

Polarity™

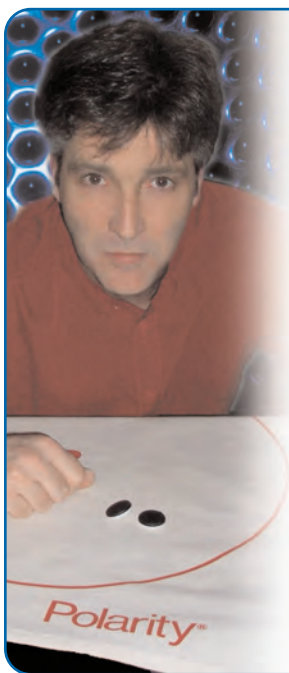


Strategy Guide



TEMPLE GAMES
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While painting magnets for a display sign on the floor of my studio, I happened to witness the balancing act that occurs when magnets are laid flat and brought close together. In a moment of clarity, the game and rules came to me; it just made sense.

The rules took three minutes to explain and six months to write. They were a challenge to document because one can never play the same game twice. I had to explain a series of judgment calls based on what could happen during the game, and at the same time teach a physical skill.

Polarity began as sculpture...the “game” arose from the physical challenges inherent in placing the discs.

—Douglas Seaton

POLARITY STRATEGY GUIDE

This guide is aimed at making you a better Polarity player, giving you illustrated examples of maneuvers, as well as tips and answers to frequently asked questions.

Basic Terms

The following are important terms that you will see throughout this guide. It's important to learn these terms as they are critical to game play.

Action Disc: the disc in hand being brought into play with the active player's color face up. You may only bring the Action Disc into the play area with your own color upward and may only play it on discs or Towers with your own color upward.

Capture: the method of gaining points. When discs attract together in groups of two or more, the opponent of the player that caused the action picks up the discs and places them as a Tower.

Conversion: the act of turning a Leaner into a Foundation Disc.

Fault: any secondary reaction or movement of discs or Towers in play that results in discs contacting each other, falling flat on the play mat, being forced or pulled out of bounds, or flat-lying discs moving more than their diameter.

Foundation Disc: one of the five discs that is played at the very beginning of a game OR a Leaner that has been forced down (either accidentally or on purpose) during game play.

Leaner (aka Standing Disc): a disc that is successfully placed into play by leaning the Action Disc against another disc of your own color.

Towers: stacks of two or more discs. At the end of a game Towers give you points. The player with the most total discs in Towers—less the number of pieces left in his or her hand—wins the game.

Turn: Your turn begins when your hand crosses into the circle. During your turn you may either successfully play an Action Disc, or cause a Fault. It is important to remember that your turn is not complete until your opponent begins their turn. That is, even after you have successfully placed a disc on the board or have caused an accidental or deliberate Fault and removed your hand from the playing area (your hand passing back outside of the circle), it is still technically your turn until your opponent begins their turn by crossing the circle with his/her hand. If during your turn—even after you have removed your hand from inside the circle—a Fault seems to spontaneously occur, it occurs during your turn and you must act accordingly.

Things to Remember

Because Polarity utilizes strong magnetic forces, there are a few important points to be mindful of before you play the game:

1. Polarity should be played on a non-magnetic surface. The best play surface is one which is solid and perfectly level and flat. A surface that allows both players to freely move around all 360 degrees of the board is also preferable.
2. If you are wearing a watch or any jewelry that might be damaged by magnetism, remove them.
3. Only hold one magnet at a time in your hand, as the magnetic forces of other magnets will greatly affect other pieces on the board.
4. Loose clothing and dangling sleeves can touch discs and cause accidental Faults.
5. Practice, practice, practice. Soon you'll find that you're a Polarity master!
6. For fun, play Polarity in public. You'll be amazed at how many people will stop to watch a complete game, or ask you where they can get a set.

Choosing a Color

The player that wins the toss can choose to play white to go first or black to react to what their opponent does. The winner of the toss can also gain a slight advantage by choosing the color (magnetic pole) that matches the toss so that his or her discs and the red disc repel.

