



FOOL'S GOLD

BY JOSHUA BALVIN



GAME RULES



In the winter of 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in Coloma California. Over the course of the next seven years, this discovery would redefine the landscape of what is now the West Coast of the United States. Rumors of the discovery spread rapidly and by 1849 as many as 90,000 forty-niners arrived from all over the world. Boomtowns exploded across the landscape. By 1855 more than 300,000 Argonauts had flooded into the California region in the hopes of striking it rich! While some made a fast fortune, most (especially those who arrived after 1850) garnered little or lost much.

In "Fool's Gold", players act as wealthy investors sending prospectors into the diverse regions of the landscape in a fast-paced quest to snatch up gold before others beat them to it. In the early rounds of the game, gold is easy to be found. As the game progresses, resource depletion sets in and players must resort to more desperate attempts at snatching what little can still be found.

The player who is most savvy at balancing finances, location and timing might just make a fortune!

COMPONENTS

Fool's Gold includes:



1 game board



5 player screens



10 Prospecting Dice



1 Winter Die



121 Coins



5 Mine Decks
(43 cards each)



40 Miners (8 each in 5 player colors)



1 rulebook



1 Start Player token

SETTING UP THE GAME

- 1 Place the game board in the middle of the table.
- 2 Each player chooses a color and takes the player screen and a number of Miners of that color, based on the number of players:

3-player game: 4 Miners each

4-player game: 3 Miners each

5-player game: 2 Miners each

Each player also takes six Coins. Place your Miners and Coins behind your player screen.



5



Game setup for five player game

Each player takes:

3-player game: 4 Miners each

4-player game: 3 Miners each

5-player game: 2 Miners each

6 Coins

- 3 Place one additional Miner of each color on the 1850, 1851, 1852, and 1853 spaces on the game board (leaving the 1849 space empty). The highest space with no Miners indicates the current "year" in the game. Also place coins equal to the number of players on each of the spaces beneath years 1850 - 1853.
- 4 Divide the cards into the five Mine decks. Shuffle each deck separately and place them on the matching spaces of the game board.
- 5 Place the 10 Prospecting dice in the middle of the game board. Set the rest of the Coins and the Winter die next to the board, creating a general supply.
- 6 The player with the most gold teeth takes the Start Player token. The game is ready to begin!



MINE PROFILES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
HILLS	4	5	7	-	-	15	6	3	3											
FOREST	3	5	5	3	-	15	6	3	3											
MOUNTAINS	4	3	2	3	4	15	6	3	3											
RIVER	4	3	2	3	4	15	6	3	3											
LAKE	3	2	6	2	3	15	6	3	3											

Coins

You use your Coins to fund Miners in their search for Gold and Gems. You have a “budget” of Coins that you can spend each year. Spent Coins are never returned to the general supply. Instead, they are placed in front of your player screen. At the end of the Prospecting Phase, all players take their spent Coins and return them to behind their player screens.

Hint: Since you get all of your Coins back, there is never a benefit to having any leftover money at the end of the Prospecting Phase!

You begin the game with six Coins, and gain one additional Coin at the start of each year. But, you also receive 1 new Miner each year, and over-crowding quickly becomes a problem. You will need to send your Miners to more expensive locations as the game goes on!

You may gain additional Coins if you do not take cards during the Mining Phase. You do not have to collect more Coins in this way during the game, but if you do not increase your investment budget, you will have fewer placement options as the game goes on!

THE OBJECT OF THE GAME

You are a mine investor, using your Coins to fund Miners in their search for Gold and Gems. You will send your Miners to the 5 different Mines on the game board (Hills, Forest, Mountains, River, and Lake).

Each Mine is represented by its own deck of cards. Each deck offers a different mix of Gold, Silt, Gems, and Perils. The mix of cards in each location deck is displayed on a grid on the back of each player screen:

MINE PROFILES	Gold					Silt	Gems	Hazards	
HILLS	4	5	7	-	-	15	6	3	3
FOREST	3	5	5	3	-	15	6	3	3
MOUNTAINS	4	4	4	4	-	15	6	3	3
RIVER	4	3	2	3	4	15	6	3	3
LAKE	3	2	6	2	3	15	6	3	3

After five years of prospecting, the player who can earn the most points by collecting Gold and Gems will be the winner (Gold and Gems are scored differently – see “Final Scoring”). Money (Coins) is worth nothing at the end of the game!

PLAYING THE GAME

Fool's Gold is played over five rounds, called “years”. At the start of each year (except 1949, the first year), all players take the Miner of their color from that year's space on the game board and one Coin each from the stack below the year space, placing both behind their player screens.



Each year is divided into two phases:

1. Prospecting Phase

2. Mining Phase


All players must complete each phase before the next phase begins.

THE PROSPECTING PHASE

During the Prospecting Phase, you will send your Miners to the locations you wish to mine in that year. The Prospecting Phase is divided into 2 steps:


Step 1: Roll Prospecting Dice

Each Mine on the game board has a box with an image of a dice number, and a path of spaces numbered "0" through "6". Four of the spaces on each Mine path are marked with a red box. These paths and the Prospecting dice determine how productive the Mines are each year.

The Start Player rolls all 10 Prospecting dice, and sorts the dice by the number showing. Each die is placed on the path for the Mine that matches the number rolled. Dice that roll  are "wild", and are always placed on the Mining Camp in the middle of the game board.

The first die placed on each Mine is placed on the image of that dice number. The other matching dice are placed one die per space on the path, starting with the "0" space and working towards the Mine deck (i.e., from lowest number to highest). Each space on the Mine path can only hold one die.



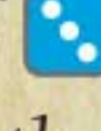
Important: The dice are **not placed** on the spaces marked with the **red** boxes. If there are more than four dice rolled for a single Mine (so all of the spaces without red boxes are full), the extra dice are turned to show a  and placed in the Center of the game board (in the Mining Camp). This limit **only** applies to the initial Prospecting dice roll each year: wild dice **may** be added to that Mine later in the year.

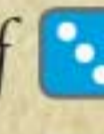
Example


After rolling the Prospecting Dice, the results include:




The dice are placed on the Mine paths that match the numbers rolled.

Five dice show a result of , and are resolved at the Mountain Mine path. The first is placed on the space showing the numbered 3 die.

The next three dice showing the result of  are placed on the "0", "1" and "2" spaces.

The fifth and final die showing a result of  cannot be placed on the Mine path, as dice cannot be placed on the red bordered spaces during the initial placement of the Prospecting Phase.

This die is changed to show a result of  and placed in the Mining Camp at the center of the board. This is now a wild die, and may be placed on any Mine later (including on red bordered spaces)



