

by Reiner Knizia
for 3 to 5 players

The game of strategy, strength and supremacy

Many centuries ago, the heart of Europe was divided. Powerful dukes ruled over separate duchies from fortified castles along the river Rhine and gained a rich income from the prosperous cities they governed. Power struggles were commonplace and often required the intervention of influential bishops in the area.

Now it's your chance to extend your control of the Rheinlands by out-witting your opponents and expanding your empire. Will you be the one that rules the Rhine?

CONTENTS

1 gameboard
54 numbered cards
1 reshuffle card
1 archbishop card
30 duke figures

Cardboard sheets containing:
125 knights
55 coins
7 bishop markers
15 bastions and
26 landmark tokens
(12 cities, 7 castles and 7 churches).

SETTING UP THE GAME

The first time you play, remove all the duke figures from the plastic bags and carefully punch out all the tokens from the cardboard sheets.

Before each new game, do the following:

1. Shuffle all the landmark tokens face-down on the table and then randomly place one landmark face- up on each of the circular building site spaces on the gameboard. Each time you play the game, the set- up will be different.



Castles



Churches



Cities

2. For a three-player game, give each player six dukes and all 25 knights of their chosen colour, plus three bastions. In a four-player game, players get 20 knights each and in a five-player game, 17 knights each.



Dukes



Knights



Bastions

3. Take the archbishop card out of the deck of cards and place it to one side, shuffle the deck and deal five cards to each player. Place the remaining cards face-down next to the board to form a draw pile within reach of all the players. (If you are dealt the reshuffle card, place it back anywhere in the deck and take a new card.) Make sure other players cannot see the cards in your hand.



Take the archbishop card out of the deck.

4. Nominate one player to be banker and give that player the coins to look after.
5. Place the bishop tokens and the archbishop card next to the gameboard.



Bishops

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To score points by forming powerful duchies along the river Rhine. The player with the highest score at the end of the game wins.

PLAYING THE GAME

Decide which player will start the game. Play then continues clockwise.

On your turn, carry out the following three steps:

1. Select a card from your hand and place it face-up on the discard pile so that all players can see it.
2. Place one of your knights on the gameboard.
3. Draw a new card from the top of the deck to bring the number of cards in your hand back to five. This marks the end of your turn.

Note: If you ever draw the reshuffle card, place it back in the deck and shuffle the discard pile with the rest of the deck. Place the cards face-down on the table to form a new draw pile and pick up a new card from the top of the deck. (The reshuffle card cannot form part of a player's hand.)



Reshuffle card

PLACING KNIGHTS AND FORMING DUCHIES

Your aim throughout the game is to place your knights in such a way as to form one or more duchies along the banks of the Rhine. The larger the duchies, the more powerful you will be and the more points you are likely to score. As you will discover later, another factor that will influence your fate is the number of duchies you control, so sheer size is not everything!

Playing a card to place a knight

The cards are numbered from 1 to 54 and correspond to the numbered spaces on the board. Each number on the board covers the river space as well as the two land spaces on either side of the river - this is known as an area.

- On your turn, select a card from your hand according to where you want to place one of your knights on the board. Place this card face up next to the draw pile to form a discard pile so that all players can see the card you're playing.

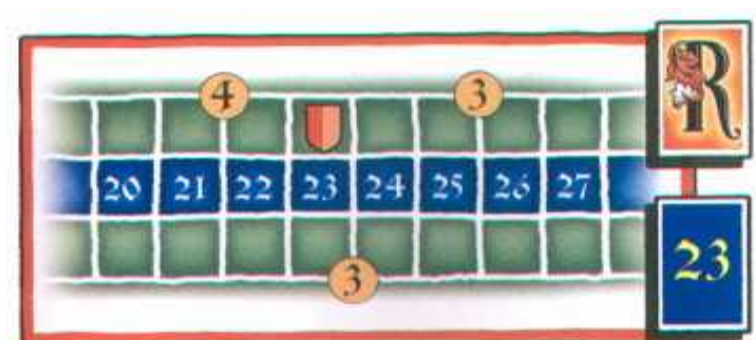


Figure 1. You decide to play card 23 from your hand and place the card face up on the discard pile. Place one of your knights face-up on one of the two land spaces in the area numbered 23.

