



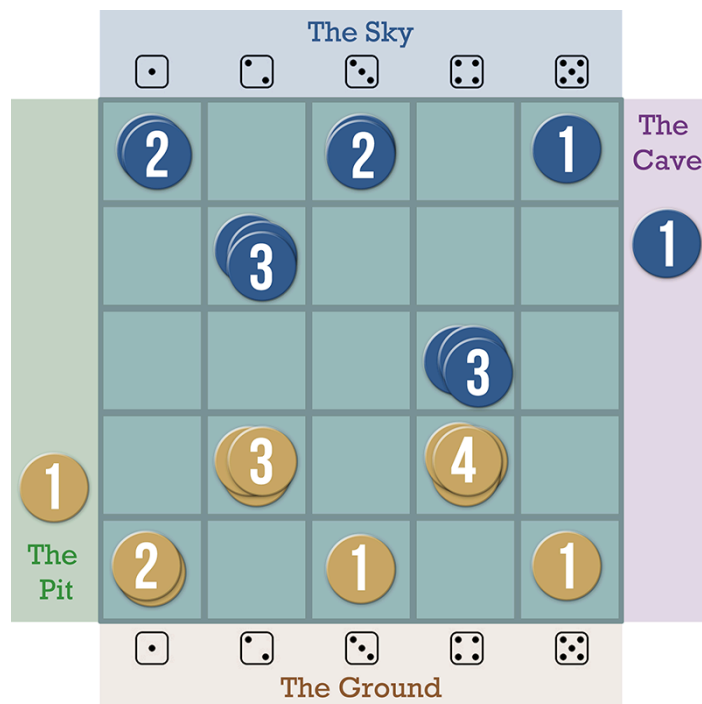
El Oso (The Bear)

Solitaire Board Game

James Ernest / Crab Fragment Labs

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Introduction: El Oso, also known as “Rain,” is a solitaire board game from the world of Carrisor. Your opponent is the Bear. The player’s moves are deliberate, and the Bear’s moves are random. The player’s goal is to move at least ten pieces off the top edge of the board.



Equipment:

You need a 5x5 game board, shown above, twelve stacking pieces for each side (for example, a checkers set), and at least one 6-sided die. More dice will make for some easier turns.

Setup: The player's pieces start along the bottom row, and the Bear's pieces along the top row, in stacks of random height. Start by placing one piece in each space, and then roll dice one at a time to add the remaining pieces, as follows:

For each piece, roll a 6-sided die. Add the piece on the space in the column that corresponds to that roll. If you roll a 6, roll again. If that stack has five pieces already, do not stack it any higher, and roll again. Continue this until all pieces are placed.

This process will result in a set of randomly sized stacks for the player and the Bear, between 1 and 5 pieces high, in their respective starting rows.

The player takes the first turn.

Player's Turn:

On each turn, you may move one of your stacks, by the following rules:

Distance: A stack can move a maximum distance equal to its size, so for example a stack of 3 pieces can move up to 3 spaces.

Direction: A stack can move diagonally forward or backward, or laterally (side to side), but it cannot move straight forward or straight back.

Clear Path: A stack can move only in a straight and open path. Player stacks do not capture or jump, and cannot move into occupied spaces. (By contrast, the Bear's stacks always move one step at a time, and always towards the ground, no matter what is in their way.)

Moving Off the Board: You can move a stack from the top row off the top of the board, and into the Sky. The player's goal is to move as many pieces as possible into the Sky. Stacks can not move into the Sky unless they start in the top row.

When the player's last piece leaves the board, the game is over.

Passing: If you wish, you may "move zero," passing your turn. You might choose to do this if all of your stacks are hemmed in, or if you think moving would be more dangerous than staying put. When you do this, you must still designate which stack "moved," because this will affect the Bear's turn.

Bear's Turn:

The Bear rolls a number of dice equal to the *height of the stack* that the player moved. For example, if the player moves a stack of 2 pieces, the Bear rolls 2 dice. (It doesn't matter how far the player's stack traveled, or if it moved at all, only how tall it is.)

Order: Arrange the Bear's dice in ascending order, and then execute them one at a time, re-checking the board state after each move. Treat any roll of 6 as a blank, and do not re-roll it. The results of each roll depend on the current state of the board, as follows:

Basic Result: If there is exactly one stack in the indicated column, move that stack one space towards the Ground. For example, if the Bear rolls a 3, advance the stack on the 3 column one step towards the Ground.

Capture: When a Bear's stack moves into Player's stack, opposing pieces annihilate each other one by one, pairing off and leaving the board. The remainder from the taller stack, if there is one, remains on the space. For example, if a Bear stack of size 2 meets a player stack of size 3, 2 pieces from each side are removed, and one of the player's pieces remains on the board.

The Bear's pieces are removed to the right side of the board, into a space called the Cave. The player's pieces are removed to the left, into the Pit. The player's pieces can not return from the Pit, but the Bear can bring pieces back from the Cave, as described below.

Empty Column: If you roll a die indicating a column with no Bear's pieces in it, add a new stack of Bear's pieces in the top row, using up to five of the pieces from the Cave. If there are no pieces in the Cave, treat this roll as a blank. If there are more than five pieces in the Cave, leave the rest in the Cave. Note that sometimes an empty column will be filled by one die, and then immediately moved by the next.

Bear pieces that land on player pieces during this step annihilate the player's pieces (and themselves) just as they do in a capture, removing those pieces to the Pit and the Cave.

Double Column: If a column has more than one stack of the Bear's pieces in it, advance only the highest stack (the one closest to the Sky). In this way, stacks will move down and merge into lower stacks. (When two stacks merge, there is no height limit.)

The Ground: When a Bear's stack moves off the bottom of the board, these pieces are placed temporarily on the "Ground." They will rain back onto the board after all the Bear's moves are complete, as follows:

Raining Back: After finishing all of the Bear's moves, redistribute any pieces that were left on the Ground into the top row. This is similar to the method used during setup; however, if you roll a 6, or if a stack would become higher than five, send those pieces directly to the Cave and do not re-roll. As with new pieces from the Cave, above, these pieces can eliminate player pieces.

Objective:

The player's goal is to move as many pieces as possible into the Sky. Ten pieces or more is considered a "win," and eleven and twelve are superior wins. Nine or less is a loss.

When the player's last piece leaves the board, the game is over. The player's score is the number of pieces that have been moved to the Sky.

For a competitive game, multiple players can take turns as the player, and compare their final scores. You could also decide to keep a running score over any number of games.

Design: EL Oso was designed by James Ernest and Crab Fragment Labs. Testers included Nora Miller, Carol Monahan, Jimm Stout, Anthony Westbrook, Jeff Wilcox, and many others.

Design Notes: If you have a comment or a question, [reach out to us](#) at Crab Fragment Labs. Thanks for playing and we'll see you at the table.