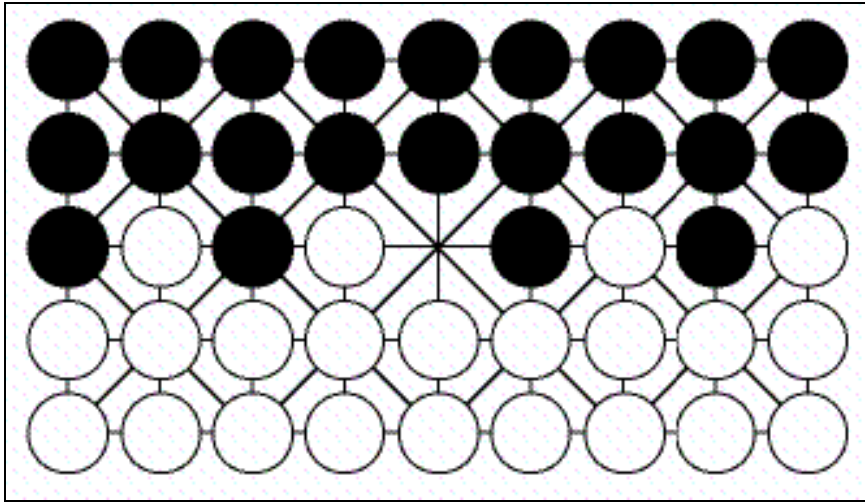


Fanorona



Fanorona (pronounced fa-NOORN), the national game of Madagascar, is a traditional game, played for several hundred years in its present form. Fanorona starts as a fast moving capturing game - most of the pieces are typically captured in the first few turns. After the initial massacre, it becomes a subtle positional game.

Setup: The board and starting position are as shown in the diagram above.

Object: The object of the game is to take all your opponent's pieces, or to leave a position where they have no moves. If neither player can do this, then the game is a draw.

Moving: White moves first. Pieces are moved by sliding one space along one of the lines.

Capturing: You can capture a line of your opponent's pieces by *approach*, by moving directly toward them into the adjacent space, or by *withdrawal*, by starting in the adjacent space and moving directly away from your opponent's piece. In some positions, you could capture either way, and you must choose one or the other.

A Turn: A turn consists of either a single, non-capturing move called a *paika*, or a sequence of capturing moves. If any capturing moves are possible anywhere on the board, then a capturing move must be made. If multiple captures are possible, you can choose which to do. Subsequent captures on the same turn are optional. Second and subsequent captures in the same turn are subject to some restrictions:

- you must keep moving the same piece
- you cannot return to any space twice
- you can't move in the same direction twice in a row

VARIATION

Vela - Rematch

A rematch is played, the loser of the previous game playing first. The first part of the Vela game has different rules:

- On each move made by the loser of the previous game, exactly one piece must be taken. This is still done using the *approach* or *withdrawal* techniques, but now only the piece nearest to the moving piece is affected. There is only one step per move.
- The winner of the previous game moves without making any captures. The move made may be a *paika* move; or else a move that would normally be a single-step capturing move, but without taking any pieces off the board. Each move by this player must leave the opponent with the opportunity to make a capture; otherwise the game is forfeited.

These rules are used until the winner of the previous game has only **five pieces** left. The game then reverts to the normal rules. So the player who lost the last game has to avoid the humiliation of losing an unequal contest with 22 pieces pitted against five! If this is achieved, the player is said to have *eaten* the vela, and lifted the punishment. The next game then reverts to the **normal rules**. Otherwise the hapless loser must try again to eat the vela.