The many possibilities on Catan

English edition v2.0 © January 2007 Jon Ivar Toennesen, jontonn@hotmail.com

Preface

This counts as the second version of my own clarifying and alternative rules that I published on <u>www.boardgamegeek.com</u> in may 2005. Back then I used the title "The Settlers, Seafarers, Cities and Knights of Catan". That last version will not be completely replaced by this one, but the most important things are still in this document and much of it is reorganized. I have also taken out the part "Alternative games" and put it in a document of its own. The English version of the "Card Guide" I now find unnecessary and it is removed.

I now use the title "The many possibilities on Catan". My goal with these rules is to make the game even better to play without altering the game too much. When these rules are used in a round of Settlers it is easiest to use the short-term "multi-Settlers" (not a good name, but the best I could come up with).

The reason for the many new possibilities is that I since the last version have bought "Die Siedler von Catan – Das Buch zum Spielen", a German book with English translation, hereby referred to as the Book. It contains many different variations to Settlers as well as game components to play them. I have tried to gather as many of these variations as possible, together with some of my own ideas, so that they can be possibilities in the same game. I recommend buying the Book, but with a little bit of imagination it is possible to replace the new game components with components from other games or one can make some oneself.

I apologize for my not-so-good English, but I hope it is not too broken. Every comment, suggestion and error-report is appreciated.

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New things to build

These things come in addition to what one already can build/place according to the ordinary Settlers-rules. They can both help you and distract you on your way towards a certain amount of victory points. It is not certain things that are designed to distract, but keep in mind that not all the things give you those desired victory points. Some of the new things may help you in one situation, while other things may be useful in a completely different round of Settlers.

Pioneer (Settlers)

The pioneer is a piece from the Book, but it is used in a completely different game than ordinary Settlers. The Book gave me the inspiration, but the rest of the idea is my own. The idea is that the pioneer can gather resources from a land hex where you at the moment have no access.

Cost:

A pioneer costs 2 grain and 1 wool (a load of food and some clothes).

Placement and conditions:

There is only one pioneer per player.

The pioneer is placed on a land hex next to one of your settlements/cities.

Function:

The pioneer may be moved from land hex to land hex.

The pioneer may be moved 1 hex each time it is your turn.

The pioneer is moved for free.

If the land hex where the pioneer stands is producing resources and you don't have a settlement/city on that hex then he picks up one of that resource.

The pioneer must return to a land hex next to one of your settlements/cities before you can use the resource(s) he has picked up (until then the resource cards lays on the table in front of you).

The pioneer can carry a maximum of 2 resources (resource cards).

The robber can steal a resource cards directly from the pioneer.

Strategy:

This give you the opportunity to gain a resource you sorely need even if you are unable to build a settlement next to that land hex.

Factory (Settlers)

The factory is a piece and an idea taken directly from the Book. The only thing I have added is the possibility to upgrade a settlement to a factory.

Cost:

A factory costs 1 of each of the 5 resources.

An upgrade from a settlement to a factory costs 1 grain, 1 brick and 1 ore.

Placement and conditions:

There is only one factory per player.

For a factory the same rules as for a settlement applies when it comes to placement, victory points and upgrading to a city.

Function:

If a land hex next to your factory produces resources then you can choose if you want a resource of that type or a resource from one of the other land hexes next to your factory.

The factory may be built next to a gold field, but you can not choose gold (any resource) when one of the two other land hexes produce resources.

Strategy:

For maximised effect a factory should be built on an intersection between 3 land hexes where none of them is a gold hex.

If a high probability number and a low probability number lie next to each other then the factory can be effective if you are most in need of the resource with the low probability number.

Castle (Settlers)

The castle is a piece and an idea taken from the Book. The castle is functioning a bit different when playing with Cities and Knights (see own paragraph about that).

Cost:

When playing out your second soldier card you choose if you want to exchange them for a castle.

Placement and conditions:

There is only 1 castle per player. The castle is placed on a land hex next to one of your settlements/cities.

Function:

This land hex is now immune to the robber (the robber can not be placed there).

Strategy:

You reduce your chances to gain the "Largest Army" in comparison to a player that choose not to build a castle.

