

PULLING STRINGS

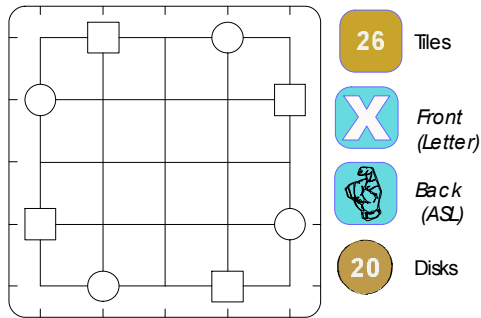
*A Blue Panther Game by Clark Rodeffer
Art by Scott Starkey*

Overview & Goal

Start with a stack of five disks in the middle of the board. “Pull the strings” by simultaneously choosing letters. Move, split and combine stacks of disks along the pulled strings. Win by being the first player to get at least five disks onto your “home” spaces (circles or squares on the edge of the board).

Components

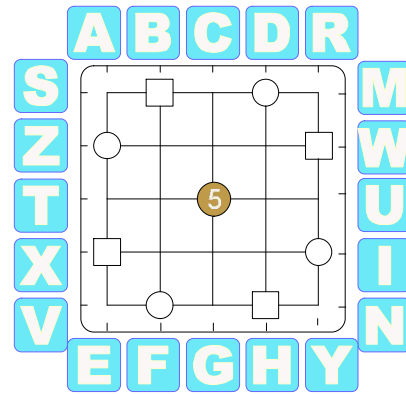
26 Two-sided Tiles (Letters / American Sign Language)
20 Scoring Disks
1 Playing Board
1 Set of Rules
Optional – paper and pencil (not supplied)



Game Components

Setup

Choose which player will be “squares” and which will be “circles”. Place the game board in between the two players. Squares and circles have four “home” spaces shown on the board. Choose which set of symbols you will use – English or ASL and turn all the tiles face up to that side. Randomly place 20 tiles around the board and five disks in the middle of the board as shown. Place the remaining unused tiles aside.



Typical game setup

Playing the Game

A turn in Pulling Strings has two components.

- 1) Pull a string by choosing and then simultaneously revealing a letter.
- 2) Move the disks as a result of the strings you and your opponent pulled.

1) Pulling the String

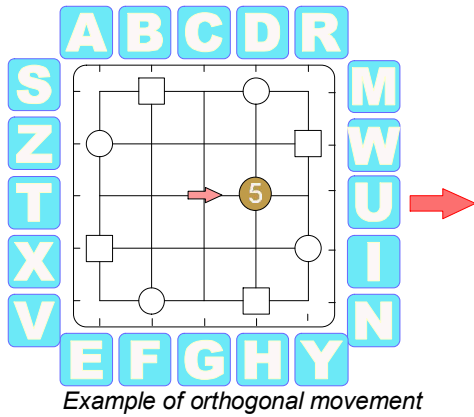
If you are using the English letters, write your chosen letter on a piece of paper and keep it hidden until your opponent is ready, then reveal them simultaneously. If you are using the ASL signs, simultaneously make your chosen ASL signs (Rock-paper-scissors style).

2) Moving the Disks

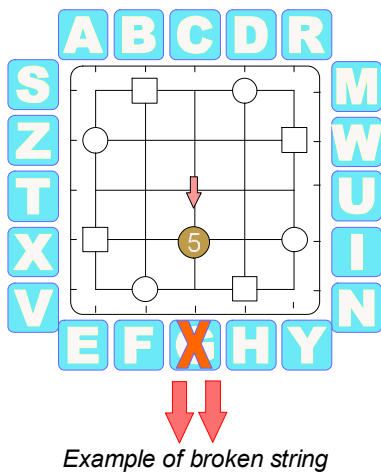
Throughout the game, stacks of disks rest on the intersections of strings on the board. These stacks are moved, split and/or combined when the ends of the strings connected to that intersection are pulled. Stacks stop when they are pulled against the edge of the board, but they might be pulled away from the edge on a later turn, even (especially) away from home spaces.

How to Move Disks

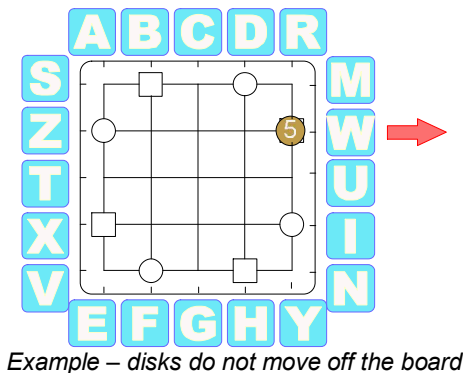
-- *Disks always move “orthogonally”* one intersection in the direction of the letter/symbol that was chosen, they follow the straight lines around the board. For example, at the start of the game, if a player pulls the string for “U”, all 5 disks will move one intersection to the right towards “U”. The disks were in the middle of the board at the start of the turn, now they have moved one intersection to the right at the end.



