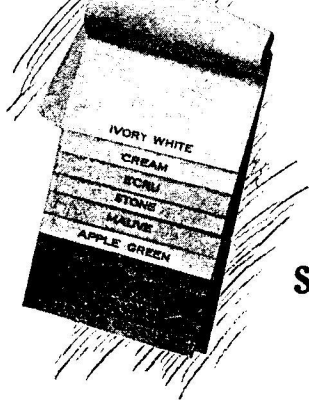


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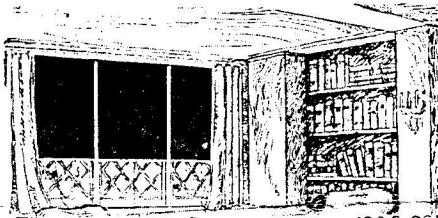
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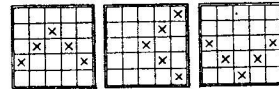
ST. MALO: A NEW GAME

By William Parker Bonbright



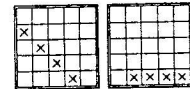
"TIT-TAT-TO" suggested this game, which, in its way, is as perfect as chess, far simpler and hardly less fascinating. To play it, draw a square consisting of twenty-five smaller squares like this, but of convenient size:

The contestants play alternately, penciling crosses and naughts. A game consists of twenty-one points, and as many sheets are used as may be necessary. Points are scored as follows:



A. A *Pyramid* consists of five squares touching each other at the corners and forming a right angle with sides of equal length. It counts five points. Examples are shown here, and it may be noted that these are only a few of the pyramids possible.

The formation shown in the illustration on the left is not a pyramid, for the squares touch each other at the sides and not at the corners. It has no scoring value whatever. A pyramid may point in any direction and may be in any part of the board.



B. A *Straight* consists of four squares in a row, touching each other either at the corners or the sides. It counts three points. These figures show the two types of straight, which may also be in any direction or in any part of the board.

C. A *Trio* consists of three squares in a row, touching either at the corners or the sides. A single square may form part of several trios.



This illustration is an example of a well-played round in which the crosses have secured four trios and the naughts three. To make trios easier to count, draw lines through the squares making each trio.

Subtract the number of trios made by one player from the number made by the other to obtain the score. This method of scoring applies only when all the twenty-five squares are filled without either player getting a pyramid or a straight. When a pyramid or a straight is scored the round stops, and the trios are not counted.

It is best for one player to retain the crosses and the other the naughts throughout the entire game. The first move alternates—that is, one must not play first twice in succession. The reason is that the first move is worth one trio and the advantage should be equally divided.



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It is best for one player and the other the naughts throughout the entire game. The first move alternates—that is, one must not play first twice in succession. The reason is that the first move is worth one trio and this advantage should be equally divided.

The center square is the most valuable, since it enters into more scoring combinations than any other, and should be selected by the first player. The second player should then play in one of the squares touching the center square at the corner; otherwise he lays himself open to certain defeat. The first player does not necessarily lose if he does not play first in the center square, but he sacrifices the advantage of the move, which is considerable.

ON COMMENCING the game one tries for a straight or a pyramid. With alertness, however, these can be headed off, and the affair resolves itself into a race for trios. Even in the beginning one should have this in mind.

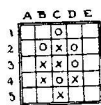
The fascination of the game lies in the fact that while one is intent on his own devices his opponent is likely to score a pyramid or a straight, down some obscure diagonal. In theory it is the plurality of trios which will always win; in practice one neglects the greater possibilities at the risk of losing the game. It is necessary for the player to decide whether to lay a rock-bottom foundation for trios or to cut loose and get a pyramid at any cost.

So much for the strategy of the game. Now for the tactics. The nearer to the center the more valuable are the squares. The most dangerous weapon in the beginning is the straight. As soon as two squares in an open five line are occupied there is danger, and prompt action is necessary. For, after the next move, there will be three in a row, with an empty square at either end, and a straight is certain. Two occupied squares on an open four line as shown in this illustration are less immediately threatening. The crosses here must block the diagonal row of naughts before it grows any longer. But there is no hurry about blocking the row of crosses, since even after it is three long a straight can be prevented.



It is worth while noticing that the best play for the crosses (whose move it is) is not to block the naughts at once, but to extend its own line, thus threatening a straight before the naughts can complete theirs, and making a trio, which in the last analysis may determine the victory. One principle of the game is, never defend while attack is possible.

WHEN further attempts at straights and pyramids seem hopeless, and you are at a loss what to do, complete a trio or spoil one for the other man. If you can do both at once so much the better. Sometimes a single move will complete two trios, or even three, and that is purest joy. As in chess and draughts, it is possible to compose problems, record games and play by mail.



This is an instructive position for the beginner:

Naughts to play and win in four moves. Here is the solution:

NAUGHTS					CROSSES				
1	.	.	3	E	1	.	.	3	A
2	.	.	2	E	2	.	.	5	B
3	.	.	4	E	3	.	.	1	E
4	.	.	5	E (straight)					

The first move of the crosses is to block the pyramid threatened (3 E, 2 D, 1 C, 2 B, 3 A). The second to block the impending straight (2 E, 3 D, 4 C, 5 B). The third merely determines the location of the winning straight, but cannot prevent it.

There are other mysteries still untouched upon, but it is kinder, perhaps, to allow the adept to discover them on his own initiative.