

Zopp: A game from Anton Karger. For 2 or 4 football-mad billiards players of 6 years or more.

Zopp can be played by two players as a "singles" game, or by four players as "doubles". The rules are, to a large extent, based on the standard rules of football. Each player (or team) has 3 playing counters, (representing their players, either in black or white), while a smaller red counter is the ball. The counters are flicked around the board, either with a finger, or one of the special Zopp flickers, or some other item. Each side in turn, has the chance to move the ball forward by striking it with one of their counters. The aim is to score, by getting the "ball" into the opponent's goal. The player or team that scores the most goals, wins.

Contents: A large, smooth wooden board, representing a football pitch.

4 Zopp bats

8 playing counters, 4 white, 4 black.

2 red playing counters, ("balls")

2 Metal goals (place on board before game).

2 Score markers (1 white 1 black), (place on board before game).

1 bottle of Zopp polishing powder

These rules, and instructions for care of the game.

Contents:

Length of Game: Decided either by time or by the number of goals.

Kick Off: White always kicks off. After a goal, only the ball is returned to the centre circle, the counters stay where they are.

Foul: Occurs if a playing counter hits a counter of the other color, without first hitting the ball or the sides. Leads to a free kick.

Free Kick: The player who takes the free kick has three turns before the opponent can play again.

Offside/Defensive Wall. A counter that comes to rest in the opponent's penalty area is offside, in it's own penalty area it forms a defensive wall. In either case, once pointed out, that piece must be moved at the first available opportunity.

Out: A playing piece that leaves the playing area or enters a goal is immediately taken by the opposing player and placed on one of the "out" points around the board. The opponent has an almost free choice of "out" points.

Tactical plays: These occur if a player strikes a counter in such a way that so it won't hit the ball. If a player makes more than 3 tactical plays in a row, the other player gets a free kick.

Contact: If a playing piece comes to rest against the edge of the pitch or on the goal line or it is in contact with another piece, it must be moved a finger thickness away from the obstruction.

Goal: The ball is knocked into the opponent's goal. A goal only counts if no counter enters the goal along with the ball. Additionally, the shot that leads to the goal may not involve a foul.

Own Goal: The ball is knocked into the player's own goal. It doesn't matter whether a counter enters the goal with the ball, the goal still stands.

Special cases and Zopp for four players.

Length of Game: Players should agree before they start whether to play, "first to 5 goals" or 10 or any other suitable number. The first player to reach the target wins. A 10 goal game normally lasts about 40 minutes. Or, they can agree a set time of play.

Tournament games: These are usually played over 20 minutes, (two halves of ten minutes each). If the score is level after 20 minutes the two teams play on, with the first team to score after the restart winning.

Kick Off: 1) At the beginning of the game, the two players each arrange their three counters around the centre circle as shown in the illustration on side 3 of the rules, (abb. 1).

The younger player, or alternatively, the player with white, places first. Each player in turn places one of their counters around the centre circle, in their half of the field. When all the counters have been placed, the red "ball" is placed on the centre spot and the white player takes the first move. The white player flicks one of their counters so as to hit the ball. Once they have done this, the black player takes a turn.

After a goal, the ball is put back into the centre of the field. The playing counters however are left where they are, unless one is inside the centre circle, in which case it is moved outside the circle, (see diagram 2 in the rules). Play proceeds as normal, with the player who conceded the goal playing next. If the player scores a goal directly from the kick off, the goal stands.

The Goal: A goal is scored when the ball fully crosses the goal line. It does not count however, if a counter goes into the goal along with the ball, (except in the case of an own goal). Also, if the shot that leads to a goal, involves a foul, or a counter leaving the field of play, the goal doesn't count. In these cases, the appropriate rules for a foul or

a counter going out come into play. If a counter finishes the move that leads to a goal, in an offside or wall position, the goal stands.

Own Goals: If the ball enters a player's own goal, during that player's turn, it counts as an own goal, and the opposing player scores a point. Own goals always count, even if they involve a foul or a counter going off the field, or counters going into the goal along with the ball. The player who conceded the own goal then takes the next turn and kicks off again as normal.

Foul: A foul leads to a free kick for the opponent. The opposing player must point out the foul and if they do so, gains a free kick. The player who caused the foul need not point this out. If the opponent doesn't notice the foul, play continues as usual.

A foul has been committed if:

- a) A player's counter strikes one of the opponent's counters before it strikes the ball or the band around the pitch.
- b) Or, a player's shot causes one of their counters to strike one of the opponent's counters in a penalty area, even if this occurs after the player's counter has hit the ball or the side of the pitch.

Free Kick: All counters and the ball are left where they are. The player awarded the free kick has up to three free turns before the other player may play. They may use any or all of their counters for these three turns, i.e. they need not take all three turns with one counter. If the free kick leads to a goal after one or two turns, the game restarts with a kick off for the opponent, the remaining turns from the free kick aren't counted. If a player taking a free kick offends against the rules in some way, (foul, offside or out), the situation is resolved before the free kick goes any further.

Example: Black takes a free kick. His first turn results in one of his counters lying in an offside position. White may now insist that Black's second turn is used to correct the offside. If this second turn results in a foul, the free kick is immediately broken off, and it is White's turn to take a free kick.