Balloon (Settlers)

The balloon is a piece and an idea taken from the Book. The idea is simplified to fit in as a part of multi-Settlers. This is maybe the most exciting piece for those players who can afford to build and fly it.

Cost:

A balloon costs 2 wool, 1 grain and 1 lumber (balloon, basket and fuel). As fuel (when flying) you use 1 grain or 1 lumber.

Placement and conditions:

There is only 1 balloon per player.

The balloon is placed on a land hex next to one of your settlements/cities.

Function:

The balloon can move a maximum of 3 hexes in one direction each time it is your turn. Each hex moved costs 1 fuel (combine grain and lumber as you like).

If you stop the balloon at sea then you must pay 1 extra fuel to keep it hovering till next time it is your turn, on land you can make an intermediate landing.

Next turn you can fly in another direction.

- When the balloon has landed on a land hex you may build a settlement if it is possible around that land hex.
- If you build a settlement from a balloon then you can choose to disassemble the balloon (take it off the board) and recirculate some of the wool so that you only pay 1 lumber, 1 brick and 1 grain for that settlement.
- You can not build a settlement from a balloon if you already have a settlement/city next to that land hex.

You can not build a factory from a balloon.

If you don't manage to keep your balloon flying at sea (lack of fuel) then it will fall down and sink (removed from the board).

Strategy:

You can fly across long distances and land on new land. Then you can collect several bonus points for discovering new land.

- You can land and build a settlement in the middle of an opponent's road if the distance conditions for settlements/cities are met.
- A player that is flying from place to place has reduced chances of gaining the victory points for longest trade route.

Harbours (Seafarers)

This is my own idea, launched already in the previous version. I have since the seen other with similar ideas, but in my opinion this is the best. The idea about building the harbours instead of placing them on the board in the setup phase is that it makes it less random and thus more fair who gets the harbours. They also become a new way to gain victory points. It is recommended to use the loose harbours from the expansion and not the hexes with harbours.

Cost:

A 3:1-harbour costs 1 ore, 1 brick and 1 lumber.

A 2:1-harbour costs 1 ore, 1 brick and 1 lumber + 2 resources of the same kind as the harbour is going to export. (Ex: a grain harbour will cost 1 ore, 1 brick, 1 lumber and 2 grain).

Placement and conditions:

There is only 1 3:1-harbour per player. Only 1 of each type of 2:1-harbour may be built. A harbour may only be built next to a settlement/city on the coast. Only 1 harbour per settlement/city. Only 1 harbour per sea hex. Harbours may only be built on sea hexes or on marked sea hexes in the frame, not on the frame. Harbours may only be built in open sea, not in closed lakes.

Harbours may not be built on a sea hex that is occupied by the pirate ship or a hostile warship.

Function:

Each harbour is worth 1 victory point.

The harbours works for the rest like the normal rules.

A harbour can not be used if it is occupied by the pirate ship.

Strategy:

Block your opponent's chances of building a harbour by building one in the same hex first. Since it is only 1 of each 2:1 harbour it is important to remember that you must be the first

player to build a harbour if you should have it at all.

Pier (Seafarers)

This is my own idea and I have not seen it elsewhere (but it replaces other ideas that in my opinion don't work that well, for example building a bridge across a distance at sea). Normally you will need a settlement/city to connect roads and ships, but with the pier you get en easier and cheaper way to do this, witch also may give the players more possibilities in the game.

Cost:

A pier costs 2 lumbers.

Placement and conditions:

A pier is represented by a ship laid on its side.

A pier is placed in the same way as a settlement/city.

A pier may only be built on the coast.

The distance rule do not apply to a pier, it can thus be built only 1 distance away from a settlement/city.

Function:

Change from road building to ship building without building a settlement/city in between. It is possible to replace your pier with a settlement if the distance rule is not broken.* An opponent can demand that you have to remove a pier if you have not put it to use (built at

least one road and one ship in connection with the pier) within two turns after it was built.* *You will in these two cases get the ship back in your reserves, but no resources.