- Each space may only contain one knight.
- You can place your knight on either side of the river, if both of the spaces are free.
- If the space on one side of the river is already occupied, you must place your knight on the other side of the river.

- You can only place your knight on the river space itself if the land spaces on both sides of the river are already occupied.
- If all three spaces in an area are occupied, a knight cannot be placed there (but you may still choose to play the card - see Using a card for reinforcement).
- Some spaces on the island at one end of the board belong to two areas and can therefore be occupied by playing one of two different cards.

Forming a duchy

Neighbouring spaces with an edge in common are called adjacent.

- A duchy is formed when two (or more) adjacent spaces have each been occupied by a knight.
- A duchy may consist of knights of the same or of different colours.

Who owns a duchy

At any time during the game, you can take ownership of a duchy if you have at least two of your knights in the duchy **and** you have more knights in the duchy than any other player.

- If you gain control of a duchy, place one of your dukes on the gameboard next to your duchy.
- There is no limit to the number of duchies a player can own. If you run out of dukes, you can temporarily use the dukes of an unused colour.

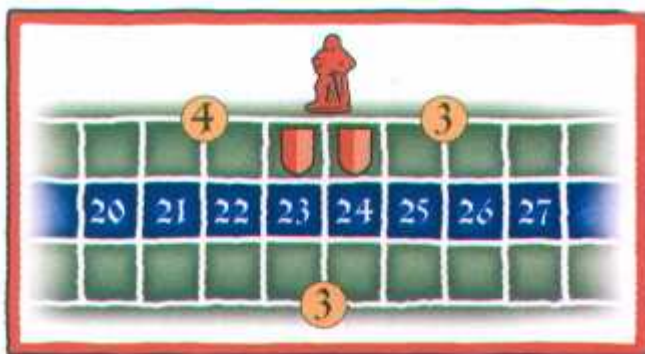


Figure 2. You managed to place a second knight adjacent to one you placed earlier in the game. This is the simplest form of duchy. Place one of your dukes next to the duchy to show that you own it.

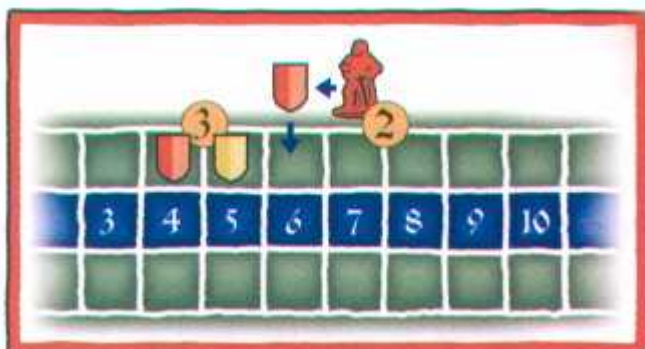


Figure 3. You are the red player. You play card 6 to extend the duchy. You now have two knights in the duchy and outnumber your opponent: place one of your dukes on the board next to the duchy to show that you now own that duchy.

Remember: a new duke can only be placed if a player has more knights in the duchy than any one of his opponents. As long as two (or more) players have the same number of knights in a duchy, they cannot place a new duke.

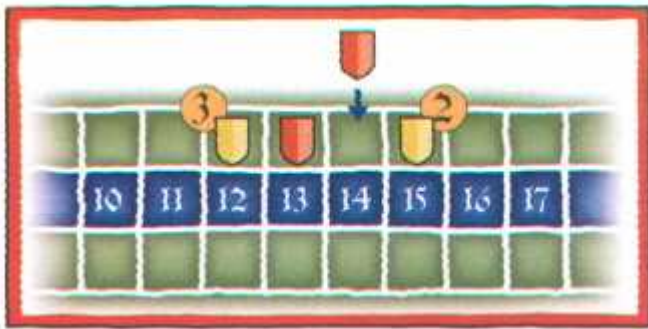


Figure 4. You are the red player. You play card 14 and now have an equal number of knights as the yellow player. No one can take control of the duchy, so no duke is placed on the board.

