

Awale

[Historical background](#) of Awale

The [rules](#) of Awale

Some [examples](#)

A variation on Awale : The "[two-four](#)"

[The menus](#)

[Using the game](#)

[Some strategies](#)

[Registration](#)

[Version release/Greetings](#)

[Bibliography](#)

Historical background

The game of Awale (or Awele) is one of the oldest strategy games. It seems to come from the ancient Egypt, and to have been spread gradually in whole Africa.

Awale is a "plank game" (mancala). It is played with an hollowed wood plank and some stones.

Nowadays, Awale can be found in every African regions. Several variations on this game exist. With this software, you can play to "classical Awale" or with a variation, the "2-4", as described by Kanga Ballou in his book. (See [bibliography](#))

The rules of Awale

The rules of Awale are very simple, and the game is easy to understand. On the other hand, the strategies you have to implement to win are fearful !

The rules are varying from a region to another, even sometimes from a village to another... We'll use here the most common rules, but it'll be easy for you later to adapt your game to more local variations.

Rule 1 : Aim of the game

The aim of the game is to capture more stones than your opponent. At the end of the game, the player who have captured the more stones wins.

Rule 2 : The playground

The playground is divided into two areas, hollowed with six holes each.

Your area is on the bottom of the screen, your opponent's (computer) area is on the top.

At the begining, 48 stones are distributed among the 12 holes (four stones into each hole).

Rule 3 : The game turn.

Every player plays alernately, the first one to play is chosen at random.

The player takes all the stones in a hole of **his** area and distributes them counterclockwise, one in each hole.

Rule 4 : Capture

The master stone is the last to be distributed.

If the master stone falls into one of the opponent's holes, containing already one or two stones, the player captures the two or three stones.

The captured stones are taken off the game (the hole is left empty).

At every turn, the player have to reach (if it's possible) his opponent's area. If it's not possible, he can play any hole of his area.

Rule 5: Multiple capture

If a player captures two or three stones, if the preceeding hole contains also two or three stones, they are captured too, and so on...

Rule 6: Loop

If the number of stones taken in the starting hole is greater than 11, it constitutes a loop : the starting hole is missed out everytime the distribution loop, and therefore always left empty.

Si le nombre de pierres prises dans le trou de départ est supérieur à 11, cela

A hole containing enough stones to loop is called a 'Kroo'.

Rule 7: End of the game

The game ends if :

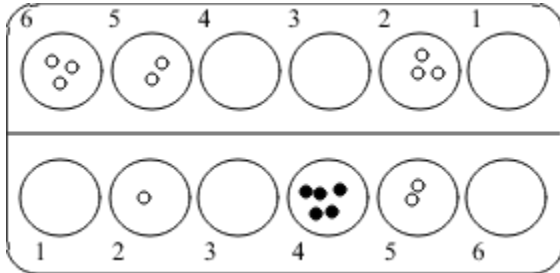
- A player hasn't any stones in his area, and therefore can't play,
- A player had captured more than 24 stones,
- No hole of the playground contains more than one stone.

In this case, every player captures all the stones of his **own** area.

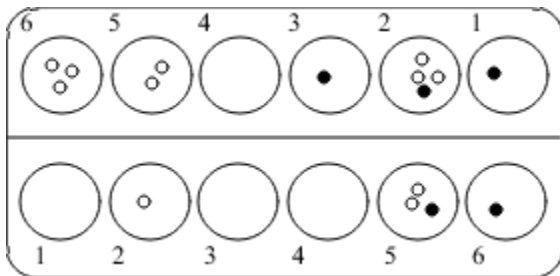
Examples

Some examples :

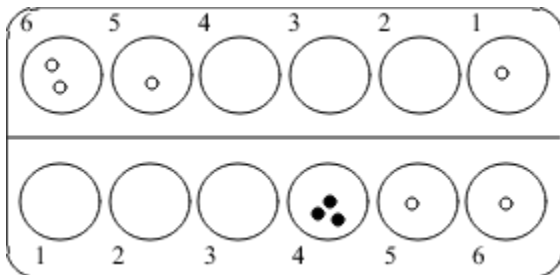
A basic move :



