



A game of Wild West actions, influence, & territory building by Don Lloyd  
For 1 – 4 Players 13 and up, 30 – 90 minutes.

## THEME, CENTRAL GAME MECHANIC, AND OBJECTIVE

“Dark Horse” refers to a person or competitor who reveals little about him or herself, their talents, or abilities. In this game players take on the role of an entrepreneur with unique skills that is attempting to grow a small area into a thriving territory with multiple cities and towns.

The central mechanic players will use while playing the game is rolling dice and placing them on the actions they wish to take. The dice that are rolled in the game represent opportunities that players can exploit during game play. For example, rolling a 2 and a 4 gives the player multiple options, representing tasks for their citizens to work on. A player could use the 2 to take the **Hired Hand** action for additional assistance on the next turn or use the 4 for assembling a **Work Crew** to produce resources. Alternatively, the player could combine both dice for a total of 6, taking the **Builder** action. Optimizing the best available options will determine the level of a player’s success in the game.

Each player starts the game managing one city and two towns in the Old West. Players collect victory points by expanding their towns, cities, and railroad connections, gaining gold, and collecting Influence points from certain actions on the game board. Players will need to watch each other’s progress as the game can end in different ways. The objective of the game is to collect the most victory points before either one player builds all their cities and towns or reaches the Game End token on the influence track.

## SUMMARY OF PLAY

In turn order, players roll two dice (three if they have obtained a bonus die) and place them on an action on the game board in turn order. The game promotes fast play since each player will usually only place dice on one action per round until all players have placed all of their dice. Players then collect their dice as they take the action that they were placed upon. Actions include drawing cards, producing resources, building additional towns and cities, and taking special actions such as the **Sheriff** or **Trader**. Some actions, such as **Politics**, require a certain natural die roll, while other actions require that your dice add up to a certain value. Players gain Influence points during the game by taking specific actions. Influence counts for a player’s overall victory points at the end of the game. Players will need to focus on building railroad connections to their towns so they can maximize their score at the end of the game.

The game has several actions and tokens that allow players to manipulate their dice results. Players will have to decide whether to use actions or limited tokens, such as **Wild Die** or **Engineer**, to modify their dice. These actions and tokens allow players to change their dice rolls to further improve their position.

To keep things simple, there are only two main game phases. In the **Placement Phase**, all players roll their dice and take turns placing a die/dice on one action. Once all dice have been placed, then players enter the **Collection Phase**. In the **Collection Phase**, all players, starting in the **Turn Order** area, resolve any actions that have dice placed on them.



## GAME COMPONENTS

- 12 Wooden city tokens
  - 4 different colors, 3 per player
- 24 Wooden town tokens
  - 4 different colors, 6 per player
- 55 Wooden rail tokens
- 13 Six sided dice
  - 4 different colors, 3 per player
  - One silver Deputy die
- 73 Resource Tokens
  - 23 Food, 25 Wood, & 25 Ore
- 12 Gold Tokens
- 8 Wooden player discs
  - 4 different colors, 2 per player
- 4 Wooden pawns
  - 4 different colors, 1 per player
- 20 Resource Hex Tiles
  - 7 Food, 6 Wood, & 7 Ore
- 34 Various Tokens
  - 10 Wild Die, 6 Engineer, 6 Stock, 8 Loan, & 4 Trader
- 27 Action Cards
- 7 Character Cards
- 1 Reference Card
- 2 Game markers
- Sheriff & Mayor token
- 1 Game board
- This rule book

### Game Board Overview

The game board consists of five different areas. The **Turn Order** is tracked in the upper left corner. The **Action Space Area** consists of all the actions on the game board that a player can take and it begins with the **Turn Order** action and continues along the top and right side of the board, ending with the **Market** action. The numbered **Influence Track** starts on the left side of the board, continuing along the bottom of the board. The **Territory Map** is in the center of the board. Finally, the Jail area is located below the **Turn Order** action, which is where players place any die/dice that they have lost due to using a card or ability with the Jail icon.



### Territory Map Overview

The territory map is comprised of four different types of hexes on the board.

- **Resource Hex** – These hexes have a dashed border on the inside and indicate where resource tiles are placed. Only towns can be placed on this type of hex.
- **Revealed Resource Hex** – These hexes are located in each corner of the territory map, i.e., the pre-printed food and wood hexes on the game board. Each of these corner areas are also referred to as “**Safe Zones**” as they ensure you will have both food and wood.
- **Rugged Resource Hex** – These hexes have a dashed border and a red outline, and like Resource Hexes, they will be covered with a Resource Hex tile. Rugged Resource Hexes will be described on page 13.
- **Non-Resource Hex** – This hex type is empty and does not have any text or lines inside of it. These hexes indicate an area where only a city can be placed.

## GAME SETUP AND OVERVIEW

### 1. Character Cards

As explained in the **Character Overview** on page 11, players select a Character to play the game with and take their **Start Game** bonus.



## 2. Game Pieces and Tokens

Place all cardboard tokens in an accessible area off to the side of the board. This area will be the **Bank**. It is important to understand that only food, wood, and ore counts as resources, not gold. **Gold cannot be used for actions and cards that require resources.** (Note: There is no limit to any of the cardboard tokens; however players may only use 6 towns and 3 cities.)

Each player chooses a set of wooden colored game pieces. All players will receive 6 towns, 3 cities, 3 dice, 2 discs, and one pawn. The third die for each player is only used when a **Bonus Die** is obtained by using specific actions or cards. Finally, all players receive a **Game Start Bonus** of the following items: one rail (**must** be placed before the game starts), one Wild Die token, and one food, ore, and wood token from the **Bank**.



Players can never trade any items with other players, unless a card or ability allows them to do so.



### Event Marker

This marker is placed on the appropriate action affected by the current event. (Note: This marker is not needed until an event comes into play.)

**Example:** When the event card **Drought** is played, a marker is placed on the **Builder** action because this event causes towns to be more costly to build.