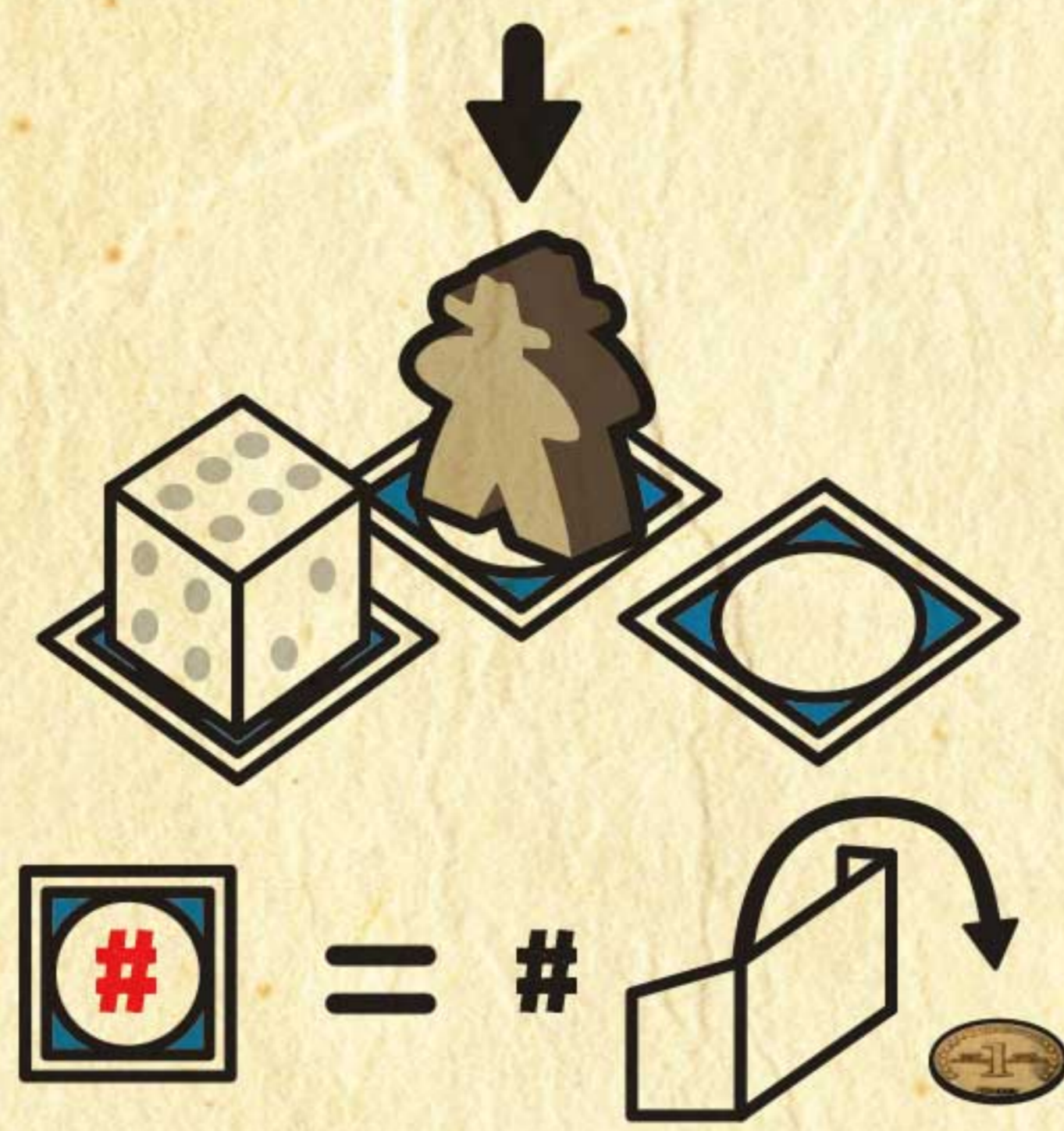
Hint: The dice reveal which Mines will be most productive during the current year. When a Mine is resolved during the Mining Phase, the number of Miners at the Mine is multiplied by the number of Prospecting dice there to determine how many cards are drawn – increasing the chances of getting valuable Gold and Gems!

Step 2: Take Player Actions

Once the dice have been rolled and placed on the game board, the players take actions. The Start Player takes the first action, with the other players taking turns clockwise. Players continue to take turns until all players have passed.

On your turn, you **must** take one of these four actions:

1. Place One Miner on an available Mine

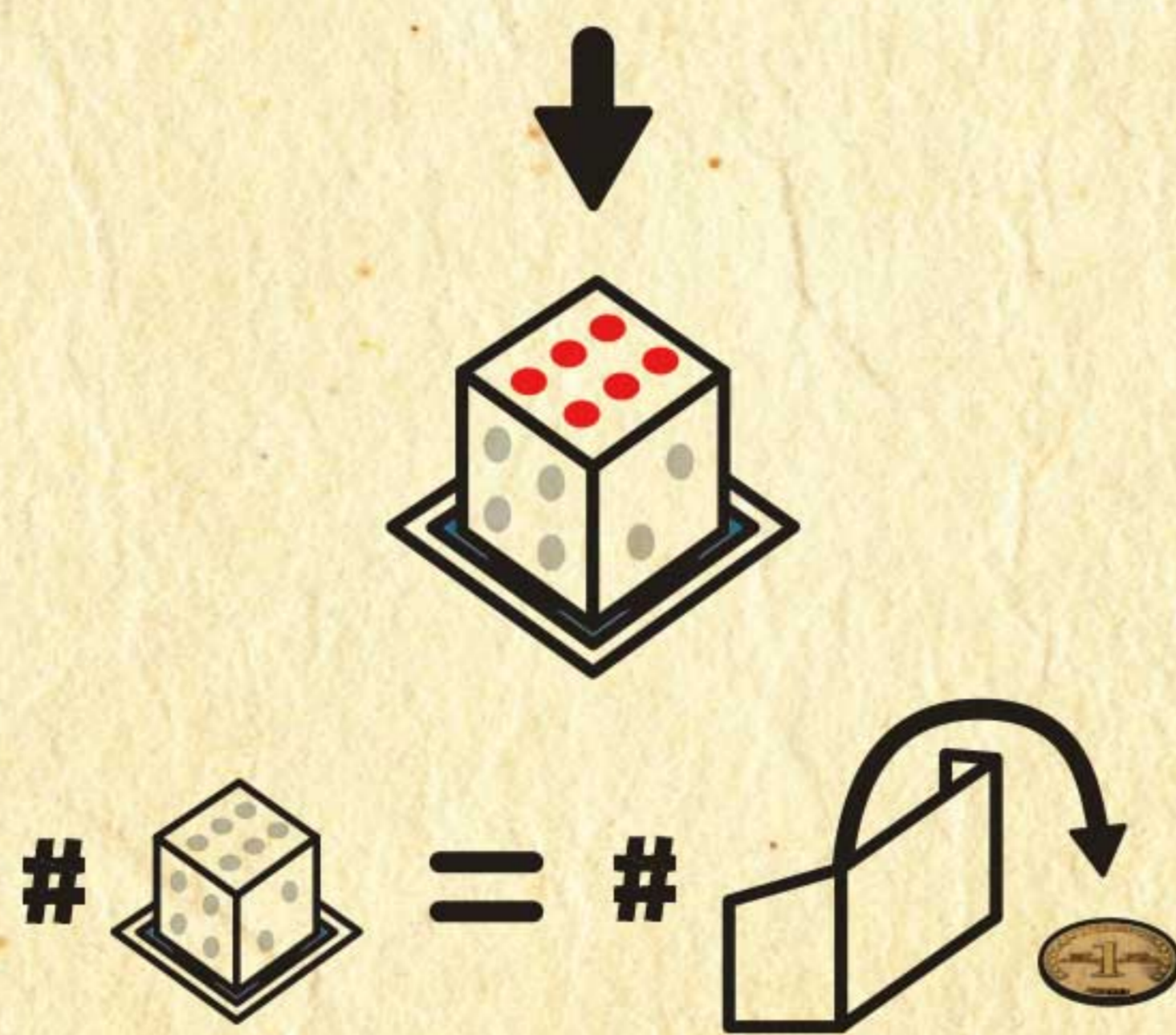



Place one of your Miners on **any unoccupied** space at any **available** Mine and pay the cost shown on that space, in Coins (the "0" space is free). Remember to place the Coins you spend in front of your player screen.

A Mine is *available* if it has *at least* one Prospecting die on the Mine path. If there are no dice at a Mine, no Miners may be assigned there. That Mine may become available later if a wild die is added to it.

Note: Some spaces at a Mine may already be filled with Prospecting dice. Each space can hold either *one* die or one Miner.

2. Add One Wild Die to any Mine



Move 1 wild die from the middle of the game board to any Mine. The die is placed with the  face up on the **lowest-numbered empty space** (Miners and wild dice may be interspersed in this way). You must pay one Coin for **each** die currently at that location (so, the first die is free; if there were already four dice, the cost is four Coins). The value of the space you place the wild die in is ignored.

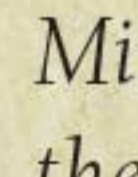


Example

BLUE wants to place their Miner in the Mountains. They place their Miner on the "2" space, and moves two of their Coins in front of their screen.

