hargrave speculates, "that these domino cards also found their way into Europe in the 13th century, and that [the mythical figures] became the stranger persons on the 21 high cards of the Tarot series." We note this theory here only because of the sense of wonder it imparts. Dominoes were not reliably reported in Europe before the 18th century (see below), by which time the Tarot was well-established.

Whatever may have become of these figures, there seems to be a clear connection between Dominoes and playing cards. Marilyn Simonds Mohr makes the case in *The Games Treasury*, pointing out the playing-card terms in Dominoes. We *shuffle* the bones before each game, *draw* bones to form a *hand*, and dig in the boneyard when we can't play (which Mohr calls the equivalent of the expression *Go fish*). The 28 bones make up a *deck*, and the deck can be broken into *suits* (one suit is all the bones with one blank half, a second is all the bones with one pip on one half, etc.).

Dominoes takes its time leaving China

Though dice spread relatively quickly around the globe, Dominoes was a sluggard. Chess, Checkers, and Backgammon were firmly entrenched in Europe before the first mention of Dominoes appears (in Italy in the early 1700s). It was mostly likely brought to Italy by merchant traders, though that still doesn't explain the tardiness of the game's arrival. Dominoes spread to France and then to France's colony in Canada. When the British defeated the French in the Seven Years War (1756-63) and took control of Canada, French POWs brought Dominoes to England, where they found an enthusiastic following.

Joseph Strutt, an Englishman who compiled one of the first serious studies of games in English (*Sports and Pastimes*, 1801), thought Dominoes "a very childish sport." Dominoes, Strutt huffed, "could have nothing but the novelty to recommend it to the notice of grown persons in this country." Strutt was a better researcher than a judge of public taste, and Dominoes has been one of the world's more popular pastimes ever since.

How the game is played

Hoyle includes three versions of Dominoes (Draw, Block, and Sebastopol). These are the general rules (specific rules for each version follow):

Dominoes are rectangular tiles marked with every combination of numbers (21 of them) that can be rolled with two dice. The tiles are called "bones." In addition, six bones are blank on one half, and one bone is blank on both halves, making 28 bones in a set or deck. The "heaviest" bone is marked with six dots or "pips" on each end: 6-6. (When comparing bones, one is heavier than the other if it has more dots; the other is lighter.)

Bones whose ends are alike (as with 6-6) are called "doublets." Each doublet belongs to a single "suit."

To begin a game (no matter which version), the bones are placed face-down on the table and shuffled (moved around at random). Each player draws a certain number of bones at random to form his or her hand. For the first play, a bone is laid face-up on the table. The next bone laid down must match the first in some way. For example, if the

first bone played is the 6-5, the next one down must have a 6 or a 5. You set the new bone down with matching ends touching.

One object of a Dominoes game is to get rid of all the bones in your hand. There may also be scoring involved in the course of play. Dominoes variations fall into two categories, according to what you must do when you have no playable move. In the "block" category, a player with no playable move loses a turn. In the "draw" category, the player draws more bones from the common pile (the "boneyard") until finding one that can be played. If no such bone turns up, the player loses a turn. The lightest hand wins the total number of points in all other hands.

Block

This is the simplest variation. If two people are playing, they each draw seven bones for a hand. If three or four are playing, they each draw five. (This distribution of bones is the same for Block and Draw; Sebastopol has its own distribution, as explained below.)

The player holding the highest doublet "sets" it—that is, lays it down as the first play. The turn to play then rotates to the left. Each play is made by adding a bone to an open, or exposed, end of the layout, with equivalent numbers touching. The layout in Block always has two open ends. Two branches are built off the sides of the set (the doublet that began the game). All doublets are customarily placed crosswise, but this doesn't affect the number of open ends.

If a player has no legal move, he or she passes. The game ends when a player gets rid of his or her hand or when no player is able to add to the layout. The player with the lightest remaining hand wins the total number of pips on all the bones remaining in the other hands. (The amount needed to win a game is usually decided among the players before play begins.)

Sebastopol

This sounds like a battle in the Crimean War, but so far as is known, the Charge of the Light Brigade has nothing to do with it. There's no boneyard. Four people play, each drawing seven bones. The 6-6 is set, after which play rotates to the left of the first player. The 6-6 is open four ways, and the first four plays after the set must

fill each opening—no branch may be extended before these four bones are laid down. All other Block rules apply.

Draw

If you've mastered Block, then you have only one thing to remember about Draw: a player having no playable bone must draw from the boneyard until a playable bone turns up. Once the boneyard is empty, a player with an unplayable hand must pass. Draw is the most popular variation of Dominoes, and it's the default game option.

Strategies

The player who spends the least time "digging in the boneyard" (drawing bones) is usually going to win Dominoes. To avoid the boneyard, you need to think about upcoming turns; try to maximize your own options and minimize your opponent's options. Ways you can do this include: playing to your strengths, interpreting your opponent's plays, and determining what bones are unplayed (counting bones). This last category is discussed later in the advanced strategies section.

If your hand is loaded with one or two numbers (e.g., 3's and 5's) you can play to this strength. Try to expand your options on both sides of the board. For example, playing the 3-1 on the right in Fig. 1 means you can't be blocked next turn by your opponent.

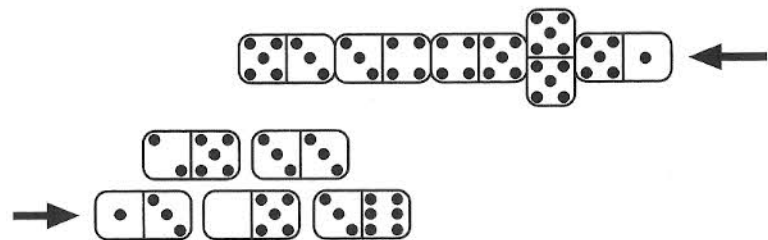


Fig. 1: Playing to your strengths

Early in the game, you can often glean useful information by paying attention to the bones played by another player. (This is also true later in the game, but to a lesser extent.) For example, when your opponent leaves a 5 on one end of the board, realize that one or several 5's may be waiting in reserve. Be aware of it.

Remember that the player with the lightest hand wins. A lighter hand is also better if you lose, as your opponent does not gain as many points. Therefore, when all other factors are equal, play your heavier bones. (The best bone to hold onto is the blank doublet, which has a zero sum on its pips. It can't hurt your hand at all, so don't get rid of it without a good reason.)

Because the Sebastopol version of Dominoes has four branches on the board instead of two, it is very difficult to block opponents. The player who takes the first turn often wins. Given the likelihood that you will lose a lot of rounds, it is even more critical to reduce damage by playing your heavier bones in Sebastopol.

Advanced Strategies

Counting bones is the essence of "dominoes domination." You can use information garnered from the counting of bones to block your opponent. Suppose you're the player holding the bones shown in Fig. 2. The initial impulse is to play the 4-1 (since you have a lot of 1's.) But recall that seven bones in the deck contain 6's. Counting bones, you realize that six of the seven are showing and already accounted for (only the 6-1 is missing). Knowing that only the 6-1 is left—either in your opponent's hand or the boneyard—you can try to block your opponent by placing a 6 on both ends of the board. This

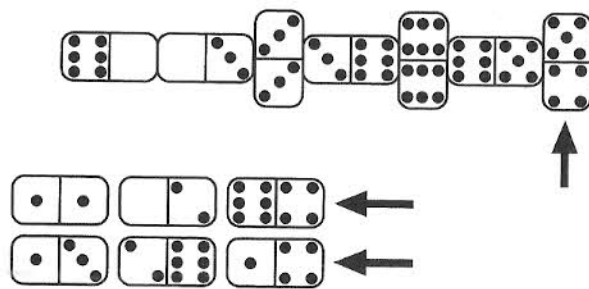


Fig. 2: Counting bones

could easily force him to the boneyard and set him up for a quick loss.

Fig. 3 shows an inverse situation in which you can count bones to your advantage. The purpose here is to prevent yourself from being blocked by your opponent.

Here, your hand is weak in 3's and 6's, so you want to avoid these numbers. Playing the 2-1 on the left would be a good option because you can play the 1-1 on the following turn if necessary. However, consider playing the 5-2 on the right instead. What makes this move more attractive? Counting bones, you realize that by playing the 5-2 there is only one bone left in the game that can hurt you—the 6-2 (the 3-2 has already been played and is out of the picture). If you had played the 2-1, on the other hand, your opponent might respond with the 6-2, 5-1, or 6-1, blocking you (on that side) in each case.

