

Alien City

City-Building on a Distant World for Two Players

Play Time: Approximately 30 minutes

Story

Alien City is set in the far future and concerns the building of a city on a newly colonized world. Society in this distant time is divided into four powerful guilds. These are the Energy Guild, the Synthesis Guild, the Control Guild, and the Builder's Guild.

Cities in this future contain two types of structures: towers and domes. There are three types of towers: power plants (energy), factories (synthesis), and government facilities (control). Domes are smaller structures that house the citizens. Towers and Domes are colored to identify guild affiliation; red for energy, blue for synthesis, green for control, and black for builders.

Each guild wants its towers positioned close to towers and domes of other guilds (their customers) and far from its own other towers (to avoid competition within the guild). Location, location, location! Some things never change, even in the distant future.

The Builder's Guild is unique because there are no builder's towers. Instead, builders are compensated for their efforts with profits of other guilds' towers that the builders choose as they construct the city.

The players are competing builders working to construct the city. At the same time, they are choosing towers for themselves that they work to make profitable. The choices must be made with care because each builder may only choose three.

Components

20 tiles

14 large pyramids (towers), 5 red, 5 blue, and 4 green

6 small pyramids (caps), 3 white and 3 black

24 domes, 6 red, 6 blue, 6 green, and 6 black

Setup

Turn all the tiles face down and thoroughly shuffle. Arrange them into a 4x5 array, then turn them over, one at a time, preserving orientation. The board should consist of a randomly distributed, randomly oriented tightly packed array. This area represents the city.

One player takes half of the domes (3 of each color), plus half of the pyramids (3 large red, 2 large blue, 2 large green, and 3 small white). The other player takes the remaining domes (3 of each color) and pyramids (2 large red, 3 large blue, 2 large green, and 3 small black). The large pyramids represent *towers* and the small pyramids are called *caps*. Both players keep their pieces openly visible on the table. Figure 1 shows a typical board after setup.

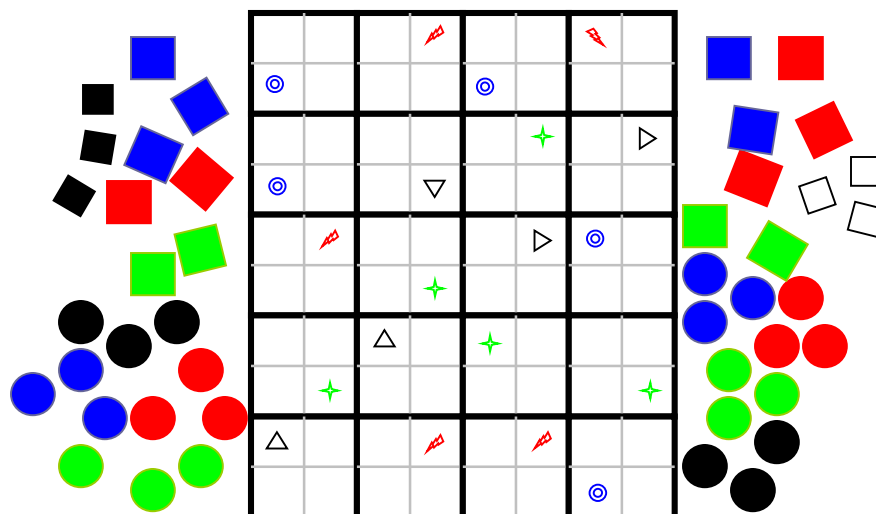


Fig. 1

Typical starting setup showing board and each player's pieces

Object of the Game

At the end of the game, each of the towers has a value that depends upon its distance from other towers and from domes, along the city streets. Players claim three towers during the game by placing their caps on them and the player whose towers are in the most lucrative positions *at the end of the game* wins.

Play Sequence

The player with the black caps goes first, after which players alternate turns. A turn consists of building (placing on the board) a tower or a dome. Players **must** build a tower or dome each turn. Players may build their towers and domes in any order they wish. At the end of a turn, a player has the **option** to claim any unclaimed tower that is on the board.

A player may **not** claim a tower on the last turn of the game. Note that a player may claim a tower on his or her own last turn as long as he or she doesn't go last (i.e., the very last action in the game prior to scoring may not be the claiming of a tower).

Claiming a tower is done by *capping* it with a small pyramid. Thus, one player's claimed towers are identified by white caps and the other player's by black caps. Each player can claim only three towers during the game.

Building Towers and Domes

The board (tile array) is gridded to show 80 potential *lots* (4 lots per tile) where towers and domes may potentially be built. Each tile has a zoning restriction, indicated by a guild icon: a red lightning bolt for energy, a blue ring for synthesis, a green star for control, and a black pyramid for builders. These will be referred to as red tiles, blue tiles, green tiles and black tiles, and the lots on the tiles will be referred to as red, blue, green, and black lots, respectively.

