

PISTARD

Anki Toner 2009 (v 2.12, 2010)

Track cycling game.

Basic game: One lap race.

For 2-5 players.

Recommended age: 8+

Playing time: 30 minutes



Material needed

- a) PISTARD track (It can be downloaded at www.cyclingboardgames.net)
- b) Four D6 dice, in matching colours with the PISTARD track squares. This means yellow, green, blue and orange (or red).

You can probably find these in a cheap Parcheesi set. (This game, Parcheesi, has many games, depending on the country: Ludo, Parchis, Le Jeu des Petits Chevaux, Mensch ärgere Dich nicht ...). Or else you can find coloured dice in other games, buy them in a good games' store, or even paint them.

- c) Four cyclists per player (Though it is recommended to use three riders per player if there are 5 or even 4 players)

You can use the original PISTARD print-and-play riders, or get some small plastic riders. Once again you can get them from other games (for instance, MAILLOT ARC-EN-CIEL includes 43 riders).

d) Three tokens or chips per player.

Preparation

The first player to place a rider decides in what square (before the starting line, of course) he places his rider. Typically, he will place it in the outer lane. Next player decides where he will place his rider (typically, either besides or behind the first rider). Continue this process until all riders are placed. (Typically, but not compulsorily, the riders will form a peloton on the outer lanes of the track).

Each player receives three energy tokens.

Movement

The cyclists move in the order of the race (first rider moves first, rider in the inner lane has precedence) .

In his turn, a cyclist throws all four dice. He chooses ONE die to advance his cyclist.

His movement MUST end on:

- (a) a square matching the colour of the die
- or (b) orthogonally behind another rider.

If none of these possibilities can be accomplished, the cyclist does not move in this turn. (However, if he has at least one legal movement, he must move).

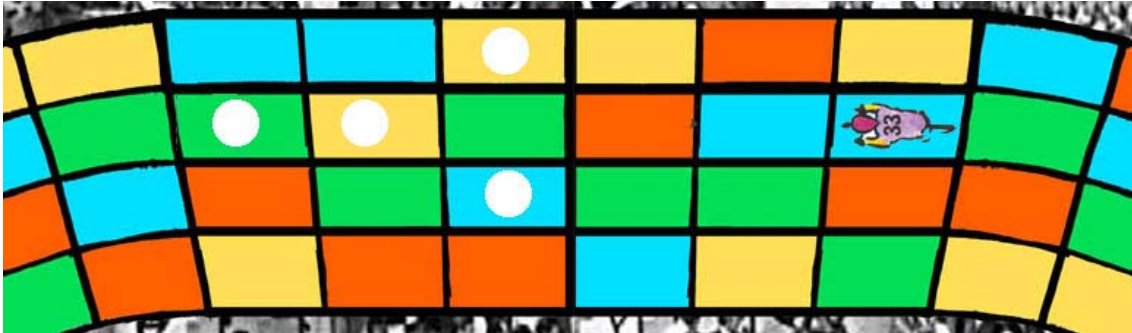
The riders can only move ahead orthogonally or diagonally. (No lateral or backward moves). Riders cannot pass through an occupied square (nor end their move on it, of course).

A movement diagonally outwards (towards an outer lane) costs one extra point (two dice pips, see examples)

Riders can change as many lanes as they want in a turn but always in the same direction (inwards –at no cost- or outwards –at a cost of an extra pip for each lane-). However, riders cannot change lanes in both directions (inward and outward) in the same turn.

