

Entropy Game Rules

A two-player strategy game based on the eternal conflict in the universe between order and chaos.

Components:

Square board divided into 7x7 cells (5X5 is possible as well).

49 counters: 7 each of 7 different colours (or 5x5 colours, when playing on a 5x5 field)

Small bag

The Game

One player is Order, the other Chaos. Order is trying to make patterns vertically and horizontally. Chaos is trying to prevent this. A pattern is any sequence of counters that is identical if viewed from either direction (left to right/right to left or up to down/down to up). A pattern scores the number of counters in the pattern. All patterns within a pattern also score. For example: red-green-blue-green-red scores 5 and also 3 for green-blue-green; total: 8. Another example: red-green-red-green-red scores 5 plus $3 \times 3 = 14$. A further example: red-red-red-red-red scores $4 + 2 \times 3 + 3 \times 2 = 16$. All possible patterns are listed below.

Play

Chaos puts the counters in the bag. He draws them out *unseen* one at a time and places them on any empty square. Each time Chaos places a counter, Order may slide any one counter on the board (including the one just placed) vertically or horizontally over any number of vacant squares (exactly like a rook in chess). Only one counter may occupy a square. When the board is full every vertical and horizontal line is scored. The players then reverse roles and the player with the highest score is the winner.

Comment

The variety of play is almost infinite so that each game is different. An average score is about 75; 100 is good, 50 is poor.

A good strategy for Order is to avoid holes into which Chaos can drop awkward colours. The ideal is to have no more than two vacant areas. Order achieves this by moving counters to the sides. As the game progresses, Order can calculate the odds of a particular colour coming out of the bag next.

Tournament rules, using a timing clock, have been perfected.

AA	2	ABCCBA	12	AABBBAA	23
		AABBAA	16	AABABAA	25
ABA	3	ABAABA	18	ABAAABA	25
AAA	7	ABBBBA	22	ABBABBA	27
		AAAAAA	50	AAABAAA	29
ABBA	6			ABABABA	37
AAAA	16	ABCACBA	15	ABBBBBA	37
		ABCDCA	15	AAAAAAA	77
ABCBA	8	ABBCBBA	19		
ABBBA	12	ABCCCBA	19		
AABAA	12	AABCBAA	19		
ABABA	14	ABACABA	21		
AAAAA	30	ABCBABA	21		

Here, for ease of checking, are the 30 possible scoring combinations. Distinct letters stand for distinct colours.