

## INTRODUCTION

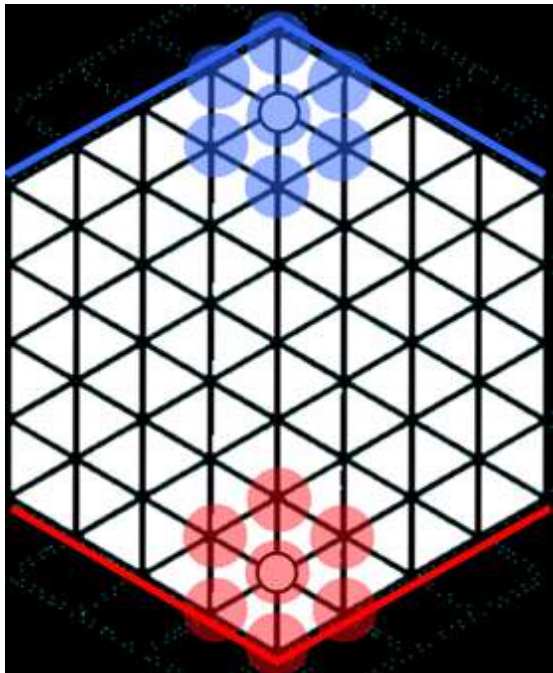
**Benediction** is a combinatorial abstract strategy game for two players. The objective of the game is to “bless” one friendly king, or to capture one opponent king. If a player does this, they win.

## EQUIPMENT

Tri-gridded hexagonal board

Discs: 12 blue and 12 red

Stones: 30 black and 10 white



*The Benediction board and its relevant areas.*

## DEFINITIONS

**Zone:** Each player owns a starting point in opposite corners of the board (two circled points at top and bottom of the diagram). The starting points and all adjacent points make up the zone (shaded areas in diagram), where players can drop men. Mark empty starting points with a white stone.

**Walls:** Each player owns a wall (colored lines in diagram), which can bless enemy men. Points on enemy walls are adjacent to opposite ends of their respective gridlines (like a portal). Movement through enemy walls, via forward and forward-diagonal movement, results in teleportation of pieces across the board and a blessing. Side walls cannot be used to access enemy walls.



**Man:** Stack of checkers (men start with a stack size of 1 and are limited to stack size of 2, unless merging with a blessed man). Men move any direction in a straight line, distance up to size of the moving stack. Men can jump occupied points, but cannot move onto or jump over blocks. Captures happen by replacement, without regard to stack size.



**King:** Stack with all checkers flipped over. Men landing on any starting point first lose all blessing/curses and then become kings. Men that merge with kings become kings. Kings cannot merge with kings. Kings cannot get cursed.

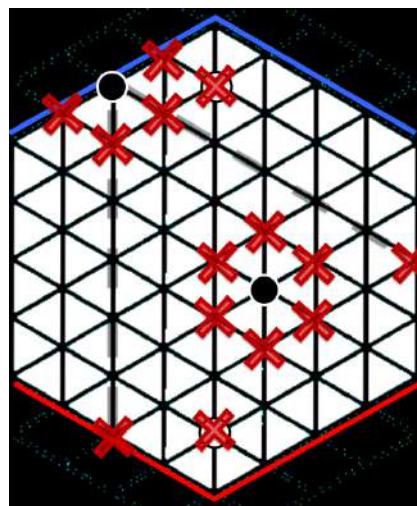


**Blessed men:** Men with a white stone. Blessed men can merge with any friendly man (stack size unlimited). If a man moves past enemy walls, he is blessed. If you connect your wall to the enemy wall with a chain of friendly men, they all become blessed, unless already cursed.



**Cursed men:** Men with a black stone. Men are cursed when stacks split. Cursed men cannot be blessed and can only merge with blessed men.

**Blocks:** Black stones on the board. Men can't jump over or move onto blocks. Blocks can never be adjacent, or on opposite ends of the same grid line (example below to see red X's denoting illegal blockade placements).



