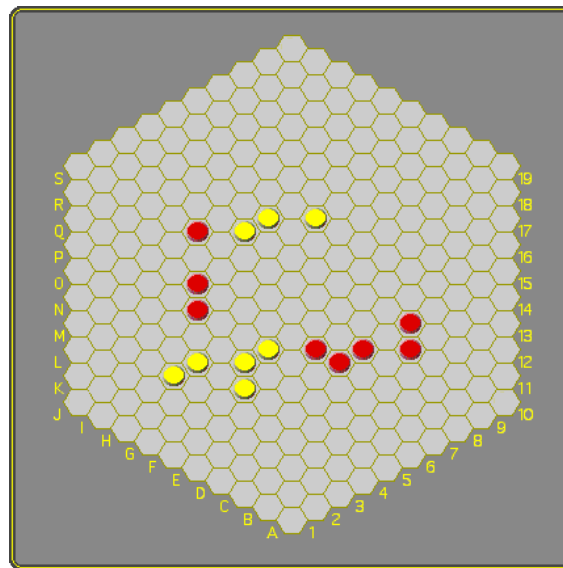


# Phalanx

Christian Freeling, 1980, <https://mindsports.nl/index.php/arena/phalanx>



The board is initially empty. There are two players, Red and Yellow, both with a sufficient number of men in their colour. There are also neutral pieces representing cells of the walls.

**Group.** A *group* is a number of connected men of the same color. A single man is a group by definition.

**Phalanx.** Two or more men of the same color in a straight unbroken line are called a *phalanx*. The line is called the 'line of movement'. A group may contain several phalaxes in different directions.

## The basic move protocol

On their turn players may:

1. Grow any or all of their groups by one stone.
2. Move any or all groups *that didn't grow*.
3. Pass.

A pass does not affect the player's right to move next turn. When both players pass on successive turns, the game ends.

## Balance

There are two ways to use the pie rule, one with one red stone and two yellow ones and one with two red stones and three yellow ones. One player places one red man (or two) and two yellow men (or three) on the board. The other player, called the chooser, then decides whether to play Yellow, in which case the opponent places

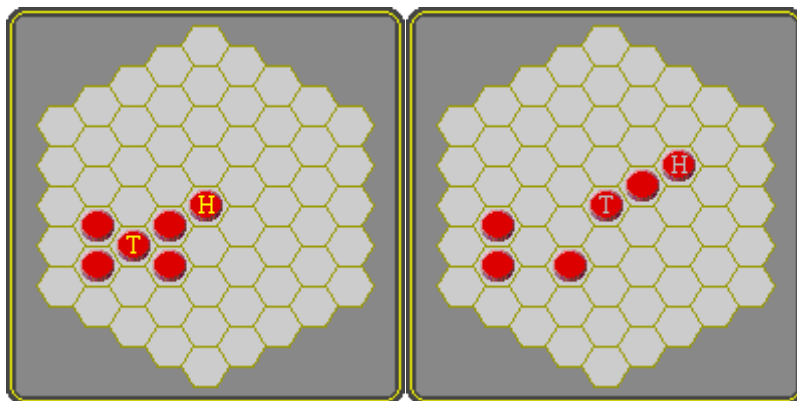
another red man for his turn, or to play Red, in which case he himself places another red man for his turn. In either case the basic move-protocol kicks in afterwards.

### Growth

On his turn a player may grow one man at each of his groups, or at part of his groups or at none at all. It is permitted to connect groups, provided none of the player's groups afterwards has had more than one man added to it. If a single placement connects two groups, it is considered to have grown both of them. It is possible to connect two groups by growing both of them, as long as both placements only touch one another, but neither placement touches both original groups.

### Movement

A group has the right to move if it has remained unchanged in the growing stage. The player may move any or all such groups. However if a group by movement connects to another group, the latter loses the right of movement. Thus the order of movement may make a difference.



- Moving a group means moving *one and only one* of its phalanxes. The phalanx one intends to move is identified by indicating its 'head' and its 'tail'. The head must be one of the men at either end, the tail may be any other man.
- The *maximum* range of a moving phalanx is *one less than its number*. The head and the (chosen) tail in the diagram identify a three man phalanx which consequently may move up to two cells along its line of movement.

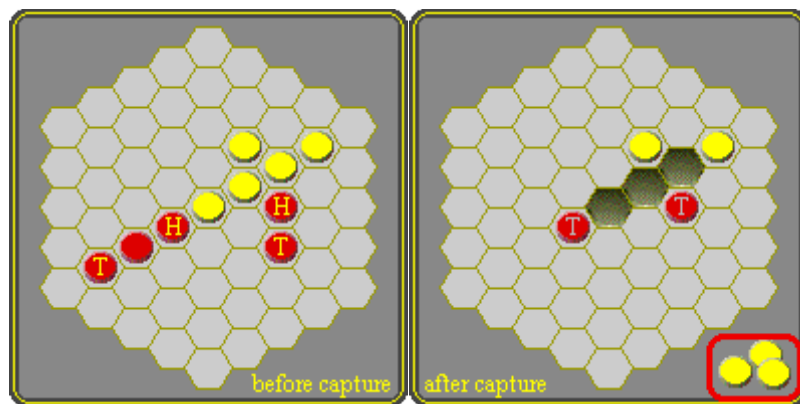
In actual play one moves by leapfrogging, placing the tail in front, then picking up the next man, and so on. A phalanx may be moved less than its maximum range. Moving a phalanx may split a group in two or more parts, each of which has the right to grow next turn.

## Restrictions

A phalanx may neither move onto nor over the 'Wall' (see capture) nor onto or over a man of like color.

## Capture

- If a phalanx moves over opponents' men, all men covered are immediately removed as prisoners of the capturing player. The men on top, that perform the capture, return to the capturing player and are replaced by neutral pieces that make up the "**Wall**", a permanent obstacle for both players.
- A phalanx may *only* attack an opposing phalanx on the same line of movement if it is *longer* than the latter.



Here is a combination. First the smaller phalanx captures a single yellow man, then the 3-men red phalanx eliminates the 2-men remainder. Red captures three men and erects a 3-cells section of the wall.

A phalanx needs not to be 'head to head' with an opposing phalanx it attacks. The only criterion is that it must be longer.

## Object

The object of each player is to obtain as large a piece of territory as possible, counted as vacant cells under his control, albeit minus the number of pieces the opponent has captured.

## Territory

Two cells are said to be *connectable* if there exists at least one route of connected vacant cells between them.

At any stage of the game, vacant cells can be divided into three classes:

- Cells that are connectable with men of both colors. These are as yet neutral.

- Cells that are connectable with men of one color only. At the end of the game, these cells make up that player's territory.
- Cells that are not connectable with men of any color. These are neutral.

### **End of Game**

The game ends when both players pass on successive turns. In over the board play, prisoners then are placed inside the opponent's territory to reduce it with a corresponding number of points.

### **About Phalanx**

Phalanx is one of my first games, invented when I still played at Fanaat every week. The question I had asked myself was "what if an organism would emerge as a single seed on a large plane, capable of growing, moving, splitting, while in the distance similar but hostile organisms were emerging"? Note that I thought in 'organic' terms already, back in 1980. And the rules emerged without a wrinkle. We played on a large hexagonal board with a triangular tessellation and the only problem was playing with five players, because of an initial set-up. A small problem but one that eventually led to the use of 19-cell modules for multi-player versions.

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