# Tomoe

a tile placement game for 2 players of 12 years and up
by Gerd Breitenbach and Markus Hagenauer

Components:
48 tiles (12 of each of the 4 different tiles)
1 board (with space for 36 tiles)

Time:
30 min  (large board 60 min)

Game play:
One player plays black, the other one plays white, both players may choose and lay any of the 4 tiles. The aim of the game is to get control of an area as large as possible by encircling it with a closed loop of your own color. To ensure that your opponent does not encircle your loop again, you have to connect it with at least one of the three border regions of your color.

The game is played in turns. White begins and places one tile on the grid. The border colors must fit the ones of the adjacent tiles. So on each cell in the grid on the board, only two of the four different tiles can be placed. The same applies if a tile is placed in a cell surrounded by empty cells. The tiles can be easily distinguished by the color of their tips. The centerpiece shows in which direction to put the white tip or the black tip so that all pieces fit together.

In all further turns the players have two options. Either you place two new tiles or you rotate one tile already placed by 120° and then place one new tile. Only tiles that are not part of an already closed loop can be rotated. Closed loops can't be opened/destroyed by rotating tiles.
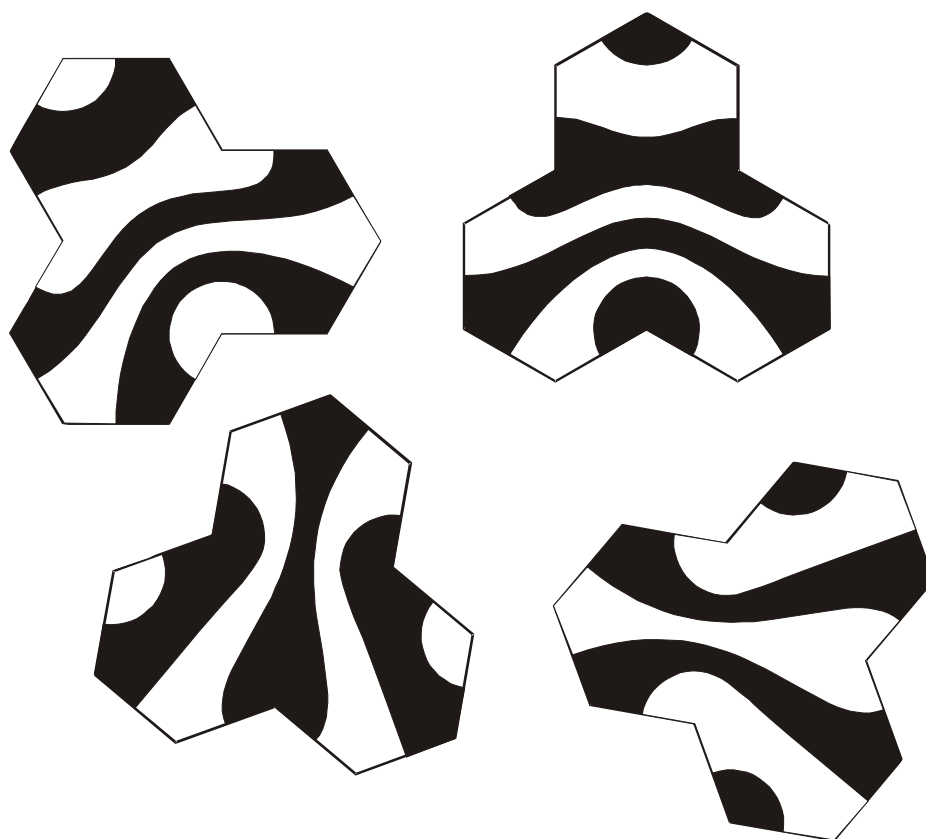
The game ends when the whole board is completely filled with tiles.

Now the score is counted. The players score points for all their loops that are not encircled by the opponent (that is loops that are connected with an edge). They get one point for each section of a tile of the opponent's color that they have enclosed (see the examples below).

