Shepherd Mess

2-4 players

30-60 mins

Shepherd Mess is a game of cunning and skill in the art of herding sheep … Get your flock in their pen or there shall be no lamb for supper :)

Shepherd Mess requires a little more crafting than some of our other Print & Play games, so prep the scissors, a few dabs of glue and a little bit of patience and a couple of hours later you will have a super adorable board game. Simply print the pages from the 'Game Pieces' file on the website in colour and follow the instructions in the Shepherd Mess 'Crafting' section on the website. There you will find all the instructions you need to make your game and the box we have designed for it. You will also need a dice. Use any six sided dice you have at home or even an app on your phone :)

Have fun :)

Set the board:
To set the board quickly and easily, refer to the Set Up infographic at the end of these rules.

1. Start by laying out the nine board squares to make up the board.Some of the squares have numbers on them and these numbers must be arranged as you see in the infographic. The rest of the squares can be arranged any way you like.
2. Place four corner walls with double gates on the four corner tiles of the board to make up the four pens. Any number of sheep can go through the double gate in one turn. You can place another gate on the other side of the corner wall during the game, but your sheep will only be able to go into the pen one at a time through the small gate.
3. Obstacles. Next you must add some terrain variations to the bord. You have six tiles with 'Muddy Patches' and five tiles with 'Puddles'. You must lay them all out. To do that at random, you will use the dice. Roll the dice twice to determine the position of each obstacle as is shown in the infographic at the end of the instructions.
4. Sheep. Next you will place your sheep. Pick your sheep breed and matching sheepdog first and pick a player to start. They must place one of their sheep first, followed by the player to their left and so on until all sheep have been placed one by one.

    Note: Please note that you will not know which pen will be yours until after you have placed your sheep, so place them strategically.
   ● **A sheep can be placed only on a tile without an obstacle.**
   ● **A maximum of two sheep can be placed on the same tile when setting up.**
   ● **Sheep from different flocks CAN be placed on the same tile but be aware that all sheep will react to the external sources (i.e. if a dog scares the sheep, they will all move, even if they are from different flocks).**

- ***Depending on the number of players, every player will place the number of sheep as follows:***
    - ***2 players - 10 sheep each***
    - ***3 players - 7 sheep each***
    - ***4 players - 5 sheep each.***

5. When all the sheep are placed, it's time to find out which pen will be yours. Player 1 throws the dice until they get any number between 1 and 4. This will be the number of the pen they will use. Player 2 throws the dice until they get an available pen number. This continues until all the players know where their flocks need to end up. Place both your sheepdogs in your pen.

6. Ram. When the board is all laid out it's time to add the final piece - the ram. There are six muddy patches on the board. The ram will land on one of them at random. To do that, throw the dice and place the ram on the corresponding muddy patch.

7. Arrange the remaining landscape additions next to the board, visible to all players. You will find 4 bridges, 4 stepping stones, 8 straight stone walls, 3 corner stone walls and 10 gates. These will help you guide your sheep to their pens and prevent your opponents' flocks to reach theirs. Here is how they work:
    a. Bridges - sheep can't cross the water without a bridge. Throughout the game you will have to add bridges to move your flock. Bridges are directional, so the sheep can only cross in the direction of the bridge. Once a bridge is placed, the tile in question becomes functional only in the direction of the bridge. As long as there is a bridge, any number of sheep can cross the water at the same time.
    b. Stepping stones. Mud patches already contain stepping stones that show the path a sheep can take to cross them. These paths can go straight, make a turn or go in any direction. During the game you will be able to add stepping stones to a mud patch to alter the path direction. Please note that only one sheep can cross a muddy patch in one turn.
    c. Stone walls. There are straight and corner stone walls. Sheep cannot cross stone walls without a gate.
    d. Gate. A gate can be placed on any wall. Sheep can go through a gate, but only one at a time.

The board is set, now it's time to play :)

Play the game:

The aim of the game is simple - use your sheepdogs to herd all your sheep into your pen. You mustn't steal another player's sheep. If there is another player's sheep in your flock, you must separate it before driving your flock into your pen. If you end up with another player's sheep in your pen, you lose the game.

