



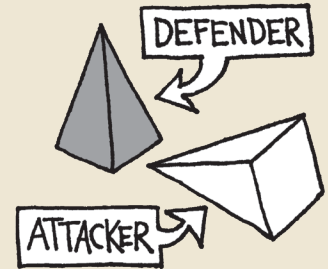
ICEHOUSE

DESIGNED BY JOHN COOPER & ANDREW LOONEY



SUMMARY OF PLAY

After starting by playing two Defenders, you will be choosing between adding more Defenders to the table, or playing your pieces as Attackers, pointed at other players' Defenders. Once placed, a Defender will never move, but Attackers may get repositioned under various circumstances. There is no turn structure; you can play slowly or quickly, just be careful not to jostle any pieces already in place. When everyone runs out of pieces (or the timer expires), points are awarded for all successful Attackers and undefeated Defenders.

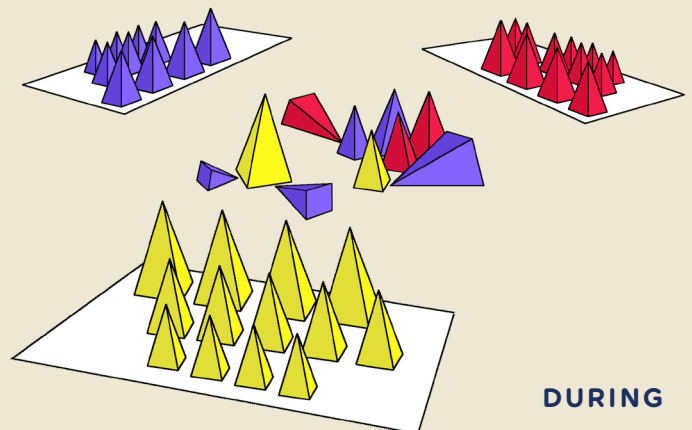


GOAL

The player with the highest score wins. 30 points is the maximum possible score.

TERMINOLOGY

- Stash: Your pyramids
- Stash Pad: Area where your unplayed Stash is stored
- Iced: When a Defender has been successfully Attacked
- Over-Iced: When a Defender has been excessively Attacked
- Meltdown: When you fail to start with a pair of Defenders
- In the Icehouse: When you totally lose the game because someone calls you out for having no Un-Iced Defenders
- Prisoner: Another player's piece under your control
- Crash: An accidental change of piece placement



EQUIPMENT

- 5 trios of the same color for each player
- Index cards or small pieces of paper to indicate location of unplayed pieces (called "stash pads")
- a timer of some sort

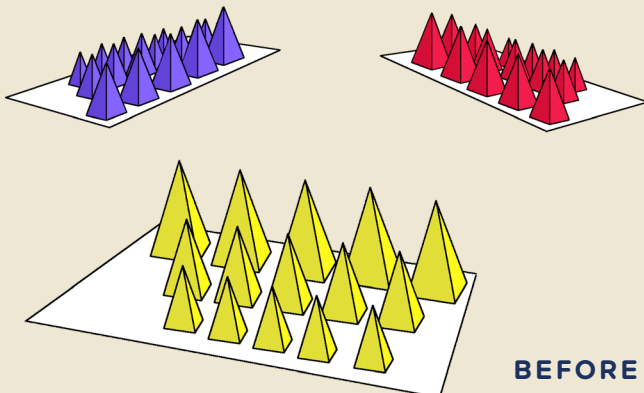


OVERVIEW

Icehouse is the original game for the pyramids. It is played without turns, and involves strategy, diplomacy, fast thinking, and physical dexterity. Icehouse is a game for sharp minds and steady hands.

SETUP

Each player places all 15 of their pyramids upon their Stash Pad. Each player's Stash Pad should be placed at one edge of the playing area and must never be moved at all during the game.



ICEHOUSE (CONT.)



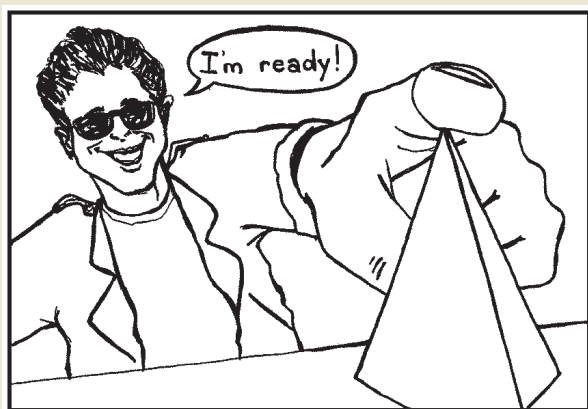
HOW TO PLAY

THE TIMER

Set a timer for 10 - 15 minutes, and place it where no one can see how much time remains. Unless all players finish early, the game ends at the instant the timer rings.

