

Bushwhacked[©]

Instructions

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. *Bushwhacked* was inspired by the ancient Chinese game called *Go*. I wanted to produce a game that had the same spirit and complexity of *Go*, but allow up to four players competing for positions on the board.
- 1.2. *Bushwhacked* is all about capturing bases and or your opponent's pieces. It is scaleable for 2-4 players
- 1.3. The goal is to control the most bases at the end of the game
- 1.4. Game takes approximately 30-60 minutes to play

2. Game Components

- 2.1. Battlefield is a 17x17 grid with 9 points marked for bases
- 2.2. 4 player colors to choose from: white, red, blue, and yellow.
- 2.3. Each pouch of stones contains 40 play pieces and 30 capture pieces for each corresponding player (10 extras of each in case of lost stones).
- 2.4. Black stones represent the points the players need to capture on the board
- 2.5. Board Illustration

3. Setting up the game

- 3.1. To set up a 4 player game, place 9 black stones on the marked points on the board
- 3.2. For a 3 player game, place all black stones on the dots except on two opposing corners of the marked points. A 3 player game only uses 7 black stones.
- 3.3. For a 2 player game, place all black stones on the dots except on the four corners of the marked points. A 2 player game only uses 5 black stones.
- 3.4. Each player gets a pouch of two types of stones of similar color, one to represent a played move and the other to represent a captured piece that belongs to the capturer. (see image 2.3)
- 3.5. Each player starts with 30 play stones and 20 capture stones.
- 3.6. The player who is most familiar with the game goes first. If no one has played before, then the player whose birthday is closest to July 14th starts the game.

4. **Turn Order**

- 4.1. Movement
- 4.2. Capture Player Piece
- 4.3. Piercing Capture
- 4.4. Capture Trade in
- 4.5. Chain Capture

5. **Movement**

- 5.1. Once the game starts, players take turns placing one play stone inside the squares of the board. Player order is clockwise from the starting player. If you pass on your turn, you can place an additional piece on your next turn. You can pass only twice in a row for a maximum of three pieces.

6. **Capturing a Base**

- 6.1. A base can be captured by surrounding the base with a minimum of four stones by a single player. Stones used for capturing can be with either the play stones, capture stones, or both from a single player. (see image 6.1)

7. **Capture Trade In**

- 7.1. Once a player has captured 3 play stones of another player, they can then choose to trade in those 3 capture stones to control any single captured stone anywhere on the board, or continue to play a piece on the board. For example, a player captured a play stone next to a base that is now preventing anyone else from capturing that point. If you cash in 3 capture stones that you captured in earlier rounds, then you can now place one of your capture stones in that spot. If you choose to cash in your captures during your turn, then you cannot place a play stone on the board this turn and can only place the capture stone that you cashed in to acquire. The capture stones that were used for the trade in get removed from the board.
- 7.2. Only one trade in per turn is allowed

8. **Capturing a Player**

- 8.1. To capture a player's play stone, the enemy needs to surround their opponent with 3 of their own play stones. Once a piece is captured it becomes the attacker's capture piece.
- 8.2. Capture stones cannot be re-captured by surrounding it with play stones. The only way you can change ownership of a capture stone is to do a capture trade in (see section 7).

- 8.3.** Capturing only becomes active on your turn. If you notice that a player has put themselves in a position to be captured, you can then capture the play stone in question, but only on your turn. Likewise if it is your turn and you place enough play stones to make a capture but one of the play stones is placed in a position that it could be captured, your play stone is not captured since only your captures are active on your turn.
 - 8.4.** One way to perform a capture is to pass twice to gain 3 pieces on your next turn to quickly ambush another player's piece.(see image 8.1)
 - 8.5.** Another type of capture is a piercing move. It is arranged much like the normal capture except that you place the head of the triangle shape next to the piece you wish to capture. In order for it to be used as a piercing move, you cannot have another stone of any kind inside of the triangle. (see image 8.2)
 - 8.6.** When a player's play stone is captured by an opponent, the play stone on the board representing the player who had just been attacked returns to the victim's hand. It now becomes a playable piece again.
 - 8.7.** There are times when a stone is placed in a position where more than one play stone can be captured at a time. If this should occur, then the captured stones become the attacker's and may be used to capture adjacent play stones if the play stones in question are surrounded on three sides by the opponent.
- 9. Check for Victory**
- 9.1.** The first player to run out of play stones or when players run out of places to move, the game has ended. Whoever has controlled the most bases at the end, wins.
 - 9.2.** In the event of a tie, when two or more players control the same number of black stones, the player who has the most capture stones on the board wins the tie-breaker.

2.3



These are the play stones



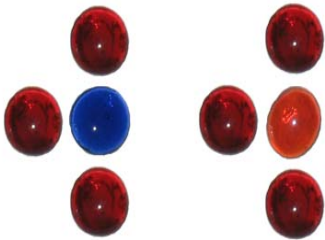
These are the capture stones

6.1



This shows red capturing a point

8.1



This shows red capturing blue by surrounding

8.2



This shows red capturing blue using a piercing move



Bushwhacked Analysis

The game I started with and the game I ended with became two completely different games. Originally inspired by the ancient Chinese game *Go* and the flow of the game, I created a game where you captured points on the board placed similarly to the nine point handicap spots on the Go board. I wanted to make a game that was more and more visually pleasing as the game progressed. The first pass of the game was very similar to *Go* in that you place stones on a grid and capture something. As time progressed and more play testing occurred, the game evolved into something completely different in play.

The board was made from solid wood and the markings were engraved using a wood burner. I started off using a 20x20 grid and after testing, reduced it to 17x17 because there was a ton of unused space. Eliminating that space reduced the length of the game drastically. The board size reduction also made the game more convenient to play.

The early stages of the game were not very fun to play. There were limited choices in what you could do and how you would play. I found that in the early game, there would be a point where no one would be able to claim a point if one person messed with the capture. I needed a way to penetrate the forming walls around each point so that someone could actually win the game. This is where I introduced the piercing move. It allowed me to capture stones that were unable to be surrounded on three sides. That addition greatly improved game play and the choices you can make.

Through the weeks of play testing, questions that needed to be answered came up with almost every game played. The concept of the overall game was understood easily but after the game progressed, the board became very hard to read and there was a lot of confusion as to what captured what. People who played the game found things like chain captures, cashed all their capture stones at once during their final move of the game, or even captured something that they saw later even though it wasn't their turn. These situations made it harder to balance but greatly improved the game. I adjusted the game so that captures are only active when it is your turn so that if you notice a point where you have a capture, on your next turn you'll be able to claim it. I also reduced the number of stones you use by a significant amount. Now you only play with 30 stones which makes the game end now instead of always being in a limbo state.

One of the most difficult parts of the game process was making the rules for the game and wording them so that people would understand. In the early versions of my rules, many people would get confused. This was mainly due to word choice. I used the words "pieces" and "stones" interchangeably which presented difficulty in understanding. I made changes multiple times till I found most people could understand them without having to ask questions.

Play tests of the game usually occurred at least every Thursday where I would get as many people together as I could to our games. This was great feedback because the earlier versions of my game seemed boring to most people and I noticed them not paying attention while focusing on other things. Now that the game has become more solid, the people that play *Bushwhacked* get into it a lot more. It also helps that the instructions are worded much clearer now. I have even started to lose more often because I'm seeing new strategies each time I play with someone new.

The past few months have given great feedback as to where to take the game and how to fix issues that had come up. I will continue to improve the game because more issues will come up eventually that I haven't seen and will need to be fixed.