Delegate Dash

A game for the piecepack by Chrystal and Glenn Overby
Version 1.11, 8 May 2004
Placed into the public domain at first publication by Chrystal and Glenn Overby
Two to Four Players, about 30 Minutes
Equipment: A piecepack

Introduction

Delegate Dash, a game for 2-4 players, uses all the parts of a standard piecepack. Players are candidates of the Piecepack Party, seeking its nomination for President of the Republic. They campaign state-by-state over five rounds of votes, trying to win at least 305 out of 608 delegates. Sometimes the game-ending convention brings a surprise!

What is a piecepack?

A piecepack is a public-domain definition of a set of game components. There are 56 items in a piecepack.

- Piecepack tiles: There are 24 tiles in a piecepack. On one side the tile is divided into four quarters, useful for making gameboards. On the other side is a symbol for one of four suits: Arms (blue), Crowns (green), Moons (black), and Suns (red). There are six tiles in each suit: null or blank, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Ace. Tiles are called *states* in these rules, and each suit is a *region*.
- Piecepack coins: These are much smaller than tiles. A suit symbol is on the back of each of the 24 coins. There are six coins of each of the four suits, numbered just like the tiles are. Coins are called *delegate markers* in these rules. Each marker is worth 10 times its number in *delegates*; the null is worth 1 delegate.
- Piecepack dice: There are four dice, one of each of the four colors, marked null, 2, 3, 4, 5, Ace.
- Piecepack pawns: Finally, a piecepack has one pawn of each color. At the end of the game, each pawn also becomes a delegate marker worth 1 delegate.

Setup

The 24 tiles are set up, number side up, as shown:

```
                +---+
                | A |
            +---+---+---+
            | A | A | A |
        +---+---+---+---+---+
        | M | A |(a)| S | S |
    +---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
    | M | M |(m)|||||(s)| S | S |
    +---+---+---+---+---+---+---+
        | M | M |(c)| C | S |
        +---+---+---+---+---+
```

```
  | C | C | C |
  +---+---+---+
      | C |
      +---+
```

```
A = random Arms tile
C = random Crowns tile
M = random Moons tile
S = random Suns tile
(x) = null tile of suit x
```

Each player picks a pawn:

- **Senator North** (blue)
- **Governor East** (red)
- **Representative South** (green)
- **General West** (black)

Each player's *home region* is the six states matching their pawn's color.

There are always four candidates! Extra candidates are played automatically by the rules.

Place all four pawns in the central gap. This is the only time during the game that the central gap is used.

Turn all coins suit-side up, and shuffle them.

Roll all four dice.

Put a blue coin on the blue state tile indicated by the blue die. Do the same thing for each of the other three colors.

Repeat this five times, rolling the dice and placing four coins. At the end, all 24 coins will be spread randomly over the board, and each region will have the same number of coins and delegates.

You are now ready to play.

Campaign Rounds

In each of five campaign rounds, each state with that number holds a caucus to award delegates to the players. The Aces states caucus on round one, the twos on round two, and so on. Both the threes and the Nulls caucus in round three, on *«Super Tuesday»*.

1. Flip the delegate markers face-up on each state holding a caucus this round. All players can now see how many delegates are at stake in each caucus.
2. North, or the first player clockwise from North if North is not a player, has the dice for all rolls in round one. In each later round, pass the dice clockwise.
3. Roll all four dice. Each die represents the candidate of matching color. The highest die roll moves first, then the next highest, and so on. Ties for movement order have the roller move first, then clockwise from the roller.

- A player may move their pawn any distance, up to the rolled number of states. Moves may be horizontal, vertical, or any combination, but never diagonal. The center gap may not be entered. (A player does not have to move.)
- A player may instead move their pawn to any state in their home region, *regardless* of the rolled number. (If a player rolled a null this is the only alternative to passing.)
- A player may surrender one delegate marker of their choice, after moving or passing, to immediately roll their die and move again. That marker becomes uncommitted, and will eventually go to someone at the convention.
- Non-player candidates in 2-3 player games still campaign, and can win delegates. They move in turn to the active caucus which they can legally reach with the most delegates still at stake. If two or more such caucuses exist, the player with the dice chooses. If no such caucus exists, the pawn moves to the Null state of the home region.

