

# Konane

## History

Back in my grandfather's day, when Capt. Cook first stumbled upon Hawaii, konane was already an ancient game to the Hawaiians. Konane was a favorite game taken very seriously and often played for high stakes, even life and death. Grand tournaments were held to find the greatest konane players in Hawaii.

One of the greatest konane players was King Kamehameha, who would play endlessly with his chiefs. In fact, when the King of Great Britain heard of the amazing skill of the Hawaiians, he sent his champion "draughts" team to challenge them, but was easily defeated when Kamehameha fielded his "queens" team of konane players and beat them at their own game.

Unfortunately, konane was lost along with so much other Hawaiian history when it went from a popular pastime to a forbidden or "kapu" one. Konane was only remembered in few books as resembling the European game of "draughts" (checkers), but more complicated, intricate and played often by the Ali'i (nobles).

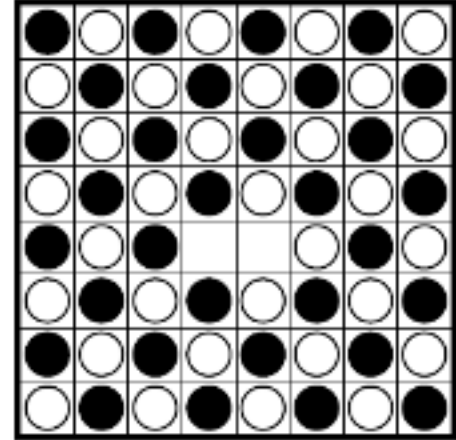
## **"A minute to learn, A lifetime to master"**

Konane is a simple yet challenging game. It is a unique game because the size of the game changes the difficulty level and playing time. Konane can be as simple as tic-tac-toe or as complex as tournament chess depending on the size of the game being played.

Ancient playing boards (papamu) etched into the lava bedrock on the Big Island can range in size from 5x6 to as big as 14x17. So try a small game first (ex. 4x5) and work your way up to bigger & longer games (5x6, 6x7, etc.) until the playing board is completely full.

## Konane Basics

1. The board is set up with each color in alternate hole to the desired game size.
2. Players decide their colors.
3. Black ('ele'ele) removes a black stone from the board.
4. White (ke'o ke'o) removes an adjacent white stone.
5. Black then jumps white into the empty hole and removes white from the board.
6. White then jumps black into an empty hole and removes black from the board.
7. Players take turns jumping\*\* until a player is left without a jump and loses (nalo).



\*\*Stones may jump more than one stone in a turn, but **cannot** jump diagonally, jump an empty hole, off the game board being played or move without jumping a stone.

**To win (eo) is to be the player who had the last jump.**

In ancient Hawaii, the playing pieces used for games were smooth, black pebbles called ili'ili and small bits of white coral. The Big Island of Hawaii was known to produce the most prized of stones for their beauty and color.

**HINT for play:** Konane is not so simple to win, jumping more than one stone may not be the best strategy, the number of stones you have makes no difference, only who jumped last. Often, young children (kiekis) will be better than you think and beat you!

**“Exercise your mind, pa’ani (play) konane”**

More Anthropological Details of Konane

<http://web.mit.edu/ieee/6.370/2001/web/konane-anthrop.html>