

Obelisk

1. Object

Obelisk is a two-player strategy board game, and each player controls three stones.

The largest base stone is the *cornerstone*.

The smaller rectangular stone is the *keystone*.

The pyramid-shaped stone is the *capstone*.

The object of the game is to construct an obelisk by first stacking the keystone atop the cornerstone, and then by stacking the capstone atop this foundation.

The first player to construct his or her obelisk is the winner, and if a player has no legal moves, he or she immediately loses the game.

1.1. Setup

Each player sits across from each other on opposite ends of the game board, with the narrower edge of the board closest.

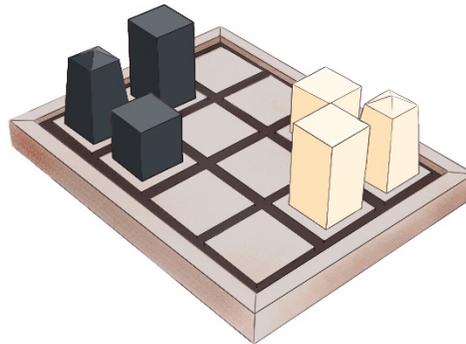


Fig. 1.1. For each player, set up the game board as follows: the capstone is placed in the closest rightmost corner; the keystone is placed directly ahead of the capstone; and the cornerstone is placed immediately to the left of the capstone.

2. Movement

Players alternate turns, with the player in control of the black stones opening play.

2.1. Forward and Backward

All stones—including the constructed foundation—may *only* be moved forward (toward the opponent) or backward (away from the opponent) in the following ways.

2.1.1. Forward

Any stone may be moved forward diagonally to an unoccupied adjacent square.

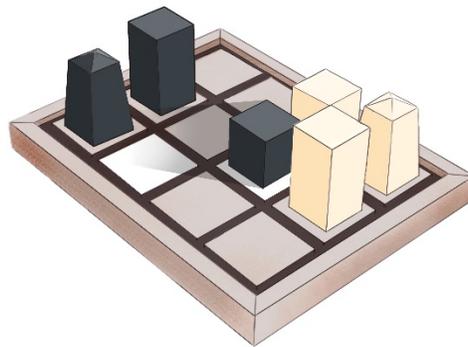


Fig. 2.1.1. The black player's keystone moves forward diagonally toward the white player.

2.1.2. Backward

Any stone may be moved straight backward to an unoccupied adjacent square.

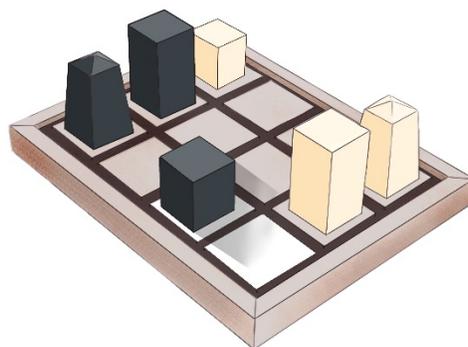


Fig. 2.1.2. The black player's keystone moves straight backward away from the white player.

2.2. Constructing the Obelisk

The *foundation* of the obelisk must be constructed first. To construct a foundation, a player moves the keystone atop his or her own cornerstone. Once the foundation is constructed, a player may then construct the final *obelisk* by moving the capstone atop the foundation. However, a player may *not* move the capstone atop his or her own keystone or cornerstone prior to constructing the foundation.

Once the foundation of an obelisk is constructed, it cannot be deconstructed, and it moves as a single stone.

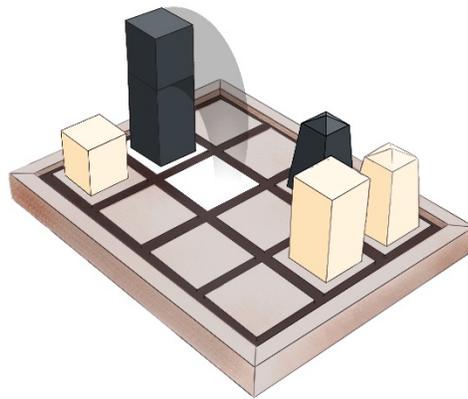


Fig. 2.2.a. The foundation: the black player's keystone moves straight backward atop the cornerstone, constructing the foundation of the obelisk.