As the game progresses and more and more knights are placed on the board, new duchies will come into being and existing ones will grow larger. Ownership of each duchy may change, too, depending on which player has the highest number of knights in any given duchy. More about this later.

Using a card for reinforcement

Instead of playing a card and placing a knight on a matching numbered space, you can choose on your turn to play any one of your cards for reinforcement:

- Choose a card from your hand which you are happy to dispense with. When you play a card for reinforcement, disregard the number on the card.
- Place your chosen card on the discard pile and place one of your knights on any space you like, making sure you follow the reinforcement rules:
 - you must place your knight on a free land space that is both adjacent to a space already occupied by one of your knights and not adjacent to a space occupied by an opponent's knight.
 - you cannot place a knight on a river space.

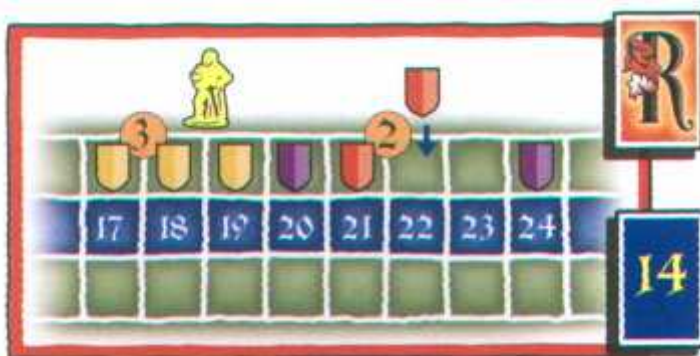


Figure 5. You are the red player. You use card 14 for reinforcement and place a knight on space 22, next to one of your knights, and away from any opponent's knight.

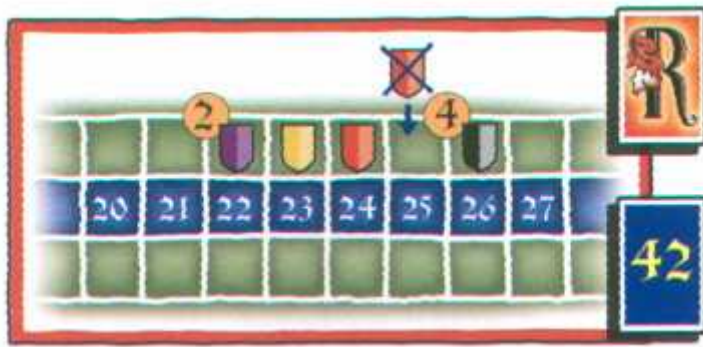


Figure 6. You are the red player. You cannot use a card for reinforcement here: placing your knight on space 25 would put the knight adjacent to an opponent's knight. (Playing card 25 is the only way to place one of your knights here.)

Using cards for reinforcement, despite the restrictions described above, gives you more flexibility. It is easier for you to support knights and duchies which you already have on the board, and it allows you to dispense with cards whose matching numbered spaces are of little interest to you.

Placing a bastion

In addition to placing a knight on your turn, you may also place one of your three bastions. These are solid walls that prevent your opponents from extending their duchies and protect the duchies you own.



Bastion

- You can place a bastion on any free land space on the board.
- A bastion cannot be placed on a river space.
- Only one bastion may be placed per turn.
- A space containing a bastion cannot be occupied by a knight.
- Bastions do not form part of a duchy: once placed, they are neutral.

