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GAME BOARD WITH PLAYING POSITIONS ARRANGED ABOUT A CENTRAL VACANT AREA

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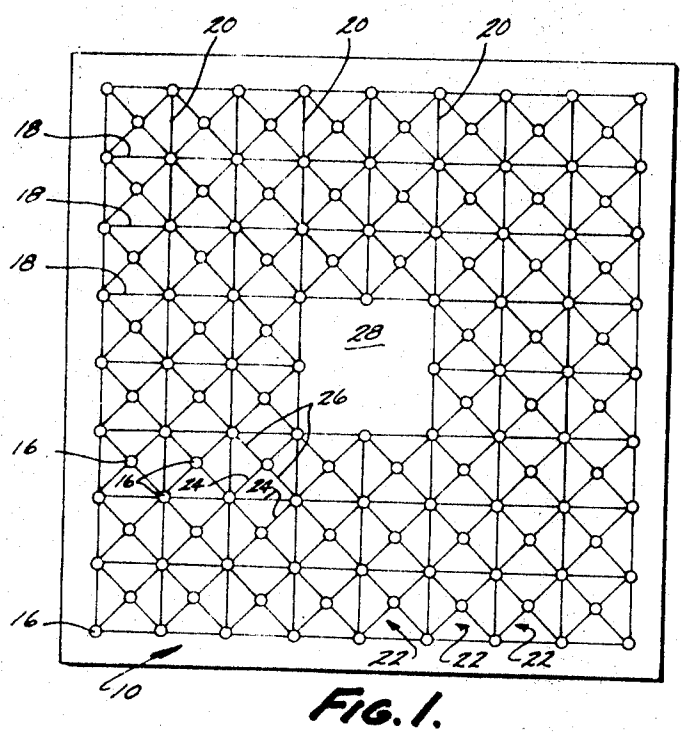


FIG. 1.

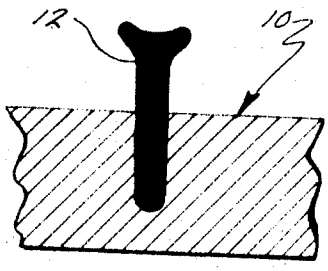


FIG. 2.

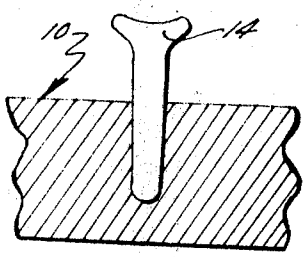


FIG. 3.

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GAME BOARD WITH PLAYING POSITIONS ARRANGED ABOUT A CENTRAL VACANT AREA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A game apparatus comprised of a playing board and sets of playing pieces, the board having a large number of spaced playing positions, each for placement of a single playing piece, arranged at the corners and centers of a plurality of contiguous mutually aligned squares and defining a continuous rectilinear loop having a central area devoid of playing positions. The loop so formed has a width around its circumference consisting substantially of the same number of aligned playing positions as there are playing pieces in each such set.

This invention relates to games, and more particularly to games of the type in which a game board is used and playing pieces are moved in alternating steps upon the board, with the ultimate goal of the game being the arranging by one player of his playing pieces in a prescribed manner upon the board before the other player can do so.

Numerous games have in the past been provided which make use of playing pieces which are moved upon a playing board from position to position in a prescribed manner, until a predetermined winning position is finally obtained. In most such games, the playing pieces of one set, moved by a first adversary, must be jumped over the playing pieces of the second set, being moved by a second adversary, as for example is true in the ancient game of checkers. As is well known, most such games are based on the underlying aim of capturing the playing pieces of an opponent by removing them from the board when they have been jumped.

The game of the present invention utilizes a game board and playing pieces which are moved about on the board, but it does not involve either the capturing or the jumping of an opponent's playing pieces. Instead, the playing pieces of the present invention are freely movable about individually, from any one placement on the board to any other, with the moves of one opponent being alternated with the moves of another or other opponents. There must be at least two players but there may be three, four, or even more.