Strategy:

- The pier is useful if you have built roads from the inland and out to the coast but you don't wish to build a settlement there before you start conquering the seas.
- It is also useful if you reach an island and wish to proceed by building roads before building a settlement.
- If the distances are long or the struggle for the longest trade route is hard you have to remember that building a pier will give you one less ship to use for that purpose.
- It is possible use a pier to block an opponent's possibilities of expanding that way, but remember that you have to put you pier into use quickly to avoid the risk of having to remove it.

Warship (Seafarers)

The warship is an idea taken from the Book. The idea is slightly modified to fit in as a part of multi-Settlers. The warship gives the players a new way to chase away the pirate ship and a new way to hinder the other players' building of ships.

Cost:

A warship costs 1 lumber, 1 wool and 1 ore (hull, sails and cannon). An attack with the warship costs 1 ore (cannonball).

Placement and conditions:

There is only 1 warship per player.

- A warship is represented by a ship placed in the middle of a sea hex (in the same way as the pirate ship).
- A warship may only be built next to one of your buildings at the coast.
- You can not build a warship in an opponent's harbour.

Two warships may not stand on the same hex.

Function:

The warship may be moved from sea hex to sea hex.

The warship may be moved 1 hex each time it is your turn.

The warship is moved for free.

- The warship may not be moved to a sea hex with an opponent's harbour, but it may be moved past this one (in other words one extra move to get past the harbour).
- The warship may attack an opponent's warship or the pirate ship by paying 1 ore if it stands in a hex next to one of these. The defeated ship is moved 1 hex (attacker's choice).
- The warship may attack an opponent's (normal) ship if it stands around the hex of the warship and if the ship is the foremost ship in it's shipping line. The defeated ship is moved another (legal) place on the board (owners choice).
- No one can build or place ships around a sea hex where an opponent's warship stands (just like the rules of the pirate ship.

Strategy:

It is possible to move first and then attack but also to attack first and move thereafter.

Castle (Cities and Knights)

The castle is a piece and an idea from the Book. Here I have added one extra function and adjusted the idea to fit with the Cities and Knights expansion.

Cost:

A castle costs 1 knight (take it off the board), 1 wool and 1 ore.

Placement and conditions:

There is only 1 castle per player.

The castle is placed on a land hex next to one of your cities that are connected to (by roads or ship) the knight that was removed from the board.

Function:

This land hex is now immune to the robber (the robber can not be placed there).

The city that the castle stands next to is now immune to the barbarians (it does not count as a city when calculating the strength of the barbarians and it can not be destroyed by the barbarians).

Strategy:

You lose 1 knight in the struggle to become Defender of Catan, but you also have 1 less city to defend.

It may be wise not to use a strong or a mighty knight when building a castle.

Other news

Development aid (Settlers)

Development aid is an idea that is somewhat similar to a couple of ideas in the Book, but this is a more radical change than those ideas. It works like 1/3 of an aqueduct. It speeds up the game in the start and may prevent some players to fall too far behind because of a bad start.

Components:

The square red tokens from the Book.

Function:

Each time the dice are thrown then the players who don't get any production receive 1 aid token that is placed on the table in front of each of them.

There is no development aid collected if the dice throw is a 7.

Each player can collect a maximum of 5 aid tokens (they can not gain a 6th aid token).

When it is your turn you can exchange 3 aid tokens for a resource of your choice (not a commodity).

If you build the aqueduct (level 3 on the green part of the city calendar in the Cities and Knights expansion) then you will no more receive any development aid.

The specialists (Settlers)

The specialists are an idea from the Book. Here the players can specialize in one or more resources and that way gain more of that or those resource(s). The idea is slightly changed to fit in as a part of multi-Settlers, first of all the way to decide who becomes a specialist.

Components:

6 specialist cards from the Book (1 for each resource including gold).

Function:

- The one player that at any time has the most (and at least 3) settlements/cities next to one type of hex (ex: next to wood) is considered as specialist on the corresponding type of resource (in this ex: lumber).
- If two or more players have the same amount of settlement/cities next to one type of hex then it is the player with the most cities on these that get the specialist bonus. If it still is a draw then neither gets the specialist bonus.
- A settlement/city that stands next to 2 hexes of the same type counts twice when calculating the specialist of that type, equivalent 3 times if the settlement/city stands next to 3 hexes of the same type.
- The specialist produces 1 resource of the type he is specialized on each time it is his turn (in addition to the production due to the dice).