A tower or dome is *built* by being placed on an open lot. All empty lots together comprise the network of city streets. Thus, as towers and domes are added to the board, the

street network changes; it is broad and open near the beginning of the game, and becomes constricted and mazelike late in the game. At all times, every built lot on the board must connect (on at least one side) to a single street network, so **it is always possible to travel from any tower or dome in the city to any other tower or dome in the city over the street network**. Figure 2 shows the street network, composed of the exposed (unoccupied) spaces on the board in the early to middle stages of a typical game. Figure 3 illustrates how the street network has evolved by the end of the same game. The streets are now narrow and maze-like. Note that there are no isolated street segments; all are part of a single contiguous network, and each tower and dome has at least one of its four sides facing onto a street.

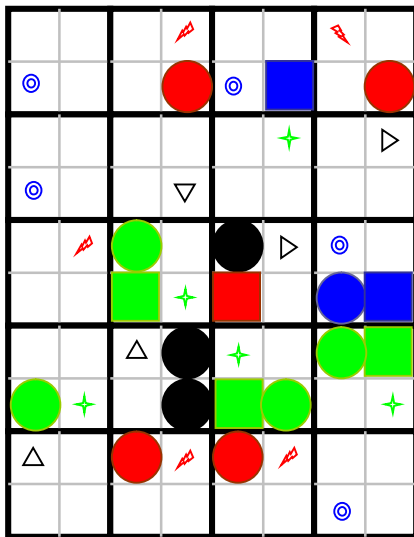


Fig. 2

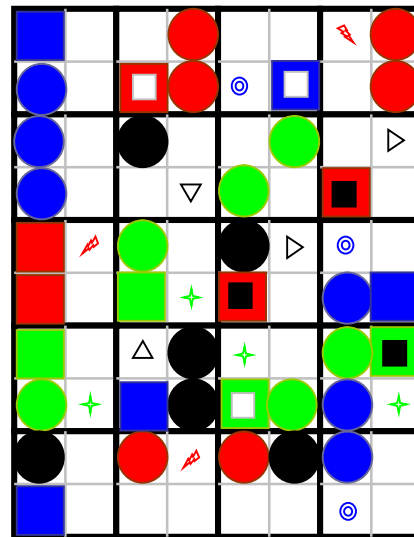


Fig. 3

Illustrating the evolving network of streets during a game

The rules for placing towers and domes form the heart of the game, and are as follows:

- 1) Only one *structure* (tower or dome) may be built on any lot. So, potentially, a tile may hold up to four structures since each tile comprises four lots.
- 2) Domes may only be built on tiles matching their color, unless there are no such lots left on the board that are legal to build on. In this case domes of that color may be built on lots that are on other color tiles.
- 3) The first two structures built on a tile must be the same color as the tile (as set by the guild icon). After a tile holds two structures, **towers** of any color may be built on it. There is an exception for black tiles; any color **tower** may always be built on a black tile.
- 4) A structure may not be built in a location that results in any two lots not being connected to each other over the evolving street network, or that splits the network into two networks. Only one face of a lot need be connected to the street network.
- 5) The lot containing the guild icon on a tile may not be built on until after all other legally buildable lots on that tile have been built on.

Figure 4 can be used to illustrate examples of each of the placement rules. In the figure, some towers and domes have been labeled. Also, the rows of the board have been numbered and the columns lettered to facilitate convenient referencing of particular lots.

