



Complete Manual (English) with rules for all available variants.
Rules and images taken from Tailten Games website (www.tailtengames.com)
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NOTE: Some game concepts and examples are explained in the Appendix at the end of the document. In the manual, words that are underlined can be found alphabetically in the Appendix, for quick reference.

Sacred Hill is the base game variant.

Four Treasures is an easier game, suitable for ages 6+.

High Kings of Tara, Poisoned Chalice and Stone of Destiny provide even more different gameplay modes for you to enjoy.

I. TARA – SACRED HILL

1. Singles – Level 1 – Kingdoms

A connection game with a difference. Link all your ringforts together (if you can) with bridges to create a magical landscape of Celtic knotwork. Split your enemy up - "Divide and Conquer" - that's the aim. But watch out for the enemy, they may try to capture your territory - so attack, defend or sacrifice? All ages can enjoy a truly unique strategic experience!
For 2 players



AIM

A match comprises two games, each player taking turns to start. The player with most points after two games wins the match. At the end of each game the player with the fewest kingdoms receives points. In case of a tie, the player with most territory receives points.

PREPARATION

Sit opposite your opponent with the empty board set squarely between you. Each of you takes the tiles of your chosen colour, ignoring the kings. Draw lots to determine who starts.

GENERAL RULES

Passing is not allowed. Once you touch a hill you are committed.

FIRST PHASE - MANOEUVRES

Each player takes turns to build (place) one ringfort on an empty hill. Each player may build their first ringfort anywhere. Subsequently, your own ringforts must be built at a knight's move from any one of your own ringforts, but not any closer than a knight's move from any other friendly ringfort (*figs 1-1 and 1-2*). Note that your ringforts may be built adjacent to enemy ringforts. When you can no longer build a ringfort in the prescribed manner, Battle starts. At the start of such a turn, whichever player does so first must announce "BATTLE" and advances. The other player too advances on their next turn, regardless of whether there are available knight's moves or not.



↑ fig. 1-1: Red to move. Ticks are legal moves but crosses are not. Crosses are too close (within a knight's move) to friendly ringforts.



↑ fig. 1-2: Red to move. Red can no longer build a ringfort using the knight's move rule, so advances to Battle.

SECOND PHASE - BATTLE

The knight's move rule no longer applies. You must now build ringforts on vacant hills that are adjacent to friendly ringforts, linking them all automatically in the same turn (*fig. 1-3*).

Towards the end of a game you may find that there are no vacant hills to build upon which are adjacent to your own ringforts. In this case, you must start building afresh, even if it's on a besieged hill (*fig. 1-5*).

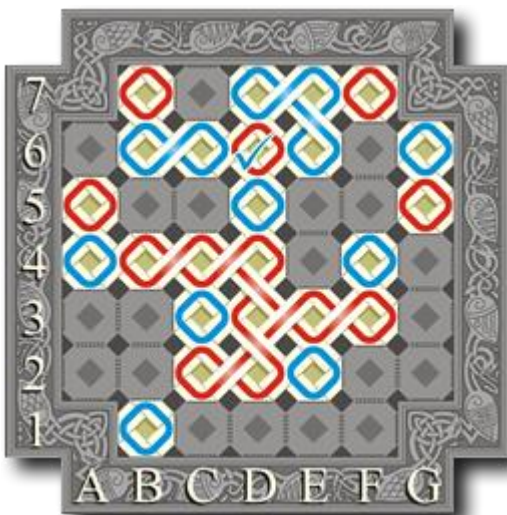


← fig. 1-3: Red starts Battle and must now build on hills adjacent to friendly ringforts which are marked with ticks.

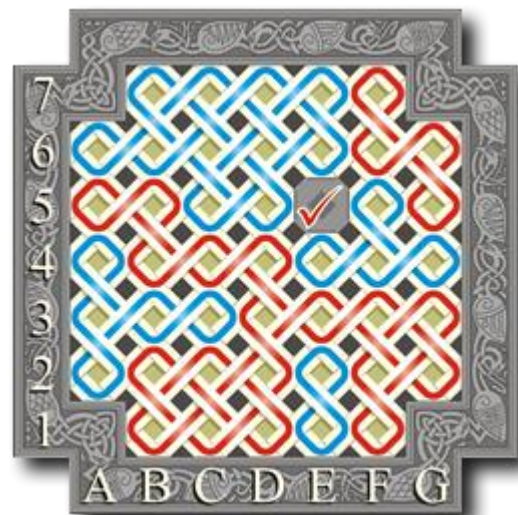
CAPTURING RINGFORTS

If you besiege an isolated enemy ringfort, you must capture it on your next turn. The ringfort is removed, then replaced by one of your own and linked, all in the same turn (*fig. 1-4*). Capturing takes a complete turn. You must not build another ringfort in that turn.

Towards the end of a game, if your opponent has just built a ringfort on a besieged hill, you must capture it immediately (*fig. 1-5*). Normally, you would only ever have one ringfort to capture at any one time. However, there may be cases towards the end of a game when your opponent builds on a besieged hill and you already have another ringfort to capture. You may then choose which one to capture first. You may capture only one ringfort per turn.



↑ fig. 1-4: Blue previously besieged D6 and must now capture it.



↑ fig. 1-5: Red to play. Red must start afresh on E5, but then Blue must capture it immediately.