Each specialist card gives the holder 1 victory point.

Strategy:

To become specialist it can even be worth while to build settlements on hexes with low probability numbers.

Discovery points (Seafarers)

This is a simplified version of a rule that is used in many of the scenarios in the Seafarer expansion.

Components:

Tokens with victory point flags.

Points:

- A player gets 1 discovery point (extra victory point) each time he builds a settlement on an unknown island or on unknown land. The token is placed underneath the new settlement. This island or this land is not considered unknown to that player anymore.
- An unknown island is an area separated by one or more sea hexes from where the player has already built.
- Unknown land is an area on the same island as the player that is separated by one or more desert hexes from where the player has already built.

Initial setup (Cities and Knights)

The normal rules in Cities and Knights give the players a brutal start of the game. The players who do not manage to place and activate a knight before the barbarians will probably lose a city and are almost out of the game before it has begun. This does not promote joy of the game and should be changed. It exists an "Easy Start Variant" where the event die is not thrown the two first rounds. It has also been published a new rule from the designer of the game that the robber should not be moved before the barbarians have hit Catan the first time. However, this is the well tested easy-start that I always use for a friendly game:

Active knight start:

- 1: Each player places one settlement (with a road or a boat) in turn clockwise.
- 2: Each player places one city (with a road or a boat) in turn counterclockwise.
- 3: Each player receives resources after placing their city.
- 4: Each player places 1 active knight in turn counterclockwise.
- 5: The first player starts rolling the three dice.
- 6: The play order continues <u>clockwise</u>.

If you have plenty of time you may also try this way to start the game:

Original Settlers start:

As original, but with 2 settlements instead of 1 settlement and 1 city. A player can only build knights when he got at least 1 city. The event die is rolled as long as there is at least 1 city.

Individual defence (Cities and Knights)

This is my own idea and it has its background in an often recurring thought that the original rules for the defence of Catan are unfair. It is mainly the player with the fewest cities that also has the fewest knights and it is not fair that the weakest always has to suffer. Besides it is not reasonable that if I only have one city and one knight that my only knight should run off and defend some other player's city.

Components:

No new components.

Function:

- The strength of the barbarians is calculated as in the original rules (1 point of strength per city/metropolis) with the exception that cities/metropolises with a castle do not count.
- The strength of the knights of Catan is calculated as in the original rules (1-3 points of strength per knight, depending on the type).
- Metropolises are not immune to the barbarians' attack.
- If the strength of the barbarians is greater than the strength of the knights of Catan then the barbarians win.
- If the strength of the knights of Catan is greater than or equal to the strength of the barbarians, then the knights of Catan win.

In the case of victory:

The player witch defends more than his own cities (witch has less cities/metropolises to defend than the strength of his active knights) acquires 1 "Defender of Catan" card.

- If more than one player is defending more than their own cities then it is the one with the greatest "spare" knight strength that gets the card.

- If this is equal it is the one of these players that contributed with the greatest strength of active knights who gets the card.

In addition will every player that did not defend his own cities (that has more cities/metropolises than the strength of his active knights) 1 of their "Defender of Catan" cards (if they have one).

In the case of loss:

- If Catan loses then every player that did not defend his own cities (that has more cities/metropolises than the strength of his active knights) will lose 1 city (this city is reduced to a settlement).
- If a player loses a metropolis (in the unlikely event that the metropolis is the only city of this player and that he does not have one single knight or a castle) then the metropolis is passed to another player that meets the requirements for that metropolis.

Black pieces and other trouble

The robber, the pirate ship and the barbarians are all well known troublemakers to us common settlers on Catan. Here is introduced some more ways to make and to avoid trouble. But first a rule for a more gentle start that I found on the official homepage on the internet:

The black pieces may not be placed to block or steal resources from players that do not have more than their 2 (or 3) starting victory points.

The robber (Settlers)

The robber is his old self and has not changed.

The robber blocks production in the hex where he is standing. The robber may steal from a building next to him. Road building and building of settlement/cities are not blocked by the robber.

