

It's a Weird, Weird Galaxy

Phredd Camel™

**It's a Weird, Weird Galaxy!**

## **It's a Weird, Weird Galaxy!**

A game for the piecepack by Jim Adams and Amy Enge

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Two to five players, 30-60 minutes

Equipment: piecepack, piecepack expansion (either seasons or cards), a set of twelve unique counters for each player, e.g., twelve pennies, twelve nickels, etc., scratch paper (or form found in the Appendix), and a pencil

### ***Background***

It's the year 2543 and technology in the galaxy has reached unprecedented heights and achievements. No, there's still no cure for the common cold. No, a shocking percentage of the galactic gross national product is still going into building weapons to vaporize everyone. No, the Chicago Cubs have not won a World Series since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Enough questions, okay?

Ahem. Space travel has advanced to the point that traveling to the center of our own Milky Way galaxy is now possible and practical. Not only that, there is now the ways and means of building a space station near the black hole at the center of the galaxy. Why undertake such an extremely expensive and dangerous task? Planetary pride! You see, several planets are trying to be the first to build a huge space station at the center of the galaxy, essentially for the political bragging rights. And, to draw attention away from their various little domestic issues that leave much of their respective societies no better off than where they were in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So, nothing ever changes!

*It's a Weird, Weird Galaxy* is a space race and resource management game. Each player, starting from their home world, flies their starship about the galaxy engaging in interstellar trade in order to earn enough Space Bucks to build a string of space stations stretching from their home world to the center of the galaxy. The first player to complete their seventh space station wins. However, nothing is that easy! Each space station cost more than the last one to build. Each space station also impedes the path of opposing starships. Finally, there is this weird space alien, affectionately known as "Phredd", and looking vaguely like a camel the size of a small moon that randomly flies around spitting on stuff and generally balling up the works. But, hey! It's a weird, weird galaxy!

## Setup

- Lay out the 48 tiles into a 7x7 grid with a (black) hole in the middle. See below.

2	A	N	2	A	N	2
N	4	3	4	3	4	A
A	3	5	5	5	3	N
2	4	5		5	4	2
N	3	5	5	5	3	A
A	4	3	4	3	4	N
2	N	A	2	N	A	2

- Each null tile is a home world.
  - Each player selects a suit and then places their pawn and one of their twelve counters (space station) on the null tile of that suit.
  - The remaining space station counters and coins are kept in front of the player.
- All eight of the dies are placed in a small, opaque drawing bag.
- Place an unused pawn in the black hole in the center. This will be Phredd.
  - If you wish, there are a couple special Phredd pawns in the Appendix.

Take your pick! 😊
- Decide who goes first. Play alternates.

## Rules

- Each turn a player has three action points that can be expended in any way they wish.
  - Unused action points are lost, i.e., they do not carry over to future turns.
  - Action points can never be transferred or traded to another player.
- The following table summarizes the possible player actions and their action point costs. The explanations are below.

Action	Action Points Cost
Move starship normally one tile	1
Move Phredd and spit	1
Roll for a new trading mission	1
Shoo Phredd	1
Repaint a starship or space station	1
Build a space station	2
Install a space station spit shield	2
Hyperjump starship	3

### Move Starship Normally One Tile

- You may move your starship one tile horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

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- You may move into the black hole without sustaining damage.
- You may move into a tile that contains one of your own space stations.
- You may move into a tile that contains someone else's starship.
  - A tile can hold any number of starships.
- You may move into a tile containing an opponent's space station for a fee of one Space Buck, payable to the space station owner.
  - This fee is payable once per turn.
- You may move into a tile containing Phredd.
  - However, Phredd may subsequently spit on you if you are nearby. This is not a good thing.
  - See *All About Phredd*, below.

### Move Phredd and Spit

- You may move Phredd in any direction one tile just like a starship.
- You may have Phredd spit on any starship or space station that comes within one tile of Phredd during his move.
  - Phredd may spit only once per move (action point).
  - If there are multiple targets in a given tile, Phredd only gets to spit on one object.
  - See *All About Phredd*, below.

### Roll for a New Trading Mission

- To establish a new trading mission, draw one die from the dice bag and roll it.
  - The result is the source of the commodity to be traded.
  - Do NOT put this die back in the bag just yet.
- Next, draw another die and roll it.
  - The result is the destination that wants the commodity.
- Record this mission on the Trade Mission Worksheet (or similar scrap of paper) and return both dice to the dice bag.
- See *Trade Missions*, below.

### Shoo Phredd

- If Phredd is within "spittin' distance" (one tile) of your starship or one of your space stations, you may shoo (hyperjump) him away.
  - Draw a die from the dice bag and roll it. Place Phredd on the indicated tile.
    - This is a standard hyperjump. See *Hyperjump Starship*, below.
  - You can always shoo Phredd, even if your starship or space station is currently disabled.
  - See *All About Phredd*, below.