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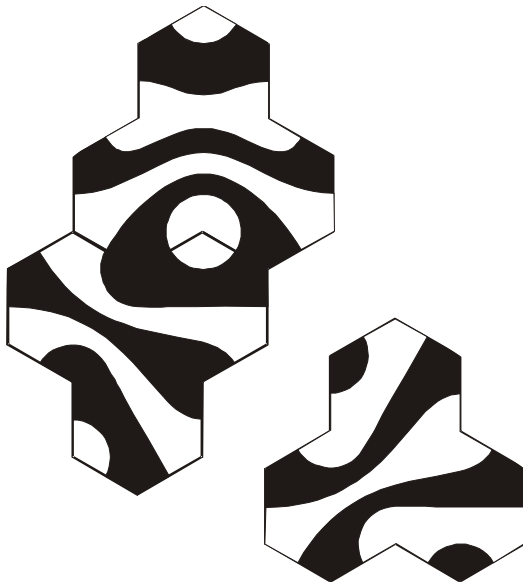# The four different tiles



# The board

# Examples

White has enclosed a black area of a size
of 3 sections.
None of the three tiles can be rotated anymore.
At the end of the game, white would score
3 points unless the white loop is encircled by black
again.

Black has enclosed two white sections. In
his next turn white places a tile as shown, so
the black loop is encircled again by white.

So white would score 3 points at the end of
the game, black would score zero.
.

Black retorts with two tiles building a black
loop around the white one.

Black would score 7 points for this
formation, white zero

But obviously, these points are not
completely secured. White may encircle the
whole area again.

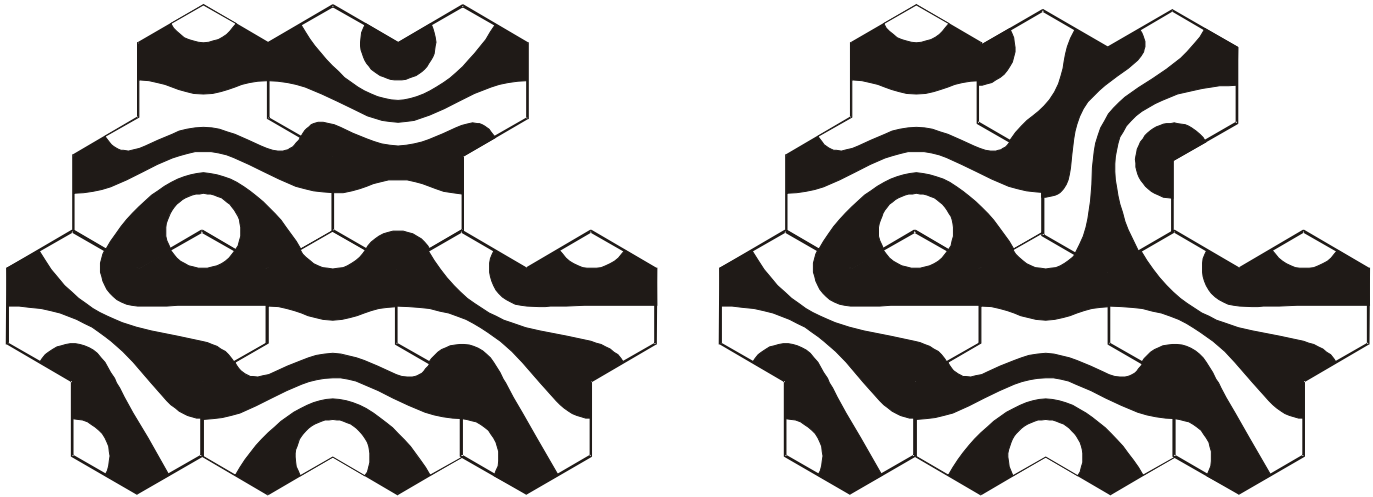Only loops that are connected with a border
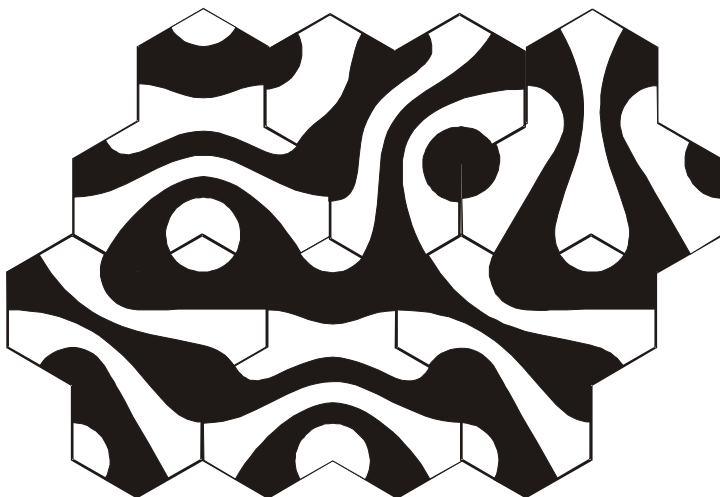region are safe.

