

BLACK NARROWS

by Mark Steere

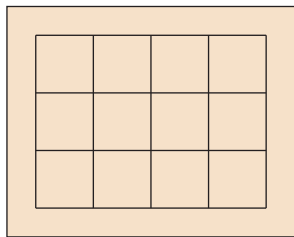


Figure 1
Initial setup

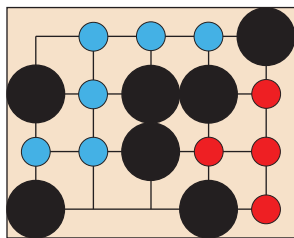


Figure 2
Connecting path (blue),
and illegal moves (red).

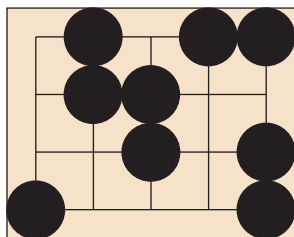


Figure 3
Player 1 wins

INTRODUCTION

Black Narrows is played on a rectangular grid of size 2x2 or larger [each dimension is greater than or equal to 2], initially empty. **Figure 1** shows a 5x4 grid. Mark Steere designed Black Narrows in August 2026.

PLAY

Two players take turns placing black stones onto unoccupied points on the board, one stone per turn.

LEGAL MOVES

After your placement, there must be an orthogonally interconnected path of unoccupied points, of length at least 1, connecting every pair of stones. In **Figure 2**, the bottom left stone is connected to the top right stone by a path of unoccupied points marked with blue dots. The red dots mark some illegal placements. A stone placed there would not have access to the two stones on the left side.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

The last player to place a stone wins. In other words, if you don't have an available placement on your turn, you lose. In **Figure 3**, there are 9 stones on the board, an odd number, and there are no remaining placements available. Player 1 placed the last stone and has won the game.

DESIGN NOTES

I wanted an impartial game with single stone placement on a rectangular grid, and which was invulnerable to mirroring. Black Narrows was a solution. Black Narrows borrows a concept from another of my games, Narrows (May 2026).

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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