

NIAGARA

a rapid battle in the river
for 3-5 fearless canoers
aged 8 and up

In the wild rapids of the Niagara River, fearless canoers battle the water and each other to collect gems along the riverbank. Of course, the most valuable gems are found furthest down-river, close to the waterfall. Yes, there is a waterfall, and careless canoers that don't keep an eye on the currents can fall over. Also, players must return collected gems to land in order to be counted. At the end, the player who collects the most value in gems is the winner.

Contents:

Figure 1:
Illustration of game contents



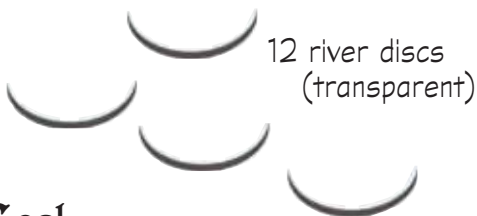
10 canoes in 5 colors



1 life preserver
(starting player marker)



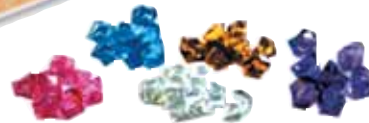
1 rainmaker marker (cloud)



12 river discs
(transparent)



1 game board
with sunken riverbed



40 gems - 8 of each:
ruby (red), sapphire (blue), diamond
(clear), amber (yellow), and amethyst (vio-
let)



35 paddle cards
in 5 colors

rule booklet

Goal:

The players paddle their canoes along the Niagara River to collect gems. By playing paddle cards, they determine the speed of their canoes and the speed of the rapids in which all canoes travel. Where the rapids are very strong, the players must paddle defensively to keep their canoes afloat and away from the waterfall.

However, the most valuable gems are located close to the waterfall, so players who want these gems must be willing to take risks and plan their moves carefully so to avoid the waterfall, and return with their cargo to safety.

The first player to collect five different or four of the same colored or seven of any colored gems and bring them safely to land will end and win the game.

