

### FURTHER INFORMATION

The following books, from which the above information comes, may prove useful to the interested reader.

Bell, R. C. *The Boardgame Book*, pp. 96-97. London: Marshall Cavendish Ltd., 1979.

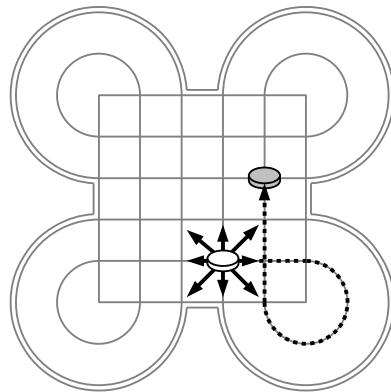
Bell, R. C. *Discovering Old Board Games*, pp. 32-33. Aylesbury: Shire Publications, Ltd., 1980.

Parlett, D. *The Oxford History of Board Games*, pp. 249-250. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

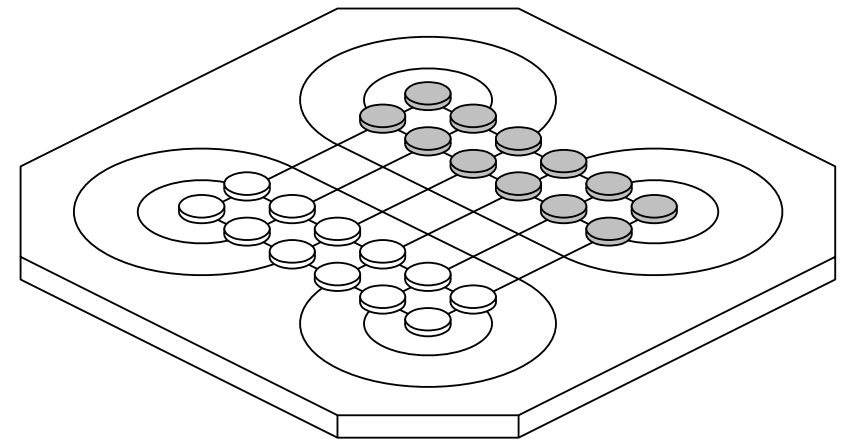
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## SURAKARTA

by Damian Walker



*Illustration 3: the white piece can move in any of the eight directions shown. It can also capture the white piece by sliding along the dotted path. In this nearly empty board, the white piece could slide in any of the other cardinal directions and eventually hit the black piece.*



## INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

The island of Java has given the world the peculiar and interesting game of *surakarta*. This game is named after an ancient town on the island, and is remarkable by the unusual way in which the pieces capture one another.

Traditionally, the game was played on a grid drawn into the sand, using stones and cowrie shells as pieces. Its origin is uncertain,

but it may have developed from the game of *alquerque*, a forerunner of draughts. Surakarta, however, plays very differently to draughts.

The game was relatively unknown in the English-speaking world until the latter half of the twentieth century. It was first described in English by R. C. Bell, from a French source.

## HOW TO PLAY

The rules for this game are very simple, and luckily, as the game was traditionally played in only one area of the world, there are no variations to complicate matters.

### Beginning the Game

1. The surakarta board consists of a grid of six lines by six, with two concentric circular tracks at each corner, as shown in Illustration 1.

2. Each player starts with twelve pieces, which are placed on the intersections nearest to him – see Illustration 2.

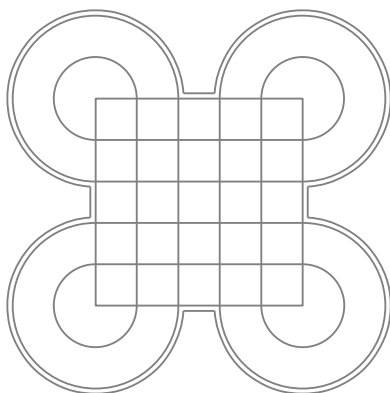


Illustration 1: the empty surakarta board.

3. Players decide at random who is to move first.

### Moving the Pieces

4. In a turn, a player may move one of his pieces from one intersection to an adjacent intersection, horizontally, vertically or diagonally, as shown in Illustration 3.

5. Pieces may not jump over one another, and only one piece may occupy an intersection at any particular time.

6. The circular tracks are used only for capture; pieces cannot use them for ordinary

movement.

### Capturing Enemies

7. A piece captures an enemy by sliding along a line, around a circular track, and further along the straight line until it lands on the enemy piece. The enemy is then removed from the board. An example is shown in Illustration 3.

8. A capturing move may take in more than one of the circular

tracks. It must, however, take in at least one.

9. There is no jumping in a capturing move; if another piece blocks the way then that capture cannot be made.

### Winning the Game

10. A player has won the game when he captures all of his opponent's pieces.

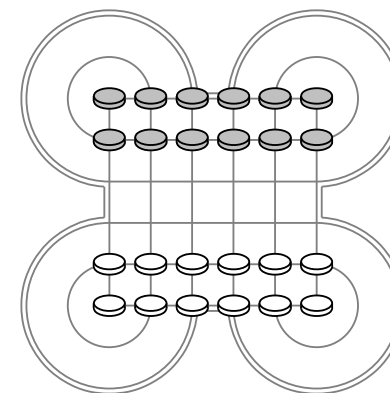


Illustration 2: pieces set out for play.