ouroboros

An abstract strategy game for 2 players by
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OVERVIEW

Ouroboros is a two player abstract strategy game that takes 5-15 minutes. After the initial setup of the board, there is no luck, and there is not an obvious first or second player advantage.

MATERIALS

- Board (6x6 grid)
- 40 discs (10 of each color – blue, yellow, red, green)
- 10 thick black discs (called "stones")
- Carrying case

TERMINOLOGY

The word "discs" means the colored discs (not black). The word "stones" means the thick black discs.

SETUP

Randomly put 1 disc on each square of the grid. There will be 4 discs left over; they will not be used this game. Use the carrying case to help randomize the setup.
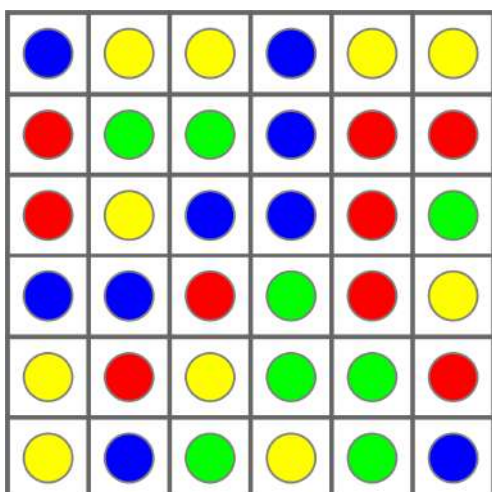
Setup example

OBJECT OF THE GAME

Be the first player to have zero discs in your supply.

Note: Players start the game with zero discs in their supply, but obviously do not win until the second turn or later.

GAMEPLAY

Randomly decide who goes first. Players alternate turns. Each turn, a player must do **exactly one** of three things:

  a) Place a stone on a square that contains a colored disc

  b) Remove two stones matching a pattern

  c) Discard one disc from his or her supply

a) PLACE A STONE

If you choose to place a stone, you must **place it on a square that contains a disc**. You add that disc to your supply. In addition, you **choose 4 adjacent squares** (horizontal + vertical) OR (diagonal) and give all the discs from those squares to the other player.

A sample first move of the game is shown below. The player on the right went first.
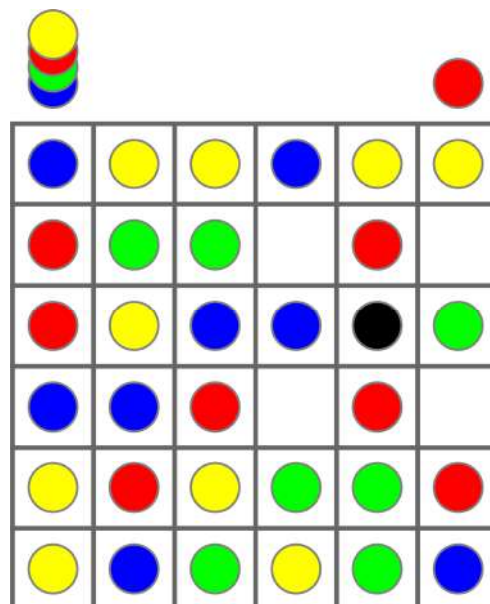
If some of the squares adjacent to the placed stone are empty, the other player simply gets as many discs as are present. The player placing the stone chooses (diagonal) OR (horizontal + vertical) each time he or she places a stone.

b) REMOVE TWO STONES MATCHING A PATTERN

A player may remove two stones that match one of the patterns below, **as long as he or she has the necessary discs**. The player discards the matching discs along with the two stones. These are the valid patterns:
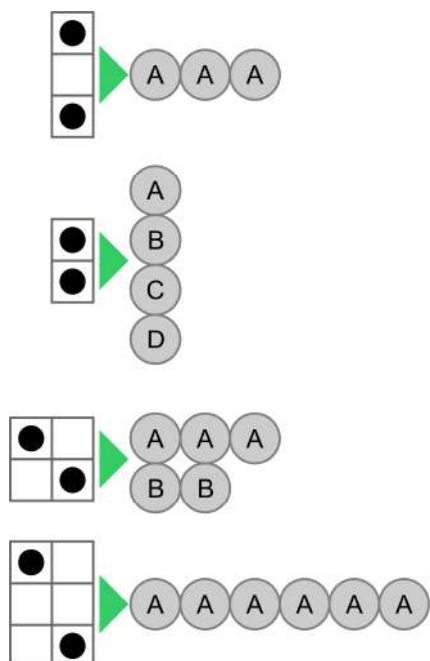
The first pattern requires 3 discs of the same color. The second pattern requires 4 discs of different colors. The third pattern requires 3 discs of one color, and 2 discs of a different color. The last pattern requires 6 discs of the same color.

The patterns of stones may be rotated 90 degrees, 180 degrees, and/or mirrored/flipped, and the pattern is still a match.

Once the discs are discarded, they are not used for the rest of the game.

Example of removing stones

In the picture below, the player on the left could remove the two adjacent stones from the board and discard 4 discs of different colors. The player on the right could not do that, since he or she doesn't have 4 discs of different colors.

Though there are two stones matching the 4th pattern above, neither player may remove them because they do not have 6 discs of the same color.
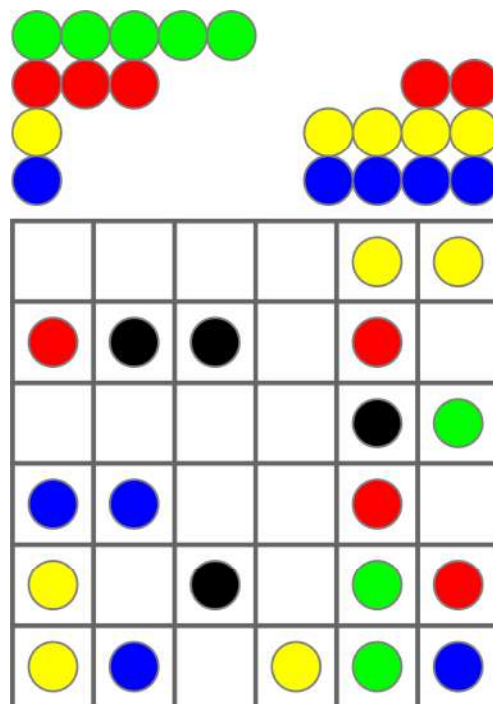
c) DISCARD ONE DISC

The third option for a player's turn is to simply discard one disc from his or her supply. Once a disc is discarded, it is not used for the rest of the game.

FAQ

Q: Can I hide my discs from my opponent?
A: The intended design is nothing hidden, but if the game would be more fun for all players to hide discs, feel free!

Q: If there are three stones in a row, can I remove the two outside stones to match Pattern 1, or does the middle stone get in the way of the pattern?
A: You can make the match. Other stones do not get in the way of matches.

Q: Where can I get more information?
A: The gameplay video is here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgHZdu8swJI
You can see the full website here:
http://irafay.com/ouroboros.html

Q: How long did it take to design this game?
A: This game was designed in one weekend for the 2012 Global Game Jam.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS