RUBIK'S GAMES

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RULES & TIPS BOOKLET

RUBIK'S ECLIPSE GAME

Win or Lose in Only 8 Moves!

2 Player Game!

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The Game

Rubik's Eclipse is a fast-moving, easy to learn strategy game. Deceptively simple, the game offers a series of challenging options on every move. There are few rules and a maximum of 8 turns for each player. The objective is classic: to create a line of 3 which cannot be broken. You will get the idea of the game very quickly, but to safeguard your lines and master your opponent takes some practice.

Meet Your Eclipse

The game has a 4x4 game board with 16 squares. The lid snaps shut for easy storage and portability, so you can take your Eclipse Game with you anywhere. There are 16 double sided game pieces: 8 magenta, with a gold sun on one side and a silver sun on the other; 8 purple, with a gold moon on one side and a silver moon on the other.

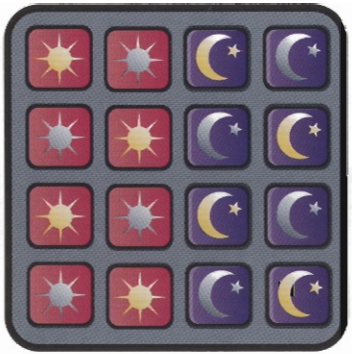

Diagram 1

Set Up

At the beginning of the game, the board is empty. One player takes the 8 sun pieces, playing Sun; the other player takes the 8 moon pieces, playing Moon.

Objective

To win the game you must get 3 of your game pieces of the same color (gold or silver) in a "locked" row, either horizontally, vertically or diagonally. A row of three is "locked" when none of the game pieces in it can be flipped into an adjacent square because all the adjacent squares are occupied.

Diagram 2

This is the position after both players have played their 8 moves and Sun wins with a "locked" line of 3 gold suns.

Rules of Play

Players alternate in taking turns. The Sun player starts the game by placing a sun piece, either side up, anywhere on the board. Subsequently, starting with the Moon player's first turn, each player's turn consists of two actions: Flip and Place, in that order.

FLIP: On each turn, the player must first flip any one of their opponent's pieces already on the board. Flipping a piece means moving it to any adjacent vacant square (horizontally or vertically, but not diagonally) while REVERSING the sides. The gold sun becomes silver and vice-versa.

PLACE: Each player must, on each turn, then place one of their pieces, either side up, on any vacant square on the board, even if this results in a winning line for the opponent.

Diagram 3

The Moon player on the first move had the option of flipping the gold sun into four possible adjacent squares and then place a Moon piece, either side up, anywhere on the board.

Note: A player must flip an opponent's piece even if this may result in a winning line for the opponent.

If it is not possible to flip any of their opponent's pieces, the player still goes on to placing a piece of their own.

Play goes on in this manner, with each player first flipping ANY ONE of their opponent's pieces (not necessarily the last one placed) before placing a piece of their own. This means that once placed on the board, players will never touch their own pieces but they can change the position and color of those of their opponent.

A player may leave an opponent's row of 3 without losing the game (provided it is not "locked").

Winning the Game

The first player to create a "locked" vertical, horizontal or diagonal line of 3 of their own game pieces, all with the same color symbol (all gold or all silver), is the winner! (see Diagram 4) A "locked" line is one in which none of the 3 game pieces can be flipped because all adjacent squares are occupied.

If the game continues until the last piece is placed on the board, and both players end up with a winning line, or neither player has won, the game is a DRAW.

Diagram 4

Moon wins because the player has three silver Moons in a "locked" diagonal row.

Some Common Questions

Q: If I flip one of my opponent's game pieces into an adjacent square and create a line of three of the same color, does my opponent win?

A: No, not necessarily. Your opponent would win ONLY if the line created is "locked".

Q: Do I have to flip the last piece my opponent placed on the board?

A: No. You may flip any of your opponent's pieces.

Q: When placing my piece, must it be adjacent to one of the pieces already on the board?

