June 20, 1939. W. I. BARTON 2,162,876

BOARD GAME APPARATUS

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FIG. I.

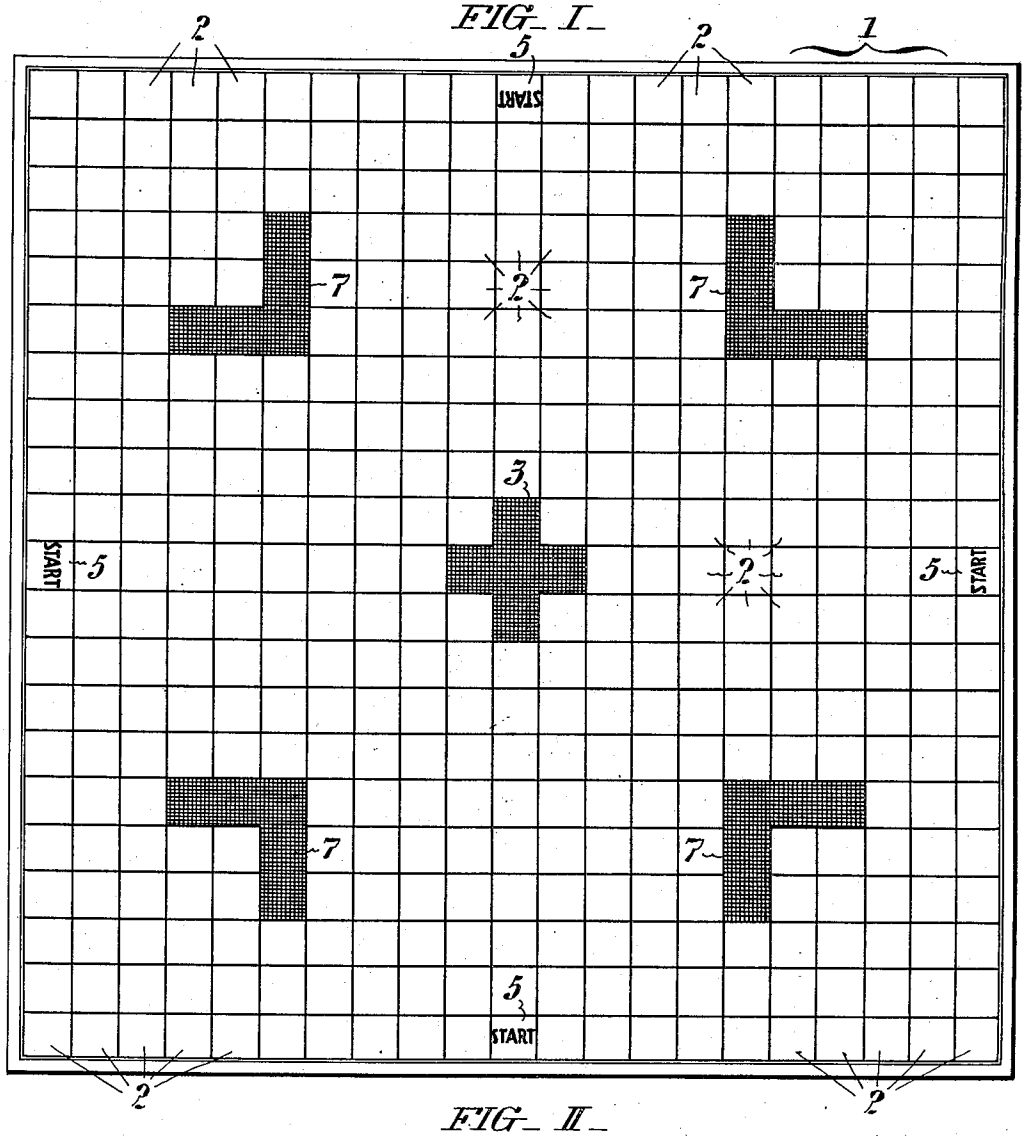

FIG. II.

