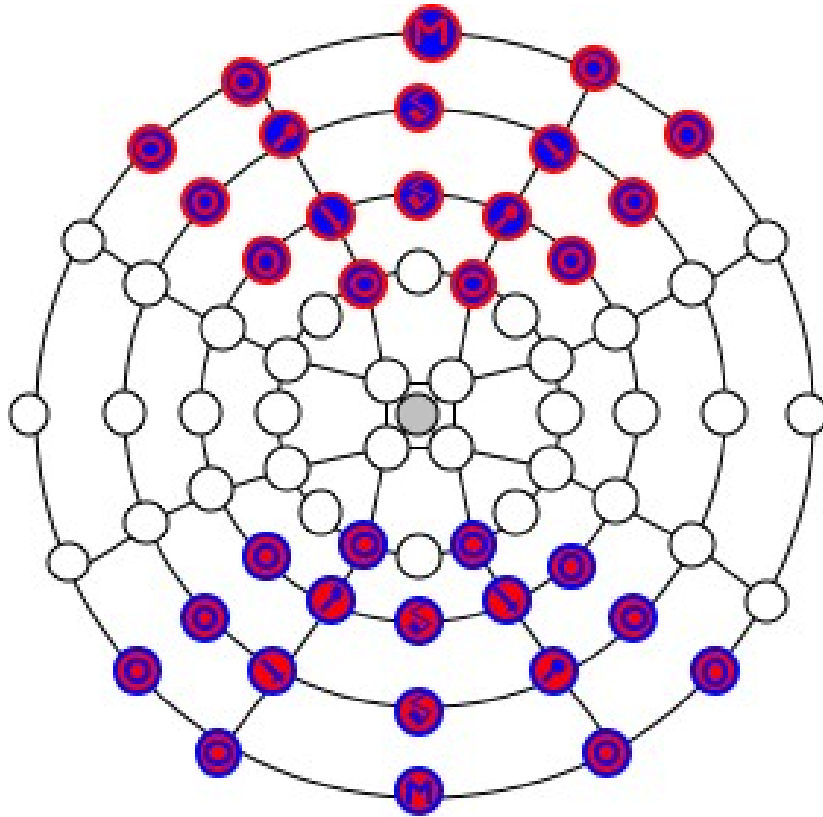


Sava

Gameplay:

The objective of the game is to capture the opponent's Matron Mother. In order to do this, both sides are equipped with a small force of pieces of various move values. These are moved in alternate turns, with the Red player moving first. The board is in the shape of a stylized spider's web, and pieces move from one intersection to another along the web's "strands". An element of chance is incorporated in the form of the Spider Dice.

Players choose for color by rolling the Spider Dice – the highest takes Red. Red is always at the south of the board. The opening layout is as follows:



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Pieces and movement values:

Each player has one Matron Mother, one Priestess, one Wizard, four Weapon masters, and ten Orcs.

Matron Mother – moves one space in any direction along any rank or file. +5 to combat rolls.

Priestess – moves any number of spaces along a continuous, unimpeded rank or file. +5 to combat rolls.

Wizard – moves 3 linked spaces in any direction; may change direction unimpeded by any intervening pieces. +3 to combat rolls

Weaponmaster – makes 2 moves of one linked space each per turn. The Weaponmaster may capture on one or both moves. +2 to combat rolls

Orc – moves one space in any direction along any rank or file, but only if the move takes them closer to a hostile piece on the same rank or file and there are no intervening friendly pieces. +0 to combat

rolls

All pieces capture by positional substitution.

Dice: 2 D8s Representing Spiders

The chaotic nature of Drow society is manifested in Sava in the form of the Spider Dice. When someone attempts to capture a piece they must roll the 2d8 spider die, and the defender rolls 1D8 spider die. Both sides can add the bonus of their piece to the roll. Only if the attacking player wins is the piece captured. Any captured piece is removed from play, captured by the attacker.

- If the attacker rolls “double spiders”, i.e. both dice land with ones on their uppermost faces, he or she may move one of their opponent’s pieces (the “turncoat”) according to its usual movement value capturing the opponent’s pieces as though the turncoat piece was one of their own. The player may not, however, capture the Matron Mother with the turncoat piece, since Matron Mothers are too aware of treachery in their ranks to be caught unawares by such a gambit. The Matron Mother may be chosen as the turncoat, though.
- After the player has moved the turncoat, play passes to his or her opponent again. The opponent may not immediately move the turncoat piece back to its previous position, although it can be moved to another position on this turn.
- Any roll resulting in a Tie goes to the attacker as a successful capture.

Resurrection:

If an Orc manages to travel across the board to the opposite promotion zone. (– for Red, A1, A2, A3, A4, for Blue, I1, I2, I3, I4,), it may be removed from play and replaced with any piece which the opponent has captured. If none of the player’s capital pieces have been taken, nothing happens.

Strategy and tactics:

The Priestess is arguably the most powerful piece in the game (if placed correctly, it can attack over

most of the board from a single space), but is hampered in the early stages of the game by the Orcs, which limit its ability to attack around the circumference of the board. For this reason, many players opt either to hold the Priestess in reserve until the later part of the game, when many of the Orcs have been captured, or sacrifice the outlying Orcs in order to make space for the Priestess to attack early.

