

AlmaTafl

Designed by Paschalis Antoniou

AlmaTafl is an abstract strategy game for 2 players of at least 8 years of age, with an average playing time of 20 minutes, influenced by the Tafl family of games, where one player controls the invaders (Black) and one player controls the defenders (White and Red).

For ease of reference, White can use a red disc to distinguish the King from the rest of the pieces and he shall be referred to as the "King" throughout the remaining document.

The invading army (Black) aims to capture the King, where the defending army (White) aims to lead its King on any escape spot.

The board, as well as the setup of the game are inspired by the star-shaped fortifications and unlike other Tafl games, AlmaTafl is perhaps the only game in the Tafl family of games which features the stacking mechanism and no casualties.

Escape spots

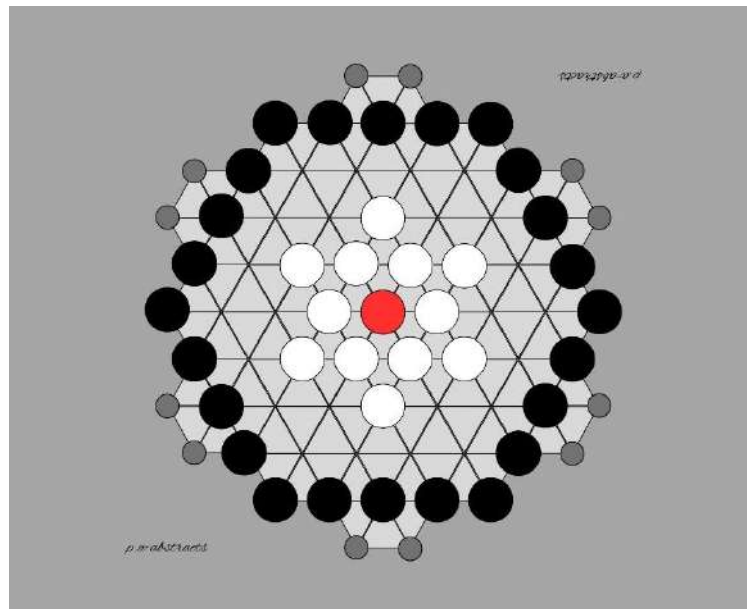
The escape spots are the dotted marks on the peripheral of the board and can be occupied only by the King.

Throne

The throne is the dotted mark at the centre of the board and can be occupied only by the King. However, the King can be stacked by an invader (Black) while being on the throne.

Setup phase

The discs are placed on the board just like in the picture provided below:



Stacks

A stack can either consist of a single (1) disc, 2 discs or 3 discs on top of each other despite the colours or the variation of colours in the stack. The number of the discs which form the stack

dictates the height of the stack. E.g a single disc is a height-1 stack. Two discs on top of each other form a height-2 stack. Three discs on top of each other form a height-3 stack. The topmost disc is "active", while the ones underneath it are "non-active". A single disc is also considered to be "active"

"Non-active" discs cannot move.

Only "active" discs can perform a move.

The total height of a stack should not exceed 3 discs in total.

The King cannot be stacked by its own army (White), meaning that the King cannot become "Non-active" by its own army (White) throughout the entire game.

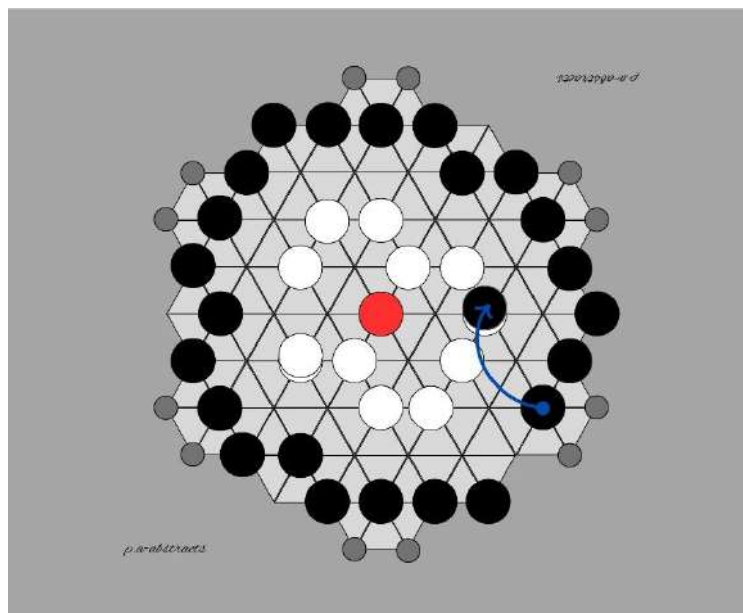
The King can be stacked by an invader (Black) which in this case it is a win for the invaders (Black).

Movement

Starting with Black (invaders), players alternate turns moving 1 of their "active" discs following the rules provided below.

