R. U. M. B. L.

RoboUltimateMechaBattleLeague

by Greg Lam

By the year 2534, inefficient, unreliable human players of team sports have been replaced by machines, maximizing enjoyment for all. To take advantage of the machines' capabilities, new Robosports have been invented.

The third most popular sport on planet Earth after SPACECAR racing and Clone Professional Wrestling is RoboUltimateMechaBattleLeague, where the controllers try to program their team of robots to seize the middle of the playing field in three rounds of exciting robotic combat. To win a RUMBL, you must carefully choose among the special abilities of your robots, place them for maximum impact, anticipate your opponent's moves, and ration your team's power strategically. If you can do all this, you can rule the RUMBL!

Object of Game

To score the most number of points after three rounds by having robots closest to the center of the board at the end of each round.

Game Components

16 large double-sided Robot tokens, 8 per color
14 small Power tokens, 7 per color
6 small Sector tokens
4 small Clone tokens, 2 per color
8 small double-sided Priority tokens
6 wooden obstacle blocks
1 board, 2 docks
2 secrecy screens

Initial Assembly of the Components

The Robot tokens should be stickered on both sides, with robot stickers of the same color and same prefix letter placed on opposite sides of the same token. For example, the blue "A. Missile" sticker should be on the opposite side of the blue "A. Shield" sticker. The 8 small, round Priority tokens should have an orange numbered Priority sticker on the front, and a generic black sticker with the word "Priority" on the back. The other tokens should be stickered only on one side.

Play Overview

There are three rounds of play. In each round, players first simultaneously and secretly place 1 to 3 of their robots on a dock. On each placed robot is placed a power token which determines the distance the robot can travel. On top of that, place a Priority token which will determine turn order. The docks are then revealed and connected to the main board. In the resolution phase, the placed robots each move in the order of their Priority tokens the amount of spaces that is on their Power token unless blocked or affected by other robots. At the end, players receive points based on where their robots ends up at the end of the round.

As there are 7 power tokens and 8 robots, each player will have at least one unused robot at the end of the game.

Play Setup

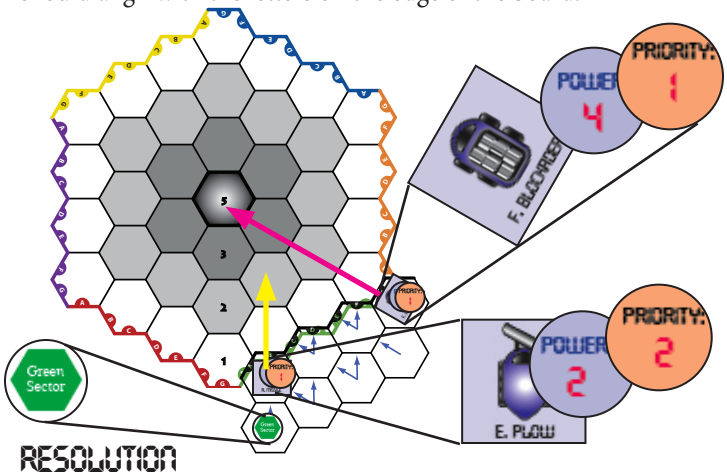
At the beginning of the game, each player draws three sector tokens and randomly and secretly places their Robot tokens on the table behind the secrecy screen. The randomly chosen face-up sides of the robot tokens are the rosters for the game.

Play

At the beginning of each round, each player draws three priority tokens. Place all tokens and the dock behind the secrecy screen.

Each round, each player loads from 1-3 robots onto their dock. Place the robots aligned in the direction that you want the robot to move. Add a power token on top of the robot token and then a priority token on top of that. The player also must place a sector token on the dock to indicate the side that the dock connects to.

When both players have arranged their robots on the dock, they slide them from behind the screen to their spot on the game board so that the dock aligns with the chosen sector color. Each dock should align with the letters on the edge of the board.



Resolution

In priority token order, reveal the power level of the first robot and resolve its movement before moving onto the next robot. A robot moves the number of spaces equal to its power token in the direction that it is pointed unless it is blocked. Each robot has an ability that can affect its movement. In the diagram above, the Blockader robot moves first as its priority is #1. It moves ahead 4 spaces as shown by the pink arrow to match its power token. The Plow then moves ahead two spaces as shown by the yellow arrow.