## HOW TO PLAY

Players begin by filling their zone with men and must alternate turns of two actions per turn (except on the first player's first turn where only one action is played). Passing is not allowed.

Actions: **Move, Drop, Block, Merge, Split.**

**1. Move:** Move man to an empty point (or capture). If he moves past enemy walls, bless him. A man that was already Moved or Dropped this turn cannot be Moved (but he is allowed to Merge or Split).

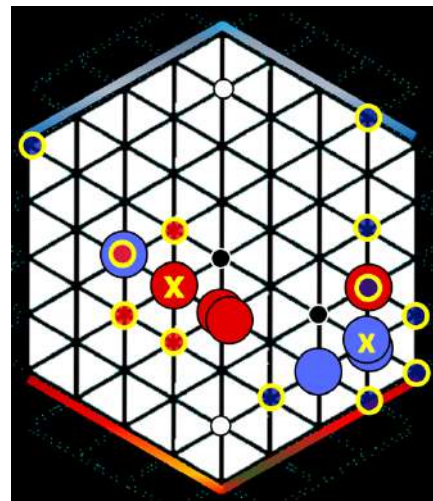
**2. Merge:** Move man or sub-stack onto a reachable friendly man. If a man is moving through enemy walls in the process of merging, bless him. Before completing the merge, remove their blessings/curses.

**3. Split:** Move sub-stack to empty point (or capture). Curse both resulting stacks. If the sub-stack moves past enemy walls, bless that sub-stack instead.

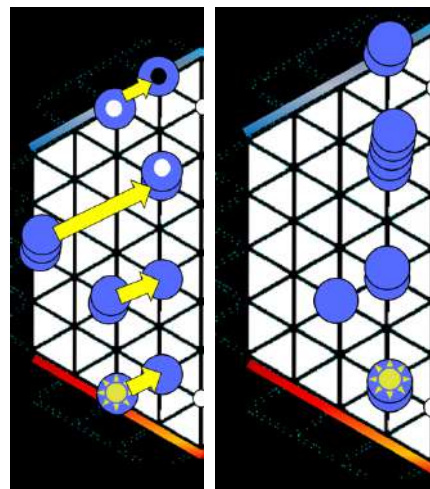
**4. Drop:** Drop a new man on an empty point in your zone. If all of your pieces are on the board, this action is not possible. He cannot Move this turn, but he can Merge.

**5. Block:** Put black stone on an empty point. Blocks cannot be placed on adjacent points. Blocks cannot be placed on opposite ends of the same gridlines. Blocks cannot be placed on a starting point.

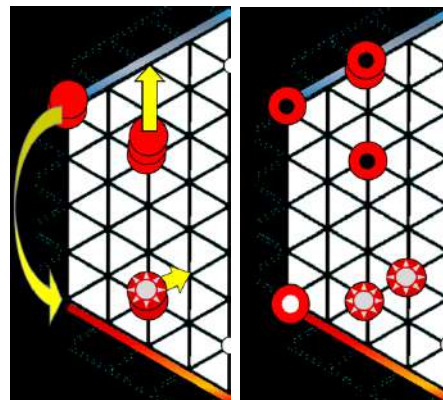
**KING'S TRAIL RULES VARIANT:** King's Trail is the same game as Benediction with the following modifications: Play on a 7-hex instead of a 5-hex board and with 24 instead of 12 men. Choose an initial starting point along your second line. Cursed men will be removed from the game instead of recycled. When a king vacates a point in any way, he leaves a starting point behind. A player's zone includes all adjacent points to all their starting points. The win condition for owning a blessed king only triggers at the start of your turn.



*Examples of movement and capture: shaded yellow circles show all legal moves for red and blue men marked "X". Some of blue's moves cross enemy walls.*



*Examples of legal merges.*



*Examples of legal splits.*