## 3. Resource Hexes

Empty all of the Resource Hexes onto the territory map. These hexes will have a specific resource such as Ore, Food, or Wood on the face. Grab any four Ore hexes and place them face up on the hexes marked with a “C” in the diagram to the right. Players then flip all remaining hexes face down so the resource is not revealed. Mix the hexes and randomly place them on the Resource Hex and Rugged Resource Hex spots remaining on the game board. Once all of the hexes have been placed, flip over and reveal only the top two and bottom two hexes marked with a “B” in the diagram. All other hexes marked with an “A” in the diagram will remain face down and unrevealed.



**Two Player Setup:** In a two player game remove all Rugged Resource Hexes and one additional random hex. Do not place any Resource Hexes in the area marked in blue, as identified in the diagram above. This area in blue is “Out of Bounds”, which means you cannot place cities or towns in this area, but you may place rails if needed. You also may not use the Character called “The Tracker”, while playing with this specific two player setup.

**Setup Variant:** Once players are experienced with the game you will find it more challenging to randomize all Resource Hexes and place them face down. Players are also encouraged to come up with different placements for the Resource Hexes such as revealing Ore hexes in the “Safe Zone” corners of the map or even the top and bottom rows.



#### 4. Determine Turn Order

Players randomly determine turn order and place one of their discs on the **Turn Order** track in the upper left corner of the board.

#### 5. Place Initial City and Two Towns

In **reverse turn order**, a player places a city on the board, following the **City and Town Placement** rules on page 12.

This allows the player last in turn order to gain the benefit of placing their city first. The very first city that a player places on the board must have at least two Empty Hexes between the cities. See diagram to the right. (**Note:** Once the game starts, you may build a city that has only one Empty Hex between itself and another city. Once all cities have been placed, then all players place two towns on the board, ignoring turn order. Players may place one town and reveal a hidden resource before placing their second town. Additionally, players ignore the **Rugged** building cost on **Resource Hexes** and **Rugged Resource Hexes** when placing their two initial towns. Rugged resources will be explained on page 13.)



#### 6. Place Discs on Influence Track

Each player places one of their discs on the 🧑 at the top of the **Influence Track**. When players obtain **Influence Points** from actions or cards, they move the disc along this track. **Note:** You only move your disc when you collect from an action that has a 🧑 on it or an Action Card adds or subtracts **Influence Points**. Finally, place the **Game End** token on the number 11 spot on the **Influence Track**. For a shorter or longer game, this may be adjusted.

### GAME PHASES

#### Placement Phase

The game has two distinct phases, i.e., placement and collection. The **Placement Phase** determines what actions, roles and resources a player will be placing their die/dice on this turn. The **Placement Phase** starts with each player rolling two dice, (three dice if they have

obtained a bonus die on the previous turn), and in turn order they place a single die or dice on one spot in the **Action Area** on the board. After the player in the last turn order position has placed a die or dice, a new round of the **Placement Phase** begins. The player in first turn order continues to place any remaining die or dice in the **Action Area** and play continues in

**Example:** A player cannot place two dice on the Market action at the bottom of the Action Track even though it is a grey dashed unlimited action. Players can only collect once off each specific action. For further clarification on actions, refer to the **Action Spaces** section below.

**Example:** If a player were to roll a 3 and a 5 on their dice they could potentially have three or more actions to place them on. The simplest options would be to either place the 3 on the **Politics** action, the 5 on the **Rail Baron** action or combine both dice for a total of 8 and place it on the **Trader** or **Engineer** action.

turn order. If a player is unable to place a die or dice, then the next player takes a turn. When all available dice have been placed, the **Placement Phase** is complete.

**(Note:** A player while triggering an action in the **Collection Phase** may only trigger that action once. This



means a player can only collect one gold token from the **Trader** action, or build one town from the **Builder** action, etc. This includes actions that can be taken by multiple players, e.g., **Market** can only be triggered once.)

Most actions require that a certain total is rolled on the die or dice before you can place them on that action. Players have various ways to modify their die rolls such as the **Dealer** action, **Wild Die** token, and **Engineer** token. These are all described in more detail on page 6 under "**Action Space Descriptions**".

### **Collection Phase**

The second phase involves players resolving the actions spaces where they placed their dice in the **Placement Phase**. Starting at the **Turn Order** area, players resolve each action space in order, moving to the next action to the right and then down the right hand side of the board after resolving the **Builder** action space. (**Note:** Players must wait for each action to be resolved before collecting the next action.) Most actions are self-explanatory, but others have specific instructions detailing their use, such as placing a town, city, or rail onto the board. If a player cannot pay or chooses to not pay for an action they are collecting, they do not suffer any penalty. This allows players to block actions so other players may not use them. Once all actions have been collected, the turn ends and players begin a new **Placement Phase**. (**Note:** All actions in the game, and each type of token, are limited to one use per **Collection Phase**. This is explained in more detail below in **Action Spaces**.)


## **ACTION SPACES**

### **Overview**

As mentioned in the **Placement Phase**, it is important to remember that even though a player has placed his or her die/dice on an action, they can only collect from that action once.

**Example:** Joseph took the **Builder** action. He can only build either one town or one city, but not both. Alisa took the **Trader** action. She chooses to trade any four resources for one gold. She can neither perform this action twice to collect two gold, nor take the other action.

The next rule to remember when placing die/dice on action spaces is that you can only place on one action per each **Placement Phase** player turn as described in the **Placement Phase** section above. All players always take turns placing their dice on the board, but you can never place in two different spots on your turn, except when using the **Dealer** Action (+/- to the die roll). The **Dealer** action will be described in more detail on page 7.

The final rule players need to remember is that some actions require a specific number on a die versus any die, the symbol for **Any Die** is this: . If an action space has a die symbol with a specific number of dots (also known as pips) on the die, then the die placed there must match that number exactly for a player to take the action. This unmodified die roll is referred to as a natural number, such as a die showing three pips is called a "natural 3". A player cannot use the **Dealer** Action or a **Wild Die** token (both modify the die roll by +/- 1) to satisfy the requirement as you must roll that exact number for an action requiring a natural number.