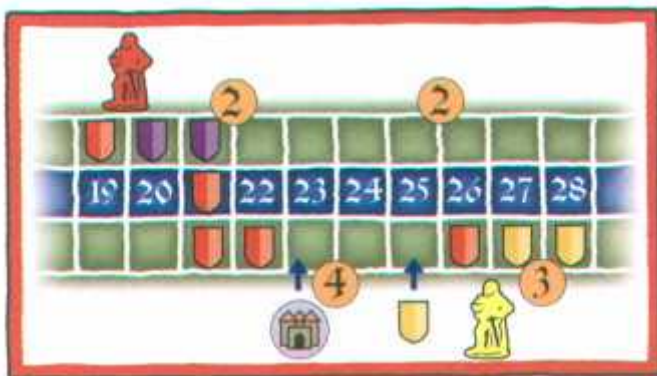


Figure 7. You are the yellow player. You play card 25 on your turn and, fearing further expansion by the red player, you also place a bastion on space 23.

CHANGING THE OWNERSHIP OF DUCHIES AND SCORING

Seeing duchies come into being and watching them grow is only part of the story of the Rheinlands. The game really comes into its own as duchies start to change hands and players attempt to consolidate their positions.

The value of a duchy

Each duke placed next to a duchy on the board during the game has a value of 1 point. However, you can build up significantly higher values for your duchies if they include one or more landmarks - cities, castles and churches.

- A duchy controls a landmark when one of the knights within the duchy occupies a space adjacent to that landmark.

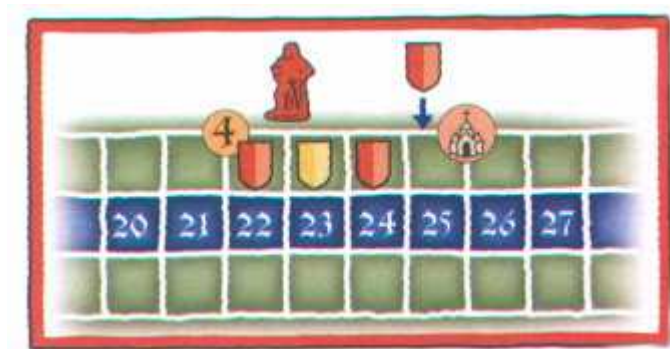


Figure 8. You are the red player. Your duchy already controls the city. When you now place a knight on space 25, your duchy also gains control over the church.

- During the course of the game, the value of a duchy is made up of 1 point for the duke, plus the point values of all its cities, castles and churches. For example, the red duchy in Figure 8 is worth 6 points (1 point for the duke, 4 points for the city and 1 point for the church). Examine the Scoring Table below.

Scoring Table

During the game, a duke scores...	1 point
Within his duchy,	
for each church, score...	1 point
for each castle, score...	1 point
for each city, score the value shown...	2, 3 or 4 points
Bonus points are also awarded at the end of the game. See Final scores .	
At the end of the game, a duke scores...	5 points
The player with the archbishop card scores...	5 points

Scoring points during the game

As new duchies are formed and existing ones grow larger, their respective values can be calculated at any time, allowing players to gauge their strength relative to that of their opponents. However, a duchy will only realise its value when it changes hands during the game and at the end of the game when the final scores are settled.

Points are scored during the game when duchies change hands:

- When you lose the ownership of a duchy (see Taking control of an opponent's duchy below), you score points for the value of your old duchy. The banker pays you in coins which you place face-down on the table in front of you.
- By concealing the total value of the coins you have amassed, other players can be misled and will have difficulty knowing which strategy is working best. This, together with the scoring that takes place at the end of the game will mean that there may be some surprises in store!

Taking control of an opponent's duchy

As the game progresses, keep an eye on what your opponents are doing. You'll need to be ready to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, not just to enlarge your existing duchies, but to take over those of your opponents.

- Each duchy may have only one duke.
- When you place a new knight in a duchy so that as a result you have more knights in that duchy than any other player, you become the new owner: the old duke is removed and returned his owner who scores for his old duchy. You place one of your dukes on the board next to your new duchy.

