The Business Card Games

ROTATOR

A Game for One Player

Designed by Doug Lynn

Rotator is a maze requiring strategy and planning. You can only move in one direction, but with each move, the map rotates. You'll need to work from one end of the board to the other by going in circles. But be warned – each space you touch will collapse in on itself. Don't be there when it happens. Be careful how you move or one thing's for sure: you're going to be a lot thinner.

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Setting Up

Doug Lynn's Business Card Game Board is set up to work with *Rotator*. The Game side of the card contains a board divided into two grids of 100 squares each. Each grid is built of ten rows (numbered 1-10) and ten columns (lettered A-J).
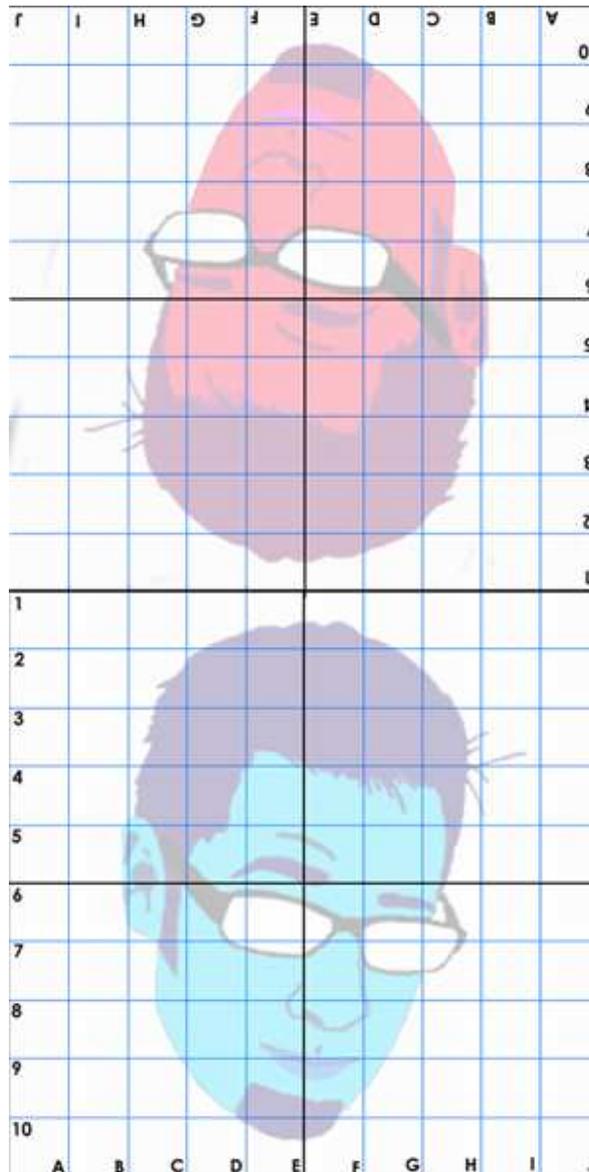

For *Rotator*, you will only need one copy of the game board, along with a pencil with a good eraser. Unfold the card so that it lays flat, grid-side up. Rotator uses both sides of the grid as a single ten column by twenty row game board. The game will begin with one of the grid's short sides facing you.

Getting Started

To begin, choose the location of ten Control Nodes on the game grid, five on each half. If you prefer, you can choose from one of the **example boards** provided.

- A Control Node covers a territorial area surrounding the Node in a diamond shape
    o Including the Node at the center, this territory is an area encompassing 5 spaces horizontally, 5 spaces vertically, and 3 spaces diagonally in both directions.
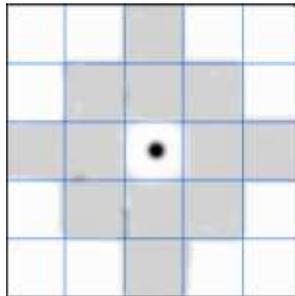
- Nodes CANNOT overlap each other or be placed on edge spaces. A buffer of one row is required between an edge and a Node.
- A Node is marked out on a player's grid by a single dot. The diamond-shaped area surrounding a Node is shaded, as is the Node space itself.