**Example:** The **Rail Baron** action requires a 5 die. A player must have rolled a natural 5 to place the die on the **Rail Baron** action space. Any other action with a number on it may be obtained by placing a die or dice totaling that number. Players may always use modifiers on these spaces such as **Wild Die** tokens and the **Dealer** Action.



**Example:** If Paul rolls a 6 and a 3, but really wanted the **Trader** action that requires a 7/8, he could modify the dice. Paul could place his 3 die on the **Dealer** Action to immediately place the 6 die on the **Trader** action space. Alternatively, Paul could use a Wild Die token, which produces the same result. Using the token would then free his 3 die to be used on another action space later in the **Placement Phase** when it becomes his turn again.

## Action Space Types

There are two major types of actions players may take on the game board. The following details the two different types:



**Limited** – These actions have a brown background and can be distinguished from unlimited actions because they do not have a dashed outline inside the box. This type of action can only be taken by one player. This means that once someone has placed their die/dice on this action, then no one else may place dice there unless they have an Engineer token or the action states otherwise. In addition to regular “Limited” actions there are also two different sub-types which are the following:

- **Reserved:** The **Produce Resources** action is a reserved action. The term “reserved” simply means that the number of players that may use the action is dependent upon a specific rule as defined in the action space description.
- **Restricted:** This identifier is used on the **Sheriff** and **Mayor** Action spaces. A restricted action cannot be obtained by a player by using any sort of dice modifiers. A player must roll two or three dice that total exactly 10 to claim one of these actions. Players cannot use Wild Die, Engineer tokens, or the **Dealer** action space to obtain a **Restricted** action.



**Unlimited** – These actions are gray and have a distinct dashed outline inside the box. Any number of players may place die/dice in these locations. During the **Collection Phase**, multiple players would resolve the action space in turn order.



Players may use an action that they cannot pay for or benefit from. This allows players to block each other from taking actions. Players quickly learn that they need to take actions they feel may be taken away from them.

## Action Space Descriptions

This section details all of the various actions that can be taken during the **Placement Phase**:



**Turn Order** (Unlimited action space; requires a die roll of 3+.) Players that take this action must place a single die, 3 or higher, beside **Turn Order** in the first available 3+ spot closest to the top. The first player to place a die in this action will receive first turn order. The next player placing a die on this action will receive second turn order, and so on. (**Note:** You may use dice modifiers to claim this.)

**Example:** Justin places a die with 4 on the top 3+ spot and Gary places a die with 6 below that. Justin will get to move his disc up to the 1st turn order position as he placed his die first. Gary would then move his disc to the 2nd position.





### Dealer (Unlimited action space; requires any die.)

This action space has two different options, but a player may only choose one to take during the **Collection Phase**. In the upper right corner of this action space, there is a ⚡ icon, which means the action is resolved immediately upon placing a die on the action regardless if you choose to +/- a die/dice result **or** take a loan token. The two different options are:

1. A player may move a die or dice to an action that is one less or one higher. **It is important to remember that players do not actually rotate a die to a new number.** They simply move the die or combination of dice onto an action that is one lower or higher than the die/dice result and place their Wild Die token on the action. The reason for this clarification is so that players do not mistakenly use this action to obtain limited action spaces that require natural die rolls, such as **Politics or Rail Baron**. Players may also use this action to move a die or dice that they placed earlier in the **Placement Phase**. (**Note:** Unlimited actions such as this one can be used by multiple players; however it may only be used once per player during the **Placement Phase**.)



This is the **ONLY** action that allows a player to place dice on two different actions during the same turn. **Example:** If Jason rolls a 2 and a 5 but really needed a 6 for the **Builder** action, he can place the 2 on this action and move the 5 to the **Builder** action.

2. A player may take a loan token to receive any three resources from the **Bank**, i.e., Ore, Food, or Wood (remember, Gold is not a resource). As with all other tokens, players may never have more loan tokens than they have cities on the board, so a player with one city on the board can only have one loan token. Players may pay off any number of loans and discard the token(s) by paying any six resources to the bank, per loan, at any time during the **Collection Phase**. At the end of the game, each loan token subtracts a Victory Point from a player. For the rules section on tokens, see page 15.



### Pioneer (Unlimited action space; requires a natural 1 and any other die.)

Draw two Action Cards and discard one. If you draw one Event card then immediately play that Event and keep the other card. If you draw two Event cards then place them back into the deck along with the discard pile, reshuffle, and draw two new cards. For the rules on cards, see page 13.



**Produce Resources** (Reserved limited action space; requires any die, or a die roll of 4+ for an additional resource. This action is a reserved **"Limited"** action, which is governed by unique rules.)

Players use this action to produce resources. Players produce as many resources as they have towns on the matching resource hexes. (**Note:** Players cannot produce a resource if they do not have a town on that resource hex type.)

The 4+ box on the right side of the action means players must place a single die with four or higher on the icon to use it. (**Note:** Players may use a modifier such as Wild Die token or the Dealer action to use this ability.) This ability represents the player putting

**Example:** If Rob has two towns on food resource hexes and places a 4 die on the 4+ icon located beside the food icon in this action space, then he will produce a total of three food resources: one for each town on a food resource hex and one for using the 4+ ability.



additional effort to harvest or produce a specific resource. Players using this ability will receive one resource of the specific type produced in addition to the ones received for each town that they have on that specific resource type.

The second type of icon allows you to produce resources as normal. These icons show two figures with a plus sign and three figures with a plus sign. The figures on the icon refer to how many players are playing the game. In a two player game, players only use the icon with two figures and the 4+ icon. In a three player game, players use the icon with three figures, the icon with two figures, and the 4+ icon.

Players are allowed to place a die on different resource **rows** during the same **Placement Phase**. However, a player cannot place more than **one die per** resource type. See diagram to the right. When this action is collected players will produce resources based upon how many towns they have on the matching Resource Hexes and if they used the 4+ ability.

