



- GAME RULES -

Introduction

Mentis is an abstract strategy game for two players which throws you straight into the middle-game. The rules of Mentis are fairly simple, but making the right moves takes some mastery. What is unusual is the combination of unfamiliar concepts, such as the deployment rules, the stacking of tiles, and capturing without moving.

The game has next to no setup time, may play out in just a few moves or as a cautious probing parley. It can be short, sharp and brutal!

This is also a great game for devoted strategists, because this is a game which can be very precise and require careful evaluation of each move. You can spend lots of time on post-game analysis, reviewing a game that played out in relatively few moves but with many permutations.

The game is played by two players on a 7x7 board, with each players' tiles lining up to face each other from opposite sides. However, the tiles start in the players' hands, not on the board, so how they are deployed is part of the opening strategy and beyond.

The aim is to capture the opponent's King. The King is a vulnerable piece, unable to move from his hill on your side of the board, sending out his forces of Spears, Trenchmen and Nobles to fight for and defend his hill.

Game contents

- A game board
- 10 Red Tiles
- 10 Blue Tiles

The Blue Tiles :-



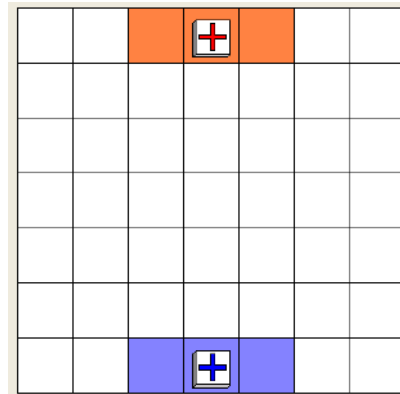
The Red Tiles :-



Game Setup

There are two shaded areas of three squares on each side of the board. This shaded area is each player's "Hill" on which their King stands. The blue King is placed on the middle square of the blue hill; the red King is placed on the middle square of the red hill.

The person playing Blue takes the remaining 9 blue tiles into their hand, and the person playing Red takes the remaining 9 red tiles into their hand. Each player can keep the contents of their hand hidden from their opponent throughout the game.



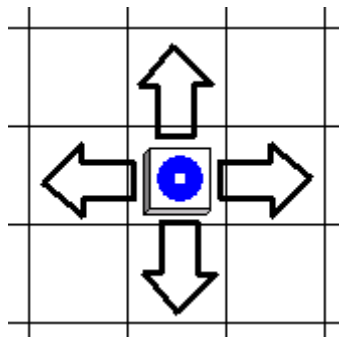
Rules Summary

The Blue player always takes the first turn, after which players take alternate turns. On your turn you can do one of, and only one of, either:-

- **Move** -
- **Deploy** -
- **Capture** -

Movement Rules

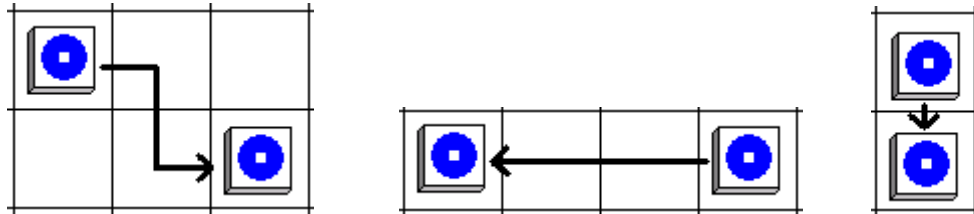
Tiles move on the board squares orthogonally (they cannot move diagonally), forwards, backwards or sideways.



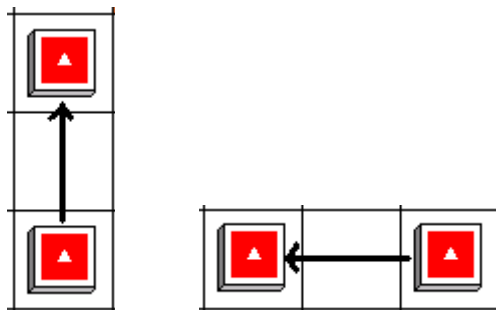
No tile can occupy or move over a square occupied by an opponent's tile.