READY SIGNAL

Since Icehouse is a game without turns, it begins when everyone indicates that they are ready to start. When all players are touching (but not lifting) one of their pieces, start the timer and begin playing!



NO TURNS

Everyone plays at the same time. Players move their pieces, one at a time, from their stash pads to any spot they choose in the playing area. Players play pieces whenever they want, acting slowly or quickly.



IMAGINE SOLID PYRAMIDS

This game was designed for the first generation of pyramids, which were always solid. Therefore, upright pyramids can never be stacked, and no part of any piece can penetrate the hollow space at the back of an Attacker. Pretend the pyramids are solid.

PLACEMENT RULES

Pieces may be played either as Defenders (upright) or as Attackers (pointed at an enemy Defender).

Defenders can be played anywhere (provided they fit without Crashing). Attackers, however, can only be played according to various restrictions (also including not causing a Crash).

Once placed, Defenders can never be moved. Attackers, however, may get captured and replayed.

LEGAL ATTACKS

Attackers must be attacking something. More specifically, Attackers must be:

- Pointed at a Defender of another color
- Within range i.e. closer to the Defender than the length of the Attacker

If you place a piece in the attack position without meeting these requirements, you must pick the piece up again and place it legally.

ONE AT A TIME

You may never have more than one unplayed piece off of your Stash Pad at one time. You cannot be placing a piece with one hand while grabbing at the next with the other hand. It IS permissible to use both hands on a single piece, such as when maneuvering a piece into or out of a tricky situation. Also, you can change the hand you are using by passing a pyramid from one hand to the other. But you cannot alternate hands in order to play quickly.

TOUCHING = UNPLAYED

While placing a piece, it's considered unplayed as long as you are still touching it. You might set a piece down and slide it around on the table for awhile, testing out various placements, and even pick it up again, as long as you never stop touching it. But as soon as you let go, the piece is played, and cannot be moved again unless certain conditions allow it (see Over-Icing).



ICEHOUSE (CONT.)

SCORING RULES

ICED DEFENDERS

If a Defender is worth fewer points than the total value of the Attackers being pointed at it, the Defender is said to be Iced, and will score zero points. Ties go to the Defender.

For example, to Ice a Large piece, worth 3 points, there must be at least two Attackers pointing at it, with a total value of at least 4 points.

FAILED ATTACKERS

Attackers can only be played in legal positions. However, it is very common for changes to occur such that the position of an Attacker becomes illegal. This is called a Failed Attacker, and will score zero points. Attackers can fail for 3 reasons:

- Pointed at Defenders of own color
- Pointed at Attackers of any color
- Under-Icing, i.e. pointed at an enemy Defender that is inadequately attacked

THE FINAL TALLY

When the game ends, points will be awarded for all successful Attackers and for all Un-Iced Defenders, equal to each piece's Pip Count.

THE MELTDOWN RULE

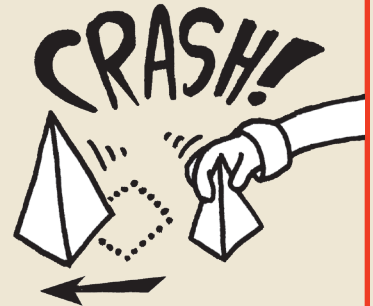
Your first two pieces **MUST** be played as Defenders.

MELTDOWN RECOVERY

If you forget and play an Attacker before you play your required pair of Defenders, you will need to take back your illegally played Attackers before playing further. You may be called on this by another player, or you may realize the mistake yourself; in the latter case, you should announce the error and comply with the recovery procedure rather than trying to fix the situation by quickly playing Defenders. That would be Uncool. (See Etiquette Notes.)

THE CRASH RULE

Icehouse is a game of precise piece placement. Therefore, it's a big deal if you bump a piece with another piece and cause it to change positions. This is called a Crash.



THE CRASH PENALTY

If you Crash a piece, you must sacrifice the piece you Crashed it with. The piece is given to another player (your choice) and becomes that player's Prisoner. (See Prisoners.)

