

PYRAMID ARCADE



BY
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WELCOME TO MY ARCADE

HI THERE. MY NAME IS ANDY LOONEY.

Perhaps you think of me as the inventor of Fluxx, that crazy, chaotic card game where the rules change all the time. It's my biggest hit to date, and I've designed some other cool games too... but this set is easily my proudest creation. It's my magnum opus.

Pyramid Arcade is the culmination of more than 25 years of work. For half my life I've been obsessing over these colorful little pieces, thinking up new games to play with them. Now we've put all my favorites and everything you need to play each one into this big box.

So, what kind of games are in this arcade? We've got everything, from fast games to long games, luck games to strategy games. We've got simple dexterity games and brain-burning puzzle games, games for two and games for ten. Many of the games in this collection are pure abstracts, but half of these games will take you to other worlds. Get ready to become everything from a microbe fighting for survival in a petri dish to a galactic overlord commanding an interstellar space fleet. You will build rockets, hack computers, send armies across epic battlefields, and fight as both insects on a flower petal and space marines teleporting between lunar outposts.

For easiest reference, the games herein are presented in alphabetical order. The first section of this book contains high-level details, like naming conventions, tips on choosing a game, and how to play multiple games simultaneously. At the end you'll find a detailed history of the system, ideas for inventing your own pyramid game, and a list of other great games for the pyramids.

HAVE A GREAT TIME, AND THANKS FOR PLAYING MY GAMES!

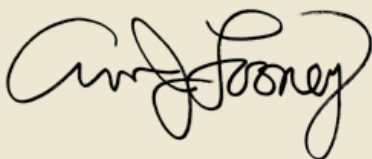


TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO MY ARCADE	002
FOR THE IMPATIENT	004
WHAT'S IN THE BOX?	004
NAMING CONVENTIONS	005
OTHER EQUIPMENT	006
CHOOSING A GAME	007
PLAYING FORMATS / PYRAMID THROWDOWN	008
SIMULTANEOUS GAMING / GOING FIRST	009
YOUNGER PLAYERS / VISIBILITY ISSUES	010
SCORING WITH PYRAMIDS / STARSHIP CAPTAINS	011
WHAT ABOUT...? / NUMBER OF PLAYERS	012
LET'S PLAY!	013
• BLACK ICE	014
• COLOR WHEEL	016
• GIVE OR TAKE	018
• HIJINKS	019
• HOMEWORLDS	020
• ICE DICE	028
• ICE TOWERS	030
• LAUNCHPAD 23	034
• LOONEY LUDO	036
• LUNAR INVADERS	038
• MARTIAN CHESS	040
• PETAL BATTLE	042
• PETRI DISH	044
NANOFICTION INTERMISSION	047
• PHARAOH	048
• POWERHOUSE	050
• PYRAMID-SHAM-BO	052
• TREEHOUSE	054
• TWIN WIN	057
• VERTICALITY	058
• VOLCANO	060
• WORLD WAR 5	062
• ZARK CITY	064
HISTORY OF THE PYRAMIDS	066
INVENT YOUR OWN GAME	070
22 MORE GREAT GAMES	071
INDEX OF GAMES	074
HAIKUS	076



FOR THE IMPATIENT

Can't wait to start playing? Just read the Naming Conventions section on the next page, then go right to page 28 and try Ice Dice. Next, if you have two players, try Hijinks (page 19). If you have three or four players, try Pharaoh (page 48). If you're by yourself or with a larger group, try Color Wheel (page 16). You can read the full introduction later on!

The fastest way to get started is to go through the Pyramid Arcade cards and choose the game that looks the most interesting to you. It's like a Table of Contents you can shuffle!

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

- 90 Pyramids (3 Trios in each of 10 colors)
- 9 Dice (3 Standard dice, 3 Lightning dice, 1 Pyramid die, 1 Color die, 1 Treehouse die)
- 3 Big Gameboards (Volcano board, The Wheel, two-sided Martian Chess / WW5 board)
- 8 Mini-Gameboards (6 square Looney Ludo boards, 2 round Lunar Invaders boards)
- 3 Decks of Cards (Pyramid Arcade cards, Twin Win cards, Zark City cards)
- 1 Turn Token
- 1 Drawstring bag
- 1 Starship Captain sticker
- 1 Looney Labs catalog
- 1 Plastic tray
- This Rulebook



NAMING CONVENTIONS

These game pieces are officially known as Looney Pyramids. Some old-timers still use the original name, Icehouse Pieces. In this book, the word “pieces” always means pyramids.

SIZES

The three different sizes are most commonly referred to as Smalls, Mediums, and Larges.



SMALL



MEDIUM



LARGE

COLORS

The pyramids come in ten standard colors: Red, Yellow, Orange, Green, Cyan, Blue, Purple, Clear, Black, and White.

- Monochrome Trio: a Trio with pieces that are all the same color.
- Mixed-Color Trio: a Trio of pieces that are NOT all the same color.

PIPS

- Pips: The teardrop-shaped marks on the pyramids are called Pips.
- Pip-Count: The Pip-Count is the number of Pips on a pyramid. Smalls have one Pip, Mediums two Pips, Larges three Pips.



PIPS

GROUPS

- Trio: Any grouping of the three pieces, one of each size, is called a Trio. Some games require a single Trio of various colors, but many require a set of three Trios, i.e. all nine pieces of one color.



TRIO

- Tree: When a Trio is stacked in the arrangement that makes it look like a little pine tree, it's called a Tree.



TREE

- Nest: When a Trio is nested together with the Small inside the Medium inside the Large, it's called a Nest.



NEST

It's not uncommon to drop the extra syllable and say Tree when you mean Trio, especially since it's frequently ideal to stack Trios up as Trees. But technically, a Trio is only a Tree if the pieces are arranged as a Small on top of a Medium on top of a Large.

ORIENTATION

- Upright: A pyramid standing up is called an Upright pyramid.
- Flat: A pyramid on its side is called Flat.
- Direction: Flat pyramids can point at things. The direction a flat pyramid is pointing can also have meaning.



UPRIGHT



FLAT

These are the high-level names. Individual games will frequently have their own terminology sections, and may give theme-specific names to particular constructs. For example, in Powerhouse, a monochrome Trio is called a Battery.



OTHER EQUIPMENT

NON-PYRAMIDAL EQUIPMENT

There's a lot of stuff in the Arcade besides the pyramids!



STANDARD DICE X 3



COLOR DIE



PYRAMID DIE



LIGHTNING DICE X 3



TREEHOUSE DIE

Some items are named for the games that introduced them, such as the Treehouse die and the Volcano board. Other times, names are simply descriptive. The Lightning dice are called that because of the lightning bolt icon.



THE ATOM

The symbol on several dice made of circles and lines is called the Atom. It typically means Wild.



THE TURN TOKEN

The coin is called a Turn Token and is used as a marker for indicating whose turn it is. A Turn Token can be useful in any complex tabletop game, but is especially desirable in a serious game of Homeworlds. Turn indicators are necessary for each game when playing several simultaneously (see Playing Formats, page 8) but careful placement of dice also works well, as do other coins, small objects, and tchotchkes.



DRAWSTRING BAG

The drawstring bag can be useful anytime you want to take your pyramids on the road, but it's required for two games: Black ICE and Powerhouse.



VOLCANO BOARD



THE WHEEL



MARTIAN CHESSBOARD

The Martian Chessboard is on the back of the World War 5 board, and vice versa.



WORLD WAR 5 BOARD



LUNAR INVADERS BOARDS

The Lunar boards are double-sided. Both boards are used for Lunar Invaders.



PETAL BATTLE BOARD

The Petal Battle board is on the back of one of the Lunar boards.



TWIN WIN BOARD

The Twin Win board is on the back of one of the Lunar boards.



LOONEY LUDO BOARDS

The six Ludo boards are double-sided. The backs of four provide additional color options for Looney Ludo.



HIJINKS BOARD

The Hijinks board is on the back of one of the Ludo boards.



LAUNCHPAD 23 BOARD

The Launchpad 23 board is on the back of one of the Ludo boards.

OTHER EQUIPMENT



PYRAMID ARCADE CARDS

The Pyramid Arcade cards are used to decide which game (or games) the group will play next.



TWIN WIN CARDS

The Twin Win cards are used to assign goals in the game Twin Win. But these cards are also very useful as color reminders in games such as IceTowers and Pyramid-Sham-Bo.



ZARK CITY CARDS

The Zark City cards are our version of a standard card deck, featuring 5 colorful suits and 65 square cards. This deck is ideal for Zark City and Verticality, plus they're handy if you want to play Hearts or Poker (for which pyramids make great scoring markers / chips).

CHOOSING A GAME

The Pyramid Arcade cards are provided to help your group decide what game to play next.

Begin by spreading out the full set of cards where everyone can see. Discuss which cards should be eliminated from consideration, based on factors such as the number of players and the length of time available. Each player should also be given one free veto option, simply for reasons of personal preference. Some games may be ruled out simply because someone doesn't know the rules and the group doesn't want to take the time to teach them. As games are ruled out, set those cards aside. Continue until all cards on the table are for games that would be possible and acceptable for all at that time.

Next, some method must be used to choose a game from the narrowed field. Players may wish to simply continue removing games from the slate until you get to the number of games to be played. Another way is to shuffle the narrowed selection of cards together and draw the next game to be played at random. The person drawing a card at random should close their eyes, since the cardbacks are not uniform. But often there will simply be an obvious choice as consensus forms in the group.



PLAYING FORMATS

Not only are there many games in the Arcade, there are a variety of formats in which to play those games:

- **Full-Focus:** This is the traditional single-game approach, with everyone in the group playing one game.
- **Throwdown:** A Pyramid Throwdown is a multi-game tournament of different Pyramid Arcade games. (See details below.)
- **Simultaneous Gaming:** A group can multi-task and play more than one game at once, with the players switching their attention from one game to another as it becomes their turn in each. Turn Tokens are used as reminders of whose turn it is in each game. (See details below.)
- **Party-Style:** Because the Arcade is so big, several groups can each play a different Arcade game at the same time. You just need to choose games that don't overlap, equipment-wise. You might need to negotiate which colors of pyramids the different groups each use, etc.

PYRAMID THROWDOWN

A Pyramid Throwdown is a multi-stage tournament of games in the Pyramid Arcade. A Throwdown has one more game than players. The first to win two games wins the Throwdown!

The Pyramid Arcade cards are used to select which games will be played. Each player in the Throwdown chooses their favorite game, and places that game's card onto the table for consideration. Each player gets one Veto, and if any are used, the player whose game was vetoed chooses another, until there are as many games as players on the table. This leaves one game still to be selected.

To choose the final game, each player makes a second choice. Any vetoes are handled again, and when there are as many second choice cards selected as there are players, the second choice cards are shuffled together and one is chosen at random, and added to the others selected.

After determining which games the Throwdown will consist of, the cards are then shuffled together and used to randomly determine the order in which the set of games will be played.

Throwdowns will often end prematurely. As soon as one player wins two games, the final games will be rendered moot and won't need to be played.

The two-player Throwdown is best, since it's the simplest. As more players are included, it becomes trickier to be sure all the games interact well. Make sure all games chosen are intended for the number of players in the Throwdown. Be aware that with more players, the system becomes more complex and easier to abuse, particularly if combined with Simultaneous Gaming.



SIMULTANEOUS GAMING

Almost all of games in the Arcade have been designed for concurrent play. (The exceptions are Ice Towers and Color Wheel, where everyone's already playing at once.) I like playing more than one game at the same time, and I design my games accordingly. Wherever possible, players can mentally "check-out" of each game when it's not their turn, thereby being able to resume focus on another game in which their turn has now come back around. This allows for an overall gaming experience in which all players are constantly engaged, filling the downtime between turns in other games with the time it takes to make a move in each.

Set each game up in its own area of a large table, or gather multiple small tables together, so that each game has its own clearly defined area. Also, establish a Turn Token for each gamespace. (Note that some games have built in Turn Tokens, such as the stack of Dice in Petri Dish, placement of the bag of pyramids in Powerhouse, etc).

When choosing the set of games for simultaneous play, be careful to avoid overlapping parts, and make sure different colors are used as needed to prevent pyramids from one game being mixed into another.

Arrange the seating so that each player can see & reach each game as easily as possible. Ideally you'll be able to simply rotate in your chair as you complete your turn in one game and turn your attention to your situation in the next.

While this may sound daunting, it actually becomes pretty easy to move back and forth between two or three games at the same time, once you get the hang of it. Think of it as being like a story with multiple unrelated plotlines the author is switching your attention between. Start with two-player Throwdowns with two concurrent games, and work your way up to more of each.

The most satisfying form of Pyramid Throwdown sets two players against each other in a three-game match with all three games being played simultaneously.

GOING FIRST

Most of the games in Pyramid Arcade have no rule for who goes first. When there is such a rule, it's usually because there's some game mechanism already in use that also provides an easy way of choosing a first player, such as by rolling dice.

In a few cases, the going-first rule is sort of a joke, such as Launchpad 23's rule about being a Rocket Scientist, or Twin Win's rule about being a Twin (or a Gemini, or Born on the 2nd). In Volcano, where it's actually kind of a disadvantage to go first, the player who goes first is whoever's been closest to molten lava. This rule was created so that whoever has to go first gets to brag about that one time when they got really close to molten lava.

If you have around five players, you can assign everyone a color, then roll the color die to see who goes first. If two are playing, the turn token is perfect for flipping a coin. (The spaceship side is Heads, the "It's My Turn" side is Tails.)

Lastly, the rules for Petri Dish include a fun all-purpose way of determining who goes first, which is done by cupping a small for each player in your hands, shaking them up, and carefully letting one drop. Or you can have someone else close their eyes and take one out of your hand.



YOUNGER PLAYERS

Kids love the pyramids, but adult supervision is always a good idea with young players, if for no other reason than to make sure none get left on the floor for you to step on later. And of course, the Smalls could be a choking hazard for very young children. But the real issue is that most of the games for the pyramids are too complex for first-level gamers. On the other hand, there are several easy games that are good to start with, and as kids grow they can work their way up to the more difficult games.

Here are the games we think are best suited to try teaching your children first: Give or Take, Ice Dice, Pharaoh, and Pyramid-Sham-Bo. After those you might try Treehouse, Hijinks, Martian Chess, and Verticality.

Some games can also be modified to accommodate younger players. A good example is the Keep-Going Variation of IceDice, which simplifies a core element of the game. (Shelly Roache, who worked as the office manager at Looney Labs, created this rule so her kids could play with the grown-ups.)

Similarly, you can make Verticality more playable for youngsters by removing the requirement that each pyramid be touching another. This is known as Skyscraper Style.

Color Wheel is perfect for little helpers. They can help with setup, they can help you look for good moves, and they can help you monitor the Scoring Track.

Lastly, don't overlook what I call Game Zero: using the pyramids for the simple act of aimless play. Before ever bothering with the rules to an actual game, have fun just messing around with the pyramids.

Stack 'em up and see how tall they'll go before teetering over. Collect 'em into groups of size and/or color and stack 'em up accordingly. Grab a bunch of Larges and stick one on the end of each of your fingertips. Now you have claws. Rraaarrwww! Just have fun with them!

VISIBILITY ISSUES

One of the advantages of having all ten colors in this set is that you can make accommodations as needed for colorblind players and for anyone playing in low-light conditions.

Before starting any game, make sure all players can tell the difference between each color used, assuming that color matters. (Note that color is irrelevant in the following games: Treehouse, Martian Chess, Give or Take, Hijinks, and Verticality.)

In most cases, when color does matter, you can choose combinations that allow everyone to see what's what. Even Color Wheel can be adjusted if needed. Simply substitute the black and white pyramids for the two colors you find most difficult to tell apart.

For games that use the color die, the symbols can be understood to refer to whichever five colors you're actually using in the game.

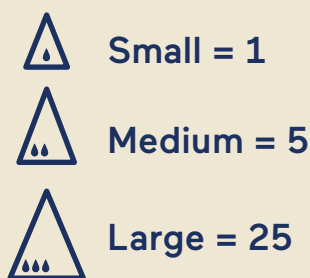


SCORING WITH PYRAMIDS

One of the most simple and wonderful ways to play with the pyramids is to use them as score-keeping tokens.

This is built into the design of a couple of the games in the Arcade: Pyramid-Sham-Bo, which is a Rock-Paper-Scissors tournament in which pyramids are used for scoring, and Color Wheel, which uses pyramids to count down the deadline clock alongside the main action of the game. In Color Wheel, the score-keeping pyramids are all worth a single point, whereas each is worth its pip-count in Pyramid-Sham-Bo.

But for general score-keeping, we use these values:



Pyramids make a fantastic alternative to paper & pencil when keeping score in any game with points. For a score-based game such as Hearts, in which you don't want points, give everyone pyramids with a total value of the end-game amount. Then, as players gain points, they lose pyramids from their stash until they run out. For example, for a 100-point game, each player would start with 3 Larges, 4 Mediums, and 5 Smalls.

Pyramids also make wonderfully exotic poker chips. Just think of them as pennies, nickels, and quarters. Some of us actually like them better than poker chips, since larger-valued pieces feel more valuable when they're actually bigger.

STARSHIP CAPTAINS



The biggest fans of these Pyramids are known as Starship Captains. To gain this title, you must learn to play at least ten pyramid games, then make a list of your favorites, ranked by your desire to play each one. With this list you'll be ready when another Starship Captain challenges you to a game. It doesn't take long to choose a game when you each know exactly what you most want to play.

As you master the games in the Arcade, keep a list going so you'll know when you can join the Icehouse Academy of Starship Captains. Until you know ten games, you will be known as a Space Cadet. You can call yourself a First Class Space Cadet as soon as you know 3 or more games.



One last little item included in this set is a colorful round sticker. You can put this anywhere you want to show some pyramid pride, but it has a suggested use. It's the perfect size to put on the lid of a four-inch round metal tin, which you can buy online from the Container Store. (Item #10054293, "8 oz. Shallow Seamless Tin," Silver, 4" diam x 1-1/8" h.) This particular tin holds 36 pyramids in a perfect, tightly packed circle. This makes it a perfect travel case for Homeworlds fans! There's even room for a die of some kind to add other game fun.

This tin is so perfect we thought about trying to squeeze one into this set as well, but just couldn't justify it. For one thing, we're discouraged from selling these tins entirely, because of their high dent-factor. So if you do get one, expect it to show wear and tear pretty quickly. But it's worth it if you like the portability it provides.



WHAT ABOUT...?

Because there are SO many other great games besides those featured here, we couldn't even begin to decide what else to include. So we drew the line at games of my own design, since I've done enough to fill the box myself, along with a couple of my all-time favorites which just happen to be at the top of my personal Starship Captain list: Volcano, designed by my wife Kristin, and my all-time favorite, Homeworlds, designed by my life-long friend John Cooper.

Also, some classics need yet more pyramids than we decided to include in this set. The most notable of these was Icehouse, the game that started it all. As described in my original short story, Icehouse requires fifteen pieces of each color. But after years of inventing new games, nine pyramids emerged as ideal. So this set is oriented around nine-piece games, and you will need more pyramids to play that original game.

Similarly, another popular favorite is Kory Heath's Zendo, which really needs at least 15 pieces of each color, along with marking tokens, guessing stones, and rule cards. Personally, I'm more a fan of Kory's robot-programming game RAMbots, but that too requires more pyramids than are provided in the Arcade.

The games included here should keep you busy for a quite long time, but when you're ready for more, the rules for literally hundreds of other games for these pyramids are freely available on the internet. And you'll find a list of twenty-two suggestions to start with at the end of this book.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

For easy reference, here's a list of the games, sorted by which ones you can play based on the size of your group. Note that these are maximums... most of these games can be played with fewer than the limit.

10 Player Games:

- Give or Take
- Petri Dish
- Pyramid-Sham-Bo
- Treehouse

6 Player Games:

- Ice Towers
- Looney Ludo

5 Player Games:

- Color Wheel
- Powerhouse
- Verticality
- Zark City

4 Player Games:

- Launchpad 23
- Pharaoh
- World War 5

3 Player Games:

- Ice Dice
- Twin Win
- Volcano

2 Player Games:

- Black ICE
- Hijinks
- Homeworlds
- Lunar Invaders
- Martian Chess
- Petal Battle

Solitaire Games:

- Color Wheel
- Verticality

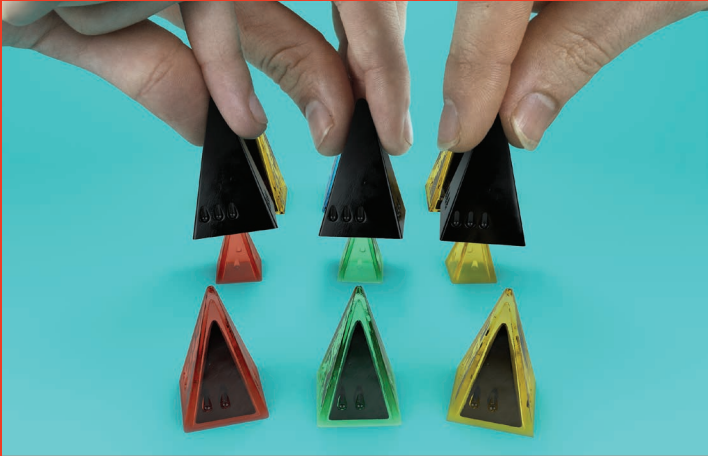




**LET'S
PLAY!**



BLACK ICE



- Codes: Smalls hidden under the Locks
- Keys: A line of black pyramids (either Smalls or Mediums) in front of each player
- Keycaps: Colorful Medium or Large pieces each player places on top of their Keys to indicate their current settings.
- Capping: An action consisting of placing one of your Keycaps onto one of your Keys.

SETUP

Place a row of three black Smalls in front of one player and a row of three black Mediums in front of the other player. These are the Keys that each player will be trying to set to match the colors hidden under the three black Larges, which will be placed in a row in the center of the table, between the players' rows of Keys. Sort out the other pieces by size. Put all the remaining Smalls (the Codes) into the bag, and hide a Code under each Lock, using the Locking Codes procedure described below. Move all the rest of the pyramids (the Keycaps) to be in front of the players, with the medium Keycaps going to the player with the small Keys, and the large Keycaps going to the player with the medium Keys.



