

AKUNUR

The Game of Echoes and Stillness

STANDARD RULES - 3.0.0-alpha.11

The shape of the game

Build through the centre, claim the six elemental corners and bring the board into Alignment. Reaching three corners is not the end: the winning player must place a supported stone directly on the Still Point while that Alignment still holds.

1. Qualify	Complete an ordinary supported passage through the Still Point. The first passage awards your permanent Still Point marker.
2. Claim corners	After qualification, enter or capture corners using two adjacent supporting stones. Your first two token claims each award one Echo Piece.
3. Align	Control three corners at the same time. This creates Alignment, but the opponent receives a reply.
4. Complete	Win by moving a supported stone directly onto the Still Point. No exit is chosen; the winning stone stays at the centre.

Quick start

- Use the standard fixed opening: 12 white and 12 black stones are already placed; White moves first.
- On a normal turn, move one stone to an adjacent empty hex unless a special move applies.
- Captures use the Rule of Two: two adjacent friendly supporters and a third friendly stone completing the capture.
- Before earning your Still Point marker, you may not enter, claim, capture or take over any corner.
- An ordinary supported Still Point passage is one move: origin to centre to any legal empty non-corner destination.
- Your first and second corner-token claims each require an immediate Echo Piece placement. Later token claims do not.
- At three corners, you are aligned. The opponent acts before you can make the final centre claim.
- At 3-3, both players are aligned; the first supported move onto the Still Point wins.

1. Board, setup and movement

The board is a radius-7 hexagon with 169 cells, six corners and one central Still Point. The sectors are Fire, Snow, Wind, Rain, Sand and Rock. Sector names and guide lines are visual aids only.

Components

- 1 board, 12 ordinary stones per player and 4 red-marked Echo Pieces (2 per player).
- 6 corner tokens, one at each corner at the start of the game.
- 1 Still Point marker per player. Keep it off-board once earned.
- Optional score track: each first-time corner token is worth 10 points.

Standard opening

Use the fixed rotationally balanced starting position. White takes the first movement turn. Free placement in rings 2-4 remains an advanced simulator option; no initial stone may be placed on a corner or the Still Point.

Normal movement

- Move one of your stones to an adjacent empty hex.
- A stone occupying a corner cannot move.
- An Echo Piece can move normally or use its Echo Point ability.
- A forced Echo Piece placement after an eligible token claim is part of the same turn and must be completed before play passes.

The Rule of Two

The main tactical actions require two adjacent supporting stones. This applies to ordinary captures, entering or capturing a corner, and entering the Still Point. The moving or capturing stone is the third stone that completes the action.

2. The Still Point

Ordinary passage

A stone adjacent to the Still Point may enter only when two other adjacent friendly stones support it. During ordinary play it must immediately continue to a legal empty non-corner destination as part of the same action. It never remains on the Still Point between turns.

Qualification

The first completed ordinary passage awards that player a permanent Still Point marker. The marker unlocks every corner for that player. Further ordinary passages remain legal and can redeploy stones across the board.

Final claim

Once aligned, a supported stone adjacent to the centre may move directly onto the Still Point. The game ends immediately. No exit destination is required or selected, and the winning stone remains visibly on the centre.

Opponents may interfere by capturing or moving the supporting stones, taking away an aligned corner, or preparing their own final claim.

3. Capturing, Echo and corners

Ordinary capture

A stone is captured when it is adjacent to two supporting enemy stones and a third enemy stone moves into the legal capture position. The capturing stone occupies the target cell.

Echo displacement

A captured ordinary stone normally moves to its Echo Point: the cell at the same distance from the Still Point on the directly opposite radial line. If that destination is occupied, the occupying stone is removed and the captured stone takes its place.

Special capture cases

- A stone captured on a corner is removed and does not echo.
- A captured Echo Piece is removed permanently and does not echo.
- An ordinary stone captured by an Echo Piece still moves to its own Echo Point.
- An Echo Piece may capture an enemy occupying its own Echo Point without ordinary support.

Echo Pieces

Each player can earn at most two corner-awarded Echo Pieces. The first and second token claims by that player each require immediate placement in the normal placement area. A third or later token claim gives no additional Echo Piece. The white or black body shows ownership; the strong red ring and centre mark identify the special type.

Corner control

- Before qualification, no corner action is legal for that player.
- After qualification, entering or capturing a corner requires two adjacent supporters.
- The occupying stone controls the corner and is locked there until captured.
- The first claim removes the corner token and scores 10 points.
- A capture of an opponent-controlled corner is a corner takeover. It transfers control but gives no token or Echo reward.
- Control can change repeatedly; each transfer can gain or break Alignment.

Why the opponent gets a reply

The corner that creates Alignment is deliberately non-terminal. If it is a player's third or later token claim, no new Echo Piece interrupts the turn sequence. The opponent can attack an aligned corner, dismantle the supported route to the Still Point, or create a competing Alignment.

The two-Echo limit preserves the special pieces for the middle and endgame without giving the newly aligned player an automatic extra gateway stone.

4. Alignment and victory

Creating Alignment

In standard play, a player is aligned whenever they control at least three corners. Alignment is derived from current corner control; it is not a permanent entitlement.

Alignment gained	You control three corners. You are now eligible to claim the Still Point.
Alignment broken	The opponent takes over one of your corners and your total falls below three. You are no longer eligible.
Alignment restored	You regain three corners. Eligibility returns immediately.
Both aligned	At 3-3, both players are eligible. Each balances a final centre claim against disrupting the opponent.
Victory	Move a supported stone directly onto the Still Point while still aligned. The stone remains there and the game ends.

Extended game

The optional four-corner setting uses the same structure but requires control of four corners before the final Still Point claim can win. It is expected to create longer games with more corner attacks and takeovers.

Strategy prompts

- Qualification is not merely a gate. A well-placed exit can begin a corner campaign or preserve a future return route.
- Before claiming a third corner, consider whether your centre supports can survive the opponent's reply.
- When the opponent aligns, taking over any one of their corners cancels the threat, but breaking the two centre supports may be faster.
- Echo Pieces can remove or displace a critical support without the ordinary support requirement at their Echo Point.
- At 3-3, tempo matters: a player with a prepared supported entry threatens an immediate final claim.

Prototype notes

This alpha is intended for playtesting. The three-corner Alignment plus final Still Point claim is the recommended ruleset. Points and token totals are recorded but do not currently provide an alternate victory. The simulator log and diagnostics are analysis aids rather than additional rules.

Everything aligns at the edge - and is completed at the Still Point.