TRI-STAR RACERS

BY GLENN COTTER

30 Minutes

2 - 5 Players

TRI-STAR RACERS

Glenn Cotter
2-5 Players • 30 Minutes
Rules vF.01

Overview

In Tri-Star Racers, you are the captain of a spaceship racing team competing in the Tri-Star Race Championship. As you race, you'll discover new crystals to fuel your ships. Place triangle tile crystals making color matches to fuel your ships and activate special powers to propel your team to victory! Win by getting your ENTIRE TEAM of ships the farthest passed the Finish Line at the end of the race.
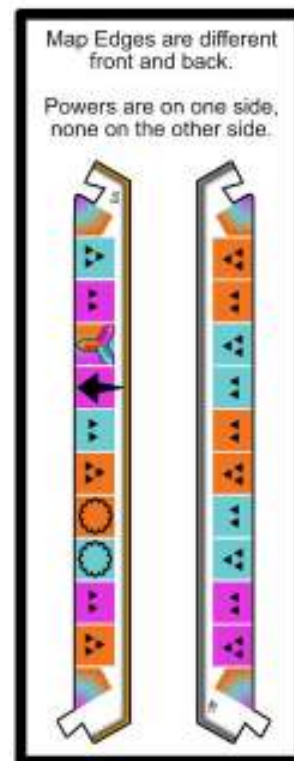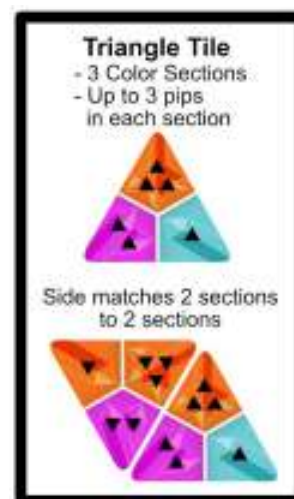
Components
1 Board • 65 Triangle Tiles • 1 Tile Bag • 8 Map Edge Pieces • 9 Starburst Tokens • 1 Finish Line
• 3 Draft Cards • 5 Players Reference Cards • 20 Ship Tokens • 1 First Player Badge

Triangle Tile
- 3 Color Sections
- Up to 3 pips in each section
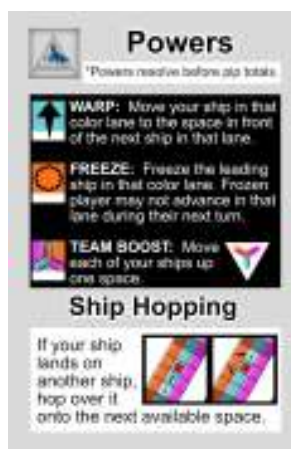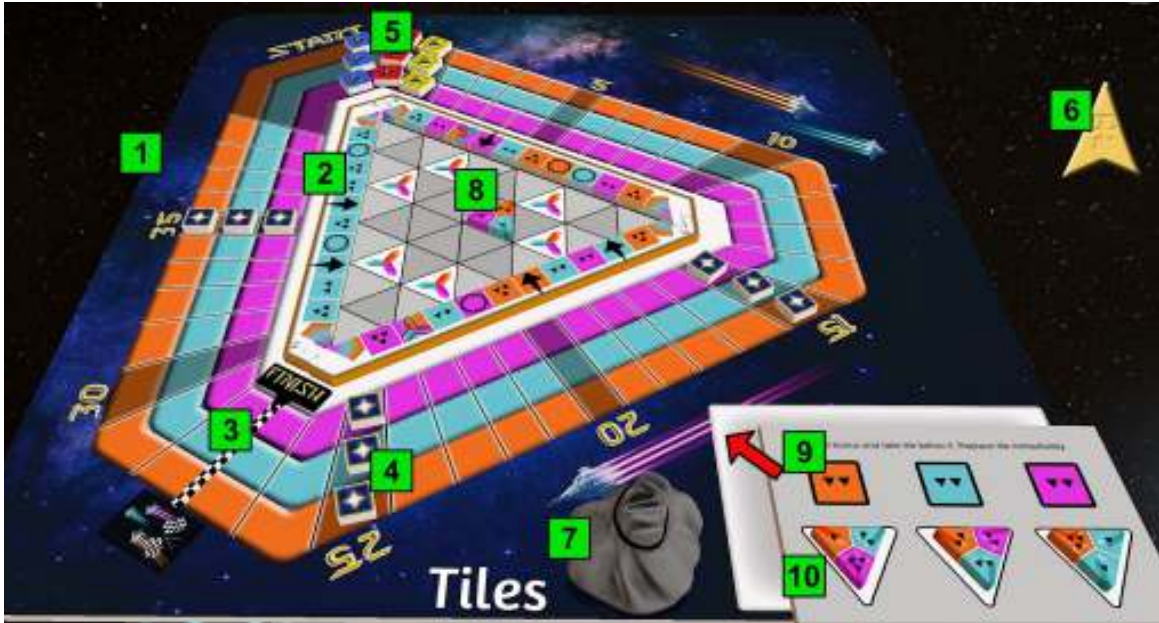
Side matches 2 sections to 2 sections

