

Which Dice Win At Chutes & Ladders, or “Chuteless & Ladderless”

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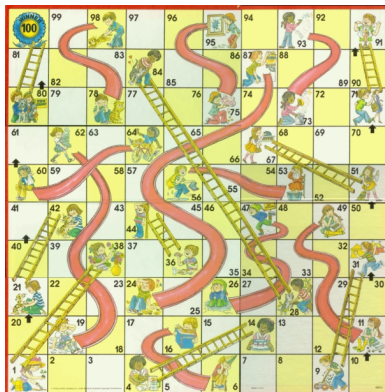
Outline

- The Games
- Past Work – Minimize Average Game Length
- Probability of Winning with Difference Dice
- Chutes & Ladders, One Die
- Chutes & Ladders, Multiple Dice
- Chuteless & Ladderless, One Die
- Chuteless & Ladderless, Multiple Dice
- Chuteless & Ladderless, Probability of Getting Stuck



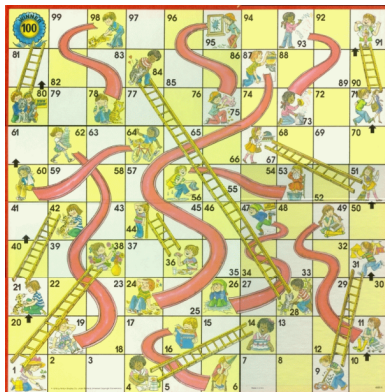
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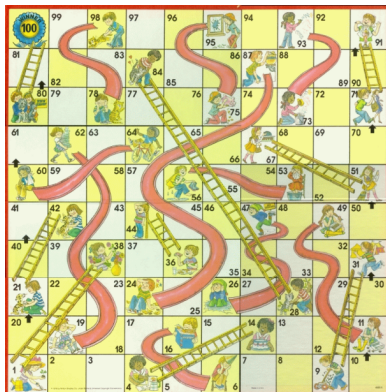


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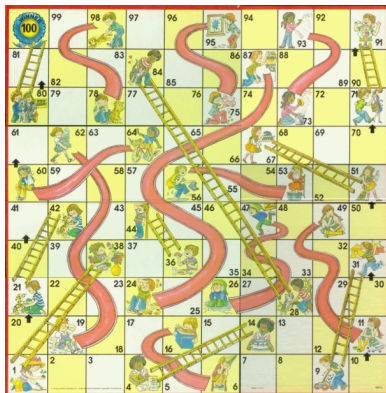


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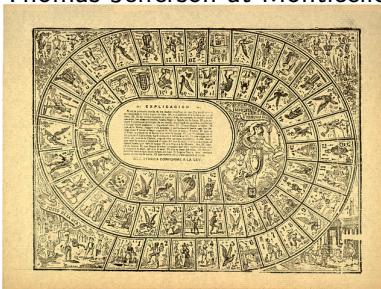
Imported to Victorian Britain.

US version (children scared of snakes) by Milton Bradley, 1943.



Variants

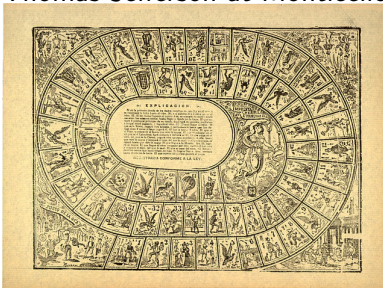
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- “Chuteless & Ladderless” is Chutes & Ladders with no chutes and no ladders, allows for easier mathematical analysis.

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- Cheteyan, Hengeveld & Jones showed that the shortest average game length is 25.81 moves with a die of size 15 in 2001.
- Glass, Lucas & Needleman showed that without chutes or ladders, the shortest average game length is 26 with a die of size 13. A six sided die requires 33.33 moves.



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What if we use two six sided dice instead of one? Does moving faster towards the end negate the lower chance of a move near the end reaching the last square, and the chance of not being able to finish at all? This question motivated this project.



