

# BENEDICTION

## Official Rules

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Benediction original soundtrack link:

<https://razors.bandcamp.com/album/benediction-ost>

# **What is Benediction?**

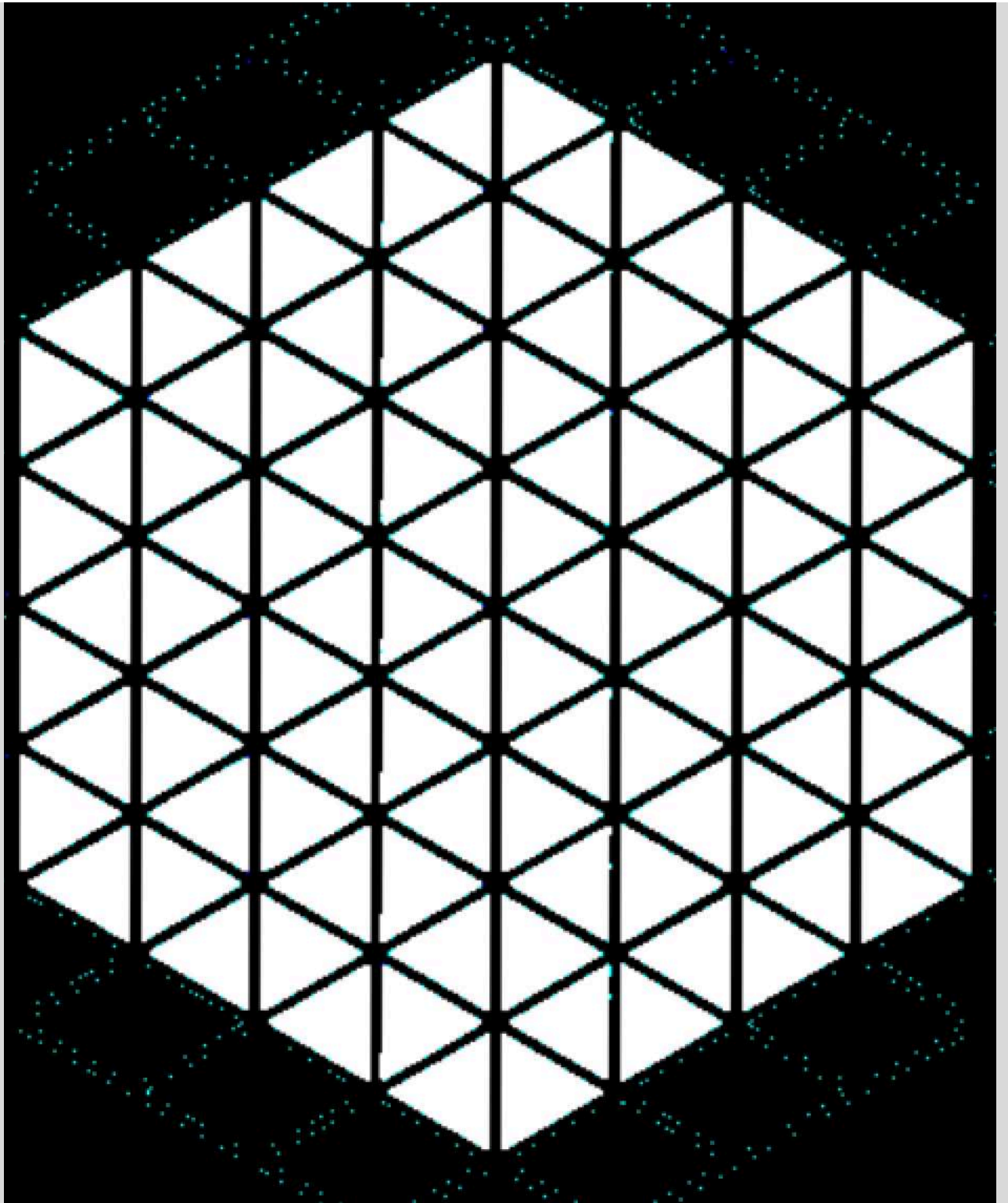
Benediction is a combinatorial abstract strategy game.

Benediction is meant for two players of all ages.

Benediction lasts from 5-90 minutes (25 minutes on average).

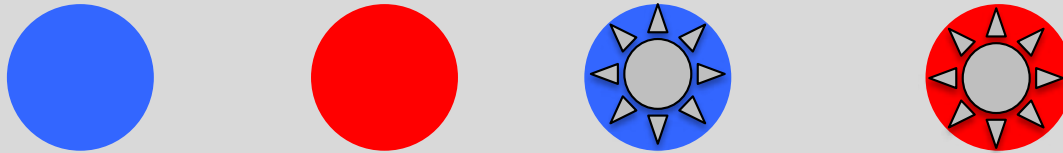
# The Board

Benediction is played on the points of a triangle-gridded equilateral hexagon (5-hex board).



# The pieces

**16 flippable Red and Blue checkers.** Checkers, and stacks of checkers, are men. If they are flipped over, they are kings.

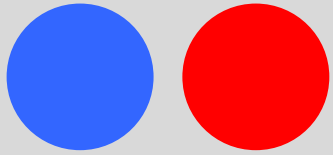


**White stones:** White stones on the board designate a player's "starting point". When placed on a piece, they are a "blessing".

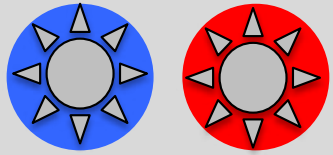


**Black stones:** Black stones on the board designate "blockades". When placed on a piece, they are a "curse".

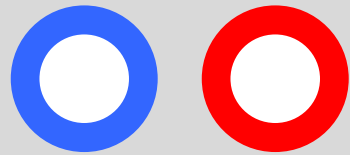




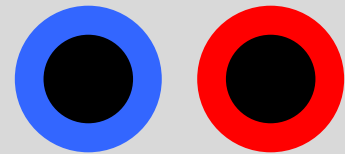
Men can move, capture each other, stack, split, get blessed, get cursed, or become kings.



Kings: special type of men. If a king is captured or blessed, the game is over.



Blessed men can merge with any friendly man. Blessings are gained by interacting with enemy walls in different ways.



Cursed men can't get blessed and cannot merge except with blessed men. Curses are gained by splitting stacks.



Starting point are special points in a player's zone where kings are made.



Blockades are impediments to piece movement.

# What is the objective?

Bless one friendly king.

*or*

Capture one enemy king.

# The Walls

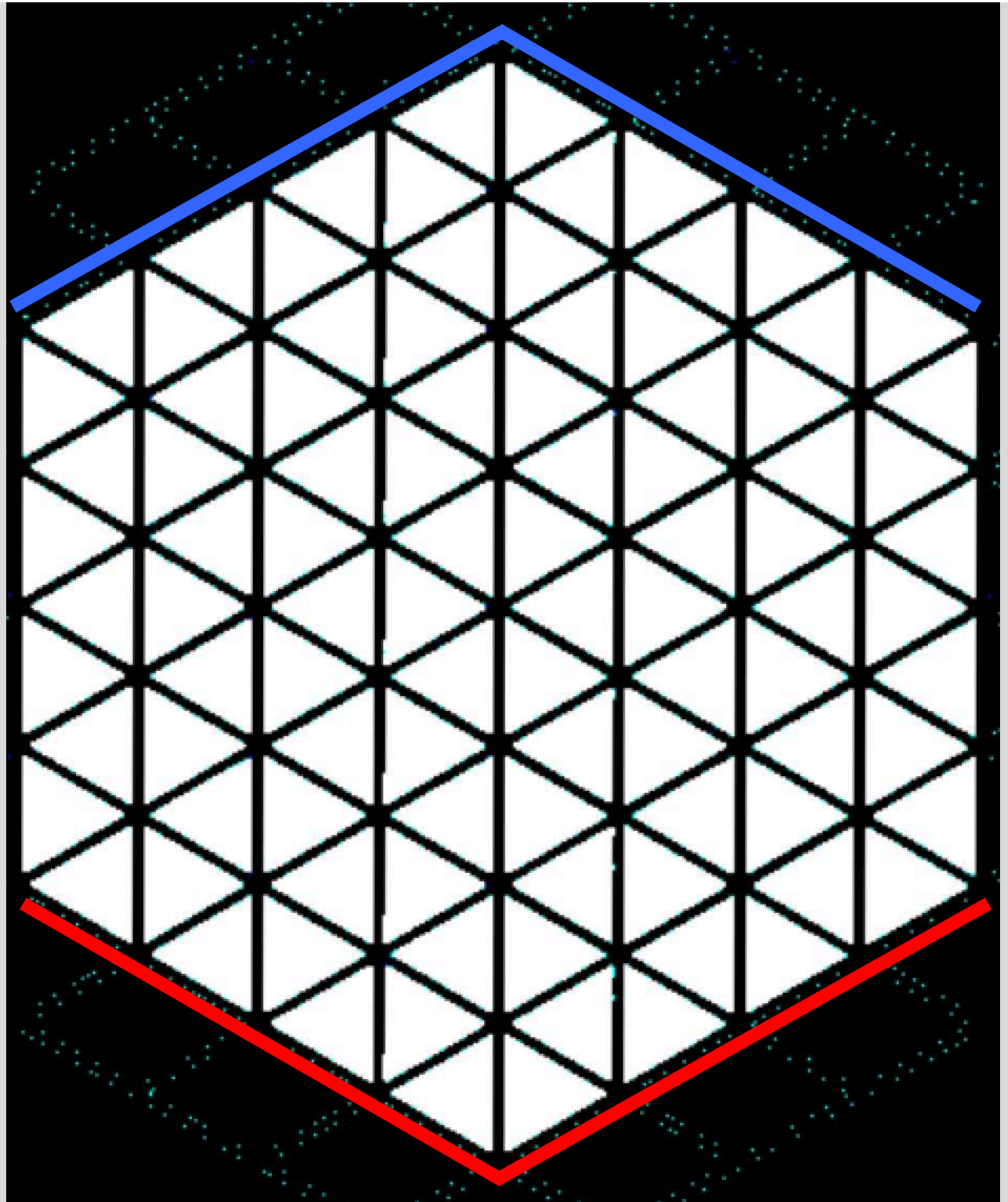
Players own walls on opposite sides of the board.

Enemy walls have the power to “bless” pieces, by players:

1. Moving through enemy walls

OR

2. Connecting both walls with a chain of friendly men.



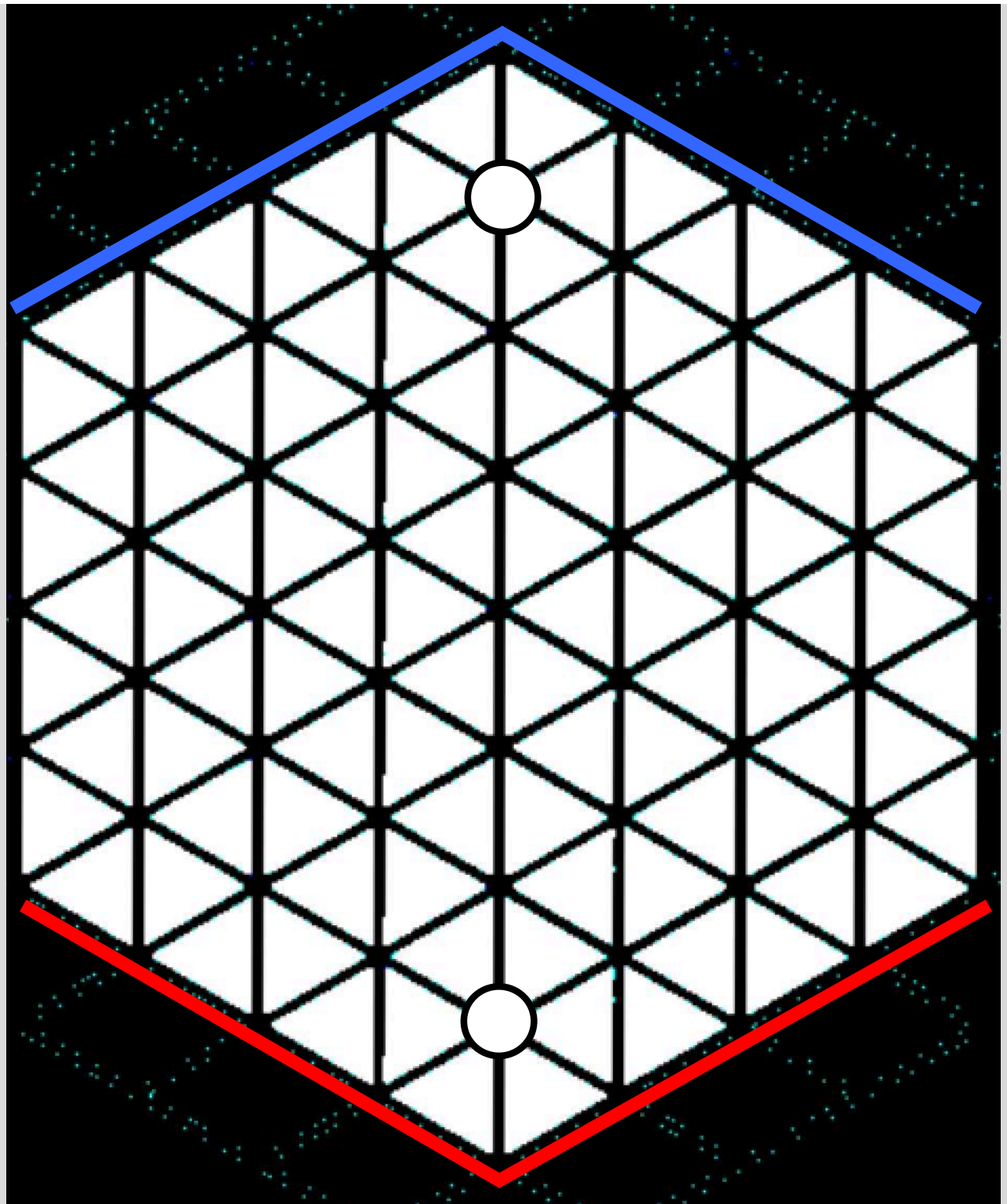


# Starting Points

Players have starting points in the middle corner of their walls. Mark empty starting points with white stone.

Piece on a starting point lose blessings/curses and become a king.

Starting points can not be blockaded.

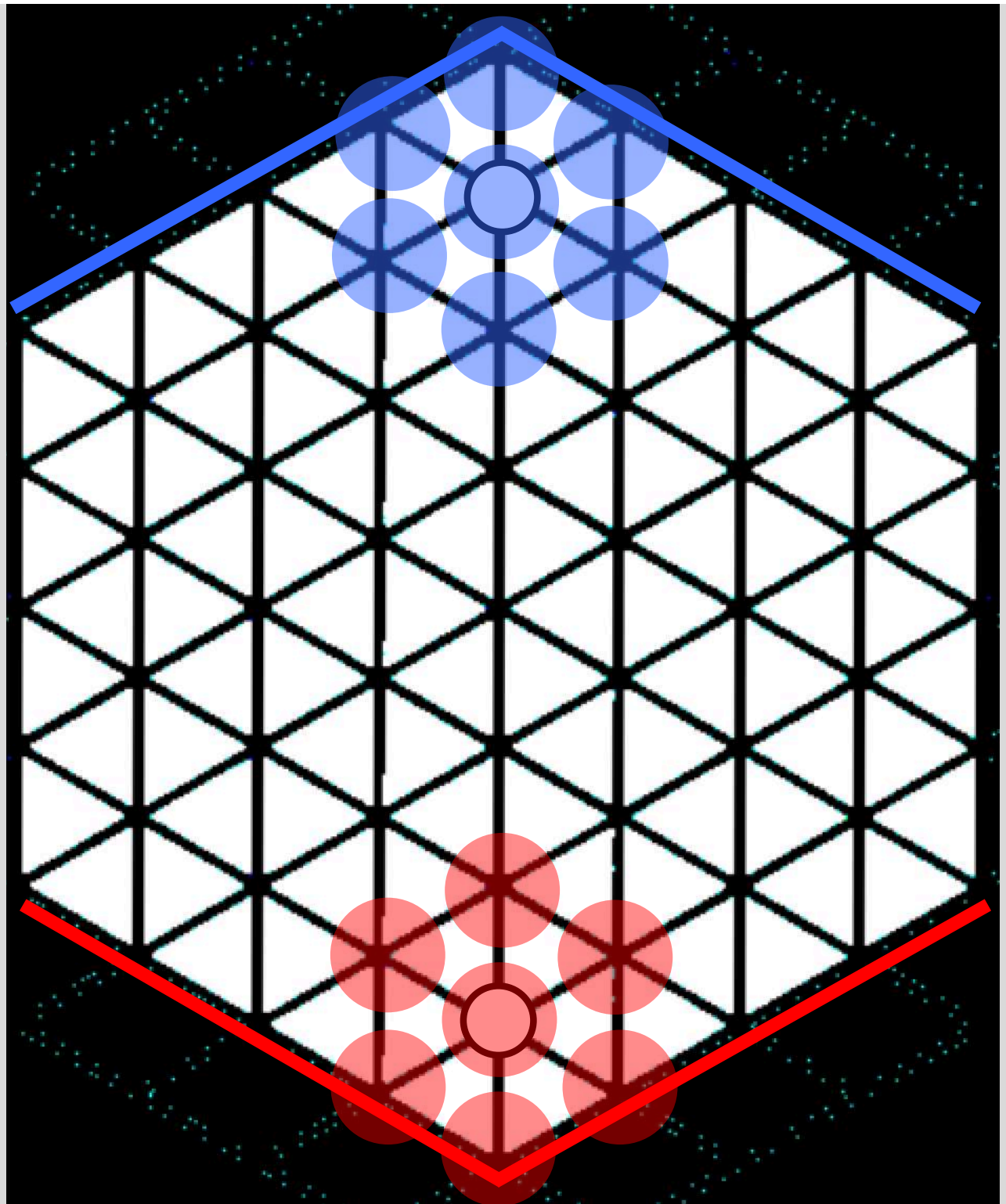




# The Zones

Zones include the starting point and all adjacent points.

A zone is where new pieces can be dropped on empty points.

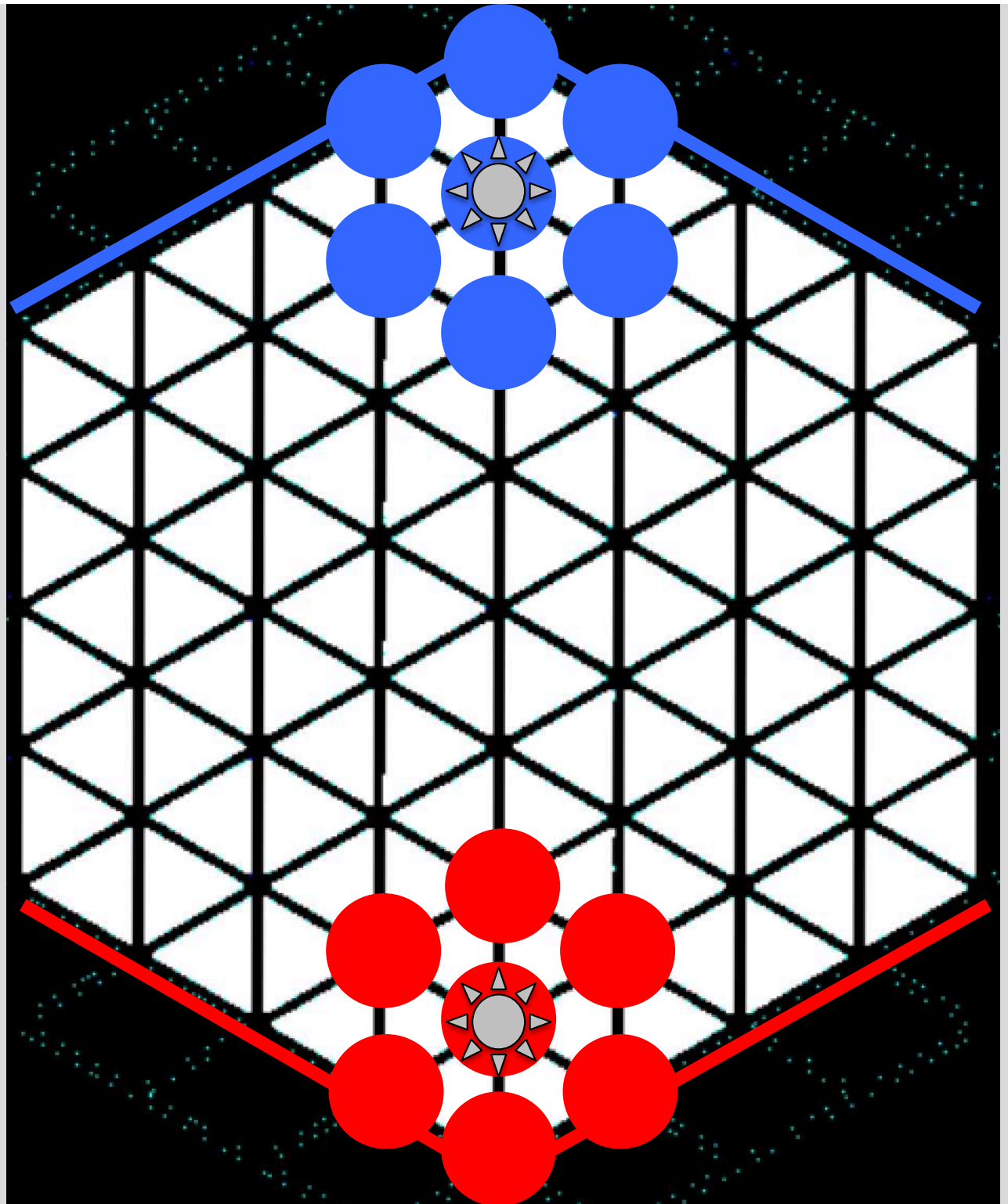


# Initial setup

To start, fill your zone  
with pieces.

Pieces on starting  
points are kings.

To denote kings, flip  
over the checker.



# What happens?

Choose colors and decide who plays first.  
The first player's first turn is a single action.  
Subsequently, players alternate turns of 2 actions each.

## There are five possible actions:

Move, Merge, Split, Block, Drop

All legal actions are defined in a reference sheet on the next slide.

Don't worry if the definitions are confusing at first...  
Everything is explained in visual detail in the remaining slides!

**Move:** Move man to a reachable empty point (or capture). If he moves past enemy walls, bless him. He cannot move again this turn, but he can merge or split.

**Merge:** Move man or sub-stack onto a reachable friendly man. If a man moves past enemy walls in the process of merging, bless him. Before completing the merge, remove all blessings/curses from the pieces involved.

**Split:** Move sub-stack onto an empty point (or capture). Curse both resulting stacks. If destination is past enemy walls, instead bless the moving sub-stack, and curse the other resulting stack.

**Drop:** Place a new man on an empty point in your zone. He cannot move this turn, but he can merge.

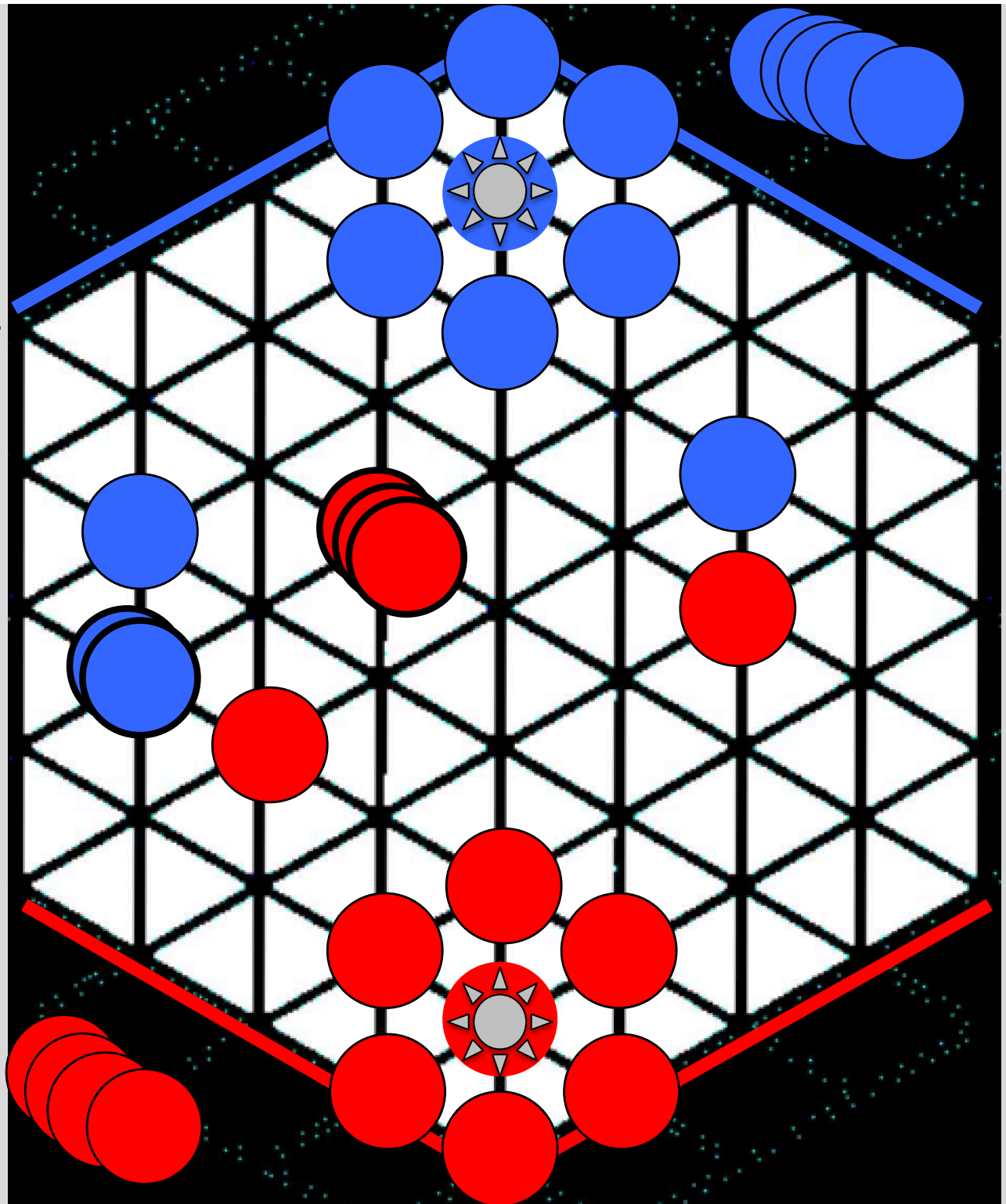
**Block:** Place a black stone on an empty point. Men cannot move onto or jump over blocks. *Blocks must NOT be placed:*  
1) adjacent to existing blocks, 2) on opposite ends of the same gridline, or 3) on any starting point.

