

ICE BREAKERS TO THE RESCUE (c) 2004, Jim Deacove

A CO-OPERATIVE GAME (TM)

PLAYERS 2 to 4

AGES 10 to Adult The Introductory Game, described at the end of the rules is recommended for ages younger than 12, and the Full Game described below for ages 12 to Adult.

EQUIPMENT Game Board, Rules, Ice Report Chart, 66 Ice/Water pieces (20 x1, 2 and 3. 6x4), 12 Ships, 20 Ice Reports, 32 Coast Guard Cards consisting of 24 Ice Breaker Powers (8x 5 and 7 and 6 x 10), 4 Retrofits (4 x 3), 4 Bubbler (4 x1) and 2 Auto-Ballasts (2x 2).

THE OBJECT We operate a team of Ice Breakers for the Coast Guard. Our job is to open up frozen waterways for Freighters, Supply Ships, Tankers, and Military craft. We succeed if we get all 12 Ships to their respective destinations before the ice becomes so thick and widespread that we are prevented from further action.

THE GAME ENDS when any of the following conditions are reached: (1) We have escorted all 12 Ships to their Destinations. A completely successful season! (2) Winter conditions make it impossible to get all the Ships in. Some have to winter over where they are. A partly successful season!

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE GAME PARTS

THE GAME BOARD

The board is a map of the Arctic as Winter sets in. (Parts of the Map have been modified for game purposes) Ice and snow are forming around the Dark Islands. Some Islands have outposts, research stations, military installations, and even villages that are waiting for their respective Ships to arrive. Each of these Destinations/Buildings is flagged and numbered from 1 to 12. The flags honor the different nations that explored these Arctic regions. Each has a large Harbor space next to it, which are the entry spaces to the Destinations. When a Ship reaches its Harbor, it is automatically placed on its Building. All the Harbors never ice over, so Ships can rest on them and not get pinned by Ice.

There are two kinds of Destinations. The larger, red outlined ones supply us with 3 Coast Guard Cards when we get a Ship to its Destination, while the smaller, yellow outlined ones supply us with 1 Coast Guard Card when we escort a Ship to its Destination.

All the other connected spaces are the channels the Ships take and the spaces where the Ice/Water pieces are placed. These are the channels the Ice Breakers have to clear for the Ships.

THE PARTS Carefully separate these parts. Use scissors, if necessary. Keep them in separate piles until we set up the game for play.

THE ICE/WATER PIECES

Mix all 66 of them really well and put in a pile by the board. Some folks put them in a small cup. One side of the pieces show Ice of different strengths (1, 2, 3 and 4) while on their flip side is Blue Water. The numbers on the Water side make it easy to find which Ice form as the game progresses. For example, if the Satellite Ice Report says that Ice #2 is forming, then all the Water #2 pieces get flipped back to the Ice side.

THE COAST GUARD CARDS

Sort through the Cards and get to know what each kind does.

The Power Cards These indicate the Strength or **Power** of the Ice Breaker. For example, a 7 POWER can break any combination of Ice pieces that total 7 or less. The Ice pieces do not have to be connected. Thus with a 10 Power Card you might decide to flip a couple of connected Ice numbered 1, 2 and 2 (total 5), but then go to another unconnected location with the 5 Power points you still have left and flip Ice 3 in one place and finally an Ice 2 somewhere else. All 10 points are now used up. If all the points on a Power Card don't get used, they are lost. There is no saving of extra Power points. Used Power Cards are played face up to form a Discard Pile.

A Power Card is also used to unpin a Ship stuck in Ice. For example, if you want to unpin a Ship stopped in an Ice 3 condition, and you play a Power 7 card, you would use 3 Power points to flip the Ice 3 to Water leaving you with 4 Power points to clear Ice up to a total of 4. Now the Ship can be moved further along.

On a turn, you are allowed to play only 1 Power Card after which you or other players may add the other kinds of allowable Cards. The exception is the special Auto-Ballast Card, AB2, explained later.

The Bubbler Cards, B1, represent the other special feature of an Ice Breaker. Air pumped outside through holes in the ship's hull help to reduce friction when breaking through ice. They are added to any Power Card for more Ice breaking ability. You can play any number of them as long as a Power Card has been played.

The Retrofit Cards, R3, indicate that work has been done to strengthen the weaker Ships. So, they add 3 points to a Power Card. However, R3 Cards can be added only to 5 and 7 Power Cards. The 10 Power Card is considered at full strength already. You can play as many R3s as you wish on a turn. They can be played in addition to B1s to get an even higher total.

The Auto-Ballast Cards, AB2, represent the ability of an Ice Breaker to free itself when it gets stuck in Ice. In reality, there are two ways for it to do so. One is to back out the way it came in, but this runs the risk of damaging the propeller. The other way is by the Automatic Ballast-Movement System that shifts water back and forth to help rock the ship free.