If a Creeper robot is on the board at the end of a round, it may move an extra space. If two Creepers are on the board, the player who moved a robot most recently moves their Creeper first.

At the end of a round, the robots on the board score according to the space that they occupy. The outer ring scores 1 point, the 2nd ring scores 2 points, the 3rd ring scores 3 points, and the center space scores 5 points. Any piece that is in the middle space is removed from the board after scoring. The two used sector tokens and all of the used power tiles are discarded, and the priority tokens are all discarded and redrawn. The docks are cleared of tokens and re-used.

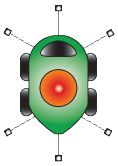
Play lasts three rounds. At the end of the game Sleeper robots, if any are on the board, move according to its power token. This occurs after the Creeper robot, if one is on the board, moves. If there are two Sleeper robots, the player who moved most recently goes first. Sleeper robots score double at the end of a game.

TYPES OF ROBOTS

A. BOMB

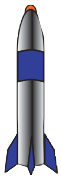
After the Bomb robot reaches its destination or is blocked, it explodes, destroying itself and every object in any adjacent space.

A. MINE



After the Mine robot reaches its destination or is blocked, it activates its land mine sensors. For the rest of the game, if any robot then enters a space adjacent to it, the Mine explodes destroying it and every object in an adjacent space.

B. MISSILE



After the initial movement, the Missile continues moving to seek and destroy the closest object, removing both itself and the target from the board. If there are two or more objects at an equal distance to the Missile, the player chooses which to target. It can turn in any direction so long as it heads toward the nearest object. If it hits an object during its initial movement, it will destroy it and itself upon contact. If there are no other objects on the board when it fires, the Missile flies off the board.

B. SHIELD

This robot climbs over other robots or obstacles in its path. If it stops on top of another object, it protects it from damage. For example, a Missile will destroy the Shield, not the robot underneath. If it lands on another robot, it moves along with it if that robot should be moved. It scores like any other robot.

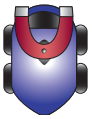
C. CLONER

After the Cloner reaches its destination or is blocked, the Cloner places two clones in two adjacent spaces of the player's choice. These clones also score points, though only at half of normal Robots, rounding up. If it is reactivated via the Activator robot, a Cloner can replace lost clones, but a Cloner may only have at most two clones on the board at one time.

C. BLOCKADER

As the Blockader moves, it drops obstacle blocks in the spaces behind it. The obstacles block movement for any robot that encounters it, except for the ones that can fly or climb over other robots and obstacles.

D. MAGNETBOT



After the Magnetbot reaches its destination or is blocked, it attracts the nearest object in each of the six directions closer by one space.

D. REPULSOR

After the Repulsor reaches its destination or is blocked, it pushes away all objects in an adjacent space away from it by one space if there is space behind it. If there is no empty space behind an object, the Repulsor does not move that object.

E. ACTIVATOR

When the Activator's path is blocked by a robot, friendly or otherwise, it transfers its remaining power to that robot. That robot, controlled by the original owner, then uses the remaining power to move forward and enact its ability.

E. NULLIFIER

After this robot stops, no robot may use its ability or move when within an adjacent space of the Nullifier for the rest of that round. If a robot enters a space next to a Nullifier during that round, it loses power and stops. In subsequent rounds, this ability is not activated.

F. HELIBOT

This robot hovers over the playing field, passing over obstacles and other robots, and lands on the space at the end of its allotted movement. If that space is occupied, it lands in the closest open space along its path before that space.

F. RICOCHET

This robot, whenever its path is blocked, must turn and continue in the direction of the player's choice to complete its allotted movement.

G. CREEPER

The Creeper, at the end of every round it is on the board, can move to any adjacent space of the player's choice after all other movements have been made. The orientation of the Creeper changes to the new direction. If both players have a Creeper, the player who most recently moved a robot goes first.

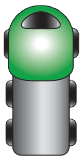
G. SLEEPER

When the Sleeper is played, play the Power token upside down. The Sleeper initially moves ahead until it reaches the outer ring of the playing board and immediately shuts down. The hidden power token is not used for this initial movement. At the end of the game, if the Sleeper is still on the board, the power token activates and the Sleeper moves its full allotted movement. The Sleeper scores double its value at the end of the game.

H. PLOW

The Plow pushes any object that blocks its path forward until its power is used. It can push more than one object, the objects being pushed pushing the next object in line in turn. It may push oblects entirely off the board.