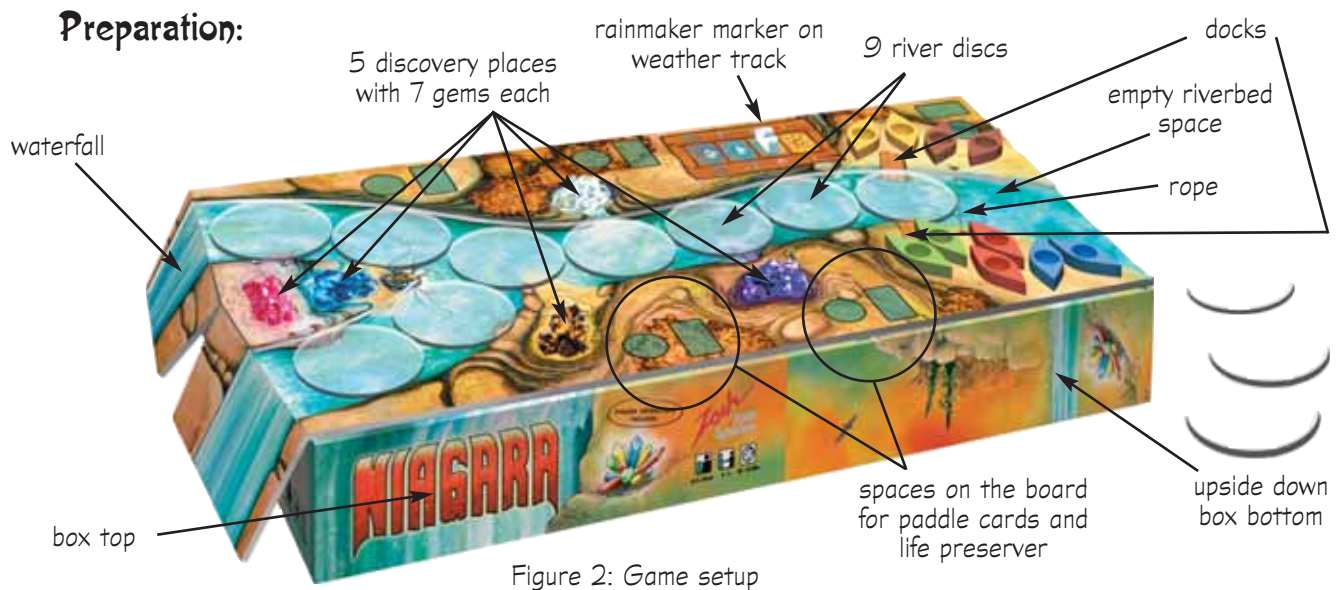


Figure 2: Game setup

- Place the box top and bottom, with their open sides down, side by side, so they form a platform.
- Place the game board on this platform so that it forms a waterfall at one end as shown in figure 2.
- Place 7 gems of the colors that match each of the discovery places set aside for the gems. The 8th gem of each color is a spare to be used in case gems are lost.
- Place 9 of the transparent river discs in the riverbed so the upper-most river disc is placed below the rope spanning the river. The upper-most riverbed spaces remain empty (see figure 2). Place the remaining 3 transparent river discs next to the game board.
- Place the rainmaker marker (cloud) on space 0 (zero) of the weather track on the game board.
- Each player takes both canoes and all 7 paddle cards in his color. He holds his cards secretly and places his canoes on one or both beaches near the dock (see figure 2).
- Every player selects a pair of round and rectangular spaces on the board which he can reach best.
- The players choose a starting player for the first round and he takes the life preserver and places it on his round space on the game board (see figure 3a).

Playing the game:

Every round is subdivided into 4 phases, which are always played in the same sequence:

- I. Playing a paddle card
- II. Moving canoe/influencing weather
- III. Moving the river
- IV. Giving up the life preserver

Phase I: playing a paddle card

Each player has 7 paddle cards that he holds secretly in his hand. Six of these show a number from 1 to 6. The seventh shows a cloud. The player uses the number cards, to move his canoes and, thereby, collect gems. The player uses the cloud card to influence the weather and, thus, change the speed of the Niagara River.

From his available paddle cards, each player chooses one card and places it face down on his rectangular space on the game board (see figure 3b).

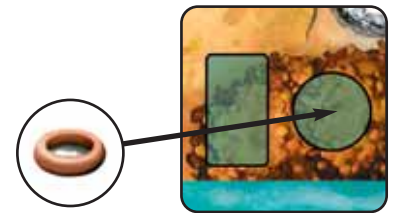


Figure 3a: The starting player places the "life preserver" on his round space on the game board.

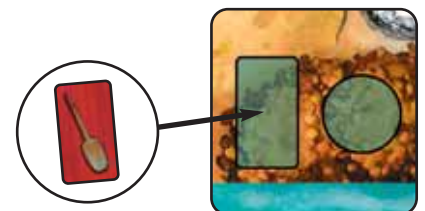


Figure 3b

Phase II: “Move canoe” or “influence weather”

Beginning with the starting player (with the life preserver), the players take their chosen actions in clockwise order. Until it is his turn, every player keeps his paddle card face down on the game board.

on a player's turn, he

- turns over his paddle card
- takes the “move canoe” action, if he played a number card or “influence the weather” if he played a cloud card (both actions are described below).



Figure 3c: On each player's card space on the board, lies the player's last played card. Previously played cards lie under these cards.

During the game, the face-up paddle cards of each player create a discard stack on their spaces on the game board. The players place each new card on top of the stack so the numbers on the cards under it cannot be seen (see figure 3c). Once played, cards remain on the game board until all 7 cards for a player have been played (and used). After 7 rounds, the players take back all 7 of their cards from the game board.

a. Move one of his canoes

When a player plays a number card, he takes the “moving canoes” action. He may only move his canoes. When moving his canoes, a player may - when the situation allows - collect gems from the discovery spaces, or steal them from other canoes. Furthermore, he may put gems from his canoes back to the discovery places, or bring them safely to land beyond the rope.

Move only one or both?

Whether a player, may/must move one or both of his canoes, depends on whether his canoes, at the beginning of his turn, are on land or in the water (see figure 4).

- If BOTH of his canoes are on land (e.g. at the beginning of the game), he MUST move ONE of his canoes - but may not move both.
- If ONE of his canoes is on land, the player is free to choose whether to move this canoe or not, but must move the other canoe (that is in the water).
- If BOTH canoes are on the water, he MUST move both.



Figure 4: Bea BROWN may only move one of her canoes, as both are on land. Yannick YELLOW and Roger RED must move their canoes that are already on the water and may also move their second canoes that are on land. Biggi BLUE must move both her canoes as they are both on the water. Gina GREEN would also have to move both her canoes, but she played a cloud, and moves no canoes. Instead, she moves the cloud marker on the weather track (see page 6).

The moving distance of the canoes

◦ The number on the played paddle card shows how far a player moves his canoe(s). When a player moves both canoes, he moves EACH CANOE the complete PADDLE DISTANCE (see figure 5 and page 6: “The eternal paddle laws of NIAGARA”).