ILLEGAL MOVES

If you make an illegal move and it's spotted before your opponent takes their next turn, your opponent may order you to remove that ringfort, and then replace it somewhere else of their own choosing in accordance with the rules pertaining at the time.

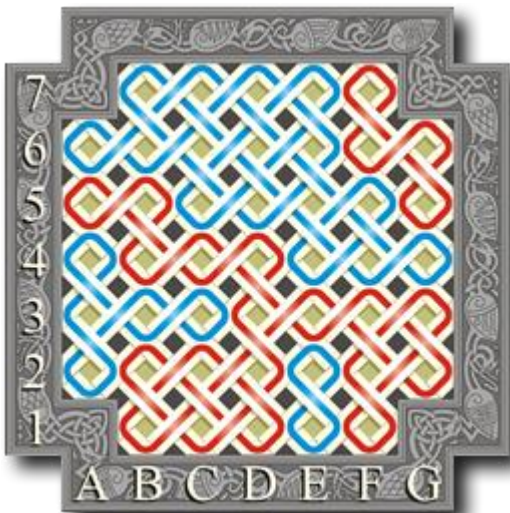
END OF THE GAME

The first player to not have a legal turn calls "OUT". The other player then just has one more turn before the game ends.

SCORING

The winner is the player with the fewest number of kingdoms. The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in the number of kingdoms. For example, if the outcome was 1 to 4 kingdoms, the winner would get 3 bonus points. The other player does not receive points (*fig. 1-6*).

If both players have the same number of kingdoms, the winner is the player with most territory. The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in territory. For example, if the outcome was 24 to 21 ringforts, the winner would get 3 bonus points. The other player does not receive points (*fig. 1-7*).



↑ fig. 1-6: Finished game: Red has 2 kingdoms and Blue has 3, so Red wins. Red scores 2 points (for the win) plus 1 bonus point (for the difference between 2 and 3) which equals 3 points.



↑ fig. 1-7: Finished game: both Red and Blue have 1 kingdom each, so territory must be counted. Red has 24 ringforts and Blue has 21, so Red wins. Red scores 2 points (for the win) plus 3 bonus points (for the difference between 21 and 24) which equals 5 points.

2. Singles – Level 2 – Kingdoms

Sacred Hill Level 2 gets big and bulky! Because the rules for building ringforts in Battle mean that you will generally get fewer, but more bulky kingdoms, the kingdom variant can produce very close games. So if you like living on a knife edge, this one is for you; it's concentration all the way!

This game is like a roller coaster; you can feel as though you're completely out of control. However, once you begin to master it, it's a great thrill. The skill in this game is to be able to see what's going to happen well in advance and to know when to attack your opponent and when to leave them alone. Mistiming will cause real problems for you; make a mistake, and you will pay for it dearly!

For 2 players



This variant is exactly the same as the Level 1 game, except for the rules below.

SECOND PHASE - BATTLE

The knight's move rule no longer applies. Now, each player must assess the order of priority (OP) for each vacant hill before they take their turn. Initially, there will only be OP0s and OP1s (*fig. 2-1*). Your highest OP must always be built first; if there are multiple hills with equally the highest OPs, you may freely choose which one to build first.

Once your first Battle ringfort has been built, it is likely that one hill (possibly more) adjacent to it will have been raised to OP2. If so, you must build on one of these OP2s on your next turn unless your opponent has built there first (*fig. 2-2*).

The game continues like this in a chain reaction; having built one ringfort, you find you are committed to building others until you reach a lull.



↑ fig. 2-1: Blue starts Battle and must build on one of the OP1 hills. Note: it is also Blue's first lull.

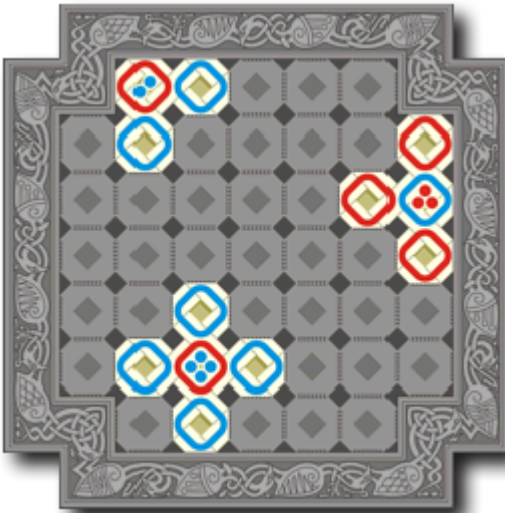


↑ fig. 2-2: Blue has now got two OP2s, C4 and D5, and must decide which one to build first.

CAPTURING RINGFORTS

Besieged ringforts automatically become targets for capture. Unlike Sacred Hill Level 1 rules, besieged ringforts adopt an OP determined by the number of ringforts besieging them, fig. 2-3.

So, as long as there are OPs the same (or higher) as the besieged ringfort, the ringfort does not need to be captured straight away, (figs. 2-4 & 2-5).



↑ fig. 2-3: Examples of besieged ringforts and their OPs.



↑ fig. 2-4: Blue has three OP2s, only one of which is the besieged Red ringfort B1. The capture does not have to be made immediately.



↑ fig. 2-5: Red previously besieged F5 and it becomes an OP4. This is the highest OP on the board currently, so must be captured this turn.

3. Doubles – Kingdoms

Doubles may be played with the same rules as singles Level 1 or Level 2, except for the rules below. *For 4 players*



AIM

A match comprises four games, each player taking turns to start. The partnership with most points after four games wins the match.



