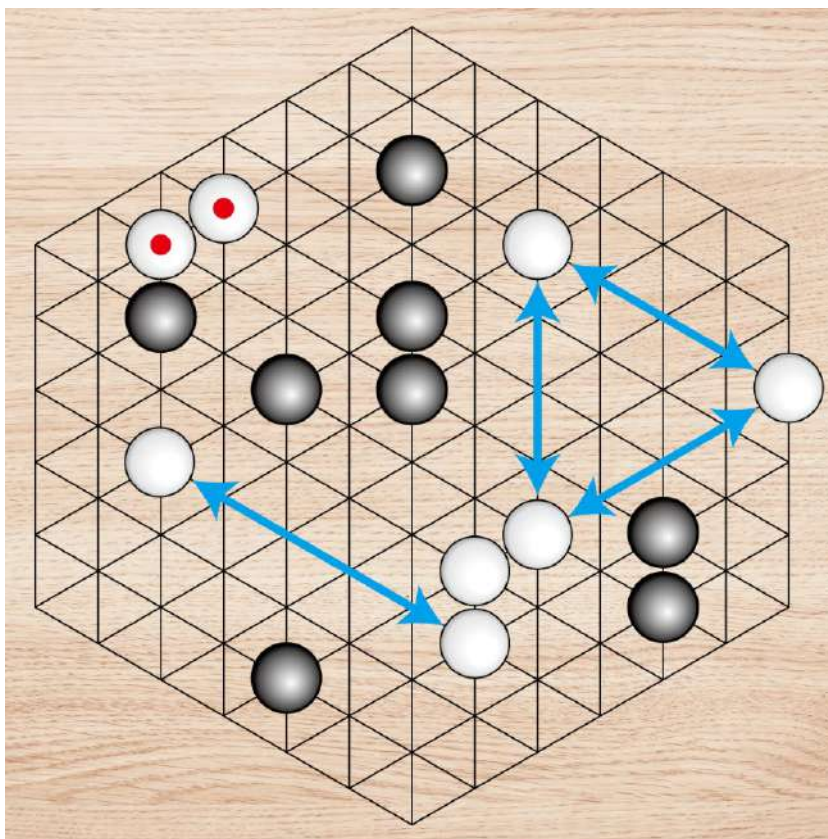


DEFINITIONS

Group: like-colored stones adjacent to each other. Singletons are considered groups of size 1.

Path: an empty point, or an uninterrupted straight line of empty points that have a pair of like-colored stones on both ends, which are not part of the same group. Such a pair is said to have a path.

Dead group: a group in which all stones belonging to it have no path. If any stone belonging to a group has a path, the group is said to have a path.



(Fig.1) Arrows indicate paths between four Light groups. Red dots indicate a dead group. All Dark groups have at least one path.

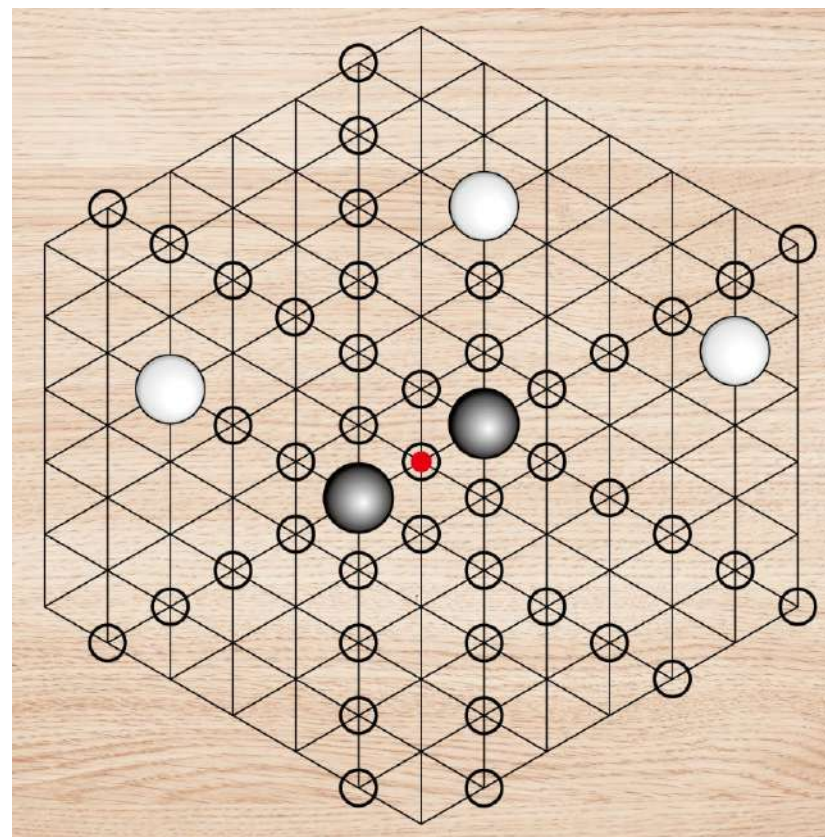
GAMEPLAY

Decide which player plays as which color (Light or Dark).