The desired goal of the present game is for a player to succeed in arranging all of his playing pieces, normally four, in either of two winning formations. In the first such formation, all playing pieces are placed in adjacent playing positions falling along one of a plurality of straight lines arranged on the board. In the second such formation, four playing pieces are arranged in separate positions to form a square. As the game is played, however, the opponent or opponents of the aforesaid player employ blocking tactics to prevent such player from obtaining either of the indicated formations, while simultaneously striving to obtain the winning formations themselves. The playing of the game is enhanced by the arrangement of the playing positions upon the game board, which limits the various lines along which the playing pieces may be arranged and channels the possible moves available to a player by restricting his otherwise complete freedom.

Accordingly, it is a major object of the present invention to provide a new form of game of the general type which has been noted, which has new and different rules of play and new playing conditions when compared to other previous games.

A further important object of the invention is to provide a game board for such a new game, having a particular playing surface area thereon comprised of a plurality of playing positions arranged or grouped in a predetermined manner.

The foregoing major objects of the invention and the advantages provided thereby, together with other objects and advantages equally a part thereof, will become increasingly apparent following consideration of the ensuing specification and its appended claims, particularly when taken in conjunction with the accompanying illustrative drawings setting forth a preferred embodiment of the invention.

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is an overhead plan view of the game board, showing the locations of the playing positions and the playing patterns defined thereby;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged, fragmentary, sectional view of one of the playing positions on the board of FIG. 1 and showing a first playing piece; and

FIG. 3 is an enlarged, fragmentary, sectional view of one of the playing positions on the board of FIG. 1 and showing a second playing piece.

Briefly stated, the new game provided by the invention comprises a playing board having a plurality of mutually spaced positions thereon, each for the placement of an individual playing piece, and at least two sets of playing pieces of at least four pieces per set, each such piece in a set being distingushable or differentiable from the pieces in the other such set or sets. The positions on the playing board are located in a number of spaced parallel vertical and parallel horizontal rows which intersect each other to define a plurality of contiguous or adjoining squares, and each such square has a playing position at its center also. The various squares so defined together form a continuous rectilinear loop comprising the playing field for the game, with the central area within the loop being devoid of playing positions and hence inaccessible to the placement of playing pieces.

Referring now in more detail to the drawings, the playing board is shown in FIG. 1 at **10**, and a playing piece **12**, colored black, of a first set of such pieces is shown in FIG. 2, whereas a playing piece **14**, shown as white in color, is illustrated in FIG. 3. The playing board **10** will be seen to have a plurality of mutually spaced playing positions **16** thereon, each preferably being in the form of a cylindrical hole or passage bored into the top of the board **10**, so as to receive a single one of the playing pieces **12** and **14**, which are of the same size even though they are visually differentiable, in color or otherwise.

The numerous playing positions **16** are arranged on the board **10** in a series of parallel horizontal lines **18** and a series of parallel vertical lines **20**, which intersect each other orthogonally to produce a number of contiguous squares **22**, i.e., squares which share mutual boundaries and mutual playing positions at their adjoining corners. The lines **18** and **20** may be, and preferably are, etched or drawn on the face of the playing board, in the manner shown. In addition to the playing positions defining each corner of the squares **22**, each square also has a playing position at its center, as shown. Mutually orthogonal diagonal lines **24** and **26** which extend through and connect the playing positions at the centers of the various squares are also preferably etched or drawn on the face of the board, similar to the horizontal lines **18** and the vertical lines **20** just mentioned.

It is to be observed that the squares **22** which are defined by the playing positions **16** themselves define a con-

tinuous square-cornered or rectilinear loop which circumscribes a central area **28** which is devoid of any playing positions. Further, the central area **28** is preferably centered within the aforesaid rectilinear loop, and is of a size such that the width of the loop is preferably such as to contain the same number of playing positions **16** as there are to be playing pieces in each set thereof. That is, in accordance with the specific embodiment being described, four of the playing pieces **12** or **14** make up each set thereof, and it will be noted that the horizontal and vertical lines extending transversely across the width of the rectilinear loop include four playing positions.

