

SMALL STAR EMPIRES

RULEBOOK



ARCHONA
GAMES

OVERVIEW AND COMPONENTS

A new dawn for the galaxy is coming. Four of the major species inhabiting the galaxy finally achieved interstellar travel, and are ready to establish their empires and dominance across the galaxy!

Your species is among them. As a leader, you must make sure your rising empire is the dominant at the end! You will accomplish this by colonizing planetary systems and beautiful nebulae with your ships while establishing your domain.

Plan your strategy wisely to become the greatest star empire of the galaxy!

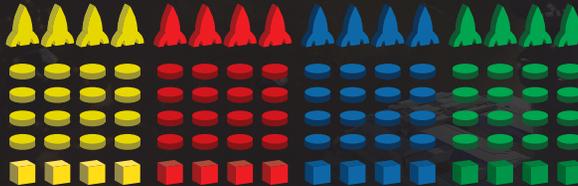
GAME OBJECTIVE

In *Small Star Empires*, you will move your ships on a modular map containing hexagon spaces called systems. After you move one of your ships into a system, you will colonize it by placing either a City or a Trade Station in that system. This will give you control over that system, and score you points either immediately (planetary systems) or at the end of the game (nebula or other systems). At the end of game, all players will calculate their points for each of the systems they control, plus other applicable bonus points. The player that has the most points wins the game.

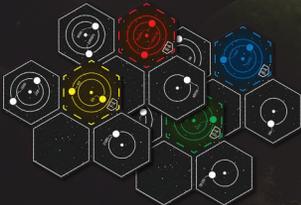
96 Plastic Components (4 Ships, 16 Cities and 4 Trade Stations per player)



Score Track and 4 player score markers



9 Nebula Markers (3 per color)



4 Homeworld Sector Tiles



7 Main Sector Tiles



15 Unexplored System Tiles

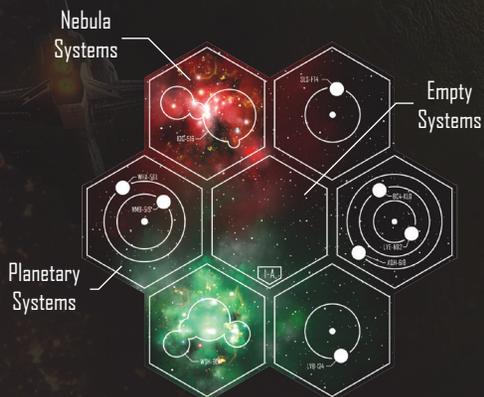


6 Wormhole/Black Hole Tiles

GAME ELEMENTS

Main Sector Tiles

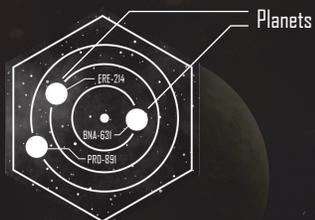
These tiles form the galaxy board. Each of the Main Sector Tiles has different spaces called systems in it.



Planetary Systems

Each Planetary System can contain a number of planets in it, usually from one to three planets.

When you colonize a Planetary System, score **1** (1 point) for each planet in that system.



Example: Three-planet Planetary System

Nebula Systems

There are three Nebula Systems of each color: Red, Blue and Green. The more Nebula Systems you control of one color at the end of game, the more points you will gain.



Example: Red Nebula System

Empty Systems

Empty Systems don't score you points when you colonize them, but they can be a pretty good spot for a Trade Station! Additionally, if you play with additional tiles from some of the variants, you will place those tiles on these systems during setup.



Other Systems

Other systems such as Wormholes, Black Holes and Unexplored Systems are described in more detail at the Variants section, page 10.



GAME ELEMENTS

Homeworld Sector Tiles

These tiles are similar to the Main Sector Tiles, except that each of these tiles contains a different player's Homeworld System in it, in addition to the standard Planetary Systems. Depending on the number of players, each player starts to play the game with a different amount of ships on his Homeworld System.



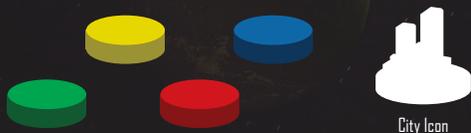
Ships

Each player will use their ships during the game to colonize the systems of the galaxy.



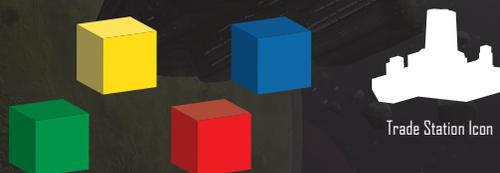
Cities

These are used for colonization of the systems of the galaxy. By placing a City on a system means that you have colonized that system.