# Men

A man is defined as a checker or a stack of checkers.

By default, men have a stack size of one checker.

Players start with 16 checkers each:  
7 onboard,  
9 in-hand.



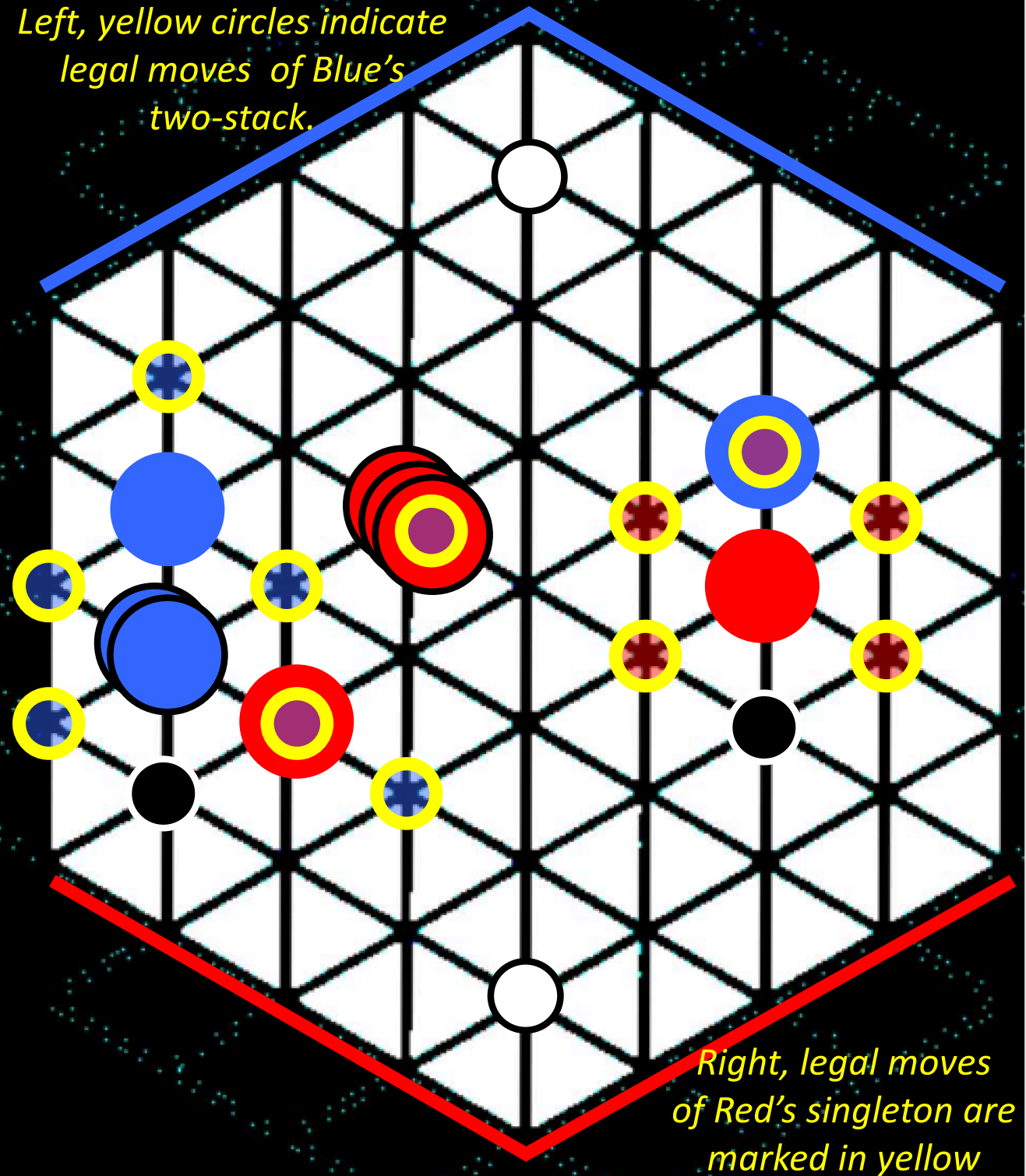


# Moving

Men move any direction in a straight line, distance up to the size of the moving stack or sub-stack.

Stacks can jump over points occupied by men, but they may not move onto or jump over blocks.

*Left, yellow circles indicate legal moves of Blue's two-stack.*



*Right, legal moves of Red's singleton are marked in yellow*

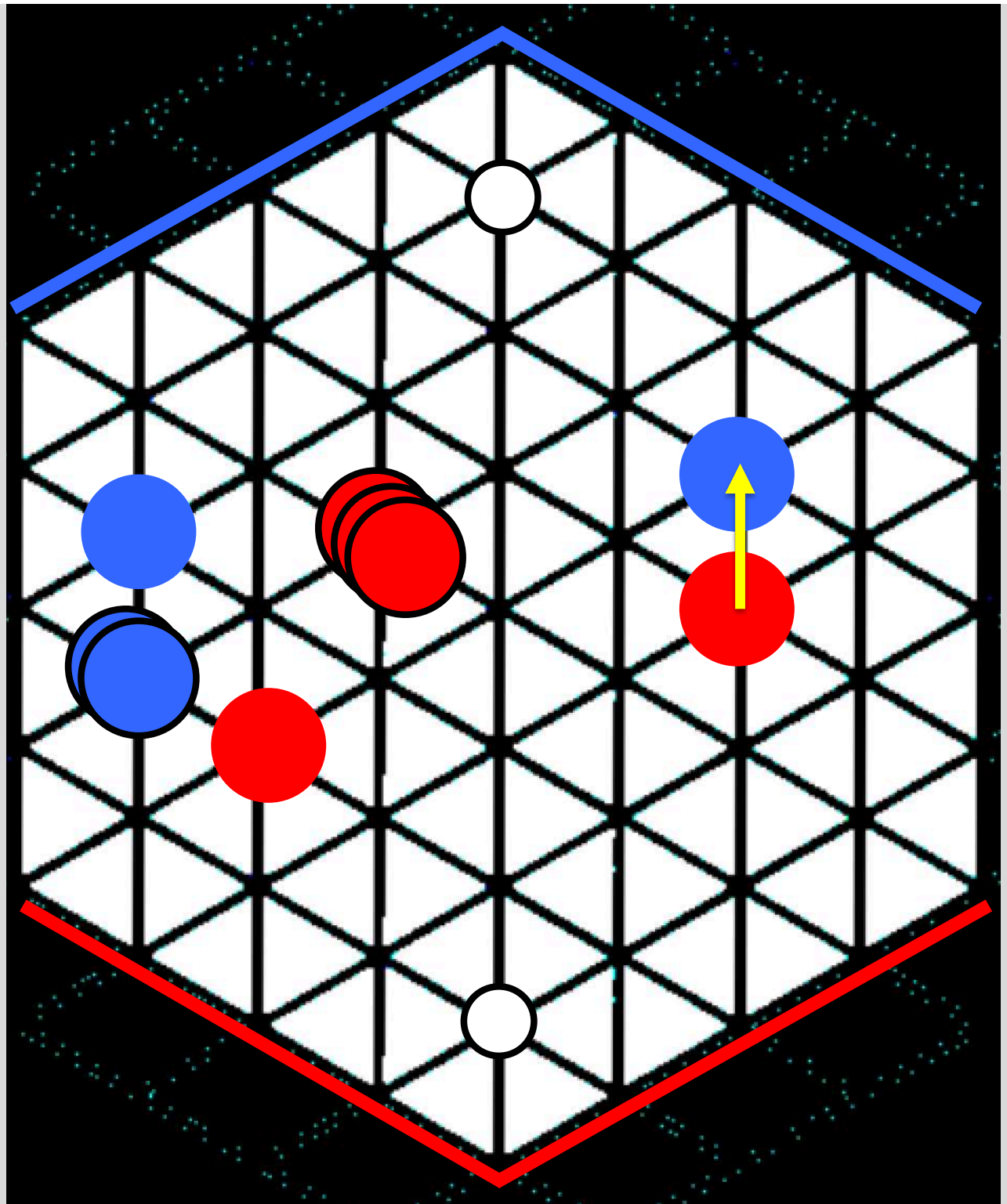


# Captures

Captures happen by replacement (like in chess).

Capturing does not depend on stack size.

Return captured men to the opponent.

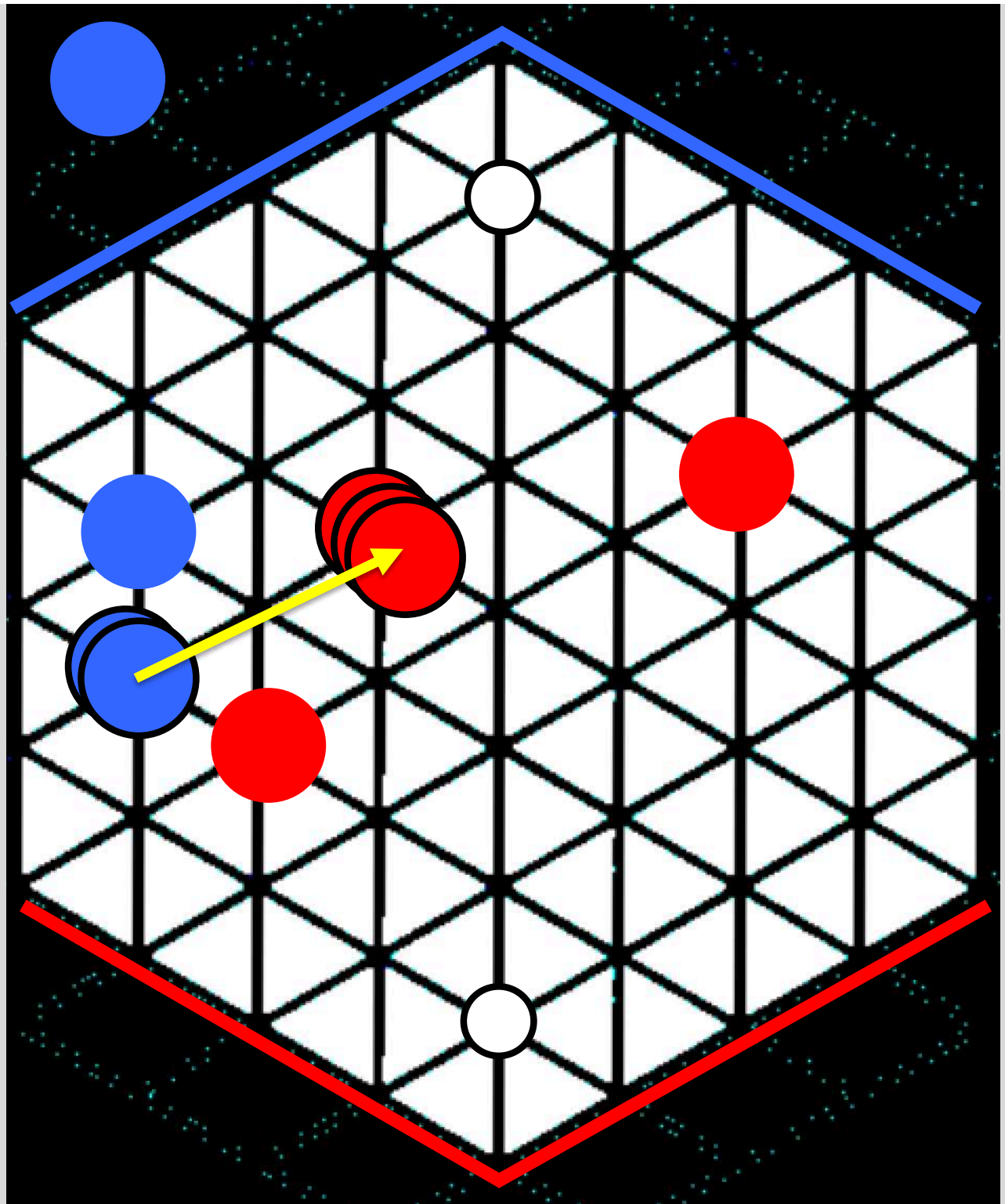


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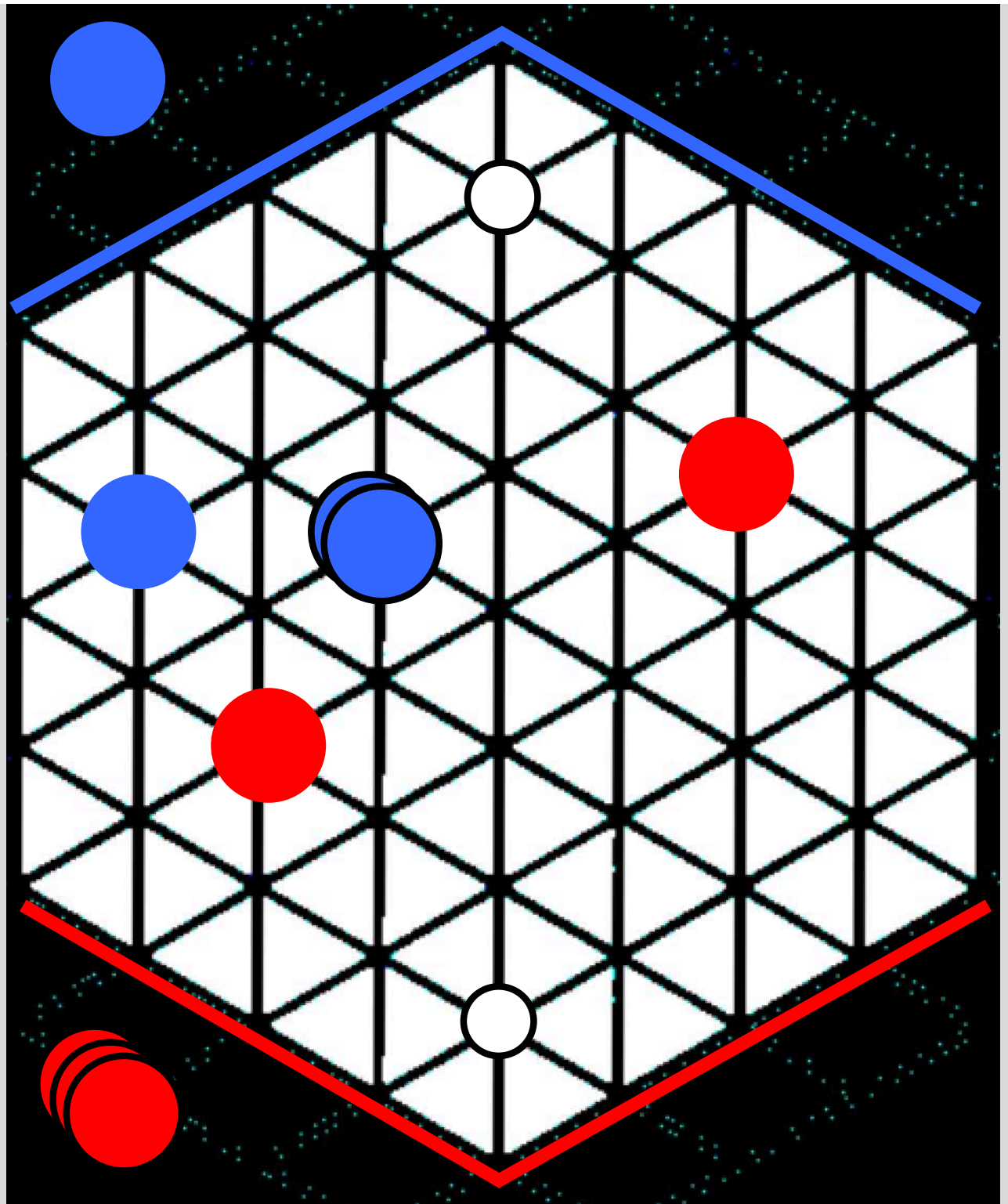


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Return captured men to the opponent.

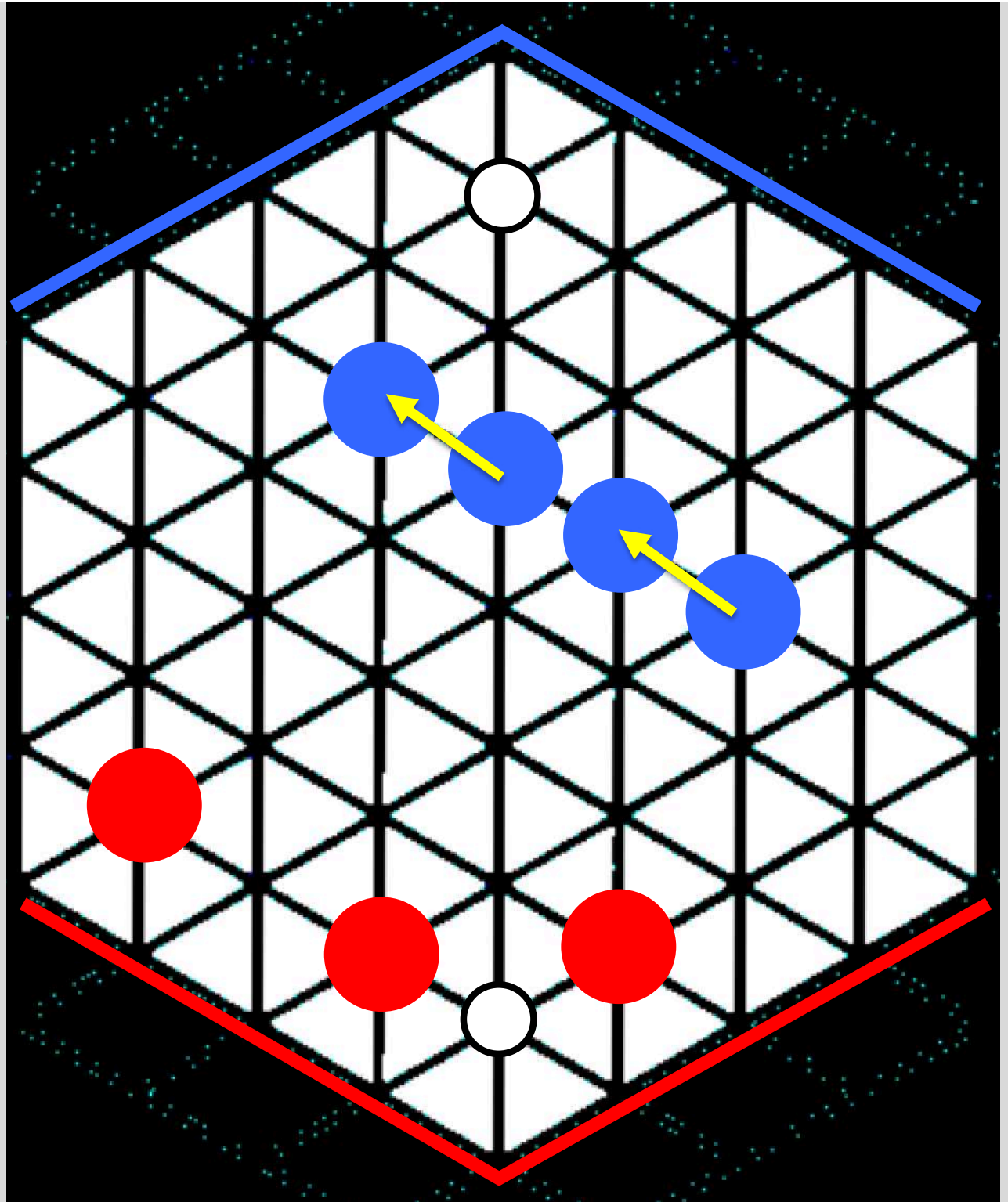




# Stacking

New men are created by merging and splitting stacks.

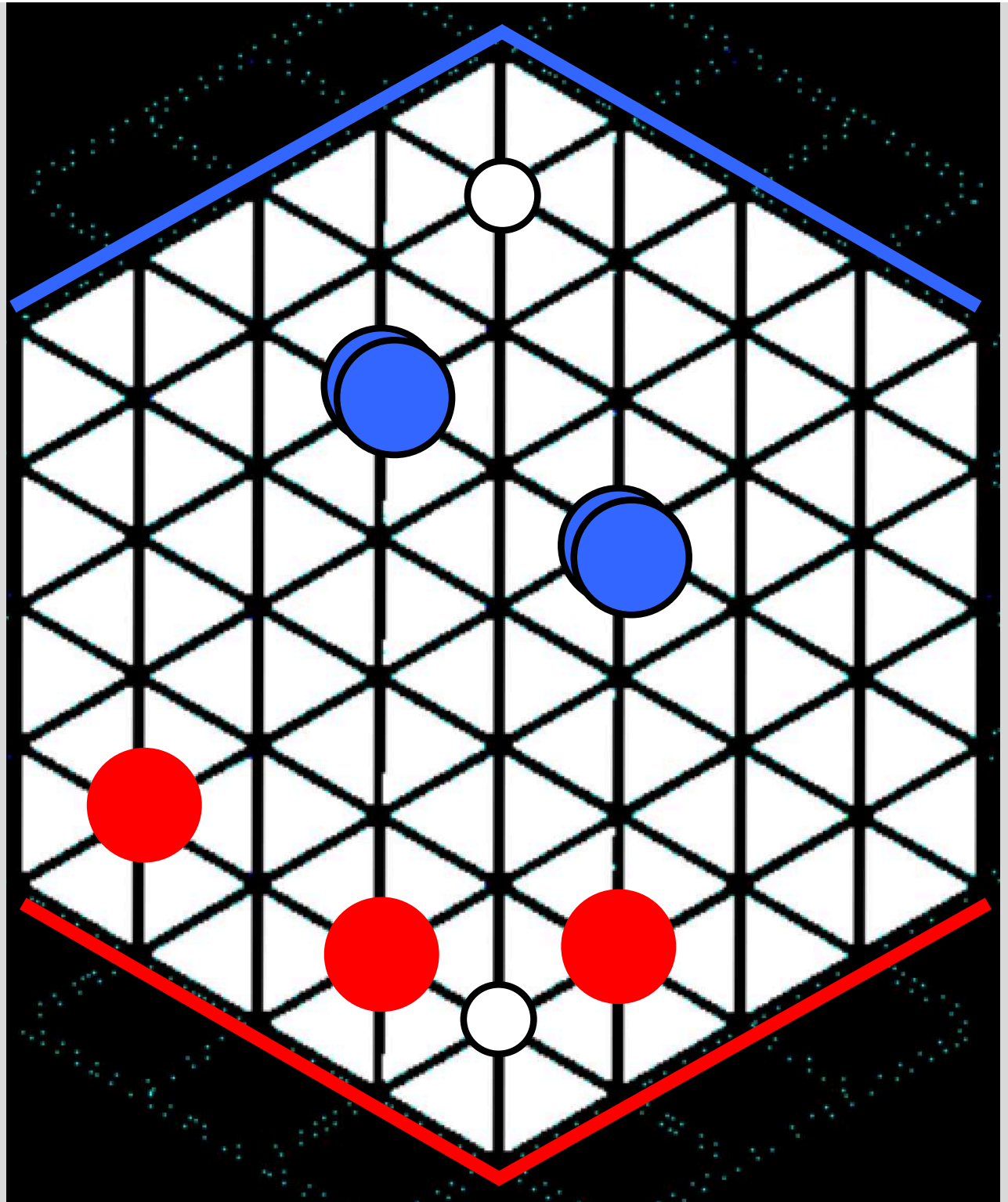
By default, men are limited to making stacks no higher than two checkers high.



# Stacking

New men are created by merging and splitting stacks.