2



FAST



SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios of each of five colors one of which must be opaque (black is assumed, but white also works)
- Three Lightning dice
- Cloth bag



OVERVIEW

In this game, you are a computer hacker trying to break into a secure system. To gain access, you need a three-color password. The secret codes are changed frequently, by the system's Intrusion Countermeasure Equipment (ICE). The computer you're trying to hack has the strongest possible level of ICE protection — code Black — which means if you don't enter the correct password, the Black ICE will fry your system when it shuts you down. So don't try to open the locks until you have the right colors programmed in!

GOAL

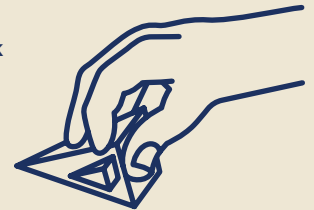
Correctly match the hidden code. (You also win if your opponent guesses incorrectly.)

TERMINOLOGY

- Locks: A line of three black Larges in the center, with Smalls under them

LOCKING CODES

This is done by placing a Lock into the bag, pushing a Code into the Lock by touch, and removing the Lock with your thumb blocking the opening so that no one can see what's inside.



LOCKING EYES

Any time someone is setting a Lock, the players should look each other in the eye — that way, you can both be sure neither of you gets a glimpse at the new color being hidden.

HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, roll the three dice, and take the three actions shown. You can perform them in any order.

DUPLICATES BECOME WILD

If you roll two of the same symbol, one is changed to Wild. If you roll Triples, two become Wild.

BLACK ICE (CONT.)

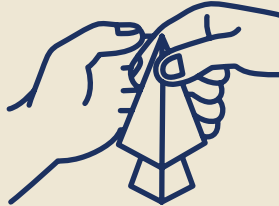


DICE OPTIONS



= Peek

Sneak a look at the Code under one of the Locks. This is best done by cupping your hand around the Lock, forming a little shield, then lifting the Large just enough to look underneath.



= Swap

Trade the positions of two of the Locks, or swap two of your Keys (but not your opponent's Keys).



= Set

Place a Keycap onto one of your Keys. (Remove the old Keycap first if needed.)



= Reset

Lift up a Lock to reveal the Code. Reload the Lock, then return the old Code to the bag.



= Copy

Cap one of your Keys with the same color that your opponent has in that position.



= Wild

Choose any of the other five actions.

NULL = WILD

If you can't perform an action, or if said action is rendered meaningless, it is treated as a Wild. For example, Copy becomes Wild if your three Keycaps already match your opponent's, and Reset becomes Wild if your opponent hasn't Peeked inside any of the Locks.

PASSING

You can also pass on any action you don't care to take.

EFFECTIVELY VS. LITERALLY TURNING WILD

Notice the important difference in the two ways a die roll can become Wild. If you roll doubles, one of the rolls literally becomes Wild: as soon as the results are observed, one of the dice should be physically changed to the Wild position, as if that's what had actually been rolled. On the other hand, when you are unable to use the action shown, the move becomes effectively Wild. In this case, you should NOT physically change the position of the die, because an action you are unable to take at the start of your turn might become possible, due to your other actions, before your turn is over. Actions only become temporarily Wild for the span of time when their original functions don't work.

HOW TO WIN

The game ends as soon as someone makes a guess. At the end of your turn, if you believe your Keys are capped with the same sequence of colors that are hidden by the Locks, say "I win!" and reveal the Secret Codes. If you were correct, you win! If you were wrong, say "Wait, I'm wrong! You win!" and demand an immediate rematch.

OTHER NOTES

INCREASING THE CHALLENGE

Described above is the standard game, with 3 Locks and 4 color possibilities. But once you've mastered those, you might wish to dial up the difficulty. You can add one or more white Trios to form additional Locks, and by including other pieces you can increase the spectrum of colors those Locks can be set to. Slowly increase either of those factors to make the game gradually more challenging, or if you dare, go directly to Expert Level, with 6 Locks and 8 colors!

DICE PLACEMENT PROTOCOL

After rolling, line the dice up before you. As you take each action, place the corresponding die in front of the other player. For extra fanciness, stack the second die onto the first and the third onto the stack, thus forming a noticeable indicator that it's the other player's turn.





COLOR WHEEL



the remaining 23 pyramids in the bag or the box; they will not be used. Once the board has been populated, prepare the Scoring Track by spreading out the grayscale pyramids next to the board, with each one flat.

HOW TO PLAY

You may change the arrangement of the board in two ways, either by swapping any two pieces that are the same size, or by swapping any two pieces that are the same color. Most of the time, same-size pieces are swapped, but now and then same-color swaps are needed to get pieces into the desired positions.

PIECE GROUPING

Pyramids must be clustered such that all the the pieces in each color-cluster are next to another of the same color. Note that "next to" only includes full-edge connections; corner-connections and across the board connections don't count.

SCORING TRACK

The grayscale pyramids are used to track your number of moves. They all begin lying flat; whenever you swap pieces on the board, you must also stand up a grayscale pyramid. When all of these pyramids are upright, the game is over. Even so, you can continue to measure your performance by reversing the scoring track, flattening the scoring pyramids as extra turns are taken, to see how far over "par" you went.

HOW TO WIN

Rearrange all the pieces on the wheel so that all are clumped together into contiguous groups of the same color, within 27 moves.

OTHER NOTES

SOLO STYLE

Some players will always prefer to "go it alone," trying to solve the puzzle without anyone else's help. Even then it's a good idea to have someone else involved, specifically keeping track of the score for you, since it's easy to forget to keep track of each move yourself when you're "in the zone."



1-5



FAST



SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- The Wheel Board
- All 90 Pyramids



OVERVIEW

Color Wheel is a solitaire/cooperative game. The ten-sided board is populated with a mixed-up arrangement of pyramids, and you have a limited number of moves in which to rearrange the pieces into groupings of each color.

GOAL

Move all the pieces on the board into clusters of the same color — kinda sorta like solving a Rubik's Cube.

SETUP

Separate the seven colorful sets of pyramids (red, yellow, orange, green, cyan, blue, and purple) from the grayscale pyramids (black, white, and clear). Randomly populate each space of the Wheel with one of the colorful pyramids. Do this by grabbing pieces without looking at them and placing them on empty spaces. Make sure that each piece you add is of a different color than any in the spaces that share a side with that space. Also, be sure to choose pieces of all three sizes as you go. Place

COLOR WHEEL (CONT.)



COOPERATIVE-STYLE

To play as a group, players can simply take turns in order, each making a single play, or you can go free-style, with anyone jumping in with a good move as soon as they see one. A nice compromise is for a player to call out a move they think is a good one, and after making it, wait until someone else has gone before jumping in again. You can call a move by saying "Large yellow here," for example, pointing to a specific spot, indicating that you'll move a Large yellow into that location, with either a single move or a two-move swap.

TIMER-STYLE

Another way to play is to measure your performance with a timer. Instead of counting moves, simply race to rearrange the wheel using a stopwatch to track your speed. You can try to beat your personal best time, or you can challenge another competitor to beat your time, using the same set of randomly-chosen pyramids to set up the board. (Exact duplication of the random starting configuration is not necessary.)

HEAD-TO-HEAD STYLE

Players can compete head-to-head, either against the clock as already noted, or by seeing who can solve the puzzle in the fewest moves.

RAINBOW STYLE

If you'd like to increase the challenge, play with the added requirement that the colors end up in a ROY G BIV sequence (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Light Blue, Dark Blue, Purple).

ESCAPE-ROOM STYLE

Just to make sure everyone's fully engaged, I like to imagine we're all trapped in a puzzle chamber by some evil villain. If we don't finish before the timer runs out, poison gas fills the room and we all die! So focus, people, please! We only have a few moves left!





GIVE OR TAKE



HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, roll the die. This indicates the size of piece that will be Given or Taken. (If a double pyramid is rolled, you choose between the two sizes.) You then choose any possible Give or Take action, for yourself, or for another player.

TRADES

If you roll a double pyramid, you have the additional option of making a swap, but only if the right pieces are available. This option allows you to trade one of the pieces in your set for any opponent's (or the Bank), as long as the two pieces being traded are the same as the two on the die. You can also make two other players trade pieces. If a trade causes two players to meet the winning conditions at once, the active player wins.

NO PASSING

You must cause some sort of Give or Take action to occur.

YES YOU CAN

Basically, any action is possible if it makes sense given the die roll and the situation. If it seems like you should be able to, you can!

EXAMPLES

If you rolled a Medium, here are some of the possible options you might have, depending on which pieces are still in the Bank and which are held by other players:

- Take a Medium from the Bank.
- Take a Medium from another player.
- Give a Medium back to the Bank.
- Give a Medium to another player.
- Require another player to Take a Medium from the Bank.
- Require another player to Give a Medium back to the Bank.
- Require another player to Give a Medium to a third player.

HOW TO WIN

You win if you have exactly three pieces and they're all the same size!



2-10



FAST



SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- The Pyramid Die
- At least three Trios (color doesn't matter)
- For two players you need three Trios; for more players use as many Trios as there are players.



OVERVIEW

Give or Take is a very simple game of either giving or taking a piece. All the pieces start in the Bank and you're trying to collect a matching set of three. You can take a piece yourself, or choose to make someone else take a piece. You can give a piece back to the bank, or you can make someone else give back a piece. You can give a piece to another player, or take a piece from that player. Sometimes you can even trade pieces. The trick is that a die roll determines the size of the piece that someone has to give or take.

GOAL

Collect exactly three pyramids, all the same size.

SETUP

Place all the pyramids in the center of the playing area. This will be called the Bank.



HIJINKS



HOW TO PLAY

- On your turn, roll the die. Choose a pyramid of the size shown, and move it one space orthogonally (non-diagonally). If the die shows two sizes, pick one.
- Pieces may be stacked, but **ONLY** onto pieces of the same size or larger.
- You may move any piece in a tower. All pyramids on top are carried along with it.
- You may move pieces **INTO** your opponent's Home Row, but once they are there, only your opponent may move them.
- **No Passing:** If you **CAN** make a move, you **MUST**. If the die roll indicates no legal moves, you must roll again until you have a legal move.



2



FAST



SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- The Pyramid die
- Three Trios of any color
- Hijinks board



HOW TO WIN

1) Fill your Home Row with all three pieces of a given size, one in each spot, with no extras.

or

2) Get all nine pyramids moved into the other player's Home Row.

OVERVIEW

Hijinks is an elegantly simple yet surprisingly deep strategy game. Luck determines which pieces you get to move each turn.

GOAL

Be the first to fill the row on your side of the 3x3 grid with exactly three pieces, all the same size, one per space. Alternatively, cause your opponent to take all nine pieces.

TERMINOLOGY

Home Row: The three spaces on the edge closest to you are referred to as your Home Row.

SETUP

Stack each trio of pyramids in the Tree formation (a Small on a Medium on a Large) and place each one on one of the three spaces in the center row of the board.

OTHER NOTES

TRI-COLOR FUN

Although color has no meaning in this game, it's aesthetically pleasing to play with Smalls of one color, Mediums of second, and Larges of a third, particularly when the three colors go well together, such as red-orange-yellow, green-blue-purple, or black-white-clear. (This is true for Give or Take as well.)

HISTORICAL NOTES

This was originally published as a standalone game in a tiny pink pyramid-shaped zippered bag, featuring pink pyramids, called Pink Hijinks. But since this is Any-color-other-than-pink Hijinks, we shortened the name to Hijinks.



019



HOMEWORLDS

DESIGNED BY JOHN COOPER



WHO STARTS

Flip a coin if the players' skills are evenly matched. Otherwise, the lesser-experienced begins.

HOW TO PLAY

Let's begin with the fundamentals of interstellar space travel:

- Star systems are marked on the playing field with upright pyramids. This "star map" displays only the star systems actually being visited by spaceships.
- Spaceships are represented by flat pyramids. The direction in which they point indicates who they belong to. Your pieces always point away from you.
- When a ship discovers a new star system, it appears on the star map, and when the last ship leaves the system, the star piece is immediately returned to the Bank.
- You can move a ship from one star system to another **ONLY** if the stars are of different sizes. Differently-sized star systems are connected, but same-sized stars are not. (Why? It's just the way the wormhole technology works...)
- A Binary Star (a system with two stars) is only connected to a star if it's of the size not included in the Binary Star.

2 LONG COMPLEX

EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios each of Red, Yellow, Blue, and Green
- Turn Token



OVERVIEW

What Chess is to medieval warfare, Homeworlds is to Star Trek and Star Wars. (Actually, the best comparisons are Starship Troopers and Ender's Game.) Our people have discovered an alien race, but they are Evil and intent on destroying us, so we must obliterate them first. We are galactic overlords in this epic space opera, commanding fleets of starships, blowing up planets in our wake, and ultimately conquering the universe. And it's all done with what appear to be random clusters of colorful pyramids arranged upon the table.

GOAL

Dominate the universe by destroying the enemy's Homeworld, or conquering or destroying all of their ships at their Homeworld. You lose the game if you have zero ships at your own Homeworld, regardless of how many other stars or starships you might control.

SETUP

Stack up the pyramids, sorted by size and color, and place them to the side of the playing area. This is the Bank.

THE FIRST TURN

The game begins with a setup round, during which the players choose their initial pieces.

- A Binary Star and Large Ship: To begin, take a Large spaceship (of any color) and place it with your Homeworld, made of two upright pyramids, in your choice of sizes and colors. Stack them up to form a Binary Star. (All Homeworlds are Binary Stars, and all other stars are single stars.)
- Choosing Your Homeworld: The decisions you make during setup will greatly affect the entire game. You need to make smart choices when deciding on the colors & sizes of your Homeworld stars and the color of your Large ship. (See Strategy Tips below.) If this is your first game, we recommend starting with a blue and red Homeworld and a green ship, with the second player choosing a different pair of sizes for their stars than did the first.

HOMEWORLDS (CONT.)



TURN OPTIONS

During each turn, you may perform one Basic action, OR you may return one of your ships to the Bank in order to gain as many as three Sacrifice actions. Also, at any time during your turn, you may invoke the Catastrophe option for any Overpopulation situation on the table.

- **Basic Action:** You may perform your Basic action in any system where you have a ship, using any power you can access in that ship's system.
- **Sacrifice Action:** The number of Sacrifice actions you get by removing one of your ships is equal to the pip count of that ship. You get that many actions, of that ship's color, in any systems where you still control a ship, regardless of colors you have available at that star.

COLOR POWERS

Access to a power you can use for your action is provided by one of the following:

- 1) Star: Color of the system's star
- 2) Ship: Color of a ship YOU control there
- 3) Sacrifice: Color of a ship you give up

Each color provides a different game option:

- **Green = Build** (The green Colonists construct the starships.)
- **Yellow = Move** (The yellow Navigators grok the wormholes.)
- **Red = Attack** (The red Warriors wield the weapons.)
- **Blue = Trade** (The blue Ice-Traders offer transformations.)

GREEN

Build a new ship, by taking a piece from the Bank and placing it next to one of your existing ships.

- **Same Color:** The color of your new ship must be the same as one of the ships you control in the system where the new ship is being Built.
- **Smallest Size:** The ship you Build must be the smallest size of that color currently available in the Bank.

YELLOW

Move a ship from the system it's in to any other Connected system (new or known).

- **Discovery:** Take a piece of your choice from the Bank, add it to the board as a star, then move your ship to that star.
- **Abandonment:** Return a star to the Bank immediately if zero ships are there.
- **Travel:** Move to any Connected system whether it is currently populated with your ships, your opponent's ships, or both.

RED

Take control of an enemy ship by turning the piece around so that it points away from you. (Note that attacking never destroys another ship; it's more like stealing than attacking.)

- **Size Matters:** You can only attack a ship if it's smaller or the same size as the biggest ship YOU have in that system. But note that a small red CAN be used to attack a larger ship — you just need to have your own larger ship (of any color) in that system, which can attack the enemy's ship using the power of your Small red.
- **Example:** Suppose you have a Small red and a Medium yellow, and the other player has a Medium red in the same system. Your Small red is not big enough to attack the Medium red, and your Medium yellow cannot attack on its own (except when the star is red). But together they can prevail, because the Medium yellow can "borrow" the power of the Small red.

BLUE

Swap one of your ships with a differently colored piece of the same size from the Bank. You can only trade exact size for exact size; if the size you want is not available, you cannot swap.

OVERPOPULATION

Too much of one color in one system can trigger a disaster. Overpopulation exists any time a single system contains four or more pieces of the same color — including ships on both sides AND the star itself.



HOMEWORLDS (CONT.)

CATASTROPHES

At any point during your turn, if you notice an Overpopulated star system, you have the **OPTION** to declare a Catastrophe in that system (even if you don't have a ship there). If called, all pieces of the overpopulated color are returned to the Bank. If this includes the star itself, then **ALL** ships at that location are destroyed (unless the star was half of a Binary Star, in which case it becomes a single-star, but still a Homeworld).

HOMEWORLD ABANDONMENT

It's OK to temporarily abandon your Homeworld as long as you have a ship there again by the time your turn is over. However, you are eliminated from the game if both stars in your Homeworld are destroyed, or if you don't control any of the ships at your Homeworld when your turn ends. If you destroy your opponent's Homeworld but lose your own in the process, the game ends in a tie.

HOW TO WIN

There are three paths to victory:

- 1) Direct Assault: Use Red to take control of all enemy ships at the enemy's Homeworld.
- 2) Fleet Catastrophe: Destroy all enemy ships at their Home by causing a catastrophe.
- 3) Star Demolition: Cause two catastrophes, destroying both halves of the Homeworld.

OTHER NOTES

THE TURN INDICATOR

It's very helpful to move a token back and forth to indicate whose turn it is. This helps avoid confusion (in cases of distraction or interruption), but also signifies that you're done with your move. Since one turn may consist of a sequence of actions, there are times when you won't realize that you want to rethink your move until after you've seen how it looks on the table. So think of moving the coin as being like clicking "send" on the orders to your fleet.

MARKING THE HOMEWORLD

It will be clear which star systems are some player's Homeworld for as long as both stars of such systems remain intact, since all binary systems are by definition someone's Homeworld. However, once a player's Homeworld is reduced to a single star, you may find it desirable to mark said system with a card or token of some kind, to remind the players of its importance.

ARRANGING THE STAR MAP

Because the layout of this game's playing area is free-form and ever-changing, players should feel free to move the star systems as needed, to positions that are the most desirable for seeing the connections. This process is sometimes called Star-Towing. Here's our system for arranging the board:

- Stars connected to a player's Homeworld are placed nearest to said Homeworld.
- Stars not connected to either Homeworld go in the middle.

Arranged in this way, each star is connected to the stars in the rows ahead and behind, but not to stars in the same row. Think of it as being like cars on a freeway: your ships (and the systems you control) are moved to your side of the road. Assuming you drive on the right side of the road, place your ships on the right side of your star, and move star systems that you control to the right side of the star map.

NOVICE VS. EXPERT

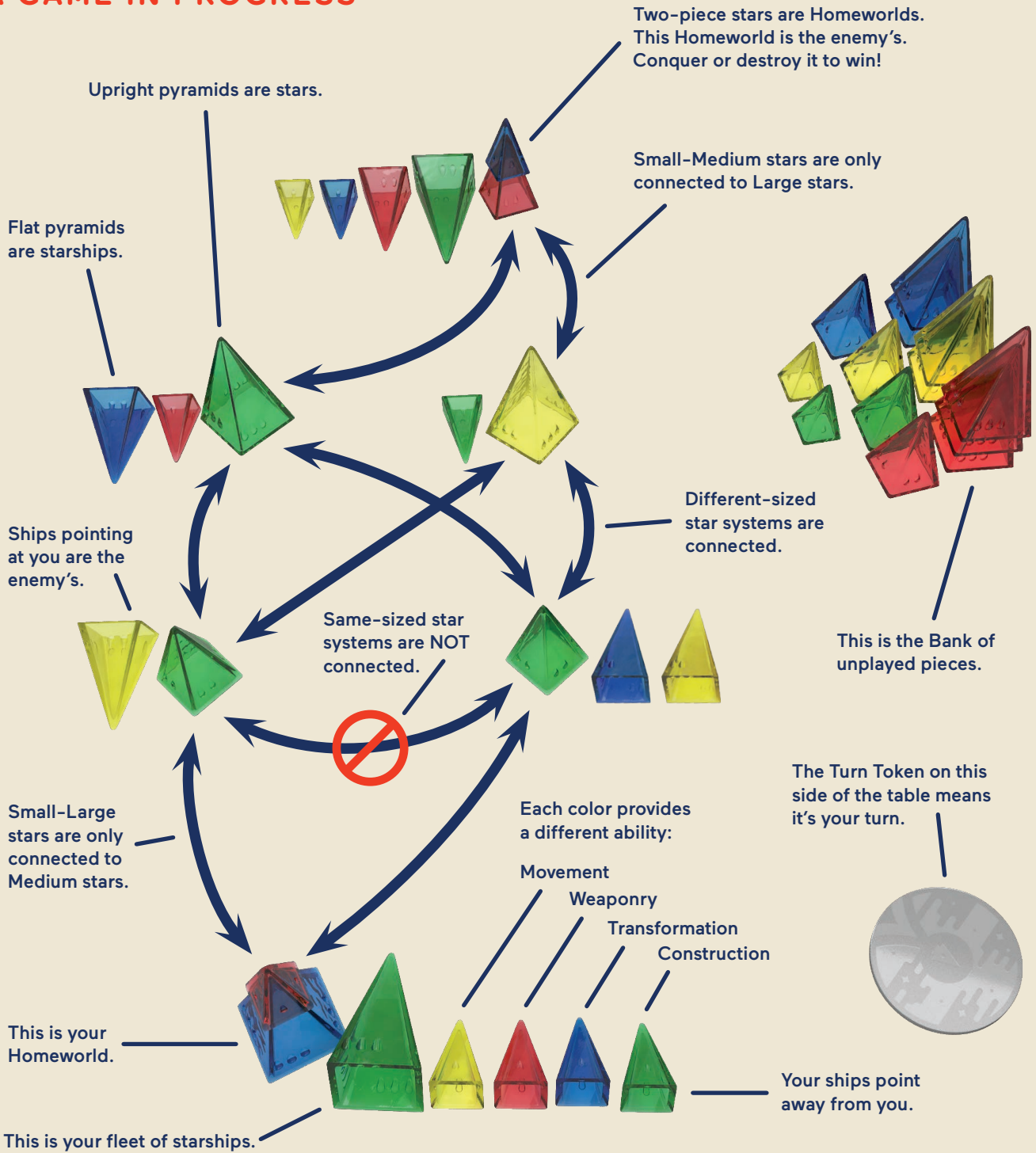
Homeworlds is a complex game with a steep learning curve. Because of this, novice players (known as "Junior Officers") will be no match for experienced players (called "Senior Officers"). To make the game equally challenging for both, a Senior Officer may wish to offer one or more of these headstart options to the new player:

- Second Turn Timewarp: After both players build their Homeworlds, the Junior Officer may be allowed to perform one or more bonus turns, so as to get ahead faster.
- Red Alert: Not unlike saying "Check" in Chess, the Senior Officer will say "Red Alert" whenever the Junior Officer is in immediate danger of elimination.
- Brain Transference: The Junior Officer is given one chance, at some point during the game, to completely change places with the Senior Officer for the remainder of the game.