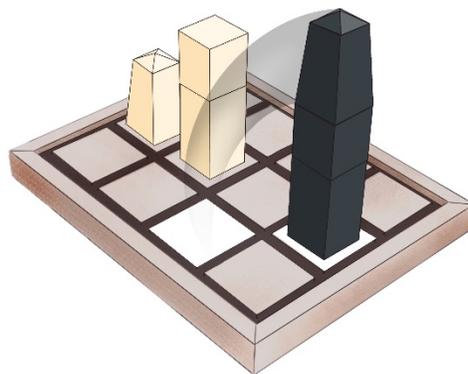


Fig. 2.2.b. The obelisk: the black player's capstone moves forward diagonally atop the foundation, constructing the obelisk and winning the game.

2.3. Vault and Pillar

There are two special movements, *vault* and *pillar*. Even with these special movements, stones can only ever be moved forward diagonally or straight backward.

2.3.1. Vault

Any stone, even a foundation, can *vault* an adjacent stone or foundation and move to the next square *if and only if* that square is unoccupied. If *any other stone* occupies the next adjacent square, a player may not vault an adjacent stone; you cannot vault and construct a pillar, foundation, or obelisk in the same movement.

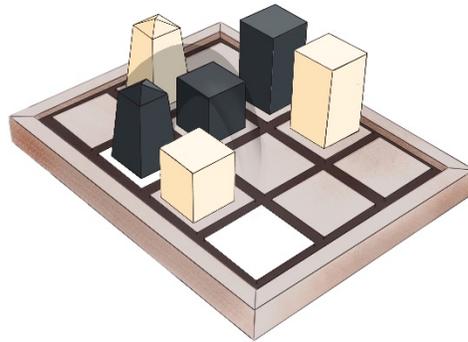


Fig. 2.2.1. The black player's capstone moves straight backward, vaulting the white keystone.

2.3.2. Pillar

A player may *pillar* an opposing player's cornerstone, keystone, or foundation by moving his or her capstone—and only the capstone—on top of the opposing player's cornerstone, keystone, or foundation; however, this player must deconstruct the pillar on his or her next turn. If this player cannot deconstruct the pillar because there are no legal moves, he or she immediately loses the game.

On the turn before a player deconstructs his or her pillar, the opposing player may move the pillared stone normally, with the other player's capstone remaining on top of the stone.

To deconstruct the pillar on the next turn, the player must do *only one* of the following movements, moving the capstone forward diagonally or straight backward: (a) move the capstone to an unoccupied adjacent square or vault an adjacent stone; (b) move the capstone atop a foundation to construct the final obelisk; or (c) move the capstone to successively pillar an opposing player's stone.

