

G I P F  
 T Z A A R  
 Z È R T Z  
 D V O N N  
 P Ü N C T  
 Y I N S H



Information about the *GIPF* project:  
 games, potentials, digital versions  
 and more.

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**Warning!** Choking hazard. Not suitable for  
 children under age of 3 due to small parts.



Z È R T Z



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Kris Burm





## A game about making sacrifices.

The third game of GIPF project. For 2 Spieler.

Strange ...

A board that gets smaller  
and two players playing with  
the same marbles ...

In the beginning you will have to  
get used to it, but once you do, you  
will find out that there are many  
ways to get the game under control.

Play the right marble at the right  
place at the right moment, and  
you will be leading the dance!

### A CONTENTS

- 6 white marbles
- 8 grey marbles
- 10 black marbles
- 49 rings
- 1 rulebook
- 1 bag
- This rulebook

### B AIM OF THE GAME

You must try to capture:

- either 3 marbles of each color,
- or 4 white marbles,
- or 5 grey marbles,
- or 6 black marbles.

The winner is the first player to achieve one of these goals.

### C PREPARATION

In total you have 49 rings. To play the basic game you need only 37 of them. (So, you do not need the 12 remaining rings yet. After having mastered the basic strategies, you can use them to play ZÈRTZ on a larger board. See: H. "Expanded board")

- 1/ Take 37 rings and assemble a hexagonal game board with them.
- 2/ The 6 white, 8 grey and 10 black marbles are the "pool". Put the pool next to the board, so that both players can easily reach the marbles.
- 3/ Draw lots to determine who will go first.

### D MAKING A MOVE

When it is your turn, there are two possible moves:

- 1/ You place a marble on the board and then remove a ring.
- 2/ You capture one or more marbles.

After you have performed one of the two possible moves, it is your opponent's turn.

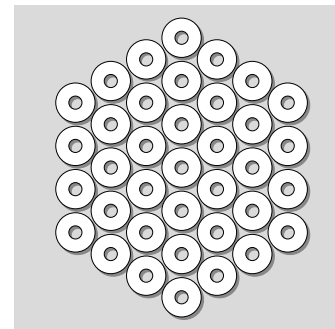
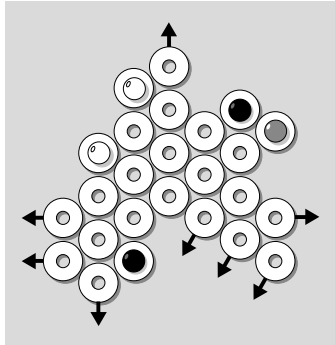


Diagram 1: The board at the start of the game.

**Important:** the marbles, in the pool as well as on the board, belong to both players (i.e. neither you, nor your opponent have your “own” marbles to play with).

### Possible Move 1: Placing a marble

- 1/ When it is your turn, you first select a marble from the pool. Next you must place it on the board. You may select any color you wish and you may place the marble on any vacant ring.



**Diagram 2:** only the rings with an arrow may be removed.

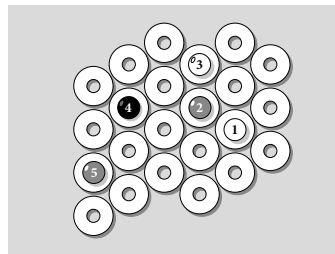
- 2/ After you have placed a marble on the board, you must remove an empty ring. Empty means: the piece must be vacant and it must be positioned at the edge of the board. In other words, there may not be a marble on it and you must be able to remove it from the sides without disturbing the position of the remaining rings.
- 2/ Placing a marble and removing a ring is one turn. You must do both. However, it may occur that you cannot remove any of the vacant rings without disturbing the position of the other rings. In this case you must not remove a ring (i.e. your move ends after having placed a marble).  
**Note:** do not stack the rings that you remove on top of each other. It is better to use them to put your captured marbles on. (See: “Possible Move 2: Capturing marbles”).

### Possible Move 2: Capturing marbles

- 1/ Capturing is compulsory. You must do it if you can.
- 2/ To capture a marble, you must jump over it with another marble (i.e. as in checkers). You may only jump over a marble on an adjacent ring. You may jump in any direction if there is a vacant ring behind the marble that you intend to capture.
- 3/ The color of the marbles is of no importance when capturing: you may jump with any marble over any other marble, no matter the color, no matter whether you or your opponent placed it on the board.

**For example:** you put a white marble on the board. A few moves later your opponent places a grey marble next to it. There is a vacant ring behind both marbles. You may select the option you think is most advantageous: jumping with the white marble over the grey one or the other way around.

- 4/ If you jump over a marble and you have the possibility to jump over a second one, then you must do so, no matter in which direction you make the second (or third) jump.
- 5/ If you can capture different numbers of marbles (e.g. in one direction 1 marble and in another direction 2 marbles), you may freely choose which possibility you will go for.



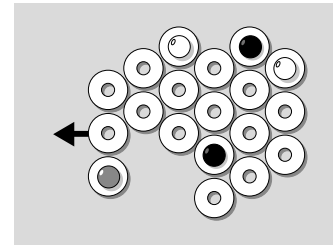
**Diagram 3:** the arrows below indicate the different ways to capture.