The Nobles tile can move 1, 2 or 3 squares in a turn, and can change direction within the movement turn. *Note: a Nobles tile can only return to the square it started on if it drops or picks up a piece on the way (see the “Stacking” rules below)*

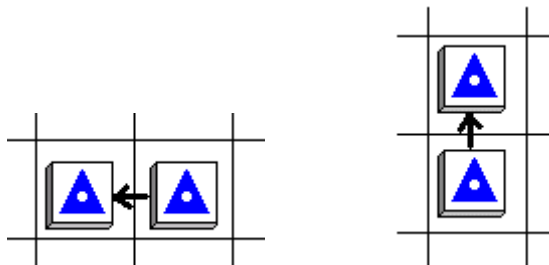
Example Nobles Tile movement :-



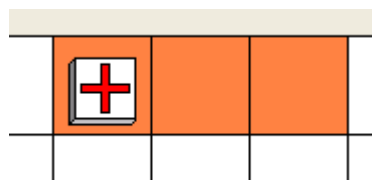
The Trenchmen tile can move 2 squares per turn, no more, no less, and they cannot change direction within the movement turn. *Example Trenchmen Tile movement:*



The Spears tile can move only 1 square per turn. *Example Spears Tile movement:*



The King tile can move only 1 square per turn. The King can only move on the Hill (the three shaded squares of their colour) and nowhere else. This means a King is restricted to those three squares.

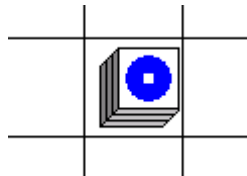


No tile, other than the King, can move either on or across either King's Hill.

Stacking rules

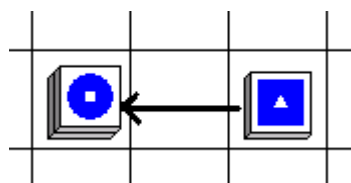
Tiles of the same colour can occupy, or move across, squares occupied by other tiles of their same colour, so long as no square contains more than three tiles, either during or at the conclusion of a move. Tiles occupying the same square are placed one on top of the other in a “stack”.

An example “stack” of three same coloured tiles:

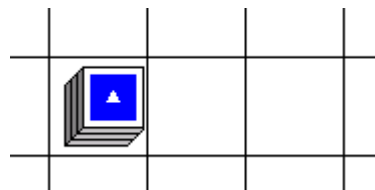


A tile can only join a stack by being placed on top of the stack (i.e. you cannot move a tile to stack and place the tile on the bottom or in the middle of the stack).

Example, a Trenchmen tile joining the top of a stack of two other tiles:



The Move



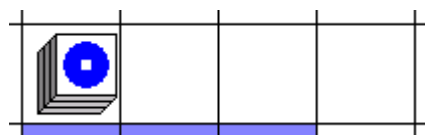
After the Move

Tiles below the top of a stack remain hidden by the top tile. Neither player can look through a stack to try to see what tiles are within the stack.

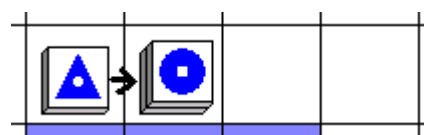
During a turn, all tiles may pick up or drop off tiles on squares they travel from, to and across. Tiles are dropped-off from the bottom of a stack only, without changing their order within the stack.

Example of dropping tiles during a move:

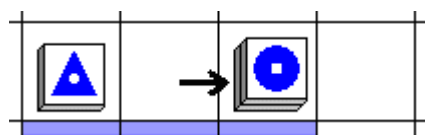
The top tile is Nobles, so we get to move 3 squares...



A stack of three tiles (Spears, Trenchmen, Nobles)...



dropping Spears, moving two tiles one square...



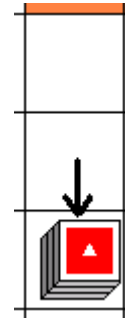
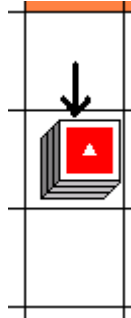
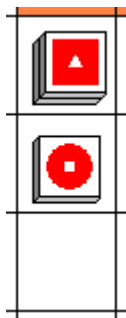
moving two tiles one square again...



...and completing the move, dropping the Trenchmen before the third and final square is reached.

Example of picking up tiles during a move:

The top tile is Trenchmen, so we get to move 2 squares...


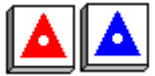




A stack of two tiles ... picking up the Nobles tile...

and completing the move, picking up the Nobles tile on the way.

