

NARROWS

by Mark Steere

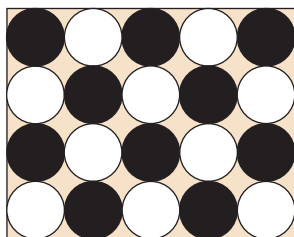


Figure 1
Initial setup

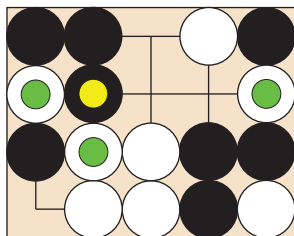


Figure 2
Rook captures

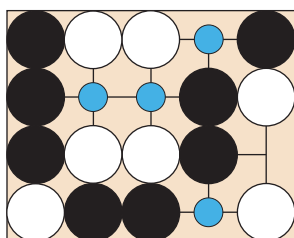


Figure 3
Black wins

INTRODUCTION

Narrows is played on a Kōnane board. That is, a rectangular grid of pits that can hold one stone each. The grid can be any size, with at least one even dimension. The board is initially filled with a checkerboard pattern of black and white stones. **Figure 1** shows a 5 x 4 grid. Mark Steere designed Narrows in May 2026.

PLAY

The two players, Black and White, take turns moving a stone of their own color, one stone per turn, starting with Black. Passing is not allowed. Narrows uses the pie rule. White, on his first turn, has the option of switching colors and becoming Black, claiming the first move as his own, instead of moving a white stone.

ROOK CAPTURES

You must capture by replacement an enemy stone in any orthogonal (horizontal or vertical) direction. (The enemy stone must either be adjacent to the capturing stone, or separated from it by empty points.) In **Figure 2**, the black stone marked with a yellow dot can capture a white stone marked with a green dot.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

The goal is to have all of your (orthogonally interconnected) groups linked together by empty regions (areas of orthogonally interconnected, unoccupied points). [In other words, each of your stones must be linked to all of your other stones via orthogonally interconnected paths of unoccupied points and/or friendly stones.] You could think of it as all of your islands being interconnected by open water. ["Narrows" refers to a restricted, narrow passage of water - such as a strait, channel, or river - that connects two larger bodies of water.] In **Figure 3**, Black has won. All of his groups are interconnected by the regions marked with blue dots.

You can win on your turn or on your opponent's turn. If your move causes all of your groups to be linked by regions, and simultaneously causes all of your opponent's groups to be linked by regions, you win.

DESIGN NOTES

Narrows was inspired by the ancient, Hawaiian game of Kōnane. True to the spirit of Kōnane, Narrows begins with a checkerboard pattern of stones, and is extremely simple.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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