

Dieter Stein

Accasta

Strategy game for 2 players aged 8 and up

Accasta is a tactical stacking game. At the start players set up their pieces on their side of the game board and try to occupy the castle on the opposite side. In the process they inevitably cross paths.

Components

- six-side game board composed of 37 tiles
- 2 sets of 20 pieces, black and white

Game Board

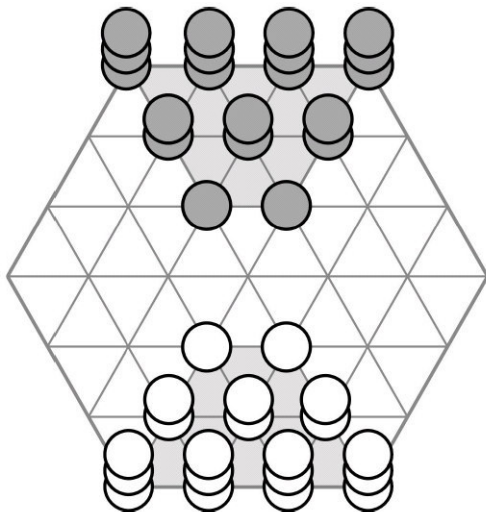
Accasta is played on a six-sided board. Pieces are placed on the intersections of lines. Nine intersections at either end of the board are marked as player castles.

Playing Pieces

Players choose colors.

To start the game all of the pieces are placed on the board. Most of them will be stacked.

White places 3 stacked pieces on each of a1, a2, a3 and a4, 2 pieces on b2, b3 and b4, as well as 1 piece on c3 and c4. Black makes the corresponding placements on his side of the board.



The starting placements

Basic rule: the top piece on a stack (the "controlling piece") determines which player owns the stack, that is, pieces are free and may move and which are captured.

Goal of the Game

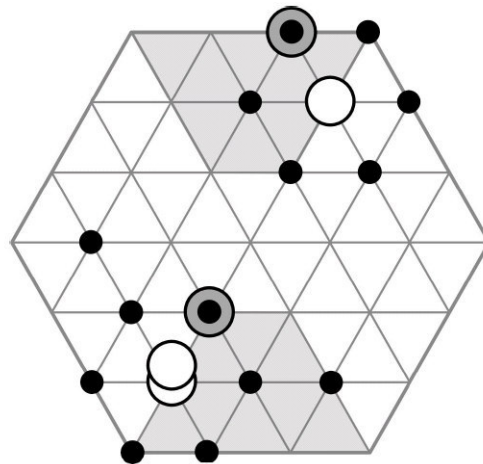
The players try to place 3 or more controlling pieces in the opposing castle.

Playing the Game

White takes the first turn and from then on turns alternate between the players. A player must always perform at least one action whenever he has a turn.

Moving Pieces

Pieces may move 1, 2 or 3 spaces, **but always in a straight line**. No piece or stacks **may ever be jumped over**, however it is possible (within certain restrictions explained below) to jump **on top of** other pieces (regardless of whether owned or opposing).



The controlling piece of the stack at b2 (lower left) may move up to 2 spaces, the singleton piece at f4 (upper right) may move 1 space.

The distance a piece may move corresponds to its height, ignoring opposing

pieces in its stack. For example, a singleton piece always moves only 1 space. A piece with one same-color piece somewhere in the stack below it (not necessarily immediately below) is in the second position and moves 1 or 2 spaces. A piece in the third position moves 1, 2 or 3 spaces.

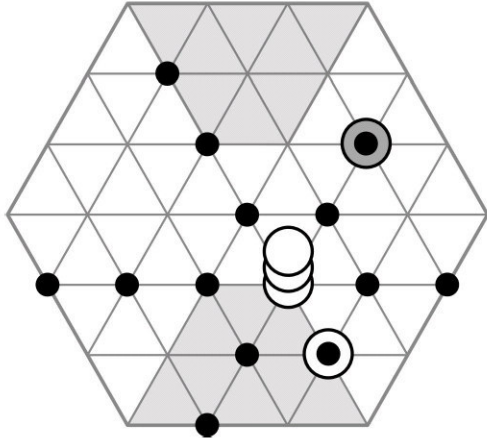


Illustration: The main piece of the white stack at c4 may move up to 3 spaces in a straight line, but not over other pieces (or stacks)

In the course of the game mixed stacks of black and white pieces will come into existence. The determination of the height for purposes of movement range counts only one's own pieces in a stack.

For example, a white main piece atop 3 black pieces may only move 1 space.

