



MORPHIBLOCK

RULEBOOK

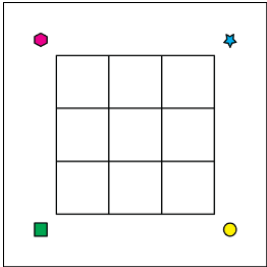
Morphiblock is a logic game in which players build a large cube (block) made up of multiple smaller cubes while collecting points. The player who collects the most points wins the game.

During the game, players construct a three-dimensional block consisting of either $3 \times 3 \times 3$ cubes or 4×4 cubes, using the five elements of Far Eastern philosophy (Fire, Water, Wood, Metal, Earth) and the interactions between them.

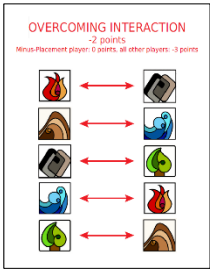
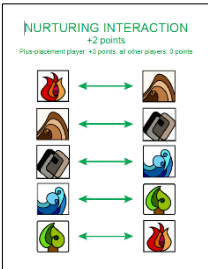
Game Components



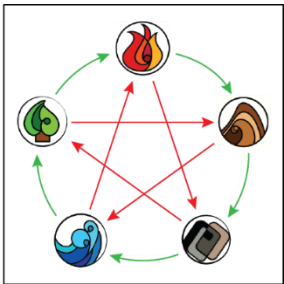
65 wooden cubes



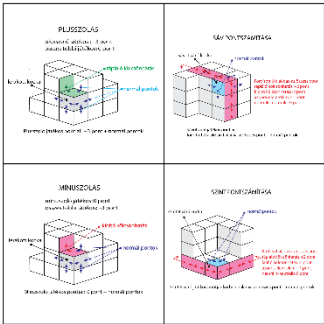
Double-sided game board



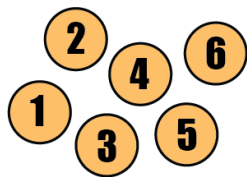
2 interaction marker boards



Five Chinese Elements board



Reference sheet



6 Player Markers



6 Element Markers



1 Round Marker

You will also need paper and a writing utensil for keeping score.

Setup

The game can be played by 2–6 players. At the beginning of the game, players must decide whether they want to build the smaller block (consisting of 27 cubes) or the larger block (consisting of 64 cubes), and the cubes must be distributed among the players accordingly. In certain cases, 1 additional cube must be used when starting the game.

For a $3 \times 3 \times 3$ (27-cube) block, the cubes allocated to each player are as follows:

Players (pcs)	Cubes (pcs)	Pre-placed cubes (pcs)	Additional pre-placed cubes (pcs)
2	13, 13	1	
3	9, 9, 9		1
4	6, 6, 6, 6	3	
5	5, 5, 5, 5, 5	2	
6	4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4	3	

For a $4 \times 4 \times 4$ (64-cube) block, the cubes allocated to each player are as follows:

Players (pcs)	Cubes (pcs)	Pre-placed cubes (pcs)	Additional pre-placed cubes (pcs)
2	32, 32		1
3	21, 21, 21	1	
4	16, 16, 16, 16		1
5	12, 12, 12, 12, 12	4	
6	10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10	4	

Example: If four players are playing a $3 \times 3 \times 3$ (27-cube) game, each player receives 6 cubes, and the **remaining** 3 cubes must be placed on the board at the start of the game. Using the player markers, three players are selected at random, and each of them may place a cube anywhere within the boundaries of the block.

Example: If four players are playing a $4 \times 4 \times 4$ (64-cube) game, each player receives 16 cubes, and one **additional cube** must be placed on the board at the beginning of the game. Using the player markers, one player is selected at random and may place the cube in any location within the boundaries of the block.

In games where **an additional cube must be placed at the beginning of the game**, one player will have one cube remaining in their hand at the end of the game. Since the starting player changes from round to round, it is only determined at the end of the game which player will still have a cube remaining. At the end of the game, that player may place their remaining cube anywhere and score any points gained from that placement, even if this final cube extends beyond the boundaries of the completed block.

