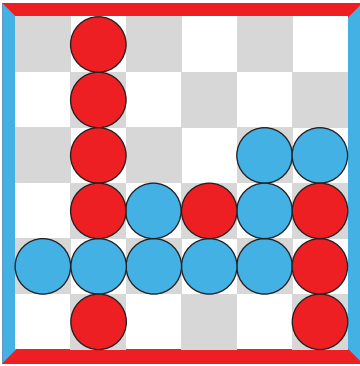# HALFCUT by Mark Steere

Figure 1

INTRODUCTION Halfcut is a two-player game played on a square board of any size, initially empty. The two players, Red and Blue, take turns placing their own checkers onto unoccupied squares, one checker per turn, starting with Red. Passing is not allowed, but if you don't have an available placement, your turn is skipped. Mark Steere designed Halfcut in August 2023.

OBJECT Red must form a path of red checkers (interconnected via horizontal or vertical adjacencies, or both) connecting the two red sides of the board. Blue must form a path of blue checkers connecting the two blue sides of the board. In **Figure 1**, Blue has won.

GROUP A group here is a monocolored group of checkers interconnected horizontally or vertically, or both. Diagonal adjacencies are irrelevant in Halfcut.
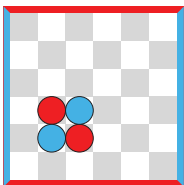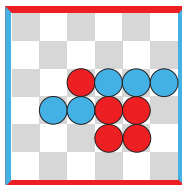
CROSSCUT A crosscut is comprised of four adjacent checkers arranged in a square as shown in **Figure 2**. Two of the checkers are red and two are blue. Like-colored checkers are diagonally opposed in the square.

Figure 2   **Figure 3**

CROSSCUT GROUP A crosscut group is the group that contains a crosscut checker. In **Figure 3**, Red has crosscut groups of sizes 1 and 4. Blue has crosscut groups of sizes 2 and 3.
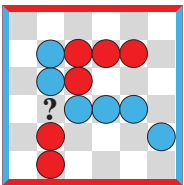
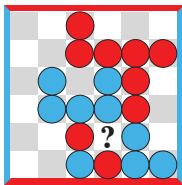**CROSSCUT RULE** You can only form a crosscut if by doing so you create a new crosscut group which is larger than at least one of the enemy crosscut groups of the crosscut.

Figure 4   **Figure 5**

In **Figure 4**, Red can place on the **?** because his newly formed crosscut group would be size 3, which is larger than the blue crosscut group of size 2. In **Figure 5**, Red can't place on the **?** because his newly formed crosscut group of size 3 wouldn't be larger than either of the blue crosscut groups of sizes 3 and 5. If it were Blue's turn however, Blue could place on the **?**, forming a crosscut group of size 9, which would be larger than both of the red crosscut groups of sizes 1 and 1.
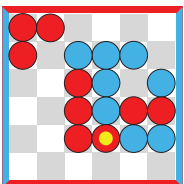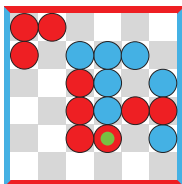

Figure 6a   **Figure 6b**

CHECKER REMOVAL Having formed a crosscut, immediately remove the enemy crosscut checkers which are part of enemy crosscut groups which are smaller than your newly formed crosscut group, concluding your turn. In **Figures 6a and 6b,** Red places the checker marked with a yellow dot, and kills a blue checker.
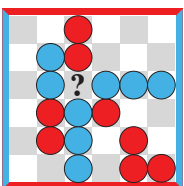

Figure 7

SIMULTANEOUS CROSSCUTS In order to make a placement which would form two crosscuts simultaneously, you would have to satisfy the crosscut rule for both of the crosscuts, each considered separately. In **Figure 7**, if Red were to place on the **?**, two crosscuts would be formed. Red's newly formed crosscut group of size 3 would be larger than the blue size 2 crosscut group of the left crosscut, but would not be larger than the blue size 3 crosscut groups of the right crosscut. This placement is not allowed for Red.

AUTHOR'S NOTE Feel free to publish this rule sheet and to program the game of Halfcut. No licensing fee or royalties are expected. However, please don't change the name or the rules, and please attribute the game to me, Mark Steere. My other games can be found at marksteeregames.com.