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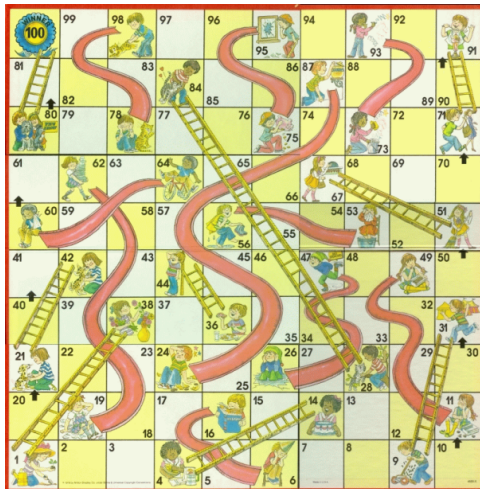
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If $P = \begin{pmatrix} Q & R \\ \mathbf{0}^T & 1 \end{pmatrix}$, the first element of $(I_t - Q)^{-1}\mathbf{1}$ is the average number of steps.

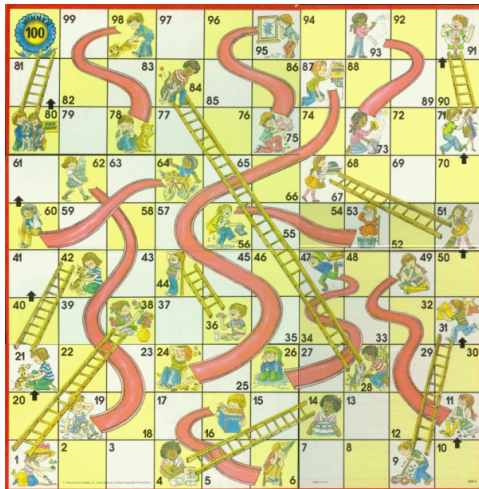


Markov Chutes & Ladders



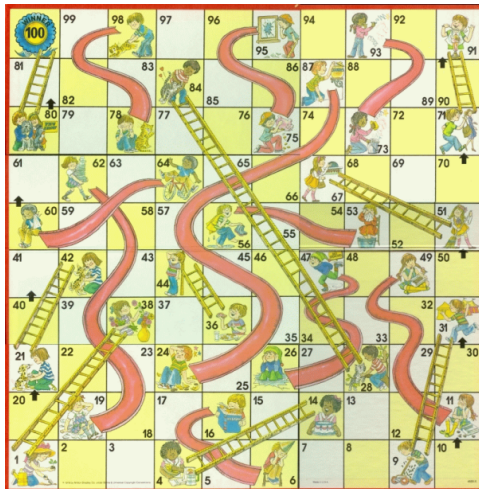
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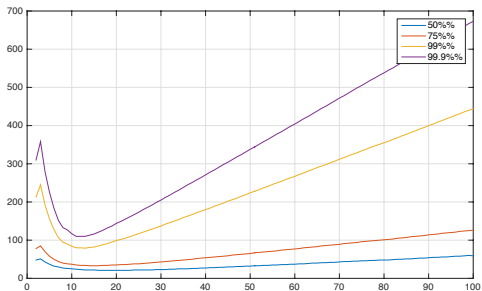
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- 50%: 32 (mean 39), 75%: 50, 99%: 128, 99.9%: 184.



Chutes & Ladders Results

Calculate the probability distribution at every time step, look at proportion.

- Six sided die: fastest finish is 7 moves.
- 50%: 32 (mean 39), 75%: 50, 99%: 128, 99.9%: 184.
- Best die: Twelve sided (ish).



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If a player uses multiple dice, the same approach with more complicated Markov matrices works. But finished when at end or stuck.



Which Dice Win

Assuming moves are made simultaneously, player one wins on move k if they reach the last square on that move (probability $F_1(k) - F_1(k - 1)$) and player two doesn't reach the final square up to move k (probability $1 - F_2(k)$).



