

Stacks In Action rules

By Rich Hutnik and Paul Beykirch (Copyright 2011)
Game #25 in the Games on Half a Checkerboard Series

This game is a fusion of Lines of Action, Focus and Extinction Chess. In this, in order to keep pieces moving, a player must control at least one stack each containing 1 piece, 2 pieces, and 3 pieces. In order to move a stack on top of another stack, a player must have all their pieces on the board. If a player is unable to perform a legal move at the start of their turn, that player loses the game.

Number of players for game: 2

Objective of game: To force one's opponent to have no legal moves at the start of their turn.

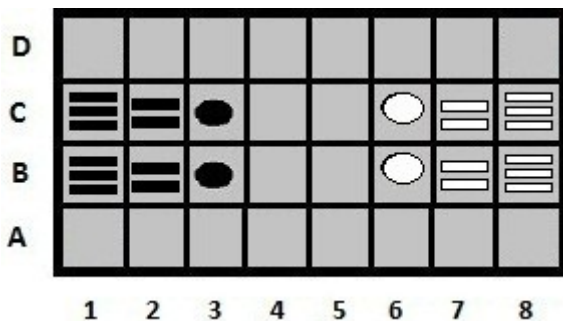
Equipment used in game:

* **Half a checkerboard:** The board is 8 spaces long and 4 spaces wide.

* **12 checkers for one player, and 12 checkers for the other player.** The next diagram shows what stacks of different height for Black side (White side would be the same, except in white). A stack's height is determined by how many pieces are in it, with the high increasing by one for each piece the stack has in it.



Board Setup: The checkers start on the board, as seen in the next diagram.



Rules of play:

Players alternate turns either moving one of their stacks on the board (if legally able) placing 1-3 high stacks of pieces on an empty space on the board. At most 3 pieces can fit on a single stack. When placing pieces, a player must place the pieces on an empty space on the board.

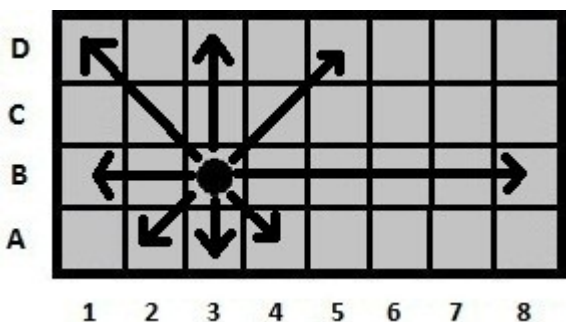
If a player does not control a stack of one piece, a stack two high and a stack 3 high, the player must enter a stack on the board at the start of their turn. Whatever player's piece is on top of the stack of pieces that are left behind, ends up controlling the stack of pieces that were there prior. This stack can be placed on any empty space on the board. This need to keep entering new pieces on the board at the start of their turn continues until the player controls a stack of one stack of one piece, one stack of two pieces and one stack of three pieces.

In the next diagram, assuming that all the pieces shown are the only ones on the board, Black needs to enter a single piece onto the board in order to to move his pieces, and White needs to enter a 3 stack on the board, in order to move his pieces.



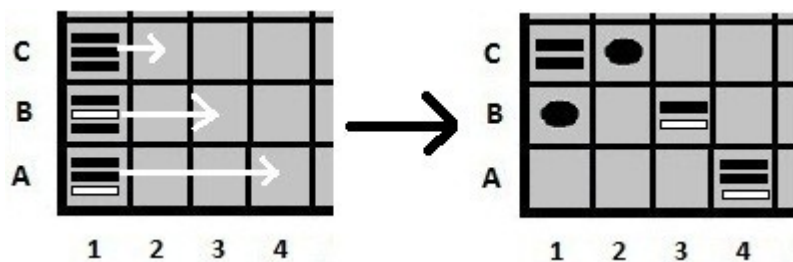
Movement:

Stacks move in a line in any direction, a bit like Queens in Chess, as far as either as far as the stack that is moving is tall or the number of piece they have in the same row. The next diagram shows a possible full range of possible moves for a Black piece, or stack, at B3.



