

QUILT FROM PATCHES

PATCHWORK

BUTTONS FOR MONEY AND VICTORY POINTS



Uwe Rosenberg is really an eclectic game designer and I like most of his games (actually my favorite games are CAVERNA and FIELDS of ARLE) and recently I played really a lot "AGRICOLA: ALL CREATURES BIG AND SMALL" and "LE HAVRE: THE INLAND PORT" with many friends and my wife, so I was happy to discover a new game for TWO designed by him.

PATCHWORK seems directed to anybody, including people that rarely play game, as its rules and mechanics are very easy to explain and to understand. But playing still require a good use of your brain. In this game you have to sew a large cover using up to 33 small multicolored cloth "patches" (represented by multiform cardboard tiles).

The small box (same size as the two games named before) also contains 1 big white pawn, 2 colored markers (one per player), 5 brown square tiles, 50 "buttons" (the "money of the game), 1 "Bonus" tile, 2 mini boards (one per player) and 1 "double face" Time marker board.

A side of the Time Board is selected: face 1 shows a square spiral path, while side 2 shows a round spiral track. The use is the same but you may change it for more ... variety of your games, I suppose. Anyway both players have to place their round colored markers (one yellow and one green) on the initial case of the board: they will move them after each turn and when both reach the final case of the track the game is over. Along the track you also remark five special cases where are initially placed the five brown squares that will be given to the first player to reach them.

Each player takes 5 buttons and a board with a 9x9 squares grill printed on it that should be then filled with patches (tiles), possibly without leaving "holes".

The Time Board is now placed in the middle and the 33 tiles (patches) are laid in a circle around it. The wooden pawn is placed in the "space" immediately after the smallest tile. Those "patches" have multiple forms (straight, square, L, U, Z, etc.) and their dimensions vary between 2 and 8 "squares". The task of the game is to collect the right tiles and to place them on the personal board, trying to cover as many squares as possible because every "hole" is a penalty.

(see picture 1)

Let me spend a few lines to better "define" those patches, as they are not listed on the rulebook but it is important to know which are the better ones to pick up:

(a) - 21 tiles have "buttons" printed on them:

- 10 of them have 1 button

- 8 of them have 2 buttons

- 4 of them have 3 buttons

(b) - 11 tiles do not have buttons

(c) - dimensions are as follows:

- there is only ONE "two squares" tile (the starting one)

- there are 3 "three squares" tiles (and none of them has buttons)

- there are 7 "four squares" tiles (3 with 1 button, 2 with 2 buttons and 1 with 3 buttons)

- there are 9 "five squares" tiles (3 with 1 button, 3 with 2 buttons and 1 with 3 buttons)

- there are 10 "six squares" tiles (2 with 1 button, 3 with 2 buttons and 2 with 3 buttons)

- there are 2 "seven squares" tiles (1 with 1 button)

- there is only 1 "eight squares" tile (with 1 button)

(see picture 2)

HOW IT WORKS ?

The player whose marker is back on the path of the Time Board takes his turn and select one of the two possible actions:

(1) - Advance in the Time Board's track until the case AFTER the opponent's marker and receive one button per case moved.

(2) - Select one of the 3 patches in front of the white pawn (clockwise), paying the number of buttons printed on the tile and adding it to his personal board. Then the white pawn takes the place of that patch. If this option is selected the marker on

the Time track is also moved the number of cases printed on the tile. It is possible for a player to take more than 1 turn if his marker does not reach the other (something similar to Glen More's system). This rule very often decides the player's strategy, especially when his marker is very close to the end of the Time Track and some extra tiles are required to fill the grill. Players must always check their reserve of buttons as the best tiles are always the ones that cost more ! As George Clooney says in a famous spot: No

Pietro Cremona

All in all a quick game very interactive and where luck takes no part. I recommend this game to everybody!

buttons ? No Patch.

Of course during the game sometimes you have to take patches and sometimes you need to collect buttons in order to be able to purchase the most large and valuable patches. We already examined how to gain buttons on the Time Board (see Option 1) but there is also another possibility: when your marker stops or pass through a case of the Time Track with a button you receive as many buttons as you have (printed) on the tiles already installed in your board.

In order to mark points you have to collect as many buttons as possible and fill most of the squares of your personal board, trying to leave as few holes (uncovered cases) as possible. This means that before collecting a new tile you have to verify if it fits well on your grid, wrapping the already placed tiles and avoiding to leave empty squares that will be too hard to cover in the following turns. This task is not so easy sometimes, if your opponent moved the white pawns just in front of the bad tiles, but it may be helpful to take some of the four wooden squares that we placed on the Time track during the initial set-up. In effect you may use them to "cover" a single empty square on your grid.

The player who is able to completely fill AT LEAST a grid of 7x7 squares on his personal board will get a SPECIAL tile that will grant 7 VP at the end of the game. This may be helpful but is not so "vital" and sometimes we found that it was better to try to fill at best the personal grid without even trying to complete the 7x7 squares.