In the case of *Rotator*, Control Nodes dictate the layout of the game map. Shaded territory around Nodes represents solid land, whereas unshaded squares represent open air.

The Situation

Your mission: drill through a rocky world as it tumbles through the air. You are in possession of an auger. This auger is not the highest-quality piece of technology you will find, but it's enough to drill through the occasional layer of rock you find beneath you. Using only this auger, you must burrow from one side of the game map to the other.

Using the game map you've just established, your task is to cross from Row 10 of one grid to Row 10 of the other. Naturally, there are a few obstacles that stand in your way.

Gravity restricts your movements to a single direction – down. However, "down" isn't as straightforward as it seems. With each move you make, the game board rotates clockwise 90 degrees. Regardless of the orientation of the board, the direction of travel will always be towards you. As a result, it will take some careful planning to avoid simply traveling in a circle.

On top of this, you face an additional challenge. As you travel, you leave behind a trail of instability. Each space you touch will eventually collapse in on itself. After three turns, any space you contact turns back into solid rock – even a space that originated as air. If you're not careful, this space can collapse in on you. If it does, your burrowing adventure comes to a swift end.

Making a Move

Each move in *Rotator* involves four steps. We'll discuss these steps briefly below, then move on to demonstrate a **hypothetical example**.

To begin, you may pick any square on the top row of the grid from which to make your first move. Mark this starting space with a triangle, its point facing down.
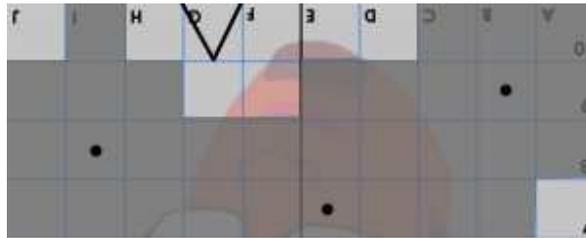
Step 1: Fall
- Any spaces which are not shaded in represent open air. When you encounter a pocket of open air, you fall until you hit the ground.
- Mark any spaces you pass through with a triangle pointing down.
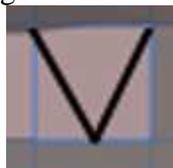
Step 2: Collapse
- In this step, each space you pass through moves a step closer to closing in on itself.
- Any previously contacted spaces should already be marked with triangles. To these, add a horizontal line.
  - o Lines are added to crossed spaces to indicate their age. For instance, a triangle with a single line through it would represent the previous turn; two lines, the turn before that.

  - o Do not add a line to any space you just passed through on a Fall. (i.e., do not mark any triangles that are pointing down. Triangles from older moves will all face different directions.)
- When a space is marked with two lines, it collapses on the next turn and becomes a Solid space. Erase any markings on the space and shade it in.

- If you are within a space that collapses, the game ends.

Part 3: Drill, Baby, Drill!
- From this point, you can travel down ONE space into the ground beneath your current position. Erase the shading in the selected space and mark it with a triangle pointing down.
  o Any space you pass through (marked with a triangle) becomes an Open space. If you encounter the space again, you will fall straight through it. HOWEVER, do not place fresh markings on a space that has already been marked. Remember that these spaces age with time – a collapsing space continues collapsing as you pass through it.
- If you drill into a space that has only Open spaces beneath it, you will fall through those spaces until you hit the ground again.
- You can drill only once per turn. If you drill and then fall, you cannot drill again until the next turn.
- Generally, each round of drilling will only cover one space.
  o **Drilling Boost:** The Drilling Boost is a cache of additional spaces you can drill through. Over the course of the game, you are allowed to use only **10 Boost Spaces**. Additionally, during a single turn, you can drill no more than 3 spaces at any one time (one standard space and two Boost Spaces). Use Boost Spaces sparingly to reach air pockets and Control Nodes.
- If you hit a Control Node, you clear out every Solid space covered by that Node. Mark each space accordingly by erasing its shading and adding an arrow pointing down.
  o When you claim a Control Node, your next move can be made from ANY SPACE covered by the Node.
  o Captured Node spaces will collapse at the same rate as all other spaces you pass through. Upon collapse, the Node returns to its original state.
- In some cases, it may prove advantageous not to drill through any spaces. DRILLING CAN BE SKIPPED IN ANY TURN.