It's your turn to play. Your area is on the bottom, your holes 1, 3 and 6 are empty, you can't play them. The hole 2 doesn't contain enough stones to reach the opponent's area, you can't play it as well. You play the hole 4. This action leads to this new configuration :

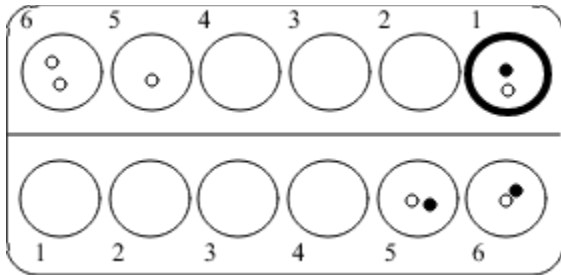


A capture :

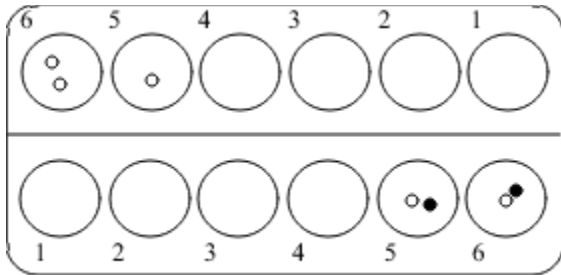


It's your turn to play. You have three stone in the hole 4, one stone in the hole 5, and one stone in the hole 6.

If you play the hole 4, you reach the hole 1 of your opponent's area :

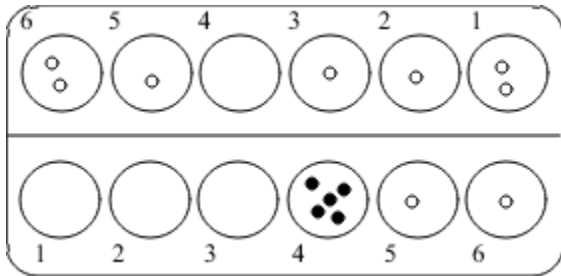


Your master stone fell into the hole 1 of your opponent, which contains two stones now.
You capture them :

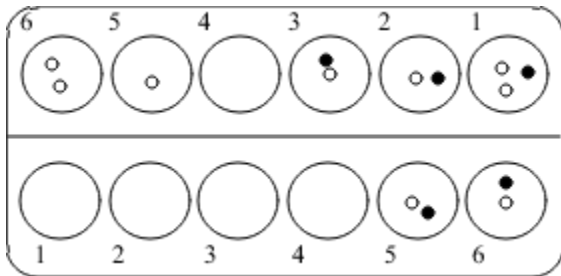


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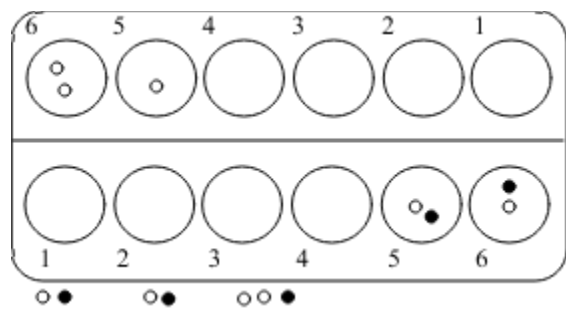
A multiple capture:



You play the hole 4 so that you reach the hole 3 of your opponent's area :



The hole 3 of your opponent contains two stones now, you capture them. But the previous hole contains two stones as well, and the previous again contains three stones. You capture all these stones ... So, seven stones are captured in a single turn !



The rules of the 2-4

The 2-4 is a very interesting variation on the Awale game.