## Strategy:

**Sacrifices:**
Sometimes it is expedient to build a loop with the opponents color to fix tiles, since tiles that are part of a closed loop can't be rotated anymore.

In the following example, black is in danger to loose the center area if white would add an adequate tile on the lower right side.
Black tries to avert this by rotating the upper right tile thus creating a ramification. But white might simply rotate the tile back in the next turn.
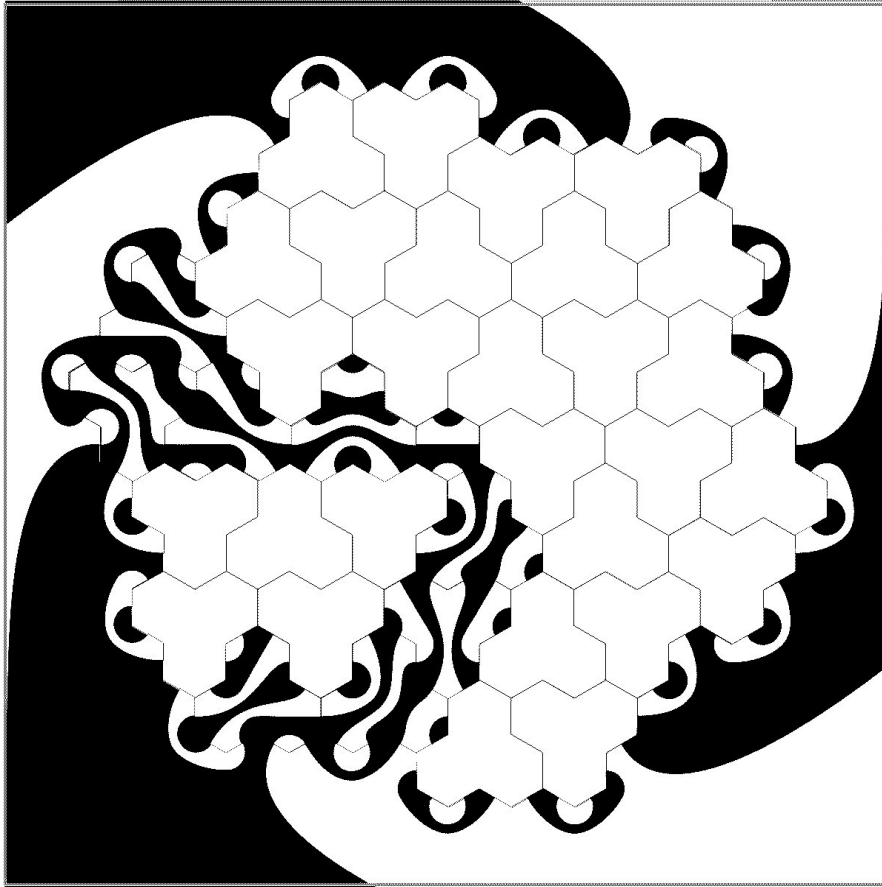


Now black can place a tile as shown below. As the tile rotated before now encloses the black area, it can't be rotated back. So black sacrificed 2 points but avoids loosing a much bigger region.