Part 4: Rotate
- Rotate the game board 90 degrees clockwise to begin a new turn. Return to Part 1 and continue on.

Hypothetical Sequence
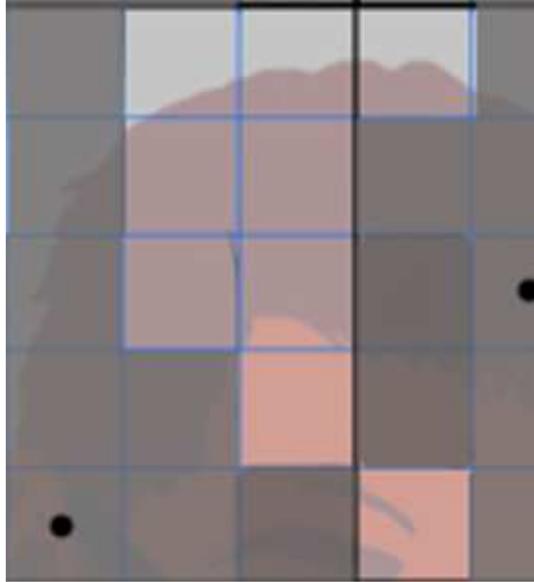
Here we see a section of the grid containing a large air pocket. Currently, the player is just off the top of the screen. The board has just rotated 90 degrees (Step 4).
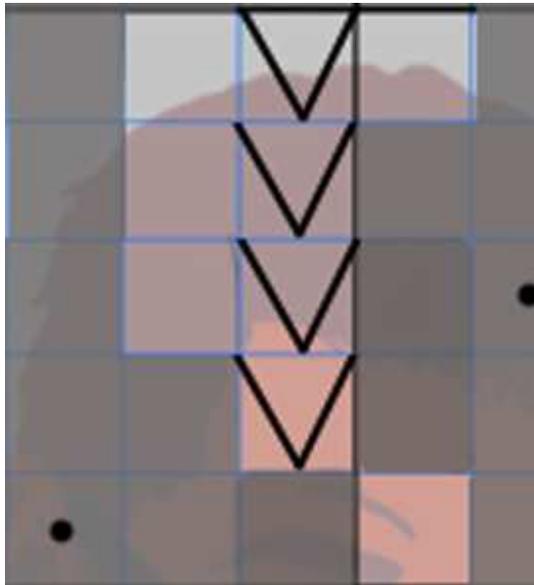

This leads into a Fall (Step 1). The player drops from the starting position through all of the open spaces below. Each one is marked with a triangle pointing in the direction of travel.

In the next frame, we skip Step 2 (Collapse) as the previous position is off the screen. We'll get to that later.
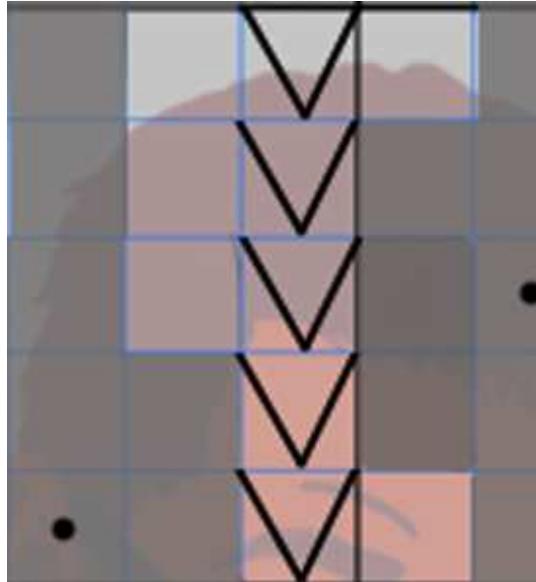

What we see here instead is Step 3 (Drill). The Solid space beneath the player's position is cleared out and the player drops down into the now-empty space. (In this instance, though we can't see it, the next space down is also Solid. If the next space were Open, the player would fall and the path would continue until the next Solid space.)