Setup Steps

1. Distribute the appropriate number of cubes among the players.
2. Place the game board in the center of the playing area with the correct side facing up, depending on which block you wish to build (27-cube block or 64-cube block).
3. Place the 2 Interaction Marker Boards, the Five Chinese Elements Board, and the Reference Sheet next to each other in a location that is clearly visible to all players.
4. Randomly determine who will be Player 1, Player 2, Player 3, and so on by having each player draw a Player Marker. Sit around the game board in numerical order in either direction and place your Player Marker token in front of you.
5. Using the Player Markers, randomly determine which players may place the pre-positioned cubes or the additional cube at the beginning of the game. (Draw Player Markers one by one—Players 1, 2, ... up to the required number. The player(s) whose marker is drawn may place the cube(s).) The cube or cubes may be placed anywhere within the boundaries of the block.
6. If you are playing the “Game with Element Selection” variant (see later), each player chooses an Element Marker token and places it in front of themselves. (If the game is played with 6 players, the Neutral Element may also be selected.)

Game Overview and Terminology

Objective of the Game

The objective of the game is to collect the highest number of points by the time the 27-cube or 64-cube block has been completed. In both the 27-cube game and the 64-cube game, players **must remain within the boundaries** of a $3 \times 3 \times 3$ cube or a $4 \times 4 \times 4$ cube respectively. In other words, in both versions players are constructing one **large cube (block)**. Points are scored by placing cubes. If the motif (element) on **any visible side (edge)** of a placed cube meets an identical motif on another cube (e.g., Fire–Fire, Water–Water, Wood–Wood, etc.), the player who placed the cube receives **+1 point**. If two different motifs meet (e.g., Fire–Earth, Metal–Wood, etc.), the player receives either **+2 points** or **-2 points** depending on the relationship between the two elements. The interaction between two elements may be either a **Nurturing Interaction (+2 points)** or an **Overcoming Interaction (-2 points)**. **All visible touching sides (edges)** must always be examined, and the resulting points must be added together. (Points may also be earned in other ways; see later.)

The Cubes

Each of the six sides of every cube contains a motif (element). These are:



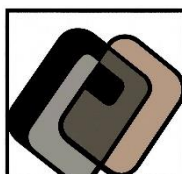
FIRE



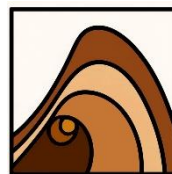
WATER



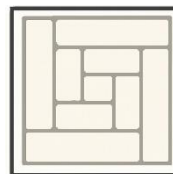
WOOD



METAL



EARTH



NEUTRAL

During the game, these elements must be matched with one another. As a general rule, a Neutral–Neutral element match is also worth **+1 point**. However, the Neutral element has no other interactions with the remaining elements. Therefore, when building the block, a Neutral–Fire, Neutral–Water, Neutral–Wood, Neutral–Metal, or Neutral–Earth match neither adds nor subtracts any points.

(See later for additional details.)

Element Interactions

Nurturing Interaction (+2 Points)

Fire nourishes Earth (Fire nourishes the Earth through its ashes.)

Earth nourishes Metal (The Earth contains the ores from which Metal is born.)

Metal nourishes Water (Metals and minerals nourish Water.)

Water nourishes Wood (Water nourishes plants, creating Wood.)

Wood nourishes Fire (Wood feeds Fire with its material.)

Overcoming Interaction (-2 Points)

Fire overcomes Metal (Fire melts Metal.)

Earth overcomes Water (The Earth absorbs Water.)

Metal overcomes Wood (Metal cuts Wood.)

Water overcomes Fire (Water extinguishes Fire.)

Wood overcomes Earth (The decay of Wood becomes Earth.)

Block Construction

Player 1 always begins the game. They place the Round Marker token in front of themselves to indicate that they are the starting player for the round. They place the first cube, followed by Player 2, and then the remaining players in order until every player has placed one cube. Cubes may not be fitted temporarily or tested in multiple locations. Players must decide where to place a cube while rotating it in their hands before placement. Once a cube has been placed, it must remain in that position and may not be taken back. Where the visible sides (edges) of the placed cube meet the visible sides (edges) of other cubes, the interactions must be examined. Each matching motif interaction scores **+1 point**, including a Neutral–Neutral motif match. Every other element-to-element interaction scores either **+2 points** or **-2 points** depending on the relationship between the two elements.