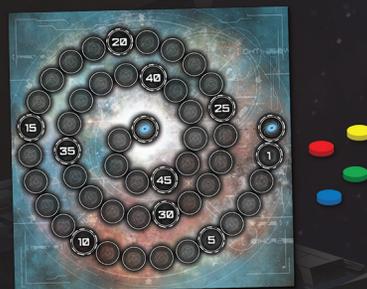
Trade Stations

These are also used for colonization of the systems in the galaxy. By placing a Trade Station on a system means that you have colonized that system. Additionally, you score bonus points for each of your Trade Stations at the end of the game (For more details on how they score points, see Gameplay, page 9).



Score Track and Markers

You will use the score track and the player score markers in order to track your points during the game and calculate the end game points.



Score points symbol:

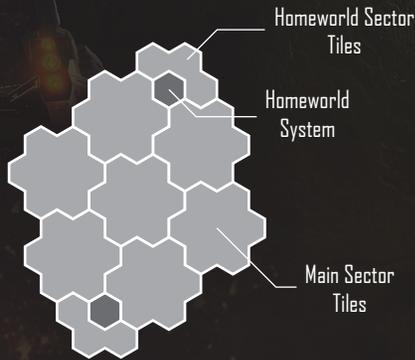
This symbol contains a number within it, which means how many points you need to score when you do certain moves or at the end of the game.



SETUP

1. Create the Board:

If this is your first game of Small Star Empires or you like to play on a balanced map, we recommend the following map. Shuffle the tiles and make a form like the examples below, corresponding with the number of players.



2 Player Basic Setup



3 Player Basic Setup



4 Player Basic Setup

IMPORTANT: The modular nature of the board allows you to create different map setups!
Be creative and find the setup that works best for you!

2. Choose a Player Color:

Each player chooses a color and they take all of the Ships, Cities and Trade Stations of that color. Depending on the number of players, each player starts with 2-4 ships of his color on his Homeworld System.



3. Prepare Score Track:

Place each player's disc marker on the 0 space of the track.

4. Start playing:

You are now ready to start playing!

GAMEPLAY

Small Star Empires is played over a series of turns, starting with the player that has last been a Star Emperor in one of his previous lives. If none of the players have been Star Emperors in their previous lives, the youngest player starts.

Basically, on your turn, you **MUST** do the following: Move one of you ships and then colonize the system you have moved into.

MOVE ONE SHIP

You must **choose one** of your ship on the board to move it as many spaces as you want but only in a straight line. You can move your ships in any one of the six directions of the hexagon during your turn. However, your ships cannot change directions during the same move.

Additional Rules for Movement:

Additionally, you **MUST** move your ship in accordance with the following rules:

Your ship **CAN** ✓

>> **MOVE INTO** any uncolonized system on the board that is in its line of movement.



>> **PASS THROUGH** a system you have already colonized (under your control).



>> **PASS THROUGH** a Wormhole System (for more info on Wormholes, check Variants section, page 10).



GAMEPLAY

Your ship **CANNOT** ❌

>> MOVE INTO or PASS THROUGH a system that is already colonized by another player (under opponent's control).



>> MOVE INTO into your Homeworld System, except if it is a Damaged Ship, (more on damaged ships check Variants section on page 10).



>> MOVE INTO a system you have already colonized (under your control).



GAMEPLAY

MOVE INTO or **PASS THROUGH** a Black Hole System (check Variants section, page 10).



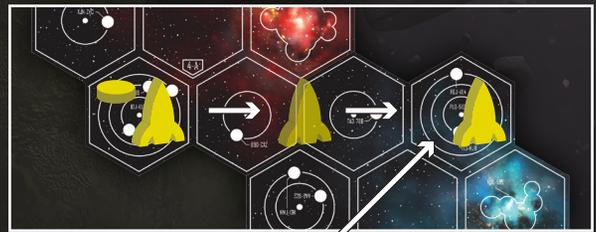
MOVE INTO a Wormhole System (for more info on Wormholes, check Variants section, page X).



GOLDEN RULE: By using some Variants and/or Expansions of the game, some of these rules may be overridden by the rules from those Variants and Expansions.