The game is played between opponents, of which there must be two but may be any small number greater than two, such as three, four, etc. Each opponent has his own set of playing pieces such as **12** or **14**. As stated, there should be four such pieces in each set, although larger sets could be used if so desired. In any event, the game is begun by one player taking a first one of his playing pieces and placing it into a desired playing position; in the example given, a peg **12** or **14** would be inserted into one of the holes or passages **16**. A second player then does likewise, as does a third and fourth, if such other players are involved. All players then follow this sequence of turns, until each of the pieces in each set is on the board.

As stated previously, the alternate objects of the game are for a player to succeed in placing his playing pieces so that four of them either form a straight line or else define a square. Such a straight line may be along any one of the horizontal lines **18**, any one of the vertical lines **20**, or along any of the diagonal lines **24** or **26**, so long as each playing piece occupies a successive playing position along such line. A square may be successfully formed by placing four playing pieces in any four playing position holes defining the corners of a square shape, so long as such holes are interconnected by any of the aforesaid lines on the board. This includes the four corners of the board, any of the squares designated by the numeral **22**, or any square shape whose corners are provided by the playing positions located at the centers of the squares **22** and whose sides lie on the diagonal lines **24** and **26**. The other opponents in turn attempt to block any such winning formation by moving the playing pieces in their own sets to interrupt the growing progressive alignment or formation of the first player, i.e., by blocking such attempted straight line or square formations. At the same time, such other players are themselves attempting to arrange the pieces in their own sets in a formation of the aforesaid character, and thus win the game themselves.

The game continues in this manner with the players taking alternating moves, and the playing becomes quite intense in a very short time, with various stratagems being developed and implemented, or attempted to be implemented, against the blocking tactics of the various opponents. In this connection, it is to be noted that the presence of the central area **28** on the playing board will interrupt many plans and strategies developed by a player in the course of a game, since frequently the movement of pieces during a game becomes quite rapid according to the intensity of the game, and the general flow of motion around the playing board will at times be rather swift. In the course of such rapid movement, a player is very likely to conceive of a plan for outwitting his opponent which, much to his dismay, is never fulfilled because he failed to take into consideration the presence of the central area on the board, which limits the number of lateral moves which can be made at any point on the board.

Once accustomed to the general principles of the game, players may wish to improvise along general lines according to their own personal preferences. For example, sets of playing pieces numbering six, for example, may be used, with the goal the same as described previously, i.e., the arrangement of four of the six such pieces in succession forming a straight line, or the forming of one of the aforesaid squares. This, of course, greatly increases the possible strategies and the general complexity of the game, and heightens the intensity evoked in playing it, particularly since each piece has complete freedom as far as the direction or distance in which it may be moved upon the board is concerned.

It is believed that, although somewhat similar in certain respects to a few of the very great number of games already in existence, the present game is quite new in its own right, when viewed from an overall perspective. It is entirely conceivable that upon examining the foregoing disclosure of this new game, those skilled in the art may devise embodiments of the concept involved which differ somewhat from the embodiment shown and described herein, or may make various changes in structural details to the present embodiment.

I claim:

1. A game apparatus comprising: a playing board having a plurality of mutually spaced positions indicated thereon, each for the placement of a playing piece; and at least two sets of playing pieces of at least four pieces per set; each of said pieces in such a set being visually differentiable from the pieces in the other set; said positions being located on said board to define the corners of a plurality of contiguous squares; said squares together defining a continuous rectilinear loop having a central area devoid of said playing positions; and said rectilinear loop having a width at points around its circumference corresponding to substantially the same number of said indicated playing positions in linear alignment as there are playing pieces in each of said sets thereof.

2. The game apparatus recited in claim **1**, wherein said playing board has indicated playing positions located at the center of each of said squares, in addition to those positions located at each of the corners of each square.

3. The game apparatus recited in claim **1**, wherein said playing board has visible indicia extending between each pair of adjacent playing positions.

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