



# SANDSHIPS



2-4



MEDIUM



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## EQUIPMENT

- Three Trios per player
- One Trio for each unused city (black is preferred)
- Three Lightning dice
- Sandships board



## OVERVIEW

A thousand centuries ago, territorial factions controlled the five major city-states of Mars, with power equally balanced between them. Commerce between the cities was maintained with fleets of sandships, graceful vehicles that slid across the desert under the power of huge sails. The canals were built not for transit, but as aqueducts, to move water across the wasteland. (Mars has no boats.) While vital for the survival of the Martian civilization, the canals also impeded the movement of their sandships.

Tragically, a plague has recently destroyed one (or more) entire cities. Everyone is gone — their beautiful crystal spires have turned dark and opaque. Fortunately, those who have survived the plague are now immune.

Now the other cities are assembling their armies, sending troops on their sandships to claim the empty cities as their own. Whose faction will be the first to control three cities, and thus, the entire planet?

## GOAL

Build a stack of pieces of your color in three cities, each of whose pieces have more total pips than any other color in those cities.

## TERMINOLOGY

- **City:** The five circular spaces on the board, in which pyramids are placed upright, are called Cities.
- **Spire:** A tower of upright pieces of a single color, placed on a city and sorted by size (smaller pieces on top of larger pieces), is called a Spire.
- **Canal:** The lines on the board which divide the wasteland into zones are referred to as Canals.
- **Sandship:** A pyramid on its side, placed in a wasteland and pointed at a city, is called a Sandship.
- **Zone:** The wasteland is divided into eight zones. Sandships can only move between zones by transferring at a city.
- **Port:** The triangular notches in the city spaces are called Ports. When a Sandship is pointed at a City, its tip must be "docked" in one of that city's open Ports.
- **Control:** When a city contains more than one Spire, the player whose Spire has the highest total Pip Count controls the city. In case of a tie, no one has control.

## SETUP

Place a Trio on each player's city, of their color. Place a black Trio in the central city as well as each unused city. Stack all pieces as Spires, with smaller pieces on top.

In a three-player game, there will be two dead cities; however, the central city will not be one of them. Instead, a player will start in the central city, with black pieces being placed on cities in two opposing corners.

## ELIMINATION

If a player has zero pieces remaining in their original city, they are out of the game. All of their Sandships are immediately removed from the board. Their Spires, however, remain in place. They must be overcome to control the cities they occupy, as with the dead city. Replace these pieces with pieces of the dead color, and merge them into that city's dead Spire, if any.

## HOW TO PLAY

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

CONT. →

# SANDSHIPS (CONT.)



## DICE OPTIONS



= Transform

Remove any piece of your color from a Spire and turn it into a Sandship, placed in any of that city's open Ports; Or, move a Sandship into the city it's pointing at, either by standing it up to form a new Spire, or by adding it to an established Spire of your color.



= Build

Add a piece to the Spire in your original city. The piece you add must be the smallest size available in your pool of unplayed pieces.



= Unfurl

Replace one of your Sandships with the piece of the next larger size (assuming you have that piece available in your pool of unplayed pieces). The sails of your Sandship expand for greater power!



= Move

Move one of your Sandships to another Port. You can move to any other Port in the same city, or you can move to the Port at another city in the same zone. If the Port you wish to move into is occupied, you can bump the Sandship in that space to another Port (of your choice of the possible moves) before moving your piece into the Port. Bumping the other Sandship back to the Port you came from IS a legal option (i.e. swaps are OK). You can only bump another Sandship into an empty Port it can legally move into – no cascading bumps. Bumping your own Sandships is allowed. Sandships can NOT bump larger Sandships.



= Zap

Remove an enemy piece from a Spire in a city where you have one or more Sandships docked. You can only Zap a piece with a pip count smaller than the total Pip Count of the Sandships you have docked at that city. Only Sandships can Zap; pieces in a Spire in that city do not contribute to the attack. Only Spires can be Zapped.



= Wild

Choose any of the other five actions.

## DUPLICATES BECOME WILD

If you roll two of the same symbol, one is changed to Wild. If you roll Three-of-a-Kind, two become Wild.

## 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.

## THREE-OF-A-KIND BONUS

You gain an immediate additional Wild action any time you roll three of a kind. (It's helpful to use an additional die as a Wild marker, to keep track of your extra action.)

## HOW TO WIN

The first player to control three cities at once is the winner! (You do not have to control your own city to win, so long as you still occupy it.)

## 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.

### HISTORICAL NOTES

This game was the Looney Labs Holiday Gift for 2016. Designed by Andrew Looney. Special thanks go to Ray Bradbury, for the inspirations found in his classic book, *The Martian Chronicles*.