Points are awarded according **to the type of interaction** between the two elements. Every visible touching side (edge) of the placed cube must be taken into account. Construction may proceed in any direction—both vertically and horizontally—provided it remains within the boundaries of the block. Once every player has placed one cube, the round ends and the game pauses briefly. The player with the fewest points (in the case of a tie, the player who most recently reached the tied score) is **required** to perform either a **Plus Placement** or a **Minus Placement**. They must place a cube using a special placement method (see later). By placing this cube, that player becomes the **starting player** of the next round. They take the Round Marker token and place it in front of themselves. In that round, the remaining players take their turns after them in numerical order (Players 1–6) until everyone has placed a cube again. **It is important to maintain the correct turn order within each round throughout the game.**

Example: If six players are playing and **Player 3** has the fewest points at the end of a round, that player performs a **special placement**, either a Plus Placement or a Minus Placement, and scores the resulting points. The turn order then continues with **Player 4, Player 5, Player 6, Player 1, and Player 2**, completing the next round. At that point, it must once again be determined which player has the fewest points (in the case of a tie, the player who most recently reached the tied score). That player becomes the starting player of the following round and **must perform** a Plus Placement or Minus Placement using the special placement rules. The game continues until the block has been completed. The player with the highest score wins the game. (Tied scores are possible, both for first place and for any subsequent positions.)

Special Placement (Plus Placement / Minus Placement)

During a round, the player with the fewest points (in the case of a tie, the player who most recently reached the tied score) must perform either a Plus Placement or a Minus Placement by placing a cube. This is done as follows: The player must select one touching side (edge) on the cube to be placed and match it with a side of a cube already present in the growing block. Depending on the interaction between the two elements on that touching edge, the player either receives **+3 points** or receives **no points**. (For this procedure, two elements located on the same cube being placed may not be chosen.) **This selected touching side (edge) may not be counted again when calculating the total score.** All other sides of the placed cube that touch other cubes must be scored normally.

For different element-to-element matches, **+2 points** or **-2 points** are awarded according to the interaction involved. For identical element-to-element matches, **+1 point** is awarded. For Neutral–Neutral matches, **+1 point** is awarded.

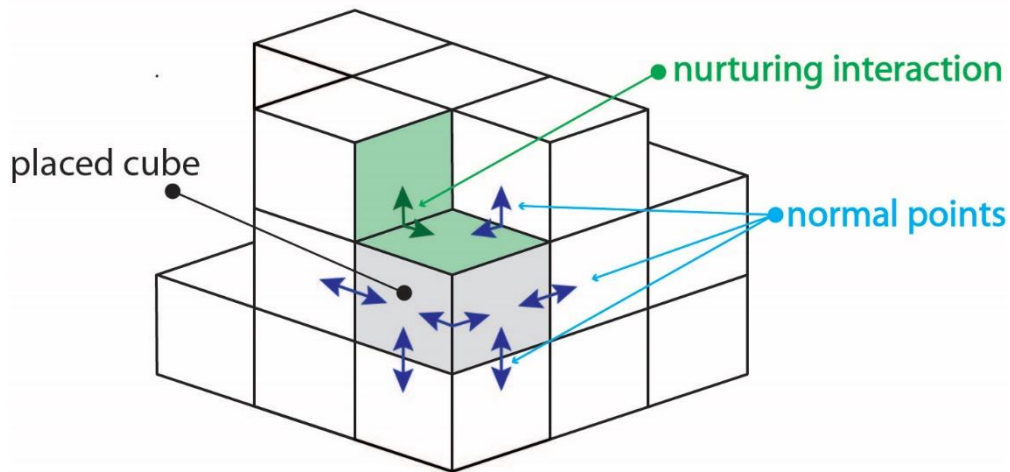
Plus Placement

If the player decides to perform a Plus Placement, they must find a position where they can bring together two elements (motifs) that **nourish** one another. The player places the cube, and in this case receives **+3 points** instead of +2 points. The other players **do not receive any points**. **All other sides (edges)** of the placed cube that come into contact with other cubes must be scored as in a normal placement.

