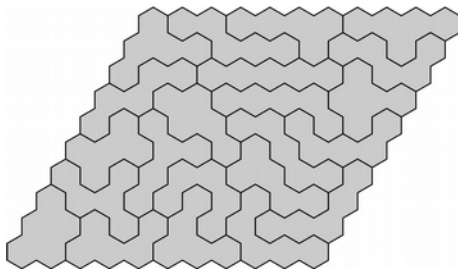**STACK-22**

A strategy game for 2 players by
Néstor Romeral Andrés

INTRODUCTION

Stack-22 is a tile-stacking game that uses polyhexes of 5 hexagons, called pentahexes. There are 22 different pentahexes (hence the name of the game):

The pentahexes, packed together

Stack-22 is a new addition to the *Pile-Omino* family (*Seven*, *Pent-Up* and *Counterplays*) by the same designer. All of them play the same, but *Stack-22* can be considered a step up from *Seven*. **Warning**: this is not a game for the casual player. It is recommended that you at least master *Seven, Pent-Up or Counterplays* before playing *Stack-22*, as if you don't know the tactics it can feel a bit cold at the start during the first games. Its depth can be overwhelming (22 opening moves and more than 3000 second moves; the branching factor is crazy), but it rewards those who dare to explore.

Players alternate turns placing one of their tiles according to some simple rules, trying to get the most of their pieces on the topmost layers when the game ends.
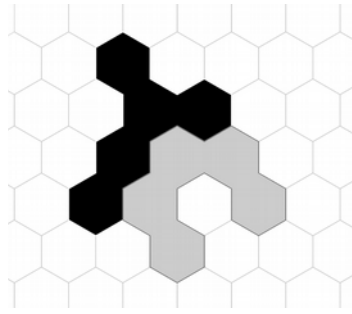
Note that some of the tiles are not symmetric, and can be placed either side up.

EQUIPMENT

Each player has 22 different pentahexes of the same colour (black or white). The game also includes a bag for storage.
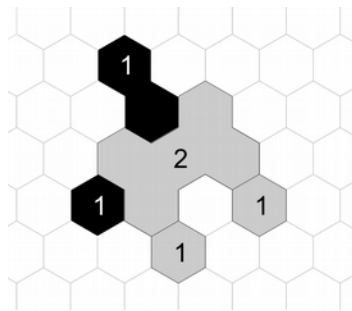
HOW TO PLAY

White starts by placing a white tile on the playing surface. Black then places a black tile adjacent to it so that it fits within an imaginary hex grid.

Example of opening (imaginary grid drawn in light grey)

From now on, players alternate turns placing **any** tile of their colour according to the following rules:

a) The tile must be aligned with the hex grid.

b) The selected tile must be placed on the **highest level** on which it can be placed legally.

c) The tile must be placed either on the table and adjacent to a piece already on the table, or atop at least 2 tiles, regardless of their colour.

d) The tile must lie flat, with every hex directly supported, either by the table or by a lower tile.

Example: White places the 'H' tile on Level 2 (numbers indicate levels).

GAME END

The game ends when all tiles have been placed. The player with the most tiles on the highest level wins (so, if the stack is 3 levels high, look at Level 3). In case of a tie, the 2nd-highest level, then the 3rd-highest level, and so on.

STRATEGIES

Rule 'b' (mandatory placement on the topmost level) is the key for winning the game. Force your opponent to place 2 adjacent tiles on the topmost level, so you can place one of yours on top of them. But be careful: timing is important. If you force a placement too soon or too late, you will lose the game!

VARIANTS

Play as usual, but the player with most tiles on the **lowest** level wins.

For shorter games, you can remove the same pieces from both players before the game starts.