

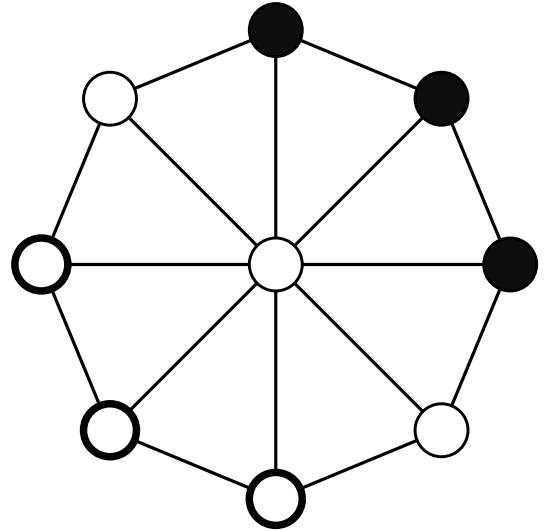
Shisima

A NINE-POINT STRATEGY GAME / PRINT + PLAY

WHAT WE KNOW

Reviewed accounts associate Shisima with Tiriki play in western Kenya. A 1998 activity book describes children drawing the board in sand and using bottle caps, pebbles or buttons as counters. The same source gives the compact move-and-align rules in this pamphlet.

The sources support that association and rules form. They do not establish an origin date, a single universal version, or a claim about every Tiriki person today.



WHAT YOU NEED

2 players

Take opposite sides of the board.

3 counters each

Use two distinguishable sets: buttons, coins, beans or pebbles.

The board

Print page 4, or draw the same nine-point wheel on paper or in sand.

THE WHOLE GAME AT A GLANCE

①

Already moving

All six counters begin on the rim. There is no placement phase.

②

One step

Slide one counter along one marked line into an adjacent empty point.

③

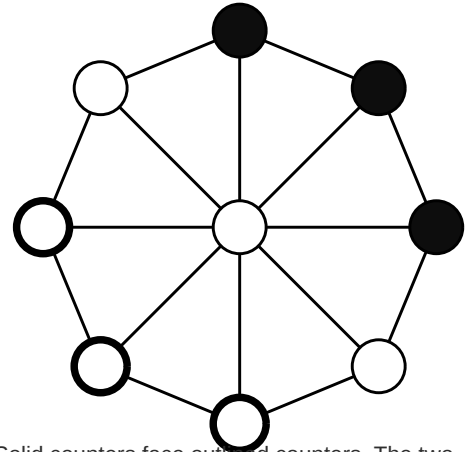
Through the centre

Make a straight line of three that passes through the centre.

How to play

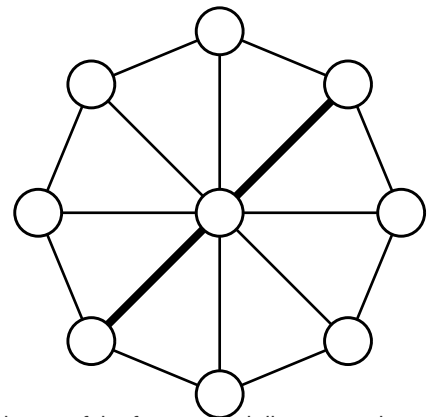
- ① **Set up**
Each player takes three counters. Place them on three consecutive outer points. The other player takes the three opposite outer points. Leave the centre and two side points empty.
- ② **Choose a first player**
Take turns. The reviewed accounts specify alternating play but do not require a named side to start.
- ③ **Move one counter**
Slide one of your counters along a marked line to an adjacent empty point. A move can follow the rim or travel between the rim and centre.
- ④ **No jumping or capture**
You cannot jump over a counter, move onto an occupied point, or remove an opponent's counter.
- ⑤ **Win through the centre**
Win immediately when your three counters occupy one complete marked diameter: an outer point, the centre, and the opposite outer point.
- ⑥ **A repeated cycle is a draw**
The 1998 rules say that repeating the same set of moves three times ends the game in a draw. Agree the repeated cycle clearly as you play.