Placing a Leaner

Leaners are one of the most basic aspects of the game, yet one that many players have problems with at first. The image to the right shows a successfully placed Leaner.

NOTE: *If you attempt to place a Leaner and the disc falls flat on the play mat, simply pick it up and keep trying until you are successful.*



Strategy Tip!

Eventually, you may want to convert Leaners into Foundation Discs. The higher the angle of the Leaner, the more difficult it will be to convert. A low-Leaner makes for an easy Conversion, but a steep-Leaner is a more unstable trap—for you and your opponent. As you advance in skill and become more adept at different placements, pay attention to the outcome of those placements.

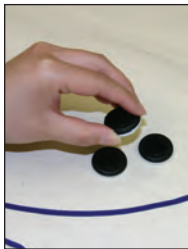
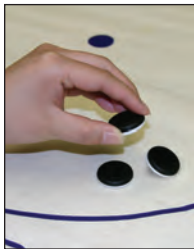
Introduction to Faults—Converting a Leaner to a Foundation

Remember, Faults are a BIG part of game play. Faults can be deliberate or accidental. Faults can be used to build more play area and interfere with your opponents. As you play Polarity more and more, you will discover subtle Fault moves that give your play a big strategic boost. For now, let's focus on a key move using a deliberate Fault.

Successful Conversion

During play you may wish to convert Leaners into Foundation Discs. Leaners are converted in order to either gain additional Foundation Discs upon which you can play more Leaners or to force your discs toward an opponent's discs—in order to disrupt his or her play. Practice makes perfect for this move! It's never a bad idea to practice conversions outside of regular game play so that you can do this move with ease during a real game.

With the Action Disc, carefully approach your Leaner from above, being careful not to disrupt the magnetic fields of any other pieces in play.



NOTE: *If you attempt to convert a Leaner and cause a black OR white disc to lie flat (thus converting to a Foundation Disc), immediately remove your hand from the play area. Your turn is now over.*

NOTE: *While it is possible to convert more than one Leaner at a time, just be sure that you do so in*

a single move. In other words, you cannot convert a Leaner and then bounce your hand down again to convert another Leaner. The conversion of two or more Leaners must happen simultaneously.

Accidents Happen—Unintentional Faults

Accidental Faults occur throughout the game and can instantly shift the balance of power. All Faults, even deliberate ones, are governed by important rules.

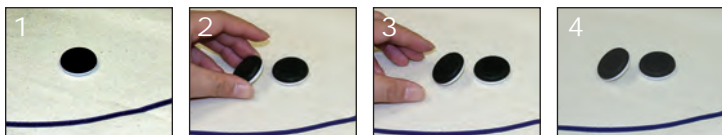
NOTE: *Your turn is not complete until your opponent begins their turn. That is, even after you have successfully placed a disc on the board or have caused an accidental or deliberate Fault and removed your hand from the playing area (your hand passing back outside of the circle), it is still technically your turn until your opponent begins his or her turn by crossing the line of the circle with his or her hand.*

Game Play Scenarios: An Illustrated Guide to Additional Rules

Primary Action example: creating a Leaner

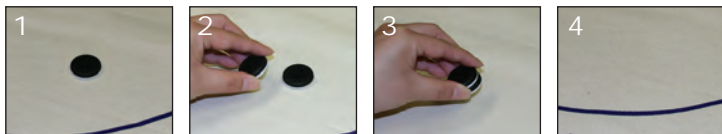
- Situation:** A single black Foundation Disc is already on the playing mat.
- Attempt:** The Action Disc is brought in low to the point at which the magnets are felt to repel.
- Reaction:** The Action Disc is raised and balanced on the edge of the magnetic field of the Foundation Disc.
- Result:** The Action Disc was balanced successfully, now Leaning. Turn completed.

NOTE: Discs may only be played one at a time. A turn is not complete unless the disc is balanced and left Leaning. Discs can balance on Towers or even other Leaners using a similar technique. Balancing a Leaner on another Leaner is very difficult and should only be attempted after you are comfortable with the fundamentals of the game.