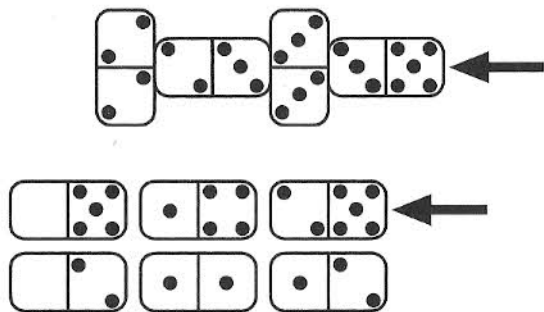
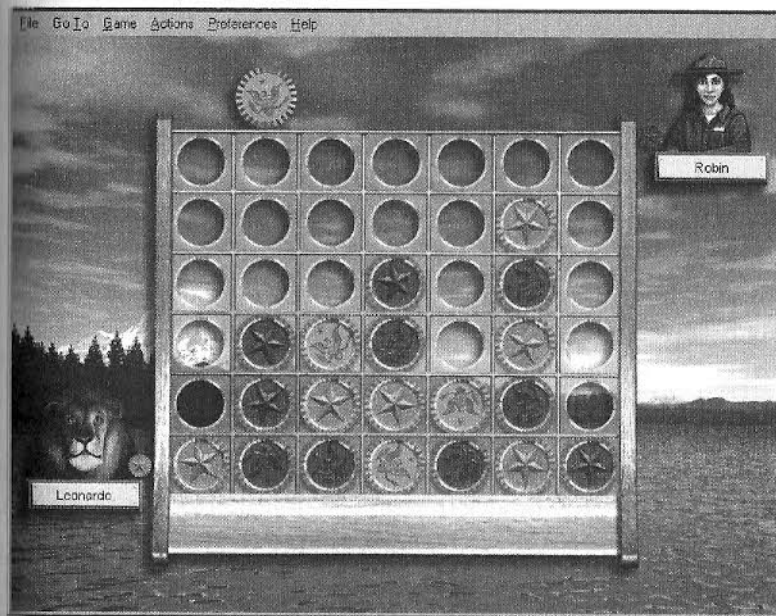


Fig. 3: Counting bones defensively

LINE 'EM UP



How the game evolved

Line 'em Up is a four-in-a-row variation of tic-tac-toe. One of the simplest of games, tic-tac-toe has ancient roots. One tic-tac-toe grid was found among the game diagrams in the Egyptian temple at Kurna. These diagrams were carved into the temple's ceiling slabs. The identity of the players was not certain, but suspicion fell strongly upon the stonemasons who did the cutting; this was evident because one diagram was partially cut off by the final trimming of the slab. The stonemasons may have engaged in a round or two of games during their breaks.

Tic-tac-toe's history is fairly continuous. Ovid, born in 43 B.C., made mention of tic-tac-toe in the *Ars amatoria*. Roman ruins, medieval cathedrals, viking ships, burial sites, and many other historical locations provided ample drawing space for tic-tac-toe. The game existed in China before 500 B.C. In the time of Confucious, it was called yih.

In most tic-tac-toe games throughout history, play occurred at line intersections rather than in the space between the lines, as we are

used to. Some of these games had more than nine playing points and, like checkers, were descended from alquerque. Any convenient material, such as small stones or pegs, sufficed for playing pieces.

Its British names include nine-holes, mill, and three men's morris. Tic-tac-toe was banned at various times in Britain because its grid pattern had been used centuries before by the Druids in their ritual ceremonies. On the Isle of Man, two men were punished by an ecclesiastical court in 1699 for "Makeing Nine Holes with their Knives after Evening Prayers." In the far east, the Tibetans and others also had used the nine-point grid as a sacred symbol.

The movement of play from the intersections to the spaces most likely occurred in the English school room after the development of drawing slates. This new tic-tac-toe variation was called noughts and crosses, in reference to the O's and X's that were used to fill the squares. According to the normal rules of play, a youngster should exclaim, after winning, "Tit tat toe, here I go, three jolly butcher boys all in a row." The significance of the butcher boys remains unknown.

As a four-in-a-row game, Line 'em Up has less predictable results than tic-tac-toe. It is also characterized by its vertical board arrangement; played pieces drop to the lowest available spaces in the columns (thus making Hoyle's Line 'em Up a gravity-simulator).

How the game is played

Line 'em Up uses a 7 x 6 playing grid (seven squares wide, six squares high). The pieces are identical to those used in checkers. Black goes first. To play a piece, drop it down any column that is not already filled to the top.

How the winner is determined depends upon the game variation being played. In the standard variation, the winner is the first to get four in a row in any direction, including diagonals. In a special variation included with **Hoyle Board Games**, the game is played until the grid is completely filled, and the winner is the player who makes the most three-in-a-row combinations.

Strategies

When playing Line 'em Up head to head or on the Internet, try to get diagonal rows of four; they're harder for your human opponent to spot than vertical or horizontal rows. The computer, of course, does not "see" things the same way as a person, and your strategy in playing the computer must be more sophisticated.

Often, bad moves will become obvious, and you and/or your opponent will be avoiding certain columns. In such cases, you will want to count remaining turns to see who is forced to make a bad move first. If it's your opponent, great! If it's you, try something desperate (no, we don't mean yanking out the computer's power cord!).

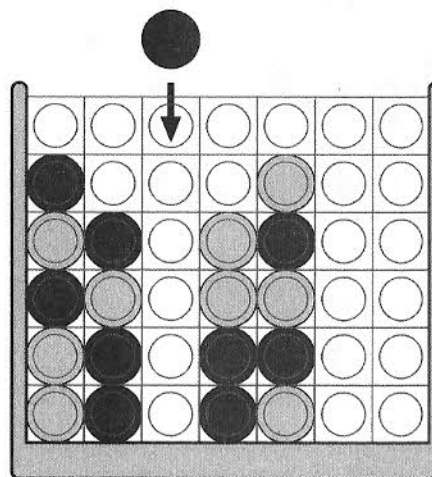


Fig. 1: A forced block

Another potential road to victory is to make a move that will force your opponent into a block, while you try to make four in a row somewhere else. **Fig. 1** illustrates this idea. Here, it is Black's move. Black plays the column marked with the arrow.

Red (shown as the lighter pieces in the figure) is forced to play in the same column to prevent a horizontal four in a row. This move, however, allows black to win diagonally, as shown in **Fig. 2**.

Statistically, the three central columns are most likely to produce a winning combination. You can attempt to take a lot of central "real estate" as a game strategy. You are, however, most likely to be thwarted in this effort (at least when playing the computer).

When playing the alternative version of Line 'em Up (in which the player with the most sets of three in a row wins), the central columns are also very important. Board position, rather than counting remaining turns, becomes the determining factor.

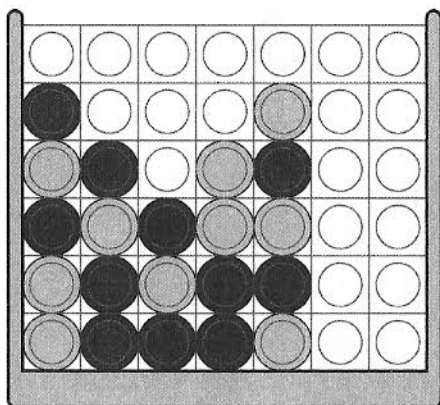
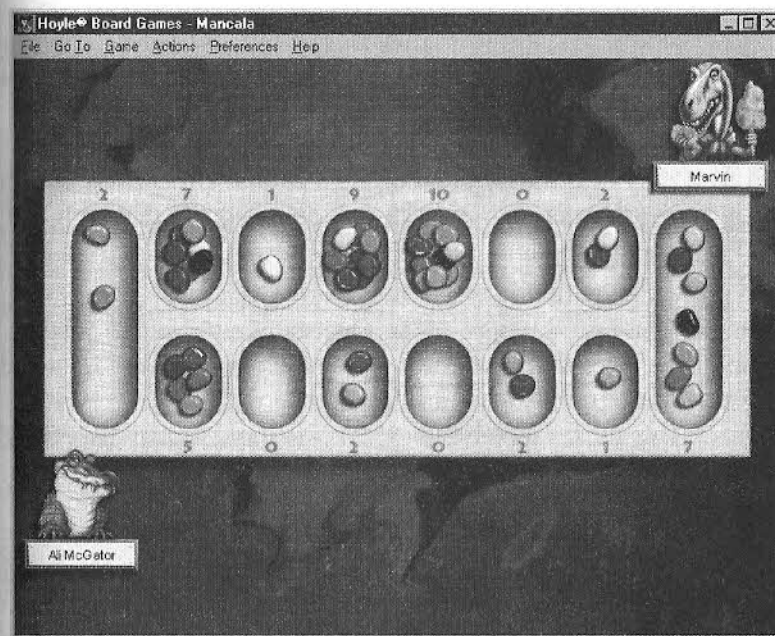


Fig. 2: Diagonal four in a row

MANCALA



How the game evolved

The name "mancala" applies to a family of games in which the playing board consists of two, three, or four straight rows of deep, round holes. The holes, which are used to hold the playing pieces, are what distinguishes this game from other board games. The word Mancala (or Manqala) is derived from the Arabic word naqala, to move.