Note: Only the tile on the top of a stack dictates the move (i.e. you cannot move a tile from the middle or bottom of a stack), though as it moves it can carry any number of tiles, from the top of the stack to the bottom, with it.

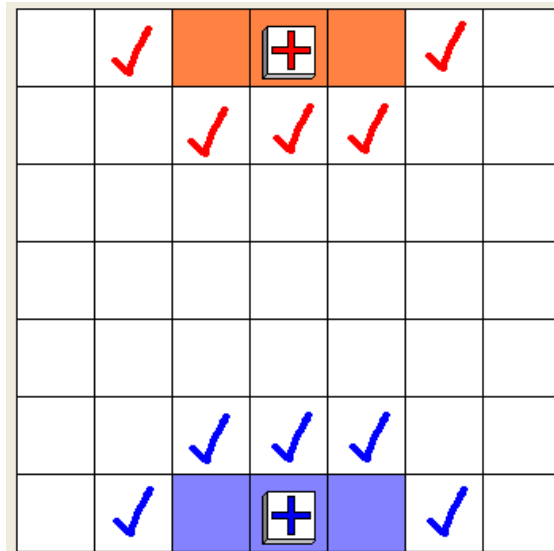
Movement Summary Table :-

King		One square only, and only on the Hill
Spears		One square only
Trenchmen		Two squares only, in a straight line in one direction.
Nobles		One, two or three squares, in any direction, and does not have to be in a straight line. (<i>Note: can not move back to the square it started moving from unless it drops or picks up another tile on the way</i>)

Deployment Rules

During your turn you can deploy 1 to 3 tiles from your hand to the board.

You may only deploy these tiles to a single square on the board, and the square must be orthogonally adjacent to a square on your King's hill.



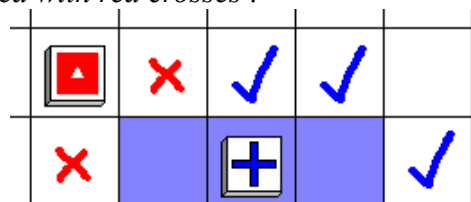
*The Red player can only deploy to the squares marked above by red ticks.
The Blue player can only deploy to the squares marked above by blue ticks.*

NOTE: You can deploy your tiles onto an empty square **or** to a square already occupied by any of your tiles, as long as they form a stack no more than 3 tiles high.

NOTE ALSO: When you deploy more than one tile from your hand into a stack, you **MUST** reveal to your opponent, at the time of deployment, each of those tiles, one at a time.

SPECIAL DEPLOYMENT RULE: You **cannot** deploy any tiles onto a square which is orthogonally adjacent to a square occupied by one or more enemy tiles.

As shown in this example, the Red Trenchmen tile is preventing blue from deploying to the two squares marked with red crosses :-



Capture Rules

On your turn you may capture an opponent's tile with one of your tiles. You can only capture with a tile sitting on its own in a square or with a tile on the top of a stack. The tile doing the capturing is called the "attacking tile".

SPECIAL RULE: An attacking tile does NOT move when it captures.

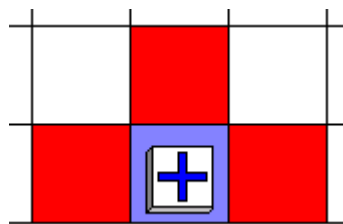
You can only capture an opponent's tile on the top of a stack or an opponent's tile sitting on its own on a square. To capture a tile, just announce which of your opponent's tiles you are capturing and which of your own tiles you are attacking with, and simply remove the captured tile from the board.

A captured tile is removed from the board and takes no further part in the game.

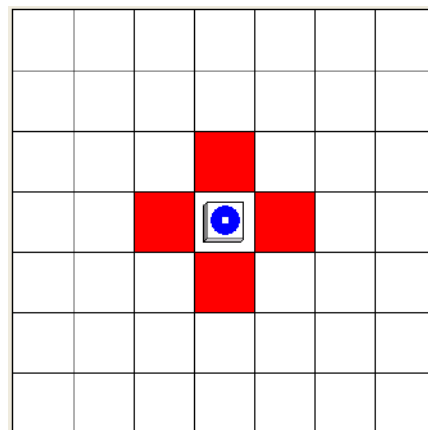
Tiles can only capture in one direction, either orthogonally forwards, backwards or sideways in a straight line. Each type of tile has a "Range of Attack". The Range of Attack dictates how many squares forwards, backwards or sideways a captured tile must stand from the attacking tile.