Jumping

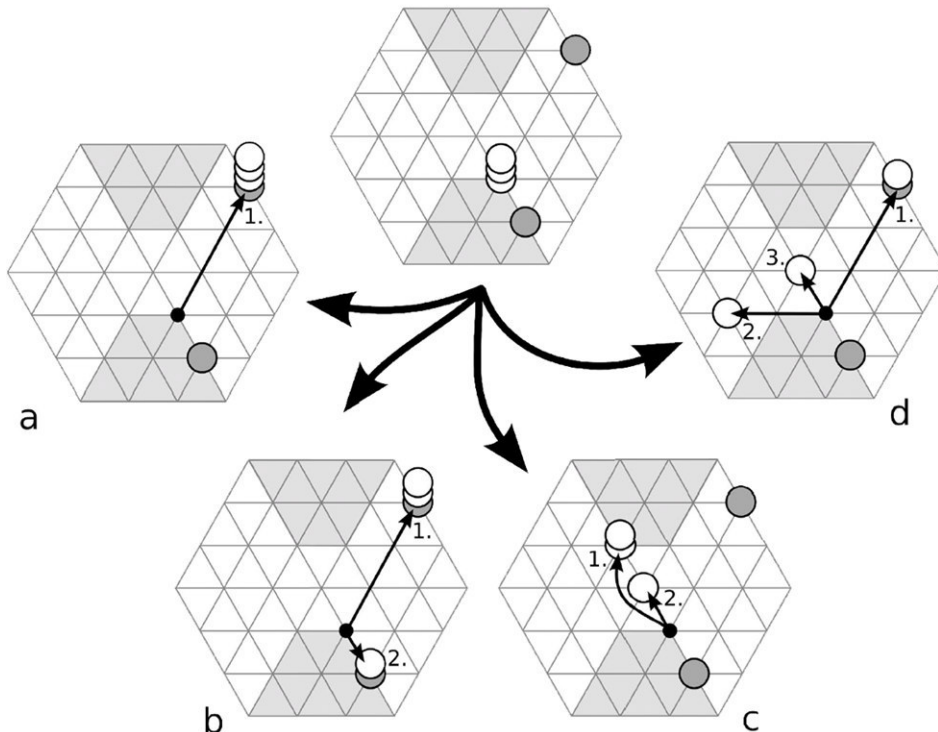
It is possible for pieces to jump on top of other pieces (regardless of whether owned or opposing). However, any move which would result is a stack having more than 3 pieces of the same color is not permitted.

Carrying Pieces

When it moves, a piece may carry along as many other owned and opposing pieces as desired so long as they are stacked under it. Thus a stack can be arbitrarily divided. However, the range of the piece in question is not altered by the number of pieces brought along, but is only determined by its height **before** the move.

Multiple Moves

If a stack is split and after the controlling piece moves off, the new controlling piece on a stack belongs to the current player, then this piece **may** also immediately move.



A selection of possible moves for the white stack of three at c4:

- a) the complete stack moves,
- b) the top two pieces are separated and move 3 spaces, then the remaining piece moves 1 space
- c) 2 moves in the same direction
- d) with a stack of 3 up to 3 moves are possible.

in the same round. It can move in a different direction and take pieces with it and even end on top of another stack, but it may never jump over other pieces or stacks.

In this way a player may make up to three moves in a round. It is never required to make a multiple move; a player may stop after having made at least 1 move.

Release

Moves which leave an opposing piece in the position of controlling piece are permitted (termed a "release").

In that event the next turn is immediately taken by the opponent. It is **not** allowed to release an opposing piece which rests on one of the 9 spaces in one's **own** castle.

Safe Stacks

Basic rule: At all times a stack may only contain **at most 3 pieces from any one player**. All moves which would result in a stack containing more than 3 pieces of the same color are not allowed.

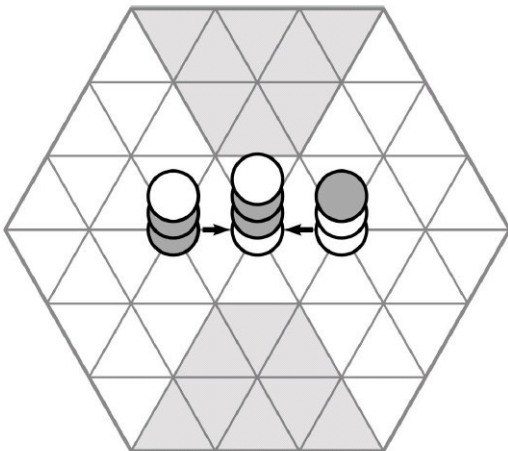


Illustration: White must split his stack his stack at left if he wants to move on top of the center stack. Similarly, Black must release at least one white piece from his stack at right to be able to stack atop the center stack.

Thus a stack containing 3 pieces of a color may not have any more pieces of this color added. If these pieces are captured, this is known as a safe stack as it is invulnerable.