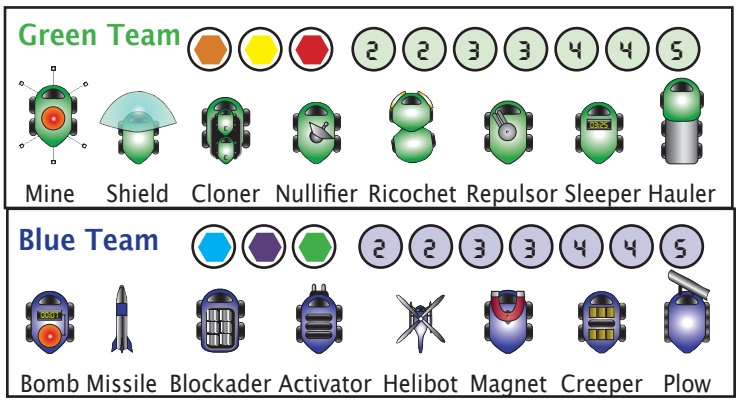
H. HAULER



The Hauler pulls any object in the space directly behind it along with it as it moves. A hauled robot may then move on its own in a later phase from its new location. A robot being hauled may be pointed in any direction and does not have to be aligned with the direction arrows. If it is pointed forward at the Hauler, however, its path will be blocked by the Hauler itself.

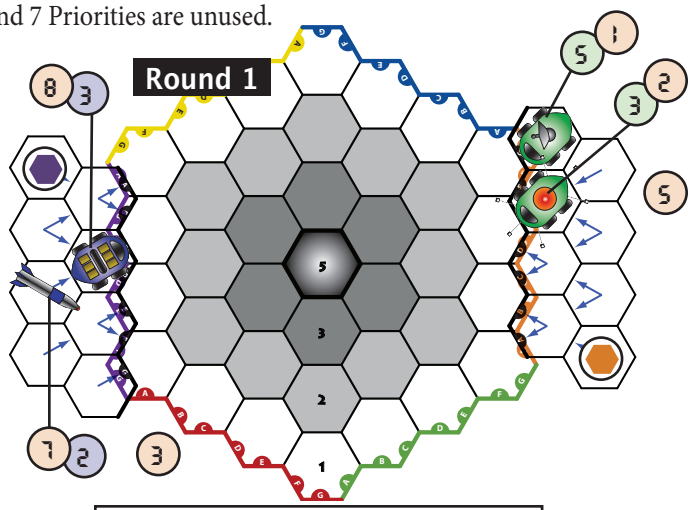
SAMPLE GAME

To illustrate game play, here is a sample game. After the two team owners draw sector tokens and randomize their team tokens, their assets look like this:

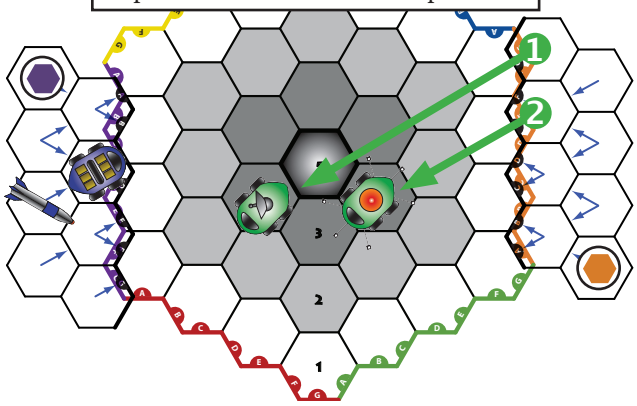


In the first round, Green team draws Priority 1, 2, and 5. Blue team draws 3, 7, and 8.

