

Siege Master

A board game for 2 players by Phillip L. Leduc

INTRODUCTION

Siege Master is a two-player game of territorial conquest that requires a keen eye and nerves of steel.

Fortress tokens are distributed on a map-like hexagonal grid. Players then take turns extending chains of army tokens on the map-grid in order to capture these fortresses by surrounding them. The player who completes the siege of a fortress captures it. The player who captures more than half of the fortresses on the map-grid wins the game.

COMPONENTS

The game of **Siege Master** requires:

- A grid of hexes
- 102 black tokens
- 15 neutral fortress tokens (gray)
- 2 sets of 8 fortress tokens (red and blue)
- 2 sets of 20 army tokens (red and blue). An army token is a straight tetromino (1x4) that covers four empty hexes in a row.



SET-UP

Players create a map-like shape of around 200 hexes using the hexagonal grid and the black pieces (border), and then alternate placing the neutral fortresses such that *most* fortresses are at least three spaces from all other fortresses. See sample setups in Figures 1 to 7. Each player takes a matching set of army and fortress tokens.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Siege area: A siege area is an area of zero or more empty hexes that is surrounded by army tokens, border tokens, and/or the edge of the game board, *and* no armies can fit into this area.

Fortress Siege: If there are one or more fortresses in a siege area, they are immediately captured by the player that placed the last piece. See examples in Figures 8 to 14.

Adjacent Armies: Two armies are adjacent if the hexes that they occupy share at least one common hex edge.

Map-grid: One or more areas outlined at the start of the game, such that each area is completely surrounded by border tokens or contains at least one neutral fortress. For example, in Figure 1, the island of Madagascar is part of the Africa map-grid but the northwest corner of the board is not part of the map-grid.

GAME PLAY

To start the game, Red places an army anywhere on the map-grid. If this move completes the siege of any fortresses, these fortresses are captured and Red replaces the neutral fortresses with his or her own.

On Blue's first turn, if Blue feels that Red's move was too good, Blue may replace Red's tokens with blue tokens. Otherwise, Blue takes a normal turn. Whatever Blue decides, players then take turns performing the following player actions. Players may not pass a turn.

PLAYER ACTIONS

On a player's turn, if the player's opponent did not capture a fortress on his or her last turn *and* it is possible to play an army adjacent to the opponent's last placed army, then the moving player must do so. Otherwise, the moving player can play an army token anywhere on the map-grid.

After placing an army, the moving player claims any newly captured neutral fortresses by replacing these fortresses with his or her own.

The player who captures more than half of the fortresses on the map-grid wins the game.

