

## Nine Man Morris

**History** - If you're good at strategic games and you like challenges, then you'll like Nine Man Morris as much as the Egyptians did.

While its origin is uncertain, the earliest Nine Man Morris board was found at the ancient Egyptian temple of Kurna about 1440 BC. Other boards have been found in Ceylon, which were carved during the reign of Mahadithika Maha-Naga (9-21 AD). European boards have been found in such places as Troy, within a Bronze Age burial site in Ireland, and at the Acropolis in Athens. The game reached its peak popularity in Europe during the Fourteenth Century. It was played by monks in churches as well as on village greens throughout England. It used to be played with black and white pebbles on a board dug into village greens as well as on tables in taverns marked with chalk. As the game spread to other countries, it began to pick up names like Me'relles, Muhle and Mill.

**Objective** - Your objective is to get three of your pieces in a row (which is called a "mill"). All the pieces in a "mill" must be on dots, which are connected by lines. In other words, diagonal mills don't count. When you get a mill, you may remove and keep one of your opponent's pieces from the board.

**Rules** - There are 2 phases to the game. In the first phase, the players take turn putting their pieces on any free dot on the board. This continues until all pieces have been placed on the board. In the second phase, players alternate moving their pieces along the lines trying to form new mills. You can only move one space at a time, You may only move to adjacent open dots and you may not bump or jump an opponent's piece.

When a player has three pieces in a row, he has a mill and may remove one of his opponent's men from the board. The row must be straight, it cannot turn a corner, and it must be along a drawn line, which means diagonals do not count. If a piece moves out of a mill, the mill is broken and moving the piece back may make a new mill. A particularly effective strategy is to use four pieces to form two pairs with a fifth piece moving back and forth between the pairs creating a new mill with every move.

**Optional Rule** - The only time a piece can be removed from an opponent's mill is when there are no other pieces available except those in a mill.

**Optional Rule** - When a player is reduced to three men, he may move any man to any unoccupied space on the board on his turn and does not have to follow the drawn rules.

Players should agree ahead of time on whether the optional rules are to be used.

**Winning the Game** - The first player that can either no longer move or is left with only 2 playing pieces on the board loses the game.