

Cardinal's Guards

A Solitary Confinement game for the piecepack by Michael & Stephen Schoessow

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1 player, 20 minutes

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Equipment needed: one piecepack, paper, pencil

The Story

The year is 1626, and France is under the control of Cardinal Richelieu. The King and Queen are weak, and there is no love lost between the King's musketeers and the Cardinal's guards. In a castle in Normandy, four musketeers have just broken out of **solitary confinement**. The castle is well garrisoned, with a full company of the Cardinal's guards, but the musketeers are determined to locate evidence of the Cardinal's treachery against the King, that they know is somewhere within the castle. They form a plan; each musketeer will search a different set of particular halls and chambers, and then attempt to escape from the castle while defeating as many guards as possible. Hopefully the musketeer with the evidence will reach the King. The task ahead won't be easy, but there is hope, and the musketeers have knowledge of a secret network of underground passages beneath the castle that the guards are unaware of.

The Game

In Cardinal's Guards, the player moves the musketeers around the castle, defeating or luring guards, while searching various chambers, before trying to escape.

The musketeers are represented by the four pawns.

The coins represent the guards.

The tiles represent castle chambers.

The dice are used to keep track of the chambers searched.

The player's score at the end of the game is based upon the number of chambers searched, the number of guards defeated, and the number of musketeers who escape.

Setup

Turn all tiles suit-side-down and shuffle them, or place them in an opaque bag and mix them up. One tile at a time, form a 5x5 board of randomly distributed tiles, **suit-side-up**, with a hole in the center. This forms the castle. Place all the coins in an opaque bag, mix them up, and draw them out one by one, placing coins suit-side-up, one coin against the outer edge of each of the perimeter tiles (start at any tile and work clockwise around the castle perimeter to get a random distribution). These twenty coins represent the Cardinal's *perimeter* guards. The four remaining coins are placed suit-side up, next to the board, and constitute the player's *supply* while also representing the Cardinal's *castle* guards. Place the four dice, null-side-up, conveniently nearby. These are used to keep track of which castle chambers have been searched by the musketeers. The musketeers are placed on their color-matched null tiles. These four chambers are their starting positions. Figure 1 illustrates the starting set-up of the game.

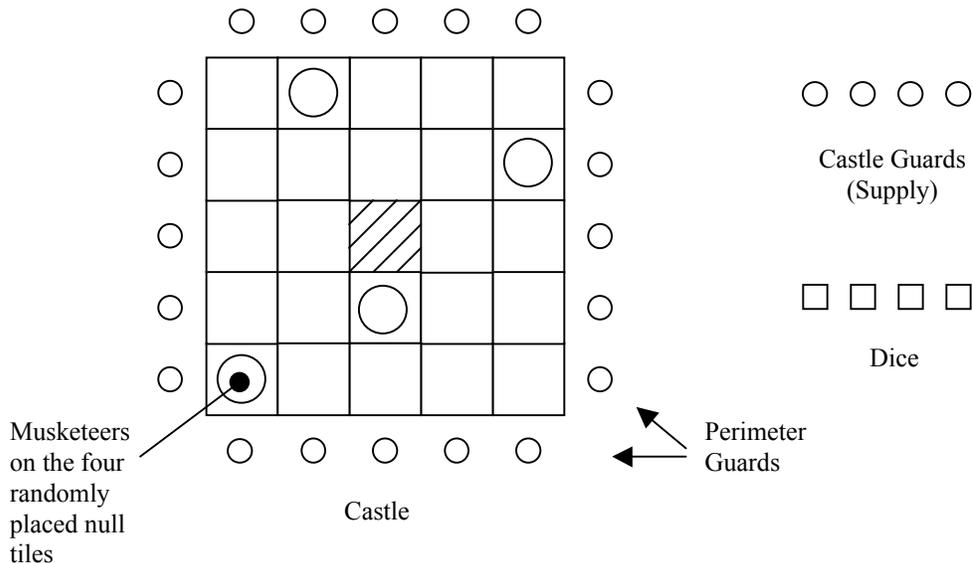


Figure 1 – Starting Set-up.

Object of the Game

The player's objective is to move each of the musketeers through all five remaining chambers of their color, in numerical order from 1 (ace) to 5, while also defeating as many guards as possible, and then move the musketeers out of the castle (off the board).

