MAMMALATH

A strategy game for 2 players by
Grant Fikes

INTRODUCTION

Mammalath is an animal-themed board game inspired by the idea of having a winning condition and a losing condition that's a subset of the winning condition, as seen in *Yavalath* (by Cameron Browne's Ludi) and *Manalath* (by Dieter Stein and Néstor Romeral Andrés). The goal is to capture three squares in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row which don't contain animals. However, if you make three in a row and at least one animal is in those cells, you lose! (Think of the members of an animal activist group getting angry at you for capturing the animals.) To win, you must strategically free the animals while going for three in a row.

COMPONENTS

• 36 pieces shaped like animal heads, 6 each of 6 animals (red armadillos, orange badgers, yellow cougars, green deer, blue elephants, and violet foxes)

• 18 white tokens and 18 black tokens.

SETUP

Arrange the 36 animal heads on the inner 6x6 board. Each player takes the 18 tokens of her colour.

Determine who will go first by any means except thermonuclear warfare (a coin flip is preferred).

Figure 1: One possible starting configuration.

GAMEPLAY

Players take turns doing **one of three** actions on their turn:

* **Place a token of your colour**: Place a token on a space (either one with an animal or one where the animal has been released). Tokens can't be placed on other tokens.
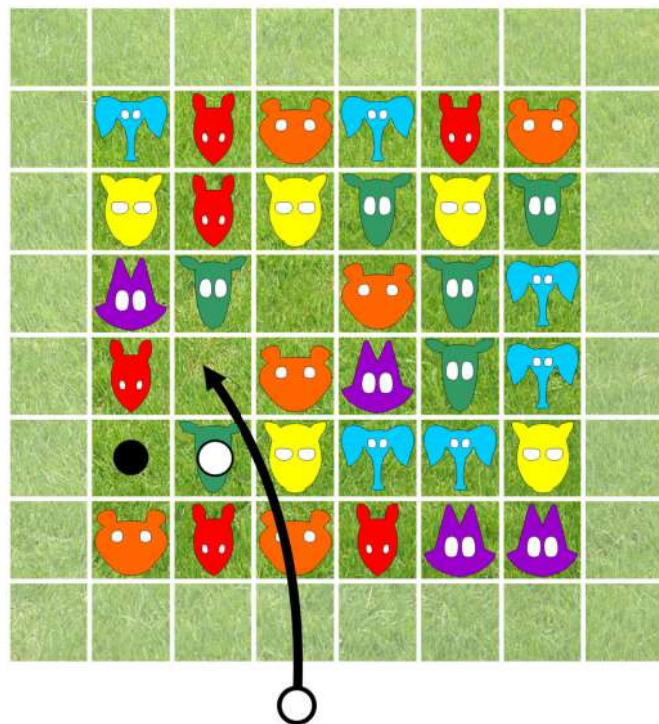

Figure 2: The white player places a token.

* **Release a type**: Release all the animals of one type (for example, all of the foxes) by removing all the heads of that type from the board. The animals thus released **can** be on spaces with or without tokens (leave the tokens there).
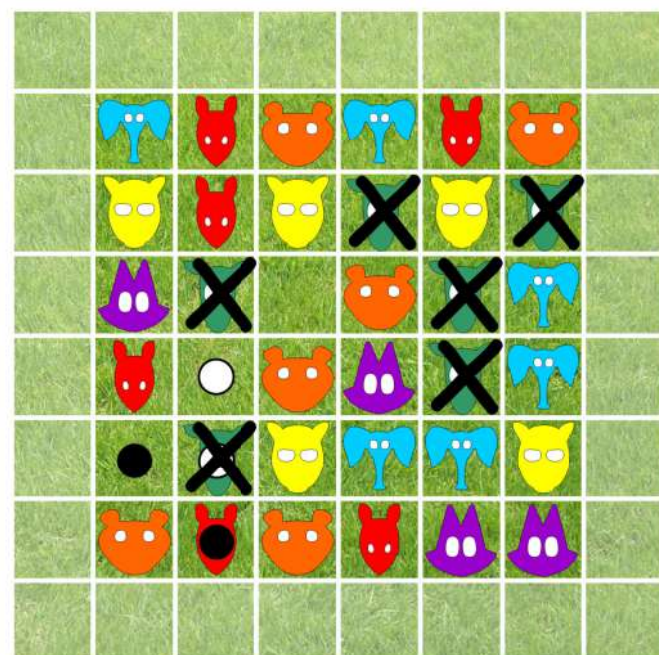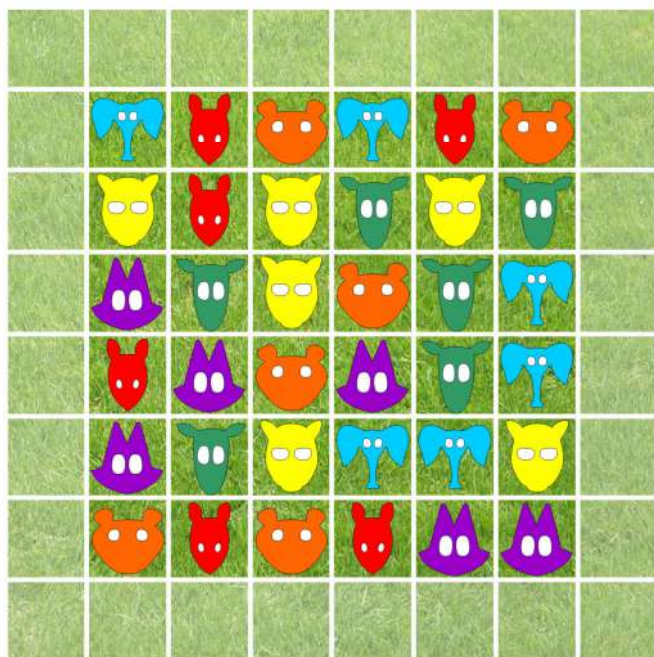

Figure 3: A player releases all the deer.