Quick Start
Once the game is set up, most of what you need to know is on your Player Reference Card. This rule book is meant to be a detailed reference. It should clarify your questions about gameplay, give examples and tips, and show alternate setups and scenarios.

Just start playing and see how it goes… Match up colors, count pips, and move ships. The game plays quickly, and the first time is always a learning game. Have some fun racing!

You may also watch a quick "How to play" video to get you started:

http://headcraftedgames.com/tri-star-racers

Map Edges are different front and back.

Powers are on one side, none on the other side.

On your turn
1. PLAY A TILE
For each color match:
First, activate any Powers.
Then, total pips in the matching color sections and move your ships.

2. TAKE A NEW TILE
Gain linked bonus on Draft Card.

3. (USE STARBURSTS) if collected

End Game
First team of 3 ships to cross the finish line triggers the final round.

Get your entire team far up their tracks. Final score is your lowest track.
High score wins.

Powers
*Powers resolve before pip totals.

WARP: Move your ship in that color lane to the space in front of the next ship in that lane.

FREEZE: Freeze the leading ship in that color lane. Frozen player may not advance in that lane during their next turn.

TEAM BOOST: Move each of your ships up one space.

Ship Hopping
If your ship lands on another ship, hop over it onto the next available space.

Board Setup
1. Place the board in the center of the table.
2. Assemble three Map Edges to form a triangle border around the tile play area.
3. Place the Finish Line on the race track, between the 27 and 28 distance marks.
4. Shuffle Starburst token face down and place one onto each lane space at the 15, 25, and 35 distance marks. (9 total Starburst tokens)
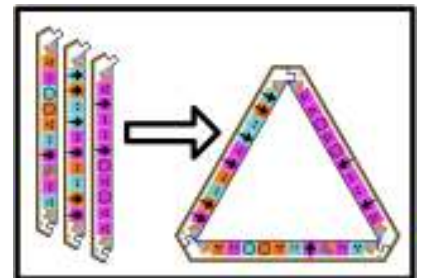
Player Setup
5. Each player chooses and takes a player color reference card, then takes 3 Ships in their player color and places them in the Starting Zone of the Race Track. You must have a single ship in each of the three race lanes.
6. Give the Tri-Star badge to the most experienced interstellar racer. They will be 1st Player (unless you are playing Advanced mode).

Tiles Setup
7. Place all Triangle Tiles in the Tile Bag, then each player draws 3 tiles from the Bag to form their starting hand of tiles.
8. Draw a random tile from the bag, and place it on the center start space.

Draft Card Setup
Tri-Star Racers can be played with variable complexity through the use of different Draft cards. Basic / Boost / Advanced *(See pages 9-10 for specifics of each Draft Card.)* In this setup we are using the "Boost" mode with 3 draft slots.

9. Place the Draft Card in the Draft Mode spot on the board.
10. Fill all triangle draft slots on the Draft Card with random tiles from the bag.

