

Settlers of Catan: The Great River

Alternate variant rules

1.0 Introduction.

The Great River of Catan supplement provides a 3-hex tile expansion to the Settlers of Catan game, which features a river running from the island centre to the coast. Unfortunately, the rules with the supplement are fairly simple and uninspired. This article provides alternate rules for using the Great River of Catan tile.

2.0 The 3-hex river tile.

The Great River of Catan tile consists of 3 adjacent hexes – hexes x, y, and z (see figure 1). Hex x is the central highlands of catan; this is a mountain hex, which produces ore. Hex y represents the foothills, and produces brick. Hex z represents the flood plain around the mouth and estuary of the Great River Catan and is a rich area of farm land, due to the frequent flooding providing a rich source of silt and nutrients. As such, it produces grain (hex z is not a swamp, as indicated by the hex colouration/original rules of the expansion).

When using the Great River tile, it replaces 1 mountain, 1 hill and 1 field tile (not 1 mountain tile, 1 hill tile and the desert tile, as stated in the original rules of the expansion).

3.0 Production and floods.

Number tokens are placed in each of the three hexes (in the mountain and hill hexes as per normal, but also in the flood plain hex; the expansion original rule about not placing a token in the swamp is disregarded).

Hexes x and y produce exactly as any other hex. Hex z produces (if not flooded) whenever the dice roll is equal to its token value, and whenever a 6 or an 8 are rolled. (Note that it is possible that the token placed on hex z will be a 6 or an 8; in this case, the hex will still produce only as normal – i.e the hex produces once, for the dice roll; it does NOT produce twice, once for the 6/8 rule and once for the token). If hex Z is flooded, it does not produce, regardless of the dice roll.

If hex z is not flooded and a '7' is rolled, the hex floods (mark this in any suitable way, for example using a VP token, or an unused sea hex). If hex z is currently flooded and a '7' is rolled, the flood abates and the hex is now not flooded. Hex z is the only hex that ever floods; the only way that floods can appear is through a dice

roll of '7', and the only way that a flood is removed is through a dice roll of '7' (floods can NOT be moved by soldiers, or any other card).

4.0 Floods and the burglar.

The burglar is a coward and an opportunist, but not stupid; he won't deliberately go into flooded areas.

Whenever a '7' is rolled, resolve the change in flood status before moving the burglar. The burglar may never be moved onto Hex z while it is flooded; he may be moved into hex z (by a dice roll of '7') if the flood has been abated by that dice roll. He may also be moved into hex z by the play of a soldier card, if the hex is not flooded at that time.

If the burglar is in hex z when it floods, he drowns – remove him from the board (the player rolling the '7' does not get to place him on the board). The burglar remains off the board until the next '7' is rolled, when the player rolling the '7' must place him in the burglar's starting position in the desert hex. Thereafter, the burglar may be moved through the roll of '7' or play of soldier cards, as normal. The burglar can NOT be returned to the board by the play of a soldier card, only through the roll of '7'.

5.0 Building

The presence of the river acts as a barrier to travel, requiring bridges to be built. It also acts as a barrier between communities, enabling them to grow closer than they otherwise might, and where the river is bridged, it creates transport hubs that produce more dense settlement.

5.1 Roads and bridges.

In general, all hex sides on the great river tile are treated as normal. However, there are three exceptions. There are four hex sides that cross the line of the river (shown as A1-C1-B1 (actually 2 hex sides), A2-B2, A3-B3 and A4-B4 on Figure 1.

A1-C1 and C1-B1 is the mouth of the River Catan. This wide estuary is uncrossable: no road may be built here.

A2-B2 and A3-B3 are potential crossing points of the river. However, to carry a road across the river, a bridge is required at these locations.

To build a bridge, the resource cost is 1 timber + 1 brick + 1 stone (i.e normal road cost + 1 stone). Additionally, when a bridge is placed, it requires Two lengths of road

be placed on the map (side by side). Thus building a bridge reduces the maximum length of road that a player can achieve. However, a bridge is much more impressive than a simple section of road: for the purposes of determining longest road, a bridge counts as 1.5 lengths of road. (example: Ian has 6 lengths of road; Jon has 5; if Jon builds 1 length of road, he goes to 6, but Ian keeps the longest road tile. However, if Jon builds a bridge, his road becomes 6.5 long, and Jon takes the longest road).

If one player builds both possible bridges, they automatically win any ties they may be in for longest road, regardless of who originally held the longest road card.

If the Road building progress card is played, this can provide the 1 brick + 1 timber requirement of a bridge from one of the 'free' lengths of road built, but the player must still provide the 1 stone, and must have sufficient lengths of road available to place.

A4-B4 is above the headwaters of the river, and is treated as a normal hex side for road building purposes.