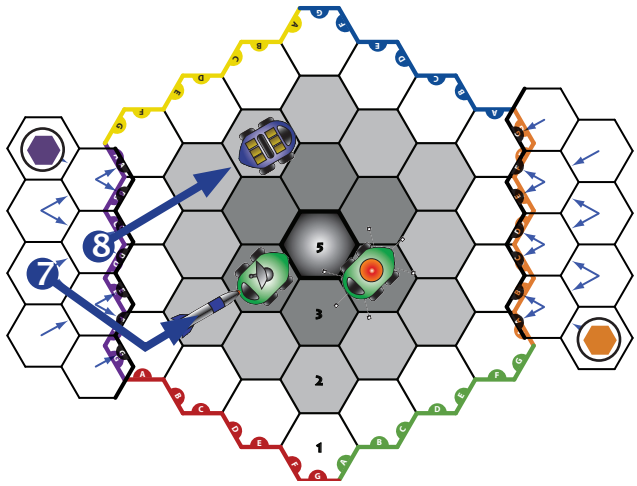
Green chooses to to use the orange dock and programs a Nullifier with Priority 1, Power 5 and a Mine with Priority 2, Power 3. Blue chooses to use the Purple dock, and programs a Missile with Priority 7, Power 2 and a Creeper with Priority 8, Power 3. The 5 and 7 Priorities are unused.



In phase 1, the Nullifier moves 5 spaces.
In phase 2, the Mine moves 3 spaces.

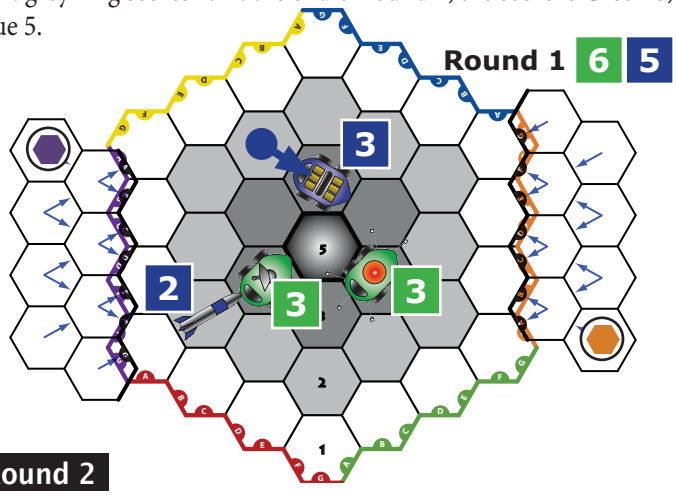


In phase 7, the Missile moves forward two spaces. After its movement, it must turn and target either the Nullifier or the Creeper. The player chooses to target the Nullifier. Because it is in an active Nullifier zone, it stops in the second space. In phase 8, the Creeper moves three spaces.

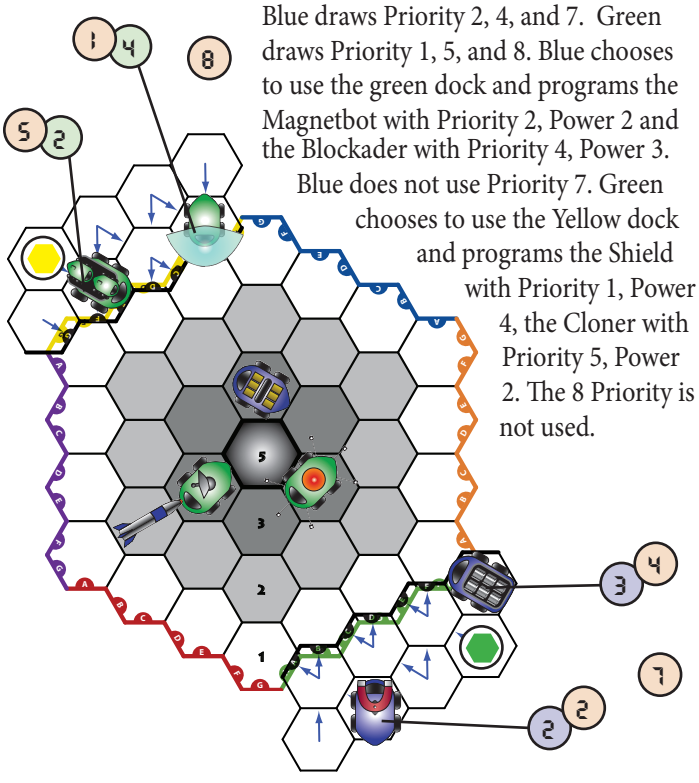


At the end of the round, the Creeper is able to move one extra space of the player's choice. The Creeper turns and moves into the next ring, avoiding the Nullifier's affect.

