

Rules of the Game of Fanorona



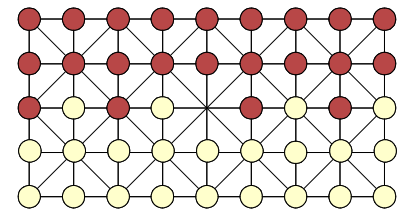
mastersofgames.com
+44 (0)1727 855058

Fanorona is one of several games including Draughts and the native American 'Fighting Serpents' that appear to be derived from the old medieval game of Alquerque as outlined by Alfonso X in his 13th century book of Games. Fanorona is a Madagascan game that appeared around 1680 and which has adopted an unusual and interesting form of capture.

Equipment and Objective

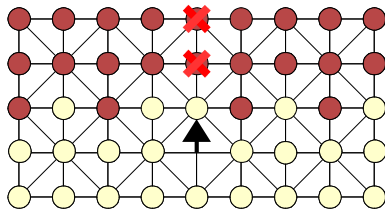
The best and most common form of Fanorona is played on a 9 x 5 grid with diagonal lines. It starts with an almost entirely populated board as shown in the diagram.

The objective of the game is to take all of the opponent's pieces. If at any point, a player is unable to move or capture, the game is a draw.



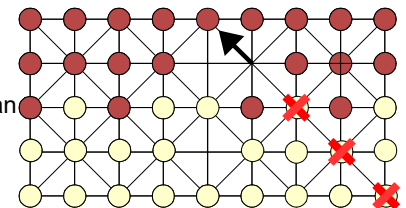
Basic Play

Players take turns to move one of their pieces. For each turn, a player either moves or captures. To move a piece, it is simply moved along a line to an adjacent vacant point.

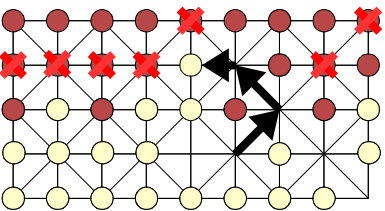


Capturing is compulsory, if it is possible, and is done in one of two ways.

Capture by Approach – A piece captures by moving to an adjacent empty point so that an enemy piece is on the next point in the direction of movement. The enemy piece and any further enemy pieces forming an unbroken straight line in the same direction are taken.



Capture by Withdrawal – this is the reverse of capture by approach. If a piece begins next to an enemy piece and moves away from it in to an adjacent empty point in the opposite direction, then that enemy piece and any adjacently beyond it in an unbroken straight line are captured and removed from the board.



Like Draughts (Checkers), multiple capturing moves in a single turn are allowed – once a player has made a capture, if another capture move is possible, the player must play it and so on until no more capturing moves are possible. So in the second example, the player should have continued the capture, moving down one and capturing a further single piece.

Sometimes, a piece is in the lucky position of being able to capture by approach and by withdrawal in the same move. In this case, only one type of capture is allowed – the player decides which. In the diagram, for the final move, the player could have chosen to capture the single piece on the right by withdrawal instead of the 4 pieces on the left.

Capture Move Restrictions

You may wish to play using the basic rules above before using the following full capture rules. The following restrictions are added to multiple capturing moves by one piece in a single turn:

- you cannot move along a line already traversed during the multiple capture move.
- you cannot return to a point previously occupied during the multiple capture move
- you cannot capture in the same direction as the previous capture move

The first two multiple capturing restrictions require players to stay alert and remember the path of the capturing piece!

Variations

- A common additional rule is to say that the first time a player captures in each game, only a single capture is allowed – the player's turn ends immediately the first capture move is taken.
- It improves the game slightly to say that after the first capture, further captures in a turn are not compulsory - the player can choose to stop capturing at any point.