- A King tile can only capture an enemy tile which is 1 square away.
- A Nobles tile can only capture an enemy tile which is 1 square away.
- A Trenchmen tile can only capture an enemy tile which is 2 squares away, no more, no less.
- A Spears tile can only capture an enemy tile which is 3 squares away, no more, no less.

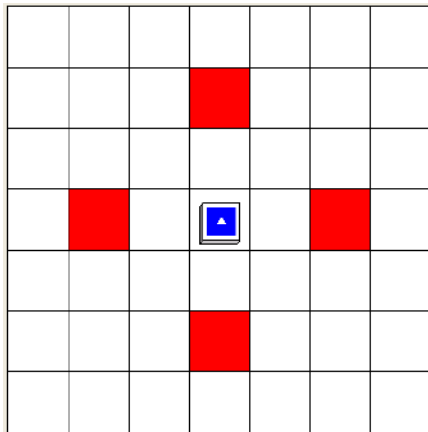
Illustration of attack ranges:



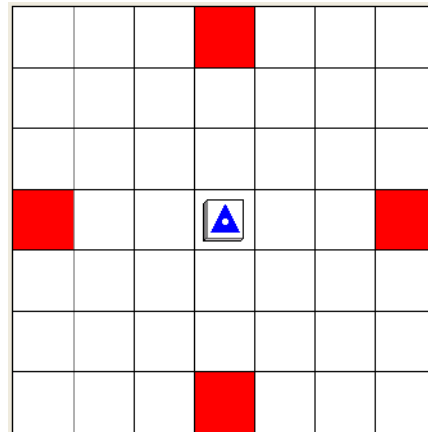
A King can only capture tiles 1 square away.



Nobles can only capture tiles 1 square away



Trenchmen can only capture tiles 2 squares away.



Spears can only capture tiles 3 squares away

SPECIAL RULE: All types of tile, except the King, are immune to capture from one other type of tile.

- Spears are immune to capture by Nobles
- Trenchmen are immune to captures by Spears
- Nobles are immune to captures by Trenchmen

TIP: The one type of tile it is immune to is shown by the small white symbol inside its tile shape.

So:-

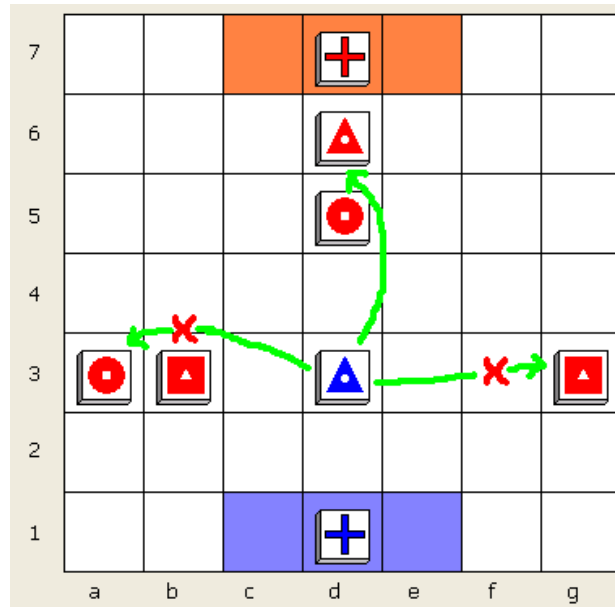
- A Spears tile can capture Nobles and Spears, but cannot capture Trenchmen
- A Trenchmen tile can capture Trenchmen and Spears, but cannot capture Nobles
- A Nobles tile can capture Trenchmen and Nobles, but cannot capture Spears
- A King can capture and be captured by all the other tiles.

Blocking Attacks :-

As well as being immune to captures from one of the other types of tile, immunity also allows that tile to block captures of other, non-immune, tiles by standing between an attacking tile and a tile that could otherwise be captured, thereby “blocking” the capture. (A capture is not blocked by a tile of the attacker’s own colour ; it can only be blocked by an opponent’s tile).

So, a Nobles tile blocks captures by a Trenchmen tile, and a Trenchmen tile can block captures by a Spears tile. This means that if an opponent’s Nobles tile lies between your Trenchmen tile and an enemy tile two squares away, then you cannot capture that tile with your Trenchmen; and if an enemy Trenchmen tile lies between your Spears tile and an opponent’s tile three squares away, then you cannot capture that tile with your Spears.