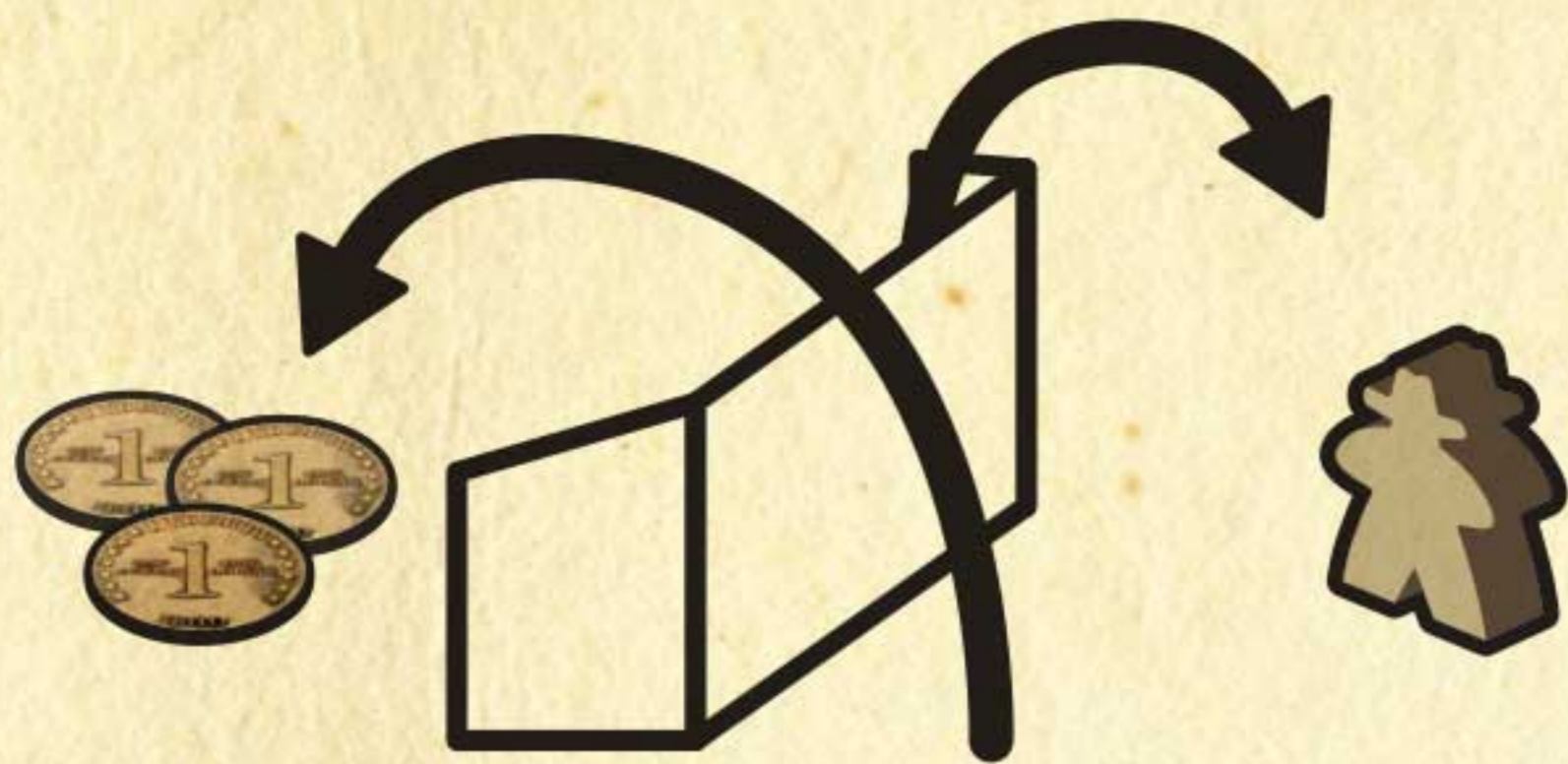


Example

GREEN wants to increase the value of the River Mine. They move a  die from the middle of the board and places it in the lowest-numbered empty space ("2"). Since one die has already been placed on the River path this year, GREEN must move one Coin from behind their player screen.



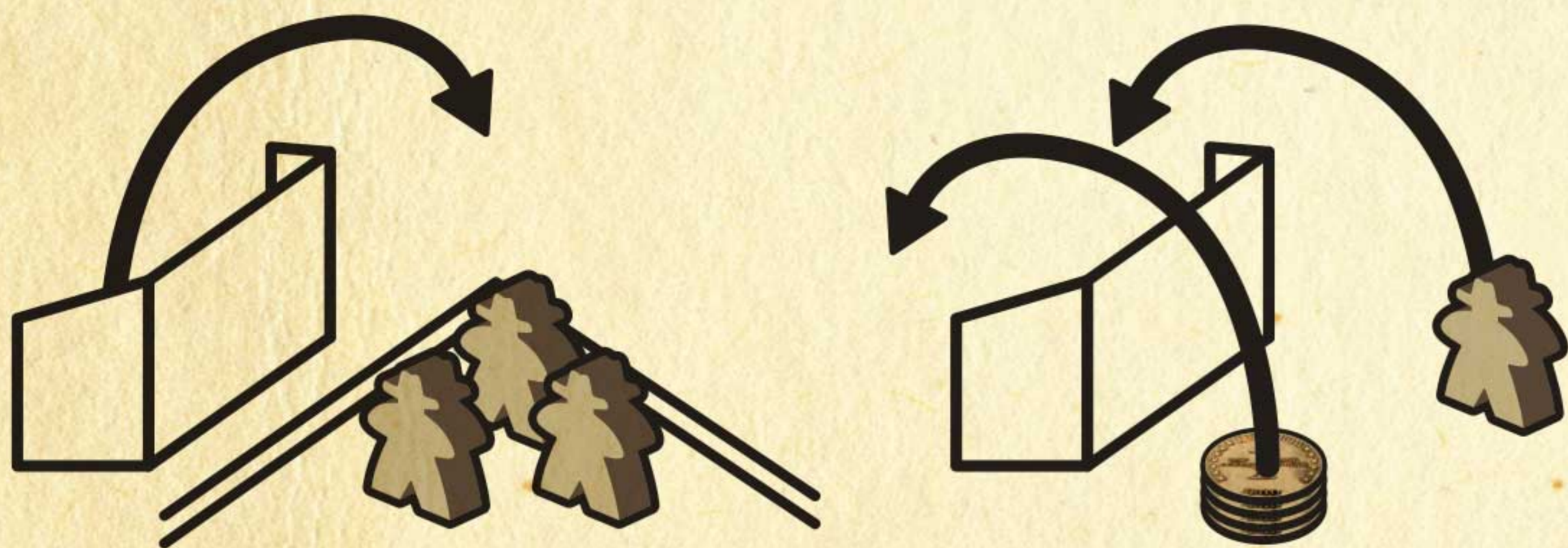
3. Place One Miner in Front of Your Player Screen to Retrieve three Coins



Place one of your Miners in front of your player screen and take back three of your Coins. This Miner is not available for any other action this round, and is **not** placed in any reserve (see below).

Important: These Coins come from in front of your player screen, not from the general supply! This money does not increase your overall investment budget, but it may allow you to place more Miners or wild dice during the current year by re-using three of your Coins.

4. Pass



This is the **last** action you will take each Prospecting Phase. Once you choose to pass, you cannot take any additional actions during this Prospecting Phase.

When you pass, take all of your unused Miners from behind your screen and place them "in reserve" at any Mine or Mines (next to the deck of cards). You may place your Miners in reserve at the same Mine, or divide them among different Mines as you wish.

There is no limit to the number of Miners that can be placed in reserve at each Mine.



Then, return all of your Coins and Miners that are in front of your player screen behind it and wait for the other players to pass.

Once all players have finished taking actions, the Prospecting Phase ends and the Mining Phase can begin.

Example

YELLOW has run out of money, so they use their action to move one of their Miners from behind their screen, placing it with the Coins they spent earlier in the year. YELLOW then takes three of their spent Coins and moves them back behind their screen.



Example

At the Lake Mine, there are a total of three Miners on the Mine Path and two Prospecting dice. six cards are turned over from the top of the Mine deck. Note that the Miners placed in reserve are not counted.