PREPARATION

You now play in pairs. Each player sits opposite their partner with the empty board set squarely between them.

HOW TO PLAY

Each player is now limited to playing just in the first four rows of the board nearest themselves. Because there are seven rows, it means that the row furthest away from each player (the fourth and middle row) will become a shared row between each partnership (*figs. 3-1a & b*).



↑ fig. 3-1a: The Red territories meet in the middle shared row.



↑ fig. 3-1b: The Blue territories meet in the middle shared row.

FIRST PHASE - MANOEUVRES

The first player must build their initial ringfort anywhere on their partnership's shared row. Play continues clockwise. Likewise, the second player must build their initial ringfort anywhere on their partnership's shared row. The third player (the first player's partner) must build a ringfort at a knight's move from the first player's ringfort - and importantly, within their own area. The fourth player follows likewise. Play continues like this, following the usual proximity rule in Manoeuvres.

Note: each player may use any of their own colour ringforts to "jump" from, even if they are within their partner's area, but each player's ringforts must be built within their own area, including the shared row (*fig. 3-2*).

When the first player to announce "BATTLE" advances, the other three players too advance on their next turns, regardless of whether there are available knight's moves or not.

II. TARA – FOUR TREASURES

4. Singles



Introducing a simple new game to play, suitable even from the age of 6. Legend tells originally of four standing stones at Tara, connecting the four points. In this game your treasures are bridges. So weave your way around the board, connecting all the ringforts you can. Leave traps and try to capture your opponent. But be careful they don't outsmart you!

For 2 players

AIM

A match comprises two games, each player taking turns to start. The player with most points after two games wins the match. At the end of each game the player who has used most bridges receives points. In case of a tie, the player who has used the most ringforts receives points.

PREPARATION

Sit opposite your opponent with the empty board set squarely between you. Each of you takes the tiles of your chosen colour, ignoring the kings. Both players place their 40 bridges in two adjacent rows at the side of the board. This makes it easy to see who is leading throughout the game and to count points at the end. Draw lots to determine who starts.

HOW TO PLAY

Each player takes turns to build (place) one ringfort on any vacant hill. If you build a ringfort adjacent to one or more of your own ringforts, you must automatically link your new ringfort to each existing one in this same turn. So, if it's next to **one**, you use **one** bridge; if it's next to **two**, you use **two** bridges, etc. Note: never link your ringfort to an enemy ringfort.

CAPTURING RINGFORTS

If you besiege an isolated enemy ringfort, you must capture it on your next turn. The ringfort is removed, then replaced by one of your own and linked, all in the same turn.

Capturing takes a complete turn. You must not build another ringfort in that turn. You may capture only one ringfort per turn, so if you have more than one to capture, you may choose which one to capture first. Also, if your opponent has just built a ringfort on a besieged hill, you must capture it immediately.

END OF THE GAME

At the start of any turn, whichever player does not have a turn first, calls "OUT". The other player then just has one more turn before the game ends.

SCORING

Firstly, check that each player has placed all possible bridges. The winner is the player who has used most bridges, i.e. has the fewest bridges left in their row. The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in the number of bridges. For example, if the outcome was 34 to 27 bridges, the winner would get 7 bonus points. The other player does not receive points.

If both players have used the same number of bridges, the winner is the player with most territory. The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in territory. For example, if the outcome was 25 to 20 ringforts, the winner would get 5 bonus points. The other player does not receive points.

5. Doubles

This variant is exactly the same as the Four Treasures Singles game, except for the rules below.

For 4 players



AIM

A match comprises four games, each player taking turns to start. The partnership with most points after four games wins the match.

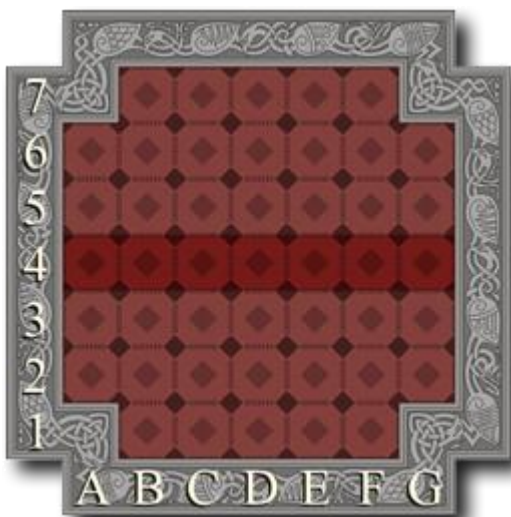
PREPARATION

You now play in pairs. Each player sits opposite their partner with the empty board set squarely between them.

HOW TO PLAY

Each player is now limited to playing just in the first four rows of the board nearest themselves. Because there are seven rows, it means that the row furthest away from each player (the fourth and middle row) will become a shared row between each partnership (*figs. 5-1a & b*). Note: enemy shared rows will cross each other on the central hill. Play continues clockwise.

When you build on the shared row, you still link to your partner's ringforts in your partner's area.



↑ fig. 5-1a: The Red territories meet in the middle shared row.



↑ fig. 5-1b: The Blue territories meet in the middle shared row.

CAPTURING RINGFORTS

If one partner besieges an enemy ringfort which is within their partner's area, the partner must complete the capture on their next turn.

END OF THE GAME

The first player to not have a turn calls "OUT". The other three players then just have one more turn each before the game ends. Note: it is possible for a doubles game to finish without completely filling the board, although extremely rare.