Offside and Defensive Walls: Counters which finish a turn in one of the penalty areas are either offside (in the opponent's penalty area), or forming a defensive wall (in their own area). In either case, providing this is pointed out, the player's next turn must be used to remove the offending counter from the penalty area. As with a foul, it is up to the opponent to point out that the counter lies illegally. If they do not notice, or choose not to, the counter may be left where it is. An opponent may however choose to point out the illegality later on. This can sometimes be a tactical advantage. Once the situation has been pointed out, the offending player must use their next turn to remove the illegal counter from the penalty area. A goal scored during this turn counts, as long as the counter ends its turn in a legal position. A counter on the line around the penalty area is illegal if more than half of the counter lies within the area.

Out: If a counter ends its turn off the playing surface, either by jumping over the edge of the board, or in a goal, it is "out". The counter is replaced on one of the "out" positions around the board. The task of replacing the counter always falls to the opposing player. They must, if possible, replace the counter on one of the two "out" positions in the same half of the field from which the counter left the board. If one "out" point is already occupied, the other must be used, if both points in one half are occupied, the player may use the points in the other half. If several counters leave the field during one turn, the ball must always be replaced first, followed by the playing counter or counters, placed as the player wishes. If all "out" points are occupied, a very rare situation, the remaining counter or counters should be placed in the centre of the pitch.

Tactical Plays: A tactical play is a turn where the counter is struck so as not to strike the ball. This is sometimes necessary to line up a shot. A player may make up to three such tactical plays in succession. If they exceed this number, the opponent gains a free kick. The deciding factor is the intent to strike the ball. If a player hits a counter so as to attempt to strike the ball, it counts as a normal turn, and not as a tactical play, even if they fail to make contact.

Professionals may choose to play a more difficult version of this rule, whereby any shot that fails to hit the ball counts as a tactical play, regardless of intention. This makes tactical plays far riskier, since a player who fails to make contact with the ball with their third play, automatically gives away a free kick regardless of their intentions. In particular, it may lead to an element of snooker, where a player attempts to position the ball so that it is difficult for their opponent to reach, in the hopes of gaining a free kick.

Contact: If a counter finishes a turn in contact with the band around the pitch, or with another counter, the contact rules apply. Contact with the band is solved by moving the offending counter directly infield until it is fully within the line around the pitch. (See Diagram 5 in the rules). If the counter is in contact with another, it may be moved a

finger's width directly away from the other counter. Only the counter which was struck by the player may be moved in this way.

Fair Play: Players should attempt to resolve any differences over the rules as fairly as possible. If however agreement proves impossible, White's decision is binding. Any second dispute is then decided by Black and so on.

Examples of problems that may occur are: Foul or not? Did the counter hit the band around the pitch before hitting an opponent's counter? Was a third turn tactical or not? Was a counter moved or not? Did a shot result in two of the opponent's counters colliding? Is the score right?

Professional variant: If a player commits a fourth foul during a game, they must remove one of their counters from the game.

Special Situations: To prevent argument, the following situations are resolved as follows:

Ball and counter both leave the pitch. - the ball is replaced first.

A player may not directly strike the ball or an opponent's counter. - Should this occur, the opponent gets two free turns.

It is the opponent's responsibility to point out any infraction of the rules. If they fail to do so, play continues as normal. If however, the opponent points out a rule infraction but the player fails to correct this, the opponent then takes two turns in succession when they are next in play.

A counter finishes its turn against the band around the pitch. This counter is then moved directly infield until it lies fully within the playing surface, i.e. inside the sideline. If a counter ends its turn on the goal line, it is moved a thumb-width directly infield.

Two or more of a player's counters finish the turn in a penalty area. The player must attempt to knock both counters out of the area with one hit. Should they fail to achieve this, they may have to use their next move or moves in resolving the situation before they can continue with the main object of the game, scoring goals.

Two counters finish up one on top of another. This is illegal. Should such a situation occur, the uppermost counter is removed and placed a finger width away from the lowest. If a counter is lying on the ball the ball counter is removed and placed a finger width away from the counter.

A counter hits one of the opponent's counters: This is normally illegal and results in a free kick. It may however be legal in one of three cases.

- 1) If the first counter hits the second after it has hit the ball it is legal (Diagram 6)
- 2) If the counter hits the second counter after rebounding from the edge of the pitch it is legal. (Diagram 7)
- 3) If the first counter hits a second counter which then hits one of the opponent's counter it is legal. (Diagram 8).

However, if the contact takes place in a penalty area it is always illegal, no matter what route it may have taken to get there.

Zopp for four:

There are two ways of playing Zopp with four players. The basic game is the same as the game for two, with each side having three white counters or three black. There are however two different modes of play.

A) This is very similar to the game for two. Play alternates between the two teams, and between each player on a team, leading to the course of play shown in Diagram A on page 11 of the rules.

B) Here each team plays alternately, with each player in a team taking a turn before the other team can play. The situation is then as shown in diagram B on page 11 of the rules. This leads to a slower, but tactically more interesting version of the game, since the first player on each team can attempt to set up a good position for their partner.

The Zoch Verlag and Zopp company are presently working on a set of Tournament rules for Zopp. We already know that many people have worked out their own versions of the rules, and we would be very interested to hear from any Zopp players in different countries with details of their solutions for any of the various situations that can arise in play. Alternatively send us your ideas as to how the game could be improved.

Copyright 1997 Zoch Verlags GmbH, Zopp Company, Rheinstr. 7, 80803 München, Germany