4. After all pawns are moved, if any pawns are in the same state as one or more face-up delegate markers caucus voting takes place.
   - If only one candidate is present at a caucus, they take one marker of their choice from that caucus.
   - If two or more candidates are at the same caucus, each candidate rolls their die. The high roller gets first choice of one marker, then second high, and so on. Ties go to the candidate from that home region, then clockwise from that candidate. A non-player will choose the highest value marker available in turn.
5. After each caucus with candidates present has voted, if any delegate markers remain face-up on the board return to step 3. If all of this round's delegates have been distributed, the round is over. Begin a new round at step 1.

When five rounds are complete, proceed to The Convention to see who wins!

The Convention

1. A candidate who has 305 or more delegates wins. *Otherwise, the candidate with the fewest delegates is eliminated.*
   - An eliminated candidate's delegate markers, including the pawn, become uncommitted.
2. If candidates are tied for last, they are not yet eliminated.
   - When this happens, each tied candidate loses all of their delegate markers from one region of their choice. Those delegate markers become uncommitted.
3. Now, split up all uncommitted delegate markers among surviving candidates, region by region. *Non-players may gain uncommitted delegates.*
   - Roll a die for each surviving candidate. Add one to the roll for each delegate marker the candidate already has in that region.
   - The high roller gets the most valuable uncommitted marker, then the next highest rolls select in turn. (Roll off ties.)
   - If all survivors get a marker and some still remain for the region, keep picking in the same order until all markers are distributed.
4. After all delegates have again been committed, if a candidate now has 305 or more they win. If not, the process repeats until a winner is found. *A non-player can be the winner....*
   - Should the last two candidates tie at 304, each rolls a die, and the high roll wins. Repeat if needed. (The legislature decides.)

Notes on the Design

Delegate Dash was designed for the sixth piecepack contest, Group Projects. A condition of the contest is that each entry must be a bona fide collaboration of two or more authors. These notes describe our design process.

Designer A has designed many games, including previous work with the piecepack. Designer B is a novice designer, with no piecepack background prior to the project, but with substantial game experience.

The designers spent a familiarization night of playing piecepack games and studying the components. Each designer then agreed to take two of the four parts and figure out what to do with them. Design resumed a couple of weeks later.

Designer A's first idea for the coins was to make them legislators, thinking about a political or diplomatic game of negotiation. Designer B countered with using pawns as candidates and tiles as a map. (In February 2004, the US presidential race was in high gear.) Legislators quickly became delegates, as a nominating convention makes for a lively multiplayer scenario.

Early versions used the dice to determine which states were voting on a given turn. But that ran into problems, as eventually just a few states were left to resolve and you could never roll the right numbers.

Designer B thought of letting one four-die roll act for all players at once, and having turn order vary according to the rolls. B also invented the rule allowing delegate markers in hand to be traded for rolls. Designer A thought of using the numbers on the state tiles to form a schedule, and the final scheme for distributing delegate markers to states. The caucus rules are not clearly creditable to either designer.

The map went through four patterns before settling on its current version. The chosen pattern inspired the regional influence on the end-of-game convention, and ultimately on little things like naming the players as well. Earlier patterns used more random tile distributions, including some face-down tiles which lengthened distances and slowed play.

The convention rules are primarily Designer A. A majority is needed to win in the real-world model. Our rules get a divided convention to unite, with the possibility of coming from behind, but limiting players making kingmaker deals in the endgame. Once in a while all of the players lose!

Licensing Information

Delegate Dash is placed into the public domain, and may be freely republished without further license.