### Build a Space Station

- Space stations must be built in numerical order.

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- You can only build a new station if all your previous space stations are currently functioning. (See *All About Phredd*, below.)
- You received your home world station for free at the beginning of the game and placed it on your null tile.
- The next station costs one Space Buck and must be placed on your ace tile.
- The next station costs two Space Bucks and must be placed on your number two tile.
- The next station costs three Space Bucks and must be placed on your number three tile.
- The next station costs four Space Bucks and must be placed on your number four tile.
- The next station costs five Space Bucks and must be placed on your number five tile.
- The next, and last, station costs six Space Bucks and must be placed in the black hole.
  - Once you build the black hole station, you win! See *Winning the Game*, below.
- You may build a space station even if an opposing starship or Phredd is on the tile or, in the case of the black hole station, in the black hole.
  - On their next move, opposing starships must leave the tile as soon as possible, or stay and pay the new station owner the standard one Space Buck. See *Move Starship Normally One Tile*.
  - Phredd can stay in the tile, though you will probably want him to visit elsewhere.

### **Install a Space Station Spit Shield**

- For the cost of two Space Bucks, install a spit shield on your space station to make it immune to Phredd spit.
  - A space station must be fully functional to have a spit shield installed.
  - Add a second space station token to the tile to indicate the spit shield.
  - See *All About Phredd*, below.

### **Repaint a Starship or Space Station**

- Return your starship or space station to functioning status by righting the pawn or pyramid.
- A repainted starship or space station can be immediately used as normal.
- See *All About Phredd*, below.

### **Hyperjump Starship**

- Draw a die from the dice bag and roll it. Your starship immediately moves to the designated tile.
  - You may not hyperjump into a tile that is occupied by an opponent's space station.
    - Normal movement into a tile containing an opponent's space

station is allowed, for a fee. See *Move Starship Normally One Tile*, above.

- If you roll an illegal hyperjump destination, return the die to the bag, redraw and reroll until you get a legal location.

### Trade Missions

- You earn Space Bucks by completing trading missions.
- To establish a new trade mission, see *Roll for a New Trading Mission*, above.
  - Any player may complete a given trade mission, regardless of who rolled the mission.
  - Each trade mission can only be completed once.
  - You may wish to use the Trade Mission Worksheet in the Appendix to help you keep track of your active trade missions.
- To begin the trade mission, move your starship to the source tile and drop a coin there to show you picked up the commodity.
- To complete the trade mission, move your starship to the destination tile. Once there, retrieve your coin on the source tile and collect the payoff.
  - Each trade mission is worth half of the city block distance between the source and destination tiles, rounded up. See below.

2	A	N	2	A	N	2
N	4	3	4	3	4	A
A	3	5	5	5	3	N
2	4	5		5	4	2
N	3	5	5	5	3	A
A	4	3	4	3	4	N
2	N	A	2	N	A	2

- The source tile is the **4 of spring** and the destination tile is the **4 of summer**. The city block distance is 2 (columns) + 4 (rows) = 6. The trade mission payoff is  $6/2 = 3$  Space Bucks.
- If the source and/or destination tile also contains an opponent's space station, you will need to pay the station owner(s) the standard one Space Buck fee. See *Move Starship Normally One Tile*, above.
- If you are carrying a commodity for a trade mission that someone else completes first, your commodity load becomes worthless.
  - You receive no payoff for trade missions completed by opponents.
  - Pick up your coin from the source tile.
    - Your commodity is unloaded (and vanishes) at the tile your starship is currently in at no penalty.
- It is possible to have two or more active trade missions that originate from the same source tile.

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- Assuming you have already picked up a load from the source tile, you may complete any active trade mission associated with that source tile, even if it was rolled up after you picked up the load.
- In essence, each tile produces only one type of commodity.
- You may abandon a valid, in-progress trade mission at any time for the forfeit of one Space Buck to the bank.
  - Pick up your coin at the commodity source.
  - Your commodity is immediately unloaded and vanishes as above.
- Your starship is big enough to hold two commodities at any given time.

### All About Phredd



Phredd is a friendly, cuddly, big teddy, er, camel, of an alien. Really! You wouldn't mind having him date your daughter. He just has an unfortunate habit of spitting on stuff. This might be the result of some deep-seated neurosis caused by a childhood trauma (alien kids can be so cruel), or simply the result of overactive salivary glands due to a ringing in his ears. No one knows for sure.

Phredd's spit is, uh, unpleasant stuff. It will ruin a paint job in no time flat. It is kind of like living next to a chemical company's main incinerator stack.