Examples

1) Rider 33 throws 5 green, 4 yellow, 3 blue, 1 red

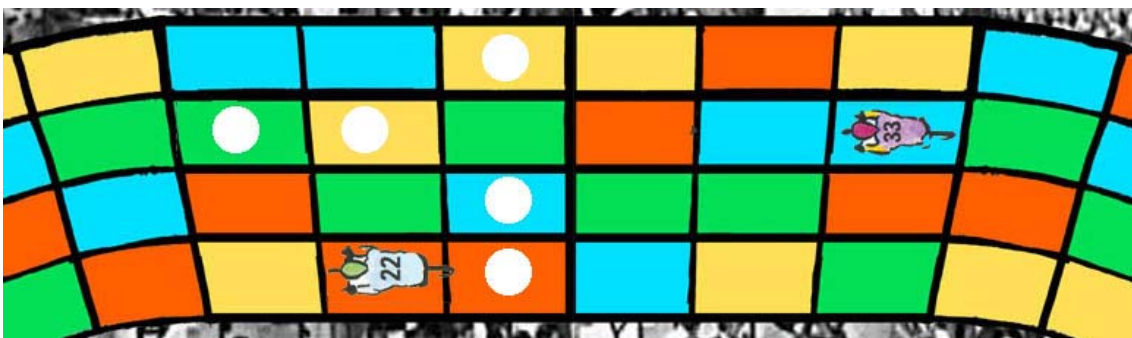


He may move:

- a) 5 squares ahead to a green square (using the 5 green throw)
- b) 4 squares ahead to a yellow square (using the 4 yellow throw)
- c) 2 squares ahead and one step inwards to a blue square (using the 3 blue throw)
- d) 2 squares ahead and one step outwards to a yellow square (using the 4 yellow throw. The outward movement requires 2 pips)

Notice that the 1 red throw is useless in this case.

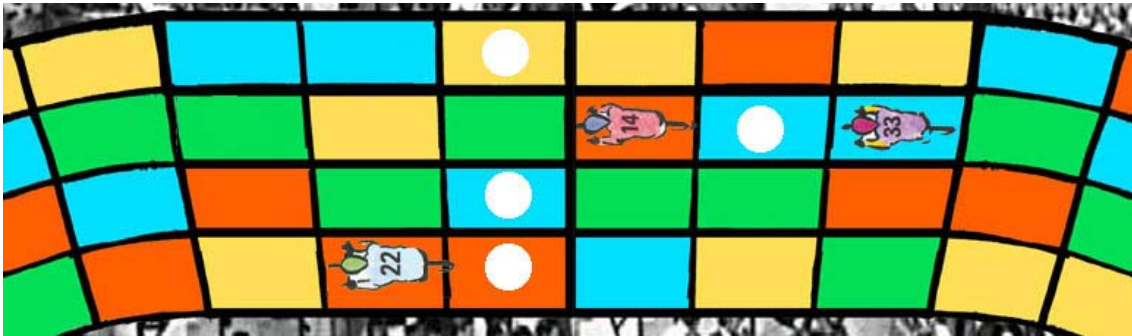
2) Rider 33 throws 5 green, 4 yellow, 3 blue, 1 red



He may move all of the above or:

- e) 1 step ahead and 2 steps inward, behind rider 22, using the 3 blue throw.

3) Rider 33 throws 5 green, 4 yellow, 3 blue, 1 red



Since rider 14 is blocking his path, moves (a) and (b) are not possible. Instead he may move:

f) 1 square ahead, behind rider 14, with the 1 red throw.

Notice that movement (d) –described as “2 squares ahead and one step outwards”- is still possible since the step outwards can be moved before (or between) the steps ahead.

Using the energy tokens

Each player receives three energy tokens at the beginning of the game. He may use them at any moment of the game to increase by one the value of one dice, as long as this value does not become higher than 6. He cannot spend two counters on the same turn, though.

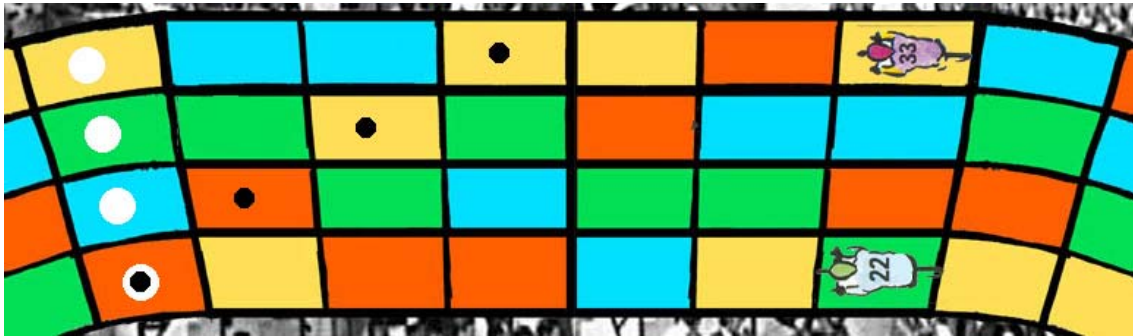
Example: A player throws 6 green, 5 red, 3 yellow, 3 blue. He can play one of these values or spend one of his counters to play 6 red, 4 yellow or 4 blue. He cannot spend one counter to increase the value of the green die since it is already a six.