Most board games are based on human activities such as war, racing, and hunting. In light of this, H.J.R. Murray (In *A History of Board Games Other Than Chess*) suggested that the original Mancala cups must have had some functional purpose. He notes the earliest patterns of lined cups are found around ancient construction areas, and they could have been used to calculate worker's wages.

Mancala games spanning several continents have existed in great diversity from ancient times, making it difficult to trace their place of origin. However, the game apparently moved from west to east in southern Asia, and, from the northeast in Africa, westward and

southward on that continent. This suggests a starting point near Egypt or Arabia.

The theory of Egyptian origination is given some credence by archeological findings. Patterns consisting of two rows of six cup-like holes are carved atop walls and/or roof slabs at the temples of Karnak, Luxor, and Kurna. These temples date from Egypt's Empire Age (1580-1150 B.C.). Another (possibly older) set of carved holes is found on a rock near the pyramid of Menkaura at Giza. These are historically isolated examples, however, and do not prove that King Tut was a Mancala aficionado.

A stronger case for an early appearance of Mancala comes from Ceylon, an island off southern India. One set of cups found outside an island cave dates from the 2nd century B.C. and another is carved on the side of Gaimaedyagala, a huge sloping rock called the "stone frog rock." This rock stands beside an ancient holding tank built between the 2nd and 4th centuries A.D.

Mancala was a cultural perk left behind in the wake of Islamic expansion, which began in the 8th century A.D. The first passing mention of Mancala in Arabic literature is in a book written about 950 A.D.

By the time Mancala was noticed in the Mideast by European visitors, it had long infiltrated most of Africa and southern Asia. Jean de Thevenot ran across it during a visit to the Mideast in 1657-1679. He says, "They played Mancala very frequently, which is made in the shape of a box, about two feet long and half a foot wide, with six small holes in the box itself, and six in the lid which is hinged to the box (for it opens like a chessboard)."

Beating a path to Africa

The timeframe for Mancala's penetration into Africa is not known, and may or may not have preceded the arrival of Islam. It goes by many names in different African countries, but "Wari" is the most prevalent. In 1896, a western chronicler of games named Stewart Culin called Mancala the "national game of Africa."

Africanized Mancala is a spectator sport. Onlookers discuss strategy, dole out advice to (and sometimes interfere with) the primary players. To many western observers this lent a tribal atmosphere to game proceedings. (To modern Americans, it just sounds like ice hockey!)

Westward ho!

Mancala never gained much of a foothold in the non-Islamic parts of Europe. The game did, however, cross the Atlantic with the African slaves, landing first in the West Indies.

Before its arrival in the west, Mancala was mostly a secular activity. In Dutch Guiana (northern Brazil) and the West Indies, it took on some spiritual overtones. M.J. Herskovitz, an anthropologist, wrote, "It is the game which is played in the House of Mourning to amuse the spirit whose body is awaiting burial." Apparently, the Dutch Guianese didn't want too much communion with the dead person; they kept a few different-sized boards on hand, and played on the type most disliked by the deceased!

Regional incarnations

Though six and seven cups per row is most common, the number of cups differs from place to place. Children imitate the adults by playing mancala games with only two or three holes in each row. Some regions (especially in Africa) use Mancala boards with up to 28 cup-holes per side. One type of Mancala game, with up to three and four rows of six (or more) cups each and only two beans per cup, is common in eastern and southern Africa. A greater quantity of holes requires more playing pieces and more time to finish a game.

In West Africa, as in Syria and Egypt, Mancala did not cross gender lines: men played with other men, and women played with women. In most Asian countries and the Philippines, men usually don't play the game at all.

Mancala might be played on a hinged board, as Thevenot reported, or dug right out of the ground. Non-hinged boards usually had two extra receptacles for storing captured pieces. The extra receptacles are especially common in the far east (southern China, Indonesia, and the Philippines).

Playing pieces are beans, seeds, berries, stones, or anything convenient. Play is normally counterclockwise. However, in some areas the first player determines the direction of sowing (i.e., piece distribution).

Some regional variations include the following rule: if the last piece is sown on a player's own side, that cup is immediately lifted

and sown into the other cups. Rules for capture also differ greatly from place to place.

In some circles, cheating is commonplace, and in fact the player is highly regarded who can cheat without being detected. In one place, recorded by Murray, this inspired a corresponding rule that players sowing must keep their hands high above the board, so their moves could be monitored closely by the opponent.

How the game is played

Hoyle's Mancala is played on the traditional Egyptian board with two rows of six cups. The six small cups on the bottom of the board are yours, and the tall cup on the right is your Mancala, which is the storage place for captured stones. (If you are playing from the top-right position; your cups are along the top of the board and your Mancala is the tall cup on the left.)

Your turn consists of selecting a cup and distributing all its contents (stones) around the board. Stones are distributed in a counter-clockwise direction. As you move around the ends of the board, you drop one stone into your own mancala but bypass your opponent's mancala.

If the last stone from your selected cup drops into your mancala, you are allowed an extra turn. You can continue to gain extra turns in this way while you make multiple plays that end in your mancala.

If the last stone from the selected cup is dropped into one of your empty cups, that stone plus all stones in your opponent's cup directly across the board go into your mancala.

When one player's six cups are emptied, the other player adds all stones remaining on the board to his or her mancala, and the game ends. The player with the largest mancala wins.

Strategies

If you're not sure how to win this game, set the computer player on "Expert" skill level and watch it play. You will immediately notice that the computer takes a lot of extra turns. Although Mancala is a highly complex game, the major factor in winning is gaining extra turns by dropping your last stone in your own mancala. Besides scor-

ing points, this method also helps you to avoid leaving stones on the other side of the board, where they can be used by your opponent.

Good board position will allow you to take extra turns. A good board position is evident when you maintain a balanced number of stones in your cups. **Fig. 1** shows an example of this.

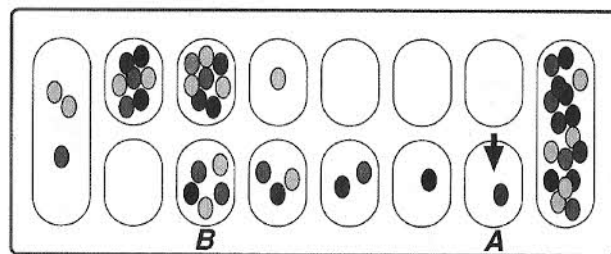


Fig. 1: Balanced cups

The player on the bottom can take a whopping twelve turns in a row (no kidding!) by moving cup A at the right edge, followed by cup B, followed again by cup A (**Fig. 2**), and so on.

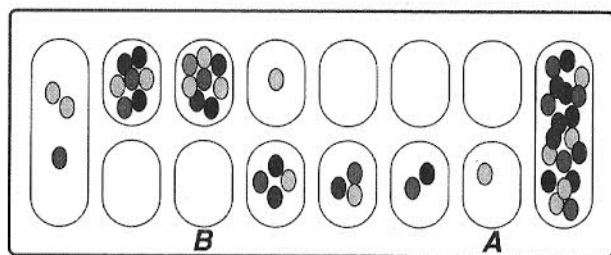


Fig. 2: Extra turns

Of course, it's not usually possible to get so many extra turns at once. The principle of maintaining balance is the important thing. The optimum number of stones in the cups depends on whose turn it is and on which cups you're moving first. As you saw in Fig. 1, a cup should ideally contain one stone for every cup between it and your Mancala. In particular, try to keep your last cup empty or with only one stone in it. (Conversely, adding a second stone to your opponent's last cup is almost always a good move.) This will allow you greater flexibility in taking extra turns.

Advanced Strategies

While the general principle of balance is vital, a critical examination of the board is necessary at all times. Take a look at **Fig. 3**. If it's your turn and you are the player on the bottom, the initial impulse is to move cup B, because it is in danger of being captured.

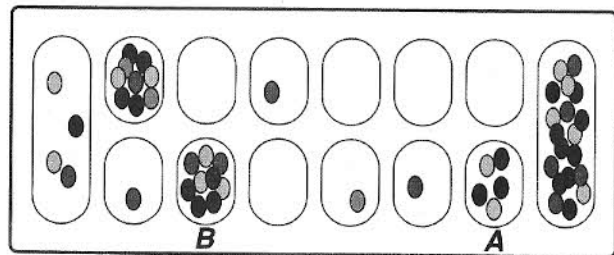


Fig. 3: A threatened cup

However, this is not your best move. A better alternative is to empty cup A. This play has several advantages: (1) it prevents your cup B from being taken (by placing a stone in the opposing cup), (2) it frees up your end cup, and (3) unlike emptying cup B, this move does not excessively load up your right-hand cups, which would cripple your options in upcoming turns (the computer delights in loading up your right-hand cups, if you give it a chance to do so).