During the first part of the game the players will try to take the most valuable tiles from the table, especially if they have buttons, but they must always try to maintain a compact "cover" on their grill. When most of the tiles are already inserted the "choice" is reduced and usually the most complicate patterns are still available and some of them will not fit into you grill if you did not "prepared" the available space in advance. When both markers arrive in the central





Bild 2 - picture 2

(and final) case of the Time Track the game ends and the players count their VP. You get 1 VP per button that you still own and you lose 2 VP per empty square on your board. The player with the BONUS tile add 7 VP to his total.

The penalty for empty squares on your board is really severe and therefore players try to cover as many cases as possible in a way similar to the videogame TETRIS. Unfortunately the necessary tiles are very often too far from the white pawn and at best you have to program your moves in order to avoid that your opponent takes them before you.

Buttons are the "money" of the game but they are also VP at the game's end, so you need to start collecting them as soon as possible. There are only 4 tiles with THREE buttons in the game and they all cost too much (players start the game with 5 buttons only), so you have to try to get some cheaper "1-2 buttons" tiles as soon as you can and then collect buttons for a couple of turns in order to spend them for at least a couple of the "3 buttons" patches. The earlier you get them

and the more you collect extra buttons. All this with an eye to the pattern of the tiles as they must fit your grid the best.

The game is very interactive, as you try to move the wooden pawn in a way that blocks your opponent to reach a highly valuable tile but .. he is doing the same, naturally, so after a few turns it is not so rare to see both players trying to remain back on the Time Track for a number of cases sufficient to make at least two turns in a row and therefore collect two different and interesting tiles.

In my first games I never paid too much attention to the five brown squares and my opponents were able to freely "close" some holes on their grid. After having lost the games due to the -2 VP per empty square I realized that those squares are as important as a 4 VP tile, so I started disputing all of them because closing the gaps in the grid is the most difficult task of the game. Luckily, tiles are all "double face" so you may place them any way up at your will: for "square" or "rectangular" tiles this is not a problem, but many other tiles have complicate forms and

you need to study well before trying to fit them in the grill. This takes some time, especially in the middle game when you are trying to complete that damned 7x7 grill: often the players are obliged to physically take a tile in their hand to test it on the board and see if it fits. Nothing in the rules prohibits this move, so we usually agree this test: we also tried an house rule that forbade that "manual use" but the game was not as "competitive" as before so we cancelled it.

(see picture 3)

All in all a quick game very interactive and where luck takes no part. I tried it with some teenagers too and I realized that they had some problems on the first game or two, but then they were able to beat me regularly: they are much smarter in finding the right shape for their grill and I had to note that their ability clearly shows to me another effect of ... aging!

I suggest this game to everybody: expert players may use it while they are waiting for an heavier game to be prepared, while regular players may fight for victory since the first game. In family it is highly suggested that a player already expert of the game explains the rules to the others and assist them on the first moves in order to speed up things. ☑

Pietro Cremona

INFORMATION

Designer: Uwe Rosenberg

Artist: Klemens Franz

Price: ca. 17 Euro

Publisher: Lookout Spiele 2014

www.lookout-spiele.de

PLAYERS:
2

AGE:
8+

TIME:
35+

EVALUATION

Placement
Users: With friends
Version: de
Rules: cz de en fr gr hu it kr nl pl
In-game text: no

Comments:
Fantastic game for two players * Innovative topic * Good mechanisms * Pretty graphic design

Compares to:
Ares-filling placement games

Other editions:
Mayfair Games, USA; Mindok, Czech Republic; Kaissa, Greece; Funforge, France, Compaya.hu; Korea Boardgames, Uberplay.it; Rebel.pl; 999 Games, The Netherlands

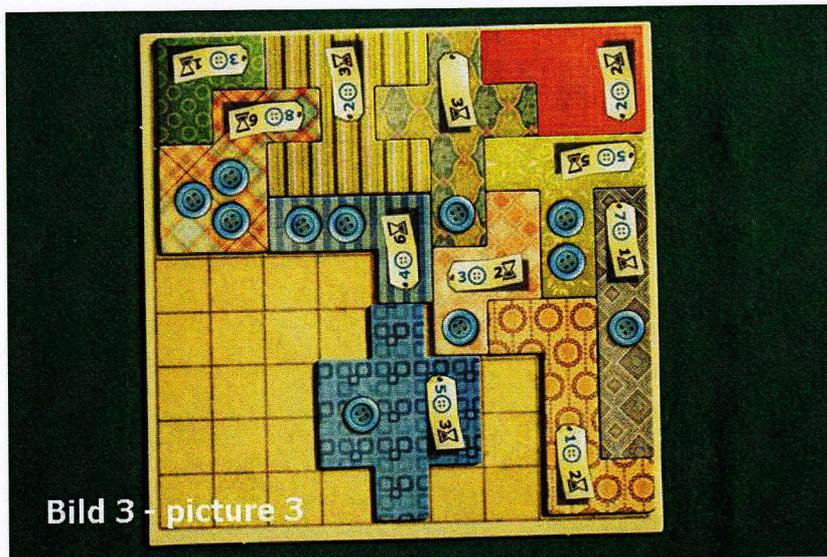


Bild 3 - picture 3