

Catena

2025, Luis Bolaños Mures, <https://boardgamegeek.com/thread/3595980>

Catena is a territory game for two players: Black and White. It is played on the spaces (*cells*) of an initially empty hexagonal grid of hexagons (*board*).

Definitions

- A *clump* is a stone along with all stones one can reach from it through a series of steps onto adjacent stones.
- A *ribbon* is a clump with no stone adjacent to more than two stones. A *bounded* ribbon is one that cannot grow without becoming a non-ribbon.
- To *claim* a ribbon is to replace all enemy stones in it with friendly stones.

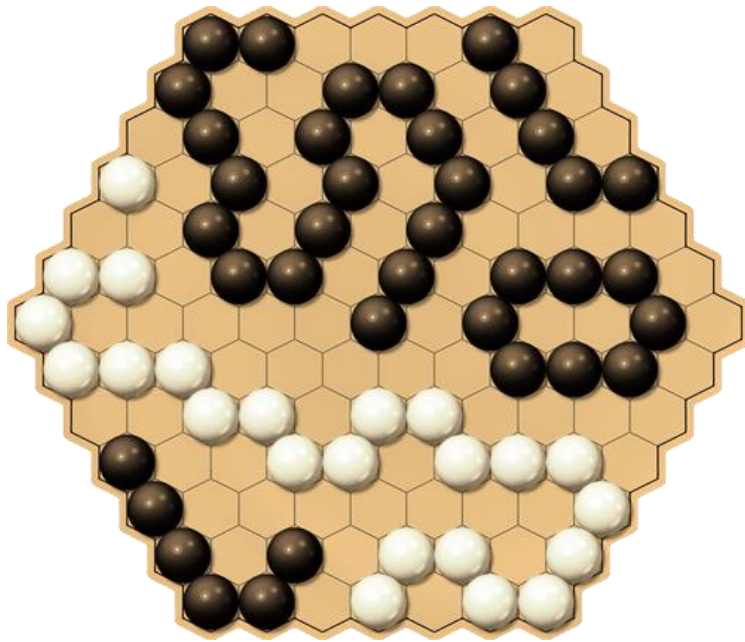
Black plays first, then turns alternate. On your turn, place a stone of your color on an empty cell without creating a non-ribbon, then let every unclaimed, bounded ribbon be claimed by the player with more stones in it. Tied ribbons of this kind are claimed by your opponent. When no more stones can be placed, the player with more stones on the board (plus komi and button where applicable) wins.

- *Komi* is the whole number of points that is added to White's score at the end of the game as compensation for playing second. Before the game starts, one player chooses the value of komi, then the other chooses sides.
- The *button* is a special token that is placed next to the board at the start of the game. On your turn, if neither player has taken the button yet, you may take it instead of making a board play. At the end of the game, a half point is added to the score of the player who has taken the button.

Variants

For buttonless ribbons, demand that two stones be placed on every turn after Black's first. Some alternative scoring rules are:

- *Longest ribbon*: When neither player can place a stone, remove pairs of same-length, opposite-colored ribbons until no more such pairs remain. The owner of the longest ribbon left over wins.
- *Square score*: Each ribbon contributes the square of its length to its owner's score. The player with the higher score wins.



Catena game won by Black.