Example

These Miners are at the River Mine:



BLUE and GREEN both have two Miners (one on the path and one in reserve). RED has one Miner here. Even though RED's Miner is on the highest numbered space on the path, he doesn't get to go first because the other two players both have more Miners. Between BLUE and GREEN, GREEN's Miner is on the higher numbered space, so they take the first action.

THE MINING PHASE

During the Mining Phase, you will find out what your Miners are able to recover from the Mines.

First, all of the Mine decks are shuffled. Each player takes the deck of cards closest to him and shuffles it well (if playing with less than five players, you may need to shuffle more than one deck).

Note: Any deck that has no Prospecting dice or Miners assigned to it does not need to be shuffled.

Starting with the first deck (the Hills), each Mine is resolved one at a time in numerical order. To resolve a Mine, follow these three steps:

Step 1: Reveal Location Cards

The player who shuffled that deck multiplies the number of Miners at that Mine's Path by the number of Prospecting dice there (the number of individual dice, **not** the number of pips on the dice!). Any Miners placed in reserve at the Mine are **not** counted. The result is the number of cards from that Mine deck that are turned over.

Turn over cards from the deck one at a time (it may help to divide the cards into groups as you turn them over: Silt in one pile, Gold in another, Gems in a third, and finally Perils in a fourth pile).

The total number of cards turned over is *reduced* by one card for each Foul Weather card drawn (see page 10).

Once the required number of cards have been drawn (Miners x Prospecting dice – Foul Weather), any False Alarm cards are immediately resolved (see "Perils" on page 10).

Step 2: Miner Actions

After all False Alarms are resolved (if any), players use their Miners at that location to take one action per Miner.

Players use their Miners to take action in order of priority.

Priority for Miner actions is determined by these steps:

1. The player with the most Miners at that location (including Miners in reserve) is given priority, and takes an action.
2. If multiple players are tied for the most Miners, the player whose Miner is in the highest numbered space for that location takes an action.

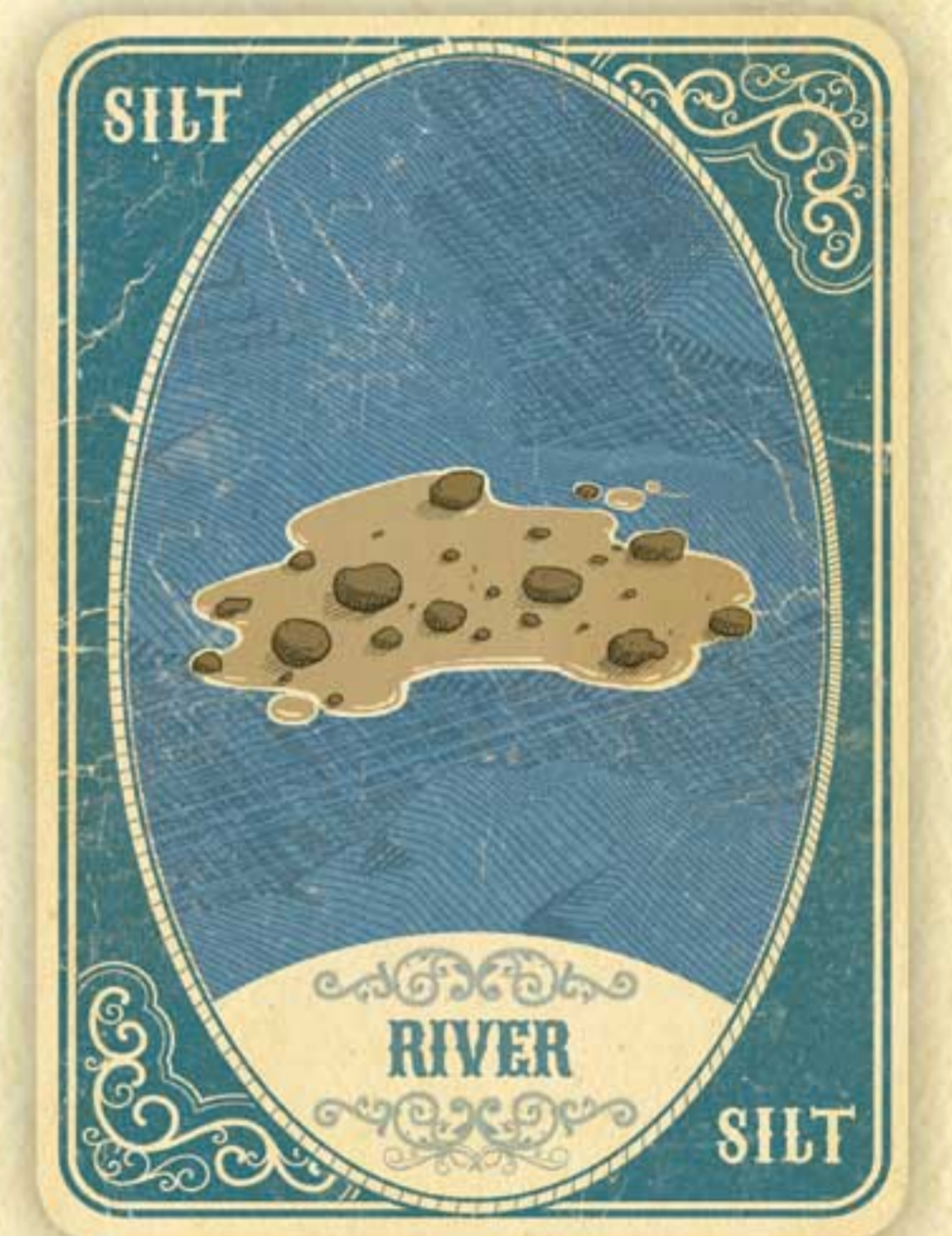
When the player with priority takes their Miner action, they must use the Miner of their own colour that occupies the highest numbered space on the Mine path.

Once that player has taken their Miner action, priority is again determined by the steps described above. The player who now has priority takes an action for their highest positioned Miner, and so forth until all miners on the Mine path have taken an action.

Important: Miners placed in reserve do **not** take any actions. They **only** increase your priority at that Mine (i.e., they count as Miners at that Mine only to determine the order in which you take actions). Your Miners in reserve stay on the board only as long as you have Miners on the numbered spaces for that Mine. When all of your Miners on numbered spaces have taken actions and are removed, all your reserve Miners from that Mine are also placed behind your player screen. If you leave Miners at a Mine for the Winter Step, your reserve Miners also stay at that Mine until Winter.



Gold Card (River) with a value of three



Silt Card (River)



Gem Card (River)