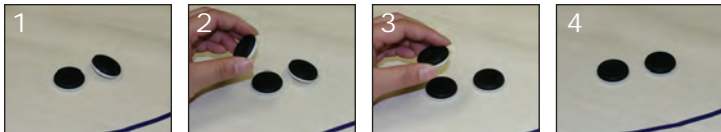
Primary Action attempt gone wrong, causing an accidental Fault

- Situation:** A single black Foundation Disc is already on the playing mat.
- Attempt:** The Action Disc is brought in to attempt to create a Leaner.
- Reaction:** The Action Disc was placed too close to the Foundation Disc, and the Foundation Disc jumps up and connects with the Action Disc.
- Result:** Both the Action Disc and the Foundation Disc are returned to the player's hand. Turn completed.



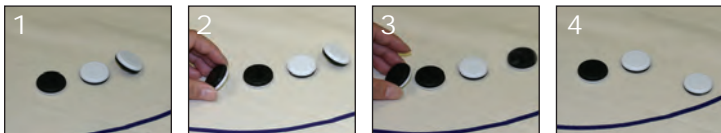
Key Strategic Move: Expanding, building and growing your territory—A deliberate Fault, converting a Leaner to a Foundation Disc

- 1. Situation:** Two black discs (one Foundation Disc and one Leaner from a previous turn) are left on the playing mat.
- 2. Attempt:** The Action Disc is brought into play high above the Foundation Disc.
- 3. Reaction:** With a gentle up and down motion—using the magnetic force of the Action Disc as a tool—the Leaner is forced to fall flat to the mat and become another Foundation Disc.
- 4. Result:** The Action Disc is returned to your pile of discs to be replayed. The advantage is that you now have two Foundation Discs from which to build. Causing a disc in play to drop from a Leaning state (a Fault) without touching another disc constitutes the turn.



Fault—A scenario which does not involve contact between discs

- 1. Situation:** One black Foundation Disc, two white discs: one standing, one flat.
- 2. Attempt:** The Action Disc is brought into play to attempt to create a Leaner.
- 3. Reaction:** Black causes a previously Leaning white disc to flip over exposing the black surface. This disruption of the field completes Black's turn and the Action Disc is returned to the pile of discs to be played.
- 4. Result:** Black may not take the advantage (nor may White be penalized) for this mistaken play. White captures the fallen disc by picking it up, turning it over to expose the white side, and returning it anywhere on the playing mat, white side up. If the suspended white disc fell exposing white (and not black as shown in photo 3), then it would remain in play where it lays.

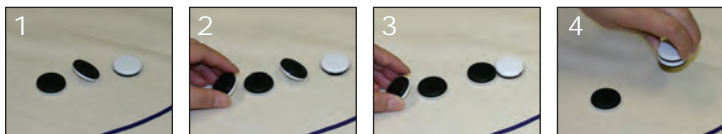


NOTE: If a Fault occurs while White is attempting to capture the disc, then that player's turn immediately ends. The disc that White was attempting to capture is returned to White's pile of unplayed discs. Black now takes his or her turn. Also see the "Unsuccessful Capture" section below.

Fault—An accidental connection of discs

- 1. Situation:** There are three discs on the playing mat: one white Foundation Disc, one black Foundation Disc and one black Leaner between the other two Foundation Discs.
- 2. Attempt:** The Action Disc is brought into play trying to become a Leaner off of the black Foundation Disc on the opposite side of the other Leaner.
- 3. Reaction:** The previously Leaning black disc is forced over and connects with the white Foundation Disc.
- 4. Result:** The fault (disruption of a previously balanced disc) completes Black's turn. The Action Disc is removed from the mat and returned to Black's unplayed stack. White must now attempt to capture.

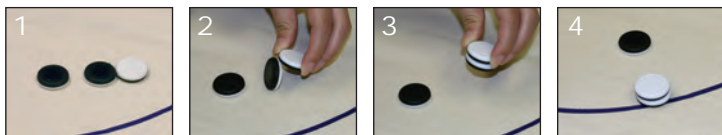
NOTE: As a result of an attempted play, all discs that have collided and connected are now involved in a capture (a stacking/scoring attempt).