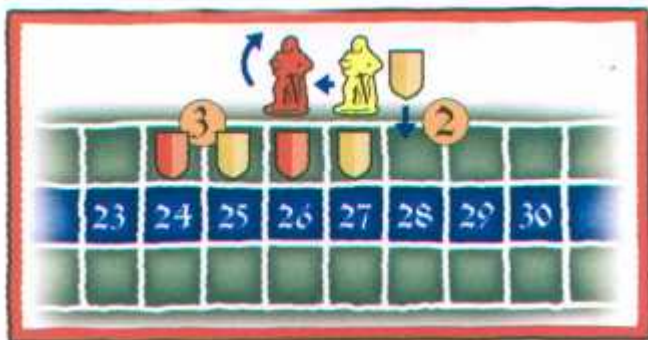


Figure 9. You are the yellow player. You use a card for reinforcement and place a knight on space 28. You gain ownership of the duchy as you now have more knights than your opponent. You return the red duke to his owner and place one of your dukes next to the duchy. The red player scores 4 points for his old duchy (1 point for the duke and 3 for the city, but no points for the new city you just added to the duchy).

- When you place a new knight in a duchy and there are equal numbers of knights as a result, ownership of that duchy does not change: the current duke remains next to the duchy.

Remember: a new duke can only be placed if a player has more knights in the duchy than any one of his opponents.

Combining duchies

From time to time, placing just one knight on the board can dramatically change the course of the game. If a knight is placed on the board adjacent to two (or more) current duchies, these are combined to form one large duchy:

- If you have more knights in the combined duchy than any other player, you take ownership of the duchy:
 - if you did not own any of the old duchies, place one of your dukes on the board next to the combined duchy;
 - if you owned one of the old duchies, your duke remains on the board to rule the combined duchy;

- if you owned more than one of the old duchies, the duke of your most valuable old duchy remains on the board to rule the combined duchy, irrespective of the number of knights involved in your old duchies.
- All the other old dukes are removed and players score for their corresponding old duchies.

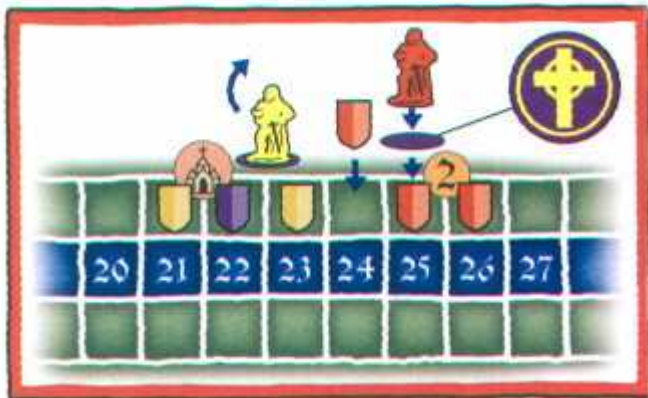


Figure 10. You are the red player. You play card 24 and combine the two duchies. You become the owner of the combined duchy. Your duke remains on the board and the yellow duke is returned to his owner. The yellow player scores 2 points for his old duchy (1 for the duke, 1 for the church). See [Bishops and the archbishop](#) to find out more about the bishop tokens.

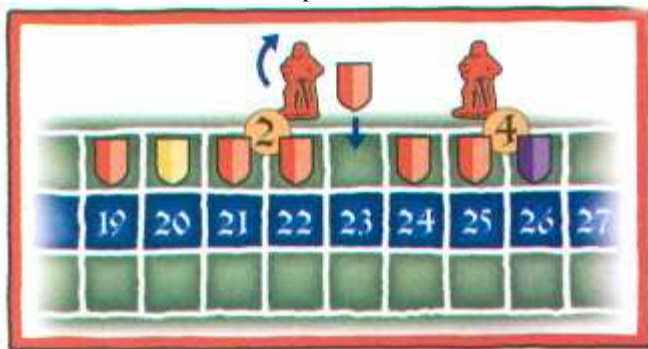


Figure 11. You are the red player. You play card 23 to combine two of your duchies. Your duchy on the left has the lower value (3 versus 5 on the right), therefore you remove the duke on the left and score 3 points (1 for the duke and 2 for the city).