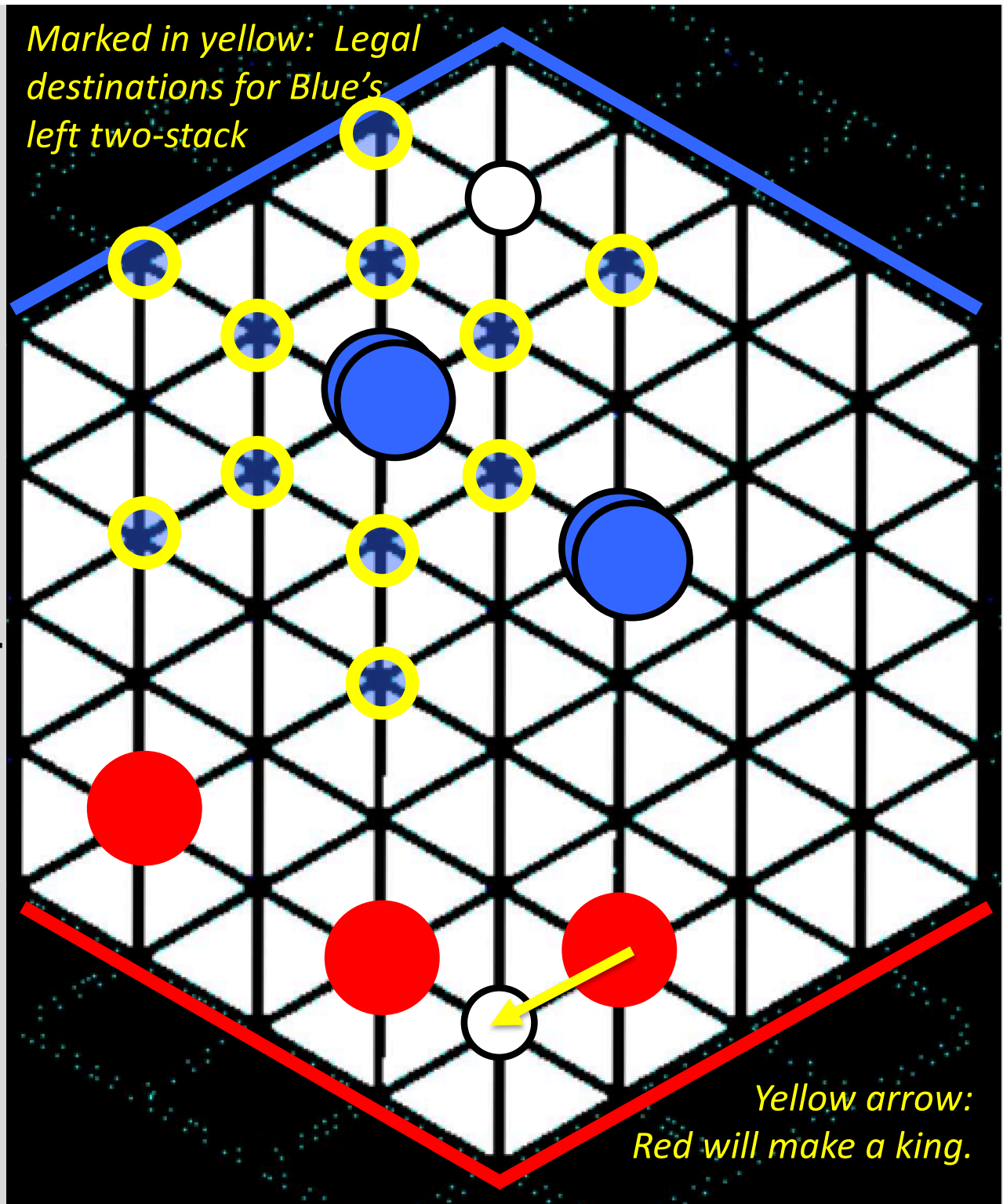
By default, men are limited to making stacks no higher than two checkers high.



# Stacking

New men are created  
by merging and  
splitting stacks.

To create stacks taller  
than two checkers  
high, at least one of  
them must be  
blessed.



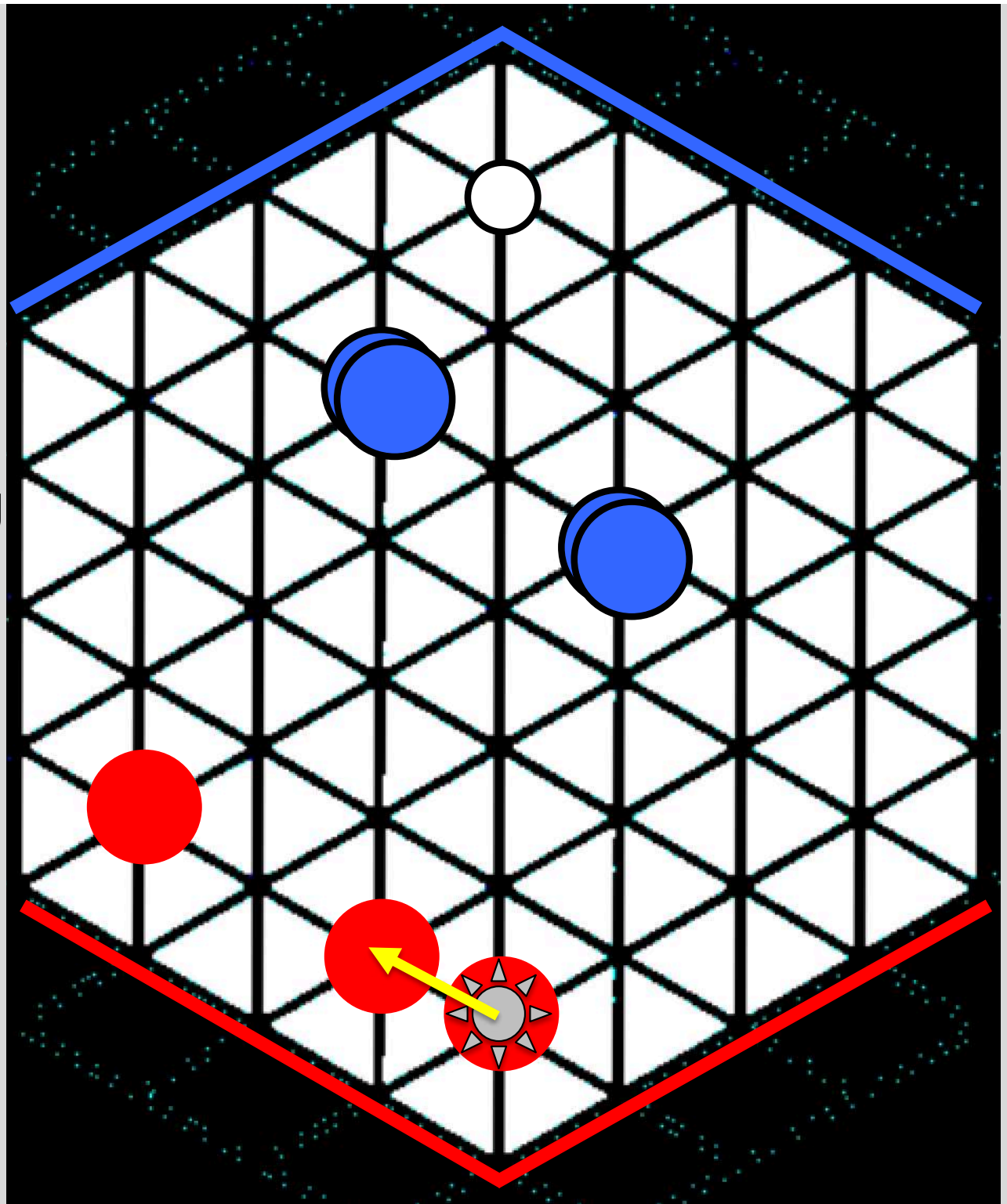


# Kings

Kings are the most important pieces in the game.

Any man on a starting point loses all blessings/curses, and then automatically becomes a king.

Kings can merge with men, but not other kings.

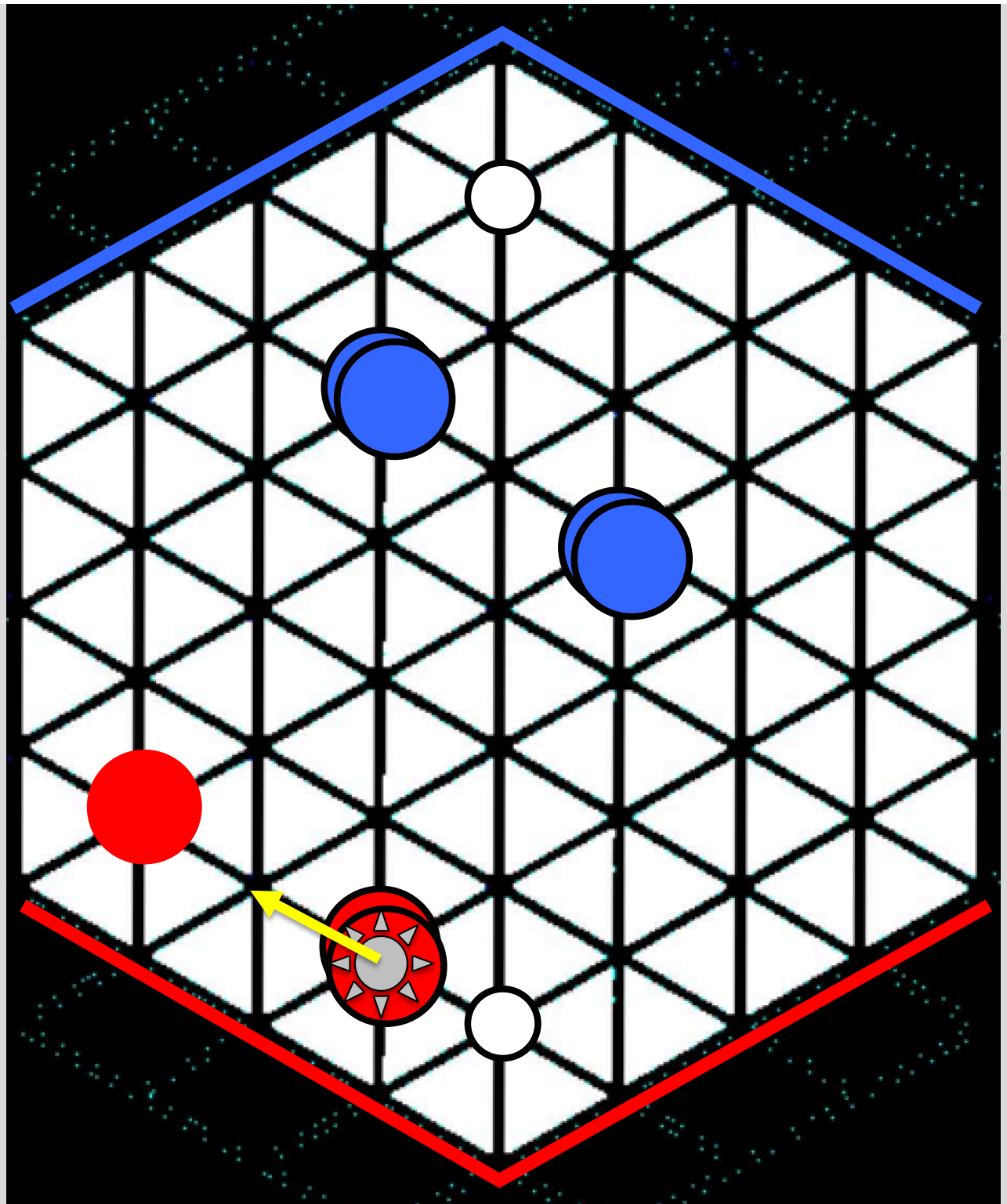


# Kings

Kings cannot be cursed.

Any man in a stack with a king becomes a king.

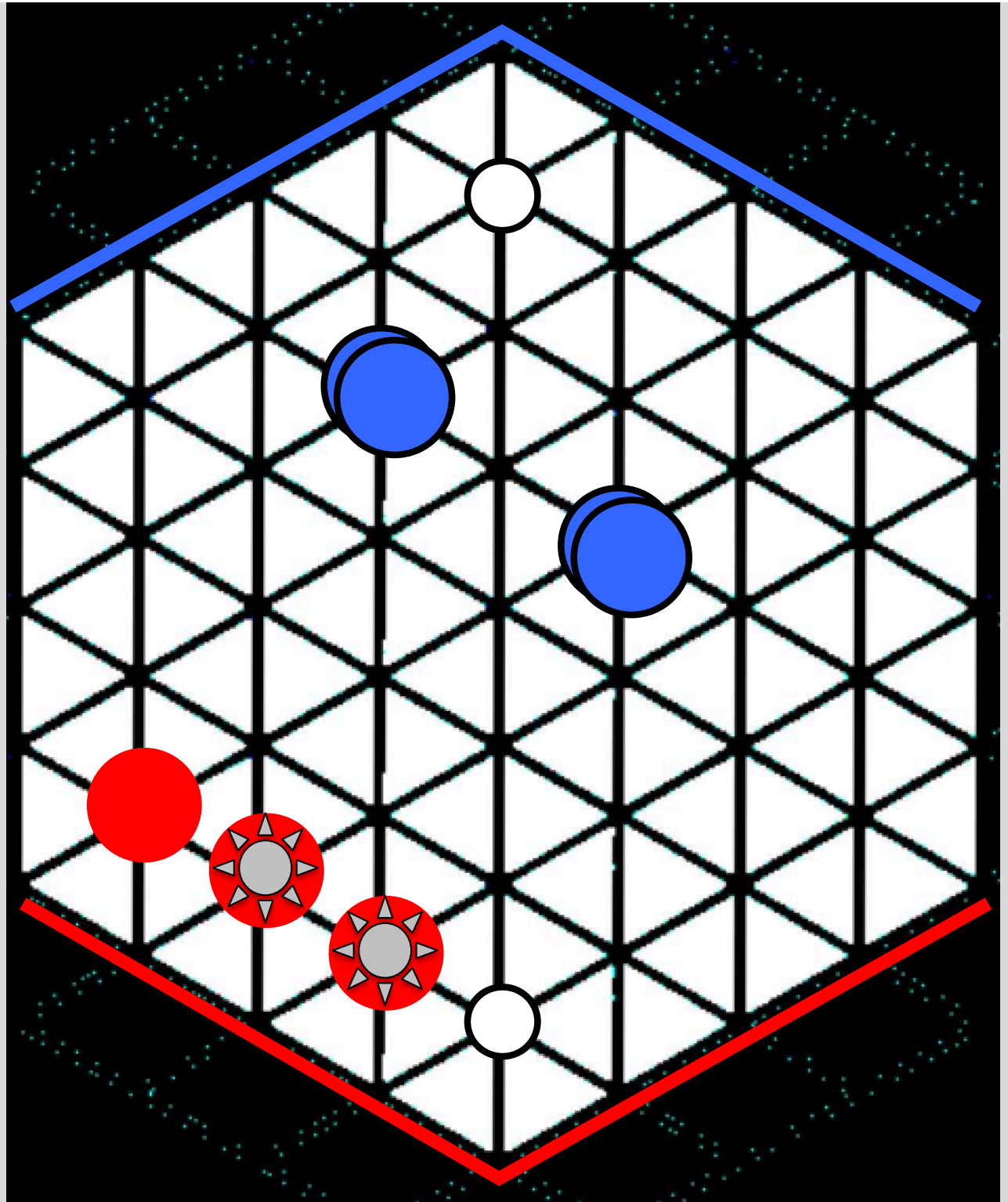
When kings split, all resulting stacks are kings.



# Kings

Kings cannot be  
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When kings split, all  
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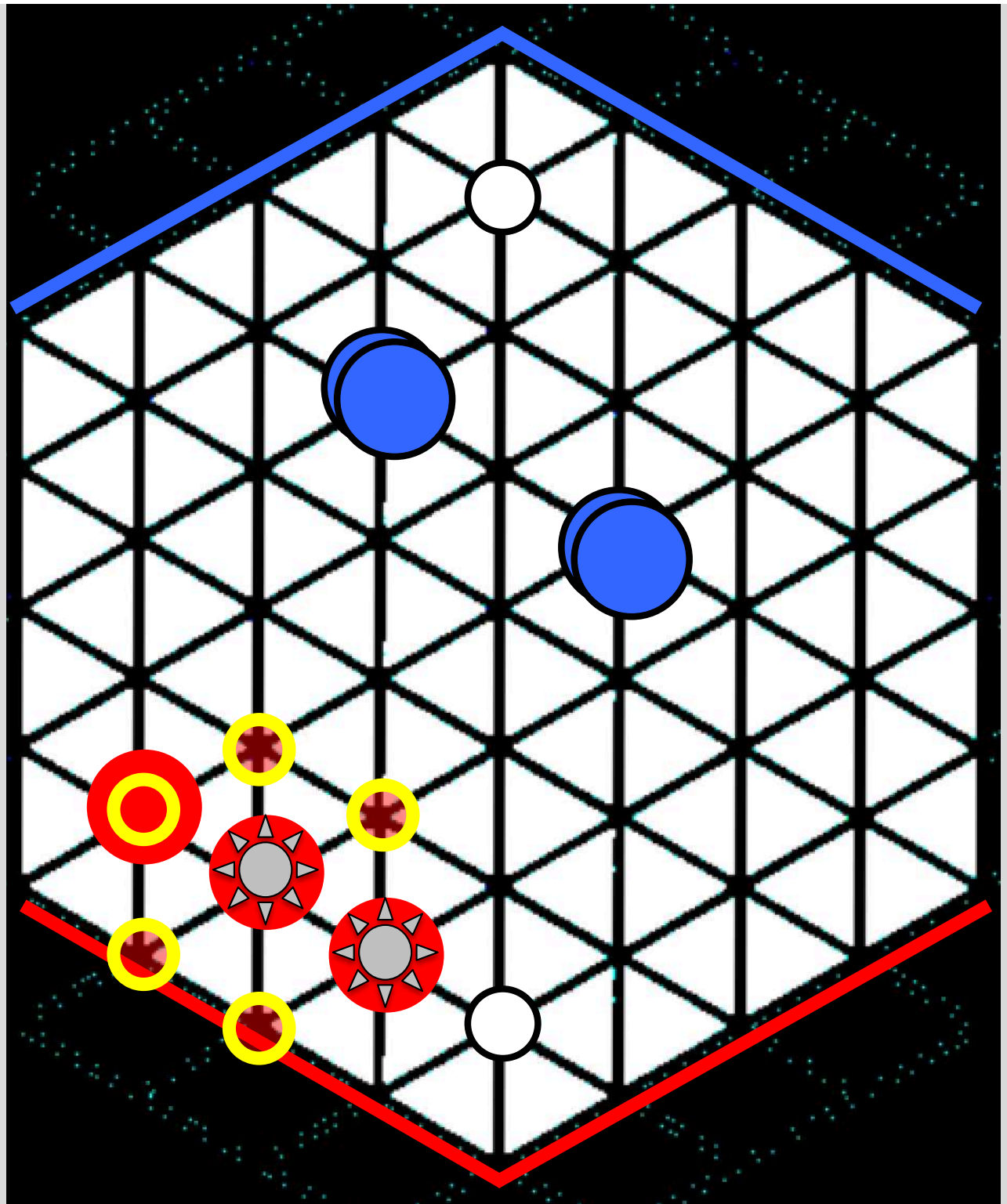




# Kings

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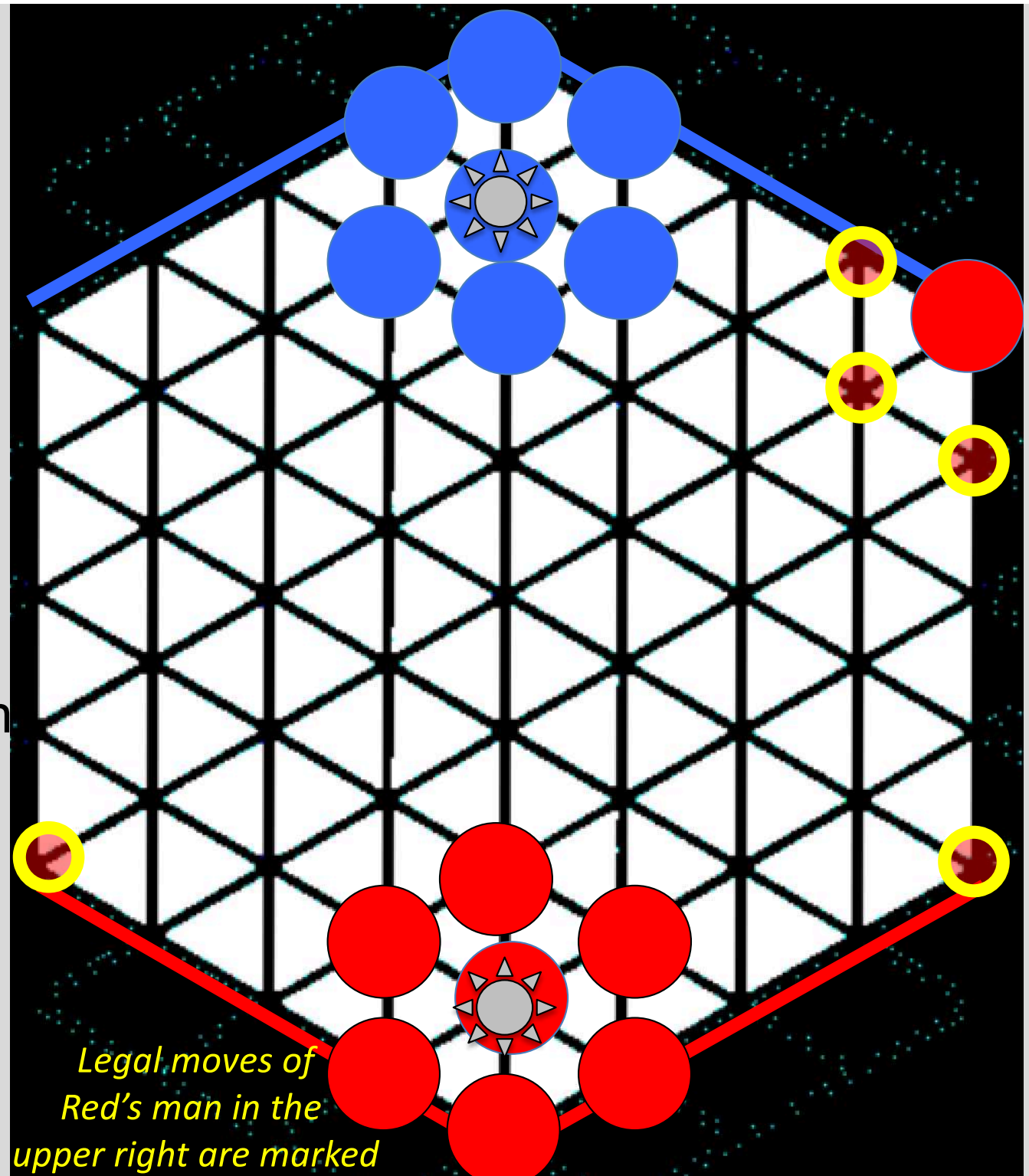
*Legal moves and/or merges  
of Red's singleton king on the  
left are marked in yellow*



# Enemy Walls

Enemy walls are portals to the other side of the board by forward (30-120 degree) movement.

Blue can pass through Red's walls and vice versa, but a player cannot move backward through their own walls.

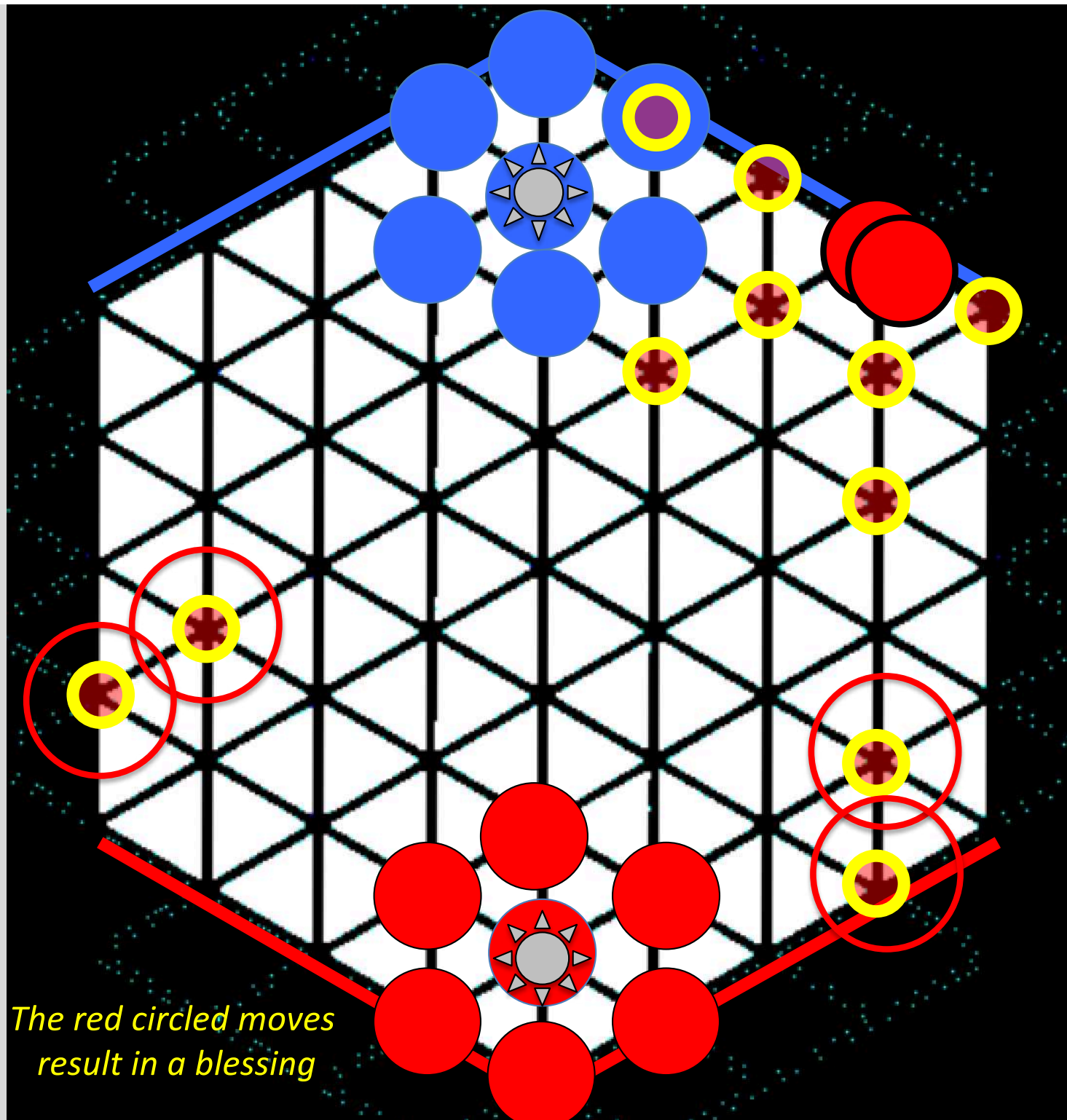


# Enemy Walls

The side walls are not jumping off points.

All moves must follow a single straight line, even if passing enemy walls.

If a man passes enemy walls, he receives a blessing.



