

Nine men's morris is a strategy board game for two players dating at least to the Roman Empire. The board consists of a grid with twenty-four intersections or "points." Each player starts with nine pieces (one with the light color, and the other the dark). Players try to form "mills" - three of their own pieces on contiguous points in a straight line, vertically or horizontally - allowing a player to remove an opponent's piece from the game. The overall objective being to reduce the number of opponent's pieces to less than three, or to render the opponent unable to play.

The game begins with an empty board. The players toss a coin to decide who will play the light color, and then moves first (having a slight advantage as a result). They then take turns placing their pieces one per play on empty points. If a player is able to form a mill, then they may remove one of their opponent's pieces from the board and the game, with the caveat that a piece in an opponent's mill can only be removed if no other pieces are available. After all 18 pieces have been placed, the set-up phase is complete, and the regular phase begins.

Note: in the set-up phase of the game, it is more important to place pieces in versatile locations rather than to try to form mills immediately. An ideal position, which typically results in a win, allows a player to shuttle one piece back and forth between two mills, removing a piece with each turn.

Players continue to alternate moves, in this phase sliding a piece to an adjacent point with each move. A piece may not "jump" another piece and can only be placed in an adjacent point. Players continue to try to form mills and remove their opponent's pieces as in the set-up phase. A player can "break" a mill by moving one of their pieces out of an existing mill, then moving it back to form the same mill in a subsequent turn, removing one of the opponent's pieces each time the mill is formed.

When a player is reduced to three pieces, there is no longer a limitation on that player of moving to only adjacent points, thereby allowing a move where a piece may jump from the existing point to any vacant point on the board.

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