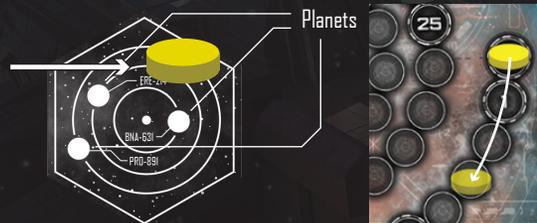
COLONIZE

After you have moved one of your ships, you **MUST COLONIZE** the system your ship has moved into by placing either a **City** or a **Trade Station** from your reserves. This way, you gain control over that system. No other players may later colonize that system during their turn. Additionally, you cannot choose to replace a **City** with a **Trade Station** or vice versa during the game.



Colonizing a Planetary System

If you colonize a Planetary System during your turn, you will immediately score points on the Score Track equal to the number of planets present in that system.

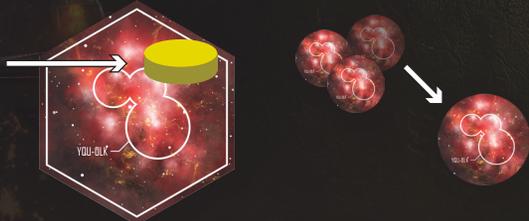


Example: Colonizing a Planetary System with three planets would give you **3** (3 points.)

GAMEPLAY

Colonizing a Nebula System

If you colonize a Nebula System during your turn, take the Nebula Marker of the corresponding color and place it beside you. At the end of the game, you will score **2** for having one Nebula Marker of a color, **5** for having two Nebula Markers of a color and **8** for having all Nebula Markers of a color.



Colonizing an Empty System

You can also colonize an empty system, but those systems will not give you points for colonization. However, if you place a **Trade Station** in an empty system, it can score you points for adjacent opponent systems at the end of the game as explained below.

The difference between a City and a Trade Station

Colonizing a system with a **City** or **Trade Station** is basically the same (placing either will give you control over the system), except that each of your **Trade Station** will give you additional points for **each adjacent opponent system** to them at the end of the game, so use them wisely!



Example: This **Trade Station** from the yellow player will score additional **5** at the end of the game, because it has 5 opponent systems adjacent to it. Note that it will not score **1** for the system that is under the yellow player's control.

GAME END

As previously stated, you **MUST** move one of your ships during your turn and colonize the system you move into, if **able**. If you are unable to move any of your ships because you are blocked by opponent systems, you pass and don't take any more turns. Play continues, until all of the players cannot move their ships anymore and each player passes.

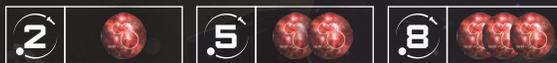
Alternatively, the game can also end when all of the players have put all of their **City** and **Trade Station** on the board.

SCORING

After the game ends, players continue to count down their end game points and add them on the score track:

Nebula Systems:

>> Score **2**, **5** or **8** if you control 1, 2 or 3 Nebulae of a color, respectively.



Trade Stations:

1

For each opponent system next to each of your Trade Stations.
NOTE: An opponent system is a system that has either an opponent **City**, **Trade Station**, other types of stations or a **Homeworld System**.

3

For the player with the largest territory (most connected systems in a single territory under his or her control).

If players are tied for having the most systems in a single territory, they all gain **3**.

Bonus points from Expansions and Variants:

Score additional points from Variants and Expansions.

GAME END

Congratulations! The player with the highest score is the winner!

TIEBREAKERS

In case of a tie, the player that has the most **Cities** left in his reserve is the winner of the game. If there is still a tie, the player that has the most **Trade Stations** left in his reserve is the winner. If there is still a tie, the player controlling the most planets from the tied players is the winner of the game. If there is still a tie, all tied players are winners.

VARIANTS

Variants are an interesting way to “spice up” your Small Star Empires gaming nights. You can choose to play with either one, several or all variants during a game. Here’s an explanation of some rules associated with the variants as well as explanation for the components.

Most of the Variants in Small Star Empires 2nd Edition are associated with some additional single-system tiles.



Additionally, most of the Variants and Expansions for Small Star Empires utilize the “Damaged Ships” rule. Here’s an explanation for Damaged Ships:

DAMAGED SHIPS

In some cases, your ships can get damaged during a game. When a ship gets damaged, simply turn it horizontally on the board.



VARIANTS

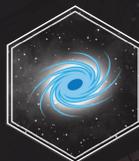
Damaged Ships have limited movement of 2 systems in any one direction during a turn, instead of the unlimited number of systems like the undamaged ships.