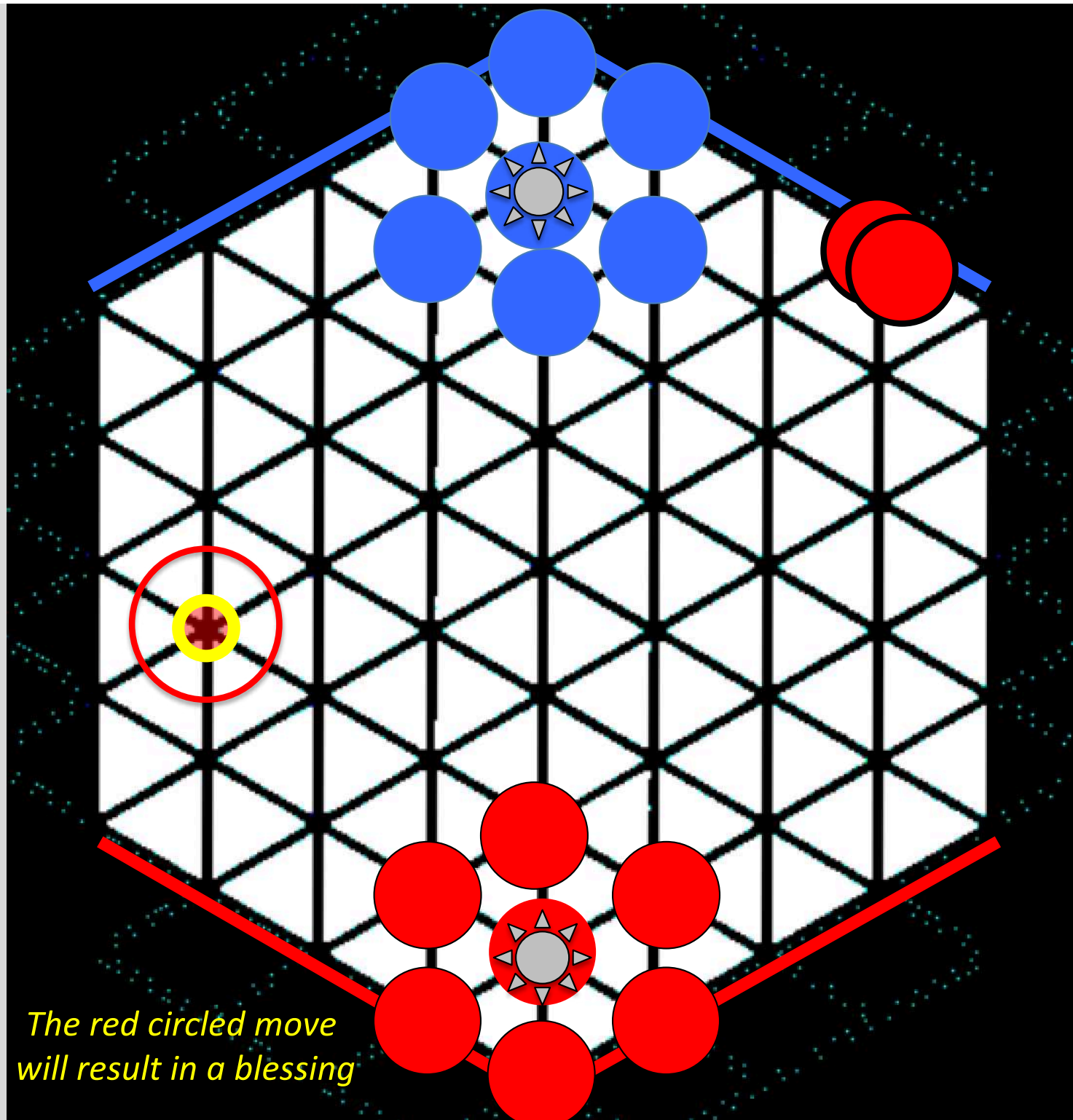


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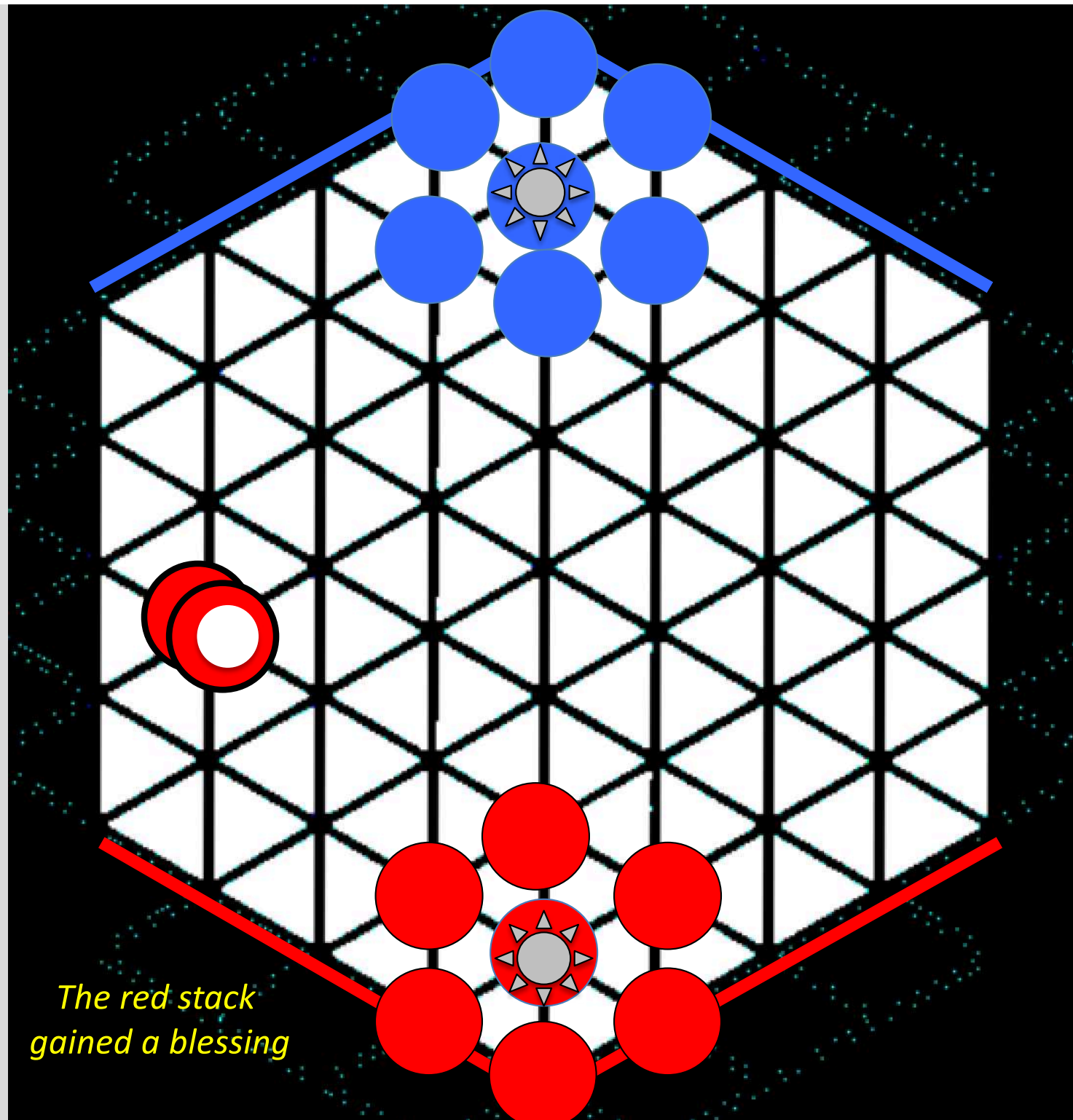
*The red circled move  
will result in a blessing*

# Enemy Walls

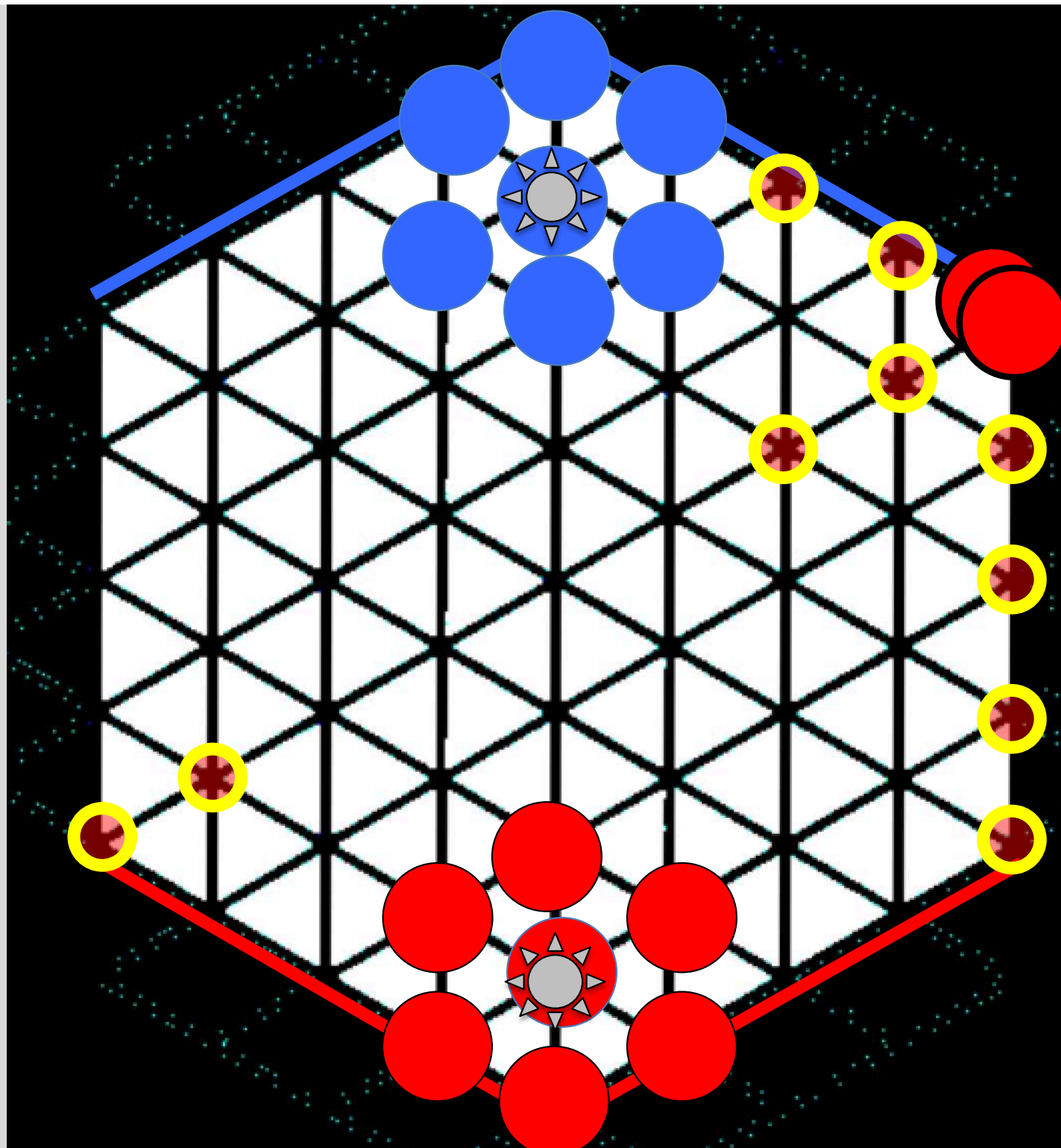
The side walls are not jumping off points.

All moves must follow a single straight line, even if passing enemy walls.

If a man passes enemy walls, he receives a blessing.

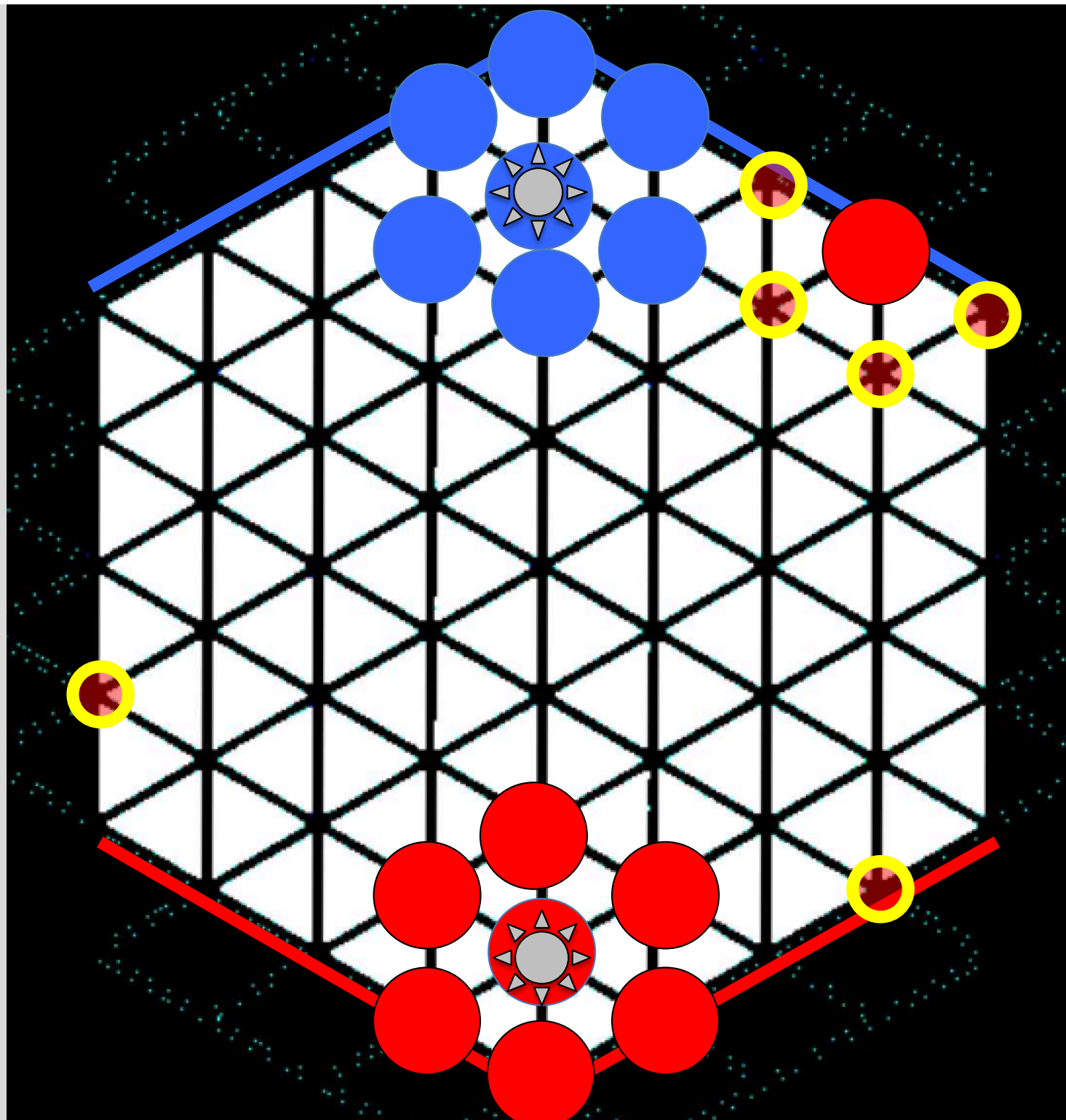


*Yellow circles indicate:  
Legal moves of Red's  
man in the upper right*

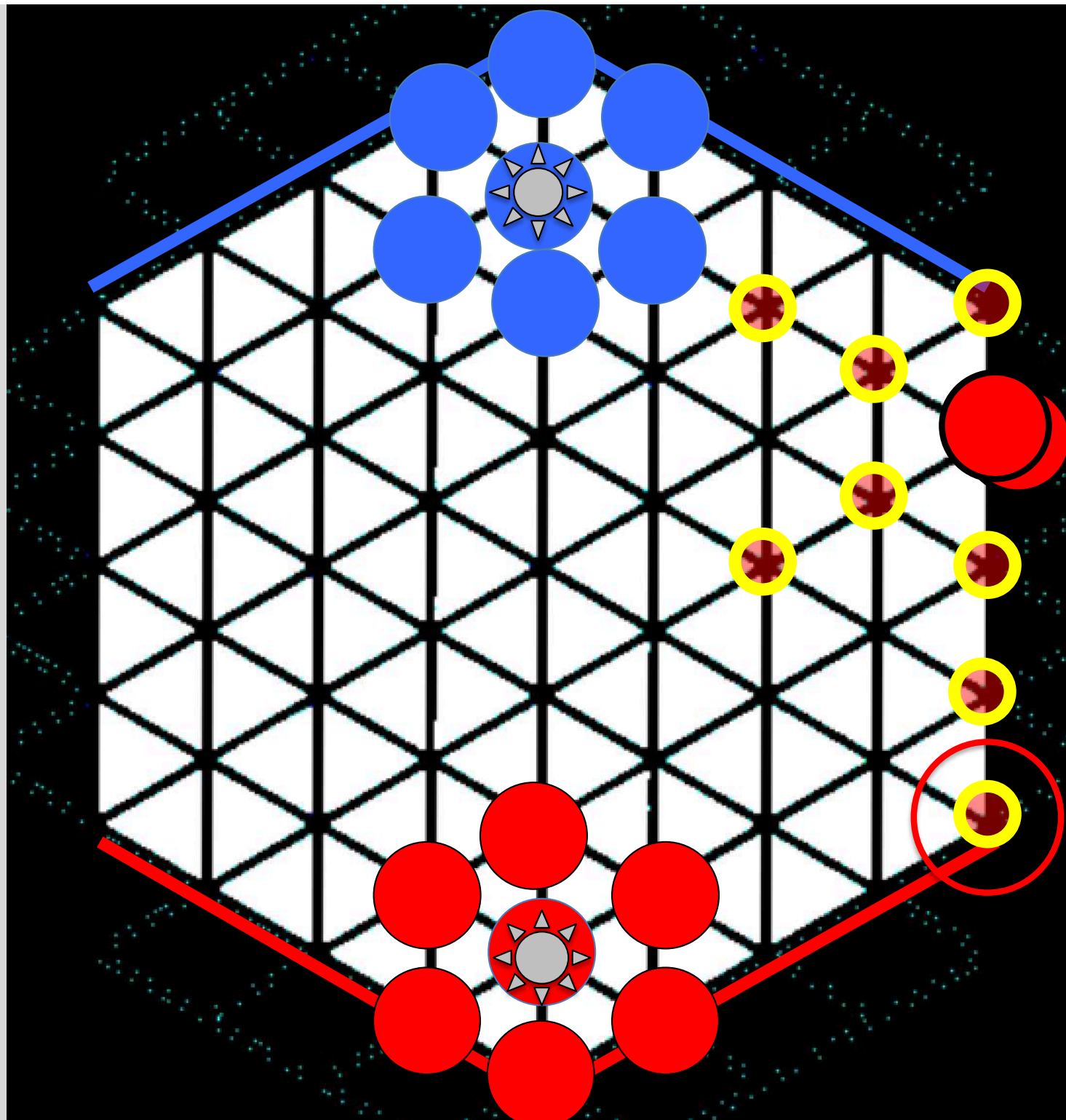




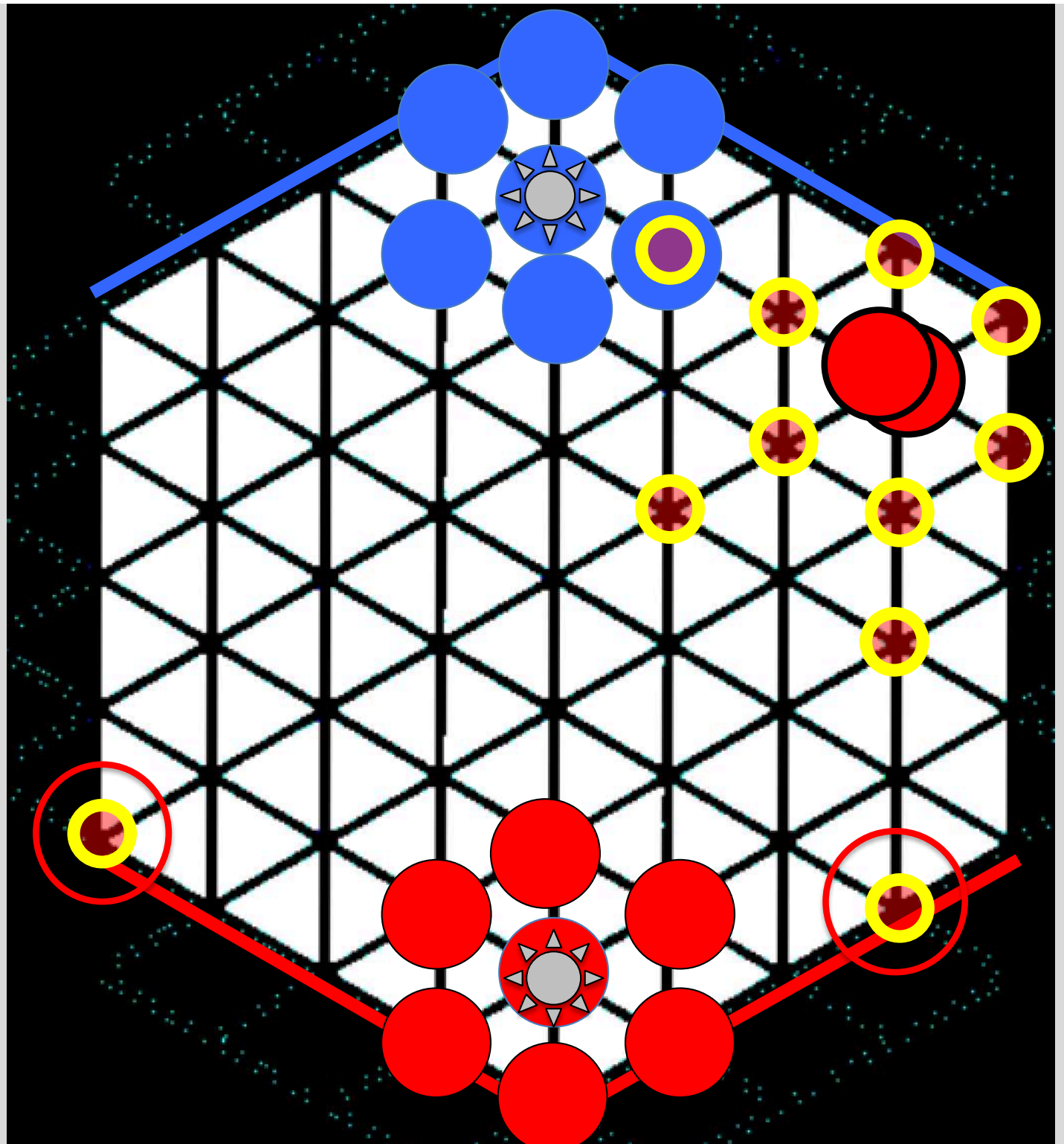
*Legal moves of Red's  
man in the upper right  
are marked*



*The red - circled moves  
result in a blessing*



*The red circled moves  
result in a blessing*



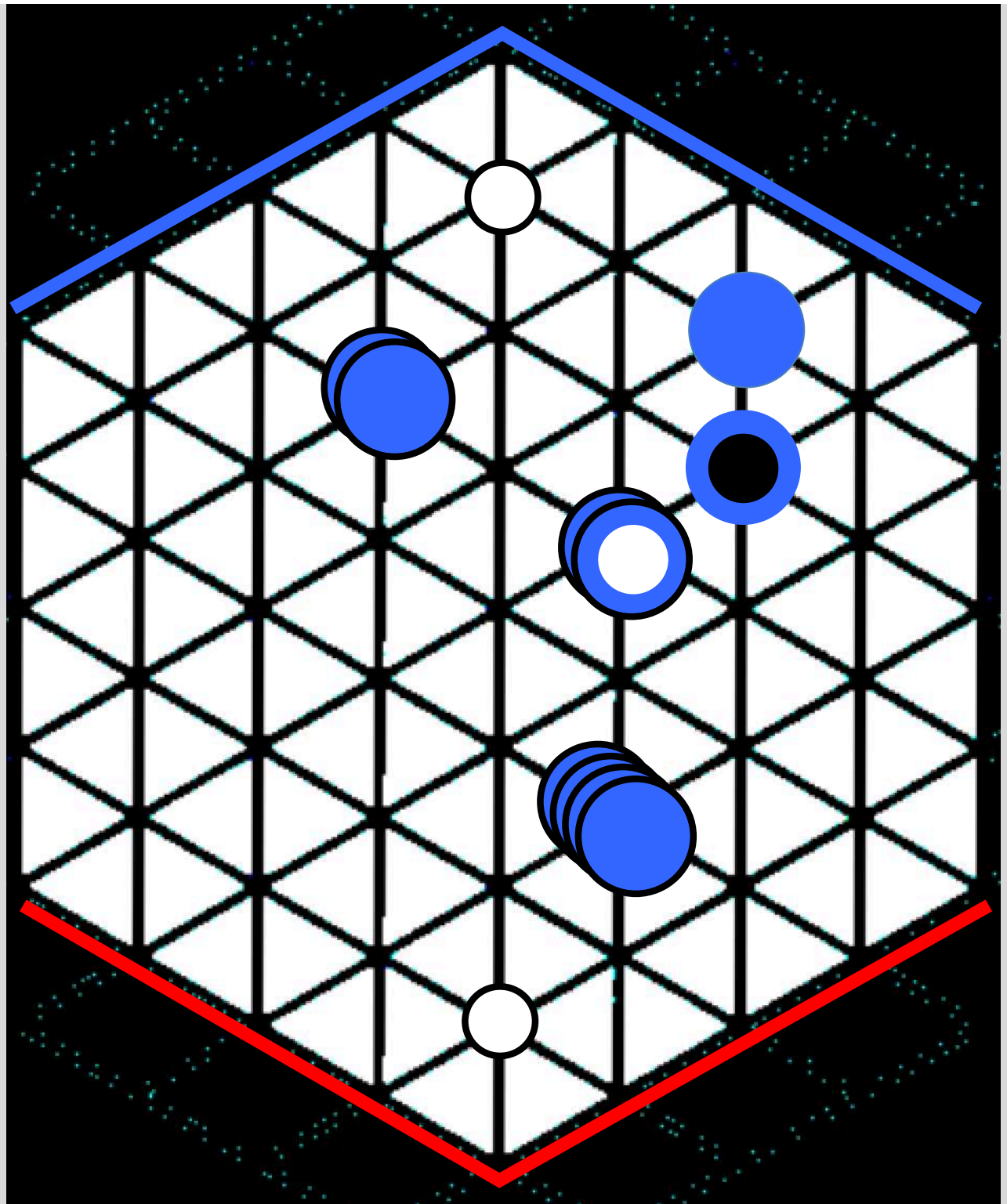


# Blessings and Curses

If a man is blessed,  
mark with a white  
stone.

