

Game Analysis – Carrom

Culture:

Carrom is a game that is probably of Indian descent and it is played most often in the Middle East and eastern parts of the world. It was described to me by a friend from Sri Lanka. It is a game that children are taught when they are young and that most grown people in Sri Lanka know how to play. Like billiards in the United States, it is a leisure game. There are also many different variations of the game for different areas of the world including Denmark, Mexico, the United States, and Australia. In these areas, Carrom is much more competitive than in Sri Lanka where it is played mostly for fun.

The game's audience is anyone who knows the rules of the game. As previously stated, it is taught to children at a young age and played by both children and adults. In the variations played around the world, the game is primarily played by adults.

Play:

Carrom can be played like tennis, with singles or doubles. In singles, the two opponents sit across from each other on opposite sides of the carrom board. In doubles, four people play and they each sit on one of the four sides of the carrom board. The players tend to sit on the stools and the board is located on a stand so that the players can reach it. When one person is taking his or her turn, the other players cannot touch the board. Each player plays the game with their hands. There is also an umpire that watches over the game and determines who starts.

Emotions can run high while playing this game, but for the most part it is just for fun. Emotions tend to get high when it is being played professionally or even by children who do not like the idea of losing. Some children also find it frustrating because they cannot propel the striker to move as far as they want it to move. This is because the striker is large.

Rules:

Equipment

The carrom board is usually made out of wood and is in the shape of a square. The square is usually 29 inches along the diagonal and it has four pockets, one in each corner. The edges of the board are bounded by wooden bumpers. The bottom of the board has a net. Instead of using balls like in billiards, carrom uses disks. The object of the game is to hit one large disk (the striker) with your finger and cause it to hit another smaller disk (carroman) that will enter one of the 4 corner pockets. The disks then fall into the net that is attached to the bottom on the board.

The smaller disks, carromen, are made of wood or plastic and are positioned flat on the surface of the board. They move smoothly across the board. They are arranged in

a circle on the board. They come in two colors to differentiate the two players or two teams. Those colors are black and white. The person who plays first, also known as the breaker, plays with the white carromen. There are nine black carromen and nine white carromen. There is also one red carroman and it is called the queen. The queen is the most powerful piece on the board and it is located in the middle of the circle of carromen. Players can attempt to pocket the queen once they have already pocketed at least one of their white or black carromen. Pocketing the queen adds five points to your score. The larger disk is the Striker. This disk is flicked by the players' fingers so that it can hit one of the carromen and put it into a pocket. It acts very much like a cue ball in the game of pool or billiards. It is also made of wood or plastic, is smooth, and is positioned flat on the surface of the board.

Powder is sprinkled on the board to help the pieces move more smoothly. The powder is similar to the powder used on a shuffleboard.

Definitions

Breaker – Person who starts the game. This person strikes the Striker first is the breaker.

Carromen – The pieces that move on the board. The white carromen belong to the breaker and the black carromen belong to the opponent. Each pocketed carroman is worth one point.

Striker – The disk that is flicked by the players to hit other carromen in an attempt to pocket them. The striker cannot be pushed.

Queen – The red carroman and the most important piece on the board. It is worth five points to whoever pockets it. This must be pocketed before the a player tries to pocket his or her last carroman.

Toss – This is how the breaker is determined. The umpire holds one white carroman in one of his hands and a black carroman in the other. He hold these hand behind his back and the players must then guess which had is holding which color carroman. The person or team who guesses correctly wins the toss. The winner of the toss can choose to go first or can request that the opponent go first.

Shooting/Striking – The act of flicking the striker so that it hits another carroman on the board.

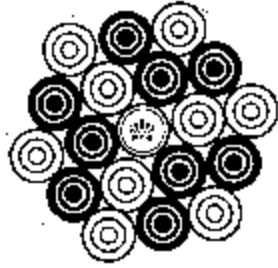
Pocket – The act of someone's carroman going into one of the 4 corner pockets of the carrom board.

Overboard – If a persons carroman or queen jumps over the bumpers on the end of the board. The umpire then places this piece in the center of the board.

Umpire – The person who watches over game play, starts the game, and declares a winner.

Goal-Oriented Rules

1) Arrange the pieces on the board as so:



with white being the white carromen and black being the black carromen. The middle piece is the red queen.

- 2) The toss occurs, the breaker is chosen. Then the umpire says PLAY.
- 3) The breaker starts by shooting the striker at the cluster of carromen. If the striker does not hit any of the carromen, then the breaker loses his or her turn and the opponent tries.
- 4) If a player pockets at least one of his or her carromen or the queen, then his or her turn continues. If not, then it becomes the opponents turn.
- 5) If a carroman is pocketed, the player receives a point. If a player pockets the queen, then that player gets 5 points.
- 6) Once someone has pocketed all of their carromen, the umpire then counts up the points of each player and the player with the most points is declared the winner of that match.
- 7) Three matches are played and winner is determined in the best of those three matches.

Boundary Rules

- 1) After the umpire says PLAY, the breaker must act within 15 seconds. If he or she does not, then they must forfeit their turn.
- 2) When it is a player's turn, that player can take no longer than 15 seconds to shoot the striker the turn is forfeited.
- 3) If the player accidentally pockets the striker, he or she must forfeit their turn.
- 4) If any piece goes overboard, the umpire must place it in the middle of the board.
- 5) The queen can only be pocketed after at least one black or white carroman has been pocketed.
- 6) A player's last carroman can only be pocketed if the queen has already been pocketed. If the queen is still on the board, then he or she must attempt to pocket it first.

7) After each match, the players must switch locations sitting on either side of the board. They cannot take more than two minutes to switch sides.

Critique:

The boundary rules of this game are very similar to the boundary rules of billiards or pool. The difference is the presence of the umpire and the time constraints. In this way, carrom is better organized. The only hole that I have found is what happens if you accidentally pocket your opponent's carroman? Is there a penalty involved? Or does a point go to your opponent?

One way to effectively play this game is to try to block your opponent from trying to get their carromen in the corner pockets. Another thing is if your opponent only has one carroman left, but the queen is still on the board, you can try to move the queen far from the corner pockets so that your opponent cannot end the match.

The game is sort of like a race game in that you want to get your carromen in the pockets before your opponent. The game is meaningful for this reason. It is also meaningful because it is used to entertain. More than anything, this is a game for the purpose of leisure and fun. At the same time, there are strategies that many people have come up with to make the game more competitive.

In the areas where it is well known, carrom is an everyday game played by everyone. My friend from Sri Lanka equated it to UNO in the United States. Though it is very similar to pool, pool in the United States is mostly played by adults. There is an International Carrom Federation and they are doing what they can to spread the game of carrom around the world. As a result of their work, there are many different versions of carrom being played worldwide. In other parts of the world, it is like pool in that it is mostly played by adults.