

SWAPTIMUM

by Mark Steere

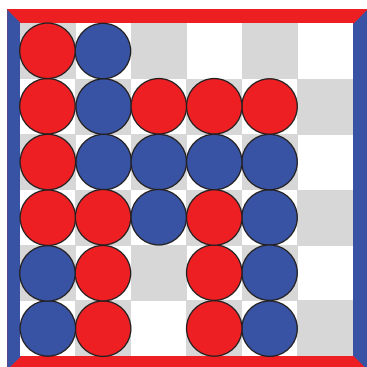


Figure 1

INTRODUCTION Swaptimum is a two-player game played on a square board of any size, initially empty. The two players, Red and Blue, take turns placing their own checkers onto unoccupied squares, one checker per turn, starting with Red. Passing is not allowed, but if you don't have an available placement, your turn is skipped. Mark Steere designed Swaptimum in August 2023.

OBJECT Red must form a path of red checkers (interconnected via horizontal or vertical adjacencies, or both) connecting the two red sides of the board. Blue must form a path of blue checkers connecting the two blue sides of the board. In **Figure 1**, Red has won. It's possible that a player may win on the other player's turn.

CROSSCUT A crosscut is comprised of four adjacent checkers arranged in a square as shown in **Figure 2**. Two of the checkers are red and two are blue. Like-colored checkers are diagonally opposed in the square.

PLAY You can place a checker on any unoccupied square not ruled out by the placement restriction (see **PLACEMENT RESTRICTION**). If your placement forms a crosscut, then make a swap:

- between any two checkers in the crosscut, OR
- between any checker in the crosscut and any other checker not in the crosscut which is horizontally, vertically, or diagonally adjacent to said checker, which kills the crosscut and doesn't form a new crosscut, concluding your turn.

In **Figure 3a**, Red has placed the checker marked with a yellow dot, forming a crosscut. In **Figure 3b**, Red has swapped a blue crosscut checker with a red checker diagonally adjacent to it, killing the crosscut without forming a new crosscut.

PLACEMENT RESTRICTION If your placement would form a crosscut, and if every possible crosscut killing swap would form a new crosscut, then said placement is illegal for you.

In **Figure 4a**, if Blue were to place on the ?, forming a crosscut (yellow dots in **Figure 4b**), there wouldn't be any available swaps that would kill the crosscut without forming a new crosscut. Therefore, ? is **not** a legal placement for Blue. Since Blue doesn't have any legal placements, her turn is skipped, and Red can place on the ?, forming the crosscut shown in **Figure 4c**. Red makes the swap shown in **Figure 4d**, killing the crosscut, not forming a new crosscut, and winning the game.

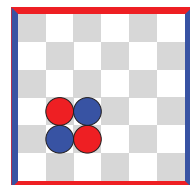


Figure 2

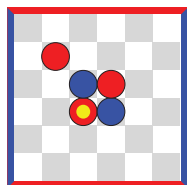


Figure 3a

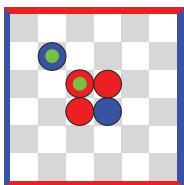


Figure 3b

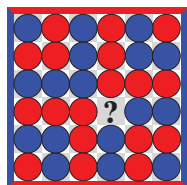


Figure 4a

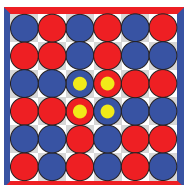


Figure 4b

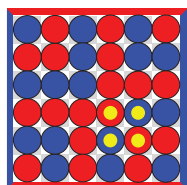


Figure 4c

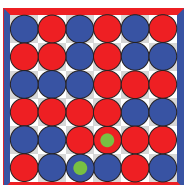


Figure 4d

DESIGN NOTES Swaptimum was inspired by Reneo (2023) by Luis Bolaños Mures. Luis is a world class abstract game designer and the leading authority on OOSCGs (orthogonal only square connection games. That is, only horizontal and vertical, but not diagonal, adjacencies count as connections.)

Swaptimum is my most recent in a series of OOSCGs after a continuous, obsessive, months long design odyssey. Of my last 18 attempted OOSCGs, only five (Halfcut, Clump, Crisscross, Flipstop, and Swaptimum) survived Luis's scrutiny. Most either didn't work or were very similar to what had already been done, many by Luis himself.

AUTHOR'S NOTE Feel free to publish this rule sheet and to program the game of Swaptimum. No licensing fee or royalties are expected. However, please don't change the name or the rules, and please attribute the game to me, Mark Steere. My other games can be found at marksteeregames.com.

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