From here, we move on to Step 4 and rotate the board 90 degrees clockwise.
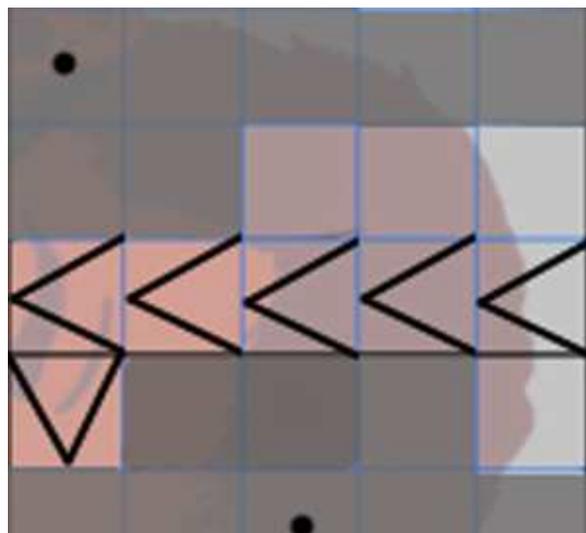

With the board rotated, we move back to Step 1. The space immediately below the player's previous position is Open, so she falls right into it.
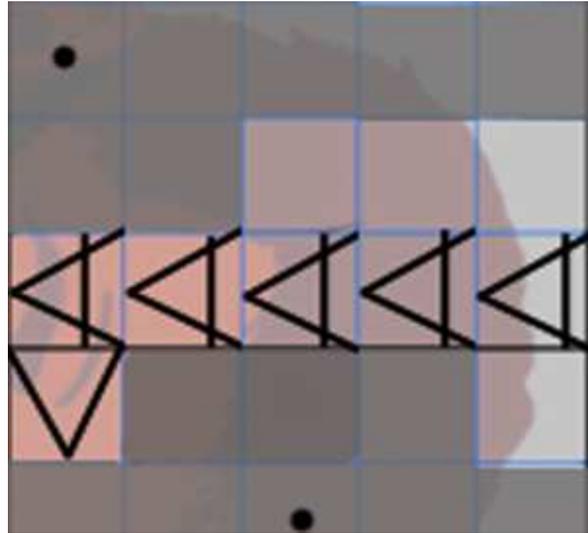
Now we get a chance to take a look at Step 2 (Collapse). The left-pointing triangles come from the player's previous turn. Inside each, a single line is added to indicate their age. Since the downward-facing triangle is from the player's current turn, it remains unmarked.

Normally, the player would now move on to Step 3 and drill into the next space down. Instead, we'll skip ahead a little. We'll rotate the board another 90 degrees (Step 4).
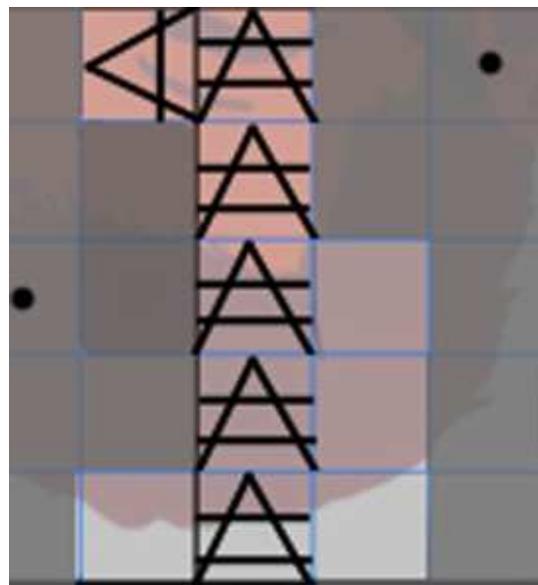