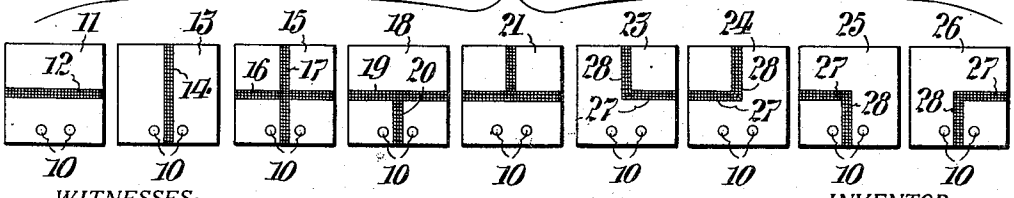

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FIG. III.

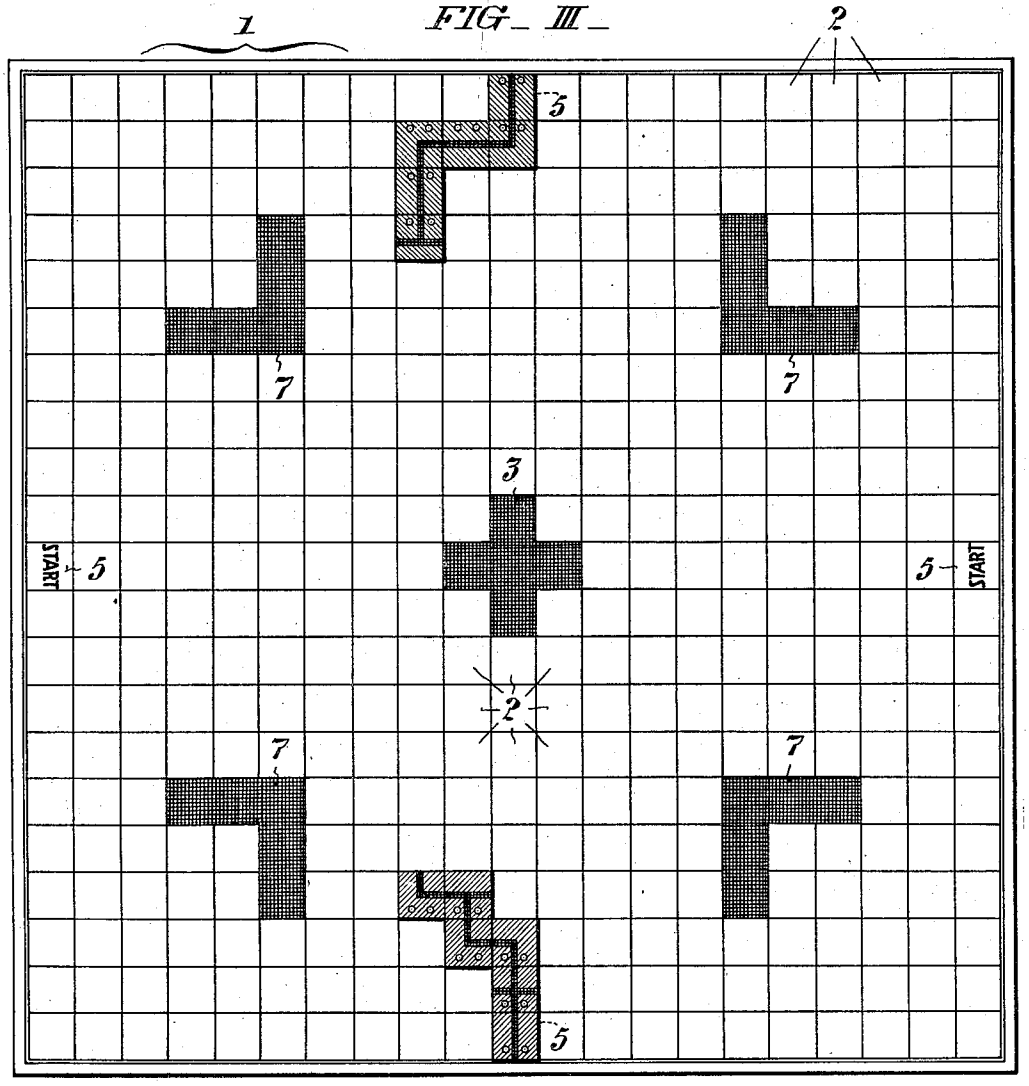


FIG. VI.

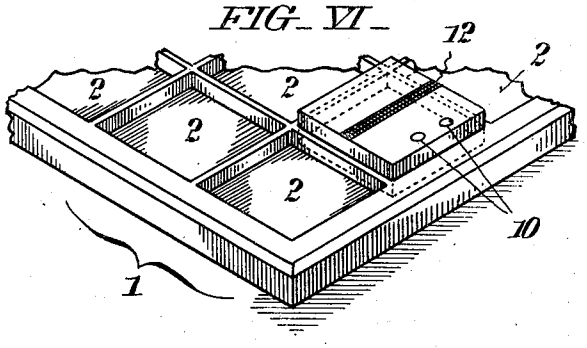