PLUS PLACEMENT

plus-placement : +3 points

all other players: 0 points



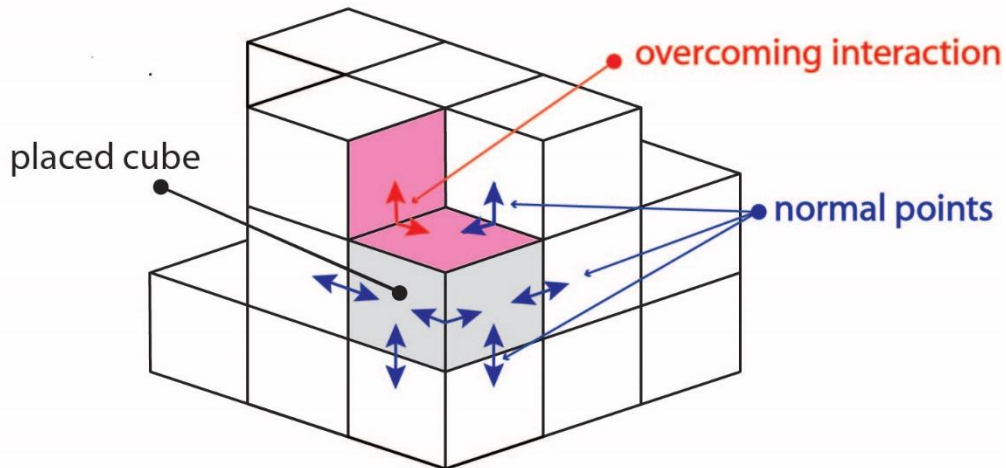
Plus-placement player: +3 points + normal points

Minus Placement

If the player decides to perform a Minus Placement, they must find a position where they can bring together two elements (motifs) that **overcome** one another. The player places the cube and, in this case, **does not receive** -2 points. Instead, their score remains unchanged, while **3 points must be deducted** from every other player. **All other sides (edges)** of the placed cube that come into contact with other cubes must be scored as in a normal placement.

MINUS PLACEMENT

minus-placement player: 0 points
all other players: -3 pont



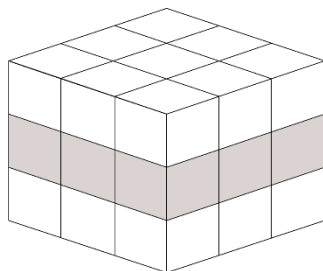
minus-placement player: 0 points + normal points

Closing Levels and Vertical Bands

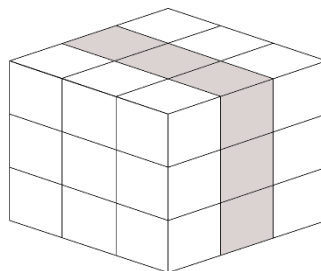
When a horizontal level or a vertical band of the block becomes completely filled, additional positive or negative points must be scored by the player who completes that level or band. **This also applies if the player completing the level or band is required to perform a Plus Placement or a Minus Placement during that turn. In such cases, the points are cumulative, and the player must calculate all points earned.** A **level** is considered completed when every cube is present on that horizontal level. In the $3 \times 3 \times 3$ (27-cube) game, a completed level contains **9 cubes**. In the $4 \times 4 \times 4$ (64-cube) game, a completed level contains **16 cubes**. (Therefore, if there is a "hole" inside the block, that level is not considered completed.) A **band** is considered completed when every cube is present within that vertical band. Therefore, in the $3 \times 3 \times 3$ (27-cube) game, a completed band contains **9 cubes**, while in the $4 \times 4 \times 4$ (64-cube) game, a completed band contains **16 cubes**. A special situation occurs when a single cube placement completes a band in two directions simultaneously. In this case, the two perpendicular bands together contain:

- **15 cubes** in the $3 \times 3 \times 3$ (27-cube) game
- **28 cubes** in the $4 \times 4 \times 4$ (64-cube) game

Care must be taken to score each point of contact only once. If a Plus Placement or Minus Placement is being performed, the selected "plus" or "minus" side (edge) must **not** be included in the completion scoring, since +3 points or 0 points have **already been awarded** for that interaction. The final cube of the block completes one level and two perpendicular bands. In this case, at the end of the game, the completed level and bands must not be scored. Only the touching sides (edges) of the final cube are scored as normal placement points.



