

Introduction

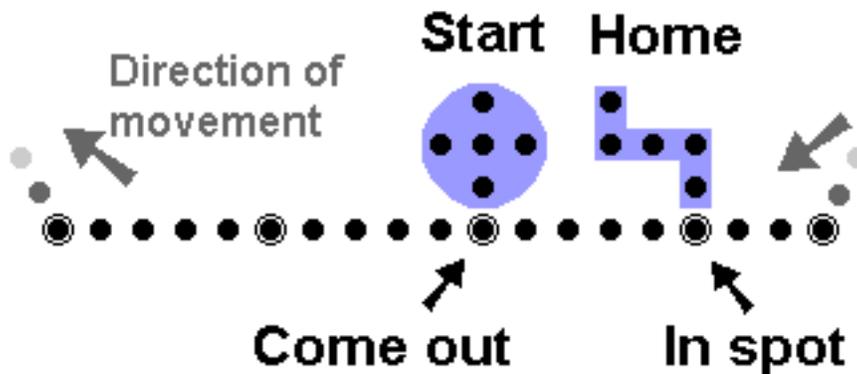
Marbles and Jokers is a North American race game for four, six or eight players, using playing-cards to move marbles around a board. It is also sometimes known as **Jokers and Marbles**. Some board designs use marbles instead of marbles as the playing pieces in which case it may be called **Marbles and Jokers** or **Jokers and Marbles**.

Marbles and Jokers is a partnership game played with standard playing-cards on boards that are generally home-made. It allows extra scope for strategy by giving players a choice of cards to play. Each player has five marbles, and the winners are the first team to move all their marbles from their START area to their HOME areas.

Players and Equipment

The players are divided into two teams - two against two, three against three or four against four. They sit alternately - each player seated between two opponents. Standard decks of cards are used, with two jokers in each deck. Three decks (162 cards including 6 jokers) may be enough for up to six players: eight players should use four decks (216 cards including 8 jokers).

Four players use a four-sided board; six players use a six-sided board; eight players use an eight-sided board - one side for each player, each associated with a different color. Each player has five marbles in the color that corresponds to the side of the board nearest to them. Each side of the board has a straight section of track 18 units long; there is a corner hole at each end, shared between two adjacent sides, and 17 holes between them. The 8th hole after the corner is the "**come out**" position for the marbles on that side, and next to it is the colored "**start**" area with five holes where the marbles of that color are stored at the start of the game. The 3rd hole after the corner is the "**in-spot**" for that color, and branching off at the "in-spot" is a colored private track of 5 holes, which is the "**home**" or "**safe**" area or "**castle**", where the marbles end their journey. The diagram below shows one side of the board.



Basic Game

Deal and play of cards

Seven cards are dealt to each player, and the remaining cards are stacked face down. As usual players hold their cards so that they can see their faces but no one else can. Played cards form a face up pile on the table. Players take turns in clockwise order. At your turn you do the following:

1. Play one card of your choice from your hand face up onto your discard pile.
2. Move according to the power of the played card.
3. Draw enough cards from the top of the face-down deck, so that you hold seven cards.

If you have any card (except a joker) that allows you to move a marble, you must play such a card, even if the move is disadvantageous. However, if you have no cards (except jokers) that enable you to move you may discard one card of your choice without moving and draw a card to replace it. This ends your turn. Discarding without moving normally happens only at the start of the game, when a player has no aces or pictures to move any marble out of the start area.

A player is never forced to play a joker: if you have no other move you may keep the joker and discard another card.

Movement of marbles - general rules

All the marbles begin in their own start areas. From there they move to the neighboring "come out" hole, and then around the board clockwise. On reaching its own "in-spot" a marble may take the branch into its safe "home" track. No marble may ever move into any start or home area other than its own.

In the basic game, except in special circumstances described below, you may only move your own marbles.

You may never land on or pass over a hole occupied by one of your own marbles, but you may pass over or land on other player's marbles. Passing over a marble of a different color has no effect on it, but landing exactly in the hole occupied by a marble of a different color has the following results:

- When a marble lands on an opponent's marble, the opponent's marble is immediately moved back to its start area.
- When a marble lands on a partner's marble, the partner's marble is immediately moved to its "in-spot", provided the partner does not already

have a marble there. It is illegal to land on your partner's marble if that partner already has a marble on his or her own in-spot.

Movement of marbles - effects of individual cards

In order to move your marble out of your start area, you must play a double, jack, queen, king, ace (to move it to its "come out" hole) or a joker (to move it to the hole occupied by a marble of a different color anywhere on the main track).

When playing a **2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9** or **10**, you move one of your own marbles that is not in your start area forward that number of holes along the track.

When playing an **ace**, you may *either* move one of your marbles from your start area to your "come out" hole, **or** move one of your marbles forward one hole.

When playing a **jack (11)**, **queen (12)** or **king (13)** you may **either** move one of your marbles from your start area to your "come out" hole, **or** move one of your marbles forward 10 holes.

When playing an **8**, you must move one of your marbles **backwards** 8 holes.

When playing a **7**, you may **either** move one of your marbles forward 7 holes, or **split** the 7 between two of your marbles, moving them 1 and 6, 2 and 5 or 3 and 4 holes forwards. Of course the split move can only be made if you have at least two marbles in play.

When you play a **joker**, you move any one of your marbles (for example one in the start area) into a hole on the main track that is occupied by another player's marble, belonging either to a partner or to an opponent. This has the effect of sending that marble to its in-spot or start area respectively, as described above. A joker cannot be used to move to an empty hole, so if there are no marbles of any color on the main track a joker cannot be played.

You must always use the full value of the card played.

Endgame

For a team to win the game, all its marbles must be in their respective home areas. Marbles move along the home tracks in the usual way. Since they cannot land on or pass over each other, the first marble to arrive must eventually be moved all the way to the end of the home track to leave room for the others, the second to the next space behind it and so on.

"Backing in" to the home track is not allowed. In other words, marbles cannot turn into their home track while moving backwards. Also, marbles that are already in their home areas are not allowed to move backwards.

However, it is legal to use a backward move on the main track as a means to get from start to home. For example: you could use a picture to move from the start area to "come-out"; use an 8 to move back 8 spaces to the corner (NOT into the home track); use a 4, 5, 6 or 7 to move forward into your home track.

When, and only when, all five of your marbles are in the home (safe) position, occupying the five holes of your home track, you use your turn to move the marbles of any of your partners.

The first team that manages to get all its marbles into their respective home areas wins the game.