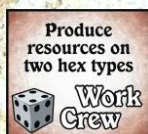


**Hired Hand** (Limited action space; requires any die combination of 2.)

Gain a bonus die during the next **Placement Phase**. However, the bonus die only benefits a player for one **Placement Phase**. Once a player with a bonus die has collected from all actions, then they place the bonus die aside so as not to accidentally include it with their other dice. (**Note:** Players are limited to one bonus die. If something else grants a bonus die, such as an Action Card or Character ability, and the player already has one, then that part of the action is ignored.)



**Politics** (Limited action space; requires a natural 3 and one resource.)  
Gain one Influence Point.



**Work Crew** (Limited action space; requires a natural die roll of 4.)

Choose two different resource types from hexes that you currently have towns on. Players receive one resource for every town they have on a matching Resource Hex. If a player only has one resources type then they will only receive that resource. (**Note:** No action will ever allow players to

produce resources that they do not have towns on. Players can obtain/collect other resources, but “**producing**” specifically refers to gathering resources from hexes with towns on them.)



**Rail Baron** (Limited action space; requires a natural die roll of 5.)

Pay two ore and one food to the bank to place two rails on the board. Rails must be placed immediately when collecting from this action. Refer to the “**Rails Overview**” section on page 12 for instructions on how to place rails properly. The four player gold icon in the upper left corner indicates that two players may use this action during a four player game.



**Builder** (Limited action space; requires a dice combination of 6.)

Build one town for two food and one wood -or- one city for one gold and four wood. As with all actions, players can only use this action once. This means players can build a town or a city, but not both. Refer to the “**City and Town Placement**” section on page 12 for instructions on how to place

these tokens properly. The four player gold icon in the upper left corner indicates that two players may use this action during a four player game.





**Trader** (Limited action space; requires a dice combination of 7 or 8.)

A player has two different options to choose from on this action space in the Collection Phase. A player must choose only one of the two options, and can trade only once. The two options are the following:

1. Pay any four resources for one gold from the bank.
2. Pay any four resources for any two resources from the bank.

Even if a player has eight resources, the player cannot take 2 gold or any four resources.

(Note: All actions in the game are limited to one use per **Collection Phase**.)



**Engineer** (Limited action space; requires a dice combination of 7 or 8.)

Players will move up one position in the turn order. Players also receive one Engineer token and one Wild Die token as long as they do not already own too many of a specific token. As with the loan tokens, players may never have more Engineer and Wild Die tokens than they have cities on the board,

so a player with one city on the board can only have one Engineer and one Wild Die token.

For the rules section on tokens, see page 15.

The token abilities are described in detail below:



**Engineer Token** (Use during **Placement Phase** Only.)

This token has two different uses that are described below:

1. The token may be used to change the natural die roll of one die to any other number. This allows players to modify a die needed for a natural roll such as the Politics or the Rail Baron action, but cannot be used for the restricted actions such as Sheriff or Mayor. **This token is only useable to claim actions on the board and is not allowed for character abilities or cards.**
2. The token may be used to place your die/dice on a limited action space already containing die/dice from another player. Any number of players that discard an Engineer token may use a limited action that is currently taken as long as they have the correct die/dice to place on that action. A player may not use the token to place die/dice on an action space already containing a players own die/dice.

**Example:** In a three player game, Dave wants to place dice on the **Builder** action space, but Larry's dice are already there. By playing the Engineer token, Dave can place his dice next to Larry's and use this action. If Chris wants to use the **Builder** action as well then he could also use an Engineer Token to place his dice.



**Wild Die Token** (Use during **Placement Phase** Only.)

If all dice a player rolls show the same number, then a player receives a Wild Die token. Normally, a player will roll a double and receive a Wild Die token. However, if a player uses the Bonus Die, then a player must roll a triple to receive the token. As with all other tokens, you may only use one Wild Die token per **Collection Phase**. This token has the following uses:

This token has the following uses:

1. You may use and discard this token to re-roll one or two dice. If the bonus die is used, then all three dice may be re-rolled.
2. The other use for this token is to take the +/- action, similar to the **Dealer** Action.





**Scout** (Limited action space; requires a dice combination of 9.)

Look at the top three cards of the Action Card deck. Keep one card and place the other two back on top of the deck face down in any order. You may also choose to look at one face-down resource hex in addition to drawing cards. Do not reveal the resource hex to any other player. If one or more event cards are drawn, follow the same rules for Event cards as defined on the **Pioneer** action. For the rules section on Action cards, see page 13.



**Mayor** (Restricted Limited action space requires a natural roll of 10.)


A player that uses this action will gain one Influence Point, takes any one resource from the **Bank**, and takes the Mayor special role token. A player with this key token does not have to pay one resource when taking the **Politics** action.



**Sheriff** (Restricted Limited action space; requires a natural roll of 10.)

A player that collects from this action will immediately move to first in turn order, and takes the “**Sheriff**” special role token and receives the silver **Deputy** die.



A player with this badge token cannot be affected by cards or abilities that have the  icon on the specific ability that is affecting them. The player with this token also swaps one of his/her dice for the silver **Deputy** die. After rolling a **Deputy** die in the **Placement Phase**, a player may flip the die once to the result at the bottom of the die, e.g. rolling a 6 and could flip it to a 1. There are three exceptions to the **Deputy** die:

1. If a player chooses to use the ability to flip the die, then he/she must use that die by itself. However, this ability is helpful in obtaining natural die rolls for the **Politics** or **Rail Baron** actions, or obtaining a 4+ for the **Produce Resource** action.
2. If a player manipulates the **Deputy** die with an action, a token, or a card, then they forfeit the chance to flip the die on that turn.
3. Players cannot manipulate the **Deputy** die once it has been flipped.



**Broker** (Limited action space; requires a dice combination of 11.)

A player that uses this action will collect one stock token. Players may hold on to this token until they are ready to use it. Stock tokens can be discarded for either one gold or any three resources of their choosing from the **Bank** during the **Collection Phase** or during the End Game. For the rules section on tokens, see page 15.