SCORING

The game is scored the same as singles; you win or lose as a team. However, if both partnerships have the same number of bridges and the same territory (there must be an odd number of vacant hills left) the game is drawn and each partnership scores just 1 point.

III. TARA - HIGH KINGS OF TARA

6. Singles - Level 1 - Kingdoms

Introducing the kings in all their ancient power. Each player has three which do the work of building your ringforts. They move like the knight in chess and add many more twists and turns to the game, taking it to another dimension altogether. Kings can capture enemy ringforts and kings, but they can also be immobilised.

For 2 players



AIM

A match comprises two games, each player taking turns to start. The player with most points after two games wins the match. At the end of each game the player with the fewest kingdoms receives points. In case of a tie, the player with most territory receives points.

PREPARATION

Sit opposite your opponent with the empty board set squarely between you. Each of you takes the tiles of your chosen colour and the three kings. Draw lots to determine who starts.

GENERAL RULES

The following rules apply throughout the entire game:

- A king is always moved in the manner of a knight's move in chess.
- A complete turn comprises the movement of one king plus all actions required by that move:
 - Manoeuvres Actions: building ringforts and possibly capturing kings.
 - Battle Actions: building and linking ringforts and possibly capturing ringforts and / or capturing kings.
 - Note: a king may be captured throughout the game, but a ringfort may only be captured in the Battle phase (as this would link ringforts).
- Friendly kings may never stand on adjacent ringforts (this is to prevent them working in tandem); enemy kings can.
- A king must always move to a vacant hill (whenever possible); never onto enemy territory, unless to capture a ringfort.
- Once you touch an accessible hill or a mobile king you are committed.

FIRST PHASE - MANOEUVRES

The first player builds a ringfort anywhere and then places a king in it. The second player does likewise, and so on until all six kings and their ringforts have been built. Note: during this phase, ringforts may not be built adjacent to your own ringforts; the closest they may be is diagonally apart, although they may be built adjacent to enemy ringforts.

You then take turns, moving one of your kings, in the manner of a knight's move, to an empty hill and building a ringfort underneath it (*fig. 6-1*). Two friendly kings may never be adjacent.

As play continues, movement will become more restricted until one of your kings is immobile (*figs. 6-2 & 6-3*). Play must continue with the other kings until they too are immobile.

When all your own kings are immobile, (*fig. 6-4*), Battle starts. At the start of such a turn, whichever player does so first must announce "BATTLE" and advances to the second phase. The other player too advances on their next turn.



↑ fig. 6-1: Red to move. Ticks are legal moves but crosses are not.



↑ fig. 6-2: Blue to move but D7 is immobile.



↑ fig. 6-3: Red to move but E2 is immobile.



↑ fig. 6-4: All Blue kings are immobile so Blue proceeds to Battle.

SECOND PHASE - BATTLE

The restriction that prevented friendly ringforts from being built adjacently is now lifted. You may now build ringforts adjacent to your own (whenever possible), linking them all automatically in the same turn, (fig. 6-5). Although the proximity restriction is now lifted, you may (for strategic or mandatory reasons) still build isolated (non-adjacent) ringforts.

Note: kings are still moving using the knight's move and friendly kings must still never stand on adjacent ringforts.

Now, when all of your own kings are immobile, they are allowed to either backtrack into friendly ringforts, (fig. 6-6), or capture enemy ringforts. This must stop as soon as one of your own kings becomes mobile again.



↑ fig. 6-5: Blue starts Battle. Blue's only moves are either F5 or G2 to E3. Blue's D7 is immobile, but only until both Blue's other kings are immobile too.



↑ fig. 6-6: All (both) Blue's kings are immobile, so D7 backtracks to C5.

CAPTURING KINGS

An enemy king may only be captured by one of your attacking kings if it stands on a single ringfort that is about to be (or is) besieged. If one of your kings builds the last ringfort needed to besiege it, (*fig. 6-7*), (or backtracks to one of the besieging ringforts, (*fig. 6-8*)) the capture is made. The captured king is removed from the game, unable to return.

Note: if you have a choice of moves, it is not obligatory to make the capturing move, but if you do make such a move, you must capture the king.

If a king moves to a besieged hill / ringfort that already has an enemy king adjacent to it, the king played is safe from that particular king, (*fig. 6-9*), (that particular king would first have to move away before attacking and making the capture, however, another king may be able to make the capture instead). This is because a king may legally move to a besieged hill / ringfort to capture an enemy king, (*figs. 6-10 & 6-11*). If one player makes a double capture the game ends immediately and that player wins.



↑ fig. 6-7: Capturing a Red king with a new ringfort.



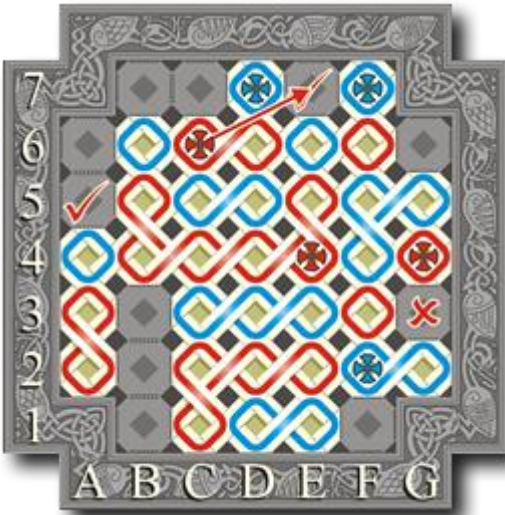
↑ fig. 6-8: Red backtracks to capture a Blue king from an existing ringfort.