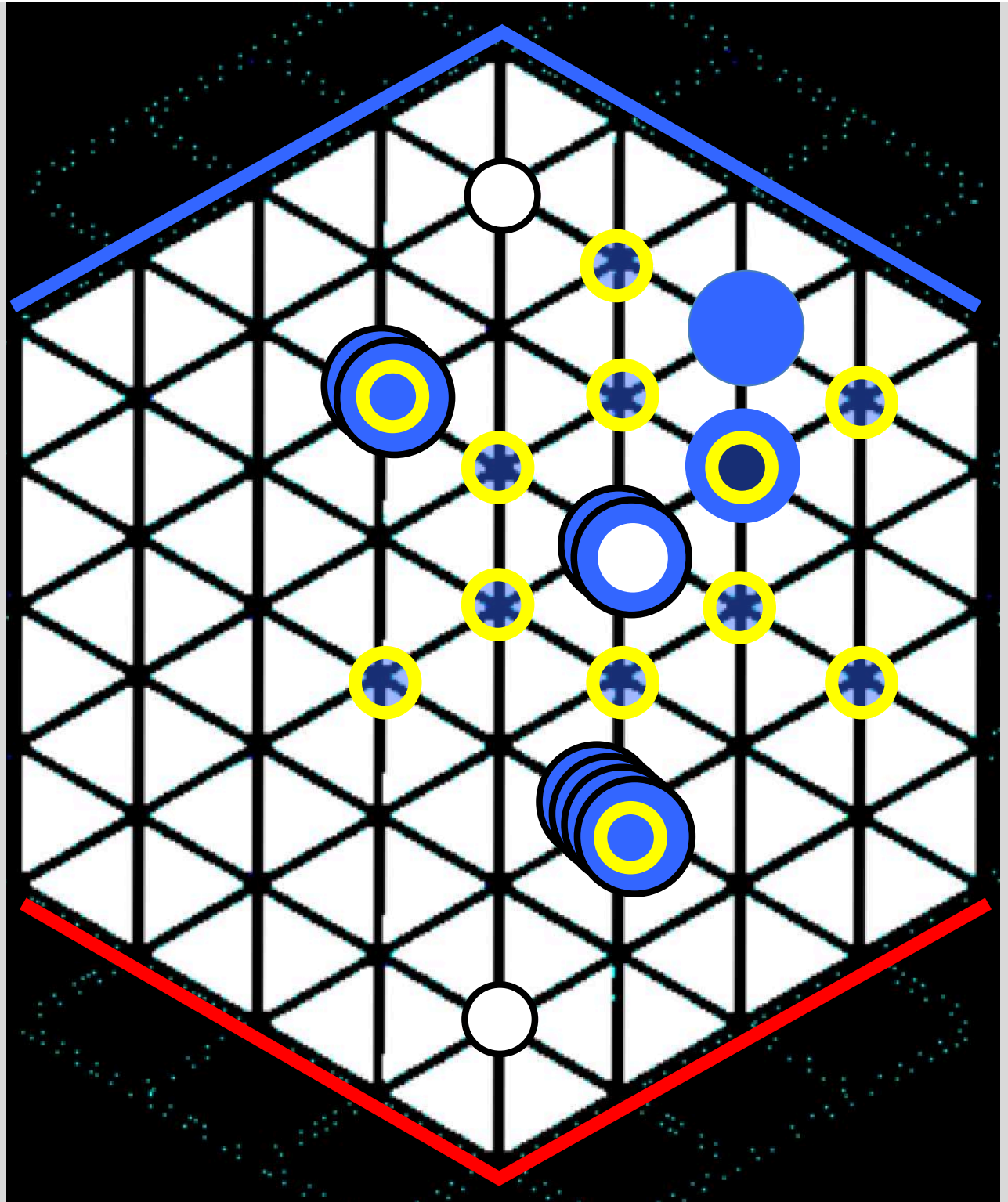
If a man is cursed,  
mark with a black  
stone.

When  
blessed/cursed men  
merge, remove all  
stones from them.



# Blessings

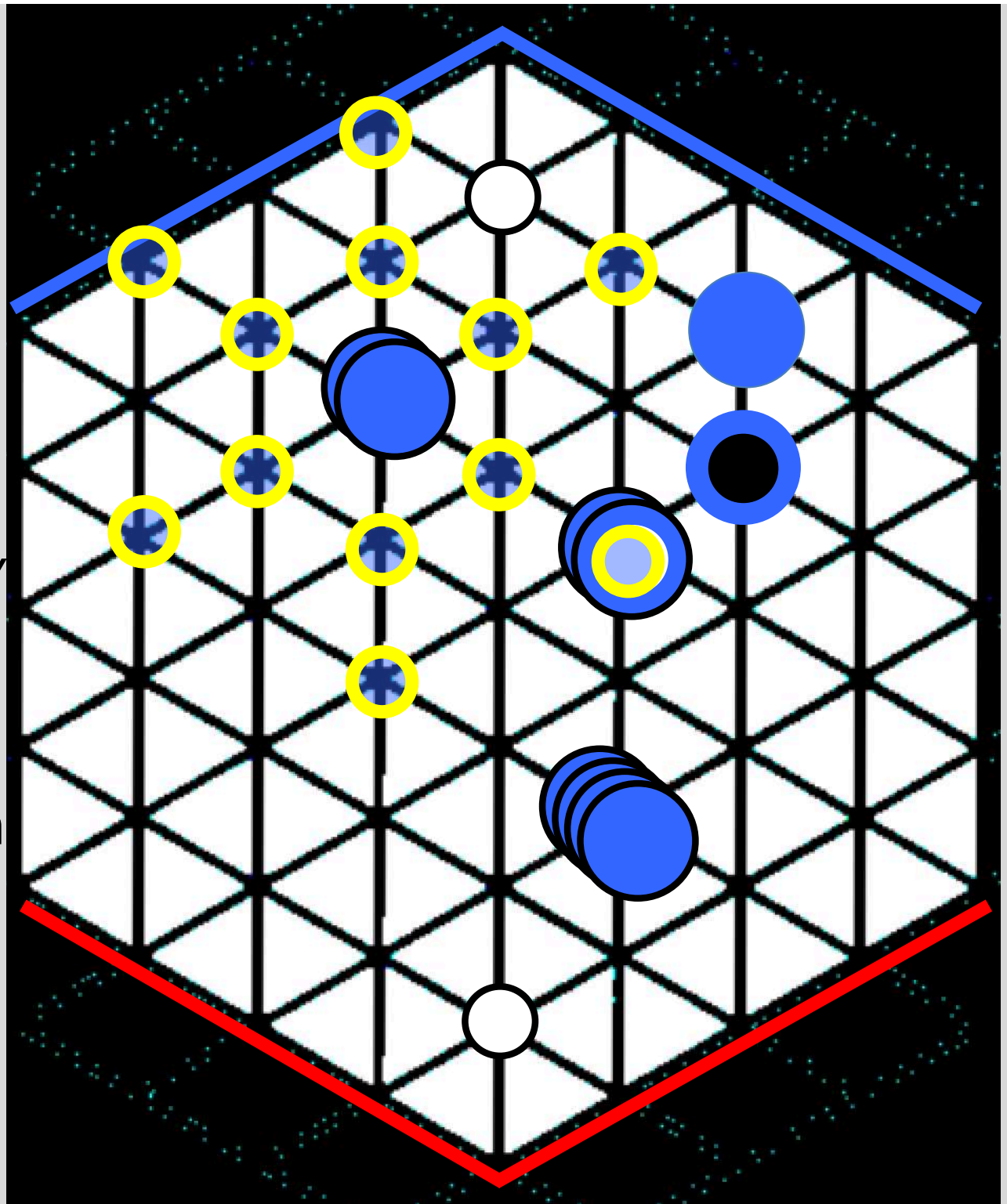
A blessed man can merge once with any reachable friendly man.



# Blessings

You can make stacks of any size *if and only if* one of the merging men is blessed.

Non-blessed men can merge with blessed men and vice versa.

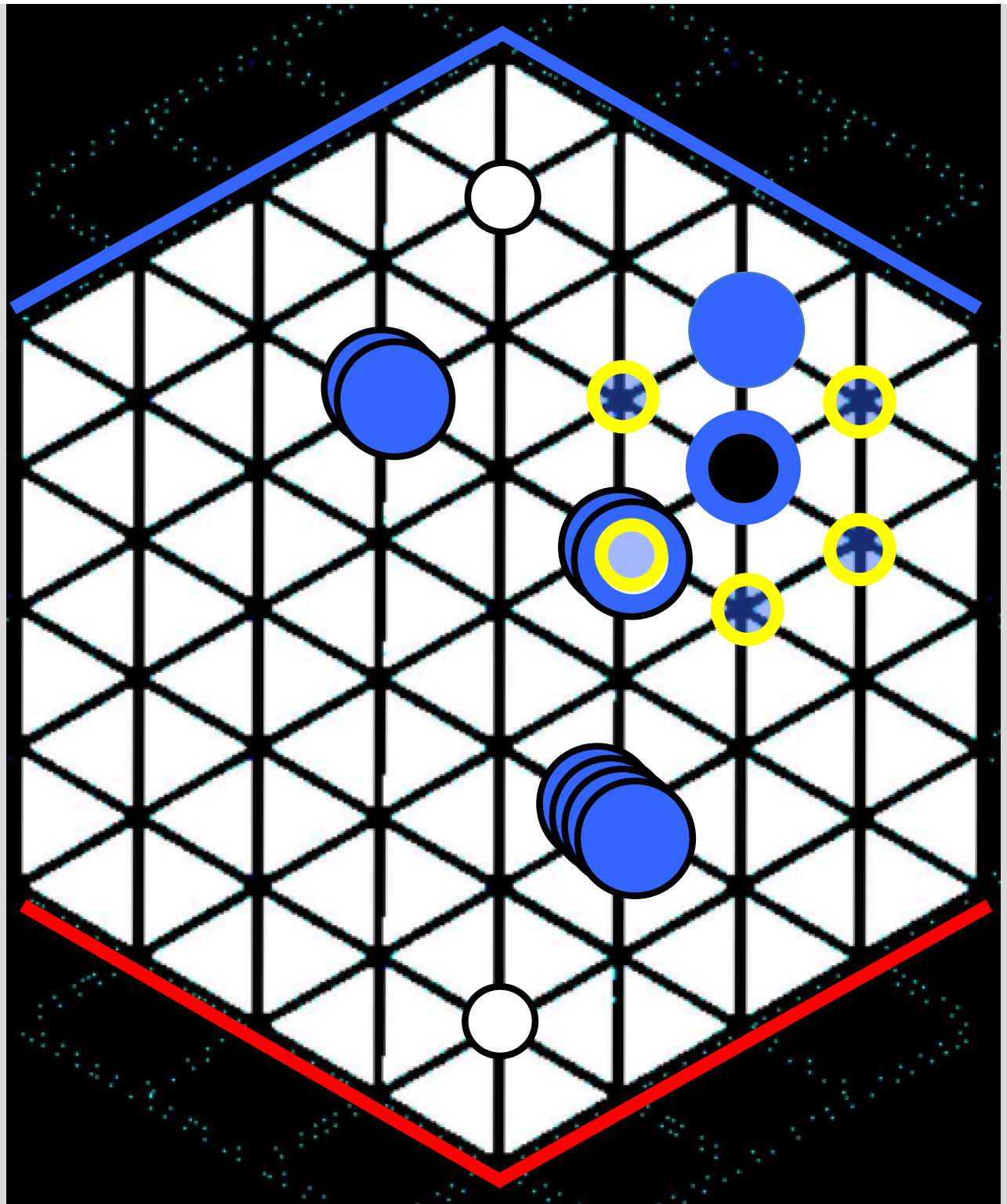




# Curses

Cursed men can  
only merge with  
blessed men.

Cursed men cannot  
ever be blessed  
themselves.

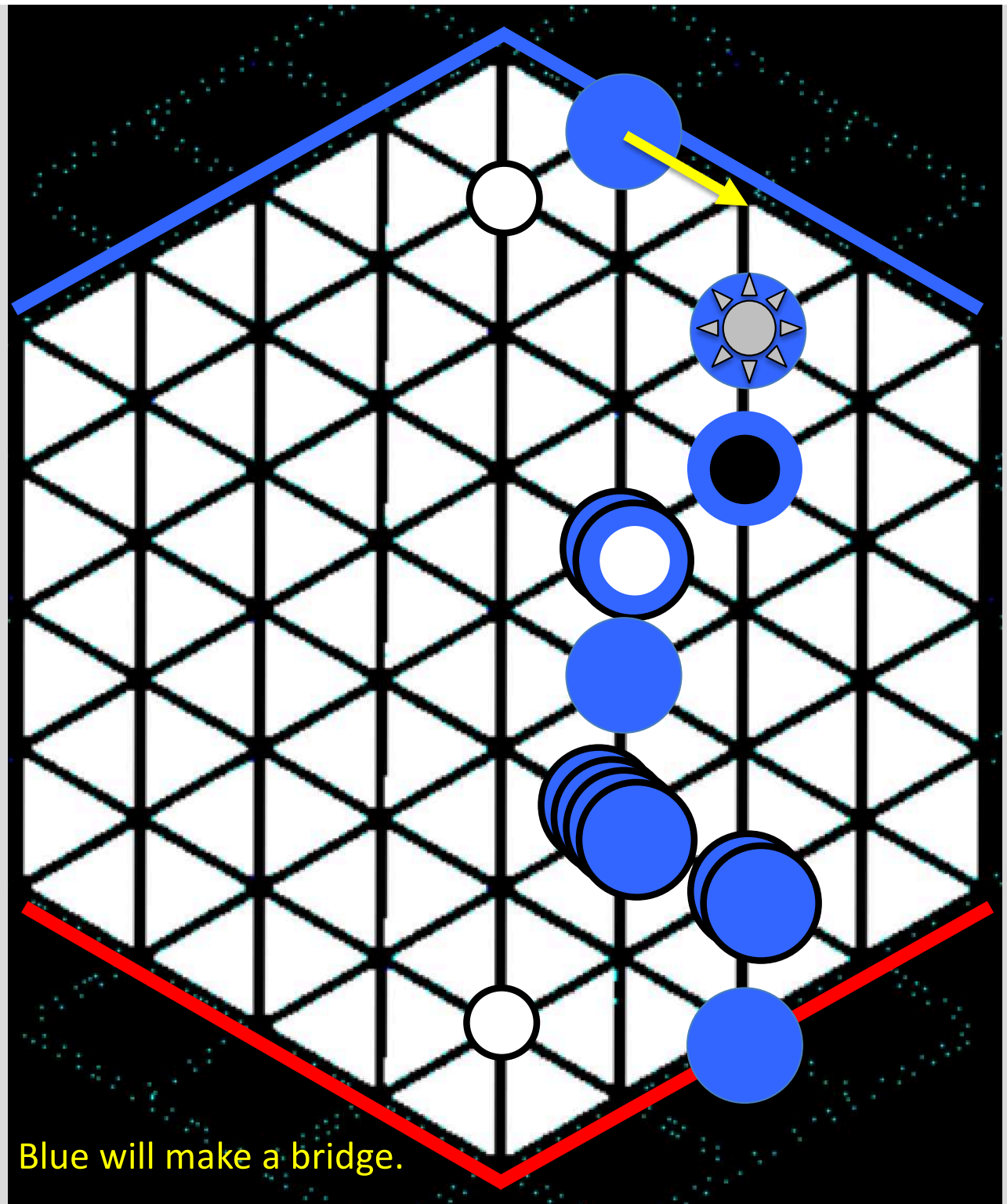




# Bridge

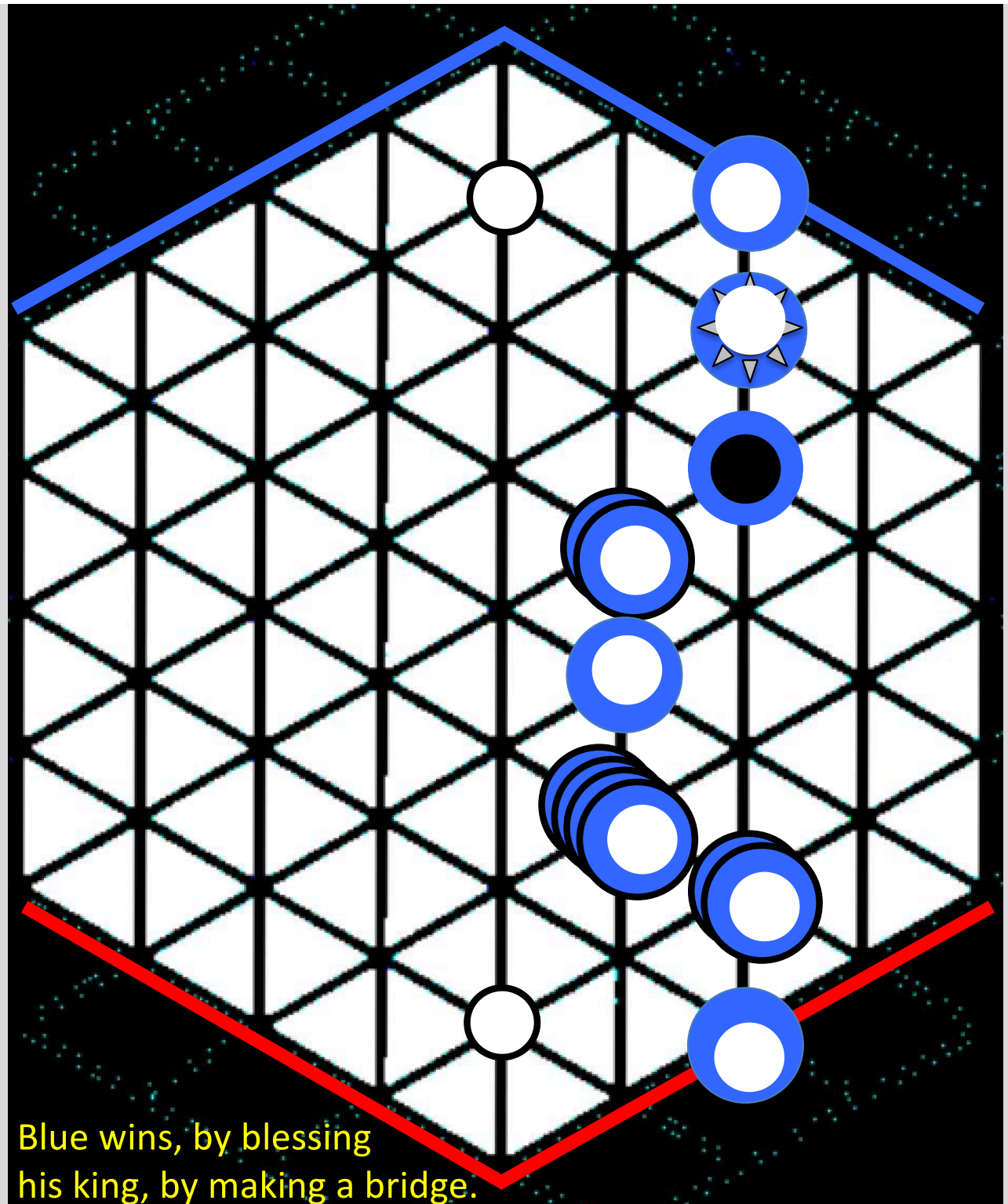
If you make a bridge of men connecting enemy walls to your walls, all men in the bridge get blessed.

(except the cursed men, because they cannot ever get blessed)



# Bridge

If you bless a king,  
either by moving a  
king past enemy  
walls, or as part of a  
bridge, you win the  
game!

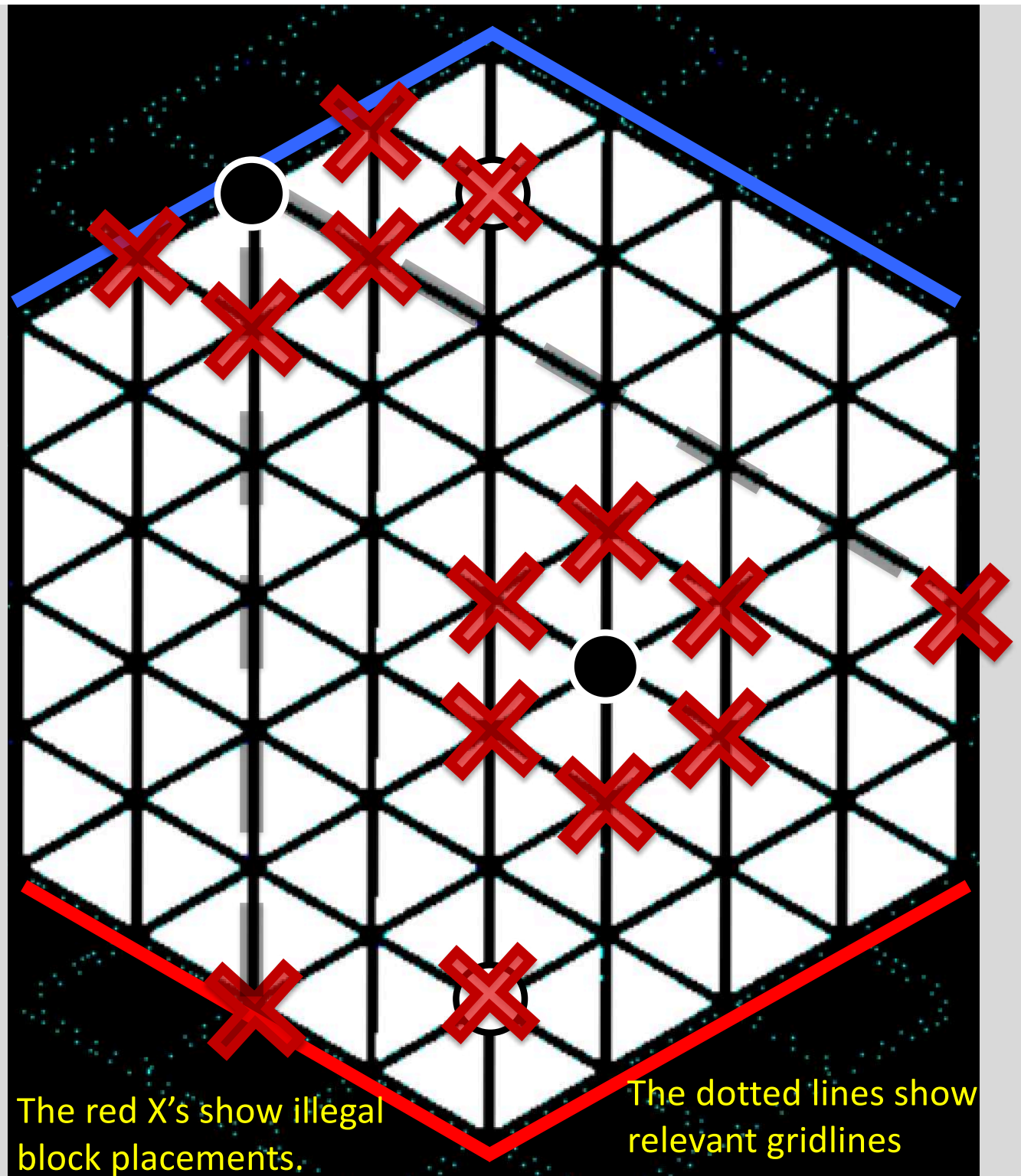


# Block placement

Blocks cannot be placed on starting points.