**Tycoon** (Limited action space; requires a dice combination of 12.)

A player that uses this action will collect one gold and one rail token. A player collecting this action must immediately place the rail token on the board following the correct rules for placing rails as defined on page 12 under “**Rails Overview**”.



**Market** (Unlimited action space, requires any die.)

A player may place any die on this action space to use one of the three actions in the collection phase. The first action allows a player to pay any three resources for any one resource from the bank. The second action allows a player to pay one gold for any three resources from the bank.



Finally, the third action allows a player to trade any six resources for one gold. These actions are considerably more expensive to use than the Trader action, but may sometimes be necessary. (**Note:** This is an unlimited action so multiple players may use it; however it may only be used once per player during each **Placement Phase**.)

## CHARACTER CARDS

### Overview

Before the game starts, players may choose or randomly select a specific Character type to play for the length of the game. Each Character starts the game with slightly different resources, tokens, and/or bonuses, as pictured in the upper right corner of the card. Characters also allow players to use abilities that slightly bend the rules of the game, giving the players unique benefits to exploit during the game. Once players become comfortable with the game, they will notice certain Characters lean towards different tactics or play styles within the game. (For example, “**The Scoundrel**” character gains different bonuses by allowing a player to collect additional Wild Die tokens and discard Action cards. These abilities give the player interesting options while playing the game.)

### Start Game Box

Each Character’s unique starting ability is listed in the blue box beside the illustration for that character. In the example above “**The Scoundrel**” shows various resources and a Wild Die token in the **Start Game** box, which indicates the player that chooses this character will start the game with those tokens. Some Characters will have additional text at the bottom of this box stating other important conditions.



If a Character ability requires a die then the player simply announces that they will be using the die on that ability and places the die on the Character card.

### Character Ability Box

The lower portion of the card is the Character ability area, which lists all of the special abilities that a player can use during the game. Players must announce when they are using an ability on their Character card. Players may use each of the abilities on the card **ONCE** during the **Collection Phase**, unless stated otherwise. However, this restriction does not prevent a player from using more than one ability per **Collection Phase**. Referring to “**The Scoundrel**” character above, a player may discard an Action card for two resources, but may only do this once. The player could also discard an additional Action card to gain one that was discarded this turn and un-played. The player could not discard any more Action cards to use these abilities during this **Collection Phase**. Some abilities such as **The Scoundrel**’s ability to control an additional Wild Die are passive actions, meaning that the player does not have to announce that a specific character ability is being used.



## PLACING CITIES, TOWNS, AND RAILS

### City and Town Placement

City tokens can only be placed on empty hexes. Town tokens can only be placed on resource hexes. An empty resource hex is any hex that does not have a resource on it. When a player places a city on the board, it gives him/her access to build towns on any resource hex around that city. Building a city, using the Builder action, also allows you to look at any face-down resource hex around that city. As long as a player has access to a resource hex by his or her city, then the player can build a town there. (**Note:** Once the game starts, cities must always be placed at least one or more hexes away from any other city.) When two different players have access to a resource hex, the first player to place a town on the resource hex claims the resource. In the example below, the city token grants the blue player access to the six hexes round it, marked in a yellow outline. (**Note:** Only one town token can ever be placed on a resource hex and only one city on an empty hex.)

### Producing Resources

When a player takes an action that allows them to produce resources, he/she will collect as many resource tokens equal to the number of towns on the matching Resource Hex. (**Note:** Players can never produce resources that they do not have towns built on.)

In the example to the right, the blue player has two towns on the board. One is on a food resource hex and the other on a wood resource hex. If the blue player were to take an action that produced either Food or Wood then



they would only collect one of the appropriate resource types. The blue player cannot produce any Ore resources as they do not have any towns on Ore resource hexes. If the blue player were to build a third town on a Food resource hex, then they would collect two Food resource tokens each time they took an action that produced food.

### Rails Overview

Rails allow players to expand to additional resource hexes and build new cities. There are two stipulations to placing rails on the board.

1. Rails must be built on a player's city hex side or extend from a hex with a player's city on it. A player must be able to trace a path to the rail he/she is placing back to a city or town that they control.
2. Once built, rails do not belong to any player. New rails can be built from previously built rails, either a player's own or from another player's rail network.

### Building Rails for a New Town

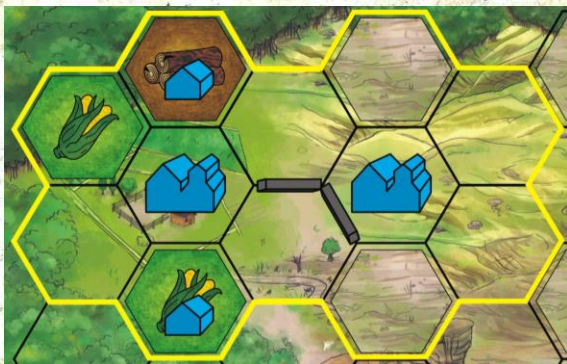
Players may build towns on a resource hex that they do not have access to from one of their cities, as long as they build rails from his/her city to that hex. In the example above, the blue player built two rails and can now place a town on the ore resource hex in the upper right corner. (**Note:** If a player has rails connecting from a city to a face-down resource hex tile, the player may look at that resource at any time. Players should not reveal the resource hex to other players. This is similar to a player's ability to look at face-down resource hex tiles adjacent to his/her city.)



### Building Rails for a New City

When a player wishes to build a new city, they must build rails from one of their cities out to a non-resource hex where they would like to place that new city. Players must also place a rail on one of the hex sides of the empty hex where the new city will be built. In the example below, notice that the city to the right has an additional rail placed on the lower left side of the hex.

Once a player builds a city using the **Builder** action, he/she can look at the unrevealed resource hexes adjacent to that city at any time. (Note: When building rails to a resource hex outside of your cities control, a player does not have to place the additional rail on the hex side. The additional rail is only necessary when building a new city.)



