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SHIP, CAPTAIN, CREW: PONTOON

A Dice Game By Simon Edward Jepps

How To Play



Ship, Captain, Crew: Pontoon is played in the same way as standard *Ship, Captain, Crew*, only it also uses one extra 6-sided die of a different colour.

Traditionally there are FIVE Black dice and ONE ***Red*** die.

I developed this game because I felt as awesome as ***Standard SCC*** is to play, the game really deserves more strategical depth and tactical theme.

Ship, Captain, Crew dates back at least 100 years and it has been a popular sailor's game ever since the early 20th century.

I stumbled upon this game some time ago and being both a Yahtzee fan and a swashbuckling adventurer fanatic, it immediately struck a chord deep in my heart. I knew there and then, it was the perfect catalyst and "vessel" for a new swashbuckling adventure I have had in the back of my mind, ever since time began.

Herewith, I will first briefly explain the rules to ***Standard SCC*** and then get onto ***SCC: Pontoon***.

Standard SCC

You have FIVE 6-sided dice and THREE rolls per turn.

You MUST roll a:

6 = ***Ship***
5 = ***Captain***
4 = ***Crew***

...in order to score your ***Cargo*** = ***the remaining two dice***.

You may RE-roll *any or all* of the dice a maximum of TWO more times to attempt getting the essential **6/5/4** granting you the total of your ***Cargo***... BUT if you DO NOT succeed in getting the **6/5/4** then you DO NOT score any ***Cargo***.

Play would usually continue to an agreed target or number of turns whence the highest accumulated ***Cargo*** score wins.

SCC: Pontoon

As mentioned earlier, ***SCC: Pontoon*** is played in exactly the same way but with some tactical enhancements provided through the extra ***Red*** die. This die enables THREE kinds of hand-scores in comparison to only the one of ***Standard SCC***.

The ***Red*** die is rolled at the same time, in the same hand with the other regular dice. Likewise, you may RE-roll *any or all* of your dice a maximum of TWO more times to attempt getting your desired hand.

The ***Red*** die is NOT usually allowed to form within the **6/5/4** of your SCC, *except* when making a ***Pontoon***.

The ***Red*** die *does not score* UNLESS:

- Its value matches a die held in your ***Cargo***.
- It forms part of a ***Pontoon***; here it scores DOUBLE.
- It forms one of two triplets; this is called ***Treasure***.

The Pontoon

A ***Pontoon*** is when you have all six dice line up consecutively 1-6.

If you see a ***Pontoon*** is possible, the ***Red*** die may/must form part of it somewhere, in order to achieve six dice running 1-6 ~ BUT this is the ONLY time the ***Red*** die may be used as part of your SCC **6/5/4** formation.

By default, a ***Pontoon*** scores ***21 points***, the total of all dice added together ~ BUT also, the ***Red*** die scores DOUBLE, so you must count this die TWICE.

For example, if the ***Red*** die is the '6' in the ***Pontoon*** *(called a 'Royal Pontoon')* then the hand scores: 21 + 6 = ***27 points***.

Treasure

For extra points, players can attempt the 3rd kind of hand, known as ***Treasure***.

When you have THREE dice of one same value and THREE dice of another same value, this is known as ***Treasure*** and is the 3rd kind of hand-score.

The total of all these dice added together is the score of ***Treasure***.

The ***Red*** die gives a BONUS ***+3 points*** if it sits within the highest value triplet.

This is the hardest of all hands to achieve, not merely because you are trying to get 3+3 dice to be the same value, but because upon your 2nd or 3rd roll you will often decide to abandon the odds of trying to get the last 1 or 2 dice to follow suit and try instead for something like regular ***Cargo***, with more dice and easier odds.

Highest Scoring Hands

Cargo = ***18*** is the highest possible score (3 sixes / 2 black 1 ***Red***).
Pontoon = ***27*** is the highest possible score (***Red*** Six / *Royal Pontoon*).
Treasure = ***36*** is the highest possible score (3 sixes + 3 fives + ***Red*** 3pts).

End Of Game

After ***36 turns*** each, the player with the highest score WINS; or if it is clear no other player can win before then, then earlier.

Note: Non-scoring hands still count as turns. For example, if neither player scores, there will be a whole line blank in that turn, before moving on to the next line of turns.

Summary

I have spent many, many years pondering on dice and all their different kinds of wonder.

Interestingly, most dice games are just that ~ dice. A handful of dice and an infinitum of ways to score. Often the most popular dice games are just dice and a score sheet.

What makes them popular is a perfect balance of both thematic appeal and tactical playability. Take ***Ship, Captain, Crew*** as a perfect example. Its mariner theme enriches the tactical play unto a brilliant composition. It just works.

Yet, dice games are for the majority short played pastimes, over a beer or just to enrich the evening. Whilst nevertheless many people play dice games religiously, they are still for the most part only closed systems of familiar outcomes.

Thus in truth, I have always felt there is one dice game missing. That is a dice game where one has real ongoing decisions, the ability to change tactic or strategy in-hand and to have dynamic control over a variation of outcomes.

Much like you would of course, in Chess... but, only dice.

Aye, it has been a life-long mission of mine to eventually realise such a game, knowing it has only truly been realised when I eventually find myself picking up just a handful of dice over a Chess set.

That game is ***Ship, Captain, Crew: Pontoon***.

Thank you for reading.

simon@jeppsquare.me
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