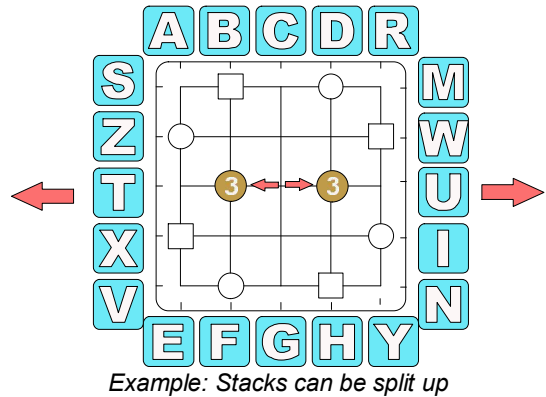
-- *Strings can be broken.* If both players choose the same letter / symbol on the same turn then the disks move one intersection in the direction of the string pulled, but the string is now "broken". Remove it from the playing area. It cannot be used again during the current game. For example, if both players chose "G" at the start of the game, the disks will move one space "down" towards "G" but "G" is now "broken" and cannot be pulled again. Remove "G" from the playing area.



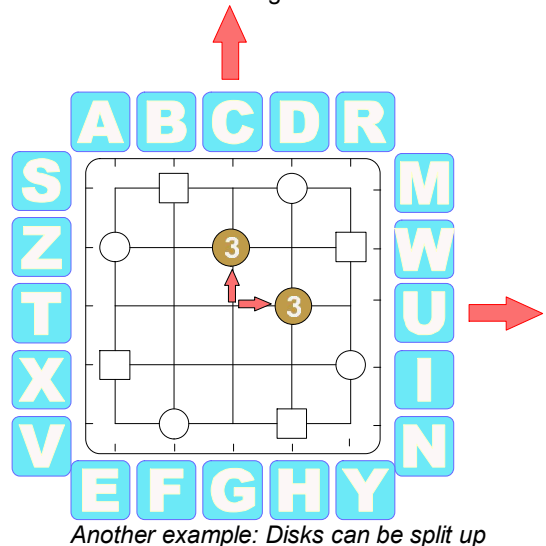
-- *Disks cannot be "pulled off the board".* When disks contact the edge of the board and a string is pulled that would move the disks off the board, the disks do not move.



--- *Stacks can split up.* When two different string ends are pulled, the disks "split up" with half moving one intersection in the direction the string was pulled. If there are an odd number of disks in the stack, add one disk to the stack, then split it. For example, at the start of the game, with 5 disks in the middle of the board, if one player pulled "T" and the other pulled "U", the stack of 5 disks would split up into two stacks of 3 disks and each stack would move one intersection in the direction the string was pulled.

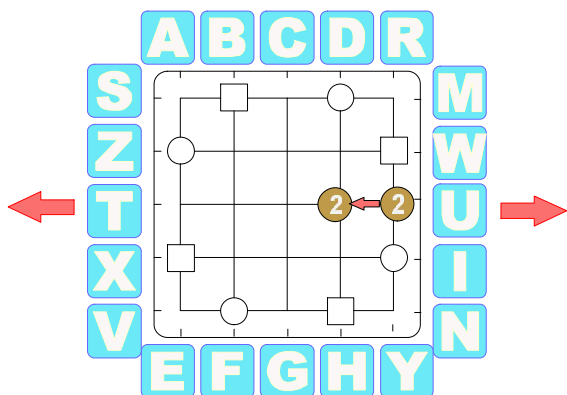


When a stack of disks is at the intersection of where two strings are pulled, the stack splits into two stacks of equal size with each stack moving in a direction the string was pulled. Stacks with an odd number of disks would add one disk, and then split. For example, at the start of the game with a stack of 5 in the center of the board, if one player pulls "U" and another player pulls "C", add one disk to the stack, then split it into two stacks of 3 disks, with 3 disks moving one intersection towards "C" and 3 disks moving one intersection towards "U".



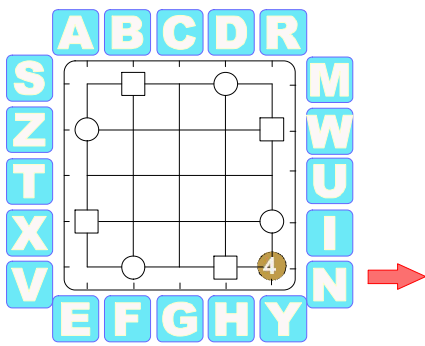
-- When a stack of disks on the edge of the board is at the intersection of two strings being pulled, the stack still splits into two even stacks (if an odd number of disks, add one then split into two equal stacks), but disks that would move off the board,

stay on the original intersection. For example, if there was a stack of 3 disks right next to "U" at the start of the turn and one player pulled "U" while the other pulled "T", add one disk, then split into two stacks of 2 disks each. One stack would move one intersection towards "T", while the other would stay where the original stack was.