Additionally, **Damaged Ships** cannot enter Unexplored Systems. However, **Damaged Ships** can enter their owner’s Homeworld System for repairs. When you move your **Damaged Ship** into your Homeworld System, simply turn it in its original vertical position. From now on, you may move that ship regularly. This is the only case when you don’t need to colonize a system after moving your ship.

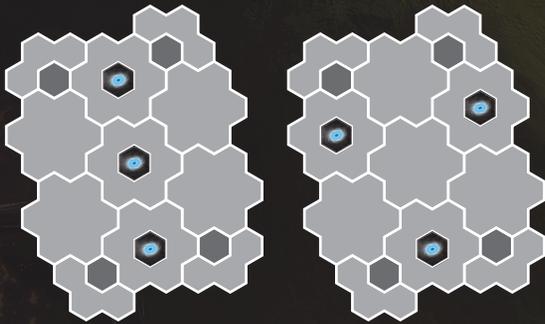


WORMHOLE

The **Wormholes** variant lets you use the Wormhole System tiles in order to create really interesting maps with the Special Wormhole Movement. To create a balanced wormhole map, we recommend the following setup:



VARIANTS



Place the Wormhole Systems on the middle Empty System on the Main Sector Tiles.

Moving with Wormholes

As previously mentioned in the Movement section, you cannot move your ship into a Wormhole System. However you can move a ship between systems that are adjacent to Wormhole Systems. This means that when you start your movement, your ship must already be adjacent to a wormhole in order to place it adjacent to another wormhole.



Wormhole Movement Example

Separate Galaxies Map

Using the Wormholes, you can create a separate galaxy board where players can travel between the smaller galaxies using the Wormholes:

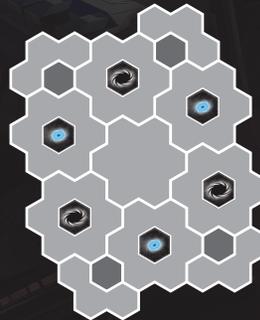


An example setup using Wormholes for separate galaxies



BLACK HOLES

The gravitational pull of the Black Hole Systems present a great danger to any ship passing through those systems, and that's why your ships cannot pass through or move into a Black Hole system.



An example setup using both Wormhole and Black Hole Systems

VARIANTS



UNEXPLORED SYSTEMS

The Unexplored Systems represent the areas of the galaxy that are yet to be discovered.

To setup, shuffle the Unexplored Systems face down and put one tile without looking at it on each of the Empty Systems on the board. Put the rest back in the box without looking at them.

Exploring These Systems

You may only move your ship into these systems and colonize them using Cities. If you don't have any Cities left, you CANNOT enter these systems.

When you enter an Unexplored System, simply turn the tile face-up and resolve its effect.



Planetary Systems:

When you enter and reveal this system, colonize it with a City. Score points as when you colonize a normal Planetary System (1 per planet).



Chromatic Nebula:

When you enter and reveal this system, colonize it with a City. When scoring points for Nebula Systems at the end of the game, you may choose which color this Nebula is and add it to that set of color. A color set cannot have more than 3 Nebulae in the base game.



Asteroid Field:

When you enter and reveal this system, Damage your ship. From now on, no other ships can enter or pass through this system.



Abandoned Trade Station:

When you enter and reveal this system, colonize it with a City. Score 1. At the end of the game, count this City as your Trade Station.



Refueling Station:

When you enter and reveal this system, colonize it with a City. Score 1. You may then move the ship in this system into an adjacent uncolonized system and colonize that system.



Hollana Federation:

When you enter and reveal this system, colonize it with a City. Score 2. At the end of the game, the player that controls the most systems adjacent to the Hollana Federation system scores additional 3. If there is a tie for who controls the most adjacent systems, all tied players score 2.



Tennar Union:

When you enter and reveal this system, colonize it with a City. Score 2. At the end of the game, each player that controls at least one system adjacent to the Tennar Union system scores additional 2.



Nordinn Empire:

When you enter and reveal this system, Damage your ship. From now on, no other ships can enter or pass through this system. After that, if you have any adjacent Cities to this system, choose one of them to destroy (return the City back to your reserves). If you don't have any Cities adjacent to this system, then choose another player's City and destroy that instead.



If you destroy an adjacent City this way, place put the Nordinn Empire conquest marker on the system. Systems with a Nordinn Empire conquest markers are considered conquered and you cannot move your ships into those systems.

VARIANTS

CAMPAIGN MODE

If you want to play multiple games in one night, you can also try the Campaign Mode. In this variant, you will play more than 3 games depending on the number of players to determine the winner.

