

# PULLING STRINGS

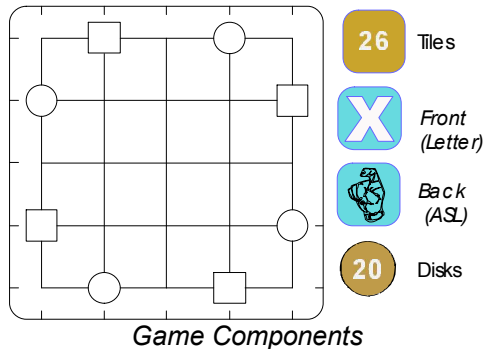
*A Blue Panther Game by Clark Rodeffer  
Art by Scott Starkey*

## Goal

There are five disks in the middle of the board at the start. You must “pull the strings” by choosing letters to get five disks onto your “home” (circle or square) on the edge of the board.

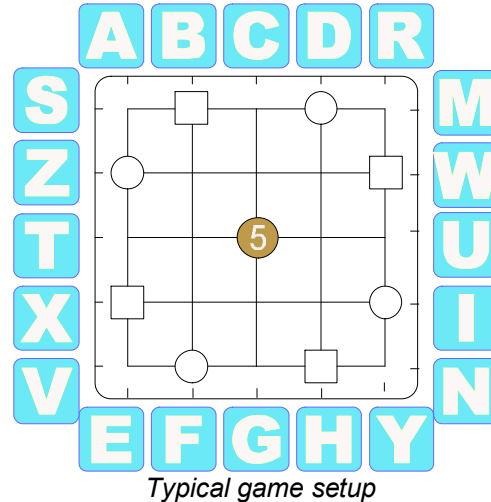
## Components

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



## 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. The remainder of the tiles will not be used during the game, and are placed aside.



## Playing the Game

A turn in Pulling Strings has two phases.

- 1) Pulling the String (choosing a letter)
- 2) Moving the disks

### *1) Pulling the String*

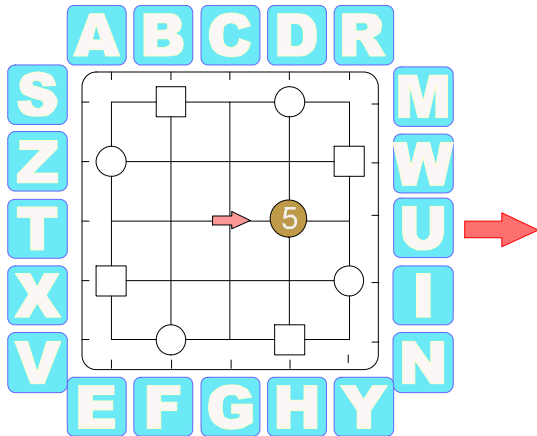
If you are using the English letters, write your choice of letter on a piece of paper and keep it hidden from your opponent until it is time to reveal. If you are using the ASL symbols, then each player will simultaneously make the ASL letter with their hand. (Rock-paper-scissors style). Reveal your choice!

### *2) Moving the Disks*

At the beginning of the game there is a stack of 5 disks resting on the intersection at the middle of 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 grid. Disks move according to the following rules...

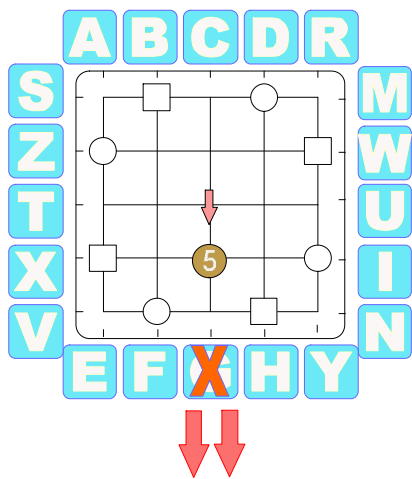
-- *Disks always move “orthogonally” one intersection in the direction of the letter/symbol that was chosen, they follow the straight lines around the board. For example, at the start of the game, if a player pulls the string for “U”, all 5 disks will move one intersection to the right towards “U”. The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



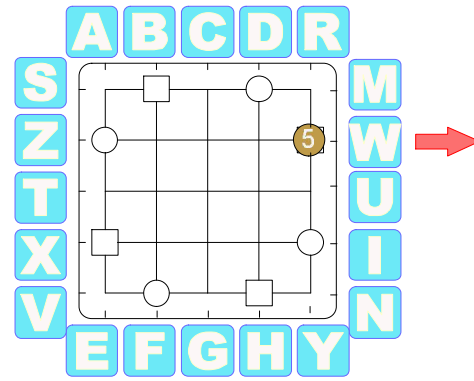
Example of orthogonal movement

-- *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.



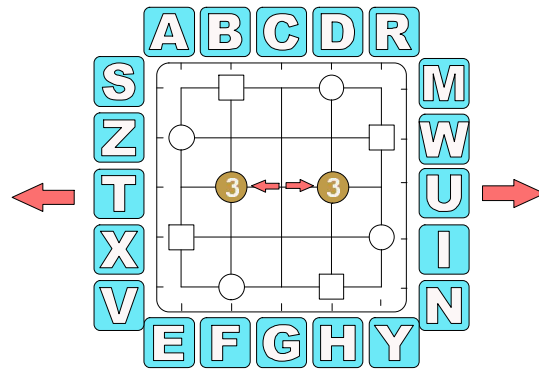
Example of broken string

-- *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.