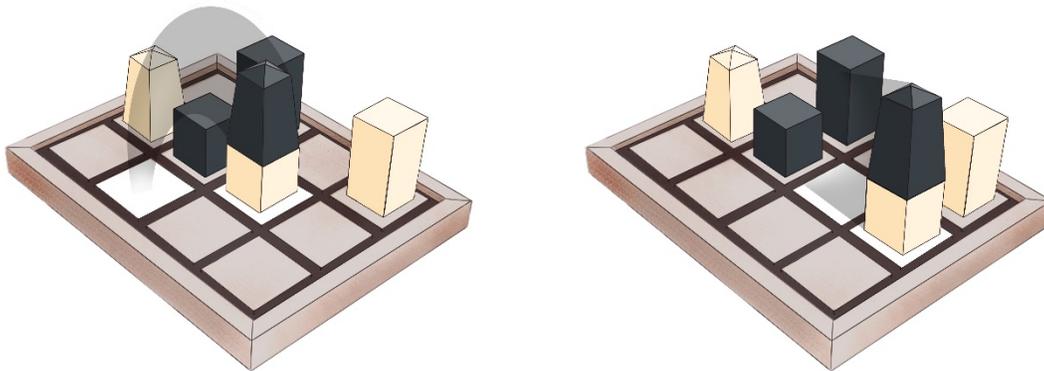


Fig. 2.3.2.a. Constructing the pillar: on the left, the black player's capstone moves forward diagonally and is placed atop the white player's keystone; on the right, the white player may then move his or her keystone normally on the next turn, before the black player must deconstruct the pillar on his or her following turn.

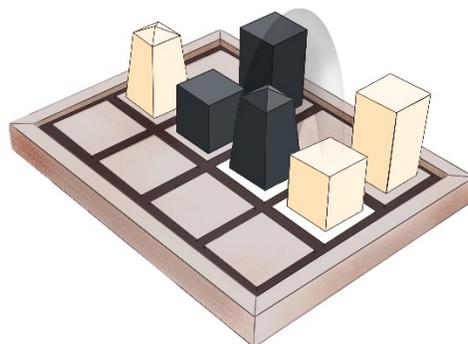


Fig. 2.3.2.b. Deconstructing the pillar: The black player's capstone moves straight backward to an unoccupied adjacent square.

3. Symmetry

Symmetry must be maintained at all times, and symmetry refers to the arrangement of two or more respective stones on the same horizontal or vertical axis of the game board. As long as *any two* respective stones are symmetrical after *any* stone is moved, symmetry is maintained. Movements that would result in no symmetrical stones are not allowed, and if a player cannot maintain symmetry because there are no legal moves available, he or she loses the game.

Before beginning gameplay, players choose one of three game modes—*open play*, *bounded play*, or *balanced play*—each of which requires players to maintain a certain type of symmetry: *color symmetry*, *shape symmetry*, or both.

To maintain *color symmetry*, at least two of a player's own stones must be arranged on the same axis after any stone is moved. To maintain *shape symmetry*, at least one of a player's stones must be arranged on the same axis as the opposing player's respective like, or matching, stone—cornerstone to cornerstone, keystone to keystone, or capstone to capstone. For example, if one player's cornerstone is arranged on the same axis as the opposing player's cornerstone after any stone is moved, shape symmetry is maintained.

For *open play*, movements must result in *either* color symmetry *or* shape symmetry.

For *bounded play*, movements must result in *at least* color symmetry.

For *balanced play*, movements must result in *both* color symmetry *and* shape symmetry.

Once a player's foundation is constructed, color symmetry is continually maintained for that player for the duration of the game. A foundation can also maintain shape symmetry with either an opposing cornerstone, keystone, or foundation (but not with the opposing capstone).

The final obelisk must also maintain symmetry, though for open and bounded play, color symmetry would already be maintained by that player's foundation. For balanced play, however, the obelisk must maintain shape symmetry with any of an opposing player's stones or foundation.

3.1. Color Symmetry



Fig. 3.1. Color symmetry: the black player's cornerstone and keystone are maintaining color symmetry along the central vertical axis; the white player's cornerstone and keystone are maintaining color symmetry along the horizontal axis as well.

3.2. Shape Symmetry

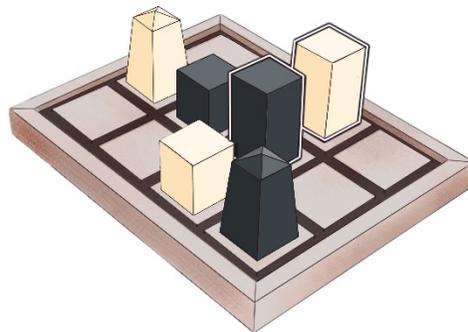


Fig. 3.2. Shape symmetry: the opposing cornerstones are maintaining shape symmetry along the horizontal axis.