STARTING POSITION



Solid counters face outlined counters. The two unoccupied rim points sit between the groups.

A WINNING LINE



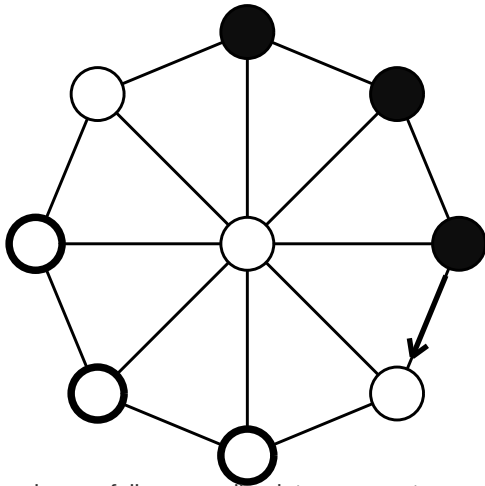
Only one of the four marked diameters wins. Three neighbouring points around the rim do not.

FAST CHECK

Adjacent empty point? Along a line? No jump? If yes, the move is legal. Then check whether all three of your counters form a diameter through the centre.

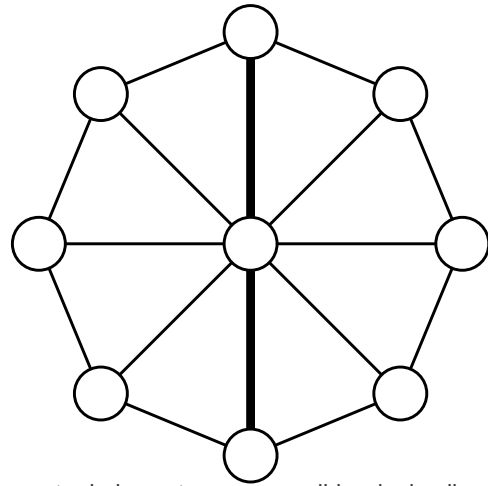
Play guide

READ THE BOARD



A legal move follows one line into one empty neighbour. Moving a counter also releases the point it leaves behind.

EVERY WIN CROSSES HERE



The centre belongs to every possible winning line. Reaching it is powerful, but holding it does not win by itself.

THREE USEFUL REMINDERS

The rim is not a winning line.

Three consecutive outer counters may look impressive, but a winning line must pass through the centre.

Look at the point you release.

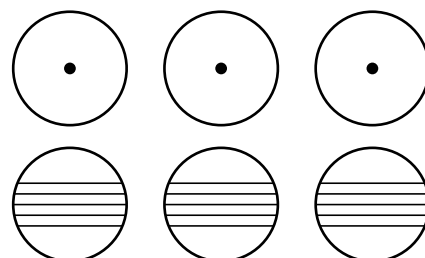
Every move opens your old point to the other player. Check their next move before committing yours.

Name a repeated cycle.

If the same exchange begins looping, count it together. The third repeat is a draw in the reviewed 1998 rules.

OPTIONAL PAPER COUNTERS

Cut out three of each pattern, or use any two distinguishable sets of small objects.



