

Mærstánas

by John Beers

Version 0.1

Overview

Mærstánas is a free libre open source abstract strategy game where players alternate placing stones within the squares of a 7x7 grid with the goal of creating connection points between their own pieces.

Objective

Players try to achieve the highest score by making the most number of connections.

Components

- Game board
- *[Number to be determined]* stones or tokens, split evenly between two colors

Setup & starting the game

The board begins empty (similar to Go). Players may decide which one goes first in whatever manner seems appropriate. Players then alternate taking turns.

Playing the game

- On a player's turn, the player places one stone (*stán*) on a square on the game board.
- Stones (*stánas*) must be placed within the square, not on the intersections as in Go.
- Stones may be placed on any empty square, either standing alone or adjacent to another stone of either color (creating a *heorr* or “hinge”).
- Stones may only have **three** *heorras*; the fourth side *must remain free*.
- The edge of the board counts as **one** *heorr*; corners count as **two**.
- Play continues until no more viable moves remain.

Scoring

- Players receive one point for each stone or edge adjacent to one of their own stones (*freóndlic heorr* or “friendly hinge”).
- The player with the highest score wins.

Credits

Mærstánas was created by John Beers.

It was conceived in 2022 while working on **Oferhlýp**. As a fan of Hnefatafl, I wanted to name my games using Anglo-Saxon words to lend a quasi-historical feel to them. Both **Mærstánas** and **Oferhlýp** utilize the same 7x7 grid because, if they *were* historical, it might make sense for people to reuse an existing board, much like chess and checkers.

The word *mærstánas* is the plural form of *mærstán*, an Anglo-Saxon (Old English) word that means “a boundary-stone”. (<https://bosworthtoller.com/22190>)

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Find out more

More information on **Mærstánas** and “living rules” can be found at: <http://github.com/jaerrib/maerstanas>