

# TiJa

2001, Oliver Jakopaschke, Klaus Tidow



[[Review](#) by Wieland Herold]

The game board is printed on linen, which, when folded, serves as the game's packaging and contains 18 double-sided pieces and the rule sheet. The board's layout recalls the classic Barbacan: here too, the goal is to conquer the center, though not all paths lead directly there. Tidow and Jakopaschke present an interesting blend of familiar mechanics — a bit of Checkers, a bit of Focus, and a bit of TIJA.

Each of the two players receives 9 pieces, placed in groups of three on the outer ring of the board — none of them have direct access to the center. The pieces must first be moved onto these red-marked spaces. On each turn, a player may move one of their pieces one space to the right, left, or toward the center; only on the first move is a two-space move toward the middle allowed. Towers of up to four pieces may be formed. A tower's movement range equals its height, and towers can also be broken apart. The player whose piece is on top controls the tower. To distinguish ownership, the round wooden discs are stamped "Ti" on one side and "Ja" on the other.

An additional twist comes from the jumping rule: when you jump over a piece, it is not captured but flipped over — so a “Ti” piece becomes a “Ja” piece. This also applies to towers, and players must remember who originally owned the bottom piece, since the entire tower is flipped. The final flourish is the “Revolution Rule”: if the central stack is jumped over, ownership there also reverses. The game ends when a player can no longer move any pieces, and the winner is the player with the most pieces in the center. However, for the jumping piece — even if it’s a tower — a revolution is suicidal: it is removed from the game.

The few rules lead to a complex and varied game flow. There’s no point in rushing toward the center — which could be reached in five moves per piece — because the “Revolution Rule” punishes such a strategy. The opening phase takes place mostly in the second and third outer rings, where towers are built and ownerships change through jumping. Gaining the upper hand here allows a safer approach to the center later. Toward the end, a game of TIJA can drag on a bit: although pieces must move toward the center (no backward moves allowed), sideways moves are permitted. This often leads to a delicate dance of the last pieces around revolutionary jumps or the decisive final move into the center. Expect a playing time of about an hour.