HOMEWORLDS (CONT.)



A GAME IN PROGRESS





HOMEWORLDS (CONT.)

COMMON MISTAKES

Homeworlds is a difficult game to learn, and even seasoned players can make mistakes. Here are some of the concepts new players find most difficult to grok:

- **Can't Move There:** Beware of thinking two systems are connected when they aren't.
- **Can't Do That:** You can't use the power of a color another player has in the same system; only your own ships, the star itself, and power gained by sacrifices.
- **Can't Build That:** You can't grow a ship if you don't have a ship of that color in the same star system.
- **Can't Attack Yet:** The one-two punch nature of attacks in this game are confusing at first. You have to have the drop on the other player — you cannot move in and attack all at once. When you move a ship into my system, I get a turn to respond before you get to attack me. And during my turn I can (potentially) take instant control of your ship, as if it were a gift being delivered to my doorstep.

PHOTO DOCUMENTING

Homeworlds can be a long game. If you need to pause it, remember that everyone has a camera on their smartphones now so it's easy to save a record of the state of a game and reconstitute it later. Just make sure the picture includes the pieces in the bank, and a marker showing whose turn it is. When reconstructing the game, a check of your bank against the state of the bank in the photo will confirm if you have everything restored correctly.

HOMEWORLDS FOR MORE THAN TWO

Although originally intended by the designer as a game for more than two players, non-Binary variations of this game have gone the way of Icehouse. For starters, you can't even play with more than two unless you get more pyramids. (For each additional player, you need another Trio of each color.) Then you'll also need additional rules to determine who you need to knock out in order to win: You can fight to the last captain standing, each player can be seeking to destroy the one on their left, or you can assign secret Good or Evil roles to all players, with Good players seeking to destroy all Evil and Evil players seeking to destroy anyone. But while these variations can be interesting, it's the pure, two-player version that has become a classic.

THE SECOND TURN

It will almost always be the case that both player's second turns will be the same: the growth of a small ship of the same color as your initial Large. Other options don't make sense: there won't be anything to attack yet; even if you decide to begin with yellow, you can't go anywhere on your first turn; and if you wanted a different color than blue, you'd have chosen it rather than wasting your first turn changing your blue ship to another color. The only time when the second turn isn't automatic is in the rare case in which you went first and the other player created a setup that conflicts with yours in such a way as to make an immediate use of blue desirable.

STRATEGY TIPS

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE ECONOMY

While Homeworlds may seem like a war game, like most wars, it's all about the financing. So keep a close eye on the bank! Here are some tips on banking wisely:

- **Don't Take the Last Serving:** Whenever possible, avoid being the player who has to take the last available Small or Medium piece of any given color. (You'd rather be the one who gets to build the first ship of the next size.)
- **Smart Shopping:** Wait for bargains, and snap them up when they're available. It's a good time to go shopping when there are three of a size available in the bank, but the best time is when there are two, since the other player will be opening up availability of the next size if they copy your action. Other good opportunities to look for are times when you might be able to sacrifice a green Medium to grow a couple of Larges, and times when you can leave the next size open because you know your opponent can't safely grow the next size themselves.
- **Never Get Frozen Out of Any Color:** Maintain control of at least one ship of each color (and seek to freeze out your enemy by monopolizing a color they lack). It's easy to get frozen out of a color early in the game, when most of the pieces in play are Smalls. If the only piece you have available to change into a new color is a Small, and the other player grabs the last Small of that color, you won't be able to get into that economy until you have a Medium available to transform... and that could take awhile. And by then, all the Mediums might be gone and they'll building Large ships while you're still struggling to catch up.

HOMEWORLDS (CONT.)



CHOOSE YOUR HOMEWORLD WISELY

But what setup is best? Most Starship Captains agree that you need to start with Blue and Green along with either Red or Yellow. Beyond that, opinions vary. Some players like to start with Yellow, so they can move immediately, but others prefer starting off with a Red ship. Many like building a "Planetary Defense System" which means including Red as one of the two colors that form the Homeworld itself. As for the size pairings, here are the three possibilities:

- **Banker (Small-Medium star):** This setup gives you an edge when using the Investment strategy, since it moves first to Large systems.



- **Fortress (Medium-Large star):** This setup makes your Homeworld harder to invade as the game progresses, since the supply of Smalls needed for bordering star systems dwindles as players turn all the Smalls all into starships instead.



- **Goldilocks (Small-Large star):** The stars you can go to from here are "just right" because they're not too big and not too small.



AVOID SMALL UNIVERSE

If the second player chooses the same two sizes of pieces for their Homeworld as did the first player, the map will be far more compact than with non-matching Homeworlds. This shrunken universe makes the game very claustrophobic, and not as much fun. Choosing a "Gemini Star" (Large-Large, Medium-Medium, or Small-Small) also shrinks the universe.

AVOID GETTING BLUEBIRDED

Imagine you have exactly two ships at your Homeworld, and they're both the same color. Let's say they're blue. If your opponent has a large yellow, and two blue ships at near and far positions, they can knock you out in one move. Don't let this happen to you! (The name refers to a coffeeshop in Amsterdam called the Bluebird, where a particularly memorable game ended this way, back in the earliest days of the game's history.) There are two ways a Bluebird can happen, and one is easier to see coming than the other. Either way, you are vulnerable if you have exactly two ships at your Homeworld and they're both the same color.

- **The Easy Bluebird:** Your enemy sacrifices a yellow Medium to simultaneously move two ships of your color, from systems one jump away, into your Homeworld.
- **The Tricky Bluebird:** Your enemy sacrifices a yellow Large to move in two ships of your color, one from a nearby star and one from two jumps away.
- **The Sitting Duck:** This is like a Bluebird but even more vulnerable. If you have three ships of the same color (or two ships plus a star of the same color) and no other ships at your Homeworld, all your enemy needs do is to drive one ship of that color into your system and KA-BOOM it's game over.

MAKE INVESTMENTS

When the only ship at a star system goes away, the star-piece is immediately returned to the bank. If the ship that just departed was green, and was Sacrificed, it may be possible to instantly change the star it was taken from into a ship. Parking green ships at stars you'd like to change into ships later is called Investing. The best use of this strategy is to park greens at Large stars while Mediums and Smalls of that color are available, then wait until the Bank is empty to "cash in." You just need to hope that your enemy doesn't move any other ships into your Investment system before you can sacrifice the solitary green ship you have at that system to turn its star into a ship.

DON'T RUSH

Tempo is tricky in this game. Sometimes fortune favors the patient, not the bold. For various reasons (such as how all Bank quantities are in odd numbers), the player who acts first can sometimes get the short end of the stick. If it's a bad time to go shopping, consider stalling instead, moving ships around rather than constructing new ones.



HOMEWORLDS (CONT.)

BEWARE THE INCOMPLETE BATTLE-PLAN

One of the easiest ways to lose this game is to mount an attack that fails to annihilate your opponent, but leaves your own empire vulnerable. This most often happens when you knock out half of a player's Homeworld, leaving you with fewer ships and more connected stars than before. Plan for total victory!

BUILD A FACTORY

A Large Green ship, along with another Green ship in the same system, sets up a powerful maneuver called the Factory. Once no Greens remain in the Bank, you can Sacrifice your Large Green for three Build actions. Then, as one of those actions, re-build the Large Green in the same system you took it from. You now have two more Build actions without having lost your original Large green. You can do this over and over again!

CREATE HAPPY SYSTEMS

When you have a star system containing exactly four pieces, one of each color, we call it a Happy System. It's the ideal arrangement, since it's hardest to blow up and gives you all the options. So, while it's great to have a Factory, doing so requires having two greens in the same system, which is more dangerous.

PLAY KEEP-AWAY

If you can't build a desirable piece as a ship, try turning it into a star. Even if the ship you discover it with isn't Green, you might be able to turn the system into an Investment opportunity later on. More importantly, you are preventing your enemy from getting to build a ship with that piece.

SQUONKING

There are times when you might wish to sacrifice a piece wastefully, specifically to interfere with your opponent's access to the Bank. We call this Squonking (a combination of squandering and blocking). For example, you might want to sacrifice a yellow Small when moving a ship away from a yellow system, not because you need the movement ability — you don't — but because the return of the yellow Small to the Bank will block the opponent from growing a larger yellow piece.

TERRAFORMING

When you sacrifice a yellow for movement, the piece immediately goes into the Bank, which means you can instantly take it out again and place it back onto the board as a star, while moving one of your ships into orbit alongside it. We call this Terraforming, and it's a very useful technique for a couple of different reasons. First, it allows you to maintain control of the yellow piece you're sacrificing, so that your opponent can't immediately grow it as a ship themselves, which is particularly important if the yellow ship you are sacrificing is a Large and the Bank is empty. Secondly, Terraforming allows you to transform one of your yellow ships into a star, which can be crucial when all pieces of that size are gone from the bank and you need to get to a star of that size.

USING GREEN TO TELEPORT

This trick is very useful if you get frozen out of Yellow. You can "teleport" a small Green ship into any other system where you have another Green ship. Just Sacrifice the ship to get a Build action, then rebuild that ship in a different star system. If the Bank is low on Green, you can also Teleport Medium or even Large ships, and get extra Build actions in the process!

THE DEMOLITION FLEET

This is a tricky maneuver, requiring just the right conditions, but it will be devastating if done correctly. It's only possible if your opponent has just one Large ship at their Homeworld, along with at least one other ship of that color. (Note that if they have zero other ships at home, it's a Bluebird situation.) You will need two ships of the same color as your opponent's Large, accompanied by a Large of your own of a different color. We will call these three ships your "Demolition Fleet." You will also need a yellow Large you can sacrifice, and some kind of access to red. Position the ships in your Demolition Fleet at stars one jump away from your enemy's Homeworld. Spread your fleet out between multiple stars if you can, to make it more difficult to notice what you're setting up. Assuming they don't see the threat in time, you can move all three of your Demolition Fleet ships into your enemy's Homeworld at once, and call Catastrophe. They will be left with no ships big enough to challenge your Large, and as long as you don't run out of attack power, you should be able to take control of all enemy ships at their Homeworld on subsequent turns — including any other Large ships they might try to return home after the damage is done.

HOMEWORLDS (CONT.)



THE DOOMSDAY MACHINE

With a particular fleet of nine ships, scattered across the galaxy in specific positions, you can vaporize your enemy's Homeworld in exactly two moves. We call this setup a Doomsday Machine:

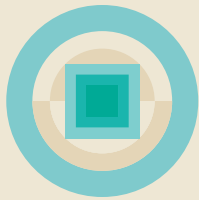
- 2 Large Yellow ships (for two triple-jump moves)
- 3 ships of one of the colors of the target system, all located at systems one jump away
- 3 ships of the target system's other color, located at stars that will be within one jump after the first half of the target Homeworld is gone
- 1 extra ship, to protect your own Homeworld

THE PRIMARY DIRECTIVE

The Starship Captain's Primary Directive is to defend the Homeworld. Here are four practical tips for accomplishing this:

- 1) Keep a large ship at the Homeworld at ALL times. Tempting though it can be to use that big powerful ship elsewhere, you should always protect your Homeworld with a Large ship, unless you are about to win or are absolutely certain you will get a Large back at home before being invaded.
- 2) As soon as your enemy gets a weapon (i.e. a red ship), you should get one too. You may not need a weapon until your enemy has one, but as soon as they do, you need to arm yourself immediately. (This is particularly true if you lack a Planetary Defense System. i.e. a Homeworld setup that includes red in your star.)
- 3) Diversify and minimize your local defense fleet. To reduce the threat of catastrophe, avoid having more than one piece of each color at your Homeworld, either as a ship or part of the star system. In particular, never let all your home ships be of a single color if there's ANY chance of being invaded.
- 4) If your star is half-destroyed, monopolize the remaining color of your Homeworld. After half of your Homeworld has been blown up, your enemy needs just three ships of your remaining color to finish you off. Take those pieces out of circulation any way you can!





ICE DICE



SETUP

Stack up the pyramids, sorted by size and color, and place them to the side of the playing area. This is the Bank.



2-3
 FAST
 SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- The Pyramid Die
- The Color Die
- One Trio per player of each of the five colors on the Color Die (that's 30 pyramids total for a two player game and 45 for a three player game).



HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, roll both dice. Choose a piece of the size and color indicated, take it from the Bank, and place it on the Counter. You may or may not get to put this piece in your Vault when your turn ends.

- If you roll the Atom, choose any color you don't already have on the Counter.
- If the pyramid die shows a pair of pyramids, choose between the two sizes shown.

OVERVIEW

Ice Dice is a press-your-luck game. Roll the dice to see what pyramid you get, then decide if you want to risk it by rolling again!

GOAL

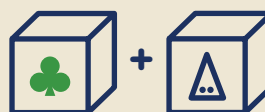
Collect three single-color Trios.

TERMINOLOGY

- Counter: In the center of the table is a spot called the Counter.
- Bank: To one side is an area called the Bank, where all the pieces begin.
- Vault: The space in front of each player is called their Vault.

EXAMPLES

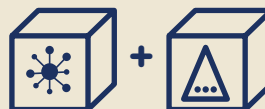
If you roll:



You get a Medium green pyramid.

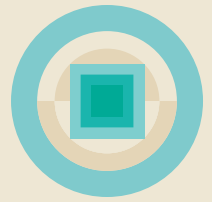


You get your choice of either a Small or a Medium yellow pyramid.



You get a Large pyramid of any color not already on the Counter.

ICE DICE (CONT.)



ROLLING AGAIN

You may continue rolling and moving pieces to the Counter until you either decide to stop, or Bust Out.

BUSTING OUT

You Bust Out as soon as you roll the same color as a piece on the Counter. If you Bust Out, all pieces on the Counter are returned to the Bank. To move pieces into your Vault, you must decide to end your turn before you make a roll that causes you to Bust Out. When you roll the Atom, you cannot choose a color you already have on the Counter, since to do so would cause you to Bust Out. Size doesn't matter here, Busting Out is all about color.

RAINBOW BONUS

If you roll all five colors without Busting Out, you get to move those pyramids to your Vault and take another turn!

STEALING

If the piece you rolled is not in the Bank, you must steal it from an opponent's Vault. (Stolen pieces are NOT returned to their former owners if you Bust Out.) If your roll gives you options, it's OK to make a choice that will require stealing even if the Bank contains the other pyramids you could choose. If your Vault already contains all the pyramids of the size & color you rolled, you get nothing for that roll, but may roll again.

HOW TO WIN

You need three monochrome Trios to win. It's acceptable to have two Trios of the same color. The order you collect them in also doesn't matter; you can regroup your collection however you wish as you go. Extra pyramids in your Vault are irrelevant.

OTHER NOTES

KEEP-GOING VARIATION

When young players are participating, you can remove the press-your-luck element, so that everyone always gains pieces. All players keep rolling until they would otherwise Bust Out; then instead they simply Vault whatever pieces they have on the Counter at that point. (The Rainbow Bonus does not apply during this variation.)

HISTORICAL NOTES

I invented this game — and the dice it uses — at my first Burning Man event, a regional gathering in Delaware called Playa Del Fuego, in May 2009. Ice Dice is basically the same game as Volcano, except with a press-your-luck dice mechanism for collecting pieces, rather than a puzzle you have to solve.





ICE TOWERS



2-6



FAST



MEDIUM

EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios of one color per player (if you have more pyramids, you can add them for a longer game)



OVERVIEW

Ice Towers is a fast-paced game of pyramid stacking, played without turns on any flat surface. If yours is the top piece on a tower at the end of the game, you control that tower, and you get points for each piece it contains. As the towers grow taller, you can sometimes take your pieces out and replay them, or even split some towers in two. The game ends when no more plays will be made.

GOAL

Score the most points by capping the most valuable towers.

SETUP

Everyone's pyramids are gathered together, then randomly scattered across the tabletop. Stand all pieces upright in place.

READY SIGNAL

As soon as all players show they are ready to start, by touching (but not lifting) one of their pyramids, the game officially begins.

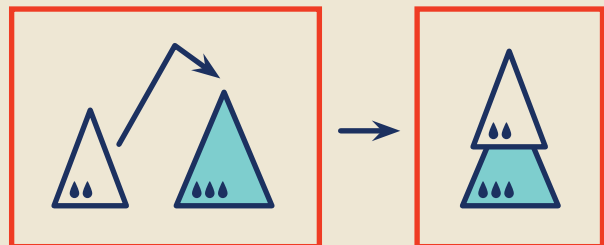
NO TURNS

In Ice Towers, everyone plays at the same time. You may take any legal action at any time you choose. You can take several actions in quick succession or do nothing for awhile as other players continue making moves at their own pace. Things usually happen quickly at the start of the game, then slow down as the options melt away. Sometimes it will be a race to see who manages to take a particularly crucial action first.

HOW TO PLAY

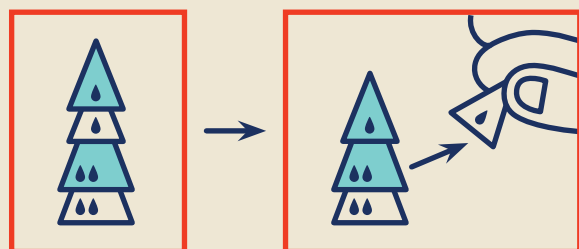
There are three possible actions: Capping, Mining, and Splitting. You may only perform one action at a time.

CAPPING



- Capping: Stacking one of your pieces on someone else's to take control of it is the most common action. You may only pick up and move single free-standing pieces of your own color. In order to cap, your piece must be the same size or smaller and a different color than the topmost piece in the tower you are capping.

MINING

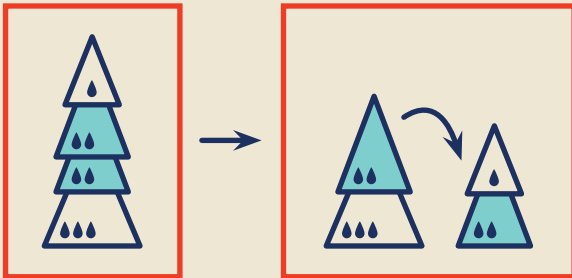


- Mining: If you don't control a tower (i.e. you don't have the top piece), but two or more of your pieces are inside the tower, you may open up the stack and remove one of your pieces (your choice). Reassemble the rest of the tower and continue playing (but see the rules below about Minebacks and Carry-Overs).

ICE TOWERS (CONT.)



SPLITTING



- **Splitting:** Whenever two pieces of any other player's color are next to each other in a tower, you may split the tower in two, by separating the pair of same-colored pyramids. However, you cannot split your own pieces. Splitting is optional. Some towers may remain unsplit at the end of the game, typically when a splittable pair is at the top of a tower.

NO MINE BACKS

When you mine out a piece, you must immediately use it to cap a different tower. If there are no legal plays available, just set the piece down; it becomes a free-stander.

NO CARRY-OVERS

When you mine out a piece, you must re-assemble the tower before doing anything else. It might seem OK to carry the upper half of a tower away briefly as you carry out the mandatory replay, since you'd soon be back with the upper stage after replaying the piece you are mining, but in a game without turns, "soon" isn't fast enough. Resist the urge to "carry over," and fully reassemble the tower you've mined before recapping.

POST-MINING ETIQUETTE

It's fine to take a moment after mining to consider your options, but you aren't allowed to stall. You can't just hold onto that piece, waiting for a good spot to open up; if you take too long, others may insist that you play a mined piece before they take their next actions.

ENDING THE GAME

The game ends when all players agree that no more plays will be made. Often this will happen automatically, when no more moves are possible, but generally the players will need to agree that the game is over, since not all splitting opportunities will be used.

COUNTING SCORES

When adding up the scores, feel free to dismantle and re-stack the towers you captured. We find that it's fastest if you stack the pieces back up into 10-point towers. (Just make sure everyone has the correct towers first!) Anything over 18 is a good score.

HOW TO WIN

When no more plays will be made, everyone counts the number of points in the towers they controls. Each Small scores one point, each Medium two points, and each Large three points. Highest score wins!

OTHER NOTES

REMINDERS AND CLARIFICATIONS

- When capping, no piece can be fully hidden (no larger pieces on top of smaller pieces).
- You can't cap a tower if your piece is already on top.
- You can only mine if your color is NOT on top, and you have at least TWO pieces in the tower.
- When mining, you can remove ANY ONE of your pieces, but you MUST replay the piece elsewhere.
- You cannot split your own color; only others can.
- Splitting is NOT mandatory. The game can end with many splitting options untaken.
- You DON'T have to be on top of a tower in order to split it. There just has to be a different color than yours at the split-point.
- If you have free standers when the game ends, they're not worthless – they're just short towers.
- If you have a piece in your hand, you CANNOT split a tower! You must first do something with the piece you are holding!
- It is NOT necessary to finish all capping before starting to mine.
- You can play your pieces in ANY order.
- You get points for ALL of the pieces in the towers you capture.



ICE TOWERS (CONT.)

FINAL PIECE SHOWDOWN

If two players with no other moves left each end up with an unplayed piece in their hands, with nowhere they can be played and neither player wanting to set their piece down because it would just be capped by the other, then both players set their pieces down simultaneously, and the game ends.

TOWER WARS

Players can sometimes get into mine & recapture exchanges that can seem endless, but these usually resolve themselves, often faster than you might think. Keep playing until you can split a tower, or create a new tower by fleeing (see Strategy Tips).

