

## A Guide to the Winter Camp Tabletop

Almost from its inception, Winter Camp has played host to a number of games, some fairly well-known and a few less common. There have always been some Winter Campers who would likely self-identify as gamers, starting with the Donohues and the Bollmen and proliferating to modern days. Some of them have been board gamers, some Role-players and many a little of both.

This document will provide an overview of some of the games, how they got to camp, and why they might be fun and educational for campers.

### Commercial Releases

These are games which might not be the most common, but which are released at least into hobby channels. Hobby channels are typically smaller stores focused on games and gaming as opposed to big box stores like Walmart or Target.

#### Apples to Apples

This is a classic party game which has given rise to a large number of imitators, the most famous of which is probably Cards Against Humanity. The game was originally created by Out of the Box games and was later sold to Mattel which has produced many versions from Disney to pictures. In the game, one player is the judge and the judge draw a random adjective. Each player then plays one noun from the nine in their hand which they think the judge will choose as best fitting the adjective. The player whose noun is chosen, keeps the adjective card and the first one to accumulate nine of them wins. The strategy in the game mostly comes from a knowledge of the judge and their likely preferences.

The game's biggest notoriety at Winter Camp comes from an incident where the judge (Ron Donohue) drew the adjective European. When the cards were revealed, they included Europe, several European countries, and Homer Simpson. Ron chose Homer which so frustrated Gordon Draper (who had played Europe) that he vowed never to play the game at Winter Camp again.

#### Car Wars: The Card Game

This is an attempt to make a card-game version of the very complex wargame Car Wars by SJ Games. It is by the same publisher. Each player has a car and players take turns shooting at each other with lasers, flame throwers, machine guns, and rockets. The targeted player can use armor or swerves to avoid the damage, but once taken it can't be restored. The goal is to do enough damage to kill the drivers of the other cars and the last car still driving is the winner.

This game appeared at a Lincoln Pilgrimage where a young Ethan Rein was motivated to become more active in the Order after seeing a number of older members, including Kenny Mills, enjoying the game.

#### Chess

Chess has appeared at Winter Camp a number of times, although it has mostly been played outside as a version of chess where captures are not guaranteed, somewhat similar to the chess-like game played in Star Wars. Actual chess has actually had one tournament in the history of Winter Camp where Jeff Rand admitted that he found playing Chess at Winter Camp very stressful as he feared an early defeat. He finished third.

A number of chess variants have also appeared at Winter Camp, with Doubles Chess being the most common. Many of these variants came from Steve Donohue's chess set collecting hobby from Winter Camp XXII.

### Coloretto

Coloretto was included in the Winter Camp Game League created at Winter Camp XXXIII. The high score of 35 was posted by Ethan Rein. It's a rummy game with 6 colors of cards. At the end, each player chooses 3 colors which score positively for them and 3 which count as a penalty.

### Diplomacy

In the early years of Winter Camp, Diplomacy had a number of fans. It's a game where players have armies and fleets on a map of Europe and Russia and seek to control more than half of the key territories. Unlike many such games, there are no dice and players must work together to take out their opponents. The game hinges on "the backstab", the moment when players who have been working together turn on each other in hopes of winning a victory. The game is time-consuming and plays best with exactly seven players, so it hasn't seen much play at Winter Camp in recent years.

### Euchre

Euchre is a card game known to most residents of the Midwest. It uses a reduced deck of cards with one suit being declared trump in each round. Play is conducted in partnership and the goal is to win enough rounds to be the first team to score 10 points. The game allows some bluffing and stealing the deal from your opponents is common. The cards, bidding and suits are confusing enough that some people refuse to learn to play even though kids under 10 can often manage the game. It is as much something to do with your hands while talking as it is a serious card game.

### Everyone is John

This is a roleplaying game where one person is in charge and the others are all different personalities which live inside John. Each player has three stats and a goal they'd like to use John's body to achieve. If John is hurt, wakes up, or fails at something, the person in control will typically change. John's behavior is usually pretty strange.

The first time this was played at camp, it turned out that everyone was looking to have John kill people. Some just wanted to hurt people while others looked for an excuse to punish them. The session was pretty entertaining and was facilitated by TR Evangelista.

### Fiasco

Fiasco is the role-playing game of powerful ambition and poor impulse control. It is aimed at creating a story similar that resembles a caper gone wrong. The quintessential example might be the movie Fargo, where nearly all the major players wind up dead or in jail.