Blocks cannot be placed adjacent to one another

Blocks cannot be placed on opposite ends of a gridline

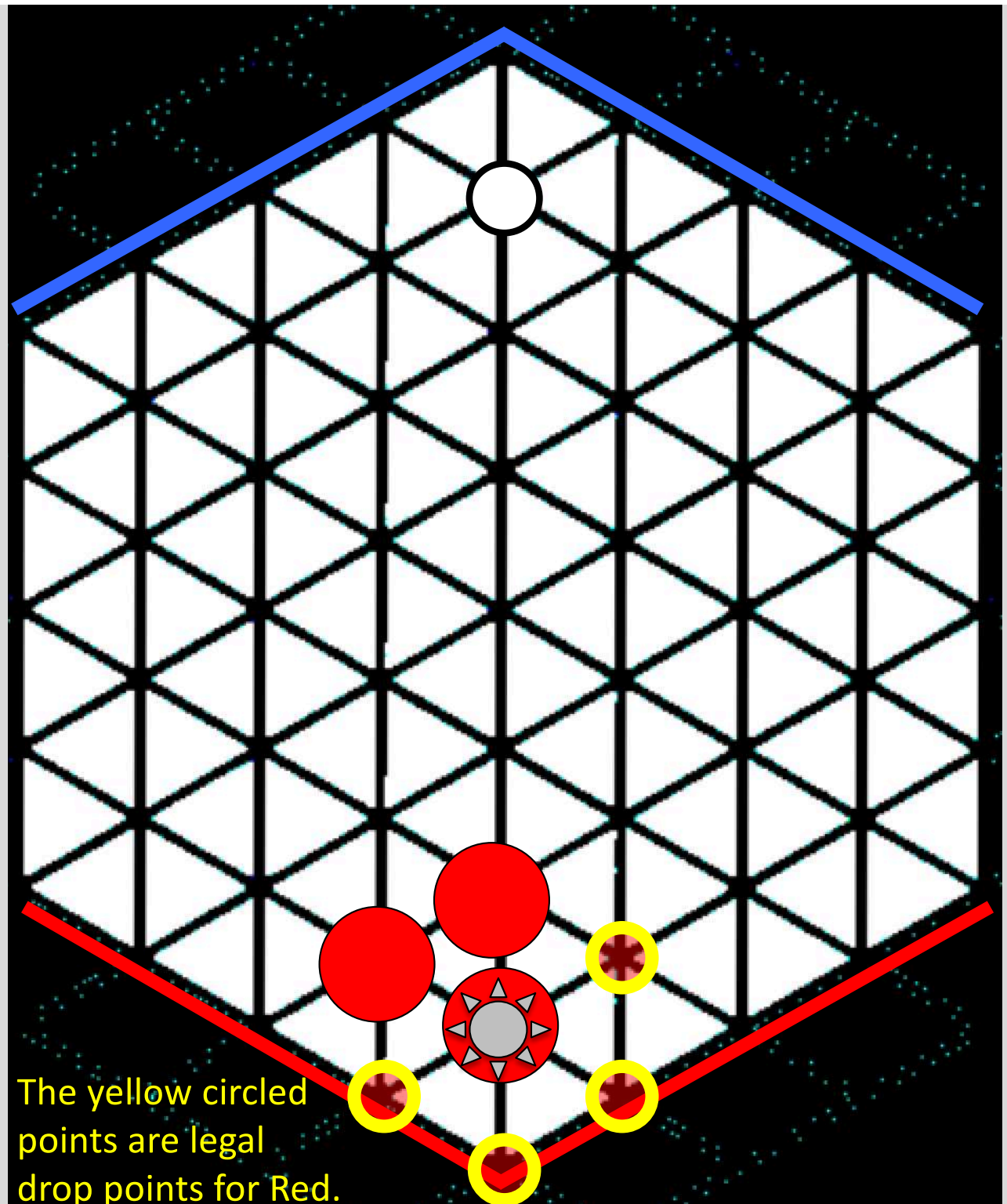




# Man placement

As an action, you may drop a man in an **empty** point in your zone.

Dropped men cannot move in the same turn, but they can merge.



The yellow circled points are legal drop points for Red.



# Reminder of how play proceeds:

Choose colors and decide who plays first.  
The first player's first turn is a single action.  
Subsequently, players alternate turns of 2 actions each.

## The five possible actions (formally defined on slide 12) can be notated as follows:

**Move:** initial and final positions "h4g4"

**Merge:** initial + final "h4 + g4"

**Split:** initial, minus sub-stack size, minus final "h4-2-g4"

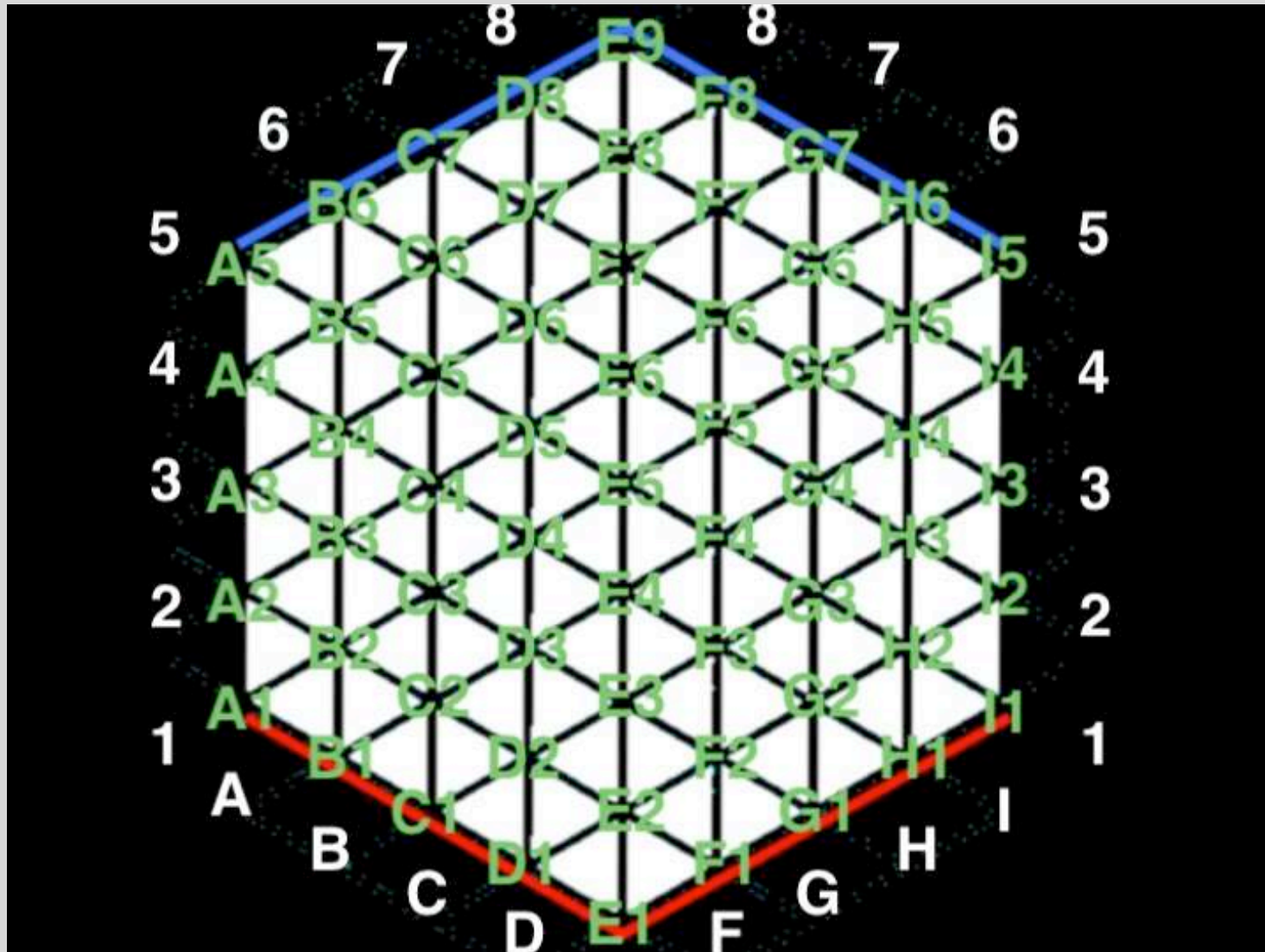
**Block:** B at destination "B@g4"

**Drop:** at destination "@e1"

**Captures:** record captures using the letter "X"

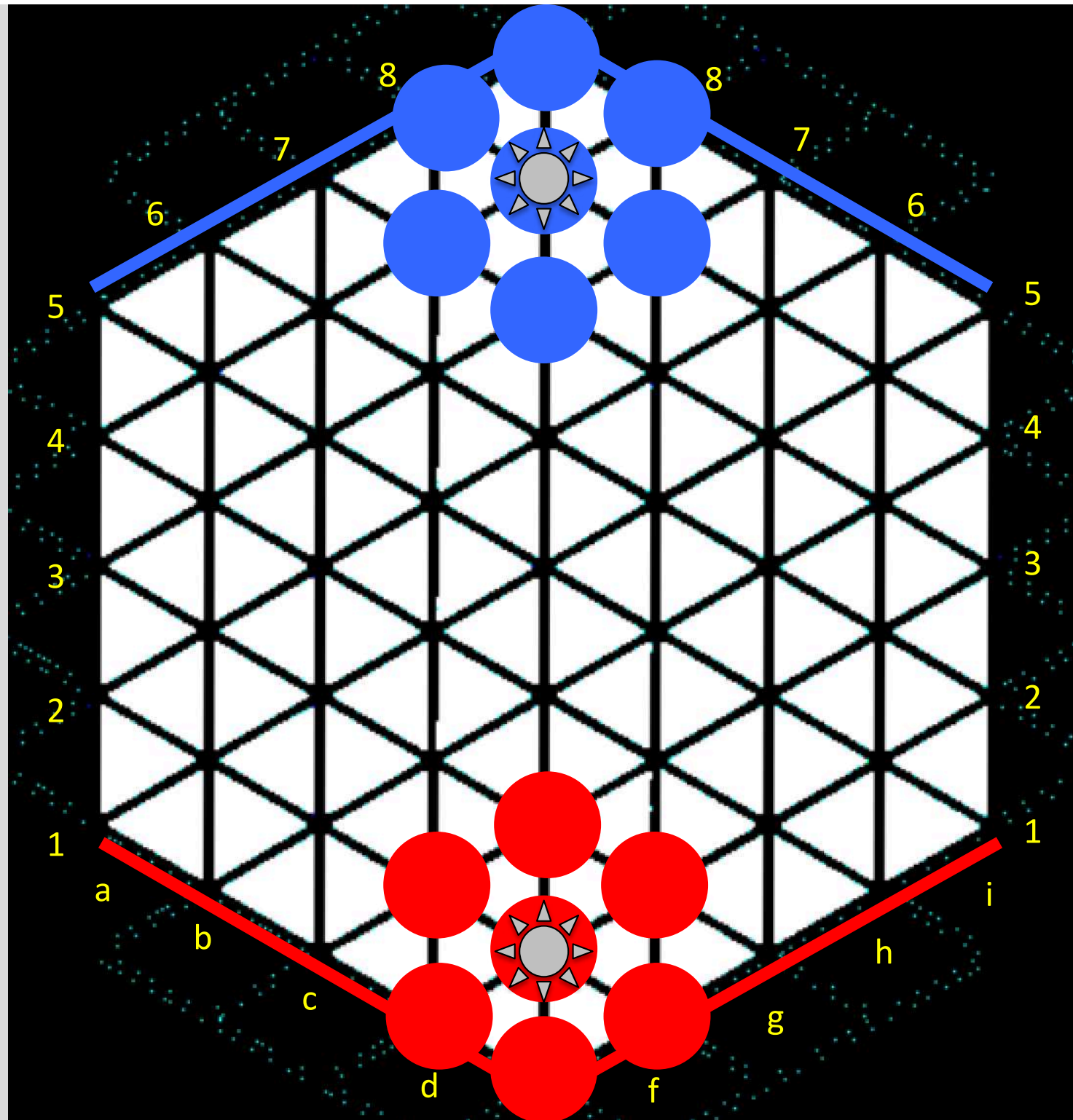
**Kings:** Kings may be denoted with the letter "K".

# Point notation map on a Benediction board



# Example game

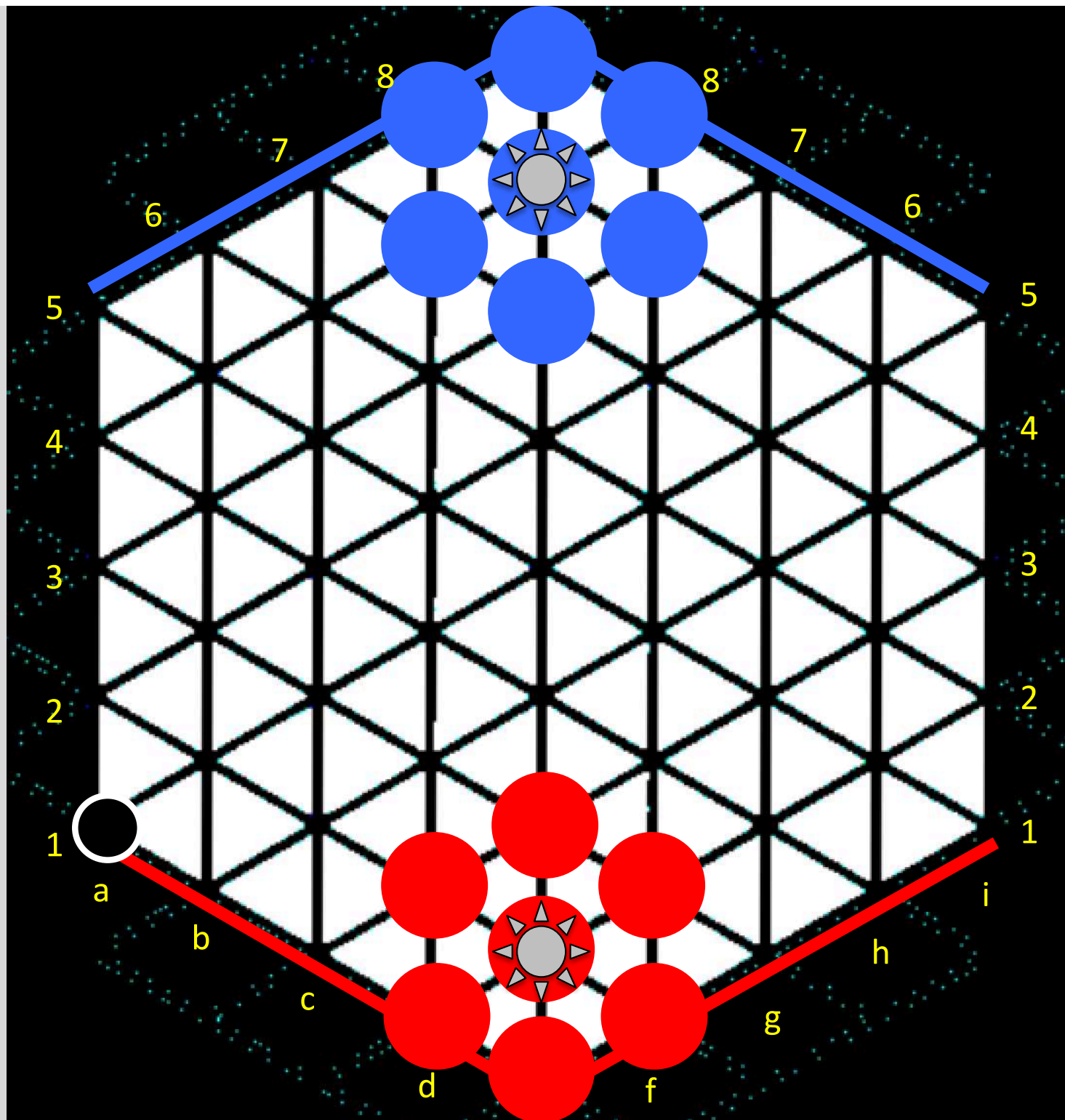
...to illustrate  
the rules in  
action!



Blue starts with a  
single action:

Block

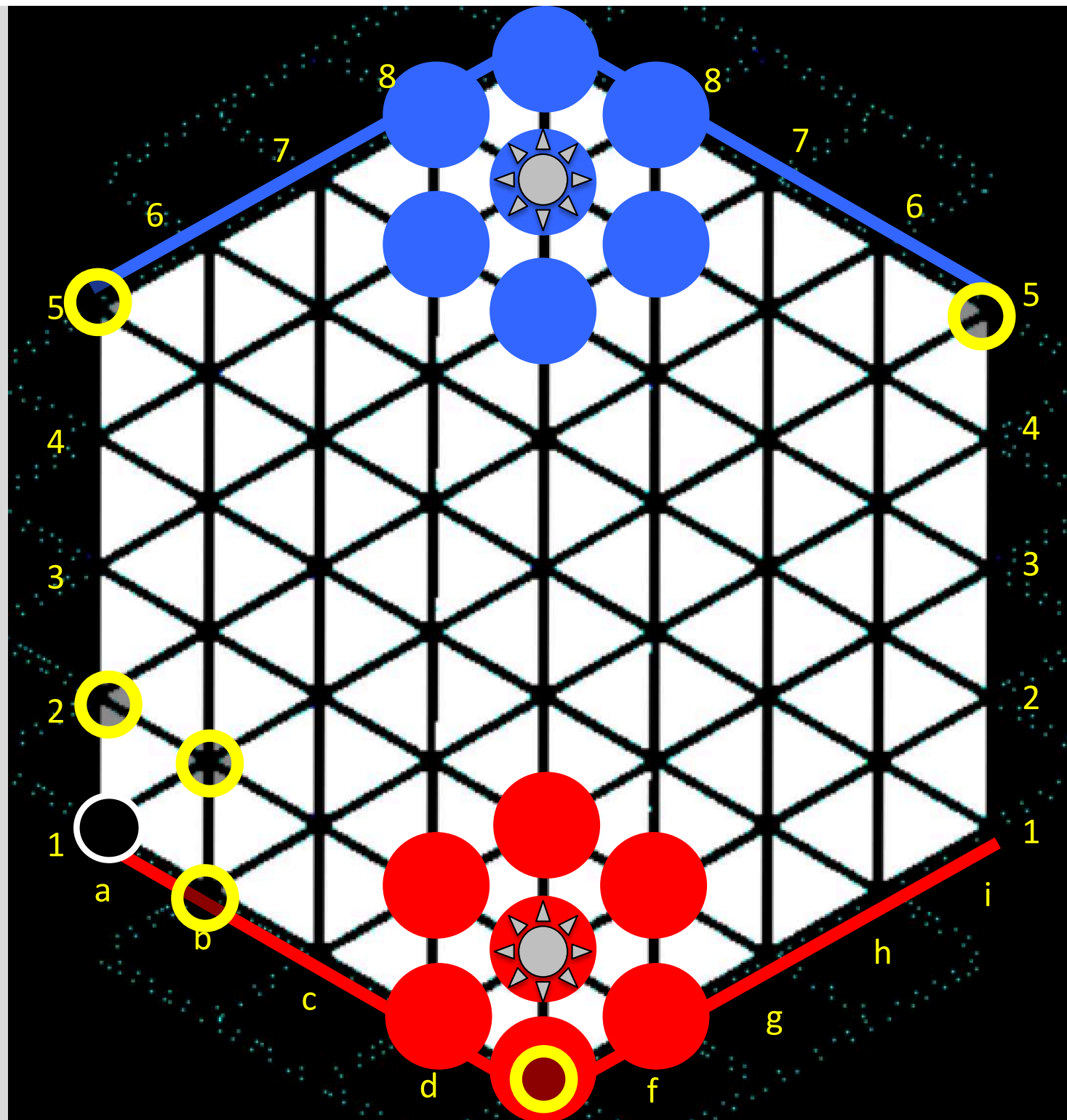
B@a1





This move prevents future blockades on all points that are adjacent or on the opposite end of the same gridline:

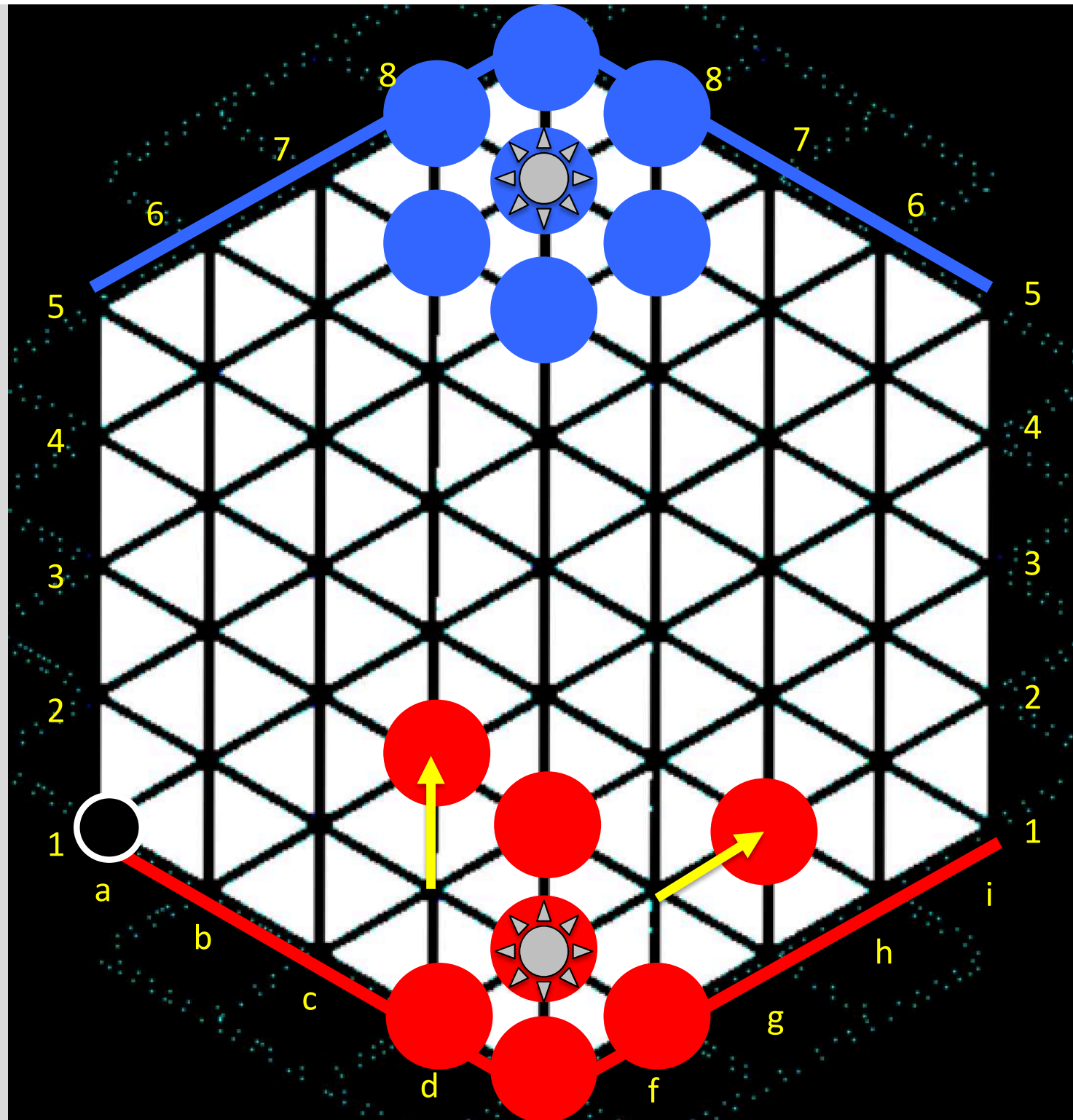
A2, B2, B1, A5, E1, and I5 (marked in yellow)



Subsequently, all  
turns consist of 2  
actions per turn.

Move, move

Red: d2d3 , f2g2



# Block, Block

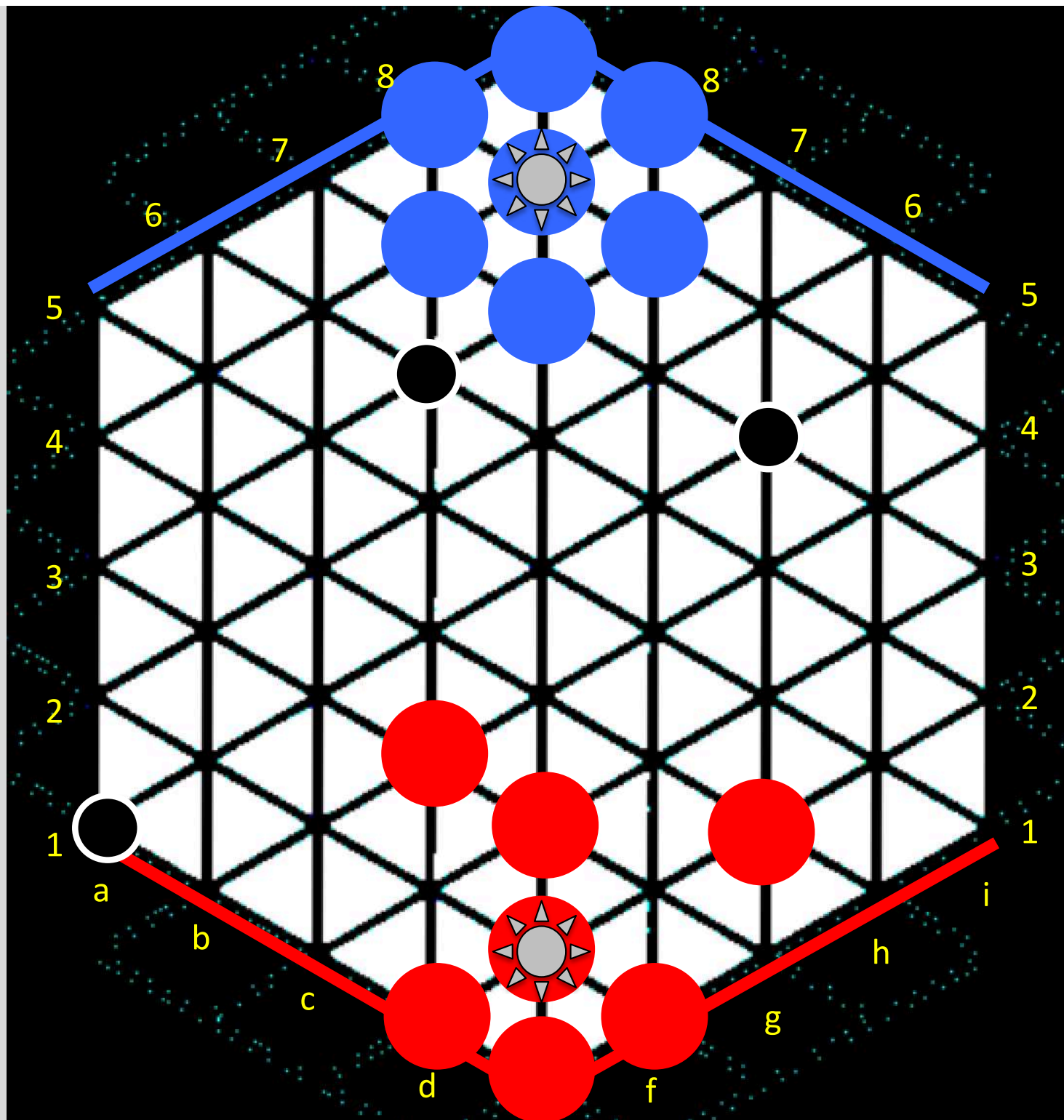
Blue: B@d6, B@g5

All points adjacent  
to these blocks  
cannot be  
blockaded in the  
future.

Men cannot jump  
over blockades.

Men cannot be  
dropped on  
blockades.