Game Play

Game play consists of moving musketeers to different chambers, and defeating or luring guards. Each musketeer wants to move first to the ace tile of his color, then to the 2 tile of

his color, then the 3, etc. This is called *searching* the chambers. Only after searching all five chambers of his color, **in numerical order**, does a musketeer try to escape from the castle (move off the board). In some cases, it will be advantageous for a musketeer who has searched all five chambers to work on defeating more guards before escaping from the castle.

Note: There is no penalty for visiting chambers out of numerical sequence, or for visiting chambers of other colors (between searches of the required chambers in the required order). However a chamber only counts as being **searched** when it is *visited by the musketeer of the same color, and when all lower number chambers of that color have already been searched by that same musketeer.*

Musketeers move as “run-away rooks”. That is, they move orthogonally, and they keep moving until they come up against another musketeer or a guard. Movement is **not** automatically stopped by the edge of the board. Musketeers stop on the last unoccupied tile in their direction of movement before encountering a guard or another musketeer. Therefore, a musketeer starting from the interior of the castle, and moving outward, would stop on a perimeter tile *only if there was a perimeter guard against the outer edge of that tile.* Otherwise he would leave the castle. A musketeer that leaves the castle in this manner before visiting all five of his assigned chambers is considered to have been killed by the guards, and the pawn is placed off to the side. The four musketeers may be moved in any sequence, and one musketeer may be moved two or more times in a row. A musketeer may never occupy a chamber already occupied by a guard, or by another musketeer. **Nor** may a musketeer pass through a guard or another musketeer during a move, or cross the hole in the center of the board.

The center hole in the board represents the entrance to a secret subterranean network of tunnels, leading to the four corner chambers of the castle. Whenever a musketeer moves onto the tunnel entrance, he immediately emerges within the corner chamber of his choice, providing *the chamber is unoccupied, by either another musketeer or a castle guard.* If all four corner chambers are occupied, the tunnel network may not be entered. The tunnel entrance may **never** be traversed (moved across to reach a chamber on the far side).

Note: the tunnel network may **not** be used to travel from a corner chamber back to the tunnel entrance. No guard or musketeer may ever occupy the tunnel entrance.

When a musketeer is stopped on a perimeter tile by a perimeter guard just outside the castle, that guard is normally considered *defeated*. The exception is when the guard coin is the *same color* as the musketeer pawn. In this case, the player **may** add the guard coin to his *supply* of coins, *if and only if* he has no coins of that color presently in his supply. If he chooses not to add the coin to his supply, the guard stays at his post. If he *does* already have one or more coins of that color in his supply, then the perimeter guard *always* remains at his post. When a musketeer is stopped by a perimeter guard of a *different color* than the musketeer, the guard is *always* defeated. **All defeated guards**

(perimeter or castle guards) are placed in a pile off to the side, to be counted at the end of the game.

At any time, a player may take a coin from his supply and add it to the board, where it becomes a Cardinal's castle guard. Coins may be added on any empty tile of the **same color** as the coin. This constitutes *luring* a castle guard to that location.

Because the guards have no knowledge of the secret tunnels, whenever a musketeer travels through a tunnel, he **may** remove any one *castle* guard (not a *perimeter* guard) currently on the board. These guards are *not* returned to the player's supply, but are considered *defeated*, and are placed off to the side with the other defeated guards.

Each time a musketeer reaches the next numerical tile of his color (and he has already searched all lower-numbered chambers of his color), the die of that color is incremented up by one digit, so the dice always display, and keep track of, the chambers most recently searched by the musketeers. Thus when a musketeer has searched all five chambers, his die should show 5.

Game End And Scoring

When the player feels that no additional useful moves are possible, the game is over. One point is earned for each chamber searched, two points are earned for each musketeer who escapes, and one point is earned for each guard defeated. Or, in equation form,

Score = (sum of the numbers showing on the dice) + (number of escaped musketeers times 2) + (number of guards defeated). A perfect game would score $(4 \times 5) + (4 \times 2) + 24 = 56$ points. High scores are not too difficult with practice, but perfect games are rare.

Variations

Players who develop a high level of expertise playing the game, may wish to consider one of the following variants (or both together).

- 1) When a musketeer enters the tunnel network, his option to remove (defeat) a castle guard extends only to guards of his own color.
- 2) Players may not add coins to their supply during the game.