TIMED ENDINGS

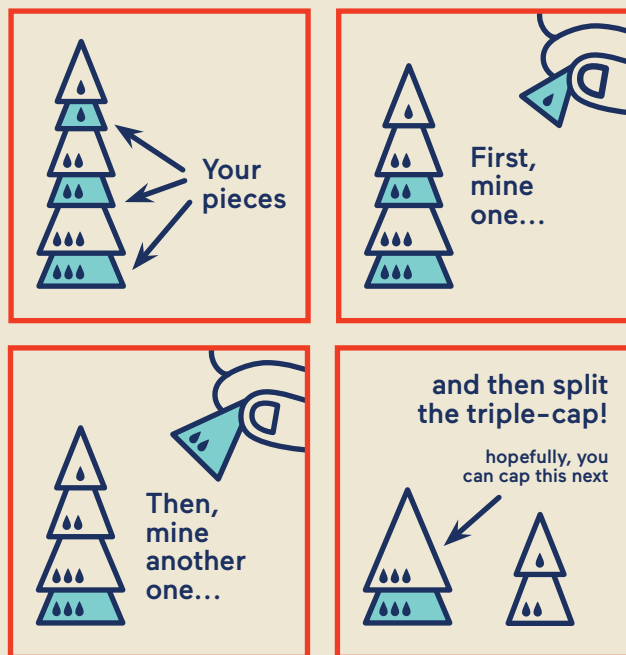
During high-pressure games like tournaments, “analysis paralysis” may cause the game to drag. If necessary, you can add a timer to the game: when it rings, anyone holding a piece must set it down. Towers are scored as they are.

STRATEGY TIPS

- **Start Big:** The most powerful pieces are the smalls, which can cap anything, so save them until the end. Play your Larges first, then play your Mediums.
- **Invest in the Future:** Set up mining opportunities by getting at least two pieces into every tower you join.
- **Limit Your Opponents’ Options:** Think through the mining opportunities you’ll create for others when you cap a tower. Look for towers where the top piece is the only one of its color, and try not to cap towers that will allow someone else to mine multiple pieces.
- **Mine to Create Splits:** Splitting a tower can often stop your opponent cold, so look for chances to remove a piece that will create a splitting situation.
- **Mine to Prevent Splits:** Look for situations where a split of pieces you own might occur. Unless such a split would be good for you (which is rare), then hurry, mine out a piece before someone splits you!
- **Think Before You Split:** Make sure it’s best for YOU before you choose to split a tower. (Just because you can doesn’t mean you should.) Be cautious about splitting off singleton pieces, since you’ll just give control of that piece back to its owner. Why give the enemy a free play?

- **Diplomatic Splitting:** Splitting off a singleton can be a great maneuver if you make a deal with someone else to do the same thing to your piece elsewhere. Making a deal can be as easy as saying “I’ll split you here if you split me there, OK?”
- **Look Before You Mine:** The No Minebacks rule says you must cap a different tower after mining, and you need to do so without too much delay. So, figure out your plan BEFORE you get that piece into your hand.
- **Fleeing:** When you mine out a medium or large piece, you may find that no towers are available for you to cap it with, since most towers will be topped by small pieces as the game draws to an end. If so, you must re-play the piece by just setting it down. Doing this deliberately (i.e. mining out a large when you know it can’t cap anything) is called “fleeing” (or “running away”) and is often a good move.
- **The Triple-Cap Split:** Two of your pieces in one tower is good, but three is better. (This is particularly true in a two-player game, where this trick becomes a trap you can set for your opponent.) After you get capped, mine twice to leave your opponent with three pieces stacked up together at the top of the tower. You can then split the tower, creating a big tower (ripe for capture) and a small tower (which you can ignore).

THE TRIPLE CAP SPLIT TRAP



ICE TOWERS (CONT.)



HAUNTED ICE TOWERS

Ice Towers is better when played with more than two, so to increase the complexity and excitement of a two player game, we suggest summoning up a ghost player. Since ghosts have no physical form, such players can only move their pieces by mentally commanding the other players to carry out their moves for them. The ghost can even win!

SPECIAL RULES FOR THE GHOST

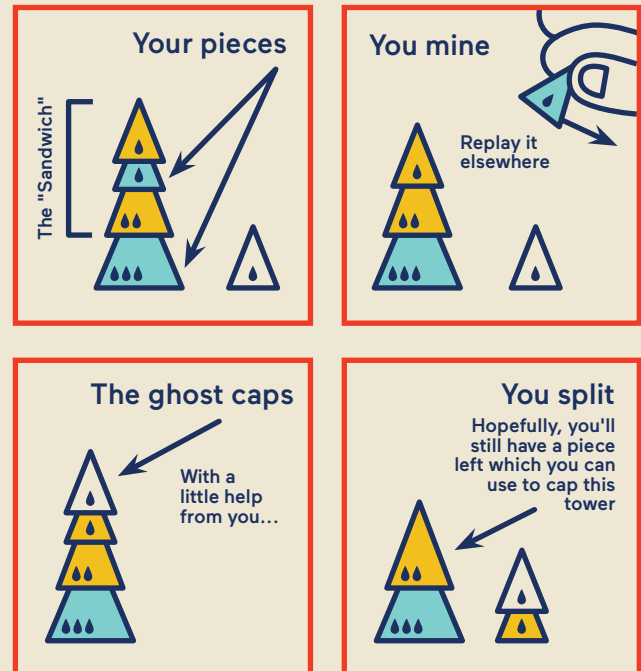
Begin by naming your imaginary friend and selecting a color for the ghost to use. (The ghost can be any color, but white or clear are the obvious best choices.) During the game, either player may move for the ghost at any time, with the following restrictions:

- The ghost never caps a free-standing piece.
- The ghost never splits a tower.

HAUNTED STRATEGIES

If there's a ghost in the game, look for a spot where there's a "sandwich" (with your piece as the "filling") at the top of a tower. Make sure the ghost still has a small available, then mine out your piece, creating an empty sandwich. Replay that piece as fast as you can, then cap the empty sandwich with a ghostly Small. You can then immediately split the tower – without even letting go of the piece! This leaves the bottom of the tower ready for recapping while squandering one of your enemy's strongest pieces. The counter to the Empty Sandwich is as follows: After your opponent mines out the sandwich "filling" and is busy replaying it, cap for the ghost yourself and immediately mine out one of the "bread" pieces.

THE EMPTY SANDWICH



OTHER NOTES

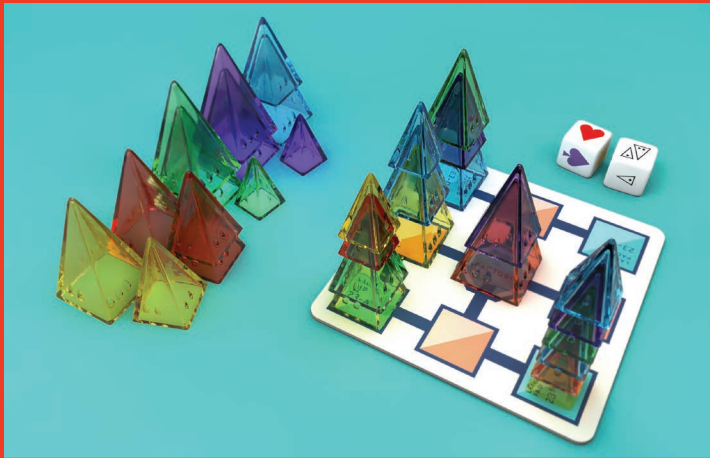
HISTORICAL NOTES

Ice Towers is my own version of Icehouse, the imaginary game I described in the short story that spawned this whole system. Although the actual game known as Icehouse was based on my ideas, it's really a John Cooper game. I revisited my original concepts with this game, which I designed after many years of playing John's game, and learning to design games myself. Ice Towers fixes (or designs around) many of Icehouse's imperfections and in some ways is more like the game I originally envisioned than Icehouse itself. Ice Towers was the first game invented for stackable pyramids, and was designed before we had any such pyramids in hand, but had started to get them made. Ice Towers is protected by US patent #6,352,262.





LAUNCHPAD 23



- **Storage Depots:** All other spaces on the board (including unused Launchpads) are simply storage areas for rocket parts.
- **Bank:** All pyramids not in play are held in an area called the Bank.
- **Rocket:** Any stack of pyramids is considered a Rocket, but it will only fly if it's complete & balanced, consisting of exactly five pieces, all the same size, each a different color.

SETUP

Each player chooses a Launchpad and an initial piece to start with. To choose pieces, have each player take a monochrome Trio, select a size, and conceal it in a closed fist while hiding the other two pieces out of view. Players then reveal their choices all at once, placing their starting pieces on their Launchpads and returning their leftovers to the Bank.

WHO STARTS

The player who can best make the claim of being a Rocket Scientist gets to go first!

HOW TO PLAY

During each turn, players will roll the dice and add a new part to the Factory as determined by their roll. They will then take between two and four actions (also depending on the dice), moving one or more parts from one spot in the launch complex to the next.

ADDING A NEW PART

Move a pyramid of the type indicated by the dice from the Bank to the Factory. If you rolled the atom, you choose the color. If you rolled a double-triangle, you choose between the two sizes shown.

PARTS SHORTAGE

If a piece you have the option to add to the Factory is not in the Bank, you can either roll again or remove the part from any space on the board. If you steal the part, it still gets placed on the Factory. If your roll gives you a choice of pyramid sizes, and only one size is available, you may choose to a) play the available size, b) steal the unavailable size, or c) re-roll. If you re-roll, you must proceed using the results of second roll, even if you have to steal because the piece is not in the Bank.



2-4



FAST



SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- The Pyramid die
- The Color die
- The Launchpad 23 board (or any 3x3 grid)
- Two pyramid trios from each of the colors on the Color die



OVERVIEW

Launchpad 23 is a game about building rockets. Our launch complex can handle up to four rockets at once, and we have several teams working simultaneously. Unfortunately, rocket parts roll out of the factory on a random schedule, and are often misrouted to the wrong launchpad. Who will finish their rocket and launch it first?

GOAL

Build a complete & balanced 5-stage rocket on your launchpad.

TERMINOLOGY

- **Launchpad:** A corner of the Launch Complex where you will assemble your rocket for launch.
- **Factory:** The center space, where new rocket parts will appear every turn.

LAUNCHPAD 23 (CONT.)



NUMBER OF MOVES

You get two moves per turn, plus an extra move if your pyramid die shows two pyramids, and/or an extra move if your color die is wild. Examples:



MOVING PARTS

You can move any piece in any tower on the board, except for those on another player's launchpad. Just take the part you want from its location (removing it from a tower as needed) and move it into the adjacent space.

- No diagonal moves.
- Yes, you can move a part INTO another player's rocket.
- No, you are not required to use all of your moves.
- No, you are not required to use the new part that appeared in the Factory during your turn.

AUTO-SORT BY SIZE

After each turn, restack all rocket parts by size, with smaller pieces on top of larger pieces. (Yes, this is done primarily for visual convenience. It makes all of the pieces within each tower visible at once, plus it makes all the towers look like little rockets.)

TOTAL SYSTEM FAILURE

You may use one move to return ALL of the pieces on your pad to the Bank.

CLARIFICATIONS & REMINDERS

- You can move ANY piece in a tower, not just the topmost piece.
- All pieces move one space at a time, regardless of size.
- You are NOT required to build your rocket using the size of piece you started with.

HOW TO WIN

Build a complete & balanced rocket on your pad. This will be exactly five pyramids, one of each color, all the same size. When your rocket is complete, gradually raise it up and hold it in the air as high as you can, making rocket launch noises as you do. (Failure to complete this step invalidates your victory.)





LOONEY LUDO



BOARD SETUP

Each player chooses a color and places the gameboard for that color in the center of the table. Four gameboards are used when playing with four or fewer players; arrange the four coasters in a square. (Notice the small dot in the corner of each coaster: to maximize fairness, place the coasters together with all of these dots in the center.) When playing with five gameboards, create a big plus sign, and with six, arrange the boards as a 2x3 rectangle.

PYRAMID SETUP

Mix up everyone's trio of pyramids and distribute them around on the gameboards, as follows, depending on the number of players:

- 2 Players: Place each medium onto the center square of the opponent's home gameboard. Place each Small onto the opposite color Large, and place these stacks onto the center squares of the remaining two gameboards.
- 3 Players: Make a stack with the three Mediums and place it on the center of the coaster not assigned to anyone. Then build three two-tone Small-Large stacks, and place each one on the center of the remaining gameboard of a color not included in the stack. (To maximize fairness, stack the tower of mediums in reverse turn order.)
- 4 Players: Build four mixed-color Trees and place each Tree in the center of the gameboard of the color not included in that Tree.
- 5-6 Players: Like four players, except that it becomes easier to place the Trees onto gameboards of a color not found in the Tree.



2-6



FAST



SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- Four Looney Ludo Boards for two, three, or four players, or five boards if there are five players, or six boards if there are six players
- 1 Trio per player (each a color that matches one of the boards being used)
- The Treehouse die
- 2 Regular dice
- Note: four of the six boards are double-sided, to help maximize available color combinations.



OVERVIEW

Looney Ludo uses a set of mini-gameboards, each a different player's color, which can be moved around during the game. It's a race to be first to get all the pieces of your color from their scattered locations back to the center of your home gameboard.

GOAL

Get your trio onto the center spot of the gameboard featuring the color of your pyramids, stacked up as a Nest (a Small inside a Medium inside a Large).

WHO STARTS

The highest roller goes first.

HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, roll the dice. The Treehouse die gives you a special Action (see below), while the regular dice determine your Movement Points.

ROLL TWO, USE ONE

You will roll two regular dice, but only use one. The number of movement points you get is equal to the greater of the two values you rolled. If you get doubles, you can use that number or choose to re-roll both dice.

LOONEY LUDO (CONT.)



MOVING

You may only move your pieces in the directions indicated by the arrowheads. How far your pieces may go is determined by each piece's pip count. It costs three Movement Points to move your Large one space, but only two to move a Medium one space, and Smalls cost one Movement Point per space to move. You can only move your own color.

MOVING UPWARDS

A piece may not be moved if another piece is sitting on top of it, but a piece may be moved to the top of the stack it's in by spending the Movement Points needed to move that piece one space.

MOVE TIMING

You may take your Action at any time during your turn, be it before, after, or in the middle of using your Movement Points. You may spread your Movement Points over as many pieces as you wish, including using them on one pyramid, then taking your Action, then continuing to use them on the same pyramid again.

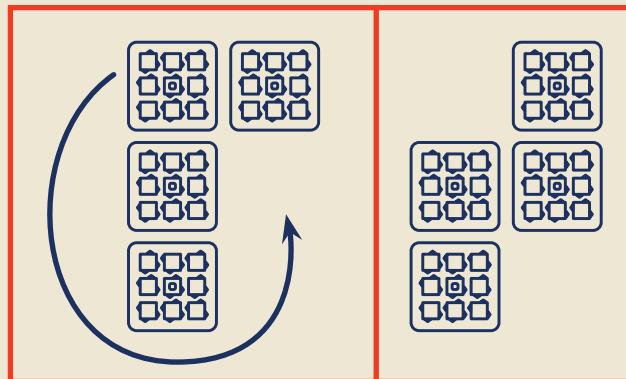
PASSING

You are not required to use all of your Movement Points. Your Treehouse action is also optional.

TREEHOUSE ACTIONS

- **TIP:** Totally Increase Points! Regardless of your other roll, you now have seven Movement Points.
- **DIG:** Do It Globally! You may spend your movement points to move ANY player's pieces. You may split your movement points between as many players' pieces as you wish.
- **SWAP:** Two gameboards of your choice are swapped. (However, their orientations do not change.)
- **HOP:** Choose any one gameboard and move it to another spot. You may also freely rotate the gameboard.
- **AIM:** You may freely rotate in place as many of the gameboards as you wish.
- **WILD:** Take your choice of the other five options.

SAMPLE HOP



CLARIFICATIONS & REMINDERS

- You may not HOP in such a way as to cause any gameboard to become disconnected from the rest of the group. That said, it's OK to temporarily disconnect a board during a HOP as long as the board being moved ends up in a space that reconnects it (as shown above).
- It's OK to HOP to the same location, but in a new orientation (i.e. you can use your HOP to AIM a single gameboard).
- Multiple AIM actions must be done all at once. You cannot AIM a board, then move a piece, then AIM another board.

HOW TO WIN

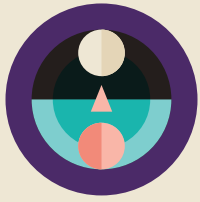
The first player to build a Nest in the center of their gameboard wins! It doesn't matter if other players' pieces are in your way; you can just build your Nest on top of any obstructions. (But you can't have other colors between or on top of your pieces.)

OTHER NOTES

HISTORICAL NOTES

This game was originally published under the name *Martian Coasters*, and featured beverage coasters as gameboards. The new name was chosen because the gameplay is reminiscent of Ludo, a 19th century derivative of the ancient classic *Parchisi*. Except it's crazier.





LUNAR INVADERS



SETUP

Begin by choosing a color and a moon. Each player populates their moon with all of their Smalls and Mediums, leaving their Larges on the side forming the Bank. Place two Smalls on the Control Points on one side of the moon, with a Medium on the Factory in between, and a reverse of that setup on the other side, leaving the Teleport Pad and two of the Factories empty. Lastly, each player gets four Tokens.

WHO GOES FIRST

One player takes the ninth Token and conceals it in one fist. The other player chooses a fist. If the empty fist is chosen, the chooser goes first. The player who goes second gains the extra Token.

2 MEDIUM MEDIUM

EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios of a color for each player
- Two lunar gameboards
- 9 dice (or tokens of some sort)



OVERVIEW

Lunar Invaders is a teleportation combat game. The problem with teleportation is that it's a one-way trip. After you transport your space marines to the enemy's moon, the only way for them to get home is to take control of the enemy's teleporter!

GOAL

Transport one of your pieces back from the other moon.

TERMINOLOGY

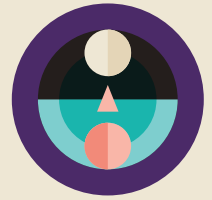
- Moon: One of the round gameboards
- Factory: Square spaces
- Control Point: Triangular spaces
- Teleport Pad: Circular space in center
- Malfunction Tokens: The dice
- Bank: The reserve of unplayed pieces

HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, choose one of these options:

- **Teleport:** If you occupy two or more Control Points anywhere around a Teleport Pad, you may transport the piece on the Teleport Pad to any spot on the other gameboard, with the exception of the other Teleport Pad. Any piece occupying the space your piece arrives in is destroyed, regardless of either piece's size. (Destroyed pieces are returned to the Bank.) You can't use the Teleporter if the other two Control Points are occupied by enemy pieces.
- **Build:** If you occupy the two Control Points flanking an empty Factory (on either player's moon), you may place a new piece of your color on that Factory. You must build the smallest of the pieces you have in the Bank. You can't build if you have no pieces available.
- **Move:** You can move a piece of your color into any empty space to which it is connected.
- **Attack:** To move a piece into a space occupied by an enemy's piece, your piece must be of equal or larger total size. Their piece is then either pushed out, or destroyed. If there's a choice of empty spaces to retreat into, they decide where to go. If there's no connected space for them to retreat to, their piece is removed from the board. The defender cannot retreat into the space from which the attacker is advancing. Also, you cannot Attack a space you've just been forced to retreat from. (See No Undos).
- **Combine:** You can combine your pieces into a single unit by moving one piece into the same space as another, and stacking them up with the smaller piece

LUNAR INVADERS (CONT.)



on top. The tower is now treated as if it were a single piece, with a size value equal to the total number of pips in the tower. Once combined, multiple pieces are considered a single unit which could be combined later with yet another unit.

- **Divide:** If you have combined two or more of your pieces into one, you can dismantle them again by removing any one piece and placing it onto an adjacent space. Furthermore, if you have the pieces in the Bank, you can split a Medium into two Smalls, or a Large into a Medium and a Small. You can only Divide if there's an empty space adjacent to the original for you to move into.
- **Transfer:** If you have more than two pieces in a pair of adjacent spaces, you can move a piece from one tower to the other, as if dividing and combining in one maneuver. However, this is the only case when such actions can be taken together. You cannot Divide and also Attack, neither can you Combine while retreating from an Attack.

BEAMING THE ENEMY

If you control a Teleporter and the enemy's piece is on the pad, you can choose to beam it into oblivion, and return it to the Bank. If said Teleporter is the one on their moon, you also have the option of beaming their piece to a location on your moon occupied by one of their pieces, causing that piece to be destroyed. However, if their piece is on your own Teleporter, you wouldn't want to beam it to their moon, since that would simply cause them to win!

MALFUNCTION TOKENS

During the other player's turn, you can spend your Malfunction Tokens to sabotage whatever they're trying to do. (Their technology breaks down just when they need it: engine failures prevent movement, factory mishaps interfere with build actions, and so on.) Most malfunctions cost one token; it costs double to cause a full-stop on the Teleporter.

- **Simple Stop:** If you spend one token when the other player is taking any action not involving the Teleporter, that action is simply canceled.
- **Targeting Error:** If you spend one token when the other player is seeking to Teleport a piece, that piece lands in the wrong location on the destination moon, i.e. you get to decide where the piece lands (although you cannot choose the Teleport Pad).

- **Total Shut Down:** At the cost of two tokens, this prevents the other player from beaming any piece from one moon to the other, leaving that piece right where it was on the Teleport Pad.
- **Blocking Oblivion:** At the cost of one token, you can prevent the other player from using the Teleporter to destroy a piece you've got on a Teleport Pad they control.

NO UNDOS

- You can't spend a Token to cancel a Malfunction.
- A piece cannot immediately move back into a space it has just been pushed out of.

REMINDERS & CLARIFICATIONS

- Making change is free. If you need to exchange a stack of pieces for a larger one of the same value from the Bank (or vice versa) in order to carry out your desired play, you may freely do so.
- You are allowed to wait until the other player has announced where their piece will land before deciding if you will use a Malfunction Token.
- If all of your pieces are destroyed, or you have so few left you can't make any more, you lose... but the other player still needs to be able to beam a piece home, or they lose as well and the game ends in a draw.
- Any time a piece is destroyed, it goes back into the Bank.

HOW TO WIN

If any of your pieces are Teleported back from the enemy's moon, you win!

OTHER NOTES

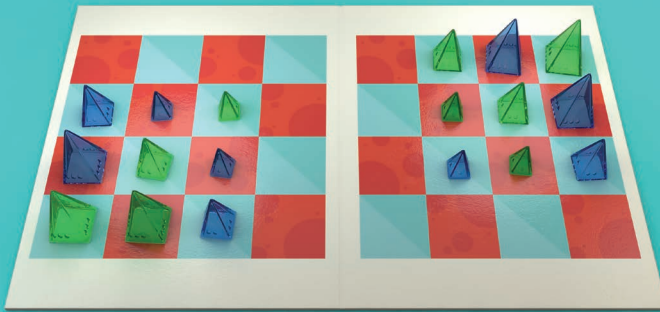
HISTORICAL NOTES

Lunar Invaders is adapted from Cosmic Coasters, which I designed as a game to be played in a bar, with coins for game pieces, boards printed on beverage coasters, and Rock-Paper-Scissors for combat resolution. In 2001, Cosmic Coasters received the Origins award for Best Abstract Board Game of the Year. Ten years later, I adapted the rules to work with pyramids, but five years after that (i.e. now) I did a major overhaul. Thanks to my arch-colleague James Ernest for helping inspire me to "sand it down" and rebuild it.



