

# SENAT

A piecepack adaptation of an Ancient Egyptian Game of Strategy and Chance

Adaptation by Craig Blumer from the rules for *Senat* by Fundex Games, Ltd.  
Indianapolis, IN 46241, 1-800-486-9787

2 Players

Playing time 10 – 15 minutes.

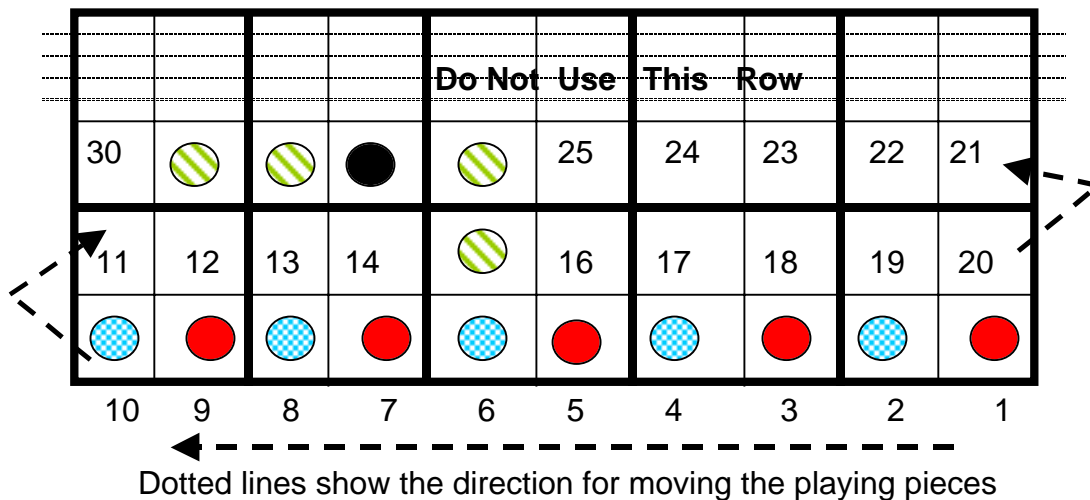
*Senat is the Egyptian forerunner of Backgammon family of face-games. The earliest record of Senat is a wall painting on the tomb of Hesy of the Third Dynasty, about 2686 to 2613 B.C. At this early date it seems that the players had seven play pieces each and used for casting sticks to control their movement. The game was seen both as a form of entertainment and forecasting the future.*

**EQUIPMENT:** 10 piecepack tiles, 5 Sun coins, 5 Arms coins, 1 Moon coin, 4 Crown coins, and the 4 Null coins (or in place of the Null coins, one die).

**OBJECT:** To be the first player to move your play pieces around and off the board.

**SET UP:** Arrange the 10 tiles in 2 rows of 5, grid-side up. Three rows of the grid will be used, the fourth row is not used in the game. Alternate Sun and Arms coins, one coin per square, on the first row (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Starting Set Up



Arms and Sun coins are alternated on the first row. They are the game playing pieces. Crown coins are set on the board as above (squares 15, 26, 28, and 29). A Moon coin is set on square 27. The Crown coins and the Moon coin are on the board only to mark special squares (described below) and are never moved and are not playing pieces. The 4 Null coins are used to determine the number of squares the play pieces are moved. (A dice can be used instead of these 4 coins.)

PLAY: In the original Senat, numbers were cast using round sticks cut lengthwise to have a flat side. This same type of casting lots is done by players throwing the four Moon coins and moving their pieces the number of squares indicated below. Pieces move around the board as shown in Figure 1. Only one piece may be moved per roll, unless a player is bearing off (see "Bearing Off" section.) The four Null coins are cast and a piece moved the number of squares as follows:

One suit-side up = 1 square  
Two suit-sides up = 2 squares  
Three suit-sides up = 3 squares  
All Four suit-sides up = 4 squares  
All Four Null sides up = 6 squares

Instead of the Null coins, a dice may be used. Ace = 1; Blank = 6, the remaining numbers = their number, and a 5 is not used and the die is re-rolled.

FIRST PLAY: Players alternate turns throwing the Null coins until one player throws a 1 (only one moon-side up or, with dice, an ace). The player throwing a 1 begins and must move the Arms coin 1 square from the end of the first row to the first square on the second row. The same player throws the Moon coins again.

If a 1, 4, or 6 is thrown, the player moves any piece the same number of squares along the board and throws again.

If a 2 or 3 are thrown, the player moves one of his play pieces the indicated number of squares; and then play passes to the opponent.

The second player throws the Null coins and begins play by moving his piece on square 9 (the last Sun coin in the row) the number of squares indicated by the throw. After that move any of a player's pieces can be moved.

Play continues as with the first player. If throws of 1, 4, or 6 are thrown the player moves a piece the indicated number and throws again. If a 2 or 3 are thrown, a piece is moved and the player's turn then ends.

OCCUPIED SPACES: If a play piece lands on a square occupied by the opponent, the opponent's piece is moved back to where the attacker came from

(in other words, they switch places.) For example, if you have Arms and you move from square 6 to square 9, and square 9 is occupied by a Sun piece, you remain on square 9 and the Sun piece is moved back to square 6.

Two play pieces can not occupy the same space at the same time, regardless if they are the same or different colors.

Two play pieces of the same color which occupy consecutive squares, such as 16 and 17, protect each other from attack by the opponent's play pieces and can not be removed while they remain in consecutive squares. For example, you occupy 16 and 17 (or any other consecutive squares) your opponent may not land on either 16 or 17 and may not send either of the pieces back.

Three play pieces of the same color in a row form a block and can not be attacked or passed by the opponent's play pieces. Play pieces of the same color may pass, however. For example, if you had pieces on 14, 17, 18, and 19; and you rolled a six (four Moons down), you could move the piece on 14 six squares to square 20. If you threw a 4 (four Moons up) you could not move the piece on square 14 as two pieces can not come to rest and occupy the same square. If your opponent had a piece on square 16, he could neither move past the block nor attack any of the three on 17 – 19 and send them back.

**SPECIAL MOVES AND SPACES:** Any throw which can not be used to legally move forward must be used to move a piece backwards. If a player moving backwards lands on a square occupied by an opponent's play piece, the opponent's piece moves forward to the square the player previously occupied (in other words, they exchange places.)

If a player is not able to move in either direction, the turn ends and play passes to the other player.

Square 27 (marked by a Moon piece) is a trap. Players landing on this square must move to square 15 (marked by a Crown piece). If square 15 is occupied, then the player must return the play piece back to the start of the game.

**SAFE SPACES:** Squares 26, 28, and 29 (marked by Crown pieces) are "safe". Play pieces on these squares are protected and may not be attacked by the opponent's play pieces. Players do not have to leave these safe squares unless they want to.

**BEARING OFF:** Players "bear off" play pieces (taking play pieces off the board) only while all of their play pieces are out of the first row. Players need not land exactly on square 30 before bearing off. If you throw a number that puts your play piece past square 30, you may use the extra unused moves to move another play piece. For example, if your play piece is on square 29 and you throw a 4, you would move your play piece from square 29 off the board (2

spaces – square 30 and off), then advance one of your other play pieces two squares ahead.

If one of your play pieces must return to the first row, then you must wait to bear off until that play piece is out of the first row.

**WINNING:** The first player to bear off all of his/her play pieces wins the game.

**OPTIONAL SCORING:** If you are playing a series of games and wish to keep score, award the winner one point for each opponent's play pieces left on the third row and one point for each play piece on rows one and two.