### Rugged Resources

On the game board, there are eight resource hexes, bordered in red, in the center of the board that are considered “Rugged.” Additionally, there are six Resource Hex tiles with “Rugged,” written on them. These resource hexes and tiles denote locations that are difficult to build towns upon as the terrain may be rocky, heavily forested, or otherwise difficult for travel.

A rugged resource costs one additional ore to build a town there. (Note: Ignore this penalty when placing the initial towns during game setup.) This penalty is in addition to the cost of placing the town.

**Example:** If building a town currently costs two food and a wood, then placing on a rugged resource would require you to pay two food, one wood, and one ore.

If a player is unaware that the face-down resource tile is a rugged resource, then they will be unable to place a town there unless they can pay the additional ore. The player **DOES NOT** lose any resources and must reveal the resource hex and state to the other players that he/she encountered a rugged resource and cannot pay the additional costs.



In the event a Rugged Resource Hex is placed on a Rugged Hex printed on the Territory Map, the penalty is paid only once.

## ACTION CARDS

### Action Card Overview

The Action Card deck is made up of two different types of cards: Action Cards and Event cards. Players obtain cards through two different actions: **Pioneer** and **Scout** as explained in the **Action Space Descriptions** on page 7 and 10. There is no limit to how many Action cards a player can have.

Some Action cards and abilities may require a player to pay a penalty to use them. A player must be able to pay the penalty, or they cannot use that card or ability. If a player had an action card that had the penalty “Lose one Influence point,” but did not have any Influence Points, then he/she cannot play the card since he/she could not pay the penalty.



### Action Card Timing

Players are allowed to play one Action Card any time during the Collection Phase immediately before or after they collect from one of their action spaces on the game board. For example, if a player had dice on the **Builder** action, and that was the only action space that he/she had dice on, then the player could only play an Action card immediately before or after building the city or town. It is important to consider the right time to play an Action Card. Some cards give additional resources that are needed before taking an action. Other situations may require the completion of an action before the card is playable.

**Strategy Example:** The Action Card “**Entrepreneur**” gives players one free rail. A player may want to place a new city first so they can place the rail further out. This would require the **Builder** action to be taken first so that a new city could be placed and then the card could be played for full benefit.

### Action Card Symbols

Some Action cards have symbols on them, listed on action and Event cards. Please refer to the list below for a description of the various types of icons.



This icon indicates that the player must make a specific choice when using this card.



This icon indicates that the player must use this card during the **Placement Phase** when they choose to use it. Normally, Action cards are used in the **Collection Phase**.



This icon indicates that the card, if played, must be done immediately. Players can never hold onto a card with this symbol.



This icon indicates that you may not select a player as a target for this card's ability if they have the **Sheriff** token.



**Corruption:** This icon indicates that if a player uses this ability, then they move to last place in the **Turn Order** area. If the player is already in last place, then this icon has no other effect in the core game.




**Jail:** When a player chooses to use a card or ability with this icon, then he/she suffers two penalties. First, the players lose any special role they have and their associated tokens, i.e., **Mayor/Sheriff**. Secondly, during the next **Placement Phase**, the player loses as many dice as the number on the icon, represented by either a 1 or a 2+. The 2+ icon means that the player will lose two or more dice next turn. This means the player will also lose any bonus die they may have claimed next turn. Players place the number of dice that they have lost on the **Jail** area on the game board.

### EVENT CARDS

Event cards have a different colored background and state, “Event Card” at the center of the card. Event Cards are a type of Action Card, but they are played differently than regular Action Cards. Event cards have five distinct rules which are described below:

1. If an Event Card is drawn through the **Pioneer** or **Scout** action, then it must be played immediately. However, you may still keep one Action card.
2. If an Event card has an ability on it, then the player may choose to use that ability instead of taking an Action card. Note: The Event card is put into play whether the ability is used or not.



3. If a player draws two Event cards, then the player must put both Events back into the deck and reshuffle the deck, including all discarded action cards and events. There is no limit to the number of cards a player may keep; however players may only play one Action Card per round. (**Note:** Players can never hold onto a card that has the  icon. These cards must be played immediately.)
4. Event Cards are continuous. This means once an Event Card is in play, it will affect the game until another Event Card replaces it. When a new event card comes into play, you always discard the old event card. (**Note:** If the Sheriff card is discarded to remove the active event, then no other event will be in play.) One final thing to remember is that the **Event Marker** is placed on the action that the event affects.
5. Event cards that state they are discarded after being used are **Temporary Events** and do not replace any current event in play, unless stated specifically on the card. All other events are considered to be **Permanent Events**.

## TOKENS

There are various actions that allow players to collect tokens throughout the game. There are two basic rules that govern using tokens.

1. Players are restricted in how many “Limited” tokens that they can control. “Limited” tokens are defined as the following: Wild Die, Engineer, Loan, and Stock. A player may only have as many of a specific type as the number of cities that they have placed on the board. For example, if a player only has one city on the board, then they may only have one of each token. If a player had two cities then they could have two tokens of each type and so on, e.g., Two Wild Die, Two Engineer, etc.
2. Players can only use each type of token once per Placement/Collection Phase. However, a player may use different types. For example, a player can use a Wild Die and an Engineer token during the same **Placement Phase**, but not two Engineer tokens.

**Note:** There is no limit to the overall number of the cardboard tokens available. If players run short, then they can agree that a substitute (like glass tokens) can be used.

## END GAME

The game can end in two different ways:

A player places all of his/her cities and towns onto the game board.

- or -

A player reaches or moves past the **Game End Token** on the Influence Track.

The game ends when either condition is triggered. All players will be allowed to finish the current **Collection Phase**. If a player triggers the Game End Token on the Influence Track condition, then the game ends (even if that player loses Influence Points during the final Collection Phase). Once the last action on the board is collected, players total their scores according to the list below. (**Note:** Players are allowed to pay off loan tokens and collect gold from any **Stock** tokens during scoring.)