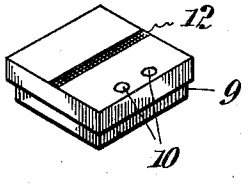


FIG. VII.



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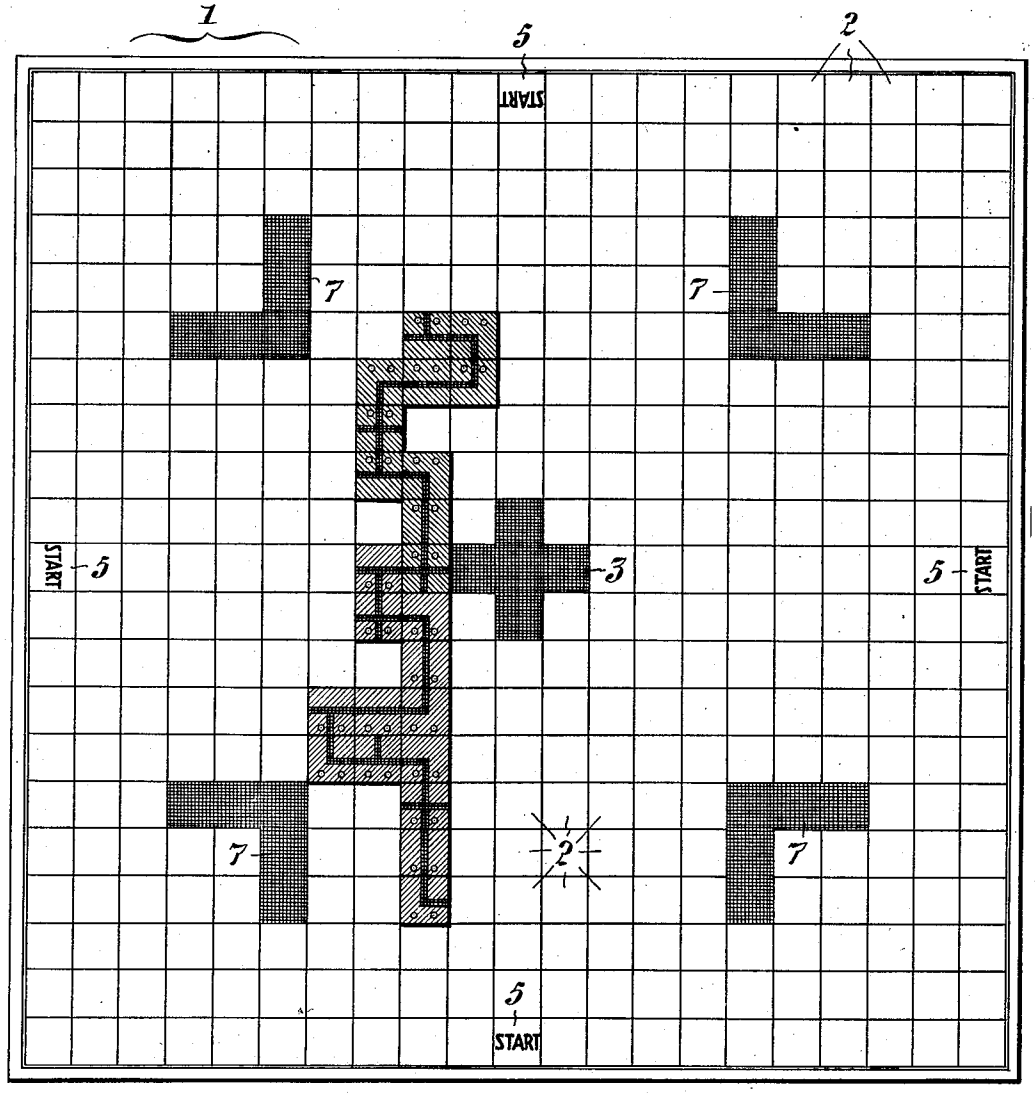
BOARD GAME APPARATUS