4
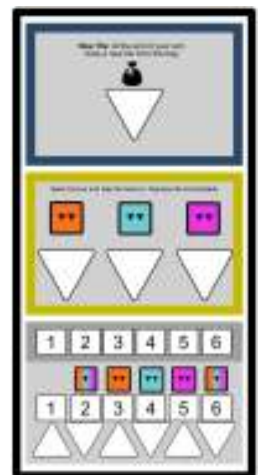
How to Play

Tri-Star Racers is played in turns. In all Draft modes, players get an equal number of turns before the race is finished. On your turn, you'll play a triangle tile to the board. Matching colors will advance your ships on the race track and activate special powers. Gain a replacement tile at the end of your turn. Get all 3 of your ships across the finish line to end the race.

First Player:
- **Basic and Boost modes:** The most experienced racer has the Tri-Star badge. They are the first player. Play then proceeds clockwise, with each player taking a turn.

- **Advanced mode:** When playing with the Advanced Draft card, play order is set by the order of tokens.

On Your Turn
1. **Play a tile** from your hand (rotate/flip it to best fit) onto a space on the center map. Place your tile so that it is adjacent (*touches*) a previously placed tile. You don't *have to* make color matches on all sides it touches.

2. **Color Matches.** Check for all Color Matches resulting from your placed tile. It's often possible to match sections of your tile with multiple sections on other tiles or edges of the map:
   a. **Powers:** If your tile activates a Power, resolve that Power immediately. You must match the color of a Power section to activate it.
   (See Powers List on page 8 for more info on powers.)
   b. **Ship Movement:** Total the pips in the color-matching sections of your placed tile along with the pips of matching color sections the tile *touches*. For each pip of that color, move your ship in that color lane +1 space forward.
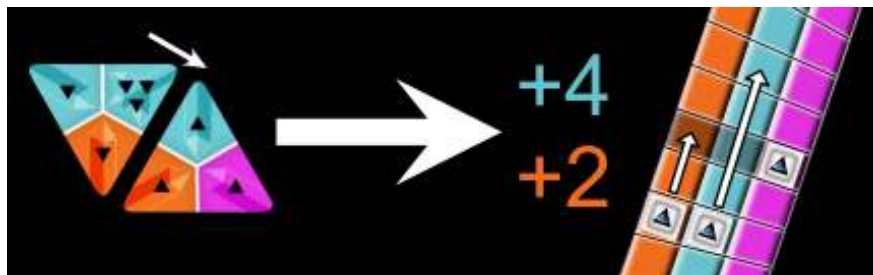
(See Tile Matching examples page 6 for more visual examples.)

3. **Use Starburst(s)** collected this turn. A Starburst grants a Ship some extra movement.
   (See page 9 for specifics of Starbursts.)

4. **Draft a new tile**. Take a tile off the Draft Card. Gain the benefit of the draft slot.
   (See pages 9-10 for specifics of each Draft Card.)

Ship Hopping

Multiple ships may never occupy the same space (aside from when in the Starting Zone). If your ship *ends* a movement on the same space as another ship, hop over the opponent's ship onto the next available space.

Wild Crystals

Some tiles have sections that contain all three colors. These crystal sections are wild, which means they are *all* colors. Wild sections never contain pips, but activate *all* sections they touch.

Map Edges may also have Wild crystal sections.

Tile Matching Examples

	Matches Made:
	Pink to Pink section
	Blue to Blue section
	
	Outcome
	  Pink: 2+2 pips = Move Pink Lane Ship +4
	  Blue: 1+2 pips = Move Blue Lane Ship +3
	  Orange: no matches, so 0

	Matches Made:
	Pink to Pink Power section
	Blue to Wild section
	Orange to 2 Orange sections
	
	Outcome
	  Pink: Warp Power + 1 pip = Warp Pink Lane Ship, then move it +1.
	  Blue: 3 pips = move Blue Lane Ship +3
	  Orange: 6 Pips = move Orange Lane Ship +6
	
	Note: Powers always activate before regular ship movement.

Game End

The final round is triggered once a player crosses the Finish Line with *all three* of their Ships.

The game doesn't end immediately when the Finish Line is crossed. Other players *may* still be able to take turns to ensure each player has an equal number of turns:

Basic and Boost mode: Continue taking turns clockwise, until you reach the first player (with the badge). Do not start a new round.

Advanced mode: when the end of the game is triggered, finish out the current round. Each player who still has a ship remaining on the Player Turn track (top row) takes a turn until the track is empty.