Crashed pieces should be moved back to their original positions (as best they can be) before the game continues.

It is considered Cool to acknowledge your own Crashes rather than hoping no one noticed, and Uncool to argue if another player points out that you Crashed.

THE ICEHOUSE RULE

Philosophically, Defenders are like the civilians back home whom the troops are fighting to protect. If all of the civilians are dead or captured, then the troops have failed at their job. In game terms, if a player has no un-iced Defenders, they can automatically lose the game. This is called "being put in the Icehouse," and if it happens to you, then you lose all your pieces and you get a score of zero.

THE STASH LIMIT

In the early stages of the game, you are safe from being put in the Icehouse. It can't happen until you've played at least half of your pyramids, i.e. when you have fewer than 8 pieces on your pad (including Prisoners). This threshold is called the Stash Limit.

ICEHOUSE (CONT.)



CALLING "ICEHOUSE"

If a player is under the Stash Limit and has no safe Defenders, someone must still notice and make the call to put you in the Icehouse.

If someone calls out "icehouse" and:

- all of your Defenders are Iced, and
- you have fewer than 8 pieces on your pad;

then you get an automatic score of zero, and the player who was the first to call "Icehouse" gets all of your unplayed pieces as Prisoners.

If you make the call when you yourself are in the Icehouse, your score goes to zero, however, you don't give your pieces away.

DOWN BUT NOT OUT

A player in the Icehouse remains part of the game. They can be given Prisoners and make captures when Over-Iced. While they cannot win, they will perhaps be motivated to drive down the score of the player who put them in the Icehouse, or they may wish to help a particular player achieve victory. These issues can be of particular importance if this game is part of a multi-round tournament.

THE INCORRECT-CALL PENALTY

If you make an Icehouse call and, after pausing the game to evaluate the situation, it turns out you were wrong, you must pick a piece up from your Stash Pad and put it onto any other player's Stash Pad.



PRISONERS

Players can gain control of opponent pieces in several ways. These pieces are called Prisoners and they can be played in whatever way the controlling player chooses. That player loses control of the Prisoner when they play it. The original owner always retains the point value.

OVER-ICING

To Ice a Defender, you must attack it with at least one point more than its own value. It's legal to use more force than required, but if an excessive number of pieces are used, the piece becomes "over-iced." This gives the owner of that piece a special power.

CAPTURING WHEN OVER-ICED

If there are so many Attackers pointing at your piece that you can remove one and the piece will still be Iced, then you get to do exactly that. You just pick up the redundant Attacker and make it your Prisoner. It's considered Cool to say something like "Hey, my piece is Over-Iced!" as you make a capture.

OWNERS ONLY

Just to be super clear, no one except the owner of the Over-Iced Defender may capture a redundant Attacker. (This is a common mistake.)

RAPID REPLAY

As soon as you touch a piece you are Capturing, it's considered to be on your Stash Pad. But you don't have to move it there before replaying it – you can pick it up and immediately replay elsewhere. You can even slide an Over-Iced piece a tiny distance if you just want to nudge it.

TIMING OF CAPTURES

You can capture an Over-Iced Prisoner at any time you want – not just when it first happens nor when you first notice it. But it's a real-time game, so, if you wait too long, the situation might change!



ICEHOUSE (CONT.)

GAME OVER

The game ends when every Stash Pad is empty, or when the time limit expires. If the timer rings, all pieces being touched are returned to their owners' Stash Pads, and do not score any points.

THE FINAL FREEZE

Except when time runs out, the game ends at the exact moment when the last piece is played. Any Over-Ice situations that are noticed after the last play, or even created by the last play, cannot be acted upon.

COUNTING SCORES

Although some players may wish to simply count up their own scores, we recommend going around the table as a group and adding up each player's score together, discussing any edge cases as they come up and making any judgement calls collectively. (In a tournament situation, independent referees should calculate the final scores.)

It's often easier to count your Iced Defenders and failed Attackers and subtract from 30 instead of counting up your successful scores.

Be careful not to bump the table or move any pieces until all the scores are counted!

When two or more Attackers owned by different players participate in the same attack, each player scores points only for their own pieces.

High score wins! Ties are resolved by rematch.



STRATEGY TIPS

Good Attacks: Always play your Attackers as close to the Defender as possible, touching if you can do so without Crashing. If you leave space, someone could squander your attack later. (For example, they might also attack that same Defender, putting the tip of their Attacker right in front of the tip of your Attacker.)