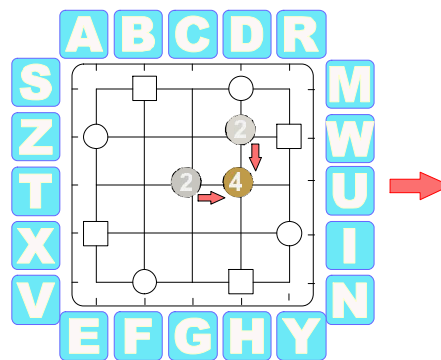
Stack of 4 splits, but disks on edge do not move off

--- If a stack is in one of the four corners of the board, and both strings pulled would cause the disks to move off the board, the stack "splits", but none of the disks move. For example, if there were 4 disks in the lower right corner of the board and "Y" and "N" are pulled, then the result is the stack "splits" into two stacks of 2 disks each, but neither one moves, so all 4 disks remain in that corner.



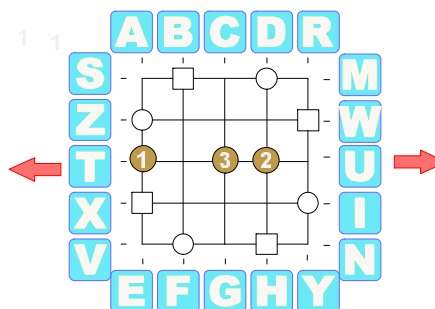
Example: disks in corners do not move off board

-- Stacks can "combine". For example, on the next board shown if the "H" and "U" were pulled on the same turn, then the 2 disks that were originally at "H-W" and "U-T" intersections would "combine" at the intersection of H and U at the end of the turn. When disks combine, simply add them together on the same intersection (in this case 2+2 = 4 disks total).

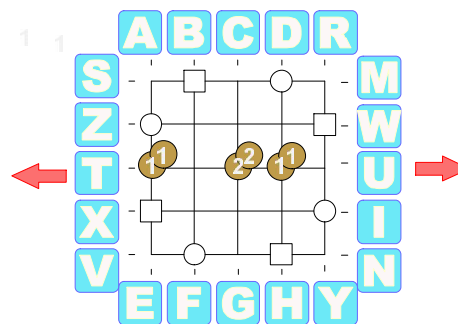


Example: disks can combine

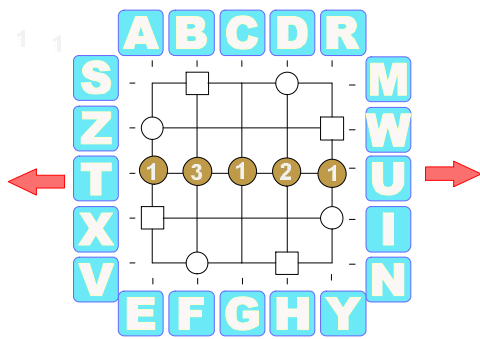
--- Stacks split before they combine. If a turn results in one or more stacks splitting as well as two or more stacks combining, do all of the splits first before combining any of the stacks.



At the beginning of the turn, "T" and "U" are pulled.



First: Split the stacks



Then move and combine.

*** If you run out of disks before the game ends, use coins or similar markers to represent the extra disks.

Winning the game

The game ends when one player has five or more disks on any combination of their four "home" intersections (one player uses circles, the other uses squares). If both players get five or more disks on their home spaces in the same turn, continue play until one player has more disks (minimum of 5) on home spaces than the other player. The game ends in a draw if all of the strings connected to the remaining stacks are broken before either player pulls at least five disks home.

Variations – or Learning Can Be Fun

Pulling Strings is a fun game. It is also a fun way to learn. It's easy to use a slight variant on the rules to learn American Sign Language.

1) Start the game with English letters facing up, but each player must use American Sign Language to indicate which letter is on the string they want to pull. Before moving the disks, turn the tile corresponding to the letter upside down to reveal the ASL symbol. If the player used the correct symbol, then the string gets pulled normally. If not, then no string gets pulled by that player for that turn.

2) As above, but instead of no string getting pulled, the string corresponding to the ASL symbol the player used that turn gets pulled. For example, a player tries to make the symbol for "D", but actually makes the symbol for "B". The "B" string now gets pulled instead of the "D" string.

3) The tiles included with Pulling Strings can be also be used like flash cards. One player holds up the English letter and the other player must give the correct ASL symbol with their hand. Or one player can hold up the ASL symbol and the other player must guess the correct English letter.

Pulling Strings Expansions Now Available!

All expansion sets are 100% compatible with the Pulling Strings starter set.

Expansion Set 1) Roman Numerals
Expansion Set 2) Japanese (Katakana, Hiragana)

Check out www.bluepantherllc.com for the latest info.

If you have any ideas about what subjects future expansion sets can cover (for example, the Periodic Table of the Elements), we'd like to hear about them.

Send your ideas to questions@bluepantherllc.com. If we use your idea, you'll get a free copy of the set!

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