Filed Sept. 7, 1937 4 Sheets-Sheet 3

FIG. IV.



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BOARD GAME APPARATUS

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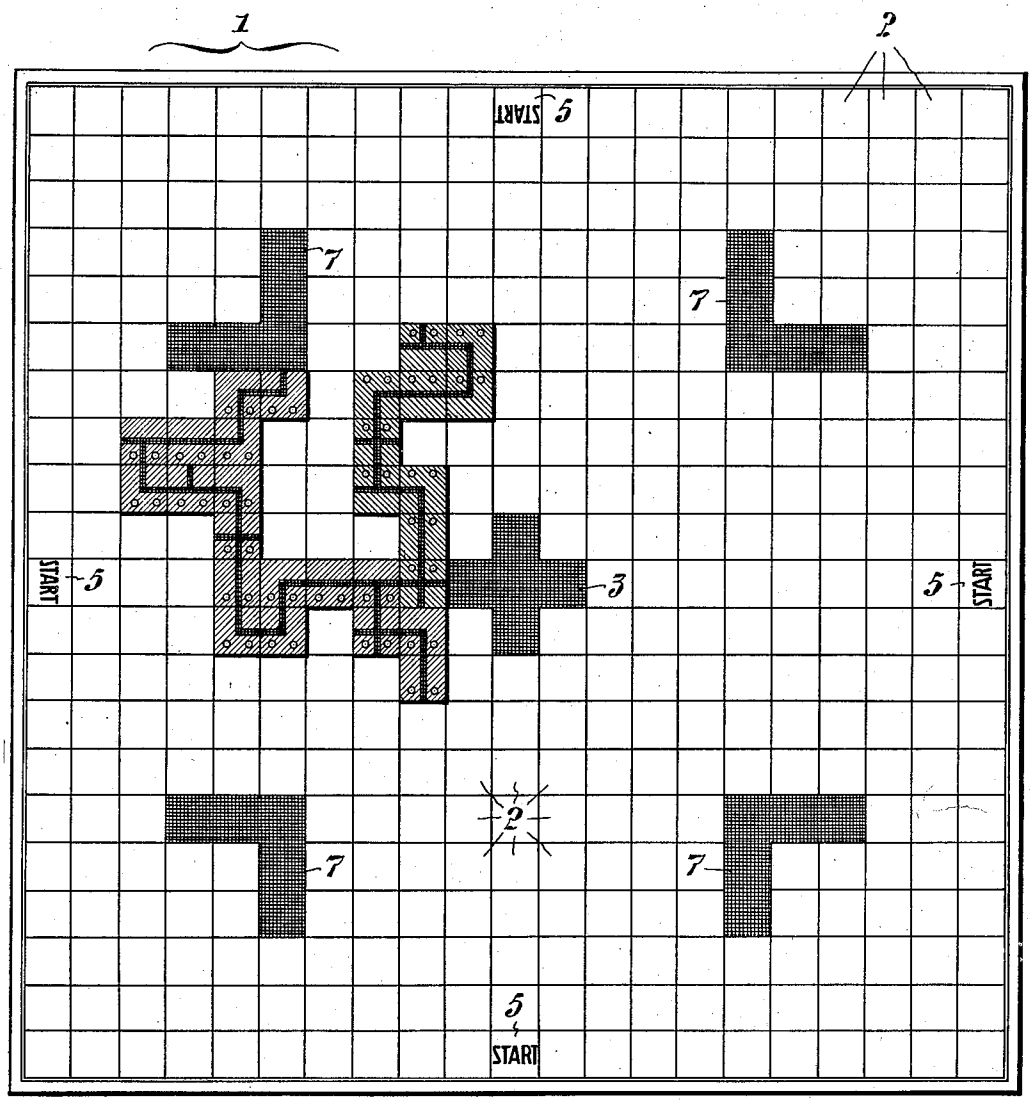
FIG. V.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,162,876

