

Board Game Design Project

- Expand an existing game



THREE MUSKETEERS

- 'JEWELLED' EXPANSION

Design Team:

Andrzej Solecki <andrzej_solecki@yahoo.com>

Ernest J. Walker <ewalker@ejw3.com>

Mohit Sadhu <mohitmax@gmail.com>

and Mohan Subramanian

Illustration and Documentation by

Mohan Subramanian

CONTENTS

1. Goal	4
2. Original Game	4
2.1 Overview:	4
2.2 Game Setup.....	4
2.3 Gameplay	5
3. Brainstorm	6
3.1 Retained features.....	6
3.2 New ideas.....	6
4. Our Game - The Expansion	6
4.1 Overview:	6
4.2 Game Setup.....	6
4.3 Gameplay	7
4.4 Story	9
4.5 Multiplayer Setup	9
4.6 Silence - a Strategic Advantage.....	9
4.7 Playtesting.....	9

1. GOAL

To expand the original three musketeers board game by designing additional gameplay features, while retaining the core gameplay intact. This expansion should feature a common set of rules allowing the game to be played by 2 to 4 players.

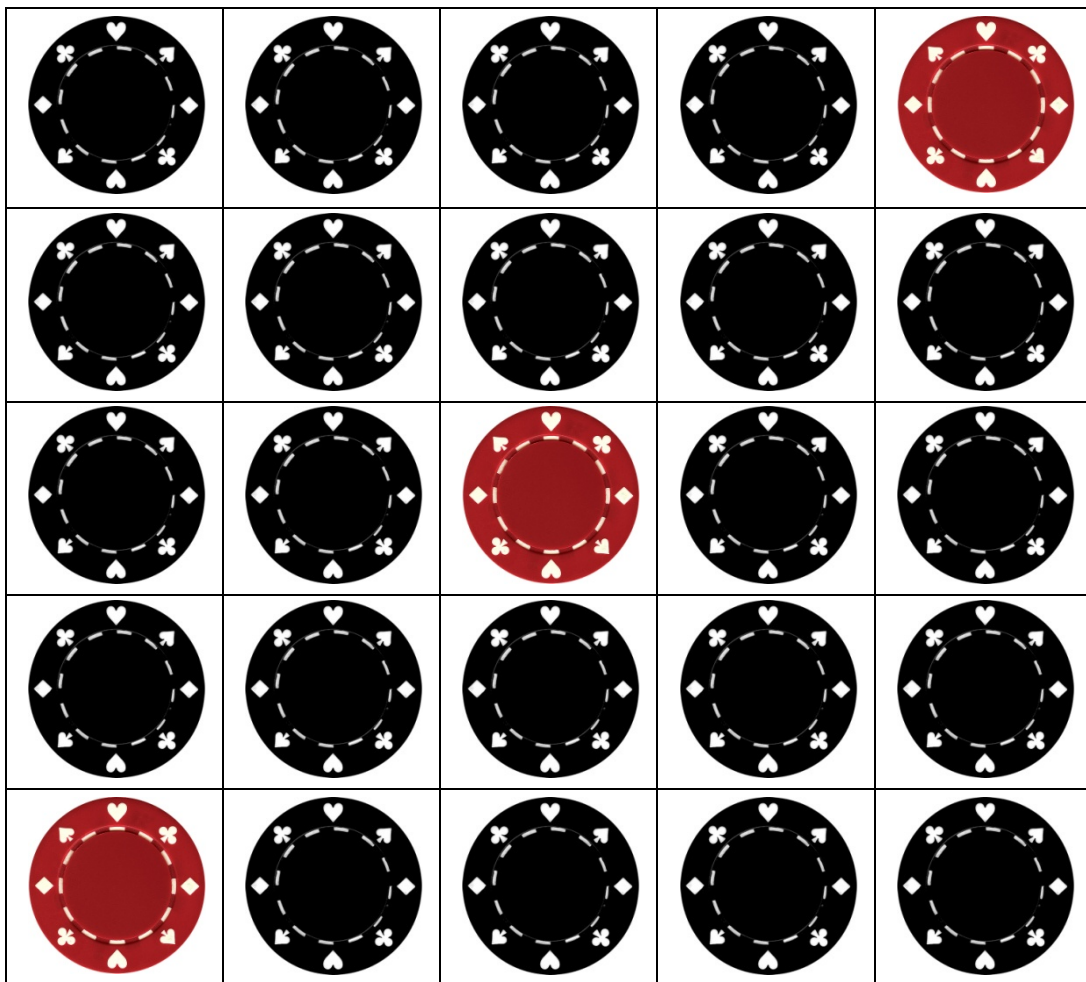
2. ORIGINAL GAME

2.1 Overview:

Three Musketeers is an abstract strategy board game by Haar Hoolim. It is a two player game which uses the principle of unequal forces. The two players neither use the same types of pieces nor the same rules, and their victory conditions are different.