An Example :-










The blue Spears tile on square d3 cannot capture the Nobles tile on a3 because it is blocked by the Trenchmen tile on b3 ; it cannot capture the Trenchmen tile on g3 because Trenchmen tiles are immune to captures by Spears ; it can, however, capture the Spears tile on d6 because Spears tiles are not immune to capture from Spears, and Nobles tiles, like that on d5, cannot block captures by Spears.

Note also, that it cannot capture the Nobles tile on d5 or the King on d7 because tiles must be exactly 3 squares away from a Spears to be captured.

REMEMBER: an attacking tile does not move. So whilst (and after) capturing the red Spears tile on d6, the blue Spears tile on square d3 remains on square d3.

Capture Summary Table :-

Tile Type	Attack Range	Is immune to captures by (i.e. cannot be captured by), and can block captures by :-
King 	1	None
Spears 	3	Nobles 
Trenchmen 	2	Spears 
Nobles 	1	Trenchmen 

Ending the Game

You win the game by capturing the enemy King, or if your opponent chooses to resign the game.

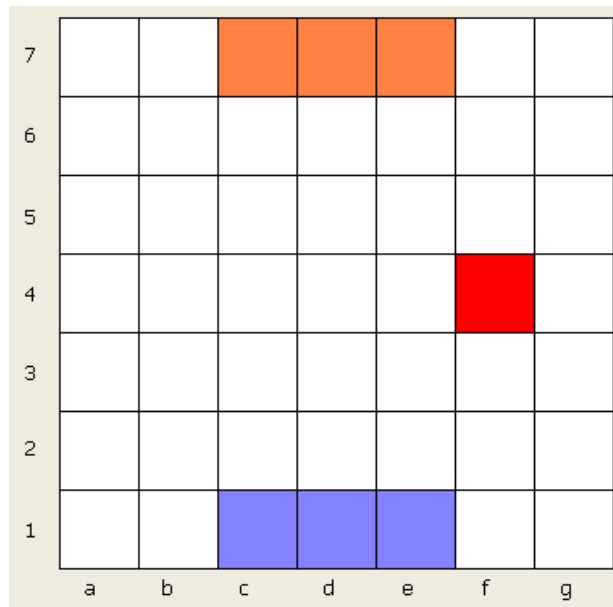
A game is drawn if the same position repeats three times or if both players agree to end the game in a draw (e.g. if the game is not won after 30 moves).

Game Notation

The following notation can be used to record and play back games.

The board is divided into 7 columns, identified by the letters a to g, and 7 rows, identified by the numbers 1 to 7. A square is identified by its two character co-ordinate of column and row.

Example, square “f4” is highlighted in red below:-



Movement Notation

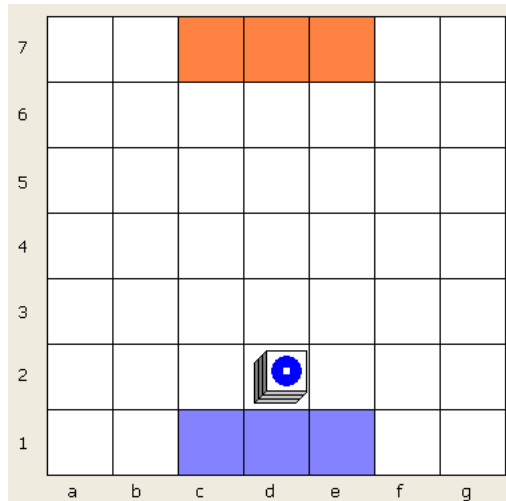
Moves on the board are shown as two square coordinates separated by a dash “-” representing the square being moved from and the square being moved to. When a Trenchmen or Nobles tile moves, since they get to move 2 or 3 squares, respectively, then a second and third “-” dash followed by a second and third square coordinate are added.

For example, “a3-a4” represents a move of the tile on square a3 to the square a4.