End of the race

The winner of the race is decided on a “furthest past the post” basis. When the first rider crosses the finishing line, the turn is completed and the rider who goes furthest past the finishing line in this turn is the winner of the race. In the case of a tie, the inner lane has precedence.

Tactics:

In general, being in the outer lanes is a big advantage. For instance, in the next diagram, rider 33 (in the outer lane) will be able to move any 6 he throws (since he can go inwards at no cost, would move to white dotted spaces), while rider 22 (in the inner lane) can only move with orange or yellow sixes (to black dotted squares).



However, since the inner lane has precedence, if rider 22 throws an orange 6 and moves ahead 6 squares, rider 33 will not be able to play an orange 6. Furthermore, if rider 22 throws a yellow 6 and decides to move 3 lanes outwards (to the black dotted yellow square on the outer lane) he would prevent rider 33 from playing a yellow 6.

Being behind one or more riders is also an advantage, since one has more movement options. As in real cycling, riding in the back of a peloton is quite safe, and it is easy not to lose contact. However, sooner or later one has to leave the back of the peloton and try to move ahead, and that is not so easy.

Tactics in the few last throws ("the sprint") can be tricky if there are many riders involved, since outer lanes tend to go faster, inner lanes play first (and have precedence in case of a tie, and the track can be blocked by riders who got a bad throw. Like in real life cycling when a big peloton sprints.

VARIANTS

Almost every track cycling race can be played with this game (excepting paced races like Keirin, of course). However, races in which there is no interaction between riders (individual time trial and individual persecution) are less interesting.

Feel free to try any possible variant (increasing or decreasing the length of the race, the number of cyclists per team, or the energy tokens given to each team. If you play with young children, you can play without energy tokens (Incidentally, that was version 2.0 of the game).

One Lap Race (Scratch)

This is the basic game. For a short game use just between six to ten cyclists and divide them among the players. For instance, with 4 players each takes two cyclists, with 3 players each takes 3 cyclists, etc...

Points race (Madison, “Amériquaine”)

6 to 10 riders. Players decide how many laps they want to run (typically 10, or 20 for a longer race) and how many points are awarded to the winner of each lap (typically 5,3,2 and 1 points to the first four riders in each lap, double in the last lap). The race is not interrupted. It is thus possible that one or more riders win or lose one lap (in this case they would score/lose 20 points). Warning: It is quite difficult to win a lap, but not so difficult to lose one in a 20 lap race!

Elimination Race

This is a longer race, which lasts as many laps as riders are in the race. In each lap it is not so important who wins but who is last. The last rider is out of the race. The remaining riders start a new race again. Nevertheless, the rider who was first in the last lap has the advantage of choosing the starting position, the second chooses next, etc...

Sprint (“sur place” allowed)

This is a one lap race between two cyclists (similar to the last lap of the elimination race, when there are only two riders left). The difference is that “sur place” (standing still) is allowed in this race. This means that a player does not have to move compulsorily even if he has a legal move. He can stay still and let the other rider move first. If a rider stands still during three consecutive turns, he falls and loses the race. If a rider decides not to move during two consecutive turns, he has to move compulsorily in the next turn. If he throws a dice combination that does not allow him to move, he is out of the race.

Team Time Trial

While an individual time trial is not so interesting a team time trial poses some tactic issues that make it an interesting exercise. Since all the riders are in the same team, the player may decide, before throwing the dice, that a rider does not move until one or more of his teammates have moved. In general, it will be better that a riders in the outer lane moves before a rider in the inner lane.

Team Pursuit

One-lap team time trial by two different teams starting at opposite sides of the track. The third rider in the team is the one that counts. The first two riders of the team do not disappear from the race if they cross the finishing line in a given turn but the third rider has not ended the race, since they can draft him in the last throw. Since both teams will have the same numbers of turns, the second team has the slight advantage to know what his rival is doing (specially in the last turn).