↑ fig. 6-9: The Red king is safe from the Blue king above, but it doesn't prevent another Blue king from making the capture.



↑ fig. 6-10: Capturing a Red king from a besieged hill / ringfort.



← fig. 6-11: Red captures Blue's king F7 from a besieged hill / ringfort. Note: if there had been a Red ringfort on C7, Blue's king D7 would have been captured also, making it a double capture in one move.

CAPTURING RINGFORTS

Only single besieged ringforts may be captured. Ringforts are not automatically captured when besieged (as opposed to the Sacred Hill game version) and it may only happen when all of your own kings are immobile. Note: even single ringforts still count as one kingdom, so you might want to think twice and leave them alone, it really depends on the situation!

You capture a ringfort by moving a king onto the ringfort itself, replacing and linking it as usual all in the same turn (figs. 6-12 & 6-13). It is not obligatory to make a capturing move, but if you do make such a move, you must capture the ringfort.

- You may not build another ringfort in that same turn.
- You may capture only one ringfort per turn.



↑ fig. 6-12: Capturing a Red ringfort.



↑ fig. 6-13: Blue is immobile, so is able to capture Red's ringfort E7.

ILLEGAL MOVES

If you make an illegal move and it's spotted before your opponent takes their next turn, your opponent may order you to retract that move, and then replay the move with one of their own choosing in accordance with the rules pertaining at the time.

PASSING

You may only pass at the start of your turn if all the kings on the board (both Red and Blue) are immobile. If you choose to pass, you must remove all your own kings from the board.

Your opponent then just has one more turn before they too are forced to pass and the game ends.

Note: High Kings of Tara does not have to end with a completely filled board.

END OF THE GAME

Once one player builds a ringfort on the last remaining vacant hill, the other player then just has one more turn before the game ends. Otherwise, the game ends immediately when either one player has made a double capture or both players have passed.

SCORING

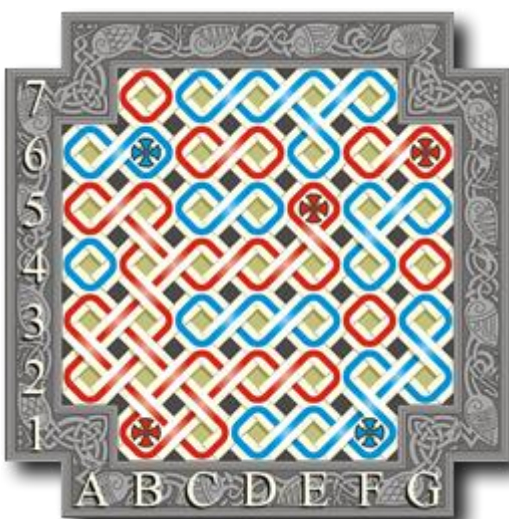
The winner is the player with the fewest number of kingdoms (*fig. 6-14*). The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in the number of kingdoms. For example, if the outcome was 1 to 4 kingdoms, the winner would get 3 bonus points. The other player does not receive points for kingdoms. If either player captured one king they would each score an additional 1 point.

If both players have the same number of kingdoms, the winner is the player with most territory. The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in territory. For example, if the outcome was 23 to 22 ringforts, the winner would get 1 bonus point. The other player does not receive points for territory. If either player captured one king they would each score an additional 1 point.

If both players have the same number of kingdoms and the same territory (you both must have passed leaving an odd number of vacant hills) each player scores just 1 point.

If one player has captured two kings, the game is won by double capture (the loser still keeps 1 point if they captured a king too). Neither player scores any points for kingdoms or territory, even if the double capture was made on the last turn.

Note: it is possible to capture two or even three kings in one turn, but it is extremely rare. Remember, as soon as one player loses two kings the game ends immediately, so the only way to win with a 'triple capture' is to either capture them all in one turn or capture one in one turn, then two in a subsequent turn. You would score 3 points for the triple, if you were so lucky, or skillful.



← fig. 6-14: Finished game: Red has 6 kingdoms and Blue has 7, so Red wins. Red scores 2 points (for the win) plus 1 bonus point (for the difference between 6 and 7) plus 1 point (for the captured king) which equals 4 points.

7. Singles - Level 2 - Kingdoms

Now the full power of the ancient kings is revealed! But this only comes to those who are prepared to sacrifice a king and live close to destruction. The rewards are great; you're able to sacrifice your own territory for the greater good, but if your enemy captures one more king, you lose everything! *For 2 players*

This variant is exactly the same as the Level 1 game, except for the rules below.

SACRIFICING RINGFORTS

If one of your own kings has been captured, your two remaining kings have the additional power to sacrifice your own ringforts. This may only happen when all of your own kings are immobile and one of your kings backtracks to a friendly ringfort which is already besieged (*fig. 7-1a*). You may choose (on a case by case basis) whether to sacrifice it or not. If you do choose to sacrifice, you replace it with an enemy ringfort and link it with enemy bridges in the usual manner in the same turn. Your king is now standing on enemy territory, (*fig. 7-1b*), but it is temporarily immune from capture. Unless the game is ended by your opponent by double capture on their next turn, on your next turn you must:

- If the king is mobile: move to a vacant hill.
- If the king is immobile: either backtrack again (you may also sacrifice again) or capture an enemy ringfort.
- If the king has been trapped (escape route taken): the king is captured by default and you lose the game by double capture.