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$$P(\text{Player 1 wins}) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} (F_1(k) - F_1(k - 1))(1 - F_2(k)),$$

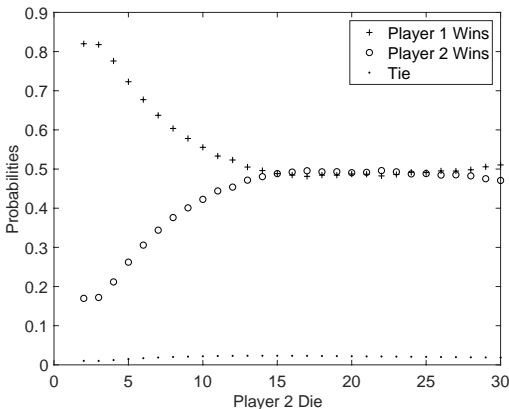
$$P(\text{Player 2 wins}) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} (F_2(k) - F_2(k - 1))(1 - F_1(k)), \quad \text{and}$$

$$P(\text{Tie}) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} (F_1(k) - F_1(k - 1))(F_2(k) - F_2(k - 1)).$$



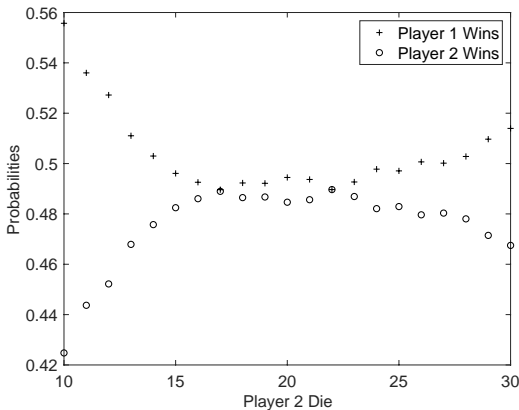
Chutes & Ladders, One Die

The minimum average number of moves uses a die of size 15. If player one uses a die of size 15 and player two uses a die of size two to thirty:



Chutes & Ladders, Best Single Die

The best die is size 22, second best is size 17. 22 vs 17: 0.48962 vs 0.48897, tie 0.02140.



Chutes & Ladders, One Die Versus Two Dice

Two dice means we move more quickly, but could get stuck and finishing is less likely on any move near the end.



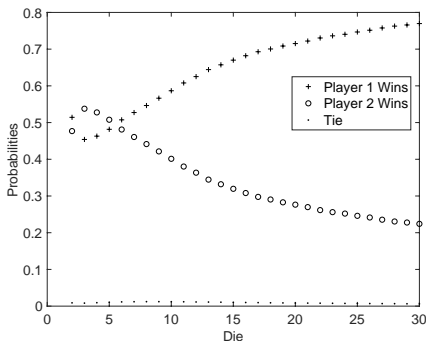
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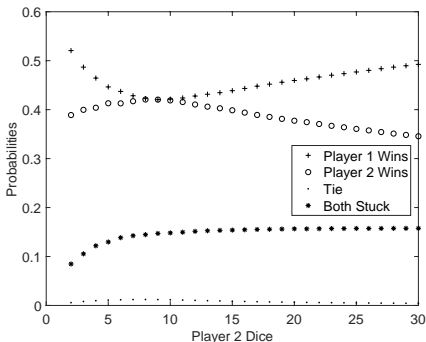


Two dice are better with sizes 3, 4, 5. Six sided, one die wins!



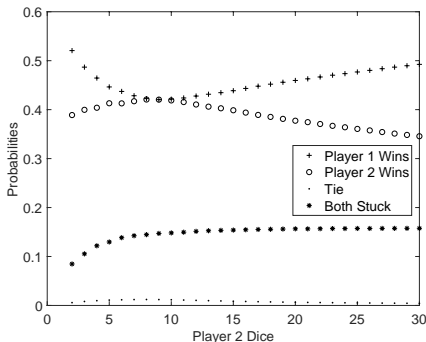
Chutes & Ladders, Best Two Dice

Both using two dice, nine sided is best, probability of both stuck is about 0.1471.



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A single 22 sided die still beats every pair by substantial margins.



Chuteless & Ladderless, Board Length 100

Without any chutes or ladders, we can easily vary the length of the board as well as the die size.



