

FURTHER INFORMATION

Readers wishing to know more about the game of seega may like to consult the following books for information:

Bell, R. C. *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, vol. 1, pp. 82-84. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979.

Botermans, J et al. *The World of Games*, pp. 122-123. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1989.

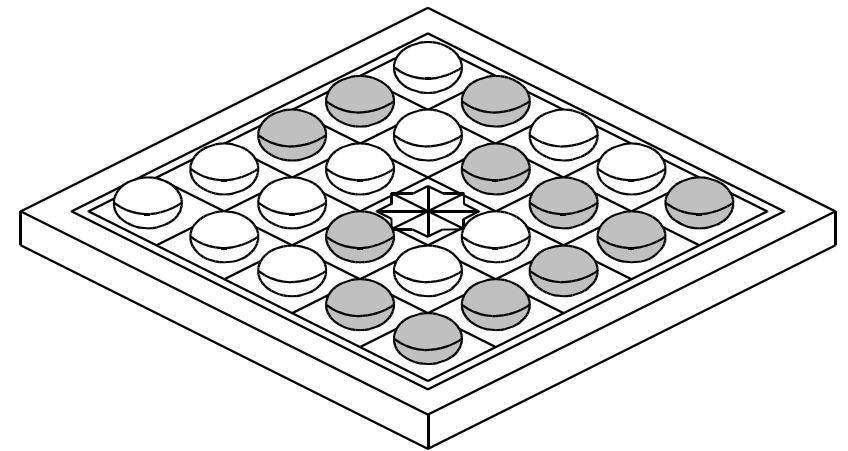
Murray, H. J. R. *A History of Board-Games Other Than Chess*, pp. 54-55. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Parlett, D. *The Oxford History of Board Games*, p. 238. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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SEEGA

by Damian Walker



INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

Egypt was a source of many interesting games in ancient times, but its inventiveness has continued into the modern age. The game of *seega* was apparently unknown in the 17th century, but became popular in the early 19th century, only to decline in its homeland late in the 20th.

The game was more a pastime of the poor than the rich. Boards were scratched into the temple stones at Kurna, but they appear to be relatively recent and of poor quality. The game was more usu-

ally played with pebbles on a lattice scratched into the ground.

The game is especially interesting as it resembles games played in ancient Greece and Rome, *petteia* and *latrunculi*. The Greeks claimed that *petteia* came from Egypt, and it would be tempting to think that this game of *seega* is the one the Greeks adopted, but there is very little evidence to support this. It is therefore possible that the resemblance is entirely coincidental.

HOW TO PLAY

There are some variations in different countries, but the rules that follow are a fair summary.

Starting the Game

1. Seega is played on a board of 5 squares by 5, the central square of which is marked with a pattern, as shown in Illustration 1. The board starts empty, and each player starts with 12 pieces of his own colour in hand.

2. Players de-

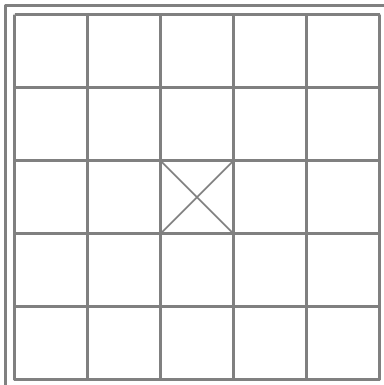


Illustration 1: the empty seega board.

cide at random who begins.

3. Players take turns to place 2 pieces each anywhere on the board, except for the central square.

4. When all pieces are placed, the second player begins the movement phase.

Moving the Pieces

5. A piece may move one square in any horizontal or vertical direction, as shown in Illustration 2. Diagonal moves are not al-

lowed.

6. In this phase pieces may move onto the central square.

7. If a player is unable to move, his opponent must take an extra turn and create an opening.

Capturing Enemies

8. If a player in his move traps an enemy piece between two of his own, the enemy is captured and removed from the board. Diagonal entrapment does not count here.

9. After moving a piece to capture an enemy, the player may continue to move the same piece while it can make further captures.

10. If, when moving a piece, two or three enemies become simultaneously trapped, then all these trapped enemies are captured and removed from the board.

11. It is permissible to move a piece between two enemies without its being harmed. One of the enemies must move away and back

again to effect a capture.

12. A piece on the central square is immune from capture, but may itself be used to capture enemy pieces.

Ending the Game

13. The game is won by the player who has captured all his enemy's pieces.

Variations

The game is often played on a 7x7 board with 24 pieces for each player, and on a 9x9 board with 40 pieces each.

Some writers have noted that it is possible to force a draw by creating a straight, impenetrable barrier

of pieces with no enemies behind. To prevent this, players may agree beforehand that such a situation gives victory to the player with the most pieces remaining on the board at the end of the game.

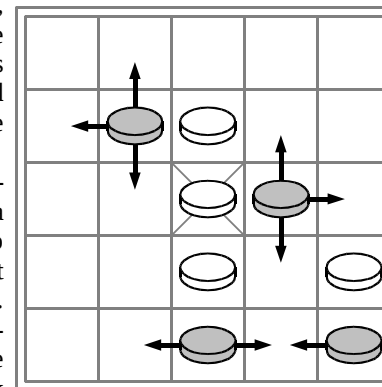


Illustration 2: a sample position with all possible moves for black. The central white piece will not be captured even if sandwiched, but the white piece above it, and the one on the right, can be captured. In this example there are no multiple captures available to the black player.