Note: it is possible to capture an enemy king and sacrifice a ringfort, all in the same turn.

Note: it is illegal to build a ringfort and then sacrifice it in the same turn.



← fig. 7-1a: Blue C5 backtracks to B3 and decides to sacrifice it.



↑ fig. 7-1b: End of Blue's turn and Blue B3 is now on enemy territory and is temporarily immune from capture. Blue must backtrack B3 next turn to either C5, D4 or C1. If it's C1, that could be sacrificed also, then escape to E2.

However, it's Red's turn now and Red has four options:

Option A

Red passes, then Blue B3 escapes to C5 or D4. Red would have 6 kingdoms to Blue's 4, so Red loses with 1 point (for the king) to Blue's 4.

Option B

Red passes, then Blue sacrifices C1. Blue would hand a double capture win (2 points) to Red - very unlikely.

Option C

Red continues and allows Blue to sacrifice C1, then passes. Red would have 6 kingdoms to Blue's 3, so Red loses with 1 point to Blue's 5.

Option D

Red continues and allows Blue to sacrifice C1 and fill G3 and F1. Red would have 6 kingdoms to Blue's 3, so Red loses with 1 point to Blue's 5.

So Red's best option is A.

IV. TARA - POISONED CHALICE

8. Singles - Kingdoms



Shift gear with this one - it turns the tables - literally! It's a battle of spirits between High King Lóegaire and St. Patrick. Players sit at right angles to each other, pitting their wits against the unknown powers of the enemy. Get your head around this, take control of the enemy and watch them squirm!

For 2 players

AIM

A match comprises two games, each player taking turns to start. The player with most points after two games wins the match. At the end of each game the player with the fewest kingdoms receives points. In case of a tie, the player with most territory receives points.

PREPARATION

Sit at right angles to your opponent with the empty board set squarely between you. Each of you takes the tiles of your chosen colour, ignoring the kings. Draw lots to determine who starts.

GENERAL RULES

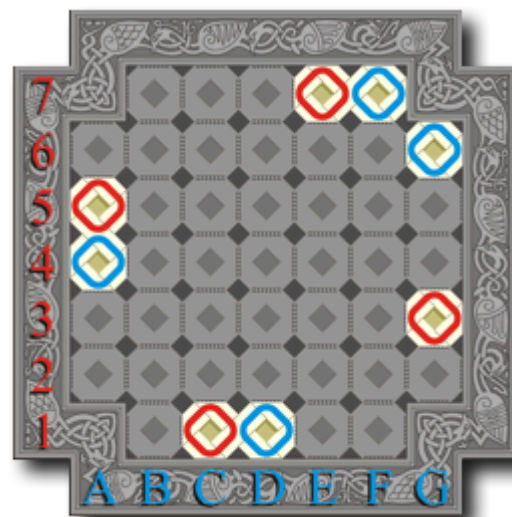
Passing is not allowed. Once you touch a hill you are committed.

FIRST PHASE - MANOEUVRES

Each player takes turns to build (place) one ringfort on an empty hill. Manoeuvres comprises just eight turns (four turns for each player); each player building just one ringfort in each of the board's four edges. The first player must build a ringfort anywhere on any board edge. Subsequently, each player in turn must build their ringfort so that none are built opposite another (*figs. 8-1 & 8-2*).



↑ fig. 8-1: Red sits along board edge marked with Red numbers 1-7. Blue sits along board edge marked with Blue letters A-G. Red built first on E7, so Blue must build on any edge hill, marked with a tick except E1 (opposite E7).



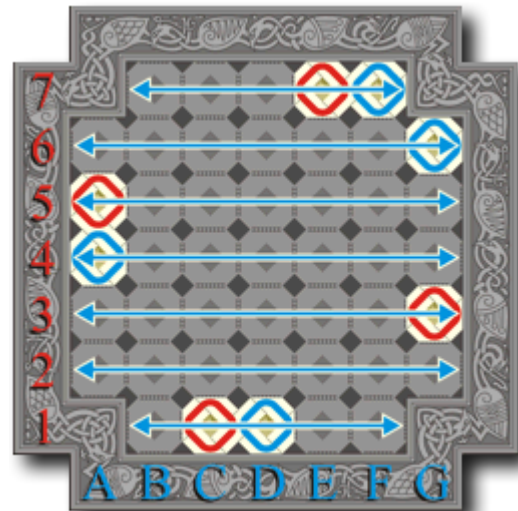
↑ fig. 8-2: End of Manoeuvres - each player has built one ringfort on each board edge. None are built opposite another.

SECOND PHASE - BATTLE

Because you are sitting at right angles to each other, you will each have a different perspective of the board. Before each turn, you must assess your own individual rows (figs. 8-3 & 8-4), running horizontally in relation to yourself, for qualified rows.



↑ fig. 8-3: Red's rows.



↑ fig. 8-4: Blue's rows.

A **qualified row** is one in which you have either the same number of ringforts, **but at least one**, or fewer ringforts as your opponent (figs 8-5 & 8-6).



↑ fig. 8-5: Red's qualified rows are A, D, F & G.