Remember: when you have more than one duke in the combined duchy, you always remove the dukes from the old duchies that score the least.

- If there is a tie such that no player has more knights in the combined duchy than any other player, then all dukes are removed and players score for all their old duchies. In this case, the combined duchy remains without owner.

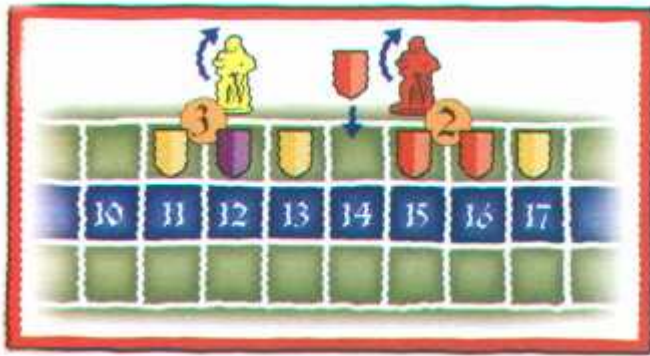


Figure 12. You are the red player. You play card 14 to combine two duchies which now include three red knights and three yellow knights. As there is a tie, both dukes are removed. Yellow scores 4 points and you score 3. The combined duchy remains without an owner.

CASTLES AND CHURCHES

As you are about to see, owning castles not only gives you additional knights, it can also give you a commanding stranglehold over entire stretches of the Rhine! On the other hand, owning the greatest number of duchies with churches brings you the power of conversion - the power to turn your opponents' knights to your own colour.

Taking a castle

The ownership of a castle is decided when you place the first knight on one of the two spaces adjacent to a castle landmark.

- If your new knight is part of a duchy with a duke, the player who owns the duchy automatically gains control of that castle and places an additional knight of his colour on the castle landmark.

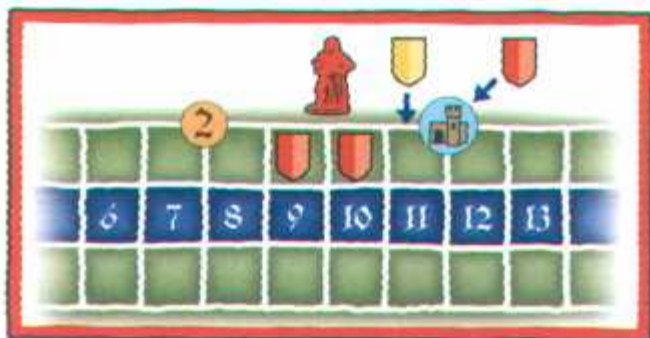


Figure 13. You are the yellow player. Although you are first to place a knight on space 11 next to the castle, you effectively link the castle to the red duke's duchy. The red player automatically takes control of the castle and places one of his knights on the castle landmark.

- If your new knight is part of a duchy that has no owner, you gain control of the castle and place an additional knight of your colour on the castle landmark. Then, if you have more knights in the duchy than any other player, you can also claim ownership of the duchy and place one of your dukes on the board next to it.

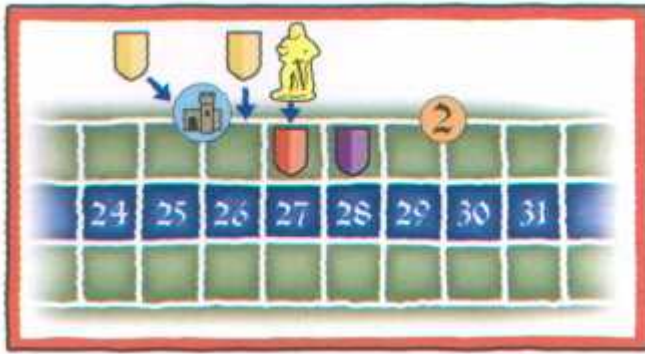


Figure 14. You are the yellow player. You are first to place a knight on space 26 next to the castle. This links the castle to the neighbouring duchy which has no owner. You place an additional knight on the castle and now have more knights in the duchy than any other player. Claim the duchy as yours by placing one of your dukes next to your new duchy.