Now, what's going on here? We've skipped Step 1. As you can see, there's nowhere to fall from the player's last position. That being the case, we move on to Step 2. Before, we'd added a line to each of the triangles on the right. Now that we've moved on to another turn, they age again, so they each get a second line. At the same time, the mark from the previous turn (pointing left) gets a line of its own.
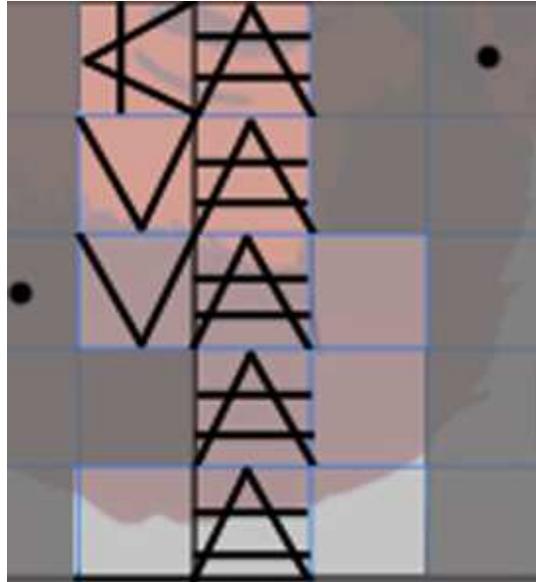
With everything properly aged up, we move on to Step 3. The particular drill pattern you see here is special as it covers two spaces, rather than one. In this case, the player is drilling through the standard single layer, then utilizing a Drill Boost to move forward one extra space. Remember: Drill Boosts can only be applied once per turn and can only provide you with up to two extra spaces. You get only 10 Boost spaces for the entire game, so use them sparingly.

We'll rotate the board one more time and move on.
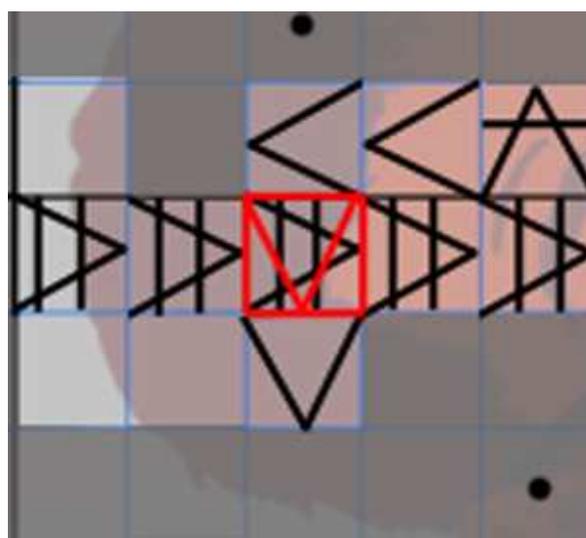
What's all this mess? This is a standard Step 1 move, a fall. As this picture illustrates, any space you pass through behaves like an Open space. The player has fallen through her previous path and landed on the Solid space below. In this case, however, the space that has been crossed does not receive a new marker. It has already been touched, and its age continues to increase.
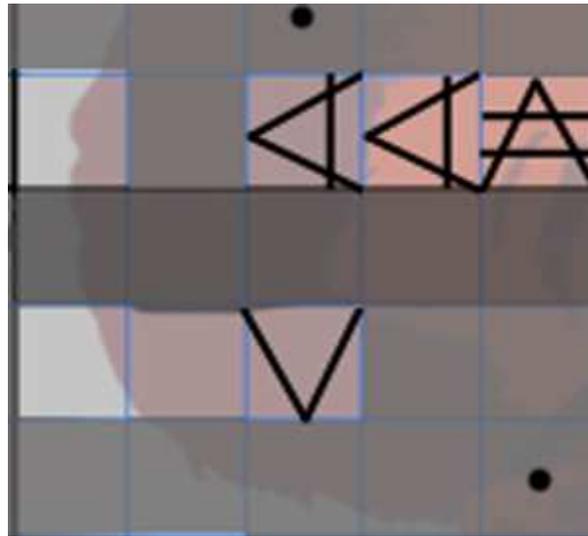

