

JOKERBALL

by Mark Steere

INTRODUCTION

Jokerball is a luck infused soccer game. A size 6 hexagonal board (side length 6), comprised of 91 cells, is set up as shown in **Figure 1**, with 13 red men on Red's side, 13 blue men on Blue's side, and a green ball in the center. [Optionally, more or less rows can be filled. Alternatively, a size 4 board can be used. The more initial men for a given board size, the higher the ratio of skill to luck.] Red and Blue take turns moving their own men and the ball. Mark Steere designed Jokerball in June 2025.

WALLS

Pieces can slide off the board through the nearest and farthest sides. But the four sides to the left and right are walled, or closed, as indicated by the thick lines in the figures. More specifically, the farthest two sides of each cell in the farthest row are open. Similarly for the nearest row and nearest cell sides. All other outer sides of outer cells are closed.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

If the ball exits the board through your far side, on either player's turn, you win.

DICE

There are two 6-sided dice. The purple die is the "distance" die. The green die is the "direction" die. [On a size 4 board, the distance die is 4-sided.]



PLAY

Begin your turn by rolling the two dice. First, move one of your men, as described below, if you can. Then move the ball, as described below, if you can. Passing is not allowed, unless you have no available moves.

MAN MOVEMENT

For a **non-capturing move**, a man traverses a straight path of contiguous, unoccupied cells, forward left (left, away from the player on turn) or forward right. It travels the distance indicated by the distance die, unless its path is blocked short of that distance by a wall or the ball, in which case it stops adjacent to the block. A man can move off the board through the opponent's side. For a **capturing move**, a man traverses a straight path, in any direction, of zero or more contiguous, unoccupied cells, terminated by a man occupied cell, and captures that man by replacement. A man can only capture another man within the distance indicated by the distance die. You can capture a friendly man or an enemy man. In **Figure 2**, all four of the possible moves for the red man marked with a yellow dot are indicated by black dots. The blue man and the black dot marked red man would be captured by replacement.

BALL MOVEMENT

The ball makes a non-capturing move. It traverses a straight path of contiguous, unoccupied cells, in the direction indicated by the direction die (from the perspective of the player on turn), as explained below, any distance. The ball can move off the board through an open side. **Direction Die Indicated Ball Directions:** 1 - backward left. 2 - left. 3 - forward left. 4 - forward right. 5 - right. 6 - backward right. In **Figure 3**, a continuation of **Figure 2**, it's still Red's turn. Red must move the ball to one of the cells marked with a black dot. In **Figure 4**, it's the beginning of Blue's turn. Blue must move a man off the bottom of the board, and move the ball off the top of the board, losing the game.

DESIGN NOTES

I tried to maximize strategy and minimize luck.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Feel free to publish this rule sheet and to program the game of Jokerball. 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.

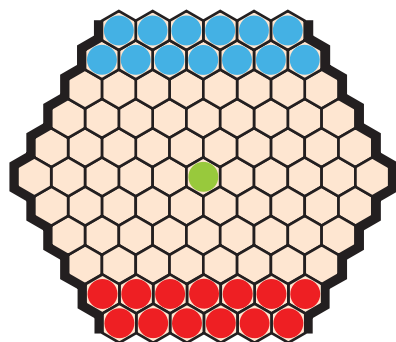


Figure 1

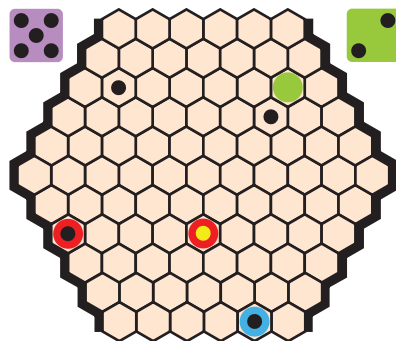


Figure 2

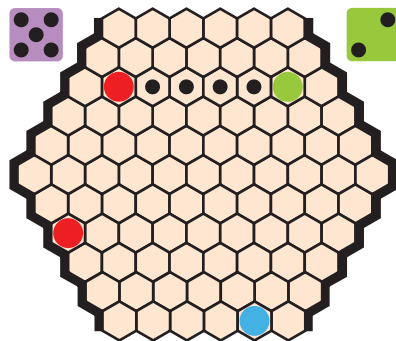


Figure 3

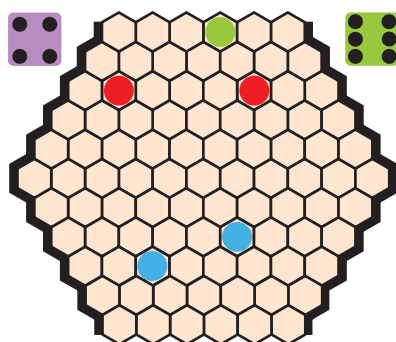


Figure 4