The **AB2 Cards** are used when a player feels "stuck" with his/her hand and wants more options. Each AB2 card is worth 2 additional Coast Guard Cards. When exchanged, the AB2 card is discarded from the game, not put on the Discard Pile.

HOW TO EXCHANGE AN AB2 FOR TWO ADDITIONAL CARDS

The player cashing in the AB2 Card, turns the Discard Pile face down, and without shuffling, cuts the Discard Pile placing the bottom part on top. He/she takes the top card into his/her hand. Then the deck is cut a second time, the bottom put on top and the top card taken into hand. In this random way, you gain 2 new cards to play. These cards can be kept or given away to other players. Then turn the Discard Pile face up again for further play.

The **AB2 Cards** can be used at any time during a turn, before playing a Power Card, during the playing of a Power Card, or after. If you have already played a Power Card, you can't play any more that you gained for the AB2 card. However, you can play R3s and B1s or another AB2 gained in the exchange.

SUMMARY OF COAST GUARD CARD USE

1. Power Cards

Play only 1 per turn
Clear Ice (Turn to Water)
Free Ships stuck in Ice

2. Bubbler Cards

Play only in addition to a Power Card
Can play more than one per turn

3. Retrofit Cards

Play only in addition to a 5 or 7 Power Card
Can play more than one per turn

4. Auto-Ballast Cards

Exchanged for two cards by randomly cutting the Discard Pile.
Can be played by itself and anytime during a turn.

THE ICE REPORT CARDS These indicate which Water get turned back to Ice as the game progresses. Most of the cards show only 1 Water to flip, some show 2, while 1 indicates 3 Water to flip and, finally, there is 1 that shows that all 4 Water (numbering 1,2, 3, and 4) are to be flipped. There are two that declare Mild Weather Conditions, so that no Ice will form on that turn.

THE ICE REPORT CHART

This is kept near the game board. On the leftmost space titled, Ice Report Supply, is where the Ice Report Cards are stacked in a special way that is described later. Whoever sits closest to the Chart, looks after it during the game, turning the next forecast and moving the forecast into the In Effect space.

THE 12 SHIPS

These are the Ships that we have to bring to their Destinations. Each has its own Flag and is numbered from 1 to 12 and their Destinations have matching Flags and numbers from 1 to 12.

SETTING UP FOR A FULL GAME

1. Put the Game Board in the middle of the table.
2. Oldest person goes first. Turns pass to the left, clockwise around the table.
3. Spill the **Ice/Water** pieces on the board and mix them around. Each player help place one piece, Ice side up on each of the little spaces of the channels. This is done randomly, so that no two games played are ever the same. None are put on the **Flag spaces**.
4. The oldest player mixes up the **12 Ships** and makes a stack of them face down. Taking from the top, place 1 Ship face up on the Harbor space next to Destination 1, then the next Ship on the Harbor space for Destination 2 and so on in each Destination's numerical order until all 12 Ships are placed. If a Ship with the same flag and number as the Destination flag and number comes up, put the Ship at the bottom of the stack and place the next top one. (At the start of the game, a Ship can't already be at its Destination.) You now can see how far each Ship needs to be escorted to its Destination.

Ships can only be moved over and on to connected Water pieces. A Ship cannot go past Ice pieces. Ice blocks the channel. When a Ship is stopped on a Water piece, rest the Ship's corner on top of the edge of the Water piece, so you can see the Water's number (in case it has to be flipped to Ice) and show exactly which piece the Ship has stopped at. If a Ship stops on a Water that gets changed to Ice, rest the Ship's corner on top of the Ice piece. This means the Ship is now stuck in Ice. It will take Power Card points to free it.

Ships can stop on Harbor spaces or move on past them (they are considered always ice-free). Thus, if a Ship gets to the Harbor space of its Destination, it automatically enters. A Ship that reaches its Destination is placed on the flagged Destination itself, face down to make it easier to spot which Destinations still require a Ship. More than 1 Ship can occupy the same Harbor or Channel space.

5. The oldest player now creates the Ice Report stack. Sort through the cards to find the one with all 4 Ice numbers. Place it face down on the leftmost supply space on the Ice Report Chart. Then place the card with 3 Ice numbers face down on top of the 4 card. Now gather all the cards with 2 Ice numbers plus one Mild Spell with no Ice numbers, shuffle them well, and stack them face down on the 3 and 4 cards. Lastly, gather, shuffle, and stack the remaining cards face down on the others. The stack has been formed in this way to simulate how winter sets in. The ice becomes thicker and more widespread until finally all the ice cleared will ice over right away represented by the last card to be exposed. If you haven't completed the game by the time this last card is exposed, then it remains in effect for **every move** after that until the game is ended.

The routine during the game is for the top card to be placed face up on the middle Forecast space and then, after Cards are played, get moved over to the In Effect space, causing Water pieces to flip into Ice.

