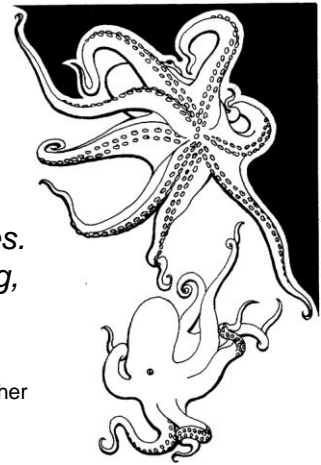# TAKO JUDO – The Timeless Sport of Octopus Wrestling
## A Blue Panther Game by Kevin Lanzing

*In days of old, cephalopods (octopi) would venture forth and compete in friendly wrestling matches. Two, sometimes even four would engage in a three dimensional exhibition of cephalopod cunning, each attempting to pin the other into immobility. This game is a lot like that, minus the smell.*
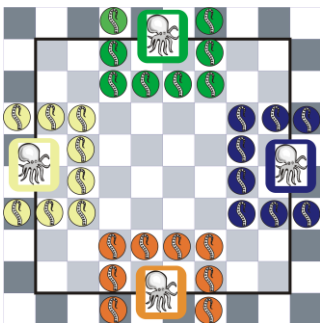
## Setup

Tako Judo includes rules, playing board and four octopi, each a different color. Each octopus consists of one head and eight tentacles. Assemble the playing area with the darker rows on the outside border. Place the octopi on the board…
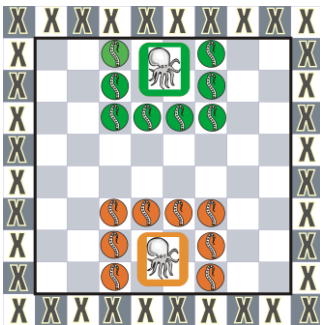


*2 Player Setup*
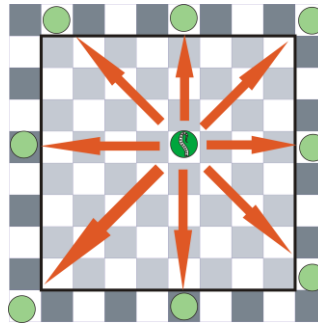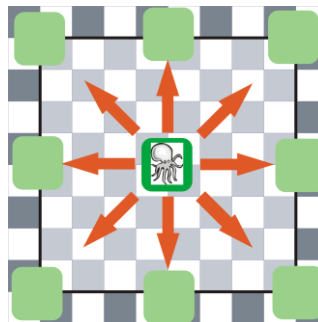Spaces marked "X" are not used



*4 Player Setup*
All spaces are used

## Playing

The youngest player moves first, and play proceeds clockwise until all opposing octopi are entangled and cannot move. Each turn a player may move one piece (head or tentacle) as shown:



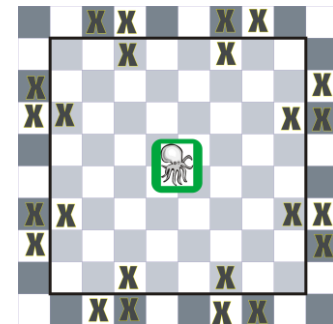*Tentacle moves*



*Head Moves*

All heads and tentacles move similar to a queen in chess. Heads and tentacles can move any number of spaces up, down, across or diagonal in a straight line, until they encounter another head or tentacle.

Then movement must stop. You cannot move through a head or tentacle (including your own). There is no "jumping over" or piece capture in Tako Judo.

## Movement

Tentacles: In order to move a tentacle, you must be able to draw an unbroken "line of sight" between your tentacle and any one of the four spaces occupied by octopus' head. Lines of sight must be up, down, across or diagonal in a straight line. Line of sight can be blocked by another head or tentacle (including your own). If your head cannot "see" your tentacle, that tentacle cannot move until the line of sight is restored.



