nestorgames

Akron

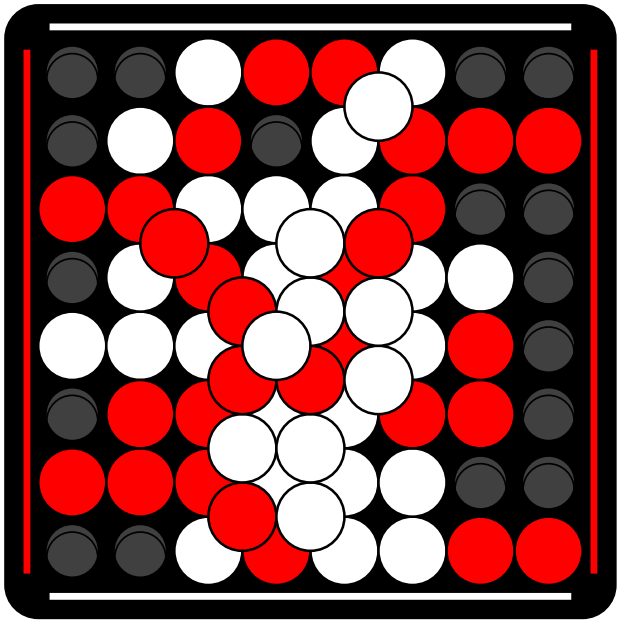
A ball stacking connection game for two players, by **Cameron Browne**.

MATERIAL

- A game board (8x8 grid of holes with coloured sides)
- 32 white balls
- 32 red balls

OBJECTIVE

The aim is to connect the board sides of your colour with a visibly connected chain of touching pieces of your colour.



White wins by connecting the white board sides.

The winning connection must exist *at the start of the winning player's turn*.

Note that there is also an underlying chain of red pieces connecting the red sides in the example, but that the white chain passes over it to cut it: *overpasses cut underpasses*.

PLAY

The board starts empty.

White plays first.

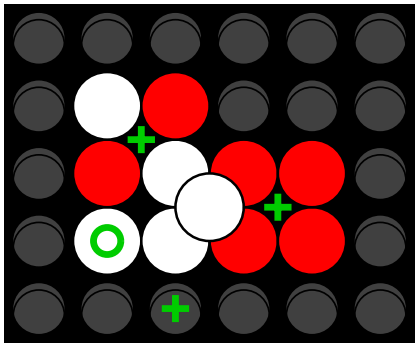
MOVES

Players take turns either:

1. Adding a ball of their colour to any empty board hole; or

2. Moving a ball of their colour to any *playable point* connected by a visibly touching chain of same-coloured balls.

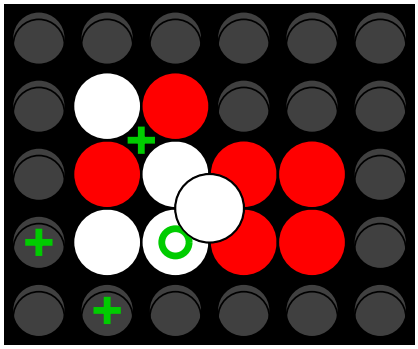
A *playable point* can be either a board hole or a 2x2 platform formed by balls of any colour.



Legal moves for white ball **O**.

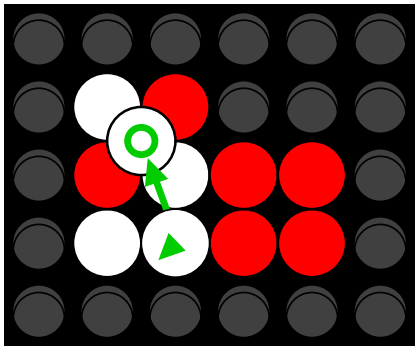
DROPS

A ball can be moved even if another ball rests upon it. For example, if the following ball **O**…



Legal moves for ball **O**.