Before the start of the first game, the players start with fewer available Cities and Trade Stations than the normal game, according to the number of players:

- >> 2 Players - 14 Cities and 4 Trade Stations
- >> 3 Players - 12 Cities and 3 Trade Stations
- >> 4 Players - 10 Cities and 2 Trade Stations

Put the remaining **Cities** and **Trade Stations** back in the box.

Designate an area for the "win pile". Each time you win, you must put a **City** from your reserves into the "win pile". The **City** marks that you have won the round and are one point closer towards total victory. This also means that you will start the next game in the Campaign Mode with one **City** less.

Winning a Campaign

A player will win the whole campaign after earning a number of Campaign points (**Cities** in the "win pile"), which is also determined according to the number of players:

- >> 2 Players - 5 Campaign Points
- >> 3 Players - 4 Campaign Points
- >> 4 Players - 3 Campaign Points

OPEN BORDERS

This variant adds one simple rule to the game:

If you want to pass through an opponent system with one of your Ships, you may pay him one of your unused **Cities** in your reserves to pass (the opponent puts the **City** in front of him). The opponent cannot reject this. At the end of the game, players score **2** for each **City** that they got from their opponents during the game.

EPIC GAME MODE

If you own two copies of Small Star Empires and/or any additional expansions, you can play the Epic Game Mode variant by using tiles and components from both copies of the game and/or the expansions.



Since you will have more Nebula Systems of each color when playing the **Epic Game Mode**, at the end of the game score points according to this table:

1x Nebula	2x Nebulae	3x Nebulae
2	5	8
4x Nebula	5x Nebulae	6x Nebulae
11	15	19

To create the board, shuffle the Main Sector Tiles from both copies of the game, and set use the following recommended setup according to the number of players:

Base Game Epic

If you want to use only two copies of the base game, we recommend the following map setup and number of components for each player:

2 PLAYERS

Components per player:

3	
32	
8	



VARIANTS

3 PLAYERS

Components per player:

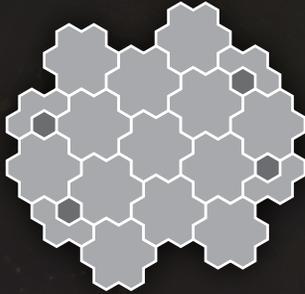
4	
26	
7	



4 PLAYERS

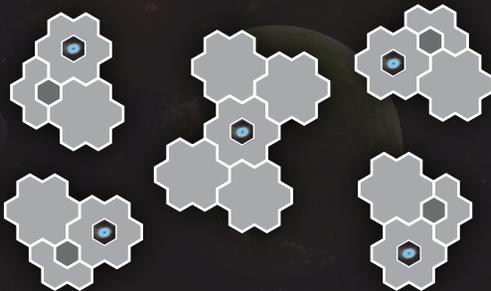
Components per player:

5	
24	
6	



Epic Game with Wormholes

Of course, you can create separate galaxies for an EPIC board setups by using the Wormhole Systems:



Epic game with ONE Main Expansion

If you want to play an epic game with one of the main expansions (The Galactic Divide or Dawn of Discoveries), we recommend the following map setup and number of components for each player:



OR



2 PLAYERS

Components per player:

3	
32	
8	
3	



Additional
Tiles from Expansion

3 PLAYERS

Components per player:

4	
26	
8	
3	



VARIANTS

4 PLAYERS

Components per player:

4	
24	
6	
3	



3 PLAYERS

Components per player:

3	
26	
8	
3	
3	



Epic game with TWO Main Expansions

If you want to play an epic game with the two main expansions (The Galactic Divide + Dawn of Discoveries), we recommend the following map setup and number of components for each player:



4 PLAYERS

Components per player:

3	
24	
6	
3	
3	



2 PLAYERS

Components per player:

3	
32	
8	
3	
3	



Score Keeper Application

At the following link/QR Code, you can download the official Score Keeper application for Small Star Empires, where you can write your scores and keep statistics of your games.
www.archonagames.com/rulebooks/

CREDITS



This rulebook and any new updates and FAQ's may also become available in several other languages on our website in the future. Scan the QR Code on the left or enter the following address manually to download:

www.archonagames.com/rulebooks/

If you need any help with the game and/or replacement parts, send us an e-mail at:

contact@archonagames.com

SMALL STAR EMPIRES

2ND EDITION

HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE HELP OF 1198 **KICKSTARTER** BACKERS.

THANK YOU!

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