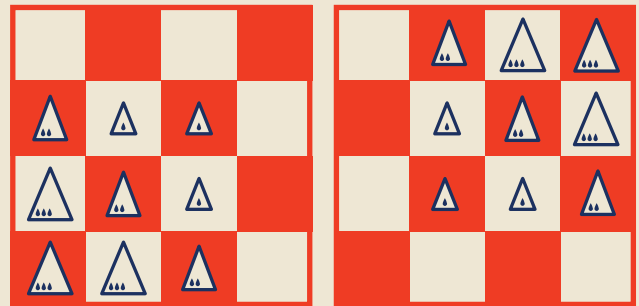


MARTIAN CHESS



SETUP

Each player starts by setting up their nine pyramids in opposing corners of the board, creating a 3x3 square in the right-hand corners of each end (not as exact mirrors, but rotationally symmetrical). Start with a Queen in the corner and two more Queens on either orthogonal side. Next, add a diagonal row of Drones that share sides with the Queens. Finally, fill in the square with Pawns in a similar-but-opposite setup as the Queens.



2



MEDIUM



MEDIUM

EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios of an assortment of colors for each player
- Martian Chessboard



OVERVIEW

In Martian Chess, color means nothing. Instead, location determines which pieces you may move. As in Chess, each type of piece has its own way of moving, and you capture by entering an opponent piece's square. However, you can move only the pieces sitting in your section of the board, and you can only attack pieces in another player's zone. Thus, a piece changes ownership after it attacks. The game ends when a player has no pieces left in their zone.

GOAL

Score the most points. ("Checkmate" is an Earthly concept; the term has no meaning here.)

TERMINOLOGY

- Pawn: Small pyramid.
- Drone: Medium pyramid.
- Queen: Large pyramid.
- Canal: The dividing line separating the players' zones.
- Zone: One player's half of the board.

HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, move one of the pieces in your zone in a straight line, passing through unobstructed spaces according to its movement ability. Jumping is not allowed.

- Pawn: One space at a time, in any of the diagonal directions.
- Drone: One or two spaces, on either the horizontal or vertical lines.
- Queen: Any distance, in any straight-line direction: horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

OWNERSHIP

You control ALL and ONLY the pieces currently in your sixteen-space zone of the board. After you move your piece into another player's area, it stops being your piece.

CAPTURING

When your piece moves into a space occupied by an opponent's piece, remove their piece from the board and keep it for scoring. Any piece can capture any piece. Capturing a piece always involves moving a piece across the Canal and losing control of it upon completion of the capture.

MARTIAN CHESS (CONT.)



NO UNDOS

Your opponent may not “reject” your move; if one player moves a piece across the canal, the other can’t move it back to the same square it came from.

FIELD PROMOTIONS

If you have no Queens, you can create one by moving a Drone into a Pawn’s space (or vice versa) and merging them. Similarly, if you control no Drones, you can make one by merging two of your Pawns. (The pieces being merged should be removed from the board immediately and replaced with a single piece of the combined size.)

ENDING THE GAME

The game ends as soon as one player’s zone is totally empty. This means if you have only one piece left, you can force the end of the game by moving your last piece across a canal.

HOW TO WIN

Each piece you capture is worth its pip count in points. The winner is whomever has the highest score. (Pawn = 1 point, Drone = 2 points, Queen = 3 points.) If the game ends in a tie, the player who ended the game is the winner.

OTHER NOTES

FOUR-PLAYER MARTIAN CHESS

If you have a regular chessboard, you can play Martian Chess with four players. Just set each player’s set of nine pyramids in a corner of the board, and envision canals dividing the board into fourths. Also, ignore the No-Undos rule when playing with more than two. (It’s not needed because of the increased volatility and diplomatic possibilities you get with more than two players.)

EEYORE’S WEDGES

Three-player Martian Chess is possible, but use of a standard chessboard is not ideal, since the empty quadrant will unbalance the game. Fortunately, Elliott “Eeyore” Evans has designed wedge-shaped gameboards which allow for play by three, five, or six players. Of similar interest are the diamond-shaped multiplayer gameboard panels created by Bruno Curfs. Look for them online.

RANDOMIZING COLORS

Since color has no meaning in this game, the pieces should be mixed up to make it easier to ignore color. Here are two good ways to go:

- **Rainbow-Style:** Each player gets pieces that are of nine different colors.
- **Shady-style:** Players agree on two colors that look similar, such as yellow & clear, red & orange, or the two shades of blue. These 18 pieces are scrambled and distributed between the players.

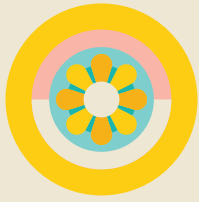
STRATEGY TIPS

- **Beware the Double Whammy:** Whenever you capture a piece, make sure the piece you moved isn’t in a position where it can immediately capture one of your own remaining pieces (unless you’re happy enough making an exchange...).
- **Eyes on the Prize:** Keep in mind that the goal is points, not position. This is particularly vital in a four-player game, when two people can use the Double Whammy on each other to quickly trade pieces for points.
- **Run for the Border:** If you’re ahead on points and low on pieces, try to end the game quickly by pushing your last few pieces across a canal.

HISTORICAL NOTES

Martian Chess is the second game ever invented for the pyramids. For details about its origins, please see the history section at the end of this book.





PETAL BATTLE



2



FAST



MEDIUM

EQUIPMENT

- Daisy Board
- 4 Trios per player (three Trios of one color plus one Trio of another color)



OVERVIEW

When two groups of insects battle for control of a flower, we call it a Petal Battle.

GOAL

Swarm your pieces over all the petals on one side of the flower.

SETUP

Each player chooses a three-Trio color and a one-Trio color. Each player places a Large pyramid of their main color on the board in spaces directly opposite each other. Each player then takes the three pieces of their extra Trio into their hands.

HOW TO PLAY

At the start of the game, and again between every three rounds, the players will pre-determine the details of their subsequent three turns in a special game process called Sequencing. Players then alternatingly carry out between

one and three game actions, the number of actions having been determined by the Sequencing process, along with the turn order.

SEQUENCING

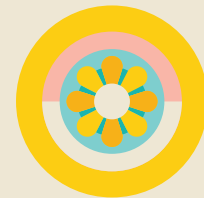
Each player will stack up their sequencing trio however they wish, being careful not to let the other player see. (Hide your three pieces in your hands as you stack them up, set the stack on the table, and keep your hand cupped around the stack until the other player has theirs ready.) During the next three rounds, each player will take a number of actions equal to the number of pips on the top-most pyramid in their stack, removing the piece and setting it on its side as they complete their turn. This process is repeated every three rounds.

GAME ACTIONS

During your turn you will take between one and three of the following actions:

- **Spawn:** Place a new Small piece into an empty space on either side of a space occupied by a Large piece of your color. (You can't Spawn if all of your Small pieces are already in use.)
- **Grow:** Replace a Small or Medium of your color with one of the next larger size. (You can't Grow a piece if the next size is unavailable.)
- **Slide / Flip:** Move a piece of your color into one of the spaces on either side of the piece (Slide) or into the space directly across the board (Flip).
- **Bump:** Slide or Flip a piece of your color into a space occupied by another piece of equal or smaller size, then Slide that piece into the next empty space. Bumped pieces cannot be Flipped. If you Bump by Flipping, and the spaces on both sides are empty, you choose which space the Bumped piece Slides into.
- **Squish:** When you Bump a piece and there's no empty space for it to Slide into, it gets Squished. If the two pieces are the same size, the Squished piece is reduced in size. If the Bumper is bigger, the Squished piece is removed from the board. A smaller piece can never Squish a larger piece. You can Bump your own pieces, but you cannot Squish them.

PETAL BATTLE (CONT.)



SQUISHING ISSUES

- If you Squish a smaller piece, remove it and move your piece into the newly vacant space.
- If you Squish a same-sized piece, it gets smaller while your piece does not move.
- If you Squish a Medium when no Smalls are available, the piece is removed and you move in.

WHO GOES NEXT

The Sequencing process also determines who will go first in all of the next three rounds. Whoever has the smallest piece at the top of their stack will be the first player until the next round of Sequencing. If this is a tie, then the player with the smaller piece in the middle slot goes first. If both players choose identical stacks, the first player to be ready with their sequencing choice goes first.

HOW TO WIN

Fill five contiguous spaces on the board with pieces (of any size) of your color. You also win if the other player has no pieces left on the board.





PETRI DISH

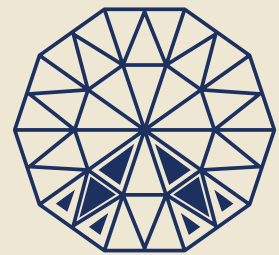


- **Sporf:** This is a technical term which refers to the blobby nature of a mass of bacteria and its ability to ooze from one area to another by contracting here while bulging out there.

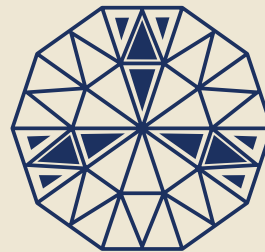
SETUP

Each player starts by filling a Wedge with four of their pieces: a Large, a Medium, and two Smalls.

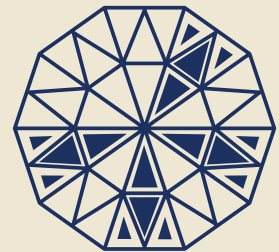
These pieces are placed on each player's Wedge as shown. The diagrams also show which Wedges to use for a 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 player game. To play with 7 or more players, start with the 6-player setup, then fill in empty Wedges with additional players' pieces as needed.



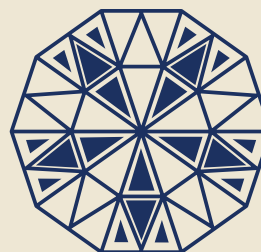
TWO PLAYER SETUP



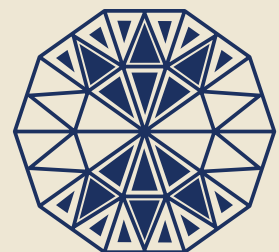
THREE PLAYER SETUP



FOUR PLAYER SETUP



FIVE PLAYER SETUP



SIX PLAYER SETUP

WHO STARTS

Someone with big hands gathers up a small piece of each player's color and cups them all together in both hands. Shaking them up, they then allow one piece to fall out of their hands first, and that player starts. Play proceeds clockwise.

2-10
 MEDIUM
 MEDIUM

EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios of one color for each player
- The Wheel
- Three Lightning dice
- An extra marker to track an uncommon bonus action (ideally, the Color die)



OVERVIEW

You are a colony of bacteria, fighting for dominance in the only world you will ever know: the inside of a Petri Dish.

GOAL

Become the most powerful germ in the dish, either by destroying everyone else or by growing your colony to its maximum possible size.

TERMINOLOGY

- **Wedge:** A triangular "pie-slice" of four spaces of the board is called a Wedge. The Wheel has ten Wedges.
- **Adjacency:** Two spaces are adjacent, and therefore connected, if they share a solid line border. In addition, the two spaces in the center of the board directly across the center axis from each other are considered adjacent. This is the only exception, other close-connections are not adjacent.

PETRI DISH (CONT.)



HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, roll the dice. Immediately adjust the dice to match any bonuses you may have rolled (see below). You will then take three actions (or on rare occasions, four) which you can perform in any order. If you are unable to perform an action, you can take any of the other options instead. The actions are:



= Divide

Split one of your pieces into two smaller pieces. A Large becomes two Mediums, or a Medium becomes two Smalls. One goes in the original space, the second into an empty adjacent space.



= Grow

Replace one of your pieces with the next larger size, or spawn a new Small in an empty space adjacent to a space containing one of your Larges.



= Infect

Replace an opponent's piece with a piece of your color of the same size. You must be "touching" the target piece, i.e. you must occupy a space adjacent to the space containing the piece you are infecting. You must use a replacement piece of the same size as the one you are infecting; if all of your pieces of that size are in play, you cannot infect.



= Move

You can move a piece to any empty adjacent space; and you can also move to an empty space adjacent to ANY piece in the same contiguous group of your pieces. This type of ooze-movement is called Splorfling.



= Zap

Remove any Small piece from the board, or reduce a Large or a Medium to the next smaller size. A piece cannot be Zapped if there are no pieces available of the size to which they'd be shrunk.



= Wild

Choose any of the other five actions.

NO PASSING

You cannot pass, you must perform all of your actions.

DUPLICATES BECOME WILD

If you roll two of the same symbol, one is changed to Wild. If you roll Triples, two become Wild, plus you get a bonus move.

NULL = WILD

If you can't perform an action, or if said action is rendered meaningless, it is treated as a Wild.

EFFECTIVELY VS. LITERALLY TURNING WILD

Notice the important difference in the two ways a die roll can become Wild. If you roll doubles, one of the rolls literally becomes Wild: as soon as the results are observed, one of the dice should be physically changed to the Wild position, as if that's what had actually been rolled. On the other hand, when you are unable to use the action shown, the move becomes effectively Wild. In this case, you should NOT physically change the position of the die, because an action you are unable to take at the start of your turn might become possible, due to your other actions, before your turn is over. Actions only become temporarily Wild for the span of time when their original functions don't work.

BONUS ACTIONS

You gain an immediate additional Wild action any time:

- You roll three of a kind.
- You eliminate another player from the game.

It's helpful to use the Color die, placed Atom-side up, to keep track of your extra action.

HOW TO WIN

There are two ways to win:

- You become the only player with pieces on the board
- All nine of your pieces are on the board.



PETRI DISH (CONT.)

OTHER NOTES

DICE PLACEMENT PROTOCOL

After rolling, line the dice up before you. As you take each action, place the corresponding die in front of the next player. For extra fanciness, stack the second die onto the first and the third onto the stack, thus forming a noticeable indicator that it's the next person's turn.

WARNINGS

Increased Danger of Premature Elimination: Be aware when playing with more than five people (and escalating as the player count approaches the maximum), that some players will be eliminated quickly. In a ten-player game, it's common for someone to get knocked out before they even get a turn. (Such is the unfair climate in a Petri Dish swarming with ten types of bacteria.) Please make sure everyone knows the situation before starting a large game, so that those knocked out early won't be overly disappointed. (There are plenty of two-player games in the Arcade to keep you busy if you get squeezed out quickly.)

Don't Match Setup with Turn Order: As the number of players approaches the maximum, it becomes increasingly important not to arrange the starting wedges in the same order as the players are sitting. It might seem clever, but such a setup can create an unfair wave of destruction that moves around the Wheel as the players take their turns.



THE NANOFICTION INTERMISSION

NANOFICTION INTERMISSION

Let's take a little break from learning all those rules! Here are seven tiny tales from the fictional world that originally inspired these pyramids, back in 1987. These stories follow a very restrictive writing format we call Nanofiction: tales that are exactly 55 words long (not counting the title). Feeling creative? Try writing your own!



THE 100,000 YEAR LEGACY

The festival featured tripod races, Icehouse tournaments, singing flower concerts, and moonlit fondue feasts. Afterwards, the Emperor of Mars issued a challenge to his Science Council: invent a system for mass emigration, within 33 years. Sadly, all that remains of their ancient civilization are pieces for a game, not their technology for inter-dimensional doorways.



INTO THE UNKNOWN

When Scorpio-5 landed at Cydonia, few believed they'd find alien artifacts. But they did. The ancient pyramid contained the still-operational inter-dimensional doorway through which the original population had apparently abandoned Mars. But where'd it lead now? Earth? The future? "Empty space" wasn't the answer Commander Thompson expected as he leapt through the portal...



THE PRIME MINISTER IS DEAD

One thousand centuries ago, in the crystal city of Lyralla, the Emperor of Mars declared that whoever beat him at Homeworlds would become the new Prime Minister. After 3 weeks of tournaments, the 3 best challengers each played a game with the Emperor. All 3 won. So they became a Tribunal, and the Emperor retired.



WHOEVER GETS 1000 POINTS WINS

In The City, where people play pyramid games with a passion Americans reserve for televised sports, four noted individuals dueled for possession of a solid gold Icehouse stash. The 23 widely publicized Pyramid Throwdowns were held at the Saturn Cafe. I hear the winner developed back trouble after carrying the set around in her rucksack.



THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

A crowd formed around the pyramid table as word of the high stakes game spread throughout the coffeehouse. Gambling wasn't really permitted at Planet X-33, but this was different: with news of their father's ailing health on their minds, four siblings were settling a question of great importance to them all. Tonight's stakes: one kidney.



THE TAVERN

Five guys drove around one night in an old VW Beetle, looking for adventure. They arrived at a mysterious tavern, where they learned to play an unusual game with pyramids. Later, they were never able to find the tavern again, and that barmaid's phone number was bogus. At least they remembered how the game worked!



EVIL VICTORIOUS

The interstellar fleet commander suddenly gave the order to attack. After colonizing nearby star systems, acquiring new technologies, and building more and better starships, all while acting peaceful, he was finally ready to strike. His warrior ships created a supernova that vaporized his enemy's Homeworld, decimating her space fleet. Gina snarled. "Another game?" asked Jake.





PHARAOH



HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, roll the dice to determine how many movement points you get.

ROLL TWO, USE ONE

You will roll two dice, but only use one. The number of movement points you get is equal to the greater of the two values you rolled. If you get doubles, you can use that number or choose to re-roll both dice.

MOVEMENT RULES

It takes one point to move a Small one space, two points to move a Medium one space, and three points to move a Large one space. Pieces may move forwards or backwards or sideways, one space at a time. Pieces cannot be jumped over other pieces. To move a piece diagonally, you must pay double the number of movement points.

BRINGING A PIECE ONTO THE BOARD

Adding a piece to the board counts as a move for that piece. Pieces can only be added to one of the spaces along that player's edge.

NO STACKING

Only one piece may ever occupy a single space.

BARGING IN

When you move a piece into the same space as an equal or smaller-sized enemy piece, that piece is removed from the board. You can never move into a space occupied by one of your own pieces, nor can a smaller piece move into a space occupied by a larger enemy piece.

SPLITTING MOVES

You may divide your points between as many different legal moves as you wish, including moving more than one piece in the same turn. For example, with three points you can move:

- A) A Large piece one space,
- B) A Medium one space and a Small one space, or
- C) A Small three spaces.

You are not required to use all of your movement points.



2-4



FAST



SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- 1 Trio of a color for each player
- Volcano Board
- Two Regular Dice
- Twin Win cards as color reminders may also be desirable



OVERVIEW

Pharaoh is a simple strategy game focused on control of the middle square and the two on either side of it. The struggle for this central point has a "King of the Hill" feeling to it, so we named it after the "King of the Pyramids" i.e. the Pharaoh.

GOAL

Occupy the central row with your three pieces.

SETUP

Assign everyone a color and gather each player's pieces just off the board along a different edge. With two players, they must be on opposite sides of the board.

WHO STARTS

Players roll to see who goes first. Play then proceeds in the clockwise direction.

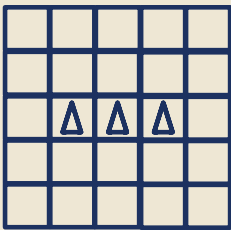
PHARAOH (CONT.)



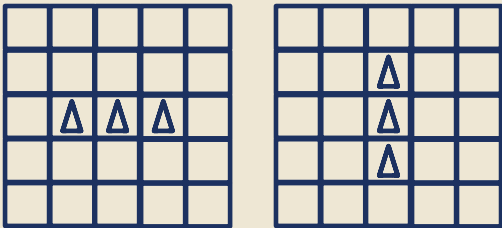
HOW TO WIN

To claim victory, you must occupy the three spaces of a goal-line with your three pieces (in any order). A goal-line is a line of three spaces whose center is the center of the board. The number of goal-lines increases with the number of players.

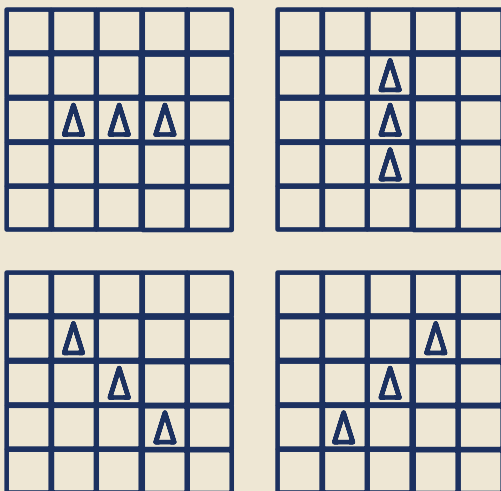
- 2 players: Just one goal-line divides the players.



- 3 players: You can win on either axis.



- 4 players: You can also win on one of the diagonal goal-lines.



OTHER NOTES

HISTORICAL NOTES

Long-time players of this game will recall that we used to block off the four corners of the board. We don't bother with that anymore because we realized it doesn't matter. We don't need to make those spaces off-limits because players rarely want to go there anyway. And even if you do, nothing bad happens. So we dropped it.



POWERHOUSE



2-5



FAST



MEDIUM

EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios each of five colors
- Any three dice
- Drawstring bag



OVERVIEW

You are an astro-archeologist, unearthing energy crystals from the ruins of an alien city on a distant planet. As you add new crystals to your power grid, they combine with others to create chain reactions. Can you be the first to collect a set that creates clean, stable power?

GOAL

Collect exactly five pyramids, each a different color but all the same size, a set known as a Clean Powerhouse.

TERMINOLOGY

- Grid: Your collection of pyramids.
- Powerhouse: a set of five pyramids, each a different color but all the same size.
- Dirty Powerhouse: a Powerhouse joined by additional pieces, which cause contamination.
- Clean Powerhouse: a Powerhouse with no other pieces in its Grid.
- Reactor: Two pieces of the same size and color.

- Stable Reactor: Three pieces of the same size and color.
- Battery: a Monochrome Trio (a small, medium, and large pyramid of the same color).
- Transform: An action in which you give someone a piece from your grid and optionally take back one from theirs.
- Dump: An action in which you remove a pyramid from your grid and return it to the bag.
- Cubes: The dice.
- Meltdown: An event triggered by unearthing a cube, which causes all players to lose an escalating number of pyramids from their grids.