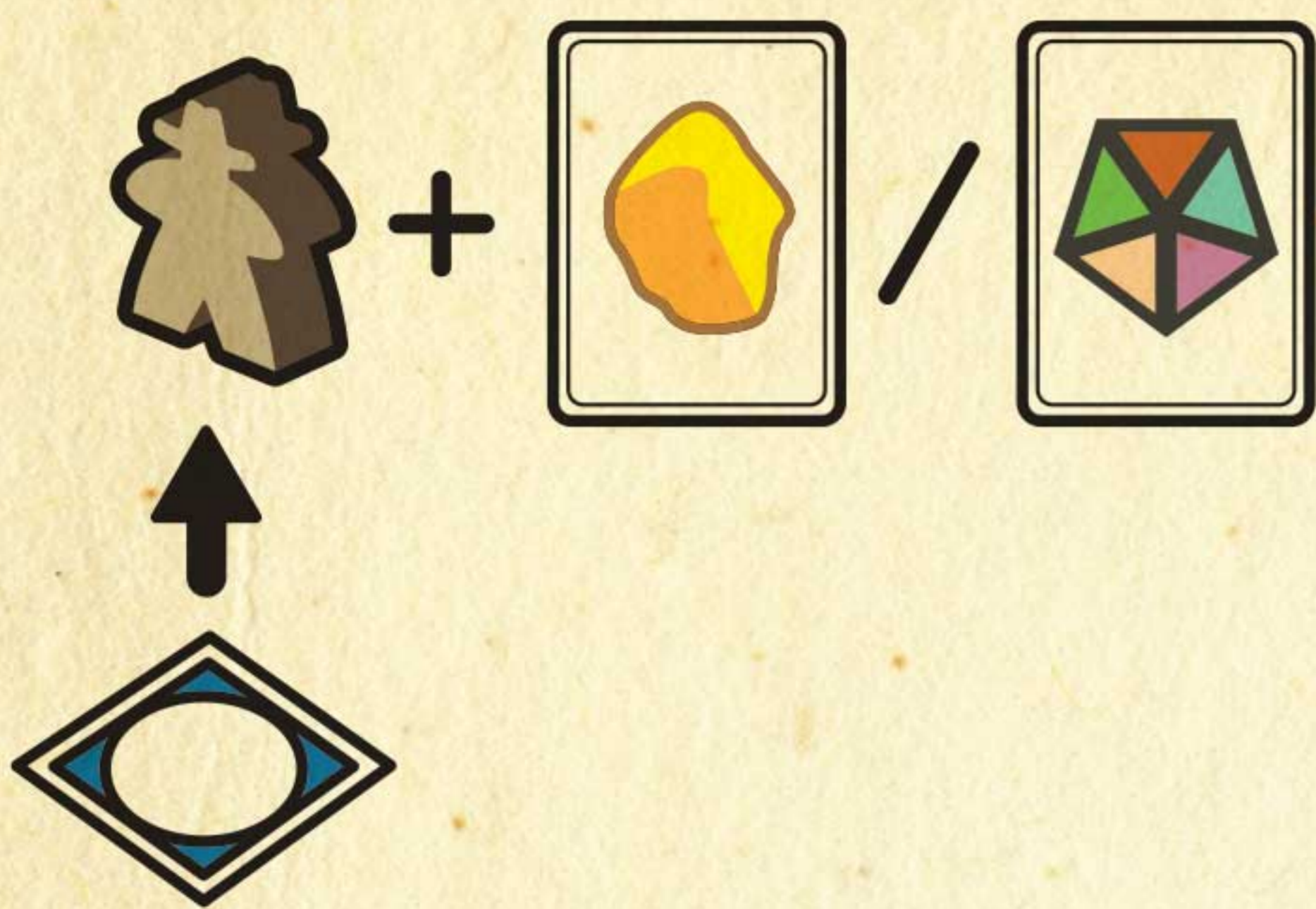
Peril Card – Foul Weather!



Peril Card – False Alarm!

There are three actions you may choose from for each of your Miners:

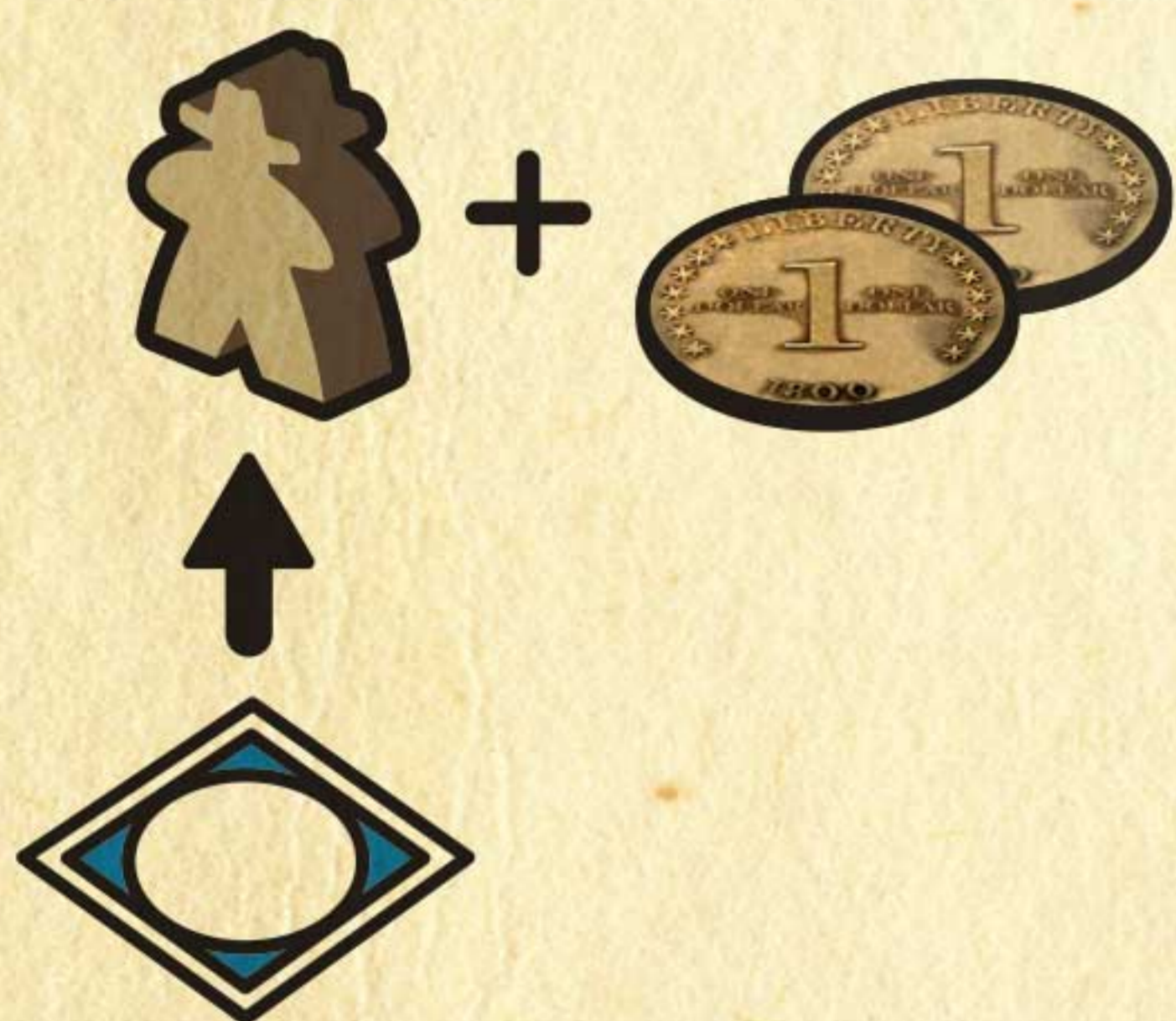
1. Take One Gold or Gem Card



Place the chosen card behind your player screen (your Gold and Gem cards are always kept hidden from the other players) and return your Miner to behind your screen.

Important: You can only ever take one card of each gem type (so, only one Quartz card). You **cannot** take a second Gem card of the same type.

2. Take Two Coins from the Bank



Place the money and your Miner behind your player screen. You do **not** take a card if you choose this action. Remember: these 2 Coins stay in your investment budget for the rest of the game. This is the only way you can choose to increase your investment budget.

3. Place your Miner on its Side for Winter



Your Miner will get to take an action during the Winter Step.

Important: Miners that are on their sides do not count towards action priority at that Mine: they have already taken their action. These Miners become active again once the Winter step begins.

Hint

You are never required to take a Gold or Gem card, even if they are available. You may always choose one of the other two options instead. It is important to remember that each Miner action is resolved completely in priority order, even during Winter. You will always know how many players get to select cards before you! Only one die is rolled during the Winter step, so you must decide if it is worth the risk to wait for Winter.

Miner Action Example:

There are three Miners at the River Mine.

GREEN takes an action first (See opposite page example for determining priority at this mine). He decides to take the only Gold card turned over for this Mine. He places the card and his Miner behind his player screen.



BLUE goes next. They think they have a good chance of getting something valuable during Winter, so BLUE lays their Miner down.



RED takes the last action. They don't feel good about their chances going second in the Winter, so they decide to take two Coins (now RED will have more to invest next year). The two Coins and the Miner are placed behind RED's player screen.