The moving distance of the canoes for loading OR unloading gems

- When a player, on his turn, loads a gem from a discovery place on his canoe, this costs two paddle points. He moves this canoe TWO SPACES LESS, than the number on the paddle card (see figure 5a).
- When a player unloads a gem from his canoe to the discovery place, his move is also two spaces less than the number on the paddle card.
- If a player unloads and decides to reload his canoe immediately, this costs four paddle points! This canoe may move four spaces less, than the number of the paddle card (see figure 5b)



It is not allowed to waste “paddle points”
Exception: in the case of bringing gems safely to land (see page 5).



Figure 5a: Yannick YELLOW played his number 4 paddle card. As both his canoes are on the river, he must move both canoes. He first chooses to move his empty canoe 2 spaces toward the waterfall and there uses his third and fourth movement points to pick up the gem there. Then, he moves his other canoe four spaces toward the dock.



Figure 5b: Roger RED played his number 5 paddle card. He moves his canoe 1 space down-river. Now, he unloads the yellow gem (two paddle points) and loads a blue gem in this turn (two paddle points). With his second canoe he unloads a clear gem in the yellow colored discovery place first (two paddle points) and then moves his canoe 3 spaces up-river to steal the red gem from Yannick YELLOW's canoe (see page 5: "Stealing gems").

Loading OR unloading gems

! Only empty canoes may be loaded, as the canoes can transport only one gemstone.

Along the bank of the Niagara River, there are three different discovery places where gems can be found. There are also gems on two places on the land tongue. To load or unload a gem, a player must have one of his canoes on the river space next to the space with the gem. Each space with gems corresponds to a specific river space (see figure 6).



Figure 6: Unloading at the red discovery place, a canoe must be on the last river tile before the waterfall to either the left or right of the tongue of land. Unloading at the blue discovery place, the canoe can be both on the left and right side along the tongue of land. Unloading at the yellow discovery place, the canoe must be on the merging river space and so on.

There are two possible times a player can load OR unload his canoes: before or after he has moved the canoe. That is:

either:

- On a player's turn, he loads or unloads his canoe which is on a river space next to a discovery place. Then, he moves the canoe (but by 2 spaces less than the number on his paddle card).

or:

- On a player's turn, he begins with moving his canoe two spaces less than the paddle card number and then he loads or unloads his canoe at that place, where the move is finished.

- The color of an unloaded gem must not be identical with the color of the discovery place.
- If there are different colors of gems in a discovery place, the player may choose the gem to load.
- In case the player played the number 1 paddle card, he is not allowed to load or unload gems, as he needs 2 "paddle points" to do it.

Unloading a canoe and reloading it immediately

Having unloaded a canoe at a discovery place, a player can reload his canoe at once - but only at that discovery place where he has just unloaded that gem (see figure 5b)! The color of the reloaded gem has to be different from the unloaded gem.

On any case, a player must have sufficient "paddle points" (at least 4) to do this move! He can decide, whether he likes to start first moving his canoe or (unloading it).

! A loaded gem may not unload again in the same turn!!!

Gem stealing

Players can also collect gems by stealing them from other players. To do so, the player must have an empty canoe - moving up-river - stopped at the same river space at the canoe he wants to steal from (see figures 7a to 7f):

- When a player moves an empty canoe up-river and ends the movement on a river space with a loaded canoe, the player may steal the gem from the loaded canoe, placing it on his empty canoe. This applies, even if the player has unloaded his canoe at the beginning of his move (see figure 5b)!
- If there is more than one loaded canoe on the river space, the player may choose which to steal from.
- It is not possible to move a loaded canoe on a river space (with 2 points less than number of paddle card), unload the gem (2 paddle points) and then steal a gem from another canoe (0 paddle points).
- A player may not steal a gem while moving. That is, he may only steal a gem in the river space where he stops, and he may not stop the canoe's movement early to do so. The player must always use the full paddle movement when moving a canoe.
- The act of stealing costs no paddle points (unlike the cost for collecting a gem from the river bank or tongue of land).



Figure 7a: Roger RED plays the number 3 paddle card. He moves one of his canoes (with a gem) to the dock, and can unload the gem, placing it in his play area.



Figure 7b: He could move his other canoe (empty) up-river 3 spaces, and there can steal a gem from either Yannick YELLOW or Biggi BLUE.



Figure 7c: If he chooses to move 3 spaces down-river, he will go over the waterfall, which he certainly does not want!



Figure 7d: He also could choose to pick up the blue gem (for 2 movement points) from the river bank where his empty canoe was, and then move one space with the blue gem.



Figure 7e: Roger RED could also move 1 space down-river, and use his remaining 2 movement points to pick up the red gem from the river bank there.