Players add or subtract Victory Points for the following items:

1. Each gold token a player owns will give them one Victory Point.
2. Each Influence Point a player has will give them one Victory Point.
3. Each city that a player has is worth as many Victory Points as the number of towns connected to it by rails. (See “**City Scoring Example**” on the next page.)
4. Controlling a special role such as **Mayor** or **Sheriff** is worth one Victory Point.



5. Players lose one Victory Point for each Loan token they cannot pay off.
6. Players lose one Victory Point for having any die/dice in Jail when the game ends.

The player with the most Victory Points wins the game. In the event of a tie, the person with the most points on the **Influence Track** wins. In the event the game is still a tie, then the person with the most resources wins. If there is still a tie, then the person with the higher turn order wins.

### City Scoring Example

Each city that a player has on the territory map is worth as many points as the towns that are connected to it by rail. In the example to the right, the blue player's #1 city is worth four victory points. In the example, the two towns above the first city are connected by rail as well as the two towns to the far right. Note that the two towns below the #1 city are not connected by rail, so they do not count for scoring either city #1 or city #2.



The second city in the diagram is connected, by rail, to the town above and below it, so that city is worth two Victory Points. If the blue player would have placed rails where the three stars are located, then both cities would have been connected to all of the blue player's towns. This would have made each city worth six Victory Points for 12 Victory Points total.

## TWO-PLAYER VARIANT – GUNSLINGER

At the start of a two-player game, players will take a Gunslinger pawn from one of the sets of game pieces not being used and place it on the **Trader** action. Players will now add one die from that same set of game pieces to their dice. This die will be referred to as the Gunslinger die. (Note: Players will always roll the Gunslinger die along with their other dice during the **Placement Phase**.)

**At the beginning of the Placement Phase**, in turn order, each player must move their Gunslinger pawn plus or minus as many action spaces as the result on the Gunslinger die. (Note: Both players must move their Gunslinger pawns **before any dice are placed**.)

The Gunslinger pawn can only be moved onto actions 2 through 12, and must move the full amount that was rolled on the Gunslinger die. This means if a player cannot move the full distance up or down on the track, then they are forced to move in the other direction. For example, if the blue player has the pawn on the #3 action and rolls a four on their die, then they must move up the track to the #7 action.

When a Gunslinger pawn is on an action, it blocks the other player from taking that action. Players may not use an Engineer token to share an action if the other player's Gunslinger pawn is present. If both Gunslinger pawns are on the same action, then neither player can take that action. (Note: If you have the appropriate die/dice and only your Gunslinger pawn is on an action you can still take the action. The Gunslinger pawn does not block Action cards that state a player can take a specific action, e.g., **Election**, **Marshal Dylan**, etc.)



## SOLITAIRE VARIANT

The solitaire version plays the same as the regular game but with a few exceptions. First off, remove the following cards from the Action card deck: Claim Jumpers, The Ol' Switcheroo, Whispering Campaign, Mudslinging, and Winds of Change.

Secondly, the **Turn Order** action space is off limits. Instead, use the other colored sets of dice to simulate opponents. These additional dice will be called Ghost dice and will recreate the competition for taking various actions on the board. Depending on the difficulty you choose, roll one or more of these dice in a different color than your game pieces. Determine the level of difficulty by choosing one option as described below:

- **Chicken (Easy)** – Add one Ghost die when rolling dice in the **Placement Phase**. Place on one action first and then you must place the Ghost die. If your dice placement blocks the Ghost die then discard it this turn. If you roll a 1 on the Ghost die, place it on the **Pioneer** action. If you roll a 2, then place it on the **Hired Hand** action, and so on.

When the Ghost die is a 1, you reveal the top two cards from the Action Deck during the **Collection Phase** before you collect any actions. If the Action card is an event, than it goes into play, otherwise the cards are discarded. (**Note:** If you draw two Event cards, then randomly determine which Event is played and discard the other Event.)

- **Ornery (Medium)** – In addition to the “Easy” option above, you will roll two more Ghost dice in a different color than the Ghost die used in the “Easy” option. You will be allowed to place on one action first, and then all Ghost dice are placed. Afterwards, you may place any remaining die/dice you still have. Whenever you roll a number on these two dice that is 7 or higher, you will block the action that corresponds to the total of both dice during the **Placement Phase**. For example, if you roll a 6 and a 3 then you would block the #9 Scout action. The exceptions to this are the following:

- On a 7 you will block the **Trader** action.
- On an 8 you will block the **Engineer** action.
- On a 10 you randomly decide whether the **Sheriff** or **Mayor** action is blocked.

When a Ghost die blocks either **Sheriff** or **Mayor** you lose the role next turn.

If the total on the dice are below 7, then you only use the highest die to place on a single action as defined in the “Easy” option. In the case of doubles, just use one die. If another Ghost die is already on the same action, then do not place the die.

- **Cruel (Hard)** – Use all options above, but add in another pair of dice in the fourth dice color that follow the same rules as the “Medium” option. Conversely to the above options, you always place your dice last. This means all other Ghost dice must be placed before you take any actions.

The final thing to decide is choosing a scenario. Each one has a specific end game condition, such as building all of your towns and cities, receiving a certain amount of gold, etc. To track turns, move the Game End marker on the Influence Track. An easy way to remember when to move this token is to do so whenever you roll dice at the start of the **Placement Phase**.

When starting the game, place the Game End marker on the #14 spot on the Influence Track. Each time you start a new round, move the marker minus one on the Influence Track. In essence you will be counting down the turns. When the marker reaches the #1 spot for the first time, move it back to the #14 spot on the next round. When the marker reaches the #1 spot for the second time, this indicates the final round and the game will end after you collect from your action(s). Each scenario gives you 28 turns to accomplish the objective unless it states otherwise.