5.2 Settlements and Cities

Because the river provides separation between communities, and bridges provide important trade centres, the normal limitation on building at adjacent intersections (the distance rule) does not fully apply around the banks of the Great River.

Settlements/cities may be built at both A-1 and B-1. No Settlement/city may be built at C-1

Settlements/cities may be built at both A-2 and B-2

Settlements/cities may be built at both A-3 and B-3

Settlements/cities may NOT be built at both A-4 and B-4; if the intersection at A-4 has already been built on, then no building is possible at B-4, as normal (and vice versa).

Other than the above, the normal rules prohibiting construction on adjacent intersections applies.

5.3 Seafarers.

If the seafarers expansion is also being used, then ships (but not roads) may be built along hex-sides A1-C1 and C1-B1. Additionally, settlements/cities may be built at C1.

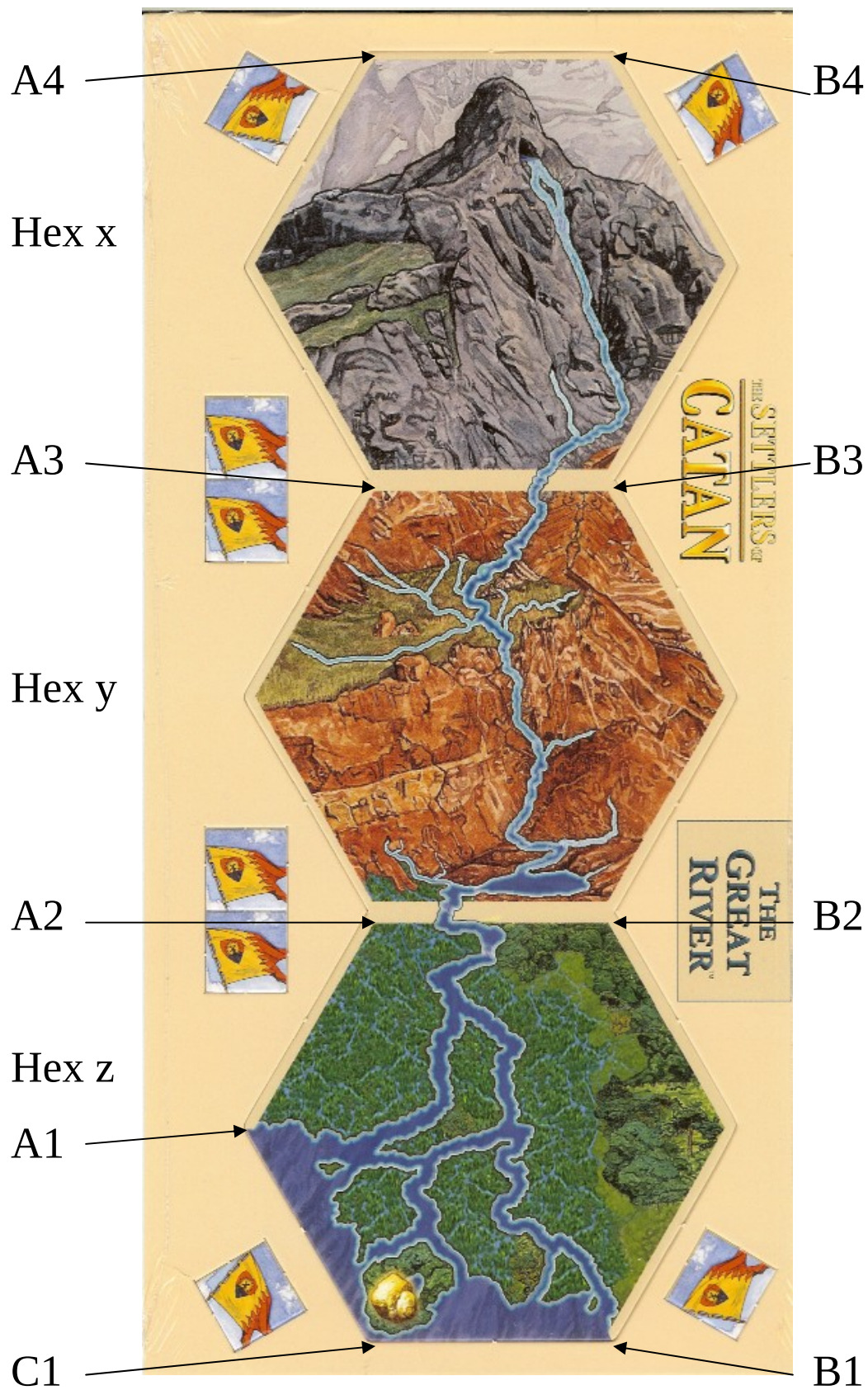


Figure 1: Basic image downloaded from Boadgamegeek.