[Nick Bentley, ref] Someone posted this game into the BGG database, but I'm not done designing it! I therefore feel it imperative to post the most recent version of the game here. *Reposted from my blog*.

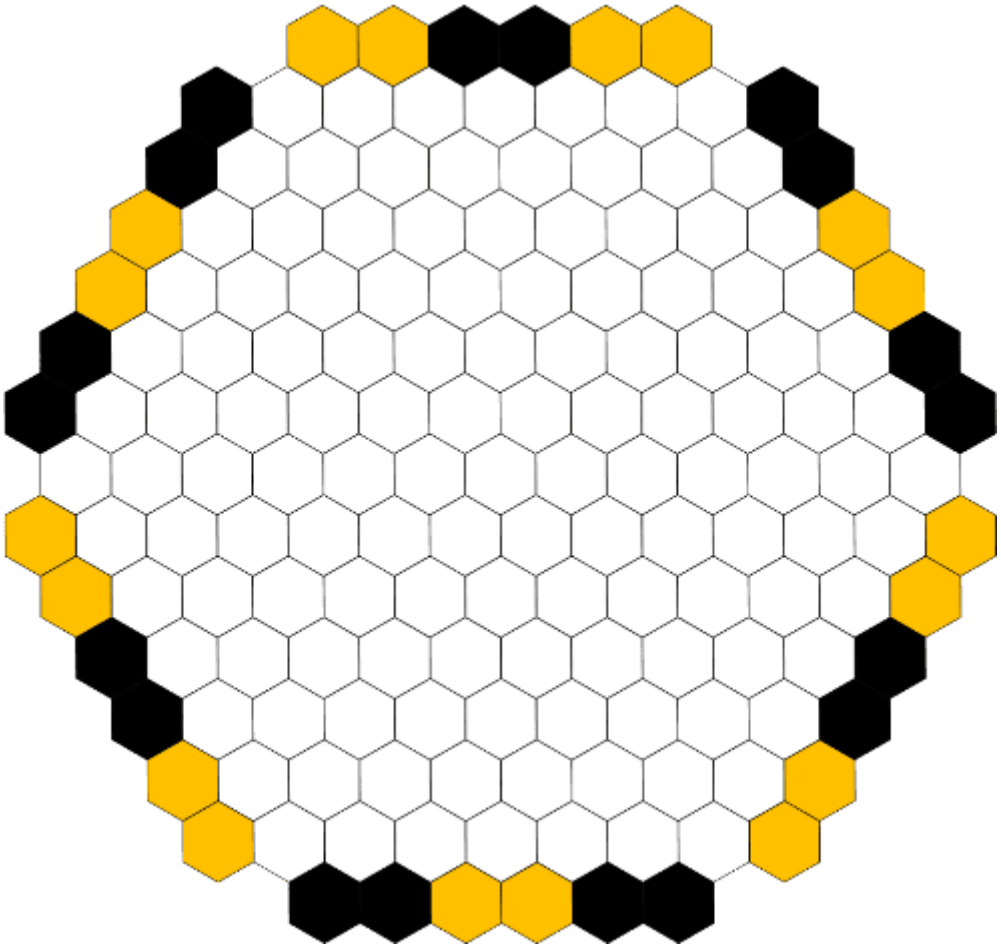
This isn't necessarily the last version of Glorieta (but it could be). I've made great progress on the game, using (for a second time) a mechanism I've not seen elsewhere, so I'm reporting on it. But the more I design games, the more I'm convinced they're never actually done. Every ruleset is just a launchpad for another, better ruleset, always in pursuit of a platonic ideal.

Glorieta represents one attempt to design a game on a hex board where the goal is simply to form a connected loop of stones. I'm convinced that the goal has great potential, and it sounds simple enough, but realizing it has proven incredibly tricky, especially because I want it to satisfy a bunch of other constraints as well (example: draws should be impossible, and the game should be highly balanced, along with other constraints I won't bother to record here).

I've been working on this project on and off for five years, and I have designed many, many (unpublished) games in an attempt to achieve it. Once in a while, I

post an example: see here for the preceding version of Glorieta, see here for the one before that, and see here for a completely different attempt to solve the problem. Or don't bother, because at the moment I like this new one more.

Equipment: Glorieta is played on a hexhex7 board with black and yellow stones that are pink on their undersides. The board is also surrounded with a ring of black and yellow spaces, as this picture of an empty board illustrates:



Definition - *Loop*: a connected group of like-colored stones, and (optionally) pink-side-up stones, which completely surrounds one or more spaces, regardless of what's in those spaces. The picture below shows a board that contains two yellow loops and two black loops. Note that loops can also include like-colored spaces that surround the edge of the board (as illustrated by the small yellow loop on the right). The smallest possible loop is six stones/colored spaces surrounding a single space.

Rules

1. The board begins empty. One player owns the yellow stones and the other owns the black. To start, Yellow places a stone on any empty, uncolored space.

2. Then each player takes six of her stones and holds them in her hand.

3. From then on, starting with Black, the players take turns. On your turn, you must either take 1 or 2 stones from your hand and place them on any empty uncolored spaces on the board, or you must flip any one of your stones on the board so that it's pink side up. If you run out of stones in your hand, your turn is over. If the board fills completely, you must keep playing by flipping a stone on each turn.

4. You must choose to flip a stone at least once for each handful of stones. You can do so after you've used all the stones from your hand, but before you pick up your next hand of stones, or on any earlier turn. After you've used up all the stones in your hand, and flipped at least one of your own stones, pick up another hand of six stones and continue.

5. The game ends when a loop is formed and the player who owns that loop wins.

Notes

-The game will always end with a loop and there will never be a draw.

-If I've designed the game right, the board will rarely fill completely before a loop forms. In any case, if you'd prefer to play a shorter, more tactical game, just reduce the number of stones in each handful.

-The picture at the top of this page shows a finished game, won by black, who has a loop near the bottom of the board.

-This mechanism can be applied to any pattern-completion game (as long as empty spaces aren't part of the pattern), and it will make that pattern inevitable. I love this. Since pattern-completion games are a huge category, it's cool to know that if nothing else, this game shows how to make a much wider range of patterns possible as game goals. A lot of those goals probably won't make for good games, but maybe some will.