- 1 → 2 and 3
- 1 → 2, 4 and 5
- 2 → 1
- 3 → 2 and 1

- 6/ Capturing one or more marbles counts as a complete move. In other words: that turn you may not place a marble, **nor may you remove a ring.**

### E ISOLATING MARBLES

- 1/ If you succeed in isolating one or more rings from the main part of the board, you may claim the isolated pieces, including the marbles on them. Most of the times it will concern one ring, thus one marble, but it is not limited to one. This “claiming” should be seen as a secondary way of capturing marbles, **but it is not compulsory.**



**Diagram 4:** if you remove the ring indicated by the arrow, you may capture the marble on the isolated ring.

- 2/ You can only capture marbles this way if there are no vacant rings in the isolated group. So, you may claim one or more rings when you either put a marble on the last vacant ring of an already isolated group, or remove the ring through which a group of occupied rings gets isolated.  
**Note:** you may capture marbles this way as a **result** of a move; it is not itself a move.

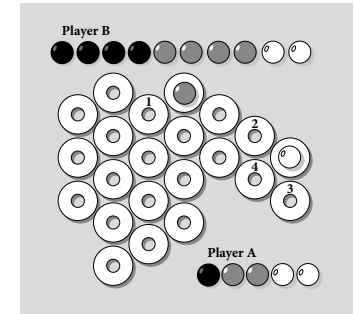
### F END OF THE GAME

- 1/ As mentioned at the beginning of these rules: the first player to capture either 3 marbles of each color, or 4 white marbles, or 5 grey marbles, or 6 black marbles wins the game.

### G SPECIAL CASES

- 1/ It may occur that there are no more marbles in the pool before the game has ended. In this case you must continue with your captured marbles. As with selecting a marble from the pool, you may choose any color of your captured marbles to play with - and this goes on until one of the two players gets a winning set of marbles.
- 2/ In the extreme event (not to exclude the possibility) that all the rings were occupied before either

- of the players achieves one of the set goals, it is the one who makes the last move who wins. In fact, he may claim all of the remaining rings, including the marbles, for this situation is to be seen as an isolated group of occupied rings.
- 3/ If it would happen that two players start repeating the same sequence of moves, the game ends in a tie.



**Diagram 5:** a bit of strategy. Player A is 5 marbles behind, but he can win the game from here! He puts a black marble on ring 1 and removes ring 2. By doing so, he forces Player B to jump over (and to capture) that black marble. The fact that it is a black marble, means that Player B hasn't a winning combination yet. Then player A goes again: he puts a white marble on ring 3 and removes 4. He captures the 2 white marbles on the isolated rings and wins with a set of 4 white marbles!

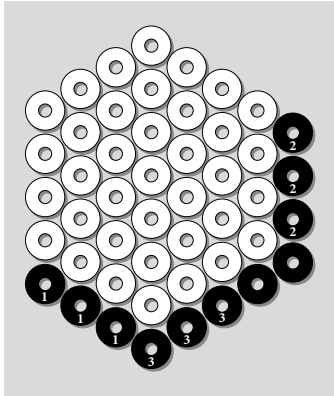
### H EXPANDED BOARD

ZÈRTZ was initially released with only 37 rings. That is all you need to explore the game and to find out how challenging it is. However, once you have become an expert player you may want to play with more rings.

But be careful! Playing on an enlarged board only makes sense if you have first mastered the basic strategies. ZÈRTZ is a fast and explosive game. If you add extra rings too soon, you risk to turn it into a long, possibly even boring game - and that is not the purpose!

On the other hand, once you are familiar with the principles of making sacrifices and long sequences of forced moves, then you will find an extra challenge in making the board larger. For example:

you can add a row 3 rings at one side of the board. 3 extra rings do not add that much complexity, but they change the board into an irregular hexagon and that implies that you now have more different opening moves. You can go one step further and play with 6 or 7 extra rings. If you want to play the tournament version, you must add 11 rings. The more rings, the harder it is to control the game!



**Diagram 6:** to play with ...

- 40 rings: add rings 1.
- 43 rings: add rings 1 and 2.
- 44 rings: add rings 1 and 3.
- 48 rings: add all the rings.

**Note 1:** you do not need extra marbles; the number of marbles and the conditions to win remain unchanged.

**Note 2:** the 49th ring is a spare piece. And you may need it if you have the Potentials and want to play ZÈRTZ with 24 extra rings.

## I TOURNAMENT RULES

- 1/ Tournaments are played on a board that consists of at least 48 rings. (If you want to play on a board that is even larger than 48 rings, you will need the Potentials. ZÈRTZ with 24 added rings, thus on a board with 61 rings, may well become the ultimate tournament version some day.)
- 2/ Handling the marbles and the rings: (a) once you have taken a marble from the pool, you must play it (i.e. you may not put it back and chose a marble of another color), (b) as soon as you touch a ring with the marble you play with, you must put it on that ring, and (c) as soon as you touch a vacant ring at the edge of the board, you must remove that ring.
- 3/ Capturing is compulsory, meaning that you may force the opponent to take back their last move if he did not do so. (Taking back a move includes putting back the removed ring.)

**For example:** you put a marble on the board and create an opportunity for a capture. Your opponent does not capture; but takes a marble, places it on the board and next removes a ring. You may have a look at the new situation and either do the capturing yourself, or force your opponent to take back the move and oblige the capture. (If you do not ask your opponent to take back the move and you do not capture either, then it is your opponent who may force you to take back your last move.)

## J BLITZ VARIANT

This variant concerns the original "Basic Game". It is a short, very aggressive and unforgiving version to play ZÈRTZ. It is played on a board with 37 rings, and with one marble less per color. So, you only need 5 white marbles, 7 grey marbles and 9 black marbles. Now you must either capture only 2 marbles of each color, or 3 whites, or 4 greys, or 5 blacks to win the game.

**Enjoy the game!**