LEVEL

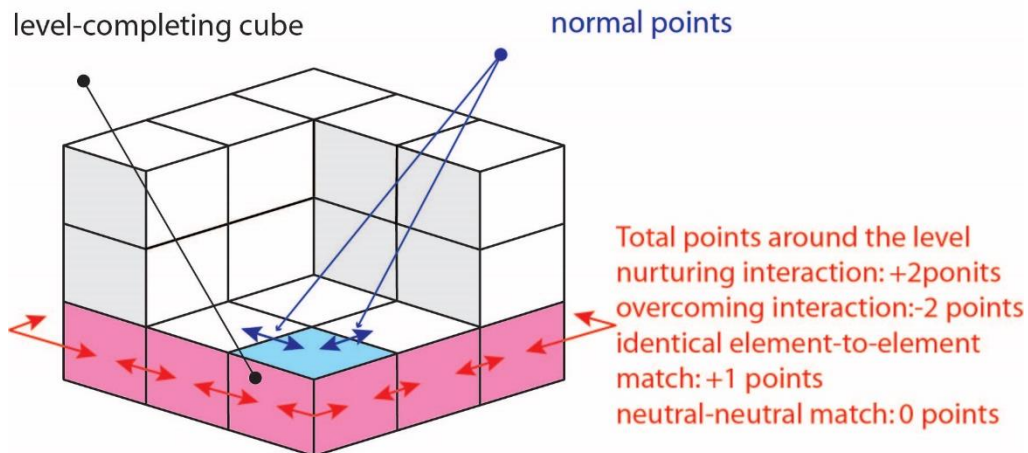


VERTICAL BAND

Scoring Levels and Vertical Bands

For **levels**, points are calculated by starting from a chosen corner and proceeding **horizontally** in one direction around the completed **level** of the block. As you move around the level, **the points are added together** by taking into account the interactions between all adjacent elements (motifs). Each Nurturing Interaction is worth **+2 points**. Each Overcoming Interaction is worth **-2 points**. All other identical element-to-element matches are worth **+1 point**. **The motifs located on the corners of a single cube also count when calculating the score.** All touching sides (edges) of the cube that completes the level must be scored as in a normal placement, including those that do not lie within the plane of the completed level. Neutral motifs located within the plane of the completed level **have no effect** during level scoring. Therefore, adjacent Neutral–Neutral motif matches within the plane of the level **do not score** any points. Only Neutral–Neutral matches **outside** the plane of the completed level are worth **+1 point**.

LEVEL SCORING

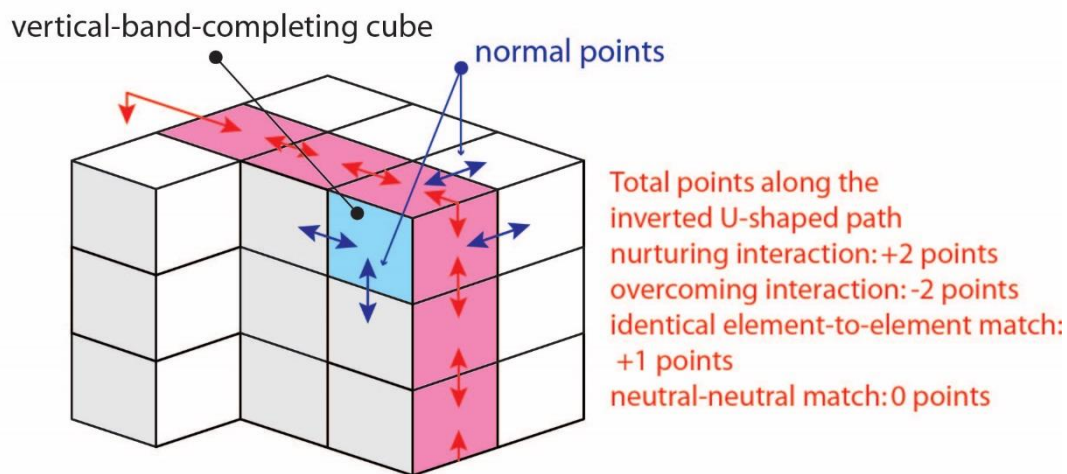


level-completing player's score: total points around the level + normal points

Vertical Band Scoring

The scoring of completed **Vertical Bands** is calculated in a similar manner. Starting from the bottom of the block, move **vertically** upward along the completed Vertical Band and add together all interactions shown on the cubes, including the interactions formed by the motifs located on the corners of each cube. Scoring is as follows: Nurturing Interaction: **+2 points** Overcoming Interaction: **-2 points** Identical Element-to-Element Match: **+1 point** The difference is that the hidden underside of the block cannot be taken into account. Therefore, the scoring path follows only an **inverted U-shaped band**. All touching sides (edges) of the cube that completes the Vertical Band must also be scored as in a normal placement. Neutral-Neutral element matches that lie within the plane of the Vertical Band **do not score** any points. However, Neutral-Neutral element matches that occur outside the plane of the Vertical Band are worth **+1 point**.

