Rolling Control

Components

You will need:

- Five six-sided color dice. It is assumed here that one of the sides is black.
- An ample supply of company tokens matching the five colors on the dice which are not black.
- One distinctive train figure per player (we recommend 3 players), preferably not matching the color of any tokens.
- A copy of the game board large enough to hold a variety of your tokens comfortably in each town.
- An 11" by 17" box to serve as your dice tray, with an insert for the box matching the game board.
- Scoring mats for each player.
- Some means to tallying points.

> An image file is provided so you can print out and mount the company tokens. If you do use color dice, any markers of matching colors will do. If you don't have color dice matching the company colors, you can also use a regular d6: the company logos have been designed to match the patterns of pips on a die (faces ⚀ through ⚄))

Setup

- All tokens ("storefronts") are initially considered to be in "the reserve."
- Set aside 5 tokens of each color. These are the "stock."
- Each player gets one token of each color from the reserve, to put on the "ready" section of their scoring mat.
- Roll two dice for each of the nine towns. Each die indicates a storefront (of matching color) should be placed on that town from the reserve. Rolling black here means no storefront is placed.
- Each player now places his train on the track, straddling two towns, facing either direction. Decide what order to do this in any way you please.
- Choose a Starting Player.
- You're done with the reserve now. During the game, you'll be taking storefronts only from the stock.

> ### Rolling the Dice
> Players should decide ahead of time what constitutes a sporting throw. As a suggestion, require that the dice be released at least 9" (or 20 cm) above the rolling surface. If aiming is not desired, players must hold the dice in their hand palm-down and release them over the center. Otherwise, go ahead and aim!

Play

Play proceeds in rounds, during which each player takes one turn. Each round proceeds in the following steps.

1. Starting Player rolls five dice into the dice tray.

2. Players take turn choosing, using, and removing one die from the tray, until each player has had one turn. Two dice will be left unused.
3. Starting Player advances their train along the track to the next boundary between towns (choosing which direction to turn if more than one is possible).
4. The next player in clockwise order becomes the new starting player.

Using Dice

The Starting Player takes the first turn at using a die; the turn then proceeds clockwise until each player has used one die.

For all purposes in this phase, black dice count as wild: the player using them may choose what color they represent. Also, if the die touches more than one town, you may choose which one to count.

When you use a die, choose one of these options:

- Add a storefront of the corresponding color (or "company") to the board, in the town the die occupies in the dice tray. You *may not* take this option of there are no matching company markers left in the stock.
- Score the corresponding color in that town (even if you might get zero points doing so). You may *not* take this option if you have previously scored that color.
- IF none of the dice in the tray allow you to take either of these two options (and *only* in this case), you instead choose a die to use, but use it to no effect.

Scoring

When you score a company, each of that company's storefronts in that town does a deal with every other *company* (not storefront) present there. Move your scoring marker for that company into the "scored" line on your player mat, and gain one point per deal.
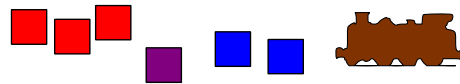
Score = storefronts × other companies

If your *train* touches the town, you treat it as either an additional storefront or an additional company: your choice

Examples of Scoring
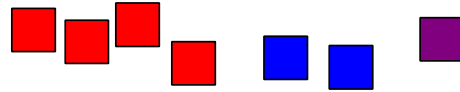
In this town:

- red scores **8** (4 storefronts, 2 other companies)
- blue scores **4** (2 storefronts, 2 other companies)
- purple scores **2** (1 storefront, 2 other companies)

Here, the train can count on either side of the equation, so the best scores become:

- Red **9** (3 storefronts, 2 other companies plus train)
- Blue **6** (2 storefronts plus train, 2 other companies, *or* 2 storefronts, 2 other companies plus train)
- Purple **4** (1 storefront plus train, 2 other companies)
- *Any other color* **3** (train, 3 other companies)
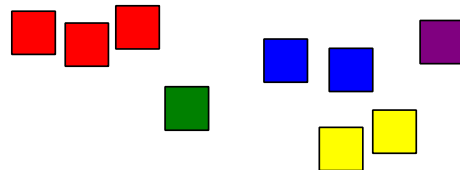
There's a lot going on here, but it can be broken down quickly. *Whichever* company scores, there are four other companies present. So the score for each one is four times its number of storefronts: Red 12, Blue or Yellow 8, Green or Purple 4

In any case, after using a die, remove it from the dice tray. It is not available to the other players.

End of Game

When at least two players have scored all five companies, you are in the final round of the

game. Finish the round, if necessary, and compare scores.

Strategy

The best scoring opportunities are towns with many storefronts of one company, and a wide variety of other companies present. In the early game, such things are meager. To avoid taking low scores, you are obliged to add storefronts, which will tend to increase the scoring opportunities for everybody. Once the stock of storefronts starts running out, you run the risk of being forced to score even in poor places … possibly even taking zero scores. Judging the approach of the endgame is essential in order to strike when the iron is hot.

In towns with already-good scoring opportunities, the presence of a train can make a big difference. Consider not only how to reap returns from your own trains, but where you might cut your opponents off from deals in towns with their own trains. But don't forget that good deals can often be made even without the advantage of a train in that town.

If you're allowing players to aim their die rolls, cultivate scoring opportunities preferentially in the corners of the map, then the sides, then the center. The former areas are easier to bias the dice towards than the latter.

Credits

Rolling Control was designed by Jonathan Venezian, Tim Stellmach, and Ed Su during the Fall 2011 Boston Cardboard Game Jam. The event was organized by Boston Game James (bostongamejams.com) and supported logistically by the Singapore/MIT GAMBIT Game Lab.

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