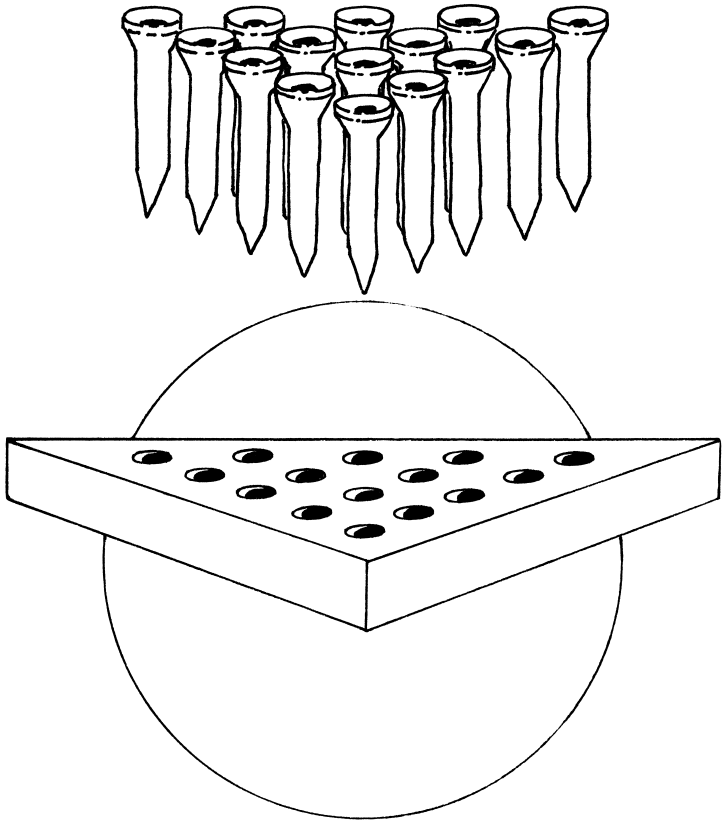
No Reason to be Embarrassed, Try Again!

Solutions to the Peg Game found at the Cracker Barrel™ Old Country Store



David Witt

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Forward

The strangest things seem to fascinate us. Why is this simple game so difficult to excel at? We may have had a few too many Sunday breakfasts at the CRACKER BARREL™.

The Game



This is the famous “JUMP ALL BUT ONE GAME” found at the ubiquitous CRACKER BARREL™. Placed on the dining tables to occupy the children, we have seen many children of large stature puzzling over the board.

The board is a simple wooden triangle about five inches on a side and one-half inch thick. There are fifteen holes arranged in an even triangular matrix. Fourteen golf tees serve as the game pieces.

Game Rules

The game is so simple that the only rule listed is “JUMP EACH TEE AND REMOVE IT”.

Most people make a number of assumptions about other rules as well.

The board starts with 14 tees, so there can only be one empty hole at the start. The game player gets to pick this location.

Each move requires using a tee to "jump" an adjacent tee and land in the next hole. The ending hole must be empty, of course. The jumped tee is removed. Moves are only permitted in straight lines (where all 3 holes are in a line).

Symmetry

The game board is an equilateral triangle, each side of equal length. The holes are placed evenly on the board in a triangular manner as well. The affect of this symmetry on game play is to reduce the number of unique empty starting positions from fifteen to five (just rotate the board to see, it looks the same each time you move the next point to the top). Of the five unique starting positions, two of these are mirror images of each other (one is a left hand play, the other a right hand version). There are actually only four unique starting positions when these effects are considered.

For the purposes of this analysis, we will identify the unique groups of empty starting holes as follows:

Position Group	Holes Included
A	1, 11, 15
B_1	2, 10, 12
B_2	3, 7, 14
C	5, 8, 9
D	4, 6, 13

These hole numbers are identified in the board drawings in the solutions section. The B_1 and B_2 groups are the mirror imaged versions. The designation B without a subscript identifies all the holes of both versions. To save space each position group will be described once. You can apply the solutions to all the holes in that

position group by first rotating the board until the empty position is nearest the top.