Winning

At the end of the game, the player whose entire team of ships is the farthest on the Race Track is the winner. **To determine whose team is farthest, each player compares the position of their farthest back ship.** Out of these ships, the player with the leading ship wins the race!

In this example end game (see right) all teams crossed the finish line. Green is the winning player because their farthest back ship (on space 31 of the Pink Lane) is ahead of the farthest back ship of each of the other teams.

Team	Farthest Back Ship
Green	Space 31 (Pink Lane)
Yellow	Space 30 (Pink Lane)
Blue	Space 28 (Blue Lane)
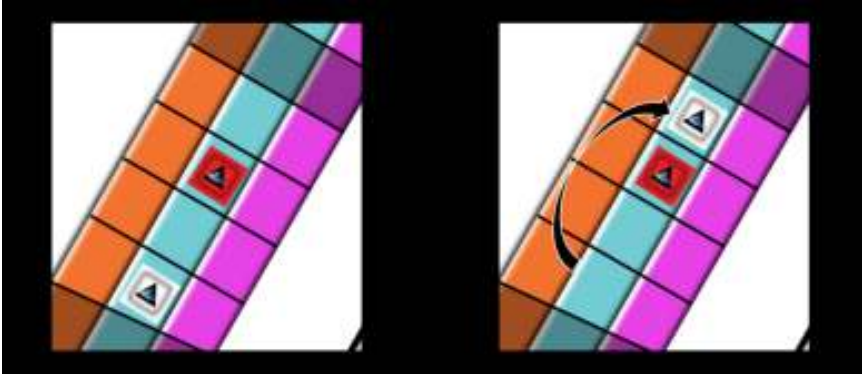
Note: The lane each ship is in doesn't matter, only the position (space number).

Ties: In the case of a tie, the tied players then compare the positions of their next furthest back ship. Out of these ships, the player with the leading ship wins the race!

Power Spaces

Some sections on the edges of the Map have special Power icons. If your tile creates a match with these Power sections, you activate the power and gain its effect. **Using a power is not optional. If you activate a power with a color match, you must trigger the effect.**

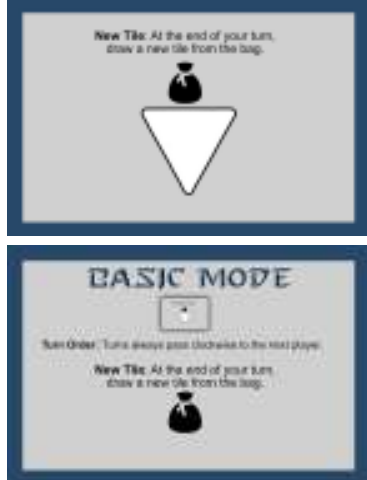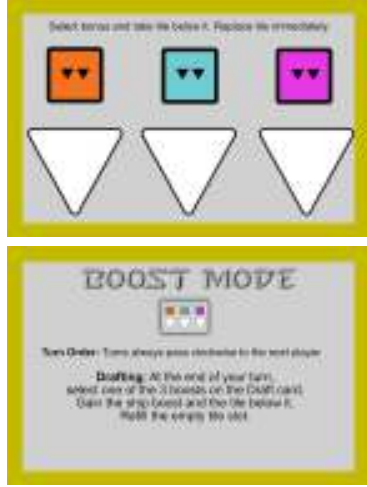| Power Icon	Power Effect
	Power Effect You must match colors with the Power Icon to activate its effect. If you place a tile adjacent to a Power Icon, but don't match the color, you do not activate the effect.
	Warp: Pick up your ship on the matching color lane and move it to the space immediately in front of the next closest ship ahead of you on that track. If another ship is occupying that space, hop over that ship to the next available space according to normal ship movement rules. **Example:** The White Player activates a Blue Lane Warp and moves their ship in the Blue Lane to the space immediately in front of the next closest ship (red ship).
	Freeze: Flip over the *leading* ship on that color track (that is not already frozen). This ship is now frozen and cannot be moved (ignore any tile matches that would move this ship). *Beware:* you *can* Freeze your own ship if in the lead. Active Ship (Front) Frozen Ship (Back) **When your ship is frozen, your ship remains flipped until the end of your next turn. Then flip it back over (returning it to normal).** Note: If the lead ship is already frozen, the next ship on that track is then frozen.
	Team Boost: Move each of your ships forward +1 space. **Team Boost is a Wild color edge power that can be activated by a tile section of any color.** Team Boost also appears on select spaces of the board. Activate a Team Boost space by playing any tile on top of it.