6. The oldest player now distributes the Coast Guard cards. Regardless of how many are playing, give each player one 5 and 7 Power Card to start with. Shuffle the rest well and deal them out as follows: Place 3 cards face up at each Large Destination, fanning the cards slightly to show what they are, and allowing the number of the Destination to show. Everyone should be able see what is available when you bring the Ship in.

The player who brings the Ship in, will collect the three cards and keep them all or distribute them among the players as he/she thinks best. Usually, a player asks around to see who has a weak hand and needs some big Power Cards or is lacking some special cards.

Then count out the next 8 cards face up and make a fanned out row below the Ice Report Chart. These are the 8 cards available when a Smaller Destination has its Ship brought in. The player who brings the Ship in takes the top card on the right of the row and adds it to his/her hand or else gives it to another player, who may need it more. Now the next card exposed will be the next one gained. Everyone should be able to see what Card is next available as each Ship is brought in.

NOTE: It is only when you collect Cards upon reaching Destinations or cashing in an AB2 that you may give away cards to others. However, during your turn, only after you have played a Power Card to start your turn, may other players add cards to what you have played.

The remaining cards are dealt out to the players. If two are playing, each should get 4 more, if three, each should get 2, and 1 more if four are playing.

7. The oldest player goes first and turns pass to the left, clockwise.

PLAYING THE GAME

With the game set up, everyone now has enough of an Overview to begin planning strategies.

A variety of decisions to make arise.

Players might decide to work alone to clear the channels for a particular Ship or they might talk it over and decide to combine efforts and work on one Ship.

Since you will want to keep adding Coast Guard cards to your hands, you may wish to go after the 3 Card Destinations or else go for a bunch of 1 Card Destinations.

Since you can split a Power Card's points in different locations, there are decisions to be made as to which channels to attack.

Should we pay special attention to Ships that are farthest from their Destinations?

When is the best time to cash in the AB2 cards?

These are some examples of decisions to think about.

TAKING A TURN

Each turn consists of the following actions done in order.

1. Expose the Ice Forecast. Put the top card on the middle space of the Chart. This card tells you what Water pieces will be turned back into Ice.

2. Play a Power Card OR Pass. If you do pass, then the Ice Forecast is put Into Effect, applicable Water pieces turned to Ice and the next Forecast exposed. Your turn ends. Otherwise, you must play a Power Card from your own hand to start your turn. After that, you or others may add Cards (R3, B1, AB2) as allowed. Eg, Add as many R3s and B1s as wished to a 5 or 7 Power, but only B1s to a 10 Power. AB2s can be cashed in regardless of which Power started the turn.

Coast Guard Cards are played face up to form a Discard Pile near the board.

3. Clear Ice pieces (ie flip to Water side) according to the Cards played. Eg. A 5 Power Card will clear Ice Tokens totalling up to 5 or less. If you add Bubbblers and/or Retrofits, this makes larger the total number of Ice you can clear.

4. Move any Ships They are moved over connected Water pieces as far they can go before being stopped by Ice or as far as you wish to move them. (Maybe a large Ice is forecast and you don't wish to leave a Ship stuck in it.) Rest the Ship's corner on top of the Water piece, so the Water's number is still visible.

If a Ship moves into its Destination, turn it face down on its flagged Building and collect the cards there (3 or 1) and keep or distribute the cards.

Sometimes you acquire a card that you can still use in this turn. For example, you might have played a 10 Power and used up only 7 to get a Ship to its Destination. At this Destination you pick up a Retrofit card that you can add to the Power Card's remaining points and get to move Ships further along.

5. Move the Ice Forecast to In Effect Space Turn back to Ice any Water on the board bearing the number or numbers on the Ice Report Card. If any Ships get stuck, put the Ice's corner on the Ship so each number is still visible.

6. Finish the turn by exposing the next Forecast. It is now the next person's turn. Continue playing in turn until the game comes to an end.

6. THE GAME ENDS The game ends when you have brought as many Ships as you can manage to their Destinations. All of them? Bravo! Only some? Still a partial success. Time to analyze what alternative strategies may have worked better.

Hint: If you wish to play another game right away, to save time, just leave the Ice pieces where they are - Ices up. Flip the Ice Report deck over to form a new supply, but you needn't shuffle it. Just shuffle and distribute the Ships on to new Flag spaces and shuffle and redeal the deck of Coast Guard Cards as well.

7. THE INTRODUCTORY GAME

The rules of play are the same, but the initial set up is different.

Use only the following 6 Ships and Destinations. 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9.

Put the other Ships face down on their respective Destinations. They have already arrived.

As before, deal 3 Cards to the Larger Destinations, 2, 3, 6, and 8.

Deal 1 Card face up next to Destinations 5 and 9.

The remaining cards are dealt out to the players.

Thus the game is half the length of the full game, but in many ways no less intense.

Questions? Comments? Want a copy of our latest illustrated catalog of co-op games?

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