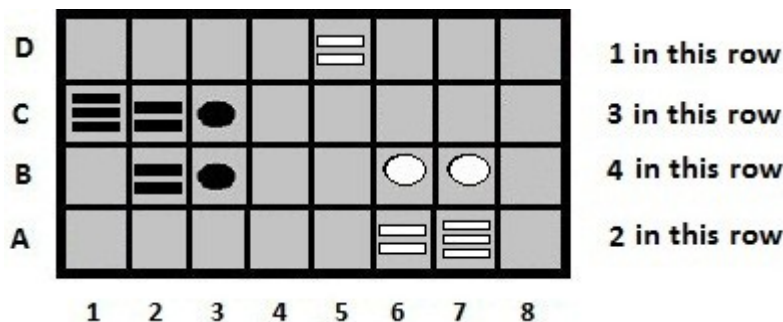
In order for a player to be able to move a stack on top of another stack, they must not have any pieces in their reserve.

All or part of a stack may move, when moving off a space. In the next diagram, Black advances pieces on three high stacks he controls 1, 2, and 3 spaces, with the stack moving as far as the number of pieces the stack contains. During these movement, some pieces may be left behind and a stack may be moved that also contains pieces of an opponent.

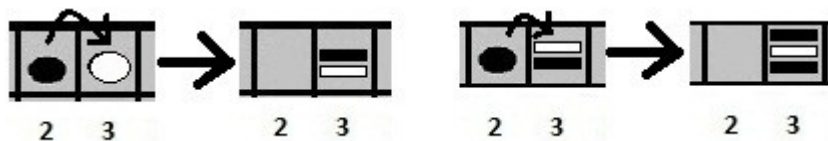


Stack moves as far the number of pieces on in a row (their own or opponent), or the number of pieces it has in the stack that is moving (1-3 spaces). A stack passes through a stack with a friendly piece on top, and a player is only permitted to land on a stack controlled by an an opponent on an exact count, either the size of the stack that is moving or the number of pieces that are in the stack's column. A stack is not permitted to move through a stack that has an enemy piece on top of it.

In the next diagram shows how far a stack can move, based on the number of pieces it has in the row it was in before moving. The stack on D5 can move either 1 or 2 spaces. In row C, all those pieces can either move 3 spaces or the height of the stack that moves in that row (C1 can move 1-3 stack 1-3 spaces, C2 can move 1-2 stack 1-2 spaces, C3 can move 1). In row B, all those pieces can either move 4 spaces along the row, or as far as the height of the stack that moves in that row (B2 can move 1-2 stack 1-2 spaces, and the remaining pieces, B3, B6 and B7 can move 1 space). In row A, all those pieces can either move 2 spaces or the height of the stack that moves in that row (A6 can move 1-2 stack 1-2 spaces, A7 can move 1-3 stack 1-3 spaces). All movement is in a straight line, as show in the diagram above, and is not limited to only movement in the row. A piece may move in a straight line to another row, governed by the rules above, provided it is a legal move (for example, not moving off the board or passing through an enemy stack).

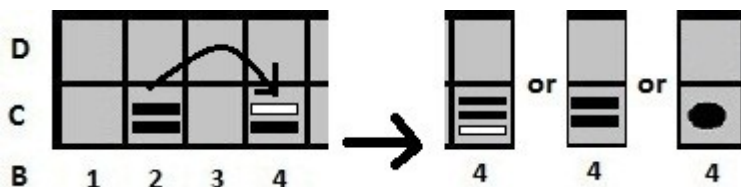


Landing on a stack of pieces: When a stack ends its movement on another stack, this creates a new stack by placing the moving stack on top of the stack that was prior, with the pieces in the stack on the board being placed at the bottom of the moving stack. In the next two diagrams, the Black piece in column 2 advances one space, and increases the size of the stack in column 3. Landing on a stack of pieces on the board is only permitted if a player has none of their pieces in their reserve.