You can see the symmetry by rotating the game board. Start with the top hole pointed away from you. Next rotate the board till the next corner points to the top. The hole at the top now can make the same moves as the first hole.

Statistics

The following tables show how many possible games leave 1 tee remaining, 2 tees, etc. The odds of ending a game with a specific number of tees are expressed as percentages.

Summary Game Statistics and Probabilities

	Total Games	Probabilities
1 Tee Left	438,984	6.0%
2 Tees Left	1,775,648	24.2%
3 Tees Left	3,302,123	45.0%
4 Tees Left	1,605,348	21.9%
4 or More Tees Left	1,817,634	24.8%
5 Tees Left	197,670	2.7%
6 Tees Left	11,160	0.15%
7 Tees Left	3,438	0.047%
8 Tees Left	12	0.0002%
10 Tees Left	6	0.0001%
Total Games Possible	7,335,390	n/a
Total Moves	33,308,085	n/a

The game board suggests the following appraisals depending on the pegs remaining:

"LEAVE ONLY ONE-YOU'RE A GENIUS"
Chance of this result - 6%

"LEAVE TWO-ROCKING THE CHAIR BUT NOT THE GAME"
Chance of this result - 24%

"LEAVE THREE~~-OR MORE~~-NO REASON TO BE EMBARRASSED, TRY AGAIN"
Chance of this result - 45%

It seems that the <u>real challenge is to leave five or more</u>! It is only possible to leave eight or ten from certain starting positions. In fact, we propose that the game be changed to say,

"LEAVE ONLY 8 or 10-NASA NEEDS YOU"
Chance of this result - Less than 0.001%

The following two tables show that it matters which hole starts empty. The odds change depending on your choice.

Game Statistics by Group

Empty Hole at Start	Group A 1,11,15	Group B 2,3,7,	Group C 5,8,9	Group D 4,6,13
1 Tee Left	29,760	14,880	1,550	85,258
2 Tees Left	138,614	70,481	20,686	290,954
3 Tees Left	259,578	133,919	62,736	510,556
4 Tees Left	123,664	65,832	46,728	233,060
4 or More Left	139,678	75,263	52,874	262,800
5 Tees Left	14,844	8,740	5,688	27,878
6 Tees Left	833	522	374	1,458
7 Tees Left	324	168	82	404
8 Tees Left	2	1	0	0
10 Tees Left	0	0	2	0
Total Games	568,630	294,543	137,846	1,149,568

Game Probabilities by Group

Empty Hole at Start	Group A 1,11,15	Group B 2,3,7,	Group C 5,8,9	Group D 4,6,13
1 Tee Left	5.2%	5.1%	1.1%	7.4%
2 Tees Left	24%	24%	15%	25%
3 Tees Left	46%	46%	46%	44%
4 Tees Left	22%	22%	34%	20%
4 or More Left	25%	26%	38%	23%
5 Tees Left	2.6%	3.0%	4.1%	2.4%
6 Tees Left	0.15%	0.18%	0.27%	0.13%
7 Tees Left	0.057%	0.057%	0.059%	0.035%
8 Tees Left	0.00035%	0.00034%	0%	0%
10 Tees Left	0%	0%	0.0015%	0%

Solutions

Solutions to selected games follow. For brevity, only the five unique starting layouts are shown. Remember to rotate the board before starting to use these solutions with the other holes.

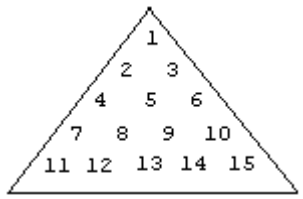
Each set of solutions shows at least one example for each of the possible ending layouts. There are usually thousands of games which will end up the same way, so this is only a partial list.