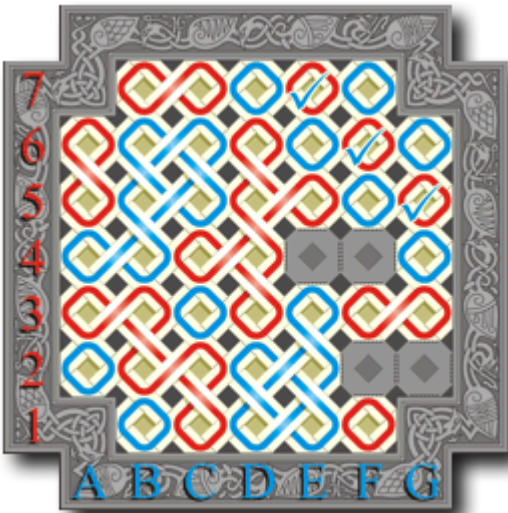


↑ fig. 8-6: Blue's qualified rows are 1, 3, 4, 6 & 7.

Now, each player takes turns to build one ringfort on an empty hill, anywhere in a qualified row. As friendly ringforts are built adjacently, they are all linked automatically in the same turn. If you have no qualified rows you must capture an enemy ringfort if you can. If you cannot capture a ringfort, you must build a ringfort anywhere you like.

CAPTURING RINGFORTS

If you besiege an isolated enemy ringfort, it may be captured later in the game. Capturing ringforts is not automatic (as opposed to Sacred Hill) and it may only happen when you have no qualified rows. If you have more than one to capture, you may choose which one to capture first. The ringfort is removed, then replaced by one of your own and linked, all in the same turn (fig. 8-7). Capturing takes a complete turn. You must not build another ringfort in that turn. You may capture only one ringfort per turn.



← fig. 8-7: Blue has no qualified rows and must choose which ringfort to capture.

ILLEGAL MOVES

If you make an illegal move and it's spotted before your opponent takes their next turn, your opponent may order you to remove that ringfort, and then replace it somewhere else of their own choosing in accordance with the rules pertaining at the time.

END OF THE GAME

The first player to not have a legal turn calls "OUT". The other player then just has one more turn before the game ends.

Note: the board will always be full and only one player should have any besieged ringforts remaining (if any).

SCORING

The winner is the player with the fewest number of kingdoms. The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in the number of kingdoms. For example, if the outcome was 1 to 4 kingdoms, the winner would get 3 bonus points. The other player does not receive points, (*fig. 8-8*).

If both players have the same number of kingdoms, the winner is the player with most territory. The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in territory. For example, if the outcome was 24 to 21 ringforts, the winner would get 3 bonus points. The other player does not receive points.



← fig. 8-8: Finished game: Red has 3 kingdoms and Blue has 6, so Red wins. Red scores 2 points (for the win) plus 3 bonus points (for the difference between 3 and 6) which equals 5 points. Note: only Blue has any single ringforts remaining.

V. TARA - STONE OF DESTINY

9. Singles - Level 1 - Kingdoms

The mighty Stone of Destiny set atop the King's Seat will roar as it accepts the true High King of Tara. In this ultimate test of skill and nerve, victory rests on a knife-edge as you battle with your enemy to and fro. Ringforts are won and lost in the blink of an eye; so be wise in the art of attack and defence; protect them with your life!

For 2 players

AIM

A match comprises two games, each player taking turns to start. The player with most points after two games wins the match. At the end of each game the player with the fewest kingdoms receives points. In case of a tie, the player with most territory (i.e. the one who does not have the spare ringfort, see Battle) receives points.

PREPARATION

Sit opposite your opponent with the empty board set squarely between you. Each of you takes the tiles of your chosen colour and **one** king. Draw lots to determine who starts.

GENERAL RULES

Passing is not allowed. Once you touch a empty hill / ringfort you are committed.

FIRST PHASE - MANOEUVRES

The first player builds (places) one ringfort on an empty hill and places their king into it. Thereafter, each player builds one ringfort 1 or 2 hills (horizontally, vertically or diagonally) away from the enemy king, (*fig. 9-1*), and then moves their king into it. If you have nowhere to build you must start again anywhere else. This continues until the board is full. Note: this phase does not need bridges.

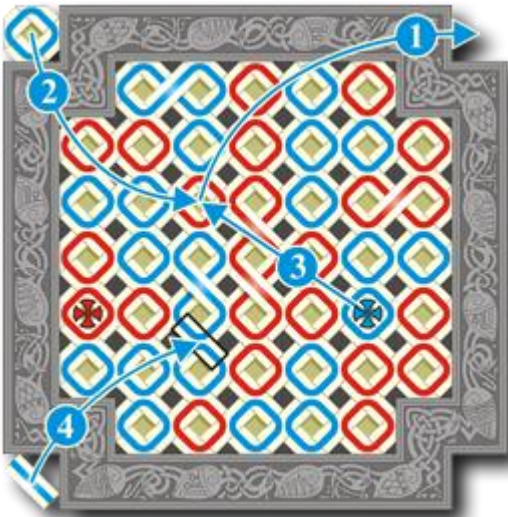
→ *fig. 9-1*: Blue may build a ringfort 1 or 2 hills away from Red's king horizontally, vertically or diagonally

SECOND PHASE - BATTLE

Now, there will only be one spare ringfort left; this player starts the Battle. On your turn you must do the following, (*fig. 9-2*), in order:

1. **Remove** any unlinked enemy ringfort (except for the one in which the enemy king stands) and give it to your opponent.
2. **Replace** it with your own (the spare) ringfort.
3. **Move** your king into your new ringfort to protect it.
4. **Link** any two of your own ringforts (not necessarily with your new one).