SETUP

Toss all the pyramids and the dice into the bag and mix them up. Each player starts with three pieces drawn blindly from the bag, one of each size. (Unless players are superstitious about drawing out their pyramids themselves, it's fine for one player to set up everyone's initial grid.) Whenever you remove an object from the bag, you must do so without looking. You can feel around for the size you seek, but you can't peek.

HOW TO PLAY

Each player's turn has two phases:

- Draw Phase: You remove an object from the bag. If you draw a pyramid, add it to your grid; if you draw a cube, place it in the center of the table.
- Reaction Phase: Perform all of the mandatory power reactions along with whatever optional reactions you choose, in whatever order you see fit. Often you won't have any reactions to perform, but sometimes you will start a cascade as one reaction triggers another.

SETTING UP YOUR GRID

As you accumulate pyramids, arrange them within an imaginary grid of 15 squares, five across and three deep. Sort your pieces by size and color. Fill the row furthest away from you with your smalls, and place your larges in the row closest to you. This will make it easiest for your opponents to see what's in your Grid while still providing a good view for yourself.

POWERHOUSE (CONT.)



POWER REACTIONS

- **Sequence:** You get to decide the order in which all of your reactions will occur. This means that you might choose to perform an optional reaction which changes the situation so that another reaction, which would have been mandatory, instead does not happen at all.
- **Delayed Reactions:** Reactions are only triggered during your turn. When another player gives you a piece that creates a Reactor in your Grid, you must wait until the Reaction Phase of your own turn to carry out that reaction.
- **Meltdown:** When a cube is removed, ALL players must immediately dump a pyramid. If this is the second cube, all players must dump two pyramids. If this is the third cube, all players must dump three pyramids, and all three cubes are immediately returned to the bag. Also, if you trigger a Meltdown, your turn ends immediately — you don't complete any other reactions, even those that would otherwise be mandatory.
- **Reactor:** If your Grid contains two pieces of the same size and color, you must Transform one. This means you give one of those pieces to another player, and take back another of their pieces in return. You may also choose to Transform your piece into vapor, by giving it to a player without taking anything back.
- **Battery:** Whereas Reactors trigger automatically, Batteries may be saved for a future turn. To use a Battery, Dump one piece and Transform one piece, keeping the third piece in your grid.
- **Double Powerhouse:** If you complete a second Powerhouse, you must perform a Major Flush during your turn, which consists of Dumping your choice of at least one, and as many as five, of the pyramids in your second Powerhouse.
- **Transformation-Proof:** If you have a Powerhouse, other players are not allowed to break it up when Transforming their pieces. However, this does not mean a Powerhouse is Meltdownproof.
- **Reactor-Stabilization:** If you have all three pieces of a Reactor, the triggering of that Reactor becomes optional.

EXAMPLES

- Let's say you have a green Large and a yellow Battery in your Grid. Another player also has a green Large, and no one has a Powerhouse. Now suppose you draw a green Large. You now have an unstable green Reactor, which you must trigger during your turn. However, you could decide to use your Battery first, and Transform one of the pieces of your yellow Battery into your opponent's green Large. If you did this, you would then have all three of the green Larges, causing this Reactor to stabilize. Now you have a stable Green reactor. You might choose to let it sit in your Grid for a few turns. Someone might take a piece of it away, and when your turn rolls around again, you'd be required to trigger the remainder of the Reactor during that turn. Or perhaps you'll still have all three green Larges when you decide it's time to clear them out. In this case you'd remove the first piece and Transform it; at that point the rest of the Reactor will have become unstable, so before your turn ends you'll need to also remove the second of those three pieces and Transform it as well.
- Suppose you have a red Medium, a yellow Medium, a green Medium, and a purple Medium. You also have a purple Small and a purple Large. Your opponent has a Dirty Powerhouse made of Smalls and among their other pieces is blue Medium. You pulled a Medium out of the bag, hoping to get a blue to complete your Powerhouse, but instead you got another green one. So now you have a green Reactor which you must trigger before your turn ends. You decide to use it first. You give one of your green Mediums to your opponent, and as part of the Transform action, you take from them their blue Medium, which is available to you since it's not a part of their Powerhouse. Now you have a Powerhouse! You just need to clear out the dirt. Since your only other pieces are other purples that collectively form a Battery, all you need do to win is to trigger that Battery, Dumping the purple Small and Transforming the purple Large into vapor, by giving it to another player and taking nothing back.

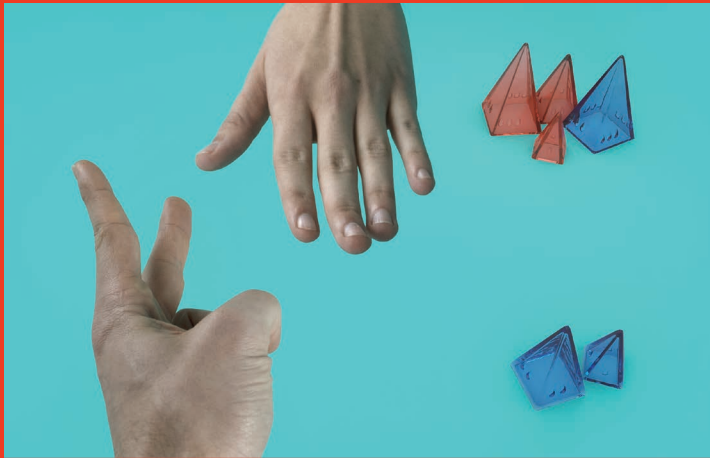
HOW TO WIN

As soon as a player has a Clean Powerhouse, they win, even if it's not their turn. If more than one player gains a Clean Powerhouse at once, the player who made it happen wins.





PYRAMID-SHAM-BO



HOW TO PLAY

Players sit in a circle. A table is not necessary, so long as everyone can see everyone else, along with the pieces they are currently holding and their color card. (It's crucial that all players remember their starting color.)

ACTIVE PLAYER MARKER

As players each take their turns, the Turn Token should be passed from one person to the next. (After a particularly intense duel, it can get difficult to remember who started it.) Turns are taken in clockwise order.

ESTABLISH RPS PROTOCOL

Before starting, agree on whether your group will be using the "1-2-3!" or the "1-2-3-go!" combat styles. Also, make sure someone is ready to keep track of the number of rounds as escalation mounts.

BASIC ACTION

On your turn, choose an opponent for a round of RPS. Winner takes a pyramid from loser.

TIE ESCALATION

If the RPS challenge is resolved on the first round, the winner gets a small pyramid. However, if the players tie, the fees increase. If they tie once, the winner gets two pips worth of pyramids. If the players tie twice, the winner gets a three pip prize, and so on.

MAKING CHANGE

The loser must always pay their fee using the pyramids they hold, if they can. If they must get change, someone at the table will provide it. The player being paid must make change if possible; if not, an uninvolved player must provide the required change.

ACTIVE PLAYER MAKES ALL DECISIONS

Any time a decision of any sort is required, the choice is made by the player whose turn it is. This means the active player chooses which players will exchange pieces as needed to make change, and what color of pieces will be used for all payments.

PLAYER ELIMINATION

When a player loses their last piece, they are out of the game. Moreover, the three pyramids of that player's original color are also removed from the game. Those who held them get nothing in return.



2-10



FAST



SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- One Trio of each color for each player
- Matching "Color Reminder Indicators" for each player (Twin Cards work well, as do Looney Ludo boards if playing with six or fewer)
- "It's My Turn" token



OVERVIEW

Pyramid-Sham-Bo is tournament-style Roshambo, also known as Rock Paper Scissors (RPS). The pyramids are used as scoring chips. Escalating penalties and knock-out bonuses add to the excitement. Pyramid-Sham-Bo is to RPS what a Texas Hold 'em Tournament is to a single hand of poker.

GOAL

Be the last player still in the game!

SETUP

Everyone chooses a color and picks up the three pieces of that color. They also place the Color Indicators of their color in front of them, as reminders to all of what their color is.

PYRAMID-SHAM-BO (CONT.)



KNOCK-OUT BONUS

After an eliminated player's pieces are removed, all remaining players must give a small pyramid to the winner of the challenge. The winner, being active player, makes all decisions about what colors are used for payment and change.

CASCADING KNOCK-OUTS

If a player is eliminated, not by losing a challenge, but from paying a Knock-Out Bonus or losing an exiting player's color, that player's pieces are removed as usual but no further Knock-Out Bonuses are paid.

SELF ELIMINATION

If it's your turn, but you lose the challenge and get knocked out, the challenge winner will briefly become the acting active player. This can be important because the active player makes all decisions. (Knock-Out Bonuses must still be paid.) The player who would have gone next still goes next.

SHOWDOWN SPEED UP

When the game is down to the last two players, payment amounts are doubled. Also, the Turn Token and Color Indicators can be set aside at this point, since neither are needed when only two are left.

HOW TO WIN

The winner is the last player left!

OTHER NOTES

PLAYING WITH SMALL GROUPS

Although we say this game is for 2-10 players, and it turns into a two player game at the end, we don't really recommend it for groups of four or fewer. This is a party game, intended for a crowd.

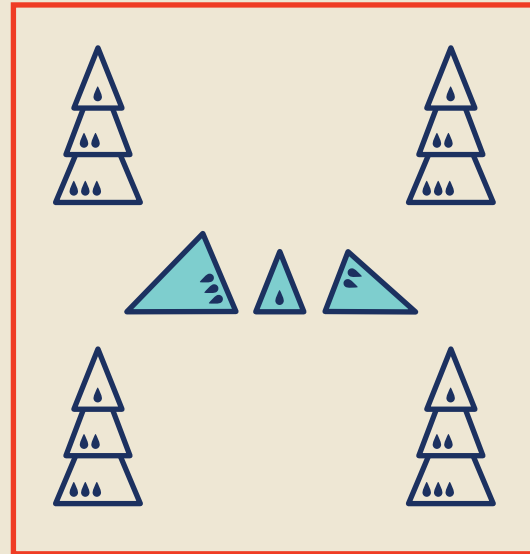




TREEHOUSE



FOUR PLAYER SETUP



2-10
 FAST
 SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- The Treehouse die
- 1 pyramid of each size for each player
- 1 pyramid of each size for the House. (Any colors can be used, but it's nice for each player to have their own color.)



WHO STARTS

The player holding the die goes first!

HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, roll the die, then alter the arrangement of your trio of pyramids using the type of action indicated by your roll.

- If you can use the action on your Trio, you must (unless you roll a Wild, which can be used on your own pieces or on the House).
- If you cannot do it to your own pieces, you may do the action to the House, or pass.
- If you cannot use the action in either place, then you roll again.

OVERVIEW

A trio of pyramids in the center of the table, called the House, establishes a pattern for everyone else to match. Each player has their own Trio, and you win by getting your trio into the same arrangement as the House. How you re-arrange your pyramids is dictated by a roll of the Treehouse die.

GOAL

Re-arrange your Tree so that it matches the House. (Or change the House to match your pieces.)

SETUP

Each player starts with their pieces stacked in the Tree formation (a Small on a Medium on a Large). Place the additional trio in the center of the table, with the Small standing upright and the Medium and Large lying down on opposite sides of the Small, pointing away from each other.



TIP	△ OR ▲	DIG	△ ONLY
AIM	△ OR ▲	SWAP	ANY TWO
HOP	△ OR ▲	WILD	YOU OR THE HOUSE

TREEHOUSE (CONT.)



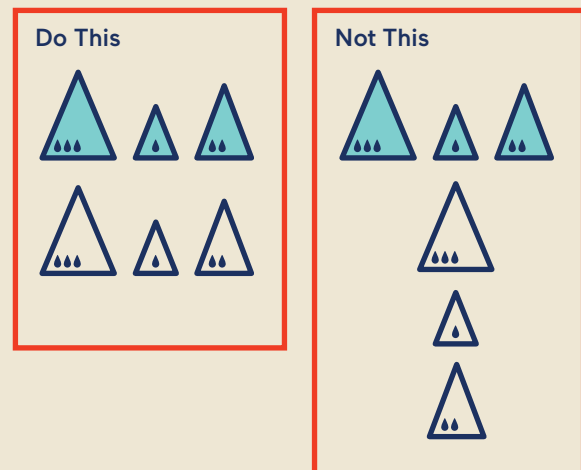
ROLL OPTIONS

- **AIM:** Reorient a solitary piece. There are only three directions a piece can ever be pointed: Left, Upwards, or Right. Therefore, Aiming allows you to point a piece in one of the two other possible directions. You cannot Aim any pieces that are part of a stack. If two of your pieces are in a stack, you must use Aim to change the position of the third piece.
- **TIP:** Push over an upright piece or a stack. (Don't actually knock it over; this is not a dexterity game.) An upright piece is turned on its side, pointing in either of the two possible directions. When two or three pieces in a stack are Tipped, the pieces separate, all pointing one way. You can only Tip an upright piece or stack — you cannot Tip a lying down piece up. You cannot Tip just one piece in a stack.
- **HOP:** An upright piece jumps up, then lands somewhere, upright. Hopped pieces land upright in any other spot in your line, or onto any other piece in your trio. Only upright pieces can be Hopped. A piece can Hop alone, or with a piece on top. If you wish for the piece you are Hopping to land on a piece which is lying down, that piece automatically stands up to be hopped upon. You cannot Hop in place. When pieces are stacked, you can take the top piece off of a stack and Hop it, or you can Hop a whole stack as group, but Hopping pieces cannot be split up to land in more than one location.
- **SWAP:** Two of your pieces switch locations. Swapped pieces retain their orientation, except when a lying down piece enters a stack. It's always possible to Swap two pieces in your trio. Therefore, you can only Swap the House if you roll a Wild.
- **DIG:** A lying down piece tunnels down, moving in the direction in which it points, and surfaces upright. The piece may surface upright in place, under another piece, at any spot between pieces, or at the end of the line. Digging always starts with a flat piece and ends with that piece standing up. When you Dig, the piece either stays in place or moves in the direction in which it points. After Digging, the piece stands up. The Digging piece goes on the bottom of the stack if you Dig under another piece. If your piece Digs under a flat piece, both pieces are turned upright. You can't use Dig on an upright piece. You can't Dig backwards (nor wraparound). You can't Dig under more than one stack (i.e. you can't scoop up two separate pieces).
- **WILD:** Perform any of the other five actions, on either your own Trio or the House.

CLARIFICATIONS & REMINDERS

- Pieces must always be pointed in one of three orientations: Left, Right, or Up.
- Keep your Trio arranged in a line parallel to the House. All players' lines of pieces must be parallel.
- Stacked pieces are always kept upright.
- Flat pieces can never be nested. They must be spread out into a line.
- Pieces may be moved apart to make room for a piece to go in between them during a Hop or Dig. Close up the gaps in the line when your turn ends.
- You can never change another player's Trio of pieces.
- You can only Pass when you can't do the Action to your own Trio, and don't wish to do it to the House.

STAY ON PARALLEL LINES



HOW TO WIN

Your goal is to rearrange your Trio — or the House — so that your pieces and the House pieces match each other exactly.

TIES

If more than one player matches the House at once, the player who caused the match is the winner. If one causes multiple others to match without winning themselves, it's just a tie.

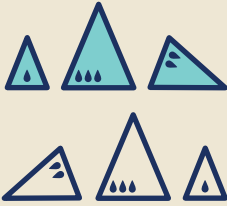


TREEHOUSE (CONT.)

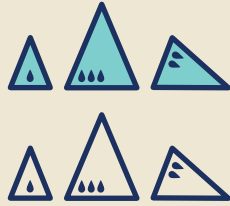
EXAMPLES

A MIRROR IMAGE ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH

These don't match



These do match! You win!



THREE WAYS TO SWAP A TREE

If your pieces are stacked as a Tree, and you roll a SWAP, there are 3 possible ways you can take the action, as shown below. D is not a SWAP.



A - Top Two



B - Bottom Two



C - Bottom & Top

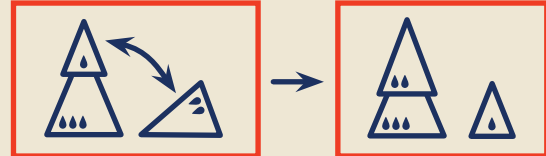


D - NOT a Swap



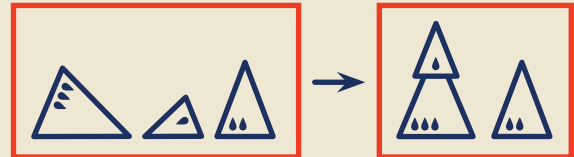
SWAPPING TO REORIENT

In this case, if you SWAP the Small and Medium pieces, the Medium must turn upright to take the place of the Small, while the Small stays upright as they trade places.



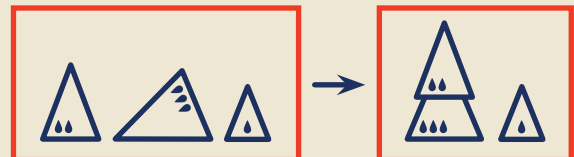
DIGGING TO REORIENT

Here, if you DIG the Large to the spot under the Small, the Small turns upright.



HOPPING TO REORIENT

With this situation, you can HOP the Medium onto the Large, causing the Large to become upright.



OTHER NOTES

HISTORICAL NOTES

In 2006, Treehouse received the Origins award for Best Board Game of the Year. The invention of this game was driven by the need to collapse the previous way of selling the system — a mix & match DIY approach with pyramids sold by individual color — into a more manageable number of individual products. It has been released in several formats: the original in a clear plastic tube (in Rainbow and Xeno color options), an all-pink boxed edition, and a green pyramid-shaped bag.



TWIN WIN



WHO STARTS

The player who is actually a twin goes first. Failing that, the player whose zodiac sign is Gemini goes first. Failing that, the player born on the 2nd goes first. Failing that, each player rolls two dice, high score goes first (unless someone rolls doubles).

HOW TO PLAY

During each turn, you must take two actions. Usually you will use both of these actions for piece movement, but sometimes you might want to change Goals.

- **Move Piece(s):** Move one piece two spaces or two pieces one space each. You can move a piece of ANY color, but you can ONLY move the topmost piece in a stack. Pieces can be stacked onto any and all sizes. The arrows on the Twin Win board show the legal movement options.
- **Change Goal(s):** You can use an action to trade in one of your Goal cards and draw a new one to replace it. You can use both actions in one turn for this, either replacing both Goals, or changing one, then changing it again. Draw the new Goal first, then place the old Goal on the bottom of the stack. You are not required to reveal your old Goal.



2-3



FAST



SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- Five Trios, each a different color
- 10 Twin Win cards (two for each of the five colors in use)
- Twin Win board



OVERVIEW

Twin Win is a quick & easy strategy game featuring a pair of secret goals and a small amount of bluffing. Anyone can move any of the pieces, so the trick is to assemble one of your two assigned combinations without making your goal too obvious.

GOAL

The Twin Win cards show specific colors in either the Nest or Tree configuration. Build one to win!

TERMINOLOGY

Corners: The four spaces that don't connect to the center space are called the Corners.

SETUP

Stack the pyramids in five Trees, each of three different colors. Place one in the center and the others on the four Corners. Sort the Twin Win cards, setting aside those that show the five colors you aren't using. Shuffle the remaining Twin Win cards and deal two to each player.

HOW TO WIN

To win you must create one of your assigned patterns. If at any time the appropriately colored Tree or Nest shown on one of your cards appears somewhere on the board, then reveal your card and claim victory! Pieces under or on top of your Tree or Nest don't matter, but no other pieces can be in-between.

OTHER NOTES

USING AN ALTERNATE BOARD

If the Twin Win board is unavailable, you can play this on any 3x3 grid, such as one of the Looney Ludo boards. Just remember you can only move your pieces clockwise around the outside, and either into or out from the center space from a non-corner spot.



057



VERTICALITY



HOW TO PLAY

In this game, each player will be building a tower consisting of playing card "floors" sitting atop "walls" formed by three upright pyramids of the same size. Everyone plays at the same time, and starts with a base of three pyramids. Everyone gently places a playing card on top of their base grouping, and when all are ready and fate (i.e. the pyramid die) has determined what size to use next, everyone will proceed to add the next piece to their tower. When your tower falls, you're out!

WALL HEIGHTS

As needed, someone will roll the die to determine the size of the three pyramids everyone will use in the next level of their towers. If the result is a pair of sizes, the third pyramid will be the result. To be specific, Small + Medium = Large, Small + Large = Medium, and Medium + Large = Small.

RULES FOR BUILDING TOWERS

- One by one, you will add three pyramids of the required size to your tower.
- All pyramids must be placed upright.
- You must group your pyramids closely enough together such that each piece is touching another piece. If a piece is placed too far from others to be considered touching, you must reposition it.
- You can never use more than one hand at a time.
- You can never touch any part of your tower after you've let go of it.
- When adding the second and third pyramids to each story, it's acceptable to use the piece you are adding to nudge an existing piece (or pieces) into a better position. However, you can only nudge pieces on the current level.
- Players wait for each other to finish adding each pyramid before adding the next, and all players add their next cards at the same time.
- If any pyramids in your tower fall, your whole tower falls. However, if your top card slides off but nothing else in your tower is disturbed, you may replace it and keep building. But if it happens again, you're out. Only one mulligan per game!

 1-5  FAST  SIMPLE

EQUIPMENT

- The Pyramid Die
- As many as all 90 Pyramids
- Zark City Cards



OVERVIEW

Verticality is a dexterity game. Players use pyramids and playing cards to build towers. As players add pieces and cards to their towers, they will fall over until only the winner's is standing.

GOAL

Build the tallest tower!

SETUP

Place all the pyramids and cards in the center of the table for all to reach. Roll the pyramid die to determine the size of the first pieces used.

VERTICALITY (CONT.)



- If you run out of pyramids of the size the die indicates, keep rolling until you get a size you have.
- If you run out of pyramids entirely, suspend the game until natural forces of some kind cause one of the towers to fall, freeing up pyramids for the others to use. While waiting, play another game, find a source for expansion pyramids, or increase the intensity of natural forces in the vicinity of the table.

HOW TO WIN

When everyone else's tower is down, you win! If two people build towers to the same height and neither succeeds in adding the next piece, the player who first completed the previous step is the winner.

OTHER NOTES

SKYSCRAPER STYLE

Younger/clumsier players may prefer to play this way, which simply removes the requirement that each pyramid be touching another. You can create much more stable towers this way, which will make for taller buildings!