Successful Capture—Building points

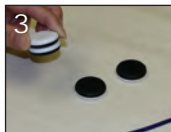
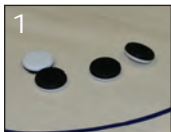
- 1. Situation:** A black disc has forced contact between two discs.
- 2. Attempt:** White must attempt to capture any discs contacting other discs. These can be Foundation Discs and/or Towers.
- 3. Reaction:** Lifting the one disc straight up off the mat makes the other disc touching it snap underneath.
- 4. Result:** White returns the newly formed Tower anywhere on the mat, white side up, to establish two points. Once this Tower has been successfully captured, the player that captured the Tower now takes a normal turn and may convert a disc, place a Leaner, or play an offensive move.

NOTE: Any stacks formed by Black's attempted play that land white-side up may be declared captured without moving them.



Unsuccessful Capture—No points are scored and the turn is lost

- 1. Situation:** A black Foundation Disc that was already in play on the mat accidentally made contact with a white Foundation Disc.
- 2. Attempt:** White must attempt to capture the contacting discs.
- 3. Reaction:** While White is capturing the discs, White has caused a Leaner to drop to the mat, which becomes a Foundation Disc.
- 4. Result:** The disc that White caused to fall to the mat and became a Foundation Disc ends the capture attempt. The discs in hand (those that were being captured) go back into White's hand to be played and he or she loses a turn. Black continues to play.



Additional Tips and Rules

Offensive Use of Contact

Contact is sometimes used as an important offensive strategy. For example, a player intentionally uses the magnetic repulsion of his or her disc-in-hand to force one of his or her own discs to contact an opponent's Foundation Disc that also has a Leaner balanced on it. When the opponent attempts to capture the now-connecting discs into points, the opponent's Leaner will fall—requiring the opponent to return the attempted-capture discs to his or her deck. Play then passes back to the first player.

Multiple Reactions

Sometimes more than one Fault will occur during a turn. When this happens, all of the above rules apply. For example, in attempting to place a Leaner a player causes another Leaner to fall and still other discs on the mat to connect with each other. The disc from the original attempt returns to the unplayed stack and play passes to the opponent, who then must successfully capture all connecting discs.

Forcing out

If a disc or Tower is forced out of bounds, it is placed into the player's hand and his or her turn is over. It is now the opponent's turn.

Attracted out

If a disc is attracted off the mat to a disc in a player's hand, that disc is considered out of bounds, since it has left the mat. Both the out of bounds disc and the disc in the player's hand are returned to the unplayed pile of discs and that player's turn is over. It is now the opponent's turn.

Shifting

A player may use a disc in hand to move a Foundation Disc, Tower, or Leaner from its current location. However, if the Foundation Disc or Tower shifts by more than its diameter, that player's turn ends. If the disc or Tower comes into contact with another disc or Tower, the opponent can capture for points. Leaners may roll more than one disc diameter as long as they do not fall flat onto the mat or contact another disc.

Basic Etiquette

If a player accidentally negatively interacts with the game outside of his or her turn (e.g. jarring the table or causing reactions with unplayed magnets), that player is considered to have caused any faults that may occur. Resolve these faults as normal, and then let the active player continue with his or her turn.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I won the toss and chose to play black. Do I still play first?

A: No. Regardless of who won the toss, white always plays first.

Q: Can I use my Action Disc to force an opponent's disc out of bounds?

A: No. You may only play the Action Disc on your own discs and Towers.

Q: Can I bring my Action Disc in to play in any orientation?

A: You must bring the Action Disc into play with your color face up. This can be anywhere from 0 degrees (horizontal) to 90 degrees (vertical).

Q: Can I place a Leaner outside the circle?

A: As long as some part of the disc is touching the mat inside or on the circle, it is considered in-bounds.

