



A strategy board game for 2 to 4 players by
Néstor Romeral Andrés

INTRODUCTION

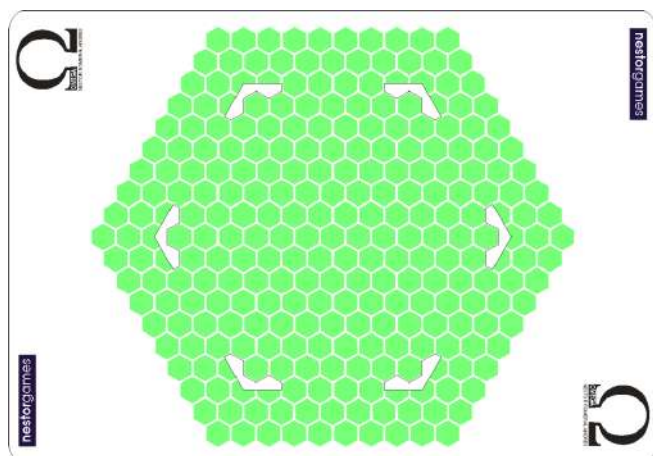
In **OMEGA**, players try to create groups of their colors by placing stones in a hexagonal grid, in order to score the most points. The final score for each color is calculated by multiplying the sizes of the different groups of that color.

MATERIAL

- **OMEGA** board (hexagonal grid of 10 hexes per side. 2 pads)
- 6 'corners'.
- 136 white stones (player A)
- 136 black stones (player B)
- 91 red stones (player C)
- 68 blue stones (player D)

SETUP

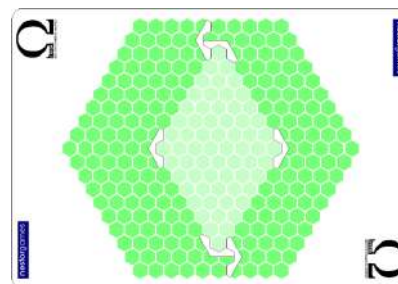
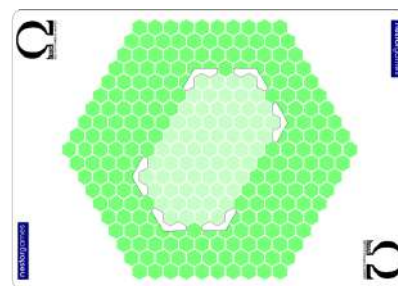
Determine the number of players (2 to 4) and the grid size for the game (5-hexes side to 10-hexes side). Place the 6 'corners' on the board according to the desired size.



Placement for a 7-hexes side game

As a **variant**, other board shapes may be used.

Examples:



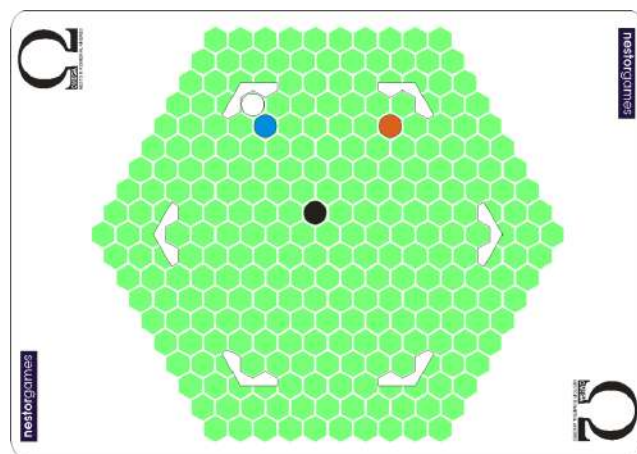
For a 2 player game, white and black stones are used. A 3rd player uses the red stones and a 4th player uses the blue ones.

Each player has an allocated color. Pick one stone and place it before you **to indicate your color**. This is your '**color marker**' and it is not used during the game.

HOW TO PLAY

Starting with **White**, players take turns according to the color order (white, black, red, blue).

