

DOOLHOF-SPEL

Article and photos by Fred Horn

In 2005, I learned of a magazine titled *ABSTRACT GAMES*. Because of my fascination with and interest in abstract strategic games, it came as a complete surprise I had missed this magazine entirely! After a few inquiries, the name and address of the publisher was obtained and I ordered the complete set (of 16). In issue number 15, (Autumn 2003), a letter from a certain Mr. Charles M. Tung asked for some information about a game.

In his letter, Tung refers to his research on James Joyce and the latter's book *Ulysses* in which he found the game mentioned. He showed a copy of the board and the title of the game "*Labyrinth*." He wanted to know more about the game and especially how it was played. The main reason he asked for assistance was that he found it important to know why, as Joyce stated, it was possible to make six errors of judgment while playing the game.

I am a Berkeley Ph.D. candidate, writing on James Joyce's *Ulysses*. While writing one of his chapters, Joyce played a board game called *Labyrinth*. I have obtained a copy of the board, which I enclose.



I have not been able to find or figure out myself the rules to this game, and I would like to ask for help. The reason it is important is because Joyce discerned six errors of judgment it was possible to make while playing this game with his daughter. Do you have any ideas? Any help would be much appreciated.

Charles M. Tung, USA

*N.B.—
I played
the game
many times
but I have
no idea
what Joyce's
statement
means!
Can anyone
provide any
help on this?*

New research by Rob van Linden gave some insight in how the game *Labyrinth* appeared in the book.

James Joyce bought a German version of the game which was named "*Labyrinth Spiel*" at the Franz Carl Weber game shop in Zürich, located in the

Bahnhofstrasse. Rumor has it that he thereafter played the game every evening with his daughter. The game itself is now exhibited at the James Joyce Society in Zürich. For better or worse, the book also seems to be more like a written *Labyrinth*!

In 2011 I tried to trace Mr. Tung. After a long search I found someone with the same name and schooling.

Although I sent some e-mails, I never received any answer.

But I do hope I made you curious about this game and its rules.

When I saw the board, it was easy for me to detect what game Mr. Tung was interested in: Het DOOLHOF-SPEL, a game that had been in my collection for decades. I had always thought it was a Dutch game from the late 19th Century, but now I had to look at it in a completely different way.



Here are the Rules in Dutch,
printed in the lid of the box:



For your convenience I will do my
best to translate it out of the (dated)
Dutch into (modern) English.

The Labyrinth Game

This party game, which 2-6 players it
can take part in, gives as task, to find
a route through the crooked paths of
the labyrinth to the red endpoint and
all the way back. Whoever returns
first to the starting point of his journey,
becomes the winner.

Regulation

Each player pays 5 game tokens into
the cashbox. The checker-discs are
placed on the six starting points.
A throw of the die determines who
starts—highest number rolled goes
first. There are two ways for play.

a. Relay Race

In this race each player is only
allowed to move on (*in his turn F.H.*)
the same number of (*imaginary
hexagonal F.H.*) fields. The number
is set beforehand by using the die or
by agreement (*between the players
F.H.*). If a player ends his turn on a
field so marked with one or two dots,
he then must pass for one or two turns,
or if he prefers, pay the cashbox one
or two game tokens, to redeem himself.

b. Luck Race

In this race the steady movement
on the board is set by the number
rolled by the die. The number a player
throws determines the number of
fields he can play forward. The
remaining game play follows the
same rules as for the Relay Race.

Winner of the cashbox is (*the player
F.H.*), who is first to return to his
starting point. If more than one
player, in the same turn, accomplishes
this, the cashbox is then divided
equally among them. **ABPC**

The Labyrinth Game

To play the game, use 6 different colored Pawns; 1 Die; and a copy of this board