Winter Action Example

Three Miners remain at the Mountain Mine at the beginning of the Winter step. The lowest priority player (RED) rolls the Winter die and gets a 6. Too bad! Somebody loses out! Two cards are turned over, both Gold cards. BLUE has the higher priority Miner, so they take the most valuable card. YELLOW is next, and takes the other card. Red is out of luck: there are no more cards to take, so they get nothing.



Foul Weather! Example

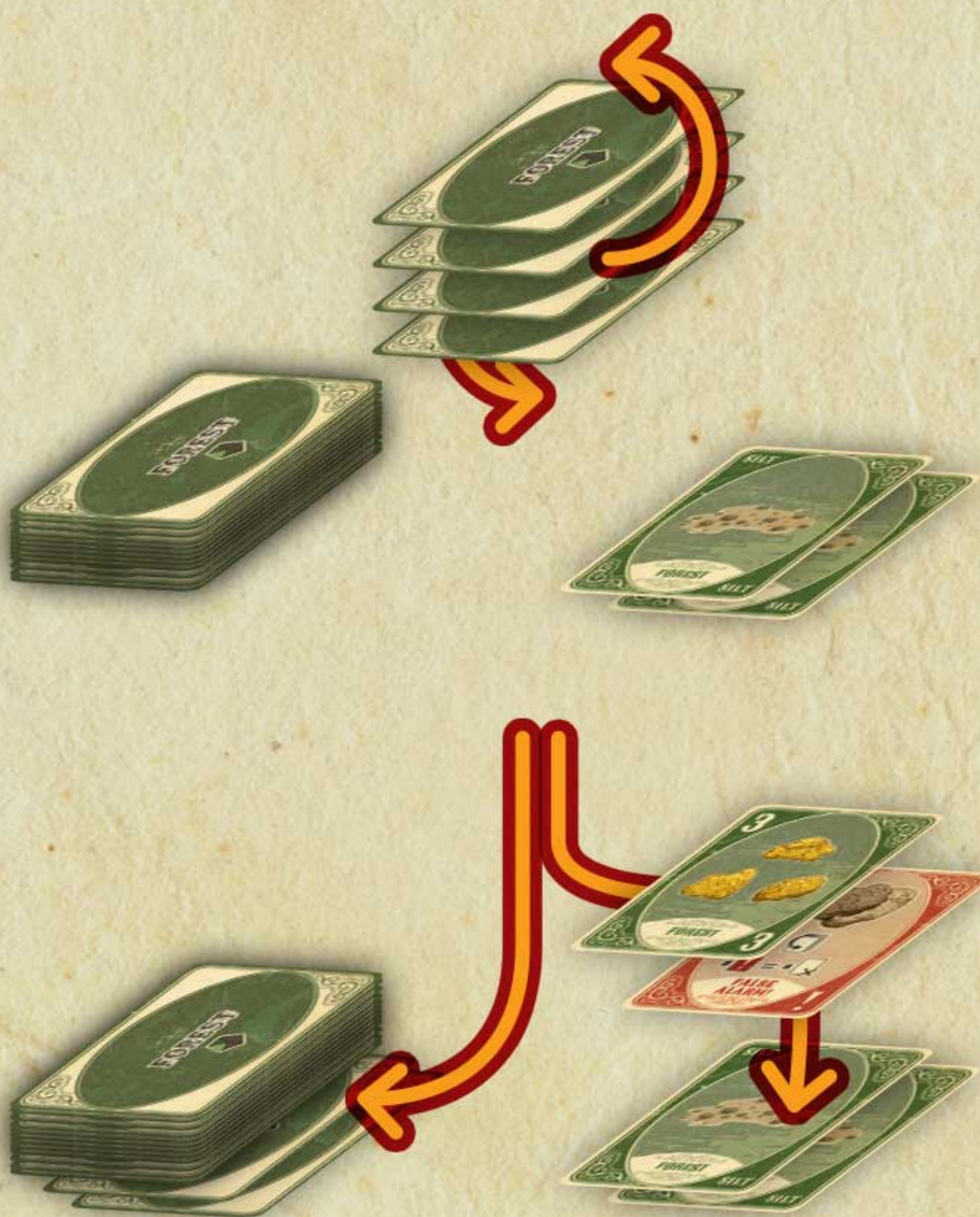
The number of cards to be drawn for the Lake Mine is six. The second card turned over is a Foul Weather! card. Only three additional cards are turned over, for a total of five cards.

False Alarm! Example

These six cards were turned over for the Forest Mine:



The two False Alarm! cards, the Gold, and the Gem are shuffled together, and two random cards are returned to the bottom of the deck.



The remaining two cards are returned next to the two Silt cards, face up. If any False Alarm! cards remain, they are simply ignored.

Step 3: Winter

After all the Miners at the Mine have taken an action, any remaining Gold, Silt, Gem, and Peril cards are placed at the **bottom** of the Mine deck. These cards do **not** carry over to the Winter Step.

Now, the player with the Miner in the lowest priority space rolls the Winter die. The number rolled is the number of additional cards that are turned over from the top of the Mine deck. These cards are resolved as described above (first Perils, then the remaining Miners take actions in priority order, etc.).

When it is your turn to take a Miner action in Winter, you **cannot** choose to take Coins. You either take a Gold or Gem card, or you get nothing. That is the risk of mining in the winter – it can be brutal!

Once the Mine is completely resolved (all Miners have taken an action and Winter is complete), any cards not taken from that Mine are returned to the Mine deck. You don't need to shuffle them, since all decks are shuffled at the beginning of the next Mining Phase. Now the next Mine is resolved, in numerical order.

PERILS

Each deck includes six Peril cards, three each of two different types. Peril cards are resolved before any player takes a Miner action.



Foul Weather!

Bad weather sweeps in and hinders the Miners in their quest for riches!

For each *Foul Weather!* card drawn, the total number of cards drawn at that location this year (including the *Foul Weather!* card) is *reduced* by one.

If *Foul Weather!* is the last card drawn at a location, it has no effect.



False Alarm!

When an unskilled Miner is looking for gold, any shiny object will catch his eye – leading only to disappointment! After all cards for a location have been turned over, take all *False Alarm!*, Gold, and Gem cards drawn and shuffle them together. One of these cards, at random, is placed on the bottom of the Mine deck for each *False Alarm!* card that was drawn. The remaining cards are again turned face up before the Miner actions begin.

Note: Each *False Alarm!* only takes effect once when drawn. If a *False Alarm!* card is one of the remaining cards, do not shuffle the cards again and return one to the bottom of the deck.

THE END OF THE YEAR

Once all the Mines have been resolved, the current year comes to an end. Any Miners remaining at any Mines are taken back and placed behind their players' screens.

The Start Player token is passed to the next player clockwise.

The next year is ready to begin!

THE END OF THE GAME

When the fifth year is complete, the game ends. It's time for the Final Scoring!

FINAL SCORING

First, divide your **Gold cards** by which Mine they came out of (i.e., all Gold cards from the Forest Mine go together). If you do not have **at least one Gold card** from **each of the five Mines**, you suffer a **five point penalty** for **each deck** that is missing. Gems do **not** count for this! You must have at least one Gold card from each deck to avoid the penalty!

Now, add up the total value of each group of Gold cards, counting the number of nuggets on each card. For example, three cards from the Forest deck with one, three, and three nuggets would equal seven. The location that gives you the highest total value is Fool's Gold! You must discard those cards. For all of the other Gold cards you have, you receive **one point for each nugget** showing on your cards.

Finally, count the number of Gem cards you collected. You earn points based on the number of different types of Gems you have:

Types of Gems Points Awarded

1 Gem	1 Point
2 Gems	3 Points
3 Gems	6 Points
4 Gems	10 Points
all 5 Gems	15 Points



Note: The points awarded are for your entire Gem collection, *not* per Gem!

A summary of this scoring information is printed on every Gem card.

The points for all your remaining Gold cards (each nugget is worth one point) are added to your Gem score to determine your final score.

The player with the highest score is the winner!

If there is a tie for the highest score, all tied players add up the nuggets on their Gold cards from the **second highest value Mine** (the highest value was Fool's Gold, remember!). The higher total is the winner. If there is still a tie, repeat this process with the next highest value Mine and so on until a winner is declared.

