

# CLUMP

by Mark Steere

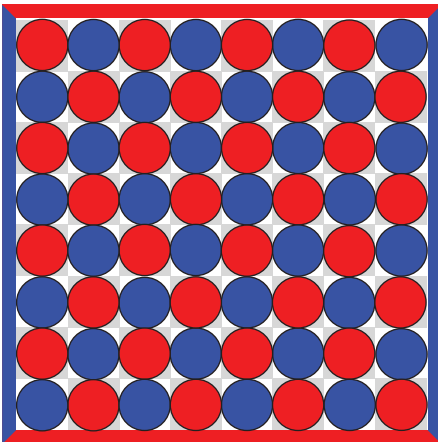


Figure 1

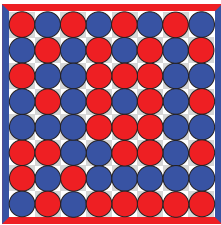


Figure 2

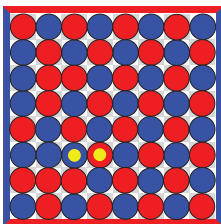


Figure 3a

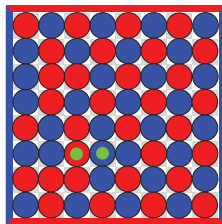


Figure 3b

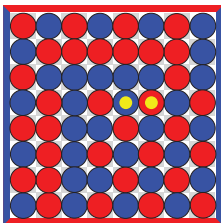


Figure 4a

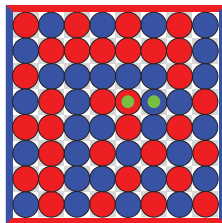


Figure 4b

**INTRODUCTION** Clump is a two-player game played on a square board of any even size, initially filled with red and blue stones interspersed in a checkerboard pattern, as shown in Figure 1. Mark Steere designed Clump in August 2023.

**OBJECT** Red must form a path of red stones (interconnected via horizontal or vertical adjacencies, or both) connecting the two red sides of the board. Diagonal adjacencies are irrelevant in Clump. Blue must form a path of blue checkers connecting the two blue sides of the board. In **Figure 2**, Blue has won.

**PLAY** Players take turns swapping one of their stones with an orthogonally adjacent enemy stone (subject to swap conditions described below), one swap per turn, starting with Red. Players will always have a swap available. Passing is not allowed.

**GROUP** A group here is a monocolored, orthogonally interconnected group of stones. Groups can morph without any change in size.

**SWAP CONDITIONS** On your turn, make a swap subject to the following conditions:

1. At least one of the swapped stones must be part of a larger group after the swap than it was before the swap.
2. The largest group so formed must be larger than the largest group that would be diminished by the swap. (If no groups are diminished, only condition 1 applies.)

In **Figures 3a and 3b**, Red swaps the two stones marked by yellow dots. In doing so, the moved red stone, which was in a group of size 1, is now in a group of size 6. The moved blue stone, which was in a group of size 4 is now in a different group of size 4. A red size 1 group is diminished to size 0, and a blue size 4 group is diminished to size 3. The largest group formed (size 6) is larger than the largest group diminished (size 4).

In **Figures 4a and 4b**, Blue swaps the two stones marked by yellow dots. In doing so, the moved blue stone, which was in a group of size 13, is now in a group of size 15. The moved red stone, which was in a group of size 1 is now in a group of size 3. No blue groups were diminished, but a red size 1 group diminished to size 0. The largest group formed (size 15) is larger than the largest group diminished (size 1).

**AUTHOR'S NOTE** Feel free to publish this rule sheet and to program the game of Clump. 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](http://marksteeregames.com).