Six-stone Mancala is more complex. In this version of the game, it is more difficult to keep a light balance of stones in your cups; thus, it's more difficult to take extra turns. As a result, capturing enemy stones has a much greater impact on the overall score. (This is also due to the increased capture range of the cups.)

At the end of the game, it is sometimes helpful to count remaining turns, especially if you have a lot of stones left in one cup. If your opponent has fewer remaining turns than you have, you can delay emptying your heaviest cup until your opponent ends the game. In this manner, the pile of stones will be added to your own mancala.

For example, look at **Fig. 4**. The top player has more turns than the bottom player (4 vs. 3) and can therefore hang onto the stones in cup B—as long as they're not moved.

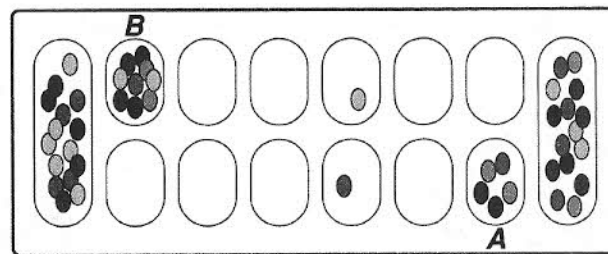


Fig. 4: Keeping your stones

What should the bottom player do in this situation? Moving cup A (**Fig. 5**) immediately might allow the possibility of capturing a few last stones before the game is finished. If the game is close, this could determine the winner.

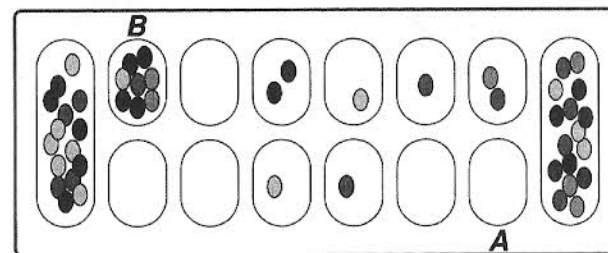
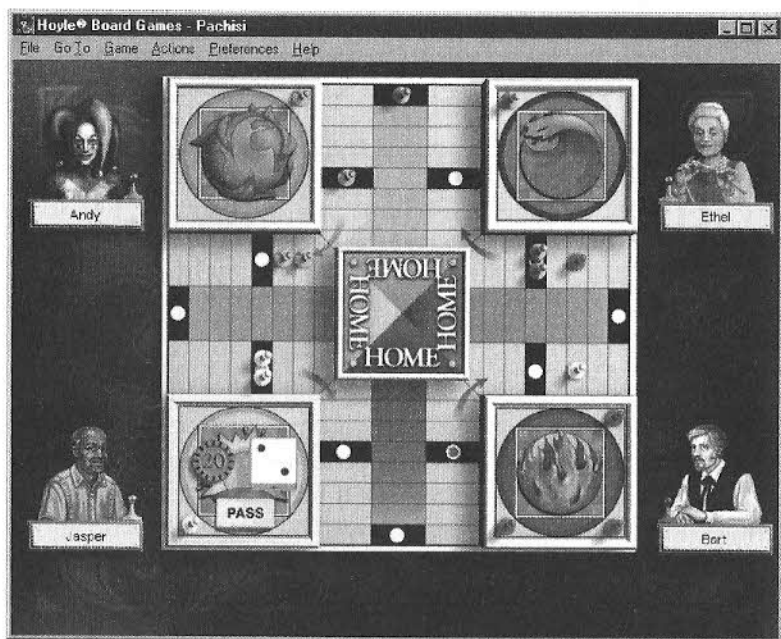


Fig. 5: End-game captures

PACHISI



How the game evolved

Racing games have been developed by almost every culture on Earth. When the Conquistadors landed in Central America, they were surprised to find the Indians playing a game on a cruciform (cross-shaped) track with some resemblance to Pachisi.

Pachisi is a Hindu word meaning “25,” a reference to the method of scoring used in the original game. It’s an old game, perhaps dating from the era in which the Indians (of India) invented Chess (6th century AD). It’s still popular in India.

The Pachisi we’re familiar with in America was patented by an Englishman in 1896. He called it Ludo, but in this country we call it by its ancient name (though we use the Ludo rules). The modern board is square, but the track on which the pieces race is still cross-shaped.

Americans also know this game as Parcheesi™ (introduced in Britain in 1874), Sorry!™, which uses cards and a square track instead of dice and a cross-shaped track, and Trouble™, which uses

dice in a plastic bubble in the center of the board. You push on the bubble to “throw” the dice. The track is a square.

It’s worth mentioning two aspects of Pachisi (besides its name) that help to identify its origins:

First, the pieces move counter-clockwise; this is generally thought to be characteristic of Asian games. In most Western games, the pieces move clockwise.

Second, certain squares on the Pachisi board act as “castles” in which the pieces of one player (or one team) may take refuge and not have to worry about being bumped back to the beginning of the course. In some early forms of Chess, particularly as that game spread eastward toward China, each side could send at least a few pieces to safety inside a castle or citadel.

How the game is played

Players move their pieces (one at a time) out of their starting area, take one trip around the track, and head up the middle (the home stretch) toward home. A piece can’t move from its base square to its entry space until the player has thrown a 5 on a die. You have the option of passing the rest of your turns after you have used at least one die value to move. Rolling doubles allows you an extra turn (but you lose a turn if you roll doubles three times).

You can be bumped back to your base if you’re not standing on a safety space when an enemy piece lands on you. The “bumping” player receives a 20-space bonus immediately.

Two pieces of the same color on the same space form a blockade that cannot be bypassed by any other pieces. A blockade cannot be advanced up the board with doubles.

The first player to bring all four of his or her pieces home is the winner. To enter home, you need an exact roll, for which you also receive a 10-space bonus.

Strategies

One decision you’ll need to make in Pachisi is whether you want to take an aggressive or conservative approach. Invariably, the former

will land you back in your starting square and hoping for 5's. (We recommend the conservative approach!) Being aggressive, however, does pay off big dividends if you can bump another piece; you get a 20-space bonus! But even in this case, be sure you're not leaving your piece too vulnerable or your gains will be quickly lost.

Conservative play involves entering safety spaces and avoiding being bumped by your opponent(s). You should end your move on a safety space whenever possible. Avoid leaving a safety space unless your piece is relatively safe from enemy pieces.

It is also important how far around the board your piece has traveled. Obviously, you do not want to risk a piece that has almost reached the safety of your home stretch.

Fig. 1 shows an example of taking a conservative approach (the arrows mark possible moves by green). Here, green might like to advance the front piece as far as possible: seven spaces. However, it is a poor risk. Blue and red, though not dangerously close, are close enough to warrant concern (doubles makes everyone a threat!). Because green's front piece has advanced almost completely around the board, green's first priority should be to keep it safe from attack. He should move this piece three spaces (onto the safety space), and move his other piece four spaces.

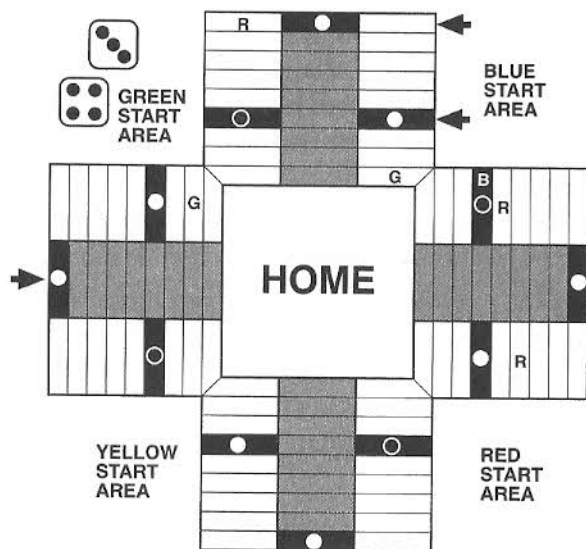


Fig. 1: Playing conservatively

Remember: 5's and 7's are the magic numbers. They will take you from one safety space to another.

Advanced Strategies

Even if you play conservatively, at times you will have to endanger your pieces by advancing them forward unprotected (i.e., they're not ending on a safety space or in a blockade). The key is to move the piece that will be least threatened by your opponents. Try to stay at least eight spaces (the more the better!) ahead of your closest opponent. A piece usually moves seven spaces or fewer in a given turn. Of course, also consider the number of enemy pieces behind you; three pieces eight, nine, and 10 spaces back are far more likely to get you than one piece one space back!