Thus if a player has captured 3 pieces in a single stack, this stack is unassailable as long as he does not split it. On the other hand, captured pieces can be a hindrance if pieces are to be moved on top of an opposing stack.

End of the Game

The first player able to place 3 (or more) controlling pieces in his opponent's castle wins the game.

Alternatively, a player wins if the opponent is unable to perform a legal turn.

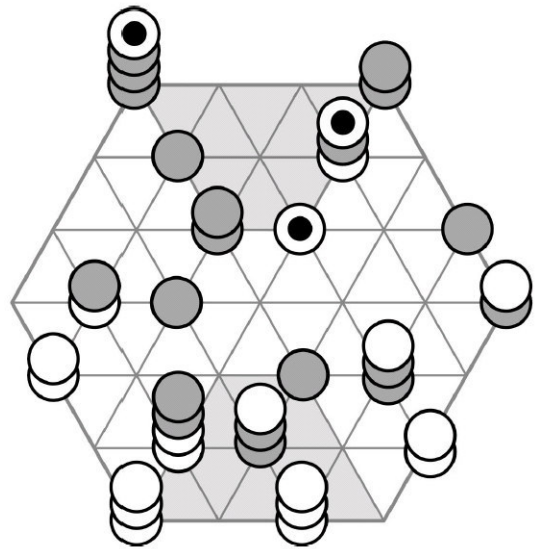


Illustration: White wins with 3 controlling pieces in the opposing castle.

Q&A

- *What is the origin of the game's name?*
From the Italian accatastare which means "to stack up"
- *After a release, is the opponent required to operate from the stack which was just released?*
No, he may choose any stack he controls.

Notation

The spaces on the six-sided board are clearly marked with coordinates. The horizontal rows are marked, starting from White, with "a" through "g" and the individual spaces numbered left to right. The central space therefore has the coordinate "d4", for example.

Accasta turns may consist of up to 3 moves which all depart from the same space.

A complete turn is notated as follows:

Stack location: Total number of pieces moved (a "1" may be omitted) — ending space, further turns, ...

When a player stacks on top of one of his own pieces, this can be noted by a "+" rather than a "-" while capturing an opposing piece is noted via an "x".

Sample Game:

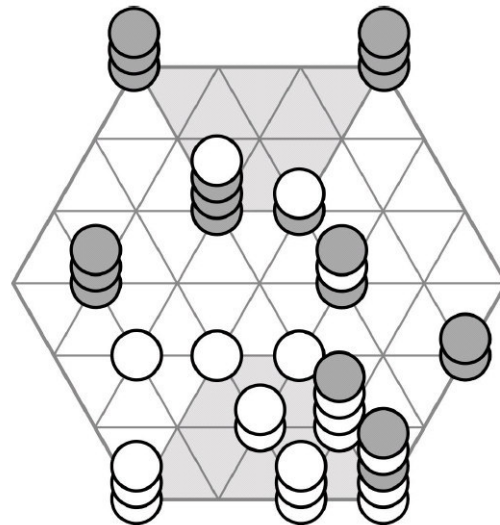
White	Black
1. b4:2-c5	e4:+e3
2. a4:3-b4	f2:+f3,+e3
3. b2:2+c3	f4:2-e5
4. c4:-d4	e3:+e5,xd4
5. b4:xd4,2-c4	e5:xc4
6. c5:xc4,-d5	e5:-e4
7. d4:2xe3,-d3	e4:-d4
8. c4:2xd4	f3:xe3,2xd5
9. c4:xd5	e3:3+e5,xd4
10. d3:xd4	e5:2xd5,-e3,-e4
11. d4:2+c4,3xe3	d5:6-b5
12. a3:3-b4	b5:3-a4,xb4,2+a4
13. a2:3-a3	g3:3-e5
14. c4:2-d5	g2:3-d2
15. c3:xe4,-c2	e5:2-c6,xd5

White concedes.

Accasta game rules:

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More information is available on-line at <http://accasta.com>



Placements after turn 15. ... e5:2-c6,xd5.

Strategy Hints

- Keep an eye on the safe stacks! The stacking height restriction should be used to tactical advantage.
- Safe stacks are worthwhile, but they can be more easily blocked by the opponent.
- Notice how the range of pieces changes! If you stack on your own pieces, range increases, but if you place individual pieces on vacant spaces, they decrease
- If on the first turn you move your three-stack from a1 to d1 (a1: 3-d1) pull, you have already lost. Do you see why?
Your opponent answers with g1: 3xd1; this 6-height stack is unstoppable.

For More Information

Accasta, together with the games **Abande** and **Attangle**, comprise the stacking game trilogy by Dieter Stein, invented between 1998 and 2006.

Strictly speaking the above rules describe a variant of the base game called **Accasta Pari**, which is played with unmarked pieces. In the original game there are three different piece values which provide fixed ranges.