A: No. You can place your piece on any vacant space anywhere on the board.

Hints and Tips

Try to flip your opponent's game pieces away from corners and edges towards the center of the board.

Whenever possible, place your own pieces in corners and along edges of the board on squares from which they cannot be flipped.

Place your pieces so that one color predominates over the other. The chance of creating a winning line increases with the number of pieces of the same color symbol.

Stop and think before making any move. Remember, your opponent MUST flip one of your pieces before placing one of their own.

Anticipating Your Opponent's Move

You are playing Suns and it's your turn to move. You can flip the gold moon (square C) to either A or B in Diagram 5 to become a silver moon and place a gold sun in the vacated square. But your opponent, on the next move, can flip that gold sun you just placed to the only remaining vacant square and place a silver moon in the now-vacated space, winning the game with a diagonal line of three silver moons.

Diagram 5

So stop and think. Diagram 6 shows a much better option. Flip the moon in C to B and place a silver sun on A. Your opponent now has no option but to flip one of your suns into a winning line of suns, "locking" them in place by placing the last moon game piece into the empty space.

Diagram 6

Gaining Control

Try to gain control of several key squares. "Control" of a square means that you have one of your game pieces on it that your opponent cannot flip, because there is no vacant adjacent square. It is valuable as it limits your opponent's opportunities.

Some squares are easier to control than others. Corners are the easiest to control, having only two adjacent squares, then edge squares (having three) and finally the center squares, having four adjacent squares each.

You can gain control of a corner square quite easily. Suppose your opponent has a sun placed as in Diagram 7.

Diagram 7

If you flip this game piece towards the center, and place a moon in the corner, as shown in Diagram 8, you effectively win control of the corner.

Diagram 8

If your opponent now flips your moon AWAY from the corner and replaces it with a sun, you simply flip away this sun and place a moon in the corner, as shown in Diagram 9.

Diagram 9

If, instead, your opponent flips your moon away from the corner, but places a piece in another part of the board, you flip the sun from its position as shown in Diagram 8 to the square next to the corner and place a moon in the corner itself, ending up with the position as shown in Diagram 10.

Diagram 10

If your opponent did not flip your corner moon, on your next turn you should flip the gold sun from its position in Diagram 8 to one of the squares adjacent to the corner and place another moon next to the corner moon. So whatever your opponent does, the corner is secure!

Forcing Plays

As the game develops, it is more and more important to limit your opponent's choices of flipping. The fewer game pieces your opponent can flip and the fewer squares open for these pieces, the better.

Try to create situations where your opponent can only flip one of your pieces, preferably flipping it into one specific square. Since such a move is forced, this gives you more control and makes it easier for you to plan ahead.

Placing Game Pieces

Other tactical considerations apart, you should always try to link up the piece you are placing with your other game pieces already on the board in a way to create multiple potential lines of three. An ideal positioning of a piece is one where it forms a line of three, but whichever way it is flipped, it forms part of another line of three.

Notation

It can be helpful to record a game. You can use the following notation system to do this.

Diagram 11

The squares are numbered as shown Diagram 11. A flip is recorded by two numbers: the number of the square from which the game piece was flipped followed by the number of the square to which the game piece was flipped. Thus, 3-4 means a flip from square 3 to square 4.

A placement is recorded by the initial letter of the color of the game piece followed by the number of the square into which the game piece was placed. Thus "G5" means a piece with its gold color on top placed in square 5.

Here is an example of a recorded game:

SUN	MOON
1) S1 (silver sun on square 1)	1-5 / S16 (flip sun from square 1 to square 5; place silver moon on square 16)
2) 16-12 / G13	5-6 / S1
3) 12-11 / S16	6-2 / S5
4) 11-12 / G15	2-6 / S2
5) 5-9 / G5	6-7 / S6
6) 9-10 / G9	13-14 / S11 (wins with a diagonal line of 1-6-11)

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