TORA

Short Board Quick Rules
US Patent: US 7,182,341B2 and US 7,287,754B2 Canada and Australia Pending
Kevin Conner

The short board of TORA is played on a 9x9 unit grid. This can mean either a graph board (where the pieces are placed on the intersecting lines), or a checker board (where the pieces are placed on the individual squares). Just as long as the grid area is 9 x 9.

Jeopardy and Victory

Jeopardy is defined as a position in which the opponent can take the piece immediately on the next turn. However, a player is never forced to move their General out of Jeopardy (though it may easily mean the end of the game).
A General may not willfully be placed in Jeopardy unless the only piece placing the General in Jeopardy is the other player's General, and the other player's General is taken in the same round. Any other (standard) piece may be considered to be in Jeopardy for notation purposes only, as they are unaffected and unrestricted by Jeopardy rules.
Victory occurs when the opponent's General is killed or the opponent resigns because they can't move. The only time a tie occurs is when both players' Generals are defeated in the same round.

Turns and Rounds

There are two turns per round.
The Challenging Player takes the first turn in a round, and is considered the aggressor in the game.
The Opposing Player takes the second turn in a round, and is considered the defender in the game.

Otherwise, the play is more or less considered simultaneous. While normal pieces (Soldiers, Archers, the Cannon), are removed from the board immediately upon being taken, the General pieces aren't removed from the board until after both players have taken their turn in that round. A player's turn ends when they say it ends (within reason. i.e. time, or if loss is clear), even if they remove their fingers from the piece. Any player is allowed to move a piece back where it was originally placed.

Movement

If a piece moves it must move before attacking. Example: It is my turn. I have two actions. I use my first action to move my Archer 1 space, then fire 1 adjacent space, killing my opponent's Soldier which was blocking my Soldier. I take my opponent's Soldier off the board. I then use my second action to move my Soldier into the same space previously occupied by the Soldier I just killed.

Taking a Piece

Any piece "Attacked" by an opponent's piece, this includes those landed upon, is removed from the board. A standard piece (Archer, Soldier, Cannon) is removed immediately, while the command piece (General) is removed at the end of the round (after both players have taken their turn).

Optional Writing Notation

For notation purposes, the Challenger sits on the side of the board, where the unit grid area on his or her right is Vertical 1 x Horizontal 1, the Opposition sits with v.9, h.9 on his/her right. When writing notation, the abbreviation for the unit being moved always precedes the notation. Archer Vertical 1 x Horizontal 1 to Archer Vertical 2 x Horizontal 2. Short hand is written thus: A. v.1, h.1, to A. v.2, h.2.

Pieces

General (Command Piece) x 1

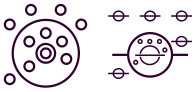
This is the most important piece for each player. It grants each player two actions to use with any two pieces. 1 action allows the player to use any of their pieces on the board to their fullest abilities. i.e. A player may use 1 action to move a Soldier 1 space, or move an Archer 1 space and fire 1 adjacent space, or move a General 2 spaces, etc... When a player loses their General in a short board game they lose the game (or tie if both players lose their General during the same round). A player is never forced to use any or all of their actions, but it is inadvisable to pass.
A General may move up to 2 spaces in any direction, and fire (attack an opponent's piece) up to 1 adjacent space in any direction. Yes, this means that a General may move diagonal one space then forward one space. A General may land on an enemy unit to kill it.

The following pieces are part of the standard army.

Archers x 3

An Archer may move up to 2 spaces in any direction, or move 1 space in any direction and attack 1 space in any direction, or attack up to 2 spaces in any direction (yes this means they could attack a piece that is 1 space forward and 1 space adjacent). An Archer may only attack 1 piece in any given turn. An Archer may land on an enemy unit in order to kill it.

Soldiers x 2



This graphic is a Soldier in attack position (left) and defense position (right). You could also just flip the piece upside down. A Soldier may use one action to either: switch from attack to defense position, or switch from defense position to attack position, or move 1 space if in attack position. A soldier can switch from defense mode to attack mode and then attack or vice versa in the same turn (as long as you use two actions).
Defense Position rules: A Soldier in defense position automatically blocks any "arrows" fired by any Archer or General over the Soldier. The Soldier cannot "block" attacks by Archers or a General unless the attack goes "over" the same space as the defending Soldier. Any soldier which blocks such an attack is killed instead.