2.2 Game Setup


The game is played on a board which is essentially a 5 x 5 grid. Twenty five tokens (checker coins or poker chips) are used - twenty two of one kind and 3 of another kind. Let us take poker chips for our game - 22 black chips and 3 red ones. The game board is setup in the following manner




2.3 Gameplay

One player takes the role of the three musketeers, while the other takes the role of Cardinal Richelieu's men ("the enemy"). The players set their tokens up in the game board as shown in the figure. The musketeer player sets up his tokens (red chips) in two opposite corners and in the center space; the enemy places his tokens (black chips) in all remaining board spaces. The players take turns in moving their respective tokens, one at a time. The musketeer player plays first.

The rules for each player is given below :

CARDINAL PLAYER		
	Movement :	The cardinal player can move one of the enemy piece to any orthogonally adjacent empty space.
	Win Condition:	The cardinal player wins if he can force the three musketeers to be all on the same row or column.

MUSKETEER PLAYER		
	Movement :	The musketeer player can move a musketeer to any orthogonally (non-diagonal) adjacent space occupied by an enemy; the enemy piece is removed from the game.
	Win Condition:	The musketeer player wins if on his turn, none of the three musketeers can move as there are no enemy pieces adjacent to any musketeer and they are not all on the same row or column.

3. BRAINSTORM

3.1 Retained features

We wanted to retain some of the interesting features from the original game. We felt these features brought the unique strategic element to the game. The retained features are

- To begin with, the game has this unifying theme of **Good vs. Evil** which we wanted to retain.
- The inequality of each player's movement and victory condition is very interesting.
- The background story of Three Musketeers fit well to this abstract board game.
- At the beginning of the game, the musketeers are more powerful as they have more choices to move. But towards the end, it shifts to the cardinal as they begin to literally direct the movement of the musketeers. We found this shift of balance very interesting and hoped to retain the same.

3.2 New ideas

After deciding on the features of the original game that we wanted to retain, we continued to brainstorm for the new ideas. The main issues from the original game that we wanted to modify were

- The goals of the players were abstract. Our characters must have well defined goals backed up by the story and theme of the game.
- New characters must be created to make this an engaging multiplayer board game.
- The new character should move differently compared to existing characters.
- It would be interesting if the new character also had a different win condition.
- Our game should also feature a cooperative gameplay.
- There should be a balance between the cooperative and competitive gameplay elements.
- We also wanted to tell an overall story through the game.

We polished our new ideas and started nailing down the additional features, which resulted in the following expansion.