Preventing Trade-Ups: Use the minimum amount of strength when attacking. Although it may seem like a six point play to ice a Large Defender with two Large Attackers, you are in danger of having those pieces easily restructured. If your piece were iced in this way, and you had a Small prisoner, you could use it to attack your own Large Defender, over-icing it, then capturing one of those Larges instead, thus "trading up." Had your Large been iced by two Mediums, you wouldn't be able to trade up using just a Small prisoner.

Building a Fortress: Since it's vital that you have at least one successful Defender on the board (lest you be placed in the Icehouse), a common strategy is to wall off access to a Defender by surrounding it with other pieces. Such a structure is called an "ice fortress." One effective method of building fortress walls is by using Large Attackers to ice nearby enemy Defenders.

The Snowball: Often players will build a massive group of tightly packed pieces in the middle of the playing area, in a formation known as the "snowball." Each player hopes to quickly find a niche in that rapidly developing space to place a small Defender, ideally using walls formed by other Defenders, which can't be moved later, unlike the potentially flimsy walls formed by Attackers.

Slanted Attacks: When Icing a piece in an incomplete fortress, you can often slant the Attacker such that it's difficult or impossible for the attacked player to later Over-Ice the Defender and remove your piece. You might also need to play Defenders of your own next to your Attacker so that there is no space for an Over-Icing piece.

The Cheeseball: If you are desperate for a successful Defender, you might decide to play a few Defenders in the corner of the table such that nobody can attack one of them. This maneuver, called the "cheeseball," is perfectly legal, but rarely works against alert players, who will swarm in to attack you as soon as you start to do it. Using this strategy might bring you scorn, but it's not Uncool, and it can be very useful when you're desperate.

ICEHOUSE (CONT.)



The Shotgun: Instead of hiding in a fortress, this strategy involves placing your Defenders right out in the open, apart from other pieces, with plenty of room around them so that future attacks can be easily restructured. However, you may not want to try this until after you've gotten a Prisoner, since this strategy will backfire if you never gain one, and other players will become wary of giving Prisoners to a Shotgunner skilled at Attack Restructuring.

Capturing Prisoners: Restructuring attacks is obviously crucial, but you can't do it without a Prisoner. How do you get one? You can hope for someone to Crash and choose you, but there are other ways. Pay close attention when your opponents are restructuring attacks – if you act fast, you might be able to suddenly drop your own Defender in front of another player's piece and thus steal a Prisoner, just as they are putting it to use. (For example, imagine plopping a Small into the empty space at step 5 of the example on the next page called the 2-For-1 Exchange.) Not only will you get a Prisoner, but you'll be interrupting your opponent right in the middle of their careful work!

Make a Deal: As the game progresses, look around and figure out the current scores, at least roughly. If you are winning, you don't need a Prisoner yet, and you should keep quiet unless you have a silver tongue. If you are losing, offer to trade Prisoners with someone else who is losing. Once an agreement is made, usually to trade Mediums or Larges, Over-Ice one of that player's already Iced Defenders, and they'll do the same for you. Then you'll both have Prisoners and can restructure Attackers at the expense of the other players. Diplomacy is a vital element of this game!

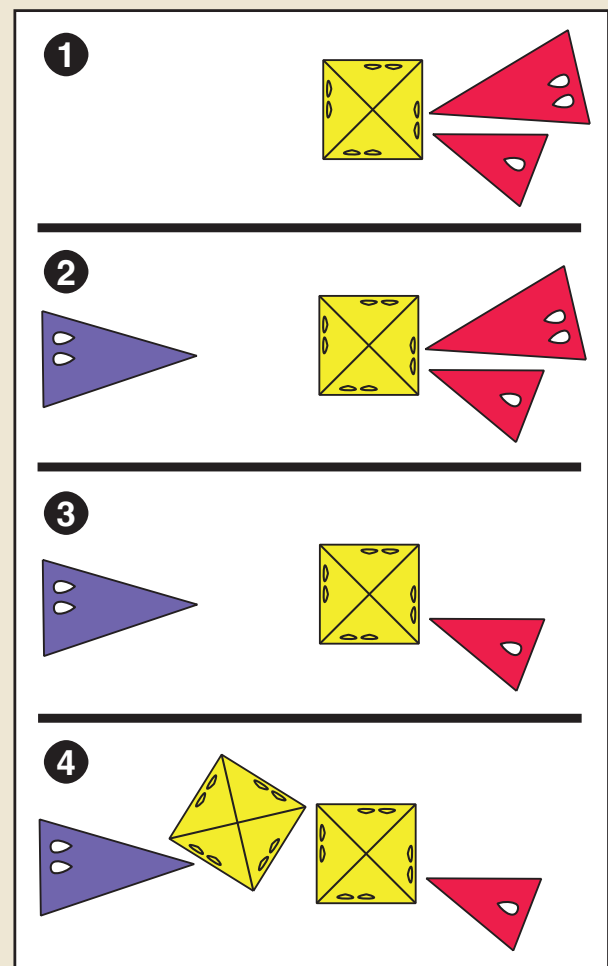
Hunt for Icehouse Calls: As you look around, also see if anyone has just a few successful Defenders. If you can, you may want to quietly Ice all of them. As soon as that player has 7 or fewer pieces left (don't forget to count the one they are holding!) call "Icehouse" and collect all the Prisoners. (As defense against this tactic, pay close attention to your own successful Defenders.)