*Head has no line of sight to boxes marked "X"*

You cannot move a tentacle that has line-of-sight broken by an opponent's tentacle or head. It is considered "entangled".
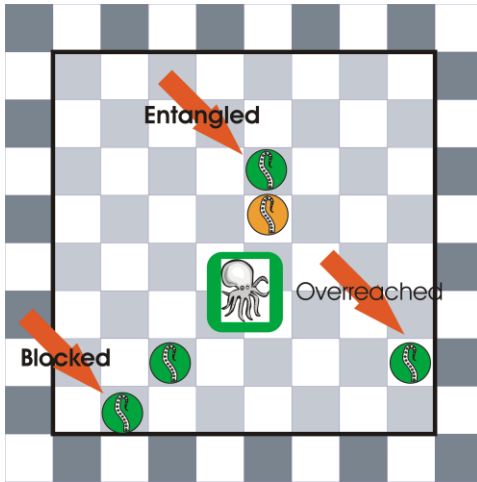
*Blocked, Entangled, Overreached*

The orange tentacle "entangles" the green tentacle since the head cannot "see" it.

You cannot move a tentacle that has line-of-sight broken by an opponent's tentacle or head. It is considered "entangled". In the example above, the orange tentacle "entangles" the green tentacle since the head cannot "see" it.

You cannot move a tentacle that has line of sight blocked by your own tentacle or that is in one of your head's "blind spots" (out of direct line-of-sight).
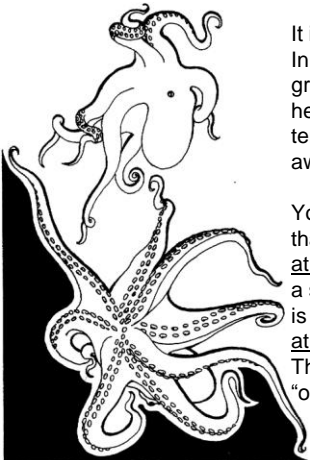
It is considered "blocked". In the example above, the green tentacle close to the head blocks the green tentacle that is further away from the head.

You CAN move a tentacle that is in your line-of-sight at the start of your turn to a space on the board that is not in your line-of-sight at the end of your turn. This is known as "overreaching".

Whether a tentacle is "entangled", "blocked" or "overreached" the effect on gameplay is the same – you cannot move that tentacle until a direct line-of-sight is restored between the tentacle and the head.

Heads occupy a 2x2 square (four spaces). Although octopi can get pretty squishy, your head cannot move in a given direction unless there is a clear path in all four squares it has to move through. What this means, is that a head can only move to a place if there is an open path that is "two rows wide" up, down, across or diagonal.

Heads cannot "squeeze" between two tentacles if they are only one row apart. You cannot move your octopus' head "over" or "through" any tentacle, even your own.

## Twiddling

You may not move a head or tentacle back and forth between the same spaces in *consecutive* turns. This is known as "twiddling" (moving to one space, then reversing back to the space you just came from). You may move a head or tentacle back and forth between the same spaces on *non-consecutive* turns.

## Four Player (Team Play)

All rules for the four player game are the same as the two player game *plus*:

In a four player game, the two players seated directly across from each other form a team. The objective is to pin both of the opposing players' octopi. Each octopus is considered "independent". This means that your tentacle can block your partner's.

In the four player game, when an octopus is pinned, it is considered "exhausted". The player may no longer move their exhausted octopus, but the pieces representing that octopus stay on the board and will continue to block the other players as per the movement rules. An exhausted octopus may not move, even if another player's move results in the exhausted octopus having a legal move. All octopi on the opposing team must be pinned in order to achieve victory.

## Victory

When your opponent(s) are completely entangled (cannot move head or tentacles), or when the only move available to them is "twiddling" you have won the game. A big "high-eight" to your cephalopod!

## Variant

No Teams: In a four player game, it's each octopus for itself. When an octopus is pinned, it becomes "exhausted" as per the regular four player game rules. The last octopus to remain free is the winner!

## Strategy

Overreach only when you have to – sometimes it's a good idea but don't squander an arm unless it's for a clear advantage. Give your head some room to maneuver. A mobile head usually has better line-of-sight. If you stay on a side or in a corner, it's easier to get pinned. Always move forward, push your opponent into a corner, if they will let you.