BOARD GAME APPARATUS

William I. Barton, Camden, N. J.

Application September 7, 1937, Serial No. 162,680

2 Claims. (Cl. 273—131)

This invention relates to games generally and more specifically to games played on a board with movable pieces of a definite character. With many games the complex character of the rules and the vagueness and remoteness of the object are obstacles precluding the ready acceptance of the game by new players. The costliness and complexity of the actual physical equipment itself is a serious detriment in many of the games known to the art today. Further, much of the game spirit is lost when the mind must be loaded down with involved and complex rules and a great variety of game implements.

The object of my invention is to provide a game which is governed by a few simple rules and has an obvious and simple object to guide the play. A further object is the provision of a game having simple and inexpensive equipment. A further object is the provision of a game which will allow full expression of the game spirit untrammeled by involved and complex rules and by a confusing variety of equipment. Thus the main object of my invention is to provide a simple and inexpensive means for expressing the game spirit and the spirit of play without harassing a mind already fatigued by work.

In order that the principle of the invention may be readily understood, I have disclosed a preferred embodiment thereof in the accompanying drawings.

Fig. I is a plan view of the board showing the positioning of obstacle areas and the starting points.

Fig. II is a plan view of the nine different types of playing pieces which each player has in his set of eighteen pieces.

Fig. III is a plan view of the playing pieces arranged on the board showing a partially played game between two players.

Fig. IV is a plan view of same showing the termination of a game with one player unable to move and before the winner has taken his scoring moves.

Fig. V is a plan view of same showing the position of pieces after fourteen scoring moves have been taken by one who has blocked his opponent.

Fig. VI is a partial perspective view of a playing piece in place on a board with recessed squares.

Fig. VII is a partial perspective view of a playing piece formed with shoulders on its bottom edges to fit into recessed squares on the board.

In the following detailed description of the embodiment shown in the above drawings, I shall employ specific terms, but it is to be understood that numerous changes may be made both in the board and the markings thereof and in the pieces, within the scope of the invention.

The board 1 may be formed of any suitable material, and may be of the folding type used commonly for checkers and chess. The board 1 is square and is marked with a relatively large number of areas 2, which for convenience I shall refer to as squares, although it is to be understood that the term "squares" is one of broad description and includes any suitable area whether they be square or of other desired form or size. In the disclosed construction of a board 1, I have represented a number of squares 2. The total number of squares in the present embodiment of my invention is 441. In the center of the board 1 an obstacle area or barrier 3 is formed in the shape of a cross by coloring three squares 2 in a vertical direction and in a horizontal direction in a way that they stand out from the other squares 2. It will be noted that the size of the board 1 is such that the obstacle area 3 is nine squares from the edge of the board 1 on all sides. It has been found that this amount of playing area is most satisfactory, but, of course, a less playing area might be used if desired.

