

Pinch

Pinch is played on the intersections of a square grid (9x9, 11x11 or 13x13 are the recommended sizes). One player plays with black stones, the other with white stones. The borders of two opposing sides of the board are colored black; the remaining two sides have white-colored borders. (If a Go board is used, mark the ownership of sides as follows: place a black stone near one side of the board and then place another black stone near the opposite side; do the same with white stones and the remaining sides.)

A player's goal is to connect his/her two same-colored board sides with a group of orthogonally-connected stones of his/her color. On each turn, a player must place a single own-stone on any empty point. If as a direct result of the placement, a player has two own-stones that are orthogonally adjacent to an enemy stone at a right angle, then that enemy stone is converted to an own-stone. If the newly converted stone creates conditions for a similar capture, then that capture takes place immediately, and so on in a chain reaction. A capturing pair (i.e. the two own-stones that bring about a capture of an enemy stone) must contain at least one newly placed or newly converted stone, otherwise no capture takes place.

For examples of captures, see the Rules Forum posting titled "How Pinch captures work."

In order to offset the first player's advantage, the PIE RULE applies. (After the first stone is placed on the board, the other player decides which color of stones he/she wants to play.)

How Pinch capture works

Basic Capture

Here is an example of a Pinch capture. Below is a set of four intersections on the board. An X stone and an O stone are already on two of the intersections. It is Player X's turn to place. Player X can play such that the O stone has two orthogonal enemy neighbors at a right angle. This captures the O stone and converts it to an X stone.

x__o		x__o		x__x	A "pinch
	-->		-->		"capture"
._.		._x		._x	takes place

Chain Captures

Note that "chain captures" are possible, as in the following example. It is Player X's turn. The sequence below shows the automatic effects of Player X placing at the intersection marked "\," below:

```

. _ x _ o _ . _ .
| | | | |
. _ . _ o _ x _ .
| | | | |
. _ x _ o _ . _ .
| | | | |
. _ . _ , _ . _ .

```

```

|
|
\|/
V

```

```

. _ x _ o _ . _ .
| | | | |
. _ . _ o _ x _ .
| | | | |
. _ x _ o _ . _ .
| | | | |
. _ . _ x _ . _ .

```

```

|
|
\|/
V

```

```

. _ x _ o _ . _ .
| | | | |
. _ . _ o _ x _ .
| | | | |
. _ x _ x _ . _ .
| | | | |
. _ . _ x _ . _ .

```

```

|
|
\|/
V

```

```

. _ x _ o _ . _ .
| | | | |
. _ . _ x _ x _ .
| | | | |
. _ x _ x _ . _ .
| | | | |
. _ . _ x _ . _ .

```

```

      |
      |
    \ | /
      V

  . _ x _ x _ . _ .
  | | | | |
  . _ . _ x _ x _ .
  | | | | |
  . _ x _ x _ . _ .
  | | | | |
  . _ . _ x _ . _ .

```

All O stones are captured!

"Playing into the pinch"

Note that "playing into a pinch" doesn't result in self-capture:

```

o _ .      o _ x      The x stone
| |  -->  | |      is NOT
. _ o      . _ o      captured

```

The reason for this is that according to the rules of Pinch, at least one stone of a "capturing pair" of right-angle stones must have been newly placed or newly converted that turn. In the example above, the O stones were placed in previous turns, and so cannot bring about a capture of the X stone.

This in turn means that double captures are possible, e.g. if an opponent plays poorly:

```

o _ .      o _ x      Player O      o _ x      x _ x
| |  -->  | |  -->  plays  -->  | |  -->  | |
. _ o      . _ o      elsewhere  x _ o      x _ x

```

[BGG description, Craig Duncan, 2019]