As in life, one must think several moves ahead with Wizards. Their range and jumping ability make them dangerous, but they have no way to attack at close quarters, and must be placed carefully to make maximum use of their talents. The Wizard is excellent for forking maneuvers. About 70% of final captures in Sava are made by the Wizard.

The Weaponmaster is in its element when surrounded by adversaries, since this is the point at which its unique double-move is most effective. The Weaponmaster is often the first major piece to engage the enemy, and is often lost in the resulting skirmish. However, since the Weaponmaster can often take two pieces off the board in one move before being captured, the trade is usually worthwhile, especially if it results in the capture of the enemy Priestess.

The Matron Mother rarely has a chance to capture anything in the course of the game. Its low move rate make it very vulnerable, and it must be protected from attack by the more mobile pieces. The Matron Mother can easily be trapped by its own forces, so should be moved from its starting position as soon as possible – this maneuver is not easy since it necessitates the removal of at least two Orcs from the flanks, and can take as many as eight moves to complete. The threat of the enemy Wizard also prompts a player to open up space around the Matron Mother early in the game, to prevent it being blocked in by friendly pieces when the Wizard attacks. If the Wizard is captured during the opening then it can be an effective tactic to surround the Matron Mother with friendly pieces once again, making it harder for the remaining enemy forces to mount a successful attack.

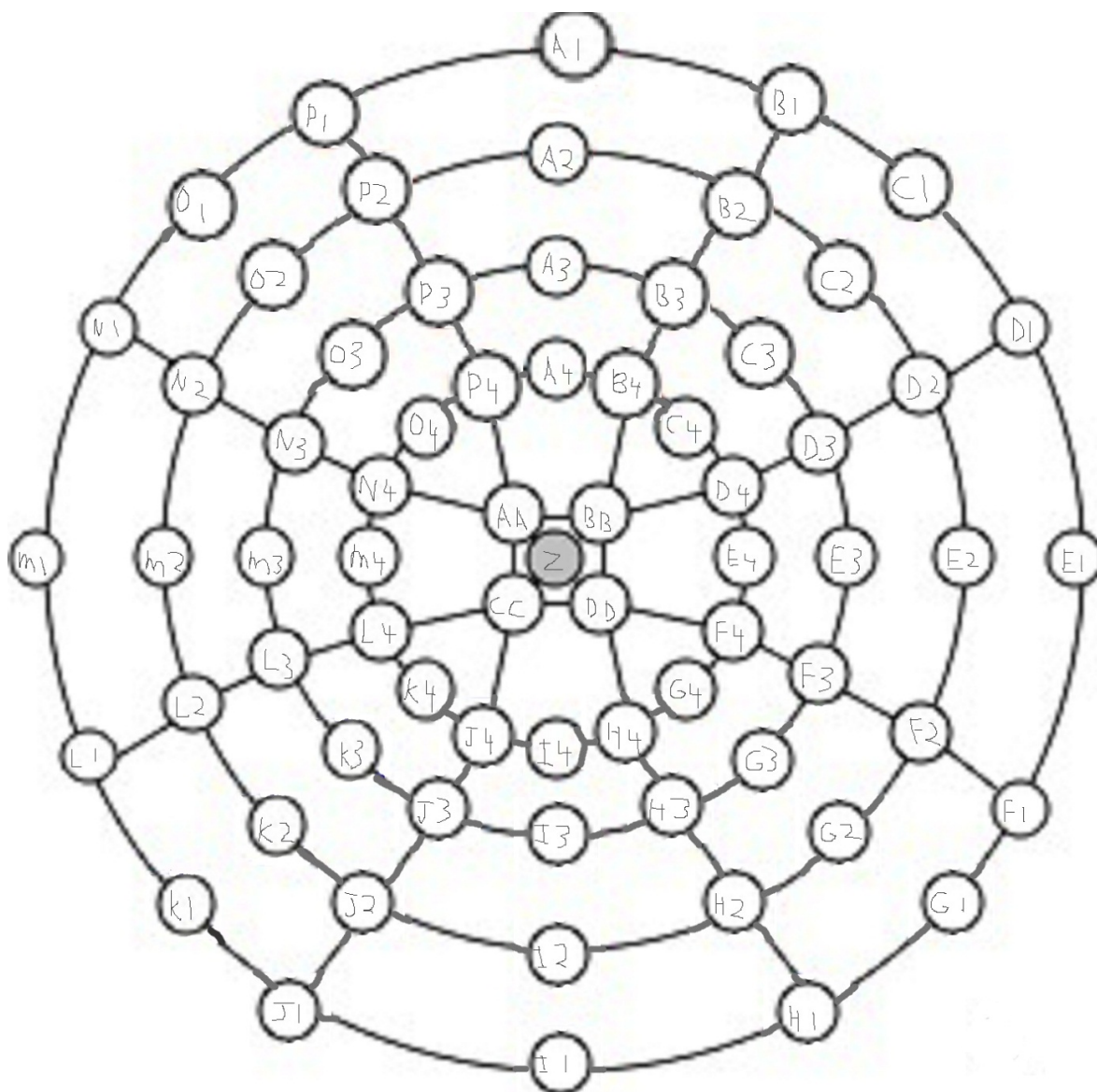
Orcs are weak, and a canny opponent can use the special “must move towards an enemy” rule to dictate their movements and even paralyze them entirely. However, they are far more numerous than the other pieces, provide excellent defense, and can be used in conjunction with a Wizard or Weaponmaster to apply a lethal pincer check on the enemy Matron Mother. They can also exert considerable influence when they occupy at least two of the four central spaces.