Figure 7f: He chooses the last possibility: moving 1 space up-river and using his remaining 2 movement points to pick up the red gem on the river bank there.

Bring a gem to land

To win the game, it is not enough for players to load gems on their canoes. They must also bring them back to land.

- To bring a canoe to land, a player must move it over the last river space (marked by the rope) to the beach and placed on it.
 - When a player moves a loaded canoe to land, he takes the gem from the canoe and places it in his play area - well visible for all other players. The player now owns the gem. Unloading a canoe in the docks does not cost paddle points.
- The player places the canoe on the beach to the left or right of the river and may move not the canoe again until his next turn.
 - When a player moves a canoe back to land, he need not reach land by exact paddle movement. The unused movement points are lost.
 - A player may move an empty canoe to land, as well.

“The NIAGARA paddle laws“

- Canoes can only get into and leave the river, where the rope marks the starting and ending point (see figure 8) - unless canoes fall over the waterfall.
- Players are free to choose the movement direction of their canoes in the river (up-river or down-river), but are not allowed to change direction within their move (e.g. a player has paddle card 5 and moves 1 space down-river and 4 spaces up-river).
- If a player moves his canoe down-river, it is his free decision to move into the left or right creek. But, it is not possible to move a canoe up-river from one creek and down-river into the other creek within the same turn.
- There is not a specific sequence for moving canoes, if both are in the river. It is allowed to move one canoe down-river and the other one up-river.
- A player may, in the same turn, collect a gem with one canoe and steal a gem with his other canoe.
- Canoes may not trade gems, even when they are in the same river space.
- A canoe, moving down-river (towards the waterfall) may not steal a gem.
- A loaded canoe cannot steal a gem, as it is already full.
- A player who may steal a gem need not do so.
- A canoe that has been stolen, being now empty, may steal a gem from another canoe if it has the opportunity to do so.
- A player may not steal gems from his own canoe.
- When a player moves both canoes, he may move them in any order he chooses.
- A river space may contain any number of canoes.



Figure 8: Getting into the river, players have to move the entire paddle distance. Moving to the docks, players may waste paddle points.

b. Influence weather



When a player plays a cloud card, he takes the action “influence weather”. With this action, he can change the speed of the river, making it slower or faster (see also move the river).

- The player moves the CLOUD on the weather track one space up or down (also, e.g. from 0 to -1 or +1). The player must move the cloud when he plays the cloud paddle card, and may not leave it where it is. So, if the cloud is on +2 of the weather track, the player must move the cloud to +1 (see figure 9a/b).



Figure: 9a



Figure: 9b

A player who plays a cloud paddle card and, thus, influences the weather, may not move a canoe in that round, nor may her collect or steal a gem.

Phase III: Move the river

Using the transparent river discs that are next to the board, the players move the river.

For each space the river moves (river movement points), place a transparent river disc on the empty river space above the rope that spans the river. Now, push it down-river until it passes the rope and moves all transparent river discs. As soon as one transparent river disc falls over the waterfall, this space of movement is complete. All canoes that are on the river, float on their transparent river discs with the movement of the river (see figures 10a/b).

The number of spaces the river moves (the speed of the Niagara River) depends on the number cards played during the round, and, also, on the weather:

- With neutral weather (when the cloud is on O on the weather track), the river moves as many spaces as the lowest number card played in phase II of the round. This does not change when several paddle cards have the same lowest number.
- In non-neutral weather (i.e. the cloud is not on O on the weather track), the position of the cloud on the weather track adds (+1 or +2) or subtracts (-1) from the river movement determined above.

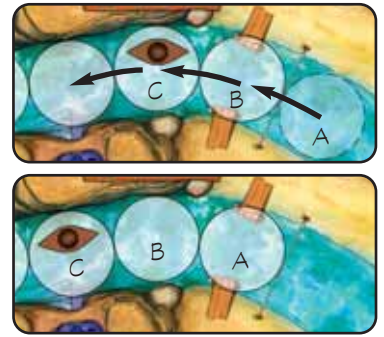


Figure 10a and 10b

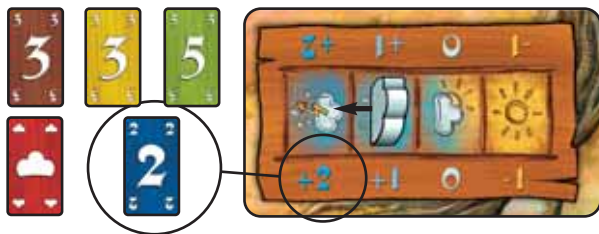


Figure 11: Bea and Yannick both play a 3 paddle card, Gina plays a 5, Biggi plays a 2, and Roger plays his cloud card. Roger moves the cloud from +1 to +2. Thus, the river will move 4 spaces (2 spaces for the lowest number paddle card plus 2 spaces for the weather).