You have the option of using just one of your die values, passing on the other. Use this rule to avoid placing a piece in danger. Fig. 2 shows a situation in which passing on a move is a wise choice. Green can take yellow by moving six. This is definitely good. However, after taking yellow, green can move zero, three, 20, or 23 additional spaces (with the 20-space bonus). Using the 20 will put him in considerable danger from blue and red. Moving three spaces is the less risky option.

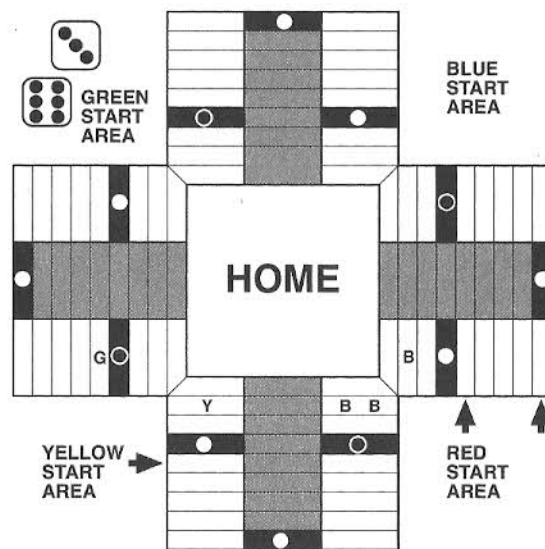
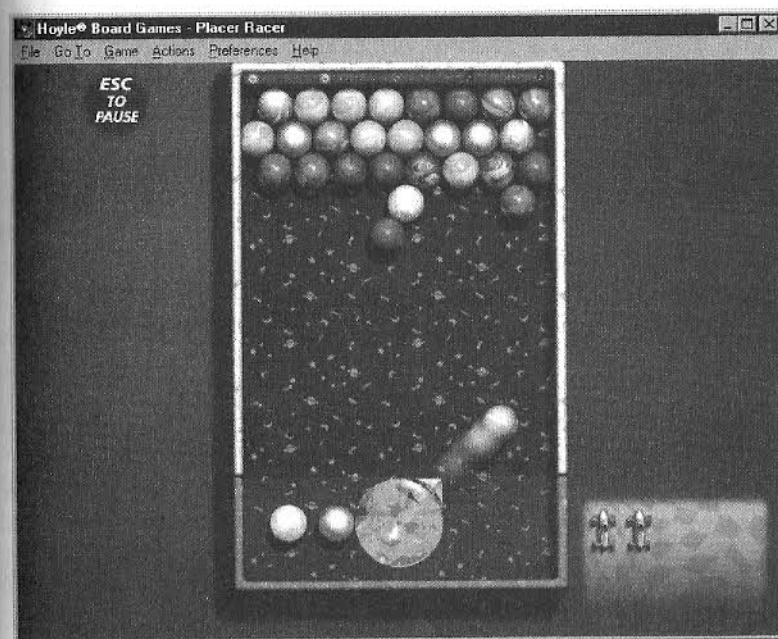


Fig. 2: Passing

Use blockades wisely by breaking them up carefully. If you allow enemy pieces to bump you as soon as you break up the blockade, what's the point? A good place to build a blockade is on your entry square. The best time to build it is upon entering your last piece into play. This will allow you to continue advancing pieces while slowing down your opponents.

PLACER RACER



How the game evolved

Placer Racer, though it resembles a type of electronic billiards game, plays more like the arcade games that attained popularity in the 1980s. Many of these games consisted of a series of screens with stationary targets. Advancement to the next level required dissolving all of the targets. Breakout™ by Atari is one early example of this type of game. Later, Tetris™ added puzzle-solving features and a time limit (you had to clear the screen before it filled up, ending the game). While Placer Racer includes features popularized by these other games, it ups the adrenaline ante by incorporating a shooter “gun” for zapping targets.

How the game is played

To play Placer Racer, aim your shooter to the left or right and shoot the balls using your “fire” key or button. Each ball you shoot bounces off the walls and sticks to the ceiling, or to the first stationary

ball in its path. When three or more balls of the same color touch, they disappear, along with any linked balls above or below them.

The goal of the game is to clear each level by getting rid of all of the balls between the shooter and the ceiling. Be careful because the ceiling periodically drops and pushes all of the balls down. If any ball drops below the level of the shooter, the game is over.

You can play Placer Racer against a friend or family member on the same computer, choosing who sits on which side of the keyboard. In head-to-head play, the more balls you free from your side, the more extra balls appear on your opponent's side.

Strategies

To escape being crushed by the descending balls in Placer Racer, you must have good aim, and you'll find that your aim improves with practice. Aside from that, the two major things to think about are: 1) what to do with the "unmatched" balls, and 2) how to use bank shots.

Unmatched balls are those of a color where there is no immediate prospect for forming a group of three. You should try to place these balls strategically to prevent them from blocking upcoming matches in other colors. To help in deciding where to aim these "wasted" shots, look at the balls you'll be firing next; their color may help determine what parts of the field you need to avoid.

In **Fig. 1**, you have two blues about to be fired and no blue targets that can be hit. Where should you unload these blues? You don't want to put them right in the middle (blocking two purples), nor on the left (blocking two blacks). Sending them to the right might seem like a good idea-but there's a white ball there, and another white waiting to be fired. Aiming just right of the purples should maximize your options.

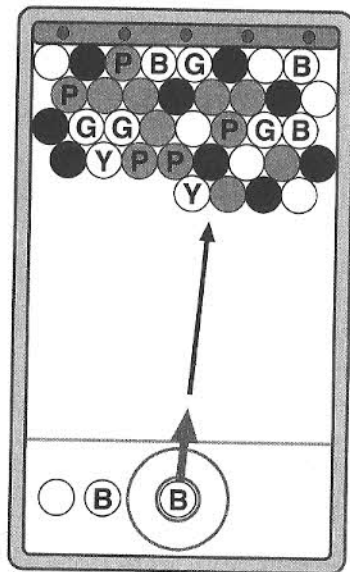


Fig. 1: Placing off-color balls

Also, make sure you lump these two blues together so they form an easy target if another blue pops in to be shot.

When aiming unmatched balls, remember that every connection to the ceiling helps to stabilize a group of balls (a bad thing). You'll want to avoid such connections whenever possible.

It is worth practicing your bank shot in order to master it. Firing a bank shot often allows you to sever a group of balls hanging from the ceiling by a relatively small "thread." For example, in **Fig. 2** a good bank shot connects three black balls near the top of the screen and drops most of the balls in the field. The alternative of shooting the black ball over to the left (perhaps clearing the other two blacks on the left) is easier, but still leaves the board as a whole in a dangerously low position.

In the two-player game, if you destroy any group with x number of balls, $x - 3$ balls will be transported to your opponent's playing field. (For example, if you destroy a group of four balls, one will be sent to your opponent.) Try to dislodge large groups at once by working at the ceiling connections.

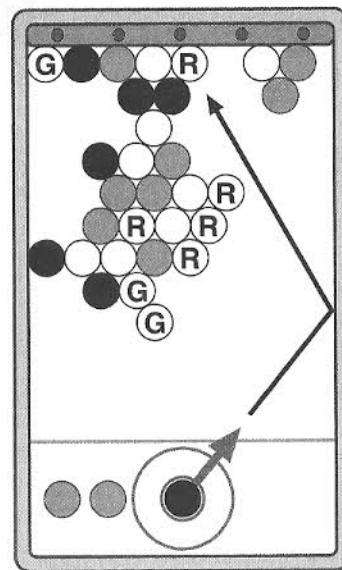
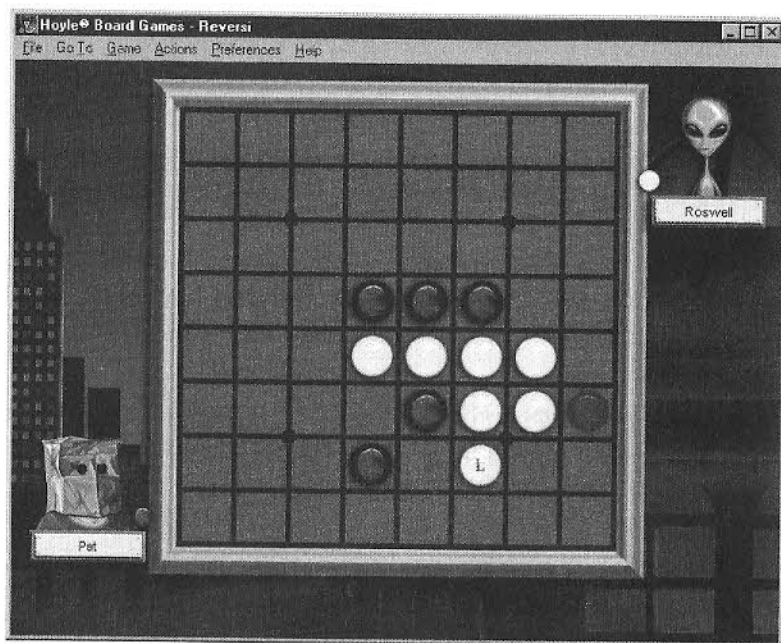


Fig. 2: Bank shots

REVERSI



How the game evolved

In an unlikely coincidence, two very similar games were marketed in the city of London in 1880. One game, invented by John W. Mollett, was called Annexation and was played on a board shaped like a cross. The other game, invented by Lewis Waterman, was Reversi. Reversi used the same 8 x 8 square board as Checkers. Which of the two games actually hit the marketplace first is unknown, but Waterman's Reversi survived. This may have been due in part to the fact that Jacques and Sons, Waterman's firm, legitimized the game by publishing *The Handbook of Reversi* in 1888.

