



BIG SHOT

ALEX RANDOLPH

ages **8+** | **2-4** players | **45** min.

Speculators are rushing to the city where a building boom is in progress. Players want to acquire ownership cubes at a good bargain, then deploy these cubes wisely to lots within the city. It is important for players to lay their hands on valuable properties without falling too deeply in debt.

Contents

- One game board with 13 lots.
 - When a player has ownership of a lot, at the end of the game they earn "M" (the monetary unit of the game) equal to the number shown on the lot.
 - Districts: The game board is divided by dashed lines into four districts.
 - x2 lots: A player earns no M for owning one of the two "x2" lots on the board, but if they own a x2 lot and any of the adjacent lots (9, 10, 11) in the same district, then the value of those lots is doubled for that player.
 - Auction spaces: Bordering the city are 18 auction spaces that will each hold 4 ownership cubes. Auctions will determine where these cubes are placed within the city.
- 72 cubes (4 colors, 18 per player), which represent players' claims to lots
- 1 real estate broker piece
- 45 coins: 1M (x20), 5M (x15), 10M (x10)
- 4 player tokens (4 colors)
- 30 IOU tokens (-10), which record a player's borrowing from the bank
- 13 SOLD tokens, which denote ownership of lots
- 1 die

Set-up

- Lay out the game board on the table. Distribute the 72 cubes by placing 4 cubes at random on each of the 18 auction spaces. Make sure that at least 2 different colors of cubes are on each auction space.
- Place the broker piece at random on one of the 18 auction spaces.
- Designate an area on the table as the bank, then place all the coins, IOU tokens, and SOLD tokens in this bank.
- Give each player a 10M coin from the bank.
- Give each player a player token.
- Decide which player will take the first turn, then take turns in clockwise order.
- Keep your player token, coins, and IOU tokens visible to all players during the game.

Play!

A game of Big Shot lasts 18 rounds, with each round proceeding as follows:

(1) Move the Broker

The starting player rolls the die, then moves the broker piece clockwise that

many spaces, skipping any auction spaces that contain no cubes. The player then passes the die left to keep track of who will start the next round.

(2) Auction the Cubes

An auction now takes place for the 4 cubes in the auction space where the broker piece is located. Bids are made in turn in clockwise order, starting with the player to the left of the one who rolled the die. A player may bid or pass; after passing, a player cannot re-enter the bidding. When bidding, a player must place a bid at least 1M higher than the previous bid. If a player doesn't have enough funds, they may either borrow from the bank or pass instead of bidding. (Please refer to the "Loans" section below.) The bidding continues until all but one player pass. The winning bidder pays the amount bid to the bank, then takes the 4 cubes from the auction space. If nobody bids, the player who rolled the die takes the 4 cubes at no cost.

(3) Deploy the cubes

The winning bidder now places the 4 cubes on the game board. The 4 cubes can be placed on a single lot or distributed on multiple lots. Be clever when placing these cubes! (Consult the "Acquire Lots" section for details.)

• Acquire Lots

A maximum of 7 cubes can be placed on a lot.

Once a lot has 7 cubes on it, determine who owns the lot. The player who has the most cubes out of these 7 acquires ownership of the lot.

However, if a tie exists for most cubes on a lot, then these cubes are ignored when determining who owns the lot. More specifically, when two or three players tie on

a lot (with a cube breakdown of 3/3/1 or 2/2/2/1), then they have no right to own the lot. Instead, the lot goes to the player with only one cube.

When the seventh cube is placed on a lot, determine who owns the lot, then place a SOLD token on the lot, along with a cube of the lot winner. Remove the 6 other cubes from the game.

• Hints

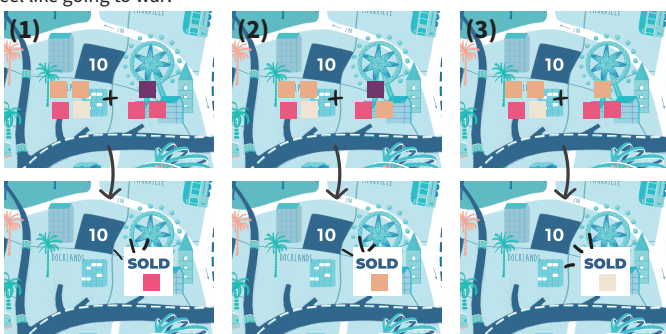
Each player has only 18 cubes, so you need to be careful about "spending" those cubes. Always look for a chance to gain ownership of a lot with only 1-2 cubes. Having 3 cubes in a lot does not guarantee that you'll own it, and spending 4 cubes to gain a lot can be wasteful!