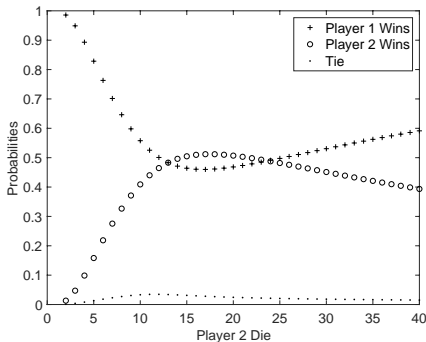
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Without any chutes or ladders, we can easily vary the length of the board as well as the die size. With length 100, minimum average game length uses die size 13.



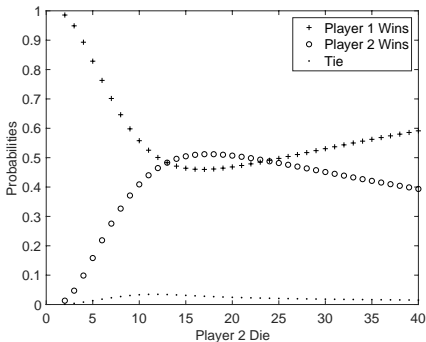
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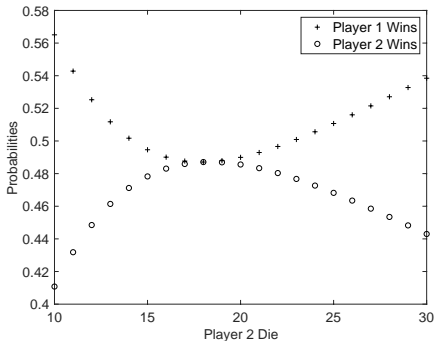


Fourteen through
twenty three do better
than thirteen.



Chuteless & Ladderless, Best Die, Board Length 100

Comparing all the possibilities, best die size is eighteen.



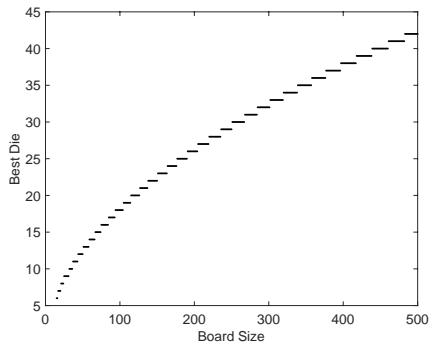
Chuteless & Ladderless, Best Die, Varying Board Length

For every board length (15 to 500), we can test each die against all others and find the one that wins most often.



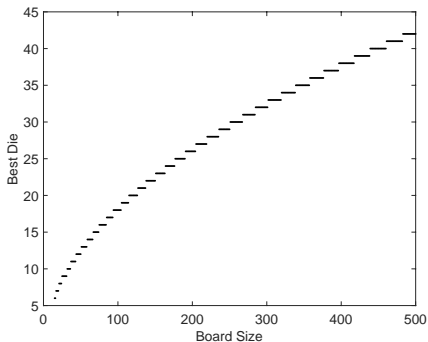
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A simple fit suggests the best die is proportional to the square root of the board size.



Chuteless & Ladderless, Best Die, Small Board Length

For small boards,

p	d	p	d
5	5	11	6
6	3	12	6
7	4	13	*
8	4	14	6
9	5	15	6
10	5	16	6



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For board length 13,
seven (0.4638) beats six (0.4631),



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 and five (0.4634) beats seven (0.4617).



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 Nontransitive!



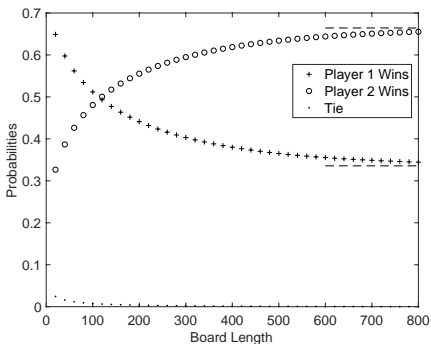
Chuteless & Ladderless, one versus two six sided dice

Board length 100, one 0.511864, two 0.480613, tie 0.007523.