1. **Tenderfoot – Victory:** Build all of your cities and towns.
2. **Wild Frontiers –** Place your first city in a “**Safe Zone**” as defined on page 2 in the “**Territory Map Overview**”. **Victory:** Build a town on both Rugged Resource hexes on the dead center of the territory map.
3. **Gold Rush – Victory:** End the game with three cities and obtain 10 gold.
4. **Barnstorming – Victory:** End the game with three cities and obtain 11 Influence.
5. **Marshal Law –** Remove the events from the Action Card deck. Mix them up and place them face down. Each time you roll doubles on your dice, draw an event and play it. Unlike the regular game, all permanent events stay in play unless you remove them from the game. For example, if **Drought** was in play and then **City Fire** was played then both events would stay active versus the current event replacing the prior event as outlined in the main rules. You may remove one event of your choosing from the game each time you take the Sheriff action. **Victory:** Build all of your cities and towns.

Check this site <http://www.knighworks.net/darkhorse/> for additional scenarios.

## GAME HINTS FOR NEW PLAYERS

When new players are introduced to Dark Horse, it is important that they understand some basic concepts to make their experience more enjoyable. It is recommended that once you have read the rules or explained the game to new players that the following points are emphasized. The following details outline specific areas that new players tend to forget, misunderstand, or are actions that they do not use due to being unfamiliar with the game.

1. Players not familiar with designer games and are playing Dark Horse for the first time should consider not using Characters Cards and reveal all face down Resource Hexes.
2. Spend a few minutes looking at a sample of a few different cards in the Action Card deck. Consider using the **Pioneer** and **Scout** action. New players tend to shy away from the Action Cards since they are not familiar with them. In some circumstances, they can be more powerful or useful than taking regular actions on the game board.
3. Use the **Engineer** action to obtain an Engineer token if you have a hard time rolling a natural die roll for certain actions, i.e., **Politics**, **Work Crew**, and **Rail Baron**. The **Engineer** token allows you to change a die to any number.
4. Place the first city on a hex where you have access to three Resource Hexes. Players new to the game, or designer games in general, should place their starting city in one of the corner spots with revealed resource hexes on the **Territory Map**. (**Note:** Food is fairly important early on in the game as it is used for both **Towns** and **Rails**.)
5. Players primarily produce resources from either the **Produce Resources** or the **Work Crew** actions; however a player can never produce a resource that does not have a town on that matching resource hex type.
6. A player produces a resource token for each town on a matching resource hex type. **Example:** If a player has built a town on two different food resource hexes, then the player will produce two food tokens using the appropriate actions.
7. If a player needs a specific type of resource and does not have a town on that resource hex type, then use the **Trader/Mayor/Market** action or obtain a Loan token.
8. Consider using the **Dealer** action if a wanted dice combination was not rolled. This action allows you move a die or dice to plus or minus one action space. This action allows even more flexibility if the player obtained a **Bonus Die**, because you will have two dice to manipulate instead of just one.



9. Players can only have as many tokens of a specific type per city that they control. For example, if you have only one city then you can only have one Wild Die, Engineer, Stock, and Loan token.
10. Do not forget: You receive a Wild Die token each time you roll doubles, triples in the event you have a bonus die, as long as you do not have too many Wild Die tokens.

## DESIGNER NOTES

I want to personally thank you for supporting the Dark Horse game. This game may have not seen the light of day if it was not for the fine supporters that backed the project on Kickstarter.com. This game was entirely designed by gamers just like you, without the influence of a large board game publisher. In short, this project has been a labor of love for a small handful of people over the past few years. The examples in the book use the names of friends that helped play test and design the game. On that note, I wanted to thank my friends and family for the support that went into this game and the upcoming expansion. Without friends and family, the road to getting the game finished would have been an even longer one.

I also want you to know that your opinion counts. I would love to hear your feedback concerning this game or any future games that we create. My goal for Knight Works is to create a small indie publishing company that invites the supporters, fans, and players of our games to be involved in the design process. If you would like to subscribe to our contact list for all future projects please let us know at one of the email addresses below. If you want to drop us a note to just say hello or comment on something please feel free to do so as well at [feedback@knightworks.net](mailto:feedback@knightworks.net) or [knightworks@gmail.com](mailto:knightworks@gmail.com).

## Play Testers

I want to sincerely thank all of the play testers of Dark Horse. Play testing is an important part of any game while it is being developed. Without diversified play test groups and play sessions the game as it is today would have not been possible. In alphabetical order, I want to thank, Herman Armstrong, Jose & Jenny Balderrama, Nicole Behner, Jeff Berger, Jeff & Jason Bergner, Vincent & Sarah Berryman, Frank Branham, Wade Broadhead, Larry Burns, Steve Carlson, Donovan Carrillo, Craig Chapman, Don Clevenger, Cameron Crawford, Patrick Cutter, Rob Duman, Joseph & Alisa Forsythe, Kris Gibbs, Larson Gramckow, Hannah Haley, Jake Hermance, Carl Hurst, Paul Incao, Rachel Incao, Joe & Joseph Joiner, Ken Kemj, Chris & Cherilyn Kirkman, Chris Krier, Charlie Kowalski, Jason Leveille, Leokesh Lewis, Shannon Liska, Bret Martin, James Mathe, Bryan McClendon, Chris Moore, Dana Morris, Kyle Noonan, Brett Orr, Jim Otto, Bruce Phillips, Ellie Phillips, Dave Ray, Doug Richardson, Randy Reith, Thomas Schrupp, Jake Spencer, David Stassen, Kirsten Taylor, Mario Valencia, Ben Vincent, Drew Waterman, Kevin Waterman, Damon Webster, Rick Westmoland, Andy Van Zandt.

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# KICK STARTER

What can I say, as words of appreciation are just not enough? To all of the Kickstarter backers please accept my humble thanks for your support and interest in the Dark Horse board game. Kickstarter, as I have mentioned to many different people on various occasions, is

an absolutely amazing site. Talented artists, musicians, writers, and designers of all walks of life finally have an outlet to show off their projects and potentially have them funded. This definitely is not the first micro funding site on the internet but it has gained a lot of popularity over the past few years. In alphabetical order, I would like to thank the following people:

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