Reversi is similar to, though more accessible than, the ancient Asian game of Go. Besides their visual similarity, both games share a theme of controlling territory by surrounding the opponent's pieces in order to reverse them (in Reversi), or capture them (in Go). It seems likely that Waterman and/or Mollett were inspired by Go in the invention of their games.

How the game is played

Reversi is played on an 8 x 8 board with black and white stones. Black moves first.

The only legal moves are those that cause one or more of your opponent's pieces to become sandwiched between your pieces and thus flipped (their color changes to your color). Only sandwiches formed by newly placed pieces count; sandwiches that result from stones being flipped do not themselves cause other stones to be flipped.

If you can't move, you lose your turn. The player with the most stones showing his or her color at the end of the game is the winner.

Strategies

Most players of Reversi use one of three common strategies, depending on their level of experience. These are:

1. Capture as many squares as you can each turn.
2. Concentrate on capturing stable squares.
3. Attempt to maximize your mobility (your play options) while limiting the mobility of your opponent.

The first of these three strategies is simple: on each turn choose the move that flips as many of your opponent's pieces as possible. This strategy works in certain cases, but you will often find that gained territory is soon lost when your opponent flips the pieces back. It's true that you want as many pieces as possible to show your color at the end of the game. But you will find that haphazardly going for big flips in the early game won't achieve this goal.

The second strategy, capturing stable squares, is more complex. The main idea here is that some squares are more stable, and hence more valuable, than others because they are harder for your opponent to recapture. Corners are the most stable, since they can never be recaptured. Squares along the edge of the board are fairly stable also, since they can only be captured by other pieces on the edge. Other squares on the board are much more unstable and vulnerable.

Take a look at Fig. 1. Key squares in Reversi have standardized letter designations: A, B, C, and X. All the edge squares are considered valuable (C is better than B; B is better than the A) because they are relatively stable. The corners are not marked because they are obviously valuable. The X squares are discussed below.

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
1		C	A	B	B	A	C	
2	C	X					X	C
3	A							A
4	B							B
5	B							B
6	A							A
7	C	X					X	C
8		C	A	B	B	A	C	

Fig. 1: Types of squares on the Reversi board

Advanced Strategies

The X squares are generally dangerous plays because they almost always allow your opponent, sooner or later, to take the adjacent corner. Late in the game, or when the corner has already been filled, you may find an X square to be your best play. But before then, you should almost always look for another move.

An example of playing for key squares is shown in Fig. 2. Here, Black has taken two edge squares along the top of the board and is in good position. Black can now also take the edge square at b1 (indicated by a question mark). However, doing so would be a costly mistake; it would jeopardize all of Black's key positions (b1, d1, and e1). If Black takes b1, white will move into c1, subsequently gain control of the corner, and wipe out all of Black's edge positions (Fig. 3 shows the end result). Black must do something else instead; just about anything else would be a better move.

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
1		?		●	●			
2			○	●	●			
3			○	●	●	●	●	
4				●	○	●		
5			○	○	○	○		
6				○				
7					○			
8								

Fig. 2: Playing for edge squares

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
1	○	○	○	○	○	○		
2			○	●	●			
3			○	●	●	●	●	
4		○		●	●	●		
5			○	●	●	○		
6			●	●	●			
7					○			
8								

Fig. 3: Losing the edge

The third strategy, mobility, is more difficult to illustrate. It is also counterintuitive. Looking at **Fig. 4**, your first inclination might be to say that Black is firmly in control. In fact, White is in control; Black is currently immobilized, while White has options for taking pieces on every side.

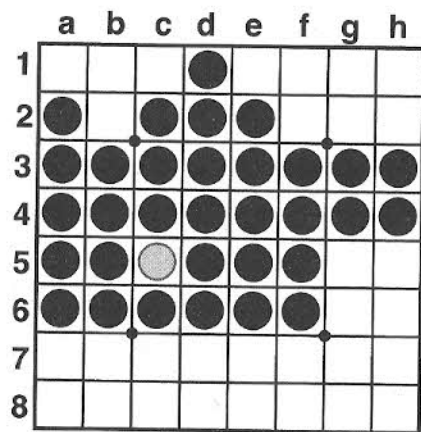


Fig. 4: Who is winning?

Remember that players are only allowed to make moves that cause one or more pieces to be flipped. By limiting your opponent's choice of such moves, you gain control because you get to choose how the board is developed.

However, it is not easy to achieve a board position where you dominate your opponent in terms of mobility. To do so, you must sacrifice pieces and try to capture central positions instead of pieces along the frontier of play. **Fig. 5** illustrates this concept. White has too much frontier space, and Black is in control.

The trick to controlling mobility is to constantly look at the board from your opponent's point of view. What moves can you make that will leave your opponent with the fewest available moves?

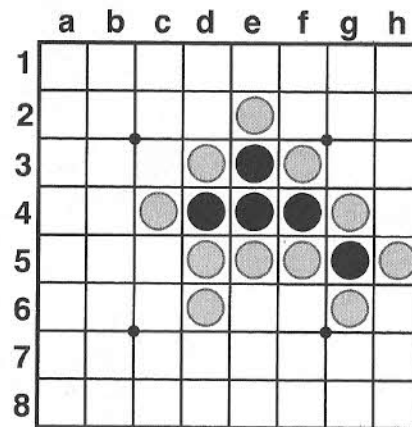
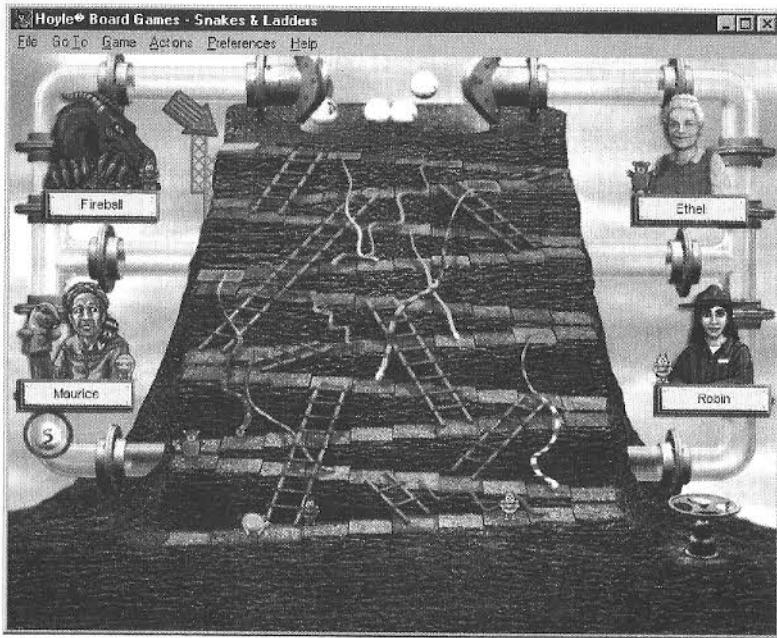


Fig. 5: Black keeping white on the frontiers

SNAKES & LADDERS



How the game evolved

Though Snakes & Ladders is popular primarily with children, adults should not dismiss it as superficial, as it belongs to a gaming tradition—racing—that stretches back 6,000 years. Not bad for a kids' game!

The Egyptians of 4,000 BC left behind fragments of game boards that researchers surmise were tracks for little wood runners to race on. By 2,500 BC, the Egyptians were painting (in their curious, two-dimensional style) on the walls of their tombs representations of people thinking hard over game boards. With some paintings, we can't really know what's going on; since the Egyptians painted in profile, it's impossible to know what the boards looked like or what the pieces were doing on them. With other paintings, however, the profile view is not a problem. The pieces on the boards are engaged in a race.