The pirate ship (Seafarers)

The pirate ship has had its function extended to apply also to harbours. It looks like more people than me have come up with this rule, so then it must be a good one.

The pirate ship blocks the building and moving of boats around the hex where it is standing. The pirate ship also blocks the building and use of a harbour in the hex where it is standing.

The pirate ship may steal from surrounding ships or from the owner of the harbour where it is standing (both when moved due to a roll of 7 and when moved after an attack by a warship).

Road building and building of settlements/cities are not blocked by the pirate.

The pirate ship may be moved to a sea hex where there already is standing a warship. This warship is moved 1 hex by the same player that moved the pirate ship.

The black knight (Cities and Knights)

The black knight is my own idea. I felt the lack of a black piece in Cities and Knights (yes, we got the barbarians, but still) and that it was on its place with something that could block building on land.

Components:

1 Desert-raider from the Book or any other black piece.

Placement:

It moves independent of roads (anywhere on the board). It may only be placed on land. It may only be placed on the end of a road or shipping lane.

Function:

The black knight works the same way as an opponent's knight:

It can split a road and it can block the building of roads and settlements.

It can be displaced by a knight the normal way.

It has the strength of zero and may be displaced even by a basic knight.

The black knight may steal from the owner of a connected road or ship.

Strategy:

Even if the black knight must be placed on the end of a player's road it can still break another player's road in half.

Moving and blocking

These points are important if you choose to play with the black knight in addition to the robber and the pirate ship.

When rolling a 7 that player must move 2 of the 3 black pieces (but only steal 1 resource). If a player is blocked by 2 black pieces then he can not be blocked by the third one.

- A player is considered blocked by the robber when he has one or more buildings next to the land hex where the robber is standing (as long as there is a number token on that hex).
- A player is considered blocked by the pirate ship when he has one or more ships around the hex where the pirate ship is standing or when he has the possibility to build or already have built a harbour in that hex.
- A player is considered blocked by the black knight when he has the possibility to build a settlement at the intersection where the black knight is standing or the possibility to build further with roads or ships on the other side of the black knight. A player is also considered as blocked by the black knight if it cuts his road in two pieces.

Briberies

A simple way to get rid of the black pieces (or resource cards) is to apply these rules for briberies. The idea has probably struck many players, but this version is my proposal.

The robber may be bribed with 2 resource cards, and at least 1 of them must be from the type of land hex where the robber is standing. Move the robber back to the nearest desert hex, no cards are stolen.

The pirate ship can not be bribed.

- The black knight may be bribed with 2 resource cards. Move it back to the nearest desert hex, no cards are stolen.
- A player that owns a warship may bribe the barbarians with 1 commodity card to sail 1 step back if the barbarians are more than half the way to Catan.

Strategy:

Briberies open the possibility for a player that have a road past a desert hex may use a knight to chase away the robber from that hex and then place it on another hex on the board (and steal a card as usual).

The Storm

This is an idea from the Book that I have adjusted to fit multi-Settlers. The storm may be a way to bring more excitement/trouble into the game. As opposed to the black pieces the storm is moved more often and can thus be more exciting.

Components:

1 storm-token from the Book.

Placement:

The storm-token is a small hex that is laid on top of one of the hexes on the board.

The storm-token is placed as far from the biggest island on the board as possible at the start of a game.

Function:

After rolling the dice the player may choose to move the storm in the direction of the arrow. It is moved maximum the number of hexes as the die with the highest value.

If the storm hit the frame of the board it changes direction (it can not be where it came from). When the player has moved the storm the desired number of hexes he chooses a new direction

for the storm (it can even be the same direction or where it came from). The next player that moves the storm has to move it in that direction.

- The new wind direction decides in what direction the current player may move his balloon.

The storm has the following effect on the hex where it stops:

- Nothing may be built in or around the hex where the storm lies.
- A harbour may not be used.
- A pioneer carrying 2 resources lose one of them (owner's choice).
- A balloon is blown 1 hex in the direction of the arrow (the direction of the storm when it came).
- A warship gets the sails destroyed (it is laid on the side) and has no function before the owner pays 1 wool for the repairs.
- The robber is blown 1 hex in the direction of the arrow if there is a land hex in that direction.
- The pirate ship is blown 1 hex in the direction of the arrow if there is a sea hex in that direction.