The Forced Retreat: After you gain a Prisoner or two, you can begin making the Attackers around you take a big step backwards. Say your Small is under attack by a Medium, and you have a Large Prisoner. Use it to Over-Ice your Small. This allows you to capture the Medium Attacker, but don't actually pick it up—just scoot it back from your Defender, leaving its attack intact. Then reclaim your Large Prisoner. Your Defender is still unsuccessful, but now you are in position to do many good things. For example, you might do a Forced Retreat on another nearby piece, and move that other piece right in front of

the Medium Attacker, thus squandering it. Or you might play a Large Defender, or a Prisoner, in the line of fire of the retreated Attacker. You could even block it with an Attacker cutting across its path while pointing elsewhere!

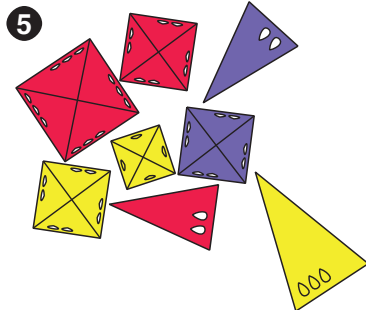
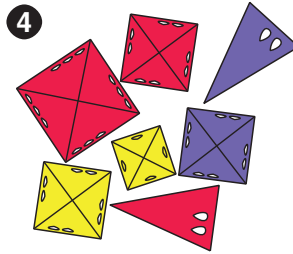
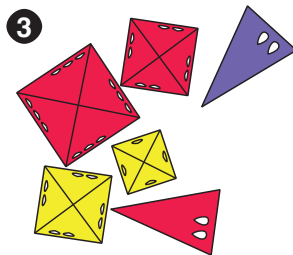
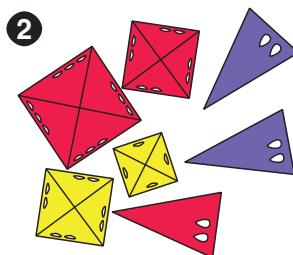
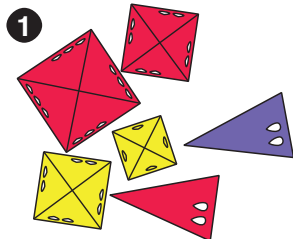
GAMEPLAY EXAMPLES

Let's assume you have a Medium blue Prisoner in your hand, and your yellow Medium is being Iced by a Small and a Medium red (1). Begin by placing that Prisoner as an Attacker, positioned just within range of your Defender, on the other side where you have plenty of room (2). Next, capture the Medium Red (3). Lastly, you can drop another Medium of your color into the path of the Blue Attacker (4). This will leave both of your pieces safe and both of the Attackers squandered, and since you still have a Medium Prisoner, you can repeat this process if someone tries to attack you again!





ICEHOUSE (CONT.)