Many boards and pieces have been recovered from this period, not only in Egypt but in the early civilizations of Ur, Palestine, and Assyria as well. These too are racing games, in particular an Egyptian

game that archaeologists call "Dogs & Jackals" (after the carved heads of the pieces). "Boards" for racing games have also been found chiseled into the floors of buildings, courtyards, and public areas in ancient, long-abandoned towns in Egypt, India, Persia, China, Italy, and Spain.

The English stake their claim...

Snakes & Ladders evolved in England from earlier racing games, though we don't know for certain which ones. A likely candidate is Goose, a racing game of Italian origin that entered England shortly before 1600. Whereas Snakes & Ladders has a single reward, the ladder, and a single penalty, the snake, Goose has one reward (landing on a goose gives you another turn) and many penalties (including going to prison, getting lost in a maze, and falling down a well).

Goose was exceedingly popular among adults at this time, when Shakespeare was still alive and the civil war that would temporarily throw out the English monarchy was still decades away. Perhaps Snakes & Ladders was intended to be the Goose for children.

...and so do the Hindus

Merilyn Simonds Mohr, in *The Games Treasury*, has a different idea. She cites an old game from India, "Moksha-Patamu" ("Heaven and Hell"), as the source for our Snakes & Ladders. Hindus used Moksha-Patamu to teach their children how to survive in a world of good and evil. In the Indian game, each ladder rose from a "square of virtue" (Faith, Reliability, Generosity) while each snake descended from squares of "wickedness" (Disobedience, Theft, Drunkenness).

Mohr has uncovered a game patented in England in 1892 as Snakes & Ladders; this is surely not the first appearance of this game, but perhaps a reformatting of Snakes & Ladders along the Hindu lines. Mohr notes that "while vices outnumbered virtues in the Indian game, most early Snakes & Ladders variations balance the two, and more recent versions give the players more ladders to climb than snakes to slither down. Today's games are stripped of moral overtones; in some versions, even the snakes have been replaced by 'chutes.'"

With the Hindus, you hit the snake's head and slide down to its tail. In North America, the snakes have no significance and are often reversed.

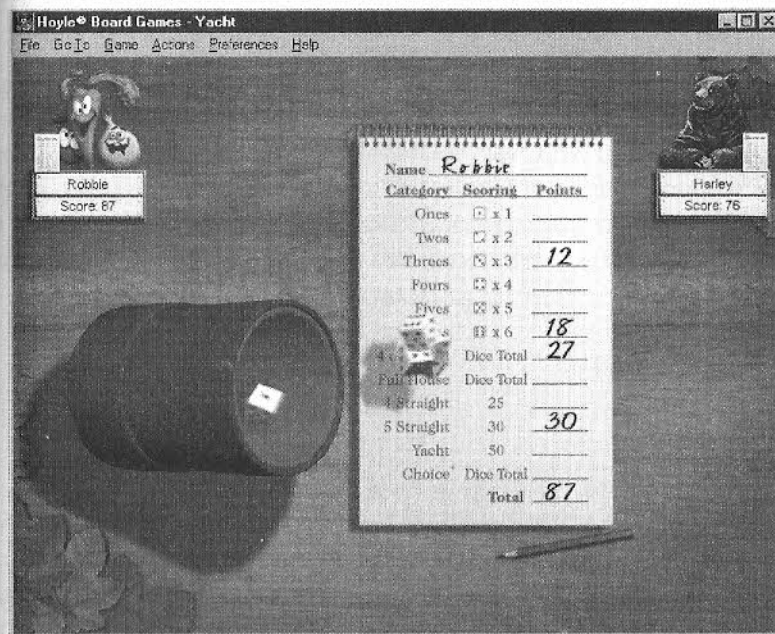
How the game is played

You start at the bottom of the hill (as a beetle low on karma) and move upward according to the number shown on the ball. If you land on a red square that's supporting a ladder, your piece climbs that ladder to the square at the top. But if you land on a blue square at the top of a snake, you slide down that snake to the square at the bottom. The first player to the square on the top of the mountain wins.

Strategies

Careful experiments have shown that of the three available methods of picking your number in Snakes & Ladders (clicking on the circle, clicking on the crank wheel, or pressing the spacebar), the crank wheel is the best. The reason for this is pretty mysterious, and you're probably safer not delving into it. We think it has something to do with chaos theory and the grease/spin ratio of the wheel itself. However, all of our experiments were conducted on a Cray supercomputer whose random number generator was on the fritz, so your results at home may vary.

YACHT



How the game evolved

Most Americans know this game from the popular commercial variant, Yahtzee™. Supposedly, the marketer of this game bought it from Canadians who called it Yacht because that's where they played it. (However, according to the current edition of *Hoyle's Rules of Games*, Yacht is usually played "in a restaurant or bar to decide who pays the check.")

Yacht by any name was originally a means of playing Poker with dice instead of cards (hence another of its names, Poker Dice). Special Yacht dice are made with an ace, king, queen, jack, 10, and 9 replacing the pips of the standard dice. Today, most people play Yacht with standard dice and without much thought for its Poker origins, even though most of the game's terminology comes from Poker.

How the game is played

Yacht uses five dice. Any number of people can play (though with just one person the only goal is to beat your past high score). Points are scored in the following categories as shown:

<u>Hand</u>	<u>Score</u>
Ones	Total of ones
Twos	Total of twos
Threes	Total of threes
Fours	Total of fours
Fives	Total of fives
Sixes	Total of sixes
Four of a Kind	Dice total
Full House	Dice total
Four Straight	25
Five Straight	30
Yacht (Five of a Kind)	50
Choice	Dice total

There are 12 categories, and you have 12 turns. On each turn you roll the dice three times. You can keep one or more die from each roll as desired; you can also discard the die or dice you kept from the first roll if the second roll changes your mind. You can stand pat (stop your turn) after the first or second roll if your hand is good enough.

Your goal is to fill in each category in the list above with the highest possible number. A 4-4-5-5-5 Full House, for example, is 23 points. Once you fill a category, you go on to another. If you throw a second Full House, say a 4-4-4-3-3, you may choose the Fours category. Your score then would be 12 (the threes in this example wouldn't count).

(With Four of a Kind, the number on the fifth die does count in the scoring. Example: 6-6-6-6-1 is Four of a Kind, but it counts as 25.)

Three categories already have scores: Four Straight (25), Five Straight (30), and Yacht (50). These numbers are higher than the highest possible totals on your dice for those particular hands, so consider these scores a bonus.

The Choice category is just that—your choice. Use this category if your hand has a high point value but doesn't fit anywhere else. You'll receive the total points showing on your dice.

At the end of 12 rounds all of the categories will be filled in and the game ends. High score wins.

Strategies

If you're playing Yacht for the first time, it's easy to assume that the dice control your fate. However, your scores are liable to improve if you remember who's "tossing" whom, and make your decisions carefully. The fact that you can throw the dice three times and pick which ones you want to keep gives you a lot of flexibility. Yacht is a subtle game, and effective strategies can't be reduced to a simple formula. Many factors should affect play in addition to the dice roll, including:

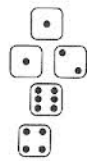
1. Which categories are hardest to score
2. Which categories have already been used
3. How many turns remain
4. How close the total scores are

In the early, you're better off scoring in the categories that are most difficult to fill: Four of a Kind, Full House, Large Straight, and Yacht. Filling these categories early will help you minimize damage that results later on from having to "zero out" categories.

Remember that Four of a Kind and Full House are scored by totaling your dice. A Four of a Kind consisting of four 3's and a 1 adds up to (a rather paltry) 13 points. It is better to go for these two categories if you have high numbers on the dice. Of course, toward the end of the game, you are lucky to fill an empty Four of a Kind or Full House category, even if it's with relatively low numbers.

Sometimes you use up your three rolls and simply end up with crummy dice values that don't give many points in any of your available categories. This happens to novice and expert players alike. The question is what you should do with this roll to minimize the damage. For example, take a look at Fig 1.

ROLL 3



Ones	⊙ × 1	3	
Twos	⊙ × 2		←
Threes	⊙ × 3		
Fours	⊙ × 4	8	
Fives	⊙ × 5		
Sixes	⊙ × 6		←
Four of a Kind	Dice Total		
Full House	Dice Total		
Four Straight			
Five Straight			
Yacht			
Choice			←

Fig. 1: Scoring a bad roll

This roll doesn't give a good score in any of the available categories, but you have to choose one of them. Some of your options (marked with arrows) are:

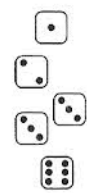
- Use your Sixes category; this gives you 6 points.
- Use you Choice category; this gives you 14 points.
- Use your Twos category; this gives you 2 points.