Winning the game

It takes some time to play Settlers, but much of the length is determined by how many victory points one must achieve to win. In the basic game the original rule for winning is 10 victory points, but I have experienced that as too little because the game is ended when the fun has just started. For that reason I have often participated in playing the game to 12 victory points.

When playing with Seafarers the points needed to win the game vary from one scenario to another depending on how many extra victory points it is possible to achieve. In multi-Settlers it is many ways to gain victory points and thus this rule is used:

Victory conditions:

- 2 metropolises must have been built (not necessarily by the winner).
- The winner must have 15 or more victory points.

The winner of the game:

The winner of the game is the player that achieve 15 (or more) victory points after two metropolises have been built (two golden gates are placed on the board) or the player with the most victory points when the second metropolis is built (the second golden gate is placed on the board and earns that player 2 victory points and the game immediately ends).

By desire of a shorter or longer game the number of required metropolises may be varied. In a game without Cities and Knights 15 victory points still is a good rule for starters.

Normal setup

This is the way I use to set up a normal game of Settlers, including multi-Settlers. It is random so that the board is different every time, but still there are some rules to secure that the board is worth playing on. A different alternative is that each of the players draws a hex and by taking turns they build the board so that the result is a board designed by everyone. The size of the board is chosen so that the players have some room to expand, but not without the risk of bumping into each other.

Setup – rules

Rules for hexes

Hexes are shuffled and placed out systematically.

Adjustments:

Move the desert hexes (as short as possible) so that they split an island in two areas. Move the land hexes so that no more than 3 of the same type lay next to each other. If desired, swap a couple of land and sea hexes to create more islands and get rid of lakes.

Rules for number tokens

Tokens are mixed and placed out systematically. 6es and 8s can not be placed next to each other. 2s and 12s can not be placed nest to each other. 6es and 8s can not be placed on a gold hex. Equal numbers can not be placed next to each other.

Setup – tables

Game board

Players	3	4	5	6
Frame*	2x	3x	4x	5x
Hexes total	46	53	60	67
Hexes	3 of each=15	4 of each=20	5 of each=25	6 of each=30
Gold	1	1	2	2
Number tokens	16	21	27	32
Desert	2	2	3	3
Land hexes total	18	23	30	35
Sea hexes	28	30	30	32
% sea	60,9 %	56,6 %	50,0 %	47,8 %
2:1-harbours	1 of each=5	1 of each=5	1 of each=5	1 of each=5
3:1-harbours	3	4	5	6

*Refers to the size of the frame, the length of the pieces marked "X" (A board for 4 players shall be 3x, that is 1 big X-piece (=2x) and 1 small X-piece (=1x) on each side of the board).

Number tokens – normal

2	3			6	8				12	= 32 Number tokens
		4	5		8	9	10	11		= 27 Number tokens
2	3			6				11	12	= 21 Number tokens
		4	5	6	8	9	10			
2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	= 16 Number tokens

Number tokens – productive

This alternative will probably lead to much production and maybe a flooding of resources, and that way some of the excitement may disappear.

		4	5	6	8	9				= 32 Number tokens
		4	5	6	8	9	10	= 27 Number tokens		
			5	6	8	9	10			= 21 Number tokens
		4	5	6	8	9	10			
2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	= 16 Number tokens

Points overview

Buildings		
5 Settlements	1 point	5 points
4 Cities	2 points	8 points
		13 points
Settlers		
1 Longest road	2 points	2 points
1 Largest army	2 points	2 points
5 Development cards	1 point	5 points
		9 points
Seafarers		
1 Longest road	2 points	2 points
1 Largest army	2 points	2 points
5 Development cards	1 point	5 points
? Extra points	? Points	? Points
		9+ points
Cities & Knights		
1 Longest road	2 points	2 points
3 Metropolises	2 points	6 points
8 Defender of Caten	1 point	8 points
2 Progress cards	1 point	2 points
1 Merchant	1 point	1 point
? Extra points	? Points	? Points
		19+ points

In addition it is the factory with 1 victory point and 1 victory point for each harbour that is built by the players.