Q: What happens if I force a disc or Tower out of bounds?

A: Your turn is over and you place the disc or Tower into your unplayed stack.

Q: Several discs came together in between turns. Whose Fault is it?

A: The player who just finished his or her turn is still considered to be the active player until the next player's hand crosses the table. Thus, any Faults would go against the just-finished player.

Q: I don't have any discs or Towers left on the mat. Can I place a Foundation Disc?

A: You can never place Foundations Discs except during initial placement. If you do not have any discs or Towers left on the mat of your color, you lose the game.

Q: While placing a Leaner, I caused a disc to shift but not connect. What happens?

A: A flat-laying disc or Tower that moves more than its own diameter ends your turn. A Leaner is allowed to roll any distance as long as no contact is made.

Q: I converted one of my Leaners but it fell with my opponent's color face up. What happens now?

A: Your turn is over. Leave the disc where it lies regardless of which color is now face up.

Q: I caused one of my opponent's Leanners to fall flat. What happens?

A: Your turn is over. However, if the disc now has your color up, your opponent gets to capture the disc.

Q: A Fault resulted in connected discs partially out of bounds. What happens?

A: As long as at least one of the connected discs is in bounds, they are all in bounds.

Q: My opponent caused a Fault that leaves me with an impossible capture. Do I have to make a capture attempt?

A: If your opponent caused any discs and/or Towers to connect, you must attempt to capture them.

Q: My opponent's Fault caused two separate groups of connected discs. What happens now?

A: If there are multiple groups of connected discs, you must attempt to capture them separately. If you cause a Fault during any of the captures, your turn ends.

Q: My opponent caused a Fault during his capture attempt. Do I get to capture the remaining connected discs?

A: Yes. You must attempt to resolve all Faults on the mat at the start of your turn.

Q: My opponent's Fault is already in the form of a Tower. Do I still capture it?

A: Yes. Unless it is with your color face up in which case you can declare it captured and leave it where it is.

Q: Can I use two hands to scoop discs up for a capture attempt?

A: No. You may only use one hand to grip a disc and you must maintain this grip until all the discs in the capture attempt have formed a Tower off the mat.

Q: Can I grip more than one disc during a capture attempt?

A: You may grip more than one disc as long as the discs you are gripping are aligned in Tower form.

Q: I created a Fault during a capture attempt. What happens?

A: Treat a Fault during a capture attempt the same as a Fault created while playing your Action Disc. The discs in hand go to your unplayed stack and your opponent now gets to attempt to capture the remaining discs.

Q: During a capture attempt, some of the connected discs stayed on the mat while the rest formed a Tower in my hand. Do I still place the Tower?

A: No. If any connected discs become disconnected, this causes a Fault. The discs in hand go to your unplayed stack and your opponent now gets to attempt to capture the remaining discs.

Q: Can I mix my old Irwin or Tangent Polarity set with my newer Temple Games version?

A: Although the Temple Games rules are virtually identical to those of the original Polarity game, other aspects of the game have evolved. Switching canvas mats is fine, though mixing magnets from different editions is not advised. While they may appear to be the same (with only slight differences due to manufacturing), the internal magnets are not. The game has been reprinted over the years and better materials have become available for the magnets, making for more consistent magnetic strength. It is important that all the magnets behave similarly to each other.

Q: How do I care for my Polarity canvas play mat?

A: Machine wash the canvas mat on cold, using a fabric softener. Do not bleach. Do not dry in a dryer; instead, run a warm (not hot) iron over the reverse side of the board to dry it and remove most big wrinkles. To store your mat, keep it rolled up around the provided cardboard tube. Do not fold as this will leave creases.

Q: How do I care for my Polarity magnets?

A: If you need to, individually wash them with a warm, slightly damp cloth. Do not drop them as this can cause the magnets to depolarize. Do not store them with different kinds of magnets. It is suggested to keep them stored together in the cardboard tube provided so as not to lose them.

Q: I have lost some of my magnets. Can I get replacements?

A: Visit www.polaritygame.com for information on replacement magnets.