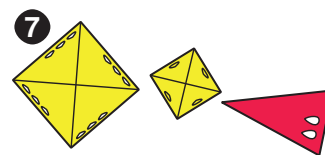
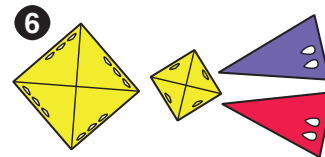
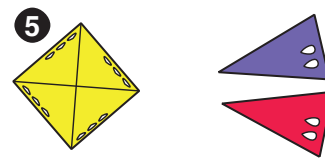
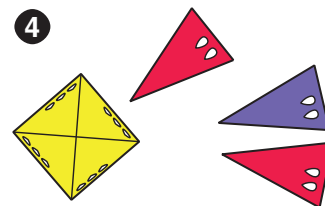
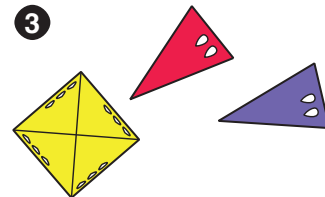
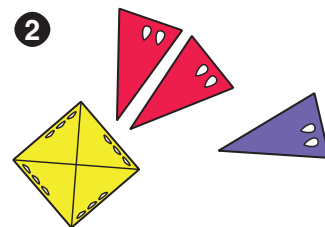
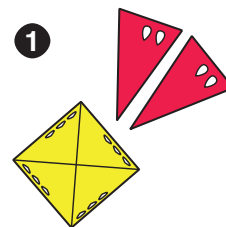


CONVERTING AN ATTACKER INTO A BRICK IN YOUR WALL

In this example (on the left), you are the yellow player (1) and you are holding a Medium blue Prisoner. Begin by using that Prisoner to Over-ice your Small yellow piece (2). Next, capture the original Medium blue (3). Now replay that piece as a Defender in the path of the attack of the other blue piece (4). You can do this very quickly, by simply reorienting the piece in your hand and placing it right back down, rather than returning it briefly to your Stash Pad. This is important if other players are hovering, seeking to ice your Small before you can finish your fortress. Lastly, if it makes sense strategically, you can Ice the enemy Defender you just played (5).

THE 2-FOR-1 EXCHANGE

Here (on the right) is a situation in which you can turn one Prisoner into two. You have a Large being iced by two Medium reds (1), and you are holding a Medium blue. Use that Prisoner to over-ice your piece, but from a reasonable distance, i.e. just barely within range (2). Now, capture one of the red pieces (3), then replay it alongside the blue you just placed, again at a nice safe distance (4). Now you can capture the other red Attacker (5). Next, drop a small piece of your own color into the path of the two Attackers you moved back (6). Now the Small you just played is over-iced, which means you can immediately capture one of those other two Attackers (7). This not only leaves you with two Prisoners instead of just one, but you've also reduced your Defender losses by a net of two points.





ETIQUETTE NOTES

Part of the mystique of Icehouse is the idea that a player's attitude is a vital element of the game. A good Icehouse player is not only skilled at using clever strategies and diplomacy, but also understands the importance of being cool. Basically, this is just our way of saying, being a good sport.

What's Cool: Playing it Cool means that no matter what kind of player you are, from friendly diplomat to evil executioner, you play with a style that makes others enjoy playing with you, even if you happen to win a lot. Being a Cool player can even extend to matters well beyond the scope of the actual game, such as turning on some good mood music or making sure that everyone has a lovely beverage.

What's Uncool: The rules of this game are easily abused by those with a bad attitude. The most obvious example of this are intentional bad plays, such as Crashing on purpose, deliberately creating a Meltdown, and calling Icehouse without really believing someone is in the Icehouse. It may be very strategic to "accidentally" do this, and it can be faked well enough that no one will notice the "mistake" was done on purpose. But it's contrary to the spirit of Icehouse, and extremely Uncool.

Don't Hover: When two players rush to play pyramids into the same spot, the one whose piece arrived first must be allowed to attempt placing it without being harrassed. Obviously, you can't just push their hand away! Back off! But it's fine to hold your own piece in the air nearby, ready to swoop in if the other player Crashes or withdraws.

MERCENARY ICEHOUSE

This is a variation that makes the game viable with only two players. This is also a great way to practice making the best use of your Prisoners. Each player starts with a trio of pyramids of a third color. As with any other Prisoners, they may use these pyramids however they wish; at the end, they score zero points.

HISTORICAL NOTES

This game started as a plot device in a short story. A five-paragraph description of a fictional game led to these rules for a real game, then a system you can play hundreds of other games with, and ultimately even Looney Labs itself. The original story became part of a novel Andy finished in 1991, called *The Empty City*.



For eight years, Icehouse was the only game you could play with the pyramids. Then, in 1996, Andy and John began creating new games, the first of which was Andy's Martian Chess, followed soon after by John's game, Zarcana.

Andy & John were granted a US Patent for this game (#4,936,585), although it has now expired.

The cartoons appearing here, as well as the cover art for *The Empty City* and two paintings of ancient cities on Mars, where done by Dawn Robyn Petrlik.