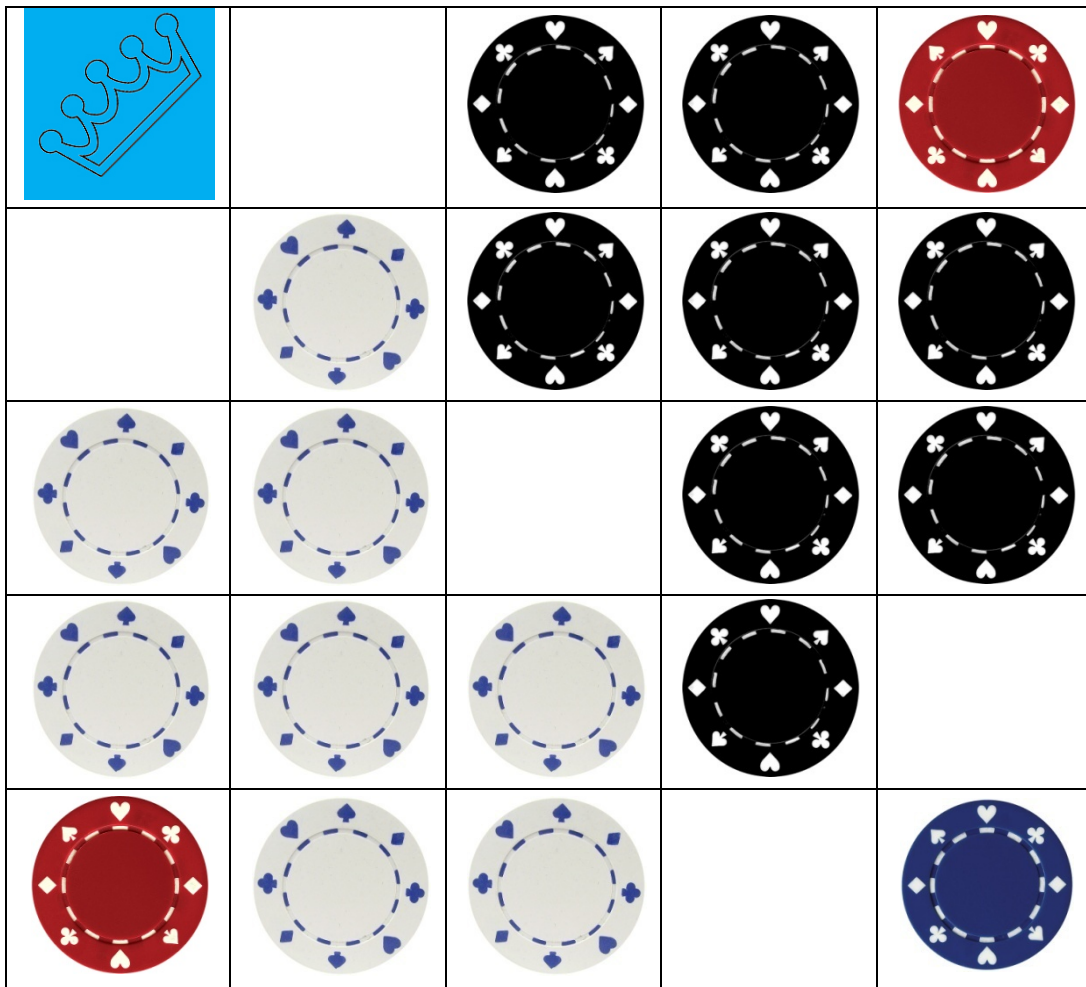
4. OUR GAME - THE EXPANSION

4.1 Overview:

We retained the core gameplay of the game. We introduced two new sets of characters by splitting the cardinal's men and the three musketeers into two groups each. The characters were given specific goals. We made the new musketeer powerful by designing special moves for him.


4.2 Game Setup


The game is played on the same board which is essentially a 5 x 5 grid. Our game requires Nineteen tokens (checker coins or poker chips) - 8 each of two kinds, 2 of another kind and finally one special token. Let us take the same poker chips for our game - 8 black chips, 8 white chips, 2 red and one blue chips. The game board is setup in the following manner




4.3 Gameplay

- The three musketeers are split into two groups.
- Athos and Porthos are played by one player, while Aramis is played by another player.
- Both the musketeer players must play co-operatively against the cardinal.
- The cardinal's men are also split into two equal groups of eight men each. These two groups are controlled by two players.
- The musketeer players and the cardinal players take turns alternatively.
- The 'Aramis' player who controls the blue chip, plays first.
- Next in line is the Black cardinal player, followed by the red musketeer player and the white cardinal player respectively.
- Every round continues in the same order.

BLUE MUSKETEER PLAYER - ARAMIS		
	Movement :	This musketeer player can move a musketeer to any orthogonally (non-diagonal) adjacent empty space.
	Goal:	The blue musketeer player wins if he reaches the blue tile on the diagonally opposite corner.
	Special move:	When orthogonally adjacent to any one of the red musketeer tokens, the blue musketeer can swap places with the red one.

RED MUSKETEER PLAYER - ATHOS & PORTHOS		
	Movement :	The musketeer player can move a musketeer only to an orthogonally adjacent space occupied by an enemy. The enemy piece is removed from the game.
	Goal :	As the musketeer players play a co-operative game against the cardinal's men, the red musketeers must aid the blue musketeer to reach the blue tile in the corner.

BLACK AND WHITE - CARDINAL PLAYERS		
	Movement :	Each cardinal player can move one of his respective tokens to any orthogonally adjacent empty space.
	Win Condition:	The cardinal players win collectively, if both the players lose all their men (tokens) to the red musketeer player , before the blue musketeer player can reach the blue tile.

4.4 Story

Storytelling is an important part of the player's experience when he plays a game. We wanted our game to provide that valuable experience for its players. We decided to retain the theme of the three musketeers. We took an excerpt from the original three musketeers' story and used it in our game in such a way that it backed up our gameplay.

- The blue tile represents the castle of the Queen of France.
- The Queen had secretly given her jewels to her lover, the duke of Buckingham. But now she needs it back for an event with the King.
- Aramis takes the quest of returning the jewels to the Queen to save her honor.
- Athos and Porthos decide to help their dear friend, Aramis in his mission.
- The Cardinal who wants a war between England and France, tries to stop Aramis from returning the jewels back to the Queen.
- The cardinal's men try to incapacitate the musketeers before Aramis reaches the castle.

4.5 Multiplayer Setup

Our game features a multiplayer setup for two to four players with a common set of rules.

- In case of two players, one player takes up the role of the musketeers while the other takes up that of the cardinal's men.
- The musketeer player is not allowed to play as either the red or the blue musketeers for two consecutive turns. He must alternate playing the red and the blue musketeers.
- In case of three players, one player takes up the role of cardinal's men, while the remaining two players take up the roles of the red and blue musketeers respectively.

4.6 Silence - a Strategic Advantage

One important constraint in our game is that the players are not allowed to strategize openly with their counterparts. The strategic balance is lost when either the musketeer players or the cardinal players strategize among themselves. The game loses its challenge and becomes less fun. Hence we decided to enforce this gameplay constraint of no strategic communication between player counterparts.

4.7 Playtesting

We refined and polished many features based on the feedback we got from playtesting. We playtested within the team as well as with external testers. Some of the feedback we received were

- The background story and the clear goals for each player worked out really well.
- The balance between the cooperative and competitive gameplay was admired.
- The blue musketeer's special move made it very powerful. This gave the musketeers an unfair advantage. Some restriction must be imposed on that special move to balance the game. So we added the constraint - blue musketeer cannot use his special move for two consecutive turns.
- The constraint of players not strategizing openly was actually a feedback from playtesting.