Note: If you want to play without Powers, use the reverse side of the Map Edge pieces when setting up the game. (The basic 'b' sides, 1b, 2b, etc.) Pip sections are not Powers; they only add to regular ship movement.

Starburst Tokens

	Collect and reveal a Starburst when your ship is the first to reach it on the track.
	Starbursts give you a one-time burst of movement. Once collected, they must be revealed and used *immediately* (after all current regular movement is resolved). If a Starburst is wild, choose which Ship gains the Starburst movement.

Drafting Card Guide

Tri-Star Racers can be played with variable complexity through the use of different Draft cards. Put the selected card draft side up (with the triangle draft slots). Rule details are on the backs of different draft cards to use as reference during the game.

Draft Card Mode Details of play	Draft Card Picture
BASIC The most simple version of the game and the mode. Recommended for folks who just want a light, fluid race game. **Gameplay** ● **Turn Order:** Turns always proceed clockwise to the next player. ● **Drafting:** At the end of your turn, take the tile on the card to replenish your hand back to 3 tiles. Refill the empty tile slot with a random tile from the bag.	
BOOST This mode adds a little more complexity and strategy through a visible market of tiles to choose from, paired with specific ship boosts depending on the tile you select. **Gameplay** ● **Turn Order:** Turns always proceed clockwise to the next player. ● **Drafting:** At the end of your turn, select a one of the 3 tiles available on the Draft card and gain the ship boost above that tile (eg. if you select the orange boost with 2 pips, move your ship in the orange lane forward +2 spaces). Then refill the empty draft slot.	

ADVANCED
We recommend this mode for experienced hobby gamers or people who want more strategy.

Setup
- Place the Draft Card in the designated spot on the board.
- Fill all 6 triangle draft slots on the Draft Card with random tiles from the bag.
- Gather the remaining ship tokens of the player colors used in the game (1 per player). These ships will be used to track player draft choices.
- Shuffle the ship tokens. Place them in a row at the top of the card from left to right to determine player turn order for the first round. No badge needed to show the first player.

Gameplay
- **Turn Order:** Turn order is set each round by the order of the ship tokens at the top of the card.
- **Drafting:** At the end of your turn, move your ship token from the upper track to an available space on the lower track. Claim your tile and gain the associated Boost (move your ship).
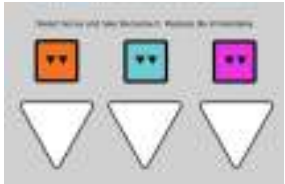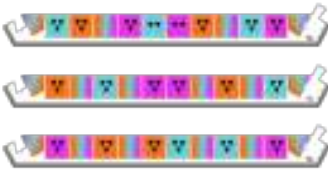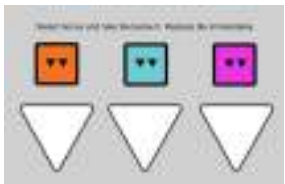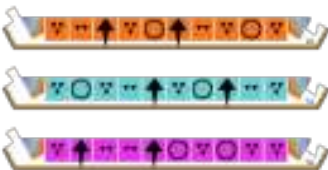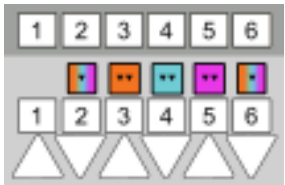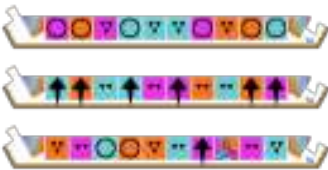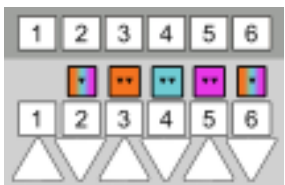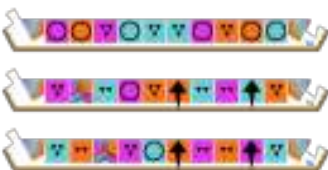
  Note: Spots 2 and 6 contain Wild boosts. If you select a Wild Boost, you choose one of your ships to move forward +1 space.