A disc can move in any direction, always in a straight line and always covering a distance equal to the height of the stack which the disc begins its turn, being the total number of discs which make up the stack. E.g 1 disc should move 1 space, where in essence the disc will simply move to an adjacent hex. The topmost disc in a stack (the "active" one) of 2 discs in total, will move 2 spaces. The topmost disc in a stack (the "active" one) of 3 discs in total, will move 3 spaces.

A disc can finish its move on either an empty point, or on top of another disc, despite its colour. Spaces and discs in between them are not affected.



In the example provided above, a black disc coming from a height-2 stack, lands on top of a white disc.

Remember, the total height of a stack should not exceed 3 discs in total.

No disc can exit the board.

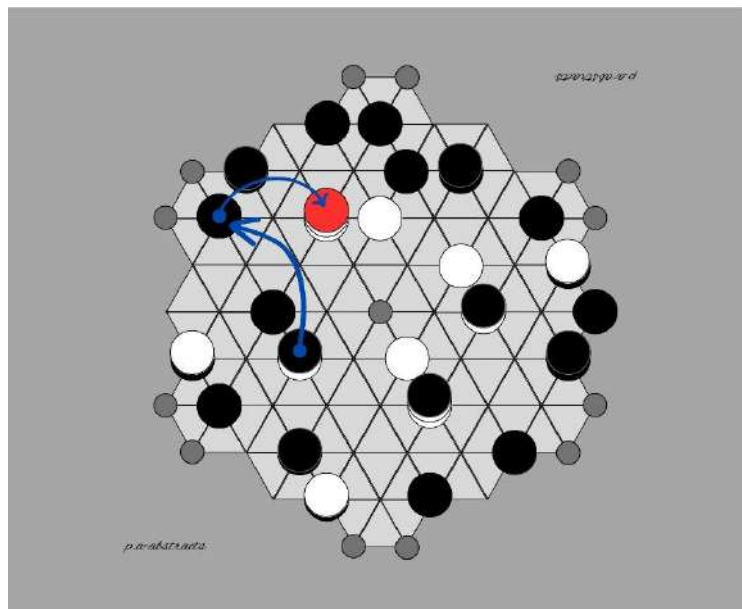
Passing is not allowed.

Bounce

The King can perform a "bounce" action as long as he lands on an invader (Black), either being an "active" single disc, or an "active" (topmost) part of a height-2 stack.

The King can either land and remain on spot, or perform a "bounce", being a subsequent leap following the rules provided above concerning the distance to be covered as well as the maximum height of stacks, provided that the King lands on an invader (Black).

The King can bounce as many times as the player wants, given that the King lands on an invader (Black)



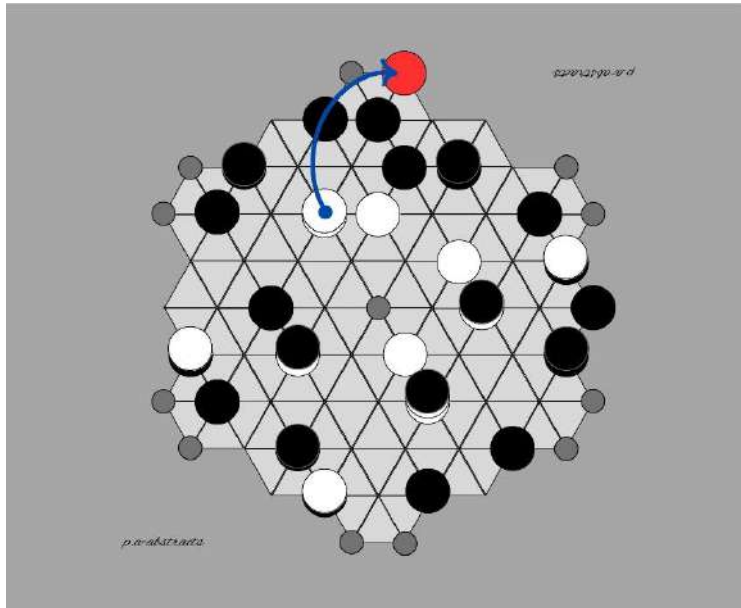
In the example provided above, the King, coming from a height-3 stack, lands on a black disc, thus forming a height-2 stack. Then he performs a bounce, according to the rules provided for a height-2 stack and lands on a height-2 stack, with a white disc on top, thus forming a height-3 stack. Due to the King has landed on a white disc he cannot perform another bounce.

Winning conditions

Defenders (White) win the game once the King reaches any escape spot.

Invaders (Black) win the game once the King is stacked and becomes "non-active".

Invaders (Black) can also win the game, if the defending army (White) has no "active" disc left, apart from the King.



In the example provided above, the King manages to reach an escape spot resulting in a win for White.

Advanced Winning conditions

Players can choose to play with the rules provided above, or use the following winning conditions which make things harder for the defenders (White). In this version, the King can be stacked by the invaders (Black) even while he is on an escape spot. The average playing time increases to 35 minutes.

Defenders win the game when they begin their turn with the King on any escape spot.

Invaders (Black) win the game once the King is stacked and becomes "non-active".

Invaders (Black) can also win the game, if the defending army (White) has no "active" disc left, apart from the King.