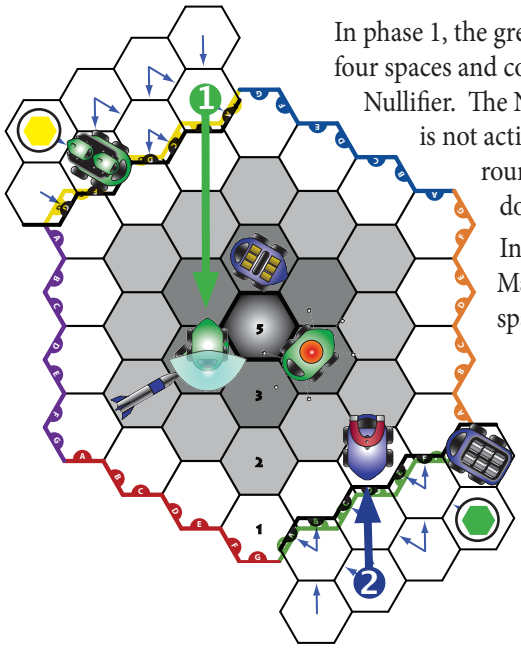
At this point, all robots on the board are scored. The three robots in the dark grey ring score three points, and the Missile in the light grey ring scores 2. At the end of round 1, the score is Green 6, Blue 5.



Round 2

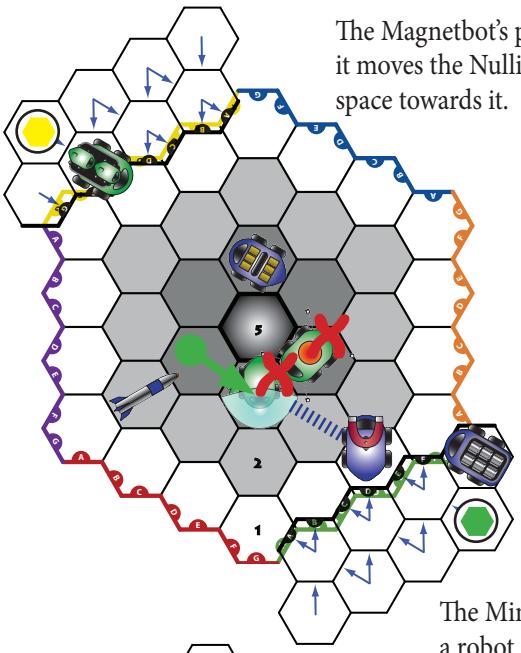


Blue draws Priority 2, 4, and 7. Green draws Priority 1, 5, and 8. Blue chooses to use the green dock and programs the Magnetbot with Priority 2, Power 2 and the Blockader with Priority 4, Power 3. Blue does not use Priority 7. Green chooses to use the Yellow dock and programs the Shield with Priority 1, Power 4, the Cloner with Priority 5, Power 2. The 8 Priority is not used.



In phase 1, the green Shield moves four spaces and covers the green Nullifier. The Nullifier's power is not active in this second round, so the Shield does not stop moving.

In phase 2, the Magnetbot moves two spaces.



The Magnetbot's power activates, and it moves the Nullifier and Shield one space towards it.

The Mine explodes as a robot moves into its area, also destroying The Shield.

The Nullifier remains unharmed as it was protected by The Shield.

In Phase 4, the Blockader moves three spaces, dropping an obstacle block behind it in each space. In Phase 5 the Cloner moves two spaces, then places two Clones in adjacent spaces.

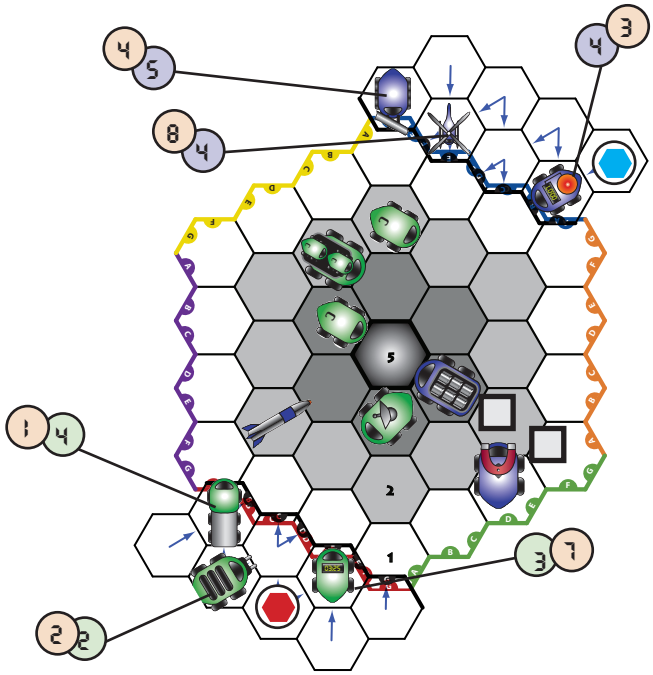
The Creeper moves one space at the end of the round (X).