CREDITS

A big thanks to all the playtesters who made this game possible: Christopher Peterson, Kerrie Maynes, Trevor Owen, Giulio Pellegrini, Amy Logan, Eric Logan, Aaron Patterson, Nicole Browning, Anne Browning, Jay Heiny, Adam Pearson, Kelly Wyse, Nick Vivion, Kevin Farrell, Jason Malone, Rory Nordeen, Jeff Averill, Jeff Robbins, Ian Todd, Tom Garner, Samuel Rodarte, David Caldwell, Brendan Toner, Jacqui Gilroy, Rod Maplestone, Clint Keithley, Christopher Webb, Gerry Doherty, Daniel Billett, Anthony Curtis, Jared Balvin, Heather Balvin, Rachael Smith, John Smith, Todd Suscovich, Ian Good, Ryan Durand, Elizabeth England, Leif Norcott, Stephanie Norcott, Chris Fiske, Kevin Phillips, Morgan Ross, Brittany Aubert, Steve Chiavelli, Ken Berg, Dan Bothman, Amanda C., Amy Wyman, David Wyman, Matt Shofner, Andrew Kane, Kat Hazzard, Kaitlin Marie-Fritz, Annalise Finkler, Evan Conroy, Jenni Whitney, Blake Fisher, Mike Rohr, Cameron Morrison, Nicholas Eaton, Marius Falbusch, Benjamin Williams, Evan Parker, Nick Abel, Brent Bartlett, Erika Wright, Brian Firfer, Joseph Tringali, Matt Pellicane, Brett Caird, Chris Wells, Chris Taylor, Michael Brunn, Todd Jonker, Adam Espinoza, Sean Haste, Brandon Godfrey, Gary Simmons, Zach Horrocks, Topher Click, David Watson, Jenn Cheung, Casey Muldoon, and Reed Nelson-Saunders.

About the game designer: Joshua Balvin is a Seattle, WA based video game and board game designer. His first game, Oktoberfest, was one of four games selected for publication by Rio Grande Games following a 2009 nationwide design competition. His other forthcoming games include *Salem* and *Duomo*.

About the artist: Ian O'Toole is an Irish graphic designer and illustrator working in Perth, Western Australia. He is an avid boardgamer and has created art for numerous games. See more at: www.ianotoole.com

Editorial work by William Niebling

Scoring Example

At the end of the game, YELLOW has these cards (sorted by the Mine they came out of):



Hills Mine = Four Gold Nuggets



Forest Mine = Five Gold Nuggets



Mountain Mine = Nine Gold Nuggets



Lake Mine = Seven Gold Nuggets



Three Gem cards

YELLOW has at least one Gold card from each Mine except the River Mine, so starts with -5 points.

They have more nuggets from the Mountain Mine than any other (9), so those are all Fool's Gold and are discarded.

Adding up the rest of their nuggets, YELLOW gets a total of 16.

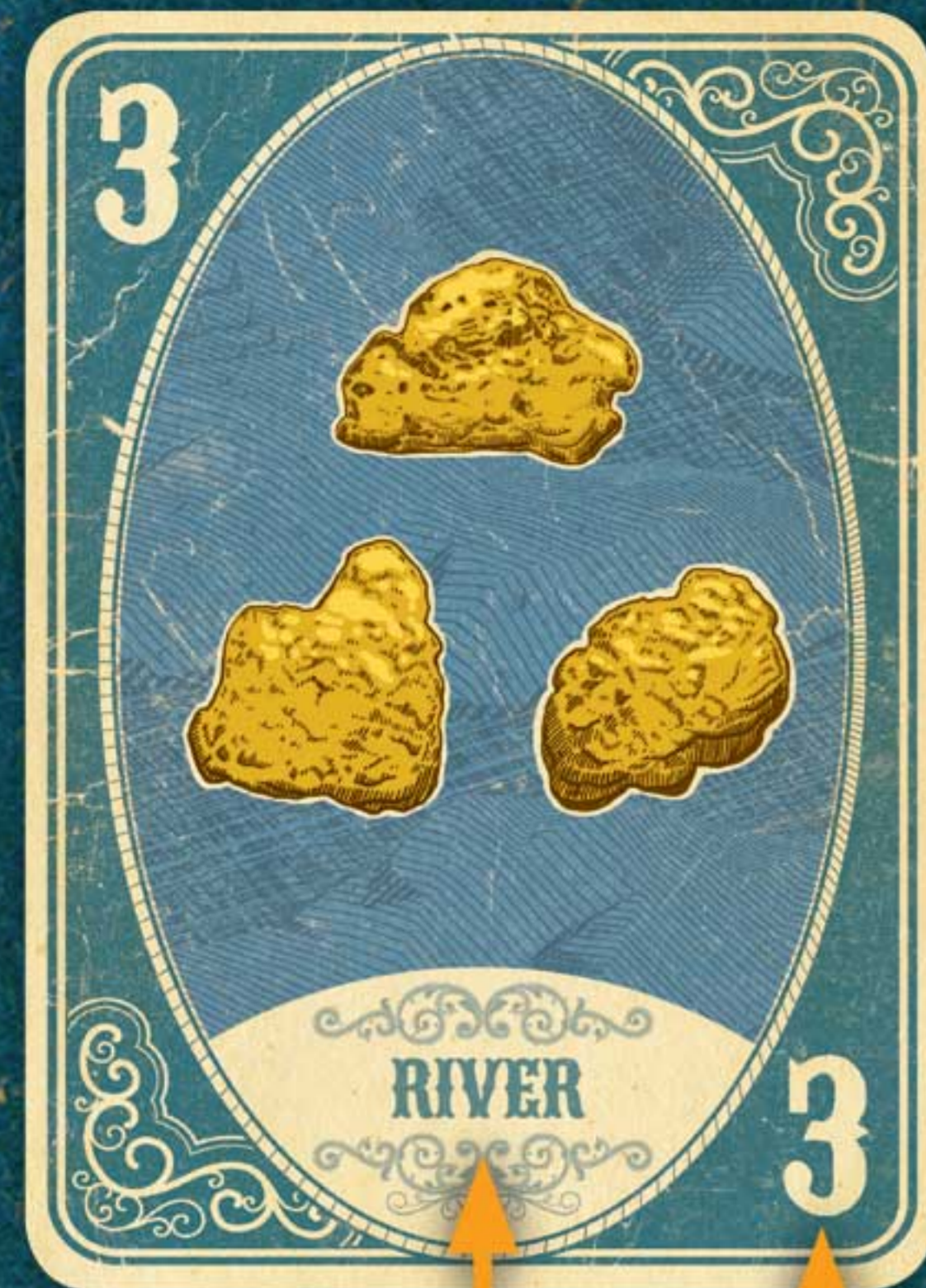
They have also collected three different Gems, which are worth a total of 6 points.

YELLOW's total score for the game is:

-5 (missing Mine penalty) + 16 (Gold nuggets)
+ 6 (Gems) = 19 points!