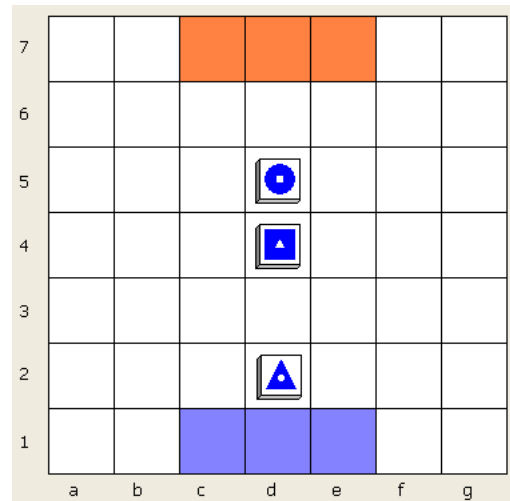
“b5-b6-b7” represents the movement of a tile on square b5 across b6 to square b7.

If a move takes a tile to a square already occupied it is assumed the tiles join to form a stack. When a tile moves away from a square and leaves (drops) one tile behind then the coordinate of the square where the tile is dropped is followed by a hash (“#”) symbol. If two tiles are dropped then the square where they are dropped is followed by a double-hash (“##”).

For example, a Nobles tile moves from d2 to d5, leaving one tile at d2 and dropping one en-route at d4 :-



Before the move d2#-d3-d4#-d5



...and after.

Deployment Notation

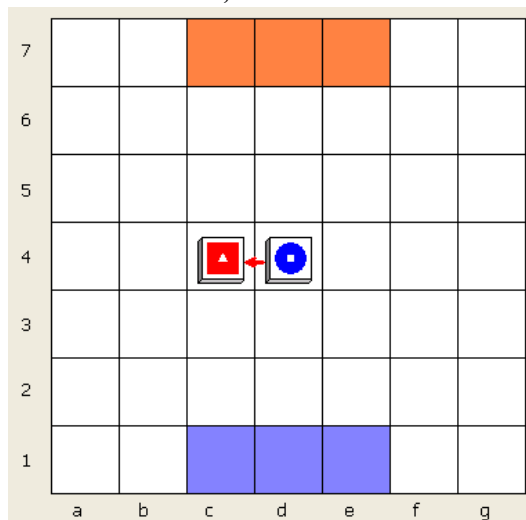
The deployment of tiles are represented by the letters S (for Spears), T (for Trenchmen) and N (for Nobles) followed by the co-ordinate of the square they are deployed to. If more than one tile is deployed then the order is given from bottom to top.

For example, “NSTb1” represents the deployment of a stack of three tiles to square b1, with Nobles on the bottom, Spears in the middle and Trenchmen on top of the stack.

Capture Notation

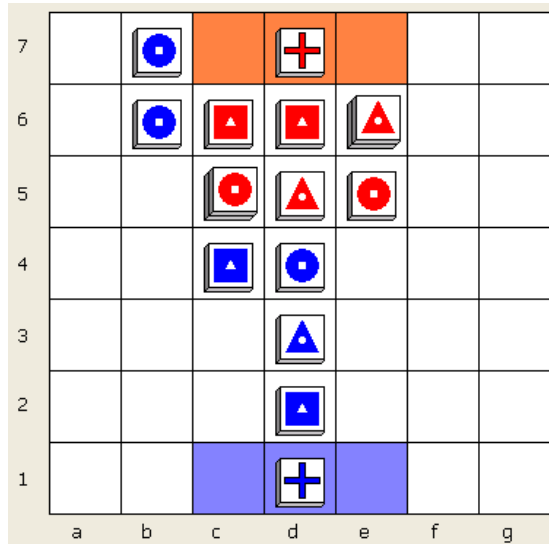
Capturing is noted with the “x” symbol. The co-ordinates of the attacking tile are followed by an “x” followed by the co-ordinates of the tile being captured.

For example, the blue Nobles tile here on d4 captures the red Trenchmen tile on c4 with the notation, “d4xc4”:-



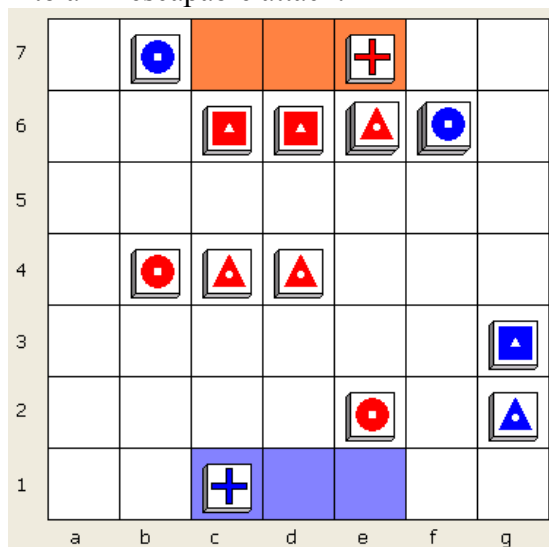
Example Game

<i>Blue Moves</i>	<i>Red Moves</i>
1. TSNd2	TSNd6
2. d2#-d3 #-d4	d6#-d5 #-e5
3. TNNc2	TSNc6
4. c2-c3 -c4 #-b4	c6#-c5
5. b4-b5 -b6 #-b7	TSe6