VERTICAL BAND SCORING



Vertical band completing player's score:
total points along the inverted U-shaped path + normal points

Strategy

There are situations in which it is advantageous to complete a Level or a Vertical Band, and situations in which it is better to avoid doing so. For example, if it is already apparent that a particular Level or Vertical Band contains a large number of positive points, players will attempt to be the one who completes it and claims those points. Likewise, if a player has the fewest points during a round and must perform a Plus Placement or a Minus Placement, while also being able to complete a Level or a Vertical Band, they may be able to catch up with the other players by scoring a significant number of points, or even take the lead.

Game with Element Selection

Both the $3 \times 3 \times 3$ (27-cube) game and the $4 \times 4 \times 4$ (64-cube) game may be played using this variant. In this version, the rules are modified as follows: At the beginning of the game, each player chooses one element (Fire, Water, Wood, Metal, Earth, and in a 6-player game, Neutral) and retains ownership of that element until the end of the game. At the start of the game, each player places their chosen Element Marker token in front of themselves next to their allocated cubes and Player Marker token. The scoring rules remain the same, with one exception: Whenever a player's chosen element matches an identical element, the player scores **+3 points** instead of +1 point. Element-to-element matches involving a player's chosen element do not score additional points when calculating completed Levels or Vertical Bands. The +3-point bonus only applies to the other sides (edges) of the completing cube that do not belong to those scoring planes.



Element Marker Tokens

Notes and Suggestions

Scorekeeping

It is recommended that scores be recorded by writing the player numbers next to one another and recording their scores vertically underneath. At the end of each round, when it has been determined which player has the fewest points, that score should be circled. Depending on whether the player performs a Plus Placement or a Minus Placement, either 3 points are added to the score or the score remains unchanged. This result should immediately be written below the circled score. Next, record the points earned by the other players from normal scoring. Only after that should the remaining points of the Plus-Placement or Minus-Placement player be calculated. These additional points may come from:

- Normal scoring
- Completing a Level
- Completing a Vertical Band

This total should then be written below the Plus-Placement or Minus-Placement player's score. This method makes it easy to determine who will be the starting player in the next round.

Example: 4 Players

1

1	2	3	4	players
4	4	3	4	first round

Player 1 scored +4 points
 Player 2 scored +4 points
 Player 3 scored +3 points
 Player 4 scored +4 points

2

1	2	3	4	players
4	4	3	4	first round
		6		

Player 3 scored the fewest points
 and decides to **Plus Placement**.
 They receive +3 points.

3

1	2	3	4	players
4	4	3	4	first round
4	4	6	4	

The other players
 receive no points.

4

1	2	3	4	players
4	4	3	4	first round
4	4	6	4	
		10		second round

Player 3 scored an additional +4 points
 from the remaining sides of the cube.
 The next players in order are:
 Player 4, Player 1, Player 2.

5

1	2	3	4	players
4	4	3	4	first round
4	4	6	4	
9	7	10	9	second round

Player 4 scored +5 points
 Player 1 scored +5 points
 Player 2 scored +3 points

6

1	2	3	4	players
4	4	3	4	first round
4	4	6	4	
9	7	10	9	second round
	7			

In the second round, Player 2
 has the fewest points and
 decides to **Minus Placement**.
 Therefore, they receive 0 points.

7

1	2	3	4	players
4	4	3	4	first round
4	4	6	4	
9	7	10	9	second round
6	7	7	6	

However, 3 points must be
 deducted from all other players.

8

1	2	3	4	players
4	4	3	4	first round
4	4	6	4	
9	7	10	9	second round
6	7	7	6	
	11			third round

In addition to **Minus Placement**, Player 2 scored +4 points
 from the remaining sides of the cube.
 The next players in order are:
 Player 3, Player 4, Player 1.

Cube Arrangement

It is recommended that each player keep their cubes neatly arranged in a consistent manner in front of themselves. This also helps make it clear which player is next to take their turn.

Tournament Play

If the players have more time available, a tournament may also be organized. For example, six players begin a game and the player who finishes in last place is eliminated. After that, a five-player game is played, and so on until the final winner is determined.

Cube Placement

A cube may be placed anywhere within the boundaries of the block. As a result, situations may arise where a cube must be placed in a location that is difficult to reach. In such cases, do not drop the cube into the structure.

Pay attention to the stability of the block, carefully separate the cubes if necessary, and after placing the cube, gently move the cubes back into their proper positions.

(The best positions can also be found by carefully rotating the game board. However, it is often better to stand up and walk around the block. A little movement during the game never hurts 😊 .)





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