**Introduction**

In Eric van Waarden's game collection—which he donated to the Spellenlab in Brugge, Belgium after his passing—we found a rare and otherwise unknown game.

Nothing is known about the game of Torno—no author or publisher, nor which country it originated from! Some 'misspelled' words in the rules suggest a translation from German. And only one advertisement (at right) was found by Rob van Linden which dates the game.

Another notice mentions three different prices, surely for different versions.

For the Torno game currently in the Spellenlab, its version remains unknown as there is no price indication found on the box.

**The Tiles**

The game employs 36 wooden tiles (rectangles) with 'dots' on both sides. There are six series of six tiles:

- 6 with one dot on one side and on the reverse side dots from 1 up to 6.
- 6 with two dots at one side and on the reverse side dots from 1 up to 6.
- ... repeating up to ...
- 6 with six dots at one side and on the reverse side dots from 1 up to 6.

(N.B. In the picture above, the tiles in the column which (from above) start with three dots are not correctly laid down!)

Also included in the box is one larger hexagonal tile having on one side one dot and on its reverse side six dots. There are 6 pawns in 6 colors; and a 'normal' six-sided die.
The Games

In the rules sheet, four different games are described that can be played with the given material:

I. Spel (TURNO-Loop) (TURNO-Walk)
II. Spel (TURNO-Loterij) (TURNO-Lottery)
III. Spel (TURNO Domino) (TURNO Dominoes)
IV. Spel (TURNO-Damspel) (TURNO-Checkers)

Although the material supplied for the games is well suited for some abstract/strategic games, the above offered games are, all but one, more based on luck, using the random mechanism of a die.

I. A game where the players walk along a ‘layered-out’ track (see picture) using the die for the number of tiles to walk over. An even or an odd number means going forward or going backwards. The first one reaching the middle starting tile, after traveling the whole track, wins.

II. A fixed ‘layered-out’ track. Each player now has a 6-tile row to the middle. When his throw designates the number of his first tile, this one is taken away. The first player who reaches the middle hexagonal tile, wins.

III. Played similar to Dominoes. The die is not used. In a turn, two tiles with the same number must be placed opposite to each other, starting with those with 1 dot. Then the 2 rows must be completed with tiles from 2 to 6 dots before starting another 2 rows. The first player who has no more tiles in his hand, wins.

IV. More like a Halma game than Checkers. A 6 x 6 board is ‘layered-out’ with the rectangle tiles. The hexagonal tile is not used. Players start after a throw, with their pawns at one side (on a tile with the number of the throw) of the board and must travel, moving from the tile with their pawn to an orthogonal adjacent tile, to the other side, and then return to their starting tile. The throw of the die can be broken up but their sum of the tiles traveled over must be the number of the throw. The first player who reaches his starting tile, wins.

Comments

The name TURNO comes from a little village in Slovenia where about 100 inhabitants live today.

It is possible the game originated in Tscheko-Slowakia before WWII, because at that time there was a large game industry in that country and rules where, for exported games, at most offered in four languages: German, English, French, and Dutch.

It is a pity that the possibilities for more abstract/strategic games using the 36 rectangle tiles have not been used.

This set is, as far as I know, not published elsewhere or has been used for (an)other game(s), although it is very interesting for mathematicians! Maybe this publication will inspire authors to use it for a strategic game.

It is easy to manufacture the material yourself. Tiles and cards are interchangeable, so making a ‘card deck’ is much easier than sawing wooden tiles.

Think about adding a ‘blank’ tile (like in Dominoes) and you’ll get a deck of 49 cards. Also making two decks in different colors (total of 72 cards) will allow for other options for games.

The following is an “extra” strategic game, invented by me, added for your convenience!

Here is URL address to the game as documented on the website of the Spellenlab:

https://www.spellenlab.be/speldatabase/47109

Turnooi

A two-player game by Fred Horn played with the tiles of the game TURNO. ©Fred Horn, Feb. 10, 2023

Material: Use the 36 rectangle 2-sided tiles from the game TURNO. (photo opposite page)

There are six series of six tiles:

- 6 with one dot on one side and on the reverse side dots from 1 up to 6.
- 6 with two dots at one side and on the reverse side dots from 1 up to 6.
- ... repeating up to ...
- 6 with six dots at one side and on the reverse side dots from 1 up to 6.

Set up: Shuffle the tiles—let them ‘fall down,’ or put them all in a bag. On an imaginary ‘board’ of 6 x 8 rectangles (same size as a tile) lay down the 36 tiles randomly, in 3 rows of 6 tiles on both sides (total of 18 tiles per side), with 2 rows in the middle left empty. Each player controls the tiles on one side. The player with most tiles with 6 dots visible starts.

Rules: Turns alternate. In his turn a player can move one of his tiles orthogonally to an empty rectangle, only forward or sideways. It is not allowed to move one’s tile over the middle line to the opponent’s part of the board.

The two rows (started empty) with the middle line in between are the “TURNOI-area”—the place where capturing is possible.

When a player moves his tile onto the middle line and at the same time touches with a side (not an edge) of an opponent’s tile, a battle starts. Both players count the sum of the dots on both sides of their own tile. The player with the highest sum wins and captures the opponent’s tile removing it from the board. The winner’s tile stays in place.

If the sum is equal both tiles are removed from the board, but these are put aside and do not have any value anymore.

When all, but one, tiles are captured or removed from the board, the game ends. (N.B. The board is left empty only when the last battle results in an equal sum!)

After the game ends, players count the dots on both sides of all their captured tiles. The player with the highest score wins the game.