

Appendix

Here you will find the rules to *So Long Sucker*, the treacherous game designed in the 1950s by the game theorists Mel Hausner, John Forbes Nash, Lloyd Shapely, and Martin Shubik. Negotiation and agreements are key to winning *So Long Sucker*, but betrayal is also an implicit necessity. I provide the rules here in case you're tempted to evaluate the experience of playing treacherously for yourself. Caution is recommended before playing with spouses or coworkers.

"SO LONG SUCKER"—A FOUR-PERSON GAME

M. Hausner, J. Nash, L. Shapley, and M. Shubik

This parlor game has little structure and depends almost completely on the bargaining ability and the persuasiveness of the players. In order to win, it is necessary to enter into a series of temporary unenforceable conditions. This, however, is usually not sufficient; at some point it may be to the advantage of a player to renege on his agreement. The four authors still occasionally talk to each other.

First published in M. Hausner, J. Nash, L. Shapley, and M. Shubik, "So Long Sucker"—a Four-Person Game," in *Game Theory and Related Approaches to Social Behavior*, ed. Martin Shubik (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), 359–361.

Rules

1. A four-person game.
2. Each player starts with 7 *chips* (playing cards, or other markers may be used instead), distinguishable by their color from the chips of any other player. As the game proceeds, players will gain possession of chips of other colors. The player must keep their holdings in view at all times. For a longer game, more chips may be used. If the game is attempted with more than four players, then the number of chips per player should be reduced.
3. The player to make the first move is decided by chance.
4. A *move* is made by placing a chip of any color out onto the playing area, or on top of any chip or pile of chips already in the playing area.
5. The *order of play*, except when a capture has just been made or a player has just been defeated (Rules 6 and 9), is decided by the last player to have moved. He may give the move to any player (including himself) whose color is not represented in the pile just played on. But if all players are represented in that pile, then he must give the move to the player whose most-recently-played chip is furthest down in the pile.
6. A *capture* is accomplished by playing two chips of the same color consecutively on one pile. The player designated by that color must kill one chip, of his choice, out of the pile, and then take in the rest. He then gets the next move.
7. A *kill* of a chip is effected by placing it in the "dead box."

8. A *prisoner* is a chip of a color other than that of the player who holds it. A player may at any time during the game kill any prisoner in his possession, or *transfer* it to another player. Such transfers are unconditional, and cannot be retracted. A player may not transfer chips of his own color, nor kill them, except out of a captured pile.

9. *Defeat* of a player takes place when he is given the move, and is unable to play through having no chips in his possession. However, his defeat is not final until every player holding prisoners has declared his refusal to come to the rescue by means of transfer (Rule 8). Upon defeat, a player withdraws from the game, and the move *rebounds* to the player who gave him the move. (If the latter is thereby defeated, the move goes to the player who gave *him* the move, etc.)

10. The chips of a defeated player remain in play as prisoners, but are ignored in determining the order of play (Rule 5). If a pile is captured by the chips of a defeated player, the entire pile is killed, and the move rebounds as in Rule 9.

11. The *winner* is the player surviving after all others have been defeated. Note that a player can win even if he holds no chips and even if all chips of his color have been killed.

12. *Coalitions*, or agreements to cooperate, are permitted, and may take any form. However, the rules provide no penalty for failure to live up to an agreement. Open discussion is not restricted, but players are not allowed to confer away from the table during the game, or make agreements before the start of the game.

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By: Marcus Carter

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