

SO LONG SUCKER

Hausner, M., Nash, J. F., Shapley, L. S. & Shubik, M.,
(1964), "So Long Sucker, A Four-Person Game",
Formatted and edited in this form by J C Lawrence

<claw+bgnight@kanga.nu>

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<http://www.lucs.lu.se/Courses/Spel/Parlor/Sucker.html>

A game of negotiation, alliances and backstabbing for four players.¹

PLAYING MATERIAL

- 28 chips or markers in four different colours.

SETUP

- Each player takes the seven chips of one colour and puts them on the table in front of them.
- A cup is placed to one side and is called *the dead box*. During the game chips will be removed from play and placed in *the dead box*. Such chips are considered to have been removed from play.
- Decide the start player by any means acceptable to the group. A random method like playing *the remainder game* is recommended.²

HOW TO PLAY

The start player starts the game by playing a chip into the middle of the table. They then name any other player of their choice to go next. Play then proceeds as follows:

- (1) A move is made by playing a chip of any colour out into the playing area, or on top of any chip or pile of chips already in the playing area.
- (2) Unless there has been a capture or default, the player then names the next player to play. He may give the move to any player (including himself) whose colour is not represented in the pile just played on. But if all players are represented in that pile, then he must give

¹For a longer game, more chips may be used. If the game is attempted with more than four players, then the number of chips per player should be reduced.

²Remainder game: Starting with any player, number each player in rotation starting from zero: 0, 1, 2, 3. On a count of three each player sticks out some number of fingers from their right hand. Total the number of fingers revealed modulo 4. The player with that number is the start player.

the move to the player whose most-recently-played chip (by colour) is furthest down in the pile.

- (3) A capture is accomplished by playing two chips of the same colour consecutively on one pile. The player designated by that colour must kill one chip, of his choice, out of the pile, and then take in the rest. The killed chip goes in *the dead box*. He then gets the next move.
- (4) A prisoner is a chip of a colour other than that of the player who holds it. A player may at any time during the game kill any prisoner in his possession, or transfer it to another player. Such transfers are unconditional, and cannot be retracted. A player may not transfer chips of his own colour, nor kill them, except out of a captured pile (Rule 3).
- (5) Defeat of a player takes place when he is given the move, and is unable to play through having no chips in his possession. However his defeat is not final until every player holding prisoners has declared his refusal to come to the rescue by means of a transfer (Rule 4). Upon defeat, a player withdraws from the game, and the move rebounds to the player who gave him the move. (If the latter is thereby defeated, the move goes to the player who gave him the move, etc.)
- (6) The chips of a defeated player remain in play as prisoners, but are ignored in determining the order of play (Rule 2). If a pile is captured by the chips of a defeated player, the entire pile is killed into *the dead box*, and the move rebounds as in Rule 5.
- (7) Coalitions, or agreements to cooperate, are permitted, and may take any form. However deals are unenforceable within the game, the rules provide no penalty for failure to live up to an agreement. Open discussion is not restricted, but players are not allowed to confer away from the table during the game, or make agreements before the start of the game.

GAME END

The winner is the player surviving after all others have been defeated. *Note that a player can win even if he holds no chips and even if all chips of his colour have been killed.*