Cannon x 1

Each player has one Cannon. The Cannon must have 2 friendly pieces in adjacent spaces in order to be fired or to be moved. The Cannon can be moved outside of range of 2 friendly pieces, but for it to be moved or used again, the pieces must move within 1 space of the Cannon. Two friendly adjacent pieces can move the Cannon 1 space in any direction that is not occupied by an enemy unit.
Two friendly adjacent pieces may attack with the Cannon. A Cannon that attacks is flipped upside down and is considered "unready". This piece cannot be moved or fired when unready. It takes 1 action to ready a Cannon, and it may be readied/un-readied in the same turn (as long as you have the number of actions necessary). This piece can only be readied if there are two friendly adjacent pieces.
When a Cannon fires it shoots in a straight line until it reaches the end of a board or hits a piece. This straight line can be vertical, diagonal or horizontal as a compass (N-NE-E-SE-S-SW-W-NW-N).
A Cannon can only kill 1 piece at a time, and it cannot kill friendly pieces. Any piece in the way of its attack is removed. The player using this piece chooses what direction it fires.
Cannons can only be removed from the board/destroyed, they cannot be captured and used by enemy forces. Friendly pieces used to fire/move/ready a Cannon cannot be used for any other actions.

Board Placement

These following graphics demonstrate board placement allowed for terrain, and player units. Graphic 1 demonstrates piece placement for both Attack and Defense strategies. Neither player is forced to play Attack or Defense. For example, both players may wish to play with the Attack setup strategy. Or they may both wish to play Defense setup strategy. Or a Challenger may wish to play the Attack setup, while the Opposition plays Defense setup. For purposes of demonstration, Graphic 1 has the Challenger playing Defensive setup and Opposition playing Attack setup.

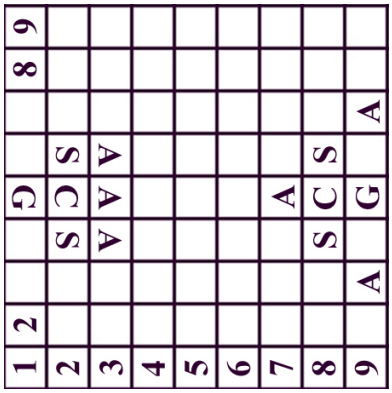
Graphics 2 and 3 shows Optional Terrain Setup (blue=water green=forest). If using terrain remember this:

* Any piece passing through a space marked as “water”, has its movement reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1). Cannons must have 3 adjacent pieces to move it forward, rather than just 2. Since each piece has a minimum movement of 1, an Archer can move 1 space through water and shoot 1 space in either direction. They are not forced to use their entire ability as movement.

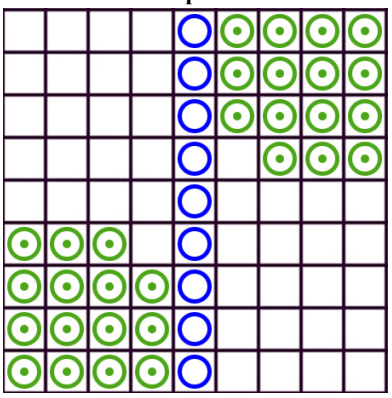
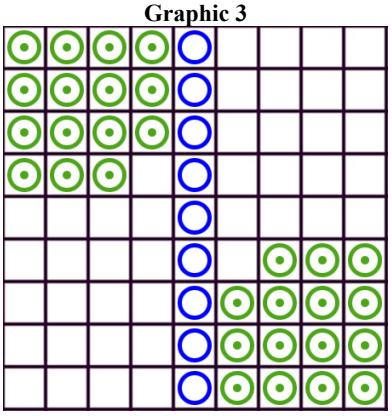
* An Archer firing into a space marked as a “forest” (or “tree”), is reduced to 1 space in its attack distance. Cannons have no such limitation.

If an archer is at the edge of a “tree/forest” location, and is firing away from a “forest/tree” location, the Archer can fire two spaces. But, if the same archer is firing into a space marked as a “tree”, then the archer can only fire to one adjacent location rather than 2.

Graphic 1



Graphic 2



Graphic 3