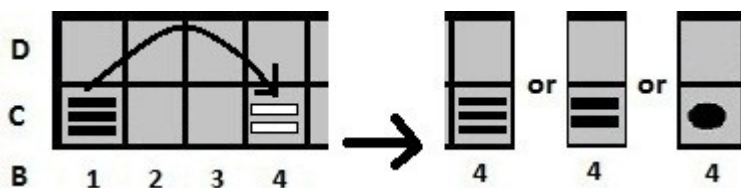


If the stack is greater than three high, all pieces under the stack are removed from the board, and the stack can be reduced from any size of 3 high to one high. Pieces removed from the board belonging to the place are place back in the player's reserve. Pieces that belong to the enemy are removed from play.

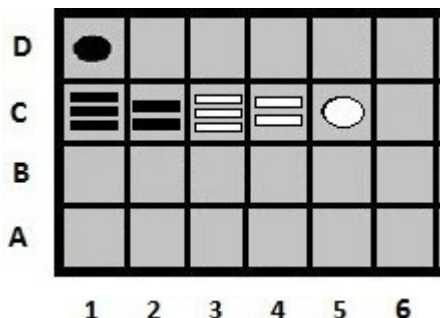
In the next diagram, the stack at B2 advances onto the stack at B4. The Black piece at the bottom is placers in the Black player's reserve. The Black player then has the option of reducing the size of the stack further, down to one piece, placing all the Black pieces in his reserve, and removing the White pieces from play.



In the next diagram, both White piece on B4 are removed from play. Black player would have an option to reduce the stack even further, placing his own pieces he removed from the stack into his reserve.



Pieces can be blocked by enemy pieces from engaging in full movement. In the next diagram, assume that all the pieces show are what remains in the game, with none in reserve. The Black player would not be allowed to advance pieces on C1 to C5, although there is 5 pieces in row C (movement of 5 spaces pieces in that row is 5 because it contains 5 pieces), because the spaces on C3-C5 are occupied with enemy pieces. Two pieces on C1 or 1 piece on C2 could advance onto C4, however, using their stack height movement to gain control of that stack, and win the game for the Black player.



How the game ends:

If a player forces their opponent to have no legal moves at the start of their opponent's turn, then that player wins the game.

An opponent can be forced into having no legal moves if, at the start of an opponent's turn, the opponent does not have one 1 high stack, one 2 high stack and one 3 high stack on the board and no pieces in their reserve.

Variant rules:

Advanced placement: All pieces start off the board, in reserve area. Play proceeds as normal above, with players being required to have at least one stack 1 high, one stack 2 high, and one stack 3 high on the board before they can begin to move. In addition, a player must not have any pieces in their reserve off the board, before the player can combine stacks on the board. Any pieces captured (pieces of an opponent in a stack greater than three that are taken off the board when a stack is reduced) are placed out of play, and not into the reserves of the players. A player's own pieces are placed in the reserve area. This variant is not recommended for people who are new to the game.

Simplified play:

For people who find the base rules for the game to be too demanding, these changed are suggested to make the game less demanding (pick whichever is preferred):

- * Whenever a stack is over 3 high, it gets reduced to 3 high, as opposed to a choice of 1-3 high.
- * Eliminate movement based on how many pieces are in a column, or eliminate movement based on the height of a stack. Pick one or the other, not both.

About the Games on Half a Checkerboard Series:

The Games on Half a Checkerboard Series (and the games in it) is the creation of Rich Hutnik. It originated from an attempt by a game designer to adopt some of Rich Hutnik's prior game designs on other play areas to half a checkerboard. This initial attempt grew to create a mixture of games derived from classic game designs, to all new creations. Games in this Series all utilize half a regular 8 by 8 checkerboard and a mixture checkers and other common game equipment (such as dice or chess pieces). As of this time, there are a total of at least 25 games that either currently have their rules available, or are in development (to be released when ready). The list of the currently available games, and access to rules to these games, can be found here:

<http://boardgamegeek.com/geeklist/67989/games-in-the-games-on-half-a-checkerboard-series>