

# MICHIGAN ROCKS™



A CogginTheMachine Creative Arts exploration...

## About the game...

The word cairn refers to a mound of rough stones built as a memorial or landmark. Ancient peoples from all over the globe have used the practice of cairn building to mark pathways through difficult to navigate terrain as well as places of special importance.

Arctic explorers used cairns to mark points on treks and in some cases, such as a most famous cairn discovered on May 5, 1859, to relay messages to those who might follow in their tracks. The cairn, again made famous by the recent series on AMC, contained a note written by Captain James Fitzjames and alluded to the fate of the men aboard the two expeditionary ships the Terror and the Erebus. The Victory Point cairn, as it is now known, is believed to have originally been constructed by another explorer, a predecessor of Fitzjames, James Ross in 1830.

You may not be marking anything of importance or creating a memorial but the subtle art of precise cairn building, or rock balancing, could leave you feeling pretty special. Hell, it could even make you famous. If you don't believe me check out this guy at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3zcL3bOiuM> or this guy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFZdZ5igtwI>

**Michigan Rocks™** is a game of skill and balance...and a little bit of luck. The game brings the centuries old practice of cairn building into your living room and adds an element of competition. With hand picked rocks from the shores of Lake Michigan and hand made cedar specialty dice this game is bound to get you feelin' pretty stoned, or maybe it'll even rock your world... ha!

## Contents

- Game platform - Hand made from repurposed materials
- 18 hand picked lake Michigan rocks, color coded into three colors: Red, White, and... you guessed it...Blue!
- Two hand made cedar dice: Die one, the Action die, has sides that display either a slash or a circle and determines whether the player will add a rock to the cairn (circle) or remove a rock from the cairn (slash). Die two, the Category die, displays colored circles that correspond to the three categories of rocks and determines from which category of rock a player adding a rock to the cairn must choose from.

## Rules

- Lay out game mat.
- Remove the rocks and place on game bag in piles according to color marking... we're gonna call this the "Game Quarry" just to be clever
- Determine who will go first by playing rock, paper, scissors. In the case of a 4 player game, divide into two groups of two. The winners of each group then play each other and the winner of that game is first to play.
- Player one must start by adding a rock. To do this the category die should be rolled and a rock from the corresponding category chosen and placed in the middle of the platform. Only at the beginning of the game and when there is no stone in the middle during play is the action die not rolled at the beginning of a turn. Thus the cairn begins.
- Cairn-play continues to the right, going counter-clockwise...for no other reason than to mix it up a little :)
- Player two rolls the action die, and if a slash is rolled removes the rock and places it in his own quarry. The player's turn is then over. If a circle appears on the die face then the category die is rolled and a rock chosen from the corresponding category is placed on top of the first rock.\*
- Play continues until either the cairn falls or one player has six rocks in their quarry.
- If a player has six rocks in their quarry at the beginning of their turn they can choose to "stack alone" using their six rocks. If the player successfully stacks all six rocks the game is over and that player wins. If unsuccessful the player is out. The player's rocks are returned to the game quarry and the remaining players continue. In the case of a two player game the remaining player wins.

### Rules Cont...

- At any time if the cairn falls while a player is stacking a rock that player is out. The rocks are returned to the game quarry and play begins again. In the case of a two player game the remaining player is the winner.\*\*
- If at any time all the rocks of one color are absent from the game quarry and that color appears on the category die, the first player with that color rock to the right of the player whose turn it is must surrender it to be stacked.
- These rules of course can be modified to meet your needs...perhaps you just wanna stack rocks. Don't be ashamed...that's perfectly normal. Go for it!

### Additional Rules

- **\*Stacking Rocks-** When stacking rocks it is permissible to use your free hand to steady or adjust the rock immediately below the one you are attempting to stack. In this way it is easier to make adjustments in order to facilitate the stack. At no time should any other part of the already stacked cairn be touched.
- **\*\*Multiple Lives Game-** In order to facilitate longer game play, rocks held in a personal quarry can be used to indicate extra lives. When a player is deemed out during regular game play (not stacking alone) the player can return one of the rocks in their quarry to the game quarry and therefore remain in the game.



For more information regarding Michigan Rocks  
or to leave feedback check out  
[CogInTheMachine.com](http://CogInTheMachine.com)

### **About the creation of Michigan Rocks...**

Each game pack takes approximately two hours to create and assemble...not including the long walks on the beach:) All of the components are made of recycled/repurposed materials... it may not be pretty, but it's damn fun! For more information about the types of rocks found in and around Lake Michigan check out Bruce Miller and Kevin Gauthier's book Lake Michigan Rock Picker's Guide.

Use these blank pages to jot down ideas on how to make the game better then send us an email at [MichiganRocks@cogginthemachine.com](mailto:MichiganRocks@cogginthemachine.com)

**Rock On!**



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