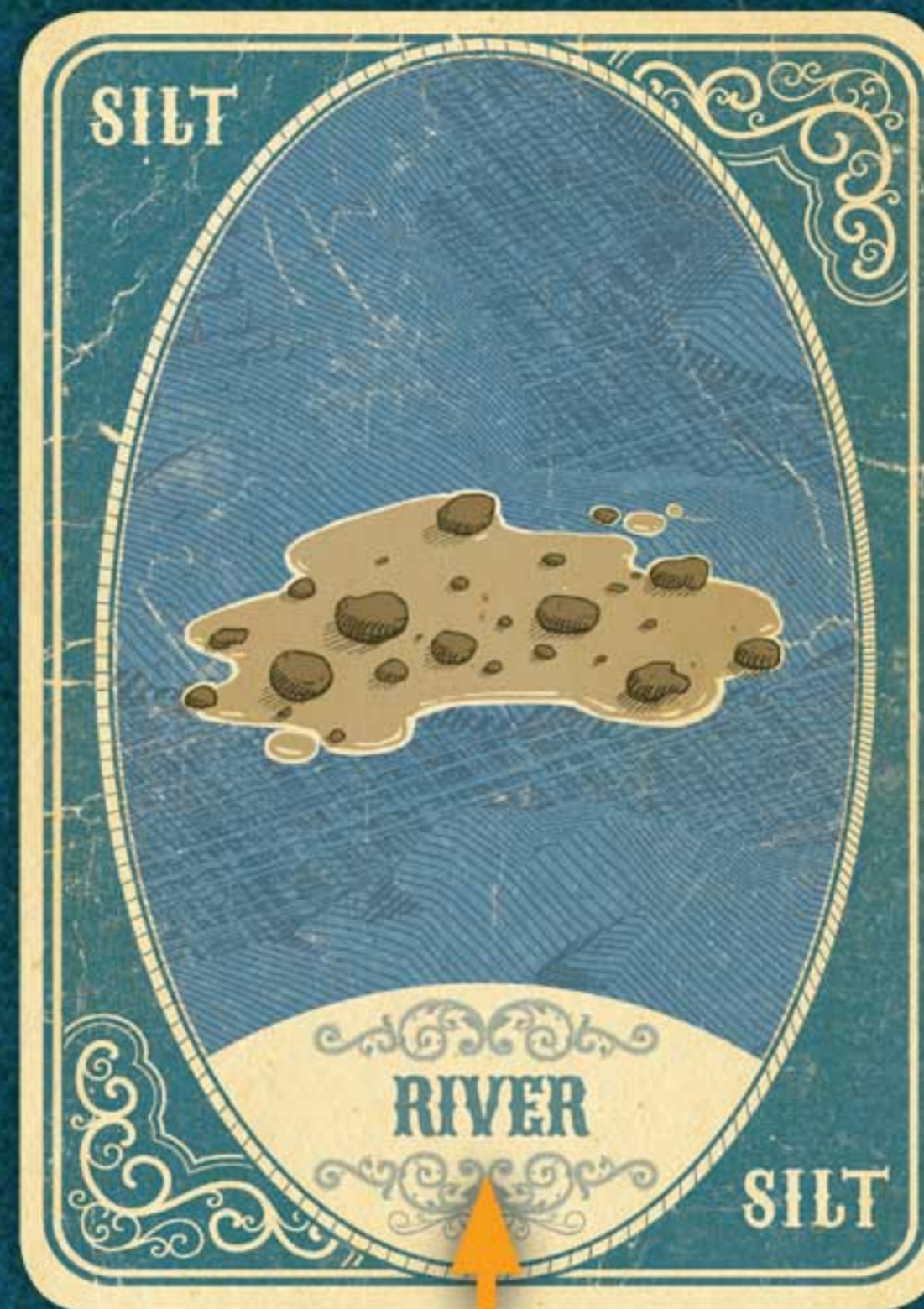
QUICK REFERENCE

GOLD CARD



LOCATION OF ORIGIN
CARD VALUE

SILT CARD



LOCATION OF ORIGIN

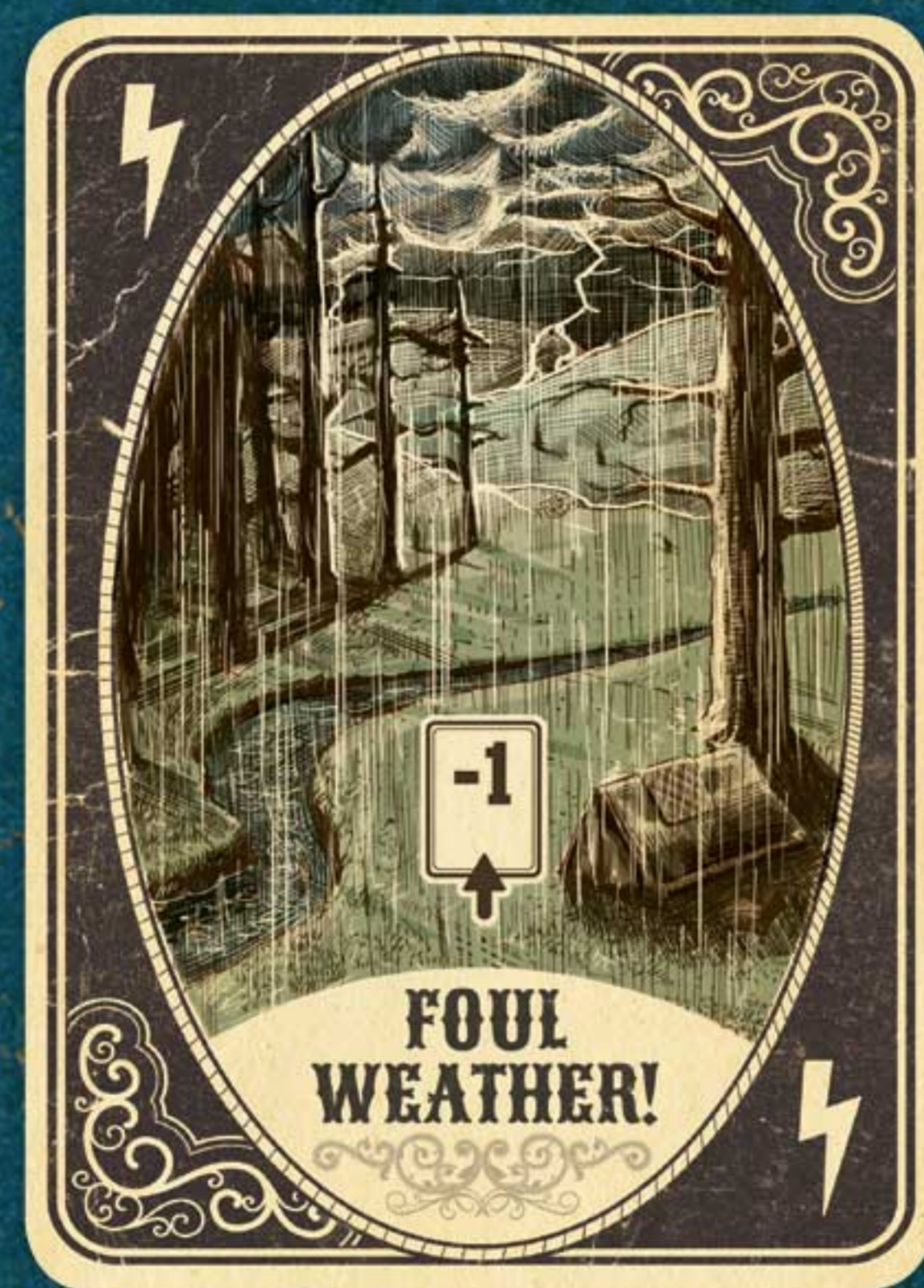
GEM CARD



SCORING BREAKDOWN
GEM NAME
GEM ICON

PERIL CARDS

FOUL WEATHER!



Draw one less card for each *Foul Weather!* card drawn. A *Foul Weather!* card counts towards the total card count. If the last card drawn is a foul weather, it has no effect

FALSE ALARM!



Reshuffle all Gold, Gem and *False Alarm!* cards drawn from the mine and discard one card for each *False Alarm!* card. Reveal the remaining cards and proceed as usual. If any *False Alarm!* cards are revealed this time, discard them

SCORING

-5 points unless you hold at least one **GOLD** card from each Mine

Discard highest scoring mine as Fool's Gold

Add up remaining Gold cards

Add in score for Gems

Gem Scoring

Types of Gems	Points Awarded
1 Gem	1 Point
2 Gems	3 Points
3 Gems	6 Points
4 Gems	10 Points
all 5 Gems	15 Points

TIE BREAKER: The player with the highest value scoring Mine (NOT the Mine discarded as Fool's Gold) wins. If still tied, proceed to next highest scoring Mine etc.

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For comments, questions, or suggestions, please contact us at:

Passport Game Studios, PO Box 550, Bothell, WA 98041, USA

info@passportgamestudios.com

Additional game information available at www.passportgamestudios.com