- The same applies if your new knight is not adjacent to any other knight. Place an additional knight on the castle. This creates a new duchy and you place one of your dukes next to it.



Figure 15. You are the yellow player and play card 43. You place a knight next to the castle and take possession of the castle. Place another one of your knights on the castle landmark and a duke nearby to show that the new duchy is yours.

- Always establish the ownership of a new castle first, before assessing any change in the ownership of the duchy.

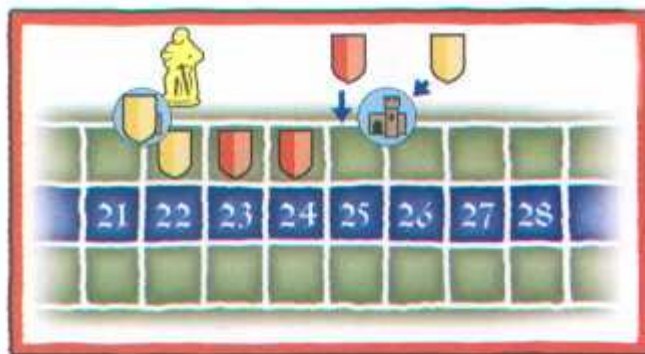


Figure 16. You are the yellow player. The red player uses a card for reinforcement and places one of his knights on space 25. As the owner of the duchy, you place a knight on the castle landmark immediately the castle is linked to your duchy. Consequently, you and the red player still have the same number of knights, and you retain ownership of the duchy.

Remember: when counting the number of knights in a duchy, always include any knights on castle landmarks as part of your calculation.

- Once a castle is occupied by a knight, it will remain occupied for the rest of the game, even though the occupying knight may change.
- Knights on castle landmarks do not influence card play for reinforcement: You cannot use a knight on a castle landmark as the base for reinforcement, and it does not inhibit an opponent from playing a reinforcement on a space adjacent to the castle landmark.

How do castles change hands?

When a duchy gets a new owner, the castles in that duchy change hands too.

- The player who places the new duke automatically takes over any castles in the duchy: he returns all knights on the duchy's castles to their owners and replaces them with knights of his colour.

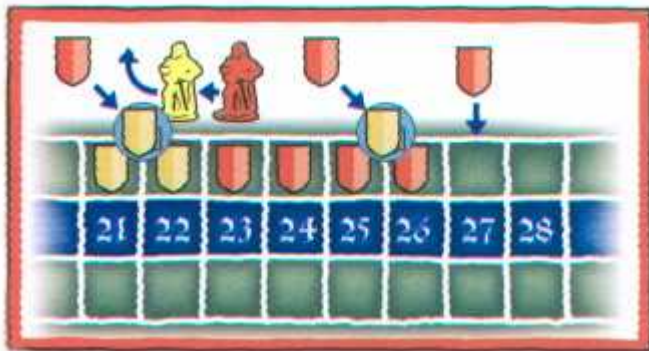


Figure 17. You are the red player. The yellow player already owns the two castles as he already owns the duchy. You place a knight on space 27 and now outnumber the yellow player. With 5 knights against 4, you take ownership of the duchy: replace the yellow duke with one of yours, then replace the two yellow knights on the castles with your own knights. The yellow player scores 3 points for his old duchy.

- If a duchy is left without an owner, the knights occupying the castles in that duchy remain in place.

Bishops and the archbishop

A duke can increase his power by owning a church.

- If your duke owns a duchy which includes one or more churches, he installs a bishop: place a bishop marker under your duke to show that a bishop exists in that duchy.



A duke installs a bishop when his duchy includes one or more churches.