On that note, we move on to Step 2. As you can see, the marked spaces above have all received fresh markings indicating their age. However, the right-facing triangles running through the middle of the screen have been removed and shaded in. Having passed through three turns, these spaces have aged and collapsed in on themselves. These spaces have all now become ordinary Solid spaces. Keep in mind that even the spaces which originated as Open spaces before being touched have become Solid. This applies to EVERY space the player touches.

With this out of the way, we would then drill, rotate again, and so on.

Loss
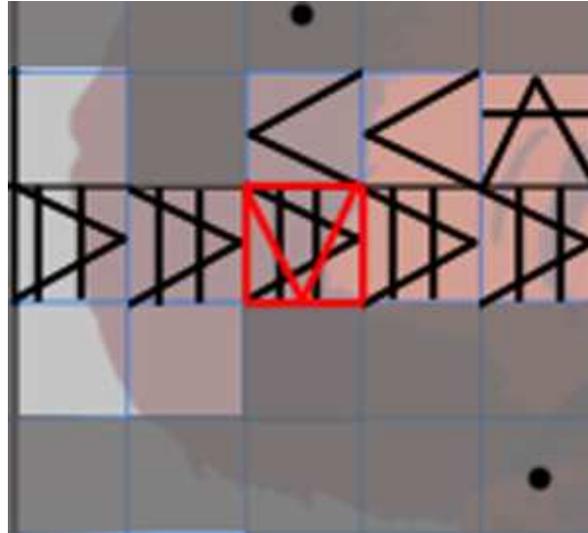
You may ask, "What happens if a space becomes Solid when I'm still on it?" The answer is simple: you lose. In this case, the player falls back through an old path and lands within it.
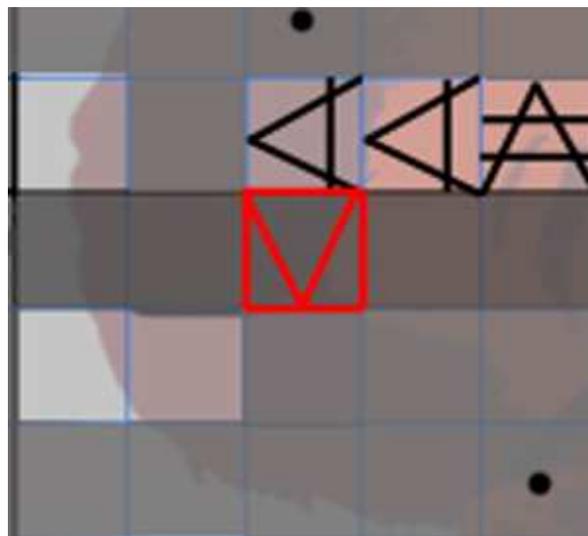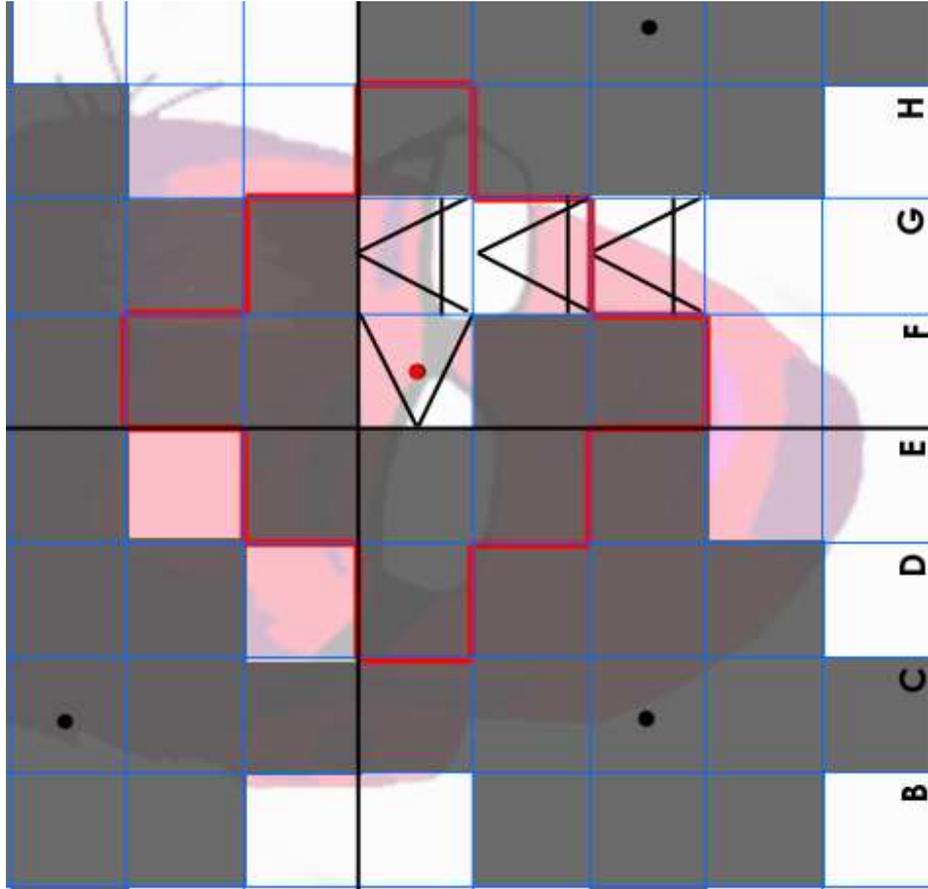