Round 2	8	11
Total	14	16

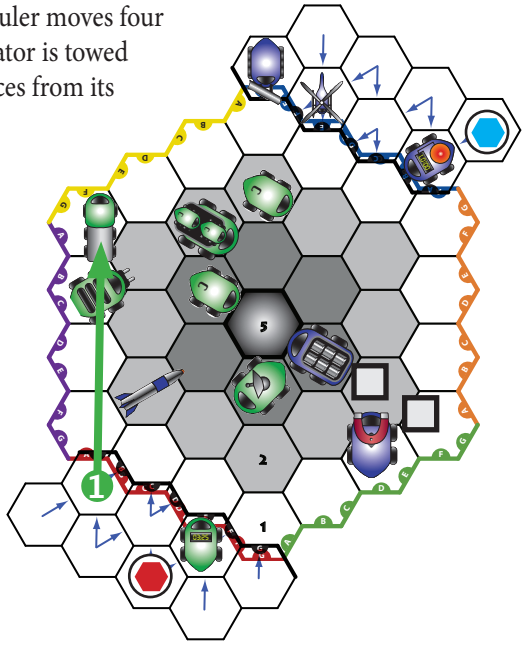
The score for this round is Green - 8, Blue - 11. Remember the Clones score 1/2 of a normal piece, rounded up. The total score is now Green - 14, Blue - 16. After the round is over, the piece in the center is removed.

Round 3

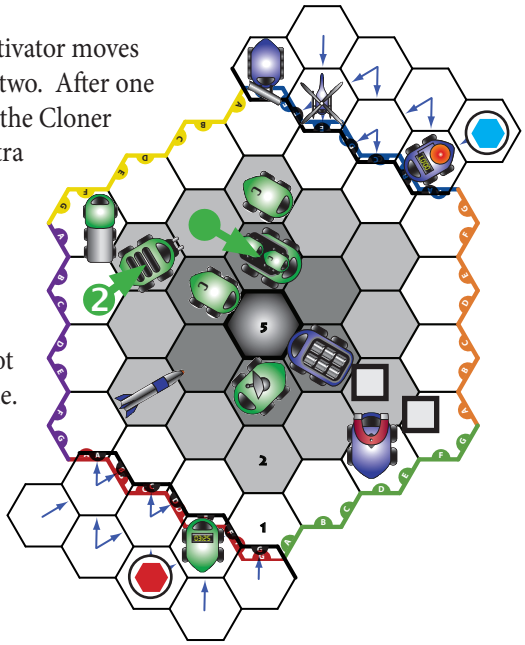
In the final round, Blue must use the Blue Dock, Green must use the Red Dock. Blue draws Priority 3, 4, and 8. Green draws Priority 1, 2, and 7. Blue programs a Bomb with the Priority 3, Power 4, a Plow with the Priority 4, Power 5, a Helibot with the Priority 8, Power 4. Green programs the Hauler with the Priority 1, Power 4 the Activator with the Priority 2, Power 2, and the Sleeper with Priority 7, Power 3.



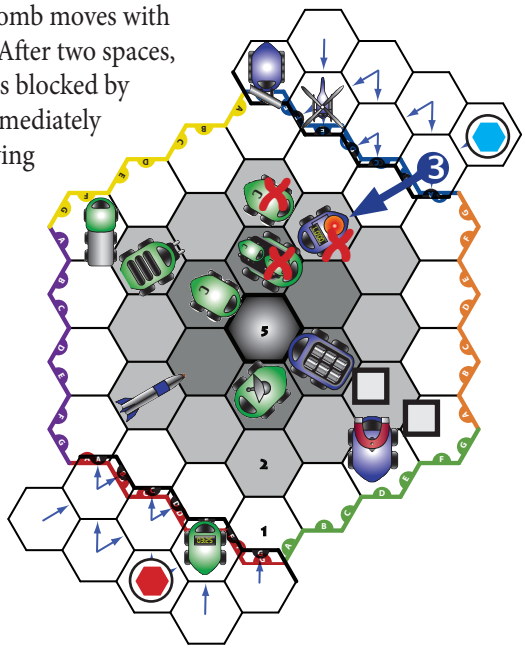
In Phase 1, the Hauler moves four spaces. The Activator is towed behind it four spaces from its starting point.



