Populace

2025, Kanare Kato, https://boardgamegeek.com/thread/3414350/populace

Definitions

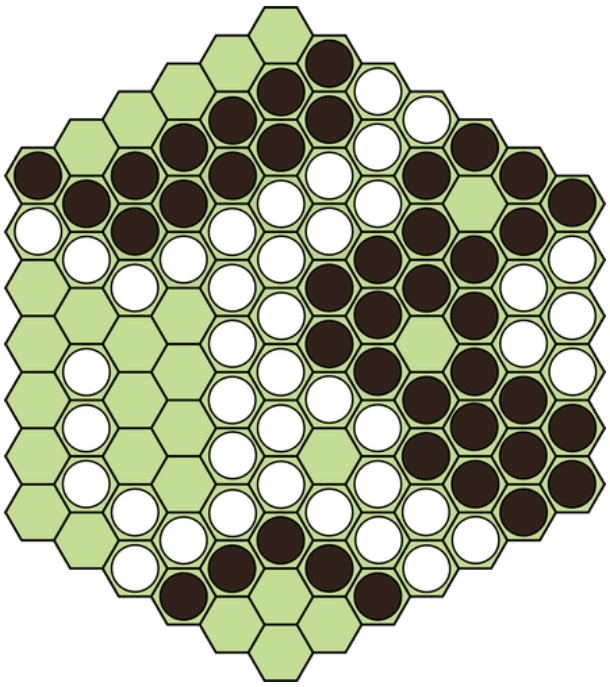
- When you have more pieces adjacent to an empty space than your opponent, you **control** that space.
- When a piece has two or more opponents adjacent to it than friendly pieces, the piece is **threatened**.
- The number of friendly pieces adjacent to a piece minus the number of opponents adjacent to it, plus 1 for itself, is the piece's **potential value**.

The board is initially empty. Start with one-stone pie.

On your turn, you perform one of the following four actions:

1. Place your piece on a space you control or a space adjacent to no piece.
2. Replace a threatened opponent's piece with one of your pieces in your hand.
3. Move one of your pieces on the board. The piece can move up to its potential value, can change direction at each step, passing over empty spaces and/or other pieces, and must land on an empty space.
4. Pass

The game ends when both players pass consecutively. Your score is the total number of your pieces on the board plus the total number of spaces you control. The player with the larger score wins.



White won by 56 to 52

Author’s notes: This game developed out of my attempt to make Dale's Throngs more playable. Constructed by adapting the "action potential" concept of Throngs, but the turn handling, movement, and placement rules are much different from the original. Since it seems to have distinctly different characteristics, I thought it should be treated as a separate game. It is also partially inspired by Control by Takuro Kawasaki, and as a result, it seems to be closer to Control than Throngs.

To eliminate a draw on an even board, use the button (first to pass receives ½ point). As far as I have tried, it seems to be played on hex-hex board without any problem, and even size 6 worked well enough.

Note that although three concepts are defined for understandability, the reality is that all three are unified mechanics derived from the idea of action potential in Throngs. When an enemy piece is in a certain cell, the piece itself has an AP of -1 from your point of view, which means that two or more your pieces must be adjacent to it to make the AP of that position positive for you to place a piece there. Thus, drop and flip are essentially the same action.

I thought it might be possible to eliminate cycles if limiting where pieces can be moved to where the player cannot drop his or her piece, but I am not sure. It is difficult for me to imagine a forced cycle position.