

Witch Stones

By Justin D. Jacobson (2005)

OBJECT: To be the first player to score 50 points.

GAME PIECES:

81 pieces of four different types:

- 9 marked with the symbol of power (called “crowns”),
- 12 marked with the symbol of the sun (called “suns”),
- 12 marked with the symbol of the moon (called “moons”), and
- 48 marked with the symbol of earth (called “earthstones” or simply “stones”).

A 9x9 game board. A bag, bowl, or similar container.

SET-UP:

1. Place two suns on opposing corners of the board. Place two moons on the other set of opposing corners.
2. Place all the remaining stones *except* the crowns into the container and mix them up. Twenty-eight (28) of the stones are drawn at random and placed in the unoccupied spaces in the outermost squares, starting at a pre-designated square and proceeding in a pre-designated order until they are filled up.
3. Add the crowns to the remaining stones in the container and mix them up. These pieces are then drawn at random and placed on the board, starting at a predesignated square and proceeding in order until all the pieces are drawn and the board is filled up.

GAME PLAY: The first player is selected at random. The *second* player declares whether he will play the suns or the moons. Each turn, a player may make one of three moves:

1. Remove one of his own pieces from the board. I.e., the sun player may remove a sun, and the moon player may remove a moon. -OR-
2. Remove an earthstone from the board. -OR-
3. Remove all pieces from the board that lie in a single, unbroken row or column between two empty board spaces. A diagonal line of pieces between two empty spaces may NOT be removed. (Crowns and an opposing player’s pieces may only be removed in this way.)

SCORING: A player scores:

- 5 points for each crown he removes from the board,
- 2 points for each piece of an opposing player he removes from the board, and
- 1 point for each earthstone he removes from the board.

ENDING THE GAME:

The game ends when a player has removed **50 or more** points worth of pieces from the board. That player is the winner!