

Thaayam

(The text below is from Cynningstan Traditional Board Games.)

<http://www.cynningstan.com/game/281/thaayam>

Thaayam is played by two, three or four people, on a board of five squares by five. The central square is marked with a cross and called the keep. The middle square on each edge of the board is also marked in the same way, and is called a palace, one belonging to each player. As each player has four pieces, and pieces may sit together in the same square, the board for this game needs to be big enough to accommodate many pieces in each square.

(If the printable counters are being used, then they will be flat enough to sit on top of each other, otherwise use small coins or buttons of different colours. A Printable spinner dice numbered from 0-4 is included, the zero represents a count of '8'. Otherwise use two sided objects for dice such as cowrie shells or objects that have a light side and a dark side.)

1. The game begins with all the pieces off the board.
2. Each player throws the dice. The score is the number of light sides up, with none scoring 8. If cowries are used, the mouths are counted instead.
3. The player who throws highest starts the game, play passing to her left when she has completed her turn.
4. A player starts her turn by throwing the dice repeatedly, noting the throws made, until a two or three is thrown.
5. Once the series of throws ending in two or three is complete, the pieces can be entered and moved, using in any order the throws noted.
6. A piece not already on the board can only be entered using a throw of 1, in which case it is placed on the player's own palace.
7. If a player has no pieces on the board, any throws made before a 1 are discarded.
8. A piece already on the board may be advanced along it using any of the throws individually or combined.
9. The order in which the numbers were thrown is not significant except as noted in rule 7.
10. A piece does not move twice; when combining two or more throws to move one piece, the piece moves the total number of squares without stopping on any intervening squares.
11. If one of the throws is 1, a piece may, however, enter the board and advance in the same turn.
12. Each player's pieces follow a path starting on her own palace. The route is shown in the diagram.
13. Every throw in a series must be used, if possible.

14. Any number of pieces may occupy the same square.
15. If two pieces land on the palace opposite a player's own, she can declare them twins.
16. Twins move together as one piece, but for half the number of squares scored. If an odd score is used to move the twins, the result is rounded down (e.g. throws of $8+3=11$ could be used to move twins 5 spaces, wasting one point).
17. There are no special rules for triplets or quadruplets. Capturing Enemies
18. If a piece lands on a square occupied by enemy pieces, those enemy pieces are removed from the board and handed back to their owner (or owners).
19. Such captured pieces must re-enter the board as if they had never been on it.
20. After capturing, a player is granted another turn. So after completing her moves she again proceeds as per rule 4 onwards.
21. Pieces on marked squares (palaces or the keep) are not prone to capture. Pieces of different colours may therefore share these squares.
22. Twins can be captured only by other twins. Single pieces landing on twins will simply share the same square as if it were a palace or the keep.
23. Twins being captured are separated and re-entered as single pieces.
24. Twins may capture singletons.
25. The keep is at the end of each player's course, and may only be entered by an exact throw.
26. Twins entering the keep are there regarded as two individual pieces.
27. When a player has all her pieces in the keep, she may start bearing off.
28. On a throw of one, a piece completes its journey and is removed from the board (borne off).
29. When a player has borne off all of her pieces, the game is over and she is declared the winner.

The game is relatively simple but still involves some tactical skill. The first thing to take advantage of is the differing chances of each of the throws: 2 is the most common, followed by 1 and 3, followed by 4 and 5. Positioning a piece two squares behind an opponent, threatening capture, is a good way to force the opponent to move that piece. Similarly, you should avoid leaving a piece in an unprotected square when an enemy piece is two squares behind.

The path around the board is easy to remember, but the difficulty comes in recognising (and remembering) that the opponents paths are not the same as your own: they are rotated versions of it. It is easy to forget this, and make plays to threaten enemy pieces that in actuality you can never reach.

Contents:

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Page 4. Printable Thaayam board.

Page 5. Printable counters and spinner dice. Cut out and stick to card or stick to card first and cut out. Insert a small pointed stick or pencil through centre of spinner dice.

Page 6. Printable Ashtapada Board.

Page 7. Smaller printable counters for Ashtapada board.

Page 8. Route for Ashtapada board.

(All vector graphics are produced by J P Smith using Eazydraw)