In Phase 2, the Activator moves with the power of two. After one space, it runs into the Cloner and imparts its extra movement point to it. The Cloner moves one space. However, because both clones are on the board, it cannot place another clone.

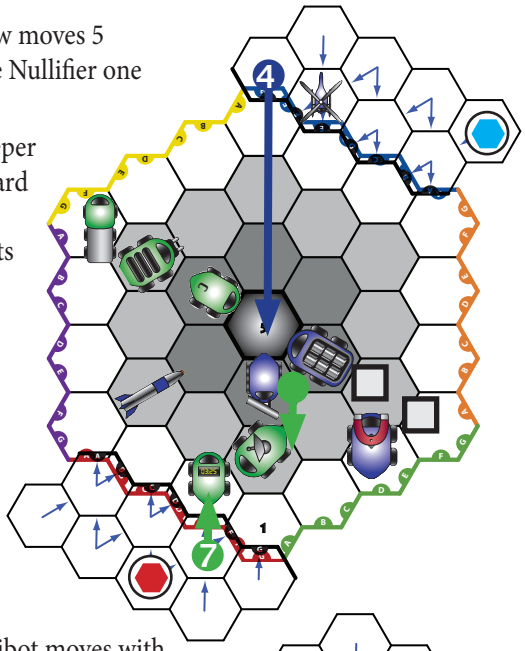


In Phase 3, the Bomb moves with a power of four. After two spaces, the Bomb's path is blocked by the Cloner. It immediately explodes, destroying itself, the Cloner, and one of the Clones.

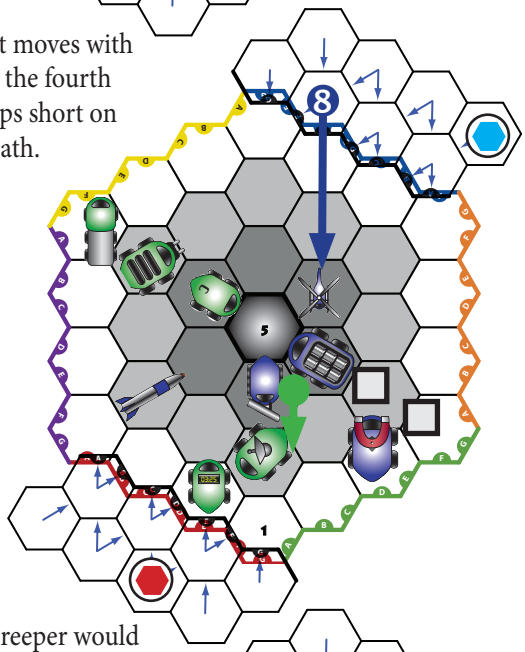


In Phase 4, the Plow moves 5 spaces, pushing the Nullifier one space at the end.

In Phase 7, the Sleeper moves onto the board and shuts down without revealing its power token.

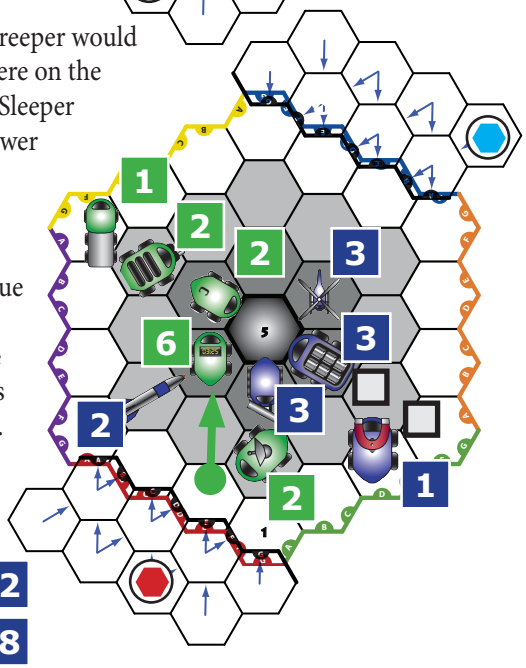


In Phase 8, the Helibot moves with a power of 4. Because the fourth space is blocked, it stops short on the third space in its path.