If your matron Mother is captured you immediately loose the game.

Notation:

The board is divided into Four ranks (1, 2,3 and 4) and four files (A,B,C,D etc). Individual spaces are

referenced by their file and then rank, as shown below, except for the four center spaces which are referred to by double letters.



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Variations:

In Baenre Sava, popular in Menzoberranzan, the Matron Mother gains the same move ability as the Priestess if the Priestess is captured. This makes it rather unwise to take the enemy Priestess except under very specific circumstances. This variation gained its name not because it was invented, or

even played, by House Baenre, but because the denizens of Menzoberranzan associated the need to avoid aggravating a priestess quite closely with the First House.

Ched Nased Sava is a variant with a promotion, rather than a resurrection, rule – Orcs reaching the promotion zone can promote to capital pieces even if the player already has a piece of that type on the board, making it possible to have multiple Wizards, Weaponmasters or Priestesses in play.

Champion Sava, a popular variant, adds an extra piece, the Holy Champion (C), which has the move ability of a Priestess and a Wizard combined. The Champion starts on the front line of the opening setup – A4 for Blue and I4 for Red. In spite of its substantial move tree, the Champion cannot capture or be captured, making it useful for blocking enemy attacks.

Lolth's Champion Sava, the Champion is allowed to make captures and be captured when two other capital pieces have been taken. This is the variant still played occasionally as a religious sacrament.

In Demonweb Sava, the stakes are much higher. In the Demonweb there are Demonweb Sava boards. This board functions as a Sava board with the following modifications. A person can replace a game piece with a champion. This champion is a literal representation of their soul. The champion pieces Capture or be captured until 2 other capital pieces have been lost by the other side. If the imbued game piece is lost it harms the person it represents in the following manor:

Replaced Orc- Loses 2 healing surges.

Replaced Weaponmaster- If captured loses 4 Healing Surges.

Replaced Wizard- If captured loses 8 healing surges

Replaced Priestess- If captured is killed.

Replaced Matron Mother- If captured soul is absorbed by the piece, resurrection is not possible unless you have the actual captured matron mother piece.

In Dice Sava, a throw of one spider grants a player the usual turncoat move, whilst a throw of double spiders allows him to remove one of his opponent's pieces entirely.

History:

Sava's origins are mysterious. According to popular myth, it was gifted to the race of the Ilythiiri by the goddess Lolth, as a way of teaching them the tenets of drow society - treachery, fate, deviousness and careful planning. However, most historians of the game date its appearance to shortly after The Scattering, around -3000 DR, since there appears to be no evidence for its existence prior to this time. As the drow settled into a less expansionist and (comparatively!) more peaceful urban way of life, the increased leisure time of the nobility led to the development of sava as a pastime. Since it was, and still is, thought to teach many useful lessons about survival as a drow, the Matron Mothers of most clans gave their tacit approval to the game, and some even encouraged it amongst their subordinates. It was considered a vital part of the education of any warband leader, and for a time was played as a devotional rite in the Church of Lolth at Sshamath.

In recent centuries sava's popularity amongst the nobility has waned, partly due to an increase in players drawn from the lower classes. Since all that is required to play sava well is a quick mind and a degree of study, many drow from the underclasses who were able to master the game became capable of defeating members of the noble houses. This intolerable state of affairs was notably remarked upon by the Archmage Gromph Baenre, who, when defeated in a sava match by a lowly footsoldier, calmly stated that;

"... to lose to you [at sava] does not make me the lesser drow. It does, however, make me very, very angry."

Whereupon he transformed the unfortunate victor into a mushroom.

As a result of its universality, sava has become less common in the halls of the nobility, but this decrease in popularity is more than compensated for by its dissemination throughout the rest of drow society. There are even a few non-drow players in existence – the wizard Elminster is known to be a competent player – but few if any of these have ever sat across the table from a competent drow sava master. Partly this is due to the drow race's general reclusiveness, but mostly it's because the dark elves are fiercely protective of their traditional game and tend to flay and/or eviscerate members of any other species whom they find playing it.

In any case, sava can be said to be fully entrenched in the culture of the drow, and no non-drow could ever hope to fully understand its subtler aspects. The game of sava forms a vital lynchpin in the world

of the dark elves. Though they would never admit it, the fact that sava is available to all, rich and poor alike, makes it a unifying factor in an otherwise heavily stratified society. It has been said that the world of the drow is one of chaos, treachery and disorder – ironically, the game which codifies these concepts may well be part of the glue that holds that world together.