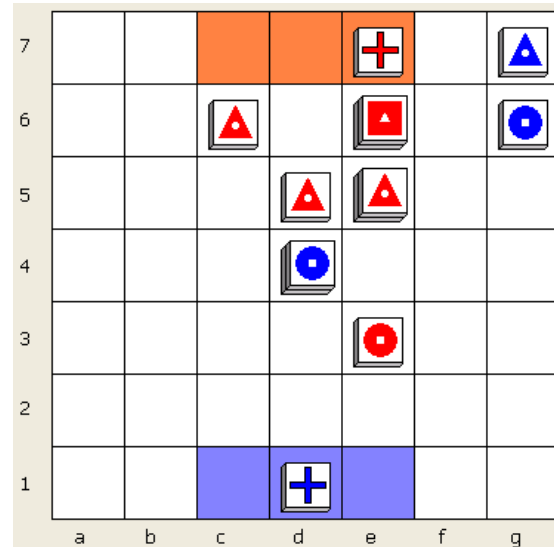
6. d4-d3-e3-f3	e6xb6
7. f3-f4-f5-f6	d7-e7
8. TSf1	e5-e4-e3-e2
9. f1-g1	e2xd2
10. g1#-g2	d5-d4
11. d1-c1	c5xc4
12. g1-g2#-g3	c5-c4#-b4

The game is finally won by red with astonishing swiftness, as blue fought to build an attack on f7 and g7, ignoring the mounting threat from Red. The move of a stack of Nobles on Spears from c5 to b4, dropping the Spears en-route at c4, puts blue's King into an inescapable attack:

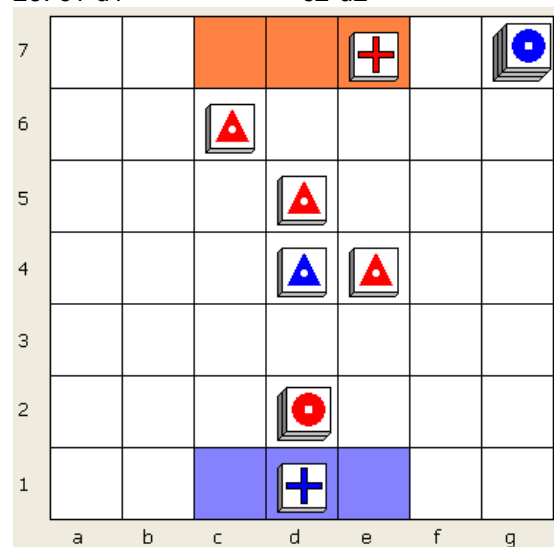


Here is the same game, picked up after move 5 again, but played out to a draw:

<i>Blue Moves</i>	<i>Red Moves</i>
6. TSSe2	e6xb6
7. e2#-e3	c6xc4
8. d4-d3#-e3#-f3	e6xe3
9. f3-f4-f5-f6	d7-e7
10. d2-d3-d4	d6xd4
11. d4-e4	e6#-e5
12. f6xe6	c6-d6-e6
13. e4-d4	c5-c6#-c5
14. f6-g6-g7#-g6	c5-c4
15. b7-b6-b5	c4-c3-d3-e3
16. b5-b4-c4-d4	e3xe2



17. d4#-e4-f4-g4	e5#-e4
18. g4-g5-g6-g7	e5-e6-f6-f7
19. g7xf7	Ne6
20. g7xf7	e6-e5-e4#-e3
21. g7xf7	e3-e2-d2
22. d1-c1	d2-c2
23. c1-d1	c2-d2



Blue played a much stronger game this time through the middle, but Red was able to force the draw through some tactical sacrifices.

Thankyou

Many thanks to Heidrun Spohr and Lars Rose for play-testing the game and rules, and to the support of BoardGameGeek.

<http://www.boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/69832/mentis>