SOLO STYLE

This game is fun to play alone, plus every game of Verticality has the potential to become a solitaire game, if you challenge yourself to keep building after all other players are out. How tall can you build? What's your personal best?





VOLCANO

DESIGNED BY KRISTIN LOONEY



BLACK = WHITE

The black and white pieces have the same functions in this game, and are called Caps.

WHO STARTS

The player who has traveled the closest to molten lava goes first (and the closer they've been to an active volcano, the more they get to brag).

HOW TO PLAY

The primary action of the game is called Erupting. The nests become mountaintops which explode, spewing molten rock in a specific direction. All eruptions begin when a Cap is moved onto another stack. The pieces that were under the cap then 'flow' out in the same direction, each new piece jumping over and landing farther away than the piece before it, continuing until the pieces run out or there's nowhere for the next piece to land, either because it would go off the edge of the board, or because there's a Cap in the way (since nothing can EVER be placed on top of a Cap).



2-3



MEDIUM



MEDIUM

EQUIPMENT

- All pyramids in the box except the Medium & Large blacks & whites
- Volcano board



OVERVIEW

This is a puzzle game inspired by the spewing eruptions of volcanoes. Trigger pieces, called caps, are freely moved around the mountaintops until an eruption occurs. Up to 3 pieces will be moved onto other stacks, and pieces that land on others of the same size are captured.

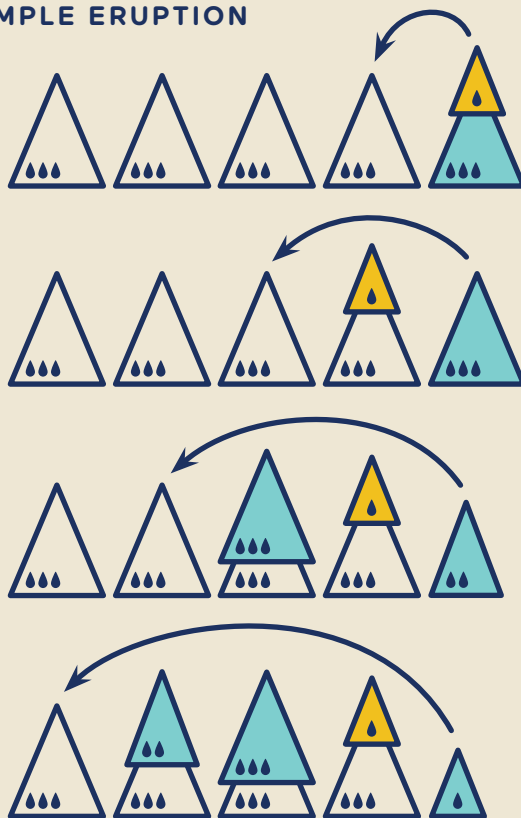
GOAL

Capture 3 monochrome Trios, or 5 mixed-color Trios.

SETUP

Begin by stacking all the translucent pyramids into monochrome Nests (groups of Larges atop Mediums atop Smalls). Arrange these in a randomized way on the board, with an empty space known as the Caldera located in the center of the board. When randomizing the placement of the nests, avoid putting two nests of the same color any closer together than corner-to-corner (no direct side-by-side color matching). Place a Small black piece onto each of the red nests, and a Small white piece onto each of the orange nests.

SAMPLE ERUPTION



VOLCANO (CONT.)



MOVING CAPS

The only direct action the players take in this game is to move the caps around on top of the other colored pieces. Sometimes when you move a Cap, one or more pieces beneath it will erupt. But oftentimes you can move a Cap such that no eruption occurs, in which case you get to move a Cap again (either the same one or a different one). In this way, a player can make many Cap moves in one turn, moving them around until an eruption occurs. Your turn ends as soon as one or more pieces erupt, no matter how much you moved the Caps around.

- Although Caps cannot be stacked upon, all other types of stacking are allowed. For example, it's OK to stack larger pyramids on top of smaller ones. This can create some strange-looking towers.
- You can move any number of Caps any number of times, as long as nothing erupts.
- Your turn ends when you cause an eruption of any kind, even if you fail to capture any pieces.

LEGAL MOVES

Pieces can be moved as follows:

- Caps can be moved in any direction, including diagonally.
- Erupting pieces are all moved in the same direction as the cap that triggered the flow.
- Caps (and erupting pieces) cannot be moved beyond the edge of the board.
- Caps (and erupting pieces) can be moved into any empty space, including the space in the center (called the Caldera) which only remains empty until a piece erupts into it.
- Moving a cap out of an empty square results in no eruption, and you can keep going.
- No piece can ever land on top of a cap.
- It's OK to move a Cap back in the same direction it came from in order to cause an eruption.

Given these rules, many moves will cause no eruption because the erupting piece would either go off the board or land on a cap.

CAPTURING

The object of the game is to capture pieces, which is done by causing eruptions. Whenever an erupting piece lands upon a piece of its same size, you capture the erupting piece. For example, if you move a cap such that the erupting large lands upon a large, and the medium further lands upon a medium, you would remove those two pieces from the board and set them in front of you. Only the topmost piece can be matched by the erupting piece to make a capture.

TURN SUMMARY

Move a Cap. If this does NOT cause an eruption, move a Cap again until it does. Then, collect captured pieces.

POWER PLAY OPTION

At any time before you cause an eruption, you may choose to give up one of the pieces you'd previously captured, and put it back onto the board. This is called a Power Play. Doing this allows the player to alter the landscape and thus enable captures not otherwise available.

HOW TO WIN

You must collect three monochrome Trios, or five mixed-color Trios. Extra pieces in your collection do not matter, nor does the order in which you captured them. You can freely rearrange the pyramids you've collected into different groups as you build your sets.

OTHER NOTES

HISTORICAL NOTES

Technically, this is a variant of Volcano known as Fiesta Caldera. The original game was played with a different mix of pyramids, had a different victory condition, and didn't include the Power Play Option. But even so, we decided to call this Volcano, since it's basically Volcano 3.0 and we like the original name best.





WORLD WAR 5



2-4



MEDIUM



MEDIUM

EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios of a color for each player
- Three regular dice
- World War 5 board



OVERVIEW

World War 5 is a world-conquest board game. We can't tell you what happened during World Wars 3 or 4, but at this point the earth is neatly divided into six nation-states, each filling up their continent, with everyone perfectly connected to every other nation-state in equal and completely balanced ways. So the international stage is set for a world conquest board game that is both fast and fair.

GOAL

Conquer another continent while maintaining a base in your own. You are eliminated from the game if there are zero pieces of your color on your continent.

SETUP

Each player chooses a home continent and receives the pyramids of the color most similar to the colors of their continent. Each player then places three of their pyramids, one of each size, onto the three territories of their continent. (Only one piece may ever occupy a

territory.) The starting pieces are placed in turn order, with all players taking turns placing their smalls, then adding their mediums, and finally their large pyramids.

WHO STARTS

The highest roller goes first.

HOW TO PLAY

Perform one of these actions during each turn:

- **GROW:** Increase the size of one of your pyramids by replacing it with the next larger size, if one is available. You can only grow a piece on your own continent.
- **BUILD:** Place a small piece of your color (if available) into an empty territory on your own continent.
- **MOVE:** Transfer one of your units to an empty territory that it is connected to.
- **INVADE:** Attempt to enter a connected enemy-held territory by using combat.

COMBAT RULES

A territory can never contain more than one piece. To move into an occupied territory, you must push the enemy out. (You cannot push your own pieces.) Attacks are resolved as follows:

- Begin by placing the piece you are attacking with on its side, pointing at the territory you seek to move into.
- Battles are resolved with the two players rolling dice. The number of dice you roll is the same as the number of pips on your piece. (If your piece is Large, you roll three dice, if it's Medium, you roll two, and if you only have a Small, you only roll one die.)
- If the attacker fails to get a better total dice roll than the defender, the battle ends and no pieces are moved. Ties go to the defender.
- If the attacker wins, the loser must retreat into an empty, adjoining territory of their choice, while the winner's piece is moved into the disputed zone.
- You cannot retreat into the space the attacker is coming from.
- If (and only if) there is no available territory for the loser to retreat to, then their piece is reduced in size by one.

WORLD WAR 5 (CONT.)



- If a piece must shrink but there's no piece available of the size needed, the piece shrinks to the next smallest size. Smalls are removed from the board, allowing the attacker to move in.
- If a player is eliminated because they have no pieces left in their home territory, all pieces of that color are immediately removed from the board.
- After resolving combat, stand your piece up.
- The defender chooses where they retreat to.

HOW TO WIN

You win if all three territories in another colored continent are occupied by pieces of your color — provided you also have at least one piece of your color in your home continent. If two players happen to meet the victory condition at the same time, then the active player wins. You also win if all other players are eliminated.

OTHER NOTES

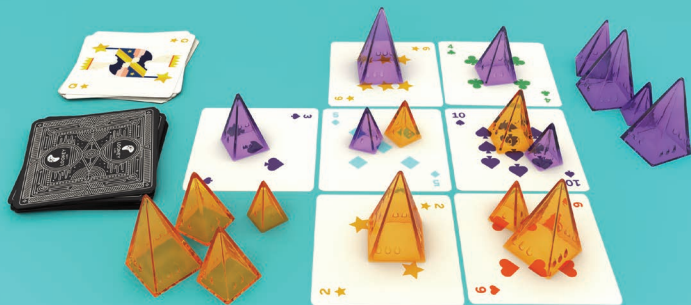
PLAYING WITH MORE THAN 4

You will note that we say this game is for 2-4 players, even though there are clearly enough continents for as many as six to participate. The reason we don't recommend 6 or even 5 player games is because they tend to last a lot longer, due to the fact that no one can win until someone gets eliminated. That said, as long as everyone knows the situation, there's no reason you can't play with 5, or even with 6. Just be prepared for a long, brutal game.





ZARK CITY



- **Diagonal Connection:** When two cards are connected only at their corners, they are said to be diagonally connected.
- **Three of a Kind:** A group of three adjacent cards that all have the same number.
- **Suited Run:** A group of three adjacent cards that are all of the same suit and together form a consecutive sequence of numbers.
- **Power Block:** Three cards (in either a straight line or an L-shape) which are composed of either a Three of a Kind or a Suited Run (numerical order not required).

SETUP

Move each player's pieces to their spots at the table. Shuffle the deck and deal three cards to each player. If any player's hand contains nothing but aces and/or face cards, all players draw an extra card, repeating until all players hold number cards. (If you have no numbers, you must reveal your hand of cards to prove it.)

WHO STARTS

Everyone chooses a number card (2-10) from their hand and plays it face down. Once all players have selected a card, everyone reveals. The player with the highest number goes first. In the event of a tie, the tying player who first selected their starter card goes first. Play then proceeds clockwise around the table.

FIRST ROUND

The first player sets their chosen card in the center of the table, and places a small pyramid on that card. In turn order, the other players then add their starter cards to the board, placing their cards adjacent to any card in play. Each also puts a small pyramid on their card.

HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, draw a card, add it to your hand, then take one of the eight Turn Options listed below. Afterwards, discard cards as needed to meet the Hand Limit of six.

HAND LIMIT

When it's not your turn, you can only hold a maximum of six cards in your hand. You can exceed this limit during your turn, but you must discard to six cards when your turn ends.



2-5



LONG



MEDIUM

EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios of a color for each player
- Zark City cards



OVERVIEW

In Zark City, a deck of cards is used to create an ever-expanding gameboard of numbered territories. Pyramids are used to indicate who's in control of which cards.

GOAL

To win you must exclusively occupy three adjacent cards with pieces of your color, and they have to be either a suited run or three of a kind.

TERMINOLOGY

- **Gameboard:** The numbered cards on the table collectively form the gameboard. (Aces and face cards do not get added to the board; you get special actions when you use them.)
- **Occupy vs. Control:** You occupy a card if one or more of your pyramids is on it; you control a card if you are the only player occupying it.
- **Adjacent:** Two cards on the board are adjacent to each other if their sides are touching.

ZARK CITY (CONT.)



TURN OPTIONS

- **Draw:** Draw three additional cards, for a total of four this turn.
- **Grow:** Replace one of your pieces with the next larger size.
- **Spawn:** Add a small pyramid to a card you occupy.
- **Build:** Add a number card from your hand to the board, placing it adjacent to a card you occupy.
- **Move:** Slide one of your pyramids onto an adjacent card.
- **Demolish/Convert:** Choose a piece to either remove from the board or change to your color. The piece you target must be on a card adjacent to, or the same as, a card you occupy. You must discard one or more face cards, as many as needed to equal or exceed the Pip value of the piece. Kings are worth three points. Queens are worth two points. Jacks and Aces are all worth one point. You can either convert the piece to your color by exchanging it with one of the same size or smaller from your stash, or you may simply remove the target piece from the board. If you spend more attack points than required, draw one or two extra cards, depending on the number of leftover points. (For example, if you discard two Queens to convert a Large, draw one card.) However, you may not discard entirely redundant face cards to get extra draws.
- **Fly:** Aces have power in addition to Convert & Demolish. You can discard an Ace to move a card, like a flying carpet, from one spot on the board to another. You must occupy the card you wish to move (but need not control it). The pieces on the card ride along with it to the new location. You can move the card anywhere as long as you place it adjacent to another card, and provided your move doesn't leave one section of cards completely detached from another. Note that a diagonal connection IS adequate to prevent complete detachment, even though pyramids may become isolated. You can only do one thing with an Ace, so if you use it to Fly you cannot also use its power to Demolish or Convert during that turn.
- **Hatch:** If you have no pyramids on the board, you may Build a new card anywhere, and then place a Small onto that card.

SIZE MATTERS

You cannot Grow or Spawn if you don't have the right sized pyramid available in your stash. For example, you can't Spawn if all three of your smalls are already on the board.

RE-SHUFFLING

If the deck runs out, shuffle the discard pile and keep playing.

HOW TO WIN

You win if you Control all three cards in a Power Block.

OTHER NOTES

HISTORICAL NOTES

This game is based on one of the earliest hits for the pyramids, Zarcana by John Cooper. Minor inspiration also came from Lost Cities by Reiner Knizia. Hence the name Zark City.

USING A STANDARD CARD DECK

Although the 5-suit deck included in this box is ideal for this game, you can also play Zark City with a regular card deck. Jokers count as 1 point for Demolish or Convert actions, and when adding cards to the board, alternate them each by 90 degrees to create a more pleasing board pattern.



HISTORY OF THE PYRAMIDS

You hold in your hands the culmination of 25 years of game design effort, entrepreneurial drive, and my unrelenting obsession with pyramids.

In the summer of 1987, I wrote a short story. One of the plot devices was an imaginary board game which had no turns, used colorful pyramid-shaped game pieces, and was played with no additional equipment on any flat surface. I called this game Icehouse, and imagined a world where it was as commonplace and widely played as chess and playing card games. The characters in this world carried pyramid sets everywhere and used the game not just for fun but to settle disputes. Popular night spots would have pyramid gaming spaces built right in, just as backgammon tables were sometimes found in lounges back in the eighties.

We didn't have the internet to share ideas back then, but we did have photocopiers, so I made booklets of my stories and gave them to all my friends.



Everyone was intrigued by my imaginary game, but the idea really caught fire in the brains of two of my best friends: John Cooper, a buddy since childhood, who designed an actual game like the one I described, and Kristin Wunderlich, a co-worker at NASA, who wanted to start a company to publish my cool new game.

Within a couple of years, we were manufacturing and selling the first run of 100 handmade Icehouse game sets, featuring solid (non-stacking) plastic pyramids, and packaged in a stark black box.



This was our first foray into becoming a game publisher, and the first step towards the eventual founding of Looney Labs. Around that same time, Kristin and I got married, and John was the Best Man at our wedding.

With that first game we got our feet wet learning what it takes to start a business and launch a product. The challenge of getting custom-designed game pieces made was bigger than I had realized, and it wasn't until we'd started making money from Fluxx that we could even afford to pay the injection-molding setup costs required. Indeed, it was frustration with this manufacturing challenge that famously caused Kristin to challenge me to invent a much-easier-to-publish card game, which is how I was first inspired to invent Fluxx. But that's another story.



Icehouse is a fascinating game and we really got into playing it. We ran annual tournaments, we published a photocopied newsletter (called Hypothermia), and we sold short runs of game sets, in your choice of deluxe, color-stained wood pyramids, or cheap, punch-out-and-fold-together cardstock pyramids. We didn't quit our day jobs.

After years of enthusiastically teaching people to play Icehouse, we finally had to concede that our first game for the system was subtly flawed in fundamental ways and that, intriguing though it was, Icehouse would never become the Next Big Thing. But everybody loved the pyramids... so, what if there were some entirely new game that could be played with the set?

Amazingly, it took us eight years to think of this. But once we had that mental breakthrough, my friends and I quickly started having other ideas for games (and we haven't stopped yet).

HISTORY OF THE PYRAMIDS

My first intentionally designed pyramid game was Martian Chess, which I adapted from Monochrome Chess, a twisted version of chess I had recently come up with, which was played with a chess set consisting of pieces that are all the same color. I used the name Martian Chess because Mars was already baked into the pyramids.



The Mars connection goes back to the beginning. Technically, it was the second story I wrote with characters playing Icehouse that triggered the creation of the real game, and that story was called "The Children of Mars." In 1988 I mailed that story out to a few dozen friends as a series of five postcards. (Again, no internet.) This caused renewed interest in making real my imaginary game, and that's when things really started to happen.

But that was also when I first advanced the idea that Icehouse was a relic of the long-dead Martian civilization, which we knew about via race memories carried in the subconsciousnesses of the descendants of survivors of that ancient civilization, who'd fled their dying planet to live among humans eons ago. (You could identify people of Martian lineage by their red hair.) By 1991, I'd combined both of the original Icehouse stories, and others I'd been working on, into my first novel, called *The Empty City*.



The "100,000 year-old game from Mars" was a marketing angle we often talked about, back in our earliest days of starting a game company. So it was only natural to embrace the Martian theme when I designed Martian Chess. I also wrote a new short story to help promote it, called the Martian Archeological Society, about a secret society you could only join by winning a game of Martian Chess against standing members of the group.

In 1996, we started selling a little booklet called *More Icehouse Games*, featuring the first five games beyond the original. Other than Martian Chess, they've all been forgotten or superseded, but even if some of them weren't very good, it was incredible to suddenly have so many new games to play with the pyramids!

But none of those early games featured stacking, since hollow pyramids didn't exist until 1999. It seems absurd at this point, given the number of amazing games that depend on stacking, but we used to be actively opposed to the idea of hollow pyramids. We desired the heft of a solid pyramid and feared hollow pieces would feel chintzy. However, once we realized how much more versatile stackable pyramids would be, we once again wondered why it took us so long to see the light.

As we continued to invent new games, we learned other lessons. We gradually realized that the full "stash" size of fifteen pieces is really more than is needed for most games. In 2006 we introduced a scaled-down pyramid game set with just one Trio of each color, called a *Treehouse* set.



This relaunch introduced the first special die for the system and also established the two color schemes were available for many years: the "Rainbow" colors (red, yellow, green, blue, and black) and the "Xeno" colors (purple, orange, light blue, clear, and white).

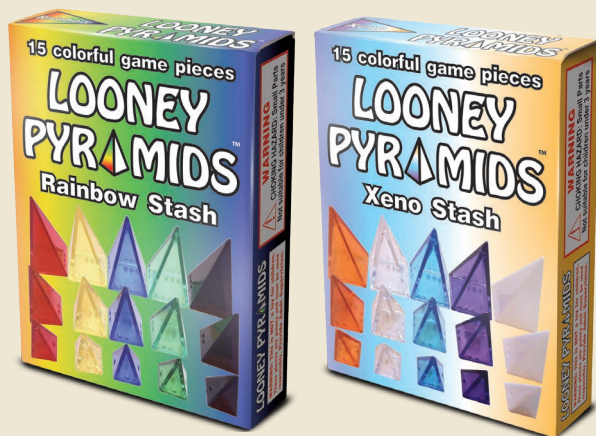
HISTORY OF THE PYRAMIDS

The launch of Treehouse shifted the paradigm again, and opened up our brains to the world of games you could play with a single Trio of each color. But as I kept on inventing new games for the pyramids, I found that the “just right” Goldilocks spot is actually three Trios of each color. Many of the best games in Pyramid Arcade use the 9-piece stash. And yet, the 3-Trio grouping still lacks an accepted name. (For awhile I was championing 3HOUSE as a naming convention, but it was just too weird.)

Terminology has always been tricky. Naming things is never easy, and even when you find the perfect name, getting it to stick can sometimes be a challenge. Awhile ago we switched to the more generic name Looney Pyramids, but even I sometimes forget and call them Icehouse pieces. On the other hand, with Martian Chess I gave each piece a formal name — the Pawn, the Drone, and the Queen — but those names never stuck. It’s just more natural to call them Smalls, Mediums, and Larges.

As the system continued to develop, we needed to invent other equipment to be used along with the pyramids. The original vision, of a game played ONLY with pyramids, is difficult to achieve. Most pyramid games require other equipment, such as gameboards, cards, tokens, and most importantly, dice. One of the big ways in which the pyramids are unlike playing cards are that the latter are better at hiding and randomizing information, so dice are often used to add a luck factor to pyramid games. All of the special dice we’ve created over the years are included with this set.

As the library of games I’d invented for the pyramids grew, I found that the most optimal set for my needs included three-trios in the full range of Rainbow and Xeno colors, along with all the other stuff required for all



my favorite games. And as that ideal set emerged, I even found that games which traditionally called for fifteen pieces per color, such as Ice Towers and Volcano, could be adapted to work with 9-piece stashes. On the other hand, some games just can’t be down-scaled, including rather sadly, the game that started it all, Icehouse.



I’ve been continually inspired and re-inspired by these pyramids. Sometimes it feels more like I’m discovering, not designing, these new ways to play games. I like to let a new game go where the rules want to take me, and some of these games have seemed almost to invent themselves, popping almost fully formed into my brain. Over the years, we’ve refined and re-invented many games, creating some of the best in the process:

- Zark City was inspired by Gnostica, which was itself a redesigned version of Zarcana, one of the first games after Icehouse and the biggest hit of the post-Icehouse phase.
- Homeworlds evolved from an earlier game John created called Ice Traders.
- Ice Towers was designed as a fresh interpretation of the original imaginary game, incorporating all the lessons learned from years of trying to teach people to play Icehouse.



HISTORY OF THE PYRAMIDS

As a game's designer revisits a set of rules and starts tinkering with it, the game sometimes changes into something different enough to need a name of its own. And sometimes the new game ends up just replacing the existing game. The rules to Volcano presented in this set are, technically, a variation known as Fiesta Caldera.