Each turn, the current player **must** place **one stone of each color in play** on any free spaces on the board. This is, for a 2-player game, the player in turn places one white stone and one black stone; for a 3-player game, she places one white stone, one black stone and one red stone; and for a 4-player game, she places one white stone, one black stone, one red stone and one blue stone.

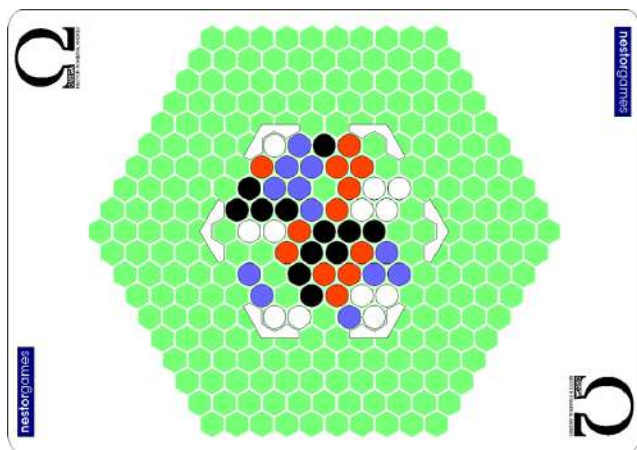


Example: White's first turn in a 4-player game

GAME END

The game ends when, just **before white's turn**, it is not possible to play a complete **round** (all players). For a 2-player game, at least 4 free spaces are needed to play a complete round; 9 for a 3-player game and 16 for a 4 player game. A few spaces will remain free at the end of the game.

Several groups of connected stones of the same color have been created. The 'value' of a group is the number of stones on that group. To calculate your score **multiply** the values of all the groups of your color. The player with the highest score wins. In case of a tie, the last of the tied players wins.



Example of an endgame (size=5, players=4). It's white's turn and there are no free spaces left to play a complete round (13 free, 16 needed), so the game ends.

White scores $1 \times 2 \times 2 \times 4 \times 3 = 48$.
Black scores $1 \times 4 \times 7 = 28$.
Red scores $1 \times 5 \times 2 \times 4 = 40$.
Blue scores $6 \times 2 \times 3 \times 1 = 36$.

White wins!

PIE RULE

Upon agreement, the **pie rule** may be applied.

This is how it works: The **first** player plays normally. Then every player in turn starting on the **second** one may either...

- **PLAY** normally by placing stones on the board or...
- **SWAP** colors with any one of the **previous** players by exchanging their 'color markers'.

...until the **last player** has either played or swapped.

Then the game continues normally starting on the player of the '**n-th**' color, being '**n**' the number of players that have **PLAYED** plus 1. If '**n+1**' is larger than the number of players then the **white** player starts.

Example:

4 player game. Remember that the color order is 'white, black, red, blue'.

Player A (white) places 4 stones (one of each color).

Player B (black) swaps colors with A. Now A is black and B is white.

Player C (red) places 4 stones (one of each color).

Player D (blue) swaps colors with player B (white). Now D is white and B is blue.

The first round ends this way:

A is black and has **played**.

B is blue and has **swapped**.

C is red and has **played**.

D is white and has **swapped**.

$N = 2$ (played) + 1. So it is **red's** turn (Player C).

2-PLAYER TOURNAMENT PLAY

In a tournament, players must play twice, once with 'White' and once with 'Black'. Each player sums up its score playing 'White' and its score playing 'Black'. The player with the highest total score wins the tournament.

The pie rule can't be applied in tournaments.

NOTES AND STRATEGY

OMEGA was born as an experiment on complexity and intuitive arithmetic. Both concepts teamed up to create this little monster.

You will soon realize that you don't need to calculate your score during play (multiplying your group values), but to use an intuitive strategy instead. How? You must figure it out by yourself.

Notice that, when the game ends, there are a few empty spaces. These spaces are very important!

2-player games of size beyond 8 are only recommended for experienced players and scores are often gigantic.