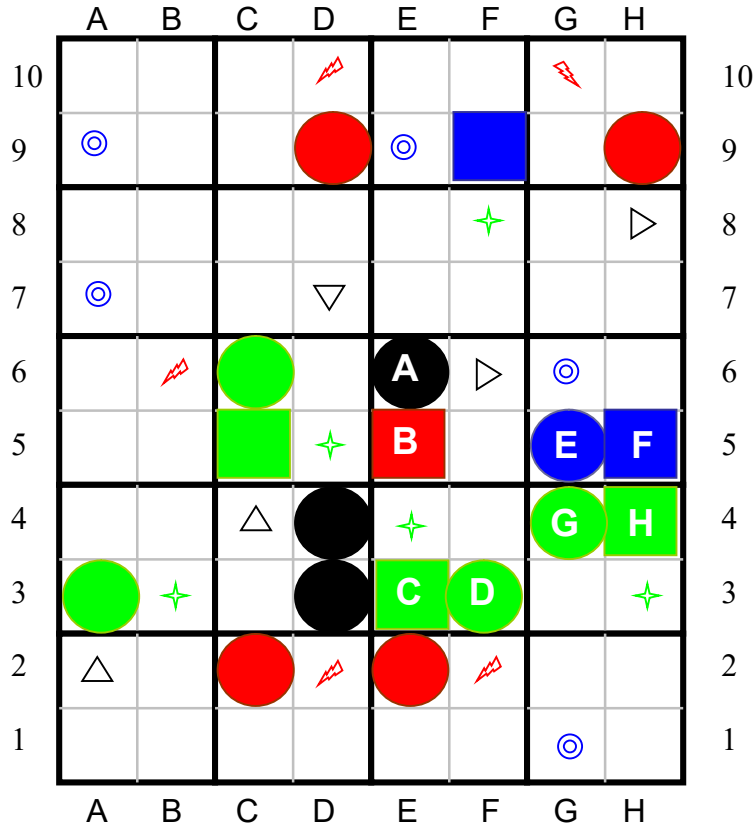


Fig. 3
Typical placement of towers and domes midway through a game

Placement Rule Examples:

- 1) Notice that towers and domes are dimensioned to just fill a lot on the board, so each lot may hold one tower or one dome.
- 2) Lots A5, A6, B5, and B6 are all red lots since they are on a red tile, as illustrated by the red lightning bolt on B6. Any domes built on these lots must therefore normally be red. Dome color must always match tile color unless there are no lots of the appropriate color still available for building, such as may happen late in a game. For example, if there were no legally buildable blue lots remaining, then a blue dome could be built on A6.
- 3) The upper left tile (lots A9, A10, B9, and B10) is empty. Since this is a blue tile, as illustrated by the blue ring of the synthesis guild on A9, the first two structures built on this tile must be blue. Lot G6 is also on a blue tile, but since two blue structures have already been built on this tile, any color tower may now be built on G6. Note that this only applies to towers. If a dome is built on G6 now, it must still be blue. Lots C7, C8, D7, and D8 comprise an empty black tile. Black tiles are an exception to the rule and any color towers may be built on these lots. Once again, this only applies to towers. Domes built on black lots must generally be black.
- 4) In figure 3, all towers and domes on the board are connected to each other over the street network. Since travel must **always** be over the street network, structures that are immediately adjacent to each other can sometimes be a long distance apart over the streets if they face onto widely separated parts of the network. For example, to get from

dome G to tower H, move 1 space left from Dome G onto space F4. Then go north to space F7, then left to B7, then south to B1, right to H1, and finally north to tower H on lot H4. An example of illegal placement would be to build a structure on lot F6. This would break the street network into two sections, and would isolate tower C from most other structures. Lot G3 is a legal building site for a tower or a green dome. If a structure is built on G3, then lot H3 becomes illegal to build on because this would isolate tower H on lot H4 from the street network.

- 5) Lot A9, which shows a guild icon, is not presently a legal building site because there are other open lots on the same tile that may be built on. Lots D5 and E4, both of which also show guild icons are legal sites for building, even though, in each case there is another open lot on the tile. This is because those open lots (D6 and F4) are not legal building sites; building on either one would violate rule 4.

Game End and Scoring

The game ends when there are no legally buildable lots remaining on the board, or when both players have built all of their structures. In the last couple turns of some games it may turn out that one player has one or two structures that may not be legally placed on any remaining open lots due to color, etc. In such a case, the other player continues placing structures if able to do so.

Note: Don't forget that a player may not cap a tower as the last play of the game, and that capping may only be done following the placement of a structure during a turn. If a player is anticipating another turn and intends to cap a tower, but the other player then builds in a position that precludes further play by the first player, the game ends without the first player having placed his or her last cap.

Scoring now takes place. All black-capped towers score points for one player and all white-capped towers score for the other player. For each capped tower, count the number of neighboring structures (towers plus domes) that may be reached by traversing 1 or 2 spaces **along the street network**. This number is called the *Customer Base*. Do **not** count structures of the same color as the tower being scored; a guild's customers are always structures from other guilds. Then count the number of spaces **along the street network** that must be traversed to arrive at the nearest tower of the same color as the one being scored. This number is called *The Distance to the Competition*. The points score for the tower being scored is then,

Points Scored = (Customer base) x (Distance to the Competition)

Second, all **unclaimed** green towers (green towers without caps) offer the possibility of additional scoring. The Control Guild actively encourages the building of other guilds' towers conveniently close to its own, and rewards such placement. For each unclaimed green tower, the owners of the closest red and blue towers receive bonuses. If the closest red or blue tower is not owned (not capped by either player), then no bonus is paid for that tower. If two or more red towers are equidistant from the green tower, there is no bonus unless a player owns all of them, and similarly for blue. The size of the bonus depends on the distance between the towers, along the street network, and is equal to 10 minus twice the distance.

Example: The closest red tower to an unclaimed green tower is 3 spaces away and is capped by one of the players. That player receives a bonus for the red tower equal to $10 - (2 \times 3) = 4$ points.

