

NINE MEN'S MORRIS · VARIANT 6 OF 7

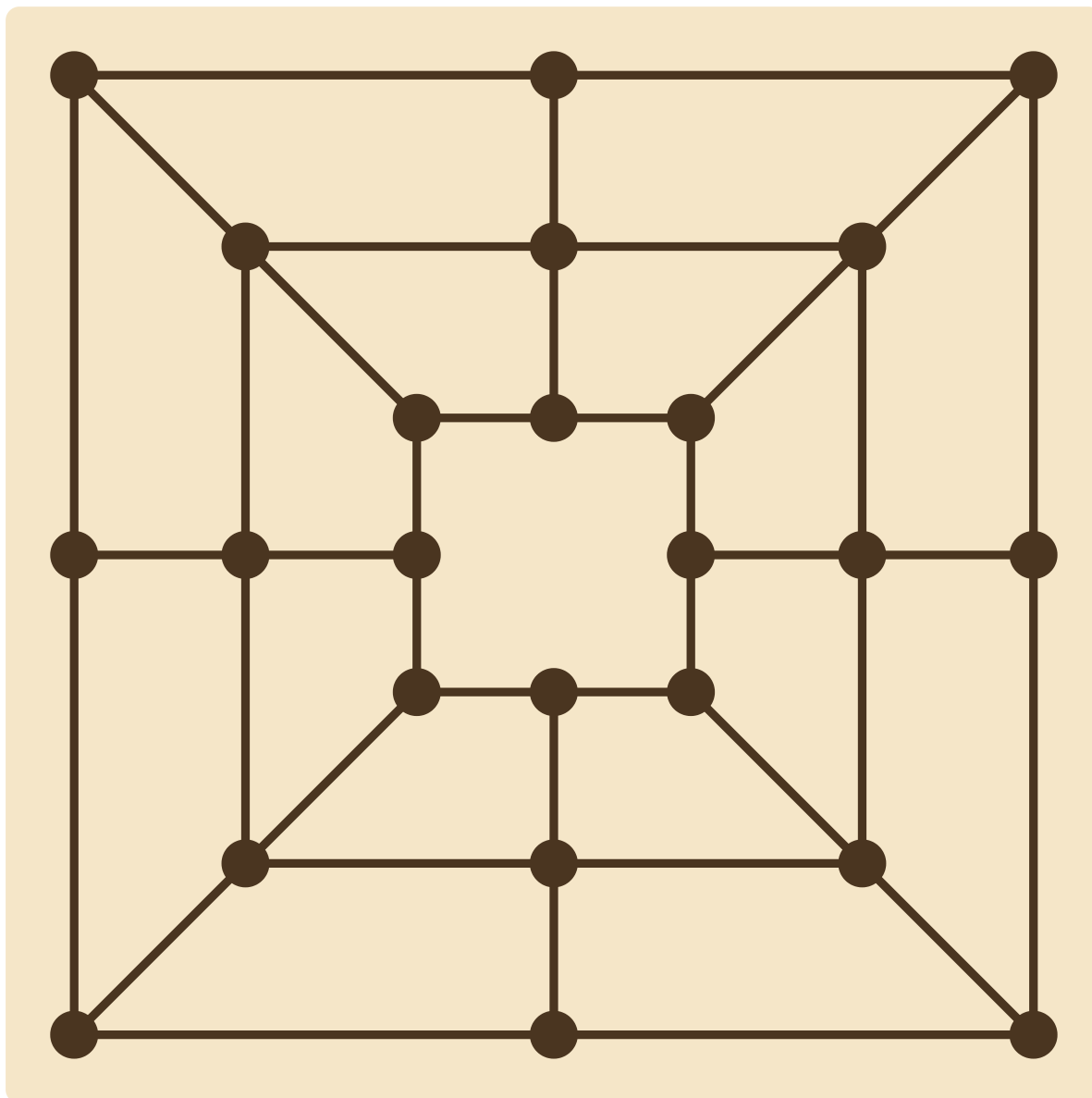
Morabaraba

Three concentric squares (24 intersections)
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

MORABARABA

The national board game of South Africa, played across the country and particularly popular among Zulu, Sotho, and Ndebele communities. The game is a direct descendent of Nine Men's Morris brought to southern Africa during colonial trade contact, but it has developed distinct rules and a rich local tradition. It is played as a recognised sport with national championships. Pieces are called *cows* (*inkomo*) rather than men.



Morabaraba — board layout

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=morris&variant=morabaraba>

ITEM	QTY	NOTES
Board	1	Three concentric squares joined at midpoints; 24 intersections
Cows	24	12 per player in contrasting colours

PHASE 1 — PLACEMENT

Players alternate placing one cow per turn onto any empty intersection until each has placed all 12 cows. Completing a mill (three cows in a row along a board line) during placement lets you remove any one opponent cow not in a mill.

PHASE 2 — MOVEMENT

Players alternate moving one cow to an adjacent empty intersection (along a connecting line).

Mill and removal: Completing a mill during movement triggers removal of one opponent cow (same rules as placement).

Protected mills: A cow in a mill may not be captured unless all opponent cows not in mills have already been captured.

THE THREE-COW ENDGAME (FLYING)

When a player is reduced to exactly 3 cows, they may move any cow to any empty intersection on the board — not just adjacent ones. This mirrors Nine Men's Morris flying.

Special three-cow rule: When both players have 3 cows, if a player forms a mill, they may remove any opponent cow, including one in a mill. The mill protection rule is suspended in the three-cow endgame.

WINNING

A player wins when the opponent is reduced to 2 cows (cannot form a mill) or cannot move.

DRAWS

The game is a draw when a position repeats five times (more lenient than international chess draw rules), or when both players agree.

ATTRIBUTION

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