Play:

1. Player 1 starts. They can make two moves. They can move their sheepdogs, alter the landscape or both. Here is how it works:

   a. Place an addition to the landscape. As part of your move you can choose to place a bridge, a wall, a stepping stone or a gate. Simply pick what you would like to add and place it anywhere you want, depending on what the piece does (i.e. a gate goes over a wall, a bridge goes over water, a stepping stone goes in a mud patch and a wall goes on the border between two squares.) This counts as one of your two moves. You can then choose to place another addition to the landscape or move your sheepdog:

   b. Sheepdog move: the other move you can make is to move your sheepdog. Sheepdogs scare and drive the sheep away from themselves as shown in the infographic at the end of the rules. A sheepdog can be moved up to three spaces in one move. **When the sheepdog stops, it scares the sheep and drives them one space away from the dog in a straight line**. If there is something in the way, the sheep will take the next available exit.

   Note:

   - *The dogs must move around the sheep, not through the flock. They cannot step or stop on tiles that have sheep on them.*
   - *A dog will affect ALL sheep on adjacent tiles at the same time, no matter which player they belong to.*
   - *A dog can only make one move per turn. If you would like both your moves to be using your dogs, you must move both your dogs once.*
   - *A dog does not have to physically move to make a move (i.e. if there are already sheep next to the dog that you want to drive, simply use one of your moves to have the dog 'bark' and scare the sheep away from itself without actually moving.*
   - *A dog can go through and stop on any tile that has no sheep, even if it has an obstacle. They can also ignore the directionality of an obstacle square. For example, a puddle with a bridge on top can only be crossed in the direction of the bridge by the sheep, but not the dog. The dog can go in the other direction or at a right angle as well. They can also jump over walls and cross muddy patches in any direction. They cannot move diagonally though.*
   - *If a sheep is presented with two equal choices, they will stay in place. Indecision is one of their biggest character flaws :).*
   - *If the sheep are scared towards a wall, water without a bridge or another player's sheepdog, they cannot move in that direction and will choose another available direction or if there is no available direction, they will stay in place.*
   - *If the sheep are scared towards a wall with a gate, only one sheep can go through. If there are different sheep on the tile, you can choose which one will*

go through. The rest of the sheep will stay in place. You can use this to separate a sheep that is not meant to be in your flock.

- *If the sheep can choose between joining sheep from their own flock or joining a different flock, they will choose their own. You can use this to your advantage in order to separate a sheep that is not meant to be in your flock.*
- *If the sheep are scared towards a bridge, they will go over the bridge and stop on the tile just beyond. Any number of sheep can go over a bridge in one move.*
- *If the sheep are scared towards a muddy patch with a stone path, one of the sheep will be able to cross following the path (so not necessarily in a straight line) and land beyond the muddy tile. If there are different types of sheep on the tile, you can choose which sheep will cross. The rest of the sheep will stay in place. You can use this to separate a sheep that is not meant to be in your flock. If there are no stepping stones in an appropriate place on the muddy patch, the sheep cannot cross and you will have to use one of your moves to add a stepping stone.*

   c. Sheepdog fight. You can prevent another player from using one of their dogs for a turn by fighting them. You must be within 3 spaces from the opponent's dog and use one of your moves to do it. Simply move your dog to the same square as the other one. You cannot use this dog on that turn and your opponent can't use it on their next turn. For the turn after that, the dogs are free to move again.
Please refer to the infographics below for some helpful examples on how the sheep and dogs move on the board.

2. When player one has finished their turn, the player to their left continues and so on until one player drives all their sheep home and wins.

End of the game
As soon as one player has all their sheep and only their sheep safe and sound in their pen, the game is over. There is just one more little thing. Did anyone get the ram in their pen? If so, they must multiply their flock by 1.5 for lambing season. The player with the most sheep in their pen wins.