In the cases where it is possible to end with eight or ten tees remaining we have shown those games as well (all 5 of them). The probabilities for finding them are really, really small.

Using the Solutions

Each game is described in a shorthand detailing the moves. Numbers are used to identify the starting and ending holes. Refer to the board diagrams to identify where the holes are. As each move is made the tee skipped is removed.

The GAME SEQUENCE numbers can be ignored. They are just the game identifications made up by the computer program that played all 7 million plus games for us. We went to eat breakfast, the computer worked.



Solutions - Starting with Hole #1 Empty
(Position Group A, Holes 1,11,15)

1 Tee Remaining

GAME SEQUENCE 8106
6⇨1; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 10⇨3; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 3⇨8; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 13⇨4; 4⇨1

GAME SEQUENCE 29948
6⇨1; 13⇨6; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 10⇨3; 4⇨13; 12⇨14; 15⇨13; 3⇨8; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 13⇨4; 4⇨1

GAME SEQUENCE 153689
6⇨1; 4⇨6; 14⇨5; 12⇨14; 15⇨13; 11⇨4; 10⇨3; 2⇨7; 13⇨4; 7⇨2; 1⇨6; 6⇨4; 4⇨1

GAME SEQUENCE 442185
4⇨1; 6⇨4; 15⇨6; 12⇨5; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 7⇨2; 3⇨10; 13⇨6; 10⇨3; 1⇨6; 6⇨4; 4⇨1

GAME SEQUENCE 8107
6⇨1; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 10⇨3; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 3⇨8; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 13⇨4; 2⇨7

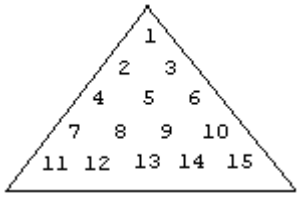
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GAME SEQUENCE 8117
6⇨1; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 10⇨3; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 2⇨9; 13⇨6; 3⇨10

GAME SEQUENCE 442189
4⇨1; 6⇨4; 15⇨6; 12⇨5; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 7⇨2; 3⇨10; 13⇨6; 10⇨3; 1⇨4; 4⇨6; 3⇨10

GAME SEQUENCE 3668
6⇨1; 15⇨6; 8⇨10; 10⇨3; 2⇨9; 14⇨5; 12⇨14; 7⇨2; 3⇨8; 1⇨4; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13

GAME SEQUENCE 8142
6⇨1; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 10⇨3; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨4; 2⇨7; 1⇨6; 6⇨4; 4⇨11; 11⇨13



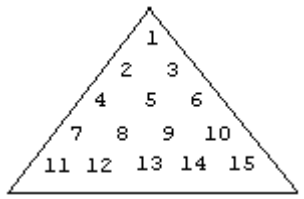
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GAME SEQUENCE 222932
6⇨1; 4⇨6; 11⇨4; 10⇨3; 2⇨7; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 4⇨11; 1⇨6; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13
GAME SEQUENCE 306695
4⇨1; 13⇨4; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 7⇨2; 6⇨13; 15⇨6; 12⇨14; 3⇨10; 1⇨4; 4⇨6; 6⇨15; 15⇨13

8 Tees Remaining
GAME SEQUENCE 95584
6⇨1; 13⇨6; 7⇨9; 10⇨8; 4⇨13; 1⇨4

GAME SEQUENCE 334207
4⇨1; 13⇨4; 10⇨8; 7⇨9; 6⇨13; 1⇨6

Solutions - Starting with Hole #2 Empty
(Position Group B_1, Holes 2,10,12)
1 Tee Remaining
GAME SEQUENCE 11653
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 2⇨7; 1⇨6; 10⇨3; 3⇨8; 13⇨4; 7⇨2