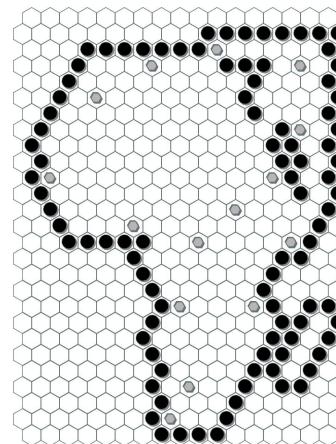


Figure 1 – Africa

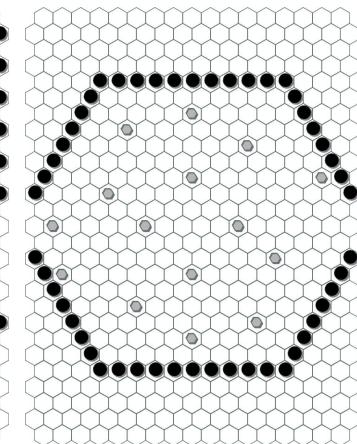


Figure 2 – Hex board

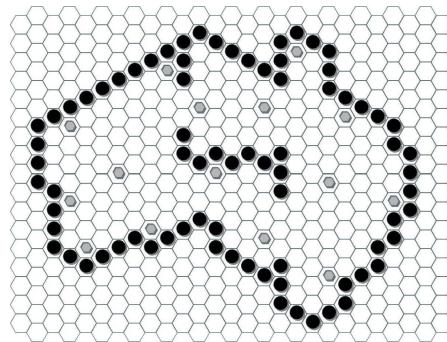


Figure 3 – Australia

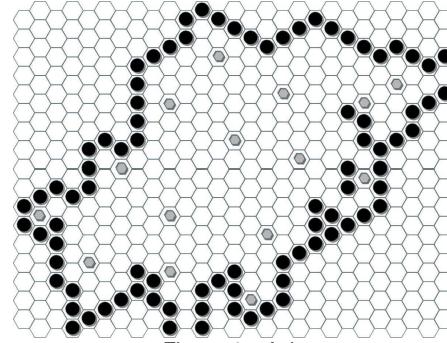


Figure 4 – Asia

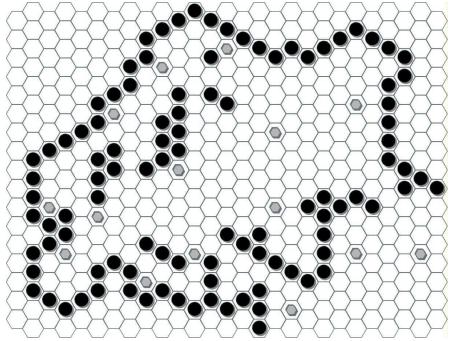


Figure 5 – Europe

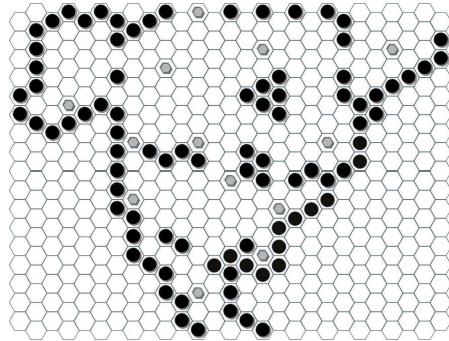


Figure 6 – N. America

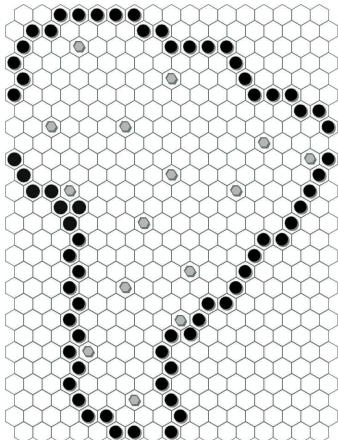


Figure 7 – South America

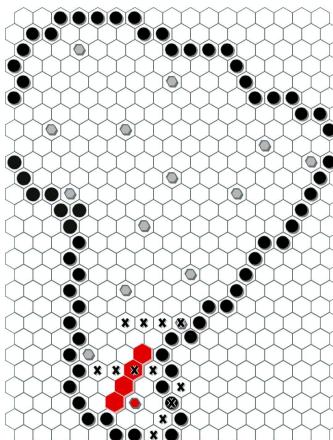


Figure 8. Illegal Moves: Armies may only be played to empty hexes. If Red starts a game by capturing a fortress on her first move and Blue were to decide to take a normal turn, Blue could not play at the locations indicated by the x's, because armies may not be placed over a fortress or an army or off the map-grid.

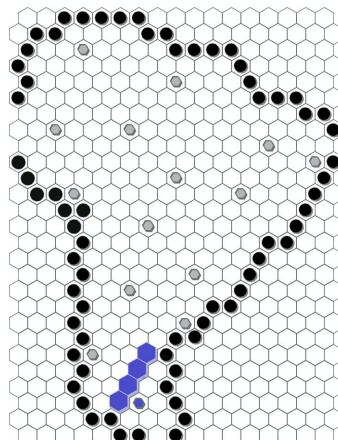


Figure 9. Swap Rule: On Blue's first turn, Blue has the option of swapping out Red's tokens. Since Red made a capture which gives Red the lead in captured fortresses, Blue decides to swap her tokens with his. He in effect becomes the first player.