Light goes first, then alternate turns. On each player's first turn, players place a stone of their own color on any empty point. On each player's second turn, players place another stone of their color so that their own two stones have a path.

Then players take actions below on each turn, in this order. Passing is not allowed unless there is no legal move.

1. Remove all opponent's dead groups.
2. Place a stone of their own color on an empty point that is on at least one same straight line with an existing friendly stone, and no opponent's stone in between.

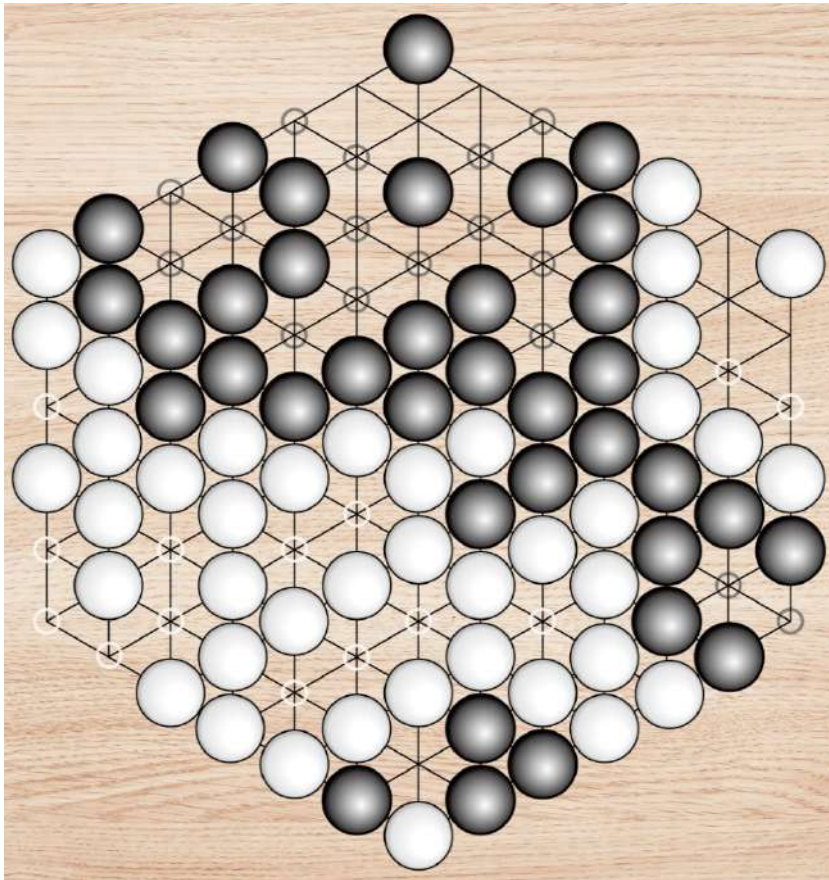


(Fig.2) Rings indicate on where can be placed Dark stone. However, Dark will lose having no path if it is placed on the red dot.

GAME END

After the second turn, the player with no stones of their color on the board at the beginning of their turn loses.

As a secondary way to end the game, when players have established areas where the enemy cannot place stones on each other, the winner can be determined by counting the number of intersections where each player can place their stones without losing their group.



(Fig. 3) In the diagram above, Dark has room to safely place 16 and Light 14 stones. If the game proceeds normally, Light will lose all their stones, so Dark can be judged to be winning at this point.

PIE RULE (OPTIONAL)

Pie rules can be used to mitigate the first player's advantage. At the beginning of the game, one player places one stone of each color and the other player decides which color to play. Light always plays first.

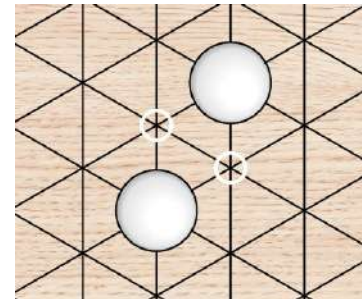
IN CASE OF OVERLOOKED DEAD GROUPS

As the game progresses and each side's paths become intermingled, you may miss an opponent's dead group that should be captured on your turn. In practice or casual games, it is recommended that both sides check each other, but in more serious games, it is recommended that your dead group that was overlooked be treated as a live group until the beginning of the next opponent's turn.

TIPS FOR STRATEGIES

Be careful that your stones are not divided into smaller groups by opponents' groups. For this purpose, it is important to make sure that your groups can be merged into larger groups when the time comes.

The arrangement shown in the diagram to the right is an excellent arrangement because if an opponent's stone is placed on either of the marked intersections, you can still merge your stones into a group by placing your own stone on another intersection. One of the interesting points of Meridian is that each of the two stones requires a path from a different intersection to achieve such an arrangement.



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