Polarity Variants

Three-player Shuffle

In turn order, players place the initial Foundation Discs, after which the remaining discs are divided equally (each player receives 14 discs). Gameplay continues in turn order with colors alternating, so each player will play the opposite color of what he or she played on his or her last turn. The winner is the first person to play all of his or her discs. An alternate win condition is to have each player score the Towers that correspond to the last color he or she played, and then subtract one point for each disc in his or her unplayed stack.

Four-player Team Game

Polarity can be played with four players. Gameplay is virtually identical to the normal rules with the exception that each team (or color) consists of two players that alternate taking turns, starting with the initial placement of Foundation Discs. Teammates share the same unplayed stack of discs and win or lose as a team.

Four-player Advanced Team Game

Gameplay is the same as the basic four-player team game except that after the initial placement of Foundation Discs the remaining discs are divided four ways. This means that the first player on each team has 11 discs and his or her teammate has 10 discs. If any one player runs out of discs in his or her stack, the game ends. Scoring is done as in the standard game, though with each team scoring as a single unit. Teammates can work together so that one of them plays all of his or her discs to attempt to end the game whenever he or she believes his or her team can win.

Starting Point

Gameplay is the same as the normal rules except that only one Foundation Disc of each color is placed during the initial setup. Players must then expand off their single Foundation Disc. Hint: don't mess up early on!

More Tower to You

During a capture attempt, treat any Leaners on Faulted discs or Towers as part of the Fault as though they were connected. When capturing, any Leaners must be snapped up and incorporated into the Tower in order to make a successful capture. This variant removes the strategic ability to create impossible captures but opens up Towers to be used more to place Leaners.

Closing Comments

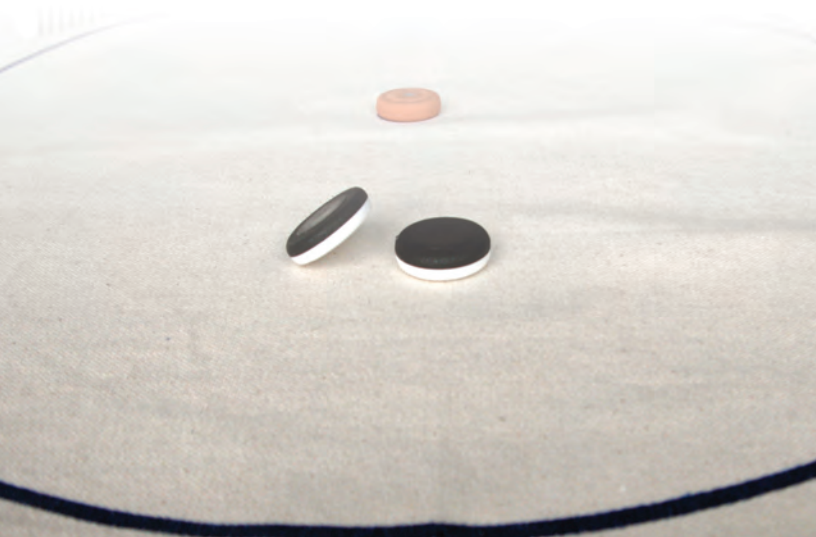
“Seeing” the Waves of Magnetism—Developing a Sixth Sense

After a short time of playing Polarity, many people report that they can actually look at the play area and “see” the forces of magnetism at play. As you play the game, observe the placement of pieces. Notice how clusters of discs interact with each other. See how some discs are standing at angles that do not, at first, seem correct or natural. In your mind’s eye, try to imagine waves emanating from the discs that are in play—and from the disc that you are attempting to play. Developing this new sense can go a long way toward mastering Polarity.

A hearty thank you for playing Polarity!

We hope that you continue to enjoy playing this unique game for years to come and we encourage you to deepen your skills—and help others to deepen theirs—by participating in our growing online community at forums.templegames.com. There you will find beginner to advanced play tips, be able to interact with other Polarity players, and get official answers to your Polarity questions.

Visit us online at www.polaritygame.com.





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