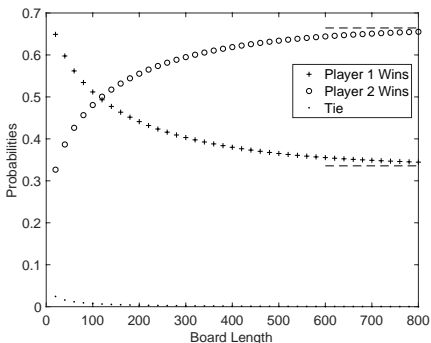
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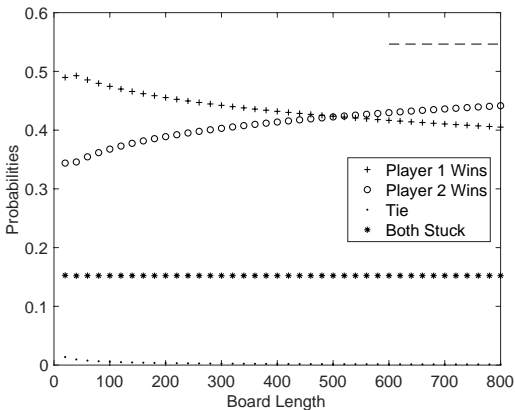
One versus two, crossover
at 116.

One versus three looks
similar, crossover at 1279.



Chuteless & Ladderless, two versus three six sided dice

Crossover at 508



Combined Results

- Board length 10 to 115, one beats two beats three.



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- Board length 116 to 507, two beats one beats three.
- Board length 1278 and up, three beats two beats one.
- Board length 508 to 1277, two beats one beats three beats two. Non-transitive!
- Board length 890, two (0.658) beats one (0.341), one (0.521) beats three (0.478), and three (0.446) beats two (0.401).



Other Non-Transitive Examples

- A: 234499, B: 116688, C: 335577, A beats B beats C beats A
all probabilities $5/9$.



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- Two sided dice, board size 22 to 48, two beats one beats three beats two.



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- Ten sided dice, non-transitive about four to seven thousand.



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- Two sided dice, board size 22 to 48, two beats one beats three beats two.
- Three sided dice, board size 19 to 51, non-transitive.
- Ten sided dice, non-transitive about four to seven thousand.
- Simulation with three players, length 890, one 0.178, two 0.398, three 0.423.



Chuteless & Ladderless, Two Dice Stuck

Adjusting the Markov chain approach to multiple absorbing states, we can find the probability of getting stuck.



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Dice	Probability Stuck	Fraction
2d2	0.3611111111111111	$\frac{13}{36}$
2d3	0.344907407407407	$\frac{149}{432}$
2d4	0.339423076923077	$\frac{29506}{87563}$
2d5	0.336968810916180	$\frac{34573}{102600}$
2d6	0.335688649974364	$\frac{317543}{945945}$
2d10	0.333990844573179	
2d20	0.333436370180405	
2d50	0.333341021092870	
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Chuteless & Ladderless, Two Dice Stuck

Adjusting the Markov chain approach to multiple absorbing states, we can find the probability of getting stuck. Asymptotic as board size increases for given dice.

Dice	Probability Stuck	Fraction
2d2	0.3611111111111111	$13/36$
2d3	0.344907407407407	$149/432$
2d4	0.339423076923077	$\frac{29506}{87563}$
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Darren has proven that as the die gets large, probability stuck $\rightarrow 1/3$.



Chuteless & Ladderless, Three Dice Stuck

With three large dice on a very long board (numerically), probability finishing approaches $6/11$, second last square $3/11$, third last square $2/11$.



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Further numerical evidence suggests that if W_k is the probability of finishing with k big dice on a very long board, probabilities of getting stuck on squares $n - 1, n - 2, \dots, n - k + 1$ approach $W_k/2, W_k/3, \dots, W_k/k$.



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So $W_1 = 1, W_2 = 2/3, W_3 = 6/11, W_4 = 12/25, W_5 = 60/137, \dots$, reciprocal of the Harmonic numbers.



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Thank You