- **Round End:** The Advanced Drafting mode is played in rounds. After each player takes a turn, the round ends and players move their ship tokens back to the top row to set the player order for the next round. Then all empty tile slots are refilled.
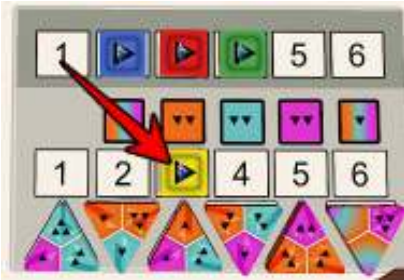

ADVANCED MODE
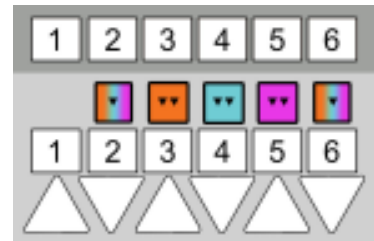
Setup Scenarios

Map Edges also create variable levels of complexity to the game. Below are some suggested combinations of Draft Cards and Edges to suit the desired play experience.
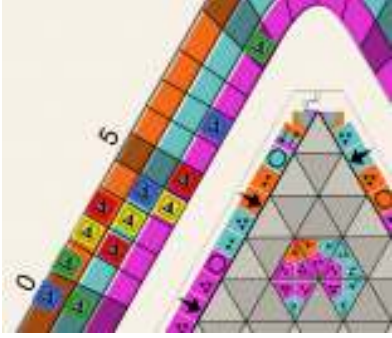
Scenario	Draft Card	Edges	Special Rules
Most Basic– For early gamers and kids, least complex.	Basic	1b, 4b, 5b	Don't put out Starbursts in setup.
Warm up	Boost	6b, 7b, 8b	
Color Bias– Good place to start for experienced gamers.	Boost	1a, 2a, 3a	
Standard Game	Boost or Advanced	*Random* a-sides	
Power Play	Advanced	4a, 5a, 6a	
Brutal– Only for those that have mastered the game, and are looking for more of a challenge.	Advanced	4a, 7a, 9a	Mismatched tile colors **not** allowed. If you can't play, discard hand. Draw two tiles from the bag then draft one, ending your turn.

Example Player Turn (Advanced Draft mode)

In this example, the Yellow player, Jean, is taking the first turn of the game. Jean's 3 ships each begin in the Start Zone (the 0 space) in respective color lanes.
Note: Jean is playing a game using the Advanced Drafting card.

Actions	Picture	Notes

Jean places a tile from their hand onto the map adjacent to the Starting Tile.
 	
Jean places their tile to try and make color matches to move their ships as far as possible on the Track.
		Matches Made:
		Blue to Blue & Pink to Pink.
		
		Outcome
		   Blue: 1+2 pips = 3
		   Pink: 2+2 pips = 4
		   Orange: no matches, so 0

Jean totals the pips in the matching color sections and moves their ships in the corresponding color lanes. *Note: Jean's tile didn't activate any powers.*		**Ship Movement** Orange Lane Ship: 0 spaces Blue Lane Ship: +3 spaces Pink Lane Ship: +4 spaces *Note: Since it was the start of the race, Jean's ships all began in the Start Zone (the 0 space).*
Jean and their friends are playing with the Advanced Draft card, so Jean takes the Draft card actions to take a new tile: Jean moves their Drafting Token to the tile they wish to draft and takes the Orange Boost and tile below. This choice will dictate their position in the turn order of the next round.		**Draft Card** **Boost:** Move Ship in Orange lane +2 spaces. **Tile:** Take the chosen tile into hand.

Jean took the first turn of the game and now waits as the other players each take a turn.		At the end of the first round, green is currently in the lead (on one lane), but it is the whole team that counts. Red and yellow advanced all three of their ships, but who knows what will happen next!
The Advanced Drafting mode is played in rounds. After each player takes a turn, the round ends and players move their Draft Tokens back to the top row to set the player order for the next round All tile slots are refilled.		Based on the draft choices of all players, Jean (yellow) will go 2nd in the next round.