The aim is to capture the greater number of stones, just as with the classical Awale. The playground configuration at the beginning of the game is the same.

The changes are :

While playing, a stone is left into the beginning hole. A hole can be played only if it contains at least two stones.

The player can capture stones only if the hole contains one or three stones before the master stone falls into it.

The same player continues playing from the hole his master stone has fallen into :

- While his master stone doesn't fall into an empty hole
- While he doesn't capture stones.

If the player can't play, he passes.

The 2-4 variation is reserved to registered copies of Awele.

The menus

The system menu

Opens the information box, or the help window.

The Awale menu

The first two options let you choose the game variation :

Classical Awale

2-4 Awale

New game : begins a new game

New Match : begins a new match, i.e. six games.

Stop Match : stops the current match.

Score panel : If a match is in progress, shows the scores of the games already played.

The Options menu

Show number of stones :

If this option is active, the number of stones contained by the hole pointed by the mouse cursor is displayed.

Show target

If this option is active, a little circle shows the hole reached if the player plays the hole pointed by the mouse cursor.

Noises

If this option is active, the actions are supplemented by sound effects.

Animations

If this option is active, some animations shows what is played.

Comments

If this option is active, comments are made on the actions performed. This option is automatically activated with the initiation level.

Levels :

Your opponent's level can vary from initiation to Grand Master. This last level is quite fearful, and remains unbeaten for now...

The highest levels are reserved to the registered copies of Awale.

NOTA : Since the computer's thought time is limited to 10 seconds, it becomes a more competitive opponent with powerful computers.

Using the game

The game is playable essentially with the mouse : just click on the hole you want to play.

Some keyboard keys are useful :

F1 : Open this help window

Space bar : The computer finds the best hole and plays it for you.

Some strategies

Mr Kanga Ballou explains in detail numerous strategies used by the Awale players.
Here is some of them :

There is three main groups of strategies :

- The offensive strategies
- The defensive strategies
- The end-of-game strategies

An classical offensive strategy is the Kroo (in Akan language, accumulation). The Kroo is the accumulation into a hole of enough stones to make a complete revolution, i.e. at least twelve stones.

A Kroo is 'ripe' when there is enough stones to reach the hole 1 of the opponent during the second revolution. A well executed Kroo can be desastrous for your opponent, by capturing large series of two or three stones.

On the other hands, a devensive strategy can thwart a Kroo.

A player can protect himself from a Kroo with :

- the dam
- the pressure
- the overloading

The dam consists in maintaining more than two stones into the hole reached by his opponent's Kroo.

The pressure leads the opponent to play his Kroo befor it's ripe. To do this, the player feeds his opponent's holes as less as he can.

The overloading is just the contrary : the player feeds his opponent's Kroo in order to make him missing his target.

Version release / Greetings

12/25/1995 : Santa Claus gives an awale game to one of the authors (a real one, made of solid tree wood).

12/26/1995 : Beginning of the programmation of Awale on Macintosh.

01/02/1996 : version 1.0, on Macintosh and Windows 95.

We want to thank here :

Jean-François 'Jeff' Cassan
Main Beta-tester

Santa Claus
for his good idea.

Bibliography

Règles et stratégies du jeu d'Awalé, Kanga BALLOU, 1993, Nouvelles Editions Ivoiriennes, 01 BP 1818 ABIDJAN

Registration

This game has been designed for Macintosh and Windows95.

By registering your copy, you can access all the options, and therefore :

- play against more opponents
- play the 2-4 variation

To register, send the registering form (or write your complete name and address) to this address

Didier et Olivier GUILLION
4 rue de Bordeaux
31200 Toulouse

Join to this mail: \$10 cash
or \$40 by check
or 50 french francs, with any mode of payment

You'll get, by postal or electronic mail, your personal registration number.

You can send us suggestions, remarks and questions on E-MAIL :

101455.254@compuserve.com

or consult our Web pages on

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/myriad>

and find there the latest releases of our sharewares for Macintosh and PC.