- If no number cards (only cloud cards) are played in phase II of the round, the river only moves if the weather track is positive. Then it moves 1 (+1) or 2 (+2). If the weather track is on O or -1, the river does not move.
- At the land tongue, where the river splits, the discs flow to the left or right (usually alternating directions, but not always). Should it happen that a disc becomes lodged on the point of the land tongue and cannot be moved by pushing the disc at the top of the river a bit harder, the players should push the disc by hand in the opposite direction of the direction the previous disc moved.
- Each canoe on the river moves with the river, floating on the disc where it is. Watch carefully to make certain that no canoe changes discs or runs aground on the river bank: each canoe must remain on the disc where it was when the river movement began. Players may not move canoes during the river movement. If a disc falls over the waterfall, all canoes on the disc fall with it.
- In Phase III, gems cannot be collected, traded, or stolen.

Important! Waterfall danger!

During the river movement, canoes can fall over the waterfall into the deep.

- When a canoe falls over the waterfall, the owner loses the canoe (for a time). The canoe remains (for now) at the bottom of the waterfall.
- When a loaded canoe falls over the waterfall, the player returns the gem to the place on the riverbank for gems of that color.
- The owner of a canoe lost over the falls, may pay to have it returned (can only be done during phase I). The cost is any gem that the player owns (in his play area). He places the returned canoe on the beach at the starting point at the top of the river and may now use the canoe. He places the gem he paid with on the riverbank place for gems of that color.

EXCEPTION: if a player (after losing a canoe over the waterfall) has no canoes (both are lost in the waterfall) and no gems, he takes one of his canoes (for free) and places it on the beach at the starting point at the top of the river.

Phase IV: Give up the life preserver

Now, the current starting player gives the life preserver to his left neighbor. This player puts it on his round space on the game board and is the starting player for the next round. The next round now begins with phase I.

Game end and winner:

As soon as a player has collected (in his play area) five different gems or four of the same color or any seven gems, he wins and ends the game. However, the current phase II continues until everyone has played. As such multiple winners are possible.

Summary of NIAGARA

How to play...

Phase I: Every player lays a paddle card faced down on the game board ---> page 2

Phase II: On his turn, a player uncovers his paddle cards and takes his chosen actions. The current owner of the life preserver is the starting player. The players take their chosen actions in clockwise order ---> page 3

The face-up paddle cards of each player create a discard stack and remain on the game board until all 7 cards are played. Then, the players take their cards from the game board

Action A: MOVE CANOE(S) (in case a number card is played): ---> page 3

◦ Moving canoes

- Both canoes on land: only one of the canoes is allowed to get into the water
- One canoe on land: It is the player's free decision to move this canoe, but he must move the canoe in the water
- Both canoes in the river: both have to be moved

◦ Loading or unloading gems (cost per action: 2 paddle points): ---> page 4

- At the beginning or end of a move
- One gem per canoe

◦ Unloading and reloading the same canoe within a turn (cost: 4 paddle points): ---> page 4

- Gems must be of different color
- It must be the same discovery place
- A loaded canoe may not unload in the same turn!

◦ Stealing gems (cost: 0 paddle points): ---> page 5

- Only while moving up-river
- Player must move his empty canoe with the exact paddle distance to the river space, where he wants to steal a gem

◦ Bring gems to land: ---> page 5

- Move the canoe up-river to one of the landing spaces (extra paddle points may be wasted)
- Unload the gem and place it so it is visible for all players. This gem is safe for the rest of the game

Action B: INFLUENCE WEATHER (in case the cloud card is played): ---> page 6

◦ Player moves the cloud on the weather track one space up or down. (The CLOUD must be moved)

Phase III: Move the river ---> page 7

Speed of Niagara River (river movement points) = lowest number of played paddle cards +/- number of the weather track (marked with the cloud)

◦ Push as many transparent river discs as movement points down-river, until they have passed the rope

- Canoes are floating on the discs, where they are

◦ When a loaded canoe falls over the waterfall, it is lost. To get it back (unloaded), the player has to pay any gem he has already collected ---> page 7

- A player, who has neither canoes nor gems at this time, gets one of his canoes back for free and puts it

on the beach beyond the rope

Phase IV: Give the life preserver to the left neighbor (the starting player for the next round) --> page 8

End of the game: see above!

Published by Zoch Verlag - Copyright: 2004

Author: Thomas Liesching - Illustration & Layout: Victor Boden - English translation: Anna & Jay Tummelson