

Title : Cold Spell

No. of Players : 2 - 4

Required Components : One Icehouse Stash, an Alpha Deck (available at <http://www.tjgames.com/>) or any other scorable letters from another game, such as Scrabble or Quiddler. For the purposes of explaining the game, an Alpha Deck will be assumed.

Object : To form the most valuable words with cards gathered from the playing field using the Icehouse pieces.

Setup : Shuffle the Alpha Deck and deal a 6 x 6 grid of cards face-up. Set the rest of the deck aside, out of play. Separate out the Icehouse pieces and set them next to the playing area, for use by all players.

Play : Determine a player to go first by whatever method you prefer. On your turn, you may take any two actions described below (with one exception -- see description). Both of these actions may not be the same. (For example, if you move a piece as your first action, you may not move any pieces as your second action.)

Place a New Piece : Take a new piece from the stash and place it on any unoccupied card. This action ends your turn, so it is usually best to do it as your second action if possible.

Move a Piece : Move any upright Icehouse piece (but not those from the stash, obviously) orthogonally up to its number of pips (small may only move 1 space, medium up to 2, and large up to 3). A piece may move through a claimed card (see below), but may not land on it. Also, if a card has been taken from the playing field, the empty space may not be moved through or landed on.

Claim a Card : Choose any upright piece on the playing field and point it toward yourself. That card is now reserved for you, unless your claim is hijacked (see below).

Take a Card : Choose any card that you have claimed, and remove it from the field to place in front of you, along with the pyramid which claimed it (this is important for scoring). This card is out of play until the game is scored.

Hijack / Give up a Claim : Choose a pyramid that is claiming a card for an opponent (or yourself) and return it to an upright position. You must immediately move this piece up to its number of pips away. Thus, this action can only be taken as your first action, since you must use the second action for movement.

Force a Claim : Choose any upright piece on the playing field and point it toward an opponent. That card now belongs to them and must be taken by the end of the game, unless they use up a turn giving up the claim.

Game Over : The game ends when all the Icehouse pieces have been used to claim cards. Once no more Icehouse pieces are upright, players must take the remaining cards claimed by them, whether they want them or not (which is why forcing a claim is important near the end of the game). Only 15 cards will be taken during the course of a game. Also, if a stalemate occurs (e.g. the same few pieces being moved back and forth with nobody claiming any for 2 full rounds), the game is over.

Scoring : Use the cards you have gathered from the playing field to form words of 2 or more letters. Remember, the vowel cards can be used as either vowel. The blank wild cards are of course worth zero. Each card may only be used once. The number of pips on the pyramid multiplies the score of the card it captured (for example, if a 3 point pyramid captured the letter Z, which is worth 10 points, that card is worth 30 points). The player with the longest word receives a 20-point bonus. In the event of a tie for length, no one gets the bonus. Any cards captured which were not used in a word are multiplied in the same way, and subtracted from that player's score.

Comments would be welcomed, of course.