**Encircling empty regions:**
Empty regions can be enclosed as well.



Black will score points for the whole lower left area, no matter how the tiles on the 5 free spaces inside will be placed. The number of points of this area is not determined yet, it depends on the tiles that are placed inside.
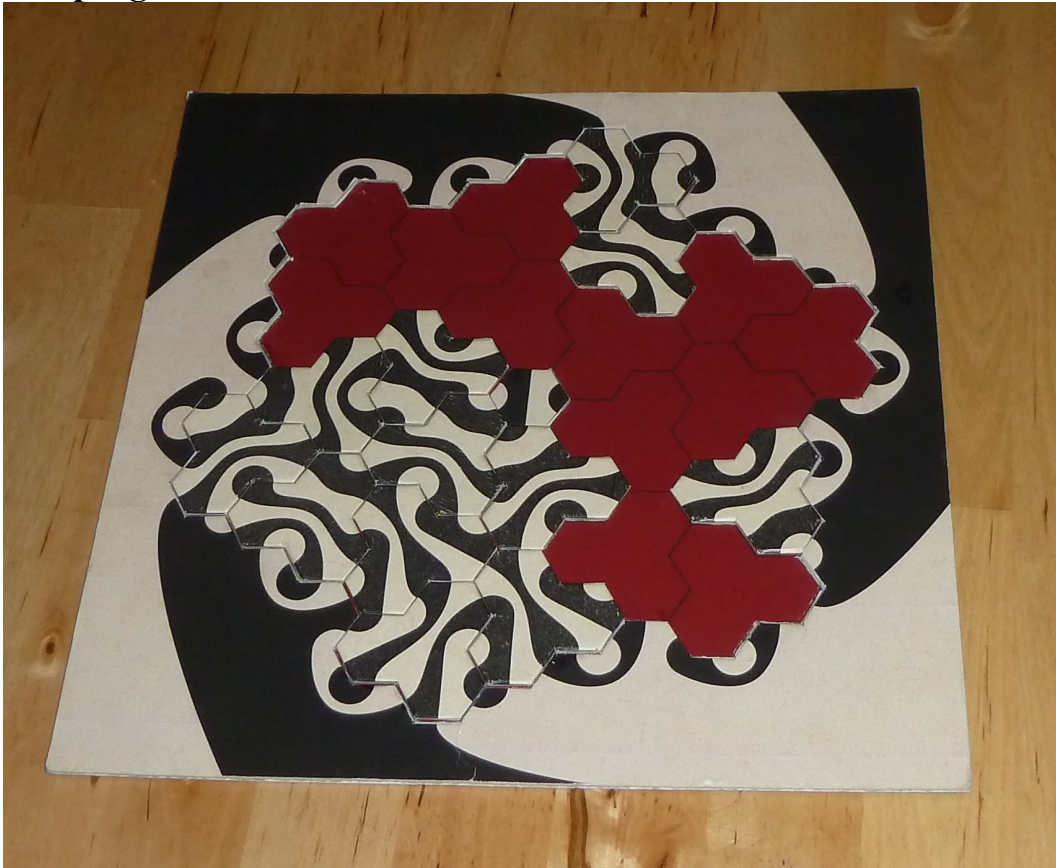Remark: A connection between two <u>different</u> border regions of the same color does <u>not</u> count as a closed loop.


**The right balance:**
Both players have to try to keep the balance between loops that are either too small or too large.
If you try to build a loop too large, it is more likely your opponent will prevent you from closing it. On the other hand if you only close small loops, you won't score enough points. Furthermore small loops are more likely to be encircled again.

# Game in progress



# Three examples of completed games with the large board

A tight win for black ( 58 : 59 )

White has enclosed most of the board and wins by far ( 65 : 49 )



Black wins 20:11