

Namibia » Reviews » Exploring Namibia

Author: Iorna

I enjoy economic games for the most part and Namibia did not disappoint. I haven't seen too much about it yet so I thought I'd write a review/session report of our first 3-player game. A big thanks to Cary and Eric who have been stalwart in helping me try out some of these new games from Essen.

Namibia was the winner of the 2009 Edition Bohrt's game. It is a game for 3-4 players who compete for commodities, sell at the market and convert money to reputation (VP) over 6 rounds. Since the competition is for design of the best game with the same components, this game has the same oil wells (mines), trucks and trains as seen previously along with some cubes, pawns, rail markers and discs. A slight downside is the board gets very crowded with all these large pieces. Also the rules say to use the pawns as demand markers, which at times may need to stack with the price markers. I suggest using the discs and print out some "D"s for one set of discs so they stack nicer on the market table and use the pawns as the port markers. The game comes with plastic money but we used poker chips. The board is very nice and has a lot of flavor graphics.

In the game, each player is assigned 3 of 4 commodities they may mine and sell. The game starts with seeding of the commodities on the board as well as an initial placement of 1 mine by each player. The auction for turn order is interesting. The minimum bid = the round of the game. All players pay their bid; even if you drop out first, you need to pay the minimum bid. Each player starts with \$15. The winner also loses 4 VP and the second place person loses 2 VP.

The first player then completes any previously started mines adding 1 commodity if there are no adjacent closed mines, starts a new one indicated by laying a well on it's side. Next, the first player prospects by extending a seam of a commodity of their choice by placing two cubes adjacent to a previous mine. Then the player lays 3 rails, which must connect to any rails already on the board. The board has 4 ports printed on it with starting rail surrounding each. Any player may use all rails. Finally, the player places a truck at an existing mine. Commodity cubes are limited. The prospecting came into place in our game, as Cary cut off gold in the mid game, which he couldn't mine or sell by surrounding it with copper and preventing it from extending. Next the second player completes any mines, starts a new mine, prospects, places 2 rails and places a truck. In a 3-player game, the last player completes any mines starts two new mines, prospects twice, places no rail and places a truck.

Then in player order each player places a port to one of the 4 preprinted spots on the board assigning a commodity exclusive for that port. In a 3 or 4-player game only 3 commodities will be sold per round. The player may then trucks one commodity of his choice if applicable and removes his truck and the commodity from the board and collects payment. The other players also do so if they choose but this gives the active player 2 VP per use of the port. Then players may ship all of the commodities on one hex by rail if connected and receive payment and repeat the action if they have other available hexes if they choose. If other players ship by rail, the active player gets 2 VP as with trucking. The market price and demand start at \$6 for each commodity. If the demand is exceeded, the price immediately drops to half rounded up and further sales are at the new price. Next the market is adjusted. For commodities where demand is lower than supply the demand increases, the price has already been adjusted down. Where the demand is equal the demand and price increase by 1. If the demand is higher than the supply then demand increase by 2. If a good is not sold, the price and demand increase by 3. After mines are used up, black markers are placed to indicate old abandoned mines and decrease the new mines output (you don't get the extra cube when a new mine is placed) and those hexes are unavailable. In our game, the market was very interesting. Diamonds stayed high throughout the game while both gold and silver had prices drop by half during the game. Copper was also maxed out at the end of the game. All 3 players had interest in copper.

At the end of round 3 players may buy VP 3:1, round 5 for 4:1 and round 6 at 5:1. The winner has the most VP. In our game scores were Eric 66, Cary 62, me a sad 56. I was concerned at the beginning of the game because Cary did place a port allowing Eric to sell 3 cubes twice getting a huge money advantage. Our game at the 2nd round



the 5th round.



and end game



I think it did even out during the game and in the last round I made an error and let Eric place a port getting about 10 VP from shipping. Taking first too often also hurts as that is 4 VP you lose I think I made an error in that as well. I think this is a very interesting game and really look forward to another play. 3 players worked out fine and I am definitely interested in a 4-player game. I rate it an 8 so far.

Wed Nov 10, 2010 7:41 pm

Author: garygarison

Thanks for bringing back this jewel from Essen, Lorna. This game deserves more attention. Without question, so far my favorite of the Essen batch. Perhaps it's a bit generous, but I'm giving this an 8.5.

My copy-and-pasted comments for the game:

An excruciating auction, TransAmerica-style leaching route building, piece-of-the-action VP extortion, and a player-manipulated supply-and-demand economic market. In short, Namibia is chock full of all my favorite ingredients. And it's played using another game's bits! How can I not love this? Very impressive, very excellent. A must-try for Winsome and Wallace fans.

Wed Nov 10, 2010 8:35 pm

Author: garygarison

lorna wrote:

If the demand is higher then the price and demand increase by 2.

Slight correction: If the demand is higher than the supply, then price goes up by 2 and the demand is halved.

Thu Nov 11, 2010 12:33 am

Author: lorna

garygarison wrote:

lorna wrote:

If the demand is higher then the price and demand increase by 2.

Slight correction: If the demand is higher than the supply, then price goes up by 2 and the demand is halved.

thanks I'll fix that.

Thu Nov 11, 2010 12:43 am

Author: lorna

I think Namibia kind of reminds me of [Planet Steam](#), only shorter with a more interesting auction and consequences of

winning or losing.

Thu Nov 11, 2010 2:58 pm