One player may receive two bonuses associated with a single green tower if that player owns both the closest red and blue towers. Note that towers more than 4 spaces away

do not score bonuses. To determine their final scores players add up their scores for all of the towers they own, plus any bonuses they have earned.

Comprehensive Scoring Example: Figure 5 shows a typical completed game, and will be used to illustrate scoring. The three caps of each player have been labeled for convenient reference.

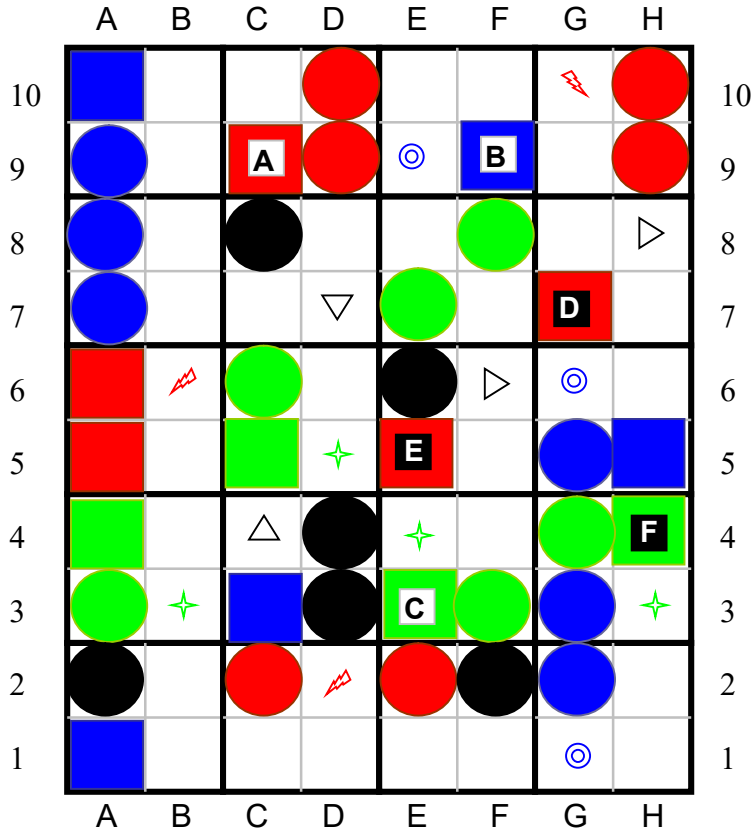


Fig. 5
The placement of towers and domes at the end of a typical game

Scoring For White

White's three caps are labeled A, B, and C in the figure. Tower A has 4 customers (there are 4 non-red structures within 1 or 2 spaces along the streets). These are a blue tower on A10, blue domes on A8 and A9, and a black dome on C8. The nearest competitor (the nearest other red tower) is 4 spaces away on A6. The score for tower A is thus $4 \times 4 = 16$ points.

Tower B has seven customers. These are the red domes on D9, D10, H9, H10, the green domes on E7 and F8, and the red tower on G7. The nearest competitor is the blue tower on H5, 5 spaces away. The score for tower b is $7 \times 5 = 35$ points.

Tower C has two customers. These are the black dome on D4 and the red tower on E5. The nearest competitor is the green tower on C5, 19 spaces away. Starting from Tower C, the route is 1 space north, then right to F4, north to F6, right to H6, north to H8, left one space, then north to G10, left to E10, south to E8, left one space, and finally south to D5. The score for tower C is $2 \times 19 = 38$ points.

White does not own the nearest red or blue towers to either of the unclaimed green towers so red does not receive a bonus. White's total score is $16 + 35 + 38 = 89$ points.

Scoring For Black

Black's three caps are labeled D, E, and F in the figure. Tower D has six customers. These are the two green domes on E7 and F8, the blue dome on G5, the black dome on E6, and the two blue towers on F9 and H5. The nearest competitor is the red tower on E5, 3 spaces away. The score for tower D is $6 \times 3 = 18$ points.

Tower E has eight customers. These are the two black domes on D4 and E6, the three green domes on E7, F3, and F8, the blue dome on G5, and the two green towers on C5 and E3. The closest competitor is the red tower on G7, 3 spaces away. The score for tower E is $8 \times 3 = 24$ points.

Tower F has two customers. These are the two blue domes on G2 and G3. The nearest competitor is the green tower on A4, 12 spaces away. The score for tower F is $2 \times 12 = 24$ points.

Black owns the nearest red tower to the unclaimed green tower on C5, 1 space away. Normally this would result in a bonus of $10 - (2 \times 1) = 8$ points. In this case however another red tower (the one on A5) is also 1 space away, and Black would have to own this as well to receive a bonus, so Black receives no bonus and Black's total score is $18 + 24 + 24 = 66$ points.

In this case, White would win the game 89 points to 66 points.

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