SELECTED SOURCES

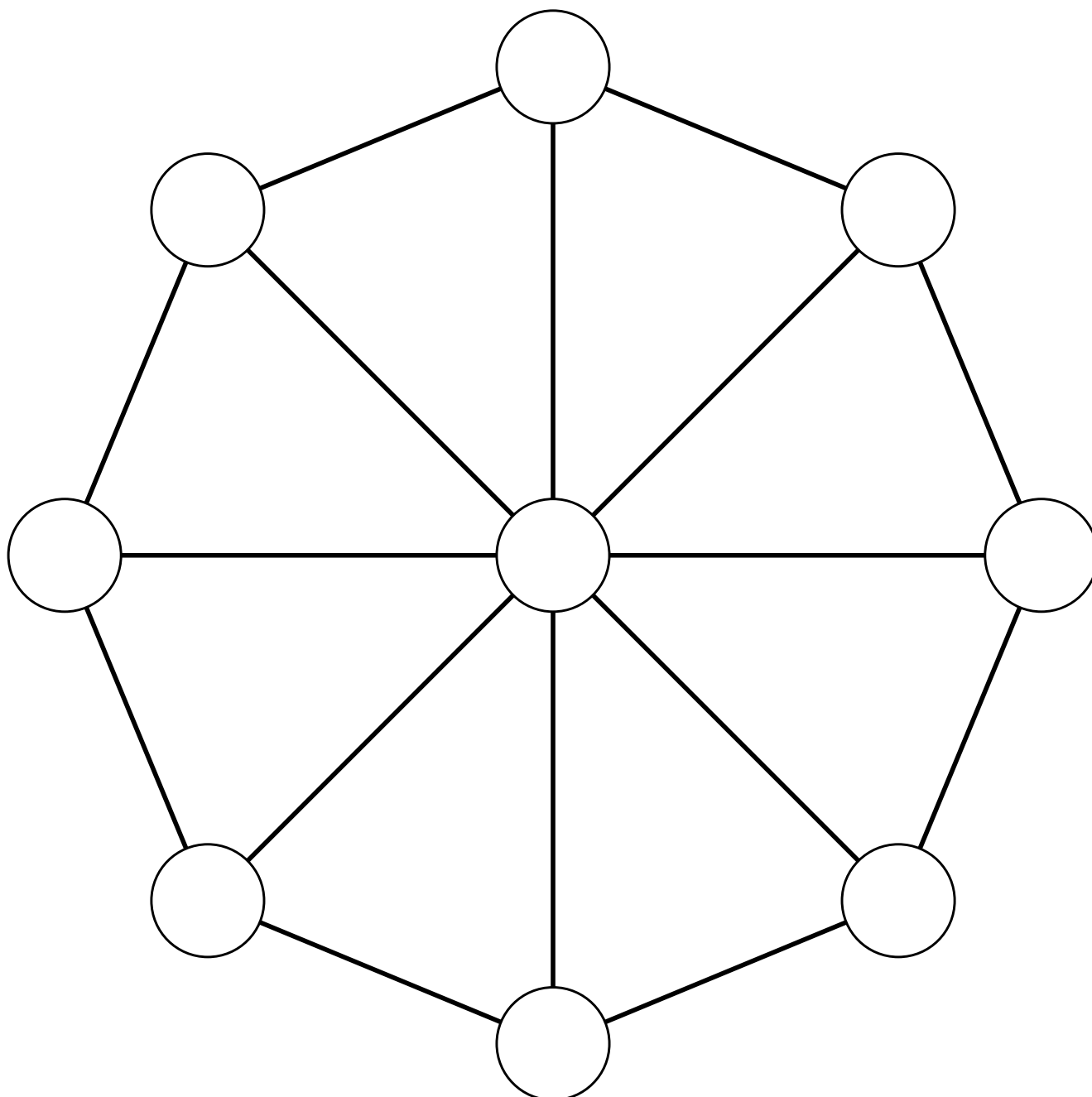
Claudia Zaslavsky, Math Games & Activities from Around the World (1998), pp. 4-5.
 Paukwa, 'Shisima' (accessed 10 Aug 2026).
 Digital Ludeme Project, 'Shisima' DLP.Games.69 (accessed 10 Aug 2026).

EVIDENCE NOTE

This pamphlet presents the reviewed nine-point move-only form. It does not claim an origin date or that this is the only way Shisima has ever been played.

Printable board

Print at 100%. Place three counters on one rim run and three on the opposite run.



3 LIGHT COUNTERS + 3 DARK COUNTERS / LEAVE THE CENTRE EMPTY

Scale check: this line should measure 50 mm