Although Sixes or Choice would give you more points on this turn, by choosing the Twos category you avoid wasting scoring potential that you can use later in the game. The most you could ever get in the Twos category is 12 points. So by taking 2 points in Twos you "give up" 10 possible points. The Sixes category can potentially earn 30 points, so by taking 6 points you would be giving up 24 possible points. Similarly, taking 14 in Choice would be giving up 16 possible points.

The Ones category is, of course, the best category for throwaway rolls. Even if you score a 0 in Ones, you only lose 5 possible points.

You should allow game circumstances to dictate which dice to keep and which category to aim for. For example, say you make an initial roll as shown in Fig. 2.

ROLL 1



Ones	⊙ × 1	1	
Twos	⊙ × 2		
Threes	⊙ × 3		←
Fours	⊙ × 4		
Fives	⊙ × 5		
Sixes	⊙ × 6		←
Four of a Kind	Dice Total	20	
Full House	Dice Total	17	
Four Straight			←
Five Straight			←
Yacht			←
Choice			←

Fig. 2: Choosing a target category

Some of your options include:

- Keeping the 6 with the plan of going for Yacht (not likely!), Sixes, or Choice.
- Keeping the 3's, and going for Yacht or Threes.
- Keeping the 1, 2, and one of the 3's, and going for a Straight.

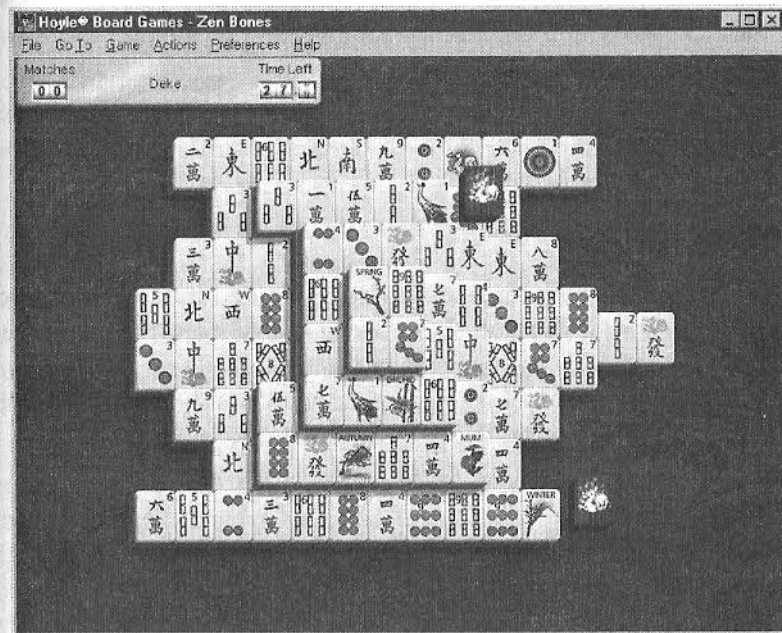
Option (a) is not very wise. Re-rolling 4 dice is a lot like re-rolling 5 dice from scratch, but with one fewer roll available—and the difference between two and three rolls is dramatic.

Option (b) is a bit better, but with only two 3's, your chances of getting a Yacht in two more rolls are pretty slim. You will probably be able to get at least one more 3, but scoring 9 (or even 12) in the 3's category isn't anything to get excited about this early in the game.

Option (c) makes the most sense. It's not ideal (a 2, 3, 4, for example, would be a better starting point for a Straight), but the chances are pretty decent that you will be able to roll a 4 with two rolls of two dice.

As the game progresses, however, these dynamics change. It depends especially on what categories are left open. If you roll the same 1, 2, 3, 3, 6 at the end of a close game, and your Threes category is open, going for Threes is a good way to assure yourself some points. On the other hand, if you need a lot of points, going for Yacht may be your only hope for victory.

ZEN BONES



How the game evolved

Zen Bones is a simplification of Mah Jongg, which itself is an American simplification of a Chinese game of the 19th century. (The Chinese original was played by different rules and known by different names throughout that country; one name that's come down to us translates roughly as "Game of the Four Winds.")

An American businessman named Joseph Babcock, who was living in Shanghai at the close of World War I, played the Chinese game and fell in love with it. He thought it would appeal to Americans, so he set about codifying (and streamlining) the rules. Babcock coined the name Mah Jongg for the new version; supposedly, he took this name from the bird that appears on one of the game's tiles. The bird represents a mythical figure called by the Chinese (this is an approximation) Mah Jongg, "Bird of a Thousand Intelligences."

Babcock might not have been as smart as that bird, but his hunch about the gaming marketplace was sound. Mah Jongg became a thunderous hit in the United States, Great Britain, and Australia in the

1920s. The game is still played today, though it no longer commands an army of fanatics as it did 70 years ago.

Mah Jongg is superficially similar to Dominoes in that both games use tiles, or bones, and because the arrangement of the tiles forms the “board.” Zen Bones shares that similarity with Dominoes; it also resembles certain card games, such as Solitaire, where uncovering hidden cards is the order of the day.

How the game is played

At the start of the game, the tiles or bones are randomly arranged in a pyramid shape. Your job is to match exposed tiles in pairs (a tile is exposed if its left or right edge is not touching another tile and there are no tiles on top of it). Each pair, once found, is removed from the layout. You keep matching pairs until there are no more in the layout, trying to end with the fewest tiles remaining. You can then stop and begin a new layout, or “reshuffle” the remaining tiles and continue on.

There are six categories, or suits, of tiles:

Circles (from one to nine)

Characters (Chinese letters)

Flowers (Mum, Plum, Bamboo, Orchid)

Seasons (Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn)

Compass (North, South, East, West)

Bamboo (not to be confused with the “bamboo” tile of Flowers)

Dragons (including one that looks as if a sword has been thrust through it)

Many of the tiles are numbered, but these numbers are for your convenience in making matches—they don’t figure in the scoring (since there is no scoring). You can’t match across suits; two tiles with nine circles are a match, but a Nine of Circles and Nine of Bamboo don’t work.

Any of the Flowers can be matched, for example, Mums with Plums. Any Season matches any other Season, for example, Winter with Spring. An exact match is required for all other suits.

The Bird of a Thousand Intelligences is considered part of the

Bamboo suit, but this distinction is only of consequence in Mah Jongg, where suits count in the scoring.

Strategies

Zen Bones is like an overstuffed version of Solitaire; the board needs trimming down fast, and it’s your job to do it. In comparing these two games, you’ll find that the rules are very different (matching pairs versus combining suits and ranks), but the strategy is quite similar.

The “playing field” in Zen Bones is a puzzle that must be unlocked. Look to see what tiles will unlock other tiles. As in Solitaire, you have no guarantees that the puzzle is solvable at all (a needed “key” may be out of reach behind or beneath a tile). You can, however, postpone or completely avoid the typical dead end (where you have no plays left) by making the best play when you have several choices available.

Fig. 1 shows a simple illustration of how the Zen Bones configuration must be “unlocked” if you wish to win the game. Three available matching tiles have large round circles (with 1’s in the upper right corner). You can match two of the three; which two do you choose? The two tiles in the lower right unlock a 3 tile and a 6 tile, while the third tile (upper left) doesn’t unlock anything (it’s adjacent to a hidden tile). Take the two in the lower right; otherwise, you’re reducing your future options.

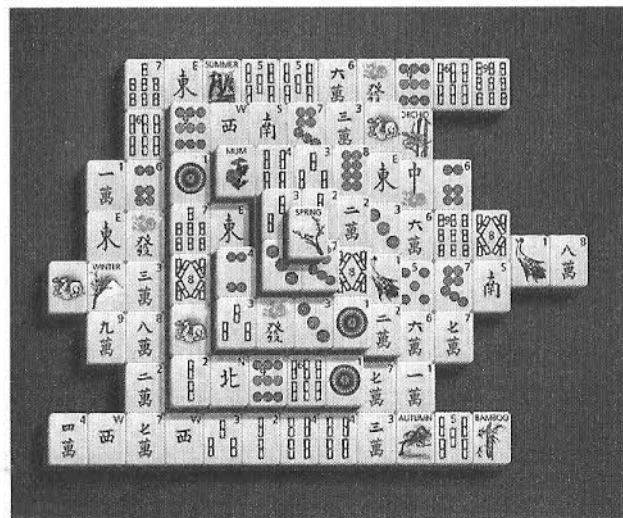


Fig. 1: “Unlocking” Zen Bones

The crucial element that makes Zen Bones more "brainy" than Solitaire is that you can see most of the tiles. In standard card Solitaire, most of the cards are hidden beneath stacks one to seven cards deep. If you need a specific card, you have to get lucky to pick the right stack. With Zen Bones, on the other hand, you can spend as much time as you want looking for the very best move. So the big question is, do you have time?

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