GAME SEQUENCE 10262
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 10⇨8; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 3⇨10; 2⇨9; 13⇨6; 10⇨3; 1⇨6
GAME SEQUENCE 11655
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 2⇨7; 1⇨6; 10⇨3; 3⇨8; 7⇨9; 13⇨6
GAME SEQUENCE 12046
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 6⇨13; 13⇨15; 2⇨7; 11⇨4; 1⇨6; 10⇨3; 4⇨6; 3⇨10; 15⇨6
GAME SEQUENCE 36114
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 10⇨8; 3⇨10; 4⇨6; 12⇨5; 10⇨3; 1⇨4; 4⇨6; 3⇨10; 15⇨6



GAME SEQUENCE 11654
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 2⇨7; 1⇨6; 10⇨3; 3⇨8; 13⇨4; 4⇨11
GAME SEQUENCE 13855
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 3⇨8; 10⇨3; 2⇨7; 11⇨4; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 1⇨6; 6⇨13; 13⇨11
GAME SEQUENCE 36897
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 6⇨13; 12⇨14; 15⇨13; 2⇨7; 1⇨6; 10⇨3; 3⇨8; 13⇨4; 4⇨11

GAME SEQUENCE 11779
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 2⇨7; 11⇨4; 1⇨6; 10⇨3; 3⇨8; 4⇨13; 12⇨14
GAME SEQUENCE 36011
7⇨2; 13⇨4; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 10⇨8; 3⇨10; 15⇨6; 2⇨7; 6⇨4; 7⇨2; 1⇨4; 4⇨13; 12⇨14

8 Tees Remaining

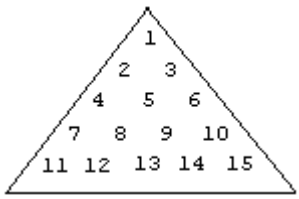
GAME SEQUENCE 184761
7⇨2; 6⇨4; 14⇨5; 2⇨9; 13⇨6; 11⇨13

Solutions - Starting with Hole #3 Empty (Position Group B_2, Holes 3,7,14)

1 Tee Remaining

GAME SEQUENCE 962
10⇨3; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 3⇨10; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 2⇨9; 13⇨6; 10⇨3

GAME SEQUENCE 4
10⇨3; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 7⇨9; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 3⇨8; 2⇨7; 13⇨4; 7⇨2; 1⇨4
GAME SEQUENCE 364
10⇨3; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 7⇨9; 3⇨10; 4⇨6; 14⇨5; 10⇨3; 1⇨6; 6⇨4; 2⇨7; 11⇨4
GAME SEQUENCE 17056
10⇨3; 13⇨6; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 4⇨13; 13⇨11; 3⇨10; 15⇨6; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 6⇨4; 2⇨7; 11⇨4
GAME SEQUENCE 17143
10⇨3; 13⇨6; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 4⇨13; 12⇨14; 15⇨13; 3⇨10; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 2⇨9; 10⇨8; 13⇨4



GAME SEQUENCE 437
10⇨3; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 7⇨9; 3⇨10; 2⇨7; 11⇨4; 4⇨6; 10⇨3; 1⇨6; 6⇨13; 14⇨12
GAME SEQUENCE 17220
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GAME SEQUENCE 438
10⇨3; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 7⇨9; 3⇨10; 2⇨7; 11⇨4; 4⇨6; 10⇨3; 1⇨6; 6⇨13; 13⇨15
GAME SEQUENCE 963
10⇨3; 13⇨6; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 3⇨10; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 2⇨9; 13⇨6; 6⇨15
GAME SEQUENCE 17142
10⇨3; 13⇨6; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 4⇨13; 12⇨14; 15⇨13; 3⇨10; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 2⇨9; 13⇨6; 6⇨15

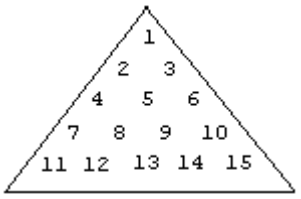
8 Tees Remaining

GAME SEQUENCE 191002
10⇨3; 4⇨6; 12⇨5; 3⇨8; 13⇨4; 15⇨13

Solutions - Starting with Hole #4 Empty (Position Group D, Holes 4,6,13)