After the round, the Creeper would move one space if it were on the board. After that, the Sleeper activates its hidden power token of 3 and moves forward. It is blocked after two spaces.

For the final round, Blue scores 12 points, and Green scores 13. Note that The Sleeper scores double, the Clone half. The final score is Blue - 27, Green - 28.



Round 3	13	12
Total	27	28

Note that two robots were unused at the end of the game: The Ricochet for Green, and the Repulsor for Blue.

Learning Variant

When playing the game for the first time, try playing an abbreviated version of the game for the sake of simplicity and learning. Play a one round game with both players using only the robots lettered "A" through "D" as their options. Each player will take 3 Power tokens, one each with the numbers 3, 4, and 5 and will draw one sector token.

Advanced Variants

1. **Roster Choice** Instead of randomly choosing a roster of robots, each player secretly chooses their rosters before the first round before drawing Sector tokens and Priority Tokens.
2. **Two Game Series** To mitigate the chance of having unequal rosters in any given game, play a two game series of games. For the second game, each player flips over all their robots so that every robot is available for both players during the series. Scores should be kept cumulatively over the series.
3. **Timed Rounds** Use a timer to limit the amount of time players can use to program their Docks. For intermediate players, use 90 seconds as the time limit. For advanced players, use 60 seconds.
4. **Priority Tokens Swap** Each player can choose to turn in two of his or her Priority tokens in return for one of the unused tokens.

Notes and Special Cases

Tie Breaker
In the event of a tie, the team with the robot on the board with the letter closest to the beginning of the alphabet wins. If the Blue team has a Shield (B) and the Green team has the Cloner (C) as its highest value robot, the Blue team wins. If the top robot is tied, go to the next highest for each team.

General
Players may choose to use fewer than seven robots in a game.

Robots must be initially placed on the Dock aligned with one of the direction arrows, except for a robot towed by the Hauler.

Docks act like any other board space and can be affected by things like a Bomb, Magnetbot, Missile, or Repulsor.

Docks are cleared after the end of each round.

Objects pushed off the board are eliminated immediately (unless onto a Dock), and cannot affect anything on the board.

An obstacle or robot can prevent another robot from moving onto the board by blocking its entrance onto the board. In that case, a robot's ability can activate while on the dock.

Activator
An Activator can transfer power to an enemy robot. In that case, the opponent makes any choices regarding its abilities.

Creeper and Sleeper
In the last round after all of the new robots have moved, Creepers move before Sleepers.

Hauler
When a robot is placed in a dock behind the Hauler, it does not have to align with the direction arrows. If the Hauler is activated by the Activator, it hauls any object that happens to be behind it.

Mine
An active Mine robot will explode as soon as a robot enters its area before an approaching Activator or Shield can reach it. A robot already in a space when a Mine moves adjacent to it does not set off the Mine.

Missile
A Missile, once it uses its original movement, must take the shortest route possible to the nearest target, even if it is a friendly robot.

Missile and Helibot
The Missile and Helibot do not trigger the Mine as they pass over spaces adjacent to the Mine. However, the Missile cannot pass directly over robots or other obstacles.

Nullifier
Robots whose ability are not activated due to the Nullifier do not have their ability activated in the next round(s) when the Nullifier shuts down unless they are activated by the Activator. This includes destructive robots like the Missile, the Bomb and the Mine.

A Shield that enters a Nullifer's field can move on top of another robot, but will not protect it.

Shield
A Shield can protect an enemy robot or even an obstacle. If an Activator touches a robot with a Shield on top of it, the robot underneath receives the energy. Two Shields can cover the same robot, with the last Shield to move on top of the stack.

Sleeper
The point(s) of movement that brings the Sleeper onto the board is free. When the hidden movement token is revealed and activated at the end of the game, the full amount on the power token is used.

Special Thanks to Doug Orleans, Evan Tannhauser, Felix Rodriguez, Luke Miratrix, Paul Abrahamme, Eric June, the participants of Protospiel 2010 and other playtesters.

702 Randolph Ave.
Milton, MA 02186
(617) 680-4984
http://www.pair-of-dice.com
Email info@pair-of-dice.com