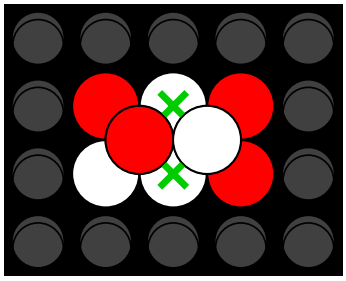
…makes the move shown below, then the ball it supported will drop down to take its place, due to gravity. Clunk!



The supported ball drops down when **O** is moved.

PINNED BALLS

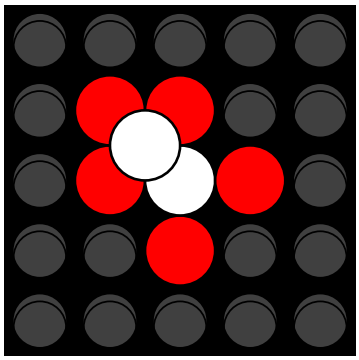
Balls can not be moved while two or more balls rest directly upon them.



The balls marked **X** can not be moved.

DROP RULES

Balls can not move onto any ball which just dropped as part of that move. In other words, balls can not simply swap positions with a ball resting upon them.

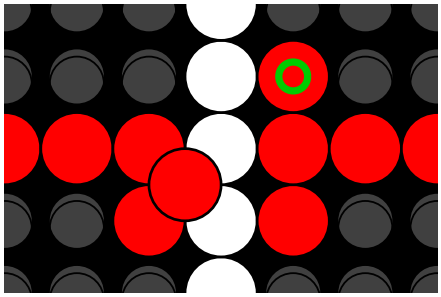


These white balls have no moves.

In general, balls that drop do not count as part of the connection for that move. Balls being moved must be connected to their destination regardless of any dropping balls.

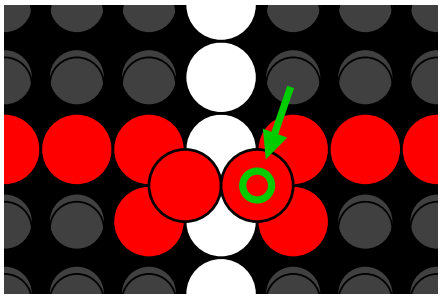
OVERPASSES CUT UNDERPASSES

The following position shows a white connection:



A white connection.

Red can cut this connection by building over it:

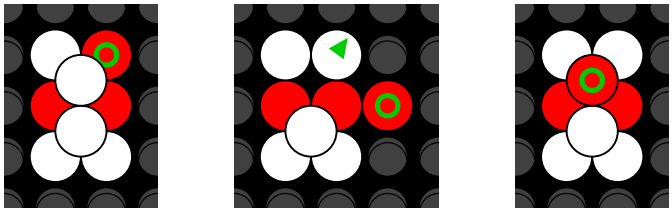


Red cuts the connection with an overpass.

Now the white balls are cut into two groups and the red balls are connected.

MULTI-STEP CUTS

The following example demonstrates a sequence of moves by Red that cuts the white group.

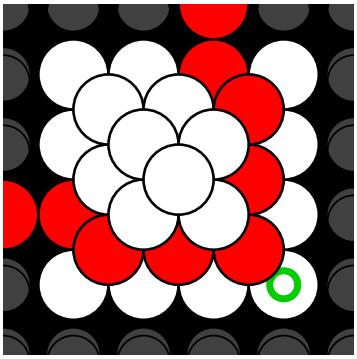


Cutting sequence by red ball **O.**

The red ball **O** eventually comes to rest on the white ball that it caused to drop, but it took two moves to do so.

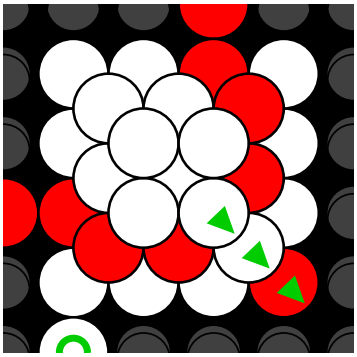
TACTICAL DROPS

Drops themselves can be used to cut enemy connections. Consider the following position.



A red connection.

If White moves ball **O**, then multiple balls drop down to cut the red connection.



Dropping balls break the red connection.

The moral here is: *don't trust enemy foundations!*