1 Tee Remaining
GAME SEQUENCE 962
13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 10⇨8; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 3⇨10; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 2⇨9; 13⇨6; 10⇨3
GAME SEQUENCE 404982
11⇨4; 2⇨7; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 7⇨2; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 3⇨8; 12⇨5; 1⇨4; 4⇨6; 10⇨3

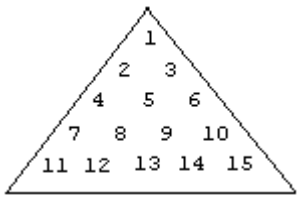
GAME SEQUENCE 4
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GAME SEQUENCE 364
13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 10⇨8; 7⇨9; 3⇨10; 4⇨6; 14⇨5; 10⇨3; 1⇨6; 6⇨4; 2⇨7; 11⇨4



GAME SEQUENCE 5757
13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 4⇨11; 1⇨6; 10⇨3; 3⇨8; 13⇨4; 2⇨7; 11⇨4
GAME SEQUENCE 41259
13⇨4; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 10⇨8; 4⇨13; 12⇨14; 15⇨13; 3⇨10; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 2⇨9; 10⇨8; 13⇨4
GAME SEQUENCE 404497
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GAME SEQUENCE 404996
11⇨4; 2⇨7; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 7⇨2; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 1⇨6; 10⇨3; 3⇨8; 12⇨5; 2⇨9
GAME SEQUENCE 913241
1⇨4; 7⇨2; 13⇨4; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 10⇨8; 3⇨10; 15⇨6; 2⇨7; 6⇨4; 12⇨5; 7⇨2; 2⇨9
GAME SEQUENCE 437
13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 10⇨8; 7⇨9; 3⇨10; 2⇨7; 11⇨4; 4⇨6; 10⇨3; 1⇨6; 6⇨13; 14⇨12
GAME SEQUENCE 41336
13⇨4; 11⇨13; 14⇨12; 10⇨8; 4⇨13; 12⇨14; 3⇨10; 15⇨6; 1⇨4; 7⇨2; 2⇨9; 6⇨13; 14⇨12

GAME SEQUENCE 438
13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 10⇨8; 7⇨9; 3⇨10; 2⇨7; 11⇨4; 4⇨6; 10⇨3; 1⇨6; 6⇨13; 13⇨15
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GAME SEQUENCE 41258
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GAME SEQUENCE 365848
11⇨4; 13⇨11; 2⇨7; 6⇨4; 15⇨6; 7⇨2; 3⇨10; 1⇨4; 4⇨13; 14⇨12; 11⇨13; 13⇨6; 6⇨15
GAME SEQUENCE 404851
11⇨4; 2⇨7; 13⇨4; 15⇨13; 12⇨14; 7⇨2; 6⇨15; 15⇨13; 1⇨4; 4⇨6; 3⇨10; 13⇨6; 6⇨15



Solutions - Starting with Hole #5 Empty
(Position Group C, Holes 5,8,9)

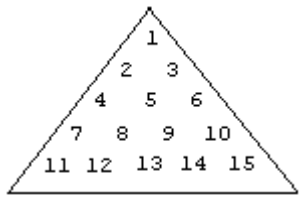
1 Tee Remaining

GAME SEQUENCE 3725
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GAME SEQUENCE 5792
14⇨5; 12⇨14; 7⇨9; 6⇨13; 14⇨12; 2⇨7; 11⇨4; 1⇨6; 10⇨3; 3⇨8; 4⇨13; 12⇨14; 15⇨13

10 Tees Remaining

GAME SEQUENCE 65338
14⇨5; 2⇨9; 12⇨5; 9⇨2
GAME SEQUENCE 134301
12⇨5; 3⇨8; 14⇨5; 8⇨3



The End