Following the standard sequence, spaces collapse before any drilling takes place. As a result, the player is stuck. The space becomes Solid and the player is trapped, resulting in a loss.
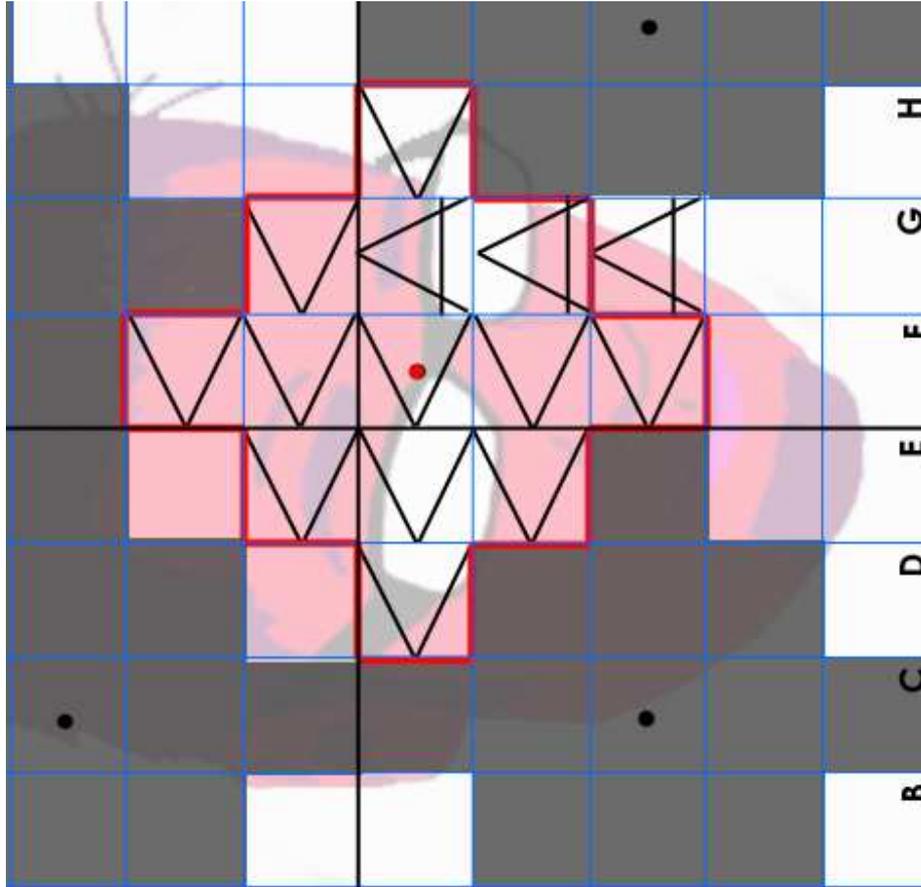
Nodes