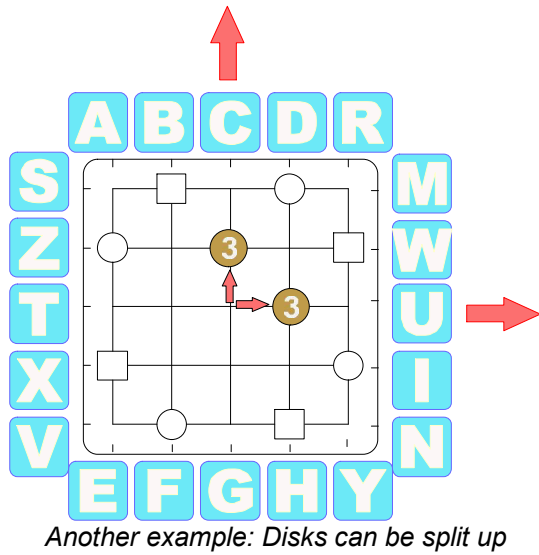
Example – disks do not move off the board

-- *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.



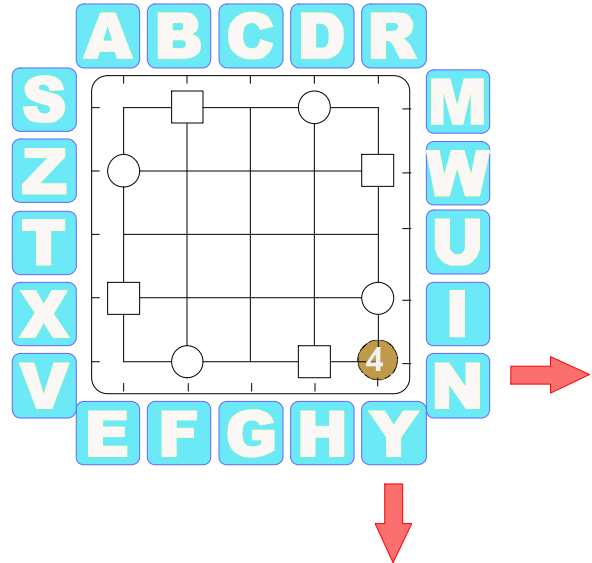
Example: Stacks can be split up

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 "T", add one disk to the stack, then split it into two stacks of 3 disks, with 3 disks moving one intersection towards "T" and 3 disks moving one intersection towards "U".

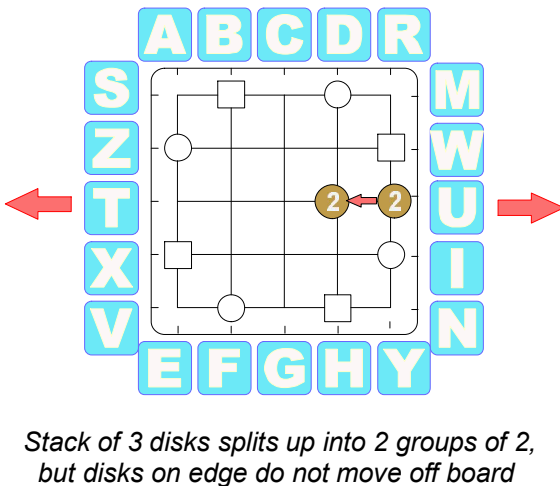


-- When a stack of disks on the edge of the board is at the intersection of two strings being pulled, the stack still splits into two even stacks (if an odd number of disks, add one then split into two equal stacks), but disks that would move off the board, stay on the original intersection. For example,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

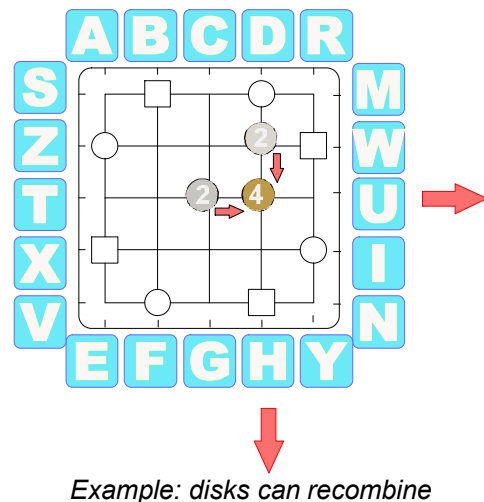
For example, if there were 4 disks in the lower right corner of the board and "Y" and "N" are pulled, then the result is the stack "splits" into two stacks of 2 disks each, but neither one moves, so all 4 disks remain in that corner.



-- Stacks can "recombine". For example, on the board shown below, 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 "recombine" at the intersection of H and U at the end of the turn. When disks recombine, simply add them together on the same intersection (in this case 2+2 = 4 disks total).



--- 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.



\*\*\* Note: Complete all stack splits *before* doing any stack “recombines”

\*\*\* If you run out of disks before the game ends, use a coin or similar marker to represent the extra disks.

### **Winning the game**

The game ends immediately after the movement phase when one player has five or more disks on any combination on their four “home” intersections (squares or circles). In the case of ties, the player with more disks on one home space wins.

### **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](http://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](mailto:questions@bluepantherllc.com). If we use your idea, you’ll get a free copy of the expansion set!

Pulling Strings is designed by Clark Rodeffer,

Cover art by Scott Starkey.

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