

## Activator

A game for the piecepack and piecepack pyramids by Michael Schoessow  
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2 players, 20-40 minutes

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**Equipment Needed** 4 piecepack tiles (any 4). piecepack pyramids as follows: one A, one B, two C, two D, two E, two F, in Red, and similarly in Blue. (20 pyramids in all, 10 red, and 10 blue)

### Setup

Activator is a 2-player game. One player is called Red and the other player is called Blue.

Use the four tiles, grid-side-up, to form a square gridded board of 4x4 spaces. Orient the board at 45 degrees rotation so that it appears as a diamond shape from the player's perspectives. The corner square closest to a player is that player's *home square*. Red arranges his own color pyramids as follows (and orients them so that the large suit logo is visible on the pyramids from his seating position). Place an F pyramid on the home square. Place another F pyramid on the space diagonally adjacent to the home square. Place E pyramids on the two spaces orthogonally flanking the home square. Place D pyramids next to each E pyramid, so there are now two lines of F,E,D, starting from the home square. Stack the two C pyramids on top of the two E pyramids. Stack a B pyramid onto the F pyramid setting on the home square. Now Blue arranges his pyramids in the same fashion, on his end of the board. Lastly, each player stacks his A pyramid on top of the **other player's** home square, on that player's B pyramid. This completes the set-up.

### Definitions

Home Square: the corner square closest to a player is that player's home square

Piece: the B,C,D,E,and F pyramids are pieces.

Activator: the A pyramids are activators, *and are distinct from pieces*.

Stack: 2 or 3 pieces, setting one on top of another

Double: a stack containing 2 pieces

Triple: a stack containing 3 pieces

Single: an individual piece, not stacked

Ranks and Files: lines of orthogonally adjacent squares (as in chess)

Orthogonal: two orthogonal squares share a side

Diagonal: two diagonal squares share a corner but not a side

## Object of the Game

Occupy the opposing player's home square for a full turn **or** reduce the opposing player to a single piece or stack.

## Rules of Movement

Red moves first, and thereafter, players alternate turns.

The rules governing singles and stacks are described first. Then the movement rules, and the effects of, activators are described.

Single pieces move one space, orthogonally.

Stacks of two pieces (doubles) move *up to* two spaces orthogonally.

Stacks of three pieces (triples) move orthogonally or diagonally, *up to* three spaces.

Taller stacks are not allowed.

Pieces and stacks require a clear path to move. They may **not** jump over, or move through, other pieces.

Pieces may only be stacked onto larger pieces. In any stack, each piece in the stack must be smaller than the piece beneath it. Pieces in stacks need not be strictly sequential, letter-wise. For example a stack of (top to bottom) B,D,F is legal.

Note that activators are not considered pieces, so a single piece with an activator on top is still considered a single piece and not a stack. Similarly, a stack of two or three pieces topped by an activator is considered a double or triple respectively, and moves as such.

When a piece is moved onto the space of a larger friendly piece, a stack is formed. Singles may also be stacked onto friendly doubles (or vice versa) to form triples. Stacks may be deconstructed by moving off the top one or two pieces. A triple may be deconstructed, either by moving off the top piece and leaving behind a double, or by moving off a double and leaving behind a single. When deconstructing stacks, the movement capability of the portion being moved is determined by the number of pieces it contains. It is legal to move the top part of one stack directly onto another friendly piece or stack. In all cases, each piece in a stack must be smaller than the piece beneath it.

When a piece or stack moves onto a space occupied by an enemy piece or stack, a capture takes place and the enemy piece or stack is removed from the game. Stacks are **not** more powerful than singles, and triples are **not** more powerful than doubles, regarding capturing powers. All pieces and stacks have the same capturing power, differing only in their movement capabilities.

Activators have different movement rules than pieces and stacks do. An activator may not be captured. An activator must **always** rest on top of one of the opposing player's pieces or stacks. Each turn a player has the *option* to move their activator, **after** moving a piece or stack. The rules for moving an activator are:

- It moves orthogonally, up to 4 spaces, and does **not** require a clear path. Thus it cannot be blocked.
- It **must** always rest on top of one of the other player's pieces or stacks.
- It may not be placed on top of the other player's activator.

Activators have the following three important effects on pieces and stacks:

- A piece or stack may not launch an attack unless it is resting on the same rank or on the same file as the friendly activator. In other words, the position of a player's activator determines what squares that player may attack **from** (assuming there are pieces or stacks in a position to do so).
- There will always be two spaces on the board that are the rank and file intersections of the two activators (the intersection of one activator's rank with the other activator's file and vice versa). Pieces setting on either of these two spaces are frozen. They may not be moved. This makes them vulnerable to attack. Note that when the activators are both on the same rank or are both on the same file, then the two rank and file intersections are coincident with the activators themselves. Only pieces and stacks can become frozen however, not activators, so an activator that is setting on a frozen piece or stack is **not** itself frozen. It is OK for a piece or stack to end its movement on a frozen space during a move (but then that piece or stack will become frozen).
- Pieces or stacks that are holding activators are immune to attack (an activator confers immunity to the piece or stack beneath it).

Note: A piece or stack that has an activator setting on it is no different from any other piece or stack as regards movement and attack capabilities, and how they are affected by activators. If a player moves the piece or stack containing the opponent's activator, then the activator goes along for the ride. A player may attack the opposing player using a piece or stack that holds the opponent's activator for example (assuming the player's own activator is in the appropriate position of course).

## Winning the Game

There are two ways to win the game:

- 1) The first player to occupy the opponent's home square wins the game, *provided the occupying piece or stack survives the opponent's next turn*, i.e., suicide runs don't win the game. When a player moves a piece or stack onto the opponent's home square, the opponent has one turn to capture the occupier. If the opponent cannot capture it, the game is over. If the opponent does capture it, the game continues.
- 2) When one player is reduced to owning only a single piece, or a single stack, then the other player *immediately* wins the game.