In the middle of each side of the board 1, the center square is selected as the starting point or square 5 and marked "Start". In order that this square 5 may be in the center, the board 1 should have an odd number of squares to a side.

Four other obstacle areas or barriers 7 are also provided in the corner portions of the board 1 as shown in the drawings. These areas 7 are in the shape of right angles resembling the carpenter's square and are positioned so that nine squares of playing area separates the areas 7 from each other. This separation space may be varied at will, of course, but the above proportion has been found most satisfactory in practice.

The matter of the size of the squares 2 and the board 1 is to a considerable extent a matter of choice. Squares 2 measuring a half-inch on a side make a good size of board 1 for traveling. For general purposes, however, it is recommended that the squares 2 be made three-quarters of an inch on a side. Some advantage is found in recessing each square to receive the playing pieces when the game is to be used in the open or in traveling, see Figs. VI and VII.

The playing pieces are of nine different types, each player having two of each type, see Fig. II. They may be made from wood and faced with Celluloid carrying the distinctive marking of each piece. Of course other types of material may be

used as is well known in the art for making this kind of playing block. The pieces should be of substantially the same size as the squares 2 of the board 1.

If the squares 2 are recessed the ridges between squares should be narrow and the pieces should fit easily into the recessed areas, see Fig. VI. It is important that the pieces fit close together when in place on the board 1 in order that the markings on the pieces will be in substantial continuation over a number of pieces. In order to further this end, I suggest that corresponding shoulders 9 be formed on the bottom edges of the pieces as shown in Fig. VII. This will allow the bottom part of the piece to fit into the recessed area in the board while the top part bearing the identifying marks will be in close proximity to adjacent pieces.

Each player has a complete set of eighteen blocks of nine functionally different types which he places on the board individually as the play progresses, starting with the square 5 marked "Start". Each piece has an orienting mark 10 placed on one edge of the piece to designate which edge must be kept toward the player in playing. It is to be noted that an orienting mark 10 is not functionally necessary on the cross piece but may be put on for the sake of uniformity. This mark 10 is in the form of two dots spaced horizontally as shown in the drawings, but any other designation could be adopted. These dots must be toward the player who plays the piece.

Each piece bears on its face a directional line of different shape and direction with reference to the orienting mark. The horizontal piece 11 has a directional line 12 running across the piece halfway between the edge which has the orienting mark 10 and the opposite edge. The vertical piece 13 has a direction line 14 centrally placed and vertical with reference to the edge of the piece having the orienting mark 10. The cross piece 15 has central direction lines 16 and 17 running from the middle of each edge of the piece to the middle of the opposite edge. The T-piece 18 has a center line 19 running horizontally with reference to the edge bearing the orienting mark 10, and a line 20 running down from the center of the first mentioned line to the middle of the edge bearing the orienting mark 10. The inverted T-piece 21 is the same as the T-piece 18 except that the T-shape is inverted with reference to said orienting mark 10. The remaining four pieces 23, 24, 25 and 26 are corner pieces which are all different. Each corner is formed by two lines 27 and 28 running from the center of the piece to two intersecting edges making a right angle. It is obvious that these directional lines control the positioning of the pieces in a series relation on the board allowing a limited choice in the player. I have now described the game implements and I will next describe the rules of the play and then describe the playing of the game.

The playing of the game is governed by the following simple rules.

The game may be played by two, three, or four players, each of whom will use a set of blocks of a different color. Each set of blocks comprises eighteen pieces of nine functionally different types. The objective of each player is to skillfully place his blocks on the playing board so as to force his opponents into a position from which it is impossible to move.