Tips for play:

General Tips

- **Tile Matching:** Look for spaces that you can match more than one section of your tile. Remember your ships will move for all matching color sections that your tile touches.

- **Ship Hopping:** Try to land on ships ahead of you to get a little extra movement out of your turn, especially when you see a group of ships bunched up ahead of you.

- **Placement Opportunities:** Consider what is best for you when playing a tile, but also be aware of the spaces that you open up for the next player.

Drafting Tips

- **Tile Awareness:** If you are missing a color in your hand, it's likely you ***won't*** be able to score that color next round. Having a variety of color crystal combos will allow you to take advantage of the opportunities that present themself during the game.

- **Turn Order:** Turn order can be very powerful in the Advanced mode. If you are last in a round, consider setting yourself up for a big move. Expand out to the edge, then make your draft so you can go first in the next round to match high scoring crystals and/or trigger a special power. Two turns in a row means making your own power combo.

Summary - Player Reference

On your turn

1. PLAY A TILE
For each color match:

First, activate any Powers.

Then, total pips in the matching color sections and move your ships.

+4
+2

2. TAKE A NEW TILE
Gain linked bonus on Draft Card.

3. (USE STARBURSTS) if collected

End Game

First team of 3 ships to cross the finish line triggers the final round.

Get your entire team far up their tracks. Final score is your *lowest track.*
High score wins.

Powers
*Powers resolve before pip totals.

WARP: Move your ship in that color lane to the space in front of the next ship in that lane.

FREEZE: Freeze the leading ship in that color lane. Frozen player may not advance in that lane during their next turn.

TEAM BOOST: Move each of your ships up one space.

Ship Hopping

If your ship lands on another ship, hop over it onto the next available space.

FAQ

Q: If I match the same color multiple times with my tile, is each match a separate move?
A: No. Total all the matching pips of a color and move once in that lane.

Q: Can I choose to not activate a power (like Freeze, if I'm in the lead)?
A: If you match the color, you activate the Power. You may intentionally mismatch colors to avoid triggering the Power, preventing someone else from playing in that space.

TTS Supplemental - Tri-Star Racers

There are just a few key differences between the physical version of Tri-Star Racers and the TableTop Simulator version. Also below are some tips specific to playing in TTS.

General TTS notes and controls

When playing, I recommend that you play in top-down perspective (press "**P**" key twice).
It is good to lock ("**L**" key) components that don't need to move during the game: Map Edges, Draft Card, Finish Line. Some even prefer locking tiles, once played on the board.

Playing Triangle Tiles

Set your Rotation Degrees to 15 or 30. Click and drag to a move tile over the board. While the tile is hovering, rotate (using "**Q**" and "**E**" keys) and flip the tile (using "**F**" key), then release to put it down. Do *not* set the tile down and then rotate in place (may bump previously played tiles out of place).

Remember the back side of tiles are mirrored. If a tile isn't fitting the way you thought, flip it "**F**".

Drafting Tiles

In TTS, when you hover over a group/bag/deck and press a number, you'll draw that many into your hand. At the start of the game, hover over the tile bag and press "**3**" to draw your initial 3 tiles to your hand. When drafting a tile at end of turn, hover over a tile on the Draft Card and press the "**1**" key. It will go directly to your hand.

Map Edge pieces <Setup>

In the physical prototype, Map Edge pieces are different front and back: Basic on one side, Advanced (with Powers) on the other side. In TTS, the different types are contained in separate bags, "Basic" and "With Powers."

When you put new Edges out, be sure they are consistently flipped (press "**F**" key if mismatched). If notches are not the same orientation, the Edges won't interlock properly. After placing Edges, lock them in place ("**L**" key).

StarBurst Tokens <Setup>

Starburst tokens are randomized in the bag face-down. So you can just pull them out and put them on the track during setup.

Players <Setup>

Reference cards and ship tokens are set out. Just pick your seat, and put ships in Start zone.

Advanced Draft - First Turn Randomizer <Setup>

Once Starburst Tokens are out on the board, the bag is empty (but set to randomize). Each player puts a ship token into the bag. Then pull tokens out to establish starting play order.