

FURTHER INFORMATION

Readers interested in learning more about Wari might like to consult the following books.

Bell, R. C. *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, vol. 1, pp. 116-121. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979.

Murray, H. J. R. *A History of Board-Games Other than Chess*, pp. 158-164 & 181-182.

Parlett, D. *The Oxford History of Board Games*, pp. 209-210. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Copyright © Damian Walker 2011 - <http://boardgames.cynningstan.org.uk/>

WARI

by Damian Walker

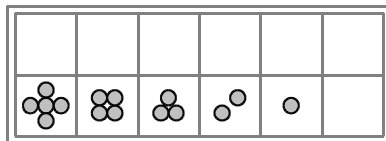
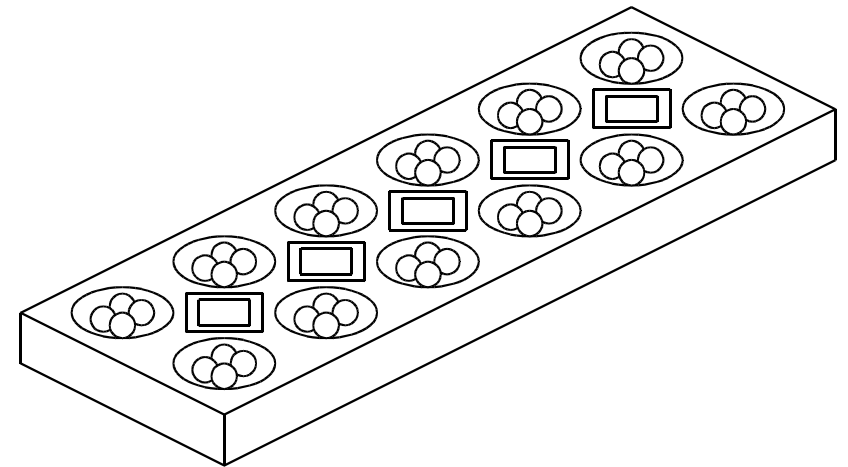


Illustration 3: it is impossible for South to play pieces into the north side of the board (see rule 11).

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

By far the largest family of board games in the world is mancala, and *wari* is the mancala game best known in the Western world. Wari

was played principally in West Africa, but has recently been widely publicised throughout the world.

HOW TO PLAY

There are hundreds of different games in the mancala family, but wari is probably one of the simplest to learn and play.

Starting the Game

1. The game is played on a board with two rows of six pits. Each row, and all the pieces it contains, belong to a particular player.

2. At the start of the game, each pit contains four pieces (see Illustration 1). All the pieces are the same colour, ownership of a piece being discerned by its location at a given time.

3. Players decide between themselves, at random or by agreement, who is to make the first move.

Moving Pieces

4. A player moves by choosing a pit on his side of the board, lifting all the pieces from it. Then, proceeding

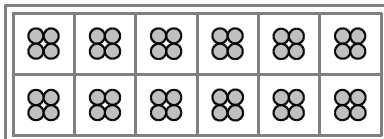


Illustration 1: the wari board set out for play.

anticlockwise around the board, the player drops one piece in each consecutive pit until his hand is empty. An example is shown in Illustration 2.

5. It stands to reason, therefore, that the player may not choose a pit that contains no pieces.

6. If twelve or more pieces were lifted, then the player when dropping the pieces will omit the pit from which those pieces were lifted.

7. A player must not make a move which leaves his opponent's pits completely empty (see also rule 11).

Capturing Pieces

8. If the player drops the last piece from his hand into a pit on his opponent's side of the board, and that pit then contains two or three

pieces, then those two or three pieces are captured by the player and removed from the board. This is shown in Illustration 2.

tion 2.

9. If the pit into which the previous piece was dropped is also on the opponent's side, and contains two or three pieces, then those pieces are also captured. This is repeated for each previous pit until:

- (i). the pit contains some other number of pieces, or
- (ii). the pit is on the player's own side of the board.

Ending the Game

10. The game is over if one player has captured more than half

of all the pieces. That player is the winner.

11. The game is also over if a player's opponent's row is empty, and the player has no possible move that provides his opponent with pieces to play (see Illustration 3 for an example). In that case, the player captures all remaining pieces and the game ends. The winner is the player who has captured the most pieces.

12. The game is drawn if both players have captured exactly half the pieces.

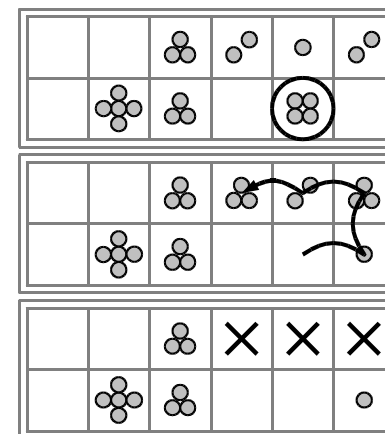


Illustration 2: a sequence, top to bottom, showing a move with captures.