The most recent format we'd been selling the pyramids in, prior to this boxed set, was a series of cute little pyramid-shaped zippered bags, each featuring a headliner game: Ice Dice, Treehouse, and Hijinks, which we called Pink Hijinks, since it featured special pink pyramids. (We plan to keep Pink Hijinks in print, while the other two are going into the Vault.)



There have been many other important helpers along the way, from Chort Montrie, who made the first plastic Icehouse pyramids as a gift to inspire me to design the game I'd imagined, and Charles Dickson, who engineered the first hand-poured pyramid making system we used, to all the game designers who've come up with their own games for our pyramids, some of whom are now close friends of mine, including Kory Heath, Jacob Davenport, Dave Chalker, Keith Baker, Kristin Matherly, Zarf Plotkin, and others too numerous to list. It blows my mind how many pyramid games have been invented now — approaching 500 at last count, judging by the pages at the fan-run online database at IcehouseGames.org.

I also want to thank all of the playtesters who've suffered through in-progress versions of these games over the course of the past 20+ years, including Josh Drobina, Davy Kramer-Smyth, Wil Allyn, Shel West, Tom Eigelsbach, Robin Vinopal, Russell Grieshop, Ryan Hackel, Greykell Dutton, and so many others, but most importantly of course, my lovely wife Kristin.

Thanks to everyone who supports Looney Labs in every way, and to everyone who's helped fund or otherwise support our efforts, recently or long-past. Thanks to all fans of the pyramids everywhere, whatever game they discovered first or like best. This set wouldn't be possible without so many others, and I thank them all for helping make what we're doing possible.

A few other thanks in order. Big thanks to Eileen Tjan, and her associates at OTHER Studio, Abe and Rosa, who created all the packaging designs, logos, final gameboard illustrations, and so on which make this boxed set so beautiful. Amber Cook also deserves a shout-out for connecting us with Other and otherwise helping shape our marketing direction.

Going further back, I'd like to thank Randy & Tim, formerly of KLON corporation, who were the first to make injection-molded pyramids for us, and whose input influenced certain aspects of the final design, including the tear-drop shape of the pips. Thanks to Dawn Robyn Petrlik for painting Martian landscapes for us along with the cover of The Empty City. Finally, after years of struggling with what to call this set, it was Laurie Menke who suggested the perfect name, Pyramid Arcade. (Like so many parts of this story, it seems so obvious now, why didn't anyone think of it sooner?) Laurie also had a lot of great proof-reading advice for me as I wrote this book, as did Kristin, Alison Frane, Jeff Wolfe, Jacob Davenport, Leila Zucker, Sarah Boyle and many others.

Plus we couldn't do any of this without the help we get from the incredible group of employees we have working for us at Looney Labs!



With more than two decades of history behind this box, there are other stories I haven't told here yet and other people I'm probably forgetting to acknowledge, such as financial backers and legions of play-testers too numerous to list... but I sincerely appreciate everyone's help during the last two decades. Thanks for helping me create this beautiful dream.

— Andrew Looney, April 2016



INVENT YOUR OWN GAME

GLOTZ, THE GAME THAT HASN'T BEEN INVENTED YET

As we continue discovering new ways to play with the pyramids, we're always excited to hear that others have been inspired to invent their own pyramid games. We always encourage this, and challenge you to try it too!

We call any un-invented game Glotz. For many years, that's been our code name for any as-yet unnamed game we are in the process of inventing. When a work-in-progress takes final form, it gets a real name, and the name Glotz gets freed up for some other half-baked idea.

So, when you are tinkering around with the pyramids, trying to make up a game, you're playing Glotz. To help inspire your creativity, here are some starting points.

If you come up with a great new Glotz for the pyramids, please let us know!

GLOTZ CHALLENGE #1

For this idea, you will need a full-sized chessboard. Get three trios of one color and use them to populate the six squares in the middle of one edge. Place a Small, a Medium, and a Large in the first three spaces, and fill the other three spaces with three different two-piece towers: a Medium on a Large, a Small on a Large, and a Small on a Medium. If you imagine these two-piece towers are glued together, this creates a set of six unique game pieces for each player. Use additional colors to populate other edges of the chessboard as needed for two, three, or four players. This is the starting point for a new game in which the pyramid die is used to designate which of your six pieces you get to move during your turn. But what are the rest of the rules to this game?



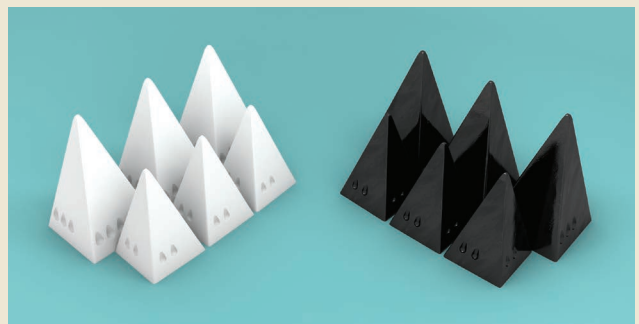
GLOTZ CHALLENGE #2

Pyramid Arcade includes a 5-color deck of cards, and a 5-color die, but as of this writing, no game has been invented that really combines these elements. You could probably play a pretty cool game just with the deck and the color die, but if you also include pyramids of those five colors, the possibilities become endless!



GLOTZ CHALLENGE #3

Most of the games in the Arcade leave plenty of pyramids behind for other uses. However, Volcano is greedy, requiring almost all of the pyramids in the box. Just a dozen pyramids are left over by Volcano, in only two colors and sizes, and that's just not enough to play anything with... yet. But wouldn't it be cool if those strange few leftovers could somehow be used for a game you could play alongside Volcano?



So, that's our 3rd Glotz challenge: Can you design a game that uses just twelve pyramids — three black Large and Mediums, and three white Large and Mediums — along with any other equipment in this box (besides the Volcano board)?

22 MORE GREAT GAMES

TWENTY-TWO MORE GAMES TO EXPLORE

We asked the community of Starship Captains for recommendations about other games to try, and this is the list they came up with.

Seven of these games can be played right out of this box, with a couple requiring a few extra items of easily-gathered equipment, such as a chessboard, poker chips, or gaming tokens. The other fifteen games require additional pyramids as well as other equipment.

Rules for all of these games are available online. You can find a complete list of links to the rules to these games at this URL: LooneyLabs.com/other-pyramid-games

LITTLE ELSE REQUIRED

APOPHIS

- Designed by Erik Dresner
- Number of Players: 1-4
- Equipment: 5 trios of different colors, 6-sided die, deck of playing cards, 5 counters, timer
- Overview: A high-speed cooperative game of launching missiles at the Apophis asteroid before it hits the Earth on April 13, 2036!
- Notes: In 2009, Apophis won the Ninth Icehouse Game Design Contest.

EGYPTIAN SOLITAIRE

- Designed by Dallan Duggar
- Number of Players: 1+
- Equipment: 3 trios each of 5 different colors, 3x4 grid
- Overview: A solitaire puzzle game that can also be played cooperatively or competitively. Imagine a combination of Peg Solitaire and a Rubik's Cube.

FREEZE TAG

- Designed by Jeanne Rink Kramer-Smyth
- Number of Players: 2-4
- Equipment: 2 trios of a single color per player, pyramid die, Volcano board
- Overview: Pyramids race to the other side, trying not to get frozen along the way, which happens when another piece is on top of the one you want to move.

GLEEBES AND GRUES

- Designed by Robert Dudley
- Number of Players: 2
- Equipment: 5 trios of different colors, 4x4 grid
- Overview: Absorb the enemy Gleebs while trying not to be eaten by a Grue. Each player has two colors of pyramids, plus a fifth color is used for the Grue, who can immobilize or remove pyramids from the game.

LOGGER

- Designed by Erik Dresner
- Number of Players: 2-4
- Equipment: 25 trios of any transparent colors (the trees), 5 small opaque pyramids (the protesters), Volcano board, a unique marker for each player (meeples or other such pawns)
- Overview: Four rival lumberjacks are competing to chop down the most trees for their business. However, standing in their way are tree-hugging hippies protesting the deforestation!

TIMELOCK

- Designed by Jason Darrah
- Number of Players: 2
- Equipment: 1 trio each of all 10 different colors, two 6-sided dice, Treehouse die, Volcano board
- Overview: You're an agent of the Time Repair Agency, racing to create a Timelock to stop an alternate reality version of yourself from taking your place in this continuum. A semi-abstract strategy game of matchings stacks of pyramids before the Goal changes again.

PENGUIN SOCCER

- Designer: Avri Klemer
- Number of Players: 2
- Equipment: 2 trios of different colors, a chessboard, a token to represent the soccer ball
- Overview: The pyramids become cute families of penguins playing soccer and sliding around on the ice!
- Notes: Penguin Soccer was published by Nestor Games as a commercial game with penguin-shaped game pieces in February 2010.

22 MORE GREAT GAMES

MORE PYRAMIDS REQUIRED

ICEHOUSE

- Designed by John Cooper and Andrew Looney
- Number of Players: 3-5
- Equipment: 5 trios of a single color per player, area markers called stash pads for each player, a timer
- Overview: This is the game that started it all. No turns, no board. Upright pyramids are defenders, flat pieces are attackers. Requires a sharp wit and a steady hand.
- Notes: US Patent #4,936,585 (now expired) was awarded to this game in 1990.

QUICKSAND

- Designed by Erik Oosterwal
- Number of Players: 2
- Equipment: 5 trios of one color per player, 4 Looney Ludo boards
- Overview: A brain-burning abstract. Place a pyramid onto the board, or use a placed pyramid to capture others by jumping over them. Next, rotate one of the boards – this can greatly alter the balance of power.

TORPEDO

- Designed by Jacob Davenport
- Number of Players: 2-5
- Equipment: 5 trios of one color per player
- Overview: Players rush to deploy a fleet of naval vessels (flat pyramids) on the table in real-time. After all of a player's pyramids have been placed, they fire their torpedoes, and some ships will sink!
- Notes: This game was inspired by Light Speed, designed by Tom Jolly & James Ernest. In 2005, Torpedo won the Fourth Icehouse Game Design Contest.

UNDERCUT

- Designed by Joseph Kisenwether
- Number of Players: 3-5
- Equipment: 5 trios each of 5 different colors, bag
- Overview: An auction game where the players score points based on sets of similar pieces, but the twist is that the player with the lowest score wins.
- Notes: In 2004, Undercut won the Second Icehouse Game Design Contest. In 2013, this game was published as a standalone game by Eagle-Gryphon Games, with a Zen Rock Garden theme, called Karesansui.

MORE PYRAMIDS + OTHER STUFF REQUIRED

ALIEN CITY

- Designed by Michael Schoessow
- Number of Players: 2
- Equipment: a Piecepack set (a public domain game system consisting of tiles, coins, and dice), 20 Pyramids (14 Larges and 6 Smalls, of 3 colors)
- Overview: Four powerful guilds are constructing a city of towers and domes on a newly colonized world in the far future.

BLAM!

- Designed by Jon Eargle
- Number of Players: 2-4
- Equipment: 5 trios of one color per player, chessboard
- Overview: Placing pieces onto the board causes others to get shoved around. Push high-scoring pieces off the board to add them to your treasure chest.

BUILDERS OF R'LYEH

- Designed by Matthew Rogers
- Number of Players: 1-5
- Equipment: 5 trios of one color per player, plus one extra set of 5 trios, playing cards, Cthulhu die from Steve Jackson Games (or two regular dice)
- Overview: A stacking and dexterity game about constructing the alien city of R'lyeh. Try to get your pyramid atop the tallest crazy spire in the city of Cthulhu before it sinks into the sea.

GNOSTICA

- Designed by John Cooper with Jacob Davenport, Kory Heath, and Kristin Matherly
- Number of Players: 2-6
- Equipment: 5 trios of a single color per player, a tarot deck (any style will work as long as it has classic 4 suits and 22 traditional major arcana cards)
- Overview: A territory-based war game. Tarot cards make up the often-changing board; players use pyramids to control those territories for points. Every tarot card has a special power.
- Notes: Gnostica, like Zark City, was based on Zarcana, one of the earliest games for the pyramids. Gnostica was published in Playing with Pyramids in 2002.

22 MORE GREAT GAMES

PIKEMEN

- Designed by Jacob Davenport
- Number of Players: 2-4
- Equipment: 5 trios of one color per player, chessboard
- Overview: Your pyramids are Pikemen, warriors with long spears. Each turn, a Pikeman may charge in the direction they are pointing and then orient their pike in any direction, including straight up for defense.
- Notes: Only 9 pieces of each color are needed for a 4-player game, which means you can play the 4-player version of Pikemen with the pyramids in this set. Pikemen was included in *Playing with Pyramids* in 2002. In 2010, this game was rethemed and published by Nestor Games as *Star Fleet Scramble*.

PYLON

- Designed by Doug Orleans
- Number of Players: 2
- Equipment: 5 trios of a single color per player, 5x6 grid
- Overview: An abstract strategy game of placement and stacking. A placement phase, in which all the pyramids are placed onto the board, is followed by a stacking phase, in which pyramids are collected into stacks.
- Notes: In 2007, Pylon won the Sixth Icehouse Game Design Contest.

RAMBOTS

- Designed by Kory Heath
- Number of Players: 2-4
- Equipment: 5 trios of 4 different colors, plus an extra set of 4 Large pyramids, a chessboard, a screen for each player wide enough to hide a row of five pyramids
- Overview: You are programmer, instructing a RAMbot to tag four beacons on the grid, by ramming them after shooting them with lasers which activate their flags. Everyone sets up a sequence of 5 commands behind their privacy screens; then, all the RAMbots execute their instruction sets at the same time, ramming each other and shooting anything in their way.
- Notes: RAMbots was published in *Playing with Pyramids* in 2002.

STACK CONTROL

- Designed by Robert Dudley
- Number of Players: 2-4
- Equipment: 5 trios of each of 5 different colors, chessboard, drawstring bag

- Overview: A game of stacking shared pieces. Each player is assigned a color, and there is at least one neutral color in play as well. On your turn, you can stack pyramids of any color, either helping score potential points for yourself or to eliminate rival pyramids. If all your pyramids leave play, you lose!

SUBDIVISION

- Designed by Carlton Noles
- Number of Players: 2-4
- Equipment: 5 trios of one color per player, chessboard, nine markers
- Overview: You are a real estate developer competing with others to strategically develop a new subdivision. Where you build is somewhat restricted and what gets built next to you affects your value. Bring down your competitor's value while maximizing your own.
- Notes: Variant rules allow for a shorter game with three trios per player.

SYNAPSE-ICE

- Designed by Joseph Kisenwether
- Number of Players: 2
- Equipment: 5 trios of one color per player, 5x6 grid
- Overview: Players alternate placing flat pyramids on any square on the board, pointing to an empty space. Large's point to the square 3 steps away, Medium's point 2 steps away, and Small's point to the adjacent space. The next player must place their piece in the square just pointed to. This piece must also point to an empty space. The first player unable to make a move loses.

ZENDO

- Designed by Kory Heath
- Number of Players: 3-5
- Equipment: 60 Pyramids (5 trios of 4 different colors), 20 White Stones, 20 Black Stones, 20 Green Stones
- Overview: A game of inductive logic in which one player thinks of a secret rule, then the others attempt to discover that rule by building and studying small arrangements of pyramids. Each such cluster gets marked with a white stone if it follows the secret rule, and a black stone if it does not. The first player to state the rule correctly wins.
- Notes: Zendo was published in *Playing with Pyramids* in 2002. In 2003, this game was published in a standalone set, which received the Origins award for Best Abstract Board Game, as well as the Mensa Select award.



INDEX OF GAMES



BLACK ICE **PAGE 14**
You are a computer hacker, seeking to be the first to figure out a 3 color secret code.

🕒 Fast	👤 2 players	🌲 📦 🧶
🎯 Simple	📈 45	



COLOR WHEEL **PAGE 16**
A solitaire / cooperative game of swapping pieces until all are grouped into clusters of one color.

🕒 Fast	👤 1-5 players	🌲 🌀
🎯 Simple	📈 90	



GIVE OR TAKE **PAGE 18**
Collect a matched set of 3 pieces by taking from a central pile, or giving pieces back.

🕒 Fast	👤 2-10 players	🌲 📦
🎯 Simple	📈 3 each (9 w/2)	



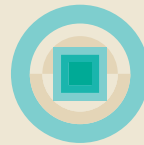
HIJINKS **PAGE 19**
Get all 3 same-sized pieces lined up in your home row before your opponent does.

🕒 Fast	👤 2 players	🌲 📦 🗺️
🎯 Simple	📈 9	



HOMEWORLDS **PAGE 20**
A complex intergalactic space battle game. No luck, no hidden info, just pure strategy.

🕒 Long	👤 2 players	🌲 🌐
🎯 Complex	📈 36	



ICE DICE **PAGE 28**
A fast & simple press- your-luck dice game. Collect 3 monochrome trees to win!

🕒 Fast	👤 2-3 players	🌲 📦 📦
🎯 Simple	📈 30 or 45	



ICE TOWERS **PAGE 30**
A fast, turnless stacking game. You get points for each piece in a tower if your piece is on top!

🕒 Fast	👤 2-6 players	🌲
🎯 Medium	📈 9 each	



LAUNCHPAD 23 **PAGE 34**
Be the first to build a 5-stage rocket using randomly delivered factory parts!

🕒 Fast	👤 2-4 players	🌲 📦 📦 🗺️
🎯 Simple	📈 30	



LOONEY LUDO **PAGE 36**
Your pieces move around on a gameboard made of tiles that rotate and change positions.

🕒 Fast	👤 2-6 players	🌲 📦 📦 🗺️
🎯 Simple	📈 3 each	



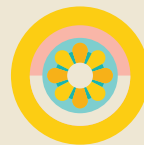
LUNAR INVADERS **PAGE 38**
You must teleport to an enemy moon, take over their teleporter, and use it to beam home.

🕒 Medium	👤 2 players	🌲 📦 🌐
🎯 Medium	📈 9 each	



MARTIAN CHESS **PAGE 40**
It's kind of like chess, but your pieces change ownership as soon as you attack with them.

🕒 Medium	👤 2 players	🌲 🗺️
🎯 Medium	📈 9 each	



PETAL BATTLE **PAGE 42**
Your pieces represent insects fighting over a flower. Take over half of the petals to win!

🕒 Fast	👤 2 players	🌲 🌀
🎯 Medium	📈 24	

INDEX OF GAMES



PETRI DISH **PAGE 44**
 You control germs in a Petri dish. Dominate the dish by eliminating the other germs!

🕒 Medium	👤 2-10 players	🌳 📦 📦 🌀
🎯 Medium	▲ 9 each	



PHARAOH **PAGE 48**
 Get your 3 pieces into a row in the center of the board before you get kicked back out!

🕒 Fast	👤 2-4 players	🌳 📦 📊
🎯 Simple	▲ 3 each	



POWERHOUSE **PAGE 50**
 Pieces drawn randomly from a bag react to others you've saved as you seek to build a set.

🕒 Fast	👤 2-5 players	🌳 📦 🎒
🎯 Medium	▲ 45	



PYRAMID-SHAM-BO **PAGE 52**
 Pyramids are added to Rock Paper Scissors to make it an elimination tournament event.

🕒 Fast	👤 2-10 players	🌳 📦 🎮
🎯 Simple	▲ 3 each	



TREEHOUSE **PAGE 54**
 Rearrange your trio of pieces to match the arrangement of a trio centered on the table.

🕒 Fast	👤 2-10 players	🌳 📦
🎯 Simple	▲ 3 each + 3	



TWIN WIN **PAGE 57**
 A quick bluffing board game where you seek to build either of 2 secret goal patterns.

🕒 Fast	👤 2-3 players	🌳 📦 🎮
🎯 Simple	▲ 15	



VERTICALITY **PAGE 58**
 A dexterity game in which players build rickety towers using cards and pyramids.

🕒 Fast	👤 1-5 players	🌳 📦 📦
🎯 Simple	▲ Up to 90	



VOLCANO **PAGE 60**
 A puzzle game of causing eruptions and matching pieces to collect a set of trios.

🕒 Medium	👤 2-3 players	🌳 📊
🎯 Medium	▲ 78	



WORLD WAR 5 **PAGE 62**
 It's a world conquest board game you can play in just half an hour!

🕒 Medium	👤 2-4 players	🌳 📦 🌍
🎯 Medium	▲ 9 each	



ZARK CITY **PAGE 64**
 A deck of standard playing cards is used to create a gameboard to battle upon.

🕒 Long	👤 2-5 players	🌳 📦
🎯 Medium	▲ 9 each	

PYRAMID ARCADE BY ANDREW LOONEY
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075

My Magnum Opus
Twenty two amazing games
Pyramid Arcade

Give or Take a piece!
Roll the die to see what size.
Clean set of three wins!

Three colorful codes
concealed by the Black ICE...
Who will break in first?

Let's play Ice Towers!
It's a high-speed stacking game.
No board, and no turns!

Swap to group colors.
Play alone or as a team.
It's Color Wheel!

Spewing lava from
the erupting Volcano
lands on same-sized rocks.

Surprisingly deep...
Such a simple little game!
Hijinks. (Sometimes pink.)

Roll the Treehouse die.
Change your Tree to match
the House...
Or just change the House?

We're building rockets!
Each must have 5 equal parts.
Launchpad 23!

Roll the Ice Dice dice.
What color piece did you get?
Bank? or press your luck?

Two groups of insects
Fighting on flower petals.
That's Petal Battle.

Three pyramids each
Trying to hold the center.
Pharaoh of the hill.

Martian Chess is weird
Position is ownership
Color means nothing

Rock, Paper, Scissors
Now played as a tournament:
Pyramid-Sham-Bo

Two secret goal cards
Five towers of shared pieces
Who will win Twin Win?

We're all just a bunch
of germs in a Petri dish.
The strongest germ wins!

Don't have time for Risk?
You can play World War 5
during your lunch break.

Powerhouse crystals
cause different reactions
when pulled from the bag.

Get your pieces home
through a sliding tile landscape
in Looney Ludo

Lunar Invaders
Beam to the enemy's moon!
... How do we get back?

Verticality
Each builds a fragile tower
hoping it falls last.

Zark City's gameboard
is built out of playing cards
as the game unfolds.

In the game Homeworlds,
Interstellar empires
battle to the death.

A three game throwdown
Played simultaneously
by two BFFs.