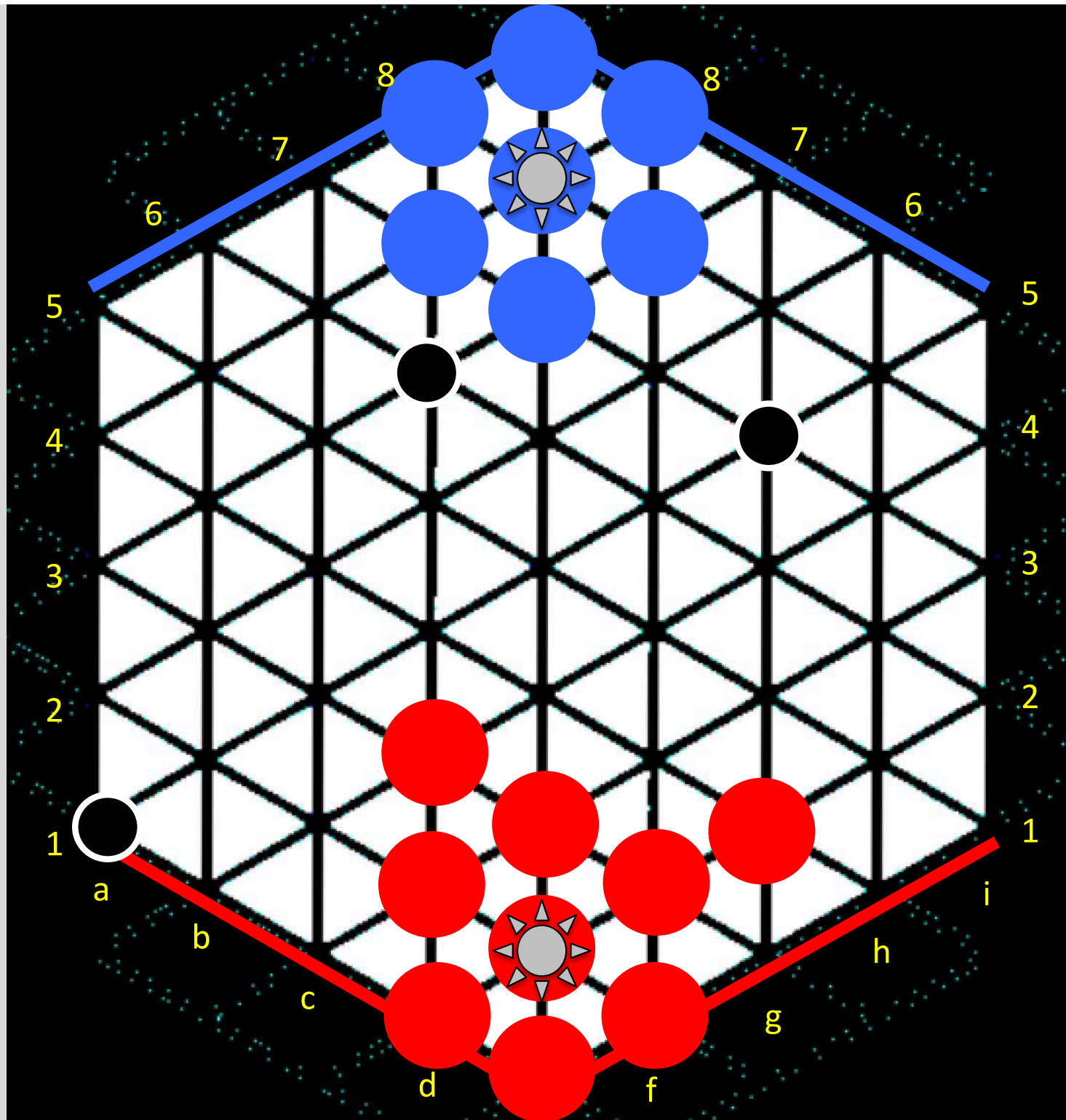
Men cannot move  
onto blockades.





# Drop, Drop

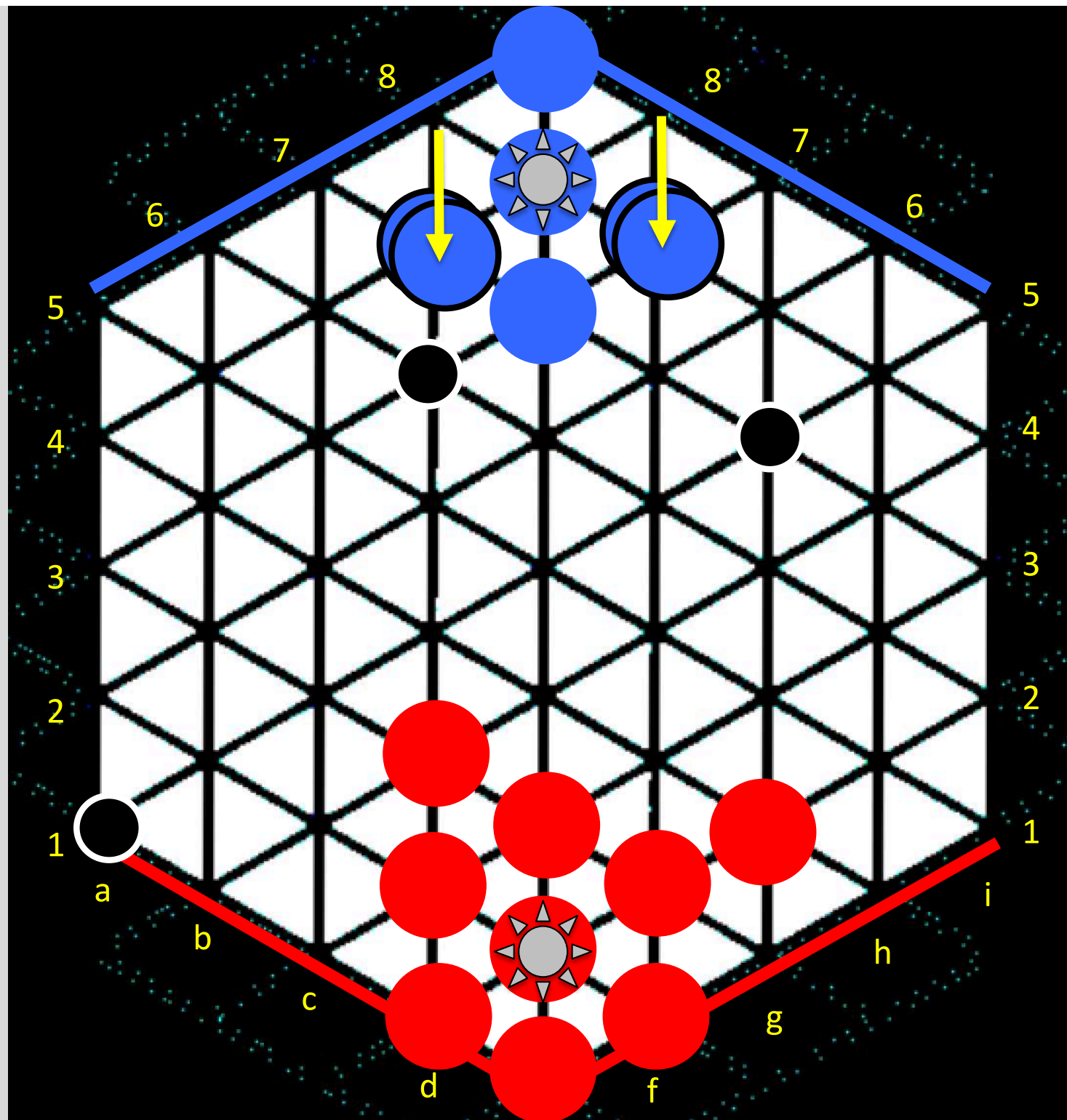
Red: @d2, @f2





# Merge, Merge

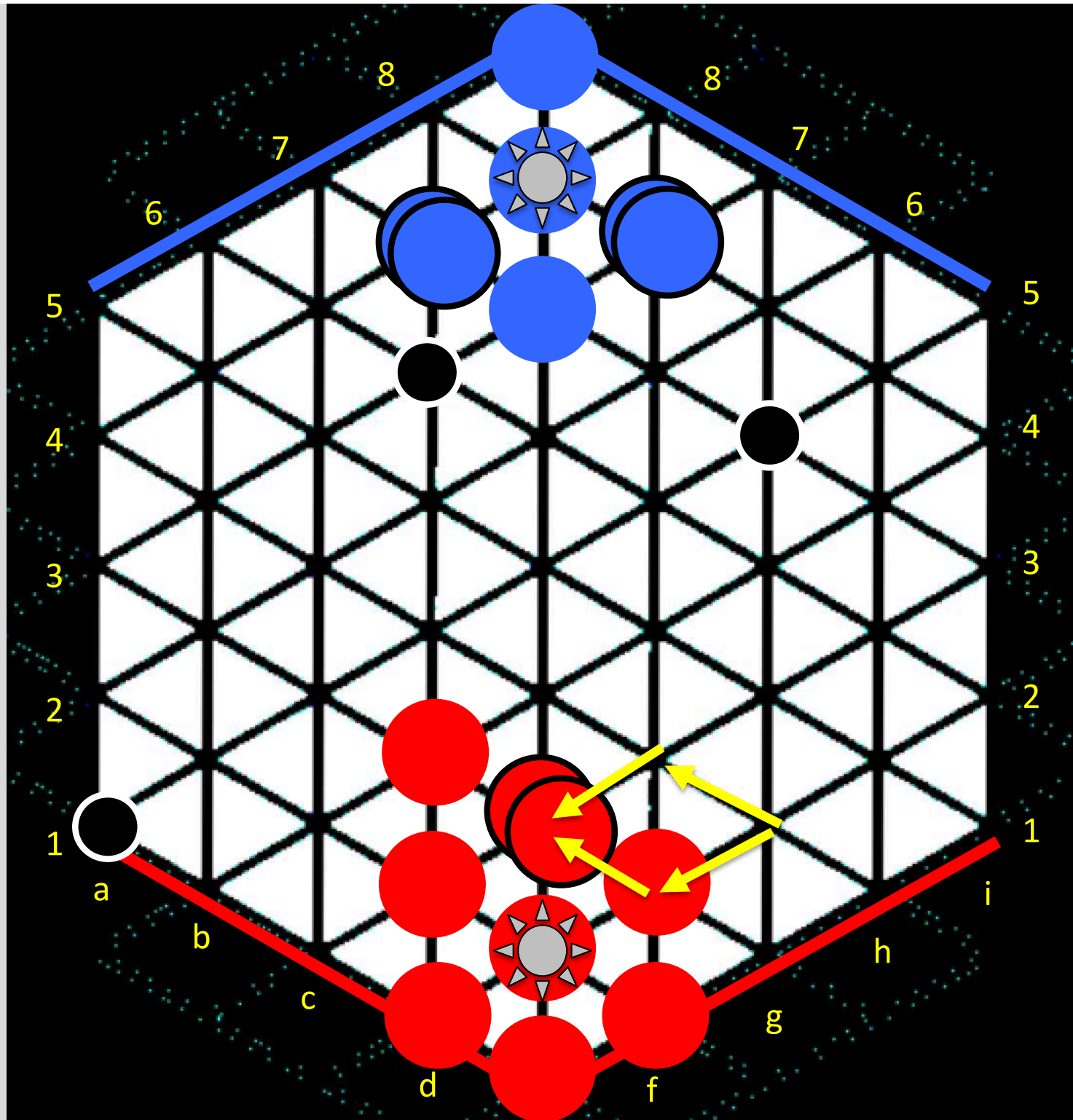
Blue:  $d_8+d_7$ ,  
 $f_8+f_7$



# Move, Merge

Red:  $g_2f_3, f_3+e_3$   
OR  
 $g_2+f_2, f_2+1+e_3$

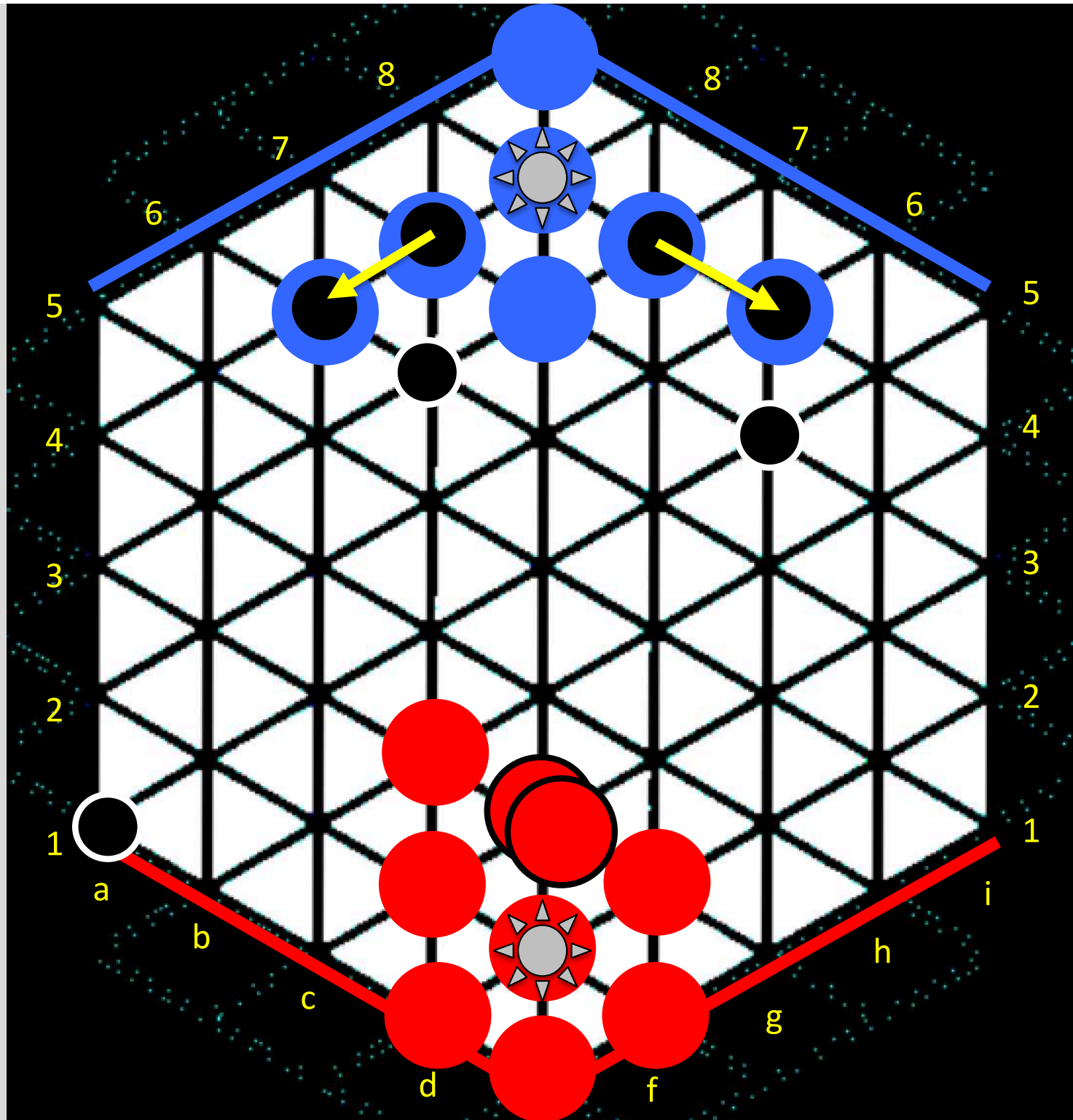
This position can also be reached by merging twice, via moving onto a friendly man, and then move sub-stack of 1 onto friendly man.



# Split, Split

Blue:  
d7-1-c6, f7-1-g6

They are cursed  
as a result.





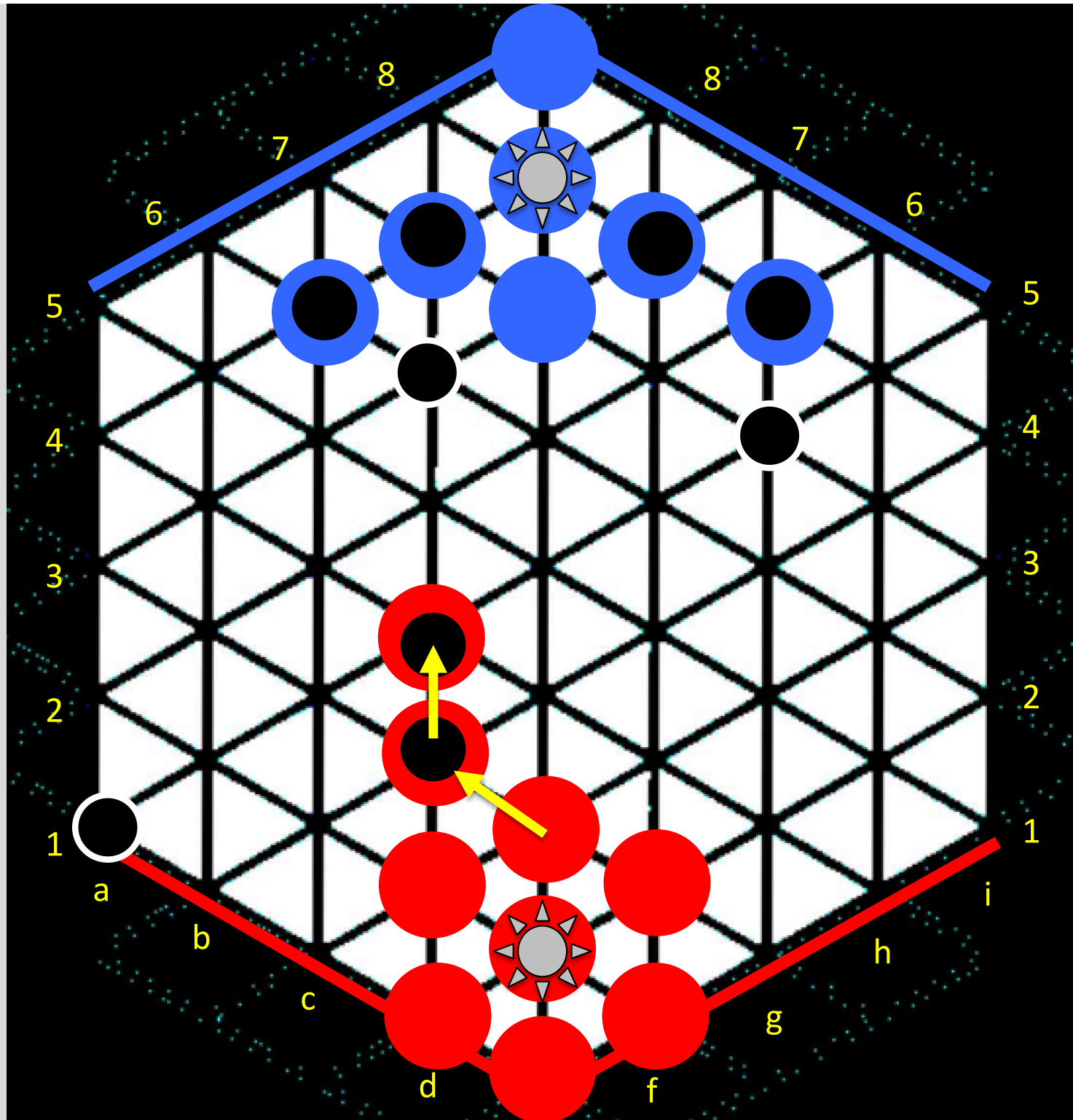
# Merge, Split

Red:

e3+1+d3, d3-1-d4

This happens by  
*merging* a sub-  
stack of 1 onto a  
friendly man, then  
*splitting* a sub-  
stack of 1 onto an  
empty point.

Thus, the red  
men on d3 and d4  
get cursed.

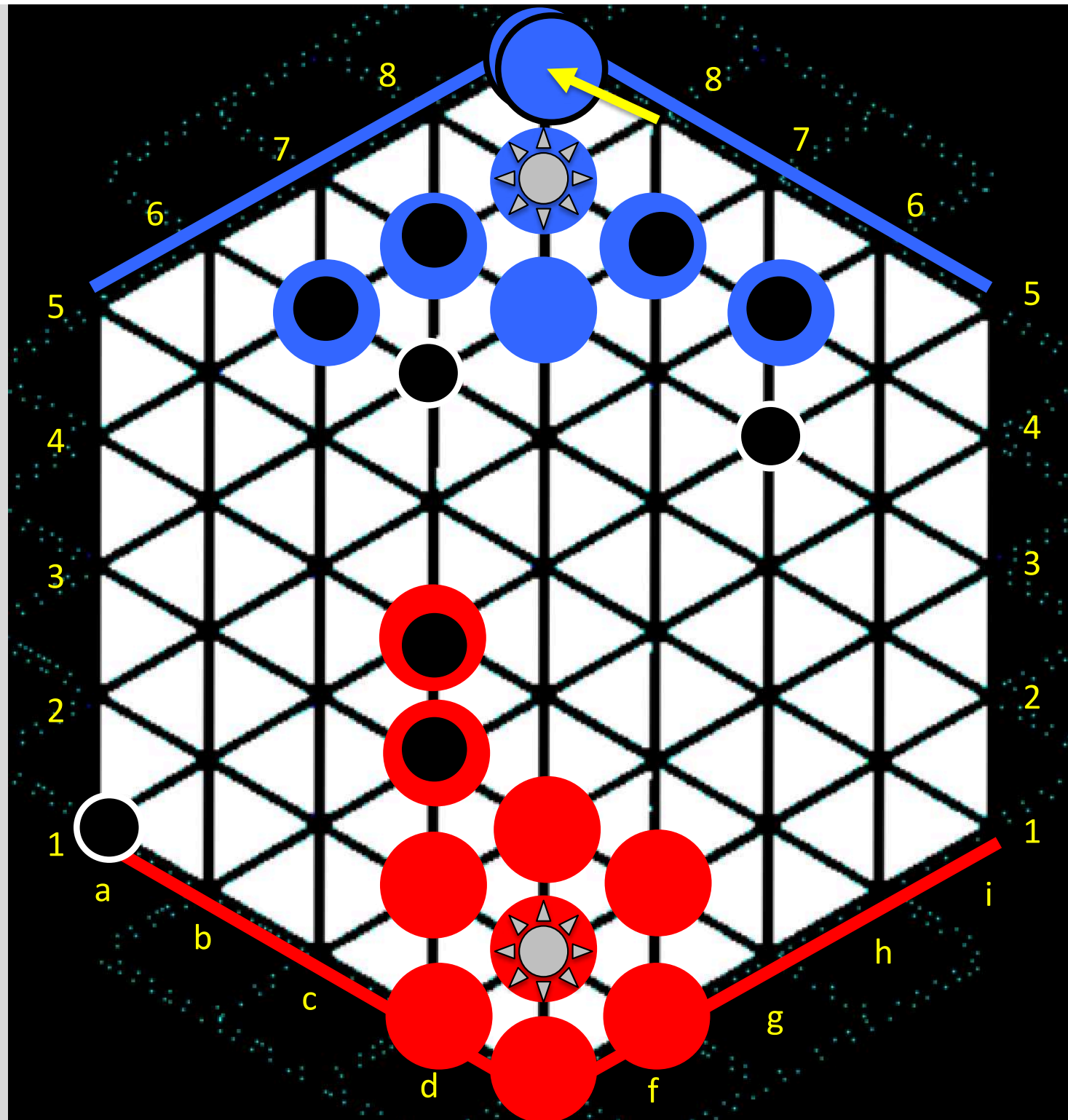




# Drop, Merge

Blue:  
@f8, f8+e9  
OR  
@d8, d8+e9

Newly dropped  
men cannot  
move, but they  
can merge.



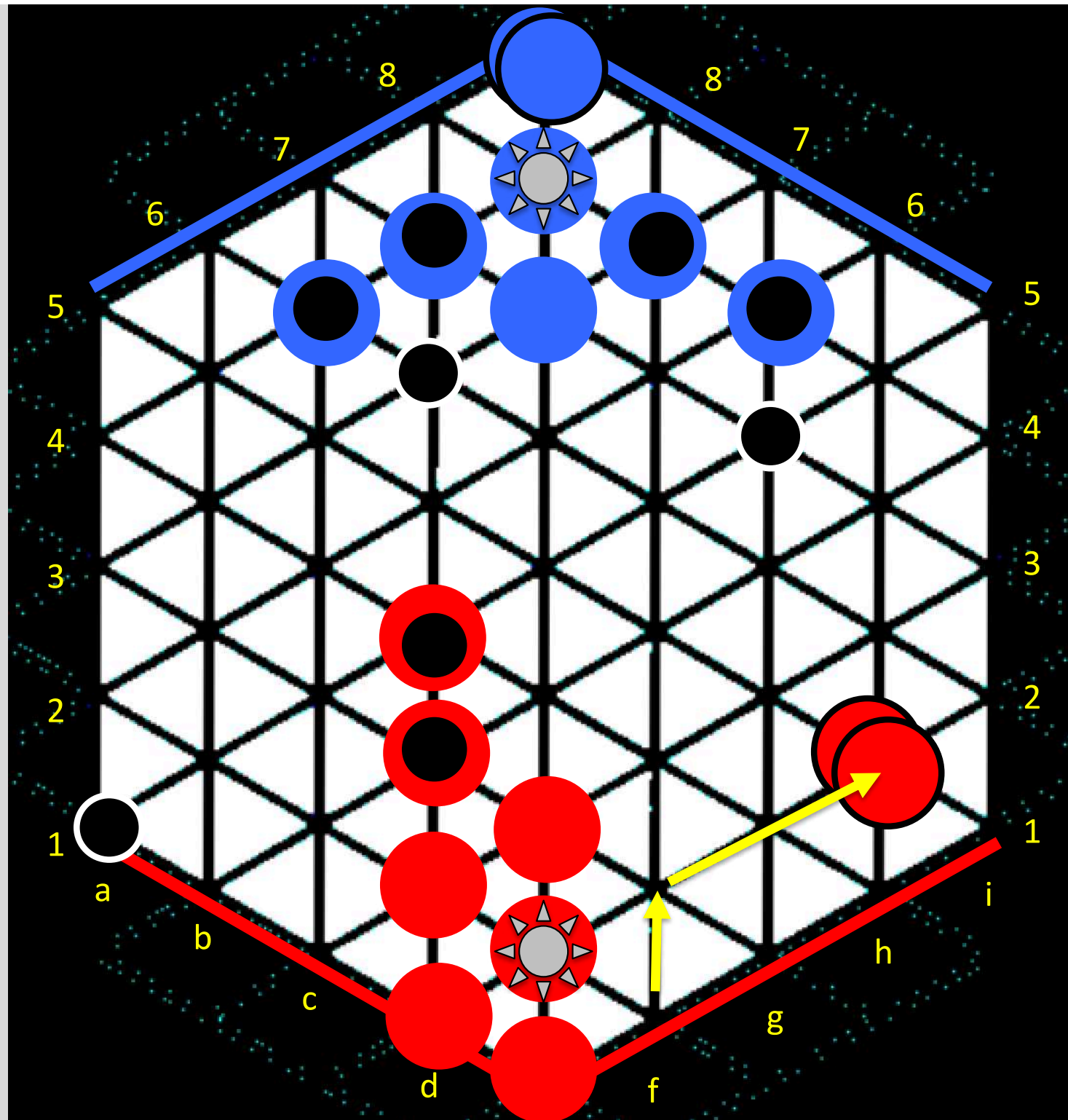
# Merge, Move

Red:  $f1+f2$ ,  $f2h2$

Merging and  
splitting creates  
new men.