1. Arrange the board tiles, so the numbers in the corners follow and match the illustration above.

2. Place the four pen walls with gates in the four corners.
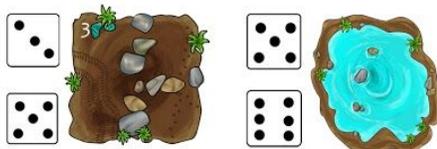
3. Throw the dice to see where each mud patch and puddle will land. Throw the dice once and find the number across, throw the dice a second time and find the number on the side. Place the mud or puddle tile where these numbers cross. Repeat this until all mud and puddle tiles have been placed. If you get a repeat result or a pen, throw again to place the mud and puddle tiles in available spaces.

4. Take turns adding your flock to the board. Start with player one and add one sheep at a time until the appropriate number of sheep for each player has been placed as described in the rules.
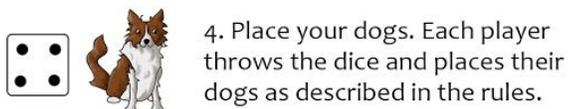
4. Place your dogs. Each player throws the dice and places their dogs as described in the rules.

6. Throw the dice one last time and place the ram on the Muddy Patch, corresponding to the number.

Play the Game

Here we have put together some example moves
for Shepherd Mess. There are more variations possible, but these
examples will give you a good idea of how the game works.

Have fun, enjoy and if you have any questions, just ask :)

1. Let's have a look at one half of the board as it's set in the Set Up example above.

2. Player one starts. They can make two moves - place an addition to the landscape or move their dogs. Let's say Player one has the white dog. They can only come out of the pen one way, because they can't go through a tile that has a sheep. So they take the other way and move three spaces. When they stop, they are next to one black sheep. The dog scares the sheep one space away from itself, so the sheep joins the two brown ones. During the game any number of sheep can occupy one square.

3. As a second move Player one must move their second dog, which is still in the pen or add to the landscape. Let's say they choose to move their other dog. They can still take only one way. This time, they only go two spaces. When the second dog stops, they scare the sheep. In this case though, the sheep can't go one step away in a straight line. The two grey sheep can't cross the water without a bridge, so they must go one of the other two ways. If there was a grey sheep they could join, they would. In this case there isn't. If both available spaces had sheep from different herds, the grey sheep would have stayed in place, because they can't decide who to join. In this case though, one of the spaces is empty, so they would go there. The white sheep can't go out of the board and can't cross the puddle, so it will go the only available way - into the pen. Player one has one of their sheep safely in the pen.

4. It's player 2's turn. Let's say as a first move they want to place a bridge. Simply take a bridge from the game pieces and place it over the puddle in the direction they want the puddle to be crossed. From now on this puddle can only be crossed in this direction. As a second move, Player 2 moves one of their dogs just one space. The dog scares the black sheep. The sheep can either go join the white and brown sheep to the right or cross the bridge. In this case beyond the bridge there is another black sheep, so the sheep that has to move will choose to go that way.

5. It's Player 1's turn again. This time they will want to get their second sheep into the pen. This will take three moves, so first they will just set it up by adding pieces to the landscape. The white sheep cannot cross the mud patch because the direction of the stone path is not suitable. As a first move Player 1 places a pebble stone on the muddy patch to extend the path. Now the sheep will be able to cross the muddy patch, but the wall beyond has no gate. As a second move Player 1 will add a small gate to the pen wall.

During their next turn, Player 1 will be able to scare the sheep and drive it into the pen. Player 1 must make sure they get only their sheep into the pen and not the brown sheep, which is part of a different flock. Luckily, in this case Player 1 has two different ways of doing that. Both the muddy patch and the single gate can only be crossed by one sheep at a time and the player can choose which sheep crosses.

Hope these examples help. The game has a number of complexities as there are many moving pieces and they can be … well, quite sheepish about the way they move :)

Have fun with it, remember that sheep are very fluffy and cute, but not necessarily very bright and obedient, so be kind and patient with them :)

If you have any questions or difficulties, please don't hesitate to contact us!

Have fun, be green, be Green Squirrel!