← fig. 9-2: Example of a turn in the battle phase:

- 1) Blue removes an unlinked Red ringfort,
- 2) replaces it with the spare Blue ringfort,
- 3) moves the Blue king there and
- 4) links two Blue ringforts.

ILLEGAL MOVES

If you make an illegal move and it's spotted before your opponent takes their next turn, your opponent may order you to remove that ringfort, and then replace it somewhere else of their own choosing in accordance with the rules pertaining at the time.

END OF THE GAME

The first player to not have a legal turn calls "OUT" (*fig. 9-3*). The other player then just has one more turn before the game ends. After that turn, all remaining unlinked ringforts must be linked together to form the fewest possible kingdoms.

SCORING

The winner is the player with the fewest number of kingdoms. The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in the number of kingdoms. For example, if the outcome was 1 to 6 kingdoms, the winner would get 5 bonus points. The other player does not receive points (*fig. 9-4*).

If both players have the same number of kingdoms, the winner is the player with most territory. The winner scores 2 points, plus bonus points for the difference in territory (this will always be 1 point, i.e. the spare ringfort). The outcome will be 23 to 22 ringforts so the winner gets 1 bonus point. The other player does not receive points.



↑ fig. 9-3: Blue cannot swap a ringfort. The Red king also protects Red's only unlinked ringfort. So Blue calls "OUT". Red has no legal turn either.



↑ fig. 9-4: Finished game: Red has 1 kingdom and Blue has 3, so Red wins. Red scores 2 points (for the win) plus 2 bonus points (for the difference between 1 and 3) which equals 4 points.

Appendix: Game concepts and Examples

ADJACENT

Next to, either horizontally or vertically - not diagonally.

→ The four outer ringforts are adjacent to the central ringfort.



BESIEGE

Only a single hill / ringfort may be besieged. Being surrounded on all available adjacent sides by enemy ringforts. Two or more (linked) ringforts built adjacently cannot be besieged.



↑ A besieged hill.



↑ A besieged ringfort.

CAPTURE

Only a single besieged ringfort may be captured. The ringfort is removed, then replaced by one of your own and linked, all in the same turn. Note: only when playing the High Kings of Tara variant, a king is needed to capture an enemy ringfort.



↑ Blue captures a Red ringfort in a corner using the two adjacent ringforts.



↑ Red captures a Blue ringfort on an edge using the three adjacent ringforts.



↑ Blue captures a Red ringfort in the middle using the four adjacent ringforts.

DOUBLE CAPTURE

A winning condition; the capture of two enemy kings either in one turn or two separate turns.

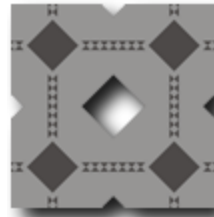
FRIENDLY

Of the same colour; your own colour.

HILL

One of the 45 board cells centered on a single hole.

→ A hill



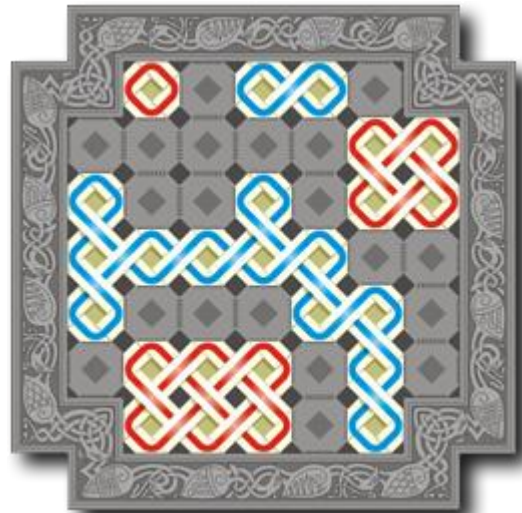
IMMOBILE

(Of a king) unable to move to a vacant hill in accordance with the rules pertaining at the time.

KINGDOM

A group of friendly ringforts; either one isolated ringfort or any number which are linked together.

→ Five examples of kingdoms.



KNIGHT'S MOVE

A type of move used in this game, in the manner of a chess knight, i.e. one by two or two by one.

→ Examples of knight's moves. Red has eight possible moves; Blue has three.



LINKING

Clipping on one bridge between the new ringfort and each adjacent friendly ringfort. If the new ringfort is adjacent to one other ringfort, one bridge is used; if it is adjacent to two ringforts, two bridges are used, etc. All links are made automatically in the same turn (except SD). Note: never link two ringforts of different colours.

→ Example of linking one new ringfort (lighter) to three existing ringforts.



↑ Example of linking one new ringfort (lighter) to an existing ringfort.



LULL

A state of having only OP0s and OP1s; a point at which a player has no particular outstanding commitments. See also Order of Priority.

MOBILE

(Of a king) able to move to a vacant hill in accordance with the rules pertaining at the time.

ORDER OF PRIORITY

A number (between 0 and 4) that is allocated to a vacant hill (by each player individually) determined by the number of friendly ringforts adjacent to it. Order of Priority is referred to as "OP". OP1s are shown as single dots; OP2s are shown as double dots etc. OP0s are left blank.



↑ Example of Red's OPs.



↑ Example of Blue's OPs.

TERRITORY

The total number of ringforts used by each player.