During the RPG Round-up at Winter Camp XXXVII, Doug Wilson, Steve Donohue, Gabe Church, Joe Warren, and Alex Downie sat down to play a story game called Fiasco. In Fiasco, the players create relationships between their characters then assign them needs, locations and objects before finally starting to play. In our game, Joe and Gabe were best friends, Joe and Steve were the two weirdest kids in school, Steve and Alex were a pair of angry nerds while Alex and Doug were identical twins and Doug had met Gabe while doing community service. Alex and Steve had the School Yearbook on a bad disk drive and were planning to restore it while secretly putting on some photos to shame Gabe. The photos

came from Joe and were of a party at the lake that got a little wild. Meanwhile Gabe and Doug had found a bag of money while doing community service and the drug dealer whose money Gabe had found was looking for him and, in a case of mistaken identity, Joe. The game went pretty well, and everyone seemed to have a good time.

### Fits

Fits is another game in the Winter Camp Game League. It plays as a sort of competitive Tetris, each turn a card reveals a shape to be played and players must play that shape to their board, but they can flip or turn it as needed. Once the round is over, scores are taken based on the spaces covered, some of which are worth more than others. Lucas Kuzala notched the best score of 31.

### Heroquest

If Brian Mann is at Winter Camp, there will be Heroquest. The game is what's called a dungeon-crawler; one player is the gamemaster who sets the challenges. Each player takes the roll of one of the available characters and they work together to explore the dungeon. As they succeed, they earn points and find items which can allow them to improve their characters and take on additional challenges later. It is, in many ways, a boardgame version of Dungeons & Dragons.

### Heroscape

This is another game where players move figures on a map. It only made it to Winter Camp a couple of times as it has a lot of expansions. The game bills itself as the battle of all times and includes figures from a variety of eras and genres from magic to the future and pretty much everywhere in between. The game has a variety of scenarios and features customizable terrain, similar to Lego which includes bridges, land, trees, water, snow, and even lava. Combat is resolved with dice and some figures have ranged attacks and other special abilities.

### Ipswich

This is a word game with some similarities to Scrabble (not surprising since they share a publisher). In the game, each player has their own boards on which they create a word. For the next round, the board is passed to the left and players have to build on things which others used.

This game was popular until Winter Campers realized they weren't likely to match the vocabularies of Mark "I read the dictionary" Bollman and Ron "I read everything else" Donohue.

### Obliqo

Obliqo is a game where players attempt to stack a variety of shapes of wooden pieces on top of each other. Many of the shapes are similar to those found in the game Bandu, but that game plays very differently. The pieces are stacked until they topple and then scoring takes place. At Winter Camp, we often ignored the scoring and settled for mocking the player who toppled the tower. This game was introduced to Winter Camp by Roger Horn.

### Qwirkle

Qwirkle is probably best described as "Scrabble for Cavemen". There are 108 tiles, 3 sets of 6 shapes in 6 different colors. Players take turns adding things to the structure, creating a crossword pattern similar to Scrabble. There are no letters so the rules for placement are that a row or column can't have more than 6 in a row and must all be either the same color and different shapes or the same shape and different colors. Scoring is 1 point per tile played, with a bonus of 6 points if you play the 6<sup>th</sup> tile in a row or

column. This is part of the Winter Camp Game League and the high score of 132 was notched by Gabe Church.

### Risk

Risk is what some call a “dudes on a map” game. The board is 42 countries roughly related to the current world (although there are variations with different maps). Up to six players have armies on the map and the goal is to eliminate all opposing armies. There is no limit to the number of armies in a territory. Combat is resolved by die roll. The attacker can roll up to three dice and the defender two, but both are limited by armies in their territory. The dice are matched in order with the higher die eliminating an opponent army; ties are resolved in favor of the defender.

Players gain armies each turn based on the territories they control. They also have cards, sets of which can be redeemed for bonus armies. The end game is often very dramatic as one player will decide he’s ready to take over and begin attacking. If he fails, his opponents will almost certainly remove him from the board.

### Risk Legacy

Although it uses territories and dice mechanics similar to Risk, this game is considerably different. First, there are victory points and getting four of them makes one the winner. Each player plays as a different faction with different pieces and slightly different abilities.

