

INCHWORM

by Mark Steere

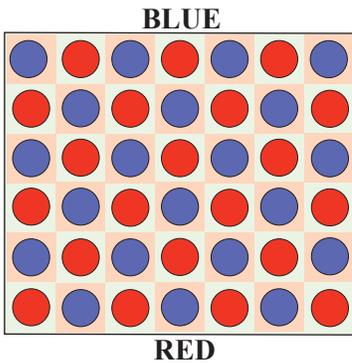


Figure 1 - Initial Setup.

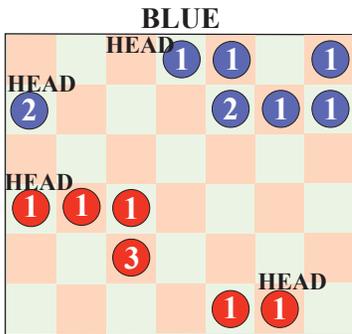


Figure 2 - Worms.

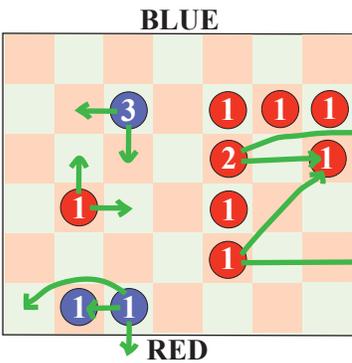


Figure 3 - Moves.

All available moves are indicated.

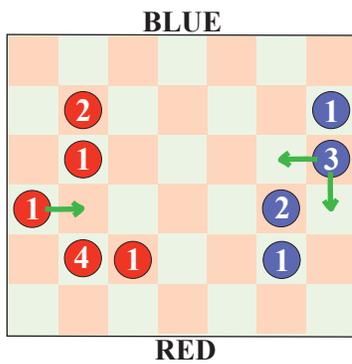


Figure 4 - Mergers.

Michael Amundsen suggested a rule change to correct deadlocks in an earlier, slightly different version of Inchworm.

INTRODUCTION

Inchworm is a two player game played on a 6x7 (or 8x9...) checkerboard initially filled with a checkered pattern of red and blue checkers as shown in Figure 1. Players take turns moving their own checkers, one checker per turn, starting with Red. If you have a move available, you must make one. If not, you must sit the game out until you do have one. At least one of the two players will always have a move available. Draws can't happen in Inchworm. Mark Steere designed Inchworm in March, 2021.

WORMS

All STACKS are comprised of one or more like colored checkers. All ADJACENCIES are ORTHOGONAL (horizontal or vertical). A CONNECTION is an adjacency between like colored stacks. A SINGLE is a stack of height one. A BIG STACK has height two or more. A LONE stack has no connections. WORMS are groups of interconnected stacks, each stack connected to at most two other stacks. (A worm includes all stacks connected to it. There are no sub-worms.) Worms of length one only have a HEAD. Worms of length two or more have a HEAD and a TAIL, each occupying a single square at opposite ends of the worm. Loops of like colored stacks are not allowed. All of a worm's stacks which are not its head or tail comprise its BODY.

If a worm's two ends are in different rows, its head is the forwardmost end. If its two ends are in the same row, its head is the rightmost end. Every interconnected group must be a worm. See Figure 2.

MOVES

You can remove a checker from any big stack on a worm's body or tail and stack it onto the worm's head. If a worm's tail is a single, you can move it onto the worm's head (the stack that is the worm's head before the move). All other types of moves are to unoccupied squares (or off the board). A lone single can move one square forward or to the right. You can move the top checker from a lone big stack one square forward or to the right. The remainder of this section deals with worms of length two or more.

You can remove the top checker from any big stack on a worm's head, body, or tail, and move it adjacent to its head in a row forward of its tail or in a column rightward of its tail.

If a worm's tail is a single, you can move it in the following manner: Take note of the worm's head square and tail square before picking up the tail checker. Move the tail checker to a square adjacent to said head square and forward or rightward of said tail square. See Figure 3.

MERGERS

Any move to an unoccupied square, as previously described, may merge two or three worms into one. See Figure 4.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To win you must move all of your checkers off the far end or right side of the board. See Figure 3.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Feel free to publish this rule sheet and to program the game of Inchworm. No licensing fee or royalties are expected. However, please don't change the name or the rules, and please attribute the game to me, Mark Steere. My other games can be found at marksteeregames.com.