- When Phredd spits on a starship or a space station, it is immediately disabled.
  - Turn the pawn or space station counter on its side or upside down.
  - Except for the ability to shoo Phredd away, a disabled starship or space station cannot do anything until repaired (which in this case means receiving a new paint job.)
    - A disabled starship cannot move or complete trade missions.
    - A disabled space station blocks you from building new space stations.
    - Disabled space stations still collect fees from opponent starships. (Their *guns* still work just fine. They're just preoccupied with their Wagner Power Painters. Remember what I said about this being A Weird, Weird Galaxy?)
  - If the space station has a spit shield, it is immune to Phredd's spit.
  - Starships never can get spit shields.

In case you are wondering, in order to shoo Phredd away, the starship or space station transmits a strong radio message in Phredd's direction. In essence, the message is (read with a heavy Brooklyn accent), "Phredd! Knock it off, you big lug! Youse cramping my style!" Radio transmitters are not harmed by Phredd's spit.

### Winning the Game

- Once you have completed your black hole space station, you win!
  - Your starship may be disabled, but all of your space stations must be functional.

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- Actually, all of your space stations have to be functional or you won't be able to build your black hole space station in the first place.
- If Phredd is in the black hole, you don't care if he spits on your black hole space station because you will have already won before he can spit.
- ~~The winning player gets to spit on the losing players.~~ NO! NO! NO!  
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU!

### **Designer Notes**

*It's a Weird, Weird Galaxy* was created as a piecepack game that uses eight unique suites. While in principle up to eight people can play, once you get much beyond four or five players it becomes too hard in the latter part of the game to complete any trade missions without paying all of your income to your opponents due to the necessity of traveling through tiles with opponent space stations. On a related note, it would probably be possible to add both expansion sets to get twelve unique suits. You would have to figure out how to arrange the tiles symmetrically so that no suite has any kind of positional advantage over any other. With this larger galaxy, more players could be accommodated.

The tempo of a typical game of *Galaxy* is to start off very gentle and with great civility and at some point transition into a brawl with Phredd spit flying everywhere! Without the use of spit shields on the space stations, the game tends to end in a deadlock as the galaxy is small enough that opponents can keep any potential winner under Phredd spit indefinitely, regardless of whether you manage to shoo Phredd to the farthest reaches of the galaxy, or not. Also, games tend to end in a photo finish because anyone who opens up a big lead tends to be instantly neutralized with Phredd spit.

Because of the inconvenience of having to repaint space stations all of the time and the expense of installing spit shields, one common strategy is to accumulate Space Bucks until one has enough to build all six space stations need to reach the black hole and then to build the string as quickly as possible at the end of the game. While it is clear that if you have not built a given space station that Phredd cannot spit on it, you also miss out on the opportunity to pick up any space station fees from opponents. (Space stations fees are a double whammy as they not only bring you closer to building your next space station, they also financially impede the construction of your opponent's next space station.) Since, as mentioned before, *Galaxy* tends to end in a photo finish, there does not seem ultimately to be any difference between building space stations early in the game or late in the game.

Ultimately, the game tends to hinge on the rolling of trade missions. An ideal trade mission begins where your starship happens to be and ends up at the farthest tile from your starship. Racing opponents to complete the same trade mission is usually not a successful endeavor due to the small size of the galaxy. Phredd is generally not a help in this regard because if he is close enough to spit on your opponent, he is generally close enough to spit on you, too. (However, there *are* cases where Phredd spit can provide the needed tempo to win a trade mission race. So, always compute the position a move or two ahead.) It is better to rely on statistics and a bit of luck. If you are near the center of the board, when you roll for a trade mission, you have 24 in 48 chances (50%) of rolling a source tile within two tiles of your starship. If things work out, that's one action point to roll the trade mission and a maximum of two action points to

reach the source tile and pick up the load. If you are closer to the edge of the board, your odds go down, but they are by no means bleak. Of course, an opponent's freshly rolled pointless trade mission can be your gravy train run, so rolling good trade missions for yourself is not entirely your responsibility. Finally, Lady Luck does shine from time to time and there will be opportunities to pick up two loads from one region of the galaxy and deliver them in another region of the galaxy for a big payday.

One undecided point is whether a player's Space Buck balance is public knowledge, or not. All Space Buck transactions are surely public knowledge, so anyone can do the math to keep track of anyone's Space Buck balance. However, this additional bookkeeping tends to detract from the flow of the game. Still, it is vital to be aware of opponent Space Buck balances near the end of the game. The decision of whether Space Buck balances are public knowledge, or not, will probably be a house rule determined by the competitiveness of the players involved.

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### ***Appendix***

- Phredd pawns
- Trade Missions Worksheet
- I ♥ Phredd Bumper Sticker for your starship