The real change in the game though is the Legacy aspect which was created for this game. Players do things which change the board and factions for later games. Territories can be destroyed, cities built, and other things which may make some things more interesting. Most of these changes are made at the end of the game when the winner gets to make a major change and each other player can make a minor change. In addition, the game features a number of envelopes which have specific conditions which must be met before they are opened. These envelopes can change the board or the factions and even add new rules to the game – the rulebook actually has blank spaces where stickers are added in once they are found in an envelope.

The game is intended to play 15 times before it stabilizes, and no more changes can be made. Winter Camp has a board which should finish at Winter Camp 50 at our current one game per year pace.

### Ticket To Ride

Ticket to Ride is another member of the Winter Camp Game League. It is basically a rummy game with players collecting sets of colors in order to build train routes on a map of the United States (there are many expansions with different maps). Points are scored for placing trains on the map and for connecting longer routes based on randomly drawn destination tickets. The high score wins. The high score in the Winter Camp Game Leagues is 127 points scored by Will Gagnon.

### Zan-Tec’s Game

This is a game designed to teach principles of fairness and resource management. Three teams are given different objective for building structures and must then purchase resources from a central bank. The cost of resources changes based on demand. Winter Campers did not do well at this game. It should be noted that the nature of the game requires not sharing too much about the rules and outcomes lest you ruin the game for future players.

## Unique to Winter Camp

Over the years, Winter Campers have sometimes created their own games. Many of these are based on existing games, but some are essentially unique to Winter Camp.

### Adviserati

Adviserati is probably the oldest game created for Winter Camp. It is based on the world-domination game Illuminati. Each player in Adviserati takes on the role of one of the ancient advisers who has a goal based on his observed proclivities and the opinions of the Goons. The advisers try to control other groups of Winter Campers like "First Timers" or "Oatley Children". Each group has power and resistance, and a few have special powers. The game was popular at Clearwater Cabin, but never made the transition to the mainstream. The art was drawn (poorly) by John Howey and the groups were recorded (barely legibly) by Steve Donohue. They were drawn on index cards and the game survives to this day.

### Giant Jenga

Jenga is a fairly well-known game of stacking and unstacking wooden pieces. They start out in layers of 3 stacked 17 tall. Players remove one piece and then try to stack it on top of the existing structure. For Winter Camp, the pieces were made of two by fours about 10" long. They were created by Keith King's father and demonstrate his superior skills and tools. They are perfectly machined, and each is etched to show it belongs to Winter Camp.

The game was immediately popular, if somewhat loud, at Winter Camp. Campers invented a second version where a wooden dowel and a mallet are used to remove pieces; this was dubbed the "Don't Break the Ice" version after the notorious ice-tapping game. Giant Jenga appears in the Winter Camp Game League with a high score of 32 for the traditional version and 31 for Don't Break the Ice.

### Missing Marquis

This variation of murder-clue appeared at Winter Camp XVI. It was very similar to the actual game Clue. The original plan had been to play outdoors, but after an all-day rain, the indoor version (and staying dry) proved very popular.

### Pirate Kings

This Winter Camp XVIII game found five teams of pirates searching for buried treasure and attacking rich merchantmen as well as each other. It was played on a hex-based board which players built as they went.

### Tabletop Soccer

This game was created at Winter Camp XVI as a rainy-day alternative to snow soccer. The game used a hex-grid which Tim Hunt had brought and had about two-pages of rules including a number of rules for having star players with special powers named after various Winter Campers. It involved rolling 3 dice for most actions (similar to Champions) and some of the other rules were probably half-remembered from Blood Bowl. The game worked pretty well with a low-scoring game and accusations of cheating by the losing team.

Honestly, the rules for tacking and interfering with other players were probably broken, but the game was made in about 90 minutes after Steve woke up and saw more of the cold rain from the day before. No effort was ever made to improve it or to play again and the rules are probably lost.

### Viking Explorers

This game was very similar to Pirate Kings save that it featured a Norse theme and only 3 teams.

### Winter Camp Stock Market Game

At Winter Camp XX, Roger Horn created a stock market game. There were seven companies included and their value rose or fell each day based on different environmental factors which were not entirely explained by Mr. Horn, allowing for some mystery in the inner-workings of the market.

### WinterCampOpoly

This board game was manufactured by Steve Donohue for Winter Camp XXII. It is based on Monopoly with nearly every component rethemed to Winter Camp from the money to the hotels and even the tokens for movement. It was a pretty popular play that year.