• Gameplay example:

There are 4 cubes on a lot: one red, two orange, and one ivory. The broker piece has arrived at an auction space with one purple, two red, and one orange. Three players have a chance of acquiring this lot:

- (1) If the red player wins the bid and places one purple and two red cubes on the lot, then the lot goes to the red player (purple 1/ red 3/ orange 2/ ivory 1).
- (2) If the orange player wins the bid and places one purple, one red, and one orange cube, then the lot goes to the orange player (purple 1/ red 2/ orange 3/ ivory 1).
- (3) If the ivory player wins the bid and places two red and one orange cubes, then the lot goes to the ivory player (red 3/ orange 3/ ivory 1).

Therefore, bidding on this auction space — and almost all auction spaces — will feel like going to war!



- Loans

Once in the course of each round, each player may borrow 10M from the bank. However, the player receives only a portion of this 10M. For the first loan, the player receives 9M (as 1M is withheld as interest). They receive only 8M for the second loan, 7M for the third, and so on. Together with the money, the player receives an IOU token, and these tokens must be kept visible to all players. When the game ends, players must pay back the face value of IOUs (i.e., the number of tokens x 10M) to the bank.

End of the game

The game ends after the eighteenth round, i.e., after all the cubes on the auction

spaces have now been placed on the lots. If any lots have fewer than 7 cubes on them, ownership of these lots is decided by the same set of rules described above:

The player with the most cubes on a lot (e.g., 2/1 or 1/0) gains ownership of that lot.

However, if players are tied for the most cubes, these cubes are ignored. For example, if a lot has 2/2/1 cubes on it, the player with only one cube now owns the lot.

If there is still a tie, e.g., 2/2 or 1/1/1, then nobody can claim ownership of that lot.

As you determine ownership of each lot, place a SOLD token on that lot along with a cube of the lot owner. Remove all other cubes from the game.

- **Valuation of the lots**

The number on a lot indicates its value in millions. The two "x2" lots have no value on their own. However, if a player owns neighboring lots, e.g. 9, 10, 11, then the value of the lots doubles.

- **Example:**

The red player has an "x2" lot and the two adjacent lots 9 and 10. The ivory player possesses lot 11 in the same district. Red's lots are worth 38M (i.e., $(9+10) \times 2$) while ivory's lot is worth 11M.

Each player needs to evaluate their final financial status by summing the value of all the lots they own and all the coins they possess, then subtracting the value of their loans (i.e., the number of IOU tokens they hold \times 10M).

Of the players who own at least two lots, the player with the best financial status wins. In case of a tie, the tied player who owns the most lots wins; if the tie persists, the tied player who owns the most valuable lot wins.



A More Challenging Variation

For a more challenging way to play Big Shot:

- Stick to the same rules, but each player keeps their coins hidden.
- In each round, borrowing is possible only before bidding begins.
- Players cannot bid more than they can pay. If a violation occurs, the player who made a mistake must reveal their coins, then the auction restarts.

The Game for Three: The Neutral Player

The rules are the same except that:

- The cubes of the fourth color belong to a neutral player.
- The neutral player cannot participate in the bidding. Nevertheless, players can make the neutral player acquire lots by strategically distributing cubes of this fourth color.
- If the neutral player owns a lot, place the SOLD token and the neutral player's cube on it.
- After the game ends, ignore the financial status of the neutral player.

The Game for Two: A Fierce Competition

- Each player plays with two colors and takes coins worth 20M at the start of the game.
- The coins and IOUs must be kept in two separate piles by color.
- A player can take a loan only before bidding begins in a round, with only one loan being allowed per round.
- After the auction, a player must pay the winning bid with coins from only one of their corresponding colors.
- The doubling power of a "x2" lot applies only to lots owned by the same color as the x2 lot, not to all adjacent lots owned by the same player.
- A player must acquire at least two lots with each of their two colors in order to win.
- When the game ends, a player sums the earnings and debts of their two colors together to determine their final financial standing.