In general  
managing stacks  
allows the same  
piece to be moved  
twice in a turn.

However, you can't  
use the action  
"Move" on the  
same man in one  
turn.



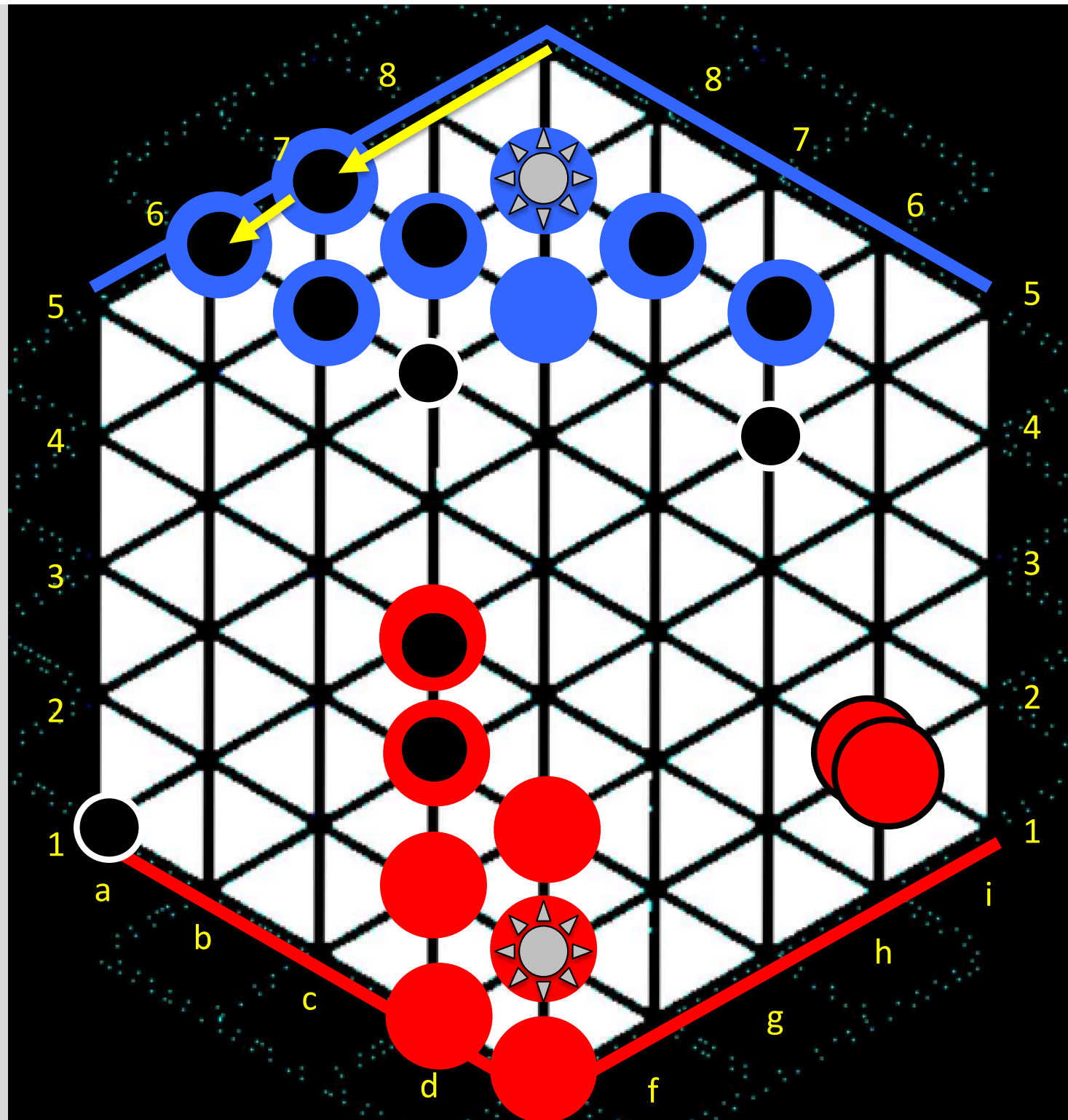
# Move, Split

Blue: e9c7, c7-1-b6

Merging and  
splitting creates  
new men.

In general  
managing stacks  
allows the same  
piece to be moved  
twice in a turn.

However, you can't  
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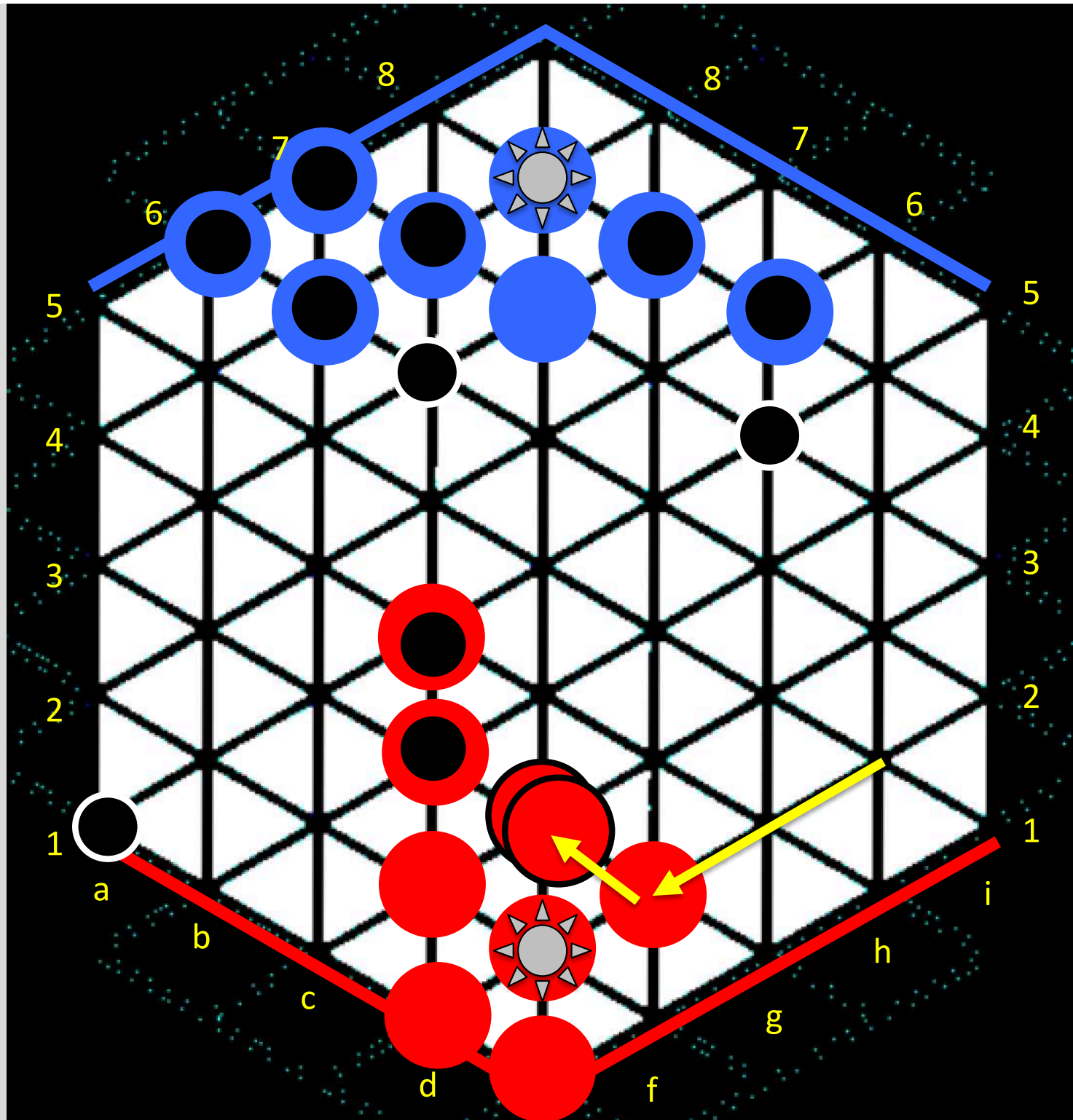
# Move, Merge

Red:  $h_2f_2, f_2+1+e_3$

Merging and  
splitting creates  
new men.

In general  
managing stacks  
allows the same  
piece to be moved  
twice in a turn.

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use the action  
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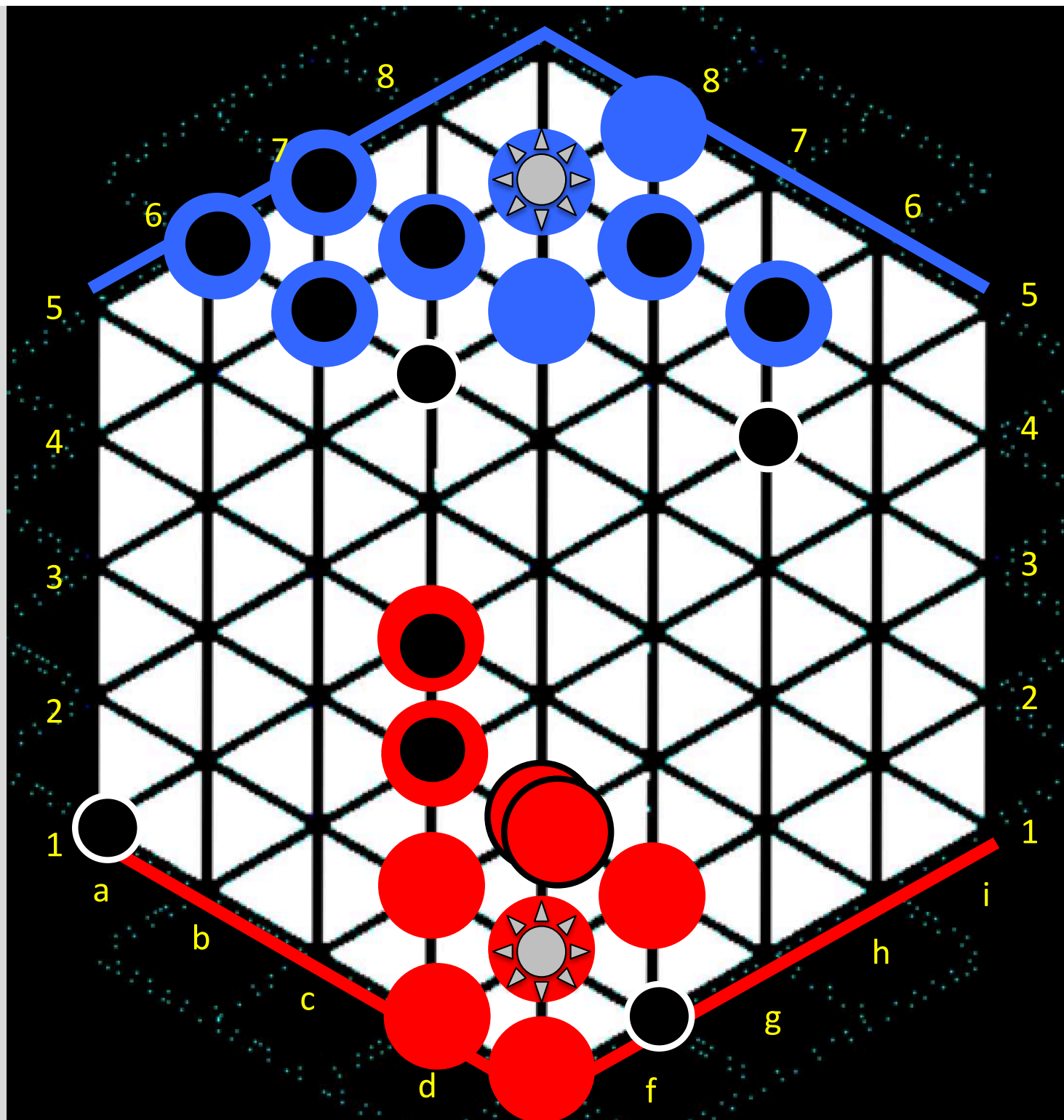


# Drop, Block

Blue:  
@f8, B@f1

It is perfectly  
legal to blockade  
points in any  
zone

(but not the  
starting point).

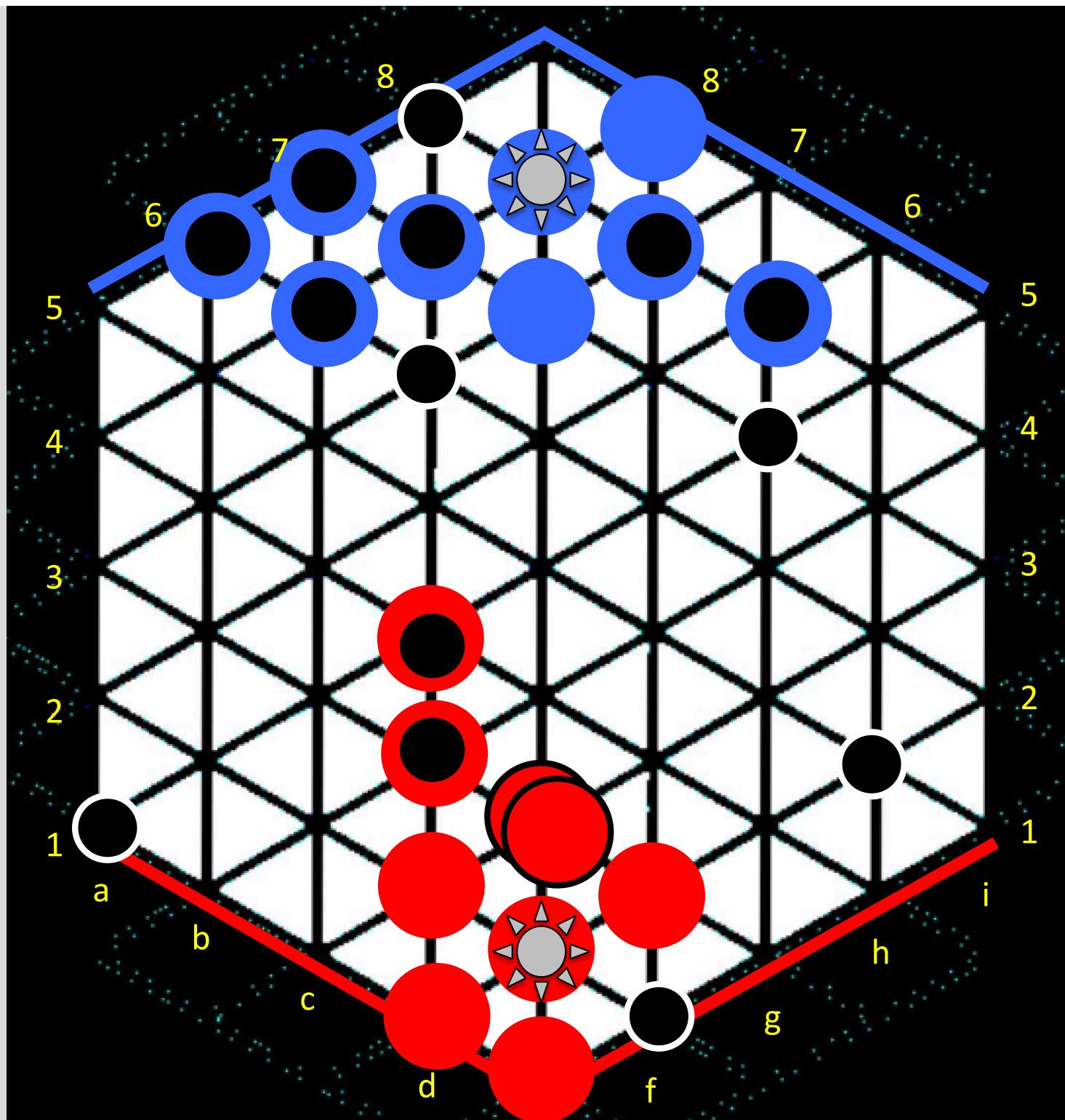


# Block, Block

Red:  
B@d8, B@h2

It is perfectly legal  
to blockade points  
in any zone

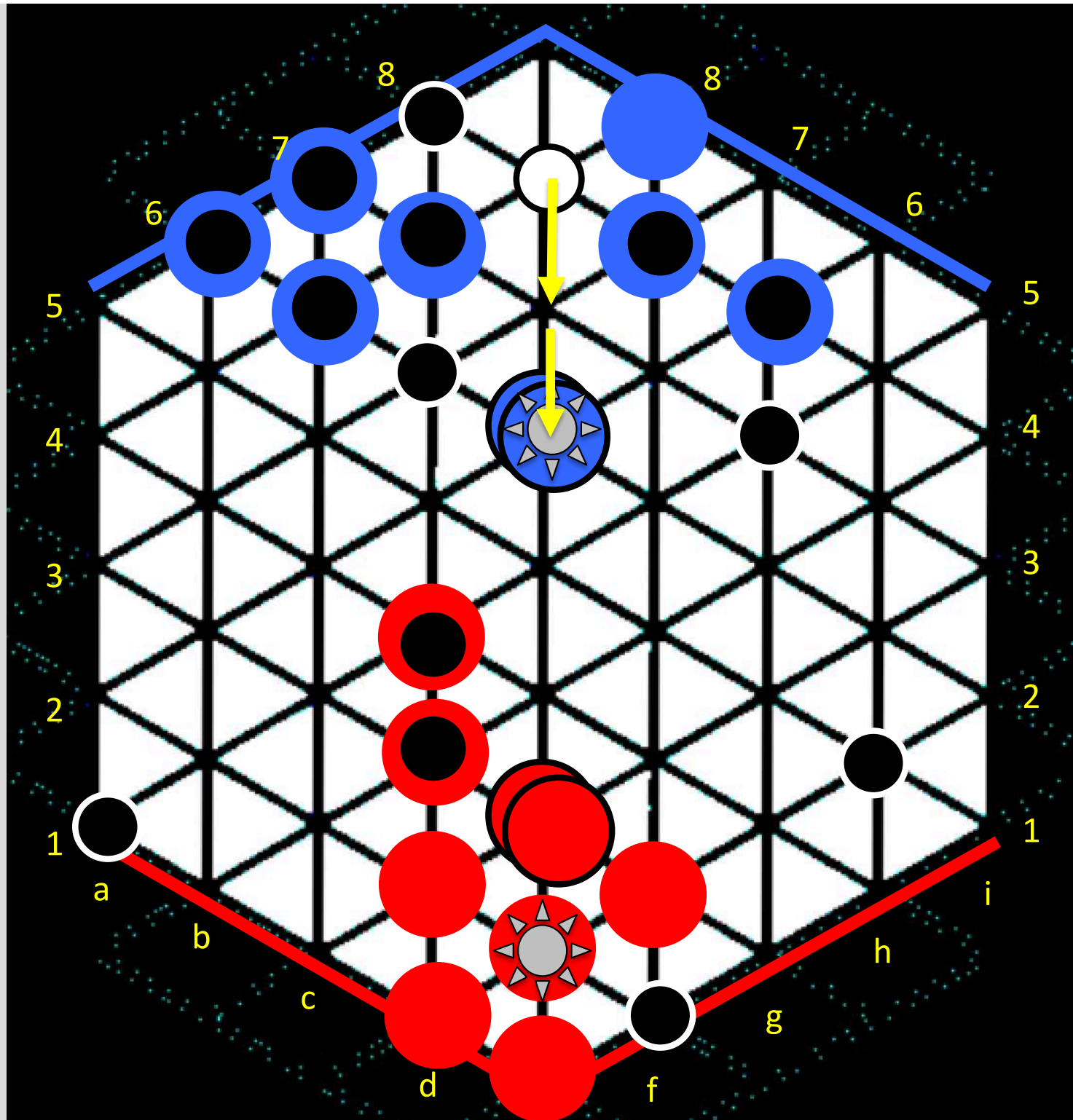
(but not the  
starting point).



# Merge, Move

Blue:  
Ke8+e7, Ke7e6  
OR  
e7+Ke8, Ke8e6

If the king  
moves, mark the  
starting point  
with a white  
stone.

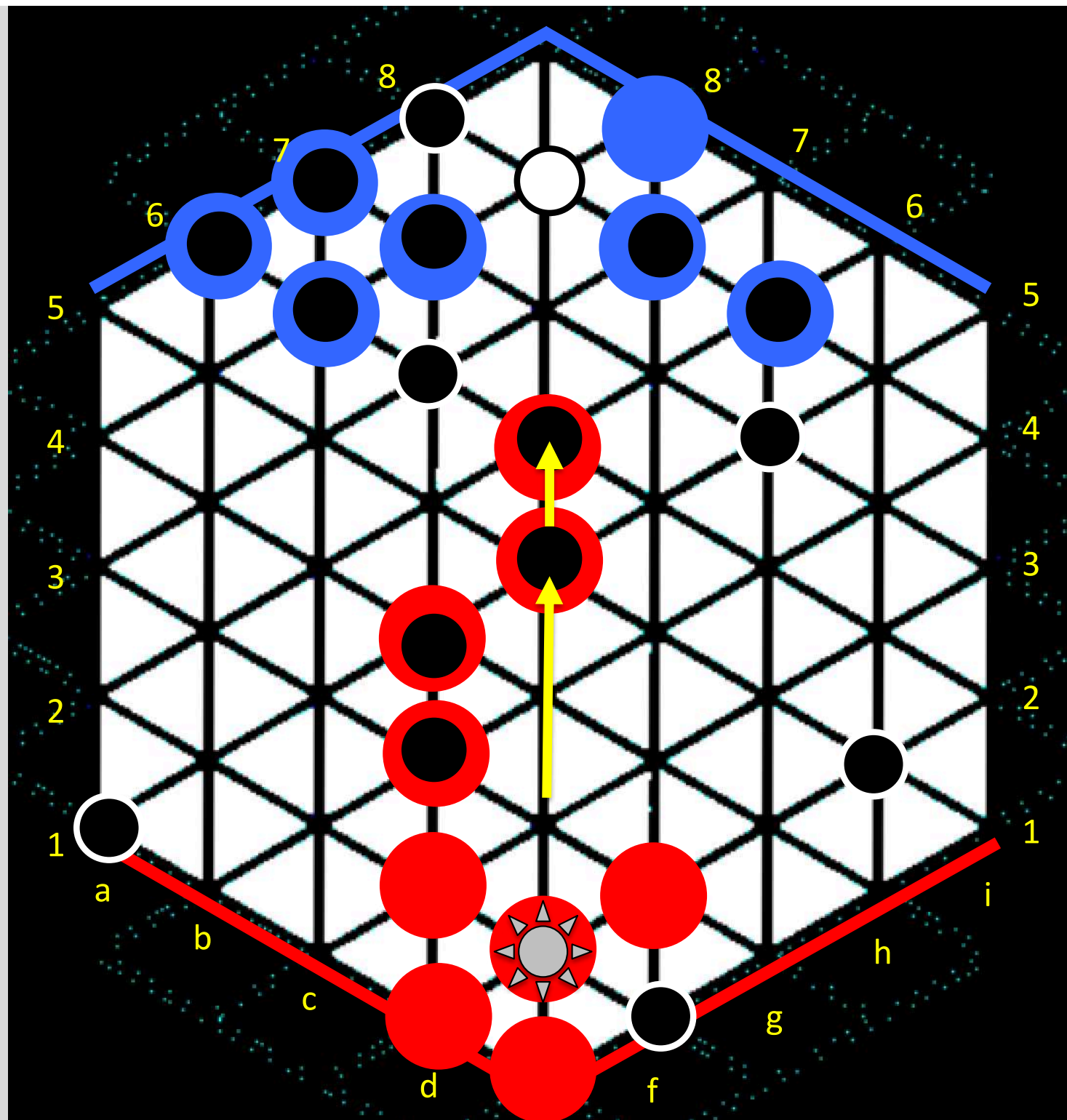




# Move, Split Game over

Red:  
e3e5, e5-1-e6 x

If you capture a  
king, you win the  
game!  
(if you bless your  
own king, you  
also win)



# BENEDICTION RULES VARIANT

- **King Trails Benediction:**
  - Played on a 7-hex hex instead of base 5.
  - Blessing win condition only applies at the start of a player's turn.
  - Before the game, players choose any starting point from their own second line.
  - If a king moves, they leave a new starting point in the vacated point.
  - Each player's zone includes all points adjacent to their own starting points.
  - If a cursed piece is captured, it is not recycled. Instead, that piece is removed forever from the board.
  - Players start with 24 pieces.