* **Release a line**: Release any **three consecutive** animals in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line. The animals thus released can be on spaces with or without tokens (leave the tokens there). Empty spaces may not be in the line of three.
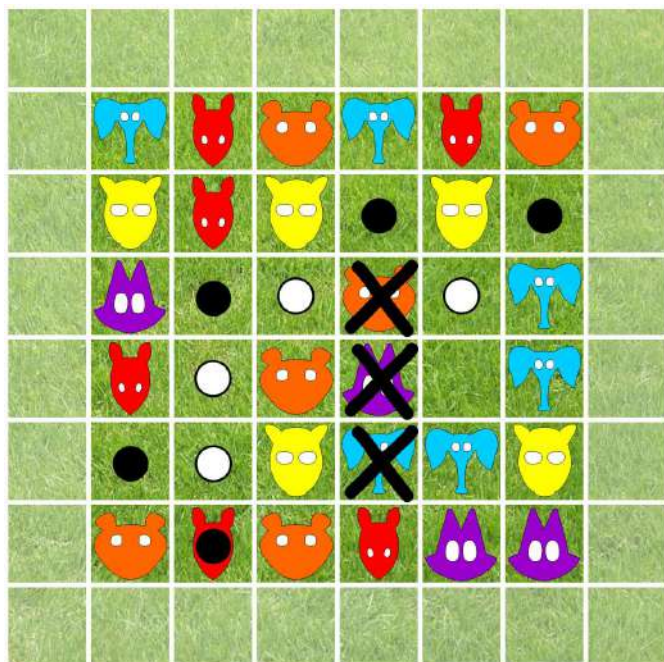

Figure 4: A player releases three consecutive animals in a vertical line.

The swap rule: On the first player's first turn, they must place a token. On the second player's first turn (only), they may replace the first token with one of their own if they think the opening move is too strong.

GAME END

The game **ends** when one of the following happens:

* A player captures three consecutive spaces in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row, at least one of which still contains an animal, and **loses**. Capturing means 'having a token of your colour on that space'.

* A player captures three consecutive spaces in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row, none of which have animals, and **wins**. (If you fulfill the winning condition and the losing condition at the same time, you still lose.)

* One player plays all of their tokens (without making a winning or a losing formation). The game ends in a **draw**.
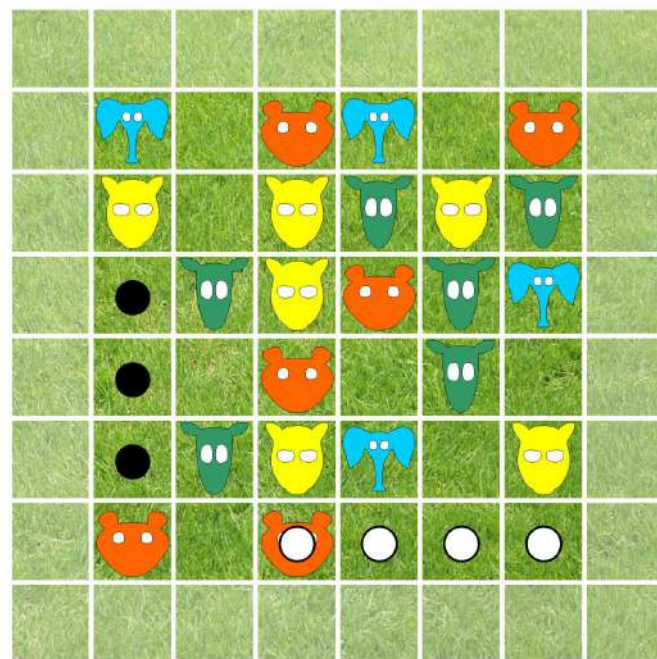

Figure 5: On the left is a winning configuration for the black player. On the right is a losing configuration for the white player (the left three spaces are a line of three with at least one animal; even though the right three spaces are a winning configuration, if you would win and lose at the same time, you just lose).

MAMMALATH PLUS (THE ADVANCED GAME)

The optional expansion Mammalath Plus adds two of each animal from the base game, plus eight each of two new animals (white giraffes and black hippopotami), for 64 animals altogether. It also includes 14 white tokens and 14 black tokens. Make these changes from the base game:

• Setup: Arrange the animals in the entire outer 8x8 board.

• Each player gets 32 tokens instead of 18.

• The winning and losing conditions are a line of four tokens rather than a line of three, or four tokens in a 2x2 square, and the draw condition is one player playing all 32 of their tokens without winning or losing.

• Release a line: Release a line of four animals, not a line of three. You may also release four animals in a 2x2 square.

Note: due to production constraints the additional animals are of the same colours as the player tokens. However, the tokens are tall enough to prevent lack of clarity. Just remember that the player's colours are not related to the colours of the additional animals.