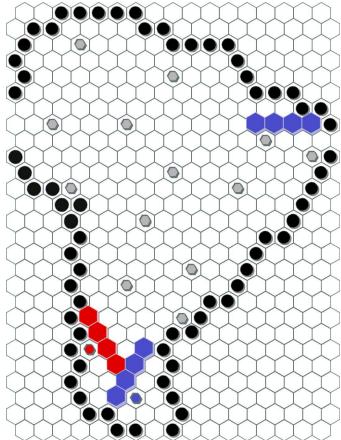


Figure 10. Following a capture: After a fortress capture, the next player is free to play anywhere on the grid. After Blue's capture, Red can play anywhere, including adjacent to the last placed army. Red captures a fortress. Following Red's capture, Blue plays up north. Notice that there are no more easy captures.

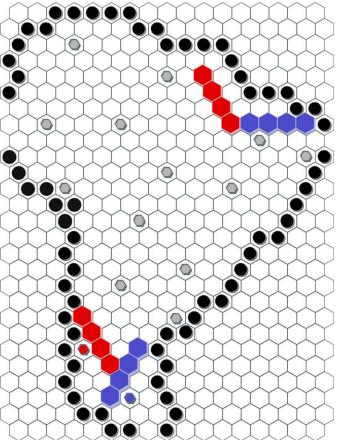


Figure 11. Playing adjacent: Since Blue's last move did not capture a fortress and Red can play adjacent to it, Red must play adjacent to Blue's last-placed army. She plays a northwest move which turns out to be a weak move.

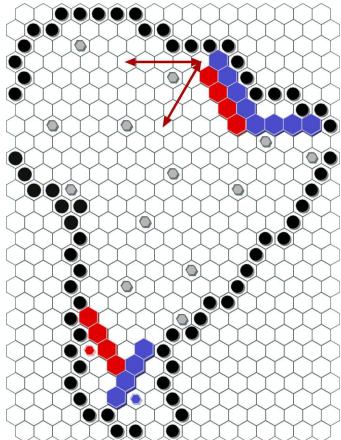


Figure 12. Forcing moves: Blue decides to limit Red's possible placements. By playing along the coast, Red will have only two possible moves which are indicated by the arrowed lines. Which is the better move for Red?

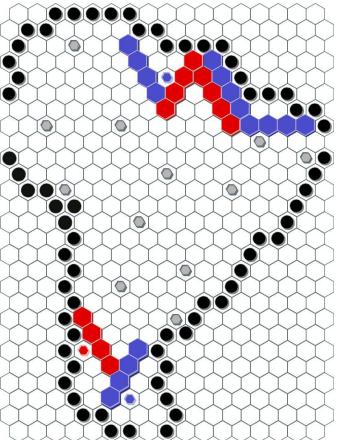


Figure 13. Red does not look ahead and chooses the southwest move. Blue plays another northwest move to capture another fortress and takes the lead.

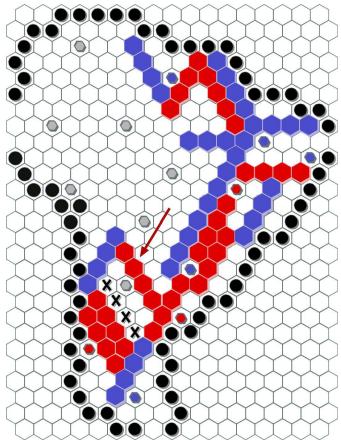


Figure 14. Isolated areas: In this figure, the red arrow points to the last played army. Red has created a small enclosed area but does not capture the fortress inside the area because an army could fit in the area. The x's mark where it would fit. Note that Blue cannot immediately play where the x's are because the army would not be adjacent to the last played army. Instead he must continue the current chain of moves northward.

Strategy tip: An isolated area is an area into which an army cannot be placed during the current series of moves but can have one or more armies placed into it later in the game. Isolated areas should be studied carefully because they can be crucial to winning the game.