Beginning with the square marked "Start" the players alternately place one block at a time on the board. The design on each block played must be a continuation of that on the block previously played, and the double dots must be on the side of the block toward the player. No block may be placed on a square occupied by another block, or on any of the five obstacle areas or barriers.

After a player has placed six blocks on the board, he may reserve his unused blocks by using those on the board, moving the end block to the front of the line. This may be done as often as the player wishes. When a player is eliminated from the game, his blocks remain on the board as an additional obstacle area and hazard to the remaining players.

After the first player is eliminated from the game, a score of 1 point is allowed each player remaining in the game for every additional move he can make. For example: A, B, C, and D are four players. A is eliminated. B, C, and D continue the game. B is able to make 2 more moves after A is stopped, C—5 more than A, and D—8 more than A. Their respective scores would be A—0, B—2, C—5, and D—8.

The game may be played by each person playing for himself or with a partner. It is obvious that the above rules may be varied considerably without departing from the spirit of the invention. For example, the following modification is suggested for two players only.

When there are only two players the above rules may be modified if desired as follows:

Play completely around the cross in the center of the board and back to the original starting point, so that a line, on the final block played, ends at the edge of the board. During the game, a player may be temporarily checked by his opponent's blocks being in his path, but he may play again when the opponent wishes to move them out of the way. The player first to finish scores 2 points for each additional move made by the opponent. In addition, each player receives a score of 1 point for every block he has not used. If one player is unable to return to the starting point, a score of 10 points is allowed the player able to finish. In this case, the number of moves does not count. In event that both players fail to return, the game is declared a draw and no score is allowed.

The objective of each player is simply to bar another player so that he cannot move. The score depends upon how many moves can be made by the one who successfully bars another. In playing the game the skill of governing the directional progress of a series of pieces determines the winner. The players start by putting a piece on the starting square and then place the pieces down in turn in a way which will eventually bar the opponent or opponents and yet leave the way clear for further moves by the one doing the barring. In Fig. III a game between two players is shown in progress. In Fig. IV one player has barred the other and has room for further moves to determine his score. In Fig. V the result of these scoring moves is shown. The winner was able to move fourteen times after barring his opponent and hence his score was fourteen.

Thus my invention provides a game which is direct in its objective and simple in the rules governing its play. The structural simplicity and low cost of manufacture are apparent. The simplicity of the play in no way detracts from the part that skill can play in the game.

Having thus described one illustrative embodiment of the invention, it is to be understood that although specific terms are employed, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense and not for purposes of limitation, the scope of the invention being set forth in the following claims.

Having thus described my invention, I claim:

1. A game comprising a board having squares, starting points and obstacle areas marked thereon, in combination with a plurality of sets of functionally designated playing pieces supported on said board, some of said playing pieces being designated as functionally different by lines of different configurations, said pieces being adapted for play on said board in a series relation with other pieces and with relation to said squares, starting points and obstacle areas, said functional designations of individual pieces in series forming a continuous playing line, each said set of playing pieces comprising the following functionally different types: a horizontal piece, a vertical piece, a T-piece, an inverted T-piece, a cross piece, and four corner pieces, each said piece bearing functional directing lines extending over the face thereof and orienting marks.

2. A game comprising a board having squares marked thereon, certain of said squares being indicated as starting points, others being indicated as obstacle areas and the remainder as playing squares, said obstacle areas being disposed centrally and in each corner of said board, in combination with a plurality of sets of freely movable playing pieces supported on said board, each of said playing pieces being designated as functionally different by lines of different configurations and bearing orienting marks to designate that edge of the piece which is nearest the player playing the piece, said pieces being adapted for play on said board in a series relation with other pieces and with relation to said squares, said functional designations of individual pieces in series forming a continuous playing line.

WILLIAM I. BARTON.