

Saiju

Designed by Kanare Kato

2 - 3 players / 30 minutes / 10 years and older

Saiju is a territorial game with the traditional Japanese motif of Setsu-Getsu-Ka: the trilogy of snow, moon and flower. The game uses some types of pieces with 1 of 3 symbols for each, but players can place any type of piece they want. The objective is to create a group of pieces of the same color while keeping your symbol in the majority among them.

COMPONENTS

- 1 gameboard: with 36 hexes, arranged as a larger hexagon without a center
- 36 "Color" pieces: 3 colors (white, yellow, pink) × 3 symbols, 4 of each
- 3 black "Shadow" pieces: each with one of the 3 symbols

SETUP

At the beginning of the game, decide in some way which player is in charge of which symbol; if 2 players playing, choose between Snow and Moon, and treat Flower as neutral. The order of play is Snow, Moon (then Flower).

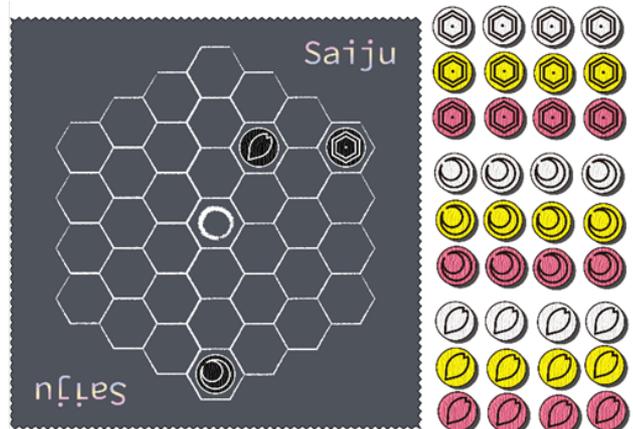
Place the board between the players and arrange the 36 "Color" pieces next to it as a common supply. In this game, it is important to be able to keep track of the remaining pieces at the supply, so please arrange them neatly by type as shown



The symbols represent Snow (snowflakes), Moon (crescent moon), and Flowers (cherry blossom petals).

in the diagram. It is a good idea to arrange your symbols close to you so that you don't forget your own symbols during play.

Next, place the "Shadows" on the board. In a two-player game, the Snow player places a "Shadow" with the Moon symbol on any hex, then the Moon player places a "Shadow" with the Snow and Flower symbols on any hex. In a 3-player game, the Snow player places a "Shadow" of the Moon, the Moon player places a "Shadow" of the Flower, and the Flower player places the "Shadow" of the Snow on any empty hex in this order.



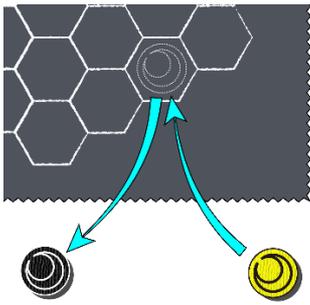
(Fig. 1) Setup example

GAMEPLAY

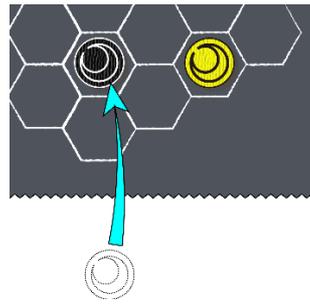
Starting with the Snow player, perform the following actions on each turn.

1. First, choose a "Shadow" on the board and replace it with a "Color" off the board with the same symbol. (Fig. 2)
2. Reposition the replaced "shadow" to an empty hex on the board. (Fig. 3)

The turn player may place up to two "Colors" of different symbols on the board following the same procedure. You can also choose to place only one "Color" but may not pass the entire turn.



(Fig. 2) Replace a "Shadow" on the board with a "Color" of the same symbol.



(Fig. 3) Reposition the replaced "Shadow" to an empty hex.

REMOVING "SHADOWS"

If, after placing a "Color" with the above action, there is only one more color of that symbol left off the board, the player in the turn immediately replaces that "Color" with the "Shadow" of the same symbol, removing the "Shadow" with no corresponding "Color" from the game (You can then continue with the second placement if there is still your action left).

Also, if there is only one "Shadow" left on the board and "Colors" of only one color off the board, the player in the turn may immediately place all remaining "Colors" off the board to any remaining empty hexes on the board, removing the last "Shadow" from the game. This ends the game.

SCORING

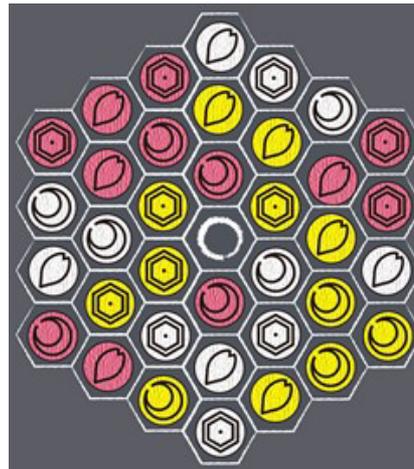
When all the "Colors" are placed on the board, the scoring is calculated as follows.

Check for groups of three or more adjacent "Colors" of the same color and contain two or more kinds of symbols on the board. If any such group contains most of your symbols among the three symbols, you will get a score equal to the number of all "Colors" in that group.

Furthermore, if the group contains all three symbols, the score you get from that group is doubled. If there is a tie between players for the highest number of symbols in a group, no one scores from that group.

In a two-player game, you can score points even if you do not exceed the number of neutral Flower symbols, as long as your symbols are more numerous than those of the other player.

The player with the highest total score is the winner. In case of a tie score, the game is a draw.



(Fig. 4) If a 2-player game, Moon wins with 19 points ($8 \times 2 + 3$) against Snow with 16 points ($5 \times 2 + 3$). If a 3-player game, Flower wins with 16 points (8×2) against Snow with 13 points ($5 \times 2 + 3$) and Moon with 3 points.

TOURNAMENT RULES

The above rules may result in a draw, but in a two-player game, you can play it without draw as the following: The player who removes a "shadow" from the board keeps it, and in case of a tie, the player with the most "shadows" wins.