

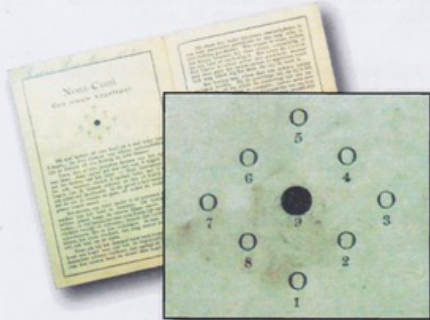
Noni-Coni

An abstract board game from Fred Horn's Collection in the "Spellenlab" at Brugge

Article by Fred Horn

Part of my collection, now in the "Spellenlab" (former Vlaams Spellenarchief / Flemish Games Archive) in Brugge, is a game, possibly dating from around 1900, of which nothing is known about its history: the game titled NONI-CONI.

More than thirty years ago I found this game at a fair. It was in good condition and also within the box there was a sleeve of paper with the games' rules in Dutch.



NONI-CONI: A new skittle game

This game has a board and four sets of nine skittles, which can be distinguished by their color. Each set consists of a king and eight jacks.



Two, three, or four persons can play the game. To start, each player places his set of nine skittles in one of the corners of the board. In a two-player game, each takes two sets of skittles and uses all 18 skittles as one set. In this case it is advisable for one player to select the black and yellow skittles, the other taking the red and green skittles.

The goal for each player is to occupy the numbers in the middle of the board. Movements occur along the black lines, always one space further; and outside the square outlined with a red line, forward and sideways; inside that

square also backwards, thus in all directions. Once inside the red square one is never allowed to move out; not even for capturing.

Just like in checkers one has to capture an opposing piece; this means when a skittle moves adjacent to one of the opponents' (skittles) and the intersection behind (the players' skittle) is not occupied, then the opponent must jump over and remove this skittle.

This can be done several times in one go under special circumstances and may be done in any direction. Anyone who forgets to capture, loses the skittle he was supposed to take, whether it is a jack or a king. This is called blowing. However blowing is only permitted if it is not pointed out by any of the other players. Also, the only one who may do this is (the player) who's turn it is.

A king can only be taken by another king. Given the important role king plays in the game, it will always try to avoid meeting another king; therefore one has to be careful of being forced to strike a suggested jack, immediately bringing him before his own covered king.

The skittles that occupy the skittle image in the center (the nine red points), can only be taken by other skittles within this image; for example a skittle on No. 1 can only be taken by a jump from No. 2 or 8; not by one occupying an intersection outside the image.

A skittle that was once in the skittle image, but has since moved out of it by advancing or capturing is subject to the general rules for capturing. As soon as there are only nine skittles left from all the players, capturing stops



Box cover and game board. At left, game rules and skittles

and the focus is now on making figures that count as many points as possible. Such figures are the following:

No. 1, 3, 5, 7 add up to 8; with king 12
 " 2, 4, 6, 8 " 12; " 16
 " 1, 9, 5 or 2, 9, 6 or 3, 9, 7 or 4, 9, 8
 count 6;

If the king is included and in the middle: 8, otherwise each skittle counts 1;
 The king in the middle: 4, on the other intersections: 2. Whoever has the most point count, wins the game.

The origin of this game, from the publisher, author, date, and country where it was manufactured are a complete mystery. Probably it's from Germany and maybe from around the turn of 19th and 20th century.

I bought this game together with the game ATTACCO which is a SALA game produced in Germany, so maybe this suggests a similar origin. AGPI