- If you have more bishops on the board than any other player, your bishops are vested with the powers of the archbishop. Take the archbishop card and place it in front of you.
- If no player has a bishop, or if there is a tie for the most bishops, the archbishop card remains out of play.

The archbishop has special conversion powers:

- If you have the archbishop card and you play a card with the number of a land space which already contains another player's knight, you can use your turn to replace the knight on that space with one of your own. The knight which is removed is returned to his owner.
- Even if both land spaces corresponding to the number you played contain other players' knights, you can only convert one of them.
- You cannot use a card for reinforcement to convert another player's knight.
- You cannot replace bastions with knights.
- If you convert a knight on a space adjacent to a castle landmark, only that knight is converted. The knight on the castle landmark remains unaffected.
- You cannot convert knights on a castle landmark.
- The conversion of a knight may change the ownership of a duchy.

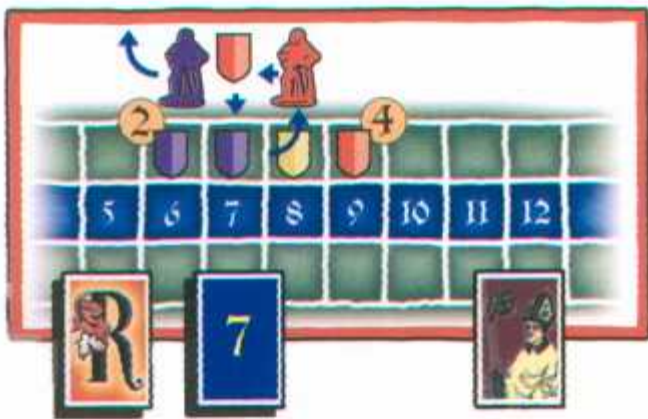


Figure 18. You are the red player. You hold the archbishop card and play card 7. You can now replace the violet knight on space 7 with a knight of your own. As a result, you have more knights in that duchy than any other player and take ownership of the duchy. The violet player scores 7 points for his old duchy.

WINNING THE GAME









The game ends when at the end of a turn any one player has no more knights available. If the player who used all his knights obtains possession of further castle landmarks on the final turn, the player uses additional knight tiles to mark his possessions.

Final scores












At the end of the game, players count up their scores for each of their duchies on the board.

- In addition to the cities, castles and churches, each duke now scores 5 points in place of the normal 1 point to reward his independence.
- The player holding the archbishop card at the end of the game scores a further 5 points.
- All the scores are paid out in coins.
- The player with the most money wins the game and is declared master of the Rheinlands.

Strategic hints

-  Study your cards to determine your strengths.
-  Quickly establish a power base by creating several small duchies.
-  Focus on the big stakes.
-  Do not get involved in conflicts unless you have a good chance of success.
-  Use the bastions to limit the growth of your opponent's duchies and to defend your own.
-  Don't forget that you need high scores (cities and a good number of dukes) to win the game.
-  Duchies you own will eventually score for you - either when your duke is removed from a duchy or at the end of the game.
-  Keep an eye out for the end of the game - it often arrives sooner than you expect!

KEY RULES

-  Play a card on your turn and place a knight on its matching numbered area.
-  Alternatively, use a card for reinforcement and place a knight adjacent to another of your knights and away from any opponents' knights.
-  Two or more adjacent knights form a duchy.
-  You take ownership of a duchy and place a duke when you have more knights in the duchy than any other player.
-  When two duchies are combined, the player with the most knights takes ownership of the combined duchy. If there is a tie all dukes are removed.
-  In addition to placing a knight on your turn, you may place one of your bastions.
-  You can place an additional knight on every castle you control.
-  Every duchy with a church gives you a bishop. If you have more bishops than any other player, you obtain the archbishop and may convert your opponents' knights to your own colour.
-  The value of a duchy is determined by its cities, castles and churches. Players score only when duchies change hands and at the end of the game. See the [Scoring Table](#).
-  The game ends when one player places his last knight on the board.
-  The winner is the player with the highest score.