Is there anything special about Node spaces? You bet.
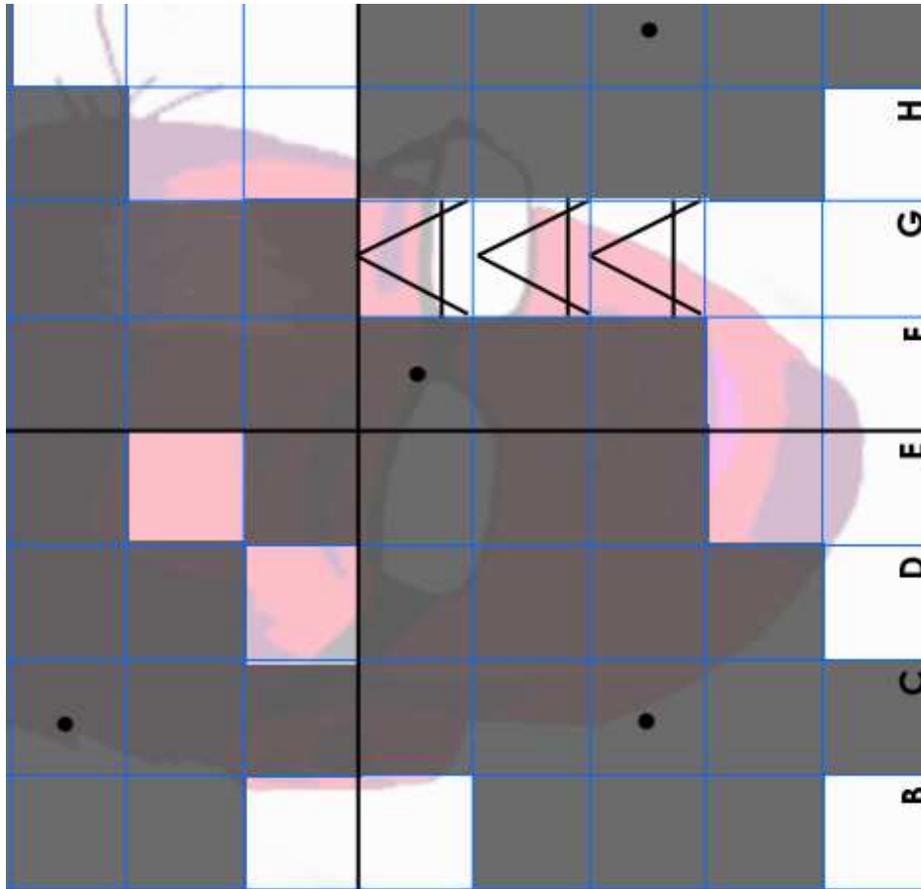
Here, the player is in a position to drill down into a Node space.

The player drills down into the Node and marks the move accordingly. Now, though, something unique happens. The area controlled by the Node (outlined in red) clears out.

Just as with any other move, all of the spaces that have been cleared in this turn are marked with downward-facing triangles. (Keep in mind – the previous move retains its age and does not receive new markings.) However, the player doesn't fall through the newly-created open space.

Instead, the player proceeds to rotate the board and move on to the next turn. Now, he receives an added bonus; as a result of capturing the Node, the player can move from any of the spaces in the controlled area.

Victory Conditions

The objective of the game is to travel from anywhere on Row 10 of one grid to anywhere on Row 10 of the other, i.e., traveling the length of the board. As soon as this is achieved, you win.